



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. This month we were pleased to welcome Michelle Leonard whose theme was the *Fromelles Genealogy Project*. That the presentation was via Zoom meant that we were able to be joined by members and visitors from throughout the UK and abroad. There were 40 attendees in all which was a great turnout for a very interesting topic. Our main article is a summary of my own impressions of the event. As usual, we attach other topics that we hope will be of interest and point you in the direction of sources to inform you Anglo Scottish family history research. Also, please do note our November Branch meeting.

Enjoy.

Editor.



From Anonymity to Remembrance: this was a quote from Michelle Leonard given during her presentation.

She preferred it as a description of the *Project* given that this is what was hoped to be achieved by it. Michelle is a Scottish professional genealogist, DNA detective, freelance researcher, speaker, author, and historian. It was as a result of her interest and research into genetic genealogy pursuing her own family history that she was co-opted into the *Fromelles Genealogy Project*.



Michelle's presentation is available for members on the Society/Branch web site for the next 30 days so ample opportunity to view for those who could not attend, or for a refresher for those who did attend. Access it in the usual way; [Sign in / AngloScots Branch / Research - Speakers notes/videos / Anglo Scottish meeting videos \(members only\)](#).

Given this availability I share the elements of the presentation that impressed me most:

It appears that I am not alone in never having heard about the battle of Fromelles that took place on the 19th July 1916. In the UK the battle has been largely subsumed into the battle of the Somme which was raging at the same time and only a few miles away. Indeed the battle of Fromelles was staged by British High Command as a feint to try and draw away from the Somme front any possible German reinforcements.

The battle is, however, well known in Australia. This was the introduction to the 1st World War for Australian troops who had only just arrived in France a few weeks earlier. As is too familiar when considering any of the statistics of the 1st World War, the number of British and Australian men killed and injured in this battle is mind blowing. To get a sense of the battle, the Wikipedia entry is as good as any to look at [Attack at Fromelles - Wikipedia](#) although there are many others. According to the ["Forces War Records"](#) site, "...in all, 1,547 British troops and 5,533 Australian troops (90% of the 5th Division) became casualties that day"

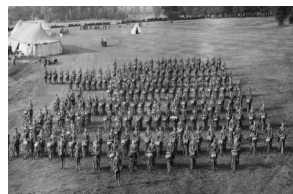
The number of dead proved a health risk for the Germans. Apparently they had proposed a truce for the removal of the dead but this was rejected by the British command. The Germans therefore removed many of the dead and placed them in mass graves created nearby. It was the discovery of these mass graves and the excavation of the remains that became the focus of the *Fromelles Genealogy Project*.

Any attempt to identify the individual men was difficult not only because of the level of decay but also because the Germans had removed the identity tags and sent them to the Red Cross. There were therefore no identifying features and so the team turned to geneticists to assist.

Obtaining genetic material from the soldier's remains was relatively easy. It was then hoped that simple publicity would draw the attention of relatives but this proved ineffective on its own. It was then that Michelle and her

skills in matching DNA and family history came to the fore. The detective work employed by Michelle in finding family relatives is a wonder in itself and well worth viewing the video for.

To demonstrate this Michelle told the stories of some of the soldiers she was able to research, and, on some occasions, unite with their families. Amongst these we learned about the [Highland Cyclist Battalion](#), a force few of us had heard about. Initially a Territorial Force it was later absorbed as a professional unit into the British Army and sent to the front at Fromelles.



However, by far, the greatest casualty numbers lay with the Australian battalions. According to the [Australian War Memorial](#) site, "...over 5,500 Australians became casualties. Almost 2,000 of them were killed in action or died of wounds and some 400 were captured. This is believed to be the greatest loss by a single division in 24 hours during the entire First World War. Some consider Fromelles the most tragic event in Australia's history." Again, Michelle was able to research some of these families and unite them with information about their ancestor.



This was a powerful and very moving presentation delivered with great knowledge and enthusiasm. As is so often the case with any presentation involving the 1st World War, many attendees were affected and still at the end. The mechanics and application of the Genealogical Project were fascinating, but it was the individual stories that left a lasting impression and a lasting sense of gratitude that a relatively recent process - DNA profiling - is able to serve such an important function.

Family Search: a reader emailed us to let us to let us know that **Family Search** have updated their Scottish record section with the addition of [Scottish Presbyterian and Protestant Church Records 1736 - 1990](#). This is obviously a great and important addition to the resources available to us in our research. Do remember that *Family Search* has a huge amount of Scottish records available that you can access directly by going to the "Research Wiki" option on the web site under "Search" and putting "Scotland" into the search box.



Branch Chairman Michael Couper representing the Society and Branch at the U3A Conference, Buxton

Crime and Punishment in Scotland: recently there have been a number of articles appearing in various publications highlighting criminal ancestors and how to trace them - presuming of course that you might want to!!!! The magazine "Who Do You Think You Are?" in their October issue, published an article on the subject and referenced a link specifically to Scottish sources that a reader passed on to me that you can view here [Scottish ancestry: How to find Scottish criminal records | Who Do You Think You Are Magazine](#). Well worth a read. As well as these occasional references from publications however it is well to remember the sources that are always available to us. I remind you of the [Scottish Indexes](#) web site with their "[Scotland's Criminal Database](#)" option. Then of course there is the [National Records of Scotland](#) with their myriad of research guides, including an extensive one on [Crime & Criminals](#).



National Library of Scotland: the latest news from NLS on their map updates;

"Our maps are a rich source of information and ideal for research, learning and creativity. Did you know you can download, remix and combine our map information with other data sources? We've created [a new guide on using our map data](#) to help make this process as easy as possible. Take a look at our [upgraded 3D map viewer](#) and you can soar, zoom and scroll to your heart's content. We're also holding an event looking at the impact and value of our map transcription projects. Tuesday 8 November, 5pm. [Book Map Transcriptions 2022](#) (via Eventbrite)."



Bits'n'Pieces: just a selection of items, some new, some reminders, that have been sent to us or have just come to mind that we think are worth sharing with you.

UKBMD: this site has been around for a long time but, in view of the treasures it holds, still deserves a mention and a reminder. We are very familiar with the [Free BMD](#) site whilst searching for a hint regarding births, marriages and deaths, or, more recently, the [GRO](#) site for births and deaths since the latter offers us the mother's maiden name. However these two sites depend upon information transcribed many times and thus open to errors, especially with the early records. The UKBMD site with its affiliated local Registrar areas on the other hand offers only information that volunteers have extracted from the actual registers and so are likely to be more aligned with the facts. Sadly not all Registrar areas are represented on the site but those that are follow a similar format for searching and are being added to all the time. I always tend to visit this site first in any research I do, not only for accuracy, but because not only is the detail of the event noted but also where it took place. If this is a Church, then the way is pointed for whatever Church to search for the record and FindMyPast and Ancestry have many Church records online.

If you are not overly familiar with the UKBMD offerings then do have a look at the [tutorials](#) offered on the menu on the site. These are given by the founder of the site, Ian Hartas, and are broken down into short training sessions covering all the topics and how to get the most out of them. Easy to follow and invaluable.

What's on in Manchester FHS

There is a great deal of information on our Society web site for anyone to look at to inform their research, but even more for members, and it is being added to all the time. So if you are not a member of the Society, you really are missing out. There is the Great Database option where you just have to insert a name to discover all and any records available on them. Then there are 7 training videos to spark your interest and help with your research. Then of course there are the Branch events;

Bolton: *"Records & Research using the CWGC Archives"*: Wednesday, 2nd November 19.30 hrs at the Branch venue and via Zoom. The talk will cover the history of the CWGC archive and how to access its contents. Reserve your place or attendance via [Eventbrite](#) so that the login details can be sent to you.

Oldham: *"Exploring Manchester's underground spaces; full of mystery and myths"* Saturday, 12th November 1400 hrs at the Branch venue. See the [web site](#) for details.

Manchester: the Manchester Branch have three events coming up this month;

"The History of Carnival" as part of the Black History month. Wednesday, 12th October, 1900 hrs via Zoom.

"Studying the 3R's" with Claire Moores. Wednesday, 19th October, 10.30 hrs via Zoom.

"An Irishman missing in Manchester" with Carol Lee. Wednesday, 19th October, 19.30 hrs via Zoom.

Full details of all these three events and how to access them can be found on the [Branch web page](#)

Book Shop: always worth a look. I particularly like our own John Marsden's book on the history of the cemeteries of Greater Manchester. You can download it for just over £4. Bargainous!! All other publications are cheaper than, or match, the prices you pay elsewhere, and it all helps the Society if you get your books from the Shop.

Volunteers needed: do you think that you can help?

The Society is always in need of volunteers and there are various opportunities open to you. Remember, when you access all the various 3.2 million records on the MLFHS web site or sources elsewhere, like Free BMD or UKBMD, they are all available because others have given of their time to transcribe them. Some of these records require a presence at Central Library but many can be transcribed at home. The past three years have been difficult for everyone and led to some of us feeling quite isolated. Why not think about becoming an active part of the MLFHS and offer your time and any skills to helping the Society grow. If you want to find out more contact the MLFHS office at office@mlfhs.org.uk.





Anglo Scottish Branch Meeting

Saturday 5th November 2022

1.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.



“Please come and join us”

Celebrating 40 years

What to look forward to:

- Welcome: with an introductory slide show and music with a Scottish theme
- Quizzes - with Prizes!!!
- The history of the Anglo Scottish Branch
- Invited speaker: Bruce Keith asking;

“Are we nearly there yet?”

(Using the medium of milestones, Bruce explores the early measurement systems in Scotland, early maps and great journeys throughout the country over the centuries)

- Wine and Scottish faire

All too good to miss.

So come along and celebrate with us!