

Aberdeen & North-East Scotland Family History Society

Journal No. 159 • May 2021



*The old kirkyard at Dipple, now in Speymouth parish, county of Moray (drone footage
© Duncan Michael), shown at our Moray/Banff Group meeting in April 2021*

Membership Details

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.

Family membership is available for two named persons at one address. Please nominate one surname for registration purposes.

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As website renewals are processed automatically, renewing via the website greatly assists our hard-pressed volunteers. Thank you.

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In order to get the most from your Society membership, you should register on our new website. Go to www.anesfhs.org.uk and click on the Register link at the top right of the screen. For further assistance, please visit www.anesfhs.org.uk/how-to-register

Once you have registered, you can access our growing list of very useful members-only features:

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

General Data Protection Regulations, 2018

Members' details are stored on computer for administration and research purposes only, and will not be lent or sold to a third party. We require only your name and address – all other details are optional.

We may occasionally send e-mails to Society members only, concerning Society membership, appeals for volunteer help or promotional information, using the e-mail address you have provided. You may choose to unsubscribe from these e-mails. For further details of data protection, please contact the Society in writing.

Journal of the Aberdeen and North-East Scotland Family History Society

Issue 159, May 2021

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Society Reports, News and Information

Chairman's Report

Our Family History Centre in King Street, closed since Christmas under restrictions to control the pandemic, is at last reopening. As this Journal goes out, King Street reopens for business on Tuesday 4th May with all protocols in place, just as in August 2020. Our volunteers look forward eagerly to getting back to business and welcoming you in again.

To begin with, it's the appointment system: phone the Centre, or use our new booking system that should be on the website when you receive this Journal (or soon after that). All users of our Centre must bring and wear a face-covering. To prepare for your visit to our Centre, please read our Covid-19 Safety Policy and other guidelines. Full details can be found on our website and on p. 3 of the previous Journal.

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Ivor Normand

No. 4161

—oOo—

Editorial

The Queries section makes a welcome return in this issue. Members' meetings are all still online and going very well, and maybe by the August Journal we'll be able to bring back the Diary page if face-to-face meetings are likely to resume. We'll keep you posted on developments there, and on how these may dovetail with online meetings continuing.

I thank the few members who have responded to my plea for some help on the Journal. It may be a Journal Team bringing you the next issue in August.

Next Journal: themed on "emigration / immigration"

In years past, a Journal was often based mainly on one theme, for example Queries, or military ancestors. Our August issue will revive this idea, with articles on ancestors who migrated. We already have several articles in hand on this theme, and will welcome further contributions. If you have any illustrations to accompany them, so much the better. To whet your appetite, this issue has a report on a presentation given to our London Group about Ellis Island, the famous historic port of entry in New York.

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Volunteer Profile: Nick Reid

If you've ordered any of our wide selection of publications over the last couple of years, you've probably come across Nick Reid, who volunteers in our Postal Sales area. He also dips his toe into the "Brick Walls" area of our website's Members' Forum and uses his recently acquired skills to try to assist members in their quest for furthering their family history. Through his contact with the public via Postal Sales, he also tries to arrange the sourcing of gravestone photographs to "close out" the tracing of ancestors.

Nick was born in Aberdeen, and his roots are in the North-East. He attended school at Robert Gordon's College, then progressed to Aberdeen College of Commerce, from where he joined Shell UK in 1980 in Aberdeen. After a 36-year career in Finance and Project Valuation / Assurance both at home and abroad, he took early retirement from Shell in 2016.



A comparatively new member (no. 22316, since 2018), he was "prompted" to volunteer by his wife, Joan, who hails from the Western Isles and has been a Society member since 2007 (no. 16661) and an avid family-history geek – currently up to her neck in Hudson Bay records. It would be true to say Nick had absolutely no interest in family history until recently – indeed, he knew very few people at his own wedding, and had to be reminded of his side of the family on several occasions during the day! That, however, has very much changed – and he has the bug, both for researching his own family and trying to help others do something similar. He has also been working his way through palaeography workshops to assist in the interpretation of OPRs and other old documents.

Outside the Society, Nick is a qualified spin instructor (think: the Peloton advert!) and takes classes throughout south Aberdeenshire. He and Joan have two children; one teaches in Edinburgh, and the other works in manufacturing in Auckland, New Zealand.

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Members' Meetings: Aberdeen

All Society meetings are still being held online until further notice (from governments). We have been pleased to see many people joining in for the first time or the umpteenth time. Everyone is always welcome. See our website's "Events" tab for how to obtain an invitation link to any Society online meeting in which you are interested.

A few of our most popular meetings have reached the current limit of 100 sign-ups, and we have regretfully had to turn later enquirers away. A wee bit of "Zoom etiquette": if you register for an online meeting and then find that you can no longer attend, please tell us, either by contacting the organiser or by going to our website and changing to "I will NOT go to this Event", which will cancel your registration. Thank you!

20th February 2021: General family-history discussion: solving "brick walls"

Members tuned in from many countries to watch brief presentations of some "brick-wall" family-history problems and to offer hints, tips and solutions. The seekers were delighted by the range of advice and findings, both verbally and in the typed Zoom Chat, even if an

ancestor was revealed as a “black sheep”. We also played (but didn’t sing) a bothy ballad, “The Barnyards o’ Delgaty”, which went down well.

20th March 2021: Patricia Keppie, “The work and archive of the CWGC”

After our online AGM (see pp. 13–14), we welcomed Patricia Keppie and Neil Cameron from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, who answered members’ questions after Patricia had given a wonderful and poignant illustrated talk on the origins and work of the Commission, and about its ever-growing archive (www.cwgc.org).

We also screen-shared Anne Park’s WW1 Roll of Honour. Log in to the Society’s website and go to DataBank. This Roll of Honour is an extensive database with details of over 20,000 soldiers and other personnel serving in North-East Scotland regiments/units, who died in service during the First World War. The information available may include burial location, war memorial and family details, as well as references to newspaper articles.

10th April 2021: John Corall, “Aberdeen Streets with a Story to Tell”

We rescheduled this meeting from 17th April to avoid a clash with the SAFHS Conference, which was similarly online and open to all. John had been due to give this presentation in April 2020 in Aberdeen. In the meantime, his talk had grown arms and legs, and we were treated to a fascinating and well-illustrated two hours that John assured us was just the tip of the iceberg! Every meeting is always a great chance to learn something new.

At our next meeting, on 15th May (again online), Ken Nisbet will talk on “The Register of Corrected Entries and how it can help your family-history research”, to be followed by Q&A as usual. Registration for this meeting is now open on the Society’s website.

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Ivor Normand No. 4161

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Moray/Banff Group Report

Our meetings have taken place via Zoom for almost a year now, and participant numbers have continued to increase as more members have become accustomed to meeting online. We have also had people joining in from a wide range of localities, both in the UK and around the world – and this has been a definite upside of the pandemic and lockdown.

In February, we had close to a full house for Michelle Leonard’s excellent presentation on DNA-testing and matching. It is a big subject, but Michelle’s clear and lively talk gave us all an insight into how our DNA can help us make progress with our family history. For some, it was helpful to have some of the more advanced techniques explained, while others were encouraged to take the plunge and opt for their first DNA test.

During our monthly Zoom meetings, we have devoted a considerable amount of time to “brick walls”, with members being encouraged to bring along a problem for the meeting to discuss and suggest possible ways forward. With so many brick walls in evidence, it was likely that there were also plenty of solutions found – so, for March, we changed it all around and went for “I don’t believe it! Look what I’ve found”. This proved extremely successful, and the 65 participants shared some fascinating “wow!” moments that members brought along.

Our April meeting drew over 80 participants for Keith and Helen Mitchell’s presentation of beautiful aerial photographs and videos of almost 40 Moray burial grounds. Keith is

chairman of the Moray Burial Ground Research Group, which not only records visible memorial inscriptions but also locates and records buried stones. When it is clear that a buried stone exists, this is carefully uncovered, with the pieces of turf kept alongside in the same order as they have been removed. The stone is recorded, photographed and then covered over again with the turf, so that it is completely restored to the state in which it was found. So far, over 800 buried stones have been recorded. Our meeting was rounded off with a quick look at sources for memorial inscriptions on the websites of the MBGRG and of ANESFHS.

We continue to look forward to our Zoom meetings! As always, everyone is welcome.

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Mary Evans

No. 1975

—oOo—

Glasgow Group Report

Chris Paton, “Sharing Your Family History Online”

13th February 2021

Chris Paton is an accomplished and very popular speaker – so much so, that he had given this same online talk by video a fortnight earlier in the Scottish Indexes Conference VIII. We were very grateful that he had taken the time to re-record some parts of his video after the death of his father just a week before our meeting. We were even more grateful that Chris was able to step in and give his talk online in real time when your correspondent proved unable to broadcast the video properly to our high turnout of members worldwide.

Chris’s talk shares its title with his latest book, published by Pen & Sword and containing much more than even he could pack into this talk. “Online” covers all e-communication and social media: e-mail; discussion forums; social-media platforms; image-sharing.

You can “weaponise” your research findings, and even yourself and your research skills, as resources to draw people in to share interests and material. We often need to look beyond our immediate family for clues and resources to help unpack the stories. There are always other relatives, other repositories and other information out there.

His parents had separated when Chris was young. His father, Colin, had also been raised by a single parent and knew little about his own father, other than hearsay that he had been born in Belgium and evacuated to Scotland before 1914. This fired Chris’s interest, and he began digging – to discover that his grandfather Charles had been born to David Hepburn Paton and Jessie (née Macfarlane), who had married in Inverness in 1889 when David, a manager in the boot trade, was indeed living in Brussels.

Chris made contact with a second cousin in Perthshire, which led to other relatives who held loads of material, including letters and records not held in archives anywhere. This legwork was mostly done in the pre-digital age but can now all be vastly accelerated and enhanced by using the power of the Internet and communication technologies.

Responsibilities

When uploading any information online, we must always bear in mind privacy and data protection (GDPR) regarding living individuals’ personal details.

Copyright and ownership of information from original sources is also paramount. For example, you own the copyright of a photo you’ve taken; but you might not have the right

to place online a copy of any other image unless it's clearly a very old photo in your family that would be out of any copyright. See <https://creativecommons.org> for guidance on open licences and whether you have the right to place something online.

Terms and conditions must also be read, understood and adhered to when signing up to websites or using any online platform. Understand what you are entitled to do and what the companies are entitled to do with your or anyone else's information online.

"Digital estate" refers to your online presences. You can, and indeed nowadays should, specify in your will what you want to happen to your online information (digital assets), such as uploaded family trees and photographs, or subscriptions to websites, or anything you host online, after your death. For example, Family Tree DNA have "Beneficiary Information" – and you need to know what companies can do with your DNA samples.

Online etiquette involves treating people respectfully, as you would wish to be treated. If you see information or a photograph on someone else's website or social-media feed, it's always good to contact them and ask permission to re-use. "It's nice to be nice."

Communication and social media

Technology is ever-evolving, but the core basic is the same: we can use the Internet to ask questions of each other and to respond to each other. A well-established method is e-mail, to which we can attach documents, photographs, video clips and other digital creations. Most e-mails nowadays are stored in the "cloud" and can be accessed from anywhere, although there is also still computer-based e-mail, and it can also still be worth printing off a particularly important e-mail. Separate e-mail accounts can be worthwhile for different purposes, depending on how you organise your research and other aspects of your life.

Online discussion forums have always been useful for family history: www.rootschat.com or www.talkingscot.com, for example, have Scottish and many other sections of interest for exchanging Q&A of all sorts.

Social-media platforms include Facebook (public pages or private groups). Twitter uses hashtags, such as #AncestryHour once a week, where all Q&A on a certain topic can be accessed by anyone clicking on that hashtag. But beware: social media is also out to profile and exploit you in a world of give-and-take, so be clever in your use of it.

Some platforms are dedicated to image-sharing, e.g. Instagram, Pinterest or Flickr. Not only stories but also emotions are generated by images. MyHeritage has tools to let you improve photographs and even to colourise black-and-white ones realistically.

Stories can be written, read and exchanged via a blog, e.g. on Blogger or Wordpress. Get the kids involved! You can blog about anything, and at no cost. Ideas from around the world can be seen at www.geneabloggers.com.

Virtual meetings are basically conference phone-calls including video. You could host family reunions or join in with any group of people (not just ANESFHS meetings!) using free software from Zoom, Google or a host of others, all easily downloadable.

Collaboration and crowdsourcing

Resources can be generated and shared in many ways. Collaborative platforms such as www.lostcousins.com or www.curiousfox.com let you upload an item of interest, e.g. a census entry, to find whether anyone else shares that line of research, and to contact them.

Cloud sharing (e.g. DropBox or Google Drive) is good for sharing and transferring large files or amounts of data. You can also create documents together online with other folk.

Crowdsourcing allows many people around the world to come together at once to tackle a shared project, e.g. thousands of volunteers transcribing and indexing a census.

Wiki projects are where users collaborate to write articles online that can be updated by other users, e.g. on FamilySearch (www.cyndislist.com/wikis has a list).

Recording your family history

Recording usually begins on paper, but we now also use family-history programs and other software. These can be on your own computer, and/or can be shared via the Internet. Online family-tree programs (Ancestry, MyHeritage etc.) let you host a family tree online for free, even without having to subscribe to their other services. If you change your tree online or on your own computer, you can synch these changes in either direction – but you should always keep your own back-ups in case of anything going wrong. Online versions show matches with other people's online trees or DNA results. Privacy is an important issue, so always think about what you want to reveal and make available for others to lift. It's up to you to assess the quality of any information you find on someone else's tree.

Collaborative family-tree websites (e.g. www.wikitree.com) let you build collaborative trees and comment on others' work, if you prefer that way of working.

DNA-testing

Several companies offer DNA-testing for genealogy, and let you upload and share your results. Their software will indicate levels of matching with others who have tested and who share some of your DNA. You can often work out where the exact connection is, even if a relationship emerging from DNA may conflict with family stories. You can have a lot of further fun using www.dnapainter.com and websites that explain this big subject.

Sharing and preserving stories

Our ultimate aim is simple: to tell a story, and make others want to read it now or in the future. Sharing stories can be via blogs, or by giving a talk (live or recorded), or via your own website (via e.g. Wix or Weebly) that you allow relatives to link to and comment on.

Audio-visual platforms let you use your cameraphone to record a clip for uploading (e.g. to YouTube). Downloadable tools/apps now let anyone video-record a story, using any amount of visual materials, and edit and host your output (e.g. on SoundCloud). You could also record your own podcasts.

www.familysearch.org/memories ticks many boxes on the multimedia front, letting you create a living time-capsule of memories, stories, photographs, audio recordings and so on. You can preserve interactive experiences, e.g. someone talking about a photograph.

Our appreciative audience thanked Chris warmly, and was grateful for the Q&A session that followed. For much more on Chris and his activities, just Google him! In our next online meeting, on 22nd May, we'd like members to bring heirlooms to show and describe, whether screen-sharing or to camera. Please drop me a line if you have a family heirloom for this show-and-tell Members' Day meeting.

London Group Report

27th February 2021

This online meeting drew our Group's biggest attendance yet, from across England and Scotland (as well as Ireland and Canada). In the first half, Graham Irvine (no. 18248) gave us a very informative and interesting illustrated talk, with a Q&A session afterwards, about Ellis Island, the US immigration centre in New York. Graham took us right through the history to the present day. A detailed report appears later in this Journal issue.

One of our members had asked that we discuss Archiving for the long term – what do you do with your research so that it lives on once you are no longer around? Had anyone done anything about this? Did anyone have any ideas? Well ... as is normal when you have a group of people, there are varied opinions. Some suggested that you leave details of what you want in your will; others said to be wary of online things, as your account may be disabled once you have died. A lot of great ideas on what to do were suggested.

Our next online meeting is on 15th May, when Mary Evans of our Moray/Banff Group will coach us in "Working with old documents". Registration is now open via the Society's website; and everyone is welcome. We also now have a London Group e-Newsletter, to which you can subscribe via "My Details" when logged in to the Society's website.

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Sheena Clark No. 19190

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Midlands Group

It has been suggested that the Society's Midlands Group be revived, with meetings to be held online, possibly with a view to reconvening in person in due course. To that end, I seek your views, and am willing to offer one-to-one or one-to-few online meetings to try to assess the keenness of Society members in the wider Midlands area.

I joined ANESFHS in 1989 and have spent many years studying family history, mostly on my wife's Scottish, Dutch and English families, as well as on my own English Midland families. I hold a Certificate in Family History Studies from Stirling University.

Given the past year's restrictions on travelling to Scotland, I have become a regular participant in the very enjoyable online meetings that are hosted by each of our Society's Groups around the world. It is great that these are open to anyone and are increasingly popular, with wonderful exchanges of useful information by our friendly fellow members.

In the latest Aberdeen meeting, a member in the Midlands was attending an ANESFHS online meeting for the first time. Afterwards, he wrote:

What an experience I had over the nearly 3-hour Zoom! Many thanks to one and all for allowing me to be present as if I was in Aberdeen. There was a huge adrenaline rush at the end when my wife set me up so that I could contribute. This was, on reflection, the reason I gave a mini life story in one minute! I need to join in more of these so that my "Zoom confidence" can improve.

I am presently unable to drive and am experiencing eye problems, so the ability to see on an enlarged screen while using Zoom or Skype is a blessing. Please e-mail me with any thoughts; and I'm also happy to exchange phone numbers.

phudson8@aol.com

Paul Hudson No. 2428

Brisbane Group Report

20th February 2021

With local restrictions easing, we met at the library but had only five attendees, including one new member. I had invited suggestions for topics, and many of our Group members were forthcoming with some fabulous suggestions. Thanks go to all who responded.

Many members wanted to continue to Zoom for a wide range of reasons – and many sent apologies for this meeting. As well as holidays, there were event clashes including QFHS family-history things. The third Saturday of the month was allotted to us by the library but is inconvenient for a lot of people. So, since most prefer Zoom, and we would all fit in someone's home if meeting physically, we decided to give up the library room. We then compared schedules and settled on the first Saturday of every third month.

By the time this Journal appears, we will have met on 1st May. Our new schedule for the rest of 2021 is now on these Saturdays (10am to 12 noon): **7th August** and **6th November**.

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Robin Price No. 18058

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Melbourne-area Group Report

Mary Evans, “Putting Your Ancestor in the Landscape”

27th March 2021

This online meeting ended up a success after local confusion when I had to call off at very short notice. I thank David Stephen and Mary Jo Martin for facilitating the meeting, and I apologise for the inconvenience, especially if you had registered but couldn't take part.

Mary Evans of our Moray/Banff Group had got up extra-early for us, and she patiently let us get sorted out, then treated us to an excellently detailed look at chosen areas of Moray by screen-sharing maps of all ages, scales and levels of detail. Mary kindly circulated a handout afterwards that listed these resources she used and recommended:

Streetmap:	www.streetmap.co.uk
Google Maps:	www.google.co.uk/maps/
National Library of Scotland Maps:	https://maps.nls.uk/
Scotland's Places:	https://scotlandspplaces.gov.uk/
Statistical Accounts:	https://stataccscot.edina.ac.uk/static/statacc/dist/home
Vision of Britain:	www.visionofbritain.org.uk/
British History Online:	www.british-history.ac.uk/
Kirk Session records:	www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk/
Geograph:	www.geograph.org.uk/
Francis Frith:	www.francisfrith.com/
Annals of Elgin:	https://archive.org/details/annalsofparishbu00youn#:~:text=Annals%20of%20the%20parish%20and%20burgh%20of%20Elgin,historical%20and%20other%20notices%20illustrative%20of%20the%20subject
Annals of Banff:	https://archive.org/details/annalsbanff01cramgoog/page/n5/mode/2up
Annals of Cullen:	https://archive.org/details/annalscullen00cramgoog/page/n4/mode/2up

We also welcomed our Brisbane Group into this meeting along with members in Britain, as well as two members in New South Wales for the first time. See the Society's website for details of our other meetings in 2021. On 26th June, we look forward to Professor Marjory Harper of Aberdeen University, presenting on "Adventure or exile? Snapshots of Scottish emigration to Australia in the 19th and 20th centuries". Everyone is welcome.

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Julie Fleming No. 22166

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Southern Ontario Group Report

After a year, our Group can claim almost 50 members with North-East Scottish ancestors, from Birse in the south to Forres in the north, and many parishes, burghs, farmtouns and bothies in between. Each of us is part of numerous incomplete but growing family trees. Nearly a third of our members are researching the surname Smith, while many others search for Milne, Gordon, Davidson, Mitchell, Thom, Pirie and other proud North-East Scottish surnames – some common, many not so.

These searches bring us to the topic of our winter Zoom meeting held on **27th February**, "Breaking down Brick Walls". While we tend to add the verbs "attempting to" or "hoping to" in connection with solving Brick Walls, our Group is certainly better prepared to deal with this ongoing frustration now than we were before the meeting.

Mary Evans from our Moray/Banff Group was our presenter and lead problem-solver for the day. As Mary explained, there are times when you need to go over, under, around and maybe even through the wall to solve the problem. She described how, at times, we put ourselves into brick-wall dilemmas by looking in the wrong place, by using transcriptions rather than original documents, by not diversifying our approach or by not recognising that boundaries and record-holders may have changed from times past to today. Assessing these issues is a critical first step in trying to find that elusive ancestor.

In describing ways to overcome these walls, Mary began with the "elephant in the room", which is simply that "the information might not be there". That is the conclusion you unfortunately sometimes have to accept after trying other possible solutions put forward. She pointed out there are times you are left with inaccurate or misleading dates, locations and stories from relatives. This situation is part of a bigger cautionary note always to double-check all sources of information that you read or hear. She also advised looking at other associated events and individuals (siblings, parents, witnesses, neighbours) that might help you get around the brick-wall problem. Name changes were identified as potential research obstacles, especially as they could be altered through time, legally or whimsically, or through the Anglicisation of the Gaelic or old Scottish languages. This problem can be compounded further by transcription and clerical errors by enumerators, administrators and even the clergy.

Mary used personal examples to demonstrate how obstacles can be overcome. It was particularly helpful to our Group that she led a discussion focusing on a few of our members' brick walls. These included Joan McCausland's search for an elusive Helen Smith who married John Flett in Rathven, Banffshire in 1806. Gail Ferguson was trying to find background information on George Rae and Margaret Anderson from New Deer, while Lynda Garden Zakrzewski was researching and trying to verify the life history of John Garden from Rathven parish in the mid-1700s. Suggestions for alternative research

sources and methods were provided to Susan Brouwer, whose long-standing frustration is focused on Agnes Catto and Alexander McPherson and their pre-1800 family heritage.

Time did not permit dealing with all brick walls, but potential solutions were plentiful and applicable to others facing similar problems. A major benefit of online meetings is the sharing of ideas among a much broader membership than would happen if we met in our smaller local group. We certainly benefit from and appreciate the wealth of knowledge we are able to experience during these times. Thank you to all who attended our meeting from other parts of Canada, Scotland, England, the USA and Australia.

Our spring meeting, on Saturday 29th May, will again be held via Zoom. The theme will be de-cluttering and organising the myriad notes, pictures, maps, dates, locations and personalities in our family-history world. We hope you will join us.

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John McLean No. 5641

outgoing co-organiser with Lorna Weber (No. 21787);
co-organisers now Rod Coates (No. 18349), Susan Brouwer (No. 20475) and David Joiner (No. 16651)

—oOo—

Kirk Session Records (a Personal View)

Some Established Church of Scotland Kirk Session records are now free to view on the ScotlandsPeople website as virtual (but unindexed) volumes. For family historians, is this good news? Possibly!

Providing you know what you're looking for, and where the event happened, and when (roughly) it occurred, you might be lucky. In addition, you have to hope the records have survived, are available and have been digitised, and that the decision has been made to publish them on this platform. Assuming we can line up all these parameters, and the volume of records we seek is available, what might we expect? Most of the time, nothing!

Unless your enquiry sits on the administrative side of the fence (minister, elder, session clerk, treasurer, heritor etc.), the subject of your search would normally only appear in the documents if the Church thought they'd misbehaved (and required discipline), needed support (distributions to the poor or needy of the parish), or were involved in a cash transaction (such as income from hire of a mortcloth, or expense for a coffin or funeral).

Kirk Session records – especially Minutes – *can* be a useful source, but we have to understand that very few parishioners appear in their pages ... and very, very few of your ancestors will “get a mention”. But, of course, you *have* to check, just in case!

In my case, I worked through my 153 known ancestor families, ending up searching 178 parishes because some families might have been found in more than one parish. There were parish/year combinations where the volumes I sought were not online; there were ancestor families for whom I could find nothing in the expected parishes; and there are a couple where I need to delve deeper to decide whether I found my ancestor family or not.

I managed 20 positive hits – in reality, only 18, because one couple generated hits in two parishes, and also in the records of the Presbytery of Dunkeld – so, a 1-in-8 or 1-in-9 chance of finding a family reference in Kirk Session Minutes. Was it worth the effort? Yes, of course it was; I've learned something new about some of my ancestors.

doug.stewart@mail.scot

Doug Stewart No. 563

ABERDEEN & NORTH-EAST SCOTLAND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY (A Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES **Year ended 31 December 2020**

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds		Total Funds 2020	Total Funds 2019
		General Fund	100 Club		
		£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from generated funds:					
Voluntary income:					
Covenantants and Gift Aid		7,424	–	7,424	6,783
Donations		4,025	–	4,025	4,939
Legacy income		–	–	–	10,000
Annual fees		–	1,455	1,455	1,497
Investment income:					
Interest received		565	–	565	876
Incoming resources from charitable activities:					
Subscriptions	2	56,964	–	56,964	60,113
Publication sales		7,315	–	7,315	12,593
Research and queries		1,194	–	1,194	3,146
Other incoming resources:					
Other income		592	–	592	426
		£78,079	£1,455	£79,534	£100,373
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Charitable activities					
Direct charitable expenditure	3	83,804	964	84,768	70,369
Depreciation		6,252	–	6,252	6,346
		£90,056	£964	£91,020	£76,715
Net incoming resources		(11,977)	491	(11,486)	23,658
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		345,750	5,324	351,074	327,416
Total funds carried forward		£333,773	£5,815	£339,588	£351,074

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS		Year ended 31 December 2020			
3. TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED – CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES GENERAL FUND					
	Direct Charitable Expenditure	Depr'c'n	Total	Total	
	£	£	£	£	2019 £
Publication cost of sales	3,831	–	3,831		4,706
Provision for slow and non-moving stock	–	–	–		–
Printing Society Journal	14,618	–	14,618		15,463
Postages and Journal distribution	11,159	–	11,159		10,727
Stationery and office supplies	2,581	–	2,581		2,847
Insurance, heat, light and telephone	6,854	–	6,854		8,786
Rent	5,800	–	5,800		6,000
Rates	2,528	–	2,528		2,728
Equipment repairs and maintenance	0	–	0		(160)
Meeting expenses	1,067	–	1,067		1,653
Conference and course expenses	0	–	0		–
Affiliation fees and subscriptions	2,543	–	2,543		2,681
Advertising	(46)	–	(46)		276
Internet and IT expenses	1,334	–	1,334		625
Accountancy fee	1,000	–	1,000		1,000
Professional fees	0	–	0		–
Bank and credit-card charges	1,763	–	1,763		1,637
Sundry expenses	5,997	–	5,997		6,379
Building and library repairs	22,774	–	22,774		4,385
Depreciation	–	6,252	6,252		6,346
	£83,804	£6,252	£90,056		£76,079

100 CLUB					
Building and library repairs		233	–	233	–
Prizes etc.		731	–	731	637
		£964	£ –	£964	£637

ANESFHS Annual General Meeting 2021: Summary Report

20th March 2021, via Zoom video-conference

Full minutes can be obtained by e-mailing secretary@anesfhs.org.uk or writing to King Street. Full audited accounts for 2020 are in the members-only area of our website at <https://anesfhs.org.uk/about-us/documents/accounts>, and a copy can be had by writing to King Street. Accounts were approved by Sally Low and seconded by Barbara Lamb.

Attendance was by website pre-registration. Apologies received were read out. Over 90 members joined in this AGM from across the UK and four other countries. A summary report of the AGM held online on 6th September 2020 appeared in Journal 157 (Nov 2020, pp. 24–25). Full minutes of that meeting had been made available and were taken as read. Those minutes were approved by Liz Foubister and seconded by Ronald Leith.

Chairman's Report

Ivor Normand stated that our Research Centre in King Street reopened on 3rd August with an appointment-booking system and sanitation protocols in place, but had low footfall until having to close from Christmas onwards. We intend to reopen as soon as official restrictions allow. Services to members have continued as best we can manage.

Online meetings continue to prove successful: almost 500 individuals had attended online Society meetings in nearly a year; cumulative attendance over 2,000. Interest has been expressed in reviving meetings of our Midlands Group. Our meetings' attendees include members who are also in other organisations and who promote us there.

Repairs are ongoing to address water ingress at roof level and in flats above our Centre. Some work has been done, and the Society has paid the contractor's invoice. Owners of the flats have been contacted and have all agreed to pay their shares.

Secretary's Report

Ronald Leith noted that our August-to-December reopening saw a few regular visitors but none from outside the locality. ANESFHS was classed as "non-essential" in the winter lockdown, but the next-door tobacconist stayed open for customers and click-and-collect.

Mail continues to arrive at King Street and to be dealt with. Ronald thanked volunteers who handle each area of business. Closure has limited the number of new members, but we still welcome those who join the Society via our website. When physical meetings resume, we hope these can be streamed for members elsewhere.

Treasurer's Report

Pat Black, Reporting Treasurer, read a report on behalf of our Finance Team. She thanked Andy Horne for preparing accounts for the auditors. Membership subscriptions are down slightly on last year: fewer members join than renew, but also more opt for e-membership at the reduced rate. New members are also joining via our Facebook Group page. Gift Aid has increased slightly, and we should continue to promote this to UK taxpayers.

Bank income is slightly less: publications sales and research income decreased during the pandemic. Direct charitable expenditure has risen, partly due to increased Internet and IT expenses, and the completed refurbishment of 164 King Street. Repairs are ongoing. The Granite Roots Appeal fund has largely been used up. Our current financial state is good.

Pat concluded by thanking all our volunteers. Sally Low, in Edinburgh, endorsed the thanks to all volunteers who keep our Society going. Jacqui Farmer, in Yorkshire, thanked our Publications Department especially. Ivor clarified some membership issues. All societies are seeing numbers on a steady slight decline overall.

Publicity, and online meetings

The Society is developing closer relations with Scottish Indexes and with a range of good speakers on popular topics for the meetings of our various Groups worldwide.

Elections to the Board of Trustees (a.k.a. “the Committee”)

Barbara Lamb, retiring after a three-year term and eligible for re-election, was proposed by Pat Black; seconded by Liz Foubister. Ronald Leith outlined a proposal to designate the office of Membership Secretary as a Committee position, and to elect the current holder, Sheila Symons, to the Committee. This was seconded by Sally Low. Votes were held, and both motions were passed.

Scottish Association of Family History Societies Annual Conference

Ivor described the 31st SAFHS Conference, being held online on 17th April and open to all. Ken Nisbet (also of SGS, and SAFHS Secretary) gave further details and encouragement. ANESFHS and the SGS were founder members of SAFHS. Next year’s Conference and Family-History Fair will be held in Dundee, hosted by Tay Valley FHS.

ANESFHS hosted the 6th SAFHS Conference in 1995, and the 20th in 2009, both very successfully. Ivor announced that our Society will hold the 33rd SAFHS Conference in April 2023, again combined with a family-history fair.

AOCB

Ivor drew attention to vacancies for Press Officer (Publicity) and Education Officer in particular, and requested more help with some of the tasks that he and other volunteers cover. He thanked Margaret Bradley for offering to help with images for the Journal.

The meeting closed at 2:39pm. After a break, we had a presentation from the CWGC, followed by general Q&A during which numerous attendees expressed willingness to be involved in organisation and publicity, in particular for hosting SAFHS 2023.

—oOo—

Publications List Update

Our volunteers are continuing to process and despatch your orders. On our website, the list of “Publications for Sale” was updated in October 2020. New in stock:

ANESFHS

AA075 Nigg Kirkyard MIs. £7.50 150gms

Moray & Nairn FHS

AJ165 *Nairn County Press & Advertiser* Deaths & Obituaries 1900–1905. £8.00 160gms

Scottish Research

GS140 Tracing Your Scottish Family History on the Internet: a guide £14.99 475gms
for Family Historians. C Paton.

Library Report

One of the most frequently consulted sections in our Society Library is the one containing a wide variety of information on deaths, burials, lairs and monumental inscriptions (MIs). The MIs represent hard work by our members, over many years, systematically recording inscriptions on gravestones in most of the kirkyards and cemeteries in Aberdeen and throughout the North-East. Published MI booklets are available to buy, and copies are in our Library. You can also check the index on our website (DataBank, under Memorial Inscriptions) to find whether your ancestor is mentioned on a gravestone.

Our Library also holds unpublished MIs for several other North-East burial grounds. Many of these are indexed and fully transcribed in our DataBank (for members only, when you log in to our website), as Gavin Bell mentioned (Journal 157, Nov 2020, pp. 18–19). His article, and Pauline Gerrard's that follows it (pp. 20–21), are extremely helpful in explaining how monumental inscriptions and burials can help to further your research.

Complementing our Society's efforts, the Moray Burial Ground Research Group is surveying every burial ground in Moray and part of the old county of Banff. Many of these have been published – check their website at www.mbgrg.org for work in progress. Copies of all their published works are in our Society's Library. Most other Family History Societies are also systematically recording the inscriptions on gravestones in their areas; and our Society's Library always buys a copy of their publications as well.

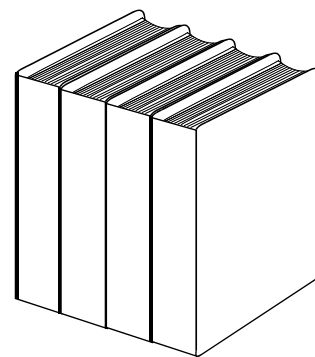
Most people want to know where their ancestors are buried and hope to find a gravestone, especially one with a lot of useful information. Some stones, of course, give few details. My great-grandfather's stone in the Kirkyard of Tough is a granite shield with just initial, surname, date of death and age. In the Kirkyard of Peterculter, however, another great-grandfather's stone has a wealth of information which took me back a further couple of generations. My 2g-grandmother's stone in Fraserburgh Kirkyard mentioned "their grandchildren who died in Cando, North Dakota, USA", which helped me to find their son who had emigrated. And a 2g-grandfather's stone in the Kirkyard of Keith alerted me to a first wife I didn't know existed. She is the only one mentioned on the stone, but not the only occupant of the lair, which also contains her husband, his second wife and eight other family members.

But sometimes there isn't a stone. We usually point out to people that gravestones were expensive, and not everyone could afford one. But there might be other reasons. This is a photo, taken in 1923, of my mother with her parents on their way to lay flowers on her grandparents' grave in Allenvale Cemetery. Every Sunday, without fail, attendance at church was followed by a visit to tidy up the grave and lay fresh flowers. But there isn't a stone. With four sons all working in good jobs, the family could well have afforded one. When I asked my grandmother, she replied that there was no need: the family knew who they were and where they were buried and would always remember them anyway. What was the point of a stone? I hadn't started researching my family history at that stage, so I didn't have an answer for her!



Book Reviews

Women's Suffrage in Scotland by Carole O'Connor (Pen & Sword Books, 2019), Paperback 152pp, £12.99.
ISBN 978 1 52672 328 4



In 1913, Norway was the first sovereign nation to give women the vote, though this right had been granted in 1893 in New Zealand (at that time a British colony) and in 1906 in Finland (at that time a Russian Grand Duchy). Elsewhere, women battled for the same right – and some battled quite literally. Emily Wilding Davis (later to die after a clash with the king's horse at Epsom) attacked a clergyman, the Rev. Forbes Jackson, at Aberdeen station in November 1912, having mistaken him for David Lloyd George!

This captivating book looks at the suffrage movement in Scotland not as a whole but in seven cities/areas, one of which is Aberdeen. For each one, the background of women's working lives, their health and welfare and their education is described. Ishbel Hamilton-Gordon, Marchioness of Aberdeen, founded the Onwards and Upwards movement for the overall elevation of women. Not all suffrage groups were militant, and it must be noted that many men, e.g. the Northern Men's Federation, supported the women's cause. So too, did Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald; Winston Churchill opposed it. Lloyd George, prime minister in 1918 when women aged over 30 were given the vote, had been earlier considered to be "hot and cold", hence the 1912 attack in Aberdeen on a lookalike.

The book gives short biographies of some suffrage activists in Aberdeen, such as Teresa Billington-Greig, who organised a Scottish branch of the WSPU (Women's Social and Political Union) in 1906, but who was a suffragist as opposed to a militant suffragette. For this reason, she was edged out by Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst. Caroline Phillips was honorary secretary of the Aberdeen WSPU from 1907 until a curt telegram told her that she was being replaced – by a Pankhurst. Alas, those campaigning for women's suffrage did not always act in unison. Marion Pollock, Lillas Mitchell and Helen Ogston were among those active in Aberdeen, as was Louisa Innes Lumsden, first headmistress of St Andrew's School, who spoke on behalf of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies to a huge gathering in Hyde Park, London, in 1913.

Stanley Baldwin was prime minister in 1928, when his government granted suffrage to women aged over 21. He had originally opposed women's suffrage, but said that the Great War had taught him many things.

The book is illustrated with studio portraits of enduring charm, as well as by photographs of posters of the time. There is a bibliography and a list of websites. The print is a reasonable size and the book so well laid out, making it, together with the engaging content, a pleasure to read.

spthorshope@gmail.com

Stella Pedersen No. 12914

Editor's note: Journal 150 (Feb 2019, pp. 4–5) carried a report of a talk to our Aberdeen members by Professor Sarah Pedersen (no relation!) on "The Scottish Suffragettes". To access the entire back run of ANESFHS Journals, just log into the Society's website and select "Journals". To register as a website user and to set your own password, see the instructions in the second-bottom box on the inside front cover of each Journal.

The Chester Creek Murders: An Investigative Genetic Genealogy Mystery.

Venator Cold Case Series 1, by Nathan Dylan Goodwin, 2021 (ISBN 9798575329886).

Website and newsletter: www.nathandylangoodwin.com

Set in the USA, and written in American English, this is the first novel in a new series by this established author. I reviewed a previous novel of his in Journal 156. This one flows nicely while being believable and gripping.

Solving “cold cases” is the focus for Venator, a company of online genealogical detectives led by Maddie. Each of the team’s characters is convincingly drawn throughout the book, portraying interesting individuals collaborating on a difficult shared task, i.e. how to find a murderer from a few DNA clues after 38 years. Teamwork underpins the whole online detection process, making the storyline engaging while carefully educating the reader in the use of online research to solve a seemingly impossible DNA task. All the information on websites and materials is genuine, though that is not pointed out within the text.

The author’s eye for relevant detail and his ability to paint a scene is a particular strength. Short, focused, sequential sentences highlight the drama of the first murder victim in a mere two pages. Headings for each early chapter clue the reader in, with a clear typeface ensuring rapid reading as the tension grows; this reader was “hooked”! Even unfamiliar words (e.g. homozygosity on p. 43) are no impediment, as meanings become apparent.

The Venator team starts its hunt with the murders of three females, all with the same male DNA left on their corpses. From this minimal clue (four sets of DNA), they begin a seemingly impossible task. Highly technical jargon is used but is quickly elucidated as the team establishes the possible ethnicity, hair and eye colour of the victims and a possible perpetrator. The team shares out the 32 DNA lines to be investigated for each of four sets going back five generations to 16 males and 16 females.

It is clear that the USA is well advanced in genealogical records by state, county and town, and held by commercial companies. The team’s daily process – individual tasks, sharing time at end of day, and setting goals for the next – lets the reader participate and enjoy the daily prize for best achievement. All tantalising – and it keeps the reader, as well as the ’tocs, focused. Once the killer’s phenotype is established from his DNA, hair, eyes and skin colour to superimpose on the old police artist’s impression sketch, the pace increases.

Websites, news sources and social-media forums abound. The story’s wealth of quality information, subtly provided, is a gift for anyone trying to locate their own DNA links in America. All in all, this is a first-class read in a relatively new genre of crime fiction.

betty.jomac@gmail.com

Elizabeth Jordan No. 18139

GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

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

All enquiries welcome

Mrs. Margaret Davidson, CSFHS, Grampian Ancestry Research

6 Bayview Road, Inverbervie, Montrose DD10 0SH

E-mail: grampian.ancestry@btinternet.com

Tel. 01561 361500

Nigg Kirkyard: Our Latest MI Booklet

The parish of Nigg in historic Kincardineshire was originally served by the now-ruined kirk of St Fittick, down near the shore. However, by the early 19th century, this had become too small to accommodate a growing population, and in 1829 it was replaced by the new Nigg Kirk, near the summit of Tullos Hill. Burials continued at first in the old St Fittick's kirkyard, the first burial beside the new church being in 1878.

Nigg Kirkyard contains more than 1,000 stones, many of them commemorating members of the old fishing and sea-faring families of Nigg, Cove and Torry – Wood, Main, Guyan, Masson, Leiper and more. The dead of both World Wars are remembered on a war memorial in the form of an obelisk and on 22 individual Commonwealth War Graves.

The Memorial Inscriptions of Nigg Kirkyard are now published by ANESFHS: code AA075, price £7.50. The MIs of St Fittick's were published in 2006 as AA156 (£2.40).

A searchable index to the published MIs of St Fittick's, Nigg Kirk, and over 130 other burial grounds in North-East Scotland will be found at:



Detail from "The Nigg Brae" by George Davidson (1901)

<https://anesfhs.org.uk/databanks/memorial-inscriptions/miindex>

mis@anesfhs.org.uk

Gavin Bell (MI Co-ordinator)

No. 4085

ANESFHS Talks to Outside Groups

Our Society offers talks to other organisations about our work and our Family History Centre, and how to get started on researching your family history. In recent weeks, some of our office-bearers have been spreading the message in telephone conference calls with local North-East groups of Macular Society members.

If you belong to a society or group that would like a talk from ANESFHS, please extend the invitation to contact our Society. We look forward to any enquiries.

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Letters to the Editor



Dear Editor,

Gordon Bennett: Clarification

In the report of our Edinburgh Group's Members' Day (Journal 158, Feb 2021, p. 9), on my question on the Gordon Bennetts and my coming across a gravestone (in the Auld Kirk burial ground in Keith, Banffshire), you write that it commemorates a "daughter whom no researchers into this famous family seem to have known about".

In fact, it was the gravestone, its inscription and the burial in Scotland that seem to have been unknown to researchers ("Here rests Jeannette Bell, granddaughter of James Bennett and daughter of James Gordon Bennett, 1854–1936 [her dates], in deo fidemus"). Her existence as the only daughter of Bennett snr to survive infancy, along with her elder brother James Gordon Bennett jnr, was known and mentioned, even if, beyond that, relatively ignored by biographers of her father and brother.

The Times (12th February 1936, p. 1) reported that Jeannette had died in London on the 10th, and that the interment was to be private. It was thus a surprise to me to find her buried in the Bennett lair in Keith – but presumably significant and obviously deliberate. She had spent most of her life in Europe (mainly Paris, including her first 18 years, but also the Netherlands, where her husband, Isaac Bell, was US ambassador); she lived for about 20 years mainly in New York, where her children were born and grew up; she then moved back to Paris, and finally spent her later years in England, mainly London. For her burial, she (or perhaps her son, her eldest child) could have considered Ireland (her mother's birthplace), Paris (her own birthplace, it appears), New York (where her father and other relatives are buried), or, most easily, London.

I could speculate upon reasons regarding the choice of Scotland. They concern her uneasy relationships with different members of her family. Her grandfather James Bennett is also mentioned on her stone, as well as being commemorated on the stone standing above it, erected many years earlier by her father. Scotland and Scottish ancestry do seem to have a pull on descendants of emigrants and on how they feel about themselves and their identity.

I thank Phyllis Tait (no. 8050), who suggested I write to Messrs G & G Cruickshank, monumental sculptors in Keith, about the Bennett Memorial erected by James Gordon Bennett snr. I also thank Gordon Cruickshank for his most helpful response, and for drawing my attention, with photographs, to the related horizontal stone he had noticed in the shadow of the one I was enquiring about. Not everyone would have taken the trouble.

geoff.hare@hotmail.com

Geoff Hare No. 21515

Royal Observer Corps Casualties in CWGC Records

I always enjoy attending the Society's online meetings, learning new things every time, and receiving the typed Zoom Chat afterwards containing some of the many useful hints, tips and websites exchanged by members during each meeting.

As well as family history, for some years I have also been doing voluntary research on Observer Corps/Royal Observer Corps (ROC) casualties during the Second World War

that are recorded in the Roll of Honour held in Westminster Abbey, London. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission also have these records. I have given the ROC Heritage Team my results so far, and they have one file in their archive already.

I particularly enjoyed the talk from the CWGC after our Society's AGM on 20th March. Afterwards, I sent an enquiry to the CWGC and was delighted to receive an answer along with a six-page list of casualties where, under Additional Comments, reference is made to Observer Corps/Royal Observer Corps. This will be so helpful in my ongoing research and will also mean I will be able to add more names/files for the ROC Heritage Archive.

When I find casualties in Scotland, I use my Scotland's People subscription to obtain more information to add to my files.

The ROC Heritage Team are all volunteers, and when I started my research they admitted that, being volunteers, they could not commit to doing extensive research on Second World War casualties but agreed I could continue doing my research on a voluntary basis and eventually providing all my findings in files for their Heritage Archive.

As you can imagine, the recent lockdowns have helped me to ensure I can always pass my time productively.

jamesmac47@aol.com

James Mackie No. 18550

ANZACs associated with Aberdeen and North-East Scotland

I live at the other end of King Street from our Society's Family History Centre, and I am doing some research to trace ANZACs associated with Aberdeen and the North-East and to improve records of these connections.

Since 2014, there has been an ANZAC service in St Machar's Cathedral, attended by representatives of the Australian Defence Force and New Zealand including Sir Neil McIntosh, who was the honorary consul for NZ in Scotland. The representatives have laid wreaths, and a wreath was laid on behalf of Legacy at the last service in 2019.

Before the 2014 service, I invited the NZ High Commission to send a representative. They asked whether there were ANZAC graves in the North-East. Thus began a project to discover local connections with the Gallipoli campaign. Eventually, I joined ANESFHS to help take this forward. Anne Park, our WW1 military historian, let me know about her vast Roll of Honour database. I hope to collect information from descendants to file with ANESFHS, and to commission an article for the *Aberdeen Press & Journal* in advance of an ANZAC service. Before the pandemic, there was some progress which then stalled.

There are four graves in Aberdeen city with an ANZAC connection, and one at Kirriemuir in Angus. Four NZ airmen are buried in Arbroath cemetery, where there is an ANZAC service each year. In Dulnain Bridge near Grantown on Spey, I found a recently restored war memorial which has names with AIF and NZEF against them. Whether they were casualties, or natives of the area, and whether they served at Gallipoli, I do not know. (My father is recorded on a war memorial in a suburb of Newcastle, NSW – and he came back from New Guinea.) Another connection is through General Hamilton, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied forces in the Dardanelles. His standard hangs in St Machar's.

If you have any North-East ancestors associated with Gallipoli that you know of, I would be very grateful if you could please share that information with me.

ajf3eh@btinternet.com

Alan Fenwick No. 22367

Queries

159/1 *PETRIE / WINKS / BROWN*: My grandfather Gavin E A Petrie (b. 1881 Kincardine O'Neil, youngest of 12 chn) qualified as a medical doctor at Aberdeen University, moving to practise medicine in Staffordshire and Derbyshire, where he met my gm. He joined the RAMC in 1917 as a temporary captain and was mostly abroad until leaving the army in 1919, a sick man. He practised again until he d. in 1931 aged 50 when my mother was 14. She too d. quite young, so I hope I have the facts correct.

My gt-gf Joseph Petrie (b. 1840 Kennethmont, d. 1922) was for most of his adult life a merchant in Kincardine O'Neil. A stone in the kirkyard commemorates him, his wife Mary Robertson Brown (d. 1896 aged 51), and four chn who d. young.

Joseph was s/o Robert Petrie (1805–85) and Ann Winks (1815–77), who m. 1834 in Mortlach parish, Banffshire (also recorded in Dufftown) and both d. in Kinnethmont. I am not familiar with local areas, but we hope to visit Aberdeen again this year.

I am struggling with the 3g-grandparents, and any help would be appreciated.

kgrahamhall@hotmail.com

Judith Hall

No. 22782

159/2 *GEDDES*: This is a huge shot in the dark. Seeking a George Geddes who fathered my illegitimate gt-gm, b. Dec 1875 in Cornhill, parish of Ordiquhill, Banffshire. The mother was Margaret (Maggie) *COWIE*, of Fordyce.

All I know of him was that he and Maggie were servants at Longmuir or Longmoor Farm in 1875, and that in 1877 he was an omnibus driver for a Mr *GOLDSWORTH* (tenant occupier of stables) at 4 Sandyhill Road, Banff. George's dau's m. cert. (Dec 1899) records her father George Geddes as "deceased".

ANESFHS has done some great research into Kirk Session records on my behalf, but we still do not have the confirmed identity of this elusive George Geddes. If anyone has any leads or further suggestions for me to look into, I would be very grateful.

moirasambey@hotmail.com

Moira Sambey

[non-member]

Instructions for Queries

Queries are accepted from paid-up Society members free of charge. Non-members should donate £1.00 per query (or postage stamps). Up to four queries per person will be accepted per calendar year. The parts of a multi-part query count as separate queries. Each query will show the submitter's name, e-mail address and membership number. The query service is intended for ancestor research and *not* as a finding service for recent or living relatives. We will omit parts of a query which we consider too recent, or which have no North-East Scottish content.

If you have asked the Society for research, you'll receive an answer eventually. Please don't duplicate requests by asking for research on the same question as a Journal query.

In each Journal, we include all the queries that are ready. Queries received close to our publication date will appear in the following Journal.

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FATHER'S SIDE

Record of Ancestors

Name **Kareen EDWARDS**
 Address **Aberdeen**

Great-grandparents

Date **20 April 2021**
 e-mail **kareen.edwards@yahoo.co.uk**

F3 **Jonathan Cumming ANDERSON**

Born 10 Aug 1855
 Place Nigg, Kincardineshire
 Married 23 Dec 1874
 Place Aberdeen
 Died 2 Nov 1920
 Place Aberdeen
 Occup. Granite-cutter /
 furniture dealer

Grandfather

F1 **James Calder ANDERSON**

Born 28 May 1875
 Place Aberdeen
 Married (2): 19 Feb 1909
 Place Aberdeen
 Died 12 Oct 1923
 Place Aberdeen
 Occup. Insurance manager

F4 **Rachel CALDER**

Born abt 1852
 Place Edinburgh
 Died 10 May 1922
 Place Aberdeen
 Occup. Furniture dealer

Father
 [F0]

Richard Douglas ANDERSON

Born 10 Jul 1916
 Place Aberdeen
 Married 2 Jun 1945
 Place Aberdeen
 Died 27 Jun 1956
 Place Aberdeen
 Occup. Master grocer

Great-grandparents

F5 **William MATTHEW**

Born 17 Jul 1849
 Place Aberdeen
 Married (2 of 3): 6 Jan 1882
 Place Aberdeen
 Died 3 Jul 1930
 Place Aberdeen
 Occup. Market gardener

Grandmother

F2 **Margaret MATTHEW**

Born 26 May 1882
 Place Aberdeen
 Died 29 Jul 1954
 Place Aberdeen
 Occup. Housekeeper

F6 **Isabella CAMPBELL**

Bapt. 25 Apr 1849
 Place Newmachar, Aberdeenshire
 Died 26 Jul 1885
 Place Aberdeen
 Occup. Farm servant

Please send in your known
 ancestor chart, with extension
 sheets as required. Don't worry
 about leaving gaps, but try
 to fill in as much as you can.

Please return this form to:
 Aberdeen & NE Scotland FHS,
 158-164 King Street,
 Aberdeen AB24 5BD.

OR

charts@anesfhs.org.uk

Great-great-grandparents		F15	James ANDERSON				
			Born	1773?	Place		
			Married	[record not found]	Place		
			Died	1801/1802	Place	Aberdeen?	
					Occup.	Labourer	
F7	James ANDERSON		F16	Anne REID (wife)			
	Bapt.	13 May 1802		Born	abt 1774	Place	Banchory-Devenick, KCD
	Place	Nigg, Kincardineshire		Died	Mar 1828	Place	Nigg, Kincardineshire
	Married	(2): 18 Nov 1837				Occup.	
	Place	Nigg, Kincardineshire	F17	Forbes CUMMING			
	Died	18 Oct 1873		Born	abt 1776	Place	Tough, Aberdeenshire
	Place	Aberdeen		Married	16 Jun 1799	Place	Monymusk, Aberdeenshire
	Occup.	Farmer / granite-quarrier		Died	13 May 1851	Place	Nether Coullie, Monymusk
F8	Helen CUMMING					Occup.	Sawyer / crofter
	Born	abt 1808	F18	Isobel EWAN			
	Place	Chapel of Garioch, ABD		Born		Place	
	Died	25 Feb 1889		Died	abt 1808	Place	[in childbirth?]
	Place	Aberdeen				Occup.	
	Occup.		F19	Robert CALDER			
				Born	abt 1809	Place	Aberdeen
				Married	13 Feb 1826	Place	Aberdeen
				Died	31 May 1888	Place	Aberdeen
						Occup.	Master shoemaker
F9	James CALDER		F20	Isabella SHEPHERD			
	Born	abt 1831		Bapt.	31 Mar 1806	Place	Aberdeen
	Place	Aberdeen		Died	30 Mar 1875	Place	Aberdeen
	Married	6 Sep 1853				Occup.	
	Place	Gretna Green, Dumfriesshire	F21	John HUTCHISON			
	Died	13 Feb 1908		Born	abt 1796	Place	Peterhead, Aberdeenshire
	Place	Aberdeen		Married	12 Mar 1820	Place	Peterhead, Aberdeenshire
	Occup.	Furniture dealer		Died	22 Dec 1869	Place	Aberdeen
F10	Rachel HUTCHISON					Occup.	Seaman
	Bapt.	25 Sep 1827	F22	Jane CAMERON			
	Place	Peterhead, Aberdeenshire		Born	abt 1800	Place	Peterhead, Aberdeenshire
	Died	5 Mar 1900		Died	27 Mar 1875	Place	Peterhead, Aberdeenshire
	Place	Aberdeen				Occup.	
	Occup.	Furniture dealer	F23	William MATTHEW			
				Born	abt 1800	Place	Montrose, Angus
				Married	18 May 1832	Place	Aberdeen
				Died	21 May 1859	Place	Aberdeen
						Occup.	Flax-dresser
F11	James MATTHEW		F24	Elizabeth PAUL			
	Born	abt 1828		Born	abt 1807	Place	Aberdeen
	Place	Aberdeen		Died	27 Jan 1872	Place	Aberdeen
	Married	11 Oct 1847				Occup.	Linen handloom weaver
	Place	Aberdeen	F25	John Frederick GROTHENWELL			
	Died	27 Dec 1902		Born	abt 1772	Place	"Foreign"
	Place	Aberdeen		Married	11 Feb 1820	Place	Aberdeen
	Occup.	Gardener		Buried	7 Sep 1850	Place	Aberdeen
F12	Christian Frederick GROTHENWELL					Occup.	Seaman, Merchant Service
	Born	abt 1826	F26	Christian MACKIE			
	Place	Aberdeen		Born	abt 1790	Place	Aberdeen
	Died	15 Apr 1865		Died	20 May 1877	Place	Edinburgh
	Place	Aberdeen				Occup.	Cotton-weaver
	Occup.		F27	Gordon CAMPBELL			
				Born	abt 1781	Place	Oldmeldrum, Aberdeenshire
				Married	[record not found]	Place	
				Died	Jan 1853	Place	Udny, Aberdeenshire
F13	William CAMPBELL					Occup.	Farmer
	Born	7 Apr 1819	F28	Isabella CRAIGIE (wife)			
	Place	Udny, Aberdeenshire		Born	abt 1783	Place	Aberdeen
	Married	9 Dec 1849		Died	2 Jan 1870	Place	Udny, Aberdeenshire
	Place	Udny, Aberdeenshire				Occup.	
	Died	2 Jul 1896	F29	Basil MACKIE			
	Place	Belhelvie, Aberdeenshire		Born	24 Feb 1812	Place	Old Deer, Aberdeenshire
	Occup.	Farm labourer		Married	[later, to others]	Place	
F14	Margaret MACKIE			Died	16 Mar 1901	Place	Aberdeen
	Born	abt 1832				Occup.	Farm overseer
	Place	Newmachar, Aberdeenshire	F30	Ann DIACK			
	Died	25 Jun 1920		Born	abt 1806	Place	
	Place	Belhelvie, Aberdeenshire		Died	22 Jan 1860	Place	Udny, Aberdeenshire
	Occup.					Occup.	

159/3 *SMITH / STEPHEN*: Seeking m./d. of Jane Smith (b. 28 Mar 1867 Forgue), d/o Charles Smith and Ann Stephen. Jane is last found aged 14 in 1881 census with her family; father was farmer of 25 acres in Ythanwells.

Jane's siblings: James (b. 2 Mar 1863 Forgue) m. Agnes M. McAlpine; d. 1927 Toronto. John b. 30 Jan 1865 Auchterless; Alexander Charles b. 8 Mar 1869 Forgue; George b. 12 Jun 1871 Ythanwells. Isabella Reid b. 2 Dec 1873 Ythanwells; d. 12 May 1952 Aboyne, unmarried. Charles b. 1876: m. Robina Smart.

1891 census, Huntly: only Ann Smith (53), Isabella R. (17) and Charles jnr (15); Charles snr not found, though 1901 Huntly census has Charles Smith (65), Annie (62), George B. (27), Isabella (25), Charles (23), Lizzie Smith (8) and a William Tocher (15). Ann Smith (69), m. to Charles Smith general labourer, d. 3 Mar 1906.

That is the extent of my findings to date. Many people have uploaded trees to Ancestry, but none shows more on Jane. Any help would be much appreciated.

rosinaj@live.ca

Rosina Jarvis

No. 8674

159/4 *COWIE "Dougal"*: Searching for 12 years for the d. registration of my 2g-gf John Cowie, teename Dougal (Duggal), b. 1822/23 Buckie (Rathven parish), d. between Mar 1861 and Aug 1862. He is variously given as fisherman, merchant seaman, sailor, master mariner. Father was probably William Cowie "Dougal" (1789–1871), but need the entry for proof of this. No boat names available.

I cannot find this man's death in the UK or on marine returns, using increasingly wild variant and wildcard spellings. Trawled through online newspapers; *Banffshire Advertiser* on microfiche; ScotlandsPeople Centre in Edinburgh; Moray Heritage centre. Sat with a registrar and went through 1859–1930 deaths – nothing else found. I printed out every John Cowie death up to 1930 – all now identified as other people.

In the 1851 census, he was at home in New Street, Buckie with wife Jane (née Cowie "Dosie"), m. 1847 Buckie. He registered their son's birth in 1859 but is not in the 1861 census – probably at sea. Jane is noted as "sailor's wife" in 1861 but is marked as widowed in 1871. He is not the John who d. Jan 1861 (wrong teename).

Valuation Rolls show John as occupier of 23 New Street, Buckie in 1861, but Jane as the widowed occupier in 1862 – so, he d. between Mar 1861 and 15 Aug 1862.

Said to be a master mariner – but no proof of this from TNA search. No boat names; no mate's or master's ticket found. There is a J. Cowie who is master of vessels in the 1850s–60s, but no way to tell if that's him (plus there is a John Cowie b. 1816 has a master's ticket). Nothing helpful on chn's marriages/deaths, nor wife.

Any DNA links have shed no light. I thought about him running away / prison / deported / hung, but reckon that might have come down family lore. Nothing in the papers, apart from a John Cowie "Dougal" who battered his wife in 1856 and was up in court (but there were several John Cowie Dougals around at that time).

Most likely is that he died at sea – no body, no registration? Plenty others were registered with no body, though – and nothing on Scottish heritage sites or in the old Rathven graveyard interments.

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Rhoda MacKenzie

No. 19303

159/5 *MILNE / MILL / POLSON*: In my family's oral history, at least one male Milne fled from the Aberdeen area to the north of Scotland after other relatives had been killed.

William Milne m. Margaret Polson (b. 26 Jun 1763 Watten, Caithness, d/o Alexander Polson and Margaret *SUTHERLAND*) on 5 Jan 1787 in Reay, Caithness. It is not known how many (if any) Milne generations were in Caithness before then. Cousins of my father, seeking Milne family-history info in the 1960s, couldn't verify tales their generation had been told, or to connect back to any locality nearer Aberdeen.

Our family's name changed from Milne to Mill, in Scottish church records and census records, after a doctor called Mill came to Caithness in the mid-1800s. Until then, I had been able to follow my Milne ancestors in church records for Reay and south-east from there (apart from the confusion of each brother in each Milne family choosing the same string of boys' names). My grandfather left for Australia in the 1880s when his father was head shepherd on the large farm called Durran.

I know Milne and Mill are common names in Aberdeenshire. Do any Journal readers know of other families, especially Milne or Mill folk, who fled north from the 17th century onwards, due to wars or the 1647 outbreak of bubonic plague, when a quarter of the population died (and we think *we've* got problems)? I also suspect that folk who fled north might not have wanted to be discovered, so I may never be able to trace my family back to the area west of Aberdeen.

jojugray@bigpond.com

Judith Gray (née Mill)

No. 18924

159/6 *HARPER*: I have hit a brick wall with B/M/D for my 3g-gf Lewis Harper. I have searched all the usual sites, and looked at family trees, some of which I know are wrong! I have all the baptism OPRs from ScotlandsPeople for the five chn of him and his wife Janet (née Harper!) in Frendraught, Forgue parish, from 1790 to 1809.

James Harper in Back Slioch, 1766, had a "[blank] baptised named [blank]" (as the others above in the register are; the clerk obviously didn't come back to finish this). Forgue Kirkyard has an MI for Lewis Harper d. 30 Sep 1813 aged 55. *If* that age is correct(?), he would be b.c. 1758 – so, not the Back Slioch child.

I was sceptical about why this MI shows only Lewis Harper. He was a crofter, so could the family have afforded this? The only Janet Harper I can find in Frendraught is in the 1841 census, aged 74 (so, about right), on her own, and "Poor".

Lewis is on Forgue stone 162, while stone 168 names two John Allans and a Janet Harper. I believe this is Lewis's dau., who did m. a John *ALLAN* in 1832 when her father Lewis was deceased. (His son Alexander m. in 1819 – no father mentioned.)

The only other possibly relevant info I can find is:

Alexander Harper from Forgue m. Margaret *HENDRIE* in Drumblade in Jan 1752.

James Harper, Inverkeithny, m. Janet *BAXTER* in Auchterless in Jun 1753.

They would fit around the birth of Lewis in 1758, if that's correct, but I have been unable to find records of any chn (or anything else for that matter!) for either couple.

If anyone could suggest anything else to try, I would be extremely grateful.

pam27252@gmail.com

Pam Heggie

No. 23052

159/7 *MACKIE / SIMPSON*: Trying to find out about the lives of my 3g-grandparents and births of their chn in Aberdeen. I have info from ScotlandsPeople, FindMyPast, Ancestry and FamilySearch.

James Mackie, cork-cutter, and Jane Simpson (d/o the late John Simpson, pensioner in Aberdeen) m. 7 Nov 1818, Aberdeen, at the minister's house; rites performed by the Rev. David *GELLATLY*(?) of Shiprow Chapel. Witnesses: Joseph *MATHESON* and Hamilton *JACK* (possibly Jack *HAMILTON*), both cork-cutters.

In the 1841 census, I can't find James Mackie (certainly not as a cork-cutter); but, at Part 1 Lodge Walk, Aberdeen, Jean Simpson (b. 1802 Aberdeenshire) is with Elizabeth Mackie (15), Alexander Mackie (13; my 2g-gf), Jean Mackie (8) and John Mackie (5), all b. ABD.

My 2g-gf Alexander is a fruiterer in all records. He m. twice: (1) Christian *BOOTH* (d. 1874) in 1848 at Zion Chapel, Aberdeen; and (2) aged "48", in 1875, to Margaret *PAUL*, at the Evangelical Union Church, Aberdeen. His parents are given as "John" Mackie, cork-cutter, and Jane (née Simpson), both deceased.

Alexander d. 1889, aged "65", in Old Machar parish; informant was brother John; parents given as James Mackie, cork-cutter, and Jane (née Simpson), both deceased. From the will and confirmation, Alexander owned property at Black's Buildings.

His brother John was a slater, m. 1856 at age "24" in the Congregational Church, Aberdeen, to Ann *STUART*. His parents are given as for Alexander in 1889.

At John's d. in 1898 in Aberdeen, the informant was niece Johan, from brother Alexander's first m. His parents are given as "Alexander" Mackie, cork-cutter, and Jane née "*JAMIESON*", both deceased (possibly just guesses by Johan).

I have nothing more for Elizabeth or Jean. Any help will be gratefully received.

mcconkeyki@gmail.com

Kathleen McConkey

No. 20947

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Arms and ANESFHS: Aye Tyaavin Awa

We were saddened to learn of the death of Anthony Maxwell, heraldic artist. After our grant of arms by Lord Lyon in 2013, Anthony was commissioned to render our coat of arms. The design was popular from the outset and has been at the forefront of our Society's branding ever since. Friends of Anthony are preparing a *Festschrift* in his memory, featuring many of his outstanding designs.

Articles

US Immigration through New York, 1855–1924

This presentation was delivered at our London Group online meeting; see p. 8 above.

Ellis Island is the most famous point of entry in New York – but not the first. At the tip of Manhattan was the Southwest Battery, built 300 feet offshore in 1811. It was one of four forts built at the mouth of the Hudson River to repel any threat of attack by the British Navy – but no shots were ever fired from this Battery (renamed Castle Clinton in 1817). The other forts were each built on islands in the bay: Castle Williams on Governor’s Island, Fort Wood on Liberty Island – and Fort Gibson on Ellis Island.

In 1824, the Federal government gave the Castle Clinton land and fort to New York City. It was further renamed Castle Garden, and became a popular entertainment venue. In 1844 a roof was added, and the building became the largest concert hall in New York.

On 3rd August 1855, Castle Garden became an immigrant registration centre controlled by New York State. It was the first facility of its type in the USA, and signalled a change in immigration policy and in the way through which immigrants became Americans. (In the USA in the 19th century, the words *emigrant* and *immigrant* were interchangeable.)

During the next 34 years, over 8 million people (two thirds of all American immigrants) entered the USA through Castle Garden. It closed on 18th April 1890 because of being no longer fit for purpose and also following a number of scandals (including unnecessary / unexplained deaths, cheating, and immigration officials stealing from the immigrants).

The US Federal Government then took over, processing immigrants through the Barge office next to the US Customs building in Manhattan. Construction of a new facility was started on Ellis Island, which began to operate on 1st January 1892. On opening day, the first people to be processed through Ellis Island were Annie Moore and her two brothers, who had left Ireland on 20th December 1891 from the port of Cobh, near Cork.

Arriving in America

Incoming ships anchored in a designated quarantine area off the coast of Staten Island. Doctors boarded and examined the ship for signs of contagious disease, including cholera, plague, smallpox, typhoid fever, yellow fever, scarlet fever, measles or diphtheria. If signs of any of these diseases were detected, the whole ship could be quarantined.

The doctors also gave first- and second-class passengers a quick inspection in their cabins before returning to Ellis Island. Immigration officials boarded the ship while it continued to New York harbour. They paid particular attention to 2nd-class passengers, who might be “undesirables” trying to escape the authorities in their own country by changing their name and buying a more expensive ticket to avoid the whole Ellis Island process.

On arrival, first and second-class passengers disembarked and were free to start their new lives in America (US citizens were exempt from review), based on the idea that if they could afford such a ticket, they were less likely to become a burden to the American public for medical or legal reasons. However, anyone who was sick or who had a legal problem was sent to Ellis Island to be processed alongside third-class “steerage” passengers, who disembarked and were pinned with a “manifest tag” showing their name, ship’s manifest number and line number.

Medical inspection

Doctors watched from the second floor to see how people climbed the stairs to the Great Hall (the Registry Room). Passengers were unaware that climbing the stairs was their first medical “test”. Anyone who showed physical stress / stopped to rest / was breathless was pulled out of line for suspected heart problems or to be inspected for tuberculosis.

At the top of the stairs, there was one line for women and children, and another for males aged over 15. The passengers – with caps / hats removed – were observed by doctors as they proceeded through the Registry Room. There were inspectors about every 15 feet, all with different responsibilities. Passengers were often asked to put down their bags and continue walking to check for defective posture or lameness. Children aged over two were taken from their mothers and checked that they could walk by themselves.

Adults could be asked simple questions to see if they appeared inattentive or “stupid”. (This and/or “idiotic” were the expressions used at the time, and may have involved simple mental arithmetic. In 1917, a literacy test was introduced where immigrants aged over 16 had to be able to read 30–40 words of ordinary text in their own language.)

Immigrants feared the final test – the eye test, known as “the six-second medical”. A buttonhook or even the inspector’s fingers were used to pull back the eyelids to look for signs of disease. The irony was that this action alone could spread infectious diseases like trachoma. Following a visit to the facility by President Roosevelt in 1903, orders were given for inspectors to wash their hands frequently and sterilise any instruments used.

The doctors became very efficient at making a snapshot analysis of illness or disability. Along the way, they would make chalk marks on the immigrants’ clothes, showing defects observed. These had meanings as follows: B back, C conjunctivitis, CT trachoma, E eyes, F face, Ft feet, G goitre, H heart, K hernia, L lameness, N neck, P physical and lungs, Pg pregnancy, S senility, Sc scalp (favus, a fungal disease), X = suspected mental defect, and circled X = definite signs of mental disease observed.

In addition, if a legal inspection was failed and they had to go before the Board of Special Inquiry, “SI” was chalked on their clothes. Immigrants “in the know” would arrive at Ellis Island wearing totally reversible clothing, so if they were chalked they would just remove the clothing and turn it inside out to appear that they had passed all the tests.

Those marked with an X were sent to a separate room for a mental examination. Others were sent to Ellis Island Hospital for a more intense medical examination or treatment. If they passed a more thorough inspection there, or had been detained then recovered, they could rejoin the inspection process. The average length of stay in hospital was two weeks. If an ailment or disease was thought incurable, the sufferer was deported. For trachoma, 11 out of every 12 were deported.

What next?

Those passing the medical inspection now walked to the opposite end of the Great Hall for a legal inspection. They were met by a Registry clerk, an immigration inspector and an interpreter. The cross-examination was based on 29 questions that the shipping-company agents had already filled in before the voyage and then given to Ellis Island officials on arrival. In reality, the officials were mainly interested in three questions:

Q 6: What is your occupation?

Q 16: How much money do you have?

Q 22: Are you coming to America for a job? What is it, and where will you work?

The inspectors wanted to determine if the immigrant had no money. If someone else had paid their passage, but they had a job to go to, they may have been illegal contract labour.

Single unaccompanied ladies may have been at particular risk without a good reason to pass inspection. These women would have been suspected of being prostitutes – but, if they said they were going to meet their fiancé, he would be called to the island, and they were sometimes forced to marry before they could leave, to prove it was all genuine.

Board of Special Inquiry

If there were inconsistencies or anything else suspicious during the legal inspection, the immigrants were detained to go in front of the Board of Special Inquiry. About 20% of immigrants had go in front of this Board, but only 2% of the 12 million processed were deported (about 240,000 in total). Half of those were for incurable / contagious disease or disability. This small percentage is mainly attributed to the fact that the shipowner's agents effectively did a pre-check because, if anyone was deported, it was the agents who had to pay for the return passage. Shipping-line owners would remove an agent's licence if his "clients" kept being deported.

Inspection pass or fail?

A successful inspection process could take 3–5 hours all in. Those detained may have spent days or even weeks or months on the island before moving on or being deported. It was rumoured that, if immigration officials couldn't cope with the incoming numbers, the process was sometimes ignored, and immigrants were waved through.

Deportation versus inspection success

The main reasons for deportation were: (1) contagious disease; (2) if it was considered that the immigrant could become a public charge; or (3) illegal contract labour, which had been banned since 1885. This last was usually directed towards Chinese, Japanese and Asians in general, in case they were cheap labour depriving American citizens of jobs.

After the inspection, immigrants were directed towards the "Stairs of Separation" – left for the ferry to New York or heading north; right for New Jersey and south – and middle for the Detention Rooms. They hoped not to be sent down the middle stairs.

Successful immigrants mostly went to the houses of family or friends. Immigrants going beyond New York were "supervised" by Government officials all the way until they got on the train, to prevent them being approached by "boarding-house runners" and conmen.

The Ellis Island fire

On 15th June 1897, the original Immigration Station, made of (resin-soaked) Georgia pine, burned down. The fire, believed to have been due to a faulty electric-light wire, spread to every building on the island. Around 250 detained immigrants were asleep at the time, including 40 patients in the hospital – but all survived, and nobody suffered any burns. Immigration processing was moved back to the Barge office at the Battery on Manhattan. A new "fireproof" main building opened on Ellis Island on 17th December 1900.

The fire destroyed Federal and State immigration records dating back to 1855, including ships' manifests for entries prior to June 1897, although Customs Lists remain. Similar to

a ship's manifest, these records detail each passenger's name, age and country of origin, as well as how many pieces of luggage they carried.

Dates and numbers

12 million people passed through immigration on Ellis Island between 1892 and 1954. Of those, 4 million were Italian – larger than any other group. The majority were up to 1924, when the “USA Immigration and Naturalisation Act” was introduced, based on a quota system derived from the numbers of immigrants from each country in the 1890 and 1910 censuses. (The authorities were trying to control the incoming immigrants depending on origin, in order to balance the population mix.) By 1910, 75% of the populations of New York, Chicago, Boston, Detroit and Cleveland were immigrants or children of immigrants.

Ellis Island normally processed about 5,000 individuals on an average day, but a record of 11,747 in a single day was set on 17th April 1907. April 1907 was also a historic month: the Port of New York received 197 ships, carrying more than 250,000 passengers from around the world. Ellis Island's peak year was 1907 – processing 1,004,756 of the 1.2 million immigrants who came to the entire USA that year.

Ellis Island: truth and myths

Ellis Island wasn't the only port of entry into the USA. It was one of 70, but it did process 75% of all immigrants (1880 to 1920). And the Statue of Liberty is *not* on Ellis Island!

With one exception, there is no evidence of any *enforced* name-changes to enter the USA (this was done by the immigrants themselves, either before leaving their home country or within the first five years of living in America). About a third of Jewish Americans *still* believe today that their family names were changed by officials on Ellis Island.

The one name that was changed

The exception to the name-changing policy came in 1908, when a traveller named Frank Woodhull admitted that he had been born Mary Johnson and had spent the previous 30 years living as a man – in the USA! After briefly detaining Woodhull, officials allowed him to re-enter the country – but not before changing his/her name back to Mary Johnson!

Mary, born in 1858 in Toronto, had a troubled childhood, having masculine features and a deep voice. Moving to California about 1878, she found it easier to get work by passing off as a man. Returning to the USA after a trip to England, but not being an American citizen, she had to go through Ellis Island – where she was found out.

Ellis Island today

From 1924 until closure in 1954, it was primarily used as an immigrant detention centre. In addition to the general history of Ellis Island, there is a wealth of information available online covering 1924–54. Ellis Island reopened to the public in 1976. Restoration began in 1984, and the museum opened in 1990. It receives over 2 million visitors per year.

To conclude, I presented a case study of Jeannie (Jane) Taylor née Wood, my maternal grandfather's elder sister, born in Stonehaven, who emigrated with her two children in the peak month of April 1907 on the *Ethiopia* from Glasgow, arriving through Ellis Island to join her husband in Greenwich, Connecticut. The 29 immigration questions, and Jeannie's answers to them, were shown in full.

Down Memory Lane: Blackhill Smiddy near Peterhead

My nostalgic picture is of the smiddy at Blackhill, near Peterhead, once a hive of activity but now long gone. I am the baby in the pram, and the boys are Blackhill loons. My father took the photograph about 1948/49 when we were visiting my grandparents, who lived at Blackhill. Some of my earliest memories are of watching the smith shoe the farm horses, operate the large bellows at the fire, and hammer on the anvil.



Blackhill lies very near the boundary junction of Peterhead, Longside and Cruden parishes. Dating from the mid-19th century, the smiddy was about four miles south-west of Peterhead, beyond Blackhill Farm and opposite the Blackhill Church. Immediately to the left of the smiddy, a path wound up a small hill to the smith's house and croft, and immediately to the right of the smiddy was the pump. The smiddy, the house and path are clearly seen on the six-inches-to-a-mile 1868 Ordnance Survey map, sheet XXIII.13 (Peterhead).

The smiddy was run between the 1860s and the 1970s by three successive generations of the same family. These were master blacksmiths James Willox (1828–1905), his son James Jonathan Willox (1856–1940) and his grandson Jonathan Willox (1911–99).

James senior built the smiddy in 1861, according to an article in the *Buchan Observer and East Aberdeenshire Advertiser* (29th June 1915). In the 1881 census he had two assistants, and in 1891 he had been joined by his son James Jonathan (sometimes recorded as just Jonathan). By the 1901 census, James Willox was a retired blacksmith, and there was an apprentice, Forbes Gibson.

In the 1911 census, Jonathan was running the business with the assistance of David Rothney, a “General Blacksmith” aged 25, and was advertising in the local newspaper for extra assistance. James Jonathan became a celebrity when in 1935 the *Aberdeen Press & Journal* published a photograph (on 20th July) of him aged supposedly 82 (in fact 78 or 79), describing him as “The oldest working blacksmith in Buchan”.

Jonathan junior ran the business through the 1950s and 1960s until he retired. The smiddy was then closed after over 100 years in operation and was eventually demolished. Today the blacksmith's house and croft are thriving, and the pump has been replaced by a tap which is attached to a stake.

Do you have an interesting or nostalgic photograph with some family history attached which you would like to share with the other members of our Society? If you have, please send your photograph and your story to the Editor (journal@anesfhs.org.uk).

margaret.nb@btinternet.com

Margaret Bradley No. 17303

—oOo—

Advice to a Bride in 1838

The bride was only 18 at the time of her marriage in Illinois to a man five years her senior. Grace Eliza Jack was the eldest daughter of Charles Jack, who had been born and raised in Aberdeen, and his wife, Ann Robertson, a native of Edinburgh. News of the wedding caused her grandmother to write a letter combining advice to Grace with a newsy update of people Grace would recall from her childhood stay in Aberdeen.

We know these facts from extensive personal research and a cache, discovered in 2011 by a cousin, of boxes of jumbled family letters, journals and records dating back to 1817, when our ancestor Charles Jack had first arrived in the USA. This advice to Grace from her grandmother was so important that a handwritten copy was made in the days before typewriters or copy machines existed. Now that copy is brittle and darkened with age.

Grace and her sister, Mary Margaret, were only 9 and 5 years old respectively when they were invited to travel from Illinois to Aberdeen and live with their grandparents, Grace and William Jack. The sisters lived with their grandparents for three years before beginning their return home in the spring of 1833.

There's no record of why this arrangement was struck. We can speculate that the two granddaughters of the Provost of the University of Aberdeen would receive an education in Scotland far superior to what was available in frontier Illinois. Perhaps the parents wanted their daughters to share their own Scottish heritage. It's clear from letters that Grace Jack, the grandmother, hoped their presence would help to assuage the grief created by the deaths of two of her daughters the previous year.

In late November 1829, young Grace and Mary set out from Illinois with their Dad to travel to Aberdeen. They arrived on 26th January 1830 to greet the grandparents and other relatives they had never met, and live with them for an indeterminate number of months. They began their return to Illinois, accompanied by their uncle Andrew, on 4th April 1833.

The 1838 letter from grandmother Grace to young bride Grace is masterful in conveying two reactions: her shock at marriage so young, and the seriousness of wifely duties.

King's College, July 17, 1838

My dear Grace –

Time passes so imperceptibly that I must acknowledge it came upon me by surprise when I first heard that the little girl whom I parted from only five years ago was about to become a wife. I have just learned by a letter from my son Andrew that you are actually married, and I now hasten to offer our united congratulations on the event which I hope and earnestly wish may bring increased happiness to all concerned, and chiefly to yourself and the husband of your choice. You are young to undertake the arduous duties that hence-forth belong to your station. I hope you are fully impressed with the sense of their importance and that, forming strong resolutions to act your own part well, you will seek divine aid in the conscientious discharge of the duties which devolve upon you in your new character.

The great principles of duty are impressed upon the human mind in indelible character, and the particular duties in every relation of life are strongly inculcated by the word of God, and by the bounden duty and the best interest of every rational and accountable being to endeavor to regulate their lives by their rules. It is not for me at this distance and ignorant of local ideas and habits, to enter into particulars, but I earnestly pray that you may be guided, in the way of duty which is also the way of peace and true happiness both here and hereafter.

All your old companions were astonished to hear that their little friend Grace was married, while those of your age are yet at school and think themselves children. The three Misses Thurburns are here at present on a visit to their Uncle's family. They, with the two families of Smiths, Marian Nuttall, the Misses Leslie, Miss Hamilton — to offer their best regards and congratulations wishing you all happiness in your new state of life.

Your father will have told you that his brother Alexander has been at home upward of two years past; he is such a high spirited, merry sort of a fellow that he has for the time made us all some-thing of the same kind. We have indeed had much pleasure in his society and now regret that the remaining period of his stay with us must necessarily be very short. – He talks of embarking for India in October although we hope that he may yet remain with us till next Spring, having obtained six month further leave of absence; but that must depend upon circumstances.

I particularly regret this uncertainty on your dear father's account, the time of Robert's coming home being as uncertain as that of Alexander's departure, and although his visit would give us pleasure at any time, yet it would be a great pity that he did not meet at least one of his brothers.

Your friend Miss Andrews has given up her School and Mrs Barclory [sic] (with whom I hoped to have placed you) is dead. Miss Cook and Mrs Smith (the mother and kind Patroness and guardian of Christian, Louisa, and Joanna Smith) both died within a fortnight about (2) two years ago and the dear girls left to our guardianship, have since been at school. Miss Cook left them a moderate provision, but not sufficient to support them without some exertion on their own part, the eldest must in consequence soon take a situation in a school or family.

The Principal, Alexander and Mary unite with me in every kind wish to you, Mr Ellett – and your father, mother, sister and Andrew.

I remain, ever my dear Grace, your affectionate friend and Grandmother,

G. Jack

(Mrs William Jack "Grace Bolt")

The writer moves effectively from sombre advice to a chatty update on the people Grace knew in Aberdeen and then returns to send congratulations to the bride and groom from all the relatives in Aberdeen. We can infer that the Scottish ideal of equal education for women enabled the writer to be erudite and gifted in the subtle use of language.

Letter-writing was the only available method of communication, and even the address suggests the difficult journey of a given letter. This letter was sent from

Mrs Princ'l Jack, King's College, Aberdeen, Scotland Via N. York

and addressed to:

Mrs Ellett, Care of Chas. Jack Esqr., Knoxville, Knox County, Illinois, U.S. America

Stamped New York Ship
18 Jul. M Aug. 21. 1838
1838

Sources

Handwritten copy of original letter to Grace Ellett from her grandmother, Grace Jack. Found in boxes of family papers from at least three generations, beginning in 1817.

Excel file summarising letters to/from the American Jack family to the Aberdeen Jack family in University of Aberdeen archives. (Letters had been promised to archives but never conveyed; only the Excel file.) Received copy while visiting Archives, September 2016.

Sawdust and Alcohol: “Señor Sawdusterio Caldero” (1818–92)

In *Aberdeen Curiosities* by Robert Smith, dozens of old-time “characters” and eccentrics are described; and *Walking the Mat*, compiled by Winram & Cluer, has illustrations of some of those, and others as well. In neither does “Sawdust” Calder feature, although in later Victorian times he was one of the city’s genuine “characters”, with a considerable local reputation – mostly involving alcohol and being the worse for it, but also for his ready wit and for having been an excellent musician in his younger days.

As early as 1877, jokes involving him were common in Aberdeen – even at public meetings and in local election campaigns. A candidate was once scorned by another for his Council colleagues being more like “Sawdust” Calder than fit persons to vote for.

During the 1880s, conundrum competitions were popular in the city’s theatres. A winner in the Cooke’s Circus competition in September 1884 was: *Why is Sawdust Calder like a celebrated statesman? Because he often attends at Court, and dines at Her Majesty’s expense.* As obituaries stated in 1892, Calder had for years been a regular sight with his sacks of sawdust, and now one of the city’s last true “characters” was gone.

Born (with an elder twin brother, James) a week before Christmas 1818 at Shannel in Birse parish, Alexander Calder had been a bright and lively young man. From a typical agricultural community, he was clearly influenced by the traditional music-making of rural Aberdeenshire from an early age. He worked on farms, also learned the trade of flesher (butcher) from his father, and learned to fiddle, play the pipes, and dance.

His parents, James Calder and Catren (née Ross), had married in March 1815 and seem to have had only the twins. James snr had been born in 1792 in nearby Aboyne – then just a scattering of dwellings – son of another James Calder, who worked on the land, and his wife Mary Robbie (the twins’ grandparents, who had married in June 1790).

Alexander’s father stayed in Birse parish all his life, a flesher and occasional cattle-trader, before turning to making and selling brooms after his wife died. He was a pauper by his death in 1878. It’s not clear how much his twin sons knew of his later years, having left home as young men and being still unmarried and both struggling somewhat in Aberdeen.

Alexander had arrived there by mid-century with a useful trade and already a reputation – but it was for good music and dancing. He butchered, reasonably profitably it’s said; but the acclaimed “Fiddler of Birse” played at a lot of weddings and other functions, and was noted for his strathspeys and reels in the true Aberdeenshire fiddling style and tradition. He lodged for well over 10 years with a settled Pittendrigh family in Renny’s Wynd.

Unhappily, things had changed for this fiddling flesher by the 1870s. He was now living in lodging houses such as the Victoria in Guestrow, was picking up labouring jobs, and was having alcohol problems. Moving to a very crowded lodging house in Farquhar’s Court, Upperkirkgate, he took up collecting and buying sawdust, which he sacked and sold on to butchers and other tradespeople. Some customers would offer to pay him in beer or whisky, and he accepted too readily. He was also known for quips and witty responses, but by the later 1870s these too were becoming less amusing and less welcome to others.

He had begun to appear in court a lot, charged with drunkenness and/or trespassing, and later vagrancy, but never charged with violence despite being loud and argumentative. Intoxication allied to his well-lit pipe was seen as a real fire hazard. He still fiddled a little, but the image of “Sawdust Calder” had now replaced the “Fiddler of Birse” in the

public mind. The number of “drunk and whatever” charges multiplied as the years passed and the notoriety associated with his liking for alcohol and its consequences spread. In 1879, he served 30 days in prison for vagrancy and trespass. “Sawdust” was never short of interesting and often original excuses, or assurances that he would keep out of trouble in future – “at least till New Year”, he would frequently tell the bailies.

There was always “laughter in court” when he was in the dock. On a charge of trespass, he said he had been chased by a gang of boys who tore his jacket and his “unmentionables, which he greatly deplored”. Being told by the bailie that boys wouldn’t chase and abuse him if he was sober, he replied: “Thank you, Sir, God bless you, Sir”. Another time, in a café, he had ordered oxtail soup and paid 4 pence in advance; but the girl brought him hotch-potch, costing 2 pence, which he didn’t like. When he complained, he was thrown out, his food uneaten, and charged with being drunk. Being questioned, he admitted having taken a drink but was adamant that he was not “beastly drunk”. He hadn’t been in court for more than a year on that occasion – which clearly impressed the magistrate, who imposed no penalty.

By the later 1880s, magistrates were being much less severe on him and several times dismissed him without penalty. One bailie remarked that he had personally witnessed the defendant being over-zealously and unfairly treated in the street by policemen, and he dismissed the charge. So, a more sympathetic attitude was latterly being shown to the character now sometimes referred to grandly as “Señor Sawdusterio Caldero”. Around this time, a fictitious company was publicised in the Aberdeenshire press – the “Sawdust Calder Pulverised Timber Company Limited”. It was apparently seeking investors!

Also by the later 1880s, “Señor” was suffering from kidney disease and was increasingly frail. Unable to carry sacks of sawdust, he returned to playing his fiddle in the back streets, seeking pennies from pedestrians and shopkeepers. His skills had deteriorated seriously since earlier days, and soon he became destitute. During the next few years, he was in and out of hospital and the city’s poorhouses. He was also going blind, and often depended on a kind young boy to guide him from place to place.

Eventually his kidneys failed, and “Señor Sawdusterio Caldero” died on 24th November 1892 in the City (St Nicholas) Poorhouse. It was known that his brother was working in a rag store somewhere in the city but that he was not well either, and so the Poorhouse Governor dealt with all the formalities himself.

The *Aberdeen Free Press* ran an obituary a few days after Alexander’s death, beaten to it by the *Dundee Evening Telegraph*. Both pieces were friendly and stressed his earlier life qualities. The Dundee paper included this illustration and concluded that he had had a truly chequered career “with a full share of life’s vicissitudes”.



Elsie Smith/Taylor, Boat-breaker fae the Broch

Elsie Smith or Taylor (1891–1982) was a colourful Fraserburgh character – a “midwife and scrap merchant”, and often in trouble with the law. She became a good friend of my great-auntie Helen Morrison (Nellie, 1898–1989). In 1938, Elsie delivered my cousin Eileen, daughter of John Ritchie Mitchell jnr (Jack), who had been born illegitimately in April 1915 to Nellie, then aged 17, after his father was killed in action in November 1914. Jack was raised initially by his grandparents so that Nellie could work to support her son.

Nellie worked at the harbour as a fish “wifie” and also travelled to Great Yarmouth in East Anglia for a few seasons during the autumn herring glut. Special trains from Peterhead, Fraserburgh and Aberdeen transported the “wifies” to the east coast of England. They were contracted to work for a particular fishing-boat owner, but Nellie would have ceased this when her mother was taken ill. Her mother died in April 1925, so Nellie worked locally as a housekeeper. Her father died in 1930, and son Jack started work in Aberdeen.

Elsie Fraser Smith (always known as Elsie) was born on 26th November 1891 at Bents Cottage, Philorth, Fraserburgh, to Isabella Duncan and William Smith, gamekeeper for Lord Saltoun of Philorth House. Bents Cottage was tied to the estate and was originally called the Longhouse. William, born in Peterhead, had had five children with his first wife, Ann Mitchell Gibson from Rathen (d. 1880). He then married Isabella on 30th May 1881, and by 1894 they had seven children, the sixth being Elsie. There is a connection with Mary Smith, who is mentioned in *The Christian Watt Papers*, page 36.

Elsie’s middle name would have come from the family who were the Lords of Philorth House. She married Alexander Taylor, a carter, on 5th June 1914 in Rathen parish, and they had a son, Robert. Elsie’s marriage didn’t last, and she “kicked him out”. She had trained as a nurse and midwife in London during WW1, and was a VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) on the battlefield during the big German push of 1918. She was working in a tented camp hospital when it was attacked. American troops were nearby and came to their aid. She probably returned to Castlehill Hospital before going back to Fraserburgh.

A picture of Elsie’s lifestyle over the next 15 years or so is reflected in a column of the *Aberdeen Press & Journal* on 17th April 1922:

Two wooden steam drifters – *General McDonald* and *Promote* – names that have been familiar in connection with the staple industry of the port for over twenty years, will no longer take their place in the Fraserburgh fleet. These vessels recently were condemned, their engines and boilers removed and disposed of, and the hulls beached at St Combs and Inverallochy to be broken up for firewood.

This fits in with family stories I picked up over the years – and it is not surprising that Elsie found herself in trouble with the law a few times. She used both married and single surnames to suit the relevant court cases that she attended during this inter-war period. Also from that same day’s newspaper:

THEFT OF LARCH POSTS:- Elsie Smith or Taylor, firewood dealer, and Charles Wilson, labourer, 76 Shore Street, Fraserburgh, pleaded guilty before Sheriff Dallas at Aberdeen on Saturday to having, on or about 4th, 5th, or 6th April, in Birnie Wood, Memsie, Rathen, the property of Lord Saltoun of Philorth, stolen seven larch posts. Sheriff Dallas imposed a penalty of £2, or 14 days imprisonment on each of the accused.

These are just a few of numerous other instances found:

Fraserburgh Herald and Northern Counties Advertiser, 9th May 1922:

THEFT OF CEMENT:- In the Peterhead Sheriff Court on Friday before Sheriff Laing – Elsie Smith or Taylor, widow, fire-wood dealer, and Charles George Wilson, labourer, 76 Shore Steet, Fraserburgh, were charged with having from a dwelling house in course of erection on the farm of Mains of Philorth, stolen a bag containing one and a half hundredweight of cement. The accused pleaded guilty, and both admitted previous convictions. They were ordered to pay a fine of 20 shillings each, or go to prison for 10 days.

Fraserburgh Herald and Northern Counties Advertiser, 6th June 1922:

THEFT AT INVERALLOCHY:- 30 Days for Broch labourer: Elsie Smith or Taylor, coal & firewood dealer, and Charles Wilson, both residing at 76 Shore St, Fraserburgh were charged at the Aberdeen Sheriff Court on Friday with stealing a quantity of clothing and bed linen from the house 4 Frederick St, Inverallochy, formerly occupied by a woman now an inmate of the Aberdeen Royal Asylum. They pleaded not guilty. ... It was stated that the children of the village often entered the house since the occupier was removed to the Asylum, and used it as a playground. A middle-aged woman who was called to give evidence inquired, when asked to take the oath, if it was compulsory for her to do so. Sheriff Dallas – Do you refuse to take the oath? Witness – I don't want to do it if I can be listened to without it. Do you not believe in the oath? No, I do not. God says I ought not to swear. I am not asking you to swear, but to take an oath to tell the truth. Well, I would like you to hear me without that. The witness, who "affirmed and declared" that she would tell the truth, said she and other people in the village had also entered the house by the window. She did so "just for curiosity". Constable Cruickshank said he had been stationed at Cairnbulg and Inverallochy for five years and found the community a very respectable people, but with "a way of their own". The charge against Mrs Taylor was not proven. Wilson was found guilty and sent to prison for 30 days. He admitted 5 previous convictions for theft in Peterhead, Fraserburgh and Aberdeen.

Aberdeen Press & Journal, 26th August 1925:

Elsie Smith or Taylor, widow, and Alexander Sim, carter, both of High St, Fraserburgh, pleaded Not Guilty to having, on August 6th, on Denmark Street, stolen a quantity of herrings belonging to Edward Gordon, fish curer, Quarry Road, which were then in the custody of Sim, who was conveying them to the curing yard. Both were convicted on evidence. Smith was fined 20s, or 10 days, and Sim 10s or 5 days.

Aberdeen Press and Journal, Saturday 23rd July 1932:

FAILED TO STAMP CARDS:- The failure of Elsie Smith or Taylor, firewood hawker, 80 High St, Fraserburgh to affix National Health and Unemployment Insurance stamps to the cards of an employee for thirty-six weeks from July 13th last year, rendered her liable to fines not exceeding £720. Sheriff Laing at Peterhead Sheriff Court, where she appeared yesterday, said in view of special circumstances of her financial position he would restrict the penalty to one of £3, with the alternative of twenty days imprisonment. A month allowed for payment.

Aberdeen Press & Journal, 25th August 1937:

TOOK SCRAP METAL INNOCENTLY:- A woman who appeared before Sheriff Laing at Aberdeen yesterday was found not guilty of a charge of theft. Mrs Elsie Taylor, firewood merchant, 27 North St, Fraserburgh, denied having stolen on Saturday June 12th 11cwt 3qrs of scrap metal, consisting of an iron ballast tank which had been cut into five portions, from part of the foreshore at Broadsea, Fraserburgh. Mrs Taylor, who said that she bought and broke up old boats, told the court that she thought the scrap metal belonged to her. She had removed it by mistake. The Sheriff said he thought that what Mrs Taylor did was done quite innocently. She had made a mistake.

The Valuation Rolls of 1930 and 1935 have Elsie living at 80 High Street, with a stable on Denmark Street. The proprietor is James Birnie, a farmer at nearby Memsie.

There are other family stories of Elsie, who liked a dram or two. In a bar, she punched to the floor a drunken sailor who had made unsavoury suggestions to two young women! On 5th April 1941, a heavy air raid on Fraserburgh hit Maconochie's fish canners, killing five and injuring 112. Elsie was a lorry-driver for the local toolworks, Consolidated Pneumatic Tools, and was driving in the area, so she parked her flatbed lorry against the factory wall, stood on the back and broke some windows to help rescue some of the injured. Her nursing experience came to the fore, as she tore up bandages and dressed the wounds, taking some of the injured home. Her sister, Mrs Michael, was killed in this air raid.

After the war, Elsie made her money initially in shipbreaking. Redundant motor torpedo boats were purchased by trawler owner George Duthie and towed to Fraserburgh from the south coast. The powerful engines were removed and reconditioned before being refitted to some of his fleet. The boats were then beached on the rocks between Fraserburgh and Sandhaven, and the remains were broken up by Elsie and inevitably sold for scrap.

My great-auntie Nellie was now housekeeping for Elsie. After the Second World War, they moved to Elsie's "ancestral home", Bents Cottage, and she continued boat-breaking. She bought a tractor and trailer and moved on to lighter work, selling vegetables.

Marjorie Flora Fraser (Lady Saltoun) of Cairnbulg Castle was married in 1956, and Elsie was an invited guest along with the Queen Mother and the Queen of Denmark! Her friends were shocked, as she was normally seen wearing a faded brown "bib and brace" pair of dungarees but was one of the best-dressed ladies to attend the "English kirk" that day. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, up from England on holiday, I remember day visits to the Bents. Elsie used to let me ride on the trailer down to the Philorth Burn, where she filled two or three milk churns and lifted them on to the trailer. They had no mains water supply in what had been a "but and ben" cottage with the animal end facing eastwards.

Nellie and Elsie lived at Bents Cottage for over 30 years. It was demolished when the golf course was extended. The new 11th tee was called "Elsie's Tee". Nellie and Elsie retired to a council cottage in Sandhaven. Elsie died on 30th November 1982, aged 90; and Nellie died on 22nd April 1989, aged 91, at Fraserburgh Hospital after a short illness. The two dear friends are buried together in Kirkton Cemetery. Nellie was "cheery" – always laughing and smiling.

In August 2009, I met Billy, who was looking after Maggie's Hoosie Museum in Inverallochy. He remembered Elsie when she was at the Bents; and, in August 2015, when I was buying butter biscuits and rowies in Smith's Bakery in Fraserburgh, she was remembered by staff and customers a good 30 years after her death. She was a gentle giant, with a kind heart, and I am very lucky to have been in her company.



(L to R): my mother Mary; Great-auntie Nellie; Elsie Smith; Auntie Margaret. Front: my brother Duncan; cousins Heather and Foster Brown; me.

The Remarkable Marnochs of Kintore

Around 1813/14, Peter Marnoch and his wife May Alexander settled in a croft at Tom's Forest, by Kintore, where he worked as a forester. Prior to this, they had moved around the area, as was common among those who worked in agriculture.

Peter Marnoch was baptised in Cluny parish on 29th November 1766, the son of John Marnach (or Marnoch) and Barbara Forbes. His wife was probably the daughter of Alexander Alexander and Barbara Christie, baptised in Cluny in 1772.

In 1795, Peter and May were censured for fornication by Echt Kirk Session and married immediately afterwards. The fine was waived, as "their circumstances were but mean". Their eldest child, George, was baptised in Skene parish five months later. The OPR for his baptism reads: "April 23rd Peter Marnoch in Craigiedarg and his wife [*blank*] had a child baptised named [*blank*]" . Perhaps they had not been in Skene long enough for the session clerk to know their names.

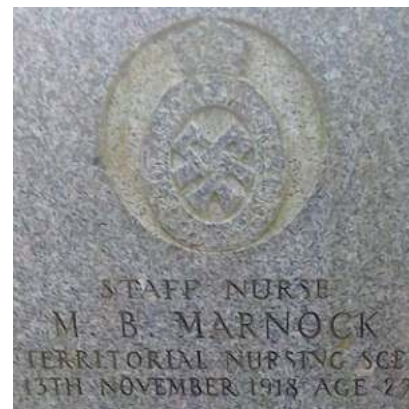
They were in Auchronie, Kinellar when daughter Barbara was baptised in March 1798; still in Kinellar in March 1800 when son Robert was baptised; and in Aquhorsk, Kinellar in September 1802 for the baptism of their son John. This was followed by a seven-year gap. Had they moved to a parish whose baptismal records have been lost? They reappear in Balbithan, in the parish of Keithhall & Kinkell, for the baptisms of an unnamed daughter in 1809, Jean in 1811 and Mary in 1813. Finally, they were in Tom's Forest, Kintore, for the baptisms of Peter jnr in October 1814 and May jnr in February 1816.

May Alexander died sometime between the 1841 and 1851 censuses. Peter lived to be the second-oldest person in the parish, dying at age 90 on 17th November 1856. They were buried in the kirkyard of Kintore. If there was ever a gravestone, it has not survived.

What makes this couple remarkable? Their descendants.

Their son Robert (1800–89) became a gardener. It is not known where he trained; there are several large estates in North-East Scotland at which he might have served an apprenticeship. He moved to England in 1825, to become firstly foreman of the kitchen garden and then head gardener at Bretton Hall, Yorkshire. His name was anglicised to Marnock. In 1834, he won a competition to lay out Sheffield Botanic Gardens. This launched his career as a landscape gardener. He designed the Royal Botanic Society's garden in Regent's Park, London; Alexandra Park in Hastings; and many private commissions in England and Italy. He married Ann Hobson; he was predeceased by his son Robert and survived by his daughters Rebecca and Ann.

Maggie Bella Marnoch was a great-great-granddaughter of Peter and May Marnoch, descended from their son George (1796–1858). She was born in Townhead, Kintore in 1891, the second child of George Marnoch, a farmer, and his wife Isabella Fowler. In the First World War, she served as a nurse in the Royal Army Medical Corps. She died of pneumonia in London two days after the Armistice, on 13th November 1918. Her name appears both on the Kintore Parish War Memorial (Sister M. B. Marnoch, listed among "the men of this parish") and on the Kintore Primary School War Memorial; she is the only woman on both. Her name is also on the Nurses' Memorial in St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh (shown as Margaret B. Marnoch). She is buried in

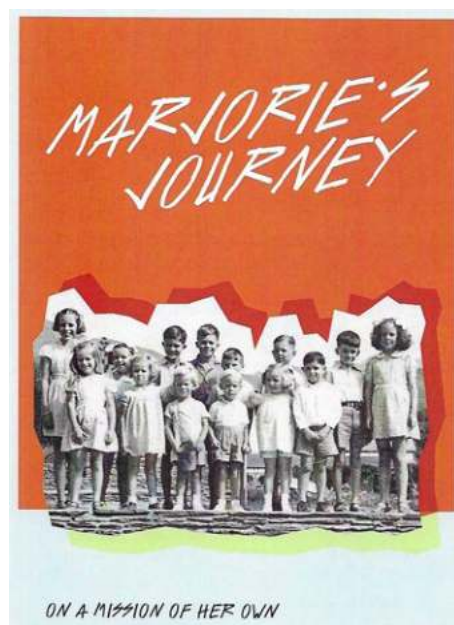


Kintore kirkyard, commemorated on her parents' gravestone as well as on a stone raised by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, which has anglicised her surname to Marnock (see photograph).

Another two of Peter and May Marnoch's great-great-grandchildren, first cousins of Maggie Bella Marnoch, also died in the war – brothers John and David Marnoch. Both were born in Kintore, in 1891 and 1898 respectively, but by 1914 the family had moved to Kirkcaldy in Fife. John (service no. 2355) died in France on 9th November 1915, serving with the Black Watch. David (service no. 344204) died during the Third Battle of Ypres on 10th August 1917 and is buried in Essex Farm Cemetery, Belgium. The CWGC website anglicises their surnames to Marnock in both cases.

Peter and May Marnoch's son John (1802–73) had a large family: eight children by his first wife Jane Low, and five by his second wife May Newlands. Two of his sons, George Robert Marnoch and James Annand Marnoch, moved to Aberdeen, where George had a succession of jobs. James became a postman. His son, John, studied medicine at Aberdeen University, graduating with highest honours in 1891. In 1909, he succeeded Sir Alexander Ogston as regius professor of surgery at Aberdeen. On the outbreak of the First World War, John was commissioned in the 1st General Scottish Hospital in the RAMC, and it was in this role that he attended Midshipman Prince Albert (later King George VI) when he took ill on board ship. Marnoch diagnosed appendicitis and had the prince transferred to Aberdeen, where he operated; appendectomy was a risky operation in 1914. Marnoch continued to have a distinguished career and was knighted in 1928.

Meanwhile, George Robert Marnoch's son, also George Robert, sought his fortune in the colonies. He married Harriet Lund Macdonald, sister of Sir John Marnoch's wife Agnes. (These two couples' offspring were thus simultaneously first and second cousins.) George and Harriet's only child, Marjorie Anderson Marnoch, was born in 1906 in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). Harriet's ill-health forced the family to return to Aberdeen, where she died in 1909. Marjorie was raised by Sir John and Lady Marnoch, and then moved to England. In the Second World War, she evacuated a party of children to South Africa, where she cared for them until the war was over. Her story, including her childhood in Aberdeen, is told in a newly published book, *Marjorie's Journey: On a Mission of Her Own*, by Sir John's granddaughter, Prof. Ailie Cleghorn of Concordia University, Montreal, Canada.



It is remarkable that so many distinguished people should descend from an apparently undistinguished couple who raised their family on a croft in Kintore.

Sources

www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk

ODNB – Robert Marnock

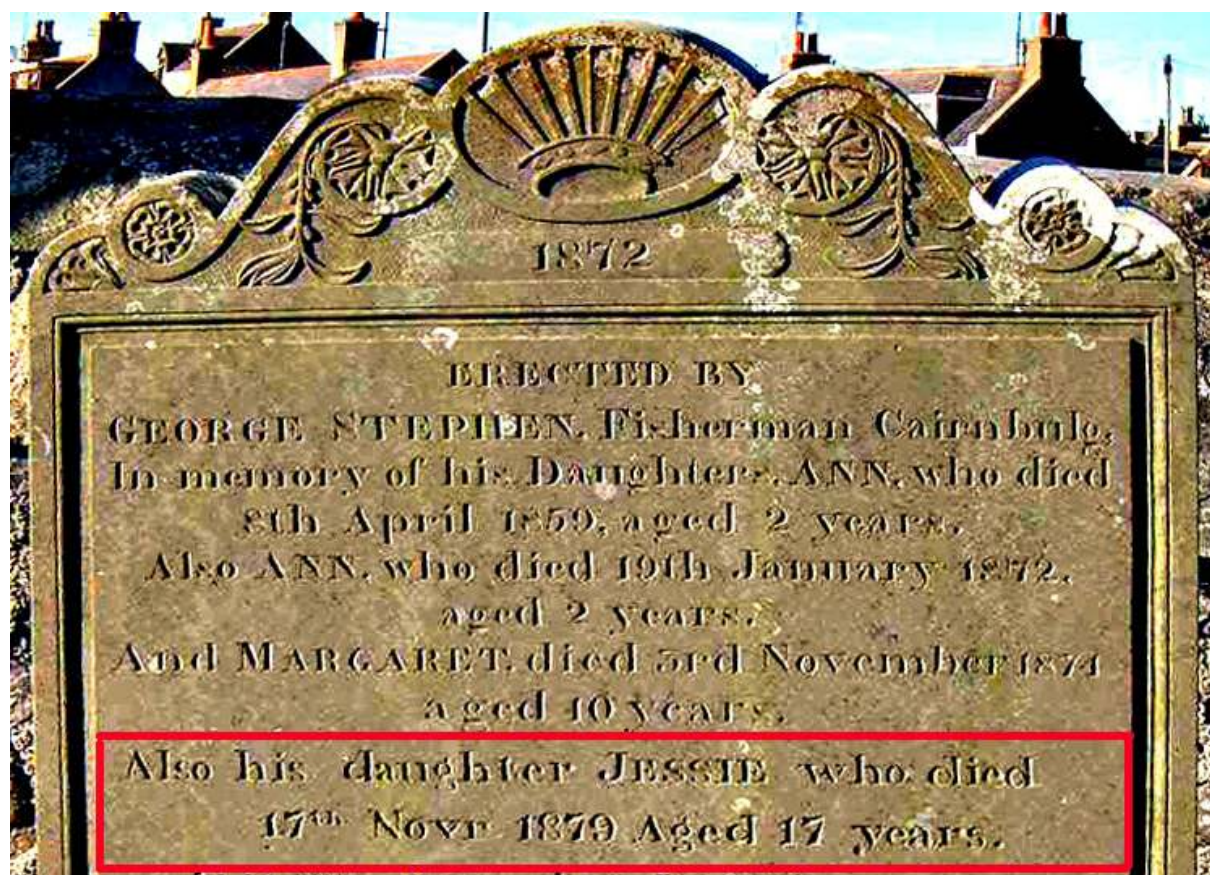
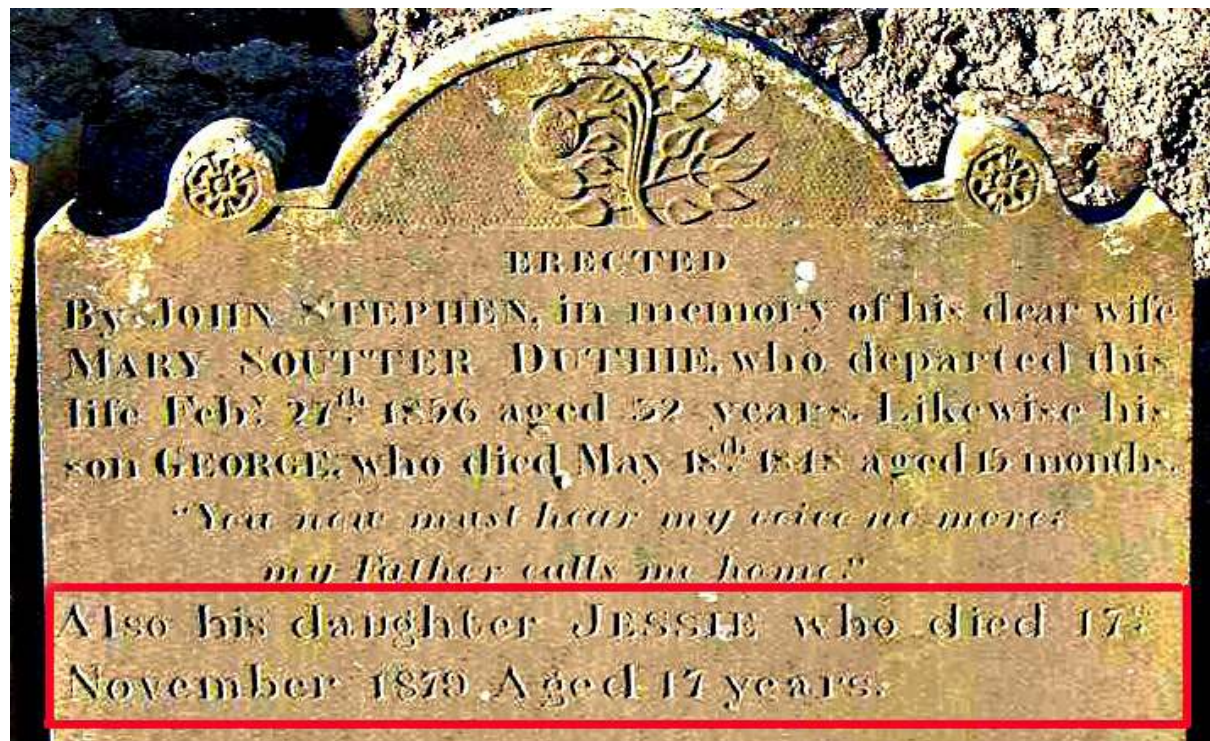
Cleghorn, Ailie, *Marjorie's Journey: On a Mission of Her Own* (Scotland Street Press, 2021), £9.99.

CWGC website: <https://www.cwgc.org/>

The Kirkyard of Kintore (ANESFHS ref. AA197)

More Monumental Mistakes

Epitaphs are carved in stone in hopes that they will endure. But the flipside of this is that any errors in the text also risk being preserved. These two stones stand next to each other in the Kirkyard of St Combs. Look closely at the highlighted parts.



What do you think has happened here? Some possible answers are given overleaf.

More Monumental Mistakes: A Possible Explanation

The two gravestones in St Combs kirkyard shown on p. 41, and several others on either side of them, commemorate members of the Stephen family – and one might surmise that John and George were brothers. If the families used the “Scottish naming pattern”, it is quite possible that they might both have had daughters called Jessie. But how likely is it that both died on the same day, at the same age? Not impossible.

But, if we look more closely at the inscriptions, we see that the first stone commemorates the death of Mary Soutter, John’s wife, in 1856 – so Jessie, dying aged 17 in 1879, must have been born in 1861 or 1862, and cannot be a daughter of Mary’s.

Of course, John could have been married again, to a woman who never made it on to the gravestone ... but I can envisage a different scenario. This would have the local mason being told, in 1879, to “*pit Jessie on oor stane at the west wa’, jist alang fae the gate ...*” – and, faced with a row of Stephen stones, picking the wrong one!

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No. 4085

—oOo—

John Frederick Grothenwell and Christian Mackie: Two Brick Walls

My keen interest in family history and genealogy began in the 1980s while undertaking family therapy training at the Scottish Institute of Human Relations in Edinburgh, where in studying genograms as a tool for family history-taking we were invited to explore our own family histories. I realised the importance of talking first to older relatives; but there were few to assist. My father had died young – but my mother passed on what she knew about both families, and I soon found myself “bitten by the genealogy bug”.

Aberdeen is fortunate to hold many archives. Before digital records and online research, I regularly visited the Registrar’s Office and enjoyed looking through the original registers of B/M/D records. I also joined ANESFHS, with its wonderful resources and library, and have had great assistance from our knowledgeable, helpful volunteers over the years.

This Journal’s centrefold has my paternal Record of Ancestors Chart (continuation sheets are in progress for most lines); and this article concerns 30-year “brick walls” in tracing my 3g-grandparents John Frederick Grothenwell and Christian Mackie.

The Grothenwells attended Episcopal churches in Aberdeen. Their daughter Christian, my 2g-grandmother, married James Matthew in 1847 at St Paul’s Church, Loch Street; and son William Matthew was baptised there in 1849. St Paul’s was demolished in the 1980s as part of a central development scheme, but fortunately records survive. Soon after that demolition, I visited ANESFHS in King Street, where the late, great Violet Murray introduced me to professional genealogist and fellow member Archie Strath Maxwell, whose transcribed Episcopal records are held in our Society’s library. He kindly led me to a number of records on Grothenwells, helping enormously with my early research.

John Grothenwell (b.c. 1772) and Christian Mackie (b.c. 1790 in Aberdeen/shire) married in February 1820 at St John’s Chapel, Aberdeen. The present St John’s was built in the 1840s, so presumably they married at its former church in Golden Square or at an earlier place of worship in the Shiprow. John was a seaman (Merchant Service) and Christian a cotton weaver; the witnesses were Alexander Walker and William King. The couple had

three known children, though I have been unable to trace birth records: Christian (b.c. 1826), Ann King Grothenwell (b.c. 1830), and Isabella Walker Grothenwell (b.c. 1835).

In the 1841 Aberdeen census, John, of “Foreign” birth and by then a retired seaman, was recorded as watchman on the *City of Aberdeen* vessel, while Christian and the three girls were recorded in St Clement Street in Footdee. The family later moved to Gordon Street. John died there in 1850, aged 78, and was buried in St Peter’s Cemetery.

John and Christian’s marriage witness William King and his wife Ann had lived in nearby Huntly Street and later Gordon Street. William (b.c. 1770 in England) was a wright or builder, featuring for many years in the Post Office Directory at Huntly/Gordon Street. Ann King died between 1841 and 1851.

I have no information about the other marriage witness Alexander Walker, other than the possible 1841 and 1851 census records at Causewayend/Spital of an Alexander Walker, canvas weaver, with his wife and children.

In the 1851 census at 19 Gordon Street, the widowed Christian Grothenwell was recorded as resident housekeeper to the widowed William King. He died in 1853 and is also buried in St Peter’s Cemetery. By 1861, Christian was living with one of her married daughters in Edinburgh, where she died in 1877. Unfortunately, the granddaughter who registered her death did not know her parents’ names.

William King and Alexander Walker may just have been long-standing friends of the Grothenwells, but I wonder if they or their wives were related to Christian and might therefore provide clues to her mother’s maiden surname.

I have been unable to trace John Grothenwell’s “Foreign” birth c. 1772 or Christian Mackie’s birth in Aberdeen/Aberdeenshire c. 1790. Taxation on baptismal entries during the period 1787–97 discouraged some people from registering their offspring’s births. It’s possible therefore that Christian Mackie’s birth was not registered.

I was searching ANESFHS’s Banchory-Devenick MI booklet for my Matthew ancestors’ burials and was amazed to see on stone no. 206 the following individuals mentioned:

Below lies ALEXANDER WALKER and his wife. Also of ANN KING aged 64 wife of WILLIAM KING wright Huntly Street, Aberdeen also JANE LARGUE d. Ruthrieston Croft 5 Mar 1892 aged 90 and JAMES MATTHEW gardener d. 27 Dec 1902 aged 74 also his wife ELIZABETH MILNE d. 17 July 1923 aged 76.

James Matthew is my 2g-grandfather, who married Elizabeth Milne after his first wife Christian Frederick Grothenwell died; and Jane Largue is related to the Matthews. Clearly all these individuals had been linked in life – but, having been commemorated on a stone together, it seems more likely that they were relatives rather than just friends.

I and a number of Grothenwell/Mackie 3rd–5th cousins in the UK and Australia have been struggling with these brick walls for decades without significant breakthroughs. I wonder if Journal readers may be able to assist concerning John Grothenwell’s and Christian Mackie’s ancestry, or help me to understand the long-standing connection with their Walker and King marriage witnesses?

Having now had my DNA tested, I hope too that in time DNA matches may help to trace the origins of these elusive ancestors.

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Registered charity no. SC012478 SCIO

ISSN 0143-4500

VAT registration no. 875 3262 06

*Printed by McKenzie Quality Print Ltd, Unit 12, Wellheads Trading Estate, Wellheads Crescent,
Dyce, Aberdeen AB21 7GA*