

McCowns in Lorn

As you know, I spent four weeks at Dunollie House in Oban, the Seat of Clan MacDougall, studying a collection of historical documents preserved by the MacDougall family. The collection is being newly archived in renovated rooms of the wing of Dunollie House that was built in 1745 when the family moved down from Dunollie castle. The project, described on www.dunollie.org, is a major step for the MacDougall of Dunollie Preservation Trust. Subsequent stages will turn Dunollie into a significant historical and archaeological center. My minor role this last summer is somewhat described in the History section of www.dunollie.org and in my trip report for the MacDougall McCallum Heritage Foundation at <http://www.macdougallmccallumheritagefoundation.org/>¹.

The area around Oban, in fact all of Lorn, is a very comfortable location for McCowns. The name is known. Although our numbers are not great, MacCowns have been here for centuries and most people assume you or your people probably belong here. The name can be found on tombstones in surrounding cemeteries. There is a plaque on the wall outside the Argyll and Bute offices in Oban to Provost Hugh McCowan, founder of An Comunn Gàidhlig (ACG) in 1891 and the first Gaelic Mòd in Oban in 1892. In an email exchange with Leonard McCown, on his last birthday, I said I had pulled together some reflections and observations on McCowns that I had made during and before my stay, and promised to circulate them to him and others who might have an interest. I have since made that same promise to other McCowns. This note tries to fulfill these obligations. It covers the origins of our name(s), places in Lorn connected to the name, and historical notes on these places. This is a note that unashamedly reflects my personal interests. Some of you, indeed, will have heard or read some of these tales over the years. The note makes no pretence at being encyclopedic.

The central source for information on MacCowan from this area is the chapter "McCowan of Kilninver" in Nancy Black's book, *From a Hollow on the Hill*. I believe the author is the most important depository of information on these families in the world. She has been of invaluable assistance in preparing this essay, but bears no responsibility for my blunders. In addition, there is a wonderfully unique source of material on the people and way of life of Kerrera Island in Hope MacDougall's *Kerrera - Mirror of History*, a book relying heavily on documents in the MacDougall Archive, many of which she transcribed.

The Names of MacCowan

There are different, valid, historical derivations of the name McCown. Almost all the derivations involve anglicizations of Gaelic names, many of which occurred before the late 18th century when English orthography began to be standardized. I will mention three important derivations.

As you know any of the three derivations apply to variant spellings of the anglicized name McCown – Mac/Mc/M^c/Mak/M' Cowan/Cowan/Couin/ and more. They also apply to the equivalence of MacCowan and Cowan. In fact Nancy Black is able to point out specific examples of McCowans in the area who dropped the Mc before going south to look for work.

I Saint Comgan

The traditional derivation of the name MacCowan is from Gillecomgain or Gillechomgain, meaning servant (gille) of Saint Comgan. Although gille means lad or servant, in many areas any man was called gille until he married, after which he would be referred to as duine, a man or person. Nowadays it usually refers a man who accompanies and provides counsel to those on hunting or fishing expeditions. The g in gille can become so soft in various grammatical contexts as virtually to disappear, and is often written and spoken as 'ille, with the double ll representing a sound approaching a y.

St Comgan, Brother of Saint Kentigerna and uncle to her son Saint Fillan, emigrated from Leinster in the 7th or early 8th century and founded a monastery on Lochalsh. Saint Kentigerna founded a religious community on Loch Lomand. Fillan was on and off a hermit, at one stage an abbot. Fillan buried Comgan on Iona. Robert the Bruce spent the night at St. Fillan's Priory in Strathfillan, the night before he was defeated by John MacDougall of Lorn at the Battle of Dalrigh (1306). In that battle Bruce lost his brooch which remains in the hands of MacDougalls to this day – with a few intervening centuries in some Campbell houses. Bruce brought some of the relics of St. Fillan with him to the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314.

The Christian name Gillecomgan probably came into use in the last centuries of the first millennium. A Gillecomgan, who became mormaer of Moray in around 1020 AD, was the first husband of Gruach, later Lady MacBeth, and the father of Lulach who succeeded MacBeth to the throne of Scotland. Lulach was crowned in August 1057 at Scone and killed by Malcolm III or his henchmen the next year. Both MacBeth and Lulach were buried at Iona along with 46 other Scottish, 4 Irish, and 8 Norwegian kings. I assume that the Christian name, Gillecomgan, was widely used by the time surnames began to be assumed. Those thus adopting, say, Mac 'illeChomhghain as a surname need not either have had a close genetic link nor have lived close by each other.

The forms "MacGill..." or "Mac'ill..." are very common in Gaelic names. Colin Mark's dictionary lists 24 such names, and more doubtlessly exist. Of these only three carry a Gill over to the anglicized form of the name. A similar set of surnames is constructed using "mael", or servant². It is derived from "maol" or bald, in its modern spelling. Members of church orders had a particular tonsure – in fact one of the points of dispute between the Roman and the Celtic church at the Synod of Whitby (664) was the proper tonsure. Servants had no tonsure – they were shaved bald. So we have Mal-Bridte, or servant of St Bridget, and Mal-Colum, or Malcolm, servant of Calum.

The name MacCowan is the result of both a grammatical and a historical process of lenition which softens (or makes more breathy)³ some Gaelic consonants. Lenition is still a prominent feature of modern Gaelic grammar. Some of the internal lenition that changes “comgan” into “comhghan” is a historical process that I do not fully understand, although this happens with other names⁴. Mac Ghillechomhghan can mutate to either Mac ‘illechoan or MacCòmhghan, the ch (as a German might pronounce the ch in Bach), mh, and gh are breathy forms of consonants which, even when disappearing can affect the sound of adjacent vowels and the cadence of pronunciation. MacCòmhghan (sometimes MacCòmhghain) and Mac ‘illechoan are anglicized as MacCowan⁵. There are place names in which Comgan appears of which Kilchoan, or Cille Chòmhghan (Comgan’s cell or church) is the best known.

This derivation of the name was noted by the Duke of Argyll in a partial list of the hundreds massacred at Dunavertie in 1647. The list was published in the *Highland Papers Vol II (1916)* with the Duke’s commentary. The massacre, during the covenanter wars, cost the MacDougalls a great part of their fighting strength. The list includes 49 identified MacDougalls⁶ and 41 persons with various names, including three named M’ilchoan. The total number killed was three to six times the number in the partial list and it would not be surprising if the names in the list were also born by many who were not listed. About the M’ilchoan, the Duke adds the note:

The M'ilchomghains, or M'llchoen as they here are called, were an ancient race of untraced origin; the name means Son of the Servant of S. Comgan, and they have now in the Highlands anglicized their name to the form Cowan. Three generations of them are commemorated on the Market Cross of Inveraray, which must have been brought from somewhere in Lorne, or wherever this race were really natives of, as I have not found signs of them about Inveraray itself. On the Cross they are called M'Eichgyllichomghan.

Similar language can be found in other sources, for example George F. Black’s *The Surnames of Scotland*.

Following the action at Dunavertie, the covenanter forces assaulted and plundered Gylen Castle, a MacDougall castle on Kerrera, killing all but a few defenders – who were taken to the Campbell Clan Seat in Inveraray and hanged. Hope MacDougall notes that an Act of Parliament in the reign of Charles II lists John Mellecheon as one of the defenders killed during the assault on Gylen Castle.

II Son of a (or the) Smith

In modern Gaelic “smith” = “gobha”, (in the genitive case, “of a smith”= “gobhain”, and “of the smith”=“a’ ghobhain”), “son”=“mac”, “son of a smith” =“mac gobhainn”, “son of the smith” = “mac a’ ghobhainn”. In modern Gaelic, both initial g and initial c are pronounced like “k”. However, the lenited forms, gh and ch, have different

sounds. The lenited b, bh, is like a v, the lenited m, mh, is also like a v and nasalizes preceding vowels as w can in English. Mac a' Ghobhainn is the modern equivalent to the name Smith. It has a different pronunciation from that of MacCòmhghan. However, the two most authoritative of Gaelic dictionaries, Dwelly's from 1902-1912 and Colin Mark's from 2004, give MacCowan as a possible rendition of both MacCòmhghan and MacGobhainn. It does not require Gaelic mutations to merge or confuse the names. This happens frequently enough with the anglicized versions. My name was misspelled McGowan (the other form derived from MacGobhainn) in the US Government Manual for a number of years, despite my careful attempts to provide the correct information.

More importantly, Provost MacCowan gives the derivation of his name from son of the smith. Nancy Black sent me with the following succinct description of Hugh MacCowan's line:

Iain of Dunollie (1375) was the eighth Chief of the clan and the son of Allan, who was the son of our Sixth Chief, Duncan of Dunollie. Dunollie castle was his main seat and the clan duthus. Iain of Dunollie married Christina the daughter of Sir Dougald Campbell of Craignish. He lived with Christiana for twenty years and had one son named Dougall. Christina later married the Alexander the second Chief of the MacNaughtens and still later Ivor Campbell. Traditions say that Iain of Dunollie had a second son Allan who founded the MacDougalls of Raera (Raray) and Ardmaddy. This was the senior cadet family of the MacDougalls of Lorn. Allan of Reyran (Raera or Raray) in Kilninver parish himself had a son called Comham (Gobhainn) Mor (the big blacksmith) from whom descended the McCowans (MacComhain) of Lorn. Iain of Dunollie died around 1400.

Hugh MacCowan is thus part of a MacDougall line.

One often sees Provost McCowan's Gaelic name spelled MacComhghan, rather than something like MacGobhainn⁷/Mac a' Ghobhainn, which would be literally closer to the son of a (the) smith. For example the Summer 1994 issue of *Gairm* reproduces a 1930 picture of him in front of one of his Luinge slate quarries⁸, and uses MacComhghan as his name, while the plaque on the wall in Oban honoring the founders of AGA and the Mòd spells his name Eoghan MacComhghain.

Other references, however, provide variant spellings. Dugald Gordon MacDougall refers, in his poem "Comunn Chlann Dùghaill" describing the 1905 Clan MacDougall Gathering at Dunollie, to ex-provost MacCowan as being from Slochd Chòmhain. A footnote clarifies the spelling, saying that the "MacCowans" are said to be descended from Comhan (Gobhan?) Mòr, a son of the first MacDougall of Reyran." A recent book, *Dualchas an aghaich nan creag* (2011) dealing with the efforts to promote Gaelic in the years 1890-2020, naturally mentions Provost McCowan. In this book

his name is given as Eòghann Mac a' Ghobhainn – Hugh, son of the smith, just as he said. He is pictured there with his three co-founders of ACG and the Mòd.

III MacEwen/MacEwan

I have been told that the names MacCowan and MacEwan can mutate into one another, in both directions, in Lorn⁹. I have read that the name McKeown is pronounced MacCowan or MacEwan in Ireland, depending on the region. Pronounced as it is spelled, McKeown is close to the Gaelic for MacEwan, MacEòghainn. Eòghan is a very old Gaelic name. It appears in the Ulster cycle and can be found on one of the earliest stones recovered at Iona. It is anglicized as Ewan or Hugh (although Hugh most often translates Uisdean nowadays.) Eòghan has sometimes been used interchangeably with Eòin, the name John as it appears in the bible. Nowadays, however, Iain is used as the Gaelic equivalent of John.

I believe the MacEwan family of greatest interest in looking at names related to MacCowans in Lorn is the great bardic family.¹⁰ They have a strong MacDougall connection. They lived in Lorn, were significant late medieval Gaelic poets and were bard-sennachies to both the MacDougalls and the Campbells. MacEwans are regarded as a sept, or associated family, to both Clan MacDougall and Clan Campbell.

Derick Thomson, one of the most significant Gaelic scholars and poets of the second half of the twentieth century, writes of the MacEwen family¹¹:

.... They are designated as a bardic family in 1558, when Colin Campbell of Glenorchy granted a charter to Eugenius McDuncane McCarne and to his son Arnaldus or Arnoldus and his heirs male after him who act as *Joculatores* ('wlgariter Rymouris') giving them the two merklands of Barmullocht in the lordship of Lorne. Over two centuries later (1779) Donald MacNicol records the following tradition about the MacEwens:

The MacEwens had free lands in Lorn in Argyleshire, for acting as Bards to the family of *Argyle*, to that of *Bredalbane*, and likewise to Sir *John MacDougal of Dunolly*, in 1572. The two last of the race were Airne and his son Neil.

Alasdair Campbell of Ards, in his *A History of Clan Campbell*¹², treats MacCowan, MacOwen, and MacEwan as different names of the same Campbell sept. He accepts the derivation of MacCowan from Gillicomgan, and so I would assume that he would see the interchange between MacCowan and MacEwan to be in the late Gaelic or the Anglicized forms of the names. In the Gaelic, MacEòghan is not the same as MacCòmghhan. But neither is the interchange between Eòin (John as the name would appear in the Gaelic Bible) and Eòghan, but it happens nevertheless. Alasdair Campbell notes they "were the MacEwans who held the lands of Kilchoan

(on Loch Feochan, south of what is now Oban) for their services, first to the MacDougall Lords of Lorne, then to the Campbell chiefs.

A member of the family composed a lament for a John of Lorn, Chief of Clan MacDougall, that was reproduced in the Book of the Dean of Lismore, the oldest known anthology of Scottish Gaelic poetry. (The poem has incorrectly been identified as a lament for Iain Ciar, who lived a century after the Book of the Dean of Lismore was written.) Members of this family may have been responsible for translating Calvin's Catechism in 1631, and some poems included therein, and the Shorter Catechism in 1652.

The Landscape

Kilniniver (Cill an inbhir, or Church of the estuary) is a very small, beautiful, community on the shore of Loch Feochan. The estuary in Kilniniver's name is the River Euchar. There are now no vendors of any products in the town. It has a primary school and a small very attractive parish church. An older parish church, on top of the hill surrounding, is a ruin, although the cemetery is still used. A short walk from the town center (which I take to be the current parish church near the intersection of two minor roads at a bridge crossing the Euchar¹³) is Carraig nam Marbh (Rock of the Dead). Carraig nam Marbh is a low rock outcrop jutting into Loch Feochan where the bodies of the Kings of Scotland would rest waiting for the boat to ferry them to Iona for burial.

MacCowans have rested in the Kilniniver Cemetery for centuries. Nancy Black believes that the graves may go back until the early 16th century, although she says that her research is incomplete, not confirming any before 1700.

Martin Petrie, of the Lorn Archaeological and Historical Society, who also provided me directions to both Carraig nam Marbh and the old Kilniniver cemetery, noted that Robert the Bruce granted land in Kilniniver in exchange for naval services. Indeed, a charter by King Robert is recorded granting:

to Dougal Cambell of Lochaw and his heirs, for homage and service of the lands of Kilcongen, Degnish, Auchinacloch, Auchinsaule Caddiltoune, Garpynging, Ardincaple, Ragray, Kilniniver, Esgeallan Clachanseilach, Leternacroch, Scamadill, Kilverran, Leternamuck, and Toresay; to be held of the King and his heirs for the service of a ship of twenty-six oars, to be employed in the King's army, furnished with men and victual. Dated 24th January, seventh year of the King's reign [1312].

This needs to be viewed in the context of naval warfare during the Wars of Scottish Independence. Neither the Edwards of England nor Robert the Bruce had effective naval forces, particularly on the west coast of England and Scotland. The fleets of western clansmen were the most significant forces in the area at that time -- in particular the fleets

of the MacDougalls and the MacDonalds of Islay, the former supporting the Edwards and the latter, eventually, Bruce.

The MacDougalls turned against Bruce after he killed their kinsman through marriage, the Red Comyn, in Greyfriars Church in Dumfries February of 1306. Bruce finally defeated the MacDougalls on land at the battle of Brander Pass in August of 1308. The chief's oldest son and principal opponent of Bruce, John, escaped to England with some of the Clan galleys. Bruce proceeded against the MacDonalds immediately after his victory at Brander Pass, defeating and imprisoning their chief, Alexander, who died in prison in 1308. Alexander MacDonald was succeeded by his brother, Angus Òg MacDonald who was, or became, a staunch supporter of Bruce.¹⁴ Bruce gave the bulk of the mainland MacDougall properties to Clan Campbell, and the bulk of the islands, with their sea fighting capacity, to Angus òg MacDonald.

The significance of the grant of Kilninver may be that it shows that Robert the Bruce used some of the MacDougall land confiscated after the battle at Brander Pass to exchange for increasing the crown's naval capacity. This effort was successful.

John and his father, Alexander, left Scotland for England where John became an admiral in the English navy in 1311. He was very effective in this job, capturing the Isle of Mann in 1315. This was critical in that it secured an English supply route to Scotland – Bruce had been unsuccessful in taking Carlisle on the Scottish border – and hampered Bruce's support of Scottish forces in Ireland. The Kilninver land grant illustrates the successful efforts of Robert the Bruce to build an effective fleet. In 1318 the combined fleets of Bruce and his ally Angus Òg MacDonald, were finally able defeat John MacDougall – who worked under the considerable disadvantage of commanding an English fleet.

Loch Seil

Frank Adams, in his *Clans, Septs, and Regiments of the Scottish Highlands*, describes the MacCowan sept of Clan MacDougall as:

Cowans were numerous in Kilchoan, Nether Lorn. A family of Cowans or MacCowans followed MacDougall of Reyran, from whom they held lands about Loch Seil.

Loch Seil is a small inland loch lying to the south of Kilninver. The only village now near Loch Seil is Duachy. Nancy Black tells me that her family were in Duachy and the various clachans thereabouts for at least a century.

Loch Feochan

Loch Feochan is a large, protected loch running several miles inland from the sea on whose south shore lies Kilninver.

Kerrera

This is a small island across from the town of Oban, whose tip almost reaches Dunollie castle. Drovers swam cattle across the narrow strait between the tip of Kerrera and a landing below Dunollie up into the nineteenth century. Kerrera Sound is part of the long fast inner passage that has carried trade between the north of Ireland to the coast of Scotland as far north as the island of Skye, or perhaps as far as the Orkneys, for millennia. It is the only remaining island possession of the MacDougalls. A number of interesting events have marked its history.

Ewan, the first chief to bear the name MacDougall, held lands on the mainland from King Alexander II of Scotland and a large part of the Hebrides from the King of Norway. Alexander II launched an expedition in 1249 trying to wrench control of the Hebrides from the Norwegians, anchoring in Horseshoe Bay and summoning Ewan to surrender the islands to him. Ewan refused. Alexander II died, either on board ship or on Kerrera, before he could take further steps. In 1263 Hakon, king of Norway, led an expedition along the coast of Scotland to secure his hold on the Hebrides, and to regain control of a couple of islands that Norway had lost earlier in the 13th century. He seized Kerrera, invaded Mull and summoned and detained Ewan, demanding that he join Hakon on his expedition south. Although other clan leaders joined Hakon, Ewan refused, offering to return the islands he held from the Norwegian King. Ewan was released, and raised the clan's land and sea forces, retaking Kerrera and counterattacking in Mull. Hakon was in a hurry to proceed south to retake the southern islands, and sailed away. Hakon was met by Scottish forces in October of 1263 at the Battle of Largs whose outcome, although close to a draw, is celebrated in legend as the decisive battle pushing the Vikings out of the Hebrides¹⁵. After the battle King Hakon retired to the Orkneys where he died.

Gylen Castle, whose pillage by the covenanters took the Brooch of Lorn from the MacDougalls for over a century and a half, is on its southern shore.

Kerrera forms a community with the nearby mainland, in terms of family connections, services, and commerce. Hope MacDougall of MacDougall, in her book *Kerrera - Mirror of History*, relates that the first recorded church on Kerrera was built in 1872. Before that, the people of Kerrera would cross to the mainland and walk a fair distance to the Church at Kilbride or further to the church at Kilmore. Kilbride is just on the other, north, side of Loch Feochan from Kilniver.

Kilbride

This is an old religious center. Perhaps appropriately, it is named for St. Brigit, often associated with a pre-Christian figure in Ireland. It does not apparently have the antiquity of, say, Lismore or Iona, but Catherine Gillies, Project Officer at the 1745 Dunollie House, writes¹⁶ that it was deemed important enough for King Alexander II to endow the Church of Kilbride when he was on Kerrera in 1249. Catherine Gillies argues that Alexander probably intended to move the Bishopric of

Argyll from Lismore to Kilbride. He died, as noted above, before this could be done. Kilbride has been the traditional burial place of the Chiefs of Clan MacDougall for four centuries or more.

Kilchoan

South of Kilninver can be found a number of Kilchoan place names. Kilchoan Bay lies west of Melfort in an indentation of the land in the North Westerly part of Loch Melfort. Just north of Kilchoan Bay is Loch Kilchoan and the Kilchoan Estate. There are a number of maps available on the internet that give a fair idea of the relation of Kilchoan Loch, Loch Seil, Kilninver and other places south of Oban, e.g, <http://www.trout-salmon-fishing.com/map-scotland-kilmelford-1.jpg>

There is a town of Kilchoan in the southwestern part of the Ardnamurchan peninsula, which can be seen at the top left hand corner of the Reference Map. It is located near the ruins of Mingary castle.

Names in the Landscape

Nancy Black's chapter "The McCowans of Kilninver" lists MacCowans, of every spelling, on testaments, lists of rebels, valuation rolls, rental books, lists of fencible men, etc. over the past few centuries. There are McCowans, Cowans, McCoans, McQuoan, Mcagown, McGown, McOwan, etc spread through Nether Lorn. Hope MacDougall records the, perhaps older, form of the name, Mc Illichuan, as well as MacCowan, McCowan, McCoan, on written records pertaining to Kerrera. It is interesting to see the co-existence of so many different forms of McCown in the same community.

I counted three tombstones inscribed with the name Cowan in Kilbride Cemetery, the traditional burial ground for the Chiefs of Clan MacDougall. There are, of course, McCowans in the old Kilninver cemetery. And on the high cross in Inveraray.

I cannot find a Kilchoan place name near Loch Feochan, as Alasdair Campbell describes. The nearby Kilchoans are currently to the south by Melfort and north in Ardnamurchan. I suspect that the area described in Alasdair Campbell's description of the grant to the MacEwan family is the area near Melfort. At the same time, Kilninver is on Loch Feochan and there are, indeed, MacCowans associated with the area. It is not clear where the Kilchoan mentioned by Frank Adam, and quoted above, is located.

From Scotland to North America

As the McCowns among the addressees know, there are thorny problems, related to the paucity of records, in tracing McCown origins for any extended period before the name appears in North American records.

In considering origins or location before the seventeenth century, several historical events, which are often neglected in the glare of political events like the Battle of the Boyne and Darien scheme, need to be kept in mind.

The first of these events is seven years of bad harvests in Scotland beginning in the 1693. The wretched harvests in the highlands spread to the lowlands in 1696. It is claimed that the livelihood of a fifth of the population of Scotland came to depend on begging.¹⁷ Keith Brown¹⁸ describes the period:

Aberdeen was unable even to feed its own poor with the meager handouts usually on offer, let alone the beggars who flooded into the town. Nationally the population fell by 13 percent¹⁹ due to deaths from starvation and disease related to malnutrition, a fall in the birth-rate caused by inadequate diet, and as a consequence of unusually high levels of emigration.

Large immigrations from Scotland increased significantly the, what Americans term, Scotch-Irish population of Ulster. Property prices rose sharply thereafter, presumably the result of the increased demand for land. The relatively inexpensive land in places like western Pennsylvania and western Virginia was the major factor in the immense Scotch-Irish migration to North America in the first half of the 18th century. [I recall (but I should check the numbers) that for a fraction of the cost of 15 acres of land in Ulster, one could get 300 acres in the Borden tract around Lexington VA]. As a result, In the 18th century we see McCowns arriving in North America from both Scotland and Ulster. We, of course, have records of three, William, William and Kate, that arrived in 1747 as prisoners of the '45 at Port Oxford, Maryland, to be sold as indentured servants.

The lowlands of Scotland, where in the late 18th and early 19th century the industrial revolution was in full swing, were a significant recipient of the population movement from Ulster. [In fact the movement of people, in both directions, between Scotland's west coast and Ireland has been common throughout recorded history and before.] This can be seen by the frequent appearances of McCowns in 1841, and later, censuses of Scotland that are recorded as born in Ireland and living in the lowlands of Scotland.

These events indicate that not only did a fair number of Gaels pass through Ulster on their way to North America, but their names may well have been anglicized from the Gaelic in Ireland. It is likely in that maelstrom of cultural upheaval that there was further mutation of the anglicized forms of names in both Ulster and North America – from that time through to today. All the evidence suggests, however, that the most common variations of MacCowan have their roots in Scotland.

Tòmas MacCòmhghan/Thomas Ashby McCown
Betsda, Tir-Mhàire / Bethesda, MD

¹ Some documents have yet to be posted.

² See Kenneth Jackson's "Notes on the Texts" in *The Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer*, Cambridge University Press (1972).

³ Or replacing a stop with a fricative, if you will.

⁴ A similar process transformed "servant of Saint Comgal", or GilleComgal, to Cowal, for which the Cowal peninsula lying between Loch Long and Loch Fynne is named. This derivation is commonly cited. See, for example, Kenneth Jackson *op cit*.

⁵ The "mh" nasalizes the preceding vowel so "còmh" sounds very much like the "cow" in McCown. Spoken Gaelic introduces a ghost (a glide or "svarabhakti") vowel in some consonant clusters. Spoken Gaelic would introduce a vowel sound between "cow" and "n", no matter how it was spelled. FYI, the letters k,q,v,w,x and z do not exist in the Gaelic alphabet. h is used only to show lenition in modern Gaelic. The classical Gaelic alphabet (Irish uncial script), developed from Latin script in or before the Middle Ages, uses a dot over a consonant to denote lenition.

⁶ The list of MacDougalls is interesting in that a man's name is typically given in the traditional Gaelic rendering 'x son of y son of z son of...' qualified by "alias M'Dougall". This illustrates the coexistence of traditional names with inherited surnames in the 17th century.

⁷ If Gobhain is taken to be a name in its own right, then the son of Gobhain would be MacGhobhain.

⁸ He would only hire Gaelic speaking workers. He is reputed to have had a fine voice and I have often wondered if he required the slate workers to sing as well as speak in Gaelic.

⁹ In the interest of disclosure: I have respectable DNA matches with a group of MacEwans (of various spellings) and so have a special interest in this connection. This group is not, however, one of the major groups in the Clan Ewing DNA database.

¹⁰ There are other MacEwen families as can be seen in *Notes on Clan Ewan* by Thor Ewing (2009). Thor Ewing's book describes one MacEwen line descending from the Ewan MacDougall discussed under the sections on Kerrera and Kilbride.

¹¹ Thomson, Derick in *The Companion to Gaelic Scotland* (ed. Derick S. Thomson) Basil Blackwell, 1983.

¹² *A History of Clan Campbell Volume 1*, Alastair Campbell of Airds, Unicorn Pursuivant of Arms, The Clan Campbell Education Association, 2000.

¹³ Although one of those roads will take you to the Bridge over the Atlantic and over to Seil. If you miss the turn to the Bridge you will run out of road at Ardmaddy Castle and Gardens – one of several former MacDougall castles. If you take the bus, there will be no missed turns and you will eventually arrive at the village of Ellenabeich, and, a short ferry ride away, at the island of Easdale, both with flooded slate mines and a great deal of charm.

¹⁴ The MacDonalds were supported by Edward I, in the reign of Alexander III of Scotland, in pushing their claim of land against the MacDougalls, who were trying to keep the peace in Argyll on behalf of the Scottish crown.

¹⁵ In fact, the King of Scotland ended up buying the Hebrides from the King of Norway.

¹⁶ Gillies, Catherine, "Medieval Kilbride" in *Historic Argyll No. 16*, (2011) p.21-26.

¹⁷ Goring, Rosemary in introducing Patrick Walker's description of the famine of 1698 in *Scotland – the autobiography*, The Overlook Press (2008).

¹⁸ Chapter 4, "Reformation to Union, 1560-1707", of *The New Penguin History of Scotland – From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, Edited by Houston, R.A. and Knox, W.W. (2001)

¹⁹ I have seen estimates as high as 25 percent. This seems high, but I have not done the computations myself.