



The Moray Burial Ground Research Group Newsletter

**Aberlour's link to the Scott
Expedition**

Knockando Book Released!

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Editors Note

Welcome to the latest edition of the newsletter, and a fresh new look which I hope you like. We start this time with unfortunately sad news at the loss of our colleague and friend Bill who has been a stalwart member over the years on site. A full obituary will be posted later in the issue. We have some interesting articles for you from an unusual link with the town of Aberlour and the fated mission of Scott of the Antarctic to a range of well preserved medieval stones in Argyll. We also have great news in that the Knockando book has been published and is available to buy now.

Enjoy the issue, and feel free to contact me with any questions, comments or articles for future editions. Thank you.



Derek C Page

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Front Cover:

St. Peter's Kirkyard, Duffus © Derek C Page 2012

11. Book Release. *The new Knockando book now available.*



Recording Days –

by Keith Mitchell (Chairman)

During our recording sessions so far this year, we have not managed to achieve as much as might be expected due to bad weather and reduced numbers being available. To try and maximize the time available, so that we have as many chances as possible to chase the sunshine, as well as suiting as many members as possible, we have decided wherever possible to extend recording sessions more or less to any day of the week. This may of course not suit everyone, but we must make an effort to avoid cancellations wherever possible. It will be very helpful to our recording efforts if you can support this change wherever possible.

OBITUARY - William (Bill) Riddell

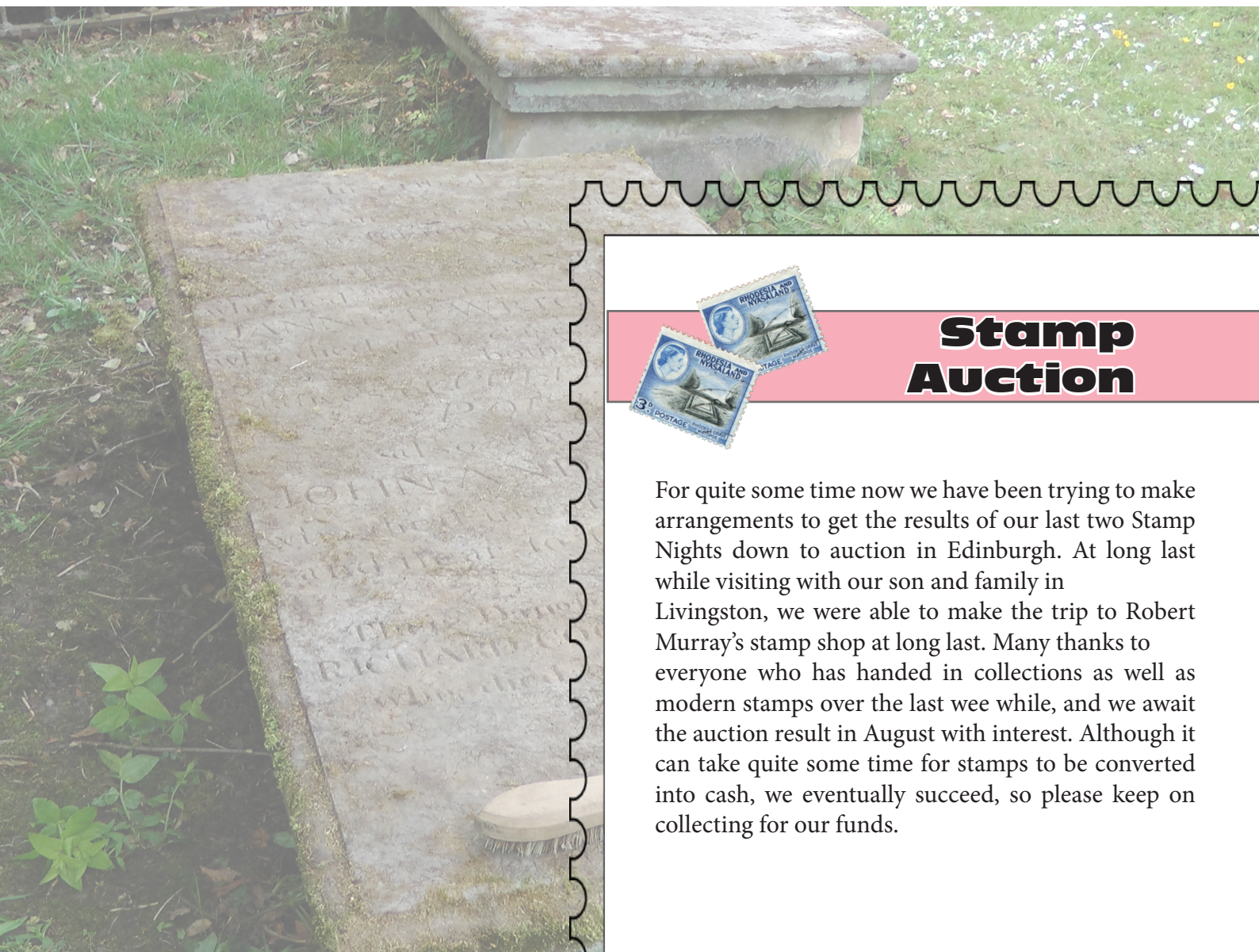
On 16th April, our stalwart member Bill Riddell passed away at Dr Gray's Hospital in Elgin. Bill was a very active member of MBGRG and his regular presence at group activities will indeed be greatly missed.

Bill joined MBGRG in 2008, and at that time he also took a very keen interest in bowling. This was another of Bill's hobbies, but as time went on, his work in cleaning tombstones in particular seems to have taken up more of his time. As time passed, Bill took on the role of tomb cleaner 'par excellence,' and he took a great pride in seeing that as far as possible tombstones were presented to best advantage in readiness to be photographed. He also enjoyed taking part in the exciting task of helping to uncover

buried tombstones, of which Bill helped to do a considerable number. Another of Bill's interests was family and social history, and it was a pleasure that he was able to share a common link with at least one other member.

Bill was indeed one of life's gentlemen, and another of his many attributes was his willingness to take part in any task asked of him. MBGRG expresses its deepest sympathy to his children Dawn and Scott, grandchildren, Kirsty, Callum, Douglas and Skye, and to his partner Madeline.

Keith Mitchell, Chairman



Stamp Auction

For quite some time now we have been trying to make arrangements to get the results of our last two Stamp Nights down to auction in Edinburgh. At long last while visiting with our son and family in Livingston, we were able to make the trip to Robert Murray's stamp shop at long last. Many thanks to everyone who has handed in collections as well as modern stamps over the last wee while, and we await the auction result in August with interest. Although it can take quite some time for stamps to be converted into cash, we eventually succeed, so please keep on collecting for our funds.

Centenary of Robert Falcon Scott's Antarctic Expedition (Terra Nova) 1910-1913

by Lindsay Robertson

Robert Falcon Scott (1868-1912) a Royal Navy officer and explorer, led two major expeditions to the Antarctic – the British National Antarctic Expedition, later known as the Discovery expedition of 1901-1904, and the ill-fated Terra Nova expedition of 1910-1913. During this second expedition, Scott led a party of five men in an attempt to be the first to reach the South Pole, which they did on 17th January 1912, only to find that the Norwegian expedition led by Roald Amundsen had preceded him five weeks earlier. Scott's anguish is paraphrased here from his diary, with the remarks: "The worst has happened" - "All the day dreams must go" - "Great God! This is an awful place."

On the return journey, of some 800 miles, Scott and his four companions (Wilson, Bowers, Oates and Evans) experienced horrendous conditions – frostbite, snow blindness, hunger and exhaustion. The fate of Oates is well known – suffering with severe frostbite, and believing he was a burden to his companions, he voluntarily left the tent and walked to his death.



Scott wrote in his diary that Oates' last words were "I am just going outside and may be some time." Scott and his three companions did not survive either, their bodies being found some eight months later, in their tent, only some nine miles from a pre-arranged supply depot. Following the news of his death, Scott became an iconic British hero, a status maintained for more than 50 years and reflected by the many permanent memorials erected to him.

You may wonder why I have chosen to comment on this in an MBGRG Newsletter, but there is a link, between the above, and our work at Aberlour Churchyard, due to be published in this tenth anniversary year of the instigation of our Group.

Able seaman, William McDonald, was born in Liverpool in 1892. He later went to New Zealand with the specific desire of becoming a crew member on the Terra Nova, in which he was successful, sailing two round trip supply voyages to Antarctica. Following the return of the Terra Nova to Oamaru, in February 1913, William decided to settle in New Zealand, where he later married and raised a family, naming his first son Robert Falcon Scott McDonald. During the 1962-63 Antarctic season, William visited the continent again, with two others of Scott's veterans, as guests of the US Navy, and had the honour of having Mount McDonald, on the north side of Trafalgar Glacier named after him.

To return to the link with Aberlour, we must look to William's direct paternal ancestors. His parents were Robert McDonald and Helena Hamilton who married in Liverpool in 1890, his grandparents being Alexander McDonald, born in Aberlour, and Catherine Gourlay, who he married in Dundee in 1859. His great grandparents Archibald McDonald and Jean Morrison, married in 1828 in Aberlour. One generation further back takes us to his paternal great great grandparents, Angus McDonald and Helen Thomson, who were married in Aberlour on 13th April 1788.

Earlier this year, I was contacted by Wayne Robert McDonald, 4th great grandson of the above Angus (and grandson of William McDonald), enquiring as

to whether MBGRG could supply a full transcript, and possibly a photograph of the memorial to Angus McDonald in Aberlour Churchyard, citing the stone as number 66. This request was initially confusing, as our Aberlour data is so far not published, with no related data on our website, while Moray Heritage Centre (Libindx), showed stone 66 as linked to a quite different family. However, a little research showed that this stone was included in Alison Mitchell's Monumental Inscriptions (Speyside) as Aberlour number 66, and relates to our numbering system as Aberlour 642.

For those of you who worked at Aberlour Churchyard, many will remember with great satisfaction (and no doubt blistered hands, and aching backs) uncovering the little group of stones, hidden from view for many years, beneath our so-called called 'ivy tree.'

And so it came to be that the above transcript and photo of Angus McDonald's memorial found its way to his living descendants in Auckland, New Zealand, some 190 years after his death. Wayne McDonald has sent several messages of appreciation, and has asked me to thank most sincerely all the members of MBGRG, without whose hard work and help this part of his family history might not have been fully uncovered.

My thanks to Wayne, who supplied me with details of the genealogy incorporated above, and also interesting information relating to the five days of Centenary Commemoration events held in Oamaru in February 2013, remembering Scott's final expedition. If anyone has links to this particular McDonald family, please let me know, and I will pass on Wayne's contact details.

Lindsay Robertson
MBGRG Webmaster.



Transcript for publication purposes of Aberlour Stone 642.

Very worn. Sacred to the memory of Serjeant ANGUS MCDONALD, late Farmer in Alowick who died there, March 16th 1823 aged 80. And of his son GEORGE MCDONALD, who died at Dovecot park (sic), near Elgin (13th June) 1846 aged 37.

Within () from source Moray Heritage Centre

The stones of Kilmartin

by Derek C Page



We recently embarked on a trip down to Oban to catch a ferry out to Mull and then on to Staffa to see the impressive Fingal's Cave and sit and take lunch with the Puffins on Lunga. This has been one of the most amazing trips we've ever been on, however, what has this to do with gravestones I hear you say. Well on our return we saw a village named Kilmartin marked on the map near where we were staying mentioning historic gravestones. I knew we wouldn't be able to go anywhere without finding such a site!

Many of the stones have been housed in a roofed enclosure, a former burial aisle for Neil Campbell, Bishop of Argyll & his wife Christiane in 1627 allowing for protection from the elements and keeping them in excellent condition. The slabs range from the 1200's to 1712.



The symbolism and decoration on these stones is very impressive and displays a declaration of importance. The stone to the right though is one of the oldest in the enclosure and does depict a set of shears, something more in common with the stones we're used to. The kirkyard does also have many other stones from the 17th & 18th centuries resplendant with emblems of mortality, although they could all do with a good clean!



The poltalloch enclosure

These seven carved graveslabs include effigies of medieval warriors and two tombstones from the 1600s. All but one were reused and inscribed with the name 'Poltalloch'. This was probably done after the Malcolms of Poltalloch bought the Campbell of Kilmartin estate in 1827.



The Michael Kirk at Gordonstoun

by Keith Mitchell, Chairman



At the time of writing, (6th July), Helen and I have just returned from photographing the last of the visible tombstones in this churchyard. Making a photographic record of all the memorials has been complicated because so many of the old flat stones are hidden from the sun by tree cover. However, we now have a complete record, although quite a few stones under the circumstances are not quite up to our preferred standard.

A few days prior to this, a small group of our members went to the churchyard to try and find just how many buried tombstones there are outside the front of the church. A previous probing survey suggested that there might be a complete row from one end of the church to the other. Our first effort was put into digging several small trial trenches to the east of the church door, but all we uncovered were areas of packed rubble.

The churchyard inscriptions were initially published in 1980 by Edward Lightowler, a member of staff at

Gordonstoun School and in his book he records two buried stones, the oldest dating to 1575. It was this flat memorial that we uncovered, lying only a few inches under the grass. Lightowler records the inscription as "15 BW 75." Now at first glance this would appear correct. However, some questions remain. The above text is carved into the top part of the stone slab, but at the bottom is incised what appears upon initial examination to read IS IS. The first interpretation of the whole text would seem to be that someone with the initials BW died in 1575 and that two people with the initials I S were also buried here. But further thought suggests several other ways this text might be read.

It has been proposed for example that the numbers 15 could also be read as IS, so if that were the case, the top text might read as the initials of two people as in IS and BW who may have died in year 75, presumably meaning 1575, or perhaps 1675. Another possibility is that 75 is meant to represent an age, meaning either that IS, and or BW died aged 75 years of age. To add to this confusion, if the bottom text is read upside down, it would appear to read 1515. If all this confuses you, don't worry as it confuses us as well! So if you have any suggestions, please let us know



Webmaster's Report

by Lindsay Robertson

Website news/updates are regularly reported on the website, and in the Annual Reports, but perhaps a short update is appropriate here.

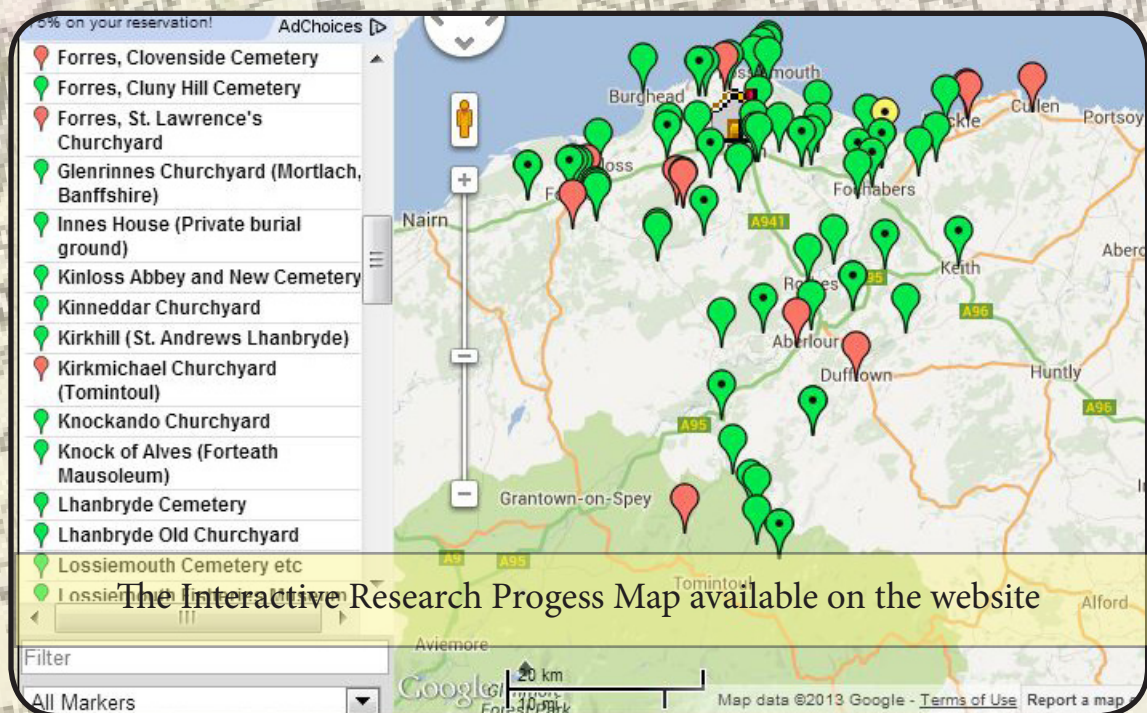
The website format remains basically the same, reporting on new publications, work in progress, on-line Newsletter archive, various reports, and additions to the on-line Ancestor Indexes (or Indices even, for older folks like me!)

The latter now includes over 53,000 named individuals, from gravestones recorded by our hard working field teams, and may well reach over 55,000 when the abstracted data for the latest publication, Knockando, is added in August.

Worldwide orders for MI transcripts/photos and Publications have boosted our funds by over £1,000 since the MBGRG PayPal Website Gateway was set up.

The interactive Research Progress Map (Google Type) has been recently updated, allowing users to quickly get summary progress info on all research sites. Filtering by name or site type is available, as is 'Street-View', allowing users to get an impression of the site and surrounding area. Some more obscure sites may not be available to view, as Google has not mapped some of the very minor access roads. Not seen it yet – please check it out. Your feedback is always welcome, and helps to improve the website.

Lindsay Robertson.



The Interactive Research Progress Map available on the website

Field Co-ordinator's Report.

By Helen Mitchell

Overall we have had 10 outings since the AGM in March. A few postponements were due to weather at the beginning of the recording season.

Elgin (east) : 3 outings to date where recording progresses well.

Mortlach there have been 2 outings. The lower part has now been completed except for recording round the perimeter wall in the Manse Garden. In the older section around the church we continue to uncover buried stones, clean table-stones and record.

Cullen Old Kirk recording has now been completed. Having probed all around there are no buried stones, which was a little disappointing as we thought there might be, as it is such a historical church site.

Cullen Cemetery will be our next recording project in the area.

Burnside Rathven is now being recorded. From 2 outings we recorded over 500 inscriptions. Being a fairly modern cemetery it does not take long to record

and we had a good turnout of members. Transferring these to computer takes the time.

Rathven churchyard is complete.

At present we are concentrating on preparation for our next MI book, which will be Aberlour churchyard and new cemetery, war memorials for Aberlour and Craigellachie, St Margaret's Episcopal Church (including the memorial for the boys of the orphanage who were killed in the two wars). An addition to this are the burial records from St Margaret's Burial Register.

Kirkmichael buried stones still have to be completed. The MI recording is finished.

Gordonstoun Michael Kirk has now been recorded and photographed. This is another churchyard where we thought there may be buried stones but so far it appears there are only two.

Knockando MI book is now on sale. This includes Archieston War Memorial.

Taphophiles in Toronto

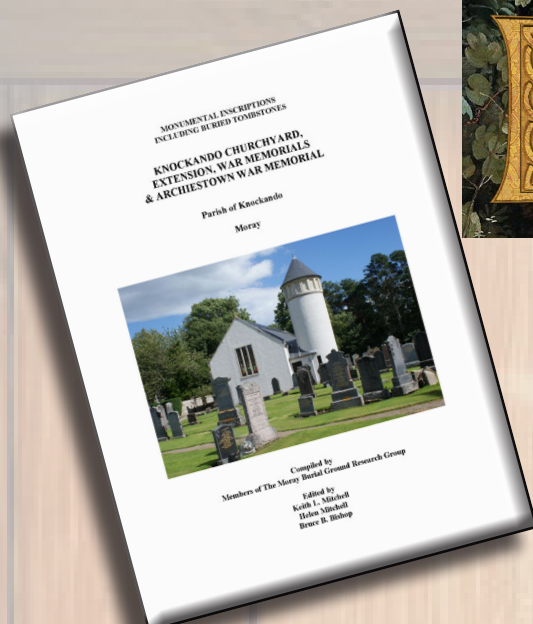
by Stephen Leitch

On a recent trip to Toronto I found myself exploring several historic cemeteries in the city. While walking round St. James' Cemetery I noticed a group of people eagerly probing the ground, digging and recording. A quick detour in my travels took me to where they were working and to my delight I had discovered members of the Toronto branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society. These members share an interest in recording cemeteries led by their cemetery coordinator David Reed. David informed me that they had been working on St. James' cemetery for 10 years, with the site containing 90,000 burials and they still had some way to go to complete the project. "People usually ask us what on earth we are doing" said one of the members. "I know exactly what you're doing, I do the same back home!" I replied. It was a delight to meet a group on another continent engaged in the same work as our group, with the same passion and interest.

St James' cemetery also contains a crematorium and over 90,000 internments have taken place to date along with some 75,000 cremations. The cemetery is one of Toronto's oldest being established in 1844. Other large cemeteries in the Toronto area include the Necropolis and Mount Pleasant Cemetery which is the resting place for some 168,000 people. Find out more about the Toronto branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society at:
<http://www.torontofamilyhistory.org/>



Book Release



Knockando Churchyard, Extension, War Memorials and Archiestown War Memorial' is the latest book of monumental inscriptions to be published by the Moray Burial Ground Research Group. The book features over 420 surname spelling variations taken from in excess of 620 stones and memorials, which were recorded by the group between 2010 – 2013.

Amongst some of the more interesting memorial inscriptions can be found a reference to Charles Cruikshank who was drowned in the Spey during the great flood of 1829, the tombstone being erected according to the testamentary instructions of her daughter Charlesann. Another individual of note buried in the churchyard is The Rt Hon. Sir Archibald Levin Smith, Master of the Rolls, who died at Wester Elchies in 1901. Another Elchies connection is that of James William Grant of Elchies who died in 1865, aged 77 years. He constructed a notable observatory at Elchies, which was guarded by sphinxes. It was the first large telescope in Scotland.

Erected by the testamentary instructions of CHARLESANN CRUIKSHANK The Cottage Aberlour who was born 5th December 1829 and died 23rd December 1889 in memory of her father CHARLES CRUIKSHANK who was drowned in the Spey at Aberlour on 3rd August 1829, as described by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder in "The Moray Floods", aged 42 years. And of her mother HELEN STUART who died 5th April 1872 aged 75 years.

In remembrance of JAMES WILLIAM GRANT of Elchies in this county, who died the 17th day of September 1865 aged 77 years. His mortal remains are laid in this vault. Jesu mercy.

Sacred to the memory of The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD LEVIN SMITH Master of the Rolls, son of FRANCIS SMITH Esq. of Salt Hill Chichester, born 26. Aug. 1836, died at Wester Elchies, Strathspey 20. Oct. 1901. And ISABEL his loving and beloved wife, daughter of JOHN CHARLES FLETCHER Esq. of Dale Park, Arundel, born 6. Aug. 1840 died Wester Elchies 26 Aug. 1901.

This cross is erected in loving memory by their sorrowing sons and daughters and grandson ARCHIBALD WILLIAM HENRY GRANT of Wester Elchies.

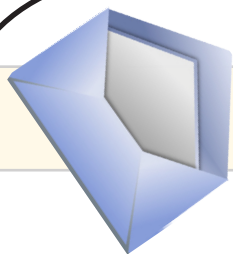
This publication contains the monumental inscriptions of the entire Knockando churchyard, MIs previously published but not seen in this survey, inscriptions from within the church, buried tombstones and a transcription of the Archiestown war memorial. The book also features detailed plans for the churchyard, photographs as well as illustrations of the buried tombstones.

The churchyard also contains two class 1 symbol stones and a Rune stone placed by the entrance gate. The church itself was opened in 1992 replacing its predecessor which was destroyed by fire in 1990. The church is the third to be built in the present site.



Enhanced Image of Knockando Class I Symbol Stone (Photo KLM)

The book is priced at £7.50p plus postage and is available direct from the group by calling Keith and Helen Mitchell on 01343 546620. The group are currently recording at Mortlach, Cullen, Elgin East, Kirkmichael and the Michael Kirk at Gordonstoun.



Your Letters

I write as a long distance researcher following up the many different Davidson references found across Moray. I stumbled across the MBGRG working on site at St Duffus, a few years ago, who immediately made me welcome. The team which make up the MBGRG deserve great credit in maintaining such high standards in their surveying, documenting, and researching of the burial grounds. The published books are vital, and important for the sharing of accurate information, not just within the home territory of Moray and across Scotland, but also on a world-wide basis.

One of the other important aspects of the MBGRG's

work has been to report details about the memorials found inside what are often locked kirks or similar sites. Too often this aspect gets overlooked elsewhere, and in some locations the kirk authorities appear to have no knowledge of what treasures are to be found inside the buildings for which they are responsible. Sadly, in some cases, they even fail to respond to the long distance enquiry.

The MBGRG has always welcomed and answered enquiries, and shared so much. You are setting a very important example of what can be achieved regardless of the difficulties encountered on some sites. I cannot praise your selfless work enough. Please keep up this good work.

Nick Hide
London

Modern MBGRG Folklore – A little light Humour

No names and no pack-drill as they used to say a long time ago. Indeed no other ID specifics are required! As time progresses certain words or phrases, for various reasons become part of Group history. Things like "Where's my camera" are well known to many, which from time to time raise a titter amongst members out doing a day's recording. However, things like "An Edinburgh Banker" are much less obvious, and perhaps advisedly so! Well here's a new one "a Dame Scrubber" for your delectation. So Dear Reader, make of that what you will!



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For all submissions and queries, please contact the Editor: Derek C Page



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