

Dalilea House

by

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Dalilea, in Gaelic “Dail an Léigh” meaning “Field of the Physician”, lies on the north side of Loch Shiel, near to its western end, in Moidart. The occupant of the house in 1745 was Angus Beag MacDonald, eldest son of the Rev. Alexander MacDonald, Episcopal minister of Ardnamurchan, a man of great physical strength who was known locally as Maighstir Alasdair, or Master Alexander, indicating that he was a man of the cloth. It would appear that he made the thirty miles journey from Dalilea to Kinchoan an Ardnamurchan every Sunday to conduct the service before his parishioners in the church there. He died at Dalilea on 25 May 1724. His eldest son, Angus Beag, although small in stature, inherited his father’s great strength for which he was also known. During the Forty-Five he and his younger brother Alexander, the renowned Jacobite bard of Clanranald, better known as Alasdair Mac Maighstir Alasdair, served as captains in the Clanranald Regiment and the latter, in addition to providing information on the rising to Bishop Robert Forbes, which appears in the *Lyon in Mourning* is almost certainly the author of the anonymous account, described as the “Journal and Memoirs of P..... C..... Expedition into Scotland Etc. 1745-6. By a Highland Officer in his Army” which is contained in *The Lockhart Papers*. The bard is thought to have been born at Dalilea around 1700 and that while living there he planted several trees near the house, one of which, a venerable oak, still stands in front of the kitchen of the present house. The original house presumably must have been burned down in 1746 by the Hanoverian soldiery, although no record of the fact seems to have survived. Angus Beag was succeeded at Dalilea by his eldest surviving son, Allan, one of whose sons, Alexander, a successful banker at Callander, built the present Dalilea House around the end of the eighteenth or beginning of the nineteenth century. Ownership of the house eventually passed to Archibald MacDonald of Rhu, Arisaig, elder son of John, youngest son of Angus MacDonald, 1st of Borrodale, who served as a lieutenant in the Clanranald Regiment and left a manuscript account of his wanderings with the Prince in 1746, which was published in *Blackwood’s magazine*, in October 1873 and reprinted in *The Lyon in Mourning*, Vol. III. This MS was, in 1873, in the possession of two of John’s grand daughters who then resided at Dalilea

House and on account of which, it has become known as The Dalilea Manuscript. There is displayed at the present house, a plaque commemorating the repeal in 1782 of the Act of 1747 proscribing the wearing of the Highland Dress, which was renovated by the late 1745 Association member, George Robertson Clarke.

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