



Clan DONALD

ARMS

A shield divided quarterly; 1st and 4th are silver with a red lion rampant; 2nd is gold with an arm holding a cross; 3rd is gold with a black Galley.

CREST

An arm holding a sword

MOTTO

Per mare, per terras (By sea, by land).

DONALD. This is one of the very oldest of our Gaelic personal names, and, from the greatness of Clan Donald commonly considered as the Highland name pre-eminently. It, however, ranks only second, John being the first. The name has come down to us in two forms, Gaelic and Cymrie. The modern Gaelic spelling of the name is Domhnall; in the Gaelic genealogical manuscript of 1467 and in the Gaelic entries in the Book of Deer (c. 1100) it is *Domnall*. The early Gaelic is also *Domnall*. *Dunegal* (for Old Welsh *Dumngual* or *Dumnagual*) was lord of Stranith (Strath Nith in Dumfriesshire) in 1124, and Gillemor Macdunegal witnessed a charter of lands in Carric in the reign of Alexander II. The early Welsh form (*Annales Cabriae*, ann. 760) is *Dumnagual*, later Welsh *Dyfywal* and *Dyfnwal*. In the *Gododin*, the old Welsh poem on the battle of Catteraeth (a.d. 603) it is *Dyvywal*. In the Chartulary of Redon, Brittany, written in the eleventh century but dating largely from the ninth, we have the name in the fuller forms *Dumnouallon* and *Dumuallon*. *Donewaldus*, king of the Britons, died in the reign of Constantine (900-943), and *Duuenaldus*, son of Ede (i.e. Aed) was chosen to succeed him. *Dunegal* was a native chief in the north-east corner of Caithness in the early Norse times. The district in which he resided was named *Dungalsbae* (*Dungalsboer*) by the Norsemen, and is now *Duncansbay*.

These early forms of the name all point to early Celtic *Dubno-* or *Dumnovalos*, with the meaning of "world-mighty" or "world wielder," a name probably applied to themselves 'by tribal rulers who had an exaggerated sense of their own importance.' The first part of the name (*Dumno-*), as the late Sir John Rhys suggested, may mean the smaller world of the tribe before meaning the world in the wider sense.

The earliest record of this name is not found in Britain, where one would naturally expect to find it, but in an inscription at the other end of the Roman empire in Galatia, engraved probably about the year 20 a.d. Suctonius in his life of the Emperor Augustus (b.c. 63-a.d. 14) says the emperor by his last will desired an abstract of his achievements to be engraved on brazen tablets and placed before his mausoleum. The record was composed by Augustus himself before the year 2 b.c., and probably revised from time to time between that date and 14 a.d., the year of the emperor's death. The tablets perished in the downfall of the imperial city. Fortunately for us the inhabitants of Ancyra in Galatia, the modern Angora or Ankar, obtained from Rome a transcript of the emperor's record, the most important inscription of the Latin empire (the "Queen of Inscriptions," Mommsen the historian calls it), and engraved it with a Greek translation on the wall of a temple which they had erected in their city in honor of the emperor and the city of Rome. The Latin inscription was discovered in 1554 by Buybeeche, a Dutch scholar, and the Greek shortly after. Both inscriptions still exist, but as might be expected after so many years, both are imperfect in places. Fortunately the Greek is perfect in parts where the Latin is imperfect and vice-versa, so that practically the whole record can be read and understood. In this inscription is recorded the name of a British prince or petty king (*regulus*) otherwise almost unknown to history, except from a few of his coins which have been found in the south of England. In his inscriptions Augustus says that among those kings who had betaken themselves to him as suppliants was "of the Britons, *Dumnobellaunus*." This *dumnobellaunus* appears to have had dominion over the country of the *Captii* (i.e. people of Kent) and later of the *Trinobantes*, a people who inhabited what is now modern Essex. From this he was expelled by *Cunoebelinus*, the *Cymbeline* of Shakespeare. Coins of *Dumnobellaunus* have been found in Kent and in Essex, and on his gold issue his name appears more or less abbreviated as *Dvbno*....(*Dv*)*bnovel*..., *Dvbnovilla*, (*dvbno*)*viillavn*, and *Dvbno(vella)vnos*.

The stem *Dumno-*, root of Old Irish *domum*, Gaelic *domhan* "the universe," is common in Gaulish proper names, and *-vellaunos* had the meaning of "prince" or "one who ruled." It occurs also in the Old English title *Bretwalda* and better in the fuller form *Brytenwealda* "ruler of the Britons."

By the time the name “was first written in Gaelic the terminal *-os* had disappeared, the *v* had become vocalized, and the name was written Domnall although sounded Dovnall”, and in Gaelic it is now written Domhnall. The devocalization of *-ll* final in Domhnall suggested to non-Gaelic ears that a *dir t* followed, hence in early Latin records and charters the name is written *Dovenald*, in English Donald, and the caricature *Tonalt*. The same explanation applies to Douerroneously rendered in English by Daniel. In Benbecula Domhnall is pronounced Domgull (with *mh* silent,) and the assimilation of *n* to *l* gives *Doll*. In Badenoch Domhnall becomes *Dòul*, with nasalized *o*. Rob Donn, the Gaelic poet, spells the name regularly *Dòll*, gen *Dhòll*, and with Mac, *Mac Dhòll*. In the Gaelic entries in the Book of Deer the name occurs three times regularly as Domnall, and in the twelfth and first half of the thirteenth century the spelling of the name (omitting the Latin ending *-us*) occurs as Dofnald, Dofnalt, Douenald, Douunald, Dufernald, Duuenald, and in 1255 Devenold. In the Norse *Orkneyinga Saga* the name occurs as *Dufnjall*, a form which has probably arisen from confusion with the Norse personal name Njall. In the papal document of 1389 it is spelled Dompraldus. As a forename it is now quite commonly given to boys in England, and it is also becoming a favorite in the United States among non-Scots.

The contribution of Haket Donald for peace was paid to the Baillie of Kinross in 1328, and in 1398 Robert Donaldus was elected Baillie of Aberdeen. In 1567 Ilene Donald was tenant of “ane quarter land” under the Abbey of Kelso, and George Donnald is in record as a merchant burghess of Jedburgh in 1641. Domh’Il Ogauk was known as the Shepherd Poet of Badenoch.

Taken from “The Surnames of Scotland”, by George F. Black, The New York Public Library 1999.

Clan DONALD Septs

ABRACH
MAC CRAM
MAC LARTIE, -Y -C

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