

# highland family history society



# comunn sloinntearachd na gaidhealtachd

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Please mark each item of business for the appropriate Official.

How do you pronounce Sasine, that land-transfer document which is very useful to find things out from? The OED says 'say-sin', Well that's fine, but it's related to Seisin. That seems to have come to Scotland from Latin via French. The 'ei' in the old French would have been pronounced 'ay' like the 'rains' on horses, but Scots (the language) lengthened vowels by adding an i, unlike English where you add an e to the end of the word (think of 'them' becoming 'theme'). Another related word for taking over land is to seize it, pronounced seez just like the Scots would. Ah, hum. I don't care, I pronounce seisin seezin and sasine sayzin and neither one sayzyne. Any objections?

John Welsh sent some more pieces (thank you, John) which we have added to our Fridge file, one of several not listed last issue because at that stage I hadn't got to it. There may be others we have not put into the pile, but let me know. My Dingwall researches threw up that we had at least one Fridge who died in the Great War To End Wars and is remembered on three stones in Dingwall, but buy yourself a copy when it comes out.

The Invergordon Highland Gathering is one of my part-time interests, and I got a phone call at the office from someone in Natal who wanted to start a Highland Gathering in South Africa, so phoned the British Embassy in Pretoria who gave him my office phone number! Belgian TV phoned me to help organise part of a Jim'll-Fixit-type programme they do, wherein a chap has a bee in his bonnet about things Scottish so they wanted him to partake in a Highland Gathering: well just naturally they phoned me, wouldn't you?

We sorted that one out and in the general chatting that ensued I elicited that they are also coming to Scotland on the family history front for a man named Colson, there are pages of Colsons in the Brussels phone book, apparently, who are descended from Scottish soldiers in the Napoleonic war times. He has discovered that these 'McColls', as they were then, are part of the MacDonald clan so he is coming over to meet the current chief on Skye. The researcher is learning a lot about the geography of the Highlands in these phone calls and now knows where the real McColl country is in Appin and Lorn, not that I expect too much of them. Isn't the world small?

What form do we want trees for our files? I don't really know, nor do I really mind and nor does it really matter. I suggested a few formats, expressing a preference for the standard drop chart, but when organising our small collection of computer-printed lists, hand-drawn charts, letters and family histories and so on, I found the easiest to work with and to file were the PAF pedigrees; I included this format as my own submission. They are not to be considered complete family trees, but are easiest to index by surname, and if they include a submitter's

## A NOVICE AT NEW REGISTER HOUSE

by John McMillan

I'm very much a novice at this genealogy game. Having cut my teeth on my Highland connections using the facilities in the library at Inverness, I had to look to New Register House in Edinburgh to dig up a host of Lowland ancestors. Following the advice given in the book "Tracing Your Ancestors at the Scottish Records Office" I telephoned to reserve a seat to search the country's records thinking I may have to book several weeks in advance. The girl's voice at the end of the line was welcoming and encouraging.

"Oh there shouldn't be any problem, sir. Since we've increased the number of search rooms we've never yet had them filled to capacity. Just come in when you like and you'll get a numbered ticket at the reception desk. Take a seat in the waiting room until your number comes up on the display board and you then report to the Public Counter and pay the fee (£15 per day or £55 for a week). You'll then be given a pass and a seat in one of the search rooms and someone will show you what to do".

I wasn't sure how long I should book for.

"If you have approximate dates for the deaths or marriage of your grandparents you should be able to trace all your ancestors back to 1855 in a couple of hours".

That was encouraging but, with a distinct lack of information on one side of the family and a host of details required on the other, I decided to book for a couple of days anyway.

I called in at the accommodation bureau at Waverly Station and was told that the cheapest bed and breakfast in town (this was at the height of the season in July) was the Edinburgh University student halls of residence. By booking there and then I was offered a 10% discount. The Pollock Halls are only a few minutes bus ride away and you can also have an evening meal for an extra charge.

Next morning I arrived at NRH at four minutes past nine and was already number 40 on the waiting list. Ten minutes later I had declared the reason for my search ("family history" will do if your spelling isn't up to "genealogy"), received my pass and copy of Notes for Guidance and was shown to the supervisor in the West Search Room.

"This will be your desk for the two days. When you come in tomorrow, there's no need to go to the waiting room. Just come straight in here and start. Now, if you come over here to one of the vacant computers, I'll show you what to do". They were all very friendly.

name and address they can be a starter for a point of contact. Thus after all my rattling on in the last few issues, this is what I've come down to.

The 1881 census has slowed down a bit for the summer holiday season but it does march on and it's had a late fillip due to the members of the LDS church in Inverness and Alness suddenly switching on to its needs. Altogether about a third of those batches have been transcribed for our area, and half of those are back for checking. The first few have now been returned to the GSU for data entry so they now know we really do exist. Many more people have offered to help than I was able to thank properly, but I do appreciate your offers. Please, please could someone in the Western Isles volunteer to be a local coordinator? It is a very important part of Scotland and the census for 1881 is naturally a very significant a set of documents for Gaelic speakers and ancestor-hunters.

Talking about transcribing censuses, we have only this week received the results of some very hard work by Margaret Shand, one of our Australian members. She has been indexing the 1861 census for Banffshire for the Aberdeen & North East of Scotland F.H.S. and she has abstracted all those she has found who were born in our area. She has some more parishes to do, but the alphabetic list she has sent contains 337 entries. It lists the name, relation to the householder, marital status, age, occupation, place of birth and the name of parish with book and page number where the entry can be found. Thank you, Margaret, this is an excellent addition to our growing library of family history data.

By the time you receive this Journal it will be less than two weeks to the 1993 SAFHS Conference and AGM, which our Society is hosting. The work involved in preparing for it is the main reason for the delay in producing this journal. As those of you who booked to come (142 at present) will know, we have had to move the venue as Culloden Academy suddenly discovered that they were double booked and the other lot (something to do with a Prince) outranked us. The conference will still be taking place as otherwise planned as we have moved the venue to Inverness Royal Academy.

Today is the first day of our new membership year and those members who have not paid their subscription in advance will find a reminder in the journal. Please pay as soon as possible as there will be no further reminders.

Cowlinge baptisms include "John Coling that was found in the cowcrib was baptised the 25th Dec 1691 being as they supposed a year and a half old at the least." Where was his mother when the church fathers found the child that Christmas? Hiding or at home pretending to be a good girl or out foraging? It sounds like she didn't come forward as they obviously baptised him with the name of this Suffolk village.

akin to a spirit medium as she searched for a long lost ancestor muttering desperately to it "Oh come on Willie, where are ye?" When the electronic medium responded to her impassioned plea she celebrated loudly by breaking wind! "Oh pardon me, I just got that excited when I saw oor Wullie coming up on the screen!"

It's a sociable place. I'm looking forward with confidence to my next visit.

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#### INDEXING OF SOLDIERS' DISCHARGE CERTIFICATES

Along with other family history societies, we have received a letter from the Association of Friends of the Public Record Office. On the 24th May they launched an ambitious project to index all the soldiers' discharge certificates up to 1854 held in Class WO 97 at Kew.

At present most of them are arranged in alphabetical order within regiments, so that anyone wishing to locate a particular soldier whose regiment is unknown has well over a hundred places in which to search. Moreover, certificates are filed under the last regiment of a soldier's service, so even when a regiment is known, a later transfer may mean that the certificate is in an unexpected place.

When the database is complete, it will be possible to group the men by regiment or county of origin, as well as having all of them in alphabetical order. This will be very helpful to those engaged in local history and population studies, as well as to family historians.

To achieve such an index, they need as great many volunteers. The work is to be done from microfilms, wherever a volunteer may have access to a microfilm reader. Anyone who is interested in helping with the project should write to Lesley Wynne-Davies, Project Organiser, 47 Wynclyff Road, Charlton, LONDON SE7 7LP.

An example entry from our area was enclosed with the letter.

Robert ANDERSON discharged from 1st Life Guards Ref WO 97/1 born Inverness enlisted aged 19  
Discharged in consequence of old ulcers from an injury received at Orleans in France early in July 1814.  
Previous service in Fifehire Fencible Cavalry 27 March 1796 - 26 March 1799.  
In 1st Life Guards 9 Sept 1802 - 11 Aug 1814  
Makes his mark for signature at discharge, aged 32, 5' 11" tall, brown hair, grey eyes, fair complexion.  
Trade: weaver Pension: 9d.

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I decided to start with my wife's grandfather. The computer invited me to type M for male, surname, initial, D for death, and year of death. I tried 1955. Instantly, it told me there was no record of such a death for that year and invited me to advance a year or try the previous year. I advanced a year and there he was: name, Registration District No and Entry No.

You then make out an order slip with Year, Reg District No, Entry No and your name and desk number on it and take it into the self-service storage area where microfiche with all the registration entries are stored. Go to the drawer with the year 1956 on it and extract the fiche for your Registration District, replacing it with the Order Slip. Take the fiche to your desk and locate the required entry on the microfilm/fiche reader (all the desks have one which can be used for reading fiches or censuses and OPRs on microfilm).

Having copied down the details I returned the fiche to the storage area. Just place it in the tray marked "Deaths" and the assistants replace it in the correct filing drawer. And so on. You go merrily tracing births, marriages etc. in the same way. You are allowed three fiches or two microfilms out at any one time so you can gather a lot of information very speedily.

Even when you have erroneous information the computerised system makes it so easy and quick to locate events. On one marriage certificate I noted that the groom's father was recorded as deceased. To identify his date of death I entered the details and started searching from the year of the marriage going right back to the year prior to the groom's birth. No such death had been recorded. I then checked details of his wife's death and there he was registering her death when he was supposed to be deceased himself!

Starting from that year I re-entered his details and simply pressed "Advance" key each time no record of death appeared. In a few moments I had scanned the country's death records for the next thirteen years and got my man. The marriage certificate had the groom's father deceased when it should have been the bride's father.

Some records eg. deaths at sea and service records are not available in the self-service area. An order slip passed to the assistant will have the records you want delivered within moments to your desk.

Don't worry if you are unfamiliar with computers. The staff are always on hand to help with any minor problems and I found that the other experienced searchers around me were quick to offer a word of advice when I showed any signs of uncertainty. There were many other novices there too.

On the second day my companion at the neighbouring desk was an elderly lady who seemed to regard the computer as something

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## MUSICIAN, MURDERER AND MUTINEER

James Shaw Grant

(Talk given to the Society 27 Feb 1990)

My subject is, as you might guess from the title, the skeletons in the family cupboard, more particularly, how I nearly lost the skeletons by my own carelessness and recovered them mainly by good luck. It's a cautionary tale for people like yourselves who are interested in family history and genealogy because you've got to take your opportunities when they're there. I was sitting for many years on top of what I can only describe as a goldmine, and I didn't realise the fact and did nothing about it and it's too late but fortunately I did manage to pick up some of the strands later on, but more by good luck than management.

When I was in my middle 40s I had an uncle and three aunts all living together not far from me in Stornoway, all in their 90s and all perfectly clear in the head and I used to go and visit them as they sat talking about somebody or other and then suddenly one of them would turn to me and say: "But you won't remember him, he died in 1890"; now I should have been sitting there taking notes of what they said, but I didn't. One or two things did stick of course. I remember being told by my aunt how, when my mother was a baby in arms, in a great gale in January 1877 the roof blew off her thatched house on the sea front in Stornoway and they were all standing looking up at the stars, and my granny, who's a very determined sort of character, refused to leave the house until daybreak because she wasn't going to disturb the neighbours.

On another occasion my uncle gave me a very vivid description of a whale hunt which took place in Stornoway harbour in 1867, he was seven years old at the time and he told me that he was awakened by his mother shouting at him in Gaelic: "Get up, get up, the town has been taken by whales!" When he went out there were about a hundred whales in the harbour and every boat was out driving them ashore.

Those things stuck to me but I didn't get down in any systematic way to trying to dig into the information that they could have given me if I had looked for it. And even before that when I was in my 20s my grandmother was still alive and she was born in the 1830s and she was a perfect mine of information if I had looked for it, but almost the only thing I remember picking up from her was that in her young days in the centre of Stornoway there was a big three-storey building: on the ground floor there was the local jail, on the second floor was the Council Chambers and on the top floor was the school. Now I don't know if that's getting the priorities right or wrong but she recalled that on the wall of the jail there was a scolding visor, I didn't think that she saw it in use but it was still there in her young days.

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I had another uncle and he went to live in the north of England and as very often happens to people who are away from home he was more interested in the family history than the people who remained. Very fortunately for me he wrote out the family tree on my mother's side, and sent it to William Matheson of Edinburgh University who used the material in a book he wrote about Rory Morrison, the Blind Harper of Dunvegan, a famous figure in Gaelic music and literature. The list as my uncle wrote it down was that he was William son of Roderick, son of Roderick, son of Angus, son of James, son of James, son of Roderick, son of John. The John was rather interesting, he was a well-known figure in Lewis history, the tacksman in Bragar on the west side of the island. He wrote the first description in English of the island of Lewis published recently in a book about maps of the Western Isles, and the Assistant Keeper of the National Library in Edinburgh, who edited it, described it a 'prose map' of Lewis.

But perhaps more interesting to me was the fact that he was a great grandson of John Morrison, the last of the hereditary judges of the island of Lewis, the Breitheams as they called them, who were the judges in the island under the old Lords of the Islands. The last of these judges, John, was killed in a fight, more a brawl than a battle I think, in Assynt around 1600 and a friend there told me that after the battle his relatives set off for home taking the body with them, but were storm-bound in Lochinver, storm-bound so long that they began to have doubts about the body.

As my friend put it rather crudely, they galloped the corpse and buried the intestines on an island in the mouth of Lochinver which is known to this day as the Brieve's Island and in that way they were able to take the rest of the corpse home for burial in his native Lewis. So I can boast that I had an ancestor and on more than one occasion the British navy has sailed between his stomach and his head! But the most interesting thing about this that my uncle passed on to Matheson was not the information it contained, but the piece of information that had disappeared. My uncle identified John Morrison the tacksman of Bragar, but not Roderick Morrison, John's son, who is much the most interesting person in the list, he was my Musician: Blind Rory, the Harper of Dunvegan.

Now, Matheson suggests Rory's identity was overlooked because he had left Lewis and had spent most of his lifetime in Skye, and his father John had remained in Lewis and was well known in the region. I think there is rather more to it than that, I think the memory of Roderick was suppressed because for the best part of the last century and even into this century the churches in Lewis were very opposed to music and dancing and poetry and everything profane, and I would think that our harper was forgotten because they didn't regard him as altogether a respectable member of the family.

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Historically he is much the most interesting and important of the lot. Some time ago I had the pleasure of listening to Ian Grimble's series on Scottish Castles and in the course of one programme a singer sang in the hall of Dunvegan Castle a song which my ancestor the Blind Harper had composed more than 250 years ago. It certainly gave me a thrill to hear the song being sung again. It is rather an important song because it was a political satire, one of the earliest in Gaelic, one of the first songs recording the decline of the old clan system, lamenting the fact that the chief had gone off to live in luxury in London and deserted his clansmen, and where there used to be singing and music making and playing of chess, and all sorts of things going on in the hall of Dunvegan Castle, there was nothing now but the echo sounding through an empty building. It is a very powerful piece of writing.

Now that was the Musician. The Murderer, if he was a murderer, I first heard of in my childhood. Everyone of my generation in Lewis was brought up on the story of Mac an t-Sronaich which means The Man With The Hooked Nose. And every village of the island has its own story about the people that Mac an t-Sronaich is supposed to have murdered and some of the stories are obviously quite ridiculous. The story as it is generally told says that he was hanged on Gallows Hill, just across the harbour from Stornoway. But I remember as a child being shown at the mouth of the river Creed in Stornoway Harbour a cave which was identified as Mac an t-Sronaich's cave and a little rock in it which was supposed to be his bed, and another big rock he was supposed to have used as a table. And one day when Willie Matheson was on a visit to the island, I said somewhat casually to Willie Matheson: "This Mac an t-Sronaich, did he ever really exist, or is he a myth?" And much to my consternation he said "Oh yes he existed all right, he was a relative of yours!" He proceeded to show me, and the only consolation I could get out of it was that he was probably a fifth cousin, about the same relation to me as Lord Macaulay the historian is, and that's far enough out.

When I mentioned it to one of my aunts who always said the things that the other members of the family didn't say, if you know what I mean. She said: "My great granny used to put out food for him." She went on to identify the house and the window where the food was left for Mac an t-Sronaich. Now, that rather interested me but I did nothing about it, but when I retired and began to have a little bit of time, I started digging around and I found no evidence whatsoever of a murderer in Lewis of that time. But I found in the records of the sheriff court in Stornoway a warrant issued for the arrest of a man described as a moor lurker, who was putting the people of the island into a state of terror and alarm.

Somebody had applied to the court for a general warrant authorising anybody in Lewis to effect the arrest of this man. The sheriff issued the warrant restricting it to any of the

constables in the island. But of course the constables at that time were not a real police force, they were more concerned with agricultural and village matters than law and order, and the warrant was never executed. But I had correspondence in the paper, and on one occasion I had a letter from a man who claimed that his own great grandfather had been with Mac an t-Sronaich on the night that he left Lewis. They had been sitting together sheltering under the lee of a boat at a place the man identified as Sober Island. It is not really an island at all, it's a little peninsula in Stornoway Harbour, the place that a man would choose if he was seeking to board a boat that was leaving Stornoway but did not want to be observed doing so from the town. The conclusion I came to was that he had been on the run for something that he had done and had taken shelter in Lewis where he had relatives and friends and had eventually gone away from the island possibly on a vessel going abroad.

I found there were two separate Mac an t-Sronaich traditions, there was the oral tradition of all these murders, and quite obviously any murder that was in the oral tradition in Lewis was tacked on to him no matter when it had happened. But side by side with this, and the two never came together, was a perfectly clear tradition as to who he was and who sheltered him. He was the son of an innkeeper in Garve, the grandson of a minister in Wester Ross, and Mac an t-Sronaich which, in the wrong version of the oral tradition is regarded as a nickname and goes on to say that he was called it because as one person puts it "he had a nose like a shinty stick," Mac an t-Sronaich wasn't a nickname at all, but was his surname in Gaelic: Stronach, and is perfectly clearly known. And not only that, I've found a number of families in which there was a tradition of the people who had sheltered him.

I wrote a bit about it in the local paper, and that produced a letter from a near neighbour of my own, a lady I had known all my life. She recalls that in her own family there was a tradition that her great grandmother had been a maid in the manse in Keose where the minister's wife was related to Mac an t-Sronaich and used to leave food for him, just as my own great great grand-aunt did in Stornoway. The minister whose wife was feeding the alleged murderer was one of the leaders of the great religious revival in Lewis in the last century and was known as the Bunyan of the North. It's very interesting I think, the relationship between the, what you may call the respectable community and the not-so-respectable community, and it all I think confirms that Mac an t-Sronaich was on the run for something that he had done on the mainland and was helped by relatives on Lewis until he was able to make a getaway. But the story doesn't end there, I have a suspicion that it may be possible to find the rest of the story in the Record Office in Edinburgh, possibly in the court records from either Dingwall or Tain around about the period I'm talking about which is between 1820 and 1830. I'll one day hope to solve the problem of what he was running away from.

So that's the Musician and the Murderer. The Mutineer I stumbled on in a rather casual way. I don't know if any of you remember the film of the "Mutiny on the Bounty" with Charles Laughton in the role of Captain Bligh. When the film came to Stornoway, my aunt told me she was going to see it and I tried to dissuade her. She was a very nervous person and I didn't think that the blood and floggings and violence would suit her very well "Oh but" she said "I want to see it because James Morrison was a relative of ours." I must say I took it rather with a grain of salt, but subsequently I mentioned it to her brother who made only one comment: "Where on earth did Jessica get hold of that story?" She told me that she had got it from "Maggie Captain", Maggie, the Captain's daughter, which meant nothing to me, but when I told my uncle he immediately said "Oh, she was in a position to know."

And I left it there, I wasn't interested as I should have been and didn't follow it up but many years after that when William Matheson published his book about Blind Harper I came on the name Maggie Captain and I immediately realised why she was in a position to know: she was not only the daughter of a naval captain, her grandfather had been an ensign in the British Army in America during the War of Independence and had fought on the Loyalist side and then came back to Scotland and tried to re-establish himself in Stornoway. Recently I found in the Harbour Office in Stornoway a letter book he had kept in the 1790's. It's a fascinating book to read because when he came back first he tried to establish himself in the fishing industry, and he was involved very deeply in the earliest attempts to develop a herring fishing industry in Loch Lorridan and then he became a little more adventurous and established a coopeage in Greenock and built a vast number of barrels during the winter to make a fortune when the summer herring fishing season came around, but unfortunately for him that year the fishing collapsed completely and he was left with a coopeage full of barrels that he couldn't sell and he was really on his uppers then.

He took a job recruiting for the Seaforth Highlanders raising soldiers for the Napoleonic War. He was getting a bounty for each recruit and literally buying them by the inch because the taller you were the bigger the bounty. Apparently height was important in the army in these days and he was employed largely around the jails in Glasgow and Greenock picking up people as they were discharged from jail and drafting them into the army and while Seaforth was accepting the recruits he was very reluctant to pay for them and it eventually reached the stage that the poor old ensign had to send his wife and family home to Stornoway to let their relatives keep them alive because he eventually had to go to court to get Seaforth to pay his debts. But that's by the way, more important than the ensign himself was the fact that he married Lillias Morrison.

Lillias was in her middle 20s when the mutiny on the "Bounty" took place and she had a brother, a lieutenant in the navy. If

James Morrison had any Lewis connections, she was definitely in a position to know. Now her grand-daughter Maggie Captain was in her late teens when her granny was in her 80s. The granny and the grand-daughter (I discovered from the 1851 census) were living almost side by side in Stornoway at that time so that any information the old lady had about the mutiny of the "Bounty" or anything else almost certainly would have been transmitted to her grand-daughter. And this is the astonishing thing, that it only takes two steps, my aunt and Maggie Captain, who was a relative and her music teacher, to take us back to a woman who was alive and in her mid-20s when the mutiny on the "Bounty" took place more than 200 years ago. So that he was a relative seems to be fairly well substantiated insofar as oral tradition can substantiate it. Unfortunately it is very difficult to get in any more than the oral tradition because all the baptismal records are at the bottom of the Minch because the minister of the day was drowned when he was coming back from a meeting of the synod and he had all the presbytery records with him when the boat went down.

But again I was helped out by others. I had occasion to write about the mutiny on the "Bounty" in the local paper and much to my delight I had a phone call from a cousin to say he had been that day to a butcher shop in Stornoway and the cashier there had said that there was a tradition in her family that one of the mutineers of the "Bounty" had been a relative of theirs. So I got this woman to send down all that she knew. There's always a risk in these sort of situations that if somebody is well-known and his name happens to be the same as your own you tend to assume that there's a connection. But in this case the family tradition had lost trace of the identity of the mutineer. They just knew that somebody on the "Bounty" who was involved in the mutiny had been a relative and began to assume that the mutineer must have been a Mackenzie because it was down through a Mackenzie line that the tradition came. But she told me three things about their family. One was that they had a relative who was supposed to have been on the "Bounty". The second was that they had a relative who had been a mate on a ship and had lost his life off the Cornish coast and that they had some connection with the tacksman at Aignish, a village about five miles from Stornoway.

Now all these things fit perfectly into my family tradition of the mutiny on the "Bounty". The mate who was lost on the Cornish coast can be identified without any difficulty as Roderick Morrison, my great grandfather, who was drowned when his ship was lost coming from America with a cargo of timber and it sank off St. Ives and not only was I able to get the official report of the loss from Lloyds in London, but I've been able to get extracts from the reports that appeared in the Cornish papers at the time. The connection with the tacksman at Aignish is also interesting because he was Lieutenant Morrison. Another point in the story was that the lady who told me about it had an elderly relative who used to visit family connections

in a certain street in Stornoway, she didn't know who they were, but in that street there lived two people who were closely related to James Morrison of the "Bounty" if he's the person I think he is.

Now it's very difficult to break through the tradition that seems to exist in written history that James Morrison of the "Bounty" came from London. He joined the "Bounty" in London, but if you go to the Record Office in Kew you can establish very quickly that he joined the navy in Leith. And I think it very unlikely that anybody who is a native of London joined the navy for the first time as a gunner on a ship in Leith. Unfortunately the only record that I can find of his birthplace in list after list is "Born Glaston". Now there's no place in any list of placenames that I've ever come across that lists a place called Glaston but there is a farm in Lewis which is known as Galston and it almost looks as if the name had been taken down wrongly at some time and copied from list to list over a long period of time.

Whether it will ever be possible for me to get some more formal written evidence of his connection with Lewis I don't know, but I'm hopeful there may be something in the Seaforth munitments in Edinburgh which I'm digging through whenever I have an opportunity. At one time I thought it possible that I might find something in the records of the London Missionary Society because James Morrison kept a journal, one of the principal sources of our knowledge of what actually happened during the mutiny, it's the only sort of counterblast to Captain Bligh's own account. In addition to that, he wrote one of the earliest accounts of life in Tahiti. It was published in a limited edition about forty years ago and the original manuscript is in the Mitchell Library in Sydney, Australia.

Morrison remained on board the "Bounty" after the mutiny took place but he had no actual part in it. He was later arrested when HMS Pandora was sent out to pick up the mutineers. In the interval he had organised a party in the building of a vessel in which he claimed that they hoped to return to Britain and that was not impossible because the vessel sailed for many years on the China coast and was regarded as a very seaworthy and speedy ship. But unfortunately for James Morrison he was picked up by the Navy almost on the day that the vessel was launched and was taken back to Britain to be tried. On the way back to Britain the Pandora struck a reef and sank and several of the mutineers were drowned, but Morrison was able to swim to safety and was taken home and tried, and was actually condemned to death but later reprieved.

While he was on a prison ship lying in the Thames waiting for his trial with the threat of execution hanging over him he compiled a Tahitian vocabulary and that list of Tahitian words. I think that it is very interesting to think that a Gaelic speaker from the Hebrides under sentence of death in a hulk in

the Thames compiling a vocabulary that was of assistance to missionaries going out to Tahiti a few years later. I thought that because of that there might be some evidence about Morrison in the early records of the London Missionary Society and a few years ago when I was in London I went down and made enquiries but I didn't find what I was looking for.

But to come back to the point at which I started, you can save yourself a vast amount of trouble if you ask the question at the right time instead of not asking them, like me, and having to dig out the answers afterwards.

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I finally weakened and have bought the Mormon's Personal Ancestry File (PAF) as a computerised organiser for the facts behind the slightly more smoothly written magnum opus of a family history I've spent the last few years putting together. My tentative reasoning is that it holds together disparate genealogical details (like dates, relationships and long notes) in a shorter tidier form than the lever-arch files I keep all the letters and notes and reports in, it is an internationally-known standard and it is also very cheap for a reasonably powerful computer program. If it cost the usual £100-£300 I would just say that I'd do my own thank you. PAF was reviewed in an earlier Journal, and I shall also let you know my feelings as the years go by.

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Liz Sutherland, one of our members, has been corresponding for some time with a Mr O P Moss of Exmouth. On a recent holiday with his family in Zimbabwe he photographed the following memorial to a gold miner while on a tour in the Northern Transvaal.

"In Memory of Donald Sutherland, a Native of Scotland, who died March 31 1880 aged 80 years"

The place was called Pilgrims Rest and gold was found there in 1873 and soon the big mining companies set up there, attracting more and more skilled workers, many of them from Wales.

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In last year's Budget the Chancellor relaxed the regulations concerning covenants of subscriptions to Societies like ours. Because of these changes the administration is much easier for me (the treasurer) and for members who would like the Society to reclaim the tax on their subscription. Anyone wishing to take out a covenant should contact me and I will send them a form which they will now only have to fill in once.



## HEIRLOOM NIGHT

(Held on 26th January 1993 - Part 2)

### **Mary Murray**

I have this book which was given to 9 year old Agnes Campbell Dunbar as a Christmas present by her mother. It is inscribed - "Aggie Campbell Dunbar from her loving Mama, 25 December 1885".

Agnes was told by a fortune teller that she would be married three times. She had remarked that one marriage was enough. As it happened, the prophecy came true, but not in the way that she imagined. She went to Germany as a governess and, while she was out there, met Cyril John Day who was a railway engineer. His work took him to Buenos Aires and it was there that they married.

The first ceremony took place at the Argentine Civil Office on 3rd November 1909. The second ceremony was held in St Paul's English Church on the same day, while the third was in the British Consulate on the 3rd August 1909.

As a young child I can remember her coming to visit us. She gave my father a lecture on what he should be doing in the garden. She lived for many years in Cheltenham and died in 1958 aged 86.

### **Neil Murray**

My heirloom this evening, two photographs. The first, a postcard marked on the back 'somewhere in France March 1918', with on the front a young man in the uniform of what we now know to be the 5th Seaforth Highlanders. The second in taken outside a shop in Dornoch of George Murray, Stationer, Tobacconist & Confectioner. The building is still there, but not the shop which is being used for other purposes now.

What is the connection between the two photographs? My Uncle George after whom my brother was named is in both. All I knew from my father was that he had been severely wounded in the First World War and had suffered for a number of years there after and eventually died of his wounds, as it was put at the time.

My father really didn't pass on much more information to me but as the years went by I became interested in the family history. We knew when he had died, when he was born and so on but I wanted to find out about his experiences in the war. Particularly as I became interested in a sideline to family history, in military affairs of the First World War period.

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I found it very difficult actually. It was surprising, I thought it would be fairly easy to look up his record and so on, particularly as he was in a local regiment and I knew that the newspapers of the time contained a lot of local information, particularly about casualties.

I can't remember exactly my starting point but I remember going into the Cathedral at Dornoch and in the vestibule there is a bronze plaque listing local men who were in the 1st War and not only those who were killed and there was George's name and alongside his name was MM and C de G (Croix de Guerre). His regiment was listed as the Seaforth Highlanders.

So that set me off on the trail and I managed, using a magnifying glass, to have a look at his cap badge and I decided it was that of the 5th Seaforth Highlanders. The various Territorial regiments had slightly different badges.

I paid a visit to the Cameron Barracks in Inverness and had a word with Colonel Fairrie, Regimental Secretary. He put me onto piles and piles of books and magazines. I ended up reading the original war diaries of the 5th Seaforth Highlanders. It didn't help me at all because in that photograph he is a lance corporal and he ended up being a humble sergeant. If you were an officer, yes, you got a mention and all the rest of it but other ranks were nearly never mentioned in the Regimental Histories.

I had to decide about how to find out more about this MM because I was aware that not all Military Medals were awarded for actual bravery in the fields. I was burning with curiosity, particularly as I knew he had been severely wounded. I discovered that the information I sought was in the north, in Golspie. There is possibly one other place in Britain where that information could be obtained and I will say something about that in a moment. I wrote to the Ministry of Defence. I quoted my relationship and I gave all the details that I had about his service.

I received a very pleasant letter from the Ministry of Defence saying that the London Gazette did confirm the award of the Military Medal to George Murray and also to his brother, Donald. He was in the 4th Seaforths and the letter made it quite clear the individual citations for the award of the Military Medal during the 14-18 War are no longer available and I knew from other sources that that was correct. All the records had been destroyed through enemy bombing in the 2nd World War.

The Ministry of Defence also confirmed that George had been awarded the Croix de Guerre and that gave me the date of the London Gazette in which that was intimated and it went on kindly to indicate that the letter I had received previously from the Ministry of Defence should be disregarded as it had

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referred to a different soldier! Even they got their regiments mixed up.

They enclosed two very nice certificates, confirming that the London Gazette supplement dated 11th December 1917 stated "His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to approve of the award of the Military Medal for bravery in the field" to the undernoted or undermentioned Warrant Officers, non-commissioned Officers and men of the Seaforth Highlanders. Included in the list is the name of Corporal G. Murray, Dornoch, 5th Battalion Territorial Force.

I thought that was quite nice of them, they had obviously made that up for me. So that wasn't any help. As I say I looked at the original records and here is a photocopy of the Battalion Daily Orders for January 1919. There is a reference to him being awarded the Croix de Guerre but no reference at all to the Military Medal. I bracketed my research of course over a period of time, no reference at all.

I tried the local newspapers, having the London Gazette award date. Again I bracketed months after the London Gazette, no notification at all and it was infuriating because I think virtually every soldier in the north appeared.

So I just wasn't getting anywhere at all and then I had the brain wave of at looking at the local papers at the time of his death and bingo, there it was and I managed to get it. He actually appeared in two newspapers, the Northern Chronicle and the Northern Times and this is the article from the Northern Times. In the article was all the information I was looking for and I couldn't even get that from the library, I had to go to the offices of the Northern Times in Golspie.

By going back to the Regimental Histories of the 5th Battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders I was able to pinpoint precisely where they were almost on a day-to-day basis throughout the 14-18 period. He died August 1929. There is a photograph of him showing a mis-shapen leg, obviously a false leg which must have been very very uncomfortable.

So with patience, a wee bit of persistence one can find out information from unexpected quarters but it is very difficult to research that period. I have tried researching a number of soldiers, not all family and DCMs no problem. The citations still exist. MC, yes but MM no, unless the family happen to have the original bit of paper or a copy of it, it is impossible to find it from any official source. The records just do not exist. A great pity.

There was one source I didn't mention "Cabarr Feidh" the journal of what was at that time the Seaforth Highlanders. There is a small report there of George Murray's funeral. I have used that

to trace several men. The Cameron Barracks have got all issues of that. Quite a good source of information.

Jonathon McColl

"There's a place for us, somewhere, a place for us."

That's the first line of a song from "West Side Story", and is always a trigger in my head to fire off thoughts and my memories of Grandfather McColl. He was always 'Grandfather', being a more distant person than my mother's father who was always a much more comfortable Grandpa and on whose wheelchair we children used to play. Had Grandfather ever allowed some germ of polio or a shrapnel wound to put him in one, we would never have dreamed of borrowing it to whizz up and down hallways.

Grandfather had a habit which I possess too, although I do not know if it is due to him or just through developing a common interest, of playing recordings of songs over and over to fix them in his mind. I cannot remember if he could sing, and even if he had been able to once, now that he was in his eighties he might well have lost a lot of the strength anyway. I do remember one very rare occasion of closeness when I stood, aged about ten, beside his bulky upright figure in the long drawing room in Ballinteer, south of Dublin, and we listened as the record player sang over and over: "Peace and quiet and open air wait for us, somewhere."

His youth in a small city in Western Ontario perhaps got him fed up with too much peace and quiet and open air, but later photos and letters show me that he might often have occasion to wish for it again, somewhere. As a young man he had joined the army and when the war started in France in 1914 he volunteered for active duty. He trained on Salisbury Plain with the hundreds of men and horses under his command, and then practised what he had learnt with them under genuine gunfire in France and Belgium. Ypres, Passchendaele, Cambrai, Bourlon Wood he worked in and shot at and rode from and ran to. Did he ever think that "We'll find a new way of living, we'll find a way of forgiving, somewhere?"

The heirloom I have brought this evening is just a piece of paper, and it reminds me that even when the war was over all was not always peace and quiet for him. He was a Trade Commissioner for Canada in the 1920s and 30s, and in 1937 he was based with his family in Cuba. Someone considered that he needed an extra piece of personal protective equipment, and this paper is his permission to carry a pistol. My father remembers the Colt 45 as a weapon "that could do great damage when flung" which makes me think that the thing was never used in anger, even when the Chief of Police in Havana who had put his flowery signature on this permit, Fulgencio Batista, led a rebellion to topple President Machado and replace him with an

obviously far better leader: himself. The change involved a lot of shooting and my father was put in a wardrobe for safekeeping. Twenty-five years later Fidel Castro used the same system of power transfer to get rid of Batista.

I imagine Grandfather to have been a lonely man. In the army he had been a reasonably senior officer, a major, so presumably grew the air of distance there. In the various Canadian embassies and trade commissions he must always have been at functions glad-handing the businessmen and smiling with his teeth at their wives, always wanting to get trade going between his country and wherever he was based at the time.

Grandmother was a Society woman, smoked like a chimney, and allowed him one child, who grew up with parents who visited him rather than raised him. I never knew her, as the Crab caught her years before I was born, but stories suggest her to have been somewhat austere and a good partner to have in Society events. I find it difficult to imagine them as lovers, "Hold my hand and I'll take you there" seem words that can't really apply to them, now.

They all moved to and fro across oceans to new postings, and in England to find a new world war too. There Grandmother died when her husband and son were in Ireland, a neutral country which felt very little of the anger of the foreigner's war but whose self-inflicted scars of a domestic one were still visible. Grandfather moved to the big house of Clonlea on the slopes of the over-grandly named Dublin Mountains and we rejoined him there after our return from our own emigration back to Canada. He has few friends, if his bridge partners and the people who borrowed and sold his medals and silver were friends, and his private business was failing and he lived alone but for his gardener and his scerteary until we came.

And in the drawing room with its long red velvet curtains and the portrait of Aunt Mary, a ten-year-old and his grandfather listened to a song and I held his hand and he took me there, somewhere.

Barrie Tulloch

This kettle was given to my husband's grandparents when they married on the 18th June 1879. She was a Margaret MacArthur from Nairn and he was William Robertson from the Cawdor area. Margaret had a sister and five brothers. The five brothers went to Canada starting about 1862 to 1874. They were early pioneers in Canada and I knew there had been writing back and fore and a lot of the letters had gone to the National Library in Edinburgh.

In November I got a letter from a granddaughter of one of the pioneers telling me of this book that had been written with all the letters from the National Library and the archives in

Canada. It has all been put together and is a most interesting book telling of all the brothers. There are letters from each and this is the parents. She was Sarah Dallas and he is John MacArthur, the parents of the pioneers. This is their family tree.

This is Margaret MacArthur who got this kettle for a wedding present and there are pictures throughout the book. One brother mentions that he wants things taken from a safe and he gives the number to open the safe. Most interesting it all is.

This is Margaret's sister Bella. They were the only two left in Nairn. This is her family here, in Nairn. She married a chemist by the name of Falconer in Nairn. One brother went out and back again. He was a seed merchant in Nairn for a long time and used to send seed to another brother in Canada. For flowers and vegetables and all sorts of things and went by boat to New York and from there to Winnipeg.

First of all I thought it is only of interest to me and to anybody that knew who they were but as I read it, it is so interesting that anybody would enjoy reading of the experiences they had while they were there.

Hamish MacLennan

I have got one small story. My grandfather was in the Boer War. He was in the original Lovat Scouts and they all got a medal when they came home and he decided he wanted to go to Canada. It could have been Winnipeg, somewhere like that and the medal got lost when he was out there. I don't think he was out there very long, a year or two years.

My grandfather was killed, falling off the harvest cart in 1945 and two years after that somebody in Canada found the medal. There was a number on it and they were able to trace it back and my cousin in Dingwall has it now and she has it as an necklace.

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From the Church register of Eckington in Worcestershire: "Burials Anno 1682. Memorandum. Those yt dyed this year were not thought worth the registering." Maybe the clerk couldn't spell names either.

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We have recently received a note from a lady who has offered to help any members of our Society with research in New Zealand. She is Ms Iris Rowntree and her address is Knockbain Cottage, 33 Clarendon Avenue, Paeroa 2951, New Zealand.

