

Oxford Reference

The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland

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Publisher: Oxford University Press

Print Publication Date: 2016

Print ISBN-13: 9780199677764

Published online: 2016

Current Online Version: 2016

eISBN: 9780191781797

Duncan

Variants: DONKIN, DUNKIN, DINKIN

- **Current frequencies:** GB 26163, Ireland 1577
- **GB frequency 1881:** 20316
- **Main GB location 1881:** widespread in Scotland: esp. Aberdeens
- **Main Irish location 1847–64:** Antrim; Tyrone and Donegal

1 Scottish: relationship name from the Older Scots personal name *Dunecan*, from Irish *donn* 'brown-haired man' (which has the transferred sense 'chieftain' or 'leader' + *chad* 'warrior').

Further information

This common Scottish personal name is found in Yorks and Cumb in the 12th century. Here it was probably introduced from Ireland, as also in Somerset, where the name occurs in 1086 and as a surname in the 13th century. In 1327, in Subsidy Rolls (Somerset), there are several men named *le Ireys*, and one *Irlonde*.

Early bearers

given names, England:

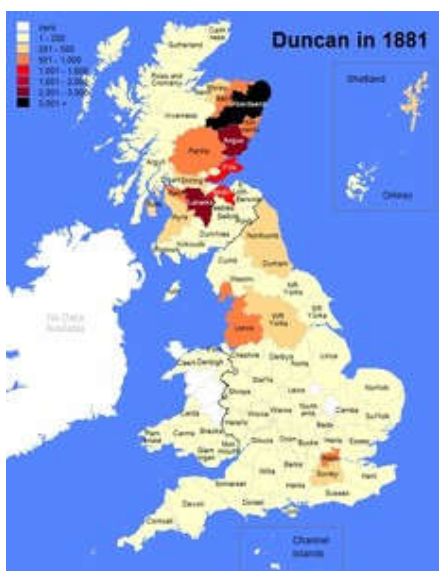
Donecan, 1086 in Domesday Book (Somerset); Dunecan', 1130 in Pipe Rolls (Wilts), 1181 in Pipe Rolls (Yorks);

surnames, England: Willelmus filius Dunecan, about 1135 in History of North Durham; Hugh Duncan, Hugh Dunkin, 1275–6 in Hundred Rolls (Lincs); Ralf Donekan, 1280 in Assize Rolls (Somerset); John Duncan, 1327, Richard Donykyn, 1327 in Subsidy Rolls (Staffs); Richard Donykyn, 1327 in Subsidy Rolls (Somerset); William Donekyn, 1332 in Subsidy Rolls (Sussex); John Duncan, 1367 in Scotland Calendar (Berwick upon Tweed, Northumb); Richard Donkin, 1674 in Hearth Tax (Suffolk).

given names, Scotland: Dunchad, 11th abbot of Iona, 717 in Life of Saint Columba; Duchad, abbot of Dunkeld, about 965 in Chronicles of Picts and Scots; Donchadus, earl of Fife, about 1150 in Book of Deer.

surnames, Scotland: Willelmus filius Duuecani, about 1200 in North Berwick Charters; John Duncan, 1367 in Scotland Calendar (Berwick); Janet Duncan, 1562 in IGI (Dunfermline, Fife); Thomas Duncan, 1565 in IGI (Monifieth, Angus); Johne Duncan, 1570 in IGI (Perth, Perthshire); Daid Duncan, 1573 in IGI (Aberdeen, Aberdeens); Johne Duncan, 1574 in IGI (Edinburgh, Midlothian); Catrein Dunckane, 1643 in IGI (Leith, Midlothian); Hellin Dunckan, 1667 in IGI (Kingsbarns, Fife).

2 Irish: in Ireland, adopted for **Ó Duinnchinn** 'descendant of *Donncheann*', a byname from *donn* 'brown-haired man' or 'chieftain' + *ceann* 'head'.



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Duncan, 1881 frequency.

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