

MY RED RED ROSE

By Don Gordon

June 2022

- * Alan McLean is Don Gordon's great-great grandfather.
- * This story is based on the fact that, in March 1837, Allan Mclean appeared before the Kilmallie Kirk Sessions when Catharine McLean claimed that Allan was the father of their child, Sarah.
- * Two versions have been placed on this website. This version is for serious researchers whereas the other version is just a good story that can be enjoyed on its own.
- * Language: This narrative has occasional Gaelic words to remind the reader that the characters would have been not have been speaking English. Also, there are some unfamiliar legal terms and traditional Scottish words. A glossary helps with all this - appendix A.
- * This story is consistent with known facts and is accurate enough to be placed with our family history. It is mainly based on the Kirk Sessions (appendix D). However, some details are just made up:-
 1. Allan definitely visited Bellanoch on his way from Duisky to Glasgow at least once, but it is not known whether he went this way on other occasions. Bellanoch added 84 kilometers and seven water crossings to the journey (appendix E)
 2. Allan had a brother, Hugh, but it is not known whether they spent time together in Glasgow, nor whether he would have come via Bellanoch.
 3. It is not known where Allan dwelt in Glasgow. The Sarry Heid is just a guess (appendix E).
 4. Catharine did not marry James McGugan who is a fictitious character. He was placed in the story to create a reason for Catharine delaying three years before making her claim. There definitely was 'a young man about the house' but we do not know who he was (appendix L).
 5. There was not a feud between the McLean's of Ardgour and the McLeans of Bellanoch. This was placed in the story to create a strong reason for Allan not marrying Catharine (appendix J).

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The facts

In March 1837 Allan appeared before the Kilmallie Kirk Sessions when Catharine McLean claimed that he was the father of her child, Sarah.

There is no doubt that this was 'our' Allan, as the minutes of the Kirk Session refer to him as "*Allan McLean, son of Don'd McLean Blaich in the Parish of Kilmallie*".

Catharine was born in 1816. Her parents were John McLean and Sarah McGugan.

Conception had occurred in July 1833 when Allan was staying for a few days at Catharine's father's inn at Bellanoch. He was on his way from Duiskey to Glasgow. This was a long 250 km journey with Allan walking or travelling by horse, and there were eight ferry crossings. Bellanoch was a half-way point.

Places: Catharine was born in Cosandrochaid. She was 17 years old when she met Allan in Bellanoch. Three years later she was in Anichonan when she lodged her complaint. Cosandrochaid is within Tayvallich, 11 kms southwest of Bellanoch. Anichonan is halfway between Cosandrochaid and Ballanoch.

Six months after Bellanoch, John and Allan met at a public house in Glasgow. John was acting on behalf of Catharine, and he had a plan in mind when he set up this meeting. He had a letter that he wanted Allan to sign, thereby admitting that he was the father of the child that Catharine was carrying. This might have been the first that Allan had heard that Catharine was pregnant. John and Allan argued late into the night, and Allan was drunk when he finally signed.

The letter must have been drafted before-hand as the wording was of such quality that it would not have been penned hurriedly on the drinkers' table at the public house – it was erudite and contrite: -

To Miss Catharine McLean, Bellanach
Dear Madam,
I understand that you are in the family way, and that you blame me for the same. I acknowledge my own fault, and should it come on my time, I confess the same, and take you good care to do justice between you and me, as we have to stand at the judgment seat of our Saviour, and give an account of our works, whether good or bad. Therefore go you and give up your time according to Law, and I will be answerable for myself, and by so doing you will much oblige.
Yours,
Allan McLean
Glasgow, 22nd January 1834

Catharine's baby, Sarah, was born in 1834.

Sarah was almost three years old when Catharine made her complaint and laid the letter before the session clerk – exactly three years after Allan had signed it. Catharine lodged this with the Parish of North Knapdale where she was living, and the matter was referred to the Kirk Sessions in the parish of Kilmallie where Allan was living.

The hearing was in the Corpach church, across the loch from Blaich and Duiskey, on 12th March 1837. The minutes stated that when "*interrogated as to the authenticity of a letter of date 22nd Jany 1834, bearing what purported to be his signature Allan admitted the signature to be his, but denied that he ever wrote such a letter himself, or ordered any other person to write it for him. Maintained that he knew nothing of the contents of the paper to which he adhibited his name and that his signature was obtained at a late hour in a Public House in Glasgow when he was the worse of liquor in company with the said John McLean*". Initially Allan "*would not admit his being the father of her child until John McLean and a young man who was about the House would clear the woman upon oath*". Finally, Allan "*confessed to being guilty of fornication with the said Cath McLean about the time*

corresponding with the birth of said child, while lodging for a few days at the House of John McLean, Merch at Bellanoch, when on his way to Glasgow."

Catharine might have been seeking financial alimony from Allan. No decision is recorded in the minutes of the Kirk Session, but similar cases (in the same minute book) incurred a formal rebuke in front of the church congregation, and imposed a fine and ongoing payments for the support of the child. Allan might have paid something straight away. He would not have continued to pay anything because he left for South Australia a few months later.

The baby's birth was not registered until the girl was almost five years old – *"Sarah an illegitimate daughter of Allan McLean parish of Kilmaly and Catherine McLean in this parish born 15th April 1834"*.

There are no indications that Allan had any direct contact with Catharine after 1833, nor that he ever saw his baby Sarah. They took no further part in each other's lives after he migrated. We have no other information about the life events of Catharine and Sarah.

Coincidentally, Allan's sister, Mary lodged a complaint in the same Kilmallie Kirk Sessions, just six weeks after Allan's case. Mary claimed that Ewen Cameron was the father of her child who was soon to be born.

There is a semi-fictionalized story of all this – 'My Red Red Rose' at the bottom of the profiles of Allan and Catharine or J19 in the STORIES directory on the left of the home page of www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com.

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MY RED RED ROSE

By Don Gordon

A GLASGOW PUBLIC HOUSE IN JANUARY 1834

Allan McLean¹ warmly greeted his brother with a rough slap on his back as Hugh² shuffled into the tavern. The younger brother was folding his arms around his chest, to wrap in his coat on this wintery Glasgow evening.

“Well, how was your trip?” Allan enquired in rich Gaelic tones.

Before Hugh answered, he looked around at the crowded tables. There were many candles, a couple of oil lamps, and one gas light over the bar. The room was filled with loud Gaelic chit chat as the men were already well primed. Hugh turned to Allan, “That trip is never easy, as you know. It took me two weeks this time. There are so many rivers to ferry across. I had to beg for ponies, and a couple of short cart rides. I was mostly walking and walking.³”

Allan asked, “What places did you stay at?”

Hugh responded, “Oh, mainly sleeping rough. So, it’s always good to get to the Bellanoch as the halfway point - to rest up for a few days at the inn⁴”. He looked at Allan who nodded for him to continue. “It’s quite a diversion, but that is the way we like to go”.

“Did you see anyone there?”

Hugh did not notice that Allan was particularly curious about people in Bellanoch. “Oh, no one particularly. I was so exhausted that I paid no attention. There were a couple of other travellers, and of course John⁵ the innkeeper and his daughter⁶, with the horses. And I think that lad James⁷ was helping with the stables.” He paused and then added, “Oh, but I did go out deer stalking with John. He is handy with a shot-gun, but we just didn’t sight any.”

The brothers, Allan 22 years old and Hugh 19 years, were drinking at The Sarry Heid⁸. Allan had been staying there for several weeks. This is where he usually lodged whenever he had to visit Glasgow from their Duisy farm.

“What’s the news from home?”

Hugh shrugged, “The same. Of course, there are no oats or barley growing this time of the year. Athair [dad] is always tending the black cattle. He goes out fishing for herring on the loch every morning, and usually brings something home. Mathair [mum] milks the goats⁹. Our pesty sisters are annoying all the time – they are looking after the hens and geese. John is helping athair, and Archibald is growing big enough to be handy. But it is all a struggle.”

Hugh added: “What have you been doing here in Glasgow?”

Hugh had been doing most of the talking, with Allan listening. This was how it was with these brothers. Hugh’s question prompted Allan to explain, with a few words, “There was a Wakefield¹⁰ meeting here”.

1 Fact: Allan McLean – appendix L

2 Imagined: Hugh McLean – appendix L

3 Imagined: The journey between Duisy and Bellanoch and Glasgow – appendix E

4 Fact: Bellanoch Inn – appendix E

5 Imagined: John McLean – appendix L

6 Imagined: Catharine McLean – appendix L

7 Imagined: James McGugan – appendix L

8 Imagined: A public house in Glasgow - appendix E

9 Fact: “Donald grew oats and barley, raised cattle and had interests in herring fishing” (BRB p4).

10 Fact: Edward Gibbon Wakefield conceptualized how colonies should be developed by balancing the availability of land and the availability of labour. His ideas were applied in the colony in South Australia which was founded in December 1836.

Allan thought: *This was my main reason for visiting Glasgow. I wanted to find out about migrating because athair has been thinking about Canada or Australia. There were meetings for people wanting to learn more about migrating to a colony which will be starting in South Australia. It was an enthusiastic crowd here at The Sarry Heid. There will be plenty of good, cheap land. So much more than Duisky. We could grow anything. This is our chance.*¹¹

Hugh did not pick up with this. He was focused on his own immediate plans. "I will only be here in Glasgow for a few days. I must get back home for the foot race around Fort William. All the lads are in it, and some are really serious. I will try your training of a month on bread and cheese. It worked for you last year, when you won that long hard race¹²".

Allan smiled to himself.

Thoughts: *I will not be going in that race again. I have proved that I am good enough. It would be great to see another McLean name inscribed on the cup. However, I can't see Hugh being able to keep up the fierce pace.*

They were becoming tipsy when Allan ordered another whisky for them both.

It was getting late into the evening when suddenly there was a rush of cold air as the street door opened. A large man stepped in. He had a loose-fitting coat, and a long scruffy beard. An imposing figure. He took off his woollen cap as he eased himself into the room. His head rotated from side to side, peering around, searching.

Hugh exclaimed: "Hey, isn't that John, from Bellanoch, over there?"

"John!" Allan called out, "Fancy seeing you here. Have a drink". Allan jovially beckoned him over to their table.

John did not return the smile. He quickly sat down and grasped the tankard which had been in front of Allan. He sipped it and fixed his eyes on Allan. The big man's mood was intent. He was not going to engage in small talk. "I have something to say to you."

This sounded like trouble for Allan. The joviality dissolved.

John paused before proceeding. He had practiced this moment. Perhaps he had started with too much intensity. He raised his eyebrows and pushed his head back. The big man was now trying to make light of something which was weighing heavily on him. He loosened his grip on the half-pint. He was able to summon up a sing-song manner as he announced, "My daughter is in the family way. Six months."

John watched Allan intently to see how he would react. But Allan already had had his suspicions, so this news was not totally unexpected. He did not want to show how he was thinking. He displayed disinterest. He said nothing.

John had fired his opening shot for a confrontation that he had rehearsed over the past few weeks. Seeing that Allan had not reacted, John fired his next shot, "Of course you will have to marry Catharine." His face was white.

Allan was not ready for this. He breathed in deeply. Many thoughts came rushing in.

In the middle of last year, I had to stay at Bellanoch for a week because the brown mare I had borrowed needed to rest up. It looked like it was going lame. Catharine has a good way with horses. And her cousin, James knew a thing or two – he had a room next to the stables. John didn't stop us going to the stables in those evenings. He knew that we didn't need to feed the horses at that time of night. We didn't have to be in the hay-loft. But oh dear – athair's [dad's] hostility to the Bellanoch McLeans. He never explained the reasons for the feud¹³. Maybe someone said something to someone many generations ago. Why are we fighting each other now? We should be one big clan - loyal to our chief, Sir

10 Imagined: Meetings to encourage migration were held in Scotland, but there are no indications that Wakefield was in attendance.

11 Imagined: Allan thoughts are imagined. This is added to create another dimension to how this story is told.

12 Fact: Race - Allan won a foot race after eating nothing but bread and cheese for a month – see J23 in the SMALL PRINT on the home page.

13 Imagined: There have often been tensions between different parts of the McLean clan, but there are no indications that there was conflict between the branch of McLeans in Ardgor and those around Bellanoch. This fiction was created because it suited this story.

Fitzroy¹⁴. The only thing that was clear was that athair would never agree to an Argdour McLean marrying a Bellanoch McLean. I can never defy him.

Allan, took hold of Hugh's whisky and moved it across in front of himself. He looked down at the drink in his hand and said in a quiet, resolute voice, "Tha [no]. Athair would not abide it."

At this, colour rushed to John's face. He reached into his ample coat and dragged out a neat envelope and unfolded a paper. He ceremoniously spread it on the table. "Then you will sign this, OR marry her. You must choose." He fired his big shot.

"What is this?" exclaimed Allan, looking at John, not at the paper.

"It's saying that you visited our inn SIX months ago." John stressed the 'six', while avoiding the real intent of the letter.

Allan watched with concern as John again reached into a pocket. He pulled out a quill pen and jar of ink and carefully uncorked the jar and then, with a flourish, the big man pushed the jar, feather and paper across to Allan's side of the table. He leaned forward across towards Allan. He impatiently scruffed his beard.

"Ah, not so fast." Allan started. "Yes of course I was there. I have been at your inn many times. Me and Cathy, we". He did not know how to continue.

Hugh had not been saying anything. His eyes shifted from one to the other as he attentively followed this interchange between his brother and the innkeeper. He picked up the letter and examined it while Allan and John continued their tussle.

Allan asked, "What will you do with it?"

John said casually, "I will just give it to Catharine."

Allan thought: *Does that mean that he expects Catharine will not do anything with it? So why did they want me to sign?*

John grabbed the letter from Hugh's hand and placed it back on the table. He was edgy. "This is where you sign". His long finger stabbed at a place near the bottom of the paper.

Allan was flustered now. It was beginning to show. He wriggled in his seat. Nervously he tapped his half-pint on the table. The booze was taking hold of him. Once again, Allan's thoughts came crowding in.

Was it really me? Was she really in the family way? No one can argue with six months. Cathy might not even carry to full term. Certainly, I can't marry her. I can't go against athair. She might marry some other lad. A lot could happen. Why had I welcomed John to this table? He should just leave. But he was here, across the table, with the quill, the ink, and the letter. He was in a hurry. He is big. I am a deer in the hunter's sights. It was just a piece of paper. Nothing will come of it.

"Tha [yes], I will sign". Allan took up the quill and signed hastily. He pushed the paper back towards John and then placed the feather next to the ink jar. Allan looked away from John and his eyes searched the tavern for some help. The bar-room was beginning to empty now. There was still loud talk interposed with occasional singing of dirty ditties, and raucous laughter.

I am alone. There is nothing to give me any support.

Allan, explaining when it was too late for explanations, "I just can't marry her. I can't go against my athair".

John huffed, "I don't care about your father. I care about my daughter. You got her into this state and that is the way it is." John was angry, but gleeful now that the paper was signed. Allan had been an easier target than he had expected. He had shot him down quickly.

John folded the letter with care and shoved it firmly into the inside pocket of his jacket.

14 Fact: Sir Fitzroy Jeffreys Grafton Maclean was the 24th chief from 1818 to 1847 – see our F20 in SMALL PRINT in www.christinaandonaldmclean.com.

John jumped up and abruptly departed with only a grunted farewell. Without looking back, he strode into the cold and windy night, where the streets were quiet at that late hour.

As Allan's younger brother, Hugh had remained silent while Allan had engaged with John. As soon as the big man had left, Hugh burst out with, "What was all that about? You should not have signed!"

Allan responded defensively, "I cannot deny I was there at the inn. What have I got to lose!"

Hugh repeated, "You should not have signed. You haven't asked athair about Catharine. You don't really know what he would say. Anyway", he continued, "it might have been some other lad passing through."

Allan began, "Oh, no one else. She said", words faded.

I have seen her blossom in the past three years. She is now 17 years and I am five years older than her. We had got to know each other – for a few days on each of my trips. We liked being together around the horses. There was always something happening between us. Always life.

Hugh: "What did you expect with dàirich? [sex]. And what do you expect when you get a girl pregnant! Her father comes to demand you marry her. You know that is what happens. And then you sign a paper. You are crazy."

Hugh had rarely let loose like this on his older brother. Allan was speechless as the enormity of everything was beginning to crash in on him.

Hugh changed track, "I looked at that letter. It must have been drafted before-hand because the wording was of such quality that it would not have been penned hurriedly by John on a drinkers' table in some public house. It was erudite and contrite. You didn't see how well that agreement was drafted. You didn't read what you signed. He wanted to get you to marry Catharine. But he expected that you would not, so he got someone to draft that letter. It was a trap."

Allan said "Yes, I was trapped".

John must have had a plan in mind when he found me here. He knew that I always stayed at The Sarry Heid, and he was stalking me. Catharine wanted John to front me. He was acting on her behalf. We never spoke about it, but Catharine wanted us to get married. In the end, we argued too much, and she was not interested in migration.

Hugh remarked on how he knew her. "I have met Catharine a few times when I have stayed at Bellanoch, but I did not know there was anything between the two of you. What in God's name were you doing with her!" Allan did not respond, so Hugh kept going, "What do you think about her? She seems a nice enough girl. She has a pretty face, ruby cheeks, buxom and a musical laugh."

"Oh yes", Allan breathed in, with a little smile, "That's how she is". Allan didn't add to this, but he was thinking.

Like Cathy, Hugh is never lost for words - but I struggle to put words together. I am always thinking. I have strong feelings. Ideas begin to take shape in my mind. Half thoughts which drift into other fragments. These are muddled and even more jumbled when I try to explain what I am thinking. When I try to say something out loud, the words tumble all over each other. With words, I am lost. I am good at doing things. I can win a running race and I can handle my team of horses and the plough. Cathy liked it when I told her stories about my strong great-grandma, Jane Robertson¹⁵ at Achnacarry. Mathair [mum] had told me about how Jane had come from an upper-class family in Aberdeenshire and met great-grandpa, Donald Cameron, when they were both training in Aberdeen. Her family disowned her because she eloped, and they settled in Achnacarry where Donald was the sawmiller. Jane could not speak Gaelic when she got there and was always an outsider - the 'lowland wife'. Despite this she taught grandma English and handicrafts. Cathy was the only one I could talk to like this. She was interested in what I had to say. For Cathy the words just flow. She always knows what to say. She's quick with an answer. We enjoyed bantering, and she usually got the better of me. She often had the best ideas – but she's not always right. I was alive with her. We were good for each other. I could see that something was coming when she was making a point. She would thrust her arms stiffly at her sides, clench her fists, straighten her back, lift her chin, tighten her lips. She narrowed her green eyes and would throw back her wild red hair¹⁶. She would stamp her feet and scrunch up her face.

15 Fact: Jane Robertson – see 'D57 – Donald Cameron & Jane Robertson' in www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com

16 Imagined: Red hair and green eyes are quite rare in Scotland, but this fiery stereotyping suits our story.

Allan articulated the last thought out loud. “She knew how to make an argument – she would tap her feet impatiently and screw up her wee nose” He immediately regretted that he had expressed this because it gave Hugh the opportunity to mock him by interrupting.

“Oh yeah”, Hugh grinned, “Like one of your highland bulls flaring its nostrils when he’s about to charge in for an attack at you”. Hugh knew how to get under Allan’s skin.

Powered by the whisky, Allan spat back, “No bull, she’s like a deer.”

Yes, the young does in the hills behind Duisky¹⁷. Springing lively. That’s Cathy. Feisty. Cathy was so full of life. Everything happens around her.

Hugh teased, “Is she your red red rose?” Now he couldn’t stop himself. It was the booze. He had to burst into song: “O my Love is like a red, red rose / That’s newly sprung in June; / O my Love is like the melody / That’s sweetly played in tune”¹⁸.

This song was by Robert Burns who had visited The Sarry Heid¹⁹. The song was well known around Glasgow and so when Hugh started singing, the next table joined in. Their drunken lyrics were slurred and mistimed. They could only mumble the next few stanzas then finished strongly by guffawing “I will come again, my luve, / Though it were ten thousand mile”.

Their hilarity was not shared by Allan. His jumbled thought kept bubbling around in his head.

We don’t talk about red-red roses. Cathy would be puzzled if I whispered sweet-talk about red red roses. What is love? The song tells me nothing about love. What does red red roses say about the lass? Or say about the laddy? Or say why they want to be together? It’s not just what we say to each other, it’s what we do together. Think of mathair [mum] and athair [dad]. You never hear talk like that. Mathair gave birth to all us bairns [children], cooked and washed, milked the goats, and never stopped working with athair²⁰. I can’t see Catharine and me working together like that. When I passed through Bellanoch again last month, it was different. She seemed distant. She was a bit moody. Maybe she was worried when she said something about being late with her sileadh-mios [periods]. She kept away from me. We argued about handling the horses. We argued about her dad’s deer stalking. We argued about what was happening at the inn. Before, our bantering was not a bad thing. It was exciting. I didn’t mind that at the beginning. However, I wish she would just step back a bit and not quarrel about everything. It is good how mathair listens to athair. Cathy was absolutely against the idea of migration. She questioned, “Why risk the seas, to try in an unknown land? You could lose everything”²¹.

Hugh might have guessed what Allan was thinking as he broke in, “Did you ask her to leave auld Scotia's shore and go 10,000 miles to the Indies?”²² He pushed this out with a snigger.

Hugh has no reason to mock me. To attack me. He is three years younger than me. He cannot be an expert about love. Yes, I came many miles, a long hard journey from Duisky, to see Cathy each time. And when I got there, it was so good to be with her. But 10,000 miles? Oh, we squabbled about migration.

In his annoyance, Allan responded quickly. “That was our biggest argument. She would never have come with us - to Australia or Canada or anywhere else.

Hugh and Allan continued this back and forwards for some time, but the alcohol and lateness eventually forced them to bed.

17 Fact: Deer hunting - 1844 was the first year of an income being recorded for shooting in Ardgour. The 13th McLean Laird, Alexander, built a lodge for deer hunting in Blaich some time before 1858 – see page 2 of our E30.

18 Robert (Rabby) Burns’ poetry – appendix K

19 Fact: Robert Burns: It is true that Robert Burns was at ‘The Saracen’s Head’ (‘The Sarry Heid’) - but it was an earlier version of a tavern by the same name, located in different site in that same street – Gallowsgate – appendix E

20 Imagined: Allan’s parents’ relationship – appendix J

21 Fact: Eventually Allan lost everything, but that was after three decades of prosperity in the colony.

22 Fact: Distances: Interestingly, it is 10,200 miles between Bellanoch and Adelaide. The mention of 10,000 miles is from the song ‘My Red Red Rose’ and the mention of the Indies is from another Robert Burns’ poem, “Will Ye Go To The Indies, My Mary?” The Indies (Jamaica) is 4600 miles from Bellanoch. Appendix K has the full text of these poems.

By the next day, Allan was not thinking about Catharine. The letter and Hugh's doubts were forgotten. That was the end of it.

KIRK SESSIONS IN CORPACH IN MARCH 1837

Three years later, on an autumn Sabbath, the McLeans were assembling with other parishioners outside the Corpach church, about to move in. The large family had rowed across the narrow loch on Allan's father's herring dory²³ with several other families from Duiskey and Blaich.

Allan was approached by Donald Matheson²⁴ who was a well-known crofter from Blaich, a small community near to the Duiskey farm. Donald, glanced at Allan's family and then fixed his eyes on Allan as he stated formally, "As beadle, I compear you to the kirk sederunt²⁵".

Allan took a deep breath and swayed back while Mr Matheson continued in an official tone, "You must attend after today's divine service, to answer a complaint from Catharine McLean of North Knapdale²⁶". He had delivered his order and did not wait for any response as he turned and marched into the church.

Allan's parents and siblings had been straining to hear what was going on. They looked puzzled but had no time to ask questions or to react as everyone began to move towards the huge doors of the Kirk.

Before Allan had time to think, he was swept up with all the parishioners as they moved into the church and settled in their usual pews. The service was starting but Allan was absorbed in his thoughts. He did not join in the singing of the hymns or listen to the readings from the Gaelic bible. He heard nothing of the preaching of the parish minister, Reverend Thomas Davidson. Allan's jaw was stiff, and his fists were clenched.

This must be about Catharine's baby. I haven't thought about her all this time. I heard gossip that her father had forced her to marry her cousin, James, the stable hand. Who else would have married her – with her guilty past, and another man's child to care for. And then I heard that James had been killed when he was thrown from a horse cart. I haven't heard anything about whether a baby was born. I am wondering why she waited so long to make her complaint. It's been three years, so why now? Perhaps she was left without support after her brief marriage had ended when James was killed. Perhaps she was prompted to act now because she had heard that my whole family were about to leave for the colony. I will never see Catharine again. My family have no idea about this. They would be perplexed about this because I didn't tell them anything about my confrontation with John at Glasgow so long ago. I don't think Hugh said anything. I would not have dared talk to athair but now I want athair and Hugh to be with me for the Kirk Session because I don't know what will happen.

After the service, the families began to disburse. Allan, his father and Hugh remained. They waited for the court to start.

Five serious men²⁷ seated themselves at a large table at the far end of the somber chapel. Allan recognised some of them. Rev Thomas Davidson was the moderator. He sat in the middle, with two elders on each side. Donald Matheson was to his right, and he appeared to be the scribe as he was writing in a large minute book. Next to Mr Matheson was Hugh McLean from Ardgour who Allan knew. Allan could not identify the two elders on the left - Duncan Cameron and Alex Fraser.

Everybody's attention was drawn to the Reverend who, with a grand gesture announced, "I declare the opening of this sederunt"

"I compear Allan McLean." Rev Davidson eyed Allan and beckoned him to come forward, to stand in front of the table.

"Allan McLean, I exhort you to solemnly tell the truth"

Allan, "Tha [yes]"

23 Imagined: It is not known what sort of boat Donald used for fishing but we are guessing it was a dory.

24 Imagined: Donald Matheson - appendix L

25 See glossary.

26 Fact: Most of this dialogue in the Kirk Session is closely derived from the minutes – appendix D.

27 Imagined: Members of the Sederunt - appendix F

"Are you the son of Donald McLean of Blaich?"

Allan, "Tha, I am"

Reading from notes, Rev Davidson stated, "Catharine McLean of Tayvallich has claimed that fornication occurred while you were lodging for a few days at the House of John McLean, merchant at Bellanoch, when on your way to Glasgow. This was in July 1833, nine months before the birth of the child, so the birth date corresponds with your stay at Bellanoch". He paused, looked directly at Allan then proceeded, "You are here to answer a charge of fornication brought against you. You are also charged with being the father of Catharine's child, Sarah. You may sit down."

Rev Davidson explained to his fellows at the table, "The Parish of North Knapdale, where the complainant lives, has referred this matter to the Parish of Kilmallie where the defendant lives. I will read the minutes from the referring parish".

- *At Tayvillich [Tayvallich] 22nd January 1837, the Kirk Session of North Knapdale being met and constituted, sederunt the Rev D... McLachlan moderator, Duncan McKellar, Hugh McNiel and Albert Stewart elders.*
- *Compeared Catharine McLean, Arichoman, who stated that she was delivered of a female child on the 15th April 1834. And that Allan McLean, son of Don'd McLean Blaich in the Parish of Kilmallie was the father of said child.*
- *Catharine laid before the meeting a letter from Allan McLean of date 22nd Jan 1834. This acknowledged him having committed guilt with her, and if the birth of her child should correspond to the time he had criminal connexion with her (which time is not stated) he confessed himself the father of said child.*
- *The session having taken these documents into their consideration and instruct their Beadle [parish officer] to summon the said Allan McLean to compear [to appear in court] before them on Sabbath immediately after Divine Service to answer to the charge of fornication brought against him by Cath McLean residing in the Parish of North Knapdale, as stated in the above extract.*

"Stand up", Davidson commanded Allan.

"How do you answer this complaint. Did you commit this fornication?"

Allan, "Nae [no]"

"Are you the father of the child?"

Allan, "Nae, I am not the father of her pregnancy."

Reverend Davidson, "Sit down while I present the case. I have a letter dated 22nd January 1834, bearing what is purported to what you have adhibited [signed]. Is this your signature?" Rev Davidson leant over, held the letter close to Allan and pointed to a signature near the bottom of the letter.

Allan looked at the letter, then turned momentarily to his brother and father before glancing back at the letter.

Allan, "Yes, it is my signature."

Davidson, "Now I will ask elder Duncan Cameron to read the letter. You have already admitted that you signed it, now listen carefully to the whole of it."

To Miss Catharine McLean, Bellanach

Dear Madam,

I understand that you are in the family way, and that you blame me for the same. I acknowledge my own fault, and should it come on my time, I confess the same, and take you good care to do justice between you and me, as we have to stand at the judgment seat of our Saviour, and give an account of our works, whether good or bad. Therefore go you and give up your time according to Law, and I will be answerable for myself, and by so doing you will much oblige.

Yours,

Allan McLean
Glasgow, 22nd January 1834

Davidson instructed Duncan Cameron to hand the letter to Allan.

Davidson stated, "You sent this letter from Glasgow to Catharine McLean".

Allan spoke loudly and quickly, "No I did not send this letter. I never wrote such a letter myself. I did not order any other person to write it for me. I know nothing of the contents of the paper".

Allan could see the scribe Matheson was writing quickly in the minute book.

After this outburst, Allan looked up, then returned his gaze to the letter he was holding in his trembling hands. He continued more deliberately, slowly, with determination, "The inn-keeper got me to sign this at a late hour in a public house in Glasgow, when I was the worse of liquor. It was more than three years ago."

Davidson, "I see". He was not impressed.

"I have three statements here – from Catharine McLean of Arichnonan, John McLean, merchant of Bellanoch, and from James McGugan, stable hand of Arichnonan". Rev Davidson handed three sheets of paper to elder Cameron who read the statements.

- Catharine McLean: I had carnal connections with Allan McLean in July 1833 in Bellanoch. I did not have guilt with any other man in that month²⁸.
- John McLean: Allan McLean stayed at my Bellanoch House for five nights in July 1833. Around that time, I did not see Catharine McLean with opportunities for fornication with any man, other than the said Allan McLean who signed the letter in Glasgow on 21st January 1834²⁹.
- James McGugan (deceased): I had a room next to the stables of the Bellanoch House and I heard the voices of Allan and Catherine in the hay loft on several nights in July 1833.

Davidson, "Allan McLean, stand up. Now, what do you say? Do you confess to carnal connection?"

Allan did not hear the reverend's demand. He was wondering about James. Allan remembered him at the inn - as the stable-hand and Catharine's cousin. He had heard that after Catharine gave birth, her father arranged for her to marry James. Allan did not know that John had got James to sign a statement implicating Allan in the birth of Sarah who had become James' step-daughter. However, Allan knew of rumours that, a couple of years after the marriage, James was killed in a fall from a horse and cart.

Davidson repeated the accusation, "Do you confess to fornication?"

Allan's mind was racing.

28 Imagined: Although notations about no other 'carnal connections' are in many other minutes, this is not included in the minutes for Catharine and Allan. We have added it here because it is an essential element for the case against Allan.

29 Imagined: Comments about the section of the minutes where Allan "*would not admit his being the father of her child until the said John McLean and a young man who was about the House would clear the woman upon oath*".

- Change of plea: The minutes indicate that, in the hearing, Allan initially did not admit to being the father, but then changed his plea when confronted by evidence, under oath, from the two men.
- 'Clear': In the minutes, the context of the word 'clear' meant that the men were 'supporting' her claim that Allan was the father. This was the purpose of her claim, rather than clearing her name. She was not asserting that she did not have sex (with Allan, or anyone else) - she had already admitted delivering a child.
- Statements: There is no direct evidence that written statements by John and 'James' were produced. However, their oaths must have been presented in this form at Corpach because their evidence was not mentioned when Catharine had lodged her claim in North Knapdale (where the men lived), and it is unlikely that either of the men (or Catharine) would have travelled from North Knapdale to Corpach for the hearing.

Hey, why was James was so involved? *How is it fair that the case against me was just Catharine, her father and her erstwhile husband – and my signature. Why did I sign! But I was there. I cannot disavow it. How much will I have to pay? They can't force me, if I go to the colony.*

Allan, hesitated, paused, then puffed, “Tha³⁰”

Davidson, “And are you the father of the child?”

Allan, head down, defeated, and answered quietly, “Tha”.

The Reverend Davidson whispered with the elders for a minute and there was much nodding, and occasional glance at the defendant. Allan remained standing as he looked anxiously from one face to the other of each of the sederunt members.

Looking grimly at Allan, Rev Davidson stated slowly, “This Kirk sessions, having taken the declaration and confession into consideration, unanimously agree³¹ to instruct the moderator to rebuke you for the sin of fornication, and to exhort you to repent of the same and to be earnest at the Throne of Grace for mercy and pardon, through Faith in the blood of atonement shed for the remission of sins, so that others may hear and fear, and sin not after the same manner³².”

Davidson continued quickly, “The Kirk Sessions also agree that you are liable to all the expenses of maintaining of the child until the expiry of the ordinary period appointed by law, and that you settle with the treasurer of the Poor Fund by paying the ordinary fine of £1/13/4”.

The reverend explained how this will happen. “Next Sabbath, you must attend the Divine Service. You will stand in front of the congregation, and I will, as moderator, rebuke you. You must then pay your dues to the treasurer who will pass this onto the Poor Fund in North Knapdale. That parish will then see to it that Catharine McLean receives what she is entitled to.”

Allan was then directed to leave the kirk.

The father kept a tense silence on the dory trip back to Duisky. As they were tying it up, Donald chided Allan with, “Well, you got yourself into a real mess. You will have to front up and pay up. Expect nothing from me”.

It would not have been different even if I had talked to athair in the beginning - regardless of the feud with those McLeans.

In the following sabbath, Allan submitted himself to the rebuke and made the payment.

ON THE NAVARINO IN AUGUST 1837

Six months after the Kirk Sessions, Allan was leaning over the Navarino hand-railings and looked out as the Graves End wharves gradually shrunk out of sight. He was immersed in his thoughts about recent events.

In the months after the Kirk Sessions, Allan had been busy as he was the main one making arrangements for the family’s migration. He was the oldest child and the best organiser. He had to negotiate the cheapest fares, arrange for freighting a plough, and pre-purchasing land.

All this entailed several trips to Glasgow, but he did not call in at Bellanoch along the way from Duisky.

Coincidentally, Allan’s sister, Mary lodged a complaint in the same Kilmallie Kirk Sessions, just six weeks after Allan’s case. Mary claimed³³ that Ewen Cameron was the father of her child who was soon to be born. She had become pregnant when they were both working at the Ardgour Inn at Corran. It appears that Mary had a child around June 1837. The child might not have survived as no record of a birth has been found, and he or she is not

30 Fact: Allan had already admitted that he had signed the letter and he could not continue to resist, after he was confronted with the evidence from John and James.

31 Fact: Kirk session decisions – appendix G

32 Imagination: The minutes for this case did not specify a penalty so, in this story, wording is taken from similar cases recorded in the same minute book.

33 Fact: Mary McLean’s paternity claim against Ewen Cameron – appendix N

mentioned when Mary migrated with her parents and siblings, just a couple of months after the child would have been born.

On board the Navarino, the large McLean family was a major presence – 10 children with their parents - among 250 passengers – thrust together for many months.

Allan kept returning to the handrails as the days stretched to weeks. It was a place to contemplate. To reflect over all that had happened, and to plan for what might be in front of him. At first, he kept looking down at the water as the grimy Thames gradually transformed into the busy channel and then he looked up and out to the expanses of the ocean. The way seemed open to him now.

What will it all be like in the new colony? We must quickly take up the 80 acres we have already paid for. What sort of stock and cropping will be best in this strange land? What supplies would we need?

Allan did not know how things were to eventuate. After a four-month voyage, the McLeans arrived in Adelaide in December 1837. Allan continued on to Van Dieman's Land for a month to buy farm supplies. As the family settled into the new colony Allan was the first ploughman³⁴ and harvested the first crop of wheat³⁵. He built their house on the small farm near Adelaide then, when the family settled in Strathalbyn three years later, he built the McLean homestead, Auchanada's, and then his own home, Meadowbank. In 1844, after seven years in the colony, he married Catherine Dawson. They had eleven children. Allan became a successful farmer as he acquired many farming properties in the district. However, at the age of 67 years, he sold up everything and unsuccessfully tried to establish himself in another farming district. He was bankrupted. At the age of 79, he died a relatively poor man.

As for Catharine, there are no indications that Allan had any direct contact with her after 1833, nor that he ever saw Sarah, their baby. They took no further part in each other's lives after Allan settled in South Australia. However, in January 1839, when Allan had already been in the colony for two years, Catharine registered the birth of Sarah in North Knapdale. By this time, Sarah was almost five years old. It is not known what prompted Catharine to register the birth at this time. Catharine must still have had Allan on her mind because she made a point of wording the registration as "*Sarah an illegitimate daughter of Allan McLean parish of Kilmaly and Catherine McLean in this parish born 15th April 1834*". There is no other information about the life events of Catharine. There is a suggestion (but no evidence) that Sarah married John McFarlane and they migrated to Canada.

This was all ahead of Allan. He knew nothing of what was to come while he was still on the wide ocean. He kept leaning over the handrails and speculating.

After we have set up athair's farm, I will get my own land. Will I have a wife? Will I find a woman who could work with me? What will the women be like in this wee colony? Will they be bonnie? What if Cathy had wanted to come? She would have done well. The colony would be just the place for a strong woman who knew her mind. Someone who would keep pushing forward. Oh, why am I thinking about her now? Will wee Sarah grow up without a father? What is ahead for Catharine now? I have paid my price by just facing the rebuke and paying up the pounds for our few nights in the hayloft. But she has paid a very high price. Is she broken or will she be able to keep springing up like a deer? She was 'My sprightly, sprightly doe', but was she 'My Red Red Rose'? I reacted when Hugh teased me so long ago - the idea of soft talk didn't match how I had felt. But today, looking out over this railing, I wonder what it would be like if she was here by my side, on our way to who-knows-what. I could hold a rose in my hand right now.

..ooOoo..

34 Fact: First ploughman: see J20 at the bottom of Allan's profile in www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com.

35 Fact: First wheat crop: see G60 in the SMALL PRINT on the left of the home page of the McLean website.

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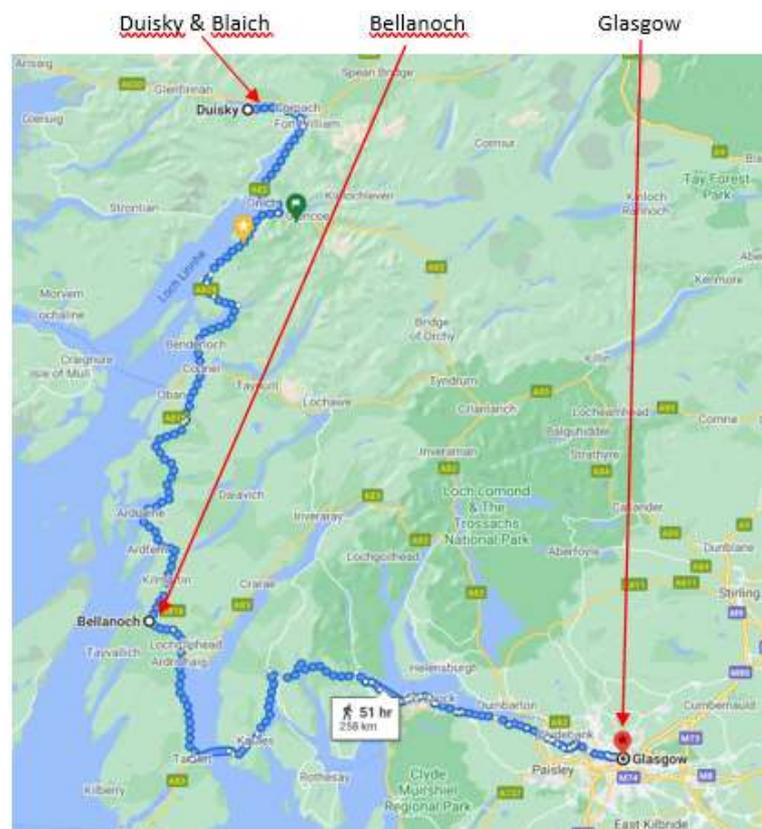
Glossary

Source: learngaelic.net/dictionary

adhibit	signature	Old legal English
athair	father	Scottish Gaelic
bairn	child	Traditional Scottish
beadle	church official for minor offenders	Old legal English
chan	no	Scottish Gaelic
compear	to appear for a court (witness or summon)	Old legal English
dàirich	a crude expression for sexual intercourse	Scottish Gaelic
dorry	a small boat	
family way	pregnant	Old English
fornication	illicit sexual intercourse	Traditional Scottish
gaol	love	
ith mo chac	eat my shit (swearing))	Scottish gaelic
kirk	church	Traditional Scottish
ladd	girl or young woman	Traditional Scottish
lass	boy or young man	Traditional Scottish
mathair	Mother	Scottish Gaelic
nae	no	Scottish Gaelic
càirdeas gnèitheasach OR seags	sexual intercourse	Scottish Gaelic
sederant	ecclesiastical assembly or church court	Old legal English
sileadh-mios	menstrual period	Scottish Gaelic
tha	yes	Scottish Gaelic
tolla-thon	arsehole (swearing)	Scottish Gaelic
wee	little	Traditional Scottish
"As beadle, I compear you to the kirk sederunt."	"As a church official, I am summoning you to appear at the church court."	Old legal English

Places

Locality	Whereabouts	Relevance
Achananda's	Strathalbyn	McLean homestead
Achnacarry	23 kms north of Fort William	Residence of Allan's great grandparents, Donald Cameron & Jane Robertson. Birthplace of Christ'n Cameron.
Adelaide	South Australia	McLeans migrated here in 1838
Arichonan or Arichoman	5 kms walk southwest of Bellanoch	Catharine was living here when she lodged the complaint on January 1837
Bellanoch	127 kms from Blaich and 127 kms from Glasgow	John McLean's inn
Blaich	'Village' near Fort William – south side of Loch Eil	Residence of Donald McLean and Christina McPhee and their first 5 children.
Corpach	Village near Fort William – north side of Loch Eil	Kirk Sessions hearing in March 1837
Cosandrochaid	Village near Tay Vallich	Birthplace of Catherine
Duisky	Next to Blaich	Farm of Donald McLean and Christina McPhee and their 10 children
Fort William	The east end of Loch Eil	
Glasgow	Major city on the western side of Scotland	Where Allan signed his admission
Hilton	80 acre farm near Adelaide	McLeans set up the farm
Kilmallie	Parish near Fort William	Includes Blaich & Duisky
North Knapdale	Parish of North Knapdale	Includes Bellanoch, Arichoman, Cosandrochaid & Tay Vallich
Meadow Bank	Strathalbyn	Allan's homestead around 1845
Strathalbyn	South Australia	McLeans settled here in 1841
Tay Vallich or Tayvollich	11 kms walk from Ballanoch	The Kirk Sessions was held here when Catharine made her complaint in 1837.



Time line

		Intervals
1811, Feb 12th	Allan: Baptised in Blaich, Ardgour – parents were Donald McLean & Christina McPhee.	22 years old in 1833
1814, Jan 27th	Hugh: Allan's brother was baptised in Blaich – parents were Donald McLean & Christina McPhee	3 years younger than Allan
1816, May 5th	Catharine: Born in Cosandrochaid, North Knapdale – parents were John McLean & Sarah McGugan - see her profile in www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com .	5 years younger than Allan
1818, April 2nd	Mary: Allan's sister was born in Duiskey – parents were Donald McLean & Christina McPhee	7 years younger than Allan
1833, July	Bellanoch: Allan stayed a few nights at John McLean's inn.	Allan was 22 and Catharine was 17 years old
1834, Jan 22 nd	Admission: In Glasgow, John got Allan to sign a letter acknowledging blame for Catharine being in the family way – appendix D	6 months after conception
1834, April 15 th	Sarah: Born in North Knapdale – parents Allan McLean & Catharine McLean, see registration in Jan 1839 below, appendix M	3 months after admission
1837, Jan 22 nd	Complaint: Catharine lodged a complaint in Tayvallich (Parish of North Knapdale).	33 months after Sarah's birth
1837, Feb 28 th	The complaint was presented at the Kilmallie Kirk sessions. An order was issued for Allan McLean to appear.	
1837, March 12th	Hearing: Allan faced a hearing in Corpach (Parish of Kilmallie).	38 months after admission
1837, April 24th	Mary: Allan's sister lodged a claim in Kilmallie Kirk Session that Ewen Cameron was the father of the child she was about to give birth to - appendix N	4 months before migration
1837, Aug 25th	Migration: The whole family (Allan, with his parents and nine siblings) left from London. They arrived in South Australia on 6 th December 1837.	5 months after the hearing
1839, Jan 1st	Registration: Sarah's birth on 15 th April 1834 was registered in North Knapdale – appendix M	Almost 5 years after her birth
1841	Strathalbyn: Allan settled into Strathalbyn	
1844, Feb 29th	Wedding: Allan married Catherine Dawson in South Australia	11 years after Sarah's birth
1840, Sept 29th	Mary married Adam Abercrombie	
1849, May 15th	Hugh married Christina Black	
1890, Sept 2nd	Allan died	Aged 79 years

Appendix D

Catharine McLean's claim against Allan McLean regarding the child, Sarah, who was born in 1834

Minutes of North Knapdale Kirk sessions at Tayvallich on 23rd Jan 1837

Source: Page 14 of Kilmallie minutes on 29th Feb 1837 - Scotland's People, Virtual Volumes, CH2/719/00001-00025

Eoderm die?? The moderator laid before the session a letter from the session clerk of the Parish of North Knapdale dated the 23rd instant, enclosing the following extract.

At Tayvillich [Tayvallich] 22nd January 1837, the Kirk Session of North Knapdale being met and constituted, sederunt The Rev Don.... McLachlan moderator, Duncan McKellar, Hugh McNiel and Albert Stewart elders. Inter alia compeared Catharine McLean, Arichoman, who stated that she was delivered of a female child on the 15th April 1834. And that Allan McLean, son of Don'd McLean Blaich in the Parish of Kilmallie was the father of said child. She at the same time laid before the meeting a letter from Allan McLean acknowledging having committed guilt with her, and if the birth of her child should correspond to the time he had criminal connexion (with her, which time is not stated) he confessed himself the father of said child.

and a copy letter from Allan McLean referred to in said minute of date 22nd Jan 1834.

Glasgow 22nd January 1834

Dear Madam

I understand that you are in the family way, and that you blame me for the same. I acknowledge my own fault, and should it come on my time, I confess the same, and take you good care to do justice between you and me, as we have to stand at the judgment seat of our Saviour, and give an account of our works, whether good or bad. Therefore go you and give up your time according to Law, and I will be answerable for myself, and by so doing you will much oblige.

Yours ??

Allan McLean

To Miss Catharine McLean, Bellanach

The session having taken these documents into their consideration and after reasoning?? instruct their Beadle to summon the said Allan McLean to compear before them on Sabbath immediately after Divine Service to answer to the charge of fornication brought against him by Cath McLean residing in the Parish of North Knapdale, as stated in the above extract.

Minutes of Kilmallie Kirk sessions at Corpach 12th Mar 1837

Source: Page 15 in Scotland's People, Virtual Volumes, CH2/719/00001-00025

At the Church of Kilmalie the 12th day of March 1837. The Kirk Session of Kilmalie being met and constituted sederunt the Rev Thomas Davidson moderator, Alex res?? Don'd Matheson, Hugh McLean, Alex Fraser & Duncan Cameron elders.

Compeared Allan McLean, son of Donald McLean Blaich, and being solemnly exhorted to tell the truth, declared as follows vis being interrogated as to the charge of fornication brought against him by Cath McLean in the Parish of North Knapdale and his being the father of the child born of her 15th April 1834. Confessed to being guilty of fornication with the said Cath McLean about the time corresponding with the birth of said child, while lodging for a few days at the House of John McLean, Merch at Bellanoch, when on his way to Glasgow, but would not admit his being the father of her child until the said John McLean and a young man who was about the House would clear the woman upon oath. Being further interrogated as to the authenticity of a letter of date 22nd Jany 1834, bearing what purported to be his signature, sent to the said Cath McLean by him from Glasgow, and in which he acknowledged guilt and being the father of her pregnancy, provided it corresponded with his time, admitted the signature to be his, but denied that he ever wrote such a letter himself, or ordered any other person to write it for him. Maintained that he knew nothing of the contents of the paper to which he ad hibited his name and that his signature was obtained at a late hour in a Public House in Glasgow when he was the worse of liquor in company with the said Hugh McLean.

How these details were found

- Fiona Harris (Allan's 3 X great grand-daughter) found these entries in the minutes of the Kirk Sessions.
- It is a remarkable find because the minutes are not indexed and so it is just a random pursual of the hand-written notes which are difficult to read. They cannot be searched, except by parish and date.
- Fiona had no reason to look at the minutes of any particular date or for a particular person or event.
- She just chanced to notice the names of people we are interested in.
- It was like scooping your hand anywhere on the beach and flicking up a family gem which you didn't even know was missing.

Travelling from Duisky to Bellanoch to Glasgow

- **The journey:** Two centuries ago, this was a 258 km journey with overnight stays at the half-way point at Bellanoch. This was 131 km from Duisky/Blaich with five water crossings, and then 127 kms from Bellanoch to Glasgow, with three more crossings. It is speculated that, in those times they had to walk, with perhaps occasional access to ponies or horse and cart, on tracks and rudimentary roads. They might have had to wait for boatmen for the eight crossings over rivers and lochs. Google maps indicate that this would take 51 hours to walk (ambitious) or now-days, a car trip via the A828 & A816 would be 300 km in less than five hours.
- **Description:** In 1842, G & P Anderson gave a contemporaneous description, of travel between Fort William (near Duisky) to Bellanoch – Along the southern shores of Loch Linnhe, Portacroich, Connel, Oban, Loch Nell, Kilmelford, Barbreck, Kilmartin and Bellanoch. The description points out places of interest to tourists. It notes that *“The roads throughout this excursion are good, though very hilly: and no conveyance except horse and cart can be had except from Oban. Owing to the superabundant moisture of the climate, however, the surface is always damp and boggy, and we would therefore warn the tourist in general to keep to the main-road, and not to attempt cross-cuts, however tempting they may be in apparently shortening distances. Lochgilphead to Kiels on Loch Swin is nineteen miles and on the way there are two inns Tay Villich [Tay Vallich] and Bellanoch, dividing the distance in three nearly equal stages of six miles each.”*³⁶.
- **Route:** The most direct walk from Duisky to Glasgow, is 174 kms whereas it is 258 kms going via Bellanoch. This lengthens the trip by 84 kms. This is a significant diversion, especially in times when travel was so difficult. The direct route is a third shorter, with only one water crossing. The only crossing was over Loch Linnhe which is one kilometre wide and was familiar to people living along the southern shores of Loch Eil. This contrasts with eight crossings when going via Bellanoch.
- **Why?:** The kirk session minutes make it clear that Allan went via Bellanoch, so this is an important part of the story. However, the extra difficulty of going via Bellanoch needs an explanation. The best guess is that Allan was going to see Catherine in particular (alternatively, he could have had substantial business or friendship with her father). Bellanoch is 131 kms away from Duisky and it is not known how their paths crossed. No matter how they met, going to such efforts to be with Catharine implies that this was more than an incidental contact with the inn-keeper’s daughter. It was more than a one-night stand. They must have been together several times.

Bellanoch Inn

- The minutes of the Kirk Sessions (appendix D) notes that Allan stayed the ‘the House of John McLean, merch). This is an inn (possibly a small one) because:-
 - Allan stayed there
 - It is recorded with a capital ‘H’, indicating that it was not just a private house.
 - John is a merchant, rather than someone just having friends coming to visit his house
 - An inn in Bellanoch is mentioned in a contemporaneous account (‘Guide to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland’ by George Anderson & Peter Anderson, 1842, page 311), but we cannot be certain this was John’s, or some other inn.

A public house in Glasgow

- In 1837, the Kirk Session (appendix D) records that Allan was in a public house in Glasgow when he signed an admission of paternity in 1834. The name of this public house was not recorded, so we are speculating that it was The Saracen’s Head.
- At different times, there have been four inns in Gallowgate called The Saracen’s Head or The Sarry Heid as the locals know it. (<https://www.eatwalkglasgow.co.uk/glasgows-oldest-pub-the-quest-continues>)
- 1755 to 1792: The original inn called Saracen’s Head, was built in 1755 (opposite the current pub) boasted 36 rooms and stabling for 60 horses. During the 18th Century, it enjoyed a reputation as a

36 Anderson, Peter & George of Inverness (1842) *Guide to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, William Tait, Edinburgh – pages 305 to 311

“resort of the elite of Glasgow” and the stop off for the aristocratic traveller. Then, it was the preferred watering hole for judges, nobles and a number of influential writers. Robert Burns stayed at the inn during one of his visits to Glasgow between 1787 and 1791. Printer William Reid, of Brash and Reid, was one of the friends made at the tavern by the poet. It is reputed that Burns first offered his poems to Brash and Reid, but Reid refused to publish such frivolities. Samuel Johnson and James Boswell rested up at the inn following their tour of The Hebrides in October 1773. Economist and philosopher Adam Smith joined Dr Johnson at the Saracen’s Head Inn for a drink but that their meeting ended in a swearing match. The poet William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy arrived, along with Samuel Coleridge, as part of their tour of Scotland in 1803. Also the Duke of Hamilton. (<https://www.scotsman.com/whats-on/arts-and-entertainment/elite-history-glasgow-pub-saracen-head>)

- 1792 to 1905: The original inn was acquired by William Miller of Slatefield and converted into shops and apartments and was finally demolished in 1905.
- 1834: Our Allan McLean might have stayed in a later inn by this name – long after the literary connections had ceased.

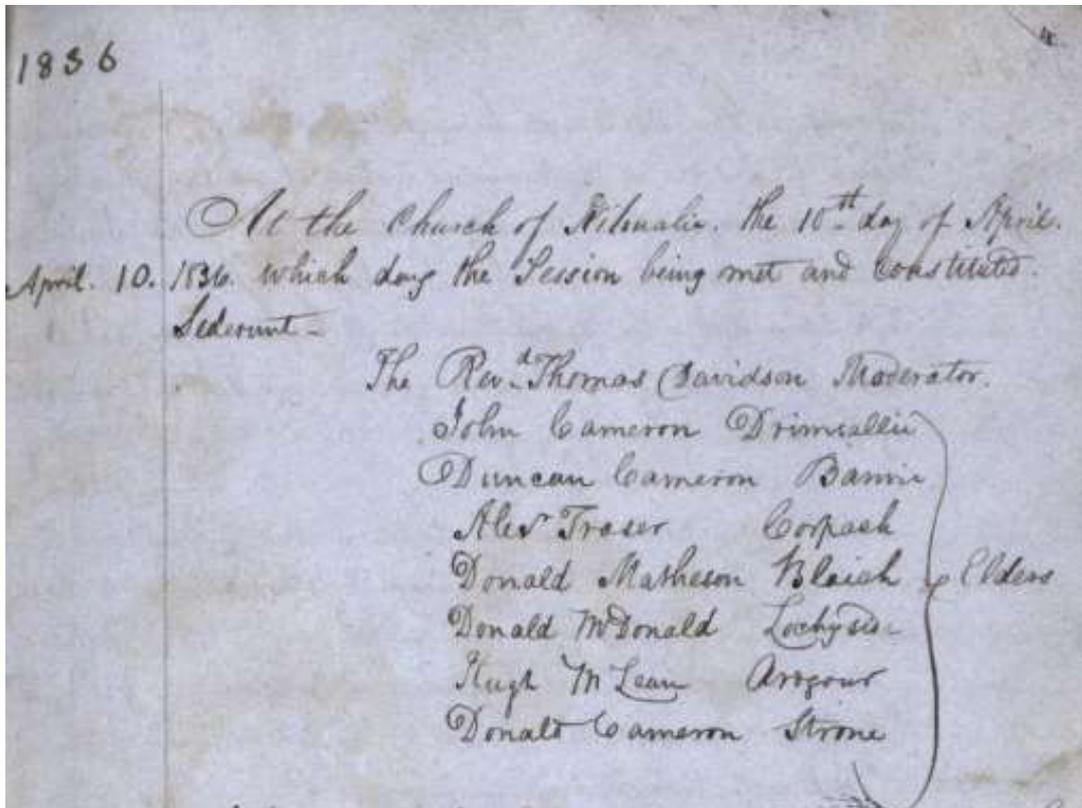
Members of the Kirk Sessions sederunt

Allan could have known at least three of the five members of the sederunt who convened on 12th March 1837. The Kilmallie minutes of the 10th April 1836 indicate where the various members were living.

Three members who Allan would probably have known about, but we do not know whether he knew them personally or whether he had been on good terms with any of them.

- Moderator: Rev Thomas Davidson was probably the minister based with the church at Corpach and he had responsibility for the whole parish of Kilmallie. As such, he would have been well known.
- Elder: Hugh McLean of Ardgour: It is not clear who this was. He was not a son of either Alexander, the 13th Laird or Alexander 12th. Blaich and Duisky are part of the Ardgour estate so Allan might have known him because he lived in the same district which had a small population.
- Elder: Donald Matheson of Blaich – see appendix L
- Elder: Alex Fraser of Corpach – We have no reason to think that Alex and Allan knew each other.
- Elder: Duncan Cameron of Banavie - We have no reason to think that Duncan and Allan knew each other.

This notation is from another page in the minute book.



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Decisions of the Kirk Sessions sederunt

No penalty is recorded in the minutes for the hearing of the case of Allan and Catharine. Other minutes have the following kinds of notations for penalties of people who had been found of fornication:-

- Rebuke:-
 - *"This Kirk Sessions having taken the declaration and confession into consideration, unanimously agree to instruct the moderator to rebuke you for the sin of fornication, and to exhort you to repent of the same and to be earnest at the Throne of Grace for mercy and pardon, through Faith in the blood of atonement shed for the remission of sins, so that others may hear and fear and sin not after the same manner"* (3rd Sept 1838).
 - In many other cases, if a person appears before the congregation and is rebuked a second time, they are *"absolved from the scandal"*.
- Money:-
 - Unfortunately, we have found suitable examples of specific amounts. The following give some indications:-
 - *"... he is liable to all the expenses of maintaining of the child until the expiry of the ordinary period appointed by law"* (3rd Sept 1838). [Research: How much should be paid, and for how many years?]
 - *"to pay to the clerk the ordinary fine imposed by the civil law on all such delinquents"* (5th March 1837). [Research: How much is the ordinary fine?]
 - *"settling with the treasurer of the Poor Fund by paying the ordinary fine of £1/13/4"* (22nd May 1836). [Research: Was this fine then passed on by the Poor Fund to the mother?]
- Imagined:- For the purposes of our story, we have imagined:
 - *"This Kirk Sessions having taken the declaration and confession into consideration, unanimously agree to instruct the moderator to rebuke you for the sin of fornication, and to exhort you to repent of the same and to be earnest at the Throne of Grace for mercy and pardon, through Faith in the blood of atonement shed for the remission of sins, so that others may hear and fear and sin not after the same manner. The Kirk Sessions also agree that you are liable to all the expenses of maintaining of the child until the expiry of the ordinary period appointed by law and that you settle with the treasurer of the Poor Fund by paying the ordinary fine of £1/13/4"*.
 - *"Next Sabbath, you must attend the Divine Service. You will stand in front of the congregation, and the moderator will rebuke you. You must then pay your dues to the treasurer who will pass this onto the Poor Fund in North Knapdale. That parish will then see to it that Catharine McLean receives what she is entitled to"*.

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Imagination for filling gaps

The minutes of the Kilmallie Kirk Sessions on 28th Feb & 12th March 1837 (appendix D) reveal intriguing insights into these events, but several questions arise. In turn, these questions have spurred imagined 'answers' which are the basis of the story we have created.

	Facts & questions	Imagined events
How they met	Duisky is a long way from Ballanoch	We have no idea how they met, and have not attempted to address this in the story.
Intercourse	When and where did Catharine and Allan have 'carnal connections'?	There would have been some secrecy. Maybe it was in the hay loft of the horse stables, next to the inn.
Delay	Why did Catharine make the complaint at this time? She had kept the letter in safe-keeping for more than three years after Allan had signed it.	Maybe Catharine was without the support of a husband and was financially vulnerable. We have speculated that this came about if she married someone after her baby was born, but then her husband died after a couple of years – see James McGugan in appendix L. Also, maybe she was prompted to act if she heard that Allan was about to leave the country.
Glasgow	Why was Allan in Glasgow? Allan was there in mid 1833 (after a few nights in Bellanoch) and in January 1834 (when he signed the letter). Was he staying there for at least the intervening six months? Or did he go back and forwards between the farm and the city?	Allan might have been doing business for his father's farm products. It is unlikely that he was trying to sell oats or barley from the farm which is so far from Glasgow. Maybe the family salted their herrings so they could be sold over this distance. However, rather than farm products, we have imagined that Allan came to Glasgow to find out about migration options. We have imagined that, after the middle of 1833, Allan went back to Duiskey, and then returned to Glasgow by the next January (after calling in at Bellanoch on the way).
Timing	Admission: Why did John and Catherine want Allan to admit that he was the father before the baby was born?	Perhaps John was using the letter to pressure Allan to marry Catharine. Maybe it was not unusual for the woman to raise paternity issues before the baby was born. For example, this is when Mary (Allan's sister) raised this – see appendix N
Signing	Why did Allan sign the letter? When he saw the letter again three years later, at the Kirk Session, he acknowledged that he had signed it, but indicated that he had not read it. He <i>"denied that he ever wrote such a letter himself, or ordered any other person to write it for him and maintained that he knew nothing of the contents"</i> .	Allan stated that he was drunk and tired. He maintained that <i>"his signature was obtained at a late hour in a Public House in Glasgow when he was the worse of liquor"</i> . He was not thinking clearly. John led Allan to understand that the letter was about him being at the inn at that time (which he could not deny). Allan thought that there was a chance that the baby might not carry to full term, or might not survive.
Memory	Allan said that he did not remember anything about the letter, yet he had some memories of other events of that night. That is, he remembered meeting John in the public house.	He was drunk and confused

Marrying?	What feelings did Catharine and Allan have for each other? Why didn't they marry?	We suppose that the pregnancy was the result of a somewhat substantial relationship rather than just a one-night stand. They got to know each other when Allan had stayed in Bellanoch on many occasions over several years. Their nature of their relationship is a theme which flows through the story. See appendix J.
Evidence	Why would he have stated that initially he had not admitted to being the father until John and another young man had given evidence under oath?	He was trying to avoid it.
Witnesses	There isn't a record of other witnesses at this hearing. The distance from Bellanoch would have made it difficult for Catherine and John to attend.	We have imagined that Catharine and John (and James McGugan) provided written statements.
Registration	Why didn't Catharine baptise Sarah soon after her birth? And why wasn't the birth registration until she was almost 5 years old?	Maybe shame. But we do not address this in the story.

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To marry - or not to marry?

Speculations about what was going through Allan's mind

In his early 20s, Allan was struggling to gain an understanding of relationships and how marriages work. He was not clearly thinking things through, and could not sort out his own feelings. He was torn in many directions, but it could be seen in two ways

Against marrying Catharine:

On the one hand he had the example of his own parents. It is imagined that:-

- Dutiful: Allan was comfortable with the idea of a compliant wife - reflecting the prejudices of the time – husbands should dominate their wives. He knew how his mother followed his father's lead. Catharine could not be like that – she would not just go along with what Allan wanted.
- Talk: His parents did not think about their relationship – it was just there. His parents did not keep on saying they loved each other. No soft talk of red red roses. The understanding did not require exploration.
- Bond: They did not show affection directly but they were bound together by the day-to-day practicalities of life around them. *"Mathair gave birth to all us bairns [children], cooked and washed, milked the goats, and never stopped working with athair"*. This alludes to 'Fiddler on the roof' – a Broadway show in 1964 and film in 1971. It was set in Ukraine in 1905, seven decades after our events in Scotland. Both cultures were in transition, with a similar battle between parents deciding who someone should marry – rather than the couple choosing their own love match. In marriages, some things are not said but are just understood (or mis-understood). In Fiddler on the Roof Tevye asks his wife Golde, "Do you love me?" She replied, *"For twenty-five years I've washed your clothes, cooked your meals, cleaned your house, given you children, milked the cow I've lived with you, fought with you, starved with you. My bed was yours. If that's not love, what is?"* Perhaps Allan saw his parents in this way.
- Feud: His father had often expressed suspicion against 'those Bellanoch Mcleans'. There was an imagined low-level intra-clan feud between the branch of the Ardgour McLeans against the McLeans around Bellanoch.
- Support: Allan never dared ask his father what he thought of such a marriage but, without asking, he got an answer – *"Expect nothing from me."*
- Arranged: There was not an idea of a marriage arranged by the parents or a match-maker, but none-the-less, parental endorsement was a factor in Allan's mind. Marriages at those times could not easily be just something between two lovers, without consideration of the wishes or support of both sets of parents. Ironically, eleven years later, Allan eloped with Catherine Dawson - apparently defying Catherine's father, and maybe his own father
- Arguing: In many ways, Allan enjoyed the banter with Catharine. It was stimulating, but it eventually wore him down and he thought of his mother – the dutiful wife.
- Migration: Allan was keen and excited about the opportunities of migrating whereas Catharine saw all the problems of the unknown. This is surprising because in other respects, she was an adventurer, a go-getter.

For marrying Catharine:

- Attraction:
- Good for each other:
- Lively spirit:
- Good to talk to:
- Bantering was stimulating
- Ambivalence: a touch of guilt about the small price he paid yet she had paid a very high price.
- Finally: On the ship out, he was anxious what he will have to face in the colony and he ruminated about how it might have been if he had Catharine with him. He felt a rose (warmth) that he had not recognised long before.

All these notions weave in and out of our narrative.

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Robert Burns' poetry

A Red, Red Rose

O my Luvie is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Luvie is like the melody
That's sweetly played in tune.

So fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luvie am I;
And I will luvie thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luvie!
And fare thee weel awhile!
And I will come again, my luvie,
Though it were ten thousand mile.

Will Ye Go To The Indies, My Mary?

Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
And leave auld Scotia's shore?
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
Across th' Atlantic roar?

O sweet grows the lime and the orange,
And the apple on the pine;
But a' the charms o' the Indies
Can never equal thine.

I hae sworn by the Heavens to my Mary,
I hae sworn by the Heavens to be true;
And sae may the Heavens forget me,
When I forget my vow!

O plight me your faith, my Mary,
And plight me your lily-white hand;
O plight me your faith, my Mary,
Before I leave Scotia's strand.

We hae plighted our troth, my Mary,
In mutual affection to join;
And curst be the cause that shall part us!
The hour and the moment o' time!

Individuals: What we know – and what we made up

Allan McLean

Facts & questions

Imagination

Age:	Allan was born in February 1811 in Blaich (see his profile). This made him 22 years old when he was with Catharine at Bellanoch in July 1833.	
Identity	There is no doubt that this was 'our' Allan, as the minutes of the Kirk Session refer to him as " <i>Allan McLean, son of Don'd McLean Blaich in the Parish of Kilmallie</i> ".	
Parents	Donald McLean & Christina McPhee	
Language	Allan spoke in Gaelic but would have known some English. Even decades later, he was a typical Highlander, and in old age, when he got excited, he would lapse into Gaelic (BRB p38).	
Residence	Living on the Duiskey farm but visited Glasgow on many occasions.	
Personality	Allan was the oldest child and had a leading role within the family. He seemed to take the lead in the activities in the colony when his father was elderly – supplies from VDL, ploughing, wheat, Hilton farm, Achananda's in Strathalbyn, etc. So probably was the main organizer for arrangements before migrating.	A man of action, rather than words. He had the status as the oldest brother. He respected his parents and accepted his father's word as final. He was not so sure about the perplexing relationship with Catharine and difficulties of dealing with her pushy father.
Source	Allan's profile in www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com .	

Hugh McLean

Facts & questions

Imagination

Sibling	Brother	
Age	Born Jan 1813	
Residences	Living on the Duiskey farm	He visited Glasgow when Allan was there – in order to create opportunities for them to talk and interact together so that the story can be carried forward.
Personality	We have no reason to believe that he was good with words – but it suits our story. Hugh is a foil - portrayed as assertive and talker, whereas Allan is an action man.	
Language	<i>"Allan and John were typical Highlanders and in old age, when they got excited they lapse into Gaelic" (BRB p38). This would have equally applied to Hugh because he was between the ages of his other brothers. Hugh spoke in Gaelic but would have known some English.</i>	It is reasonable to think that he was familiar of some of Burns's poetry which was in Scottish English (not Gaelic).
Source	Hugh's profile in www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com .	

The McLean family in Duisky

Facts & questions

Imagination

Parents	Donald McLean & Christina McPhee	
Personalities	Christina was a dutiful wife. Donald was the authority figure at the head of the family.	
Children	Allan 1811, <u>Hugh 1814</u> , John 1816, <u>Mary 1818</u> , Archibald 1824, Ann 1823, Rachel 1825, Margaret 1827, Jane 1830, Hugh 1836.	
Source	Donald's and Christina's profiles are in www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com .	

John McLean

Facts & questions

Imagination

Connections	Although Allan, Catharine and John had the same surname, they might not have been closely related or even have known each other previously.	We assume that John was Catharine's father.
Name	John McLean	
Occupation	Inn keeper & merchant	
Inn	John was a merchant who had a 'House' where travellers could stay.	We assume that it was an inn, rather than just a private house – see appendix E.
Personality	He was a big man with a flowing beard. A keen deer hunter Pushy, assertive	
Source	John's profile in www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com .	

Catharine McLean

Facts & questions

Imagination

Name	Catharine McLean as per minutes of the Kirk Sessions	
Parents	John McLean & Sarah McGugan	
Age	Born 5 th May 1816. She was 17 years old at the time of becoming pregnant.	
Residences	She was born in Coasandronchaid. She was in Bellanoch when she was 17 years old. She was living in Arichnonan when she made the complaint in 1837.	
Relations	Allan, Catharine and John had the same surname, all McLean – none MacLean. The large clan was scattered in several areas in the western side of Scotland. With such a common surname, they might not have been closely related or even have known each other previously.	Catharine is John's daughter.
Personality	Assertive, strong	
Source	Catharine's profile in www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com .	

Sarah McLean

Facts & questions

Imagination

Birth	Catharine's baby, Sarah, was born on 15 th April 1834. This is recorded in an old register of the Parish of North Knapdale in 1839 (appendix M). The wording is " <i>Sarah an illegitimate daughter of Allan McLean parish of Kilmaly and Catherine McLean in this parish born 15th April 1834</i> ".	
Registration	In January 1839	
Parents	Catharine McLean and Allan McLean	
Source	Sarah's profile in www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com .	

James McGugan

Facts & questions

Imagination

Who	The minutes of the Kirk Sessions record that Allan “ <i>would not admit his being the father of her child until a young man who was about the House would clear the woman upon oath.</i> ” (appendix D)	
Name	His name was not recorded.	We can imagine that his name was ‘James McGugan’ as per the following relationship.
Relations - Catharine’s first cousin		Maybe he was son of the brother of John’s wife – ie, if Catherine’s mother was Sarah McGugan it can be imagined that she had a brother who had a son named James. Thus his surname could have been McGugan. This would make James as Catharine’s first cousin – the son of her maternal uncle.
Relationships – Catharine’s husband		We had to invent a rationale to explain why Catherine had made the complaint so long (3 years) after Allan had signed his admission and the baby was born. This could be explained by her having a husband soon after the child was born, but then this husband died within a few years. Rather than introduce yet another character into a short story, I have applied the character who was already in the story as “ <i>a young man who was about the House</i> ”. For this to happen we have imagined that Catherine’s father arranged for her to marry James because of the shame of being an unmarried mother who other men would not marry and support another man’s child. We take it that he died (horse accident) which meant that Catherine was left without financial support and so complained to the Kirk Sessions.
Occupation	His occupation is not specified except that he was “ <i>about the House</i> ”. This indicates that he was a servant or had some other role in the functioning of the inn.	He might have been a stable hand at his uncle John’s inn.
Witness	He “ <i>cleared the woman upon oath</i> ”. That is, he verified Catharine’s assertion that Allan had sex with her around July 1833. How could he know this, and how did he provide this information (in Corpach), and why was he still such a significant witness more than three years later (in March 1837).	We have imagined that he was living in a room next to the stables and that he heard their voices when Allan and Catharine were making love in the hay loft. He might have signed a statement before he was killed.
Residences		Arichnonan – this is where Christina was living in 1837.
Source	There are no references for James	

Donald Matheson

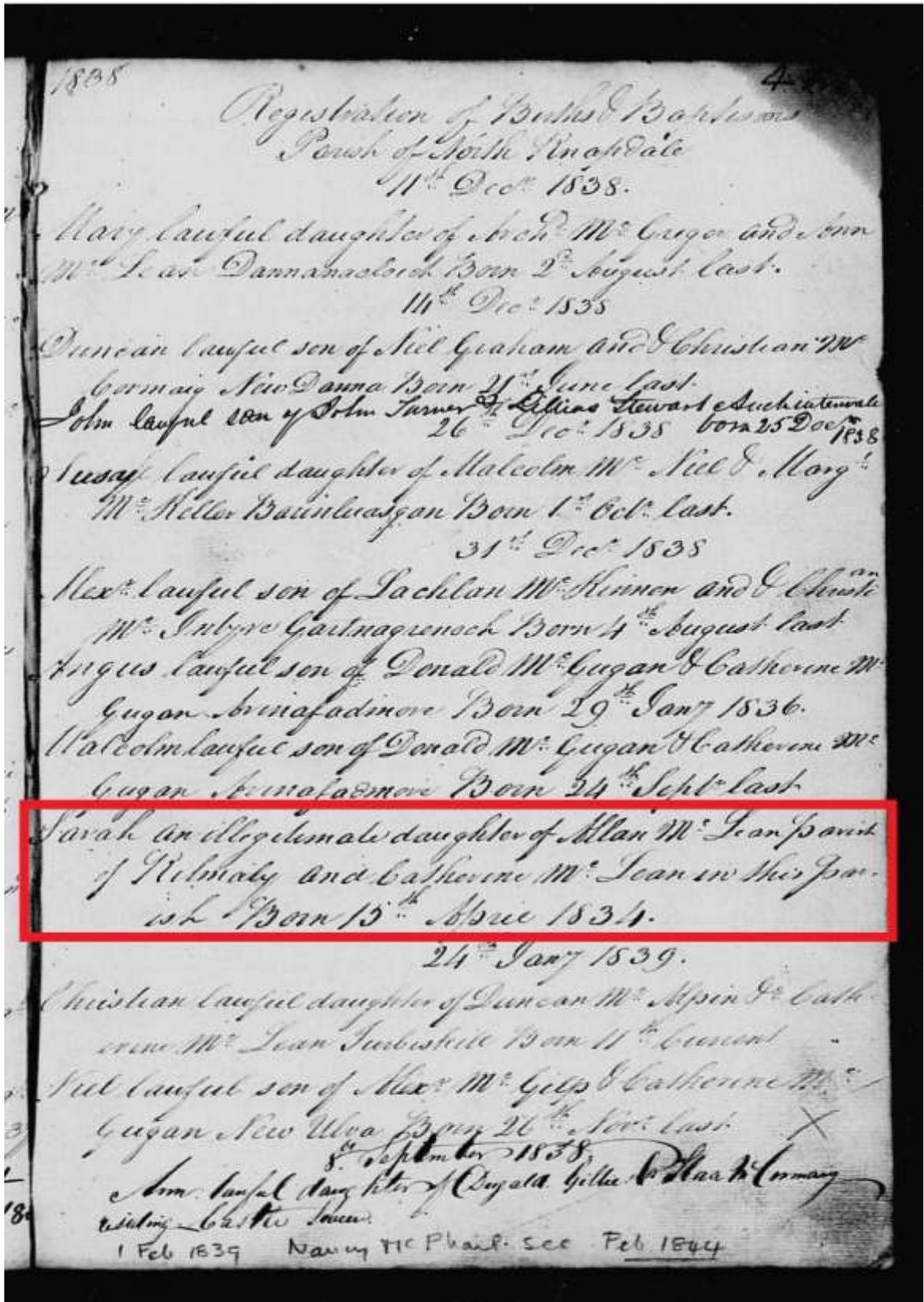
Who	The minutes name ‘Don’d Matheson of Blaich’ as one of the elders who constituted the sederunt of the Kirk Session.	As well being a member of the court, I have combined the roles of elder, beadle and scribe.
		Also I have made him a crofter who was the same generation as Allan’s father – so his father knew Donald Matheson better than Allan knew him.

Sarah McLean – born 15th April 1834 in North Knapdale

"Sarah an illegitimate daughter of Allan McLean parish of Kilmaly
and Catherine McLean in this parish born 15th April 1834"

Source: Scotland's People, NRS, OPRs Births 530/ 20 97, North Knapdale, page 97

15/04/1834 MCLEAN, SARAH (Old Parish Registers Births 530/ 20 97 North Knapdale) Page 97 of 320
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Mary's paternity claim against Ewen Cameron

It appears that Mary had a child around June 1837. The child might not have survived as we have not found a record of a birth and he or she is not mentioned when Mary migrated with her parents and siblings, just a couple of months after the child would have been born.

Mary claimed that she became pregnant with Ewen Cameron when they were both working at the Ardgour Inn at Corran. She lodged this claim at the Kalmallie Kirk Sessions which was held in Corpach - near to Duisky where Mary was probably living.

Ewen was living in Ballachulish so the matter was referred to another parish, but the outcome is not known.

Little is known of Ewen's life.

Minutes of Kilmallie Kirk Session - 24 April 1837 Source: Scotland's People, Virtual Volumes, CH2/719/00001-00029 (p16) & 00031 (p17): Inter alia, compeared Mary Maclean, daughter of Donald McLean Blaich, and being solemnly exhorted to tell the truth, and being interrogated, acclaim as follows, viz that she is in a state of pregnancy, and that Ewen Cameron, son of John Cameron, residing at Carnach//, Parish of Strontion, but he himself residing at the South Balechulish slate quarries, in the Parish of Darn, is the father of her pregnancy. That the said?? fornication was committed by them while in service at Corran, Ardgour Inn. That she expects to be delivered about nine weeks from this date, and that she had no carnal connexion with any other person - all which she declares the truth. Declares she cannot write Mary x (her mark) McLean The session having considered the above declaration of Mary MacLean, enjoin their clerk to transmit an extract thereof to the Moderator of the Kirk session of the Parish of Darn.