

# CLISH-CLASH



**The e-newsletter of the Scottish Local History Forum**

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## SLHF NEWS

Welcome to Issue 53 of *Clish-Clash* and we hope that the longer days and better weather are giving you plenty of things to do.

■ **A Trustees Meeting** was held on Monday 27 June 2022 and what follows are some of the main issues that were discussed. Some of the regular agenda items were consideration of reports on a number of governance issues including finance, publications, and website and social media activities.

One of the most pressing issues was the imminent retirement of our long-serving membership secretary, Doris Williamson, who has so ably looked after managing our subscriptions and taking bookings for our events. We are still looking for a volunteer to take on these duties. If you are interested and would like to have a chat about what is involved you can contact our treasurer, Jan Bateman, by emailing [scottishlocalhistoryforum@gmail.com](mailto:scottishlocalhistoryforum@gmail.com).

### ■ Mini-Conference

We also discussed the successful anti-slavery mini-conference held online in April, which organiser Nicky Small describes in detail below.

### ■ Walks & Talks

Our next event will see a return of our popular Walk & Talk series. SLHF is delighted to offer a curator-led visit to the Museum of Scottish Railways at Bo'ness, a light lunch at the award-winning Corbie Inn; and a private tour of Kinneil House. It will take place on Wednesday, 31 August 2022. For further details follow this link:

<https://www.slhf.org/event/walk-talk-kinneil-house-boness-railway-museum>

### ■ Annual Conference

At the meeting we also considered some of the possible subjects and speakers for our annual conference on the theme of 'Engineering, Science and Technology'. We are planning this for Spring 2023 and will look to hold an in-person and online hybrid event. Offers of suitable papers are very welcome.

### ■ NLS/SLHF Annual Lecture

Another event that we are keen to revive is the National Library of Scotland/Scottish Local History Forum annual lecture. Our speaker Tom Dowds was unable to deliver his planned lecture on the radical insurrection of 1820 due to the Coronavirus lockdown, but we are all keen for him to mark this important bicentenary, however belatedly. It is hoped that this can be arranged for next year.

### ■ AGM

The 2022 Annual General Meeting of the Scottish Local History Forum will take place on Monday 24 October at 6 pm online via Zoom. Anyone can attend, but only individual members and those representing organisational members can vote. Further details are available through this link:

<https://www.slhf.org/event/slhf-annual-general-meeting>

In addition to the election of trustees for the ensuing year we are also looking for people to serve on our advisory committee. This meets twice a year and is most valuable in helping the forum meet its aim of stimulating and encouraging interest in local history and heritage in Scotland. The purpose of the advisory committee is to represent to the trustees the views of member local history societies and other organisations affiliated to the forum. If you are interested in representing your society or institution on this committee then please email

[scottishlocalhistoryforum@gmail.com](mailto:scottishlocalhistoryforum@gmail.com).

### ■ Journal

Our editor, Don Martin, was able to provide a detailed report on the contents of the upcoming edition of **Scottish Local History**. Along with the regular news features, notes & queries and reviews we will be treated to the following articles: *Problems of Philanthropy at Pollok Park, Glasgow* by P Back; *Burghs in the Moray Landscape* by J Barrett; *Valentine Pull-out Novelty Postcards* by A Cronshaw; *Conflict over Cholera in Edinburgh, 1832 (part 2)* by P Hoad; *Newton Stewart Coronation Bridge* by D Lockhart and *Ardrasgair: Portrait of a Highland Village* by K Myers.

### ■ Scotland Against Slavery the Local View

Following a successful event over two nights in April 2021, which focussed on *Scotland's Involvement in Slavery – The Local View*, it was suggested that we hold a follow up event to explore anti-slavery in Scotland, again emphasising the local view. This event was also held over two evenings and was exclusively online. We welcomed six tremendous speakers who delved into their local topics with enthusiasm, detail and so much knowledge and

insight! We were delighted that Prof Chris Whatley joined us from Skye to introduce our speakers on the first evening and he took us through the programme with his usual relaxed style.

Katie Hunter opened the event speaking on 'Black Lives Mattered in 19th century Edinburgh: Quaker Women and the Anti-slavery Campaign'. Katie spoke about the lives of four notable Quaker women who had engaged in anti-slavery campaigning and yet her focus was not really about them or their lives but on the project which had brought these women to the attention of a local community group she worked with. While we had some information and knowledge about the Quakers' work, Katie talked more widely about the way slavery is treated as a topic in education and the ways in which engaging with this subject has changed in recent years, especially since the Black Lives Matter campaign. As a teacher she was really enthused by how local stories, especially those involving women, had an impact on people who were learning about them for the first time. Exploring this topic, and the Quaker women involved, had led some participants to consider their own involvement in campaigning and activism which in itself demonstrated the legacy left by these determined Quaker women.

Alastair Minnis gave our second presentation on 'Two Abolitionist Poets from the Scottish Borders: John Younger (d. 1860) and John Marjoribanks (d. 1796)'. This was a fascinating insight into how writers turned to poetry to express their views on slavery. John Younger seemed an unlikely poet as a shoemaker of quite modest means, but Alastair brought his experience to life and demonstrated how he witnessed others engaging in slavery by travelling to the Indies seeking jobs and fortunes as so many young men did at that time. The poets saw how their friends' experiences in the Indies 'pervert their fine sensibilities' and expressed this in their own writing.

Eric Graham completed the presentations on our first evening as he gave 'Ayrshire's Contributions' to the cause of anti-slavery some considered examination. Eric outlined visits to Ayrshire of self-liberated slaves to raise awareness of their plight including Frederick Douglass and Moses Roper. He also talked about the campaigning and talks in Ayrshire by anti-slavery figures that went on during the American civil war. Finally, he gave an insight into the 'Pantaloons', a vessel built in Troon which was used in the 'African squadron' which sought to police the ban on the transportation of slaves. Many Scots served and died as part of this effort to enforce the abolition of the slave trade. At the conclusion Prof Whatley led us through some questions and general discussion with comments, insights and queries coming from the online participants.

The second evening was hosted by SLHF Chair, Steve Connelly, with the relaxed mood and informality begun the previous evening continuing. Iain Whyte opened for the evening with his presentation: 'Destroying the Upas tree: Andrew Thomson of Edinburgh and the urgent call for immediate abolition'. This was an intriguing talk on Andrew Thomson who died very suddenly in 1831 but who had made two incredibly powerful speeches and written articles on the need for immediate action to abolish slavery. Iain really highlighted the difference in approaches from the slow and gradual changes some abolitionists preferred against the immediate cessation of these practices.

Richard Anderson then took up the theme with his exploration of three Jameses – James Beattie, James Ramsey and James Stephen – all involved with abolitionism in Aberdeen University. Richard took us through the archives and teachings of these scholars and how their lectures and writing impacted at different points on the campaign to abolish slavery. James Stephen, having attended the moral philosophy classes under the 'celebrated Dr Beattie' learned much that was 'useful to me in active life'. While some of those associated with the university grew wealthy through slave trading, others within it were using their positions to argue against it.

The final speaker was Aileen Black who took us to Dundee to talk about the 'Sin of Slavery to the Cause of Freedom all over the World' and the actions of the Rev. George Gilfillan and anti-slavery protest in the city. Aileen has done considerable work on the life of Gilfillan, and, in her presentation, she explored his conflicting attitudes. On the one hand Gilfillan held the conviction that freedom from slavery was a God-given liberty and yet she outlined how he 'lost his way' while attempting to navigate the complex nature of anti-slavery protesting in his home town. This presentation really expanded on the previous ones by showing us the flawed but human nature of a man like Gilfillan who wished to be, as we might say today, on the 'right side of history' but who demonstrated all too well how complex these issues could be when the local perspective clashes with international events.

Our second evening also had some excellent questions and more responses from our speakers and Steve Connelly wound up an extremely interesting, informative and engaging session with grateful thanks to all involved.

## MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY REQUIRED

It is with grateful thanks but some trepidation that we received news from our indefatigable membership secretary Doris Williamson, that she is planning to retire shortly after many many many years' service. The Trustees are looking for a responsible and reliable volunteer to take on the critical role of Membership Secretary – liaising with organisations and individuals and encouraging them to renew their membership each year. Out of pocket expenses will be paid.

Please spread the word. Anyone interested can contact us for further information by emailing [scottishlocalhistoryforum@gmail.com](mailto:scottishlocalhistoryforum@gmail.com)

## LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES & MUSEUMS

■ **National Library of Scotland** More than 200 manuscripts dating back as early as the 9th century have been digitised by the National Library of Scotland. The collection has a 15th-century medical almanac, printed illustrations, a 12th-century manuscript of the Rule of the Knights Templar order, including advice on the 'superfluity' of beards and moustaches, and a 15th-century psalter written and illuminated at Culross Abbey, Fife.

<https://digital.nls.uk/early-manuscripts/>

**Treasures of the National Library of Scotland** is a new permanent exhibition at NLS on George IV Bridge, Edinburgh. It provides a unique insight into Scotland's history, culture and people and its place in the world.

<https://www.nls.uk/treasures/explore/>

To mark the opening of **Treasures of the National Library of Scotland**, NLS have asked some of Scotland's real-life national treasures to select their favourite items from the exhibition in a new weekly podcast series.

<https://www.nls.uk/treasures/podcast/>

'**Discover**' is the National Library of Scotland's award-winning full-colour magazine. The latest issue features: Val McDermid on writing, reading and playing in a rock band; The exquisite artwork and history of the Gutenberg Bible (which can be seen in our Treasures exhibition); Scottish author Elizabeth MacKintosh, better known as 'Josephine Tey'; The battle to clear the names of thousands of victims of Scotland's witch trials.... and much more!

<https://www.nls.uk/about-us/publications/discover/>

NLS also provide a wide range of **talks and workshops**, many with a strong local history theme. Before Covid-19 these were run in the Library, but were made available online at the beginning of the pandemic. Audiences are bigger, and researchers from around the world can now attend. The main local history events are:

Family History From Home: An Introduction;

Maps for Family and Local History;

Navigating the Maps Website;

History of the House;

Women's Lives and Writing;

Exploring the Climate Crisis at NLS.

The current programme is listed on the NLS website – <https://www.nls.uk/events/workshops-and-tours> – and each event appears between three and one weeks before it happens (this varies depending on the workshop). A link leads to Eventbrite where the talk or workshop can be booked. Please be aware that these events fill up very quickly, so it is advisable to ask Eventbrite to send an automatic reminder when an event becomes bookable.



Swilken Bridge and curling ponds, St Andrews – 6 inch to the mile Ordnance Survey map – Fife and Kinross IX.SW sheet, 1896

■ **Historic Environment Scotland** Discover the stories of the Orkney Isles with a new digital tour featuring mesmerising drone footage and 3D scans, alongside tales from its 5000-year-long history

<https://tinyurl.com/ywefazpm>

■ **HES** awards £140,000 to community heritage projects. Latest Historic Environment Support Fund recipients include research and analysis of Bronze Age burial cist. <https://tinyurl.com/2hrr626x>

■ The **ScotlandsPeople** website is available at several **Local Family History Centres** in Scotland. These have now begun to reopen following a prolonged period of closure. For further details

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/local-family-history-centres>

■ **National Museum of Scotland** The fabled casket that led to the eventual downfall of Mary Queen of Scots has been acquired for display by The National Museum of Scotland. <https://tinyurl.com/y64l2egv>

■ **British Newspaper Archive** The BNA has recently added a Scottish Newspaper to its portfolio. It reports as follows: 'the **National Observer** began life as the Scots Observer in 1888. First published on 24 November 1888, the newspaper positioned itself as a "Record and Review", offering comment on both national and international news. With articles tackling "The Irish Land Purchase Bill Debate" to the "Government of Queensland", the National

Observer was a robust publication that addressed everything from sport (“The Spread of Golf”) to art (“Royal Scottish Academy School”). It covers the years 1888-1897. <https://tinyurl.com/32be2uxx>

■ **Highland Archives Achieves Accreditation** The Scottish Assessors, National Records of Scotland and Scottish Council on Archives, have recently announced that **Highland Archives** has been awarded Archive Service Accreditation, the latest Scottish archive to achieve this UK-wide standard. <https://tinyurl.com/mtwrmnn6>

■ **Auchindrain** which is an historic farm site in Argyll that was damaged by an earthquake last year re-opened on 1 June. Essential repairs have been completed but some buildings will remain closed. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cq3jz17d55zo>

■ **Perth Museum to honour Joseph Knight** A new national museum is to honour Joseph Knight, the enslaved man who won a landmark legal case in 1778 at the Court of Session. <https://www.scottishlegal.com/articles/museum-to-honour-joseph-knight>

■ **Empire, Slavery and Scotland’s Museums Steering Group** presents guidance to the Scottish Government <https://tinyurl.com/2dnuhbma>

■ This year **Townswab Archiving** will be offering three primary grants of equal value in order to provide as many organisations an opportunity to digitise their valuable collections. There has been an addition to the marking criteria this year which Townswab Archiving would like to focus on. This includes a section focusing on accessibility to the digitised collection so that as many users far and wide can benefit from the digitisation projects they fund. <https://www.townswabarchiving.com/2020-twa-digitisation-grant/>

Create a listing for your library, archive or museum in the SLHF Directory of local history resources. It is easy to do and free, just go to <https://www.slhf.org/submit-listing>

### ■ **Visit to the British Library in Boston Spa – Douglas Lockart**

On 9 May 2022, I visited Boston Spa for the first time to read newspapers. It is necessary to order items at least 48 hours in advance of a visit and you will need a British Library reader’s card. My card had expired during lockdown, but it was possible to get an online extension that allowed me to make an order. You also make an appointment to renew your card/set up a reader’s card – a range of times is possible – I chose 10.30, the first of the day. Next step is to download a box office style ticket showing your appointment – you will need this to show to security. Important – check on the BL website that all your ordered items are available before leaving home.

The library at Boston Spa is in an industrial estate in a rural area around 5 miles from Wetherby Services [Junction 46 southbound on the A1M]. The first stage is to follow the B1224 road towards York for around 1½ miles, thereafter its best to input your destination into the Sat Nav system in your car as your route is via a series of minor roads with the library only signposted at the entrance. On arrival at the security checkpoint present your visit ticket and you will be directed to the visitors’ car park nearby. Follow the green line on the pavement and in around 200 yards the modern reading room is reached.

Your newspapers will be waiting for you – if hard copy, on a trolley. There are dedicated newspaper reading tables, recycled from when the library was at Colindale, and digital photography without flash is allowed. If you require to renew your reader’s ticket, you will have an appointment with the duty manager who will guide you through the process in an adjacent office. I found all the staff to be very friendly and helpful. The visit enabled me to consult five years of the *Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald* after the run in *British Newspaper Archive* ends in 1910, which I could not do in a library in Scotland – it’s not available in NLS and the North Ayrshire local and family history library in Irvine Town House which closed during COVID has not re-opened to readers. Finally, the British Library is open from 9.00-4.30 Monday-Friday and there is a restaurant on site for lunch! **Douglas Lockhart**

## **SOCIETIES**

■ **Society of Antiquaries Scotland** The Society offers grants from the Regional Fund to local archaeological, antiquarian, or similar societies to help fund a lecture (either singly or as part of a symposium or conference). <http://www.socantscot.org/grant-prize/regional-fund-buchan-lecture/>

The Society began publishing its annual journal in 1851. Today, the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal of new research on all aspects of Scotland’s past.

The upcoming volume 152 is now open for submissions. Send enquiries to the Managing Editor a [editor@socantscot.org](mailto:editor@socantscot.org). The deadline is **Wednesday 30 November 2022**.

Submissions are welcome from both Fellows and non-Fellows of the Society, including early-career researchers, established academics and independent scholars.

■ Our congratulations to **Cumnock History Group** in Ayrshire. The group has been awarded the John Strawhorn Memorial Quaich from Ayrshire Federation of Historical Societies in recognition of their outstanding work in promoting the history and heritage of Cumnock. The group was founded by the late Bobby Grierson in 2014 and in the short time since then they have undertaken two National Lottery funded projects: the investigation of Pennylands Camp 22 in WW2 and the farms of Old Cumnock and the three surrounding parishes. An exhibition of the results of the latter project called Ploughing Up Our Past is running at Cumnock's Baird Institute until 27 August. They've also investigated the local men and women who participated in the Great War, transcribed Old Cumnock Kirk Session minutes and Lugar church baptisms, photographed and recorded local graveyards, have an ever growing Cumnock Connections family tree and freely share a huge amount of information and photos on their main website [cumnockhistorygroup.org](http://cumnockhistorygroup.org) They have a worldwide membership and have a large following on several active Facebook groups. The group is led by Kay McMeekin who says the late Bobby Grierson who died suddenly two years ago would have been so pleased about this award. [info@cumnockhistorygroup.org](mailto:info@cumnockhistorygroup.org) The award was presented to Kay (left) by Professor Elaine McFarland of AFHS at the history group's June meeting.



■ **Cowal Historical Society** A new Cowal history group is looking for enthusiasts A small group of local history enthusiasts and experts are looking at setting up a group as a way of sharing knowledge about the many local, heritage landmarks across the peninsula through regular meetings and the encouragement of further explorations. Residents of Cowal interested in getting involved can contact Derek Darkins by email [cowalhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:cowalhistoricalsociety@gmail.com)

■ **Women's History Network** The Women's History Network is offering a small grant of up to £750 to support the direct costs of those researching women's history outside of academia. While applicants may be in possession of a degree and/or postgraduate qualification, the grants are intended to support research into women's history by independent scholars working outside the academy. <https://tinyurl.com/ytn69m4t> The WHN is also offering four WHN fellowships to support Early Career Researchers of women's or gender history. Each fellowship is designed to provide financial support to those who have completed their doctorate but are yet to secure their first academic post. We anticipate that the scholar would produce, or work towards producing, at least one tangible output during the duration of the Fellowship. The deadline for applications is **1 August** and the result will be communicated to the successful applicants by **1 September**. Fellowships will last from 1 October 2022 – 30 September 2023.

■ **Tippermuir Books** is a Perth-based publisher producing fiction and non-fiction titles. These are generally on a Scottish theme and several cover the history of Perthshire and Scotland. The three directors of Tippermuir all have a love of history, especially local history.

In addition, to running Tippermuir Books, they maintain a popular local history website, [www.madeinperth.org](http://www.madeinperth.org), and have even been known to undertake field work – they once visited all of the Marquis of Montrose's 'Year of Miracles' (1644-5) battlefields in a weekend! (Battles of Tippermuir, Aberdeen, (Justice Mills), Inverlochy, Auldearn and Kilsyth.) It was a natural step to organise with *The Perthshire Advertiser* the first Perthshire Historical Writing Award (2022). The theme of the writing competition was any aspect of the history of Perthshire. Submissions were restricted to a maximum of 1,000 words in length. They were required to be non-fiction and to have not been published previously. The competition was free to enter.

The judging panel for the award comprised the three directors of Tippermuir Books alongside Melanie Bonn (journalist with the *Perthshire Advertiser*), Ajay Close (award-winning journalist and historical novelist), Dr Nicola Martin (Lecturer in History at the University of Highlands & Islands) and Taylor Waggoner (creative practitioner and founder of Perth's Women). The judges were impressed by the quality of submissions, which came from across the UK and included one from Canada; eight were shortlisted – seven prose and one in poetry form. Their themes were the use of concrete in railway bridge construction in Perthshire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Gowrie Conspiracy, the Picts and the Battle of Mons Graupius, George Balfour, the mobster prior of Perth, the poet William Robertson (1833-1891), Lady Susan Murray (1699-1725), a horrific murder at Kenmore of September 1947 and the rivers of Lower Strathearn.

The winner was Irene Hallyburton with her essay, 'Rivers of Improvement in Lower Strathearn'. The judges felt the essay was skilfully researched, thoughtful, entertaining, and precisely written. The runners-up were 'Concrete Underfoot' by Moira McPartlin (second) and 'Lady Susan Murray' by Rosalind Anderson (third). The winner received book tokens to the value of £150, donated by Tippermuir Books and their essay was published in the *Perthshire Advertiser*.

Irene Hallyburton was born and brought up in Aberargie. She spent most of her career in science, latterly in malaria research. Last year, she moved into the heritage sector and now works at Dundee Museum of Transport. She is a trustee of the Museum of Abernethy. Irene has always been interested in history and archaeology and has worked on excavation sites from the prehistoric to the 1800s including Perth's Cromwellian citadel and Horsecross.

Her interest in history led her to undertake an MLitt in Scottish History at the University of Dundee. 'Rivers of Improvement in Lower Strathearn' is an extract from her MLitt dissertation looking at agricultural change in the area between 1750 and 1850. The dissertation topic was inspired by spending much of lockdown walking round the rural landscape she was born, brought up with, and lives in. Irene realised that she was walking through history. She saw hints of the changes wrought in the landscape as farming developed and farmers began to control the land. She walked the old roads, and the new roads and discovered there were still things we do not know.

Her research revealed new information relating to the estates of well-known local secessionist minister, Alexander Moncrieff, and it is the relationship between religious dissent and agricultural science which will be the subject of her PhD due to begin next year. Irene has also undertaken research into witch trials in Perthshire, which was published in the *Tayside and Fife Archaeological Journal* in 2021. **Dr Paul S Philippou**

If your society would like **SLHF** to sell your publications online, contact us <https://www.slhf.org/contact-slhf>

## WEBSITES

- A new website from **Spirit of the Highlands and Islands**, filled with stories from across the region, is now available to visit. **Spirit: Stories** is an online archive of tales submitted to the Spirit of the Highlands and Islands project from people who live, work and travel in the region. <https://discoverhighlandsandislands.scot/archive>
- **The Immeasurable Wilds: Travellers to the Far North of Scotland** is a website created by Alastair Mitchell. This extensive website should keep those with an interest in Sutherland and Ross-shire very busy. <https://www.theimmeasurablewilds-sutherland.co.uk/>
- **Scottish Historic Buildings Trust** has a website that may be of interest to local historians. It includes details of their lecture series. <https://www.shbt.org.uk/news-events/>
- **War Memorials Trust** works to protect and conserve war memorials in the UK. The charity provides free advice to anyone as well as running grant schemes to support repair and conservation projects. You can find a range of resources on this website to help you engage with our unique war memorial heritage. <http://www.warmemorials.org/>
- **Jisc Library Hub Discover** exposes rare and unique research material by bringing together the catalogues of major UK and Irish libraries. In a single search you can discover the holdings of the UK's National Libraries (including the British Library), many university libraries, and specialist research libraries. This service replaces Copac and SUNCAT, providing access to a growing range of library catalogues, with a new interface style and updated search facilities, with more changes in the pipeline. <https://discover.libraryhub.jisc.ac.uk/>

## RADIO AND PODCAST

- To mark the opening of **Treasures of the National Library of Scotland**, NLS have asked some of Scotland's real-life national treasures to select their favourite items from the exhibition in a new weekly podcast series. <https://www.nls.uk/treasures/podcast/>
- Meanwhile some more gems from **BBC Sounds**:
- **Archive on 4: Sir Alex Ferguson-Made in Govan** BBC Radio Manchester presenter Mike Sweeney and former Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson go back a long way. They used to play football together and bonded over their love of music from the 60s. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0015tw6>
  - **The Museums That Make Us** Neil MacGregor travels the length and breadth of the country to find out how Britain's museums use their collections to reflect the identity and ambitions of local communities. This new series for BBC Radio Four celebrating the museums to be found in all corners of Britain including a visit to Stornoway and Edinburgh. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0015474>
  - **The Caretakers** This programme takes us behind the scenes to meet the people who really know our museums, galleries and country homes - because they clean them! Well worth a listen including Doreen who works at the Glasgow Women's Library. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/brand/m00162tm>
  - **Cold as a Mountain Top** Robert Macfarlane cites the work of W.H.Murray as one of his greatest inspirations and in this programme follows his footsteps up Buachaille Etive Mor. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0015kt7>

## PUBLICATIONS and BLOGS

### Publications

■ **The Local Historian April 2022 Journal of the British Association for Local History.** This edition has articles about: Anti-social behaviour in medieval Tamworth; a contrary view of workhouses and tracing the history of a Cheltenham Trading estate as well as many others. <https://www.balh.org.uk/thelocalhistorian>

**Note:** according to the website the BALH firewall continues to be suspended so there's plenty of material available in the back issues.

■ **Local History News number 143 Spring 2022 The Magazine of the British Association for Local History.** This edition includes useful advice about accessing the recently published **1921 census for England & Wales** which in essence recommends spending the time (but a lot less money) by travelling to the 3 areas where access is free: The National Archives at Kew; the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth and the Manchester Central Library. Other articles relevant to every local history group or society include: Keep your pdf safe; Old Edinburgh Club; Producing newsletters, and then a local book, during lockdown. <https://tinyurl.com/y3vqhb4c>

■ **Scottish Literature An Introduction** by Alan Riach who is Professor of Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow sets out to guide the reader through the varied and ever-evolving landscape of the Scottish literature. <https://luath.co.uk>

■ **Northern Scotland Vol. 13, No. 1, May, 2022** is now available online. It is a cross-disciplinary publication which addresses historical, cultural, economic, political and geographical themes relating to the Highlands and Islands and the north-east of Scotland. <https://www.euppublishing.com/toc/nor/13/1>

■ **Bought & Sold Scotland, Jamaica and Slavery** by Kate Phillips. Scotland and Jamaica were closely entwined for over one hundred years. *Bought & Sold* traces this shared story from its early beginnings in the 1800s to the abolition of slavery in the British Empire and reflects on the meaning of those years for both nations today <https://www.luath.co.uk/>

■ **Calatria The Journal of Falkirk Local History Society Number 36 Winter 2021** The first post Covid edition covers topics from Falkirk's history spanning the centuries from the Roman occupation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century to the First World War in the 20<sup>th</sup>. <https://falkirklocalhistory.club/>

■ **The Immeasurable Wilds: Travellers to the Far North of Scotland, 1600 - 1900** (Paperback) by Alastair Mitchell. Published May 2022. Whittles Publishing [https://www.whittlespublishing.com/The\\_Immeasurable\\_Wilds](https://www.whittlespublishing.com/The_Immeasurable_Wilds)

■ **R. B. Cunninghame Graham and Scotland- Party, Prose, and Political Aesthetic** by Lachlan Gow Munro Published March 2022. <https://tinyurl.com/2p98cd8z>

■ **The Scottish Historical Review Volume 101, Issue 1, April, 2022** is the premier journal in the field of Scottish historical studies, covering all periods of Scottish history from the early to the modern, encouraging a variety of historical approaches, with articles written by leading scholars and Scottish historians. <https://tinyurl.com/47dfskav>

■ **The Geographer**-the newsletter of the **Royal Scottish Geographical Society Summer 2022** includes 'Sir Ernest Shackleton: a spirit of endurance and 'George Sherriff: plant-hunting in the Pass of Flowers' both by Jo Woolf Writer in Residence.

■ **BBC History Magazine July 2022** includes an item about Stirling Castle under the theme of 'Homes of the Stuart Dynasty'.

■ **'Discover'** is the National Library of Scotland's award-winning full-colour magazine. The latest issue features: Val McDermid on writing, reading and playing in a rock band ;The exquisite artwork and history of the Gutenberg Bible (which can be seen in our Treasures exhibition): Scottish author Elizabeth MacKintosh, better known as 'Josephine Tey';The battle to clear the names of thousands of victims of Scotland's witch trials and much more!

<https://www.nls.uk/about-us/publications/discover/>

### Blogs

■ **The Royal Scottish Geographical Society** continues to offer interesting stories from the pen of Jo Woolf. There is so much to read, get yourself a favourite drink and spend some time exploring the past, including the story of **Alexander Kellas: 'the most modest man that ever travelled the Himalayas'**. Born in Aberdeen Kellas was not just the most experienced Himalayan climber in Britain of his time; he was also the leading authority on the effects of altitude on the human body, and his research had convinced him that an ascent of Everest was physically possible. Read the full story here: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9d9tcs>

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### WHAT'S ON

■ **DIGIT!** is a hub for Scottish archaeology—well worth a look for a range of activities and stories. <https://www.digitScotland.com/>

■ **Society of Antiquaries Scotland Summer Excursion 2022: 'Exploring Dunfermline'** is on **Saturday 17 September** which should be an exciting day excursion in and around Dunfermline, Fife, Scotland's newly minted city. There are 40 spaces available so sign up soon to avoid disappointment. Find out more and register before Thursday 1 September 2022. <https://www.socantscot.org/event/summer-excursion-2022/>

■ **Verdant Works Dundee Meet the Last Tay Spinners 16 July to 9 October 2022.** This new exhibition documents one of the last days of jute spinning at Tay Spinners in Dundee before closure in 1998. Using colour and black and white photographs, 27 people are shown at work in the mill. These pictures take an 'Inside the Factory' approach to record the processing of raw jute into finished yarn. The exhibition also includes artworks created during lockdown based on the photographs. <https://tinyurl.com/ycyrz9f3>



■ **University of Dundee Museums Exhibition - World View - Travelling the Globe through Art & Design** Over the past two years the pandemic has prevented most of us from travelling. At the same time, we are becoming increasingly aware of the environmental impact of travel. This exhibition presents an opportunity to see the world remotely through the creative eyes of previous travellers over the past 200 years – artists who used different cultural experiences as inspiration for their work, though often seen through a western, colonial viewpoint. The exhibition also features a range of traditional and modern designs from other parts of the world and is on until 22 July. <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/museum/>

■ The **'Sincerely, Valentines'** exhibition at **V&A Dundee** runs from 2 July until 8 January 2023. This new exhibition celebrates the Scottish photographers who pioneered the holiday postcard. Valentines was founded in 1851 by James Valentine and quickly became one of the city's biggest employers. The exhibition will include original photographs, printing plates and promotional materials. The show also features a new film featuring former employees. <https://www.vam.ac.uk/dundee/exhibitions/sincerely-valentines>

■ **Auchindrain** which is an historic farm site in Argyll that was damaged by an earthquake last year re-opened on 1 June. Essential repairs have been completed but some buildings will remain closed. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cg3jz17d55zo>

■ **Tayport Heritage Trail** has been established for the community by the Ferry-Port-on-Craig Community Fund. It provides an introduction to the heritage of both Town and Parish, along with the surrounding countryside. <https://tayportheritage.com/>

■ **Edwin Raban: Up Close An event celebrating 400 years of printing in Aberdeen** In July Aberdeen will celebrate the 400th anniversary of the birth of printing in the city and experts from the University of Aberdeen and Robert Gordon University (RGU) are coming together with others from across Scotland to mark the important milestone. A series of events and an online exhibition will tell the story of Aberdeen's first printer, Edward Raban, who set up the region's first printing press in Castle Street in 1622. On **Saturday, 16 July**, members of the public can get a close look at some of the earliest material printed in Aberdeen with a display of rare books at the University of Aberdeen's Sir Duncan Rice Library. Attendees will also be able to hear talks about Raban's fascinating life and the early Scottish book trade. To book a FREE place at this event visit <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/museums/collections>



**Create a listing for your event** (including online ones) in the SLHF website diary. It is easy to do and free, just go to <https://www.slhf.org/submit-event>



## MEET AN SLHF TRUSTEE

### Steve Connelly, Honorary Chair, Scottish Local History Forum

I was born in Coventry in 1952 with a Scottish father and an English mother. After school I spent a year working at the North Warwickshire Valuation Office before taking up a place at Dundee University. I graduated in 1975 with a degree in Modern History and went on to qualify as a teacher. The planned career did not materialise and after working in a social work department adolescent home and some supply teaching I landed a temporary job back at Dundee University in the archives. This was my lucky break and led to an almost forty-year career. In 1978 I was fortunate enough to be appointed as the first full-time, permanent archivist at Perth & Kinross District Council. The District Archive was built up over the following years with the help of some great colleagues. In 1994 we transferred the collections from the basement of Perth's Sandeman Library to a purpose-built facility at the new A K Bell Library. I remained in post when the new unitary authority Perth & Kinross Council was created in 1996 and retired in 2016.

I was a branch officer of Perth & Kinross District NALGO for eighteen years, serving as its president, 1983-86. I was also chair of the Society of Archivists Scottish Region, 1993-96 and the first secretary and later convenor of the Archivists of Scottish Local Authorities Working Group, 2005-2008. I also served on the inaugural committee of the Scottish Council on Archives alongside then SLHF chair, the late Patrick Cadell, in 2002.

I have been a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland since 1997 and I have been a member of the council of the Abertay Historical Society for twenty years, recently finishing my second stint as its president. I am also the author of its latest publication: *George Miller, Town Clerk of Perth, 1723-1763 – Whig, Hanoverian, Glasite & Anti-Jacobite*. The research for the book was carried out at my former workplace after retirement. I have also been involved in researching the original subscribers to the Albert Institute (now the McManus – Dundee's Museum & Art Gallery) for its sesquicentenary in 2017 and served on the board of Dundee Civic Trust, 2017-19. I am currently the treasurer of the Friends of Dudhope Park, Dundee (which I can see out of my window as I type this).

I became a trustee of SLHF in 2017 and was elected chair earlier this year after the passing of Professor Paul Bishop. I am trying to keep up the good work and hopefully preside over a return to face-to-face and live events in the near future. I am ably assisted by my fellow trustees and the members of our advisory committee. I look forward to meeting you at one of our events in the near future.



### The Skeith Stone, Kilrenny, Fife



KILRENNY Skeith Stone , 9 November 2009, Don.

In our last edition, Don Martin MBE in our 'Meet a Trustee' was photographed standing by a very old sculptured stone. Don takes up the story.... I am grateful to Margaret Kennedy and Harry D Watson for confirming their awareness of the Skeith Stone (just west of Kilrenny in Fife) that was illustrated in *Clish-Clash* 52, page 9. This is certainly an object that SLHF members should know about. Scotland has a profusion of early medieval stones, but this is perhaps one of the most significant. It bears an early Christian *Chi Rho* symbol (from the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ), seemingly the only example to be found north of the Forth-Clyde valley. In fact, the only other well-attested Scottish examples of stones bearing this symbol are in Galloway, at Kirkmadrine and Whithorn. This perhaps suggests that eastern Fife, and maybe a substantial portion of southern Pictland, was evangelised by Ninianic missionaries from south-west Scotland rather than by Saint Columba and his disciples from Iona.

In one respect the three *Chi Rho*-bearing stones from Kirkmadrine (the 'Viventius & Mavorius' stone, the 'Florentius' stone' and the 'Initium et Finis' stone) and the two from Whithorn (the 'Latinus' stone and the 'Peter' stone) differ from the Skeith stone. All bear crudely lettered post-Roman Latin inscriptions. This seems to suggest a relationship

between post-Roman stones bearing Latin inscriptions and those bearing *Chi Rho* symbols. Across the south of Scotland are a number of stones bearing post-Roman Latin wording but no *Chi Rho* inscription. The most northerly of those seems to be the Cat Stane, situated close to the Edinburgh Airport runway and therefore unavailable for close inspection. A broad connection between the Cat Stane and the Skeith stone can be postulated, but comment by SLHF members with knowledge of this subject would be welcome. For further information on the Skeith stone (and especially its *Chi Rho* symbol) please see: R Trench-Jellicoe, 'The Skeith Stone, Upper Kilrenny, Fife, in its context', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 128 (1998), pp.495-513.

## MEET A LOCAL GROUP

### Abertay Historical Society

Abertay Historical Society was founded on 29 May 1947 to encourage and support interest in the history of Dundee, Angus, Perthshire and north Fife, which means we've just passed our 75th birthday. The Society's founders, Major-General Douglas Wimberley and Dr Frederick T. Wainwright, were both staff at University College, Dundee. The Society still has strong links with the now University of Dundee, but our membership and activity also spreads far beyond it, including people with a wide range of interests and routes towards local history.

The Society hosts a series of evening talks by invited speakers on aspects of local history and archaeology, which run once a month between September and May. Like most groups, our talks have been mainly online over the past two years or so, but we have recently enjoyed a return to in-person events, including a packed lecture hall for a talk by committee members Kenneth Baxter and Matthew Jarron on Ernest Shackleton's Dundee connections following the discovery of the wreck of the *Endurance*. Outwith the talks, we also hold one-off events for members, including historical walks and visits to places of interest. Last summer, a historical walk around Balgay Hill and cemetery ended up as more of a 'guided swim' as torrential rain set in, but this did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of the group.

Since 1953, Abertay Historical Society has published at least one book every year on a topic relating to the history of Dundee, Angus, Perthshire or north Fife. Membership includes a free copy of the year's book, and they are also available for sale through our website - where many older titles are also available as free downloads - and



Roger Illsley gives a talk on pioneering Dundonian writer, feminist and anti-slavery activist Frances Wright as part of Dundee Women's Festival, March 2022.



Members of Abertay Historical Society enjoy a tour of Balgay Park and Cemetery in summer 2021.

in discerning local bookstores. AHS publications cover time periods from prehistory to the late-twentieth century, and represent the wide range of interests and expertise held by local historians in the Abertay area.

Our Fieldwork Division is open to any AHS members who want to take an active role in recording local monuments and archaeological sites. In partnership with Archaeology Scotland's Adopt-a-Monument programme, the Fieldwork Division made an extensive survey of Market Knowe, north of Longforan, in 2017-19. This summer, the group is continuing its work recording the Rose Window stones at Balgay Hill.

Abertay Historical Society also partners with other local groups to support larger historical projects, such as the Great War Dundee project, <https://www.greatwardundee.com/#fndtn-cryptography> which researched and commemorated the city's involvement in World War One during its centenary years. Currently, AHS is leading the Woven Together project to research the history of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people and communities in Dundee, in collaboration with University of Dundee Museums and Dundee City Council. New research by the project's volunteers can be read on the Woven Together blog, and more events will be coming soon.

We are always keen to hear from potential new members, and we invite anyone with an interest in the history and archaeology of the Tayside area to get in touch with us, no matter where you are based in the world.

Abertay Historical Society website: <https://abertay.org.uk/>

Contact us at <https://abertay.org.uk/contact-us/> or email our secretary Matthew Jarron at [museum@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:museum@dundee.ac.uk)

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‘Libraries literally aren’t just a place to obtain books for free. They are one of the few public spaces left in our society where you’re allowed to exist without the expectation of spending money’. **Amanda Killian**

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Find out about what’s happening in local history around Scotland on the SLHF website:

<https://www.slhf.org/events>

<https://www.slhf.org/calendar>

Submit your events at: <https://www.slhf.org/submit-event>

#### **CONTACT DETAILS**

**Email** <http://slhf.org/contact-slhf>

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