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Dear

Miss M.E.M. Donaldson

I have heard of you through my younger sister Margaret Jane Valentine Renaud who lives in Victoria, British Columbia, where she settled some 30 years ago. Our parents were of families connected with Glasgow. The Waddell line stemmed from James Waddell, granted the seshin of Balquahstone, between Motherwell and Stirling in 1513. Down the line came our great grandfather, born at Balquahstone, a noted divine with ministries in Girvan and Glasgow. He translated the Psalms 'Frae Hebrew intil Scottis' and was surprisingly an admirer and authority of Burns. Grandfather James Waddell, born at Girvan, served a shipping line in the far East between Penang, Singapore and Surabaya. He married a daughter of Dr. Robert Little who had gone out to Singapore, aged 20 in 1840, to join his uncle Dr. Mungo Johnson Martin in medical practice. The shipping line went into voluntary liquidation and perforce James had to return to Glasgow settling at 9 Ashton Terrace, now renumbered as 17 Ashton Road. James was then invited to return to the far East in the employ of the Royal Dutch Oil Company, but served them for only a year. My father born in Surabaya was educated in Glasgow.

My mother (née Findlay) came via Peter Findlay, merchant of Arbroath, who married Hannah Dalgety. Her grandfather was a merchant of considerable standing in Glasgow, suffering considerable loss by the failure of two banks. Her father Charles Farquahson Findlay was a journalist and died comparatively young, his marriage long broken. Thus with her sister she was brought up by an aunt Jessie Findlay in Callender. There may have been some provision from the wider relationship with the Findlay proprietorship of the 'Scotsman'

Miss Donaldson had been a school friend of my mother, sharing strong religious faith, and my first acquaintance with her would have been around 1929 when she visited us at Chesterfield in Derbyshire. She must have kept in contact after my parents returned from America in 1916 and were in London. It was doubtless because of her severe manner of dress and a tendency to wear 'pork pie' hats that my eldest brother, her godson, called her 'Uncle Tonal'. To us she thus remained. It would have been in the early 1930s that my father, involved with the steel making industry of Sheffield, was asked if he could obtain piping for a hydro-electric project she wished to install at Ardnamurchan. M.E.M.D. and her brother John M. D. were of the family Donaldson shipping line and not without modest inheritance. John after service in the Great War became General Manager of the North Metropolitan Power Supply Company with generating stations at Willesden and Brimsdown. He came into the picture to supply the water turbine and generator. Sadly I heard that the piping was insufficiently insulated and fractured during the first frost. A disaster at great expense. Brother and sister had shared the care of a nursemaid or nannie in their formative years and derived a somewhat cockney mode of speech which never left them.

The only other occasion that I met M.E.M.D. was around 1936 when she was driven down by taxi to stay with us in Chesterfield in a confused state and on inappropriate medication. It is possible that her friend and companion, Miss Isobel Bonus, had died. Was it not that shortly thereafter she

set her mind to leave Ardnamurchan and settle in Ferndown in Dorset, which by chance is close to where your scribe lives.

Her photography was of a high order and an eminent recorder of contemporary scenes, some plates still used in publicity leaflets which I have seen. She was also a regular contributor to the correspondence columns of the 'Times' newspaper debating authoritatively any historical matters which she disputed and castigating the LMS railway catering staff etc.

My wife and I visited Ardnamurchan and Sanna fleetingly in 1987 when the house was a holiday home in possession of an Edinburgh architect, name forgotten but probably known to you. It was to him we gave a photographic portrait of M.E.M.D., thinking that it might have some interest to display in the house. We were most courteously received, though her likeness may not be displayed as we intended.

You will of course be aware of the cruel characterisation of M.E.M.D. and Miss Bonus by Compton Mackenzie in his novel 'The Hunting of the Fairies'. They were much affronted by his visiting the area with a 'car load of loud speaking and lacquered nailed flappers' and probably showed their disapproval.

Her will included a bequest for the reordering of a side chapel in St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral at Edinburgh. When at my mothers request I visited to report on the work, only a few years later, it was with considerable difficulty that I could identify the chapel and the extent of the decoration since neither the clergy nor the vergers who happened to be present had more than the haziest recollection of the benefactor.

Sadly this is of little publishable interest not already in your possession though it is provided with pleasure.

With sincere regards

A.W. Waddell