

GLASGOW & WEST OF SCOTLAND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

A Scottish Charity No. SC 010866  
Unit 5, 22 Mansfield Street, Glasgow G11 5QP

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2004

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Cath. MIs Co-ordinator	Mr. William Hutcheson
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Membership Secretary	Mrs. Fiona Downie
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Mailing Officer & Exchange Journals	Mrs. Dorothy Bell
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New Members' Secretary	Mrs. Margaret Elliott
OMID Co-ordinator	Mr. Iain McKenzie
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Volunteers	Mrs. Sandra Speedie Miss Marion Lees Mrs. Olive Allardyce
Typist	Mrs. Doreen Faulds
Typesetter & Programmer	Mr. John Howarth

**Bank:**

Bank of Scotland plc  
41 Princes Mall, East Kilbride

**FINANCE** The Society's financial statements are published separately.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

We now have just under 2200 members. The recent trend is towards an increase in UK membership and fewer overseas members. The Society now accepts credit card payments, which we hope will attract more overseas members. The Membership Secretary would like once again to thank the mailing team for their efficiency in getting the Newsletter out on time.

## **PREMISES**

This year we have not needed to spend so much on electronic equipment, the only expenditure being on one replacement monitor. However the worn carpet we had inherited needed replacing, so new carpet tiles were fitted in the spring. This involved a major upheaval and the opportunity was seized to reorganise the furniture and other equipment in order to make best use of the available space. In particular, the publications cupboards have been re-sited, leaving their original alcove to accommodate still more shelving for our ever-growing microfilm library. Many thanks are due to those members who helped to achieve all this with as little inconvenience to researchers as possible. Conscious of the health and safety of our members, we have recently bought three new computer chairs to provide more suitable seating.

The research facilities are well used, by both new and longstanding members, and there is a regular exchange of information over the table at tea/coffee breaks. The expertise of our volunteers is much appreciated by members doing research, who benefit from the individual attention available. This year, some of our older volunteers have retired, mostly after many years of service. We are sorry to lose them and send them our sincere thanks and good wishes. Fortunately, replacements have come forward, but we can never be complacent in this respect and new volunteers are always most welcome.

We have recently installed a credit/debit card facility for payments in person, by phone, or by mail order. We do not accept Amex or Electron, nor is it available for online transactions. The facility is already proving popular and promises to bring an increase in business.

Outside opening hours the premises are well frequented by the various officers and assistants, whose devotion to duty is exemplary. To mention but a few, the librarians, for instance, spend many hours perusing books lists, and ordering and cataloguing new books; the printing team keep our own publications rolling off the press, as well as producing the thousands of inserts for our Newsletters; the project teams use the premises for photocopying and uplifting or returning material; the publications officer orders books, answers correspondence, fulfils orders.....and much more. Whatever name is used: the premises; the office; the rooms; Mansfield Park; it is the nerve centre of the Society's activities.

## **NEWSLETTER**

Once again we have had a busy year with lots to interest folks in the three newsletters we produce each year. The new covers, with a photograph on the front, generally went down well and after one or two hiccups with the quality of the paper, we think we are getting it right.

The story in the March issue, written by Moira Stewart about her great great grandfather shipwrecked off the coast of Brazil was picked up by a local newspaper and reproduced, albeit in a shortened version.

We continue to have a very lively "Letters to the Editor" page with members - and some non-members - writing from every corner of the world. We must be doing something right as in April we won the Scottish Association of Family History Societies' family history newsletter competition for the second year running.

More of our contributors are using e-mail, the computer and attachments to send articles or comments, which I know is frustrating for those who haven't mastered the technology, but it does make life so much easier for the editor and the long suffering typesetter, John Howarth, who never crumbles when my computer refuses to do what I think I have told it. Particular thanks to John for his help and to Alistair Smith the webmaster, but also to everyone who helps to produce the magazine. Do keep the articles and snippets coming.

## **LIBRARY**

The library continues to grow steadily and we have spent an unprecedented amount of money on stock this year. Among the many new items are early censuses and muster lists for New South Wales, Australia and updated versions of existing stock. With the recent plug for genealogy on TV, The National Archives and other publishing houses brought out a substantial number of new editions of earlier books, most of which include advice on how to use the Internet in tracing your family tree. Many other completely new titles explain, at various levels, how to go about researching family history in the UK and abroad using all the sources currently available.

We have continued to buy as many CD ROMS and material in microform as possible to save space. This year, for example, we have bought OPRs and 1841 and 1851 census data on microfilm for Dumfriesshire, Kirkcudbrightshire, Peeblesshire, Roxburghshire, Selkirkshire and Wigtonshire.

Keying in of the catalogue data is now complete and the file is being checked for inaccuracies, inconsistencies and mistakes. When this stage is complete, a stock check will be carried out, following which it is hoped that the library catalogue will be published on the Society's web pages. This will allow members to browse the catalogue from the comfort of their own homes. Furthermore, non-local members will then have direct access to the library's catalogue for the first time.

The next major project for the Library is to catalogue our map collection, which I hope to do throughout 2005. The maps will be included in the main catalogue, together with books and CD ROMS.

My grateful thanks are due to Dorothy Bell, who deals with the exchange journals received by the Society. I should also like to thank everyone who is helping with the checking of the catalogue.

Donations are always welcome, and we have to thank all donors, and in particular Sheila Duffy, for their gifts.

Finally, I should like to thank Gina Fisher once again for all her help with the Library and in particular for her computer skills, without which there would be no catalogue and excellent indexes to the OPRs and censuses.

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

This year our meetings have again been well attended and reports of these meetings are carried in the Newsletter for those members unable to attend in person. The October meeting, on the subject of the Glasgow Necropolis, generated great interest and different guided walks in the Necropolis were organised as a consequence. The December meeting, a social evening with members' heirlooms as the focus, was very well attended, with an audience of more than 80 members.

## SOCIETY WEBSITE

During 2004, our website has continued to grow both in terms of content and visitors. The site is now used by an average of 500 unique visitors daily, up from about 400 at the start of the year. The sections which receive the heaviest use are the dynamic sections of the site, i.e. the Guestbook and the OMID. In addition the pages which describe the Society's offerings such as publications, the newsletter and the census projects are also popular. In terms of web searches, most people arrive at the OMID having searched for surnames or places. The Google search engine, from a variety of countries, accounts for 4 out of the top 10 engines used by visitors to find the site. Some top search phrases include Brother's Keeper, Glasgow, and family history. Microsoft's Internet Explorer overwhelmingly dominates the browser-used figures.

2004 was the year when spam, or unsolicited mail, reached epidemic proportions on the Internet. Unfortunately, we were not immune from this. As we had many e-mail addresses of members (Omid), visitors (Guestbook) and council members on display, it was clearly time to increase the protection offered. Many approaches to this were tried early in the year and some of the perpetrators were amazingly stubborn. It is staggering to think that these people actually believed that a genealogist searching for ancestors in our area would possibly be interested in un-prescribed medication, or a Nigerian scam. It became apparent that there were only two options, either to close the parts of the website displaying e-mail addresses (and deprive visitors of its most popular parts) or implement a screening system. The latter was chosen and after many weeks of development, the solution was implemented. There is now no way to make contact with anyone on the website except by using a form which never reveals the address of the recipient.

Any messages submitted in this way are manually screened before either being deleted for being inappropriate, or approved and sent on to be acted upon as the recipient sees fit. It is immensely satisfying to find that someone from the Ivory Coast (the system addresses are logged) has spent hours filling out the form to send the same junk text to many, many people from our site, for the webmaster to simply delete the lot with one click. The one remaining real time part of the site i.e. the ability to post an item on the Guestbook, does occasionally attract unwanted attention, but Gordon Grant continues to moderate this by diligently removing offending items as soon as possible. The Newsletter Index database is now online and the facility to browse by section/topic, or to perform a simple text search has been created.

The site is becoming increasingly complex and more intelligent error and problem pages are being developed which, with other new features being planned for 2005, keep the webmaster, Alistair Smith, very busy. The Society is extremely grateful to Alistair who gives us so much of his time and expertise very willingly.

## RESEARCH

In 2004, one hundred research requests were processed, two are already waiting to be dealt with in 2005 and six are still with researchers. Apart from one blip when some certificate requests were mislaid, requests go out to a volunteer within a month of receipt. From that point times vary, but if the work is going to take longer than a month, the researcher will be in touch with the member to advise on progress or to request more information or clarification.

Thirty requests were received for information and help, which so far have not led to membership of the Society. There are also some e-mail requests throughout the year. Recently the research co-ordinator, Eileen Bell, has been unable to carry out research and she is very grateful for the assistance given by Anne Escott, Sheila Cuthbertson, Alexander Inglis, Joan Keen and Gordon Grant, who have had to work even harder this year to ensure that nobody has to wait too long for the research to be done. Pat McCabe, Sheila Cuthbertson and Margaret Warwick along with Eileen and her husband did parts of a very large search of the Wylie & Lochhead funeral records for a member. We would not normally take on that kind of research but the member was prepared to pay for the cost and extra. Rena Hamilton, Anne Kerr and Ellie Ferguson are happy to work on research from home.

The co-ordinator believes that the present charges are still suitable. Several researches go over the present deposit but members are happy to pay the extra especially when they have some new information.

All the researchers go to a lot of trouble to find answers for members, sometimes travelling to places such as Greenock and Stirling to try to find more information. The co-ordinator is glad to have such a hard working team.

## SOCIETY PROJECTS

### **a) Southern Necropolis project**

Heather Bain took over as co-ordinator of this project from Jacqueline Young during the summer. The Society is grateful to Jacqueline who stepped into the co-ordinator's role when Dan Murphy became ill. She picked up the reins and got the project back on track again when others had given up hope of it ever being completed.

With the help of Alison Macpherson, we have now completed the transcriptions up to the end of Ledger 9 or 1868 approximately. Years 1850 – 1862 are available for searching at the premises and the other years should be added soon. There is a group of very enthusiastic helpers who have been very busy and more volunteers came forward after the last Newsletter. At present we are waiting for the next Ledger from the Mitchell Library.

### **b) Glasgow Cathedral Burial Project**

The Project continues although, largely on account of some dreadful weather during 2004 and illness among some of our volunteers, there was not just as much work achieved on site.

To date, the full details of 328 stones are now committed to computer and there is a lot recorded mainly by Jim Cameron on site, and he deserves our special thanks. His results have still to be entered on computer and that is a job for the near future.

Bill and Moira Hutcheson, however, began the process of compiling a Master Index by transcribing the first two of the Old Lair Index Books. This was followed by sterling work done in the Mitchell Library by Susan Mitchell and Irene Young (all hand-written) and at home by Bill Webb who entered all the names and occupations on computer. In all 3,765 names have been recorded,

but, of course, there is not a visible gravestone on site for every name. We now have a complete transcription of the contents of all the Lair Index Books which will take the pressure off those ancient volumes when searching for information on the original and successive ownerships of the burial places. Searching for names and Lair Book page numbers can now be done electronically rather than the process of searching through seven large Lair Books, thus making this part of the research significantly easier.

The AutoCad-generated plan of the site is expanding well, mainly thanks to Iain McKenzie's efforts this year, as work commitments have prevented Bill Porter from being as active as he would have wished.

Finally, as soon as the weather permits, we begin again, and would value some additional volunteers to help on site once this becomes possible. The technique is to find stones within a designated "grid square" area, sometimes clean them and record all information (or sometimes NO information) inscribed on them. There is also much checking of previously recorded information to be done. It is fascinating work which is progressing well - let's hope for a drier spring and summer this time!

### **c) Scottish National Death & Burial Index Project**

Undertaken by the Scottish Association of Family History Societies, its member societies and the General Register Office for Scotland, the aim is to index all recorded pre-1855 deaths and burials in Scotland. The index for the High Church of Glasgow 1699-1854, over 160,000 entries, will shortly be available for sale on CD-ROM. This index will also be available for searching on computer at our premises.

Similarly the indexes for Barony, Govan and Gorbals should be published this year. Work continues on the records of Calton, the Ramshorn and Blackfriars.

### **PUBLICATIONS**

Sales of publications continue to grow. Orders are up by 25% and value has risen by 50%. A considerable part of the increase has resulted from the introduction of new CD ROMs. New publications available soon include the index to the 1841 census for Glassary parish, and CDs for the 1841 census for Barony, the index to burials in Glasgow High Church and the CD of the 1841 census for Argyll. .

### **PUBLICITY**

One of the ways by which the Society was promoted during the year was by taking a stall at a number of family history fairs, including Gateshead, Troon, Lanark, Stirling (in conjunction with the SAFHS Conference) and Grangemouth. The Grangemouth Fair was being attended by the BBC to promote its series "Who Do You Think You Are?" and it was only at the last minute that we heard about it. Thanks are due to our Vice-Chairman, John McCreadie for his efforts in ensuring our presence at these events. We are also planning to take a stall at the Partick Farmers' Market, which is held in Mansfield Street, just outside the premises. Thanks are also due to our Editor, Sheila Duffy, for promoting the Society on local radio.

### **ONLINE MEMBERS' INTERESTS DIRECTORY**

The Online Members' Interests Directory (OMID) still receives a slow trickle of requests by members to have a list of their research interests included on the Society's website. The apparent low interest in using the facility by most members prompted the question whether or not the facility should be discontinued, but it is apparent that those who do use it do value it, so the facility continues to be operated and developed.

There have been three developments this year:-

First, security of members' e-mail addresses, already high, has been increased further. If a visitor to the site wishes to contact a member, they now have to use an online form and return it to the Society for onward transmission. This gives an opportunity for the initial contact to be moderated.

Second, searches of the directory can now be made by parish. Any parish in the GWSFHS area can be selected, and a list of the surnames being researched in that parish by members is displayed. There are links to the member pages of those members researching in the parish.

Third, supplementing the parish search, is a link to a table of all the parishes in the GWSFHS area together with the sheet numbers that the parish appears on in the Ordnance Survey Maps; One-inch 2nd edition, Scotland, 1898-1904 series. There is a link from this page to the NLS website, from which the various sheets can be viewed.

No further developments of OMID are being considered at this time.

### **OTHER SERVICES**

The 1841 Census enquiries have raised around £100 this year.

The photo service has had a lower demand this year and revamping its wording on the website may inspire more enquiries.

### **SCAN USER GROUP**

SCAN, the Scottish Archive Network, completed its work under the Heritage Lottery Fund project in April 2004. The project team has now been absorbed into the National Archives of Scotland, and continues to do valuable work towards making the contents of Scottish archives accessible to the public.

Two current projects of particular interest to the family history community are the Scottish Family History Service and a project to scan and index all 10,000 volumes of the Church of Scotland Kirk Session records held by the National Archives of Scotland.

### **SUMMER OUTING**

There was no summer outing this year. Members were polled at a members' meeting and the returns indicated that there was little interest in such an event.

## **VISITS TO THE SCOTTISH RECORD OFFICE**

The three visits to the Scottish Record Office during the session 2004 – 2005 have been booked on behalf of members glad to take advantage of an evening visit after a day's work or researching in Edinburgh. During the past year it has been difficult to find the twenty members needed to sign up for each session so as to keep the charge at £8 per member.

Since November 2000 the booking fee has been £160:00 making the evening sessions even greater value. New members are encouraged to sign up as they will receive a lot of help from the staff.

Regulations have been tightened at the SRO and as a list of the names of those attending each session has to be sent in advance, it is important that any alterations are submitted to me asap.

My contact at the SRO is Keith Paxton and he is very helpful and responds to any queries by return post or e-mail.

The dates for the following session are usually published in the Summer Newsletter and announced at the June meeting. Members can book a place at the monthly meeting, or by telephone or email to:-

Gillian Bayne 0141 339 4732 [gillian.bayne@btopenworld.com](mailto:gillian.bayne@btopenworld.com)

## **SUMMARY**

Once again the Society has had an excellent year with membership numbers sustained despite the influence of the internet. On the other hand the internet has allowed us to reach our members and others through our very active website. Our services to members are still on the increase and there is a definite strain on the walls of the premises! This continuing success is due entirely to the work done by our volunteers, from the Chairman through to the helpers at the premises, and the Council of the Society wishes to thank everybody for the hard work put in this past year.