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EDITORIAL

HIGHLAND

FAMILY HISTORY
 Starting, as I do, the Editorial with a blank page can often be a bit daunting. Fortunately, an occurrence which only happens four times annually. I have to, first of all, decide what to pen (for pen, read type); ideally it should be both entertaining and informative, and then put it all down in a logical, coherent and understandable manner. Ah well. Can't have everything! Maybe I should just cut my losses and stick with the blank page!

Anyway, I'll try and put some characters down on this (previously blank) page and rattle on about what has been keeping me busy since the last random jottings appeared - my cherished research. I have had a very fruitful time recently (must be that extra free day in the week I have been allocated), with three particular areas occupying my attention.

I wrote briefly last time about the excellent Dornoch Jail Records which are available on CD-Rom at Dornoch Library and at the Highland Council's Archive Department in Inverness. What a resource it is! Well, I have just finished transcribing the whole set and now have a wonderful archive at my own fingertips, which I can at some time research further in greater detail. Some of the more serious (grizzly and gruesome) cases were transferred to Inverness, and will probably, therefore, have been reported in old newspapers and I can follow these up at the library there.

Secondly (and making no apologies for further Sutherland-centric and even more parochial references), whilst researching the old editions of the Northern Times (again, a fantastic resource covering the last 105 years, and available in Brora, Inverness, and I think Edinburgh Libraries), I have come across a real gem. A very well-respected Brora citizen, the late Frank MacLennan, compiled a series of articles for the 'Raggle' between 1953 and 1964, detailing the Place Names of Clyne Parish. He later went on to do the same for the neighbouring parishes of Golspie and Loth in the 1970s.

The truly great fact about this archive, is that Frank had spent many years not just researching the etymology of the local names, but he also consulted with local worthies as well, to include the folklore behind many of the names. These people, probably very old then and almost certainly long since passed away, held the stories which don't seem to get handed down through the generations nowadays and, consequently, many of these names have gone out of local usage. Now, however, thanks to Frank's efforts in the case of Clyne Parish over half a century ago, this unique record has been preserved and is available for all to marvel at.

And thirdly, I was loaned a small book by a daughter (Alison MacKenzie) of a long-standing family of Brora shopkeepers (William Sutherlands). The book simply had unique reference numbers (from 1 to 863), dates (No 1 is February 18th 1862, No 863 is July 1899), and names, addresses and occasionally occupations against each number, some with a sum of money (ranging from one shilling to £40) attached. There are duplicates appearing through the years and the entries are not just locals - there are hotel residents, travelling salesmen and one entry is for a 'Groom, Circus'. What it's all about, I am not too sure, but it's very interesting and gives further information about people and places in the parish. Again, it's all interlinked and is a fascinating insight into the life of our forebears a century and a half ago.

Well, that's how I've been keeping busy, and now I really should get it all published for the wider audience, who are not able to get to Brora, Inverness or even Edinburgh. Someone somewhere might find it interesting! And guess what? That's another blank page filled too!

DIGGING DEEPER: ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF FAMILY HISTORY

Talk give to the Society by Dr Jim Mackay on 23rd September 2003

Most of us, when we start to investigate our family history, find it relatively straightforward to trace our family back to the 1850s when civil registration began in Scotland. Most of us will do so by speaking to relatives, locating our family gravestones, using the civil registration records and accessing the official census information.

To move back before then, or to put flesh on the bare bones of the names of our ancestors, we need to look at a wider diversity of records. I shall be looking at some of these, and illustrating them with colourful incidents wherever possible.

An additional reason for my interest in alternative sources is that a few years ago I set myself the challenge of gathering as much pre-1855 information on my home parish of Resolis as possible. The intention was to publish a source book on the parish. The book has been delayed first by the tiptap of tiny feet and then by the renovation of our house in Cullicudden, but hopefully it won't be too long before I prune down the present 1500 pages or so into something fit for publication. For updates keep watching my website: {<http://members.lycos.co.uk/ResolisBlackIsle/index.html>}

The information I've collected on Resolis has also proved invaluable in setting into context the historical site of Kirkmichael within Resolis. The Kirkmichael Trust has been formed to conserve and restore the old Kirk and Kirkyard. Essential to the funding process is determining the history of the site, and it's also useful to identify the families and incidents associated with it. My collection of parish records makes this a relatively easy task. A short illustrated booklet on the History of Kirkmichael, all proceeds to the Trust, is available from me and more information on the Trust's activities can be found on its website: {www.kirkmichael.info}.

Church records:

The first material people turn to when they try to push back beyond civil registration and the census is the church baptism and marriage register, often incomplete, sometimes extending back into the 1700s or earlier, but commonly starting much later. In Lochcarron, for instance, the registers start around 1820. Given that the Lochcarron Free Church register covering the period 1843 onward has disappeared, it gives particular difficulties to those of us with relatives from that parish.

Incidentally, in case you aren't aware, data from the Free Church registers are not included within the IGI Index. I have often been able to identify "missing" births in Resolis between 1843 and 1855 from my transcript of the Free Church Register. As ever, I stress how important it is to check original sources. Indices such as the IGI can contain errors and certainly contain only a tiny amount of the total information within the Registers.

Interestingly, when the famous Reverend Donald Sage arrived in Resolis in 1822, he found that the original registers (which start in 1747) were tattered and already had large chunks missing. Sage copied them out afresh. Some of the tattered original pages have been kept with the registers, and when I was transcribing the registers I found that Sage himself in places had

transcribed the originals incorrectly. And then the IGI transcribers introduced errors into Sage's transcripts, with the result being similar to Chinese whispers.

Tucked into the Resolis registers are all sorts of useful snippets of information, such as transfers of ownership between families of burial lairs in the 18th century, and I've noticed similar addenda in many other registers too.

Well, the old parochial registers are easily accessible on microfilm now. However, in order to access other church records, you need to visit the National Archives of Scotland in Edinburgh. Probably the most useful are the Kirk Session Records. Now, in Resolis, the minister before the Reverend Donald Sage burnt all the early Kirk Session Records as he didn't want records of past transgressions being carried forward. What I found, though, is that the more serious cases were reported up to the Presbytery, and the Presbytery records contain extracts from the now non-existent Kirk Session Records! The Presbytery records in fact contain much information on people and events from individual parishes. I have transcribed all the Presbytery Records for Resolis, and there are tremendous stories buried in the routine church business.

For instance, if you are interested in finding if any of your ancestors were involved in charming, then turn to the Presbytery of Chanonry Records (CH2/66). I've noted incidents in the parishes of Cromarty, Avoch, Kilmuir, Killearnan and Cullicudden. Some cases are complex and serious, but here are a couple of simpler ones.

In 1732 "Anne Bay in Allanrick in the parish of Kilearnan Cited to this Dyet being Called Compared & being Interrogate if She was in use to Charm Cattle answered She had some Skill in keeping Cattle from Straying or being Stollen & for that purpose used to repeat some words in Irish which in English are as follows

The blessing which S' Comie gave y' Cattle which S' Patrick left in the field noe thief Shall touch them in the fields they Shall not be lost in the waters or Drownd in the Seas from Rocks & weather & Care footed Swift Thieves They Shall ly down in the Name of the Cross of Earman & Rise in the Cross of Christ till they come Again in peace.

The Said Anne Bay being interrogate if She had used that Charm for any other's Cattle Save those belonging to John M' Conchy in the parish of Kilmuire wester answered She Did not. Then she being removed and the presbitery takeing her Case under Consideration They appointed Master John Robertson to Deal with her Conscience twixt & next presbitry & her to attend frequently upon the said Master John Robertson her parish Minister twixt & then."

In 1734 "there was given in a Reference from the Session of Cullicudden anent Donald Simson Shoemaker in S' Martins Bearing Date the seventh of March Current Shewing that the Said Donald Simson being Cited to their Meeting of the Said Day for going in to the Corryeard of Donald Davidson & John Murray in Drumcudden & fetching away thence some Earth with him in a Clamdestine way or manner which lookt like Charmeing or Sorcery whereupon he was Called & Comparing was Interrogate if he had so Done: He Confessed he did and lodged the Said Earth in his own Corryeard if he had so Done. He Confessed he did and Davidson & John Murray their Corryeard might be transferred to him: And being further interrogate if he Ever or at any tyme before had practiced the Like or Who had taught him to do so: Answered he Ever did practice it And said that it was a transient beggar who had lodged at his house the night before he had done it that informed him thereof: Which the Session Considering & Judging to be a sin of ane very heinous Nature they did refer the Case Simpliciter to this Meeting of presbitry to Which they Cited the said Donald Simson

apud Acta: Then the said Donald being Called Compeared & he being Interrogate in the above reference Adhered to his Confession in all points Whereupon the Moderator having Seriously Dealt with him Arent & warned of the Complex Nature & heinousness of his Sin as Containing the Sins of Envy Avarice Discontent & witchcraft he was remitted to the said Session to Satisfy Discipline in usual form."

Similarly, in the Kirk Session Records, you'll find much interesting and useful material. The Records are full of investigations into folk slandering each other, profaning the Sabbath or being accused of charming and witchcraft. It's quite likely that if it's a parish of your antecedents, some of them will pop up in a colourful manner.

More seriously, if you have an ancestor missing a father, then it is likely you'll find the father identified here as the Kirk Session went to considerable lengths to find out. There were financial as well as moral reasons for this, for if the father of an illegitimate child could be identified then he could be charged with its maintenance. Nevertheless the zeal with which such investigations were prosecuted makes uncomfortable reading in this more tolerant age.

The father was often reluctant to identify himself and, surprisingly, the mother always seems to have conceived as the result of very few incidents of fornication. Here are several examples from the Resolis Kirk Session Records in the 1820s and 30s (CHZ/1191/2).

First of all, a straightforward one:

"Margaret M'Innear being also called compeared & being suitably admonished & interrogated, Acknowledges that she is with child that Allan M'Donald an unmarried man & son of Alexander M'Donald alias Taylor, Tenant in Castlecraig is the Father of her Pregnancy. That they were guilty with each other two different Times, first, on the Wednesday before Christmas Old Style (2^d day of Jar' 1827) in the wood near Brae and about 9 o'clock at night & next on the Monday after new years day Old style (14th day Jar') in the same place, never had any carnal connection with any other man, that the said Allan M'Donald left the parish two days after they were guilty with each other the last time & has not returned since. Does not know where he is but his parents do as she understood they heard from him lately."

Here is one with much more of a story to it:

"Anne Mackay in Brae being called compeared and being suitably admonished to tell the truth & interrogated, Acknowledged that she is with child. That Peter Warren, alias M'Donald in Diruthbeag Parish of Cromdale is the Father of her Pregnancy. Became first acquainted with him about four years ago in the parish of Edenkillie where she had been in service & where also the said Peter Warren resided at the time as a day labourer. That during the whole of that time tho there was a courtship, there was no carnal connection between them; That then Peter Warren had repeatedly given her a promise of Marriage That being afterwards in service in the place of Dalvenin[?] in the Parish of Cromdale she again fell in with Peter Warren where they renewed their acquaintance & courtship that on the 29th day of January last & in the field near her masters house she & the said Peter Warren were guilty with each other. Had no carnal connection with him since. That about the beginning of Summer last when she was just about to leave her service in the Parish of Cromdale to come home, had a conversation with him, told him her situation. That he then renewed his former promises of marriage to her & added that in the course of six weeks, he would come after her to the parish of Resolis & get their Marriage banns published. That she told him if he did not come to see her that she would soon come back to see him, that he

replied, she might depend upon he would not put her to that necessity.

The Session considering the above confession emitted before them by the said Anne McKay resolved to send an extract of their minutes in the case to the Kirk Session of Cromdale that the Parties may be dealt with according to the laws of the church."

Now here is one which throws much light on the lengths some men would go to avoid taking responsibility:

"The Session took up at this meeting the case of Margaret Robertson Resolis & Robert M'Leod Sadler at Invergordon. [...]

James Bayne being called compeared & being suitably admonished to tell the truth & interrogated Declares, That he is acquainted with Robert M'Leod & Margaret Robertson had several conversations with Robert M'Leod respecting Margaret Robertson. That on one occasion, & about the beginning of January last witness together with one David Smart & John Munro both residing at Invergordon went into Robert M'Leod's shop, that John Munro went away but that witness & David Smart went with Robert M'Leod into his house, that both the witness & David Smart at the time were the worse of Liquor, that David Smart after some conversation between them respecting Marg' Robertson said to Robert M'Leod, "What will you give me if I take to be the Father of Margaret Robertson's child" that Witness immediately added; "if you give me a Mutchkin of Whisky we both will take the blame" that Robert M'Leod said "if you do so I will give you a Gallon" that Robert M'Leod brought down out of his press a bottle in which there was some whisky & which Witness & David Smart drank in cups as there was no Glasses, that Robert M'Leod after that went out for more whisky & brought along with him George Ross Nailer in Invergordon to write out an agreement on the part of the witness acknowledging himself the Father of Margaret Robertson's child & which witness had agreed to sign, that after the paper was written, Witness and David Smart refused to sign it unless they got half Guinea between them, that Robert M'Leod not having that sum of money in the meantime gave them a pair of new shoes value 9/6^d & gave them also eighteen pence or two shillings but does not remember which to make up the difference. That yesterday & the day before Robert M'Leod spoke to Witness on the subject & intreated him to stand to what he had already done & said, before the Session & this day gave him a sixpence to take a dram. All which Witness declares to be truth. (Signed) James Bayne Witness."

An even more remarkable case in the Resolis Kirk Session Records relates to a woman, with child out of wedlock, who claimed never to have had an association with a man at all. This resulted in a tremendous fuss, and whether or not virgin births were possible was debated with medical experts being brought in to advise.

Within the Kirk Session Records lie the more mundane but very useful annual lists of folk on the Poor Roll and on the Communicants Roll. These lists covered a significant proportion of the adult population, and the notes attached to them will often tell you when folk died or moved into or out of the parish. Well worth checking out.

Records of civil and criminal legal proceedings:

One of the most fruitful sources of information I have found has been civil and criminal legal records, again stored in the National Archives. There are various indices to these but indices cannot tell you if your ancestor was called as a witness in a trial. There is no alternative but to identify all the cases relevant to your area and plough through the vast amount of paperwork. I have transcribed the paperwork for many of the cases involving Resolis folk, but I'm pleased

to say that many more await exploration. There's always a surprise waiting overleaf when you're going through legal cases.

This is the sort of information you might find in the proceedings of a civil case. This is an estate boundary dispute in 1822 found in the Cromarty Sheriff Court records held in the National Archives (SC.24/16/3). Numerous local folk appeared at the Bridge of St Martins to give evidence, including, as an example:

"Compared John MacLean Tenant in Brae who Depones that he is Sixty Six years of age, was Born at his present residence of Wester Brae, where he has resided all his Lifetime Depones that he knows Aulnameil which he has always understood to be the Boundary between the Counties of Ross and Cromarty; And he knows that the Tenants living on the east Side of said Burn are in the practice of attending the Courts at Cromarty, and that those living at the West side are in the habit of going to Dingwall and Fortrose to the courts; Depones that he recollects Several Tenants Successively in possession of the Lands to the east of said Burn, now in the Occupation of Widow Andrew Holm; That when the Deponent was a Boy, the same was possessed by Alexander Allan, who was Succeeded by John Scott; that John Scott's Successor was Ewen McLean, who was next Succeeded by Robert Simpson, that Simpson died about Twenty five years ago, and was in possession of said Lands upwards of Forty years Since; Depones that he knows the place where the Manor or Mansion House of St Martin Stood, that it is a little to the East of the Said Burn, immediately to the east of Widow Holm's House, and the Deponent recollects to have Seen the Walls of the House Standing".

Criminal cases can include for a single Highland parish prior to 1855 several hundred small debts cases and probably a few serious cases of violence. You are quite likely to find a member or two of your family involved as accused, victim or witness. You can see that if you're prepared to dig through these dusty collections you can strike quite a treasure trove of information.

Legal documents - Charters, Writs, Sasines, Tailzies etc.:

There are of course a whole range of other legal documents - charters, writs, sasines, tailzies and so on. Most of these prove to be rather disappointing when you investigate them. They're useful for tracking the ownership of an area of land, and are of genealogical interest if your antecedents were landowners, but for the majority of us, they are of limited benefit.

Sasines:

You can purchase sasine indices, or inspect them at various outlets, including the National Archives, and then order the relevant sasine from the NAS. There is an great deal of legal jargon to wade through for usually very little relevant information, but occasionally you will come across a wee gen.

As an example, here's a typical sasine from 1728 (RS38/8 £379). Identified in it are: the various officials and witnesses associated with the process
John Barnett tenant in Braelangwell Baillie
Margaret Ross Second lawful daughter to ye deceast David Ross of Inverchasley now Spouse to Charles Urquhart of Braelangwell
Her eldest brother David Ross now of Inverchasley

Masses of information about the estate of Braelangwell including the names of some tenants After 1781, the published indexed abridgements of the Register of Sasines make it much easier to trace land ownership.

As an example, the first one in the Cromarty index is for 22 March 1781:

"Henrietta Gordon, relict of Thomas Lockhart, one of the Commissioners of Excise, Scotland, as heir to William Gordon of Newhall, her brother, Seised, Mar.5.1781, in Wester St. Martins, and Alehouse thereof, Easter Balblair or Balblair & Kirkmichael, & Alehouse, Ferry, and Ferry Boats thereof, parts of the Barony of Newhall, viz. Wester Balblair, Newhall, Rosabrighty, and Mill of Milltoun or Mill of Kintail, and Teinds, united par. Kirkmichael, and Cullcuiddent."

Tailzies:

Tailzies are few and far between but caused many legal disputes. They were deeds by which a landowner tried to set out those who in future generations would succeed to his estate. An heir of tailzie often had to change his name, as he had to take the surname of the entailor with the lands. The Register of Tailzies for 1688 to 1833 is held by the NAS under RT1.

A good example is the Gunn Munro of Poyntzfield Tailzie (RT1/22 F. 169R-187V).

Sir George Gunn Munro made out his tailzie in 1783, leaving his estate to his children by his wife, whom failing to his children by any subsequent wife, whom failing to his nephew George Gun Munro and male heirs, whom failing to his nephew Innes Munro brother of the said George Gun Munro and male heirs, whom failing to his nephew George Munro eldest Son of his deceased Brother Henry Munro and male heirs, whom failing to Henry Munro Second Son of my said Brother Henry Munro and male heirs, and so on, at great length, usefully setting out all the relationships.

Wills:

More common, and of great value to the family historian if they exist, are wills. I shall not dwell on these (as I'm sure most of you make use of wills) except to draw your attention to the fact that indices of wills are now available on the internet. This last development makes wills much easier to access. Some of the material now on the internet used to require travelling to Edinburgh (CC and SC repositories in the NAS) or London and leafing through paper indices or scanning through microfilms until your eyes gave out.

The one tip I'll give about wills is that vital family information may be held in the will of somebody only distantly related to the person you're interested in, or even in the will of a business associate. I have found that when you're stuck when trying to confirm a theoretical relationship, it's useful to make a note of all the potential in-laws and business associates and check the indices for wills bearing their names as well. Quite often there will be a confirmatory reference to your ancestor, even if it's only that a guinea to buy mourning clothes has been left to him.

Estate Records:

A particularly fertile source of genealogical information is the estate record. A range of these

are held in the Regional Archive in Inverness, the National Archives in Edinburgh, in estate chart chests and solicitors' offices everywhere.

Despite the existence of indices, it is only by diligently ploughing through the vast numbers of bills of sale, roup documents, invoices, letters and so on that one will come across little nuggets of information relevant to your own pursuits.

For instance, I'm interested in all material relating to the 1812 Resolis murder of Captain George Munro by Robert Ferguson, an article on which I have previously written for the Society's Journal. Within the estate material is supplementary information relating to the victim's widow's financial affairs and even the bill from the murderer for the construction of a boat.

Within estate records are usually found masses of rentals, and these can be of considerable interest. At the very least, they can confirm the presence of your family at the correct residence and indicate how well-off they were. Even better, there is often supplementary material which is of even greater value. For example, the rentals of the estate of Newhall in Resolis are held in both the NAS (SC24/16/3, RH15/44/199) and Farraline Park (HRA/D32), and buried within these is a judicial review of Newhall rentals in 1762 (in RH15/44/199(iii)). It contains information provided by all tenants including such interesting material as the following:

"John Holme Tenant in Ferrytown - pays yearly 16 Bolls 2 firlois Oatmeal or Bear, a merk pr Boll in lieu of Services, 1 penny pr Boll in lieu of vicarage Tythes, 1½ Wedders, 19 hens. No tack. No mailer or subtenant that pays rent to him, only three people that Shears to him in Harvest viz Donald Mackay Peter MacConchy and Isabell Clark, and they also help him in Casting his Turf and firing - as such do he believes on other parts of the Estate and for which he pays them and supports their little Hutts".

Electoral Lists:

Early electoral lists (found in SC24/21) are of limited interest in themselves as only a privileged few were entitled to the right to vote. However, useful information is contained within both the Claims for Enrolment and any Objections. My relative Hugh Ferguson attracted objections to his enrolment on the Resolis electoral list on every election from 1832 to 1857.

This is the form objections took:

I George Mackenzie Tacksman of Humberston object to the Claim of Hugh Ferguson residing at Balblair to be continued as a Voter ... That he occupies the Ferry, which is part of the subjects upon which he is enrolled as joint tacksman with other parties or has subset the same or a portion thereof & is by the joint occupation, or the occupancy of subtenants, disqualified, for he does not pay the amount of rent nor occupy subjects of the value required by Law_ and is for various other reasons and causes disqualified.

Hugh successfully rejected these objections until 1857 when he was divested of the ferry.

Taxes:

Again, unless your forebears were relatively wealthy, there is little point in straying into the plethora of tax lists found within the Exchequer reportories in the National Archives. However, if you're interested in local history they are essential reading and if you have a farming antecedent then they will provide you with some data.

There were taxes for inhabited houses, clocks, hearths, male and female servants, carriages, horses and even dogs.

The one pre-1855 tax which I have found useful is the farm horse tax, which was continued in the consolidated tax, for the period 1797-9 (E326/10 and E326/15). This usefully provides a list of all tenant farmers in Resolis for this period.

Militia Lists:

I'll deal at some length with Militia Lists as, while these are often referred to by family historians, their full value is not often appreciated.

Each Militia List in itself effectively comprises a census of young adult males in the Parish, but the records are much more than this. Parish schoolmasters or constables were made responsible for drawing up lists of those liable to serve, including all men between specified ages, excluding married men with two or more children, and certain categories of employment.

The most complete Militia List is that for 1798 as it includes all men between 15 and 60 able to bear arms. Later Lists give a narrower age band. Other Lists are of date 1814, 1820, 1825, 1826, 1828 and 1831. The information include the name, residence, number of children, number of horses and carts, any infirmities and, depending on the parish, age bands or the exact age. They frequently have little notes like "his brother" or "his son" which help to build family structures.

The procedure of drawing up the Militia List and selecting the final men was a complex one, and it appears that Resolis males were particularly active in trying to get out of their duty.

Even the ministers were busy at it: Thus we find the Resolis minister Robert Arthur writing in 1814 to excuse Alexander Paterson from service as he is his sole servant and moreover has dislocated his shoulder in a fall from a horse.

And in 1831, at the Meeting of the Lieutenancy of the County of Cromarty to swear in men balloted, we have the following entry:

"The next Balloted man being John Macdonald Weaver in Culbo, having been called, he failed to appear. But the Court being well informed that he is lurking in this parish, being seen this day, They direct the Clerk to issue out a Warrant for his immediate apprehension".

Well, to conclude, I've only just touched on some of these pre-1855 alternative sources of family history. There are many others that I haven't even mentioned - newspapers, juror lists, war records in the Public Record Office in Kew, roup rolls, famine relief lists, emigrant ship passenger lists, letters in the National Library.

The good news is that there are many avenues to seek your ancestors prior to civil registration. The bad news is that you have work that bit harder to make progress.

BITS AND PIECES

This is the part of the journal reserved for snippets of information and responses to articles that appeared in previous editions. As usual there is a varied selection for your delectation.

Boy – or Girl?

Anne Dunnet from Wick sent in the following item.

In a recent Journal, mention was made of the interesting information that can sometimes be gleaned from checking out the Register of Corrective Entries. One of the strangest I found was in respect of the birth of a child, John Dunnett in the late 1800s. Sex - male. Father - John Dunnett. Any corrective entries I've seen before usually related to the addition of a Christian name or a change of spelling.

However, in this case, a month later the correction was made - Change sex to female. Change name to Mary. Father - John Dunnett. Well, you'd think he'd know if his wife had just had a baby girl, wouldn't you?

Bear in mind that registration was probably new and daunting for any father in the late 1800s, and a visit to the Registrar's Office may not have come easily to John Dunnett. The local Registrar and I came to the conclusion that perhaps the official was rather abrupt and simply said - "Name?" The father replied "John Dunnett", presumably thinking it was his own name which was required. We will give him the benefit of the doubt anyway.

The current Registrar assured me she always asks the question - "And what is the baby's name?"

[Anne has raised a very important point that should be considered when looking at certificates etc. If the information about an ancestor is not quite what you expected it might be the result of the wrong question being asked, or perhaps the right question having been asked but the informant misunderstood it. Ed]

Avoch Friendly Society

W. Forsyth, a member living in Avoch sent in the following information, which was triggered by the article on the Inverness area in the 1840s that appeared in two instalments in the previous two journals.

You may be interested to learn that, in the fishing village of Avoch, the AVOCH FRIENDLY SOCIETY existed early in the 1800s, taking in the village of Avoch and a fishing community across the Inverness Firth. We have a copy of their records for 1806, which gives their Constitution, lists of members and their contributions and accounts. Members had to contribute for a number of years before they became eligible for benefits.

78th Highlanders in Java

In the process of paying his subscription E Edwards McKinnon, who has previously contributed two articles on the above regiment, wrote to say that he is on the move from Java to Singapore. He indicated that work on his manuscript "The 78th Highlanders in Java, 1811-1816" in nearing completion.

He went on - I have a complete list of all the men of the 78th that died in the Java campaign and those that were invalided home from the time the regiment left Goa until their return to India in late 1816, which I think will be of interest to family historians. This aims to be more than just a straightforward military history. Now to get it all into print! After getting the appropriate permission from PRO Kew, of course. Some entries are quite useful as they give the soldier's parish of origin, or next of kin and the value of effects left.

Progress on "The Small Regiment", a new history of Clan MacKinnon is progressing slowly. My colleague and I, Gerald McKinnon in Prince George, British Colombia are aiming for an early 2006 publication date. I don't think either of us had realised how much material we would have to research and how difficult it would be to find!

Possible new Website for the Society

As those of you who have looked at our website will have realised that it does not compare with other websites of other Scottish societies. A request was made in a previous journal for someone to volunteer to be our Webmaster and to design a new website. I am pleased to report that such a volunteer has come forward. I won't say any more at present as discussions are still being held to agree the layout and how the new website will be operated. Hopefully by the time the next journal is out in May there will be positive news on this subject.

Ross/Ogilvie and a French Connection

Patti Collingwood who contributed the article with the title shown above, and which appeared in the previous journal, e-mailed me recently. Having asked for anyone who recognised the families she was writing about, she omitted to supply her e-mail address. Please contact her at <patie@jornich.com>

Research in Skye

Anne MacKinnon e-mailed to say that she had noticed that there was a website which might be of interest to those researching from a distance into families residing in north west Skye. The address is <www.skye-km.co.uk>.

A Stray on a Gravestone in New Zealand

Phillipa Craig e-mailed to say that while on holiday in New Zealand she came across a small cemetery in Kyburn Diggings, which is north west of Dunedin. The place is really in the middle of nowhere but she noticed one grave that may be of interest to anyone researching the name Stuart in Inverness-shire.

The inscription is as follows: - In loving memory of Sarah Jane, beloved wife of John Henry

STUART, died 24th Jan 1909, aged 53; also John Henry STUART, native of Grantown, Invernesshire, Scotland, died 15th Dec 1912, aged 64.

MORE DAPHNE VICTIMS

By John Durham

It is some time since I last wrote about the subject of the launch of the SS Daphne on the River Clyde in July 1883. Readers of the previous articles may remember that there was a terrible loss of life when the ship heeled over while being launched. At the time it was believed that there only four victims who had Highland connections. I have received correspondence from someone who has been carrying out extensive research into the effect the loss of these men had on their families. From these researches it now appears that there were ten victims with Highland connections, not the four at first believed. If anyone recognizes any of the following as belonging to their family tree, please get in touch with me. More victims will be highlighted in the next journal.

John BROOKS. Engineer's labourer. He was born 16th August 1863 at Tarbat, by Fearn, Ross-shire. His father was Hugh Brooks, fisherman and his mother was Ann Simpson. Single. Residing at 85 Langlands Road, Govan.

Body found on 3rd July and buried at Craigton on 6th July. Death registered by brother-in-law, Adam Breckenridge, 85 Langlands Road.

Graham ARTHUR. He was a joiner, aged 28, birthplace not known. His father was Donald Arthur, joiner and his mother was Margaret McDougall, deceased. He was married, wife Agnes Wilson. Residing at 28 Smith Street, Paisley Road.

Recovered on 3rd July. Body taken by *PS Marquis of Bute* to Greenock and buried in Greenock Cemetery 6th July.

Married only 12 months. Joined yard one month ago. Previously worked in Manchester. Parents originally from Inverness but victim was brought up in Oban.

John MACRAE. He was also a joiner, aged 63, birthplace not known. His father was Duncan Macrae, deceased, a farmer and his mother was Christina McKenzie. Married 14th September 1848 at Lochs, Ross-shire, wife Catherine Gillies, with son and daughter, both of whom were adults. Residing at 4 Hamilton Street, Govan.

Recovered at 0730 on 19th July in forehatch. Identified by son, Alexander MacRae, joiner. Buried on 19th July at Craigton. Death registered by brother Alexander of 813, Govan Road.

Alexander McANDREW. Yet another joiner. Born 30th April 1856 at Drainie, Moray. His father was Alexander McAndrew, sailmaker of 37 Innes Street, Inverness and mother was Mary Ann Sutherland. Single. Residing at 939 Govan Road, Govan.

Found on 3rd July. Buried at Falkirk on 5th July.

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Alexander REID. He was a shipwright. Born on 7th June 1857 at Cromarty. His father was Robert Reid, fisherman and his mother was Margaret Patience. Single. Residing at 12 John St., Govan.

Recovered at 1540 on 19th July. Identified by cousin. Buried at Craigton on 20th July. Death registered by cousin, John, 57 Thomson Street.

Brother James also serving in ship, sent ashore just before launch and he survived.

SAFHHS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Central Scotland Family History Society will host the 15th Annual Conference of the Scottish Association of Family History Societies on Saturday 24th April in The Albert Halls, Dumbarton Road, Stirling. It is entitled "In Loving Memory, A Celebration of Graveyards". The theme of the conference will be graveyards and their importance to family, local and social historians. The morning papers will look at the benefits of well-maintained graveyards to the community, but will also draw attention to some possible problems. In the afternoon, two possible solutions will be discussed, and the Conference will finish with a presentation about a restored graveyard.

The conference will be opened at 9.45am and the speakers will be:-

Dr Angus Mitchell, Secretary, Greyfriars Graveyard Trust:

"Graveyards as an Educational Resource"

Dr David Caldwell, National Museums of Scotland:

"Islay Graveyards and Cemeteries"

Rachel Hoskers, Glasgow University Business Archives Services:

"Using Burial Grounds in Family and Local History"

Mrs E Roy, Clackmannanshire Field Studies Society:

"Alloa Kirkgate Outreach - The Past is the Future"

Miss I Mackay, Edinburgh Cemeteries Support Group:

"Edinburgh Cemeteries Support Group"

Mr Bill Wolsley, Kincardine Local History Society:

"The Tulliallan Graveyard Project"

As well as Bookstalls, a raffle and a Members Interest Board, you can bring a photograph of your favourite gravestone. Accompany it with a few words on why you like it, pin it to the display board and share your pleasure with other delegates.

Booking forms are available from the Conference coordinator at the Smith Art Gallery and Museum, Dumbarton Road, Stirling FK7 2RQ or at Central Library, Corn Exchange Road, Stirling FK8 2HX. Please send an A5 SAE along with your request for a form. Booking forms are also available of the Society's website <www.csfhs.org.uk>.

If any HFHS members attending the conference could help out at the society's table over the lunch period for 30 minutes or so, it would be much appreciated.

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