

Newsletter



Na Rest We Haif - 1571

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(Currently published twice a year)

Editor's Note by Derek C Page

Welcome to another edition of the group's newsletter. I apologize in advance if you receive this newsletter a bit later than normal. This last month has been rather a bad one for me with initially finding out I will be losing my job thanks to the Defence Review, and then my father passed away a couple of weeks ago. However, I'm getting back on track a bit now and bring you another edition to let you see what we've all been up to over the last few months. I hope this finds you all well, and that you all have a lovely Christmas and New Year.

Derek

General Report - (by Keith Mitchell - Chairman)

Since the last Newsletter the Group has accomplished a great deal, although as is frequently the case, much of the work has been carried on behind the scenes. After what can only be described as a considerable amount of work by way of assorted checking procedures, July saw the publication of our latest MI publication for Duffus, St Peter's Churchyard. It is fair to say this ranks as a significant addition to our list of publications and many thanks must go to all who took part in the recording work as well as those involved with putting the book together. These comments also refer to our very latest book "Monumental Inscriptions Including Buried Tombstones" for Kinloss Abbey. However, I would like to acknowledge here the valued help given to this project by members of the Kinloss Abbey Trust. Please note that we are hoping to hold a book launch at the Falconer Museum in Forres, on Friday 7th January, to which all members are warmly invited. If you are interested in attending please contact Helen or me to let us know you are coming.

Unfortunately for a variety of reasons, including holidays, weather conditions, health problems and other assorted reasons, little has taken place on the recording front during September and October. Several members including Connie, Moira and Bill were ill, but I am pleased to report that they are all now recovered. However, some work has been achieved both at Rathven Churchyard and New Elgin. Thanks are due to Ruth who helped out organizing meetings at New Elgin while Helen was away in Canada in her capacity as a new Granny. Also it looks possible that the early onset of winter may mean that little recording work will be achieved before the start of next season. For more information on that front, please read Helen's Report.

During the last few months considerable emphasis has been placed on getting as many tombstone photographs taken for sites such as Knockando, Rathven Old Churchyard and the old section of New Elgin Cemetery. This has been accomplished in part thanks to getting some decent weather, but of course that as usual has only occurred only in patches. As a result, several thousand photographs have been taken during this time, and it is taking quite a long time to catalogue them properly. Both Helen and I spend a lot of time at the computer typing and checking transcripts, but every photograph has to be accurately catalogued for future reference, and this does take up a lot of time. Certainly the pubs round our way won't be making any money from us in the foreseeable future, but that is probably not a bad thing anyway!

Membership remains fairly positive and up to the period of August we appeared to be on something of an upswing in regard to active members, although latterly this seems to have nose-dived somewhat. We have also gained one member from the USA. The group was represented at the first Banff History Fair at the beginning of August. We also attended the Nairn History Fair in October, organised by our own Bruce Bishop. We had two tables at each event, which included our "Graveyard Experience."

Last week we had a very successful Stamp Night which was attended by 13 people including Marilyn, one of our members from Australia who was holidaying with us. It was quite a lively event and everyone seemed to enjoy the proceedings. Since the previous Stamp Night, stamps and coins have been donated to the group from quite a few different sources. These thoughtful donations include a substantial quantity which formed part of one members own personal collection, so we are extremely grateful for her generosity. Already the sale of some of this material has raised the sum of £85.00 before auction.

The Website continues to attract interest from various parts of the world, and our new method of accepting payments via PayPal appears to be working extremely well. This has solved most, or indeed all of the previous problems we have had in the past in this regard. Thanks in particular go to Lindsay for all his hard work in overcoming all the complexities involved.

STOP PRESS – John Crawford of the Buckie & District Fishing Heritage Centre recently filmed some of our MBGRG group members at work, transcribing Monumental Inscriptions (MIs) at Rathven Churchyard.

Field Co-ordinator's Report (by Helen Mitchell)

Since our summer outing to Knockando our site visits have been sparse, 12 visits in total, due to holidays, illness, lack of numbers and weather. From now until February it will depend on weather. If the forecast looks good (excluding December) then at short notice I may phone you and arrange an outing. Probably they will all be to Elgin.

Knockando unfortunately this was not completed on our first visit. There are about 70 stones to record and three buried to uncover. Twice I arranged dates to go back but the "heavens" opened and the visit was cancelled. We did extremely well to record over 400 stones on the day we were there and I think everyone was certainly ready for high tea at Dalnashaugh Hotel, once again. The weather on that day was beautiful and to be able to stand outside the hotel as a group and enjoy liquid refreshments was a bonus and a perfect end to our outing.

Roths outside work is completed.

Dyke churchyard is completed with a few to record in the Cemetery.

Kinloss Abbey is now published.

Elgin (west) has to be completed.

Rathven is more than half way completed. The lower part is fully recorded (we worked there over the last two visits to keep out of the cold wind coming off the North Sea). The top part has to be completed, but due to having laid aside buried stones at present we have decided to wait until spring and work recording MIs and buried together.

Next year may see us up Speyside way on the recording front to Aberlour or Mortlach.

There is plenty of indoor work to be done over the coming months, preparing future the next publications.

The "Christmas" Party will be held on the evening of Saturday, 12th March 2011 at the usual time and place. This will be followed by the AGM on Sunday 13th. Last year we found, after cancelling twice due to atrocious road conditions, that March suited many members better. We may have to change the name from Christmas!!!

MBGRG WEBSITE (by Lindsay Robertson – Webmaster)

Work on the Website has been mostly routine since the publication of the last Newsletter, but acquisition of a new personal laptop recently, with updated versions of most software, has slowed my working output rate somewhat - as they say, 'auld habits die hard', and Windows 7 takes a little while for an auld grey haired surfer to get used to! If you receive multiple copies of emails, the wrong emails or Word documents in the wrong format, please bear with me.

Thanks are due to the Committee who authorised the purchase of Microsoft Access 2010, used for storage of the raw Ancestor Indices Database, and for generation of each new draft MI booklet publication Index.

Ancestor Indices

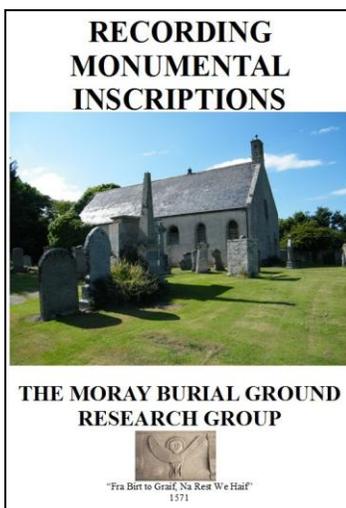
Since the publication of the last Newsletter (April 2010), abstracted data from only one site, St, Peter's (Duffus) has been added to the on-line MI/Photo database. However, work on abstracting data from a number of sites being researched by the Group, is continually being done as verified data becomes available for processing. Kinloss Abbey is expected to be added soon after its pending publication.

On-line Website Payments

This was instigated in April 2010, and to date has generated some £170 income for the Group. Not a vast sum, but could be regarded as paying for our Web hosting costs!

Particular thanks are due to Keith, Irene and Ruth for their part in processing orders.

MBGRG - The Movie (by Derek C Page - Editor)



Just a quick update to let you know the latest on the film project. For those of you not aware of this yet, the plan is to create a DVD of the groups activities to show people the intricacies of the work we do and best practice to carry it out along with a 'social side' to the group. The idea was formulated by Keith last year, and as a one time student of TV & Film Production, I volunteered to take on this role which will see the group produce a quality High Definition film. So far I have amassed a reasonable amount of footage of the group's activities which I intend to have completed some time next year (if all goes well!) However, I've hit a small drawback at present due to my camcorder failing which I will hopefully rectify shortly.

Fundraising (by Ruth McIntosh – Fundraiser)

Well here we are heading to Christmas and a New Year once again.

In 2011 we are taking on the Charity shop in Lossiemouth for two weeks from the 17th January. We are going to take it on with Cornerstone Community Care, so will share the work and the proceeds.

We will be open from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday each week. If you are doing your Christmas cleaning please keep any goods which we will be able to sell and hand them in to the shop when we are there. If storage space is short you can give donations to me at the address below. We are looking for good quality clothes, household items, bric a brac, books or any item you think will sell.

We are also planning a small raffle in the shop so any unwanted Xmas presents could help to swell the prizes.

Due to legislation we cannot accept any electrical goods or foodstuffs. We are not taking videos as they are not selling.

The shop is situated up an alley way opposite KAMS beauty salon on Queen Street which is the street which runs past Grampian Furnishers (the old Bingo hall) and the square. The alley is on the left hand side going towards Covesea. We will have a board at the bottom of the alley.



If any member can help man the shop please e mail me. I do already have quite a number of helpers so no panic yet!

I would like to thank those of you who donate stamps for our fundraising effort, keep them coming. We recently got together at Keith and Helen's home to prepare stamps ready for selling, and a very fruitful night saw a large



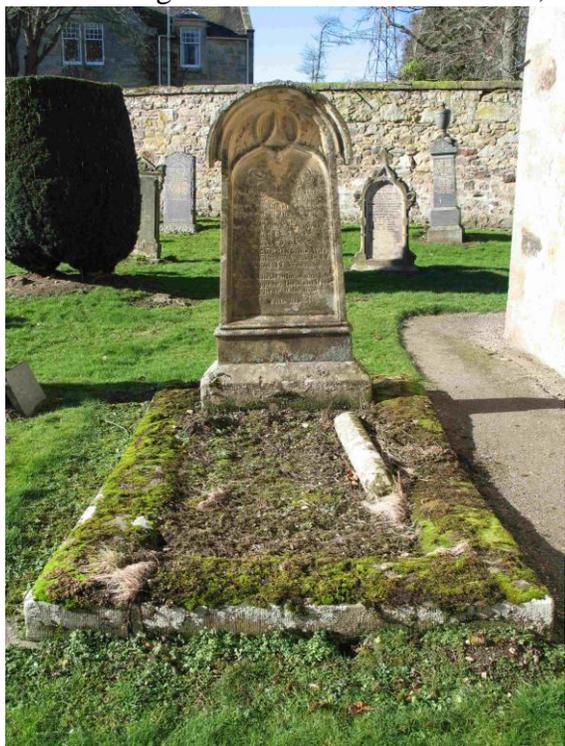
number of stamps sorted into their various categories. It would be great if everyone made an effort to save their stamps over the Christmas period.

If you only have a few please send them to me at the address below or hand them to any committee member. Wishing you all a peaceful festive period.

Ruth McIntosh,
17 Thornhill Road,
Elgin
IV30 6DY
01343 549550
email_fundraiser@mbgrg.org

Jane Cumming wife of Rev William Tulloch of Dallas
(by **Keith Mitchell and Frances Singh**)

The Rev William Tulloch of Dallas in Morayshire served his parish from 1822 until his death in 1845. Both he and his wife Jane Cumming are buried in Dallas Churchyard right next to the main wall of the main building that faces the road. This tombstone was recorded along with the remainder of the churchyard by MBGRG members in 2007 and first published a year later in 2008. Subsequently, Frances Singh our member in New York, contacted me for additional information about William and



Jane for a historical research project she is conducting. Earlier this year Helen and I had the pleasure of taking Frances and her husband Brij out to Dallas to see the church and burial ground for themselves. Later, Frances emailed me the following "little capsule" about Jane.

"Jane Cumming, the wife of Rev. William Tulloch, had a past. She was the mixed-race, illegitimate daughter of George Cumming, who was the eldest son of Sir Alexander Penrose Cumming Gordon of Altyre. George had gone out to India as a Writer in the East India Company in the early 1790s and shortly developed an attachment to a local lady. He was originally besotted and called her his "nymph," but his ardor cooled over time and by the time he made his will in 1800, she was the most "evil-intentioned of all women."

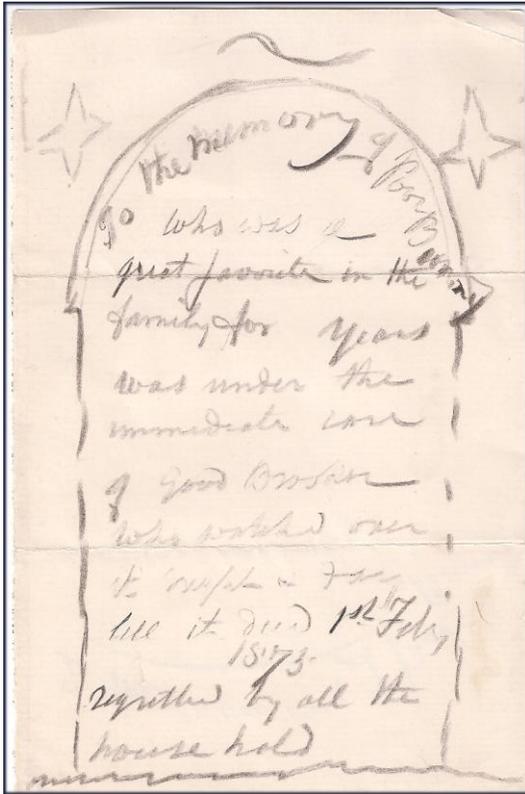
When Alexander was informed about Jane's existence, he had her brought back. She arrived in 1803 and was immediately enrolled in a school in Elgin. In 1810, Alexander's widow, Dame Helen Cumming Gordon, enrolled her into a finishing school in Edinburgh. Jane accused her teachers of being sexually intimate and a libel suit that lasted until 1821 ensued.

What happened to the teachers is still unknown but in 1818 Jane was married from Knockando to a parochial schoolmaster from Nigg named William Tulloch. Three years later the living at Dallas fell vacant and Jane's uncle, Sir William Gordon Cumming, installed him as the minister at Dallas. Dame Helen settled £700 on Jane at the time of her marriage.

Jane and William's marriage had its rocky moments. In her will she left him only (2/6) - two shillings and sixpence. At the time of the Disruption in 1843, she went out with her three children while Tulloch stayed. Presumably, she continued to live at the Manse. In any case, the two were buried in the same plot and share a common headstone.

If you, or someone you know has any details which link up with the Jane's history in particular, I know that Frances will be delighted to hear from you. Should you wish to pass on information about the subject, please email Helen or myself in the usual way.

A Family Pet Remembered - (by Keith Mitchell)



Courtesy of Scottish Family Heritage

memorial service" took place at the Hall's family home in Phillimore Gardens, Kensington. Upon gingerly opening the envelope, I was somewhat startled to discover a cutting of rabbit's fur, which had probably never seen the light of day for over some 130 years! Just for a bit of added interest, the little envelope was sealed with wax, and contained the impression of a ship's flag with the word INVICTA stamped on it. Invicta, meaning unvanquished, may in this context have some connection to the County of Kent.

Quite who wrote out this little memorial to "Bunny" is unclear. Sir William and his wife the Hon. Hilare Byng were married in 1845, and had one daughter thought to be called Frances, but of course it may have been written by any member of the family. Whoever it was, this little ephemeral item is a classic example of the sort of relic that certainly helps to put the flesh on to the bones of a family tree.

While sorting through a collection of papers relating to Admiral, Sir William Hutcheon Hall, K.C.B., F.R.S., I came across the rather unusual memorial illustrated here, inscribed to a beloved family pet rabbit apparently called "Bunny" – as you might expect!

Sir William was a well-respected figure of the Victorian period, whose naval adventures are well documented, during for example, at the Second Battle of Chuenpee of 1841 in China. Another noted example took place at Bomarsund, Finland, in 1854, when Britain was fighting Russia during the Crimean War.

The inscription on the mock tombstone is as follows:-

To the memory of Poor Bunny who was a great favorite (*sic*) in the family for _____ years was under the immediate care of Good Bro.....* night & day till it died 1st Feby 1875
regretted by all the house hold

* (this word was at first thought to be "Brother," but subsequently it was suggested the word might represent the name of another pet, such as a dog, etc.)

An accompanying envelope informs us that "Bunny" was "Buryed Feby 3ed (*sic*) 1875. Presumably the "little

Elgin Cemetery (by Bruce B Bishop)

The need for a new cemetery, due to the overcrowding in the cathedral churchyard, was first mooted in March 1848, as recorded in the Forres Gazette. Over the next 10 years the idea was raised several times, but it was not until the early months of 1857, under the watchful eye of the Elgin Parochial Board, that the proposals took on any real substance. Land was acquired to the east of the village of New Elgin, with an access road and a lodge being constructed.

The first interment was reported in the Elgin Courant of 28th October 1858 and the formal approval for the use of the site as a cemetery was granted by the Sheriff in June 1859. The Morayshire Advertiser of 16th November of that year carried a description of the cemetery. By the start of the following year there had been 21 interments there.

Another description of the cemetery was printed in the Forres Gazette of 12th June 1864, and the site gradually began to fill up. The 1868 Ordnance Survey map gives a very clear plan of the site, surrounded by woodland to the east. In 1873 the owners of the cemetery passed a resolution to prohibit the interment of 'paupers and strayers'.

The original site on the small hill above New Elgin had begun to fill up rapidly, and in 1877 the Elgin Courant reported the need for an extension to the cemetery. This was completed, on the northeast side of the original site, in July 1878.



It was by now really the only burial ground for Elgin, the cathedral churchyard being quite full, and in 1890 there were 102 interments. It was still not able to keep up with the demand for burial lairs, and on 19th April 1907 a further extension was opened, and a photograph of this appears in the 1907 Northern Scot Christmas Number.

The cemetery was managed by the Cemetery Committee of the Elgin Parochial Board, and the minutes for their meetings between 1856 and 1915 have survived. At a later date the running of the site came under the control of the Elgin Town Council, and their Cemetery Committee meeting minutes have survived for the period between 1956 and 1967.

It is really during the period from about the start of the First World War until the late 1960's that the management of the cemetery is not well-documented, although fortunately the registers of lairs and registers of burials have survived.

The next extension to the cemetery was dedicated in January 1967, but this soon led to complaints about the lack of any facilities such as shelters in this rather bleak and windswept addition, a story which was picked up by the Northern Scot in 1972.

Vandalism was beginning to increase and in 1980 it was decided to lock the cemetery gates at 4 p.m. in the winter to prevent desecration during the dark winter evenings. It is sad to relate that almost all of the mentions of the cemetery in newspaper reports over the last 30 years have been with reference to vandalism or to the dangerous condition of the gravestones.

The one bright spot has been the construction, in 1997, of an area for the burial of stillborn premature babies.

A survey of the old section, the original Elgin Cemetery, is presently being carried out by the Moray Burial Ground Research Group. This survey suggests that many of the original tombstones have now disappeared, and also reveals certain as yet unresolved anomalies with regard to possible burial vaults in the southeastern section of the site. Work on this part of the cemetery, and eventually to be extended to the remainder of the site, is ongoing.

A Puzzle at New Elgin Cemetery - (by Keith Mitchell)

When MBGRG began its mammoth project of recording all the MIs at Elgin's largest cemetery, with well in excess of 6000 memorials in March, it was certain that more than a puzzle or two would come to light. One of these little enigmas turned out to be four rather strangely sited alcoves, constructed into the southern retaining wall of the West section. There are two equally spaced on either side of the small flight of steps down to the lower area. All appear to have been purposely blocked up a long time ago, and each has one large hinge type bracket situated near the top of each jamb; the ones to the west of the steps being on the west jamb, while the other two are on the eastern side. What were these alcoves for? Apparently not for decoration, nor is there any evidence of any memorial having been placed in or in front of them that corresponds to a suitable time-frame. Could they perhaps indicate a storage area for coffins, or might they represent some type of family vault? To date no-one seems to know for certain. So if you have any suggestions, we will be glad to hear from you. In the accompanying photograph, Bill is seen hard at work cutting back overgrown vegetation so that the recording process can be achieved as accurately as possible.

