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The Journal

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Welcome to Journal 136

In this edition of the *GWSFHS Journal*, many articles are on the subject of problem solving, and breaking down the brick walls that can hamper our research. The articles here can give us all some hints and exciting new avenues to continue our research!

Some of the other contributions showcase fascinating local history, and the stories and lives behind that history. They show us just how much can be hiding in plain sight behind a building facade, or tombstone.

We also have a call to volunteer and become a part of the exciting Southern Necropolis project; we hope some of you can take part!

Luke Gibson, Editor

J137: Please submit articles for the next edition of the Journal by the end of August.

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Chair's Blog

Greetings to all our members! If you missed the AGM you will not have heard that we have started the 49th year of the Society! Most of the council were re-elected with one new face as Editor. There are still vacancies however, so, if any member would like to contribute to running the society, drop the secretary a line. For the last five years Karen has given us a very interesting and professional journal, and I am sure that we all thank her very much for her service, we welcome Luke Gibson who has taken over the post of editor.

The start of the summer season sees a number of members from abroad visiting us in Partick. It is useful for the volunteers if you bring a tree or note of what resources you have checked on the subjects you are researching. We are indebted to volunteers who spend time helping visitors on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. I hope that you enjoy our monthly talks, and general chat after the presentation. If you have any general or specific questions on family history or about the society resources, this a great venue to discuss in the absence of face to face meetings. If you receive the monthly eNews you will have seen that Strathclyde University is holding some paid seminars, some of which are in person.

We have recently received some generous donations of printed family histories from members abroad, and you will see them appearing at the top of the Library catalogue on the website - when you are at the website checking in for the next talk, it is a good idea to have a browse by the library catalogue and the datasets to see what new information has been entered. From the projects volunteers, a couple of new monumental inscription transcripts from local cemeteries are nearing completion. The online project, entering transcriptions of burial entries at the Southern Necropolis involves a number of distant members, and it is a project that anyone with a computer at home can contribute to; just contact our research team!

Scott Fairie, Chair, 30

Sister-in-law Marriage before 1907

Until 1907, in Scotland, it was not legal for a man to marry his sister-in-law. This restriction came from the rules of consanguinity in the Old Testament book of Leviticus, chapter 18, formally embodied in Scots Law.

Practically, after the death of his wife, if they had young children, her widower would need to arrange for their care. Sometimes, the family unit would break-up and the children would move into the households of members of their wider family. Regrettably, sometimes the children would be abandoned or passed into the care of the Poor Law authorities who would house them in an institution. Sometimes one of the sisters of the deceased wife would move into the household to take care of the children. In this situation, it is natural that often the widower and his sister-in-law would want to marry.

Sighthill Cemetery

In Sighthill Cemetery, Glasgow, a Forsyth – Mitchell monument remembers two wives of William Forsyth, Ann and Matilda Mitchell; I suspected they were sisters.

The inscription on the monument reads:

*In memory of /
Annie Mitchell /
wife of /
William Forsyth /
12th Jany. 1869 /
and their pre-deceased
children /
Jamie, Mattie, and Harry /*

*And of his wife /
Matilda Mitchell /
6th Jany. 1875 /*

*Also /
William Forsyth /
28th May 1889 /*

Record Evidence

The registration of the birth of the son of William and Ann, Harry, at 81 Argyle Street, Glasgow on the 4th December 1867 states that William Forsyth married Ann Mitchell in Melrose on 1st November 1849.

Annie's death registration states that her parents were Joseph Mitchell and Grace Dunstan:

Death 1869, 644/5, 43

Ann Forsyth

Married to William Forsyth,

Hotel Keeper

Died January 12th, 1869

81 Argyle Street, Glasgow

F, 42 years

Daughter of Joseph Mitchell,
Shoemaker (Master)
(deceased) and Grace
Mitchell, M.S. Dunstan
(deceased).

There is a parish register baptism for an Ann Mitchell, baptised in Newport, Isle of

Wight, on 30 November 1825, daughter of Joseph and Grace Mitchell.

Was Matilda her sister? Matilda's death registration states that her parents were James Mitchell and Grace Dunstane:

Death 1875, 644/7, 57

Matilda Forsyth

Married to

1st - Richard Laxton

Upholsterer

2nd - William Forsyth

Hotel Keeper

Died January 6th 1875

81 Argyle Street, Glasgow

F, 54 years

Daughter of James Mitchell
Shoemaker (deceased) and
Grace Mitchell, M.S.
Dunstane (deceased)

There is a parish register baptism of an Elizabeth Matilda Mitchell, baptised at Newport, Isle of Wight, on 7

April 1820, daughter of Joseph and Grace Mitchell. I haven't purchased the certificate to confirm that this marriage is our couple (PDF images of historic marriages are not available for England & Wales). However, if Ann and Matilda were sisters, such a marriage would have been legally void.

There is a parish marriage of a Joseph Mitchell and Grace Dunstan on 5 July 1819 at Budock, Cornwall. This fits well if Matilda was their first child. I couldn't find a marriage of a James Mitchell and Grace Dunstan. I think that the informant of the death of Matilda (her widower) mistakenly stated that her father was James rather than Joseph. A search of the FreeBMD marriage index for the period 1869-1875 found a marriage in Kensington, London in the March quarter between William Forsyth and Matilda Laxton.

cousins? My hypothesis is that they were full sisters and that William and Matilda were not legally married. The death registration for William states that he was married to Annie Mitchell; Matilda is not mentioned. Usually, if the deceased had several marriages the death registration would mention each spouse. However, the informant was not related to William, and he might not have known about Matilda.

William Forsyth was keeper of the Cobden Hotel, Glasgow.

Census 1851, Island Street, Melrose, Roxburghshire, Scotland

William is 28 years old, a Wool spinner, born in Earlston, Berwickshire, Scotland.

Ann, his wife, is 25 years old, born in the Isle of Wight, England.

Census 1861 - Not found

Analysis and Theory

Were Ann and Matilda full-sisters or half-sisters? First

Census 1871, 2 Buckingham Street, Govan

William, Head, is aged 48, a Hotel Keeper, born in Earlston, Berwickshire, Scotland.

Matilda, Wife, is 51, born in England.

The youngest child is a son, Henry, born in Glasgow in 1868.

Census 1881, 189 Pitt Street, Glasgow

William, Head, aged 58, a Hotel Keeper, is a widower.

His youngest child living at home was Harry.

It appears that there were no children born to William and Matilda. Matilda would have been 48 years old when she “married” William, so she might have been beyond child bearing.

The monument and associated memorials are published at Find-a-Grave:

William Forsyth:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/300078260/william-forsyth>

Ann Forsyth (Mitchell):

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/300078368/ann-forsyth>

Matilda Forsyth (Mitchell):

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/300078424/matilda-forsyth>

The evidence supports my hypothesis that William Forsyth and his “second wife” Matilda never legally married. If Ann and Matilda were sisters, then prior to 1907 a marriage of William and Matilda would have been void. It appears that William and Matilda had a void marriage in London. Did they know that such a marriage wasn’t permitted? This prohibition was widely known. In 1907, the Deceased Wife’s Sister’s Marriage Act removed this prohibition, too late for William and Matilda.

Reference: Probert, Rebecca. Marriage Law for Genealogists: The definitive guide, 2nd. Ed. Kenilworth, Warwickshire, England (Takeaway, 2016). Note that this book applies to the law in England & Wales, not Scotland.

Murray Archer, 4316



Destination: Peru?

This is a story that has its beginnings in Argyll, moves south to Dunbartonshire and into Lancashire, then southwards again into Cheshire. Later, it progresses possibly to London, and finally, (though this is where the story becomes cloudier), perhaps to Peru. However, we will start at the beginning!

Analysis and Theory

Donald Brodie, born in Kilmartin, Argyll in 1834 was, by the 1841 census, living with family in Main Street, Alexandria. In the 1851 census the family were still there, Donald working as a printfield engraver.

On 18 January 1861, Donald, by now a journeyman joiner, married Mary Montgomery in Anderston, and their first daughter, Mary, was born in May of that year. Two years later, on 10 January, a daughter Catherine was born.

The 1871 census shows Donald, Mary and their two daughters living in Blackburn Street, Govan, but by 1879 they had left Scotland and were living in Birkenhead, Cheshire. On 6 December of that year, daughter Mary died at their home at 7 Bridge Street of scarlet fever, Donald being the informant.

The Mysteries

In 1881 the Brodies were still living at 7 Bridge Street in Birkenhead, Mary being described as married and a boarding house keeper. Daughter Catherine, 17, was there, but Donald was not, and I have not been able to find him from December 1879 in either England or Scotland, in censuses or in deaths. The Birkenhead News of 1 October 1881 notes the sale of the dwelling house numbered 7 in Bridge Street, Birkenhead, in the occupation of Captain D Brodie, at an annual rent of 35 pounds. It therefore looks as though Donald was still alive, although he was certainly not a captain.

As to what became of Catherine and Mary, they too remain mysteries. Mary obviously returned to Scotland, as I have found her living at 56 Church Street, Dumbarton with my great grandparents, Colin and Mary Campbell. She is described as a widow, living on private means, sister-in-law of Colin (whose wife Mary Brodie was a sister of Donald). This would point to Donald having died between 1881 and 1891. His widow Mary, "living on private means", also raises questions. She can't be found in the 1901 census in Scotland or England, and I haven't so far been able to find her death.

Donald and Mary having "disappeared" leaves their daughter Catherine unaccounted for. Aged 17, and living in Birkenhead in 1881, I looked for her in the 1891 census and was unable to find her in either England or Scotland. Perhaps she had married? Searching through the marriages for Scotland and England between 1881 and 1891, I tried several in Scotland with no success.

However, I came across one in England in 1883. The certificate, luckily online, showed Catherine Brodie, a minor, marrying, by licence, a man named Gaston Bonito Valdeavellano, a gentleman, in St Mathews Church in the parish of St Matthews, Oakley, Middlesex, on 25 June 1883.

Catherine's father was said to be Daniel Brodie deceased master mariner and Gaston's Benito Valdeavellano, a merchant. My Catherine's father was Donald, a joiner but, (remembering the Birkenhead News advertisement three years earlier), this only adds to the confusion in one way, while it also links the story back to Bridge Street, Birkenhead. One of the witnesses was the parish verger William Henry Everest and the other John Baptiste Recano, an 18 year old Gibraltar born ex pupil of Stoneyhurst College in Lancashire. I said this is a story!

Thinking that Catherine was possibly "my" Catherine I looked for Valdeavellano

births. I found nothing, and neither anything for deaths!

The surname pointed to South America, mainly Peru, and businesses in Guano with possible ties to Liverpool. Could Gaston, in Liverpool on business in the early 1880's have met Catherine and could she have gone to London and married him there and left for Peru? Ancestry produced several leads of others researching the name, but none have replied to queries.

So Catherine Valdeavellano has disappeared, as have Donald and Mary Brodie. If she is not their daughter she is someone else's, and if there is anyone searching for her I would very much like to hear from them. It's just possible that I may still discover what happened to my three missing Brodies and find an ending to the story.

[Moyna Harland, 907](#)

Borders, DNA, and unknown Paternity: Finding the Father of Edward Nixon Wilson

Looking back at some of the most popular talks and inquiries into the society, one topic stands out amongst all others, and that is the subject of DNA. This is not without reason, as DNA is one of the most fantastic and versatile advances in modern genealogy, allowing us to peer into the past and discover things about ourselves and our ancestors that otherwise we would have had no knowledge.

One of those ways in which genetic genealogy is indispensable is that of identifying the unknown parent of an illegitimate ancestor (usually the father).

Identifying the father of an illegitimate child often presents one of the most challenging hurdles in family history. When the father in question subsequently emigrates, the search then requires cross-referencing records across

multiple countries and jurisdictions, while also cross-referencing and checking those documentary findings with DNA to further back up your theories.

This case of Edward Nixon Wilson demonstrates how combining Scottish Kirk Session minutes, English census returns, North American civil registrations, genetic genealogy and more, definitively broke down these brick walls. It also highlights the importance in general of having a high standard of proof, and a wide array of sources and evidence before drawing conclusions in your own family history. It is written in such a way that the reader can follow the train of thought, and I hope it will be of use and highlight some routes for readers to smash down their own brick walls in research.

The Scottish Origins: A Dumfries Birth

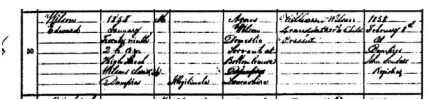
The subject of our research is Edward Nixon Wilson - Edward was born on 29 January 1858, at the High Street in Dumfries

and was registered as "Edward Wilson" by his maternal grandfather, William Wilson, who was present for, and signed his birth certificate.

He was illegitimate and his father not present, so he simply has "illegitimate" written in the space for his father. His mother, Agnes Wilson is listed as "domestic servant at Boltonlemore [Bolton-le-Moors], Lancashire", although she must have been in Dumfries for Edward's birth, and apparently she did not return to domestic service in England. She is to be found as a domestic servant in Applegarth in the 1861 Census. [Census returns. Scotland. Applegarth, Dumfriesshire. 7 Apr 1861. WILSON, Agnes. 813/ A 1/ 6.]

It should be noted that Edward was enumerated as "Edward Nixon" in the 1861 Scotland Census, and signed himself as Edward Nixon Wilson at his 1883 marriage, though in all other statutory records in which he appears, it is simply as "Edward Wilson". It was

these two references as "Edward Nixon" and "Edward Nixon Wilson" that originally helped me form some hypotheses as to whom Edward's father was, or at least some clues to his father's name.



William Wilson	1858	18	Agnes Wilson	William Wilson	1858
Edward Wilson	1858	18	Agnes Wilson	William Wilson	1858
Edward Wilson	1858	18	Agnes Wilson	William Wilson	1858
Edward Wilson	1858	18	Agnes Wilson	William Wilson	1858
Edward Wilson	1858	18	Agnes Wilson	William Wilson	1858
Edward Wilson	1858	18	Agnes Wilson	William Wilson	1858
Edward Wilson	1858	18	Agnes Wilson	William Wilson	1858
Edward Wilson	1858	18	Agnes Wilson	William Wilson	1858
Edward Wilson	1858	18	Agnes Wilson	William Wilson	1858
Edward Wilson	1858	18	Agnes Wilson	William Wilson	1858

Edward's birth certificate

After finding an illegitimate birth, some of the best places to search for answers first are the Kirk Session records and the Sheriff Court records. No relevant record was found on the Sheriff Court side, however, the Kirk Sessions were a different story.

The First Breakthrough

On 26 March 1858, Agnes appeared before the Dumfries (St Michael) Kirk Session and was rebuked for her antenuptual fornication with the father of her child, who is revealed in the record to have been a man named Edward

Nixon. The record reads as follows:

Appeared Agnes Wilson late Servant in Boltonmore Lancashire now in Dumfries who confessed she had given birth to a male child in uncleanness in the month of January last and declared Edward Nixon Assistant Grocer at same place now in Canada as being guilty with her and the father and at sometime produced a letter from him from Canada acknowledging himself to be the father of the child dated 23d of February last

[Dumfries St Michael's kirk session, Minutes (1838-1862). CH2/537/16. Image 546.]

Now that I had proper information about Edward Wilson's father, and a few concrete facts about him, I could begin to search for potential candidates in other documentary sources, to be further corroborated, then proven, with the help of DNA.

From Cumberland

For this period there are not any comprehensive passenger lists between the UK and Canada, so we can't know the exact date Edward Nixon went to Canada, but it must have been between April 1857 and February 1858.

Therefore, to identify which Edward Nixon had fathered Edward Wilson, I began to analyse the 1851 England Census, as there were extremely few Edward Nixons in Scotland, and none that could have been the father.

With an educated assumption that Edward Nixon was likely a similar age to Agnes Wilson (who was born in 1835), and probably born around the north of England, I managed to find a candidate in the 1851 census:

Edward Nixon, born c. 1834 in Bewcastle, Cumberland - Living at Brampton in 1851 as an apprentice grocer and druggist.

[Census returns. England. Bampton, Cumberland (Eastern). 30 Mar 1851. NIXON, Edward. HO107; Piece: 2427; Folio: 854, p. 18. Collection: England, Wales & Scotland Census Image.]

The profession of Edward in the census was an exact match, with the addition of druggist, and Bewcastle, his place of birth, is very close to the Scottish border (/ Dumfriess-shire), which all together was very promising.

This Edward Nixon was born on the 30 December 1834, and baptized on 3 February 1835 at "The Mire", a freehold near Bewcastle. His parents were Nathaniel Nixon and Margaret Nixon nee Forester (or Forrester / Forster), who were non-conformists, part of the "Scotch Presbyterian" Church (effectively just Church of Scotland, but presbyterianism was viewed as non-conformist in England.) Even more promising was the fact that this Edward was nowhere to be found in the 1861 Census in England, and there was no

record of death registered anywhere during the 1851 - 1861 interval that could have been him, which meant he likely migrated.

So now going with this more promising candidate for a hypothesis, I set my sights on searching in Canada for Edward Nixon.

To Canada

Turning the search to Canada yielded conclusive proof that this Edward Nixon did indeed migrate to Canada.

On 21 June 1860, an Edward Nixon, aged 25, born circa 1835 in Cumberland, son of Nathaniel Nixon and Margaret Forester, married Hannah Murray in Hillier, Prince Edward County, Ontario.

It was very fortunate that the Canadian marriage record contained so much information, and it made the job of finding Edward Nixon an awful lot easier!

So this Edward Nixon: who was an apprentice grocer and druggist in 1851, born in 1834 (just a few months older than Agnes Wilson) near the Scottish Borders, part of the Church of Scotland, unmarried in 1858, did indeed go to Canada around 1858, and got married 2 years later.

With the absence of any other candidates who met even a couple of parts of the criteria to be the "correct" Edward Nixon, let alone all of these, it already made it very likely that this Edward Nixon was correct.

Genetic Corroboration

With this candidate in place, and to ensure that the documentary theory met the Genealogical Proof Standard, I now turned my attention to testing my theory against the information and DNA matches that I had.

To do this, I conducted more research into Edward Nixon's family, and traced his siblings, parents, aunts / uncles, and

his grandparents. I then traced their descendants down for multiple generations, to increase the chances of finding positive matches, and being able to include them in the wider family tree.

On the genetic genealogy side, by testing multiple descendants of Edward Nixon (a great-grandchild, 2nd great-grandchild, two 3rd great-grandchildren, and a 4th great-grandchild [myself] I had a large amount of matches and data to work with.

Using initially the Leeds Method, and a couple of other genetic genealogy methods, and more latterly (when it released) Ancestry's "Enhanced Shared Matches" feature, I was able to identify a number of matches who descend from Edward Nixon's siblings, and also matches who descend from Edward Nixon's maternal and paternal aunts and uncles. Many of these matches were mutually related to each other and to the various DNA tests I was managing, which greatly

supported my hypothesis.

Analysing the relatedness, and trying to place the matches I had positively identified into the family tree, many of these matches fell precisely in the expected centimorgan ranges for 4th to 8th cousins, which finally validated the documentary conclusion, that **Edward Nixon of Bewcastle and Ontario was unequivocally the father of Edward Wilson.**

Some more information of interest

After proving that Edward Nixon was indeed Edward Wilson's father, it allowed me to trace some more interesting information about his life and relatives.

1871: In 1871 he is to be found in London, Ontario in the 1871 Census. He is living with his wife Hannah, and their children, John Edward, aged 7, William, aged 6, and Maggie, aged 2. Edward is listed as being from England,

and Presbyterian, which further confirm we have the correct man. He was a bookkeeper. They are living right next to a family of Murrays, who are probably Hannah's relatives.

1875: By 1875, the family have moved again and they are to be found in Auburn, Cayuga County, New York. They had a new 3 year old son, Frank, who was born in Ontario, so they must've moved between 1872 and 1875, but does not appear that Edward ever naturalized as a US citizen, so it's hard to be sure exactly when they moved. They seem to be fairly settled in Auburn as they pop up again in the 1880 Census and the 1892 New York State census. Edward was a stone cutter throughout all this time, and his children were attending school there. Margaret by 1892 was actually a schoolteacher.

13 August 1893: Edward Nixon dies in Auburn.

All this information allowed me to find a picture of Edward Nixon's headstone, a great piece of media to have!



Edward Nixon's headstone in Fort Hill Cemetery, Auburn, Cayuga County, NY



Edward Nixon's son, Edward Wilson (male at front) with his family

The research led to some incredible discoveries, such that one of Edward Nixon's cousins, Abram William Lauder (1834 - 1884) also migrated to Canada and became a lawyer and politician, and that his son in turn, William Waugh Lauder (1858 - 1951) became one of the pupils of Franz Liszt!



Abram Lauder



William Waugh Lauder

Final Thoughts

It is my hope that this article was both informative, and interesting, and that it has given you some ideas on how to break down brick walls in your own family tree, as well as show some of the rewards and satisfaction of finding this information!

I am always looking for more information, and unfortunately I have not been able thus far to locate any pictures of Edward Nixon or his Canadian family. In the offchance that anyone is in possession of pictures, or is also related to this family, then please do not hesitate to reach out to me!

Luke Gibson, 11588

The Glasgow and West of Scotland Family History Society's New Publications

We have some wonderful new additions to the Society's library shelves! This latest selection of books spans a fascinating range of topics, perfect for breaking through those genealogical brick walls or simply immersing yourself in local history.

A massive thank you to all our generous donors - both at home and overseas - for your continued support. Your contributions keep our collection vibrant, diverse, and growing every single month.

New Additions:

Streets of Bridgeton and Dalmarnock

Bridgeton Library Local History Group

Bridgeton Library, 2025

S/GLA/BRI

Heart of Glasgow, 3rd Ed.

Jack House

Hutchison, 1978

S/GLA/HOU

Hamilton Crescent and Hyndland Secondary School Roll of Honour 1914-1918

Fred Ellsworth

Independent Publishing
Network, 2026.

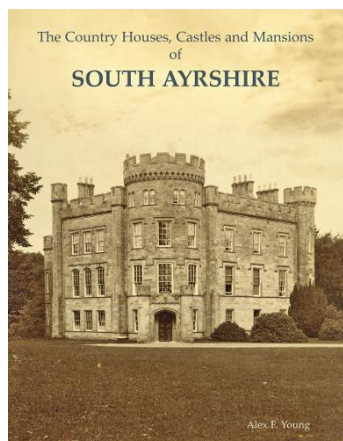
S/GLA/ELL

Country Houses, Castles and Mansions of South Ayrshire

Alex F. Young

Stenlake, 2025.

S/AYR/YOU



History of Congregations in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland 1610-1982

Presbyterian Church in
Ireland, 1982.

I-/PRE

Captain Peter Macfarlane 1822-1905: ship master and ship owner, Port Glasgow

Alison Paul and Peter
Macfarlane Shankland

Privately published, 2025.

S/RFW/PAU

Pollokshaws: Village and Burgh 1600-1912, with some account of the Maxwells of Pollok

Andrew McCallum

Alexander Gardner, 1925.

S/GLA/MCCA

Our Menzies Heritage

Fred Brooker

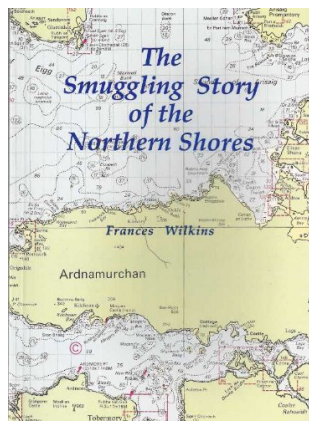
Privately published by the
author, 1994.

F/MEN/BRO

Smuggling story of the northern shores: Oban to Montrose, including the islands

Frances Wilkins

Wyre Forest Press, 1995.



These books on the topic of smuggling looks particularly interesting - we often forget that our ancestors could have been involved in illegal, or secretive, activities! How interesting it would be to find out one of our ancestors was involved.

Smuggling story of two Firths: Montrose to Dunbar

Frances Wilkins

Wyre Forest Press, 1993.

S/-/WIL

Smugglers of Kyle

Frances Wilkins

Wyre Forest Press, 2007
(reprinted 2021).

S/AYR/WIL

Ballantrae's muggling story

Frances Wilkins

Wyre Forest Press, 2013.

S/AYR/WIL

Strathclyde's smuggling story

Frances Wilkins

Wyre Forest Press, 1992.

S/STD/WIL

Java: British and Empire graves 1743-1975

Justin Corfield

BACSA, 1999.

O/IDN/COR

Darjeeling and the Dooars: Christian cemeteries and memorials 1842-1995

Eileen Hewson

BACSA, 2006.

**Teluk Anson, Malaysia:
European graves in the
Jalan Anderson cemetery**

Justin Corfield

BACSA, 1999.

O/MAL/COR

**British cemeteries of
Monghyr**

Vincent Davies

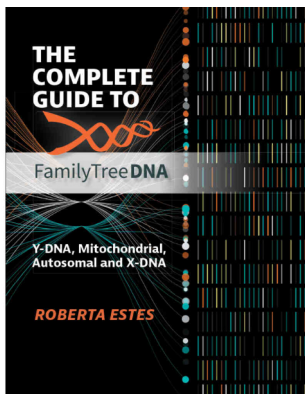
BACSA, 2003.

O/IND/DAV

**Complete guide to
FamilyTree DNA: Y-DNA,
mitochondrial and X-DNA**

Roberta Estes

Genealogical Publishing
Company, 2024.



A very useful book to have in the repertoire, as genetic genealogy and the tools we can use to trace our ancestors through DNA are evolving.

**In and around Milngavie with
register of householders.
3rd ed.**

D. MacLeod, 1930.

S/DNB/IN

East Kilbride through time

Bill Niven

Amberley Publishing, 2009.

S/LKS/NIV

Annals of Blantyre

Paul Veverka and Rev Stewart Wright

Blantyre Project Publications,
2017.

S/LKS/VEV

Blantyre images vol. 1

Paul Veverka

Blantyre Project Publications,
2017.

S/LKS/VEV

The Cearchall: tracing the lost life of Mary Gaughan from Achill island to Glasgow

Mary Gorman

Privately published, 2025.

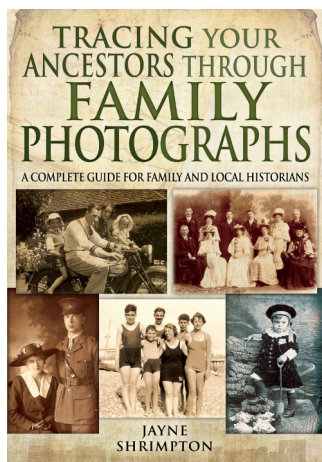
F/GAU/GOR

Tracing your ancestors through family photographs: a complete guide for family and local historians

Jayne Shrimpton

Pen and Sword, 2014
(reprinted 2024).

G/-/SHR



One of the most exciting discoveries in genealogy is when we find pictures of our ancestors, and the places that they lived. This Pen and Sword

book written by Jayne Shrimpton will help the beginner and the seasoned genealogist find out how to extract and analyse the pictures we have even better.

Old Pollokshields

Sandra Malcolm

Stenlake, 2010.

S/GLA/MAL

Working over by: Donegal emigrant working lives in Scotland 1940-1990

Donegal Heritage Office, 2025.

I/DON/DON

A History of Govan

John Simpson

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S/GLA/SIM

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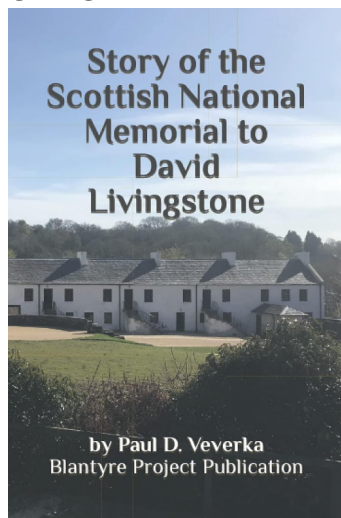
S/-/BAR

Story of the Scottish national memorial to David Livingstone

Paul Veverka

Blantyre Project, 2021.

S/LKS/VEV



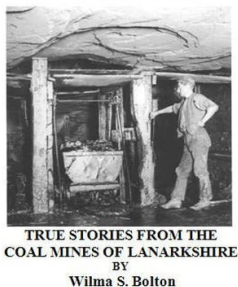
Pit props and ponies: true stories from the coal mines of Lanarkshire

Wilma S Bolton

Published by the author, 2007.

S/LKS/BOL

PIT PROPS AND PONIES



I'm sure that the majority of us with roots around Glasgow and the West of Scotland have coal mining ancestors - how much can we actually say we know about their stories and lives?

Black faces and tackety boots: true stories from the coal miners of Lanarkshire. 2nd ed.

Wilma S Bolton

Published by the author, 2007.

S/LKS/BOL

**Inverkip and Wemyss Bay:
then and now**

Bill Clark

Stenlake, 2025.

S/RFW/CLA

**Strathardle, its history and
its people. 4th ed.**

A.G. Reid

Published by the author, 2002.

S/PER/REI

**Old Partickhill, Hyndland
and Thornwood**

Lewis Hutton

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**Dundonald smugglers
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Frances Wilkins

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S/AYR/WIL

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Paul Veverka

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**George Moore and friends:
letters from a Manx
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Frances Wilkins

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E/IOM/WIL

**The Laigh Kirk graveyard,
Paisley: a history and
transcriptions of
headstones and memorials**

Stephen Clancy

Privately published by the
author, 2025.

S/RFW/CLA

Emigrants to settlers to citizens

Stephen McCarthy

Gatekeeper Press, 2024.

F/MCC/MCC

history in your hands. You are more than welcome to come by the society library, and explore these new arrivals, with our experienced volunteers on hand to help you further, if you require.

Up & doon the Gallowgate

John Gorevan

Published by the author, 2006.

S/GLA/GOR

Whether you are a seasoned researcher or just beginning to trace your family's roots, our doors are open, and there is something for everyone.

Half of Glasgow's gone

Michael Dick

Brown, Son & Ferguson, 1986.

S/GLA/DIC

Even if you cannot make it to our library just yet, you can always browse the library's catalogue, to see our whole collection here:

<https://www.gwsfhs.org.uk/collection/>

Streets of Bridgeton and Dalmarnock

Bridgeton Library Local History Group

Bridgeton Library, 2025.

S/GLA/BRI

We hope to see you at the library soon. Happy hunting!

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Every name transcribed is a life remembered. If you would like to become part of this rewarding journey, please reach out to **lesley.littlejohn@gwsfhs.org.uk** for more information.

Please, give it a go! Your contribution could be the missing piece of the puzzle for someone is searching for!

James Tannock MacKelvie—1824-1885

This past year, I photographed a selection of monuments in the Southern Necropolis. Most of the monuments I photographed are in the Central and Eastern sections, matching memorials loaded by other users from the unrestricted burial registers at FamilySearch. However, I photographed some monuments in the Western section too.

Perhaps the largest monument in the Western section was erected to remember Neil McKelvie, shipmaster, who died in Glasgow in 1876, and his family. It is in the form of a celtic cross. I photographed this monument and I added memorials in Find-a-Grave for each family member.

See the monument directly to the right.



The monument reads:

*In memory of Neil McKelvie,
shipmaster, who died at
Glasgow, 22nd May 1876,
Aged 78 /*

*His wife Susannah Richmond,
died 11th May 1831, Aged 38 /*

*His son Neil, died 28th August
1832, Aged 5 /*

*His son Robert, drowned at
sea, 2nd November 1837,
Aged 17 /*

*His wife Agnes McKelvie, died
26th July 1855, Aged 55 /*

His son Alexander, died at Sierra Leone, 22nd April 1859, aged 28 /

Also his son James Tannock MacKelvie, Merchant, Auckland, New Zealand, born at Saltcoats, 20th June 1824, died in London, 4th June 1885. /

His daughter Catherine, wife of Capt. John Smith, born 27th August 1822, died 31st March 1893 /



Although the monument is large and prominent, it does not appear in the guides published by the Glasgow Council and the Friends of the Southern Necropolis.

I noticed the connection to New Zealand, one of several connections in the Southern Necropolis, but I thought no more of it.

A few weeks later, Mary Kisler in New Zealand sent message to me through Find-a-Grave, thanking me for publishing a memorial for James Tannock MacKelvie. Mary is writing a biography of him. She spent many fruitless research days in London trying to find where he was buried. During her visit to the UK she found a related grave and monument in the Greenock Cemetery, but she did not visit the Southern Necropolis in Glasgow.

Mary wrote a brief biography of James Tannock MacKelvie for the Find-a-Grave memorial:

“A relative of Scottish artist James Tannock, Scottish merchant, collector and benefactor James Tannock MacKelvie was born in Saltcoats, Ayrshire to Neil MacKelvie and Susanna Richmond. After his mother's early death in 1831 the family

moved to Glasgow, where James began working as a clerk for the Glasgow and Liverpool Royal Steam Packet Co. He moved to Liverpool, becoming manager of the Woodside Ferry Company. At this time, he became a benefactor of the local art school, and was involved in beautification projects in Birkenhead, where the company was based. He moved to Auckland, New Zealand from 1865 to 1871, becoming a merchant and shareholder in Brown, Campbell & Co, the first company to provide everyday needs to Auckland's immigrant population. During this time, he made his private fortune investing in both land and gold mines.

On his return to Britain, Mackelvie divided his time between his house at 21 Victoria Street, London W1 and Hyères in the south of France, where he wintered owing to ongoing ill health. He also became the guardian of his widowed sister Catherine's three children after she became mentally unwell.

He became an assiduous collector, using the interest from his New Zealand investments to acquire gifts for Auckland.

He believed passionately that a new society must develop the cultural assets that became an intrinsic part of Victorian society. His early gifts included rare books, paintings and works on paper, decorative arts, which were to be housed in a museum constructed specifically for their display, open to every level of society, and free of charge.

At his death in 1885 at the age of sixty, his remaining collection of paintings, books, 'objects of vertu' and antiquities were bequeathed to the people of Auckland. Although a museum in his name was not built, today the collection is divided between Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki; Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum; and Special Collections, Auckland Central City Library Ngā Pātaka

Kōrero o Tāmaki Makaurau. The Mackelvie Trust, established at the time of his death in 1885, continues to acquire works for these collections”.

James Tannock MacKelvie left an estate in the United Kingdom valued at £34,190. Little wonder that his family could pay for a prominent monument!

His generous donation of his collection to the citizens of Auckland reminds me of the donation by Sir William Burrell to the City of Glasgow. I tried to persuade Find-a-Grave to mark his memorial with the ‘famous person’ tag. They rejected my application. He is certainly a famous person in New Zealand, with a legacy to the current day. It is a shame that he was forgotten in his native Scotland.

My thanks to Mary Kisler, former Senior Curator of the Mackelvie Collection, Auckland Art Gallery.

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Find-a-Grave memorial: https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/286862583/james_tannock-mackelvie

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[Murray Archer, 4316](#)

James Templeton & Son, and a Glasgow Disaster

In a previous newsletter there was an article about “James Templeton & Son”, carpet manufacturers.

The famous building he had built in the East end of Glasgow to produce carpets was the location for one of the blackest days to occur in Glasgow.

An extension was started in 1889 that resulted in one of the worst disasters in Glasgow. On the first of November 1889 a large number of young women were working in the carpet weaving shed next to the new extension when unusually high winds caused a section of the extension to collapse into the adjoining weaving shed. The workforce in the weaving shed was composed of almost entirely local women from the Calton area.



By Carpet factory by Anthony O'Neil, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=126447840>

29 were killed and many others injured. The youngest

being only 14 years old and the oldest 25 years old.

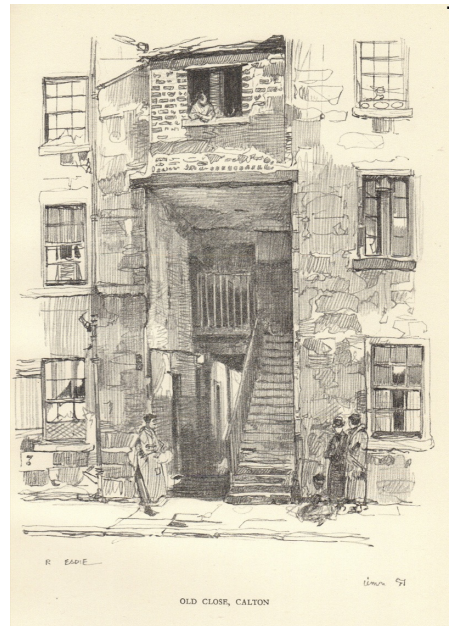
The majority of the girls were born in the Calton area, with most of their parents being of Irish origin.

The Calton

Calton was one of the main areas where Catholic Irish people settled when arriving from Ireland in the mid to late nineteenth century.

Accommodation was primitive with most parents having large families and even taking in lodgers whilst living in a room and kitchen or even a single room (known by Glaswegians as a 'single end'). Infant mortality was exceptionally high in Calton as a result of the basic and unsanitary conditions that they had to live in.

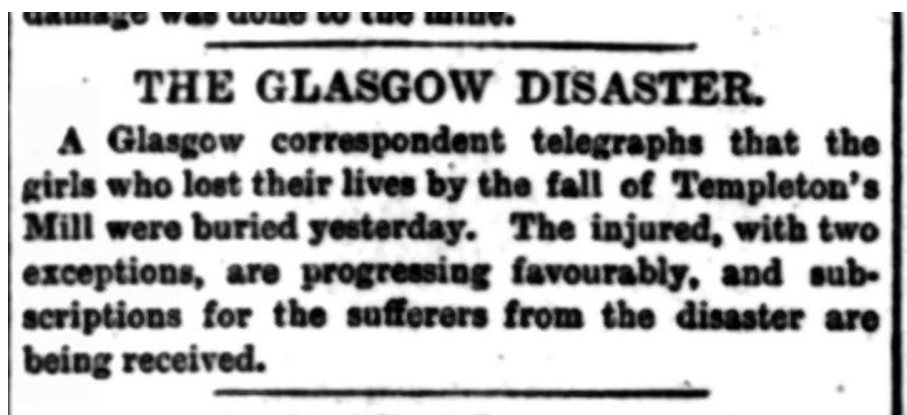
Have a look to the right at what a typical old close in the Calton would have looked like. By Robert Eadie.



Of the 29 families affected by the disaster there were 201 children with 54 of them dying in infancy (this does not include children recorded but date of death not known).

A granite memorial plaque and garden were erected in 1954 on London Road adjacent to the Templeton carpet factory. Over the years, the site became neglected and run down. The (sic) Housing Association commissioned a restoration project, and all 29 women have their names

engraved on the flagstones.



THE GLASGOW DISASTER.

GLASGOW, SATURDAY MORNING.—The latest telegram from the scene of the Glasgow disaster states that up to two o'clock 25 bodies had been recovered from the ruins at Templeton's Mills, and that 30 girls are yet missing.

A Glasgow correspondent telegraphs—It is believed that thirty young women have perished in the fall of the building adjoining Messrs Templeton's weaving shed. At half-past two o'clock this morning twenty-five bodies had been recovered from the ruins, and at six o'clock four more were found. The rescuing party then left off work, as every brick and beam had been turned over. The bodies were dreadfully crushed, and the weight of falling masonry had even smashed the heavy machinery into splinters, the spot where the looms stood being now a mass of broken bricks, iron, and timber. One of the victims was completely decapitated. Another, Rose Ann Macmillan, who was alive when recovered, subsequently died in the hospital, making the total number of fatalities twenty-nine. The finishing shed of the mill has been converted into a temporary mortuary, into which the relatives are admitted to identify the bodies. The members of the firm have been at the scene all morning, one of them not having been home since the disaster. The following is a list of the dead identified up to the present—Jeanie Glass (30), Lizzie MacMillan, Rose Ann MacMillan, Jessie Gibson, Mary Ann Stewart, Annie Strathearn, Ellen M'Cann or Wallace, Mary Turnbull, Agnes Dickson, Mary Arthur, Dinah Glass, Maggie Blair, Martha M'Kie, Maggie M'Cartney, Agnes M'Gregor, Helen Brodley, Minnie Grant, Jemima Morris, Jeanie Marshall, Jane Duff, Ellen Broadfoot, Grace MacMillan. Seven others have not been identified. The eighteen injured lying in the infirmary are doing fairly well.

The remaining seven bodies were subsequently identified as follows—Sarah Groves (21), Maggie Shields (19), Lellias Devitt (19), Ann Wilson (15), Maggie Cassidy (19), Dinah Benton Gillies, not Dinah Glass, as before stated Lizzie Sinclair (25), Agnes Broadfoot M'Garigh. It is now believed that all those who perished have been recovered, there may be one or two more in the ruins but inquiries from relatives for missing friends have now ceased.

Mr Wm Leiper, architect of the building, says that he was responsible for the outside of the building only. The foundations were excellent, being of solid concrete. The bricks came from Wales, and the structure was regarded as one of the finest pieces of brick-work in the kingdom. We believe the gale was the cause of the disaster.

To the left are some images of the stones, enlarged for ease of reading.



Courtesy of University of Glasgow Archives & Special Collections, Stoddard-Templeton collection, **STOD/201/2/15/5/2.**

There is a commemorative statue of a young woman on the roof of the Templeton Building, believed to be in memory of the 1889 disaster. This is incorrect, and there is theory of it relating to a woman who died during its construction. The statue is known as the "Golden Goddess" or "Golden Lady".

All the girls were buried in Dalbeth Cemetery in the East End of Glasgow, apart from Margaret (Maggie) Sheilds who has her name recorded on a headstone in Janefield Cemetery, Eastern Necropolis also in the East End of Glasgow.

It is possible the inscription is a memorial to her, and she might have been buried beside the rest of the girls.

They are all buried in unmarked graves in Dalbeth Cemetery, however the staff who do a wonderful job of



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maintaining the cemetery helped find the location of the graves.

There are some conflicting reports on the date(s) of the burial, although it is probable that they were all buried on 4 November 1889.

Glasgow, like many other cities, has street art applied to buildings, and one is located at Abercrombie Street close to the Templetons buildings with a mural of Tenew, who was the mother of the patron saint of Glasgow, St. Mungo.

This Glasgow mural by Mark Worst shows St Tenew being guided across the Firth of Forth by a shoal of fish. Her shawl features 29 motifs honouring the women killed in the 1889 Templeton Factory disaster.



Leslie Williamson, 11062

Editor: After this article, it is now impossible for us to look at the facade of the Templeton building without thinking of the stark contrast it posed to the lives of the Calton women working within its walls. This article gives us a poignant reminder of the lives, and human cost, at times, that have built Glasgow's legacy.

The tragic irony of this story is that the building's designer, William Leiper, was constructing it to resemble the Doge's Palace in Venice, to ensure that the building would actually go ahead. However, unfortunately, it was the pursuit of that beautiful exterior which ultimately led to the walls collapsing on the labouring working class women and girls inside.

Next time we find ourselves near Glasgow Green, we can take a moment to remember these hard-working women. Their stories are deeply woven into the story of Glasgow and its industry itself. Thank you for your interesting and enlightening article, Leslie!

The Seggies of Kirkcudbright and Their Origins

In George Black's *Surnames of Scotland*, the surname "Seggie" is given the following meaning:

Of local origin either from Seggie near Leuchars, Fife, or Seggie in the parish of Orwell, Kinross-shire. Walter junior de Seggin witnessed a charter by Duncan de Lasceles in the twelfth century (RPSA, p. 275). John of Segy had sasine of lands in Kinross, 1417 (Pitfirrane, 13). John Seggie in Kingorne, 1647 (PBK., p. 306).

While "Seggie" is a very uncommon surname across Scotland in general, its presence in the south of Scotland is exceptionally rare, and in fact can be traced back to one single couple residing in Kirkcudbright in the mid-18th Century! The surname appears *ex nihilo* in the South with the marriage of John Seggie and Agnes McGirr on 25 November 1756.

At his marriage, John Seggie was already designated as a gardener, and he would keep this profession throughout the rest of his life in Kirkcudbright. His profession actually serves as a clue in discovering his origins.

John had various posts as a gardener throughout his life, including being an under-gardener at St Mary's Isle, just south of Kirkcudbright. In addition, John was recorded in the 1786 and 1788 *Visitation Lists* compiled by the Reverend Robert Muter.

Unfortunately, despite these references to him in the documents, the only source I have found giving him an age is his tombstone in Kirkcudbright Cemetery, which reads:

Erected in Memory of /

*John Seggie, Gardener in
Kirkcudbright /*

*who died 12th March 1797,
Aged 72 years /*

Also three of his Children /

*Also his spouse, Agnes McGirr
/*

*Who died 28th March 1817,
aged /*

*87 years. And of his Daughter /
Ann Seggie, who died 18th
Sept /*

1840, aged 84 years.



*The tombstone of John Seggie in
Kirkcudbright Cemetery*

The Cranston Hypothesis

If we use the age at death recorded on the stone as at least a rough estimate, this

would give John Seggie's year of birth sometime between 1724 and 1725. Doing a search for baptisms of "John Seggie" (with variants) across the entirety of the UK, between the range of 1704 and 1744 returns only *one* result!

That is the baptism of a John Seggie in Cranston, Midlothian, on 7 June 1724. This John Seggie was the son of another John Seggie and Anna Scroggie. His baptism does not provide an occupation for John Seggie Senr., however it does confirm they live in Cranston.

Searching for other children of this couple provided the baptism of a son James, on 26 May 1726 in Cranston, with a more informative baptism. This baptism informs us that John Seggie Senr. was "Gardiner to Mr James Baird of Chaster". Digging further, I discovered that "Chaster" was actually a nearby property called "Chester Hall", owned by the well-established gentry family, the Bairds of Chesterhall.

This information, showing that John Senr. was not just a small local gardener, will hopefully open up more avenues of research in the future, though I have not been able to undertake it yet.

In the baptisms, there is another remarkable coincidence between the two families of Cranston and Kirkcudbright, which we will come to next.

A Clergy Connection?

The Cranston origin hypothesis is further bolstered by an amazing coincidence involving the local clergy. The minister who baptised John Seggie in 1724, and his siblings, was the Reverend Robert Muter [written as Mutter in the OPRs], another very rare surname in Scotland.

Though this Rev Robert Muter died unmarried in 1733 [see the attached image of the *Fasti Ecclesiae*] the minister who later recorded John Seggie in the Kirkcudbright visitation

was also a Reverend Robert Muter, though this Robert was son of James Muter of Tofts.

Given the rarity of both the Seggie and Muter surnames, the dual occurrence is compelling, and interesting, at the very least. It is highly likely that, with a bit of further research, a genealogical link will be found between the two ministers.

ROBERT MUTTER, licen. by Presb. of
1714 Haddington 26th April 1709 ; pres.
by the heritors 16th April 1713 ; ord.
23rd March 1714 ; died unmarr. 7th Feb.
1733.

Perhaps a connection / social link to the Muter family was the catalyst for John Seggie moving to Kirkcudbright from Cranston?

While this remains an ongoing research project, and hopefully further inquiry will provide solid genealogical and documentary proof of the Cranston Hypothesis, it remains a strong contender, supported by the sheer rarity of the surnames, the continuity of professions

across the generations and localities, traditional naming patterns, and the potential social link provided by the Muter family!

Beyond John Seggie and Agnes McGirr

Regardless of where he originated from, from John Seggie and Agnes McGirr's union were born five children:

John Seggie (1757),
David Seggie (1759),
William Seggie (1761),
Ann Seggie (1765),
and Helen Seggie (1773).

From the three sons descend the majority of Seggies who still live in the South, and some of their Seggie descendants arrived in the USA and Canada in the early 19th and 20th Century, taking the surname to the Americas as well. Their descendants have spread out far and away from their home of Kirkcudbright!

In Kirkcudbright, the Seggies held respected positions in their community, a lot of the Seggies were involved with local trades such as carting, blacksmithing, gardening and inn-keeping.

One more prosperous Seggie, William Seggie (1850-1921) became the proprietor of the Victoria Restaurant and Hotel in Kirkcudbright, which he ran for over 30 years. He was very well known in his local area for having a beautiful restaurant and hotel, as well as providing excellent meals.



A selection of Seggie Graves photographed by the author in Kirkcudbright



Future Avenues

Even if documentary evidence of the Cranston Hypothesis remains elusive (though I remain very hopeful of finding it), one future avenue of research that would be very interesting to explore would be the Y-DNA of the Seggies.

In particular, it would be fascinating to compare the Y-DNA of patrilineal descendants of John Seggie of Kirkcudbright to the Y-DNA of patriline descendants of John Seggie Senr. of Cranston. Especially given that Seggie is such a rare surname, it may open up some interesting research routes.

Again, if anyone is related to, or researching these families, I would love to hear from you, and please do not hesitate to reach out!

[Luke Gibson, 11588](#)

A Call for Articles!

As family historians, we are all well acquainted with the thrill of the chase - when a previously illegible census finally makes sense, when we find our ancestor's birth certificate, discover a new part of their life, and the list goes on!

I'm sure we can all agree that the most exciting part of this genealogical journey that we go on is finding the stories, the "flesh on the bones", as it were, to our ancestors.

The Glasgow and West of Scotland Family History Society Journal is built upon, and relies upon those very stories. It is an exciting, colourful collection of the people and places that shape the region. Yet, so many of these exciting journeys remain hidden away, because their discoverers hesitate to share them!

If you have ever thought about writing an article for the journal, but stopped yourself

here is your sign to dust off your research and put pen back to paper (or rather, fingers back to keyboards!)

There is a constant need for new and interesting articles and stories for the journal, and hopefully this short segment can help encourage some more contributions to the journal.

Choosing your Topic

One of the hardest bits about writing anything, whether it is essays, or articles for the journal, is actually pinning down who, or what, it is you would like to write about, and then what particular facet you are going to focus in on. Here are a few simple ideas that may help!

Writing about a relative who is notable for something interesting (such as William Wauch Lauder, Franz Liszt's student).

A "brick wall breakthrough" that will definitely provide

some help to other members, showing a process whereby you solved a problem.

A "day in the life" article. Research into particular occupations, and what it was like to actually live that life. For example, what was life actually like for a 19th century mill worker in Ayrshire?

"The Journey Away." If an ancestor, or relative, emigrated from the West of Scotland to elsewhere, perhaps you could document their story? Not only would it be interesting to read, but it would also be useful for people to learn some ways they could find more links and roots to Scotland!

When you publish your research, it really does help others. You never know who might be reading the journal, now or in the future, and gasp as they recognize a name, a niche place, or a face in the text! Your throwaway piece might be the crucial piece in someone else's complex puzzle!

Programme of Meetings 2025/26

22 June	The People of New Lanark Explore 250 years of history through the fascinating people who called New Lanark home.	<i>Sophie Hunter</i>
25 June	Beyond the Family Tree Conference The Strathclyde Institute for Genealogical Studies (SIGS) will hold an international academic genealogy conference in Scotland at the University of Strathclyde, June 25-26, 2026.	<i>Strathclyde University</i>
20 July	Glasgow Highlanders in Poor Law Applications	<i>Alison Springs</i>
17 August	Women's Lives in the Shipbuilding Community of Port Glasgow Conventional accounts of the shipbuilding town of Port Glasgow might concentrate on men's experiences: This paper will explore instead the community from the perspective of its women.	<i>Hugh Hagan</i>

These meetings will be held in the evening, (7.30pm) via Zoom. To register for any of these sessions please see the links on the GWSFHS website.

The website also provides more information about the individual talks and the speakers.

Please remember if you miss one of the talks when it is first 'broadcast' there is a link to the recordings through our website, providing the presenters give us permission.

If anyone has any suggestions for future talks please let Christine Woodcock know at syllabus@gwsfhs.org.uk

From the Editor

As we reach the final pages of this issue, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed articles and segments for this edition. Your submissions are what keep this journal running smoothly and ensure that we can continue to publish regular, high-quality content for our members.

Please bear in mind that there is no time limit as to when you can put forward submissions for the journal, though a rough guide for the deadline for submissions for the upcoming journal is contained in the first few pages of each edition.

Looking forward, we currently have a clean slate for our next edition in October, with no articles held in reserve. That means that if you submit an article before the next deadline, you are almost guaranteed to see it in October! If you have been thinking about sharing your research or family stories, now would be the perfect time to send them over!

Of course, articles are just one facet of the journal - the other is putting them all together! Stepping into the role of new editor for the *GWSFHS Journal* has already presented some new challenges, and I am incredibly grateful for your continued support as I continue to learn in this new journey.

Finally, with the upcoming Commonwealth Games bringing thousands of visitors to Glasgow, many may wish to explore their West of Scotland heritage. If you are one who would like to visit the society, but cannot make the current opening hours, please email or call us in advance with your availability during the weeks, and we will do our best to try and accommodate you. Keep an eye on our website for any further updates!

Happy reading, and I look forward to receiving your submissions soon!

Luke Gibson, Editor
editor@gwsfhs.org.uk

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Research Centre

The Research Centre is open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 1pm-4pm. There is no need to book unless you want to ensure access to one of the computers.

e-News – monthly newsletter

The Society sends out an email newsletter open to both members and non-members. To receive it, you have to sign up because the software operates with extra security and permits people to unsubscribe. The sign-up is in the footer of each page on the website.

Previous issues can be seen at: gwsfhs.org.uk/services/e-news-archive/

The e-News editor welcomes contributions which can be sent via the email above.

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