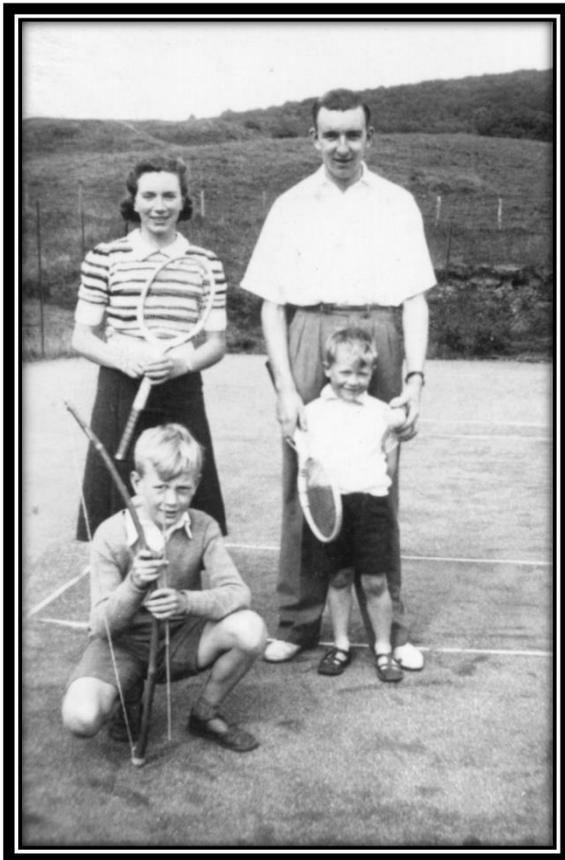


# Archibald MacInnes – Engineer

Archibald MacInnes, (known as Archie to his family but often as just Mac), was born on the Isle of Skye on 10th April 1919. His parents were Duncan MacInnes and Catherine (Katie) McDonald who had married in 1918. Although his parents married in Kent, they were both Highlanders, Duncan was from Mull while Katie was from Skye, where she returned to give birth to her first child, Archibald.

Archie moved to Gatehouse of Fleet about 1920 when his father Duncan took over the Market Cross Stores in the High Street and lived at 21 Catherine Street. The family soon expanded with the arrival of 3 sisters and a brother - Effie, Chrissie, Flora and Hamish. In the 1930's the family moved to 31 Catherine Street, known as Landale.



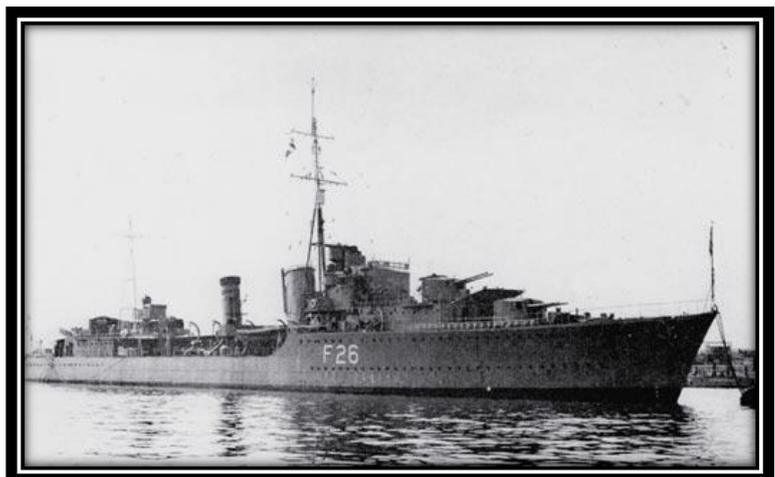
Archie enjoyed his young life in Gatehouse, taking part in lots of sports. He enjoyed fishing and was a member of a prize-winning school choir. He also had a small cairn terrier named Skye - in honour of his birthplace.

He went to Gatehouse School and later Kirkcudbright Academy before, in 1937, aged 18, joining the Scotts Shipyard and Engineering Company in Greenock, thereby starting his engineering training. Archie had not been sure which career path to follow but his parents knew one of the directors of Scotts and a general apprenticeship was easily arranged. He attended James Watt College in Greenock and the Royal Training College in Glasgow for further training.

*In the photograph on the left, taken at the tennis court in Gatehouse, Archie is on the right with his arms on Tommy Turnbull, the banker's son. Effie, Archie's sister, is on the left with Hamish in front with his bow and arrow.*

Going to Greenock was a cultural shock for Archie. The total population of Gatehouse was about 1000 and Scotts employed over 8000 in their Greenock workshops. At first he lived in digs but in 1944 his father bought a business in Greenock which two of Archie's sisters ran, and Archie moved in with them.

During the Second World War he was involved in the building of many types of ships from cruisers, and destroyers such as HMS Matebele - *see right*, to



submarines such as HMS Tuna. He also took part in the sea trials of some ships such as HMS Punjabi, before they were handed over to the Royal Navy.

He applied for a commission in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) and was very disappointed when it was refused. He became an officer in the Home Guard and in the Anti-Aircraft Battery, serving all night duties during the Greenock Blitz. In 1941 the head office at Scotts was destroyed by bombing, but ship-building continued.

In 1945 he was appointed to the Colonial Office. His first commission was in Nigeria, where he was involved in the public works department. He also met his wife Nancy Blyth in Nigeria. They had three children, Morag, the eldest daughter, then Duncan and Fiona. Archie later worked in Gibraltar, where his second daughter Fiona was born, and later he worked in Germany.

In 1963 he returned to London to work for the Department of the Environment where he was responsible for the maintenance and management of all government buildings such as the Houses of Parliament, Tower of London and Hampton Court. His remit also included preparations for royal and other ceremonial occasions such as royal weddings, jubilee celebrations and state visits.

When he retired in the 1980s, Archie worked for several consultancy companies before becoming a part-time planning inspector for the Department of the Environment which involved travelling around England assessing planning appeals. In 1977 he was awarded the C.V.O. (Commander of the Royal Victorian Order) for his worldwide contribution to engineering. He again retired in 1989.



Archie was interested in sport all his life although he said he excelled at none. Two of his hobbies, golf and salmon fishing, he had enjoyed from childhood. While he lived in Africa he motored home, across the Sahara Desert, to the UK with a friend and he was keen on game shooting. He also travelled widely to support his local rugby team, Salisbury and also the British Lions.

He died in Wiltshire on 24th April 2004.

*Photo left shows Archie having received his CVO at Buckingham Palace, with his children Morag, Fiona and Duncan.*

*File last saved : 26 April 2017*

*Thanks to Chrissie, Patricia & Jill Leighton. Chrissie is a sister of Archie MacInnes.*