



e-Scotia

Newsletter of the Anglo-Scottish FHS

Website: www.anglo-scots.mlfhs.org.uk

E-mail: anglo-scots@mlfhs.org.uk

Newsletter: scotia@mlfhs.org.uk

Welcome. We say hello to our members beyond these shores in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the US amongst others. As we did not have our address list up-to-date last month only members in the UK were notified of the Newsletter. This has since been rectified so that all and any who have expressed an interest in Anglo Scottish research will be contacted. Many thanks to those of you who expressed your appreciation and approval of the Newsletter. Our main feature this month is the talk by Bruce Bishop on Scottish Kirk Session Minutes given at the Anglo Scots Meeting on the 21st May. Further, given that the holiday period is almost upon us we draw your attention to various Family History events going on in Scotland. If you are in the area, drop in. You will be welcome.

Editor

Scottish Kirk Session Minutes.

A talk by Bruce Bishop, FSA Scotland.

Our visiting speaker this month was Bruce Bishop, FSA Scot. ASGRA. Bruce is the vice president of the Aberdeen and North East Scotland Family History Society and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. He spoke to us about Scottish Kirk Session Minutes, a topic I for one knew very little about. We were reminded that Scottish Statutory Records did not begin until 1855. Any research prior to this is dependant upon Old Parish Records (OPRs). However OPRs refer only to the Established Church of Scotland and any other denomination, including breakaway Churches from the Church of Scotland, will not appear in the OPRs. A surprising piece of information, that underscored the importance of Kirk Session Minutes, was that around the middle of the 18th century only 60% of people were members of the Established Church.

The background to the Session Minutes lay in the close scrutiny that the Church Elders had on the members of their congregation, which, in many areas, was the whole village. Whilst some Kirk Sessions in cities like Edinburgh would meet daily, in the more rural areas this might be weekly or monthly. Bruce pointed out that whilst Statutory Records give facts, Kirk Session Minutes are great for giving a broader picture of families and individuals in a local area. At these Sessions the behaviour of the congregation was scrutinised and noted assiduously by the Session Clerk with the names of miscreants noted. Whilst the imposition of discipline and punishment are well known practices the Minutes contain much more than these. There are Visitation Records indicating home visits made by the Church Elders during which whole families were quizzed about their knowledge of the scriptures. If they failed to answer correctly they could be required to attend Sunday School until they were proficient and the Minutes list these people. The Minutes record also births and baptisms with some detailing the members of whole families akin to a census return. In many Kirks also congregations had to pay for a pew or a space to place in the

Church. This was an important source of revenue for the Kirk and there are lists of the names of individuals and families in this regard.



Bruce Bishop with EC member
Ina Penneyston

It is well known that before the advent of any State welfare system, it was the Churches that had responsibility for the poor and the elderly. Again the Kirk Session Minutes list all the members of the parish that were in receipt of poor aid. The Churches were also the main providers of education and there was a fee for school attendance. Again these families and their children are listed in the Session Minutes.

So, how do we access this mine of information? Unfortunately whilst the National Library of Scotland has many of these Session Minutes some remain in local libraries and can only be accessed there. If they are not in the National Library, pinpointing the area where your ancestors lived and then contacting the local library may assist. For those in the National Library reference to the CH index is the way forward. Bruce suggested that in the three search boxes offered, put the name of the village/town in the first box. The letters CH without a number in the second and relevant dates in the third. This should bring up the records available.

A final piece of information. D C Thompson have lost the franchise to operate ScotlandsPeople and the new owners are promising, amongst other things, to digitise the Kirk Session Records within the 18 months of them taking over. Good news indeed. Costs? We will have to wait and see!

LITTLE SCOTLAND – BOLTON

A project is underway to explore the migration of Scots who made their way to or found themselves in and around Lancashire. However, in our searching around we found this area named “Little Scotland”. It forms part of the road from Blackrod to Aspul. Research has unearthed a view that the reference is not to Scotland at all but to “Skat Land” a “Skat” being a land tax. This may be true but there are so many references to Scotland around this area that we wonder if there is indeed some link. There is Scot Lane nearby. There is Scotland Flash on the Liverpool/Leeds Canal at Wigan. Perhaps there is a member of the Bolton FHS that has some insight into this and could let us know. As an extra connection between Scotland and Bolton, the 1841 Census lists a Highland Regiment stationed in barracks in Bolton. The site of the barracks was at the junction of Deansgate, Moor Lane and Gartside Street. There is now a Church on the site. The barracks were the headquarters of the 96th Regiment of Foot, composed mainly of Scottish soldiers and their families. It seems that members of this Regiment were used to guard prisoners transported on ships to Australia and New Zealand, and, inevitably, some stayed on there. Interestingly, this Regiment was later to become The Manchester Regiment.



Heritage along the Clyde

On St George's Day, boasting the banners of both St George and St Andrew, four intrepid members of the branch visited the picturesque valley of the Clyde at New Lanark to represent the branch and the Society at the 27th annual Family History Fair and Conference hosted in the name of the Scottish Association of Family History Societies.



Anglo Scots Members at the Conference. From left to right; Michael Couper, Ina Penneyston, David Kirkpatrick, David Muil

On the main day of the event we welcomed a wide range of visitors to our stall answering questions and giving advice on many aspects of Manchester and other English archives as well as promoting the Scottish Marriage Index and our extensive display of books, CD's and leaflets. We also renewed contact with many of the 35 local family history societies and research organisations who were there to catch up on current trends and topics, to encourage the digital exchange of journals, and to learn of useful courses and speakers. It was particularly pleasing to catch up with some of our recent and future speakers, Ann Reid, Ian McKechnie, Ken Nisbet and Bruce Bishop.

The conference hosted four presentations under the common theme of **Heritage along the Clyde**. Jane Masters, manager of



Advice given at the help desk

the World Heritage Site at New Lanark Mill got the ball rolling by describing the establishment and growth of New Lanark Mill and the benefits accruing to the communities in the area. Dr Irene O'Brien, Glasgow City Archivist at the Mitchell Library developed this theme by tracing the growth of trade and the port of Glasgow using the vast amount of archival material available at the Mitchell. Emma Maxwell, genealogist at Scottish Indexes, took as her theme **Understanding Our Ancestors—A look at Prison Registers and Mental Health Records**. Dr Stephen Mullen of the University of Glasgow, arriving hot foot from engagements in New York and Washington explained how the expansion of trade through the port of Glasgow was heavily dependent upon, firstly tobacco and secondly sugar, illustrating the role played by slave ownership.

Detailed articles of each of these talks will be published in The Manchester Genealogist in September. Our thanks go to the volunteers at Lanarkshire FHS for hosting such an enjoyable event.

For further research using these resources consult;

<http://www.newlanark.org>

<http://www.glasgowfamilyhistory.org.uk>

<http://www.scottishindexes.co.uk>

<http://www.gla.ac.uk>

Dates for your Diary.

June 18th: Trip to Rylands Library. A great opportunity to be shown around this Manchester gem and see some of the treasures. They have extensive resources that might assist in family research. Meet at the entrance of the Library, which is situated on Deansgate, at 1.30 pm. With the tour commencing at 2.00 pm. Space is limited so please book your place on the tour through the [Eventbrite](#) icon on the MLFHS webpage.

July 16th: Ancestral Workshop. It is an opportunity to ask questions, seek advice, share experience of your own family history search into Scottish ancestry. There is usually someone present who can help you. If you can't make the meeting why not e-mail us with your query and we shall share it around the group and get back to you with any suggestions. Our e-mail address is on the front of the Newsletter.

BBC Looking for Help.

The BBC "The One Show", had a feature recently looking for help to identify about 4,000 WW1 photographs that have come to light having been found in France. The show has put the images of the British soldiers onto its web page and is asking for help to identify these men. Have a look and see if you recognise anyone.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/3LVxjjZghNQW2LJhx1SsX0t/the-lost-tommies>

DON'T FORGET!!

There is the **help desk facility** available to all from 10.30 am until 12.30 pm prior to the Anglo Scots Branch meeting on the third Saturday of each month. Experienced members will be there to offer help and advice. Why not give it a try?



NEWS

On holiday in Scotland over the summer? We have been notified by some of our sister family history societies in Scotland of a number of events being held. If you are in the area, why not drop in? You will be welcome.

TROON - On **Saturday, 4th June 2016** South Ayrshire Council is promoting a *History and Family History Fair* at the Walker Hall, Troon. There will be a large range of stalls available from 9.00 a.m. until 4.30 p.m. Family History Societies will be among organisations represented and there will also be a specialist Scottish Bookshop. Admission to the stalls is free.

The conference which is associated with the fair will include such varied presentations as *The Smuggling Coast*, *Pre-historic Ayrshire*, *Burn's memory* and *Bronze Age excavations at Hunterston*. The cost to those who wish to attend the presentations is £5 for half a day, £10 for the full day. Further details may be obtained from www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/libraries.

FIFE - On **Saturday, 8th October 2016**, Fife Family History FHS will host its annual Fife Family History and Local History Fair at the Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline. Among the planned topics for talks are Place Names, Forth Bridges, Dunfermline Family Records and the Historic Environment of Scotland. Further details may be obtained from the society chairman at chairman@fifefhs.org.

National Library Edinburgh; loads going on there all over the summer months. If you are in Edinburgh, worth a visit. Check out what is going on at the National Library website www.nls.uk and click on "Events".

Useful Information

Aberdeen: We have learned that if you are doing any family history research that includes the Aberdeen area then the Aberdeen and NE Scotland Family History Society have digitised a collection of records that can be researched for free. Have a look at the site at anesfhs.org.uk. Under the **MI Index** heading there is access to their Monumental Inscriptions and to the database. Have a look around the site. There is a lot of information there.

CAIRT: is the Newsletter of the Scottish Maps Forum initiated by the National Library of Scotland. "Cairt" I am informed, is the Gaelic & 17th century Scots for map. If you have not already done so I urge you to explore the map site. It is the best site by far for maps of the whole of the UK not just Scotland. Not only is there access to current maps but the facility is there to look at older maps of the area you are interested in. Access the site by going to maps.nls.uk

Search Tip

For those of you with access to Ancestry (there are other search sites available!!) try this quick way to access their Scottish resources. Instead of going into the Ancestry site, "Google" **Ancestry Scotland**. In the selection offered choose, **Scotland Genealogy & Scotland Family History Resource—Ancestry**. This takes you into the Ancestry site, but focusing upon all their Scottish resources including the ability to narrow your search by County. Enjoy.