



# e-Scotia

## Newsletter of the Anglo-Scottish FHS

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**Welcome:** to this July edition of the Newsletter. Given the rather scant offering last month I decided on a bumper version this month. As is normal in July, our Branch gathering had an organised trip, this time to Elizabeth Gaskell House in South Manchester. It was such a fantastic trip that I am dedicating two pages to it. Included in the newsletter are also a number of suggestions to further enhance your research. Enjoy. Editor.

**Visit to Elizabeth Gaskell House:** the group was welcomed by the curator, Diane Duffy who manages the House alongside her husband. Diane also happens to be a member of the MLFHS, so was able to put a "family history" slant into the visit. Fifteen members of the Branch chose to make the trip so it was a good sized number to appreciate the inside of the House without feeling crowded out.



The House was built in the late 1840's and the Gaskell family were the first tenants. Elizabeth lived here from 1850 until her death in 1865. Born in Chelsea, London, in 1810, Elizabeth Stevenson married William Gaskell in Knutsford in 1832. They moved to live in Manchester where William was the Unitarian minister at Cross Street Chapel. They had six children, the first being stillborn and the second dying in infancy. The other four, all girls, lived with Elizabeth and William in the House. Diane highlighted to us that the care and welfare of the children was very important to Elizabeth and was a constant tension for her during her writing period. The family moved into the House in 1850 and at that time it was situated in the countryside south of Manchester. Elizabeth wanted to move there to get away from the noise and grime of the City. When you consider it is now only a 10 minute bus ride from Manchester city centre it is an indication of how the city grew rapidly.

In the relatively short period that she lived there, the growth and development of Manchester was a concern for Elizabeth Gaskell who considered the building of terraced housing nearby an encroachment on their living space. Indeed one of her daughters, who continued to live at the house until 1913, purchased the park next to the house to ensure that there was no house building on the site. She did give the park to Manchester Council for public use, nevertheless, being concerned for the poor and writing about them did not, it seems, run to living too close to them.



Inside the front door is the hall, the floor of which has been restored to the original flagstones. The group was reminded that Elizabeth Gaskell received many visitors at this house, including Charles Dickens and Charlotte Brontë. For most of us it is as close as we are ever going to get to walking in the footsteps of these great authors. As part of her repertoire Diane had some great stories of Elizabeth Gaskell's involvement with both Dickens and Brontë.

The house is a basic construction on the ground floor with four large rooms and a staircase. The room on the left was the play and study room for the children. The room opposite this was William Gaskell's study where he also met with students in his role as a tutor. A picture of this is opposite with a painting of William Gaskell above the fireplace. Diane made the point that the study being where it was William could, by keeping both doors to the rooms open, keep an eye on the children as they did their work.



Across the hall is the dining room. Again we were entertained with tales of the eating habits of people at this time. At the far end of the dining room is a writing desk and it is thought that Elizabeth did some of her early writing there. There was an exhibition on the desk of letters to Elizabeth Gaskell from Dickens and Bronte. According to some of her writing however, Elizabeth admits to too many distractions whilst writing in this room and moved into the small room through the door next to the fireplace. It was in there that most of her writing was done.

Through from the dining room is the sitting room that also has a grand piano in it. It was in this room that the Gaskell's entertained their guests, including of course, Dickens and Bronte. Throughout the house the wallpaper and carpets have been chosen to reflect the designs that were found in the house when the Trust took it over. Great effort has clearly been made to present the house as it would have been at the time the Gaskell's occupied it.



The top floor of the house has been turned into an exhibition of the servants and their lives. Diane was good enough to acknowledge the help that they have received from the MLFHS in acquiring information, including census details, of the residents of the house during this period, and many of these are on show in the exhibition.

At the end of the tour the group enjoyed tea/coffee and cake in the basement area which has been converted into a café, but was originally the kitchens etc. Altogether a very interesting and entertaining trip. Diane Duffy is clearly well informed about the Gaskell family and brought the whole experience alive with her enthusiasm. I have only given a hint here of all the information that was shared with us. It is a tour that I can only highly recommend. An hour very well spent, very informative, entertaining and with a tea afterwards. What is not to like!! Have a look here for the House web site and think about booking if you are close by. [\(Click here\)](#)



**Bodies of Evidence:** we received information about this exhibition that might prove of interest to some. The web site informs us that;

*"In November 2013, two mass burials were discovered in an area being developed as a new café for Palace Green Library. After over 350 years, a team of archaeologists from Durham University were able to confirm that the burials were some of a group of Scottish prisoners who died following the Battle of Dunbar in 1650. Find out how different pieces of a complex jigsaw of evidence were pieced together to establish the identity of the bodies, the science behind the discoveries, and the remarkable story of the survivors, some of whom were transported to New England to a new life at the edge of the known world."*



As can be seen from the poster, the exhibition runs until the 7th October 2018. The web site ([Palace Green Library](http://www.durham.ac.uk/palace.green)) give more details of how to get there and also prices. All looks good and I intend to organise a trip for myself. For those of you unable to get to the exhibition I shall collect some information and fit it into a newsletter. After all, perhaps some of our readers in the USA, Canada and Australia have links to these men.



### Gretna Green Marriage Registers:

It was pointed out to me by a reader that **Ancestry** have added the marriage registers for Gretna Green from 1794 to 1895. Under Lord Hardwick's Act of 1793 only marriages performed before a Church of England priest were legal. Banns also had to be published and parental consent was required for those under 21 years. The law applied to England and Wales but not Scotland. To circumvent the law many couples eloped to the border towns of Scotland, and Gretna Green was one of the most popular. To access the marriages open the Ancestry web site and under the "Search" button click into the "Card Catalogue" section. You can then insert "Gretna Green"

**Scottish Monumental Inscriptions:** in the interest of balance, to let you know that **Find My Past** has issued information that they have updated their Scottish Monumental Inscription data. I don't know about you but I usually find it difficult to access these records. For those of a like mind, here we go. Having logged in to Find My Past you first have to click the "Search" button and then the "A-Z of Records Set" button. In the left column you click "Scotland" then in the search box you can put in "monumental inscriptions" Good luck.



### Scotland Monumental Inscriptions Index

**New records:** 33,916

**Total records:** 293,113

**Covering:** 14 Scottish counties including the Isle of Skye

**Discover:** Birth year, death year, burial ground and any additional notes



**MLFHS Fiche Collection:** Just to let you know that the fiche collection that the Society had, but which has been in storage since the move to Manchester Central Library, has, as a result of persistent requests from some members, been restored to the Society Library in Central Library. There is a substantial Scottish collection as follows:

**Scotland:** Old Parish Records; Christenings by County; Marriages by County; Name Index by County; and the IGI Name Index for Scotland.

**Ireland:** IGI Name Index by County.

It is recognised that much of the information contained on the fiche will be available on other sources, not least, FamilySearch. However sufficient evidence has been produced to show that not all the information is available elsewhere, hence the decision to make it available once more in our own collection. Obviously this resource will only be available to those close enough to Manchester to refer to it, but know that it is there and if you want anything looked up, let us know.



**Online Society Library Catalogue:** .....and to continue the good news we can let you know that the MLFHS library catalogue is now available to be viewed via the Society web site. It is for members only and is accessed when you log in to the member area main menu. Can I recommend that you have a look at it, in particular, all the Scottish resources that are listed. By putting "Scotland" in the category box the sub-category box gives eleven different options for you to choose from.

Now clearly this resource is a catalogue, and does not give access to the actual documents but if there is any reader out there who sees some resource in the catalogue that they would want to know more about, then let us know and we will get back to you.

**Find My Past:** have announced an interesting addition to their Scottish resources entitled "Scottish Jacobite Histories 1715-1745" ([click here](#)) They declare:

*"Discover more about the Jacobites and the Jacobite Risings with this collection of 23 publications. You can search by name, conflict, publication title and year, and keyword."*

Amongst the 23 titles there are a mix of historical documents giving background to the 1715 and 1745 Rebellions as well as memoirs, presumably, of those who were there. Interestingly there is included "Bonnie Prince Charlie's Songbook" so you can have a bit of a singsong whilst doing your research. I don't have *FindMyPast* at home so cannot look more deeply into this collection but I shall have a look when next in Manchester Central Library where *FindMyPast* is free. Hopefully it is included in the library edition.



**World War II Memories:** at the recent MLFHS Quarterly Meeting one of the talks was given by a representative of "**WARGEN**". ([www.wargen.org](http://www.wargen.org)) This is an organisation, (soon to be a "charity" I believe), set up by two historians, but now run by volunteers, who became aware that those with memories of living through WWII, whether as combatants or civilians, are fast passing on. It is considered important to record their memories before this happens. These memories are "living history" rather than history as recorded by those in power and/or historians. The talk was both about explaining what **WARGEN** were trying to achieve and also to try and recruit volunteers who could assist in the recording of memories either through interviewing or transcribing of interviews. Some examples were shown of interviews with men who had fought in the war, some with quite harrowing detail of their experiences, and some with quite hilarious stories. Altogether quite a different insight into the war than reading about it in some history book. And that is the point, to bring the experience of ordinary people alive. So the plea was for volunteers or for names of those with memories that they would be prepared to share. If you are interested in either, why not go to the **WARGEN** web site and make contact with them. They would love to hear from you.



**Who is it?** On the topic of the II World War, a reader sent me this photograph that came into her hands and she would like some help in trying to identify who it might be. There is no date or regimental number, but there are a few clues on the reverse of the card.

The heading of the card on the reverse is "Carte Postale", indicating that the photograph was taken in France.

The card is addressed to "Mrs Robertson and Family" but there is no address or stamp so it would appear to have been sent in some other envelope.

It is signed, "From Fred, 1st K.O.S.B." Fred was clearly in the Kings Own Border Regiment, but who Fred is, is the mystery. His message on the card says; "Here is a photo I got taken at the week-end. It's not good but I hope it will do"

Any assistance/advice/information that would help trace this soldier would be very much appreciated. Get in touch via the e-mail address. Thanks

### Visit to the Pankhurst Centre: Monday 13th August 1pm.

It has been announced that Society members are invited to a talk and a tour of the Pankhurst Centre, the birthplace of the Suffragette movement. The tour is led by a Pankhurst Centre volunteer.

The Centre houses a small museum and heritage centre that remains as a legacy to the Pankhurst family and the Suffragette movement, and also serves as a women's community centre.

The visit is open to members of MLFHS only and a fee of £3.50 is payable at the time of booking.

Places are limited so booking is **ESSENTIAL** Please [CLICK HERE](#) for more details and to book.



### Early Warning—A Presentation about War Memorials:

Given that we are coming to the close of the 4-year commemoration of the 1st World War, the Society is hosting this event. The speaker is Mike Coyle and it is on Tuesday, 4th September 10.30 a.m. at Manchester Central Library. **Admission is free.**

This talk covers the types and significance of war memorials to families and communities, and the efforts of communities and individuals to research and preserve them.

Mike Coyle is a passionate advocate for war memorials, a volunteer with the War Memorials Trust and a fieldworker with the Imperial War Museum's 'War Memorials Register'.

John Marsden of the Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society will also talk about the Society's database of names taken from over 1000 memorials in Greater Manchester.

North West Film Archive will also show a short film about the unveiling of a couple of North West War Memorials.

This event is open to all but booking is essential. We shall mention the event again in the August newsletter, but given that this is likely to be a very popular event we wanted to give you a "heads up".

**Book on Eventbrite via [www.events.mlfhs.org.uk](http://www.events.mlfhs.org.uk)**

**Oh no! No Branch Meeting in August:** Please remember that there is no Branch meeting in August. Apparently some people want to go away on holiday!!!! In case you feel at a loss as to how to occupy your time during August why not have a look at some of the articles on the Society web site or do some research via the newly opened catalogue.



**September Branch Meeting:** We shall all be back in September, refreshed and full of enthusiasm!! Above I make mention of an event being offered by the MLFHS regarding War Memorials. We are all a bit aware that we are coming to the end of our 4 year period of remembrance of the 1st World War and its aftermath. The Branch committee therefor considered it appropriate to organise our own event on a similar theme but with a Scottish flavour. So we alert you to the talk at the September Branch meeting so that you can book ahead.



The talk will be given by Ken Nisbet who will be coming down from Scotland to talk to us.

Ken is a very experienced family historian and has written many books on various family history subjects.

His theme this time will be how best to research your 1st World War ancestor with particular reference to Scottish research

More about this in the August Newsletter.