



# e-Scotia

## Newsletter of the Anglo-Scottish FHS

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Anglo Scottish Family History Society

**Welcome:** to the October edition of the newsletter. Our Branch meeting last Saturday was an opportunity for us to share the breakthroughs we made in our family history research. As usual with these sessions, whilst this one was not overly-populated, it does encourage and enable those who want to, to share experience and to ask questions in a relaxed atmosphere. Someone once said that they preferred these sessions to the more formal talks because they learned so much more from the practical experience of co-researchers. Whilst summarising the input we once again include some information about forthcoming events that you may want to tune into. Take care. Editor.

### Breakthroughs in Scottish Family History Research

At our Branch meeting on this occasion 12 members managed to get together to share the experience of a breakthrough in their family history research. We were particularly pleased to welcome Julie who had tuned in from Germany where she lives and adds to the international flavour of our gatherings.



The value of these particular topics for our meetings was confirmed by Denise who, in light of suggestions made at the last breakthrough meeting was able to move forward on her research of one of her husband's ancestors, Margaret Ewing. It seems that it was the suggestion to remember to search using name variations that led to Denise finding Margaret married under the name of Maggie Ewing and this together with the correct names of her parents confirmed the find. I had a similar situation with a great aunt of mine whose first name was Isabella and who was married under the name of Bella. Not very romantic, but it was obviously the name she was known by and that is what she chose to use. Clues like this variation of names should alert us to how we go about searching for people in other documents such as census records.

David Hartley is a long-term member of the Branch and has a very interesting family history. I look forward to him writing it up sometime for the Journal. As if he had not progressed enough in his family search, David shared with us that he had very recently had another breakthrough confirmed with a DNA link. David's Scottish ancestors come largely from the Borders in general and Ayrshire in particular and there is a tradition of a 17th century family bible citing the covenant and signed in blood. This bible is currently missing but hopefully with another family member. David also shared about an ancestor, Captain John Matheson, born in 1641, and who was exiled to America in the 1760's because he was a covenanter. David understood that John Matheson was enlisted with the Cameron Highlanders but these were not formed as a regiment until the 1790's. It is more likely that John was a captain with the Cameronians, a radical covenanting group formed after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and who objected to the reordering of Church and Civil authority preferring the earlier presbyterian structure. They also happened to object to the union of the parliaments, but that is another story. A very interesting period of Scottish history in which David's ancestor was clearly directly involved with clearly many avenues to explore.



Hilary shared about her Ralston family, in particular, Alexander Ralston, who, according to family tradition, hailed from Glasgow. This was always his claim and his strong accent appeared to support this. However there is no evidence so far available to Hilary to confirm this claim. Alexander lived and worked in Liverpool and he was a block maker. Being such it is likely that he worked on the docks given that “blocks” are the wooden supports placed to hold a ship during construction. So far Hilary has not been able to place Alexander in the Glasgow area although the Ralston name is concentrated around Paisley and Glasgow was a hub for shipbuilding. In her search however Hilary came across other sources that she shared with us, namely the **“Register of Freemen in Liverpool”** and the **“Liverpool Poll Book”**. Both are useful resources for confirming the presence of ancestors, albeit those who, as a result of the “Representation of the People's Act 1832” were able to meet the basic criteria of renting a property with a rental value of at least £10. In both of these she was able to find her ancestors and confirm that station in Liverpool at this time. So, useful resource knowledge to pass on if you have any ancestors who may have been in the Liverpool area at this time.

Yvonne shared a discovery she made by making use of the Wills made available in Scotlands People. Many of Yvonne’s ancestors come from Fife, in particular, Kincardine, and she was interested in an ancestor, Alexander Peddie. She had him in some census’ but he disappears after 1871. Through the Wills resource she discovered that he drowned in Dartmouth, Devon, in 1896, probably the last place she would have thought of looking. It seems that Alexander was a ship’s engineer and appears to have sailed around various places in the UK. Finding this reference in the Will led Yvonne to the newspaper archive where she found several other referrals to the event.

Michael posed the question “where was Herbert Bunday in the 1939 register”? An ancestor of Michael’s, he had a lot of information on Herbert. Many of Michael’s ancestors were career military men and Herbert was no exception having joined the Artillery Company. Herbert enlisted in 1903 and served in the 1st World War. He served on HMS Nestor which was sunk during the Battle of Jutland. Herbert survived this but was rescued by a German vessel and became a POW. A fascinating life story was shared but no sign in the 1939 Register. Through persistent searching, particularly through the Find My Past records, Michael eventually found, amongst military sources, that, despite his age, Herbert had re-joined the Navy in July 1939, hence his not appearing in the 1939 Index.



As usual with these sharing sessions, this was a fruitful, entertaining and informative gathering. The clear message to emerge from all of our contributors was one of persistence. Be prepared to make use of all resources available and be prepared also to find ancestors in the least likely of places.

### **“Scottish Indexes” Conference Saturday 23rd October:**

Once again we welcome the conference organised - and offered for free - by Emma and Graham Maxwell, the owners of the [“Scottish Indexes”](#) web site. The conference on this occasion has a real Gaelic flavour with speakers’ topics covering Wales and Ireland as well as Scotland. Also, if you read this newsletter regularly, you will know of my keen interest in maps and I am pleased to see that Chris Fleet from the National Library of Scotland is a speaker who will be sharing with us the best use to be made of the fantastic map collection at the NLS in our family history research. Details about the programme and how to register can be found [here](#). Once again, for the benefit of our overseas readers, we remind you that the conference tries to accommodate time zone differences and so begins at 0700 BST and goes on until 2300 BST. Also each presentation is shown twice, once between 0700 and 1500 hours BST and again between 1500 and 2300 hours BST, so plenty of opportunity to join in or catch up.





## University of Strathclyde Genealogy Course



We have been notified that the University of Strathclyde are offering a free Online Genealogy Course. They say;

*Hello from the University of Strathclyde, I hope you are all well.*

*Our FREE online '**Genealogy: Researching Your Family Tree**' MOOC is live and enrolling now!*

*On this 6-week genealogy course for beginners, you'll learn how to uncover the past and record your family history.*

*You'll be a scientist for the day and find out how DNA testing works in genealogical research.*

*Throughout the course, you'll also follow one woman's journey as she researches her family tree and learns about her past.*

*Learn through storytelling, discussion and visual learning.*

*Join straight away and learn at your own pace. Learn through storytelling, discussion and visual learning.*

*Join straight away and learn at your own pace.*

*Or join the MOOC from the 18th October to the 26th November, when our tutors will be facilitating the course and joining the discussions.*

*The MOOC has been a huge success since its launch with over 112,000 learners taking part. We would very much appreciate any 'shares' to help us get the word out.*

*To find out more or to sign-up please visit - <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/genealogy>*

In case you are wondering - as I was - MOOC stands for Massive Open Online Courses. I have hyperlinked the web site given so that you can have a look at it. I had a go at it a couple of years ago and, like the curates egg, it was good in parts. It depends upon how experienced you are in genealogy. This certainly is aimed at beginners, but always good to have a refresher. Anyway, have a look and see if you fancy it.

**Salford Histories Festival:** Saturday, 30th October at Fletcher Hall, Swinton. 10.00 am until 4.00 p.m.

*On Saturday 30th October, the Salford Local History Forum are holding a history festival. This will take place at Fletcher Hall and St Peter's Church, Swinton. There will be over 30 history stalls, five talks from invited speakers on a range of local interests, and a quiz for children. St Peter's Church will host the premiere of 'The Bridgewater Waltz', a display by St Peter's Primary School, and guided tours of the building. Other highlights include a mobile exhibition of memorabilia, a vintage bus and a heritage trail.*

The Society has been invited to take part so, for those of our readers who are within striking distance of Salford, why not come along to the Festival with the added pleasure of meeting us!!!



### Celebrate the 1921 Census with the MLFHS.

We are all pretty eager for the release of the 1921 Census to be released early in 2022. By way of feeding our enthusiasm the Society has put together a portfolio of information at [mlfhs.co.uk/blog](http://mlfhs.co.uk/blog), a radio-style play and a whole plethora of events that can be found at [mlfhs.uk/1921-census-event](http://mlfhs.uk/1921-census-event). So whet your appetite and get ready for this event by having a look at the web sites.

**Erratum:** I feel obliged to apologise for wrong information that I gave out in the September newsletter with regard to the availability of talks recorded at our Branch meeting. I gave you to understand that, for members, to go to the "Speakers notes. Videos" section of the web site you would have unlimited access to all the handouts and talks. Whilst this remains the case for the handouts, it is not so for the talks. When speakers are generous enough to allow us to record their talk many of them normally, and understandably, put a time scale on the availability of that talk, usually 30 days, after which time it is erased from the web site. So if you go to the site now you will see that Dr Irene O'Brien's talk on the Glasgow Mitchell Library is there as is Chris Paton's talk on Scottish Marriage patterns. This latter will be removed on the 24th October, so if you have not viewed it, please do quickly. It is worth it. Anyway, sorry about that mis-direction.

"History is not what you thought. It is what you can remember" Taken from "1066 and All That".

## Announcement!!!

### We are changing our Branch meeting day.

You will all be aware that up until now our Anglo Scottish Branch meetings have been held on the 3rd Saturday of the month. For a variety of reasons, not least the availability of appropriate space at Manchester Central Library, we have decided to hold our **Branch meetings on the 1st Saturday of the month starting from February 2022**. So please see this as an early alert that we shall be mentioning every month until February.



**What's On?** We like to remind you of what is going on in the Society and its Branches so here are a few notes.

**Bolton:** continuing the Gaelic theme referred to in the Scottish Indexes article, Bolton Branch are looking at researching Welsh ancestors at their next meeting on the 3rd November. The talk will consider Welsh emigration in the context of Welsh history. It will be interesting to find out how this compares and contrasts with the Scottish experience of emigration.



**Oldham:** at their meeting on the 13th November the Oldham Branch have called in the services of a popular speaker in the Society, Alan Crosby, who will be exploring "Family Life in the Industrial Revolution". Alan will be using the biography of Benjamin Shaw who, in 1826, wrote of his desire to explore his family history and in so doing gave us an insight into the developments and upheavals of the day.



**Manchester:** well, how the Gaelic theme continues!!! At the meeting on the 6th November a presentation has been arranged looking at "How to get the most out of your Irish Family History". The talk is given by the experienced Irish researcher, Carol Wells, a member of the Society. These talks are always popular and very informative.



As we have come to expect during these days, all of these presentations are Zoom meetings and full details of them and how to register via **Eventbrite** can be found on the Branch web pages.

## Anglo Scottish Branch Meeting

Saturday, 20th November, 1400 hours BST

### Kirk Sessions Palaeography with Robin Urquhart

This is the first in a triptych of presentations on the Kirk Session Records that we have arranged. To get as much out of this great resource that we can, we first have to be able to fully understand what we are reading and this is the topic of this presentation. Now retired, Robin Urquhart was Head of Digitisation at the National Records of Scotland and was in charge of the project to make the Kirk Session and other Court Records available online. Robin is also the creator of the Scottish Handwriting website. As a prelude to his presentation Robin writes;

*"This presentation will provide historical background to kirk session and other church records, including an explanation of the court process and legal jargon; how kirk session records overlap with OPRs; how they were affected by religious wars and presbyterian church divisions; and what palaeography and Scots language skills you will need to make sense of what you are reading."*



It promises to be a very interesting and informative presentation on a resource so recently digitised and released by Scotlands People and we are fortunate to have such a knowledgeable speaker. This is likely to be a popular event so please reserve your place early. As usual it will be a Zoom presentation and attendance has to be booked using the **Eventbrite** facility so that you can be sent the necessary link. For members the event is free but for non-members it is £3. We look forward to seeing you there.