

GLASGOW & WEST OF SCOTLAND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

A Scottish Charity No. SC 010866
Unit 13, 32 Mansfield Street, Glasgow G11 5QP

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2005

Office Bearers:

Honorary President
Honorary Vice-Presidents

Lord Gordon of Strathblane C.B.E.
Mr. Donald Whyte
Mr. Roy Gillespie
Dr. Arthur Jamieson of Barnach
Mrs. Susan Miller
Sir Ilay Campbell of Succoth Bt.

Honorary Member

Council Officers:

Chairman
Vice-Chairman & Publicity
Secretary
Treasurer

Mrs. Mary Buchanan
Mr. John McCreadie
Mr. James Slavin
Mr. Edward W. Nairn

Ordinary Members of Council:

Cathedral MI's Co-ordinator
Printing & ICT Adviser
Pedigree Charts Co-ordinator
Publishing Assistant

Mr. William Hutcheson
Mr. Alex Thomson
Mr. Russell Adams
Mr. Iain Milmine
Ms Sheila Cuthbertson
Mr. Victor Currie
Mrs. Jean Rafferty

Ex-officio Members of Council:

Editor
Membership Secretary
Publications Secretary

Miss Sheila Duffy
Mrs. Fiona Downie
Mr. Findlay Munro

Administrative Assistants:

1841 Census Co-ordinator
1851 Census Co-ordinator
1861 & 1901 census Co-ordinator
Exchange Journals & Mailing Officer
Guestbook Editor & Research Assistant
Librarian & General Information files
Library Assistant
Members' Interests Co-ordinator
Minutes Secretary
NBI Project Co-ordinator
New members' Secretary
OMID Co-ordinator
Principal Keyholder & NRH Visits
Publishing Assistants

Mr. John McCreadie
Mrs. Elizabeth Smith
Mr. James Bain
Mrs. Dorothy Bell
Mr. Gordon Grant
Dr. Helen Cargill Thompson
Miss Gina Fisher
Mr. John Bagley
Miss Alison Macpherson
Ms Laura Martin
Mrs. Margaret Elliott
Mr. Iain McKenzie
Mrs. Gillian Bayne
Mr. William Webb
Mrs. Nan McConnell
Mrs. Ellen Griffith
Mrs. Eileen Bell
Mr. Andrew Eadie
Ms Heather Bain
Mrs. Elizabeth van Lottum
Miss Marion Lees
Mrs. Sandra Speedie
Mrs. Olive Allardyce
Mr. Alex Hall
Mrs. Marion Munro
Mr. John Howarth
Mrs. Doreen Faulds

Research, Gift Aid, 1881 & 1891 Census
SAFHS Representative
Southern Necropolis Co-ordinator
Strays Co-ordinator
Team Leaders for Mansfield Park Volunteers

Typesetting & Programmer
Typist

Bank:

Bank of Scotland plc
41 Princes Mall, East Kilbride

Finance

Financial statements are reported separately

Thomas Waugh

At the end of the summer, the death of Thomas Waugh, one of our Honorary Vice-Presidents, came as a shock to the Society. Tom was one of the founder members of the Society and apart from the last two or three years when he was in ill health, he was a regular attender at meetings and the premises. He had a wealth of practical knowledge about genealogy with which he was always happy to help those struggling with problems. Up until a few years ago he ran regular tutorials for members starting off in research. Tom will be sadly missed. The Society has sent its condolences to the Waugh family on behalf of the members.

Library

The high point of 2005 was the Society's move to new premises in November.

That the library's move went so smoothly was entirely due to the team of volunteers who packed the boxes and labelled them correctly.

The move has been very much to the library's advantage as we have taken over the wall space of the middle room. This has resulted in a considerable increase in shelf space and few shelves are now more than half full, so items are easier to locate. The availability of tables beside the shelves should also make library use easier. A new guide to the location of items is available.

We have continued to purchase items for the Library, but due to pressure of space in the old premises CD-ROMS were bought whenever possible. In print format, we concentrated on buying Scottish MIs. We continue to buy material in microformat and with the purchase of two microfilm cabinets, we hope in the near future to make the microfilm collection more readily accessible, particularly as microfilms of the 1861 and 1901 census for our area are now in stock.

We are grateful to Isobel Biggerstaff who has volunteered to produce a listing of the contents of the microfiche cabinet, which will be reorganised at a later date. One of the problems with microfilm and microfiche storage is deciding which the least used material is for storage in the bottom drawers as it is essential from a safety point of view that the bottom drawers be filled.

Last year it was hoped to complete the cataloguing of the map collection. This was prevented by the move to new premises but it is hoped to finish this project in 2006.

Grateful thanks are due to Dorothy Bell who continues to deal with the exchange journals received by the Society. Everyone who helped with checking the catalogue is also thanked by the Librarian.

Donations are always welcome and once again we are grateful to a number of donors for their generosity.

Finally the Librarian would like to thank Gina Fisher for all her help with the library and in particular for her computer skills without which there would be neither catalogue nor the excellent indexes to the OPRs and censuses.

Membership

As of the 1st January, membership was again just slightly less than 2200 fully paid-up members. Payments by credit card have increased over the year and overseas members especially appear to find this method of payment attractive. Payments by standing order were quite substantially up this year as well.

Several people deserve thanks and credit for helping out with the Membership Secretary's duties: Margaret Elliot who has prepared and sent out the new members' packs for the last couple of years; Ellen Griffith, who helps with the printing of new members' packs; Rita Jeffrey who has recently agreed to help with the processing of credit card payments; finally, thanks to the mailing team for another year's hard work.

Monthly Meetings

Our meetings have again been well attended this year, and particular thanks are due to those members who turned out faithfully for the January evening despite the horrendous weather which caused such traffic disruption. They were not disappointed as the talk on "Glasgow's Forgotten Village" proved to be very popular with those present. Unfortunately we were let down by the speaker for the February meeting who cancelled at the very last moment. Our other speakers, however, proved to be very interesting, their topics ranging from heraldry to dating photographs from costume and from regional records to carved stones. The December meeting was held in the West of Scotland Cricket Club pavilion as St. Peter's Hall was unavailable due to building work, but members seemed to enjoy the change of venue as well as the purvey! The Society also would like to thank those who brought along their old photographs and newspapers of Glasgow, adding a local history flavour to the evening. We are most grateful to Jim Slavin for organising the speakers and venues.

Online Members' Interests Directory

At the beginning of January 2006, 194 members had their interests displayed on The Online Members' Interests Directory (OMID). That number is down from 214 at the same time last year. This is despite the popularity of the facility with visitors. In 2005, 1148 visitors made contact with members who subscribe to OMID. Several of these members who have entered their research interests on OMID have been complimentary about its usefulness to their research.

The parish search facility, described in last year's annual report, was the most recent improvement to OMID. We are looking at parishes just outwith our area to see which ones have several members researching there, with a view to usefully extending the coverage of the parish search facility

Premises

The year unrolled with relative calm from January to August, with our multifarious activities proceeding as usual at the Society's premises. In the spring we bought a second-hand filing cabinet for the printing team and on our research computers, we installed the invaluable 1901 census search program, written by John Howarth. Since then, John has completed a free upgrade of the obsolescent software used to create our search engines.

In September, we replaced a failed research computer, and two second-hand film readers were acquired, one of which is in use, the other still under repair.

Also in September, we took part in the Glasgow "Doors Open" event. In six two-hour sessions over the two days, we had 141 visitors from whom at least 25 people joined the Society. Consequently we plan to participate again in the future, benefiting from our recent experience and from the greater space now available. Many thanks are due to all who helped with this event.

In October, we heard suddenly that a larger unit had become available in the same block and within two weeks we were on the move from our very cramped office at Unit 5 to the much more spacious Unit 13. With outside help for heavier items, Council members and other volunteers transferred carpet tiles and all other equipment within a week. In addition other administrative changes had to be organised, arising from the change of address, and additional lighting was installed in dark alcoves where books, films and fiches are stored. Understandably we had to close the premises for two weeks before we could reasonably reopen for research.

We also took the opportunity to make some welcome improvements to the library, the printing and the ICT facilities. New bookshelves and two new microfilm storage cabinets were purchased for our ever-expanding library; flat screen monitors, new keyboards and optical mice for the research computers; a dedicated server computer and a DVD writer. We have also upgraded the system on all four research computers to Windows XP and have bought a laptop computer to enable us to provide a look-up service for enquirers at outside events. We are most grateful to Alex Thomson and John Howarth for implementing the ICT improvements and to John McCreadie for his valuable input in sourcing and building bookshelves and cabinets.

At the end of December we connected to Broadband, thus enhancing our access to the Internet. Furthermore, this has allowed our computer engineers, if necessary, to take control of all the computers in the premises from a remote location. This has already shown great benefits in that the engineers' rolling program to complete the installation of programs on all computers can now be done from their homes, obviating the need for on-site maintenance. A future extension, already incorporated, is that the computer engineers will be able to speak directly from home to individual computer users in the premises. In its present form this has already demonstrated its usefulness in resolving problems with printing.

Thanks to the willingness and hard work of Council members and volunteers, we now have an up-to-date, fully operational unit, which should serve us for many years to come under its new title, "The G&WSFHS Research Centre". We are most grateful to all concerned for a first-class team effort.

Newsletter

Once again it was another busy year for the editor with three lively magazines going out to our members. Glorious photographs were found for the front covers – March had a wonderful view of the Old Quay at Campbeltown, June featured cancer specialist Dr. Hugh Murray with his family of seven plus wife at the Brig O'Doon, Ayr and October had a terrific aerial shot of the old Singer Sewing Machine Factory at Clydebank, dominated by its Clock Tower, a factory which employed ten thousand people in its heyday.

The magazine now consists regularly of fifty eight packed pages – a great deal of work but very rewarding since members contribute their articles, comments and reports in such abundance that we are regularly full to bursting. The Letters to the Editor section continues to be full of tips, hints and the occasional criticism or correction which keeps the editor on her toes. The only black cloud on the horizon is the continuing number of societies, albeit a small number, who are stopping exchanging journals for reasons of space and cost. I do see this as a loss but can understand why it is happening.

Research

2005 has been a quieter year for us. 71 pieces of work were completed. This is possibly due to more people obtaining information from the internet. It certainly seems that more people are using the Society's website and therefore there have been fewer vague inquiries from people wondering if the Society can help them. The 'Open Day' article in the *Evening Times* brought a couple of inquiries as did the visits made by volunteers to various shows and gatherings.

Thanks are due to Anne Escott, Sheila Cuthbertson, Alexander Inglis, Joan Keen and Gordon Grant who have worked hard throughout the year. There are also three new researchers on the team, Dr. Bill Duncan, Margaret Warwick and Tom McCormack.

The present charges made for research are still suitable. Several researches go over the present deposit but members are happy to pay the extra especially when they receive some new information.

The researchers become very involved with the work they are doing and although the Society claims only to do limited research, they often keep going over a long period to try to solve problems. Unfortunately many members come to us a last resort when they have 'hit a brick wall' and we are no more able to find their family than they are.

There have been a number of inquiries to find where somebody worked or where they are buried and these have often proved unsolvable. People do not like to think that their family member might lie in an unmarked grave.

Some research is prioritised where a member is seriously ill or in one case where a member knew almost nothing about his mother.

Society Projects

a) Southern Necropolis project

The Southern Necropolis project is progressing extremely well thanks to the faithful endeavours of all the volunteers. The Mitchell Library has loaned us a few volumes at the same time so there is plenty of material on hand to transcribe. The database is updated at the premises as each book is completed, and searches can now be made from the 1850's to the 1870's.

b) Cathedral Burial Ground project

Most of 2005 was spent checking work that had been done previously although some new grid squares were recorded.

A major development over the year has been that all the Lair indexes within the old Lair Books which reside in the bowels of the Mitchell Library have been transcribed. Bill & Moira Hutcheson recorded the contents of Books 1 & 2 (dating back to 1600). The subsequent Index Books were transcribed by Irene Young and Susan Miller, then all the material was passed to Bill Webb who continued with the keying in of this into an accessible form, using Microsoft Excel. This is undergoing final checking.

Within this collection, an interesting little handwritten book by one of the ministers was found, entitled "St. Mungo Book". It is thought to have been written about 1830, around the time when the Burial Ground was closed to new interments. It gives descriptions of how the positions of stones relate to others in the Burying Ground, and has proved very useful, confirming, 175 years later, the accuracy of Iain McKenzie's excellent surveying!

Part of the Burial Ground, in the vicinity of the East Chapel, has not been accessible because of ongoing work by Historic Scotland. A few weeks ago, however, the scaffolding was removed and as the days lighten, recording should be possible in that area.

Once the weather improves, there will again be activity on the site, with the plotting of squares and the recording of the last resting places of the rich and famous of Glasgow. To this end, more willing volunteers to help with this task would be very welcome. Volunteers are needed on site and also to research the personalities. The work is most interesting, but limited by the short working season in Scotland. It is also a race against time as these inscriptions are suffering from the combined effects of our Scottish weather and the various miscreants who have been seen playing football in the grounds of the Cathedral in the evenings (and, who knows, what else?).

c) Marriage Index

This project is on-going. Members may submit ancestral charts for the purpose of creating a marriage index and possibly a birth index in the future. To date, the marriage index contains 34,000 names and is open to enquiries from members. Members can now access the index at our Research Centre, or make a written enquiry. A small fee is charged for postal enquiries.

Society website

Statistics

During 2005, our website has attracted more and more visitors. The site is now used by an average of 850 unique visitors daily, up from 500 at the start of the year. This is a huge increase. To put this in context we receive more visitors in an hour now than we did in an entire month back in 1996.

The Online members' Interests Directory (OMID) and the Guestbook are far and away the most used parts of the site. We now have over 2200 Guestbook postings. During 2005, 734 e-mails were sent to people who had posted on the Guestbook and 1148 people made contact with members who had listed their details on the OMID. As last year the pages which describe the Society's offerings, such as publications, remain popular. The Google search engines, from the UK, the US, Canada and Australia, are the top four sites used by visitors to find the site.

Challenges & New Features

2005 saw the final abuse loophole closed. The success of the e-mail screening system implemented in 2004 prompted the webmaster to turn his attention to the increasingly inappropriate Guestbook postings. Although Gordon Grant policed this by removing them when he could, the volume reached a level where this was no longer a viable option. As the Guestbook is one of the top entry points for new visitors, regrettably for some, their first experience was viewing inappropriate postings. Over the summer the webmaster incorporated a screening system whereby any postings did not appear until they had first been vetted. This cleaned up the Guestbook overnight and was a real relief to all concerned. Finally in November a security code system was implemented to stop automated junk postings.

2006

A major site overhaul will be embarked upon. The objective is to improve the accessibility of the site by tightening the standard of code throughout. This will allow the site to be viewed consistently on many more devices and platforms. For example it will be more usable by audio readers for the visually impaired. It is planned to rewrite the site using a new coding language ASP.net 2.0 which was launched in November. This is a major undertaking and it may take most of the year, but the webmaster is looking forward to the challenge!

Publications

Publications sales continue to increase, and our in-house printing and CD production have proved most successful, thanks to our hard-working publishing and sales teams.

The Gorbals and Calton Burials Index pre-1855 will be available on CD ROM shortly. Jim Slavin's *Index to the Campsie Catholic Mission Records* (of baptisms and marriages 1831-1860, and mission census of 1831) will be published by the Society in time for the 2006 SAFHS Conference in New Lanark. Ian Brown's *Guide to Genealogical Sources in West Scotland* will be available early in the New Year, initially as a set of 8 books but possibly later on CD ROM as well. The guide will consist of 8 volumes (1 index and 7 area data volumes) and runs to about 500 pages in total. The price will be £8.00 per volume or £60.00 for the complete set. The Society is also going to publish Robin Urquhart's transcription of the *Stent Rolls for the Royal Burgh of Rutherglen*, and the *1841 census indexes to North and South Knapdale*. The revised version of *Strathclyde Sources* will be ready shortly, and Professor Arnold Morrison has given us permission to print his book, *The Defence of Scotland*.

Publicity

The fairs attended by the Society in 2005 went well.

Gateshead was not as rewarding in sales as last year, and this is thought to be due to the extra Scottish societies that attended and were missing in 2004. Almost all the Scottish societies were present at Gateshead this time.

The Society did very well at the Fife fair which was moved to Glenrothes this year. Biggar was a new venue but it ended up as more of a flag waving exercise and the Society sold very little there.

Mail shots and application forms continue to be sent out to libraries in the hope that they display our material. The Society has still to venture into advertising in some magazines and 2006 may be the time to do it.

Scottish Record Office visits

Three visits to the Scottish record Office were booked for the session 2004-2005. Unfortunately we were only able to attract ten names for the June visit and it had to be cancelled. The members who had booked were disappointed but understood that the Glasgow & West of Scotland Family History Society could not subsidise about 50% of the places.

For the session 2005-2006, a decision was taken to reduce the bookings to two per session, one before Christmas and the other in early to mid spring. The cost per booking remains at £8 if 20 members sign up.

Our 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. Places can be booked at the monthly meetings or by leaving name and contact details at the Research Centre (Tuesday pigeonhole FAO Gillian Bayne), who can also be reached by telephone or e-mail.

Gillian Bayne 0141 339 4732 gillian.bayne@btinternet.com

Summary

In last year's report, it was stated that due to the increasing services to members that there was a "definite strain on the walls of the premises". It was with relief, then, that we jumped at the chance of the larger accommodation when we heard about it in October. Although they are twice the size of the former office, the new rooms are already filling up! The extra space will also allow us to participate more fully in events such as "Doors Open" days and similar occasions.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the changeover to the new premises was done very quickly, thanks to our volunteers. That is just one example of the many tasks they carry out. Without their help, the Society just could not function. The Council also wishes to thank our chairman, Mrs. Mary Buchanan, whose drive and hard work ensured that 2005 was another successful year in the annals of the Society.