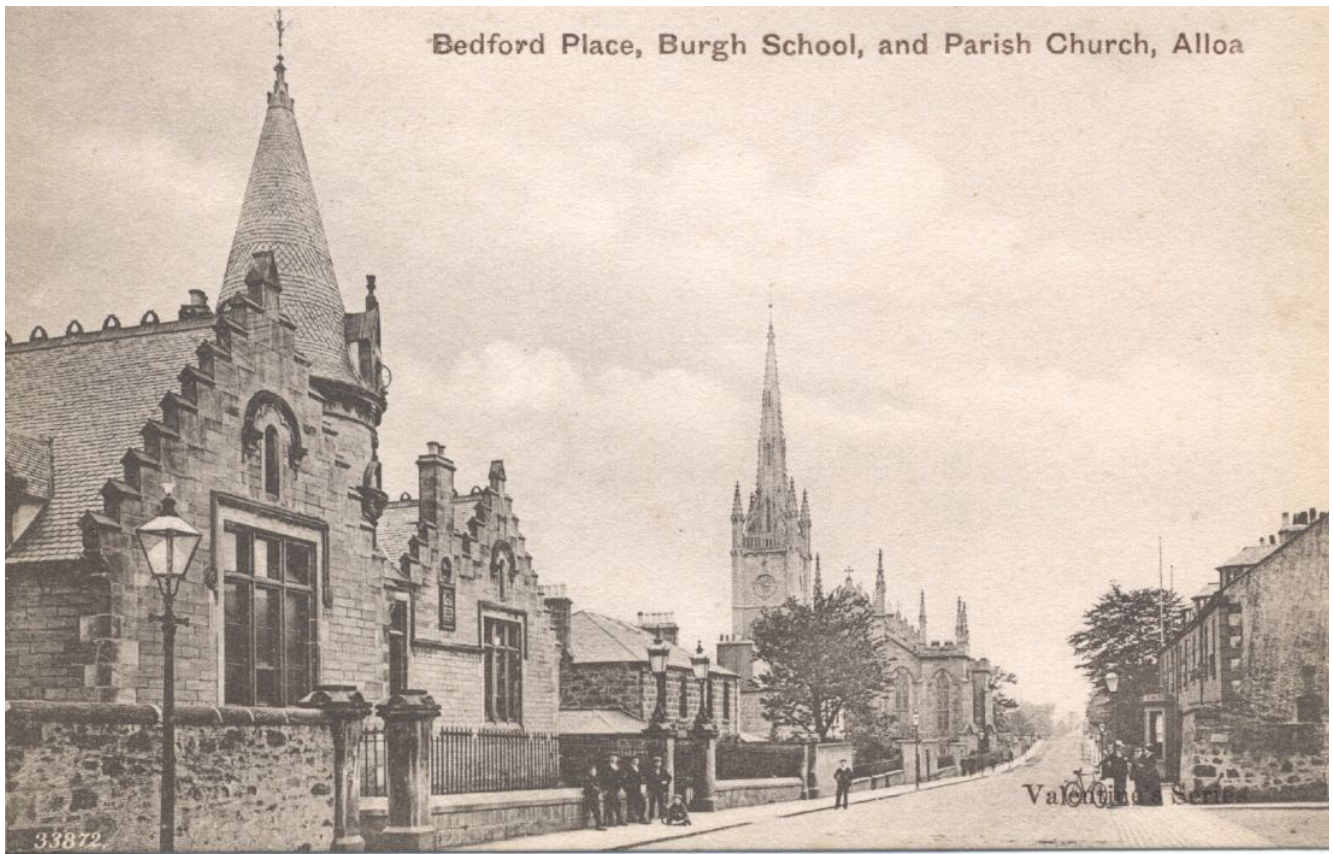


CENTRAL SCOTLAND

ISSN 0961-0502



Bedford Place, Burgh School, and Parish Church, Alloa



Old View of Bedford Place, Burgh School And Parish Church, Alloa

MEMBERSHIP

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

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

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

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

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

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

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

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

E-mail: newslettercsfhs@yahoo.co.uk

**Copy for the next issue should be
submitted by 18th August 2025**

HELP WANTED

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

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

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CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLINGS

Here we are in a New Year, and by the time you receive this issue we will be more than halfway through our syllabus – how time flies! We have had a variety of talks from excellent speakers both at Bridge of Allan and on Zoom. Unfortunately, two of our last speakers did not wish their talks to be recorded and transcribed, so apologies if you were unable to attend those – there is no resumé of these talks in the Journal. However, we were able to email out one of the speaker's handouts and it is included in this Journal.

Our AGM (the May meeting) is not that far away, and we are looking for a couple of members who come to our Bridge of Allan meetings, to volunteer to give us a short 10 minute talk about something from their family history research which might interest others eg. the story behind an heirloom you have inherited, a brick wall you have successfully broken down etc. Alva from the committee and I did this last year, so we are looking for some new faces. This meeting is also our annual social and tickets for this will be available at the April meeting at a cost of £5. We like to know numbers to help with the catering.

We are also looking for some ideas for talks and speakers for next year's syllabus. It seems to be getting more difficult each year to find a topic which we have not covered before. This year, one of our topics was suggested by a member, so get your thinking caps on and let us know your thoughts. Remember, this is your society as much as it is the committee's.

Our help and advice workshops at St Ninians Library have recently been fraught with a few niggly problems – mainly due to a seeming lack of interest, but also due to people booking a place, then cancelling or not turning up on the day when we have arranged for volunteers to be present. So we have taken the decision to put the project on pause for the next few months, and the committee will review it with the library staff during the summer, with a view to resuming in the autumn.

The Scottish Association of Family History Societies (SAFHS) has recently introduced regular informal Zoom meetings with representatives from their various affiliated family history societies in Scotland and a couple from down south. The aim of these get-togethers is for committee members of the societies to share and discuss any problems, concerns and ideas. Some of our committee members are attending and it is proving to be a very useful platform for networking and brainstorming.

On a sad note, we have learned of the death of one of the founding members of the Society – George Dixon, one time archivist with Stirling Council Archives. He was a native of Grantown on Spey and died there in November. Unfortunately we did not receive the obituary for George in time for this Journal, but will include it in the Autumn 2025 issue.

Throughout the year we often receive or purchase books for addition to our library. One such title appeared at the end of 2024 about the Grangemouth War Memorial, and you will find a review of it in the Journal.

In the meantime, I hope you are finding time to investigate and make use of the various new resources which seem to be announced almost daily. Or maybe you attend the online Conferences organised by Scottish Indexes. If you have not attended one of these yet, you will find they have some really good speakers. Many of you will know that I don't have any roots here in the area covered by our Society – my roots are in the north east of Scotland, mainly in Upper Banffshire and Moray. So I attended a one day Conference in Cullen last October, entitled Banffshire Places [last year's had been Banffshire Fouk (ie. people)] – an excellent day each year with two long talks and 4 shorter talks – a good format for such a day.

Happy researching.

Sandra

WANTED FOR THE MAY MEETING



A SHORT 10-MINUTE PRESENTATION About SOMETHING FASCINATING OR FRUSTRATING IN YOUR RESEARCH

Do you have a good story to share with our members

At the meeting on 14 May 2025

At 2.00pm

In Bridge of Allan Church Hall

Please get in touch

Email: censcotfhs@gmail.com

**Central Scotland Family History Society Annual General Meeting to be held on
Wednesday 14th May 2025 at 2pm at Bridge of Allan Church Hall**

Agenda

- 1) Apologies
- 2) Minutes of AGM 2024
- 3) Matters arising from the Minutes
- 4) Chairman's report
- 5) Treasurer's report
- 6) Election of Office Bearers
- 7) A.O.B.

**Minutes of Central Scotland Family History Society Annual General Meeting
held on 8th May 2024 at 2pm at Bridge of Allan Church Hall.**

- 1) **Apologies:** James Kennedy, John Patrick
- 2) **Minutes of AGM 2023** previously issued were read and accepted. Adoption of minutes proposed by Lindsay George, seconded by Sandra Reid.
- 3) **Matters arising from the minutes:** nil.

4) Chairman's report: 2023 – 2024

We have had another successful session of talks covering a wide range of topics. We started off at Bridge of Allan Church Hall with our two autumn afternoon meetings on two quite different subjects – *The History of Smith of Maddiston Haulage Contractors* and *Would Rebus have made a good genealogist?* Then we continued on Zoom for the next 4 meetings with talks on *Scottish resources found at Scotland's People*, *Using Deeds to trace your Family History*, *Resources from Health records*, ending with a really interesting talk, *My Ancestor was Shipwrecked*. We rounded off the session back at Bridge of Allan with a talk on records to be found at our local Clackmannanshire Archives, plus today's AGM, which will feature two short talks from two of the committee, as well as our social get-together.

It was good to meet up with our far-flung members (and our more local ones) at the winter Zoom talks. We have kept more or less to our usual attendance of an average of 35 people per talk. We intend to continue with this same pattern of meetings next session - 4 on Zoom and 4 at Bridge of Allan. Looking ahead to our next session, Carol is working on the syllabus with a few speakers already booked. But we will always welcome any ideas for a topic or speaker you think would interest our members. With some of our talks being held on Zoom, it is possible to have speakers from anywhere in the world!

We continue to produce two journals during the year, plus our e-newsletter, and we thank all those who have contributed to these in any way. My thanks to Elsie and Margaret, who edit the journal, for their perseverance and patience in transcribing and summarising the talks for publication in the journal, so that our members don't miss out on those talks they could not attend. We will continue to issue the e-newsletter on a less regular basis, as it is much appreciated by our overseas members.

We co-opted Alva Harker onto the committee after last year's AGM. My thanks to those who were involved in transcribing and checking the early baptismal records of Stirling Erskine Church. This project is finished now and pdf copies will be available soon.

Our take-up at the monthly advice sessions at St Ninians Library in Stirling has been a bit erratic this year, so we may need to look at a different way to advertise them. If you know of anyone who is keen to start

researching their family history, then please tell them about these workshops, and encourage them to book a place by phoning the library.

Finally, on behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you for all the support you give the Society - to the monthly meetings, the journal, and the e-newsletter. It gives us confidence that we are still doing the right thing!

We look forward to seeing you again in the autumn. Good luck with your research and enjoy the summer.

5) Treasurer's report:

I would like to thank Jim Cram, our Independent Examiner, for checking our accounts.

This year's Balance Sheet shows we ended the year with a surplus of £424.59.

Income:- Subscriptions have gone down, as last year was an anniversary of the introduction of three-year payments. Sales of publications are now mostly digital downloads and have remained steady. The Gift Aid figure represents two years, as the payment for 2022-2023 did not reach our bank account until after 1 Apr 2023.

Expenses:- The cost of hall rental has increased as we have moved to the larger meeting room. Postage costs were lower as we had pre-bought a large number of stamps for the newsletters just before the price went up. Printing costs were higher because of a generous reduction given to us as a one-off gesture the previous year. Our SAFHS membership includes the cost of providing the zoom link for the autumn / winter meetings.

Due to our healthy bank balance, the Committee are proposing no increase in the membership subscriptions this year.

Adoption of the report proposed by Marion Smith, seconded by Peter George

Election of Office Bearers:

It was agreed that we would elect the Office Bearers and Independent Examiner en bloc.

Chairman: Sandra Reid,

Vice-Chairman: Vacant

Treasurer: Margaret Turner,

Secretary: Carol Sergeant,

Committee Members: Peter George, Alva Harker, John McCormack, Feona Mann, John Patrick

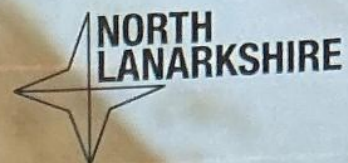
Independent examiner: Jim Cram

Proposed by Marion Smith, seconded by Jean Whyte

A.O.B: Nil

Central Scotland Family History Society, Registered Scottish Charity No SC013887

LANARKSHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY'S



LOCAL HISTORY FAIR

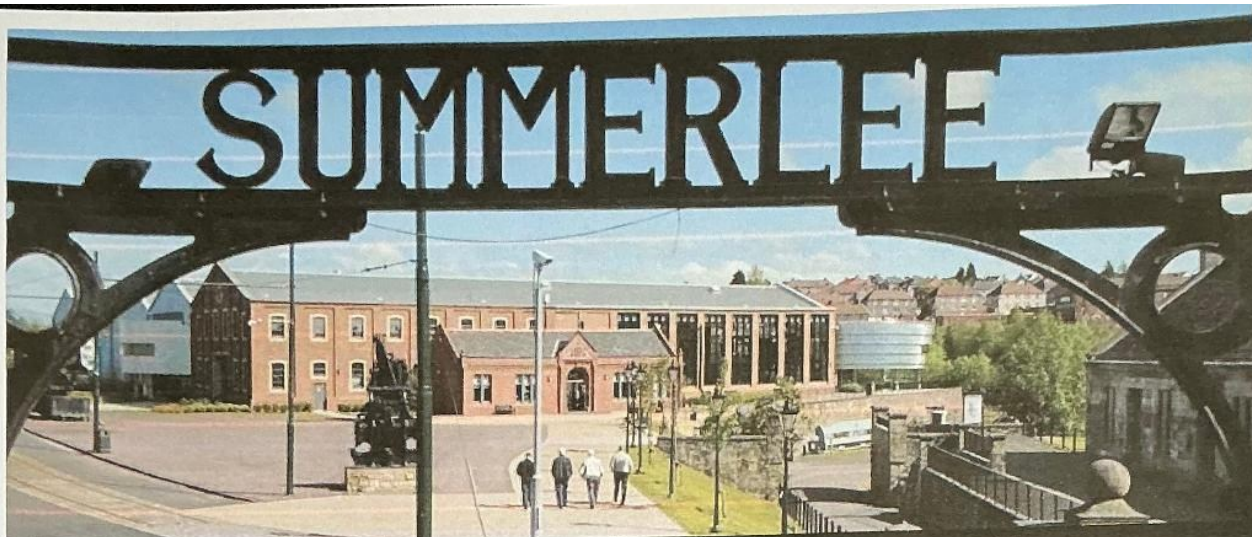
**Summerlee Museum
of Scottish Industrial Life**

Saturday 22 March 2025

10am - 4pm

FREE ENTRY to Museum and Fair

VISIT HERE



Stalls

Lanarkshire FHS

West Lothian FHS

Central Scotland FHS

North Lanarkshire - Local Studies

North Lanarkshire – Archives

North Lanarkshire – Heritage Outreach

'Summerlee: New Stories,
New Audiences, Better Lives' redevelopment
project

Lanarkshire Police Historical Society

Monklands Poets Corner

Airdrie Writers Group

Shotts Heritage Group

Lanarkshire Fallen Project

Bothwellhaugh Mining Village (The Pailis)

Enable Communities

Glasgow & West of Scotland Family History
Society

Plus free short talks
throughout the day.

Don't miss our
mine tours & miners' row,
café, play area & picnic
area, exhibitions & shops.

Train and bus:

www.travelinescotland.com

Cycling:

National Cycle route 75.
Bike parking at the gate.

Parking:

Follow the signs for the
Timecapsule ML5 1DL

Guide dogs welcome

Summerlee Museum
of Scottish Industrial Life,
Heritage Way, Coatbridge. ML5 1QD

Tel: 01236 638460

For more information visit:

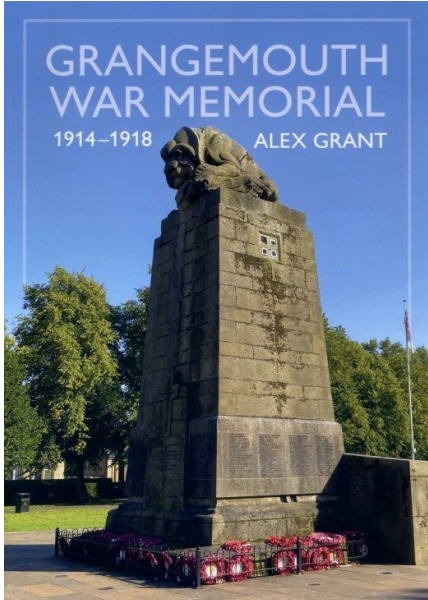
culturenl.co.uk/summerlee
www.lanarkshirefhs.org.uk/

BOOK REVIEW

Grangemouth War Memorial 1914-1918

~Alex Grant~

Published by Falkirk Local History Society 2024



This well-researched and documented book is of great interest to anyone who has ancestors in the Parish of Grangemouth. It is a detailed account of the lives and service of some of the 482 men and women who lost their lives in the Great War, who are remembered on the town's magnificent war memorial in Zetland Park, which was officially unveiled in September 1923, as well as others who are not remembered in this way.

The author is a local man who grew up in the town, and who has had a lifelong interest in wartime history. This book is the result of that interest and many years of research into the stories behind the names of those who never returned from the horrors of the various battles of the First World War. It also covers the villages of Bothkennar, Skinflats, Old Polmont, Glensburgh and Powfoulis. He has used sources from both local and national archives, military and civilian, and newspapers etc.

The book is divided into 3 Sections, with Section 1 covering those listed in the Grangemouth Roll of Honour, 1914-1919 whose names **do** appear on the War Memorial; Section 2 lists those in the Roll of Honour who **do not** appear on the War Memorial; Section 3 contains "those born, married or associated with the Parish of Grangemouth and those who either lived, worked or enlisted in the town". Where possible, the individual records are enhanced by photographs of the men taken from the archives of the Falkirk Herald.

Each section is arranged in alphabetical order of the men's names, so is easy to use. The information for each entry is listed under the following headings: Name, Rank & No., Regiment, Additional, Enlisted, Home, Civilian Life, Died, Grave Memorial.

The book also contains contributions from Jim Pringle, a history teacher with strong family links to Grangemouth. He has written the Foreword, as well as a further chapter about Grangemouth on the eve of the Great War. Local Falkirk historian, Ian Scott, a well-known face to our Society as a regular speaker, has also added his contribution about Grangemouth at the Turn of the Century as well as at the time of the Great War, with a Timeline of the Main Battles.

The book costs £5 and is available to purchase from Inkspot & Silverleaf Booksellers in Bo'ness, the Ochil Crafts Shop in La Porte Precinct, Grangemouth or from grangemouthwarmemorial@gmail.com or Falkirk Local History Society, who published the book, on flhs.secretary@yahoo.co.uk

If you would like to find out if any of your ancestors are listed in the book, you can ask us to look up our copy.

Sandra Reid

History of Mining In Central Scotland

By Ian Scott (October talk)

I'm a great admirer of the skills of those involved in extracting coal and other ores from deep underground. Within the lifetime of most of us here today, something that was an enormous employer, affecting the lives of every single person for generations, just disappeared before our eyes.

There are now no deep mines in Scotland and there are no miners of the kind we used to know. Yet in Central Scotland alone, there were tens of thousands of men and families who depended on coal mining as their source of putting food on the table for their families. I've been interested in coal mining ever since I was a student, when I started playing traditional Scottish folk music. I was very keen on songs that came from the working traditions all round the world. One song I know says:-

"Dark is the dungeon and damp is the dew
Where dangers are doubled and pleasures are few
The rain never falls and the sun never shines
It's dark as a dungeon way down in the mines"

And for a thousand years that was the reality for so many people. We know that the monks in the various abbeys and priories, the canons in the Augustinian order in Holyrood for example, were involved in mining. Their charters tell us that they had the right to lift coal, to use coal and to sell coal in their own communities and abroad. These were grants given to them by various landowners. In 1200 we know that William de Vipont, whoever he was, had a tithe of his coal from Carriden. Dunfermline and Newbattle Abbeys had similar charters.

Now we know that, because these charters have survived. Lots and lots of records of other landowners have not survived but we can presume that they also took the opportunity to exploit their assets. We are not talking about serious mining. We're talking about coal that cropped out on the surface. There is a seam of coal and it is interrupted by erosion so you would get a little river valley and this means that the coal somehow reaches the surface. We know that people were picking up coal on the seashore and they can still do so down in Bo'ness. When you have coal cropping out like that, what you have is the opportunity to dig in, as long as you don't go too far. This is mining rather than pit digging. So you would go in as far as you could and when the roof started to fall in, you would have to abandon it.

The refinement after that was the pit adit system. They would dig another tunnel sloping down at an angle, so that the water that accumulates would run off and the work could continue. You can put some kind of support in the roof and when you get far in and the water is not escaping, you can then dig down from the surface. It's not going to be too far, say 40 to 50 feet and you can start lifting the coal up in containers and that is where the pit villages start to accumulate.

The next development was bell pits. Again, a very simple idea – you dig down from the surface and when you get to the seam of coal you allow it to widen out, you gather the coal and it is carried up on ladders to the surface and accumulated up there and carted away. Bell pits were all over the place. You can still find some places where there has been settlement and Bo'ness particularly was seriously undermined – never think of buying a house in Bo'ness! As it became more sophisticated, a windlass was used to lift up the coal from a greater depth and then there was a horse gin to help bring the coal tubs up to the surface. This was one of the first uses of animal labour in mining.

Hector Boece, the famous historian of the 16th century said "in Fife are such black stanes that hae sae intolerably hot when they are kindled, that they resolve and melt iron and are therefore right profitable for the operation of smiths". So we know the coal is being used for other

purposes and not just for domestic heating. The idea of smelting iron in a primitive way would be common at the time. A century later, the coal is being sold as a product of the land e.g. from Elphinstone Pans (now called Dunmore). General Roy's map of 1750 says "Elphinstone is a small town where there is a pretty store of shale coal reaching far beyond the sea and though there is never a vessel belonging to this place, yet the Dutch mostly and some others choose to laid [load] there because of the goodness of the coal". We find that the ports on the Forth are taking the coal and selling it to places over on the other side of the country. In Ayrshire, for example, we find that the very first use of coal dug out in quantity was to sell to Ireland. Ireland had no supplies of coal of their own.

A very important use of coal in central Scotland was in the manufacture of salt. All the way along on both the north and south sides of the River Forth, coal was being used to take water from the river, put it into pans, heat it up and sell the salt. These pans would be located close to the shore so that when the tide came in, it would fill the pans and then the water was locked in and treated using the local coal to dry off the water until you were left with the salt. It was used extensively as an export and in the local area. This was not the kind of salt we shake on our fish and chips, but rather the coarse stuff that is used to cure salted herrings and bacon, before there was refrigeration to preserve food.

Salt making was really important and it used a lot of coal. The pans were kept going continuously, but as they weren't allowed to work on a Sunday, the pans were allowed to cool down. This meant that instead of drying with a big heat to force the water to continuously bubble and boil, but instead you allowed the fire to cool down gently, then what was produced was a fine salt which could be used for domestic purposes and in Scotland it was of much higher value and it was known as "Sabbath salt".

In 1563 – 1579 coal was becoming so important that the Scottish parliament acted against the export of coal which was leading to a shortage of fuel within Scotland. This led to the notorious Act of 1606. This is the Act that meant anybody who worked in the salt works as salters or in the mines as colliers and coal-bearers could not leave their job without sufficient testimony from the master whom they had last served. Anyone hiring them without such testimonial was bound upon challenge within a year and a day by their late master to deliver them back to him. I am basically saying that these people were "owned" – though strictly speaking they were not slaves - but they could be sold en masse, e.g. I will sell you Kinneil Colliery for £5000. It consists of so much coal unwrought so far, so many yards of iron bars, bogies and trucks and it has say 70 men, 16 women and 5 children. They were serfs. They were not allowed to leave their work and if they did leave, they could be brought back and punished in quite severe ways.

The Act also gave rights to all masters and owners of coal heughs and pans to apprehend all vagabonds and sturdy beggars and to put them to work, so not only did they "own" the miners and salters, but they could also apprehend anyone wandering through their area without a useful purpose and just add them to the work force and that was them permanently stuck there. We have odd little horrible examples of this. In the River Forth some years ago in the Victorian era, a brass collar was dredged up out of the water and the inscription said that this man had been found guilty of theft at Perth and had been gifted by the courts to Lord Erskine for his coal mines in Alloa as his perpetual servant in 1701.

In 1641 Scotland was in the grip of a rather puritanical version of the Reformation. Everyone had to work six days a week. The law mentions that watermen, windsmen and gatesmen would also come under the 1606 Act. These are all trades that had emerged separately from the men who dug the coal. These are trades that operated underneath the ground. The watermen were responsible for draining the pit, windsmen were to ensure the air circulated under the ground and gatesmen were the guys who operated the system where the bogeys carried the coal back and forward through wooden Gates or shutters. The government passed an Act against wrongous imprisonment, meaning that people cannot arbitrarily arrest somebody and put them in prison without explaining why. In Scotland it was called "an Act against wrongous

imprisonment" but it specifically was not to be extended to colliers and salters; they could be wrongously imprisoned.

If you were the child of a collier, then the coal owner made sure that you were given an arles, a valuable coin and when you accepted that it meant that your child would follow you into the pit, thus ensuring a continuity of labour. At this time the underground conditions were horrendous. The deeper they went, the more onerous it became. It was the women who got the job of filling large baskets and carrying them on their backs, climbing up a whole succession of ladders constructed inside the shaft.

By the 1700s whole families were totally engaged in this work. The man, his wife and his children, little ones as young as 7 or 8 were working in the pits in terrible conditions. They were doing physical work before their bodies had formed. This disgraceful situation didn't change until the 1840s. When they needed more coal and were using bigger, wider seams, they operated a different system of extracting the coal. It's called stoup and room. The rooms are the spaces where the people work and they leave pillars of coal standing to hold up the roof. They create a grid of roads working back and forwards leaving this whole network of coal pillars. The owners didn't really like that because 30% of the coal was not being taken out. When they decided the coal seam was exhausted, they would pull the pillars down taking out the coal as they left. It was a very dangerous thing and lots of people were killed.

Bo'ness used to have the most beautiful Town Hall anywhere in central Scotland as there was loads of money in Bo'ness in the 18th century. It had all kinds of activities going on, particularly the maritime ones. The money went to build this beautiful Town Hall which was modelled on Inverary Castle. However, 50 feet down below there was a great enormous hole in the ground as they mined underneath it and in 1890 the Town Hall started to sink and so they decided to demolish it and then they rebuilt the tower. In the 1960s the tower started to sink as well, so it has now gone too.

Everything changed by 1759, the moment the Carron Ironworks opened its doors. To produce one ton of pig iron you needed ten tons of coal. The message went out to the landowners, particularly in our area, if you have coal in your ground, then get it out. Anything you have, we will buy. So we have landowners like James Bruce in Kinnaird, the famous Abyssinian traveller, knowing that small amounts of coal have been lifted in his area and now he starts mining in earnest. The Duke of Hamilton owns all the pits up the brae at Shieldhill and Redding and Laurieston and they start digging. Then the Erskines over in Alloa, who have already been exporting a lot of coal to Edinburgh to heat the population, now start redoubling their efforts as Carron will buy everything they can produce.

Coal villages began to appear all over central Scotland. They were all pretty much of a muchness, the mining apparatus, the little houses, the miners' rows, the chimneys and the pit bings. When the Carron Ironworks opened, the system of serfdom was still in operation. Nobody wanted to volunteer to be a miner. They started to get desperate for more and more workers and so these laws were finally extinguished at the end of the 18th century. It was not out of the goodness of their hearts or because they thought it was a good idea to liberate people from serfdom; they needed to be able to recruit miners from England where the system didn't operate.

This changed the physical landscape completely. Sometimes the Carron Company bought the coal, sometimes they owned the coal mines themselves. The demand for coal pushed a whole lot of other technologies forward. One of the reasons that they couldn't get enough coal was because they couldn't solve the problem of getting the water out of the pit. If they went deeper, the pits flooded. Necessity was the mother of invention and James Watt from Greenock came to Kinneil House in Bo'ness, where one of the partners in the Carron Company was living at the time. He built a little house for him at the back of Kinneil House – a workshop actually – and James Watt was brought there. He had developed an idea and everybody wanted a piece of the action, so they had to protect it. This was so they could secrete him away while he did his

experimental work. In 1769 he patented an engine, still called the Kinneil engine. It was never successfully manufactured in Scotland, mainly because the skilled men and equipment were not here. They had to go down to Birmingham and the Watt Steam Engine could then pump the water out of all the pits and this made him a famous man.

Then we had a revolution in transport, also driven by the demand for coal. They needed to get the coal from where it was mined to where it was needed and transportation up until the middle of the 18th century was almost impossible. We just didn't have any main roads at all. We had fragments of the Roman roads and one or two of General Wade's roads made after the Jacobite Risings, but that is all. We could however make waterways. We had the building of the Forth & Clyde Canal and at the same time, the opening of the Monkland Canal and that was specifically to get the coal from Lanarkshire into the Forth & Clyde Canal and carry it to the people who were making iron in smithys as well as in the foundries. They needed the coal and they simply couldn't get enough coal in their local area, so it had to be transported. In Edinburgh they complained bitterly about the fact that the Erskines in Alloa were charging them an absolute fortune for the coal from Clackmannanshire which was being taken along the river and then taken into the city. In one particular cold winter they said "enough's enough, we need to get that Lanarkshire coal" and so they ended up with the Union Canal. So the coal from Shieldhill eventually ended up going to Edinburgh.

We have got coal as the driver for change. We think roll on roll off ferries are a recent idea, but at first the pit bogies and their contents were loaded onto the canal boats as they were and were taken to where they were needed and then rolled off at the other end. This would have been a common sight and the canals were certainly used for that purpose extensively.

The central belt coalfields were pouring coal out by the tens of thousands of tons. In the 1690s, Scotland was producing half a million tons per annum. In the 1790s it was 1,600,000 tons. The trajectory was always upwards with more and more coal demanded. It is at this stage that they realised if they wanted to increase production, they needed to relax the serfdom rules, which they did in two stages. In 1775 and in 1799 the Collier Emancipation Acts were passed to free the people from their serfdom. The 1775 one wasn't really very good, because they had to buy themselves out and they didn't have the money to do it. It wasn't until 1799 that the whole thing finally came to an end and the serfs were free to move to another job.

Coal was being used for so many different things – we talked about salt making, domestic heating, in smithys and for iron smelting. Now we had factories that required steam power and we had gas lighting. In 1812 coal gas lighting was effectively invented by Scotsman William Murdoch, an associate of James Watt down in England. Then came the arrival of the steam train. In 1842 the first line between Glasgow and Edinburgh opened and thereafter there was a huge expansion, all based on coal

However, there was a hidden secret which was not swept away by the change in the law and that was the disgraceful conditions that existed underground. There was a famous Report in 1842 which examined the role of the employment of children and women underground in collieries. It is the most heart-rending stuff to read. Children as young as four and five were working twelve-hour shifts in the pits. Girls were crawling on hands and knees, harnessed like horses, pulling a bogey with hundredweights of coal in them. They were all interviewed in all the pits in central Scotland and it was all written down by the examiners who asked questions about the working conditions, the hours worked and if they worked as a family unit. The outcome was an Act of Parliament which banned all women and children under the age of twelve from working underground.

Rather paradoxically, a lot of the women said they needed to work underground as they needed to earn the wages and there were ministers and others who said the women were perfectly all right working underground. In the pits in Larbert for example, the minister said he had never known such a healthy population of women as were found in Larbert. That company opposed the Act as did the Duke of Hamilton who owned a lot of the pits, but the Parliament held its

nerve and it passed into law. It didn't mean that the days of hard work for women were over because the women then worked on the surface, sorting the coals and doing other sundry heavy labour jobs. Women's labour was replaced to some extent by the use of pit ponies. Most of these ponies were taken underground when they were very young and they stayed there until they died because once they had been living in their stables underground for any more than a year, they couldn't move back up because their eyes couldn't function and it would cause them great distress.

Fighting back did begin in the 1700s. Colliers would meet underground in secret away from the prying eyes of the foremen and under the guise of Friendly Societies and sickness benefit clubs which were recognised as legal activities. At such meetings they made their own bonds of solidarity, making and keeping solemn oaths of craft brotherhood. The semi-masonic brotherhood was to become more influential towards the close of the century with the birth of the Free Collier Movement. The large amount of coal from the Lanarkshire coalfield caused prices to fall, resulting in wage cuts. There were strikes and riots. Acts were passed to stop people gathering to have meetings. The government's reaction was to clamp down very hard. They would send dragoons into the pit villages to stop any kind of gathering and from that the Free Collier Movement was born. The Free Colliers were started in 1863 as an alternative to any form of trade union which were then still weak and effectively banned.

If anybody took action publicly to call for a strike, they would get sacked, they would lose their tied housing and the family would be almost destitute. But the colliers formed themselves into a semi-secret society where they could meet together and discuss the various possibilities of withdrawing their labour, having strikes or working to rule. Within two years there were 65 lodges of Free Colliers all over central Scotland. The only one existing now is the Redding one – the original one and once a year, on the first Saturday of August, they go for an eleven-mile walk round what used to be the pit villages of the Braes area. At the end of the day, they end up on the top of Wallacestone and declare themselves to be free men, praising the name and story of William Wallace as their guide. It's a great event. In the early days, they prided themselves on the fact that it was completely alcohol free, however that's one of the traditions that was abandoned. The men wear top hats and gauntlets and at the end of the march, usually some politician of the left or the nationalist side are invited to speak.

One of the places they always visit is the scene of the Redding Pit Disaster which was of national importance. 40 men were trapped by the influx of water in Redding No 23 Colliery. It was one of the biggest losses of life in the 20th century mining. The conditions of the miners were still atrocious at this stage. In 1930, the Westquarter model village was created for the miners. There was no water supply but they did get coal for heating. In 1947 the pits were nationalised and this was a great step forward, because they could tackle the worst of the excesses endangering people's lives. On the day of nationalisation, there were 275 Scottish mines operated by 125 companies. 79 were so small that they were exempt from nationalisation, so they were allowed to carry on. They might only have 5 or 6 miners. 50% of the rest were nearing exhaustion or were beyond repair, so this was a very big rationalisation in a very short space of time. Coal was still in huge demand. Society would have stopped dead if they had no coal.

One colliery in Fife in 1957 had 3,500 employees. There were 900 colliers in Redding Colliery, which was the biggest one in our area. The new superpits were starting to be developed and working underground was much more pleasant. They were supposed to lead us into the distant future with millions of tons of coal being exported. Little did they know in the 1960s that this was not going to last for more than another 20 years. In 1984-85, colliers were told that vast numbers of the pits were going to be closed, often in very brutal fashion. There was no proper preparation for reskilling the workers and there was a tremendous spirit among the colliers because they had been so close as communities since the days of serfdom. They married within their own communities, they were very clannish and supportive of one another and tended to be hostile to people from outside and also to receive hostility coming back the other way.

They had a tremendous sense of solidarity. Back in 1926, when the General Strike was on, it was the miners who kept going for far longer than anybody else. That doesn't mean they cannot be badly led. The Miners' Strike of 1984-1985 split communities right down the middle. You will remember the miners with their buckets collecting money in the supermarkets and how generous ordinary people were to them. When it became a personal thing between the government and the leaders of the National Union of Mineworkers it started to become a "no compromise" kind of thing. In Polmaise Colliery in Fallin, the workers were told that if they went on strike, the machinery would run down. They knew that the pit was getting towards the end of its life and they were told if you stay on strike, it will close, and that's exactly what happened. As soon as the strike was over, the pit didn't open again.



Not long ago I had the pleasure of speaking at the unveiling of this wheel erected to mark the impact of coal mining history on Bo'ness and by extension, Scotland, particularly the central part. Finally, The Redding Colliers always visit the Redding Memorial from 1923 on their annual walk. In 2023 to mark the centenary, a fantastic memorial was built in the middle of Redding. The figures of a collier and a collier's wife stand each side of the memorial in front of the wheels and the bogeys full of coal. Falkirk Council were persuaded to let them wire the two miners' lamps into the street lights, so when the street lights come on at night, the lights come on at the memorial. It is a very moving sight.

Using the Sasine Minute Book Index to look for your family

By Elizabeth Passe (Member No. 1069)

For nearly 2 years, as a volunteer for Graham Maxwell at www.scottishindexes.com I have been creating an index to the Stirling and Clackmannanshire Sasine Minute Book. (Sasine Minute book 1726-1734 vol 15 and 16 National Records of Scotland Ref No: RS83/4 for Stirling, Clackmannanshire and Stewartry of Menteith)

The Sasines are the records of property transfers. You will find a very helpful overview of Sasines on the Scottish Indexes website in their Learning Zone. On the "Search our Record Sets" page, there is a link to coverage which shows what has been indexed to date. As these volumes almost exactly equate with the area covered by the Central Scotland Family History Society, I thought it would be of interest to share something of what I have learned in the process. Records for the Burgh of Stirling and the Parish of Stirling covering this period are held in Stirling Archives. These records are neither digitised nor indexed and except for a few odd examples, which seem to have crept in, do not form part of this index. Before I started, I would probably have said that, only the wealthy owned property, or women didn't own property, or my ancestors were too poor to be in any property records..... but I have found a very different picture.

The Minute Book, which is what we have been indexing in this project, is only a summary of the full sasine. It names the two parties involved, a brief description of the property or land being transferred and gives the reference to the full sasine, which can be accessed via Scottish Indexes or in person in the National Records of Scotland Search Room in Edinburgh. The Scottish Indexes entries are searchable by name, occupation, residence, organisation, deed year [which may not be the same as the year of registration] year, and place of lands conveyed.

It would seem that in this area nearly every skilled tradesman owned property: tailors, bakers, weavers, maltmen, wrights. As would be expected, these properties are in the towns and villages, usually described as: "a house, yeard and the purtenances thereto" or a "house high and laigh, back and fore with the closs and yeard" – which sounds like the original of a four in a block!

There are numerous entries for merchants, school masters, doctors, shipmasters and Ministers of the Gospel. There are surprisingly few records relating to those at the top of the land-owning system – the superiors.

It is mainly in the records relating to the land in the countryside that there are references to the tenants currently on the land. Many of these people are probably not named in any other record. Some of the records, both town and country, name the previous owners of the property or even the neighbours whose land adjoins the one being transferred.

If your ancestor was a Writer (roughly equivalent to a solicitor) or notary in the area the Minute Book contains their actual signature at the end of each entry which had been written by a clerk. This gives us a list of about 30 people working in the legal field. Many of them also transferred property during this period and have their own entries for this.

I was surprised how frequently women appear in the records: sometimes as the only heir, they are also often named as the mother of a person involved in a transaction. As with other Scottish records, you will usually find women entered by their maiden surname and sometimes with their father's name as well. A typical example from 1727 relating to Birdstone in Campsie Parish gives: Agnes Stewart lawful daughter to James Stewart, portioner of Bleahill and now spouse to William Muir, portioner of Burdstoun. Hugely useful information. Very many men made a provision for their wife to have a liferent sasine (a lifetime ownership, or to receive an income from a property), these were often drawn up at the time of marriage. I particularly like the record from 1731 when Elizabeth Don, wife of William Maiken, a Baillie of Stirling is given a liferent: "in implementing their Contract of Marriage and for love and favour".

The number of entries is close to 4000 and even allowing for some names appearing more than once it must represent quite a large proportion of “the middling sort” from a time when we have very few other records listing people.

Work is in progress on the next volumes and will eventually take the records available from 1726 to 1745. The range of fields in which you can search make this a hugely useful index for family history, local history and one-place studies.

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Books Reviews

Hiding the Past: A Genealogical Crime Mystery by Nathan Dylan Goodwin.

This is the first in a series of books about Morton Farrier who works as a forensic genealogist. He is engaged to help a man, Peter Coldrick, who had done a lot of research on his own family himself and previously employed genealogists to help, but nothing beyond his father has been found. We see the genealogical sources he uses as he tries to solve the puzzle. The case is not straightforward however and Morton’s life is put in danger as he tries to find answers – someone else seems determined to stop him.

A fast-paced story, with lots of twists and turns.

The Deserter’s Tale: A Genealogical Crime Mystery by Nathan Dylan Goodwin.

Goodwin has a series of books featuring Morton Farrier who works as a forensic genealogist with this being the tenth in the series.

In this story Morton is taking part in the RootsTech conference in Salt Lake City and takes time to follow up several leads in two cases that affect his own family. One is the conviction of murder of his own grandfather, on rather dubious evidence. The second is the disappearance of his wife’s great grandfather who deserted his young family soon after World War One, and as you might image DNA testing gave some interesting leads as to where he went and what happened to him. Goodwin details the process Morton goes through as he tries to solve these mysteries, the resources he uses, the archives he visits etc. I think family historians would find this very interesting.

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NEW MEMBERS		
1233	William Hay	Dundee
1234	Sally Garner	London

Overcoming Brick Walls

by Emma Maxwell (December Talk)

Emma is well known to many of us from previous talks and Scottish Indexes which she runs with her husband Graham.

Nearly all of us have some brick walls, so Emma gave some tips on how we could break them down. She used three different examples as illustrations.

In the first, with an Irish birth certificate, the problem was to find more about the mother.

The second example was a Scottish gravestone with a death in 1847. As this was before civil registration we cannot get the parents name from a death certificate, and ages in 1841 census were rounded down.

The third was a common surname.

Tips to try:

- Widen your search from the missing person and expand it to other family members, especially if there is someone with a less common or unusual name which might allow you to identify the family.
- Many websites allow you free use of the indexes, so do a broad search within a particular date range for an individual. You can do this on FamilySearch over a date range that goes before and after civil registration.
- Try a ten year search on Scotlandspeople for a baptism.
- Use wild cards when searching as spellings can vary considerably,
 - * for a series of characters and ? for 1 character.
- If there are several possible baptisms, keep trying to find out more about the family until you have evidence to confirm which is correct – don't guess and never assume that the first record you find that looks possible is the correct one.
- Remember not all parish registers exist, some were lost and many give very little information apart from a name and date, so other sources are required to confirm details.
- Look at the relationships of all people in a census return, in-laws, nieces, nephews etc and follow them as you may be able to work back and find links to determine the correct family.
- Use maps to identify small places, farms, cottages etc. as this might confirm which family you want.
- If there is anything unique about the family, use that to find further detail

PRISONERS OF WAR

ON-LINE MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM

***PoW80: Commemorating 80 years since the
release of Allied prisoners from Europe.***

Saturday 7th June 2025

Purpose: - To commemorate and remember the liberation of allied prisoners of
World War II and the sacrifices they made.

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pow80-80th-anniversary-event-of-the-liberation-of-wwii-
prisoners-of-war-tickets-938621350727](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pow80-80th-anniversary-event-of-the-liberation-of-wwii-prisoners-of-war-tickets-938621350727)



POW80

**Commemorating 80 years since the
release of Allied prisoners from Europe**

Join us for PoW80

7th of June 2025

The Midland Hotel, Manchester, UK

Ticket release date 27th September 2024 –
check back for more information

Using FamilySearch Alison Spring (January talk)

This is the handout which Alison has allowed us to share with all our members in place of a summary of her talk.

As FamilySearch is such a large website, the following links are provided for ease of finding the specific pages mentioned in the presentation. You may need to sign in to your free FamilySearch account to access some of these pages.

The history behind the organisation that became FamilySearch: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/about/>

How to access Indexed Historical Records: <https://www.familysearch.org/search/>

The International Genealogical Index (IGI) – it's still there! https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/International_Genealogical_Index

Find a FamilySearch Centre or Affiliate Library to visit near you: <https://www.familysearch.org/centers/locations/>

You can also explore many unindexed Historical Images by browsing: <https://www.familysearch.org/records/images/>

Create a Family Tree chart Keepsake to display or share: <https://www.familysearch.org/tree-designs/global/>

Access thousands of e-books via the Digital Library: <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/>

One example is

A Whispering in the Hearth: Lives of our Scottish Coalmining Ancestors: <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/1115694>

Check out a variety Family History Activities suitable for all ages: <https://www.familysearch.org/discovery/>

You can grow your family history skills and your tree by consulting the Research Wiki for advice: https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Main_Page

Classes and other ways to increase your understanding and knowledge are available at the Learning Centre: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/help/helpcenter/learning-center>

Check out the upcoming and recent FamilySearch Library Classes & Webinars: https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/FamilySearch_Library_Classes_and_Webinars

There are plenty of informative and helpful videos at FamilySearch's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@familysearch/videos> and RootsTech's On-Demand Video Library: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/library> Including a few of my own videos:
Alison Spring RootsTech FamilySearch

FamilySearch doesn't offer DNA testing, but if you're not sure what would be involved and how your results can be used to research your ancestry, you can get information here: <https://www.familysearch.org/home/dnatesting>

Volunteer for even just a few minutes at a time with online projects at the Get Involved pages: <https://www.familysearch.org/getinvolved/>

Download one or more of FamilySearch's Mobile Apps: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/mobile-apps/>

You can stay up to date with the latest developments, record additions, and technological advances at the Blog:

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/>

For any support with the website and its services, you can contact the Help Centre in a number of ways. Details at: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/help/helpcenter/landing>

You can even sign up to speak face to face with a helper in an Online Research Consultation. Book your appointment: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/library/online-consultations>

And finally, read the FamilySearch Review of 2024 to get some idea of the past year's projects and records: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/familysearch-year-in-review-2024>

If you have questions about this presentation, you can contact me

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Members' Interests

SURNAME	PARISH	PLACE (if not a Parish)	COUNTY	COUNTRY	PERIOD FROM	PERIOD TO	MEM NO.
ALLICE	ALLOA		CLK	SCT	1750	1920	1234
CARMICHAEL	BALQUHIDDER		STI	SCT	1750	1970	1234
CARMICHAEL	ALLOA	BRIDGE OF TEITH	CLK	SCT	1750	1970	1234
CARMICHAEL	DOLLAR		CLK	SCT	1750	1970	1234
HAY		BALDERNOCK	STI	SCT	1600	1850	1233
HAY			PER	SCT	1600	1850	1233
HODGE	ALLOA		CLK	SCT	1700	1850	1234
NEILSON	ALLOA		CLK	SCT	1700	1900	1234
RITCHIE	ALLOA		CLK	SCT	1750	1900	1234
RITCHIE	TILlicOUNTRY		CLK	SCT	1750	1900	1234
SHARP	ALLOA		CLK	SCT	1700	1910	1234

James Scott Stewart – Artist

The Falkirk Years

By Craig Adam (Member No. 802)

James Scott Stewart (JSS), a Falkirk-born artist, forged a long career over almost seventy years as a painter of portraits and landscapes, serving the expanding and prosperous Victorian middle-class across west-central Scotland. Although now virtually forgotten, with only a handful of paintings now known to be in gallery collections, his ability to harness the newspaper media, to advertise and advance his business, allows the historian to track and map that career in surprising detail. Indeed, his almost continuous presence in the Falkirk Herald (FH) and other papers throughout the 1850s and early 1860s has been used to piece together his life story over his first thirty years.

Firstly, there is the question of why he used the middle name of Scott throughout most of his adult life. Although it was his paternal grandmother's maiden name, it is not on his baptism certificate or on the census returns declared by his parents. Professionally, it did allow him to distinguish himself from his Glasgow-based, artistic contemporary, James Malcolm Stewart (1830-1916) who commonly is referred to as J. Malcolm Stewart, though nowadays when attributing paintings by JSS, he is more-often confused with Edinburgh-born James Struthers Stewart (1791-1863), an engraver, who lived in South Africa from 1833 until his death. Whatever the reason, the middle name gives his otherwise rather common name, some distinctiveness and he used that to promote himself commercially. In studying his artistic life, the correct identification of his works can be challenging and many sources have erroneous and confusing attributions.

James was the youngest child and sole son of Charles Stewart (1791-1869), a brick and tile maker, and Margaret Burgess (1790-1875). The couple had already baptised two daughters; Margaret, my 2G-grandmother, in 1820 and Mary in 1829. Charles was born in Grandtully, Perthshire and had migrated south, presumably for work, while Margaret, from Falkirk, had been married previously to William Watson, a sergeant in the 90th regiment (Perthshire Light Infantry), finding herself a widow in 1819 under unusual circumstances – but that is a separate story (see CSFHS Newsletter Issue 66, Spring 2024). The parents lived in Kerse Lane, Falkirk for most of their married lives and indeed, by 1855, valuation rolls tell us that Charles is the proprietor of several houses there. After Margaret's death in 1875 the ownership of these transferred to the two surviving children, Margaret (in fact, to her husband Robert Buchanan!) and to James.

The first evidence of how James commenced his career as an artist comes from the 1851 census and from an advert in the Falkirk Herald the following year. In June 1851 he was a lodger in the house of John Elder, a messenger with the Commercial Bank, at 20 East Rose Street, Edinburgh. James' occupation was given as 'artist painter'. On 17th June 1852, the Falkirk Herald ran an advertisement for 'Evening Classes for Drawing and Painting' to be given by James Stewart '... having just returned from studying in the School of Design, Edinburgh'. This was in fact the 'Trustees Academy School of Design⁽¹⁾' which had moved into what was then the Royal Institution building, now the Royal Scottish Academy, at the foot of the Mound, in 1826. Over the subsequent years this amalgamated and evolved into the Edinburgh College of Art. It is not known for how long James had studied there or under what circumstances he became a student. Despite training in the city, James does not appear to have retained any connections with Edinburgh over the rest of his life, instead pursuing a career between Falkirk and Glasgow, then the expanding industrial and commercial centre of Scotland.

In addition to this teaching work, the first references to his commercial paintings also appear at this time. Reviews of paintings appeared in the newspapers quite frequently in those days and they were often presented not only in galleries but in shops. In early 1851 the FH reported:

'The Fine Arts in Falkirk

There may be now seen in the shop of Mr Charles Jeffrey, bookseller, two very promising specimens of the skill of two young townsmen who are devoting their attention to the study of painting. One is a view of Greenwich Hospital by Mr W Dobbie after a water colour drawing by Edward Campion. The other is an original painting by Mr James Stewart, representing a coast scene, and fisherwomen waiting for the return of the boats. Both are highly creditable productions and augur well for the future success of the young artists.' (FH 13 Feb 1851)

In an article entitled 'Camelon - The Seaport and the Village' published in the Stirling Observer (SO) in 1866, the author says:

'I may also note in passing that the hull of the first steamboat—the Charlotte Dundas—lay for many years in a creek of the canal, between Locks 8 and 9. The vessel was built in 1801, for Symington, by Mr Hart, Grangemouth. Some fifteen years ago, Mr James S. Stewart painted an excellent little picture of the boat as she lay wasting in the creek; while, not further back than 1860, a fine stereoscopic negative of her hull was taken by Mr John Aitken, Darroch.' (SO 8 Feb 1866)

This places this painting at around 1851 or 1852, so at the start of James Stewart's career, and although the painting has not been traced, a copy of the photograph by Aitken is held by the Falkirk Council Archives⁽²⁾. His paintings also started to be exhibited and sold in Glasgow galleries at this time. In October 1853 the FH informs us that three pictures were shown at the new West of Scotland Academy Exhibition in Buchanan Street and all were promptly sold. One is named as 'The Tired Companions' – a study of a child and dog; however, the FH quotes a humorous Glasgow correspondent summing up the three paintings as:

'... a sma' figure piece, a cattle piece, an' a bit laddie an' a whalp lyin' sleepin' aneath a plaid.' (FH 13 Oct 1853)

Early the following year, he exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy Exhibition in Edinburgh and his career took an unexpected turn when he moved his base to Belfast. This appears to have been facilitated by an editor at the Falkirk Herald called William Howie Wylie who provided a letter of introduction for JSS to James Withers, then editor of the newspaper, Ulster Conservative, in Belfast (Obituary of Withers, FH 2 April 1863). A consequence of this was that a portrait of Withers by JSS was presented at the Belfast Fine Arts Society exhibition of June 1854. This may be his first portrait of a notable citizen, a commercial market in which he was extremely active throughout his life.

Amongst all the newspaper articles on his professional work during what turned out to be a brief sojourn in Belfast, there is a curious report of a court case in Sept 1854 brought by JSS against John Gallen, a dentist, for assault. Suffice it to say that Gallen had sought advice from the artist on touching up a painting he owned and while apparently the worse for drink, he assaulted JSS, knocking him to the floor. The newspaper report in the Northern Whig of 23rd Sept 1854 gives much detail on the events, including the court case, ending with a guilty verdict and a sentence of three week's imprisonment on Gallen.

Throughout his time in Belfast from early 1854 until late 1856, he regularly had very complimentary reviews of his paintings published in the newspapers there, as summarised by these comments:

'The Belfast Chronicle and various other journals in the capital of Ulster speak very highly of the efforts of a young Scottish painter, James Stewart, several of whose paintings are attracting much attention in the local exhibition of works of art. Mr Stewart who is a native of Falkirk, has exhibited several works in the Glasgow and Edinburgh exhibitions, by a rare

union of modesty and merit. His friends entertain high hopes of his future success. The 'Ulster Gazette' pronounces Mr Stewart to be 'one of the finest portrait painters whom the Royal Scottish Academy has produced, and a lovely landscape painter besides'. (Commonwealth (Glasgow) 27 May 1854)

Despite this apparent success in traditional painting, JSS was becoming aware of the new techniques of photography and, it appears, the use of paint to colour photographic images, particularly portraits. In February 1856, he announced the opening of a studio in Belfast:

'MR. JAMES SCOTT STEWART
ARTIST

Respectfully intimates to his Friends and the Public generally that he has removed his studio to Castle Buildings, Castle Place where he proposes devoting his attention to the following branches of the Fine Arts: - PORTRAITS, in oil and chalk, sepia or ivory black. The new process of Oil Portraits by photography, now so highly appreciated in Paris, and heretofore not introduced into Belfast.' (Mercantile Journal, Belfast, 12 Feb 1856)

This advertisement appears to be the first printed evidence of his use of his middle initial or name. It also is the first time he refers to practising photography and indeed to colouring photographic portraits using his skills as an artist. How successful this business was in Belfast may be in doubt, for at the end of 1856 he was back in Falkirk in the same area of work. A comment in the local newspaper tells us:

'Fine Arts - It will be seen from an advertisement that Mr James Stewart, a talented young photographer, is about to open photographic rooms in the town nearly opposite the Royal Bank. ... His style is new and produces effects far superior to the old mode of Daguerreotype and his works have reached a higher point of excellence than any others that have come under our notice. They have all the truthfulness of the finest finished miniature paintings. We wish Mr Stewart all success. (FH 13 Nov 1856)

This was followed up early the next year in an advertisement placed by the artist himself that expands on the scope of his business:

'Fine Arts - Mr James S. Stewart, artist, respectfully intimates to his friends and the public generally that he has opened photographic portrait rooms nearly opposite the Royal Bank where he purposes devoting his attention to the following branches of the fine arts: - portraits on glass and paper, suited for brooches, bracelets and lockets, highly coloured in oil or water. Copies taken from paintings, statuary, views of mansions, houses etc. Gentlemen attended at their own residences. The Art taught and the Apparatus supplied. Portrait on canvas life size.' (FH 1 Jan 1857)

He continued to produce paintings for sale that were exhibited in local shops and received comment in the press, for example:

'Fine Arts - Our townsman, Mr James Stewart, has painted a portrait of a little girl, the daughter of another townsman which our readers may now see in the show rooms of Mr Neilson, cabinet maker. We have frequently had occasion to speak in high terms of the work of this young artist and his last effort has not only outstripped all his previous efforts but will bear favourable comparison with works of artist of much greater experience and more general fame.' (FH 28 May 1857)

In 1858 he expanded into animal photography:

'Cattle Show - James Stewart, artist, Falkirk begs respectfully to state that on Thursday next, he will be on the Show Ground with suitable photographic apparatus for taking first class portraits of the prize stock or other animals if ordered by the proprietors. Terms Moderate.' (FH 6 May 1858)

The following year, 1859, was the centenary of national poet Robert Burns' birth and the Falkirk Herald of 27th January reported extensively on local festivities which included a dinner at the Royal Lion Hotel chaired by Provost Kier as well as a 'Working Men's Festival' at the Bank Street Chapel. This latter event included a - 'colossal head and bust of Burns, painted for the occasion by Mr James Stewart, artist, and the work reflected great credit upon that gentleman'. Interestingly, that appears to be the second time Burns featured in JSS' work as four years before he had completed another portrait as reported, in detail, in the FH:

'Fine Arts - We have just seen a fancy portrait of our national poet Burns in Mr Neilson's gallery by Mr James Stewart of Falkirk. The poet is seated at a table in his own house engaged in composition and Mr Stewart has very happily succeeded to the expression of his face that peculiar characteristic which, in moments of intense study, the human face divine - more especially the face of a poet - wears. The various accessories to the principal figure - a few books - among which is conspicuous the 'big Ha' Bible' and the odds and ends which one might expect to find in the cottage of such a man as Burns are given with great force and fidelity. Through the half-open window there is a glimpse of the landscape, characterised by all that promise of excellence in this department of the fine arts we have noticed previously about the efforts in landscape by this artist. We understand that the picture has been sold.' (FH 3rd May 1855)

Over the next two years, reports and reviews of his paintings and photographic productions at exhibitions are regularly reported on in the press. He also moved his studio to one at Burns' Court that incorporated:

'... a first-rate Glass-House and convenience for executing Portraits and Groups of every description in every style of Art.' (FH 31 May 1860)

In the 1861 census he is still living with his parents in Kerse Lane but that is about to change as he makes the key move of his career.

Another Falkirk-born man, James Robertson (1811 – 1882), had for many years been working as a miniature and portrait painter in Glasgow, latterly branching into photography, rather in the same way as JSS had done in Falkirk. A short note in the FH in the autumn of 1862 tells us that the two artist/ photographers were now collaborating and that JSS had moved his base to Glasgow. The context of this was that, shortly before he died in April 1862, Lauchlan Aitken of the Falkirk brewery firm Aitken and Co. had his portrait painted by the Glasgow artist William Wighton. Later that year the opportunity arose to make and sell copies of that portrait to meet an apparent demand in Falkirk:

'... Mr Wighton's admirable portrait was placed in the hands of our townsman Mr James Stewart (who is now attached to the establishment of another townsman, Mr Robertson, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow) with the view of photographs being taken therefrom. Mr Stewart has fulfilled his commission most creditably. He has produced on a small scale, most admirable copies of the original. ... They are coloured in oil and are touched with a delicacy equal to the finest miniatures in ivory.' (FH 17 Sept 1862)

Confirmation of his move to Glasgow comes from the exhibition catalogue in 1863 for the recently formed Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts. JSS had three paintings on view, titled: 'The Fruit Stall', 'Refreshment' and an unnamed water colour portrait. His address was given as 6 Dalhousie Street; interestingly, this now runs alongside the present site of the Glasgow School of Art which in the 1860s was located in Ingram Street.

JSS had completed around ten years of his artistic career at this time, mostly spent in Falkirk, and still had well over fifty years of active working life remaining, all of which would be spent in Glasgow, though over that period he remained in social and business contact with those in Falkirk and visited the town on many occasions. What he achieved in Glasgow and what new directions his path took will form the basis of a second article on this artist.

References

(1) Brief history of the Trustee's Academy at:

https://ourhistory.is.ed.ac.uk/index.php/Trustees_Academy_School_of_Art

(2) Aitken's photograph of the remains of the 'Charlotte Dundas' at:

<https://collections.falkirk.gov.uk/objects/14027/wreck-of-charlotte-dundas-at-tophill-lock-10>

Newspaper resources available at Find My Past: <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/home>

JSS at ArtUK:

https://artuk.org/discover/artists/stewart-james-scott-18311920/view_as/grid/search/2025--keyword:james-scott-stewart/page/1

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Donation to Library

Kathleen MacQueen has kindly donated to the Society of copy of her book **"A Migration Story, 1818 – 1848"**.

The book details the migration of her ancestors from Clackmannanshire, Scotland to Matfield, County Tipperary in Ireland, where they were part of the establishment of a Stein whisky distillery – connected to the Jamieson dynasty through marriage.

The book starts with the Stein family who founded a distillery at Kennetpans in the 1720s. At one time this was the largest distillery in Scotland. They also founded another distillery at Kilbagie a few miles away about 1770. The Steins were industrialists. In addition to the distilleries, they opened coal pits, made a canal to join the two distilleries and built a railway line to the harbour. At one time they were very successful in their businesses but ran into trouble when they got involved with the gin trade in England and the distilleries were sequestrated in 1788.

This is a very well researched book with many references.

Other surnames listed at the end of the book are Bagwell, Bellingham, Bianconi, Boyd, Buchanan, Fotheringham, Haig, Jamieson, MacQueen, Moore, Murray, Nairn, O'Connell, Ryan, Stein and Watson. So if you are interested in these names in Clackmannanshire, this book might be of interest to you.

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Upcoming Scottish Indexes Conferences

You will probably receive this Journal after the date of their March conference, but here are the dates of future conferences.

13th September 2025

22nd November 2025

31st January 2026

21st March 2026

Exchange Journals Received: List 68 – Feb 2025

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

Society	Issue	Format
Aberdeen & North East FHS	171 Aug 24, 172 Nov 24	e-journal
Caithness FHS	No. 77 Oct 24	e-journal
Dumfries & Galloway FHS	No. 110 Nov 24	e-journal
Highland FHS	Vol 42 Iss 4 Aug 24, Vol 43 Iss 1 Nov 24	e-journal
Orkney FHS	Issue 111 Autumn 24	Hard copy
Renfrew FHS	Issue 52 Sept 24	e-journal
Shetland FHS	No. 131 Hairst 24, No. 132 Yule 24	e-journal
Tay Valley FHS	129 Oct 24	e-journal
Troon@Ayrshire FHS	102 Summer 24, 103 Winter 24	e-journal
West Lothian FHS	Iss 62 Mar 24, Iss 63 Nov 24	e-journal
Genealogist Magazine	Vol 34 No. 12 Dec 24	e-journal
Berkshire FHS	48 Sept 24, 48 Dec 24	e-journal
The Manchester Genealogist	Vol 60 No. 4 2024	e-journal
Alberta FHS	Vol 6-7 Sept 24, Vol 6-8 Oct 24, Vol 6-9 Nov 24, Vol 6-10 Dec 24	e-journal
The Heraldry & Genealogy Society of Canberra	Vol 47 No. 2 June 24, Vol 47 No. 3 Sept 24, Vol 47 No. 4 Dec 24	e-journal
Cooroy-Noosa Genealogical & Historical Research Group	Iss 55 Nov 24	e-journal
Liverpool Gen Soc	No. 138 Oct 24	Hard copy
Journal of Richmond-Tweed FHS inc Ballina NSW Australia	Iss 161 Sept 24, Iss 162 Dec 24	e-journal
Journal of Shoalhaven FHS inc Australia	Iss 135 Aug 24, Iss 136 Dec 24	e-journal
Journal of the Western Australian Gen Soc	Vol 15 No. 12 Nov 24	e-journal
Scottish Interest Group NZSG	Issue 137 Winter 24	e-journal
Family History Society of New Zealand	Dec 24 68	e-journal
NZ Society of Genealogists	Sept-24, Dec-24 68	e-journal

Cover Photos

Bedford Place Burgh School and Parish Church, Alloa

The photograph on the front cover dates from the 1900s. On the left, is the Burgh School and in the centre is the Parish Church (St Mungo's) in Bedford Place in Alloa.

In the back cover picture the Burgh School is hidden behind the scaffolding and the tree. The Parish Church and the buildings on the right-hand side can still be seen in this 2025 photograph.

Within the Parish Church is a War Memorial plaque. Bessie Coltman's name can be read on the bottom line.



Alloa, St Mungo's Parish Church, WW1 War Memorial.

Staff Nurse Bessie Coltman

Anyone who has looked at the WW1 memorial plaque in the porch will have noticed that only one woman is mentioned on it. Miss Bessie Coltman joined the Queen Alexandra Nurses on 27 October 1915 and was ordered to active service in Malta where many of the casualties of the Dardanelles campaign were being nursed. She was qualified in Fever Nursing and had medical and surgical training, so would be an asset to the hospital. She was awarded the Royal Red Cross decoration in 1916. While serving in Africa in 1917 she contracted malaria from a mosquito bite and was hospitalised for 2 weeks before returning to duty. She was eventually sent home in early 1918 and given leave of absence to recover but after some weeks she suffered a mental breakdown, was admitted to Woodilee Hospital in Lenzie and ultimately discharged from the service as medically unfit. She died in November of that year from pneumonia following a bout of flu. Her wartime experiences probably contributed to her weakened body being unable to survive.

According to The British Journal of Nursing:-

"Staff Nurse Bessie Coltman who died recently at Lenzie, was buried with military honours at Alloa. For devotion to duty, she was awarded the M.B.E. a few months ago."

Just one of many forgotten casualties. Bessie is buried in Sunnyside cemetery and for more than 100 years her grave had no gravestone. However, she has now been added to the Commonwealth war Graves Commission database and in September 2023 they erected a gravestone so that her final resting place has now been marked.

Elizabeth Ramsay



Bessie Coltman grave stone (Sec 11.150) Sunnyside Cemetery

An article on Bessie appeared in the Alloa Advertiser, 23 Sept 2023

Further information on Bessie's life, work and family. can be found on the following websites:-

The Imperial War Museums

<https://livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk/lifestory/4947169>

Mapping Memorials to Women in Scotland

<https://womenofscotland.org.uk/women/bessie-coltman>

Scottish Parliament

www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/votes-and-motions-search/S6M-10635

Roll of Honour.

www.roll-of-honour.com/Clackmannanshire/Alloa.htm

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A reminder for members intending to come along to the Summer Social after the AGM on 14th May 2025 at 2pm in Bridge of Allan Parish Church Hall—Please buy your tickets (£5) at the April meeting or email us so we can include you in the numbers.

As usual, there will be a selection of tasty sandwiches; scones, cream and jam; as well as a variety of small cakes.



Present Day Bedford Place, Burgh School and Parish Church, Alloa

