

PENNYMORE NEAR INVERARAY

SOMETIME A CAMPBELL PLACE

By Duncan Beaton
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The name Pennymore is from the Gaelic 'Peighinn - Mor', for 'Big Pennyland'. The system of land measurement in the Western Isles and Argyll was of Norse origin, with a Pennyland equating to one twentieth of an 'Ounce' land or the extent of land which payed the value of an ounce of silver. Obviously the area varied in size depending upon what it produced in terms of crops and herds. A 'Big Pennyland' would therefore indicate a fairly poor return in terms of Acreage or Hectares.

The earliest mention of Pennymore on Loch Fyne is in relation to Archibald 'Makevire of Pennimor' who acted as attorney in a writ for the Scrymgeour family in 1479. This was witnessed by his sons Archibald and Eware (Iver). This family of MacIvers held Pennymore for ten generations, up until the end of the 17th century.

They may have been related to Sir Duncan MacIver of Stronshira who was hereditary keeper of the castle of Inveraray at the end of the 16th century. Sir Duncan was the ancestor of the MacIver-Campbells of Asknish, the first Asknish being on the south side of the mouth of Loch Melfort, now Arduaine, and a later move of the family taking the name to near Lochgair. They may also have ben descended from the Campbells of Strachur, across Loch Fyne from Pennymore, with whom Iver was a popular name.

Early in the 17th century the MacIvers dropped their patronymic in favour of Campbell, as did some other families in Argyll. Alexander Campbell of Pennymore, 8th of the line, was a covenanter who supported the Marquis of Argyll against the Marquis of Montrose during the Civil War period.

Alexander was wounded and captured at the battle of Inverlochy in 1645. On the restoration of Charles II the prominent covenanters were rounded up. The Marquis of Argyll was executed and Alexander Campbell

of Pennymore died in the Edinburgh Tollbooth. He was buried in Greyfriars Churchyard in Edinburgh on the 4th of September 1661.

During Alexander's time, in 1630, Pennymore had been expanded to include Glensluain across Loch Fyne in the parish of Strachur. This was the peak of the Pennymore Campbell's power in the county. In the time of Alexander's son John the property was divided into three portions and sold off. This was in 1664 and two years later John's son William was served heir to his father. He died without male heirs and the family's hold on Pennymore ended.

William Campbell of Pennymore's sister Jean married twice, the second time to Patrick Campbell, minister of Glenaray. They lived at Clonary and had a large family. From them descended the Campbells of Kilmory (Lochgilphead), Knockbuy (Minard), Ederline (near Ford at the south end of Lochawe) and others.

Pennymore passed, on the 31st of March 1718, to the Clerks of Braleckan, a family first noted in Argyll on the 15th of March 1514. It was Dugald Clerk of the ninth generation at Braleckan who purchased several farms in mid-Argyll in 1718.

Dugald had been served heir to his father Archibald Clerk on the 30th of August 1706 and he was Argyll's commissioner to the Isles in 1710. Between 1710 and 1716 he acted as Baillie of part of the islands of Tiree and Coll, granting and receiving various tacks (leases) of lands.

Dugald Clerk married Sarah Rankin, neice to Sir John Clerk, 2nd of Pennicuik, a handsome estate just south of Edinburgh. Although the two Clerk families were apparently unrelated prior to this marriage, they were the only two of the many Clark-Clerk families in Scotland, to spell their surname with an 'e' rather than with an 'a'.

The marriage produced two sons; Gabriel, named after his maternal grandfather, and John. Gabriel was still alive on the 30th of January 1731 but had died by 1749 when his brother John was described as 'only child of this marriage' during a visit to Braleckan by Sir John Clerk of Pennicuik. Perhaps Gabriel died in 1743, as both his name and date were barely decipherable on the tombstone at the family burial plot above Pennymore about twenty years ago (circa 1970).

John Clerk went to Jamaica in 1749 when many Argyll families owned property on that island. For example descendants of Jean Campbell of the Pennymore family (above) had the estates of Black River, Fish River and Orange Bay. John Clerk had returned to Argyll by 1752 to help run his father's estate, disposing of the family lands on his father's death in 1754. Braleckan and Pennymore were sold to the Duke of Argyll in that year.

Angus Fisher, one of the Inveraray merchant family, had rented Pennymore from Dugald Clerk and continued to live there until 1766 when he purchased Auchindrain, renaming it Thornfield (Auchindrain



= Achadh Na Droghainn in the Gaelic which translates as Field of Thorns). Angus was living in Inveraray when financial difficulties forced him to part with Auchindrain in 1771. He died in about 1780.

Thereafter Pennymore was let by the Argyll estates and had many interesting residents. The present house dates from Angus Fisher's time and probably replaced a small fortified tower house which stood on the adjacent point in the days of the early MacIvers. There is a natural harbour, Port Na Se Uamh' (Port of the Six Caves) beyond the point, where fishing boats were stored in winter up to the First World War period.

Among the later residents at Pennymore were, in 1795, Lachlan Campbell, a retired writer (lawyer) and former provost (mayor) of Inveraray. His son Duncan Campbell of Duncholgin was living there in the 1820's. They were the descendants of Duncan Campbell the notary of Muckairn whose wife was daughter of the famous Reverend Colin Campbell of Achnaba, the brilliant correspondent of Sir Isaac Newton.

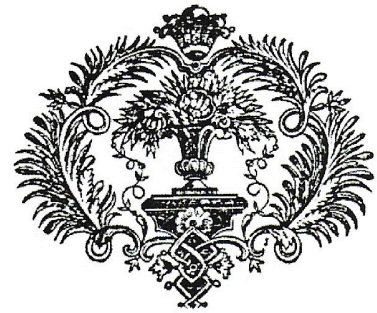
By 1850 the house was let to Major Donald Campbell, a veteran of Waterloo, the battle at which the British defeated Napoleon. He died in Inveraray in 1865 and the house became a farmhouse. The last farmer was John Smith Ferguson, a noted shinty player who died in retirement in his 91st year in Furnace.

Thereafter Pennymore became a house only used for holidays, until it was renovated as a permanent home by a Mr. Len Ford in recent years. Who knows what ghostly figures from the past visit the place? The coaches from Inveraray perhaps, the horses whipped to a lather as they sped down Donald Bain's brae on the old toll road. The old Major, with his memories of the great days of the Duke of Wellington's campaigns, setting off for a days fishing at "The Major's Rock" which keeps his name alive near Kenmore.



THE NAME OF BURNS A CAMPBELL CONNECTION?

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There is an oft-repeated tale, regularly re-appearing in Journals such as The Oban Times and this one, which recounts the ancestry of Scotland's bard Robert Burns and the possibility of a Campbell Connection.

Burns is much loved in many corners of the world, particularly among the Scots colonies in North America and Australasia. Many myths have grown from the basic tale of the ploughman-poet. They are recounted every year, especially at the time of his Birthday Anniversary on the 25th of January.

So what is the origin of the Campbell tale, and what in fact were the origins of Robert Burns? His birth was recorded thus: "Robert Burns, lawful son of William Burns in Alloway and Agnes Brown his spouse, was born January 25 1759. Baptised by Mr. William Dalrymple. Witnesses John Tennant and James Young". According to the family Bible, the parents were "married together 15th December 1757".

The father was born William Burness, or Burnes, and it was during his lifetime that the more familiar spelling of the name was adopted. William had moved to Ayrshire about 1753-5, when he found employment a gardener. He stayed in this employment until 1766 when his growing family forced him into some other, more secure, profession. He took the lease of a 70 acre farm called Mount Oliphant, where the family was brought up. They remained there for 11 years until William took up the lease of the farm called Lochlea.

Robert Burns the poet was also

interested in his own genealogy. In his autobiography he wrote "My father was of the north of Scotland, the son of a farmer who, like his ancestors, had rented lands of the noble Keiths of Marischal, and had the honour of sharing their fate". He went on "I have not the most distant pretensions to assume that character which the pye-coated guardians of escutcheons (i.e. heralds Ed.) call a gentleman. When at Edinburgh last winter I got acquainted in the Herald's Office, and looking through that granary of honours, I there found almost every name in the kingdom; but as for me:-

My ancient and ignoble blood
has crept through scoundrels
since the flood".

However in the revised Kilmarnock Edition of Burn's autobiography, edited by William Scott Douglas, there is note of a more fruitful expedition: "In 1837...a search made in the same quarter by Dr. James Burness of (from) Montrose, a grandson of the poet's cousin and correspondent, was more successful. Tradition had assigned as the root of the Burness family tree planted in Kincardineshire, a certain Walter Campbell from Argyleshire who had, in the early part of the seventeenth century, for political or prudential reasons abandoned his native district, dropping his proper surname, and assuming that of Burnhouse or Burness, and settled in the parish of Glenberrie, in the Mearns."