

**THE MORAY BURIAL GROUND
RESEARCH GROUP**

Newsletter

Fra Birt To Graif



Na Rest We Haif - 1571

Issue 6 - - - April 2006

(Currently published twice a year)

Dear Member or Supporter, much has happened since last reporting the Group's activities in the previous Issue. Most of the important detail about our work up till the end of February was published in the Annual Report so will not be repeated here. Our AGM held at Miltonduff Hall on March 12th was very successful with a good turnout, including several visitors and three new members. The highlight of the meeting must surely have been the installation of Betty Willsher, M.B.E. as our Hon. President who regaled everyone with a most interesting account of her experiences. During her stay in Elgin over the weekend, Betty received numerous requests to autograph her books, which was not surprising considering her boundless energy and enthusiasm!

Observant readers may note the slight modification to the logo heading of the Newsletter. The words above and below the logo were found on the tombstone of Alexander Anderson of 'Petinsair' dated to 1571, which the Group uncovered at Alves churchyard last year. In case anyone is not familiar with the old Scots wording, the English translation is "From Birth To Grave No Rest We Have." Personally I find it somewhat magical that a saying of such antiquity has been resurrected to find a place in the lives of people living in the 21st century.

And Now An Important Appeal (Part 1)

Fund Raising Organiser (ANY IDEAS WELCOME)

Last September I asked members to consider how we might increase our funding substantially by getting someone to act as a Fundraising Organiser. **UNFORTUNATELY THIS APPEAL BROUGHT A ZERO RESPONSE.**

Currently we more or less have all the main equipment require to operate our research in the field, as well as having enough in the bank to cover expenses for the immediate future. However, there are several items that could require considerable sums of money, if we wish to succeed with several ventures being considered.

If we intend to publish the results of all our hard work at Elgin Cathedral in a suitable format, the costs are liable to run into **several thousands of pounds**. A Lottery grant is being applied for at present. Although there is at least one other alternative, it would be a great pity if we found ourselves unable to publish under our own Group name.

Several people have expressed parallel thoughts about the possibility of the Group having access to some form of "**Ground Radar**" that would hopefully supersede our present labour intensive methodology, whereby we find "Buried Tombstones" manually by means of sticking a probe in the ground. Member, William Windwick, initiated some Internet research and has discovered that a starting price would be around **£10,000**.

While we are grateful to Bruce Bishop for his hard work in dealing with the "Awards For All" Lottery grant applications, it is abundantly clear that the Group desperately requires someone to act as a Group fundraiser. Those of us who might be able to embark on this sort of activity are quite unable to undertake any further Group responsibilities, so we need other volunteers to take on this extremely important task. Unless we get support in this area, it is unlikely that we will be unable to proceed with some of these aspirations.

Just Another Stone? (by Lindsay Robertson - Webmaster)



Photo: Keith Mitchell, 28th June 2005

SACRED
TO
THE MEMORY OF
CHILDREN OF
GEORGE HENDRY
WHO DIED AT **WOODPARK**
IN CHILDHOOD.
AND OF **ROBERT R. HENDRY** WHO DIED AT **ELGIN**
IN 1882
AGED 18 YEARS.
ALSO THE SAID **GEORGE HENDRY**
WHO DIED AT **ELGIN** IN 1898
AGED 66 YEARS.
AND OF **BARBARA REID** HIS WIFE
WHO DIED AT **ELGIN** IN 1912
AGED 83 YEARS.
REPLACED BY SURVIVING CHILDREN
1919.

As a member of the MBGRG living in Aberdeen, I have had the privilege of participating in fieldwork activities less often than I would wish. Nevertheless, working with such enthusiastic, dedicated and sensitive colleagues on visits I have attended, has made me view the recording of monumental inscriptions in a somewhat new light.

Most of us I am sure, have done similar research with regard to our own family history, and will remember setting off on that personal journey of exploration to some near or distant graveyard. Pen and paper protruding from the back pocket, camera over the shoulder, folded notes at the ready - that feeling of anticipation about discovering something new about our special ancestor - another stone - what new information will it yield?

But what of all those stones we record so dutifully and painstakingly as part of our Group activities? Not perhaps, our own immediate ancestors, and yet still a privilege to briefly share a little of an unknown family, so meaningful to others. Which Group member recorded the details of the above stone at Urquhart? Could he or she have been wet, cold and tired after a long day - was it a case of - 'just another stone to do, and then I can go home', or was there time to think and perhaps discuss the inscription with colleagues, as so often happens.

The fact that the stone was 'replaced by surviving children' would have been cause for thought. What happened to the original? Was it broken by natural or other causes in years gone by? Was it so worn that it was felt a new one should be erected, or did it not have sufficient space left on it for additional details? Was there specific information about the children on the original stone? A valuable lesson to us all here, with regard to the importance of our current work - record the information *now*, before it is lost forever.

The good folk remembered at Urquhart, are not blood relatives of mine, but a distant connection through marriage exists. Apart from that, there was something moving about the brevity of the inscription, which made me curious to find out a little more of this family. Where or what was Woodpark? What had happened there, that resulted in the deaths of those un-named children? Had some catastrophe occurred, resulting in multiple simultaneous deaths? I have researched a little, and the following account, is hopefully a fairly accurate one. It is dedicated to those young people, whose names are embedded in the stone, though not carved upon it.

Our story starts with the birth of George Hendry at Greens of Coxton in 1832. On December 8th 1853, the Banns having been read in the adjoining parishes of St. Andrews-Lhanbryde and Urquhart, he married Barbara Reid, from New Spynie.

George was aged 21, and possibly worked at the local corn mill at Longhill Burn, not far from Woodpark, at the edge of the Crooked Wood. Barbara was a year older. The birth of their first child, James is recorded in the old registers as the 'lawful child' to George Hendry in Longhill, and his wife Barbara, but the birth year cited as 1852 appears to be in error.

By 1855, George was an "Under Miller", and the couple's next child, Francis Hendry, was born on 8th May 1855, at Longhill Cottage. Sadly the child would not survive, and 15 months later he became seriously ill. He was seen by Maclean, an Elgin surgeon, but, having been ill for eight or nine days, he died on August 24th 1856, the cause being cited as Croup (a hoarse hacking cough associated with swelling of the larynx, trachea and bronchi in infants - now known to be usually caused by a para-influenza virus). The first of many sad journeys was made to Urquhart churchyard, where the young child was buried.

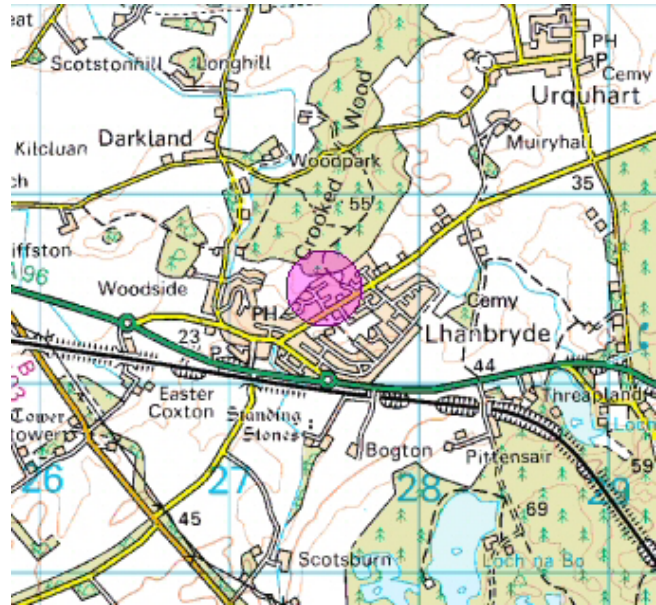


Image reproduced with kind permission of [Ordnance Survey](#) and [Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland](#)

In the spring of 1857, Barbara was again pregnant, and on August 31st gave birth to her first daughter, Jane. Over the next six years a further three sons augmented the family group, George being born on December 28th 1859, Francis Walker on May 28th 1861, and Robert Reid Hendry on Nov 1st 1863. Although the couple were married at 'Woodpark', later references are to 'Burnside of Woodpark', and the family were resident there at the time of the 1861 Census. The exact location of Burnside of Woodpark has not yet been identified, but it was one of two locations of that name, presumable not far from 'Woodpark', and close to the Lhanbryde Burn.

The family seemed to be thriving well, George working as Meal Miller/Dealer, and Barbara meeting the many demands made on her by husband and children. James the eldest boy was now 11, and would have been a scholar, or perhaps working and he would be able help look after his younger siblings, Jane aged 6, George 4, Francis 3, and baby Robert.

However, 1864 would test the resolve of not only the Hendry family, but many others also. An epidemic of diphtheria would rage through the parish, for several months, and many of the younger children would not survive. The local minister at Lhanbryde, the Rev John Walker, would be called upon many times to support and help local families, a task which must have severely tested his strengths, for he had lost his own five year old son Charles, to the disease in April of that year. Just a week after his own loss, he would have been called to the Hendy household no doubt, for on 26th April 1864, after two weeks of illness, George and Barbara's six year old daughter, Jane, died at Burnside of Woodpark.

The epidemic was not short lived, and towards the end of May, there was another very sick child at Woodpark. Three year old, Francis was ill for ten days, before he too, on June 1st, succumbed to the ravages of diphtheria. For the third time George trudged forlornly to register yet another death.

One can only imagine the thoughts and fears that went through the couple's minds - Robert was only 7 months old - would he be next? Robert however, survived the epidemic of 1864, and over the next few years, some sort of normality returned to Woodpark, two new children being born - William Sellar Hendry on 23rd Jan 1866, and John on 29th July 1868. But the cruel shadow of death had not left the family. Disaster struck again in 1869 - not diphtheria this time, but equally fatal to young children in those days, scarlet fever.

The horrors of 1864 were to return in a similar guise. At the end of April 1869 baby John, and 10 year old George both fell ill. Fever raged, and after only a few days, the baby died on 1st May. George, fought on, but three days later he too passed away. George registered John's death, but was perhaps too distraught to do so with regard to his older son George. He passed that task to his oldest son James, who registered his brother's death on 5th May 1869.

The following year the Hendry family was completed, with the arrival on 17th Oct 1870 of their ninth and final child, Barbara.

By 1881, George and Barbara had moved to Elgin, and were living at North College Street, with sons Robert and William, and daughter Barbara. Robert was working as a Press Reporter in the town, but he too would be cut down early in life. He died at North College Street in February 1882 from cancer at only 18 years of age. Some years later George gave up his job as Meal and Flour Miller, and became a toy merchant in Elgin. He died at Wiseman Lane, Elgin in January 1898, his widow Barbara, remaining at that address until her own death in 1912.

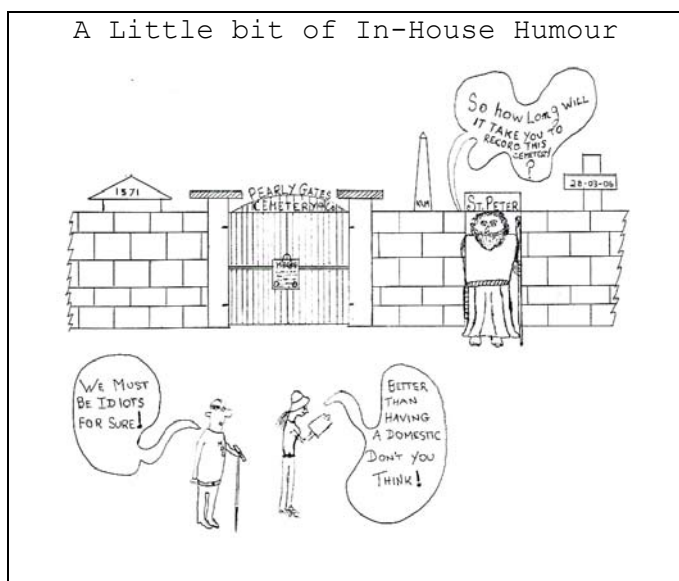
Of the nine children of George and Barbara, we have seen the sad deaths of six. What became of the others? James, their eldest son became a Minister, and reared his own family, teaching the word of God, at Rothes, in South Africa and finally in Forres. Barbara, the youngest surviving child became a teacher, was married by her elder brother James, at the Free Church Manse in Forres in 1895, and later moved to England. William is believed to have survived to manhood, though no record of his death has been identified.

And so we reach 1919, when the decision was made by the surviving children to replace the original stone. What prompted them to do that is unknown, and there is no evidence to suggest that the original stone survived. Sadly Lair Registers for Urquhart do not exist prior to 1926, and so our story remains incomplete. The remaining children chose a simple inscription in memory of their siblings, on the stone that survives today, hiding sad and painful memories, yet allowing us to reflect and appreciate the courage of those faced with such adversity.

The stone that prompted this investigation, will not survive - in time it will, like all things decay and perish. We can only hope that records taken now, will survive, and remain a lasting memorial to those gone before, and for the benefit of generations to come.

Particular thanks to Janette Knox (né Reid), a direct descendant of Barbara Reid, for bringing this family to my attention, and for sharing resources and for helpful discussion. Also to K and H Mitchell for access to unpublished data.

Ed. note: Lindsay's article necessitated a recheck of the transcription and the relevant photograph. As a result we discovered that the monumental mason's particulars had been missed out on the original M.I. recording as well as in the photographic double check. Just goes to show how easy it is to get things wrong, or miss important details. The mason we later found by a rather circuitous route was J.R. Henderson of Elgin.



From the Editor:-

As I did not have any entries for the "Humour" section from members this time round, me thoughts I would have a go myself. A Eureka type vision appeared to me of MBGRG members being faced with MI'ing and probing behind the Pearly Gates, so the adjoining cartoon was born. Apologies for the graphics for as you can see I am definitely not an artist!

If you have any funny entries for September's Issue you can send to me at any time.

Tombstone Photographic Project **Photographing Gravestones - (by Alasdair Gunn - Member)**

In the last issue, Keith touched on some of the ethical and privacy aspects of this part of our operations. Since I've been involved in actually photographing gravestones in Dipple and Bellie churchyards during the last year, I've learnt from my mistakes about the problems you can encounter, and for what it's worth here is a summary of some of the things I've had to allow for.

With all photography, GOOD LIGHT is important for clear pictures. However, good light does NOT necessarily mean bright sunshine, which can sometimes actually be more of a problem than anything else. For photographing gravestones, you get much better results on an overcast but bright day because there are fewer chances of SHADOWS or REFLECTIONS ruining the shots, something which can happen all too easily and which do not become obvious until you look at the shots on a computer screen. To avoid the REFLECTION problem, it is best to photograph the gravestone at an angle so that you are actually out of the direct line between light source and gravestone. This is particularly important when dealing with highly polished dark grey or black stones; you can very easily get a beautiful picture of yourself on the gravestone!! If you feel you must take the picture from straight in front of the stone, then try to use any slope in front of the stone to allow you to lie flat in front of it but below it.

As far as SHADOWS are concerned, these are most likely when the light is really bright, and even if you are working from off the direct line your shadow can still appear in the foreground. The best way to avoid this is to use the "zoom" feature of the camera, thereby removing any foreground from the photo.

Most gravestones will simply need a single photo to record the inscription, but you will occasionally come across "pillar," "column" or recumbent stones which need to be photographed in sections if the inscription is to be large enough to be legible. For this it's best to photograph the stone in sections so that the inscription is recorded large and clear – but make sure your shots of the inscription overlap to provide the complete story. For "flat" stones, again two or three overlapping shots will often be necessary to get the full story, but here try to take your shots from directly above the stone - but beware shadows. A set of kitchen type steps may help you to gain sufficient height to acquire the desired effect, but always be careful that they are safely founded.

In general, gravestones tend to face East or West, which can pose problems depending on the time of day. Obviously, as with any photography, you want the light coming from behind you for best results, which might mean that you have to take east-facing stones in the morning and west-facing ones in the afternoon, and south-facing ones around mid-day. For north-facing ones (when you will be facing south), your only hope for a clear photo is a fairly dull day when your camera's flash can improve the natural light, or else first thing in the morning or last thing in the afternoon.

Another problem you might encounter is that of bushes or other plants obscuring the gravestone. Obviously, you cannot uproot these, so you must find some way of holding back the foliage while you take your photo. I've found that a garden fork can be quite useful here as you can anchor the stems temporarily off the face of the stone while you take your shot, and when you remove the fork the stems spring back, and after a couple of days no-one would know what had happened. Just watch you don't photograph the fork!

The legibility of text on some types of tombstone is a perennial headache, though the camera seems to have the power to improve the situation to a certain extent. However, you CAN do something yourself to enhance legibility WITHOUT DOING ANY HARM TO EITHER THE STONE OR THE INSCRIPTION, something which Mother Nature will quickly wash away. A little moist earth (from around the base of the stone!) brushed lightly onto the lettering will greatly improve the clarity of the inscription, especially on old Sandstone stones, white marble stones, and even some of the grey granite ones, and can often make the difference between success and failure. On darker stones, a little domestic plain flour brushed on can bring up the letters if there is a problem. However, it is important to stress that this should be completely washed off to avoid the possibility of any fungal growth subsequently occurring. Also this process should not be attempted if there are any bits of the stonework flaking off.

I hope these observations will be helpful. HAPPY SNAPPING from Alasdair Gunn.

Buried Tombstone Methodology Publication

At long last! After quite a few setbacks and more than a little burning of the 'Midnight Oils,' the Group's efforts to produce a complete and professionally sanctioned publication on the Methodology that we have spent so much time slaving over, is finally in print.

Entitled "Recording Buried Tombstones" by Keith L. Mitchell, M. Helen Mitchell and Bruce B. Bishop, this A4 sized booklet is published jointly by the Moray Burial Ground Research Group and the Council for Scottish Archaeology, supported by the Carved Stones Adviser Project.

For the benefit of all members it is perhaps worth pointing out that suitable acknowledgement has been made of the valuable time given by the Committee and Members of the Group, as well as a wealth of suggestions and ideas that have helped to make the methodology a success. Dr Susan Buckham in her Foreward has indicated her view that the "booklet is an excellent example of the benefits of collaboration between community groups involved with local heritage and conservation professionals."

Copies are free, so if you are interested in obtaining one, please send a suitably stamped and addressed A4 envelope to the address at the bottom of this Newsletter. U.K. postage rates are 68p 1st class or 50p for 2nd.

And Now An Important Appeal (Part 2)

Recycling Print Cartridges & Postage Stamp Kiloware & Other Collectables

Since last year several members have been stalwartly donating their used printer cartridges for the Group's benefit. Although we have been reimbursed by the Internet company we were dealing with, it has to be said that their methods of dealing with the public appear to be less than satisfactory. The search is on for a much more reliable company, who will pay their dues efficiently and promptly according to proper business practice. Any ideas are welcome.

Our collection of postage stamps is slowly growing, but it will take considerably more before it will be worth while sending to auction. While in Edinburgh a few weeks ago, I popped in to the stamp shop I deal with and was offered some extremely good advice about ways of sorting stamps, and prices that can be raised, so that was really a very useful visit, in more ways than one as Helen is liable to observe. Shops like this tend to be something of an attraction to people like me!

Saving up stamps like this is really quite easy. Even if you don't want to take the time tearing off stamps from their envelopes, just give us the envelopes, so long as you do not mind personal information being on them. We will do the rest. Other items we are happy to accept are older postage or other stamps already off paper, first day covers, postcards, old documents and other ephemeral material such as old receipts, etc. Pre decimal or older coins are also welcome even if they are well worn such as pre 1947 silver coins. If some of these latter items are handed in, it may be that there could be an instant market for them if an agreement can be reached with the Committee. Already two members have handed in material of this nature and their donations are most welcome.

News from Down Under (April 2006 - by Marilyn Duff - Associate Member)

Greetings, to all from a very dry Melbourne. It has been a long hot / dry summer so I haven't been able to get out to continue my pursuit of photography of old graves. Our forgotten cemeteries are not well maintained and there is always the risk of the little extras to be found, snakes! Another problem that you probably do not encounter are our bright days, brilliant blue skies, no clouds and the temperature in the high 30's. This can make reading and photographing MI's a real challenge. Now the weather has cooled we, (yes we, I have a couple of bemused helpers now) are able to get out to search again.

I have found a large Egyptian like temple at Boroondara cemetery in the suburb of Kew - Boroondara means a place of shade - that commemorates David Syme. I knew he had connections with a newspaper, what I did not know was that he was a Scotsman. A CD with photos of this grave will be forwarded to Keith. More research for the next newsletter.



At the same cemetery I noticed a building housing a sculpture that appeared to have red lights on it. I am getting used to the bizarre modern graves but this had me puzzled, so I went to have a closer look, well I was overawed. I had found the celebrated Springthorpe Memorial but I didn't know this at the time. The tomb has no names on it and I had to phone the cemetery the next day to get information.

The history of the tomb is that Dr John Springthorpe built this beautiful monument to his late young wife who had died after giving birth to their fourth child in 1897. It is interesting to note that Annie Springthorpe nee Inglis was born on the 26th January 1897 - Australia Day. The tomb looks like a Greek Temple with dark green granite columns that support a spectacular red / rose glass domed roof. The design was by a Melbourne architect Harold Desbrowe Annear. Within this temple is a sculpture of white marble made by Bertram Mackennal. It depicts an angel placing a wreath (now missing) on the head of the deceased Annie and a grieving woman with a lyre kneels beside the bier. The sculpture is life size.



The floor tiles are hand painted with poems in English from Elizabeth and Robert Browning, Rosetti and Tennyson. On other flat surfaces there are verses from the bible in ancient Greek and Latin. The serpent gargoyles and railings are bronze.

The initial cost of the tomb had been £2,250 pounds, but eventually grew to £10,000. Dr Springthorpe in 1889 requested a site of 80 square feet from the trustees of the cemetery at Boroondara. It would seem he was granted his request because history tells us he re-interred Annie in 1899 and the sculpture was finally completed in 1901.

Words cannot do justice to this fabulous tomb, but there are some photos that add to the story. I have photographed the tomb from just about every angle and dealt with bright sunny conditions and rain all on the same afternoon. That's Melbourne for you.

Ed. note: Thanks Marilyn for the information about this amazing tomb - sad to say we don't suffer from your terrible weather conditions - and glad to hear the Melbourne branch of MBGRG is going from strength to strength!

Ongoing and Future Research

It is certainly true to say that we have more than enough work at present to keep us fully occupied for the coming year. Elgin Cathedral is progressing quite well, but there is still a great deal to do. Although we have been making considerable progress with the normal upright and table tombstones, there are a very large number of flat ones just waiting for the "scrubber" brigade so ably led by Janet. While in Edinburgh, Helen

and I visited the Library of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and the Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland. At both places we found very useful old M.I.'s, as well as a variety of useful illustrations, including photographs dating back to the 1850's. Taking everything into account, it looks certain that our task of completing Elgin Cathedral will take at least till the end of the year, and maybe even longer, depending on the support we get from the weather as from our members.

In anticipation of beginning our research into the Buried Tombstones at Birnie Churchyard, our training days at Rafford have begun, although rather hesitatingly, particularly in respect of the weather, which so far has been extremely unhelpful to us. However, we have to date managed to complete upwards of some 40% of the ground area, so we are well on the way to completing it. A couple of weeks ago several of the team effected some rescue M.I.'s. within the Dunbar enclosure, as the tombstones here are in a very sad state of repair. One tablet, which originally had been mounted into the east wall of the enclosure, we found lying on the ground shattered into numerous pieces, as well as having several fragments missing. We moved these into better light, cleaned, transcribed and photographed these as best we could, then replaced them as near to their original position and covered them with turf for some additional protection. We did our best!

On the week-end of 13th-14th May, we plan to begin our survey of the Buried Tombstones at Birnie Churchyard, weather permitting of course. As this is a project that our Group has been working so hard to realise as a goal worth achieving, it is hoped that this event will see the beginning, and continuation of, a very interesting and successful programme of research that we know will be of interest to more than a few people outwith our Group.

It goes without saying that all the work at Birnie will be conducted "as per the book" as per normal. That being the case, I will remind attending members to ensure that they are completely up to date with Tetanus jags, etc. It is at present uncertain if there will be any visiting Inspectors from Historic Scotland; however, it is possible that they may visit the site at any time.

Last week Helen and I held a meeting with David Addison, Curator of Elgin Museum and Sheila McColl, Archaeological Contact for the museum. This meeting was initially to discuss the appropriate manner in which our Buried Tombstone "Finds" could and should be dealt with. The current view is that the Museum cannot take un-cleaned or un-conserved material such as ours. However, a hope was expressed that the Museum could possible work in tandem with us on various aspects relating to find spots, with particular reference to Birnie. Some discussion took place with regard to a greater use of our metal detector, again with specific reference to Birnie, as well as paying more attention to sorting, or sieving through the loose soil produced by our activities.

And Now A Word From Our Controller - (by Helen Mitchell - Fieldwork Co-ordinator)

Since the last newsletter we have conducted 32 visits to sites. Some of these have been for photography only, essential for checking inscriptions. If it is a clear day then it is 'down tools' in the house and off to the cemetery concerned. Over the winter this season we have not achieved so much work as usual due to the very cold and wet weather. We have had to curtail the Cathedral M.I. outings due to cold and lighting conditions. Some of the tombstones there are badly eroded and take quite some time to decipher. Once the weather improves (hopefully) we will have to have a concerted effort to catch up. The Historic Scotland yard proved worthwhile, as we discovered tombstones which were missing from the Cathedral. Also the preservation cum storage unit was very interesting and Bruce and I drew seven tombstones held there.

As many of you know we start at Birnie next month and training is going on at Rafford. So far we have had to curtail our days there due to snow and hail with the occasional blink of sunshine. We have a busy time ahead of us with Birnie, Rafford, Cathedral, Tombae and Boharm all on going. The latter two should only take one day each, providing the sun shines, in particular for photography at Tombae as the M.I.'s are already partly done. For members who have not been in contact with me for some time and wish to become involved again please phone.

Editor : Keith Mitchell, Elgin.