

A
SCOTTISH FAMILY
IN
ENGLAND



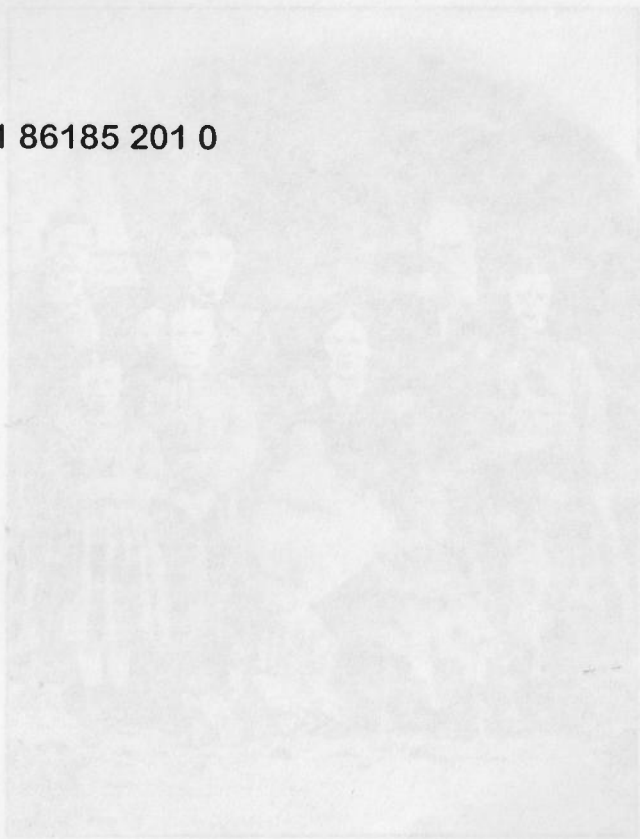
JOHN MACKETH

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JOHN MACKEITH

A Scottish Family in England

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INTRODUCTION

The idea for this booklet came from the research which I carried out into the MacKeith family's involvement in medical and health care and which I have already written up. I became interested in the family generally and did further research, in particular into William and Margaret MacKeith and their children, whose picture is on the cover. Inevitably there is more about the men than the women, since so many women's lives were home based and so have gone largely unrecorded.

One of the interesting aspects of the story is that there are some common threads which go through the generations. Apart from the obvious one of interest in medicine and health care, there are Christian names which have been handed on, such as Donald, Isabel and John. There are also common interests. For example, I discovered, shortly after compiling a leaflet listing all the sources of health care in Sunderland, that my grandfather, Alexander, had done a similar exercise in Southampton about 70 years earlier.

Most chapters have a section 'Now' about what has happened to properties with which members of the family have been associated. This was the situation at the time, October, 1999, when this was written, but things may well have changed.

During my earlier research I gathered a great deal more information about Alexander's sons, who went into medicine: Malcolm, Norman, Stephen and Ronald, than I could include in that earlier booklet. It seemed not to fit into this part of the story, but I would be happy to make it available to anyone interested.

I want to acknowledge the help which I have received from various members of the family and, in particular, from Alastair MacKeith for information about earlier members and about the family home at Ruskie. I have included some abbreviated family trees to go with certain sections, but for a more comprehensive version of the family tree, the one which Andrew MacKeith produces gives a fuller picture.

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CHAPTER 1 ORIGINS

The MacKeiths from whom we are descended came from central Scotland from the area west of Stirling and adjacent to the part called the Trossachs. The earliest known MacKeith ancestor was John McKiech (there were various spellings of the name until it settled to its present one around the middle of the last century). He was born in 1707 and lived at Drunkie in a croft called Balinluig, which was just south of Invertrossachs House on the southern shore of Loch Venachar and a few miles north west of Ruskie – which became the family home. He was a servant or tenant of John Buchan, a landowner in those parts. John married a Katharine McGrigor and both he and his father-in-law, Alexander, are said to have fought for the Jacobite cause – he at the battle of Falkirk in 1746 and Alexander at the battle of Prestonpans in 1745. It has been suggested that the McKiechs might have been MacGregors who changed their name when it became proscribed because of their support for the cause, but there is no proof of that.

HOW WE CAME INTO PROPERTY

The story of how the MacKeiths came to own Damside (later known as Burnside) at Ruskie is interesting and quite romantic. The tradition is that one dark and stormy night a young lad called Peter Graham knocked at John McKiech's door and asked for shelter; he was known in the family as "the orphan in the storm". John and his wife took him in and he lived with them for some time. Years later, after he had left the McKiechs, he went to the West Indies and made his fortune there. He seems to have been a trader and may well have been involved in the slave trade. He returned to Scotland in 1774 and shortly afterwards bought Damside, which he gave to John McKiech in 1782 in gratitude for the kindness shown to him.

RUSKIE

Ruskie, the hamlet in which Damside was situated, lies on the A873, about 12 miles west of Stirling. It is in the parish of the Port of Menteith, the village about 3 miles to the west, which lies on the Lake of Menteith, the only lake in Scotland, the others all being lochs. Ruskie lies at the foot of low hills to the north and to the south looks over Flanders Moss, a flat and boggy land, to the Fintry Hills. A stream, the Rusky burn, flows through the hamlet. Ruskie is in good farming country and for years a ploughing competition was held there. There was a village school with a schoolhouse on the other side of the road to Damside, and in early years there had been a smithy and a mill.

DAMSIDE

Damside consisted of a house and 5½ acres and lay on the north side of the road; with the property went land consisting of six fields each of about four acres up and alongside the burn. The house was built in 1745 and had been owned by a family called Fisher; it may have initially been an inn. It was called Damside because the burn had been dammed just above it to provide a regular supply of water to the mill further down stream. The name was later changed to Burnside because a member of the family did not care for the name, Damside.

EARLY ANCESTORS

The first John died at Damside in 1800 at the good age of 93; his wife, Katharine, predeceased him by 15 years. They were both buried at Kilmahog, a few miles away, outside Callendar. John had two sons, Donald and Peter; all that is recorded of Peter is that he was a sailor and there is no further information about him or his family.

In the earlier part of his life Donald McKiech lived in the Drunkie area and moved to Damside when it was given to the family.

He had eight children, of whom the first six were born at Drunkie and the last two at Damside. His second son, the one born after the gift of the property, was called Peter Graham, presumably after the family's benefactor.

Having come into property, the family seem to have become minor gentry. Donald took part in meetings of the Heritors of the parish. This body consisted of the gentry, i.e. land-owning people of the parish, and was responsible for the upkeep of the church and school and any other significant business of the parish. Subsequently Donald's son, John, was also a Heritor and sometimes appointed someone to attend meetings on his behalf. He was also allocated a specific pew in the parish church; although it was a lowly one, it was better than being in a general pew allocated to tenants. This second John was also given the responsibility of being an enumerator, i.e. the person making the count, for his part of the parish for the first census, which took place in 1841. He himself is listed as being an agriculturist, indicating that he was farming in a serious way.

JOHN MCKIECH AND HIS FAMILY

This second John was born in 1779 to Donald and Margaret McKiech; Margaret was a McGrigor, like her mother-in-law, Katharine. Although he was born at Drunkie, the family moved not many years later to Ruskie, where he will have gone to school. He presumably helped his father on the land. In 1812 he married Jean McEwan, who came from the same parish. They had two sons, Donald, born in 1815 and William, born in 1816. Jean died in 1818 and John married for a second time in 1830, Isabel McColl, who was also from the parish. They had seven children, four daughters and three sons, although there is no official record of one son, William, who is supposed to have drowned. The youngest daughter, Janet or Jessie, was born three weeks after John died in 1842; it appears to be her name which is carved on the glass of a window at Lower or Wester Tarr, the farm diagonally across the road and burn to Damside, where they lived.

Of their three sons, only one, Alexander, married. He moved to Glasgow and became a tea-selling agent. Of Alexander's sons, three, John, Thornton and William Alexander followed in the tea business. There are descendants of William, who still carry the family name, as

well as John's son, Alexander (Sandy).

LATER HISTORY OF DAMSIDE

The story of the ownership and occupation of the house is complicated by the fact that those who owned it mostly did not live there. The first John gave the property to his son, Donald, a few months after he was given it. When Donald died in 1826, aged 84, the property passed to *his* son, John, and he lived instead at Lower Tarr. So Damside was occupied by John's younger brother and sister, Alexander and Mary. On John's death it passed to his eldest son, Donald. He never lived in it, but retained the ownership until two years before his death; he sold it in 1877 to his half brother, Alexander. Some time in the 1860s, Alexander's mother, Isobel, went to live there with her unmarried son and daughter, John and Helen. Finally ownership of what was now called Burnside passed to Alexander's son, John, and it was his widow, Christine, who was the last MacKeith to live there.

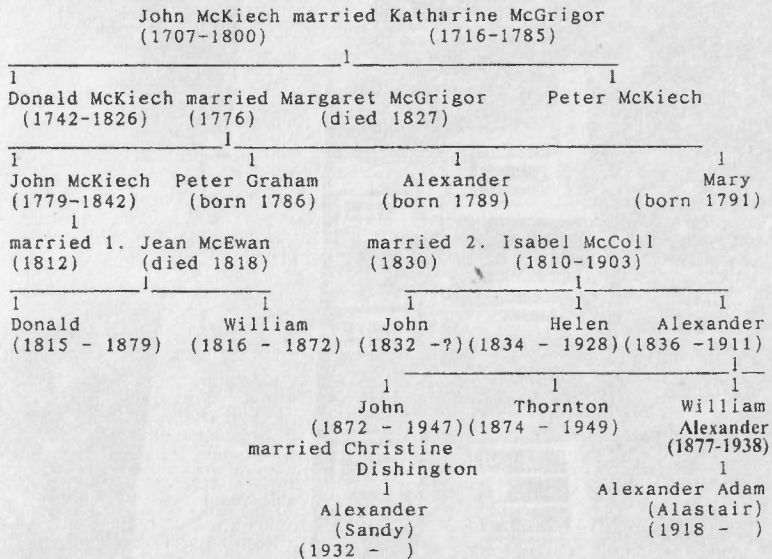
NOW

Burnside is now owned by the Sheppards, the family of the former Bishop of Liverpool, who are related to the Grahams, a local large land-owning family. Lower Tarr is still a farm and takes people for bed and breakfast. The school is now closed, but the building is used as a hall by organisations such as the Rural Institute (the Scottish equivalent of the Women's Institute).

The tombstone of the graves of the first John and his wife, Katharine, can still be seen at the graveyard at Kilmahog. Although there must be graves of other early members of the family there as well, these can not now be found.

William Alexander's son, Alastair, has described Burnside and his memories of the place very fully in his memoirs. He is one of a number of descendants of the second John McKiech, by his wife, Isabel, who still bear the family name.

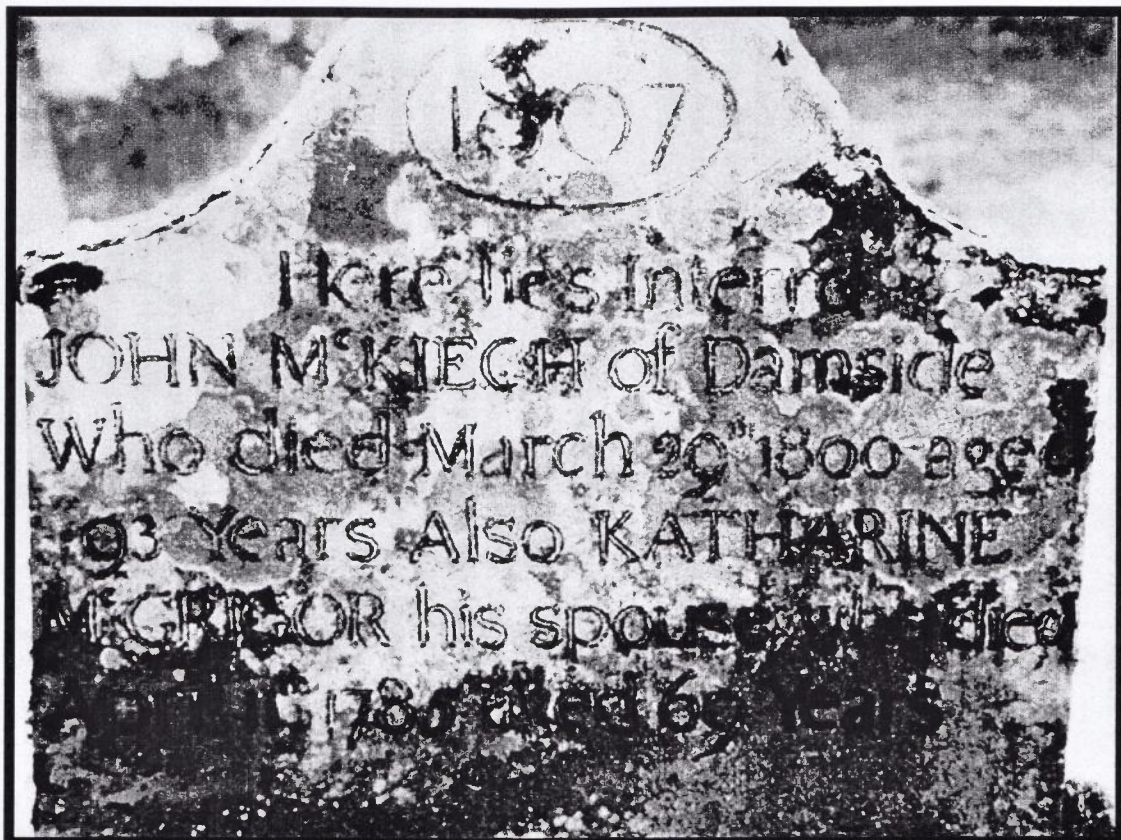
FAMILY TREE 1



This family tree is not complete, but only shows those people who are mentioned in the text.



Damside, later known as Burnside, the family home for over 200 years.



Tombstone of John McKiech, to whom Damside was given, and his wife, Katharine, in the cemetery at Kilmahog, near Callendar.

CHAPTER 2

DONALD MACKEITH AND HIS FAMILY

John McKiech and Jean McEwan had two sons, Donald and William, both of whom became doctors. It is not known why they went into the medical profession. Presumably their father, owning land, would have the means to pay their fees, but why they (or he) chose medicine is not clear.

Donald would appear to have been bright academically. He matriculated in 1828, at the age of 12 or 13, at the University of Glasgow; the entry in the Matriculation Album reads "*Donaldus McKiech filius natu maximus joannis Agricolae in com de Perth*". He graduated with both medical and surgical qualifications in 1835, still being less than twenty years of age; his brother, William, by contrast, initially only obtained a surgical qualification.

AT SANDHURST

It is not known what Donald did in the early years after qualifying. The first record of him is in the Medical Directory of 1847, where he is listed as being a general practitioner living at The Green at Sandhurst in Kent. It was not uncommon in those days for doctors qualifying in Scottish universities to come south, since there were far more medical graduates there than there were opportunities for practising medicine. Why he chose that particular part of England is also not known. Sandhurst was a relatively prosperous village on the road from London to Rye on the western boundary of Kent. He remained at Sandhurst until his death in 1879. During this time Donald seems to have lived in more than one place, including on The Green in the centre of the village and in a house called Sharp's Hill (now called Bayford House) on the outskirts.

WORKING FOR THE POOR LAW

In addition to his work as a general practitioner in the village, for some of the time that he was in Sandhurst Donald worked as a medical officer for the poor of a neighbouring parish, Bodiam. Arrangements for the poor were governed by Boards of Guardians for a particular group of parishes, in this case the Ticehurst Union (group of parishes). He was appointed in 1859 and his full title was Medical Officer and Vaccinator; he had a problem at first, in convincing the authorities that his Scottish qualifications were valid. His work involved attending the poor (other than those in the workhouse, who had a separate doctor) in their homes when requested by the Poor Law officials. This kind of appointment was often taken up by doctors wishing to supplement their income and establish themselves in their community. Donald's brother, William, had a similar post, as did William's three sons who became doctors, although two of them subsequently gave up this work when they became established.

The parish of Bodiam, which is famous for its moated castle, is quite small and Donald got the job because there was no doctor living in the parish, a normal requirement for Poor Law appointments. It meant that he had to be re-appointed each year. During the time that he held the post, his pay increased from £6:10:0 to £10, which was not much, even for those times. In 1860 he was offered the post of Medical Officer for Salehurst, a larger parish with a higher salary, but he declined.

THE HARMERS

Two men, a father and son, played a prominent part in Donald's life at Sandhurst. William Harmer was the proprietor and superintendent of a small private lunatic asylum, North Grove House, at Hawkhurst, the nearest town. His son, William Milsted Harmer, became a doctor and joint proprietor of the asylum. It is described in the local Post Office Directory as being 'for the care and treatment of the upper and middle classes mentally afflicted and convalescents'. In 1864, i.e. before William Milsted had completed his

training as a doctor, Donald became Visiting Medical Attendant.

However he ceased to hold this position in 1866 and this would appear to have been as a result of a disagreement. Donald's brother, William, had now moved south to practise in the neighbouring parish of Hurst Green and had applied for a medical officer post. Dr Harmer also applied for the same post and was successful. Donald would seem to have taken offence and to have resigned both from being Visiting Medical Attendant at the private lunatic asylum and also from his medical officer post, which he held with the same Board of Guardians which had turned down his brother. Dr Harmer's appointment then lapsed because he was unable to buy a property in Hurst Green and William was appointed instead; later, in 1870, Donald was re-appointed Medical Officer for Bodiam. Subsequently Dr Harmer bought a property at Field Green in Sandhurst and it is interesting to note that it was he who signed Donald's death certificate in 1879.

DONALD'S FAMILY

In 1854 Donald married Harriet Relf, who came from the nearby village of Benenden and had been a servant in his house. They had six children, of whom the youngest, Alfred, died in infancy. Their two other sons, John, born in 1855 and William, born in 1857, both studied medicine at the University of Glasgow, but neither qualified. John died in 1880 at Gravesend while working as a medical assistant. William Donald worked in Sheffield for a while, then moved to London and lived there until the mid 1890s, when he moved to Glasgow. He called himself variously 'doctor of medicine' and 'medical student' and so must also have practised as a kind of medical assistant. He married Emily Kate Arthur in Southampton in 1893 at the same church, St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, as was attended by his cousin, Alexander, and his family when they moved there seven years later. They had three children, Marjorie, Kathleen Donald and John Mayhew, none of whom married. Kathleen was still living in the house in Govan in Glasgow which had belonged to her parents until a few years ago.

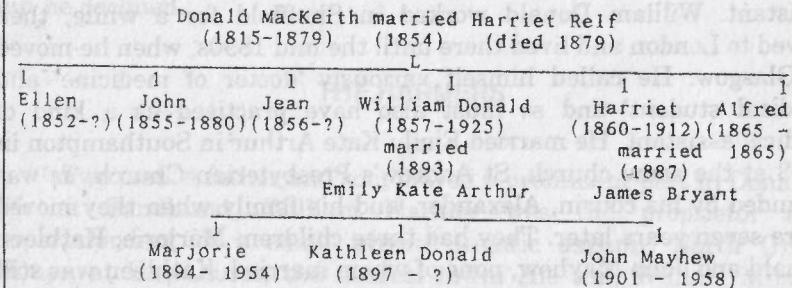
Of Donald's three daughters, little is known. Ellen, the eldest, was still living at Sandhurst in 1881 about two years after her parents' deaths; she was the only one who appears to have been still

there then. Jean, the next eldest, was the one who was granted administration of her father's estate on his death; it is not known whether either she or Ellen married or what became of them. Harriet, the youngest, married James Bryant at Edmonton in London in 1887.

NOW

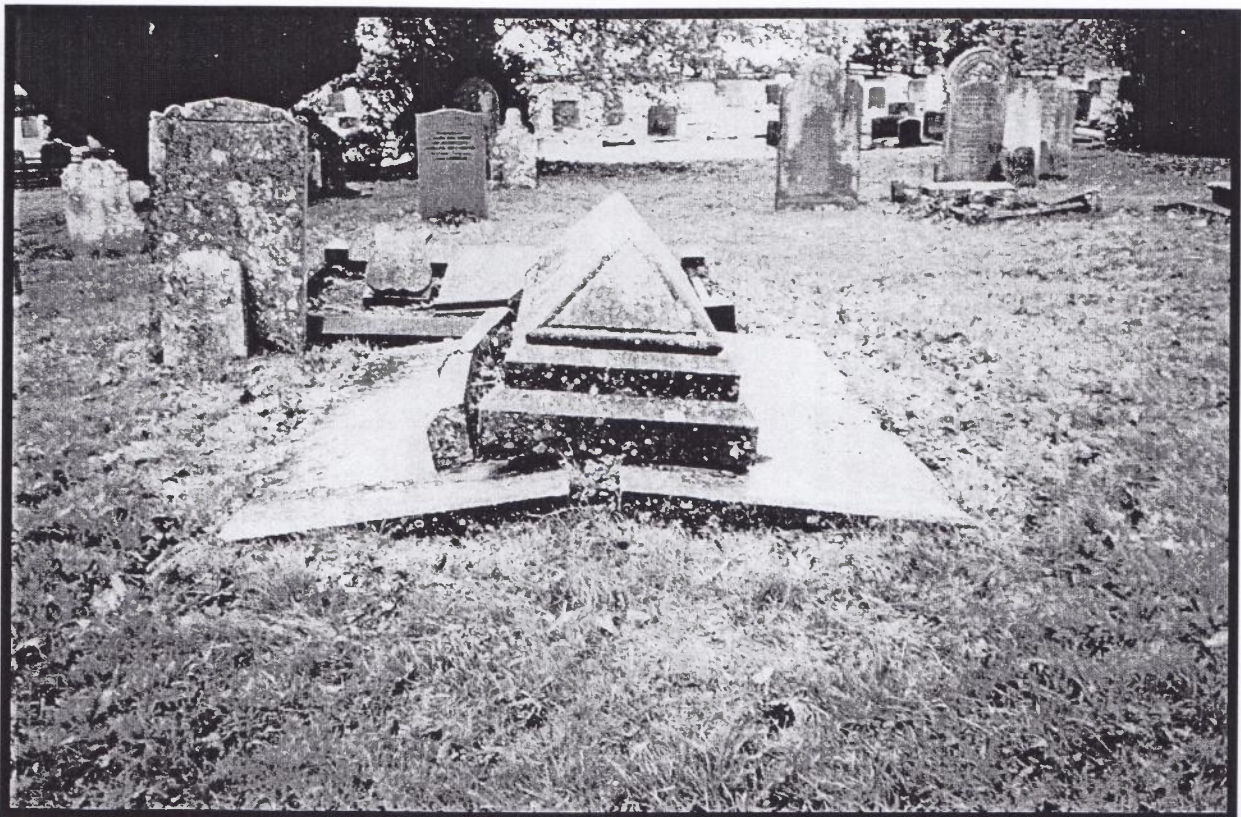
The house in which Donald and his family lived for about ten years, Sharp's Hill (now Bayford House) can still be seen on the edge of the village on the road to Hawkhurst. It is not possible to determine where they lived on The Green. All that is left of North Grove House private lunatic asylum are a gatepost and some stables; a patient is supposed to have burnt the place down. Donald and Harriet are buried in the graveyard of the parish church in a prominent position near the west end of the church, although the gravestone is falling into disrepair. Donald's great-great granddaughter, Mary, a descendant of his daughter, Harriet, has kept the family name as a second name; her husband is also researching the family history.

FAMILY TREE 2





Bayford House at Sandhurst in Kent, previously called Sharp's Hill, where Donald MacKeith and his family lived for some years.



Donald and Harriet MacKeith's tombstone in the graveyard at Sandhurst Church.

CHAPTER 3

WILLIAM MACKEITH

William MacKeith was born on April 6th, 1816 and baptised on May 6th; he will presumably have gone to school at Ruskie. There is no record of him matriculating at the University of Glasgow, but that was not a requirement in order to become a doctor. He graduated with a surgical qualification in 1838; it seems to have been perfectly acceptable to practise without a medical qualification, although years later he made good the deficiency. What he did in the early years following qualifying is not known; at the time of the 1841 census he was living at his father's home at Ruskie.

AT BUCHLYVIE

The first record of William working as a doctor is of his being appointed in January, 1847 to visit the paupers resident in the western district of the parish of Kippen. The parish lies to the south of Ruskie and the area for which William was responsible was centred on Buchlyvie, a village about 12 miles south west of Ruskie. There is further reference later in the year to his being offered to give medical attendance and medicines to the paupers in the same area.

He seems to have set up practice as a surgeon at Buchlyvie. In the 1851 census he is recorded as lodging at the house of Helen Haldane, a stocking knitter. In 1854 he married and there is reference a few years later to him renting a property consisting of a house and garden from a David Harvey.

MARGARET MCGHIE

On July 11th, 1854 William married Margaret McGhie at Offrance in the parish of Drymen. The 1851 census lists the house as Offrance Moss and it lay to the north of Buchlyvie, but in Drymen parish, whereas Buchlyvie lay in Kippen parish. Margaret and William were married in her parents' home, just as their son,

William Donald, was later married in his bride's home. Margaret's father, William, was a tile manufacturer; in 1851 he was employing 8 labourers and so had a small business. At that date Margaret was no longer living at home and was probably locally in service.

There is a mystery about her date of birth. The birth certificate of her first child, Jane, records her as having been born in the parish of Barony in Glasgow. Reference to her age in censuses and on her death certificate would put her as being born around 1835, but there is no reference in the Barony parish records of a birth of someone with that name around that time. However there is a Margaret McGhie born on the 22nd November, 1824. What makes it likely that it was her is that the mother's name was Isabel Gilmour, which was the name which William and Margaret gave to their second daughter, in the same way that they gave their second son the name, John, after William's father. (Their first daughter and son were named after William's mother and Margaret's father respectively). Why Margaret should give her age as 10 years younger than it really was is not clear.

Four children were born to them while they were living at Buchlyvie: Jane McEwan in 1855, William Donald in 1856, Isabella Gilmour in 1858 and Mary in 1860. Later that year or in the early part of 1861 they left Buchlyvie. There was considerable difficulty in finding a replacement for William as surgeon and a public meeting was held with people protesting at the inconvenience of having to go elsewhere to be seen; a replacement was eventually found.

AT HURST GREEN

The 1861 census records William, Margaret and their four children as living at Hurst Green in the parish of Salehurst in East Sussex. Obviously they had moved there because Donald and his family were living just a few miles away at Sandhurst over the county boundary in Kent. Donald presumably knew that there was an opening for a doctor at this village.

Hurst Green lies on the London to Hastings road, which is in fact called London Road. Another road runs at right angles from the centre of the village to the west and had a turnpike. At that time it was called Turnpike Road, but it is now called Station Road, as it leads to the nearest station. In the 1860s Hurst Green was a thriving

farming community with a number of shops.

William and his family initially lived in London Road at No 85, a quite small terrace house. It is possible to identify it from early photographs; on one side there was a butcher and on the other a horsekeeper. The next child, Margaret Anne, was born in 1862 and, presumably because the house was too small, they then moved to a property in Turnpike Road; it is not possible to identify where they lived, but it was probably in one of a row of cottages on the south side of the road. Here four further children were born: John in 1864, Alexander Arthur in 1866, Catherine McGrigor in 1868 and Donald George in 1870. An interesting insight into the family's church associations is a note written by Thomas Alexander, M.A., the minister at Belgrave Square Presbyterian Church at Belgrave Square in London, certifying that he had baptised Alexander on December 4th, 1866 (when he was about nine months old) at his house. The 1871 census records them all, except for Jane, who, at the age of nearly 16, was probably working in service at a house nearby.

WILLIAM AS A POOR LAW DOCTOR

The chapter on Donald referred to William's initially unsuccessful application for a medical officer post.

When Dr Harmer failed to buy a property in Hurst Green and so qualify himself to be appointed Medical Officer there, the vestry, i.e. the leading persons of the parish, recommended that William be appointed and the Board of Guardians accepted their recommendation. In April, 1867 he was appointed Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator at a salary of £40, plus extras, which meant payment for medicines and special procedures, such as attending a birth, certifying a lunatic or treating a fracture. William had already obtained the qualification of Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh in 1866, a qualification in medicine, presumably to prepare himself for a Poor Law medical officer post, which required doctors to have qualifications in both surgery and medicine. He appears to have been a man of principle about his work. On one occasion he wrote to the chairman of the Board of Guardians asking his opinion on whether he should attend a pauper, who was already being attended by another doctor. On another occasion he wrote to the Board concerning the lack of certification of the nature of

paupers' diseases by other doctors.

WILLIAM'S DEATH

William died on 8th April, 1872. His death was reported in the Sussex Express: "On Monday, the 8th instant, Mr Wm MacKeith, surgeon of this place, was taken ill about eight a.m. and expired about eleven a.m. Deceased was greatly respected and we believe his death will be severely felt by the inhabitants of the village. He has, we hear, been suffering with a diseased heart for some time past". William's body was taken back to Scotland and interred at the graveyard used by the family at Kilmahog near Callendar.

Margaret MacKeith was left to bring up nine children on her own and decided to return to her home area, so within two or three years of William's death, she went back to Scotland to live in Glasgow.

NOW

85 London Road, Hurst Green is now part of the village post office and shop. The record of William's (and Donald's) employment as Poor Law medical officers can be seen in the minutes of the Ticehurst Union Board of Guardians at the East Sussex archives at Lewes. Hurst Green has an active historical society, as well as a specialist family history researcher.

FAMILY TREE 3							
William MacKeith (1816-1872)				married Margaret McGhie (1854) (?1824-1909)			
1							
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Jane McEwan b.1855	William Donald b.1856	Isabella Gilmour b.1858	Mary b.1860	Margaret Anne b.1862	John b.1864	Alexander Arthur b.1866	1 1
				1		1	
				Catherine Macgrigor b.1868		Donald George b.1870	



Margaret and William MacKeith and their family taken about 1870. Back row from left to right: Isabella, William, Jane and William Donald. Middle row: John, Margaret with baby Donald, Mary and daughter Margaret. In front: Catherine and Alexander.



London Road, Hurst Green, Sussex. The second house on the left, to the right of the first bay window, is where Margaret and William MacKeith lived when they first moved from Scotland.

CHAPTER 4

MACKEITHS IN GLASGOW

When Margaret MacKeith and her nine children arrived in Glasgow in about 1873, she had to set about finding accommodation and making arrangements for the children's schooling and, in the case of the boys, for their higher education. Initially they lived in New City Road, just to the northwest of the city centre. Then towards the end of the 1870s they moved to a terraced house in Hill Street, further in to the centre. This had been rented by Alexander MacKeith, William's stepbrother, and his family, and it would appear that Margaret took over the tenancy from them. They were not there long and during the next ten years lived in three different tenement buildings all to the northwest of the city centre in the area in which Margaret had been born.

There were two deaths in the family during the time that they were living in New City Road. First Donald George, the youngest son, died in 1875 at the age of 4½ of TB. Then in 1878 Jane MacEwan, the eldest daughter died at the age of 22. Also during this time, in 1874, the eldest son, William Donald, started studying medicine. One of the reasons for living in this particular area of the city was to be near the university; the properties in which they lived were ever closer to the university and the last one which they occupied was a tenement in Westbank Quadrant on the very edge of the university campus.

In order to make ends meet and to pay for, and save up for, medical school fees, the children had to work from an early age. The 1881 census shows that Margaret, at the age of 18, was a teacher and that John and Alexander, at 17 and 15 respectively, were both working as clerks; Alexander is known to have worked in a solicitor's office.

AT MEDICAL SCHOOL

At that time, although there were a few women studying medicine, it was not generally accepted that women should train to

be doctors, and so it was only the sons in the family who went to medical school. After William Donald had started studying in 1874, his brothers, John and Alexander, followed in 1881 and 1882. They all took preliminary examinations to gain admittance to the university and became registered with the General Medical Council as students before starting their course. It was at this time, too, that Donald's sons, John and William Donald, also started studying. John entered in 1875 and studied until 1879, but never took any exams. William Donald (not to be confused with William's son of the same name) started studying in 1877 and it is not known when he gave up. What contact they had with Margaret and her family is also not known.

William Donald (William's son) started studying at the age of 18, John at 17 and Alexander at 16. There are records of their examination results. William Donald seems to have been referred on two occasions, but to have passed at the second sitting both times. In the record of John's exams there is a note to the first professional examination; "report to Senate - caught copying", but he passed and so must have been cleared; he seems to have had no further problems. Alexander seems to have passed all his exams first time.

William Donald passed his third and final exams in July, 1879 and graduated on 30th July. He was registered officially with the General Medical Council in 1880. John finished his exams in July, 1885 and also graduated on 30th July; he was registered just three months later. Alexander completed his exams in July, 1886, but was not able to graduate until March of the next year, when he became 21; he was registered in September later in the year.

AFTER MEDICAL SCHOOL

After qualifying William Donald appears to have gone to practise in the area of south Northumberland around Blanchland and Riding Mill. John spent a short time in practice at Etwall in Derbyshire and at Wickham Market in Suffolk. Alexander worked as a ship's doctor, making two journeys to India there and back, for about a year before he was able to practise formally as a doctor.

THE REST OF THE FAMILY

Of the surviving daughters, two married. Isabella, the eldest, was married in 1880 to the Rev. Charles Barton at St Mary's Episcopal Church in Glasgow. Catherine, the youngest, was married in the same church 17 years later to Henry Gadd, whom she had met while helping to look after her brother, Alexander, in Exeter. Mary, at the time of the 1881 census, was not at home with the rest of the family and, at the age of 21, was probably already in service or working as a companion. Margaret, having taught for a number of years, went to Exeter to help look after Alexander and died there. Catherine will have probably lived with her mother after she returned from looking after Alexander when he married until her marriage in 1897. By that time her mother had Gracie, William Donald's daughter, living with her, following the death of her parents. She also attended Glasgow University and studied arts subjects. When Gracie graduated in the 1900s, Margaret MacKeith went south to live with her son, Alexander, and his family in Southampton, where she died in 1909.

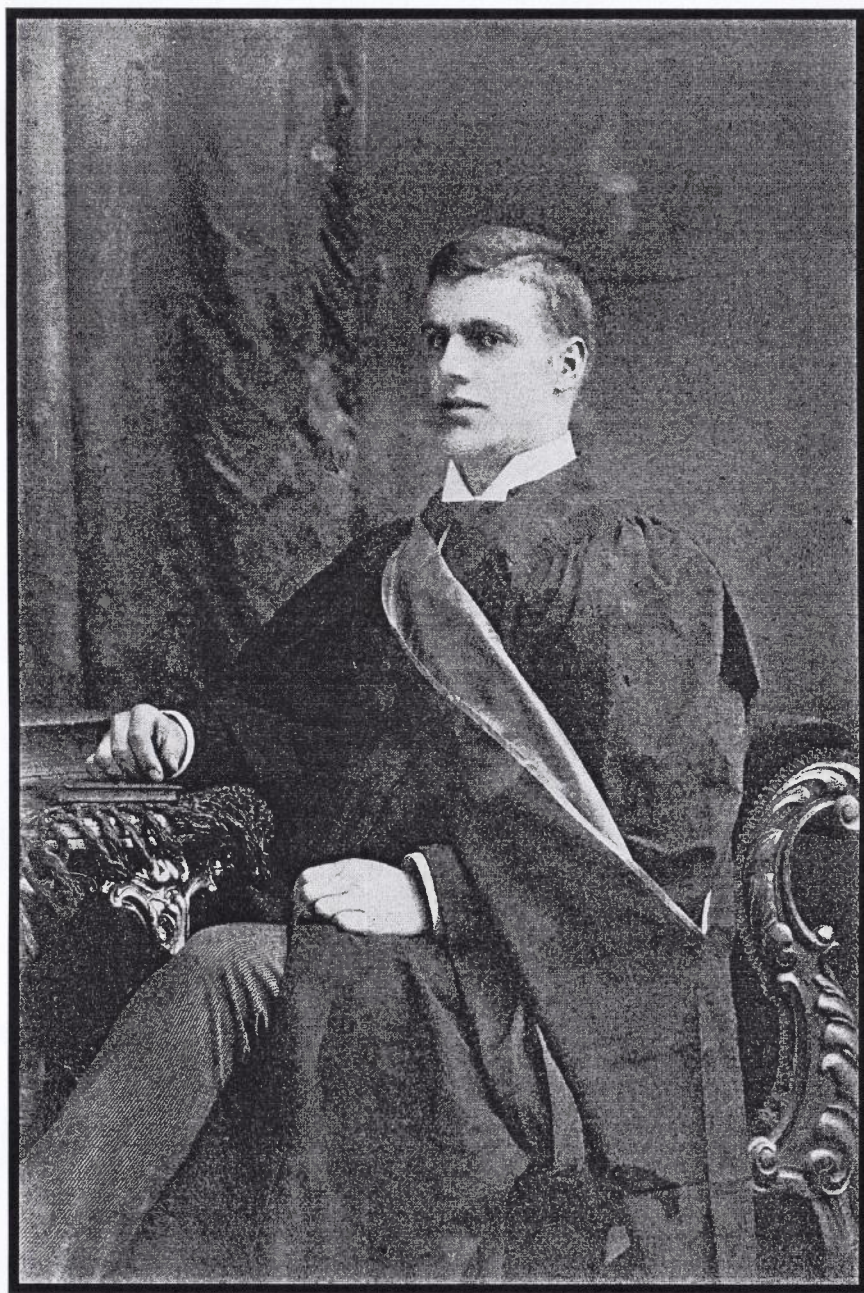
OTHER MACKEITHS IN GLASGOW

In addition to Margaret MacKeith and her family and Donald's two sons, there were other MacKeiths living in Glasgow at this time. Alexander, William's stepbrother, was a tea merchant and lived at Hill Street in the centre of Glasgow after he was married in 1871. He and his family subsequently moved to Douglas Street, also in the centre. This Alexander was very involved in Christian evangelistic and charitable work and was for some years paid to do this full time. His working offices were at Howard Street near the river. A street in the south east of the city at Bridgeton was named after him. His son, Thornton, also worked in the tea business in Glasgow.

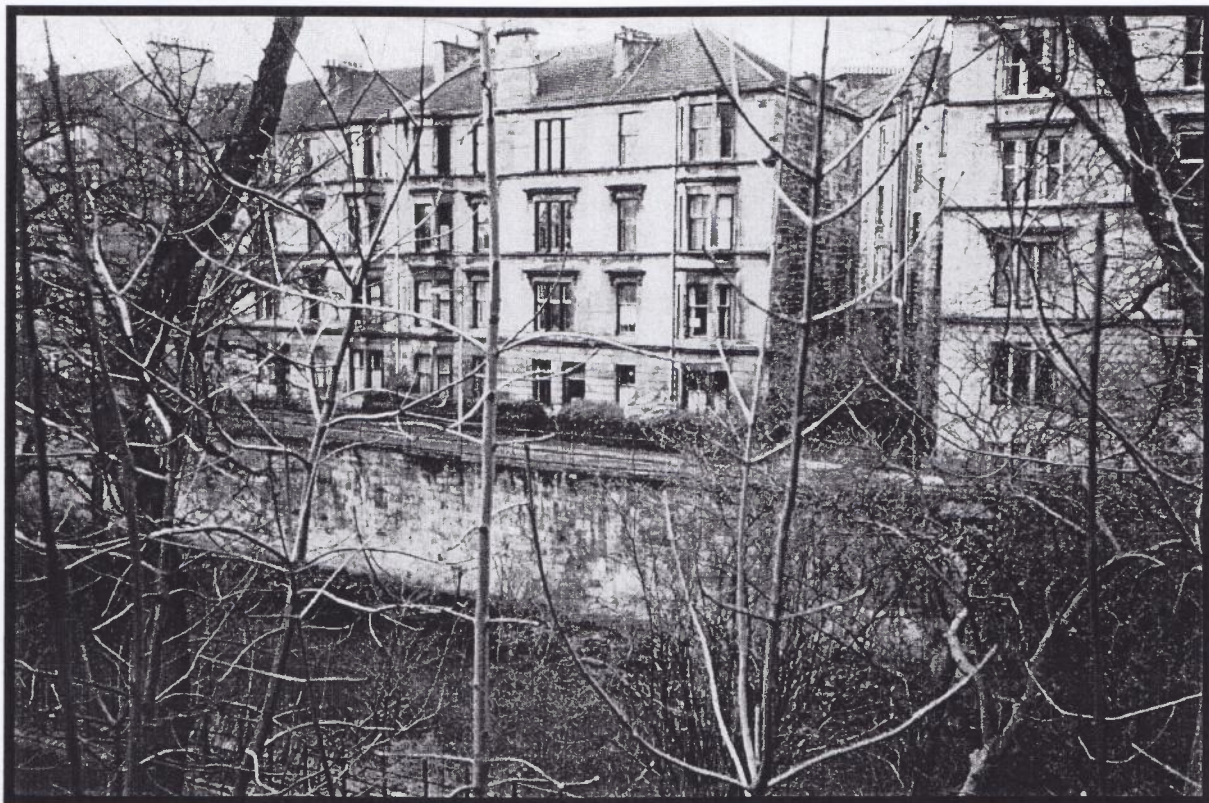
Alexander MacKeith on graduation from Glasgow
University in 1887.

NOW

Most of the tenement buildings in which Margaret MacKeith and her family lived, with the exception of the first one in New City Road, are still standing. They are large grey, rather dismal buildings, although the last one in Westbank Quadrant has a pleasant outlook over Kelvingrove Park. St Mary's Episcopal Church in Great Western Road is now a cathedral. The movements of the family can be traced from Post Office Directories, valuation rolls and voters rolls of the period. The university still has the matriculation and examination records and there is still a MacKeith Street.



Alexander MacKeith on graduation from Glasgow University in 1887.



Westbank Quadrant in Glasgow overlooking the river Kelvin, the last tenement in which Margaret MacKeith and her family lived.

CHAPTER 5

WILLIAM DONALD

William Donald was born on 13th September, 1856 at Buchlyvie in Stirlingshire, where his father, William, was practising as a doctor. He was William and Margaret's eldest son, the eldest daughter, Jane, being just 18 months older than him. When he was about four, the family moved south to Hurst Green in Sussex and he will have gone to school there. His father died in 1872, when he was 15½ years old and some time in the next two years Margaret and her family moved to Glasgow.

As the eldest son, there must have been pressure on him to help provide for the family of nine. He entered medical school at the University of Glasgow in 1874 when he was 18. He had some problems in passing his exams and was twice referred, but he passed his finals in July, 1879 and became registered as a doctor the following year. He appears to have worked first in south Northumberland in the area round Blanchland and Riding Mill not far from Hexham, because it was from there that he applied for the post of Parochial Medical Officer for Kirkmabreck in south-west Scotland.

CREETOWN

Kirkmabreck was the district centred on the small town of Creetown in the county of Kirkcudbrightshire. The name is that of an ancient settlement just south of Creetown and the district was a large rural one covering many square miles of wild countryside. Creetown itself was a small fishing port on the estuary of the Cree. Another feature of the district was the granite quarries, the stone of which was famous for its quality.

PAROCHIAL MEDICAL OFFICER

William Donald was appointed Parochial Medical Officer out of

six candidates in October 1880 at a salary of £35 per annum inclusive of medicines. He stayed as a lodger at the house of John Kelly, a butcher, in St John Street, the town's main street. He made half-yearly reports on the health of the parish and there seems to have been little bad health among the paupers who were his responsibility. On one occasion he was paid £2:9:6 for granting a certificate of lunacy to two paupers.

MARRIAGE

In 1882 William Donald married Janet, known as Jessie, Sloan at her home, Cuill, north of Creetown. (It was sometimes the practice in those days for marriages to take place at the bride's home). Cuill was a large farm of 5,000 acres rented by the family. Jessie's father, Alexander, had farmed it, but he had died by the time she married. The 1881 census showed her mother, Grace, as being the farmer, living there with six daughters and various servants and farm hands; later Alexander junior (presumably a son) held the tenancy. Jessie appears to have had seven sisters, including two pairs of twins, of whom one twin died early; the grown-up sisters were all tall, so Alexander Sloan was said to have 42 feet of daughters!

When they were first married William Donald and Jessie lived in a rented property in St John Street. In 1884 they had their first child, Gracie Smith Sloan – Grace being Jessie's mother's Christian name, Smith her mother's maiden name and Sloan her own maiden surname.

PROBLEMS WITH DRINK

In August 1885 there is the first indication of William Donald having a drink problem. There was a resolution of the Kirkmabreck Parochial Board that he cease to be Medical Officer unless within three months "he shall abandon his intemperate habits". A further decision was postponed in November in the hope that 'the cause may be removed'. He continued in his post, although in the next two years there are references to instructing him to make proper returns to the Board. There was a further problem at the end of 1887, when he appears to have neglected to attend to a sick pauper and the Board

instructed that he must 'give prompt and immediate attention to paupers applying for medical relief' otherwise he would be reported to the Board.

The following year the Board resolved to give him three months notice of the termination of his appointment. However at the end of three months "in consideration of his reported improved conduct" the Board agreed to rescind their decision and to delegate to a committee the power to dismiss him if necessary.

In February 1891 William Donald was again given three months notice of dismissal "his conduct not having been such as to merit the approval of the Board". However two weeks later a committee meeting agreed: "taking into consideration the whole circumstances regarding the Medical Officer and his promise to abstain from intoxicating liquor to recommend to the Parochial Board to reconsider the resolution . . . to dismiss him". The minutes further read: "There was laid on the table a written promise from Dr MacKeith pledging himself to abstain for the future from all intoxicating drink.

Creetown 26th February, 1891

I, William Donald MacKeith, M.B., hereby promise that I will not enter a public house for two years after this date and further I will not taste alcoholic drink after this date.

(signed) W. D. MacKeith"

The full Board met on May 2nd and decided not to accept the proposal of the committee and to dismiss him. Two days later his wife, Jessie, died.

a gravestone at the south east corner of Kirkmabreck parish church at the south end of the town. The stone was erected by William Donald himself for his wife and the other two names were subsequently added to it.

POSTSCRIPT

The only other record of William Donald at Creetown is of his being fined in 1884 5/- plus 5/- costs, for allowing a horse to pasture on the public road.



Bayview at Creetown, Kirkcudbrightshire in Scotland,
where William Donald and Jessie MacKeith lived.



The gravestone in Kirkmabreck Church, Creetown, marking the burial of William Donald, Jessie and Donald John.

CHAPTER 6

MACKEITHS IN DEVON

Nearly all the family, who were alive then, lived for part of the 1890s in Devon; the exception was Mary, who it is known visited during that period. The connection was mainly with the city of Exeter and, although they mostly moved on elsewhere at the end of the decade, two of them, Alexander and Catherine, married a brother and sister from Exeter and so formed a lasting link with the area.

JOHN AND ALEXANDER AT ST THOMAS

Some time in 1887 or 1888 both John and Alexander moved to St Thomas to set up practice there. St Thomas is now a suburb of Exeter on the west side of the river Exe from the main city centre. Previously it had a separate existence as a village with its own administration and services. How they came to choose a place about as far as possible from their native Glasgow is not clear, but it was probably because of openings for medical practice. John perhaps moved first and he is recorded in the Medical Directory of 1888 as living at Ashley House in Alphington Road. Shortly after that both brothers were living at Hampden Place further down the same road nearer the bridge leading to the city centre. John did not stay there long however, because by 1890 he is recorded as living at an address in the city centre.

ALEXANDER AS A MEDICAL OFFICER

The probable reason why Alexander moved south was because he had obtained a medical officer post. In March 1888 he was appointed Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator for the Bramford Speke district of St Thomas Union. Bramford Speke is a small village about four miles north of Exeter. It fell within the St Thomas Union of parishes and so was administered from there rather from Exeter. Alexander was paid £4:4:0 per quarter, plus vaccination payments, petty expenses and other special fees, such as for

certifying a lunatic.

It seems to have been a largely uneventful appointment, since there are no special incidents recorded, apart from when Alexander raised the issue of the delivery of medicines to paupers in the village. As a result the Board of Guardians authorised the carriage of medicines by postmen, or, in urgent cases, by carrier or special messenger, the cost to be claimed by medical officers in their quarterly bill. The year after he was appointed, his brother John was admitted as his deputy for vaccination. Alexander stayed in the post until 1895, although there must have been a lot of travelling involved, as Brampford Speke is about five miles from St Thomas. In addition to his medical officer post, Alexander was Medical Officer of St Thomas Provident Dispensary and Surgeon of the Rational Sick and Burial and other friendly societies.

Some time in 1891 or 1892 Alexander moved to Ivy Cottage, also in the same road and in July 1892 he married Alice Gadd, the daughter of Henry Gadd, a wholesale chemist, who lived at St David's Hill in the centre of Exeter. They were married at St David's Church, a few yards from the Gadd house and set up home at Ivy Cottage. They had two children while living there: Donald Kenneth, born in 1893 and Malcolm Henry, born in 1895.

Alice was the oldest of five children and had been born in London, where both her father and grandfather had worked as chemists. The Gadds however had originated from Somerset and her father and a brother and a sister of his had all three married Wippells, an Exeter family. Several Wippells and Gadds lived at that time in large houses near to each other on St David's Hill.

JOHN IN EXETER

Shortly before Alexander moved to Ivy Cottage, John moved into Exeter itself to lodgings in Eaton Place off Heavitree Road, just to the east of the city centre. Where he practised is not known, but in 1892 he was appointed Medical Officer for No. 3 district of Exeter Union and Assistant Medical Officer of Health. He was paid an annual salary of £25 and in addition was paid for visiting the local sanatorium on a rota basis. His district appears to have covered the docks and in his report to the Sanitary Committee he seems to have been concerned about the possibility of cholera. Like Alexander he

held a number .of other positions, including Medical Officer for Dr Barnado's Homes, the Church Army Labour Home, Elementary School Teachers and the National Waifs Association.

In June 1903 the Medical Officer of Health died and another of the Assistant Medical Officers of Health got the job. Possibly John was disappointed that he did not get the post, because the following year he reported to the Sanitary Committee that he had disposed of his practice and was resigning his appointment. Before leaving Exeter he had moved nearby to a house in Barnfield Road and was working also at a dispensary in Queen's Street. However by 1905 he had left the city.

ALEXANDER AT ILFRACOMBE

In June 1895 Alexander resigned his post as Medical Officer for Bramford Speke and the following month there is a record in the minutes of the St Thomas Union Board of Guardians of them being asked for a reference for him. This was because he was seeking an appointment as Medical Officer for Ilfracombe, about 50 miles away; the committee resolved that he had discharged his duties satisfactorily.

Alexander was duly appointed Medical Officer at a salary of £70, a substantial increase compared with his previous post. The district covered by the medical officer included not only the town of Ilfracombe itself, but also a large area to the west as far as Woolacombe, a very hilly rural area along the coast and inland. The medical officer was responsible for some 180 paupers, who were receiving 'out relief', i.e. they were receiving financial support in their homes, as opposed to being accommodated in the workhouse.

Two years after he was appointed Alexander applied for an increase in salary. He said that he spent £30 of the £70 salary on medicines and that, out of the remaining £40, he had to pay for horse hire. He also said that, over a period of a year, he had made 286 visits, a considerable number of which were over three miles. There was a proposal that part of the area which he covered be given to another doctor, but this was narrowly defeated and he was given an increase up to £85.

In 1896, not long after he started, the Board of Guardians

asked all its medical officers to nominate a deputy to act for them in their absence. Alexander replied that it was not convenient to name a single practitioner, but in the case of his absence, he would arrange for a registered practitioner to act for him. At the end of 1898 he made such a nomination and was granted permission to be absent for three weeks to a month. The reason for this appears to have been that he was arranging to move, because in March 1899 he tendered his resignation and was granted a testimonial by the Board.

While he and his family were at Ilfracombe, they lived at Northfields near the centre of the town. Two further children were born there: Eric Arthur in 1896 and Dora Margaret in 1898. It was while Alexander was at Ilfracombe that he first became involved with the Territorial Army, becoming a 2nd Lieutenant commanding the Devonshire (1st) Volunteer Artillery, Western District Royal Artillery (No.10 Battery). While there he wrote an article for a health journal on Ilfracombe as a health resort.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY IN DEVON

Either at the time Alexander moved to St Thomas or a short time afterwards, Margaret Anne, one of his older sisters, moved there to help look after him. However she died of heart disease and congestion of the lungs in January, 1891. Almost immediately after that Catherine, his youngest sister, took her place and is recorded in the 1891 census as living with him and a young domestic servant. It is not known what Catherine did when Alexander married in 1892, but in October, 1897 she married Alice's brother, Henry Gadd.

Another sister also moved to Devon at this time. Isabella had married Rev. Charles Barton in 1880 and they lived at Waterhouses in the county of Durham for the first ten years of their married life. They then moved to Sowerby in Yorkshire for four years, and in 1894 Charles was appointed Rector of Landkey, a small village just outside Barnstable. It seems probably not a coincidence that they moved there just about the time that Alexander and his family moved to Ilfracombe about 12 miles away and that they moved on (to Harbledown just outside Canterbury) in 1899, just at the time when Alexander and his family moved from Ilfracombe. The whole family seem to have been quite close, supporting each other and being present when needed.

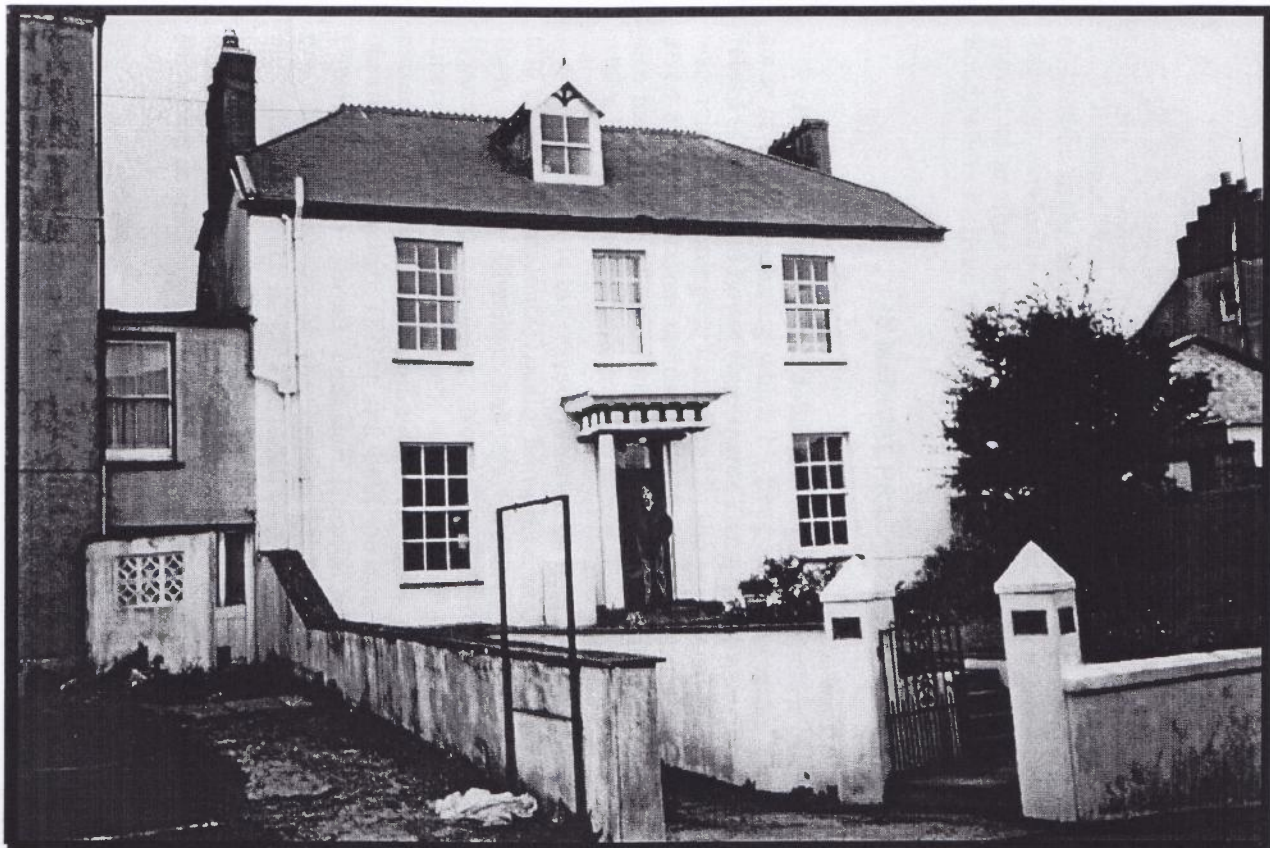
NOW

The terraced house at 5 Hampden Place, where John and Alexander lived in St Thomas is still standing; it is a large four storey building right on the main road. It has gone downhill since they lived there, when they had neighbours of an accountant and a minister of religion. Ivy Cottage no longer exists, although there is still what is probably a similar house, an attractive cottage near the railway bridge and set back from the road. It is not possible to find either of the houses in which John lived in the centre of Exeter, since there has been much development in that area. 3 Northfields Road at Ilfracombe, where Alexander, Alice and their family lived for four years, is a detached house standing on its own and is now used as solicitors offices but it remains largely as it must have been then. The rectory where Isabella lived no longer belongs to the church; it is a large Victorian building, typical of its time.

Hampden Place at St Thomas, Exeter, where John and Alexander first lived when they came to Exeter.



Hampden Place at St Thomas, Exeter, where John and Alexander MacKeith first lived when they came to Exeter.



3 Northfields Road, Ilfracombe, where Alexander and Alice MacKeith lived and where Eric and Dora were born.

CHAPTER 7

JOHN IN LONDON

It seems likely that John MacKeith moved to London at the end of 1904 or at the beginning of 1905. Initially he lived at Kennington Terrace, overlooking Kennington Park, but after a few years he moved to another terraced house not far away in Kennington Park Road, where he lived for the rest of his life.

IN MEDICAL PRACTICE

It would appear that John had separate practice premises for some of the time during which he lived at Kennington. There is a record of him at 48 Lower Kennington Lane, at the same time that he was living at Kennington Park Road in the early years and later he is given at an additional address at 37A Lower Kennington Lane. He also had the use of premises at Wimpole Street in central London, where he was perhaps able to see a better class of patient.

In addition to his private practice he held a number of hospital and clinic appointments. Locally he worked as Clinical Assistant and then Assistant Physician at the Tuberculosis Dispensary in Kennington; his nephew, Norman, described how he gave tuberculosis injections which required careful observation of the patient to achieve the optimum dose. He had a particular interest in oto-rhino-laryngology (ENT) and held various appointments at the Central London Throat and Ear Hospital and as a lecturer in practical laryngology at the London Postgraduate College. Other appointments which he held included that of Clinical Assistant at the Central London Ophthalmic Hospital at Cavendish Place, Anaesthetist at Queen Alexandra Military Hospital and Assistant Physician at the Laryngological TB Dispensary at Chelsea.

ON THE COUNCIL

In 1912 John was elected to Lambeth Council as a councillor for

No. 3 Prince's Ward, which lay to the west of where he lived; he came fifth out of eight candidates, polling 1388 votes. He was appointed to the Public Health Committee and to its sub-committees for TB Dispensary and District Insurance. From the minutes of the Public Health Committee it appears that other members found it an embarrassment initially to have a doctor on the committee; it was decided to refer to him as Mr MacKeith. He was a very active member, asking many questions and raising many matters; many of the motions, which he proposed, were defeated!

In 1919 he stood again, this time for Oval Ward and was narrowly defeated. However he was elected for that ward in 1922, receiving the most votes of all the candidates. This time he was appointed to the Wharf and Cleansing Committee.

The first suggestion of serious illness occurred in January, 1931, when it was reported that he was prevented from attending a meeting of the Council because of illness and a vote of sympathy was passed. He returned to the Council in June, but was absent again in September. At the December meeting it was reported that he had died on 30th October while still a member of the Council and it was moved by the Mayor "That the Council do offer its sympathy and condolences to the relatives of the late Dr MacKeith in the sad bereavement which they have sustained".

ON THE BOARD OF GUARDIANS

In 1922 after he had been re-elected to the Council, John was elected to the Lambeth Board of Guardians as a representative for Oval Ward. The Board of Guardians was the body responsible for administering the Poor Law locally, i.e. the arrangements for paupers both in the workhouse and at home. He was on the Visiting and Finance Committees and subsequently also on the School and Hospital Committees. As with the Public Health Committee earlier he was a very active member of the Board and its sub-committees. Like other members of the family, he was concerned that things should be done properly and in order. Certain incidents from the minutes of the Board can illustrate this:

10th May 1922 It was moved by Dr MacKeith, duly seconded and resolved; "That the Chief Officer of the Guardians be instructed, when reporting the absence from duty through illness of members of

staff, to refrain from mentioning the disease or complaint necessitating such absence, unless in the exercise of their discretion the circumstances of any case may warrant action contrary thereto”.

6th May, 1925 Dr MacKeith proposed that leave should not be granted to a doctor on his marriage in addition to his annual leave – this proposal was not carried.

28th April, 1926 Dr MacKeith drew attention to a statement reported of a certain Member in the Brixton Free Press that the Board was harsh. The Member said that he had been misrepresented and thanked Dr MacKeith for the opportunity of repudiating the report.

24th November, 1926 Dr MacKeith made a complaint about the refusal of a Relieving Officer to grant medical relief to someone on the grounds that that person had savings and should apply to a medical practitioner. The Relief Committee however approved the action of the Relieving Officer.

In 1925 he was re-elected as Guardian for Oval Ward. The following year the Selection Committee, which dealt with the appointments to sub-committees, noted that Dr MacKeith had not put forward his name for the Hospital Committee. They suggested that, as he was the only medical representative on the Board, it would be desirable to have him as a member and that last year they had changed the day of meeting to enable him to attend. He seems to have taken the hint and agreed to become a member, but later in the year he resigned from the committee. He was re-elected again in 1928 and seems to have attended meetings of the Hospital Committee without actually being a member.

In 1930 Boards of Guardians were abolished when new arrangements for providing for the poor were introduced. The last meeting was on 31st March, when there were speeches about all that the Board had achieved, after which they adjourned for a farewell luncheon.

JOHN AT HOME

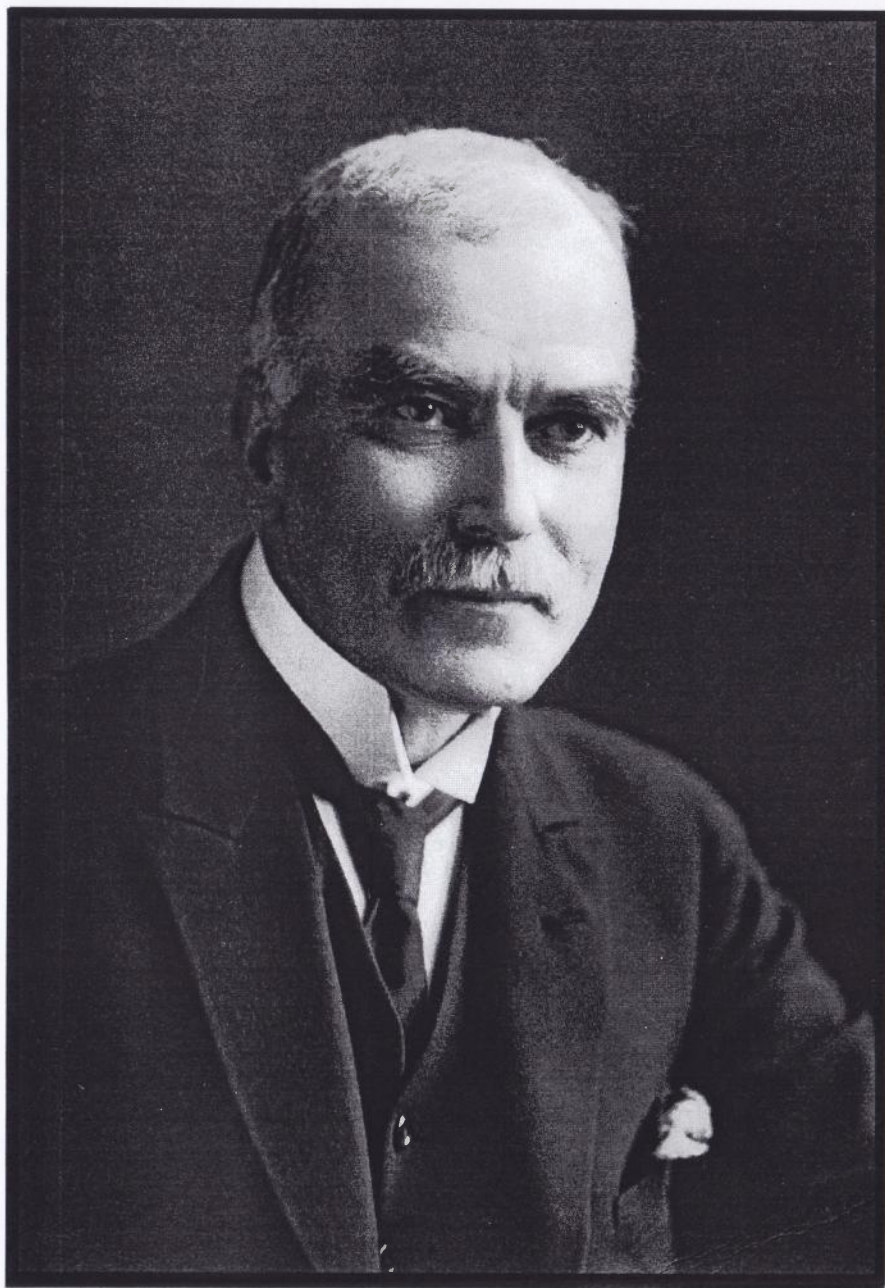
John lived by himself at 127 Kennington Park Road, although he was looked after by a housekeeper, who in later years was a Mrs Gamlen. Also he provided a home for his nephews, Malcolm and Norman, when they were medical students at Guy's Hospital

immediately after the 1st World War, and also for Stephen from 1926—31, when he was a medical student at St Mary's Hospital. They remembered him as a retiring person with little small talk. He was a regular church-goer, probably at the Church of England, judging from connections which he had with the church (he left a legacy 'to my friend, the Rev. Leslie Edward Prout, Vicar of West Drayton, Middlesex' and his mother). The nephews said that John could be irritable about public services, e.g. telephone operators.

He died on 30th October, 1931, aged 67, and a private funeral was held in Glasgow on November 2nd – quite remarkable in view of the fact that he had not lived there for 45 years.

NOW

Kennington Terrace, where John lived when he first went to London, was pulled down not long after he moved out and that land was incorporated into Kennington Park to enlarge it. 127 Kennington Park Road still exists; it is a fine two-storey terraced house with a basement and attic. Neither of the premises in Lower Kennington Lane, where John had his practice, exist any longer.



name: John MacKeith

John MacKeith



The front door of 127 Kennington Park Road in London, where John MacKeith lived for about 20 years, with his great, great niece, Helen MacKeith.

CHAPTER 8

ALEXANDER IN SOUTHAMPTON

Alexander, Alice and their family moved to Southampton probably in 1899 - certainly they were settled there in 1900. His son, Norman, said that " he moved because his family was increasing and he was looking for a place where there was scope to increase the size of his practice and income; also there was a strong Presbyterian church, because of the link of the port with Scottish seamen". (Perhaps he had attended his cousin, William Donald's wedding at the church six years earlier - see Chapter 2). They lived initially in Landguard Road in the Shirley district of the town and called their house 'St Bannock's' after a Devon saint; when they moved to 66 Howard Road, not far away a few years later, they took the name of the house with them. Donald Kenneth died in 1901, but seven further children were born to them: Monica Ruby and Norman William, twins, in 1901, Anne Vera in 1903. Stephen Alexander in 1906, Ronald Charles and Kathleen Alice, twins, in 1908 and Irene Isobel (known in the family as Wasie, because her brothers used to say that she *was*, i.e. had been, a belle!) in 1909.

SETTING UP IN PRACTICE

To quote Norman further: "When he arrived in Southampton,, Alexander was seen to be squatting or poaching by other doctors and none of their wives came to call on Alice. However the practice grew until he needed the help of a partner. The first doctor to join him was Dr Robson and not long after there was a Dr Wright. Some of his partners or assistants left to set up practices of their own in the neighbourhood to which, (contrary to usual practice) he did not object; he had sound and canny reasons for being unafraid of such competition. At least three other partners became whole or part time consultants (with, at that time, better incomes than G.P.s had) to the then voluntary hospitals - perhaps an indication of the quality of the doctors whom he was able to attract to the practice. Also another reason for being unafraid was that those (patients) who transferred to his former partners were likely to be those with whom he got on

less well.

In 1911, on the passing of Lloyd George's National Insurance Act and of the 'panel' system of general practice (which preceded the NHS system of general practice), he was one of the relatively few G.P.s who decided not to join the scheme. This was largely because he did not believe in this form of nationalisation of medical practice. But it was a courageous decision; by this time he had a family of 10 children to bring up and educate, and nobody knew how many (or how few) people would choose to be private patients rather than use the medical service to which they were entitled by their National Insurance contributions. But he had confidence in his ability to attract private patients – a confidence justified by his experience in the ensuing years.”

MEDICAL POLITICS

Very soon after he arrived in Southampton, Alexander started to be involved with various medical organisations and he continued to be heavily committed to them as well as to hospitals and clinics, until not long before his death.

He was very involved with the British Medical Association. He was a representative for the Southampton Division for meetings of delegates and he wrote letters to the British Medical Journal., making suggestions as to how the system of representation could be improved. Subsequently he held the posts, at different times, of Honorary Secretary, Treasurer and Chairman of the Southampton Division and of President of the Southern Branch.

The Division set up a Provident Medical Association and Alexander became its Honorary Secretary. Provident medical services existed before the panel system and were schemes whereby general practitioners made agreements with clubs to provide medical services to their members. The clubs could be medical clubs, set up especially to provide medical services for their members, or more general social clubs, which made arrangements for medical cover for their members. The intention of the scheme was to co-ordinate the work of the doctors and to prevent undercutting of charges and cut-throat competition. Alexander described a proposed scheme in the British Medical Journal in 1904, entitled “Notes on the Inauguration of Provident Medical Services”.

He was also a member of the Southampton Medical Society, an organisation with many of the same members as the BMA, but meeting on non medical-political matters; he was Treasurer and subsequently President.

WORKING FOR THE POOR LAW

Soon after he moved to Southampton, Alexander worked for a while as a Medical Officer for the Poor Law, as he had at Exeter and Ilfracombe earlier. In fact, his first contact was to be appointed in April, 1905, to a Board of Guardians itself, that for South Stoneham Union, which consisted of all the parishes on the outskirts of the town of Southampton, as a representative for Shirley.

However he had to give up being a Guardian when, on December of that year, he was appointed Medical Officer for No. 4 District, which consisted mainly of Shirley, at a quarterly salary of £20. He was required to say where he would see his patients and set up a surgery in High Street, Romsey Road, Shirley. 18 months later it was reported to the Board that he had given up his surgery, as patients found it more convenient to attend at his home. But then 6 months after that he resigned, probably because he was sufficiently established in private practice by then.

THE TERRITORIAL ARMY AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Alexander had first joined the Territorial Army when he was at Ilfracombe and on arriving on Southampton he joined the 1st Hampshire Voluntary Garrison Artillery as Surgeon- Lieutenant; he subsequently was promoted to Captain and then Major, and retired around 1914; there are photographs of him in uniform surrounded by members of his family at annual camps. He was also Medical Officer for army recruits at about that time.

The outbreak of the First World war had a major impact on medical practice in the town. Many general practitioners joined the army and their practices might have suffered. Alexander was responsible for organising a local medical war emergency committee, which arranged for the carrying on of their practices and a continuing income from them; at the end of the war he was presented

by those doctors with a silver salver in gratitude for his work. Also during the war he acted as Medical Officer for the troops stationed in Southampton and for the German prisoners of war, who were housed in the skating rink. During that time, too, he acted as Medical Officer for the Charitable Dispensary and was on the committee.

IN PRACTICE AFTER THE WAR

The pattern of Alexander's practice at Howard Road was for him to see patients in a room at the front of the house; a servant opened the front door for patients. Alexander hired a carriage to make daily rounds, worked out by lists in advance, and used a bicycle with a canvas bag fitted into the frame to carry instruments and medicines at other times. Later he owned a motorcar, which was cleaned and prepared by a manservant.

His was a dispensing practice in which all drugs required by his patients were dispensed on the premises either by himself or, more often, by his wife, Alice; later his eldest daughter, Dora, did most of the dispensing, which was carried out in a small dispensary under the stairs. These medicines were usually delivered by a 'medicine boy' of school age in the evening, but some times by one or other of his own five sons. The medicines were mostly in the form of bottles of mixtures, all wrapped in white paper and sealed with red sealing wax; tablets or pills were exceptional.

In the early 1920s Alexander and his family moved to 31 Archers Road, although the practice continued at Howard Road; at about this time he was joined by Dr Donald Fisher. In 1928 they were joined by Dr H.J.Simpson and Alexander then ceased to take an active part in the practice. Other doctors who worked in the practice in later years were Dr Gellert and Dr Bigby.

WORK FOR HOSPITALS

Alexander worked for local hospitals mainly in two ways: for the Hospital Contributory Scheme and for the Eye Hospital.

The Hospital Contributory Scheme was run by the Southampton and District Hospitals Association and was known as

the 'Penny-in-the-Pound' scheme. This was because employees of large firms allowed 1d in the £ of their wages to be deducted at source for the support of the local voluntary hospitals. Alexander was responsible for inaugurating the scheme and for drawing up its constitution; he was Vice-Chairman from its inception, as well as Vice-Chairman of its Executive Committee.

From October 1924 to March 1934 Alexander was Chairman of the Committee of Management of Southampton Eye Hospital. A history of the hospital says that he was "very active in raising the efficiency of the management of the Hospital during his Chairmanship" which was "9 years of unremitting zeal in the interests of the Hospital. His natural shrewdness and organising ability left their mark on the Hospital, both as regards its internal management and its relations with the public". The Mayor, speaking at the Hospital's Annual Pound Day Service the year after Alexander died, said: "He devoted the greater part of his well earned leisure to the work. The Hospital has lost a tried friend and adviser

Other ways in which Alexander was involved with local medical organisations were the inauguration of the Southampton Public Medical Service, which became a model of its kind and of which he was Chairman, and his activities with St John's Ambulance Brigade, of which he was a warm supporter and acted as an examiner, as he did for the Red Cross Society. In 1917 he published a Medical Directory, giving details of local medical and health facilities and other relevant useful information. He was, too, Medical Lecturer for the County Borough Education Committee.

ALEXANDER AS OTHERS SAW HIM

It could be wondered how one man could achieve so much. An explanation is given in a character sketch written anonymously following his death for a local newspaper:

"He lived a planned life, and because the planning was his own, and because the demands that he made upon himself were so exacting, the volume of work he was able to do was astonishing. The quality of it was not less remarkable. He did all things well. And that was because he devoted all the strength of a logical and sternly disciplined mind to every task. I remember him telling me once that it was his habit to plan a day's work and to finish it - whatever the

time. "That's the way to kill worry". That would not be an impossibility for a man who limited his output. Dr MacKeith never did. He approached every task with calm appraisal; with the determination to understand its every angle and pass judgement, even upon seemingly small issues, with all the care that most men give to great".

There were many tributes to Alexander after his death. One, published both in 'The Lancet' and the 'British Medical Journal', was by the Honorary Secretary of the Southampton Division of the BMA. It said this; "A man of logical mind with a keen insight and the power to take the long view, MacKeith was a good and just negotiator – a man whose integrity was his most outstanding virtue coupled with cautiousness and gentle-mindedness, round which all other manly virtues fitly clustered – a friend and counsellor, whose loss is deeply felt by his patients, his colleagues, and his fellow citizens"

The anonymous character sketch further described him: "He never seemed to hurry: was always ready to talk moral philosophy, and to expound his code of thinking. His standards in everything were of the loftiest, but it would never be true to say that he lived in a rarefied atmosphere. His mind was utterly practical, too – when the occasion demanded it. It was his habit to bring all his problems to the test of his own rigid – but never harsh – standard of life. But all his judgements were kindly. He may have recognised failure in others to see the finer issues, but he never spoke about them. He had a characteristic shrug of the shoulders, and sometimes he accompanied the shrug with an odd spreading of the hands, but there was an understanding smile. Perhaps it was because he had a humble mind that he was never censorious."

His son, Norman, in talking about his confidence in his own ability, said that it "was grounded in his conscientious, methodical, thoughtful and sympathetic qualities; the interests of his patients always came first. In addition he had determination and a strong sense of fair play". Another son, Stephen, said that "he had little interest in music or art or the broader field of literature, nor little interest in politics, except *medical* politics. However he did have a continuing interest, for himself and for his children, in scientific advances generally and in medicine. He was interested, too, in pronunciation and the derivation of words, in reason and in family debate".

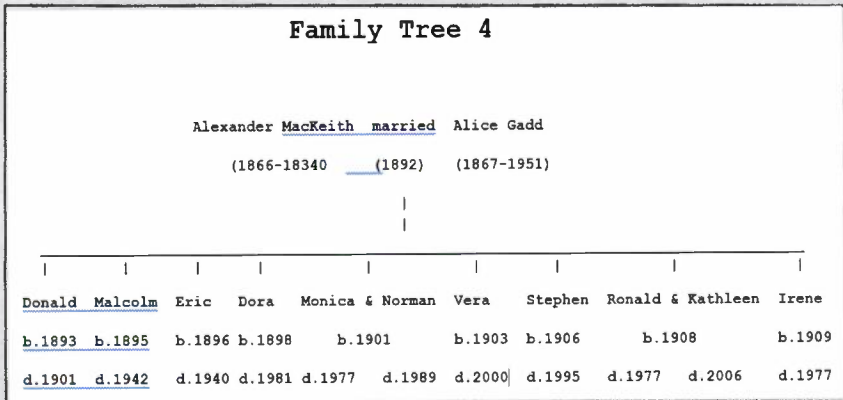
ALEXANDER AND HIS FAMILY

Alexander's demanding schedule obviously had implications for the rest of the family. Alice supported him in his work, helping with the dispensing, as well bringing up their ten children; a doctor remembers him calling her down from the top of the house to do something for him and then her returning all the way upstairs again. His daughter, Kaye, said that he did not have a lot to do with his children, but that he made an effort to have some contact; one way was to have members of the family go out with him on his rounds. Meals were important and there was the practice of getting up from the table to look something up in the family encyclopaedia, if there was a difficult or disputed point in conversation.

Alexander died in December 1934; he had been largely confined to his bed some time before that.

NOW

None of three houses in which the family lived in Southampton is still standing. Alexander, Alice, Donald, Eric and Malcolm are buried in the family grave in Southampton cemetery.





The carriage waiting outside his house in Howard Road to take Alexander MacKeith on his rounds. A French boy on an exchange is in the carriage.



Alexander and Alice MacKeith and their family, taken during the 1st World War. Back row from left to right: Eric, Dora, Malcolm and Norman. Middle row seated: Vera, Alexander, Monica, Alice and Stephen. Front row on the ground: Irene, Ronald and Kathleen.

CHAPTER 9

WILLIAM AND MARGARET'S DAUGHTERS

JANE

Jane McEwan was born at Buchlyvie in July, 1855 to William and Margaret just 9 months after they were married. She was called after her father's mother, whose maiden name was Jean McEwan. In 1860 or 1861, when she was about five, the family moved south to Sussex. By 1871, when she was 16, she is not recorded in the Hurst Green census as living at home, which probably means that she had gone into service somewhere nearby. What she did when the family moved to Glasgow in the mid 1870's, after her father's death, is not known. She died in 1878, aged 22, of T.B.

ISABELLA

The second daughter, Isabella Gilmour, was also born in Buchlyvie, in 1858. As mentioned in Chapter 3, she appears to have been called after her mother's mother. She was married on October 7th, 1880, at St Mary's Episcopal Church in Glasgow to Rev. Charles Hairby Barton. How she, a young Scottish woman from a not particularly well off family, came to meet a thirty year old Anglican clergyman from Cheshire, is not clear. Perhaps she came to England to train in church work or they met through mutual friends. Charles Barton had trained at Queen's College, Birmingham and had become a priest and served in the diocese of Worcester. He then went north and served as a curate at the church of the Venerable Bede in the parish of St Peter's, Monkwearmouth in Sunderland. He moved to the western end of the diocese of Durham to become vicar of the parish of Waterhouses, and it was while he was there that he married Isabella. They lived initially in a cottage in Esh, a little way from the church, but moved in 1887 to the newly built spacious vicarage adjacent to the church. Waterhouses was a large colliery village and they spent the first ten years of their married life there. In 1890 they moved to Sowerby in West Yorkshire and then again in

1894 to Landkey in Devon, as mentioned in Chapter 6. Finally in 1899 they moved to Harbledown, just outside Canterbury.

There is no record of them having children and it seems as if this may have been a sadness for them. In 1907 they presented a wooden cover for the font at Waterhouses, bearing the figures of Christ and St Paul and the words: "Suffer the little children to come unto me" and there is also reference to children on a plaque in Landkey Church. Isabella died in 1909 just three months after her mother, at whose death she had been present. Charles married again in 1917 and died in 1931.

MARY

Mary was born in 1860 shortly before the family moved south from Buchlyvie to Hurst Green in Sussex. At the time of the 1881 Glasgow census she was no longer living at home, which suggests that she was already working away in service somewhere. In later years she became a companion for one or more families; Bridge of Allan in Perthshire is one of the places in which she is known to have lived. In later years she returned to England and lived with Alexander's family for a while. She then had a home of her own in Lymington in Hampshire and died in a nursing home in Salisbury in 1947.

MARGARET

Margaret Anne was born in 1862, not long after the family moved to England. Little is known about her. The 1881 Glasgow census records her as being a teacher at the age of 18, although whether she had had a training for this is not clear. In 1891 she was living at Exeter with Alexander, presumably keeping house for him, when she died of long standing heart disease and congestion of the lung at the age of 28.

CATHERINE

Catherine MacGrigor, the youngest daughter, was born in 1868.

When Margaret died in 1891, she took her place in Exeter to look after Alexander, but it is not known what she did after he married. However in 1897 she married Alexander's wife's brother, Henry Wippell Gadd. He was a wholesale chemist, as well as having qualified as a barrister, and they set up home in Exeter. They lived in London from about 1918 to 1930, when Henry held the post of secretary to a national organisation of chemists. In the Second World War their home was totally destroyed by a bomb. They had three daughters: Margaret Wippell, Catherine Mary and Isabel Ruth. Margaret married Willie Palmer, an accountant, but sadly she died on the birth of their son, Kenneth in 1928. Catherine did secretarial work, initially for her father and subsequently in the disabled field; later she looked after other people, including her parents and she died in 1976. Isobel looked after her parents for many years and in 1945 she married Alfred William Wilcock, who was Director of Music and Organist at Exeter Cathedral. They had a daughter, Mary Ruth. He died in 1952 and Isobel lived in Middlesex for the latter part of her life; she died in 1995. Catherine MacGrigor herself died in 1950 and her husband, Henry, in 1955.

NOW

The font cover, which Isabella and Charles gave to Waterhouses Church in County Durham can still be seen in the church there; it is a fine piece of woodcarving. There is a memorial to Isabella in the church at Harbledown and a stone marking her grave and that of her husband and his second wife in the graveyard; the rectory, where they lived, is now a residential home. There is also a memorial to Isobel Ruth's husband, Alfred Wilcock, in Exeter Cathedral.

Kenneth, Margaret's son, married Mary Watson in 1968 but she died in 1987; he lives in Edinburgh. Isobel's daughter, Mary Ruth, married George Neale in 1996 and they live at Hampton in Middlesex.

FAMILY TREE 5

Catherine MacGrigor MacKeith married Henry Wippell Gadd
 (1868 - 1950) (1897) (1869 - 1955)

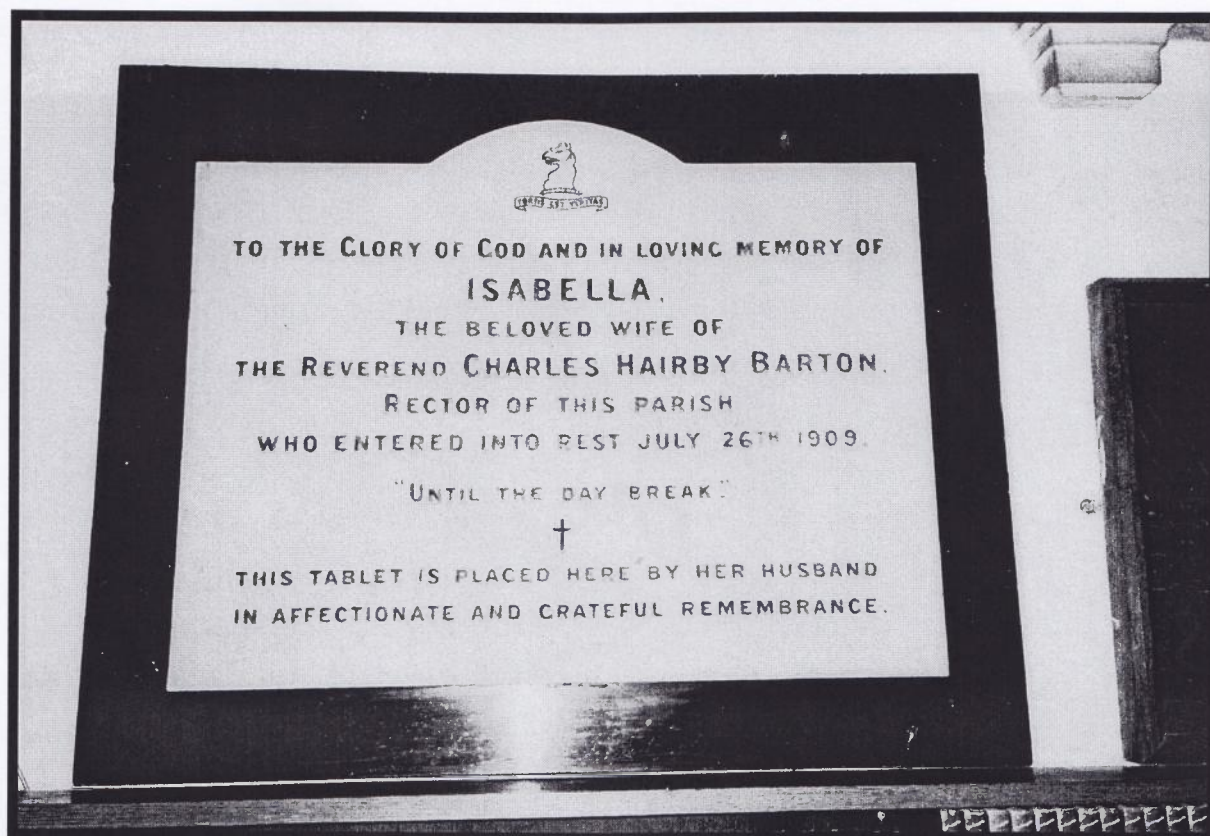
1	1	1
Margaret Wippell (1899 - 1928) married William Palmer (1923) 1 Kenneth Palmer (1928 - married Mary Watson (1968) (died 1987)	Catherine Mary (1901 - 1971)	Isobel Ruth (1905 - 1995) married Alfred Wilcock (1945) 1 Mary Ruth Wilcock (1947 - married George Neale (1996)

CATHERINE

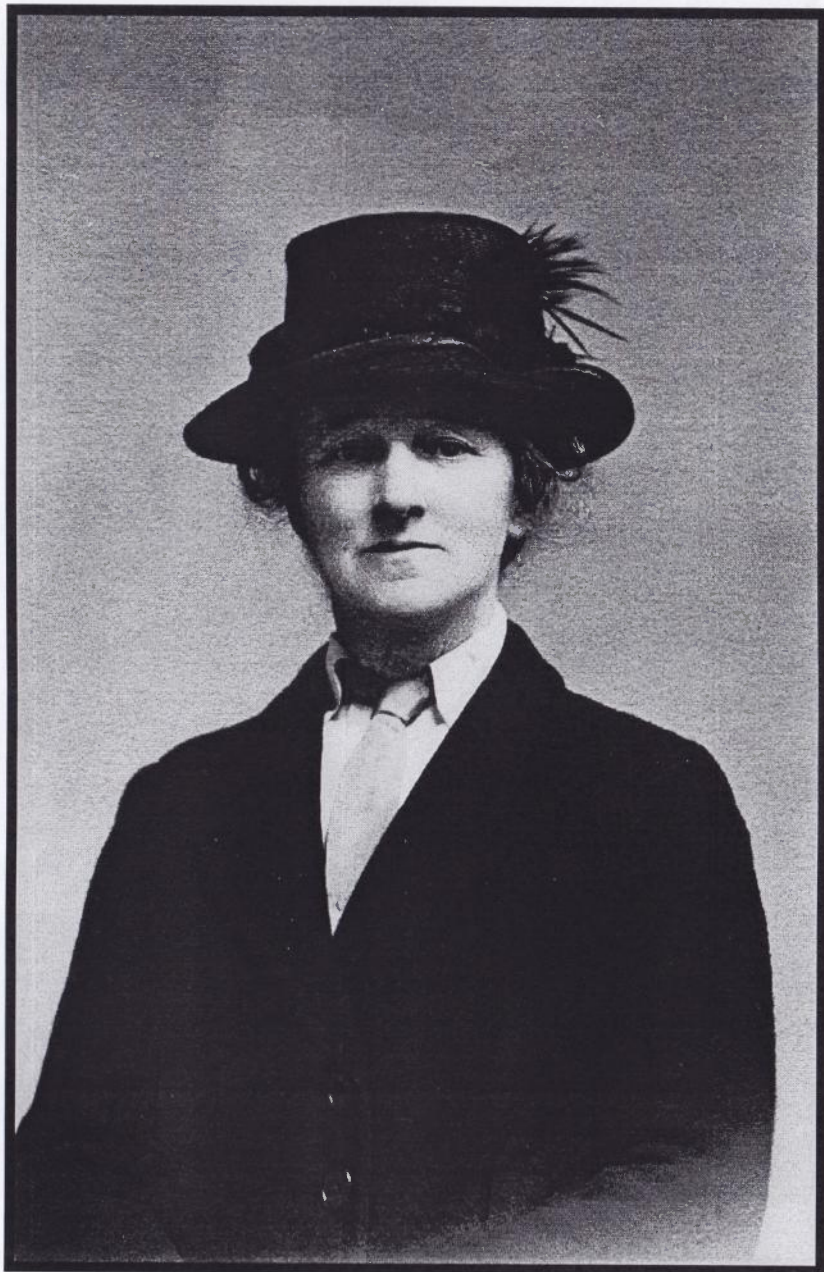
Catherine MacGrigor, the youngest daughter, was born in 1868.



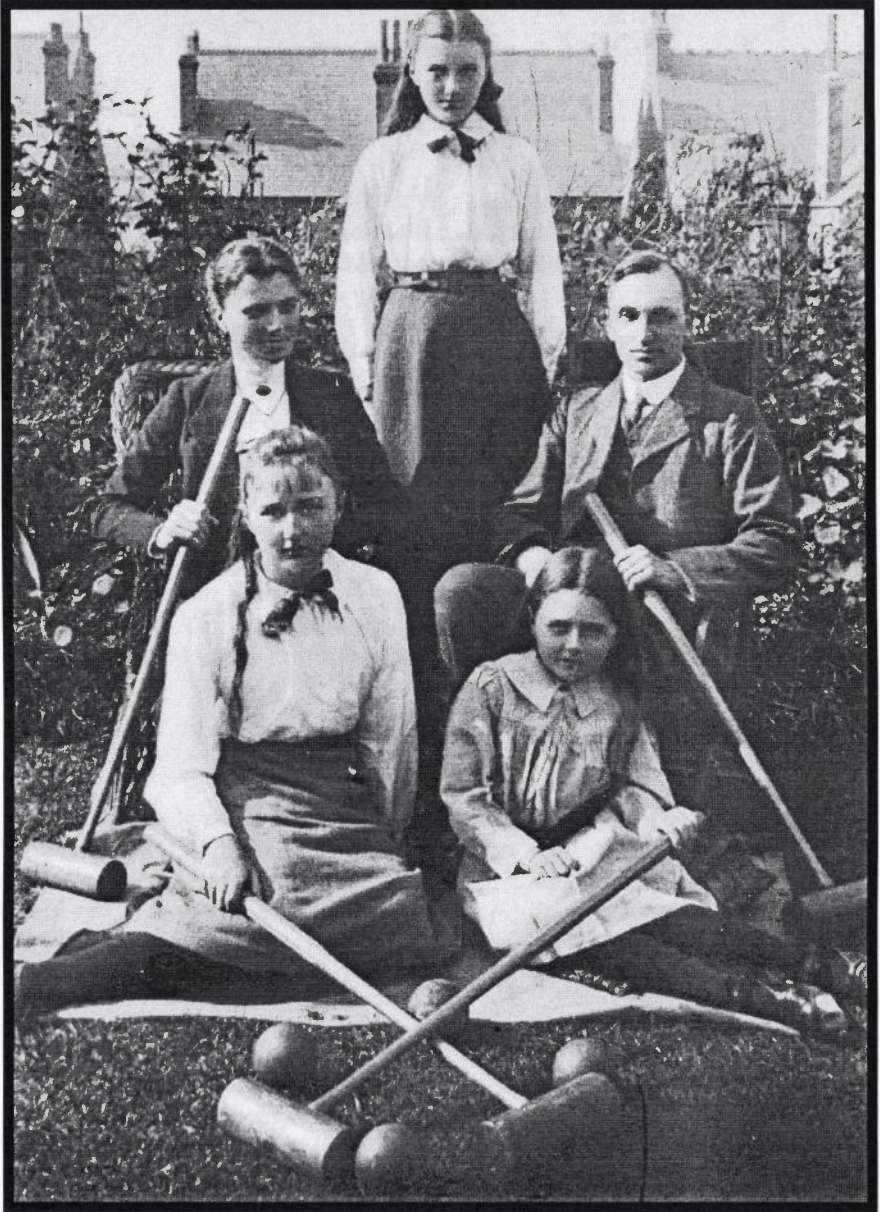
The Old Rectory, Harbledown outside Canterbury,
where Isabella and Charles Barton lived.



Memorial tablet in Harbledown Church to Isabella Barton.



Mary MacKeith



Catherine and Henry Gadd, with their daughters, Margaret, standing, Catherine, seated left, and Isobel, seated right.

CHAPTER 10

ALEXANDER'S FAMILY

Alexander and Alice had eleven children, two born in Exeter, two in Ilfracombe and the other seven in Southampton. As mentioned earlier, Donald, the eldest, died not long after they came to live in Southampton, at the age of seven.

MALCOLM

Malcolm, who was born in 1895, was the first of the sons to go into medicine. After traumatic medical service in the 1st World War, he qualified as a doctor and went into academic medicine, first at Oxford and then as the first Dean of the British Post-graduate Medical School in London. Opposition to his appointment and ill-health caused him to resign and he died at Aldershot in 1942. He married Joan Mallam and they had three children, Jean, Donald and Robert.

ERIC

Eric was born in 1896. Like all his brothers, he was educated at King Edward VI School in Southampton. He worked as an office clerk, spending many years with the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company. He was never in good health and died in 1940, aged 43.

DORA

Dora was born in 1898 and trained in dispensing. She practised in Sussex and later worked in Southampton in clinic and hospital. At Howard Road she also helped dispense for her father's practice and assisted in the running the family home. Later at Archer's Road, she also looked after the children of members of the family from time to time and generally kept a motherly eye on the family as a whole. She was very involved with the Girl Guides locally and occupied positions

of responsibility in the movement. When Vera came back to England, she shared a house with her. She died in 1981.

MONICA

Monica was born in 1901, a twin with Norman. She studied general science at University College, Southampton with the object of becoming a teacher. However she had an accident in a laboratory, which resulted in her losing the sight in one eye and she transferred to botany, in which she got a first class degree. Thereafter she spent much of her working life coaching and tutoring. However she taught for part of the Second World War at Cheltenham Ladies College and later for a while at the Charlotte Mason School at Ambleside in the Lake District. On retirement she lived with a friend in Southampton. She died in 1977.

NORMAN

Norman was born in 1901, Monica's twin. The second son to go into medicine, he specialised in ear, nose and throat and, after training in London, he returned to Southampton as a consultant in the hospitals, with private practice at his home. He developed a special interest in deafness and was very involved with the local association for the deaf, as well as doing research in his retirement. He was an active member of a local Presbyterian (later United Reformed) Church. He married Mavis Burnett and they had two children, John and Mary. He died in 1989.

VERA

Vera was born in 1903. She studied at University College, Southampton and took a general degree to train as a teacher. In 1931 she went as a missionary with the London Missionary Society to teach at a school in Shanghai in China. In the Second World War she was interned by the Japanese. After the war, with the advent of the Communist regime, she had to leave China and taught for some years in Hong Kong. On retirement in 1961 she lived with Dora in

Southampton and after Dora's death moved to a retirement home in Worthing. In retirement she served as a lay preacher in the United Reformed Church. She is known to many friends as Anne, her first given name. She died in 2000.

STEPHEN

Stephen was born in 1906 and, after training in medicine in London, went into psychiatry. He played a major part in the development of psychiatric services in the army in the 2nd World War, for which he was awarded the OBE. He worked in a number of mental hospitals and became Medical Superintendent of Warlingham Park Hospital; later he became involved in the teaching of psychiatry and, following his retirement, in health education. He was interested in psychology and co-wrote a book on the private imaginary world of children. He married Frances (known as Jo to the family) Culpin and they had six children, James, Alice, William, Lucy, Thomas and Nancy. In their later years, they lived at Winchester. He died in 1995.

KATHLEEN (KAYE)

Kaye, a twin with Ronald, was born in 1908. She trained in Household and Social Science at King's College and worked as a dietitian in London; she subsequently taught dietetics and cookery in a variety of schools and co-wrote a text book on cookery. She married Angus Scallon and they lived for a number of years in West Africa, where he was in the colonial service. On his retirement on health grounds, they returned to Southampton, where she taught for some years and has lived in the same flat ever since; Angus died in 1977. They had three children, Jacqueline, Robert and Nicolette. She died in 2006.

RONALD

Ronald was born in 1908, Kaye's twin. His branch of medicine was paediatrics, in which he qualified in London; he was appointed consultant at Guy's Hospital and stayed there for the rest of his life.

He had a special interest in handicapped children and founded a special unit for this purpose. He was interested, too, in children's development and in the psychosomatic aspects of their illnesses. He sought to encourage others by organising conferences and study groups, and wrote many books and articles. He married Elizabeth Bartrum and they had four children, Caroline, Andrew, Philippa and Peter. He died in 1977.

IRENE (WASIE)

Irene was born in 1909, the youngest of the family. She studied German at St Anne's College, Oxford, where she lived with her elder brother, Malcolm. After a brief spell of teaching, she married Frank Halliwell, who was a teacher, then headmaster and subsequently university academic and educationalist. They lived successively at Raynes Park in Surrey, at Devizes in Wiltshire, Keele, near Newcastle-under-Lyme, London and Norwich. Both at Keele and at Norwich she was much involved in work for the Citizens Advice Bureau. They had three children, Jane, Susan and Bridget. She died in 1977.

THE FAMILY CONTINUES...

Alice lived until 1951 and much enjoyed the company of her children's children. An enduring image of her is of being surrounded by her children and grandchildren, not hearing all of what was going on around her (she suffered from deafness which some of her children and their children have inherited), but loving every minute of it.

The children of Alexander and Alice had themselves 21 children; they, in their turn, had 35 and there are so far 15 in the next generation.

After the 2nd World War, while Alice was still alive, there began a tradition of members of the family meeting together on Boxing Day, occasionally joined by others closely involved with the family. This was subsequently changed to the Spring Bank Holiday, because of the risk of poor weather conditions over Christmas. The family gathering usually meets at the home of a member living in or near London, although occasionally it goes further afield.