

# Clan Chisholm Society

Australia , Canada, New Zealand, USA Branches



Clansletter 1

January 2025



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<p>A few years ago, the Australia and New Zealand Branches joined forces in producing a joint newsletter for their members. It has been very successful. Recently their editors have reached out to the Canada and United States Branches to become partners. Through the sharing of information, it is hoped that social bonds will grow between the members. <b>This is the inaugural newsletter. Its continuation will rely on your support through contributions such as a photo, paper clipping, a brick wall, a family milestone, some family history etc.</b> Please join in and help grow the spirit of <i>clansmanship</i>.</p>	Eviction and Burning at Wester Runivraid	14
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Please think about what you can contribute to the next Newsletter. A family milestone, a holiday snap, a paper clipping, photos which you have taken, a family history story. The Clan Chisholm Newsletter relies on contributions from you in order to keep it relevant and interesting.

If you see a hyperlink, you can Ctrl+ click or Tap and go directly to the linked site.

We hope you enjoy the read.

Kim Polley and Robert Chisholm, Editors.

**Acknowledgements:** Thanks to the following for contributing to this newsletter: Tony Morrison, Fay Chisholm, Kim Polley, John Ross, Kim Reeves, Anne Brand, Kate Lund, Sherrie Cork, Chis Maxwell, Pat Chism, David Holmes



## The Clan Gathering 2024

By Fay Chisholm, New Zealand.

We all know the song “It’s a long way to Tipperary”, well it’s a long way to Scotland as well, but if you have the time and money a trip worthwhile is the Clan Gathering.

Monday evening 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024 saw us all at the Glen Mhor Hotel Inverness to meet fellow Chisholms some 100 of us gathered from around the world.

From Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> July on saw Chisholms travelling by bus, first to Fort George, we all wondered what we were going to see as the bus parked it just looked like an open field.

What a surprise we all got when we walked down the ramp into Fort George army barracks which are still used today.



Across the bridge and into the barracks area was an eye opener.



As you can see in this photo the height of the fort walls with what used to be a moat right around it. The Fort covered a large area of land and one can only imagine the man hours it would have taken to build such a place and it is still being used today is remarkable.

It is hard to describe the 18<sup>th</sup> century fort which can accommodate a Governor, Officers, and an artillery detachment and a 1,600 strong infantry garrison

The Jacobite rising of 1745-6 proved to be the last attempt by the Stuart dynasty to regain from the Hanoverians the thrones of Scotland and England and Wales.

Fort George was one of the ruthless measures introduced by the Government to suppress Jacobite ambitions after the battle of Culloden and was named after King George II.

Lieutenant General William Skinner was the first Governor and it was he who laid out ramparts, massive bastions, ditches and firing steps. Defenses on the landward side of the promontory were heavily concentrated, as it was here the Jacobite assault was expected with long ramparts and smaller bastions protected the seaward side.



In the late 1700's when the Jacobite threat was over the fort became a recruiting base come training camp for the ever expanding British army. Between 1881 and 1964 it was the depot for the Seaforth Highlanders and is currently home to the Black Watch 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion.



12-30pm and on to Culloden where a very nice lunch was had. A walk about at Culloden was interesting with a guide relaying what had taken place on these grounds if one can call a swamp that, one dare not step off the path to become submerged in the swamp.

Our guide relating the story of Culloden but unfortunately we were told the markers that I saw in 1990 have been removed and not replaced so we never got to stand where Chisholm's stood to fight. The only reminder that Chisholm's were involved in the battle of Culloden is the paving stones engraved with the clan name. (see overpage)

## The Clan Gathering 2024 (continued)



Clan Chisholm Society  
paver stone at Culloden

**W**ednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July; Another bus trip to Newtonmore Highland Folk Museum.  
One could spend all day here exploring these grounds as there is so much to see, it is like stepping back into the 1700's but coming forward to the 1950's.



The thatched cottages were a grim reminder of how our forebears lived; no windows or doors, open fires and smoke filled; what a hard life that must have been.



Then there were the trades the hand tools such as the weaver's loom this is what our clan Tartan fabric was woven on all by hand.

The ladies of Newtonmore demonstrated how to shrink the cloth as they sang in Gaelic.

Further on were more of what we call homes coming into the 18<sup>th</sup> century but still with bare essentials crammed into very small rooms where a family of eight or nine would have lived.

The school room with slate boards to write on, the desks that I remember when I started school; times up until the 1950's had not changed much.

## The Clan Gathering 2024 (continued)

**B**ack in Inverness that evening a few of us guided by Susan were able to visit the Town Hall to see the Chisholm swords that hang there.



The Andrea Ferrara blade (right) belonged to Hugh Macphail Chisholm, the Corrie Ghoe hero who fought at Culloden 1746, was given by Captain Archibald Macra Chisholm of Glassburn, Strathglass. This is the sword which was entrusted by the Canadian Chisholms to Dr Stewart Chisholm (father of Capt. Archibald) to convey to The Chief, along with their pledge of loyalty in 1832.

The Andrea Ferrara Claigh Mor (left) was wielded by a Chisholm at Sheriffmuir in 1715 was given by Captain A M Chisholm of Glassburn. The honours boards in the town hall have Chisholm names on them; all in all it was a long day.



**T**hursday 11<sup>th</sup> July; This day was to be the highlight of the gathering, with two smaller buses today as the road to Glen Cannich and Loch Mullardoch dam is very narrow and very winding. The scenery we took in showed a lot of forestry on the craggy hills, mostly spruce pine.



The dam was as far as the buses would go we all had to walk the extra distance to the cairn.



The scenery in this area was outstanding with craggy hills and the local cattle seemed so tame. This cairn was originally down in the valley now covered by the dam lake it was at the present site that Tony Morrison gave us the story of the cairn.



More of the craggy hills, and yes that is my son Ben up on the rocks, what a view he would have had!



**B**ack on the bus to Marydale where a packed lunch was had. It was the along the road to the Clachan Comar Burial Ground where mostly Chisholms were laid to rest with the odd MacDonald, McLean and Fraser and as we left the grave yard there were these two little field mice busy going about their daily feeding and didn't seem to mind us walking past, after which we travelled on to the Stone above Comar this personally I was very disappointed with when I saw the Stone as there was no view because of the trees looking down to Comar House as I saw it in 1990.



Alongside the stone is the memorial seat to Wilfred Medlam; a great historian he was, hence the Medlam files as we know them today.

The best of the day was yet to come just a few minutes away was Erchless Castle, home of the Chisholms. It was here we had afternoon tea.



Some of our group walked up the road to the Chiefs' Burial Ground and generally had a good look around .



Susan our host took some of us through part of the Castle interior this was the highlight of my day. The present owners have kept a lot of the Chisholm history within the castle by way of paintings and furnishings and this was good to see.



Our piper, Andrew Whitelaw, fellow attendee at the Gathering, played some old Chisholm tunes, and the music really set the scene, while afternoon tea was served.



Many of the Chisholms who attended the gathering before we said goodbye to Clan Chief Hamish and his niece at Erchless.

## The Clan Gathering 2024 (continued)



**F**riday 12<sup>th</sup> July. The AGM was the final event of the Gathering: sitting at the top table were from left to right, Ben (UK President) & Juliette Chisholm-Broomfield (Past President) Kim Polley (Australia) David Holmes (Canada Chair) Fay Chisholm (NZ) Susan Chisholm (Secretary)

This was the end of a wonderful week and our thanks go to Susan our Secretary for organising a wonderful week-long event.

Right: Susan Chisholm of Chisholm and Fay Chisholm of Gisborne.



## THE STRATHGLASS CLEARANCES

By Kim Polley, Australia.



From their very inception, the Highland Clearances have been among the most controversial subjects in modern Scottish history. There is no historical or contemporary consensus on the clearances – their causes, methods and results, both in the short and long term – and picking a path through this controversial area can be problematic.<sup>1</sup>

Upon arriving in Scotland I discovered that the history of the clearances was not well known. Several people remarked that they were not taught about this subject during their schooling. I quickly realized that it was a rather contentious issue, people today still holding very strong views on the topic. I also learned that about 40 years ago a proposed Clearance Trail Guide for tourists was abandoned and deemed inappropriate. Therefore, I have provided a brief summary of the comprehensive display put together by the Strathglass Heritage Association which the Gathering attendees visited in Cannich in July 2024. They are a very active group committed to retaining the history of the Chisholm heartlands. Their website is <https://www.strathglass-heritage.co.uk/> The exact number of people who sailed from Scotland across the Atlantic Ocean to Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and other North American Provinces is unclear. Only 15 passenger lists survive from 1773-1852. The lists include the ships *Hector* (1773), the *Dove* and the *Sarah* (both 1801).

The ship, *Hector*, in July 1773, left Ullapool and carried about 190 emigrants including many from the Lovat and Cromarty Estates. These Estates had been in the government's hands since the Battle of Culloden in 1746. The tenants had endured huge rent hikes and poor harvests. They felt their only alternative was to emigrate. The Philadelphia Land Company had previously advertised the availability of attractively priced plots of land in Nova Scotia. Cheap fares and onboard provisions were free and a year's provisions would be available to them on arrival. Unfortunately, things were not as the emigrants had been led to believe. The *Hector* was in poor condition, the passengers were able to peel strips of timber from the ship with their fingernails. Sickness, vermin, poor progress at sea, lack of food onboard and no supplies on arrival left a sour taste in the mouths of the disappointed immigrants.

Later, between 1801-1803, 37 ships sailed mainly from Fort William, Knoydart and Ullapool taking with them many people from Strathglass. In 1803 a Passenger Vessels Act was enacted to improve the health and conditions of passengers travelling to North America. It also was designed to make the cost prohibitive for many tenants and maintain a workforce for landowners. In 1826 the Act was repealed. Landlords, who then did not want to continue assisting their tenants during poor harvests, began offering their tenants assisted passage.

Alexander Chisholm (1749-1793) XXIII, the Chisholm Clan Chief, was visited by men from the south enticing him to remove his tenants and replace them with a more profitable sheep grazing option. Being opposed to this idea, in 1792, Alexander generously offered his tenants 9 or 18-year leases to protect their tenure. Alexander's wife Elizabeth Wilson, was guaranteed the rents of several townships on the Chisholm Estate until her death. After Alexander died in 1793 aged 44, the new Chief William XXIV ensured that in 1801 and 1810 when the leases expired, the tenants were cleared, and the sheep arrived. Tenants from large parts of Glen Affric were removed in 1801. In 1810-1811 notable clan members from Knockfin and Muchrachs were removed, the latter being relocated to the combined towns of Clachan and Kerrow. They replaced 16 existing tenants. In total, 59 tenants had been removed from Knockfin and Glen Affric. Laidlaw and Kerrow, sheep farmers, had moved in.

<sup>1</sup> The Highland Clearances', <https://scottishhistorysociety.com/the-highland-clearances/>

(continued)

Estate Rentals in 1793 were over 40, but in 1817 there were only 21 leases. Farms and former townships had been combined as sheepwalks expanded. In 1818 Erchless Castle lease was advertised. Shooting and fishing rights were included.

In 1824 the new young Chief, Alexander William Chisholm (1810-1838) XXV authorised his guardians to pay off his father's debts and also remit rent arrears at the request of his tenants.

In 1826, Elizabeth Wilson died. She was the widow of the former Chief, Alexander Chisholm. Sadly, the townships from which she received rentals now returned to the Chisholm Estate. Elizabeth had been able to ensure that her tenants remained on their farms since 1793. She was affectionately known as The Fair Lady.

Chief Alexander William in 1831, now 21 years old, sent his factor to address his tenants at the Inn of Cannich. They were told that they were to vacate as their leases were now in the hands of sheep farmers. Thomas, Lord Lovat, accommodated these Chisholms in Glen Strathfarrar. Fifteen years later they were removed from there to his lands on the Braes above Beaully as Glen Strathfarrar was now to be a deer forest. There were now just 2 native Chisholm families on the Chisholm Estate.

By 1833 most of the land was now in the hands of a small number of sheep farmers. The remaining Chisholm tenants were mainly in the lower reaches of Strathglass around Easter Aigas or at Rheindoun above Beaully. The clearing of the Chisholms was now complete.

#### **Other interesting facts:**

The tenants on the Chisholm Estate paid their rentals using various commodities such as supplying shearers, wedders (fully grown castrated male sheep), hens, loads of fir, loads of peat, stones and tallow.

Between 1770 and 1810, one-third of the Catholic population in the Scottish Highlands left for other lands, and 11 Highland priests accompanied them.

#### **Suggested reading**

Campey, L. *After the Hector: The Scottish Pioneers of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, 1773-1852*, Edinburgh, Natural Heritage, 2004.

'Complete list of those who came on the Hector'. <http://haggis.mccullochcentre.ca/document/4524>

Chisholm, C. 'The Clearance of the Glens', *Celtic Magazine* 1878, Vol. 111, pp. 378-388. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=wu.89035126804&seq=460>

Gibson, R. *The Highland Clearances Trail*, Edinburgh, Luath, 2023.

Mackay, D. *Farewell: The People of the Hector*, Toronto, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1980.

Mackay, I R, 'The Davoch of Clachan (Notes on the removal of the Chisholms in Strathglass)', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, volume 45, 1968, pp. 393-412.

<https://www.ambaile.org.uk/search/?searchQuery=transactions+davoch>

Mackenzie, A. *History of the Chisholms*, 1893. <https://archive.org>

Mackenzie, A. *The History of the Highland Clearances*, The Project Gutenberg, ebook.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/51271>

MacLean, S. 'The Poetry of the Clearances', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, volume 38, 1962, pp. 240-271. <https://www.ambaile.org.uk/search/?searchQuery=clearances>

Richards, E. *The Highland Clearances*, Edinburgh, Birlinn, 2000, pp. 145-146.

(continued)

'The estate of the Chisholm', *Caledonian Mercury*, Edinburgh, 31 August 1809.

<https://www.findmypast.com.au/image-view->

[er?issue=BL%2F0000045%2F18090831&page=1&article=001&stringtohighlight='the+estate+of+the+chisholm'](https://www.findmypast.com.au/image-view-er?issue=BL%2F0000045%2F18090831&page=1&article=001&stringtohighlight='the+estate+of+the+chisholm')

The Napier Commission, vol 1-5. <https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/research-enterprise/cultural/centre-for-history/research/research-alliances/the-napier-commission/#d.en.310814>

### Further reading

I inquired with The Highland Archive Centre in Bught Road, Inverness about what they could offer to Clan members interested in researching the Chisholms. I was advised that the overarching reference number for the whole collection of Clan Chisholm Papers is HCA/D1042. Attached to this newsletter is a file titled **D1042 Chisholm Papers update August 2022 Public copy**. It contains all relevant documents they hold dating from the 1400s. For example, D1042/1/316 which is: Precept of removing, Alexander Chisholm of Chisholm against 96 tenants (ICW 1021) 29 Apr 1780.

Another collection is **HCA/D536 – Innes & Mackay, Solicitors, Inverness**, records relating mainly to Fraser of Lovat, Chisholm of Chisholm, and the Trustees of Dr John Simpson. The public copy of that catalogue is attached to this newsletter and titled **HCA/D536 – Innes & Mackay, public copy catalogue**.

Regarding ship passenger lists, apart from the ship 'Hercules' The Highland Archives does not have any in their collections, however, there are some titles in their family history reference library which could be useful, including *Directory of Scottish Settlers in North America 1625-1825* by David Dobson. Details of passengers were usually kept at the port of arrival.



## Clan Chisholm Society

Some of the things your Society does

**International Genealogical Database:** Family Trees in digital format. Is your FT there? If not, why not?

**Genealogical Forum:** Here you can gain assistance in searching for historical or genealogical answers

**DNA Project:** Moves your family and genealogical history into the scientific age. Has solved many family riddles. Has proven the Norman origin of the Chisholm founder.

**Artefacts Project:** Keeps tabs on the various Chisholm related artefacts

**Chronicles Project** (in progress) chronicling the Chisholm diaspora

**Annual Journal** Hardcopy collectible annual publication of Chisholmobilia

**Clan Chisholm Website** Full of resources, news, and links

**New Projects** always being planned. Watch this space for an exciting new project being proposed.

**Suggestions:** always welcome. Get in touch with your Branch Rep if you have a suggestion.

Branches in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK, USA,

As the Clearances is being discussed in this newsletter, I decided to include a story about one of the last cases of eviction and burning on the Chisholm estates, *Clan Chisholm Journal*, Number 35, 1992 pp. 8-13

### EVICTON AND BURNING AT WESTER RUNIVRAID, INVERCANNICH ON MONDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 1886 OF PETER SHAW AND CATHERINE CHISHOLM

**O**n Monday, 13 September 1886 at midday, there took place at Wester Runivraid, Invercannich, probably the last case of eviction and burning on the Chisholm estates.

Peter Shaw and his wife Catherine Chisholm were tenants to the Chisholm on the farm of Wester Runivraid. The farm had been in Catherine's family possession for over fifty years, her father William Chisholm built the house stone by stone and had paid for the wood required for its construction. His annual rent was set at £27 10s but this was increased a few years later to £30 and it was only by hard labour that he was able to pay this sum. James Sutherland Chisholm, who inherited the estate in 1858, granted a new nineteen-year lease to William in 1876 with the right of his daughter Catherine to succeed him. The opportunity was not lost, however, to increase the rent to £40, a massive rise of 30%. On the very week that this increase came into effect William suffered a severe stroke whilst visiting the nearby village of Beaully and was thereafter unable to actively assist around the farm. Sometime after it was reduced to £35 but was quickly increased again back to £40. Her father was unable to pay and consequently borrowed heavily from the Bank to avoid the ever-present threat of eviction.

In August 1880 poor, honest William passed away. All he had to show after a lifetime of hard work was a £150 debt to the bank, he left this world financially poorer than when he entered it. There can be little doubt that he would have been sadly aware that his devoted daughter was about to inherit an impossible legacy.

Catherine, the eldest daughter out of a family of girls, succeeded to the farm and shortly afterwards had repaid (sic) the Bank £100 of her father's debt, but in doing so fell seriously into arrears herself. Her neighbours stated that she worked hard to overcome her financial problems and had done much to carry on the farm work successfully. However, a succession of bad seasons, together with crop losses due to flooding, cattle deaths and other misfortunes added to and compounded her financial difficulties. In 1884 she married Peter Shaw, a ploughman on the farm, but by 15 June 1885 their rent arrears came to £127 16s 11d being made up as follows:

Rent (Half Year)	£ 20 0 0
Arrears	£107 16 11
Total	£127 16 11

The Shaws were unable to pay this amount in full and she made an offer to pay half the arrears by selling the sheep stock, undertaking also not to fall into arrears in the future provided her annual rent was reduced to £30. Mr JB Grant, the factor (or estate manager), would not agree to this or any other arrangement and directed that they must leave by Martinmas (11 November) taking only the stock with them.

They were reluctant to leave their home and hoped that somehow their problems would be resolved. However, they were threatened with legal action and Mrs Shaw made a further offer whereby she offered to quit provided they could take with them the stock and farm effects and be given other accommodation. She had also carried out improvements by erecting fencing on the farm four years earlier and was willing to leave it. The factor, presumably having spoken to or, at the very least, was fully confident that he had the Chisholm's support, replied that he did not think that the Chisholm would not be prepared to renew the offer that he had made earlier.

The first legal proceedings on the road to their eviction began on March 1886 when a petition was presented by the Roderick Chisholm, with the consent of the trustees of his late father James who died in 1885, before the Sheriff Court in Inverness for the sequestration of the farm stock in security of 1885/6 rent. The pursuer stating that he was afraid that his right of hypothec would be lost unless he took action.

A hypothec, to explain, is peculiar to Scotland whereby the landlord can claim the crop as security for rent. In 1853 Mr R Alister in a letter printed in 'Gloomy Memories' had this to say about them. "The laws of hypothec I also found operated most injuriously against society, by unduly enlarging the size of farms, by

giving illegitimate security to lairds for rents, and for increasing the price of rent to a fictitious amount.”

Returning to the text a copy of the petition was given to the Shaws but they could not attend court and the sequestration was granted. In June the trustees of the late Chisholm presented a petition for cession against the Shaws. On 24 June Hugh Rose, solicitor, Inverness, was appointed trustee for the general creditors and on 31 July had sold the greater part of the stock, implements and household furniture. Finally the pursuers obtained a petition of ejection against the Shaws on 2 September.

At 9am on Monday 13 September, 1886 Mr Alexander Macdonald, messenger-at-arms (or bailiff), left Inverness railway station for Beauly taking with him a locksmith, and as a precaution, five burly henchmen, in case, one supposes the unfortunate victims or their friends should resist. It was dull and drizzly when this fearless bank left Beauly for Invercannich. They drove quietly through Strathglass followed, in separate carriage, by a reporter whose diligently recorded report I have freely borrowed. Only a dozen people were passed during the entire sixteen-mile journey and three of them were ministers, none of whom would have offered molestation. The dismal party would have passed on their way the magnificent home of the wealthy but absentee Chisholm and the comfortable house of the compassionless factor. Arriving at the humble abode of the Shaws, which was some fifty yards from the road, they dismounted from their carriage and walked briskly, their heavy boots desecrating the muddy gravel path, the remainder of the way. There was nobody to be seen around the premises.

Mr Shaw, who appeared to understand the meaning of the visit, met Macdonald at the door and was asked by him why they had not removed themselves, particularly as they had been offered a house rent free for two months at Millburn, Inverness until Martinmas. Mr Shaw replied that they could not leave as the house offered was uninhabitable and Mrs Shaw added later that they did not have the means to pay for the removal.

Macdonald proffered the decree of eviction to Mr Shaw who declined to accept it. The decree was then read out and witnessed by Macdonald's assistants who then entered the house. Mrs Shaw, who was sitting inside anxiously talking to a neighbour, was informed of what was to happen and she replied that "it is very hard, but we will not hinder you."

The house consisted of a parlour, kitchen and small bedroom all of which were dimly lit. The parlour and bedroom were adorned by Mrs Shaw with prints cut out of the Illustrated London News and the Ladies Pictorial. Cuttings of the royal family from latter journal were the prominent theme on the bedroom walls. The house was also well supplied with furniture as Mrs Shaw's uncle had bought some for her sister who was staying with her. To our eyes their home would appear rustic but it should be borne in mind that, up [to] the time of the passing of the Crofters Act in 1886, there was no incentive to improve existing houses as the crofters had no security of tenure. As soon as they obtained this the housing standards rapidly improved throughout the Highlands.

The evictors then began their task in, what was described [sic] as 'a quiet and decisive manner.' Mr Shaw became excited through frustration and despair, he remonstrated with them and endeavoured to interfere and obstruct their progress when he saw their furniture being roughly handled. Mrs Shaw remained calm throughout realising that protest was futile. Only once did she interfere and that as when the men came to remove her old-fashioned wooden bed. It was impossible to take out without breaking it up. This touched her heart. Nothing could be done however and it was destroyed and carried out piece by piece.

It was cold and raining heavily by then but this did not deter the men from continuing to remove the household articles and unceremoniously discarding them on the public highway unprotected from the elements, the whole operation lasted two hours.

There were several houses in the neighbourhood but non [sic] of the occupants gathered to watch the proceedings.

Their disagreeable work was not yet complete for Macdonald announced that, unwilling as he was, he must carry out the warrant, and raze the building to the ground.

The prints which Mrs Shaw had hung to brighten and decorate the interior of her little home were insensitively torn down, roughly folded and used as torches to set the farm house on fire. The damp thatch was at first reluctant to burn and, for a while, it was thought that the fire would extinguish itself. Macdonald watched carefully and when he saw that fire would catch hold he dryly remarked, "It's going to do yet."

Dense black poignant smoke broke through rising to broadcast it's [sic] sad and evil message. This was followed quickly by the unmistakable sound of crackling burning timbers from within. Angry and untrammelled flames suddenly burst venomously from within. Angry and untrammelled flames suddenly burst venomously through the roof which soon succumbed and collapsed inward showering the confines with a pyrotechnic display, sealing for ever the fate of the poor couple's humble abode.

The wooden roofed barn and the cow-shed were then set on fire and were quickly devoured by the hungry flames. The dairy was of a wooden structure and it was pulled down.

Macdonald's final remarks were, "the law must be upheld," and with that he and his men then left, their mission complete.

By this time a small silent group had gathered. They stood some distance back and viewed the scene with sorrow and regret no doubt recalling earlier similar atrocities in the glen and wondering if they too one day would become victims. Also to offer opposition would only attract attention to themselves for the fear of factors was very real.

Mr and Mrs Shaw stood dignified and alone, Mrs Shaw saying "I have not a farthing in the world, and I have no place of shelter to which I can go." Being a person of considerable intelligence she fought off the temptation to despair and was soon busy covering her discarded and water-logged furniture.

Their hens, which had fled from the burning stable, had then to be collected and secured. This done their pig had to be transferred also. He was reluctant to go and squealed piteously. It was only after great deal of pushing and coaxing that he was finally induced to leave his quarters.

The fire burned itself out leaving only the blackened shell of the house standing. It was becoming dark and the broken and crushed Shaws departed. Bedraggled and cold they made their wet and weary way to the Cannich inn where they had been kindly offered shelter. What happened to them after that I have been unable to find out.

In a house, close by, an old man stood and watched the proceedings with deep regret. For 53 years he had paid rent to the Chisholm estate but had fallen in £120 arrears. He too was unable to liquidate his debt and, in early 1886, his land was taken from him but was allowed to remain in his house.

Stewart, Rule and Burns, solicitors, Inverness, who were agents to the Chisholm, fearing public outrage and revulsion for such barbaric proceedings rushed to publish, on the 16 September, a letter which lamely attempted to exonerate themselves, their paymaster and the sycophantic factor and dishonourably place all the odium upon their puppet Macdonald's shoulders. Great concern was expressed for the loss of the buildings and they emphasised that it was the Chisholm alone who suffered from the burning unless he recovered compensation from the officer. The Shaws, they miserably wrote, 'were not entitled to commiseration beyond what other people may be, who by shiftlessness fell into poverty.' They also pointed out that the tenants "were removed from the house before the officer set fire to it," generosity indeed. The legal agents could not think of them simply as fellow suffering human beings. The following is an extract of their letter: "*We regret that an officer, instructed by us, as agents for the Chisholm, to put in force a warrant of ejection, took it upon him, after executing his duty, to set the buildings on fire. The officer has not only been severely reprimanded, but intimation has been made to him that he will be responsible for the value of the buildings. Lest the incident should be made the occasion of comment upon the action of the Chisholm, we think it right at once to publish the fact that neither the Chisholm nor his factor, nor ourselves, had the slightest intention to destroy the buildings, and that we knew nothing of the occurrence till we saw it reported in the newspapers on Tuesday morning. We at once saw the officer, who admits that he exceeded his warrant and instructions, but partly excuses himself on the ground that the persons ejected told him that they would reoccupy the house immediately on his leaving. Of course the officer should have reported this statement to us, instead of taking the law into his own hands.*"

The Scottish Highlander newspaper dismissed this letter outright by saying that any attempt by the proprietor or his agents to remove the blame of burning out to the tenants to another cannot be listened to. The Chisholm, and no one else, was accountable and also responsible for the conduct of those that he employed to do his dirty work. The paper observed that landlords had only recently started to explain, justify or even apologise for any unusual proceedings that occurred on their estates. There was a time, it wrote, when the whole matter would have been disposed of by an appeal to the convenient maxim, that a man can do what he likes with his own.

Roderick Chisholm then instructed his legal agents to take proceedings against Macdonald for destroying the buildings and also reported his conduct to the Sheriff (i.e. judge).

Sheriff Ivory in response to the Chisholm's complaint wrote the following letter, on behalf of the Lord Advocate, to Alexander Macdonald. In it he severely censured Mr Macdonald for the rash way in which he had turned the young couple out –

25 November 1886

*Sir, - I have received a report from Sheriff Blair, with various documents, in regard to the proceedings taken by you in burning the house formerly occupied by Peter Shaw and his wife at Strathglass on 13 September last. Sheriff Blair reported to me, states that he is of the opinion that the act of Macdonald in burning the house was reckless and unauthorised, and one that should be strongly reprobated. After careful perusal of Sheriff Blair's report, and the accompanying documents, I regret to be obliged to state that I have no alternative but reprimand you for your indiscreet and reckless conduct. I have to inform you, further that the Lord Advocate, who has made full inquiries into your conduct, has desired me to convey a severe reprimand to you at his lordship's instance for your conduct on the occasion.*

*I am your obedient servant,*

*W Ivory*

Sheriff William Ivory has been described as a judicial monster for, to him, mere suspicion was sufficient for conviction. He was no friend the oppressed or the struggling crofters. Instead of relaxing their ligatures he did his best to tighten them. It was he who sent and led an army of alien policemen from Glasgow to Skye which culminated in what became known as 'The Battle of the Braes' where women and Children [sic] were brutally clubbed. His behaviour was well documented at the time and, paradoxically, it was ultimately a blessing in disguise to the crofters. The Scottish Highlander newspaper commenting on the Sheriff's letter simply said "What a splendid instance of the pot calling the kettle back."

In January 1887 Roderick Chisholm lodged an action in court against Mr Macdonald for the injury and damage of his property to the value of £70. Mr Macdonald maintained that this sum was excessive and suggested that £5 was the real value. I have not found any information as to the outcome of this case.

It is worth noting that Peter and Catherine were not alone in falling into arrears for, in December 1887, a large number of Chisholm tenantry petitioned Mrs Chisholm for a reduction in rent.

The Scottish Highlander pointed out that Roderick was but one of a distant collateral bunch of the original owners, into whose hands the estate fell by the application of a deed of entail. The paper explained that the entail excluded the female line of succession and thus deprived Mary Chisholm (Gooden) from her rightful inheritance. It was she, by her heroic and patriotic interposition, that saved the estate from sharing in the disgrace which the wholesale clearance of the native people in the past to make room for sheep had brought on so many parts of the Highlands. Roderick died in 1887 aged 24. After the death of Roderick's sister Anne in 1932 the chieftainship passed from the hands of interlopers to the descendants of the good Mary who, as stated, so vigorously [sic] opposed the evictors and so gallantly protected her people. The full circle had turned, and poetic justice had taken its course.

#### **D. Mackay, Inverness 1991**

## More information on William Chisholm and Janet Macdonald

By Kim Polley, Australia.



**T**here are several spellings of Runivraid including Rhunavraid, Rhinvraid, Runavraid but Runivraid is used in this article.

William Chisholm's death registration dated 21 August 1880 indicated that he was born about 1806.<sup>1</sup> His eldest daughter Catherine Chisholm was present at the time of his passing at Runivraid, Kilmorack and provided the details. He had suffered from paralysis for several years. His deceased wife's name was Janet McDonald. His parents were Roderick Chisholm, a deceased farmer, and Isabella Chisholm. No medical attendant was present.

William did a mighty job raising his family of five girls on his own. The 1851 Census revealed that the recently widowed William (43) was a farmer living at Invercannich, Kilmorack.<sup>2</sup> His daughters were Catherine (8), Chirsty or Christina (6), Mary (4) and Ann (2). His wife Janet must have passed sometime after the birth of their last child Ann in 1849 and before 30 March 1851 when the 1851 census was completed. Neither Ann's birth nor her mother Janet's death registration could be found. The family were of the Catholic faith. William had employed a housekeeper (44), a house servant (15) and a shepherd (15).

In 1861 William (54) and his family resided in a farmhouse at Runivraid, Kilmorack.<sup>3</sup> His eldest daughter Catherine (18) was the housekeeper, daughter Isabella (17) who was absent from the family on previous census nights, was a dairy maid, whilst Christina (15), Mary (14) and Ann (12) were scholars. A ploughman (31) resided with the family.

The Valuation Roll of 1869 recorded the names of William Chisholm and Alexander Chisholm living at Runivraid.<sup>4</sup> However, in 1871, there were 4 households at Runivraid.<sup>5</sup> William Chisholm (64) was farming 25 acres of arable land. Three of his daughters resided with him; Catherine (28) a housekeeper, Christina (25) a general servant, Mary (24) a domestic servant.<sup>6</sup> William had engaged a 25-year-old farm servant. Others living on the property were Alexander Chisholm (67) a farmer with 25 acres of arable land, Jessie Chisholm (60), a general servant and John Macdonald (70), a shepherd from Kiltarlity.<sup>7</sup>

By 1881 Catherine Chisholm (36) was the head of the household at 16 Wester Runivraid.<sup>8</sup> The property consisted of 400 acres of which 30 were arable. She had employed a 20-year-old ploughman. Catherine's sister, Mary (31), was engaged as a domestic servant living with her. Nearby at Easter Runivraid Alexander Chisholm (75) was farming 400 acres of arable land.<sup>9</sup> Living in the five other houses at Easter Runivraid were Isabella Macgregor (80) pauper, Janet Chisholm (71) pauper, John Macpherson (35) blacksmith and Margaret Mackenzie (67) pauper. One house was unoccupied.

On 10 January 1884, 4 years after her father died, Catherine Chisholm (36) and Peter Shaw (32), a labourer, were married in the Roman Catholic Chapel in Inverness.<sup>10</sup> Catherine's sister Isabella was a witness for this special occasion.

In 1891 the couple lived at Bridgend, on the southern end of Beaully.<sup>11</sup> Bridgend is about 15 miles from Runivraid. Catherine's husband Peter (40) was employed as a carter. Catherine's sister Mary (41), a domestic servant, lived with them.

In 1901 Peter (52) was a shepherd whilst Catherine (57) cared for a wee 3-year-old female boarder.<sup>12</sup> The child had been born illegitimately in late 1897 in Lower Bridgend, Beauly. Her single mother had successfully pursued the child's father through the Sheriff's Court a few months later.<sup>13</sup> The father was ordered to financially support the child until she attained the age of 7 years. Obviously, Catherine would have been paid to board the child. This would have helped financially support the couple.

On the 14 November 1903 Peter Shaw had been labouring at the Beauly Ferry until almost dark. He decided not to take the usual road home but instead use the Ferry Road. The ferryman heard shouting and splashing in the water. The river was in full flow at the time. A man's dog was anxiously looking out over the water for his master. The body of Peter Shaw was recovered after a two-hour search.<sup>14</sup> It was written "The deceased who resided in Bridgend leaves a widow to whom much sympathy is extended by the community."<sup>15</sup>

Catherine Shaw lived in Bridgend on her own until she died of influenza on 8 March 1927 aged 83 years.<sup>16</sup> She was residing at Lovat Cottage in Beauly at the time of her death. Given that the inspector of the poor, William Macdonald, from Craigmore in Beauly was noted as the informant on her death registration record, it can be assumed that Catherine may have died in impoverished circumstances.

#### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Death registration of William Chisholm, died 21 August 1880, Scotland Statutory Register Deaths, 100/42, Kilmorack, Inverness.

<sup>2</sup> The Genealogist, 1851 Invernessshire Transcript Household, for William Chisholm and his children Catherine, Chirsty, Mary and Ann, Invercannich, Kilmorack, Invernessshire. <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk>.

<sup>3</sup> The Genealogist, 1861 Invernessshire Transcript Household, for William Chisholm and his children Catherine, Isabella, Christina, Mary and Ann, Kilmorack, Invernessshire. <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk>.

<sup>4</sup> Harrison, HW (compiler), *The Glens and Straths, Parish of Kilmorack*, Kilmorack Heritage Association, 2003, p.205.

<sup>5</sup> Harrison, *The Glens and Straths*, p. 205.

<sup>6</sup> The Genealogist, 1871 Invernessshire Transcript Household, for William Chisholm and his children Catherine, Christina and Mary, Runvraid, Kilmorack, Invernessshire. <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk>.

<sup>7</sup> Harrison, *The Glens and Straths*, p. 205.

<sup>8</sup> The Genealogist, 1881 Invernessshire Transcript Household, for Catherine Chisholm and Mary Chisholm, 16 Wr Rinnwaid, Kilmorack, Invernessshire. <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk>.

<sup>9</sup> Harrison, *The Glens and Straths*, p. 205.

<sup>10</sup> Marriage registration of Peter Shaw, married 10 January 1884, Scotland Statutory Register Marriages, 098/5, Inverness, Inverness.

<sup>11</sup> The Genealogist, 1891 Invernessshire Transcript Household, for Catherine Chisholm and Peter Shaw and Mary Chisholm, Bridgend, Kilmorack, Invernessshire. <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk>.

<sup>12</sup> The Genealogist, 1901 Invernessshire Transcript Household, for Peter Shaw, Catherine Chisholm and Christina Macdonald, South Side, Kilmorack, Invernessshire. <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk>.

<sup>13</sup> Registers of Extracted Decrees, Inverness Sheriff Court, Inverness-shire, NRS Reference SC29/7/41 p. 131; Index, Scottish Indexes (<https://www.scottishindexes.com/courtenry.aspx?courtid=29041030>: accessed 26 Nov 2024); Original Source: Sheriff Court Records, National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland.

<sup>14</sup> 'Pathetic affair near Beauly. Man drowned in River. Dog's anxiety for its master', *Dundee Courier*, 16 November 1903, p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> 'Man drowned at Beauly Ferry', *The Highland News*, 21 November 1903, p. 6

<sup>16</sup> Death registration of Catherine Shaw, died 8 March 1927, Scotland Statutory Register Deaths, 100/9, Kilmorack, Inverness.

## William Chisholm and Margaret Mackay, Highland Clearances in Sutherland

By Kim Polley, Australia.



Another William Chisholm surfaced in my reading on the Highland Clearances. This William lived in the county of Sutherland in the early 1800s. Chisholm was not a common name in this area of clearances. There was only one Chisholm mentioned in the births, deaths and marriages in Kildonan parish records from 1795-1815.<sup>1</sup> My perusal of the Old Parish Registers of Farr revealed in the same time period that there were 3 Chisholm births and one marriage.

Alexander Mackenzie had the following to say:

The system of turning out the ancient inhabitants from their native soil throughout the Highlands during the first half of the nineteenth century has been carried into effect in the county of Sutherland with greater severity and revolting cruelty than in any other part of the Highlands, and that though the Countess-Marchioness and her husband, the Marquis of Stafford, were by no means devoid of humanity, however atrocious and devoid of human feeling were the acts carried out in their name by heartless underlings, who represented the ancient tenantry to their superiors as lazy and rebellious, though, they maintained, everything was being done for their advantage and improvement.

South countrymen were introduced and the land given to them for sheep farms over the heads of the native tenantry. These strangers were made justices of the peace and armed with all sorts of authority in the county, and thus enabled to act in the most harsh and tyrannical fashion, none making them afraid; while the oppressed natives were placed completely at their mercy. They dare not even complain, for were not their oppressors also the administrators of the law? The seventeen parish ministers, with the single exception of the Rev. Mr. Sage, took the side of the powers that were, exhorting the people to submit and to stifle their cries of distress, telling them that all their sufferings came from the hand of their Heavenly Father as a punishment for their past transgressions.<sup>2</sup>

Patrick Sellar, a lawyer, was born in Elgin in Morayshire in 1780. He gained employment as a factor on the Sutherland estates. In March 1814 many of the inhabitants of the parishes of Farr and Kildonan were summoned by Sellar and told that he would be taking over their farms in May and they had to remove their cattle before then. Shortly after that, Sellar ordered the heath pasture used by the tenants to maintain their cattle, to be burnt. The cattle were left in poor condition. As the fences around the tenants' corn crops were also burned, cattle belonging to the incoming tenants began to eat the crops of the remaining tenants. The poor people were also prohibited from watching their own corn to protect it!<sup>3</sup>

The tenants lived in houses that they or their ancestors had built. By law, they were their property. Bog fir was used to construct the roofs, and it was considered to be the property of the tenant as well. Other timber in the house that had been obtained on the laird's land could be claimed to belong to the laird. Tenants used to remove their bog fir and use it when constructing the roof in their next home.<sup>4</sup>

In 1802 William (aka Ewan) Chisolm (sic) of Achcoilnaborgie married Henny (Henny or Henrietta) Mackay of Rhiphail, now known as Rhifail, in Farr, Sutherland.<sup>5</sup> William was a blacksmith and later a tinker.<sup>6</sup> Henrietta and William had a daughter Betty born in Gernsary, Kildonan in 1804.<sup>7</sup>

An 1811 Sutherland census recorded William Chisholm living in Badinielad which lies between Dalharold and Truderscaig.<sup>8</sup> The household consisted of William, an agricultural worker and 4 unnamed females. One of these would be his elderly mother-in-law Margaret Mackay, born about 1722. Margaret's father and grandfather had been ground officers on the Sutherland estate in the parish of Farr.<sup>9</sup> His wife Henny, daughter Betty, and Henny's sister Janet would also have been living with him.

On 13 June 1814, William Chisholm lived in Badinloskin, adjoining Rhiloisk, about 2 miles east of Strath-

naver, Sutherland. He, like most of his male neighbours, was working away from their houses only leaving women, children, the sick and elderly at home. Patrick Sellar and his band of assistants arrived. One witness, Donald Macleod, stated that he saw the folk in the houses try to preserve their timber which they were entitled to consider as their own.<sup>10</sup> But the devastators proceeded with the greatest celerity, demolishing all before them, and when they had overthrown the houses in a large tract of the county, they ultimately set fire to the wreck. Any timber or furniture not removed was instantly destroyed. "The proceedings were carried on with the greatest rapidity as well as with most reckless cruelty".<sup>11</sup> "In these scenes Mr Sellar was present and apparently....ordering and directing the whole." <sup>12</sup>"I was present at the pulling down and burning of the house of William Chisholm, Badinloskin, in which was lying his wife's mother, an old bed-ridden woman of near 100 years of age, none of the family being present. I informed the persons about to set fire to the house of this circumstance, and prevailed upon them to wait till Mr Sellar came. On his arrival, I told him of the poor old woman being in a condition unfit for removal. He replied, "Damn her, the old witch, she has lived too long; let her burn".<sup>13</sup> Macleod saw him add faggots against the building to increase the speed of the fire.<sup>14</sup> Janet MacKay, William's sister-in-law, arrived on the scene, rushed into the flames, carried her mother out wrapped in flaming blankets and placed her in the only structure left standing. It was a cold and uncomfortable place, unfit for the habitation of any human being. <sup>15</sup>The last words uttered by Margaret MacKay were 'God receive my soul; what fire is this about me?' as she was carried out.<sup>16</sup> She spoke no more and died in the shed 5 days later on 18 June 1814.

The house which Chisholm had been living in for 9 years was originally inhabited by Mr Falconer, Lady Sutherland's factor. Chisholm sublet it. At the time of the eviction, there were 16 couples living there. At first, Chisholm paid 5 shillings rental but that had been increased to five guineas.<sup>17</sup> Chisholm lost his mother-in-law, Margaret Mackay, and his house, barn, byre, and corn. A kiln and sheep cott which was only big enough to lay Margaret Mackay in, were all left standing.

Patrick Sellars was remanded in the Dornoch Jail and awaited the sitting of a Circuit Court in Inverness in 1816. The lengthy indictment included the following.

*culpable homicide, oppression and real injury, more particularly the wickedly and maliciously setting on fire and burning, or causing and procuring to be set on fire and burnt, a great extent of heath and pasture, on which a number of small tenants and other poor persons maintain their cattle, to the great injury and distress of the said persons; the violently turning, or causing and procuring to be turned out of their habitations, a number of the said tenants and other poor people, especially aged, infirm and impotent persons and pregnant women, and cruelly depriving them of all cover or shelter, to their great distress, and the imminent danger of their lives; the wickedly and maliciously setting on fire, burning, pulling down, and demolishing or causing and procuring to be set on fire, burnt, pulled down, and demolishing the dwelling houses, barns, kilns, mills and other buildings, lawfully occupied by the said persons.... are crimes of a heinous nature, and severely punishable....*<sup>18</sup>

Patrick Sellar told the court about William Chisholm.<sup>19</sup> He proceeded to paint Chisholm as being only a tinker, a gypsy, a person of low reputation and inferior status and therefore his evidence was easy to belittle.<sup>20</sup> He stated Chisholm, was a lawless man who would rebuild his house if it was burned down. Sellar said he was told at Divine Worship at the Mission House of Achness the Sunday before the eviction that Chisholm was a man of ill repute so he approached Chisholm and told him that he must remove himself from his property or else his officers would certainly throw him out if he did not go peaceably. People had told Sellar that Chisholm had married and lived with a wife and family while the first one was still living. Sellar stated that the first wife had recently visited Chisholm while she was in the company of some tinkers. He said Chisholm was a reputed thief. He also stated that he gave all the timber in the houses to departing tenants as a present but not to Chisholm and a couple of others.<sup>21</sup>

Edgar raised several points about the trial. He wrote that James Loch in 1815 stated that the inhabitants of Strath Naver were 'a set of people whose education and rank of life entitle them to little credit unless supported by other evidence'.<sup>22</sup> Reverend David Mackenzie refused to provide a certificate of good character

(continued)

for Chisholm. Edgar noted that the Countess of Sutherland had promoted the Reverend to the position of minister of Farr.<sup>23</sup> Sellar made a point of Chisholm having illicit sexual relations outside marriage but he did not discuss others with titles who were doing this.<sup>24</sup> Edgar stated 'The rambling attacks on Chisholm's character by the defence were quite immaterial, and would not have been allowed in any fair trial'.<sup>25</sup> When the Strath Naver small tenants later recorded evidence, the statements of those who had known Chisholm contained no hint of any complaints about him.<sup>26</sup>

Lord Pitmilley, in winding up the trial suggested to the jury that if they were in any doubt they ought to take into account the character of the accused Mr Sellar. He advised that this was always of importance in balancing contradictory testimony. Mr Sellar had been most humane with the sick. His Lordship also drew attention to the letters of support from notables, which were not evidence but must have some weight with the jury. Testimonies supported Mr Sellar's humanity of disposition.<sup>27</sup> Patrick Sellar was unanimously found not guilty. The court case began on a Tuesday at 10 am and concluded at 1 am on Wednesday morning. The jury came to their verdict after 15 minutes of deliberation. The courtroom was crowded to excess.

Edgar passed comment on the jury stating that of the 15 jury members, 12 were landlords or big farmers.<sup>28</sup> Joseph Mitchell wrote his *Reminiscences of my Life in the Highlands*, 'Whether the poor people in the above case [the Sellar trial] got fair play is very doubtful. It was strongly maintained throughout the country that they did not. Indeed, the Government at that time had the means of commanding a conviction [or an acquittal] and could ill afford a verdict to be given against the panel [the accused]'.<sup>29</sup> Edgar stated that if Sellar was guilty, so were the noble family of Sutherland, and indeed "all leading Highland proprietors".<sup>30</sup>

In 2014, 200 years after the death of Margaret Mackay, Professor Jim Hunter suggested a memorial needed to be erected at the site where Margaret lived and died.

Other houses were knocked down at Rhiloisk, but Prof Hunter argues: "It was the use of fire at Badinloskin, along with Margaret Mackay's subsequent death, that gave events there their particular resonance."

There is a sense in which the reputation of Highland landowners as a class has never recovered from what was done in the name of one of the most powerful of them.<sup>31</sup>

#### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Edgar, A, *The Sutherland Clearances: The Highland Clearances, Volume 3*, Theory and Practice, 2021, Kindle book, p. 33. Accessed 21 December 2024.

<sup>2</sup>Mackenzie, A. *The history of the Highland Clearances*, Glasgow, PJ O'Callaghan, 1914. <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/51271/pg51271-images.html>, p.22. Accessed 22 December 2024.

<sup>3</sup>MacLeod, D. *Gloomy Memories in the Highlands of Scotland: versus Mrs Harriet Beecher Stowes Sunny Memories in England, a foreign land; or a faithful picture of the extirpation of the celtic race from the Highlands of Scotland*, Glasgow, 1892, pp. 7-8.

<sup>4</sup>Macleod, *Gloomy Memories*, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup>Marriage of William Chisolm, married 16 February 1802, Scotland Old Parish Registers Marriages, 050/, Farr, Sutherland. <https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>.

<sup>6</sup>'Old Stories Retold. Patrick Sellar's Trial. 111'. *Oban Times*, 21 April 1883. <https://www.findmypast.com.au/image-viewer?issue=BL%2F0000540%2F19621124&page=7&article=158&stringtohighlight=margaret+mckay+badinloskin>

<sup>7</sup>Birth of Betty Chisholm, born 27 December 1804, Scotland OPR Births, 052/, Kildonan, Sutherland. <https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>.

<sup>8</sup>Strathnaven Museum, personal email.

<sup>9</sup>Ewan, E, Innes, S, Reynolds, S (Ed) *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women*. Edingburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2007, p. 228.

<sup>10</sup>Macleod, *Gloomy Memories*, p. 8

<sup>11</sup>Macleod, *Gloomy Memories*, p. 9

<sup>12</sup> Macleod, *Gloomy Memories*, p. 9

<sup>13</sup> Macleod, *Gloomy Memories*, p. 9

<sup>14</sup> Edgar, *The Sutherland Clearances*, p. 526.

<sup>15</sup> 'History of the Highland Clearances; Trial of Patrick Sellar',  
<https://www.electricscotland.com/history/clearances/10.htm>. Accessed 1 December 2024.

<sup>16</sup> Edgar, *The Sutherland Clearances*, p. 526.

<sup>17</sup> 'Old Stories Retold. Patrick Sellar's Trial. 111'. *Oban Times*, 21 April 1883.

<sup>18</sup> 'History of the Highland Clearances; Trial of Patrick Sellar',  
<https://www.electricscotland.com/history/clearances/10.htm>. Accessed 1 December 2024.

<sup>19</sup> 'Old Stories Retold: Patrick Sellars Trial. V.' *Oban Times*, 5 May 1883, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Edgar, *The Sutherland Clearances*, p. 708.

<sup>21</sup> 'Old Stories Retold: Patrick Sellars Trial. V.' *Oban Times*, 5 May 1883, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Edgar, *The Sutherland Clearances*, p. 652, referencing Richards, E. *Patrick Sellar and the Highland Clearances*, Edinburgh, Polygon, 1999, p. 156.

<sup>23</sup> Edgar, *The Sutherland Clearances*, p. 706.

<sup>24</sup> Edgar, *The Sutherland Clearances*, p. 573.

<sup>25</sup> Edgar, *The Sutherland Clearances*, p. 708.

<sup>26</sup> Edgar, *The Sutherland Clearances*, p. 708.

<sup>27</sup> 'History of the Highland Clearances; Trial of Patrick Sellar',  
<https://www.electricscotland.com/history/clearances/10.htm>. Accessed 1 December 2024.

<sup>28</sup> Edgar, *The Sutherland Clearances*, p. 685.

<sup>29</sup> Edgar, *The Sutherland Clearances*, p. 715, referencing Mitchell, J, *Reminiscences of My Life in the Highlands*, vols. 1 & 11, Newton Abott, David & Charles, 1971, p. 87.

<sup>30</sup> Edgar, *The Sutherland Clearances*, p. 715.

<sup>31</sup> 'The spark created 200 years ago is still burning', *The Herald*, 20 June 2014,  
<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/13166234.spark-created-200-years-ago-still-burning/>

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**Help us make this Newsletter better! Help us make this Newsletter bigger!**

**Help us make this Newsletter more successful!**

**Here's what YOU can DO**

1: Contribute something, write something about your Chisholm family, past, present, future.

2: Think of a suitable name for this publication "Newsletter" is a bit bland, and does not reflect all that it contains.

3: We need a suitable banner. Can somebody with graphic skills think about this. It may be easier to design once we have settled on a suitable name.

For contributions to the publication, proposed for twice a year (Summer and Winter) contact the editors directly, or via your Branch President or Branch Representative.

## Scottish Adventure

By Kim Reeves, Australia.



Once my husband and I definitely knew we were going to Scotland for the Chisholm Gathering we had stones to collect. We waited for our daughter and her family to visit, from Canada, and went for a drive along Ocean Beach (over 20 kms in length of sand) to collect Tasmanian stones washed up on the beach. They were to be an important part of our Scottish visit.

My husband and I had a very memorable start to our holiday in Scotland. We eventually arrived in Inverness Airport just before dark. After collecting our luggage we went to the car hire desk to sign papers and collect the keys to the vehicle. Once outside the terminal we found the car and then attempted to leave. I can't say I was lost in the airport car park because I knew where I was but I couldn't find how to drive out. After 20 minutes of driving around and around in circles (it was by now very dark) I came to a gate with a pole across it. It had a help button on it! When I pressed the help button a person told me that I needed an exit ticket. Where was the machine for the ticket? In the machine behind me. Reversing back I punched in for a ticket, went forward again, paid the exit fee and away we went. How can anyone get trapped in the car park of a small airport? Only me!

A couple of days later our daughter Kate and grandson Jack, who live in British Columbia, Canada, joined us in Inverness to be part of this unique Chisholm Clan gathering.

The Meet and Greet on the first day was an eye opener for me. I met Chisholms from mainland Australia, (I'm from the most important part of Australia and that is Tasmania), New Zealand, U.S.A., Canada, England and of course Scotland. Chisholms and their partners and their children everywhere! It was a great start to the week.

After a packed Tuesday and Wednesday, Thursday came around. Stone Day in my mind. We were taken by coach to Strathglass. We toured a church used by many Chisholms of the past before the clearances set in. We also had time to explore the grave yard nearby where many Chisholms were buried. It was amazing to see the family names that have been passed down from generation to generation – Donald, James, William, Alexander. On the way out of the cemetery I bobbed down to get a closer look at another Chisholm grave as everyone else went out through the gate and closed it. When I got to the gate it was stuck and would not open. I called out for help. My daughter replied "We'll come back and get you in a hundred years" to everyone's amusement! Eventually after the laughter had ceased I was released.

Boarding the coach again we were off to the long awaited Loch Mullardoch. After arriving at this special loch we walked down a hill and up another to the Chisholm Plaque and cairn above the edge of the water. This cairn is special to the Chisholm Clan as returning Chisholms to Scotland are to bring a stone from their home and place it on the cairn especially returning Australians. It was an emotional few minutes, a tear in the eye, as we (myself, my daughter Kate and her son Jack who live in Canada) placed the stones we had collected from Ocean Beach (west coast of Tasmania near Strahan) back in February. We placed some pumice, quartz and basalt to be part of the cairn to represent the Chisholms from Tasmania halfway around the world! Hopefully we will be able to return in the future and place some more unique Tasmanian stones. (see pictures overpage)

One interesting fact I learnt – The Chisholm Clan has more than 3 different tartans!!! Something I didn't know until this trip.



Tony Morrison (Australia) after he gave his address at the Cairn at Loch Mullardoch, Kate Lund and her son Jack (both Canada) who placed stones from Tasmania on the Cairn.

Kate and Jack are Kim Reeve's daughter and grandson.



Jack Lund (Canada) at the Chisholm Cairn

## At the Clan Gathering 2024

By Kate Lund, Canada.



I always thought going to Scotland would be a trip of a lifetime. When the opportunity came to meet up with my parents in Inverness and attend my first Interna-

tional Clan Chisholm Gathering, I jumped at the chance. After talking with my mum about it one night, I went the next day and booked airfares for myself and my son, Jack.

As neither Jack nor I, had much knowledge about a lot of the places we were to go, we spent the next few months researching them all. While Jack was annoyed the ice rink was going to be closed during our stay, he was excited about visiting Culloden and attending the Highland Games. Especially when he found out he could participate in some events.

The battlefield of Culloden was a very surreal experience for me- Multiple generations of Clan Chisholm, standing on the battlefield that our ancestors died on, learning about them. Our amazing tour guide, really brought to life what happened there. Not just setting the scene but sharing stories of members of other clans as well as the role the Chisholm Clan played. Not only did I learn so much, but it also really piqued Jack's interest in learning more about Clan Chisholm. Up until then, I think he was just half absorbing the information and not putting into the context of these were his ancestors. Who knew all it would take for an 11-year-old boy to really take interest in his heritage would be learning about a battlefield and the fighting style of clansmen before him. He has now declared Clan Chisholm warriors as "badass."

As other parents would know, we get happiness and enjoyment from watching our children explore the world through new adventures and friendships. I could go on for pages about this holiday as it had so much of that for me. From watching him nervously meet new people at opening night, dance with people at dinner, playing a game of pick-up soccer at Erchless Castle with other kids from around the world while the bag pipes were played in the background and then the Highland Games to wrap it all up. The highland games certainly lived up to everything we both imagined. Jack participated in the long jump, 100m, 200m and then joined his newfound international Chisholm Clan friends in the 4x200m relay.

Even though there were no first places, he did manage to place in them and thoroughly enjoyed the cash winnings. And then we got to watch the traditional sports involved in the games. Whilst enjoying a cold beer with my parents (well me, not Jack), we cheered on the athletes doing the Caber toss, hammer throw and Weight for height. The strength of those participants is unbelievable.

It certainly was the trip of a lifetime for both of us, but we look forward to trying to out do it at the next Clan Chisholm gathering.



Jack Lund at Bught Park

## Loch Mullardoch and the Four Munros

by Kim Polley, Australia.

If your appetite has been whetted and you want to explore Loch Mullardoch more, I have selected some videos you can view. Far less strenuous to do this than climb the four Munros around the Loch.

[Loch Mullardoch 4 Munros Charlie McCartney](#)

[Loch Mullardoch & Glen Cannich-Highlands Scotland](#)

[Adventure Nic Loch Mullardoch Munros](#)

[Mullardoch Munros Brian Thomson](#)



Looking at Loch Mullardoch from the Chisholm Cairn towards the now hidden stone

Photo: Kim Polley

### Can you help, please?

A friend is looking for information on **Jemima Chisholm** born 21 June 1825 in Fodderty, Ross and Cromarty, Scotland. Jemima travelled from Scotland to Australia on the *Araminta* and landed in Sydney on 29th July 1854. She accompanied her younger brother John Chisholm. Jemima and John's sister Anne followed them in 1856 to Australia on the *Bee*. John Chisholm was offered work as a stone mason by his cousin Colin Ross, the founder of Inverell in New South Wales. N.S.W. John died as a result of an accident in 1875. He was aged 47 years. Jemima did not accompany her brother to Inverell. Her sister Anne was married in Wollongong and died there. Through some letters that arrived from their mother, Margaret Mackenzie in Dingwall, Scotland, to John, she wrote that she was disappointed that she hadn't had letters from either Jemima or Anne for months at a time. My friend has been unable to find a marriage or death certificate for Jemima in Australia and has no idea if she remained in Sydney or travelled further afield to another country. Please contact [kim.polley13@gmail.com](mailto:kim.polley13@gmail.com) if you can assist with any information.

Searching for **Annie (formerly Richards or Smith) Chisholm** last known to be leaving Jerilderie, New South Wales in 1942 for Tocumwal, NSW. She had been widowed in 1937; her husband Stanley was 36 years old. They had been married in 1928 in Albury. She may have lived in Broken Hill before her marriage. Please contact [kim.polley13@gmail.com](mailto:kim.polley13@gmail.com) if you can assist.

If you have a missing Chisholm in your Tree and would like assistance in the search, simply write to the editors, Kim or Robert, and perhaps our readers can help?

With your assistance, this can be a regular column in the Newsletter.

# From the Archives

By the editor

64 years ago Clan Chisholm Journal Number 3 (Jan. 1961) page 8

## Chiefly about the Chisholms

\* \* \* \* \*

R.H.E. (Ronnie) Chisholm celebrated his 45th appearance for Scotland at cricket by captaining them against M.C.C. at Lord's in August. He was first capped against Ireland. 12 years ago. A native of Aberdeen, he is head of the Modern Languages Department at Melville College, Edinburgh.

\* \* \* \* \*

Updates from Cricinfo, Wikipedia, Facebook: While there are many Chisholms around the world who love and play cricket, there don't seem to be many who make it to International level. The 1961 journal featured one, who would become his country's most capped player: Ronald Harry Edward Chisholm of Scotland. A fine allrounder, he scored a century against Ireland in 1970, and took 5 for 57 against the MCC at Lords. He made 55 n.o. opening against the 1953 Australian touring team. Photo credit: thanks to Forty Club Scotland District FB group.



 Forty Club Scotland District  
January 14, 2022 · 🌐

### **29 November 2006: Ronnie Chisholm dies aged 79**

Ronnie Chisholm, one of Scotland's finest batsmen, has died aged 79. After making his debut in 1948, Chisholm played a record 80 times for his country, scoring 3175 runs including 17 fifties

Ronnie Chisholm, one of Scotland's finest batsmen, has died aged 79. After making his debut in 1948, Chisholm played a record 80 times for his country, scoring 3175 runs including 17 fifties. "Ronnie was one of the best-loved and most successful cricketers of his generation," Neil Leitch, a historian specialising in Scottish cricket, told *The Scotsman*. "He was a solid accumulator of runs and a useful leg-spin bowler."

**His most notable innings came in 1953 against the touring Australians, in which he struck an unbeaten 55 opening the innings.** In addition to appearing for Scotland, he was prolific at club level too - for Aberdeenshire and Stewart's Melville College - amassing over 16,000 runs.

"Ronnie left international cricket on a high with a 50 for Scotland," Hamish More, his former opening partner, said, "in one of the best innings I ever saw him play."

<https://www.espnricinfo.com/story/ronnie-chisholm-dies-aged-79-270333>

# From the Archives

By the editor

25years ago Clan Chisholm Journal Number 43 (2000) page 40

## New research to update old case

THOMAS CHISHOLM 1680 - 1768

PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER OF KILMORACK

& FATHER OF AMERICAN CHISHOLMS

*THE NOW ABANDONED CHURCH OF KILMORACK was once the living of Thomas Chisholm. Thomas was from a Chisholm line who were considered by John Maclean to have been descended from the Chief's line. Two of Thomas' children were brought up in Georgia and later, as successful leaders of their communities, lived on either side of the Savannah River.*

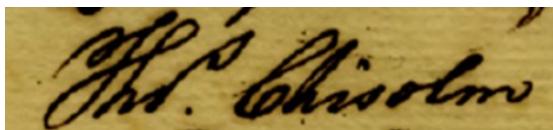
### THE SCOTTISH BEGINNING

Thomas' father was Alexander, a farmer of Teawig near Beaulieu. Alexander was born about 1650 and died after 1702 when Alexander's elder son also named Alexander married Marie Fraser the daughter of William Fraser, minister at Kilmorack.

The idea that Lt Col Thomas Chisholm of Burke County Georgia (died 1789) is the son of Rev Thomas Chisholm of Kilmorack has been widely accepted through the families in the USA, but acceptance was not always universal. One of Lt Thomas Chisholm's descendant's, Sherrie Cork of California, has been doing a deep dive into this controversy, and will be publishing the results of her research in the 2025 Clan Chisholm Journal. Sherrie has been right through the Scottish records, uncovering documents not seen before by genealogical researchers. Her findings are a "must read" for all the descendants of Lt. Thom-



as Chisholm, and for all Chisholms who appreciate reading a methodical and well researched case. Congratulations are due to Sherrie for this masterpiece of family research, available exclusively to subscribers of the Clan Chisholm Journal.



## Looking for Chisholms of Glenmoriston

By Anne Brand, Canada.



Mary McRae is my grandmother. She is pictured below with her brother Farquhar. They were born in the late 1800s in Glengarry County, Ontario, Canada. They are descendants of John McRae and Isabel Chisholm, pioneers in the 13th Concession of Kenyon, Glengarry County, Ontario.



Mary McRae & Farquhar MacRae



Pioneer house of John McRae and Isabel Chisholm in the 13th Concession

We have documents that suggest that Isabel is the daughter of Alexander Chisholm of Montreal, who died there in 1813, and his wife Margaret Fraser who died there in 1810.

Alexander Chisholm was in the British military during the American War of Independence. He was to be granted land in Nova Scotia but chose instead to settle in Quebec.

Finding Alexander's connections to other Chisholm families has been very difficult. There appears to be no connection to any of the many Chisholm families in Glengarry County, Ontario, where John and Isabel settled.

The Chisholm families that I do connect with through DNA are all in the province of Nova Scotia. However, these families have strong McRae connections as well.

This poses a question. Was Alexander Chisholm not of true Chisholm descent? In the turbulent times when he was born, was he adopted by a Chisholm family? Are the DNA samples that I have not adequate to show a Chisholm connection? Was it possible that a McRae widow was carrying a baby or bringing a baby with her when she married a Chisholm man.

There are many Chisholm families in Nova Scotia and the Chisholm families that I share DNA with are connected to the descendants of Paul Chisholm from Blairidh, located near Glenmoriston. He was married to a Catherine McRae. Their sons Hugh, Alexander and Donald are known for their part at the Battle of Culloden and their subsequent hiding of Prince Charlie in the aftermath.

I am hoping that someone out there might have more information about the Chisholms of Glenmoriston and their families.

Anne Brand

macrae234@gmail.com

Gedmatch HG5263387

Ancestry Lyle Anne Brand

Family Tree DNA Lyle Anne Brand, also Jack Arnold McRae, Douglas K McRae

## Lucy Chisholm and Robert Burns; a mystery solved.

by Chis Maxwell, Australia.



W

hat Scottish descendant with Chisholm blood in their veins does not enjoy Robert Burns' poetry. If you're a lover of his classics you might be familiar with this evergreen:

O Thou dread Pow'r, who reign'st above!  
I know Thou wilt me hear;  
When for this scene of peace and love,  
I make this pray'r sincere.

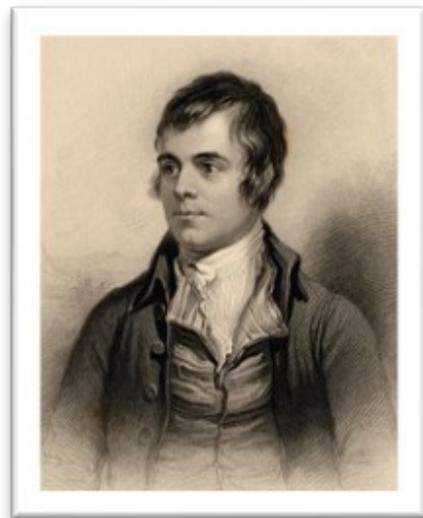
The hoary Sire - the mortal stroke,  
Long, long be pleas'd to spare;  
To bless his little filial flock,  
And show what good men are.

She, who her lovely Offspring eyes  
With tender hopes and fears,  
O bless her with a Mother's joys,  
But spare a Mother's tears!

Their hope, their stay, their darling youth,  
In manhood's dawning blush,  
Bless him, Thou God of love and truth,  
Up to a Parent's wish.

The beauteous, seraph Sister-band  
With earnest tears I pray,  
Thou know'st the snares on ev'ry hand,  
Guide Thou their steps away.

When, soon or late, they reach that coast,  
O'er life's rough ocean driven,  
May they rejoice, no wand'rer lost,  
A family in Heaven!



Robert Burns (image at right) lived between 1759 and 1796. He was a prolific writer with a unique style that blended traditional Scottish folk music with contemporary issues of his time. *O Thou Dread Power*, written in 1793 to accompany a traditional Scottish melody called *The Braes of Balquhiddy*, forms part of a collection that Burns sent to the Edinburgh music publisher, George Thomson. Known for its lyrical

style and stunning imagery, it stands out amongst other works of its time. Scholars have identified some mystery surrounding this poem's subject matter: is it referring to the general state of humanity or to specific persons he knew? It's been variously interpreted as either a powerful and evocative exploration of the themes of love, loss, and the inevitability of death, or a prayer asking God for mercy and blessings on particular people. I favour the latter. The vivid imagery still resonates with those grappling with the pain of loss or the joy of love, with a reminder that even though life is fleeting, there is still beauty and meaning to be found in the pursuit of love, which models the hope we have for an eternal future.



But there is really no mystery at all about the subject of this poem, once we understand its origin, highlighted by the inscription that comes with it: "lying at a Rev. friend's house one night, the author left the following verses in the room where he slept."<sup>1</sup> The particular "Rev. friend" was Dr George Lawrie (image at left), the incumbent of St Margaret's Hill, the Loudoun manse near Mosgiel in Ayrshire. Lawrie played a key role in introducing Burns' poetry to Edinburgh literary society, and Burns was an admirer of Lawrie's daughter, Christina, and her musical prowess ("...By far the most agreeable hours I spend in Edin<sup>r</sup> must be placed to the account of Miss

Lawrie and her Piano forte...").<sup>2</sup> Burns was a friend of the Lawrie family and frequent visitor to the Loudoun manse. This friendship, and the particular visit in early 1793 when *O Thou dread Pow'r* was written, is documented in Henry Graham's biography of Burns.<sup>3</sup> It is also mentioned in a letter from Hon. Patrick Boyle to Lawrie,<sup>4</sup> and confirmed by an engraved inscription, made with a diamond-point pen, on the window of the bedroom where he stayed at Loudoun manse...

*Lovely Mrs Lawrie, she is all charms.*

The window sash and pane were for a time preserved in the modern Loudoun manse and the inscription is regarded as genuine by handwriting experts.<sup>5</sup> In 2024 the broken pane was restored, appearing on *The Repair Shop* TV programme, and now resides at Barr Castle Museum.

So there is no mystery to the meaning of *O Thou Dread Power*. Clearly inspired by his evening visit to his friends' house in early 1793, Burns had penned his panegyric in praise of, and as a prayer for, those with whom he sojourned that evening.

The occasion was immortalised in the image shown at right. Possibly an engraving from an original painting, it is entitled "With Dr Lawrie and family, on the occasions of the visit of Robert Burns the poet", which was in the possession of Lucy Chisholm (née Dunn, 1874-1947), wife of James Edward Gerald Chisholm (1873-1924) of Raeburn, Breadalbane, NSW. The image depicts,



<sup>1</sup>Graham, Henry Grey, *Scottish Men of Letters in the Eighteenth Century*, Chapter XIV, Robert Burns, London: Adam and Charles Black 1901, <https://electricScotland.com/history/social/sctlet14.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Burns to Rev's George Lawrie, autographed letter, 5 February 1787: <https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2022/books-and-manuscripts-medieval-to-modern/robert-burns-autograph-letter-signed-to-rev-george>.

<sup>3</sup>Graham, Henry Grey, *Scottish Men of Letters in the Eighteenth Century*, Chapter XIV.

<sup>4</sup>Hon'ble Patrick Boyle Esq of Shewalton to Rev's Dr George Lawrie, 7 April 1793, <https://www.irvineburnsclub.org/other-manuscripts.html>.

<sup>5</sup>Boyle, A. M. (1996). *The Ayrshire Book of Burns-Lore*. Darvel: Alloway Publishing, p. 94.

(continued)

Lucy Chisholm and Robert Burns, a mystery solved

left to right, Christina Lawrie (playing the spinet), Rev'd George Lawrie, Robert Burns, Archibald Lawrie (likely), Mary Lawrie (née Campbell), and an unknown child.

On the back of this engraved image Lucy Chisholm wrote ....

*Robert Burns stayed the night in the home of Dr Lawrie. Pinned to the pincushion, on the dressing table of the room where he slept, was found the poem "O Thou great [sic] Power, who dwells [sic] above", which appears in Burns book of miscellaneous poems. [This was] the first time Burns heard the spinet [the small harpsichord shown in the above image] played ... on this occasion in Dr Lawrie's home [by his daughter Christina]. The original poem is now in the possession of Miss Louisa Lawrie, "The Moss", Killearn, Stirling. My daughter and I saw the original manuscript at The Moss this year [1929] when on a visit to Scotland.*

The last male of the Lawrie family was the late Sir Archibald [Campbell] Lawrie LLD, Chief Justice of Ceylon. He was a contributor to the *Scottish Historical Review*. An *In Memoriam* of him is published in Vol XII, No. 46, January 1915 of the *Scottish Historical Review*. Mrs Gerald Chisholm, Raeburn, Breadalbane is a great granddaughter of the Rev'd Lawrie. Betty Chisholm of Killara is a great-great granddaughter of the Rev'd Lawrie, of the Manse, Loudoun, in this picture of Dr Laurie [sic] and Robert Burns.

Lucy Chisholm

Sydney, September 1930.



Mrs. Gerald Chisholm.

Rev'd Lawrie's one surviving son, Archibald (1768-1837), succeeded him as Minister of Loudoun. Archibald married Anne Makittrick Adair (1794) and they had eleven children. Their sixth daughter, Louisa Campbell Lawrie (1806-1881) married William Stevenson King of Dumbarton (1836) and they had four children. They emigrated to Melbourne. Their last child, Annie Adair King (born in Goulburn NSW, 1850-1939) married Henry Dunn (1845-1916) of Sydney, and they were the parents of Lucy Chisholm (née Dunn, born in Picton, NSW in 1874), pictured left. Lucy was a polymath: fluent in Latin and Greek and very musical, these talents undoubtedly inherited from her Lawrie ancestors.



Lucy was staying with her daughter Betty Kenway (née Elizabeth Geraldine Lawrie Chisholm, 1909-1995; image at left) at Fairhaven, Lorne Avenue, Killara, when she inscribed the back of the image of her great grandparents hosting Robert Burns. There is no provenance provided with the engraving, nor the original image, apart from the note, handwritten on the back by Lucy Chisholm.

I have been unable to identify the image as a known artwork but would be grateful to hear from anyone who can. It was last in the possession of my third cousin, the late Miss Geraldine Kenway

(Betty's daughter), and was passed to me by Geraldine's first cousin Tony Morrison (our Australian President) for deposition in the National Library of Australia.

<sup>6</sup>Genealogy from Campbell Family Tree, Public Member, ancestry.com

<sup>7</sup>*The Cranbrook*, May 1923.

<sup>8</sup>Portrait of Mrs G.L. Kenway by Gwen Ramsay, Archibald Prize entry 1936, Art Gallery of NSW, Gwen Ramsay Estate.



The Chism Family Association (CFA) comprises descendants of the Chism Family which moved in the post-revolution era from the Rappahannock area of Virginia, over the mountains to the Mill Creek Area in what would become Green County, then Barren County, and finally Monroe County, in Kentucky. (The Chisms ran a grist mill on Mill Creek thereby possibly resulting in the name of the stream.)

The CFA was formed in the early 1960's from informal family gatherings in Nebraska. The group located and reached out to the Kentucky kin who remained in the Monroe County area. Dr. Neal Asa Chism, a university professor and amateur genealogist in Lincoln, Nebraska, was the key actor in bringing far flung relatives into the fold.

In 1970 the CFA entered into a "special relationship" with the CCSA. Arnold F. Decker, Chairman of the American Branch of the CCS, approached the group with the proposal. The relationship was approved at the 1970 CFA gathering in Glasgow, Kentucky, becoming known as the "James Chism of Virginia Chapter of the CCSA." However, it has been recently proven the legendary "James Chism of Virginia" who moved his family to Kentucky never existed. John Chisholm/Chism was the family forefather.

A contingent of CFA members: President Katherine Chism Gordon, past president Pat Chism and wife Dorothea, and niece Amanda Chism Briggs, attended the International Chisholm Gathering in Inverness, Scotland, the week of July 8th.

The UK Chisholms put on a tremendous Gathering and every event was outstanding! Thanks to Susan Chisholm, Clan Chisholm Society Secretary and sister of the Clan Chieftain. The CFA group spent some extra days in Edinburgh and Glasgow and toured the Isle of Skye, Stirling, Elgin, and John O'Groats.



(continued)

## Chism Family Association



### Clan Chisholm Society DNA Project: The CFA connection

As mentioned, for over a hundred years there had been a “brick wall” stopping all genealogical research into the CFA lineage before they settled in the Mill Creek Kentucky area in the late 1700’s. Thanks to DNA help and historical records on the internet, we now have conclusive proof of our origin.

A substantial 3 part family investigation has been done, and is available at the University of Western Kentucky. Click the link below:

#### [Barren County Kentucky’s Mill Creek Chism Family & Their Virginian Ancestors](#)

Those of you have been following the DNA trail know there was a non-parental event (NPE) which occurred in about 1737, when a Keziah Chissum, while unmarried gave birth, to John Chissum/Chism, who later brought his family to Kentucky in the late 1700s and from whom it has been established we are descended. DNA disclosed his father was a Stubblefield and was also located in the Orange County, Virginia area.

Keziah's parents were Constable John Chissum and wife Rebecca. John died in late 1742 or early 1743 and Rebecca died in 1746. Court records show when Rebecca died, she left an infant orphan John Chissum. Keziah was sued for a debt at that time but she did not appear in court and she and son John, then about age 8, disappeared from the records.

However, going back a generation, Constable John's father appears to be our immigrant ancestor. As one researcher states, Constable John Chissum's father "can only be Alexander Chissum." Alexander Chissum came to America in 1691 under the Headright Act, by which a person is granted land in exchange for importation of immigrants. Alexander's headright was John Perry who received land in King & Queen County, Virginia. Alexander Chissum later obtained land as his name is listed in property records having 150 acres in 1704.

Little is known about Alexander. He may be the one who witnessed a 1741 deed. Researchers believe he was from England, as Virginia was an English colony and the early immigrants were English. There is a possibility Constable John had a brother James who worked for the governor and a brother Thomas who was in the military.

The Mill Creek Chism sons were George, William, James, Jacob, Michael, and JOHN. John married Esther Lynn, daughter of Benjamin Lynn, and after 1816 they moved first to Tennessee, and finally to Florence, Alabama, using the spelling “Chisholm”. The connection to John Sr. was confirmed by DNA results connecting three sons John, William and Jacob. John Jr. and parents are buried in Florence, Alabama, which established John Sr. was the patriarch of the branch.

If you are a Chisholm who descends from John Chisholm & Esther Lynn of Florence AL, then the Mill Creek Chism Family is your family.



Photo: Kim Polley

Australian President Tony Morrison explaining the significance of the Chisholm Cairn

### Clan Chisholm Gathering, Inverness. 2024

by Tony Morrison, Australia.

Our Australian thanks go out to the organisers of the 2024, Clan Chisholm gathering in Inverness, particularly Susan Chisholm. It was a very special and well-planned event for the Clan and a delight for all of us who were lucky enough to be there. I must say it was a privilege for my wife, Sue and I.

It was a wonderful opportunity for Clan members, members of the large extended Chisholm family, from Scotland and England to the far-flung corners of the Commonwealth to celebrate our connection and history. And it was absolutely fantastic to meet our fellow colonials from New Zealand, Canada and the USA, share our families' experiences and create ties that I hope will endure into the future.

I was delighted to have an opportunity to recount Australia's Clan Chisholm founder, Miriam Chisholm's part in instigating and building a cairn above the waterline to commemorate The Chisholm stone, which becomes submerged, when Loch Mullardoch, part of a hydro-electric scheme in 1959, is full. Miriam contributed a stone from her home in Kippilaw. NSW, Australia.



She also took back a 'wee bonny piece of rock' from the cave where several

Highlanders, including 3 Chisholm men, Alexander, Donald and Hugh sheltered Bonny Prince Charlie after Culloden, as part of the cairn at Kippilaw, of which she was also the driving force.

Clan Chisholm Australia owes Miriam a debt of gratitude for all that she did because without her efforts, there would be no Clan Chisholm in Australia. Likewise to the volunteers here in Australia as well as New Zealand, the USA, Canada and of course Scotland and England who keep The Clan alive.

Thank you and well done.

# CLAN COUNCIL 2025

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## Clan Chisholm Society, Australia Branch



### Presidents Report

Tony Morrison



I wish to congratulate Susan Chisholm and her fellow Clan Chisholm members for holding such a successful 2024 Inverness Gathering.

I would like to take this opportunity to announce that I will be stepping down from the role of President at the 2026 AGM. It will have been, as it has been already, a very fulfilling journey and honour to have represented the Australian Branch of The Clan Chisholm Society. I have always valued the contributions that the Clan has made, and still continues to make, to our great country, as far back as I can remember. We have all been blessed with the work of those who took the time to write it all down, as well as record all the details of the many Australian Chisholm families who have settled in Australia. It is a unique and valuable resource.

I wish my successor all the best in maintaining the strength of the Clan Chisholm in Australia while cementing lasting ties, through newsletters, with our overseas Clan Chisholm cousins in New Zealand, the USA and Canada, as well as in the UK and Scotland, a move initiated by motion at the 2024 AGM .

**2025 FEES : Due Date 28 February 2025**

**\$35 single, \$45 double, children under 18 are free**

**PLEASE PAY VIA DIRECT DEBIT:**

**Account 205832169, BSB 012 865**

**Stating your name and member number if possible**

**OR: cheque to The Treasurer, Clan Chisholm Soc. Inc.,**

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**Branch Representative:** Kim Polley OAM (as above)

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**Clan Chisholm Society Genealogy Database (international database)**

[www.chisholmgenealogy.com/DB/](http://www.chisholmgenealogy.com/DB/) (Secretary can provide password)

**CCS Forum:** <http://www.chisholmgenealogy.com/cgi-bin/yabb2/YaBB.p>

**Clan Chisholm Australia Branch Genealogy Database** <http://clanchisholm.org.au/> (Secretary can provide password)