

# DUNDERAVE AND THE NEW CHIEFS

By Ken McNaughton

The chief seat of the Macnachtan clan in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was Dunderave Castle on Loch Fyne. Angus Macnaghten [1] says that the Macnachtans were referred to as “of Dunderave” as early as 1513. The restored Dunderave Castle that stands on the shores of Loch Fyne today (Fig. 1) includes a lintel with the date 1598. Before restoration the castle was described as “one of the few well-preserved structures in the Western Highlands and a valuable example of the Scottish style of building in the sixteenth century.” Up to this time the Clan domains had been held directly from the Crown, but now the rise in power of the neighboring Campbells made it politic for the Macnachtans to recognize their primacy in Argyllshire. In a document dated 1548, Gilbert Maknachtane of Dondarawe pays homage to Colin Campbell of Ardkinglas (see below for more on Ardkinglas).



**Figure 1. The author is happy to be visiting Dunderave Castle with the Clan Macnachtan Association Worldwide, June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007.**

There are four glens with their accompanying rivers that feed into the northern tip of Loch Fyne. Glen Aray is at 9 o’clock, with Inveraray (Fig. 2) at the mouth, this town being the ancestral seat of the Campbells of Argyll. “Inver” refers to the mouth of a river (Fig. 3). The boat in Fig. 3 is the “Vital Spark,” a “Clyde Puffer” that was named in 2005 in honor of the fictional one created by Neil Munro, a journalist and author born in Inveraray who wrote humorous stories about Para Handy, a captain of one of these steam boats that provided a vital supply link around the west coast and islands. In 1901 Munro also wrote “Doom Castle,” a fictional romance set around Dunderave Castle. A second glen, Glen Shira, enters Loch Fyne at 10 o’clock. Glen Fyne is at 12 o’clock. Glen Kinglas is at 1 o’clock, where Ardkinglas Manor is built. Dunderave Castle is built on Dunderave Point, just northeast of Glen Shira and southwest of Ardkinglas across the Loch.



**Figure 2. Inveraray overlooks Loch Fyne.**

The Macnachtans remained loyal to the Stuarts in the Jacobite cause but by 1691 King James II of England (James VII of Scotland) let it be known that it was impossible to assist the Highland clans to resist any longer and that they should make their peace with the new dynasty of the protestant English monarchs William and Mary. By 1 January 1692 all but one of the clans had taken the oath of obedience. John, the Laird of McNaughton, was among the last. The Macdonalds of Glencoe were late and their oath was not accepted, which led to a tragic and brutal massacre designed to break the power of the clans. In a macabre and

contorted collusion, the government in Scotland, with the apparent approval of William in England, ordered troops under Campbell of Glenlyon to make an example of the Macdonalds, who had been hosting the troops at Glencoe (Fig. 4). Forty of the Macdonalds were murdered.

**Figure 3. River Aray enters Loch Fyne under Bridge Aray; the Vital Spark is at right.**

The last chief of the Macnachtan clan to live at Dunderave, John, ran up considerable debt and was under pressure from the Campbells who were keen to get rid of any Jacobite sympathizers in the neighborhood. The Campbells divided up the Macnachtan lands. John became a customs officer at Anstruther, Fife, on the northern shore of the Firth of Forth, northeast of Edinburgh, and was living





there as late as 1753. He married Jane, the eldest daughter of Sir James Campbell of Ardkinglas some time before 1720. There is no record documented of any progeny, but stories abound.

**Figure 4. Glencoe: The final straw.**

## DUNDERAVE

Hugo Millar [2] gives a good description of Dunderave (abridged):

“Dunderave consists of a tower-house on the “L” plan—a main block with a projecting wing at one end. It has the addition of a large round tower at the exterior angle (Fig. 5), so placed as to flank the two long walls of each, and is well provided with gun loops, with an additional loop to the field. The interior angle of the building contains a square

tower housing the main stair, and having the entrance doorway at ground level on its south face (Fig. 6). The doorway has moldings enriched with bold dog-tooth ornamentation, and in addition a variety of sculptures in high relief on both sides. Those on the left represent two human heads, probably of the builder and his wife, and of those on the right, the most prominent is that of a piper, in highland dress.”

“The ground floor of the castle is vaulted throughout, and contains a kitchen with vast fireplace and flue, and a range of cellars separated by an internal corridor. The cellar leading to the base of the round tower contained a well, and in addition to the main stair, two other minor staircases led to the first floor. Cellars in castles such as these were constructed for storage purposes to contain the large quantities of food and drink required in an age when grocers’ shops were not available, and the vaulting served the double purpose of keeping the stores cool and as a fireproof protection to the upper stories.”

**Figure 5. Dunderave: Round tower at the exterior angle.**



“The first floor has a large hall in the main block, measuring some twenty-nine feet by eighteen, and contains an eight-foot-wide fireplace placed slightly off-centre in the north wall, opposite the entrance doorway from the main stair. This apartment is known picturesquely as the Red Banner Hall. The laird’s private room is in the wing and one of the additional staircases from the cellars led to it. A further staircase leads from the east end of the hall to the two upper stories of the castle, as does also the main stair. The next storey would contain the sleeping apartments for the family and guests, and the uppermost, those for the servants and retainers. The gables are finished with the usual crow-steps [see the square steps on the triangular peaks in Fig. 7], almost universal in buildings of this type, the roofline sweeping straight down to the eaves without the interruption of a parapet walk. By this period, castle defense was no longer conducted from parapet level, as with the arrival of firearms it had been found necessary to employ this new weapon at ground- or first-floor levels, where it had been found to be more efficacious, particularly from a flank. The south gable of the castle has the addition of two round turrets boldly corbelled out from the angles, each having conical roofs (Fig. 7), a similar roof capping the round tower at the exterior angle.”



“The date 1596 on the lintel [actually 1598, but the castle is thought to have been started in 1596] is well in keeping with the date of castle we see here, a type that can be paralleled in many other parts of the country. Dunderave, however, is an unusually fine and finished example of this class, and demonstrates in a practical manner that its builders were fully abreast of the current building practices of their day, rebutting the oft-repeated allegation that the west highlands were uncivilized and generally behind the times, as compared to their lowland neighbors.”

**Figure 6. Square tower and entrance at the interior angle.**

“The castle long lay roofless and ruinous until it was eventually acquired by Sir Andrew Noble of Ardkinglas who, while building the new Ardkinglas House in 1906-8, gave his architect, Sir Robert Lorimer, the additional commission of restoring Dunderave to a habitable condition.”



**Figure 7. Loggia, library, crow steps, and round turrets with conical roofs boldly corbelled out from the angles.**

“This was accomplished in a brilliant manner; the character of the old tower being retained, and two further wings built, one being added to the east gable consisting of kitchen and servants’ accommodation (Fig. 8), the other on the south gable forming a loggia and library (Fig. 7), both wings partially enclosing a court entered through an archway in the southern addition (Fig. 9). The new wings were kept low, and thus emphasized rather than detracted from the height of the original tower.”



Millar concludes:

“Very few clans can show such a factual record of their past as this; of existing strongholds having an occupational period from the mid-thirteenth century [Fraoch Eilean] to the late seventeenth [Dunderave], and maybe further back in time.”

**Figure 8. Kitchen and servants' accommodation.**

Noble’s architect, Robert Lorimer (1864-1929) was a prolific Scottish architect noted for his restoration work on historic houses and castles. He received a knighthood for his efforts and gained the commission for the Scottish National War Memorial at Edinburgh Castle in 1919 (Fig. 10). A memorial tablet dedicated to him is directly behind the Royal Scots Dragoon Guard in this photo.



## CLAN TOUR 2007

On Friday 29 June 2007, members of the Clan Macnachtan Association visited Ardkinglas Manor (Fig. 11) by kind arrangement with the current owners, who were present at the time. Our guide was very engaging and informative. Remember that Ardkinglas was a stronghold of the Campbell Clan and that this house was designed and built in 1906-8 by Sir Robert Lorimer for Sir Andrew Noble, the same team who restored Dunderave. Noble was a Scottish physicist born in Greenock and noted for his work on ballistics and gunnery. He became chairman of Armstrong’s armament works in Elswick, Newcastle-on-Tyne and his Scots Canadian wife was a Campbell. The lord of the manor could look out his study window at this sensuous sculpture (Fig. 12) but we were told that the lady of the house scoffed that you could eat your breakfast off her chest. Later owners used the beautiful Caspian-Sea shaped lake (Fig. 13) to recreate naval battles and we saw some of the actual ship models in the house. The current owners manage the beautiful adjacent Ardkinglas Woodland Garden ([http://www.gardens-guide.com/gardenpages/\\_0551.htm](http://www.gardens-guide.com/gardenpages/_0551.htm)) and make the house available for meetings, conferences and weddings.



**Figure 9. Two new wings partially enclose a courtyard entered through an archway in the southern wing.**



On Saturday 30 June our tour [3] climaxed with a visit to Dunderave (Fig. 16). We were hosted by Mary Cameron, who manages the property with her husband Gregor for the current owner, Dr. Stephen Joffe. Dr. Joffe was born in South Africa, studied in Glasgow, and built a very successful business, LCA-Vision Inc., based in Cincinnati on laser vision-correction services under the LasikPlus brand. In 2006, Fortune rated the company, with 55 U.S. centers, as the fifth-fastest growing in America. In the middle of that year, Dr. Joffe stepped down as CEO in favor of his 33-year-old son, Craig, and was said to be pursuing a new concept in clinics. Dunderave on the inside is beautifully finished and filled with breathtaking contemporary artwork; we were requested not to take photographs. Outside, Dr. Joffe has installed some magnificent sculpture (Figs. 14, 15, 17).

**Figure 10. Scottish National War Memorial at Edinburgh Castle designed by Sir Robert Lorimer.**

We were fortunate that Blair Macnaughton was able to join our tour. Blair is U.K. vice chairman of the Clan Macnachtan Association and former president of the Macnaughton Group, a company his family started in 1783 that produces furniture and clothing. It was based for 160 years in Pitlochry and seized as much as 65% of the world market in Highland dress through the House of Edgar. Blair was a constant source of entertainment and commentary during the 2007 tour.

## THE NEW CHIEFS

Some time after the death of John McNaughton at Anstruther in or after 1753, members of the Clan began looking for a new chief. A search was made among the descendants of Shane Dhu, who is thought to have migrated to Ireland in 1580. Macnaghten [1] speculates that Shane Dhu (“Black John”) may have been a younger son of Chief Gilbert Macnachtan who was living in 1473. Overtures were made to Edmund Macnaghten (1679-1781) of Beardville, which is near Coleraine, Londonderry, just south of the Giant’s Causeway, Antrim, in Northern Ireland.



Figure 11. Ardkinglas Manor.

The Giant’s Causeway is an area of about 40,000 interlocking basalt columns resulting from a volcanic eruption. It was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986. In a 2005 poll of *Radio Times* readers it was named the fourth-greatest natural wonder in the United Kingdom. The tops of the columns form stepping stones that lead from the cliff foot and disappear under the sea.

Most of the columns are hexagonal but some have four, five, seven and eight sides. The tallest are about 36 feet high and the solidified lava in the cliffs is 90 feet thick in places. The structure is similar to, and part of the same ancient lava flow as Fingal’s Cave on the uninhabited island of Staffa in the Scottish Inner Hebrides, which has inspired numerous artists, including Mendelssohn for his “Hebrides Overture.”



Figure 12. Fountain at Ardkinglas Manor.

Edmund declined the invitation to be Chief of the Clan. The matter was left in abeyance until 1818 when “on the attestation and at the desire of upwards of 400” of the Macnachtans in Scotland, Edmund’s son, Edmond Alexander (1762-1832), petitioned the Lyon Court, and the Arms of the chief were confirmed to him by decree on 13th January, 1818. Angus tells us “Except for the Lord Lyon’s patent, none of the contemporary documents appear to have survived.” On the death of

Edmond, the honors were conferred on his brother Francis Workman Macnaghten (1763-1843), who claimed that his brother Edmond had died unmarried. Francis inherited property from his cousin Caroline Workman on condition he assume the surname and arms of Workman. The Macnaghten Baronetcy of Dundarave in County Antrim was created in the Baronetcy of the United Kingdom for Francis on 16 July 1836. He married Letitia Dunkin on 6 December 1787 and acquired some of the Dunkin property in Bushmills, County Antrim, two miles south of the Giant’s Causeway, including Bushmills House, which he rebuilt. Francis and Letitia had seventeen children and the 20<sup>th</sup> century Macnaghten Chiefs all descend from four of their sons.

Figure 13. Caspian-Sea-shaped lake at Ardkinglas Manor.



One of these four sons was Sir Edmund Charles Macnaghten (1790-1876), the 2<sup>nd</sup> Baronet (and Chief) who demolished Bushmills House and in 1846 built in its stead the house which to this day is known as Dundarave. The English architect, Sir Charles Lanyon, is most closely associated with Belfast, North Ireland. This name “Dundarave” was presumably chosen to celebrate the Macnachtan Castle Dundarave on Loch Fyne, with the central “e” changed to an “a.” Dundarave has four gate lodges, two of which date to Bushmills House (1837). It is reputedly the largest house in Northern Ireland still in private occupation. The 100-acre estate includes extensive woods and is the seat of the Clan Macnachtan.



Another son of Francis and Letitia was Sir William Hay Macnaghten (1793-1841) who went to India in 1809 and had a distinguished career as a linguist and adviser. In 1838 he edited “The Book of One Thousand and One Nights,” for the first time published complete in the original Arabic, from an Egyptian manuscript brought to India by Major Turner. This four-volume edition became known as Calcutta II or the Macnaghten manuscript and formed the basis for many subsequent editions. In 1839 the British were concerned that Russia might invade India through Afghanistan, which led the British governor in India to enter into the disastrous First Afghan War. In December 1841, William Macnaghten met with rebel chiefs to arrange for the humiliating evacuation of the British from Afghanistan. He was shot by Akbar Khan; his body was hacked to pieces and carried through

Kabul. A third son of Francis, Elliot Macnaghten, was a Director of the East India Company between 1843 and 1858 and Chairman in 1855. A fourth, Sir Steuart Macnaghten, compiled the “Genealogy of the Macnaghtens,” but Angus, his grandson [1], cast doubt on its accuracy.



**Figure 14. Life-size bronze Cyprus (Damascus Shami) Goat and Kids (2004) by Angela Hunter from Galashiels.**

There are other distinguished descendants of Francis and Letitia. Sir Francis Edmund Macnaghten (1828-1911), 3<sup>rd</sup> Baronet, was a lawyer, judge, politician and Chief of the Clan. Edward Macnaghten (1830-1913), 4<sup>th</sup> Baronet and Chief, built his own house, Runkerry, on the cliffs near the Giant’s Causeway, which was presented to the Government of Northern Ireland in 1950. Sir Melville Leslie Macnaghten (1853-1921) was head of the criminal investigation department of Scotland Yard 1903-1913; his daughter, Christabel Lady Aberconway published the

critically acclaimed “Anthology of Cats” and had a colorful career in London [4]. In 1972, Sir Patrick Alexander MacNaghten (1927-2007), 11th Baronet, became Chief of the Clan Macnachtan. He had three sons; Malcolm Francis Macnaghten (born 1956) is the heir apparent.

**Figs. 15-17 (L to R). Life-size bronze Leopard in Tree by South African sculptor Dylan Lewis; Clan Macnachtan Association Worldwide outside Dunderave Castle 2007 (photo set up by Keith Jones bottom left); Dunderave Horse cast in bronze in London in 2005 by Dido Crosby.**



*Ken McNaughton ([kjmcn@comcast.net](mailto:kjmcn@comcast.net)) Ellicott City, Maryland*

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