



ARCHIBALD McILURAY

(c1510-c1565)

The increasing power & efficiency of a central government resulted in increased documentation. It is during this period that individual McGilvrays begin to appear in the official records & Archibald is the first (in 1542) specifically named Laird of Pennyghael. (9) An older Argyll manuscript of 1467 does not list any McGilvrays but a Gilberti M'Cambilet Nevini M'Gilvar is a burgess (free man of the town) in Inverness town in 1426 & in 1545 a John Makgilleveye is a bailie there, while in 1552 John is a burgess there. (207) A Duncane Makgillemorey is mentioned, in 1497, as a follower of Farq'r MacIntosh (likely in Inverness-shire). (189p.96)

There are two possible earlier McGilvrays acting as witnesses for McDonalds (183); although this spelling may be the McIlbrede (McBride) of later records.

- John MacGillebrede at Dingwall in 1475;
- Neil MacGillebrede at Islay in 1476 & 1479. This Neil was Archdeacon of the Isles 1472-1501.

And, there were also several witnesses, with no surnames, who may be of McDonald's lower grade of counsellors which included the McGilvrays & who, strangely, don't otherwise show up. Or, they may, more likely, be clergymen; again a strong connection to our clan. Many Celtic clergy had families by concubines, & their kids may have had only first names. The names have a strong affinity with McGilvray first names;

- Malc at Ardtornish in 1409, as Rector at Kilcolmkill (which became known as Kilmore; or the great church), Mull; who died 1421;
- Neil son of Colin (which in Gaelic is akin to Malc) at Ardtornish in 1409, as Rector, Kilcolmkill, Morvern;
- Dunc at Ardtornish in 1461, as Archdeacon of the Isles;
- Angus son of Dunc at Iona in 1492;
- John/Duff son of Dunc at Colonsay in 1492;
- Martin son of Dunc at Iona & Aros in 1492;
- Angus son of Martin at Colonsay in 1492;
- Dunc son of Martin at Colonsay in 1492;

(Although these latter two may be MacMartins of Letterfinlay, between Fort William & Fort Augustus, they could also be sons of a Martin McGilvray)

It has not been possible to verify that this Arch of Pennyghael is the well documented Rev Arch Makillewray. The Rev Arch was, however, likely from Mull (where there were seven churches in 1542) & a close associate of Duart. Rev Arch often acted as a notary public for Duart & received his Islay ministry position from him.

To qualify for these positions he would have required an adequate standard of education in Latin, penmanship & the law. (158p.108). For such an education he would have attended university at either Glasgow, Aberdeen or St Andrews; all of which were stated to be totally corrupt at this time. This much travelled Rev Arch may well be of Pennyghael because, a century later, a known Laird of Pennyghael (Rev Martin) would be similarly educated & as often transferred between parishes in this region. Such a similarity indicates a family connection between these two men & reinforces the view that this was a hereditary occupation.



The Book of Knowledge Encyclopedia. 1947 v6p.1947

A notary was a public official, appointed by the pope or king, who was authorized to record any legal document. He entered the details of it in his own register, called a protocol book, & issued from it, on request, an official extract called an instrument (such as an instrument of sasine; conveying land). As a means of authentication the notary drew, on each instrument, his own special sign. The Scottish notary was a common figure from the 15th century & must have often filled the role of a modern lawyer. In the later middle ages they were subject to examination, by their local bishop, in such matters as penmanship, grammar & language, & the forms of contracts & wills. (220pp.7/8)

That Arch filled an important role can be appreciated from the fact that only 15% of adult male Scots could make even a signature in 1600. Before 1450 literacy was found only among certain restricted groups; churchmen, university grads, royal administrators (categories which tended to overlap) & a few Scottish kings. (220pp.10/11) As Island government grew, so too grew the need for clerks. Clerics were the natural source but, ultimately, the demand necessitated an increased need for education to teach writing & other basic skills. (158p.54)

It is interesting that, even as late as 1624, Scottish handwriting was unintelligible to English readers, partially due to the strong influence of French scripts. Of the more than 500 pre-1560 printed books found in Scotland, only five were of English origin & the rest came from France. Scotland's long ties with France meant that many Scots had visited there in pursuit of education, military service or commerce. In fact, in 1558, Henry II of France granted to Scotsmen, in France, the rights of French citizenship. (220p.16) Possibly Arch, or other learned McGilvrays, visited France or even Rome; either on church business or on a pilgrimage. It is recorded that many Islesmen travelled to Rome as early as 1441. (158p.54)

Also noteworthy is the fact that priest/lawyers such as Arch (and the next generation Don & the next generation Martin) were very mobile. It must have come with the job & have been quite inconvenient & risky considering the modes of transport & the feuding times. Hopefully, it was also well paid.

The positions held by Rev Arch indicate there may, in fact, have been two such men. The fact that there are two consistent general & separate locations, very far apart, suggests two individuals. However, it was not uncommon for a minister to have two parishes.

- 1535 Dec 15; Arch Makillewray was presented as rector to the parish church of St Columba at Benbecula (just west of Skye).
- 1542 Apr; Arch McIliwray became chaplin of the two chapels in Kilarrow, Islay (Ellen, Finlagan & St Columba).
- 1542 Sept 17; Domini Arch McIlwray, resigned the rectory of Benweall in Ewist (Uist, west of Skye).
- 1543 May 23 - >1545; Sir Arch McGillwray (or McIlveray) vic perpetual? was at Killene (Killean, Mull, or central Kintyre?) mensal Lismore cath?. (91)
'Sir' was a common honorific term for clerics & had nothing to do with Knighthood. Its Latin equivalent was 'Dominus'.
- 1543; at Illannagawin?, when he acted as a notary public.
- 1545 Dec 12; at Kilmaluag, Skye, when he was witness to an Argyll marriage contract. (158)
- 1547 Aug 2; Domini Arch McIlwray, rector at Kilmolowok (likely Kilmaluag), received the gift of the escheat (forfeiture of property due to crimes) of all the goods of Mr John Spottiswod, servant of Robt Stewart of Caithness. (Forfeited 1544, but it isn't known why John lost them or why Arch received them.)
- 1547 Aug 8; Sir Arch Makgilwray was parson at Kilchomen (Islay) parish after this date.
- 1548 Dec; Domini Arch McIlwray obtained royal presentation to Kildalton, Islay. (207)
- 1552 Dec & 1554; Domini Arch MacGillebrahe at Kilmaluog in Trouterness in Skye. (207)
- 1553 Mar 11 & May 29; Sir Arch, rector of Kilchoman, represented Hector Mor McLean. (Great Sea1 Charters) Arch is said to be Hector Allansoun's uncle & curator; i.e. appointed to handle the affairs of a minor or incompetent. (158p.128)
- 1560; Master Arch witnessed a treaty between Argyll & O'Donnell. (158p.140)

There were three notaries public acting for Duart at this time. All were clerics & all were pluralists (held more than one church parish at one time), while two became ministers of the reformed church. It was not uncommon for a notary public to become the confidential clerk of a baron which is evidently the relationship these men had with Duart. Duart had the patronage of the valuable position in Kilchomen, Islay which he gave to Sir Arch Makillewray (above). Duart was also influential in making Fingon McMullen & John Angus vicars & rectors of Iona. Thus, it was in these clerics' interest to serve Duart; although, as public officials, such service must have led to a conflict of interest (a minor detail then & now). It seems that Mr John Angus was also a member of an hereditary family of learned ecclesiastics, similar to the McGilvrays. (161 Dec '92; from Letters Foreign & Domestic, Henry VIII, xx(i), 1298)

The mobility of the times & hence the likelihood of there being but one Arch McGilvray is given more weight in another document. Arch (as vicar of Killean) & Mr John Carswell (later Bishop of the Isles) were listed as the two notaries who drew up & witnessed, at Eigg (south of Skye) on 23 July 1545, the document appointing two commissioners from Don dubh (Lord of the Isles) to treat with Henry VIII of England. (161 Dec 1992 & 37p.220) This Carswell was responsible for the translation of the 'Book of Common Order' into Gaelic. He enlisted the help of other highly educated Gaelic speakers in the Isles. (158) No doubt one of them was Arch, just as a century later, Martin McGilvray would so translate one of the books of the Bible.

It would be interesting to know if, in his later years, the Scottish religious reformers wanted to get rid of an 'old school' minister such as Arch. Maybe his powerful friend Duart stood by him or maybe there was no one 'acceptable' to replace him. Or, probably he had the foresight to support the Reformation.

It was likely this Arch (although the term 'layman' is confusing) sought a Papal dispensation c1538, just prior to the break with Rome. An Arch son of Angus son of Malc (assumed to be a McGilvray) is granted leave to wed a widowed cousin, the daughter of Don McGilvray, 18 Apr 1539. (Extracts from the Vatican Archives; Isles or Penitentiary v99 1538; in 161 Feb 1987) The spellings are quite different but this may be the Italian version.

*Gillesci Boy filii Angusi Marcomi, layman, & Maringe
filia Donaldi Margilloverill, married woman. 3° & 4°
consanguinity (degree of kinship)*

Such a plea for church sanction indicates the supplicants had considerable social status & probably belonged to the main McGilvray family. It would also indicate a close family connection to the church although it seems this Arch was a layman, & in any event, priests could not marry (although they often had kids) & this dispensation was not to overcome that problem but rather one of close kinship. Most ordinary people did not bother much with such church rules. Only a few members of influential families, or

clergy, considered it worth the effort & cost to ensure their marriage was legal & their heirs secure. (158p.28) But, at least this document enables this family to be traced back a further two generations.

Rev Arch may be a younger son of Pennyghael for such scions were often provided for by giving them church positions. (158p.48) This could be carried to extremes, however, as when James IV named his illegitimate son, Alex Stewart as Archbishop of St Andrews in 1504, at the age of about eleven. (220p.19) This same Alex was killed at age 20, at Flodden, along with his father. The first McLean known to be a priest was in 1428. (158p.50)

Other clansmen are listed in official documents, at this time, albeit for less satisfactory reasons. In 1543 a number of people are charged with the 'slaughter of umquhill (deceased) Don McGillewe' (possibly the father of the above Maringe?). (207) On the other hand, a John dow McGilvorrie VcCoule & McGilvorrie VcMartines & others were horned in 1572 for the killing of Don dow McEwin. (207) (For an explanation of horning - see p.117)

And, a number of McGilvrays were horned for treason, on 14 Mar 1547, for aiding the English in the taking of Urquhart Castle (southwest of Inverness) during the late rebellion. (207)

John dow McIlvorie; Mamore? (There were McGilvrays at Glen Mama, just east of Arisaig, Inv ??)

John McGillevorie; Mamore

Angus McIlvory

Arch M'Ilvorrie alias McKyntire 10 Mar 1546;
treasonable assistance to Geo Striveling of Gloret,
Capt of Dumbarton.

Johnne McIlvorie, traitor 14 Aug 1546, Gift of Argyll ?
Thos McGilleyowe, treason. (& Duncane McMartine)



Castle Urquhart, on Loch Ness

Don McPhatrik VcGillevorey VcInter & Finlay Fischear McGillevarey must have been with the army of Mary, Queen of Scots, when it lost the 1568 Battle of Langside (south of Glasgow), for they were horned for this 'treason' the next year. Only the losers suffer such a fate. (207) There may have been more clansmen involved but it is very difficult to figure out the names.

Other miscellaneous McGilvrays at this time are;

- 1541; Ronald McAllen McIlvery (or McIlverie) was tenant on lands in Ardnamurchan
- 1549; Duncan M'Gillewra was a witness at Glenurquhay (Glen Urquhart?, southwest of Inverness). (RSS II 1181, 4880, 4566 & ER XVII p.645 & BBT p.187)
This may be the Duncan MacKilwray (or Macilwray) who was a parson at Kilchoman after Sir Arch. He was deceased by 3 May 1593 & was presumably a relation. Possibly the Dunc McGillie who was at Kilbrandon in 1584. (91)
- 1573/4; Ian daw & Martin McIlvra from Torloisk; & Ean dow McIlvra in Knock (central Mull) were witnesses at Aros.
- 1579; Arch McIlvoray, servant of James Campbell, of Arkinlas, was accused of stealing cattle & of taking prisoners, on instructions of his master. (208v3p.235)
- 1577; Malcome McGilevory, servant to Wm Drummond of Myllynab, was accused of slaughter (208v3p.60)
- 1585; John McGilliway in Culbone, ordered to appear (208v3p.749)

And, there were McGilvrays in McDonald's Islay in 1541;

- Finlay McGillewey, tenant of Cammisnakist (225 #656);
- Neill McGilrewe (McGiltrieve), tenant of Tawlynt (#615 & #636 Mid-Islay);
- Ronald M'Alan McIlvorie, tenant of Aldor, etc (#645);
- Gilcallum McIlmory, tenant of Glenharve (#631).

The mention of specific lairds of Pennyghael, in these & later records, tempts the drafting of a genealogical chart. A starting point could be the 1845 list given by an old Sennachie (Logan). (132 & 162p.197)

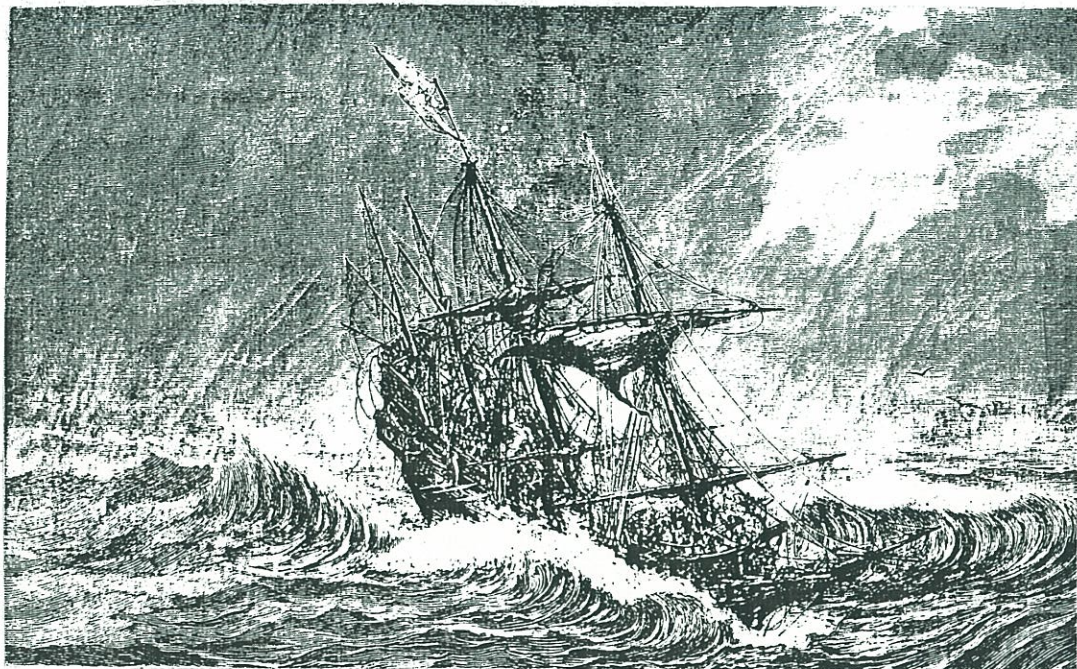
- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| -Grey Farquhar | (Fhearchar liath) |
| -(Rev) Mr. Martin | (Mhaister Mhartin) |
| -Dark Malcolm | (Mhaoli Challuim ghuirm)(gorm) |
| -Malcolm | (Mhaoil Challuim) |
| -Donald | (Dhonuil) |
| -John | (Iain) |
| -Alex | (Alastair) |
| -Ewan (Hugh) | (Eoghan) |
| -Alex | (Alastair) |

The omission of Arch & Donald gorm McGilvray, known lairds, places doubt on the early portion of this list. However, Martin may merely be out of place, & he did have a brother Farq'r who could have been named after an earlier laird. Because the numerous records of the late 1600's do not mention any such Farq'r or

Malcolms it is more likely they were from an earlier period. If the Papal request (Arch son of Angus son of Malcolm) did pertain to Pennyghael then the two Malcolms & Farq'r might be the very early generations before Arch. Of course, these three unknown lairds could fit into the late 1500's when there was such a high turnover of chiefs. Adding the extra details produces:

-Grey Farquhar	
-Dark Malcolm	
-Malcolm	
-(Angus)	
-(Arch)	c1510-c1565
-(Neil)	1608
-Donald (gorm)	c1570-c1620
-Rev Martin	c1600-<1687
-John	c1630-c1723
-Alex	1684-1778
-Ewan (Hugh)	c1730-1805
-Alex	1783-c1853

Whoever he was, the McGilvray laird, in 1588, would likely have been present during what is known as the 'Florida' incident. This was a ship of the Spanish Armada which sought refuge in northern Mull. Later evidence has shown the ship was really the San Juan de Sicilia or Silcilea. (140v14p.233 & 163) It should be remembered that Scotland was then an independent country, not at war with Spain, & thus a supposedly safe haven for Armada remnants.



The legend regarding the ship's destruction centres around Donald Gas, one of Duart's kinsman, who had gone on board to receive payment for supplies but was held captive. In order to stop the ship from leaving, he blew it up, along with himself. The English ambassador to Edinburgh reported "*the Spanish ship in Tobermory Bay was blown up by the treachery of the wild & savage Irish in M'Lanes Island of Mula*". (124p.12) Maclean later took out a remission for this action & he, & his principal adherents, were forgiven. (84p.240)



The ship was believed to be full of gold but, despite numerous treasure hunts over the centuries, no Spanish gold has been reported found. But, the ship didn't sink immediately & thus any treasure could have been recovered & hidden before she vanished completely below the sea.

(140v14p.233) Salvage attempts by Argyll in the 1660's ended when the Macleans drove him off but later attempts in 1688 were supposedly very successful. (196)

Prior to this altercation Duart had made friends with the Spanish. He had agreed to refurbish their ship in exchange for the services of 100 Spanish soldiers in his attempt to take Mingary Castle from the MacIains. This castle lies in Ardnamurchan across from Tobermory. The nearby rocky beach has since been called 'the Bay of the Spaniards'. Unsuccessful in this enterprise, Maclean, with Spanish & likely McGilvray help, laid waste the surrounding countryside; ravaged the Isle of Rhum; & killed every man, woman & child on Canna & Muck Islands. (north of Mull, near Rhum). (137p.135)



Rhum; as seen from Eigg Is, by Jim Nicholson

This was not the first such slaughter for in 1577 the Macleans had killed everyone on Eigg Island (137p.205) &, as mentioned, in Jan 1578 Duart & his men had pillaged Gigha Island killing nine men & two women (one pregnant), without pity or compassion. (208v3p.135) Such drastic action was even used against erring relatives & on 20 Apr 1578 Duart & his servants grabbed Maclean of Coll's Castle of Breachachd; & then beheaded Coll. It wasn't until 1593 that the king ordered the return of the castle & lands to the rightful owners. (36)

Such action may be difficult for us 'civilized' people (with our century of wars) to comprehend but a verse from Wordsworth's epitaph to Rob Roy will help explain these times:

*"For why? Because the good old rule
sufficeth them: the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
and they should keep who can."*

But, the wheel of fortune would turn & the destruction that Duart meted out to these others was about to fall on him & his. The power & control of the mainlanders were increasing steadily & the last thing the islanders should have done was to quarrel amongst themselves. They were to prove that a house divided cannot stand. But, greed & love of power were not limited to the Campbells & Duart now tried to increase his position in the Southern Isles by fighting the McDonalds. Although the Macleans owed their all to the Macdonald Lords of the Isles, & "*never had a rig of land but what they received from*" them, (94p.16) they now tried to eclipse their old benefactors & the result was a long-lasting clash. The feud was particularly hard & long because the two clans were both so large & so strong - at least at the beginning. In the end they ruined themselves & their vassals, & then the ever watchful Campbells stepped in & seized their exhausted lands. Now both these once great clans have naught but memories.

The troubles had begun over control of the sea-route to Ulster in the last years (c1561) of Arch McGilvray's chieftainship. (50) The Macdonalds certainly aggravated the feud when they invaded Mull, Tiree & Coll in 1562. During one of the McDonald raids they were defeated by the Macleans on the shore of Loch-na-Keal (west of Glencannel). Although peace was soon established the seeds of distrust were sown & a further truce, between these two clans, had to be arranged by the government in 1579. But, both sides were merely biding their time. Predictably, the distrust & hatred of such a feud led inevitably to ever greater excesses.

Hector McLean of Duart had enjoyed a grand life-style which left his family in debt. (85p.43) His son, Laughlan Mor, received a good education in the Lowlands & on the Continent. (Might a McGilvray have accompanied him?) He had learned civility & refined tastes, & lived accordingly. Yet, he was still an Islander. Thus, when the scheming relative, who managed the underaged youth's estate,

plotted to kill him & take all for himself, Laughlan acted first & beheaded the man (Hector of Coll in 1578; see above). All these qualities earned him great respect with both his kin & his neighbors. Under his active & energetic spirit his tribe exercised great influence in the Isles. But, such a Maclean could not long avoid a collision with the Macdonalds. Laughlan was not the type to retrench & his need for more lands & revenues resulted in a dispute over a district in Isla, the McDonald homeland.

A writer described Arch McGilvray's contemporaries - "*Trew it is, that thir Ilandish men ar of nature verie proud, suspicious, avaricious, full of decept & evill inventioun each aganis his nychtbour, be what way soever he may circumvin him. Besydis all this, thay ar sa crewall in taking of revenge that nather have they regard to person, eage, tyme or caus; sa ar they generallie all sa far addictit to thair awin tyrannicall opinions that, in all respects, they exceid in creweltie the maist barbarous people that ever has bene sen the begynning of the world*". (113v1p.98)

This period of treachery & distrust between these two clans is well illustrated in the following misadventure that most likely involved Arch's successor & our clan. About 1585 (the year that James VI came to power) Donald gorm Macdonald of Slate, sailed to visit his cousin, Angus Macdonald of Kintyre. Contrary wind, however, forced his party to land on a part of Jura (northeast section) that belonged to Duart. Despite the fact that Laughlan's sister was married to Angus, the two clans were feuding. This landing was witnessed by two men who had, themselves, quarrelled recently with Donald gorm &, hoping that he would be blamed, these two men rustled some Maclean cattle & put to sea. Predictably, Laughlan assembled his whole forces & attacked the unsuspecting Macdonalds at night. He slew about 60 of them but Donald gorm escaped because he happened to be sleeping on board his galley. The retaliation against Duart & his followers was so severe that, later that year, the king asked Macleod of Harris to assist them. (53)

Almost everything is easier to get into than out of. Agnes Allen

Later, Angus Macdonald decided to visit his brother-in-law, Duart, in an attempt to peacefully settle the matter. His brothers advised against this & they were proven correct for Laughlan seized Angus & his party & threw them into the castle dungeon. Maclean coveted the Macdonald's Rinns of Islay (the western peninsula) & he forced Angus to sign it over in order to regain his freedom. As well, Angus had to leave his eldest son & brother as hostages. Needless to say, Angus departed determined on full revenge.

In July 1586, Maclean went to Kintyre to get the title deed. For security he took Macdonald's son & left the brother in chains in Duart Castle. Thinking he was safe, he accepted Macdonald's offer of hospitality. After a sumptuous evening Maclean & 86 of his kinsmen & servants retired to a nearby long-house. Angus then surrounded the house with 350 men & would only allow Laughlan to surrender after he had released Macdonald's son. The other

Macleans were promised their lives if they too surrendered. However, two of this group were excepted - one for being an instigator regarding the Jura affair & the other, a Maclean kinsman (a McGilvray?) who was one of the oldest of the clan & celebrated for his wisdom & prowess. These two were burned alive in the house. (208v4p.161)



But, the treachery does not yet end for when the news reached Mull, Allan Maclean, who was next in line to Duart, believed he could get Laughlan killed by falsely reporting that Macdonald's brother, still a hostage at Duart, had been executed. Macdonald retaliated by beheading his 84 Maclean prisoners at the rate of two per day. On the final day Macdonald 'slipped' when mounting his horse to witness Laughlan's execution. This 'ill omen' caused Lachlan's life to be spared. (Undoubtedly faked in order to spare a fellow chief.) How many McGilvrays died on this ill-fated expedition?

The king heard of these atrocities & asked Argyle to mediate. Argyle managed to arrange for Sir Laughlan's release but only after giving Duart's eldest son, Hector, & the son of Macleod of Harris & those of Mackinnon & Macneill, as hostages. However, Maclean later heard that Angus Macdonald was visiting his Irish lands &, quite regardless of the safety of these hostages, Maclean invaded Islay & laid it waste. Angus returned &, with a large body of men, invaded Mull & Tiree. He destroyed everything & killed everyone he caught. He even went inland to Ben More on Mull. Pennyghael & Carsaig were undoubtedly left in smouldering ruins.

Instead of opposing him Maclean invaded Kintyre. What did he care about his people's homes? His castle was secure & it was less dangerous to attack women & to rustle cows. These clans continued to mutually destroy one another until they were almost exterminated & their lands laid waste & loaded with debts. The McGilvrays, unfortunately, shared these continual misfortunes. To understand how much havoc was inflicted can be gathered from the fact that in 1593/96 the number of Mull fighting men were estimated to be 600 for Duart & 200 for Lochbuie. (161 Mar 1988)

To strengthen his own power & weaken that of his antagonist, Sir Laughlan attempted to detach John MacIain, of Ardnamurchan, from Angus Macdonald's party. MacIain had long been an unsuccessful suitor for the hand of Maclean's widowed mother (a daughter of an Earl of Argyle) & Laughlan now acceded to the marriage, which soon took place at Torloisk in Mull. However, after the ceremony, when MacIain refused to switch sides, Laughlan resolved to punish his refractory guest by one of those gross infringements of the laws of hospitality which so often marked the hostility of rival clans. During the dead hour of night he broke down the bridal suite door & after killing 18 of his followers, dragged MacIain from the arms of his bride & flung him into the dungeon. (Isn't it strange that the chiefs were rarely killed in these affairs -- like generals today? Perhaps if they had, there would have been less fighting.) After suffering a year's captivity & daily torture MacIain was released (1588) & exchanged for Maclean's son & the other hostages in Macdonald's possession. (113pp.99/100)

In 1589 Maclean was brought to trial in Edinburgh where it was proven he had used Spanish troops to destroy those small islands (in 1588 after his, previously discussed, unsuccessful attempt to seize MacIain's Mingarry castle). However, he was allowed to escape. He & Macdonald were induced (by threats & promises) to

appear in Edinburgh in 1592 for the purpose of having their differences reconciled. On their arrival they were committed prisoners to the castle but were soon released after paying a fine & promising to keep the peace. The king should have, & could have, stopped all this fighting if he had so desired. But, he obviously wanted these Islanders brought to their knees. He & Argyll likely considered they were playing a game of chess.

It was certainly a game to the Island men. Even during the few quiet times many of them chose to fight as mercenaries in other arenas. It is recorded that in 1590 some Western archers were helping Sutherland in his feuds. And, Laughlan bargained for Eliz 1's help against the Macdonalds by offering her Highland mercenaries in her Irish wars. This perpetual fighting is reminiscent of the early Germans as described by Tacitus: "*If their native state sinks into the sloth of prolonged peace & repose, many of its noble youths voluntarily seek those tribes which are waging some war - because it is their only vocation, & to win renown. Feasts & entertainments, which, though inelegant, are plentifully furnished, are their only pay. The means of this bounty come from war & rapine. They think farming is tame & believe it stupid to acquire by sweat & toil what they might win by their blood.*" (240)

Thus, there was no real incentive for peace &, in Sept 1594, some McGilvrays were likely with Laughlan when he assisted the 19 year old Argyll in a seige of Ruthven Castle in Badenoch (south of Inverness). This war was under commission of the king who had been entreated by Eliz 1 to attack the Catholic Earls. But, the castle held out &, in Oct, the 12,000 men moved on to Drummin (south of Elgin on the river Avon). Argyll was not much of a general & soon had much dissention in his ranks & considerable desertion. They were defeated at the battle of Glenlivet (or Altchamlachan??) although the right wing, composed of Macleans, was the only one that didn't give way & it ultimately retired in good order. (155)

The McLean/McDonald feud continued, & even grew, as other clans & other areas became embroiled. Soon the whole Hebrides were in turmoil & the situation threatened to get out of hand which finally forced the government to threaten intervention in order to obtain peace. In the spring of 1596, James began plans for a great army to end the Islanders' disobedience once & for all. Fearfully, Maclean came forward & accepted the new rules & was forgiven. But, he soon turned around & again seized Coll; although the government would, once more, force him out. Next, he patched up his differences with Macdonald of Isla & in 1597 these two planned to enter Ireland with 2-3,000 men: although that scheme fell through.

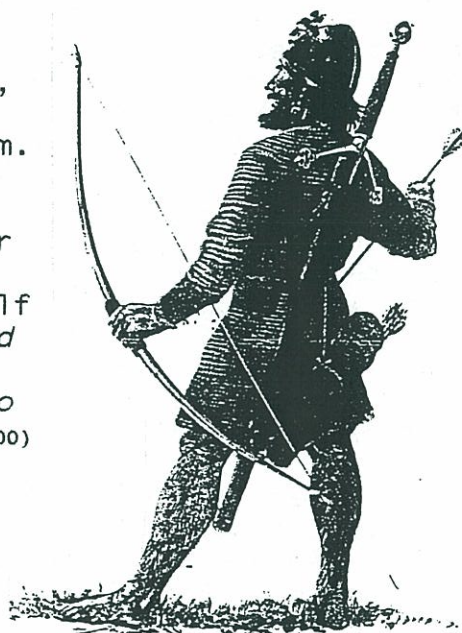
It seems Laughlan Mor McLean had a very short memory & when faced with the debts from his earlier feuding he merely repeated his earlier mistakes. This time it was the Islay lands of the Clan Ronald that attracted his ambition & avarice. Through bribery & influence he had the court give him these Islay lands while the young laird was still a minor. Once again he collected his kith & kin & invaded.

But, as might be expected, the Macdonalds & their friends were determined to keep him out & they resolved to help the young chief. While the two forces faced each other, a compromise was worked out by Laughlan's advisors. However, he turned it down. In the ensuing Battle of Lochgruinar, on 5 Aug 1597, Sir Laughlan was killed - by a hunchback archer from Jura.

Tradition says the tiny man offered his services to Laughlan (who was of giant frame & strength), but that Laughlan contemptuously said he didn't care on whose side the elf might fight. In turn, the man offered his services to McDonald who said he would be glad of 100 like him. All day Sir Laughlan, who was covered in steel armour, was followed by the little man & when once Laughlan raised his visor he received an arrow in the face.

McDonald regretted the killing but the elf said; "*I killed your enemy & unless I had done so he would have killed you. I am called the Black Elf & you were better to have me with you than against you*". (31p.100)

Also killed that day were 200 McLean clansmen & 80 near kinsmen; including no doubt, some of the few remaining McGilvrays. Although Sir James McDonald lost only 30 killed & 60 wounded, this was one of the bloodiest battles ever & neither side could afford such losses.



It would also be of interest to know if any McGilvrays were in the McDonald forces for, as earlier shown, a number of such families lived in Islay <1541. (56v17) There does not appear to have been much affiliation between these two branches of our clan.

Amazingly, Duart had been forewarned of the danger when he consulted a famous witch prior to sailing. (140v12p.92) She told him not to land on Islay on a Thursday (but, due to bad weather he did). He also ignored her warning against drinking from 'strange Neill's' well near Gruinar. What must the McGilvrays have thought of such recklessness? Laughlan is buried at Kilchoman.

One must go where his grave awaits him. *Old Gaelic proverb*

Hector, the new Duart chief, gathered another bunch of relatives & friends &, in 1598, routed the Macdonalds at Bern Biga in Islay. They then ravaged the island for three days. Hector Maclean of Lockbuy, who had been aiding the Macdonalds, & several of his men were captured & held in chains for six months. (155) This surely indicates the weakness of Duart's cause if he could not maintain a unified clan.

Basically, this Island conflict got out of hand because there was no Lord of the Isles (nor king worthy of the name) to settle it & because only Arch Campbell ('the Grim' - the most evil of all the Campbell lords) (85p.44) could benefit if both sides destroyed each other -- as ultimately happened. (85p.43)

This Campbell intervention did not pass unnoticed in the Isles. Although attempts to poison the Earl of Argyll failed, an earlier assassination plot involving Laughlan Maclean, against John Campbell of Calder, was successful when he was shot at night through the window of his house.

Parliament said the Highlands & Isles were being ruined by the ceaseless warfare & that the people lacked any "*civil or honest society*" amongst themselves. Nor did they admit others to traffic with them in safety. Therefore all those possessing rights to any lands had to produce their title deeds before the Lords of Exchequer on 15 May 1598. (84p.276) Unfortunately, these proceedings have been lost. The Highlanders had also to find security for their crown rents & for future good conduct, particularly with regard to merchants trading there.

It appears the government could justify intervention on the part of Lowland capitalists although they had long ignored the plight of Island families. In June, 1581 a Glasgow merchant, Peter Lymburner, had been robbed & injured by the Macleans of Lochtowne?, Mull. (208v6p.141) These depredations continued to such a degree that Mull was later placed off limits to all traders & drovers. (208v6p.757)

However, the real reason for the need to prove one's deeds was not the public well-being but rather that the king needed money & hoped to be able to grab some land or to obtain some '*baksheesh*'. Hector of Duart & all the other principal chiefs & gentlemen (including the McGilvrays no doubt) of the Southern Isles were resummoned, on 20 July 1605, to prove again their title deeds & to find security. But, this time, only the Macdonalds bothered to appear before Lord Scone at Lochkilkerran (now Campbeltown) in Kintyre.

With the killing of Laughlan the bitter island feud seems also to have gradually died out. But, the usual small ones continued &, in 1602, Duart inflicted great depredations against the king's tenants on Oronsay & Colonsay. (208v6p.392)

One reason for settling such disputes between clans by the sword was due to the corruptness of the legal system. Not only were most judges bought, but it was common for both sides to suffer by taking their case to court. Judges often fined guilty & innocent to an amount all their estates would bear & then pocketed the fines. Thus were Islesmen encouraged to seek legal justice. (or is that an oxymoron?)