

Fort William, Ardgour, Duisky & Blaich

A tour for the descendants of Donald & Christina McLEAN to discover what life was like two centuries ago

Version 2 – August 2018

www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com

This is a 55 mile round trip from Fort William. It starts down the A82, across the loch on the Corran ferry, then Ardgour House and along A861 past many points of interest, especially Donald's Duisky estate. Then back to Fort William on A830.

WHO IT IS FOR

This tour guide will be of interest the descendants of Donald and Christina McLean. They lived in this area from the late 1700s to 1837.

Actual visit: It could be used by anyone who is fortunate enough to get to Scotland. You could get a good sense of it all by doing a quick road tour in a couple of hours – or you could take your time with a few over-night stays.

Virtual tour: For most of us who cannot get to Scotland, we can take a simulated journey by reading this guide and perhaps taking a 'drive' with Google Street View.

This guide has a lot of detail. We have erred on the side of too much rather than too little detail because if someone has travelled so far, they probably want to learn as much as they can - otherwise anyone can just skim over this tour guide if they do not want to get lost in the fine points.

THE REGION

Fort William is in the western highlands of Scotland. Glasgow is 100 miles to the south. Inverness is 65 miles to the north east - at the other end of the Caledonian Canal. Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in the United Kingdom, looms over Fort William. The town is at the junction of two lochs. Loch Linnhe stretches southwestward towards the coast and the Isle of Mull. Loch Eil is to the west. The areas to the north of this loch have been known as Lochaber, Kilmalie or Locheil. Blaich and Duisky are on the southern shores of Loch Eil. Ardgour is the large area south of Loch Eil and west of Loch Linnhe. Morvern is further south along Loch Linnhe. At various times, these areas were included in the Shire of Inverness or Argyllshire.

- Reading: 'Kilmalie & Lochaber' – E30 research notes in SMALL PRINT directory on the left of the home page in our website.

THE FAMILY

Donald & Christina McLean and their ten children lived along the southern shores of Loch Eil before they migrated to South Australia in 1837. Christina was born in 1787. Her parents might have been John McPhee and Christian Cameron but we know very little about them. Donald was born in 1779 and his mother was probably Rachel Rankin and we are still looking for details about her. We are confident that his father was Allan McLean of Blaich who must have been born sometime before 1760 and died after 1780. We do not know who Allan's parents were.

Donald leased the Duisky Estate which is next to Blaich. We haven't got many other details about our family at that time - so this tour is designed to use our imagination to fill in the gaps.

Donald was not in a direct line with the lairds who inherited major areas of land and were the leaders of a branch of the clan. However he had the status of a 'tacksman' as the leasee of Duiskey estate. He was better off than others within this small impoverished community. Donald must have been more than a humble crofter because he somehow managed to accumulate a substantial amount of cash as he set off for South Australia.

- Reading: 'Overview of Donald's life' – G20 research notes in SMALL PRINT directory on left of home page on our website.

WHAT YOU WILL EXPERIENCE

There were no castles and cathedrals in Donald's world. The most notable structure on this tour is Ardgour House which Donald might never have visited. Pay closest attention to Blaich and Duiskey because, even though it might just look like farm land and a few houses, this is the harsh but spectacular environment where Donald and his family lived their lives while the highlands were undergoing major changes away from the traditional clan system and farming practices.

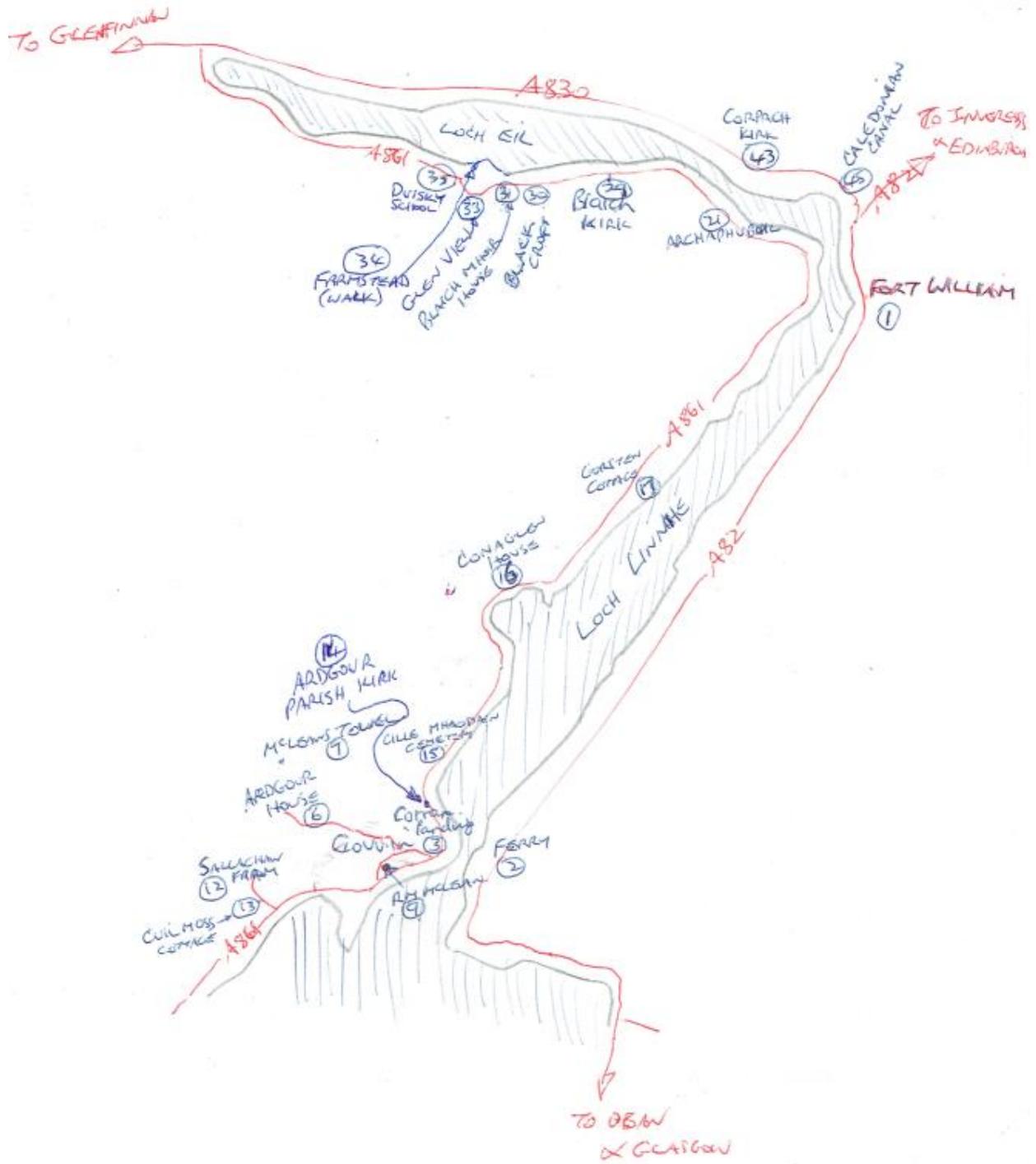
It will be perfect to visit at any time of the year - in spring, summer, autumn and even in winter when the slopes are deep in snow.

While you are in the region, your interests might extend beyond family history to take in some of the pursuits which make Fort William 'The Capital of the Outdoors' with fishing, hiking, mountaineering and bird watching.

- Activities: Have a look at www.scotlandinfo.eu/lochaber-fort-william, www.lochaber.com, www.visitfortwilliam.co.uk and.

MILES OR KILOMETRES

This current tour guide uses miles, but a kilometre version can be provided if you 'Contact us' on our website.



FORT WILLIAM

This tour is based at Fort William. Today it has a population of 10,000 whereas two hundred years ago it was called Maryburgh with just 1200 living in the garrison town. At that time, there were 4000 people in the whole parish, mostly in scattered hamlets and isolated crofts.

Apart from occasional visits to sell farm produce and purchase supplies, the town might have played little part in the lives of Donald and his family. It would be quite a journey from Duisky to Maryburgh – a walk or horse ride of 5 miles, then a dinghy across the loch, and then a bit of walk to the markets. It might require an overnight stay. However Donald's cousin, Alexander McLean, who was 18 years younger than Donald and kept a croft in Blaich, used to travel across to Maryburgh for work as a tailor each day.

Donald's oldest son, Allan, said that when he was a boy he had won the annual race around the town in Lochaber. This was after a fortnight of bread and cheese. The only town in Lochaber was Maryburgh so we can imagine his family's excitement when they cheered him as he triumphantly crossed the finishing line.

- Accommodation: There is a wide range of accommodation in Fort William to suit all tastes – just google 'accommodation Fort William' and make your own enquiries.

To make the best of your trip you could gather some background information by visiting resources in Fort William, and ask for anything about the McLeans in Ardgour, Blaich and Duisky.

- Research: Lochabar Archives Centre at West Highland College, An Aird, Fort William – phone +44 (0)1397 701942 or 01463 256444. and www.highlifehighland.com/lochaber-archive-centre.
- Research: West Highlands Museum in Cameron Square in High Street – phone +44 (0)1397 702169 and www.westhighlandmuseum.org.uk.
- Research: Lochaber And North Argyll Family History Group which meets in the Archives Centre.

BOAT CRUISE

Before embarking on a road tour, it is suggested that you do a boat cruise for a general appreciation of the area. These 90 minute excursions will take you from the Town Pier in Fort William, down Loch Linnhe and back. It costs about 15 pounds. Unfortunately, there are no cruises along Loch Eil – but maybe you can find a way of hiring a small dinghy to have a look for yourself.

- Transport: Cruises booked with Crannog's – phone + 44 (0)1397 705589 and www.crannog.net/cruises.

ROAD TOUR

This is a 55 mile round trip.

A few hours - If your time is very limited, you could just drive past most of the places and pay more attention to Blaich and Duisky (items 28 to 36 below).

A full day - Although, not far, there is so much to see that it could take a good part of a day.

A few days – You have travelled so far to get here so why not really become immersed in the whole experience by staying a night or two in the accommodation detailed throughout this tour guide.

- Transport: Vehicles can be hired through www.fortwilliamcarhire.com or phone +44 (0)1397 701515. And of course, there are other sources for hiring on the internet.

1. A82: Get off to an early start. Beginning from Fort William, head south along the A82 with Ben Nevis towering on your left and Loch Linnhe on your right, and through Druimarbin - for 8 miles to Inchree and the Corran Narrows.
2. Corran ferry: You will put the vehicle on a ferry to get across to the other side of the loch. The ferry runs every half hour. It is just a couple of hundred metres, taking a few minutes. It costs about 8 pounds and bookings are not required.
 - Transport: For more information, phone +44 (0)7789 517990 and <http://www.lochabertransport.org.uk/TransportinLochaber/PublicTransport/Ferries/CorranFerry>.

3. Landing: At this spot in 1420, the ferryman MacGurraclaich was hung by his own oars by the McLeans when they attacked the MacMasters and took over Ardgour. They were led by Donald McLean ('Strong Donald, The Hunter') who was assisted by his grandfather, MacDonald of Kingerloch from nearby Morvern. The MacMaster chief tried to escape and pleaded to the ferryman to row him across to Corran. The ferryman did not help and when the McLeans came looking for the chief, MacGurraclaich thought that they would be pleased with him. But the McLeans hung him because his disloyalty to the MacMasters indicated that he might be disloyal to the McLeans. Then the McLeans chased MacMaster and murdered him. This is how the McLeans came to possess the area.
 - Reading: 'Jump where the wall is lowest' – F25 research notes in SMALL PRINT on left of the home page.
 - Reading: Page 22 in 'Death Or Victory - Tales of Clan MacLean' by Fiona MacLean via www.maclean.org.

4. Duart Castle: The world-wide seat of Clan MacLean is on the Isle of Mull - in a direct line south-west along Loch Linnhe. It is 25 miles away - too far away to actually see of course, but you can imagine the castle overlooking the mouth of the loch. The current chief of Clan MacLean is Lachlan McLean who is the 28th Chief. We acknowledge him as our chief even though we have had no genealogical connection with his line since the early 1400s with the 7th Chief of Duart, Lachlan Bronneach McLean, who was the father of Strong Donald The Hunter. (Donald's mother was a MacDonald of Morvern). We have a closer connection with Chieftain Robin McLean, 18th Laird of Ardgour, who himself acknowledges the standing of our Chief in Duart Castle.
 - Reading: 'Duart Castle' – E35 research notes in SMALL PRINT on the left of the home page of our website.
 - Another tour: The castle is well worth a visit. www.duartcastle.com



5. From the landing, turn left (south) on the A861 with Loch Linnhe on your left. Half a mile from the landing, turn right (leaving the A861), sign-posted to Clovulin. You will see the school and village hall. Then turn right again, sign-posted to Ardgour House. Go half a mile to two grey iron gates into the main drive to the Ardgour House. If you just go into the driveway a few hundred metres can get a glimpse of the impressive structure.

6. Ardgour House: After deposing the MacMasters, Strong Donald the Hunter became the 1st Laird of Ardgour. The McLeans have maintained an unbroken line of lairds of Ardgour for seven centuries and Ardgour House was the 'seat' of the McLeans for most of this time.

The building is no longer in McLean hands - it was sold in 1996. However the surrounding property, the Ardgour Estate, is still owned by Robin McLean, the 18th Laird (see item 12, Sallachan, below). A structure was established here in 1542. In 1765, Hugh MacLean, the 12th Laird of Ardgour, built a Georgian mansion. It was almost totally destroyed by a fire in 1825. The fire would have been a major event in the area and our Donald and his family would have heard about this even though they were living 14 miles away at a time when communications were difficult. The house was rebuilt in 1830 by Alexander, the 13th Laird.

 - Note: The public might not have casual access without prior arrangements
 - Reading: A full description of the architecture and history of Ardgour House is in 'Ardgour – the district, the estate, the house & Sallachan Farm' – E25 research notes in the SMALL PRINT on our website.
 - Accommodation: This is most suited to a large group of 20 rather than a couple of people. For staying at Ardgour House, phone +44 (0)7446 583266 and www.iolair.co.uk/ardgour-house.
 - Video: Hopefully it will not spoil your visit to learn that Ardgour House is the setting for a recent horror film - 'Ghosts of Darkness' starring Michael Koltes and Paul Flannery. For a trailer of the film, with inside views of Ardgour House, look at youtube.com/watch?v=C6V1k5YP4N0.



Photo by Cynthia Kalma in 1986 – *permission required*

7. McLean's Towel: You might be able to get a glimpse of this waterfall to the left, behind Ardgor House. It is said that, while the water flows, the McLeans will never leave Ardgor.



Photo from Ardgor Estate per ardgourestate.co.uk (*Permission required*)

8. Macmaster's Graveyard: Fiona McLean's story she states 'There is a clump of trees in a field just by Ardgor House called MacMasters' graveyard' –
- Feedback: Let us know if you can find exactly where this is, how to access it, and what can be seen..
9. House of RM McLean: You will pass this house on your left.
- Question: Is this the home of the Laird's home - or is he at Sallachan Farm?
10. Cuil Moss Cottage: After driving through Clovulin you turn right to rejoin the A861. In half a mile, on your right, you will see a signpost to Cuil Cottage and Ardgor Estate.
- Accommodation: For staying at Cuil Cottage, phone +44 (0)75956 01799 and www.ardgourestate.co.uk.
11. Video: When you have access to the internet (before, during or after your actual road tour) you can have a wonderful aerial view of this area, taken by a drone, of Cuil Moss Cottage and McLean Towel - but does not include Ardgor House.
- Video: ardgourestate.co.uk/visit-ardgor-video
12. Sallachan Farm: This is now the seat of the Ardgor McLeans where the current laird, the 18th, Robin MacLean and Fiona live.
- Note: The public might not have casual access without prior arrangements
 - Reading: 'Ardgor – the district, the estate, the house & Sallachan Farm' – E25 research notes in the SMALL PRINT directory on our website.
13. Now turn around and head north back along the A861 with Loch Linnhe on your right. This time, keep going on this main road (rather the loop road through Clovullin), and past the ferry landing.
14. Ardgor Parish Kirk: This was built in 1832. Donald's family would have been aware of this major event, but we can only guess whether they would have attended as it was 9 miles from Duisky. There is a cemetery in the grounds – but none of our McLeans.
15. Cille Mhaodain cemetery: Latitude 56.74002, longitude -5.25148. A mile or so past the landing you can visit this cemetery which is walled – 200 yards from the road. There are none of our McLeans here.
- Information: www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gsr&GScid=2445457

16. Conaglen House: This estate was purchased from the McLeans in 1858 after the death of Alexander, the 13th Laird of Ardgour. It was purchased by the Earl of Morton and has Douglas clan connections.
- Accommodation: To stay here, phone +44 (0)1855 841321 and www.conaglen.co.uk.
17. Gorsten Cottage: 56° 47' 13.85" N, 5° 10' 57.04" W or 56.787815N, 5.181991W at Goirtean a' Chladaich. The original thatched roof was later replaced with the present slates.



Photo by Mike & Kirsty Grundy – permission required

18. Continue through Trislaig and then Camusnagaul. Then the road veers to the left, leaving Loch Linnhe and travelling west with Loch Eil on your right.
19. Road: The A861 is a bituminized road but narrow, so traffic must pull to one side to allow others to pass or overtake. In Donald's day this would have been a rutted track where you would come across people walking and an occasional horse and cart taking produce to Fort William.
20. There is a string of locations along the 13 mile water front of the southern shores of Loch Eil. These locations were Archaphubuil, Blaich, South Duiskey, North Duiskey, South Garvan and Drumfern. It was never densely populated. Around the time that our McLean's left the area, there was probably about 300 people living in a total of 60 crofts with 105 cottages. They were on a narrow band of farm land only a few hundred yards wide – fronted by the loch and backed by the rugged hills. There were no actual villages. There are no village squares, no main civic buildings, no kirk (a kirk was built in 1817), no schools in the McLean's time, no public house (tavern), no community services such as post offices, no sheilings (ancient rough huts), and probably no cemetery. There was not a large manor house for a presiding laird. There might not have been any shops or markets but there would have been considerable bartering between neighbours with the produce from their crofts.
21. You will pass through the village of Achaphubuil.
22. Loch Eil: The loch was the focus of many activities. They fished for herring and salmon and also collected kelp. Seals and porpoises are frequently seen on the loch. In 1791 a dog-fish shark came ashore. In the same year, there were three whales of great size – one was reported at the time to be 600 ft (we must doubt this size). As a teenager, Donald would have been part of the excited group which rushed to the shore to wonder at these sights.
23. Look across to the other side of the loch to the buildings of Caol and Corpach. This is the narrowest part of the loch and two centuries ago, people would have accessed Fort William by small boat. Maybe some were game enough to wade and swam at low tide but this would have been hazardous when the tide was running.
24. Lairds: Now, with Blaich and Duiskey just ahead, this tour takes you to the heart of our Donald's country. So far, you have been through areas which were not so intimately connected to our branch of the McLeans but which had an indirect impact on their lives. In the 1480s, soon after the McLeans established themselves in Ardgour, Hector became the 1st laird of Blaich – he was a son of the 2nd laird of Ardgour. The Blaich line was not as strong as the main Ardgour line and it faltered after less than two centuries and then was re-established in the 1680s by Lochlan Mor but ceased some time ago. Our Donald is a descendant of this re-established line ('the second family') but at present, we do not know his exact connections. From time to time the Ardgour laird seemed to have authority over the Blaich laird – and this was the situation as Donald was growing up. Alexander, the 13th Laird of Ardgour was the landlord of the crofts in Blaich and Duiskey and controlled the fishing. Donald would have been well aware of Alexander's authority, but might not have actually had personal contact. Alexander was 15 years older than Donald and was already the young laird when Donald was born and was still the laird when Donald migrated in 1837.

- Reading: 'MacLean lairds in Ardgour' – F30 research notes in SMALL PRINT on home page
- Reading: 'MacLean lairds of Blaich' - F35 research notes in SMALL PRINT

25. Today, visitors will see the general environment pretty much as it was in Donald's day. The farmland, terrain and lochside are unchanged. However, there is nothing left of the built environment around Blaich and Duisy which would have been familiar to our McLeans. All the structures we can see now were erected subsequently.

26. Crofts: The crofts were usually about 7 acres and families used to eek out a living by growing potatoes and oats – and attending to a small number of black cattle, sheep & goats. In Donald's time, the 13th laird reformed the crofting system to foster fairer tenancies and better use of the land and improved farming practices. For black cattle, which were occupying a quarter of the land, the numbers remained about the same. In this part of the highlands the numbers of sheep decreased by two thirds whereas in other parts, they were increasing as crofts were combined. Donald would have heard of people having to move away from some areas as sheep took over.

27. Blaich: The red phone box on the right is at the beginning of Blaich which extends for three miles of water front. In Donald's time, there were 46 cottages and 30 crofts totalling 3869 acres - this is about half of the whole of the settlements along the southern shoreline.

28. Blaich Kirk: 56.844299N, 5.194612W or 56°50'37"N, 5°11'43"W - Just some walls, no roof remains of this kirk which is easily seen just 30 yards off the road. It was originally a cottage and was converted for use by the Church of Scotland in 1817. It ceased being used as a church by 1999. There are no indications of any burial stones near this building.

- Note: It is in private property, so cannot be entered.



1988



2015

29. Black Croft: 56.843769N, 5.216776W - This is an example of how Christina and Donald and all their children must have lived - with thatched roofs and mud floors.

- Information: <https://canmore.org.uk/site/105290>



Photo from RCAHMS (permission required)

30. Blaich Mhoir House: This is not easily visible from the road. It seems to be a construction long after the McLeans migrated. It was for sale in 2014 for 390,000 pounds and there was also a cottage for 165 pounds.

- Information: www.rightmove.co.uk/property-for-sale/property-38394536.html

31. Chalet Blaich, Chalet Rus Chalet or Four Oaks Chalet

- Accommodation: <http://www.sykescottages.co.uk/cottage/Fort-William-Isle-of-Skye-The-Western-Isles-Blaich/The-Four-Oaks-Chalet-17209.html>

32. Duisky: NN 0101 7723

- You are now at the central point of this tour. Although there is not much to see now, you can pause to imagine how important this spot was to Donald and Christina and their large family. It was the basis of their lives for many decades. It was here, in this harsh environment, that they worked hard to extract a livelihood from the land and the loch. He grew oats and barley, raised cattle and had interests in herring fishing. He built a substantial dwelling house. Highland life and traditions were rapidly changing. Ideas were emerging about leaving all this – with earnest conversations between fellow highlanders about the pros and cons of migrating to Australia or elsewhere. This was the springboard which led to a chain of events which you, as a descendant, are part of. It all started here.
- In Donald's time, there was South Duisky, with half mile water front, 3 cottages and no crofts - with an area of 4481 acres. And there was North Duisky with another half mile water front, 7 cottages & 2 crofts with an area of 748 acres. It is not known exactly what parts of the Duisky Estate Donald leased.
- The family history which was published in 1995 states that, *'no trace of the Duisky home remains.... A later home is used as a cow shed. Further up the glen, is the huge stockage The huge barn is falling to ruin. The stones are the largest that I have seen in a farm building.'* This was the situation possibly several decades before 1995. These structures might be on private land, so cannot easily be explored.
- Walk: What can any be seen now? Do your own exploration. Park near Glen View and take a lochside stroll around a small level peninsula to find some ruins. In 2008, archeologist, Jennifer Robinson found:-
 - Farmstead: 5m X 4m drystone rubble walls, 0.60m wide and 0.75m high. The building was subsequently used as a pen. Was this where Donald and his family lived? Maybe this was the dwelling house which Donald built.
 - Enclosed field: On a steep slope is an enclosure 20m X 14m stonewall 1.15m wide and .40m high. Maybe Donald kept his sheep here.
 - Cairn: - At NN 0130 7710, on a slight rise, there is a cairn 8.5m in diameter and 1m high. It has been badly damaged by tree roots and treasure-seekers. It is thought that it dates back to more than 4000 years ago, so had no relevance to Donald's life except that it might have intrigued everyone in his time.



- Reading: 'An Archaeological Survey of Part of Garvan, Conaglen Estate Lochaber' by Jennifer Robertson, 2008. https://librarylink.highland.gov.uk/LLFiles/109238/full_109238.pdf

- ### 33. Duisky school: Latitude: 56.8461175561, Longitude: -5.2902710438. Possibly on the right, on the loch side. This was built in 1879, after our McLeans had left for Australia. In Donald's childhood there was very little formal schooling in the area. At that time there was a school in Fort William and five others throughout the Kilmallie parish, but there are no indications that any of those five schools was accessible to Donald. Somehow Donald became literate but his wife, Christina, was not literate. When their children were school age there were eleven schools in the whole parish. But still there is nothing to indicate any schools around Blaich or Duisky. Maybe there were some knowledgeable souls giving occasional private instruction. Some of the teaching was in Gaelic and in fact this was probably Donald's first language. In Donald's life time, English was rapidly replacing Gaelic.



Photo by John Mathews – permission required

34. Accommodation

- The Old School Chalet: This was the Duiskey school (item 33) which has been converted into tourist accommodation, however it might no longer be available. Phone +44 (0)1397 722227 and www.scotlandlogcabin.co.uk/the-old-school-chalets.htm.
- The Log Cabin, Loch Eil: <https://www.airbnb.com.au> › United Kingdom › Scotland › Duiskey
- Mossbank Cottage: This might no longer be available.
- Four Oaks Chalet: www.sykescottages.co.uk

35. Waste disposal facility: This services the region.

36. Garvan Hydro Scheme: This 1884 Kw system was commissioned in 2011.

37. Continue through Callacrenge and Drumfern to the western end of Loch Eil where the A861 joins the A830 – but don't turn left.

38. Glenfinnan: Glenfinnan is not part of this tour. At the intersection of A861 and A830 you are going to turn right - but before you do, spend a moment reflecting on what happened five miles to the west. Bonnie Prince Charlie raised his flag in 1745 which led to the Jacobite uprising. Less than a year later, 180 McLeans from Morvern and Ardgour joined in with a Jacobian force of 5400 in the battle at Culloden (about 70 miles away, near Inverness). They suffered terrible casualties and only 38 McLeans returned home. There were bloody reprisals against highland families. The Camerons on this northern side of the loch were decimated whereas our McLeans were less affected (we know of none of our kin directly affected) – maybe because we were less actively supporting the Bonnie Prince. None-the-less, the reprisals resulted in widespread and rapid breakdown of highland culture and the clan system – and the movement out of the highlands to the larger centres and emigration to America, Canada and Australia. This was an acceleration of the clearances which had commenced several decades previously.

All this was more than 30 years before Donald was born, however it would have still been a raw subject of conversation around the hearth. There would have been passionate tales from his grandfather's generation who were personally involved.

- Reading: See Wikipedia for Glenfinnan and Battle of Culloden
- Reading: 'Clan MacLean in the Jacobite Risings' – F40 research notes in the SMALL PRINT directory on the left of the home page on our website.
- Option: Glenfinnan is not part of this tour because it is not directly connected with Donald, but none-the-less, because you are so close, it would be a pity to miss taking the opportunity to visit the Jacobian Monument and the Glenfinnan Viaduct.

39. After turning right at the intersection, go east along the A830 with Loch Eil on your right. You are now in the territory of the Cameron Clan. It was less familiar to our McLeans but as you pass through Kilocheil, look across the loch to Duiskey and Blaich to gain a better idea of the size and starkness of the hills which rise sharply behind these crofting locations.

40. Continue through Caol and Inverlochry while looking at the spectacular views of Ben Nevis, reflected in the waters of Loch Eil.

41. Corpach Kirk (NN091770, 56.8451, -5.13166): This church is at 39 Lady Margaret Drive (turn left off A830) - on top of a short lane up a rise on the north side of the A830. The old cemetery is on the opposite side of the lane but there are none of 'our' McLeans there. The kirk was built in 1783 – after Donald was born, but before Christina was born. For more than 100 years, it was the only church in the whole of the Kilmallie parish. Donald and Christina's children were christened in Kilmallie parish and it is probable that their christening ceremonies were held in this church. Allan in 1812, Mary (the first) in 1813, Hugh (the elder) 1815, John 1816, Mary (second) 1818, Archibald 1821, Ann 1823, Rachel 1825, Margaret 1827, Jane 1830, and Hugh (the younger) in 1836. There might have been a simple christening ceremony before it was recorded in the old parish register.
42. The view from the elevated position of the Kirk across Loch Eil and down Loch Linnhe is wonderful.
43. Caledonian Canal: Construction began in 1804 and completed in 1822, well before our McLeans left the area. A large workforce moved in for the building of this ambitious project. We have no indications that Donald (who was in his late 20s and early 30s) worked here and his sons would have been too young. They would have been able to look across from the other side of the loch and would have seen a great deal of construction activity and houses being built to accommodate the workforce - and then the growth resulting from the boost from the canal trade once it was operating. There would have been great excitement with the official opening and seeing the first boats traversing the entire length – maybe 'our' McLeans went over to marvel at this great achievement.
- Reading: Wikipedia
 - Option: Visit Neptune's Staircase which it is a series of 8 locks on the Caledonian Canal.
44. Fort William: Back in Fort William you could have another look at the Museum and Lochabar Achives because your tour may have roused some other questions which you want to explore
45. Share your experience:
- Feedback: We want to know how many people have used this tour guide (either actually or virtually). Please take a few minutes to record your comments about the trip for the benefit of others. What did you find most surprising? Can you suggest how the tour could be improved? You can make comments through 'Contact us' on the website www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com.
 - Your trip: What about sharing your trip with others by sending in some photos or stories which can be placed on the website. This will inspire others to follow you.

This document has been compiled by Don Gordon. He has never actually visited the area. The tour notes are based on the websites listed, maps, and Google street view as well as other sources on the internet. It would be greatly improved by someone with direct, personal experience of visiting the area. Suggestions are welcome via 'Contact us' on the home page of our website www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com.

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