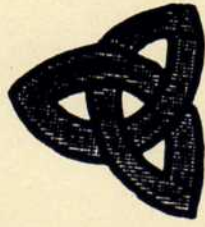


HIGHLAND
FAMILY HISTORY
SOCIETY

highland family history society



ISSN 0262-6659

Published by
The Highland Family History Society
Comunn Sliointearachd na Gàidhealtach

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sliointearachd
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Gàidhealtachd

JOURNAL

Vol. 17 No. 3

May 1999

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Membership Category	United Kingdom	Overseas
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EDITORIAL

The Ross-shire Heritage Society is the latest to have heard me burbling on for an hour or two of an evening about the wonders of family history and How Do I Start? This group introduced me to a new website going under the benign gaze of the University of the Highlands and Islands. It is to be called 'Wayfarers', and will give a multimedia cultural accounts of places around Ross-shire. This is due to go live in a month or so and any opinions you have of it will be welcome. No address yet, but your browsers will no doubt track it down.

Jargon alert! A 'Webring' is a set of websites on the Internet linked to one another, they might be produced by the same person or group, or might be independent of one another but have a mutual interest. There are many genealogy ones with many individuals tied together, the biggest one appearing to be Genring, and reviews of content and use are always of interest for our Bookshelf page. Do tell us what you thought of any Internet places for investigating family history. I've been accessing the Commonwealth War Graves Commission on www.cwgc.org and get in easily, but to do the free search for your relatives in the Services is not so hot because hundreds of thousands of hits are being scored on it. If you succeed then go in, search and get out quickly to speed up the whole thing. And tell us how you got on.

Donald Whyte sent us a note (published in this issue) from a fellow Whyte which mentions yet another Whyte who came to Inverness and set up as a photographer. Invernessians have known him and his descendants in their photographic studio for eighty years or so, and when the business closed its doors the tens of thousands of negatives became the Whyte Collection and may be looked at through the Highland Museum in Kingussie

Has anyone visited the new Clanlands museum at Foulis Ferry on the Cromarty Firth and would like to tell us about it? This is a development of the Clan Munro museum in the Munro headquarters of Foulis Castle. They took a two-hundred-year-old grainstore on the firth and did it up and built nice buildings around it, and I think many of us would be interested in what it offers. If an enthusiastic Munro doesn't answer this call for a review I shall just have to go the four miles out of Dingwall to see for myself.

Another article in this Journal concerns the descendants of a Highland policeman, shot when attempting to arrest a poacher, which yet again illustrates the importance of newspapers in our research. A look at the Inverness Courier microfilm for December 23rd 1898 found a 3000-word article on the *Tragedy at Neithy Bridge - Policeman Shot Dead - Flight of the murderer and the efforts to find him*. Constable Thomas King was 'a trusted and intelligent officer who is survived by a widow and family of seven, the eldest being a young lady teacher in Tullich Public School', and was the son of Mr King, fishmonger of Port Gordon, all good strong stuff for researchers' files. The newspaper also told us that he was 5' 9½" tall.

A friend of mine constantly tells me there is no such thing as 'co-incidence,' which I refute saying lots of things happen at the same time as one another. Such as Madeline Moreton's collection of names extracted from shipping lists, organised by county and sent to the family history societies in those areas, the second chunk of which we're printing in this issue. Separately, the Scottish Interest Group of Auckland, NZ, sent us a sample obituary from their searchable collection, concerning the death of an immigrant Joseph McRae who went there on the Blue Jacket in the 1860s. Yes, you guessed, he is there in Madeline's list!

WHYTES IN INVERNESS

by Donald Whyte

One of our founder members, Donald Whyte of Kirkliston, received a hand-written letter from Dr. W.H. Cockcroft of 5611 Highbury Street, Vancouver B.C. Canada V6N 1Y7, containing information about a Whyte family with Inverness connections and with the permission of Dr. Cockcroft, typed it and submitted it to us for publication. The letter follows:

Dear Mr Whyte,

I came across your name in Angus Baxter's book 'In Search of Your Roots' (1991), stating your interest in readers who had Scottish ancestors who came to Canada, especially pre-1855 [sic, but should have been 1867, the year of Confederation]. My brief story does not quite justify on that score, but as your surname is Whyte, this note may be of some interest to you.

It concerns two Whyte brothers, living in Scotland just about a hundred years ago. One was William H. Whyte, living in Ayr with his wife Sarah Steele from Limavady [in Drumachose parish, Londonderry], and two children: Alexander Steele, b. 1884, and Lydia Mary Hood, b. 1887, at London, England. A brother of William H., D. Whyte, lived in Inverness and worked at 57 Church Street as a photographer. William H. collapsed one day and died about 1902, probably a cardiac death. Within a few months Sarah and her two children moved from Ayr to Inverness where young Alex. went to work as an apprentice with his uncle 'D', who numbered HM Queen Victoria among his patrons.

In 1910, Sarah, Alex. and Lydia emigrated to Toronto, Canada, living briefly with an old Irish friend, Mrs Jenkinson, who had gone there, ca. 1907. Alex. had two contacts to look up re. work on photography, one in Prescott, about 20 miles west of Montreal. He went there first; met and married Gertrude Keiler, of a Scottish United Empire Loyalist family. Within four years they moved to St. Catharines, Ontario, where Alex. became a busy and successful photographer. They had two children, Jean b. 1914 d. in a car accident in 1946 and George, 1917-1985, a bachelor. In 1936, Alex. collapsed and died of coronary thrombosis.

Lydia Mary, (my mother), in Toronto ca. 1911, met a young Yorkshire man, Herbert Cockcroft, who had come from Stanningley, ca. 1904. Herbert built a house in Mimico, about 5 miles west of Toronto and he and Lydia were married in Mimico church where he was the organist. I was b. 29 Jan 1915 (had my 80th birthday a few weeks ago [Jan 1995]) and Sarah, my maternal grand-mother, lived with us. Herbert worked as a cabinet-maker in a pipe-organ factory in Toronto. Sarah died in 1934. Lydia died in 1951 and Herbert died in Vancouver, 1959.

I studied medicine in Toronto (MD 1942) then went with the Canadian Army on service 1943-45: Italy and NW Europe, and returned to Canada in July 1945. When the war in Europe ended, my unit was slated to go to the Pacific Ocean, so I had 28 days leave - married a girl from Vancouver - and on day 26 of my leave the first atom bomb was dropped and our unit was soon disbanded. My working life has been between the Vancouver General Hospital and the University of BC Medical School. Retired 1977-78.

7

We have three children:

1. * Donald William b. 1946, also an MD on the staff of University Hospital, Saskatoon, had a wife Susan and one son, Sean William.
2. Robert Douglas b. 1948, works with a pharmaceutical company here in Vancouver and is unmarried.
3. Patricia Anne b. 1951, working in Vancouver and unmarried.

* You may already know something of this branch of the Whytes - perhaps more than I do, but I felt you might be interested in learning that there are descendants in Western Canada - alive and well. In fact our telephone directory for Greater Vancouver (population ca. 1.5 million) lists about 130 Whytes.

Sincerely,

W.H. Cockcroft.

P.S. William H. Whyte worked for or with Frederick Varne & Co., printers and book-binders, Bedford Square, Strand, London. I think he was their 'man' in Ayr.

ASAD TALE

by John Durham

{Curved + wings, badly eroded} @ In memory of Christina URQUHART, who was accidentally killed at Campbelltown, Ardersier, 28 Jan 1879. This inscription on one of the stones in the Chapel Yard, Inverness records Christina's maiden name although she had been married. To whom we do not know and the possible reason for this omission is to be found in the following report in *The Inverness Advertiser* dated Friday 31st January 1879.

ARDERSIER - A FATAL ACCIDENT

An accident of a fatal and alarming manner occurred at Campbelltown on Tuesday night. Mr Cowan's public conveyance was returning from Fort George Station from the 4.3pm train with a number of passengers, and when opposite Raybank House the horse took fright and became unmanageable. The driver, William Fraser, and another passenger endeavoured to restrain the animal, but it bolted. At one of the sharp turnings of the road the horse rushed through a garden paling and into the garden, and turning suddenly round, one of the passengers, Mrs Christina Fraser, Campbelltown, was jerked out of the conveyance. Her head came in contact with a wooden shed, and her skull was fractured. She died a few minutes afterwards, within a few yards of her own door. Deceased was a widow and about seventy years of age. She had been in Inverness visiting her only relations now in the north, all her near connections having some time ago gone to Australia. The other passengers were badly shaken, but none of them was seriously hurt. The driver had his wrist dislocated.

That section of the report which I have underlined shows that her headstone was probably erected by a distant member of her family. A sad tale indeed!

HFHS PROJECTS - CURRENT STATUS

by John Durham

None of the dates of publication tentatively entered on page 32 of the previous journal were met. However, we are pleased to announce that by 1st June we will have available for sale three new publications, details of which you will find below with prices to be found on page 32 of this journal. Although not for sale, Alan Ross has completed the second edition of his Society's Index of Strays. It has been deposited in the Society's library in the Reference Room of Inverness Library for the exclusive use of members.

Monumental Inscriptions

The transcription of the monumental inscriptions in the Chapel Yard, Inverness is finished! On Thursday 6th May I checked the inscription on the last of the memorial stones. Those of you who have been following these project reports may recall that 6 months ago the number of stones located was 2,133. Three months later this figure had risen to 2,405, and now the final total is confirmed at 2,802. Of these 582 are not visible as they are covered by turf of varying thickness, in some places up to 5 inches.

The majority of those hidden (401) only have initials on them, for example J M^K + M F : 1813. + being our shorthand for the 'heart' symbol. However the remaining 181 contain in some cases quite significant and also rather quaint inscriptions on them as the following examples show:-

{Slab} (under turf) Erected by Margaret TURNBULL in memory of her deceased husband Thomas TURNBULL, wool merchant in Inverness, who died on the twenty-fourth day of April 1839, aged sixty years; their son Thomas, who died on the thirtieth day of September 1838, aged seven months; their son John, who died on the twenty-sixth day of August 1843, aged seven years; John TURNBULL, brother of said Thomas TURNBULL, wool-merchant, who died on the sixteenth day of August 1833, aged fifty-one years.

{Small slab, coffin shaped} (under turf) Sacred to the memory of Donald FRASER, infant son of Simon FRASER, boot maker, Inverness who departed this life on the 9th June 1846, aged six months. "*Bold infidelity turn pale & die; under this stone an infant ashes lie; Stay, is it lost or saved? If Death's by sin it sined for it lies here; if Heavens by works in Heaven it can't appear; Ah, reason how depraved, revered, Bible-sacred page - the Knot's untied; it died thro' Adam's sin; it lives for Jesus died*".

{Slab, top edge broken off} (under turf) Erected [to] the memory of [D]uncan MACKENZIE, labourer, Inverness, who died 26th Feb' 1830, aged 72; and his spouse Christina MACPHERSON, who died 3rd Aug' 1818, aged 75; also to the memory of his son Duncan, who died 22nd Feb' 1851, aged 64 and his spouse Jean GRANT, who died 16th May 1848, aged 62; and their children.

This latter inscription is unusual in that it had been very well carved on good quality stone and that the occupation of Duncan Mackenzie, senior is labourer. As it was quite an expense to

have a memorial inscription erected that particular occupation appears very seldom in burial grounds. When my 3rd great grandfather died in late December 1828 in Dunnet in Caithness, the accounts of the Kirk Session Records indicate that the family paid the sum of 6d to have the church bell rung at his funeral on 1st January 1829. He was a farm labourer and not surprisingly the family could not afford the extra 1/6d for the hire of the mortcloth. Duncan Mackenzie, junior must have done well for himself to be able to have such an impressive memorial erected to the memory of his parents as well as himself and his wife.

Two other stones which were found only by probing beneath the turf record the deaths of persons whom we classify as strays. They died outside the area in which they were born or were residing. Without our work in uncovering these stones and recording the inscriptions this useful information may have lain out of sight for many years to come, if not forever.

{Slab} (under turf) To the memory of John JAMESON of Cherry Vale, Aberdeen, who having come to Inverness for the benefit of his health, died 30th of August 1813, aged 72 years. This stone is placed over his remains by his surviving brother Charles JAMESON.

{Slab, badly eroded} (under turf) Sacred to the memory of John MUNRO, sawyer from Boath, Parish of Alness, Ross shire, residing in Merkinch, Inverness. He died 22nd March 1861, aged 75 years.

During this fourth and final phase of checking I 'lost' two inscriptions, one was in twice and the second was actually part of the adjacent stone. However I found five more, including one that I glimpsed out of the corner of my eye while checking an inscription on a stone adjacent to a large holly tree. I then spent nearly 30 minutes trimming back the holly before I was able to get in close enough to the tree to uncover the following inscription which, from the reference to the motto 'Stand fast', I would assume is for a family called Grant:-

{Slab} (behind, in base of holly tree) @ 16 (I G + B M^K) 91 / W G + K F : 1761. "*Stand fast*". Memento Mori.

There were a number of problems with some stones. These fell into three main categories. The most common was wind and/or water erosion resulting in several letters and numbers disappearing altogether. Next some memorials had been broken at some time and were then cemented together. In the course of this work part of the inscription on either side of the break was quite often hidden under the concrete. Finally some stones had either fallen over or been pushed over. These had been cemented in an upright position and occasionally the final part of the inscription was allowed to sink below the level of the concrete.

Some of these memorial inscriptions in Chapel Yard (a total of 1,340) were first recorded by Sandy Gillies in 1989. Fortunately some of the stones where the inscription is now under concrete were among those recorded by Sandy at that time. Although we have been unable to check the missing words, what Sandy recorded previously has been added to the inscription inside the [and] terminators with an * following to highlight this fact.

In the case of erosion or excessive use of cement around the broken ends of a stone we have checked the copy death certificates located at New Register House in Edinburgh in an attempt to recreate the missing information. Where the death occurred after 1854 and there was

sufficient detail on the stone to give a clue to the missing names and/or dates, I e-mailed copies of what we had recorded to Margaret Mackay, one of our members who has helped us out in the past. She very kindly looked up the death certificates for me and with only two or three exceptions has been able to supply the missing information. Sometimes names not visible on the memorial have been identified as the following example shows. On this stone more than 60% of the top skin of the stone had disappeared. The missing information found on the death certificate appears between the [and] terminators.

{Coffin shape, very badly eroded} (under turf) Erected by W^m BARCLAY, engineer and his wife [Anne JONES in memory of their daughter [Jane who died on the [24th April] 1856, [aged 5 years].

The index to the names on these 2,802 memorial stones is now also complete. It will need printing out and checking but, fear not, the proposed publication date of 1st June will still be met. The Society have accepted the offer of a table at the Local History Forum at the Town House, Inverness on Saturday 5th June at which copies will be available for sale of this as well as all our other publications.

Indexes to 1851 Census Returns

I said in the previous journal that I was considering not trawling through the 756 pages of microfilm upon which the 1851 census for Inverness Burgh is recorded to check the data we had recorded for the index. However, I realised that statement was somewhat bold so I decided to check a small section as a trial and found out that there were more errors than I had envisaged. During this trial I also discovered that the checking process was considerably less time-consuming than I had estimated. Over two consecutive weekends, which included the extended Easter period, the 756 pages were read through once more and all errors corrected. This compared favourably with the 16 weekends needed to enter the original data.

Once complete the index ran to 221 pages and had 12,663 persons on it. Of these over 4,000 were born outside Inverness-shire. After looking at various alternatives, it was decided that the index would be produced on fiche rather than in booklet form. The cost of production as well as the high cost of postage for sending out a booklet, especially to our overseas members, were factors in this decision. This is the first time our society has produced a publication on fiche but other societies have been using this medium for some time. I e-mailed Powys FHS, who gave me the name of the company they use who specialised in this format.

The index to Inverness Burgh was produced in time for the 10th Annual Conference of SAFHS at Hamilton. It is now available to those of you who were not at the Conference or were unable to be at the last meeting of the winter season on 27th April, when it was on sale locally for the first time. Yesterday the index for Wick Burgh, which identifies 6,716 persons was completed and will be going off for conversion to fiche in the next two days. It will also be available for purchase by the time you receive this journal.

The next index to be published will be that for the whole of Nairnshire. Our secretary Angus Bethune completed Nairn Burgh as requested but became so enthusiastic that he offered to go on and transcribe all the parishes in the county. He is working on the last of these parishes and, as all the parishes he has completed to date have already been checked, it will not be long before it too will be available for sale to our members and to the general public.

JAMES FINDLAY or MURDO MACDONALD?

By Elizabeth M. Weston

Some years ago my husband thought it would be a good idea to write down as much as my parents could remember of previous generations. For this I am extremely grateful as it set me off on the Family History trail and now that both my parents are dead, the information from that first family tree compiled from their initial recollections is so precious. I have spent a long time on my own family and have picked up as much as possible about my husband's as I have been able to along the way - after the first tree compilation, he has never had the time to pursue the matter further and anyway his parents were divorced; he had not seen his father since 1946 and his mother was not in the least forthcoming about his paternal relatives. We have since learned quite a lot about the Weston family in south London and the home counties, but that is another story. Mother-in-law had been brought up in Dingwall and was able to give us some information about her mother's family, the Rhinds of Elgin, but very little about her father James Murdo Findlay, who had been killed on the railway when she was six, in 1913.

I started with the marriage certificate of James M. Findlay (33) and Isabella Jessie Rhind (25), married on 24th December 1900 at the Royal Hotel, Dingwall; witnesses: - Marion Rhind and Alexander McDonald Ross. I understand this to be the bride's sister and the groom's brother who, according to mother-in-law, died at the age of 36 - she did not know why his surname was different. James Findlay's parents were given as James Findlay, farmer (deceased) and Margaret Findlay, m.s. McDonald. A birth certificate for James Findlay was sought but not found. His daughter thought he had come from Tain but no appropriate birth could be found. This was where I first sought the help of the HFFHS.

I had a most welcome reply from Donald MacLennan who remembered the family in Church Street, Dingwall and was intrigued to search further. He found James M. Findlay in the census of 1891, unmarried, lodging in Hill Street, Dingwall and born in Tain - so that much was true. Further research in the census for 1871 for Tain Poorhouse showed James Findlay aged 3 years along with Alexander Ross 11 months and Margaret McDonald, pauper, unmarried, formerly dairymaid, born Lochbroom. In 1881 Margaret McDonald had become a servant to the governor of the Poorhouse; she was 45 years old, a laundry maid and still born in Lochbroom. Now James Findlay appears to have become James Finlay Ross, 13 years, scholar, born Tain; Alexander Ross appears to have become Alexander Ross McDonald, 10 years, born Tain.

Entries in the admissions book for the Poorhouse in Tain were then carefully researched by the diligent Donald MacLennan and showed that James and his brother Alexander were in and out of the place like yo-yos between 1868 and 1881 when James went into service. The first relevant entry being Murdo Findlay age 9/12 years admitted May 30th 1868, taken out by his mother May 5th 1869. He was re-admitted on December 25th 1869 as James M. Findlay and his brother, Alexander M. Ross was born in the home on 11th April 1870. During 1870 to 1873, he was known as James Finlay or Murdo James Finlay - by 1874 he was James Finlay Ross - until 1881 when he was finally discharged to service as Murdo James Finlay. Some time later he must have called himself James Murdo Findlay. The confusion in the Poorhouse was obviously caused by his mother's name being McDonald and his brother's name being Ross!

However, search for his birth now had a new dimension. A check on the I.G.I. showed that Murdo McDonald was born on 14th October 1867 in the parish of Fearn, mother Margaret McDonald. This date would fit in with the other information we know about this poor child. Margaret McDonald could be the one born in Lochbroom on 24th March 1833, father Alexander McDonald, mother not given. A search was made for Margaret's death but nothing could be found that looked even vaguely right. Search of the Mitchell Cemetery records found James Murdoch Findlay and his wife Isabella Jessie and all her Rhind relatives but no Margaret.

Then we had an amazing stroke of luck. My husband's brother, who has the Rhind family Bible, found a 'Lair Certificate' for St Duthus, Tain in the name of William Ross. Subsequent enquiries made for me by Barrie Tulloch, to whom I am very grateful, showed the internment's of Margaret Ross aged 60 in 1892; William Ross in 1904 and Alick Ross aged 35 in 1907. Here now the name Ross again! Margaret Ross' death certificate was then sought to show that her maiden name was indeed McDonald; though her father's name was given as Donald McDonald, the death was registered by William Ross, who could not sign his name, but made his mark. The death certificate for William Ross states that he was widower of Margaret McDonald and the informant was Alexander M. Ross 'step-son', so he may not have been William Ross' son. My guess is that he may have been William Ross' illegitimate son, but wasn't sure how to say that! Incidentally, Alexander Ross' death was registered by James M. Findlay, 'step-brother' - did he mean half-brother or not?

The census for 1891 for 1 Cadboll Place, Tain, the address on the Lair Certificate, showed William Ross aged 55 and Margaret Ross, his wife, aged 50, born in Lochbroom. I am sure we have found Margaret and her younger son, Alexander, who was always called Ross, who died at the age of 35 and who was witness at his brother James Murdo Findlay's marriage in 1900.

So, I still have to find Margaret McDonald's marriage to William Ross sometime between 1881 and 1891; but this will take me no nearer to finding James Murdo Findlay's father, given as James Findlay, farmer (deceased) on his son's marriage certificate in 1900. The 1861 census for Fearn shows a farmer, James Findlay, at Pitkerrie House with a wife and five children, the youngest being James born 1857 in Fearn, but this is 10 years too early for our James. In 1871 there are no Findlays at Pitkerrie.

If we could find out where James Findlay moved to, we might find he employed a dairymaid called Margaret McDonald in 1867! Before he came to Fearn in 1851, he farmed Rosemount in Tain and his three farm servants were born in Lochbroom from where we know Margaret came. In his obituary in the Ross-shire Journal, James Murdo Findlay was described as "a well-known singer and being a good Gaelic scholar, he took a warm interest in the local Gaelic Choir." Would his mother, from Lochbroom have spoken Gaelic?

This has been a fascinating story so far and I have high hopes of being able to go further back. I am very grateful for all the help given by Donald MacLennan and Barrie Tulloch; I am sure there is more to find out about the Findlays of Church Street, Dingwall and shall continue with the task!

HFHS STRAYS INDEX

by Alan Ross

First and foremost I must comment on the response to my last article that appeared in this journal. To say that I have been swamped with mail would indeed not be an understatement. Even the postman asked if I ran a fan club for some one.

This large influx of mail is taking time to respond to and I will get around to replying to those who require a reply in due course. I would ask that if you have not heard from me as yet please be patient, I will get there in the end. I still have to work full-time for a living. What has surprised me is the amount of detail that some of you include. As well as copies of certificates one member in Queensland, Australia even included a most welcome map of the route that many immigrants often used once they arrived in Australia whilst another is meticulously extracting all Highlanders from the censuses in her area. Such dedication is very much appreciated on my part.

To all of you who sent me information on Fulwood Barracks, seventeen of you in total, thank you very much indeed. For the record Fulwood Barracks are situated in Watling Street Road, Fulwood, Preston, Lancashire.

A substantial amount of mail received contains details of HFHS members' ancestors who were emigrants. This information very often comes as copies of documents, letters, newspaper clippings etc. To answer a few of your queries I will attempt to explain what happens to the information that you send. Firstly a brief one-line entry is placed onto a computerised database as shown below: -

Surname	Forename	Sex	Birth	Year	Event	Spouse
HARP	John	CA	Wick	1863	74	Death
					MI	/ St. Peter & Paul

This list contains every entry that is currently on the Index. A full printed list of the above is now available for reference in the library at Farraline Park, Inverness. Once this is done a 6" x 4" card is printed with all the information that is relevant to that entry and this is stored in an ever-growing card index in my study. If documents, clippings or photos are included these are put into an envelope and attached to the individual index card. When I took over as Co-ordinator the Index was made up of cards and slips of paper of varying sizes and I am now steadily standardising it all to the same size cards. This will of course take time and will be ongoing in addition to the new data that is always arriving. Information from this card index will only be passed to people who have a positive link to that person. Some cards contain very little data whilst others contain envelopes full of paperwork. Information in the form of census entries is being stored as a computerised entry only at this time and where in some cases people have sent in the complete household that also is included. For example where Jane ROSS a 22-year-old from Tain is employed as a servant in the household of the CAMPBELL family of Edinburgh, the names of everyone in that household will be recorded if the supplier includes them.

Referring back to the item in my last article concerning Donald McLEOD, you will recall he deserted from the 1st Regiment of Foot in Sydney, Australia back in 1850. Whilst I have no further information as yet on the fate of Donald I am indebted to HFHS member John MacPHERSON of Strathfield, NSW, Australia who sent me a very long e-mail listing the

regiments that went to Australia. It seems that the soldiers were employed mainly guarding convicts or other police type duties. The 11th (North Devonshire) Regiment of Foot arrived in Australia in 1845 and remained there until 1857 thus making it one of the longest serving British regiments in the colonies. John also goes on to say that of all the British regiments that came to Australia only two were 'Scottish'. Namely the 73rd (Royal Highlanders) and the 99th (Lanarkshire Volunteers). John's great great grandfather Ewan Fergus McPHERSON who was born in October 1794 at Ardersier, INV was a Lt. Col in the 99th. Having died in Christchurch N. Z in 1856, Ewan is another 'stray' that has 'come home', and one for whom a very good life history is recorded.

Information on another 'stray' comes from HFHS member Ross BARKER in the USA. He enclosed details of his mother Ethel Ritchie ROSS who was born in Forres in 1896. After marrying a Canadian soldier during WWI, Ethel went to Canada before ending up in Buffalo in New York State. Ethel passed away recently in the USA at the grand age of 102 and is the longest living person so far recorded in the index.

Going through all the information that has been sent to my predecessors over the years, I have found that some people whilst searching a particular register or list for their own ancestor have taken time to record other Highland names and forward them to us. One instance of this is a member of the NDFHS who sent in a list of Highland soldiers who died whilst serving with the 8th Fencibles Regiment (Rothesay and Caithness) between 1796 and 1798. The names were all extracted from the MIs for Holy Trinity, Berwick upon Tweed. Without this person's help those names may never have been found.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Many of you will of course know of this web site where you can surprisingly search free of charge for a name, and get a printout on their massive database. Since it was launched in November of last year the service has suffered many ups and downs and was at times very slow indeed. Having seemingly speeded up to a more normal speed it suddenly slowed right down again. After making enquiries with the CWGC I was told that this was due to it recently becoming available in Australia and New Zealand and since then it has again been swamped with enquiries. For those of you wishing to try your luck at finding someone on the list you can visit the site at www.cwgc.org.

For those of you sending e-mails I have a new address which is somewhat easier to remember. The old one can still be used though just the same. The new address is:-
AlanRoss10@compuserve.com

FILLER

from Alan Ross

Nothing to do with strays but a snippet enclosed with other information extracted by a member from the John O' Groats Journal of Tuesday 11th March 1890.

"The Forth Bridge was formally opened for traffic on Tuesday by the Prince of Wales".
I just thought that you would like to know.

CONSTABLE THOMAS KING

by Jocelyn Gould

I have been sent copies of articles relating to the commemoration ceremonies marking the centenary of the murder of Constable Thomas King, by members of the HFHS who knew of my interest in this family. Constable King was my great grandfather. The ceremonies prompted me to put onto paper, my reflections of this incident, based on my research over the past 15 years, and to acknowledge the help that I have received from fellow members over that time. It may be of interest to members resident in the local area who read their papers but didn't know of the significance of the event in the lives of some families here in Australia.

Jocelyn Gould (838)

d-gould@one.net.au

*The Burlington by the Sea, 1175 Sixth Avenue, MAROOCHYDORE, Queensland 4558
Australia*

The Murder of Constable Thomas King

On Sunday, 20 December 1998, a small group of people gathered at the Abernethy Churchyard and later at the Northern Constabulary Headquarters in Inverness to commemorate the life and death of Constable Thomas King. On the other side of the world, in Australia, on the same day, another slightly larger group of people commemorated the life and death of Constable King, in thought and spirit. We, his descendants, felt it was appropriate to pay tribute to our ancestor on the centenary of his murder and so it was that one of our number, resident in England, initiated the two ceremonies with the support of the Northern Constabulary.

It was on a fateful day just five days before Christmas 1898, that great grandfather King was the victim of, in the words of the reporter for the Aberdeen Journal, 'a deliberate and cold blooded murder' which was to irrevocably change the course of the lives of the King family.

Thomas King was the second child born to John King and Eliza Priest at Cowfords in the parish of Speymouth, on 27 November 1852. On 8 June 1879, whilst working as a ploughman at Salterhill, Drainie, he married Jessie Gordon, born in the parish of Bottriphnie, Bariff-shure, a domestic servant at Duffus House. Thomas was obviously a man of some ambition, as his occupation was 'farm griever' at Easter Suddie in the parish of Knockbain, on the birth of his first child, Janet, (my grandmother) on 7 June 1881. The family were still at Easter Suddie for the birth of the second daughter, Eliza, in June 1882, Thomas still being a farm griever.

The culmination of Thomas' ambitions was the noble and honorable desire to protect and serve the community, and to this end, on 5 February 1883, he was appointed a Police Constable in the Inverness-shire Constabulary, a day that was to herald the start of an all too brief career ending so violently less than seventeen years later. His widow's personal papers show that he was transferred to Abernethy on 21 March 1883 and thence to Inch, where he took up duties on 1 October 1883. The life of a bobby in the village of Inch must have agreed with the constable and his wife, as daughter Blanche was born in November 1884, followed by Isabella in January 1886 and his first son, Thomas, in April 1888.

His service record states that he was transferred to Abernethy on 18 July 1888 and son Robert was born at The Old Female School, Abernethy, on 12 August 1890. By 1895, he was still the local police constable and the proud father of what was to be his youngest daughter, Catharine, born 17 May. He was progressing well through the ranks of the constabulary as he had been promoted to the rank of 1st class constable on 14 February 1889.

Life must have been very agreeable for the family in the village of Nethy Bridge. It is reported that Constable King was a favourite with the villagers, popular, and held in high esteem. He was a man of much tact and intelligence. Great grandfather King was apparently a solidly built man well over six feet tall, 'a man of commanding and striking appearance' according to the newspaper report - not one to be easily intimidated by any hardened criminal. He was diligent in the performance of his duty dispensing justice fairly and without favour. He would not have shirked the task given to him that dreadful day, of apprehending one of the area's most notorious poachers and caternans.

His daughter Janet was equally diligent in applying herself to her studies, receiving a Merit Certificate in April 1896 from the Scotch Education Department at the conclusion of her schooling at the Abernethy Public School. She showed a thorough efficiency in Reading, Writing and Arithmetic as well as the class subjects of English and Geography and the special subjects of Latin and Mathematics. This result, as well as her entirely satisfactory character and conduct, may have been conducive to her signing an indenture with the school board of Abernethy and Kincardine just two months later, on 9 June 1896. Thus began her career as a pupil teacher two days after her fifteenth birthday. No doubt the family were glad of the extra income that Janet would have been able to contribute. She was also a proficient violinist and no doubt the family home would have reverberated to the strains of music and laughter like the homes of many families filled with children.

It has always been part of our oral family history that Granny King 'had the second sight' Apparently she had a premonition of dread just prior to the murder. She insisted her husband wear an extra thick layer of padding under his vest on the fateful day in case he found himself in a life threatening situation. Sadly she was right but what chance an extra thick layer of cotton padding against a rifle fired at close range?

According to reports of the event, Constable King and his neighbouring colleague, Constable McNevin, were tracking down the soon-to-be murderer, Allan Macallum, all day on that fateful December day, for non-payment of poaching fines. Macallum had issued threats that he would 'get' anyone who came after him, such was the nature of the man. He was known to frequent the area of Milton Tulloch near Nethy Bridge where he was notorious for his poaching. They eventually cornered him at 4pm in the kitchen of "Black May" Macpherson's dwelling where he was a lodger and the father of Black May's grandson. There were two rooms in the hovel, for it scarcely deserved the term 'home' the bedroom to the right of the door and the kitchen to the left. It was agreed that the plan of action would be for Constable McNevin to enter the room to the right and Constable King would go to the room on the left. One bullet was all that the habitual poacher Macallum needed, even in the pitch black interior, to change the course of our history.

The funeral of great grandfather King was, in the words of the local correspondent, 'an impressive scene' with the cortège being one of the largest ever seen in Abernethy due to the respect with which the murdered policeman was held and the tragic nature of his death. The children were not required to return to school after the burial and 'the village exhibited every

outward sign of mourning'.

Perhaps as a result of this needless loss of life, Janet King resigned from her teaching career in April 1899 and went to London to train as a nurse. She obviously determined that she would devote her life to saving lives - an understandable and noble ambition forged by the terrible tragedy that had befallen the family. An unfortunate accident cut short her nursing career and she returned to Scotland and resumed teaching. In the meantime, the widow and her younger children had to vacate the police house in Nethy Bridge and they moved to Granttown on Spey where the younger ones obtained work as they became old enough.

By 1906 Janet had convinced her mother that emigrating to Australia might offer the family a chance of a better life. On 6 April that year Jessie King, accompanied by Janet, then aged 24, whose occupation was listed as a teacher, Robert aged 16 and Catharine aged 11, both scholars, sailed from London bound for the fledgling colony of Australia. They arrived in Brisbane on 25 May 1906 and thus began charting a new course in the history of the King family. Over the next three years, Jessie's other children, Eliza, Isabella, Blanche with her husband and daughter, and Thomas, all emigrated to Brisbane. Most of their descendants still live there to this day.

Jessie Gordon King was a woman of great fortitude who endured misfortune and overcame it. She never returned to Scotland. She outlived all but three of her children and is buried in a peaceful garden of remembrance far from the grave of her beloved husband.

Acknowledgments:

I wish to thank, most sincerely, the following people who have assisted and encouraged me over the past fifteen years of my research into my King ancestry and this incident in particular:

Constable David Connor of the Northern Constabulary, Inverness, for providing a copy of his historical account of the incident, service records and newspaper articles of the time.

John Mann MBE, of Orpington for his unpublished memoirs of the King family history.

Dr John Mann of Loughborough for his unbridled enthusiasm in research and instigating the recent ceremonies in Scotland.

Donald Sutherland of Bromley for his personal memories of the incident.

Irene Sutherland of Inverness for assistance with research.

Heather McLeod of Birnie by Elgin for assistance with research.

Marina Dennis of Nethy Bridge for taking me to the location of the murder scene.

Some unknown residents of Nethy Bridge for directions on how to locate Tulloch, the original police station and the local cemetery.

