

Aberdeen & North-East Scotland Family History Society

Journal No. 165 • February 2023



Paul Webster, 1953–2023

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New members pay the annual rate, and your subscription runs for exactly one year from the date on which you join. Further details are available on our **website**. Membership of the Society entitles you to receive the quarterly Journal. There is a discount for e-members who opt to download the Journal digitally instead of receiving printed copies.

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- All our Journals from 1979 onwards
- Monumental Inscription look-ups for many North-East Scottish graveyards
- A Members' Forum for exchange of ideas, assistance with "brick walls", and much else.

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Journal of the Aberdeen and North-East Scotland Family History Society

Issue 165, February 2023

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Society Reports, News and Information

SAFHS 33rd Annual Conference, 22nd April 2023

“Haste Ye Back”

A free online conference on settlement, migration and return, with reference to the records, stories and resources that underpin family-history research

The annual conference of the Scottish Association of Family History Societies (SAFHS) is hosted by a member society. ANESFHS is this year’s host, in partnership with the Elphinstone Institute of the University of Aberdeen.



The online-only format will be familiar from the 2021 and 2022 Conferences, which were supported by Scottish Indexes, who were pioneers of online conferences during lockdown. ANESFHS also hosted in 1995 and 2009, and we had hoped to hold the 2023 Conference in person in Aberdeen alongside a Family-History Fair – but this would have been too ambitious so soon after the pandemic. Great thanks are due to Elaine Petrie (no. 22949), who is leading a team of widely distributed Society volunteers, and to Dave Anderson (no. 7696) for all technical support, and to Emma Maxwell (no. 23041) for advice.

“Haste Ye Back”

The theme encompasses not only the conditions that led to migration or resettlement but also the ways that the telling and recording of family histories enrich a culture. Our speakers will consider diaspora through emigration and war etc., and then revitalisation through returning settlers and new Scots. Family history as a pursuit is a great example of that revitalisation of engagement with the past and with our heritage.



We think this theme will be particularly topical at a time when more folk contemplate resuming long-distance travel to maintain family connections and pursue family history.

The Conference website <https://safhs2023.anesfhs.org.uk/> has now been launched and is kept up to date with information. Seven speakers are confirmed, on a diverse range of topics: stories of migration and return; Aberdeen City historical records; oral history and records; new family traditions of the North-East; DNA; war brides; and tracing emigrant ancestors using a variety of sources, including Kirk Session and Poor Law records. There will be opportunities for Q&A after each presentation.

You can log in to the Conference website to create an account, register to attend the event, and receive e-mail reminders. We are working on making the talks available for a limited time after the event. Further information will be added to the Conference website. We look forward to presenting this Conference on behalf of SAFHS, and we hope you’ll be able to join us online.



Paul Webster (1953–2023)

Over the past few years, I have written obituaries for many ANESFHS colleagues/friends, but I have to confess that writing about Paul Webster is one of the most difficult I have had to do – partly because his death at age 69 was so sudden and unexpected, and also because he was an intensely private and unassuming person.

Paul volunteered his services *every* day at our Research Centre and could always be relied on to open the premises, switch on the kettle (very important!), check the cash register and be ready for when the day's volunteers arrived. When he didn't turn up on Thursday 26th January, and wasn't answering his phone, his colleagues in the Centre became worried, and our Vice-Chairman decided to go round to Paul's flat. There was still no answer, so he phoned the police, who broke in and found Paul dead in bed from a heart attack.

Paul was one of the very first members of our Society (no. 54) and had been a volunteer since the very start. He attended the inaugural meeting in 1978 in the Art Gallery, where a group of keen family historians met to discuss the feasibility of setting up an Aberdeen & North-East Scotland Family History Society here in Aberdeen. The rest is history!

Born and raised in Aberdeen, Paul attended Sunnybank Primary and Old Aberdeen Secondary schools. On leaving school in 1968, he worked as an office boy in the bus depot in King Street. After a spell in the army, when he served in Germany and Northern Ireland, he worked in a cotton mill in Bury, Greater Manchester, where he began to develop an interest in genealogy – thanks to his landlady, who introduced him to this fascinating hobby/obsession.

He returned to Aberdeen, working in the Cleansing Department for 40 years until he retired. During that time, he also volunteered in our Family History Centre, helping visitors with their research and fulfilling a multitude of other tasks. For many years, he and Violet Murray faithfully staffed our Centre on Tuesday and Friday evenings – and this after a full day's hard physical work for Paul – and on Saturday mornings, until a drop in visitor numbers made evening and weekend openings impractical.

Before he retired, Paul began to have health and mobility problems, which resulted in one hip and two knee replacements. All of us in the Centre reckoned he'd be out of action for several weeks, if not months. Not a bit of it. Paul was back in the Centre, on crutches, within a few days! You can't keep a good man down!

Paul's death will leave a huge gap in our Society. We will greatly miss his expertise and willingness to help. He had a encyclopaedic knowledge of the Society and all our resource materials, and was never happier than when ferreting around in the basement library looking for obscure bits of information which often helped visitors to knock a hole in that brick wall we have all experienced. King Street will not be the same without him.

liz.foubister@anesfhs.org.uk

Liz Foubister No. 6129

Deaths of Society Members

Bill Rodger (no. 8458) died on 14th January 2023. He was a valued back-room volunteer, helping with accounts and with credit/debit-card transactions. We extend our sympathies to his widow Iona, who continues as a Society member.

The Society has the sad duty of recording the deaths of members that are notified to us.

Centre Report

This has been a very busy and eventful few weeks, and it is difficult to remember what happened prior to the death of Paul Webster, our mainstay.

Paul was a very dependable and knowledgeable volunteer who lightened my job as Centre Manager. Many of you will have met Paul or have had some ancestor-chasing help from him: Paul was also a member of the Research Team and was often to be found downstairs in our library looking up old books and records. His familiarity with the library was quite under-rated, but I know that when the librarians were absent he was the “go to” for help. The Saturday meetings were a joy to him, and when the pandemic meant that we could no longer meet in person and were holding them online he was lost, as he did not have the means to join in. We then arranged for him to have a connection in the Centre.

When our cleaner was off on holiday, Paul was the one to empty all the rubbish and make sure the premises were tidy. Paul and I spent many a Saturday morning tackling various deep-clean jobs, and I will miss him for the help he so readily gave. I once asked him if he wanted to take a day off during the week, but he said he was happy being with everyone. Paul was a joke-teller and perpetrator, and when he was straight-faced you had to be wary of what was coming! I will miss him and his steadfastness and loyalty to ANESFHS – but I won't miss some of his jokes.

As you can imagine, Paul's death leaves a vast hole in the Centre, and finding enough volunteers to cover all the shifts is proving problematic. We all need reminders of how to use the till, how to join new members, and just general day-to-day operations. If you feel you might like to help, please contact us, and you will be welcomed with open arms.

An ongoing project is trying to whittle down our bookstock to local publications and other topics of interest locally. There are some very interesting books about diverse subjects such as country life in the 18th and 19th centuries, Clock and Watchmakers of Aberdeen and District, lists of female teachers or patients in hospital in Aberdeen. All these publications are on our website; or you are welcome to come in and browse.

We are all here to give a helping hand to seasoned and new customers alike, and are happiest when we have something to get our teeth into.

barbara.lamb@anesfhs.org.uk

Barbara Lamb No. 20206

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Members' Meetings

Anne Park, “St Machar’s Cathedral: WW1 Memorial and Casualties”

19th November 2022

In 1919, the Kirk Session of the Cathedral Church of St Machar in Old Aberdeen agreed to commission a memorial to the local men who fell in the First World War. A subscription appeal raised £905, and in 1924 a stained-glass window and a set of engraved tablets were unveiled. In addition, the churchyard has a good number of gravestones raised by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) to commemorate many of the fallen who had North-East Scottish connections.

Anne Park gave another fascinating insight into how she researches such war memorials and CWGC gravestones. She directed us to a range of resources that help build up a picture about First World War casualties who are mentioned on family gravestones, as well as about some men who are remembered on the memorial within the Cathedral.

If you are searching for information about a relative who may have died in either war, the first step is to go to Anne's "World War 1 – Roll of Honour" database – so well known to Society members that it is often simply referred to as "the Database". It is a comprehensive listing of over 20,000 soldiers and other personnel serving in North-East Scotland regiments/units who died in service during the First World War. The information available may include burial location, war memorial and family details, as well as references

to newspaper articles. To access it (a wee pun, as it is supported by an Access database), you log into the Members' area of the Society website, then select "DataBank", then "WW1 – Roll of Honour" from the pull-down menu which then appears. Enter the name you are looking for in the search parameters to bring up a list of possible men, then click on the name again to bring up the full record card. A "WW2 – Roll of Honour" area has also been added, and Norman Wood is working hard to add details to this section.

Anne took us through numerous fallen servicemen, using each to illustrate the different types of archive or resource that can be consulted for information, and sometimes even photographs, of the individual. Anne recommends using as many different websites as possible to build up a good picture and also to ensure that the information is correct. The big-ticket "go to" sites are Ancestry, and the British Newspaper Archive (BNA). These subscription websites are free to access when you visit our Research Centre in King Street.

Ancestry has a Military Records area which you find via the Search page. This has sections on: Draft, Enlistment and Service; Casualties; Soldier & Veteran Rolls and Lists; Pension Records; Histories; Awards and Decorations of Honour; News; Disciplinary Actions and Photos. The

data collections listed there include UK as well as overseas records. Anne particularly recommends the Pensions Ledgers and the details on Medal Cards and soldiers' effects as a way of finding out more personal information to add to the simple death record. She cited the example of the Canadian records, which are comprehensive and, importantly, provide attestation papers, where the second page gives physical information about the man enlisting, for example height. Passenger lists, again easily accessed on Ancestry, may also be helpful, but Anne warned that the travel route might be indirect and that those

Card Index Details			
Surname:	Tocher	Forename:	Peter
Born:	Woodside, Aberdeen	Date of birth:	---
Home Town:		Enlisted:	
Rank:	Pte	Number:	7596
Battalion:	1st		
Regiments:	Gordon Highlanders		
Decoration:			
Death:	Died	Location:	Home
Date:	30 Oct 1923	Age:	43
Buried/Memorial:	Aberdeen (Trinity) Cemetery		
Cemetery No.:	U. K. Aberdeen (Trinity) Sp Mem bottom corner		
Notes:	Son of Peter Tocher, Stone-driller & Elspet Tocher, 58 Hutcheon St; Aberdeen. This couple lost 5 sons. All Gordons.		
Other:	City Roll of Honour: Hutcheon St;		
Newspaper:	ADJ 03-04-15 Page 7: PoW ADJ 28-09-25 P7		
War Memorial:	City		

Military Records	
View sample images and collection details	
<input type="button" value="Search"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Match all terms exactly	
First & Middle Name(s)	Last Name
Birth	Location
Day	e.g. London, England
Month	
Year	
Death	
Lived In	e.g. London, England
Military	e.g. London, England

Narrow by Category

- [Draft, Enlistment and Service](#)
- [Casualties](#)
- [Soldier, Veteran & Prisoner Rolls & Lists](#)
- [Pension Records](#)
- [Histories](#)
- [Awards & Decorations of Honour](#)
- [News](#)
- [Disciplinary Actions](#)
- [Photos](#)

entering the USA may have done so via Canada, whereas those returning to Scotland might come in via Liverpool.

The BNA is a good way to access the articles that often appeared in local papers announcing the death or wounding of local men. These articles may often contain photographs of the men in question. While these photos may seem fuzzy or pixellated because of the newspapers' screening process for making a photograph printable, they are nevertheless a precious addition to the family story. The *Press & Journal*, the *People's Journal* and the *Evening Express* are all good places to look.

The Aberdeen City Roll of Honour is another treasure-house of information for servicemen from Aberdeen. It can be consulted easily in Aberdeen Central Library in Rosemount Viaduct; and there is a copy in the Society Library in King Street, which also has an index to the Roll of Honour. One advantage of the Roll of Honour is that includes information on those who died some time after the war, perhaps of injuries, up to 1924. These casualties may not be included in other lists of War Dead, which are based on information from 1914–18. The city conducted an Assessment exercise in 1925, and as a result the Roll of Honour contains the names of men such as Peter Tocher, who died in 1923, probably as a consequence of ill-treatment as a prisoner-of-war.

The most relevant resource for checking addresses and family members is the 1911 census – and the good news is that the King Street archive also now has transcriptions of the 1911 census for almost all parishes in Aberdeen city and shire. They are available in hard copy – in the big yellow folders just inside the entrance area – and there is a digital, indexed version that can be consulted on the King Street computers.

And, of course, the Scotland's People website remains one of the most important research tools, particularly the areas on Soldiers' and airmen's wills and Military service appeals tribunal, which can be found under the Legal Records section.

Other helpful databases include the Rolls of Honour published by the University and the Aberdeen schools, Robert Gordon's College and Aberdeen Grammar School, and the data on Libindx (<http://libindx.moray.gov.uk/>), the guide to sources of information about people and places relating to Moray. At its Town House site, Aberdeen Archives has records for the Royal Artillery.

Along the way, Anne shared little nuggets such as the Cameronians being also known as the Scottish Rifles – the initials SR being something to look out for. Men might be transferred between battalions so might not always appear in the place you expect. Many North-Easterners signed up with the Gordon Highlanders, seen as the “local” regiment – so the Gordon Highlanders Museum, Viewfield Road, Aberdeen, will also be worth a visit.

Anne plans to be in at King Street on Mondays and Wednesdays, 1pm to 3pm to give one-to-one advice, so now is a perfect time to start searching for your servicemen.

syllabus@anesfhs.org.uk

Featured data collections

UK, British Army World War I Service Records, 1914-1920

UK, British Army World War I Pension Records 1914-1920

UK, British Army World War I Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920 **FREE**

England, The National Roll of the Great War, 1914-1918

UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919

UK, Casualties of the Boer War, 1899-1902

UK, Army Roll of Honour, 1939-1945

UK, British Prisoners of War, 1939-1945

UK, Waterloo Medal Roll, 1815

Gateshead, Durham, England, War Honours Scrapbook, 1914-1920 **FREE**

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U.S., World War II United News Newsreels, 1942-1946

[View all in Card Catalogue](#)

Moray/Banff Group Report

Our September meeting on the first Saturday of the month saw us gather in the Activities Room at Elgin Library for the first time since March 2020. While numbers were lower than we had been used to, it was an opportunity to meet up with some of our regular attendees, plus a few we had only met so far on Zoom, and also one member who was on holiday in the area. Our usual start-of-the-new-calendar topic was “Brick walls”, and we carried this over to the extra September meeting that we held online later in the month. With over 70 participants it was a lively meeting, and we hope we were able to help with a few of those brick walls.

October saw us back in the Library, and this time numbers had increased slightly, which was reassuring. With the drop in Covid numbers, and with the vaccine roll-out, people are becoming less reluctant to mix, but at the same time we all seem to be extra busy as we catch up with so many things missed out on during the long months of lockdown.

For November, we were back on Zoom with “Expect the unexpected!” as our topic. It proved to be an interesting mix of experiences, and it also provided some useful tips about how we can be led astray. With around 70 participants, it was again a busy session.

We had two meetings in December. The first Saturday saw the ANESFHS online Christmas Social, which was open to all Society members; and the following Saturday found a number of us gathering for a Festive Afternoon Tea at Threaplands Garden Centre for our local Christmas event. A snowfall looked likely to make travelling difficult for this, but in the end there was only one member who couldn't make it.

“Resolutions” provided our topic for our face-to-face January meeting, and it was good to see that numbers had increased yet again. We're not quite back to full strength, but we're getting there! It was interesting to hear how members were planning to take the next steps in their research; and it also provided some useful ideas generally. This idea was to be taken forward for our February meeting, held online, using “Where next?” as our topic.

So far, since September, we have gone along with alternating face-to-face meetings with Zoom ones – and, given that hybrid meetings are not an option for us, we'll be continuing with this for a while to see how things work out. Just about all of our regular Library participants are now familiar with Zoom, but we still enjoy meeting up in person as well!

moray.banff@anesfhs.org.uk

Mary Evans (Group co-ordinator)

No. 1975

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Edinburgh Group Reports

Sally Low, “Slavery and its Impact on Family History”

12th November 2022

In the 1830s, slavery was abolished by Britain in all its colonies. However, Sally emphasised that different forms of slavery have been around for at least 7,000 years: practised by ancient Athenians; by the Romans; by pirates operating out of North Africa (Miguel de Cervantes, author of *Don Quixote*, was himself a captive in Algiers, 1575–80, and ransomed by his parents); by the Nazi Party; who used forced labour during WW2 – and, in 2020, by *The Archers* on Radio 4 with a storyline about modern slavery.

The Portuguese established a trade in people from the 15th century and the Trans-Atlantic slave trade from 1526. In total, it is believed that Portuguese and Brazilian ships carried about 5.8 million Africans as slaves, mostly to Brazil. Together with Britain, its colonies and other European countries, the total number thus enslaved could be over 10 million, as no-one really knows the true figure. It was the largest forced migration in human history.

In her necessarily very brief history of slavery, Sally made clear that campaigns against slavery began around 1787 – and, although William Wilberforce repeatedly proposed abolition bills to Parliament, it was only in 1807 that legislation passed through Parliament which made it illegal for any British ship, or British subject, to trade in enslaved people. This changed nothing for existing slaves on the plantations, and the abolition of slavery then became the main focus of the campaign. Full emancipation was not achieved until 1838 – and, unlike the owners, none of the ex-slaves in the British colonies received any compensation, many being forced to work on for several years as “apprentices”.

After over 50 years of research, Sally has decided it is now time to write up her research to leave a sensible, measured and colourful story for her children. While doing so, she found that information was lacking on two minor family surnames, Bissett and Logan, from the same small parish of Knockbain in Ross & Cromarty. This is where Kirk Session records can be so useful. Although they are not transcribed or indexed, Sally highly recommends reading them to check for “mentions” or any details of your families. In the Kirk Session records for Knockbain, she identified an Isabella Bissett, noted on the “Extraordinary List of the Poor”, as one of her ancestors. One Christmas, the Kirk Session recorded the gift of £10 for the poor of the parish, including Isabella. The Christmas bonus was to be an annual donation – it even made the newspapers, and the donor was identified as a Robert Logan of Jamaica. It transpired that he owned three plantations and 144 slaves at the time of abolition. Sally had to do a lot of research to establish that Robert was *not* on her Logan family tree, although there was possibly a pre-1800 shared antecedent.

It was interesting to hear why so many young men from Scotland went west; younger sons, unable to make a living on the family farm, often sought better opportunities abroad. Robert Logan had gone out to Jamaica in 1773, and it appeared he had worked hard as a clerk, saved his money and, after a year or so, bought a couple of slaves that he “rented out” to a plantation owner before finally being able to purchase land. This was a common practice. There are letters in the National Archives at Kew between Robert Logan and his banker in London regarding the purchase of his third plantation. You could pay back the price of a plantation in five to ten years, as sugar profits were so high. It is surely worth searching the National Archives database for your own ancestors.

There were many connections between Scotland and the slave plantations. Who knew that slaves were fed on Scottish herring? Nearly two thirds of all barrels of salted herring shipped to the West Indies, to feed slaves, went from Greenock. It was a thriving industry in Scotland from about 1750 until the market collapsed on the emancipation of slaves. At its height, 50,000–80,000 barrels were sent annually to the Caribbean. Any ancestors in the fishing industry, whether working in the ports or making barrels, benefited directly.

Sally recommended David Alston’s book *Slaves and Highlanders: Silenced Histories of Scotland and the Caribbean*, in which his research shows that while the Abolition Acts were going through Parliament in the late 1830s, petitions were presented to Parliament from the merchants and the fish-curers of Wick, in Caithness, and another from similar

groups in the town of Cromarty on the Black Isle. They complained of the loss of the market which they had formerly had for their fish in the “West India Islands”, and of the impossibility which they found of opening new markets on the European continent.

The trade between Britain and the Caribbean was part of what was called the Triangular Trade. Goods went to Africa to be exchanged for slaves. Ships full of slaves then went from Africa to the Caribbean. Finally, plantation goods were shipped back to Britain. There is a very clear connection between the agricultural, industrial and social revolutions in Scotland and the slave plantations of the Caribbean, and this affected many Scottish families – rich and poor. During the 18th century, the second-largest industry in Scotland was spinning and weaving. If your ancestor was weaving linen, it is likely they were supplying the slave trade – whether they knew it or not. They made hemp cloth for the bags in which goods were packed for shipping from the plantations of the West Indies; this was known as “Inverness bagging”. Mills all over Scotland wove Osnaburgs, a coarse type of linen used for clothing; its other name was “slave cloth”. The British Government introduced grants for each yard of linen exported; by 1790, 90% of all linen exported from Scotland was bound for the plantations. Money made in the Caribbean was also used to improve farms and land in Scotland. Sally posed the question as to whether we have indirect links to slavery even though our ancestors did not own slaves themselves.

The Scots left their mark. Many illegitimate children were born to British slavers and overseers. Pointing out that a child born to a slave was a slave themselves, Sally reminded us that very few had their freedom paid for or were gathered into the family and sent back to Scotland for an education. A list from Aberdeen’s Marischal College up to 1835 showed that 83 overseas students had come from all the islands in the Caribbean.

It was now time to detail how to start searching for slave-owners. While many Caribbean “sugar” islands have begun, with funding from some British universities, a programme of research and investigation into their own archives, the best website is that of University College London (UCL), which has an easy-to-use database of all those who received British Government compensation on the emancipation of slaves. Type in a name to find the names of their plantations, details of the number of slaves, and the amounts received as compensation for freeing them. Alternatively, entering the search term “Aberdeenshire”, without any names, brings up 76 claimants; and for “Banff” there are 13.

The next place to search is the online British Newspaper Archive (BNA). Articles from the *Royal Gazette* of Jamaica detail those arriving or leaving the island, which gives clues as to visits to and from the UK; many of the wives were sent “home” to have their babies. Sally was able to track Robert Logan coming and going, and to trace the progression of his career – through notices of meetings he placed as “R. Logan, Clerk”, eventually becoming “Robert Logan, Esq.”, then finally as a member of the various committees rather than just the secretary. However, sadly, Sally also discovered the dreadful truth that he had his own brand mark with which his slaves were branded.

The Scotland’s People Newsletter from August 2022 is full of useful information. A talk by Trish Adams on “Scots in the West Indies 1600s to early 1800s” on 19th February 2022 to the ANESFHS Australia and New Zealand Group was also very useful. David Olusoga, Professor of Public History at the University of Manchester, has conducted marvellous research, particularly about “Britain’s forgotten slave owners”. For research based in Ayrshire, read Kate Phillips’ book *Bought and Sold*. Also try Colson Whitehead’s Pulitzer

Prize-winning novel *The Underground Railway*. Ken Nisbet, a fountain of knowledge, suggested many helpful publications to members during a lively question time.

Costing an arm and a leg: Dr William Scott portrait

Many fascinating connections and nuggets of information came out of Sally's informative talk on slavery and its implications for family historians.

Enid Cruickshank delighted us all by bringing along a handsome oil painting of an ancestor named Dr William Scott. According to Enid: "Dr William Scott, born in Hawick, Roxburghshire, worked as the doctor on the Comfort Plantation on St Thomas (I presume he had studied in the Medical School in Edinburgh). He married there but had no children. When he retired, he tried living in Edinburgh but found it too cold, so moved to Paris, where he died aged 62 in 1834, and is buried there. He left his nephew (son of his only sibling) about £10,000."



We had an interesting discussion as to why Dr Scott appears to have only one hand in the portrait – and Sally informed us that portrait artists would charge extra for hands, legs and feet, which would make the painting more difficult and time-consuming to execute. This apparently is the source of the phrase "costing an arm and a leg".

Enid replied: "I was interested in your comment about charges for painting hands, particularly because he's holding papers in his left hand. Several in this family are left-handers, and maybe that's a clue as to where the trait came from. One of my sons looks similar to the man in the portrait."

edinburgh@anesfhs.org.uk

Elaine Petrie No. 22949

Ken Nisbet, "Using the 1921 Scottish Census"

28th January 2023

The new year got off to a cracking start for the Edinburgh Group as "ane o oor ain", Ken Nisbet, drew in large numbers of attendees, both in person (32) and online (around 100 in total). Ken is a popular and knowledgeable speaker at the best of times, but with this topic he was on a sure-fire winner.

Parallels between 1921 and the 2020s were quite eerie. The census was recorded shortly after an international 'flu epidemic, and it turns out that the long delay in making the records available to the public mirrored its creation. The census was scheduled to take place on 24th April 1921 but was delayed until 19th June of that year. Ken explained that the delay, announced only on 15th April 1921, was because of fears of disruption due to expected strike action by mining, rail and transport workers. This meant that a significant number of informants were on holiday at the time and were away from their usual address

– which could be disconcerting for the family historian, as there was no requirement for individuals to state their normal home address.

The 1921 enumerators were each responsible for about 200 households in urban areas, whereas topography determined the traditional catchment and enumeration route in country areas. Enumerators left forms with householders for them to fill in, transcribing the results into Enumeration Booklets which are the originals of the scanned documents we now see on *Scotland's People*. Although we are not able to see our ancestors' original handwritten submissions (as these were destroyed), we are able to see neighbouring households, which can be an advantage, as in many cases the near neighbours were in fact relatives. Unlike domestic households or small hotels and guesthouses, large institutions such as orphanages had a single schedule, completed by the manager.

Ken talked us through the format of the records and clarified the distinction between "Houses" and "Holdings", the latter being part of a house occupied by one complete family group – even where this was a single person living independently on their own, for example within a bigger apartment. The schedules list rooms with windows, but only the bedrooms and living-rooms (kitchens, lobbies and offices or work areas were all excluded from the count). "Visitor" should apply to anyone not usually resident there (even relatives), whereas "Boarder" meant the individual was taking meals with the family.

This census had some differences from its predecessors. The questions on mental infirmity and on fertility (number of children borne) were dropped, but there was greater detail expected on age (years and months); and an Orphanage column was introduced identifying, for example, whether an individual's parents were both alive (BA), both dead (BD), mother dead (MD) or father dead (FD). There was also a column to indicate Divorce. The column on Gaelic was to be used only for those who spoke Scottish Gaelic and had done so for three years or more.

There is more detailed information on employment, with details now given systematically on employers. Retired people gave their former employer. The work of home-based women was also recognised for the first time, with an entry of HD – Household Duties. This gives us better information about the scale of farms, shops, shipyards and so on; also about railways, as this was the last census before the amalgamation of the individual lines such as London Midland Scottish, Great Northern Railway and London North-East Railway. Cross-referencing with trades directories and industry websites will be very productive for family historians.

The final column, on Dependent Children, was intended for fathers to indicate all such children, whether living at home or staying elsewhere, for instance in residential schools or in hospital. Thus even men spending the night on fishing boats in Aberdeen Harbour were expected to list their children. The information about boats can be productively cross-referenced with the *Ancestry* sections on Royal Naval Reserve and Trawlers.

Ken reminded us that the Header section for the Enumeration District is well worth consulting. It is free to access if you have opened an entry from that section and will give information on the enumeration route which can then be plotted onto maps via *Scotland's Places*. Checking the names on Valuation Rolls can also be productive.

Ken's talk was well illustrated with interesting examples, such as unusual entries or anomalies, and drew on his almost encyclopaedic knowledge of genealogical matters. We were vastly entertained by a discussion on National Health Insurance eligibility which

included references to the story of the Turra Coo, famously impounded when its owner, Robert Paterson, a farmer near Turriff, refused to put insurance stamps on the cards of his employees, on the grounds that the rate was too high and did not take account of the nature of rural employment.

This census will have a special resonance for many of us, as it will be the first census in which we see details appear about parents or grandparents, individuals we have known as living beings. Here's hoping we are all available to hear a talk by Ken on the 1931 census when it duly appears ... after all, it's now only eight years to wait!

edinburgh@anesfhs.org.uk

Elaine Petrie No. 22949

—oOo—

Glasgow Group Report

Alison Smith, “Coastal Communities of the North-East”

26th November 2022

Alison Smith (no. 7779) is a genealogist who spent many years living on the Moray coast and was closely involved with the Portsoy Salmon Bothy. For our hybrid meeting, she joined other members Zooming in to the Kirk Lounge from around the world. On this occasion, Alison was presenting to us from Burgundy in France!

Her illustrated talk opened with a merry tune (James Scott Skinner, “So I am Off with the Good St Nicholas Boat”) and was informative on many aspects of the communities around the North-East Scottish coast. Centuries ago, the sea was seen not as a barrier but as offering important economic and travel opportunities.

We learned about historic charters and trading rights granted to coastal towns. Aberdeen's charter was granted in 1124, and Portsoy's in 1550 (others included 1203 Banff, 1372 Cullen, 1587 Peterhead and Stonehaven). It was interesting to hear that borough records in Aberdeen go back to the 12th century and can be found in the Aberdeen Archives, while merchant and borough records for other towns are held by the NRS in Edinburgh.

Alison continued to give us record after record which we could use in our family research. Taxation records exist, giving names and information on relative wealth – there were taxes on horses, hearths, watches and much else! Many of these are digitised on the Scotland's Places website. A “List of Pollable Persons within the Shire of Aberdeen in 1696”, by parish, is a very valuable resource of people and their occupations, and is published by ANESFHS in a series of popular booklets for sale.

Often overlooked are the *Statistical Accounts* (<https://stataccscot.edina.ac.uk>), c. 1790 and 1832). Those of Peterhead provide great detail of the commercial activities of not only the town but also the whole parish; Peterhead vessels traded with Scandinavian, Baltic and Atlantic ports. This would certainly provide a good background to any family history.

The National Library of Scotland's Map Library (<https://maps.nls.uk>) has an excellent series of Six-inch Ordnance Survey maps covering the whole UK. OS placename books have been digitised and indexed. Maps of the planned villages, such as Cullen, give clues to the landed gentry who financed such developments. Old villages had a haphazard layout compared to the regulated layouts of the new parts. Other maps, for instance those of the Portsoy Salt Works in 1800, might show where your ancestors were employed; and Sheriff Court Records are a further resource which can be utilised: once again in Portsoy, working practices of salmon fishermen in 1828 are detailed in a fatal injury case.

Wealthy landowners also offered leases to fish for salmon in rivers and in the sea, so your ancestor may appear in such lists. The Seafield Estate papers are held in Edinburgh. The borough records of Portsoy from 1828 are held locally.

The effects of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars on the wealth and seagoing activity of communities are seen in the conscription into the militia. Militia records are kept at Kew. Alison shared a wonderful list she had found from 1798 listing hundreds of parishioners from Fordyce who contributed to a Defence Contribution Fund against a perceived threat of an imminent French invasion via the North-East coast. The records, containing names, occupations, place of residence, and contribution made (e.g. 5/-!), show that although there were many textile workers, there were very few in seafaring activities. This snapshot of social and economic activity includes, in Peterhead: lint millers, kelp harvesting (important in glassblowing), weavers and stocking makers.

North-East Scotland's younger sons were traditionally sent abroad, while older ones were kept at home to inherit. A Banff gravestone was erected by "James Gardiner late of Jamaica"; in Fordyce there is a stone to Charles Hendry, retired tea planter, Ceylon.

Exploiting opportunities overseas was very important to our ancestors in the early 19th century, and in the 1840s you could embark at Banff twice weekly for the journey to London by steamship – and, interestingly, direct to Melbourne! The *Banffshire Journal* in the 1850s had adverts for various types of travel.

Alison examined the census records of 1861 and highlighted birthplaces to show the extent of travel within Scotland; for instance, a James Wilson was born in Macduff, while his wife was born in a remote parish in Argyll. Alison posed the question as to how these two met and suggested that the only way to travel between the two would be by sea. It is always worthwhile looking at a whole village to get a feel for the economic life of an area: in the parish of Macduff in 1861, there were 40 coopers and 25 carters – barrels needed for everything, and carters needed to deliver them! The Shore Porters' Society of Aberdeen was founded in 1498 – and porters, carriers and carters provided essential services to keep the harbour going. It was noted, during question time, that a porter had to be able to carry a certain weight up a hill into Aberdeen to become a member of that Society.

A particularly mobile coastal occupation drawn to our attention was exemplified in the Royal Borough of Rattray census of 1861. A majority of the inhabitants worked for the coastguard service. Some were from Argyll, others from Ireland. There was also a commissioned boatman from Fife. The number of people in these occupations working long distances from their place of birth is explained by the Coastguard Service's wish to prevent smuggling and avoid fraternising with the locals. The related occupation of lighthouse men also tended to involve movement away from place of birth. The records of the Northern Lighthouse Board are held by the National Records of Scotland.

Regarding religion in coastal communities, fishing villages tended to belong to Brethren or Free Church. In Nairn, fishermen tended to marry in the United Free Church, whereas the landward people married in the local parish church, i.e. the Church of Scotland. Ken Nisbet commented that landward people tended not to fraternise with the fisher families. He also said you are more likely to come across the issue of dynastic nicknames, or "tee-names", in North-East coastal communities.

Alison recommended that new members of Family History Societies join groups doing Memorial Inscription recording as a good way of socialising and learning elements of

genealogy. Concluding with a detailed list of sources for coastal communities, we thanked Alison for an interesting talk. While the Glasgow Group broke for a good blether in the room over tea and biscuits, Mary Evans kindly kept the online chat going until after 4pm.

Report by Kate Clark (No. 934), Sally Low (No. 1441) and Geoff Hare (No. 21515)

glasgow@anesfhs.org.uk

Buzzy Garden (No. 12916) and Ivor Normand (No. 4161)

—oOo—

London Group Report

We have been as busy as ever. The February 2022 meeting was online, and our member Graham Irvine (no. 18248) gave a brilliant talk on “Squaring the circle: the story of how Cleopatra’s Needle came to London, and how family-history research revealed an amazing coincidence”. This talk had a fantastic twist in the tale – and, as much as I would love to tell everyone the outcome, I think it’s best left that you know if you were there. Perhaps Graham may give the talk again to another of the Society’s local-area Groups.

In June, we caught up with everyone and how their family history was progressing ... or not! Some people had made good progress using online resources, while others were still holding out for various archives and family-history centres to reopen after Covid closures.

In September and November, we resumed face-to-face meetings and met up in the church hall. We welcomed some “new” members to these in-person meetings; and we had a few folks with North-East Scottish ancestors but who have always lived “doon sooth”. Both meetings were productive, and some of our long-standing members were able to share their experiences on how to find out information.

In 2023, we will move back online for the time being. Our next meeting, on 25th February, will be a “brick walls” session, and we are hoping to be able to solve some on the day. This meeting, from 12:30 to 2:30pm GMT, leaves time before Southern Ontario Group!

On 29th April, it will be all about your famous or notorious connections. We hope that on 23rd September we’ll be able to have a hybrid meeting; however, if not, we shall be online. On 18th November, we’re online. We are happy to take suggestions for topics.

london@anesfhs.org.uk

Sheena Clark No. 19190

—oOo—

Southern Ontario Group Report

Virtual Tour of the ANESFHS Research Centre

19th November 2022

Over 40 members and guests gathered for our Group’s virtual tour of the ANESFHS Research Centre in King Street, Aberdeen. Hosts Ivor Normand, Liz Foubister and Bert Lawrie did a tremendous job juggling cameras and microphones to provide a real-time visit to all parts of this valuable venue.

Starting at the entrance area and registration desk of 158 King Street, the virtual tour guides first showcased ANESFHS publications and Monumental Inscriptions, census transcriptions and computer workstations. The research workstations provide access to various databases like the library editions of Ancestry and Find My Past, or the online tools available as a FamilySearch Affiliate Library. Maps and an aerial photo montage mounted on the walls provide geographic context to family-history details; and microfilms

contain newspapers (e.g. *Aberdeen Journal* editions dating from 1747) and Scottish census records. Ivor was sure to point out the kitchen and accessible restrooms, as well as the ANESFHS Grant of Arms proudly portrayed on the wall.

More microfilm-readers and computer workstations were highlighted in the adjoining room at 160 King Street. Liz demonstrated online records such as the ScotlandsPeople website and provided helpful research hints; Bert discussed the creation of a users' guide and volunteers' guide for these online databases and digital records stored locally.

Downstairs, the tour participants were shown family-history books/binders, a large Ordnance Survey map of North-East Scotland, and many directories (census lists, Post Office lists, Poor Law indices etc.). Monumental Inscriptions for many Scottish counties are also found on the lower floor, along with parish church and civil records. Binders contain the pedigree charts submitted by members – and all members were encouraged to submit their Record of Ancestors Charts if they have not yet done so. Church histories, minister directories, Valuation Rolls, maps, and biographies from selected schools and universities are also available in the basement.

The visit proved valuable for those both local and distant. Ivor's knowledge and wit helped to keep the virtual tour interesting. Bert explained the many aids created for members and guests to navigate the multitude of resources, and Liz reiterated the importance of visiting the Research Centre both for the many items not available online and for the expert assistance provided by the Centre's volunteers.

All three hosts, along with many long-time member participants, answered questions related to local family-history resources and how best to use the resources of the Research Centre. For those members wishing to volunteer from afar, a plan is being organized that would allow interested parties to complete transcription and indexing tasks through a central shared directory.

Many thanks to Ivor, Liz and Bert, who conducted the tour, and to the many ANESFHS members who shared their knowledge and expertise with respect to questions raised in the typed Zoom Chat sidebar.

ontario@anesfhs.org.uk

David Joiner No. 16651

co-organizing with Rod Coates (No. 18349) and Susan Brouwer (No. 20475)

Group Events in 2023

We have an exciting Southern Ontario Group syllabus lined up for 2023:

Saturday 25th February, 10am to 12 noon (EST) / 3pm to 5pm (GMT)

Mike Shepherd, author, will be presenting **“The story of Jacobite Aberdeenshire”**.

The Jacobites were not just bare-kneed Highlanders: less well known is that our ancestors from North-East Scotland also took a major part in the Jacobite uprisings between 1689 and 1746. Hear that story, together with tales of several individuals who were caught up in the tumult of the time. This meeting is open for registration on the Society's website.

Saturday 29th April (time TBA)

Phil Astley will give an **“Introduction to the collections at Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives”** and highlight some of the most unusual and outstanding items.

Phil hails from Berkshire in the south of England but saw the light in 1986 when he came north to study history at the University of Aberdeen. He has subsequently worked in a variety of archives, including the Orkney Library and Archive and the North Highland Archive. He has been City Archivist for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Archives since 2008. He is a Trustee of the Scottish Council on Archives and an ordinary committee member of the Scottish Records Association.

Saturday 23rd September (time TBA)

Christine Woodcock, genealogist: **“Early Scottish Settlers in Ontario”**.

Following the Revolutionary War, many British subjects were eager to get onto British soil, and Canada was the nearest colony. Land was granted to soldiers who had remained loyal to the Crown – and, with the success of settlements such as Glengarry, colonizers soon realized that there was success to be had in getting Scots to settle in the huge swath of untapped land in Upper Canada. In this session, we will take an in-depth look at:

- The places where Scots settled
- The colonizers who created the settlements in Ontario
- The politics in play at the time.

Saturday 25th November (time TBA)

Anne Williams of Archives of Ontario: **“Presentation of archive materials with a Scottish / Ontario connection”**.

Anne Williams, originally from Antigonish, Nova Scotia, earned her undergraduate degree in Celtic Studies from St Francis Xavier University, her Master’s in Celtic Studies from the University of Cambridge, and her Master’s in Archives and Records Management from the University of Toronto. She has worked as an archivist for the Ontario and Nova Scotia governments for six years, and spent Autumn 2022 working as a special collections librarian at the University of Galway, Ireland. With years of experience at the Archives of Ontario (AO), Anne was happy to return to the AO as an archivist in January 2023. As an archivist with a passion for Scottish history, Anne looks forward to speaking with the Southern Ontario branch of ANESFHS.

—oOo—

Library Report

Over the past couple of weeks, we have been moving books around – something which never goes down well with users of a library! The section with books on researching your airforce, military and naval ancestors had run out of space, and the books were very tightly packed and in danger of being damaged. There was no room for new additions, and it was difficult to browse – and browsing can often result in unexpected and useful discoveries. The books on maritime research are now in a separate bay beside the military research.

There are books on how to research naval and fishing ancestry, books on naval history, books with lists of ship owners and seafarers, books with lists of shipwrecks. There are also many books on the subject of ships and shipping. This of course includes information on fishing vessels and on the shipyards that built the boats. Many of these books are issued by local heritage societies in the North-East whose members were involved with boat-building in the local area. There are books on Aberdeen shipping companies, but if you want to find out more about the history and details of all ships built in Aberdeen –

some 3,000 of them since 1811 – then the database compiled by Aberdeen’s Maritime Museum is well worth looking at. It’s available at Aberdeen Built Ships (www.aberdeenships.com).

This is a section of the Library I find particularly interesting. My ancestry is typical of that of many people in North-East Scotland: on one side I have ancestors who were involved with the land – they were factors, tenant farmers, crofters, farm workers; while the other side of my family were involved with the sea – they were merchant seamen, boilermakers, ship carpenters, coopers who made barrels for the herring, or they were fishermen. This section has helped me find out a bit more about the lives they led.

Fishing was one of the main industries in the North-East of Scotland, and many of the books in this maritime section are about fishing. This was an industry in which women played an integral part. For this reason, fishermen generally married women from fishing families who would be familiar with the life. The women may not actually have gone to sea, but they did most of the other jobs that were necessary, collecting bait and baiting the fishing lines, making and mending nets, selling the fish in the rural hinterland, as well as looking after the family while the men were at sea. And although they didn’t go to sea, they did get their feet wet – the women carried the men on their backs from the shore to the boats so that they wouldn’t get their boots wet before they set sail. My great-granny was a fisherwoman and, in common with most of her friends, she left home at 14 to follow the herring shoals round the coast of Britain. Teams of coopers followed the herring too, and like many herring lassies she married a cooper.

There are many books on these herring lassies, or “the Scotch girls” as they were known in England – books which tell their stories in their own words. It was a very hard life, standing all day at the farlans (long wooden troughs) full of herring, sometimes in atrocious conditions, gutting the herring and packing them into barrels. They started the day by winding clooties (bits of cloth) around their fingers to protect them from accidental slips of the gutting knife. The cuts, together with the salt used for packing the herring, often caused festering sores. But what shines through their stories is the comradeship, the companionship of their own small team and of the other girls, the laughter, the songs they sang as they worked, the freedom – far better, they all agreed, than being a “skiffie” or domestic servant, the job they took in between following the herring. These books give a very vivid picture of the kind of life these young women led.

I inherited a beautiful Japanese tea set from my granny. My grandfather was a captain in the Merchant Navy and travelled all over the world. I assumed that he had brought this back from one of his trips to Japan. Then I read in Christian Watt Marshall’s *A Stranger on the Bars* that when she followed the herring she loved visiting Great Yarmouth in Norfolk. “There were a lot of good shops in Broad Row and a good shopping centre in King Street”, she writes. “Thousands of tea sets must have been bought by the Scottish girls in King Street Market. ... [They] were very fond of those thin eggshell Japanese tea sets and gave them pride of place in their cabinets at home.” So, perhaps my precious tea set came from my granny’s mother via Great Yarmouth rather than from her husband!

Some books in our Library on the life of a herring lassie:

Duthie, Jean, *Out of the Farlans: Fresh Fields* (AuthorHouse, 2010)

This is the story of a grandmother, her two daughters and a granddaughter, all of whom were born in Fraserburgh. Their lives mirror the lives of many of our ancestors in

Scotland in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, covering areas such as the herring industry and following the herring round the coast of Scotland and England, the process of emigration, domestic service, two World Wars and the Great Depression.

Fraser, David, *The Christian Watt Papers* (Caledonian Books, 1988)

The story of Christian Watt, a Fraserburgh fishwife born in 1833, who died 90 years later having spent half her life in Aberdeen's Cornhill Asylum for the Insane. The sea took four of her brothers, her husband and her 13-year-old son. This is a remarkable memoir.

Sanderson, Rosemary, *The Herring Lassies: Following the Herring* (Bard Books, on behalf of Banffshire Maritime Heritage Association, 2008)

A detailed description of all that's involved in the herring industry, with memories of their lives from two former herring lassies.

Sutherland, Gavin, *A Stranger on the Bars: the memoirs of Christian Watt Marshall of Broadsea* (Banff & Buchan District Council, 1994)

A sequel to the Christian Watt papers, written by her granddaughter. The way of life Mrs Marshall describes changed very little from her grandmother's day until after 1945.

library@anesfhs.org.uk

Margie Mellis

No. 2090

—oOo—

Cullen Conference for Banffshire Fowk

If you have family links to historic Banffshire, there is a treat in store for you later this year! On Saturday 7th October, Banffshire Field Club is hosting a one-day conference on the theme of "Banffshire Fowk".

The Banffshire diaspora is the topic to be discussed by keynote speaker Professor Marjory Harper, an acknowledged authority on Scots emigration. Mary Evans, also well known to ANESFHS members, will focus on Banffshire family history, while contributors will include speakers from Keith Local Heritage Group and other organisations representing different areas of Banffshire and its history.

The venue for this event will be the recently refurbished Seaford Arms Hotel in Cullen.

Detailed arrangements will be publicised via the Banffshire Field Club Facebook page during the early months of 2023. Once the programme has been finalised, it will also be available on request by e-mailing Banffshire Field Club: *bfc.1880@gmail.com*

bfc.1880@gmail.com

Alison Smith

No. 7779

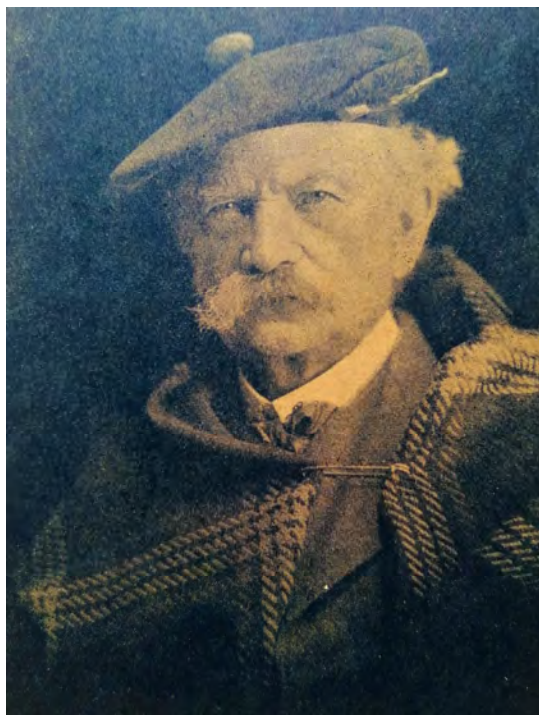
GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

Research undertaken in North-East records, also at the
National Archives of Scotland and New Register House
All enquiries welcome

Mrs. Margaret Davidson, CSFHS, Grampian Ancestry Research
6 Bayview Road, Inverbervie, Montrose DD10 0SH
E-mail: grampian.ancestry@btinternet.com
Tel. 01561 361500

Scott Skinner Statue

Following on from our article on Scott Skinner (Journal 163, May 2022, pp. 24–26), it seems appropriate to mention that there is a campaign to commission a statue of the Strathspey King to be erected in his home town of Banchory. The project is being funded through public subscription, with Paul Anderson, the well-known Tarland-based fiddler, playing an active role in fund-raising and promotion. The project is well advanced, and sculptor David A. Annand has produced a clay maquette that captures Skinner's characteristic, flamboyant look.



When sufficient funds are raised, the final version will be cast in bronze and will be sited in Scott Skinner Square in Banchory. Paul's latest online concerts to promote the project, held in the Aberdeen Arms in Tarland, can be found on Facebook; and donations towards the project can be made at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/strathspey-king-memorial-fund>.

Shoppers in Perth High Street will be familiar with David Annand's work in the form of *Nae Day Sae Dark*, his evocative celebration of a poem by William Soutar. David is also the creator of the statue of Robert Fergusson outside the Canongate Kirk in Edinburgh.

—oOo—

100 Club News

The 100 Club gives our members the opportunity to win a cash prize while also supporting the Society's work. All you need is a UK bank account, wherever you live. The fee for each number held is £12 per annum and is payable annually, in May, by banker's order.

The payout is always 50 per cent of the income, and there are four prizes in the monthly draw (1st 20 per cent, 2nd 15 per cent, 3rd 10 per cent and 4th 5 per cent of the income).

You must be a current member of the Society. If you decide not to renew your ANESFHS membership, please **also cancel** your standing order for the 100 Club.

The draw takes place monthly, and **we now pay winners via online banking. We need to be kept up to date with any changes to 100 Club members' bank-account details.** Winners are also announced in the Journal. For further details, please see the current Information Booklet on our website.

	1 st prize No. (£19·15)	Mem. No.	2 nd prize No. (£14·36)	Mem. No.	3 rd prize No. (£9·58)	Mem. No.	4 th prize No. (£4·79)	Mem. No.
Dec	18 Angus Pelham Burn	19808	110 Michael Kennedy	15552	30 Irene McCafferty	6462	138 Jacqui Farmer	20728
Jan	50 Edna Cromarty	2568	108 Moira Copley	344	115 Raymond Mennie	11359	24 Fiona Gaskell	17588
Feb	100 June Melvin	834	119 Alison Stimpson	15080	138 Jacqui Farmer	20728	98 Jim Illingworth	2542

Letters to the Editor



Dear Editor,

Where Am I From / Where Do I Belong?

Joining our Society in 1991 represented one more step in a lifetime of wanting to know my family history. Genealogy surely lies in my blood, for I'd started early, interviewing my grandfather Adam Polson in 1951 when I was aged eight ... possibly a forerunner of a career as a journalist. Somewhere I still have the note of that conversation.

I asked Grandpa Polson (born 1879) two questions, the first being "Where are you from?" and the second "What was it like the day men first flew?"

His answer to the first ("I've a relative in Inverness") proved to be a golden tip-off years later in researching my maternal Polson line, while his second response ("Houts, it wis jist like onie ither") demonstrated how slowly news travelled from the Wright brothers' triumph in 1903 at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, to Grandpa's home in Selkirkshire.

I turn 80 this year, and, thanks to a substantial list of places running from Sutherland to Devon plus a great many spots in between, I now know where I'm from. That's the good news. The bad news is: but where do I belong?

gcasely@herald-strategy.co.uk

Gordon Casely

No. 4311

Lord Mount Stephen

I was interested in the report of Alex Wood's presentation to the Southern Ontario Group concerning illegitimacy (Journal 163, pp. 7–8). I have sent you part of a drop-line chart that includes Lord Mount Stephen (highlighted but poorly printed) and his relationship to Lord Strathcona, whom he always described as a cousin. Lord Mount Stephen's mother was Elspet Smith, the issue of Christian Smith and John Smith, who were neither related nor married. Debrett does not dwell on Lord Mount Stephen's ancestry, and I always wonder what the Victorians made of his parentage, though it certainly did not bar him from being a friend to the Royal Family. Lord MS was my great-great-uncle, as his brother, Francis, was my great-grandfather.

DonKathy@talktalk.net

Donald King

No. 7391

James Strachan of Karachi: Photograph?

Mr James Strachan, born in 1834 in Aberdeenshire, was appointed Secretary and Chief Engineer / architect of Karachi Municipality in 1873. He built many buildings in Karachi which are now heritage-listed. I have searched online but found no photographs of James Strachan. If anyone has a picture of him, please contact me. Your co-operation in this regard will be much appreciated. Thank you.

<https://inspiringkarachi.wordpress.com/category/james-strachan/>

<http://historickarachi.weebly.com/the-colonial-city.html>

<https://www.thecubicfeetdesign.com/blog/top-15-historic-buildings-and-landmarks-of-karachi/>

c/o enquiries@anesfhs.org.uk

Abdullah Suleman

Diary

Some local-area Group are alternating between meetings held in person or online; other Groups offer “hybrid” meetings. Details are kept up to date on the Events pages of the Society’s website.

25th February 2023

ANESFHS London-area Group e-meeting
Brick walls
12:30–2:30pm, online; register via website

25th February 2023

ANESFHS Southern Ontario Group meeting
The story of Jacobite Aberdeenshire
Mike Shepherd
10am to 12 noon EST (3pm–5pm GMT)
Online: contact ontario@anesfhs.org.uk, or register via the Society’s website

4th March 2023

ANESFHS Moray/Banff Group Meeting
Old handwriting
2pm–4pm, Activities Room, Elgin Library

18th March 2023

ANESFHS Aberdeen Meeting
Hiding in Plain Sight
Elaine Petrie
2pm–4pm, Rubislaw Church Centre and online

25th March 2023

ANESFHS Edinburgh Group Meeting
Safeguarding your genealogical legacy
Sally Low
2pm, Royal Scots Club, 29 Abercromby Place
(and online: hybrid meeting)

1st April 2023

ANESFHS Moray/Banff Group Meeting
Topic TBA – see website
2pm–4pm (online / in person: TBA)

15th April 2023

20th Scottish Indexes Conference
Recorded talks; live Q&A; free to attend
7am–11pm www.scottishindexes.com

15th April 2023

Tay Valley FHS Family History Fair
Details TBC

22nd April 2023

SAFHS 33rd Annual Conference (online)
Haste Ye Back
Hosted by ANESFHS and the Elphinstone Institute, online. Free to attend.
9am–5:30pm <https://safhs2023.anesfhs.org.uk/>

29th April 2023

ANESFHS London-area Group e-meeting
Famous or notorious connections
2pm–4pm, online; register via website

6th May 2023

ANESFHS Moray/Banff Group Meeting
Topic TBA – see website
2pm–4pm (online / in person: TBA)

13th May 2023

ANESFHS Glasgow Group Meeting
Members’ Day: old photograph
2pm, Renfield Saint Stephen’s Church Centre
260 Bath Street, Glasgow (in person only)

20th May 2023

ANESFHS Aberdeen Meeting
Delinquency and prostitution in the records
Dr Dee Hoole
2pm–4pm, Rubislaw Church Centre and online

3rd June 2023

ANESFHS Moray/Banff Group Meeting
Topic TBA – see website
2pm–4pm (online / in person: TBA)

9th September 2023

ANESFHS Edinburgh Group Meeting
(rescheduled from March):
Genetics, succession and family law
Prof. Gillian Black
2pm, Royal Scots Club, 29 Abercromby Place
(and online: hybrid meeting)

16th September 2023

ANESFHS Annual General Meeting
Followed by a talk (rescheduled from Feb.):
Cartomania in NE Scotland: cartes de visite
Kate Clark
2pm–4pm, Rubislaw Church Centre and online

23rd September 2023

ANESFHS London-area Group Meeting
TBA
12 noon, Church of Scotland hall, Russell St,
London (use side door on Crown Court)

30th September 2023

ANESFHS Glasgow Group Meeting
Topic TBA – see website
2pm, Renfield Saint Stephen’s Church Centre
260 Bath Street, Glasgow (and online: hybrid)

Record of Ancestors

Membership No: **10376**
 Name **Tracy WOOD**
 Address **Leighton Buzzard**

 Date **18 Feb 2020**
 e-mail **tewood1242@gmail.com**

Your Father's Father

3 George WOOD (Park)

Born 12 Apr 1885
 Place 10 Wood Street, Banff
 Married 13 Oct 1916
 Place Banff
 Died 30 May 1941 (56)
 Place Fleetwood, Lancashire
 Occup. Marine engineer

Your Father

1 William (Bill) George WOOD (Park)

Born 13 Mar 1918
 Place 245 Portknockie, Banffshire
 Married 29 Nov 1941
 Place Aberdeen
 Died Nov 1989 (71)
 Place Lewes, East Sussex
 Occup. Engineer

Your Father's Mother

4 Ruth COWIE (Bullin)

Born 15 Apr 1894
 Place 56 Gordon Street, Buckie, BN
 Died 4 Nov 1938 (44)
 Place Bridge of Don, Aberdeen
 Occup.

You

Tracy Emily WOOD

Born 13 Jul 1960
 Place Aberdeen
 Married
 Place
 Occup.

Your Mother's Father

5 William MASSON

Born 21 Jul 1889
 Place 2 Marshall Street, Stonehaven
 Married 24 Apr 1915
 Place 19 Union Street, Aberdeen
 Died 2 Aug 1972 (83)
 Place Tor-na-Dee Hospital, Milltimber
 Occup. Fisherman

Your Mother

2 Violet MASSON

Born 16 Mar 1922
 Place Aberdeen
 Died May 2012 (90)
 Place Leighton Buzzard,
 Bedfordshire
 Occup. Veterinary nurse

Your Mother's Mother

6 Emily GOWIE

Born 11 Jun 1891
 Place 4 Bannermill Street, Aberdeen
 Died 8 Dec 1971 (80)
 Place Kingseat, Newmachar, ABD
 Occup.

To all Society members:

If you have found new information since you first sent in your chart – or especially if you have *never* sent a chart in! – then please send in your latest version, with extension sheets as required. Don't worry about gaps, but try to fill in as many names, dates and places as you can.

Please send your chart to charts@anesfhs.org.uk, or by post to Aberdeen & NE Scotland FHS, 158–164 King Street, Aberdeen AB24 5BD.

		15	Alexander WOOD (Park)	<i>Born</i> 29 Jan 1835	<i>Place</i> Portknockie, Rathven, BNF
				<i>Married</i> 9 Jul 1859	<i>Place</i> Portknockie
				<i>Died</i> 29 Dec 1906 (71)	<i>Place</i> 10 Wood Street, Banff
					<i>Occup.</i> Fisherman
7	William WOOD (Park)	16	Ann WOOD (Doo)	<i>Born</i> 14 Apr 1839	<i>Place</i> Portknockie
	<i>Born</i> 5 Jan 1862			<i>Died</i> 14 Apr 1903 (64)	<i>Place</i> Chalmers Hospital, Banff
	<i>Place</i> Portknockie, Rathven, BNF				<i>Occup.</i>
	<i>Married</i> 30 Nov 1883	17	George WOOD (Doo)	<i>Born</i> 11 Oct 1818	<i>Place</i> Portknockie
	<i>Place</i> 22 Scotstown, Banff			<i>Married</i> 23 Dec 1842	<i>Place</i> Cullen parish, Banffshire
	<i>Died</i> 15 May 1933 (71)			<i>Died</i> 2 Jul 1882 (63)	<i>Place</i> 22 Scotstown, Banff
	<i>Place</i> Chalmers Hospital, Banff				<i>Occup.</i> Fisherman
	<i>Occup.</i> Fisherman	18	Catherine MAIR (Shavie)	<i>Born</i> 26 Jan 1823	<i>Place</i> Portknockie
8	Jessie Ann (Janet) WOOD (Doo)			<i>Died</i> 7 Jan 1913 (89)	<i>Place</i> 22 Scotstown, Banff
	<i>Born</i> 19 Jan 1861				<i>Occup.</i>
	<i>Place</i> Portknockie, Rathven, BNF	19	Adam COWIE (Bullin)	<i>Born</i> 3 Apr 1820	<i>Place</i> Buckie, Rathven, Banffshire
	<i>Died</i> 15 Dec 1932 (71)			<i>Married</i> 10 Nov 1848	<i>Place</i> Buckie
	<i>Place</i> 10 Wood Street, Banff			<i>Died</i> 3 Jan 1903 (82)	<i>Place</i> 82 Seatown, Buckie
	<i>Occup.</i>				<i>Occup.</i> Fisherman
9	Adam COWIE (Bullin)	20	Ann REID	<i>Born</i> Abt 1822	<i>Place</i> Rathven parish, Banffshire
	<i>Born</i> 26 Nov 1857			<i>Died</i> 10 Oct 1880 (58?)	<i>Place</i> Seatown, Buckie
	<i>Place</i> Buckie, Banffshire				<i>Occup.</i>
	<i>Married</i> 9 Jul 1884	21	James SMITH (Stripie)	<i>Born</i> 18 Aug 1830	<i>Place</i> Portessie, Rathven, BNF
	<i>Place</i> Buckie, Banffshire			<i>Married</i> 4 Dec 1858	<i>Place</i> Portessie
	<i>Died</i> 27 May 1922 (64)			<i>Died</i> 7 May 1868 (37)	<i>Place</i> Portessie
	<i>Place</i> 27 Seatown, Buckie, BNF				<i>Occup.</i> Fisherman
	<i>Occup.</i> Whitefisher	22	Helen McINTOSH	<i>Born</i> 13 Oct 1827	<i>Place</i> Portessie
10	Jane (Jean) SMITH (Stripie)			<i>Died</i> 7 Oct 1904 (76)	<i>Place</i> 75 Portessie
	<i>Born</i> 11 May 1861				<i>Occup.</i>
	<i>Place</i> Portessie, Rathven, Banffshire	23	Robert MASSON	<i>Born</i> 12 May 1843	<i>Place</i> Cookney, Fetteresso, KCD
	<i>Died</i> 13 Dec 1932 (71)			<i>Married</i> 19 Oct 1866	<i>Place</i> Cookney
	<i>Place</i> 21 Scotstown, Banff			<i>Died</i> 28 Aug 1887 (44)	<i>Place</i> New Street, Stonehaven
	<i>Occup.</i>				<i>Occup.</i> Fisherman
11	William MASSON	24	Isabella MAIN	<i>Born</i> 20 Jan 1846	<i>Place</i> Cookney
	<i>Born</i> 1 Dec 1870			<i>Died</i> 14 Mar 1932 (86)	<i>Place</i> 58 Walker Rd, Torry, Aberdeen
	<i>Place</i> 27 Skateraw, Cookney, KCD				<i>Occup.</i>
	<i>Married</i> 21 Sep 1889	25	Joseph WOOD	<i>Bapt.</i> 4 Nov 1833	<i>Place</i> Portlethen, Kincardineshire
	<i>Place</i> Stonehaven, KCD			<i>Married</i> 24 Dec 1859	<i>Place</i> 15 Downies, Portlethen
	<i>Died</i> 27 Jan 1937 (66)			<i>Died</i> 14 Sep 1913 (79)	<i>Place</i> Victoria Rd, Torry, Aberdeen
	<i>Place</i> 43 Regent St, Aberdeen				<i>Occup.</i> Whitefisher
	<i>Occup.</i> Whitefisher	26	Ann MAIN	<i>Born</i> 3 Apr 1837	<i>Place</i> Portlethen
12	Ann WOOD			<i>Died</i> 5 May 1887 (50)	<i>Place</i> 2 Marshall Street, Stonehaven
	<i>Born</i> 29 Jul 1869				<i>Occup.</i>
	<i>Place</i> 35 Downies, Portlethen, KCD	27	Stephen GOWIE	<i>Born</i> Abt 1817	<i>Place</i> Aberdeen
	<i>Died</i> 22 May 1942 (72)			<i>Married</i> 26 Nov 1836	<i>Place</i> Aberdeen
	<i>Place</i> Royal Mental Hosp., Aberdeen			<i>Died</i> 16 Apr 1889 (72?)	<i>Place</i> City Poor House, Aberdeen
	<i>Occup.</i>				<i>Occup.</i> Journeyman shoemaker
13	Simon McIntosh (Samuel) GOWIE	28	Margaret CROMAR	<i>Born</i> Abt 1817	<i>Place</i> Birse, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Born</i> 24 Oct 1843			<i>Died</i> 22 Jan 1884 ("65")	<i>Place</i> 55 Longacre, Aberdeen
	<i>Place</i> St Nicholas, Aberdeen				<i>Occup.</i> Milliner
	<i>Married</i> 17 May 1872	29	George SKINNER	<i>Born</i> 1824	<i>Place</i> Fordyce, Banffshire
	<i>Place</i> 8 Bank Street, Aberdeen			<i>Married</i> 2 Oct 1852	<i>Place</i> Portsoy, Fordyce, Banffshire
	<i>Died</i> 26 Feb 1901 (57)			<i>Died</i> 17 Mar 1919 (94?)	<i>Place</i> Muir of Clochan, Enzie, BNF
	<i>Place</i> Royal Infirmary, Aberdeen				<i>Occup.</i> Farm labourer
	<i>Occup.</i> Seaman, Merchant Service	30	Mary Ann MITCHELL	<i>Born</i> 28 Aug 1826	<i>Place</i> Portsoy, Fordyce, Banffshire
14	Jane SKINNER			<i>Died</i> 12 Sep 1895 (69)	<i>Place</i> Seafeld Lane, Portsoy
	<i>Born</i> Abt 1852				<i>Occup.</i>
	<i>Place</i> Portsoy, Fordyce, Banffshire				
	<i>Died</i> 8 Nov 1920 (68?)				
	<i>Place</i> 2 Catherine Street, Aberdeen				
	<i>Occup.</i>				

Articles

Researching My Record of Ancestors Chart

I was updating my Ancestor Chart – when disaster struck in 2020, just before Covid. I broke my wrist and was laid up, so had time to do it – one finger at a time.

I started doing my family tree in 1999 when my mother, who was then aged 77 and had Alzheimer's, received a letter from what is now the Department of Work and Pensions. The letter asked her to prove who she was. My sister and I looked at the little white-haired lady with a Scottish accent and wondered: how on earth are we going to do that? We knew our parents' certificates were in the house but had not been seen since we moved in 1973, so that was out. My elder sister immediately delegated the task to me. I called the DWP in Luton and asked what they needed, and where we could get it. This was before we had access to the Internet, so a big problem in downtown Leighton Buzzard. The advice was to call the Aberdeen Registrar's Office.

I was born in Aberdeen, as was my sister, and I knew our parents were married there. Mum's family were there when I was little, and Dad's family I knew pretty much nothing about. My paternal grandparents, I knew, had died before my parents married. I knew Dad had a brother, whom I remembered meeting twice – and that was it on his side. Dad was a power-station superintendent, which meant we travelled for his job. He was the first superintendent at Cockenzie, near Edinburgh. The rest of his postings were in the Middle East, hence not seeing much of the family.

With not much to go on, I called the Registrar's Office and told them Mum's name and when they married. Next step was to post a cheque and wait. The reply was not what I expected. The certificate copies I needed, along with a letter with more information – a taster, if you will. The covering letter said they had a lot of information, and for another cheque they would do a further search and send on what they could find. That was too much to pass up on, and my search was on.

I discovered that the Aylesbury record office, next to where I worked, had the LDS Family Search disks. That took over my lunch hours, and I decided to have a trip north in the summer. I had been given details of ANESFHS, and joined up. I made a pilgrimage to King Street, and set off to explore where my newly discovered family came from. Dad's family came from Portknockie, Buckie and Banff. I discovered they had lived in Bridge of Don when grandma died, aged only 41. It took a while to find her grave in Buckie. My maternal grandparents I knew, and Mum's brother and sisters, so finding out about them and my grandparents' families was awesome. I found my grandparents' neighbour was still there. The people who bought our bungalow in Milltimber were still there. I loved the Downies, or, as the lady at King Street put it, the Doonies. I found the house my grandfather was born in on the harbour at Stonehaven, which explained why we used to go for picnics when I was little. Why so many picnics? On a glorious afternoon, I sat on the harbour with shortbread from my favourite bakers.

Then in my hire car, up to Banff, Portknockie and Buckie. I remembered places we used to visit. I paid a visit to the Banff Registrar and the wonderful basement record room.

My next trip included the maritime festival at Portsoy. I spoke to the lady in a shop near the harbour, and she asked where I came from. I had discovered Mum's maternal grandmother was a Skinner from Portsoy, so replied "here". She had been born next door!

I found my dad's father buried in Fleetwood, Lancashire. The fishing fleet had relocated there during the war, which explained why my parents had their wartime honeymoon in Blackpool. They were visiting the family. I was shocked to find out my grandfather had an accident at sea and died of sepsis. This was before antibiotics. His brother died when his fishing trawler was used as target practice by a U-boat. I found their graves and discovered they had named a daughter after my sister, but who had died as a baby.

That was the unexpected bonus of working on my tree: getting to know my family going back centuries. It is difficult to explain that you care about them, when you find out the good times and the dreadful times. Babies dying, and another child given the same name. The laughing when you find a trait that is in the current generation. A photographic artist in the late 1800s – and my sister was an artist, and I am a photographer. I met my distant cousin researching our Victorian photographer, and we collaborated and published his biography. See www.cartedevsite.co.uk, and search the website for “George Cromar Gowie”. I was thrilled to find he has a photograph in the archives of the National Portrait Gallery. They were also thrilled; and I managed to obtain a copy of it.

My favourite is that my great-great-grandfather was a shoemaker – and now my cousin would give Imelda Marcos a run for her money. I discovered my dad's family started a fund to help soldiers returning from the Peninsular Wars and their families. It was 200 years ago, but it still matters.

The family names were a surprise: William, George and Alexander, Jessie and Jane were the top of the list. I discovered Dad's mother Ruth has lots of family named after her whom we knew nothing about. The “tee-names” were a surprise as well. The booklet from the Society on Tee-names was so handy.

When Scotland's People came along, I was able to access the records from here and while on holiday in Norfolk. I can remember hearing that when I was born, my mum's father William Masson (Stonehaven branch) cried and cried. Sitting in a chalet by the beach in Norfolk, I discovered that one of his baby brothers had died on what became my birthday. He was so young. I also discovered that Grandpa had a determined side to him. I spent hours at the *Press & Journal* office looking through photographs and found one of him being thanked by the King and Queen for saving pilots from the North Sea during the war. My sister remembered seeing the photograph at Aberdeen.

I am also working on Mum's brother William Masson (Billy). When we moved here in 1969, he said he knew the area. He was in the RAF during the war; I heard he was on an island off the mainland. One of his and my mother's school friends turned out to live a few houses away, and worked at Bletchley Park. Then I read *Enigma*. They were both in the RAF Signals and based at Bletchley Park. I'm still working on that line of research.

What I have learned from doing my tree and my research is that these people matter: each and every one of them has a place in my heart, and I care about them. I went to a Family History Society talk in Wheathampstead a few years ago called “Putting flesh on the bones”. So true! My Ancestor Chart represents putting flesh on the bones.

Now that we have Zoom, it is so good being able to take part and to meet everyone.

What's in a Name: Allanach versus Stuart?

I have often joked that my Allanach ancestors in Aberdeenshire were a “surf and turf” family. The majority were tenant farmers, tilling Aberdeenshire’s soil. But a notable few left the land and ended up in the surf of some very distant shores. One such example was George Allanach, born in 1820 to James Allanach and Isabel Rannie.

I’m sure we all have examples of relatives born in the 19th century for whom a birth or baptism record is all that we have, and the presumption naturally follows that the ancestor must have died in childhood. George was one such example: I had presumed he had died in infancy, as no grave or death record of a George Allanach existed. Yet George, my first cousin five generations removed, would transpire to be one of the most interesting family members on my tree.

George was born at the croft of “Delrossoc” (now Dalrossack) in the parish of Strathdon. Initially I thought his story ended there – but, as maritime records began to be more widely released, I discovered a service record for George that showed he had started his maritime career in 1843 aged 23 aboard the Aberdeen ship *St Clement*, working as a carpenter.

George worked on different ships year by year – and what sights he must have seen! In 1845, he was on the New York-based ship *Yorkshire*, famed for its record-breaking short transatlantic passages. By 1846, he was working aboard the famous New Zealand-bound immigrant ship *Glentanner*. By 1853 he had made the rank of First Mate, and soon afterwards he was the Master of a ship bound for Australia named the *Robert Cottle*. Unfortunately, the trail ran cold again. Had the *Robert Cottle* sunk?

It was here that the story took an unusual genealogical twist that explained why later life records were hard to come by. Hidden behind George’s Master Certificate was a duplicate Ship Master’s Certificate in the name of “George Stuart”, and his application for maritime examination – an astounding document regarding the Allanach surname.

The affidavit document from 1855 declares that

his parents were James Stuart in Delrossac and his spouse Isobel Rannie: that from some cause connected with the last Rebellion in Scotland, his father changed his surname of “Stuart” and assumed that of “Allanach” and that [George] was made to do the same from his infancy, so that he has been all along known under the name of George Allanach and made use of that name in signing all writings, but he is now desirous of resuming his proper name of “Stuart”... and that his father’s name be inserted [in the registry] as “James Stuart”.

The affidavit raises numerous questions. Was it so problematic to have Stuart connections 100 years after Culloden that it was only in 1855 that the original Stuart name could be used? If it was so problematic, why does his father James use the surname “Stuart” on George’s birth record in the parish registries? And, if the Allanachs are actually Stuarts, why do so many Allanachs appear in records prior to 1745? Why did the Allanach who was known to have fought at Culloden – John Allanach, a merchant from Clashnoir – fight as an “Allanach” in Glenbucket’s Regiment and not as a “Stuart”?

Perhaps by 1855 there was a certain prestige associated with any Stuart connection, real or otherwise – a prestige George wanted to use to legitimise his position as Ship’s Master? Perhaps the desire to use the name “Stuart” was simply prompted by a wish to restore his

name? Alas, the Stuart name was to prove just as unlucky for George as it had been for the Bonnie Prince.

By 1857, George was Master and part-owner of the 886-ton clipper *Catherine Adamson* which sailed between Britain and Australia. On only her third voyage since launch, the *Catherine Adamson* was heading to Sydney when she arrived off Botany Bay about 3pm on 23rd October 1857. Her cargo was valued at £80,000 (nearly £12 million today).

Heavy squalls prevented the ship entering the harbour, and Captain Stuart favoured sitting out the storm at sea, but a local pilot who had boarded earlier insisted on steering to harbour. The attempt failed, and the ship eventually hit the rocky shore off the Old Man's Hat at the northern entrance to the harbour. Twenty-one souls were lost that night. A jury at a subsequent inquiry blamed the pilot and cleared George, though questions were raised as to why he had disembarked to direct the rescue efforts from a passing steamer – questions that were likely to have haunted him. The financial loss too would have been heavy: “Captain Stuart, a man of Energy and perseverance ... we regret to hear, has lost, by this catastrophe, the hard earnings of a busy and industrious life”. The *Catherine Adamson* sinking came just weeks after the *Dunbar* disaster in which 121 people died; they are still commemorated to this day at an annual service in Sydney.

In Aberdeen the following year, 1858, George married Sarah Birnie, with whom he would have five children. In the same year, he purchased shares in the ship *Jason* – and Sarah gave birth to a daughter onboard the new ship in 1859.

By 1865, George had taken out a £4,000 mortgage to purchase shares in the *Strathnaver* (equivalent to £593,967 today), and in August 1865 his wife Sarah launched the new clipper at the building yard of William Duthie in Dundee: “a fine launch which was witnessed by a large number of spectators”.

Photos exist of the *Strathnaver* in 1870 in Sydney harbour, and it looks a magnificent ship. Sadly, George did not live long enough to see the photos taken, as he died in 1868 of erysipelas, aged just 48.

George's life story is amazing in many ways. His father and grandfather ventured little further afield than the steadings around Strathdon, and yet George was able to see more of the world than many people do today. He came from humble beginnings and yet rose through the ranks to become a clipper captain by his early thirties, even surviving financial ruin and professional humiliation after the sinking of the *Catherine Adamson*, only to go on to captain two more ships.

Genealogically, too, George gives an unusual insight into the impact that the Battle of Culloden had on families, down to the very names they were given decades later. I would greatly appreciate hearing from anyone with stories of names being changed after 1746.

For those interested in the surname Allanach, I have created <https://allanach.co.uk/>, where all my research is collated. There is even a page dedicated to Captain George Allanach, where you can see a photo of him and some of the ships he commanded. Updates to the website are communicated through a dedicated Facebook page (Allanach Family History).

The Largest Ever English Dictionary

Published 141 years ago in 1882, by W. G. Blackie & Co., was Ogilvie's *The Imperial Dictionary of the English Language* in a revised and expanded edition by a native of Kincardineshire, Charles Annandale. At the time, this was the largest English dictionary, with over 100,000 words in four volumes of more than 3,000 pages, and with 3,000 illustrations. Now considered to be of great significance and value to literature, it included pronunciations, identified a word's origins and gave very full descriptions as to meaning. The entry for the word "dictionary" itself runs to about 100 words. Charles's work is encyclopaedic and comprehensive.

From very modest beginnings, when he died in 1915 Charles Annandale left the equivalent of just over £400,000 today. His family came from Fordoun, south-west of Stonehaven. His great-grandmother was blind. Charles owed his opportunities for a literary career to his father James's employment path at Monboddo House, Fordoun. James rose from a young gardener to steward, managing key aspects of estate business for the Burnett family.

James Burnett (1714–99) of Monboddo was a Scottish judge and a distinguished linguist. His six-volume *The Origin and Progress of Language* is the first work in modern comparative linguistics. His daughter Elizabeth, born at Monboddo House, was a romantic interest of the Scottish poet Robert Burns. It is thought she met Burns in the foyer of Edinburgh's Canongate Theatre.

Burns's poem "Address to Edinburgh" refers to a woman only as "Fair B". In a reprint of the poem, Burns declared that "Fair B" was Miss Burnett of Monboddo, at whose house he had the honour to be more than once. Her death in 1791 caused Burns to write his "Elegy on the Late Miss Burnet of Monboddo".

With his father working for descendants of the literary James Burnett, and the connection with Burns, Charles developed a keen interest in the English language. Charles was born in Fordoun on 6th August and baptised on 25th August 1843, the second-youngest of 15 children. The family link with Monboddo is also indicated by the name of the 15th child, Arthur Burnett Annandale.

Charles received his elementary education at Fordoun Parish School. With a bursary, he entered Aberdeen University in 1862, graduating in 1867 after doing well in Latin and Greek. Aged 27 in 1871, Charles worked in Glasgow as a literary assistant.

Around this time, Charles had a relationship with Georgina Hughina McLeod, a teacher of English. In May 1872, she gave him a son, Paul Annandale, who died later that year. Paul was born at 15 Apsley Place, Glasgow, and Charles's occupation on the birth certificate is *littérateur*. In 1877, Charles married Mary Hannah Wilson, aged 25. They had a daughter Florence in 1878. In the 1881 census, Charles was a "Writer and Editor".



Charles received the honorary degree of LLD from Aberdeen University in 1885. By 1891, he was the editor at Blackie & Sons, publishers. Advertisements about his publications appeared widely in the British press. This photograph of Charles was given to me in 2008 by the late Mary Westley (née Annandale), of the Isle of Skye.

The 1901 census shows Charles, aged 57, as a writer and editor of books. He died on the afternoon of 4th September 1915, of carcinoma of the liver, at 35 Queen Mary Avenue on Glasgow's south side, and is buried in the nearby Cathcart Cemetery.

The *Aberdeen Daily Journal* of 8th September 1915 published this appreciation by "J.R.L. of Drumoak, Aberdeen" (source: British Newspaper Archive):

In Memoriam

Charles Annandale M.A, LL.D

We mourn the loss of him who wrought
Through months and years on heavy tomes,
Brought life from even the driest bones
Distinctions fine for those who sought.

Profoundest truths of ages gone,
A humble worker in his field,
Whose master mind would never yield
Till perfect light and truth outshone.

A second Newton in his role,
A well of English undefiled,
But simple like a little child,
In word and deed and inmost soul.

A memory keen, his simple mind
Was fully stored with knowledge deep
A nature free to ever reap
The fields of truth for all mankind.

Who read and think and labour on
To reach a higher mental plane
His work, always another's gain
Is never lost but grown upon.

The mind it feeds, rest on and sleep
At Nature's call. Thy work will give
Its just reward to those who live
The paths of wisdom's ways to keep.

Charles gave to the world a legacy of encyclopaedias, dictionaries and books about Robert Burns, which sold around the Victorian and Edwardian world. Charles was my second cousin five times removed. I am a genealogist, a member of the Guild of One-Name Studies, the author of the book *Annandale Family History Discovered*, and manager of the website *A Study of Annandale Families*. I also have a piece due out in *History Scotland* magazine in June 2023 about an Annandale scandal in 1873.

annandalesteve@gmail.com

Stephen J Annandale

No. 5858

—oOo—

Isabella Paul Dow of the Scottish Women's Hospital

The women of Aberdeenshire who didn't "go home and sit still"

In 2015, I saw a post on the web about the British Embassy teaming up with Serbia Post to commemorate and celebrate women of the Scottish Women's Hospital (SWH) and their important role in the country's history during the Great War. My interest was piqued – I'd

never heard of them! Why were these women famous and revered in Serbia, and why was I hearing about them only now?

In the last few years, historical details of the SWH have become more visible. The founder, Dr Elsie Inglis, is soon to have a statue raised on the Royal Mile in Edinburgh to honour her trailblazing medical work, her war-time heroism and her leading place in the suffrage movement. Nursing Sister Louisa Jordan (1878–1915), from Glasgow, was a Queen's nurse who volunteered to work with the SWH, and died in the line of duty after she caught typhus. During the Covid pandemic in 2020, a temporary hospital was built on the SEC Centre site in Glasgow to cope with healthcare and vaccinations. The Scottish Government chose to name this the "NHS Louisa Jordan" after her.

My interest is: where did all these volunteers come from? Did anyone in North-East Scotland volunteer with the SWH? Who were they, and what did they do in the organisation? Well, they certainly did volunteer! About 50 people from the area played their part in the Great War through the SWH – not just doctors but also matrons, nurses, orderlies, cooks, drivers and administrators.

So, I'd like to tell you a bit about the life of one of them, Miss Isabella Paul Dow. She was born on 23rd October 1872 at the Porter's Lodge, Rothiemay, Banffshire. Her father, George Dow, worked as a coachman there. He and his wife Mary Smith had at least eight children, and they moved around the country as George sought employment, which over time included being an agricultural worker and farm servant.

After George died in January 1881, the family lived at Strachan House, Old Machar, where Mary worked as a housekeeper (1881 census). Isabella was educated at the Girls' School, Aberdeen, and when she was aged 18 she was still living with her mother and some siblings at 15 Claremont Street, Aberdeen. She was employed as a book-keeper, possibly working from home – and from there she went straight into nursing (1891).

Isabella's nursing career can be followed by looking at the Queen's Nursing Roll and her entry on it. She worked as a nurse in the Fever Hospital at Monsall, Manchester from September 1892 until September 1894. Next, she was a nurse in a hospital in Whitehaven, Cumbria, from August 1895 until April 1898.

She then returned to Scotland and was based in the Victoria Infirmary, Glasgow, for six months, May to November 1898, and then Paisley Infirmary up to 1904. The 1901 census shows her working as a sick nurse at the "Peter Brough Nursing Home", Oakshaw Street, Paisley. Her address at the time was 23 School Wynd, Paisley, which still stands today.

At some point she undertook private nursing – but a note on her record states that she should not be recommended for this again. Frustratingly, there is no mention of why!

Isabella may have been a suffragist or a member of one of the societies. She would undoubtedly have heard of Dr Elsie Inglis, who was honorary secretary of the Scottish Federation of Women's Suffrage Societies from 1906 until 1914. Working in Glasgow hospitals, she would certainly have heard about Dr Inglis's call for volunteers for the SWH – and, as an experienced, mature nurse who had fever-hospital skills, she would have been an ideal candidate. Just prior to her application to the SWH, Isabella was working in Perthshire as a temporary matron at a convalescence home for wounded soldiers.

In September 1915, aged nearly 43, she packed her luggage and donned her SWH uniform and set sail for Serbia, where she joined the 2nd Serbian Unit, known as the London-Wales

unit, under the command of Dr Alice Hutchison. Nurses' wages would have been £50 per year. Isabella would have had an allowance for train travel; her inoculations, uniform, passport and also her travel to Serbia would have been paid for by the SWH. The unit was based in Valjevo, but just a month after her arrival the hospital was ordered to evacuate.

Initially the SWH Unit moved to Pojega and then on to Vrnjarch Banja, where the women were detained by the Austrian Army and became prisoners of war, even though this was against the Geneva Convention. Other SWH units captured in Serbia were held as prisoners separately, but at one point Dr Hutchison's unit met with Dr Elsie Inglis's unit. This only lasted a short time before they were split up again.

Isabella's unit had 32 women. Food was scarce, and accommodation was sparse. Each member had managed to smuggle a blanket, pinned underneath their coats. There was no work to undertake, until the unit was ordered to take charge of a Serb cholera block in December 1915. Dr Hutchison insisted that the nurses be inoculated first. Their captors responded to this with threats of incarceration until the end of the war, and starvation. In the end the captors capitulated, and the unit was inoculated – but the women were not sent to work in the cholera block or anywhere else. The captives were moved around under armed guard, first to Belgrade, then Hungary, and on to Vienna. There, the women and their belongings were searched. Any papers, diaries, photos and camera film were confiscated before they were set free in Zurich.

The women arrived back in London on 12th February 1916. For a whole four months of their captivity, the SWH prisoners had had no communication from the outside world. They would have been unaware of the execution of Nurse Edith Cavell in Belgium in October 1915, but politically this may have been one reason for their level of treatment as POWs. The German Army may have used their release as positive propaganda after the condemnation of their treatment and actions towards Edith Cavell. It is recorded that the German Army demanded such a statement of good and fair treatment during her captivity from Dr Elsie Inglis – which she refused to give.

Isabella Dow was most likely among the large numbers of the unit who upon their return applied to the SWH Committee to be sent to work abroad immediately. However, this was not possible for a number of reasons, and only a few were selected.

While Isabella waited for her application to go abroad again to be finalised, she visited friends in Paisley. There she was interviewed by the press on her experiences – and she recalled events such as the unit celebrating Burns Night in captivity, and how Dr Alice Hutchison had wrapped the Union flag around her body to save it from enemy insults.

By July 1916, Isabella's application for another tour with the SWH had come through, this time with the American Unit. She sailed out of Southampton with other SWH colleagues for Salonika, now known as Thessaloniki, in the northern Greek region of Macedonia. The journey was challenging and dangerous, the seas would have been mined, there were German submarines, and they could have encountered Zeppelins flying overhead.

The American Unit was named as a salute to the country which had raised the money for donations. The unit's commanding officer was Dr Agnes Bennet, a formidable Australian woman. Of the 60 or so volunteers in the unit, many were from Australia and New Zealand. Isabella would still have been among Scots, though: one of the unit cooks was Ishobel Ross from the Isle of Skye, whose account of her time in the London Unit is told in the book *Little Grey Partridge*. This unit hospital was under canvas, in meadows by

Lake Ostrovo – very picturesque under normal conditions. However, at this time, the summer heat brought malaria with it; in the winter, it was so cold that the nurses' hair froze to their pillows. The fighting was close by, and casualties were brought to the hospital by mules or the SWH ambulances, the 200 beds filling up quickly. The hospital supported the Serbian Army, and they set up field hospitals as the front line moved about.

I can only find two photographs of Isabella Dow. One is very grainy, in a 1916 *Daily Record* article which will have copyright restrictions, but the photograph here is allowed under the IWM Non-Commercial Licence – and Isabella is there, somewhere within the group of nurses!



Isabella stayed working for the unit until May 1917. On her return, she was put in charge of a London hospital for wounded officers and men. Later, she returned to Scotland, where she was transferred to a soldiers' convalescence home in Perth.

By 1925, Isabella was living at 2 School Wynd, Paisley, where she must have rented a room for £11 16 shillings a year. For all her endeavours, she was awarded the Victory Medal and the British War Medal.

On retirement, she settled and bought a home in Banchory – The Chalet, Ramsay Road. She had some family nearby, a brother in Banchory and sister and family in Inverbervie.

Isabella died aged 63, on 11th February 1935. She must have died while out walking or visiting, as she was found dead that evening in the nearby garden of Marlow Cottage, Banchory. There was a small obituary in the local paper, announcing her death and funeral arrangements. She was buried in Springfield Cemetery in the same lair as her mother and two siblings, although the stone bears no mention of Isabella. Maybe she had seen so many unmarked graves and deaths in her time that she chose the same for herself?

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Register of Aberdeen Funeratory

Bodies Dissected in the Medical Schools of Aberdeen c. 1840s–1914

The Anatomy Act of 1832 allowed for the first time the supply of “unclaimed” bodies to the Anatomy Schools for dissection. Prior to this, only the bodies of murderers could legally be dissected. The Funeratory at Aberdeen, set up in 1833 to receive the dead poor for up to 48 hours after death, was situated in Henderson’s Court off Broad Street. It was conveniently near to the medical school at Marischal College and across from the Guestrow, an extremely poor area where the courts, closes and tenements housed many desperate families in dilapidated and often one-room accommodation. The unclaimed corpses sent to the anatomists came mainly from the poorhouses, asylums, hospitals and prisons of Aberdeen, but some came from their homes or were found drowned in the harbour. If a body was claimed by family and friends within 48 hours, it could be released for burial, but if the body remained unclaimed for any reason, then the corpse was usually sent to one of the medical schools for dissection by the lecturers and students of medicine.

Records associated with the dissection and disposal of anatomical remains in the city have provided details of individuals who became “material contributions” for the anatomists. I have studied the Register of the Aberdeen Funeratory over a period of years and have transcribed the information on approximately 1,700 persons dissected by the anatomists from the 1840s to 1914. The earlier records do not survive, but from c. 1841 there are details of an individual’s name, age, marital status, address, date of death, cause of death, date sent to the anatomy school, which lecturer performed the dissection, and the date and place of burial. This information is of potential use to family historians who might have been unable to find out what happened to an ancestor. Since the register itself is both fragile and difficult to read, my database is perhaps a good source of information.

If members genuinely suspect that a relative may have become a subject for the anatomists at Aberdeen, I am willing, through ANESFHS, periodically to search my database for their details. It is perhaps prudent to explain a little about how you might suspect such an outcome. It is possible that most families would have been unaware of this post-mortem contribution to modern medical science for which we should all be grateful.

- It may be a long shot for many people – on average only 20–30 bodies a year were dissected at Aberdeen.
- The register is almost exclusively of persons who lived and died in the city of Aberdeen.
- Most of the people dissected were aged in their 60s or 70s.
- Up until the 1870s, bodies could be kept by the anatomists for up to six weeks. From an amendment to the Act in the 1870s, bodies were allowed to be kept for study for up to six months. So, if there is a lengthy period between a death certificate or date of death, and the date of burial, then this might indicate that a person was dissected.
- Bear in mind that not all records are readable, or that not all information was recorded – there are gaps in the records.

To request a search, please contact ANESFHS and supply as much personal information of a person’s death as possible, i.e. name, age, address, date, place and cause of death, burial date and place, and any other relevant information.

Ann Kinnaird: From Macduff to Oklahoma

When all of your ancestors were born and lived in a corner of North-East Scotland, it's not unreasonable to assume they died there too. Not so in the case of my 3g-grandmother, Ann Kinnaird. I descend from Ann on my mother's side, but I also descend from her sister, Helen, on my father's side – a fact that my parents probably didn't know and which, of course, made them distant cousins. Ann (1823–88) and Helen (1829–1909) and their six siblings were born at their parents' farm in the parish of Gamrie. By the age of 12, both girls were working as servants at farms nearby. Ann later married James Duncan, a dock labourer and cooper, and they settled in Macduff. Helen married James Watt, a fisherman from Crovie, where they lived and raised their family.

As I built up my research, I could not find a death record for Ann, but I did find one for her husband, James Duncan, in 1917 at Rothiemay. Ann and James had 10 children. In 1866, their eldest, William Duncan, aged 20, made the journey to New York in search of a new life. He first settled in Arkansas and then moved to Stonewall, Indian Territory, where he met his first wife, Martha. They had six children, but Martha died after the birth of their youngest. William then met and married Sallie Thornhill, widow of a First Nations Chickasaw. Sallie was recorded as an "intermarried white" in the Dawes Act of 1887. The Act determined tribal citizenship among the "Five Civilised Tribes" of Oklahoma. Through this Act, Sallie and William were entitled to a large allotment of Indian Territory land. The Chisholm Trail, used to herd millions of longhorn



Ann Kinnaird (Mrs Duncan)

cattle, passed close to where William and Sallie lived. When William heard that a railroad was to be built nearby, he built a trading post which became a key trade centre. He also became the postmaster. In 1888, he sent for his parents James and Ann, along with his sister Agnes and her two young children, and another sister, Barbara, with her husband, Arthur Horne. Arthur's parents owned the Crown Hotel and stables in Banff.

Ann had probably never travelled very far in her life, but in March 1888 she and her family began their long journey, first by train to Glasgow and then by ship to New York. They travelled onwards by train to Gainesville, Texas, where they rested at a hotel before being transferred by covered wagon to their son's home at Cow Creek, Indian Territory, Oklahoma, arriving at the end of April. Just four months later, Ann died and was buried there. The cause of her death is unknown – perhaps the long, arduous journey was too much for her. Her husband soon returned home to Scotland, as did daughter Barbara and her family, as living the pioneer life was not to their liking. Agnes and her family stayed in Oklahoma.



William Duncan, c.1917

William Duncan built, sold and rented homes and buildings, and soon formed a township, which was officially named after him on 27th June 1892 when the Rock Island passenger train first passed through. Three days of colourful celebrations followed, attended by the population of Duncan and by the indigenous people who lived in the surrounding area with

their leader, Chief Qanah Parker, the last Chief of the Comanches. William had a close relationship with the local First Nations because of his wife's connections. By 1892, the population had grown to 1,200. Duncan, in Stephens County, is today a thriving city and is where the Halliburton Oil Company was founded. Ron Howard, actor and director, was born there in 1954. This photo of William Duncan (born 1846 in Macduff, Banffshire) was taken around 1917 in Bremerton, Washington State. He had retired there after leaving his township, and he died there in 1921.

A distant cousin I have connected with in California is the granddaughter of the little boy who made the long journey from Macduff with his grandparents. She finds it hard to comprehend that her grandfather, whom she thought of as quite "modern", had travelled by covered wagon. Some of his stories are recorded in the *History of Stephens County*. Much more information can be found in the newspaper archives and in the Stephens County Historical Museum.

soniapacker@btinternet.com

Sonia Packer No. 23123

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Letter Home from Canada, 1866

One of the joys of being part of a family-history society is sharing family treasures and making new connections. The following letter was originally shared by the late Joan Low (no. 340) and was published as a facsimile in Journal 13 (1984, pp. 15–18). The letter was written to her great-grandfather, George Ironside (1803–75), who was the father of her paternal grandmother, Elizabeth Ironside (1849–1929). Elizabeth married Ernest Low (1843–1912), a watchmaker and jeweller, originally from Inverurie.

According to the *Scotland's People* listings, George and his sister Catherine were two of the older children of the ten born to William Ironside and his wife Margaret Alexander (married 1801, New Deer): Margaret 1801; George 1803; Catherine 1805; William 1807; Helen 1810; Janet 1812; Bathia 1815; John 1818; William 1820; James 1823.

It appears from Catherine's letter that several of her siblings emigrated to Canada and were living in a similar area. A family tree for Catherine and her family can be found on *Ancestry* and has some fine family photographs, including one of Catherine herself as a young woman but alas none of George's young people. This tree indicates that as well as her five daughters and son James, Catherine also had a son William who died aged 2.

Catherine married Daniel Lamont or Lamon (1800–83) in September 1835 in Whitby County, Ontario. The *Find A Grave* record for the couple shows that he was from County Londonderry in Ireland and that the couple died in Whitby in the Durham Regional Municipality of Ontario and are buried in Oshawa Union Cemetery (Grave ID 139343952 – Catherine Ironside and 139343543 – Daniel Lamont). While many of Catherine's family members had emigrated, the Ironsides remained prolific in Aberdeenshire, as there are around 300 entries in the Society's MI database and 86 entries for Ironside in the MI listings for New Deer.

Catherine's family flourished in Canada, but it appears that the connection with the Scottish side of the family lapsed.



Catherine's great-great-granddaughter Barbara Gish had not been aware of George and his family until we approached her about sharing Catherine's photograph. We are very grateful to Barbara for granting us permission to reprint it. It is just one of many fine family photographs she has posted that will be of interest to anyone connected with the family. She was also able to confirm the preferred spelling of Catherine's name was Lamon, "shortened from Lamont at some point".

Catherine's letter shows the importance of family photographs and the great challenges of maintaining links with family members overseas in the days before our electronic and digital resources. Happily, Catherine's letter has been the means of making a family-tree connection, but it is also interesting in its own right as a reflection of the times in which it was written. Catherine's views on the American Civil War (1861–65) are challenging from a modern perspective, but perhaps they give us an insight into how matters were being represented to those at the time, especially those remote from the scenes of conflict and social imbalance. The reference to "Mrs Stow" is to Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811–96), whose anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published in two volumes in 1852, was admired in the northern states and beyond America but generated anger in the southern states. The book is credited with raising awareness of the evils of slavery and even of precipitating the Civil War although the long-suffering disposition of the main character Uncle Tom has eventually made that term have negative connotations for many commentators.

Spellings and punctuation have been tidied up in this transcription:

Whitby [Ontario] 1 January 1866

Dear brother,

I shall commence with wishing you and all your family a happy new year. I am getting very anxious to hear from you. I often think of you but I never think of you as an old grey-haired man as you must be now. I always think of you as I last saw you. I am getting very gray myself and very fat: I weigh two hundred and thirty pounds. You will be so good as write a few lines and let me know how you and all your family are and if you would send your and your Mrs [your wife's] photograph to me [and a photograph of] the young people to my girls' albums and would feel grateful for them. My son is married and has had two children, a son and daughter. His son died this summer eight months old. He practises law in the town. I have five daughters all at home: Margaret, Helen, Elizabeth, Catharine and Matilda. John and his wife was here last spring. I had not seen them for a long time. I have not seen James [for] eleven years. He has a prairie farm in road [i.e. inland?]. George Calder was there. He has about three hundred sheep and twelve cows and other stock besides. He has four sons and two daughters. John has five sons living and one son and two daughters dead. Janet is getting very old-like. She has worked very hard. They are getting very rich. Sister Helen's children is doing very well. They are all gone from their father. The three oldest is married, Margaret is a dressmaker: Hellen stops with her brother William. He's a merchant and does very well. There is none of Calder's family married yet. I have no news that would interest you from this country but I am always glad to hear from my native country. The American war is over and I hope it will do them good but I am afraid it will be a long time before there will be anything like peace between the north and the south. They have spilt enough white blood for a sacrifice for the negros

but I know you are all sympathisers for the slaves but your hired girls is far worse used than the black women in the southern states. They have better houses and [are] better fed than your Scotch servants and has the Sunday schools and churches and every Saturday to themselves. When I heard that Mr Lesly had women on the railroad after making so much of Mrs Stow and her Uncle Tom I could not see the consistency of it. I must conclude with kind love to you and all your family and from [unclear] and a dear sister.

Catherine Leman

Sources

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“Haste Ye Back!” SAFHS Conference on Emigration and Return, online, 22nd April

Refreshing Catherine Ironside’s letter also gives us a chance to mention the 2023 SAFHS Conference, scheduled to take place online on 22nd April. It’s called “Haste Ye Back” and will cover aspects of emigration and return, and related family traditions. Perhaps it will help to bring to light further interesting links across the oceans, like this one.

ANESFHS is hosting the event on behalf of SAFHS, and we are delighted to be working in partnership with the Elphinstone Institute, Aberdeen University’s centre for the study of Ethnology, Folklore and Ethnomusicology, part of whose role is to promote North-East culture in all its diversity.

We are just as excited about our roster of speakers, which includes Professor Marjory Harper, whose work on emigration, return and the Scottish diaspora is justly well regarded. We have interpreted the topic rather broadly in order to be able to accommodate an introduction to Aberdeen City Archives’ medieval records – a complete run of “cooncil” records from 1398 to 1511 on the grounds that they may help to illustrate some of the reasons why folk decided to leave the North-East. As family historians, we are always eager to learn about resources that can identify individuals and shed light on how they lived. This record is truly unique, in recognition of which the collection has been inscribed on the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register.

We also have talks on War Brides, on emigrants who returned or those who settled in Scotland, and a slot on DNA in family history. All in all, it should be a lively and interesting day.

You can register for the conference and browse a full listing for the talks and speaker profiles on our “Haste Ye Back!” Conference website, engineered by Dave Anderson, our IT guru and behind-the-scenes wizard. Registration is a two-stage process: you need to create an account on the site and then use this to login and register.

The site has an Emigration page where we have posted up some tasters of the kind of stories we expect will emerge on the day. If you would like to add to our emigration archive by submitting a story or photograph, please e-mail elaine.petrie@anesfhs.org.uk or ivor.normand@anesfhs.org.uk.

Check out the website: <https://safhs2023.anesfhs.org.uk/>

journal@anesfhs.org.uk

Journal Team

A 20-Year Research Journey

This is the story of one small strand of my search for information about William Sim (1844–1916) from Fyvie, my great-grandfather, and how that search spanned many years and many sources from many countries.

Every story has a beginning. This story starts with a visit to the Aberdeen Central Library on Rosemount Viaduct in October 1997. I was searching for obituaries in newspapers. Some of these newspapers were on microfilm, but others had to be searched by turning the pages of the very dusty originals and making handwritten copies of the content; there was no British Newspaper Archive in those days. However, obituaries are usually an easy source to locate since, if they exist, one has simply to check the period immediately after the death.

One of the obituaries I found was for George Sim, brother of my great-grandfather, who died in 1915. It was the kind of source that family-history researchers love to find: a whole column in the *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, full of detail. I was so pleased about finding this source for George that I nearly missed a reference in the obituary to another article – about William Sim, my great-grandfather! Now I had to get a copy of that article – and so it was back to the microfilms!

What I found was another long article, again in the *Aberdeen Daily Journal* and covering more than a full column. It was about research William had done on the ox warble fly that attacked cattle – but that is the beginning of the story of another long search. However, there was also a passing reference to correspondence with Miss Ormerod, a name that was new to me. The article said that William had been a “valued correspondent” of Miss Ormerod. Perhaps some of this correspondence had survived in an archive somewhere – but who was Miss Ormerod? I needed to find out more about her.

I located a copy of her biography in the library at Edinburgh University. I found that she was a lady of independent means who pursued her interest in entomology, especially the insects that attacked the animals and crops of farmers. She lived in St Albans, near London, but had many contacts and exchanged information with entomologists all over the world. Such was her ability and her status among fellow scientists that she was awarded an honorary degree by Edinburgh University, the first lady ever to be honoured by the university in this way. My great-grandfather had been writing to someone knowledgeable, someone significant.

Since he had been a “valued correspondent”, I hoped I might find letters written by my great-grandfather to Miss Ormerod – but this expectation received a blow when I read in her biography that Miss Ormerod did not keep letters sent to her any longer than was necessary to deal with their content. Thereafter, the mass of the letters she received were destroyed. I now knew that this was not an archive that I could search.

However, all might not be lost. Each year from 1877 to 1900, she published a booklet about the Injurious Insects that troubled farmers and growers. She received letters from these people telling her of their problems and describing the insects and the damage they did. She was careful to acknowledge the writer of each letter by name in the booklet, and as far as possible to use their words in describing the problem. She said “that to do otherwise is a robbery of the credit of the contributor, and a false appropriation of it by the reporter, wholly unbecoming an honest worker”. It looked as if Miss Ormerod’s ethics

might help me to find evidence of my great-grandfather's correspondence. But where to find a source of the annual booklets?

I found that the library of the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh had a collection of Miss Ormerod's booklets – and it was a lovely place in which to work. When I started to look at the contents of the booklets, I found that, very logically, the emphasis was on the species of insect. There was no attempt to index the names of those who had contributed questions or information. There was nothing for it but to turn the pages slowly, hoping to find a reference to William Sim. On my first visit, I found nothing. It took another visit and several hours of page-turning before I found what I was after.

I found his name on the top line of an article about an insect called Potato-stem Borer – and the bonus was that this was not his first contribution, because Miss Ormerod says that she had been “previously indebted to him” for the information he had sent; there were other articles to find. Eventually, after many hours of searching, I found six occasions on which William had contacted Miss Ormerod. One of these was to lead me down a new research track. His first contact with Miss Ormerod was the result of an article that had appeared in the *Banffshire Journal* in 1894 – so, now I had to find that article. This was about research William had carried out on the possible cause of rotting in turnips. The impact for me came in a few words from the *Banffshire Journal* article: “some time ago he discovered three species of freshwater Algae new to Scotland”. No reference to a source, and no precise date; just that it had happened “some time ago”.

I had little idea where to look for more information. I had no reason to believe that there was indeed any other printed evidence. Perhaps William had just mentioned his find to the author of the *Banffshire Journal* article, unnamed in the newspaper, and that was the only place where there was any mention of William's find of new species of algae.

So far on my journey of research, I had travelled to or sought information from Aberdeen, Edinburgh, St Albans and back to Edinburgh – but the research on freshwater algae then entered a long dark age. However, I never gave up, and I occasionally tried entering likely key words into Internet search sites – until in 2018 I found a website with some promise.

This was about William Joshua (1828–98), an amateur entomologist from Cirencester, Gloucestershire, who was particularly interested in desmids, a kind of algae. The website had references I could follow up. There were searches I could make. In particular, Joshua had published two papers on British desmids in 1882–3. In the first article, there were five species listed with the source as Fyvie. One looked particularly interesting because Joshua notes that this was “The first instance of its occurrence”. At the start of the second article, Joshua acknowledged that the species he was listing were “new or rare”. However, what particularly caught my attention was the location given for some of the species listed – Den of Gight. When I counted all the species mentioned by Joshua in the second article, I found that there were 12 from the Den of Gight, or 25% of all the species he listed. Den of Gight was close to the Sims' farm at Fyvie and would have been well known to them, but it was most unlikely to have been known to Joshua in Cirencester. Was there any explanation of how this link may have come about?

In 1882, Joshua placed two small adverts in a journal for amateur scientists called *Science Gossip*. He said that he would be interested in hearing from anyone who would be willing to exchange samples of desmids. I knew that the Sims subscribed to this journal: they had placed similar small ads and had contributed short articles. With their range of interest in

natural history, could they have resisted responding to Joshua's request? Had they sent him those 12 specimens from Den of Gight?

One of the references listed on the website I had found was an article about William Joshua, written by a Michael Dingley. Clearly this was a paper I should read – but it was in a journal called *Biologica*, published in Bratislava, Slovakia, and none of the major libraries in Scotland had copies of this publication. Internet searches on the author's name suggested a link to Australia, so I contacted the librarian at the Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney. Unfortunately they could not help; they had lost all contact with him.

I stopped searching online for “Michael Dingley” and searched instead for the title of his article – and I struck gold! I found that Dingley's article was referenced in an article in *The Phycologist* written by a Dr Dalton in the University of Limerick, so I was on my travels again. Yes, she had Dingley's article and was happy to send me a copy.

I read Dr Dalton's article in *The Phycologist* – and found more gold. What a strange story that 150 of Joshua's algae slides had recently turned up in the Geography Department in Limerick University, presumably because he had corresponded with William Harvey, the subject of Dr Dalton's paper. I asked Dr Dalton if it would be possible to find out if any of the slides had Fyvie or Den of Gight on the labels. Back came a picture of all 150 slides. The name of the alga on one of the slides was among the 12 from Gight in Joshua's second paper!

In Dingley's paper, he says that there are about 635 prepared slides made by Joshua in the Natural History Museum, so I now aimed my enquiries at London – and back came images of three slides with algal material from Den of Gight. One of them has the handwritten note “new Brit s/p”.

So, that is my 20-year search, my world tour, involving sources from places as diverse as Aberdeen, Edinburgh, St Albans, Cirencester, Bratislava, Australia, Limerick and London. At the end of this journey, I have undoubtedly made progress in my quest – but have I shown, beyond reasonable doubt, that I have found the evidence to support that original statement in the *Banffshire Journal* in 1894 that William Sim had found three new species of freshwater algae?

ian5beaton84@gmail.com

Ian Beaton No. 8352

—oOo—

A Streetcar Named Kittybrewster

Margie Mellis's Library Report in Journal 164, on the Aberdeen trams, inspired me to write about my great-grandfather Gordon Ingram Anderson, who was born in Macduff on 10th August 1855 and trained there as a shoemaker. The middle name Ingram doesn't occur in any of his ancestors, but is carried by several of his descendants. He moved to Aberdeen and worked briefly on horse buses before becoming a horse tram conductor in 1876, working on the Kittybrewster route, and later on its electric extension to Woodside, which in his day terminated just beyond Anderson Road. It didn't take long before he hit the headlines in the *Press & Journal* of 13th December 1876:

A ROW IN A TRAMWAY CAR. – At the Aberdeen Police Court on Wednesday ... George Scorgie (24) and John Brown (34), both seamen, ... were charged with having, on the 5th inst., committed a breach of the peace in a tramway car ... travelling along

North Broadford, George Street, and St Nicholas Street. It appeared that they had been very abusive, particularly towards the conductor of the car, **Gordon Anderson**, whom they struck at, and threatened to assault ... They would each have to pay a fine of 25s.

Gordon appeared in several other newspaper reports over the years of his employment, including one on the retirement due to ill health in 1905 of Mr David Moonie, the first superintendent of the Aberdeen District Tramways Company and later of Aberdeen Corporation Tramways. The presentation was made by Gordon Anderson, “the oldest servant of the Department”, whose speech was reported at great length.

Gordon had been the subject of his own feature in the *P&J* of 2nd September 1896:

Citizens will readily recognise in this picture a representation of the well-known features of Mr Gordon I. Anderson, tramway conductor. It is more than 20 years since Mr Anderson joined the company, and of all the employees on the system he has the longest record of continuous service. Mr George Allan, conductor, No. 1 on the Queen’s Cross route; and Mr George Pickard, driver on the George Street branch, entered the employment of the company at an earlier date than Mr Anderson, but their record was interrupted by the fact that they left the service for a time. Mr Anderson is a native of MacDuff, and a shoemaker to trade, but is one of those who have no faith in the saying with reference to the shoemaker sticking to his last – if he can find a more congenial occupation. The work of a tramway conductor suits Mr Anderson admirably, and he suits it. In fact he is a round man in a round hole. Frank, courteous, and obliging, and ever on alert for his masters’ interests, he is a respected public official and a valued servant. Mr Anderson occupies the position of a relief man, but he is best known on the Woodside route, and is known to every dweller along that branch. May his figure long continue to be a familiar one in the city and suburbs.



Gordon Anderson,
from Press & Journal,
2nd September 1896

Gordon died on 30th July 1915, and the following obituary appeared in both the *Evening Express* of 31st July and the *P&J* of 2nd August:

Are you stuck with your genealogy research or don't know where to start?

Roslin Roots is based near Edinburgh, with easy access to national and local archives.
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See website for details: www.roslinroots.co.uk
or contact me at roslinroots@btinternet.com

QUALIFIED GENEALOGIST

Images courtesy of National Records of Scotland and personal documents belonging to Janice Smith

OLDEST TRAMWAY EMPLOYEE'S DEATH. – Mr G I Anderson – The death occurred at 82 Great Northern Road, yesterday, of Mr Gordon Ingram Anderson, in his 59th year, the oldest servant of the Aberdeen Corporation Tramways at the time of his retirement, two years ago. Mr Anderson entered the service of the Aberdeen Tramways Company 39 years ago, and ran that company's 'bus to Stoneywood and the Bridge of Don. He was on the horse cars on the Woodside route until the introduction of the electric tramcar system, and continued as conductor on that route for eight years. He was then transferred to the Ferryhill route, and two years afterwards was employed at the depot at Ferryhill. Mr Anderson's eyesight failed, and he retired on pension two years ago. He is survived by his wife and ten of a family – five sons and five daughters.

Gordon had married Ann Chalmers, a native of Methlick, in 1877. In fact they had five sons and *seven* daughters who survived – as well as two further daughters who had died in infancy. The Ferryhill tram route mentioned above operated between 1903 and 1931, from Castle Street via Union Street and Crown Street, with alternate cars going to the west end of Fonthill Road (service 6) and to Duthie Park (service 6A).

Under the District Tramway Company, the employees worked 14½ hours per day, less one hour for breakfast and one hour for dinner. No time was allowed off for tea, and the men concerned used to avail themselves of the first opportunity for taking this meal on the tram (*Seventy Five Years of Progress*, Aberdeen Corporation Transport Department, 1974). My grandmother Isabella (Bella) was Gordon and Ann's third child, born in 1880. For most of the 1880s, the family lived at 124 Causewayend (now Powis Place), nearly opposite Fraser Place. When I was about five years old, my grandmother told me that when she was that age it was her job to bring her father his afternoon "piece", meeting his tram as it came down George Street from Kittybrewster. I asked her how she knew when *his* tram would come, and she told me that every morning her father would tell her mother what time he wanted his piece that day, and she never had to wait very long until his tram appeared.

By this time my grandmother, now a widow, was living on Great Northern Road, near the foot of Anderson Road, and I used to amuse myself by sitting at her window noting down the vehicle numbers of the Woodside trams as they passed by. I came to realise that the trams worked to a schedule which repeated itself in a cycle, with additional trams being slotted in as the peak time approached. (Later in life, my research career was devoted to developing ever more complex computer systems to schedule trams, buses, trains and their drivers, including installation of the world's first successful system to schedule rail locomotives for British Railways in 1963.)

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Of Gordon and Ann's 12 surviving children, six remained in Aberdeen, namely Gordon "Gordie" Ingram (1878–1950), Isabella "Bella" (1880–1961), Catherine "Kate" (1884–1966), Walter "Waltie" Hutchinson (1888–1955), Ethel (1895–1946) and Margaret (Meg, 1898–1966). Unmarried Ethel and Kate lived with Meg and her family at 65 Powis Place, the last home of Gordon's widow Ann, who had died in 1934. A seventh child, Violet "Vi" (1897–1960), kept a grocer's shop in Bucksburn and later in Strathpeffer, but died in Aberdeen. Two of the daughters, Jane Ann (1879–1939) and Williamina "Minnie" (1886–1960), emigrated to Vancouver and raised families there. Perhaps they were the two omitted from Gordon's newspaper obituary.

Alexander Kennedy "Alex" (1889–1919) also emigrated to Vancouver, where he married around 1915, but he returned with his wife to Aberdeen, where their child, Gordon Alexander (1916–85), was born. Alex joined the army and died in France in the 1919 'flu epidemic, after which his widow and child returned to Vancouver. John (1901–67) emigrated to Australia to work on the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. He married in Sydney and had two children.

Some mystery surrounds David "Davie" (b. 1892). He was my mother's favourite uncle, and she inherited a footstool and a deckchair made by him (and now owned by one of my sons). Davie was ten years older than my mother, and she and my grandmother both told me that he, like his brother Alex, had died in France in the 1919 'flu epidemic. But, when the 1921 census became available, I found that Davie was still alive! He was listed with four of his sisters in his mother's home at 65 Powis Place, his occupation given as a ship's steward with the North of Scotland, Orkney & Shetland Navigation Company. My mother certainly believed that he had died in France, and my first reaction was to wonder whether he had been inserted in the census by his mother as a sort of memorial. Another thought was that perhaps he was gay and had been disowned by his father, who had invented the story of his death to explain his disappearance from the family.

A search through Ancestry revealed that Davie married a Margaret Kennedy on 19th June 1926 in the registry office at Islington, London. They were both living at 19 Barnsbury Grove, Islington. His profession was Ship's Cook, while Margaret had no profession listed. Davie died of heatstroke on 24th July 1930 at Abadan, on the Iran–Iraq border, on board the tanker *War Diwan*, on which he was chief steward. His last place of abode was given as 8 Ambler Road, Finsbury Park. A detailed history of the *War Diwan* is at <http://www.historicalrfa.org/rfa-war-diwan-ships-details> and includes a picture of David and a copy of his obituary from the *Press & Journal*.

I have dim childhood memories of Gordie and Waltie, both of whose homes in Aberdeen I visited with my parents when I was around five years old. I remember that one of them had no electricity in his house. Meg married Tom Aitken and had a son Tommy. Vi married Jim Smith and had a daughter Winsome. Meg and Vi were respectively five and four years older than my mother, and we often used to meet them, their husbands and their children socially, until we left Aberdeen in 1945. I used to call on Meg when I returned to Aberdeen in the summer holidays to stay with my grandmother for a few weeks at a time.



My mother Anne Comrie, Jim Smith, me, Vi, Winsome and my father, 1938

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Key Contacts

100 Club	Jane Cameron	100club@anesfhs.org.uk
Advertising (Journal)	Ronald Leith	advert@anesfhs.org.uk
Ancestor-chart/draft MI photocopying	<i>vacant</i>	pedigree.chart@anesfhs.org.uk
Ancestor charts (collation; indexing)	<i>team forming</i>	charts@anesfhs.org.uk
Bookstalls/Events	John Urie	John.Urie@anesfhs.org.uk
Centre manager	Barbara Lamb	Barbara.Lamb@anesfhs.org.uk
<i>Education officer</i> (organises talks to outside groups)	<i>vacant</i>	talks@anesfhs.org.uk
First World War; and Gordon Highlanders	Anne Park	Anne.Park@anesfhs.org.uk
General enquiries	John Urie	enquiries@anesfhs.org.uk
<i>Indexing co-ordinator</i>	<i>vacant</i>	indexing@anesfhs.org.uk
<i>Journal editor</i>	Ivor Normand and Journal team	journal@anesfhs.org.uk
<i>Librarians</i>	Margie Mellis, Kit Corall	library@anesfhs.org.uk
<i>Membership secretary</i>	Sheila Symons and Membership team	membership@anesfhs.org.uk
MI and MI Index co-ordinator	Gavin Bell	mis@anesfhs.org.uk
Microfiche/microfilm print-outs	Print-out team	printouts@anesfhs.org.uk
Postal sales	Nick Reid	postal.sales@anesfhs.org.uk
<i>Press officer</i> (publicity)	<i>vacant</i>	press.office@anesfhs.org.uk
<i>Publications (new/reprints)</i>	Publications team	society.books@anesfhs.org.uk
Queries for Journal	Ivor Normand	queries@anesfhs.org.uk
<i>Research secretary</i>	Joyce Irvine	research@anesfhs.org.uk
<i>Secretary</i>	Ronald Leith	secretary@anesfhs.org.uk
Social media	Susan Freer	Susan.Freer@anesfhs.org.uk
Standing Orders officer (publications)	<i>vacant</i>	standing.orders@anesfhs.org.uk
Strays (from North-East area)	Library team	library@anesfhs.org.uk
<i>Syllabus secretary</i>	(<i>interim:</i>) Ivor Normand	syllabus@anesfhs.org.uk
<i>Website / IT</i>	Dave Anderson	webmaster@anesfhs.org.uk



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Prospective articles and other items should have genealogical **and** North-East Scotland content. Articles, extracts or images may also be published on the Society's website or may be re-used in subsequent ANESFHS Journal editions. All submissions will be acknowledged by e-mail.

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ABERDEEN & N.E. SCOTLAND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY
158–164 King Street, Aberdeen AB24 5BD
Scotland

Tel. +44 1224 646323

E-mail: enquiries@anesfhs.org.uk

Website: www.anesfhs.org.uk

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