



e-Scotia

Newsletter of the Anglo-Scottish FHS

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Welcome: to the April edition of the newsletter. The addition of some daffodils reminds us that Spring is here and new life, in all its forms, open to us. One sign of this life was our decision to relaunch our Branch meetings at Manchester Central Library beginning this month. It was a difficult decision not knowing where members were in their journey out of covid but we have to start somewhere. As it was, 7 of us attended the meeting (which was more than anticipated) and was useful as we were also then quorate for our Branch Annual Meeting for the election of committee members. Once dealt with the focus of the meeting turned to a sharing of heirlooms that have enabled some movement in family history research and a summary of this is shared in this newsletter. Attached also are some photographs taken at the Family & Local History Fair arranged by the Society at the end of March in which of course the Branch participated. Enjoy. Editor.

Annual Anglo Scottish Branch Meeting 2nd April 2022

Committee elections and the sharing of heirlooms.

Our Branch meetings at this time of year also give the opportunity for a review of the Branch and the election of committee members. Our Branch chairman, Michael Couper, had prepared the following report for the Branch;

"We started the year full of optimism for a speedy end of restrictions but this expectation went unfulfilled. So we started a programme based on Zoom talks. These were generally well received and allowed members worldwide to attend our meetings. We regret that there were some regular attendees to Manchester who were unable or unwilling to join Zoom talks. The committee were a little apprehensive at first about using Zoom but eventually it seemed so natural.

We had a full programme of talks, members meetings and even a walk round some historic buildings in Manchester, all via Zoom. A full account was included in the latest edition of The Manchester Genealogist. The fact that they were via Zoom benefited many members from distant locations

Our Scottish Marriage Index has received contributions, and also many searches.

With the suspension of meetings at Central Library we were unable to continue with the helpdesk held in the mornings of our meetings, but we received and answered enquires for assistance via the contacts link within the new Society website. Beginners' talks were also on Zoom so we were able to give the session on Scottish Research.

For all these activities I am indebted to the contribution given by the Branch committee members, who were unanimously re-elected at our Annual Meeting in 2021. Yvonne Gill-Martin, who organised all our speakers, Hilary Hartigan for the items in the Journal, Mark Campbell for writing and distribution of our newsletter, Ina Penneyston as our representative at SAFHS, all with the support from David Muil and Linda McInnes our Branch secretary.

In the absence of any new volunteers for the committee membership, the current committee, having indicated a willingness to continue serving the Branch, was duly re-elected in its present structure. The committee therefore continues to comprise, Michael Couper (Chair), Yvonne Gill-Martin, David Muil, Hilary Hartigan, Linda McInnes, Ina Penneyston and Mark Campbell. We wish them well and hope they are able to continue providing us with a range of speakers, resources and gatherings that enable and encourage us in our research.

A sharing of heirlooms: **Jo Downs** was the first to share with us an heirloom that

had enabled her to find out more about her father's service in the RAF during WW2.

Jo came across this shoe brush amongst her father's belongings that was clearly so precious to him that he had engraved his service number on it. Whilst she had known

something of her father's RAF career this number enabled her to search further. Information she already had was largely based on wartime photographs of her father in uniform but evidently out with others hunting and shooting.

This led her to wonder what role her father played in the war. She wrote off to the RAF at RAF Cranwell in Sleaford and was delighted with the response from them. They sent her a whole package of information about her father, including a full service record. This indicated that he had been based at the RAF listening post/radar station at Durness on the north-west Scottish coast. This formed part of a whole ring of coastal defences in Scotland, but this one in particular was the first contact point for the Atlantic convoys as they travelled over from America. On a lighter note Jo was pleased therefore to learn that her father had not, as she had imagined from photographs, spent the war hunting and shooting, but was in fact part of an important and essential network of defences. So much information from an old shoe brush, now an important family heirloom.



Hilary Hartigan had come prepared to share photographs with us that had played an important role in her firmly identifying a somewhat demure lady in a family album. Sadly the facility to show the photographs was not available but, undaunted, Hilary spoke of the content of the photographs in a way that encouraged us to use our imaginations. Happily Hilary intends to compose an article for the Manchester

Genealogist on the topic so the detail, and photographs referred to, will appear there. In summary the photograph in question was of a rather demure young woman taken around the turn of the 20th century and Hilary was unsure of who this woman was but suspected that it may have been a young version of her great grandmother. By carrying out some photographic detective work she hoped to confirm her suspicions and date the photograph so as to align it with the ancestors that she knew. She made much use of Jayne Shrimpton's book, "Family Photographs and how to date them" and from clues offered in this was able to place the photograph in the 1890's. Further research into clothes and hair style confirmed this dating as did investigation of the photograph frame and information contained on the reverse of the photograph. At the end of her investigation Hilary was able to confirm that the photograph of the young woman was indeed her great grandmother probably taken on the occasion of her 21st birthday, but the journey of discovery was intriguing with lots of advice on how to use these resources and we look forward to the full story in the Genealogist.

Yvonne Gill-Martin shared with us the contents of a box that she re-discovered at home that had lain dormant and forgotten for some time. In it she found various items relating to her father's time

in the army during the 2nd WW. He was born in Northumberland but was stationed near Kincardine, Fife, operating searchlights. It was there that he met a local girl who became his wife and so Yvonne can claim joint Scottish and English heritage. The box contained her father's

discharge papers which confirmed information about addresses in Northumberland and Kincardine as well as London where Yvonne has memories of them living. The box also contained a New Testament evidently issued to servicemen but which her father had kept. The lesson for us all in this is to check out all those boxes stored away with family mementoes and to examine them closely since they often contain information new or confirmatory.



So, this, our first Branch meeting at Central Library for two years was small, - but select! Deciding to reconvene the meetings was a risk but it paid off and was worth while. We were all grateful to those who had prepared items to share with us and through these to learn lessons and information for our own research. As is so often the case with these unstructured sharing sessions between members the opportunity to get hints and learn some very practical steps to take in our family research can be more fruitful than the more formal presentations by invited speakers, although they too have their place. They also offer the opportunity to get to know one another a bit better. The meeting shall continue at the Library and we hope that, albeit slowly, members will feel able to join us once again.

Scottish Association of Family History Societies Conference -

Saturday 9th April - 9.00 a.m.—4.00 pm.

The Scottish Association of Family History Societies



'Hard Times!'

SAFHS Conference Saturday 9 April 2022

Discover how to trace the lives of your ancestors during their hard times through poor relief records, health records, criminal records and more. Free on Zoom and Facebook.

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Scottish Charity Number SC029006



National Records of Scotland, AD1622

The 32nd SAFHS Annual Delegate Conference
"Hard Times"
Online via Zoom link and on Facebook Live

It had been hoped to host this conference live in Dundee but sadly Covid again put paid to the best laid plans. Instead SAFHS have enlisted the assistance of the dynamic team of Emma and Graham Maxwell who have developed great skills with Zoom through the presentation of their "Indexes Conferences". The event is free and you can register for your Zoom entry ([here](#)). A full itinerary of speakers is promised and the conference schedule can be seen ([here](#)). A unique opportunity for our members scattered throughout the country and particularly abroad to join us at this annual Scottish family history event.. We look forward to seeing everyone.

MLFHS News: a quick look now at what is on offer from our various Branches.

Bolton: not sure I will get this newsletter out quickly enough but last month I did point you in the direction of Bolton Branch's April offering on Wednesday, 6th. This is the perennial Dr Alan Crosby on the topic of "Finding Aunt Sarah". However on May 4th their offering is associated with the important issue of preserving archives under the heading of "Taking Care of the Past: Packaging and Handling Archives" led by Mark O'Neil from Lancashire Archives.

Oldham this Saturday, 9th April, are offering a look at "Joseph Briggs and the Tiffany Glass Collection at the Haworth Art Gallery". A resume of what to expect can be found on the events page of the Branch web site but it appears that Joe Briggs, a local lad from Accrington, worked his way through Lancashire to the USA and the Wild West and to a friendship with Tiffany. Sounds like a story worth listening to.

Manchester have a couple of offerings, both to be held at Manchester Central Library. One on the 23rd April sees Michael Couper leading a workshop on the census, how to understand it and get the most out of it. Then on May 9th there is another look at Urmston, Flixton and Davyhulme with Michael Billington. Again, full details of these on the Branch web page.

Lots going on then and lots on offer. All of the offerings have to be booked through **Eventbrite**, but details on how to go about this are on the web site.

Scottish Records Association: a whole raft of information has recently been received from the Scottish Records Association ([click here](#)) of which our Branch is a member.



The Spring edition of their newsletter, “Retour” is available to be read outlining many of the projects that the Association is involved with.

Given the situation that still plagues us with travel arrangements abroad, perhaps you plan to spend more time in the home Country, and in particular, Scotland. If so, perhaps you will be able to take in these events:

Conference 2022: to be held in Perth on Wednesday, 18th May. Don't worry if you are not in the area, or indeed the country. It is also being relayed via Zoom. [Details here.](#)

Summer Visits: a couple of visits to places of interest have been organised, the first to the Edinburgh Academy Archive on Tuesday, 14th June and another to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Regimental Museum and Archive at Stirling Castle on Wednesday, 31st August. Now it may be unlikely that our readers will be in Scotland on those dates, but, you never know. If you are and are interested, details of the visits and how to book are to be found at the end of the “Retour” newsletter already referred to.

SRA Resources: all of this aside, please remember that the SRA produces an annual Journal “**Scottish Archives**” that contains a number of articles of historical interest written by a wide variety of people. Both the index and access to these articles are to be found [\(here\)](#). There is also the opportunity, should you feel so inclined and inspired, to submit your own offering to the Journal.

Retour editor: speaking of an opportunity, the SRA have announced the retirement of the editor of Retour and are seeking someone to take over the task. Up for it? Well if so, contact the SRA secretary indicating your interest.

Exchange Journals: once again we urge you to make use of the Exchange Journal resource that can be accessed on the Society web site. Open to members only, it can be found on the welcome page once you log in. There are journals from family history societies throughout the country and abroad each with articles and contact details to inform and assist. The latest edition sent to us is by the Lothian FHS.



Anglo Scottish Branch Meeting Manchester Central Library



Saturday, 7th May 2022. 2.00 p.m. - 3.30 p.m.

“Tracing your Scottish Ancestors at the National Archives” **with Audrey Collins**

This promises to be a great event. It is assumed that for those engaged in Scottish Family History research, the relevant records are all held in Scotland. Not so. To underscore this fact Audrey Collins, the records specialist for family history at the National Archives, will lead us through all the resources that are available and how to access them.

It is a session not to be missed so why not join us and find out what treasures there are at the National Archives to be discovered.

As usual to reserve a place go to the web site and book through **Eventbrite**. It is free for members and £3 for non-members.

Family & Local History Fair - Manchester Central Library, Saturday 26th March 2022

Plans to hold this Fair were laid out in 2020 with a view to holding it later that year. Of course it had to be postponed, we thought, until the following year. Not so. So towards the end of 2021, and with some signs that Covid was on the wain, it was determined that we would hold the Fair, no matter what, in March 2022. And so it came to pass, and with some notable success. It was decided to broaden the theme of the Fair to include, not just family history, but also local history with the Fair theme "History in the City". Under this banner we were pleased to welcome members of other Societies who exhibited their speciality in various aspects of local history to the visitors. The North West Film Archive put together an hour-long film of scenes from various parts of Greater Manchester in the 1900's—1920's. These were all silent films of course since "talkies" did not appear until the mid 1930s but they were well received and provided a good visual insight into the life and times of the people. All participants were content with the Fair and it may auger well for consideration of similar events in future years.

