



Moray & Nairn Family History Society

NEWSLETTER

Edition 5

November 2010

Welcome to the fifth edition of the Moray & Nairn FHS Newsletter. We are now approaching the end of our second year, and membership is down slightly on last year. The AGM will be in January (see notice below).

Please submit articles of local or national interest, as we want to make the newsletter as interesting as we can, and the faithful few are running out of ideas!

Ardclach MIs are now published and selling well. Auldearn MIs are being tackled next, so watch this space.

Annual General Meeting 2011

The Annual General Meeting will take place on Saturday 29 January 2011, 2 pm, at Rivendell, Milnathort, Elgin, IV30 8TJ. All members are welcome to attend.

Contacts:

Chairman: Bruce B Bishop

Secretary: Janet M Bishop

Treasurer: Kenneth A M Nisbet

Webmaster: Doug Stewart

**Moray and Nairn FHS Meeting
20th November 2010**

At the November meeting in Nairn Community Centre members and visitors alike enjoyed a most interesting talk by

Jenny Rose-Miller of the Cawdor Heritage Society which gave us a 'Tour of Historic Nairnshire'.

A wide selection of photographs was shown, which took the audience to many places in the county, both the well-known ones and also many of the lesser-known ones, and gave a fascinating picture of the changing ways of life over the years. The country people no longer carry the 'bogle' round the cottage before they go to bed, to ward off evil spirits. Or maybe they do, and just don't admit to it!

From Ardclach to Cawdor, from Auldearn to Nairn, from cottages to castles, and from farming to fishing, the talk had something to interest everyone. Some of the photographs of the town of Nairn in particular brought back fond memories to some of the older members of the audience.

The meeting closed with tea and biscuits, and a general discussion, especially regarding the forthcoming release of the 1911 Census.

Bruce B Bishop

New MNFHS Publications since last Newsletter

The Parishes of Nairnshire. Monumental Inscriptions, Parish of **Ardclach**. Compiled by MNFHS members. 44 pp. ISBN 978-0-9566780-0-3. £4.00.

The Parishes of Moray. Records of the Free Church. **Burghead** Free Church, Baptisms and Marriages, 1850-1854, and **Rafford** Free Church, Roll of the Original Communicants of the Free Church, 1843. Compiled by Douglas Stewart. 60pp. ISBN 978-0-9566780-1-0. £4.00.

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Moray & Nairn FHS Website

If you have any news items for the website, please submit them direct to Doug Stewart,

**Nairn Cemetery (Victorian Section)
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by
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A Brief History of Moray and Nairn

Part II

The Vikings

In about 800 the Viking occupation of the Northern Isles began, and the Norse Earldoms of Orkney and Caithness (Caithness) were established by about 850. The main Viking sphere of influence extended down the west coast of Britain and included the Western Isles, the Isle of Man, Wales and of course Ireland. It was not long before the Norsemen began to extend their voyages southwards to the Moray Firth, especially during the time of the Earldom of Sigurd in the late 9th century. There is evidence of Viking activity at Burghead at this time, but little suggestion that they ventured any further inland, and they seem to have had little lasting influence on the local population.

Moray was now a frontier between the Scottish Kings across the mountains and the Viking Earls to the north. It is known to have been a troubled and unsettled area, but there are suggestions that the Mormaers of Moray and the Viking Earls made pacts with each other at various times, when it suited them.

The 10th and 11th centuries

The 10th century saw turbulent times for the people of Moray, with many battles between the Mormaers of Moray and the Kings of Scotland, although these were interspersed with some more peaceful periods. The Vikings to the north probably put their oar into the fray at times, whether invited or

opportunistic.

Some of the Viking forces were now venturing further inland into Moray, and there are suggestions that the name of the town of Elgin was originally “*Helgyn*”, named after Helgy, the commander of one of these forces of the Earl of Orkney. The name of Elgin, or Helgy’s presence there, does not appear in any of the Viking Sagas, which would probably indicate that such settlements were of little consequence in the greater scheme of things.

By the end of the 10th century the Province of Moray, away from the coastal wetlands surrounding the very extensive Lochs of Spynie and Cotts, was still a heavily wooded area especially in the higher lands to the south. Large areas of woodland were being cleared for agriculture, and the very fertile lands were able to provide for the now rapidly increasing population. The Mormaers of Moray continued to function as regional rulers, and the area maintained its status of both political and cultural importance. The towns of Elgin, Forres, Nairn and Inverness were now becoming established as the main settlements of the province.

In 1040 Macbeth, the Mormaer of Moray, killed King Duncan I at Pitgaveny, just to the northeast of Elgin, and was crowned King of Scotland. During the following 17 years, in addition to making a pilgrimage to Rome, MacBeth succeeded in stabilizing the country under his leadership until his death at Lumphanan in 1057 at the hand of Malcolm Canmore. The people of Moray continued to support the successors of Macbeth, and there was much infighting throughout the country, with little acceptance by the people of Moray of any centralised Scottish Rule. By the end of the 11th century Donald III was King of Scots.

The 12th Century

Times were beginning to change for the people of Moray during the 12th century, and a different way of life was beginning to emerge. The threat of the Vikings was now a thing of the past, and in 1109 Scotland was united under Alexander I, who began a reign which was to last for 15 years, followed by King David I in 1124. King David, having been educated at the English court, was greatly influenced by the Normans, and sought to ‘civilise’ Scotland. He undermined the resistance to the monarchy in the north by creating a “New Order” similar to that which had developed in England after the Norman invasion of 1066.

He established Royal Burghs throughout Scotland in order to expand the economy of the country, and Elgin, Forres and Nairn all received Royal Burgh Status. The towns were granted charters to trade, hereditary sheriffdoms were created and castles were built, not only in the Royal Burghs but across much of the country to act as bases for the enforcement of the laws of the land. The King was able to put his own men into the castles to enforce these laws, and also to protect the towns from troubles such as those during the reign of William Lyon of England.

The Roman Church was also beginning to establish its own power bases, with the influence of the church now extending throughout virtually the whole country. The parishes originated about this time, with much the same boundaries being retained to the present day.

There was a continual influx of Normans, Saxons and Flemings into Morayshire, with trade having been developed with Holland, Belgium and the Baltic ports, and even at this time there were many new settlers in the area. Beroald de Flandrensis was brought to Moray to advise with the draining of the Loch of Spynie and the Loch of Cotts, and set up home on an island in the Loch of Cotts. The Gaelic name for an island was *inch* or *innis*, and on this island he built his family home, and took the name Beroald Innes, from which evolved the mansion house of Innes and virtually every person who now bears the family name of Innes.

The Royal Burghs, and also many smaller towns or villages, were allowed to erect a mercat cross, often within the churchyard, which became the focus of trade, and also the place from which proclamations could be made. Tolbooths were being built as a seat for the civil authorities in the Burghs, and there was general law and order in the towns. The countryside around, however, was still in a disturbed state.

The natural forests had by now almost all been felled, except for the Royal Forests of Longmorn, the Enzie, Altyre and Darnaway, and the unfarmed lands were degenerating into moorland and heathland. The main commodity at the markets was food, with little in the way of luxuries for the general population. The Royal Burgh of Elgin, Forres and Nairn were now considered, for a brief period, to be quite wealthy. By 1135 the Earldom of Moray had been annexed to the Crown, and the fortunes of the Burghs were beginning to decline. The latter part of the 12th century was a time of turmoil throughout Scotland, and Moray was no exception.

King William, who succeeded to the throne in

1165, was in Elgin several times during his reign, and was accompanied by many of the leading nobles and clergy of the time. Elgin must have been an important centre to be able to accommodate the King and his large retinue, and during the course of his reign from 1165 to 1214 he granted no less than 14 charters to the Burgh of Elgin, compared with one to Inverness and 6 to Aberdeen. He may have used Elgin, and possibly also Forres, as a base for his military expeditions into Ross.

Part III will follow in the next Newsletter in March 2011

Bruce B Bishop, FSA Scot

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Articles

STRONDOW and BORLUM

**by
Pat Milne**

In writing this account of the Milnes of Borlum I am indebted to Brenda Mclean, a direct descendant, for generously sharing the extensive research she has carried out on the history of her family.

When Dod and Jessie first arrived in the parish of Knockando, there was yet another family of Milnes there besides the one at Crofts and later Knockanreich. This was the family of James Milne of Borlum (Borlume, Upper Borlum) and his wife Helen Bremner, who had been married for only a couple of years. They had a little boy named Peter, born in 1788. A descendant of this family, Brenda McLean, has not ascertained where or when James was born, as he died before the 1841 census; however there is a close link between the Borlum Milnes and those of Strondow.

The name Strondow means blacknose, no doubt referring to the shape of a prominence there. Old maps of the late 1700s, early 1800s show the site

of the farm buildings somewhat differently from the later maps of the mid-nineteenth century. Prior to the Great Moray Flood of 1829, it appears the cottages at Strondow were closer to the Allt Arder, one of the burns that tore down in a great spate towards the Spey, on that momentous occasion. The burn actually carved a new course on its way to join the river and that may be the reason the steadings were later sited differently. However, the flood of 1829 was much later than the first known Strondow Milnes, James and his wife, Elspet Stuart/Stewart. It seems they may originally have come from Aberlour in Banffshire, as a James Milne of Ballintor, Aberlour married an Elspet Stuart there in November 1718. A Patrick Milne was born in Aberlour in 1720, but his father's name was John. James and Elspet farmed at Strondow for many years before they both died in the mid-1700s. In memory of his parents, their son Patrick had a table stone placed in Knockando Churchyard:

*James MILNE of Strondow died Nov 4th 1759(2) aged 82
And his wife Elspet STEWART died May 2nd 1748 aged 60*

Patrick may have started farming at Strondow with his father, but the let may have lapsed after James' death, and Patrick then took up the lease of Borlume instead, although he may have moved. Borlume was a very old farm, and is mentioned in a charter of resignation to Ludovick Grant (laird of Elchies) in 1713. It was south-east of Strondow and closer to Knockando church and, being closer to the Spey, would have been less exposed to the elements than Strondow and with better soil. Its name is Gaelic for a ridge or declivity and is also frequently used for a patch of good arable land.

In the second half of the 18th century, moneys were raised in various ways on all types of property. In 1797 it was decided to put a tax on horses. This tax required the name of the owner and the number of horses he used in husbandry or trade. Naturally, being by nature thrifty, some evaded the payment, and it became necessary to track down the non-payers. Fortunately, Patrick Mill [Milne] and his brother or son, James Mill [Milne], both of Borlum[e] paid their duty and were listed in the official records as having done so. Patrick and James each had two horses. James was taxed 4d [pence] on his two horses, but Patrick only had to pay 2d on one of his. He was by then an elderly man in his seventies and may have needed only one working horse.

It seems likely that the James Milne at Borlum in 1797 was in fact Patrick's son. If he had been a brother his name should have been recorded on

the memorial stone along with Patrick's. If James were Patrick's son he would have been born between about 1750 and 1760 and aged in his mid forties in 1797. By then he had been married for ten years to Helen Bremner and had three sons. The eldest boy was Peter, born in 1788. Patrick was the Gaelic form of the name Peter, and at this time the names were interchangeable. It seems likely that he was named for his grandfather, James' father. He was followed by a son named James in 1792 and finally, by John, in 1795, who was named for Helen's father.

When the Parish Poor Distribution was made in 1835, it was the youngest son, John, who was farming at Borlum, so it seems that his father, James had already died. Indeed, there is a record of the let of Borlum farm dated December 31st 1830, which may indicate that James had died prior to this and the new lessee was John. Helen, his mother, however, was still alive and living at Borlum with John and his wife, Elizabeth Cumming. But why hadn't Borlum passed to Peter, John's older brother?

*

Peter Milne, born in 1788, left the land to go to sea. It is believed he rose to become a ship's master and a Peter Milne, ship's master, is recorded living at 35 Virginia St Aberdeen in 1837. There is a family legend that on one of his voyages he sailed to Australia and there met his death - through murder so the story goes (there is a reference to a Master P Milne sailing the *Lalla Rooke/Rookh* from Launceston, Tasmania to Melbourne on March 4th 1852, making Peter of Borlum, if it were he, sixty-four at the time; it is true however, that sea captains kept their post as long as they could still clamber on board their ship, up the rope ladder from the tender).

So far, no evidence of this tragic event has been uncovered, but what is true is that eventually a valuable possession of his (empty of its contents) made its way back to Scotland. This possession is a brass-bound, rosewood writing slope, which is now in the hands of his several times great niece, Brenda McLean. As it would have been given to his widow if he had married, it is presumed that he did not.

*

Peter and John's brother, James, is thought to have married Helen Kandich in 1815. Helen Kandich was born in June 1793, the daughter of Donald Kandich and Helen Clark who lived at the Borlum. Donald Kandich married Helen Clark in Knockando in 1789 and in 1841 Helen Clarke

aged 70 of independent means was still living at the Borlum with the Milnes.

The marriage between Helen Kandich and James Milne, son of James Milne and Helen Bremner of Borlum, would have been a youthful affair as they were both in their early twenties. Sadly, it didn't last as James died between 1815 and 1822, perhaps not long after they married, as there appear to be no children of the union. Helen then married Lewis Smith in about 1823 (it may have been a second marriage for Lewis also, as a Lewis Smith married Helen Grant in December 1819 in Knockando). The Smiths were at Newpark, Knockando (where James and Margaret Milne lived in another cottage), when their two eldest sons, John Lewis and Alexander Smith were born in March 1824 and February 1827.

By 1830, the Smiths were at Borlum (when Lewis was a witness at the baptism of Alexander Milne, son of James and Margaret), and where Lewis' mother-in-law, Helen Clark was still living. Helen's older brother, James Kandich also worked at Borlum, as he was recorded there when he was witness, in 1821 and 1826, to the baptisms of two of the daughters of James and Margaret Milne of Newpark. Lewis and Helen's third son, William, may actually have been born at Borlum, as his birth was in March 1830 (mother was named as Helen Kynoch).

In 1841, Lewis Smith aged 60, Ellen (Helen) Smith aged 45 and Alexander Smith aged 14 were back at Newlands (previously known as Newpark). The following year, Lewis Smith of Newlands was buried in Knockando Cemetery on October 1 1842. Helen returned to her maiden name, and in 1851 Helen Kynoch, widow, aged 59, born Knockando, crofter of 3 acres, was still living in one of the cottages at Newlands with her youngest son, William Smith aged 21 born Knockando, employed as a labourer. In 1841 he may have been the William Smith aged 10 a servant with Alexander Robertson of Milton.

*

James Milne and Helen Bremner's youngest son, John Milne, married Elizabeth Cumming, known as Elspet or Betsy, in 1828. They lived at Upper Borlum throughout their long lives. Elspet, born it seems about 1800, (although not baptised until New Year's Day 1806), was the daughter of John Cumming and Helen Cruickshank of Cardow farm in Knockando. Later, the Cummings started Cardow Distillery, and Helen featured in a history written about its origins:

"She was a resourceful woman, Helen Cumming

(nee Cruickshank). At a time when excisemen were hated and reviled, Helen Cumming's activities made her something of a folklore heroine in Moray. In 1811, she and her husband, John, took a lease on a small farm at Knockando on Speyside. Cardow was ideally placed on the fertile uplands between the valley of the Spey and the peat moors of the Mannoeh (Hill). It was particularly well placed for distilling, with a fine supply of soft spring water and good, solid peat close to hand. It was almost inevitable then, that John should set up a small still and begin producing whisky. It was illegal of course but John was undeterred. He found Helen a staunch ally.

She realised quickly that the only way to defeat the exciseman was to outwit him. Once, when brewing she was warned that two were approaching. There was just enough time to hide the distilling apparatus. She scattered a few bowls on the table just as the men were striding up to the house. Smearing her hands with flour she opened the door with a welcoming smile and the words: "Come awa ben, I'm just baking."

Such a charming and homely body quickly earned the trust of the excisemen and, whenever they descended on Knockando and Carron, they stayed with the Cummings overnight. They were, of course blissfully unaware that they were sharing a roof with probably the most professional illicit distilling operation in the country. Being wholly unselfish Helen would slip outside on some pretext and hoist a large red flag to warn the neighbourhood that the excisemen were in the area, so they should be extra careful. We can suppose that the excisemen were puzzled by their singular lack of success in finding illicit distilling in Upper Moray. (Illegal whisky makers liked to use juniper wood as a fuel to heat their stills as the near absence of smoke hid them from the ever-alert excise men.)

By 1823, the Government relaxed the still laws, and the more-prominent distillers took out licenses. John Cumming was one of the first and his Cardow whisky – now on the right side of the law – became extraordinarily popular. Its reputation spread to such an extent that Lewis Cumming, John's son, appointed manager, began to turn down orders. When Lewis died in 1872 the distillery fell to his wife, Elizabeth, an astute and admirable woman. At once she took a firm grip on the business. She decided that the original lease on Cardow Farm, which expired every 19 years and had to be renewed, did not make good business sense. She rebuilt the distillery 300 yards away on a plot of ground, which she bought. The rebuilt distillery opened in 1885 and business took

off.”

It was so successful it eventually caught the attention of several blending firms. Johnny Walker and Co. took it over in the 1890s, but before they did so Elizabeth Cumming ensured that cottages were built with running water, for all the employees.

*

By 1835, when the distribution to the poor took place, Jock was Borlum’s farmer, so it seems likely that his father, James, had already passed away. He and Elspet had three children, Helen, John and Isabella. It was to be another six years after Isabella that baby “Kissie”, or Janet was born and a further four years to John in 1842. The year before young John’s birth, at the time of the 1841 census, Jock and his family also had the two elderly Helens living with them. They were both widows; Helen Clark, the widow of Donald Kandich and Jock’s own mother, Helen Milne aged 81, who died the following year.

Jock was still farming Borlum in 1851, and it was now a sizable 46 acres with three farm labourers. The farm was mainly involved in growing cereal crops as they had a ready market at Cardow for their barley, which was used in the distilling of whisky. The two boys, Peter and young Jock, were also helping with the farm work along with the three young men Peter Milne, Donald Rannie and Alex Duncan. Peter Milne had been born in Botriphnie. He was aged twenty-two and although he was married his wife, Bell, and two young children, were living in Archiestown, not at Borlum (it is still not known what connection he had to the Milnes of Borlum, if any). Helen was Jock and Elspet’s only daughter then living at home as Isabella was working for her uncle, Lewis Cumming, at nearby Cardow farm. Four years later Bella married Peter Margach of Garlinemore.

By 1861 there were changes at Borlum as by then Jock snr was aged 65. He was now jointly farming with his son Peter, who was nearly twelve years older than his brother, young Jock.

The farm had increased to 50 acres and all the family were involved in the running of it; not only Peter and his younger brother, but Peter’s wife, Maggie, and sisters, Nell and Jessie, also. As their descendant, Brenda, said, the womenfolk looked after the children and were also kept busy “washing, cleaning, stitching, baking and feeding the men daily, as well as feeding the livestock kept in the steadings around the house.”

Peter had married Margaret Sim in 1855, and by 1861 they had four children. Charles, the eldest,

lived with his grandparents in their cottage on the farm along with his maiden aunts Nell and Jessie and Uncle Jock. Peter and Maggie and their three little girls, Jessie, Helen and Isabella lived in another cottage together with a young boarder, a house maid, a dairy maid and a ploughboy. It is possible that, as Borlum now appeared to be prospering, this was when the stone-built, two-storey house was erected on the farm which still stands today.

Between 1855 and 1877, Peter and Maggie produced three sons, Charles, John and Peter, and a bevy of nine daughters, Jessie Eliza, Helen Cumming, Isabella, Margaret, Elizabeth (Lizzie), Margaret Ann (Maggie), Williamina (Minnie), Louisa Sinclair and Mary Jane! Peter was to be the last, as by then Maggie was forty three.

Old Jock and his wife Elizabeth died within five months of each other in 1878, and the Borlum passed to Peter. Young Jock married Jessie McDonald the same year and, after a daughter, Elizabeth, was born in Knockando, went to New Spynie near Elgin looking for farm work. Three years later, the 1881 census showed Upper Borlum farm was now 80 acres. Peter and Maggie and ten of their children, ranging from the eldest, 25 year-old Charlie to baby Peter, lived there, and so did Peter’s maiden sister, Hellen. Maggie died in 1898, but Peter lived into the second decade of the twentieth century.

The last Milne to farm at Upper Borlum was Charlie Milne, eldest son of Peter and Maggie, who lived until well into his nineties (98). A past Knockando resident, Mr Shand, recalled, in his memoirs, paying a visit to Charlie’s cottage at Woodside in the 1950s, “when old Charlie Milne was nearing his century and (I) enjoyed a long ‘crack’ with him about the old days”. Charlie’s sisters lived at the Borlum, until one by one they left to get married. This was unfortunate, as it was said it had always been the women of Borlum who had worked the land harder than the men in the family (Charlie’s great niece, Brenda McLean was told that ‘the lamp was never out in the farmhouse as the women worked through the night getting everything ready for the day’s work ahead).

Neither of Charlie’s brothers chose to work for him at Borlum, and by 1904/5 only the youngest two maiden sisters, Louisa and Mary Jane, were still there. Their unmarried Aunt Nell (Helen Milne) also lived at the Borlum until her death in 1904. It is believed she had a room above the kitchen and knocked on the floor with her stick to summon her nieces when she needed attention. Charlie’s youngest brother, Peter had been

working as a cattleman on the farm but left to help his widowed sister Jessie Robertson, who farmed Burncastle at Marypark in Ballindalloch and later at Blackboats

Their other brother, John, left farming altogether and became a policeman in Glasgow. Charlie married Helen Roger and their daughter, Isabella never married. Neither did his brother Peter (nor John either) so the Milnes' long, long association with the Borlum came to an end. Even Charlie, in the latter years of his very long life, went to live in nearby Woodside Cottage with his wife Nellie Rodger.

WHO WAS AUNT JESSIE?

by
Tom Graham
(Member 33)

When my wife Sheena and I visit Aberdeenshire from our home in Troon, we stay in Alford with her sister. Long car trips around the north east are much enjoyed features of these visits, and they often include a sweep along the Moray coast. On those occasions, a visit to Speybay is demanded by the sisters "to see aunt Jessie's house".

The house is one of a dispersed cluster of cottages in the hamlet of Bogmoor, about a mile inland from the mouth of Scotland's fastest flowing river. Until the 1950s, these were mostly occupied by salmon fishers, who also did some small scale crofting - not likely to have had much of a place in history, one might think, but it has actually figured on the big historical scene three times. Two of those occasions were due to the difficulty of fording the fast flowing river Spey. One of the least bad places for crossing in pre-bridge days was at Bogmoor, so it is not surprising that the Romans had a camp there during the campaign, in which their pursuit of the Picts eventually led to the mysterious battle of Mons Grampius. It was also where Cumberland's army stopped a couple of days before they squared up at Culloden in 1746. Apparently Jacobite forces were present on the west bank of the river and could have opposed the difficult crossing, but threw away this tactical advantage by withdrawing. Maybe that was their last real chance of victory?

The other historical bit-part was as a near-neighbour to Garmouth, on the opposite bank of the Spey. Charles II landed there in 1650 on his disastrous return to Britain after his father's beheading, and entered into undertakings with his welcomers, which he signally failed to honour and

which brought major grief to Scotland.

But back to Jessie ... I knew neither of their parents had a sibling called Jessie and on enquiry she was "probably a friend or some sort of relation of Mum's". Their parents had honeymooned in her house in 1928. If she was a friend, was she one before that or because of that acquaintance? If she was a relation - what relation?

After another of these visits to Spey Bay, I decided to find out just who she was. The obvious first step was to review what we knew. More information was remembered later but the initial picture was ...

... Jessie had lived in Bogmoor from at least 1928 (the time of the honeymoon) into the 1940s, because, as youngsters, Sheena and her sisters had holidayed there on two or three occasions in the 1930s and early in the war. On at least one of these holidays they had been in the charge of a young maid from their farm in Rhynie in north west Aberdeenshire. The maid, Bunty Mearns, was herself still in her teens.

... the girls could not recall her surname; they were only wee, and knew her only as Auntie Jessie. Nor could they recall if she had a husband. They did know she had an illegitimate son called Dr Jimmy Smith ... who in turn, had an adopted son called Kenny Smith. (That suggested Jessie's name could be Smith.)

... they were sure Jessie was older than their mother, though by an uncertain amount, so she must have been born in the 1890s or earlier. She had a sister called Mrs Ross, who had moved from Aberdeen to live in their home village of Rhynie for a number of years. The Ross children were a daughter Janet, a son Jim who was a headmaster somewhere in Aberdeenshire, and another child they couldn't remember about. Janet was the best remembered, perhaps because she always brought them lovely Christmas presents! Looking at old family photos it emerged by chance that Janet had also been a bridesmaid at the 1928 wedding.

Without a surname, and with a very uncertain age, it wasn't going to be easy to pin Jessie down but there were possible lines of investigation. If I could find Mrs Ross' marriage registration, or her death, I could learn who her parents (and Jessie's) were - but with no first name, a reasonably common surname, a rather indefinite time frame and no certainty of location, that turned out too long a shot. Maybe I could get there starting with Janet Ross' birth registration? We had a first name and a slightly tighter time frame from the old wedding photo, but again the uncertainties

proved too many to easily identify her. I spent quite a few "ScotlandsPeople" credits trying to do so. Who would have thought that there were so many Janet Rosses?

Surely Rhynie was the place to look? If Jessie was a friend of mother Cran (who had spent all her adult life to that stage in Rhynie), if her sister Mrs Ross had moved from Aberdeen to live in Rhynie, and there were no family connections in the Moray area, surely everything was pointing to Rhynie being where we would find Jessie's origins? But there was no Jessie Smith birth record to fit.

Of course, there was nothing to suggest that Mr Ross came from Rhynie, but, on the off-chance, the Rhynie graveyard was explored for Ross stones. There were several of them but nothing that fitted.

Having found nothing in Rhynie, a tack which had to be explored was the censuses for Bellie parish, in which Bogmoor lies. Jessie was certainly in Bogmoor by 1928, but she might have been there even back to the time of the 1901 census. So, in that census I looked for a Jessie with a son called James Smith, but could not find a match.

Knowing that most students in the north east went to Aberdeen University, I thought that the university records might identify Dr James Smith and through him his parents but, although there were quite a number of Smith graduates, none of them were in Medicine. All seemed lost.

Then serendipity took a hand!

On one of our visits to Alford, Bunty Mearns stopped by to see Sheena, to whom she had been something of a mother in her first years. In fact instances are recalled when Sheena called Bunty "Mummy"! Bunty was coming up to her 90th birthday three or four weeks later, but was said to be as sharp as a tack. Maybe she would remember something from her visits to Bogmoor in the 30s. And she did! In fact she proved to be an encyclopaedia.

Bunty recalled that Jessie was a Jamieson relative of Sheena's mother but quite a lot older. She was married to Andy Thomson, a salmon fisher, and she had no other children than James Smith, Mrs Ross' name was Bella, who was still living in Rhynie into the 1950s but had later returned to Aberdeen. Then, crucially ... "and there were other Jamiesons living in the house behind" in Bogmoor.

With all this information, another look at the 1901

Bellie census. There was Jessie Thomson with her husband Andrew Thomson and a son James...but also surnamed Thomson. Surprisingly the marriage of Andrew Thomson and Jessie took a wee bit of finding. It was only when my search parameters were changed from "Jessie Jamieson" to simply "Jessie" that it appeared. Her maiden name wasn't Jamieson ... it wasn't Smith ... it was Taylor!

With all these leads, it was not hard to flesh out the picture. Jessie had been born in Bogmoor in 1867. Like her son, she too was illegitimate, as was her younger sister Isabella, the later Mrs Ross. Both the girls were legitimised when their mother and father eventually got married thirteen years after Jessie's birth. Her son James was indeed illegitimate with no father entered on his birth registration in 1891. So the father does not seem to have acknowledged his paternity, but the middle name of Smith was a fairly strong clue! There was a family of young Smith men living in the near vicinity, several of whom could have fitted the bill, but James must be favourite!

Jessie married Andrew Thomson in Bellie in 1892. He, like most of the men in the vicinity, was a salmon fisher. She brought her illegitimate son into the marriage and her new husband brought one too! Alex Thomson, who was 5 years old at the time, and his mother, Elspeth Burgess, were still living close by. And Bunty was right; Jessie and Andy had no further children.

Interestingly, Jessie's young son was recorded at birth as Taylor - James Smith Taylor. Then his mother married Andy Thomson, and in the 1901 census he was recorded as James Thomson. Easy to understand that happening. When I eventually found him in the university records, he was simply James Smith. Three different surnames before he was twenty! And he used James Smith as his name for the next fifty years, so I think we can assume HE knew who his father was!

So why didn't I find him when looking for him as James Smith in the university records? Simple. I was looking for someone doing Medicine. He did an Arts degree, then a PhD. He was a "real" doctor not a courtesy medical one!

After a short period on the university staff at Aberdeen, he entered the ministry. Over the years he was a parish minister in three parishes, between which he was Director of Religious Education at the teacher training colleges in Dundee and Edinburgh (Moray House). When Aunt Jessie died in 1954, it was in her son's manse at Birnie, the parish next door but two to his birthplace in Bellie.

With a bit of further digging in the records, the question, of who Aunt Jessie was, was answered.. She was Sheena's mother's first cousin once removed, and both were members of a long-established Jamieson clan in Bellie parish, where the men, over at least three generations, had been salmon fishers.

But why had I not known about a Jamieson family connection to Bellie? In my early, unskilled, family history efforts, I had come to a full-stop at the 1881 census when the Jamieson of the day (George) had apparently entered "Keith" as the birthplace of both himself and his wife. The statutory records didn't know of their births or marriage there. Only now did more experienced searching show that "Keith" was a transcription error in the 1881 census. The actual entry was "Rhynie". This was true for his wife but untrue for George. It later transpired this was not the only time in census returns he told porky pies about his birthplace! But now the statutory record door opened and with it the road straight back to Bellie. This George was the first male Jamieson in generations not to work as a salmon fisher. The arrival of the railway in the late 1840s had given him his "out", as a pointsman, then a porter. By the later 1800s he had become a merchant, first in Huntly and later Aberdeen. With the usual large Victorian family, the two oldest boys were brought up by their maternal grandparents on the farm in Rhynie. Their grandfather had no sons and I suspect this was to provide an heir for the farm tenancy, which it did.

It was satisfying to have identified Jessie and through her the font from which the Jamiesons had flowed. In the course of it I had found the last Jamieson still living in Bellie, a young married woman in her 30s. Like her husband, she worked as a lorry driver. As I left my first family history discussion with her, she gave me a kiss saying "I bet that's the first time you've kissed a lorry driver...but don't go making a habit of it!"

Moray Miscellany

The town of Keith during the first Jacobite Rebellion

The county of Moray now includes some of the western parishes of the old county of Banff, and it is interesting to note some of the events of the Jacobite Rebellions on this very pro-Catholic part of Scotland.

On 25th September 1715, at the time of the

Jacobite Rebellion, the Session clerk of Keith noted that "*at this time the country was in Great Disorder by a most unnatural Rebellion begune by the E[arl] of Mar and carried on by him and the rest of the Popish Noblemen and Gentlemen in order as they thought to dethrone King George and set the Pretender who they called King James upon the British throne*".

Only a week later the parish and town of Keith were to feel the full effects of the Rebellion, and the Session clerk's record is very informative. "*At this time the country was all in confusion, no safety was to be got out or in. For this day 25th September the Earl of Huntly began his March to the Rebel Army with his cavalcade of horse, the foot being to Marshal Munro. This day immediately after the sermon the writer John Skinner, [the Schoolmaster and Session clerk], was seized and made prisoner by a party of Achynachys men as was pretended by the E[arl] of Huntly's order and was very harshly dealt with, the school etc being much broke &c &c &c &c*".

John Skinner even recorded more distant events: "*This day November 13th 1715 the Rebells having marched from Forth where they had lyen about 6 or 8 weeks were mett by the Duke of Argyll with only about 3,000 men whereas the Rebells were 15,000 strong upon Shirriffmuir near Drumblain where about 2 aclock afternoon they had a hole engagement & killed on both sides as we were soon informed by the Numerous Runaways*". Maybe some of the men who had fought and run away after the Battle of Sherriffmuir had returned home to Keith with reports of the proceedings.

His record continues: "*18th December 1715 this day the E[arl] of Huntly passed through Keith on his return very disheartened like. Upon Thursday being the 23rd this week about 50 of the Strathdon rebels leaded by Black John alias John Forbess and Scallater Forbess came and lay in town for a week where they committed unheard of insolences, robbed the school chamber and carried off many things, as did afterwards, about the beginning of the year Glenbucket's men, who were also Monsters of Wickedness*".

"*From the 18th December 1715 to the 12th of February 1716 there was no peace to be got out or in by reason of troubles and the marches and countermarches of the Rebells and Likewise Jacobites in the parish. The thievish Garrison put [upon] me [billeted with him] the scandalous trumpeter of Rebellion Mr James Sibbard [a Catholic] ..., who intruded the church and took the collection thus this year 1715 ended and the next began with abundance of trouble, robbery and oppression*"

“Upon Thursday night the 9th [February 1716] this week, the Rebell Army consisting of about 4,000 men quartered in this parish and did a world of mischief by robbing, plundering etc as they were flying from the Brave Duke of Argyll and King George’s Army”.

The King’s forces arrived in Keith on 19th February. *“At this time the King’s Forces having come up, our Jacobite party became calm, and our meeting house was given up”.* Although things then settled down once more for the people of Keith, it was not until the 14th October 1716 that James Sibbald, having forced his [Catholic] ministry upon the parishioners of Keith for several months, was *“deposed as Minister at the Meeting House for his forsaking the Protestant Doctrine and oyr grievous scandals”.* During that time he had even conducted ‘irregular’ baptisms such as that of the child of John Hutcheon in Achynachy. Finally, however, following his deposition, the Presbyterian worship of the people of Keith was secure once more.

The eyes and ears of the Kirk Session were everywhere. The Rebellion was finally laid to rest during the summer when the Session Minutes record that *“Att this time we have accts of the defeat of the Pretender’s Army and the taking of the Auxiliary Spaniards to the number of 400 prisoners of war at Glenshiells upon the 10th of June 1719”.*

<p>Janet M Bishop, FSA Scot ASGRA, AGRA</p> <p>A Professional Research Service</p> <p>Family History Research in all parts of Scotland – Moray, Banff, Nairn and Fife a speciality</p> <p>For details, please see: genealogyscotland.net</p> <p>Tel: 07720 239611</p>
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**From the Edinburgh Advertiser of
17 January 1809**

FARMS IN THE COUNTY OF MORAY
 To be let for 15 or 19 years, as may be agreed on.

The following farms on the Estate of Gordonstoun, in the united parishes of Ogstown and Drainie, and the shire of Elgin:

Nos	Names of Farms	Contents		
		Scots Acres		
		A.	R.	F.
1	Eppiehill	50	0	7
2	Mealdale	45	3	36
3	Shemstown	77	1	0
4	Little Miln	45	0	25
5	Westerfolds	78	0	0
6	Salterhill	116	0	14
7	Emilyfold	46	3	0
8	Drainie	111	2	21
9	Long Rigg Park	81	2	19
10	Silverhill	78	0	12
11	Bellormie	42	3	35
12	Penrose	43	2	2
13	Whiteley	54	0	4
14	Overale House	46	0	16
15	North Muirtown	46	1	0
16	West do.	42	1	31
17	East do.	33	0	1
18	Paddochdale	38	2	16
19	Haydon	46	1	4
20	Hamlets	45	1	14
21	Ardeviot	102	1	11
22	Helenstown	46	3	36
23	Milnfield	58	3	22
24	Hillhead	44	2	20
25	Kingsdale	67	3	4
26	Ettles	96	0	14
27	Ballgreen	86	0	0
28	Farlands	43	3	26
29	Ryehills	41	0	10
30	Maryland	47	0	2
31	Ogstown	42	0	28
32	Sweet Hillock	44	1	19
33	Newland	40	1	14
34	Henville	84	3	28
35	Charlesfield	41	2	39
36	Smithfield	43	1	26
37	Janefield	56	2	28
38	Ellesmere	47	3	12
39	Cullilaw	46	3	8
40	Covesea	45	0	0
41	East Plewlands	40	0	0
42	South Plewlands	41	0	10

Besides the above, there are near 200 acres at Plewland, Covesea, &c. to be let in smaller tenements.

Should larger possessions be wanted, the Farms which adjoin one another, might be advantageously laid together, and let in any of the following allotments:

Nos	A.	R.	F.
2 & 3, Mealdale, &c. containing as above	123	0	36
4, Little Milne and Kirkhill Park	80	3	5
4 & 5, Little Miln and Westerfolds	128	0	25
6, 7, Salterhill, &c.	102	3	14
9, 10, 12, Log Rigg Park, &c.	203	0	23
11, 12 Bellormie and Whiteley	96	3	39
21, 22, Ardeviot, &c.	149	1	9
14, 15 Overale House, &c.	92	1	16
16, 17, 19, West Muirtown, &c.	119	0	8
24, 25, 26, Ettles, &c.	266	1	36
27, 28, 29, Ballgreen, &c.	170	3	36
35, 36, Charlesfield, &c.	85	0	23
30, 31, 32, Ogstown, &c.	183	2	9
33, 34, 37, Newland, &c.	181	3	30
8, 38, Drainie, &c.	159	1	33
23, Milnefield and Cullilaw, &c. N. and E. of No 23	100	2	30
39, 41, Cullilaw, &c	131	3	8

Should still more extensive possessions be wanted, the following allotments may be conjoined and let together.

2, 5, Mealdale, &c.	245	1	21
6, 10, 12, 37, Salterhill, &c.	534	1	16
11, 13, 21, 22, Bellormie, &c.	246	1	8
14, 20, Overale House, &c.	303	0	2
24, 30, Ettles, &c.	426	1	34

Besides the above, there are others that might be advantageously enough laid together.

These farms, which are very favourably situated between the Royal Burgh of Elgin, and the shore of the Moray Firth, in a low-lying, warm and early district, consist almost wholly of dry arable grounds of an excellent soil; part of the them being a rich loam, well adapted for wheat and beans, part of them good lands for turnips and barley, and all of them highly susceptible of farther improvement. Lime-stone and shell marle are to be had there in great plenty; particularly the latter article, which may be found on some of the farms. As the lands stretch along the shore, an ample supply of sea-wreck for manure, can be

readily procured. The markets are good, and there is the most convenient shipping for the export of grain, both at Burghhead and Lossiemouth, in the immediate neighbourhood of this property. Liberal encouragement will be given to good tenants of skill and capital, and a power to sublet, on certain fair conditions. All the farms are out of lease at Whitsunday or Martinmas next, excepting the following, the leases of which expire at the terms after-mentioned, viz. No. 13, at Whitsunday 1812, No. 14, at Whitsunday 1815, Nos. 17, 18, and 19, at Whitsunday 1813, and No. 21, at Whitsunday 1810.

Besides the above mentioned farms, there are others containing a great extent of both arable and pasture grounds, on the estates of Altrye, Dollas and Roseisle, belonging to the same proprietor, that will soon be out of lease, and will be let in allotments of various sizes, to suit the views of different offerers.

Sir Archibald Dunbar, Bart. at Duffus or Mr Donald Smith, factor at Gordonstown will give directions for shewing the farms; and farther particulars may be known by applying to them, or to the proprietor, Sir Wm. G. Cumming, Bart. Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, James McKenzie, Esq; W.S. or Dr Coventry, with any of whom offers for a lease may be lodged.

Transcribed by Doug Stewart

Ardclach Monumental Inscriptions

The new MNFHS publication is now out and available for purchase.

Auldearn Monumental Inscriptions

A team of MNFHS recorders will begin work in the Spring on recording the MIs of Auldearn Churchyard.

Moray and Nairn Family History Society

Library Additions

The Society Library is currently held at Rivendell, Milnorduff, Elgin, but it is hoped that at some time in the future it will be held at the Moray Heritage Centre in the old East End School in Elgin.

The Library at present contains about 125 items, and these can be accessed by members by appointment.

In the last few days we have received from ANESFHS a copy of 'Seaman's Victoria Hall' which was written in 1987 and provides a fascinating story of the history of the hall, and of the various uses to which it was put. The booklet also gives a good indication of the financial problems which were encountered during the early days of the hall, and the tenacity of the board of managers in keeping it going, to become one of the most-used halls in Nairn.

We have also received three complimentary publications for 'The Family History Partnership LLP'. This organization, based in Lancashire, is a not-for-profit partnership which was established about 3 years ago with the aim of maintaining the availability of quality books on family history and to provide a route for authors of books on family and local history to get their work into print. See www.thefamilyhistorypartnership.com for information on all of their publications, which can be obtained either directly from them or through MNFHS.

The publications they have donated to MNFHS are;

'Researching Scottish Family History' by Chris Paton.

'Birth and Baptism Records for Family Historians' by Stuart A Raymond.

'Scottish Family History on the Web' also by Stuart A Raymond.

Reviews:

Many members will no doubt be familiar with Chris Paton's book 'Researching Scottish Family History'. Chris has regularly written for Ancestors, Discover My Past Scotland, Family History Monthly, Practical Family History and Your Family Tree. He also has his own Scottish Genealogy News and Events blog at www.scottishancestry.blogspot.com

The book is intended as a beginner's guide, and takes the researcher through the basics such as knowing where to find records, to information on Statutory Records and Church Records. Later in the book there are useful chapters on Censuses and Census Substitutes, Wills, and other useful sources, and there are even sections of DNA and on Heraldry and Tartans. It will certainly be of great use to the person just setting out to trace their family history, and it will also remind some of the more experienced researchers of some of the other sources and facilities which they have used in the past but may now have forgotten about.

Birth and Baptism Records for Family Historians, by Stuart A Raymond, gives a lot of sources for such records throughout the British Isles, and also includes some sources relating to British Births and Baptisms overseas. The book contains details of both web-based sources and other published works which may guide the researcher to some of the less obvious sources of information, such as the announcements of births in local newspapers, wills etc. Although the sources are primarily English, how many of us have English roots, or have branches of the family who went to England, Wales or Ireland. For some researchers the information in this book may provide a way through, over or around the well-known 'brick wall'.

Stuart Raymond's other book 'Scottish Family History on the Web' gives readers a summary of the main websites available for research. These include most of the well-known sources, and also give web addresses for Libraries, Record Offices, Family History Societies, and Discussion Groups. For the family historian needing information on Monumental Inscriptions there are several pages of web addresses for indexes of names, and for Censuses, etc, there are also many sites which may prove to be useful. The MNFHS even gets a mention on page 15. The usual caveat applies, of course, in that websites may become redundant or not kept updated, but at the end of the day it is for the user to decide on the value and accuracy of any given website.

The next Newsletter will be published in March 2011. Will members please submit articles for consideration to the Secretary
