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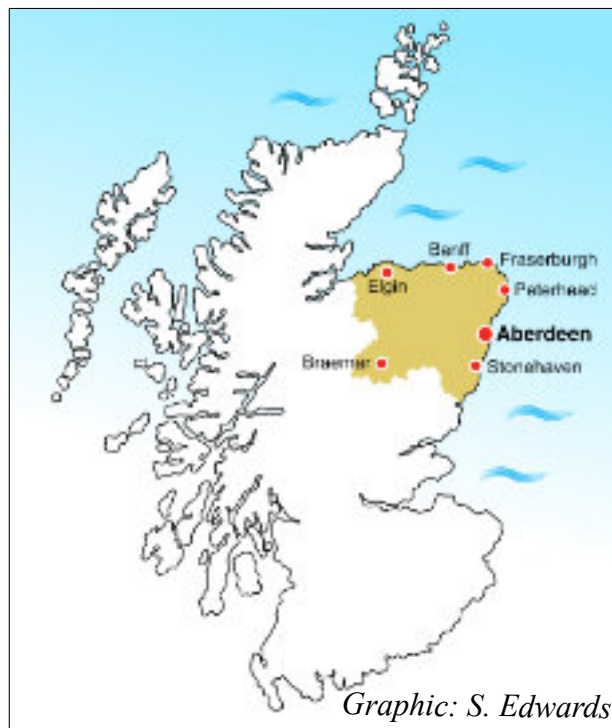
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Editorial

We are delighted to bring you another bumper edition of stories and news to welcome in the spring. Readers will quickly spot that our lead story and its companion piece do not refer to our core area of interest: Aberdeen and North-East Scotland, which we define as the former counties of Aberdeen, Kincardine, Moray and Banff. Folks who live outwith Scotland may not be aware of what area that covers, geographically. We regularly get enquiries about family records that take us down to Forfar, Dundee or Perth or up north to Inverness-shire, all outwith our area. Now, in the Research Centre, we take pride in the fact that we hold useful books and reference works on other areas of Scotland. Indeed we cover England, Ireland and much of the former Commonwealth. We also carry copies of Family History Society newsletters and journals from our sister organisations. As regards the journal, we simply say that articles should



Graphic: S. Edwards

“ideally have genealogical and preferably North-East Scotland content” but we love a good story and we recognise that our members’ family lines may derive from more than one geographical area.

The story of Catherine Mustard’s sampler is a great example. Alan wrote to us originally asking if we could help him decipher the lettering and tell him a bit more about samplers. From that beginning he quickly pieced together the details of part of his family tree that had been hitherto unknown to him. We particularly like the way he rounded out the story of his family and set it in context by using the *Old Statistical Account* to learn about what was happening in the community and how farming and economic changes might have affected their lives. As it happens, Alan himself lives in Aberdeen and has other links to the North-East, but we would have included the story anyway because it is a research success story that shows the insights that can be learned from contextual resources supplementing birth/marriage/death records.

Our cover this month shows the War Memorial at Stonehaven, an iconic spot in the North-East and worth a visit if you take the clifftop walk to Dunnottar Castle from Stonehaven Harbour, which itself features in one of our stories. We felt that the riotous display of colour was a cheering image and this cover won the vote hands down when we consulted members in a recent online meeting. It sparked a conversation about daffodils and a Society member,



Kate Duncan, shared information about a special type of daffodil that pays homage to the North-East, the Delnashaugh daffodil: “Delnashaugh is a local place name in Inveravon near the junction of the A95 and the B9008. The name is derived from the Gaelic and roughly translates as the hunting meadow. This hybrid variety of daffodil was created by J. S. B. Lea. Anecdotally, Lea often visited the area, staying at the Delnashaugh Inn, while salmon fishing the river Avon”. What a lovely way to celebrate this part of the world.

The Editorial Team:

Alex McKenzie; Barbara Bodden; Bobbie Jeal; Yvonne Milbank; Matthew Davidson; Ivor Normand; Steve Edwards; Elaine Petrie.

Cover/Banner design: Steve Edwards

ARTICLES

Catherine Mustard's sampler, 1799

One day in 1799, a 13-year old girl called Catherine Mustard sat down at her family home of Jordanstone Farm near Alyth in Perthshire and began stitching. Catherine was my 4g-grandmother and this is the story of Catherine and her sampler.

Recently, when my mother moved house, she gave me a mysterious sampler. She found it in her aunt's effects following that lady's death in 2002 but had no information about how it came into the family. There was a name in the top left corner and initials in the top right. However, the letters of the name were irregularly-formed and barely legible. The first name looked like "Cathrin" but the surname remained a mystery.

I began going through generations of my great-aunt's branch of my family to see if I could find any clues and noticed that her grandfather's middle name was "Mustard" which fitted Catherine's strange lettering! With such an uncommon surname it was easy to track down a Catherine Mustard alive in 1799: "Catherine daughter to William Mustard was baptised on 13th January 1786" in Alyth, Perthshire.

I discovered that Catherine's mother was Anna Ostler and her parents married on 8th March 1778 in Anne's home parish of Eassie & Nevay in Forfarshire. William was from Alyth. Catherine had five siblings, born on the family farm of Jordanstone in Alyth: William (b. 1781), Andrew (b. 1784), James (b. 1788), Anna (b. 1790) and Janet (b. 1796).

When I compared the initials on the sampler with those of her family the match was perfect, clinching Catherine's identity!

WM AH IM AM IM

William Mustard (father), Anna Ostler (mother), William (brother); James (brother); Anna (sister); Janet (sister). The lack of initials for Catherine's brother Andrew suggests that he died between his birth in 1784 and the sampler's creation in 1799. The only slight discrepancy was AH for Catherine's mother rather than AO, but that may indicate a preferred spelling. The word "hostler" would have been a familiar one to anybody of the time, being the term for a stableman at an inn.



Stylised motifs from the sampler

Image: S. Edwards



Catherine Mustard's sampler

Photo: M. Davidson

The sampler is made of good-quality linen (probably locally-woven as there was a flourishing flax industry in Alyth at this time). I was intrigued by the design of Catherine's sampler, with its exquisite tiny stitching, complex pattern and biblical motifs. Samplers evolved from being practical essays in needlework to being framed for display. Pattern books were in wide circulation although only a few have survived. Patterns were usually pricked directly from the printed page onto the cloth being sewn. Biblical themes were common and Adam and Eve flanking the Tree of Knowledge was one of the most popular. Birds and coronets also appear frequently. The peacock was a peculiarly Scottish choice, only rarely being sewn on English samplers.

The peacock motif was also common in Scandinavian samplers of this period, while the formal clipped trees which Catherine used were also popular in German and Dutch needlework. The predominantly red and green colours are also characteristic of early 19th century Scottish samplers. One feature which became standard from the 1720s onwards was an elaborate border, perhaps suggesting that the pieces were now likely to be framed for public display. The wavy border which Catherine decided on is typical and is shared with Dutch samplers of the period. The challenge in creating perfect symmetry demonstrated the skill of the craftswoman.

Catherine married in 1806 aged 20. While many farmer's daughters were expected to help on the farm or with housework, my grandmother, who was the daughter of a well-to-do Perthshire farmer, when reminiscing about the not-so-good Good Old Days crisply told me that after leaving school, for girls like her "there was absolutely nothing to do all day except put flowers in water and wait on Mother". Life was unlikely to have been any less constrained for Catherine in the early 1800s, so when a suitable young man presented himself there was little incentive for Catherine to put off a proposal.

Catherine's husband, Robert Brown (b. 6th June 1773) was a 33-year-old farmer from Craig parish, south of Montrose. Their marriage was recorded in both Alyth and Craig. They had three children, all born at their farm of Seatown of Usan in Craig: Ann (b. 10th May 1807), Isabel (b. 16th December 1808) and William (b. 17th April 1810). I have been unable to find out further information for Ann and William Brown. There is no marriage record for either of them in Craig and with Brown being such a common surname, it is hard to know which, if any, of the Browns who married later might be Catherine's children.

However, I know a lot about Isabel as she married a neighbouring farmer, Peter Keil, "both of this parish", on 30th November 1827 and I descend from them. Evidently Catherine left her precious sampler to Isabel and it has remained in the family to this day.

Robert was clearly a respected member of the local community and was appointed as a Kirk Elder and member of the Kirk Session on 13th June 1829, aged 56. Thereafter Robert conscientiously attended every Kirk Session meeting up until the meeting on 12th November 1837. However from December 1837 onwards he no longer appears in the Minutes. 1837 is also the last year when he was listed in the Roll of Communicants for the parish of Craig. This suggests that Robert Brown died, aged 64, in November or December 1837.

What of Catherine? She no doubt played an important role in church life as an elder's wife but women were not even included in the Roll of Communicants. She may well have been involved in church and charitable duties. However, as a respectable middle-class woman her contributions to local life remain largely invisible. Upper class ladies' lives are well-documented in family archives and we often even have their portraits. At the other end of the social scale, we have vivid insights into the lives of servant girls when they were hauled up before the Kirk Session for "prenuptial fornication". The lives of female paupers are sometimes even better documented, as we can follow the Kirk Session minutes allocating alms, meal and fuel, arranging medical care, or even paying for a coffin and occasionally listing any meagre goods which they possessed so they could be sold to help defray the funeral costs.

We do not know when Catherine died but it must have been before 1855 when statutory state records began. Through her sampler we can infer a surprising amount about her life and its



social context. I visited Alyth and found Catherine's family home, Jordanstone Farm, still standing. Craig Kirk was built in 1799 and is thought to be Scotland's earliest Gothic revival church. Today it is deconsecrated and has been converted into a private house.

Sources

Colby, Averil. *Samplers*. (1984) B.T. Batsford.

Jones, Mary Eirwen. *British Samplers*. (1988) B.T. Batsford.

Swain, Margaret. *Historical Needlework – A Study of Influences in Scotland & Northern England*. (1970) Barrie and Jenkins.

These reference books can all be found in Aberdeen Public Library's local studies department. A comprehensive list of resources can also be found in Journal 170 (May 2024), p. 36.

My thanks are due to embroiderers Prue King and Christine Riley for their expert advice on Catherine's needlework and to Buzzy Garden, Elaine Petrie and Alan Johnstone (ANESFHS) for their helpful contributions.

Alan Fraser, Kingswells, Aberdeen

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The Parish of Alyth

This is a companion piece to Alan Fraser's story about his ancestor, Catherine Mustard, who was born in Alyth. While Alyth is outwith our normal sphere of study (the old counties of Aberdeen, Kincardine, Moray and Banff) this piece illustrates how researchers can quickly build up a picture of the life of the community their relatives lived in by using resources such as the Old Statistical Account (OSA), compiled in the 1790s. This parish-by-parish survey by local ministers was the brainchild of Sir John Sinclair (1754–1835). He was born at Thurso Castle and died in Edinburgh, aged 81. He had a particular interest in agricultural improvement and the articles all give an account of the land quality and agricultural habits of the communities they describe. A New Statistical Account (NSA) was compiled in the same manner between 1835 and 1845. A Third Statistical Account was published sporadically between 1947 and 1992 and volumes may be found in local reference libraries.



*Detail from Sir Henry Raeburn's portrait of Sir John Sinclair, National Galleries of Scotland
Photo: Journal team*

Go to <https://stataccscot.ed.ac.uk/static/statacc/dist/home> to find digital versions of both the Old and New Statistical Accounts. Another good starting point for building up a picture of the parish your family lived in to go to the Genuki website where you will find a range of resources and links, organised by parish (<https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/sct>).

The OSA gives an interesting snapshot of Alyth in the 1790s. Writing in 1793, the local minister Colin Symers stated proudly that “the Heritors have augmented the schoolmaster's salary to 200 merks and built a school and schoolmaster's house on a larger scale than usual”. The parish school was situated in Alyth itself, a couple of miles away from Jordanstone. The Minister makes no mention of dame schools or “adventure schools” (private schools run independently of the minister and kirk session) where parents sent their children at their own “adventure” (risk).

With industrial and agricultural Revolutions in full swing, Alyth was apparently revelling in its new prosperity. Rev. Symers enthused that “the lower part of the Water of Isla is

extremely fertile, producing excellent crops of barley, oats and wheat. The cultivation of grass, turnips, potatoes and other parts of the new husbandry is carried on with great success... Crops of flax are generally good. There are three lint mills in the district and all well-employed... The farmers rear a considerable number of young cattle. The farms are not too large, nor do they seem to be too high-rented; none of them exceeds 140 acres... Good ground gives 15/-¹ to 21/- an acre. Marle is the manure commonly used, of which there is plenty... Considerable quantities of lime are brought from Dundee”.

Agricultural innovation had resulted in rapid improvement in land fertility and farm productivity, with ensuing transformations in living standards for local families. The growth in population, thanks to people coming to work in the expanding new industries like flax milling, meant ready markets for farm produce. The ongoing Revolutionary Wars with France (which would only finally end in 1815) were another boost to farming incomes. With food imports unpredictable and the Army and Navy needing to be fed, the minister could report that: “The prices of butcher meat are nearly doubled in that period [since 1773]. Beef and mutton ... are seldom below 3d² the pound and very often at 4d. Poultry and eggs are similarly advanced in price... There is a weekly market in the village [Alyth] ... and several annual fairs for black cattle and sheep are held here... Intercourse is made easy by the turnpike road betwixt Dundee and Meigle which will soon be finished. And there is a plan in agitation for continuing this road from Meigle to Alyth, a most essential benefit to the country”.

“The number of inhabitants in the village is almost doubled since 1774. At that time they amounted to 555: now they are increased to 1060.” However, the combination of new better-paid mill work in Alyth combined with clearance of the old subsistence-level fermtouns as part of the agricultural improvements had actually seen “numbers in the country part of the parish reduced by more than 200 in the past 15 years”. This migration of fit men from farm labouring to better-paid mill work in Alyth meant that farmers had to raise the wages they paid whether they liked it or not: “Servant wages have increased at least a third since 1773. Men servants hired at that time for five or six guineas are now with difficulty engaged at eight or nine. The wages of women servants have risen in proportion from £2 to £3”. This was a good wage since, at the same period Alexander Fraser, my 4g-grandfather, a farm labourer in Aberdeenshire’s Pitsligo parish, could only hope to earn £5 annually, plus his food.

The Minister added: “Till lately the old mode of farming was followed in all this district, viz taking crops of oats and bere alternately from the infield and after three successive crops of oats from the outfield, letting it remain as long in ley. But now a better system of agriculture is introduced and a spirit of industry promoted among the tenants. In a few years hence, when the farms are properly divided and inclosed and a rotation of crops observed according to the leases lately granted, the value of the property and the appearance of this part of the country will be much increased and improved”.

The Rev. Symers noted that “The inhabitants are sober and industrious and regular attendants at public worship”. He continued: “With the improvement of their outward condition the inhabitants are more liberal and humane in their sentiments and dispositions. The fruits of industry appear in their dress and manner of living. Mean cottages are exchanged for more comfortable habitations and those who before found it difficult, with all their labour, to procure the necessities of life now enjoy many of its comforts and conveniences. The number of poor is decreasing... This is to be ascribed to the improving state of the parish and an increasing spirit of industry among the people. The linen manufacture affords employment for old and young of both sexes and the price of labour is greatly advanced. Begging is not allowed in the parish”.

¹ 15 shillings. There were 20 shillings in a pound. A guinea was 21 shillings.

² 3d is three pence. There were 12 pennies (pence) in a shilling.

The end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 led to an economic crash with widespread social unrest exacerbated by escalating food prices. The infamous Corn Laws, enacted in 1815, made matters much worse by keeping grain – and therefore bread prices – artificially high. To make matters worse still, the massive eruption of Mount Tambora in the Dutch East Indies in 1816 resulted in a climate downturn and poor harvests. The Corn Laws meant that farming families (and their landlords) were among the few sectors of society doing well for themselves at this time. A hint of the privations ordinary people were experiencing at this time comes in the Craig Kirk Session records for 3rd March 1818 when “The Moderator informed the Session that having made a proposal to the Tenants in the parish for a supply of oatmeal to the Poor, the following Heritors and farmers at a meeting held here subscribed to furnish the quantity opposite their respective names, the one half to be delivered immediately at £1:14/- per boll [which presumably was below the going market rate] and the other half at the market price of Montrose on the second Friday of May next”. The list was headed by the local laird Peter Arkely of Dunninald who subscribed 50 bolls and among the tenants, the most generous pledge was from Robert Brown of Usan, my ancestor, at 14 bolls – suggesting both relative prosperity and a charitable concern for the local poor. However, there were limits to Robert’s charity – he wasn’t just going to give away his meal!

The Arkely family’s heirs, the Stansefields, remain the local lairds and still live at Dunninald Castle. The Mustards would have attended the charming late mediaeval St Moluag’s Church in Alyth. It was abandoned later in the 19th century in favour of a big new church, purpose-built for Presbyterian worship and today only fragmentary ruins remain of the older kirk.

Alan Fraser, Kingswells, Aberdeen

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Stonehaven Rabbit Holes and the Harbour

When I started researching my family history, I often talked of “going down rabbit holes” to find wonderful gems of interesting stories. One of the best contained the details of how my father met my mother in 1928 in the LNER Offices in Waverley Place in Edinburgh. This story led me to write my book, *The Fathers I Never Knew*, after which I was asked to be Buildings Convenor of St James Episcopal Church, Stonehaven.

This led me into researching the family histories of the rectors and the congregation members, all of which again led down many rabbit holes to some fascinating stories that put some meat onto the bare bones of a family tree. This developed into a history of the church building and the priests who ran it. I explored the history of John Wardle (not only our organ builder, but also our choirmaster and organist for 57 years), his family and the family of Wadsworth, who ran a large organ-building company for almost 100 years and trained John. Incidentally, I attempted to trace John’s descendants and managed to meet up with his great-grandson who was living in Johnshaven. That really was a rabbit hole magic moment. The Church website: <https://www.stjames-stonehaven.org.uk/exhibition/explore> gives the details.

After Covid, I was on duty as a volunteer at the Tolbooth Museum in Stonehaven when we received three enquiries as to whether there was a book on the harbour. I had to answer in the negative, but that got me thinking about research. One rabbit hole was the Aberdeenshire Archives, which turned out to be a treasure trove, a store of information going way back to the 16th century, well catalogued by the very helpful staff there. A lot of the information was rather dry: minutes of meetings, accounts, building works specifications, so how could I make this readable and interesting?



David Fleming at Stonehaven Harbour.

Photo: D. Fleming

Then my family-history experience kicked in. I think one of the things that is most interesting is imagining the people you are researching. How did they live? Why did they behave the way they did? How and where did they first meet? What can you read into the details on the certificates, the side notes, the sorts of places where people lived?

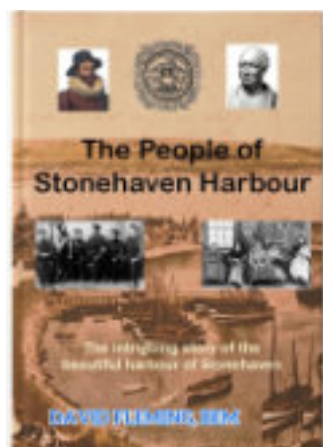
I applied those questions to my research and decided to concentrate not on the buildings, not on the piers and jetties, not on fishing and trade through the harbour, not on the financial troubles and progress, but on the people, their relationships, their characters, hence the title of my book: *The People of Stonehaven Harbour*.

This strategy allowed me plenty of rabbit holes to go down and not all of what I produced ended up in the final text! However, it did generate over 4,000 copies of documents and about 1,000 images. So, what was learnt during this exercise, which started with records from the late 1500s?

First, trying to trace the family histories of the relatively few families intimately associated with the harbour in the early centuries was extremely difficult and, in most cases, could not be satisfactorily concluded. Even in the later centuries, it was not always productive. Whilst it was easy to identify some of the key actors in the history of the harbour, knowing who were their possible siblings, spouses, parents or children contributed very little to the stories. Analysis of the early census data just for the area round the harbour (in 1841 or 1851) was also highly expensive. However, there are well over 100 family names listed in the book's appendices or index and many may be familiar to readers, who might be able to shed more light on the family connections and activities.

Secondly, while family records can be scarce or ambiguous, the case is possibly even worse for buildings. Scottish property ownership records (sasines, dispositions, etc.) do not present an easy line to trace. It is of little help to the modern reader to learn, say, that Mr Masson's house and land is defined as having Mr Adam's house on the east. The only property for which I was able to create a historic timeline in any reasonable detail was the Ship Inn, and then only because the recent owner had preserved most of the documents relating to the title of the land and buildings.

The other factor about buildings is that in a large number of cases, the owner of the building is often not the occupier. When the feus to Stonehaven were first granted by the Earl Marischal in 1624, there were only 37 people and plots of land involved. Stonehaven was just a village at the time, huddled around the harbour. Within two centuries, that number had grown to over 100 families but, curiously, very few of the family names were in both lists. Tracing the families of feu holders over a period of time would be a monumental task. However, I was helped by the retrieval of Dawson's Map, which identified people and buildings around the harbour in 1796 because of a dispute over who were the feuars of the land. This map was in use for conveyancing until the recent introduction of the computerised Land Register. A restored and preserved version is now on display in the Tolbooth Museum.



The third lesson relates to something all family-historians will be familiar with: folk stories and legends. The exercise of putting the information available into a clear timeline managed to confirm or debunk many of these stories around the harbour. The best one of these is that the "stone" in the harbour (the town's apparent namesake) was "blown up" by the engineers during the building of the harbour, and the resultant debris used to build the South Pier – it wasn't.

The fourth lesson relates to what you can find when deep down a rabbit hole. I discovered there was an official body in the early part of the last century called the Fishery Commission that seemed to be

in charge of handing out grants to harbours for their improvement. I went to the National Records of Scotland in Edinburgh to see what was available. The online catalogue had only about half a dozen file folders. However, halfway through were some stunning photographs taken in the 1920s and 30s, showing the extensive damage done to the then new Outer Breakwater. The archivist on duty confirmed these had never been accessed since the original lodgement and as a consequence there are photographs in my book which are seeing the light of day for the first time. What a precious pile of nuts to find down the rabbit hole!

The last lesson I wish to recall is the need to stay on focus. Local and family history can easily distract you from the main purpose of your work. I had to consistently re-focus on the history of the harbour: who built it, who used it, who lived by it. Perhaps another time I will explore the development of the town of Stonehaven.

David Fleming, Stonehaven

David's book *The People of Stonehaven Harbour* is available to buy in bookshops in Banchory, Montrose, Aberdeen and in a range of shops in Stonehaven. You can order copies at <https://www.surescribe.com/my-shop>.

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DNA discoveries: Jaffray, Rose and Horton links

I was born in Spartanburg, South Carolina, USA and have always been “Buckie” to my family. As a child, I had heard that there was some mystery to our family history, but no one seemed to know the details, although I was told the Hortons came from England. As a young adult, I started digging into my family history and quickly found the brick wall that no one had penetrated. I talked with family members who had spent years digging through old documents in library basements, to no avail. Then DNA testing became popular. So, I joined FamilyTreeDNA (FTDNA) and submitted a sample. I wanted answers so I bought the Big Y-700 test. The results were surprising and confusing. I did not match to Hortons. I matched to Roses who were from Scotland.

As I continued digging, now trying to learn about Scotland, I spent years down the wrong rabbit hole. I heard some incredible stories, legends, and tales about the Clan Rose from Kilravock (between Inverness and Nairn). I joined the Rose Surname Project on FTDNA and attempted to sort the data from the stories. Eventually, I found enough Y-DNA matches and pieced together enough stories to understand the journey. The discovery of who my people were and where they came from has felt like a journey back home.

It turns out that I am a descendant of James Jaffray (alias Rose), a 16th-century estate manager in the Garioch, through his son Alexander Rose and grandson William Rose. William left Aberdeen with Nicholas Meriwether in 1654 to migrate to Westmoreland County, Virginia in the British Colonies. His grandson, John Rose, had a child with Mary Horton in 1748. John's first wife, Lucy Bennett, had died during childbirth 16 years prior. John and Mary had become common-law partners but were not legally married. So, their son, George, was given Mary's surname, Horton. That was the brick wall that had stumped me until DNA testing and it explains why my surname is Horton but my Y-DNA matches Rose, not Horton.

My forefather William Rose was born in 1623 to Alexander Rose and Margaret Duncan. They had married in 1619 at Kirk of St Nicholas. I have always seen it just called the Mither Kirk. However, I encountered another brick wall. Records prior to 1600 are inconsistent and there was no record of Alexander Rose's birth. Thankfully, DNA came to my rescue, once again. I found an American with surname Jeffries who was a Y-DNA match, but at a genetic distance greater than the Roses. This means, the paternal connection to Mr Jeffries predated the paternal connection with the Roses. So, I started looking for a Jeffries, or similar, in Aberdeen. I found a James Jaffray who was working as an estate manager in the Garioch for

a Clan Rose estate. In legal papers, he was referred to as James Rose. Aha, another brick wall smashed! My Alexander was born as Alexander Jaffray, in rural Aberdeenshire, likely either Inch or Inverurie. James Jaffray (alias Rose) was working in Inch and was listed on documents as James Jaffray in Inverurie.

My Y-DNA SNP is classified as R-BY19455. That paternal line is projected to have come to Aberdeenshire in 2289 BC. So, when William Rose left in 1654, my people had lived in Aberdeenshire for nearly 4,000 years.

Thank you for the opportunity to tell my story. I have never been to Scotland and I would like to learn more and, if possible, connect with people who are still in the land that my ancestors once inhabited, especially anyone researching the Jaffray or Rose connections in the Garioch.

Timothy “Buckie” Horton, South Carolina

—oOo—

Ann Duncan: Using Fashion to Date Old Photographs

Several years ago, I contacted a second cousin, Bob Duncan, who lives in New South Wales, Australia. He has been very helpful, and has kindly shared old family letters and precious photographs of our family that I never thought I would see. One photograph was said to be my 3g-grandmother, Ann Kinnaird (1823–88), who married James Duncan in Gamrie parish. It had come from a family album held by another cousin in Canada. The writing underneath the photo in the album simply said “the first Mrs Duncan” so it was reasonable to think it was Ann. More recently I asked Bob if I could see the frame and back of the photo and he duly obliged by sending a copy (Image 1).



Image 1: Ann Kinnaird Duncan (1823–88).

Photo: S. Packer

This changed everything. When I researched the photographer, William Gammie of Turriff, Aberdeenshire, I found that he only started up his studio in 1892. Ann Kinnaird Duncan died in 1888, so it surely can't be her. The outfit she is wearing appears to be from around the 1890s, which would fit with the photographer's era. The cape, the satin ribbon and the hat all seem to be from late 1800s to early 1900s. The lady is holding a book, probably a bible and wearing her Sunday best.

However, her daughter, Annie Duncan married John Duncan, conveniently keeping her surname. She was my 2g-grandmother and it is one of her direct descendants who holds the



Image 2: Annie Duncan (1850–1917).

Photo: S. Packer

family album, so I strongly suspect it must be her in the photo. She was born in 1850 and died in 1917. A book on dating fashion, by Jayne Shrimpton, shows a lady wearing a collar made of astrakhan fur and an ornate cap decorated with beads and silk flowers, a style worn only by older ladies in the 1890s. Would the younger Ann have been classed as an “older lady” when in her 40s?



Image 3: unknown women from 1890s.

Photo: K. Hendrix.

On a Facebook group of “Nineteenth Century photography” I recently saw an image of a group of women wearing the exact same outfit as my ancestor (Image 3). An inscription on the group photo indicates a woman in the back row as being “Dorothy Fryer, mother of Joseph”, who may be from Northumberland, England. It is dated 1890s but Karen Hendrix, who owns the photo, has no further information.

I haven’t found why all the women in the group photo and the lady in the studio photo are wearing the same clothes. Was it just the height of fashion or were they assimilated to a religious group or some other kind of society? In another

photo, which is definitely of Annie Duncan, she is wearing a very similar hat with a satin ribbon but no cape (Image 2). She could be wearing her mother’s hat of course. Facially, I’m not sure the two pictures match but there isn’t another Mrs Duncan in that family line who would fit.

The problem is that dozens of family members and researchers now have the first photo (Image 1) on their trees, wrongly labelled as Ann Kinnaird, and they seem unwilling to accept that it probably isn’t her. What do Journal readers think?

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Sonia Packer, Aberdeen

—oOo—

The Cummings: Longside Scandals, Sorrows and Honour Justified

The oldest records found so far for the Cumming family in Longside come from monumental inscriptions, with William Cumming, farmer in Longside, who died 23rd February 1742, aged 73, giving an approximate birth date of 1669, and his spouse “Margreat” Brook who died 15th October 1729, aged 55. In the 1696 Poll Tax valuation, William is listed as being liable for 12 shillings and eight pence.

His son, also William Cumming, was Clerk and Preceptor for the Episcopal Church in Longside and it was probably through this connection that his son, Alexander Cumming (1736–1820), a farmer and church elder, met and married Elizabeth Skinner (1742–1817), the daughter of the Rev. John Skinner, the eminent Episcopalian Minister of Longside, who was a renowned poet, Latin scholar, correspondent of Robert Burns, and church historian.

On 1st October 1758, however, the Longside Kirk Session minutes record that Alexander Cumming, then aged about 22, was cited by one Margaret Slugie as being the father of her unborn child. Session required Alexander to attend to answer to the scandal. He did not appear until 18th November 1758 when he was “acquainted of the accusation against him by Margaret Slugie... whereupon pouring forth much idle and impertinent discourse against the Session, who he alleged knew nothing about him, did at last judicially acknowledge guilt with said woman, but would not own himself the father of the said child. Whereupon he was suitably spoke to and exhorted to repentance... He refused, alleging he was not of our communion and would only give satisfaction before the congregation whence he usually attended and then went off”.

Margaret Slugie was admonished, submitted to discipline and was then absolved from the scandal on 18th December 1758. As for Alexander, the Session noted that “he still continues obstinate”, so as he was contemptuous of them, they “cited him from the pulpit and publicly admonished him to give satisfaction for his confessed scandals”.

On 4th March 1759, it was noted in the Kirk Session records that Alexander had still not submitted to discipline and declared him as being “left under said scandal until he submits and in the meantime order that this and said penalties be forthwith demanded”.

So far no further record has been found about this after 1759, but it is obvious that Alexander managed to rehabilitate himself as he went on to marry Elizabeth Skinner and in April 1793, and he is noted in the Session records as being one of a group of local “fair and proper persons to give testimony”, in conjunction with his father-in-law Rev. John Skinner, on an issue that had arisen on the boundaries of the minister’s glebe.

However, the Cumming family were plunged into another scandal just three months later in July 1793 when two of Alexander Cumming's sons, William and Alexander junior, were cited for the crime of culpable homicide for the murder of one James Nicolson.

In his statement of 29th July 1793, Alexander Cumming junior, wrote that he saw James Nicolson when was he was leaving Aikey Fair (the cattle market of Old Deer) on Wednesday 24th July 1793, along with his father and his brother William. Alexander senior must have travelled on ahead of his sons as he was not present when James Nicolson and his two brothers later accosted them and called William “a scoundrel and that he was come of scurvy scoundrels, their forefathers having left the upper part of the County for stealing horse”. William Cumming and James Nicolson came to blows, but the Cumming brothers managed to escape and set off home pursued by all three Nicolson brothers who threw stones at them. The next morning, they heard that James Nicolson was dead.

Alexander Cumming junior was kept in the Aberdeen Tolbooth whilst William absconded. However, he must have given himself up as both the brothers were tried on 25th September 1793. If William had not given himself up, the case papers tell us he would have been put to the “horn”, denounced as a rebel, and all his moveable “goods and gear” would have been confiscated.

Fifteen eminent locals sat in judgement of the case including Sir William Forbes of Craigowan, James Farquharson of Inverly, Alexander Anderson of Bourtie, John Gordon of Cairnfield, James Reid in Portsoy, Factor for the Earl of Findlater, and four Aberdeen merchants. These local worthies later declared that they were all of one voice that the men were not guilty. The case was dismissed and the brothers were released from the Tolbooth.

Alexander Cumming senior did all he could to help his sons and was able to procure for the magistrates the names of 24 local persons who were willing to speak for them, even though the scandal led to some of their community shunning the family. The Rev. Skinner refers to these events in a 1795 poem, “An Elegy on the Death of a Favourite Young Child”, written for his daughter Elizabeth after the death of her youngest son Charles.

Yet think, my dear, how different is this blow
From what thou felt not twenty months ago:
Two blooming youths, their drooping father’s prop,
Their brethren’s favourites, and their mother’s hope,
All of a sudden driv’n from peaceful home,
To underly the law’s severest doom,
By Falsehood char’d, by Malice quick pursu’d,
Their near relations thirsting for their blood,
One dragg’d to jail, the other forc’d to fly,
Not stung by guilt but seeking remedy.

He continues on a happier note:

Remember too, how happy were thy joys
To clasp again thy persecuted boys,
When Heav'n and Law had justified their cause,
And sent them home with honour and applause,
In spite of all that Malice could devise.

Thus, with honour justified, the Cumming family of Longside was rehabilitated into the community. Seven of Elizabeth Skinner and Alexander Cumming's nine sons survived into adulthood, and the eldest, John Cumming (1770–1849), who followed his grandfather as Longside's Episcopal Minister when the Rev. John Skinner died in 1807, went on to become Dean of Aberdeen.

William Cumming (1771–1851), who remained unmarried, continued farming the land as did three of his brothers, including Marianus Cumming (1775–1860), a farmer of 160 acres, who employed three men and one boy at Cadgergill Farm, Longside, according to the 1851 Census. James Cumming (1778–1860) and Robert Cumming (1780–1869) farmed 56 acres in Longside. Interestingly Robert is noted as a musician in the 1851 Census. Cooper Cumming (1782–1836) died unmarried and Alexander Cumming junior, my 4g-grandfather, became a ship's carpenter.

Laura Sutherland

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—oOo—

Finding Arthur Anderson – Help needed!

I recently discovered that my 4g-grandfather was named Arthur Anderson. I have done extensive searches to find more information about him and have already scoured the online genealogical sites, including Scotland's People. I am now seeking the help of ANESFHS members to fill out the story and help confirm whether I have researched the correct person. I am looking for any information that might come from private archives, references in family histories, letters and personal papers. If you have an Arthur Anderson in your family tree and one or more of these family names, Skene, Forbes, Tulloh, Rennie, Maurice and Fraser, I hope you may be willing to share research results.

The Arthur Anderson I am interested in was cited in the baptism records of St Mary's Church, Fort St George, Madras, as father of his "natural" (i.e. illegitimate) daughter, named Elizabeth Anderson, born there on 11th September 1805. Her mother, known as Mary, was Indian (described as a "native"), and subsequently married a British soldier, Richard Plackett, of the 69th Regiment of Foot, in Madras on 2nd September 1806, three days after Elizabeth's baptism. Of this much I am certain. The challenge is to identify this Arthur Anderson correctly.

Apart from being named on the baptismal papers, there are no other details recorded that might help to identify him. However, it is reasonable to deduce that Arthur was British and was present in India, most likely Madras, in December 1804 or January 1805 when Elizabeth would have been conceived (premature babies usually did not survive in India in



Fort St George, Madras around the 1850s.

Image: Wikimedia Commons

those days). The absence of other later records also makes it reasonable to assume that Arthur left India by about the middle of 1806, leaving Mary and his daughter behind, as was quite common in those times.

The British in India kept quite good and extensive records, which were shipped back to London and are available through the India Office Records Collection at the British Library. Most are available online through

Findmypast or Ancestry. For those that are not, I have the invaluable assistance of a friend in London, a member of the Families in British India Society (FIBIS), to check through original documents. Information about people was mostly captured through parish registers, employment records of the East India Company, annual lists of European inhabitants not working for the Company, or army regiment muster rolls.

I found only one Arthur Anderson in any of these sources that could plausibly be Elizabeth's biological father, in terms of geography and time frame. This Arthur Anderson appears in the annual List of European Inhabitants of Madras for the years of 1799 to 1804 as a clerk working for the brokerage firm Tulloh and Co. The List identified his country of origin as Scotland. (The Tulloh family, in whose firm he worked, were also Scots). This led me to search for a Scotsman named Arthur Anderson who had been in Madras during the period 1799 to 1805 – a needle in a haystack! However, against all odds, I found a result that might fit.

A notice published in *The Scots Magazine* and *The Aberdeen Journal* records that: "In Aberdeen, Arthur Anderson, Esq. late of Madras, to Miss Margaret Skene, daughter of Dr George Skene" on 5th February 1807. The passage by sail back from Madras in the early 19th century took three to four months, meaning he would have to have left India no later than the middle of 1806, likely earlier. So, I had found a Scotsman returning from Madras at around the right time. A real possibility. I decided to research this Arthur Anderson further to see whether the theory stood up to closer scrutiny.

I found that he was Arthur Anderson Esq. of Deebank, Aberdeenshire, and later of Charlton, Forfar, and was one of the Andersons of Candacraig. He was born in Strathdon on 28th May 1775, the youngest of four apparently illegitimate sons of Charles Anderson, the 8th Laird of Candacraig (1711–76). His father died when he was an infant, and his eldest brother (32 years his senior), William Anderson, inherited the estate. By 1782, William had two sons (an heir and a spare) so there was no prospect of Arthur ever inheriting – he would have to make his own wealth.

In 1789, aged 14, Arthur went to Marischal College to study for a four-year Arts degree. According to the Marischal Register Album 2, he completed the first three years successfully but apparently left before completing his final year and receiving his A.M. award. According to an unpublished "History of Newton Dee", "he then travelled to Madras, India, and returned to Aberdeen in about 1806". Unfortunately, no Scottish record found so far provides any explanation of what Arthur Anderson did in Madras – the key to my search.

One possibility is that he left College early to answer a call to arms following the outbreak of war with Revolutionary France. In March 1793, Lord Seaforth recruited the 78th

Highland Regiment (Ross-shire Buff or Seaforth Highlanders) in the Aberdeen area, later going on to serve in India. However, annual Army Lists and the Muster Rolls of the 78th over this period confirm Arthur did not serve with that regiment.

If Arthur went to India with the Army, it seems likely that he purchased an early discharge and went into business. While senior officers made considerable fortunes from “prize money” divided after military campaigns in India, the spoils for the junior officers were more modest, not enough to earn the kind of fortune Arthur sought (and apparently amassed) while in India. The position with Tulloh & Co might have met this requirement.

It would not have been unusual for a British man in India at this time to take an Indian woman as an intimate partner – indeed, it was quite common and even encouraged. They may even have had some kind of marriage ceremony, but not one that was recognised by the church or authorities. Taking an Indian wife back to Britain was not considered an acceptable option. Guides published for young men going to serve in India at that time actually recommended not getting formally married, to avoid complications when they inevitably returned home without their wife.

In late 1805 or early 1806, Arthur returned from Madras to Aberdeen, apparently flush with money. In late 1806 or early 1807, he bought the Newton Dee Estate from Captain William Henderson and re-named it Deebank. Having joined the propertied class, he became Arthur Anderson, Esq. of Deebank.

As we have seen, Arthur married Margaret Skene (1782–1821) in 1807. Her father was Dr George Skene (1741–1803), a member of a prominent Aberdeen family, who was also a former Professor of Natural Philosophy at Marischal College and noted physician. The marriage took place in the Aberdeen home of Dr Charles Skene, Margaret’s brother. It is not clear how the couple came to know each other – none of the Skene family were at Marischal College at the same time as Arthur, and I have found no family link. Interestingly, a witness at the wedding (and likely the best man) was Captain David Forbes of the 78th Regiment of Foot. Forbes was also not at Marischal at the same time as Arthur, so they presumably knew each other from India (Forbes had joined the 78th in 1793, and this regiment was still in India in 1807, so Forbes was in Aberdeen on home leave).

Arthur and Margaret had seven children together. Their eldest, Dr Michie Forbes Anderson (1808–88), was a surgeon with the Indian Medical Service for 20 years until he retired to Deebank in 1853. Their second, George Anderson (1809–90) served in the Army and became a Captain of the 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment of Foot and later the 6th Royal Warwickshire Regiment in India. Their first daughter, Margaret Anderson, was born in 1811, but no more information has been found about her. Their fourth child, Dr Sir Arthur Anderson (1814–96) was also a military doctor, who served as chief medical officer during the Crimean War and was Florence Nightingale’s doctor. He rose to be Inspector-General of H.M. Hospitals, in which role he received his knighthood. Their fifth, John Anderson (1817–46), became an Advocate in Aberdeen, married into the Renny family (major importers of flax from Russia via the port of Riga). Their sixth, Alison Anderson (1818–71) married David Robert Morice, an Advocate who eventually became a Magistrate in Old Aberdeen and was a law partner of her brother John. Their youngest, Mary Anne Anderson (1820–?) married Robert Winchester Fraser, Staff Surgeon of the Army Medical Department, of the Frasers of Findrack.

Margaret Skene died in Aberdeen on 25th April 1821, aged 39 years. On 17th May 1831, Arthur Anderson of Deebank re-married in St Mary-le-bone, London. His new wife was Harriet Maria Rawlins (1806–70), daughter of Baker Street physician Dr Thomas Rawlins. Arthur took Harriet back to Aberdeenshire where the couple had two children: Thomas, born in either 1832 or 1834, and Harriet Jane, born in 1835 (no further details known). Arthur purchased a second estate, Charlton, in Forfar.

Arthur Anderson died at Charlton on 21st August 1839, aged 64 years. His will made no reference to illegitimate children (in stark contrast to that of his eldest son, Michie, who made bequests to three illegitimate children in India, by three different mothers, two clearly Indian).

This is what I have been able to find out about Arthur Anderson, either online or with the assistance of some very helpful Scottish archivists. But while I have been able to piece together a reasonable narrative of his life in Scotland, a yawning gap remains on the decade or more that he spent in Madras, India, in which lies the answer to whether he is, indeed, the same Arthur Anderson as I found there, and thence my 4g-grandfather.

I have set out as much as I know here in the hope of stirring a memory or identifying a new source that might provide further clues on what Arthur Anderson did during his time in India, hopefully solving this mystery. I would greatly welcome any information, comments or advice you may have, which the journal team will pass onto me here in Australia.

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Sean Kelly, Canberra, Australia

—oOo—

Peter Williamson: From Hawker to Merchant

For centuries, Scotland has had several distinct groups of Gypsies and Travellers, each with their own history, culture and nomadic lifestyle. The North-East in particular has been home to what are legally termed Scottish Highland Travellers, but sometimes (more derogatively) as Tinkers. The latter appellation originates from the Gaelic *tinneard* (tinsmith) – one of their trades – or *ceardannan* (craftsmen). They were also commonly occupied as hawkers, who sold various goods door-to-door in towns and villages. Some found work on farms and, in early times, as horse-dealers. Their commonest surnames were Cameron, Gordon, MacDonald, Macmillan, McPhee, Robertson, Smith, Stewart, Townsley, Whyte and Williamson. One of these is the subject of this short account.

Peter Williamson was undoubtedly of Traveller birth and heritage, as demonstrated by his nomadic instincts reflected in his constant “flitting” from town to town over his lifetime. This transient background and the patchiness of records, also make it very difficult to find out where he was born, and the identity of his parents. It is possible that the births of Peter (about 1833) and his siblings were unrecorded. The 1841 Census mainly listed individuals who spent the night in a specific household or location, so people on the move, like Traveller families who habitually camped in undesignated areas, were more likely to be overlooked by the enumerators.

According to his large gravestone in Aberdeen’s St Peter’s Cemetery and a newspaper obituary, he died aged 82 in 1915. His age is given as 56 and 68 in the 1891 and 1901 census returns for Buckie, which also state that he was born in Aberdeen, however there is no trace of his family in the city in the censuses prior to 1871. Peter added to the confusion by telling the enumerators in Portsoy in 1871 and 1881 that he was born in Perth!

The Williamson gravestone lists his mother as Jane McMillan, herself likely from a traveller family, who died in Aberdeen on 27th April 1849, aged 60. Researchers have come to potentially conflicting conclusions about her. One claims she was born in Banffshire in 1789 and that her husband was George Williamson, born in Moray in 1800. Another suggests that Peter was born on 5th March 1836 in Dundee, to Catholic parents with those same names

who subsequently had him baptised at St Andrew's RC Church. This sounds promising at first, but if Jane was actually born in 1789, this would make her 47 years old and thus perhaps unlikely to be his mother. Also, later records show that the Williamsons were members of the Church of Scotland.

Initially, Peter did good business as a hawker, buying and selling goods in Aberdeen city and shire and eventually in the Banffshire coastal towns of Portsoy, Cullen and Buckie. He turned his hand to horse-dealing, reselling fishing nets and sails, and sometimes profited from the contents of wrecked boats. Some of his many children kept up the tradition by becoming hawkers or china merchants. On 18th April 1851, he married Jane Shearer, born about 1832 in Aberdeen, and their first daughter Jane was born there on 14th November 1853. They soon relocated to Cullen where a son, John, was born in 1856. Two years later they were back in the Aberdeen area. Their children, Catherine (b. 1858) and Peter (b. 1860), were born in the city when the family were lodging with farmer David Watt.

Later, they returned to Cullen where sons Thomas (1862) and George (1864) were born. On 10th April 1866, Peter, Jane and daughter Jane (now 12) were charged with having "conducted themselves in a riotous and disorderly manner". The three, together with fellow hawkers William, Jane, George and Alexander Munro, along with Mary Drew, were accused of cursing, swearing and challenging each other to fight. Most were fined, but the charges against Peter Williamson were dropped due to insufficient evidence.

Shortly afterwards the Williamsons moved yet again, this time to Portsoy. Peter initially operated as a horse dealer in 1871, but in the following year took out a loan from the Union Bank to open a stoneware or china shop. Their children increased to ten with the births of daughters Charlotte (1873) and Margaret (1875). Peter was totally illiterate and apparently not financially competent, for he was charged with bankruptcy in December 1879. Although his liabilities exceeded his cash in hand, the value of his stock outweighed the debts and led the court to clear him of bankruptcy.

That was far better than the fate suffered by Peter's son-in-law, John Mathieson (a china merchant in Cullen), who was declared bankrupt in February 1883 and was unable to pay his debts. His premises, horse and cart, and all his stock were auctioned off to repay his creditors. Peter came to the rescue, however, by purchasing Mathieson's house, shop and stock-in-trade, and renting it back so that the china shop could continue in business. Ten years later, the luckless Mathieson was once again declared bankrupt. He told the court that he had been carrying on business in Portsoy as a stoneware merchant but was now living in Buckie, employed by his wife's father. The outcome is unclear, for he was soon back in Cullen, plying his trade again.

In 1884, Peter and Jane Williamson came to Buckie. They bought a house from Alex Lamb for £152, and the following July opened a permanent china shop at 11 Main Street. This was in the "doon-the-brae" area of Nether Buckie, which was renamed Buckpool not long after they arrived. In addition to workaday plates, cups and saucers, they also sold fine china, crystal and stoneware, imported from England, France and Germany. Peter was now anxious to distance himself from his former occupation as a hawker and to be seen as a respected merchant. An advertisement for the shop in the *Banffshire Advertiser* of 2nd July



Bridgend and Buckpool Harbour.

By kind permission of Barbara J. Starmans



*Peter's grave in St Peter's
Aberdeen.*

Photo: J. Poole

1885 stated emphatically that, "This establishment has no connection with Hawkers whomsoever". Business was good, enabling the Williamsons to purchase the properties at 5, 7 and 9 Main Street. In November 1887 they paid £31 for the cargo of the wrecked ketch Mellona, which included coals, fireclay water pipes, sails and nets.

Peter's aversion to being called a hawker resulted in a court appearance in October 1895. Drunk as a lord, he had met Portgordon man Alex Morrison in the street. After some reasonably affable exchanges, Morrison, who had recently become a barber, sneeringly said the work "was as good as a hawker in any way". This so infuriated the proud shopkeeper that he lashed out at Morrison, cutting his lip. Peter was fined.

The 1901 Census shows John Williamson (42), a storeman, his wife Margaret (38) and their nine children living at 11 Main Street. At 9a were Thomas Williamson (39), a horse dealer, wife Jane (34) and their six children. Incidentally, their neighbour at no. 13 had been Sandy Hepburn (1819–1909), my maternal great-grandfather³. My grandfather, John Hepburn, was also born there in 1869.

There was tragedy on 30th October 1902 when Peter's daughter, Catherine Mackay and her six sons, boarded the Aberdeen train at Buckie station. One of the boys went missing during the journey.

Once the train stopped at Inch, a search party made their way back down the line to find the lad's body. He was still alive but only survived a few minutes.

At the beginning of 1910, Peter Williamson was in poor health and decided to retire. An advertisement in *The Scotsman* on 8th January read: "For sale, by private bargain, the business presently carried on at 9 and 11 Main Street, and at Bridge End, Buckie by Mr Peter Williamson. For the past 25 years, Mr Williamson has carried on a successful business as China Merchant, General Dealer and Broker. There has also been a good turnover through hired hawkers. Mr Williamson is retiring owing to failing health".

There were either no interested parties, or the sale was withdrawn, as the business continued under the managership of his daughter Charlotte Harler. Peter died on 24th July 1915. An obituary in the *Banffshire Advertiser*, entitled "Death of an Octogenarian", stated that: "The death took place at Buckie on Saturday of Mr Peter Williamson in his 82nd year. Mr Williamson came to Buckie many years ago, where he built up a large business as a merchant. He was well known at markets in Aberdeenshire and Banffshire, and enjoyed the respect and esteem of many patrons. He is survived by his wife and a large family".

Peter left £8,631 in his will, a considerable sum in those days. His executors were charged with paying his debts and funeral expenses, including the cost of a memorial stone. Peter left the contents of his house in Main Street to his daughter Charlotte and directed his executors to sell his business. His wife Jane was to have use of the income of his estate for her lifetime, and legacies were to be distributed among his many children after her death. She died on 16th February 1918 at the height of the influenza pandemic, aged 86.

Sources:

With grateful thanks to Barbara J. Starmans of Ontario, Canada and her valuable website *The Social Historian*. Quotations in this article come from her detailed article, "No Connection With Any Hawkers".

The full link is: <https://www.thesocialhistorian.com/19th-century-occupations>.

Stuart West, Aberdeen

³ West, Stuart, "The Last Harbour-Master", *Journal* 93 (November 2004), p.17.

SOCIETY MEETINGS AND REPORTS

Aberdeen Meetings

Nicola Mills: Episcopal Records of Aberdeen and Orkney Diocese

17th January 2026

The Society welcomed Nicola Mills as the speaker at our January talk in Aberdeen. Nicola is a freelance archivist and Latin translator based in North-East Scotland. Having specialised in medical and military archives, she has recently also worked for a number of distilleries and landed estates. She teaches Latin on the Dundee archives course, has been the Provincial Records Officer for the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) for twelve years, and acting Diocesan Archivist for the diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney for the last three years. She had already prepared the ground by giving us an excellent introduction to the topic⁴. In this talk she was able to flesh out some of the stories behind the development of the Episcopal Church in the area and how it was affected by the response to Jacobitism.

The SEC covers all of Scotland and is divided into seven dioceses, each with its own bishop, dean, and at least one cathedral with a provost in charge. The current dioceses are Argyll & the Isles, Brechin, Edinburgh, Glasgow & Galloway, Moray, Ross & Caithness, St Andrews, Dunkeld & Dunblane, and of course Aberdeen & Orkney, which includes Shetland.

The origins of the SEC lie in the Reformation, when both Episcopalians and Presbyterians broke away from the Roman Catholic church. Each was known at different times as the Church of Scotland, the name that now applies to the main Presbyterian church.

Presbyterianism was established as the Church of Scotland and the Pope's authority was abolished by the Scottish Parliament in 1560, but in reality there were more adherents to an Episcopal church than to the Presbyterian church. Many clan chiefs, for example in Buchan, persisted in something more like the old ways. King James VI restored full episcopacy in 1610. After the Jacobite wars, Episcopalians were subjected to the Penal Laws, which greatly restricted their ability to worship or gather in any numbers, or to build their own buildings. Often the clergy were arrested and the buildings where they had led worship were burned down – you may know the painting by George Washington Brownlow of a priest carrying out baptisms from the window of the Stonehaven tolbooth prison. As a kind of consolation, Qualified Chapels sprang up, including St Paul's in Aberdeen. They were Episcopalian in name and used the English prayer book, but were loyal to King George. The Penal Laws were finally lifted in 1792 (though they remained for Roman Catholics until 1829).

The church grew stronger during the 19th century and gradually returned to ornament and ritual. Though sometimes referred to as the “English” church, the SEC is completely separate, with its own history and development. This is despite the fact that for a time all SEC clergy were required to have a degree from Oxford or Cambridge (to discourage the dissemination of Jacobite political sympathies).

The diocese of Aberdeen was united with that of Orkney (including Shetland), in 1865 and now comprises around 40 charges [parishes] that cover from Cove Bay south of Aberdeen up and around the coast to Buckie in the north, and inland as far as Braemar and Inch. Then we skip over the diocese of Moray, Ross & Caithness to claim the Northern Isles. Over the years there have been 118 charges in total, including three convents, at least two nursing homes, chapels in various castles and stately homes, churches in new housing developments, Victorian churches, chaplaincies in oil fields and RAF bases.

The cathedral is St Andrew's Chapel, Aberdeen, whose congregation started off with John Skinner in Longacre, then moved to a meeting house behind the tolbooth in 1723. They moved to Concert Close, and then to Guestrow where their building burned down in 1746.

⁴ *Journal 176 (November 2025) pp. 17–18.*

In 1816 the congregation opened a new building in King Street. Its development was greatly aided by James Chivas, of Chivas Brothers, whose original grocer's shop was across the road. He acted as business officer for the church and churchwarden [session clerk]. The church became the diocese's cathedral in 1914. American churches funded a heraldic ceiling on the north side of the building in the 1930s. The dedication service for the ceiling was attended by the American ambassador of the day, Joseph Kennedy, and his secretary at the time, one John F. Kennedy. The records of this charge are probably the best in the diocese, and are held at Aberdeen University Special Collections.

Outside the city, there is a generous scattering of the other eighteen churches from the early period. There were long-established congregations in Banff, Buckie, Portsoy (sometimes known as New Durn, and closed around 2016), and Cruden Bay, which was very much under the protection of the Earls of Errol.

Of the charges still functioning, Ellon is perhaps the one with the best records, and has been long linked with Cruden Bay. Ellon also oversaw a number of other smaller congregations through the years. Longside, though diminished now, has long been a seat of Episcopalianism. The birthplace of John Skinner, it was the charge of his father, also John Skinner, best known as the author of the song "Tullochgorum".

The chapels in big houses and castles were often served by local Episcopalian priests, since the families were often English or the lairds had been educated in England. Thus, for example, the Forbes Irvines in Drum Castle were served from Banchory. These chapels sometimes had their own registers, but more often their services were recorded in the registers of the charge that served them. Other chapels had only occasional services or had chaplains appointed: the Earl of Fife brought his own chaplains to Mar Lodge. Haddo House chapel was set up by the first Marquess of Aberdeen as an ecumenical chapel, and came under an Episcopalian wing from 1964 at the time of June, Lady Aberdeen (an Englishwoman married to the 4th Marquess).

There have also been religious communities in the diocese like St Margaret's Convent on the Spital in Aberdeen, which was established by the arrival of one sister from the mother house in East Grinstead in 1862. The purpose was to serve the poor of the Spital and Gallowgate areas, at that time mostly slums. The sisters of the convent worked amongst the poor: the first sister to die contracted typhus while nursing in Peterhead, and is buried in St Machar's churchyard. The convent later ran a children's home and home for young mothers, and later again turned their services to running an old people's home, all on the Spital. The convent was closed at the death of the last Reverend Mother in 2002.

Another community, the House of Bethany, began as the Community of St Mary and St John in Leith, moved to Perth, then came to Cove in 1873, where the sisters ministered to the fishermen. It moved to the Hardgate in 1876 and ran a girls' orphanage, providing training for domestic work. The orphanage was closed in 1954, and the foundation itself closed in 1980.

New churches or missions were set up in response to 20th century population changes, mostly in Aberdeen itself, such as All Saints' Hilton, built in the 1930s. Aberdeenshire examples include, the mission in Kemnay (1912) which continues to exist as St Anne's Church. A mission existed in New Deer from 1900 to 1962 and St Margaret's, Peterhead, was set up by Peterhead in 1911, closing in 1928.

The diocese also ran schools, notably at Monymusk, Errol, Tillymorgan (now Fisherford), and St Andrew's, Aberdeen. All these were eventually handed over to the local authority which now holds all their records.

Regarding records, much was destroyed during the difficult years of the 18th century. That aside, what you can normally expect to find is similar to those for your local parish church.

Registers of baptisms, marriages, burials and confirmations appear, as well as registers of services. There are usually some financial records, including pew rents, clergy sustentation forms from when clergy were paid centrally, land records, and some correspondence. Very occasionally there are lair records, mostly for the rural charges.

In this diocese, many churches still hold their own records but the main archive is in Aberdeen University Special Collections, including those previously held in Aberdeen City Archives. Records for the Northern Isles are held in Orkney Library & Archives and in Shetland Archives. For further reading, Nicola recommended David Bertie's *Scottish Episcopal Clergy*. Published by T & T Clark in Edinburgh in 2000. It is an excellent reference book, which provides biographies of the clergy right up to that year and brief histories of the various charges.

Journal team

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Fiona Musk: The Doctor Will See Your Ancestor Now

21st February 2026

Fiona Musk is Archivist with Grampian Health Board, having worked previously with Aberdeen City and Shire Archives. She gave us a fascinating talk about the records held by the Grampian Health Board Archive with lots of information about the type of records held and the sort of information family-historians might be able to access. The archive papers are held within the Sir Duncan Rice Library at University of Aberdeen.

Prior to 1948 hospitals were all independent so the volume and type of records held for each may vary. A hospital admission record may help you find out information about your relatives prior to the introduction of statutory registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths. These records can also provide a fuller picture of the social history of the time.

The type of records may vary as will the amount of information they hold. Surviving records may include minute books, case notes, financial records, annual reports, maps, plans and photographs. A good way to begin can be to search first through Scottish Indexes, especially when trying to trace Poor Law or Mental Asylum admissions.

A four-volume index of deaths, *Aberdeen Royal Infirmary Deaths Recorded 1743–1897*, has been published by the ANESFHS. It is worth remembering that as well as local folk, this record may include people from other areas who happened to be in Aberdeen when they became ill. Unfortunately the number of admissions is too great to make it feasible to create an index. However some name indexes do exist for individual institutions, such as admissions to Kingseat Hospital (1904–22), Stonehaven Poorhouse Admissions (1867–1917) and Aberdeen Royal Lunatic Asylum admissions (1800–1924). There are more to come later in 2026 and the University website (<https://calm.abdn.ac.uk/archives>) carries a full list. The records are not accessible digitally but the index tells you what is available.



Grampian Health Board records.
Photo: Grampian Health Board

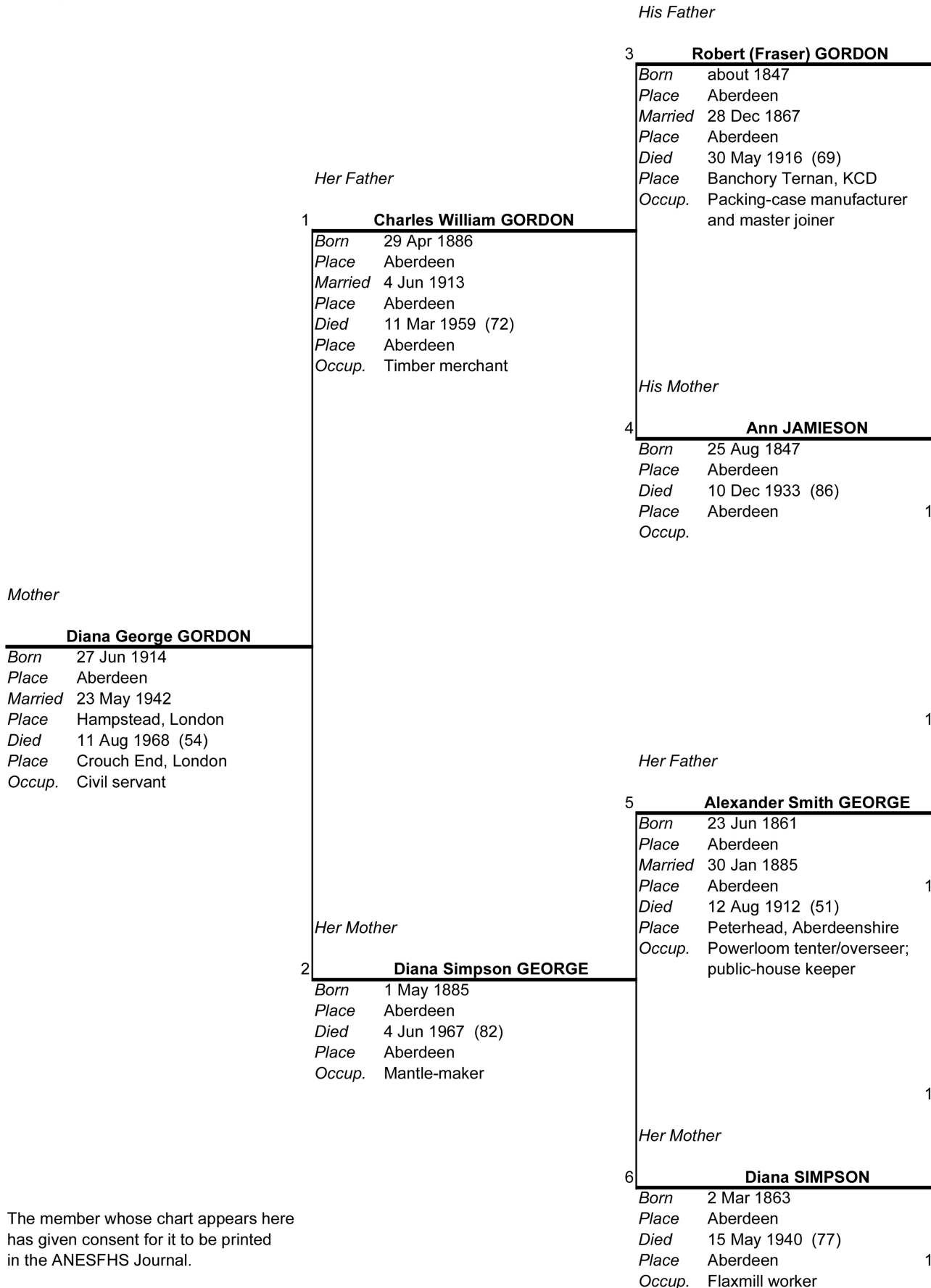
The National Records at Kew has a list of all the hospital record sets available across the country (search for “hospital records” on <https://www.data.gov.uk>).

You can view the Grampian records in person by visiting Wolfson Research Room at the University – please do check in advance if the records you wants to see are available – and if you can’t attend in person, you can email Fiona with your request at gram.archives@nhs.scot.

Case notes tend to be less informative than admission notes, except those from the mental health asylums, where there can be a lot of fascinating detail. For instance, the notes

Record of Ancestors

Member No.: 21181
Chart updated: 2023



7	James GORDON		15	John GORDON			
	<i>Born</i>	about 1816		<i>Born</i>	? 17 Oct 1773	<i>Place</i>	Rayne, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Place</i>	Auchterless, ABD		<i>Married</i>	7 Jul 1807	<i>Place</i>	Rayne, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Married</i>	15 Oct 1836		<i>Died</i>	? 1840/1845	<i>Place</i>	Auchterless, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Place</i>	Fyvie, Aberdeenshire		<i>Occup.</i>		<i>Occup.</i>	Carpenter
8	Christian FRASER		16	Agnes (Anna) CLARK			
	<i>Born</i>	about 1818		<i>Born</i>	22 Jan 1782	<i>Place</i>	Culsalmond, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Place</i>	Fyvie, Aberdeenshire		<i>Died</i>	?	<i>Place</i>	
	<i>Died</i>	2 Mar 1881 (63)		<i>Occup.</i>		<i>Occup.</i>	
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen					
9	Andrew JAM(I)ESON		17	Robert FRASER			
	<i>Born</i>	1 Jul 1799		<i>Born</i>	23 Apr 1767	<i>Place</i>	Methlick, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Place</i>	Foveran, Aberdeenshire		<i>Married</i>	10 Jun 1800	<i>Place</i>	Fyvie, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Married</i>	3 Jul 1827		<i>Died</i>	3 Jan 1859 (91)	<i>Place</i>	Fyvie, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Occup.</i>		<i>Occup.</i>	Farmer
0	Margaret CHAP(P)EL		18	Helen DURNO			
	<i>Born</i>	17 Aug 1800		<i>Born</i>	about 1775	<i>Place</i>	Fyvie, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Place</i>	Drumoak, Aberdeenshire		<i>Died</i>	16 May 1864 (89)	<i>Place</i>	Fyvie, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Died</i>	22 May 1871 (70)		<i>Occup.</i>		<i>Occup.</i>	
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen					
1	John GEORGE		19	George JAMESON			
	<i>Born</i>	15 Feb 1819		<i>Born</i>	? about 1780	<i>Place</i>	Ellon, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Married</i>	23 Mar 1799	<i>Place</i>	Foveran, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Married</i>	2 Feb 1844		<i>Died</i>	19 Sep 1814 (34)	<i>Place</i>	Foveran, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Occup.</i>		<i>Occup.</i>	Salmon fisherman/innkeeper
2	Christian/Christina SMITH		20	Isabel GRAY			
	<i>Born</i>	about 1822		<i>Born</i>	about 1780	<i>Place</i>	Foveran, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Died</i>	27 May 1856 (76)	<i>Place</i>	Foveran, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Died</i>	1 Oct 1887 (65)		<i>Occup.</i>		<i>Occup.</i>	
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen					
3	George SIMPSON		21	John CHAP(P)EL			
	<i>Born</i>	? 1800/5		<i>Born</i>	? about 1774	<i>Place</i>	Drumoak, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Married</i>	2 Sep 1798	<i>Place</i>	Drumoak, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Married</i>	20 Jul 1860 [2nd wife]		<i>Died</i>	18 Jun 1858 (84)	<i>Place</i>	Drumoak, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Occup.</i>		<i>Occup.</i>	Crofter
4	Catherine CRICHTON		22	Christian GIBBON			
	<i>Born</i>	about 1836		<i>Born</i>	?	<i>Place</i>	Drumoak, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Died</i>	by 1841	<i>Place</i>	Drumoak, Aberdeenshire
	<i>Died</i>	13 Feb 1878 (41)		<i>Occup.</i>		<i>Occup.</i>	
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen					
5	John GEORGE		23	John GEORGE			
	<i>Born</i>	15 Feb 1819		<i>Born</i>		<i>Place</i>	
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Married</i>	5 Dec 1812	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen
	<i>Married</i>	2 Feb 1844		<i>Died</i>		<i>Place</i>	
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Occup.</i>		<i>Occup.</i>	Master baker/carter
6	Christian/Christina SMITH		24	Elspet SIM			
	<i>Born</i>	about 1822		<i>Born</i>	? 9 Apr 1780	<i>Place</i>	Logie Buchan, ABD
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Died</i>		<i>Place</i>	
	<i>Died</i>	1 Oct 1887 (65)		<i>Occup.</i>		<i>Occup.</i>	
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen					
7	George SIMPSON		25	Robert SMITH			
	<i>Born</i>	? 1800/5		<i>Born</i>	25 Apr 1781	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Married</i>	21 Jun 1806	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen
	<i>Married</i>	20 Jul 1860 [2nd wife]		<i>Died</i>	2 Mar 1867 (85)	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Occup.</i>		<i>Occup.</i>	Blacksmith
8	Catherine CRICHTON		26	Elizabeth TAYLOR			
	<i>Born</i>	about 1836		<i>Born</i>	? 1780/1	<i>Place</i>	
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Died</i>	21 Feb 1868	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen
	<i>Died</i>	13 Feb 1878 (41)		<i>Occup.</i>		<i>Occup.</i>	
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen					
9	George SIMPSON		27	George SIMPSON			
	<i>Born</i>	? 1800/5		<i>Born</i>	? 1 Sep 1786	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Married</i>	26 Jul 1804	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen
	<i>Married</i>	20 Jul 1860 [2nd wife]		<i>Died</i>		<i>Place</i>	
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Occup.</i>		<i>Occup.</i>	
0	Catherine CRICHTON		28	Margaret ROBERTSON			
	<i>Born</i>	about 1836		<i>Born</i>	? 15 Nov 1778	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Died</i>		<i>Place</i>	
	<i>Died</i>	13 Feb 1878 (41)		<i>Occup.</i>		<i>Occup.</i>	
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen					
1	John GEORGE		29	? CRICHTON			
	<i>Born</i>	about 1836		<i>Born</i>		<i>Place</i>	
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Married</i>	[not m.]	<i>Place</i>	
	<i>Died</i>	13 Feb 1878 (41)		<i>Died</i>		<i>Place</i>	
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Occup.</i>		<i>Occup.</i>	
2	John GEORGE		30	Jane GLENNIE			
	<i>Born</i>	about 1836		<i>Born</i>	? 1816	<i>Place</i>	England
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen		<i>Died</i>	5 Nov 1885	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen
	<i>Died</i>	13 Feb 1878 (41)		<i>Occup.</i>		<i>Occup.</i>	
	<i>Place</i>	Aberdeen					

relating to Captain John Dick included examples of music and French poetry the patient had created. One of the more unusual items is the Wine Record for the Stephen Cottage Hospital, which lists the wine administered to patients ... for medicinal purposes, of course!

Fiona then gave some detailed examples of requests that had come in and the kind of information the archive was able to help identify. This included a request concerning the death of Mary Ann Cooper who was admitted with burns in November 1896. It turned out that she and a dozen or so other individuals had been injured when fire swept through the People's Palace Theatre in Bridge Place, Aberdeen. Another detailed story was that of Robert Galashan, who spent almost half his life in hospital being treated for mental health problems.

When trying to consult health records, it is important to remember that each hospital will have different records; that the same type of records may not survive for each hospital; that they are rarely indexed; that there may be restrictions on access, for example to records less than 100 years old. On the other hand, medical records can provide information on people who may not appear anywhere else. But, you should be prepared for surprises.

Journal team

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Moray/Banff Group Report

Having spent many meetings on using the usual run of websites and other familiar resources, we decided to devote our February meeting to the topic of “Try something new, try something different!”. The relatively new option of “Full text search” on the FamilySearch website had moved from its rather obscure Family Search Labs section to the main search links and had broken down two long-standing brick walls for me, thus inspiring the step into new territory. We also explored websites such as the Guild of One Name Studies, The Gazette, Curious Fox, Grace's Guide to British Industrial History, second-hand books at the world-wide Advanced Book Exchange, various websites that show street names that have changed, and other promising sources.

During the February meeting the talk had also drifted to the possibilities of using DNA so it was decided to have this as the topic for our March meeting. Preparation for this soon indicated that we had got more material than we could make the most of in the course of just one meeting so it was decided to spread the topic across two sessions. In Part One, held in March, Helen Taylor gave us an excellent talk, guiding us through ways of using our DNA matches to create Custom Groups, and using the LEEDS method⁵ to find our missing ancestors. She also provided very useful handouts that we could refer to when tackling these tasks.

After various email exchanges with Elgin Library, we were finally able to book the new Activities Room for our April meeting. It was lovely to be back face-to-face with our local members after so many months without this and we used this meeting to catch up with all our family history news. Some members had demolished brick walls in the meantime while most of us had inevitably acquired some new ones. We discussed options for future topics and even went as far as speculating about a date for our Christmas Lunch!

We shall now hopefully be able to return to our system of alternating face-to-face meetings with our Zoom meetings. Keep an eye on the Events page of the Society website for information.

moray.banff@anesfhs.org.uk

Mary Evans, Elgin

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⁵ See <https://www.danaleeds.com/the-leeds-method>

Edinburgh Group

Ken Nisbet: British and Commonwealth Prisoners of War (WW1 & 2)

24th January 2026

I grew up in the 1960s watching films on the television like *The Great Escape* and *Bridge on the River Kwai* and there were the series like *Colditz* and *Tenko*. The Geneva Convention was often mentioned in these, along with the suggestion that the Germans ignored it when it came to British Special forces, and that the Japanese just ignored it for everyone.

In fact, the main treaty regarding Prisoners of War (POWs) was the Hague Convention of 1899 and in particular Article III: Convention with the respect to the laws and custom of laws of war on Land. It specified how Prisoners of War should be treated and superseded all earlier treaties.



Ken Nisbet

Photo: S. Low

Prisoners of War were to be allowed to return to their home country at the end of a conflict and not be ransomed. The right of parole was commonly used for officers during the wars of the 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries (e.g. the Napoleonic Wars and American Civil War) but was not used in 20th century conflicts.

Updated in 1907, it also specified that officers were not expected to work and that any work done by prisoners should not be in support of the war effort or industries. For example, prisoners should not be used to build trenches or work in munition factories. Prisoners should not be kept in the front line but were to be removed to a place of safety and also get the same level of food as was provided to the host troops.

The Geneva Convention of Prisoners of War was signed at Geneva 27th July 1929 and came into effect on 19th June 1931. Importantly Germany, not then under a Nazi government, signed up to it but Japan did not. It did not replace the Hague Convention but amended and upgraded it. The most important innovations consisted in the prohibition of reprisals and collective penalties (for example stopping food rations if one prisoner escaped), the organisation of prisoners, and the designation by prisoners of representatives.

So how do you know your relative was prisoner of war? You may have learned about them from family stories or articles in local newspapers. If the individual died as a prisoner of war it may be mentioned on a family headstone.

1914–18: Medal cards and Medal rolls will rarely identify that an individual was a POW. Where service records survive they will do so. They will also indicate if an individual was repatriated to the United Kingdom due to their injuries. The main countries through which service personnel were repatriated were the Netherlands and Switzerland. The service record will indicate the date of capture and the date of reparation. For circumstances of capture, unit war diaries and histories should describe any actions that pertain to an individual's situation.

Red Cross records, covering both officers and other ranks can be found easily by searching at <https://grandeguerre.icrc.org>. Officer files at the National Archives often include reports on the circumstances of their capture. Red Cross records are also now available on Findmypast, and newspapers may note individuals who were prisoners of war.

I would recommend using Findmypast rather than the Red Cross site as it easier to search. It is important to note the records that survive refer to those captured by the German army not those captured by the Austrian army in Italy, the Bulgarian army in Salonika and Turkish army in Gallipoli and the Middle East.

Although British forces were taken as prisoners throughout the war, the largest number of

prisoners were taken in the German campaigns from March to May 1918. Because of the Allied Blockade many soldiers taken prisoner in 1918 suffered badly from malnutrition, as did the German civilian population, and did not fully recover. One of these was my great-grandfather's younger brother Frederick Burgdorf Macrae, a private in the 15th (Provost's Battalion) Royal Scot's. Fred as he was known never recovered from his treatment both physically and mentally.

Fred's Red Cross record shows his service number and unit (in this case down to platoon level); his next of kin; that he was unwounded when captured; that it was not until 4th September 1918 that his mother was advised he was in the POW camp at Parchim. An important point to note is that these records will not indicate if an individual is sent to a sub camp for work purposes.

Service personnel who died whilst they were prisoners of war will be commemorated by Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC). If CWGC records show your relative as a Great War casualty who is buried in Germany and died before 11th November 1918, then he was almost certainly a POW.

1939–45: For WWII Prisoners of Wars, you will find records that were created by the War Office and both German and Japan forces when they administered the prisoners of war they had captured. You will find some records are on Ancestry and Findmypast and some that are held by UK National Archives and not yet online. Both Ancestry and Findmypast have images of original casualty lists which indicate if an individual was taken a POW and you must look at both sites for an individual.

Ancestry is the unique source for a collection called UK and Allied Countries, World War II Liberated Prisoner of War Questionnaires, 1945–46. Every prisoner of war who was released, whatever their rank, was requested to complete the questionnaire, but not all did so. Fortunately, Ancestry has digital images of the original documents, and they include those for prisoners taken by the Germans and Japanese. As well as the normal sections on identity and rank there are questions on whether the individual had received training on how to behave when captured, whether they had tried to escape or carry out acts of sabotage, and how they were treated by their captors, including what work they were asked to do and how any illnesses or injuries were treated. They were also asked to identify any collaborators and any examples of bad treatment that would count as war crimes.

For personnel imprisoned by the Germans, UK National Archives has the cards created by the German Armed Forces in WO416, but these are currently not available online to view.

If you are researching a relative taken prisoner by the Japanese, Ancestry has images of the Japanese Index Cards of Allied POWs 1942–47 (WO345) in its World War II Allied Prisoners of War, 1939–1945 collection.

All in all another comprehensive session from this popular speaker.

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Edinburgh group

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Chris Paton: Researching Your House

28th March 2026

We always look forward to a visit from Chris Paton, a highly engaging and informative speaker, so we were very disappointed when he told us he was no longer available to speak to our Edinburgh group in March. However, technology saved the day, and Chris gamely undertook to record his talk for us in advance. Ken Nisbet volunteered to deal with any questions after the talk, so we had a wonderful “two-for-one” event that gave members a splendid introduction to the resources available and steps to take in researching the background of your Scottish home.

Chris set out a clear plan, covering how to find out who had lived there previously, how to trace details about the building, finding out about the ownership and inheritance history of the building, and concluded with an excellent case study that demonstrated how to pull these resources together.

He began by itemising the sorts of records, some of which are annual, that provide information in between census years. These include Valuation Rolls (1855–1989) many of which are available on Scotland's People. They list heads of household and the owners (feudal superiors) and details of rents paid. Around 700 Street and Post Office directories (1770–1940s) are available on the website of the National Libraries of Scotland (NLS) and around 1,000 are available on Internet Archive (<https://archive.org>). Electoral Registers are now available on Findmypast (FMP) and Ancestry and in local libraries. Ancestry also has a collection of British phonebooks covering 1880–1984.

The 1841 Census was the first one to list all individuals staying in a property. As most members are aware, census information is currently only publicly available for those up to and including 1921. They are a source not only of names of householders but also contain other information that is valuable from a house history point of view. The transcribed versions of the census returns available on genealogy sites often miss out additional information, such as the number of rooms with one or more windows (1891). This gives an idea of the scale of the house. One other advantage of looking at the original facsimile entries on Scotland's People is that you occasionally find extra notes added by the enumerator, explaining the layout or division of properties.

It is harder to get information for the earlier periods. Rural estates records do exist but rarely list inhabitants or specific habitations and may only refer to a fermtoun which will consist of several cottages and cottar families clustered together.

However, you may be lucky and find lots of unexpected details. Chris showed us a rental record for Arntully in 1801. He was able to find out that Peter Henderson had taken out a 19-year lease of property in 1793, while a record from 1801 showed the annual rent, made up of coal, hens and money!

Forfeited Estates papers cover lands seized mainly after the Jacobite risings. Some information for the 1745 rising is available in print: *Statistics of the Annexed Estates 1755–1756* and *Reports on the Annexed Estates 1755–1769* (HMSO Edinburgh, 1973). These can be helpful in setting out how many families live on the estate and the stock levels and amount of crops sown. This can give us quite a lot of information about life in the mid-1700s. Chris looked at an entry from the 1720s which gave him a general location for his family and even included information about whether they could read etc. This kind of local

background information is also available in the first (1790s) and second *Statistical Accounts*, compiled in the 1790s and 1835–45 respectively. The individual parish reports usually say who the principal proprietors were in each area, as do the Ratable Value records on Scotland's People.

Maps, available at the NLS (<https://maps.nls.uk>), also show how settlements developed over time and can show named farms, which is useful for pinpointing rural ancestors. In particular Chris recommended Charles Goad's fire insurance maps of Scottish towns, compiled in the 1980s to 1940s for fire insurance purposes. It gives quite useful detail about the configuration of buildings.

The Inland Revenue Survey Maps and Fields Books were created between 1910 and 1915. They collated information on ownership, tenants, insurance, ratings (where known), past sales etc. There is a helpful guide on the NRS website: just type "Field Books" into the search engine. They have been digitised but you will need an archivist to help you navigate the material.

A good resource, particularly for Edinburgh folk, is the Dean of Guild Records, available on <https://oldedinburghclub.org.uk>. Essentially these are planning permission records for the burgh. Other burghs may have similar collections. The Edinburgh collection has information from the 1790s, including digitised maps.

The online platform of Historic Environment Scotland is now called Trove, and draws together many resources that were previously dispersed across various sites. In particular the collection of aerial photographs and photographs of buildings formerly hosted on Canmore can be found here.

Newspapers are also a tremendous resource where you may find adverts for the sale or lease of the property you are interested in.

Tracing ownership can be complicated although a range of resources is available. Technically a feudal system of land tenure existed up until 2004, when the Abolition of Feudal Tenure (Scotland) Act 2004 was introduced. It was a sort of pyramid system by which subordinate feu holders owed money or obligations to a superior, ultimately reporting to the Crown.

Transfer of landed property was recorded in Sasines and the NRS contains registers for transactions going back to 1599 in Secretary's Register 1599–1609; Register of Sasines 1617–1868; General Register 1869–1979. Transfers prior to 1979 are covered in Sasines although you can order search sheets for the period 1870 to 1979 from Registers of Scotland. These were replaced by the Land Register in 1979 and land register title plans and sheets for properties and transactions from this period onwards can be found at Registers of Scotland (<https://www.ros.gov.uk>).

Summary lists or "Abridgements" provide a more easily searchable way into the sasines. Once again there is a handy guide on the NRS website (<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk>). Search for "sasines" on the learning and events pages. Inheritance for large properties wasn't simply regulated by Wills and the register of Sasines also contains information about who was recognised (serviced) as heir after the landowner died.

Chris concluded with a case study that used many of these resources to put together a history of Drumellan House in Ayrshire. This was no mean feat as it was previously called Machriemore, Myremiln and Barmarloch. Altogether it was a fascinating session and we are grateful to Chris for the lively presentation he put together and for the comprehensive handout he provided to go along with it. If you missed the talk and would like a copy of the handout, please email edinburgh@anesfhs.org.uk.

Graham Robertson's Mystery Object



Can you guess what this curious object might be?

We hope it won't keep you up at nights!

As usual you will find Graham's answer tucked away later in this issue.

—oOo—

Glasgow Group

Gavin Bell: One Family's Belated Rural Exodus

31st January 2026

Gavin's presentation described how and why the balance of the population of Scotland flipped around, 80%–20%, from country to town in 200 years. His detailed and fact-filled talk explained the background to the occasions when his Third family ancestors tried to leave the land. Gavin provided evidence that went beyond basic birth, marriage, death information and related events in his personal family story to national and global events and how this affected them. It was a theme many of us recognised as applying to our own families.

To set the scene Gavin spoke about the 1696 *List of Pollable Persons within the Shire of Aberdeen*, which has been transcribed and indexed and published by parish by ANESFHS. This record showed the interdependence of country people and their landowners. Agricultural workers generally paid rent in goods and labour in a near cashless society. About one hundred years later, in the 1790s, the *First Statistical Account* did not name our ancestors but gave a good view of their economic life in the country. It showed life had changed only a little from 1696 with bondage to landowners and common grazing rights still predominant.

In the late 1700's the Agricultural Revolution began. It made a significant improvement to the output of food but had an unsettling effect on the people. Common land for grazing disappeared. Neeps (swede turnips) were introduced! Small scale hand-to-mouth subsistence farming was replaced by farms as we know them now, and farm labourers were employed and paid as required in short "fees" (contracts). The uncertainty and insecurity of employment created a body of itinerant workers, and their families, moving frequently from place to place, always in fear of illness or unemployment which would force them to rely on welfare from their parish of settlement. Moving to more settled employment in towns where factories and services provided well paid regular work seemed a good opportunity.

For others the lure of the King's Shilling drew them away to military service which, as well as a regular income, *could* also provide a pension dependent on service, conduct, illness, disease or combat injuries. Unfortunately, Gavin's soldier ancestor was discharged back to agriculture, unfit, with no good conduct badges, and therefore no pension.

The vast estates of the landed gentry provided regular employment for some, with opportunities to climb the employment ladder by moving around Great Britain, from one of their employer's estates to another. This explains why some ancestors can be found a long distance from their roots.

The economic slump of the late 1800s forced many of those who had remained in agriculture in the North-East to head for the towns. Although North-East farmers fared better than the rest of Great Britain, foreign competition from Australia, New Zealand and South America undercut food prices. Free trade policy bolstered this and nature, in the form of bad weather and poor harvests, added another nail in the coffin of rural employment.

Farm workers found jobs quite easily in towns as their reputation for being hardworking and reliable went before them.

Gavin's talk was fascinating. It was brim full of detail and patterns of living which many of us could recognise in our own families. The visual elements were excellent and Gavin's explanation of what each showed was illuminating and thought provoking.

There were interesting questions and discussion afterwards. No doubt there will be many of our group looking at their family history with a new light. As always there were ideas about new resources to explore.

The next meeting of our Glasgow Group is on Saturday 30th May and will continue with the "Rural Exodus" theme from our January Zoom meeting. May is traditionally our Members' Day when we encourage members to share their experiences and knowledge. Have you been inspired? Whether or not your ancestors moved from country to town, you will be most welcome. Please note this is an in-person-only meeting, but a wee email to glasgow@anesfhs.org.uk would be appreciated so that we can ensure sufficient chairs and refreshments.

Kate Clark, for Glasgow Group

—oOo—

Southern Ontario Group

Janet Few: Ancestors on the Margins – Tracing Misfortunate Ancestors

28th February 2026

Our group was fortunate to have speaker Janet Few presenting on this topic. Janet is an experienced and well-known British family, social and community historian who has lectured at conferences across the English-speaking world. She has also written many books, including *Tracing Your Marginalised Ancestors: A Guide for Family Historians* (published by Pen & Sword Books).

Janet had six sub-headings for her presentation: Asylum Inmates, The Sick, The Poor, Lawbreakers, Illegitimacy and Prostitutes. She stressed the importance of handling these sensitive topics with respect and understanding, noting that many ancestors faced multiple forms of discrimination. Janet provided examples of how to find records of ancestors in asylums, including census data, death certificates, newspapers, military records and asylum records themselves. She highlighted the availability of many records online through platforms like Ancestry and Findmypast.

Janet discussed various historical records related to the physically and mentally sick, including asylum registers, hospital records and Medical Officer of Health reports. She also highlighted the importance of criminal registers, court records, newspapers and specific databases like Scotland's Criminal Database on <https://www.scottishindexes.com>.

She also presented a detailed overview of illegitimate births and related historical records, including the impact of Bastardy legislation from 1733 to 1834 and the subsequent challenges in tracing these ancestors.

Janet had a wealth of resources for each of these topics that were made available to all online Zoom meeting participants.

Janet's website is found at <https://thehistoryinterpreter.com> should anyone want to learn more about her work and her upcoming speaking engagements.

ontario@anesfhs.org.uk Susan Brouwer, co-organizing with Rod Coates and David Joiner

—oOo—

Australia and New Zealand Group

David Stephen: Tips and Tricks for Using Scotland's People

7th March 2026

David Stephen's presentation was enjoyed by 26 participants from across the globe. David told us that he had based his session on an earlier talk by Ken Nisbet which he had found very useful. David used his own Stephen family research to demonstrate various tips for finding sources on the Scotland's People website.

Initially, David introduced us to the various parts of the website, beginning with the "Search the Records" option that brings up further sections on People, Places, Virtual Volumes, Maps and Photos and an Image library.

David explained that some resources on the site are available for free but that viewing the actual records requires the user to purchase credits, which can then be used over a two-year period which is extended each time you make a further purchase. Viewing Old Parish Baptism records and Statutory records, post 1855 costs 6 credits per record. Searches can be saved so that you need not repeat the same search. We saw how documents that have been purchased using credits can be downloaded and stored online in your account. The system marks which records you have already paid for so that you don't have to pay to view them again.

David also detailed how you can purchase official certificates through the site, which is useful for those who now need to get a British passport before they can visit the UK. He explained that a certificate costs £12 and takes about 3 weeks to get to Australia. A day ticket for those able to visit in person costs £15 and is well worth the investment as you can view records, including contemporary ones, without paying further credits. There is a small charge if you want to make photocopies. The tremendous resources available include:

Image library

Useful for getting a sense of daily life, including crofting, ecclesiastical, fishing,

Maps and Plans

This section is very helpful when trying to track down where your ancestors lived. It is classified by shire, with parishes listed. There's a variety of resources, including maps showing the farms houses in each parish.

Virtual volumes

The Virtual Volumes section gives access to the Kirk Session minutes and to the Ordnance Survey name books which were produced in the mid-1800s. Surveyors went round and consulted local people about place names. These records enable you to locate farms, local topographical features and prominent places. David's handy tip was to jump to the last page of the volume you are using where there is an index page, which makes a helpful search tool.

Among the other records on the site you will find 17th–19th century tax rolls, prison records, migration records, poor relief and lightkeepers' registers and employment records, and records from the Scotland's Women's Lands Army. These are all useful for tracking family names in the periods outside the census periods. Valuation rolls are also helpful for tracking who occupied properties at various times.

Tips for searching the records

David demonstrated the search technique for a People search in the OPRs and Statutory records using his great grandfather as an example. He entered Surname (Stephen); 1st parent name (Andrew); 2nd parent name (Violet) as a way to find the children of one couple. Other tips included using "fuzzy matching", which will include different spellings of the name you are looking for. Alternatively you can use wild cards (such as the asterisk *) to find

variations on a name. Thus typing in Ste*en will bring up records for Stewen, Steaphan, and Steiven. As another example, names the begin with Gov* will pick up Gove, Govan, Goven, Goverd, Govern, Gover, Governey.

Also we should remember to check the other churches (Episcopal and Free churches), which can be harder to find, and Catholic churches which are not separated by shire.

Census

David demonstrated how to use the Census section by looking up James Stephen, his great grandfather, in Kinneff and Catterline in the old parish of Kincardineshire. David explained the referencing system so that 262/3/1 means the record is on page one of section (enumeration district) 3 of parish 262. This can be useful when searching for people in the same neighbourhood.

Death

If you have no luck searching for someone's death in records, try consulting the "minor records", which appear in the list of counties and includes consular returns and marine returns.

In other tips, David showed us an example of a birth entry that had been corrected decades after the child was born, to confirm paternity. Searching for the birth record for William A. Gove, brought up a corrected entry that added the father's details and the details of the court case that confirmed paternity.

David explained that you can have several Scotland's People tabs open at the same time, so it is possible to check your work while you have other information on display. He recommended that we all sign up for the Scotland's People newsletter emails, which are sent monthly and are very informative. It was a very worthwhile session and we learned so much about Scotland's People records.

Robin Price, Australia

—oOo—

Meet the Gang: Australia and New Zealand

I'm Robin Price, née Shirrefs, and I've been a member of the ANESFHS since 2009. I organise the Brisbane group, which joined with Mary Jo's Melbourne group to create an Australia and New Zealand chapter.

My Scots 2g-grandfather Charles Edward Shirrefs (1839–1917) and family came to Australia in 1877 after travelling to New Zealand in 1875, having been unsuccessful in their application for a land grant. Weirdly enough, I was randomly "googling" his name one day and discovered his ticket of passage in an Auckland library, as they'd had to prove they were self-funded immigrants to New Zealand. Charles was born in Nagpur, India while his father Alexander Shirrefs was serving in the Madras Infantry of the East India Company. Alexander was baptised in Aberdeen and retired there after his army service. Charles too served in East India (Madras Infantry) after being sent home to Aberdeen to attend school at the Westend Academy and Marischal College.



Photo: R. Price

I recently retired from a position as a university lecturer with a focus on industrial relations and employment. I've been fortunate enough to have had a few visits to Scotland with some extensive driving trips which have all involved visits to the ANESFHS office in King Street.

I can trace my tree back to approximately 1725 but that's where I've hit my brick wall. Hopefully, now I have more time, I can do something about tidying up my family history records.

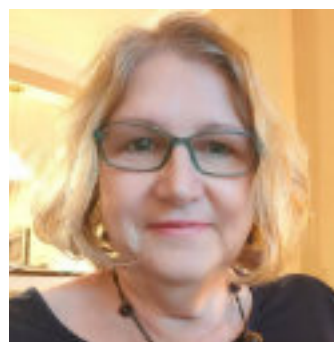


Photo: M.J. Martin

G'day from Mary Jo C. Martin! I've been a member of the Australian chapter of ANESFHS since its inception. My great-grandfather Gordon Davidson Reid (1880–1951) migrated to Lambertville, New Jersey, USA in 1883 with his parents, John Cummins Reid and Catherine B. Davidson Reid, originally from Woodside in Old Machar parish, Aberdeen.

I am a migrant to Australia, having moved here in 1989 to begin married life with my Australian husband. I teach English and job skills to adult migrants, and I love to support local and overseas historical societies.

I was lucky enough to visit Aberdeen and surrounding villages in September 2024, and I spent a happy few hours in the ANESFHS Research Centre, browsing the collections. Then I went up to St Machar Churchyard and found my 3g-grandparents, John Reid of Udney and Jane Cumming Reid of Corgarff, buried next to the side door. Oh joy!

—oOo—

Library Report

Fiona Musk, NHS Grampian Archivist, gave us a most enjoyable and informative talk in February on the wide variety of archives held by NHS Grampian, and explained how we can access these records to help with our family history research. With this in mind, I had intended to focus on the considerable number of books on health and medical care in Aberdeen which we have in our Society library; instead, I decided to narrow it down to one aspect of medical care, that of midwifery, or obstetrics and gynaecology as it is now known.

The University of Aberdeen has the distinction of being the first university in the British Isles to have engaged a professor of medicine, with the appointment in 1505 of James Cumyne. Although that didn't mark the beginning of the Medical School in Aberdeen, it does mean that the Regius Chair of Medicine in Aberdeen is the oldest Chair of Medicine in the UK, followed by that of Cambridge in 1540. Until the mid-nineteenth century Aberdeen had two universities, King's College and Marischal College. The two universities became one in 1860 under the title of Aberdeen University – this is known as the Fusion. It was at that point that a Chair of Midwifery was created, recognising the importance of midwifery for teaching.

The history of the Medical School in Aberdeen is described in the Mitchell's essay in *The Book of Aberdeen* and in the chapter on Education in Levack and Dudley. In 1758 Dr David Skene was appointed to Marischal College as a teacher of midwifery, and he was instrumental in improving the standards of midwifery. He advertised lectures, "particularly intended for the instruction of country midwives" and he offered free care for lying-in women, and bed and board at his expense for poorer women. The Kirk Session of St Machar Cathedral at that time were appalled by the ignorance of women practising midwifery, women who knew no more than their "ignorant neighbours" but who nevertheless out of a "superior degree of temerity and self conceit" offered their services as midwives. The Kirk Session recognised the harm this caused to the health and lives of both mothers and babies and recommended in 1758 that young women "of good character and capacity" should be encouraged and supported by the parish to study midwifery, and to attend Dr Skene's lectures.

Professor Dugald Baird's chapter on *The Aberdeen Maternity Hospital* in *The Book of Aberdeen*, and G.P Milne's essay for the Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society both give good accounts of the history of midwifery in Aberdeen.

A recently published book which was donated by Alison McCall, one of our members, who is also one of the authors, is *Bringing life to Aberdeen: a history of maternity and neonatal*

services. It highlights many of the individuals who have made major contributions to the advancement of midwifery and neonatal services. Among these are Professor Sir Dugald Baird and Lady May Baird who have given their name to a new hospital dedicated to the care of women and their children, the Baird Family Hospital. This was due to open in 2020, but various problems including issues with water and ventilation systems and with design have delayed its opening. It's now expected to open in July 2027. Dugald Baird was particularly interested in the social and economic factors in health and disease. He was appointed Regius Professor of Midwifery in Aberdeen in 1937 and over the next thirty years he made a major contribution to reproductive health in Aberdeen. The Baird Family Hospital will draw together maternity, gynaecology and neonatal services and will include cutting-edge research and teaching facilities and non-clinical support services.

Dr Mary Esslemont (1891–1983) a General Practitioner in Aberdeen, was another well-known figure who firmly believed in the importance of the home and the family unit in healthcare. She made a substantial contribution to the health of women and their babies and was awarded the Freedom of the City of Aberdeen in 1981. Many other major local contributors to midwifery and neonatal care are mentioned in chapter 6 of the book.

Bringing life to Aberdeen is divided into five sections: The places (The early Aberdeen hospitals and lying-in hospitals, and Aberdeen's maternity hospitals); The people; The services; Stories, tales and memories; and a final part: Then, now – and a new future. In their introduction to the book, George Youngson and Lesley Dunbar point out that while the histories of Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and the Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital are well recorded, the same cannot be said for the Aberdeen Maternity Hospital and the associated Neonatal Unit. They add, “It is timely, therefore, to put together an account of the past before some of that history is lost amidst the digital era”. A sentiment which might appeal to family historians.

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Margie Mellis, Aberdeen

—oOo—

Obituary: Margaret Shand (1944–2026)

I have received sad news that my cousin, Margaret Shand, of Queensland Australia, has died after a battle with cancer. Margaret first contacted me in early 2023 after reading a story of mine in the Society's Journal. We realised we had common ancestors: James Watt, a fishing boat skipper from Gamrie and his wife, Jean Ogilvie. Margaret descends from their daughter Helen (Watt) Wiseman and I descend from their son, James Watt. Margaret became a member of ANESFHS in 1982 and travelled to Scotland from Australia several times. She spoke highly of the volunteers she met on her visits to the King Street Centre when pursuing her research. She was a teacher and lived on the Isle of Harris



Photo: S. Packer

for four years in the 1980s. She told me she sometimes travelled over by ship when she was young, in the days when they didn't just go round in circles! She had a great sense of humour.

Margaret started researching the Watts and the Ogilvies long before documents were available on the internet but she achieved so much on her trips to Scotland that I wondered if I would be able to offer anything new. However, my many visits to the archives in Aberdeen and Edinburgh proved fruitful and Margaret was delighted with what I was able to add. (I just don't like loose ends!)

She received an award in 2017 for her services to the Queensland Family History Society. She contributed at least 14 papers to our Society Library and some are also held at Aberdeen University. She regularly transcribed documents for Scottish Indexes and other genealogy organisations. She introduced me to cousins around the world that I wasn't aware of. The Watt and Ogilvie research has been a hugely rewarding learning curve for me and led to me becoming a volunteer at King Street myself.

In mid-December (from hospital) she said she would keep in touch with me as long as possible but she sadly succumbed to her illness just a few weeks later. She will be greatly missed by me, her family and many others. I'm so glad she made contact with me. We became long distance friends as well as cousins.

Sonia Packer, Aberdeen

—oOo—

Obituary: Norman Douglas Nicol (1947–2026)

Doug Nicol, of Pennsylvania, an ANESFHS member for over 30 years, died suddenly on 22nd February, aged 79. He was a very accomplished genealogist, prolific researcher, dedicated writer and keen traveller.

After high school, he enlisted in the US Air Force, trained as an Arabic linguist and was posted to Greece in 1967 during the Arab–Israeli Six-Day War. After military service, Doug obtained degrees in Government and Politics, and in History, and in 1979 a PhD in Medieval Islamic History from the University of Washington (Seattle).



Photo: B. MacDonald

In 1977–78, he was a Fulbright Scholar in London, Oxford, Paris, Istanbul and Cairo. He returned to Egypt on a Smithsonian postdoctoral fellowship (1979–81) to research and write a catalogue of the coins in the Egyptian National Library, published in 1982. He also worked as the acting director of the Cairo field office of the US Library of Congress.

After returning home, Doug became a consultant in a growing commercial coin business until 1999, when he set out as a professional genealogist. From 2001 until 2012, he was also an annual visiting fellow at Oxford University, writing five volumes of catalogues of the Islamic coins in the Ashmolean Museum. He wrote a number of numismatic and genealogy books, journal articles and book reviews, as well as three volumes of his own family's ancestry.

Doug made frequent genealogical trips to Europe and the UK, including Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Orkney and Cornwall. He had a particular interest in Maryculter parish, and wrote *Maryculter in the 18th Century* as well as a transcription of the Maryculter OPRs with indexes, glossary and notes.

He had a warm, chatty, engaging personality, a wide circle of friends and a great interest in other people. Doug was the perfect gentleman, and his life stories were always a joy to hear. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

Bob MacDonald

—oOo—

Obituary: Rosemary Baxter (1933–2026)

We learned with sadness of the recent death of Rosemary Baxter, née Johnson, at the grand age of 92.

Rosemary joined the Society in 1981, when member numbers were still in the low 200s. A native of Shetland, she became highly committed to the Society and did a huge amount of work in several different roles over many years. In early 1985, she became the Society's General Secretary when the role of Membership Secretary was spun off. She lived further along King Street which proved very convenient when the Society purchased its first premises in 1986. She remained General Secretary until early 1988, then became Strays Co-ordinator for the next 10 years. Thereafter, she remained a Centre volunteer for many years.

She was the author of two books on St Clements: *St Clement's Parish, Aberdeen, Vol. 1 [1828–51]* (1989) and *Free St Clement's Aberdeen 1843–59*, both published by the Society. This second title provided a wealth of detail about the congregation, ministers and elders of that church.

A widow, she died on 23rd February 2026 and will be much missed by her three children and five grand-children.

Ronald Leith

—oOo—

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Patrick Cushnie Burgess of Aberdeen 1713

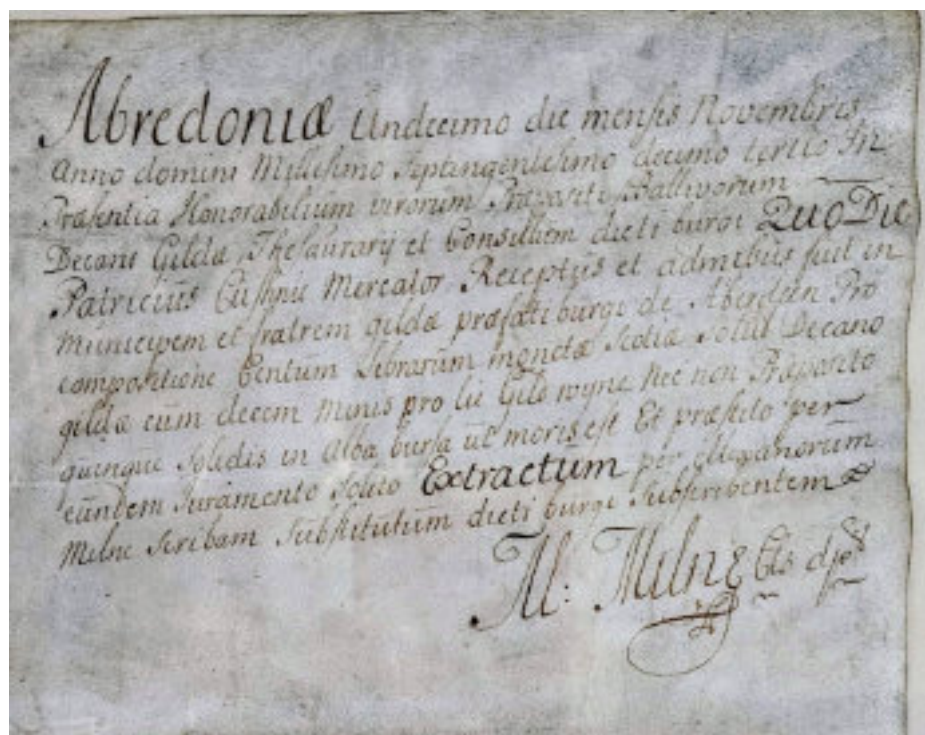


Photo: G. Service

About 50 years ago, in Dunedin, I was given a page of parchment, measuring about 190 mm by 180 mm, with a Latin inscription. I was told it was from Scotland but it was all but impossible for me to translate it.

I had it framed and it has hung on my wall since then. Last year I uploaded a picture of the text to AI and Google Translate with a fascinating result. This is a certificate awarding Burgess status to Patrick Cushnie on 11th November, 1713.

How the parchment came to be in New Zealand is a mystery. It was given to me

by Dorothy Mary White, who was the wife of Richard Desmond White, last owner of Newbolds's Bookshop in Dunedin. The bookshop was founded by the Rev. Thomas Newbold, a Methodist minister, arrived in Dunedin in 1910 and it was famous for stocking unusual antiquarian items (<https://www.odt.co.nz/lifestyle/magazine/storied-bookshop>).

I sent the results to the Aberdeen City Archives who hold all the Burgess records going back to the original Royal Charter granted in 1214. They think it is likely to be Cushnie's own copy of the award. I have not contacted the University Special collections.

I feel that my parchment does not belong in New Zealand and should return home to Scotland, ideally to a suitable family descendant. I am wondering if your Family History sleuths would be able to discover a worthy recipient of the parchment.

I do not want any money for this. I would just like it returned home as I'm sure my children have no interest whatever in the parchment and it would likely to be thrown out.

Warm regards from warm New Zealand.

Gavin Service, New Zealand

—oOo—

The Shetland Herring Fishing

It was lovely to see the article in the new journal about the Shetland Fishing and my great grandfather. In Jim Buchan's book *Bygone Fraserburgh* he has a short article about the Baltasound fishing and even has a photo of the *St Magnus* leaving Fraserburgh Harbour loaded with the fish-workers bound for Shetland.

However, there is still a mystery in this story. Why were there Germans, “neatly begloved and sprightly Teutons from the Under den Linden of Berlin”, on board? It may well have been in connection with a market in Germany or perhaps they were just itinerant workers. Earlier, in 1871, when he was Master of the *Florida of Wick*, my great-grandfather shipped 2,000 barrels of herrings from Wick to Gdansk in Poland. Maybe some of the Journal readers have an explanation?

Sadly, there is another family connection to the Shetland fishing. “In May, 1889 while the schooner *Express* was discharging her cargo of barrels at Baltasound, Shetland, Captain Sutherland was struck by the fore-boom, which was unfastened and swung round owing to a lurch of the ship. He was thrown with great violence among the barrels, his face being badly cut, and several of his ribs broken. Last Friday the *Express* arrived in Fraserburgh and Captain Sutherland was taken to the house of his son-in-law, Captain Mackay, harbourmaster”. Unfortunately, he never sailed again and much later died at my great-grandfather's house. It was a tough life, the Shetland Fishing.

Alan Grant, Guildford, Surrey

—oOo—

Dr Isabella Gordon: A Mighty Woman of Science

I was very pleased to read the piece in Journal 177 (February 2026) about my cousin Dr Isabella Gordon (first cousin, twice removed). The work of Frances Lynch, Catherine Booth and Miranda Lowe has been fundamental in bringing Isabella's achievements to greater public notice. I am very grateful for their efforts.

Since 2018, I have been in touch with Catherine to provide some family insights. I was fortunate to meet Bella, as our family know her, in London in 1982. I saw her beautifully-illustrated books and learned how she came to be awarded her O.B.E. She smiled with delight telling me that the UK government felt under pressure to respond in kind when the Japanese proposed giving her an award for her scientific work.

In 2024, I met with Catherine, Frances and Miranda at the Natural History Museum to look through Bella's archive. It was one of the best experiences of my life. In 2025, the Natural History Museum held a day-long



Frances Lynch, Catherine Booth and
Chris Griffiths at the Museum.

Photo: C. Griffiths

seminar to focus on Bella's achievements, scientific and diplomatic. I hope in future to see her name on the Standing Stones in Scotsraig Gardens in Keith.

Perhaps some members of the Moray/Banff Group will be able to visit Keith for the birthday celebrations on 18th May.

Chris Griffiths, Brisbane, Australia

—oOo—

The Sampler of Mary Scott, Peterhead 1820–21



Photo: J. Noble

Is it possible for me be put in contact with David Paterson, author of article on Mary Scott's sampler, which appeared in Journal 175, (August 2025)?

Mary Scott is my 3g-grandmother. I met David at his home in Edinburgh many years ago. I am related to his wife through the Mary Scott line. I knew nothing about the sampler until I read the journal and thought this all sounds a bit familiar and realised the connection.

Morag Hooker, West Sussex

Ed.: We were delighted when Morag's message came in as David wrote the article in hopes that a Scott descendant would come forward. It is good to know that the journal can help make connections for people. We hope that Morag and David will be able to write us a short follow-up article if they are successful in identifying who the rest of the initials refer to in Mary Scott's sampler.

—oOo—

Baltic Amber Heirlooms

I'm preparing a talk on the Baltic amber trade for my local U3A European History group and hope your readers may be able to help with my research. I have been told that fishermen and traders from the NE of Scotland from the sixteenth century onwards used to bring back necklaces of Baltic amber for their sweethearts: would anyone have any knowledge of this? I am also interested in how amber was used in the Scottish folk healing tradition. If anyone can help, I'd be most grateful.

Sandi Howie, Bangor, County Down

Ed: If you have information for Sandi, please email us at journal@anesfhs.org.uk and we'll forward your message to her.

—oOo—

Andrew Wyness, 1895–1919

My great-uncle, Andrew Wyness, is commemorated by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) at Trinity Cemetery, Aberdeen. He was born in Aberdeen in 1895, the son of John Wyness and his wife Jessie Walker, and was the brother of David Wyness, another First World War serviceman. He married Georgina Ryrie in Aberdeen in 1916. Andrew enlisted with the 4th Battalion, Gordon Highlanders on 12th May 1913, serving as a Private with service number 1502. His early military service was based in Aberdeen and the North-East of Scotland as part of the Territorial Force.

During the First World War he later transferred to the Royal Navy Mercantile Marine Reserve, serving as a Fireman aboard H.M. Armed Trawler *Loch Rannoch*, operating

primarily in coastal waters around the British Isles. His naval service is recorded in the WW1 Naval Casualties and Deaths at Sea registers. He died from disease at Wick Hospital on 9th March 1919, aged 23.

I would be grateful if anyone has more information, or family photographs they would be willing to share.

Paul Wyness

—oOo—

Charles Sleigh and family in King Street

Following the publication of my story about the family of John Sleigh (1826–1918) in Journal 177 (February 2026), pp. 14-18, I have come across more information about John's brother, Charles Sleigh (1829–94), and a link to King Street.

The Society Research Centre is based at 158 King Street but here's a coincidence. In the census of 1891 Charles Sleigh, his wife Agnes and five children, were living at 159 King Street, along with a niece (a daughter of Old John of Strichen). Charles's profession was shown as teacher of mathematics and he worked at Aberdeen Grammar School.

A report of his funeral, in 1894, shows that he had moved in the interim: "The funeral of Mr Charles Sleigh, M.A., who was for many years mathematical master of Aberdeen Grammar School, took place this afternoon from his residence, 186 King Street, to Nellfield Cemetery. There was large concourse of mourners, the chief being Mr John Sleigh and Mr Charles Sleigh, sons; Mr John Sleigh, brother; Mr Charles W. Sleigh, Mr George B. Sleigh, and Mr John Taylor, nephews; Mr Lumsden, banker, finally, and Dr Lumsden, London, cousins". *Aberdeen Evening Express*, Monday 25th June 1894, p3.

Two very young sons are buried with him in Nellfield. There is no gravestone but he is commemorated on the family gravestone in Tarves, where he had lived previously, and to where his widow and surviving children returned.

Judith Sleigh, Aberdeenshire

—oOo—

NEWS AND INFORMATION

Isabella Gordon Commemorative Event, Keith

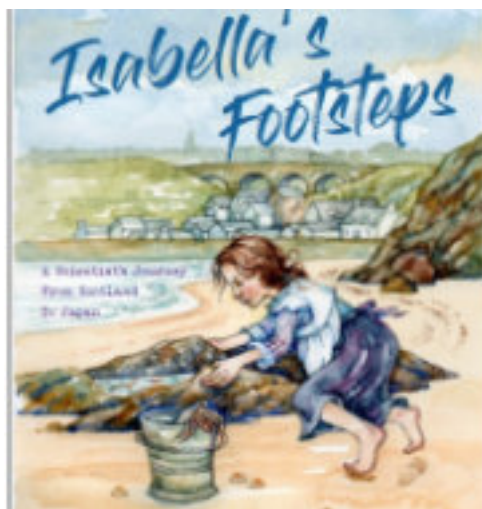


Image: Electric Voice Theatre

On Monday 18th May 2026, Electric Voice Theatre will be in Keith, celebrating Isabella Gordon's birthday at Keith Primary school and Scotsraig Gardens. The celebrations include:-

- The launch of a new book for children about Isabella which is the culmination of our Isabella's Footsteps Science/Music projects with Keith and Newmill Primary Schools, begun in September last year.
- Official planting and blessing of the Cherry Trees presented to Keith schools and community by Japan-British Society and the Japan Matsuri charity.
- Unveiling plaques in 3 locations commemorating the event and the connections between Isabella Gordon and Japan.

For more information, contact herbie@electricvoicetheatre.co.uk.

Herbie Clarke, Electric Voice Theatre



Commonwealth Links: FamilySearch/University of Strathclyde Exhibition

Lucy Reynoldson, FamilySearch's Area Genealogy Expert for northern Europe wrote to us with news of a partnership event to be run by the University of Strathclyde and FamilySearch and asking our members to participate if they can by providing stories.

There are two key areas that your members may be able to help with. We are producing a large Exhibition that will be displayed in the Strathclyde University Technology and Innovation Centre (TIC) throughout the Games. This will cover the story of migration and immigration relating to the Commonwealth and the importance of preserving records and connecting families. We would love to have some real stories of individuals rather than only talking about the collective – if you have any such stories that relate to the Commonwealth, please send us what you have (including pictures) so that we can review them and consider them for the Exhibition. We want the Exhibition space to be informative but also fun and interactive for all to enjoy.

Our goal is to create a vibrant, interactive **“Discovery Zone”** that explores the deep historical links between Scotland and the Commonwealth, with a particular focus on Glasgow's history as a major point of departure and arrival.

We are transforming the TIC lobby into an engagement hub featuring:

- Interactive Discovery: Free FamilySearch stations, AI-powered record searching, and a “Commonwealth Family Map”.
- Expert Insight: Talks from experts and professionals.
- Human Stories: Exhibits on real migration journeys, including military, naturalisation, and local community records (e.g., the Pakistani community in Glasgow).

Secondly, we plan to hold an “industry/VIP” day on the Thursday when the Games start and are considering speakers and subjects. Again, if you know of any speakers or presenters that would be of interest to this kind of audience then please also send me your proposals for us to consider.

If you would like to submit a contribution, please contact Lucy Reynoldson by email at lucy.reynoldson@familysearch.org.

Lucy Reynoldson, Area Genealogy Expert, FamilySearch International

—oOo—

The Irish Family History Society

I'm writing to you on behalf of The Irish Family History Society. We are a not-for-profit organisation that promotes Irish family history and genealogy worldwide. While the majority of our activities are on Zoom, we do hold occasional in-person activities. Our Annual one-day Conference is both in-person and on Zoom. While we don't do actual research we aim to teach and help our members how to do their own research. We have some



upcoming events, which may be of interest to any of your members trying to trace their Irish ancestry and heritage.

Our course in April focused on “what next” and taking case studies to show where you go when you have exhausted the obvious resources and the free sites. The keynote study was given by the inimitable John Grenham, Mr Irish Genealogy. His book, *Tracing Your Irish Ancestors*, is the standard guide to Irish family history.

We will be running a further short course in September focusing on the content and context of the different timeframes in which we are searching for records, the whys and wherefores of finding records in Ireland, and additional knowledge that will aid you in your searches.

We also run monthly talks, on Zoom, on subjects of interest to those searching for Irish Ancestors. Our courses are free to members and, when speakers agree, are recorded and available on our website (<https://www.ifhs.ie>) for members-only free access. Our website holds many other resources that are free to members.

Louise Maher, Treasurer / Secretary, Irish Family History Society

—oOo—

Centre News

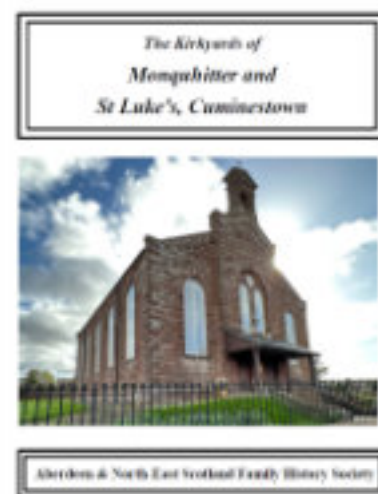
Our big news this month is that the printers have just delivered copies of our new MI booklet on *The Kirkyards of Monquhitter and St Luke's, Cuminestown*.

We are thrilled to see our new team delivering the goods and they promise they have more in the pipeline. Moira Lawrence, our MI Co-ordinator, has had big shoes to fill in taking over from Gavin Bell, but she has risen to the task and now co-ordinates a pool of over 15 graveyard volunteers, as well as other volunteers who help with checking and presenting the data.

At the end of her first year in the role, Moira says, “We have just completed the first end-to-end process for documenting and printing MIs. We have taken the opportunity to update the process – this has led to some changes in how the data is being recorded, stored, printed and updated”. Now that review is complete, the team hopes to press ahead with further new booklets in the current year. With more people involved now we may even see work going forward on more than one title at the same time.

She adds, “We are very excited about a new database project that has kicked off. It is in its early stages of development but it may also change how printing booklets works in the future”.

Our Research team has also been busy updating documentation as Gillian Marriner, Research Co-ordinator reported in Journal 177 (February 2026). We are monitoring the number and nature of research requests that we receive and plan to display the research@anesfhs.org.uk email address more prominently in our literature to encourage people to use that as the primary avenue for submitting research requests. Our Members' Forum is also a good place to post up queries and Brick Walls. Members of the Research team and other volunteers will do their best to help you crack that problem.



We have welcomed four students as volunteers who are carrying out project work alongside their studies. In some cases their time with us will help them prepare part of their coursework. We are enjoying seeing them round the Centre and will be sorry when the looming end of the academic year means they have to leave us to focus on assessment. We have encouraged them to do some family-history research on their own behalf and hope they will consider writing something for the journal in due course.

The Trustees have been focusing on Governance over the past year and several new procedures and policy documents are in place. As a modern organisation we need to keep abreast of legislative developments but we hope to keep the paperwork to a minimum and to remain the same, friendly and welcoming organisation we have been since we began in 1978, nearly 50 years ago.

Society AGM, Saturday 16th May 2026

Currently we are in the throes of putting together the final documentation for the AGM, which will take place on Saturday 16th May in the Fountainhall Church Centre at 2.00 pm. As usual all the documentation will be available on our website and details of how to download the papers will be sent out in a Newsletter. If you don't use the internet and would like to have a copy of the Annual Accounts and AGM Agenda, please write to or phone the Research Centre in King Street to request paper copies. The contact details are on the back page of this journal.

—oOo—

The UK Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 and Data Protection Complaints

I am pleased to be able to update you with news of a new, legal requirement, which will affect the Society and its members, and which is due to be introduced on 16th June 2026.

The UK Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 became law on 19th June 2025. The Act amends, but does not replace, the UK General Data Protection Regulation ("UK GDPR") and the Data Protection Act 2018 ("DPA 2018"). This is a new Act of Parliament that updates some of the laws relating to existing digital information matters and data protection. The Act is being phased in between June 2025 and June 2026. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is responsible for publishing regulatory guidance on its website and ensuring compliance with the law.

One of the new requirements of the UK Data (Use and Access) Act is that all organisations must have in place a way in which members can make data protection complaints to the Society, should they choose to do so. We must inform our members about this new requirement and provide whatever help they require to submit their complaint. There are no exemptions to this requirement.

If you think that we have infringed data protection legislation because of the way we have handled your personal information, or the information of someone you are acting on behalf of, you may lodge a complaint with the Society using a variety of methods, such as by: telephone; writing directly to the Society's data protection person (please refer to details on the second last page of the Journal); using the Society's data protection email address: dataprotection@anesfhs.org.uk; or any other means that best suit you. The Society must honour your preference.

You also have the right to lodge your complaint with the ICO if you choose to do so.

On receipt of a complaint, the DUAA requires organisations to help people who want to make complaints about how we use your personal information, acknowledging complaints within 30 days of receiving them, and taking appropriate steps to responded to complaints "without undue delay".

See our "Quick Guide", which provides a summary of how the Society will handle any

complaint received. It also includes details of how you can contact the ICO. Please note that, whilst the DUAA Law applies to the UK only, it is the Society's intention to treat all of our members fairly and with equity. Therefore, the Society intends to apply the same principles of the Law and our procedure to all of our members, wherever you live. We certainly intend that the high standards of data protection which we apply currently will be maintained. But in the event that you are dissatisfied with how we have handled your data, this procedure ensures that we are ready to deal with the issues and to provide you with the best possible outcome.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or if you would like to receive a full copy of our document “ANESFHS Data Complaints Procedure”.

Helen Strachan, Aberdeen

Quick Guide to the ANESFHS Data Complaints Procedure

Data Complaints Procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, in writing or by email to dataprotection@anesfhs.org.uk

We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. But, if it is clear that the matter will need a detailed investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.

We are legally required to acknowledge your complaint within 30 days of receipt and without undue delay.

We must take appropriate action to respond to your complaint, in writing, including making appropriate enquiries.

We will keep you informed of our progress.

Investigation

We will appoint a small sub-group of Trustees to investigate your complaint.

Outcome

We will advise you of the outcome of our investigation, in writing.

If you disagree with our decision, the Trustees may, where appropriate, choose to review the outcome.

We will advise you of any change in the decision, in writing.

Information Commissioner's Office

Should you choose to, you can register your complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office by calling their helpline on **0303 123 1113**, or by writing to Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

As detailed above, you have the right to complain to the ICO in the event that you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of our investigation.

Key Contacts

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Vice-Chair: Elaine Petrie
Secretary: Ronald Leith

Ordinary members:
 Susan Freer Ivor Normand
 Barbara Lamb Helen Strachan

Finance Reporting/Membership: Sheila Symons

Service Teams

100 Club	Sheila Symons	100club@anesfhs.org.uk
Advertising (Journal)	Ronald Leith	adverts@anesfhs.org.uk
Ancestor charts	Helen Strachan and team	charts@anesfhs.org.uk
Centre manager	Barbara Lamb	Barbara.Lamb@anesfhs.org.uk
Financial co-ordinator	Margaret Stevenson	Margaret.Stevenson@anesfhs.org.uk
First World War / Gordon Highlanders	Anne Park	Anne.Park@anesfhs.org.uk
Journal team		journal@anesfhs.org.uk
Librarians	Margie Mellis and team	library@anesfhs.org.uk
Finance Reporting / Membership	Sheila Symons	membership@anesfhs.org.uk
MI and MI Index co-ordinator	Moirra Lawrence	Moirra.Lawrence @anesfhs.org.uk
Postal sales	Nick Reid	postal.sales@anesfhs.org.uk
Research Co-ordinator	Gillian Marriner	research@anesfhs.org.uk
Secretary	Ronald Leith	secretary@anesfhs.org.uk
Social media	Susan Freer	Susan.Freer@anesfhs.org.uk
UKGDPR	Helen.Strachan@dataprotection.anesfhs.org.uk	
Website / IT	Dave Anderson	webmaster@anesfhs.org.uk

—oOo—

Graham Robertson's Mystery Object: Answer

It's a baby's feeding bottle! It claimed to be modern and easy to clean!






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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

Journal Submissions

Submissions to the Journal are always welcome. Please do not embed images in your text document), but email them as separate attachments to journal@anesfhs.org.uk.

Submissions should ideally have genealogical *and* preferably 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.

The next Journal will be published in **August 2026**. Last date for submissions is **10th July 2026**.

Format – Please type your article on a computer and send it as an e-mail attachment. Sorry, we no longer accept handwritten submissions. Source/reference lists are fine, but we prefer **no** footnotes/endnotes.

Illustrations – For best reprographic results in the Journal, please send images at the **highest** possible resolution. We have limited space, and the A5 size format means that the quality may be somewhat less than you expect. If you wish to send any originals, then please contact the Editor (**not** the Centre at King Street). If you require originals to be returned, then please state this clearly and include return postage.

Permissions and credits – We can only publish copyright material if due permission has been obtained and is included. For copyright material, and for all photographs and other images, please always state the source (publication, website, photographer and so on).

Length – Keep it reasonably short, please. We have limited space, so long articles may be edited. If you have a really long tale to tell, then why not write it as two (or more) parts?

Computer details – Please use a format that can be read by a PC running Microsoft Word. Any font or size of text is acceptable. If in doubt, send plain text. If sending **illustrations**, any standard format is acceptable (png, jpg or tif).

Advertisements

Electronic copy is preferred. Note that the original size of the Journal is A4 before photo-reduction to A5, and so a quarter-page advert should be prepared as 175mm (w) x 60mm (h).

The rates for advertisements, per Journal issue, are:

- £30.00 (black and white) or £45.00 (colour) per quarter-page (doubled for a half-page)
- £45.00 b/w or £60.00 colour for one third of a page (175 x 90mm)
- £90.00 b/w or £120.00 colour for a full page (175 x 270mm).

Writing to the Society

Please send all correspondence to The Family-History Research Centre (address on back cover). To help us be more efficient, please detail your requirements on separate sheets (with your name and membership number) according to which service you wish to call upon or which office-bearer you wish to write to – or use the appropriate e-mail address (see opposite page) to minimise delays.

Change of address

If you have access to the Internet, then **PLEASE** use the special form on our website to notify address or e-mail address changes. This form is processed automatically on receipt, ensuring fast service. If you write to the Membership Department, *please quote your membership number*.

Publications Sales

We stock a wide range of titles with emphasis on Scottish genealogy. Individuals who are prepared to place a standing order for all Society publications qualify for a 33% discount. A searchable, filterable list of all our publications is available on our website.

For all information on publications and how to order, see <https://anesfhs.org.uk>, “Publications” tab.

Disclaimer

The Society cannot vouch for the accuracy of offers of services or goods that are advertised in the Journal, or be responsible for the outcome of any contract that a reader may make with an advertiser. Views expressed in contributions are the author's and not necessarily the Society's.

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ABERDEEN & NORTH-EAST SCOTLAND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

158–164 King Street, Aberdeen AB24 5BD

Scotland

Tel. +44 1224 646323

E-mail: chairman@anesfhs.org.uk

Family history queries: research@anesfhs.org.uk

Website: <https://anesfhs.org.uk>

Centre opening hours

Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm

Saturday morning by appointment: please telephone

ANESFHS Family-History Centre closures, 2026–27

Closed on local holidays: 20th April, 4th May, 13th July and 28th September

Closing at 4:00pm Friday 18th December 2026; re-opening at 10:00am Monday, 5th January 2027

See website for further details

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