



Callendar House from the North (2026)

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to anyone who subscribes to the aims of the Society. Current rates are:-

Subscription	Annual	3– Year
Individual	£14.00	£39.00
Concession	£12.00	£33.00
Overseas (Hard Copy)	£16.00	£45.00
Overseas (e-version)	£14.00	£39.00
Family	£18.00	£51.00

Annual subscriptions fall due on 1st October each year and payment should be made to the Treasurer, Margaret Turner, 11 Springbank Gardens, Dunblane, FK15 9JX. Payment can be made online using PayPal (csfhs@hotmail.com), Genfair or by cheque made out to CSFHS. We are also offering members the choice of using direct banking.

Each paid-up member will receive two issues of the Journal each year. Meetings of the Society in October, November, April and May will be held in Bridge of Allan Parish Church Honeyman Hall at 2pm and December to March will be zoom meetings at 7pm.

Please see local press and the Society website (www.csfhs.org.uk) for details.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

Contributions in the form of articles, news items, reports etc. are invited and should be sent to :

Central Scotland Family History Society Newsletter, c/o Elsie Fraser, 17 Rylands Avenue, Dunblane, FK15 0HH.

E-mail: newslettercsfhs@yahoo.co.uk

Copy for the next issue should be submitted by 15th March 2027

HELP WANTED

This feature is designed to offer members the opportunity of assistance from other members of this or other Societies. Please submit any query briefly and clearly. Always quote your name and membership number. Please put names and places in **BLOCK CAPITALS**.

It will be appreciated that the Society cannot undertake to act as intermediary, and all subsequent correspondence must lie between individual members, although the editor will always be pleased to hear of any outcome

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Proposed Changes to ScotlandsPeople Charges

By Margaret Turner (Member No. 0385)

Members should be aware of the proposed changes to ScotlandsPeople to both the costs and services available.

It is proposed that the daily in-person fee at New Register House or any of the authorised hubs (including the Speirs Centre, Alloa) would increase from the current £15 to £23 and they will introduce a new half-day charge of £11.50.

Other proposed charges include the cost for looking at an online entry increasing from the current 6 credits per entry to 10 credits per entry. The minimum purchase of online credits will increase from 30 credits to 50 credits (from £7.50 to £12.50 for 5 images). This increases the cost of looking at each image from £1.50 to £2.50.

Anyone wishing to give their opinion on the proposals has until midnight on 4 October 2026 to do so by going to the ScotlandsPeople website, downloading the proposal document and filling out a response form.

CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLINGS

Another long hot summer here in the UK – I hope you have all been able to cope in the heat, especially those of you living south of the Border. But it is sad to see the state of the countryside with the parched ground and the wildfires. Our last session finished with our meeting at Bridge of Allan in May. This was our AGM when the Treasurer gave her annual report and she was delighted to say that we are in the black this year. The present committee of myself, Carol Sergeant (secretary), Margaret Turner (treasurer), Peter George, Feona Mann, Alva Harker and Helen Rudland was re-elected once again en bloc. There are a couple of vacancies if anyone would like to be co-opted on. You do not need to live locally as most of our committee meetings are held on Zoom. Following the business side of the meeting, we had a short talk by yours truly! You will find an expanded version of my talk in this issue - as part 2 of my theme of Using Newspapers for Family Research. Alva was going to be giving a short talk too, but unfortunately was not able to be present due to illness, but her talk is included in the journal as well. We finished our meeting with afternoon tea arranged by our treasurer, Margaret. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of this meeting.

The committee is looking forward to the new session starting in October with our first two talks being held at Bridge of Allan. We are extremely grateful to our secretary Carol for her success in sourcing an interesting and varied list of speakers for each of the meetings – not an easy task these days. Your syllabus is included with this issue. Our first talk is "Tracing the History of Your House" with Neil Dickson, who is the Assistant Archivist at Stirling Archives. I heard a similar talk given by his boss almost a year ago and I thought the sources used would be useful for family historians as well. As a reminder, we will be holding 4 meetings in person and 4 on Zoom. Our meetings in October, November, April and May will be held at Bridge of Allan at 2.00pm and the others in between on Zoom starting at 7.00pm.

We hope to restart the advice sessions at St Ninians Library soon. They are usually held on the first Thursday of the month from September to May, omitting January, from 10.00am to 12 noon. If you know of someone who wants to get started on this fascinating and addictive hobby, or if you yourself have hit a brick wall, then this may be the place to go. I am extremely grateful to the volunteers we have for this and thank them in advance for giving up their time, usually at very short notice, as we sometimes don't know until the last moment how many people are booked in. Each of the volunteers has a different level of knowledge and experience, and we hope we can introduce genealogy with our own enthusiasm.

My thanks to Margaret and Elsie for editing this journal – not an easy task – I hope you will find stories and reports to interest you. Please remember - you can share any interesting discoveries or raise problems with the other members through this journal or the e-newsletter. We always welcome articles, no matter how small.

Happy researching!

'Learning your family history is the key to unlocking who you are'

Sandra

Unusual Sources for Your Family History

By Morag Peers

(February 2026 talk)

I think the most interesting parts of genealogy are the stories – finding out the context of how our ancestors lived, what they did for work, etc. We are all very comfortable looking at the censuses and ScotlandsPeople's births, marriages and deaths. Pushing yourself out of your comfort zone can be difficult but it helps you to become a better researcher to sharpen your skills by considering different websites and records. It might help you to break down those pre-1841 brick walls.

1. ScotlandsPeople

Everybody is aware of what ScotlandsPeople is, but many people only look at the births, marriages, deaths and censuses. Yet there is such a lot of additional information on the site – the Valuation Rolls, the Kirk Session records, the communion registers, seat rent lists etc. One of the main drawbacks to ScotlandsPeople is that it can rapidly get expensive. The indexes are free, so use them as much as you can.

If your family history is anything like mine, you have massive families with up to 15 children. Do you really want to get the exact dates of birth for every one of those children, or is the year of birth which you can get from the indexes enough? It can also get expensive if you are looking for a common name. You may need to pay for dozens of records to find the right one. To save some money, always look at the marriage records as they give the most information about the most people.

As an example, when you have found a correct birth record and you know the father's name was e.g. Thomson and the mother's maiden name Aitken, you can go back to the indexes and search for any birth of a Thomson, mother's name Aitken within a certain time frame. Rearrange the list by location and it is likely that those born in the same place will be related. This helps you to prioritise paying for the ones most likely to be the family you are looking for. Always take a note of the reference number so that you can go back to it at a later date, if necessary.

2. FamilySearch

This is one of the biggest websites, run by the Mormons out of Utah. I would direct you to their card catalogue. Their search facility isn't that great and lots of stuff can get lost. Go to their "Scotland" page and you will see the records they have which are just for Scotland. You may find things like legal notices from the British Newspaper Archive. Not everything is indexed, so sometimes you just have to read through all the records to find something relevant. FamilySearch has started using a full text search. I would suggest being as specific as possible. Enter the key words, limit the search to Scotland only, put in a range of years and hit "Search". If you put e.g. "Morag Peers" in inverted commas, it will only bring up entries with both words together, otherwise it will give you all the Morags and Peers. It is all completely free of charge.

You may find records from the Register of Sasines which deals with property transfers. These are not indexed if you just go to Register of Sasines on the website, but it does zero in using the full text search. This is not information you are likely to find in many other sources. It gives a lot of information about people and their relationships to each other. You also get the Volume and Folio number if you want to chase it up further. Again, this is

free of charge. All these images are not copyrighted, so you can download them. Even if you are not 100% certain it is relevant, you can still download the page to save on your computer and come back to it later.

3. National Library of Scotland maps

My absolute favourite resource. If you haven't used maps, you are seriously missing out. The National Library of Scotland has got an ongoing project to digitise and put online a whole range of different maps, mostly for Scotland, but also for other parts of the world too. When you log on to the map site (maps.nls.uk), I would draw your attention to the list down the left-hand side, including "Browse maps", "Guide to the website" and "Research Guides". There is so much information on there about what maps they have, how to use the website, what you can find on the website, why the maps were produced, etc. They have maps going back to the Blaue Atlas of Scotland in 1560, modern maps, geological maps, every kind of map you can think of.

The tool that I like best is "map finder with marker pin". If you click on that, you can type in the name of the place you are interested in and it will come up with a drop-down list. You select the place and it will take you to a screen where you can look at all the different maps covering that place. It is really good for tracking the development of the place over time.

Another useful tool is the "side by side viewer". It splits your screen into two halves, so you can have an old map on one side and a modern map on the other. They are exactly the same scale and resolution and as you move your mouse on one map, it moves the other one in the same way. Place names change, street names change, new places are built and streets are knocked down. If you have found your people in the 1891 census, then look for an 1891 map. Find out where the nearest school was; where did they go to church or to work? It is completely free to use and you can download the maps to your own device and annotate it. The National Library of Scotland is very active on social media and very good at keeping you up to date with the new maps they are releasing.

4. Trove

This is a relatively new site that popped up about a year ago. It is a project to bring together a lot of the existing archives websites. The Scottish Government has brought together websites such as Historic Scotland and the Scottish Research and Archive Network as part of **trove.scot** and again it is completely free to use. It has so much information on the site that it might not be immediately obvious how it can be used for family history research. They have architectural drawings of listed buildings, cards detailing archaeological finds, details of planning applications and many, many images. The site is really easy to use. You go to the home page and type what you are looking for in the search box. At the end of World War 2, the government took a lot of aerial photos covering all the central belt of Scotland to help them assess damage to infrastructure and these images are also free to look at.

5. The Mitchell Digital Archives

This is a project by the Glasgow Central Mitchell Library. There are similar projects for other parts of Scotland and the idea is to put some of our photographic collections online. There is one for Edinburgh called **Capital Collections**. Once you have logged on, you can look by area, by street, or by subject. They are all free to look at. There are some copyright restrictions but you can download them for personal use but you can't put them online and they do monitor this.

6. Find A Grave / Billion Graves

These are two very similar websites which are volunteer-led. They can be useful. They are crowd-sourced projects to digitise and take photographs of graves and graveyards all over the world. You can get a lot of family history information off a gravestone. You do need to create an account, but it is free. In the box that says "cemetery location", always change it to Scotland or England as just using a person's name can give you many results. If the place has been digitised, it will tell you. If it hasn't, you may still be able to request a photo. People that have signed up to the app will get a notification that someone is looking for a photo of a certain gravestone and they may go along and take a picture for you. It can be very helpful, especially for overseas searchers.

7. FreeCEN

FreeCEN is a project on the same lines as FreeBMD which is for the indexes in England. The idea is to digitise the census and share it free of charge. Where it differs from Ancestry and Find My Past is that they try to follow the formatting of the original census completely, including abbreviations and spelling mistakes. This can be a really good way of finding free census information. You can look at the website to see what their coverage is like for the county you are interested in. There are still gaps as the project is ongoing. Every Enumeration District is transcribed twice and then compared to check for errors. You can volunteer to help. The website is easy to use and it is free.

8. The National Archives

This is the one based in Kew in London. A lot of people neglect this one as they think it is only English records. There are certain things that are managed on a UK basis such as the armed forces, passports and nationality. Their search facility is not brilliant, but go to the home page and search the catalogue. There are lots of research guides and they run regular webinars. The one thing I have used it for with huge success is naturalisations. That involves people who came to the UK from a different country (not Ireland) and who decided to make their home here and become a full British citizen. Not everyone did this and there were various flurries. In the 1870s, they changed the rules so that only British subjects could own their own property and so many wealthy people applied for naturalisation at that point. During the First and Second World Wars, being German or Italian in Britain could find you classed as enemy aliens and many decided it was time to naturalise. All the paperwork for the applications, if it is available, is held at the National Archives at Kew.

You have to create an account (free of charge) to search in the National Archives. They have a "fair use" policy which means that if you register with them, you can download 30 pages every month for free. Otherwise, you pay £1.50 per page.

9. FIBIS

The other part of the world that is often neglected is India. In the 19th century, there were thousands of Scottish people who went out to India in the Colonial Service, the Civil Service, working as doctors or in the Army. FIBIS is the Families in British India Society. They are based in London and have an ongoing project to transcribe and digitise as much as they can regarding those people who were out in India. They look at Parish Records in India for information on baptisms, marriages and funerals and also newspaper announcements. All the information is free to access and it is expanding all the time.

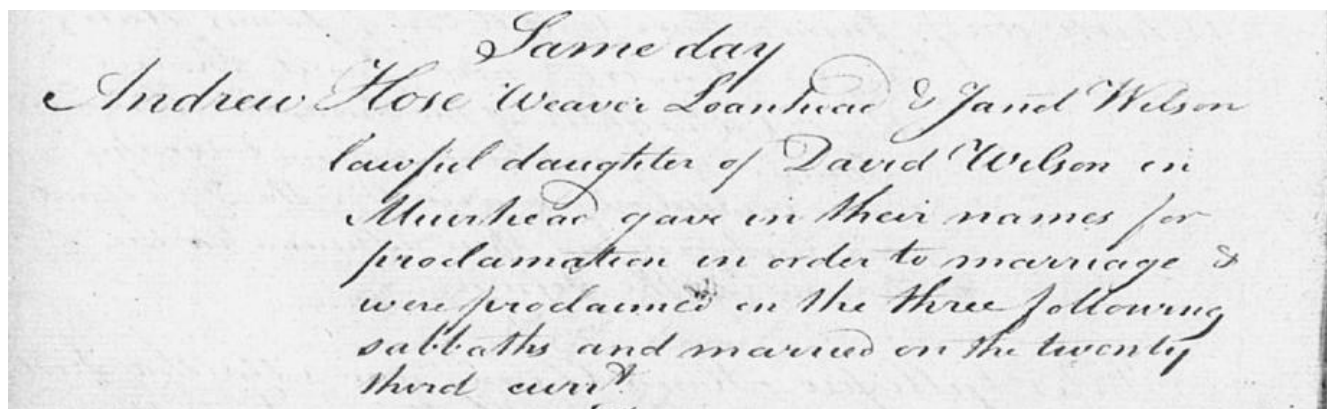
They are all available through the National Library of Scotland. They were published annually and so you can trace people in the years between the censuses. They were all different. Some of them will have two halves to the Directory. The first half will be an alphabetical list of people by surname giving their address and occupation or you may find people listed alphabetically by street. Sometimes the address of the business premises is also given. They are better for towns and cities as it just wasn't worth it to produce them for each village, so rural areas are usually part of a much larger directory. Go to the index at the front of the Directory first and then work forward from there. You can download the pages to your own device for your own use. Many Directories predate the statutory records and censuses.

They are a private company and they aim to index the records held in the National Archives of Scotland that are not yet online. You don't need to sign up for an account to search the indexes on the website. They have asylum intake records, information on criminals and for paternity cases. You can then pay them to find the full information on a record for you, if required. They will go into the National Records of Scotland in Edinburgh for you and pull out the full record, photograph it and send it to you. It is not cheap; it costs around £45 for them to do that. They also run conferences every couple of months with a range of talks. The conferences run from 7am – 3pm and then are repeated in the evening for the American market. It is free to attend but they do suggest a donation of £10 - £20. You can dip in and out of the talks during the day.

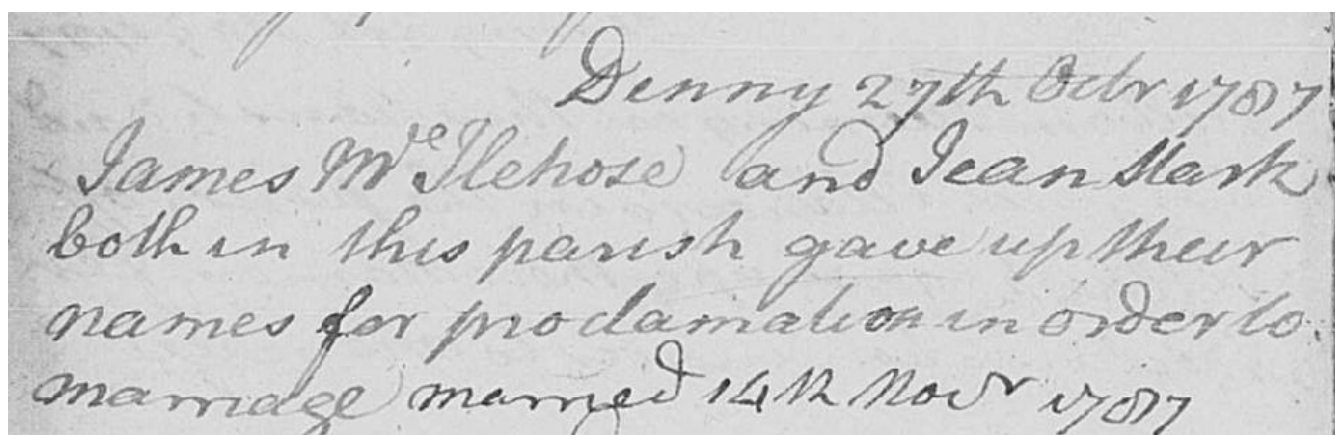


Help Wanted

Below is a copy of my 3rd great-grandparents' marriage proclamation from the 1818 Old Parish Records. It mentions her father in Muirhead, but I had only previously known of Muiravonside. Does anyone know where Muirhead is? I know she was born in Comrie, Perthshire in 1795 as I have a copy of her baptism from ScotlandsPeople, but her youngest sibling was born in Denny in 1807. Sadly, the surname Wilson is a fairly common one, so trying to find her siblings (10+) or her parents' death or burials has been proving tricky. I have also had no luck in finding Andrew's father's burial. James Hose, according to family stories, died when the children were young. The name ended up being written as Hossie in



Same day
Andrew Hose Weaver Leathwaite & Janet Wilson
lawful daughter of David Wilson in
Muirhead gave in their names for
proclamation in order to marriage &
was proclaimed in the three following
sabbaths and married on the twenty
third cur.



Denny 27th Decr 1707
James M^r Shehose and Jean Stark
both in this parish gave up their
names for proclamation in order to
marriage married 14th Nov 1707

Canada. Andrew's mother's name was Jean Stark (see second image).

If anyone can help, especially with the location of Muirhead, please contact me on nalmat59@yahoo.co.uk

Tamara Langford (Member no. 1208)

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NEW MEMBERS

1243	Celia Renshaw	Stirling
1244	Keith Donaldson	Peebles
1245	Barry E Kirk	Utah, USA
1246	Joyce Birnie	Swindon

How Our Ancestors Kept In Touch

By June Wiggins (March 2026 talk)

Today with mobile phones and e-mail, it's easy to keep in touch with our relatives, even if they're on the other side of the world. But how did our ancestors communicate over distances?

They wrote letters of course. At first these were delivered by private messengers. From 1635, King Charles I allowed the public to use the Royal Mail, previously only used to deliver the monarch's messages. At that time it cost 8 old pence to send a single sheet letter to or from Scotland, and all post had to go through London until 1711. They didn't use envelopes, as that doubled the cost. The letter was written on one sheet of paper, which was then folded with the ends tucked in and sealed with sealing wax.

Letters could be delivered surprisingly quickly in those days. In 1776 it only took three days to send a letter from Ayr to Edinburgh. The poor state of the roads in Scotland hindered the introduction of mail coaches. However by 1786 a mail coach could travel from Edinburgh to London in 60 hours.

Many early postmasters were based at inns. At that time there were no door-to-door postal deliveries. If you had a letter to post, you took it to the receiving house, usually the local inn. You also had to go there to collect your letters, unless the postmaster had arranged for someone to deliver the letters, which would cost an additional penny. According to the 1830 Directory for Ayr, the Post Office in the Main Street was open from 7am till 10pm on all lawful days and on Sundays from 8am to 10am, from 1pm to 2pm and from 8pm to 10pm. Presumably that was to enable the postmaster to go to church. The postmaster was a well-known person locally, and you may find an obituary in the local papers if you have postmaster ancestors.

The fact that postage costs were normally paid by the recipient, not the sender, caused problems in collecting the charges due. Sometimes a letter was refused, as the person was unwilling to pay to receive it. In that case, the Post Office would try to try to collect the fee from the sender. If the sender refused to pay, the letter was then sent to the Dead Letter Office. To avoid paying postage, sometimes the sender would write the address in a certain way, so that the person receiving it would get the message without having to open the letter and pay for it. This became quite a problem by the beginning of the 19th century, and Rowland Hill came up with the solution. The sender would pay to send the letter, and a small piece of paper stuck to the letter would show that the postage had been paid. The charge to send a letter anywhere in Britain would be one penny, and the Universal Penny Post was introduced in 1840.

The Penny Black was the world's first postage stamp, and this is the reason why British stamps don't bear the country of origin on them. When Britain first started issuing stamps, there was no need, as no other country issued postage stamps. The Penny Black was soon replaced by the Penny Red, as it was much easier to cancel a red stamp with a black postmark than cancel a black stamp with a red postmark. Letter writing took off in a big way.

76 million letters were sent in Britain in 1839. Five years later, after the introduction of the Universal Penny Post, the numbers of letters sent had trebled to 227 million. Remember that this was before the days of compulsory education. In Ayr there were three postal deliveries each day. A local letter posted early in the morning could be delivered the same day. Letters could be delivered surprisingly quickly, even over long distances. In my collection I have an envelope which was posted in Farnborough in Hampshire on 12th July 1864, reached Aldershot, then London on the same day and arrived in Castle Douglas on 13th July via Glasgow. This delivery time could not be bettered today. I also have an envelope which was posted in London on 16th November 1870, reached Calais on 17th November and arrived in Cognac on 18th November. Nowadays it's unlikely that a letter posted in Britain would arrive at its destination in France within two days.

Trains were used to transport the letters over long distances and to save time, travelling post offices were introduced. These were trains with special carriages where the letters were sorted according to their destinations by a team of sorting staff on board the train, working quickly as the train travelled across the country. Mail bags could be dropped off and picked up using special grabs and nets without having to stop the train. The first travelling post office ran in 1838 and the last in 2004, when it was decided to withdraw the service as it had become uneconomic. Mail is still transported by rail between London and Glasgow, but it has now already been sorted beforehand.

Communication became more affordable with the introduction of the postcard, which only cost a halfpenny to send. Now it was possible for a much wider range of the population to keep in touch. People took advantage of this and by the early 1900s postcards were extremely popular. However, there was one problem with postcards: anyone could read what was written on them, particularly the postman. Our ancestors were quite ingenious and had a number of ways of overcoming this lack of privacy. One simple way to make it a little harder for a busy postman to read the message on a postcard was to write it upside down. Many postcards contain cryptic messages, which only the recipients would understand. Another way to send a secret message was by using the language of stamps, where the position of the stamp on the card carried a secret meaning.

The optical telegraph was invented by a Frenchman, Claude Chappe, in 1794. Fast communications were essential during the Napoleonic wars. Using the optical telegraph (developed by the Rev Lord George Murray, son of the third Duke of Atholl, in 1796), a message could be sent from London to Portsmouth in 15 minutes. The electric telegraph was invented in 1837 and soon spread throughout the railway network. The first commercial telegraph service was introduced in 1846 by the Electric Telegraph Company. In 1847 the Ayr Advertiser carried a report of Queen Victoria opening Parliament, which had been transmitted from London via Newcastle in only 28 hours. The Electric Telegraph Company was taken over by the Post Office in 1870. By that time, cables had been laid across first the Channel, then the Atlantic, enabling international communications. Young telegraph boys were employed to deliver the telegrams.

Alexander Graham Bell developed the first commercially viable telephone in 1876. As early as September of that year Sir William Thompson, later Lord Kelvin, exhibited Bell's telephone in Glasgow to the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Two years later telephone services were being provided by private companies, which were later taken over by the Post Office. Scotland's first telephone exchange was opened in Glasgow in 1879. The first public call offices were opened in 1884 and advertised in newspapers. These enabled people without a

telephone of their own to make calls. By 1887 there were 26,000 telephones in Britain and trunk lines linked London to Glasgow in 1895.

However, very few people had their own telephone at that time, so unless your ancestors were wealthy, they probably still communicated by postcard and letter. Life moved at a slower pace and for most people, the Post Office would deliver their message quickly enough. In cases of emergency, there was always the telegram. I wonder what the Victorians would have thought of the mobile phone!

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Deaths of Members

We are sad to announce the deaths of the following members of the Society.

Dr Thomas (Tom) Anderson (Member No. 12) 1934-2025

Tom was one of the founder members of our Society, and was a committee member and editor of our journal from 1992 to 2004. He and his wife Irene also organised the SAFHS 8th Annual Conference in the Albert Halls in Stirling on 26th April 1997 on behalf of the Society. The theme of the Conference was "Merchants and Landowners: Trade and Industry in Central Scotland". Among the speakers was Ian Scott, a regular speaker at our meetings, who spoke about Falkirk Industry in the 18th & 19th Centuries.

Mrs Irene Walker (Member No. 66)

Irene was another of our founder members, joining the Society in 1993. She lived in Stirling.

Dr Ian Anderson (Member No. 538)

Ian, who lived in Falkirk, joined the Society in 1998 and continued as an active member until his death on 3rd April 2026. He was a valued member of the committee for many years and took on many jobs for the Society. He was Treasurer for many years, acted as Vice Chair for a while, looked after the sales of the Society's publications, as well as creating several of them e.g. Falkirk Tattie Kirk. Those who attended our old Christmas Socials may remember Ian's colourful displays of Christmas stamps and his range of quizzes.

Marie McCormack (Member No. 1014)

Marie, who lived in Brightons, joined the Society in 2007, along with her husband John. Although not a Committee member, Marie produced the teas and coffees served after meetings for many years. Marie passed away on 4th April 2026.

Anne Paterson (Member No. 1136)

Anne, from Grangemouth, joined the Society in 2012. She was a regular attendee of the in-person meetings at Bridge of Allan.

CSFHS Visit to Falkirk Archives

By Carol Sergeant (Member No. 89)

On May 20th a group of ten people from the Society went on a visit to Falkirk Archives which are housed in the beautiful old Callendar House in Callendar Park, Falkirk. The archivist Carly Manson gave us a fascinating talk covering different topics;

Place, Landscape and Change

Archives record how the Falkirk landscape has evolved over time — from designed estate grounds to working gardens and industrial developments. Plans, plant lists, and technical instructions show how landowners shaped their surroundings, balancing practical needs with displays of status and innovation. These records help us understand how familiar places developed and how people interacted with their environment in the past.

Work, Industry and Everyday Life

Many archive items reflect ordinary routines as much as major historical events. Photographs, catalogues, and domestic objects capture working lives, household technologies, municipal services, and leisure activities. From heavy industry at Carron to everyday items such as a bottle, these materials remind us that history is built from daily experience — work, home life, and social habits that often go unrecorded elsewhere.

Memory, Belief and Cultural Attitudes

Some archive items reflect how people understood life, death, and memory. The satirical Dance of Death engraving, for example, uses humour and symbolism to remind viewers that status and wealth offered no protection from mortality. Alongside personal keepsakes and records of belief, such items reveal emotional responses to loss, faith, superstition, and remembrance across generations. They show how people tried to make sense of uncertainty — through art, ritual, and personal expression.

Carly explained that archives are not just collections of old documents but that they are involved in active care, conservation, research and interpretation of the records they hold. The archivist had laid out various documents, gave us an explanation of them and we passed them round where it was appropriate to handle them. We saw a fascinating old map of Callendar House but this was too delicate to handle. We saw a very detailed list of the exotic fruits e.g. pineapples that they wanted to buy for the garden as having these was a demonstration of wealth. We also saw detailed plans for building the hot houses required for this purpose.

We saw a photograph of the horse Carnera in Falkirk which was claimed to be the tallest horse. Regarding local industry we looked at fascinating photographs from Carron ironworks. Socially we were shown a chart detailing the allocation of pews at Falkirk Parish Church (now Falkirk Trinity) with the local landed families named and having the most space with a few pews at the back of the church for the poor members of the congregation, a sad reflection on the class system of the day. There was a lucky charm necklace which we passed round and a fascinating, satirical Dance of Death poster.

We finished our visit with a very enjoyable visit to the tearoom.



A TALE OF TWO SOLDIERS

By Alva Harker (Member No. 1183)



The above photograph shows my grandfather Angus Jeffrey Fraser pictured along with his parents Alexander and Annie (nee Moir) and sisters Annie Moir, Clementina Davidson and Christina Ross. In family history research the middle names can prove very helpful in confirming the identity of forebears. Married in Aberdeen in 1881 Alexander and Annie sadly lost four children in infancy. This loss may have contributed to their decision to move to Clackmannanshire where they settled in Ochil St, Tillicoultry. Alexander worked in the local textile industry, and Angus and his sisters were born here between 1886 and 1895.

Angus Fraser enlisted in the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders in 1914 and served until 1916 in France. From 1917 until 1919 he served as Captain in the 1st Battalion Tank Corps in France. In recognition of this service, he was awarded the Military Cross.

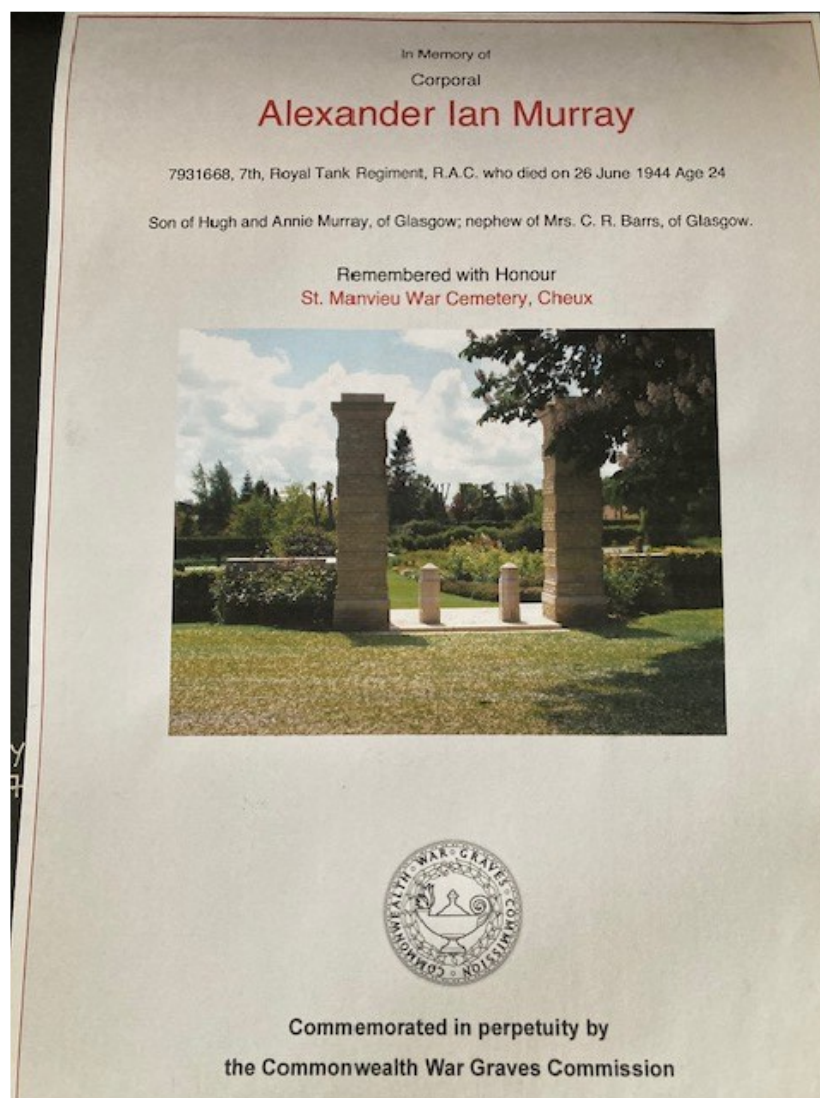
Tanks were used for the first time in action in the Somme in 1915. The idea of a "land battleship" was taken up by Winston Churchill. The early tanks were beset with many problems, they were very slow and the interior conditions were truly appalling, intense heat, fumes and noise so loud that communication was impossible. Tanks were used in the Battle of Messines in June 1917 and the improved Mark IV tanks in the Third Battle of Ypres from July until November 1917. The extreme mud, however, caused problems with many tanks becoming immobilised. In November 1917 471 tanks had initial success at Cambrai in breaking through German lines but failed to consolidate due to lack of timely backup from troops. The extra mobility of the Mark V tanks meant they were more successful at Amiens in 1918 helping infantry penetrate the German defence although tank losses were significant and many casualties were sustained.

The tanks came late to battle in the 1st World War but their development in this period and over the next 20 years meant that they were an integral part of warfare in the 2nd World War.

Annie Moir Fraser, Angus's eldest sister married Hugh Murray. They had one son Alexander Ian Murray born in Glasgow in 1920. He enlisted in the Royal Tank Regiment in 1941.

On 18th June 1944 the 7th Royal Tank Regiment landed in Normandy equipped with heavy Churchill tanks. Their role was to support the infantry in their attempt to break through German defences. Operation Epsom and the Battle of the Odon took place 26th to 30th June 1944. The regiment was successful in securing the town of Cheux traversing minefields. but nine tanks were lost. One officer and ten other ranks were killed. Sadly, Alexander Murray was one of those who lost his life.

In contrast to their contribution in WW1, the role of tanks in WW2 cannot be stressed enough. They were vital in many of the war's major battles and had lasting implications for military strategy. The War Diaries of the 1st Battalion Tank Corps and the 7th Royal Tank Regiment were provided from the archives of the Tank Museum in Bovington Dorset. In these diaries officers are named but not other ranks. Further information furnished re Alexander Murray were his Tracer card and Casualty card. He is buried in St Manieux Cemetery Cheux.



USING NEWSPAPERS FOR FAMILY RESEARCH; Part 2

Sandra M. Reid (Member No. 369)

This is an expanded version of the short talk I gave at the AGM in May. You may recall that my article in the last journal showed how newspapers helped me to prove that a hunch I had had for 20 years was in fact correct. I was able to prove that my 3 times great grandfather, George Leslie, and his uncle, James Leslie, who were both teachers of religious music, were related to each other and to me, as I had thought.

This time I aim to show how newspapers have helped me learn more about the life and character of my 2 times great grandfather, John Leslie, the above George's eldest surviving son. The catalyst for my research was a newspaper cutting from 1923 which my grandmother had kept - the obituary of her grandfather, the aforementioned John Leslie. This was a very detailed obituary, entitled: 'MAGISTRATE, MUSICIAN AND FREEMASON: Interesting Career of the Late Ex-Bailie, J. Leslie'.

Below I have listed his various occupations and interests mentioned in the obituary. He was:

Blacksmith, Commission agent, Auctioneer, Cabinet maker

Town council Bailie, Magistrate, Parish councillor

Precentor, Choir master

Freemason, Temperance movement advocate

From his marriage certificate of 1858, I knew he was a blacksmith at Gordon Castle Home Farm in Fochabers; but by 1861 he was a blacksmith in Elgin. So when did he make that move? The obituary says '64 years ago' which would be 1859 and hey presto – I found the following newspaper advert of 1859 – he was only 23 years old!

The obituary says he had to give up this trade due to '*a rather serious accident to his right arm*', and that is still a mystery to solve – there is no family story about this and I cannot find any reference to it in print! But he was still a blacksmith when his infant son and wife died in 1864 and 1866. However by the 1871 Census he is listed as a superintendent of life assurance agents. A newspaper article of 22nd December that year, states:

We have much pleasure in stating that Mr John Leslie, Insurance Agent, has been appointed District or Branch Manager in Aberdeen for the Briton Medical and General Life Britannia and Fire Association. This is a well-merited appointment, for Mr Leslie's energy and business talents are well known in the district

Firstly, this tells me something I didn't know – the name of the insurance company he was an agent with; and secondly an indication of his character.

By 1875 there are signs that he is enhancing his career and becoming an Auctioneer and Valuator, while still being an Insurance Agent.

Here is an advert from 20 July 1875, which definitely demonstrates his business talents:

JOHN LESLIE, AUCTIONEER, VALUATOR AND AGENT, Elgin, begs to inform his Friends and the Public that he conducts SALES, by AUCTION, of HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, LIBRARIES, HOUSE and LAND PROPERTY, MERCHANDISE, FARM PRODUCE, and IMPLEMENTS, LIVESTOCK, GRASS PARKS, GROWING CROPS, SHIPS, WOOD, etc. in any Town or District in the NORTH OF SCOTLAND, on Reasonable Terms.

The facilities for travelling will allow of Sales etc., being conducted in distant places, and Orders by Post will receive immediate attention and have details arranged by Letter.

N.B. – Household Furniture sold in the House of the Owner, or carefully removed to a Hall for exhibition. Valuations of Real, Personal, Heritable and Moveable Estate and Effects made with impartial care.

There are various adverts similar to this, as well for various types of Auctions; eg.

11 August 1875:

SALE OF GROWING CROP AT ELGIN. – On Friday last, three lots of barley and one of oats, the property of James Sime, Esq., shipowner, Elgin, were sold by public auction. The attendance was large, the bidding spirited, and the prices obtained very high, the crop being, for most part, of superior quality. Barley, in one instance, sold as high as £12 5s per acre. Mr John Leslie, Elgin, acted as auctioneer, and performed the duties with his usual tact and ability.

By 1876 there are signs of yet another business – that of furniture dealer and maker. There are weekly adverts for this business, which he seems to carry on side by side with his auctioneer's business. This continues until his retirement in 1916 at the age of 80 years;

27 October 1882 - there is this very extensive but interesting advert, giving an added insight into the social household fashions of the day.

HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE

WELL Made, Tasteful, and Useful, at small costs, at the ELGIN CENTRAL WAREROOMS, where an ever-increasing trade has called for an Extension of Premises, including a SALOON for Better-Class Furniture. All kinds of Dining-Room, Drawing-Room, Bed-Room, Hall, Lobby, and Kitchen Furniture made to Order, or on Sale; also, Second-Hand House Furnishings, Bedsteads, in Wood and Iron; Hair, Wool and Straw Mattresses, Feather Beds, Feathers, Flocks, Mirrors - all kinds; Full-Sized Mahogany Drawers, in great variety, and Cheap; Linoleums, Floorcloths, Waxcloths, Carpets, Rugs, Matting, Mats, Fenders and Irons, Umbrella Stands, Coal Vases, Window Poles, Curtain Hooks, etc., etc.

N.B. - SALES by Auction conducted and Valuations made, on Reasonable terms. Furniture Bought or Exchanged.

JOHN LESLIE, ELGIN CENTRAL WAREROOMS, 4, South Street, and 3 Moss Street, Elgin.

Now let's look at his time as a Town Councillor/Bailie. This interest seems to have started late in his life – the earliest reference I can find is in November 1891 with the results of the Municipal Elections, in which John Leslie, Auctioneer polled 375 votes, coming 3rd out of 10 candidates. From a later report I learned that he was elected to serve as Treasurer in 1897, then in 1900 there are a number of reports about him being elected as the Fourth Bailie. However before the latter appointment happened, it is interesting to note the areas within the town which he was interested in improving. This report from a pre-election meeting::

6 November 1900:

ELGIN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

MEETINGS BY MESSRS LESLIE AND GORDON

Last night, in pursuance of their candidature for the Elgin Town Council, Treasurer John Leslie and Mr Robert Gordon addressed meetings in Bishopmill School and the Evangelistic Hall;

Treasurer Leslie said there were four important questions at present before the ratepayers. These were the water question, the roads, the sewage, and the Public Park. As regards the water question, he could tell them that there was an abundant supply of water if only it was properly distributed. The roads, he was sorry to say, were in a sad predicament, and if they again returned him he would, give the matter his best attention. The sewage question was a matter they were putting off as far as possible, though they would have to tackle it soon, but he thought it was only fair that, before they should put their water into Lossie clean, they should get it coming into the town clean – (applause). As regards the Public Park, they had a sum of £125 in the bank left by an individual, but he did not know if it was left to buy a new park or if they could use it to put their present park in better order. At any rate he thought the park should be put in a better state as early as possible.

There followed lots of questions, too numerous to list here, but the replies from both candidates are interesting and add a bit of insight into my ancestor's character.

13 November 1900 – his nomination for Bailie:

Before sitting down, he (Bailie Forsyth) had pleasure in proposing the name of a gentleman, who, he was sure, would be acceptable as fourth Bailie. He referred to Councillor Leslie. Treasurer Leslie had been in the Council for nine years, and had fulfilled all the duties admirably, and doubtless he would perform the duties of magistrate with acceptance to them and the whole community. He had pleasure in proposing Mr Leslie as fourth Bailie.

This motion was seconded by another councillor who repeated John's abilities to carry out the duties of a Bailie. John replies, and I was struck by the humble way in which he accepted the nomination:

Bailie Leslie thanked the Council for the honour they had conferred upon him. He was quite new to the duties of the office, but he hoped, and he was sure he would not be disappointed, that those who had experience would give him every assistance in initiating him into what he might call the mysteries of the chair. When he was appointed Treasurer, he took the office feeling that he was not fit for the business but he was happy to say he got such great support from those who occupied the position before him that the duties were light indeed, and he had no doubt he would receive similar support in his new office.

However, he does not seem to have served as a magistrate for long, because by 1902 he is retiring from the Council and the Court. This next report sees him thanking the various court officials for their support, but some of the things he says to them offer a further insight into his character.

4 November 1902

BAILIE LESLIE AND COURT OFFICIALS

At the close of business in the Police Court on Saturday, Bailie Leslie, on retiring from the Council, bade farewell to the officials. When he first came to transact court work, he had no experience of such, as he had never been in a court before, He (Bailie Leslie) had conducted the business of the court in a jocular manner, but there were sometimes cases which would try the most callous, and he was no exception to the rule. With these few words he closed his career as a magistrate in the burgh. He might certainly be back again. He had served eight months out of the twenty four in the transaction of Police Court duty.

He then became a Parish Councillor, and in 1915 was elected vice-chairman – rather reluctantly, I feel. I include the final sentence of this report purely for social history reasons.

6 November 1915:

The Board has also to elect a vice-chairman, and Mr Lipp, in proposing ex-Bailie John Leslie, said he was the oldest member of the Council now sitting round the table. He remarked upon the faithful and enduring services which Mr Leslie had rendered to the Board during his many years as councillor. Mr Leslie, in thanking the Council, said he had consistently refused to go higher than he was. He had sat under six chairmen now, and he had much pleasure in accepting their nomination. (Applause). Before concluding the meeting the clerk read the names of 46 defaulters who had not been vaccinated.

To be continued in the next journal, when I will look at newspaper reports relating to John Leslie's other interests – musical, freemasonry and temperance.

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Paying your subscriptions

Our bank is now charging the Society for every transaction, both incoming and outgoing. To save on the number of physical visits to our nearest branch, we would like to encourage members to consider paying your subscription by online banking.

Central Scotland Family History Society's details are as follows:-

Bank of Scotland

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Members' Interests

SURNAME	PARISH	PLACE (if not a Parish)	COUNTY	COUNTRY	PERIOD FROM	PERIOD TO	MEM NO.
ADAMSON	PERTH		PER	SCT	1750	1880	1245
BEG	FALKIRK		STG	SCT	1750	1880	1245
DEY	LARBERT	BONNYBRIDGE	STG	SCT	1880	1960	1246
DUNCAN	LARBERT		STG	SCT	1800	1880	1245
EASTON	LARBERT	AIRTH	STG	SCT	1780	1890	1246
EASTON	LARBERT	KINNAIRD	STG	SCT	1780	1890	1246
FERGUSON	SHOTTS		LNK	SCT	1800	1880	1245
GILLESPIE	LARBERT		STG	SCT	1800	1880	1245
GILLESPIE	POLMONT		STG	SCT	1800	1880	1245
GILLESPIE	STIRLING		STG	SCT	1800	1880	1245
GRANT	POLMONT		STG	SCT	1800	1880	1245
LAWRIE	NEW MONK- LAND		LNK	SCT	1800	1890	1246
LAWRIE	OLD MONK- LAND		LNK	SCT	1800	1890	1246
LAWRIE	LARBERT		STG	SCT	1800	1890	1246
MCALLISTER	OLD MONK- LAND		LNK	SCT	1800	1890	1246
RAE	FALKIRK		STG	SCT	1750	1880	1245
SIMPSON	LARBERT		STG	SCT	1800	1880	1245
SIMPSON	PERTH		PER	SCT	1750	1880	1245
MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS	STIRLING		STG	SCT		1486	1245
TURNBULL	LARBERT	AIRTH	STG	SCT	1841	1950	1246
TURNBULL	LARBERT	KINNAIRD	STG	SCT	1841	1950	1246
TURNBULL	DENNY		STG	SCT	1841	1950	1246
TURNBULL	DUNIPACE		STG	SCT	1841	1950	1246

Exchange Journals Received: List 71 – Autumn 2026

Most of the journals are now available in electronic format as e-journals and the intention is to have these available to view on our website. In the meantime, if you wish to request a copy, please contact centscotfhs@gmail.com.

Society	Issue	Format
Aberdeen & North East FHS	177 Feb 26, 178 May 26	e-journal
Caithness FHS	No. 81 Apr 26	e-journal
Dumfries & Galloway FHS	No. 115 July 26	e-journal
East Ayrshire FHS	Iss 58 Aug 26	e-journal
Glasgow & West of Scotland FHS	No. 135 Mar 26, No. 136 June 26	e-journal
Highland FHS	Vol 44 Iss. 2 Feb 26, Vol 44 Iss. 3 May 26	e-journal
Orkney FHS	Iss 117 Spring 26, Iss 118 Summer 26	Hard copy
Renfrew FHS	Iss 55 Feb 26	e-journal
Shetland FHS	No. 137 Voar 26, No. 138 Simmer 26	e-journal
Tay Valley FHS	134 June 26	e-journal
Troon@Ayrshire FHS	107 Spring 26	e-journal
West Lothian FHS	25 Years Nov 25, Iss 66 Mar 26	e-journal
Genealogist Magazine	Vol 35 No. 5 Mar 26, Vol 35 No. 6 Jun 26	e-journal
Berkshire FHS	49 Mar 26, 49 June 26	e-journal
The Manchester Genealogist	Vol 62 No. 1 2026, Vol 62 No. 2 2026	e-journal
Cooroy-Noosa Genealogy & Historical Research Group	Iss 56 May 25, Iss 57 Nov 25, Iss 58 May 26	e-journal
Heraldry & Genealogy Society of Canberra	Vol 49 No. 1 Mar 26, Vol 49 No.2 Jun 26	e-journal
Liverpool Gen Soc	No.141 Oct 25, No.142 Feb 26, No.143 Jun 26	e-journal
Journal of Richmond-Tweed FHS Inc Ballina NSW, Australia	Iss 167 Mar 26, Iss 168 Jun 26, Iss 140 Apr 26, Iss 141 Aug 26	e-journal
Alberta FHS	Vol 7-7 Sep 25, Vol 7-8 Oct 25, Vol 7-9 Nov 25, Vol 7-10 Dec 25, Vol 8-1 Jan 26, Vol 8-2 Feb 26, Vol 8-3 Mar 26, Vol 8-4 Apr 26, Vol 8-5 May 26,	e-journal
Family History Society of New Zealand	Vol 57 No. 408 Mar 26, Vol 57 No. 409 Jun 26	e-journal
New Zealand Family Tree	Apr 26, Aug 26	e-journal
Scottish Interest Group NZSG	Iss 140 Dec 25, Iss 141 Mar 26	e-journal

Cover Photographs

Callendar Park, Falkirk

Callendar Park is a nationally important historic landscape, which contains a section of the Roman Antonine Wall, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The Park covers 170 acres, including the magnificent Callendar House. You can park free of charge in the three car parks, explore the house, exhibitions, Georgian Kitchen and then stock up at the gift shop on your way out. The grounds include a Roman themed kids playpark.



Callendar House dates from the 14th century. The house has played host to many great historical figures over the centuries, including, Mary, Queen of Scots, Oliver Cromwell and Bonnie Prince Charlie.

There are permanent displays of the history of the house, how the local area was transformed during the industrial era and the Antonine Wall (which runs through the grounds). The Wall was Rome's northern frontier.

There are a number of websites that can give you more information on Callendar House.:

www.callendarestate.co.uk/history

<https://falkirklocalhistory.club/around-the-area/houses-and-estates/callendar-house>



**Callendar House from the North
(Date unknown)**