

THE MORAY BURIAL GROUND RESEARCH GROUP



ANNUAL REPORT 2013 – 2014



www.mbgrg.org

The Committee of 2013-2014

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

Moir Windwick

Ordinary Member

Stephen Leitch

Minute Secretary

Ruth McIntosh

Appointments held during 2013-2014

Historical Research Co-ordinator

Bruce B Bishop, FSA Scot

Publicity Manager

Stephen Leitch

Webmaster

Lindsay Robertson, FSA Scot

Auditor

William Windwick

In Memory of Bill and John



Bill carefully cleaning at Aberlour



John flouring inscription at Aberlour



MESSAGE FROM THE HONORARY PRESIDENT

Once again I have been impressed by the labours and achievements of the Group over the past year. The full range of activities is well documented in the Chairman's Report.

Members know of my personal interest in heraldry and this subject often comes into the recording of gravestones and monuments. In discussion with the Chairman we have realised more could be made of the heraldic information gathered by Members and we have made preliminary contact with the Heraldry Society of Scotland. Our hope is to produce a combined illustrated publication listing all examples of armorial ensigns so far found on the tombstones and monuments of Moray. We hope this may inspire other recording groups to do the same for other parts of Scotland. Why should this be done?

Since 1672 every coat of arms granted in Scotland has been recorded in the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland which is kept in the Lyon Office, Edinburgh. However not every coat of arms has gone into the Register, particularly those before 1672. Some early Arms are known from seal impressions and these are recorded in *Scottish Heraldic Seals* by J H Stevenson & M Wood, 1940. The three volumes do not cover memorial heraldry so a vital 'missing area' could be covered by the work of the Moray Burial Ground Research Group.

From my other contacts I have also encouraged our Chairman to be in touch with the Chairman of the Scottish Church Recorders, which is part of the National Association of Decorative and Fine Art Societies, and also the Chairman of Scottish Church Heritage Research Ltd. These two organisations also record monumental information and it is right we should share our information with them, and vice versa.

Finally as the days lengthen, and with Spring in the air, may I wish all Members of the Group a happy, successful, and productive summer season!

Charles J Burnett, Esq.
KStJ, Ross Herald Extraordinary



St Margaret's Churchyard, Aberlour

Before talking about the main issues concerning our activities over the last year and looking towards the coming season, I wish to pause for a moment to draw your attention to the inside front page. Here then are two of our past members, Bill Riddel and John Walters, who very sadly passed away over the year. They are indeed a great loss to the Group, and on behalf of all members I would like to pay tribute to the extremely valuable

contribution both men made to the work of MBGRG, both in terms of the efforts they made, and friendships they engendered. The photographs hopefully capture Bill and John at work in Aberlour Churchyard doing what they enjoyed.

The efforts of members this past season has as usual been quite varied and interesting, and a great deal has been achieved, although it must be admitted, not quite so much on the publishing side as we would have wished. June saw the publication of our Knockando Parish Church book detailing over 500 tombstone inscriptions along with nine buried stones. Although a relatively small churchyard, it contains a number of interesting memorials, including one erected to the memory of Charles Cruikshank who was drowned in the Spey during the great flood of 1829. Another person of some 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 connection to this estate is that of James William Grant who died in 1865, aged 77 years. He constructed a notable observatory at Elchies, which was guarded by sphinxes, and it apparently was the first large telescope in Scotland.

We had planned to have Aberlour published in time for Christmas, but due largely to a family bereavement, this was impossible. However, I am pleased to say that after many trials and tribulations in the background, this new addition to our publication list has very recently become available. One of the problems we had with it was caused by the various different sections within it, which included several indexes. The addition of all this priceless family and local history information, which will shortly be added to website datasets, means that MBGRG now can offer information on some 60,000 people

connected in one way or another with Morayshire. Another very valuable accession we have been able to publish, concerns the Burial Register of St Margaret's Episcopal Church in Scotland, which of course includes details relating to many of the children connected with the famous Aberlour Orphanage, which closed its doors in 1967. MBGRG is most grateful to Bishop Mark Strange for giving permission for this material to be published.

The amount of MI recording during last season was very considerable to say the least. The burial grounds worked in were Cullen Auld Kirk, Elgin (East), Kirkmichael, Mortlach, Tomintoul and the Michael Kirk at Gordonstoun. Cullen Auld Kirk is of course a truly fascinating place and well worth a visit at any time, and we must thank Bill Davidson again for all his friendly help and assistance, particularly in getting access to the church. Another vote of thanks goes to Hugh Brown of Gordonstoun School, who gave permission to have all the stones photographed at the Michael Kirk. This churchyard has been recorded twice before, but it was felt that a photographic record would make a suitable addition to the work previously done. Some of the images are unfortunately of a standard below what we normally strive for, and this is due largely to the surrounding tree cover. However, we are now actively preparing a report on this new study, which we hope will be completed soon.

One other project that has been lying in the background for some time now, is Volume 2 of Elgin Cathedral, but we are now getting a little head of steam up on this project I'm glad to say. It had been originally planned to include all the difficult inscriptions we were unable to decipher for Volume 1, the recycled table-stone tops with inscriptions on the underside, Lair Records from 1915-1976, Greyfriars Church memorials, and Holy Trinity Church Death Records and church memorials. However, this has now been increased a fair bit to include all War Memorials in Elgin, except New Elgin (which has already been published by MBGRG), and all other memorials thought appropriate. Lately this has again been possibly expanded in line with our Hon. President's comments on heraldry, so as a starting point we hope to include all items of armorial interest recorded during our monumental survey within the cathedral a few years ago. WHEW! - We'll see!

So what's on the menu for the coming year? Our main areas of interest are mentioned in Helen's report, but other burial grounds may receive a visit from MBGRG and these include, Deskford, Grange and Rothiemay. A word of warning. Visits to the new cemetery at Cullen may on occasion prove a bit on the cold side as it is situated right on the coast of the Moray Firth - therefore wrap up well as and when required.

Last, but certainly far from least, I am extremely pleased to announce that Helen our Field Co-ordinator, has been nominated for the Scottish Civic Trust Champions Award for her years of dedicated efforts on behalf of The Moray Burial Ground Research Group. The winners will be announced at a ceremony

in Glasgow toward the end of March, and we will naturally watch events with more than a little interest. Well done Helen!

Keith Mitchell (Chairman)

Secretary's Report

This year has seen me dealing with the usual correspondence for our Annual meal and for this AGM. I have also been writing letters to various schools and public buildings where there may be plaques and memorials, which we would wish to record as part of our second publication on Elgin Cathedral.

So far I have had positive replies from the East End and West End schools and The Moray Council for the Town Hall. I have written to the GPO and to Dr Gray's Hospital to ask permission to record their memorials.

I would ask anyone reading this if they know of any further plaques or memorials in buildings in Elgin where the general public would not perhaps normally see them to let the group know.

Ruth McIntosh (Secretary)

Treasurer's Report

At the end of December we had a total membership of 58 (51) and 1 corporate group. This generated an income of £680 (£597) in subscriptions. The figures in brackets denotes the previous year.

Our publishing costs for the year came to £402 (£2,228). This was for the reprinting of previous publications and the first issue of Knockando MIs. Our total income to the end of December from the sale of the publications came to £907 (£2,036) and we had stock in hand to the value of £2418 (£2,602).

Other income came from the sale of Photos, £237 (£164); Donations, £60 (£140); Sale of Equipment, £35; Auction of Stamps, £105; Raffle, £20 and Bank Interest £1 (£1).

The above income includes publication, photo sales and donations etc. through PayPal to the value of £367 (£328).

Other expenditure during the year included Website expenses of £172 (£124); Insurance £177 (£177); Printing (of newsletter), stationery, travel expenses to Edinburgh for SAFHS meetings, telephone, postage, and photocopying £329 (£713); Equipment £164 (£133); Subscriptions £75 (£55); AGM expenses £41 (£30); Sundries amounting to £91 (£85); PayPal charges £22 (£19); SAFHS,

tables for 2014 Family History Fair, £20 and Annual Dinner expenses amounting to £142 (£246).

At 31 December 2013 our total cash/bank funds amounted to £3357 (£2947).

Irene Black (Treasurer)

Fieldwork Co-ordinator's Report

Overall we have had 17 working visits and 6 photo visits to the following burial grounds, as well as several war memorials and churches. These include Burnside, Cullen Auld Kirk, Elgin East, Kirkmichael, the Michael Kirk at Gordonstoun and Mortlach. Of those mentioned, Burnside, Cullen, Elgin East, Kirkmichael and the Michael Kirk transcriptions are now complete, but final checks still have to be made. We require to finish transcribing and also probing for buried tombstones at Mortlach. Aberlour is now at the printers.

As to the work for this coming year, our plans are to record at Cullen New, Elgin South, Mortlach New, Tomintoul Old and New along with St Michael's and St Laurence in Forres. Perhaps, however, this is being a little optimistic!

During your time of rest from working in the field, background work has been going full speed ahead. Lindsay, Keith and I have been working on indices for the website and appropriate index for future publications. For Aberlour around 5000 names were checked with Lindsay making out the indices, Keith and I checking that all the names were correct and that dates corresponded. Next stage was checking the index, four in all. We then started on Elgin East, which has now been partially checked and has an index of around 4000 names. The indices for Burnside in Rathven are in the process of being checked, but with nearly 1200 memorials there will be quite a number of names. These last two burial grounds should be our next publications.

Helen Mitchell (Fieldwork Co-ordinator)

Historical Research Co-ordinator's Report

With the book on Aberlour now completed, historical and archival research is being focussed on Mortlach and Cullen, in readiness for the eventual publication of these sites. Further historical research has also been undertaken with regard to the churchyard and cemetery at Rathven, and also the burial ground at Farskan in that parish.

The majority of the research over the past year has, however, been focussed on the parishes of Cullen, Fordyce and Deskford, as it becomes obvious that not every one of these churches or their burial grounds was in constant use. In quite a few cases the burials of individuals from one of these parishes took

place in a neighbouring parish. Although some of these were obviously at the family's choice, others seem to have been determined by the availability of a grave-digger, or a minister, or the willingness of a kirk session to allow the burial. This may cause confusion to those researching their family history in this area.

The early history of the church at Cullen is quite interesting, the kirk being first noted in the records in 1236, a date which is confirmed by the architecture of the rounded arch in the southwest corner. Robert the Bruce's second queen, Elizabeth de Burgh, died on 27th October 1327 whilst on a visit to Cullen, and according to an old record the "*interiors partes corporis ejus*" (the interior parts of her body) were "*eredit*" (buried) in the Kirk of Cullen, the remainder being in Dunfermline Abbey. King Robert left an endowment to the Kirk of Cullen for the saying of masses in the kirk for his deceased queen.

The earliest records of the parish are from the early 15th century, but are mostly sasines and retours. The South Aisle (transept) was erected at the desire of the pious Elena Hay in 1536 and was dedicated to St Anna, the Virgin's mother. Elena Hay was the mother of John Duff of Muldavit. Robert Moir was a mason in Cullen at this time and worked on the building of the new aisle. In 1543 the chapel was elevated to the dignity of a Collegiate Church, which would have been provided for by payments from the resources of several smaller parish churches. The "*College*" consisted of a Provost, six prebendaries and two singing boys, to ensure that the masses should be sung "*decently and in order every day*". William Lawtie, the parish priest, was granted an Instrument of Possession of the prebendary of St Mary in Cullen in 1549, and in 1555 there is a Sasine in favour of Thomas Maitland of the prebendary lands of St Mary Magdalene as fre[e]signed by John Cothbie, chaplain.

Following the Reformation of 1560 there were numerous land transfers with regard to the holdings and patronages of the church. In 1576 there is a Charter by George Duff of Muldavit in favour of William Ogilvy of the lands of Auchingall in Cullen with rights of patronage of the Prebend of St Ann in the Collegiate Kirk of Cullen, and the following year Alexander Ogilvie held the prebend of the Holy Cross in Cullen Kirk.

Research into the churches and churchyards in the parish of Kirkmichael and the quoad sacra parish of Tomintoul is also ongoing, but the information is proving difficult to trace. The church of St Bridget is of special interest as it is almost certain that it would have had its own burial ground, but is very poorly documented. There were also numerous chapels in this remote area, and there is documentary, but little physical evidence, of several other burial grounds in these parishes.

Many publications have now been produced by the group. In the "Forgotten Tombstones" series, which records the buried or inaccessible tombstones, there are now Dipple, Essil, Kirkhill, Old Drainie Churchyard on RAF Lossiemouth, Bellie, Kinneddar, Burghead, Lhanbryde, Urquhart, Spynie, Alves and Birnie. In the "Monumental Inscriptions" series which records all visible tombstone inscriptions, there are now publications for Bellie Churchyard and New Cemetery, Elgin Cathedral, Rafford Churchyard and New Cemetery, Boharm Churchyard, Downan Churchyard, Glenrinnes Burial Ground, Buiternach Burial Ground, Dallas Churchyard, Duffus New Cemetery and Extension, Dundurcas Churchyard, Macallan Churchyard, Chapelton R.C. Churchyard, Tombae R.C. Churchyard, St Ninian's at Chapelford, St Peter's at Duffus, Rothes Churchyard and Cemetery, Cluny Hill Cemetery Forres, Kinloss Abbey, Elgin Cemetery (West), Dyke Churchyard and Cemetery and Knockando Churchyard. There are also unpublished surveys of the memorials in Greyfriars Convent in Elgin, and at the burial ground on the Knock of Alves.

All members of the group are to be congratulated on the vast amount of information which they continue to provide for Genealogists and Family Historians researching their Scottish roots.

Bruce B Bishop

(Chairman of SAFHS & Historical Research Co-ordinator of MBGRG)

Webmaster's Report
(The MBGRG Website)

Heart Internet, our web hosting supplier and ISP (service provider), upgraded the SQL (programming language) database management software, towards the end of the year. They unfortunately did not inform me of this, and after the change, it was found impossible to update or edit any of our existing database tables! This caused no problems as regards accessing existing data for our website visitors, but did necessitate some minor table restructuring, to permit editing and addition of new data functionality to be restored.

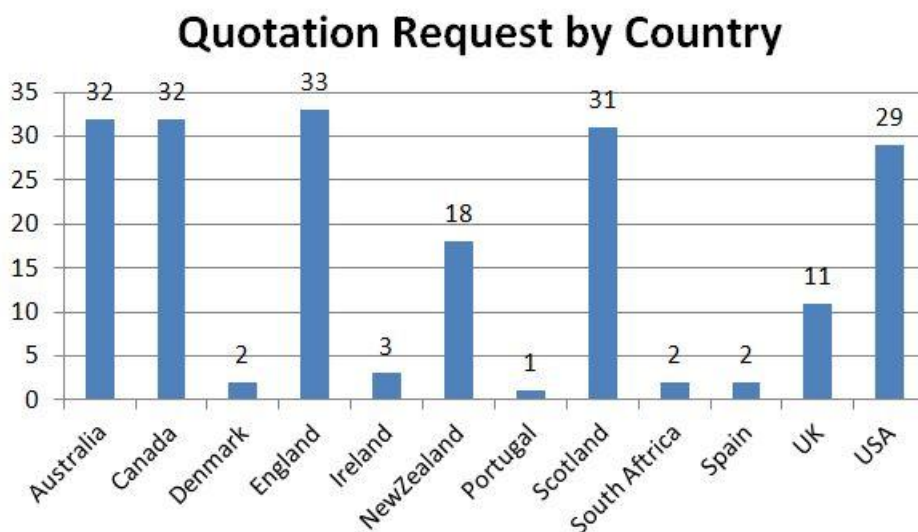
Abstracted data for Knockando Churchyard and Extension, Church and Archiestown War Memorial, was added to the Ancestor Indices on the website, bringing the number of individuals listed to some 55,000. The Annual Report for 2012-2013, and Newsletter Issues 20 and 21 have also been put on-line.

Abstracted data from 'Aberlour' has been completed, and four indexes generated for inclusion in the final publication. The abstracted data will be added to the on-line database, as usual, one month after publication. This should add a further 4,750 individual names to the Ancestor Indices.

Elgin Cemetery East abstracted data has been fully processed and checked. The Publication Index should be completed before the AGM in March. Abstraction of data for Rathven, Burnside is currently in progress.

PayPal - Requests for Quotations still continue, but the number of orders processed over the last year has been a little disappointing at only 35.

It might interest Members, however, to see where all such requests received, have originated from.



Lindsay Robertson (Webmaster)

Publicity Report

While the MBGRG has been busy with its research over the past year, publicity has been limited especially in the newspapers with only one publication, Knockandhu needing promoting. The abundance of research last year does mean a potential bumper year for publications and ample opportunity for promotion for the work of the group and publications.

Facebook has quietly progressed over the year since launching in March 2013, with 74 people 'liking' the site. It has proved a very useful vehicle to keep people up to date with the work of the group, and another way for people to contact the group. Facebook will continue to be used as a promotional tool throughout the year and member's contributions are most welcome to be posts on the site and also for the group newsletter.

The publicity officer will continue to look for other options to promote the work of the group, including local newsletters (Knock News, Spotlight etc.), as well as local outlets when the group is working in a particular area (shops, schools, churches etc.).

Stephen Leitch (Publicity Manager)

And Now For a Little Something Extra
(or What's in a Name – by Keith Mitchell)

The following bit o' blethers wis sent tae oor MBGRG hame base in Elgin fae that auld mannie in Aiberdeen fa looks eftir wir website. But before continuing, perhaps the foregoing sentence should be translated from the Doric language into more understandable English for the benefit of those not acquaint with this delightfully expressive manner of speaking. It reads:- *The following email was sent to our MBGRG home base in Elgin from that elderly gentleman in Aberdeen who maintains our website.* Well the term 'elderly' is maybe just a little bit unfair!

However, before proceeding I should explain the reasoning behind the content of this message. Over the last few weeks Helen and both Lindsay and myself have been working on checks relating to creating a website dataset, and index, covering all the memorials in Burnside Cemetery, Rathven, not far from Buckie. During our research we found many of the tombstones included what are known as Tee-names, that is, names which distinguish people who have the same surname. They came for the most part in two formats, one relating to family history, the other being descriptive. David Fowler's excellent book on the subject, covering the area from Portgordon to Cullen is indeed most informative.

Anyway I had sent Lindsay an email asking him to send out a notice to all members concerning the AGM meeting and the party the night before. As luck would have it he sent me a draft for checking, which included the dates 29th and 28th March, which of course should have read the 23rd and 22nd March respectively. It was with some little surprise when I received the following.

Tae Keith Mitchell (Tee-name "Farsma") and Helen Mitchell (Tee-name "Nitherdomestic"). Just as weel I sent you folkies a draft for checkin oot – ma first try wis a load o' richt sharnie dubbs. Dinna ken far I got the 29th fae - auld age disna come itsel – Ach weel, nicht get it richt the morn when I send aff a proper message to they Groupie folks. Aw the best, Lindsay (Crepit). I'll now leave you non-speaking Doric folk to work out the translation of this yourselves.

Members who regularly attend burial ground recording sessions will know immediately what the above suggested Tee-names refer to, but for those who are uninitiated in the subject, "Farsma" means "where's my" as in "where's my camera?," when I temporarily misplace my photograph equipment, and "Nitherdomestic" refers to disagreements between Keith and Helen on site, which are humorously referred to as domestics! I responded to Lindsay with the following email (addressed to him as "Crepit" otherwise known as "Auldb....r."

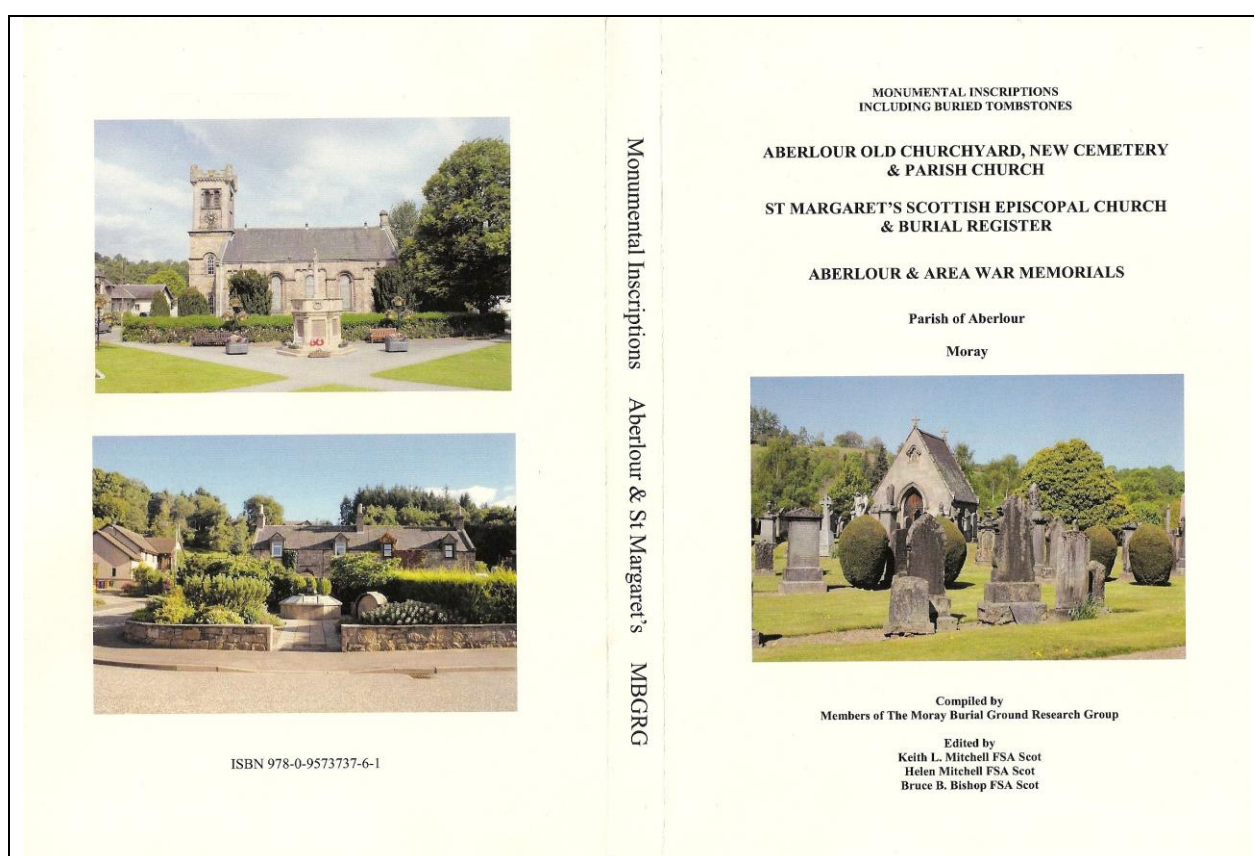
To be fair Farsma & Nitherdomestic are brawlie Tee-names. Perhaps something fir wir Reportie that we're daein wir best tae pit thegither for a' they daft feels that ging oot in a' withers, trampin roon an' roon a' these auld kirkie places, far the deid folkies bide! Dinna mind they sharnie dubbs o' messes ye got yersel intilt o'er thir dates (nae fruity anes ather)! We're a' gaen doon the same wee roadie, am thinkin. Niver worry though, it nicht get a hale lot worsted, sae mak the best o'it iv noo.

Cheerio!

Farsma (aka Keith)

Our Latest Book

Aberlour Monumental Inscriptions



The book contains : Introduction & acknowledgements, A Brief History of the Churches and Churchyards of Aberlour, Commemorative Memorials, Monumental Inscriptions for Aberlour Churchyard, Mausoleum & New Cemetery, Aberlour Parish Church & St Margaret's Scottish Episcopal Church, Churchyard & Burial Register as well as the War Memorials in Aberlour & Craigellachie. It also includes Buried Tombstone Inscriptions & Drawings and Lair Names from the 1858 Aberlour Churchyard Lair Plan and all relevant Plans & Indexes.

The book retails at £14.00, but is available to members at the reduced price of £10.50 plus post & packing. To order your copy please contact Helen Mitchell on 01343-546620, or via **coordinator@mbgrg.org**

The End of Season Party



Laichmoray Hotel on 26th October 2013





And a Good Time Was Had By All!

The Moray Burial Ground Research Group - March 2014