



ALEXANDER MCGILVRA

de Pennygai11

Born; 1684-1688 (105 #756) but his parents are unknown.

He had at least one younger brother; **Duncan**, a lawyer. (see 1716 arms list; 1725 contract & 1750 dispute below). This Dunc appears to have had a son John for in 1771 this John McGillivra is stated to be Alex's nephew & Alex's son Hugh's cousin. Of course, this nephew John could be the son of another brother or even of a sister of Alex if she had wed another McGilvray, which was very common. And, a successful Glasgow merchant, Malcolm McGilvra is called Hugh's cousin (but not cousin german).

Married; **Una MacLean**, the daughter of Lauchlan; eldest son of Alan of Gruline. (160p.18½) Their marriage contract was dated 5 July 1725. She is also called Ouna or Unna (which today would be Winifred or Agnes). She d.>1750.

On 14 Dec 1725 Duncan McGillevra in Pennieyayell (Alex's younger brother), appeared as attorney for & in name of Ouna McLean, spouse to Alex McGillevra of Pennieyayell. Alex settled a jointure (estate settled on wife to be enjoyed after husband's death), of a liferent against the lands of;

-Penniegayell (3 farthing land)

-Glenleadill (2 farthing land; same as ½ pennysize as per 1771) with houses, biggings, yards, orcheyards.

Alex's gillie (servant) was Don McNekaird in Craigurenish; & the witnesses to the contract were Chas McLean, Killennaig; Don McLean, Turbert; Dunc Campbell, Lorn: plus John McLean, Killean; Chas McLean, Killennaig (& his sons Allen, Hector, & Don); who were witnesses to the registration at Dumbartane on 25 Dec. (211; RS10 v5p.286)

Died; 27 June 1778; (age 94). Alex's obituary stated; "*At his house of Pennygaile, isle of Mull, Alexander Macgilvra of that Ilk (place or clan), Esq, in the 94th year of his age*". (212v40p.454) The long life span of Alex, John & Martin meant that Pennyghael had been held for over 150 years by but three (known) generations: a rarity for that period. Yet, despite the privations & frequent depredations of those times, longevity was by no means unknown. (132) "*There are in Ross (in 1795) three brothers & a sister of the name of Macgilvra, whose ages taken together are 342 years*". (221) (Ave= 86) They were all still alive in 1800. (187) Despite an average age of 70, their names can't be determined from the 1779 census.

KIDS -Hugh: 'only lawfull son' in 1771 Sasine (see his chapter)

-Una: b.c1735/40 wed 1760

+ Dr. Alex MacLean. JP (140v11p.41 & 26)

b.1725; Killunaig d.14 Apr 1786.

He was the fifth son of Charles of Killunaig, who was the second son of Allan of Gruline. Thus, she wed her mom's first cousin.

= Arch d.17 Feb 1830

= Cath

Dr Alex obtained a tack on the lands of Pennycross in 1778 (211 #395, 1795) & purchased them in 1798 from his father-in-law; Alex McGilvray. (162) He (or possibly the other Dr Alex of Rossal) was described by Boswell as more a farmer than a doctor & as one of the stoutest & heartiest men he had ever seen. (12p.342) On Oct 31, 1773 Boswell & Johnson dined well in his home at the north end of Glen Liddle. Una also provided Mrs Murray, the author, a good rest in 1800. (187p.147)

In 1780 there was a letter to Dr Alex MacLean & to 'step-mother'; from son? Farquahar McGilvra (in North America with Ensign Don MacLean of Killean. (197a) This McLean & the 74th Regiment went to Halifax in 1778 & was at Penobscot, Maine until 1783. He then lived in Danville, Vermont until the 1812 War)

She d.23/25/27 Oct 1807 at Pennycross. (212) (no will)

-Mary spinster in 1771

Mentioned in Lochbuie papers 1799.

A Miss McGilvray is mentioned also in 1795 & 1798.

-Isobel spinster in 1771

Although Alex was not served heir until 16 Feb 1731 (132p.79 & SRO C22/61 #689, in Latin, recorded 25 Feb 1731) he was deponed as the nearest lawful male heir to his grand-uncle, Mr Martine McIlebra, prior to 3 Oct 1724. (SRO GD174/56/310) At that time, Alex claims to own the lands although he has not yet been retoured legal heir to the deceased Martin. Many heirs simply occupied their inherited land & didn't bother with the formalities for years. However, this succession may have presented Alex with problems he did not want repeated because in later years he transferred title to his son seven years before he died.

*part or portion of the lands of Killunaig & because I am not as yet served
retoured as heir to the deceased Mr Martine McIlebra of Pennycross my
Grand Uncle and so not entered in the Books of Sasines as
nearest lawful heir male to the said Mr Martine McIlebra who died last
of the year 1724 and so cannot legally secure the said Murdoch McLean*

The fact that the legal succession follows directly from Martin, & not via John, casts doubt on the previous questionable succession of John. John was Martin's nephew so it is likely Alex was John's son despite the fact that Alex named his only son Hugh (maybe they didn't get along). In any event, Martin's sons must have predeceased him, or they did not leave issue, or else they were not recognised as legitimate heirs. Thus, Alex & John's forbear is likely one of Martin's known brothers; Don, Farq'r or Alex. The mention of 'nearest male heir' indicates the lands were tailzied to the male line.

And, as usual, there is confusion as to when John died. He was named on a 1722 mortgage discharge but he does not seem to be included on the 1716 list of men with arms (at least not at Pennyghael or Carsaig). He might, however, have been excluded due to old age. There had been a John, in Carsaig, on the 1675 Rebel list. Both Alex & Dunc were active in the 1715 Rebellion & as mentioned it was likely Alex whose exclamation is recorded. Dunc had borrowed a gun from Alex "his brother Pennyghael", according to the 1716 list & both men are living at Carsaig along with a Don McMartine McIlvra. It is noteworthy that there were no McGilvras listed at Pennyghael. (see Appendix 3)



Younger brothers are much more difficult to trace in the records because they had no property, did not sign marriage contracts & did not marry into well placed families. They seem to live in the shadow of the laird.

There is also a curious commonality about the marriages of Alex, & of his son Hugh. It appears they both waited until their predecessor had died, & they had inherited, before they married. As both John & Alex lived to ripe ages this meant Alex was 41 & Hugh was about the same age before they would marry. Both married MacLeans & both signed bountiful wedding contracts.

On 12 June 1750, Alex MacGillivra of Pennyghael, age 62 (b.1688) & married, testified regarding a boundary dispute. (105 #756) Also appearing was Dunc McGilvra, brother to Pennyghael, age 61 (b.1689) & married (to?); who had been the possessor of Kenlocksraiden 25 years ago, for two years. Other witnesses were John McLean, tacksman at Pennycross, age 40; John McLean of Lochbuie (a party to the land dispute); Chas McKinnon, tenant on Kenlock; & John McKinnon at Burg. Just prior to this, in May 1749, a Lochbuy Will had been probated & an outstanding debt by Pennygaile, for one grey bull valued at £1.8.8, is listed. (SRO CC12/15/1 Inventories)

A 1771 Sasine (see p.186) is witnessed by John McGillivra (in Pennyghael), cousin to Alex's son Hugh. Another cousin of Hugh's is Malc, the Glasgow merchant born 1729, although he is not called cousin german. They could be sons of Alex's brother Dunc.

The above John is also listed in the Mull Tacks Book of 1762. (105 ip.166) John McIlvera in Pennyghael $\frac{1}{2}$; & Hector Beaton $\frac{1}{4}$ & Don McDonald $\frac{1}{4}$, 1 penny $\frac{1}{2}$ penny Terergan & Isle of Calman (just below Erraid, southeast of Iona) presently possessed by Janet McPhie relict of Alex (McPhee?), Oct 1772, 24 houses thereon. John McIlvera in Pennyghael & others, continue to lease Tirergan from 1772 until at least 1791. However, the only McGillvray tenant at Tirergan in the 1779 census was Don age 24 with his mother & sister. As will be explained, Pennyghael & Carsaig were not included in this census.

Other McGillvrays listed on the Mull Leases of 1769-1804 were; (105)
-Dunc MacIlvera in Sheba, & others at Suie & Tirghoill, 1772-1791
(he is at Suie in 1779; age 72, so not Alex's brother);
-Neil McGillvray in Ardlure, & others at Seirphin, 1772-1791
(he is at Seirphin in 1779);
-Arch McGillvray sometime in Ardtun; &
Don & John McGillvray in Ardtun, & others at Bunessan, 1780
(Arch & Don are at Bunessan in 1779).

Earlier Mull rental lists for 1742 & 1744 have; (105 #757)
-Dunc McIlivra paying £21 at Ardalanish
-Don McIlvra paying £16 at Sarphein
-Angus McIlvra paying £23 at Assapole (£12 in 1744)
-Farquhard McIlvra & his son-in-law (who?) paying £15 at Knocknafennaig (but only in 1742)
-Alex McIlvra of Pennyghael paying £102 for Glen canell, Torosay.
This indicates McGillvray ownership of Glencannel had been usurped by Duart & hence lost to Argyll.

Alex did not, of course, have to pay rent for lands he owned but he did have to pay taxes & these Valuation Rolls give a perspective of the McGillvray lands in 1751; (SRO SC51/59/1)

Pennyghael, Fynnachy, Carsaik, Glenlidil; property of Alex McGillvray £12.4s.2p ($\approx 8\frac{1}{2}\%$ tax on 1770 assessment)
(I believe this was the first time this spelling was used)
Beninish, a pendicle of Pennyghael, property of Chas Murray £1.7.9 (the loss of this land will be discussed later)
Pennycross Wadsetted to John McLean £3.16.9
(Total value of Mull £744.11.10)

A 1770 tax list of landowners gives the (assessed) value of the McGillvray lands. (241p.37)

-Alex McGillvray of Pennyghael, Finachag & Carsaig = £146/yr
-Chas Murray of Stanhope - Benininick (sold by Alex) = £ 16
-John MacLean - wadset of Pennycross (sold by Alex) = £ 46

Obviously the preceding century's troubles had crippled our family. Without the proceeds of war & rapine to replenish their coffers the family had to turn to earning it from their largely infertile lands. It is equally obvious that the Lairds of Pennyghael couldn't live within their shortened means & were prepared to jeopardize the long-held family lands for the sake of expediency. The times were changing & they didn't! If the Tiree farm couldn't pay its way then Alex suffered also from poor business sense for not getting out of the lease & cutting his losses. It is obvious that a 25% reduction would not turn this situation around. Why would he have agreed to such a rental in the first place? Did he even bother to visit the land before renting? It seems that all these lands, including Pennyghael, were highly overvalued compared to their rate of return. As with many farmers today, they seemed to be content to live poor & die rich. And, like many another laird, Alex may have been afraid of losing face by retrenching, or of finding other sources of income, or even of selling out. It is unlikely he had the ability to join his nephew Malc in trade in Glasgow but did he ever consider emigrating?

It is also difficult to understand where his income went because the records show the home assets amounted to very little of value. As late as 1760 the best houses in the island, with a very few exceptions, were only thatched cabins built of large stones & forming a semi-circle at each end. (199p.89) If one, & possibly, two of these exceptions were on McGilvray lands their upkeep would have been very expensive. That 1654 map showed gentlemen's houses at both Bingael & Karsaick. (10)

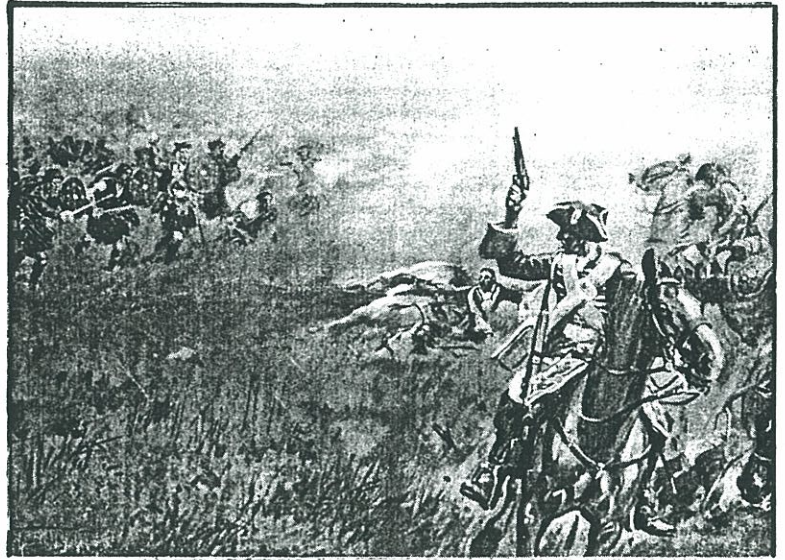
But, maybe this criticism is being overly harsh. After facing war, eviction, famine, plus high rents & taxes, the McGilvrays may be doing the best they possibly can at the time, with the resources at their disposal. They may simply have lacked that 'drive to succeed' which was so evident with earlier lairds & which preserved the family through previous tough times. However, such drive had been nurtured by education &, as will be shown, schooling had ceased in southern Mull for over a century.

Fortunately the McGilvrays were not involved in the disastrous rebellion of 1745/6. As explained, the replacement of Mull's McLean tacksmen, with loyal Campbell supporters, allowed Argyll to keep a tight rein over the island during this last Highland rebellion. The trouble was obviously foreseen because in 1744 the Mull tenants had to swear an oath of allegiance. (List ?)

In Aug 1745 Prince Charles Edward Stuart left his exile in France & landed on the Isle of Eriskay (Outer Hebrides) with but seven supporters. He had been delayed by weather & the lack of an escort ship. (143p.225) Despite initial obstacles, which would have daunted most men, this 24 year old & his rag-tag Highland army advanced to within 130 miles of London.



Prince Charlie



Battle of Falkirk (1745), by Lionel Edward

After the Highland victory at Prestonpans, in 1745, panic seized the northern English towns & many families sent their valuables to Holland or hid them underground; sometimes without sufficient markings for their lawful owners ever to find them again. (143p.229) When peace was restored, an irate English officer challenged Adam Skirving to a dual at Haddington. The reply was "Gang awa back & tell Mr Smith that I havena leisure to come to Haddington; but tell him to come here & I'll tak a look o' him, & if I think I'm fit to fecht him, I'll fecht him; & if no, I'll do as he did - I'll rin awa." (143pp.229/230)

But, despite this early victory, they hoped for country-wide support didn't materialize & they were soon faced with overwhelming odds. Turning north they retraced their steps to Inverness, & doom. After Culloden, on 16 Apr 1746, Bonnie Prince Charlie wandered the Highlands for five months until a French ship picked him up on Skye. Although the Highlanders may have been considered lawless rustlers not one was tempted (or dared) to collect the £30,000 (\$20 million) reward for the Prince.

"Carry the lad that's born to be king,
over the sea to Skye.
Loud the wind howls,
Loud the waves roar,
Thunder clouds rend the air.
Baffled our foes stand by the shore,
Follow they will not dare." (Song)

What conversations must have taken place about the chief's table & beside the home fires as news of these great events was brought by breathless messenger. How the talk at the ceilidh's (gatherings for music & dancing) during the winter of 1745 would have contrasted with that of the winter of 1746.

The McLean chief at that time was Sir Hector, also an exile in France. He returned, after Culloden, & was captured in Edinburgh. He claimed to have not been privy to battle plans & thus hadn't called upon Mull to rise. But, he may have foreseen the futility of the rebellion & decided to keep hundreds of his followers out of the fighting. (192v1p.71&p.114) Without his support there could be no general rising in Mull as the new Campbell community leaders were unsympathetic to the Jacobite cause. However, there was at least one gathering of the men - at the 'knoll of the choosing' at Glenforsa (near Salen). It is said that about 60 Mull men were out with the rebels but no McGilvray is known to have been active, on either side, in this rebellion.



Incident in the Scotch Rebellion, 1745; from "Children of the Mist" by Lord Arch Campbell; Edinburgh, 1890; NLS

In contrast, it was a McGillivray who led the whole Clan Chattan Confederation, including many from his own clan, at Culloden. He fought bravely & was killed, along with many other clansmen. Of those that survived the battle, a few were captured & either executed or 'transported'. A dozen McGillivrays had been transported to the Americas after the '15 Rebellion. (45pp.48/49)

The following song was supposedly written by a nameless Jacobite soldier as he awaited execution in Carlisle Castle;

*Oh ye'll tak' the high road & I'll tak' the low road,
(the road of death),
And I'll be in Scotland afore ye;
But me & my true love will never meet again,
On the bonnie, bonnie banks o' Loch Lomond!*

The McGilvrays couldn't join the rebels but they certainly didn't enlist in the government forces. No man, from the McLean half of Mull, joined Argyll's militia except MacLean of Brolas & one McKinnon, who probably were forced to do so for political reasons. Brolass also tried to raise militia for the government; although few joined. (185p.117) Those men from the rest of Mull, who did enlist, were sent home from Inveraray to "*protect their families*". Not one man from Morvern joined the militia &, with few exceptions, they went early into the rebellion with Lochell. (60p.99)

It should be remembered that the earliest mention of McGilvrays, c1100, places them in Morvern. Although most of the clan returned to Mull a number of McGilvrays remained during its domination by Duart. This area was particularly resistant to Argyll's take-over especially after he replaced half of the tacksmen with Campbells.

Those MacLeans, & any McGilvrays of Morvern, who did rebel; likely went less for any love of the prince than for their hatred of Argyll who was on the government side. Many other Highlanders joined in the '45 because of their instinct that the old ways of life could be protected & preserved only by a Stuart restoration. (198) But, those days were gone forever & thus they were following not only a lost cause but also a lost dream. Such an uprising was yet possible because the Highlanders were the only people in the British Isles who still had weapons at home. It was estimated that at this time the Macleans could raise 500 fighting men - compared to 800 in 1715. (19v1p.130) If the p.159 calculations are correct it is doubtful the McGilvrays could have contributed 60 fighting men.

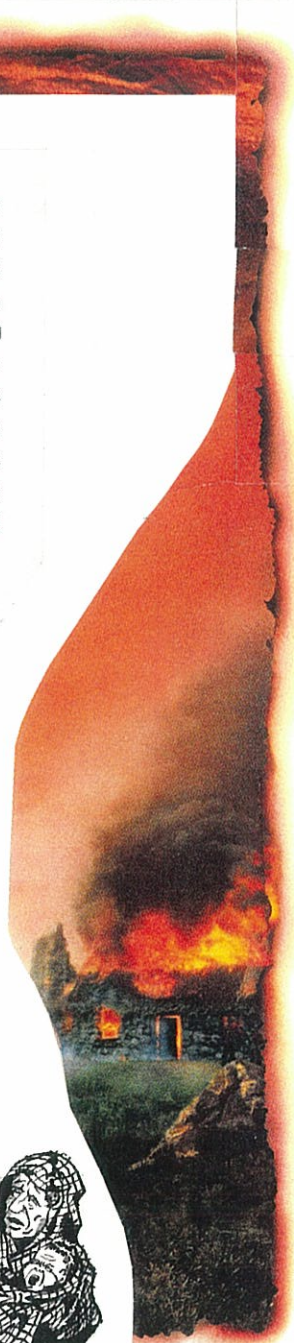
The fright this rebellion gave the German occupiers of the English Crown was evident in the degree of retribution they meted out to the Highlands. They determined to absolutely destroy the traditional Highland society & no quarter was given to any

Highlander after Culloden. Every clan (including those which had fought on the government side) was completely broken, physically & spiritually.

"There was perhaps never any change of nation manners so quick, so great & so general" as occurred in the Highlands. The clans retained little of their original character. Their ferocity of temper was softened, their military ardour extinguished, their dignity of independence depressed, their contempt for government subdued & their reverence for their chiefs diminished. (110p.12 or 51)

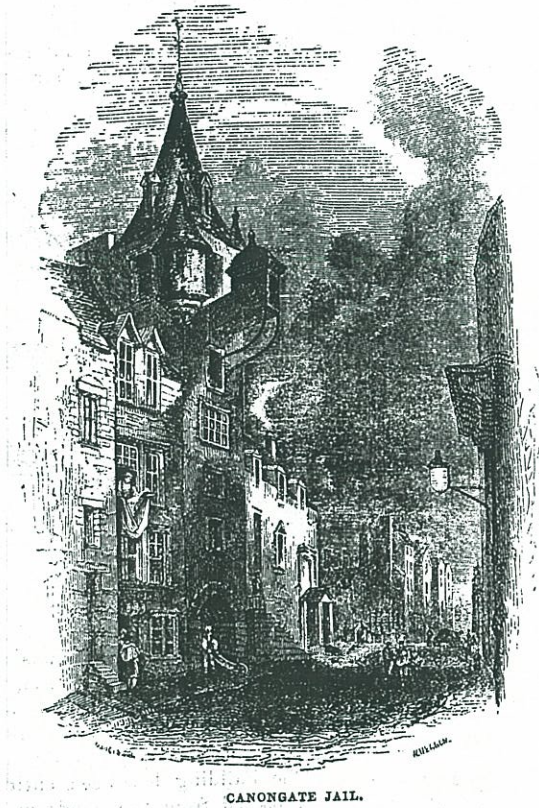
Revenge was particularly severe in Morvern. In Mar 1746, while the men were away with their prince, troops burnt & destroyed 400 homes & effects of all the rebels from Drumnin to Ardtornish (the whole west coast of Morvern). This must have been almost every home because the 1755 population is estimated at 1200. They also burned much of the woods which would not have pleased Argyll. (64p.3&p.6)

It is noteworthy that the 'barbarous' rebels did no harm to civilians during this rising which was in marked contrast to the the actions of these cowardly troops & to the men who gave the orders.



Brochure for the movie *Rob Roy*

As with any war there were stories of courage & brutality, & of faithfulness & corruption. Often the two are but different sides of the same coin.



Eaven M'Kay (whose family was a sept of the Macintosh's in Cameron country) was captured with letters in cipher &, on being asked from whom they came & were going, he gave no answer. He was tied to a stake, given 500 lashes & then returned to prison. Some days later he got 500 more & they threatened to whip him to death if he refused what they wanted. At last he was taken to the Tolbooth, where a person said he was a great fool not to tell what he knew. He returned the noble answer *"You are the fool. It signifies nothing what they can do to me (let them do their worst) in respect of what could be done to those from whom I had & to whom I was going with the letters. Their deaths would be a great loss, but mine will be none."* He died soon after. (143p.245)

Another story, from 50 years earlier, illustrates a similar trait of character. James Edgar, of Mearns, had faithfully served as secretary to the deposed King James for 46 years. Walpole, the Whig Prime Minister, tried to buy him & at last put £10,000 to his credit in an Italian bank (thinking, no doubt, that every man had his price). Edgar thanked him politely & informed him that he had offered the money to his destitute master. Walpole's reactions are unknown but he was a big enough man to appreciate honesty when he had done swearing. (143p.224) Unless, of course, that had been the ulterior motive all along as even exiled kings couldn't be allowed to die in the poor-house.

With all hopes of a military solution lost, the McLeans turned to the courts. In 1771 Lachlan McLean's great-grandson Sir Allan Maclean of Coll (but who resided at Inch Kenneth off the west coast of Mull), a distinguished soldier & the successor to Duart, continued an action against the Duke for the recovery of the whole Duart estates. One of his legal council was Boswell who was entertained, along with Dr Johnson in 1773, at McLean's home on Inch Kenneth. The result of the long case was the regaining of

Brolas in 1783. As Pennyghael was part of the Brolas district, this meant also that any question of Argyll owning Pennyghael was also removed. But, Sir Allan had only three daughters & ultimately everything went to the husband of one (MacLean of Drimnin) who lost it all to creditors in 1798. Lochbuie, Coll & Ardgour lands, although not directly affected by Duart's troubles, faced similar ruin due to their own heavy debts.

The MacLeans must have felt much like the Indians of North America when at every turn their search for justice (as they saw it) was rebuffed by a court & government that seemed to favor their enemy. Strength, courage & honor count for naught on these legal battlegrounds. The memory of such treatment dies hard. In 1912 Argyll sent congratulations to the 76 year old MacLean chief who had succeeded in regaining & restoring Duart Castle. Campbell suggested the old enmity be forgotten & received the reply; "Yes, *but only for as long as I live*".

The whole clan structure was altered, in 1746, when the heritable jurisdictions of the chiefs were abolished. This deprived them of all legal authority over their clansmen. However, the loss of physical power was compensated with financial power as they were given sole ownership over heretofore common clan lands. Many chiefs simply leased them out to the highest bidder & then moved away to become absentee landlords. Money became the main goal in life for these lairds while their faithful clansmen were thrown mercilessly into the unknown & uncaring world of commerce.

The clan chiefs were transformed from rigorous leaders of men into docile owners of land. And, like landowners elsewhere, they developed a taste for luxurious living. But, with only their meagre rents & low land productivity, they soon ran into debt.

For all but a handful, life in the Highlands was harsh, plain & exacting, with no surplus for comforts & only a slender margin of safety from famine. The greater part of the population lived on the very verge of starvation under conditions that would now be considered incompatible with a civilized existence. (64p.9) And, even more depressingly, there was no hope for there was no prospect of movement between classes. (202v2p.151)

Even in the late 1700's, when armed resistance was only a memory, there remained the strongest juxtaposition of forces in these areas. On the one hand was the improving zeal & sophisticated tastes of the 'new' gentlemen farmers while on the other lay the traditional life of the native populations, still bound together by close ties of kinship & clanship, in opposition to change & to the ancient enemies on whom they blamed their deprived state. Usually resentment took the form of a passive withholding of co-operation from the ducal plans & a suspicion of all improvements. This surely would have hurt them as much as it did Argyll unless he planned to raise their rents & appropriate all their increased productivity.

Rent increases had been imposed in the late 1600's &, in 1737, a thorough rent review was done in an effort to help alleviate the Duke's insolvency. Rents doubled by 1771 & during the next 20 years they were again trebled in the Kilfinichen region; partly due to (Napoleonic) war-time inflation. And, there were instances, in 1771 in Mull & Morvern, where overly high rents were bid as each side endeavored to exclude the other. Money had replaced the sword in the clan feuds.

This bickering & greed continued despite oppressive economic conditions which once again saw terrible famines between 1768 & 1773, (137p.13) The underlying cause was overpopulation. After 1745, with feuding & pillaging stopped, the meagre produce of the soil was insufficient to maintain the results of a high birth rate.

The helpless misery began, in 1767, with a sudden fall in the price of black cattle which ruined all the dealers. Prices fell again in 1770 & the deadly murrain disease broke out in 1772. All this was aggravated by a particularly severe winter in 1771/2 which saw snow lying on Mull for eight weeks. (72) And, in 1772, the country was hit by a short, hard depression.

All this caused appalling conditions in Mull. As head of the clan, Alex would have faced additional demands upon his limited resources due to the needs of his destitute clansmen (if he cared) & rents would have been very hard to collect. The Pennycross cash book for Dec 1767 lists Alex McGilivra of Penygail (owing?) £105 (197bp.2); Hugh Penygail, p'n? bill £4.4 (197bp.4); Penygile Dinggeash? to his wife (197bp.14); & an entry of Don Campbell's at Carsaig saying "see Hugh Peny's account". (197bp.10) In 1769 a Don, two Malc's & two John McGilivra's owed rents to Pennycross. (197a)

One result was that people now began to consider new solutions to old problems. In 1772/5 began the first of many great emigrations from Mull & Skye to America. (72p.36) This 'push' was given further impetus when, in 1782, the Highland crops again failed.

It was only the sales of their small, black cattle, at Crieff or Falkirk, which enabled the peasants to barely meet their rents. Any excess from this 'cash crop' bought those commodities that couldn't be home produced such as extra meal, iron, timber, sailcloth, ropes & salt.

In order to further supplement the family income many young men, with little education & few skills, found summer work on Lowland farms. Others took menial jobs in centres like Glasgow, while not a few were left with no option but to join the army or navy. Most of the latter never returned and city slums were not conducive to longevity.

The drift towards Glasgow had begun soon after the '15, & attempts were made to give help to the needy. "It has been a custom for many years past (<1759), particularly since the foreign trade & manufacture of Glasgow arrived at their present height, for numbers of poor families to resort to that city from the Highlands in search of employment: but as very few of them are bred to the mechanic arts, of course most of them subsist by the lowest kind of bodily labour, from which at best they can but draw bare subsistence, & are totally unable to lay up anything for their families." (143pp.319/320)



Porter, Fisherwoman & Journeyman Flesher;
"Auld Reekie"; Nat'l Lib of Scot

In an attempt to help these destitute families, a number of prosperous urban Highlanders established the Glasgow Highland Society on 12 Jan 1727. All the funds it received were lent out & the interest used for the education, or putting into trade, of Highland sons, etc. It had 500 members & 92 apprentices. "The Society has been particularly useful of late (1758) when the parents of so many poor Highland children are in the King's service in America" (in the Quebec War). (212) The Society met in the Black Bull Inn, which the members had built in 1759 specifically for the use of Highlanders.



Black Bull Inn c1840

In 1760 Alex McGilvrae of Bennagail joined this society. The Pennyghael lands allowed, if not afforded, at least their men the opportunity of a higher life style. Alex's son Hugh is known to have left his family in Mull while he went to Edinburgh for the winters. Alex may have set this example by similarly going to Glasgow. His nephew Malcolm McGilvrae, a long-time merchant there, was president of this club in 1801. Murdoch McLane, esq of Lochbuy was also a member in 1790 & in 1801, & Arch MacLean, esq of Penacross, joined in 1794 & his son Alex, of Pennycross, joined in 1839. (237) Other Mull Members were Chas & Gillean (a writer) McLean in Scour (Mull) in 1760.

The noble actions of the Highland Society deserved to be copied & just after the American Revolutionary War a group of Highland gentlemen held a meeting at Fortune's Tavern in Edinburgh, on 9 Feb 1784, & formed a similar society there, with 100 members. Another such organization would later be formed in London.

These groups realized the only sure way to help the people of Mull & the Highlands was via the education of their kids. No doubt, the overwhelming turmoil of the 1600's had brought education to a standstill in the Western Isles. It is unknown what recovery had occurred prior to 1745 but as late as 1755 the Society of Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge had only one school near Tobermory & another near Knock. The Ross of Mull school was vacant & empty in 1755 & there were no schools at Torosay, Tyree, Coll, Ardnamurchan or Morvern. (SRO GD95/11/5) As late as 1770 it was said that most kids didn't attend school or church due to the distances. (246) At that time, there was but one church school in each of the three parishes (plus Aros) paid for by Royal Bounty. Aros had only 30 kids & taught English, writing, Latin, Greek, maths & book keeping. Because only 335 people (out of Mull's total of 5,325) could understand English, the ministers had to know Gaelic.

But, things would improve &, by 1774, another school had been added near Bunessan &, in 1792, there were two in the north part of Mull, two on east coast, & others at Beach, Carsaig & Loch Buie in the south. (SRO GD95 13 16, 1-37) By 1811, the Gaelic Society also had schools all over Mull, including one at Carsaig. It appears this latter group became the Society for the Support of Gaelic Schools & in 1825 their Kilfinichen Parish schools were at Kilpatrick, Ardchiavaig, Artun, Tapul (16 kids), Balavoulin, Carsaig (40 kids), Tirergain (28 kids). They reported the people to be very poor & that there was a continuing need for Gaelic Bibles in the Highlands. (229p.47 1825) It is interesting that the parish register indicates an influx of 'foreign' names at the same time as these schools multiply. These outsiders tended to marry 'outsiders' & such people may have demanded, & been willing to pay for, more schools. In 1855 students were paid one shilling per quarter to take reading & writing; an extra 6p for arithmetic & book keeping; while basic maths, navigation, Latin, Greek & French earned them 2s6p. (114)

It is unknown what type or quality of teaching was provided by these well meaning groups. For example, Gaelic was not taught in any of the schools in 1824 & in Nov 1831, the Presbytery of Mull rebuked the school master at the Kilfinichen charity school for not teaching church music. The high closure rate of schools also indicates the sporadic learning opportunities.

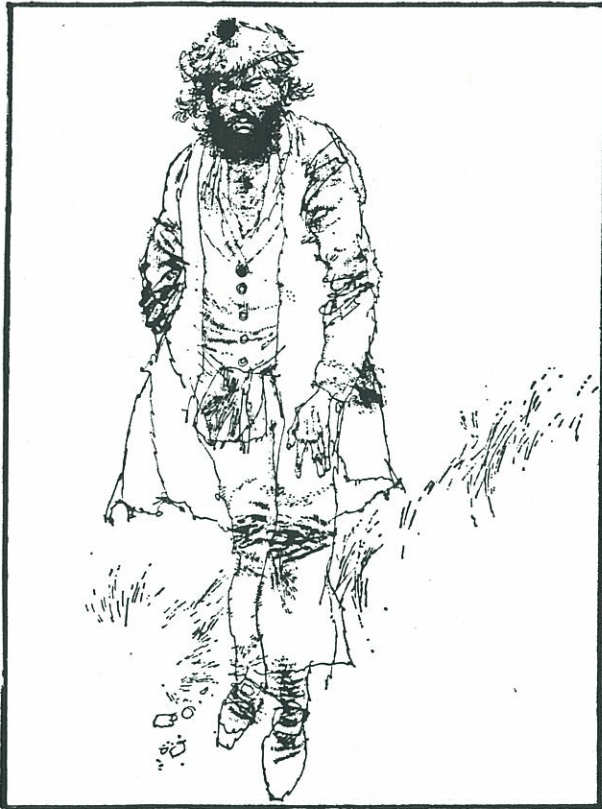
The need for Gaelic Bibles & for Gaelic speaking preachers is illustrated in another context. Although there was a Gaelic chapel in Glasgow in the early 1800's the Western Islanders there complained they could not understand the dialect which was that of the north-east. To prove the need for their own church a census of Glasgow Highlanders was undertaken. This listed the names & ages of all family members, their address & occupations, & which church they attended. Not only did it result in the Hope St Gaelic Church being built but the names were given to the British Bible Society (Pres. Sir John Shore, Lord Teignmouth) in order to prove the need for more Gaelic Bibles. Unfortunately, this 1824 census is now lost & was likely destroyed along with the other pre-1841 censuses. (98)

The Kilninian Kirk Session book (115), which began in 1760, gives some insight into the times (its Parish Register began in 1766). Unfortunately, the Kilfinichen Kirk Session (114) does not begin until 1842 & although the Parish Register began in 1782 (191), the portion to 1804 is missing & is said to have been lost in a boating accident on Loch Scridain. (161 Sept 1990)

All Kirk Sessions spent most of their time dealing with fornication. One offender, the far-sighted Don McNeil, overpaid his fine "*in case of a second offence*". Two 'very poor' servants produced an illegitimate baby in 1767 & only the woman was told to leave the parish; not only due to the double standards but also so she & the baby wouldn't be a welfare drain. There were many needy poor people, mainly elderly women. Once they had proven their need they were issued badges in order to claim their pittance (as opposed to the relatively well paid male, church minions. There were 'fasting days' regarding the American Revolutionary War (1778) & a collection for a Gaelic church in Glasgow, indicating the urban population shift had begun.

The destitution of the poor at this time (& later) can be appreciated via the works of a number of contemporary authors. Much of this period's life style was illustrated in Robt Louis Stevenson's novel "*Kidnapped*" which was set partially in southern Mull in 1751 (five years after Culloden). He says the people were in great poverty for the Parish of Kilfinichen had not yet recovered from the complete depopulation by famine & disease of 50 years prior, & there were many beggars, especially on the mainland. With no more rapine the chiefs could no longer keep open house.

Some believe the 'little hollow' where the hero, David Balfour, found the lone house could well have been the outlet of Glen Leidle at Pennyghael & possibly the home of a McGilvray. (89p.123) However, the distances would indicate rather that Pennyghael was



the place he stayed the second night, & where he was forced to pay for hospitality after the initial refusal. The next day, he had to travel five miles, out of his way, to get change. (Likely up Glen Leidle). A local chief, Hector MacLean (of Lochbuie?) is portrayed as having hardly enough silver to change £1. But, although poor, he was courteous & well spoken.

As well, David's guide was stated to be miserably poor, & a great cheat, but no robber. As Stevenson had spent time on Mull, he likely knew of what he wrote. The other hero in the book; Alan Breck Stewart died c1790.

*Judge not by appearance;
a rich heart may be
under a poor coat. (131½)*

In an effort to modernize the area the Duke suppressed distilling & ale-houses, & exhorted thrift, sobriety & industry (which were not held in high repute by Highlanders). Uncooperative tenants were removed. The Duke founded the fishing village of Bunessan (1787) & Tobermory (1788) & the crofting village at Creich, in an attempt to foster local employment.

However, as often happens, another government policy, the salt laws (taxes) were onerous & discouraged fishing. One man (in 1786) told of how snow was used in China to preserve fish &, despite initial scepticism, this idea caught on in Scotland. (143p.293) Another tax was imposed, in Sept 1783, on all birth & marriage registrations in the parishes. This fell most heavily on the poor & many people stopped registering these events which has certainly handicapped today's genealogists.

In spite of, & maybe due to, Mull's privations, the population continued to increase rapidly after the 1770's (reaching 7,000 in 1786). (116) Unless new jobs were found, destitution was inevitable. Like most of the landowners, who in their own way were just as narrow minded as the peasants, the Duke discouraged emigration & fought Lord Selkirk's schemes. But, industry stayed near the Lowland coal-fields & it was only the new kelp industry

(see p.198) that kept the Island's economy afloat. Few workers benefitted from slaving at kelp as most of their earnings went to pay their increased farm rents. And, in the long run, kelp work & the Celtic practice of splitting the farms for all their sons, resulted in a high proportion of small tenants & crofters. This sub-division of farms meant disaster when the kelp industry collapsed & agriculture prices declined after the Napoleonic Wars.

The economic restructuring that was occurring affected all classes. Highland gentlemen endeavored to make their relatively meagre incomes support a Lowland gentleman's expenditures. Increased urban living meant large increases in expenses resulting from the more sophisticated styles in dress & house, an increased need of lawyers & agents, & of entertainment & travel. High living effected everyone & even Argyll was forced to sell £20,000 worth of land in 1802 & his son, George, after 1806, sold off enormous tracts (including Morvern & some of Mull) to cover his many debts. (64pp.23/24) Thus, all the scheming & killing of only a century before was all for naught. Argyll, undoubtedly, could have made much more money via a few wise Lowland investments. He was stuck in the same old-style, prestige rut as had been the McLeans & the McGilvrays.

It was this period that saw the demise of nearly all the old Highland landlords, including the McGilvrays of Pennyghael. By 1800, the outside world had irreversibly altered these last passionate strongholds of Highland identity. The McGilvrays were about to lose their lands, their independence & their poverty. It would be interesting to be able to assess exactly what was lost in order to compare it with what was gained. Unfortunately, this is impossible; I'm too biased.

For a period following the '45 Rebellion, emigration became a viable option to the people & a solution to a government problem. It was no longer a case of drawing off a surplus but rather that Highlanders (when there was not a war on) had come to be regarded as superfluous. And, it was the tacksmen who were leaving. They were the relatively educated middle class. If they couldn't adapt to the new commercial landlordism then how much less well equipped were those at the bottom. (64p.14) Not everyone, however, saw this as a benefit to the country. *"Not only are good men, but good money, leaving; solely because of the extravagant rents here. Such men who have not money to pay for their freight have indentured themselves & their families. They have taken out a schoolmaster with them. These highly dissatisfied people aggravated the independence feelings of America. The government had hoped to rid itself of Highland troublemakers but instead rid itself of a vast colony."* (212 Oct 1773)



Green are the hills that are far from us. (Gaelic saying)

Another solution to the Highland problem was to recruit them for cannon fodder. Although many MacLeans, & even some McGillivrays from Inverness, did join, the open Jacobitism of Morvern & the sullen resistance in Mull & Tiree in 1745 did not magically disperse afterwards but survived both as a threat to Argyll's improvement plans & as a silent conspiracy contemptuous of government recruitment efforts. In the Quebec War of 1756-63, recruits from these two islands had to be bribed by MacLean chieftains in Mull. There is no evidence of any McGillvray 'volunteers'. It is just as well because, of the 57 men from Tiree who served in that war, only 12 returned. (133) As late as 1771, the small tenants of Iona 'conspired' to resist recruitment for the French War. (42)

By 1795, the Napoleonic wars must have been straining British manpower resources for there was increased pressure to recruit in Mull. Some bitterness had faded due, in part, to the enlightened practices of the Duke who had not yet resorted to the clearance tactics used in the rest of Scotland, & there was by then less reluctance to 'help the Empire'. (SRO GD174/?) But still, very few 'ordinary' men of Mull joined the army despite a personal recruiting visit by Argyll. There were, however, a large number of sons of Mull's landed gentry in the officer ranks. (161 Apr 1990 p.11) The government was forced to pass a Conscription Act in July 1797 but its impact on Mull is unknown.

Murdoch MacLaine of Lochbuie used pressure to recruit some of his cottars or crofters. A number of them, including Chas & Don MacGilvra (who made their marks), replied they wouldn't advise their sons to serve & advised Murdoch they would pay all debts owing to him & would remove their possessions by Whitsunday 1795. (105 #926) This may have been the Don, a cottar, who had told Lochbuie, in 1795, that he would advise his son to enlist. Murdoch did supply 100 men for the 98th Regiment in 1794, & tendered another 300 & Moy castle to the Duke of York in 1797. (154p.247)

Murdoch raised the Dumbartonshire Fencibles & was their Lt Col. (105 #926) To do this he paid a bounty of £2 or £3 as enticement & took men from all over the country. Recruitment lists of eligible (& ineligible) Lochbuie men were drawn up but they included few McGillivrays. (105 #922 & #927) He even tried to get his infant son made an officer but this flagrant misuse of authority was rejected.

The sons of poor families, who needed the money, joined the Fencibles. (52) These were the same as a regular line regiment except they could not be sent out of the country. Murdoch supplied 100 men for the Argyll Fencibles, in 1793 & he was in Spain with the 42nd Regiment.

There were a few McGilvrays on the muster rolls of the Argyll Fencibles. They were all privates in Dixon's Co. & earning £1.10s per month (which was likely their main reason for joining).

1793	Hugh,	Angus	x2,	Arch	x2,	Don	x2,	Dunc,	John	x2,	Farqar
1795	"	"	"	"	"	"	2	"	"	2,	"
1796	"	"	"	"	"	"	1	"	"	3	"
1798	"	"	"	"	3	"	2	"	"	2	"

A Don deserted, & a Don, John, & Dunc were terminated in 1793, while an Arch was terminated in 1798. (Kew W013 3799)

A few McGilvrays were with the 42nd Regiment in Spain in 1812, & at Waterloo in 1815, but whether they came from Mull or from Glasgow is unknown. (SRO GD174/?) It is obvious that military regimentation did not suit the McGilvray temperament.

