



# e-Scotia

## Newsletter of the Anglo-Scottish FHS

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Anglo Scottish Family History Society

**Welcome:** to the November edition of the newsletter. A bumper issue to celebrate our Branch's 40th year. Not only is there a summary of the celebrations but we include the two quizzes that we all enjoyed. Also attached, for those interested in our history, we attach the history of the Branch taken from the booklet prepared for the 40th anniversary of the Society in 2004 by David Vaughan. This takes the Branch history up 2003 and for those of us at the celebration, the history was updated by a presentation by the Society chairman, David Muil. We were delighted also to welcome once again our speaker, Keith Bruce. Keith visited us in September 2019 and under the title of "Bridgescapes" spoke of the history of Scotland through bridgebuilding. If you have retained a copy of that newsletter (as I am sure many of you have!!) you can catch up. Apart from all of this there is our usual effort to include sources that might interest you and progress your Scottish research. Whatever - enjoy! Editor.



## 40 Years



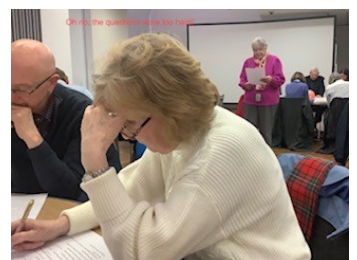
**40 Years old, and still going!!!** As you will read in the Branch history attached, the embryo of the Branch is actually a bit older than this but, like many other things, the idea took time to mature into action. When it did however it developed and grew quickly with quite a number of members many of whom did sterling work creating a database of Scottish interest. We benefit from their efforts and thank them. Much of the research they carried out has been absorbed into and is available on the Society web site. However there is much more and we are in the process of searching through this to see what can be transcribed and made digitally available to all members. We may need help to transcribe this so if you are interested - (you can do it from home) - let us know.

Anyway, as to the celebration day, we were all greeted with a screen display of Scottish scenes and music just to get us into the mood to attack the quizzes. These were prepared by our usual intrepid quiz mistresses, Yvonne and Ina. These are also attached for you to have a go at. In the spirit of the event, Yvonne based her questions on events in



1982 and, given the age range of most of the attendees (!!!), this should not have proved a problem. Of course it did. Why not see how you get on. Ina's questions were based on "general knowledge". I never understand why they are referred to in this way since, if they are so general, how come I rarely know the answers. I was clearly not alone in this as our picture illustrates. Of course there were

some bright sparks amongst us and for them prizes were allocated. As is our want though, there were also prizes in each category for the person with the lowest score and, on this occasion, both prizes were claimed by the same person. Lucky thing!!!



**“Are we there yet?”** the title of the presentation by our guest speaker, Keith Bruce.

Keith is pictured here with our chairman, Michael Couper. Anyone who has travelled with children will recognise the question, posed repeatedly during a journey. It was this scenario that prompted Bruce to write his latest book of the same title during the pandemic and based on his journeys as a child from his home in Forres to visit relatives in Dundee. As with the book, the talk was a survey of milestones and waymarkers throughout Scotland, roadside markers that sometimes help to distract bored children on long journeys - “see, only 52 miles to go!!!”. As with Bruce’s previous talk to us about bridges in Scotland under the title of “Bridgescapes”, a talk about road markers did not, on the surface, suggest much promise, but was in fact very



entertaining and informative. From the helpful to the curious to the humorous, Bruce chronicled the development of eye-catching milestones across Scotland and weaved around them the stories of peoples’ lives and the history of weights and measures. Few of us for example knew of the difficulty encountered in simply settling the length of a mile. Some milestones give precise distances in miles, yards and feet, others the seeming randomness of distances from the edge of Scotland to London or to a North-of-England town. Usually such milestones were

linked with commerce indicating the distance to the nearest large cattle market for the drovers at that time? Drovers were of course an important part of this story, establishing as they did the first tracks and the resting places. Bruce’s talk was a non-stop journey of story after story and never have milestones been so interesting. His book of this title not only narrates these stories but is also crammed full of photographs, from “To Lighthouse 1 mile 1033 yards” to a fingerpost that simply says “Lost”. A great session thoroughly enjoyed by all.



Our celebration ended, as all should, with food and drink and the chance to chat and catch up with everyone. Given that the day of the event co-incided with a national train strike (although I don’t think that they did that deliberately) the committee had considered cancelling the celebration. We are glad that we didn’t. Supported by Branch members and by members of other Branches of the Society who made that extra effort to join us, we had a great time and suitably marked the event.

**Scotlands People Newsletter:** although I have used Scotlands People for

many years, I have only just signed up for, and received, their monthly digital newsletter. It is free and I recommend it to all. They intend to offer regular

research tips that have been put together by Scotlands People staff. For seasoned researchers like our readers some of the tips are well known but I am sure that there will be nuggets also. The offering on this occasion is;

*1. Entries in the statutory registers are recorded by year of registration and not necessarily when they took place. For example, it is more likely that a birth that happened in mid to late December will be registered in the January of the following year as there are 21 days in which to register a birth.*

*2. Keep an open mind when it comes to the spellings of names as there can be variants on many surnames, and forenames may be abbreviated. It can be helpful to use the “Search options” and use name variants or phonetic spellings. See the ScotlandsPeople guides on forenames and surnames for additional help.*

*3. If you are struggling to find a birth it can help to try and trace a death record. This may either give the age the person died or the date of birth, depending on when it took place. It can also provide names of any spouse(s), if you are unsure the person was married or not, and possibly if they were married more than once.*



**Bits'n'Pieces** just a few pieces of information that have come our way that you may find useful;

**National Library of Scotland:** in their latest newsletter they reference further work done on their [map collection](#):

See more than 6,000 [air photo mosaics of England and Wales](#) from the 1940s on our website. These give an excellent view of south-east England landscapes as well as a very detailed look at 16 towns.

Also on the website are a small set of [late 1930s maps of England and Wales](#). These were prepared in advance of possible air raids and had the most up-to-date information. View the Special Emergency Edition maps (1938-39).

Search, view and download more than [21,000 names and descriptions in Edinburgh from the 1890s](#). You'll find place and street names as well as features such as churches, football grounds, hospitals, pubs and schools.

**Scottish Surname Registry:** this is a [Facebook based group](#) and includes a **DNA Family Finder Database**. To make use of the resource you do, of course, have to join the group, but this is presumably fairly straightforward. I know nothing of the group but it sounds interesting, particularly with the addition of a DNA resource for all of you who have gone down this route.

**Who Do You Think You Are:** Whilst we continue to wait expectantly for the release of the Scottish 1921 Census (no date has even yet been announced) the magazine *Who Do You Think You Are* has, over the last two editions, included articles on the 1921 Census for Scotland. The first that was referred to me was [this one](#) which is entitled "Everything you need to know..." The other is in the current edition of the magazine and is an article by Myko Clelland, late of *Find My Past* fame but now one of the directors of *MyHeritage*. In this Myko, presumably based upon his vast experience, given that the census has not been released, "previews" the content of the census.

**Scottish Indexes:** we are all by now familiar with the wonderful resource that is the [Scottish Indexes](#), and the founders Emma and Graham Maxwell. Apart from the many resources on their web site they continue to offer, free of charge, webinars addressing Scottish family history. Handouts from previous conferences are available on their web site and they also have a forum where you can seek advice/information. However this is a reminder that the next conference being offered is on **Saturday, 26th November**. As usual it is a Zoom Webinar Conference and, to cater for all, including those overseas, it begins at 0700 GMT with talks repeated throughout the day. Information about the talks and registration can be found [here](#).

### **Anglo Scottish Branch Meeting - by Zoom**

**Saturday, 3rd December, 1400 - 1600 hours GMT**

#### **The Highland Clearances - a presentation by Dr Michael Winstanley**

The Highland Clearances are of course a notorious period in Scottish history and have been explored many times by various authors most recently by Tom Devine who drew attention to how the clearances also occurred in the South of Scotland in his book, "The Scottish Clearances".

On this occasion we are fortunate enough to welcome Dr Michael Winstanley who was a senior lecturer in history at Lancaster University, (but now retired), who will guide us through the events

leading up to the clearances and their aftermath. Whilst for some it may be picking over familiar ground, it will be of value to have another perspective on a subject that is always of interest.



We anticipate a number of people will want to attend so it would be helpful, even though the gathering is by Zoom, if you could reserve a place early so that our chairman can have your email details to send you the link. Details can be found [here](#) and reservations made through **Eventbrite**. The talk is free for members. £3 for non-members.

Michael Winstanley has kindly agreed to us recording his presentation and this will be made available to members on the Branch web site for 30 days.





## How much do you remember about 1982?

In case "not much", we have multiple choice.

### 1982 in Scotland.

- Who was Secretary of State for Scotland in 1982?  
*George Younger, Malcolm Rifkind or Michael Forsyth.*
- Which post did Nicholas Fairbairn hold for part of that year?  
*Minister without portfolio, Paymaster General or Solicitor General*
- The Carron Company Ironworks went into receivership in 1982. Where was the company based?  
*Stirling, Grangemouth or Falkirk.*
- Which "sensational" glam rock musician, born in 1935, died?  
*Ian Curtis, Alex Harvey or Phil Lynott.*
- Roy Jenkins won the Hillhead by-election in Glasgow this year. Which party did he represent?  
*Social Democratic Party, SNP or Labour?*
- Pope John Paul II visited the UK in 1982. Where in Scotland did he visit?  
*Edinburgh, Glasgow or Aberdeen?*

### 1982 in the UK.

- Who disappeared in the Sahara Desert during the Paris-Dakar Rally?  
*Mark Thatcher, Claude Marreau or Jimmy Hill?*
- Argentinians landed on which island, precipitating war?  
*South Georgia, Bleaker Island or Weddell Island?*
- The European Song Contest was held in Britain in 1982. But where?  
*Brighton, Harrogate or Edinburgh?*
- Which famous music venue opened in Manchester in 1982?  
*Band on the Wall, The Plaza or The Hacienda?*
- Kielder Water, a reservoir which at the time was the largest artificial lake by capacity in the UK was officially opened. In which County is it situated?  
*Northumberland, Cumbria or Derbyshire?*
- Which group was formed in Manchester by Johnny Marr and Morrissey?  
*The Stone Roses or The Smiths?*
- Which coin, still in circulation, was first issued into circulation in 1982?  
*20p, 50p or £1?*
- Who was born on June 21st 1982 at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, London?  
*Jodie Whittaker, Prince William or Catherine Middleton?*
- What did Michael Fagan do in 1982?  
*Score for Northern Ireland in the world cup, Contest the West Belfast seat for Sinn Fein or Broke into Buckingham Palace?*
- Which flagship of Henry VIII was raised from The Solent?  
*The Mary Rose, The Great Harry or The Anne Gallant?*
- Channel 4 began broadcasting in 1982. The First programme was a game show hosted by Richard Whiteley. What was it called?  
*The Tube, Countdown or Brookside?*
- The film that won 8 Academy Awards was released in the UK in 1982, the winners included Richard Attenborough and

## General Knowledge

- What is the only muscle in the body that never tires?
- Which part of the body contains a quarter of all your bones?
- What does Abraham Lincoln not do in a photograph?
- Which country does not have Mosquitoes?
- What is the most common colour of toilet paper in France?
- What is the highest peak in the world?
- How many colours in the rainbow?
- What University did Stephen Hawking attend?
- How many valves does the heart have?
- What date was the first UK lockdown announced?
- Who painted the Mona Lisa?
- Which energy sports drink was invented in Newcastle by chemist, William Owen?
- What type of nut is in the centre of Ferrero Rocher?
- What month was Prince George born?
- What is the highest mountain in Britain?
- What is the proper name for your funny bone?
- Who was the only British prime minister to be assassinated?
- Who discovered penicillin?
- The first king of England made a law that everyone had to be in bed by 8 p.m. True or False?
- Where in the world was golf invented?

## The Answers

- |     |                   |
|-----|-------------------|
| 1.  | The heart         |
| 2.  | The foot          |
| 3.  | Smile             |
| 4.  | Iceland           |
| 5.  | Pink              |
| 6.  | Everest           |
| 7.  | Seven             |
| 8.  | Cambridge         |
| 9.  | Four              |
| 10. | 23 March 2020     |
| 11. | Leonardo Da Vinci |
| 12. | Lucozade          |
| 13. | Hazelnut          |
| 14. | July              |
| 15. | Ben Nevis         |
| 16. | Humorous          |
| 17. | Spencer Perceval  |
| 18. | Alexander Fleming |
| 19. | True              |
| 20. | Scotland          |
- What do you know of 1982?

## **PART II**

### **The Branches**

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## **CHAPTER 11**

### **The Anglo-Scottish Family History Society**

#### **Early Years**

The first indication of an interest in Scottish ancestry within the Society was in 1976 when an article in two parts appeared in the Manchester Genealogist on 'Scottish Immigration into Lancashire'. This drew heavily on an article recently published in the Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society. In his editorial in the first issue of the journal of 1977 Mr Beckett said he was compiling an Index of Scottish Emigrants in England and asked members to let him have records of those born in Scotland before 1855 but who lived, married or died in England. He suggested that enough interest might be stimulated to form an Anglo-Scot Society and that similar groups might be formed in other societies. He noted that a similar project was in progress within the Northumberland and Durham Society. In subsequent issues he reported that he had had an excellent response. In the issue of July 1977 he wrote a long article on 'The Population Movement into Lancashire' of which the Scots formed only a small part. He noted that there were few Scottish surnames in the Lancashire records before 1760. In the first issue of the Members' Interests Directory published by the Society in 1976-77, only 11 out of 125 members listed ancestors from Scotland.

In the journal of April 1978 Mr Beckett published the first list from what he called a 'Dictionary of Emigrant Scots into England' and noted that he was being sent records from members all over the world. He foresaw that the Dictionary would eventually be published separately, but an alphabetical list appeared in each issue until October 1980 when it had reached the letter 'Y'. This was stated to be the end of the first series—those with a known birthplace or place of origin in Scotland who later lived or died in England. It was noted that thousands of entries remained to be published. Suggestions were given on further research into Scottish families.

#### **1982 - 1985**

There was thus a clear interest in Scottish ancestry within the Society but it was not until September 1982 that the Council discussed, and agreed to, the formation of an Anglo-Scottish group. This was proposed to cover the whole country and, if it got too big, it would be able to break away on its own. An announcement was made in the next journal which said that 'the proposed Anglo-Scot Society would be organised in conjunction with the Manchester & Lancs. FHS on the same basis as the Bolton Family History Society—the £5 subscription would cover membership of all three societies'. The first meeting was held at Clayton House

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on 28 November 1982. Fifteen members were present. Mr Beckett was appointed chairman and projects officer, Mrs Ramsbotham secretary and membership secretary, and Miss Dixon project secretary.

In her report to the AGM of the Society in May 1983 the secretary was able to report on an active five months with regular monthly meetings and the start of much work on projects. The Society had been welcomed by individuals and societies, particularly in Scotland but also elsewhere. Mr Beckett reported that, for a limited period, the group was operating within the Manchester Society. In an article in the next journal on Anglo-Scottish Research he set out the details of available records and referred to his own research on Scottish Emigrants to England and said that the scope of this could be widened with more people being involved. At the Council meeting in May 1983 he proposed the purchase of microfiche covering a surname index of Scottish registrations. This was agreed and the cost was largely met by means of a generous loan available for such capital expenditure. The secretary wrote a full account of the first 6 months in the journal of July 1983 and in the same issue there was a list of the Scots churches in England taken from a publication in Manchester Central Library but thought not to be complete.

Links were established with Scots churches in Manchester and nearby, with a view to having access to their records. An average of 25 were attending the monthly meetings and the secretary reported that there were another 30 or so members with whom she was in contact. Towards the end of 1983 the question arose of access to the Scottish material in the library. Mr Beckett thought that 'the Anglo-Scots collection should be kept private for a while longer' although the Librarian thought that this was impractical. The first issue of the Dictionary of Scottish Emigrants was ready for the printers in early 1984. It was prepared by Mr Coupe and printed by Mr and Mrs Lomas. There was also discussion on the idea of the Anglo-Scots meeting at a venue other than Clayton House. At the AGM of 1984, Mrs Ramsbotham gave an account of the full range of activities undertaken, including much research for members living away from Manchester in which she was assisted by Mrs Mason. The branch by this time had its own notepaper headed 'The Anglo-Scottish Family History Society' with, at the foot of the page in small type, 'A Section of the Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society'. It was pointed out at the Council in June that the accounts of the Society did not cover the 'Sub-sections (Anglo-Scots, Bolton, Library, Projects, Bookstall)' which did not submit balance sheets. It was agreed that, in future, they should do so. The Anglo-Scots continued to undertake a great many projects and regular reports of their activities appeared in the journal.

### **The Bulletin**

In May 1984 the idea was raised of having a separate Bulletin published with matters of interest to the Anglo-Scottish section. Discussions continued over the next six months and in November it was agreed that a separate publication, with Mrs Mason as editor, should be prepared quarterly. The first issue, of eight closely-typed A5 pages, appeared in April 1985. The idea was that space would be released in the main journal for other items while allowing the Scots to have more news and information about their own special interests. The first issue was sent to all members of the Society but after that those who wanted to continue to receive it had to make this known.

The success of the idea can be judged from the fact that the second and subsequent issues had 16 pages full of news, information, reports and articles with relevance to Scottish family



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history. It was clear that there were many members who were undertaking research into their Scottish ancestors and were willing to write about their experiences and problems. Many of the sections were set out as in the *Manchester Genealogist*—Members' Interests, Help Wanted, reports of meetings and articles—but all with a Scottish background. From the issue of July 1986 Mrs Mason took over as Editor of the *Manchester Genealogist* and, as no editor for the *Bulletin* came forward, this work was taken on by the secretary of the section, Mrs Rowbotham, later assisted for a time by Miss Barlow.

Changes in the format of the Society's journal and the fact that 500 copies of the *Bulletin* were being sent out to members who had requested it, led to the decision to incorporate the *Bulletin* into the main journal. This took place from January 1987. In this issue the appearance remained as it had been as a separate publication and appeared less satisfactory when compared to the pages of the main body of the *Manchester Genealogist*. The typesetting and printing were changed to become the same as the rest of the journal from the next issue and this was much appreciated by the Scottish members. From this time the journal also included a definite section relating to the activities of the Bolton section rather than the scattered items which had previously appeared. From the issue of October 1987 the Members' Interests were incorporated with those of the other members in one section. The beginning and end of the 'Scottish' section was indicated with an appropriate logo—an intertwined thistle and rose.

### **1986 - 1989**

The report of the section for 1986 presented to the AGM in May 1987 detailed the range of activities being undertaken by members. These included further work on the Dictionary of Scottish Emigrants, recording of monumental inscriptions, transcriptions of Scotch Church registers and the handling of many requests for help from members unable to visit Manchester. It also reported many links with organisations in Scotland. On 16 June 1986 the section organised a one-day Anglo-Scottish Conference held at the St Thomas' Centre, Ardwick. Over 100 attended a very successful meeting. The journal this year began to record extensive additional material relating to Scottish family history.

In April 1987 it was reported that Scottish family history societies had withdrawn from the Federation of Family History Societies to set up their own organisation. The following year (May 1988) the Council agreed that the Anglo-Scottish FHS should affiliate with this new group—the Scottish Association of Family History Societies. When this was completed the Association asked that the Anglo-Scots take responsibility for the production of the Association's Newsletter. This proposal was not accepted. It is worth noting that at that time there were only six other members of the Association. By 2000, however, there were 21 full members and 12 associate members. The second volume of the Dictionary of Scottish Emigrants appeared in the spring of 1988, in time for the second One-day Conference which was held on 19 June 1988, again at the St Thomas' Centre with over 100 attending. The general subject was 'Migrants' and there was an exhibition on the same topic. The third volume of the Dictionary appeared in the autumn of 1989, the fourth in the summer of 1991 and the fifth at the end of 1992. In 2001 the information was re-published in a single volume.

### **1989 - 1993**

Mrs Ramsbotham did not seek election as Secretary at the annual meeting of the section in 1989 on account of her ill health and was succeeded by Miss Connor. As a result of the

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resignation of the General Secretary of the Society at the end of 1989, Miss Connor became one of the two Acting General Secretaries from then until the AGM in May 1990. During 1990 the number attending the monthly meetings, held on a Sunday at 2 pm, began to fall. It was thought that this was due to the restricted space available for meetings at Clayton House. Mr Beckett resigned as Chairman in November 1991 and his place was taken (in an acting capacity) by Mr Mountford. At the same time Miss Connor resigned as Secretary and was succeeded in an acting capacity by Mrs Rhodes, with Mrs Thomas taking a new position as Journal Secretary. At the AGM all these appointments were confirmed. During these years the Anglo-Scots section of the journal continued to occupy between 9 and 16 pages (10 to 15 per cent of the whole) with the usual variety of news, reports, notices and articles.

In July 1991 the Council agreed to purchase the index to the Scottish Old Parish Registers on microfiche. An appeal for donations for this was made and there was a generous response. By the end of 1992 the indexes for all counties were in the library. A party was held on 15 November 1992 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Anglo-Scots. Over 40 were present to share the birthday cake with 10 candles and other refreshments provided by members. The Anglo-Scots were represented (usually by its Secretary) at meetings of the Scottish Association of FHSs and it was felt that this contact with other Scottish societies was important. In 'Jottings' written by Mr Mountford in the second issue of the journal in 1993 he said that, unlike his predecessor, he had no knowledge of any Scottish ancestors although his wife did and both he and his wife had distant links with Lancashire. He said then that his qualification for being a member of the Anglo-Scots was through his wife but in a later article he was able to show that he had traced his line back to a distant, but distinguished, Scottish ancestor.

### **1994 - 1999**

At the meeting of the Council in January 1994 Mr Mountford pointed out that the Anglo-Scots section should have its own Constitution within the Constitution of the Society which was then under review. The rules of the Scottish Association had been agreed to allow the Anglo-Scots to act as one of its full members. When the Constitution was finally agreed in May 1996 the Anglo-Scottish Family History Society became a branch of the Manchester & Lancashire FHS. As his annual report for 1997 said, he had little different to report from previous years. The monthly meetings were well attended, the branch's section of the journal contained much of interest and many were using the library for research in the Scottish material. In February 1997, however, Mrs Rhodes said that she wished to stand down from the post of Secretary for personal reasons. She continued to undertake the work for another year. In January 1998 the Council appointed Mrs Baptie as the Society's representative in Scotland. She lived in Edinburgh and was thus able to attend meetings of the Scottish Association more easily than members living in or near Manchester. She also provided regular news from Scottish archives and family history societies.

At the AGM of 1998 Mr Mountford stood down and was replaced by Mr Muir. The post of Secretary was not filled. Mr Muir started two projects, one of which followed on from his work in Bolton. This was a transcription of the parts of the 1851 census of Bolton in which a member of the household was born in Scotland. This was published by the Society in the middle of 1999. He asked for volunteers to extend this to cover all of England and Wales and an advertisement was placed in Family Tree Magazine. By October it was reported that 150 volunteers had come forward. Members, some at a distance, were recruited to key in the data



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and by the end of 1999 over 12,000 names were on the database. The first publication from this project was in late 2001 when a CD was produced containing 31,000 names from over 13,000 families from many parts of the United Kingdom. A number of towns were completely covered. Records continued to be collected and these will be contained in further publications.

The second project, which was co-ordinated for a time by Mr Hendry, was to record from the family trees of any member, the details of the marriages of those born in Scotland but who married anywhere in the world. This did not get as great a response as expected after an initial surge of interest. In late 2002 an index to the available records was put as a searchable database on the Society's website. This created a lot of interest in the following year and many requests for the details of the records were received. The work involved in responding to these led to a discussion as to whether to place the data on the 'FamilyHistoryOnline' website set up by the Federation of Family History Societies where it would create income for the Society.

### **1999 - 2003**

In the middle of 1999 Mrs Thomas left the district and also her work as Journal Secretary. Mrs Bennett organised a group of 20 to spend three days in Edinburgh in March 2000 undertaking research. This was very successful and enjoyable. From this year the branch began to have a more prominent presence at the annual meetings of the Scottish Association and at family history fairs throughout much of Scotland. Their presence was made even more prominent with a new banner which was first unfurled at the 14th Annual Conference of the Scottish Association at Dundee in April 2003. On each occasion, several members attended at a stall displaying information and selling their publications. Those representing the branch often found themselves besieged by visitors asking for help with research in England.

At this time Mr Muir was the only officer of the branch although he had assistance from others on the committee. In 2002, however, Mrs Pelham was recognised as the Secretary and in 2003 a full committee structure was elected with Mr Couper as Secretary, Mrs Bennett as Journal Secretary and three other members. The contribution of the branch to the journal reduced in size but this was in common with the other branches. To some extent this was the result of the larger articles being placed in the Family History Research section of the journal.

In late 2001 it was decided that the day on which the monthly meeting was held should be changed from Sunday to Saturday. The reasoning for this was that numbers were falling and some members had difficulties in getting to meetings on Sundays, including the vagaries of public transport. The first Saturday meeting was on 19 January 2002 and from then on the average attendance doubled. From time to time the meetings departed from the usual 'lecture' format with a few members each talking about one of their heirlooms or their favourite (or least favourite) ancestor. Another innovation in 2002 was a series of classes on Scottish Research. Six classes were held in March and April on Friday mornings covering various aspects of research into Scottish family history. They were held by experienced members of the Society and proved very popular.

A new project was started in 2003 and introduced a new technique to the Society's work. It was decided to transcribe the registers of the United Reform Churches held in Manchester Central Library. To do this, the registers were photographed in the library under supervision using a digital camera and the images used for the subsequent transcription. It is hoped to extend this to registers held in other archives of the Church.