

Margaret MacKeith

My Story



by John MacKeith

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PREFACE

Margaret MacKeith was a central figure in the MacKeith family history. She spent most of her life in Scotland, with a significant few years in England. Gracie MacKeith, who was brought up by Margaret after her parents' sad deaths, described her as "a very fine woman" and gave the impression that she had been somewhat austere and formidable. It seemed to me to be interesting to compile her story and that the best way to do it was as a sort of 'autobiography'. Most of the story is factual, with one or two suppositions. I hope that it may be of some interest to others in the MacKeith family.

John MacKeith

INTRODUCTION

It is now some time since I came south from Glasgow to Southampton to live with Alexander and Alice and their children. They have encouraged me to write about my life, but I have been reluctant to do this, not wanting to draw attention to myself. However the children have asked me what it was like in Scotland when I was a child, and Alice, on hearing me talk to them, has said that I should write it down for future generations.

So I have reconsidered and think that such a recounting could be of some interest, and possible help, to my family. I have had a very full and interesting life and those who follow me may learn from my experiences. Not all of them have been happy ones, since some of my children died young and life has at times been hard. However I hope others may be glad to read about what I have lived through with the help of my family. I can not emphasise too much the importance of family ties in living through life's tribulations.

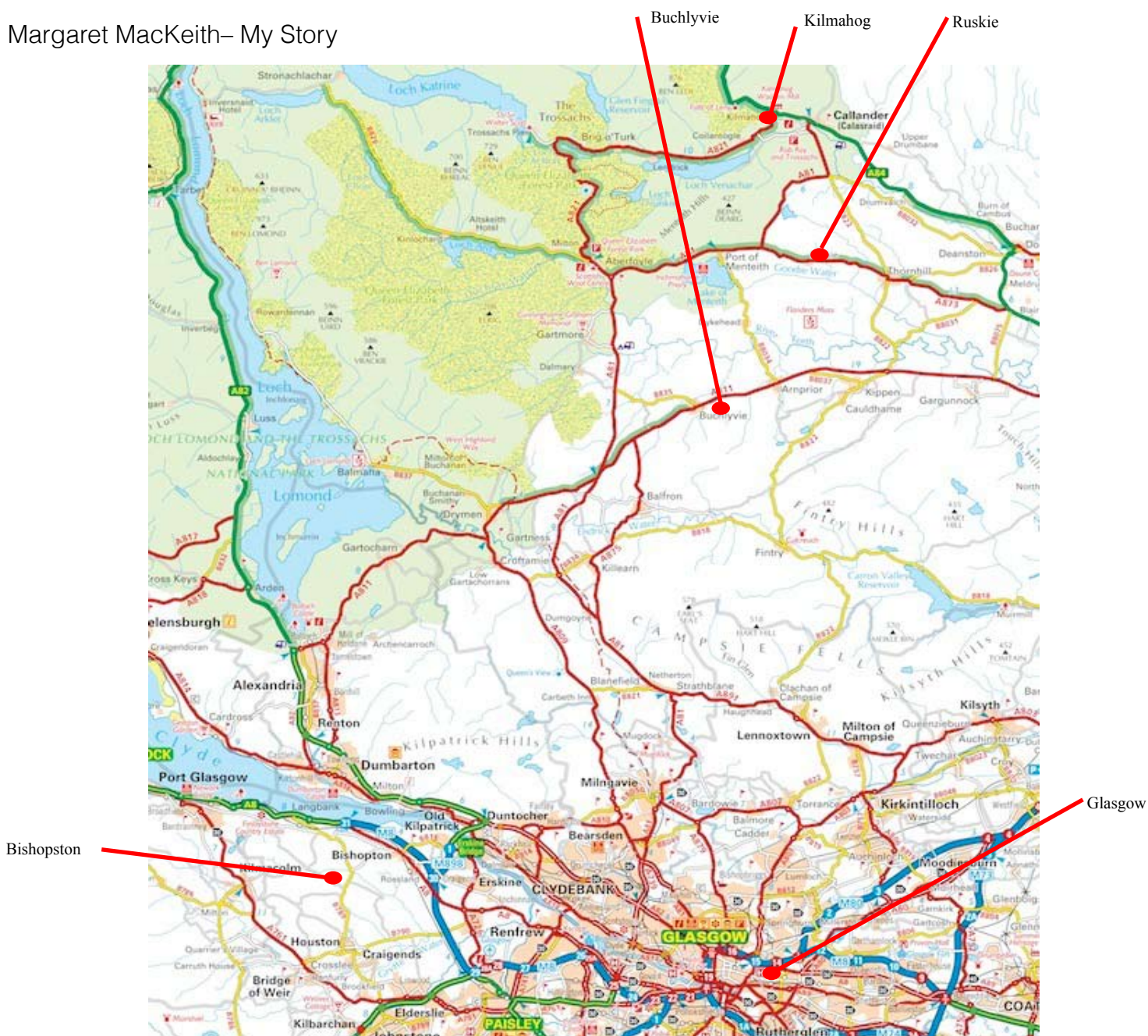
I have tried as far as possible to avoid Scottish phrases, which may be difficult for those who have lived all their lives in England to understand. Here then is my story, broken into the various phases of my life.

April, 1908

MY CHILDHOOD

I was born to Isabella and William McGhie at Lochwinnow in Refrewshire, on 9th August, 1835. I remember our house opening onto the main street, with people going to and fro all the time. Of course the road was not made up, as it is now, so that it was uneven and there were puddles around after it rained. I also remember men making a loud noise in the evening some times when they had been getting drunk at the end of their working week. When I was two, a baby appeared in our family, my sister, Jean. I was not very pleased, because it meant that she got all the attention. One thing that was strange to me then was people's reaction when I said my name was Margaret. Later I discovered that my parents had had a daughter earlier, who had also been called Margaret, who had died as a baby. I learned that this was a not uncommon practice. My mother later told me that having me made up for the loss of the earlier Margaret. I was not sure whether I really wanted to be a replacement for someone else, but I got used to the idea over the years. We were a happy family – not particularly well off, but my father was a tile-maker, owning his own business, so he had a reasonable income.

When I was quite small, four or five, we moved to a place called Bishopton, on the outskirts of Erskine, not far from Glasgow, by the Clyde. I remember my mother was happy about it, because it was the place where she was born. So we



Map showing places in Scotland where Margaret lived and where the MacKeith family home of Ruskie is situated
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had lots of relatives around and I remember aunts and uncles, but especially aunts, coming to visit, and we would visit them. Our family grew while we were there. I already had two elder brothers, Walter and Arthur, a sister and brother, Jean and William, were born after me at Glasgow. Isabella and James were born while we were at Bishopston. From an early age my mother looked to me to help with the younger ones and I enjoyed this. They sometimes called me bossy, especially my sister, Jean, who was two years younger than me – I think she resented me being older than her and we never got along well. I learned later that there had been an earlier Jean, just as I had 'replaced' an earlier Margaret; perhaps she also was upset at being a 'replacement'. My father was called William and my mother, who was quite a few years younger than him, Isabella. He was a strong character, strict but fair; people said that I took after him. My

mother was of a more gentle nature, intelligent and loving.

As I have said, my father was a tile-maker, with his own business, employing about seven men who lived in accommodation next door to us. We were on the outskirts of Bishopton, adjacent to large fields, where clay was dug to make the tiles. Probably the main reason for us moving to Bishopton was that there was much house building taking place in Glasgow, for which tiles were needed, also much land adjacent to the Clyde was being drained, for which a kind of tile was also needed. A railway line had recently been completed, linking Bishopton with Glasgow, so my father's works was ideally placed, near the station, to supply the tiles needed. I got to know the workers and I remember one in particular, called Angus, who was a bit older than the others. He used to tell me stories of Erskine before the railway came, when it was a very small village in the country. Occasionally we travelled in to Glasgow and used to marvel at all the large buildings going up in the centre.

I started going to school not long after we moved to Bishopton. School was not like it is today, with children leaving at 15 or 16 and sometimes even later. Children usually left school by the age of 12 or 13 and some left even earlier, or only went for a time when their parents could afford it. At the time I was a girl, many children worked from a very early age in mines and factories. Fortunately our parents could afford to pay for me to go to school, but in some families it was the boys who were given priority, because it was not felt necessary for girls to have much schooling.

The school was quite small, because Bishopton was only a small village, and we were all taught in one room. The teacher, a young woman, was strict, but helpful if she saw that a child was having difficulty learning. We all had small slate boards, on which we wrote our work. I liked school and did quite well; my parents took an interest in what we were doing and encouraged us. They had a few books, including a Bible, and we had to learn passages by heart. On Sundays we went to the kirk in Bishopton; it could be boring, but Sunday school in the afternoon was more interesting.

There was a sad event not long after we moved to Bishopton. My mother lost a baby girl soon after she was born. Though she had lost two babies previously and it was not uncommon for babies to die, there was a feeling of grief over the house for quite a time.

Erskine had grown in the years immediately before we moved near there, with the building of the railway. Men came to the area to work on it and some stayed after it was completed. A few of the workmen and their families came to live in Bishopton. The school had been only been built a few years earlier; before that children had to walk all the way to Erskine to go to school. While we were at Bishopton, Walter stopped going to school and started to work at the tile-works. They were very much part of our life, because we lived side by side with them. There were three long buildings, one for the works, one for the workmen and one for our family. In front of the buildings were ponds, from which water was drawn for the making of tiles; we children were told not to go near for fear of falling in, but later my father made a wire fence to protect us. My father also made bricks, but he made more tiles, as there was a special demand for them

for field drainage.

By the end of our time at Bishopton we were a family of nine and were outgrowing our house. The demand for tiles was not so great, as the drainage work had been completed. Our parents were not happy with us going to school with the railway workers' children, who tended to be unruly; they thought them a bad influence on us. So my father started to look for somewhere else, where he could start afresh, where there was a need for tiles. He had come from Dunbarton, north of the Clyde, so he started looking in that direction.

MOVING TO BUCHLYVIE

One day not long before I was due to leave school, my father announced that he was building a new tile-making business in the Trossachs area between Loch Lomond and Stirling, near the village of Buchlyvie. He said that he would take Mother, Jean and me to see it (Walter and Arthur could not be spared from the present business).

So we set out early one morning, first by pony and trap to the bank of the Clyde, where we took the ferry, which was hauled by hand from a chain strung across the river (a few years later this was replaced by a steam ferry). This took us over to Old Kilpatrick, where we joined a horse-drawn coach, which took us to Balfour at the end of Loch Lomond. This was particularly exciting, because it gave us a first view of the mountains to the north. Balfour was becoming quite a fashionable place, where people who could afford it, came for holiday. Here we took another ferry, this time a proper steam ferry, which went round the loch to Balmaha. Here we took the final stage of our journey by pony and trap, which my father had especially arranged, to Buchlyvie. By then it was getting dark and we could not clearly see the village as we arrived at the lodging-house where we were to spend two nights.

When we woke up and got out in the morning, we found that Buchlyvie was a thriving village, consisting mainly of a long main street up a slope. We left Buchlyvie by a small horse cart along the main road, before we turned off on a track, which led past a number of farms, until we reached what looked like a building site. Here the tile works were being built, together with a house and accommodation for the workers. We wondered why on earth our father had chosen this site. However he had chosen wisely, because there was plenty of clay here, soft from the river nearby, to make tiles. Also there were plans for a railway, which was to run from Stirling in the east to Balloch at the end of Loch Lomond and which would run close to where Father was building his works; this could be used to transport his tiles to Glasgow. We had a good look around the area; it was called Offrance Moss after the very marshy land. and the neighbouring farms, Wester and Easter Offrance. We called on both briefly and were made very welcome. We then returned to our lodging-house in Buchlyvie, spent the night there and went back by the same route as we had come the following day. I have described this expedition at some length, because it made a big impression on me. having never made such a journey before.

A few months later when the new tile works had been completed, we moved from Erskine to Buchlyvie. It was a real wrench, because we had been at Erskine about 10 years; I had really grown up there and had made good friends. My parents had told me that I would no longer go to school when we moved. After a few months I would go into service, when they had found a good household. However when we moved there was lots to be done and my mother looked to me especially to help, since Jean was still at school. Not going to school myself, I did not meet many girls of my age and it was a bit lonely in those first months.

After a few months my parents told me that they had found a household which needed a house servant. They were called Fisher and they lived on a farm a short distance outside Buchlyvie and not too far from my home. So one day my parents took me over to meet the family: John Fisher, middle aged and quite a bit older than his wife, Catherine, and their two young children, John, who was 5 and Janet still a baby. Part of my work was to look after the children as well as doing general house-work.

It was on the whole a happy time. I enjoyed helping to look after the children, although John was a handful and I had to be strict with him at times. Mrs Fisher was kind to me and helped me learn things about the home, which were new. I was allowed to have Sunday off, which was quite generous for those times. I used to walk to church in Buchlyvie, where I met up with the rest of my family and went home with them afterwards. While I was at the Fishers, I was admitted to full communion at the church, though it did not mean much to me at the time. At the end of Sunday

30/03/1851 MCKEITH, WILLIAM (Census 1851 484/00 006/00 001)

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Parish of <i>Buchlyvie</i>		Quoad Sacra Parish of <i>Buchlyvie</i>		Within the limits of the Royal Burgh of <i>Buchlyvie</i>		Town or Village of <i>Buchlyvie</i>			
House No.	N. and S. Street, Place, or Road, and Name or No. of House	Name and Surname of each Person who abode in the house, on the Night of the 30th March, 1851	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of		Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether Blind, Deaf, and dumb
					Males	Females			
		<i>James McKee</i>	Head	Mar	37		<i>Householder</i>	<i>Edinburgh</i>	
		<i>Janet McKee</i>	Wife			34		<i>Edinburgh</i>	
		<i>James McKee</i>	Son		11		<i>Scholar</i>	<i>Edinburgh</i>	
		<i>Janet McKee</i>	Daughter			11	<i>Scholar</i>	<i>Edinburgh</i>	
		<i>Robert McKee</i>	Son		27	6		<i>Edinburgh</i>	
		<i>James McKee</i>	Son		11	4		<i>Edinburgh</i>	
		<i>John McKee</i>	Son		21			<i>Edinburgh</i>	
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		<i>John McKee</i>	Son		21			<i>Edinburgh</i>	
		<i>James McKee</i>	Son		21			<i>Edinburgh</i>	
		<i>John McKee</i>	Son		21			<i>Edinburgh</i>	
		<i>James McKee</i>	Son		21				

I walked back to the Fishers. The farm was called Wester Ballemenoch; in fact there were two farms a few yards from one another, Easter and Wester, both with a large number of fields stretching out from the farm buildings. The other farm had a house servant of my age, called Janet, and she became a good friend.

When the children were ill, the Fishers would call the doctor. He was a handsome man, about 30 years old, with a gentle manner, called William MacKeith. I used to see him at church, which he attended regularly. I learned that he was a bachelor, living as a lodger with a woman, who made stockings for a living, and her son. He was very friendly towards me and I liked him. One Sunday he asked whether I would walk out with him that afternoon and I said yes. He came to our house in his pony and trap and we walked along the paths and down to the river. He told me about himself – how he came from a village not far away, near the Lake of Menteith, how he had an elder brother, Donald, who was also a doctor, and how his mother died while they were still young and his father had married again. He had had several more children and had died about twenty years ago. I told him a bit about myself and my family. Afterwards my parents invited him in for a cup of tea.

We saw increasingly more of each other and then one day he asked me to marry him, having earlier obtained my father's consent. And so it was that, on 11th July, 1854, we were married at my parents' house, as was the custom, by our church minister, Rev. Alexander Matheson. I was just 20 years old at the time and William was over 30, but the age difference did not seem to matter.

A NOTE ON THE MACKETH FAMILY

Not long after we became engaged, William took me over to meet his family at Ruskie. They were quite a large family, so I had some difficulty working out who they all were. As William had already told me, his father, John, had married twice and William was one of two sons by his first wife, Jean. John had married Isabel some years later, by whom he had six children, all of whom, except the eldest, were still living at home.

Ruskie was an attractive little village, based around the burn, which ran through it. There was a school, a hall, a mill and a number of surrounding buildings, mostly farms. The family house was Damside, after the dam built for the mill, later changed to Burnside, because one of the women who lived there did not like the name. It was an ample sized house with attractive proportions, facing the road. With the house went four fields at the back going up alongside the



The family home, Burnside, formerly Damside, at Ruskie, near the Port of Menteith

Parish of *St. Andrew*

1	2	3	4
PLACE	NAME and SURNAME, SEX and AGE of each Person who abode in each House on the Night of 31st March 1841	OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN
Where born Name of Village, Street, Square, Close, Court, &c.	NAME and SURNAME	Of what Religion, Trade, Employment, or Independent Means?	Of what Parish or Place?
<i>Weston Lane</i>	<i>John MacKeith</i> 60	<i>Agriculturist</i>	<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>Isabel Do</i> 30		<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>Margaret Do</i> 11		<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>John Do</i> 8		<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>William Do</i> 4		<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>Isabel Do</i> 3		<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>William Do</i> 26	<i>Surgeon</i>	<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>John Stewart</i> 15	<i>St. Andrew</i>	<i>St. Andrew</i>
<i>St. Andrew</i>	<i>John MacKeith</i> 55	<i>Miller</i>	<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>Isabel Do</i> 30		<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>Peter Do</i> 14		<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>Isabel Do</i> 9		<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>John Do</i> 7		<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>William Do</i> 4		<i>St. Andrew</i>
<i>St. Andrew</i>	<i>Isabel MacKeith</i> 55	<i>Miller</i>	<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>John Do</i> 30		<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>Margaret Do</i> 55		<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>William Do</i> 15		<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>Catherine Do</i> 10		<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>William Do</i> 6		<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>Margaret Do</i> 4		<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>John Do</i> 2		<i>St. Andrew</i>
	<i>Isabel Do</i> 1		<i>St. Andrew</i>

Birth certificate for Jane, William and Margaret's first child

REMARKS OF SHERIFF OR PROVOST.

Parish of St. Andrew will be found in Kincaidine and Kincaidine Parish original

I CERTIFY and declare that the Account of the Population of the District for which I am Enumerator, contained in this Schedule, has been truly and faithfully taken by me, and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the same is correct, so far as may be known.

Witness my hand this *seventh* day of *June* 1841.

John MacKeith Enumerator.

I CERTIFY and declare that I have examined the Account of the Population contained in this Schedule, which is signed by the Enumerator, as was delivered to me on the *seventh* day of *June* 1841, and have satisfied myself that it has been made as accurate as is possible.

Witness my hand this *seventh* day of *June* 1841.

John MacKeith { Person appointed by Sheriff or Provost to divide the Parish.

I CERTIFY and declare that I have examined the Account of the Population contained in this Schedule, which is signed by the Person appointed by the Sheriff or Provost to divide the Parish, and was delivered to me on the *seventh* day of *June* 1841, and that he has duly performed the duties required of him in regard to the same, and that no inaccuracies have been discovered therein which have not been duly corrected, as far as has been possible.

Witness my hand, this *seventh* day of *June* 1841.

burn. William's step-mother, Isabel, and her children, however, did not live in the house, but in a farm the other side of the road, called Lower Tarr. She was farming the land, which went with the property. The family home, Damside, was occupied by John's brother and sister, Alexander and Mary, neither of whom had married. You can see why I was confused by all the different members of the family.

There is a story about how the MacKeith family came to own Damside. It seems rather romantic and improbable, but William always insisted that it was true. William's great grand-father was called John, like William's father. That John was a humble tenant farmer, living in a small bothy to the north of Ruskie, in an area called the Invertrossachs. One dark and stormy night a boy called Peter Graham knocked at their door and asked for shelter. The family talked about him as the orphan in the storm, but whether he was an orphan or just a boy who had run away from home, it is not clear. John and his wife took him in and he lived with them for many years. When he left them, he went into trade with shipping, especially with the West Indies. He made his fortune and when he returned to Scotland, he bought Damside for John and his family in thanks for what they had done for him. This was in the middle of the 18th century – the house had not been long built, because it bears the year 1745 over the front door.

When we went to visit, we called first on Isabel and her family, Helen, Alexander, Isabel, William and Jessie, who was only a year old when her father died. They were very friendly towards me and also obviously curious to meet me. The oldest in the family, Margaret, was already away from home in service. Lower Tarr was an attractive farmhouse, with views to the south over Flanders Moss, a large flat marshy area. They showed me round the village and their farm, which they said was bigger and better than the Damside land. Afterwards we went across the road to meet Alexander and Mary at Damside. They were both in their sixties, unmarried and obviously very fond of the house. They took me round and I was impressed by the number of rooms and the facilities. The ownership of the house and land had come down to William's older brother, Donald, but he was quite happy to let his uncle and aunt continue to live there.

MY EARLY MARRIED LIFE

William had arranged for us to rent a house in Buchlyvie after we were married. It was on the south side of the main street with a reasonably sized garden; the proprietor was a David Harvey, who was a pleasant man and we never had any trouble with him about the property.

Buchlyvie was quite a sizeable village with a variety of shops and workshops, such as a blacksmith and a saddler. At the time we married, people were very dependent on horses and carriages, but a couple of years later, the railway came to the village and people were able to get to Kippen, the nearest town, and even to Glasgow. William, however, continued to be very dependent on a horse for getting around to see his patients and he employed a young lad to look after the horse. I had a young girl, Betty, to help me in the house. She did not know much about house-keeping when she came to us, but she was quick to learn and became a real help.

Life felt a bit strange at first after we were married. I was used to being a servant, but now I was mistress of the house and had to adjust. William had little time with me during the day, so I had to decide how to use my time. There was plenty to do, creating our new home, and I enjoyed sorting out the rooms. We did not have much money, but I managed to make the house attractive and homely.

William did two kinds of work. There were his own patients, whom he saw in our front room and whom he sometimes visited in their own homes. They paid fees and William adjusted these according to what he thought they could afford to pay. Then there was the Poor Law work. William held a post with the local council to visit paupers in the parish who needed medical attention. They could be several miles away out in the country and it meant some hard journeys for William, especially in the winter. William had to see the patients at the request of the local Relieving Officer, who carried out the work of deciding who could receive medical help on the instructions of the council. He would come to our house each day with the names and addresses of those who were ill. We dreaded these visits, because, if there were many names, it would mean a long day's work for William.



EXTRACT OF AN ENTRY IN A REGISTER OF BIRTHS – 1855
Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act 1965

	No.	CHILD.				Name; Rank Occupation;
		Name (if given), and whether Informant present or not, Baptismal Name (if different), or name given without Baptism after Registration; and date of insertion thereof.	Sex.	When born Year, Day or Month Hour.	Where born If in Lodgings, so stated.	
		McKEITH	Female	April	Bucklyrie	William McK
		McEwen		Eighth		Surgeon
	11	Jane		4 p.m.		36 Years
						Port of Mon

EXTRACTED from the Register of Births, for the..... Parish..... of..... Kippen..... in the.....
 this..... 13th..... day of..... November.....

Warning

It is an offence under Section 53(3) of the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act 1965 for any person to pass as genuine any copy or reproduction of this extract which has not been made by a district registrar or assistant registrar and authenticated by his signature.

Any person who falsifies or forges any of the particulars on this extract or knowingly uses, gives or sends as genuine any false or forged extract is liable to prosecution under section 53(1) of the said Act.

Life changed for me when our first child, Jane, was born in April the year after our marriage. I looked forward to the birth, because I had always wanted to have children. I was of course a little apprehensive about the actual birth, but I knew that I was in good hands. In the event it was a happy, though painful, experience. When I had our later children, it seemed more straightforward, though I would never agree with what Alexander now says, i.e. that it is as easy as shelling peas!

Jane was a lovely child. She was big at birth at 9lb, and grew sturdy like me. She was always cheerful and easy to bring up. People in the village were friendly and helped me if I had a problem. I already knew many of them from Sunday services and living nearby (I had often been sent to the village by the Fishers on errands). The next few years seemed to pass quickly. I had three further children in fairly quick succession, William Donald a year later, then Isabella and Mary.

Having four children was rather different to having one, so we paid for another young girl, Bessie, to help me with them. This made my life easier, though I spent as much time as I could with them. Soon it was time for Jane to go to school and we chose a private school, where children went whose parents could afford to pay the fees. We kept in touch with my family by seeing them at church on Sundays and we made several visits over to Ruskie to see William's

family. He was becoming very frustrated by his work for the poor receiving relief. The work was very poorly paid and the travel quite hazardous.

WE MOVE TO ENGLAND

William wondered how life could be made better for himself and his family, because he was spending long periods of time visiting paupers and little time with us. Medical posts were in short supply and some Scottish doctors solved the problem by going to England or abroad. William's brother, Donald, had done just that. Perhaps I should tell you a bit about him.

Donald was about a year older than William. He was very different to William, more clever (he did better in medical exams than William and got better qualifications), more sociable and ambitious. Although they were so different, the two brothers got on quite well together, though William found him difficult at times. I much preferred William, because he was so reliable, an honest man, that's why I married him! Donald had worked in Glasgow after he qualified.

When he was about thirty, Donald, who had also had difficulty getting work in Scotland, found a job in England. This was the post of physician at Sandhurst, a village in Kent in South-East England. He was pleased to find somewhere he could occupy a place in the community, although doctors were not looked up to quite as much as they are now. He rented property in the village and moved a few times over the years, including for a number of years in a very fashionable house. Being unmarried he employed a housekeeper and usually a maid as well; some doctors had a stable boy to look after their horse and carriage.

Although, being quite smart and outgoing, he knew many attractive young girls over the years, he did not marry until he was nearly forty. He became friendly after a time with his young servant, Harriet, who came from the nearby village of Benenden. Their relationship grew to something more serious and she bore him a daughter, Ellen, though his name does not appear on the birth certificate, because they were not married, and she went home to have the baby. They married the next year and had four more children, two sons and two daughters.

Donald had known that William was restless and wrote encouraging him to come to England. He talked about this with me, but for a long time he was reluctant to leave his own country for a strange place. Donald continued to try and persuade him, and in 1859 he told William that there was a vacancy for a physician in the neighbouring village of Hurst Green. So William made the long journey to London and beyond to see the place. He found the people friendly and the village quite a lively community, and accepted the post. And so towards the end of 1859 we moved to England.

The move was a tremendous upheaval. When I think about it, it still makes me shudder. We had four small children under six years old, we had to pack up all our belongings and move hundreds of miles away to a strange country. Thankfully we were able to travel by train, not by stagecoach, as we would have had to not many years previously. We

had to leave behind all the furniture and many of the possessions that we had carefully put together over the first few years of our married life. The children were tearful, not understanding what was going on.

The journey, in the end, was not too bad. We caught an over-night train from Glasgow and stayed a night in London at a boarding-house; in the morning we travelled down by train to Hurst Green. We had started to get used to the strange accents and were greeted by further strange voices at the station, which was some way from Hurst Green itself. We were taken by pony and trap to the village and on to the road which ran through it from London to Hastings. On that road were a row of houses, which contained a number of shops and also the one in which we were going to live. It was not large, but just about adequate for the six of us. Jane and William started to make themselves at home, but little Isabella clung to me and baby Mary just cried.

OUR LIFE AT HURST GREEN

Our house was next to the butcher, Mr Blinks, and on the other side of his shop was the baker, Mr Gasson. Both they and their wives were very friendly and helped us settle in. William had already managed to buy some furniture and we gradually added what we needed. Hurst Green was mainly a farming community and most of the men worked on the farms around the village. At the time we moved there was no school, so I taught our children at home. However we had found out before we moved that a school was to be built in the village and, when it opened after a couple of years, the children went there.

In fact the children were growing up fast. Jane was a quiet child, but progressing well with her reading. William was growing in confidence and was a bit cheeky. Isabella soon settled in and Mary cried less. There were plenty of other children around for our children to play with, but some were rather rough and unruly, so we tried to choose those with whom our children played. The mothers were curious about our Scottish background, but were friendly, when I got to know them and after we had adjusted to each other. I found that most of them had not had much education, but were very good with their hands. They had a different attitude to disciplining their children to the one I had; I was a good deal more strict and this could produce some tension.

Things changed not long after we moved when I found that I was pregnant again. The next year Margaret was born and I became busier still. She was a lovely baby, did not cry much and the other children loved her. Although she was only seven, Jane started helping me a bit and we employed a



House on left, 85 London Road, Hurst Green. where William, Margaret and family lived, when they first came to England

local girl to help in the house. The following years are a bit of a blur looking back. I was pregnant every two years and so by the time 1870 arrived, there were eleven of us. Obviously William could not help much, so I found two local girls to help; one of them looked after the children and the other did the laundry – I did most of the cooking.

In those early years it was good to have Donald and his family nearby. We used to go over to Sandhurst quite frequently, more than they came to us, because they had more space. For most of the time we were in Hurst Green, they lived in a lovely house called Sharp's Hill, a little out of the centre of the village. I do not know how Donald could afford it, but he liked to keep up with local society. I found it a bit awkward with Donald's wife, Harriet, at first - I suppose because she had been the servant before they married - but also because of our different backgrounds, but we got on better after a while. Their children were a bit older than ours, but they got on well from the start, as children do. They had two boys and three girls; another son, Alfred, died soon after birth



Bayford House, previously called Sharp's Hill, at Sandhurst, where Donald, Harriet and family lived for a time

WILLIAM'S WORK AS A DOCTOR AT HURST GREEN

William quickly began working hard when we arrived at Hurst Green. The district had been without a doctor for some time and people had been saving up their ailments until they could see a doctor locally. He covered a large area, including the neighbouring villages of Etchingham and Robertsbridge. Many of the roads were little more than mud tracks, though they were perhaps better than those in Scotland. Many of the people whom he visited, or came to him, were poor and could not afford high fees. He was generous and charged them less than he could have, but it meant that his income was not so good. Of course he rode a horse for visiting, which he kept in a stable at the back of our house; a local lad helped him look after it.

Because he needed extra money to help us make ends meet with our growing family, William looked around for some extra employment. There were doctors employed under the Poor Law, who looked after people who were destitute, as in Scotland. William's brother, Donald, was already employed in this way for the village of Bodiam nearby, and he suggested that William look for a similar post. A post for the villages of Salehurst and Etchingham came up in 1866 and William applied for it, but was unsuccessful.

The story now becomes quite complicated, but I tell it now, because it was a very trying time for William. There was

a local asylum called North Green House at Hawkhurst nearby, run by a William Harmer, and Donald became Visiting Medical Attendant there. William Harmer had a son, William Milsted Harmer, who at that time had just qualified as a doctor. When the district of Salehurst and Etchingham was divided in two shortly afterwards, creating a district for Hurst Green, both he and my William applied, and the junior William Harmer was appointed. Donald took offence that William, the local doctor, had been passed over, and resigned his post. But there was a rule, that a doctor had to reside in that same district, and, because William Milsted Harmer could not find a property there, the post went to William, who was also supported by local people. Donald subsequently reapplied and was reappointed to the Bodiam post.

So, after some unfortunate bad feeling, William started on his new work. It meant more money (not a lot, but more than in Scotland), but it also meant that he had to work longer hours, visiting poor people, often deep in the countryside. And William was not at all well. He had suffered from a heart problem for some time, which meant that he had palpitations when he was overworked and tired. I tried to get him to do less, but he answered that he had to do all the work to provide enough money for us to live.

William was very appreciative of what Donald had done to help him get the Poor Law post and it brought the brothers closer together. Donald had been very angry that the post had originally been given to the son of a land-owner, instead of the local doctor, and local people were also concerned. Working for the sick poor of the area was not easy. The rules were very strict about whom he could visit and treat; if he had not been requested to visit, even though William knew they were sick, he could be in trouble. In addition to his normal work, he also filled the post of Public Vaccinator, which meant that he had to vaccinate all the poor who were receiving relief. He also had periodically to do various other things, such as delivering a baby, mending a fracture or certifying someone as a lunatic, but at least he got paid extra money for these.

OUR LATER YEARS AT HURST GREEN

As I said earlier, these years after we settled in Hurst Green were a bit of a blur, because I was giving birth every other year or so, and the older children were growing up and needing attention. One thing I do remember is that after five years, we moved house. We had become too big a family for our small terrace house in London Road, so we moved to a larger terrace house not far away in Turnpike Road. We were sorry to leave our close neighbours, but made good friends in our new terrace. The house was not really much bigger than our previous one, but we managed.

As I said already, when we first arrived in the village, there was no school. Rather than send them to the nearest village, Etchingham, I decided to teach the older children myself. So I taught Jane, William, and later Isabella, at home, with set times in the morning and afternoon. It was difficult with the younger children also around, but I managed to get them mostly out of the house and playing with other children under the supervision of another mother. I was glad when

Printed by authority of the Registrar General

CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY OF BIRTH
Pursuant to the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953

Registration District *Ticehurst*

1866 Birth in the Sub-district of *Salehurst* in the County of *Sussex*

Column	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10*
No.	When and where born	Name, if any	Sex	Name, and surname of father	Name, surname and maiden surname of mother	Occupation of father	Signature, description, and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar	Name entered after registration
<i>27</i>	<i>Eighteenth March 1866 Hurstgreen Etchingham</i>	<i>Alexander Arthur Boy</i>		<i>William Mackeith</i>	<i>Margaret Mackeith formerly MacGie</i>	<i>Surgeon</i>	<i>William Mackeith Father Hurstgreen Etchingham</i>	<i>Twenty fourth April 1866</i>	<i>William Watson</i>	<i>Registrar.</i>

Certified to be a true copy of an entry in a register in my custody.

CAUTION—It is an offence to falsify a certificate or to make or knowingly use a false certificate or a copy of a false certificate intending it to be accepted as genuine to the prejudice of any person, or to possess a certificate knowing it to be false without lawful authority.

WARNING: THIS CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF THE IDENTITY OF THE PERSON PRESENTING IT.

[Signature] *depos* Superintendent Registrar
6.7.25

Birth certificate for Alexander

a school was opened by the Church of England; my teaching skills were not good and, if it had gone on much longer, my knowledge would have been stretched.

Mention of the Church of England means that I must say something about how we practised our religion while we were in England. We found the Church of England services very different to our Church of Scotland ones. There were too many set prayers and a lot of ritual, with which we were not comfortable. So we arranged our own worship at home. Each morning William would say a prayer for us all at breakfast and on Sundays we had our own service at home, with hymns, readings and prayer. The children were encouraged to take part and I encouraged them to learn passages of the Bible. For baptisms we went up to London to the Church of Scotland church there, according to a service to which we were used.

As they grew up, I was interested to see how the children’s characters developed. Amongst the boys there were quite marked differences. The oldest, William, grew up confident in himself; he was quite clever, but did not apply himself to his books. Bearing the same name as my husband, we had to have ways of distinguishing them. So he was sometimes known as Willie, or called Donald, his second name; his brothers and sisters would call him ‘W.D’., which they said meant ‘waste disposal’! John, the next boy, was a more reserved child: hard-working and always seeking to do the best he could. Alexander was the most focussed of the three; whenever he set himself to do something, he would pursue it single-mindedly. He was also, even as one of the younger ones, good at organising us! The girls were

very obedient and well-behaved. Isabella was the most striking in appearance and was the most devout amongst them. As time went on, they helped more around the house. As was the custom, Jane, the eldest, went into service when she was 15. Catherine and Donald, the youngest two, were looked after increasingly by their older sisters and spoiled when I was not looking! There is a photograph of us all, taken at about that time, which shows me very much at the centre of the family, which I suppose I was! William's sideboards are very prominent – I tried to persuade him to have them trimmed, but to no avail! Son William also looks fairly distinguished and is leaning confidently on what looks like Jane's shoulder.



William and Margaret MacKeith and family at Hurst Green, taken about 1870: Back row from left: Isabella, William, Jane and William Donald; second row: John, Margaret with baby Donald in her arms, Mary and daughter, Margaret; at bottom: Catherine and Alexander

WILLIAM'S DEATH

I come now to the saddest moment of my life, William's death. He was both my life companion and father of our children. I was left to bring up all nine of them on my own in what was still for me quite a strange country. It meant a very difficult time for me financially, but above all I lost my friend and support. I know people will say I was the stronger character in our marriage. However William was very reliable and wise, and was the rock on which our marriage was built.

We knew that he had problems with his heart for many years; he got tired and out of breath. His work as a doctor, particularly looking after paupers in all parts of the district, was very demanding; he took his work very conscientiously and would always respond to cases of need. Latterly there had been certain days when he had had to rest up for a while, but then would force himself to go out. Then one morning he was taken ill and within three hours had died. The local newspaper said that he had been greatly respected by people, and indeed he was. I received many expressions of sympathy and offers of help.

This was in 1872 and Donald was not yet two. The children took it very badly in their different ways. They tried to take it stoically, as this how William and I usually behaved in times of trouble, but the girls were



Census record for 1871 for Hurst Green, showing William and Margaret MacKeith and family

[Printed by authority of the Registrar General.]

CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY OF DEATH
Pursuant to the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953

HC 3

Registration District <i>Ticehurst</i>								
1272. Death in the Sub-district of <i>Salehurst</i> in the County of <i>Sussex</i>								
No.	When and where born	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description, and residence of informant	When registered
	<i>Eight 25 April 1872 Hurstgreen Eckington</i>	<i>William MacKeith</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>56 years</i>	<i>Surgeon</i>	<i>Heart Disease 20 years Certified</i>	<i>Margaret MacKeith Present at the death Hurstgreen Eckington</i>	<i>Thirtieth April 1872</i>

Certified to be a true copy of an entry in a register in my custody.

R. J. W. Deputy Superintendent Registrar
A. 2. 95

CAUTION—It is an offence to falsify a certificate or to make or knowingly use a false certificate or a copy of a false certificate intending it to be accepted as genuine to the prejudice of any person, or to possess a certificate knowing it to be false without lawful authority.

Notice of death of William MacKeith

On the *seventeenth* day of *August* 1922,
Letters of Administration, of &c. not requiring the personal Entry and Oath
of *William MacKeith late of Eckington*
in the County of *Nottingham*.

deceased, who died on the eighth day of April 1872.
at Eckington aforesaid deceased in England.

were granted at the District Registry situated at the Majesty's Court of Probate at
Leeds *Margaret MacKeith of*
Eckington aforesaid the lawful Widow and Sole

of the said deceased, the said being born full years duly in addition.

Donald MacKeith of Southwell Road, Glasgow
John Adams of Eckington aforesaid, His
Executors.

Forms under 2366 in the United Kingdom. In Scotland
Issued by *J. Milne, Solicitor, Edinburgh*

Death certificate for William MacKeith

particularly affected. Jane, the eldest at 16, was badly overcome, as she had been very close to William.

A week after his death, we took his body back to our native Scotland for burial. Obviously it took a great deal of effort to transport the coffin back to our home area, but Donald came to the rescue and organised it for me. We all travelled up to Scotland by train together. William was buried in the small cemetery at Kilmahog, just outside Callendar, where his father and other members of the family are also buried. I remember that it was a cold day for April and we shivered as the minister led the prayer of interment and the coffin was lowered. William's relatives were present in large numbers and welcomed us in their various homes. We issued black-edged cards to family and friends, as was the custom in those days.

WE RETURN TO SCOTLAND

We came back to Hurst Green and started to adjust to life without William - it was hard. Not only did we have to adjust to his absence, we also had to adjust to the loss of his income. Fortunately, he had been careful with our money and, when his matters had been sorted out, there was still enough for us to live on for several months. Jane was already in service locally, so that brought in a small amount, but we could not afford to on like this for very long and we did not want to suffer the indignities of having to go on to the Poor Law. Donald and Harriet were very helpful, but they could not help us much financially, with five children of their own to look after.

It seemed to me that the best way forward would be to return to Scotland. It would be cheaper living there and we would know our way around better, since England still seemed, in many ways, a strange place. The question was; where should we go? The area we had come from was obviously a possibility, but the choices of schooling and higher education were limited. William and I had always hoped that William Donald would follow him into medicine, and possibly his brothers too. Glasgow was where William had been at medical school and some of his relatives lived there.

So we started to think of going there.

William's step-brother, Alexander, lived in Glasgow; he was a tea-merchant, but later worked as a full-time evangelist and also did charitable work. He offered to help me find somewhere for our family to live in Glasgow. After some searching he found a tenement property in the Hillhead area, north-west of the city centre. It was not large, but had just enough rooms, with boys and girls sharing, to accommodate us all. It was in New City Road, a main road with a tramway, a busy place. Though it was noisy, it was convenient for shops and was very close to a Normal School for the younger children and not far from a High School for the older ones.

It was sad leaving people we had lived with for 12 years. For the children it was hard saying good-bye to friends whom they would probably never see again. Yet for some of the children there was a sense of adventure going to a new place. The move itself was a great effort. There were 10 of us in all together with all our luggage; Donald very kindly accompanied us all the way by train to London and then onwards to Glasgow. It was late 1873, the year after William died and moving then made it possible for William Donald to start at university the following year. Our journey went reasonably smoothly and it seemed in some ways like coming home, though I did not know Glasgow well, only by travelling through it and by occasional visits, when I was a child, from Bishopton. When we arrived at the tenement, I was disappointed at the property, but Alexander had taken it for a rent he knew I could afford, and it was good enough.

LIFE BACK IN SCOTLAND

It took us a long time to adjust to being back in Scotland. It was good to hear the Scottish accent again (though Glaswegians have a funny way with speaking), but life was so different from that in England. We were in a tenement, up three floors, and so were in a confined space – so different to our house in England, where we could expand into the garden and surrounding area. And there were so many people around. In England there was ordinary village life, but not the sheer numbers of people milling about – going to work, to school and shopping.

But gradually we settled in. The older children went to a Higher School and the younger ones to Cowcaddens Normal School, which was just round the corner from us; William Donald was preparing to go to Medical School. But then tragedy struck. Little Donald fell ill with tuberculosis. The disease was so common in that time and he was not a strong child. The doctor did all he could, but it was to no avail. We took his little body back to the family grave at Kilmahog and buried him there. It was very sad for us all. Being the youngest in the family, he was special to us and we missed his cheery playfulness.

Those early years in Glasgow were, I remember, a time when the children were studying hard at school and the older ones were starting to go out to work. The future for the girls was different to that for the boys. The girls would finish schooling around 15 and go out to work, usually in service to a family. The boys, on the other hand, would stay

on at school long enough to prepare for a profession or other ‘proper job’, in the case of my three, medicine. Some people think that this was not fair to the girls, but that is what it was like for me and there are fewer openings for girls. Certainly some of the girls (and I am thinking of Isabella in particular) were capable of more academic study, but that is how life was.

Jane had been in service in England and we soon found a family for her. Isabella, too, went into service soon after we moved. Mary and Margaret had a few more years of schooling. William Donald studied for his matriculation exams for about a year and successfully entered the School of Medicine. The University was a little way from us, but he could take a tram and walk a short distance. John and Alexander soon moved to the High School; they were keen to follow in William Donald’s footsteps and applied themselves well to their studies. Catherine started school soon after we moved.

ANOTHER SAD DEATH AND A MOVE

We had another very sad event in the family soon. Towards the end of 1877 the terrible disease of tuberculosis struck again. This time it was Jane who had the misfortune to catch it. She came home one Sunday on her day off and it was

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1877. DEATHS in the District of Edinburgh in the Burgh of Edinburgh

-Page 24-

No.	Name and Surname, Rank or Profession, and whether Single, Married, or Widowed.	When and Where Died.	Sex.	Age.	Name, Surname, & Rank or Profession of Father. Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Cause of Death, Duration of Disease, and Medical Attendant by whom certified.	Signature & Qualification of Informant, and Residence, if not of the house in which the Death occurred.	When and where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
70	<u>Trace</u> <u>Terment</u> <u>married to</u> <u>William Terment</u> <u>Tailor</u> <u>Journeyman</u>	<u>1877</u> <u>January</u> <u>Edinburgh</u> <u>45 St. John St.</u> <u>Edinburgh</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>62</u> <u>years</u>	<u>John Terment</u> <u>Solicitor</u> <u>deceased</u> <u>Margaret Terment</u> <u>the late of</u> <u>M. S. M. Terment</u> <u>deceased</u> <u>Edinburgh</u>	<u>Chorea</u> <u>Chorea</u> <u>deceased</u> <u>the late of</u> <u>Robert Terment</u> <u>Edinburgh</u>	<u>W. L. L. L.</u> <u>Edinburgh</u> <u>deceased</u> <u>W. L. L. L.</u> <u>Edinburgh</u>	<u>1877</u> <u>January 23</u> <u>At Edinburgh</u> <u>W. L. L. L.</u> <u>Edinburgh</u> <u>Registrar</u>
71	<u>Jane</u> <u>MacKeith</u> <u>MacKeith</u> <u>Single</u>	<u>1877</u> <u>January</u> <u>Edinburgh</u> <u>45 St. John St.</u> <u>Edinburgh</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>22</u> <u>years</u>	<u>William MacKeith</u> <u>Edinburgh</u> <u>deceased</u> <u>Margaret MacKeith</u> <u>the late of</u> <u>M. S. M. MacKeith</u> <u>Edinburgh</u>	<u>Chorea</u> <u>Chorea</u> <u>deceased</u> <u>the late of</u> <u>Robert MacKeith</u> <u>Edinburgh</u>	<u>William L. L. L.</u> <u>Edinburgh</u> <u>deceased</u> <u>Present</u> <u>W. L. L. L.</u> <u>Edinburgh</u>	<u>1877</u> <u>January 23</u> <u>At Edinburgh</u> <u>W. L. L. L.</u> <u>Edinburgh</u> <u>Registrar</u>
72	<u>James</u> <u>MacKeith</u> <u>MacKeith</u> <u>Married to</u> <u>Mary MacKeith</u>	<u>1877</u> <u>January</u> <u>Edinburgh</u> <u>45 St. John St.</u> <u>Edinburgh</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>38</u> <u>years</u>	<u>James MacKeith</u> <u>Edinburgh</u> <u>deceased</u> <u>Margaret MacKeith</u> <u>the late of</u> <u>M. S. M. MacKeith</u> <u>Edinburgh</u>	<u>Chorea</u> <u>Chorea</u> <u>deceased</u> <u>the late of</u> <u>Robert MacKeith</u> <u>Edinburgh</u>	<u>Mary MacKeith</u> <u>Edinburgh</u> <u>deceased</u> <u>Present</u> <u>W. L. L. L.</u> <u>Edinburgh</u>	<u>1877</u> <u>January 23</u> <u>At Edinburgh</u> <u>W. L. L. L.</u> <u>Edinburgh</u> <u>Registrar</u>

W. L. L. L. Registrar.

Record of death of Jane

obvious that she was unwell. The doctor could not do anything for her and she died about two months later. William Donald looked as helpless as the rest of us, in spite of his new medical knowledge.

Jane's death seemed to give the children greater determination to make something of their lives, knowing that they could be struck down by the disease at any time, but also somehow wanting to prove themselves worthy of those who had died. Mary had ambition to be somewhat more than a servant and sought a job where she could take some responsibility, either looking after children or running a household. After some initial unsatisfactory experiences, she found a post as housekeeper to an elderly lady not far from us. Margaret also did not fancy going into service; she did a year's training as a primary school teacher and then obtained a post at a school also near us. John, and then Alexander, took jobs as clerks in offices in the centre of the city, partly to bring in money for our household expenses, but largely to save for fees for the medical school.

Isabella however had different plans. She continued in school longer than the others, because she was clearly academically gifted. She had started to attend the nearby Episcopal church and there met a young clergyman, Charles Barton, and they fell in love. He was about to become vicar of a church in Northern England and we sadly lost her near

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(Page 200.)

1880. MARRIAGES In the District of Kilmory In the Burgh of Glasgow.

No.	When, Where, and How Married.	Signature of Parties. Rank or Profession, whether Single or Widowed, and Relationship (if any).	Age.	Usual Residence.	Rank, surname, and Rank or Profession of Father. Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother.	If a regular Marriage, Signature of Officiating Minister and Witnesses. If irregular, Date of Coverture, Name of Declarator, or Sheriff's Warrant.	When & Where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
411	1880. on the seventh day of October at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Glasgow. After Banns, according to the forms of the Episcopal Church.	Signed Charles Barton Incumbent of Waterhouse Parish (Bachelor.) Signed Isabella MacKeith MacKeith (Spinster.)	31. 22.	Water House near Durham. 15 Hill Street Glasgow.	Signed William MacKeith Bachelors and deceased, and Margaret MacKeith Mrs. MacKeith.	Signed J. R. Buchanan, Curate of St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Glasgow. Signed Isabella MacKeith Witness. Mary MacKeith Witness.	1880. October 7 th Glasgow.
412	1880. on the eighth day of October, at 11, Burnbank Terrace, Glasgow. After Banns, according to the forms of the Church of Scotland.	Signed Robert Gilliland, Clergyman, (Bachelor.) Signed Grace McKeith, Dairymaid, (Spinster.)	22. 21.	Little Kilmory Bute. Thornhill Farm, Bute.	Signed William John Gilliland, Clergyman, deceased, and Agnes Gilliland Mrs. McKeith (deceased) Signed James McKeith Clergyman, deceased, and Agnes McKeith Mrs. Hoche (deceased)	Signed Robert Amington, Min. of the Glasgow Church, Glasgow. Signed Thomas Lockhart, Witness, Agnes Gilliland, Witness.	1880. October 9 th Glasgow.

J. R. Buchanan, Registrar.

Record of wedding of Isabella MacKeith to Charles Barton

presence. However it was a lovely wedding and we were very happy for them both.

Not long before the wedding, in 1880, we had moved. It was a long story about how it came about, but family connections came into it, as they often did. I have already said that William had a step-brother, Alexander, who lived in Glasgow and who had helped us find somewhere to live when we moved back to Scotland. He was a successful tea-merchant (other members of the family were also in the tea business, either at home or abroad). He and his family had been living in a property near the centre of the city in Hill Street, but were moving to another property not far away. He knew that we were not altogether happy in our tenement, and offered us the Hill Street house at a reasonable rent. It certainly was an improvement on New City Road; it had four bed-rooms, reasonably sized living rooms and even a small garden. I accepted his kind offer and we moved soon afterwards. It was more convenient for John and Alexander's offices and close enough for Catherine to stay in the same school.

I get a little confused about what was happening at that time – there was so much going on: moving house, Isabella getting married, William Donald qualifying as a doctor, John and Alexander starting work. Margaret was a real help at that time. Her job as a teacher left her with some time to help me in the house; we were certainly not able to afford any paid help.

THE BOYS' MEDICAL STUDIES

I think that it would be best if I told about the boys' medical studies now; though they were spread over a long period, it is easier to talk about them as a whole. All three wanted to go into the medical profession in their own way, and William and I had been keen to encourage them to follow in their father's footsteps. The prestige of the medical profession had increased substantially over recent years, from the time William would describe of being told to go to the tradesmen's entrance. Doctors could charge reasonable fees now and they were accepted as a profession, like solicitors and clergy. There were far more students at medical schools now; this had the disadvantage that there was not enough work for all graduates, and many went to work in England. It was still an expense to train, but fortunately all three were able to live at home while they were training.

William Donald had started studying medicine soon after we moved from England. He was bright, but did not always apply himself to his studies. I was always a little sorry for him. His father died when he was only 15, and, as the oldest son, he had to take on a lot of responsibilities at an early age. I was very absorbed looking after the younger children and running the household, so that much of the business side of running the family fell to him, and he never experienced the freedom from the cares of the world, which young men usually do. His early studies seemed to go well, but, when he started taking the professional examinations, he got low marks and was required to resit a number of subjects. However he passed them at the second attempt and completed his qualification.

John was a more diligent student than William Donald, and passed his exams first time. However there was an incident when he took his first professional exams, which I never really understood and about which he was reluctant to speak. It seems that the examiner said that he had been caught copying and that the matter should be reported to the Senate, the governing body of the university. Although nothing seemed to come of it, it cast a shadow over his time there. However he passed his final exams and was duly registered as a doctor.

Alexander started studying just a year after John, although he was in fact two years younger than him. He was keen to get started and there was no lower age limit for students. He had no difficulty with his exams and passed them all first time, getting on average better marks than John.

There were also other members of the family studying medicine at the same time in Glasgow. William's brother, Donald, had two sons, John and William, whom we had known when we were living in Hurst Green and they were living nearby in Sandhurst. They also followed in their father's footsteps and went to medical school in Glasgow. However they were less successful than my boys. John started studying a year after William Donald and continued for a number of years. He appears never to have taken any exams and never qualified; he died in mysterious circumstances a year after leaving. I don't know how long William studied for, but he also did not qualify. I believe that he practised as a medical assistant, sometimes even giving himself the title 'Doctor'. He married Emily Arthur in Southampton – the first contact of our family with the town. We saw both John and William from time to time, but we did not have sufficient accommodation to have them stay with us.



Alexander MacKeith, on graduating from the University of Glasgow in 1886

THE FAMILY START TO MOVE AWAY

It was inevitable that it would happen - children grow up and move away. However it was a wrench having them go on their different ways. William Donald was the first to go after he had qualified. Work was still hard to find in Scotland and so he decided to look for a post in England. The medical press had an advertisement for an assistant in a practice in Northumberland in north east England. It was in a rural area near a small town called Riding Mill. Incidentally, it was not far from where Isabella and her husband went to live after their wedding. The post gave William Donald some much needed experience, but he was not particularly happy there and was very pleased to obtain the post of Medical Officer in the parish of Kirkmabrech on the coast of south west Scotland. This was also a rural community, but back in Scotland and based in the lively fishing port of Creetown. There he obtained lodgings with a butcher in the town.

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(Page 3)

1882. MARRIAGES in the Parish of Kirkmabreck in the Locality of Kirkmabreck

No.	When, Where, and How Married.	Signature of Parties. Rank or Profession, whether Single or Widowed, and Relationship (if any).	Age.	Usual Residence.	Name, Surname, and Rank or Profession of Father. Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother.	If a regular Marriage, Signature of officiating Minister and Witnesses. If irregular, Date of Contract, Name of Celebrant, or Sheriff's Warrant.	When & Where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
12 Aug 25	1882. on the Twenty third day of June at Kirkmabreck	1 signed William MacLeod stone mason 1 journeyman (Bachelor)	24	Kirkmabreck	John MacLeod stone mason (Deceased) John MacLeod Mrs. M. Macmillan	1 signed John Colvin Minister of Kirkmabreck	1882 June 25
13 Aug 26	1882. on the Twenty sixth day of June at Kirkmabreck	1 signed Elizabeth Jane Berman 1 spinster	23	Kirkmabreck	James Berman sea man Elizabeth Berman Mrs. Carson	William Buchanan Witness James B. Boyle Witness	1882 June 26
14 Aug 27	1882. on the Twenty seventh day of June at Kirkmabreck	1 signed William Donald MacKeith 1 Bachelor	25	Kirkmabreck	William MacKeith Surgeon & Physician (Deceased) Margaret MacKeith Mrs. M. Mac	1 signed John Colvin Minister of Kirkmabreck	1882 June 27
15 Aug 28	1882. on the Twenty eighth day of June at Kirkmabreck	1 signed Janet Sloan 1 spinster	21	Kirkmabreck	Margaret Sloan James (Deceased) Janet Sloan Mrs. Smith	John Sloan Witness Mary Sloan Witness	1882 June 28

Registrar

Record of wedding of William Donald MacKeith to Janet (Jessie) Sloan

Within two years he had met and married Jessie, daughter of a local farmer. They made an arresting couple – he quite handsome and she tall and attractive – in fact she had four sisters who were also tall, and the local saying was that there were 30 feet of Sloan daughters in the family!

As I said earlier, Isabella married her English clergyman, Charles Barton, and returned with him to the village of Waterhouses in County Durham in north east England. He had been there for only a year, having previously served as a curate in Sunderland in the same diocese. Waterhouses was a mining village; there had been a church there for a number of years. It was extended in the first years of their marriage and Charles was the first vicar. They lived in a modest property nearby, but later a spacious vicarage was built, which they very much enjoyed. Back in Glasgow we had a further upheaval. Alexander MacKeith, William’s step-brother, found that he could no longer afford to let us have the Hill Street property at a low rent. He had been doing evangelical work in the city, financed by a wealthy supporter. When that support came to an end, he had had to return to his tea business, which had not been doing too well. He needed to make the property pay or even sell it, and regretfully told me that we would have to leave. I looked round for

another property and found a tenement in St George's Road, not far away. It was not particularly congenial, but it meant that the children could carry on with what they were doing and continue to live at home. However we were really not happy there, and within a year or so moved to another tenement in Woodlands Road, also not far away. Finally we moved to another tenement building, Westbank Quadrant – this time in a more pleasant location, overlooking the river and very near the university.



View of tenements at Westbank Quadrant in Glasgow, where Margaret and family lived at the turn of the century

At this time, John and Alexander were also starting to move away. First it was John, who was also looking for work in England. He had at least two unsuccessful attempts to settle as an assistant to a medical practice, first in Derbyshire in the north of England and then in Suffolk, but neither place was satisfactory (I sometimes think that he can be a bit fussy!). Alexander graduated a year later than John and was too young to be registered as a doctor. So he spent a year working as an unqualified ship's doctor, travelling to India and back. He has said that it was the most profound experience of his life and he certainly came back a more confident and mature person. (He also was considerably tanned, which caused some amusement in the family!) It was at this moment, when Alexander had returned from his voyaging and John had been unable to find satisfactory work, that the two brothers decided to try and find work together, or at least nearby, and that deserves a new chapter.

JOHN AND ALEXANDER MOVE TO EXETER



The house in Exeter at Hampden Place, where John and Alexander lived when they came to England

The two looked in medical journals and found that there were two advertisements for posts in Exeter: one as an assistant in a medical practice and the other as Medical Officer for a Poor Law district a little outside Exeter. John was more interested in the medical practice and Alexander in the Medical Officer one. They applied and were both invited for interview at about the same date. Exeter was a long way to travel, but if it meant finding somewhere satisfactory, it was worth it.

[Printed by authority of the Registrar General.]

CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY OF DEATH
Pursuant to the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953

Registration District Saint Thomas

1891. Death in the Sub-district of Saint Thomas in the County of Devon

No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description, and residence of informant	V reg
368	Twenty seventh January 1891 5 Hampden Place Alphington Road St Thomas USD	Margaret Annie MacKeith	Female	28 years	Daughter of William MacKeith Surgeon (Deceased)	Mitral Disease 7 years Congestion of R th Lung 2 months Asthenia Certified by Henry Davy M.R.C.P.	A A MacKeith Brother present at the death 5 Hampden Place Alphington Road St Thomas	Tw ei Ja 18

Certified to be a true copy of an entry in a register in my custody.

W. Semler, Deputy
15:10:15

CAUTION:—It is an offence to falsify a certificate or to make or knowingly use a false certificate or a copy of a false certificate intending it to be accepted as genuine to the prejudice of any person, or to possess a certificate knowing it to be false without lawful authority.

Record of death of Margaret

They travelled down with a good deal of apprehension, but found Exeter an attractive city and were delighted when they were both successful. While down there they set about finding somewhere to live which would be convenient for them both. They found a house in the St Thomas district of Exeter, across the river from the centre of the city and close to the road leading north to Brampford Speke, the Poor Law district for which Alexander had been appointed Medical Officer. They returned home excited at the prospect of their new work. While home they talked about what arrangements they would need to see to the running of their household. Into these discussions Margaret made the bold suggestion that she should accompany them back and act as their housekeeper. We were all taken aback by this idea and concerned that it would mean her abandoning her teaching and moving hundreds of miles from home. In the end John and Alexander gratefully accepted her offer. It would mean that I would be left with just Catherine as company. Mary, however, was not too far away at the moment and it seemed the right decision.

In the spring of 1888 the three of them travelled south with all their luggage and took up their work; Margaret was to have a servant to help her. I awaited news of them eagerly. Initially it was good – both John and Alexander liked their work and Margaret was coping well. Alexander was seeing patients privately, since the district for which he was responsible was small and did not pay a large salary. However John soon found that their house at St Thomas was not

convenient for his work in the city centre and he moved into lodgings in the centre. About two years later Margaret became ill with a lung condition. Her heart had not been strong for some time and this infection proved too much. I considered coming south to help look after her, but it was too late; she died with Alexander by her side. This was a heavy blow to us all and we wondered what to do next. Catherine by now had left school and was working in service. She offered to go south and help Alexander in the house, and he gladly accepted. Meanwhile John had moved out of his lodgings into a property of his own, and Mary agreed to go south to look after him. I was now left all on my own, but I was soon involved with William Donald and the terrible things, which happened to his family.

THE SAD STORY OF WILLIAM DONALD AND JANET

William Donald and Janet set up home in Creetown. They had a nice house in the centre of the town and two years later had a lovely daughter, Gracie. I saw them from time to time; they came to see me and I travelled down to them, not a particularly difficult journey by train. But soon it was apparent that all was



Bayview, the house at Creetown, where William Donald and Jessie lived

not well. William Donald became moody and bad-tempered at times, and it became clear that he was drinking too much alcohol. At home we had always been teetotal, and it may have been that he had never learned to drink moderately. It may also have been to do with the weight of responsibility that he had had to carry when he was young, and the weight of responsibility of his new job was reminding him of this. I don't know – I talked with Janet and she confided her worries to me.

The drinking started to affect his work. He was given three month's notice to abandon 'his intemperate habits', but that was never implemented 'in the hope that the causes may be removed'. Later he was given notice again, but it was rescinded again. Yet again it was agreed to dismiss him, but he gave a written undertaking to abstain from alcohol. Finally in 1891 he was formally dismissed. Janet told me all this in detail, glad to have someone in whom to confide.

Just at the moment when all this came to a head, Janet had a second child, Donald John. This joyful event helped the situation a bit, although it meant that there was another mouth to feed and no money coming in. However it soon became clear that all was not well with Janet. She had not been well during her later months of pregnancy, and she was now diagnosed with TB. None of her own family was free to look after her, so I came to help. But there was nothing to be done, and she died just a month after giving birth.

And now William Donald started to go downhill. His general condition deteriorated and he caught influenza. Because of the seriousness of the situation, John came up from Exeter to give further support and help sort out their family affairs. William Donald died just a year after Donald was born, at the age of 35. Arrangements had to be made for the children. I agreed to take Gracie back home with me and we arranged to pay a woman to look after Donald John. But he survived his father by not much more than a month. The whole sorry story was a really harrowing affair and I still can not get the horror of it out of my mind. It also came at about the time of Margaret’s death, which made matters even worse. So Gracie came to stay with me; she was an obedient child and I did not have to chide her often.

THE FAMILY IN DEVON

Alexander enjoyed his work in Exeter and took on a number of medical appointments with Friendly and Assurance societies, which brought in a bit extra income. But the Medical Officer post was not very demanding and he was on the look out for something more challenging. At about this time, he met Alice Gadd. She came from a good family; her father was a wholesale druggist, who supplied medicines to dispensaries and medical practices. She and Alexander met because both attended the local Congregationalist Church. Her family lived in a large house in St David’s district not far from the station. They were married at the parish church, with John and Mary present representing the family, and

[Printed by authority of the Registrar General]

CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY OF MARRIAGE Pursuant to the Marriage Act 1949

Registration District Exeter

1892. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the County of the City of Exeter

District of Parish of Saint David

No.	When married	Name and surname	Age	Condition	Rank or profession	Residence at the time of marriage	Father's name and surname	Rank or profession of father
206	July 28 1892	Alexander Arthur MacKEITH	26	Bachelor	M.B., C.M.	Ivy Cottage St Thomas	William MACKEITH deceased	Physician
		Alice GADD	25	Spinster		25 St David's Hill	Henry GADD	Merchant

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church after Banns by William S Mallett offg minister

This marriage was solemnized between us, Alexander Arthur MacKeith in the presence of us, Henry Gadd Mary MacKeith E. Rose Gadd John MacKeith

Certified to be a true copy of an entry in a register in my custody.

CAUTION—Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this certificate, or (2) uses a falsified certificate as true, knowing it to be false, is liable to prosecution.

WARNING: THIS CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF THE IDENTITY OF THE PERSON PRESENTING IT.

J.B. Wynne Superintendent Registrar
21st August 1995

Marriage certificate for Alexander MacKeith and Alice Gadd

went to live in a pleasant cottage in St Thomas district, not far from where Alexander had been living. After the marriage Catherine was no longer needed and returned home to me. Their first two children, Donald and Malcolm, were born there.

A post came up, about three years after they were married, at Ilfracombe, a town on the North Devon coast. It was a job similar to the one which he had been doing, that of Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator

for the Poor Law district, but it paid far more money, because of the size of the district and the number of paupers for whom he had to care. Alexander and Alice found a good-sized detached house in the centre of the town. While they were living there, they had two more children, Eric and Dora.

Ilfracombe was an attractive town and Alexander wrote an article for a medical journal about its health benefits. However he was not altogether happy there. In spite of the increase in salary, he had to spend a large proportion of it on medicines for the paupers. In addition he was finding the work quite arduous, like his father before him. Many of the paupers were some way out in the country and travelling to visit them by horse on muddy roads, often little more than tracks, was not pleasant. A proposal to hive off some of the parish to another district was defeated, but he was given an increase in salary. Nevertheless he was restless.

Meanwhile John had become quite well established in Exeter. Like Alexander, he took on additional medical appointments, including that of Assistant Medical Officer of a Poor Law district, and he had a nice house in the Barnfield district of Exeter, where he was looked after by Mary. However he too was restless and Mary was homesick for Scotland.

Isabella, and her husband, Charles, also spent some years in Devon at a village called Landkey. It was really very close to Ilfracombe, where Alexander and his family were living, and I wonder whether this was a coincidence. Before that they had spent some years in a parish in Sowerby in Yorkshire, but seem to have been restless. Isabella was not able to have children, which was a sadness for Charles and herself – perhaps the moves were an attempt to find somewhere she might have been able to conceive.

Catherine only spent a year or two helping to look after Alexander in Exeter after Margaret died and before he married Alice. However she made friends there, especially with Alice's family and she made visits there from Glasgow from time to time. She became especially friendly with Alice's brother, Henry, and they married up in Glasgow in the same Episcopalian church, in which Isabella had married some years earlier. It was a lovely occasion, attended by all



House in Ilfracombe where Alexander, Alice and children lived in 1890s

the members of the family, and also by members of the Gadd and Wippell families (Alice and Henry's mother's maiden name was Wippell).

UP TO THE PRESENT DAY

As I said, Alexander did not find his work at Ilfracombe satisfactory, not only because of the difficult conditions, but also because his family was increasing and he needed to build a larger practice and increase his income. He knew of Southampton, because he had visited the town for a family wedding; a further reason for going there was that it had a Presbyterian church, because of the link of the port with Scottish seamen. In 1899 he obtained permission to be absent from his work at Ilfracombe and visited Southampton. He liked what he saw and made arrangements for accommodation for his family. He returned to Ilfracombe and tendered his resignation.

It was quite a leap in the dark. The move was arduous, since they now had four children; it reminded me of our journey south all those years ago. It was a big wrench for Alice to move from her Devon roots – while at Ilfracombe they had visited the family in Exeter quite frequently. Alexander had found a property in Millbrook district, which was expanding rapidly and therefore was a likely source of patients. However his arrival was not welcomed by other doctors in the district, who saw him as squatting or poaching patients; their wives initially did not visit Alice because of the intrusion.

At about the same time that Alexander and his family moved away from Devon to Southampton, Isabella and Charles also moved from their parish in Landkey.

I don't know whether these two moves were linked in any way, but anyhow he obtained a parish at

Harbledown, just outside Canterbury in Kent; it was a parish similar in size to the one in Devon.

John and Mary stayed in Exeter for about four more years. He however had had a yearning to live in London and a few years later set himself up in practice in South London in the quite fashionable area of Kennington; like many other London doctors he had separate practice premises. Mary was able to fulfil her wish to return to Scotland and obtained a post of companion to an old lady at Bridge of Allan in Perthshire.



The Old Rectory, at Harbledown, near Canterbury, where Isabella and Charles Barton lived

AND NOW

You do not need me to tell you what is happening now, but, in case someone should read this at a later date, I will describe how things stand. When Gracie finished her degree at the university and obtained a post as a teacher,



Alexander MacKeith in later life

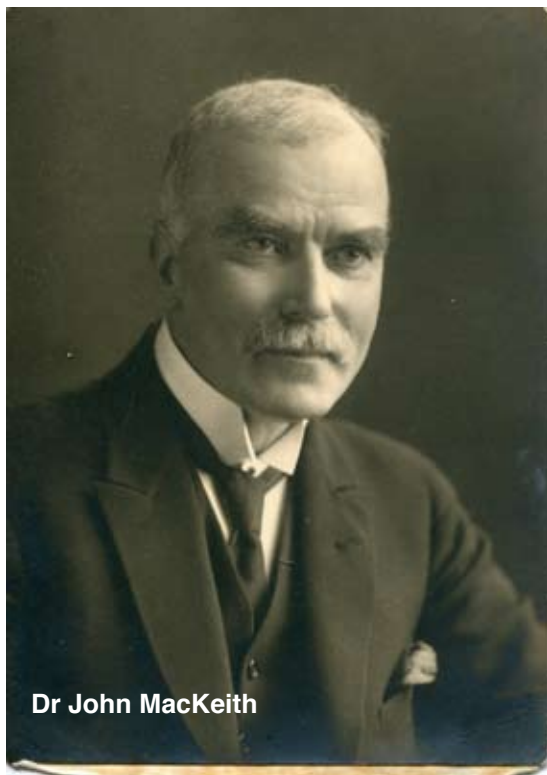


Alexander MacKeith's carriage at 66 Howard Street, Southampton, waiting for his morning round (a visiting French boy is sitting in the carriage)

Alexander and Alice invited me to stay with them here in Southampton. I certainly did not like the idea of living by myself after all these years of family company, but the thought of further upheaval daunted me. However Alexander was very good; he came up and helped me pack up my things. It was sad parting company with Gracie, who had come to be like another daughter to me. She was confident



Kenneth, Eric and Dora at Ilfracombe about 1899



Dr John MacKeith

that she could manage on her own and has stayed close to a number of members of her mother's family.

And now I am very happy where I am. This is the second house, in which Alexander and family have lived since moving to Southampton; the move has been needed, because the family has grown. However, soon after moving, there was another sad death. Donald, their first child, died of Infantile Paralysis, having contracted it a few months earlier; the family were devastated at his death, because he was such a happy boy. Later in the year Alice had twins, Norman and Monica to join Malcolm, Eric and Dora, who were born in Ilfracombe, and then Vera and Stephen also arrived; I think that Alexander and Alice have not


finished yet! Alice has two maids helping her run the family and the house; she also runs a dispensary for Alexander. He gets round town in a very stylish carriage and employs a stable boy to drive it and look after the horses; at week-ends we also get taken out, especially to church. Alexander is in partnership with a Dr Robson and seems to be getting involved with other medical organisations. And the doctors’ wives now call on Alice!

John seems to be very happy in London. He has a housekeeper (Mary did not fancy life in London) and has a hospital appointment in addition to his general practice. Isabella and Charles are very happy in Kent; they still have no children, but have a lovely large vicarage, in which they entertain parishioners. Mary is very pleased to be back in Scotland; working as a companion seems to suit her. Catherine and Henry now have three daughters, Margaret, Catherine and Isabel. Henry carries on the family business of wholesale chemist in Exeter.

So everyone seems happy and settled; for the first occasion in my life I have spare time and am able to write this story.

[Printed by authority of the Registrar General.]

CERTIFIED COPY of an
Pursuant to the Births and




ENTRY OF DEATH
Deaths Registration Act 1953

HC 4

Registration District									
South Stoneham									
1909 . Death in the Sub-district of									
Millbrook									
in the County and County Borough of Southampton									
Columns:—	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description, and residence of informant	When registered	Signature registrar
493	Eighth April 1909 66 Howard Road Shirley UD	Margaret MacKEITH	Female	76 years	Widow of William MacKEITH Physician and Surgeon	Apoplexy Bulbar Paralysis Certified by A.A. MacKeith MB	I.G. Barton Daughter Harbledown Rectory Canterbury Kent	Tenth April 1909	Sydney William Rolfe
Regist									

Certified to be a true copy of an entry in a register in my custody.



Deputy Superintendent Registrar

28th March 1996

CAUTION:—It is an offence to falsify a certificate or to make or knowingly use a false certificate or a copy of a false certificate intending it to be accepted as genuine to the prejudice of any person, or to possess a certificate knowing it to be false without lawful authority.

Death certificate for Margaret MacKeithi

POSTSCRIPT

Margaret died on 8th April, 1909 at Alexander and Alice’s home in Howard Road in Southampton. On her death certificate Alexander is given as the doctor who certified her death and Isabella as the person who reported the death to the Registrar; she must have come over from Canterbury to be with her mother.

Mackeith Family Tree

