

# Oxford Reference

## The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland

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## McDonald

**Variants:** DONALD

- **Current frequencies:** GB 74967, Ireland 8259
- **GB frequency 1881:** 48170
- **Main GB location 1881:** widespread in Scotland: esp. Highlands and Islands
- **Main Irish location 1847–64:** widespread: esp. Laois

Scottish Gaelic, Irish, Manx: relationship name from *Mac Dhomhnaill* 'son of *Domhnall*'. *Donald* is an anglicized form of this personal name. It is equivalent to Manx CANNELL and Irish McDONELL and McCONNELL.

### Further information:

This is the name of the largest and most disparate of the Scottish clans (Clan Donald), associated in particular with the Hebrides and claiming descent from Domhnall mac Raghnaill mac Somhairle, who, charter evidence confirms, lived in the late 12th century. From that time until 1493 the head of the clan was known as Lord (or King) of the Isles. The reigns of the Lords of the Isles were always stormy, often in conflict with the kings of Scotland, and peppered with disasters. After a series of defeats in the 1480s, Eoin Mac Dhomhnaill a Ille (John Macdonald of Islay, Earl of Ross and Lord of the Isles) forfeited his lands, his power, and his title as Lord of the Isles in 1493 to King James IV of Scotland.

### Early bearers:

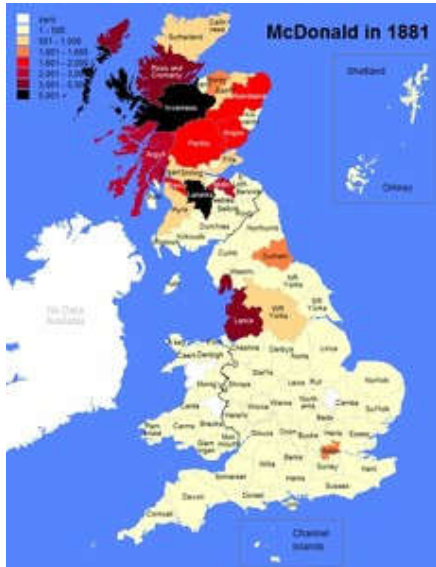
#### Scotland:

Alexander MacDonald of the Isles, 1274–92 in Paisley Register (Paisley, Renfrews); David Mc Donald, 1652 in IGI (Petty, Inverness); Bessie Mackdonald, 1670 in IGI (Leith, Midlothian); George Mackdonald, 1674 in IGI (Tranent, E Lothian); John Mc Donald, 1686 in IGI (Drainie, Morays); Agnes Mc Donald, 1690 in IGI (Dingwall, Ross and Cromarty); Janet Mc Donald, 1693 in IGI (Auldearn, Nairns).

**Ireland:** Hewe boy McDonalde, 1585 in Fiants Elizabeth §4579.

### References:

W. D. H. Sellar (2000), 'Hebridean Sea-Kings: The Successors of Somerled, 1164–1316', in E. J. Cowan and R. A. McDonald (eds), *Alba: Celtic Scotland in the Medieval Era*. Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press.



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McDonald, 1881 frequency.

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