

The McLeans of Ardgour from 1420 to the present

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This is one of a series of 38 articles which should be read in conjunction with each other. Look at [‘Setting the Scene’](#), in Small Print on the left of the homepage, for a list of all these articles and explanations of some concepts being used. Also see [‘Overview of Donald’s life’](#) for summaries of each of the other notes.

Of particular relevance to these Ardgour notes, are separate articles which can be accessed on the website:-

04. [‘Jump Where the wall is Lowest’](#): How the McLeans took over Ardgour
03. [‘Chiefs of Clan Maclean’](#): The Duart line
06. [‘The Lairds of Blaich’](#):
[‘Parents and grandparents of Donald McLean – our strategies’](#):
16. [‘Places: Ardgour – the district, the estate, the house, and Sallachan farm’](#):

Purpose

Donald McLean was born in 1779 in Blaich which is on the northern side of Ardgour in the Western Highlands. He leased Duiskey Estate, near Blaich. In 1837 he migrated to South Australia with his wife, Christina nee McPhee, and 10 children. The family history on [www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com](#) has a great deal of information about their descendants in Australia, but very little about their ancestors in Scotland except that his father was Allan.

Donald, ‘The Hunter’, conquered Ardgour in 1420 and the McLeans have maintained an unbroken line of lairds for seven centuries. Currently, Robin MacLean is the 18th Laird of Ardgour.

This branch is sometimes known as *Clan Tearlach* (*ref: Wikipedia*).

These notes are a collation of information about the traditional clan hierarchy in Ardgour. Somewhere in all of this, we have hoped to discover a connection with Donald’s forebears and to explore possible impacts on Donald and his family. So far, we have had little success but we can state with confidence that:-

- Donald’s father and grandfather were not lairds or the son of a lairds - but might have been a nephew or cousin. The most likely link is with the John Crubach, the 8th laird whose son, Allan might have been Donald’s great-grandfather.
- Alexander, the 13th Ardgour, was the laird during the whole of time that Donald was living in the area before he migrated.
- When Donald’s father, Allan, was a youth, the Ardgour Laird might have been Allan the 10th and/or John the 11th. In his mature years, it would have been Hugh the 12th. In his later years it was Alexander 13th.
- These connections are explored in our notes [‘Parents and grandparents of Donald McLean’](#).

Summary & highlights

1st Laird, Donald 'The Hunter' was born 1411. He attacked the McMasters and took over Ardgour. He possibly fought in, or at least was affected by, the battles of Lochaber, Inverlochry and Corpach. He died in 1463, aged 52 years after being laird for 43 years.

2nd Laird, Ewen died in 1482. He was laird for 19 years - from 1463 to 1482. His son, Lachlan Mor, was the progenitor of the Blaich branch - see our article 'Lairds of Blaich'. Ewen was Seneschal of the Household to John, Earl of Ross and Chamberlain to the Lord of the Isles. He might have been killed in the Battle of Bloody Bay.

3rd Laird, Lauchlan MacEwin or Allan – there is some uncertainty about this laird

4th Laird, John became laird liard as a young child. There was conflict with the Camerons on the north side of Loch Eil. He had several wives and at least 8 sons. He was pardoned for acts of piracy. Ardgour became a barony in 1542. He died in 1545.

5th Laird, Allan was born about 1520

6th Laird, Ewen was killed in 1592 in Lochber by a MacDonald who had mistaken him for Cameron of Locheil.

7th Laird, Allan was born about 1582. When 5 years old he was taken as a hostage by the MacDonalds. He became laird when he was about 10 years old and his uncle, Charles who was his tutor, tried to usurp his estate. He might have been involved, or certainly affected by the second Battle of Inverlochry. Ardgour prospered in his time. He had been laird for about 87 years when he died in 1681.

8th Laird, John Crubach was born c1603. He became laird when he was about 78 years old and was laird for 14 years. He might have spent most of his life in Coll. One of his sons, Lachlan became the progenitor to re-establish the Lairds of Blaich. Another son, Allan who was born about 1640 and died 1709 might have been our Donald's great grandfather.

9th Laird, Ewen was laird for a very short time. He died in 1694.

10th Laird, Allan was born in 1668. He became laird when he was 26 years old. He was a poor manager and brought the estate to the brink of ruin. The affairs were taken over by trustees. Allan eventually stepped down in 1731 after being laird for about 37 years.

11th Laird, John was born in 1700. He became laird at the age of 31 and was laird for 8 years before he died at the age of 39 years.

12th Laird, Hugh was born in 1736. He became laird when he was just 3 years old and lived in Glasgow. The Ardgour estate fell into bad condition and the MacLachlans were trying to gain possession. Hector MacLean of Torloisk and other relatives orchestrated the recovery. He was 10 years old at the time of Culloden but in his mid-twenties he was captain on the Argyll Fencibles who were loyal to the English crown. He arranged for the construction of Ardgour House. He died in 1768 at the age of 30 years.

13th Laird, Alexander was born in 1764 and became laird when he was 4 years old. He was laird for 87 years. For the first half of this time, he had an active military career – in several different forces, rose to the rank of major, and fought in many theatres. He lived away from Ardgour, possibly in Edinburgh when not stationed with his troops on various campaigns. He became more directly involved in the management of the Ardgour estate after 1810 and initiated significant reforms to the crofting system. This would have affected our Donald directly. He died in 1855 when he was 101 years old.

14th Laird, Alexander was born in 1799. He became the laird when he was 56 years old and was laird for 17 years. He was with the East India Company for a number of years. He sold the northern portion of the Ardgour estate to the Earl of Morton. He died in 1872, aged 73 years.

15th Laird, Alexander Thomas was born in 1835. He became laird when he was 37 years old. Like his father, he was in the East India Company's civil service. He was a judge of the high court of judicature at Fort William. He was laird for 18 years, until his death at age 55 years.

16th Laird, Alexander John Hew was born in 1880. He became laird when he was 10 years old and was laird for 40 years. He was a major in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. He died in 1930, aged 50 years.

17th Laird, Catriona Louisa was born in 1919. She became laird when she was 10 years old and was laird for 55 years until she died on 1988

18th Laird, Robin was born in 1952 and became laird when he was 36 years old. He has been laird for 28 years so far. He is living at Sallachan farm, not far from Ardgour House.

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Branches

The MacLeans of Ardgour are a branch of the Duart family from Mull. Wikipedia and JP McLean (p265) have Ardgour as the 2nd branch whereas Gregory has it as the 4th branch.

The sub-branches of Ardgour are (ref : Wikipedia)

- Maclean of Borreray – the progenitor was Niall Ban (Donald) Maclean – second son of Donald, 1st Laird
- Maclean of Treshnish – the progenitor was John (Donald Dubh) – second son of Ewen, 2nd Laird
- Maclean of Inverscaddle - the progenitor was Charles – the usurper of Allan, 7th Laird
- Maclean of Blaich – the progenitor of the first family in 1480 was Hector, son of Ewen, 2nd Laird. The progenitor of the second family was Lachlan Mor, son of John Crubach the 8th. This, of course, is the branch which we are most interested in. We are compiling a separate article about the lairds of Blaich.

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Our murderous beginning

The McLean's, came to Ardgour in 1420 when they killed the McMasters and took over their lands. The raid was led by Donald McLean and his grandfather, MacEarchorn. Descriptions of this conquest are in a separate article, 'Jump where the wall is lowest', which can be found at xxxxx on our website.

In the era in which the McLeans seized Ardgour, it was possible to gain land by force but, in order to retain it, they had to settle the area and demonstrate their control over it – and to physically resist challengers. The McLean's ownership of Ardgour was ratified with a charter by MacDonald, Lord of the Isles and then conferred by Alexander, Earl of Ross (or by his son, Earl John). (ref: Gregory p71). Title was granted by James IV 70 years later in 15xxx.

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1st Laird: - Donald – laird for 43 years - from 1420 to 1463

- We have Donald being born about 1411 (ref xxxxxx) but is this year correct, or was the attack later than 1420?
 - If he was born in 1411, he would have been just 9 years old, so would have been relying on his grandfather in the attack.
 - But was the attack in 1420? Perhaps it was 1432 as proposed by MacCulloch. *“These lands traditionally belonged to the MacMasters, until the latter were driven out by Donald Maclean, son of the third chief of Duart, in about 1432 (MacCulloch, 1971, 17)”* (Robertson p4). If Donald was born in 1411, Donald would have been 21 years old in 1432.
 - Fiona Maclean has the attack at about 1411 (Fiona Maclean, 'Around Lochaber', p51)
- His father was Lachlan Bronneach MacLean who was the the 7th Chief of Clan Maclean of Mull (Duart) and also the 3rd Laird of Dowart (Duart). (ref: Wikepedia & Gregory)

- His mother was a daughter of MacEarchorn Maclean of Kingerloch in Morvern. This MacEarchorn, Donald's grandfather, led the attack of the McMaster clan.
- *"Having been born out of wedlock, he was brought up among his mother's people."* (Ffamily p56 & JP McLean p265).
- LOCHIEL:
 - Comment: Donald asserted control of Ardgour, which is south of Loch Eil whereas, there are no indications that his influence ever extended to the northern side of Loch Eil. This northern area is often referred to as Lochiel and broadly coincides with the area referred to as Lochaber. Although the Ardgour branch never had a presence in Lochiel, the MacLeans of Coll and of Lochbuie did have significant parts to play at various times. It is an indication of the strength of the MacLeans of Coll and Lochbuie (and perhaps the weakness of the Laird of Ardgour), that these two branches, at different times, extended their influence to Lochiel which is so very far away compared to Ardgour which is just next door. The huge distances would probably have had a part to play in Coll and Lochbuie's inability to hold onto Lochiel in the face of Cameron resistance.
 - Gregory (p70, 71 & 76): *"The lands of Lochiel were originally possessed by the Clanchameron. On the forfeiture of the chief of that clan, Alexander, Earl of Ross had granted a charter to John Garve Maclean, (the first Laird of Coll). Afterwards, for some reason which does not appear, it was conferred by John, Earl of Ross, upon Maclean of Lochbuy (and then later to Celestine, Lorch of Lochalsh). The two Maclean families and the Camerons kept up their claims to these lands. It is natural to suppose that the Clanchameron, the actual occupants of Lochiel, would resist these various claims. This led to feuds between them which continued long, and in which much blood was shed. At one time John (the second Laird of Coll), the son and successor of John Garve, occupied Lochiel estate by force, and was at last killed at Corpach by the Camerons. (His infant son, later known as John Abrach, the third Maclean of Coll, was born in Lochaber, was saved by the good offices of the MacGillonies - a tribe in Lochaber who generally followed the Clanchameron.) This checked, for a time, the pretensions of the Clan Gillean but, as the whole of that powerful Maclean tribe were now involved in the feud - some from a desire to revenge the death of Coll, others from their obligations to support the claim of Lochbuy - the chief of the Camerons was forced to strengthen himself by acknowledging the claim of the Lord of Lochalsh. The latter immediately received Cameron as his vassal in Lochiel, and thus became bound to maintain him in possession against all who pretended to dispute his right to the estate. The Clanchameron in the end maintained their ground and were successful in retaining the prize. The Macleans, although they appealed to the sword, had little benefit from their charters to Lochiel. We hear no more of the feud with the Macleans till after the final forfeiture of the Lord of the Isles, when circumstances concurred to renew it with all its former violence."*
 - 1429 – Battle of Lochaber. This took place near Fort William (or Marybough?? as it was known then). It between fought between the forces of Alexander of Islay, Earl of Ross, 3rd Lord of the Isles and chief of Clan Donald against the Royalist army of King James I of Scotland (Wikipedia). Comment: It did not involve the Macleans directly and it is not known whether or not Donald had personal involvement in this battle – or how it affected him but the events must have had a close connection with the Battle of Inverlochy which occurred in the same area, just two years later.
 - 1431 – Battle of Inverlochy: Donald 'The Hunter' supported Donald Balloch in his successful battle at Inverlochy (Fort William) against the army of Lowland, Norman and Brenton-descended (Stewart) King James I. (ref: Gibson p132). *"They were pitted against the royal forces under the Earls of Caithness and Mar but Donald Balloch, who was a cousin of MacDonald, Lord of the Isles was supported by John, the brother of Red Hector (6th Chief of Clan McLean in Duart) who headed the MacLeans when the Islemen ravaged Lochaber"* (Electric Scotland). Note that there was another Battle of Inverlochy two centuries later in 1645.
- Donald was described as *"a bold, resolute, and cunning man"* (ref: JP McLean p 265 & Ffamily p57) and of warlike character (ref: Sinclair pxx). He was known as 'Strong Donald the Hunter' or 'The Hunter'. [research: How did he get his nickname?]
- An extract from Lament for Maclean of Ardgour
 - "The wind for his watcher, the mist for his shourd,*
 - Where the green and grey moss will weave their wild tartans*
 - A covering meet for a chieftain so proud.*
 - For, free as the eagle, these rock were his eyrie,*
 - And free as the eagle his spirit shall soar*

*O'er the crags and the corries that erst knew the footfall
Of Donald the hunter, Madgillian More."*

- Donald married a daughter of Ewen Cameron of Lochiel, Eoghann Mac Ailein. She was the mother of three of his four sons (ref: JP McLean p 265 & Ffamily p57):-
 - 1st : Ewen Maclean - As the first son, he became the 2nd Laird of Ardgour .
 - 2nd : Niall Ban (or Neil Bane or Donald) Maclean – He was the progenitor of the MacLeans of Borreray in North Uist. He got the lands of Borrera and others from Huistor Bane MacDonald, first Laird of Slate (Ffamily p64).
 - 3rd : John Ruadh Maclean – He served as tutor during the minority of John MacAllen who became the 4th laird.
 - 4th : Gillespig, or Archibald who was Donald's son born out of wedlock. His descendants are Clan Ewenraoch.
- Comment: We can surmise that Donald's authority and hold on Ardgour was enhanced because of the combined effect of his marriage to a daughter of the powerful Camerons of the neighbouring Lochail/Lochaber, and his support of Donald Balloch's forces when they ravaged Lochaber. [Research: On the other hand, the victorious forces after Inverlochry, ravaged Lochaber, so presumably this would have resulted (or was caused by) conflict between the MacLeans in the south of Loch Eil and the Camerons in the north of Loch Eil. And the marriage might not have been a means of bringing the MacLeans and the Camerons together.]
- Donald was granted a charter for Ardgour by MacDonald, Lord of the Isles and then conferred by Alexander, Earl of Ross - or by his son, Earl John. (ref: Gregory p71)
- Donald died before 1463, and was succeeded by his son, Ewen Maclean, 2nd Laird of Ardgour.

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2nd Laird - Ewen – laird for 19 years - from 1463 to 1482

- We do not have a birthdate for Ewen so we don't know how old he was when he became the 2nd Laird after his father died.
 - Also known as Eugene or Ewin (ref: Gregory p71)
 - In 1463, he held the office of Seneschal of the Household to John, Earl of Ross (ref: Gregory p71). This was at the time of the death of his father, and the beginning of Ewen's lairdship.
 - Ewen was Chamberlain to the Lord of the Isles (ref : Ardgour Estate).
 - Ewen was a witness to charters granted in 1463, 1478, and 1479 (ref: Sinclair)
 - He is termed Ewen, son of Donald, son of Lachlan (ref: Sinclair).
 - It is from this Ewen that the Macleans of Ardgour derive their patronymic, Mac Mhic Eoghainn. (ref: Sinclair)
 - He married a daughter of Thomas Chisholm of Comar, Chief of the Chisholms.(or Chisholras). Or Chisolm of Strathglass because Chisolm certainly came off Coignoulaen (Ffamily p58)
 - He had three sons (ref: Sinclair):-
 - Allan - his heir
 - John (Donald Dubh) - first Maclean of Tressinish (Ffamily p68)
 - Hector of Blaich and Achnadale – he was the progenitor of Blaich (ref: Wikipedia).
 - Also possibly Terlach who was also known as Charles (ref: Darryl's Peerage) – see 3rd Laird, below
 - There is another version of Ewen's offspring (ref: ??):-
 - Lauchlan? – who became the 3rd Laird of Ardgour
 - Charles? – the father of John, the 4th Laird
 - Allan? – Who had a son John who had a son Allan who became the 5th Laird
 - Another son?
 - Hector? - He was Ewen's 5th son. Hector, became the first Laird of Blaich
 - 1470 – Battle of Corpach: This was between Clan MacLean and Clan Cameron. After Alexander, Lord of the Isles was released from Tantallon Castle in 1431, he had awarded the Cameron lands around Fort William to the Macleans under John Garve Maclean of Coll, as punishment for the Camerons deserting him in 1429, before the battle of Lochaber. In 1470 the Coll Macleans invaded and were confronted by the Camerons at Corpach. It is recorded that a young MacLean chieftain, Ewen or John Abrach, the son of John Garve Maclean of Coll was killed. The Camerons were led in the battle by their chief Ailean nan Creach, and completely routed the Maclean forces, retaining their lands. However the Macleans would attempt to dislodge them throughout the coming years. Comment: It is not known whether or not Ewen and the Ardgour Macleans were involved in this.
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- Ewan Maclean, 2nd of Ardgour was killed at the Battle of Bloody Bay in about 1482 (ref: xxxx).

- His death at this time is contradicted by JP McLean who states that *“Ewen was living in 1495, for on the 24th October of that year, we find Ewen, son of Donald, son of Lachlan of Ardgour, a witness to the confirmation of the keepership of the castle of Strome to Alan, son of the captain of clan Cameron”* (Reg. Mag. Sig., Lib. XIII., No. 203).
- The patronymic of the family of Maclean of Ardgour is ‘Mac Mhic Eoghainn’, which means the son of the son of Hugh. The Hugh referred to in the patronymic as the eponymous of the family was killed at the battle of Bloody Bay about 1482, displaying his armorial bearings upon his galley and is the direct ancestor of the present Laird. (ref: Wikipedia)

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3rd Laird – Lauchlan or Allan or Terlach

- There is some uncertainties about the 3rd Laird:-
 - Who:
 - Allan: Sinclair stated that according to the "Family of Maclean", the name of the third laird of Ardgour was Allan and this is supported by JP McLean who stated that Allan was the third MacLean of Ardgour, or
 - Lauchlan Macewen (ref: Gregory and Electric Scotland). Gregory has the spelling as Lauchlan MacEwin MacLean whereas Electric Scotland spells it as Lachlan Macewen Maclean, or.
 - Terlach, also known as Charles (ref: Darryl’s Peerage) “His claim to the Chiefship was disputed by his brother Lachlan” (ref: Darryl’s Peerage which refers to Mosley, Charles, editor. Burke’s Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage, 107th edition. Wilmington, Delaware, U.S.A.: Burke’s Peerage (Genealogical Books) Ltd, 2003 – vol 2, p2505
 - When:
 - Did he become laird in 1482 if Ewen died in Bloody Bay
 - After 1495 as JP McLean indicates
 - Before 1493 – he was already laird at the time of the forfeiture of the Lord of the Isles (ref: Electric Scotland).
 - 1493 (p 71 in Donald Gregory’s ‘A History of xxx, 1881)
 - See Alexander 13th for a comment about numeration.
- Also the dates of birth 1476 and death (1567) offer some speculation. If the birth date is correct, he might have become laird after Bloody Bay at the age of 6 years. This age is not impossible but he would have had some guardians to support (or usurp) him.
- Allan married a daughter of MacGrhlasraich, (or Mac-a-Ghlasraich) a man of considerable importance, a laird, in the braes of Lochaber (Sinclair & Family p58). Allan was succeeded by his son, John.
- In 1494, James IV officially granted title of Ardgour to the McLeans.

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4th Laird – John or Allan

- John was the son of Charles, himself the son of Ewen, 2nd of Ardgour – ie grandson of Ewen
- The b13th refers to John as Allan (Family p58). Are the names John and Allan interchangeable in Highland nomenclature or is this disagreement between JP Maclean and 13th Ardgour (who are often in concurrence).
- He was very young when his father died and, on becoming laird, his uncle, John Ruadh, third son of Donald the first laird of Ardgour, acted as his tutor.
- About 1490, when John was still quite young and may not have been able to fully appreciate it, King James gave the McLeans title to the land, the Barony of Ardgour. This ratified the possession of the land, 70 years after the McLeans slaughtered the McMasters.
- 1500 (Gregory p95): The feud which had so long subsisted between the Macleans and Camerons, regarding the lands of Lochiel, broke out with renewed violence. The Macleans carried off a large prey of cattle from the lands of the Clanchameron in Lochaber - an injury which the latter, doubtless, did not suffer long to pass unrequited. These broils were ended for the time, probably by the influence of Argyle; and the Macleans, who appear to have been the aggressors, received a temporary respite under the Privy Seal.
- c1510 - Gregory p111: Towards the end of James IV’s reign, the old quarrel between the Macleans and the Clanchameron, regarding the lands of Lochiel, which had once more broken out.

- John was married twice. By his first wife, a daughter of Macdougall of Lorn (Sinclair) or the daughter of the Laird of Locheil (Ffamily p58). They had two sons:-
 - Allan – he was succeeded his father, John, to become the 5th laird
 - Ewen – he was the successor of his brother Allan, who became the 6th laird.
- By his second wife, a daughter of the Chief of Clanranald, he had also two sons (ref: Sinclair):-
 - Charles – [Research: Was this the same Charles who, as uncle to Allan the 7th Laird, was meant to assist the young laird but in fact connived against him.]
 - Lachlan.
- He also took a daughter of Maclan Macdonald of Ardnamurchan to live with him with the purpose of marrying her should she please him. He had two sons by her. At the end of two years he sent her home to her father, but, because their mother was taken upon a prospect of marriage, the children by her were regarded as legitimate 'lawfully begotten':- (ref: JP McLean & Ffamily p58)
 - Iain nimher or John from Inverscadell, a farm situated at the foot of the water of Scadell, in Ardgour, where he lived. This John was famous for his strength, boldness, remarkable valor and bravery. He signalized himself in all of Sir Lachlan Mor's wars against the MacDonalds of Islay.
 - Hector.
 - Allan had a son born out of wedlock named John Glennich
- He had a natural (illegitimate) son:- (ref: Sinclair)
 - John Gleannach or Glennich. We find his name attached to a document of 1545. He died shortly afterwards
- The six legitimate sons were very prosperous and flourishing men of great substance, and nearly all had many children, whereby for several generations they formed little tribes of their own, each being called Mac Mhic Allan.
- John was pardoned for acts of piracy at Solway by King James V, 1542, (ref : Ardgour Estate) and had his lands erected into a new Barony of Ardgour by Crown Charter the same year; one of 17 Barons in the Council of the Isles, 1545, dsp and was succeeded by his cousin once removed.
- John died about the year 1545, and was succeeded by his son, Allan (ref: JP McLean)

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5th Laird – Allan - ??? to ??? –

- Allan Maclean was born about 1520 - the son of John, son of Allan, himself the son of Ewen, 2nd of Ardgour
- Allan did not have any sons and so his brother Ewen became the 6th Lard.
- See Alexander 13th for a comment about numeration.

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6th Laird – Ewen - ??? to 1592 –

- Ewen na hetaig became laird because his older brother, the 5th laird, did not have any legitimate issue.
- Ewen was noted for his quickness or agility (ref: JP McLean – p xx & Ffamily p59))
- He married a daughter of Stewart of Appin (ref: JP McLean pxxx),
- Children:-
 - Allan – he became the 7th Laird
 - John - he settled in Mull and had a son, Allan who was the father of John Maclean, the Mull poet. The poet was known as Iain Mac Ailein, or more fully as Iain Mac Ailein Mhic Iain, Mhic Eoghainn. (ref: JP McLean p xxx) .
- Ewen was living in 1587, for his name appears in the General Band as recorded in Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis, p. 37 (ref: JP McLean p xx)
- In November 1577 Ewen, with three others, seized Adam Mackay with the intention imprisoning him in Dumbarton. The others were Lachlan Mor, John Smollett and John Dubh MacCharles MacEachann. However Adam was taken from them by John Og Maclean and servants of Colin, Earl of Ardgyll. (Sinclair p 110)
- He was killed about 1592 at Scurateir on the coast of Mamore, in Lochaber, in a long boat of his own, by a party of the MacDonalds of Keppoch. They had been on bad terms with Cameron of Lochiel and set an ambush for him but Ewen was mistaken for Locheil because he had a scarlet cloak similar to the one always worn by Lochiel. (ref: JP McLean p xx)

7th Laird – Allan – laird for 87?? Years – from 1592 to 1681

- Allan was born about 1582 – the son of Ewen, the 6th Laird
- As a five year old, in 1587, Allan was one of the hostages placed in the hands of MacDonald of Islay by Sir Lachlan Mor. (ref: JP McLean p xx & Gregory p234)
- He was only 10 years old when he became Laird.
- The massacre of the MacDonald clansmen in 1598, marked the point when the fortunes of the MacLean clan began to wane. [research : This needs to be checked.]
- Quote from JP McLean (ref :)
 - Allan was a minor at the time he succeeded his father, and his uncle Charlie acted as tutor and managed the estates.
 - Charles was Allan's tutor from 1592 to 1602 – from when Allan was 10 years old to 20 years old (ref: Wikipedia),
 - Charles was an unscrupulous man, tried to obtain the estate for himself, but did not succeed. (ref: Sinclair pxx)
 - Charles was a bold, daring, grasping, and unscrupulous man. During his administration, he not only lived extravagantly, but purposed to defraud his nephew out of his rights.
 - Charles was emboldened to this design by his marriage to a sister of Sir Lachlan Mor, who was relict to Hector MacLean, second laird of Coll.
 - Charles still held the estates after Allan had passed his minority, and the latter, listening to the advice of his mother's relations, the Stewarts of Appin, betook himself to the earl of Argyle for assistance, who, upon exacting a promise from Allan to resign the whole lands of Ardgour to him (which were held blench of the crown), agreed to restore him to the possession of the estate.
 - Charles was taken by a stratagem, by the laird of Appin, and made a prisoner in the island of Stalker, where he was detained till he consented that his nephew should enjoy his estate without molestation.
 - Through the influence of Sir Lachlan Mor, Charles obtained the lands of Inverscadell, Camuseven Craundulick, and Achidhaphubie. This was secured to Charles and his posterity by a feu right upon the payment yearly of the whole feu duty which Ardgour was to pay Argyle, which amounted to twenty-five merks Scots and cuidoich, or an entertainment for one night, which afterward was converted into the yearly payment of fifty merks Scots.
 - Because Charles served heir to Ardgour but his attempt to usurp his nephew was thwarted and to keep the peace he was granted lands at Inverscaddle, in the Barony of Ardgour, 1604. Thus he was the ancestor of the Macleans of Inverscaddle. (ref: Wikipedia)
 - So although Charles acquired extensive properties elsewhere, Allan retained Ardgour.
- 1648 – Battle of Inverlochy;
- Allan fought for James Graham, 1st Marquess of Montrose (ref : Ardgour Estate).
 - He was vanquished but Allen was pardoned.
 - There is a warrant still in the family of the marquis of Montrose, dated at Kirktown of Bothwell, September 1, 1645, empowering Allan and his posterity to hold again of his majesty as formerly, instead of Argyle, and promising to procure a charter from the king when the troubles were ended. This warrant having been shown James VII., that monarch, upon the forfeiture of Argyle, gave a charter for the barony of Ardgour to the Laird of Ardgour, dated at Whitehall, September 12, 1688, wherein honorable mention is made of the loyalty of the MacLeans in general and of the family of Ardgour in particular.
- Allan was an honest, plain man, meaning harm to no one, and readily believed anything told to him with becoming seriousness. He was nicknamed "Ma grobhartidh", because in discourse he would say, "Air lairnh ma grobhartidh," in order to shun all kinds of oaths. (ref: JP McLean p xxx)
- He married Catherine Cameron, daughter of Allan Cameron of Lochiel, Ailean nam Biodag (ref: Sinclair)
- He had 11 children (ref: JP McLean p xxx):-
 - John the elder- he became 8th Laird
 - Hector
 - Allan
 - Charles –

- Dr James MacLean (ref: notes 'MBD' which were found among the records of the previous Donald & Christina McLean Genealogical Council) indicates that this Charles (4th son of the 7th of Ardgour) might have links to the Lairdship of Blaich as follows:-
- We do not have a record of Charles' first wife, but his second wife was Margaret who was a sister of Hector Knox (she married secondly about 1660 to Capt John Finning of Glasgow). (ref: MBD)
- Charles and Margaret had a son, William, who was a Music Master (see William B in our document on the Lairds of Blaich) (ref: MBD)
- Apart from William, Charles had another son, John of Andertown, Glasgow (ref: MBD)
 - John had a son, Rev Dr John DD who married in 1797 to Anne Ballentyne and they had 7 sons – John, James, John, Patrick, William, Robert and Alexander. And 3 daughters. (ref: MBD)
- Charles died of wounds received at the Battle of Killiecrankie in 1689 (ref: MBD)
- Donald – he was killed at the battle of Inverkeithing in 1651
- Lachlan (Lachainn) Mor – Edwin McLean stated that this Lachlan, the 6th son of the 7th Laird, recommenced the Blaich family (ref: Edwin McLean) but other sources said that it was the 2nd son of the 8th Laird (see below)
- Lachlan Og – he was killed at the battle of Inverkeithing in 1651. He had married a daughter of Hector Maclean, Bishop of Argyle. Major-General Sir Joseph Maclean, was one of his descendants
- Ewen the elder
- Ewen the younger
- Archibald
- John the younger
- Mary - married to Charles, second son of Allan MacLean of Ardtoinish
- Marian, married to John MacLean of Totaranalcl
- Christiana.
- Allan died before 1681. He had lived to the age of one hundred and two years and retained his faculties to the last. He left his estate free of debt after liberally providing for his sons and daughters (ref: JP McLean p xx & Ffamily p61).

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8th Laird – John 'Crubach' MacLean – laird for 14 years – from 1681 to 1695??

- The next Laird must have taken over around xxxxxx
- John 'Crubach' was born about 1603.
- He was commonly called John 'Crubach' or Iain Cniback because of the way he walked. As a child he had a fall and he broke his leg and 'ever after halted a little upon it'. (ref: JP McLean p xx)
- His father was Allan, the 7th Laird, who died as a very old man in 1681 – so maybe Crubach became laird when he was about 78 years old. Maybe he began to take on some of the responsibilities of lairdship in the years before 1681 as his father became frail. And maybe Crubach had some restraints on his abilities in his 80s and thus needed assistance in discharging his lairdship duties – maybe his eldest son (Ewen 9th) took on some of these obligations – but note the Ewen died the year before Crubach.
- [research: Was Crubach born on Isle of Coll, and did he die on the Isle of Coll. If so, how much time did he spend in Ardgour? He became laird late in his life (when he was 78 year old) so he might have spent more time in Ardgour late in his life before returning 'home' to Coll to die? Was he an absentee landlord? Did he play an active and direct role on the affairs of Ardgour? If Crubach was born on the Isle of Coll, does this imply that his father (Allan 7th) was also on the Isle of Coll and was Allan an absentee landlord? If Crubach was living on Isle of Coll does this mean that his children were born there and so was his first son (Ewen 9th) an absentee landlord?]
- He was a bold, daring man (ref: JP McLean p xx)
- John's first marriage was to Anne, daughter of Angus Campbell, captain of Dunstaffnage, (ref: JP McLean p xx)
- John & Anne's children were (ref: JP McLean p xx):-
 - Ewen his heir – the 9th Laird of Ardgour
 - Lachlan –
 - Around 1680 Lachlan became the progenitor of the MacLeans of Blaich (ref: JP McLean p xxx) – ie the second Blaich family. We have designated Lachlan as the 8th Laird of Blaich.

- Edwin McLean said that Blaich was recommenced by Lachlan Mor the 6th son of Allan 7th Ardgour – but other sources (JP McLean & Sinclair & Alexander 13th p108) state that it was this Lachlan – the 2nd son of the John 8th Ardgour. (Alexander 13th is persuasive because he is a direct descendant and it was a transcription from a chart in his own handwriting.)
- Donald of Arighoulan (ref: FFamily p 62 & 108)
- Archibald.
- Allan – born about 1640, died 1709 (ref: Willowburn)
 - He MIGHT be the 3Xgrandfather of 'our' Donald.
 - As Allan was a younger brother of Lachlan, the 8th Laird of Blaich, we are closely connected with this new line of lairds but are not in a direct line of lairdship (which passes to the eldest son).
 - None-the-less, we can claim to be part of the second family of Blaich
 - As well as POSSIBLY directly related to the Ardgour lairds.
 - But the intervening genealogy has not been verified.
- RESEARCH NEEDED : We have John & Anne getting married about 1630 and having 5 children. The first, Lachlan Mor born 1614 and the last, Allan in 1640. This needs to be checked with Burke's Landed Gentry and other sources. We have Lachlan Mor being fathered by John, who was born about 1603, when John was only about 11 years old. And Anne bearing children for 26 years. Part of the confusion may be with incompatibility between different sources (eg Edwin MacLean has Lachlan Mor as the son of Allan the 7th Laird)
- John's second wife was Marian, daughter of Hector MacLean of Torloisk, relict of Hector MacLean of Coll (ref: JP McLean p xx & 13th Ardgour p62). Wikipeddia had Crubach marrying Mary MacLaine daughter of Lachlan 'Mor' MacLaine (11th Lochbuie) in 4 Jan 1665.
- John & Marian had one son – John
- 'Our' Hugh was born about 1690
- In 1691 the Campbells became dominant when Campbell Earl of Argyll gained possession of most of the MacLean estates, notably Mull. But Ardgour was distant enough from Mull not to be invaded. (ref : Ardgour Estate)
- John Crubach died in 1695 - He lived to the age of ninety-five, and was buried on the island of Coll. (ref: JP McLean p xx & 13th Ardgour p61)

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9th Laird – Ewen – laird for a very short time – from ??? to 1694

- Parents: John 'Crubach' MacLean & Anne Campbell
- It is not clear when Ewen became the laird because he died the year before his father (Crubach). Maybe he took on the role of Laird before his father died because his father was very old and probably frail.
- Ewen was an honest, plain, well-inclined man, and very much resembled his grandfather Allan. (ref; McLean – pxxx & 13th Ardgour p62)
- Ewen married Mary, daughter of Lachlan MacLean of Lochbuie, (ref: McLean xxxx & Ffamily p62) The Douglas family tree has Lahclan as Lachlan Poir MacLaine, 11th of Lochbuie.
- Mary & Ewen's children:-
 - Allan – the 10th Laird
 - Donald - married Janet, daughter of Lachlan MacLean of Calgary. (ref: McLean)
 - Charles - 1680-1756 who was Tacksman of Trislaig, Ardgour (ref: Willowburn)
 - John
 - Lachlan – He was a lieutenant in the Spanish service, and was killed in a duel with Cockpen in Madrid (ref: McLean xxx & Ffamily p 62)
- Ewen died in 1694

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10th Laird - Allan – laird for 63?? years – from 1694 to 1732

- Allan was born in 1668 and died 10 Nov 1756.
- Called Lach Allan (FFamily p62)
- He would have been 26 years old when he became laird after his father's death.
- John Gibson and Somerled MacMillan highlight extensive cattle stealing on the north side of Loch Eil in the 1680s and 1690s. (ref: Gibson p149) It had wide spread consequences for law and order within the community. We

have not come across any references about cattle stealing specifically in areas on the south of Loch Eil, but it can be assumed that it was not confined to the north.

- Allan married Anne, daughter of Sir Ewen Cameron of Lochiel. They had the following children (ref: JP McLean):-
 - Donald – He contributed to the mismanagement of the estate. He never married and he died in 1731 and thus, although the first son, never became Laird.
 - Ewen – The second son also died whilst comparatively young - he was on his way from Virginia, where he had been engaged in mercantile pursuits
 - John – John became the 11th Laird because his two older brothers died before their father.
 - Archibald – he died unmarried
 - Allan – He emigrated to Georgia, and died there.
 - James – He probably fought in Culloden on 1746 and later he was in Montgomery's Highlanders and was eventually killed by privateers in America on 1st June 1767. See appendix A.
 - Isabella – She married Donald MacLean of Brolas. Their son, Allan, became the 22nd Chief in Duart – see his section in our "Chiefs of Clan McLean".
 - Margaret – She married Angus MacLean of Kinlochaline
 - Mary – She married John, son of Charles MacLean of Kinlochaline
- Allan was extravagant, and a poor manager. He brought the estate to the brink of ruin. (ref: Sinclair)
- *"He had the misfortune of being the representative of the family in evil times, on which account he and his tribe in a more especial manner were persecuted for depredations committed not only by them, but for the deeds of other clans also. In 1685 an indemnity for their past offenses was procured by Torloisk at London, but as Torloisk died soon after his return, no one knew it was in his custody until afterward accidentally discovered. While it was dormant Ardgour was judged and obliged to borrow sums of money by mortgaging considerable portions of his estate to pay these debts, which, together with other additional burdens added and contracted through misfortunes and mismanagement on his own as well as his eldest son Donald's part, the estate sunk so low, that it was thought to be in a desperate condition"* (ref: JP McLean & Ffamily p62).
- *"When the affairs reached their lowest point, Hector MacLean of Coll, Donald MacLean of Torloisk, John MacLean, minister in Kilninan, and Archibald MacLean, minister of Killnicewen in the Ross of Mull, took upon themselves the management of the estate, and after passing through much trouble and changes, appointed Donald Cameron of Strontier superintendent under them. Cameron continued a few years, then went to Edinburgh under the name of settling some part of the affairs. He is known, or said to have gone on board a ship at Leith, and never was heard of afterward"*.(ref: JP McLean & Ffamily p63).
- The management of the estate fell back again into the hands of the trustees, and in a tottering condition continued for many years. (ref: JP McLean & Ffamily p63)
- After all these difficulties over so many years, shortly after the death of his oldest son, Donald, in 1731, Allan handed his estate over to his third son, John, reserving for himself only a small yearly portion. This was unusual, because normally the lairdship would only change on the death of the laird. So unusual, that, of the 18 lairds of Argour, this is the only incident where the change of lairdship has occurred while the previous laird is still living. Ironically, in this case, the father (Allan) outlived the son (John), so the father lived to see his lairdship pass to his son and then his grandson (Hugh) in his own lifetime.
- He died in 1756, in his eighty-eighth year. He was buried at Kilmore in Quinish.
- He died about 25 years after handing over to John to be 11th Laird. In fact he outlived John (so outlived his three eldest sons) and thus saw his grandson Hugh to be the 12th Laird. It was usual that the mantle would pass to their eldest son after the old laird died, so he would never see the next laird – however Allan lived to see the next two lairds.

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11th Laird – John – laird for 8 years – from 1731 to 1739

- John, the son of Allan the 10th Laird, was born 1700 and died 2 Mar 1739.
- John became laird when his father made over the estate over to him around 1732 - rather than after the death of the father. John was the third son, but was the eldest living son because his older brothers had already died.
- John continued the management of the estate under the trusteeship which had been set up many decades previously. (ref: JP McLean)
- He married Marjory daughter of Allan MacLachlan of Corry, and they had two sons and a daughter (ref: JP McLean):-

- Hugh – He became the 12th Laird.
- Hector – He died young in Glasgow.
- Margaret – She died young in Glasgow.
- He died prematurely, aged 38 years, in Mull in March 1739 (Ffamily p 63). This was seventeen years before his father. He was succeeded by his toddler son Hugh.
- He was buried in Killmore in Quinish (Ffamily p63)
- After John died, Marjory went to Glasgow for the children’s education, but the two youngest, Hector and Margaret, died in Glasgow (Ffamily p63).

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12th Laird - Hugh – laird for 29 years – from 1739 to 1768 – including the Jacobite Rising in 1745.

- Hugh was born in 1736. His parents were Marjory and John, the 11th Laird.
- Hugh was just a toddler when he became the laird on the death of his father.
- *“Together with his brother and sister, he was taken by his mother to Glasgow, where the sister and younger brother died. Hugh was left in Glasgow under the care of Lachlan MacLean, a merchant, and Doctor Hector MacLean of Grulin, both living in that city”* (ref: JP McLean 13th Ardgour p64).
- John Gibson highlighted extensive cattle stealing on the north side of Loch Eil in the 1730s and 1740s. (ref: Gibson p152&153). This was a reoccurrence of the problem more than 40 years previously. There are no references to this being a problem south of Loch Eil.
- Uprising:-
 - See a separate document ‘Clan McLean in the Jacobian Uprising’
 - Hugh was just 9 years old at the time of the Jacobite uprising.
 - The defeat at Cullodin led to brutal reprisals against Highlanders but Ardgour was not so directly impacted.
 - In these times, the threats to the estate were more from internal management rather than English reprisals.
 - We have the name of one Ardgour McLean who fought at Culloden – James. It is probably the James who was the uncle of Hugh the 12th Laird. James was the brother of Hugh’s father, John, the 11th laird. James and John were sons of Allan, the 10th Laird. See appendix A.
- *“The affairs of the estate being neglected and in manner quite sunk the administration fell into the hands of Hector MacLean of Torloisk, who got to his assistance Donald Campbell of Airds, John Campbell of Clahombie, James McLean uncle to the minor, Lachlan MacLean, merchant in Glasgow, and Dr Maclean of Gruline. By the indefatigable industry and attention of Torloisk, with the assistance of the above gentlemen, the estate was recovered from the very brink of ruin”* (13th Ardgour p64)
- The estate fell into a bad condition through the interference by his mother’s relatives as the MacLachlans attempted to gain possession of it. (ref: JP McLean) Things began to turn around *“when Hector MacLean of Torloisk, who was bred to the law, took the management into his own hands. He called to his assistance Colin Campbell of Clachombie, Donald Campbell of Airds, James MacLean, uncle to the minor, Doctor Hector MacLean of Grulin, and Lachlan MacLean, merchant in Glasgow. By the vigilance, prudence, and faithful management and the indefatigable pains of Hector MacLean, with the joint assistance and counsel of the above named gentlemen, the estate of Ardgour was recovered from the very brink of ruin”* (ref: JP McLean). Hugh’s personal role in any of this is not known and we do not know whether he was still away in Glasgow or when he was actually in Ardgour to play a more direct role.
- In 1751, when Hugh was a teenager, and probably some time before, Hugh McLean of Ardgour is described as *“owning Blaich and Duiskey as well as many other neighbouring areas, including salmon fisheries”* (ref: p 29 of “Directory of Land Ownership in Scotland” edited by Loretta R Timperley – Scottish Record Society, new series 5, produced in 1976) .
- The line of lairds of Blaich had probably ceased by this time. There is an indication that William became Laird of Blaich in 1858, however Hugh already owned the properties in Blaich and Duiskey so the status and role of William is unclear.
- At some stage Hugh was a captain in the first regiment of fencibles of Argyll which was raised in 1759.
- In 1763, Hugh married Elizabeth, daughter of Alexander Houston of Jordan Hill via Glasgow (ref: Burke).
- Elizabeth was the first non-gael in many generations to marry an Ardgour McLean (ref: Gibson p 185)

- Jan Harper's family history, 'The McPhee Family', 1889, ISBN 0 7316 7278 X, mentions on page 4, a Hugh McLean. He married an unnamed McPhee and they had two children (no names) – one a female and the other, a male blacksmith. No details are given except that he had a brother Donald McPhee, farmer, who married Mary McKenzie and they had 4 children around 1778 to 1782. These birth years indicate that Hugh might have been born in the mid 1700s.. This Hugh is unlikely to be the same person as the 12th laird.
- Hugh and Elizabeth had the following children:-
 - Alexander: He was born in 1764 and became the 13th Laird
 - Anna: She married Donald MacLean of Kingerloch. Born 13th Nov 1765 and died April 1860 in Edinburgh (ref: Ffamily p108).
- At some stage Hugh became more directly involved when he returned from Glasgow and arranged for the construction of Ardgour House in 1765. So, it seems that the estate had now become strong enough to support such an undertaking.
- Hugh died in 8 September 1768 at the age of 30 years. His premature death occurred not long after his marriage. Indeed his last five years must have been eventful with the marriage and the birth of the two children while Hugh was arranging the building of Ardgour house, and probable relocation of the family from Glasgow to Ardgour.
- Elizabeth later married John Campbell who was a brother of Sir Islay Campbell, Bart of Succoth.

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13th Laird – Alexander – laird for 87 years – from 1768 to 1855

- Numeration: Ffamily (p108) uses a different numeration with John as 7th, then Ewen 8th, Allan 9th, John 10th, Hugh 11th and Alexander 12th. This is a transcription of a chart in the handwriting of Alexander 1764-1855 (ref: Ffamily p108) so it is significant that this Alexander designated himself as the 12th whereas we will continue to refer to him as 13th as does JP MacLean and other scholars. So following from this, we wonder (a) Which of our Lairds was left out by Alexander (1764)? – maybe the 3rd because of many questions about that laird, or the 5th because we have so little information him, (b) Does the current laird Robin count himself as 17th rather than 18th as we are applying?
- We will dwell a little more on this laird because:-
 - Alexander was the laird for the whole time that our Donald was in the area (from his birth in 1779 to migration in 1837). he was the laird and landlord controlling many estates – including Duisky which Donald was leasing.
 - Donald would have been very much aware of Alexander because he was such a prominent local figure. Alexander would have known at least a little about Donald because of Duisky and the population was small. We have no direct evidence that they had much personal contact with each other – they might never have met.
 - He was Donald's land-lord
 - He was an active and influential laird – reforming the crofting system etc
 - There is a great deal of information about him – especially the McLean papers kept by NAS.
- Alexander was born 16 Apr 1764
- His parents were Elizabeth and Hugh the 12th Laird.
- He was just 4 years old when he became the laird.
- Most scholars (which ones??) referred to this laird as the 13th Laird, however:-
 - This laird, in his own had writing referred to himself as the 12th (Ffamily p108) and account of the Ardgour lairds the Ardgour section in the book numbers the Ardgour lairds as follows – 1=1, 2=2, 3=excluded, 4=3, 5=4, 6=5. 7=6, 8=7, 9=8, 10=9, 11=10, 12=11, 13=12.
 - Seneachie (p xxxx) referred to him as the 15th. This might not have been a slip of the pen by Seneachie – he used this number several times and he was a serious scholar who was very familiar with the numbering of lairds and chiefs. He was writing in 1836 and he lived contemporaneously with this Alexander and may have even known him personally – he certainly knew Alexander's son, Charles very well. So it seems that the Alexander was known as the 15th at the time. So who are the other 'missing' lairds.
 - Maybe, to some extent, the numbering might be a construct of scholars – for example in order to describe what was happening over the generations, we have devised the numbering of the second family of Blaich – the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th & 12th lairds of Blaich are numbers devised by ourselves.
- 'He was a gaelic speaker, although his mother was a non-gael. (ref: Gibson, p185)
- Military service:-

- In 1780, as a sixteen year old, he entered the army as an ensign in the 2nd battalion of The Royal Dragoons (The Royals). He was promoted to a lieutenancy in the same corps. (ref: Wikipedia)
- In 1787 he went into the 63rd Regiment (later the 63rd (West Suffolk) Regiment of Foot).
- In 1789 he obtained the rank of captain and then major in the Eighth Regiment of Light Dragoons (later the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars).
- Subsequently he joined the third regiment of local militia of the county of Argyle where he held the rank of lieutenant-colonel.
- After leaving the regular service, he became a captain in the Hopetoun Fencibles (7th regiment of fencibles) sometime between 2 February 1793 to 1799 under James, the 3rd Earl of Hopetoun (was this his brother-in law?).
- On 29th May 1795, he was appointed Major in the Fencible cavalry of the Lothian (East and West) Regiment.
- He was subsequently appointed, circa 1811, lieutenant-colonel of the third regiment of local militia of the county of Argyle, the command of which he held until the regiment was disbanded.
- Deputy-lieutenant for the counties of Argyll and Haddington (ref: Burke)
- *"He was a splendid horseman and the most accomplished and daring rider in the Royal Caledonian Hunt."* Robert Burns was a member of this hunt club, contemporarily, so they might have known each other.
- In 1791 Rev Fraser reported that *"Capt McLean of Ardgour had 1000 acres of firs, oak and other species of trees. These woods, in many places, would be very valuable. Here, however, they are not, being far from the shore, and the roads to them extremely bad"* (ref p 423). Frazer also noted that Mr McLean of Ardgour charged for people to fish in his waters.
- In 1792, Rev Fraser reported redish granite, in the farm of Sallanchan, belonging to Captain McLean of Ardgour' (p 420).
- After leaving the military Alexander spent more time in Ardgour and took a more active role in the management of the estates. He had a second home in Tranent (ref: Gibson, p 183) which is east of Edinburgh, so it is not clear how much time in spent actually in Ardgour and indeed whether he visited Blaich and Duiskey.
- Under Alexander, the villagers moved out of the glens onto crofts created from the farms on the raised beaches of the Loch-side. Alexander declared to them that *"I had an aversion to you leaving your native country"*. (ref: Ardgour Estate)
- Alexander was much more than a land-lord. He reformed the farming system – introduced crofts in the early 1800s (after he had left active military service and was now spending more time in Ardgour). Crofters selected their own members to be shepherds for a shared flock, rather than each having his own mark and caring for his own sheep separately. (ref: McLean papers, bundle 12, p 34)
- In June 1805 he was appointed Receiver General of Landrents, Paymaster of the Civil Establishment and Receiver General of the land tax, and assessed taxes in Scotland. This was apparently under the patronage of John, 2nd Earl of Hopeton, his brother-in-law, on a salary of £1,500. Just a year later, in June 1806, he was succeeded by Sir William A. Cunynghame of Milncraig (formerly of Livingston), Bart.
- *"Inferring from a general description of the population make-up of Ardgour that is taken from a speech made by Alexander MacLean himself on 31st August 1850 which contains his reminiscences back to 1780, it appears that a Gaelic cattle economy was allowed to continue relatively unmanaged in Ardgour, people repeatedly subdividing farmland, until the French Revolutionary War. Improving measures on the neighbouring Cameron forfeited estate (till 1784), basically evicting people, must have been well known. In 1810 Maclean was either just in or just about to begin service as lieutenant-colonel on the Argyll Militia. In 1810 he gave up his Stevenson Houser near Haddington and moved to Keith House in Tranent near Edinburgh which he leased from his wife's half-brother, James Hope, third Earl of Hopetown (1741-1816). In 1812 he had two sons in Harrow."* papers (ref: Gibson p 164):
- In 1825, Alexander reconstructed Ardgour House after it was damaged by fire [Question – Almost destroyed?]
- He gifted the site of Ardgour Church in 1826, which is still the centre of local worship. It was built by Thomas Telford in 1829, one of forty-two in the Highlands which were part of a Parliamentary Project for The Church of Scotland.
- Alexander married Lady Margaret Hope. She was the eldest daughter of John Hope, second Earl of Hopetoun. Her mother was Lady Elizabeth who was the daughter of Alexander, 5th Earl of Leven and Melville. Alexander and Margaret were married in 1795. They had twelve sons and two daughters (ref: Burke, Sinclair & Wikipedia):-
 - Hugh
 - He died in infancy.
 - John Hugh

- He was educated at the Scottish ba
- Unmarried
- Died in Rome in 1826.
- Archibald
 - Served as a naval officer; severely wounded; captured by the American war vessel, Prince de Neufchatel; and in 1822, promoted to the rank and commander of HMS Blossom of twenty-six guns.
 - Unmarried.
 - He died in Edinburgh in 1832
- Alexander
 - Heir and successor (see below).
- Henry Dundas
 - Of Lazonby Hall, Cumberland
 - Entered the army, became a of Lieut Col, captain major in 1832, and at different periods was resident governor of Ithaca, Cephalonia, Santa Maura, and Lante
 - JP for County of Cumberland
 - High-sherriff in Cumberland in 1848
 - Married Eleanor who was daughter of Rev J Darre Carlyle who was chancellor of Carlisle and claimant of the title of Lord Carlyle, of Torthorwald
 - Died in 1863.
- James Charles
 - He entered the military service of the East India Company
 - He married Jane, the daughter of Major Hall (who was also in El Co's service).
 - He died of fever at Calcutta in 1829.
- Charles Hope
 - He was educated for the English bar, barrister
 - Married Caroline Elizabeth who was the daughter of C Beckford, Long Esq.
 - The Gentleman's Magazine (ref: 1838 p505). points out that Charles gave a 'pecuniary advance' for the publication 'An historical and genealogical account of the Clan MacLean - from its first settlement at Castle Duart in the Isle of Mull, to the present period' by a Senearchie. The magazine describes him as Charles Hope Maclean Esq MA was of Middle Temple, barrister-at-law third surviving son of Alexander 15th (sic) laird of Ardgour.
 - *"In 1838 appeared the first published history of the Clan MacLean, published at the expense of Charles Hope MacLean of Ardgour [who] ... was persuaded into its publication by the author and against the will of his father"* (LJ MacLean, p390).
 - He died in 1839.
- Elizabeth Margaret – she might have lived to be over 85 years old (implied from JP McLean, p268).
- Charlotte Margaret
 - She did not marry
 - Died in 1824.
- Thomas
 - He entered the East India Company's service
 - Died in 1840.
- William
 - Captain in the Royal Navy
 - Married Elizabeth Mary who was daughter of T M Charter Esq.
 - He changed his name to Gunston before his patronymic in compliance with the will of his wife's maternal uncle, Sir Thomas Gunston. Of Upcott House, Somerset.
 - Died in 1851.
- George
 - He became a colonel in the Royal artillery
 - In 1842, he married Amelia who was a daughter of Sir Colin Campbell, GCB, late governor of Ceylon.
- Robert
 - Married - details not known
 - Died in 1835.

- Peter
 - He served in the Royal artillery and rose to the rank of colonel then Major-General.
 - He married Elizabeth, a daughter of Lieutenant General Sir Henry Somerset and great-granddaughter of Henry 5th Duke of Beaufort.
 - Peter and Elizabeth had four sons and three daughters.
- Lady Margaret died 16 September 1831.
- 1850 – reflecting back over precious decades: From MacLean papers – bundle 12, Printed letter, Colonel Maclean of Ardgour to his crofters, Ardgour House, 31st August 1850. *"My Friends, Our connection existed before crofting was known. Near seventy years ago I found you and your forefathers located in the glens and on different farms upon the estate, some holding a fourth, some and eighth, and many as low as a sixteenth share of the farm- the arable land divided into as many parts, and lots drawn for it every season, so that no man should sow the same land two years following. This pernicious system was more injurious to the tenant than to the landlord, but greatly so to both; ten years afterwards I found you all in the same predicament. I was then a Captain of Dragoons, and allowed my military service to prevail over duties both more important both to you and to myself, and things remained as they were. At the conclusion of the first French war, when I came more among you, I perceived it was incumbent upon me to rescue you and myself from so pernicious a system, and dividing the farms along the shores into separate holdings appeared to be the most attainable and most conducive to the interest of both parties. At that period large emigration to America was going on from the neighbouring countries, and many of you said, if you were removed from your holdings, you would emigrate also. I had an aversion to any of you leaving your native country, and endeavoured to show you the benefits of what I conceived to be a better system, advantageous to both you and me. With this impression, I had four farms upon the shores of Locheil surveyed and sub-divided into allotments, each consisting of some arable, or land easily improved into arable- with each allotment the pasture of four cows, their followers, and a certain number of sheep. The value of kelp at that period was about its height; but, as encouragement to improve the soil, I gave it up to the occupiers, and to this day yourselves are the best judges of its value. You could not at once see all the advantages of the plan. The crofting system was then hardly known: I did not press you, and gave you time to consider. A year or two elapsed before a large majority agreed to make a trial. At length, in 1801, the allotments were surveyed, marked out, and to be taken possession of at Whitsunday 1802. The rent of the farms was fixed according to the rents of the day, and three of your number, selected by yourselves, accompanied by the surveyor and the factor, apportioned the amount upon each croft separately. The numbers were then put into a bonnet and drawn out by one of yourselves- the Hill Rent was given gratis for three years, when stone houses, head and side dykes were to be finished- restrictions were few, intended for mutual advantage, but were strictly to be complied with- tenure, based on good conduct, industrial and frugal habits, quiet neighbours, obedient to the laws of our country. Assurance was given that no alterations should be made for nine years, and at the end of that period your own industrial conduct, with one exception, rendered any change uncalled for. Years rolled on before we discovered an error in our practice, but which was easily remedied and acquiesced in by all: I allude to every man having his sheep on his own mark and his own management, fraught with almost daily disturbance to the flock. The whole sheep of the farm were then put together under one mark and one shepherd, under the control of three chosen men of your number. The change has worked well, and all, I believe, are satisfied. Sometime ago I offered you leases: your reply was, What was to be the use of them? "Had any man been removed unless for bad conduct, or had any man's rent been raised for forty-eight years? What good then would a lease be to us?" I agree that, when mutual confidence exists, you are better without a lease. I know the absence of it has saved many of you from bad and indolent habits, and that my watchfulness preserved many of you from mischief. I shall now close this Address, by thanking you most fervently for your general good conduct and persevering industry, the beneficial results of which are now apparent in your present condition- your crofts improved, your rents paid. At this date, the whole arrears are under eight per cent- one-half of which is due by five individuals. All I have to add it, persevere in your present course;- while I live, mine to you shall not be changed, and before I go hence my endeavour shall be to insure to you support in your present possessions. On one point only have you disappointed me- the improvement and cleanliness of your dwelling-houses. For this you have facilities which few crofters in the West Highlands possess. You get small timber for houses and offices gratis, almost for the asking; and when a man leaves his croft, from whatever cause, he receives two-thirds of the value of the house and offices, valued by the verdict of three sworn burleymen."*
- Publications:-
 - The MacLean papers, held by the NAS is 140? pages of correspondence to and from the 13th – mostly about the administration of his properties. It includes the address to his crofters in 1850 – as above.
 - 1838: The clan history by a Seneachie was published at the expense of a son of 13th, Charles Hope. Apparently this was against the will of the 13th (LJ MacLean, p390).

- 1872: 17 years after Alexander 13th died, his son, the 14th, published 'A Breif Genealogical Account of the Ffamily of MacLean'. Alexander 13th added his family tree but it is not certain whether or not he wrote any of the rest of this book. See appendix B in 'Setting the Scene'
- Alexander became blind several years before his death.
- Most members of Alexander's family died before him -Hugh in infancy, Charlotte in 1824, John in 1826, James in 1829, , wife Margaret in 1831, .Archibald in 1832, Robert in 1835, Charles in 1839, Thomas in 1840 and William in 1851
- He died on 8 Sep 1855 – at the age of 91 years
- He was buried in Cill Mhoadain Graveyard, Ardgour alongside his wife. (ref: Wikipedia). The inscription of grave #72: "Alexander Maclean 13th Laird died 8 September 1855 aged 91 years and Lady Margaret Maclean, his wife, 3rd daughter of John, 2nd Earl of Hopetoun. Died 16 September 1831 aged 59 years." (ref : surveyed in 1996 by Iain Thornber: Knock House: Morvern: By Oban: Argyll: PA34 5UU)

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14th Laird – Alexander – laird for 17 years - from 1855 to 1872

- His parents were Margaret and Alexander 13th Laird
- He was born 1 Mar (or Feb) 1799
- On February 14, 1833 Alexander married Helen-Jane-Hamilton, eldest daughter of Major-General Sir John Dalrymple of North Berwick. Her mother was Charlotte who was the daughter Sir Warrender. They had two sons (ref: Sinclair p xx):-
 - Alexander-Thomas – He was born in Madras. He became the 15th Laird
 - John Dalrymple – He was born in Bengal, May 15, 1836, now of Lazenby, Cumberland.
- Alexander entered the service of the East India Company and became collector of the Jaghire.
- In 1855, at the age of 56 years, on the death of his father, being the oldest living male heir, he inherited the estates.
- His first major action as laird was the sale of a large part of the Ardgour estate after his father's death – the northern portion of the estate was sold as Conaglen to the Earl of Morton. It is not known why he sold it, but maybe there were financial issues which had been developing in the later years of his father's time. Or maybe his personal connections with Ardgour were not strong – he might have been still living in India.
- The northern section was sold in 1858 (ref: Robertson p4)
- In 1872, just before he died, this Alexander arranged for 25 copies to be printed of 'A breif genealogical account of the ffamily of McLean from its first settlement in the Island of Mull and parts adjacent'. At least part of it was in the handwriting of his father 13th (JP Maclean p 391). See appendix B in 'Setting the Scene'.
- Alexander died 28 Nov 1872 – aged 73 years. He died in Ardgour House (ref: chart by Alexander 13th)
- Inscription of grave #72 at Cill Mhaodain Graveyard, Ardgour: "Alexander Maclean 14th Laird of Ardgour died 28 November 1872 aged 73 years and Helen Jane, his wife, eldest daughter of Sir J Dalrymple, 5th Baronet of North Berwick. Died 4th January 1882, aged 74 years." (ref : surveyed in 1996 by Iain Thornber: Knock House: Morvern: By Oban: Argyll: PA34 5UU)

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15th Laird - Alexander Thomas – laird for 18 years – from 1872 to 1890

- He was born 1 Apr 1835, Madras, India. His parents were Helen-Jane-Hamilton and Alexander the 14th Liard of Ardgour
- He was educated at Harrow
- He entered the East India Company's civil service in Bengal in 1857
- Became judge of the high court of judicature at Fort William, which he filled with signal ability and impartiality, and retired with honors in 1884
- In 1875, he was married to Selina Philippa, daughter of William S. Dicken, Esq., and had issue:-
 - Catherine Helen Dalrymple, born 1878
 - Margaret, born 1879
 - Alexander John Hew, born 1880
 - Flora, born 1884

- Alexander Thomas MacLean, called Ardgour, after his estate
- In 1881 he wrote to JP MacLean referring to the 13th Laird's positive dealings with crofters in the first half of the 1880s (in the 13th letter in 1850 quoted above).
- *"He had naturally a judicial turn of mind. He readily weighs justice, and is as willing to obey its demands as he is anxious that others should be under its laws. He has a keen sense of right and wrong, but is naturally swayed by a generous disposition. His tendency is to forgive and forget the wrongs done by others."*
- *"He is rather tall and slender, and has the student's stoop, while his face would indicate one who was thoughtful and given to literary pursuits. He is much interested in the welfare of his crofters and tenants, and when needy, assists them with a benevolent hand."*
- In 1889, JP McLean stated, *"What was the original extent of the Ardgour possessions, I have no means of knowing, but probably the same as to-day, which is fifty thousand acres"* (ref: JP McLean p272).
- Died 14 Dec 1890
- Inscription of grave #72 at Cill Mhaodain Graveyard, Ardgour: *"Alexander Thomas Maclean 15th Laird who passed away in his sleep 14 December 1890 in his 56th year. Also of his wife, Selina Phillipa Dicken, who died 12 March 1909 and was laid her beside him. And of their eldest daughter Catherine Hellen Dalrymple died 12 February 1947."* (ref : surveyed in 1996 by Iain Thornber: Knock House: Morvern: By Oban: Argyll: PA34 5UU)

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16th Laird - Alexander John Hew Maclean – laird for 40 years - from 1890 to 1930

- Born 1880 and died in 1930
- His parents were Alexander Thomas MacLean (15th Laird) and Selina Phillipa (ref: Sinclair p315)
- J.P. for Argyllshire,
- Presumably he became laird when his father died in 1890. At that time, he was just 10 years old so someone would have acted on his behalf for many years.
- Presumably, he continued as laird until his death in 1930 – ie 40 years in this role.
- Major Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders
- He is entered on Peerage (A genealogical survey of the peerage of Britain as well as the royal families of Europe) – ref: person page – 3623, M, #36226
- On 20 July 1909, the coat of arms were matriculated in name of Alexander John Hew Maclean as follows:- *"Quarterly, first, Argent, a lion rampant, Gules, armed and langued Azure; second, Azure, a castle triple-towered Argent, masoned Sable, windows portcullis and flags Gules ; third, Or, a dexter hand couped fesswise Gules holding a cross crosslet fitchée Azure ; fourth, Or, a galley, sails furled, oars in saltire Sable, flagged Gules, in a sea in base Vert a salmon Argent. Above the shield is placed a helmet befitting his degree with a Mantling Gules doubled Argent, and on a Wreath of his Liveries is set for Crest a branch of laurel and cypress in saltire surmounted of a battle-axe in pale, all proper and in an Escrol over the same the motto 'Altera Merces'"* (ref: Wikipedia).
- Spouse : Hon. Muriel Annette Burns, daughter of James Cleland Burns, 3rd Baron Inverclyde of Castle Wemyss and Charlotte Mary Emily Nugent-Dunbar, on 5 September 1918.
- Children of Alexander and Muriel – 5 girls and no boys (re: Wikipedia):-
 1. Catriona Louisa Maclean, 17th of Ardgour b. 27 Aug 1919, d. 16 Mar 1998 – who became 17th Laird
 2. Anne Maclean b. 2 Jun 1921, d. 1 May 1981
 3. Margaret Beryl Maclean b. 20 Jul 1923
 4. Heather Joan MacLean b. 22 Jan 1926, d. 1985
 5. Elizabeth Muriel Philippa Maclean b. 10 Jun 1927, d. 28 Dec 2009 – her son, Robin, became the 18th Laird
- Died on 27 May 1930 (50 yrs old)
- Burial : Inscription of grave #73 at Cill Mhaodain Graveyard, Ardgour: *"Alexander John Hew Maclean 16th Laird born 1880 died 1930. His wife Muriel Burns, daughter of 3rd Baron Inverclyde. Born 1893 died 1969."* (ref : surveyed in 1996 by Iain Thornber: Knock House: Morvern: By Oban: Argyll: PA34 5UU)



Lt Col Alexander Maclean - stalking in 1920s Ardgour - photo from Fiona Maclean, p53 in 'Around Lochaber' [research: Permission required – also check that this is a photo of the 16th Laird]

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17th Laird - Catriona Louisa – laird for 55 years - from 1930 to 1988

- Born 27 Aug 1919
- Her father, the 16th Laird, Alexander-John Hew had no sons, so Catriona, his eldest daughter, became the 17th Laird. He died in 1930, so she became laird when she was just 10 years old.
- Comments: We do not know what machinations resulted in her become the laird. Because she was such a young child, it must have been others who negotiated the controversial path to appointing the first female laird. Her father (and others around him), would have been well aware that the inheritance would be an issue because he had 5 daughters and no sons. He might have put some plans in place or, because he died at 50 (we do not know whether this was sudden or if his death was anticipated) he might not have finalized his succession planning. Maybe his wife, Muriel masterminded the transition.
- Because Catriona was so young when she became laird, she would have had someone to assist her in this role – maybe her mother, Muriel who lived for 39 years after the 16th had died.
- She was the first woman Laird – unthinkable in earlier times.
- For several years, culminating in 1941, Henry Hugh Maclean disputed Catriona's right to the coat of arms of Maclean of Ardgour – in effect whether she was entitled to be the laird. The case was dealt with through the Court of Sessions of the Lyon King of Arms (ref: <https://lordlyon.wordpress.com/documents/court-cases/maclean-of-ardgour-v-maclean>). Henry was a second cousin of Alexander John Hew Maclean (16th Laird), as per a genealogical tree (no. 36) which was lodged as an exhibit with the court.
 - Research: It would be useful to obtain a copy of the genealogical tree 36.
- Catriona was not married and did not have any children.
- She lived at Ardgour House. At the time the estate was divided into Home Farm, two leased farms, a scattering of ten worker's cottages and two Dower House - with one of her sisters living in one of these and the other was run as bed & breakfast tourist accommodation.
- In 1995, the BRB (p4) states that "*Today the 45,000 acre estate Ardgour is owned by Miss Catriona MacLean an elderly spinster who lives in her three storey home in a style similar to Clunies Ross of Cocas Keeling.*" However Catriona had died 7 years before the BRB was published so this quote must have been taken from an earlier source.
- Catriona, the 17th Laird, had no children. It is not known what consideration she had given to succession. No doubt this would have been an issue for intense debate within the family and others. Everyone would have remembered the long court battle which was waged up to 1941 when Henry Hugh MacLean, in effect contested Catriona's right to be Laird. Were there plans in place?
- She died in March 1988 at the age of 69 years.
- Burial: Inscription of grave #73 at Cill Mhaodain Graveyard, Ardgour, on the grave of Alexander John Hew Maclean and Muriel Burns: "Their loving daughter Catriona Louise Maclean of Ardgour. Born 1919 died 1988." (ref : surveyed in 1996 by Iain Thornber: Knock House: Morvern: By Oban: Argyll: PA34 5UU)

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18th Laird – Robin – laird for 28 years so far - from 1988 until the present – he is currently 65 years old.

- Robin was born 12 Oct 1952, the son of Elizabeth Muriel Phillipa Maclean, herself the daughter of Alexander, 16th of Ardgour. His father was xxx???xxx.
- He became the 18th Laird in 1988 after the death of Catriona. We do not know if Catriona had made succession plans or whether there was some confusion for a while until it was resolved.
- Robin was the son of Catriona's youngest sister, Elizabeth – ie Robin is the nephew of Catriona.
- Did he become laird by virtue of Catriona leaving the property to Robin in her will? If this was the case, she did have a succession plan.
- His surname at birth was Torrie which he changed to MacLean
- He is sometimes styled as Chieftain of Ardgour. There are currently six McLean Chieftains – as distinct from one Chief who is Sir Lachlan Hector Charles MacLean of Duart.
- Robin is living at Sallachan farm, not far from Ardgour House. So that mean that Sallachan is now the 'seat' of the McLeans of Ardgour?
- Ardgour House was part of the large Ardgour Estate. The House was the seat of the McLeans for many centuries until it was sold in 1996 but the rest of the estate is still in McLean hands. The sale would have been arranged by Robin and this might have been a difficult decision, no doubt forced upon him. However, at least the McLeans have retained a major presence in the area.
- The seat of the McLeans: The lairds of Ardgour lived in Ardgour House for most of the past six centuries. Since the late 1990s when the House was sold, and possibly before that, the current laird has lived at Sallachan Farm.
- Robin's wife is Fiona. History is one of her main interests, and she is a Trustee of the West Highland Museum, Fort William. She is also deeply involved in the life of the village in which she lives. She wrote 'Death or Victory – Tales of Clan MacLean'
- Robin and Fiona have four children.



This photo was taken in 2005

– permission required from www.maclean.org or Robin & Fiona

- Research: The extent of land under Robin's control is not known.

Future lairds

- Presumedly the next laird, the 19th, will be one of Robin and Fiona's four children.
- The role and status of the Laird has changed over the years – depending on the age at ascension, the circumstances of the time, the financial strength of the estate, and the personalities involved. The estate is much smaller (but none-the-less still substantial) and society has changed, so we would expect that the authority of the laird will continue to change.

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Connections between Ardgour and Duart and Blaich

In this document, we are assembling information information about the Lairds of Ardgour and are compiling a separate document about the chiefs of Duart.

- What connections did Donald 'The Hunter' (born c1411) have with Duart? His father was Lachlan Bronneach MacLean who was a Duart chief.
- Interactions between the lines. In which battles did they particate together? At what points do the Ardgour story and the Duart story intersect?
- An example: Regarding the 10th Laird of Ardgour:-
 - In 1685 he was judged and obliged to pay large debts incurred by MacLean of Torloisk.
 - Hector MacLean of Coll (with others) assisted the 10th Laird to manage the Ardgour estate
 - Allan, the son of the 10th Laird's daughter Isabella, (ie the grandson of the 10th) became the 22nd Chief in Duart. Allan's ascendancy to chieftdom did not follow the usual practice of being the eldest son of the previous chief – that is, Allan's father, Donald MacLean of Brolos was not the previous chief and Allan might not have been eldest son [research: check if he was the eldest son or not]. See the comments about Allan in the document on the Duart line.
- More examples:-
 - Ewen the 9th Laird of Ardgour married Mary who was the daughter of Lachlan Moir Maclaine, the 11th of Lochbuie
- There are many scholastic works about the Duart but they hardly mention Ardgour.
- Ardgour has generally been more peaceful, less eventful, and perhaps less numerous than the other branches and thus has not been featured prominently in general histories of the Clan MacLean.
- Of the three main branches of the MacLeans, those of Coll and those of Lochbuy have a place in the history of Duart because of disputes about whether or not Duarts are superior. On the other hand, the third branch, those of Ardgour, we understand have always acknowledged that Duarts are the chiefs of all the MacLeans.

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Connections between Ardgour and Blaich

In a separate document on the lairds of Blaich we xxxxxxx

What connections were there between the Lairds of Ardgour and the Lairds of Blaich?

- Progenitor of the first family
- Progenitor of the second family

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Questions remain (further research):-

- Decline : Was there a sudden decline in McLean dominance of the area – or just a steady decline? Was it evenly spread or are there some enduring strongholds.
- Today – What remains of all this now?

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References

See '[Setting the Scene](#)'

Ffamily = 'A Breif History of the Maclean Ffamily' by an unknown author.

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APPENDIX A

James Maclean (xxx to XXX) Fought in Culloden

James McLean was a younger brother of Hugh – they were both the sons of the 11th Laird.

We have two quotes about James:-

- In describing the MacLeans' role in Culloden, McCracken stated: "*James, the son of Old Maclean of Ardgour, somehow survived the charge and secretly stole back to Ardgour. He died fifteen years later at sea fighting for the Duke of Cumberland, nephew, King George III.*" (ref: Sword Forum International, Alexander McCracken 28th Feb 2002)
- In listing the children of Allan the 10th Laird, JP McLean stated that Allan's sixth child "*was a lieutenant in Montgomery's Highlanders, and was killed at sea in an action with a privateer on June 1, 1767*" (ref: JP McLean, pxx).

Who was James?: Are these quotes referring to the same person?

- The quotes contradict each other in some details, but they broadly correspond with other information we have gathered. It is unfortunate that McCracken and JP McLean did not specify where they got their information from.
- The sea battle in 1761: The sea battle which McCracken refers to would have been in 1746+15=1761. We could not find any references to a battle of any kind in the years 1756 to 1766 – none in Scotland, none on sea or land, and none involving the Duke of Cumberland. It was an unusually peaceful period following the decisive battle of Culloden. King George III began his long reign in 1760 (ie well after Culloden) and the Duke of Cumberland died in 1765.
- The sea battle in 1767: At first reading of McLean's quote it appears that he is ascertaining that James was killed in 1767 in a sea battle between Montgomery's Highlanders and privateers. But we could find no records of such a sea battle - in fact the Highlanders disbanded in 1763, and anyway it was a Foot Regiment and so less likely to be involved in a sea battle. However, this first reading conflates two separate events – serving in the 77th, and then some years later, being killed by privateers. A better reading sees a series of events:-

Culloden:-

- McCracken ascertained that James McLean fought at Culloden, he was the son of 'Old Maclean of Ardgour', and he died in 1761 (1846+15=1761) fighting Cumberland. (ref: Sword Forum International, Andrew McCracken 28th Feb 2002)
- To be fighting at Culloden James would probably have been no younger than 15 years old and no older than 45 years – ie born between 1701 and 1731.
- There was a James, the sixth child of Allan, the 10th Laird of Ardgour and his mother was a daughter of Sir Ewen Cameron of Lochiel (and we know that the Camerons of Lochiel were key participants in Glenfinnan in 1715 and subsequent Jacobite actions). At present, we do not have a birth date for James, but his father was born in 1668 (so was 47 years old at the time of Glenfinnan). Allan would probably not have married before he was 20 years old, and with James as his sixth child, James must have been born some time after 1700 – probably many years after 1700 – perhaps in the 1710s.
- Who was the 'Old MacLean of Ardgour'? It is implied that the old man was a prominent figure in Ardgour around 1746. He was not the laird because Hugh the 12th was only 9 years old. However, the 'old man' description nicely matches Hugh's grandfather, Allan, the father of the James who was with Montgomery's Highlanders (above). Allan, the 10th Laird was 78 years old at the time of Culloden. Apparently he was unsuccessful as a laird, and his lairdship passed to John, one of James's older brothers. So we have the unusual situation where a previous laird is still alive during the lairdship of his successor (in Allan's case, two successors, but that is another story). He would have been prominent as a former laird - his failures as a laird were more than 15 years previously so might be disregarded, especially as he could bask in the reflected glory of being the father of a laird, the grandfather of a laird, and his daughter Isabella was the mother of Allan, the 22nd Clan Chief. So Allan, the former 10th Laird could be described aptly as 'Old MacLean of Ardgour' – indeed, he was probably the only person who could be described that way at that time.

Montgomerys' Highlanders:-

- In January 1757, "*Montgomery recruited 1460 men in the remotest part of the highlands including men from the following clans; Fraser, MacDonald, Cameron, Maclean, and MacPherson.*" (ref: Andrew Patterson, Nov 2011)
- In the fall of 1757, Sir Allan Maclean was appointed the Captain of one of several new companies formed within the 77th Foot (ref: Patterson) . This Allan was the James' nephew (the son of James' sister, Isabella) who was the 22nd Chief of the Clan. There is more details about Sir Allan's military career in his section in our document "Clan McLean – 1200s to present".
- Montgomery's Highlanders were loyal to King George III. So there is irony in James fighting against troupes loyal to George II at Culloden, and then a decade later he was fighting for George III.
- "*The regiment participated in the capture of Fort Duquesne in November 1758. It sailed for the West Indies in June 1761 and took part in the Invasion of Martinique in January 1762 and the Battle of Havana in June 1762. It went on to New York City in October 1762 and saw action at the Battle of Bushy Run in August 1763 after which it was disbanded later in the year.*" (ref: Wikipedia)
- JP McLean stated that James was a lieutenant. We do not know in what way James participated in each of these battles.

Privateers:-

- With the ongoing hostility between England and the American colonies, private ship owners in America were permitted by the government to capture foreign ships (legalized piracy). It was a wide-spread practice but we have not found any specific event which involved James in 1767 - there are probably records somewhere.

Children:

- We have no indications that he married or had children.
- If he had no children, there will not be any direct descendants with whom we could collaborate to fill out James's involvement in the Jacobite uprisings etc.

Conclusion:-

- The two quotes are referring to the same James. The McCracken quote is accurate with regard to him fighting in Culloden – but inaccurate in that, in later life, he was fighting with the loyalist men rather than against them, and, yes he died fighting at sea, but this was 21 years after Culloden rather than 15 years.
- If James was born in 1710, he would have been 36 years old at Culloden and 57 when he died in 1767. Or, if he was born in 1731, he was 15 years old at Culloden and was 46 years old when he died. One remaining mystery is his age in relation to two of his nephews. If James was born between the 1710s and 1731, how could his older brother John (who became the 11th Ardgour) have a son Hugh (who became the 12th Ardgour) born in 1836? Also how could his younger sister, Isabella have a son Allan (who became the 22nd Chief and was with James with the Montgomery's Highlanders) born in 1710? [research: Maybe these paradoxes can be resolved if we discover when James, John and Isabella were born.]

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