

The Lairds of Blaich

from 1460 to 1758

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www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com

How to use these notes

- Too much detail?: Read the summary first, to get the gist of what this is all about - rather than getting lost in the details in the body of these notes.
- Research: The notes are not in a narrative style because it is not intended for the general public. It is for serious researchers. There are standardized headings and dot-points which are a framework into which new details can be placed.
- Sources: This research has been limited to what can be found on the internet and quoting from various sources rather than physically accessing contemporary documents.
- Searching: You can search this PDF document via Control/F and then relevant key word.
- Our other docs: This is one of a series of research notes which are interconnected. These can be found in the Small Print directory on the left of the homepage. The notes that are most relevant to the lairds of Blaich are:-
 - 'C10 - Setting the scene'**: Essential reading.
 - 'F20 - Chiefs of Clan MacLean'**: A selected history.
 - 'F25 - Jump where the wall is lowest'**: How the McLeans took over Ardgour
 - 'F30 - The McLeans in Ardgour'**:
 - 'F35 - The Lairds of Blaich'**: This document
 - 'F40 - The Macleans in the Jacobite Uprisings'**:
 - 'E40 - Tour guide for Fort William, Blaich & Duisky'**
- Feedback: This is a draft. Your corrections and comments will be welcomed - via 'Contact us' on the homepage.
- Author: These notes were compiled by Don Gordon, with support from Lorna McLean. Don and Lorna are Donald's and Christina's GGG-grandchildren.

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Summary

This document is a collation of information about the traditional clan hierarchy in Blaich and begins to explore the possible impact on Donald McLean and his family.

Our main sources are John Paterson MacLean, Alexander MacLean Sinclair, Nicholas MacLean-Bristol and Edwin Maclean.

Donald's parents were Allan McLean and Rachel Rankin. He was born in 1779 in Blaich which is on the southern shores of Loch Eil, across from Fort William. Blaich was a string of a few cottages and crofts, rather than a village, and there were never more than 200 people living there. Donald grew up to lease the Duisky Estate which is next to Blaich. These are in the northern part of Ardgour, in the Western Highlands.

In 1837, Donald migrated to South Australia with his wife, Christina nee McPhee, and their 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.

Some births in the 1600s and early 1700s cannot be found on existing Old Parish Registers. For those years, lineages of the lairds are documented better than the crofters etc. So, our research here is exploring whether Donald's father, Allan was a son, grandson, sibling, nephew or cousin of a laird. This is not as far-fetched as it might appear – for a start, we are not dealing with large populations around Blaich and also those leasing properties often were kinsmen of the laird who were the landlords (BRB p8).

Ardgour branch: Clan MacLean established themselves in Mull, an island off the west coast, in the late 1300s. The line of 28 chiefs is detailed in our '**F20 - Chiefs of Clan MacLean**'. In 1420 a branch was established in Ardgour, which is on the mainland across from Mull – about 35 kms north west along Loch Linnhe. The MacLeans took over Ardgour from Clan McMaster (see '**F25 - Jump where the wall is lowest**'). There is an unbroken line of 18 McLean Lairds of Ardgour up to the present time (see '**F30 - The MacLeans in Ardgour**').

First Blaich family: In the late 1400s the Ardgour MacLeans established another branch - in Blaich which is the northern part of Ardgour. Hector, a son of the 2nd laird of Ardgour, was the first laird of Blaich around 1480. He was followed by Dubh, Ewen Uaibhreach, Hector, Ewen and another Hector. This last Hector became the 5th laird in 1615, but then it is not known what happened for a while. This first line of lairds of Blaich petered out in the early 1600s.

Second family: A second line was established in the late 1600s. In 1684 with Lochlan Mor, who was a son of John Crubach, the 8th Laird of Ardgour. Lochlan Mor became the 7th Laird of Blaich. There is some uncertainty about the sequence of lairds in this second line but following Lochlan Mor, it might been Allan, Lachlan (or Hugh or William) and then William. This William became the 10th laird in 1758 and we do not have confirmation about who took over from him.

This line discontinued around the time that our Donald was born. We understand that he descended from this re-established line 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 fishing on the lochs. 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. And they died within a month of each other in 1855.

Conclusion: Donald's family did were ever in the inheriting lines of lairds, but did they have any connections (perhaps through cousins or spouses). Did they personally know and associate with the families of the Lairds? Did it matter?

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First family

1st MacLean of Blaich – Hector – from 1480 to ???

Hector was the son of Ewen, the second laird of Ardgour. Sinclair (p330) stated that Hector was Ewen's fifth, however JP McLean (JPM p279) stated he was the third son.

Hector became laird around 1480. The circumstances of the establishment of this line were more peaceful than Hector's grandfather's murderous conquest of the McMasters which marked the beginning of the Ardgour line 60 years earlier. Perhaps there was some mutual agreement between Hector and his father or with the brothers. Was it simply a matter of purchasing it? *"The three merk lands of Blaich were purchased for him from McLean of Kingerloch"* (Bristol p196). So, who was this McLean of Kingerloch and how did he come to own it before he sold it?

Hector had three sons (Sinclair p 335) – This was a pivotal family because the sons spread out and were the progenitors of new lines, whereas none of these three perpetuated their father's Blaich line directly – that was perpetuated by one of their sons (Donald Dubh's son Ewen Uaibhrach), and consequently they have little relevance to the Blaich story and might have only spent little or no time, actually in Blaich. Indeed, we have no direct evidence that Hector himself was resident in Blaich rather than just an absentee owner after acquiring the three merklands of Blaich.

His three sons were Donald Dubh, Ewen & Hector Odhar:-

- Donald Dubh – 'of Treshnish':
 - The Treshnish Isles are a little west of Mull.
 - Sinclair stated that Donald Dubh became the 2nd Laird of Blaich but this might not have been the case (see below).
 - *"He was commonly called 'of the castle', and a bold rough sort of man but was remarkably true and faithful to his chief. He was brought from Ardgour to succeed his uncle's son as Captain of Carnaburg [ie the 3rd of Treshnish]. He married first to a daughter of Macmartm of Letherfinlay; secondly to a daughter of Clanranald"* (Bristol p196). His sons were (the first four are recorded by Bristol but Sinclair (p336) had previously also had the last two:-
 - ◇ Ewen: *"He was a thriving man . . . loving to distinguish himself and make figure. He married a daughter of Maclean of Lehir. He is likely to be referred to in 'Ane letter sent from the Capitane of Camaburg for certain drugges"* (Bristol p196). Sinclair (p336) has him 'of Treshnish', so he was probably the 4th of Treshnish. He had the following sons (Bristol p194)
 - Hector:
 - Hector McEwin VcDona1d, Captain of Carnaburg, [probably the 5th Treshnish] (Bristol p197).
 - Complained of by John, Bishop of the Isles 28 March 1579 (Bristol p197).
 - A wise active man (Bristol p 97).
 - Spouse 1: Hector married a daughter of Macquarrie of Ulva. Their children were:-
 - ◇ John: He married a daughter of Charles MacAileen an Sop (Bristol p197)
 - ◇ Neil:
 - ◇ Charles:
 - Spouse 2: Hector's second spouse was a daughter of MacNeill of Barra, relict of Charles MacAilean nan Sop (Bristol p 197).
 - Lachlan: He was baillie of Lachlan Og, predecessor of the family of Trishnish, "a wise and rich man" (Bristol p 197).
 - Allan: *"When he was young he went to Ireland with his cousin Katherine Maclean, Countess of Argyll (mistakenly called Giles nin Hector Mor), where he distinguished himself in the wars between O Neil and O Donnell; he was killed at Sronicaranlich in Mull by the Macdonalds, and buried in Iona"* (Bristol p197).
 - Donald Goddach: Complained of by John Bishop of the Isles on 28th March 1579" (Bristol p197).
 - Charles:
 - Archibald: *"He obtained the lands of Arehulan and others from his father, witness 1st September 1619"* (Bristol p198).

- John Rogach: On 18th March 1579 complained of by John, Bishop of the Isles (Bristol p197).
- ◇ Ewen Uaibhrach: He became the 2nd laird of Blaich – see below.
- ◇ John Odhar:
 - Sinclair (p336) has him ‘of Achadale’
 - “According to Dr J N M Maclean, 61 Learmonth Court, Edinburgh, John Maclean was first Maclean of Achanadale in Lochaber and was probably made baillie of Garbhdamhach by Hector Mor Maclean of Duart in 1557, on the marriage of his heir to Argyll’s daughter, who was given a liferent interest in Duart’s lands” (Bristol p197).
- ◇ Lachlan Fionn:
 - Sinclair (p336) has him ‘of Hynish’
 - “Lachlan Fionn of Hynish, Tiree was a bold resolute man. He was very rich, and had a numerous offspring. Hynish, 6 merkland. Assedatur Lauchlane Fyne McNeikewin, payand therfair yerle xiii bolls beir ix stone med. ii martis. On 6th February 1545/6, Ane respitt to Lauchlane Fyne McClane for burning lles of Bute and Arran” (Bristol p197).
- ◇ Lachlan: Listed by Sinclair (p336), but not included by Bristol.
- ◇ Donald: Listed by Sinclair (p336), but not included by Bristol.
- Ewen: He “came to Mull with his brother of Kernburgh . . . was the first Maclean of Cornaig in Tiree’ (Ffamily p69).
- Hector Odhar. Hector Odhar ‘from whom descended slioch Eachan Odar’, whose descendants are in Mull and Tiree (Bristol p197). According to the Ardgour MS, his descendants, Sliochd Eachainn Uidhir, were scattered over Mull and Tiree.

Research: Where does the following fit in?

- Hugh of Kilmalieu: Hugh (Ewen) became chief of Clan Tearlaich after his uncle Lachlan MacThearlaich. Ewen “*first appears on record in 1481, when he is described as ‘Ewyne Makachtane’, he is known to Maclean genealogies as ‘Hugh or Ewen Maclean of Urquhart..... Hugh is later described as ‘de Kilmalieu’*” (Bristol p71). Kilmalieu consisted of land in Morvern, Carna and Blaich – it is the on western shores of Loch Linnhe, about 10 miles south of Ardgour House which in turn is 15 miles from Blaich.

2nd Laird of Blaich - Ewen Uaibhreach

There is disagreement about who was the 2nd laird. There are three proposals.

JP McLean (p 279) stated it was either Hector, the grandson of Hector the first – or Eoghan Uaibhreach, second son of Donald, third laird of Treshnish.

Sinclair stated it was Donald Dubh, the first son of Hector the first of Blaich. Donald Dubh also had possession of Treshnish which were islands to the west of Mull – so he was the third laird of Treshnish besides being the second of Blaich (Sinclair p 336).

Bristol has it that Ewen Uaibhreach succeeded Hector the 1st of Blaich. This is the most credible proposal, and if so, the lairdship skipped a generation. “*He succeeded his grandfather at Blaich; baillie of Garbhdamhaich in the Braes of Lochaber, and was ancestor of the Macleans of Blaich and of Achnadale. It would appear he obtained sasine of Blaich*” (Bristol p197)

He had a son, Hector (Sinclair p 336)

3rd Laird of Blaich - Hector

He had a son, Ewen (Sinclair p 336)

Which laird does the following refer to?

- *“On 26 July 1621 Donald Maclean of Kingerloch as superior made a Precept of Clare Constat in investing ‘Hector Mcewin VcAighin of Blaich his father with a warrandice over the lands of Glengalmadill and Strone’. ‘In the same year Hector of Blaich granted a charter of his lands to Ewen mcAighin alias McLaine (apparently his son) and his heirs male and assignees whatsoever to be holden of Kingerloch as superior” (Bristol p197).*

4th Laird of Blaich - Ewen

He had a son, Hector (Sinclair p 336)

5th Laird of Blaich - Hector

Hector, son of Ewen, was served heir to his father in 1615 (Sinclair p330 & 336 & JPM p279)

JP McLean states that Hector had a three-merk property of Blaich, holden of the crown (p275) – this might be a fact, but the page reference is wrong.

Unfortunately, we know little about Hector (or about any of his five predecessors). We do not know when he was born, and how old he was when became laird – nor when he died.

Hector was apparently the last in this line. It is not known why it ceased.

- Maybe this Hector had no sons to pass on his inheritance, but surely there must have been someone else who could take on take on the title or own the land.
- Maybe they had lost control of all their lands.
- Maybe, at some stage, the direct control of Blaich was taken back by the Laird of Ardgour.
- Or there is an indication that an Eoghainan Morar MacEachain, who was born about 1575, was a Laird of Blaich (ref: My Heritage family trees managed by Robert McEachen and Whitney Joudrey). So it is possible that the ownership of a substantial part of Blaich passed from the McLeans to the MacEachain family. Eoghainan Morar would have been about 40 years old when Hector became laird and maybe Eoghainan Morar took over from Hector some time after 1615. We do not know if, why or how, this might have occurred.
- Whatever happened, it is clear that the line of Blaich lairds was declining.
- It is most likely that the Laird of Ardgour took over.

Interim period

6th Laird

Possibly because of this lack of details, Sinclair did not number this second Blaich line in the way that he numbered other lines. So, we will have a go at this ourselves – just for the purposes of our little history. There is a gap of about 70 years between when Hector the 6th of the first family became heir in 1615 and when the Lachlan Mor became the first laird of the new line in 1684. Hector probably ceased to be laird when he died sometime during those 70 years. So, the gap was at least a few decades, possibly much longer. Whatever the gap, let’s just regard that gap as the 6th Laird and thus we designate first laird of the new line as the 7th McLean of Blaich.

In 1645, people living in Blaich would have been well aware of the battle of Inverloch Castle which is 10 kms east of Blaich, at Torlundy, near Fort William. The 17th Chief (Sir Lachlan MacLean) figured prominently in supporting James Graham (Lord Montrose) in defeating the forces of Archibald Campbell (1st Marquess of Argyll).

Second family

There is only patchy information about the first family and there is not much more known about the second Blaich McLean family line. This is a pity because this is 'our' line and so is of greatest interest to us. There are only two 'facts' we have confidence in - that Lachlan Mor established this new line in the 1680s – and that his great-grandson, William, became laird in 1758. Thus, much of the following, which covers a period of less than eight decades, is speculative.

There would have been some connections between the first family and the second family. For example, Francis McLean, who was the most distinguished person from Blaich, had ancestral connections with both families (Sinclair p345). Even though the first laird line of succession had ceased, there probably were some descendants of the first family still living in the area. Maybe the descendants of each line, identified themselves as being either from one or the other line. Was this relevant to their lives? Were there any tensions between the two families?

7th Laird of Blaich - Lachlan Mor - laird from 1684 until after 1703 (more than 19 years)

It is not known how this new line began. What actual land did this include? How was it taken or purchased? Who was it taken from? Who controlled the land between when the last Hector ceased and Lachlan Mor started. The most likely process was that it was in the control of the Laird of Ardgour and maybe it was granted by the 8th Laird of Ardgour to his son.

Lachlan Mor was the second son of John Crubach McLean who was the 8th Laird of Ardgour. Edwin Maclean stated that he was the sixth son of Allan the 7th of Ardgour but this is not consistent with JP McLean (p279) and Sinclair (p343). But this is consistent with notes by MBD who stated "Lachlan Mor was a son of either the 7th or 8th Ardgour".

It is asserted that he was born about 1614 (Burke & Edwin MacLean)

He was styled "Lachlainn Mor" in Burke's Landed Gentry, and Sinclair refers to him as Lachlan MacEwen.

He became laird of the tack of Duisky on 9th May 1684. (Burke) so he would have been 70 years old when he took over the estate. This is consistent with JP McLean who wrote that 'around 1680 Lachlan became the progenitor of the MacLeans of Blaich' (JPM pxxx).

Siblings: Lachlan's father, John 'Crubach' (8th Laird of Ardgour) had the following children:-

- Ewen his heir – the 9th Laird of Ardgour
- Lachlan – this Lachlan became the 7th Laird of Blaich
- Donald of Arighoulan (FFamily p 62 & 108)
- Archibald.
- Allan – born about 1640, died 1709 (Willowburn)

We believe the following, subject to further confirmation:-

- Donald b1779 is the 4 X great-grandson of Crubach (8th Laird) - see family tree '**Lairds, tacks & residents of Ardgour, Blaich & Duisky**' on our website.
- Donald's lineage from Crubach b1603, then Lachlan Mor b1614, then Allan b1645, then Lachlan b1679, then grandfather Donald or Hugh b1708, then parents Rachel & Allan b1745, and Donald b1779.
- Alexander, the 13th Ardgour, was the laird during the whole of time that Donald was living in the area before he migrated. The 13th was the landlord of Duisky Estate which our Donald was leasing.
- 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 '**D20 - Parents and grandparents of Donald McLean**'.

In 1700 the 8th Laird of Ardgour divided Ardgour and gave the north-east portion to Lachlan Mor and created the Barony of Blaich (Douglas McLean, BRB p4)

On 8th December 1702, he became a vassal of Maclean of Kingairloch (Burke).

His wife was Marie MacLean of Coll. and they had two sons :-

- the first son was Allan who probably became the next laird.
- The other son was Lachlan who was born about 1650 and was in Blaich in 1709 (Willowburn) and who died in that year (Edwin McLean).
- Lachlan also had a grandson (ie the son of Allan or Lachlan) who was William, the Music Master (see William B, below)

Lachlan Mor died some time after 1703, at a "great age" – ie at least 89 years old. He must have been the Laird for about two decades but we do not know whether or not he was well enough to discharge all his duties in the later years.

8th Laird of Blaich - Allan – laird from after 1703 to 1709 (less than 6 years)

Lachlan Mor seems to have been succeeded in Blaich by his son, Allan. (Sinclair p343) – so presumably Allan took over when Lachlan died sometime after 1703.

Allan was born in 1645 and died in 1709 (Edwin MacLean) – so he died in the same year as his brother Lachlan.

Edwin MacLean refers to him as 'Allan MacLean of Blaich'. He was about 60 years old when he became laird and he held that position for less than 6 years.

Allan had at least two sons – Lachlan and Allan. Lachlan was born in 1679 (Edwin McLean) and Allan was born in 1680 and died in 1749 (Edwin McLean).

9th Laird of Blaich – Lachlan – from 1709 to 1758 (49 years)

Birth: 1679

Although we do not have confirmation from any source claiming that Lachlan (b 1679) became the next laird after Allan the 9th, there are some indications that this might be the case because:-

- In the normal course of events, the next laird would have been Lachlan (b 1679) because it is understood that he was the first son of the previous laird, 'Allan MacLean of Blaich'.
- Edwin McLean called him 'Lachlan MacLean of Loch Eil' (person 1 in Edwin MacLean's genealogy) which implies a status above being just an ordinary resident of the area.
- Sinclair stated that "*William was returned heir general to his grandfather Allan MacLean of Blaich in 1758*" but he could not have taken over directly from his grandfather because 1758 is 103 years after Allan of Blaich was born and in fact he died in 1709 at the age of 69 years. So there must have been a laird or two between Allan and William. Lachlan is the most likely contender for at least part of this period but there might have been others.

Edwin McLean has provided a genealogical chart which starts with Lachlan – and designated him as person 1.

He was 30 years old when his father died and so he could have become laird at that age.

There is some uncertainty about how long Lachlan was laird - perhaps it was a short time rather than 49 years, or maybe it skipped a generation to William.

These would have been tumultuous times for whoever was laird:-

- The Jacobite uprising: The call-to-arms by the Bonnie Prince at nearby Glenfinnan in 1745, the disaster at Culloden in 1746, and the subsequent reprisals. See the separate document about the parts the various MacLean branches played at different times in the uprisings – our **'F40 – MacLeans in the Jacobite Risings'**.
- The decline of the lairds: We might assume, by Sinclair's lack of detail about the lairds of Blaich during this period, that the Blaich line was weak and disorganized. To cover this shortcoming, maybe the lairds of Ardgour resumed a more direct role in Blaich, but Ardgour was having its own difficulties for most of the period in question. By 1709, Allan the 10th Laird of Ardgour, had been laird since 1694. Allan was described as extravagant and a poor manager who had brought the estate to the brink of ruin (Sinclair). Things might not have been much better when John was the 11th Laird of Ardgour from 1732 to 1739. Then Hugh became the 12th McLean Laird of Ardgour as a toddler and there were many years of intra-family intrigue about the control of the estate. In 1751, Hugh was described as owning Blaich and Duisky as well as many other neighbouring areas, including salmon fisheries. (Timperley p29). The Ardgour estate eventually recovered, but this might have been after 1758.
- Did the Laird of Ardgour 'take back' the Blaich lairdship? Was Ardgour 'feudal superior'. An example: John of Ardgour *"was presumedly succeeded by his second cousin Allan, who failed to be legally 'entered' to the estate. As a result the barony of Ardgour was for many years held from Duart as feudal superior. The Ardgour family remained in occupation but it was not until 1685 that they were to hold their barony again directly from the Crown. The failure of a tenant-in-chief to obtain 'entry' from the Crown made his heir's position extremely vulnerable. The Crown was usually in need of cash and was happy to sell the feudal dues and rents which were owed to it when heirs failed to obtain legal 'entry' for any length of time. If an unscrupulous neighbour had the cash to pay off the outstanding monies owed to the Crown, the latter was more than happy to sell the estate to the man with the cash, giving the occupant, 'the pretended possessor', seven days to pay off the debt"* (Bristol p144). The mechanism for becoming a 'feudal superior' is some sort of court process: *"Hector Mor had used the courts to become feudal superior of Macquarrie and Ardgour"* (Bristol p 146).

According to Edwin McLean's chart, Lachlan had three sons – Donald (b 1708 – person 2), Allan (b 1711 – person 3) and John (b 1717 – person 4). Note that Donald 1708 might have been the grandfather of 'our' Donald 1779.

It is not known when Lachlan died or who took over from him following his death. If he died before three score years and ten, Donald 1708, as the oldest son might have been in line to be the next laird. But a generation might have been skipped because Lachlan might have died in 1758 (at the age of 79 years) which is when William took over.

Skipped

We are left to guess at the circumstances if a generation was skipped – ie if either Lachlan was not the 10th Laird, and/or his oldest son Donald b 1708 did not become laird:-

- Intrigue: Maybe there was conflict in the family. Or perhaps inability or unwillingness of the first son, or any others of that generation to take over. This could have given rise to resentment towards William by those who were over-looked. There might have been disquiet within the family if in fact Lachlan's sons and their sons all missed out.

10th Laird of Blaich - William – from 1758

Sinclair stated, that *"in March, 1758, we find William Maclean, lately a journeyman barber in Edinburgh, returned heir general to his grand-father, Allan Maclean of Blaich"* (Sinclair p343).

William's status and role is unclear. He was heir to his grand-father but Sinclair does not specifically state that he became the laird. In effect, the line of lairds of Blaich had probably ceased by this time. In 1751, at least 7 years before William became heir (maybe the laird of Blaich), the 12th Laird of Ardgour, Hugh, was described as owning Blaich and Duisky as well as many other neighbouring areas, including salmon fisheries (Timperley p29).

Which William was this?

A). William – son of Allan MacLean (b 1680, d 1749)

- On Edwin McLean's genealogical chart, the only William who was a grandson of Allan MacLean of Blaich was a son of Allan (b 1680). We cannot be confident that this is the right William.
- He was the second son of the second son because William had an older brother (John MacLean of Ardgour, b 1708 – (Edwin McLean) and William's father had an older brother who of course was Lachlan McLean of Loch Eil (b 1679) (Edwin McLean)
- Edwin McLean gives no information about this William. We do not have his birth year, death or indications of off-spring. Without a birth year, we have no idea when he could have taken over from Allan, but we know that, as his father Allan was born in 1680, we might assume that William was not born before 1700 and thus must have been no more than 58 years old when he took over. We need other information about whether he was a barber and had connections with Edinburgh – or whether he ever came to live in Blaich.
- He was not designated as Laird by JP McLean – see notes about the 11th Laird and notes about Francis.

B). William – born in Mull in 1660

- Seneachie in 1838 (repeated by JP McLean in 1889) described a "*William of the Ardgour family*" who was born in Mull in 1660.
- JP McLean stated that he was a grandson of Lachlan Mor (8th Laird).
- He does not appear on Edwin McLean's genealogical chart. Seneachie stated that "*he was left an orphan at a very early age. In youth he applied to himself to the study of music, became an accomplished musician and attained such proficiency that James, the duke of York (afterwards James II of England), while Lord Commissioner in Scotland, invited him to court and honoured him with the appointment of music master to the princesses Mary and Anne; and afterward to the position of 'Master of Revels of Scotland'.*"
- If he was orphaned at a very early age, his father, whoever that was, must have died somewhat prematurely.
- To whom he was married is not mentioned but he had a son (also called William) – see below. (JPM p279).
- Dr James MacLean (MBD) puts the Blaich descent differently as he believes that the Music Master was son of Charles (4th son of the 7th of Ardgour) by his second wife, Margaret, who was a sister of Hector Knox (she married secondly about 1660 to Capt John Finning of Glasgow).
- Dr James makes William born c1660,
- Dr James states that William married Anne, daughter of James Pittendreich of Edinburgh, and ancestor of the MacLeans of Plantation in Glasgow, whose present representative, he says, is Wing Commander Charles Hector MacLean, Kilmacolm, Renfrewshire, Scotland. (ref: xx)
- There are no indications that he was ever a barber in Edinburgh - or whether he ever lived in Blaich.
- This William did not become the 11th Laird of Blaich because he would have been 98 years old in 1758. And he was the wrong generation – the William who became laird in 1758 was the grandson of Allan MacLean of Blaich (ie great-grandson of Lachlan Mor).

C). William – son of William from Mull (above)

- This William was the son of the William B above.
- Seneachie stated that this William obtained a commission in the army and served as captain in the wars in Holland under the Duke of Marlborough.
- Captain William married a daughter of Sir Francis Kinloch, by whom he had two sons, Francis and James.
 - James died in 1748 - in the East Indies (according to Seneachie and JP McLean) or the West Indies (according to Sinclair).
 - The life of Francis is outlined below, when considering the 12th laird.
- There are no indications that he was ever a barber in Edinburgh – or whether he lived in Blaich.
- He is mentioned in Fryer's fact-novel 'Allan Maclean – Jacobite General'. "*Captain William MacLean of Blaich the veteran of the Scots Brigade in the Dutch service in which his son Francis was still serving*' (Fryer p26)
- Was he the laird?:

- Neither Sinclair nor JP McLean state that this William became laird – but they don't specifically exclude this – they are just silent in this regard.
- Fryer provides the only support for this William being the laird. Fryer implied this by first stating that Captain William Maclean of Blaich was the father of Francis (p26), then a letter was sent to Francis's father (p38), then the reply came from the laird of Blaich (p39). This is a rather thin line of support but is the best we have. Our confidence is weakened by Fryer's 'Allan Maclean – Jacobite General' being a fact-novel rather than being exclusively a research document. She might have taken some liberties in telling the story she wanted, however it seems to be factually accurate in the instances I have been able to compare with other researchers such Seneachie, JP MacLean etc. And anyway, there is nothing in Fryer's account which has this William as a barber in Edinburgh – but Fryer places him in Blaich in 1745 (p26).

The latter two Williams (B&C) might have been uncles/cousins to the first William (A). Their relevance is that we are considering whether their son/grandson, Francis, was the 11th Laird.

We don't know whether William (A, born 1680) had any children, nor when he died. So we do not have a starting point for considering when he ceased to be laird and who the next laird might have been. There are so many unknowns and the year 1758 is the last firm point we have to work with (the latest time we know who the laird was). Maybe there were no lairds after William.

11th Laird of Blaich

Maybe Francis: Seneachie and Sinclair highlight the life of Francis MacLean.

- He was the son and grandson of the Williams (B&C) in our discussion of the 10th laird.
- Francis was born about 1717. and had a distinguished military career. He started in the same regiment as his father. Most of his service was in Canada, but he also served in France, Portugal and Spain. His impressive military exploits are detailed by Seneachie and Fryer and will not be repeated here.
- He was unmarried and had no children.
- Neither JP McLean, Seneachie nor Sinclair specifically state that Francis became the laird, but they all include Francis in their account of the lairds of Blaich. Even if he was not the laird, his inclusion within the story of Blaich is warranted because, with his great military achievements, he was the most prominent person with Blaich connections.
- He was often mentioned in Fryer's fact-novel (see Fryer's index) Fryer implied (see above) that Francis's father, William, was the laird of Blaich and so it follows that Francis would inherit the lairdship mantle (his older brother, James, had died in 1748). Fryer gave details of Francis's military career, but Fryer does not specifically state that Francis became the laird whenever his father died.
- Even if he technically he could become laird, maybe he (and others) did not regard himself as the laird:-
 - Maybe he didn't feel much of a connection with Blaich. Francis was not living in Scotland. He could not have been an active laird managing the Blaich estate because he was absent on military service in Canada.
 - The Laird of Ardgour had probably taken over the authority for Blaich and the neighbouring properties. Hugh, the 12th Laird of Ardgour, owned these properties in 1751 (see Timperley, above).
 - He did not have any sons. Maybe, on Francis's death, no one was interested in claiming the lairdship of Blaich. By then, maybe the idea of lairdship had become of little importance or relevance.
- He died in 1781 in Halifax, Canada (Seneachie and Sinclair p345).

If Francis was never the laird, who in fact had this title after William 11th?

After 1758

- An indication of the weakness of the Blaich line is that it is not mentioned in Ffamily even though there are details for the other Ardgour branches which developed from the other sons of John Crubach. Ffamily might

have been initially compiled in 1734 and subsequently updated to cover events up to the 1750s. See appendix F in our 'F30- Macleans of Ardgour'.

- It seems that, sometime in the late 1700s, the control of Blaich reverted to the lairds of Ardgour. As above, Hugh (12th) owned the properties in 1751. Certainly, as seen in the Ardgour papers, Alexander, the 13th Laird of Ardgour from 1768 to 1855, was very much the landlord of Blaich and neighbouring properties.
- 1837 - Our Donald McLean, leasee of Duiskey, migrated to South Australia
- 1843 – There was a Hugh MacLean who was a crofter of Blaich. He was named as one of eight people who were the chief supporters petitioning Locheil for a site to build a 'Free' Presbyterian Church. The request was initially rejected but then this rejection was cancelled and a site was granted – however we do not know whether or not the church was built on the site in question – indeed we do not know the location of this particular site - was it more likely to be on the north side of Loch Eil rather than the south side? The petitioners were tenants of Locheil and it is significant that, of the eight tenants, three were on the southern side of Loch Eil – Drumsallie, Achaphobuill and Blaich. (ref: The Antiquarian notes of Charles Fraser-Mackintosh, p218). (Research: It is generally understood that Locheil (another way of referring to the Laird, usually a Cameron) of the area north of Loch Eil, but not south of that loch – but this petition implies that the Camerons were in control of at least some of Ardgour whereas this was at a time when we understood (as indicated by the Ardgour papers) that Alexander McLean (the 13th Laird of Ardgour) was the landlord was the landlord of Blaich.
- The following inscription from the Cill Mhaodain graveyard, Ardgour raises some questions. *"Here lyes the remains of Allan Maclean, late tenant at Blaich, who departed this life, the 18th day of January 1832 aged 58 years. This stone was placed here by his spouse Catherine MacPherson"* (source: Iain Thornber email on 13th March 2016). We have not been able to identify Allan and Catherine. This Allan was born about 1774 so was 5 years older than our Donald. **As a contemporary within a small community, Allan and Donald would have known each other very well. Allan might have been an uncle, brother or at least a cousin.** [research: Check OPRs]. We don't know whether he had a direct connection with the lairds of Blaich or Ardgour. It is significant that someone thought it important to make such a gravestone – this is an indication of the status of this Allan.
- 1858 – Blaich, along with neighboring properties, were sold to the Earl of Morton.

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Research

questions remain

- Did the line cease after William the 11th Laird? If so, why? Or was there an 12th and subsequent lairds? Who is next in line?
- Do the MacLeans still have lands in Blaich?
- What is the difference between the following titles?
 - Barony of Blaich - what area does it cover – just the locality of Blaich or does it include the neighbouring properties?
 - Laird of Blaich
 - Tacksman of Duiskey
- The seat of the MacLeans was Ardgour House. Was there ever a 'seat' for the MacLeans of Blaich?

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References

Shortcut

How the source is referred to in these research notes

Full identification

Author, title, year and place of publication etc

Access

How anyone can view the original source Contact us via our website if you have difficulty in accessing any of these.

'References & library'		
Bristol	Nicholas Maclean-Bristol, <i>'Warriors & Priests'</i> , 1995	Google Books
Fryer	Mary Beacock Fryer, <i>'Allan Maclean – Jacobite General'</i> , 1987	Google Books
BRB	<i>'History of Donald and Christina McLean and Their Descendants'</i> , 1995	Ask via 'Contact us'
Our website	www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com	Internet
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Ardgour papers		

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