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Aberdeen & North-East Scotland
Family History Society

Journal



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Focus on your
maritime ancestors



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

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

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SOCIETY REPORTS, NEWS AND INFORMATION

Editorial

We are delighted to report that Matthew Davidson has joined the Journal team and, as you will see from this issue, is proving to be a valuable and resourceful colleague. We are still open to recruiting further team members to help with sourcing stories, editing articles and proof-reading.

A special mention also goes to Steve Edwards, on whose design talents we are becoming increasingly dependent. We hope you will like his new design for the Journal front cover – we think it is fresh and attractive and a great new look for our new year.

The statues of the fish seller and her fisherman partner are a familiar sight outside the Maritime Museum in Shiprow, Aberdeen. They were sculpted by David Williams-Ellis and unveiled in 2018 as a memorial to all those who made their living through the North-East fishing industry. The background evokes the scenes of their working life. We thought it made a great cover since this issue contains stories about maritime life and work.

This Journal also sees a welcome return of the “Feature Parish”, showcasing information and stories about Lonmay. The accounts written by two former ministers of the parish provide many interesting insights into the customs and way of life of the community there. We are grateful to Jim Campbell for his photographs of Lonmay and surroundings.

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Journal Team

Library Report

Happy New Year to everybody! As I write this in January, snow is falling heavily in Aberdeen and temperatures are dropping – just the kind of day to stay cosy and warm inside with a pile of books. This is what I’ve been doing, sorting through some recently acquired books which will eventually find their way on to the library shelves.

D. Fasken and G. Maxtone, *The Moray Firth Coast Line* (Great North of Scotland Railway Association, 2024)

The author, David Fasken, has donated this book telling the story of the building of the Moray Firth Coast Line, officially opened on 1st May 1886. This book places the Line in its context and gives us the earlier history of the railways in the area, the rail companies involved and the reasons for building the Coast Line. Freight was important – agricultural produce and whisky were transported by rail, as was fish from the thriving fishing villages, all vital to the economy of the area. But the Line also brought tourism to the area. The Moray coast was promoted as “the Scottish Riviera”, and this particular route was a very scenic one. The towns of Banff, Portsoy, Cullen and Lossiemouth with their beautiful beaches all became popular holiday destinations. This is not just a railway history but also a social history, since the railway was such an important part of the area and of the lives of the people there. It’s full of anecdotes about the people who were involved in the building and running of the Line, and the challenges they faced.

It’s a very well-researched book with maps and plans, and material from company minute books, newspaper reports and published literature, all complemented by a wonderful selection of photographs, many previously unpublished, carefully chosen by Graham Maxtone, who also wrote the captions.

D. Campbell, E. Ewen and J. R. Osbeck, *The History of the Aberdeen and North-East Deaf Society, 1895–1995* (Glasgow: Deaf History Scotland, 2024)

This new book covers the first 100 years of the Aberdeen and North-East Deaf Society from its inception in 1895. The Society’s founding aims were to support people who were deaf

and dumb by providing religious services in sign language, visiting them in their homes, providing opportunities for recreation and social interaction, and helping them to obtain employment.

The Society was closed down in 2010, but fortunately the authors of this book had the foresight to ensure retention and safe storage of the Society's historical records, which they have been able to use in producing this book. They also include many reminiscences from people who were able to benefit from the Society's support, and from people who provided that support.

This book was brought to our attention by the niece of one of the authors, who attended the School for the Deaf in Linksfield Road in the 1970s. She was baptised in the former Deaf Church and Club in Rose Street, and has many wonderful memories of social gatherings, children's parties and day trips.

C. Elliott and F. Jenkins, *Sailing Fishermen in Old Photographs* (Reading: Tops'l Books, 1978)

Colin Elliott's book is the story of the old sailing smacks of the North Sea and the men who sailed them, told with over 50 Victorian and Edwardian photographs from the previously unpublished Ford Jenkins collection. Although Jenkins was from Lowestoft in Suffolk, the herring fishers and herring lassies followed the shoals of herring from Stornoway and Lerwick and along the coast of Scotland and England as far south as Yarmouth in Norfolk, and there are many photos in this book of the zulus and the fifies, Scottish fishing vessels which were quite distinct from those of the English fishermen. Throughout the fishing boom, the Scottish fisher girls (herring lassies) were an integral and colourful part of the dockside scene at any port where herring was landed. They were tough and industrious and worked at great speed in all weathers gutting the herring. In their leisure time, they could be seen strolling arm-in-arm around the town, talking animatedly and knitting as they walked. This book, with its contemporary photos and informative text, brings the whole herring-fishing scene vividly to life. It, and our next book, came to us from a retired teacher and local historian, whom we thank.

J. Dixon, *Little Grey Partridge: First World War diary of Ishobel Ross, who served with the Scottish Women's Hospitals Unit in Serbia* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988)

Perhaps you recall Karen Shaw's article in Journal 165 (pp. 29–32) about the Scottish Women's Hospitals (SWH) Unit, subtitled "The women of Aberdeenshire who didn't 'go home and sit still'". It mentions *Little Grey Partridge*, the diary of Ishobel Ross. The SWH was founded in 1914 by Dr Elsie Inglis, Edinburgh's foremost female doctor at the time. When war was declared, she immediately offered her services to the Royal Army Medical Corps, only to be rebuffed with the words "My dear lady, go home and sit still". War was not the business of the "weaker sex". However, Dr Inglis did not sit still; instead, she decided to set up what became the SWH Unit. This she did, partly out of patriotism and a desire to use her skills to help, partly to demonstrate that medical women need not be restricted to gynaecology and paediatrics, and partly to prove women's fitness for the vote. She envisaged a single medical unit staffed entirely by women, but when she put forward the proposal so many volunteers came forward and so much money poured in that it soon became obvious that several hospital units could be equipped.

The Red Cross was offered the first unit, but the Red Cross was in the hands of the War Office, and they rejected the whole idea of women being in charge of a hospital in a war zone. When Dr Inglis approached Britain's allies, however, the offer was gratefully accepted. There was a special recommendation that a unit should be sent to Serbia as soon as possible: Serbia, a small but strategic nation, was surrounded by German, Austrian and Bulgarian forces and desperately needed help.

Much has been written about Elsie Inglis and about the history of the SWH. Less is known about Ishobel Ross; she had been a domestic science teacher and had joined the Unit as a cook – and her diary, kept at the time she was in Serbia, enhances and complements these other accounts by providing fresh insights into the day-to-day exigencies of life in an SWH unit, written from a different perspective. The book has many contemporary photos of the daily life of the camp and of the people. The local soldiers, admiring the trim grey uniforms and rapid walk of the Scottish women in the hospital unit on the Serbian front, called them affectionately “little grey partridges”, and there was evidently a real sense of comradeship and respect between the Scottish women and the Serbian people, a bond of friendship which lasted well beyond the war.

The book makes fascinating reading and has left me wanting to find out more about the Scottish Women’s Hospitals and these remarkable women.

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UKGDPR – Latest Update

As the Society moves into a phase of “care and maintenance” regarding the General Data Protection Regulations, our focus of attention will be to ensure that we meet the requirements of in-country regulations for our overseas members. To date, and with the intention of treating overseas members fairly and equitably, we have applied UKGDPR to all data that we hold for all members, including those who hail from other countries. We hope that this robust approach to protecting sensitive data will be commensurate with the requirements of other countries. But we must not assume this to be the case. As before, members will be unaware of the work being conducted. We will only contact overseas members if we identify a problem or need their help to achieve compliance with their home country’s requirements.



Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or if I can be of any assistance on any data-protection matters.

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Indexing of Ancestor Charts: “The Times They Are a-Changin’”

In the last update (Journal 172, November 2024), I finished by hoping to be able to share with you some news of an exciting development.

I am delighted to let you know that the Society’s Board of Trustees has agreed a proposal to create a database for Ancestor Charts based on GEDCOM format (Genealogical Data Communications). GEDCOM files are text files that contain the information and links required to store or exchange genealogical data between different genealogical software packages. In short, it is a universally accepted format for family-tree files which was first released in 1984 and, since then, has since become widely accepted by genealogists.

The capabilities of GEDCOM files are endless. They can be attached to an email to send copies of ancestor charts and can even be downloaded from a website. Additional functions include the ability to search for genealogical data by surname or membership number, and the simplification of producing indexes, to name but a few.

In December 2024, members of the Society’s Indexing team were provided with links to free versions of “Brother’s Keeper” and “RootsMagic” software to test and compare. Of course, other packages are available, and at this very early stage of development we are not committed to either of the test packages – but we needed to start somewhere. The team’s

findings and observations will be taken into account as we prepare the next steps towards digitising the very valuable resource of our Ancestor Charts.

Meantime, it's business as usual as the team continues to index your Ancestor Charts in the traditional way. I want to reassure members that we will continue this work, even after the GEDCOM project gets under way. It is important to the Society to ensure that all our members have access to our Ancestor Chart library in whatever format you require.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns that I can help with. And, for those members who are already familiar with GEDCOM, why not share your experiences? We would love to hear what you think is good or not so good about the file format, which software package(s) you use, any pitfalls to watch out for, and so on.

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100 Club News

The 100 Club gives our members the opportunity to win a cash prize while also supporting the Society's work. All you need is a UK bank account, wherever you live. The fee for each number held is £12 per annum and is payable annually, by Standing Order. If you would like to join, please e-mail the address below.

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

If you decide **not** to renew your ANESFHS membership, please **also remember to cancel your Standing Order for the 100 Club**. Only **you** can cancel your own Standing Order. If cancellation is not requested, the transaction will continue.

The draw takes place monthly, and **we now pay winners via online banking. We need to be kept up to date with any changes to 100 Club members' bank-account details**. Winners are informed personally and are announced in the Journal. For further details, please email *100club@anesfhs.org.uk*.

	1st prize		Mem.	2nd prize		Mem.	3rd prize		Mem.	4th prize		Mem.
	No.	(£17·80)	No.	No.	(£13·35)	No.	No.	(£8·90)	No.	No.	(£4·45)	No.
Nov	Derek 63 Ferguson	17823		Debra 114 Tomkinson	15015		Maureen 4 Taylor	1553		Raymond 115 Mennie	11359	
	(£18·37)			(£13·78)			(£9·18)			(£4·59)		
Dec	Margaret 121 McDowall	18020		Raymond 105 Mennie	11359		Kenny 61 Harrison	13946		William 73 Copland	20126	
Jan	Raymond 102 Mennie	11359		William 87 Watson	8320		Paul 107 Byrnes	14082		Robert 14 Strowger	21446	

Journal Proof-reading and Layout: Join our team

In years past, the Editor has politely declined offers of help with Journal proof-reading. Now he would very much appreciate help with this. Do you have sharp eyes and a keen sense for detail? We would love to work with you on the Journal Team.

To get involved, contact us at *journal@anesfhs.org.uk*.

Members' Meetings

Bruce Durie, "Records of Inheritance, or: Who Got the Land?"

16th November 2024



Bruce Durie's talk on wills, testaments and retours was a rip-roaring *tour de force* that garnered lots of enthusiastic responses for what, at first glance, might have seemed like a dry topic. Bruce has an impressive CV: he set up and ran the first Masters-level genealogy qualifications at Strathclyde University and is *shennachie* to the Chief of Durie.

Bruce's overall message was that, once you have completed all your traditional birth, marriage and death researches, you will find lots of fascinating and useful insights by consulting wills and testaments.

There was no legal requirement to make a will, and few people did. Most times, a family would settle the deceased's affairs without any need for one. Generally speaking, an eldest son would inherit the moveable property, that is to say, land or buildings. A wife would automatically inherit a share of any funds, or other moveable property, and all children inherited a share. Bruce explained the concept of "the deid's pairt", which simply meant that, once the automatic allocations were made, the person who wrote the will could specify what they wanted to happen to the rest.

Bruce explained the difference between sets of records like sasines, which recorded land sales, and retours, which recorded changes in ownership through inheritance. From 1700 to 1859, printed *Indexes to the Services of Heirs in Scotland* were produced. By checking the name of the heir, you can find their designation and some details of the person from whom they have inherited, which is all treasure for a family historian because it pre-dates statutory registration. However, there was no time limit to register a retour, and some heirs only bothered to get the changeover recorded if the inheritance was challenged by another claimant, or if they needed to prove ownership so that they could sell a property.

Bruce has made the research task a lot easier for the rest of us, since he has published the *Retours of Services to Heirs* in three volumes: Volume A, 1544–1699 (Aberdeenshire to Kirkcudbrightshire); Volume B, 1544–1699 (Lanarkshire to Wigtownshire); Volume C – 1700–1860s. He has generously donated a set of volumes to the Society Library; and you can get your very own copy at <http://www.brucedurie.co.uk/books.html>.

We have signed him up immediately to talk to us again in our 2025–26 season for another session that is bound to be both educational and entertaining in equal measure.

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Journal Team

Moray/Banff Group Report

Our November meeting was face to face in Elgin Library on our usual first Saturday of the month. Our topic was "Five-minute family history", the idea being that members would give us a short presentation on any aspect of family history in which they were particularly interested. These ranged from a fairly general interest in one aspect, such as background or school records, to a concerted effort to find out more about a specific person.

Renovation work will now rule out any meetings in Elgin Library until at least May, so we also discussed whether to seek another home for a few meetings or to stay online-only for a few months. We decided to use Zoom for all meetings until we can return to the Library. Most of our Library participants are able to join online meetings – and we also developed an interesting plan for meeting face-to-face otherwise.

In December we met online, with “New Year Resolutions” a useful topic. Members were asked both to list some of their own genealogical resolutions and also suggest one main resolution that they would recommend to others who were working on their family history. The most popular was to press forward with research, and in particular with writing up our stories. Too often, we keep lingering in order to improve the story we’re writing by hoping to add more. One member had been given some sound advice: “Done is better than good”.

No suitable date emerged for a Christmas lunch at Threaplands, but several people suggested postponing it. This also made sense as a chance to meet face-to-face in February and April as usual, in addition to meeting online. This proved a very popular idea, so we will meet for lunch at Threaplands in February on a Saturday, and for April we will aim for midweek to give as many members as possible the opportunity to join us.

At our January online meeting, well over 70 participants looked in some detail at free resources. It is surprising just how many are out there, from both ever-expanding websites such as FreeCen – www.freecen.org.uk – to local archives which we can visit in person. All of these, along with some non-free resources, are available in a handout.

We shall be holding our usual first-Saturday-of-the-month meeting online in February, but those of us who are reasonably local to Elgin will also be meeting up for lunch!

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Edinburgh Group Report

Geoff Hare, “Secret Seminaries: Training Priests After Culloden”

9th November 2024

Our Edinburgh Group was delighted to welcome local member Geoff Hare to the floor. Geoff’s talk did exactly as his title described, but along the way he took us on an exotic journey from the remotest corners of Scotland to the torrid plains of Spain.

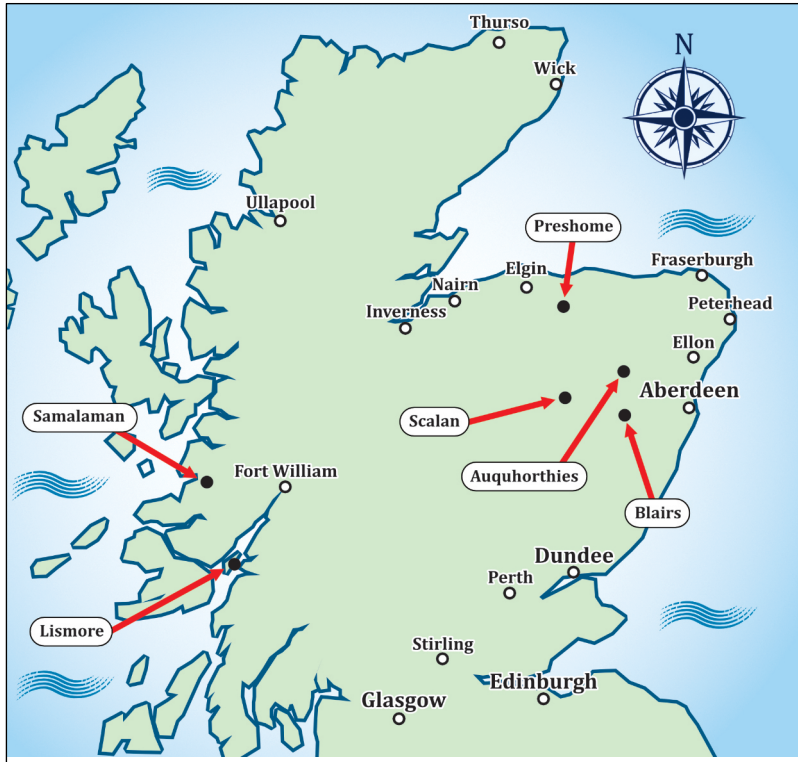
Setting out the backdrop, Geoff explained that Catholicism had faced multiple challenges after the Reformation and the Jacobite Risings. The ensuing persecution of Catholics and their priests, as well as the Clearances and other voluntary migration away from the Highlands, meant a shortage of trained priests.



Before the mid-19th-century Irish potato famine, Catholic numbers were greatest in remote parts of the Western Highlands and Islands and in parts of North-East Scotland, mainly the lands of the Duke of Gordon that stretched from the Moray Firth coast into the Grampian Mountains and included the Enzie and Glenlivet. In the early 18th century there were 50 Catholics in Glasgow but 1,000 in Banffshire, many in the Enzie, where Preshome Church was built in 1790 to accommodate 500 worshippers. A census taken in early 1760 had shown the Highland Catholic population was perhaps twice as large as that in the Lowland district – altogether a quite different picture from what we are used to today.

Several seminaries were established in remote parts of Scotland to avoid persecution, exile or death: Loch Morar (1712–15), Samalaman, Moidart (1732–1803), Lismore, off Oban (1803–28), Scalan in Glenlivet (1732–99) and Aquhorthies, near Inverurie (1799–1829). These were finally replaced by the national seminary, Blairs College, south of Aberdeen (1829–1986). The numbers of students were never huge, and the cohorts drew heavily on their local area. Scalan produced 63 priests, around 8–9 per decade of its existence, most of them born in the Enzie, Glenlivet, Strathavon, Strathbogie, Mortlach and the Cabrach.

Despite the small numbers, priests from North-East Scotland often came to occupy high positions in the Catholic Church in Scotland in the troubled century following Culloden.



Many completed their training in one of the handful of Scots Colleges set up on the Continent (France, Rome, Spain). However, access to these was often difficult, and some were unable to at all during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.

Geoff then focused on the Scots College set up in Valladolid in Spain, giving us an insight into the life of the seminarians. The first Rector (1771–80) was John Geddes, later Bishop Geddes, himself a Banffshire loon who was born in 1735 at Mains of Corridoun, Enzie. He had been Master of the college at Scalán from 1762 to 1767 before setting off with a group of students for Spain. The long and arduous journey included

mail coaches from Aberdeen to Edinburgh and then on to London. One group of boys took 30 days to travel from London to Spain. Their boat was forced off course, and they had to board a second vessel to reach Bilbao. It then took them a further 10 days by mule to travel to Valladolid.

There were always concerns over funds and expenditure, which resulted in privations for the boys. One group received cloaks of rather lightweight material in the summer of 1774 that eventually had to last them until November 1776. The cloaks were too hot in the summer and insufficient in winter. Of the college's 32 entrants during Geddes's rectorate, 17 were ordained but 14 left unordained and one died. In fact, ill health plagued many of the students because of the poor conditions in which they lived.

Geoff is well known for his interest in the family of James Gordon Bennett (see Journal 145, November 2017, pp. 40–43) – and he had a surprise in store for us. One of the North-East students at Valladolid was Cosmo Bennett, youngest sibling of James Gordon Bennett senior, the American newspaper publisher (*New York Herald*), making Cosmo the uncle of JGB junior, who inspired the exclamation “Gordon Bennett!” Cosmo, born in 1801 in the Enzie, had been at the Junior Seminary at Aquhorthies before transferring to Spain. One of his fellow students, James McHattie, was probably his cousin. Sadly, Cosmo was one of the students whose health failed, and in April 1825 he was sent back to Aquhorthies, where he died of tuberculosis on 10th May. function His burial site is unknown.

There had, however, been some happier outcomes. Perhaps one of the most interesting was Lachlan MacIntosh. Born in Braemar in 1753, he entered Scalán in 1770 and transferred to Valladolid around 1773. He abandoned the college in 1778 and, by some accounts, either won the Spanish lottery or became mentally ill, or both, eventually finding himself in Madeira, where he was ill and narrowly escaped death. He made his way back, penniless, to Valladolid in 1781 and knelt at the door of the seminary to beg readmission. A reformed character, he was ordained a year later and served as the parish priest back home in Glengairn, near Braemar. He served for 64 years, dying in March 1846.

Sources

Michael Briody (ed.), *The Scots College, Spain, 1767–1780: Memoirs of the Translation of the Scotch College from Madrid to Valladolid*, by John Geddes (Salamanca, 2015).

Maurice Taylor, *The Scots College in Spain* (Valladolid, 1971).

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Glasgow Group Report

Ken Nisbet, “Making Best Use of the Updated Scotland’s People Website”

23rd November 2024

Our weel-kent and extremely knowledgeable speaker, Ken Nisbet, guided us through the revamped *Scotland’s People* website with wisdom and many helpful tips, demonstrating the processes step by step while sharing his screen access to the live site.

This iteration of the website has received mixed reviews. The positive view is that it’s easy to read, but the many negatives include that it requires too many steps to do anything, too much scanning and moving about the screen and a downgrading of the image controls. So, it was most interesting to see how Ken dealt with it in this live demonstration.



First stop for family historians is the “People” section: Statutory Records. Ken’s mantra for any Birth/Marriage/Death search was to start large by using wildcards and fuzzy matching to keep the field broad and catch any inconsistencies in spelling, as well as general or transcription errors. After that, you can start refining to hone down the results. He threw in pearls of wisdom along the way with a brief overview of Data Protection; of changing parish boundaries; and that mothers’ maiden names are indexed for most birth certificates except for 1890–1900 and 1910–20, but they have been “ghosted” out. A search which uses mother’s maiden name can reveal family groups and missing children.

Similarly, the advice when searching Church Records before 1855 is to cast the net wide to catch any overlap, whether geographically between parishes or between one type of congregation and another, for example Roman Catholic or Free Church.

Ken gave a brief overview with tips for the Census, Tax Records, Legal Records, Poor Relief, Migration, Prison Registers and Employment Records, pointing out that some are very limited just now. But these areas are designated to be added to as more of Scotland’s records become available in digital form.

Places, Virtual Volumes, Maps and Plans and Image Library were explained with helpful comments about the challenges of searching Virtual Volumes, the treasure trove of Maps and Plans and the expense of purchases from the Image Library. Ken shared ways to access the same information more economically, including the 1921 census using smart searching, and pointed us in the direction of research centres in Scotland where a personal visit can be less costly than searching online.

Many of Ken’s tips involved saving money. We laughed at *Scotland’s People*’s money-saving prompt “Viewing this image will cost you 6 credits. Are you *sure* you want to continue?” Due to the very addictive nature of family history, the answer is always yes! Haud me back.

Seeing Ken use the site live made it look very straightforward. His overall message was: play around with it; it’s free to search. I am sure he energised a lot of us to get torn in!

And just a quick reminder for Glasgow Group members that our next meeting on 22nd February will be in person only. Postgraduate conservation students from Glasgow University’s renowned course will be on hand to give hints and tips on restoring and maintaining your heritage textiles. An email to glasgow@anesfhs.org.uk to confirm your intention to attend would be much appreciated.

London Group Report

ANESFHS London Group continues to meet four times a year in Covent Garden. We have members from all over the South-East of England, and everyone is always welcome.

Our November 2024 meeting was spent looking at “brick walls”.

Our meetings this year are on 8th February, 10th May, 27th September and 22nd November. All meetings are in person and are 12:00–14:00. On 8th February, we are delighted that the speaker is to be one of our regular attendees, Nick Hide (no. 16941), on “A snapshot of Davidsons from Aberdeen and North-East Scotland”.

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Southern Ontario Group Report

Anne Park, “Roll of Honour – Stories of Local Heroes”

23rd November 2024

Many know Anne Park for the excellent work she has been doing for over 30 years on recording as much information as she can into a data bank recording those, from North-East Scotland and beyond, who died in the 1914–18 Great War (WW1).

Anne covered not only men who were born in the North-East but also some who had joined Canadian regiments, for the benefit of our Canadian online attendees. The stories were very sobering, with some families losing their only son, while others, including the Brooke and Tocher families, lost three, four or even five sons to the war or to its effects.

James and Elizabeth Combe, of Aberdeen, had a son named Lt Robert Grierson Combe in the Canadian Infantry – Manitoba Regiment, who was killed by a sniper in 1917. He was awarded the Victoria Cross and has a memorial at Vimy. His family installed the Roll of Honour memorial in Aberdeen.

Anne also talked about how she stumbled across a statue for Brigadier General Frederick William Lumsden at Eastney Barracks, Southsea. She knew the surname was from North-East Scotland, so she decided to research him. It turned out that he was the most decorated man who came from Aberdeen. Another man who got a special plaque was Captain Archibald Bisset Smith. He too received the Victoria Cross, and is remembered at Robert Gordon’s College as well as having his name at the Tower Hill Memorial in London.

Places where Anne has found plaques, statues or memorials include schools, Eastney Barracks and the Aberdeen Maritime Museum. Anne herself raises awareness by doing walk-and-talk events about WW1 servicemen in local Aberdeen graveyards.

Anne covered the stories of many Canadians, and said she found much of her information in Canadian enlistment papers and also Canadian newspapers. Men with family still back in Aberdeen were sometimes mentioned in newspapers there too, and Anne had stories and photos of many men taken from the newspapers. It was interesting to see the details that Anne has added on the index cards for these men, including the name of family members, service number, occupation and where the family lived. These personal details really were good leads for anyone searching for family-history clues. It was also amazing to see how far and wide the men were sent for active duty and the accomplishments so many contributed to. Whether you were an orphaned farmer’s son or a Lord and Lady’s son, many families lost a cherished family member.

You can tell that Anne puts a lot of heart and soul into her research and cares for the men’s memories, as she often personally visits their gravesites and has even left flowers for them.

We appreciate all the time and effort that Anne has put into her Roll of Honour work. Her data bank can be found at <https://www.anesfhs.org.uk/component/ww1roh/?view=about>.

Many thanks from our Southern Ontario Group to Anne Park for an excellent presentation and all the work that she has done. Anne's e-mail address is *doricanne@sky.com* if you would like to contribute any information to her Roll of Honour.

ontario@anesfhs.org.uk

Susan Brouwer No. 20475

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

Southern Ontario Group dates

22 nd Feb	Sally Low's presentation on the roles of Scots in Caribbean Plantations.
15 th March	Our talk for the Aberdeen group on researching Canadian records
6 th April	David Joiner will be presenting on Mapping with Google Earth Pro
20 th Sept.	Jamie Lees on her exhibition "At the Wellgate" about an abandoned family member

Australia and New Zealand Group Report

7th December 2024

This online meeting attracted 18 people. The brief was for attendees to "bring along someone they had found interesting" during their research. We had some sad stories and met some amazing ancestors, on whom we report below. Australians can access British newspapers online by using an NLA (National Library of Australia) library card.

Ann Swain (no. 200)

George Ingram (b. 1825) married Mary Irving in 1847 at Dalton, Dumfriesshire. He was a native of Daviot, Aberdeenshire, and became Superintendent of Police at Paisley near Glasgow. He died in October 1871 of typhus, which he had probably contracted in the course of his employment, and is buried in Paisley cemetery. Researching George and his family proved interesting, covering his time and police career in Dumfries and Paisley, and a considerable amount of general Scottish history was gleaned as a result.

Cameron Davidson (no. 22809)

Francis Charles Bruce Davidson (1866–1958) married Amelia Russell (1860–1949). The paper trail gives Jane Souter as his mother. She took Charles Bruce Leslie to court to have him declared the father. Jane Souter had more children with three other men, eventually marrying Robert Laing (1838–93). Cameron is interested that he has no DNA relation to anyone on the Leslie paternal side but has lots of links to the maternal side. DNA suggests that the match is a Meldrum (Aberdeenshire parishes of Kennethmont and Gartly).

Jocelyn Gould (no. 22034)

Thomas King, son of John King (born in Glasgow) and Elizabeth Priest (b. New Spynie, Moray), was born in 1852 at Cowfords croft in Speymouth, Moray. In 1879 at Burghead, Moray, he married Janet Gordon (b. 1859 in Botriphnie, Banffshire). He joined the police in 1883 at Inverness. In 1889, he was promoted and transferred within Inverness-shire to Nethy Bridge. May Macpherson and her daughter Christina Grant lived in a bothy at Milton of Tulloch, a croft about six miles from Nethy Bridge. With them was five-year-old Allan Macallum, son of a local poacher of the same name. On 20th December, the police were looking for this poacher. He was hiding in the bothy, and he shot PC King as soon as he opened the door into the kitchen. Macallum ran out of the bothy and escaped into the hills. He was captured four days later while PC King's funeral was being held.

David Stephen (no. 22841)

William Stephen, a fisherman, was born in Stonehaven before 1841. He became publican of the Creel Inn. He had nine children, some of whom migrated to Canada and New Zealand and some who remained in Scotland.

Ross McDonald (no. 15271)

John Gartly was Deputy Chief Constable at Kincardineshire. He was a Gartly born in Gartly. He suffered injuries trying to capture poachers in 1878. and died in 1879. Ross also found evidence of his service in catching poachers.

Robin Price (no. 18058)

Rev Dr James Sherriff was the minister of St Nicholas at Aberdeen for 36 years. He had three sons and two daughters with Amelia Morison. All three sons were sent individually to Madeira to recuperate because they were unwell, but all three died either on the journey or in Madeira. As for the two girls – one married a Burnett and lived in Edinburgh, and the other married a Cadenhead and emigrated to the USA – both survived and continued the line. They are interesting both because it's desperately sad and indicative of health issues in the early 1800s, and because there is a DNA match that confirms this line, proving the paper trail for my paternal side back six generations.

Marion Gullickson (no. 18971)

Margaret Bennet was born in Rathven, Banffshire, and married John Chapman in the parish of Bellie. They lived in Rye Riggs and had nine children, including William. She is notable for living to 102 years of age.

Carlina Paul (no. 23070)

James Scott was a farm servant born about 1842 in Methlick, Aberdeenshire. Carlina identified him through the birth record of his illegitimate daughter Elspet Scott, born in 1860. Exploration of the Ellon kirk session records revealed that he and Elspet's mother, Janet (Jessie) Smith, were punished for "the sin of Fornication contracted at Tillydeask in this Parish where they were servants last winter. Scott having acknowledged himself the father of Smith's child, both were addressed by the moderator and then dismissed to appear again."

Linda Penhall (no. 21517)

Linda's family of interest came from Botriphnie, where they were all tenant farmers on the Drummair estate. Her research highlighted the value of visiting grave sites. For example, one gravestone indicated that a Charles Stewart had died in 1852 in New Orleans. George McWillie kept a diary from 1829 to 1878. The diaries were found by the laird and were displayed in the local hall, where they first became known to the public in the 1980s. They were scanned in by Elgin Library, and a transcription is available on the Internet. The diaries show a well-travelled farmer, with a lot of social commentary as well as general information on farming and the weather.

Sharon Burke (no. 20713)

Donald Aird (1840–1920), my 2g-grandfather, was born in Alness, Ross & Cromarty to Mary McLennan (1806–46), who had been born in Fodderty, and John Aird (1801–86), born in Alness. Donald fathered a child at age 21 (Donald Mutch Aird, my grandfather, born 1862) with Isabella Mutch (1840–1915?), who was born in Ellon, Aberdeenshire. In 1868, Donald senior married Mary Cruickshank (1842–1901, born in Bourtie); and they parented Donald Mutch and had nine other children. Donald worked as a stiller most of his life at Dalmore and Jericho distilleries, Jericho being one of the "Lost Distilleries". Donald Mutch Aird emigrated to Australia in 1883.

Graham Robertson's Mystery Object Quiz



We have another brain-tickler for you here. Do you know what these objects are? Have you come across them amongst your granny's treasures and wondered what they were? Some of your North-East ancestors may have used them ... but what for? The answer appears later in this issue.

Meet the Gang: Southern Ontario Group

The Southern Ontario Group was formed in early 2020 at the suggestion of Ivor Normand, who provided Society contact information to allow Rod Coates, John McLean and Lorna Weber to organize the group. Given the geographic diversity of this group's membership (which includes a few non-Ontarians), coupled with the onset of Covid-19, meetings were held via Zoom – and that practice continues out of convenience and necessity.

Susan McPherson Brouwer joined the Society in 2013 and has been a Southern Ontario Group organizer since 2021, mostly finding presenters and composing Journal reports. Since retiring from Hamilton Public Library, she's had more time to devote to genealogy, reading and oil painting. Susan loves to find the stories behind the names in her tree and has also found DNA instrumental in solving some family mysteries (as well as adding some new ones!). Her grandparents met in Toronto, Ontario shortly after emigrating from Aberdeen and Inverurie respectively, but Susan is still finding links to Canada from 100 years earlier through DNA and military and merchant-service records.



Rod Coates is a transplanted New Brunswicker, having been born, raised and educated in that province. With an engineering degree in one hand and a French horn in the other, he moved to Ontario in 1975 to pursue full-time vocations in engineering and management, along with non-remunerative participation in choirs and bands to uplift his soul. Rod is fortunate that both parents opted to have ancestors from North-East Scotland, with the diaspora pattern of his Scottish families leaving for Canada beginning in 1788 and lasting until 1833. His interest in family history was piqued by a Grade 6 "My Ancestors" report and grew considerably upon leaving his native province. His first personal computer was purchased in 1984 to enable the management of family-history records. Rod retired and joined the Society in 2009, but his engaging with other ANESFHS members took a quantum leap in 2020 because of Covid-19 and Zoom. He continues to enjoy the never-ending story that is family-history research.



David Joiner recently retired from teaching secondary-school geography at St Andrew's College in Aurora, Ontario, after previously conducting climate-change research in northern Manitoba and educating in eastern Ontario. He appreciates how the geographic themes of place, region, interaction, movement and environment are all relevant to family-history research. He enjoys sharing information about relatives and ancestors in ways that provide spatial context, such as using digital maps to chronicle his maternal ancestors' six-week 1847 journey from Ireland to southern Ontario at the height of the Great Famine. His paternal grandfather emigrated from Aberdeenshire to Canada in 1912, and David joined the Society in 2007 to locate grave sites and other

genealogical details prior to a visit to Scotland. Along with being a Southern Ontario group organizer since 2021, David enjoys camping and science fiction.

Events and Notices

RootsTech, 6th–8th March 2025

RootsTech, FamilySearch's popular global online family-history event, will take place from 6th to 8th March 2025. Speakers will include Ndaba Mandela, author and grandson of Nelson Mandela; prominent artist Dana Tanamachi; and Olympic and Paralympic gold medallists Tara Davis-Woodhall and Hunter Woodhall. Millions of participants will enjoy hundreds of classes, localised experiences, and interacting with presenters, exhibitors and other virtual and in-person attendees through an e-chat feature online and in the mobile app. The event takes place live, in person, but you can also attend online, completely free. You can register to attend the three-day event online at RootsTech.org.

“Ken Your Kin”, Strathclyde University, 4th–11th June 2025

Strathclyde Institute for Genealogical Studies (SIGS) is launching a summer school, Ken Your Kin, this summer in Glasgow..

Whether you're a seasoned genealogist or just beginning your journey into Scottish family history, the “Ken Your Kin” summer school will both celebrate and bring Scottish ancestry and heritage to life!

The 7-day programme includes -

- Talks from Scottish historians, museum curators and family history experts
- Opportunities for one-to-one input from qualified genealogists
- Experiencing Scottish food, drink and traditions
- Visiting a range of museums, cultural and literary venues
- Enjoying a vibrant social programme

It's ideal for groups or the solo traveller. You can also join an optional 2-day “Introduction to Scottish Family History” course. Access further details at <https://www.strath.ac.uk/>.

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Mystery Object Answer



If your late 19th-century ancestor wanted to pull their boots on more easily, they might slip the hooks of these boot pulls or boot hooks through the loops at the back or sides of their boots and pull them up. These have bone handles. .

And, just as a reminder, we reprint here the fleam that was the Mystery Object in the previous issue and evoked memories for two readers.



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Letters to the Editor



Dear Editor,

Mystery Object: Fleam

It was with much interest that I viewed the mystery object of a veterinarian's fleam in Journal 172. While researching my wife's Banffshire Dalgarno ancestry, I found a most illuminating article in the *Banffshire Journal*, 14th March 1854, relating to the presentation of a fleam to Alexander Dalgarno, meal miller in Mill of Minnonie in the parish of Gamrie. The following article illustrates the value of researching local newspapers and drawing on their ability to add many new dimensions to the lives of our forebears.

GAMRIE PRESENTATION. Some time ago, a number of farmers in the district of Gamrie, impressed with the great benefit many of them had received from the services of Mr Dalgarno at Minnonie, who, when there was no veterinary surgeon in the district, gave his attendance – often at great inconvenience to himself, and always gratuitously – resolved on taking steps to present him with some expression of their gratitude. Accordingly, on the suggestion, we believe, of Mr Watt, Clinterty, it was resolved to set on foot a subscription; and the result was the purchase of a “fleam”, with a handle of solid silver, and the collection of £20, both of which were presented to Mr Dalgarno on Wednesday last, at a meeting specially held for the purpose in the Gardenston Inn. Mr James Wernham presented the gift in a neat speech, which was also suitably acknowledged. The meeting afterwards spent a pleasant evening – Mr Wernham being chairman, and Mr John Ingram, croupier. The veterinary implement presented bears the following inscription: – “Presented, along with a purse of twenty sovereigns, to Mr Alex. Dalgarno, Mills of Minnonie, by a few friends, in acknowledgement of his veterinary services in this district”.

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Malcolm R Milne No. 1389

A Fleam, a Royal Crest and a Horseshoe

The Mystery Object in Journal 172 immediately drew my attention, as I have one but did not know what it was called or how it was used. However, as my Gordon ancestors were blacksmiths and farriers, I remembered a story about my great-grandfather John Gordon.

In September 1877, when Queen Victoria was in residence at Balmoral, she decided to take a “private” holiday to Loch Maree in Ross-shire with none of the formalities that usually had to take place when she travelled around the country. The journey therefore had to be kept as low-key as possible. Accompanied by Princess Beatrice, she left Balmoral on 12th September in the open horse-drawn royal coach, with servants in two other coaches, to join the royal train at Ballater. Word had got out, and crowds had gathered along railway lines and at stations, where they had put up bunting and flags. At Achnasheen, the royal party transferred to their horse-drawn coaches and headed to the Loch Maree Hotel.

The dignitaries who met or travelled in the royal train are well described in local papers, as are some details of what the royal party did when residing in the Loch Maree Hotel, which had a telephone installed to allow the Queen to keep in touch with her government.

On Tuesday 18th September, the royal party returned to Balmoral. However, one of the Queen's horses required to be reshod by a farrier before it could complete the journey from Ballater to Balmoral. My great-grandfather, a farrier at Kinnardie Smithy and Croft, Dingwall, was contacted, and it was arranged that he would meet the royal train on the outskirts of Dingwall. (The Hangman's Croft, as it was known locally, was on the Kinnardie

brae face. In 1956 the Croft ground was a nursery, and today it is part of a housing estate.) He quickly reshod the Queen's horse.

For his service, John Gordon received a Royal Warrant crest for tradesmen. In 1886 he moved from Kinnardie to 2 Mill Street, and the crest was fitted to the front of the smiddy there. It remained in place for the next 96 years, but its significance was really lost when it was painted over. My father removed the crest, and Mr Macleod of the Dingwall Museum cleaned and carefully repainted it in the required colours. My Dad died in 1985 and, after consultation with my brother and sister, the crest was handed over to the Museum, and that is where it can be seen today.

I once saw my father, an insurance manager by profession, fitting a horseshoe. During a holiday visit to the Dingwall smithy, my grandfather was shoeing a large Clydesdale. During the grown-up banter, Jock (my father) was bet that he could not shoe a horse. Jock took off his suit jacket, put on a leather apron and, with his own dad assisting, fitted a shoe on the Clydesdale. I was engrossed in watching when suddenly my grandfather lifted me on to a box on the bench, sternly telling me not to move. He then added with a smile that I would get a good view and that he did not want to have to deal with my grandmother and mother if I got hurt. I did not move until Jock took a white handkerchief out of his pocket and mopped his brow. I thus witnessed my insurance-manager father shoe his last horse.

Although these are Dingwall stories, my maternal grandfather was born in Aberdeen, and I married an Aberdeen lass, and my son was also born there.

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John A Gordon No. 12371

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Fine Fittie Folk Feedback

We received an enthusiastic response to Steve Edwards's detailed breakdown of the Valuation Roll data for Fittie (Footdee) village in Aberdeen. You can access the PDF file in our Research Centre in King Street or by emailing journal@anesfhs.org.uk.

We are researching my husband's family history and have found many of his ancestors were Fittie fisherfolk – Guyans and Allans mainly.

pat.sinclair@sky.com

Patricia Sinclair No. 24042

I saw Steve's article in the latest Journal. I believe he is my cousin! I had no idea I had relations in Fittie! My grandfather was Andrew Allan Guyan Milne.

ehnicol@aol.com

Edith Nicol No. 871

My family has ancestors, mainly Walkers, from Fittie, and I am interested in Steve Edwards's research. I would love to have a copy of the PDF version of "Fittie Folk".

l.westall@btinternet.com

Louise Westall No. 18698

I've just read the Journal article on Steve Edwards's "Fittie: Who lived where, when". My ancestors hailed from Fittie in the early 1800s, and I would love to see the information.

kandabrooks@gmail.com

Kathy Brooks No. 12024

I have just received Journal No. 172 and am very interested in the [Fittie] PDF ... My family is descended from Guyans, Allans, Baxters, Caies, Mains and others. I would also like to congratulate Steve on his project.

mikekennedy2407@gmail.com

Mike Kennedy No. 15552

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Yo Ho Ho: Fifteen Men on a Dead Man's Chest

Bruce Durie's recent talk on "Records of Inheritance" (reported in this Journal) contained a reference to 15 "upright and honest men of the country". The expectant heir to property was required to prove the right to inherit, so 15 men were called upon to hear the case and decide who the rightful heir was. It might remind you of the pirate song in *Treasure Island* – and Bruce had a hypothesis that, since the author Robert Louis Stevenson had studied law, he would have been familiar with this legal requirement.

I relayed the story to my daughter, who teaches English at a well-respected academy in Aberdeenshire. She queried the facts about RLS's legal studies vehemently! She was certain that all RLS was ever interested in was writing. Thus I also began to question Bruce's story (don't tell him!) and did a little bit of Google homework myself. It is most certainly true that RLS had declined his father's wish that he join the family engineering business. However, I have discovered that he was called to the bar, although he never did practise law, preferring instead to continue with his writing.

His father accepted Robert's choice but had insisted that he had some form of employment to support him. Perhaps the father thought that becoming a writer was too risky. And the rest, as they say, is history.

The next English Department staff quiz will include a question about 15 Dead Men and how RLS might have come to use it in his writing. And all thanks to Bruce.

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Helen Strachan No. 22873



GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

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

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ARTICLES

The Crash of Line-Fishing in the Cruden Bay Bram Stoker Knew

In my talk to the Society, reported in Journal 172 (November 2024, pp. 8–10), I spoke about the regular visits of Bram Stoker to my home village of Cruden Bay, then called Port Erroll, and the writing of *Dracula* there in 1895.

I also described the wonderful stories written by Adam Drummond, when he was minister in Cruden Bay between 1891 and 1895. His short stories, penned in Doric, tell of the lives of the fisherfolk in the village. In particular, they focus on their incredibly close sense of community in the face of the dangers of small-boat fishing at sea. Adam wrote them to read out at social functions, and never intended to publish them; altogether surprising, because the stories are well written and very readable. Bram Stoker also wrote about the fishing community, with much of the dialogue in the Doric dialect. As I researched the work of the two writers, I came across a huge story I knew very little about, and which is not widely known to the public: namely, that the busy North-East fishing villages which existed up to the end of the 19th century went into rapid decline after 1900, with numerous villages vanishing completely.

The fisherfolk in these villages, numbering anywhere between 100 and 300 in each community, carried out line fishing. Long lines, holding hundreds of baited hooks, were suspended close to the seabed in favoured near-coast locations. However, the late 1800s saw the rise and rise of the steam trawler industry, which was operated out of Aberdeen and Peterhead. Steam trawlers had sufficient power to drag a huge net along the sea floor to catch the same white fish the line fishermen were after, but in much larger quantity. The advent of trawling coincided with a rapid decline of fish stocks in the North Sea, and the line fishermen saw their catches diminish. Knowing who to blame – the trawler owners – they fought back: lobbying their MPs; writing letters to newspapers; and taking the trawler owners to court should their fishing lines be damaged by the trawlers. But most impressive of all was the huge demonstration held by the line fishermen against the activity of the trawlers, which went ahead in Peterhead on 28th January 1893.

The *Aberdeen Press & Journal* (30th January 1893) reported under the headline “Anti-Trawling Demonstration at Peterhead” that:

Early in the forenoon, the fishermen, to the number of nearly 2,000, were formed into procession and marched through the principal streets of the town. In the front of the procession was a boat placed on lorry, and the crew sitting in it shooting and hauling their lines. A banner bore the words, “No fish here”. Four flute bands provided march music, and the procession, as it wended its way through the town, excited considerable interest especially amongst the wives and children of the fishermen.

Mr William Murray Foreman, fisherman, Buchanhaven, moved the first resolution, which was – “That we view with alarm the rapid diminution of all kinds of white fish round the Scottish coast, which we feel is mainly attributable to the system of beam trawling, which destroys the spawning grounds, and captures large quantities of small and immature fish; it is therefore resolved that the subject be immediately brought under the notice of the Government in order that such remedial measures shall be applied as may be considered necessary”.

The government held many consultations on the issue, including a parliamentary select committee in Westminster. It was addressed by Port Erroll fisherman Alexander Duthie (who is the subject of one of Adam Drummond’s stories, “Duthie”). Yet the government was half-hearted in the measures subsequently adopted, including an exclusion zone for trawlers

three miles from the coast, but inadequately policed. The prevailing view among the MPs was that trawling represented the much-needed modernisation of the fishing industry, especially in view of the rapid growth in population in the industrial cities in the north of England. Fish, cheaper than meat, could be transported here from the larger ports of Aberdeenshire via the rail network.

The Port Erroll fishing community all but vanished by 1912, some taking up jobs with trawling companies in Aberdeen and Peterhead, others emigrating abroad. The writings of Adam Drummond and Bram Stoker are thus special: they capture what it was like to live in a busy Aberdeenshire fishing village.

I would be remiss if I did not dangle a few surnames for interested Society readers. The common surnames in the village were Summers, Milne, Hay, Tait and Mitchell. And in Stoker's novel *The Watter's Mou*, he name-checks real people from the village, albeit attending a fictional wedding. They are William McPherson and James Beagrie the shoemakers, David Mitchell from the salmon fishery, the fisherman Andrew Masson (although misspelling his name as "Mason"), John Reid who ran the grocery store, and Hugh McKay the butcher. They are listed in censuses and valuation rolls from the time.

Should you have ancestors in Cruden Bay, the local heritage group – which I help to run – organises an exhibition every year which show-cases a selection of the vast number of old photographs from our collection. Keep an eye on the Port Erroll Heritage Group Facebook page for details.

bishopsloch@yahoo.co.uk

Mike Shepherd

The Cruden Bay Bram Stoker Knew: Adam Drummond's stories, by Adam Drummond and Mike Shepherd, introduction by Louise Fyfe (2023), is available as a paperback or ebook on Amazon worldwide.

Port Erroll Fisher Folk: Massons and Robertsons

This is a belated thank you for Mike Shepherd's wonderful talk on Cruden Bay (report, Journal 172). I was alerted to it by a cousin who recognised the photograph of the Port Erroll fisher folk, so I Zoomed in from Australia at midnight! I found a copy of this photo among my uncle's possessions when I was clearing his house after he went to a nursing home. It was on the original glass, which was shattered, but I managed to get a company to reproduce the photograph.

When visiting my uncle in the nursing home after he had a stroke, I used to take a handful of photos with me to give us something meaningful to talk about. I had found them in no order and without any names or dates when cleaning out his house. He was a bachelor and had lived with his parents until their deaths, so had heard lots of family stories. He would have loved all the records which are now available on the Internet. I have found that 99% of what he told me was verified when I have looked up records online.

My grandfather, Andrew Robertson (1892–1972), is definitely the boy at the side of the roof. He was 8 years old at the time, according to my uncle, making this photo taken about 1900. The story was apparently that he didn't want his photo taken and hid behind the shed. He must have either wanted to see what was happening, or been convinced to appear. Andrew's elder brother James (1878–1967) was out on the boats the day the photo was taken. The woman on the left of the photo, with the basket, is Andrew's mother Barbara, née Masson (1855–1906), who married James Robertson (b. 1857 Buckhaven; d. 1939 Harbour Cottage, Cruden Bay) in 1877 in Cruden. Barbara's two daughters are standing behind: Barbara Ann (1881–1966) and Christina (1890–1973). My uncle told me that the two girls identified as sisters were bookended by their parents. However, Alan Strachan, another Robertson family researcher, thinks one of these girls belongs to his line of the Robertson clan. He says that the one closest to the mother is Jane Masson's daughter Barbara Ann (b. 1891), that the lady

to Barbara's left is her sister Jane "Jeannie" Masson who married William Robertson (1863–1914) in 1884, and the boy wearing the cap and with outstretched legs is their son James, aged about 3. I understand that two, maybe three, Masson sisters married Robertson brothers.

I now have doubts about the "father". My uncle said it was James Robertson (1857–1939), but he seems a far bigger man than in another photo I have of him. I then wondered if he was William Robertson (1833–1915), the grandfather rather than father of the girls. Perhaps another reader may have further information.

William Robertson had moved to Cruden Bay from Buckhaven in Fife in the 1870s after the death of his wife Christine Logie (1829–71), and he later married Ann Whyte in Cruden Bay. I wonder if he is the man on Barbara's left.

The Robertsons had been in Buckhaven for at least four or five generations. I have read online that the Buckhaven folk kept to themselves and even had their own language, perhaps originating from people from the Netherlands who had been shipwrecked there.

The photo of Port Erroll fishermen that Mike showed in his talk was also among my grandfather's photos. Grandfather only returned once to the UK after emigrating to Australia, when he had a period of recuperation at a Dorset hospital during WW1 after being wounded at Bullecourt, France.



James, my grandfather's elder brother who was out on the boats that day, emigrated to Australia in 1927 only weeks after the death of his wife, with his six children. His wife was a Summers. The passage was booked, they were packed, so he decided to go ahead with the journey, once again because of the decline in fishing in Cruden Bay. His father James (1857–1939) accompanied them, but returned to Scotland.

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Carol Korn No. 24158

Mike Shepherd, who knows Cruden Bay well, was able to tell us that the photo was taken in Harbour Street, at the road end of Green Street. He got his copy from Ann Findlay, whose mother and grandmother are in the photo, standing third and fourth from the left. Based on their likely ages in the photo, she believes it was taken around 1902. Mike also believes the

photo must date from the early 1900s since William Tait, a well-known figure in the village up to the 1970s, is a young man in the photo.

The hut behind them is a typical fisherman's storage hut. It was known as "the parliament" because it was a favourite meeting place for the men. Ann says there was a fireplace inside and the atmosphere could get very smoky with the men smoking their pipes.

The hut no longer exists, while the water pump in the picture was relocated in the 1960s. There was no running water in the fisher houses, so this was the communal water pump for this part of the village.

We sent the picture to one of our other speakers, Joe McLeod (no. 21957), who also has an interest in the way of life in the fishing villages. (He wrote an account of Burnbanks village, where he lives now.) He pointed out the two lines baskets, and suggests the strings on the lines basket on the left are wool ties to group lines and prevent tangles. He suggests the basket under the lines is a round basket used for carrying the fish, and the galvanised bucket in the middle would be holding bait, mussels or fish bits.

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Journal Team

Port Erroll Fishermen around 1900



Back row (L to R): William Tait; John Summers (Pad Hull's Jock); Tom Milne; John Hay (Jock Lipton); George Alexander (George Pot); William Milne.

Middle row (L to R): Andrew Summers (Croll); George Milne; George Alexander (Geordie Shuner); Robert Taylor (Robsie); Robert Tait (Robbie Tom); William McKay (Tucker); Charlie Mason (Coop); G. Mitchell (Mishak); D. Mitchell.

Front row (L to R): Andrew Duthie (Kitly Onzie); George Noble (Nobly); Alexander Robertson (Gorlin).

Port Erroll Fishermen – a postscript

Journal 172 reported on Mike Shepherd's talk on "The Cruden Bay of Bram Stoker and Adam Drummond". This talk generated a lot of positive feedback, with a number of comments on these photographs which featured in the presentation.

Carol Toshney (non-member) wrote: "It certainly holds a personal connection for me. William McKay (Tucker) was my 2g-grandfather – his oldest son (my great-grandfather) was known as Tucker's Bill. We can however find no reason for the "Tucker" – this has been lost in the mists of time."

The photos also struck a chord with Marianne Porter, who identified the same William McKay as her 2g-grandfather. She says it has made her determined to revisit Cruden Bay.

My mother came from a long line of Cruden Bay folk, dating back to at least the early 1800s. I think the McKays were a long-standing Cruden Bay family. I am researching my maternal line of ancestors, and William was married to my 2g-grandmother, Elspet or Elsie Stewart. He was born in Cruden Bay/Crudon on 7th February 1857. His father was William G. Stewart, also from Cruden, and his mother was Ann Mitchell. He was living in Cruden in the 1861 and 1871 censuses but had moved briefly to Banff in 1881. He was back in Cruden by the 1891 census, living in New Block, then in Pleasant Cottage in 1901 and Green Street in 1911. He died in Cruden Bay in 1935, having been a fisherman all his life.

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Marianne Porter No. 837

—oOo—

Alexander Gibb Troup, Chief Engineer on the SS *Norwood*

Alexander Gibb Troup is included in the ANESFHS World War 1 Roll of Honour database.



I was recently given a commemorative document listing the names of those lost on the SS *Norwood*, together with photographs of Alexander (1868–1917, the ship's Chief Engineer) and his wife Jane Bridgeford Tosh (1872–1923, my paternal grandfather's sister). This encouraged me to research the fateful final voyage of the ship; and I wondered if other Society members had lost family on board.

The SS *Norwood* was owned by the Aberdeen, Newcastle & Hull Steam Ship Company and was on a voyage from Middlesbrough to Aberdeen. Having entered Aberdeen Harbour and before tying up, they were instructed to travel instead to Peterhead. On arrival there, new orders were given to head back to

Aberdeen. As U-Boat activity had been sighted in the area, Aberdeen Harbour had now closed. The SS *Norwood* was torpedoed, with the loss of all 18 crew, east of Aberdeen Harbour by the German submarine UC-29 on 11th February 1917. Such a waste of lives! A court of enquiry was convened, and both Senior Naval Officers (SNO) responsible for the safekeeping and defence of the harbours of Peterhead and Aberdeen were reprimanded. The SNO for Peterhead was blamed for the loss of the SS *Norwood* and was removed from command.

Alexander and Jane had three known children, only one of whom survived to adulthood: Gertrude Bridgeford Troup (1904–70). Following the death of her mother, Gertrude lived with my grandparents for the rest of her life. She worked in the offices of Aberdeen's Shore Porters until retirement.

Source

McLeod, J. (2021), *Burnbanks Village* (Amberley Publishing Ltd).

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Avril MacGlashan No. 23060



The crew of the SS Norwood is listed on a commemorative scroll::

Captain James Haldane Schofield; Charles Murray; John James Aitken; John Bonner Christie; Lewis Wilson Morrison; Alexander Paterson; Edward Maxwell Silver; Arthur Ernest Albert Culling; William Smith; John Wattie Stewart; James Shepherd Coutts; Alexander Gibb Troup; William Rutherford; Charles Massie; Thomas Slater; Alexander Sangster; John Rae Booth; William Murray Loudon.

This copy is owned by Jenny Fiddes, granddaughter of James Coutts. Photo: David Geddes. More details of the Norwood and her crew can be found in Joe McLeod's book cited above.

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Aberdeenshire Burnetts and their Migration Patterns

by Susan (Kromer) Hunt, Donald Walker Quigley and Denise Spitsen HOB Board Member

When one hears about Burnetts from Aberdeenshire, one immediately thinks of Crathes Castle and the Burnetts of the House of Leys. While this group of more famous Burnetts resides near Aberdeen, another group of Burnetts have long resided in the Fraserburgh and Pitsligo area of north-eastern Aberdeenshire (1696 *List of Pollable Persons*, available from ANESFHS). Y-DNA testing has proven that these Burnetts do not share a common ancestor with the House of Leys for tens of thousands of years.

The Rutherford North Carolina Burnetts Surname Project at www.familytreedna.com, led by the authors, has been tracing the migration patterns of these Burnetts. These Burnetts have descendants who have migrated to the Virginia Colony of British America, Canada, Ireland and Australia. While paperwork trails have not yet identified a common ancestor for these Burnetts, Y-DNA testing of nearly 40 male descendants shows that they share a paternal ancestor born about AD 1400 (Big Y700 testing at www.familysearch.com SNP ageing calculations).

The paternal ancestries of these Burnetts have been traced back to an area within 20 miles of Fraserburgh, Scotland. From there, they are now found in five areas of the world.

Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire, Scotland

One of the Burnetts who has tested still lives in the Fraserburgh area, and his family has been in the area for hundreds of years. His line can currently be confirmed with primary source documentation back to a John Burnett, born 1810 in Fraserburgh. This tester is likely the key to connecting all of the other Aberdeenshire Burnetts from the Fraserburgh area. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that this line is connected to the Frasers of *Outlander* fame.

Londonderry, Northern Ireland

One of our international testers can trace his line back to Londonderry, Northern Ireland, where Samuel Burnett was born in 1824. He then migrated to West Lothian, Scotland, as shown by the 1851 census. Research is ongoing into how this line connects to the Aberdeenshire area of Scotland.

Canada

Our Canadian tester can trace his line to a John Burnett who was buried in the Old Kirkyard in Peterhead, Aberdeenshire. I photographed the gravestone in 2021. This family was in the

Peterhead area until 1841, when Peter Burnett married in Liverpool, England (records via Ancestry). Peter's son Francis Burnett then emigrated to Canada in 1871.

Australia

Our Australian tester's ancestors emigrated to Australia before 1916, when James George Burnett was born in Fremantle, Western Australia. His line can be traced back to a James Burnett, who married in 1797 in Tyrie parish, Aberdeenshire.

Virginia Colonies prior to 1735

The identity of the Burnett who left Aberdeenshire and emigrated to British America has not yet been found by primary source paperwork, but our research continues. Y-DNA testing of over 30 Burnett males has proved that his descendants, who were in Brunswick County, Virginia as adults in the 1730s (found in court minutes), share a male ancestor born about 1600. These Burnetts included John, Joseph and Thomas Sr. They were the fathers of several Burnetts, some of whom stayed in Virginia, including John Burnett who is the ancestor of Denise Spitsen, a Board Member of the House of Burnett. Others moved to Rutherford County, North Carolina before the Revolutionary War – Jesse, Joseph, Thomas Jr, and to Wake County, North Carolina – another Thomas Sr.

Further information on these families can be found by joining the Burnett Surname DNA Genealogy Group (link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/208317149732720>). The testers mentioned above are all members of the Rutherford North Carolina Surname Project at www.familytree.com, which this article's three authors administer. Research continues in all areas where our testers have been located to try to connect these lines.

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Susan (Kromer) Hunt No. 23056

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Lonmay and surrounding area Map: Steve Edwards

Ecclesiastical Account of Lonmay

This is an extract from an undated historical account written by the Rev. James Forrest (1843–1914), who was minister at Lonmay Church from 1878-1913. Prior to his ordination in 1876, he had been a schoolmaster in Auchterless. He was regarded by his successors as a noted theologian and Orientalist.

The Journal Team received this account twice: from Margaret Morrison (no. 19499), whose family lived in Lonmay; and from non-member Anne Bell, whose father was the Rev. Allan Fawkes, the last minister of Lonmay. Margaret had found it in her late mother's house in Charlestown, St Combs. Undated, but referring to "240 years ago", the document had been untidily typed after the author's death, and a copy sent to his cousin in Canada. Margaret retyped it and sent a copy to Society MIs stalwart Dr Jim Campbell (no. 12688), also in Canada. He was excited at its helpfulness in completing an MI reading, and he suggested that she forward the document to the Society.

We have made some changes to the order of the text for ease of reading and have omitted a lengthy section copied from Poll Tax records for Lonmay, since a full transcription is readily available. James Forrest's full document can be consulted in the Society's library in our Research Centre at King Street. Our thanks go to Jim Campbell for his photos of St Combs and Lonmay Old Kirkyard.



*Memorial stone
Lonmay Old Kirkyard
Photo: Jim Campbell*

When the curtain rises on the ecclesiastical scene in Lonmay, we find from the Presbytery Books Mr Thomas Rires acting as teacher in Lonmay. That was in the year 1603, the year that King James of Scotland became King of Great Britain and Ireland. Mr Ririe's school was at St Combs, somewhere beside old kirk which, it would appear, had become absolutely dilapidated and was then considered too far from the growing population in the middle and south end of the parish. The presbytery had been seriously considering the necessity of having a minister and teacher settled in Lonmay and not dependent on chance supply, as had been the case since the Reformation in 1560, 43 years before. Steps were accordingly taken and the patron, Robert Irvin of Lonmay, appointed Mr Thomas Rires the first minister of Lonmay in 1604 (1st December).

In 1452, a precept of Sasine of King James II to Sir Gilbert Keith of Inverugie, Knight and William Aberdon, Sheriffs of Aberdeen to give seisin to Alex Irvin, son and apparent heir of Alexander Irvyne of Drum, Knight and to Janet Keith, his wife of the lands of Lonmay, Svcoch, Corsekellie and Cairness in Buchan.

After his settlement, the question about having a new church built in a more suitable and more convenient place than the old one at St Combs became a burning one for the heritors. The presbytery ordered the laird of Lonmay, patron of the Parish, to have a new one built, which he did not see his way to do and in consequence, the Synod was appealed to in 1605 and it decided that the work should be started at once. But still the laird held back and it was not till 1607 that he was forced to commence operations on a site in the



Old St Combs. Photo: Jim Campbell

lands of Lonmay in what is now the old churchyard where the forewall of the church he built is still to be seen, and the old church in the churchyard of St Combs was dismantled.

So the parish had a new kirk and a minister. A glebe was also set apart for the minister in 1610.

The next thing which appears in the records is the question of a new school. It seems Mr Rires had taught in his own house while schoolmaster and that he still continued his teaching after he became minister. Times however were changing rapidly after the union of the Crowns and a new school had to be built and at the same time a manse for the minister. Furthermore a bell was needed to call the worshippers to church.

All this was no doubt a source of great annoyance and expense to Mr Irvin, but he had to yield most reluctantly and required continual prodding. The trouble about the school and the bell began about 1614, and in 1617 the school was not built and there is no word further about the bell, but in the end both had to be supplied. The first mention, however, of a schoolmaster as far as we can gather is in 1711, when a James Lyel is mentioned as schoolmaster.

Payment of schoolmasters

In 1696, in the first of the Scots Education Acts, it is expressly stated that “the heritors shall meet and provide a commodious house for a school”, but any building, stable, byre, a granary or “loft” or a ben of a cottar’s house was considered quite good. The salary was to be not less than 100 merks per year and no more than 200, which the Act thought liberal. In Sterling this amounted to £5.11.1½ and £11.2.2⅓, with any extras they could make. This salary scale lasted for many years.

The trouble that it caused Mr Rires to wring these concessions out of the patron induced him to build a manse for himself at the cost of 550 merks, or £30.11.1 Sterling. It must have been a very modest building at that money; probably the walls were built of turves with thatched roof and earthen floors, but it was probably considered sufficient in those days. The minister made it a condition of his building the manse that his executors should be repaid by his successors in office for his outlay, but as his immediate successor happened to be his own son, the parish received one legacy free of duty from its first minister. We can have little idea of the miserable hovels that served for dwelling houses in those days, made of divots and clay, and a stone house was sufficient to make a name for a place, as for example Stone house in Rathen.



Lonmay Old Kirkyard. Photo: Jim Campbell

It seems there was much left to be desired in the morals of the people when Mr Rires was settled, for we find a long account in the Presbytery books of the evil treatment that some “Englishers” were subjected to when their ship was wrecked on the sands near Netherton and we shall have occasion to see, by and by, that things mended slowly as the years passed on. It is rather unfortunate that no very good example was shown to the parishioners by Mr Thomas Rires in his old age. In 1651 it seems that William Rires, his son, had been for some time acting as assistant and successor to his father and that there had arisen between father and son an unfortunate controversy which had reached the ever open ears of the Presbytery, which appointed a committee of four to look into the matter; but to little effect, for instead of mending, the relations between the two grew worse, for William took umbrage at the Presbytery, absented himself from their meetings and was censured for this and for some other things besides.

He was charged with neglect of lecturing on Sabbath and on week days, of catechising the “parochin”. When asked why he had neglected his duty, he said his father, when in health, always preached, and that his father was in the pulpit before the hour of service and so kept him out. As to catechising, his father, he said, would not let him but did it himself and further gave out tokens (in spite of his protest) to communicants, some of whom were scandalous livers. The Presbytery found it necessary to come to the parish and make enquiry into all the matters concerning these two. In the records we see the son turned the tables on his old father and had him libelled on seven counts before the Presbytery, the majority of whom were, through political ecclesiastic reasons, opposed to the minority to which the old man belonged.

The quarrel continued until the old father died in 1658. If all accounts are true, the cause of all the trouble lay in the household of the junior minister in the shape of his mother-in-law and from the fact that these days were those of strife and contention all through the country between those who favoured the Solemn League and Covenant and those who favoured the King. William Rires, the son, died probably about 1683.

He was followed by James Irvine, who was translated from Muthil and died in 1690. Mr John Howestone, who succeeded, is described as an intruder, i.e. he was an episcopalian, who had been appointed by the patron against the wishes of the government, which had recognised the Presbyterian order of worship and polity as the nation’s. We know nothing about him except that he died in 1707 and that his widow resided in Fraserburgh.

Then came a great struggle as to the appointment of a successor. The elders, with whom the appointment now rested, made out a list of candidates and finally made a choice of a Mr Irving, whose great supporter was Doctor Gordon of Craigellie. But the Presbytery rejected him owing to charges brought against him by a Mr Duncan. Six weeks were given to choose another and, on the people being sounded, they fixed on one named Clerihew in opposition to the wishes of Col. Ogilvie’s chamberlain, Mr Abernethy. Ogilvie was then the laird of Lonmay. On account of this opposition, there followed many appeals to the Presbytery and Synod and so Clerihew was also shelved. Next followed Col. Ogilvie’s petition for the man of his choice, a Mr Stewart, but he too had to retire.

The Presbytery, seeing the hopeless state of matters, assumed the right they had waived before of appointing a successor and gave the call to a Mr Thomas Gordon on 22nd September 1709. He did not get settled without some trouble and anxiety, for the people of Boatlea, to the number of 11 households, were opposed to his settlement and threatened him on his way to ordination. They resolved to station themselves at the Lochee Brig and kill him with their big spades. One of the fishermen’s wives, fearing murder and that her husband and son might suffer for the blood of the slain, ran on, in secret, to the Philorth Brig to warn Mr Gordon not to risk his life in coming to Lonmay. He only laughed at her as she begged him, if he had no regard for his own life, to spare her husband and son the guilt of blood. But he would not listen and coming to the Lochee Brig, he found things as the woman had said, men with scowling faces and big spades in their hands. Coolly he went forward and expressed agreeable surprise at seeing so many of his parishioners coming so far and so kindly to welcome him. The ringleader, taken aback, flung down his spade and so did the rest, and they all followed him to the church and were his greatest friends ever after.

[At this point, the author goes into detail about Lonmay’s lands, proprietors, occupiers and occupations around 1695. Much of it is taken from the 1696 Poll Book for Aberdeenshire and was published in 1995 by ANESFHS as an indexed booklet, The People of Lonmay and Crimond, 1696, available for reference in the Society’s library, or to purchase via our website. We pick up the text after that.]

Poverty and famine

In those days farms rarely were valued at more than £8 to £13 of rent, which was paid mostly in kind. Farm servants were paid four pence a week if unmarried and if married, £7 or £8 a year. Blacksmiths and carpenters and weavers had little money passed through their hands, for they too were paid mostly in kind and if in money, at the most six pence per day; while tailors received two pence or three pence a day and their broth. In 1695, the following were listed as tradesmen: Alex Cruden, Tailor, Craigellie; Thos Cruden, Weaver, Cairness; John Cruden, Tailor, Cairness.

The same tale of poverty is told in the Kirk Session Records. When Mr Gordon came to the parish in 1709, an empty box awaited with no records of the past and not a copper for the poor. He had no elders till 1711, when the following were appointed: Col. Ogilvie of Lonmay (who had purchased some years before the land from Forbes of Tolquhon); William Leith, Mill of Savoch; John Mitchell, Walkmill of Crimonmogate; Andrew Robertson, Cairnglass; Jas Charles, Kininmonth; Jas Cruden, Lonmay; William Robertson, Corskellie; James Herald, Dartfield; William Robertson, Park; and Robert Forbes, Cortiecrow. In 1726 we find three new elders appointed: William Anderson, James Gall, Greenec; and George Pyper, Lonmay; and in 1752 there are mentioned as elders William Keith, Park; William Gall, Lumbs; James Gall, Greenec; Alex Duncan, Cairnlob; William Hay, Kininmonth.

As regards money circulating at the beginning of the 18th century, the church records give another sad account. It would appear that for many years there had been a desire on the part of the worshippers to keep up appearances by putting a coin, not otherwise passable, into the box on Sunday. In 1729 at a meeting of Kirk Session it was reported that most of the money in the church box consisted of bawbees and Turners or boddles, among which there was found ten pound weight of bad money which had to be sold to a merchant at 10/- Scots per lb, so that after disposing of the bad money there remained in the box of current coin, £60 Scots [one pound Scots was only equivalent to 1/8 of a pound sterling]. It was said that folks in Aberdeenshire sometimes put in bad bawbees and took out good ones, and it was also said that the merchants who received the bad coins sold them to the church-going folk at a profit on what they paid the Kirk Session and that the same coins came back over and over again. In order to stop this, the minister sometimes sent the bad coins to the town of Aberdeen or took it to Edinburgh at Assembly time. Occasionally the bad money was cast into the “dead bell” when the old bell was no longer of use and sometimes used to make “jougs” or brancks for delinquents. Besides native bad coin, many Irish Harps, or Hibernians as they were called, were found in the box. You might think that this was owing to pure greed or wickedness on the part of our forefathers, but it was not so. They were so utterly poor about the beginning of the 18th century. The years 1696–1703 were years of famine, caused by continuous easterly hoars [frosts], sunless drenching wet summers and by bitter frosts and deep snow in autumn. The people during them had to try and reap what remained of their crop in January and February to get that bad meal to keep body and soul together. Many perished of hunger. It was during these years that they spoke of people going to lick the walls of the mill. In this emergency the Privy Council allowed foreign grain to come in free which was sold at fixed prices: the maximum 28/- [shillings] Scots for barley per boll and 16/6 Scots for 1/2 stone of meal. It can be seen how much this affected Lonmay, for the minister was instructed by the Synod to purchase £3 Sterling worth of farthings in Aberdeen to distribute among the people so as to get rid of bad copper coins, Irish Harps and boddles.

In 1709 there occurred again a worse famine that completed the ruin of both farmer and labourer. All possessors of grain that year were ordered by the government to thresh it on a certain day and to bring it to market for sale at a fixed price. Tenants were driven to destitution, landlords to ruin, farms were deserted and the country would have been laid waste, had not the lairds been able to borrow money somehow and put in farmers at

“steelbow”, as it was called. That is, they offered a team of oxen and stock to those who would risk taking the farms and pay a nominal rent. Here in Aberdeenshire many left for abroad or went into Aberdeen or other towns to work, especially in the stocking factories. This was in 1709 and 1710. There were no Barley Mills till Lady Fletcher of Saltoun introduced them in 1710, and they were far from common in the north about 1742. The people had to grind it with the quern for themselves if they wanted barley meal.

Begging became a popular “occupation”. Many of the small landowners had to sell off, and in Lonmay there were many changes. Crimonmogate had to sell out, and Mr Abernethy bought the estate from John Hay, who was ruined by the bad times.

It was not until 1760 that the potato was generally cultivated, even in gardens. And for 20 years after that it was not greatly used as an article of food in the north of Scotland. The turnip seems to have been fairly common in Aberdeenshire about 1750 – but for many years grown in very small quantities. Imported grass seeds had been rarely sown till well after 1750. A great improvement in farming came after 1776.

In 1770 and again in 1782 there were excessively bad years bringing disaster once more to the country districts. In 1782 the harvest was unusually late. The harvest of that year is said to have been the worst on record. The summer was so cold and rainy that most of the oat crop was only beginning to shoot in the end of August. Early and severe frosts came in the middle of September which damaged most of the grain, and on the 5th of October a frost, armed almost with the vigour of a Greenland climate, desolated in one night the hope of the husbandman. At the end of October, a snowstorm of extraordinary severity for the season ensued. Snow lay a foot deep in many places and the storm continued for a whole fortnight. After it had passed away, the crop, still green but now past hope of proper ripening, was cut as it best could be in the continued cold and wet, though much remained uncut on 28th November. It could not be “led” till December, when two weeks of dry weather occurred. The oatmeal produced from the crop was acid and disagreeable to the taste. William Alexander in *Northern Rural Life* (1877, p. 57) wrote: “The ‘ill years 1782–3’ had the effect of ruining many farmers in Aberdeenshire, and some landowners as well; and a good deal of emigration to America followed.”

Note: 1696–1700: Patrick Walker, the Packman says: “The heat of the sun was so much beholden that it was discernable upon the cattle, flying fowls and insects decaying, that seldom a fly or cleg was to be seen. Our harvests not in the ordinary months, many shearing in November and December; yea some in January and February. Many contracting their deaths and losing the use of their feet and hands from working in frost and snow. And after all some of it standing still rotting on the ground and much of it for little use to man or beast and which had no taste of meal. Deaths and burials were so many that the living were wearied with the burying of the dead. Even all natural affections were lost in the people’s sad plight. In some parishes, the population diminished by half or more. The next famine was in 1740, the great frost in 1752–7, and the dear year in 1782.”

Farming methods

Even yet, the style of farming was primitive with the usual “outfield” and “infield” on each farm. The infield alone was manured – and that very poorly – and cultivated in two shifts: first oats, second barley or bere. The outfield was cropped till it could only produce two seeds for one sown and then allowed to be fallow for years, producing only natural grass with dockens, thistles and other weeds growing apace. There was an old rhyme repeated by our forefathers: “If land be three years out and three years in, ’Twill keep in good heart till the Deil be blin’.”

Cultivation was carried out by the 12 “ousen” wooden plough and wooden harrows which were continually breaking down and the rigs were raised up in the middle (Barrel rigs) from 20 to 40 feet wide. The farmers had a saying “it was not too late to sow till the ashleaf

covered the pyat's nest" (June). In the winter time cattle had very poor nourishment, some hay or straw or crushed whins so that in most cases, if they survived, they had to be helped out of the byres when spring came round.

Note from a contemporary publication (1798–1800?): "By universal consent the person who took the first place for knowledge of farming in Buchan was Miss Fraser of Inverallochy. Her farm was fenced with stone dykes and thorn hedges with intervening strips of plantation; drilled turnips, bear (bere) with grass seeds, thriving exceedingly, fine pasturage and the best sort of steers and cows; in short everything in perfection. I met a wain, deeply loaded with sea sheels, drawn by four fine bullocks. These were trained to draw in harness and I was charmed to see them take all the turns of the road like the best trained horses. In short, this lady is a miracle for farming, etc."

Manners and customs of the time



From the Kirk Session's records of the parish we learn much of the manners and customs of the time. There were, so far as recorded, only two change houses, i.e. public houses, in the parish; one kept by Gavin Seller in Greenee's field (opposite and East of Chapel) and another kept by William Mitchell at the Windmill. Both, you see, near the kirks old and new. We never hear of brawls through drink except on Sundays, the minister and Session taking no cognisance

evidently of what happened on other days. These places of entertainment were evidently necessary in these days when folk came miles to the services which lasted a good part of the day. On great occasions (such as fast days and communions) several preachers relieved each other and the service would last anything up to 12 hours. The ordinary service would "occupy" the hearers for over two hours and in many cases there would be afternoon services to follow.

In 1711 Robert Strachan appeared before the Session for being drunk between services with "ale gotten at Gavin Seller's inn". John Buchan (Long) and Robert Buchan (Brewster) and William Robertson were witnesses against him. Strachan acknowledged that he had come from home fasting in the morning and had "sitten" long in the Kirk and that he was never able at any time to drink a "choppin" of ale without being somewhat "disordered" but that his share that day with his neighbours had been only two pints. He had, despite the testimony of his friends, to appear in the place of repentance before the congregation for several Sundays. In 1712 Alex Leisk, Cairnglass, was punished for "being concerned with drink in William Mitchell's tavern at the Windmill" also on a Sunday and in 1714 one Alex Durno, Cairnchina was also brought before the Session for staying too long in Gavin Seller's tavern on the Lord's Day in the afternoon. Both the latter had to pay the usual penalty. One James Sangster, Newark, had evidently been there also before coming to church, for he was fined for fighting with Widow Christie about a book he said was his. In 1717 John Buchan (Long) and Janet Davidson his wife and William Quire in Cairnglass were fined for drinking and fighting in William Mitchell's tavern at the Windmill and another man, William Duncan, was hauled up for being drunk on Sabbath afternoon in William Watt's house, Cairnlob. In 1723 Barbara Shirref and Mary Milne had to do atonement for fighting with each other at Easter Cairness on the Lord's Day in the afternoon. One man appeared for shearing his corn on Sunday morning and pleaded the excuse "he forgot it was Sunday". John Buchan (Long) was brought up before the Sessions for playing

a “seacalf” (seal) on the Lord’s Day and pleaded that it was not on Sunday because he did it before sunrise. Many other incidents of boats being out at sea on Sundays are reported with always good excuses on the part of the accused. The elders’ eyes were everywhere even upon poor Barbara Morrison in Crimonmogate when she carried home on Sunday (October, 1711) a lapful of roots for her cow and upon John and William Henry (October 1712) for coming home in the “oonchancie” hours of Sunday morning from Fraserburgh with deals for their father’s coffin and James Sangster was made to appear in sackcloth for speaking disrespectfully on the Lord’s supper because he had been debarred from it for his ignorance and immorality (October 1711).

The cause of all this trouble on Sundays was probably the meeting of all the people together – a sort of weekly market – and there was always the alehouse close to the church which was open that day for refreshments before and after divine service. Such entertainment was necessary seeing the folk had come such long distances and travelling was so slow then.

It may be of some interest to know that up to 1733 there were no pews or fixed seats in the body of the kirk in front of the pulpit, except the one for offenders in front of the pulpit. Six new elders had been appointed that year in May and it seems that they had given an impetus to make the general congregation more comfortable during service by proposing to substitute pews instead of chairs and stools. In September 1733, the session considering that the body of this church where communion tables at Sacramental occasions are placed, is filled with stools and chairs which cause great disorder and indecency and all this could be obviated by building pews in their place. So they resolved that the minister should be appointed, should buy materials for the pews and make arrangements with William Craighead, Wright, for making and setting up the said seats in the said place and for the building them in such a way that they could be carried out of the church. The minister was to notify the congregation that anyone who wished convenient seats might purchase them from the Session at the same rate as they cost the Session.

These pews were always called “dasks”. On 9th December, eight “dasks” were to be disposed for at £2.8.0 Scots each, while James Gaul in Lumbs and James Milne in Lenteithny had put up dasks at their own expense. In a very short time all the available space was occupied. Shortly after Mr Lundie’s ordination in 1753 (29th March), there seemed a prospect of the fishing villages being deserted, for at a meeting of the session at which William Bruce, William Smith, William Craighead and George Pyper, elders, were present. Several of the Fishers of Corskellie appearing demanded certificates in order to leave the country, but the minister, considering that by their going away, their parents, most of whom were old and not able to support themselves, would become a burden to the parish, exhorted them not to be rash in executing their resolution and begged them to think of the circumstances of their aged parents who were to be left helpless if deprived of their support. The session agreed to delay granting them certificates “till the fishers should consider better of the part they ought to act.”

It may be interesting to mention here that the session clerk was paid £20 Scots for his arduous duties as Clerk and Inspector of poor. The Church Officer received 5 merks, or £3.6.8 Scots per annum, with the price of a pair of shoes, which was estimated in 1710 at 8/-, but rose to 13/4 in a few years. It would appear from a minute of the session that he had been accustomed to get something every Sunday from each of the elders out of the collection according to their pleasure. For some reason this was stopped and he was to get every Sunday 1d (1s?) instead. The schoolmaster held the appointment of Precentor always when he could sing.

In the session minutes we find that the change from the old date to the new took place in Lonmay on 20th September 1752, when that day was counted as 1st October 1752, and at

that time the collection (which had begun to be counted in Sterling money instead of Scots in 1737) became obligatory in Lonmay. There is no mention of any trouble in the parish at the imagined losing of the 11 days.

Note on Episcopalianism

Perhaps a word might be added about the setting up of a new place of worship for the Episcopalians in the district. It was erected in 1727 in the Bell (Jean) park with the laird of Park as its first minister and there was a large congregation from Lonmay, Rathen and Crimond. One good thing it did for the auld kirk was in making the elders take down the cutty stool and deal far less harshly with church offenders. We hear no more of poor wretches sitting three or four Sundays or more in face of the whole congregation. They had now just to stand up when the minister rebuked them. The custom had become rather farcical as it did not do any good to the culprit and was more than often treated as an entertainment by the rest of the congregation. The split in the congregation took away most of the proprietors and so caused a great deal of trouble when a new bell had to be procured to replace the old one that had cracked. The Session gave the old bell to a Mr Easton in Fraserburgh who undertook to cast a new one out of the metal. Mr Easton went off with the bell and was never more heard of. So the Session had to find money to pay for a new one from Holland. This was a great trouble as the heritors would give nothing unless compelled by law, now that they had a church of their own. The minister and elders, thinking the cost of a lawsuit would be more expensive than profitable, resolved to collect the whole money themselves, but in the end the minister, Mr Gordon, had to pay £36 Scots out of his own pocket to clear the whole sum due for the bill of £67 Scots (March 1728).

Various witnesses near the close of the 18th century describe Scotland as sadly overrun by vagrants. There were “bands of sturdy beggars, male and female, whose insolence, idleness and dishonesty are an affront to the land” and they preyed on all. There were estimated to be over 100,000 mendicants who had no regard for the laws of the land or of God.

It may be of interest to append a note about the revenue of the church, the moneys that came from the collections, fines from seat rents and bequests etc. These were used for the maintenance of Church ordinances and of the poor and for charity to distressed travellers, for the sick, to shipwrecked sailors and those returned prisoners from the Moors, for the assistance of those whose premises had been burned down. Not only were the grants made for the parish alone, but for deserving cases throughout Scotland.

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Charles Gibbon: A Minister's Training

The following is an extract from a Gibbon family history, prepared by the Rev. R. G. (Geoffrey) Gibbon and donated to the Society library by Anne Glen. This section deals with the Rev. Gibbon's grandfather, Charles Gibbon, who was minister of Lonmay parish from 1810 to 1871.

Charles, ninth and youngest child of William and Maria Gibbon, was baptised in St Paul's Episcopal Chapel in Aberdeen on 2nd December 1789. The two witnesses were his uncle James Gibbon and James's younger brother Charles, a merchant and shipmaster, after whom the child was named. At the age of 12 he was sent to Marischal College – and he graduated M.A. at 16, not because he was precocious, but because the Scottish universities at the time were little more than grammar schools. Marischal College was not the magnificent building of today but a very plain one put up in 1696, with classrooms, hall and library on successive floors and two wings added in the 18th century.

Many of the 200 or 300 students would have been from Aberdeen families: those from outside would have lived in lodgings. With one of these, Thomas Gordon, Charles formed a close friendship. Thomas's family owned Buthlaw in Longside and Newtyle in Foveran: his

father had bought the estate of Cairness in Lonmay in 1796 and had engaged the architect James Playfair to build him a house in the Greek manner, but he died before it was completed, and Thomas inherited the property, with the patronage of Lonmay church, at the age of seven. He was sent to Eton but cannot have stayed there long, for at the age of 13 or 14 he was at Marischal College, as we have seen. It was interesting that this young laird of great wealth, coming from the aristocratic world of Eton, should have struck up a friendship with a boy of his own age from the harbour quarter of Aberdeen, whose father was probably hard pressed to find the 20 guineas to put his son through college and into the ministry. Knowing that his friend wished to be ordained, Gordon promised to present him to Lonmay when the living fell vacant. It may have been a bargain between boys of 15 or 16, but it was honoured. Thomas Gordon went on to Christ Church, Oxford, and was then commissioned in the Scots Greys, while Charles Gibbon remained at Marischal College, attending lectures in Divinity for the period prescribed by the Church of Scotland.

Here we come to a difficulty. Charles had been brought up in the Episcopal Church and he had accepted his friend's offer of a living in the Established Church. How did he and his patron square their consciences? The answer is that there was at that time very little difference between St Paul's Episcopal Chapel and the parish churches of Aberdeen, for St Paul's did not share the non-juring, high-church tradition of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, while the Established Church in Aberdeen was of the 18th-century Moderate temper, tolerant, and unaffected by Covenanting or Evangelical enthusiasm. Drummond and Bulloch in their authoritative book *The Church in Victorian Scotland* refer to George Gleig, an Episcopalian who was ordained to a charge in the Established Church in 1788, and it is possible that Charles Gibbon too was accepted without any formal retraction or conversion, perhaps without being required to subscribe to the Calvinistic Westminster Confession, which at that time was not always insisted on in Aberdeenshire.

The living of Lonmay fell vacant in 1808, when Charles was only 19. Thomas Gordon presented Hugh Shearer, a man of 67 who for 40 years had served as assistant in parishes in the neighbourhood. In the following year, Charles was licensed in the church of Kincardine O'Neil, on Deeside, as Shearer's assistant and successor. A few months later Shearer died, and in May 1810 Charles was ordained as minister of Lonmay. He was to hold the living for more than 60 years.

The parish of Lonmay lies in the north-east corner of Aberdeenshire, with a long coastline stretching from near Cairnbulg Point almost all the way to Rattray Head. It is 8½ miles from north to south and 4½ from east to west: mostly flat, with sandhills on the southern part of the coast that have trapped the waters of small streams to form the shallow Loch of Strathbeg. In Charles Gibbon's time there were 1,600 people living in the scattered farmsteads and 500 in the village of St Combs on the north coast, which had 15 fishing vessels. The medieval church had been in the village, but in 1609 a new one was built two miles inland: within 200 years it had become ruinous, and the present church was built close by in 1787.

There is a full account of the parish, written by Charles Gibbon, in the Aberdeenshire volume of the *New Statistical Account of Scotland*, published in 1845. He describes in detail the recent improvements in agriculture. The soil was being enriched by bone-dust and by seaweed mixed with compost. Much land had been reclaimed by bog and waste, and he himself had recovered two acres of glebe from whinny and moorland. Land had been further improved by deep-trench ploughing with teams of four horses or oxen. In the past 40 years, strong draught horses had replaced the old dwarfish animals, so that only two were needed for a plough instead of six. Bannerman of Crimongate had brought in Southdown and Lincolnshire sheep to improve the local breed, and Gordon of Cairness had purchased three Arab stallions, two of which had got stock in the parish. Gordon had also planted 22 acres of woodland in what had been a treeless area. Oaks and rowans were doing well, but the beech was the tree of Buchan, not the Scotch fir as might have been supposed. An

unsuccessful attempt had been made in 1790 to drain the Loch of Strathbeg, on which Charles Gibbon commented: "It is unlikely that any proprietor of taste would choose to part with a natural object of considerable interest in the landscape, as well as a source of many days of summer amusement in pleasure boat sailing and fishing". We can guess how much the minister and his children enjoyed the loch, which came to within a mile of the manse.

In spite of the improvements in agriculture, life for the workers was getting harder. "The habits of the people are quiet, orderly and industrious. Their meals are frugal in the extreme, with no meat except fish occasionally (usually skate) and a fat ox at the approach of autumn shared between three or four families. Even this diet is getting harder to procure owing to the depression in agriculture." There was an alarming increase of poverty, and great exertions were needed to provide voluntary relief for the sick poor, the aged and the unemployed females. In spite of all this, poor people continued to appear in church in decent clothes and to give their children a Christian education. In 1810 there had been only one school in the parish, with 48 scholars, but in 1840 there were three parish schools and three private schools with a total of 248 scholars. Gordon had built the school at St Combs, and another had been built at Kininmonth. At the parish schools the subjects taught were Latin, mathematics, geography, arithmetic, English writing and English reading: the fees paid each quarter ranged from six shillings for mathematics and five for Latin to three for writing and two for reading.

Charles Gibbon considered that the people were well informed according to their opportunities and attentive to their religious and moral duties. The greatest danger to their wellbeing lay in "the injurious tendency of the excise laws ... which discourage the making of home-dried malt liquors ... whilst the more intoxicating distilled spirit is sold at a cheap rate, ... affording facilities to all who are so inclined to evening meetings for gossip and tippling, and thence to thriftless and improper habits".

Yet those evenings of tittle and gossip were about the only diversions in lives that would be to us incredibly hard and monotonous. The older cottages at St Combs are stone cabins, single-storeyed, closely packed, dismal even on a bright summer day. It was fortunate that firing was cheap – peat was cut in the parish. Perhaps the two great days in the year were the spring and autumn fairs, when cattle and sheep were sold, farm servants were hired, and there was plenty of fun. Charles considered that the booths for the sale of spirits should be removed at sunset, when the fun was beginning.

To the minister and his elders, and to the faithful generally, the great day of the year was the Communion Sunday, when 800 people would assemble in Lonmay church. From the outside it seems impossible that the church could hold so many, for it is a small rectangular building, like an old-fashioned schoolroom or village hall. Inside, however, it is impressive. Midway on one long wall is the high pulpit, and below it a dais with the communion table. Round the dais on three sides are pews closely packed, and above them three galleries with more pews. It is the standard pattern of a late 18th-century kirk and, by a strange turn of fashion, church architects in England and in Europe are today working on similar lines to produce simple, compact buildings with the people grouped round the minister instead of stretching away from him.

Today, in the age of the motor car, Lonmay church has a congregation of about 50 each Sunday. In 1840 there was a much bigger attendance, though the fisherfolk of St Combs had to walk two miles each way, and some farm workers came four or five miles. In 1836, people living in the south end of the parish petitioned the Presbytery for a church of their own, and one was built at Kininmonth and pew rents were given to the Poor Fund, but some landlords most improperly charged their tenants a small additional rent for seats in church.

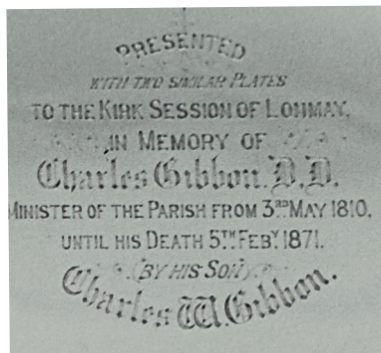
Lonmay is tucked away in a remote corner, but it was not cut off from the outside world even in 1840. Two turnpike roads cut through the parish within a mile or so of the manse, one from Aberdeen and Mintlaw to Fraserburgh and the other from Peterhead to Fraserburgh and Banff. There was a daily mail-coach service between Fraserburgh and Aberdeen and the South, and three coaches a week ran between Peterhead and Banff by way of Mintlaw.

Letters and newspapers for Lonmay were dropped at Cortiebrae, a mile and a half from the manse.

Sources

Drummond, A. L. and J. Bulloch, *The Church in Victorian Scotland* (Saint Andrew Press, 1978).

Gibbon, C., "Parish of Lonmay: Presbytery of Deer, Synod of Aberdeen" (*The New Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. XII, 1845).



Communion silverware donated to Lonmay parish in memory of the Rev. Charles Gibbon

Lonmay Servicemen 1914–1918

We asked our WWI expert, Anne Park, to tell us what she has discovered about some of the fallen servicemen of Lonmay and the memorial that honours them.

James Annand was born in Lonmay parish. He enlisted in the 5th Battalion Gordon Highlanders at Peterhead but was killed in action, aged 26, on 13th November 1916, and is commemorated at Thiepval. He was the fourth son of Jane Annand at Savock Croft, Lonmay, and left her his effects in his will.

Fellow Gordon Highlander, **James Brown**, enlisted in the 6th/7th Bn and was decorated with the Military Medal (MM). He died aged 22 on 24th February 1919 and is buried at La Louvière Communal Cemetery, located between Mons and Charleroi. His father, Robert Brown, lived at East Lodge Crimonmogate, Lonmay.

William Henry Donald fought with the 2nd Bn Gordon Highlanders and was 23 when he was killed in action on 20th December 1916. He is buried at Auchonvillers Military Cemetery. His parents were David and Annie Donald of School Cottage, Lonmay.



Walter Charles Henderson was born in 1888 to John and Anne (m.s. Ogg) Henderson, and worked as a joiner in Peterhead. He married Mary Ann Calder in 1909, and they had four daughters: Mary Burnet (b. 1909), Annie Ogston (b. 1910), Ethel Gladys (b. 1912) and Lydia Mary (b. 1914). He enlisted in the 5th Bn Gordon Highlanders in January 1915 and, like James Annand, died in action on 13th November 1916. He was buried at Y Ravine Cemetery, Beaumont-Hamel. The War Memorial shows him as Lance-Corporal, although the pension ledgers card still has him as a private.

John Johnston was born in Tyrie to James Johnston and Margaret Davidson, Ladysford Croft, Boyndie. He enlisted in the 6th Bn of the Gordons at Lonmay and was killed in action, aged 21, on 24th March 1918. He is commemorated on the Arras Memorial.

George Sutherland and his wife Margaret, of Belfatton, Lonmay, lost three sons in the war. The boys all served with the Gordons: **Duncan Sutherland** in the 5th Battalion, **James Sutherland** in the 9th and **John Sutherland** in the 4th. All died of wounds. Duncan had worked as a farm servant at Longleys in Crimond, and enlisted at Longside. He died, aged

21, on 31st July 1917 and is buried at Essex Farm Cemetery, Boesinghe. Pre-war, James had been working at Rosyth naval base in Fife, and so he enlisted in nearby Dunfermline. He died on 22nd September 1916 and is buried at St Sever Cemetery, Rouen. While Duncan and James were both born at Kininmonth, their brother John appears to have been born in Govan, Glasgow. He enlisted at Longside and, having died on 22nd March 1918, aged 23, is buried at Dernancourt Communal Cemetery Extension. There were two further Sutherland brothers, one of whom, Alexander, was posted missing for a time but is not recorded on the Lonmay Memorial.

William Willox was born at Peterhead on 17th March 1890 to Andrew Robertson Willox of Nether Park, Lonmay, and Annie Colvin, who had married in Peterhead in 1889. William enlisted in the 1st Bn Gordon Highlanders at Mintlaw before the war, and had served in India. He survived the first action in France and was sent home to recuperate after being wounded at Ypres. He returned to the front in February 1915 and was killed in action on 17th March 1915, aged 24. He is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres. His commanding officer wrote that he was struck by a shrapnel shell, and described his death: "The company was in one of the reserve billets, a ruined farmhouse, when a shell burst right inside the building, a barn, in which the platoon was billeted, doing a great deal of damage. I had Private Willox carried out of the building, but he expired almost immediately from the effects of wounds in the head. We buried him when darkness came beside four of his brave comrades who met their end at the same time."

The **Lonmay War Memorial** was dedicated to those who died in the Great War in May 1920. According to the newspaper account, William Park, Woodhead of Cairness, chairman of the Parish Council, reminded his fellow-parishioners that "In that quiet and remote district they had hardly realised the seriousness of the struggle; they could only imagine what would have been their fate if victory had gone the other way ... He offered heartfelt sympathy to the relatives of the fallen and he also expressed the gratitude of the parish for those parishioners who had served and returned – many of whom were in shattered health."

The report listed those commemorated as: Captain John Hay, Navy; 2nd Lt John Riddell, Gordons; Sergeant John M. Johnstone, Gordons; Sergeant Kenneth Nicol, Navy; Bombardier William Brown, RGA; Lance-Corporal Samuel Murray, Gordons; Lance-Corporal Walter C. Henderson, Gordons; Privates James Annand, Gordons; William Beedie, Gordons; James Brown, Gordons; James Brown, Gordons; Alexander Calder, Gordons; Adam Clark, Gordons; Wm Donald, Gordons; James Brodie Findlay, Gordons; John Smith Lawrence, Gordons; Wm Strachan, Gordons; Duncan Sutherland, Gordons; James Sutherland, Gordons; John Sutherland, Gordons; Peter F. Taylor, Gordons; Andrew Third, Gordons; William Thomson, Gordons; Albert W. Wallace, Gordons; J. Wm Willox, Gordons; Gunners James Aitken, MGC; George Skinner, MGC; Pte Wm McIntyre, Naval Division; D. H. John Buchan, Navy; Privates George Fraser, Canadians; Andrew Henderson, Canadians; James Lawrence, Canadians; Charles Morrice, Canadians.

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Lonmay Parish Resource List

Compiled by Matthew Davidson (no. 20107) and Margie Mellis (no. 2090)

Online records

Old Statistical Account (1791): Parish of Lonmay, (County and Synod of Aberdeen, and Presbytery of Deer). From materials collected by Mr John Lundie, Minister of Lonmay.

New Statistical Account (1845): Volume XII – Aberdeen. Parish of Lonmay: Presbytery of Deer, Synod of Aberdeen. The Rev. Charles Gibbon, Minister.

(Both Accounts can be found at <https://stataccscot.ed.ac.uk/static/statacc/dist/home>)

National Library of Scotland Maps: <https://maps.nls.uk> [use the lower left-side drop-down box to choose between historical Ordnance Survey maps of various scales].

Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Archives: The following records are available at <https://archives.aberdeencity.gov.uk/calmview/default.aspx>:

Records of Lonmay School, 1873–1970 (ED/AC5/142), which include (142/1) Log Books 1961–70, (142/2) Admission Registers 1873–1970 and (142/3) Miscellaneous Records 1961–67.

Records of Blackhills School, 1918–61 (ED/AC5/110), which include (110/1) Log Books 1918–61 and (110/2) Admission Papers 1921–61.

Records of Ballearn School, 1875–1956 (ED/AC5/106), which include (106/1) Log Books 1875–1956 and (106/2) Admission Registers 1921–56.

Records of Kininmonth School, 1869–1959 (ED/GR6S/B39), which include (B39/1) Log Books 1873–1959, (B39/2) Admission Registers 1869–1930 and (B39/3) Miscellaneous Records 1903–59.

Records of St Combs School, 1873–2009 (ED/GR6S/B62), which include (B62/1) Log Books 1873–1992 and (B62/2) Admission Registers 1908–48.

Records of Lonmay School Board 1873–1920 (AS/AS/lon/1–13), which include (lon/1–3) Minute Books 1873–1919, (lon/4–9) Letter Books 1882–1920, (lon/10–11) Ledgers 1873–1919, (lon/12) Abstract Book 1896–1919 and (lon/13) Register of Mortgages 1875–1905.

Aberdeen County Education Committee: HM Inspector's Reports for County Schools, 1931–38 (ASActy/5/14/16).

Account Book for Rent in Buchan, Aberdeenshire, 1726–1768 (AHB/12/2/11).

Aberdeen Commissioners of Supply: Assessment Books – Property Tax, 1807–17 (AC/1/11) and Assessed Tax Reports 1799–1832 (AC/1/14/2–117).

Aberdeen County Militia Records: Muster Roll of the Crimond and Lonmay Volunteers, 1803 (AC/10/8/9/6).

Aberdeen County Parochial Board and Parish Council Records, Lonmay Parish, 1845–1930 (AS/AP/lon), including (lon/1–4) Minute Books 1847–1930, (lon/5) General Register of the Poor 1845–1930, (lon/6) Children's Separate Register 1870–1914 and (lon/7–9) Record of Applications 1860–1931.

Records of Lonmay Public Assistance Area (Area 3), 1930–48 volumes I and II (ASActy/6/3/1–2).

Records of Lonmay Cemetery Cash Book, 1953–68 (BR/LO/1).

Lair Certificate Book for Aberdeen County Council, 1975 (BR/MISC/8).

Garden of Troup: *Observes for Mr Gordon of Buthlaw Upon the Search of Incumbrances on the Lands of Lonmay Purchased by Him from Mr Garden of Troup*, 1795.

Macqueen & Findlater: Sederunt Book detailing the trust established by John Gordon Lumsden Shirrefs of Knowsie, Blair Mormond, in favour of his son, Gordon Lumsden, 1896–1910.

Alexander Bannerman and Charles Bannerman: various 19th-century estate papers including Lonmay and Crimond area leases, expenses and farm contents (PD2/B).

University of Aberdeen Archive Collections:

[https://calm.abdn.ac.uk/archives/Overview.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&r=\(\(\(text\)=%27lonmay%27\)\)\)](https://calm.abdn.ac.uk/archives/Overview.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&r=(((text)=%27lonmay%27)))) has over 200 items available within the Special Collections. Examples of Lonmay interest include:

Craigellie: Plans and Rentals relating to Shand and Milne Families, 1847–c. 1885 (Special Collections MS 2619).

Gordons of Buthlaw and Cairness: Estate and Family Papers, 1642–1984 (Special Collections MS 1160).

Records of F. A. MacDonald & Partners, Engineers and Surveyors: Maps and Plans Collection, Plan of the Lands of Park, Lying in the Parish of Lonmay, and County of Aberdeen (MS 3860/15252).

Lonmay Burial Ground: Additional records from 1908 held by Aberdeenshire Council Landscape Services (send enquiries to burialadminnorth@aberdeenshire.gov.uk).

Findagrave: The site has entries for Lonmay New Churchyard, Lonmay New Cemetery and Lonmay Old Kirkyard at <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery>.

GENUKI: <https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/sct/ABD/Lonmay/description>.

Gazetteer of Scottish Places: <https://www.scottish-places.info/parishes/pardetails224.html>

Scotland's People: Virtual Volumes contains Kirk Session records for Kininmonth and Lonmay via <https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/virtual-volumes/place-search>.

Scotland's Places: includes Ordnance Survey maps and name books, and carriage, farmhouse, horse, land and servant (male and female) tax rolls at <https://scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/search/place/Lonmay?id=1074>.

Family Search: For an overview of vital records available, see https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Lonmay,_Aberdeenshire,_Scotland_Genealogy.

Family History Society of Buchan: <https://www.buchanroots.scot/>.

Books

These are not all available to buy, but most can be consulted in the Society Library.

ANESFHS, *Lonmay New Kirkyard MIs* (ISBN 978-1-905004-51-5; Society purchase code AA086).

ANESFHS, *St Combs, Lonmay, MIs* (ISBN 978-1-900173-40-9; code AA184).

ANESFHS, *Lonmay and Crimond Poll Book 1696* (978-0-947659-08-0; code AA349).

Bruce, S. 2009. *Along the Coast, Pennan to St Fergus* (privately printed).

Buchan, D. S. C. 1993. *St Combs My Buchan* (Pentland Press).

Buchan, J. 2014. *Bygone Inverallochy, Cairnbulg and St Combs* (Stenlake Publishing).

Campbell, J. 2015. *New Lonmay Kirkyard* (Lonmay section 2): burial index and memorial inscriptions.

Campbell, J. 2021. *Lonmay Cemetery: monumental inscriptions and burial records*.

Campbell, J. and J. McNab. 2012. *St Combs Kirkyard*, Part 1: A history of the kirkyard and its interments; Part 2 (Jim Campbell only): Death records, medical terms, notes.

Gibbon, G. 1976. *Gibbon of Lonmay* (privately printed).

Reid, J. 2001. *Steam Drifters Recalled: Whitehills to St Combs* (privately printed).

Stansfield, G. 2000. *Aberdeenshire's Lost Railways* (Stenlake Publishing).

St Combs, parish of Lonmay: names (with tee names) paying crop rental 1855, 1857 and 1858; and names paying grass park rental 1857 [no author, no date]. Available to consult in the Society Library.

Teind Roll in the Parish of Lonmay in the Presbytery of Deer and the County of Aberdeen (Teind Office, 1949). [Teinds were a tithe, based on a proportion of the crops paid as a contribution towards the upkeep of the clergy. The document lists the heritors and the farms they were responsible for.]

Additional note on Lonmay graveyards:

The Society's two MI booklets listed above, covering Lonmay New Kirkyard and St Combs, were mainly the work of Jim Campbell, with some contributions from Gavin Bell. These supersede an older MI booklet (Society code AA175) produced by Sheila Spiers in 1987 and last reprinted in 2018.

Helen Taylor (no. 7363) illustrated for us just how confusing things can be: "I have ancestors in the three Lonmay burial grounds: the Kirkyard, the New Kirkyard and the Cemetery. Lonmay Cemetery is the 20th-century one but is now full, and part of a field nearby is now being used for burials." This photograph, kindly supplied by Garioch Graver, illustrates the potential confusion.



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Walking in the Footsteps of Helmrigh and Skene Ancestors

As I watched the mist wrap around Dunnottar Castle, marvelled at the Australian bottlebrush growing in an Aberdeen schoolyard, glimpsed a house sign hundreds of years old along the backroads of Kincardineshire, walked through the tall forests of the Skene estate and clambered through a fence to an old, ruined croft on Orkney, I felt that I was walking in the footsteps of our ancestors.

Having spent a lot of time working on my family history, including studying for a Diploma of Family History at the University of Tasmania, I had the information and all the biographical details. I also had some of the stories. I just needed to see the places. And so my husband and I embarked on a journey to Scotland in 2023.



We explored the places in Aberdeenshire and Kincardineshire where my father's Duthie and Helmrigh roots lie. We investigated the Linklater name and the property called Springrose in Birsay on the Orkney mainland, and unexpectedly met a relative of my husband. We followed the history of King Robert the Bruce, who we believe is a very distant ancestor. Our exploration was an adventure, adding colour to our family stories.

One of our experiences surrounds my 3g-grandfather, Charles Hellmrigh. Family lore said that the original Hellmrigh in Scotland was a native of Germany. The first record we have of Charles is his 1804 marriage to Elspet Simmers in Cluny, Aberdeenshire. Next, we have the baptism records of his six children, and his early demise in 1817 at the age of 39 years.

(Apparently our surname changed when my great-grandfather married and the name was recorded with one L. In my research, I've found it spelled in various ways – sometimes differently between siblings!)

A piece of information from my early research in the 1990s said that Charles was an apothecary and gardener. More recently, after reading Jim Fiddes's book *Brodiach to Bervie: A History of Skene and Westhill*, I discovered that Charles was a forester: "At some point he [George Skene] also brought over a forester from Germany to work on the estate. Charles Hellmrech [sic] is buried in Skene Kirkyard, having died aged 39, in 1817."

This information specified the exact area where he had worked. The graveyard details indicated that the family had lived in the Skene area, and added to my itinerary of places to

visit. Exploring further, we found that the original Skene Castle had a renovated carriage and stable block. One of the five homes in this block was rented out. Why not stay on the estate where my 3g-grandfather Charles Hellmrich worked? Of course, we did!

Spending the week there was very atmospheric. We had long walks along the local roads, around the estate and through the forested area. I marvelled at the size and age of some of the trees and wondered whether they had been planted by Charles Hellmrich. Living on the other side of the world, I found it very special to explore where my ancestors had lived their lives, to look at the vistas they would have enjoyed, to walk in their footsteps.

A major highlight in exploring Charles's story was driving to Kirkton of Skene, wandering through the stillness of the churchyard, and discovering his headstone. I read the faded and lichen-covered inscription mostly through touch. It brought a sense of wonder to think about the two centuries since this early headstone had been placed in this churchyard.

I had done some investigating about the Skene estate and discovered that James Duff, 4th Earl of Fife, had inherited the estate in 1827 from his Skene uncle. The paperwork from the estate was with the Earl of Fife's papers. Upon examining the online catalogue of the Aberdeen archives at the University of Aberdeen, I found that the Special Collections included a couple of boxes of papers from the Skene estate.



I enquired about looking at the papers. My objective was to find a piece of paper that had Charles Hellmrich's name on it, whether it be some correspondence about him being employed there, or a reference to his early demise. As the papers were part of the Special Collections, a detailed explanation of what I was looking for was required. Privately, I feel that there was no point in keeping these papers if someone who wants to view them was unable to gain access. Finally I was able to make a booking, and followed the rules for handling these documents with care.

It was a grubby job, but it was so interesting to carefully untie the cotton tape that held various pieces of paper relating to the Skene estate, lay them flat with weights to hold them still, and try to decipher the old handwriting. We searched through a jumble of accounts and vouchers, letters and shipping manifestos, subscriptions and shopping lists – there was no order to the papers. However, I felt I got to know some of the people who serviced the estate, as I read their wages summaries and the accounts, which they sent to George Skene Esq.

After spending 1½ days ploughing through the mixed contents of the boxes looking for the name Hellmrich, we had only discovered some accounts from the blacksmith who had sharpened the forester's tools, and an auction of the wood from the forest to be harvested the following year, neither of which recorded his name. That's not to say that such documents never existed – but among this group of random papers we found nothing with his name on it. Despite my disappointment, we enjoyed the experience of handling these old papers and gained a brief insight into the workings of the Skene estates from about 1715 to 1819.

The Skene estate was of particular interest to me, because as well as being descended from the forester who worked there, I am also descended from the earlier Barons of Skene, who built Skene Castle. Like all small places, there were intermarriages between families. The mother of Charles Hellmrich's wife, Elspet Simmers, was Margaret Skene, who was descended from the 11th Baron of Skene, Alexander Skene (1517–1604). Margaret descends

from Alexander's second son, so this was when our branch of the family "lost" the castle! As I explored the castle, its gardens and surrounding woods, I tried to imagine the lives that my Skene ancestors had lived there.

Our week in Aberdeenshire, which coincided with beautiful summer weather, gave me the opportunity to ground some of our dad's family stories in the places where the events had occurred. I felt the breezes, viewed the scenery, touched the stonework, marvelled at the trees, talked to the locals, and walked in the footsteps of my ancestors.

Sources

Fiddes, Jim, *Brodiach to Bervie: A History of Skene and Westhill* (Inverurie: Leopard Press, 2012), p. 236.

Skene, William Forbes, *Memorials of the Family of Skene of Skene, From the Family Papers, With Other Illustrative Documents* (Aberdeen: New Spalding Club, 1887).

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Just an Ordinary Family: Birss and Clark Connections

I was reading some online comments about family-tree research, and one correspondent commented that his heart sank when he uncovered "yet another agricultural worker". I think he hoped for a line back to some important historical person – but I find the stories surrounding ordinary families just as interesting, and packed with historical information.

One little twig on my family tree illustrated this for me. My 3g-grandfather James Birss was a carpenter in Birse, Aberdeenshire, and his brother John was a blacksmith at Bridge of Dye on the southern edge of Strachan in Kincardineshire where the road goes over Cairn o' Mount. Both were skilled workers in an agricultural community. John's wife Barbara Dunn (his first cousin) also came from a rural family, her father and then her brother farming land at Upper Shampher. Queen Victoria travelled over Cairn o' Mount in September 1861, shortly after John Birss and his family had moved to Lower Shampher. After spending the night incognito in Fettercairn, she wrote in her diary:

We came to a very long hill called the Cairniemount, whence there is a very fine view: but which was entirely obscured by a heavy driving mist ... We next came to the Spittal Bridge, a curious high bridge with the Dye Water on the left and the Spittal Burn to the right. Sir Thomas Gladstone's shooting place is close to the Bridge of Dye, where we changed carriages again ... we went up a hill again and saw Mount Battock. You then came to an open country with an extensive view towards Aberdeen, and to a very deep, rough ford, where you pass the Feugh at a place called White Stones. It is very pretty, and a fine Glen with wood.



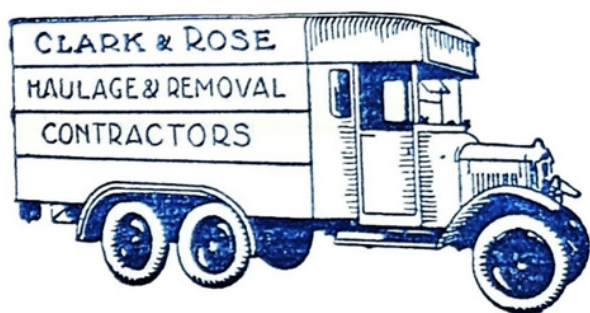
Cairn o' Mount viewpoint

Sir Thomas Gladstone (William Ewart Gladstone's brother) owned the building at Bridge of Dye that John Birss had occupied.

John and Barbara's eldest daughter Isabella Birss married Henry (Harry) Clark, a stonedyker from Logie Coldstone, in 1866, and they lived at Lower Shampher. Harry was about 33 when they married, and Isabella was 26. Stonedying ran in Harry's family – both his father John and his brother Alexander followed the same profession, but John also had a croft in Waterairn, Logie Coldstone, which another son, James, took over on his death. Isabella and Harry had seven children by 1876 – Mary, Elizabeth Berry, Margaret McPherson, James Birss, David Mitchell, Alexander and Barbara. Second names are always interesting. Birss was an obvious one, and David Mitchell was possibly named after the farmer of that name who worked the farm at Lower Shampher – I think Harry and Isabella were his tenants. But Elizabeth Berry and Margaret McPherson are both still a mystery. And

I am surprised the couple didn't have a son called John, named after both of their fathers, but I can't trace one.

Poor Isabella died of consumption in April 1876 (her eldest brother Alexander had died of the same disease in 1862, when he was just 24). Baby Barbara died the same year, and they had lost two other children, Mary and Alexander, as babies. Harry brought up his remaining children. In 1891 aged 17, David Mitchell Clark was lodging at Balno Farm in Glenmuick with his father and his brother-in-law Robert Smith, and all three were working as farm labourers – I assume there was stonedykning to be done. But both of the boys, James Birss Clark and David Mitchell Clark, moved to Aberdeen, where they became masons, an occupation not unassociated with their father's skill in building drystone walls. The move is typical of the drawing power of Aberdeen over the rural workforce in the late 19th century.



An early Clark & Rose delivery van, from a company invoice (by permission of Aberdeen City/Shire Archives).

By 1901, James Birss Clark was living in Broomhill Road, Aberdeen, a journeyman mason with his wife Sarah Inch and children Annabella and Harry; however, he died of TB (like his mother) later that year, aged only 30, and I believe Sarah remarried and emigrated to Canada. David registered his brother's death and was then working as a mason, but by the time of the census in 1911 he was running a bicycle shop with his brother-in-law Robert Rose. This became a vehicle hire and then a delivery company, Clark and Rose, which is still operating. It was the 1911 census that said

Robert was his brother-in-law, but I couldn't work out how – David had married Elizabeth Sellar or Hackett, a widow, in 1899 in Keith, with a witness called Nellie Rose. Elizabeth died later in 1911, yet another victim of TB, and inspection of the death certificate showed she was illegitimate. Her mother had later married James Rose, and had Robert and Nellie (Helen). Problem solved! Shockingly, poor Robert Rose also died of the disease in 1911 aged only 26. (Nellie also died at 26, of typhoid in 1905.)

David continued the business and remarried in 1913; he had had three children with Elizabeth, and now had three more with Annie Jane Melville (who was 18 when they married). Life was a struggle during the Great War: he had no sons old enough to serve, but his workers had to sign up, and the business suffered. He was prosecuted in 1917 for lying about his eldest son Douglas's age in order to get a full driving licence for him so he could help with deliveries. And tragedy struck again when David died aged only 51. His death was registered in Glenmuick in 1924. He had been "in delicate health" and was in Lochhead, Dinnet to recuperate, according to a newspaper report. And like his brother, mother and first wife, he also died of TB. I found this quite shocking. Three of his sons continued to run the family business, and I think one became a vet. (I have to mention that his son Donald married a girl called Daisy Cheyne ...)

As for Isabella and Harry's daughters, Elizabeth Berry Clark was in Shampher in 1891 with a child, Robina Smith aged 1, who I had assumed was her illegitimate daughter; but she was in fact the child of her sister Margaret, i.e. Elizabeth's niece. Frustratingly, despite her interesting second name, I can't trace Elizabeth Berry beyond 1891. And poor Margaret McPherson Clark, who married Robert Smith in Strachan in 1889, died – of TB – earlier in 1891, aged only 21. Her daughter Robina was in Nigg in 1901 with Robert and his second wife but died in 1905, again of TB. Was there a genetic predisposition in the family? But Robert Rose and his sister, who merely married into it, also died of the disease, so there is more to it than that. And, while it is highly infectious, these people were dying in different places and years apart.

Harry Clark was with his brother's widow in Logie Coldstone in 1901, his brother having died earlier that year. Harry lived another 14 years, dying at 425 Holburn Street, Aberdeen (where David had one of his shops) on Christmas Day 1915, aged 83. I think only one of his children outlived him. They were a dreadfully sad little family, overall, although it prompted me to consider a number of different issues – changes in employment, the terrible scourges of infant mortality and TB, and historical context provided by Queen Victoria's comments. I found the whole trail of this agricultural worker absolutely fascinating, although it certainly required a few payments to *Scotland's People*!

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List of Feature Parishes

Members may find this a handy checklist to update the one provided in Journal 118 (February 2011), p. 17. We have many more requests for parishes to be featured than we have volunteers to do the research, write the articles or take photographs. If you would like to be involved, please contact journal@anesfhs.org.uk.

<i>J'nal date/issue</i>	<i>Parish</i>	<i>Old county</i>	<i>Author(s) of main article</i>	<i>Pages</i>
May 2007 103	St Nicholas	Aberdeen city	Margaret Ewing (no. 7831)	"Colour insert"
Aug 2007 104	Boyndie	Banffshire	Margaret Ewing #2	40–43
Nov 2007 105	Ganrie	Banffshire	Stuart West (no. 2038)	42–46
Feb 2008 106	Fyvie	Aberdeenshire	Margaret Ewing #3	40–45
May 2008 107	Belhelvie	Aberdeenshire	Andrew Watson (no. 15836)	40–44
Aug 2008 108	Nigg	Kincardineshire	Andrew Watson #2.	44–51
Nov 2008 109	Marnoch	Banffshire	Stuart West #2	40–46
Feb 2009 110	Cruden	Aberdeenshire	Margaret Ewing #4	40–46
May 2009 111	Fordyce	Banffshire	Alison Salter (non-member)	49–55
Aug 2009 112	Skene	Aberdeenshire	Jim Fiddes (no. 1049) and Margaret Bradley (no. 17303)	40–47
Nov 2009 113	Inveravon	Banffshire	Stuart West #3.	48–56
Feb 2010 114	Echt	Aberdeenshire	Jim Fiddes #2	40–46
May 2010 115	Rathen	Aberdeenshire	Margaret Ewing #5	40–46
Aug 2010 116	Monymusk	Aberdeenshire	Niall Coughlan (non-member)	40–46
Nov 2010 117	Rhynie	Aberdeenshire	John Kemp (no. 18700)	40–48
Feb 2011 118	Longside	Aberdeenshire	Margaret Ewing #6.	40–46
May 2011 119	Rayne	Aberdeenshire	Jim Fiddes #3	40–45
Aug 2011 120	Maryculter	Kincardineshire	Norman D. (Doug) Nicol (no. 6023)	40–45
Nov 2011 121	Kincardine O'Neil	Aberdeenshire	Andy Gordon (no. 16302)	40–48
Feb 2012 122	Tarves	Aberdeenshire	David Leavett (non-member)	40–45
May 2012 123	The Cabrach	Moray/ABD/BNF	Ian Macdonald (no. 15896) + 2 others	48–54
Aug 2012 124	Banchory-Devenick	Kincardineshire	Joan McCausland (no. 12504)	44–52
Nov 2012 125	Leochel-Cushnie	Aberdeenshire	Jim Fiddes #4	17–26
Feb 2013 126	Dunnottar	Kincardineshire	Joan McCausland #2	32–39
May 2013 127	Fintray	Aberdeenshire	Jim Fiddes #5.	27–39
Aug 2013 128	Newhills	Aberdeenshire	Bill Diack (no. 155)	19–35
[gap]				
Aug 2014 132	Auchindoir & Kearn	Aberdeenshire	Andy Gordon #2	22–35
Nov 2014 133	Fetteresso	Kincardineshire	Joan McCausland #3.	22–35
[gap]				
Aug 2018 148	Bourtie	Aberdeenshire	Ian Macdonald #2.	35–43
Nov 2018 149	Duffus	Moray	Andy Gordon #3.	35–44

Bob Forsyth: A Correction



Doris with her parents Maisie Paul (1898–1984) and Bob Forsyth (1893–1934)

We wish to apologise wholeheartedly to Matthew Davidson (no. 20107) for an error in the caption which accompanied a photograph in his article “William Forsyth: a North-East Lunatic with Delusions of Grandeur?”, Journal 172 (Nov 2024), p. 22. The caption should read: “Doris with her parents Maisie Paul (1898–1984) and Bob Forsyth (1893–1934)”.

We are doubly grateful to Matthew, not only for his generosity in sharing the article and forgiving our blunder, but also for agreeing to join the Journal editorial team. He has already made some excellent contributions to this current issue, and we look forward to further contributions. You can now contact Matthew at matthew.davidson@anesfhs.org.uk or via the Journal Team address below.



Bob's father, Robert Johnston Forsyth (1864–1931)

journal@anesfhs.org.uk

Elaine Petrie and Ivor Normand for the Journal Team

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The Key Contacts list gives a flavour of the different activities carried out by the volunteers who run this Society. If you have a few hours to spare, please consider joining our team and lending a hand to keep the Society flourishing. If you are based in Aberdeen, we are always looking for folk to staff the Research Centre. Your nearest local area group will be glad of assistance to organise and publicise events. We welcome your articles for the Journal and would also be glad to have your help in sourcing and editing articles. For a general expression of interest, please email chairman@anesfhs.org.uk. Thank you!

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Submissions to the Journal are always welcome. Please send text and images **separately** (not embedding images in a document), e-mailed to journal@anesfhs.org.uk or queries@anesfhs.org.uk

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

The next Journal will be published in **May 2025**. Last date for submissions is **16th April 2025**.

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

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

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

Computer details – Please use a format that can be read by a PC running Microsoft Word. Any font or size of text is acceptable. If in doubt, send plain text. If sending **illustrations**, any standard format is acceptable – as long as these are in files **separate** from the text.

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