4 Davidson Family of Tarland, Tillychetly, Dess, Inchmarlo

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This ancient eminent Davidson family has a long and well documented history back to the 15th century, which can be traced at least back to Tarland. This family gradually accumulated the three estates Tillychetly, Dess, and Inchmarlo in the 18th & 19th centuries.

Different members of the family distinguished themselves as advocates, landowners, farmers, soldiers, sailors, churchwomen, architects, inventors, writers, businessmen, and schoolmasters. There are many, many references to these Davidsons in both local and national archives.

We have highlighted just a few of the personalities and historic references to be found across the region. These notes are but a fraction of the historical information about this family.

John Davidson and his family ancestors

are remembered in the cemetery beside the ruined kirk at Tarland where there is a flat stone with an inscription, still just readable, which says:

"Here lys John Davidson who was born in the beginning of the present century, lived all his life-time in Tarland and died there on the third of March 1787, going 82 years of age; with two of his children, James and Jean Davidsons, who died in their infancy. This being the burial place of their family for Several Centurys, where many of them are interred since the first of whom, a Captain, was settled in this country by the Irvine of Drum for a particular favour he had done that family in Edinburgh in the time of the Stewarts or Scottish Kings.

Done by the care of Margaret McCombie, the defuncts relict, her eldest son John Davidson of Tillychetly and his Daughter in Tarland. His second son Charles Davidson died in Jamaica some time ago.

Praise on tombs are vainly spent
This defuncts character was an ornament."

Davidson Grave at Tarland

Tarland Kirk

Few families have such early monumental inscriptions with so much history.

John Davidson, a descendant of John Davidson of Tarland, bought the Tillychetly farm estate in 1773. The farm continued to be worked by successive generations of the same Davidson family until 1983. Tillychetly is a hill farm, situated between 750 and 1,100 feet above sea level between the rivers Dee and Don, about 25 miles west of Aberdeen. Although the landscape is beautiful on a fine day, it can be brutally harsh on a cold wet winter day.

The Tillychetly landscape looking North to Bennachie Mountain.

The Arms of Capt D. G. Davidson
Granted 1948 Lord Lyon Court

Alford Kirk:
The Davidson Memorial

At the Alford Kirk, located near Tillychetly, the family memorial to John Davidson [d.1802 aged 61] of Tillychetly and his family is located on the south wall of the Kirk.

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The Davidson family of Tillychetly bought Dess, originally Desswood and formerly known as Mill of Kincardine, in 1795. This valuable agricultural, forestry, and fishing estate is located just to the west of the village of Kincardine O'Neil. It remained within the family until the mid 1950s. The Church at Kincardine O'Neil also includes several Davidson memorials.

Dess

Alexander Davidson of Dess, 1818–1895
Advocate, Aberdeen

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Dess Lodge

Inchmarlo today:
This property
is now used as a
Care Home.

Duncan Davidson, 1773–1849, purchased the Inchmarlo estate, formerly called Inchmarloch, in 1838 from **Walter Stevenson Davidson of Rayne**. [see Section 6]

This was a valuable estate with a Georgian mansion, farms, woodland, moorland, and a priceless salmon fishing beat. It is located on the north side of the river Dee, less than 20 miles west of Aberdeen. The family sold the property in the 1920s.

Davidson of Inchmarlo Family Enclosure
at Banchory-Ternan Church.

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Anne Davidson

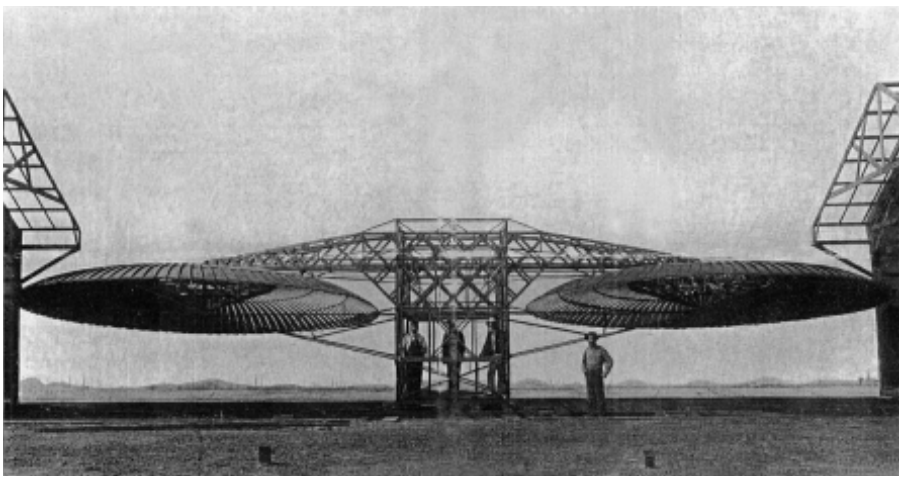
Anne Davidson, one of the daughters of Duncan Davidson of Inchmarlo, kept a Journal from 1844–1854. This family document provides a valuable insight into the social life of this family, and provides many references to the wider Davidson family and their friends across the North East of Scotland.

This journal is now available online (see our Useful Links page) as a result of a major project undertaken by **Janet Davidson the wife of James D. G. Davidson**. James Davidson is a descendant of the Tillychetly branch of the family.

Inchmarlo

George Davidson

George Davidson 1858–1939 was the youngest son of Patrick Davidson of Inchmarlo. He was an early aviation experimenter, who was known as "Fleein Georgie" to his Deeside neighbours. George Davidson was also one of the founder members in 1866 of what later became the Royal Aeronautical Society. The results of his early experiments with "heavier than air" craft have not survived. Although beaten by the Wright brothers to be first to fly using such craft, George Davidson continued to experiment even with early ideas for helicopters.



One of George Davidson's Flying Machines in the course of construction in the USA in 1907.