

# THE MORAY BURIAL GROUND RESEARCH GROUP Newsletter



**Issue 5 - - - September 2005**

(Currently published twice a year)

Dear Member, Since the last Newsletter came out in April, our Group has been extremely active in a multiplicity of ways, and from the interesting and varied selection of Members' submissions to this Issue, you will undoubtedly be aware of the significant advances in achieving the aims we have so far set ourselves.

## **Obituary - (Dr John Bruce Irving, FSA Scot - Honorary President)**

Very shortly after being elected as our first Honorary President, at the beginning of March, Dr Irving became seriously ill and was therefore unable to give any further encouragement or support to the Group. Sadly Bruce did not recover, and he passed away at Bonshaw on the 8th of June. We know that had he survived, he would indeed have been instrumental in ensuring that our activities relating to Burial Sites in Moray expanded in line with our various aims. The MBGRG was indeed considerably honoured to have someone like Bruce as our Hon. President, and we extend our sincere sympathy to Mrs Irving and the family.

## **New Members**

From the time of the previous Newsletter, we have acquired seven new full members who have joined us from Aberdeen, Botriphnie, Dufftown, Drummuir, Milnorduff and Urquhart. We hope that you have found membership beneficial and we greatly appreciate all the support you have given the Group.

Thanks to the efforts of several people, we now have a total of 12 Associate members. The Group extends a very warm welcome to everyone who has recently joined the MBGRG from as far afield as Aberdeen, Dunsyre, Edinburgh, Elgin, and St Andrews, but in particular I would like to extend a special welcome to Marilyn Duff from Melbourne, Australia and Mrs Penelope Jensen of Renton, Washington, U.S.A.

## **Sites Under Investigation (part 1)**



**Botriphnie MI Book Launch for ANESFHS**



**MBGRG Members Meet the Press at Alves**

On Saturday, 14th May, several members travelled down to Botriphnie Church to celebrate the launch of ANESFHS's new M.I. book, which was recorded by members of both groups. A pleasant afternoon was had by all, during which several books were sold and we acquired two new members for the MBGRG.

Mrs Gordon-Duff also very kindly directed us to see all the broken tombstone fragments we had rescued in their new setting outside the churchyard wall. They have been carefully imbedded in gravel chips and the whole effect was indeed most pleasing. Three of our group also met with a photographer from "The Banffshire Herald" and a small article with photograph subsequently appeared in the "Banffie's" June 3rd edition.

Sunday 26th June was certainly an important event in the MBGRG's calendar. This saw the conclusion of our recording efforts at Alves Churchyard. Our work here began some 14 months earlier, at which time we had little idea just how much work we were letting ourselves in for. Every tombstone was accurately recorded and photographed, while some 170 odd buried stones were uncovered, drawn, photographed and re-turfed.

There was a good turnout of members for our last day, which was gratifying as we had decided to leave "the best" to last. Previously we had discovered the tombstone of Margaret McKenzie who died in 1608, near to which we had partly uncovered a stone dedicated to Alexander Anderson of Petinsair, who died in 1571. This we were forced to abandon due to wintry weather conditions. Between these two tombstones there was another which we assumed would also be a very old one. Therefore we decided to open up all three tombstones for public viewing. The third stone turned out to be badly damaged, however, enough survives to identify it as belonging to George Dunbar of Asleisk who died in 1607.

The 'Press' were represented by The Northern Scot and The Press and Journal. Subsequently, articles with photographs appeared in both newspapers, so the work of the Group was significantly highlighted. Colour copies of a range of photographs can be had by applying to either newspaper.

Two other areas have been fully researched and one is nearing completion. These are Lhanbryde (old & new) which was recorded between last November and May, as well as Urquhart (old & new) which was studied between April and June. Parts of two inscriptions at Urquhart were frustratingly very faint and almost indecipherable. However, with the aid of Betty Willsher, a national authority on graveyards, and an Associate Member, we managed to complete the text in full. Our appreciation to Betty is gratefully expressed. Spynie, a very old churchyard, came under our scrutiny for the first time in July. Although not very large, it contains much of interest, including extremely fascinating stones pre-dating the 17th century. We hope to conclude our studies at Spynie in the next week or so.



The illustration on the left is a 17th century tombstone found at Urquhart and it has been computer enhanced to improve legibility. First of all by using a special piece of computer software, the original parallax has been removed from the photograph. Secondly, the image has been converted into a negative format, which in some occasions highlights text that otherwise might be illegible. The crudely carved tombstone on the right of the previous page was discovered a couple of weeks ago at Spynie. It is indeed a very curious stone as there is not one straight edge or flat area on it. It is suspected that it predates the 17th century.

### **Sites Under Investigation (part 2)**

On a very hot 11th of July, two carloads, with nine members, descended on the abandoned Roman Catholic cemetery of Buiternach (Buiternach) which is situated a few miles south of Tomnavoulin, high amongst the beautiful Braes of Glenlivet. After leaving the main road, we ascended a steep hill track, and fairly quickly found ourselves deep in 'midgie' land. However, these little blighters disappeared once we got into the open ground of the cemetery. Initially we had a bit of a problem when the lead driver, (yes me!), missed the turnoff into the cemetery, which meant that two cars began heading deep into nowhere. Six members walked.



**Bruce 'conducting' operations at Buiternach**



**Mary & Janet enjoying a 'hot' lunch**

Within a few hours we had managed to transcribe the existing 18 M.I.'s, although some posed a bit of a problem as the inscriptions were very worn, while one was found covered by grass. The oldest date recorded was 1796. Although some probing was attempted in the search for Buried Tombstones, most of the grass was so thick and incredibly tough that this idea was quickly abandoned. When we got back to the cars, I discovered that the temperature outside our car measured a staggering 35° Celsius, which according to the Media weather reports for the day, must have been more or less the hottest spot in the whole of the country.

Not long after Helen and I visited the Roman Catholic church of Tombae, which is only a few miles from Buiternach. It contains a small churchyard cemetery which we partly transcribed and photographed. It has been suggested that the M.I.'s from both these cemeteries should be published together, and this is a project that could now be achieved fairly easily.

### **New Publication - (Volume 3 *The Forgotten Tombstones of Moray*)**

Published this month, Volume 3 covers much of the Buried Tombstone work undertaken by MBGRG members during 2003-2004. Churchyards researched include Bellie (old) near Fochabers, Burghead (old) and Kinneddar, by RAF Lossiemouth. At 56 pages, with plans, scale drawings of each tombstone, as well as four pages of colour photographs and a history of each site, this booklet is well worth adding to your collection. The Normal price is £5.99; however, members can get a copy at the reduced price of £5.00. We would like to have given participating members a free copy, but the Committee felt this would not be cost effective. Copies are available from either Bruce Bishop or Helen Mitchell, or you may buy a copy at full retail price from ANESFHS at King Street, Aberdeen, or at Yeadon's bookshop in Elgin.

**News from Down Under (August 2005) - (by M. Duff - Associate member)**  
Our sole member and correspondent from the 'Australian sub-branch' of the MBGRG

This is my first snippet of news from Australia. I have visited Scotland several times and on my last visit was lucky enough to join some of the group on a field trip at Alves. Well I was hooked. So when I returned to Australia off I went with my new digital camera and started photographing graves. The request from Keith was, could I find graves with a Scottish connection?

I started with outback New South Wales, Bourke to be exact then Dubbo. On return to Victoria I started looking around the local area and found more small cemeteries than I ever had imagined. Some well kept, others in need of love and attention. The smaller cemeteries are now closed to the general public but family members of original settlers may be buried in family plots.

To get a better idea about the local history I went on a cemetery tour to Arthurs Creek one winter's afternoon. The cemetery had started as a private one for the Reid family and was eventually gazetted in 1867. One of the current trustees told the story of a request to sell a plot and as he did not know the family he contacted an ex trustee who said, "Oh yes I remember that one, the wife put him in there. She murdered him." The plot was sold and she moved away from the area to start a new life after prison.

Wandering around the cemeteries, one gets a sense of "I have seen that headstone before." Well it seems headstones were sent to Australia as ships' ballast. White marble was popular in the past and it has survived remarkably well, most of the inscriptions still being legible.

I digress; did I find the Scottish connection? Yes and there are many photos to prove it. Well enough for now. More to come if you like.

Ed. note: The news to 'Up Over' from 'Down Under' sounds really quite exciting. Keep up the good work & keep it coming! We enjoyed seeing the photographs.

## **Travellers' Tales**

### **Postbridge & Widecombe-in-the-Moor - (by Mary Wardle - Committee Member)**

Whenever I get the chance I visit my favourite part of Devon, the area around Postbridge on Dartmoor, where I spent so many holidays during and after the last war. I had hoped to find the cemetery there but couldn't find it and eventually had to ask in the Visitor Centre. It was where I thought it to be but overgrown and unkempt. Back in mediaeval times the dead from here had to be taken to Lydford some eight miles away, although when the weather was stormy, and the fords unpassable, it was more like fifteen. This old corpse road has, like many another ancient track, become a walkers' path aptly named the Lych Way. (Note: Lych or lichway was a path by which the dead were carried to burial) (see Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary)

Widecombe-in-the-Moor is usually crowded in August, but on this particular day there were few visitors, and the Craft Fair in the village hall was empty. Tourism on Exmoor was said to be down by 40%, so perhaps Dartmoor was suffering a similar fate. Last time we were here we found a gravestone from the late 1500's, now if I had found the right one, it was illegible.

I have been to the church several times and it is always a peaceful place, but this was not always so. On the 21<sup>st</sup> October 1638 there occurred a catastrophic event. During the Divine Service on this particular Sunday the sky began to darken until the congregation could hardly see each other. There was a mighty thundering and the hail falling on the roof sounded like cannon balls. Then an extraordinary flash of lightning came flaming through the window into the church that then became filled with smoke and fire and the terrible stench of brimstone. There was chaos, people on fire, burnt and scalded. Some were killed outright and others died later. Some had their clothing burnt off and others were untouched.

The church tower was badly damaged, as was the steeple, one pinnacle of which broke through into the church. The tower was so damaged it was feared it would topple into the church. Stones had been hurled

great distances and many of the houses near the church also suffered. Later it was heard that hailstones near Plymouth were so large, they weighed up to seven ounces. Over the years the toppling of the steeple has gone down in folk history. It must have been this event that gave rise to the tale of the Devil hitching his horse to the steeple.

**A Swiss Holiday - (by Helen & Keith Mitchell - Members)**



**St. Maria's Church, Savognin**



**St. Theodul's Parish Church, Gruyères**

Recycling started early in parts of Europe, one example of this being with burial lairs that are only used for some 20 to 30 years. Bodies are then exhumed and in some cases (how many we do not know) are deposited in charnel houses, or distributed elsewhere. The lairs are then reused. Previous memorial stones are also removed, but what is done with them we did not learn. While Keith and I were recently on holiday in Switzerland, we saw no evidence of old tombstones in any cemetery we came across. Each one was full of small modern memorials, all beautifully kept as shown in the photographs depicted above. From a Family History point of view, the question arises as to whether or not the Swiss keep an MI record of tombstones when the old ones are removed. It would, I think, be very frustrating to be a Swiss genealogist in these circumstances. With recycling taking off in this country, how long will it be before this type of thing happens here? Some time ago via the media, we heard that plans to recycle old graves, were under way in parts of London! Hopefully we (or the next generation of MBGRG members), will have accurately recorded Morayshire if and when this type of recycling should occur in our area.



**Two Painted Tombstones in Bern Cathedral with assumed dates of 148? and 1484 / 1488**

During a typical "tourist" visit to the beautiful city of Bern - Helen and I did the tour in a few hours - we experienced some of the beauties of the Swiss Capital city, albeit on a very wet and stormy day. Our guide on this occasion was a small and friendly elderly gentleman whose English vocabulary was excellent, but his phraseology was decidedly quaint. Add to that the fact that most of our group could hardly hear a word he said meant that the tour was largely undertaken from visual point of view only. For a brief period we were given an opportunity to observe the famous Bern "Bears" in their outdoor pit, and later on were given a whirlwind tour of the Cathedral. There were of course, many fascinating things to see inside this ancient edifice. As frequently happens on these occasions, one sees something of particular interest, but is given virtually no time to stop and study, as within the space of a few seconds or minutes, the remainder of the group has moved on to other things. This occurred to me in particular when I encountered, what I believe to be, the 15th century tombstones illustrated above. I was much struck by the way in which all the carving was highlighted with red paint. Almost instantly, I wondered whether this was a type of tombstone decoration that was relatively common at this period throughout much of Europe. Specifically I conjectured whether some of the 16th century tombstones our Group has encountered in Moray, might well to some extent have undergone this type of treatment. Having begged this question, it is fair to say that I have no way of knowing at present if these stones in Bern Cathedral were originally painted in this fashion, or whether this form of decoration is a 'Modern' episode. Any suggestions are most welcome.

**A Potted History of Some of the Sites we have Researched.**  
(by **Bruce Bishop** - Secretary & Historical Research Co-ordinator)

### **Urquhart**

In a deed of 1237 the church at Urquhart had "*past memory of man*" supplied divine service and the holy sacrament to the inhabitants of the parish. In 1350 it was taxed at 60 merks, higher than many other small parish churches, giving some idea of its status. Following the Reformation it next recorded in 1567, serving the Burgh of Barony, later the Burgh of Barony and Regality of Urquhart. The original church was demolished in 1655, with the new building being completed about 1658. During the interim the worship was held in the hall at Innes House. The Secession Church in the village dates from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the Free Church, now a B&B, was opened after the Disruption in 1843. The churchyard was modified at various dates, being surrounded by its present wall in about 1860, prior to which it would appear to have been unenclosed, as were many churchyards at that time.

### **Lhanbryde**

The church of Langbride is first mentioned in Bishop Bricius' great charter of the foundation of the canonries at Spynie (1208 - 1215). In 1509 there are mentions in the Rose Mss of "The Temple Lands of Longbride", which may suggest a possible connection with the Knights Templars.

It is probable that some years after the Reformation of 1560 the church of St Bride or St Bridget at Lhanbryde was rebuilt, or was at least extensively renovated. By 1708 the church had fallen into ruin, and improvements were not forthcoming until rebuilding work, at a cost of £929/4/8d Scots money, was carried out in 1720. Following this work the church continued in use for a further 60 years or so. In 1731 David Junken, the wright in the village, made a new stool of repentance for the church, not just a single stool like that used in most rural parishes, but a construction much like a step-ladder, with various levels at which those doing penance could be seated. Could this have been a comment on the morals and indiscipline of the people of the parish?

The union of the parishes of St Andrews and Longbride was first mooted in early 1780, and the new parish church of St Andrews-Lhanbryde was planned at Darkland, just to the northwest of the village of Lhanbryde. This proved to be a more convenient and central point for the parish, but the new church did not have a burial ground of its own, the churchyards at St Andrews Kirkhill and at Lhanbryde itself continuing to serve the parish. It is unclear when the new church finally reached completion, but there is documentary evidence that the old church of St Andrews (formerly Kilmalemnock) and the church of Longbride itself were in use until their demolition in 1796.

## Spynie

The Church of the Holy Trinity at Spynie was in existence in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and was made a cathedral church in 1207. It was in use as such until the completion of Elgin Cathedral in 1224. The last remains, a Gothic gable, fell in about 1850. In 1924 the foundations were traced and showed a church 74ft by 35ft, of stone and clay except for the east gable. The church was demolished in 1736 and the good stone was used to build the New Spynie Kirk at Quarrywood. The site of the old church is indicated by a low mound, mainly comprised of the rubble which was unusable for the new church at Quarrywood. The surrounding churchyard was smaller than it is now, and was probably linked to the villages of Spynie (next to the palace) and Bishopmill by a coffin road.

### **Group Logo-** (by **Helen Mitchell** - Fieldwork Co-ordinator)

Since the last Newsletter, we are now very pleased to report that the Group's Logo of a "Winged Soul" is now being sported on 16 T-shirts and 11 sweatshirts. T-Shirts are £15.00 and sweatshirts £16.00 + postage and packing costs. A wide range of sizes and colours are available. Please contact me for further details and to place orders.

Keith has suggested the possibility of having the option to add the following words in motto style, as found on the 1571 tombstone at Alves - "FRA BIRT TO GRAIF NA REST WE HAIF." Please let us know your thoughts about this.

## **Fund Raising**

### **Fund Raising Organiser**

For some time now there has been 'muttering in the ranks' that maybe we need someone who could organise and oversee our Fund Raising endeavours. Although some experience with this type of activity would be an advantage, it is obviously not essential. However, it would be helpful to have someone, who was in general, keen on this kind of activity. If you think this might suit you, why not let a member of the Committee know, and 'voila' the title may be yours for the asking. Equally if you know of someone who you think might be appropriate, but they are not a member of the Group, perhaps some sort of arrangement might be made to overcome this situation.

### **Graveyard Art -** (by **Keith Mitchell** - Chairman)



Urquhart Island

## **Moray Voluntary Service Organization**

During the second and third week of September, part of one of the windows of the MVSO premises in Elgin's High Street was given over to a display highlighting the work of our Group. So far comments have proved favourable and several people called inside to enquire for further information. The Autumn Newsletter also contains a full page article on the Group, so you never know we may get a few extra members through this media.

## **Tombstone Photographic Project**

With the considerable value of using digital photographs to check handwritten M.I.'s for accuracy, as well as the creation of a complete cemetery archive for a multiplicity of purposes, we are actively photographing the tombstones in every cemetery already published by ANESFHS. In a trial run a few months ago, Alasdair Gunn photographed every tombstone in Dipple cemetery near Fochabers. This proved invaluable, as it picked up a few errors that had been missed in the recent Dipple M.I. publication. Subsequently Alasdair has completely photographed the 1929 extension at Bellie, also near Fochabers, resulting in the discovery of many more inaccuracies in the rough draft. The next plan is to photograph the new section at Bellie, followed by the much more complex old section.

Working very much on his own initiative, our recently joined member, Dave McWilliam, has been quietly, but extremely efficiently, photographing Boharm cemetery not far from Dufftown. This project is more or less complete from the photography point of view, but a few odds and ends still need to be done before all the transcriptions can go through the full checking process prior to publication.

### **Photography of 'Modern' Tombstones - (by Keith Mitchell - Chairman)**

Recently, six of our members met to discuss a variety of issues and problems relating to the recent decision to photograph every tombstone that is recorded by our members, for publication both by ANEFHS and by the MBGRG in our own 'The Forgotten Tombstones of Moray' series. One of the issues discussed at some length, concerns the photography of 'Modern' tombstones as found in cemeteries dating roughly from the 1960's period, as well as those that exist in older graveyards. The general theme of the discussion was as follows.

It was felt by some members present, that the photography of 'Modern' tombstones - that is those erected roughly during the last 30 to 40 years - particularly those contained within 'Modern' cemeteries - might pose certain ethical problems. The question was also asked about how we deal with old tombstones that may also include modern inscriptions. Being aware that these inscriptions individually, and as a whole, represent a considerable amount of raw emotion both to a large number of living individuals and families, several members voiced concerns of various degrees about how this project should proceed. Other views contended that once a tombstone is erected, it is then considered to be in full public view and can be photographed or recorded without impunity.

It was agreed by all present, that if modern M.I.'s are to be published, then there is indeed a great need to photograph their original source. The primary reason for this is to ensure that the accuracy of transcription is held paramount. Inaccuracies in transcription, even with simple M.I.'s can frequently occur, and when these find their way into print, it can easily cause problems for many people, now and in the future. The second benefit from keeping a full photographic record is to help militate against the effects of individual tombstone damage or destruction, or to the wanton desecration of complete cemeteries. Recently the media reported the wholesale demolition of a modern cemetery that was quite unrecognisable after hooligans completely wrecked it. Tombstones fragments were to be seen dangling from tree branches!

Much discussion then centred on what happens to the photographs once they have gone through the whole checking system. Currently I hold the photographic record of all the 'modern' tombstones that have so far been published, as well as many more that are in the queue. It was also pointed out that many other groups who photograph tombstones destroy these images once they are finished with them. However, it was felt that this process seemed extremely wasteful, considering the work entailed in collecting it. Having expressed a concern about holding these images on my personal computer, it was agreed in principal that some other repository should be considered. A bank safety deposit box was suggested, along with several other ideas, but further research is required for future reference. Discussion also took place about the question of closure, specifically: how long should modern photographs be closed for public consumption? - and periods of approximately 30 and forty years were suggested. However, further difficulties arose with questions such as: What happens if the group no longer exists in that time frame? It was also suggested that maybe we should in some manner inform the public about our activities, although precisely how this should be done was uncertain.



Clearly this may be seen as a somewhat emotive subject - therefore in the first place it was felt appropriate to ask for the opinion of all members, before deciding what to do next. Therefore I would be grateful if you will let me know what your opinion is. If you wish to comment, or make any suggestion, please contact myself, or any other member of the Committee. Your thoughts are important!

### **Transcription Queries Checked in Edinburgh**

Through the very kind efforts of one of our new member, Janet Bishop, we now have fairly quick access to information from the post 1855 records held in New Register House, Edinburgh. This means that, as quite often happens, the spelling of a name, or the number in an age or date can be verified almost on a weekly basis, where required. This research is indeed crucial to the accurate interpretation of some transcriptions and her efforts and experience as a professional genealogist is greatly appreciated.

### **A Few Words From Our Field Co-ordinator**

Since the last Newsletter in March, there have been 33 site visits, covering various aspects of Group fieldwork, including photography, at Alves, Boharm, Buiternach, Lhanbryde (Old & New) and Spynie, while photographic work alone has been conducted at Bellie, Dipple and Elgin Cathedral. One recent outing at Spynie had 16 members present!

Behind the scene, work continues at a great speed. Cataloguing all the tombstone photographs according to the 1970's card Index Number, checking typed inscriptions against these photographs, followed by rechecking on site if we feel there is a slight discrepancy in the text; all this takes a considerable amount of time to achieve. Then the Index has to be created by Bruce, ready for Aberdeen to check before publication. Of late Keith and I are beginning to feel as if we are working in overdrive. If you are interested in further details about how our work is developing, why not check out the "Progress" page on our Website.

### **Future Research**



**Complex 17th century  
Tombstone at Elgin Cathedral**

Following a period of discussion and consultation with Historic Scotland, the Moray Burial Ground Research Group is pleased to announce that the Group will commence systematic recording of all the Monumental Inscriptions in Elgin Cathedral, in October 2005.

There are well over 1100 Monumental Inscriptions to be researched and recorded, at this very important historic site.

This will be a long and at times complex research project, as there are many unusual and difficult tombstones to record. For example, one inscription can be seen implanted in one of the Cathedral walls some 20 to 30 feet up from the ground. A further problem is that there are quite a few extremely old tombstones and sarcophagi that have pre 16th century text on them carved in archaic script. This will mean that while some of these can clearly be seen, expert knowledge will be required not only to translate them, but more importantly in the first place to transcribe them accurately. This situation is made even more complex by the fact that one

of the staircases is made up of steps utilising recycled bits of old tombstones, some with very ancient script. Sounds fun! In fact the project has already started as Helen and I have visited the Cathedral to begin the photographic record. Much of the site will have to be photographed with good sunlight during morning sessions, but already we have made a good start, having made a trial run in the north-western section. It has been agreed that only members with experience will be allowed to take part in this project. Those who are new to the Group may therefore have to undergo some form of training prior to working at the Cathedral. If you do wish to take part, whatever your level of experience, please contact Helen for further details.

The existing site plan will be utilized during the research, and will be annotated and amended on site so that a new and more accurate plan can be constructed at the end of the project. The plan will be produced in five

sections, with a key, in order that it can be accommodated on A4 size paper for publication. Each stone will be photographed, the identification number of the stone to be indicated in chalk on a slate, which must appear in the photograph, placed adjacent to the stone. The CSA Gravestone Recording Forms Sheet 1 (Stone Details) will be completed to give an accurate state of preservation or decay of each tombstone at the date of recording, and to identify any damage. The style of, and materials used in each stone will also be recorded. This will be done separately from the MI recording. Stones will be identified by numbers as on the existing card indexes at Elgin Library and the Cathedral Office. The CSA Gravestone Recording Forms Sheet 2 (MI Recording) will be recorded either by individuals or by teams of two people, according to personal preference. Text may be written or printed, but must adhere to the layout on the tombstone. All names must be entered in capitals and the use of date superscripts or suffixes should be adhered to, as should punctuation. To avoid any possible errors the identification number for each stone will be marked in an unobtrusive position on the stone before recording commences, either in chalk or as a stick-on note. It must be removed on completion of the recording. All transcriptions will be checked against the photographs before publication. In accordance with the recommendations of HS all stones which are deemed by the research team to be of special significance, either because of their age, architectural importance or any other feature, will be the subject of a scale drawing. This will probably apply principally to pre-1700 tombstones. The staircase treads in one of the towers will also be drawn, as these steps are made up of sections of tombstones from the Cathedral Churchyard.

To ensure some continuity with those of our members who prefer researching 'buried stones', we intend to proceed with at least one other site, while the Elgin Cathedral project is ongoing. At present Rafford (old) is seen as a good contender for our attentions, particularly as we had previously intended to research it prior to doing Spynie. However, the Committee will keep you fully informed.

#### **Humour Corner** (from **Mary Macdonald** - Committee Member)

This couple called their boy 'Odd'. At school, although teased about his name, he stuck out his chest and refused to be bothered. When he grew up, people still made fun of his name, even after he became a successful lawyer. Finally, as an old man he wrote out his last wishes - I've been the butt of jokes all my life - I'll not have people making fun of me after I've gone - so he instructed that his tombstone should remain blank. After his death people noticed his blank headstone and said - "That's Odd". **Anon**

*Editor : Keith Mitchell*  
*September 2005.*

*(Modified for web usage - Webmaster)*