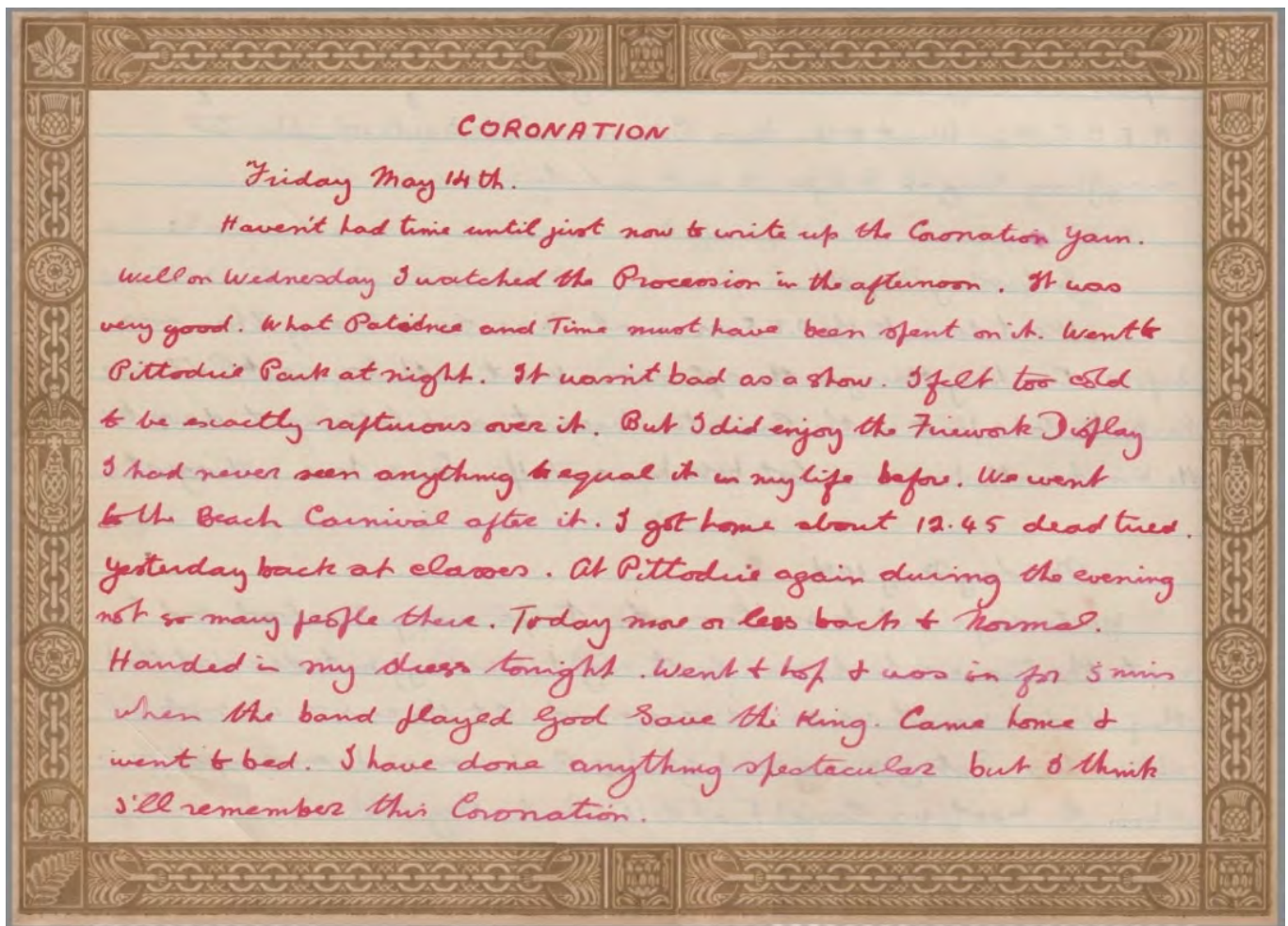


Aberdeen & North-East Scotland Family History Society

Journal No. 166 • May 2023



From the diary of Murdo Moir (1916–65), a student from 1935 to 1939 at Marischal College, University of Aberdeen, on the coronation of King George VI in 1937 (image courtesy of his daughter, Sally Low, no. 1441). See article “Coronation Reminiscences” in this Journal.

Membership Details

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.

Family membership is available for two named persons at one address. Please nominate one surname for registration purposes.

From 1st January 2020, the 12-month subscription rates (choose printed or e-Journal) are:

Ordinary membership:	£25·00	Ordinary digital (e-Journal only):	£18·00
Family membership:	£30·00	Family digital (e-Journal only):	£24·00

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You can pay online at our website (PayPal: account or cards), by post (now cheque only; **no cards**), by Direct Debit, by Internet Banking, or in person at our Family-History Centre. Members who are UK taxpayers may sign a **Gift Aid** declaration (forms supplied on request) and so increase the value to the Society of their contributions by 20%.



Internet Banking:

Bank: Virgin Money (Clydesdale Bank plc), 62 Union Street, Aberdeen AB10 1WD

Account name: ABDN & NTH EAST SCOT FAMILY HISTORY SOC

Account number: 90455891 **Sort code:** 82-11-07

IBAN: GB57CLYD82110790455891 **BIC/SWIFT:** CLYDGB21943

Include your membership number in the payment reference, and also e-mail renewals@anesfhs.org.uk so that we know you've paid!

Direct Debit: e-mail renewals@anesfhs.org.uk for details.

Cheque: GBP (Sterling) only. Pay: Aberdeen & NE Scotland FHS.

Website: You have to register first (see below). Then select "The Society / Members / Renew my membership" from the menu. All payments are processed by PayPal. If you don't have a PayPal account, be sure to select "*Check out as guest*" when PayPal asks you to log in.

As website renewals are processed automatically, renewing via the website greatly assists our hard-pressed volunteers. Thank you.

ANESFHS website and Members' Forum

In order to get the most from your Society membership, you should register on our new website. Go to www.anesfhs.org.uk and click on the Register link at the top right of the screen. For further assistance, please visit www.anesfhs.org.uk/how-to-register

Once you have registered, you can access our growing list of very useful members-only features:

- 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.

General Data Protection Regulations, 2018

Members' details are stored on computer for administration and research purposes only, and will not be lent or sold to a third party. We require only your name and address – all other details are optional.

We may occasionally send e-mails to Society members only, concerning Society membership, appeals for volunteer help or promotional information, using the e-mail address you have provided. You may choose to unsubscribe from these e-mails. For further details of data protection, please contact the Society in writing.

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

Issue 166, May 2023

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Society Reports, News and Information

Chairman's Report

On 22nd April, just before this Journal went to press, the Society hosted the 33rd annual SAFHS Conference online from King Street. The production team comprised Society members and non-member volunteers, and the event was felt to be a great success. A preliminary report appears in this Journal; and summaries of the presentations will appear in the August Journal. Special thanks go to the main Conference organiser, as well as to all of our technical support team for their selflessness and impressive competence.

Annual General Meeting

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday **20th May** (postponed from March) as a hybrid event, hosted from the Rubislaw Church Centre and broadcast via Zoom. The AGM will be followed by a presentation from a guest speaker.

All members are welcome to attend in person, or to Zoom in. Non-members are welcome to join in after the AGM for the talk. Timings are shown on our website. The AGM will run from 2pm BST until around 2:30pm, and the guest speaker's talk will begin at 3pm. Online attendance is now open for registration via the website. Audited accounts for 2022 are also available via the website (under "The Society", "Documents") when you log in.

The Covid pandemic began three years ago, and I have now reached the end of my constitutional three years as Chairman. Bert Lawrie steps up from Vice- to Chairman, and is already a weel-kent figure in King Street, where he is a regular volunteer. The AGM will see a few other changes to the Society's Board of Trustees ("Committee" for short).

Treasurer and Finance Team

The Society has grown to be a large organisation of its type, and covering all the finances has long since outgrown the role of a single Treasurer. A Finance Team of volunteers is covering all the necessary tasks, but we always welcome extra help. If you have some experience, or even just some enthusiasm and spare time, please drop in at King Street and make an appointment, or contact the Vice-Chairman (see p. 44 "Key Contacts").

In particular, the Society is keen to appoint a Treasurer to oversee the Finance Team and its various roles. The post has been vacant for a long time, and the long-serving previous incumbent has continued as Acting Treasurer but is definitely stepping away at this AGM. Roles within the Society need never be onerous: all tasks are always better performed as a team. Ideally this would be by members able to meet in King Street; but we now have the videoconferencing technology to enable members worldwide to "meet" and discuss as necessary. Please get in touch with us.

Membership Renewals: new bank account

For compliance reasons, the Society now has new bank details for when you come to renew your membership. The new information appears on the renewal notice wrapped around your printed copy of this Journal, and in e-mails to e-members. The details also appear on the inside front cover of the Journal from this issue onwards. Please use only the up-to-date information, and not what appears in older Journals! Thank you.

Research Centre Report

Spring is well on its way, more people are venturing out and about, and the Centre is becoming busier. A number of returning members are picking up their family history where they left off (sometimes many years ago) and discovering that there are now a lot more resources, in the availability both of statutory records and of others that we may not have had access to when they started their ancestor hunt. Some people are happy doing a straight-line search and getting as far back in time as they can, which usually depends on the survival of OPRs (Old Parochial Records). Others want to gather in as many relatives as they can, or simply find out who their grandparents were and where they hailed from.

Tracing grandparents or great-grandparents can be hampered by statutory records being not all freely available. In Scotland, unless you visit a registrar's office, you cannot view birth certificates less than 100 years old, marriage certificates less than 75 years old or certificates of deaths less than 50 years ago. These can be seen in the Scotland's People Centre in Edinburgh or in some local registrars' offices for a fee. It is best to come and ask us whether there are other ways to obtain some of the information. If you have original or copy certificates, then bring them in – and your journey can begin.

I suggest that you join Scotland's People online prior to coming in. They charge for viewing actual certificates outwith the timescale mentioned above, which equates to £1.50 per certificate, but volunteers are usually happy to use our personal accounts if you don't have access. ANESFHS cannot join Scotland's People, which is a government agency.

If you are unfamiliar with Scottish certificates, they contain a lot of information apart from basics. For **births**, and even more so for **deaths**, be sure to note who reported the event. Also look out for any reference to the Register of Corrected Entries – a marginal note, or an extra link to click on in Scotland's People.

Birth certificates give: child's name; where and when born; the parents' date and place of marriage (if any); and father's (sometimes also mother's) occupation. **Death** certificates give the deceased's name and occupation, where and when they died, their usual address if this was elsewhere, and the names and occupations of their parents and of any spouse alive or dead. **Marriage** certificates list the date, place and any religious denomination of the marriage; the groom's and bride's names, occupations and ages (or, later, date and country of birth); both sides' parents' names and occupations, and whether alive or not; and the names of (usually two) witnesses and the officiating minister – all potentially very useful. If older certificates show a mother's occupation, it usually means she was unmarried.

I do hope the above information is helpful and that you can come in prepared to start, as there is nothing more frustrating than leaving papers at home, especially if home is a distance away. Please call us if you want clarification about anything mentioned above.

We sell a really useful "Yellow Book", the *Family Record*, which is great for recording your findings in and is better for an overview than any recording on your mobile phone.

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Barbara Lamb (Centre Manager)

No. 20206

—oOo—

Editorial

I'm delighted to credit Elaine Petrie (no. 22949) as a core member of the Journal Team. As well as giving talks, and organising the Society's hosting of the SAFHS Conference

2023, she writes reports on talks, writes and commissions other Journal material, supplies images, liaises with contributors and generally shares the editorial load. The Editor greatly appreciates more help on all these fronts.

With this May issue, the Journal returns to a more “normal” schedule of appearing early in the month on the cover. We hope to maintain these standards henceforth. Some items, such as 100 Club, are held over until the August issue.

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Ivor Normand

No. 4161

—oOo—

Volunteer Profile: Stephen Reid

The late Gay Murton, one of our most conscientious and involved volunteers, always stressed to anyone interested in genealogy the importance of joining your local Family History Society, whether or not you had any family connection with the area you lived in. With her Liverpool-Irish background, Gay certainly practised what she preached. The same can be said about a recent, very welcome addition to our Wednesday team.

Stephen Reid hails from Northern Ireland and was born and brought up in Belfast. He moved with his wife, Carole, to Aberdeen in 1991 to take up a post as design engineer with Bond Helicopters, where he worked until taking voluntary redundancy in 2016. He and Carole have three sons and are about to become new grandparents in July this year.

In 2009 at a social gathering, he got chatting to a neighbour who mentioned his interest in family history. Stephen admitted he knew very little about his family, other than that he believed his maternal grandfather came from the Renfrew area. Fortunately for us, the neighbour encouraged Stephen to do a bit of “digging” – and Stephen was hooked!

Stephen joined ANESFHS (member no. 22261) and, after retiring, began volunteering in our Centre. Stephen worked regularly on Saturday mornings until a fall in visitor numbers meant it was no longer viable to open. He also worked on Tuesdays until changing over to his present shift on a Wednesday. I asked him what hobbies he has apart from genealogy, and he had to admit that genealogy has become such an obsession that he has no time for anything else! During lockdown, he completed a postgraduate diploma in Genealogical, Palaeographic and Heraldic Studies through Strathclyde University and has now set up his own company doing private research for a small group of clients. We are grateful to have his expertise and commitment, and we appreciate his help on Wednesdays now more than ever.



Stephen has also become part of a small ANESFHS team giving talks to outside bodies, and he has recently accepted an invitation to join the Society’s Committee. We very much look forward to sharing and benefiting from his ideas and energy on the Society’s behalf.

Thanks, Stephen. We hope you will be with us for many years to come.

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Liz Foubister

No. 6129

Members' Meetings

Elaine Petrie, "Hiding in Plain Sight"

18th March 2023

This Aberdeen hybrid meeting was well attended both in the Rubislaw Church Centre and online, but it turned into a game of two halves. As a Society, we have built up a lot of expertise in running meetings that combine a live presentation from a speaker to an audience while simultaneously broadcasting to an online audience. We usually have to overcome a few initial glitches before we get under way – but this time the gremlins won after some delay, and we elected to run the live talk to the room, with a separate group discussion for those online. We hope that, after that rocky start, everyone enjoyed the afternoon nonetheless – and we are most grateful to Mary Evans, our Moray/Banff Group co-ordinator, for kindly stepping in at no notice to host what became unexpectedly a Members' Meeting for those online.

Meanwhile, back in the Rubislaw Church Centre, Elaine Petrie introduced us to the *Greig–Duncan Folk Song Collection*, compiled principally in Aberdeen and Banffshire between 1904 and 1914. She explained that the collection holds family information on each song's key contributor, and that the songs and the notes provided give great insight into the way of life experienced by our ancestors in the North-East. Even without access to the physical collection, it is possible to hear many of the songs and to find out about the singers by browsing the interactive links in a Greig–Duncan area on Aberdeenshire Libraries' website (see links below). Elaine also provided a quick introduction to other sites (*Tobar an Dualchais* and the *Vaughan Williams Memorial Library*) which hold information and recordings relating to the North-East and other parts of Scotland.

She then moved on to share the challenges she had experienced in looking for a family marriage record. The search demonstrated the importance of focusing on the bride's parish for marriage records, and of using wild cards. When the missing record was found, it proved to be a Kirk account-book entry giving only the surnames of the matrimonial couple, which meant that it had not shown up when the couple's full names were entered in the search engine. In this case, entering less information (that is, surname only) was more effective than giving the full name.

The birth/baptismal record for the bride, Barbara Garioch, also proved elusive. It is a common surname in Orkney and Aberdeenshire, with about 700 birth/baptismal records in the Old Parish Records and around 250 statutory birth registrations from 1855 onwards, and should be familiar and well recorded in Aberdeenshire especially around the area of the village of Chapel of Garioch.

While the death records of Barbara's parents were all entered as GARIOCH, it turned out that her father, John Garioch (1796–1877), had been baptised as John HERAGERRY, son of George HERAGERRY and Catherine Taylor. John married Martha Milne in 1823 in Leochel Cushie and is recorded as HERRIGERRIE. The couple's ten children, including Barbara, were baptised with the surname GERRIE – and, by the time of these children's own marriages, most were using GARIOCH (pronounced "Geery" in the North-East) as their surname. No wonder they were hard to track!

Intrigued by the name, Elaine has sought further information on its origins and has learned in Society meetings that it may have been Flemish in origin and may have been brought to

Scotland at one time or another by immigrants from Flanders – an area which once covered northern Belgium and the southern Netherlands. The University of St Andrews has recently been the focus of several research projects on the Flemish in Scotland, tracing their earliest arrivals in the medieval period, where they are recorded in the English Domesday Book and were granted charters of land by the Scottish king David I around 1124. Many Scottish placenames like Flemington, Flanders or Flinders attest to groups of Flemish settlers having been in different parts of Scotland – including the Garioch area in Aberdeenshire. The surname FLEMING clearly indicates the likelihood of a Flemish origin. Significantly, there were Scottish Parliamentary acts in 1587 and 1600 granting citizen rights to Flemish or “stranger” textile workers, with further workers encouraged to settle in 1601. It was hoped they would teach their new Scottish neighbours the skills to create finer woollen fabric that would improve the return on the Scottish wool trade.

Over time, most family lines seem to have changed the name to GERRIE or GARIOCH, and registrations for HERIGERRIE are tailing off in Scotland. On the other hand, it appears that a similar surname, HERIJGERS, is still common in both Belgium and the Netherlands, and many family trees for people with this name can be found on *Ancestry*. What would DNA-testing tell us, one wonders?

Elaine directed us towards two of Barbara Garioch’s brothers, George (1824–1917) and John Garioch (1831–1907) – and it transpired that they, and George’s daughter Isabella Garioch (b. 1864), were all contributors to the *Greig–Duncan Folk Song Collection*. In fact, the Rev. James Duncan visited George at his farm just outside Leochel Cushnie three times between 1907 and 1911. The *Collection* has 31 contributions from George, and five from a notebook of favourite songs which John had compiled as a young farmworker. Duncan noted that George, at the age of 88, sang “with surprising clearness, and ... with wonderful fluency and correctness”. George had learned songs from fellow workers in his years as a farm servant but acquired many of his songs as a boy from his parents in the 1830s. Elaine surprised us all by bursting into song with a rendition of “Hynd Horn”, one of the ancient story ballads taught to George by his mother Martha Milne – Elaine’s 3x great-grandmother – proving that songs are indeed part of family history.

Elaine subsequently recorded a voiceover to her presentation which was made available to those who had registered online for this meeting. One member’s reply appears in this Journal’s Letters to the Editor.

Resources

The Greig–Duncan Folk Song Map, Aberdeenshire Libraries:

<https://www.livelifeberdeenshire.org.uk/libraries/local-heritage/greig-duncan/>

James Madison Carpenter Collection:

Catalogue: C. Bishop et al. (2008), *James Madison Carpenter Collection* [data files] available at: <https://www.dhi.ac.uk/data/carpenter> (accessed 23rd September 2022).

Recordings: <https://www.vwml.org/projects/carpenter-folk-online>

Songs and anecdotes of Scottish life and traditions recorded by the School of Scottish Studies and BBC Tobar an Dualchais/Kist o Riches:

<https://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk>

Information on the Flemish people in Scotland and related surnames:

Scotland and the Flemish People, ed. Alexander Fleming and Roger Mason (John Donald; Birlinn: Edinburgh, 2019).

<https://www.englishimmigrants.com> – England’s Immigrants 1330–1550: Resident Aliens in the Late Middle Ages – a searchable online database.

<https://www.poms.ac.uk/> – People of Medieval Scotland: a database of names showing in medieval records. The search term “Garioch” yields 12 records for the period 1093–1371.

The Flemish in Moray, Part 1, Morvern French, 16th October 2015 – [The Flemish in Moray, Part One – Scotland and the Flemish People \(st-andrews.ac.uk\)](http://st-andrews.ac.uk)

[CBG Surnames](#) | [MEB](#) – MEB Surnames contains information about Dutch surnames.

Searching by name provides information about its meaning and origin. The distribution of the number of name-bearers across the Netherlands is shown on a map.

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Journal Team

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Moray/Banff Group Report

Having successfully gone with “Resolutions” for our face-to-face January meeting, we decided to keep this general theme for our February Zoom meeting under the title of “Where next?” It was interesting to hear how members were hoping to extend their research, perhaps by trying something new or by going back over old work. It was useful to remind ourselves that new material is always becoming available, especially online – and several unusual resources were suggested and added to the typed Chat. With 76 participants, there was plenty of advice offered in the long discussion session as well.

March was another face-to-face meeting, and this time we returned to our usual very practical approach to a session by making use of old documents printed off – helpfully with transcriptions included! – from the excellent Scottish Handwriting website at www.scottishhandwriting.com/. A great deal of hard work went into the two-hour session as members tried to decipher material from the 16th to the 19th centuries.

We were back online for our April meeting and looking at ways for “Putting flesh on the bones”. Once again, a meeting of well over 70 participants ensured a lively discussion and plenty of suggestions for moving on from the bare bones of names and dates to finding out more about our ancestors, the places where they lived and the lives they led.

ANESFHS member Helen Taylor is coming along to our May face-to-face meeting in Elgin Library to help us unravel and organise the facts behind our DNA test results – a very welcome help for all of us! As the Coronation is due to take place on our usual first-Saturday-in-the-month date, this meeting has been moved to Saturday 13th May.

We don’t usually meet in July or August, so our June Zoom meeting will be the last for this syllabus year. However, for those of you who live within reach of Moray, how about an end-of-the-syllabus-year chance to enjoy another Afternoon Tea at Threaplands Garden Centre later that month? Please contact me if you are interested.

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Mary Evans (Group co-ordinator)

No. 1975

Edinburgh Group Report

Sally Low, “Safeguarding Your Genealogical Legacy”

25th March 2023

We were doubly grateful to local member Sally for her thoughtful and timely presentation. Not only did she step in when the planned speaker had to drop out – but also, when the big day arrived, she was too ill to attend the venue. Like the trouper she is, she recorded a voiceover for her PowerPoint presentation, so the meeting could go ahead, complete with her planned visual aids and examples.

Sally stressed that talking about a legacy does not necessarily mean talking about death, but that it is something we should all be planning for now as we collect our family-tree resources. She kept us entertained with humorous mnemonics and illustrations, but the underlying message was a serious one – be prepared, and act today!

Her talk covered: the difference between your Genealogical Will and your “ordinary” Will; identifying who’s going to take charge; sharing your passwords, website access and intentions; the preservation and maintenance of all your research; and how to organise all your “stuff”. She also developed a Master Plan for us to deploy as a plan of action, with the choice of only one action point or a plan with 19! But her message was reassuring: do a little at a time, bit by bit, to avoid being overwhelmed by the scale of the task.

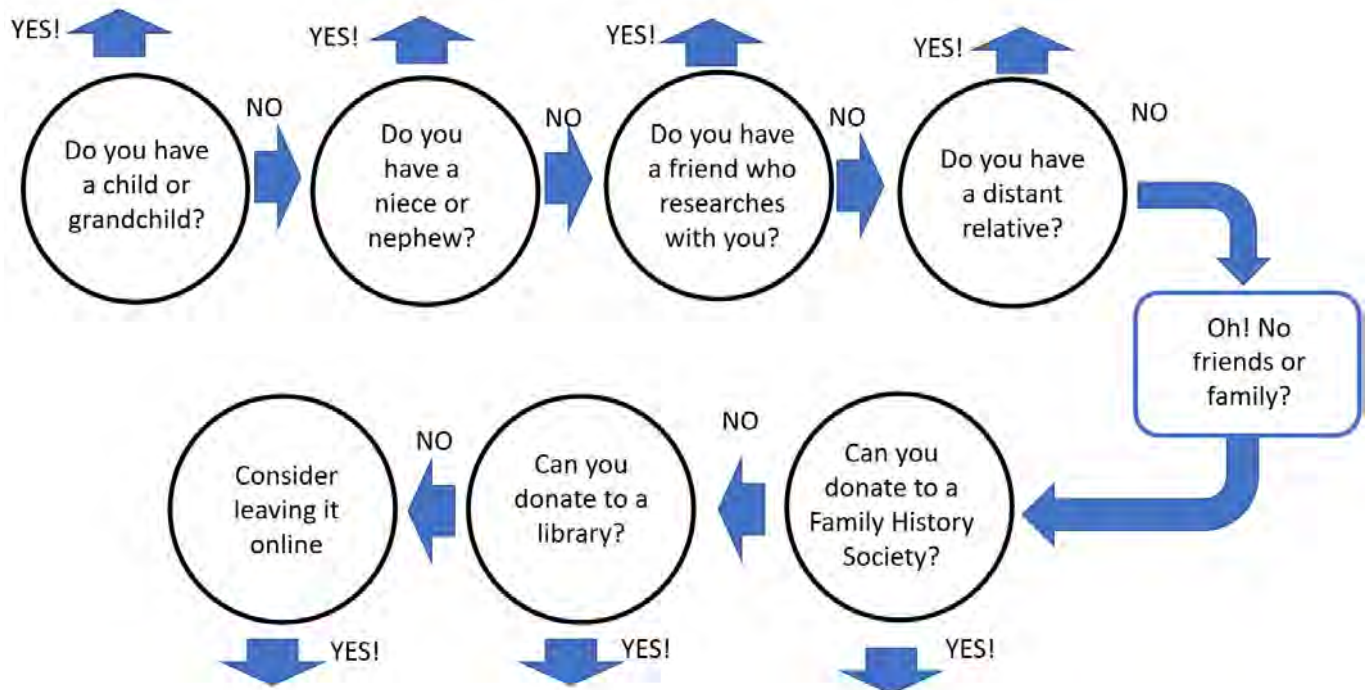
Number one on the list was to complete a Genealogical Will, such as the one available on the Society website (under Services, Downloads). Along with other helpful material, this is also available on Cyndi’s List. This was the one-step plan – but Sally reminded us this would place the responsibility on someone else to sort out destinations for our research. As she said, “How can you put that burden of identification onto your executor, or your heirs, who may know nothing about genealogy?”

To prepare the Genealogical Will or your Master Plan, you need to list what you are passing on, whether this be records, write-ups or physical heirlooms. Sally recommends going round the house to photograph these and write a paragraph, a story, about each item – perhaps doing a room or an item each day. In fact, this process may help identify to whom to leave the items, which you can then specify in your Will. Various Society members recommended labelling items to leave no doubt who is intended to get them. You can also consider making your gifts or donations now, rather than after your demise, as any valuable items will be liable for Inheritance Tax unless gifted at least seven years before your death – so do note the value in case it’s needed for tax purposes.

You also need to be aware that museums, libraries and family-history societies have limited storage space and will reject loose, uncatalogued papers but will be more receptive to a folder or printed/typewritten volume that can more easily be consulted and housed. Check with them now so that you can get the format right.

Sally then addressed how to identify the person who will take over, or at the very least look after, your years of research. She shared a neat flowchart, as well as some strategies for getting young people interested – she even suggested taking them to the *Scotland’s People* Centre to hunt successfully for an item they would think was hard to find (Sally having previously erased it from her records). Nothing will beat that moment of triumph in turning up something that the family “expert” has apparently failed to find. Then you can train them up and watch happily as they become interested – and, all the while, you’ll

be around to answer questions and pass on knowledge and expertise. Writing up the more interesting family stories is another good way to engage your relatives – keep it short and lively, and they will get hooked too.



If you have no willing family members, you can always consider online options such as *Ancestry* and *Find a Grave*. Far from being a last resort, it might be the best thing to do. Sally’s cousin has nearly 10,000 people on her *Ancestry* account and no children of her own. She’ll leave it all there, online for the benefit of the extended family. *Find a Grave* is free to access and doesn’t require a fee to set up an account and upload material.

And do list every genealogical website, or site where you may have kept such information, along with username and password, and share it with your chosen successor. It’s no good if no-one can access the material. In fact, many sites will have online forms to complete to authorise someone else to take over your account. Go to the Settings menu and follow instructions, or contact them directly. (Google, for example, calls it an inactive account form.) However, be aware that storing your material remotely (e.g. in the “Cloud”, or on *Ancestry*) carries an inherent external risk which you can do nothing about. If you are keeping all your information on *Ancestry*, for instance, please remember to export your data regularly, which means to copy it back to yourself, in case your *Ancestry* account should be hacked or corrupted, or you decide not to pay your membership fee for a year. Similarly, download from the Cloud those valuable copies of photographs or documents which you could never find again, even though the Cloud is extremely unlikely to fail.

Under the heading of preservation and maintenance, Sally covered keeping your computer in good order, and remembering that some formats such as CD or floppy disk may not be readily accessible to your successors. Some videos or audio recordings might be best converted to a digital format. She reminded us that a previous speaker had recommended saving images as TIF files (a more stable format than JPEG or JPG files).

Sally endorsed using external hard drives (she has three!) and backing them up regularly, perhaps even giving one copy of your digital archive to a friend to store in case fire, flood or other unforeseen Acts of God affect your home. She described an entertaining buddy system where pals might order materials or expensive conservation tools such as scanners

together and swap their archives at regular cake-and-coffee sessions. Preservation Equipment (see list below) sells good, archive-quality storage materials. Sally stores her most precious sentimental heirlooms wrapped in acid-free tissue in an acid-free box, with old letters placed in acid-free poly-pockets, with labels on the outside. She has also scanned and transcribed the letters in a Word document, formatted in two columns: the wider column has the word-for-word transcription, the narrower is kept for explanatory notes such as identifying the people or events referred to in the letter.

And if disaster strikes – when things go wrong unexpectedly? Write things down, as well as taking photos, getting print-outs and making recordings. Keep your written record until you are sure your items have been saved and backed up. Remember, there's always a risk of damaging your laptop while carrying it anywhere or when plugging in somewhere new, as it might pick up a virus. If you do have a computer problem, there are gadgets to help. There are computer-repair folk and/or gadgets to recover your data from any old system. They can even retrieve password-protected files from old operating systems.

When you do change laptops, please transfer all files and leave your laptop empty. There is no shortage of organisations who will return it to factory settings and recondition it; and many charities would be so very grateful to have it. There are also photograph-retrieval devices, compatible with any system, which claim to be able to retrieve and store – or transfer – all your photo files, whatever the format. Ask yourself the questions: what would you save in a fire? And how easy is it to find it?

Regarding how to store our research, we “met” Sally's cousin Catherine through an image of her tearing her hair out, surrounded by a jumble of papers, which stressed the need to organise our material properly. Even if using one of the many off-the-shelf programmes, we need to update them regularly. Specialised family-history Facebook groups offer plenty of tips and strategies for organising your material, whether it's discussing different numerical / alphabetical reference systems or using acid-free paper and files. Sally stressed we should label files consistently. She keeps anything completely irreplaceable such as family letters, but no duplicate certificates. Instead, she logs reference numbers from *Scotland's People*, or the ISBN number and library for books she's consulted.

Physical “stuff” can bring an emotional connection – but you don't want it to be a burden. You want your legacy to be joyful and meaningful, and those who follow you will be so grateful if all your research is beautifully organised and easy to manage. They are more likely to safeguard your work, and treasure it, if it's neat and tidy. Make sure they find those engaging stories easily.

So, list and collate your materials, and put the information in a handy folder or binder. Include a copy of your Genealogical Will, a list of heirlooms and who is to get them, and any codicils to this Will (not your actual Will). Add a list of all the websites you use – and their passwords. Write up your Master Plan and make a timetable of when to complete all the tasks. This will help to prioritise what needs to be done.

We are doing this for those who want to share our passion, for those whom we will never know, who we hope will choose, as we have done, to be the Storyteller, to keep the family stories and songs alive, to safeguard the photographs and the documents. It need not be an emotional burden; we do it for love, and we do it with passion. So, here is Sally's Master Plan. This is only a suggestion – and, of course, you can alter, adjust, add and amend to your heart's content.

You can choose to stop after step 1, or to follow the 19-point plan:**Genealogical Legacy Master Plan**

1. If it is the only thing you do, complete the Genealogical Will form as it stands, and send it as soon as possible to your lawyer as a codicil to your existing Will. Do it this evening!

or:

1. Make a list of physical heirlooms, write stories, identify who will inherit them and send that list to your lawyer as a codicil to your existing Will.
2. Consider giving them away now. Note the value in case it is needed for tax purposes.
3. Identify a Person who will inherit or maintain or carry on your passion and all your research, then ask them if they are willing to take it on.
4. Write to museums or libraries to ask if they will take certain pieces. Remember to allow for the cost of transportation in your Will.
5. Now complete the Genealogical Will, adjusting it with actual details of your nominated Person and details of any items to go to libraries and museums. Sign it and send it as soon as possible to your lawyer to add as a codicil to your existing Will.
6. Make a list of your online presence – websites and passwords. (Use different passwords from the ones you use on your financial applications and accounts.)
7. For each of the above accounts, find the transfer authorisation form and complete it. (Print out and keep copies.)
8. Invite your chosen successor, your Person, around to show them how to log onto your computer, and to make them enthusiastic.
9. Check that your computer is working efficiently (with up-to-date versions of up-to-date programmes and operating systems such as Windows etc.).
10. Check you have all the equipment needed to play or run the files you are keeping. Are those files (videos or tapes) kept in the correct environment? Is it worth having them put onto CDs or DVDs?
11. Have you saved your files in the correct format?
12. Ensure your physical heirlooms are protected by using acid-free preservation and storage materials.
13. Scan those vital or sentimental documents and photographs.
14. To avoid heart-stopping moments, plan to use notebooks proactively, and investigate arrangements for file retrieval.
15. Familiarise yourself with groups offering advice on organising your research and information.
16. Be consistent with labelling of files, both digital and physical.
17. Consider risk-management strategies, especially when using the Cloud and *Ancestry*.
18. Where is all your “stuff”? Can you locate it in an emergency? Is it easily portable?
19. Put your lists into an index book, or a folder, and make a timetable ASAP!

We are the chosen. In each family, there is one who seems called to find the ancestors.

To put flesh on their bones and make them live again.

To tell the family story and to feel that somehow they know and approve.

Genealogy is not a cold gathering of facts, but instead, breathing life into all who have gone before.

We are the storytellers of the tribe.

(from the poem “The Storytellers”, attributed to Della M. Cummings)

Cyndi’s List: <https://www.cyndislist.com/>

Preservation Equipment Limited: <https://www.preservationequipment.com/>

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Elaine Petrie

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—oOo—

Glasgow Group Report

Ken Nisbet, “Education Through the Ages”

11th February 2023

This talk, given online to Society members across the world, was subtitled “Researching Scottish schooling and schoolteachers”. Journal 164 (pp. 9–10) gave further details.

Ken outlined the history of education for the Scottish population from the days when it was administered by the Church to the time when local authorities took over that role. He described how to investigate the schools and universities which our ancestors attended, and told us which records are available for study. He also told us how to research those who took up teaching, and how it gave an opportunity for women to enter the profession.

The talk was followed by the usual wide-ranging session of stories, questions and answers around the topic. Some of these topics were:

School uniforms – members recalled the days of boys having to wear short trousers, even in winter. Girls had to wear skirts in winter. No trousers for them.

Local newspapers – these can be very useful because they often printed lists of school prizewinners. When did this stop? Prize books would likely be held by family members.

Social media – there is a useful Facebook group called “Aberdeen and Shire school pictures and memories”. It is worth looking at if you are searching for class photos.

Admission rolls – these can be very useful for family research, for example finding where the family was at any particular time and tracing its movements around the countryside. These are held at Aberdeen Archives in Dunbar Street, Old Aberdeen. The contents of these rolls are unlikely to be found online, but reference details are on this website:

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/libraries-and-archives/aberdeen-city-and-aberdeenshire-archives/catalogues-and-indexes/education-and-school-records>

You could ask the archivist (sufficient staff and time permitting) to send images from years you can pinpoint.

Information for Sutherland may be held in Highland Archives in Inverness. Some Glasgow archives are held in the Mitchell Library. The archive for Robert Gordon’s College is kept on site. This link will access lists of graduates for **Aberdeen University**:

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/collections/our-collections/rolls-of-graduates-147.php>

The link for **Aberdeen University Special Collections** is:

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/collections/visit-us/wolfson-reading-room-62.php>

SSPCK schools – information about these is contained in a booklet entitled “SSPCK School Masters 1709 to 1872”. Apparently it is very detailed.

Post Office Directories would have lists of schools.

A question was asked about the school for Delinquents, as someone was seeking information about a “juvenile delinquent” pre-1915.

A last reminder – not all records are available, as some have become lost over time.

Report by Valaine Middleton (No. 12834)

Do come along to our in-person-only Members’ Day on Saturday 13th May. This is *your* opportunity to share your puzzling photographs, to meet and mingle with others who may be able to help. Plus Graham’s Famous Quiz, always entertaining – will you win a prize? Never mind, there will be cake ... and good company.

Glasgow Group meets four times per year, but our hybrid meetings are being too often beset by gremlins. Thus we intend to provide two of our four meetings as Zoom-only, and, if there is still sufficient interest to justify the cost of hiring the room and equipment, the other two meetings will be in-person only, rather than by Zoom. Support your Group!

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

—oOo—

London Group Report

25th February 2023

This online meeting was themed on “Brick walls” in our family-history researches. Around 35 people joined in, meeting at the earlier time of 12:30pm because a good contingent of us were also registered to take part in our Southern Ontario Group’s meeting on Jacobites, which was starting at 3pm GMT.

Seven participants had sent prior notice of “brick walls” they required help/direction with. We looked into railway workers, farm labourers and soldiers ... and before we knew it we had been talking for 2¼ hours.

Helen Taylor and George Jamieson spoke on the importance of DNA research in solving your “brick walls”. Helen circulated her handy tips on the subject.

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Sheena Clark No. 19190

—oOo—

Southern Ontario Group Report

Mike Shepherd, “The Story of Jacobite Aberdeenshire”

25th February 2023

For this online meeting, we had author Mike Shepherd speak on the theme of his book in development. This was our best-attended online meeting yet, peaking at 88 participants.

Mike began by identifying the Jacobite risings (four in total) and listing reasons for people to have been dissatisfied in Scotland during that period. Invasions, famine, economic collapse and loss of trade due to the war with France all felt like punishment for Scots who supported their deposed King James VII.

The Church of Scotland was now Presbyterian instead of Episcopalian, and particularly in North-East Scotland there were still many Episcopalians who resisted change. In addition, Aberdeenshire was hit by a bad famine (1695–1700); then Scotland’s union with England

in 1707 resulted in higher taxes for Scots. Many did not benefit from effectively paying for England's war with France, and as a result lost their trade alliance with the French.

Mike discussed how France sent a secret agent to North-East Scotland to establish the feasibility of launching a French/Jacobite invasion, and the resulting attempts to bring such an invasion to fruition. After James Edward Stuart left Peterhead in defeat in 1715 and many of his supporters lost their land, there were a few decades of relative quiet before the Jacobite standard was again raised in 1745.

While the main Jacobite army moved south, the North-East was used as a recruiting ground for troops and funds. Aberdeen was occupied for five months by Jacobites who were supported by Lord Pitsligo and the Laird of Stoneywood, among others.

Aberdeen was retaken in February 1746 by the Duke of Cumberland, who left from there two months later for the Battle of Culloden. That pivotal battle was the end of the Jacobite cause for most Scots. Many of the Jacobite supporters escaped or were exiled.

Mike concluded by sharing some of the sources he is using for his research. He hopes to complete a non-fiction book on the topic in about a year's time.

Our syllabus for the rest of 2023 appeared in Journal 165 and is on the Society's website. Note that our September meeting is now on the 30th (no longer the 23rd).

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Susan Brouwer No. 20475

co-organizing with Rod Coates (No. 18349) and David Joiner (No. 16651)

—oOo—

“Haste Ye Back”: 33rd SAFHS Conference, 22nd April 2023

ANESFHS hosted the annual SAFHS Conference online, with seven invited speakers doing live Q&A after their recorded talks. Overall, 590 accounts were registered on our conference website, with 240 attendees in 12 countries tuning to the live event. The talks were available to all account-holders on the conference website for a week afterwards – a feature that was especially welcomed by our overseas delegates in other time zones.

This was our third time hosting the SAFHS Conference. It's as if we're on a 14-year cycle: we hosted the 6th Conference in 1995 in Aberdeen on the theme of “Hands Across the Water: Emigration from Northern Scotland to North America”. Then in 2009, the official Year of the Homecoming, we hosted the 20th Conference, once again from the University, themed on “Finding That Elusive Ancestor”. Alongside the presentations, we hosted a successful Family-History Fair, with stalls from many exhibitors.

When Ken Nisbet, Chairman of SAFHS, suggested to the Society's chairman two years ago that it would soon be ANESFHS's turn again, we initially had hopes of replicating our success of 2009 by hosting the first live, post-pandemic conference, complete with a fair next door. We thus revisited our 1995 theme of “Emigration” but added the aspect of “Return”, recognising how intense the feeling of separation had been during lockdown for those of us with close relatives overseas. And that is pretty much every household. Professor Tom Devine has said “Scotland might well be described as the migration capital of the Continent” because, between 1825 and 1939, over 2.3 million Scots left for a variety of reasons. We had also hoped that the relaxing of travel restrictions could mean that many of our overseas members would be keen to visit relatives in Scotland and perhaps combine that with attending the Conference.

In reality, we had to accept that Covid was receding but not gone. Large-scale gatherings became super-spreader events; and, as we firmed up our programme – a year ago – we realised that an online event was the safest option, given all the uncertainties.

We adopted the theme “Haste Ye Back” – and it may seem familiar. Folks of a certain age will perhaps remember the weekly BBC TV programme *The White Heather Club*, which ran from 1958 to 1968. The show featured Scottish songs and dancing, and always opened with Andy Stewart and the cast singing “Come in, Come in” and ended with them singing Robert Wilson’s charming and evocative “Haste Ye Back”, with its message of travelling in hope: *May the path on which you wander / be to you a joy each day*. Live *White Heather Club* shows became popular and toured extensively in the Commonwealth Scottish diaspora communities, helping families to feel connected in pre-Zoom, pre-Skype days. The shows coloured many people’s understanding of Scotland for a long time.

In this 2023 Conference, our speakers reflected on many different aspects of migration, particularly the reasons that led people to return to Scotland. We were delighted to have Professor Marjory Harper give our first talk, as she is the acknowledged authority on the subject, and she has some fascinating interview material to share. In fact, oral testimony, people’s first-hand accounts of their own stories, was an important theme throughout this conference. The thought-provoking papers presented by Tom McKean and Nicolas Le Bigre, both of the Elphinstone Institute, ably demonstrated implications for us as family historians. Putting flesh on the bones of our family story is about much more than census returns and registration certificates. One of the most important things is to record the stories of the older members of our own families. And, when we do, interesting questions arise about whose recollections of the old homestead, or of Great-Granny, are the accurate ones, and what are the apparently trivial things that make a new place feel like home.

Jackson Armstrong of Aberdeen University gave us a beautifully-illustrated introduction to the amazing collection of Aberdeen Council records going back to the 1300s. The archive is inscribed on the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register, in recognition of these records’ historical significance. Wonderfully for us family historians, there is an *Aberdeen Records Online* project to create a digital, searchable resource – a treasure trove that will give us insights into our forebears’ ways of life, with fleeting hints of their names and professions, dating from well before such resources as Kirk Session records.

Alasdair Macdonald’s overview of Y-DNA and its uses for family historians generated a lively set of questions; then we rounded off the programme with some tried-and-tested family-history approaches from Ken Nisbet on war brides, and Alison Spring on tracing emigrants. Ken and Alison treated the audience to a host of detailed case histories and suggestions of some less familiar records sources to tackle. Overall, it was a varied programme with elements to challenge, entertain and educate. We were very grateful for the assistance and support we have received from the University of Aberdeen and the Elphinstone Institute, the University’s centre for studying and promoting the culture of the communities of North-East Scotland. Their work was ably illustrated by a short film on a Banchory fiddle-maker, produced by two of the Institute’s recent MLitt students.

Emma and Graham Maxwell from *Scottish Indexes* were also very supportive, happily sharing tips based on their own events and their experiences of hosting the two previous SAFHS conferences online. We also owe a great debt of gratitude to all the Society members and other volunteers who contributed in various ways to pulling the conference together and helping it to air so successfully. Dave Anderson did a tremendous job in

creating our one-stop website that dealt with registration, the post-conference videos and an informative page on emigration. Most especially, we cannot praise highly enough the input of Robin Ritchie, Bethany Nicol and Hanah De Laurell, all volunteers, who made the programme flow effectively by providing first-rate technical back-up of one sort or another on the day. Sally Low obtained permission from the Kerr Music Corporation Ltd to use the words of “Haste Ye Back” – and her son Alastair Low wrote some beautiful pieces of original incidental music to accompany our pre-conference slide shows and Family History Societies presentation. Pleasingly, the event was broadcast from Aberdeen but this time from our own Society premises at 158–164 King Street.

The next Journal will contain talk reports from the event. Meantime, perhaps you should put a date in your diary for 14 years hence?

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Elaine Petrie No. 22949
and Ivor Normand No. 4161

—oOo—

Library Report

I make no apology for repeating what an Aberdeen City archivist once said about our library, that it was one of the best genealogical libraries he had ever seen. There is no doubt that we have a very good and extensive selection of books relating to family-history research, and we’re constantly adding to the collection. We’re always delighted to receive donations of books – but, before you consider donating any books to the Society, it’s worth checking with us first to see whether or not we already have them.

We recently received a substantial donation of books relating to the First World War. These are the 18 volumes of the *History of the Great War Based on Official Documents – France and Belgium*. There is also a separate atlas with all the maps issued during the course of the war, from the opening hostilities in 1914 to the British occupation of the Rhineland. The British Official History, as it is usually known, was published as a series of volumes between 1923 and 1949. It was produced by the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, and covers military operations, naval operations, air operations and a medical history of the war. The military operations are covered in 28 volumes, and the official historian responsible for the compilation of this part of the work was Brigadier-General Sir James Edmonds.

The British Official Histories are invaluable as a source of information for the study of a battle. They give an account of the development of a battle, with sketch maps of the battlefield during the course of the battle, a list of the units taking part, and casualty statistics. The volumes also provide background information about the conferences between the Allied nations, Staff plans, logistical support and equipment.

The donation also includes a large number of volumes of Unit War Diaries. These detail a particular military or naval unit’s involvement in the war, from the unit’s arrival on the Front to their departure at the end of hostilities. The National Archives hold these records (series WO95) and have published these particular volumes. If you have an ancestor who fought in the Great War, you will be able to follow his regiment’s progress, and learn what was taking place on a daily basis on the front line, what decisions were taken, and what happened as a result of those decisions. These are not personal diaries, but names are sometimes mentioned. There are also sometimes sketches of the surroundings done at the time by the officer in charge.

These volumes are a most valuable resource, and we're very grateful to receive them.

I wrote in Journal 165 (February 2023) about creating space in our library's Military Research section because, among other reasons, "There was no room for new additions". A fortunate decision, as it turns out! It will take a little while to process all these books, but at least once we've done that, there'll be no problem finding somewhere to put them!

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Margie Mellis

No. 2090

—oOo—

Mortlach and Cabrach Monumental Inscriptions

After a great deal of hard work over a long period of time, the latest publication from the Moray Burial Ground Research Group (MBGRG), *Monumental Inscriptions: Mortlach and Cabrach with Dufftown & Cabrach War Memorials for the parishes of Mortlach and Cabrach in Moray*, is now available in PDF format.

The Mortlach burial grounds were researched, recorded and photographed between 2012 and 2022, while the work on Cabrach was carried out between 2016 and 2022. In the case of the old part of Mortlach Churchyard, the work also included the careful uncovering of the buried stones, which were then recorded and photographed before being re-covered.

Correctly recording the detail on each gravestone takes time, effort and careful attention. Inscriptions which appear difficult to read in bright midsummer sunshine, or illegible under overcast skies, may suddenly become clearly visible as the conditions change. Recording difficulties may also occur as a result of worn or damaged memorials, while certain forms of lichen may completely or partly obscure areas of text or carving.

Led by Keith and Helen Mitchell (respectively the Group's Chairman and its Fieldwork Co-ordinator), 30 members and helpers were involved in this work at Mortlach, with 20 working on the stones at Cabrach. All this has resulted in three separate indexes with a total of well over 1,000 surnames, some of which occur in more than one index.

Recording the information on the gravestones and photographing the stones themselves is just the first part of the process. All the information is typed into the computer system and is then checked and double-checked against the photograph of each stone. Plans of the graveyards are drawn, now helped by some aerial photography, with each grave numbered according to the Moray LIBINDEX references, and any new stones added accordingly. The plans were expertly drawn by professional freelance illustrator Thomas Small using specialist computer software, rather than being hand-drawn, which proved to be a very lengthy process. To allow this part of the project to come to fruition, MBGRG received a very generous grant from the William Grant Foundation. Eventually, when everything is in place, the whole database then needs to be indexed – and the final part is the careful proof-reading of the completed document.

Accurately recording all the stones can be hampered by a number of things, quite apart from any difficulties with worn inscriptions. Funerary monuments may have been reused or recycled, table stones may have been turned over and re-inscribed – and, occasionally, stones have been moved from their original site, so it can be all too easy to miss some of the information. The tale that "*The Angels Were Surely Watching – A curious story of one Monumental Inscription that very nearly got away*" is detailed at the end of the volume and provides an intriguing illustration of this. Stopping for a breather, Ruth, one of our volunteers, noticed that "there's writing on the bottom of that stone" – and, sure enough,

not only had the stone been reused, but also it had been turned upside down, and what was originally the bottom of the stone had been re-carved as the top. After much effort and a light dusting of flour, the reverse of the stone, with its upside-down inscription, revealed details of a husband and wife born at the end of the 17th century. The fact that the group members happened to take a break in that very spot means that a little piece of almost-lost history has been recorded for some lucky family historian!

Another intriguing find was when one of the buried gravestones was uncovered, revealing a stone just eight inches wide by 52 inches long (20 × 132 cm). This stone recorded the burials of William Kelman and his spouse, Helen McBarnat, both of whom died in the late 1700s. However, very worn traces of lettering visible behind this inscription suggested that this gravestone had also been recycled – and this is now a fragment of a much larger stone which had borne, presumably, much earlier dates.

The Moray Burial Ground Research Group, which takes its logo from a 1571 gravestone inscription – Fra Birt To Graif Na Rest We Haif – has recorded and published the monumental inscriptions of most of the burial grounds of Moray and that part of historical Banffshire now in Moray, with more still in the process of being completed. This latest publication, covering Mortlach and Cabrach, is the largest publication so far and provides a valuable resource, beautifully illustrated and with brief histories of the two parishes.

The historic and former cathedral church of Mortlach, with its ancient Pictish symbol “Battle Stone”, and the 16th-to-18th-century Parish Church of Cabrach, both on the border between Aberdeenshire and Moray, have much to stimulate the interest of the antiquarian and family historian. The vitally important recording of stones preserves the inscriptions before the years take their further toll, and ensures that the stories of the families who lived in this lovely part of north-east Scotland are secured for future generations.

Currently there are two PDF files available. The complete version costs £12.00, while the smaller version (without many of the photographs) is £9.00. These can be obtained via webmaster@mbgrg.org, where a link will be provided to download the relevant PDF.

Due to the number of pages and photographs in this volume, as well as other factors, unfortunately the cost in this instance is substantially higher than normal. As a result, printed copies will only be available initially by order prior to being printed.

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Mary Evans

No. 1975

—oOo—

DNA Results: Easy GEDmatch How-to Instructions

I subscribe to a free genealogy newsletter e-mail from the owner of the LostCousins website. What he says about DNA-testing is worth quoting:

DNA isn't a replacement for records-based research – it's an extra tool in the researcher's toolbox, one that can:

- **provide confirmation** that the records are correct;
- **point us in the right direction** when the records are elusive;
- **prompt us to think again** when the relevant records are wrong or misleading; and
- **bridge the gap** when the records are missing.

ANESFHS members who have had their DNA tested might like to consider downloading their results from the site where they tested, and then uploading to GEDmatch. If the

terms “down/upload” fill you with techno-fear, please don’t worry. It is easy – I’m a technophobe, and I managed.

This is about Autosomal DNA (the most popular test).

Part 1:

To download, there are various websites and YouTube tutorials on how to do it – but, as most folk appear to be on Ancestry, here is how from there:

A. How to download a copy of your Ancestry DNA file

1. Press on Your DNA Results Summary.
2. In the upper right corner, press on the oblong cogwheel Settings button.
3. On the far right, press on the oblong Download Raw DNA Data button.
4. This will cause a pop-up window to appear. Type in your Ancestry password, click the box that you understand about downloading your raw data, and press the oblong Confirm button.
5. From this point on, it’s all done through your e-mail. It’s an extra security measure. Ancestry wants to make sure that the account-holder is the same person downloading the file.
6. Go to your e-mail account, and open the e-mail from Ancestry.
7. Press the green oblong Confirm Data Download button.
8. Pay very careful attention to where the file downloads on your computer or tablet. Unless you’ve specifically changed the location, it will usually download to a folder called Downloads.
9. **Do not open the file. Keep it zipped / compressed.**
10. Drag the file to your desktop where you can quickly find it. You might wish to rename the file, so you know what to look for.

Once you’ve done this, you can upload to various other sites such as MyHeritage for free, but at least please do so to GEDmatch.

B. Ancestry on computer GEDmatch upload

1. Go to [GEDmatch.com](https://gedmatch.com), and join. It is free (you can opt out of Law Enforcement accessing your DNA results if that is a concern).
2. In the upper right corner, go to Upload your DNA files.
3. Press on Generic Uploads (23andMe, FTDNA, AncestryDNA, most others).
4. Create an account by filling out the questionnaire.
5. On the bottom left of the screen, press the Choose File button.
6. Select your zipped Ancestry DNA file.
7. On the bottom right of the page, press the Upload button.
8. It will take a few minutes to completely upload to GEDmatch.
9. When it’s done, you will be assigned a random kit number beginning with two letters, followed by seven numerical digits. This is your kit number to use for all of the DNA tools available.
10. It will take a few days or maybe a week to process, before you can use the main “One-to-many” matches page. That will be your main list of matches.

You can then find Ancestor Projects and join in “Aberdeen and North-East Scotland DNA Matching”, shown in Part 2.

Part 2:

1. Log onto GEDmatch.
2. On the right-hand side of the main screen, there will be a column titled “Free Tools” or perhaps “DNA Applications” – you’ll see the “Ancestor Projects” option.
3. From the Ancestor Projects screen, you can then scroll through and examine all of the different projects to see if there are any that match your current research interests.
4. Find “Aberdeen and North East Scotland DNA Matching”, and click “Join”.
5. There will be a couple of questions to answer – these are not compulsory to answer if you don’t wish to.
6. Click the kit number(s) you wish to join the project, and click “Submit”.
7. Soon an administrator will add you to our Project.
8. When you are added, you’ll be able to see your matches.
9. Go from your main GEDmatch page to Ancestor Projects.
10. You select our project “Aberdeen and North-East Scotland DNA Matching”.
11. Add your kit number (or the one you want to research, i.e. parent’s or partner’s etc.).
12. Scroll down to the Sort Options, select “Segment start” and then press Submit.
13. A list of your matches will appear. You should be able to see how close a match they are to you, whether they have a Tree 🌳 on GEDmatch, where on the chromosome they match, and others who share the same segments, indicating a likely shared ancestor with others.
14. If you have a close relative on the Project, it is a good idea to filter by putting their gen number in “Lower MRCA/generations limit: (say 1.2 to 2.2 for instance, you’ll find that number after your first unfiltered run)”.
15. E-mail your matches – and hopefully you’ll find MRCAs and then maybe break down some brick walls.



You can ask questions and debate matters on the ANESFHS group website DNA forum: <https://www.anesfhs.org.uk/forum/dna-forum>. Or, if you have any difficulties, please feel free to e-mail me.

jbrechin@gmail.com

John Brechin No. 14650

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New: Strathclyde Institute for Genealogical Studies

The Strathclyde Institute for Genealogical Studies (SIGS) has been established in Glasgow with the aim of delivering academic excellence through the creation of new courses and research opportunities to run alongside the University’s long-standing world-leading postgraduate programme.

The Institute, based in Strathclyde's Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL), will build on the success of the University's genetic genealogy research projects and work with experts, organisations and other faculties at Strathclyde to grow a thriving research community for anyone with an interest in family history.

The University is already home to a well-established variety of learning opportunities in the subject, ranging from beginner-level short courses and free online courses to a world-leading, online Masters degree and a PhD pathway in History with Genealogical Studies.

The new Institute will launch formally on Tuesday 9th May at a free online showcase event, where Tahitia McCabe will be joined by Professor Sir Jim McDonald, Principal and Vice Chancellor of the University of Strathclyde, and guest speaker Professor Turi King. Professor King uses genetics in the fields of forensics, history, genealogy and archaeology, and is known for her work leading to the identification of the remains of King Richard III.

This free online event (5:30pm to 7pm) will share the Institute's future plans and will offer opportunities to get involved. For registration and further information on the event, please visit <https://www.engage.strath.ac.uk/event/1007>

Also, visit our website at www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/centreforlifelonglearning

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Clare Hennessey

—oOo—

Jean Beveridge: an Allanach Connection

We're delighted that Gary Allanach's article on George Stuart or Allanach (Journal 165, pp. 26–27) resulted in a message from David Allanach, whose article on three remarkable women from this family appeared in Journal 130 (February 2014, pp. 19–21). Gary writes: "David has been in touch – and I am pleased to say he even sent me photos of Jean Beveridge and her husband John Allanach, which made my genealogical year!"

Jean (1817–91) is most notable for having looked after John Duncan, the Alford weaver and noted botanist. You can find out more about Jean Beveridge and John Duncan in David's article by logging in to our website, and on Gary's impressive family-history site www.allanach.co.uk.



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Journal Team

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

Record of Ancestors

Membership No: **22631**
 Name **Sheila WARRENDER**
 Address **Glenrothes, Fife**

Date **25 April 2023**
 e-mail **sheilawarrender@btinternet.com**

Your Father's Father

3 Robert Robertson WARRANDER

Born 18 Oct 1885
Place Cruden, Aberdeenshire
Married 5 June 1914
Place Mintlaw, Longside, ABD
Died 26 Oct 1964 (79)
Place Alford, ABD
Occup. Farm servant

Your Father

1 Robert WARRANDER

Born 25 Oct 1915
Place Biffie, Old Deer, Aberdeenshire
Married 28 Nov 1941
Place Aberdeen
Died 30 Sep 1999 (83)
Place Nether Kinmundy, Longside, ABD
Occup. Crofter

Your Father's Mother

4 Isabella PENNY

Born 21 Jul 1892
Place Auchtydore, Longside, ABD
Died 28 Jan 1964 (71)
Place Tough, ABD
Occup. Housewife

You

Sheila WARRENDER

Born 9 Apr 1946
Place Ellon, Aberdeenshire
Married
Place
Occup. Quality admin

Your Mother's Father

5 Joseph Rorke DAVIDSON

Born 12 Apr 1886
Place Old Deer, Aberdeenshire
Married 12 Mar 1907
Place Kininmonth, Lonmay, ABD
Died 22 Aug 1929 (43)
Place Longside, ABD
Occup. Miller

Your Mother

2 Isabella DAVIDSON

Born 12 May 1920
Place Old Deer, ABD
Died 6 May 1994 (73)
Place Peterhead, ABD
Occup. Crofter's wife

Your Mother's Mother

6 Jannett TAYLOR

Born 6 Dec 1885
Place Kininmonth, Lonmay, ABD
Died 28 Apr 1968 (82)
Place Longside, ABD
Occup. Housewife

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	James WARRENDER	<i>Born</i> 26 Nov 1826	<i>Place</i> Longside, Aberdeenshire
				<i>Married</i> 8 Oct 1853	<i>Place</i> Longside
				<i>Died</i> 27 Oct 1901 (74)	<i>Place</i> Longside
					<i>Occup.</i> Crofter
7	George WARRANDER (twin)	16	Jean GREIG	<i>Born</i> 1831	<i>Place</i> Longside
	<i>Born</i> 16 Dec 1853			<i>Died</i> 17 Jan 1884 (52)	<i>Place</i> Longside
	<i>Place</i> Cruden, Aberdeenshire				<i>Occup.</i> Housewife
	<i>Married</i> 2 Nov 1878	17	Charles ALEXANDER	<i>Born</i> 1818	<i>Place</i> Crimond, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Place</i> Cruden, ABD			<i>Married</i> 21 Dec 1839	<i>Place</i> Cruden, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Died</i> 6 Nov 1930 (76)			<i>Died</i> 11 Nov 1893 (75)	<i>Place</i> Cruden
	<i>Place</i> Cruden, ABD				<i>Occup.</i> Gardener and crofter;
	<i>Occup.</i> Roadman / crofter				church officer
8	Jane ALEXANDER	18	Isabella WATT	<i>Born</i> 28 Jan 1818	<i>Place</i> Cruden
	<i>Born</i> 17 Nov 1859			<i>Died</i> 15 Feb 1901 (83)	<i>Place</i> Cruden
	<i>Place</i> Cruden, ABD				<i>Occup.</i>
	<i>Died</i> 23 Nov 1921 (62)	19	John PENNY	<i>Born</i> 6 Jul 1812	<i>Place</i> Auchtydore, Longside, ABD
	<i>Place</i> Cruden, ABD			<i>Married</i> 18 May 1845	<i>Place</i> Rathen, ABD
	<i>Died</i> 23 Nov 1921 (62)			<i>Died</i> 6 Nov 1896 (84)	<i>Place</i> Longside, ABD
	<i>Place</i> Cruden, ABD				<i>Occup.</i> Farmer
	<i>Occup.</i> Housewife				
9	Alexander PENNY	20	Mary TRAIL	<i>Born</i> 25 June 1826	<i>Place</i> Rathen, ABD
	<i>Born</i> 5 Oct 1867			<i>Died</i> 13 Oct 1803 (77)	<i>Place</i> Longside, ABD
	<i>Place</i> Auchtydore, Longside, ABD				<i>Occup.</i> Farmer's wife
	<i>Married</i> 19 Jan 1891	21	Robert WALKER	<i>Born</i> 7 Sep 1837	<i>Place</i> Aberdour, ABD
	<i>Place</i> Longside, ABD			<i>Married</i> 10 Jan 1861	<i>Place</i> Strichen, ABD
	<i>Died</i> 9 May 1947 (79)			<i>Died</i> 27 Oct 1900 (63)	<i>Place</i> Peterhead, ABD
	<i>Place</i> Longside, ABD				<i>Occup.</i> Farmer / joiner
	<i>Occup.</i> Farm overseer				
10	Isabella WALKER	22	Helen KERR	<i>Born</i> 21 Feb 1840	<i>Place</i> Fraserburgh, ABD
	<i>Born</i> 14 Apr 1867			<i>Died</i> 19 Jan 1891 (50)	<i>Place</i> Old Deer, ABD
	<i>Place</i> Longside, ABD				<i>Occup.</i> Farmer's wife
	<i>Died</i> 16 Dec 1935 (68)	23	John DAVIDSON	<i>Born</i> 29 Apr 1804	<i>Place</i> Clola, Old Deer, ABD
	<i>Place</i> Alford, ABD			<i>Married</i> 27 Dec 1833	<i>Place</i> Old Deer, ABD
	<i>Occup.</i> Housewife			<i>Died</i> 3 Jan 1877 (72)	<i>Place</i> Clola, Old Deer, ABD
11	James DAVIDSON				<i>Occup.</i> Farmer
	<i>Born</i> 6 Feb 1841	24	Catherine MITCHELL	<i>Born</i> 8 Apr 1809	<i>Place</i> Clola, Old Deer, ABD
	<i>Place</i> Old Deer, Aberdeenshire			<i>Died</i> 27 Apr 1895 (86)	<i>Place</i> Old Deer, ABD
	<i>Married</i> 6 Apr 1865				<i>Occup.</i> Farmer's wife
	<i>Place</i> St Fergus, Banffshire	25	John PARK	<i>Bapt.</i> 10 May 1800	<i>Place</i> St Fergus, Banffshire
	<i>Died</i> 8 Jul 1928 (87)			<i>Married</i> by 1825	<i>Place</i> St Fergus?
	<i>Place</i> Old Deer, Aberdeenshire			<i>Died</i> 7 Mar 1879 (78)	<i>Place</i> St Fergus
	<i>Occup.</i> Miller / farmer				<i>Occup.</i> Farm servant
12	Christian Bisset PARK	26	Christian JAFFRAY	<i>Born</i> 1804	<i>Place</i>
	<i>Born</i> 7 Oct 1842			<i>Died</i> 7 Apr 1883	<i>Place</i> Old Deer, ABD
	<i>Place</i> St Fergus, Banffshire				<i>Occup.</i>
	<i>Died</i> 7 Oct 1913 (71)	27	Peter TAYLOR	<i>Born</i> 1804	<i>Place</i>
	<i>Place</i> Rora, Longside, ABD			<i>Married</i> 30 Oct 1836	<i>Place</i> Fraserburgh, ABD
	<i>Occup.</i> Housewife			<i>Died</i> 19 Apr 1882 (78)	<i>Place</i> Lonmay, ABD
13	William Maitland TAYLOR				<i>Occup.</i>
	<i>Born</i> 1852 or 1853	28	Ann ROSS	<i>Born</i> 1812	<i>Place</i> Pitsligo?, ABD
	<i>Place</i>			<i>Died</i> 6 June 1879 (67)	<i>Place</i> Lonmay, ABD
	<i>Married</i> 29 Nov 1879				<i>Occup.</i>
	<i>Place</i> Lonmay, ABD	29	John ROBERTSON	<i>Born</i> 18 Oct 1830	<i>Place</i> Longside, ABD
	<i>Died</i> 10 Apr 1942 (90)			<i>Married</i> 28 Dec 1854	<i>Place</i> Lonmay, ABD
	<i>Place</i> Dundee			<i>Died</i> 27 Apr 1908 (77)	<i>Place</i> Lonmay, ABD
	<i>Occup.</i> Traction engine driver				<i>Occup.</i> Crofter
14	Margaret ROBERTSON	30	Margaret WATT	<i>Born</i> 16 June 1833	<i>Place</i> Fraserburgh, ABD
	<i>Born</i> 12 Jan 1861			<i>Died</i> 4 Dec 1905 (72)	<i>Place</i> Lonmay, ABD
	<i>Place</i> Lonmay, ABD				<i>Occup.</i>
	<i>Died</i> 6 Jul 1925 (64)				
	<i>Place</i> Persley, Aberdeen				
	<i>Occup.</i> Housewife				

Letters to the Editor



Dear Editor,

Louise Esson Sinclair of the SWH

Having read Karen Shaw's article on Isabella Dow of the Scottish Women's Hospitals (Journal 165, pp. 29–32), imagine my surprise when the same organisation, which I had not heard about previously, turned up in my own family research. For some reason I have a number of nurses in my wider family tree, but when I read about Louise Esson Sinclair (1887–1955), a second cousin once removed, and her exploits in Serbia with the SWH, loud bells started ringing, especially as the American Unit was mentioned.

As there is an Aberdeen connection, I thought others might be interested in a fascinating story (courtesy of, and thanks to, Karen Shaw) that overlaps that of Isabella Dow.

On joining the SWH, Louise was assigned to the Ostrovo Unit, based near what was at that time called Lake Ostrovo in Macedonia, about 90 miles west of Salonika. It was a field hospital of about 200 tents; the Chief Medical Officer in charge was Dr Emslie, another Scot. The Unit was under command of the Serbian Army, and was often referred to as the American Unit because most of its funding came from the USA. Louise served with the Unit from September 1918 until August 1919.

Shortly after Louise's arrival, the armistice with Bulgaria was announced and the Unit had orders to move. Given the opportunity to go home rather than face the difficulties and challenges of the 311-km journey to a new posting, nobody voted to go home. The Unit's new post was at a village called Vranje, in northern Serbia, in an army barracks to be used as a hospital. Difficulties were compounded by having to work in filthy conditions by candlelight, with no time to rest. The barracks was already overflowing with 450 extremely ill patients. Most of the surgical cases were still in their original field dressings. Many were also suffering from bronchopneumonia and pleurisy.

Among the many tasks was a request to accept British soldiers from the British Transport Company as patients in the hospital. They were working with the Serbian Army, and some were suffering from the "Spanish" influenza. This was one of the very few cases where the SWH looked after their own soldiers. Two wards were reserved for the British Transport unit. Once the hospital was properly set up, it provided 300 beds.

The hospital was for male patients, but the civilian population was also in dire need of help, and the Unit set up an outpatient department for the women and children of the village. Many locals were suffering from malnutrition, and wounds from bombing and exploding shells. Louise's nursing career had earlier involved working with children. Her choice to volunteer in a field hospital, nursing men with horrific war wounds, or dangerous diseases such as typhus, showed her skill, resilience, courage and bravery.

Louise travelled home in August 1919. In the Unit, she had worked with fellow Scots, among whom would have been Aberdonian Dr Myra Mackenzie. Dr Mackenzie was the first female graduate in medicine at Aberdeen University in 1900. She had a successful and prominent career in medicine.

It is a little-known fact that the Unit was awarded many decorations for its work. The Serbian Army awarded the Royal Red Cross to 52 members; several also received the

Order of Saint Sava. The whole Unit was awarded the “Gold Medal for Zealous Service”. In 1921 they were awarded the Victory Medal and the British War Medal by the British Committee of the French Red Cross.

Louise married Lanarkshire boilermaker Alexander Anderson in 1925 at Dalziel, and died there on 6th May 1955. Little is known of her life after marriage, but if anyone is able to fill in any gaps, or add anything to her time with the SWH, I’d be most grateful, as anything we can do to shine a light on the bravery and devotion of another “forgotten army” from the Great War must be a positive.

jfdw@webbs.me.uk

John Webb

No. 8415

Family History in the *Greig–Duncan Folk Song Collection*

Thank you to Elaine Petrie for taking the time to forward her talk to us after the technical hiccups at the Aberdeen Members’ Meeting on 18th March.

I’ve had a look on the Aberdeenshire Libraries Greig–Duncan interactive map and have so far heard a wonderful and funny song about Mrs Greig of South Sandlaw (Alvah, Banffshire). My grandfather was farm grieve there around the 1930s, and it’s where my mother and her siblings were brought up. Jimmy Taylor, who sings the song, sounds just like my grandfather, Alexander Duncan.

I’ve asked the library if I can have an appointment to browse the volumes. My ancestors were mainly fishing people around Crovie, Gardenstown and Banff/Macduff, and farmers and farm workers around Alvah and Auchterless. I’ve been told my Crovie ancestors were very musical, so I’m surprised there aren’t any more songs from that area. However, I try never to dwell on what ISN’T there and just appreciate what IS there.

I appreciate all the hard work that has gone into pulling these songs together.

soniapacker@btinternet.com

Sonia Packer

No. 23123

[Editor’s note: Sonia has found a Valuation Roll entry for 1930–31 for South Alvah that shows the proprietor as Miss Isabella Gerrard Greig, with John Greig and his son John as tenants. It lists Sonia’s grandfather Alexander Duncan as grieve, John Wilson, horseman, and Alex. Ewing, cattleman, whose houses were each valued at £6.]

Photographs of Servicemen

I’m always remembering anecdotes from my mother. One was from the Great War, when she and her teenage friends were still at school – and many of the boys, some under age, were volunteering. Formal photographs of the lads in uniform were taken but had much more “street cred” if a girl was seated beside the lad as the sweetheart. I wonder if this could account for a few of the occasional figures no-one recognises in old army photos?

annadoxford@icloud.com

Anna Doxford

No. 21502

Reminiscences of a Centenarian

A member draws our attention to this talk by a 100-year-old woman born in Scotland, who later lived in Norwich and elsewhere in England. It’s a wonderful hour to spend in the presence of an amazingly lucid and “listenable” lady. The next Internet sensation?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiFiH79vCao>

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.

13th May 2023

ANESFHS Moray/Banff Group Meeting

How to make the most of DNA results

Helen Taylor

2pm–4pm, Activities Room, Elgin Library

13th May 2023

ANESFHS Glasgow Group Meeting

Members’ Day: bring along old photographs

2pm, Renfield Saint Stephen’s Church Centre

260 Bath Street, Glasgow (in person only)

20th May 2023

ANESFHS Annual General Meeting

Followed by a talk:

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 only)

2nd September 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)

9th September 2023

21st Scottish Indexes Conference

Recorded talks; live Q&A; free to attend

7am–11pm www.scottishindexes.com

16th September 2023

ANESFHS Aberdeen 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)

30th September 2023

ANESFHS Southern Ontario Group meeting

Early Scottish settlers in Ontario

Christine Woodcock

Time TBA

Online: contact ontario@anesfhs.org.uk, or

register via the Society’s website

7th October 2023

Banffshire Field Club Conference

Banffshire Fowk

Marjory Harper, Mary Evans and others

Seafield Arms Hotel, Cullen

Contact bfc.1880@gmail.com; see Facebook

21st October 2023

ANESFHS Aberdeen Meeting

Topic TBA – see website

2pm–4pm, Rubislaw Church Centre and online

11th November 2023

ANESFHS Edinburgh Group Meeting

Using the NLS map collection

Paula Williams, National Library of Scotland

2pm, Royal Scots Club, 29 Abercromby Place

(and online: hybrid meeting)

18th November 2023

ANESFHS Aberdeen Meeting

Topic TBA – see website

2pm–4pm, Rubislaw Church Centre and online

18th November 2023

ANESFHS London-area Group e-meeting

Topic TBA – see website

2pm–4pm, online; register via website

25th November 2023

ANESFHS Glasgow Group Meeting

Topic TBA – see website

2pm, Renfield Saint Stephen’s Church Centre

260 Bath Street, Glasgow (in person only)

Articles

Notes on my Family Tree

When filling in my Record of Ancestors chart (this Journal, centre pages), writing the words “housewife” or “crofter’s wife” did not sit well with me. It didn’t do them justice – so, here are a few notes and memories of those years gone by.

Those ladies not only cooked, did all the cleaning and raised their families, but their other duties were numerous too. Cows to be milked by hand, sitting on a wee three-legged stool – never mind the swish of the tail, or a kick that ended up with spilled milk. Hens to be fed, eggs to be collected and washed then trayed up for the grocer. The grocer collected them twice a week when he did his rounds with the van.

Lambs to be bottle-fed (they were called “sicky lambs”). They were small, or maybe a third lamb and too much for the ewe to cope with, and needed that extra help.

No automatic washing machines; just a boiler and a scrubbing board. No fridge or freezer to store food. Maybe, if lucky, a stone shelf inside the “press” – the large cupboard in the kitchen. In the country, it was a container outside in a shed or the barn. A large weight on top so that no wee four-legged furry friends could access the contents!

Home-made cheese and butter. Baking pancakes, scones and oatcakes on top of the Raeburn stove. The Raeburn was fired by peat. Casting the peat from the moss was a family affair. Cutting, laying out to dry, then set on end to dry more. Then collected by tractor and cart to bring the peat home.

When a cow calved, curds and whey was one of mother’s special dishes, and her sister was sure to visit at that time. It was not for me – but those two fair enjoyed this special dish.

At harvest time, all the crofters and farmers pulled together, as this event was “weather permitting”. The men worked the harvester, and the ladies prepared and served the picnic baskets and kettles of tea. You would hear the occasional scream from the ladies, and laughter from the men, when mice ran from the hay ricks! That was one health-and-safety precaution the men followed by tying binder twine round the bottoms of their dungarees.

My paternal great-grandparents George and Jane married in 1878 and had 14 children. He was a roadman and a crofter. George’s father, James Warrender, was also a crofter. He and Jean married in 1853 and had 12 children.

On my mother’s paternal side, the Davidson family were farmers and millers. They also owned/managed the flour mill at Rora in Longside, and the one at Stuartfield, a mile south of Old Deer village in Buchan, north-east Aberdeenshire. It still stands but has changed in appearance, like many such buildings.

My three siblings and I are all Warrender, but my father was registered as Warrander, and so were his father and grandfather. Before that, Warrender was the spelling usually found in records of our family. I have traced the line back to 1766.

“Dollie and Billie”: Vaudeville Stars with Banffshire Grandparents

I was glad to see my story about my 3g-grandmother Ann Kinnaird Duncan and her son William in Journal 165 (Feb 2023, pp. 34–35). Several people have since contacted me regarding our shared ancestors, and we have exchanged more information, which I’m very pleased about. I had thought the story about William Duncan was my most interesting family tale, but I have now found another. A cousin in America noticed the connection, and we have since researched much more and found a vast amount of information.

Dorothy (1907–54) and Barbara (1909–60) Large were born in New York to William Large and his wife, Lillie Horne. Lillie was born in Indian Territory, Oklahoma when her mother, Barbara Duncan from Macduff, and her father, Arthur Horne from the Crown Hotel and stables in Banff, travelled over in 1888 with the intention of settling close to Barbara’s brother, William Duncan – the founder of the town of Duncan, Oklahoma. However, the Horne family did not like their new life in Oklahoma, so Barbara, Arthur, their son Joseph and baby daughter Lillie had all returned to Banff within six months. They had a third child, Alexander, in August 1890.

Arthur Horne never knew his famous granddaughters. In October 1890, Arthur rescued a three-year-old boy from the River Deveron, near Banff. When Arthur, a driver for his father’s company, saw that a crowd had gathered near the water, he stopped his horse-drawn bus and, without hesitation, pulled off his boots and swam out to reach the boy. The youngster sadly did not survive, as he had been in the water too long. It is said by family that, after the incident, Arthur continued on his journey – but he had caught a chill, and he died a few months later, age 24, leaving Barbara with three young children.

In 1905, 16-year-old Lillie married William Large in Glasgow, and the following year they set off for New York. Barbara (Duncan) Horne married again after Arthur died, but she also lost her second husband, Joseph Grimmond, a ship’s carpenter, when he died at sea. When a third husband died, she travelled over to America with her children, in 1911, and settled firstly with Lillie in New York.

From the ages of six and five, Dorothy and Barbara Large were natural performers and were singing and dancing on stage, said to be influenced by Harry Lauder, the Scottish singer and comedian, after being taken to see him performing during a tour of the USA. They had a talent for impersonation and enjoyed copying Lauder and similar acts. A friend of their family who was in the music-hall business encouraged the girls to perform at amateur nights, and they won prizes every time they appeared. A New York agent happened to see them one night and signed them up. The Broadway agent secured work in various theatres around the UK for the girls, with their father acting as their manager.



In 1919, the family travelled from the USA to Scotland so that William could also visit his elderly parents. While there, the girls’ performances grew more and more popular. An introduction to Sir Oswald Stoll resulted in long engagements performing at his theatres up and down the country. He also owned the Cricklewood Film Studios; and in 1924 and 1925 the girls were to feature in two silent films produced by Stoll Film Productions.

They adopted the stage names “Dollie and Billie” – not to be confused with The Dolly Sisters, who were also performing around that time. The girls were given rave reviews despite their tender years. Dollie appeared to have the better singing voice, while Billie, a tomboy, was quite a comedienne. The girls also played ukulele. As teenagers they travelled back to New York, and also to South Africa, South America, Australia, Berlin – and Paris, where they appeared at the Moulin Rouge. They had their own cabaret act in Paris – Chez Dollie et Billie – in 1930. They made several records with titles such as “Bonjour Phillipine”, “Hello Aloha, how are you?”, “Where’d you get those eyes?”, “Wikki wikki wonkki woo” and “Ukulele Lady”. Collectors of vintage 78rpm records have uploaded some of these songs to YouTube, where we can hear their singing voices now a century later. The girls travelled extensively, wore the latest fashions and collected beautiful jewellery from around the world.



In 1926, Billie announced her engagement to Walter (Jim) Lawrence, son of English businessman Sir Walter Lawrence. The couple split up after an argument about Billie’s career, but in 1938 she hurried to his hospital bedside when she heard he had been badly injured in a plane crash. He was the only survivor while travelling with Lord and Lady Plunkett, who were both killed along with the pilot. The young couple again announced their intention to marry, but for unknown reasons the wedding did not go ahead.

The hugely successful vaudeville act “Dollie and Billie” came to an end around 1933. Both Dorothy and Barbara married several times but were somewhat unlucky in love. They died within a few years of each other in California. Dorothy was 46 and Billie was 51.

<https://youtu.be/G2dsgothxEQ> is one of their 78rpm gramophone records. The rehearsal for the opening night at Moulin Rouge is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woaUN4rACeA&t=3s>. They are either side of the man.



soniapacker@btinternet.com

Sonia Packer No. 23123

—oOo—

Discover with me your ancestral roots in Aberdeen & NE Scotland!

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Maritime Coincidences: the *Titanic* and the *Waratah*

There is a piece of North-East folklore that has the sinking of the RMS *Titanic* being reported in the *Press & Journal* as “North-East Man Lost at Sea”. There is no evidence for this – but the loss of that famous vessel certainly captured the public imagination, and some interesting North-East connections have emerged over the years.

When the ship went down on 15th April 1912, the *Evening Express* announced: “World’s Biggest Liner Sinking – Collision with Iceberg – Passengers Taking to Boats” – and on the following day the *P&J* did provide information about local passengers, perhaps giving rise to the famous summary “*Titanic* latest: NE man dead” on a shop billboard.

Curiously, Robert Hichens, the quartermaster who was steering the ill-fated vessel when it encountered the iceberg, is buried in Aberdeen. He survived the sinking by being ordered to take charge of a lifeboat, whose occupants were later picked up by the RMS *Carpathia*.

Born in Cornwall, Hichens later settled in Southampton and had a troubled life after the disaster, including a period in jail for attempted murder. This was *not* directly related to events on the *Titanic*; his great-granddaughter, Sally Nilsson, believes he probably had PTSD, and took to drink and borrowing money because other seamen believed he was a jinx. In 1940, Hichens was working on a cargo vessel delivering corn in Aberdeen harbour when he suffered a fatal heart attack. His burial in an unmarked grave in Trinity Cemetery was discovered by his family 100 years after the *Titanic* sank. The grave was marked by a simple wooden cross until in 2019 a headstone was unveiled.



© Simon Medhurst

I have a family link to an extraordinary maritime coincidence concerning the *Titanic*. My third cousin twice removed (3c2r), Thomson Beattie (b. 1875 in Fergus, Wellington, Ontario, Canada), was one of the last passengers to leave the *Titanic*.

As a well-to-do estate agent in Winnipeg, Beattie had gone on a tour of Europe in January 1912 with a group of friends. However, one of the group, (John) Hugo Ross, became ill with dysentery; and Beattie and his companion Thomas McCaffry also felt themselves to be exhausted, so they decided to sail home early on the maiden voyage of the brand-new *Titanic*. Beattie wrote to his mother: “we are changing ships and coming home in a new, unsinkable boat ...”.

Beattie and McCaffry’s cabin in first class (£74 4s 0d) seems to have been on the roof nearest the officers’ quarters, astern – and, after checking on Hugo Ross (who refused to leave, as he felt too ill), Beattie took the last available nearby life-raft which was stationed there. It was a basic, collapsible A Class. McCaffry presumably didn’t make it into the life-raft, and his body was later recovered by the *Mackay Bennett* and interred in Montreal. Ross’s body was never recovered.



Thomson Beattie
(courtesy: Alan
Hustak, Canada),
from *Encyclopedia
Titanica*

Beattie’s was the last boat off and the last to be found. It took a month for the *Oceania* to reach this raft, “bobbing about” 300 nautical miles from where the *Titanic* had sunk. It was a gruesome sight: the bodies of Beattie (in evening dress), a seaman and a fireman had been exposed to the elements, and evidently someone had tried to chew cork from the raft.

The biggest coincidences are that when these men were duly buried at sea, it was on 15th May 1912, the 82nd birthday of Beattie's mother, Janet Boyd Wilson, and very near the spot where she had been born at sea on a ship bound for Canada. She in turn was buried on what would have been her 92nd birthday in 1922. Thomson Beattie is remembered on a stone in the family plot in Fergus, Ontario, shown here. He is also commemorated along with McCaffry, Ross and others on a plaque in Wellington City Hall.



His parents' families had emigrated separately to Canada. The birth of his father, John Beattie (1821–97), is recorded in Strathdon and Corgarff, although his own father was actually a farmer in Tarland and Migvie. The wider family included many who went to Canada, especially to Ontario. John had emigrated in 1839, as did many of his relatives, all following his uncles George and James, who had married a pair of Grassick sisters and immediately emigrated to Wellington County, Ontario.

The loss of the *Titanic* made an enduring impression on the public generally. On being asked his age, my father would typically reply: "I was born the year the *Titanic* went down", unaware of this poignant connection.

And, as if one maritime disaster in the family wasn't enough, I have also identified a 1c2r, James Hay Jamieson, who was one of 211 people lost in the mysterious disappearance of the SS *Waratah* in 1909.

The *Waratah* was a cargo (and passenger) steamship built at Whiteinch on the Clyde in 1908 for the Blue Anchor Line. It was scheduled to sail between London, Australia and South Africa. It passed its insurance assessment and sea trials with flying colours – but its maiden voyage wasn't without incident, as there were some concerns about it listing in the water; and two of its coal bunkers went on fire, which took two days to quell. On its second voyage, it docked successfully in Adelaide and progressed to Durban, leaving that port on 26th July 1909 and expected to arrive in Cape Town three days later.

There was a verified sighting on 27th July, when the weather was described as fair and light. However, a hurricane ensued on the 28th, and the *Waratah* was never seen again, despite extensive searches at the time and in later years. The latest search in 2001 was also inconclusive, despite a promising 1999 find. The currents in that area may have moved the vessel far from the area of its last sighting – possibly as far as the Antarctic.

Meanwhile, in Aberdeen, my great-great-uncle James Hay Jamieson (snr), who had a shoemaker's business at 165 George Street, and his wife Ann Harvey Ritchie were very anxious. James jnr had corresponded frequently with his parents, and had written from Adelaide early in July, saying all was well. The parents were interviewed by the *P&J*, and the story copied to other papers.

On 20th August, the authorities in Cape Town officially abandoned their search. In December that year, Lund, the owners, said there was still no news of the liner, and they had given it up as lost.

James jnr (b. 1882 in Aberdeen) had served his apprenticeship as a mechanical engineer with Barry, Henry & Co. and had only been at sea for five years. After a few years as an engineer on two local steamers, he joined the maiden voyage of the *Waratah*. At the time

of his presumed death, he was only 27 years old, and was described as senior fourth engineer during his second journey.

Perhaps it was fortunate that James's parents died before they could learn of yet another maritime disaster to befall their family. Their fifth son (of 10 children), Stanley Fraser Jamieson, was chief engineer on the SS *Lagosian* when it was hit by a U-boat in 1943 near the Canary Islands. He was presumed killed in the explosion, and is commemorated on the Tower Hill war memorial in London.

Further information

<https://www.findagrave.com/> has lots of MIs and information on Beatties.

The *P&J* has an online article with more information about local links to the loss of the *Titanic*:

<https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/past-times/4167626/titanic-aberdeen/>

Erection of headstone at Trinity Cemetery for Robert Hichens: see

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-50837669>

See <https://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/titanic-victim/thomson-Beattie.html> for more information on Thomson Beattie.

Lifeboats differ from life-rafts: see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lifeboats_of_the_Titanic

Many newspapers have accounts of finding the last bodies. A gruesome account of finding the body of Thomson Beattie is in *The Reporter*, Rapid City, Manitoba, Thursday 23rd May 1912.

The Society for Nautical Research has more information on the loss of *SS Waratah* and other marine disasters: <https://snr.org.uk/the-mariners-mirror-podcast/maritime-disasters-ss-waratah-the-ship-that-disappeared/>

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Editors' note: On the basis of these stories, our advice to Buzzy is ... don't go to sea!

—oOo—

George Crichton (1815–53), Soldier

It was while searching my great-grandmother's family history – the Crichtons of New Deer – that I came upon George Crichton. He was my great-great-grandfather's elder brother, who, it turned out, had an interesting, if not entirely unusual, life.

George was born in 1815, the second child of George Crichton and Margaret Brebner (whose gravestone can be seen in New Deer churchyard). George senior was a farm labourer at Mickle Auchreddie, and young George was his second son in what was to be a family of 12 in all. But, after his baptism, we lost track of George junior – until we found him in the 1851 census. That explained everything.

The 1851 census showed that George was at Glencorse Military Barracks near Penicuik, south of Edinburgh, with his wife – and, interestingly, that their first son had been born in Toronto and their second son in Montreal. This opened up a new line of enquiry and produced a story that was no doubt repeated by many others at the time, who, from the North-East and indeed all over Scotland, spent a life as a soldier in the army of the day.

George joined the 93rd Regiment of Foot, the Sutherland Highlanders, at Banff on 28th October 1831. He “appeared to be” 18 years old, though in fact he was 16 and just 5 feet 5½ inches tall. There is no information on why George decided to join up – but, on being

enlisted by Captain Hugh Ross, he received a bounty of £3. It turned out, however, that George was not the perfect soldier.

After about 2½ years as a private soldier, George deserted on 2nd May 1834 while serving with the Reserve Battalion in Aberdeen. This was reported in his service record and also in *The Police Gazette or Hue & Cry*, in the list of Army Deserters published on 21st May 1834. It seems that, in his short time with the army, George had grown an inch and put on some weight – he is described as “stout” in the *Gazette*. It’s fair to say that, at that time, the army seems to have seen its fair share of deserters – the double-page spread of offenders in the *Police Gazette* for that day has a list of 70 names.

George was absent for just a couple of months, and rejoined on 10th July 1834. His service record shows that he then faced a court martial in October in Aberdeen, where he was sentenced to two months’ imprisonment; and he was released on 27th January 1835.

He may not have been the perfect soldier, but he ended up serving for a total of 21 years and 37 days. Almost half of this – 10 years 5 months – was spent abroad, in North America, and this explains the births of his two children there.

In fact, the 93rd Regiment seems to have spent a great deal of its time stationed overseas. According to Roderick Hamilton Burgoyne’s *Historical Records of the 93rd Highlanders* (published 1883), the regiment was in St Lucia and Dominica and then Barbados between 1830 and 1834 (with the Reserve Battalion – George’s battalion – in Hamilton, then Ayr, Fort George and finally Aberdeen). From 1835 to 1838 it was stationed in Ireland, in Dublin and then in Newry and Downpatrick, in aid of the civil power.

However, unrest in Canada prompted the regiment to be posted there in the early months of 1838. There had been a reluctance to move the regiment to Canada so early in the year because of the weather, but the nature of the crisis forced the situation, and George and his comrades landed in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in three separate groups, in the depths of winter between January and March 1838. It is interesting to note that the regiment travelled with wives and children: 48 women and 52 children travelled to Canada with the men.

George was to spend the next 10 years in Canada, first in Toronto and then in Montreal. His regiment saw action in November 1838 in the Battle of the Windmill, when insurgents from America tried to capture the town of Prescott on the north shore of the St Lawrence, 120 miles south-west of Montreal and 250 miles north-east of Toronto. The insurgents took up position in the stone windmill at Prescott, which appeared to provide a strong fortified position, but a prolonged artillery bombardment led to their surrender.

After that, George’s regiment returned to the headquarters in Toronto on 28th November; and, according to the Regimental History, “the baggage, women and children arrived on 13th December, just before the closing of navigation”. Wives and children travelled with their soldier husbands as they went abroad and as they went from one engagement to the next. Moreover, the men met local women and married when they were on service – this is likely to have included George – and children were born to serving soldiers. In fact, women had important roles to play, albeit unofficially, in the army at this time. According to the National Army Museum, they worked as cooks, nurses, midwives and seamstresses and so were very much an integral part of the organisation.

And that is why I should not have been surprised to find that George, and his wife Isabella Winchester (who said she was born in Elgin but, though I have yet to track down details of

their marriage, I think she must have been living in Canada when they met and married), had two sons in Canada while he was a serving soldier. Their first, William, was born in 1842 in Toronto and baptised on 19th December at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

This was just after George had finally been promoted, to Corporal, in July 1842. But this elevation was short-lived – he faced another court martial in November 1843, charged with “neglect of duty”, after which he was given 30 days and reduced to the ranks.

At this time, the 93rd Highlanders were held in high esteem. A local newspaper remarked that the 93rd was one of the best regiments in the army and that the men “all are the same height, fine looking muscular fellows and make a superb appearance in their picturesque national costume”. Of course, many of those evicted in the Highland clearances had found themselves in a new homeland around Toronto, and they were extremely pleased to see men from their own counties. Indeed, many of the soldiers had relatives in the area, and this was a once-in-a-lifetime chance to meet up again with family members. Moreover, with Gaelic the first language of many soldiers as well as emigrants, this meeting up will have been important for the exiles and soldiers alike, and particularly poignant.

In 1844, the regiment moved to Montreal, where George and Isabella's second son, George Alexander Crichton, was born. His baptism on 13th January 1846 was recorded at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Montreal.

Significant numbers of children were born to serving soldiers on campaign. The transcript of William Crichton's baptism shows another seven children of soldiers of the 93rd baptised at St Andrew's, Toronto, between August and December 1842. Meanwhile, George was not the only child of a Sutherland Highlander baptised at St Andrew's, Montreal – the next day the church record notes that a daughter of Sgt James Taylor was baptised Ann (and that James Scott, also of the 93rd, was buried).

After two years in Montreal, the regiment moved to Quebec in July 1846. While there, the soldiers suffered greatly – the regiment's surgeon wrote “the mosquitoes were a great source of worry to the men for they bit their naked limbs terribly”. Finally, in 1848, the regiment, with the Crichton family, sailed home. The voyage on the troop ship *Resistance*, a three-masted sailing ship, will have been cramped and hazardous. In total, the journey from Quebec back to Stirling Castle took 31 days.

However, George must have been struggling with the army life. He was retired on the grounds of ill-health on 14th June 1853, just a year before his regiment left for Crimea. He was suffering from chronic rheumatism, brought on, his record said, by “exposure to cold, change of climate and alteration of temperature” as a result of the performance of his military duties over the previous 21 years. He was granted a pension of 1/-, and his conduct was described as “good – he being in possession of one Good Conduct Badge with pay” – despite his two courts martial convictions.

At the relatively young age of 38, with a wife and two children, George could not survive on his modest pension. He found a job, and his record shows that he moved to Dundee, where he took up a post as a harbour policeman. Sadly, his retirement was cut short: George died on 25th August 1853, just over two months after he had left the army.

The Dundee Register of Burials, which describes George as a Harbour Policeman and Army Pensioner, showed that he drowned by falling into Earl Grey Dock, the smallest of the four principal docks of the harbour, on 25th August. The subsequent report in the

Dundee, Perth and Cupar Advertiser said that while he was on his rounds along the quay he missed his footing and fell. “He was seen by two individuals, who ran to his assistance and threw a rope to him; the drowning man caught hold of it, but so much time had elapsed before the parties had been able to reach him, that his strength was evidently exhausted, and he quitted his hold and sank. Before the body was got out of the water life was quite extinct. Crichton was a sober person ...” The article concluded: “He has left a widow and two children in very destitute circumstances, such, in fact, as to form a peculiarly strong case for the sympathy of the benevolent”.

The fate of that family after George’s untimely death is, for me at least, still unknown. I can find no record in Scotland or elsewhere in the UK of Isabella, or sons William or George. An 1871 census entry in Liverpool has proved to be a false trail. I can only speculate that perhaps Isabella took her two boys and returned to Canada, though I have been unable to find them there. But the search continues.

Main sources

Scotland’s People – Old Parish Register, Baptism 1815.

Scotland’s People – 1851 Census; Dundee Register of Burials 1853.

Find My Past – Service records of George Crichton; Royal Hospital Pension Records.

Ancestry.com – Baptism records of St Andrew’s Church, Montreal, 1846.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives – St Andrew’s Church, Toronto, baptism records, 1842.

British Newspaper Archive – *Dundee, Perth and Cupar Advertiser*, 26th August 1853.

Roderick Hamilton Burgoyne, *Historical Records of the 93rd Highlanders* (R. Bentley & Sons, 1883).

The Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders Museum.

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Visit to Historic Environment Scotland

27th March 2023

Following on very neatly from Sally Low’s Edinburgh Group talk on securing the future of your heirlooms and research documents (“Safeguarding Your Genealogical Legacy”), seven local members took part in a visit to John Sinclair House, Historic Environment Scotland’s archive and library in Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh. With Sally’s talk fresh in our minds, we were well primed to take advantage of the tips and information generously shared by our tour guide, Neil Fraser, Public Services Manager, and his colleagues.

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) is a non-departmental public body with charitable status, responsible for over 300 historic buildings and monuments including Edinburgh Castle, the Antonine Wall, Skara Brae and Dunnottar Castle. In addition, their library and archive, which are considered internationally significant, are both open to the public and include more than 5 million drawings, photographs, negatives and manuscripts, along with 20 million aerial images of locations across the world. HES is also responsible for important online tools like Canmore (<https://canmore.org.uk>), a catalogue with maps and images relating to archaeological sites, buildings, industry and maritime heritage across Scotland – and SCRAN (<https://www.scran.ac.uk>), a digital repository of images relating to Scottish history and material culture and intended as a reference resource for those in education. It draws together images, audio and video resources, museums, galleries, archives and the media to create a one-stop portal.

We were then shown round the store room, which houses a fascinating range of material including architectural drawings and models housed on 17–20 kilometres of shelving. The collection had initially been intended to be an inventory of buildings, but grew rapidly and somewhat haphazardly so that the current challenge is to convert all the paper records to a consistent digital format and to future-proof the system and the records. If this sounds familiar, you can see we amateur archivists are in good company.

We learned that the aim is to balance keeping items in protective storage and making them available to the public on display. Plans are kept flat where possible, but larger items are rolled on acid-free formers, wrapped in acid-free paper and stored in tube boxes. There are particular issues with some older forms of prints, negatives and photographs, since cellulose acetate will give off a vinegary smell as it deteriorates, while cellulose nitrate becomes unstable and flammable! It turns out wood also gives off gases so may not be the ideal storage medium for your family papers or textiles – and even digital records are not exempt, as the HES team works to update old formats to avoid something called “bitrot”.

On a more upbeat theme, we spent some time with paper conservator Elizabeth Hepher, who demonstrated some of the techniques required in rescuing old documents.

Elizabeth recommended using acid-free, archival poly-pockets and a binder for storing photographs and letters so they can be viewed easily without being damaged by finger contact. Most items can be handled with clean hands – but you should use gloves for handling photographs and negatives, and remember that they are highly susceptible to water damage. If not kept in pockets, consider placing sheets of acid-free paper between them to prevent them sticking together. Treasured items, including photographs, should be kept in a dark, stable environment – not in a cold garage, where they might “sweat” as seasonal temperatures change – and our old friend the widely available “Really Useful Box” is a safe storage medium that has been tested by conservators and found reliable. Frail items can be supported by acid-free card; and the general principles are: store items flat if possible and, if not, roll them but do not fold them, as creases will set in and may cause damage over time. If you can freeze items at -18°C for 3–5 days, you will have despatched any woodworm or insects that may be lurking in your treasured item.

If you have concerns about how to repair or store any family heirlooms, the advice is to contact a professional conservator through <https://www.conservationregister.com/>. You can filter the search tool to find the specialism you are interested in, and find accredited conservators near your area.

We rounded off our visit in the library, where a selection of items with North-East associations had been specially set out for us. Our hosts then piloted us through using the HES website as well as Canmore and SCRAN. Canmore in particular is very useful when paired with Scotland’s Places to help family historians to familiarise themselves with the area and sometimes the actual farms our ancestors may have lived in.

All in all, this was a great visit. It’s good to have this resource so handy (a mile south of the NRS) – and Edinburgh-area members should make the most of the opportunity now, as the collection is being transferred to new custom-built facilities in Bonnyrigg in 2026. Visit now, before it moves out of town. John Sinclair House, the home of the HES archive and library, is open to the public from Tuesday to Friday, 10am to 4pm.

George Cruickshank Mackay: from Herd Loon to Master Mariner

A life on the ocean wave was not on the cards when George Cruickshank McKay was born in Banff on 1st January 1838. His parents were John McKay, a stonemason, and Margaret Cruickshank. George was born out of wedlock, and his father had little to do with his upbringing. The 1841 census shows George and his mother (aged 30) living with his maternal grandparents William and Christina Cruickshank (both aged 71) at St Katherine Street, Banff, with Margaret's brother George (aged 40), after whom the lad may have been named. St Katherine Street is near the harbour – and, while grandfather William was described as a general labourer, the elder George was a cooper, possibly making barrels for packing and transporting herring. Is this where the lad had felt the lure of the sea?

In 1849, at the age of 11, George stowed away on board a trader in Banff harbour and made a voyage to London and back. As a result, the romantic lad was sent to the farm of Hungryhill to the east of Banff as a herd loon to be out of harm's way. Despite the kindness which his master lavished upon him, his longing for a roving life increased rather than diminished, and, after a couple of terms spent preventing his cows from falling over the cliffs, he found a means of satisfying the desire of his heart. One afternoon as he was trudging along the turnpike reading the weekly paper which the farmer had sent him into the county town to buy, he came upon an advertisement which made the blood run riot in his veins. The barque *Minerva* (233 tons) was loading a cargo of oats for Melbourne, and apprentices were wanted for the vessel. The next week, when the herd loon went back for his master's paper, he called at the office of the owners and wanted to sign on. He was told he was too young at 13 years old, and to come back when he was somewhat bigger. He replied spiritedly that these faults were always mending – and the owners, Thomas Adam & Co., were so impressed with his pluck that they engaged him there and then.

The census of March 1851 described George as a sailmaker aged 13. His mother, listed as a washer, was head of this household at 15 High Shore Close, Banff (again not far from the harbour). Presumably George left on the *Minerva* soon after this date.

There was great stir in Banff when the *Minerva* sailed away from port with 18 passengers on board for Australia. She was the second vessel to undertake that long voyage – the *Witness* having been the first – and at the end of 19 weeks she successfully completed her passage. At that point in 1851, gold fever was at the height in the Antipodes, and almost every sailor deserted his ship to seek his fortune at the diggings at Bendigo, Ballarat and Mount Alexander. Half a dozen of the *Minerva*'s crew joined the rush, but George Mackay (henceforth spelled this way in records) was not tempted to accompany them. The *Minerva* returned to London via Mauritius, and George found the metropolis in a state of excitement over the Crimean War, which had just been declared (October 1853). This opened up great demand for shipping. The *Minerva* next sailed for Mauritius with a general cargo and the mails. On reaching his destination, young Mackay said the islanders were so eager for information about the war that he would have made a small fortune if he had had a stock of newspapers to sell. The *Minerva* later sailed to Constantinople and to the West Indies, where several of the crew died from “yellow jack” (yellow fever).

On turning 15, George formally signed up for a four-year naval apprenticeship with Thomas Adam (Adam & Co.) in Banff on 25th May 1853; and he passed the Board examinations for mate on 4th December 1858, aged 20. He was made second mate with only 2 years and 9 months of his apprenticeship served; but his heart was in his work, and he was quite equal to the responsibilities devolving upon him, even at age 17. When the

Minerva changed hands, Mackay returned to Banff and joined the barque *Favourite* (400 tons) which traded to Italy and Quebec between 1856 and 1858. He served on a range of other vessels including the *Sovereign*, *Lord Clyde*, *Glenmore* and *Challenger* until he obtained his Master's ticket at the age of 26 in April 1864.

Between 1863 and 1864, he was trading in the China seas. On the passage to Shanghai, his vessel, the *Ensign* of Dundee (500 tons), was becalmed off Java and was attacked by a fleet of pirates. The guns were loaded and everything in readiness for attack when, fortunately, the wind got up, filled the sails and enabled the *Ensign* to escape. The ship traded on the Chinese coast for ten months with Chinese merchants, of whom Captain Mackay had a very high opinion.

When serving on the *Wave* in 1864, with a cargo of tea for New York, the vessel was badly mauled by heavy seas and had to put into Jakarta for repairs. When the passage home to London was almost completed, the ship ran into fog in the Channel, went aground on Beachy Head and became a total wreck. Heavy seas broke over the vessel, but all the crew managed to get off by swinging ashore at low water. At the Court of Enquiry, the Captain and second mate had their certificates suspended, but Mackay (then first mate) was cleared, he having been off duty three hours before the ship struck ground. (The cargo of tea, incidentally, could have an interesting Aberdeen connection, having probably been bought in Nagasaki from Glover & Co. of Scottish Samurai fame!)

The schooner *Waters* of Wick was the first vessel of which Captain Mackay was Master. She was among the fastest ships on the coast in his day, and, in the keen races which frequently took place, was hardly ever outstripped. The *Waters* traded to the Baltic and the Mediterranean for four years (1865–69). George Mackay had a vivid recollection of his first visit to St Petersburg. He went up to the Custom House to lodge his papers, but he was passed on from one official to another, all refusing to have anything to do with him. Standing in the street and feeling very much “at sea”, he espied a Scottish skipper and told him his trouble. The man furnished him with 10 roubles, and together they returned to the Custom House. Once the palms of ten officials were greased, the young captain found everything to be plain sailing. On another occasion, an account was presented to him for double the quantity of ballast he had received. He refused to pay, and he and his ship were arrested. He was hauled before a judge who gave a very unsympathetic ear to his story, until the captain, remembering the custom of the country, gave the judge a substantial tip. A decision in his favour was immediately pronounced. One historian records that the officials were low-paid, so they felt obliged to take bribes.



“Captain McKay was the last of the old sailing masters of the north”

On returning home in 1874, Captain Mackay was advised to apply for the recently vacated position of harbourmaster of Fraserburgh – which he successfully gained, aged 36. He continued to hold the post with honour and distinction for the next 38 years. The portrait above belongs to my family; and the quotation is from an article on his career published in the *Fraserburgh Herald & Northern Counties' Advertiser* on 30th April 1918, written probably by his brother-in-law John Cranna.

Meanwhile he had married Jessie Gray from Portsoy in Arnboth, Fordyce parish, on 23rd February 1860 when she was 21 and he was 22. The 1861 census shows Jessie and their first child, Robert, aged 1, living with Jessie's mother Elizabeth Gray in Portsoy. George and Jessie had seven children: Robert (1860–1914), George (b. 1862), James (1864–65), Barbara Gray (1868–95), William (1870–1934), Jessie Gray (1873–1953) and Elizabeth (b. & d. 1875). In 1871 the family was living in Barbank Street, Portsoy, next door to Jessie's mother Elizabeth Gray and her married sister Barbara, but by 1873 they were living at 14 Seafield Street, Portsoy. After George's appointment as harbourmaster, they moved to Fraserburgh and lived at the Anchorage, 91 Saltoun Place. Tragedy struck, however, when Jessie died on 28th February 1875 giving birth to Elizabeth, who also died two days later. Captain Mackay was left alone to care for Robert (14), George (12), Barbara (6), William (4) and Jessie (1). He remarried on 19th October 1876 in Portsoy to Isabella Sinclair Sutherland (also of Portsoy), a Master Seaman's daughter. He was aged 38 and she 33. They subsequently had four children in Fraserburgh: Evelyn (b. 1877), John Sutherland (1880–1908), Marguerita Sutherland (1881–1928) and Isabella Davidson (1883–1911). When Isabella died on 20th October 1902 aged 59, George was a widower again at age 64. His daughters Marguerita (20) and Isabella (18) were still living with him in the Anchorage at that time.



George and Isabella at a wedding (probably that of William Mackay) in Fraserburgh about 1900

During George Mackay's tenure of the harbourmaster post, Fraserburgh's herring trade grew rapidly, and he was involved in the deepening of Balaclava Harbour and other developments including the establishment of a fish market at the South Pier which was also constructed around this time – but we'll save the details for a separate article.

Towards the end of a successful career, the Captain met with a serious accident himself when, in 1908 aged 70, he was swept off the point of the Middle Jetty by a ship's cable and thrown violently into a boat. Several of his ribs were broken, and he never recovered his former vitality. In 1911 Captain Mackay became ill, and in August that year he submitted his resignation to the Fraserburgh Harbour Commissioners, citing the state of his health. He had been harbourmaster for some 38 years. The Board accepted his resignation and "in respect of his long and faithful services resolves that he be paid (during the pleasure of the Board) an annual allowance of £100 on the understanding that he will, when asked, continue to give the Board the benefit of his valued advice begotten of long experience". The allowance represented 50% of his current salary.



In the Harbour Commissioners Board Room in September 2022 with the photograph of Great-Grandfather Captain Mackay and the Books of Minutes from his time.

Captain Mackay died in Fraserburgh of heart failure on 14th April 1918, aged 80, and is buried in the cemetery there along with his second wife Isabella. He was harbourmaster in Fraserburgh from 1874 to 1911 – the height of the herring industry. He had come a long way from being a humble herd loon.

Acknowledgements

In researching my great-grandfather's life, I have been given the most generous help by numerous people and organisations. In particular, I have to thank Nick Reid at ANESFHS (no. 22316) for helping me to find out about Captain Mackay's early days – and this article would not have been created without his enthusiasm and encouragement. I must also mention Jill Smith at the Harbour Commissioners in Fraserburgh, and Ann at the Fraserburgh Library. Great material was found in past editions of the *Fraserburgh Herald & Northern Counties' Advertiser* – a wonderful archive.

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Lairds of Aberdour: Some Surprises

I was prompted to write this short article by the Genealogical Will item and form (Journal 164, pp. 30–31) and by the need for information not to be lost.

In about 2003, I was trying to add another layer to my family tree. One of my direct ancestors, Isabel Laird, was born in Aberdour parish, Aberdeenshire, in October 1812.

I came across another ANESFHS member who also had an interest in these Lairds, and we shared information. We discovered a Laird family expert, Jamie R. Smith in the USA (also an ANESFHS member at the time), who had done a huge amount of research. We were in touch by e-mail, but unfortunately I have since lost track of his e-mail address.

I sent him my research to look over. When he told me I had the wrong parents for Isabel Laird, and I had the wrong Isabel, I was unconvinced. I had been caught out before with other people's research being wrong. It was the Society's late and much-respected expert Violet Murray who had found Isabel and her parents for me. Surely Violet would not have made a mistake?! I had been there when she scrolled through the OPR microfilm of 1812 birth entries for Aberdour, starting from the beginning of 1812. She had picked the first Isabel Laird born that year – but my Isabel was not born until October.

What even Violet did not know was that New Aberdour/Aberdour was a Lairds hot spot! There were several Isabel Lairds born there in 1812 – probably all related. Jamie told me that my Isabel's actual parents were John Laird, born 1778, and Barbara Laird, born 1781 – undoubtedly first cousins, and also both born at Mains of Coburty, Aberdour.

I had already assumed that some of my ancestors were inbred, so it was quite fun to come across a case study. I did not doubt Jamie's research after that!

Jamie never submitted his 41 pages of Lairds research to ANESFHS, and I don't want it to be wasted. It has meticulous references from page 32 and a full index from page 35. The only change I made to his 2004 document was a placename update. The unfortunate place name "Urinal" might also have been Atrinal and has been Ironhill since 1869.

If any other members have an ancestral interest in Lairds of Aberdour, I will be happy to hear from them.

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Mary Scott No. 4376

Coronation Reminiscences

Our Edinburgh member Sally Low is lucky enough to have a diary written by her father, Murdo Moir (1916–65), a student from 1935 to 1939 at Marischal College, University of Aberdeen. He died when Sally was only six years old, so it is especially precious to her to be able to read stories he might otherwise have recounted to her as a youngster.

As a bursary scholar from the Black Isle's crofting lands, living far from the family home, he kept a meticulous account of his expenditure and any small boosts to his income for the term. Murdo described visits to Aberdeen harbour (Scotland's largest fish market at the time), his election as president of the Chemistry Society and his experiences of driving an ambulance in the dark in blackout conditions at the start of the Second World War.

One paragraph, written appropriately in red ink, describes events marking the coronation of George VI, grandfather of the current king – and it may be interesting to compare it with the present-day arrangements for the coronation of King Charles. Murdo's original handwriting graces the front cover of this Journal.

CORONATION

Friday May 14th

Haven't had time until just now to write up the Coronation yarn. Well, on Wednesday I watched the Procession in the afternoon. It was very good. What Patience and Time must have been spent on it. Went to Pittodrie Park at night. It wasn't bad as a show. I felt too cold to be exactly rapturous over it. But I did enjoy the Firework Display: I had never seen anything to equal it in my life before. We went to the Beach Carnival after it. I got home about 12.45 dead tired. Yesterday back at classes. At Pittodrie again during the evening, not so many people there. Today more or less back to normal. Handed in my dress [uniform] tonight. Went to Hop and was in for 5 mins when the band played God Save the King. Came home and went to bed. I have done nothing spectacular but I think I'll remember the Coronation.

We'd be delighted to hear about other family heirlooms and the ways they shed light on your family tree.

Crowning success!

Our Moray/Banff Group meeting in April was held online, and the theme of "Putting flesh on the bones" led to some coronation reminiscences – not least because this Group's May meeting in person will be a week later than usual because of the present coronation.

Our earliest memento took us back to the coronation of King Edward VII, who succeeded to the throne in 1901 on the death of Queen Victoria. Anne Park has these medals which were given to her grandfather and his brother to mark the coronation. The medals have a faded red, white and navy ribbon. It's a good reminder that not all medals are about wars. Have you got stories about medals gained for prowess in sport or ploughing? They are a great way to round out the story of your predecessor's interests.



As our conversation progressed, Mary Evans, our Moray/Banff Group co-ordinator, found all sorts of memories flooding back. Mary grew up in a small village in Wales (although her parents met as holidaymakers in Scotland). She recalls that when the “old” king, George VI, died, the schoolchildren were sent home for the day as a mark of respect – although the children thought of it as a holiday and something to celebrate. At Elizabeth’s coronation, Mary recalls being invited to the home of the local doctor, one of the few people with a television set. They weren’t normally on the doctor’s guest list, so it did feel like a “special” event. The children were all cross-legged on the floor, watching the event in black and white on the tiny screen. She remembers being told that it was raining in London but also thinking that the crown seemed very heavy on the young queen’s head.

Some days later, the entire school, about 200 children, were taken by train to the nearest little village cinema to see a film of the coronation and a film about the recent conquest of Everest by Tenzing Norgay and (later Sir) Edmund Hillary. This time the coronation was in colour, but young Mary was much more struck by the Everest film. She still has the tiny New Testament, pictured here, that children were given to mark the coronation – and we were impressed that she was able to find it quickly. Hers was presented by the Caernarvonshire Education Committee. It was a good reminder that small items may have a story and significance that might not immediately be evident to those who follow after us.



Much later, in 1977, at the time of Queen Elizabeth’s Silver Jubilee, Mary’s children were all given commemorative gifts by the local school.

Paul Hudson, one of our Zoom regulars, also received a New Testament to commemorate the coronation, and recalls that girls were given a china mug and the boys got a beer mug. Paul still has his beer mug, but his sisters jettisoned their teacups long ago. His class also watched the event on a local TV set, with the children sitting on the floor so close to the set that they could hardly make out what was happening. Just like Mary’s class, they then had a trip to the local cinema – a short walk of 500 yards in his case. He remembers that the following Christmas he got a toy coronation coach, which he played with for years.

Paul reminded us about the chain of fire beacons that were lit across the country to mark the Silver Jubilee, and that these “I was there” moments are worth passing on.

Jan Tavendale, born in Shetland, is too young to remember the 1953 coronation of Queen Elizabeth, but she does recall that her older sister had a Viewmaster slide machine. It had a set of colourful images of the coronation which completely fascinated Jan. She would be allowed as a special treat to look at it, so it became even more significant to her.

Barbara Dawes of Trenton, Ontario, has a different sort of perspective. Her recollection of the events around the 1953 coronation of Queen Elizabeth was of being a small child, travelling in a plane. Her family stories were mainly from her father’s perspective, as she didn’t spend time with grandparents. Understanding when and where family stories fit in can be quite important in setting them in context.

Buzzy Garden had been told by a second cousin, Charlotte Garden, that when Edward VII had his coronation in 1902, their great-grandmother did not give her children china mugs;

allegedly she gave them mustard pots. The two artefacts shown here are from Buzzy's husband's family: a George VI mug from 1937, and an Oxo tin from 1953.



Anna Doxford, in south-west England, has written to us:

“A précis of the George V celebration at Aird school in Lewis, from my mother's journal:

It was decided we would have a sports day, and could we find flags to bring? Our neighbour was a handy man, not far short of a magician, and I put my case to him. ‘Ask your mother for a clean flour sack’, which I did. He cut it in half, and one piece halved again. Then he got the blue and red chalk they used for marking sheep. ‘Get a fishing rod from your father.’ This was handed over rather grudgingly; it was a good rod. In no time at all we had three Union Jacks, one large and two small, with the rod cut to appropriate sizes. There were three of us at school by this time, and I, the eldest, got the big flag, and off we set bearing our banners ‘dressed overall’ to join the procession. All this, including buns, from a former pupil who donated £5 for the children to have a treat [about 300 pupils].

George VI coronation: I gather that my sisters, with great enthusiasm, were allowed to decorate me, in my pram, as their idea of the coronation coach – sorry, no photo!”

The power of provenance

Jan Tavendale also had some entertaining memories of being part of a school group who sang for Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, who was on a visit to Shetland. Jan has a photograph of her father, the local doctor, greeting the Queen Mother with a very hearty handshake (not the limp grasp recommended by protocol advisers). Jan still has the tweed suit her father wore that day, and had considered selling it. When she posted it online, she very quickly got lots of bids, including a “name your price” offer – but, when it came to the point, she found she couldn't part with the suit, which is a lovely item in its own right, but also precious because of the links to her father.

She has also discovered that her mother had worked during the Second World War at the top-secret code-cracking facility at Bletchley Park. She had signed the Official Secrets Act, so never spoke of her experiences; but Jan has found notes on the backs of envelopes and notepads that show her mother adjusting her CV to hide, disguise or otherwise account for the unexplained gap covering the years she spent in Bletchley. Are there mysterious gaps in your relative's family story? There may be an interesting story lurking behind.

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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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