



# THE MACASKILLS OF



## RUDHA AN DUNAIN AND DRYNOCH

## ISLE OF SKYE

**(Abridged)**

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MACASKILLS OF SKYE

The name MacAskill has been associated with the Isle of Skye for many centuries and particularly with the part controlled by the Clan Macleod which was based in Dunvegan.

The MacAskills emerged from Norse stock surviving on the Isle of Skye after the Vikings defeat at Largs in 1263. Their name is derived from Askell or Asketill, the Norse name for "kettle" or "sacrificial vessels of the gods" and was probably taken up by the person offering the sacrifice. The name appears in Gaelic as Asgall which became Mac Asgail when prefixed by mac and, in turn, became MacAskill in English.

According to tradition, the progenitor of the Skye family was a refugee from a kingship strife in Ireland about 1170. It would appear that he was received in a friendly manner and then given permission to settle, probably by the dominant family in the area at the time.

Later on the first name to come to prominence was William who was the Seneschal of Dunvegan during the Chiefship of Malcolm, the third chief of the Macleods who flourished in the middle of the fourteenth century. By this time the MacAskills had become a considerable family and occupied important positions and land within the Macleod territory.

One of the areas given to MacAskills was the land of Rudha an Dunain, the area to the southwest of the Cuillin. The Gaelic name means 'the promontory of the little fort', and in their capacity of coast wardens for the Macleod Chiefs in Dunvegan, the MacAskills could easily fulfil their obligations and any vessels approaching Skye from the south and west could be espied, stopped or boarded, if necessary.

The first of the Rudha an Dunain MacAskills on record was a Kenneth in the 1664 Rental. He was the grandson of Black Donald who flourished there in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, and, indeed, the Rudha an Dunain MacAskills were known in the area thereafter by the family's Gaelic patronymic of 'Clann Mhic Dhomhnaill Dhuibh', or 'the children of the son of Black Donald'.

This family retained the tack or farm of Rudha an Dunain until 1846 when the then tacksman emigrated to New Zealand with his family. (See appendix A.)

Thereafter, a relative of the immigrant namely Hugh MacAskill who already occupied the adjacent tack of Talisker took over the Rudha an Dunain Tack and lived thereafter in Leasol in Glenbrittle.

Hugh MacAskill, who was instrumental in the genesis of Talisker Distillery, died at Leasol on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March 1863, thus ending the family's four hundred year period of occupancy. (See Appendix B.)

The MacAskills of Drynoch are descended from Black John or Iain Dubh who was the Rudha an Dunain Tacksman on record in the 1683 Rental. (See Appendices B & C.)

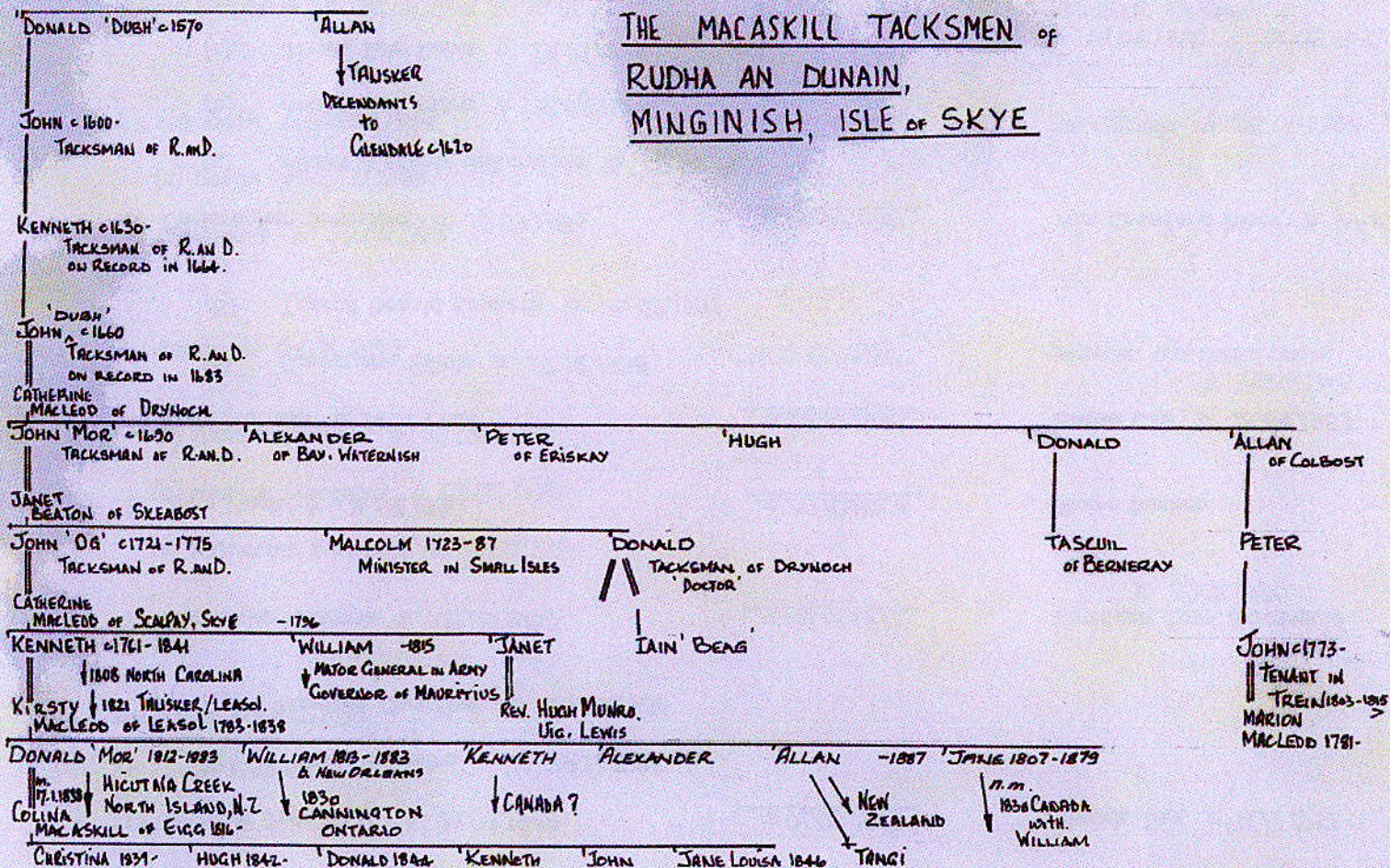
The immediate antecedents of Alexander MacAskill who was born in Glenbrittle on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1873 and his descendents are shown on the various pages hereafter and also Appendix D.

Angus Macleod  
25 Brue  
Barvas  
Isle of Lewis

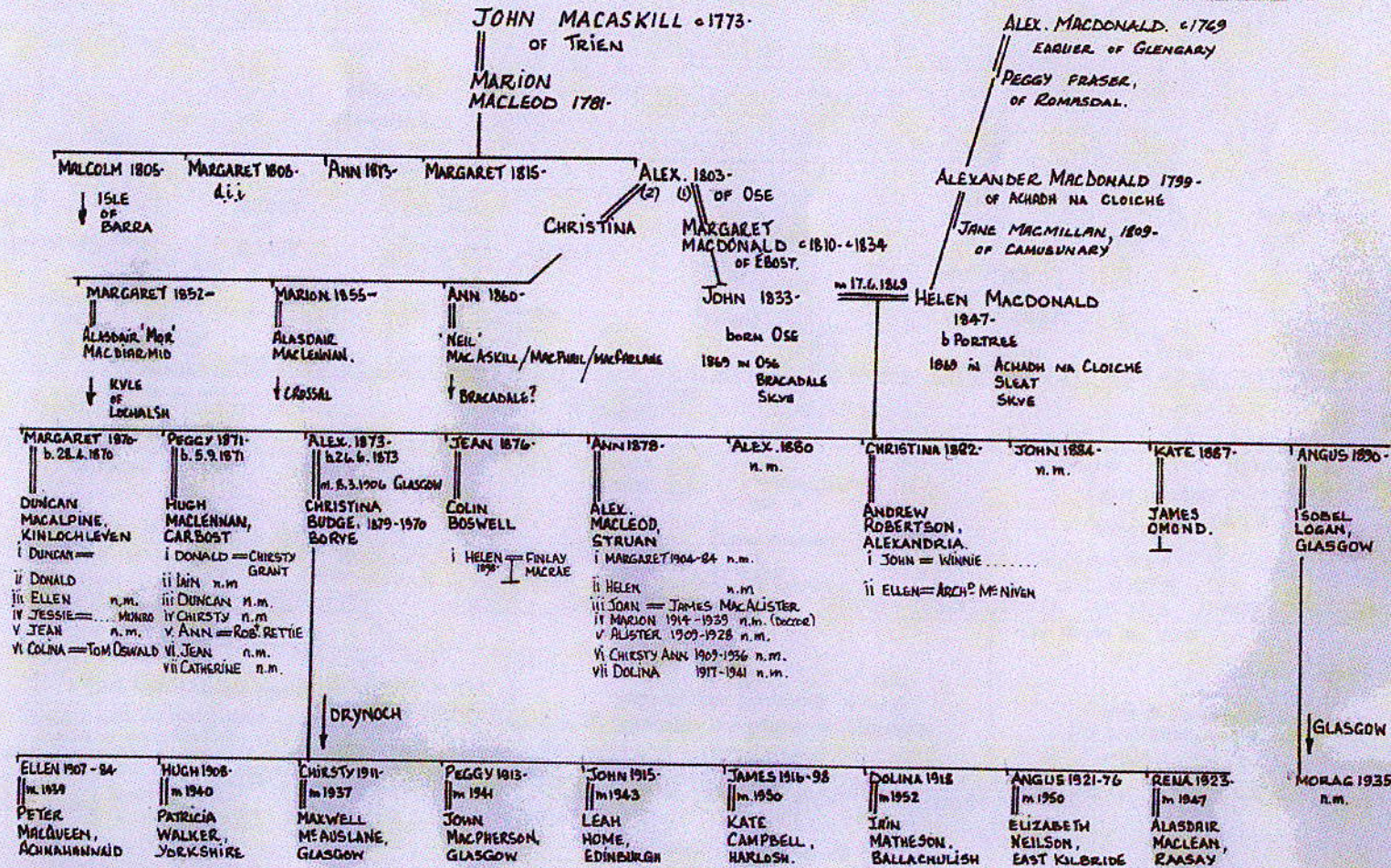
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APPENDIX 'A'

THE MACASKILL TACKSMEN of  
RUDHA AN DUNAIN,  
MINGINISH, ISLE OF SKYE



APPENDIX 'C'



APPENDIX 'D'

