



# e-Scotia

## Newsletter of the Anglo-Scottish FHS

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Anglo Scottish Family History Society

**Welcome:** to the February edition of the newsletter. Whilst it remains a bit chillsom in this part of the world the sun is beginning to feel a bit warmer—when it shines, the bulbs are beginning to show their heads, tentatively, and the birds are beginning to sing, albeit, hesitantly. Our main feature this month is the talk by Kate Keter. Kate is a professional genealogist and tutor in family history at Strathclyde University in Glasgow so it was a privilege to welcome her. As usual in this publication we try and offer you some new or not so new web sites that might offer you something as you continue with your Scottish family history research. Take care and enjoy. Editor.

### Mother Dead, Father in Prison: with Kate Keter.

We were pleased to welcome 53 guests to our gathering. The advantages of Zoom I suppose so that members from different parts of the world were able to join us. On this occasion however, Zoom technology frustrated us by misbehaving and freezing Kate's input on several occasions, albeit, briefly. Attendees were however decent enough to take this in their stride and carried on regardless.



The point of Kate's talk I think was to indicate to us the various sources that could be available to us in our research. To do so she made use of three generations of one family, the Thompsons from Edinburgh, that were made all the



more interesting in that deafness was prevalent in all members in each generation. It was this that prompted Kate to begin her story at Donaldsons School for the Deaf in Edinburgh. If anyone has approached Edinburgh from the west, Donaldsons is a mighty impressive sight. Built in 1851 to house, educate and train 400 boys and girls, most of whom were deaf, the aim being to provide young deaf individuals with an independent future. Alexandra Wilhelmina Thomson was one of these pupils, entering the school in 1880 aged 8 years. Both her parents were deaf as was her brother, Skirving. Skirving Thomas moved to London and married Amelia Moore, also deaf, and both became involved in St Saviours Church for the deaf. A very interesting video of St Saviours Church and the deaf community, including information about Skirving, can be seen [here](#). Skirving was a great promotor of causes for the deaf but, for no doubt, various reasons, succumbed to fraud and was imprisoned. This wasn't to be the first time he was imprisoned as his continued involvement in petty crime led to his incarceration in Scotland and England. In the meantime Wilhelmina and her siblings, Amelia and Alexander emigrated to, firstly Canada, and then the USA where they remained. There was much more to this family but in considering the various twists they experienced Kate had a variety of sources that she shared with us. A reading list of these is available to members on the Anglo Scottish web page. Access this in the usual way: *log in/ on the welcome page click Branches then Anglo Scots. On that web page you will see under "Research" the reference to "Speakers Notes/Videos". In this section click on "Anglo Scots Meeting Reports" and you will find the handout there.* A recording of the presentation is also available for members but remember that this is time limited. That the members of this family managed to achieve so much in this period despite being deaf is a marvellous achievement.



# SAFHS Conference 2023

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## Haste Ye Back

is the theme of the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual one-day conference of the **Scottish Association of Family History Societies** (SAFHS) which will take place online and for free on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2023. The conference is being hosted by the **Aberdeen and North-East Scotland Family History Society** (ANESFHS) in partnership with the **Elphinstone Institute of the University of Aberdeen** and it will explore different aspects of settlement and migration in the north-east with reference, where possible, to considerations and resources for family history research.

This is a free Zoom Conference and you can access all the information about the Conference [here](#) to get all the details of speakers and how to go about reserving a place.

**Do you have Highland links?** Then you may be interested in this venture - [“Highland Hospitals - a History”](#). Once again I am indebted to our reader in Fort William for drawing attention to this interesting web site and topic that might be of interest to anyone who has Highland roots.

The web site has been put together by Jim and Steve Leslie who began the project in 2008. It remains a work in progress and the authors would like to hear from anyone that might have some information/story or fact about the institutions covered. Already however there are some interesting details including a comprehensive list of all the hospitals etc. in the area. As the introduction says;



*A comprehensive..... history of over 60 Highland hospitals including fever hospitals poorhouses and maternity homes. Many of them are long forgotten. Some have no existing records.*

Perhaps you have some ancestral tale of one of these institutions that you could pass on. If so, Jim and Steve's details are on the web site.

**Memories are made of this:** those of you who make use of the Society Forum may have noticed this entry from a Society member <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiFiH79vCao>. It is a talk given by Rose Douglas, born in Clydebank and now aged 100 yrs. and talking about her life story at her local library in Plumstead. I gave it a try and ended up listening to it all. It is a fascinating narrative of an age, not that long ago, but nevertheless, gone by and a lived history. Well worth a listen.

**Scottish Records Association:** - of which we as a Branch are members - have informed us of a conference that they are holding later this month on the 24th February. Unless you then happen to be in Edinburgh on holiday at the time I expect this information to be for the benefit of our Scottish readers.



The RSA web site can be accessed [here](#) and information about the conference and details about how to apply can be found [here](#). The theme of the conference is “*On the write track - making sense of older handwriting*” and is being held at New Register House in Edinburgh. Attendance is free. The morning is given over to presentations but the afternoon is offering an opportunity for attendees to take along records that they have had difficulty understanding/translating and the “experts” will help decipher them - if they can of course.

Anyway, looks like a good offer and opportunity to break down another chirographical brick walls. For the rest of us not in the Edinburgh area, remember that the SRA newsletter “*Retour*” is available to be read by members in the **Exchange Journal** section of the Society web site.

### **What's On.....!** So what is available for you to get involved with in the Society?

**Bolton:** Using your DNA Results: Wednesday 1st March at 1930 hrs. To be held at Bolton Golf Club for those close enough to get there or by Zoom for those who can't. If you want to attend via Zoom you have to reserve a spot so that the organisers can send you the link. For those of you who have gone down the route of having your DNA tested, this is surely for you. Having the test done is the easy part. Understanding the results is something else. Now is the opportunity to explore how to get the most out of those tests. All information is on the web site.

**Oldham:** On Saturday, 11th March at 1400 hrs., Oldham are offering an insight into Manchester's Victorian underworld. It is a talk by historian Joseph O'Neill recreating the world of Manchester's less salubrious citizens. This is a hybrid meeting ... on zoom and in Oldham Library. All are welcome. As with Bolton, booking is only necessary for zoom attendance so that organisers can send out the link. However the gathering is free to all. Details on the web site.

**Manchester:** On Saturday 25th February at 10.30 a.m. on offer is a tour of the MLFHS web site. “**Manchester Ancestors**” Our web site has been up and running for some time now but it still holds many features that need to be explored. Full details of the event and how to reserve a spot are available on the web site.

**.....And What's Coming Up?** On the Anglo Scottish Branch programme that is. We thought that you might like to know what else we have planned for you for the rest of this year so that you can mark your diary;

**March 4th:** Branch AGM and knocking down those brick walls

**April 1st:** Prisons and their records. A talk by Emma Maxwell about Scottish prison records and how to access them.

**May 6th:** Branch meeting cancelled in view of the Coronation of King Charles. We did ask them to change it but they wouldn't !!!!!

**June 6th:** Society of Genealogists: a presentation about the Society and its resources by Sue Gibbons.

**July 1st:** Traditionally our “Branch Outing”. We are arranging a guided tour of Manchester Art Gallery.

**August:** No meeting. Holiday time.

**September 2nd:** Scots migrating to Canada

**October 7th:** A look at maps at the National Library of Scotland with Laragh Quinney.

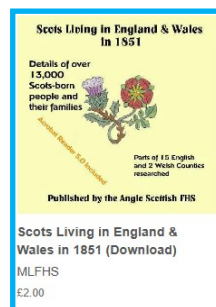
**November 4th:** “Banishment and Transportation” a talk by Ken Nisbit.

**December 2nd:** It's Christmas again and time for our Christmas Social.

So, a full programme of talks and events to look forward to. Some of these are in Central Library and some are by Zoom but we will be giving much more detail about each of these nearer the time of course, but put them in your diary so that you don't miss out.



**Digital Downloads:** there was a time when we would have wondered what those two words meant, but not now. This is to draw to your attention that many of the items for sale in the Society Shop have now been digitised and can be downloaded straight on to your computer rather than having to order and wait for a hard copy. These items are also much cheaper so worth considering. A visit to the [Society Shop](#) and clicking on the heading "Downloads" will reveal all. For those of us with a Scottish bent these three might be of particular interest;



**Scottish Churches Trust - Church recording:** I am grateful once again to Martin Briscoe for informing us of this project and a webinar that is available to watch. Martin says;

"Many Church of Scotland churches will be closing in the next few years so a project has been set up to record the churches. The (webinar) speaker is an archaeologist and compared it with the emergency surveys that archaeologists do at sites about to be developed or demolished. They have an App for mobile phone or tablet that records all the details. Eventually all the information will be on the Historic Environment Scotland website though nothing will be published about a church until closure for security reasons! They have been making interesting discoveries like quite valuable books tucked away in cupboards that no one knew about. During the Q&A session at the end, there was a question from someone in Wales because similar things are happening to many chapels in Wales. It was said the Apps will be made to others doing similar projects. It is a Church of Scotland project but they seem to be cooperating with other denominations who will probably be having similar closures. It does not include churchyards because they are not owned by the church since about the 1920s (I think), also unlike England the sites are consecrated."



Information about the Scottish Churches Trust can be found at [Scottish Churches Trust](#) and the webinar itself can be viewed at The webinar can be viewed at <https://t.co/PXBxqduqrW>

## Anglo Scots Branch Meeting

**Saturday, 4th March, 1400 until 15.30**



### Theme: Branch meeting and breaking down brick walls

Just a chance for us to get together as a Branch - well, perhaps not in this setting - and to share our experience of researching our Anglo-Scottish ancestors. Whilst it is interesting to have speakers sharing their expertise with us, these Branch get-togethers have proved popular too as a chance to share the nitty-gritty of our research.

So, this is an opportunity for you to pick the brains and experience of your fellow members because someone else has almost certainly met the same brick wall at some time, and may have managed to get over it.

Remember too that we have recommenced our Branch help desk. This is to be found on the 3rd Floor of Central Library and will be open from 10.30 until 12.00.

