



# e-Scotia

## Newsletter of the Anglo-Scottish FHS

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Anglo Scottish Family History Society

**Welcome:** to the May edition of the newsletter. You may recall that 12 months ago this small cartoon was put into the May 2020 Newsletter. Did we for a moment think that we would still be in the situation we are in, and that so many other countries are much worse. Still, progress is being made and the message remains apt, for hope does spring eternal. Whatever stage you are at in this pandemic we wish you well. Our main feature this month is the marvellous display and presentation of the Great Tapestry of Scotland by Sue Whittaker. Once again we include some items that we hope will inform and assist your research into your Anglo Scottish ancestors. Enjoy. Editor.

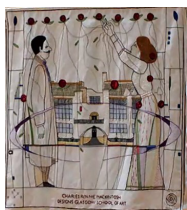


### The Great Tapestry of Scotland

It was a joy to welcome Sue to our Branch meeting to deliver a talk on a subject about which she is so enthusiastic and to which she has dedicated so much of her skill. The panel opposite is the one we used to advertise the talk and on closer examination after the talk I was pleased to notice that it depicts "The Discovery sails from Dundee" illustrating the moment when "Discovery", built in Dundee, sailed off to take Scott and Shackleton to Antarctica. A fuller version of Sue's presentation will appear in the next Manchester Genealogist Journal but here I share a few of my own reflections.



Sue began her talk by giving us some facts about the Tapestry. It is the largest tapestry in the world being 143 meters (or 469 ft for those of us of a certain age) long and composed of 160 handstitched panels depicting 12 thousand years of Scottish History. It "employed" many hundreds of embroiderers from around Scotland and each panel took 500 hours and 300 miles of thread to prepare. All mind-boggling facts only underscored by the fact that the embroiderers were given only a year to complete their task.



Having got the facts out of the way, Sue's talk became less formal, more colloquial, narrating her experience as one of the embroiderers. The panel that she chose to take us on the journey of construction was the one that she and her group were involved in preparing - "Charles Rennie Mackintosh designs Glasgow School of Art". Most of the panels were 1 metre square, although some were half-width size. The material of the panels was a grey mix of linen and cotton. Each embroiderer was sent a bag of threads of pre-determined colours. They did not have to use all the colours but they could not change any of them. What was intriguing was the skill used in choosing a mix of threads to provide the right effect - as with silver and blue - to obtain the glass effect in the windows. I was particularly impressed when Sue spoke of how Rennie-Mackintosh was himself



portrayed. Some wanted him to appear in the kind of clothes he wore, others opposed this idea. Eventually it was agreed that he should be portrayed as a "presence" and this was achieved by retaining the background colour of the panel with an outline of coloured threads. Clever and beautiful! Enough from me. As I say, more on this presentation will appear in the Manchester Genealogist. The completed panels were sent from all over Scotland to the centre in Edinburgh where it was put together. Since its completion in 2013 it has toured throughout Scotland. It is now housed on permanent display in Galashiels, chosen as it is the textile capital of Scotland and so a fitting home. In summary, for my part, having no knowledge, experience or, frankly, interest, in embroidery, I found the talk fascinating and entertaining and certainly a prompt to get to see the Tapestry.

**National Library of Scotland:** you may recall that in last month's newsletter I made mention of the

National Library of Scotland's "**Digital Resources and e-Resources**" beta site. This includes digitised books, periodicals and manuscripts spanning over five centuries, together with online databases, journals, reference works and more. Sadly access to this resource is restricted to residents of Scotland. However I emailed the NLS to ask what kind of access to such resources could be granted to those of us outside the Scottish boundary. As is a common experience I have when contacting the Library and Records offices I received a very fulsome and extremely helpful reply if not a hoped-for resolve. Having reminded me that the NLS is "not the repository of sources of family history research" it was explained that stipulations set by publishers insisted that access to e-resource documents be only available to registered readers and only residents in Scotland can apply to be registered. This said, trouble was taken by my correspondent, Emma, to offer a supply of resources that could be accessed. Here are some of them as outlined with their links; some we already know but others might not be so familiar.



*The "Digital Gallery" is the Library's collection of materials which have been digitised and are free to access to anyone, anywhere, with many of those very useful for conducting Family History research, such as [Histories of Scottish Families](#), [Scottish History Society Publications](#) and [British Military Lists](#).*

*The "[Moving Image Archive](#)" which contains thousands of film clips to view from home from a range of sources and time periods and can offer a fascinating insight into Scotland as it is now, and also of communities and people who are no longer around. Also offered in this vein were [Canmore](#) and [Scran](#), both well known but also [Capital Collections](#) that I hadn't heard of before.*

*The famous [Maps website](#) familiar to all of us was of course referred to.*

*The [Scottish Post Office Directories](#) that can often demonstrate who lived at a particular address and sometimes also feature details of their occupations. These have only been digitised until 1911 at this time, with the later versions found within our physical collections.*

I was then directed towards the usual suspects well known to many; "[The Statistical Accounts of Scotland](#)"; the NLS's own "[Family History Section](#)" and "[The British Newspaper Archive](#)", again free if you live in Scotland but otherwise you pay for. I was however pointed in the direction of the [Scottish Local History Forum](#) which I had not previously heard of to that was useful.

A subsequent email from Emma at the NLS took up the view that I may want a particular article and told me about the resource-sharing scheme being operated during this time of Covid restrictions by the [International Federation of Library Associations](#) (IFLA). If I could specify the document or article that I was looking for Emma offered to make use of IFLA to search for it and, if successful, send these to me. Now I said they were very helpful. What a service! 🙏 Now I am not encouraging you all to get in touch with Emma, but my experience demonstrates the lengths that the NLS will go to be helpful so do contact them if you have a query.

**FreeUKGen Conference:** we are fairly familiar with web sites like [FreeBMD](#), [FreeCen](#) and [Free Reg](#) whose umbrella site is [FreeGen](#). They organise and co-ordinate all the voluntary effort that goes into providing such useful and valuable resources for family history researchers. I have just been notified that this parent organisation is having an [online conference](#) on the 22nd and the 29th May. I hope to have this newsletter out before the 22nd, but if not then you will be able to catch the 29th May. The link provided gives as much information that is to hand



**Kirk Session Records:** it has been well publicised that access to the Kirk Session Records, normally held by the National Records of Scotland, have been digitised and some, but by no means all, are now available through [ScotlandsPeople](#). A helpful talk on these records was provided by Emma Maxwell at the last conference that "[Scottish Indexes](#)" organised and this included how to access all the available records on the NRS site. ([Click here](#)) One of the pieces of information that was missing for me was knowledge of a specific parish's CH2 reference. (CH2 is the NRS reference for Church of Scotland records, including Kirk Sessions.) I asked the question via the "[Scottish Indexes](#)" online forum (well worth belonging to) and was told that knowing this particular reference number is not necessary. All that was required was to enter CH2 in the "reference" box and the name of the parish you were seeking in the "search for" box. Problem solved. The bigger issue is of course the name of the parish covering the area you are interested in. The "[Family Search](#)" [site](#) gives a good explanation of the Parish numbering system in Scotland and a full list of all the Scottish parishes through the "[RootsWeb](#)" [site](#). Perhaps you can work it out through these.

## Kirk Session Records (cont.)

We know that not all of the Kirk Session Records are yet available on ScotlandsPeople and our representative at SAFHS made some enquiries as to the progress being made. The following response was received;

*“Staff are adding extra parishes to the Kirk session record set. It is a slow process. If someone needs a particular parish that they know has been digitised and could be previously viewed at a computer terminal in the Historical Search Room then best contact us through the ScotlandsPeople website and ask. The team who manage that record set can then confirm what is possible. There are copyright issues to consider so it possibly won't be possible to make some records available online.”*

There seems then to be a distinction to be made between a Record having been digitised and previously available to view at one of the Family History Centres and being now made available to view on the ScotlandsPeople web site. So if you can't find a particular record an enquiry through the “contact us” system on ScotlandsPeople may resolve the matter.

Given the slow (but we hope, sure) progress out of the Covid restrictions our representative also asked about the access to Family History Centres for general researchers. Currently only “business users” are allowed access. The response was;

*.We have carbon dioxide monitors in the Dundas search room and readings are being recorded. There are also requirements for social distancing and whilst they remain at 2 metres it will be difficult to add more seats. It isn't possible to guess when lockdown measures might be further relaxed and when non-professional researchers might be allowed in. Best if everyone keep an eye on the NRS service status page to see what is happening.*

So there you have it. This response applies of course to the main Family History Centre in Edinburgh. There are five further FH Centres and their arrangements for visits varies. You can find the FH Centres listed [here](#) with information available on each as to their various arrangements.



**Scottish Census 1921:** it had been announced by the Scottish Government that the Scottish Census 1921 was going to be released this year albeit that the 2021 census in Scotland was being postponed until 2022. Indeed it was anticipated that the census would be released “sometime after June”. Well we have just learned that the “sometime” is in fact “not probably this year”. This is sad, but in line with the release of the remainder of the UK 1921 census in January/February 2022. “FindMyPast” have the commission to produce the English/Welsh census but who is doing the Scottish census remains a bit of a mystery. I tried to find out but got no response to that particular question. The Covid restrictions are a valid reason for many delays at the moment so perhaps it is due to that. Anyway, whatever the reason, we shall have to wait a bit longer.

**Auxiliary Hospitals in WW1:** A response to an enquiry seeking to identify a particular hospital appeared in the Forum of the Scottish Indexes site included the following. [List of auxiliary hospitals in the UK during the First World War.pdf \(redcross.org.uk\)](#) It was too good a source not to pass on. Many thanks to the person bringing it to our attention.



**The Black Book:** this is a title that can conjure up all kinds of preconceptions. Reference to it was sent to me by a reader to pass on as a possible resource in your research. In reality it is a source that belongs to the Scottish Genealogical Society and, as their own site states:



*“contains details of all the Scottish Genealogy Society's holdings relating to Scottish deaths and Scottish burials. The collection is made up of the old parish death registers, lists of monumental inscriptions, some obituaries and a growing library of transcripts of Scottish death, burial and mortcloth accounts lists.”*

Arranged alphabetically by County with an indication to the years covered, the book is an index of all the Society's holdings with references as to how they might be accessed. The actual record has to be purchased through the Society's on-line shop, but there is some value in knowing what resources are available and where they can be obtained. [\(Click here\)](#)

**SOCIETY BRANCHES;** please remember that as members of the M&LFH Society you are also members of the various Branches of the Society and can join in their events and contact them directly if you have connections with the area and want to tap into their expertise. Their web sites are:

[Anglo-Scottish Branch: – http://www.mlfhs.uk/anglo-scots](http://www.mlfhs.uk/anglo-scots)

[Bolton Branch: - http://www.mlfhs.uk/bolton](http://www.mlfhs.uk/bolton)

[Oldham Branch: - https://www.mlfhs.uk/oldham](https://www.mlfhs.uk/oldham)

[Manchester Branch: - https://www.mlfhs.uk/manchester](https://www.mlfhs.uk/manchester)



**Forthcoming Branch Events:**



**Bolton Branch Meeting: Wednesday 2nd June, 7.30—8.30.**

*Dave Joy draws on his own family history to tell the story of the lives and times of the Liverpool Cowkeepers.*

See the Bolton Branch web page for Events arranged for July and August.

**Manchester Meeting - Saturday 5th June, 10.30 - 12.00**

*“A practical guide to help you get the most out of your Irish research”*

A presentation by Carol Wells. Carol is a member of the Society and well known and valued for her knowledge and practical guidance on Irish research.



See the Manchester Branch page for a number of events planned for June



**Oldham Branch Meeting: Saturday 12th June, 2.00– 3.00.**

*“Markets to Supermarkets and Beyond - 200 years of shopping”.*

*A history of shopping over 200 years. (I wonder if the men sat waiting outside at that time as well?)*

See the Oldham Branch web page of other Events. A great one coming up in July about canals.

**MLFHS Shop:** access to the Society online shop can be had here - [mlfhs-shop.co.uk](http://mlfhs-shop.co.uk) Lots of good stuff there including some Scottish material. Don't forget to look at the “Download” section where if you are prepared to accept

**Anglo Scottish Branch Meeting: Saturday 15th June, 2.00 - 3.30**

**The Mitchell Library and its Holding**

A presentation by Dr Irene O'Brien



Dr Irene O'Brien is City Archivist for Glasgow as well as Chair of the Scottish Council on Archives. She leads at Scotland's largest civic archive, the Mitchell Library, with its wealth of records. We are fortunate to have Irene talk to us about this immense resource. Even if, like me, you have no links with Glasgow, the talk will be a great general indicator of what records were kept and what therefore might be available in the area you are interested in.

Again, this will be a “Zoom” meeting and booking is essential - through **Eventbrite** - ([click here](#)) so that you can be sent the necessary Zoom link.

Again, a message to our local members who do not feel able to engage with this technology. We miss seeing you and, given the progress being made, look forward to meeting up again at Central Library.

