

HIGHLAND  
FAMILY HISTORY  
SOCIETY

# highland family history society



## comunn sloinntearachd na Gaidhealtachd

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This year's New Year Honours List included an OBE for our chairman John McMillan, for his services to education over the last 34 years of teaching in Irvine Royal Academy, the British Military School in Germany, Invergordon Academy, Thurso High School, Alness Academy and a return to Invergordon Academy as Rector in 1986, the same year that I arrived in the town. I had become interested in education-industry linking down south and was keen to try it out on the local secondary school, but before a plan had completed its passage through my slow pate, this bundle of energy arrived requiring my agreement to take pupils into my office for work experience, and get them surveying things, measuring things learning things through the medium of a fish-feed factory. Over the next ten years I and colleagues visited the Academy to talk and to listen, and its students came to our factory to work and to report and both sides got a great deal out of it, and very seldom did money exchange places, just experience and education and understanding. We watched his pupils measuring the Cromarty Firth, exploring oil-rigs and exploration vessels, selling cars, one designed a new council street dustbin! Meanwhile this small out-of-the-way academy was building a professional reputation that had its rector and staff praised by the schools Inspectorate, and found increasing numbers of children who suffered the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune at home and other schools were transferring here to be brought back into the normal world by the understanding teaching methods of all the staff. A well-deserved award. Sadly, ill-health has persuaded John not to seek re-election as chairman at our AGM in April, but he remains an enthusiastic member of the Society and we wish him well.

Several people commented on my complaining review of the General Register Office's new research website Origins. I have not been back to it, but I had expressed the hope that the rougher edges of the site would be sanded off in time. One member asked me if there were really no MacLennans in the Inverness district parish in 1855-6, as according to Origins it would seem not, but the necessary high level of effort and cost put me off checking. He also objected to just the year appearing for B/M/Ds, he'd have liked the full date. June Waters downloaded Netscape Navigator 4 (I moaned that Origins doesn't like MS Internet Explorer) and used the Soundex versions of names, and found many OPR entries which she can now check out when she gains access to the full OPR. David Greenhalgh downloaded all the instruction pages a few days before logging into Origins, and printed off essential lists like registration districts and parishes. He copied the long login code to the clipboard so could recall it at the touch of a button. He also started with strict criteria and relaxed them when no answers came out, rather than my way of a very general question producing far too many answers and then refining the question. For example, he got nothing for *Lewisina Dingwall* born in Cawdor, but when he asked for *L\* Dingwall* born anywhere he received *Louisina Dingwall* born Nairn. Finally he saved all pages to his hard disk for study later, although forgot one which he went back for within the 24 hours and found, after a bit of a struggle as Origins saved them as page1, page2 etc. Overall he liked the site and recommended it for non-Edinburgh residents.

Meanwhile, I've just received a phone call from Oban from someone who may turn out to be a sixth cousin, descended from the earliest Highland ancestor of mine I know, a weaver born in the 1720s. At last, a non-Canadian from that root! Also a new nephew has just been born, continuing the demonstration that family history is always happening, and not just in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## HOW I STARTED MY FAMILY HISTORY

by Jane Hall

My interest in family history began in 1968; a great aunt of mine who lived in Avoch, Black Isle died, and with my future husband I went to help clear out the house she lived in. The house was Rose Cottage in Rose Street, Avoch; my great aunt had lived there as a child with her four brothers and sister Margaret. Great aunt Janet was widowed in 1956 and she planned to return to Rose Cottage to live with her sister Margaret. However, it was not to be as Margaret died before her sister could join her and Janet lived alone in the house until her death in 1968.

It was on this visit to help clear Rose Cottage that I came across a daguerreotype photograph of a family group taken about 1860. On the back all the details of the family were written. It was a picture showing my gt. grandfather David MACKENZIE, his wife Janet JUNOR, and three of their children, Donald, Hector and David. All this information was carefully written on the back and from that moment I was completely hooked on family trees.

I did already have quite a lot of information to go on. Though I had a very Scottish name - Jane Fraser Mackenzie - I had been brought up in London and Bromley, Kent. My father was born in Kent and had spent his early life in South Africa. However, his father, Dr William Mackenzie, was born in Avoch, one of the six children of Donald Mackenzie and his wife Isabella Fraser. The story of these children and their subsequent lives in many ways echoes that of many Scottish families, who left small villages, obtained education that their parents could only have dreamed of, entered professions and emigrated all over the world.

David Mackenzie in the photograph, was the third son of Donald Mackenzie and his wife Elizabeth nee Mackenzie. Donald was a stone mason and the family lived in a house called the "Craggan" at Balblair in the parish of Resolis. William was the eldest son, also a stone mason; he never married but seemed to have had an important influence on the family, leaving them property etc. Donald was the second son; I know nothing about him. David, the third son, shown in the photograph with his wife and three sons (my gt. grandfather) was married to Janet Junor of Hill of Fortrose farm (more of them later). The other children were Thomas, born 1831; Alexander born 1833; Eliza born 1835 and finally Helen born 1837. Helen never married but looked after her brother William.

David Mackenzie and his wife Janet had five children. Donald, my gt. grandfather, Hector who never married and in later life lived and died at Hill of Fortrose farm, where his mother had been brought up. Hector was buried in a paupers grave when he died. David the third son emigrated to Canada in the 1880s; he married and had many descendants. However, that is another story! The last two children of David and Janet, William and Barbara Anne, both died in infancy and shortly afterwards their mother died aged only 29. Janet Junor was suffering from T.B. and there is a strong possibility she infected her two last born children. David Mackenzie was left to bring up three young children alone; he never remarried and in the latter years of his life had a hardware shop in Brick Street, Cromarty. I have not found his grave, yet his wife and two children are buried in Avoch.

David's eldest son, my gt. grandfather, married Isabella Fraser in Fortrose in 1882. Donald was a master carpenter. The couple settled in Avoch and Donald built a house known as Rose

Cottage in Rose Street. Opposite the cottage Donald had a workshop where at one point he employed 12 men.

Donald and Isabella had six children; David b. 1883; James b. 1886; Janet b. 1888; William b. 1891; Margaret b. 1893 and finally Donald, known as Tom to the family. Tom was b. in 1898 during the Boer War and apparently was called Tom by his older brother David "A real little Tommy Atkins" Dave said when asked what the new baby was! All these brothers emigrated to South Africa.

David, the eldest, with his wife Anne nee Wiseman, was the first to leave. One can only guess at the reason for choosing Africa; I suspect it might have something to do with Anne working at Rosehaugh House as a maid. Apparently in the 1880s, James Douglas Fletcher, the new Laird of Rosehaugh, had financial interests in South Africa and he encouraged young people from the Black Isle to emigrate there.

David arrived in South Africa when Johannesburg was just a collection of huts. However, gold was discovered and men became wealthy overnight and David invested in the new mines and joined the ranks of the new rich. David never forgot his origins though and frequently visited Avoch and he was a generous benefactor of the Inverness Infirmary.

James the second son was not so fortunate. He arrived in South Africa in 1911 and became a farm manager. On New Years Day 1914 when walking back to his farm with a friend, he was struck by lightning and killed. Isabella, his mother never got over the shock of his death and she died in 1921. I found several photographs of his grave in Rose Cottage.

Janet, the eldest daughter went to train as a needlework teacher in Aberdeen. She made several beautiful items especially in needlework tapestry. Janet enjoyed cruising and at the age of 37 met her future husband, a Dr Walter Crabtree, a widower on such a holiday. They married in Inverness in 1926 and their honeymoon was spent touring eastern Europe by car. Janet kept a diary of their travels. It is fascinating reading, she mentions visiting Nuremberg and seeing the 'brown shirts'. In later years Janet lived at Stansfield Hall, Todmorden, Lancashire, her husband was an early pioneer in X-Rays. It was after he died that Janet returned to Rose Cottage.

William was the third son (my grandfather). William went to Edinburgh University to study medicine. After he graduated the first world war broke out and he joined the RAMC as a doctor. In 1915 while in a billet in Folkestone, Kent he met and married a Henrietta Reeve. The DSO was awarded to William for treating wounded under fire. When the war was over William and his family, a son James, (my father had been born by now) left for South Africa. Unfortunately, William became seriously ill and died in 1929 and his three children, as there were now, returned to England. My father and his brother went to live in Avoch with their grandfather and aunt while their sister Jean went to live with aunt Janet in Lancashire. My father and his brother William lived in Avoch for two years while their mother stayed in South Africa to settle her husband's estate.

Margaret the second daughter, was very artistic; however, as happened in many families, she stayed at home to look after her father and youngest brother. Margaret or Meg as she was known in the family, looked after her father until he died aged 89. It was with Meg that Janet



hoped to live with in Rose Cottage. However, it was not to be as Meg died in 1958 and Janet moved to Rose Cottage alone.

Tom was the youngest of the children and Donald Mackenzie hoped that he would join him in the family business. However, Tom wanted to be a doctor and eventually went to Edinburgh University, qualified in medicine and also left for South Africa. Tom worked for the government and was involved in health care for the natives. I have pictures of him vaccinating children in the bush. Tom died in 1989, he is buried in Durban with his brother William who died 60 years before.

The family house in Avoch has now been sold. However, there are still people in the village who remember the family well and in the old graveyard of Avoch parish church there is a headstone marking the burial of Donald Mackenzie, master carpenter, his wife Isabel and their six children, though only their two daughters lie with their parents, the sons lie buried thousands of miles away.

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#### WERE YOUR ANCESTORS MACLENNANS FROM CONTIN, STRATHPEFFER?

We are looking for anyone at home or abroad who is descended from Murdo MacLennan (1808-1899) of Jamestown, Strathpeffer, Ross & Cromarty, Scotland. On 29<sup>th</sup> May 1999 we will be holding a gathering of his descendants in Strathpeffer, to mark the 100 years since his death.

Murdo was a crofter and a teacher of music. He married Jane McDonald in 1833 and they had four children - Alexander, Eliza Downie, Kenneth (my great grandfather) and Mary. Unfortunately Jane died, aged 32 and he later married Mary Gollan. This second marriage produced a further eight children - Isabella, Dinah, Catherine, Helen, Jane (Jean), Roderick, Murdo and John.

There is a possibility that Murdo's first family emigrated to Canada and that Alexander may have been involved in the Canadian Pacific Railway. All his second family stayed in Britain, most of them going into service in Scotland.

Murdo was a man of high principle and faith, who, from the age of 16, followed his father Kenneth as a 'precentor' i.e. the one who leads the singing of the psalms during the church service. To quote from his obituary in the *The North Star and Farmers Chronicle*, he was one who "for a long time was widely known and respected in the north of Scotland, and to whose melodious and tuneful voice thousands of people used to listen with delight".

We have lots more information about and photographs of Murdo if anyone is interested in finding out more. If you think you may be part of this family PLEASE, PLEASE contact either myself - Mrs Ruth Glegg, "Bridge of Bennie", Banchory, Kincardineshire AB31 5PY or Joan MacDonald, 8 Salisbury Terrace, Aberdeen AB10 6QH.

#### HEIRLOOM NIGHT - January 26<sup>th</sup> 1999 *Jonathan McColl*

This is the annual lecture evening that we throw open to the membership, asking you to bring along a Thing that reminds you of an ancestor, and the individual levels of enthusiasm released by that Thing reminds us all why we have chosen family history as a hobby. I cannot report on it properly, you really had to be there! I ask pardon of those for whom my notes were too short or illegible to allow a report on their exposés.

Graeme Tulley started the ball rolling with the medals and an army spoon of his great-uncle, killed in March 1918 while serving with the 6<sup>th</sup> Seaforths near Arras. When he moved to the Black Isle when working for the Forestry, he discovered that on his land was an old shooting range for the army. The private report of a local archaeologist (*Feddonhill Rifle Range*, Annette Jack, no date) identified it as being in use from about 1860 onwards, and Graeme now has a fine collection of spent bullets from that date up to and past WWI. He was fascinated by the idea that his great uncle may perhaps have trained on that rifle range.

Hamish MacLennan spoke about a large tombstone in Boleskine to John MacDonald, whose father had been demobbed in Canada, had family there and the descendants came back and found family here who had forgotten their existence. In a separate tale, Hamish's grandfather Hugh was in the Lovat Scouts in the South African War, so received the byname of 'Spoots' in the area. His pension was paid at Munloch, but a problem constantly arose in that the Kilcoy Arms pub lay between hiscroft and the post office!

Neil Murray spoke on his Shetland ancestor Danald da Cockstool, as Daniel Randall Williamson was known to those who didn't call him DR. Born in Burravoe, Yell in 1845, his talent seems to have lain in making money, then investing it in property. After an active life at sea for seven or eight years and then running a business in Leith, he returned to Shetland and started a grocery business in Lerwick, cornering the market in spirits and beer. Neil showed us his watch and chain, and vesta case as well as a photo of DR outside his Lerwick shop. The byname of Da Cockstool came from a natural pier used as a landing place in Lerwick Harbour.

Neil's wife Mary showed us a small black torque-like object, made of a metal (bronze?) which had come to her from her Wicker grandfather, born in 1876 and an engineer in the Royal Navy. This item was a sample of Nigerian money he had brought back from his travels.

John Durham, referring to a photograph of his wife's grandparents, Fred Hampton and Libby Viola Yeates, recounted a visit to Rhinebeck in Dutchess County, NY to photograph the church in which Libby was baptised. Fred had a twin sister Rosa who 'disappeared' from records in the 1880s. A chance scan of Workhouse records in Southampton led to settlement papers in Woolwich. From these it was discovered that Rosa had run away from home, joined a travelling fair and been taught to box! She had given exhibition fights with the fair owner's son and once spent six weeks in hospital recovering from injuries sustained in the ring.

In the chatting afterwards, one member wondered what 'speldimes' were, mentioned in a family letter sent to a cousin serving in the WWI trenches. He had eaten them in milk. Another member explained that they were a sort of Finnan haddie, but this one a speciality from Collieston in Aberdeenshire.

## DEATH REGISTRATIONS

### An Important Tool in Locating Generations prior to OPRs

by Marion McQuay

I found the following interesting Monumental Inscription on Murdoch McLeod, my 2<sup>nd</sup> great-grandfather's tombstone when I visited the graveyard at Elphin, Sutherland in 1982. It reads: "*Sacred to the memory of Murdo McLeod, Gaelic Teacher and Elder, Elphine, who died 30 September 1872 aged 85 years. Esteemed for Christian simplicity, self denial and faithfully discharging his official duties.*" Erected by his son. This gave me the information that he would have been born c1787 and as the Parish Register of Assynt, Sutherland only began around 1800, how would I find out who his parents were?

I submitted Queries #643 and #644 in the February 1995 issue of *Highland Family History Society Journal*. I was concerned that I wouldn't be able to find any more ancestors before 1800 in my parishes of Lochbroom, Ross and Assynt, Sutherland. I received a very informative response from Dr. Malcolm Bangor-Jones, which I appreciated very much. His response was published in the May 1995 Journal.

From Murdoch's tombstone I know the year of his death. So I searched the Scotland Death Indexes at our local Family History Centre and found the entry that would most likely be his. I received the registration of his death dated 30 Aug 1872 on micro-film from the FHL in Salt Lake City. (Birth, Marriage and Death registrations are available on micro-film through local Family History Centres from the Family History Library for the years 1855-1875, 1881 and 1891). I knew Murdoch's wife's name was Jannet and the registration states that Murdoch was married to Janet McLeod. He was the right age and the event happened in the right place - Elphin, Assynt, Sutherland, so I know I have the correct registration. I now have his parents' names as John McLeod (tenant deceased) and Anne McLeod, m.s. McLeod (deceased). So that takes me back another generation on this line.

The death registration has the death as Aug 30, 1872 and registered Sep 3 so the death date on the tombstone is incorrect. Probably the stone was erected many years later and the son had forgotten the month of his father's death.

I found from the 1881 Census that Murdoch's wife Jannet McLeod was still alive so I searched for her by looking through the death indexes after 1881. Her death was the first entry for Assynt Parish in the year 1888. After ordering the certificate from New Register House, I received it and [discovered] her death date was 1 Jan 1888 at Elphin, Assynt. She is registered as 'widow of Murdoch'. Jannet's parents on her Death Certificate were: Roderick McLeod (deceased) and Barbara McLeod m.s. McLeod - (deceased). Jannet was born at Elphin, Assynt, Sutherland so I presume Roderick and Barbara were also born there. I then found Roderick and Barbara's marriage: 10 Mar 1802 in the Assynt Parish Register.

On my own Campbell line, Death Certificates showed parents of John Campbell, my 2<sup>nd</sup> great-grandfather (born c1872) to be Angus Campbell and Catherine McKenzie. John died 3 Mar 1872 at Leckmelm, Lochbroom, Ross & Cromarty. Dr. Malcolm Bangor-Jones' research has an Angus Campbell at Leckmelm in 1815 so this could very well be my 3<sup>rd</sup> great-grandfather.

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The death registration for John Campbell's wife, Henrietta Cameron, showed Roderick Cameron and Margaret McKenzie as her parents. Henrietta died at Leckmelm, Lochbroom on 15 Apr 1873 at the age of 88, so by calculation, her birth would have been about 1785.

I wanted to share with your readers the valuable aid that Death Registrations are in our research. That is, of course, if the event happened after Civil Registration began in 1855. We sometimes feel that we have gone as far back as we can by viewing the parish registers to their beginning. But by availing ourselves of the death information, we can find out who the ancestor's parents were, getting us back another generation.

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### **WE ARE SURVIVORS!**

**(For those born before 1940)**

*Anon*

We were born before television, before penicillin, polo shots, frozen food, Xerox Plastic, contact lenses, videos, Frisbees, and the Pill. We were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and the ball point pen; before dishwashers, tumble dryers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes - and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first then lived together (how quaint can you be?). We thought 'fast food' was what you ate in Lent, a Big Mac was an oversized raincoat and 'crumpet' we had for tea. We existed before househusbands, computer dating, dual careers. A 'meaningful relationship' meant getting along with cousins and 'sheltered accommodation' was where you waited for the bus.

We were before day-care centres, group homes and disposable nappies. We never heard of FM-radio, tape decks, electric typewriters, artificial hearts, word processors, yoghurt and young men wearing earrings. For us 'time sharing' meant togetherness, a 'clup' was a piece of wood or fried potato, 'hardware' meant nuts and bolts and 'software' wasn't a word.

Before 1940 'Made in Japan' meant junk, the term 'making out' referred to how you did in your exams, 'stud' was something that fastened a collar to a shirt, and 'going all the way' meant staying on a double-decker to the bus depot. Pizzas, McDonalds and instant coffee were unheard of. In our day, cigarette smoking was 'fashionable', 'grass' was mown, 'coke' was kept in the coal house, a 'joint' was a piece of meat you had on Sundays and 'pot' was something you cooked in. 'Rock music' was grandmother's lullaby, 'Eldorado' was an ice cream, a 'gay person' was the life and soul of the party and nothing more, while 'AIDS' just meant beauty treatment or help for someone in trouble.

A 'tart' was a pastry with jam in it.

We who were born before 1940 must be a hardy bunch when you think of the ways in which the world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make. No wonder we are so confused and there is a generation gap today.

BUT - by the grace of God - we have survived!

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**HELP WANTED**

One of my ancestors deserted twice in the space of three weeks from the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Foot, the Black Watch, in 1838. I have obtained two photocopied documents from the PRO as follow:

- WO25/2917 which records details of his name, physical description, dates of desertion, number of the report from the Regiment, number of the report of committal;
- WO25/2948 which records details of the date of committal, place of confinement, in what manner disposed of, date and address of route. It is the last two columns mentioned which are causing me difficulty, the remainder of the information is quite legible. I cannot decipher the whole of the hand-written text in these columns, probably due to the terminology used and the author's writing.

I am attempting to discover what punishments were given as a result of his desertions. It certainly must have been a serious offence with a severe penalty for those who were apprehended and brought for committal. I would greatly appreciate advice in obtaining further assistance with this.

Donald Morrison, 7 Beechwood Road, Fishburn, Co Durham TS21 4EP. Member no 1542  
E-mail: don.morrison@onyxnet.co.uk

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**SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION of FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETIES**  
**10<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

The Lanarkshire Family History Society look forward to meeting you at the 1999 Conference in Hamilton Town Hall, Lower Auchingramont Road, Hamilton on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> April 1999. The theme for the Conference is "Lanarkshire, Its Life and Labours" and will feature the following speakers and topics.

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Lorna Davidson  | New Lanark - People and Cotton          |
| Gavin Sprott    | Rural Life and Industry                 |
| Neil Ballantyne | Growth of Industry in North Lanarkshire |
| Frank Rankin    | Working Memories - Archives in Business |

The doors will be open at 9am for registration and to allow delegates to have their first look around the book stalls, which will be set up in the Main Hall. The Conference will commence at 10am and following the closing speeches at 4pm, the book stalls will remain open until 5pm. Lunch will be served in the Lesser Hall between 12.15 and 2pm. The cost of the Conference will be £8 and the cost of lunch, if required, an additional £9.

Application forms are available from the Conference Secretary: Mrs Golda Morrison, 'Allt-Na-Strubbain', 10 Loudon, Valleyfield, East Kilbride G75 0QT. Tel: 01355 908055. Please enclose a SAE.

**HFHS PROJECTS - CURRENT STATUS**

by John Durham

I am pleased to report that with the exception of the National Burials Index, there has been significant progress on the transcription projects that members of the Society are at present involved in. You will find a report on the Strays Index elsewhere in this Journal. By the time that the next Journal arrives through your letterbox it is hoped that several new publications will be available to assist members with their family history research.

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**Monumental Inscriptions**

Even a break for a photo-call, which resulted in members of the Chapel Yard transcription team appearing in the centre-fold of the first edition of the *Highland News* to be published in colour, has not slowed down progress on this project. When we come to publish the completed monumental inscriptions the reporter with the *Highland News* has promised a follow-up article to highlight the publication date.

Since I last reported Graham Tuley has been going mad with his dibber, if you pardon the expression, and he has uncovered (literally) another 300 stones which were under the turf. His makeshift dibber consists of the top foot or so of the wooden shaft of a spade with a six inch nail hammered into it. This allows him to probe under the grass and locate any stones not visible on the surface. The result of this exercise is that the total of 2,133 stones mentioned in the previous Journal is now up to 2,405. One such find about which Graham is particularly pleased is the following inscription found well below the surface.

[Slab] (6 inches under turf) Sacred to the memory of Robert NICHOLSON Esq, late Staff Adjutant of the Inverness District, who died June 12<sup>th</sup> 1818, aged 60, after a faithful service to his King and Country for 43 years. Few characters have been more deservedly lamented, his affection for his family and steady warmth of feeling towards his friends secured him the regard and good opinion of all, whilst his honourable consistency of character reflected lustre on the name of a man and a soldier! Sacred also to the memory of Lieut Rob' NICHOLSON, 78<sup>th</sup> Reg' and Capt' E M NICHOLSON, 55<sup>th</sup> Reg., sons of the above, who both died in India; the former at Goa on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 1810, aged 21, and the latter at Madras the 9<sup>th</sup> August 1831, aged 36 years.

As is the case with all stones found under the grass, the inscription was carefully recorded and the turf put back tidily so that the individual pieces will knit together leaving no visible trace. The discovery of so many stones under the turf has delayed the completion of the second phase slightly, but the checking of all the inscriptions found above ground will have been completed by 20<sup>th</sup> February. The final phase will concentrate on re-checking the few inscriptions not fully recorded due to poor light etc., and trying to locate further stones under the turf. As each section is completed, indexing will start immediately and we are still hopeful of publishing in time for the SAFHS Conference in Hamilton on 24<sup>th</sup> Apri.

In my report in the August 1998 Journal I included an inscription which I highlighted as being one of my favourites. At the time I commented that the inscription omitted to include the exact whereabouts of the body of the wife of the deceased. During the current checking process a

number of corrections have been made to the original transcription including a very significant extra line of inscription. This extra detail has solved one problem but has posed a second more intriguing one. The transcription previously recorded was:-

[Table] In memory of Capt. Thomas WALCOTT, late of the 12<sup>th</sup> Regt. of Foot, 3rd son of John Minchin WALCOTT of Croagh, County Limerick, Ireland. He died on the 28 March 1815, aged 79 years. It was the wish of his widow, who died on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb. 1825, aged 82 years, to have been interred in the same grave with her beloved husband but, owing to the absence of the person to whom she confided this wish, her mortal remains are laid with those of her beloved daughter. {end} T W - M M'K : 1815.

The corrected inscription and that on the adjacent stone now reads:-

[Table] Underneath this stone are interred the mortal remains of Captain Thomas WALCOTT, late of the 12<sup>th</sup> Regt. of Foot, their son of John Minchin WALCOTT Esq of Croagh, County of Limerick, Ireland. He died on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 1815, in the 79<sup>th</sup> year of his age. It was the wish of his most affectionate widow, who died on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1825, aged 82 years, to have been interred in the same grave with her beloved husband but, owing to the absence of the person to whom she confided this wish, her mortal remains are laid with those of their much and deservedly loved daughter underneath the next stone. {end} T W - M M'K : 1815.

[Table] Underneath this stone are interred the mortal remains of Edmondina, younger daughter of Capt. Thomas WALCOTT and only child of his wife Mrs Marjory MACKENZIE. She died on the fifth of March 1808, aged 24 years. {end} E W : 1808.

Reading both inscriptions it looks as if there may have been a family dispute. From the inscription on the second stone it can be seen that Marjory Mackenzie was Captain Walcott's second wife. The more generous interpretation of the facts is that, by the time she died, all the children to the first marriage were deceased and that there was no-one left to confirm Marjory's wish to be buried alongside her husband. The less generous interpretation is that at some of the children to the first marriage were still alive and they did not want their step-mother to be buried in the same plot as their father. We shall probably never know the truth, but it is inscriptions like this that make this type of work so interesting.

Finally, here is a memorial which is a timely reminder of the importance of faithfully transcribing all the words that appear on memorial stones. Sandy Gillies did his original transcription work in the Chapel Yard 10 years ago. Today only the first two lines are visible. The remaining 6 lines inserted between << and >>, which Sandy recorded at the time, have disappeared completely, mainly from the effects of erosion.

[Pink, broken top connected to base, text on white insert and very badly eroded] Sacred to the dear memory of Kenneth MACKENZIE who died at Westhill, Culloden 11 Nov. <<1876, aged 76 years; also his wife Jessie MACKENZIE, died 15 July 1879, aged 75 years; and their children viz. Donald, died 11 July 1841, aged 21 years; John, died at Old Rayne, Aberdeen-shire 29 Dec. 1853, aged 27 years; Kenneth, contractor, Edinburgh, who died at Crieff 29 April 1868, aged 33 years; also their children, who died in infancy; also Alexander, many years sculptor in Tain Ross-shire, who died at Inverness 2 March 1897, aged 57 years.>>

## Indexes to 1851 Census Returns

The object of this project is to produce indexes for the Royal Burghs in the Highland area. In the outlying parishes the majority of people were either born in the same parish or one of the adjacent parishes. In the Burghs, in addition to those born locally, there are many entries for people who were born in other counties and other countries, including some from overseas. In 1851 some people coming into the Highland towns from outside were already involved in business or they or their descendants were to found local businesses in the future. In Nairn there is an entry for a J LIZARS, an optician from England, whereas in Inverness I noted an entry for three brothers in their 20s called Andrew, John and Matthew, born in Edinburgh, all described as gardeners, with the surname HOWDEN!

Each entry in the index will consist of Surname, Forename(s), Age, County of Birth and Place (usually Parish) of Birth. To help you to identify the person you are looking for more quickly all names have been standardised. If you are interested in an Alexander Stewart you will only have to consult one list for that name as there are no Alex Stewart, Alexander Stuart or Alex Stuart entries. They will all have been corrected to Alexander Stewart. Likewise all Mac entries will have been standardised to Mc.

Names and places of birth have been corrected where it is obvious that the enumerator had misspelled them or misunderstood what he was being told. In one district of Inverness Burgh in particular the numbers of spelling errors was so high that it would appear that he was either dyslexic or illiterate or possibly both. The principle behind these indexes is to help researchers to locate the enumeration district and page number where the family they are interested in is to be found. I would then expect them to get the film out, look up the entry themselves and note all the details including any spelling mistakes.

As of today the index to Inverness Burgh is just over 90% transcribed, a total of 11,417 entries. This has taken about 4 months working each weekend and, as I am confident that there will be very few errors, it has been decided not to re-check the data. The indexes will be printed with the caveat that there may be the odd error. The habit of the enumerator of crossing through the age column while doing his statistical analysis means that some ages are very difficult to read. Fading ink can make it almost impossible to read what was written and poor filming of Nairn Burgh has resulted in shadows obscuring all but the first two or three characters. Re-checking in those cases would not improve the situation.

A possible concern is that by not going back and checking the entries on the film against the computer listing, some individuals may be missed altogether. Even if that were to happen, I don't see it as being too much of a problem. I would estimate that roughly nine entries out of ten in a census return are going to be of a member of a family. Locating the family using one of the other members will still get you to the correct page and there you will find the person who was omitted from the index.

Other Burghs beside Inverness currently being worked on are Wick, Dornoch, Dingwall, Fortrose/Rosemarkie, Cromarty and Nairn. Volunteers are required for the others. A little bird tells me that Wick should be soon be ready for type-setting prior to going to the printer at the end of February. Both Nairn and Fortrose/Rosemarkie are also well advanced. On page 32 you will find both a list of our current publications and those earmarked for this project. In the case of some of this latter group, I have bravely pencilled in possible publication dates.

## HFHS STRAYS INDEX

By Alan Ross

My first article regarding the Strays' Index must have been well received as this month's allocation of pages has been increased from two to four. Other Societies have also contacted me asking if I would write an article for their respective journals explaining the HFHS Strays Index. This I am only too happy to do as I am a firm believer that the more people who are aware of the Index the better for all and as a bonus the HFHS may well attract more members.

After the last issue of this journal was produced I started to receive what has been a steady supply of letters and e-mails from society members asking for help with queries. Sadly to date I have not been able to help anyone positively although I may have been able to help one or two in an indirect way. As the database grows I am certain this trend will alter quite drastically, indeed I hope so. Of course the trouble is that over the years so many people left the Highlands for one reason or another that a database containing a mere 3000 of them is just a pinprick. However I am sure you will all be familiar with the old saying "From little acorns the mighty oak does grow..." Everything has to start somewhere.

I also take this opportunity to thank those of you who have already contributed information, and with a special thanks to those members who have sent files by e-mail. Once again I appeal for more information on any stray that you find to be sent to me please. Some of you are more than likely to have had an ancestor or relative who was born in the Highlands and moved overseas. They are of course strays as are those Highlanders who gave their lives overseas in the numerous wars over the centuries. Many Scots went to Africa for the Boer wars so any details on those would be appreciated.

Over the past few months I have been adding more entries to the Strays Index and it currently exceeds three thousand, most of which have been extracted from census entries, and in particular the 1851 census. By the time that you read these pages I hope to have a revised index deposited in the HFHS library at Farraline Park, Inverness. It is intended only to be an interim index as I still have a large amount of information to add and check over the coming months as time permits.

One of the things that has come to light whilst entering and finding Strays is that a very large number of Highlanders have over the years perished at sea or in lochs in such incidents as local ferry disasters and fishing/boating accidents. These people are not strays as such but as it is a pity to waste such useful research information and owing to the fact that I have not heard of anyone else compiling this data I will be creating an additional database to cover these people. So again any entries of this nature would be appreciated. With luck this database can supplement the strays index from the start of the new millennium.

During the compiling and checking of the revised index a lot of, to say the least, odd spellings of names of both people and birthplaces have highlighted themselves. These are either writing mistakes or misunderstandings on behalf of enumerators etc. To try to overcome the problem of sorting on a database I have spent considerable time sorting and clarifying birthplaces. Therefore some of them have been altered from the original spellings. You would not believe how many ways people can spell 'Campbeltown'! Hopefully I have got it right. When it comes to people's names I have not made any changes whatsoever and the index shows this by the many varied spellings and abbreviations of Margaret and Elizabeth as two examples. When

one asks for a query please try to include all variations of surname spellings. Naturally with Scottish people it could begin Mac or Mc but the second part may vary enormously. To give an example take Mac/McFee or is it Mac/McPhee or Mac/McFie? And the list just goes on.

Genealogy can be a very rewarding and yet frustrating pastime and one of the main problems can be surname spelling. When looking for ancestors one should not be blinkered into the idea that "my surname is Smith so none of my ancestors could possibly be named Smythe." To give an example let us go back to the early 1800s and a baptism where a family may have two or three children baptised on the same day. Neither of the parents could read or write and the cleric, possibly new to the area, asked their name. The father replied in a broad accent Avory. The cleric then may have written Avary, Avery, Every, Ewby, Awbry or any other combination that he could think of. On top of this also bear in mind that as it was a joyous occasion the drink may well have flowed quite freely so anything was possible.

### **Newspaper Cuttings**

Newspapers contain very interesting snippets from time to time. You know, reporters of old certainly had a rather pleasing way of wording and compiling an article. Here is one that caught my eye:-

The *West Highland Free Press* of August 1995 printed the following

This week 193 years ago.

On 12<sup>th</sup> August 1802 Archibald MacGillivray of Skye, having determined to emigrate to the United States of America, went - as was customary - to his local minister for a written reference to the New World. MacGillivray, along with hundreds and thousands of others in the years to come, received his reference. It read:

"Those do Certify that the Bearer hereof Archibald MacGillivray is a Native of the Parish of Sleat, Isle of Skye, North Britain. That his Family have always behaved themselves Mostly and Decently, and are Therefore Recommended as good Members of Society wherever it may please Providence to Cast their Lot.

Signed

Martin MacPherson, Minister

Arch MacDonald, Elder

John MacKinnon, Elder

Angus MacDonald, Elder"

With this small encomium, that native of North Britain and his Honest and Decent family set sail for America.

Another snippet that I find not only interesting but also intriguing is a reference to one Donald McLEOD aged 20 years and 4 months and a native of Thurso, Caithness, Scotland who is mentioned on page 339 of the 1850 edition of the N.S.W. Government Gazette. It appears that Donald enlisted in the 11<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot in Liverpool, England on the 27<sup>th</sup> June 1848 and deserted on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February 1850 in Sydney, Australia. A couple of things spring to mind here. What was the 11<sup>th</sup> Regt of Foot doing in Australia and had Donald had enough of



