



The Moray Burial Ground Research Group

Newsletter



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Editor's Note

It's been another busy start to the year with two more sites well under way. Work started early on at Keith cemetery and also at Edinkillie and is progressing well despite the rain! We've also had our AGM at Lhanbryde which was well attended and the group outing to the Cabrach. There have been some interesting finds so far and I have personally had to endure hanging off a bridge, scaling an exceptionally high tablestone and standing knee deep in a cold river to get some of the work done at Keith! (more on that later no doubt!) As we now descend into autumn, here's to the last few good finds of the year and the continuing pursuit of the elusive Pictish symbol stones..... !



Derek C Page

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**THE MBGRG
NEEDS**



YOU

We are urgently requiring help with all group activities. If you are able to come along and help with activities or even just provide a letter or story for the newsletter, we'd really love to hear from you!

Front Cover: *St Andrews Kirkyard*
© Derek C Page Photography MMXVI

Welcome – A Bit of a Rant – Summer Outing – The Sun A Scotsman or an Indian? – the RAF Requests MBGRG Help

(by that Mannie with the Camera)

Well folks – Since last writing we have managed at the end of the day a fair amount of MI cleaning and recording so far this season. Before detailing our progress, I am particularly pleased to welcome several new members to the Group. These include Anthony Buxton, Reg and Paul Nessling, Bev and David Marsden, Morag Black and Claudia Frew. Both young lads, Paul and David make a great team at cleaning and have picked up the do's and don'ts very quickly. Anthony is also an expert at cleaning and has also proved extremely adept when it comes to excavating buried tombstones. Morag was so taken with the work of the Group that she became a member on her first day's outing. Claudia, who hails from Grants Pass, Oregon is in the process of enjoying one of her far flung expeditions across the world, and on this occasion has great hopes of being able to work with the Group on at least one day – maybe even helping to uncover a buried memorial. We hope she has her wish granted!

Our recording work has gone on as usual since the AGM, but of course as everyone knows the weather in this neck of the woods has been extremely poor, with weeks and weeks of wall to wall clouds and precious little sunshine. So much so that our photographic work has almost come to a standstill. An example of that is at Edinkillie, where although most of the recording has been completed in the churchyard, only a very small proportion of stones have been photographed. Any that have been taken are either those that rarely or never see the sun at all, or those that I have managed to take in between a lot of "cloud hopping." Equally your happy photographer has of late been getting quite depressed about the situation, and it was only on the day of the summer outing to Cabrach Churchyard that for a few days all was more or less forgiven.

Our day at Cabrach was excellent! Although we did not quite get the whole site fully recorded, this attempt was almost achieved and that included the cleaning and preparing of some 30 flat stones for camera and recording action. In all 17 members worked up till about 4.00 pm., at which time some of us repaired to The Grouse Inn for High Tea, which was also attended by Sandy McAdam one of our original members. Also sincere thanks to member



Karen McGregor who travelled up to be with us from her home near Perth as well as going back on the same day!

And so the sun continued almost wall to wall, well at least for a few days. As a result Helen and I spent long hours back at Cabrach, which should now be completed in one more visit. Then we managed in two morning visits to get almost all of the remaining stones at Old Keith photographed, as well as making great progress in the new section of Mortlach Churchyard. If the sun hopefully persists we may be lucky enough to get all the areas finished, which would be progress indeed.

Our recording work at Keith (Old Section) is proving to be of historical interest in several ways. A fair few buried stones have been discovered, although to date only part of the site has been probed, while we may have uncovered part of the foundations of the old school house that existed there in the early 18th century.

One curiosity found is on the only remaining table-stone. It is quite difficult to see properly because this monument is high for its type. The text recalls that it was erected by George McIntosh of Halifax, Nova Scotia in memory of his brother George who died in 1778 at the age of 26. That information of itself is of no particular interest except to the family, but what appears quite significant is the large, framed image that is deeply carved at the bottom of the stone. Here we have the representation of a man holding in his left hand what appears to be an extremely long spear like weapon. Unfortunately because the carving is so deep, water regularly collects over and around the

figure making the image much more worn than it might otherwise be. However, enough survives to see that the man is wearing what seems to be a skirt or kilt like piece of clothing. So the interesting question arises, is this the image of say George wearing a kilt, or might it just be the depiction of a native Canadian Indian? What do you think?

In July 2011 Helen and I were invited by RAF Lossiemouth to advise and assist in cleaning all the tombstones in the remains of Drainie Churchyard within the base (see Newsletter – Issue 16).

Recently I received an email from Andy Kidd who had helped at the above event, and wanted further assistance for a repeat visit as the stones had once again become badly covered by grass and other vegetation. So on this occasion Helen, myself and Ruth McIntosh landed up at the main gatehouse to get our security passes. There we were met by John



Le Huquet who transported us to an inner carpark and thence to meet Andy and the other volunteers.

We had expected some rain, but as it turned out, the sun held out most of the morning and continued with some clouds during the afternoon. The volunteers included William, a son of two of the other volunteers. He was very keen and proved to be a keen worker under Ruth's guidance. Huge amounts of turf were removed from the surround foundation walls and I must say we did not envy the men this task, and what a job they did. While this was going on, the rest of us made a start to cleaning the stones, which was in itself a fairly demanding task. However, by the end of the day most of them had been cleaned



to the point where it was obvious a dramatic change had taken place at the site. The event concluded by group photographs and the Padre saying a few contemplative words.

On the photographic front there was indeed a plus point for our MBGRG archive. When we visited the site initially in the summer of 2003, most of the stones were photographed with the aid of a first generation digital camera that had a pixel capacity of up to not much more than 100kb. Compare that with modern cameras that have a pixel memory in excess of 3 to 5 or more thousand Kb and you may visualize the difference in quality. So with the good offices of Mark, one of the volunteers who became brusher in chief for the afternoon, I managed to re-photograph the majority to a far higher standard than currently in our archive. Hurray! Onwards and skywards.



Drainie Churchyard



eòinkillie



Derek, Stephen & Helen trying to decipher buried tombstone E. It is for Ann Miller who died in 1782.



Trying to decipher a very difficult flat stone MI. Mentioned is Robert McKerras who died in 1778 and his wife Janet who died in 1779.



Lunch break on the last major recording day Saturday 23rd August. An excellent turn out of 16 folk.

Digital MI Publications. Going Going GONE!

Almost two years have passed since the items below were published in MBGRG Newsletter Issue 22 of August 2014:

“MBGRG MI Publications Are to Go Digital” by Lindsay and
“To Kindle or not to Kindle, that is the question” by Keith.

Both these articles suggested that making our Publications available not only as hardcopy, but also in digital format was a sensible way to progress, to meet the varying requirements of our customers, and to address the problems associated with drop in sales of hardcopy books which so many family history groups were and still are experiencing.

Discussions took place among Group Members and others, as to whether these digital files should be in Kindle or PDF format, which highlighted differing benefits for both formats. Eventually it was decided to opt for the PDF route, for two main reasons. It avoided the problems associated with a ‘whole new learning curve’ associated with Kindle publishing, if I was to be responsible for taking this forward, and in my view following the PDF route meant that we would have complete control over distribution, variable pricing as and when required, and ‘upkeep’ of the relevant PDF files.

I believe Keith has submitted an article in this Newsletter about how errors can occur, however careful we are, and it is relevant in this context. Should we identify an error in a previously published PDF file, it can be easily corrected while had they been in Kindle format, I assume a much more complex process would be involved.

I have commented on the progress of this exercise over the last two years, both in Newsletters and Annual Reports, but am delighted to report here, that after much blood, sweat and tears by myself, Keith and Helen that all 35 MBGRG Publications are now available in PDF format. Responses

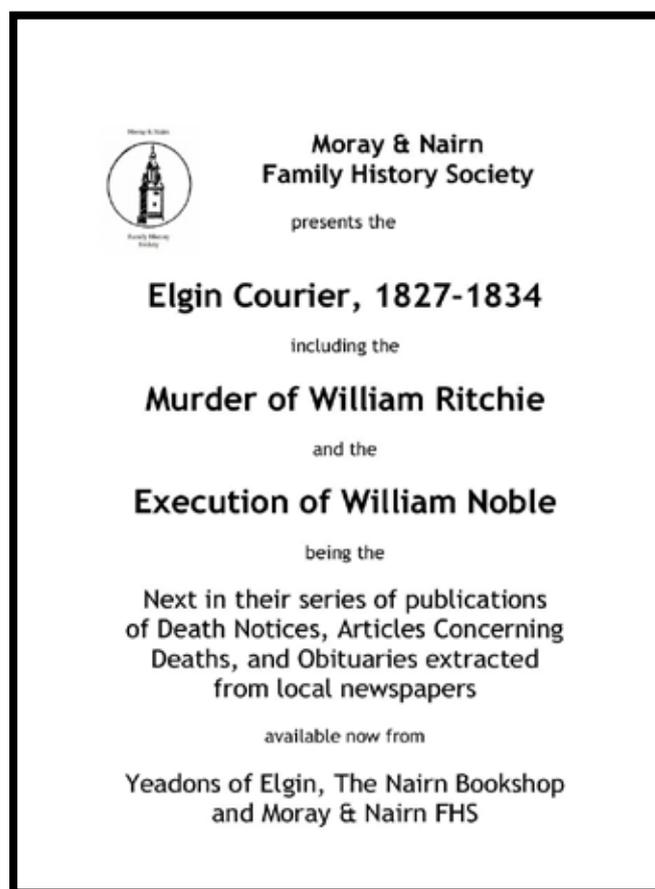
from our customers who have purchased them (one hundred copies have been sold so far) have been nothing other than highly positive.

“Great discount. No excessive postal charges. No lengthy delivery delays. Being fully searchable a great bonus - were 43 Grants in the Names Index, but I found my family member by searching on farm name - instant success!”

All future publications will be available in both hardcopy and PDF format, but it should be noted that once prepared there are no further publishing costs involved with the latter. Every copy sold yields 100% profit to help boost funds to assist with the future work of the Group.

For details regarding availability, pricing and how to order, please see the website at www.mbgrg.org

Lindsay Robertson
(Webmaster)



 **Moray & Nairn**
Family History Society
presents the

Elgin Courier, 1827-1834
including the

Murder of William Ritchie
and the

Execution of William Noble
being the

Next in their series of publications
of Death Notices, Articles Concerning
Deaths, and Obituaries extracted
from local newspapers

available now from

**Yeadons of Elgin, The Nairn Bookshop
and Moray & Nairn FHS**

The Military Men of Kirkmichael & Tomintoul

(by Ruth McIntosh)

From the information contained in the Monumental inscriptions in these graveyards the area had a rich tradition of serving in the military. There are references to several Fencible Regiments. The raising of Fencibles Corps in the Highlands was first proposed and started recruiting in 1759. Recruitment took place at various times until 1799. There were 29 Battalions of Fencibles in Scotland including the Clan Alpine, Strathspey and Gordon Fencibles. The Fencibles were British Army regiments raised in the United Kingdom and in the colonies for defence against the threat of invasion during the Seven Years War, the American War of Independence, the French Revolutionary Wars, the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812 in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. They were composed of local volunteers, commanded by regular army officers, and usually confined to garrison and patrol duties. They had no liability for overseas service.

Stone 86 records the death at the grand old age of 79 years of Captain Robert McGrigor of the Clan Alpine Fencibles & 14th Battalion of Reserve. He died at Delivor 5th Oct 1816. There are three other family members mentioned on the same stone who died serving their country aged 17, 26, and 32 years respectively. Other Regiments mentioned on Monumental inscriptions are Lovat Scouts, Kings Own Scottish Borderers, Royal Army Medical Corps, Bengal Staff Corps, Bengal Infantry, Royal Artillery, Gordon Highlanders, Cameron Highlanders, several Regiments of Foot and Grenadier Guards.

One of the most decorated men buried in the Parish Church of Tomintoul is Inspector General of Hospitals and Fleet Robert Grant, M.D., R.N., C.B born at Blairnamarrow, 4th Sept. 1842. He attended Aberdeen University and entered the Royal Navy as an Assistant Surgeon in 1868. He rose through the ranks and became Inspector General of Hospitals and Fleet in 1901 before retiring in 1902. During his service he served on shore with the 88th Regiment during the Kaffir war of 1877. In February 1879 he tirelessly tended to the smallpox patients of HMS Bodicea, and was specially promoted to Staff Surgeon as recognition of this. He landed during the Zulu war in 1879 and accompanied the Naval Brigade to Port Durnford and was mentioned in despatches.

He was Staff-Surgeon of Orion during Egyptian war in 1882, Staff-Surgeon of Orontes, served during naval and military operations in the Eastern Soudan, 1884. He then became Medical Officer in charge of transports, and accompanied the Royal Marine Battalion in action at Tamanieb where he was mentioned in despatches for his admirable arrangements for the sick and wounded. His service was recorded in the British Medical Journal of 1901. In 1902 he was appointed Companion of the Honourable Order of the Bath and in 1905 he became Deputy Lieutenant of Banffshire and a Justice of the Peace. He died at Ruthven, Ballindalloch on 14th July 1910 and is buried at Stone 52 in Tomintoul Parish Church.

Memorials 129 and 150 in the Churchyard of Kirkmichael Parish Church are dedicated to the Gordon family. This family are recorded as farming the lands of Croughly as early as 1560, and they were known as the "Croughly Gordons."

One of those commemorated on stone 129 is the much decorated Lieutenant General William Alexander Gordon, C.B., who was born at Croughly on the 21st March 1769 and died at Nairn on 10th August 1856. The monument is of grey granite and most unusual as it has sculpted above the inscription a crossed sword and scabbard and the Companion Order of the Bath and two medals with clasps enclosed by two vines with leaves.

Both medals relate to the peninsular wars which took place between 1807 and 1814. One medal has the word NIVE on the clasp which was a battle that took place in 1813 where he was wounded and had his horse shot from under him. The other medal which has inscribed "TO THE BRITISH ARMY" has two clasps one of which is inscribed FUENTES D'ONOR, and the other which is inscribed VITTORIA. He was severely wounded in his left arm at Vittoria, and again in the right foot in another battle at Haspaine, on the 14th of February, 1814. On the adjacent grave slab is carved a claymore and around the hilt in Old English characters is written "I Fought" which certainly sums up his illustrious military life. Gordon's career is further documented in his Obituary printed in the Nairnshire Telegraph of 20th August 1856, which gives a very vivid description of the man himself, his funeral, his life in the military, and in Nairn where he lived in the latter part of his life.

In Search of Ancestral Headstones

By Claudia Frew

What compels us to search for evidence of ancestors? Perhaps it is the deep seated need to feel connected to them, the discovery of who we are, who we come from, and where on this planet those ancestors lived and were laid to rest. Perhaps we just enjoy solving mysteries.

Tracing one's roots and discovering who our ancestors are and what their stories can reveal to us is a favorite past time of many people worldwide. Through the use of modern technology which is constantly evolving daily, the daunting task of a genealogical search has become much easier for us to find the answers we desperately seek.

I began my own search about 10 years ago, and like many, I began that search by first following my paternal ancestral line. I didn't know very much at all about my father's grandfather, William Rose Frew. All I knew was that he emigrated from "somewhere" in Scotland to the United States in the mid to late 1800s. Once I set my mind to the task, answers began revealing themselves rather quickly much to my delight!

Through a genealogy website I found a distant (4th cousin) in Scotland, Lindsay Robertson. His great grandfather, John Rose Frew, was my great grandfather's brother! I was elated. After corresponding with him for a short while I discovered he had a keen interest in our ancestors and had already compiled a lot of documenta-



tion regarding them. Not long after I was on an airplane and visiting Scotland for the first time. He showed me a lot about our ancestors' town, Dingwall, where they lived, work and attended school.

He also took me to the St. Clements churchyard where I saw for the first time the headstone of our 3rd great grandparents, Thomas MacNaughton and Christina Rose Frew.

It's amazing how a simple thing like a tall piece of pink granite stone standing there with chiselled stone masons cuts could move me so much. I never imagined it would affect me in such an emotional manner, but there I was, awestruck and elated, with tears in my eyes. I felt as if it had been waiting for me to find it and it was welcoming me home.

On each subsequent trip back to Scotland I always visit that particular headstone. It keeps me grounded and connected to my roots.

Last year when I visited, I noticed the moss beginning to grow on the face of the smooth cool polished stone and dirt was beginning to find purchase there. In addition, the paint in the stone masons' cuts had almost all but disappeared.

I inquired at the nearby stone masonry shop to find out how to clean and care for the stone. He gave me excellent advice on the materials to use and the technique to employ. It cleaned up beautifully just like he said; it was shining elegantly and practically begging for more loving attention.

I shared what I had accomplished with my hosts, the Dingwall museum curators, Ian and Pat MacLeod, and they also encouraged me to do more and offering some more helpful ad-



vice and direction on how to restore the lettering.

The next day, I followed Ian's advice and armed myself with a "wee tin of enamel paint and a wee paint-brush" from the local hobby shop. I headed back to the churchyard and began applying a new coat of white paint in the stone mason's chisel cuts.



For 3 consecutive days I worked on it for a few hours each day in the rain. Luckily the stone has a pointed top so I was able to put an umbrella over the top and the adjacent tree branches held the umbrella in place to shelter me from the raindrops as I worked. After due diligence I restored the entire stone; it looked practically as good



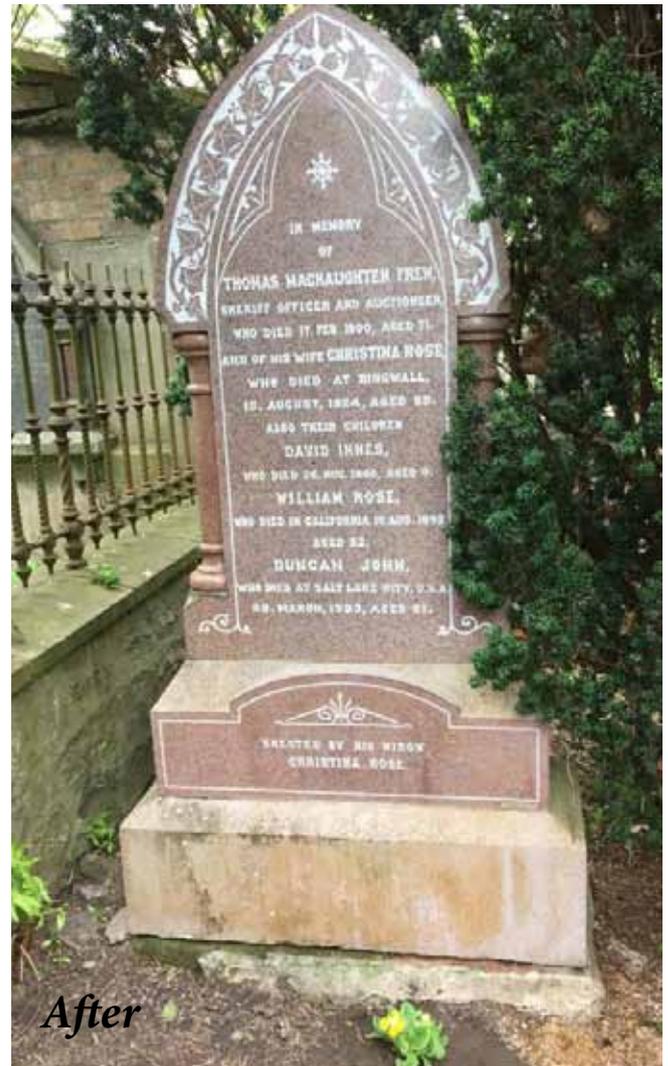
Before

as new once again.

During my several visits to Scotland, Lindsay has taken me to explore many other old churchyards such as Dyke and Elgin where the MBGRG has done an amazing amount of work. He explained the processes and procedures the group employs as we wandered through a myriad of headstones. The dedication and painstaking work that this group accomplishes just amazes me.

Discovering one's roots is a very important and sacred journey for many people worldwide. Having an organization such as MBGRG locate and record headstones in ancient churchyards and cemeteries is such a valuable resource. The service they also provide for transcripts, photos and digital files to customers worldwide is a Godsend to us all. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

I am hoping that on my next visit to the Highlands of Scotland that I will have the honor and pleasure to work alongside my fellow MBGRG members in a churchyard. That, my genealogy friends, is at the top of my "Bucket List!"



After

Funeral Traditions

by Derek C Page

For those of you who have seen the recent BBC series *The Living and the Dead*, you cannot fail to be haunted by the unusual title music. Determined to find out more, I looked it up to find that although this version is created for the series, it is in fact based on a 14th century funeral poem originating in Cleveland, North Yorkshire.

The title is “A Lyke Wake Dirge” A Lyke being the corpse, and the Wake the traditional watch over the corpse, a term we still use. It was apparently sung by a woman at the wake, and is aimed at both the corpse and the mourners in a very typical Old Testament way, in such as the way you have lead your life has now determined your fate, no time for repentance on the deathbed.

Fire an’ fleet an’ candleleet, refers to the fire, floor and candlelight, really the last remaining comforts of the home prior to passing on. It goes on to say that if you gave stockings and shoes to the poor (hosen or shoen) that you would be able to put them on yourself and pass on safely, if you didn’t, however, the thorns will prick you to the bone forever. If you gave meat or drink, then you will never shrink in the fire, this assumedly means not going to hell, but if you didn’t give freely in life, the fire will burn you to the bare bones in hell. Although it does say Christ will receive your soul all the same. It certainly puts the case forward for charity and goodwill during your lifetime, as there is no last minute repentance available here!

A Lyke Wake Dirge

This ae neet, this ae neet,
Every neet and all,
Fire an’ fleet an’ candleleet,
And Christ receive thy saul.

If thou from here our wake has passed,
Every neet and all,
To Whinny Moor thou comes at last,
And Christ receive thy saul.

And if ever thou gavest hosen or shoen,
Every neet and all,
Then sit ye down and put them on,
And Christ receive thy saul.

But if hosen or shoen thou ne’er gavest naue,
Every neet and all,
The whinny will prick thee to thy bare baue,
And Christ receive thy saul.

From Whinny Moor when thou mayst pass,
Every neet and all,
To Brig o’ Dread thou comest at last,
And Christ receive thy saul.

From Brig o’ Dread when thou may’st pass,
Every neet and all,
To Purgatory thou comest at last,
And Christ receive thy saul.

And if ever thou gavest meat or drink,
Every neet and all,
The fire will never make thee shrink,
And Christ receive thy saul.

But if meat nor drink thou ne’er gav’st naue,
Every neet and all,
The fire will burn thee to thy bare baue,
And Christ receive thy saul.

This ae neet, this ae neet,
Every neet and all,
Fire an’ fleet an’ candleleet,
And Christ receive thy saul.

kerch

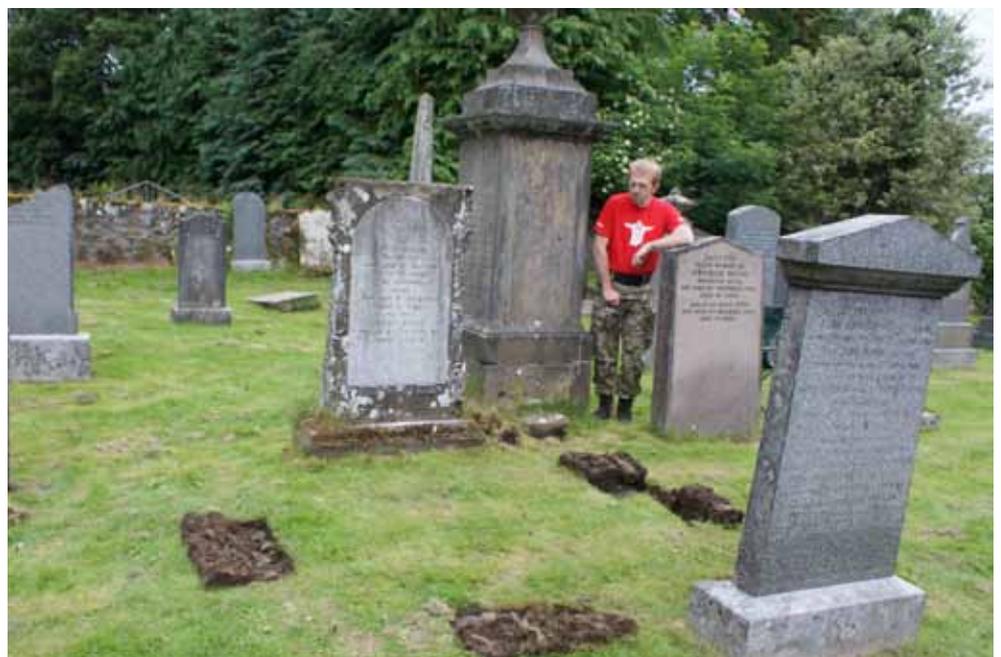


Peter Wills at the start of making an integrated plan of the oldest part of the burial ground.



Buried stone D. A very curious flat stone. Appears that the inscription section on this flat stone has been comprehensively destroyed on purpose with only tiny fragments remaining. The remainder of the stone is intact. Very odd indeed!

Derek who dug three small probes and uncovered what appears to be wall foundations of either a kerbed enclosure, which seems unlikely, or possibly part of the old school building which was demolished in the 19th century. Measures approximately 6 feet x 7 feet.



Thoughts from a long distance MI researcher

by Nick Hide

I started seriously looking at headstones and MIs about 20 years when I began to research my own ancestors who were Davidsons and Lamonds from Scotland, Hides from West Sussex in England, and Jansens from Shanghai in China and New Jersey, USA. I have learnt much from my research trips to many different graveyards throughout the Britain and Ireland as well as further afield. Too often I have rushed off to some newly discovered remote site thinking I am going to find details of a family ancestor, only to end up being disappointed because I simply have not done my homework.

Have I checked that it is even possible to get access to the relevant site? There are still many sites in Scotland, particularly in towns, which are kept under lock and key [sometimes for genuine reasons, sometimes not] and where the associated notice concerning key holders is hopelessly out of date even if actually exists.

Have I done my homework checking the historical or recent published surveys of the site? The MBGRG thank goodness has led the way with the quality of their publications and graveyard layout plans. Beware of those surveys where the surveyors stopped recording MIs dated after 1855, and in some cases failed to provide a graveyard plan. There are parts of Scotland [for instance in Dumfries-shire] where such surveys were common which has caused me great frustration.

Be prepared to find and make contact with the locally based historian. This is how I discovered the large table graves for my early Davidsons located in the Old St Regulus Chapel graveyard at Cromarty when David Alston kindly provided copy of an unpublished typescript survey of this historic site.

Understand the local history. In rural communities, many families simply could not afford an inscribed headstone. Many of my ancestors may be recorded in the burial records of a particular graveyard but today there is no sign of their grave let alone there being even a marker stone of any kind.

Be thankful that some recent surveys were completed. Our cities and towns are changing rapidly. It has been quite a shock to discover that the grave

and headstone of my Davidson grandparents buried in Acton, West London in the first half of the 20th century, had been cleared by the local authority sometime in the 1980s to create a poorly managed public space. Fortunately a local group had surveyed the site a generation earlier.

Understand the local geology. The granites used by the masons in North East Scotland will probably last centuries and if the MIs are well cut/engraved/applied, there is a reasonable chance that they will survive subject to serious damage. The slate headstone in Devon and Cornwall may not last quite so long, but the quality of the finely cut inscriptions on slate often remains easier to read for far longer than those on the granites. In contrast the MIs found on sandstones and limestones used in Sussex are often unreadable after 75 years, unless one is lucky. Some of my Hides buried in West Sussex were fortunately buried under a tree, probably by accident rather than design. The tree has protected the headstone leaving the inscription readable today. Be aware that the effects of air pollution in some of our cities can make some MIs reading difficult.

When you find a relevant gravestone do not assume that the detail is correct. Keep an open mind. Names may be miss-spelt, ages and dates may be incorrect, and the people being commemorated may have no connection with locality or even buried in the particular grave. Beware of gravestones installed by a later generation. I have found an example at Cruden in Aberdeenshire, where the descendants of an emigrant family have returned from overseas and commissioned an inaccurate MI for their ancestors.

Most important of all, always check the back of the headstone for inscribed detail. It was only on my third visit to the Canonbie graveyard in Dumfries that I discovered that I had missed such an example.

Today the internet is an invaluable source of information with an ever growing range of useful websites but such home research can never replace the research on the ground wherever possible. There are important discoveries to be made.

DUCHESS OR DUTCHESS

(A Brief Tale Concerning Accuracy)

Inscription Base of Number 1148



On Sunday, 13th August 2006, members of MBGRG were recording and photographing memorials in St Mary's Aisle at the south east end of Elgin Cathedral. One extremely interesting monument there is to Henrietta, Duchess of Gordon who died at Preston Hall, Midlothian in 1760 aged 78 years. It is carved out of marble and is exceptionally fine in detail with a large and apparently life-like bust of her. It was apparently created by the noted Flemish sculptor Peter Scheemaker (or Scheemakers / Scheemaekers) in his London workshop.

One of the aspects that our Group takes some pride in is its overall attempt to provide as much accurate detail to the family and social historian by way of the recorded monumental inscriptions. Our system of checks, double checks and in some cases multiple checks has proved to be very time consuming, one result of which is that our rate of publication is to some degree considerably protracted. However, in broad terms these delays are deemed worthwhile given that the end result contains an error rate we trust of minimal proportions. As experience continually teaches us, however, our efforts are by no means infallible and as stated in the Introduction to our MI publications, we do not suggest that the published results of our recordings are entirely accurate. In fact we must confess that the more we try to produce an error free publication, the more we discover just how impossible that appears to be!

An extremely good example of how such errors get into print can be extremely well illustrated by the following account.

At or around the date in question one of our members was given the task of recording Henrietta's memorial inscription. This was duly completed along with the rest in the area and the resultant paper notations given to Helen for typing up onto computer. At this point it is perhaps worth pointing out that one of the major items of advice we give to our volunteers before they start recording is "write what you see – not what you think you see." This piece of simple guidance is perhaps overtly obvious, particularly for recording purposes, but it is continually worth reminding ourselves about it as I have frequently found out through my own frequent verbal and visual errors. A good example of this is the spelling of the word "remembrance." Some people erroneously spell this word as "rememberance," and when faced with the word "remembrance" on a memorial, unfortunately continue to insert their own spelling instead, thus making it possible for this kind of error to end up in print.

A classic example of this kind of problem unfortunately befell the "Duchess's" inscription. As can be clearly seen from the above photograph, it begins with the following text:- SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF HER GRACE HENRIETTA

DUTCHESS OF GORDON, but the dilemma began when the recorder's eye, brain and hand transcribed the word Duchess as would normally be transcribed, not "seeing" the letter T as in DUTCHESS. Sometime later, Helen typed the inscription into her computer file, which not long after was "supposedly checked" by me reading aloud the wording to Helen, who at the same time compared my dictation to what she saw on her computer screen.

As the Latin has it "mea culpa" are the words which appropriately spring to mind. It seems that I too was a guilty party in the process of compounding this mistake. I read aloud to Helen the word "Duchess," but similarly failed to spot the importance of the missing letter "T," with the result that Helen simply accepted the normal spelling. Hence the error was completely missed!

Quite a while later, and after the first edition had been published, Helen and I were in the cathedral ticket office by the entrance gate. In conversation with a member of the Historic Scotland staff, we were informed about this unfortunate confusion and at first could not believe what we were told. However, a quick check soon proved this to be the case.

Thankfully it is now possible to correct this transcription error, so that the Duchess now has her correct memorial title of Dutchess, but it is interesting to note that this episode first began when the hand of the monumental sculptor, Mr Scheemaker made use of this archaic spelling which

can be found in many old books of the period.

Regrettably this is not quite the end of the story. While attempting to ensure that the MI details were as accurate as possible for our new edition, we discovered yet another little error that had inappropriately crept its way into print. This time the problem lay in the sculptor's name. It appears that the original transcription may have been correct, but the typing was apparently not. This was confirmed when we later conducted a final check of the memorial at the cathedral in May 2016. Through what seems to have been a simple typing error, Scheemaker had been transposed into Schermaker. Unfortunately at that time we did not have a photograph of his name on the memorial, thus the normal dictation check failed to spot the problem. So how did this mistake happen? The probable answer is simply that the letter "r" sits next to the letter "e" on the keyboard. This particular problem only came to light when we attempted to find out more information about P Schermaker with no luck, until thanks to a bit of playing around on the Internet, hit upon Peter Scheemaker as the obvious person and then everything fell into place.

Keith L Mitchell FSA Scot

This article is an excerpt from our PDF publication on Elgin Cathedral which is available via the website.



Glenfinnan Memorial.

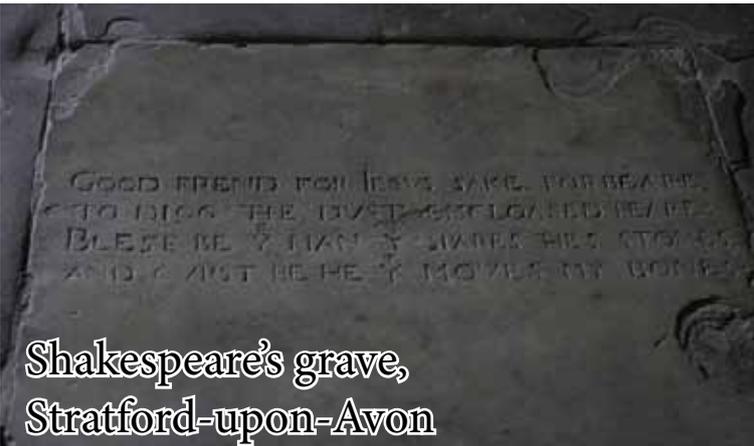
This shows one of two wall tablets when the structure was being restored. It has just recently been finished, last week I think. It was in the news. This is the Gaelic version & there is also an English version. As you can see the stone was in the process of being painted.. Visited by our family in June during a family reunion holiday break.

Inveravon



Helen and Stephen cleaning flat stones 169-171.

INTERESTING STONES



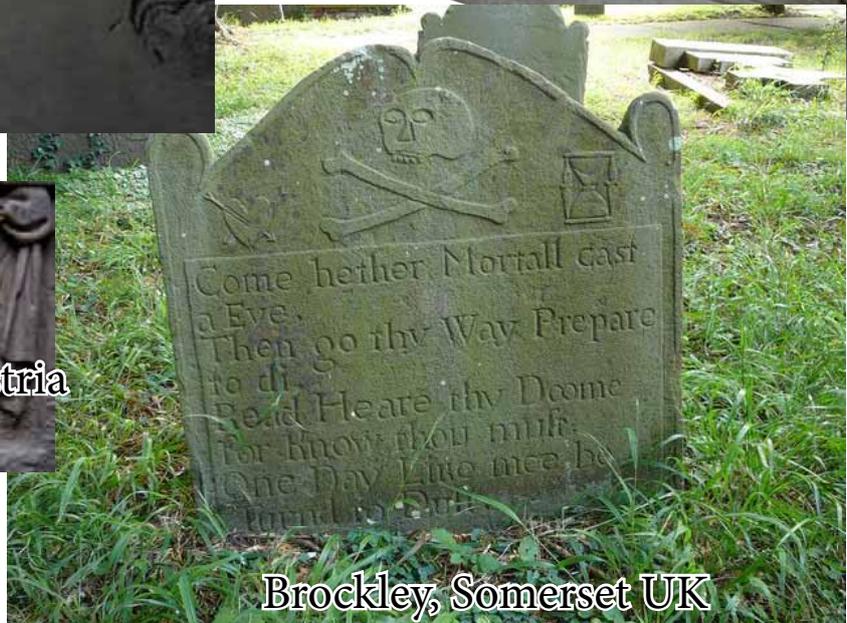
Shakespeare's grave,
Stratford-upon-Avon



Boston, USA



Salzburg, Austria



Brockley, Somerset UK

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