



e-Scotia

Newsletter of the Anglo-Scottish FHS

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Anglo Scottish Family History Society

Welcome: To the May edition of our newsletter. Our main feature is the *Scottish Heritage Day* we organised and held last Thursday. It was a very successful event with 93 people booked in to attend. That said, a comment from myself. In this little editorial I tend towards brevity and generalisation, but on this occasion I am giving myself permission to be rather more forthright because those who attended came with an expectation that was not fully met. This was because, for the organisers, preparation of the day was somewhat “disturbed” by being let down at the last minute by the morning speaker, Ed Glinert. In January he had accepted an invitation to speak at the conference and offered the theme of aspects of Edinburgh. For reasons I shall not go into here he decided, two weeks before the event, to pull out. Attempts by the organisers over the following ten days to negotiate with him proved fruitless. Suffice it to say that his reasons were considered, by the organisers, to be extremely unprofessional. It of course left the event organisers with a major headache. Fortunately we had the resilience and, more importantly, the resources, in the person of committee member, Hilary Hartigan, to resolve the situation. Hilary stepped forward and within a 48 hour period prepared an alternative view of Edinburgh which she delivered with panache and professionalism and we are extremely grateful to her. More of this input later. As usual the newsletter also offers some information that we hope will be useful to you in your research and news of some events in which you may be interested. Enjoy. *Editor.*



Scottish Heritage Day



The day was conceived some months ago as a great opportunity for Society members to hear first hand from the primary sources for family history research in Scotland, the *National Records of Scotland*, and their more public face, *Scotlands People*. Negotiating their attendance was achieved largely by the good services of NRS's head of learning, Tessa Spencer, who also attended the event, and we are grateful to her. Tessa is photographed opposite alongside Iain Ferguson and our Branch chairman, Michael Couper. Since travel arrangements determined an afternoon attendance by them, a supplementary morning event was arranged on the theme of Edinburgh. This was delivered by Hilary Hartigan.



The theme of Hilary's talk was *Edinburgh Old Town*. It began with a look at Edinburgh Old Town around the year 1700, the beginning of a century which was later called 'The Scottish Enlightenment'. Reference was made to the 'lands' (the big tenement blocks that single out the architecture of Edinburgh from much of the rest of the country) that had been packed tightly in between the closes and wynds of Edinburgh to accommodate a rapidly growing population. Quite inadvertently, the organisation of the “lands”, despite their darkness and discomfort, meant that all



classes of Edinburgh society lived on the street, especially the 'one good street', High Street, seen above as it is today. Nobility mixed with gentry mixed with the common masses. It was impossible not to know everyone by sight and not to hear the latest news, ideas and innovations in the taverns and the many meeting houses. However, there was a major problem. Dense housing – where neighbours could shake hands from their windows across the narrow closes – were dangerous places

Old Edinburgh Town (cont.): where one stray spark could cause a fire of disastrous proportions. Weaving in and out of this story were the Braidwood family. In 1700, James Braidwood was a candlemaker and such was his standing that he became a deacon of the *Incorporation of Candlemakers*. His son William was also a candlemaker. He married wisely, becoming a freeman and setting up as an ironmonger. This occupation was continued by his sons, including his son William, who later set up the Caledonian Fire Office in the same building. Another son, Francis, became a successful upholsterer and cabinet maker who also owned quarries and large building yards. Francis married Janet Mitchell and they had ten children. The tenth child was James Braidwood. Born in 1800, this combination of family experiences and the flow of information, knowledge and ideas, benefitted young James who went on to study the causes of fires and the means of extinguishing them. His knowledge and experience helped to extinguish some of the huge conflagrations of his time. He created a new science, the science of fighting fires. Sadly James, the father of the modern fire service, was killed in the great fire of Tooley Street, London, in 1861. His statue now stands in Parliament Square, Edinburgh.



The first of our speakers from Edinburgh was Iain Ferguson, manager of the Scotlands People Centre in Edinburgh. Iain gave a brief history of the development of Scotlands People and its role in providing in family history research. He ran through what is available on the Scotlands People web site and mentioned the latest addition, **the 1940 valuation roll** that can now be accessed. He spoke of the “surviving” Church Records, mainly the OPR’s of the Established Church of Scotland but also referred to the many thousands of records belonging to “other” Churches. In dealing with births, marriages and deaths, Iain reminded us that the year 1855, the first year of registration in Scotland, is referred to as “The Golden Year” for good reason as the records contain so much more information than was to be recorded subsequently. With regard to the census, Scotland mirrors the years throughout the United Kingdom but it was interesting to hear that whereas the 1931 census of England and Wales was destroyed in bombing during the 2nd World War, the 1931 Scotland census remains intact. The difficulties that researchers have in carrying out family history was addressed with tips on how to get the most of the web site. The primary message was the mantra that “Less is More”. Generally people tend to put too much information into the search parameters but initially putting in just the basic information is usually more fruitful. We were reminded that surnames in Scotland were not standardised until the mid 1800’s and this adds to the difficulty in doing research. The use of wildcards was highly recommended. In searching the OPR’s knowledge of the parish of residence is essential and reference was made to a publication detailing the parishes throughout Scotland and the birth, marriage and death records that each of these has. This document can be accessed ([here](#)) from the National Records of Scotland site. You will need to have Adobe Reader installed to download it. Iain’s talk was informative and appreciated by all, but for me three main messages emerged; firstly, do make use of the many and detailed research guides that are available to access free of charge; secondly, do contact Scotlands People via the “contact us” button at the bottom of the page if any difficulties are experienced be that the poor quality of downloaded certificates or the difficulty in finding an ancestor. With regard to the latter, giving as much information that you have would be of great assistance; thirdly, do make use of local family history societies. Iain was clear that Scotlands People do not have all the records that exist in Scotland and that many still reside in local libraries and with local family history societies, so contact them if you are in difficulty in locating an ancestor.

Our second speaker from Edinburgh was Tessa Spencer, head of learning at the National Records of Scotland. Tessa reminded us that the NRS began life in 2011 from a merger of the National Archives of Scotland and the General Register Office. Whilst the primary site of the NRS is at the east end of Princes Street, there are actually four sites scattered throughout Edinburgh with almost 50 miles of records dating from the 12th to the 21st century. Our attention was drawn to the many and various records held by the NRS that cover all of Scottish history. These included the various Church Records and the well known Maps and Plans site accessed under the heading of the National Library of Scotland. Tessa spoke of the various legal records that can be of great value to family history researchers. These include the instruments of sasine that record the transfer of land



These date from 1617 and all the records have been digitised and are searchable. It was recognised however that such orders refer to a relatively few landed persons. However Wills and Testaments have a more general application and should not be discounted in research. That said it appears that leaving a will was not a regular practice throughout the classes and in the 1960's only 43% of Scots left wills. Our attention was drawn to Valuation Rolls that have all been digitised from 1855 until the most recent, 1840. The vast amount of useful information in the *Scotlands Places* site was also touched upon containing as it does various tax records. Probably less well known but nevertheless a potential resource for research are the records of the Private and Corporate Bodies. Their records often contain the names and details of employees and are worth a look if you know the company an ancestor worked for. An example of such are the Railway and Canal Records. These records however are not available other than attending at the NRS and making use of the search room.

Altogether a very enjoyable, and for many, going from the feedback, an enlightening and informative conference. Tessa and Iain had prepared a handout of useful information and links that was available to attendees. I attach this at the end of this newsletter.

Free credits from Scotlands People.

At the end of the conference Iain Ferguson announced that Scotlands People were offering 24 free credits to those interested in making use of them and left us with a number of codes that we were able to distribute to attendees. We have 20 of these codes still available. So, for those of you who did not manage to attend the event, if you would like one, email us and I shall send you a code number. It must be understood that this is on a first come first served basis and I shall take it from the timing of the email's arrival, so the sooner you email us the more chance you have of securing a code. **You must email us by Friday, 24th May.** To benefit from the offer you must, of course, be registered with Scotlands People, but to do so is free. You must also download the credits by the 31st May. You do not have to use them by then, but you must log them into your account by then.



Bits'n Pieces: we are regularly sent information from other family history societies at home and abroad about local events and digital copies of their magazines and newsletters. Recalling what was advised earlier about encouraging you to make contact with local family history societies if you need help in your research, then this collection might be of interest and value. Please remember that all the current and past copies of digitised magazines can be found on the Society website ([click here](#)). As the holiday season is fast coming upon us it may be also that you find yourself in the area of one of these societies. Why not make contact if you have links.



Caithness Family History Society. If you have ancestral links there or are planning to tour around the north of Scotland, the Caithness FHS will welcome you. As the Society chair says in the editorial to their journal;

"Already a few people have been in contact with the Society prior to visiting Caithness during the year. This initial approach helps our volunteers to seek out the information required, in order to make visits memorable."

Aberdeen and North East Scotland Family History Society: a recent communication from the Aberdeen and NEFHS announced that they have started sharing their magazine digitally. I note that in our Society collection we have only the digital copies for 2019. Happily the communication from them gives [a link](#) to all past copies of their magazine going back to their first one in March 1979. A great achievement and a good resource for all of you north-east of Scotland researchers.



Redland Genealogical Society: moving a bit further away from home, this society is just south of Brisbane, Australia. They have been exchanging journals with us for some time and their latest edition has just been posted on our site.

New Zealand Society of Genealogists: we have received the latest copy of the journal, *New Zealand Family Tree*. Again, if you have any links with NZ or Aus. then have a look at these. I can see that they contain lots of local information regarding resources that are available for research.

Retour: The Newsletter of The Scottish Records Association:

We have been notified by [The Scottish Records Association](#) that their latest edition of Retour is available. It can be read [here](#).

We have also been informed of a couple of visits that they have organised for members for 2019, (for some reason not yet advertised on their website) one, on the 14th June to the Trades House of Glasgow Library and Archives followed by a visit to Kelvin Hall and another on the 6th of September to Glamis Castle.

The SRA have also organised a conference at Dundee University on the theme of "Hidden Histories" to be held on Friday, 15th November 2019. Details of the conference can be found [here](#).



The Genealogy Show 7/8 June - NEC Birmingham

Manchester & Lancashire FHS will have a stall at this national event. Our Anglo Scottish Branch chairman, Michael Couper, leads this for the Society and so will also be representing Anglo Scottish interest. It should be a great event. Why not consider going along.



Find My Past are advertising a number of new Scottish Records:

[Scotland, Wigtownshire & Minnigaff Parish Lists 1684](#)

Search for your Scottish ancestors in parish lists containing over 53,000 names. First published in 1916 by the Scottish Record Society, the lists consist of "nominal Rolls of all persons, male or female, over the age of 12 years, resident within their respective parishes - grouped according to their residences, farms and house-holds, and specially indicating such as were 'irregular' that is non-conforming".

[Scotland, People Of Banffshire & Moray 1150-1857](#)

Over 23,000 additional records have been added to the collection. The names in this collection have been discovered across a number of sources. Each record will tell you the original source and a description of the text.

[Scotland, Burgess & Guild Brethren Index](#)

Did your Scottish ancestors become masters of their trade? Uncover details of their lives with over 64,000 records spanning nearly 650 years of occupational records. Each transcript will reveal a combination of their occupation or trade, dates, locations and notable life events.

Anglo Scottish Branch Meeting - Saturday, 15th June 2019

Ancestry Workshop: Our meeting in June will be an opportunity for all of us to share some of our research and to seek help, if required, from fellow members as we continue our search for those, often, elusive, ancestors. As usual the meeting starts at 2.00 pm in Manchester Central Library. Do come along and share. You always know more than you think and we could all benefit from your research experience, no matter how mundane and basic you think it is. Remember to book your place at the meeting through [Eventbrite](#) on the Society web page.



Help Desk:



Remember that we operate a help desk during the morning prior to the Branch afternoon gathering. We meet from 10.30 until 12.30 and have the batch of computers on the third floor of the library available to us. Come along. "Expert" help available to advise and guide.





National
Records of
Scotland



ScotlandsPeople

The Historical Search Room

www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/visit-us/historical-search-room

Where to find us and opening hours

- The Historical Search Room is located on the first floor of General Register House in Edinburgh.
- In this search room you can access records created by the Scottish government and courts (civil and criminal), as well as private records created by businesses, landed estates, families, churches and other corporate bodies.
- The search room is open Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 16:30. It is not open at the weekend. The latest time for ordering records and copies of records is 15:45.
- There is no need to make an appointment but please note that seats are allocated on a first come, first served basis.
- You may consult original records without charge for purposes of historical research provided that you hold a current reader's ticket and adhere to our Historical and Legal Search Room Regulations.

Before you visit

- In advance of your visit we recommend that you consult the catalogues and indexes and research guides on the National Records of Scotland's website for items of interest.
- Many items are stored off site, so please contact the search room in advance of your visit to check whether records need to be ordered in for you.
- Allow 24 hours' notice by telephone 0131 535 1334 on Mondays to Fridays during office hours.
- Two working days' notice by emailing: lsrhe@scotlandspeople.gov.uk

Reader's ticket

- You will need to obtain a reader's ticket before consulting any records. Please bring:
 - photographic proof of your identity such as a driving licence or passport;
 - proof of your current address such as a driving licence, bank statement or utility bill (these must be original documents, not scanned or viewable on a mobile device) and
 - two passport sized colour photographs.

Additional information

- Please bring pencils and paper for conducting your research: pens, highlighters, scissors are not permitted in the search room.
- You can also bring a laptop, but scanners are not permitted.
- Eating, drinking, smoking or vaping are not permitted in the search room.
- Copying services are provided as well as self-service photography, provided that there are no restrictions in place on the records and certain conditions are met.

ScotlandsPeople Centre

www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/visit-us

Where to find us and opening hours

- The ScotlandsPeople Centre is the official government resource for family history research where you can access digital images of statutory registers of births, deaths and marriages; the Census; Old Parish Registers; legal records and more.
- The Centre has two search rooms in General Register House and New Register House in Edinburgh and is open Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 16:30. It is not open at the weekend.

Before you visit

- You can book a day search place online for £15 using our online booking system: www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/book-a-seat
- If you are not an existing ScotlandsPeople customer you need to register an account in order to make an online seat booking at: www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/
- Please see our charges for further information: www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/content/our-charges
- Once you have completed your booking you will receive a confirmation email and your ticket. You will need to present your ticket to staff when you arrive at the Centre.

Useful links

- NRS' catalogues and indexes: www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/catalogues-and-indexes
- NRS' research guides: www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/guides
- NRS' copying services: www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/visit-us/historical-search-room/copying-services
- ScotlandsPeople website: for digital images of statutory registers of births, deaths and marriages; the Census; Old Parish Registers; legal records and more: www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk
- National Register of Archives for Scotland (NRAS) for archives held in private hands in Scotland: www.nrscotland.gov.uk/record-keeping/national-register-of-archives-for-scotland
- ScotlandsPlaces: a free resource for records about Scotland that draws from Historic Environment Scotland, the National Library of Scotland and NRS: www.scotlandsplaces.gov.uk
- Scottish Archive Network (SCAN): a catalogue of collections held by Scottish archives and useful research tools: www.scan.org.uk
- Scottish Handwriting website: for online tuition in palaeography for historians, genealogists and other researchers for help reading manuscript historical records written in Scotland from 16th to 18th centuries: www.scottishhandwriting.com
- Dictionary of Scots language for tracking down the meaning and historical origin of Scots words: www.dsl.ac.uk

Useful Publications

- **'Tracing Your Scottish Ancestors: The Official Guide'**, edited by Tristram Clarke, National Records of Scotland. (Birlinn Ltd., 2015)
- **NRS' leaflets:** for advice on undertaking various types of research such as family and local history.