

Damside



Burnside

The MacKeith Family Home

By John MacKeith

INTRODUCTION

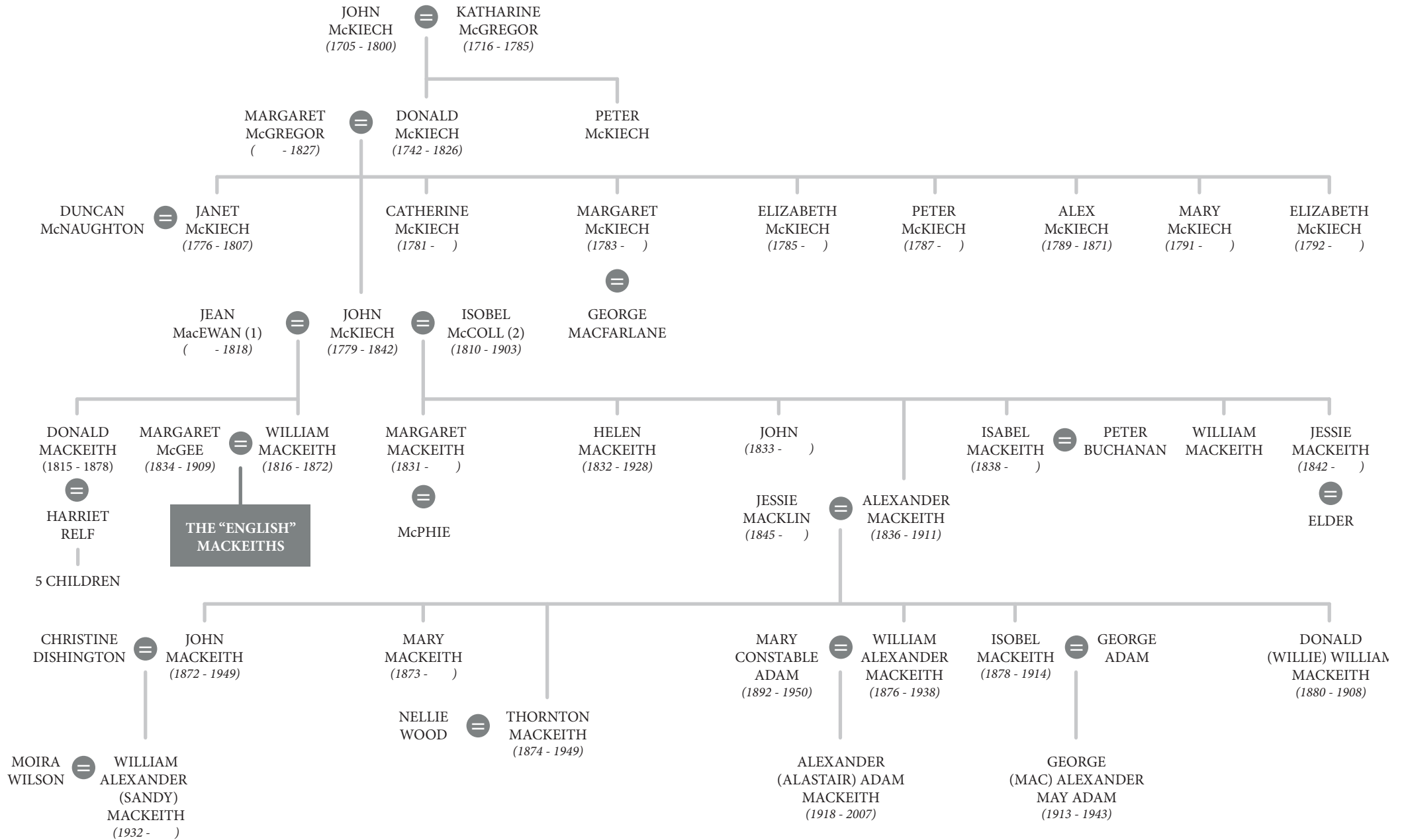
I acknowledge my extensive use of the research, sketch maps and photos provided by the late Alastair MacKeith. I am also very grateful for the help of his daughter, Fenella Lacey. My thanks also to my daughters, Joy and Helen, for their comments. My thanks, too, to Lucy at Stampa for her help.

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For about 200 years the MacKeith family owned a property, Damside, (later called Burnside), in the hamlet of Ruskie in the old county of Perthshire (now in Stirlingshire) in the heartlands of Scotland. There are both facts and stories about the house and the people who lived there, which have been circulating in the family for many years. It seemed to me to be a good idea to bring these all together, so that there would be a record for posterity of our family antecedents. There are a good many names in the story, so I have included, from the start, a family tree and also a chart showing who owned Burnside and who was living there at different times (see Appendix 5). For much of this information I am indebted to Alastair MacKeith, who did a lot of research into the family. It would seem right to dedicate this booklet to him.

MACKEITH FAMILY TREE

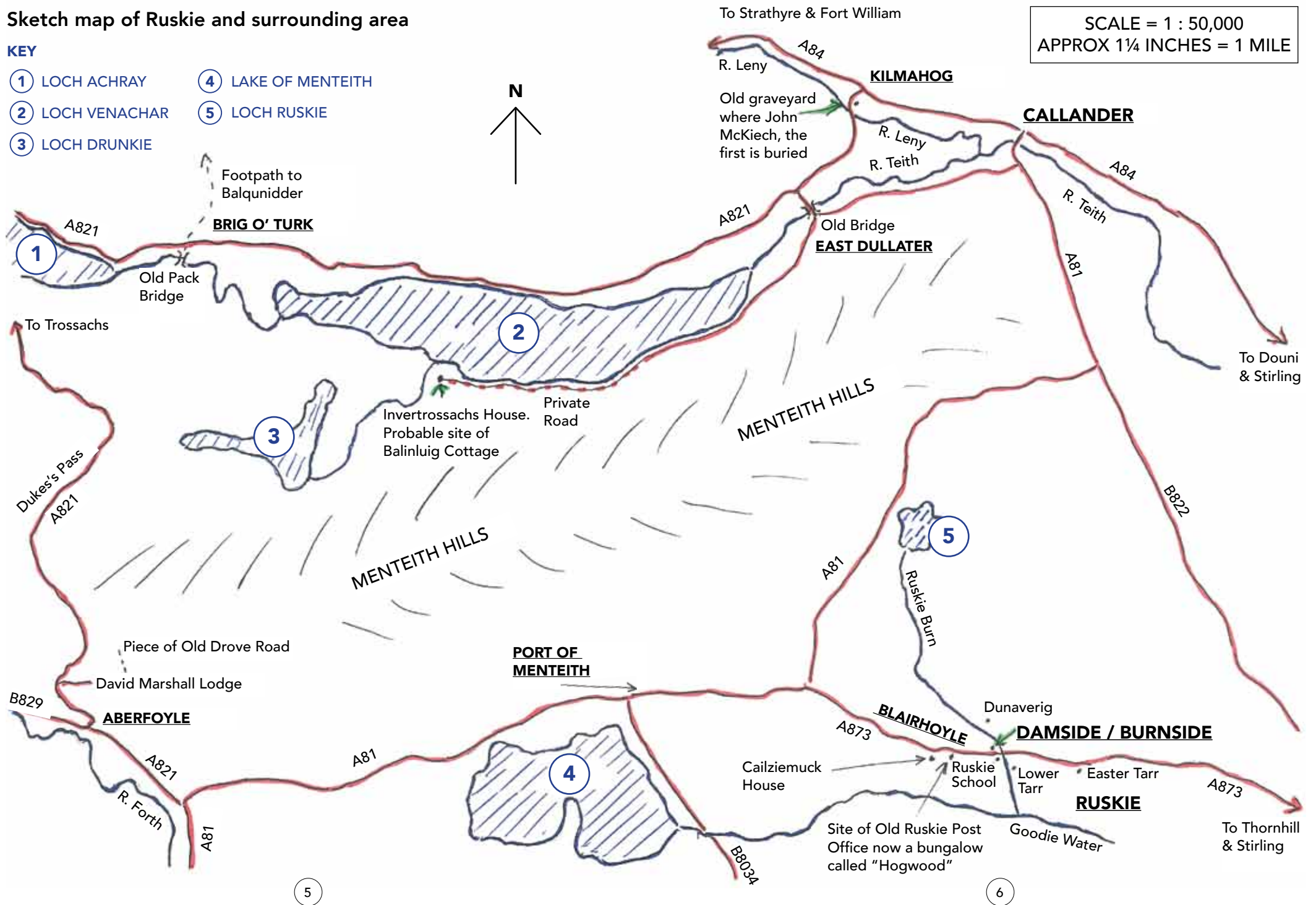


Sketch map of Ruskie and surrounding area

SCALE = 1 : 50,000
APPROX 1 1/4 INCHES = 1 MILE

KEY

- ① LOCH ACHRAY
- ② LOCH VENACHAR
- ③ LOCH DRUNKIE
- ④ LAKE OF MENTEITH
- ⑤ LOCH RUSKIE



RUSKIE

The hamlet of Ruskie lies on the A873 between Aberfoyle and Stirling, approximately three miles from the Port of Menteith on the lake of the same name (the only Lake in Scotland!). It figures in a book 'The Lake of Menteith', published at the end of the 19th century. It refers to a Castle of Rusky; this may have been a castle on an island in the lake, the remains of which are shown on Ordnance Survey maps, or another castle, the remains of which are shown on maps about a mile to the north-east of the Port of Menteith. A further reference in the book is made to a clan battle between the Drummonds and the Menteiths in the middle of the 13th century on the Tar (tor) of Rusky, which lay approximately where the remains of the second castle were.

The hamlet is centred on the Ruskie Burn, which flows downhill from Loch Ruskie to the north. There is a bridge over the road, and on the south of the road lay a school and a hall, which is now used by the local Womens Institute. The family had close connections with the school. The children living at Burnside went there, even those staying at Burnside for a few weeks; also members of the family were at times on the school's governing body. Below the school buildings was a water mill and there was also a smiddy (smithy) on the road there. On the other side of the burn down a track lies Lower Tarr farm, sometimes known as 'Wester Tarr', or just as 'Tarr'. Up the hill to the west was a garage and a post office. Burnside lies to the north of the road on the west bank of the burn.

In the 19th century Ruskie could be reached by train to the Port of Menteith station, which in fact was not at the Port of Menteith itself, but on the road south to Arnprior. This station was on the North British line which ran from Glasgow to Stirling. It was the custom of the younger members of the family to walk from that

station, or even from Doune station across the Goudie Water, which was only four miles away across fields, though the older members probably used a horse-drawn conveyance. Ruskie could also be reached by motor bus and before that by a 'Post Gig'. In later years members of the family would travel to Burnside by car.

THE FIRST JOHN MCKIECH

The earliest known member of the MacKeith family was John McKiech (the earlier spelling of the family name, used until the middle of the 19th century; an account of the origins and development of the name is given in Appendix 1). He may well have been descended from the MacGregors, whose name was banned for parts of the 17th century, so either he or his parents may have had that name. He is believed to have originated from Brig' O Turk, a little to the north of Ruskie, and lived at a time before the family owned the house there; records show that he lived south of Loch Venachar, about five miles from Ruskie as the crow flies (see enclosed sketch map). The place where he lived is variously described as Balinluig or Drunkie, the latter being the name of a small loch just to the south-west of Loch Venachar. It appears that John was born about 1707 (his gravestone shows that he was 93 when he died in 1800) and that he was a tenant farmer of a John Buchan, living in a croft, or cottage, on his land. The likely position of Drunkie is now marked on the map as Invertrossachs; it is a very wooded area, with little flat open land, so it must have been hard to make a living.

It is believed that their croft may still remain as part of the outbuildings of Invertrossachs House (the present Invertrossachs House was re-built as an Edwardian shooting hunting lodge in 1911

and so is not the original Drunkie House, which had been re-named Invertrossachs House).

In about 1741 John McKiech married Katherine McGregor, who was nine years younger than him and is also recorded as having been born at Drunkie, They had two sons, Donald, who was born in 1742, and Peter, about whom nothing appears to have been known. There are no baptismal records for a son Peter. It would seem more sensible to assume that this son Peter was one and the same as their foster son Peter Graham. At some time later in the century the family moved to a property, East Dullater, to the east along Loch Venachar. It is probable that John McKiech, or his son, Donald, was still a tenant, either of the same landlord or a different one.

(This was the time of the 1745 Rebellion – for an account of the family’s involvement – see Appendix 2)

DAMSID

It was during this period that an event occurred which is part of family folklore. One dark and stormy night a boy or youth, called Peter Graham, knocked at John McKiech’s door and asked for shelter (he is known as ‘the orphan in the storm’). Whether he was in fact an orphan or had just run away from home, John McKiech and his wife took him in and he lived with them for some years. When he grew up, he went away and sought his fortune in the West Indies. He worked as a ‘tidewaiter’ (also referred to as a ‘lidowaiter’), an official who oversaw the arrival of cargoes. He earned good money and returned to Scotland a comparatively wealthy man.

On his return to Scotland he bought Damside in 1775. The property was built by a Donald Fisher in 1742, having bought the land in 1736 or 1737 and has the date and his initials, and those of

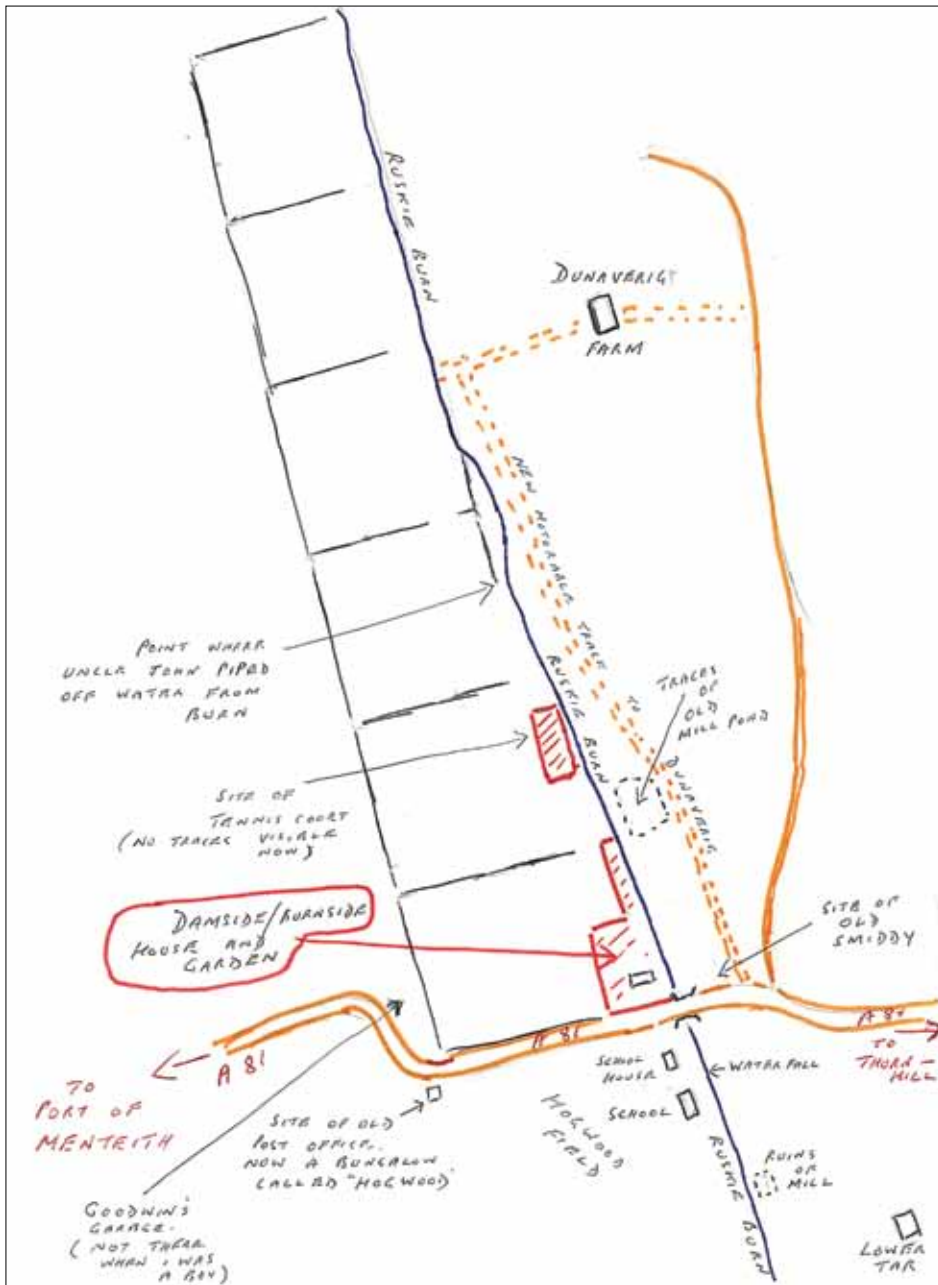
his wife, Janet Senine, over the entrance. Donald Fisher is described in deeds as a mallster, and so the house was probably used as an inn initially (when it ceased to be used as that is not clear). The property then passed to his son, John, and it was he who sold it to Peter Graham on his return to Scotland. Peter Graham probably did not live in the property, but leased it to a John and James MacArthur for a period of 21 years. Peter Graham died in September, 1782, but three months before his death he gave it to John McKiech, presumably in acknowledgement of the kindness which he and his family had shown him, and perhaps also because he had no children. John gave the property to his son, Donald, three months later.

(For a verse account of how the family came to own Damside - see Appendix 3)

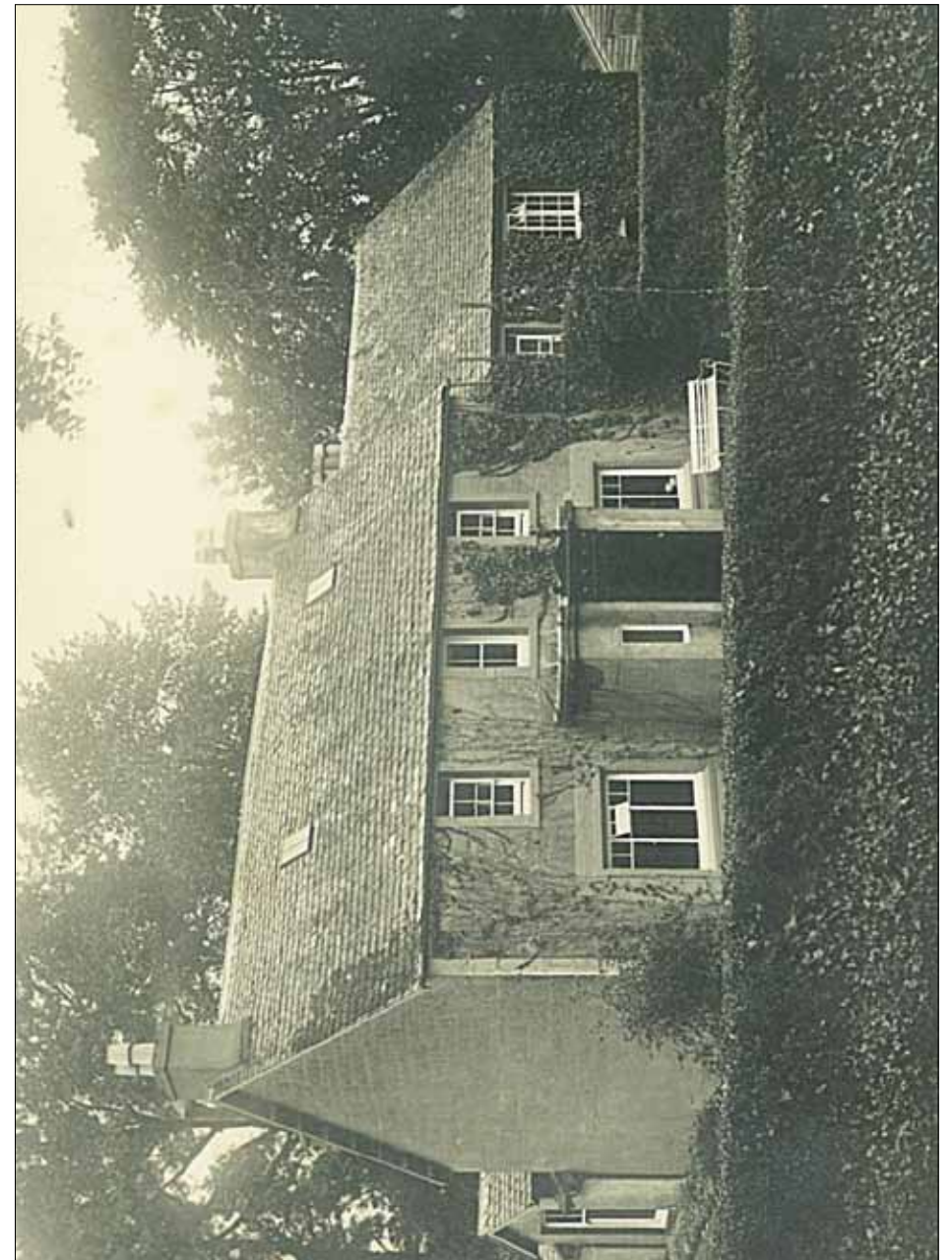
DESCRIPTION OF DAMSID AND ITS LAND

The following is a description of Damside as it was then and the land which went with it (see enclosed sketch). The house was stone built with a slate roof. On the ground floor was a small parlour and a low-ceilinged, rather dark, dining room; later a sitting room was added at the back. A sloping passage lead to the kitchen. On the first floor were three quite small bedrooms with a tiny dressing room between two of them; these were approached by a very steep staircase and even steeper steps led to an attic. There were also several outbuildings. Later a barn was converted into a bedroom and a bathroom – there had been no bathroom until then.

Outside at the back was a small garden, which led to the fields belonging to the property. There were six of them of approximately the same size, amounting to about six acres, leading up the hill



Sketch map of Damside/Burnside and grounds



Damside/Burnside

alongside the Ruskie Burn; at one time there were a further 24 acres. In days gone by there had been a dam up the stream by the fields, and a small mill pond was built on the other side of the burn to provide water for the mill (the dam gave the house its original name). Water for the house was piped from the burn higher up. There had also been a tennis court by the burn behind the house.

DONALD

Donald McKiech was the first real family owner of Damside. He spent his early years at the family home at Balinluig and presumably worked with his father at their tenant farm holding. In 1776 he married Margaret MacGregor, who, although having the same surname as his mother, came from Aberfoyle, a town to the south, which was where they were married, and they moved into Damside in about 1790. They had nine children in all, including two Elizabeths (it was the practice that sometimes a child was given the name of an earlier child who had died).

The increase in the size of the family may have been the reason why they moved to East Dullater and John McKiech probably moved with them, as he had lost his wife a few years earlier. The gift of Damside to the family changed everything. They now had a property of their own, but could not move into it, because it was rented to others, John and James MacArthur. For some reason the MacArthurs appear to have surrendered their tenancy (it would have expired in 1794) and the family moved in; John seems to have moved with them. John died in 1800 and was buried in the family grave, alongside his wife, Katherine, in the graveyard at Kilmahog, just outside Calendar. As Donald's children grew up, they started to move way; Janet married first and then John in 1812. They

obviously could not all continue living at Damside and so John took a lease of a farm almost directly opposite Damside, called Lower Tarr. This had the advantage of having a larger area of land than Damside, and was flat. Donald died in 1826 and Margaret a year later and were buried in the family grave at Kilmahog.



Grave of John McKiech and his wife Katharine in the old graveyard at Kilmahog, near Callander.

THE SECOND JOHN MCKIECH

The second John McKiech of our known family was the grandson of the first, and son of Donald McKiech and Margaret McGregor: he was their second child and eldest son, and was born on 19th February, 1779 at Balinluig, the earlier family home. He moved with the family to East Dullater Farm and then to Damside, when it came into the family. He married Jean McEwan at the Port of Menteith on 22nd or 24th May, 1812.

It was probably at this point that he took a lease of Lower Tarr Farm and moved out of Damside. He and his wife will have wanted to set up their own home, and the farm, with larger and flatter land than Damside, will have been a good opportunity. His older sister, Janet, had already married a George McFarlane and moved away. They had two children, Donald, born in 1815 and William, born in 1816. Sadly Jean died in 1818; John presumably continued to farm Lower Tarr and his younger sisters probably helped to look after the two young boys.

When John's parents, Donald and Margaret, died, John inherited Damside, but did not move back to the family home; it would appear, from later census records, that he left his younger brother, Alexander, to farm it. In 1830 John married, for the second time, Isabel (later known as Isabella) McColl. She was more than 30 years younger than he, and it is interesting to speculate as to how she came to marry him. She could have been employed to look after Donald and William and to act as housekeeper for their widowed father; it was quite common for this arrangement to lead to marriage. They had seven children, the youngest of whom, Janet or Jessie, was born three weeks after he died on 2nd May, 1842 and was buried beside his first wife, Jean, at Kilmahog. (On a visit to Lower Tarr some years ago we paid a visit to the farm, where we had bed

and breakfast. On the glass of a window was quite clearly etched the name 'Janet McKiech!').

John must have been a respected member of the local community, for he was the enumerator for the parish in the first census in 1841 (an enumerator is the person who records the details of the people living in the parish on the day of the census).

THE 1841 CENSUS

The 1841 census record is a good point to take stock of the family. It was the first time that there had been one and it provides a record of the people living in households at that time.

The two main McKiech households in Ruskie were at Damside and Lower Tarr. Alexander and Mary, the two remaining members of Donald and Margaret's family, continued to live there, the others having moved away on marrying, though Mary herself was said to have been married earlier to a James Graham. There is also a Robert McKiech recorded living there, aged 15. Donald and Margaret had a son of that name, born on 23rd March, 1798, which would make him 43 years old at the time of the census – this is something of a mystery. At Lower Tarr John was living with his wife, Isabel, and their children. Also at that time William McKiech, John's son by his first wife, is recorded as being there. He had trained as a doctor, like his brother, Donald. It is not clear whether he was just visiting or whether he was living with the family while he waited to find a job. A few years later there is a record of him working at Buchlyvie, a village a few miles away. In addition to these people, was a servant, Helen Stewart, aged 15; it was common practice for girls of that age to go into service. There is a puzzle about a seventh child, William, who is not recorded in the census. He is listed on some family trees

without any detail, apart from one reference 'drowned'. It is possible that he could have been born before the 1841 census, and died early.

The one other child of that family missing was Helen. She was six years old and was living with her grandmother, Isabel's mother, also called Helen, who was 50; she died in 1846. It was a bit strange that a child so young was away from home, but perhaps she was there as company and a help for the other Helen, and she was at least in the same village.

Another McKiech, Peter, was living in the parish with his wife, Cath, and their two children and two servants. His age is given as 60, which could make him the Peter Graham McKiech, son of Donald and Margaret. In addition there was a Robert with his wife, two small children and two servants – it is not clear whether these two households fitted into the family, if at all. There were other families called McKiech in Port of Menteith parish, and these may have been cousins, but there is no written record of the connections.

ISABELLA

John in his will set up a trust to make detailed provision for his family. This included his widow, Isabella, and her children receiving the rents from the Damside property. Isabella was also bequeathed her choice of the household furniture, one cow, and a yearly supply of peats and coals. Although the tradition has been that he left the property itself to Donald, his son by his first wife, the will says that Donald was not to receive Damside until John's youngest child reached the age of 21, i.e. in 1862. It is not clear how these provisions affected Alexander and Mary, who continued to live at Damside.

Isabella was left with six young children to support. John's older sons, Donald and William, had moved away to train as doctors at

the University of Glasgow, but were supportive of her. John had made generous provision for his younger children in his will; also the extended family of his brother-in-law, George McFarlane, were prosperous farmers and would have provided her with a strong safety net.

It appears that she continued living at Lower Tarr, although John had said in his will that the lease should be surrendered, and Alexander and Mary continued living at Damside. Both properties had land that needed to be farmed. Alexander is described in the censuses of 1841, 1851 and 1861 as an 'agriculturist' or 'farmer'. The Robert McKiech recorded as living with him and his sister in 1841 may well have been helping Alexander with the farm. Much of the Damside land was leased to the farmer at Dunaverig, which lies to the east of Damside across the burn, at some point during these years; maybe Alexander felt unable to continue to farm it because of his age. Isabella would have needed to continue farming at Lower Tarr with whatever help she could get. Initially the children would have been too young to help much, but by 1851 the three older siblings were earning a living away from home. Margaret was a house servant to John Fisher at Wester Ballamenach farm, Kippen. John was a farm servant for Henry Dougall, at Blarsassenach. Helen was a general servant for the Graham sisters at Cutsiemuck Cottage in Ruskie. The younger children were still scholars.

At this time the women of the family would have needed to take on more responsibilities. No longer were they wives and mothers - they took on work for the farm. Mary would have been like a farmers wife for her brother, supporting him with farm duties. Isabella took over responsibility for Lower Tarr farm. In addition to working the land, she needed the income which it produced to support her family. As her children grew older, they would have been able to do more to help with the farm. Also both Isabella's

mother, Helen, Isabella herself, and her daughter, Helen, are all recorded as being dressmakers, and so provided further financial support. In addition, her elder daughter, Margaret, and Helen, were employed as nannies, looking after other family's children.

THE FAMILY MOVES ON

Not a great deal is known about the family around the middle of the 19th century and most of this comes from the censuses. From these we learn that in 1851 and 1861 Alexander and Mary are recorded as continuing to live at Damside; at what point Alexander ceased farming the land is not known. In 1851 Isabella was living at Lower Tarr with children, Alexander, Isabella and Jessie. Margaret is recorded as living as a servant in the household of a John Fisher, near Buchlyvie, and married James McPhie in 1852, John was not at home and was presumably was working at another farm, while Helen was a servant at nearby Cutsiemuck Cottage. By 1861 John had returned home and was living with the two Isabellas, mother and daughter; Helen was living in Glasgow as a servant. By then Alexander was no longer at home The story is that he left school at 16 (one version says 12) and walked to Glasgow, where he found work as an office boy and grocer's assistant. He attended Glasgow University as an evening student – much more is known about his later life.

By 1871 things had changed. Mary died at Damside on 7 February 1863 and Alexander died there on 24 March 1871 (just before the 1871 Census). The informant for his death certificate was his niece Helen, so she was presumably living at Damside, looking after the house for her elderly uncle. She had living with her at that time someone recorded as 'Lassie Mackline'. This would have been Jessie Macklin, who married the younger Alexander a couple of months

later. She must have been making a visit to her future sister-in-law and to the family home. Isabella and her son, John, were still living at Lower Tarr, but presumably moved into Damside soon after her brother-in-law, Alexander's, death

ALEXANDER

A significant change took place in 1877, when Isabella's son, Alexander, bought Damside from Donald MacKeith for £1,000, just two years before the latter died in England. He did not come to live there though and allowed his mother and his unmarried brother and sister, John and Helen, to continue living there.

Alexander by this time had become a tea-selling agent in Glasgow. He had married Jessie Macklin, the daughter of a Professor Macklin, Andersonian Professor of Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Sanskrit at the University of Glasgow and they had four sons and two daughters. Though they lived in Glasgow, they used Damside as a holiday home; with Alexander and Jessie's growing family, this must have been a tight fit! Jessie took a dislike to the name 'Damside', thinking it improper, and persuaded her husband to change it to 'Burnside'. The Damside fields continued to be let out to a tenant.

Towards the end of the 19th century Alexander became an evangelist and later devoted himself full time to this work; this was made possible by a payment of £1,000 a year from a Lord Overton. Alexander became involved in a number of evangelical and charitable societies and, because of this dedicated work, had a Glasgow street named after him. However when Lord Overton died, the grant stopped and he returned to his tea business. Three of his sons also went into the business; his oldest son, John, went out to India as an employee of a tea growing business in Assam, where



Family group photographed at Burnside of Ruskie on 24.08.89.
 Standing; Alexander MacKeith and William Alexander
 MacKeith (Sandy).
 Seated; (Aunt) Helen MacKeith, Jessie MacKeith (nee Macklin),
 Isobel McKiech (nee McColl) and John MacKeith.
 In front; Donald William MacKeith (Willie) and Isobel MacKeith.

he worked from 1891 to 1928, while his second son, Thornton, worked in the business in Glasgow and took over while his father worked full time as an evangelist. William Alexander, also known as Sandy, therefore was the third son in the tea business, going out to Assam in 1895 and staying there until 1929.

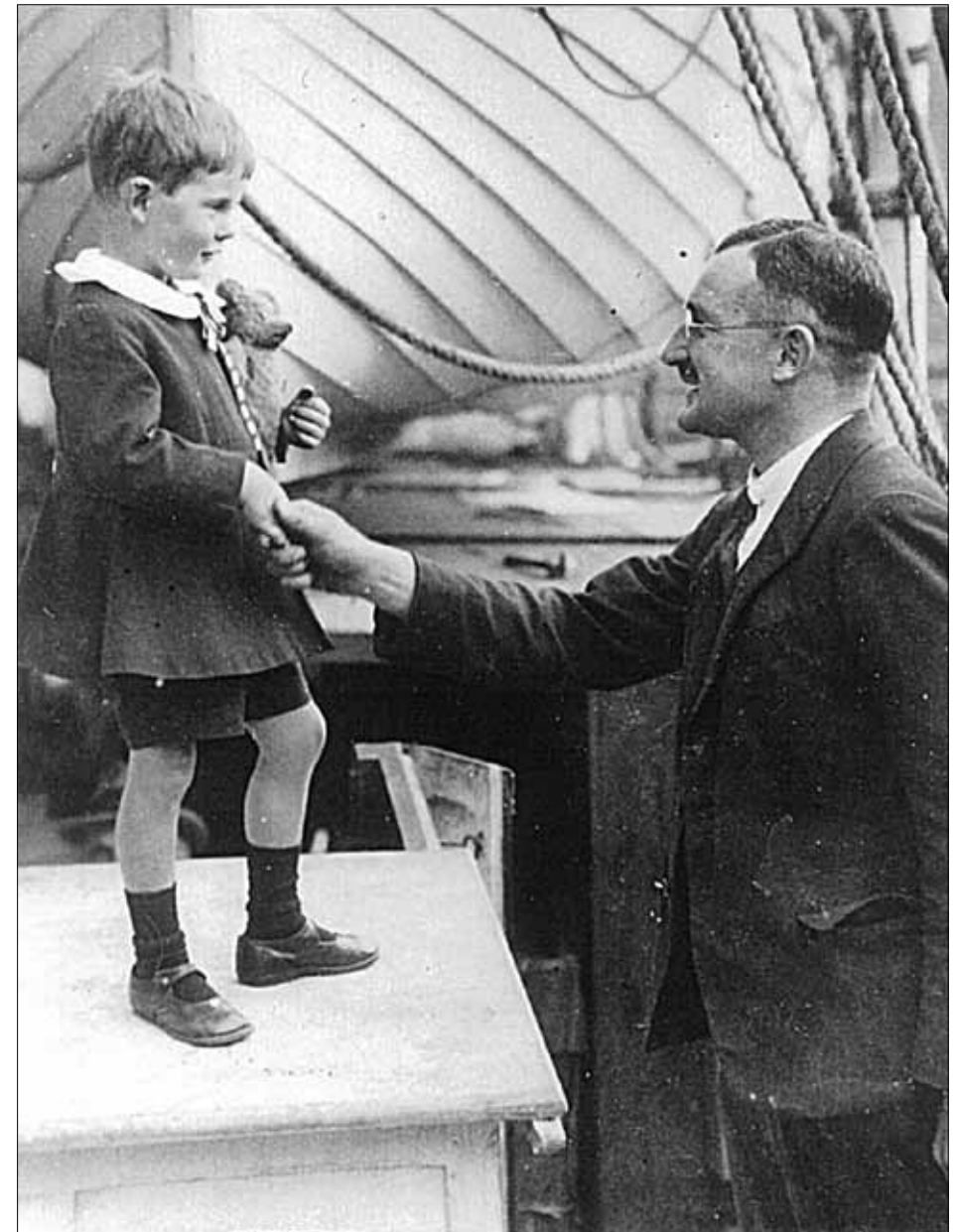
BURNSIDE AS A HOLIDAY HOME

From the 1880s there was a period of stability at Burnside. For about twenty years Isabella, the matriarch of the family, lived there with her two unmarried children, John and Helen. John is recorded as an agricultural labourer and Helen as a sewing teacher. Whether John worked the fields of the property or worked for a farmer is not clear; by 1891 he is recorded in the census as an 'annuitant', i.e. retired. Then in the 1901 census he is described as 'feeble minded, kept at home'; he possibly had Down's Syndrome or some other form of mental disability. It is interesting that Helen is described as 'a sewing teacher'. Other members of the family had been described as 'dressmakers'; whom Helen taught is not clear. In addition to these three who were permanently living there, Burnside was also used as a holiday home by other members of the family. This included William Alexander and his children, and subsequently their children. They would either visit from Glasgow or come to stay when they were on leave from Assam; children who were at boarding school, while their parents were overseas, would also come. Alastair, William Alexander's elder son, has written very vividly in his memoirs of his experiences there and also of his father's; it obviously was a very happy time for them and they got up to all sorts of pranks. There is a photograph of a group, including the permanent residents and those visiting. Isabella's son, John, is not in the picture for some reason; it has been suggested

that he could have disrupted the taking of the photograph because of his condition. How they all fitted into the house is not clear; at least the maids may have been local girls and not living in. When Alexander married Jessie Macklin they continued living in Glasgow, first in Hill Street and later in Douglas Street, both near the business centre of the city and convenient for Alexander's work; his stepbrother, William's widow, Margaret, and her family lived in the Hill Street property for a while after Alexander moved out. His two older sons, John and William Alexander, went to a local school, Garnethill.

THE MACLINS AND THE ADAMS

It is useful here to give some information about two of the families into which two of the children married, because they figured prominently in the story. Jessie Macklin was the daughter of Professor Thomas Thornton Macklin; both she and her father were said to have a determined character. The Macklin family came from Irish lawyers and Lanarkshire country gentry. It was Jessie who insisted on changing the name from Damside to Burnside; though she did not actually live there, her husband owned the property! A relative of hers rose to some fame. He was a nephew called Alexander Hepburne Macklin, who trained as a doctor and sailed with the explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton, on his two expeditions to the South Pole. There is a photo of Alastair MacKeith standing with him on board the Quest, taken in 1921. The other family with whom the MacKeiths had close connections were the Adams. The Rev. Hector Adams, with whom Alexander probably came into contact through his evangelistic work, had a daughter, Mary, who married William Alexander, and a son, George, who married Alexander's daughter, Isabel, and they had one son, who was also called George.



Alastair MacKeith with Dr Alexander MacKlin on board Sir Ernest Shackleton's ship "Quest", 1921

THE HOUSE IN THE 20TH CENTURY

In 1903 Isabella died aged 93, but Helen continued living at Burnside. She had had an arm amputated at some earlier time due to blood poisoning, but is said to have managed well with the other arm and the stump. John died in August, 1909 of 'recurrent cerebral apoplexy 9 months'. The family continued visiting (the 1901 census shows Jessie and her daughter, Isabel, there) and Helen would probably have had one or two maids to help her. Alexander continued living in Glasgow, but at some time he must have moved to Burnside, where he died in 1911.

Helen died in 1928, which was the year when her nephew, John, retired from Assam. He then took over occupancy of Burnside and in 1930 married his first cousin, Christine Dishington. They had a son, Alexander, known as Sandy, born in 1932; he went to school first at the local school, then to a school in Stirling and later to Fettes College in Edinburgh. On leaving school he worked on a farm for some years, before training for the Baptist ministry and served at a church in Glasgow. He married Moira Wilson in 1960 and they had a daughter, Catherine. After he retired, he moved to the outskirts of Glasgow. His wife died in 2009 and is buried at Port of Menteith cemetery.

John died in 1947 and his widow and son continued living at Burnside. In 1954 Christine offered to sell the property to Alastair MacKeith, but he was in the Colonial Service in Somaliland and could not afford to buy it. However he wrote to one of what were known as the 'English' MacKeiths, i.e. the family of Alexander MacKeith, grandson of the second John Mckiech, who lived latterly in Southampton, but he had a negative response. She ultimately sold Burnside to Major Graham of Rednock, the adjoining estate to Ruskie, though she continued to live there until 1965.



Alexander, Helen, Mary and Alastair MacKeith outside the front door of Burnside.

BURNSIDE MOVES OUT OF THE FAMILY

Major Graham sold the fields which went with the property to a Sandy Goodwin who lived at Dunaverig, the farm on the east side of Ruskie Burn. Major Graham then let the house and garden to a Mr and Mrs Mailer. It is said that he intended living at Burnside if anything happened to Rednock, though Mrs Mailer has said that he neglected to look after the property. Alastair wrote to Major Graham in 1982, when he was about to return to Scotland, asking if he would consider selling Burnside to him, but he declined. After Major Graham's death, David Shepherd, the Bishop of Liverpool, inherited the estate. Major Graham apparently was really a Shepherd, but adopted the name Graham, having himself inherited the estate from a female Graham (these Grahams are no known relatives of the Peter Graham, who originally owned the property). David Shepherd naturally did not want to live there, but gave it to one of his nieces, who married a Maxwell. The Maxwells made repairs and improvements, which the Major had neglected to do, but only used the place as a holiday home.

AND NOW

Since then the property has changed hands at least once and further alterations have been made to modernise it, and they have significantly altered its character. Recent estate agents particulars describe it as a charming country house and say that 'the current owner has recently upgraded and extended the property to create a spacious and family home combining the best of old and new'. Burnside House sold for £412,500 on 19 October 2015. In 2017, ½ acre of the garden to the rear of Burnside was offered for public sale as a building plot with planning permission for a 300sqm executive home, with offers over £120,000].

The only traces of the MacKeiths in the area which remain are the gravestones in the two cemeteries in which they are buried, at Kilmahog and Port of Menteith.

(See Appendix 4 for details.)



Burnside now

APPENDIX 1:

The MacKeith Family Name

Two sources of information about the surname 'MacKeith' are the Historical Research Centre at Trinity College, Dublin and the publication 'The Surnames of Scotland' by the New York Public Library. They both have some of the same information, so were presumably taken from the same source.

According to these accounts, 'MacKeith' is an Anglicisation, i.e. converted into English, of the Irish or Gaelic name 'MacShitish', translated 'son of the wolf'; 'Mac' being the preface which indicates 'son of'. (Another meaning in a Gaelic dictionary is 'son of the fairy'). There were other Gaelic versions of the name, but the earliest anglicised forms were in the 15th century, when there were variants 'MacKet, MacKeth, MacKett and MacKeich'. There were several later variants: 'McKethe, McCayth, McKeich and M'Keith'. There are a number of references to people with these names in the 17th century. One man was fined for aiding the clan Gregor and two others were killed at the battle of Dunverty in 1647. A sailor with the name was said to have composed a popular song and another, John Mackeich, composed a well known hymn.

The places associated with the people with these names cover quite a wide area. Among these are the Isle of Islay and the tip of the Kintyre peninsular. Many of the places mentioned are hard to identify. What is clear is an association with the clan Gregor or MacGregor, which occupied land to the north of Ruskie. Both John McKiech (1705 – 1800) and his son, Donald (1742 – 1826), married MacGregors.

The name 'MacGregor' was banned for periods in the 17th century and many MacGregors and their associates were forced out of their properties, partly as a result of their support for the Jacobite rebellion, and also later as a result of the clearances. There are records of a David MacKett sailing to Boston, Massachusetts in 1652 and

Isabel McKet emigrating to Maryland in 1734.

The Trinity College records have details of the family coat of arms, which includes a sailing ship and a hand holding a dagger; the family crest is described as 'a cat sejant proper'. There are no records of a MacKeith family tartan, though maybe the MacGregor tartan was used.

At the time when we have the first information of our own MacKeith descendants, the family name was spelt 'McKiech'. This became gradually changed in the 19th century to the form we have today.

APPENDIX 2:

The McKiechs and The 1745 Rebellion

Around the middle of the 18th century events occurred that were turbulent for Scotland and for the early McKiech family, because it was the time when Charles Stuart, or 'Bonnie Prince Charlie', as he was known, formed a rebel army with the intention of taking over the British throne. In the end the rebellion failed, but not before the monarchy had appeared seriously threatened.

Charles Stuart, or the 'Young Pretender', as he was also known, landed in the north of Scotland on the Isle of Eriskay, towards the southern end of the Western Hebrides, and then the mainland in August, 1745 and was joined by many men from Scottish clans. He marched south with the object of taking the British crown from George 2nd. He came down from Doune in Perthshire and made for Edinburgh. In September he crossed the river at the Fords of Frew, just north east of Drymen, the lowest point at which it was possible to cross the river, and at that time not difficult to cross because of a drought. He passed Stirling and continued on to Edinburgh, on his way into England.

There is a story that he stayed overnight at Damside on his way south. It is said that, when the house was built in 1742, it was used as an inn, a Donald Fisher having bought the land in 1737. He is said to

have entertained the Prince and a room in which he is supposed to have stayed, has even been identified. Furthermore the Fishers are said to have the silver cup from which the Prince drank. This was at a time before the McKiechs owned the property.

All this has to be speculation. What is more likely to be true is the family tradition that Alexander MacGregor, the father of John McKiech's wife, Katherine, fought at the Battle of Prestonpans on 21st September, 1745 and that John McKiech himself fought at the Battle of Falkirk on 17th January, 1746. The McKiechs, again according to tradition, were a part of the MacGregor clan, which took the Prince's side in the rebellion. It is quite credible that both Alexander MacGregor and John McKiech joined the army as it marched south. The Battle of Falkirk was fought during the retreat, which the prince was subsequently forced to make. It is unlikely that the prince stayed at Damside on his way back north, as the places at which he stayed in that area have been identified. Moreover the story of the prince staying at Damside appears to relate to the year 1745 and not 1746 when he was passing that way on retreat. Whether the McKiechs suffered from having taken the prince's side is not known, though the family's association with the MacGregors might have counted against them.

The stay of Prince Charles at Damside can not, at least not yet, be proved or disproved. It is not likely that he did stay, as Ruskie is well to the west of Fords of Frew, and the Prince generally stayed in gentlemen's houses. There are probably similar stories circulating about connections with the prince. At this point in time so long after the event, it is likely that we may never know.

APPENDIX 3:

Poem

"Links in a Life or Angels in the Storm - A Historic Ballad -
by Agnes H. Bowie

Prefatory Note

The story related in the following poem is authentic, and was told me some years ago by a friend of the family in which it occurred; and as I was much impressed with its beautiful lessons of gracious benevolence on the one hand, and graceful gratitude on the other; but above all with the thought of the blessing hid in that Christmas storm, I have conserved it in ballad form in the hope that it may yet " seed and blossom" in the hearts and lives of the readers.

A.H.B.

1.

A Christmas storm was raging wild,
That sorely tried the homeless poor,
When, drenched with sleet, an orphan child
Came toiling o'er a highland moor.

For him no cosy winter haps;
Half-shod, his feet are blistered sore;
And cold and hungry thus he raps,
All timid, at a farmer's door.

2.

The farmer had to market gone;
And, as the day was wearing late,
With densest darkness drawing on,
For him his dear ones watch and wait.

And who is this, they, wondering, say,
Would visit us on such a night?
Some hapless traveller lost his way,
And not a star appears in sight.

The mother opens wide the door,
For she was large of heart and good,
And freely gave from out her store,
Now shelter and now homely food.

And there she saw the dripping lad,
So silently before her stand,
For few the English words he had -
But she has caught him by the hand.

3.

She leads him in to her fireside,
Where, with good cheer and Christmas joy,
Her children form a wide circle,
And there she adds another boy.

She strips him of his dripping dress,
She clothes him in a suit full of warm,
And gently soothes his sore distress,
And bids him fear no future harm.

She laid him in a cosy bed,
As if he were her very own;
And then, with tender words, she led
Him to the Heavenly Father's throne.

Next morn the farmer eyed the lad,
And, wondering, asked who this could be;
And gently chid her, yet was glad,
For he was bountiful as she.

4.

But, as the days and weeks went on,
He, chaffing to her, oft would say,
"Tis time, I think, that he were gone;
Why send you not the boy away".

While she made answer in a mood
That woke in him a kindred chord;
"I cannot do it if I would,
The thing", she said, "is from the Lord".

And so together they agreed,
Though they had many of their own,
To educate, clothe, and feed,
And keep the boy till he was grown.

This 'mong their children there he grew
On up to manhood's early prime;
And then, with noblest purpose true,
He left them for a foreign clime.

5.

And in that land afar, I trow,
The influence of their home was felt,
While many a high and holy vow
he made to Heaven, as there he knelt,

And asked his God that he would bless
And crown his efforts day by day,
That, with the first-fruits of success,
he might those gracious friends repay.

Long years have passed, That worthy pair,
Whose children now are scattered wide,
Hold sacred every vacant chair
That used to grace the old fireside.

And as they talk, one summers's eve,
About the lad in foreign lands,
Their senses they could scarce believe,
For there he stood and clasped their hands.

6.

"And I have come across the sea",
he said, "to see that hallowed hearth,
In this dear home that sheltered me,
When but the veriest waif on earth.

"To hear that loving voice again
That cheered me in those days of yore;
That, like an angel, soothed my pain,
And took me in by that same door.

"Now take from me, oh take", he said,
In tones that rang for very joy,
"This goodly farm, this dear homestead -
The gift of your poor foster boy.

"For you and yours I bought the land,
'While waters run and woods do grow' =
So run these deeds; but understand
'Tis nothing to the debt I owe."

"I was a stranger, and ye took me in," &c.- Matt .xxv.43.

7.

To Heaven, 'mid silence all profound,
Arose their thanks no words could form;
To them all earth seemed holy ground,
Where angels guide us in the storm.

APPENDIX 4:**Family gravestones in Kilmahog and Port of Menteith graveyards**

Inscriptions on the old gravestones are now almost illegible but records have been made previously of various monumental inscriptions, including in the published MI index series 'Monumental inscriptions (pre 1855) in South Perthshire', by John Fowler Mitchell and Sheila Mitchell, Scottish Genealogy Society, 1974.

In the Kilmahog graveyard, just outside Calendar, there are several family gravestones in a row. The first John McKiech and his wife, Katherine are buried in the middle of the row, MI: "Here lies interred John McKiech of Damside who died March 29 1800 aged 93 years. also Katherine McGrigor his spouse who died April 11 1785 aged 69 years".]

[The left-hand gravestone, MI: "1808 Robert McGrigor erected this stone in memory of his father Alexander McGrigor who died the 22nd Nov 1788 aged 68 years". This is believed to be Alexander McGregor, brother-in-law to John McKiech(1)].

The family gravestones at Port of Menteith church no longer exist, but details were recorded by the Mitchell survey of the burial there of some relatives of Isabella McColl, including her parents. In addition, Stirling Council has records of the burial of several members of the MacKeith family in the early 20th century. Six churchyard plots were purchased by Alexander MacKeith and most of these appear to have been used but it would appear that no gravestones were ever erected. Due to council confidentiality rules it is not currently possible to search the burial registers to determine who was buried in these graves. However verbal confirmation was made some years ago to Alastair MacKeith's daughter Fenella that some of the names of her great-grandfather Alexander's siblings matched with burials.

Two siblings did not die at Damside of Ruskie. Margaret (Mrs. McPhie died 10 August 1896 in Buchlyvie, where she was buried. Jessie (Mrs. Elder) died 29 August 1910 in Gourrock. The other 4

siblings and their mother died at Burnside: Isabella McColl (Mrs. MacKeith) on 24 December 1902; John on 23 August 1909; Isabella (Mrs Buchanan) on January 1911; Alexander on 17 July 1911; and Helen on 8 April 1928.

APPENDIX 5.**Ownership and occupation of Damside/Burnside**

| DATE/YEAR | OWNER | OCCUPIER(S) |
|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1742 | Donald Fisher | Donald Fisher |
| 1752 | John Fisher | John Fisher |
| 1774 | Peter Graham | John and James MacArthur |
| 22.6.1782 | John McKiech(1) | " " " |
| 28.9.1782 | Donald McKiech | " " " |
| 1790 (approx.) | " " " | Donald McKiech and family |
| 1826 | John McKiech(2) | Alexander and Helen McKiech |
| 1842 | ? | " " " |
| 1863 | Donald MacKeith | " " " |
| 11.11.1877 | Alexander MacKeith | Helen and Isabella MacKeith |
| 1903 | " " " | Helen MacKeith |
| 1911 | John MacKeith | " " " |
| 1928 | " " " | John MacKeith |
| 1947 | Christine MacKeith | Christine MacKeith |
| 1959 | Major Graham | " " " |
| 1968 | " " " | |

