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Clan MacMillan International

Septs and related names.

Branches of the clan whose members use a different surname.

Following is a list of MacMillan septs and related names with a brief descriptions of each. More detailed descriptions of these names are available in the members-only section of this website, a page devoted to each of them or groupings thereof. Log in ([../members/members_login.html](#)) to access this content or join Clan MacMillan International ([../join.html](#)) (CMI) to gain access.

Baxter

From mac Bacasdair, "son of the Baker", and therefore a common name in Scotland, so only some will be of MacMillan origin. MacMillan Baxters derive from Argyll and are said to be descended from a son of the MacMillan chief who killed "a certain man of repute" and disguised himself as a baker in the kitchens of Inverary Castle to evade pursuit. According to William Buchanan of Auchmar the "Principal Man" of the sept in the early 18th century was a Nivein M'Bhaxter in Glendaruel on the Cowal peninsula. A wealthy and influential family of Baxter cloth-makers in the Dundee area claim descent from the MacMillan Baxters. They have their own coat of arms and their American branch have commissioned a Baxter tartan.

Bell

Though the Na Belaich are probably the oldest and largest of the septs of Clan MacMillan, the surname Bell is fairly common in Scotland, and only those bearing it whose ancestors came from the Highlands - and particularly Argyll and other areas associated with the MacMillans - can certainly be linked to the clan. The proof of that link comes from the name itself, which stands for the main element of the Gaelic names from which MacMillan is derived; i.e. mhaoil (the aspirated genitive of maol, meaning shaven or tonsured) which is pronounced in English like "vaoil", as is the Gaelic bhaoil. So, Mill/Mell is seen to be the equivalent of Bill/Bell. While this may seem incredible to English speakers, it is proven to be the case by the appearance of the MacMillan's namefather on the 1560 Leny family tree both as Maolan and as Gilibile (a phonetic version of Gillemhaoil), and by the record of MacMillan's Rock in Knapdale on the first edition OS Map as Rudha Mhic Ghille-bheill (it appears on the current edition as Rubha Mhic Ghille-mhaoil). Most of the earliest Bells recorded in Scotland were associated with the church at Dunkeld, where Gilchrist Maolan's father had been the bishop, and the largest branch of the sept were latter to be found in Glens Aray and Shira (near Inverary) where the arbitrary mass-changing of their name from versions of Mcllvoil to Bell can be witnessed in the parish register in the middle decades of the 18th century. The name McBell is on record amongst Scottish emigrants to America in the late 18th century, though in Scotland it seems to have evolved into MacGill, which was recognised in Kintyre as a MacMillan sept. The earliest record of a Bell in Dumfries-shire, in 1304, seems to be a Norman-French form of Mac Bell (i.e Gilbert le fitz Bel), and the first record of a Bell coat of arms in the Borders (the seal of Robert Bell in Berwickshire in 1427) is identical in design to the unadorned form of the Galloway MacMillan' arms. However, by the 16th century the many bearers of the name Bell in Dumfries-shire and the Borders were recognised as a clan in their own right by the Scottish crown, and DNA evidence points to some of the later Border Bells being of English origin. The traditions of the Bells of Kirkconnell, the leading Border family of the name in the 15th century speak of an ancestor that came from France with the Earl of Douglas in the previous century, and descendants of the Bells of Blackethouse (their 16th century chiefs), maintain a separate identity which is respected by Clan MacMillan.

Blue

Though this name is said to come from Mac-Ghille-Ghuirm - "Son of the Blue-Eyed Lad" - there is no tradition in the clan associated with any such lad (in contrast to the well-known story about the Brown-haired hero who is said to have given his name to the sept of Brown). It seems more likely therefore that the original Gaelic name was really Mac Ghille-Ghuirman - "Son of the Servant of [Saint] Gorman" - and that it got misinterpreted when Gaelic names in Argyll were arbitrarily Englished in the mid-18th century (see sept of Bell). If so, then the many Blues who lived alongside the MacMillans in Knapdale may have descended from an early member of the clan who was devoted to that particular saint (just as others in the clan were devoted to saints like Catan and Fillan).

Brown

Browns in Argyll are said to be MacMillans descended from a brown-haired son of a laird of Carradale, an estate on the east coast of Kintyre opposite the island of Arran (where this branch of the clan are thought to have gone when they lost Carradale - they being the claimed ancestors of the publishing family and the 20th century British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan). Carradale's son is supposed to have distinguished himself in the pursuit of cattle reivers from Atholl, and therefore to have been acclaimed by his father as "my Brown-haired hero". Browns on the Cowal peninsula became a sept of Clan Lamont, but since there is no Lamont tradition explaining the connection, they were probably in origin MacMillans since the clan had other branches on the peninsula, such as the Baxters.

Calman/Colman/Colmin

Originally MacCalman/MacColman/MacColmin, this name comes from MacColuman/MacColumban, a diminutive or pet-form of MacGille-Columb/MacGille-Callum, meaning The Devotee of [Saint] Columba. In personal names, the Gaelic prefixes Gille and Maol were synonymous, so the given-name Gille-Columb/Gille-Callum also appeared as Maol-Columb/Maol-Callum, and was Englished as Malcolm. This was the name of Gilchrist Maolan's son, and the MacCalmans/MacCallums in Argyll take their surname from him. In medieval times, Clann Challuim was so powerful in Lorn that their Clann Somhairle rivals the MacDougalls jibed that "A third of Albyn [Scotland] were none too much for MacCallum of Colagin". In the late 18th century the MacCallums of Poltalloch, having become fabulously wealthy in the West Indies, adopted the English version of their

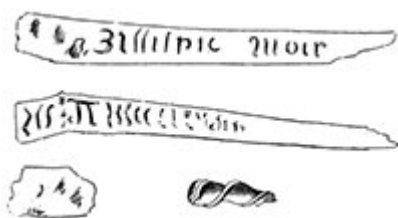
surname, and were later recognised as chiefs of Clan Malcolm. Modern (Mac)Calmans and MacCallums can be associated with either the MacMillans or the Malcolms, or indeed both.

Caniche/Cannan/Connon

This name comes from Cathan, the great-grandson of Maolan, who appears on the record in Galloway in 1273 as Cane Mcgillolane, i.e. "Cahan son of the devotee of [Saint] Fillan". Clann a' Chainich or Caniche were lairds in Glendaruel on the Cowal peninsula, in the mid-18th century, which was then also home to the MacMillan sept of Baxter, and to the MacGibbons. The MacGibbons and some or all of the MacChannanichs probably descended from the Galloway noble Gibbon fitz Kan (i.e. Gibbon mac Cahain), whose close relative Duugal Gyvelstone (Dougal, the laird of Gelston in Galloway) was given a charter in 1318/19 for the lands of Glendaruel and Knapdale (which was to become the seat of the later MacMillan chiefs). John Makane was laird of Kilmun in Glendaruel in 1434, and Duncan M'Channanich/MacHannanich was laird of Achatachyranbeg/Auchtekerrenbeg in the 1750s (the lairds of Ardachearanbeg later took the surname Buchanan). In Galloway, Gilberti Mcgillolane, an ancestor of the MacLellans, was recognised in the reign of king David II as the "Captain of Clenconnan" (i.e. Clann Cahanan). They were later represented by the family of Acannane/Cannon of Killochy whose arms bear the great sword of Leny tradition and the three mullets that appear on all MacMillan arms. Places called McCheynston and Ironmacannie can be found in Galloway adjacent to the lands once owned by the McMillans of Brockloch and the Cannons of Killochy. A Makanestoun can also be found on the old Leny lands in Stirlingshire, and in the 1540s it was part of an estate held of the crown by Donald McKane/McCaane.

Gibbon/Gibson - see MacGibbon

Leny/Lennie/de Lany



This name probably derives from the Gaelic *lainidh* meaning the blade of a sword - the symbol of the MacMillans, as depicted on the chief's crest - and was given to estates held by Gilchrist Maolan and his

descendants in Perthshire and Midlothian (where it appears now as Leny and Lennie). A little silver sword inscribed with the name "Gillispic Moir" served as a charter for Leny for centuries. Although it has since disappeared, bits of this claibeg survived until 1789 when they were reproduced as a drawing in the magazine *Archaeologia*, this pictured at left.

These estates passed by marriage to the Buchanans, and in 1560 Robert Buchanan of Leny drew up a family tree showing his descent from Colmin (ancestor of the MacColmans or MacCallums) mac Maolan/Gilibile (ancestor of the MacMhaolains in Argyle and the MacGilbiles/MacGhillemhaoils in Lochaber - and of the Biles/Bells). The name Leny and its variants are not common, probably because when surnames became required for ordinary Scots, most potential bearers of it chose to call themselves MacMillan or Buchanan.

MacAldonich - see MacGilledonich

MacBell - see Bell

MacCan/MacCannie/MacChannanich/MacKane/MacKean - see Caniche/Cannon

MacGibbon/Gibson

The name MacGibbon (and its English equivalent, Gibson) are connected with the estate of Auchnagarron in Glendaruel on the Cowal peninsula, which Dungall Gibbonsoun (i.e. Dougal MacGibbon) held of the crown in 1508. He was probably a descendant of the Galloway noble Gibbon fitz Kan (i.e. Gibbon mac Cahain), whose close relative Duugal Gyvelstone (Dougal, the laird of Gelston in Galloway) was given a charter for the lands of Glendaruel, along with the later MacMillan home of Knapdale, in 1318/19 (for Gibbon's ancestry see the sept name Caniche/Cannan). Though feudal superiority was granted to the Campbells in 1513, the old lairds remained in possession of their estates until "Baron McGibbon" sold Ormidale (in 1728) and Lephinkill (in 1740). However, Duncan MacGibbon of Achnagarn/Achingarren was Commissioner for Supply in Argyll and Surveyor of His Majesty's Customs at Glasgow later in the 18th century. A Donaldum Gibbonesoun appears on the record in Galloway in 1486 when he and Johannem

Macmwlane (probably the MacMillan chieftain there at the time) were fined for obstructing the Chamberlain of Galloway in the collection of the royal rents. There are also places called Balgibbon and Arngibbon on the old Leny estates in Perthshire and Stirlingshire.

MacGill

Andrew McKerral, in his *Kintyre in the Seventeenth Century*, says this name came from a curtailed form of the Gaelic original of MacMillan. It was sometimes assumed therefore that MacGill was MacGille-mhaoil without the "mhaoil", whereas in fact it's a phonetic form of Mac-Mhaoil without the "Gille" - and therefore the equivalent of MacBell. This is shown by transitional forms recorded in 17th and 18th century Argyll - such as, Mclyeill, mc yeall, McGeyll, MacIlgheill, and McGheill - and, most helpfully, by a single record of a drover called Duncan in Kilmichael, Glassary, whose surname appears in it as "McYeill or Mcllvoill or Bell".

MacGilledonich/MacIldonich/MacMaoldonich (and MacAldonich)

The 1560 Leny family tree shows the MacMaoldonichs in Strathearn to have taken their name from Maoldonich mac Colmin mhic Maolan. In given names, the prefixes Maol and Gille are interchangeable, and this surname more often appears as versions of Mac'illedonich, though it's not very common as such either (most potential bearers of it probably chose to take the names Buchanan or MacMillan - and one or two instances of the latter can be shown). According to Somerled MacMillan, there were Macmillans on the isle of Lewis who traced themselves back seven generations to a Maoldomhnuich Mor on the neighbouring isle of Harris.

Melanson/Millanson

Millanson, a literal English form of MacMillan, can be found in Scotland as early as the first two decades of the 15th century when Andree Mulansone/Melanesone appears as a crown tenant in Litill Tary, Moray. A possible version of it, Melançon, appears in Nova Scotia and France in the 17th and 18th centuries. Somerled MacMillan claimed that some at least of the Nova Scotia Melansons were descended from a Peter MacMellan who

emigrated from Tarbert, Loch Fyne to Boston, Massachusetts, in the mid-17th century; going in due course to Nova Scotia, where his sons changed their name to Mellanson. Sadly Somerled seems to have left no information about his sources for this assertion.

Mellan/Millan/Mullen

Some MacMillans who went to England dropped the "Mac", as can be seen with a branch of the clan who settled in the parish of Millom in Cumberland in the first half of the 18th century. Once or twice they are recorded with a Mac (as McMellan, and on one occasion as McMelin), but they generally appear using Mellan, Mellon, or Millon (see article in CMI Magazine No. 2. June 2004). At about the same time a John Millan, whose origins are unknown, had established himself as a very successful printer and publisher in London, where he was later joined by Buchanan Macmillan from Glenurquhart, a cousin of Macmillan of Murlagan, who became Printer to Parliament and to the King. Though he was known in the trade in England as Buchanan Millan, when he retired back to Inverness-shire he resumed his "Mac" and was buried in Beaulieu Priory as "Macmillan". Some Mellans, Millans, and Mullens may have come from Ireland and dropped their "O's", in the same way that MacMillans dropped their "Macs". The Mellon family of Pennsylvania, who gave their name to a university, emigrated from northern Ireland, but are said to have been Scottish in origin. There is a Millan coat of arms which clearly claims a connection with the 18th century MacMillans of Dunmore.

Milliken/Mulligan

This name derives from Maolagan, a diminutive or pet form of Maolan meaning "little or dear tonsured one", and its connection with MacMhaolain is evident in Perthshire, where at least one McMhaoiligan, and a number of Mulikyns, are recorded living amongst MacMillans on Loch Tayside. In Galloway, the Brithonic form of the patronymic (i.e. Ap Maolagain) originates a surname whose early versions such as Amilligane, Ameligane, Amulykin, give way in due course to Mullakane, Mwlikyn, Milligane, Mulligan, Milliken; and their leading family, the Amuliganes/Millikins of Blackmyre, occupied lands that marched with, and some that were indeed later owned by, the local MacMillan chieftains. Two places called Milliganton can be found in the area. The easternmost of these lies next to McCheynston (see sept of Caniche/Cannan) while the western Milligantown lies but three miles from the Tower

of Brockloch, which may well have been the original seat of the 17th century clan chieftains, the MacMillans of Brockloch (though in modern times they are usually associated with the place of the same name in the Glen Kens). A Major James Milliken purchased part of the old barony of Johnstone in Renfrewshire in 1733 and changed its name to Milliken, thus making himself Milliken of Milliken, and he matriculated arms somewhat suggestive of a Macmillan link. In northern Ireland the connection of many Mulligans with Galloway is acknowledged, and in County Down in particular the name was considered interchangeable with Mullan.

Walker

A trade name derived from the fulling (i.e. the cleansing and thickening) of newly woven cloth; a process that was known as "waulking" (which really means "working" the cloth, but as this can be done with the feet it is sometimes thought of as "walking"). As every pre-industrial community had weavers, only those Walkers from areas associated with the clan will be MacMillans, but an ancient connection between the two names is clearly evident both from personal and place-name records. A fuller or "walker" in Gaelic is fucadair, and in 1643 there appears on the island of Seil in Lorn, the homeland of the MacMillans' parent kindred, a Donald Fuccader... alias McEwin V' Gillemoyll (i.e. Mhic Ghillemhaoil). Other versions of Mac-an-Fhucadair include MacInhuggater, Mackinquorcher, and McNowcatter; and one of the earliest records of it occurs in Knapdale where a Donald roye McInocader appears as a witness in 1547. The place-name Ballanucator (Walkerstown) appears in Mentieth on the lands of the old MacMhaolain lairds of Leny.

Find much more information on the Clan MacMillan septs at left in the Clan MacMillan International members' pages ([../members/members_login.html](http://www.clanmacmillan.org/pages/genealogy/septs.html)). You may join Clan MacMillan International ([../join.html](http://www.clanmacmillan.org/pages/genealogy/septs.html)) to gain access to this and much more.

Five categories of septs

1. A phonetic variation of a surname. Examples: Bell, Melanson or Mullin.
2. An alternate name for the name-father. Example: MacDiarmid for Campbell.

3. A small clan living on lands conquered by larger clan/s.
4. A small clan moving onto a larger clan's lands seeking protection or providing specific services.
Example: MacMhuirichs as hereditary pipers for Clanranald.
5. Descendant of famous clan member of parent clan commemorating the given name, or nickname of that famous ancestor. Example: Baxter.



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The official website of Clan MacMillan International
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