



Portrait of Donald Mackelvie

## Donald Mackelvie

1867-1947

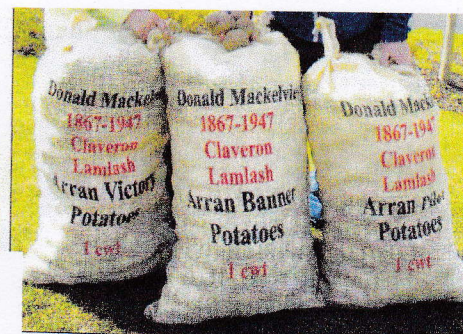
Lamlash

Isle of Arran

Pioneering Potato Breeder



8 Lord Derby Gold Medals



3 of the best known Arrans

Donald Mackelvie, son of a sea captain, Neil Mackelvie from Kildonan, was born in 1867. He trained as an accountant in Glasgow but returned to the Isle of Arran to run his uncle's general merchant's business, in Lamlash now, the Co-operative. Not content with the busy life of general merchanting he started breeding Highland /Arran ponies with notable success then in 1907 he started cross breeding potatoes bringing varieties from the midlands. He built greenhouses in the gardens of Claveron where he raised and selected thousands of seedlings. The Irish potato famine, Darwinian thinking inspired early breeders such as Paterson (Victoria) from Dundee and Archibald Findlay (Majestic) from Markinch/Auchtermuchty. Successful breeding did not bring wealth; there were no plant royalties then, quite the reverse in Findlay's case, bankruptcy. Mackelvie took the title of the leading Scottish Potato breeder of his time. He was awarded an OBE for his contribution to wartime food production. The work was continued in state run breeding stations Pentlandsfield, Scottish Crop Research Institute now known as The James Hutton Institute. Jack Dunnet from Caithness follows on from Mackelvie.

### Successful selections from the many thousands of seedlings

Arran Banner

Arran Bard

Arran Cairn

Arran Chief

Arran Comet

Arran Comrade

Arran Consul

Arran Crest

Arran Early

Arran Hope

Arran Leader

Arran Luxury

Arran Mascot

Arran Peak

Arran Pilot

Arran Rose

Arran Scout

Arran Signet

Arran Treasurer

Arran Victory

Arran Viking

Arran White

Gold medals

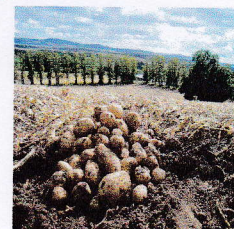
Voted the most iconic food in Britain, the best fish and chip suppers use Maris Piper, a direct descendant of Arran Cairn



Arran Victory celebrating the end of World war 1



Arran Banner  
The Cyprus Potato,  
The Newspaper



UK most popular early 1931 Arran Pilot



Mackelvie's work should be celebrated and remembered in the context of his contribution to everyday potato usage. Arran should be proud. The Markinch Heritage Group and Fife Council unveiled a plaque to celebrate an unsung hero, Archibald Findlay. Please support Mackelvie's contribution. A plaque perhaps?