



e-Scotia

Newsletter of the Anglo-Scottish FHS

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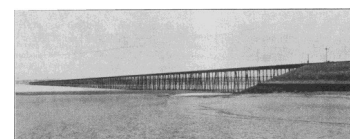
Anglo Scottish Family History Society

Welcome: to the February edition of the newsletter. After a relatively mild few months winter is coming our way with heavy rain and storms. Any of you effected by the storms and rain/floods, our thoughts are with you. Our Branch year takes off this month with the first of our invited speakers, Dr Alan Crosby. Alan retired as a lecturer at Lancaster University but during his career has lectured at many universities throughout the country. He is now a freelance local and regional historian and is a popular speaker on the family history circuit. We were delighted to have him. Also included in this newsletter is the usual suggested sources and news that might assist you in your Anglo Scottish research. Enjoy. Editor



Crossing the Solway: Tracing the Rickerbys of Cumberland and Dumfriesshire.

Over the years we have considered, in various formats, the movement of peoples at the Border of Scotland and England. Such movement has of course gone on for many centuries and we saw from the talk we had about the Border Reivers that the border meant nothing to them as they robbed and raided throughout the area. Means of crossing the border were equally various with perhaps the most adventurous being the railway line that ran across the Solway between the ironstone works in Cumberland and the iron works in Lanark. Apart from carrying trains, the bridge was also used by people as a fast and convenient route until its eventual closure as a railway in 1921 and as a viaduct ten years later.



However, Alan's approach to what could have been an overly-familiar theme was both original and interesting. He focused upon the history of one particular family, the Rickerbys. Whilst researching this family Alan was gracious enough to give recognition to the superior quality of Scottish records over their English counterparts that greatly aided his research. The Rickerbys originated in the Solway plain around Carlisle and probably derived their name from the village of Rickerby north east of Carlisle. Alan's interest was in John Rickerby (1665-1747) who lived in Orton Rigg where the family had been farmers for many generations. However, in the mid 18th century, a nephew of John Rickerby, Jonathan, broke away from this farming tradition and moved to Wigton where he married an inn keeper's daughter in 1752. Two children were born to the couple, but from 1754 the family seemed to disappear. How familiar is that scenario to many of us. To find them Alan began to widen his search, including, to the Scottish Borders. To assist him he also had sight of John Rickerby's will in which nephew Jonathan is referred to as a "Currier" or tanner of hides. The search eventually took Alan across the border and in the Dumfries Burgh records library he was advised to search the "Dumfries Burgh Ale Imposts" and the "Dumfries Burgh Stent Rolls", both tax records of the period. Sure enough he found reference to a Jonathan Rickerby "ale house keeper and currier". There are no equivalent records in England, and without them, the Rickerbys would have been lost from research. As it was Alan was able to discover that Jonathan's son, James, became an important member of the local community in Dumfries and in the Town Council minutes of 1787 when he is elected a Burgess, he is referred to as "Mr James Rickerby "late of the island of Jamaica"". A surprising further piece of information that, when taken together with the ale tax records, suggests that James continued his father's involvement in the liquor trade. He was possibly a merchant who travelled to Jamaica, a centre for sugar and rum and where there was a strong Scottish presence. There was no indication that James was involved directly in the slave trade but given the period it would have been a situation of which he would have been aware. Alan's research into this family revealed that James' daughter, May Ann, married a William Campbell in Liverpool in 1813 when they then moved to the USA. By focusing upon one family in this way Alan was able, in an original way, to highlight the movement of peoples and the means of tracing them by use of very detailed resources in local Scottish libraries. A great talk that was enlightening and appreciated by all who attended.



National Records of Scotland/ScotlandsPlaces: Tax Records

Alan Crosby's reference to the assistance he was granted by way of referral to the Scottish tax records prompted me to have another look at the many and various tax records that the NRS has available online that might be of assistance to us in our Scottish family research.

In his talk Alan made reference to the Burgh ale imposts and the stent, or tax, rolls. The National Records of Scotland has copies of these but they are not digitised and only available to be viewed at the NRS. However each Burgh does have a copy of their own records - those that have preserved them that is - and so a visit to the local Burgh library would produce the same records. As Alan found, these records do seem to give a lot of information. This link ([click here](#)) gives a summary of the Burgh records and what they contain.

What tax records have been digitised by the NRS are available on the ScotlandsPlaces web site ([click here](#)) that some of you will be very familiar with. For those not so familiar, when you go to the web site you will see a list of all the Scottish counties on the left of the screen. Click on to any one of these that is of possible interest to you and this will in turn list all the maps, drawings, photographs and text documents that are relevant to that area. Amongst this you will find various tax documents. Altogether a very rich source for research.

Have you got Viking ancestors? For all you know, according to recent research, your "Scottish" ancestor may have in fact looked like this, returning home from a hard day's pillaging. A reader sent me the following information contained in the "*Medical Xpress*", a web-based medical and health news service. I must say that I never cease to be amazed at the sources some of our readers have to find relevant Scottish research sources. The relevant article forwarded to me can be found here. ([click here](#)) It is yet another genetic study that seems to demonstrate a very strong genetic link between the people of Norway and the current residents of the north of Scotland. I



suppose none of us would be surprised to be told that the people of Orkney and Shetland had such strong links, but it seems that other areas of "northern" Scotland were also influenced. Coming from Dundee I am aware of a number of words we used locally that must have Viking origins. When the mist rolled in off the North Sea and embraced the city



we referred to it as the haar. Even our word for "good", "bra", as in "that's bra" or, as some might have us saying, "it's a bra bricht moonlicht nicht" was/is a Scandinavian word. It seems then that the traditional explanation for the thistle being the emblem of Scotland, - that Vikings, furtively invading the Aberdeenshire coast, were stung when they trod on thistles, thus alerting the Scottish troops who defeated them - may not stand up to any great scrutiny. Anyway the article refers to other studies carried out on the topic of the genetic make up of our regions, so have a look. You never know!! However can I suggest that if you find a horned helmet in your loft, that is an even better clue as to your roots.

Declaration of Arbroath - 6th April 1320

With the upcoming 700th Anniversary of the Declaration various exhibitions and celebrations are being organised in Scotland. The National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh is hosting an exhibition from the 27th March - 26th April ([see here for details](#)) to include a display of the only version of the Declaration to survive. For anyone who is unsure what the Declaration of Arbroath is about, this little summary from the Rampant Scotland site is helpful. ([click here](#))

The main celebration will however be in Arbroath itself over the weekend of the 3rd to the 6th April. It is an opportunity that the townsfolk of Arbroath will rightly use to promote their town and from all accounts it promises to be an amazing occasion. To be fair to them I can only direct you to their web site where you get a flavour of their plans and enthusiasm. ([click here](#))

So, if by any chance you intend to visit Scotland around then, why not make your way to Arbroath. I am sure you will not be disappointed.



British Newspaper Archive: always on the lookout for sources to assist Scottish Family History research I came across ([this site](#)) the other day. It is part of the BNA blog and refers to their archive of Scottish newspapers. These date way back to the 18th century and up to the present day. There is of course a charge but as a source of wider research as well as access to birth, marriage and death announcements, then there is little better. On the other hand it may be that your local library has a BNA subscription and you can access it for free. Worth a look.



Who Do You Think You Are Magazine: sometime ago the WDYTYA magazine produced an article by Chris Paton highlighting the best **free** search sites for Scottish Family History research. This is now available online and can be accessed ([here](#)). Some of the sites many of us will be very familiar with, but others are listed that I for one knew nothing about. Have a look. Might help.



Exchange Journals: a reminder to you of our exchange journal arrangement with many other family history societies at home and abroad. There are 41 societies who contribute to this arrangement and the following societies have uploaded their January 2020 journal;

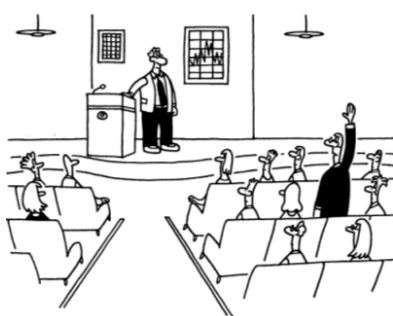
Aberdeen and North East Scotland; Caithness FHS; Central Queensland FHS; Glamorgan FHS; Highland FHS; Huddersfield FHS; Nottinghamshire FHS; Redlands (Queensland) FHS; Ryedale FHS;

You can access these journals only on the member's area of the MLFHS site and via the "Exchange" toolbar at the top of the page. As I have pointed out previously, these are great sources of local information and also contact points should you wish to seek assistance from them. They are all very helpful.

Scottish Strays or the Scottish Marriage Index: those of you who have been Branch members for some time will be very familiar with the Scottish Marriage Index, but we do have a number of new members so I thought it worth while to highlight this rather unique resource that our Branch has and makes available to anyone who want to use it. The database lists all those Scots who married away from home. This of course refers to those who emigrated, but it also includes Scots who married within the UK, but away from their "home" wherever that may be. Contributions from readers are always welcome. The criteria required and access to the database can be had here. ([click](#))



Anglo Scottish Branch Meeting and AGM - Saturday 21st March 2020



"Could we extend the annual meeting? I still have a lot of complaining to do!"

As indicated, our Branch meeting next month incorporates the Branch Annual General Meeting when we have the election of our committee and the opportunity for members to give feedback to committee members as to how the past year has fared. It also gives us the opportunity to share with you the outcome of the survey that was conducted recently.

Following the AGM there will be the opportunity for members to share with one another heirlooms and treasures of our family history research. This always proves to be a popular topic. Whilst it is undoubtedly helpful and valuable to have speakers to inform and direct our research, there are frequently more research gems to be gathered from colleagues and fellow members who through the stories linked with their heirlooms are able to share items that prompted their involvement in family history research. It is the personal stories that carry most weight.

The meeting begins at 2.00 p.m. and concludes at 3.30. There is of course, as always, the help desk available on the 3rd floor of the library from 10.30.