

# MY RED RED ROSE<sup>1</sup>

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## A GLASGOW PUBLIC HOUSE IN JANUARY 1834

Allan McLean warmly greeted his brother with a rough slap on his back as Hugh 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.”

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 inn”. 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 John the innkeeper and his daughter, with the horses. And I think that lad James 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 Heid. Allan had been staying there for several weeks. This is where he usually lodged whenever he had to visit Glasgow from their Duiskey 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 goats. Our pesty sisters are annoying all the time – they are looking

1 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 the website [www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com](http://www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com). One version (this one) is just a good story that can be enjoyed on its own. The other version has notes for serious researchers.

\* 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.

\* Places: A list of localities is in appendix B.

\* More: Research about Allan can be found in his profile in the website. Also, there are profiles of Catharine and Sarah.

\* This story is consistent with known facts except:-

1. Allan definitely visited Bellanoch on his way from Duiskey to Glasgow at least once, but it is not known whether he went this way on other occasions. Bellanoch added 84 kilometres and seven water crossings to the journey.
2. Catharine did not marry James McGugan who is a fictitious character.
3. There was not a feud between the McLean’s of Ardgour and the McLeans of Bellanoch.

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 Wakefield meeting here”.

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.*

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 race”.

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 feud. 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 Fitzroy. 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.

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 d'airich? [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 Robertson 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 hair. She would stamp her feet and scrunch up her face.*

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 Duisky. 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".

This song was by Robert Burns who had visited The Sarry Heid. 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 lassie? 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 athair. 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".*

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" 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 Duiskey, 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.

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 dory with several other families from Duiskey and Blaich.

Allan was approached by Donald Matheson 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 sederunt".

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 Knapdale". 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 men 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]"

"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 month.
- 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 21<sup>st</sup> January 1834.
- 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.

*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, "Tha"

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 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".

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 claimed 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 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 ploughman and harvested the first crop of wheat. 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..

## Glossary

Source: [learngaelic.net/dictionary](http://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
sederunt	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.

