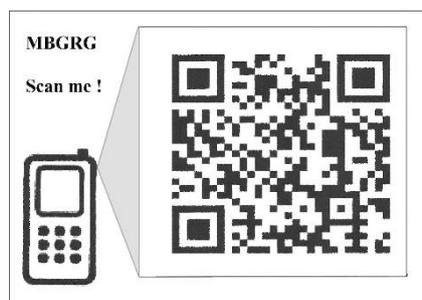


THE MORAY BURIAL GROUND RESEARCH GROUP



ANNUAL REPORT

2017 – 2018



www.mbgrg.org

The Committee of 2017-2018

Hon. President	Charles J. Burnett, Esq. KStJ, Ross Herald Extraordinary
Chairman	Keith L Mitchell, FSA Scot
Secretary	Ruth McIntosh
Treasurer	Irene Black
Field Co-ordinator	Helen Mitchell, FSA Scot
Ordinary Member	Mary Evans
Ordinary Member	Stephen Leitch
Minute Secretary	Ruth McIntosh

Appointments held during 2017-2018

Auditor	William Windwick
Historical Research Co-ordinator	Bruce B Bishop, FSA Scot
Facebook Manager	Stephen Leitch
Publicity Manager	Ruth McIntosh
Webmaster	Lindsay Robertson, FSA Scot
Newsletter Editor	Derek Page
SAFHS Representative	Karen McGregor



Photograph 1: The Oliphant Coat of Arms, Keith (KM)



Message from the Honorary President

This has been a slightly odd year for the Group - diminishing membership, poor weather, and the upheaval of moving house and library for Keith & Helen.

As a result publication is behind, but the labours at Cullen Kirk and district have proved rewarding with much heraldic material being discovered and recorded, much to the Honorary President's delight!

Keith & Helen report elsewhere on their respective responsibilities. Aileen and I have visited their new home in Livingstone which is slowly being adapted to their needs and taste, and very comfortable it is too, with a larger library and office which allows them to work at a common desk like Queen Victoria and Albert!

Aileen has now been given the all clear by her doctor and surgeon, so we are hoping to be present at the AGM this year. I also hope new members can be attracted, there is still research to be done in Moray, and I can but send my best wishes for good weather and fruitful labours in the field. Any weather will be better than we have experienced at the beginning of March!

Charles J Burnett

Charles J Burnett Esq. KStJ, DA, MLitt, FHSS, FSAScot



Photograph 2: Burghead Old Cemetery (SL)

Chairman's Report

Well it's a wee bit difficult to know quite where to start with this year's Report. It would be really great were I able to present an upbeat and positive account of this year's activities and achievements, but sadly in many ways the other side of the coin seems to have the upper hand to some extent. For those of you acquainted with unusual aphorisms, the pseudo Latin example that makes use of the word "carborundum" seems on the face of it to be a factual truism to a degree as far as MBGRG is concerned.

Having now spent a year, more or less, down in the central belt, our lives are now just beginning to return to some form or normality, but the shock waves of our move still reverberate around our lives on a daily basis. And then our wee grand-daughter Islay's illness continues to play a big part in our daily lives. We are pleased to report that she is making good progress, but it is still very much, 'one day at a time,' even though she is a feisty wee lass. However, from a family point of view we are really glad to have made the move here from Elgin. Goodness knows how we would have coped were we still living up in Moray permanently.

On the recording front we have both a positive and a negative side to talk about. Our work at Elgin North public cemetery progresses well, but there is still much to be done, as it such a large burial ground. The Index of memorials is more or less complete and at the moment stands at some 3,200 entries plus, so that's ranks as the largest we have completed to date. Much of the actual MI recording is being typed up initially from photographs, with on the ground checks as required. As previously reported, last year we fairly struggled to get any form of consistent sunshine compatible with making good quality photographs for our archive. So we are well behind in our target. Whether the coming year will be any better is anyone's guess, but of course it may equally be worse. Now there's a cheery thought!

To complement the recoding work done at Keith old cemetery the previous year, an attempt was made to finish off the photographs. With the result of getting one afternoon of decent sunshine we managed to get quite a large number done, but we still need a similar morning's lack of cloud cover to finish off the rest.

A lot of effort was put into recording MIs at Broomhill public cemetery on the outskirts of Keith which contains a large number of tombstones, many of which are modern. Again the weather was very much against us, however, thanks to the endurance and perseverance of our extremely hardy volunteers, it is one success story worth highlighting in that the actual MI recording is more or less finished. This is due in no small measure to the determination of our younger members, Reg & Bev, along with Dave and Paul. Between them they managed to record almost all the modern sections, which is no small feat, bearing in mind the numbers involved. However, again we ended up at the end of the year being well behind with photographs.

One extra item we recorded in the Keith area was the imposing War Memorial in the centre of the little village of Newmill. It makes quite a substantial footprint on the ground and in height considering how small the village appears to be. Another project we continued from the previous year was at the small churchyard of St Laurence in Forres. More cleaning work was undertaken along with photographs, although as previously reported, the quality of photographs is in the main sub-standard due to the majority of tombstones being in the shade of the large church beside it. Curiously the remaining stones at the west end require a cloudy or overcast backdrop to avoid creating photographs containing a horrendous contrast between light and shade in the same image if there is any sunlight about.

Years ago members recorded the old burial ground in Burghead which is very small. This was when our research work was published as part of Aberdeen & North East Scotland Family History Society's MI publication series. Thanks to the efforts of quite a large number of our group, we managed to record both the old and new sections of the more modern Burghead cemetery. Unfortunately from the recording point of view this is the habitat of a colony of seagulls that uses the area as a hatchery. Many of the memorials are badly encrusted with guano, which made recording inscriptions quite difficult. Some had to be thoroughly and carefully washed, which was quite a task. Also it should be observed that those taking part had to take extra care due to dive-bombing attacks. Medals were perhaps in order for those that fell foul of these near misses!

And then of course there is Cullen & Deskford and the publication we have been working so hard to get finished and onto bookshelves and computer files. This should have been published last year at the latest for sure, but all sorts of problems have kept on arising ensuring that it wasn't. Although the book will include four burial grounds, two War Memorials, and several other items of interest such as the Coats of Arms at the Castle Hill, along with the inscriptions on some 16 public benches in Cullen, one of the main complications has centred round the Auld Kirk. However, I am glad to say that at long last most of these have now been resolved. That said, due to further specialized research still ongoing into three of the kirk's important memorials, it may be that a second publication will be necessary.

One of the major areas of ever continuing concern is over the need for MBGRG to rejuvenate itself, particularly in terms of practising volunteers, including not only the fundamentals of outside recording work, but also in an organising and backroom capacity. Getting younger people to become involved in a project such as ours is a familiar complaint nowadays, and many groups up and down the country face extinction, or severely increased curtailment if this situation is not resolved soon. Please help to ensure this does not happen to MBGRG as there is still a great deal to be done before we can say we have fulfilled our overall remit of recording all the memorials in Moray.

Keith Mitchell (Chairman)

Secretary's Report - Publicity Report

As well as being Secretary tasking minutes and organising publicity I also attend the group when they are recording in the field. My special interest is Military Personnel in all conflicts. Last year proved to be very interesting for me when we started to record at Broomhill Cemetery near Keith. In the old part of the cemetery I came across three beautiful crosses engraved with regimental badges and medals. The crosses commemorate a family who had sons killed in both the First and Second World Wars. I have never come across stones like this with the Regimental Badges and Medals of war carved on them.

I am at present researching this family and will use this information to publicise the publication of Broomhill.

When we start to record in a new cemetery you never know what you will find. In the case of Edinkillie another very interesting stone came to light. On a large stone is commemorated Kopuri Tom a native of the Island of Rotumah in the South Pacific Ocean, who died at Relugas House in 1877. He was the servant of C.F. Wood an Author and traveller.

Research ongoing, watch this space.

Ruth McIntosh (Secretary)

Treasurer's Report

At the end of December we had a total membership of 35 (43) plus 1 Corporate Group. This generated an income of £381 (£485) in subscriptions. The figures in brackets denotes the previous year.

Our publishing costs for the year came to £82 (£590). This was for reprints of Aberlour, Dyke and Kirkmichael & Tomintoul MIs. Our total income to the end of December from the sale of the publications came to £258 (£1,203) and we had stock in hand to the value of £1,448 (£1,504). We also made £364 (£510) from the sale of PDF files.

Other income came from the sale of Transcripts & Photos £81 (£54); Donations £78 (£159) and Bank Interest £1 (£2).

The above income includes subscriptions, publications, PDF files, transcription & photo sales and donations through PayPal to the value of £527 (£495).

Other expenditure during the year included Website expenses of £251 (£196); Insurance £178 (£178); Printing, Stationery, Travel, Telephone, Postage, and

Photocopying £634 (£648); Subscriptions £120 (£90); AGM expenses £65 (£77); PayPal charges £30 (£28); Sundries £109 (£38) and Equipment £238 (0).

At 31 December 2017 our total funds in the bank amounted to £2951 (£3655).

Irene Black (Treasurer)

Fieldwork Co-ordinator's Report

On a number of occasions this past season we have had a good compliment of members, considering our recording membership is decreasing and one or two outings were postponed or curtailed due to weather conditions and lack of support. Although the weather has not been in our favour, we have still managed to complete recording at Burghead public cemetery, with some 800 stones, and also rechecking the Aberdeen & North East Family Society (ANEFHS) monumental inscriptions for Burghead Old in Grant Street.

Broomhill in Keith with approximately 2000 stones has now been completed. Lhanbryde public cemetery (ANEFHS) has been rechecked with a number of new memorials added. Although Keith Churchyard and Extension recording was completed the year before there was an area of buried tombstones still to do. This was due to moles causing disruption and we could not probe the area. This past year we completed the task.

Now all we need is sunny weather to complete photography and check the inscriptions in preparation for the publication of Mortlach, Grange, Rothiemay, Edinkillie, Cabrach, Elgin North, Burghead, Broomhill and St Laurence.

This season we will be concentrating on Buckie Cemetery where in the 1970s, when it was last recorded, there were 1673 headstones. From experience there will be well in excess of this to record now. Please ask your friends to join us in doing a worthwhile or "monumental" task.

Also many thanks to Ruth for organising outings when I was not available due to family illness and our distance from the area.

Helen Mitchell (Fieldwork Co-ordinator)

Webmaster's Report (The MBGRG Website)

Items added to the website include the Annual Report for 2016/17, and Newsletter Issues 25 and 26 (Sept. 2016 - Dec. 2017), with minor updates being made to the Ancestor Indexes and News items. The Ancestor Indexes, have been augmented with the addition of abstracted data from the MI Booklets for Elgin Cemetery (South), Kirkmichael Churchyard and St. Michael's and the Parish Churchyards at Tomintoul which has raised the number of individuals listed in the MBGRG on-line database to some 78,500. The vast bulk of the abstracted data pertaining to the pending Cullen and Deskford MI Publication is now in our Access database, and various draft 'Names Indexes' have been prepared.

Some sales of transcripts and related tombstone photographs have been made, but most sales were of our MI Booklets in digital PDF format. The two remaining to be completed last year, Bellie and Elgin Cathedral are now available, making all 35 MI Publications available in this popular format.

To date, 174 copies of such PDF format files have been sold through the website 'Quotation Request' facility.

Total income generated since website sales were instigated in April 2010, has now reached some £2,850 although this figure does include some Membership Fees, and donations.

Lindsay Robertson (Webmaster)



Photograph 3: In the shade at St. Lawrence, Claudia Frew and Lindsay Robertson (KM)

The Scottish Association of Family History Societies

It seems incredible that a year has passed since my last update to you on the Scottish Association of Family History Societies Meetings.

The SAFHS Council Meeting on the 7th October 2017 was held at the Kelvin Hall in Glasgow. This was a change of venue from Edinburgh where the Council meetings have been held in the past. Whether the change of venue had any bearing on this Council meeting or not, but there were apologies from 13 Council Members and after recent discussion at the last SAFHS Council meeting (held on 10th March 2017 in Edinburgh) it was decided that in the interim, the meetings would continue to take place in Edinburgh.

As mentioned in last year's report, representatives have to travel long distances to attend the SAFHS meetings. For some, it is more difficult to attend the meetings due to the long distance in travelling from the far North of Scotland and at times, travelling costs can be inhibitive including accommodation. Some member Societies, combine the trip with research and other business.

Membership

Since my last report from last year, there has been a further loss of two member societies - Dumfries and Galloway and Moray and Nairn. The latter was due to falling membership within the society.

Membership to December 2017 amounted to 31 member societies and 10 associate member societies.

I feel that the recruitment of falling membership in the respective member societies has to be seriously addressed in order to encourage younger members to join and engage in promoting the good work that has been carried out by existing members, in order to carry forward the respective societies into the future, with perhaps new ideas and developing a different format as to how societies are currently run at present.

Perhaps more integration is required with similar societies from abroad with encouragement / incentives for visitations to each other's countries for exchange of information which could be linked to tourism travel, involving ancestral / genealogical research. Perhaps, young people working in those industries would then show an interest in joining member Societies which would enhance their knowledge and subsequent careers.

Could some form of link / cohesion be established with Visit Scotland or groups who promote heritage/ genealogy /research tour's, or indeed make contact with the history department of local secondary schools to give talks or encourage the pupils to partake in genealogical research as part of the history curriculum or indeed, an approach made to Colleges which have tourism on their curriculum. Colleges are

always looking for outlets where students can be placed to learn more on the subject that they are studying.

One of the SAFHS committee members, recently attended a genealogical family roots convention in Salt Lake City, America which was attended by over 12,000 people – young and old. He stated that he had been approached by a great deal of people attending the convention as regards researching their Scottish / British ancestral roots.

Could there not be some contact / liaison made with those running that particular convention as to identify how they “recruit” younger members to the American family societies that are spread throughout the country and also Canada?

The Membership handbook has been finalised as is now available to be viewed or downloaded.

SAFHS Conference

The last SAFHS Conference in 2017 was hosted by ASGRA in Kinghorn, Fife and was a great success with a small profit being made from the Conference.

The 2018 Conference is to be held at The Rothes Hall, Kingdon Shopping Centre in Glenrothes, Fife on the 21st April 2018 between 10.00am and 16.30 pm.

There are 48 Exhibitors at the Conference with more in the pipeline. The theme of the Conference is on Convicts with talks on “The Making of the Fife Kalendar of Convicts 1790 - 1880” (Note – Kalendar has not been mis-spelt for this particular talk.) There will also be the launch of a CD /with digital download that has 3000 pages, giving details of prisoners and convicts.

This will be followed by talks on “Finding your Ancestors Footprints”, “The Banishment and Transportation of Convictions” and “The Strange Tale of Charles Durie’s Trousers” which involves links with Dunfermline, Norway, a jail in Jersey, Queen Victoria, New Zealand and Texas.

The 2019 Conference will be held on the 26th and 27th April 2019 at the Pulteney Centre in Wick. Details are still being finalised for this conference but it is hoped that there will be three speakers for this conference. SAFHS has agreed to give any member society wishing to attend this conference £100 to assist with expenses. Accommodation costs are also being looked with discussion with local hoteliers.

SAFHS Financial Statement

A decrease in Society membership for 2018 means that some cost – cutting will be required, and areas where savings can be made are the cost of Meeting Rooms Hire and SAFHS Bulletin printing. This will be monitored and addressed if required. However, the Treasurer is happy with the current state of the accounts which are stable.

Public Liability Insurance has been renewed for 2018 giving cover for every society member and SAFHS itself and the website cost has also been renewed.

A one of payment was made to Warners magazine to give SAFHS members a listing in the family history handbook which is produced for free with the December issue of Family Tree Magazine.

Bank opening Balance on 1st January 2017 amounted to £4912.98

Bank closing Balance on 31st December 2017 amounted to £5551.86.

Statement of Assets for year ending 31st December 2017 amounted to £5762.

SAFHS Bulletin

The SAFHS Bulletin continues twice yearly and there are plans by the Editor - Ian Leith to enhance the format of the bulletins for the future.

Hobbycraft and Stitchcraft Exhibitions, SECC.

Attendance at these shows is still ongoing. There are plans for a second show in Scotland and notification of this will be given out in due course.

Forces Network Website

The above website is fairly new but discussion with member societies suggests that it is not a good website with room for improvement. Difficulties have been encountered by society members accessing the site. Suggestion that Find my Past is a far better website.

Karen McGregor (MBGRG Representative)



Photograph 4: Broomhill Garden of Rest, Keith (KM)

An Interesting Old Photograph - Thomas Goodwillie

Lindsay Robertson

I recently received a request for a transcription and photograph of stone 190 from Dallas Churchyard, from Michelle Gibbon, one of our Australian customers. The inscription reads as follows.

Erected 1868 by ALEXANDER DEAN, Builder in Sydney, New South Wales. In memory of his father JAMES DEAN at one time parochial Schoolmaster, of this parish and afterwards of Rothes, at the Schoolhouse of which place he died 23^D March 1832. His remains lie here interred, as do those of his spouse CHRISTINA SMITH, who died at Bishopmill, Elgin, 1ST September 1842. Blessed are those that die in the Lord.

South face.

Also in memory of their sons, WILLIAM, who was born in the School-house of this parish on the 5TH January 1816 & who died in Berbice, in the year 1846. And JAMES born at the School-house Rothes on the 27TH April 1832, also died in Berbice in the year 1852.

West face.

Also in memory of their eldest daughter ELIZA born 1816, died April 20TH 1892 & who was interred here.

North face.

Also in memory of their daughters, ISABELLA the beloved wife of ROBERT MORRISON, Pinefield, Elgin, at which place she died on the 26TH January 1867, aged 41 years, & whose remains are interred within the New Cemetery, Elgin. And also CHRISTINA who died at Elgin on the 6TH July 1867, aged 44, & who was interred here.

(Mason, T. Goodwillie, Elgin).



Photograph 5: 2007 MBGRG Photo (LR)



Photograph 6: 1868 Photo (LR)

Michelle replied with: 'I thought you may like a copy of a photo kept by Helen Dean, daughter of James and Christina and sister of Alexander Dean. (Taken 1868) I'm happy for you to share it'.

Comparing the old photo with the more recent one taken by MBGRG in the Churchyard in 2007, it was to my mind, difficult to match the two locations.

My main points of concern were:

- 1) The wall directly behind stone (A) does not appear on the B photo - was it built after the stone was erected in 1868?
- 2) Was the stone rotated at some time, or even moved?
- 3) What originally I assumed was part of the old church roof to the right on photo B does not seem quite right.
- 4) The two stones to the left and right of 190 in B, do not match exactly with the two stones adjacent, at the present time.
- 5) Unless we are looking at the back of these two stones, they do not appear to have any inscription on them in photo B.

I discussed these apparent discrepancies with Keith and Helen, and to be honest we were all at a bit of a loss to explain them satisfactorily. However, refusing to let the matter lie, I later tried to enhance the old photo, and discover that our old friend, Goodwillie had left a clue!



Photograph 7: Detail of 1868 Photo (LR)

This local sculptor (and his son of the same name) did a lot of memorials throughout Moray, but it seemed out of character that he would be advertising so blatantly in a churchyard.

In further discussion with Keith/Helen, we suggest that the photo is indeed of the same stone, but the old photo was taken, not at Dallas, but in Goodwillie's yard in Elgin, prior to being dispatched to the Churchyard. Michelle said that the photo had been kept by Helen Dean, but did not imply she had taken it. Possible Goodwillie employed a photographer to submit such photos to clients to make sure they were happy with the work prior to transportation and erection in the churchyard. If this is the case, it would mean that the stones in the old photo were in a similar stage of completion – the two 'blank' stones either being viewed from the back, or not yet inscribed.



Photograph 8: Detail of Isabella Brown stone at Burghead (KM)



Photograph 9: Cleaning to be done at Burghead! (KM)