



Location: Close to the prominent Victoria Tower in St Peter Port, Guernsey, at the junction of Monument Road and Upland Road.

Whereas the plaque gives the date of burial as 9th May 1802, the Register of Burials held by Priaux Library, St Peter Port records the date of burial as 8th May 1802.

Wikipedia

Sam McDonald (1762 – 6 May 1802), called "Big Sam", was a [Scotsman](#) of unusual height for his day who had a distinguished military career and was a noted "strongman". Most sources state his height as 6 feet 10

inches, with a burly build, although one 1822 source claims 7 feet 4 inches. Born in [Lairg, Sutherland](#) in 1762, he served in the [2nd Sutherland Fencibles](#) 1779-83 and the [Royal Scots](#) 1783-1789 (where he served as [Fugleman](#) or drill-leader). From 1791-93 he was employed by the [Prince of Wales](#), and during this time appeared at the [Drury Lane Theatre](#), playing Hercules in "Cymon and Iphigenia". From 1793-99 he was in the [3rd Sutherland Fencibles](#), and from 1799 until his death in 1802 in the newly formed [93rd Sutherland](#). Due to his height and bulk he generally marched to the side of the formation, and was frequently detached for recruiting. His image was later used on recruiting posters. He died while stationed with the regiment on [Guernsey](#), and is buried there.

There exist several engravings of him, both in military uniform and while serving as a gatekeeper for the Prince of Wales, including three by noted Scottish caricaturist [John Kay](#).

His obituary in the [Sydney Gazette](#) was the first newspaper obituary printed in Australia; it appeared in the 12 March 1803 edition.

93rd Regiment

Upon the disbandment of the two regiments in 1799, the new 93rd Regiment was recruited from the recently disbanded Sutherland Fencibles by their old colonel William Wemyss, at this time a Major General in the British Army, on behalf of his 16 year old cousin Elizabeth, Countess of Sutherland. Wemyss had the remaining volunteers from all over Sutherland lined up by [Parish](#) and selected those he thought most suitable and issued each of these a pinch of snuff, a dram of whisky and their bounty money. When the regiment first mustered, in [Strathnaver](#) in August 1800, not a single man selected by Wemyss failed to report. There is a cairn at Skail, in Strathnaver, marking the spot where this muster took place.

One of the soldiers who had served with the Fencibles and then with the 93rd was Sergeant Samuel Macdonald. Sergeant Macdonald was reputed to be a veritable giant, standing six feet ten inches and a chest measuring 48 inches. A one time actor, being cast in a Drury Lane production of Cymon and Imphigenia as Hercules, Macdonald served in the 3rd Sutherland Fencibles as a sergeant of the Colonel's company. With the raising of the 93rd, he volunteered for the new regiment, being accepted by Wemyss. Countess Sutherland, upon seeing Sergeant Macdonald, donated a special allowance of 2 shillings 6 pence a day. She is reported to have said that anyone as large as Sergeant Macdonald "must require more sustenance than his military pay can afford."^[1]

September 1800: Dispatched from Ft. George, via [Aberdeen](#), to [Guernsey](#). October 1800: Formally gazetted into the Army.

From BBC News "In Pictures: 18th Century characters"

Scottish Hercules

Samuel McDonald's remarkable size would have been notable in itself if it were not for the mountain deer which accompanied him wherever he went. Big Sam was a private in the Sutherland Fencibles during the American War and afterwards a porter at Carlton House for King George IV.

www.eurekastreet.au

Australia's first newspaper, the *Sydney Gazette*, published an obituary in its second edition (12 March, 1803). It was a re-print from an unnamed British source, recording the life of Samuel McDonald, known as 'Big Sam', a sergeant of the 93rd Regiment who was 'six feet ten inches in height, four feet round the chest ... and always disliked being stared at'. Just over a year later, on 25 March, 1804, the *Gazette* produced an obituary of its own to acknowledge the death of the New South Wales building superintendent, James Bloodworth.