



e-Scotia

Newsletter of the Anglo-Scottish FHS

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Welcome: to our November edition of *e-Scotia*. Our main feature this month is the talk by the chairman of the Manchester and Lancashire Family History Society, John Marsden, on military record research. We also have some information about new resources that have become available recently. You may have heard about them, but, just in case, we bring them to you here. As well as pointing you in the direction of resources we include this month contributions from two of our committee members who illustrate resources that have helped them to break down some barriers to research. Enjoy. Editor.

Researching WW1 Soldiers.

The speaker at our Branch meeting on Saturday 19th November was the chairman of our Society, John Marsden, who spoke with us about the various resources for researching WW1 Soldiers.

The methodology for researching any soldier in the war depends upon four essential requirements; name, regiment, rank and number. Anyone who has tried to trace a relative involved in the war will know that name is not sufficient. A name and a number is better, but, as John pointed out, in the 1st World War, numbers were regimental and not personal (as in the 2nd world war) and so the same number does occur within different regiments. The advice given in tracing anyone involved in the war is to search all the resources available in order to try and find the four essential requirements. The main sources referred to were:

War Office Sources: many now available in Ancestry and Find My Past and include service and pension records. Both search engines list their resources under the heading of "Military". However it is to be remembered that 60% of records held by the War Office were destroyed in the blitz of WW2. When starting out searching War Office records it is therefore worth remembering that there is only a 40% chance of success. If successful however these records are a great source of information so it is always worth having a look. You might be lucky.

Campaign Medals: all soldiers in the war received a medal of some kind. There were three main medals issued and these are useful for discovering the soldier's regimental number, usually inscribed around the edge of the medal. All "other rank" soldiers were automatically awarded the medals but the officer ranks had to apply for their medals. Accessing "The London Gazette" free on the internet, gives a list of all those soldiers awarded the Gallantry Medal.

Medal Cards: detailing the medals issued to soldiers but often giving more information with regard to date of enlistment, regiments and arenas of conflict engaged in. If an ancestor was an officer who did not apply for their medals then there will be no medal card listing them.

The Fallen: sadly more information tends to be available about those soldiers who died in the war than about those who survived. Resources such as the multi-volume "Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919" lists all those who died but the lists are organised in Regimental Order and so knowledge of the regiment would be necessary to identify the soldier. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission website is an obvious first call site to find anyone who died. This also gives information as to where they are buried and lists not only those who died in the field but also those who subsequently died from injuries after being brought home.

Absent Voters List: In 1918 the franchise was extended to all men over the age of 21 yrs. Those soldiers still serving abroad after the war ended could be listed here and these are worth looking at. Local libraries should have these. The lists are organised by street name, so it is necessary to have an idea of where the soldier's family lived. However tying this search up with recourse to the 1911 census should assist.

These were just some of the sources that John referred to in his talk and his input generated a number of searching questions throughout. Most of the sources referred to are available on the MLFHS website and also listed in the "**Researching WW1 Soldiers**" leaflet produced by the Society and available at the helpdesks of the Society and its Branches. The general theme of the talk was to make use of all and any sources that might give a clue to the discovery of name, regiment, rank and number. Old photographs showing uniforms and regimental badges; birth and marriage certificates that sometimes list the regiment of the father; newspaper reports; war memorials. They can all be resources to assist what might otherwise appear to be a lost cause in research.

Many thanks John.



The General Registry Office has launched a new service:

You may have picked this up from other sources but I think it worth mentioning in case you haven't. We are grateful to Peter Calver of the **Lost Cousins** (www.lostcousins) website for bringing this to our attention and I quote him regarding what is on offer;

The key features of the new indexes are:

- **Constructed from scratch:** *Rather than digitising their existing indexes - which we are all familiar with from sites like FreeBMD, Ancestry, and Findmypast - the GRO have based the indexes on transcriptions of their registers made during the aborted DoVE (Digitisation of Vital Events project). This means that errors and omissions made in the construction of the original indexes, or when handwritten indexes were recast as typeset indexes, are likely to have been avoided. I'm not suggesting that the new indexes are error-free (they aren't) but it's likely that the errors will be different errors. It's important to remember that whilst we can search the existing indexes at several different websites, they've all based their transcriptions on the same source.*
- **Limited range:** *The new indexes include births from 1837 to 1915 (i.e. more than 100 years old), and deaths from 1837 to 1957.*
- **Extra information - mother's maiden name:** *The mother's maiden name was only added to the original indexes with effect from July 1911, which means that finding births prior to that date has often been problematic - this was highlighted 8 years ago when the 1911 Census went online and we could see, for the first time, that children had been born to our ancestors who didn't live long enough to appear on any census. Even if the surname was fairly rare, without knowing when they were born, what their forenames were, or even their gender it was difficult to find the entries. The mother's maiden name is now shown from 1837 onwards, which also helps us to identify illegitimate births.*
- **Extra information - age at death:** *The age at death only appears in the original indexes from 1866 onwards, which means that ordering the death certificates for ancestors who died between the introduction of Civil Registration in July 1837 and December 1865 has been very difficult. The age at death is now shown from 1837 onward.*

Please note that the existing indexes will continue to be available online at the usual sites. To view the GRO indexes you'll need to log-in at their site, and you may be required to verify your email address.

I had a look at the site and you do indeed have to register— indicate your e-mail address and create a password etc.—but then you are into the system. You can look at the indexes quite easily. As an added bonus, until the end of November (or until 45,000 certificates taken up) there is an offer of certificates costing just £6 instead of the normal £9.50p.

By the way, I think I mentioned before that the **Lost Cousins** website is well worth registering for. It always contains a lot of useful hints and information. Access it using the link above.

Scots buried in Calcutta: *"The Scotsman"* newspaper had a very interesting article recently that was drawn to our attention. It is about a graveyard in Calcutta (I think it is spelt differently these days, but I am quoting *"The Scotsman"*) where more than 3,000 Scots are buried. It appears that in the 18th and 19th centuries many Scots went out to India in connection with the cotton, and particularly, the jute trade. Many of those buried there came from Dundee—a place you will now know to be close to my heart. Dundee of course was the jute centre of the UK, jute being one of the "three j's" for which Dundee was famous—jute, jam and journalism. Have a look at the article. Very interesting history and details of the work being done to restore the graveyard. Access it here ([The Scotsman](#))

Ayrshire Surname Database Index: If you have any family connections in Ayrshire then this database is worth a look at. (www.ayrshiredatabase) The website is fairly self-explanatory. You can do a search of the index and can also add names that you consider to be relevant. As with most sites, you have to register and create a password—yet another to remember!!! Nevertheless a lot of work gone into it for which we are grateful.

Broadening research: previously we have informed about the various sources available to determine where your ancestors lived such as the maps available at the National Library of Scotland ([NLS](#)) and the [CAIRT](#) website as well as other sources you might find helpful if—and when—you hit that brick wall. To develop this theme we were sent the following couple of articles. The first “What did granny’s house look like?” is sent by Yvonne Gill-Martin who helpfully put together some, perhaps less usual, resources that you might find helpful. The second “A Minor Breakthrough” is by David Muil who shares a couple of sources he found helped him take his research that little bit further. Thanks to both of them, and remember, if you have any helpful bits to share then let us know. It might be just the hint someone is looking for.

What did Granny's house look like?

As Family Historians, we like to 'flesh out' the bare facts around dates and places. Useful sources for doing this are photographic collections in published works on specific villages, towns or cities. These images are usually reproduced from postcards or are the work of a local photographer. You may be lucky and find an image of the house or street where your ancestors lived. You may also find a photo of the church where they were married, or the hospital where they died. There are many local history series, but the following might prove a starting point:

Stenlake Publishing

Based in Scotland, Richard Stenlake has published books on individual places, such as Alloa and Burntisland. There are also titles relating to mining, railways and transport in general in Scotland. Take a look at the website for further information.

(www.stenlake.co.uk) By the way, there are some books on England too!

The History Press Ltd.

This local history imprint includes the Archives Photographs Series. As well as providing images, the text is informative too. 'Images of Scotland' includes, for instance, the port and town of Grangemouth. (www.thehistorypress.co.uk)

A Minor Breakthrough

This month, material published by two different archives have combined to fill a gap in the life history of my grandfather, William Muil.

William Muil was 24 years old in July 1893 when he married my grandmother, Catherine Moir in the Tollkeeper's Woodside Cottage, Yetts of Muckart, Perthshire at the foot of the Ochil Hills. This much, I knew. I also knew that he earned a living as a musician playing concerts and social soirées in and around his home town of Alloa, Clackmannanshire and sometimes further afield in Glasgow.

However, there was always a period I could not account for subsequent to their wedding and the start of their family in 1902 [when my uncle Willie was

Amberley Publishing

There are various series, such as 'Through Time', which shows a former view of a place juxtaposed with a current one. Places covered include, Aberdeen, Aberdour and Dalgety Bay and Alloa and the Hillfoot Villages. There is even a volume on Scottish Lighthouses! (www.amberley-books.com)

If some of the titles in the above series are now out of print, it is worthwhile looking on a well-known auction site for second-hand copies. Good luck and happy hunting!



born]. Digitised records recently released by the **British Newspaper Archive** [www.bna] and **ancestry.com** have gone a long way to explaining the missing story.

The first piece of the jigsaw fell into place when a search of the BNA's recent publication of back copies of the Alloa Advertiser unearthed the following reference to his appearance at the forthcoming New Year Concerts of 1899 to be held at Alloa Town Hall.

'In a company rich in local talent Mr William Muil takes no mean place. He has gained wide experience as an oboe player in the City and is recognised as a player of the first rank. Mr Muil is not heard so often

as his abilities would justify, and consequently his appearances on Monday and Tuesday week are sure to be all the more appreciated.' [Alloa Advertiser, Saturday, 24th December 1898]

With this piece of information, I was able to turn to the second store of archives recently published as a digital version by **ancestry.com**— **Glasgow, Lanarkshire Electoral Registers 1857-1962** courtesy of the *Mitchell Library, Glasgow*. These listings disclosed that in 1895, 1896 and 1897, William Muil, musician, was a tenant and occupant at 474 St George's Road, Glasgow. This supports the reference above to the 'wide experience' gained in the City and is circumstantial evidence in support of the family claim that among other things the oboist had a seat in the nascent Scottish Orchestra. [I wonder if he did and if he ever sat alongside the composer, Gustav Holst, who served as a trombonist with the orchestra for four years from 1900.]

His name disappears from the Glasgow Electoral Register from that date but re-appears in 1906 when he is listed as tenant and occupant at 5 Nursery Street in the Strathbungo District of the city. This

address I know very well for it is the place where my father, Archie was born and baptised in December 1904. My grandfather appears to be taking his husbandly duties seriously for he is listed as a clerk both here and in 1907 and 1908 where his address is 614 Pollokshaws Road, 140 yards away still in Strathbungo. I strongly suspect his clerical duties were important for family income and that he continued to play music in the evenings.

Thus, the availability of digitised material has enabled me to home in quickly on important pieces of information that would have taken many hours of search in the archives of both Clackmannanshire District Libraries and the Mitchell Library.



The Statistical Accounts of Scotland: a great new website that is worth exploring. To quote their own blurb:

"This service provides access to the 'old' and 'new' Statistical Accounts of Scotland: all users can browse scanned images of the published pages, search the transcribed text, and view historical maps of the parishes and counties. Subscribers can use keyword search, tag and annotate pages and images, and access a wider range of related resources.

Getting started is easy. Just type your search term or the name of a parish into the search box at the top of the page and press enter or click the magnifying glass icon. Alternatively, you can explore using the interactive maps: click on the map of Scotland on the right, then select a county. On the county pages, you can either select a parish from the county list or open the maps to see the locations of parishes.

The search box is available at the top of every page, so you can start a new search at any time you choose. If you want to retrace your steps, just use the browser's 'back' button. If you need help at any point, then click the grey help button next to the search box."

If you fancy having a look at this you can find it here: stataccscot.edina.ac.uk



please remember that there is **no Branch meeting in December**. It is all a bit too close to Christmas. There will however be an **e-Scotia** Newsletter as usual. So if you have anything to share or to ask about, please continue to send it in via our e-mail address which you can find at the head of the newsletter.

The next Branch meeting will be on **Saturday 21st January 2017** when we shall have our Anglo Scots Christmas celebration. More about this in the December newsletter

