



Moray & Nairn Family History Society

NEWSLETTER

Edition 20

March 2014

Welcome to the latest edition of the Moray & Nairn FHS Newsletter.

MNFHS Chairman's Report

Moray & Nairn Family History Society recently celebrated its 6th birthday! Although our membership numbers are slightly the same as this time last year, other societies are in a poorer situation with one group folding. Worrying times are ahead for family history groups throughout the country.

However it is not all bad news, our publication sales are on the increase! At our recent AGM I was informed by our treasurer Doug Stewart that sales figures were very good for 2014. And this year again we will therefore be publishing another three books relating to our area of interest. So thank you for your continued support of the Moray & Nairn FHS, without your membership we could not afford to publish material.

This year sees us continuing with work at Barevan Churchyard (hopefully we can get some sunny days to carry out the work) and Records related to Nairn Poorhouse, both of which will be published later this year. I am also currently working on the Elgin Poor Roll Registers, quite a few stories there and hopefully I will be able to tell a few in forthcoming newsletters. The Poor Roll for Elgin will be published in three parts in 2016.

As mentioned before I would welcome any comments or ideas on the society's future publications. Please tell us what you want! Items for the newsletter are particularly welcomed.

The society will attend the SAFHS Conference at Stirling at the end of April and we hope to see you there.

Stuart Farrell
Chairman

MNFHS Publications

Coming Soon!

*St. Ninian Press & Nairnshire
Advertiser*

&

*Nairn County Press and Advertiser
Deaths & Obituaries 1892-1899*

The St. Ninian Press and Nairnshire Advertiser newspaper was published by John Fraser of 102 High Street, Nairn, and was issued weekly on a Saturday. First issue was on the 5th July 1892 and ceased as the *St. Ninian Press* on the 17th July 1897 being renamed *The Nairn County Press and Advertiser* from the 24th July 1897. The paper ceased trading completely at the end of July 1917.

98 pages, of newspaper extracts with deaths and obituaries.

ISBN - 978-1-909887-06-0

£6; Postage & Packing costs on application.

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FOR ALL TITLES AVAILABLE**

Nairn Miscellany

The following was inserted in the marriages section of the *Nairnshire Mirror* of 7 Dec 1853, it therefore does not appear in my book of deaths from the Nairnshire Newspapers –

‘At North Street, Elgin, of scarletina on the 22d ult; Frederick David William, aged 6½ years, nephew of David Macbean, Esq. and second son of the Rev. John Macbean, A.M; Inverbrockie, South Australia.’

Contributed by Stuart Farrell

Moray Miscellany

THE MACLEODS OF DALVEY

By Ian Campbell Harris

Alexander MacLeod, who became the first MacLeod of Dalvey in Morayshire, was born in 1756 as the third son of Alexander MacLeod, the resident Sheriff-Substitute for the Isle of Skye, and the tacksman (lessee) of the Ullinish estate on the west coast of Skye. These Ullinish MacLeods were relatives of the MacLeod Chief at Dunvegan Castle, and like him were descended from Sir Rory Mor MacLeod, the 15th Chief.

The young Alexander was also born and brought up on the Ullinish estate, and it was there in September 1773 that his father received Dr Johnson and James Boswell as his guests during their tour of Skye and the Western Isles. In his famous Journal, Boswell gives a lengthy account of their time at Ullinish. [The house is now a hotel where you can stay in Johnson's room.]

In 1783, the 27 year-old Alexander MacLeod obtained a commission in the Indian Army, and served as ADC (Aide-de-Camp) to his kinsman, Major-General Norman MacLeod, the 23rd Chief (of Dunvegan).

It was only two years after Alexander was commissioned in the Indian Army that the unfortunate Warren Hastings was succeeded as Governor-General of India by another of Alexander's own kinsmen, namely John Macpherson (created a baronet in 1786), who also happened to be the nephew of Alexander's future wife, Marion née MacLeod. Alexander was thus already related to his wife, being the great-grandson, and she the great-great-granddaughter, of the same Donald MacLeod, 1st of Greshornish (another estate in Skye), who was a son of Sir Rory Mor MacLeod. Marion was furthermore the niece by marriage of Alexander's sister.

The couple appear to have married in 1796, shortly before Alexander began the acquisition of the Dalvey estate in Morayshire. This largely agricultural estate was located in the fertile coastal plain midway between the cities of Inverness and Elgin and just a couple of miles from the market town of Forres. Shakespeare mentions Forres in his famous Scottish play, when the eponymous Macbeth meets the prophesying witches on a heath near Forres, which, if the event had

happened, would have been in the vicinity of Dalvey. Witchcraft was indeed notorious in the area, and there is an account of a local woman brought to trial as a witch in 1662, who admitted to feasting with the Devil during Candlemas at Dalvey (then known as Grangehill).

The Dalvey estate which Alexander MacLeod purchased comprised about 1,500 acres of mostly arable land leased to tenant farmers. Before the Reformation of 1560 this estate (or manor) had been church land belonging to the Priory of Pluscarden located about 8 miles away towards Elgin, and is now re-occupied by monks with the status of an Abbey. A cell of Pluscarden monks also occupied Dalvey (or Grangehill) in order to superintend the running of the manor. From about 1608 the property passed into the hands of private lairds, and in 1749 it was purchased by Sir Alexander Grant, who changed the name from Grangehill to Dalvey, as he was to succeed his father as Baronet of Dalvey.

The original manor house that superseded the monks' dwelling was a substantial tower-house, but it had become structurally unsound by the time Sir Alexander Grant acquired the property, so he replaced it with an entirely new mansion in a Neo-classical or Georgian style. It was duly called Dalvey House and stands to this day as the focus of the Dalvey estate (although an extension of almost equal size was built at the rear in the late 19th century, but in a form sympathetic to the original block). The builder/architect of the Georgian Dalvey House was a local man named Colin Williamson, who later went to America, where he was appointed chief stonemason for the construction of George Washington's new residence, and his name appears on a brass plaque on the cornerstone of the White House.

Alexander MacLeod became a Captain in the Indian Army, but it might be asked how even an army captain had the means to acquire an estate like Dalvey with an elegant mansion like Dalvey House. His immediate family were in only moderately comfortable circumstances, and at best Alexander could probably have obtained only modest loans or legacies from any of them. However, there was in India at that time the opportunity to acquire considerable wealth, as well as power, and since some mutual relatives of Alexander and his wife were known to be good examples of such colonial enterprise, it seems more than likely that Alexander would have used such connections to do the same.

Although Alexander's two older brothers were army officers, and one of them in India, Alexander's wider family was probably more useful to his career. The immediate family of his kinswoman and future wife, Marion, for example, included very well-placed and influential people, some having direct connections with India. Marion's nephew, Sir John Macpherson, who was about thirty years her senior, had been no less a figure than the Governor-General. He was also known to have been very rich, and, significantly, Marion was to be one of his legatees. Of her brothers, one became a lieutenant-general in the Indian Army and a KCB (Knight Commander of the Bath), and two others were captains of ships in the East India trade. The elder of the latter brothers acquired a considerable fortune, enabling him to purchase the whole of the Harris estate in the Hebrides, including St. Kilda. His son, who was older than Marion, held a lucrative post with the Nizam of Hyderabad (a native prince). Numbering among Marion's younger nephews was also a major-general in the Indian Army, an ADC to a governor-general of India (Lord Ellenborough) and a senior surgeon in India who even became Honorary Surgeon to Queen Victoria.

Albeit Alexander already had blood ties with his future wife's family, the marriage must have given him even greater access to the influence of these relatives. However, such a marriage would not have been entirely one-sided in its advantages. Marion was not then wealthy in her own right, nor personally influential, but her family connections were nevertheless assets, and by investing them, as it were, in Alexander through marriage to him, she would as his wife be able to share in the status and benefits he gained in using them to advance his career and fortune. More particularly, however, Marion needed a suitable husband and a father for her two infant children, having been either widowed or in effect deserted.

Being in the Indian Army, Alexander probably also had the opportunity to win prize money and booty. It is well known, for example, that Chief Norman MacLeod of MacLeod, to whom Alexander was, of course, both related and served as ADC, had amassed no less than £100,000 in prize money during his career in India, which was a very considerable sum at that time. On the other hand, seeking one's fortune in India in those days was not without hazard. Conditions in general were harsh and unhealthy for Europeans, while personal ambitions had to survive in an equally hostile climate.

As a soldier, the physical risks were only compounded. India's various native rulers were often at war with each other, and the British in protecting their interests and their established bases (chiefly in Bengal, Bombay and Madras) inevitably came into conflict with these potentates. The British were also involved in colonial rivalry with other European powers, notably the French. The instability in India thus often led to military action by the British, and an officer could therefore expect exposure to considerable personal danger. Even Alexander's brother had been killed whilst a major in the Bengal Army, and as Alexander could well have been under the command of Norman MacLeod of MacLeod ever since he was commissioned in 1783, he may also have been involved in some of the very active service seen by the forces of that valiant Clan Chief. In 1785 Norman MacLeod was appointed Second-in-Command of the whole Indian Army, and remained in that post until he retired from the Army three years later. Thus Alexander MacLeod must have been his ADC some time between 1783 and 1788, so that may well have coincided with at least some of the period Norman MacLeod was the Indian Army's Second-in-Command. In that case, Alexander would have enjoyed a correspondingly prestigious position and access to a wider and more influential social circle.

It was, in fact, not at all unusual for returning "nabobs" who held ranks such as captain to be in a position to acquire landed estates in Scotland. When Captain MacLeod purchased the Dalvey estate, he is recorded as being late of the East India Company's service at Bengal. Alexander subsequently rose to the rank of Major, though this may have been in a local militia regiment.

Having also become the father of eleven children, Major Alexander MacLeod, 1st of Dalvey, died on February 3rd, 1821, aged 64. Only three days before his death, Alexander signed his last will and testament. He was then in "*bad health*" and attended by a nurse and a surgeon. He stated, however, that he was in "*perfect possession of my faculties*" and evidently realised that his end was near.

As executors, Alexander MacLeod appointed his wife, Marion, his son-in-law, Colonel Alexander Hay of Westerton (the laird of a nearby estate), his brother-in-law, Major-General (later Sir) John MacLeod, and his sister-in-law's husband, Norman MacLeod of Knock in Skye, bequeathing to each £100.

To each of his surviving children Alexander bequeathed £1,000, and to his "*beloved wife*" he bequeathed an annuity for life of £200, in addition to the usual entitlements of a widow. Excluding the capital value of the Dalvey estate, Major Alexander MacLeod's personal funds and moveable property were assessed at circa £2,400 in Scotland, though it appears he also had assets in England of a similar amount.

In accordance with his will, Alexander MacLeod's funeral was to take place without "*pomp or parade or useless expense*".

In having eleven children, these first MacLeods of Dalvey have also had many descendants. While quite a few have been connected to farming, a good many have been in the military, usually as army officers. Among the descendants over time, I have so far recorded 6 lairds (4 of Dalvey including the present one, and 2 of Westerton), 3 clan chiefs (MacKintosh), 2 barons (MacKintosh), 2 baronets (Baring), 1 countess (Temple of Stowe), 1 viscountess (Arbuthnott), 1 Lord Lieutenant (Aberdeenshire), 1 KB (Knight Bachelor), 1 KCB (Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath), 1 CMG (Companion of the Order of St. Michael & St. George), 1 CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire), 2 OBEs (Officer of the Order of the British Empire), 2 MBEs (Member of the Order of the British Empire), 1 MC (Military Cross), 8 JPs (Justices of the Peace), 2 MDs (Doctors of Medicine) and a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy).

The Author is sixth in a line of descent from the first MacLeods of Dalvey and lives in Denmark. He has compiled a very detailed manuscript about the Dalvey MacLeods and the Dalvey estate with a view to publishing it in some form. Anyone interested in this "project" please contact ian.harris@ofir.dk

Moray Miscellany

List of The Municipal Electors of Forres 1843

Anderson, James, Butcher
Anderson, John, Merchant
Anderson, R, Greeshop
Anderson, W, Painter
Anderson, A, Butcher
Anderson, J S, Greeshop
Allan, J B, M.D
Austin, J, Baker
Austin, James, Bulletloan

Baker, Richard, Vintner
Bremner, James, Merchant
Bain, Alexander, Shoemaker
Brands, A D, Surgeon
Bowie, Thomas, Shoemaker

Cumming, Sir W G G, Bart
Cruickshank, R, Wright
Cumming Bruce, C L
Campbell, J, Labourer
Cruickshank, John, Forres
Campbell, William, Grocer

Davidson, Thomas, Merchant
Donaldson, William, Labourer
Downie, William, Merchant
Davidson, J, Shoemaker
Duffes, J, Plasterer

Eddie, Alexander, Hairdresser

Forsyth, John, Writer
Fraser, John, Merchant
Fraser, Robert, Tailor
Fraser, Col, Drumduan
Fridge, James, Carrier
Falconer, W, Spirit Merchant
Ferguson, J, Gardener
Fraser, S, Baker
Fraser, John, Innkeeper
Fimister, J, Carrier

Gill, J, Merchant
Gillan, J, Clothier
Gillan, John, Wine Merchant
Gillan, John, Jun, Grocer
Grant, Rev D
Grant, J, Cabinetmaker
Grant, J, Carrier
Grant, Major A
Gillan, John, Vintner
Grant, D, Bookseller

Hendry, Alexander, Merchant
Henry, George, Merchant
Hendry, William, Wright
Hunter, J, Tailor
Harrold, Alexander, Wright
Hutchison, James, Rafford
Hutchison, J, Merchant

Innes, J G, Surgeon

Jamieson, W, Merchant

Kerr, William, Butcher
Kynoch, John, Merchant
Kerr, T, Merchant

Laing, William, Merchant

Lillie, Alexander, Farmer
Logie, William, Blackhillock
Lauder, F, Shoemaker
Laing, J, Draper
Leal, John, Crooks

McEwen, James, Draper
McCulloch, John, Carrier
Miller, James, Cartwright
Milne, Alexander, Bookseller
Munro, Robert, Merchant
Munro, George, Flesher
Munro, Alexander, Flesher
Murdoch, John, Vintner
McDonald, R, Brewer
McRae, John, Merchant
Manford, J G, Writer
McKenzie, A, Plasterer
McLean, Alexander, Baker
McPherson, J, Blacksmith
Munro, James, Grocer
Maund, P W, Draper
McGarrow, W, Grocer
McDonald, C, Baker
McDonald, A, Corn Merchant
Murphy, John, Gardener
Murdoch, Alexander, Vintner
McLean, D I, Druggist
Miller, J, Printer
McPherson, W, Baker
McDonald, R, Merchant
McGarrow, D, Innkeeper

Nairn, D, Plasterer
Naughty, W, Cooper

Paxton, R, Conicavel
Purse, W, Merchant
Paxton, R, Logie
Peterkin, Major Grant

Raff, James, Saddler
Riach, P, Merchant
Rose, John, Merchant
Ross, George, Merchant
Ross, Hugh, Mason
Ross, Thomas, Merchant
Reid, Alexander, Merchant
Russell, Thomas, Clothier
Rose, A, Carrier

Seal, John, Merchant
Sinclair, John, Mason
Smith, William, Blacksmith
Stark, Rev T
Sim, R, Alves
Smith, J, Carpenter
Souter, William, Roadmaker
Smith, Alexander, Carpenter
Sclanders, William, Writer

Smith, Alexander, Merchant
Stuart, R, Jeweller
Simpson, Rev A L

Thomson, P, Wright

Urquhart, James, Mills
Urquhart, Alexander, Mills
Urquhart, George, Mills
Urquhart, R, Writer
Urquhart, John, Mills

White, Alexander, Merchant
Williamson, A, Merchant
Williamson, A, Vintner
Watson, W, Shoemaker

Contributed by Stuart Farrell

Moray & Nairn Miscellany

Following on from the Moray & Nairn FHS's last book on Forres War Memorial, here are some of the men from Moray & Nairn who were awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal in WW1.

Nairnshire & Morayshire Distinguished Conduct Medal Winners

Gordon Highlanders

240651 L/Cpl J Burns (Fraserburgh)
For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. On the tanks being held up, and when the advance appeared to be indefinitely checked, he immediately rushed forward to the second objective in the face of heavy fire, and getting into a trench on the flank, bombed his way along it, clearing it for 200 yards, and thus enabling his company to advance with very few casualties. His prompt and gallant action at a critical moment enabled the advance to continue. (28.3.1918)
[Cpl John Burns, 5th Bn Gordon Highlanders, aged 20, was killed between 21/3/1918 and 2/4/1918 and has no known grave, he is commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial, Somme, France, panel 73. Son of Mrs Burns, 33 Hanover Street, Fraserburgh.]

265548 Sgt W Stewart 1/6th Bn TF (Aberlour)
He displayed marked courage and leadership from 9th-11th April, while his company was defending the bridgehead at Vielle Chapelle. The platoon officer was early wounded, and he assumed command. His platoon was guarding the principal post which the enemy attempted to take no less than six times during the two days. On one occasion he stood on the top of the trench,

discharging his rifle at the advancing enemy. (11.3.1920)

Seaforth Highlanders

5866 CSM J Alexander 1/4th Bn TF (Nairn)

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during the operations at Lieu St Amand, Noyelles, and Mount Houy in October 1918. During the heavy fighting he never failed in the conscientious performance of his duty, and set a fine example to the other ranks of the battalion. (11.3.1920)

8710 CSM J Bain (Forres)

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in killing fifteen of the enemy during an attack. He was severely wounded by his last opponent, whom he killed. He is a grand fighter, and his example is contagious. (6.12.1918)

265904 Pte J Cameron (Elgin)

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. This man was a stretcher-bearer and under heavy bombardment he attended the wounded of his own and other units, making journey after journey through machine-gun and rifle fire to the rear with wounded men, many of whom he carried on his back after his stretcher had been destroyed by shell fire. His gallantry was conspicuous, and his devotion to duty an example. (3.9.1918)

843 Pte W Fraser 1/6th Bn TF (Morayshire)

For conspicuous gallantry. Private Fraser displayed great skill in applying first aid to wounded under heavy fire, and bravery in carrying them afterwards to the First Aid Post 1½ miles distant. While performing this work he was wounded in the head by a shell, but continued carrying. His devotion to duty was most marked. (11.3.1916)

266466 L/Cpl G Geddes (Aberlour)

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. With five men of another unit he volunteered to go and bomb a post of Germans who had dug themselves in in front of our wire. In spite of heavy machine-gun fire the enterprise was successful, ten Germans being killed and fifteen captured. When his company withdrew he covered the retirement with his Lewis gun, though heavily shelled. Throughout the operations he showed great initiative and much courage. (3.9.1918)

[L/Cpl George Geddes, 6th Bn Seaforth Highlanders, aged 27, was killed 9/4/1918 and has no known grave, he is commemorated on the Loos Memorial, Pas De Calais, France, panel 112-115. Son of James and Elizabeth Geddes; husband of Ada Morrison Smith Geddes, of 30 Deveron Street, Huntly, Aberdeenshire.]

265978 L/Sgt J B Grant (Elgin)

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. When his platoon commander had been killed, this non-commissioned officer took command of the platoon, which had been reduced to seven in number by hostile artillery fire, and with great courage and determination beat off the attacks of the enemy, on whom he inflicted heavy casualties. When the line had finally to be evacuated, though bombed from a flank and under heavy rifle fire, he effectually covered the retirement with the remnants of his platoon with the greatest tenacity. (3.9.1918)

265140 Cpl R Gray (Lhanbryde)

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. Seeing three of the enemy bring a machine-gun into position to enfilade the line, this non-commissioned officer went out alone and attacked them. He killed one, wounded another, and took the last man prisoner, and then destroyed the machine-gun. Through five days of battle he showed a fine example of leadership and devotion to duty to those around him. (3.9.1918)

S/13475 L/Cpl C McQueen (Nairn)

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. His Lewis gun was buried by a shell. He dug out his gun and managed to bring it into action against the enemy in spite of his serious wounds, a piece of shrapnel having entered his back and passed clean through his body. (3.9.1918)

S/3043 Sgt J Noble 8th Bn (Nairn)

He has been in charge of the battalion signaling section, and for some time there was no battalion signaling officer. In the execution of his duty his fearless and untiring efforts were invariably successful. Throughout the enemy offensive in March 1918, near Arras, he was able to maintain touch in a most remarkable way, superintending the laying and mending of the lines, to a great extent personally. At Buzancy, July 1918, he maintained the advanced visual signaling station under heavy fire. His section has always been remarkable for keenness and efficiency, mainly due to his own efficiency and energy. (3.9.1919)

10476 CQMS W J C Proctor MM 2nd Bn (Elgin)

The work of this NCO during the period 25th February to 16th September 1918, has been most valuable, and he has shown great courage and devotion to duty under very trying circumstances. On one occasion during the attack on the Drocourt-Queant at the beginning of September, he remained two day's and nights with his company's rations under heavy shell fire trying to get in touch with ration parties which had missed their way. He is most valuable and reliable NCO. (3.9.1919)

26721 Sgt J Riach (Fochabers)

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in command of a platoon in an attack. Under heavy fire he rushed along a trench at the head of his men and bayoneted the first three of the enemy he met. The remainder, about fifty, surrendered, and their machine guns captured. (4.3.1918)

265303 CSM J Robertson 1/6th Bn TF (Burghead)
For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during an enemy attack. Under heavy rifle and machine-gun fire he reorganised the left flank of his company when it was in danger of being outflanked, and so readjusted the posts as to prevent the enemy cutting his company off. His fine courage and leadership, when all the officers were casualties, prevented the enemy from breaking through. (5.12.1918)

[CSM J Robertson, 6th Bn Seaforth Highlanders, aged 36, was killed 27/3/1918 and was buried at Beaulencourt British Cemetery, Ligny-Thillooy, Ps de Calais, France. Son of Mr and Mrs Robertson of St. Athans, Burghead; husband of Mrs G Robertson, 19 Grant Street, Burghead.]

8090 CSM A P Rodgers (Elgin)

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He assumed command of a platoon for four days under heavy and continuous shell fire. Throughout he displayed the greatest courage and energy, and set a splendid example to the men. (6.2.1918)

266323 Sgt J Ross (Elgin)

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. When his platoon commander became a casualty he took command and led his men successfully to their objective, eventually establishing a strong point across a river, which he held until ordered to withdraw. His determination and fine personal example had a very great effect on the morale of his men. (26.1.1918)

266089 L/Cpl J Shand (Hopeman)

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. When the battalion was rushed up into the line he showed great initiative and brought a Lewis gun into action when the enemy were close and held up their advance. Under heavy fire he carried a wounded man to the rear, and returned with a supply of magazines for his gun. His devotion to duty and good work were most marked throughout the period. (3.9.1918)

265769 Pte J Stewart (Lossiemouth)

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. Accompanied by three others, he entered his platoon's objective before the barrage had lifted and cleared a large section of the trench with bombs. His fine action greatly assisted in the

capture of the position and saved his platoon many casualties. (6.12.1918)

Black Watch

77 Sgt R Dunbar 1st Bn R. Highrs (Rafford)

During the forcing of the Sambr-Oise Canal, on 4th November 1918, and subsequently he showed great courage and dash while clearing a portion of a village where the enemy put up a strong resistance. He organised a party and led it round the flank of a house from which fire was delaying the advance. He rushed into the house alone and killed the man firing a machine gun and took six prisoners. (10.1.1920)

Machine Gun Corps

20372 Sgt W J Grant MM 1st Bn (Nairn)

For conspicuous gallantry in action at Maissemy-Fresnoy on 18th-19th September 1918. He set a magnificent example to his men, and it was owing to his courage and resource that his guns were able to inflict heavy casualties during enemy counter-attacks. He was subsequently wounded, but refused to leave his post until ordered to do so. (2.12.1919)

Contributed by Stuart Farrell

Moray Miscellany

Forres War Memorial – A Possible Non Commemoration

Further to my article in our last newsletter, I found the following article in the *Forres Gazette*. I would like to think if he had had family still in Forres he would have been commemorated on the war memorial.

From the *Forres Gazette* 10 February 1915:

'Forres Man's Son Killed in Action – Last week we noticed the death of Private James Hendry Auckland (elder son of Mr J. W. Auckland, and grandson of the late Mr Auckland, coachbuilder, Forres) who was killed in action at the front with his regiment, the 1st Battalion of the Scots Guards, on the 24th of December. The relatives have received the following letter, written by a comrade, Private John Lawson, on 27th January, giving particulars regarding the action in which Private Auckland met his death :-

As James no doubt told you in his letters, the few days' rest we were enjoying came to an end about a week ago and we went back into action. Having been pals since we got to Wellington we resolved to stick to one another through thick and thin and

exchanged addresses, in case anything should happen to either of us. On Sunday, 24th curt; the Germans made a splendidly organised attack on our trenches. [Part struck out by Censor.] We stuck together and fought for all were worth. Once his rifle and bayonet were shattered by a bullet, but he picked up another and continued firing. Then he was hit in the right shoulder, but continued to fire with his left hand. He turned and shouted above the noise "I'm hit, if you get through you might write and tell them." Soon after he was shot through the brain and dropped without as much as a groan. I myself was partly buried and lay for twenty-four hours on the field, and from what I saw I am sure that I myself would prefer instantaneous death to the torture some suffered before being finished off. I myself had to crawl though both German and British lines to get back to headquarters, so I was unable to take any of his personal belongings, all his kit being buried when the trench was blown up. I can deeply sympathise with you in your bereavement, for I have lost one of the best chums; but at the same time I thank God that he died as he did – fighting bravely till the end – an end that all of us must face some day, and after all is not better that we should die in the field, letting our country benefit by our last days, and finally giving our lives for that country and the suppression of tyranny. That's how a soldier faces death here, and I give it to you, hoping that it may relieve you in your sorrow. Remember that James died the death of a real hero, and could the circumstances be known he would be honoured by all.

The family has the sympathy of many friends in Forres to whom the subject of this notice was known as a most promising young man. He spent many of his holidays here and the relatives feel as if they had sustained a personal loss. The following appreciation of the *Govan Press* will be read with interest:-

As one who knew James H. Auckland more or less intimately from his boyhood I gladly bear my testimony to his worth and character. He was a native of Govan, born in the west end 24 years ago. He was educated at Hill's Trust and Elderspark Public Schools. He served his apprenticeship to engineering, at Fairfield, where he became a first-class tradesman, loved, respected and honoured by all his fellow workmen. He was of a bright, active and kindly disposition, and made a large number of friends. Everyone loved Jamie. But it was in church work that he excelled. His parents have been members of the MacGregor Memorial Church since its inception. James was in the Sabbath School and Boys' Brigade, and he was also for a number of years a member of Mr Haggart's Bible Class. Early in the war he heard the call of his country. He said: "I must go, father, and do my part for my

country," and so he enlisted in the Scots Guards on the 7th September last, and went to Aldershot for training. He never was home on leave, but was sent off to France, where he was killed in the trenches, as the letter from his comrade tells. In the MacGregor Memorial U.F. Church he was a force and an example. After leaving the Bible Class he became a Sabbath School teacher. He took a great interest in the Crusaders. He was also secretary to the Band of Hope, the largest in Govan, having 450 members. He was also a member of the Y.M.C.A, and above all he was a young man greatly beloved and an earnest Christian. Another sad coincidence was that Mr Auckland had just been elected to the office of deacon and was to be ordained in the MacGregor Memorial Church along with others, and it was intimated from the pulpit last Sabbath that as Mr James H. Auckland was with the colours in France he would be ordained on his return from the war.

Now is the fair young column broke,
The beacon light is quenched in smoke;
The worker's weary watch is still,
The trumpet silent on the hill.'

Sadly James has no known grave and is commemorated on the Le Touret Memorial, Pas de Calais, France panel 3. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission notes his service Mo.10441 and gives his date of death as the 25 January 1915, which contradicts the above article. He is not listed in the Morayshire Roll of Honour. His Medal card in the National Archives notes he only landed in France on the 5th January 1915 and was therefore killed less than three weeks later. Awarded the 1915 Star, British War and Victory Medals. James is listed in the Glasgow Roll of Honour with address of 31 Barnwell Terrace, Govan, Glasgow.

Contributed by Stuart Farrell

The next Newsletter will be published in July 2015. Will members please submit articles to the Editor: newsletter@morayandnairnfhs.co.uk

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