



Moray & Nairn Family History Society

NEWSLETTER

October 2009

Welcome to the second edition of the Moray & Nairn FHS Newsletter. In this edition we have added a Members' Queries section, which we hope will encourage some interaction among members – especially those not living locally.

Please note we are not at this stage able to carry out research, but if we can answer queries from within the committee we will do so by email.

As you will see from the members list on the back page, membership is steadily increasing, and we are sure this will continue. For all enquiries about your membership, please contact the Secretary, Janet Bishop.

Diary

Saturday 13 March 2010, 2 pm
Annual General Meeting, followed by:
Bruce B Bishop: "From Lochindorb to Culbin – the story of 2 parishes"
Lossiemouth Library

Saturday 5 June 2010, 2 pm
Fiona Watson: "Health Records in Family History"
Forres Community Centre

Saturday 6 November 2010, 2 pm
tba
Nairn

Contacts:

Chairman: Bruce B Bishop

Secretary: Janet M Bishop

Treasurer: Kenneth A M Nisbet

October 2009 Meeting

The October meeting took place in Nairn Museum, and was attended by almost a full complement of local members, as well as some very welcome non-members.

Alan Barron gave a most interesting talk on the Fishertown of Nairn, giving us an insight into the way of life of this fishing community. The presentation illustrated many of the different types of boat in use since the early 19th Century, and he highlighted some of the risks these fishermen took. The slides showed several of the characters of the Fishertown of Nairn, who were occupied in various aspect of the fishing, including the wives carrying their men back from the boats, so they didn't get their feet wet! The pictures of the old fishermen and their wives baiting the lines showed us a way of life that is now long gone, as did the picture of the fisher lassies gutting herring – not one of the most pleasant jobs.

Refreshments were provided by the Museum, which were much appreciated, and afterwards we were given an interesting tour of the Museum, and a chance to chat with other members.

Membership

Our membership continues to grow, and, on going to print, stands at 31.

Moray & Nairn FHS Website

We now have a website
www.morayandnairnfhs.co.uk

The Moray Family History Fair
Elgin Town Hall
10 October 2009

The Moray Homecoming 2009 Family History

Fair was held in Elgin Town Hall on Saturday 10 October. It was attended by family history societies from all over Scotland, including MNFHS, as well as many local heritage groups. There were talks by Jean Shirer of Aberdeen & N E Scotland FHS, Ken Nisbet of Moray & Nairn FHS, Elizabeth Mortimer of ASGRA (Association of Scottish Genealogists and Researchers in Archives) and Peter Wadley of the National Archives of Scotland. It was a very successful and enjoyable day, both for visitors and standholders. The fair was organised by Moray Council in conjunction with Scottish Genealogical Research, Elgin.

New MNFHS Publications

The Parishes of Nairnshire, pre-1855 Burial Records for Auldearn, 1721-1754, 1816-1854, and isolated surviving death records for the parishes of Cawdor, Ardclach and Nairn

£ 5.80, inc P&P

MNFHS Publications List

The Parishes of Nairnshire. Deaths and Places of Burial 1855 – 1860, parishes of **Ardclach** and **Cawdor**. Compiled by Janet M Bishop and Kenneth A M Nisbet. ISBN 978-0-9561937-2-8, £4.00

The Parishes of Morayshire. Deaths and Places of Burial 1855 – 1860, parishes of **Speymouth** and **Urquhart**. Compiled by Janet M Bishop and Kenneth A M Nisbet. ISBN 978-0-9561937-3-5, £4.00

The Parishes of Morayshire. Deaths and Places of Burial 1855 – 1860, parishes of **Edinkillie** and **Dyke & Moy**. Compiled by Janet M Bishop and Kenneth A M Nisbet. ISBN 978-0-9561937-4-2, £4.00

The Parishes of Nairnshire. Pre-1855 Burial Records for **Auldearn**, 1721-1754, 1816-1854, and isolated surviving Death Records for the Parishes of **Cawdor**, **Ardclach** and **Nairn**. Compiled by Bruce B Bishop and Stuart Farrell. 84pp, ISBN 978-0-9561937-5-9, £5.00

Note: MNFHS has a booklist offering other publications relating to Moray and Nairn counties, many of them published locally. This will shortly be posted on the website.

Overseas Payments

For our overseas members, it may be convenient

to make payments to MNFHS by BACS, whether for subscriptions or for publications. For relevant bank details, please contact the Secretary, Janet Bishop.

ARTICLES

Finding Elspet McKay by Doug Stewart

I already knew that Elspet McKay died at Hillhead, Tomlea, in the parish of Knockando, on 22nd September 1888, and, from that, I'd been able to find her in some of the earlier Census Returns for the parish.

In 1851, she was a boarder, aged 40, living with a McPherson family, at Knowhead (ED:1, HH:19) - Ann McKay may have been a daughter of Elspet McKay; George McLeod may have been Ann McKay's son and Elspet McKay's grandson:

- 1 John McPherson, Head, Married, 54, Agricultural Labourer, born Knockando
- 2 Jane McPherson, Wife, Married, 41, Labourer's Wife, born Knockando
- 3 Isabella McPherson, Daughter, 8, born Knockando
- 4 Jane McPherson, Daughter, 6, born Knockando
- 5 John McPherson, Son, 2, born Knockando
- 6 Ann McPherson, Daughter, 2m, born Knockando
- 7 Elspet McKay, Boarder, Unmarried, 40, born Knockando
- 8 Ann McKay, Boarder, Unmarried, 22, Pauper, born Knockando
- 9 George McLeod, Boarder, 1, Pauper, born Knockando

In 1861, she was at Kirdals Poorhouse (ED: 2, HH:39), where she was described as a 52 year-old, unmarried, pauper and born Knockando:

- 1 Elspet McKay, Head, Unmarried, 52, Pauper, born Knockando
- 2 George McLeod, Grandson, 11, Pauper, born Knockando
- 3 William Smith, Grandson, 2, Pauper, born Knockando

Jumping to 1881, I found her at Tomlea Parish Cottage, still in the parish of Knockando (ED:2, HH:24) aged 73, a pauper, born Knockando:

- 1 Elspit McKay, Head, Unmarried, 73, Pauper, born Knockando
- 2 Ann McLeod, Grandson's Wife, Married, 23, Platelayer's Wife, born Rothies

3 Jane McLeod, Great Granddaughter, 4, born Knockando

4 Elspit McLeod, Great Granddaughter, 2, born Knockando

The problem I had was finding her in the 1871 Census Returns – I was unable to pick her up in the ancestry.co.uk index to the Censuses.

I had no choice but to look at the actual documents (on microfilm, at Elgin Heritage Centre). There, I found Elspet McKay living at a place I could not decipher (ED:2, HH:31):

1 Elspet McKay, Head, Unmarried, 65, Pauper, born Knockando

2 George McLeod, Grandson, Unmarried, 21, Ag Lab, born Knockando

3 William Smith, Grandson, 12, P Scholar, born Knockando

Returning to the index in ancestry.co.uk, I still could not find Elspet McKay. Nor could I find George McLeod or William Smith.

It was only when I thought to look for the household that I found living at Joudra? (ED:2, HH:31):

1 Elspet Ros, Head, Unmarried, 65, Pauper, born Knockando

2 George Ida Ross, Grandson, Unmarried, 21, Ag Lab, born Knockando

3 Lillian Small, Grandson, 12, P Scholar, born Knockando

No wonder I couldn't find Elspet McKay in the index for 1871!

By the way, I still haven't definitely found her in any of the local 1841 Census Returns – unless she's the Elspet McKay listed at 'residing' in Elgin's Burgh & County Gaol at that time:

1 James Fife Walker, 25, Writer

2 James Sim, 20, Carter

3 Peter Davidson, 30, Labourer

4 Alexander Gilbert, 13, Vagrant

5 Alexander Cameron, 35, Farm Labourer

6 Elspet McKay, 30, Vagrant

Editor's Note: a good example of the inadequacies of online indexes!

**Some Moray Apprenticeships
by
Bruce B Bishop**

The "Elgin Institution for the support of Old Age

and Education of Youth", more commonly known in the town as "Anderson's Institution", dominated the eastern approach to the town. The Institution took in children from many walks of life, but in general these were children whose parents were unable to afford a good education for children who showed promise.

Little is known of what happened to the girls who attended "Anderson's", but many of the boys were found apprenticeships in various trades, and the papers of G & P Gatherer, Solicitors in Elgin, contain some of the indentures of these boys.

James Mackintosh from Cromdale, 1877

James Mackintosh, the son of Donald Mackintosh from Nairn, now a labourer at Craggan in the Parish of Cromdale, was apprenticed to John Sparke, Watch and Clockmaker in Nairn. This bound the 14 year old James to his master for a period of five years from 2nd April 1877. George Gatherer, the Secretary of the "Elgin Institution for the support of Old Age and Education of Youth", and Donald Mackintosh, the father of James, were to act as cautioners for his good behaviour. During his apprenticeship James was required to "bind and oblige himself that he shall faithfully, diligently and honestly attend his said Master's service both by night and by day, and that he shall not absent himself without leave first asked and obtained. He shall do no hurt or damage to his said master, nor willingly suffer it to be done by others, but shall prevent the same to the utmost of his power. He shall abstain from all vicious company and from all exercises which may divert him from his Master's services".

The "Elgin Institution for the support of Old Age and Education of Youth" obliged themselves to pay John Sparke the sum of £5 annually during the period of the apprenticeship. In return John Sparke obliged himself to "teach and instruct the said James Mackintosh in all the branches of the business or trade of a Watch and Clockmaker carried out by him, and to conceal no part of the business from him".

One of the most interesting things about such an Indenture, however, is the large number of people who were involved in such a legal procedure. In addition to James's father and George Gatherer of the Institution, we also find signatures for the witnesses, these being Hugh Rose, Builder, and James McArthur, Seedsman, both in Nairn, Donald Mackintosh, John Grant, the Minister of Cromdale, Jessie McIntosh, James's sister, a Domestic Servant at Craggan, and also of Henry Hilton Brown, clerk to Messrs G & P Gatherer,

and also a signature of Patrick Grant. The document was finally signed off by Alexander Reid, J.P. in Elgin.

Walter Ross from Alves, 1876

On 22nd May 1876 Walter Ross, the son of John Ross, a labourer from Alves Parish, had started an apprenticeship with John Taylor, Grocer in Elgin. John Taylor died on 4th May 1877, and although his representatives kept on the business for a short while after this they soon decided to close it, and Walter was obliged to continue his apprenticeship elsewhere. On 22nd November 1877 Walter was indentured to John Munro, another grocer in Elgin, and was able to serve out the remaining 3 years, 6 months and 22 days with him. George Gatherer and John Ross were to act as cautioners during the period of the apprenticeship. As part of the agreement John Munro was to furnish, either within his own family or elsewhere, at his expense, bedding, boarding and clothing at all times during the period of the apprenticeship.

Again we have a large number of signatories to this document, including not only John Ross, Walter Ross, George Gatherer and John Munro, but six witnesses, John McIntosh, John C Shaw, another John McIntosh, Patrick Grant, Patrick Gatherer and James S Allan. The whole agreement was signed off by John Nicol, J P in Elgin.

Alexander McRobbie from Elgin 1882

The third agreement took the apprentice far from his home. 14 year old Alexander McRobbie, the son of the late Patrick McRobbie, Gamekeeper at Pitgaveny near Elgin, was apprenticed to John Christie Lindsay, Grocer in Kirkcaldy for a period of four years from the 1st December 1882 to learn the trade of Grocer and Spirit Merchant, under the usual terms of an apprenticeship. Alexander's father Patrick, sometimes known as Peter, had died from Typhoid in Dr Gray's Hospital some 7 years earlier. The Institution paid the sum of £7 each year during the apprenticeship, but the document gives no indication of why Alexander had to travel so far from his home to find such a vacancy. Although George Gatherer acted as one of the cautioners, Alexander himself was obliged to stand surety for his own actions as his father was dead.

The signatories to this indenture were George Gatherer, John C Lindsay, and Alexander McRobbie, and it was witnessed by George Simpson, George Blair, James S Allan and W Cowie, but it was never signed off by a Justice of

the Peace. This and the other documents already mentioned provide a good example of how such a simple document as an Apprentice Indenture can identify many people, often ones of some status, in a town or an area, and the signatures on these documents will often provide a good indication of just how literate and educated the signatories were.

WORLD WAR ONE BRITISH ARMY RECORDS – PART 2

by
Stuart Farrell

So you've found out as part of your family research that you have a member of the family who was killed in the World War One as part of the British Empire forces - but where do you start?

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission gives a register of all men reported to them up to the 21st of August 1921, and has a searchable database at <http://www.cwgc.org> Family details are often included, and it includes a description and location of the cemetery or memorial where a person's remains are recorded.

For any man who served with the Australian Imperial Forces, you can get his service record for free! Visit the National Archives of Australia web site www.naa.gov.au and follow the links to service records, where you can download or print his entire record, including enlistment papers, medical records, service sheet and correspondence, all in colour and all free!

For any man who served with the Canadian Armed Forces, visit www.collectionscanada.gc.ca and under military and peacekeeping there is a searchable database, which will give you for free the first two pages of his enlistment form, with details which include address, parents, occupation, medical inspection and date of birth. Also available free to download are War Diaries, which give details of where units were and their movements during the war. A new site to look at is the Canadian Expeditionary Force Study Group at www.cefresearch.com for a wide range of topics on their history.

For any man who served with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, visit

www.aucklandmuseum.com/130/cenotaph-database and use the searchable database named Cenotaph, which will give details of occupation, address, embarkation details, next of kin, regiment and service number. Service records may be requested from the National Archives of

New Zealand –
www.archives.govt.nz/researching/personnelfiles.php - they used to be free a number of years ago if you were researching a family member, but now there is a \$25 NZ charge, payable in advance.

For any man who served in the South African Forces, unfortunately WW1 records are still held by the South African National Defence Forces. Copies of service records can be acquired if an application is made in writing to: The Senior Staff Officer, Documentation Centre, Department of Defence, Private Bag X289, PRETORIA, 0001. There is a charge payable in advance. Sadly there is no website that I have been able to find about South African soldiers in WW1 but there are some useful items at the South African National Museum of Military History -
www.militarymuseum.co.za/main.htm

A publication worth looking at is De-Ruvignys Roll of Honour, 1914-1918: published in five parts, its 1400+ pages contain the biographies of well over 25,000 men of the army, navy and air force who gave their lives, nearly 7,000 of the entries being accompanied by a photograph.

Members' Queries

Query:

Alexander Wilson and Janet McIntosh had a daughter Isobel born in the parish of Croy and Dalcross on 20 July/August 1793 – the place name being indecipherable. **Keith Wilson (10)**

Response:

The Wilson entry is rather faint, but by looking at the digitised image in New Register House I was able to suggest that the place name might be "Tamnain" (or "Tomnain"). However, Tomnain was surely in Nairnshire and not in Croy and Dalcross, so this prompted another look at the digitised image at New Register House. It actually looks as if the end of the place name has been cut off during filming, and Bruce Bishop made the suggestion that it may in fact be Tomnacroich or Tomroich. If anyone can help with this one, please contact Keith direct by email.

Janet Bishop (2)

Query:

Hugh Wilson and his wife Mary Allan (Hugh was the son of Alexander Wilson and Janet McIntosh) appear on the 1851 census for Old Monkland (Lanarkshire). However, the facts declared for Mary are dubious to say the least! Her age recorded suggests a birthday in 1817 but that would make her a child bride and mother at 9 years of age. I am of the belief that a recording

error is present and that the year should be 1807 which would fit ideally with the expected date (always a danger, I know!). Further, her birthplace is recorded as "Eveeth", Sutherland – but no such place exists, therefore I am very wary of any information on this census. **Keith Wilson (10)**

Response:

The death certificate of Mary Wilson, ms Allan, in 1868 shows her age as 61, giving a birth date of circa 1807. The index to the census of 1851 does indeed give Mary's age as 34, when in actual fact she would have been 44. The indexes to the now digitised censuses were compiled outside the UK, and ages are notoriously unreliable, especially in the census of 1851. However, on looking at the actual digitised image it certainly does look like 34 on the entry, so it is not an indexing error.

Imagine the accent of whoever supplied the information to the Enumerator – a highland accent and a Lanarkshire Enumerator – 44 with a Nairn accent could easily have been heard as 34 by the Enumerator, especially if Mary wasn't actually there at the time and couldn't be seen! The same applies to Mary's place of birth. Rather than "Eveeth" to me it looks more like "Crieth". I think therefore that what was heard as "Crieth" was probably uttered as "Creich", which is of course in Sutherland. Any other thoughts on this one? **Janet Bishop (2)**

Please feel free to add your own comments to any of the queries or responses.

Query:

I am looking for descendants of John Main and Mary McPherson. They married on 30 November 1843 at Duffus. They had the following children: Ann, 1843, Janet, 1848, Mary, 1850, Elizabeth, 1953, Madelina, 1854. They lived in Coal Row, Hopeman. **David Stephen Rennie (26)**

I am seeking descendants of Donald McPherson and Ann McIntosh, Hopeman. **David Stephen Rennie (26)**

I am seeking descendants of William Main and Margaret Young, Duffus area. **David Stephen Rennie (26)**

Please send any queries for inclusion in the Newsletter to Janet.

It is proposed, if there is sufficient interest, to have 3 informal meetings annually, probably in Elgin, for general discussion and solving of problems. These will be in addition to the 3 formal meetings per year. Watch the website for details, and please give us feedback on the idea.

