

THE MORAY BURIAL  
GROUND  
RESEARCH GROUP  
Newsletter

Fra Birt To Graif



Na Rest We Haif - 1571

Issue 7 - - - September 2006

(Currently published twice a year)

Dear Member or Supporter, since April, our Group has gone from strength to strength, achieving a considerable amount of research, which both in genealogical and historical terms might be described as fairly significant. Membership has increased in line with our activities, currently totalling 33 "Full Members" and 28 Associate Members. The support of all is of course greatly appreciated. It is also gratifying to see that we are now beginning to attract a few "younger" members into the fold; something the Group has set its sights on since our foundation. In an attempt to attract additional members, we recently included a leaflet in the Moray Society Newsletter, with thanks to new member Alan Wills for his valuable help in that department. Thanks also go to Alan for his practical assistance in having our modified "Newsletter" published in a more professional manner. Hand-feeding a personal computer printer had reached the stage of becoming far too time consuming and labour intensive. So I hope you will approve of the changes made in this respect.

The Group received a very complimentary report in the August edition of the Aberdeen & North-East Scotland Family History Society Journal, about the April talk Bruce, Helen and I were privileged to give to a large turnout in the "granite" city. Our work was also on display at The North of Scotland Family History Fair held at Baxters Highland Village in May, courtesy of W.A. Baxter & Sons Ltd. It goes without saying that appropriate thanks also go to Bruce and Janet Bishop who helped to organise the event, along with ANESFHS. Also, thanks go to all those who helped with the MBGRG stand. As a direct result of the Fair, two people joined the Group, which was most gratifying.

**Visit of Hon. President, Betty Willsher, M.B.E. to Birnie**

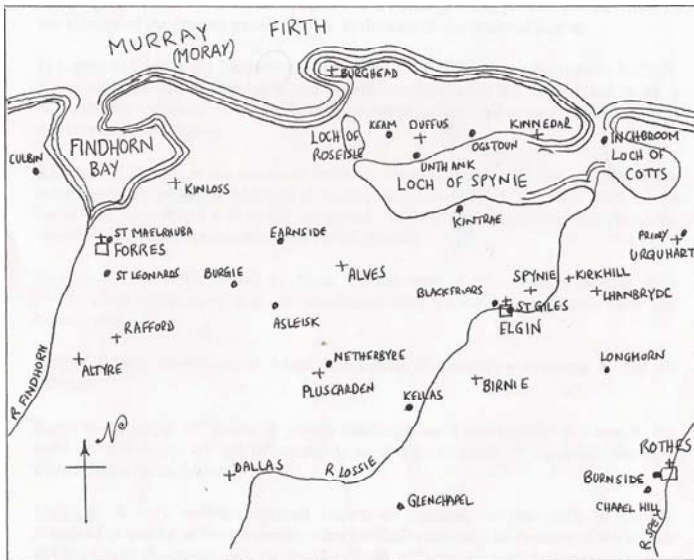


**On Sunday 10th September, the Group held one of its now regular Sunday "digs" at Birnie Parish Church to uncover some of the 60 odd buried tombstones we know exist there. It was our 4th visit to this historic churchyard since we began work here in May. As luck would have it, the weather was with us, and we all experienced a lovely summer's day. Betty, who had travelled up from St Andrews for the weekend, joined in our activities mid-morning and stayed with us until lunch time. While doing some research of her own, Betty also took an avid and energetic interest in our activities.**

The above photograph shows our Hon. President deep in discussion with fellow researchers, Willie, Lindsay, Moira and John, while they transcribe several difficult areas of interpretation.

This particular tombstone had in fact been erected in 1823 by James Robb, to the memory of his Grandfather John Robb, farmer in Bogside who died in 1812, age 72 years, and his wife Elspet Brodie who died in 1830. Also mentioned are his sons, John who died in 1827 at the age of two and Alexander whose year of death had been completely obliterated by wear, although it was possible to decipher that he died at the age of one year.

### **The Lost, or Nearly Lost, Burial Grounds of Moray** (by **Bruce Bishop** – Historical Research Co-ordinator)



At the time when the Catholic Church was all-powerful in Scotland, before the Reformation of 1560, there were, in addition to the parish churches, many small churches and chapels throughout most of the country, and this included much of Moray, especially the lowland area known as the 'Laich', and the hills just inland. Following the Reformation and the establishment of the Protestant church in Scotland, many of these small places of worship disappeared, along with their burial grounds. The area around the Loch of Spynie, which in early times was an inlet of the sea, seems to have been particularly well-endowed with these sites. Most of these early churches or chapels would have had consecrated ground either inside or outside the building, into which

burials would have been made. Unfortunately, as tombstones were the prerogative of the rich and landed in these early times, there is little evidence of the crude stone markers or wooden crosses which would have identified these pre-Reformation burials.

Culbin Kirk in the parish of Dyke and Moy. Buried, in a matter of days, beneath the sands blown in from the west in 1694. It is known that there was a church serving the Barony of Culbin, and there is evidence that it had its own burial ground.

St Maelrubha's Church in Forres. A very early site, probably out of use by the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century, but at one stage the principal church for the settlement later to become the Burgh of Forres. Anecdotal evidence of a burial ground, probably somewhere in the vicinity of the present parish church, to the east of the castle of Forres.

St Leonard's Chapel. At Chapelton to the southeast of Forres on the road to Rafford. Some evidence of foundations of the church remained until the 1970's, and there is documentary evidence of burials being uncovered in the area around the chapel, but no records of tombstones.

Kirkton of Burgie in the parish of Rafford. There is mention in early documentary records of a settlement at Kirkton of Burgie, in the vicinity of the castle. This would imply that there was a kirk at the settlement, which being associated with the castle would undoubtedly have had its own burial ground

Earnside Castle in the parish of Alves. To the west of Alves, again there is early documentary evidence of a chapel associated with the castle, which may have had burials within it.

Asleisk Castle. Southwest of Alves, has similar documentary evidence to that for Earnside.

Keam in the parish of Duffus. A pre-reformation church was situated at Keam, to the west of Duffus, but fell out of use as the settlement declined. It is possible that this church had a burial ground.

Unthank. A very well-documented church at Unthank, to the south of Duffus, remained in use for at least a century after the Reformation. The remains of the church did not totally disappear until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup>

century, and the farmer ploughed up parts of skeletons for many years, although there was no evidence of tombstones.

Duffus Castle. There are suggestions that Duffus Castle had its own chapel and burial ground, but its proximity to Unthank makes this unlikely.

Ogstoun Church in the parish of Drainie. Originally the church for Ogstoun parish prior to its amalgamation with Kinnedar to form Drainie. The church was in use until the late 17<sup>th</sup> century when the new Drainie church was built on what is now the airfield. It is likely that the graveyard surrounding the Michael Kirk, which was later built on the site, is a continuation of this earlier burial ground.

Kintrae in the parish of New Spynie, at the foot of Kintrae Brae, and originally on a headland jutting into the Loch of Spynie. The church went out of use shortly before the reformation, and the remains of the church were destroyed by ploughing of this very fertile land. The farmer ploughed up parts of skeletons for many years, although there was no evidence of tombstones.

Inchbroom Chapel in the parish of Lhanbryde. The chapel of Inchbroom served the northern part of the parish, being only a couple of miles southeast of Lossiemouth. It originally stood on an island in the Loch of Spynie, reached only at low tide, and remained in use for almost a century after the Reformation. The chapel and its burial ground are very well-documented, and many human remains have been exposed by ploughing. The burial ground went out of use in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. The site is now known as Chapel Field on the farm of Inchbroom.

Urquhart Priory. The Priory survived until the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and it is almost certain that there would have been burials within the priory, although no trace now exists.

Netherbyre Church at Pluscarden in the parish of Elgin. Built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to serve the western part of the parish, unfortunately on a bog into which it later partially collapsed. It had its own burial ground but only one interment ever took place there due to the nature of the ground. It seems that the coffin may have sunk without trace!

St Giles. The parish church of Elgin, at the Plainstones in the centre of the town. The old church was demolished in the 1820's and with it went its churchyard, which surrounded the old church and took up the area now covered by the Plainstones, except for the western end which was the site of the Tolbooth and the town jail. The graveyard seems to have gone out of use long before the church, however, as many burials were made in the Cathedral churchyard.

Blackfriars Monastery. To the northeast of Ladyhill in Elgin. The monastery had gone out of existence before the Reformation, but was recorded as having its own burial ground, probably somewhere under what is now the Moray Leisure Centre.

Kellas in the parish of Dallas. A small catholic chapel is known to have existed at Kellas before the Reformation, its site now marked by the small mound at the entrance to the village, where the war memorial now stands. There is some documentary evidence that this chapel had its own burial ground.

Glenchapel in the parish of Birnie. Right up in the hills beyond Glenlatterach lies Glenchapel, possibly the site of a small chapel which served travellers on the old Scots Road to the south. It is possible that there were burials there.

Chapel Hill, Rothes. This was a chapel associated with the Castle of Rothes, and is mentioned as having a burial ground as recently as the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. No trace of the site is now evident due to afforestation.

Burnside of Rothes. This site is rather ambiguous in that it may refer to the old church of Rothes, in the old part of the cemetery, but alternatively may be an older church on the site of the present kirk, with its own burial ground.

Longmorn. On the site of Longmorn Distillery, the church was in existence for almost a century after the reformation. The foundations of the church, and its churchyard, now lie beneath the reservoir at the distillery.

There are many other sites for which there is tentative evidence of places of worship with small burial grounds, but the research into these is ongoing.

#### A Little bit of In-House Humour



*"Just going to take the last few photographs"  
was what he said!*

From the Editor:-

The adjoining cartoon was sent in by our Webmaster, Lindsay Robertson.

It seems he received this anonymous piece of humour via an email, and subsequently added the text, which he thought most appropriate to certain MBGRG members who spend a lot of time photographing tombstones.

No prizes for guessing who the poor lady on the seat is meant to represent!

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

## Publications

### The Forgotten Tombstones of Moray – Volume 4

Following in the format of volumes 1-3, our new publication is hot off the press. Including 49 pages with four pages of coloured photographs, this booklet details the work of the Group in Lhanbryde Old, Urquhart and Spynie Churchyards. It is available from Bruce Bishop or Helen Mitchell for £5.99 (plus p&p), **but please note that "Full Members" can obtain a copy at the reduced rate of £3.00 (plus p&p)**. Copies of Vols. 1 to 3 are still available at the same price.

### Lhanbryde Old Churchyard & Lhanbryde New Cemetery - - - Urquhart Old Churchyard

These two booklets were published by the Aberdeen & North-East Scotland Family History Society in April this year. Monumental Inscription (M.I.) recording of these cemeteries was done jointly by ANESFHS and MBGRG members, and the efforts of all concerned are appreciated. Copies are available from Bruce Bishop or from the ANESFHS shop at King Street, or via the ANESFHS website. The MBGRG's contribution to recording Spynie Churchyard and Urquhart New Cemetery should hopefully be ready for publication in the not too distant future, so hopefully by the time of Issue 8, both will have been published.

### Fundraising - Recycling Print Cartridges & Postage Stamp Kiloware & Other Collectables

After the last appeal for a "Fundraiser" to step forward, I received two emails on the subject from Marilyn in Australia and John in Glasgow. Thanks to both of you for your well thought out ideas about various methods of raising money on the Group's behalf. However, the main problem of getting someone to organise it all still persists. In May we received some £42.00 from all the printer ink cartridges handed in, so folks, please keep your printers busy and pass the empties on to Helen! However, please note that "Epsom" cartridges are not suitable. Members are still handing in Kiloware postage stamps so that the box is growing larger by the month. It may take another years collecting before we have anything worth while to send to auction, but we are definitely getting there. So we express Group thanks to all who are collecting stamps for us from as far afield as England.

In response to my request for donations of first day covers, postcards, old documents and other ephemeral material such as old receipts, etc., as well as pre decimal or older coins, donations have been handed in by Willie Winwick, Mary Macdonald and Mary Wardle which so far have raised £40.00, while thanks also go to Jean Butler for starting the process of organising a prize competition to be available in shops. A number of members have given tentative support to the idea of raising funds via a Car-Boot Sale. However, once again this idea will not get off the ground unless someone is willing to organise it!

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



David Syme Memorial at Boroondara : by M. Duff 2006

Queenstown Cemetery, Smith's Gully : by M Duff 2006

## Greetings from Melbourne in winter.

The weather has been miserable, cold with drizzling rain, but I have still been able to check out a couple of small forgotten cemeteries. Firstly, in my last newsletter I promised some information about David Syme (1827-1908). He was a native of Scotland, born in North Berwick, the fourth son of a strict father, George Syme (1791-1845) and mother Jean, née Mitchell. When his father died, David studied religion for two years and then lost interest. He then went to Germany, as well as California, and in 1852, Victoria. He tried gold prospecting and road contracting and in 1856 joined his brother Ebenezer in a half share of the insolvent *Age* newspaper. When Ebenezer died in 1859, David took on the duties of publisher and editor of the newspaper for the next 50 years. After he died, the business was continued by his wife and sons as a trust until 1948 when it was converted into a public company. The name continues as David Syme & Co., while the newspaper continues as a daily broadsheet. In articles that I have researched, I have not been able to find any Egyptian connection, so am at a loss as to why the family memorial was built like a temple.

I have been out and about checking on some forgotten cemeteries. One I photographed - a new challenge - down on my knees with my camera nearly on the ground. This is the earliest private cemetery at Heidelberg (1852), but now is reduced to the size of a house block with only about a dozen headstones remaining. It is situated in a suburban street and surrounded by houses because somebody wanted to build them on the site in the 50's or 60's and actually paid to have the remains of early settlers removed to a bigger cemetery close by. Some of remaining dozen headstones are lined up very neatly against the fence, but so close together they don't look right. I was left wondering as to where the remains actually were. The other cemetery, a complete opposite, was also a challenge but for another reason. It was a 1.7 hectare site on the side of a hill surrounded by replanted Australian bushland and protected plants. There had been a bush fire through the area in the 60's, so all the original wooden markers were gone. The cemetery is at Smith's Gully and is named Queenstown Cemetery. It was established in 1861 after the discovery of gold in the area. There were over 380 burials, many in unmarked or unrecorded graves. No map or plan of the cemetery exists. This cemetery actually has people who care for it and I noticed some graves had been restored, while others are still under repair / restoration. Interestingly, whoever was restoring one of the graves had left a laminated list on the site. Ed. note: Upon editing Marilyn's article, I discovered that a very silly editor's mistake had been made in the April

Newsletter, for which I am wholly responsible, and for which I make very humble apologies. Too much cutting and pasting I can only assume! In referring to the history of the Springthorpe Memorial, Marilyn in reality wrote as follows:-

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 née Inglis was born on 26th January 1867, married on 26th January 1887 and was buried 26<sup>th</sup> January 1897 - Australia Day. ....

Further to my entry in the April Newsletter about the elaborate tomb of Annie Springthorpe, I recently discovered that when Dr Springthorpe died in 1933, he only left his family (wife and children) about 8000 pounds Australian.

**Poets' Corner** - (entry by Betty Willsher, Hon. President, M.B.E.)  
From the Selected Poems of Douglas Dunn, 1964-1983, by kind permission.

### Winter Graveyard (an extract)

Mossed obelisks and moss-gloved curves,  
Uncherishable headstones  
Rise from the dead place at a time of death.  
A swarm of fissured angels sweeps over  
Unremarkable civilians,  
Magnates of no inheritance;  
In depths of briar and ivy  
Their utterly negative remains –  
Dried convolvulus,  
A bush of nerves sprouted  
From lost anatomies.

Survivors of scattered families  
Can't get at inscriptions.  
When did Frederick die? Or Emily?  
They need to know. Relatives  
Underfoot impart a sad feeling  
Worth expeditions  
Sometimes beaten back by the strength  
Of wild entanglements  
Pensioners declare is neglect, unprincipled  
Spite of generation for generation,  
And imply their own regret.

### Ongoing Research

#### Elgin Cathedral



Sarah Battye Memorial : by K. Mitchell 2005



Elizabeth Dunbar (ms) Tulidef : by K Mitchell 2006

Having now successfully carried out approximately 75% of our recording programme at the Cathedral, it appears that maybe we will complete our tombstone transcriptions there a little bit earlier than anticipated. A large number of markers are badly degraded and worn, which has made our task considerably more difficult. However, using all our received techniques to date, we have managed to retrieve a significant body of genealogical and historical information that previously had gone unrecorded. Of the many fascinating inscriptions we have transcribed, there are two, which for the purposes of this Newsletter I would like to briefly comment on. Within the first 100 tombstones, there was one name that sort of caught my eye so to speak. The stone itself is unremarkable, but on reading the text, I found myself being forced into making a rather humorous connection, or so I thought. I refer to tombstone 67 which informs us that it was placed there in memory of a lady called Sarah Battye of Holmfirth, who died on the 17th March 1857 at the age of 30 years. What's strange about that you may ask? Well, I was forced into making an apparent connection with that lovely character known to the British nation as Nora Batty, of Last of the Summer Wine fame. Thanks to Bruce and Janet I have been able to shed a little more light on Sarah. She was married to one Henry Battye and her parents were Joshua Bailey a woollen weaver and Ann Bower. Sarah died from Typhus Fever from which ailment she had suffered for three weeks. According to Bruce there is a property in Lossiemouth known as Holmfirth, but whether Sarah was connected to this one, the one in Yorkshire, or some other area of the country is at this time not known. Neither Sarah nor her husband appeared in the 1851 census, so were they incomers to the area? If any more information becomes available, I will pass it on.

Calling all 'Tulidefs' – Tombstone 421 presented members with one of the many challenges our group has faced transcription wise at the cathedral. It is a 'flat' which like many of its compatriots, has suffered considerable wear. However even a casual look tells you that a great deal of information still survives to identify the person for whom it was originally carved. Previous research had only identified the name "Elizabetha," on this tombstone, and it is easy to see why such an inscription would appear to be such a daunting process, to anyone other than a keen and determined enquirer. The problem was also compounded by the fact that the text is in Latin, which makes it doubly harder to read, particularly as most of our members have only a superficial knowledge of this arcane language. Using all our available techniques on several different visits, including the use of differing shades of daylight, we eventually managed to secure for posterity almost 98% of the text and, hopefully its meaning.

From what we were able to deduce, we are quite confident in saying that this tombstone was laid down for Elizabeth Tulidef, spouse of John Dunbar, Burgess of Elgin, who died in the 1620's. When we first tried to make sense of the inscription, we were much puzzled by the spelling of the word "Tvlidef," (Tulidef) which at the time did not seem to make any sense. We also considered the possibility of a mason's error. However, thanks to further knowledgeable enquiries by Bruce, we established it to be a very old and possibly extinct name, certainly in this part of the world. The National Archives hold several references to this surname; for example that of Andrew Tulidef of that ilk in 1453, while there are also mentions of it in the Register of the Great Seal up to the 17th century. According to The Surnames of Scotland by George Black, the origin of "Tilliedaff" and its various spelling variations comes from the old barony of that name in Aberdeenshire. Douglas in his Baronetage of Scotland, 1798, states that Sir John Ogilvie of Innercarity married Charlotte Tullideph from Forfarshire in 1754, while Tillyduff Midmar in Aberdeenshire is listed in the County Directory of Scotland for 1878. If anyone should be looking for a Tulidef ancestor in their family tree, we will happily point out Elizabeth's reputed resting place.

## Birnie Churchyard



Alexander Spence died 1658 : by K. Mitchell 2006

John Rob died 1710 : by K Mitchell 2006

The first tombstone we discovered was just outside the choir-door. It was for Alexander Spens, minister of Birnie, who died in 1658, and Margaret Innes his wife. Originally a pillared structure, it had at some time become badly damaged as evidenced by the two large iron clasps still holding part of it together. While work on this stone was in progress, we were visited by several members of the congregation, along with the Rev. Julie Woods, whose welcome presence seemed most propitious.

The second illustrated tombstone was found on our last visit to the site. It had been carved for John Rob, in Redavie who died in 1710, and his spouse Agnes Petrie who died in 1677. We were quite taken aback by its incredibly good condition, and the "OOH's and AAH'S reverberating round the churchyard were more than a little audible. The quality of the carving seemed quite exceptional, particularly the Emblems of Mortality which stood out in remarkably high relief.

### **An Appreciation - (by Mary Macdonald - Member)**

Having attended the family History Fair at Baxters Highland Village on 28th May it was brought home to me how much work is done behind the scenes of which we are not always aware. We all do our bit on the sites, but special mention must go to Bruce, Helen and Keith, who must spend many hours checking, indexing and doing lots of other tasks to produce the books, lectures and open days, which are more enjoyable to everyone. I am sure I speak for all of us when I say a big "Thank you" to the three of you.

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

We have conducted 41 visits to sites since the last newsletter, with 17 of them being to Bellie and Elgin Cathedral by Keith and myself for photographs or M.I. checking. In the last Newsletter, we recorded that the weather was so cold that outings were curtailed, and hoped that better weather would enable us to work longer during our site visits. By a "quirk of nature," during the last hot spell, the weather was so warm that many of us felt somewhat exhausted. Perhaps if we were all in the "Younger" age bracket, no doubt we could survive the pace better! Perhaps a plea to spread the word as much as possible about our "unusual" hobby might bear further fruit so that we encourage more new younger members to join us.

Another aspect of the time we spend on sites may be reflected in the number of weekly visits we are now making. For assorted reasons, we now go out to sites more or less every Sunday during the year, weather



permitting. Perhaps this is too much for a voluntary Group such as ours to sustain. If you have any views on this subject, please let me know so that the position can be discussed by Committee if necessary!

We recently finished Rafford, buried, MI's and photography of both cemeteries. Considerable thanks go to Ron and Jean Butler for doing most of the MI's there, but thanks of course also go to other members who helped. Boharm Churchyard MI's have now been fully recorded and we also now have a complete photographic archive partly done by Dave McWilliam and part by Keith. Thanks also to Dave for his assistance in helping us to retrieve information from some of the very difficult tombstones there. On our penultimate visit to Tombae, well Keith and I were beaten by the weather again. Unfortunately we forgot the broly and as you can imagine, transcribing M.I.'s under a cagoule is not easy! However, on our last visit there not long ago, on a glorious summer's day, we completed transcribing and photographing the entire churchyard. On this occasion we found ourselves in a beautiful country setting in the midst of Glenlivet, which was extremely peaceful and tranquil. The present plan is now to concentrate on Elgin Cathedral and Birnie, both of which projects are continuing to provide us with exciting discoveries. At the cathedral a great deal of time is being taken up with cleaning and transcribing many of the very worn and degraded tombstones, where the text in many cases has all but disappeared.

Another plea, please if possible, phone me on Saturday evening or Sunday mornings between 8.15 and 8.45 if you have said you would be attending and suddenly find you can not manage. This enables me to change plans beforehand, instead of waiting on site for people and find that they do not attend. If you have not been in contact for some time, please feel free to phone and ask where we are going on a particular Sunday.

Editor : Keith Mitchell, Elgin.