

# 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 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2006**

### **Office Bearers:**

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

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Treasurer	Mr. Edward W. Nairn

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Cathedral MI's Co-ordinator	Mr. William Hutcheson
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### **Ex-officio Members of Council:**

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Membership Secretary	Mrs. Fiona Downie
Publications Secretary	Mr. Findlay Munro

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1851 Census Co-ordinator	Mrs. Elizabeth Smith
1861 & 1901 census Co-ordinator	Mr. James Bain
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Guestbook Editor & Research Assistant	Mr. Gordon Grant
Librarian & General Information files	Dr. Helen Cargill Thompson
Library Assistant	Miss Gina Fisher
Members' Interests Co-ordinator	Mr. John Bagley
New members' Secretary	Mrs. Margaret Elliott
OMID Co-ordinator	Mr. Iain McKenzie
Principal Keyholder & NRH Visits	Mrs. Gillian Bayne
Publishing Assistants	Mr. William Webb Mrs. Nan McConnell Mrs. Ellen Griffith
Research, Gift Aid, 1881 & 1891 Census	Mrs. Eileen Bell
Southern Necropolis Co-ordinator	Ms Heather Bain
Strays Co-ordinator	Mrs. Elizabeth van Lottum
Team Leaders for Mansfield Park Volunteers	Miss Marion Lees Mrs. Sandra Speedie Mrs. Olive Allardyce Mr. Alex Hall Mrs. Marion Munro
Typesetting & Programmer	Mr. John Howarth
Typist	Mrs. Doreen Faulds

Bank:	Bank of Scotland plc 41 Princes Mall, East Kilbride
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## Finance

The Financial statements is available separately..

## Library

This has been the first full year in the new premises! It would appear that the greater space available to the library is encouraging members to make greater use of it.

That said, we have had some important accessions in the past year. Firstly, we have to acknowledge the significant gift of 24 volumes of sasines mainly covering the 17th and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries from John Adams FSA Scotland. Next, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ordnance Survey maps of Scotland have at last been catalogued and the recently published magnificent facsimile edition of Blaeu's atlas of Scotland (1654) has been bought. Allowing for the latinisation of place names and some quirky spellings, it is amazing how many farms and small hamlets are still identifiable. Another major purchase has been the Noel Farrell series on exploring family in Ireland, 27 booklets covering Letterkenny in the north to Kinsale in the south. Each booklet contains 1901 and 1911 census information and Griffiths Valuation details for the particular area as well as maps and other information.

Thanks are due to Isobel Biggerstaff for her sterling work of cataloguing and indexing the microfiche collection. Dorothy Bell is also due thanks for continuing to deal with the many exchange journals received by the Society. Thanks are also due to everyone who helped with the checking of the catalogue, particularly Liz and Russ Adams.

Donations are always welcome and once again we are grateful to a variety of donors for their generosity. Finally the librarian wishes 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.

## Membership

This is down by about a 100 compared with the previous year's figures. Greater use of the internet and the expansion of the Scotlandspeople website are also possible factors in the drop in our numbers. Thanks are due to our Membership Secretary, Fiona Downie, and her assistant, Margaret Elliott, for the never-ending task in handling the multitude of mail bringing in subscriptions and a variety of membership queries from all over the world.

## Monthly Meetings

This year we had a solid programme of speakers dealing with a number of topics relating directly to family history research as well as others to lighten the mix. The year started with Dr. Susan Buckham speaking to us about the Scottish Carved Stones Project and ended with the members joining in to a Music Hall sing along with Judith Bowers of the Britannia Panopticon Trust. We were let down by our February speaker, but we are very obliged to the Rev. T. Davidson Kelly who stepped in at the last moment to give us a very interesting talk on Old Govan Parish Church of which he was formerly the Minister. The Laird of Blair, in Ayrshire, spoke to us about his family and we were updated on family history resources at the Mitchell Library, The Scottish Genealogical Society and The Scottish Family History Service. The year concluded with an heirlooms evening in St. Peter's Hall, Partick. Those members who came along on a wintry night enjoyed the refreshments provided and appreciated the display of family treasures. We are grateful to Jim Slavin for organising the speakers and venues.

Reports of all these meetings are carried in the Newsletter for those members unable to attend in person.

## Newsletter

The magazine continues to go from strength to strength with sixty packed pages three times a year going out to members. However, we are not resting on our laurels and take note of such comments as 'the paper you use is a bit slimy' and 'why so many e-mail addresses?'

There is a very lively Letters to the Editor page which keeps the editor, Sheila Duffy, on her toes. There have been some excellent articles, such as that of David Webster about the use of Soundex and the marvellous one about the little used Admiralty records in the National Archives of Scotland.

The Newsletter has been fortunate in having some wonderful photographs and tribute must be paid particularly to John Howarth, our typesetter, for his continued patience with the editor's requests and changes. In addition, the Newsletter would simply not get out to everyone without the excellent mailing team and Alex Thomson in charge of printing.

## Research

67 pieces of research have been completed this year and there are 2 pieces left to complete in the new year. It has been a quiet year as it is possible that more people are doing their own research on the internet. Unfortunately as has been stated in previous reports, some of the inquiries received prove to be impossible – usually 'where are my family buried?' Some requests cannot be started as the inquirer does not send a deposit. Hopefully an entry can be found in the Poor Law records that gives a lot of information about the family although they are almost all very sad stories.

Family History has become so popular that it is increasingly difficult to get a place at Park Circus. Several places are now being required to be booked in advance which then can be transferred to an available researcher.

Thanks are due to Eileen Bell and all the researchers for their hard work and their amazing finds, for example in hospital records.

## Premises

This section of the report is being held over to next year due to the indisposition of Mary Buchanan, the Office Manager. The Society wishes her a speedy recovery and hopes to see her back at the Research Centre very soon.

## Online Members' Interests Directory

Forty members asked for their research interests to be added to OMID during 2006. There have been 1275 contacts between enquirers and subscribing members during the same period

The Society has three databases of members' interest. In addition to OMID there is the database used to support the Computer Based Directory (CBD) and a third to support the Members' Research Interests (MINL) feature in the Newsletter.

CBD and MINL use the same source data, mostly information submitted by new members when they join. There were approximately 100 such submissions in 2006. The CBD receives just a handful of queries in a year, as few as one per month. There is a prima facie case for combining the three databases. Members wishing to add their research interests to OMID have to apply separately by e-mail.

An audit was undertaken of OMID to see how well it is working. There are two problems. First, subscribing members change their e-mail addresses without informing the OMID coordinator, which means queries received cannot be forwarded. Second, members allow their membership of GWSFHS to lapse. Information about which memberships have lapsed has not been passed on to the OMID coordinator, so the lapsed members' interests still remain on OMID. Work is progressing to sort out these matters.

The OMID co-ordinator, Iain McKenzie is finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the complexities that are necessarily being introduced to guarantee security of members' information, and to deal with incorrect data. He has therefore advised that he does not want to remain OMID Coordinator after the end of the 2007/2008 session, which coincides with his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. Our grateful thanks are due to Iain for all the work he has done with OMID and SCAN over the past few years.

## Society Projects

### a) Southern Necropolis project

We have made good progress this year with a dedicated band of transcribers and checkers, with the result that the transcription of book 15 is almost complete. Thus now leaves only five books to be done. Thanks to everyone who has helped with this project.

### b) Cathedral Burial Ground project

Sadly, this year, there has not been much movement on the project, caused by a combination of illness of volunteers and the fact the project co-ordinator, Bill Hutcheson both attended and played the organ for a total of 21 funerals in 2006! Pressure on personal time was great in 2006 and it may be that a new co-ordinator will need to be found to continue the task as the workload on Bill is looking to be just as frenetic.

About two thirds of the Burial Ground has already been recorded and the results have to be committed to computer. There is additional information on some of the more prominent Glasgow citizens buried there, but, while some of the rich and famous lie there, many of those buried are not so famous and there is precious little, if any, information about their background.

Bill and his wife, Moira, have enjoyed immensely working on this project and there has been no shortage of enthusiasm, but rather of available time to work on it. A further report will follow once the work already done has been consolidated.

### 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 35,000 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.

### d) National Burials Index Project

The GWSFHS contribution to the National Burial Index is drawing to a close. We have almost completed the burials allotted to our society at the start of the project almost ten years ago.

This year we have published Gorbals, Barony and Calton and the final burial grounds of Ramshorn & Blackfriars are in the final checking process and should be ready for publication in the next couple of months.

Since the project was started in 1997, a great many people have given their time and expertise and the co-ordinator would like to thank everyone who has contributed.

## Society website

The webmaster, Alistair Smith, has kindly supplied us with the following report.

### a. Site Overhaul

In 2006 a major project was undertaken to upgrade the technology the site uses to deliver pages. This involved a complete rewrite from scratch. The objectives were three fold. Firstly the size and complexity of the site was such that managing the layout, formatting and the code to create the dynamic parts of the site was becoming too much for a part time job. The new site is now completely managed as a Web Application in Visual Studio 2005. Secondly, over the last eleven years the site has had many additions and extensions and had also been maintained in a variety of tools over this time. This meant that most pages were not written in such a way that could be consistently viewed using different browsers and platforms. The site is now almost fully compliant with emerging web standards and as such can be viewed on any compliant browser. This includes mobile devices which have seen a surge in use recently. In addition I included many enhancements which make the site more usable for visitors who are visually impaired and use audible web readers. Finally, it is expected that future developments will require a member's only section and I needed a good platform on which to build that. I am pleased to say that all of these objectives have been achieved and the new site went live on a new hosting provider in early September. There is still more to do and I will continue to work on it through 2007.

## b. Statistics

Throughout 2006 the site has grown ahead of the general increase in web use. Between two and four thousand page requests are made every day, with about the same again being indexed by search engine and archiving robots. This increase over last year is due to better indexing of our site by the major search engines. I have employed many devices to improve our ranking. Visitors arrive mainly via search sites but also from listing sites such as Genuki and Rootsweb.

The Online Members' Interests Directory (OMID) and the Guestbook are still far and away the most used parts of the site. We are just short of 3000 Guestbook entries. During 2006, 814 (2005, 734) emails were sent to people who had posted on the Guestbook and 1301(2005, 1148) people made contact with Members who had listed their details on the OMID. I would encourage any members who have not listed their interests online to do so as it has a huge following. The OMID and Guestbook protection system is now very robust and successfully prevented over 10,000 inappropriate contacts or postings from reaching our visitors, members or the site.

## c. 2007

The site is far from ideal. There are still sections that I am not happy with and require improvement. Further enhancements are in the pipeline. I have established a 'wish list' of features that have been requested from keen contributors and members alike. There are new Guestbook, OMID, Publications and Library sections under development which will enhance the visitor's experience. I am grateful for the support from Iain McKenzie for his work on the OMID, Gordon Grant for his focus on the Guestbook and to John Howarth who provided useful testing and feedback prior to the re-launch. I welcome suggestions from members; I can be contacted via the Website. Where appropriate and where time permits I am happy to take them on board.

The Society is very grateful to Alistair for his ongoing work and his support of the Society.

## Publications

In the course of 2006, 36 items have been added to the publications sales list, including 12 of our own publications. Sales have continued to be high: best sellers have included CDs of the National Burials Index and Jim Slavin's "Index to the Campsie Catholic Mission Records". Other additions to the list include Ian Brown's "Guide to Genealogical Sources in the West of Scotland", Susan Miller's revision of "Strathclyde Sources" and four more books in Edna Stark's index to the 1841 census for Argyll.

Ian Brown's book "Born on the Bottom Rung" is about to be published and work on the National Burials Index continues, the next expected publication relating to the Ramshorn kirkyard.

## Publicity

The presence of our leaflets in the Mitchell and other libraries has proved worthwhile, and it also helped that we had members taking part in local radio with many plugs for our Society. We intend to progress by becoming involved with local organisations with "*How to Do Your Family Tree*" courses. That will in turn promote the Society and hopefully gain new members.

This was a good year for the Society at fairs up and down the country. Five venues were attended and our best sales result was at Gateshead where publications to the value of £261 were sold. Gateshead will again be booked for 2007 as it is the Society's only venture into England. The Society will also be represented at the SAFHS Conference in Inverness in the spring of 2007.

The photo service offered by the Society has not been used as well as we would have liked with only six requests for photographs taken of grave stones. This service will be promoted more vigorously in 2007.

## Scottish Record Office visits

In line with the change of policy stated in last year's report, only two meetings were booked with the Scottish Record office for evening visits. The Spring visit took place on the 5<sup>th</sup> April and the Autumn one on the 29<sup>th</sup> November. There were last minutes call-offs for each meeting, but thanks to speedy efforts from Gillian Bayne and Sheila Duffy, these were filled before the event. The cost per booking remains at £8 if 20 members sign up. Although Park Circus provides a local alternative for members in the Glasgow area, it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain bookings there. In addition, for those members unable to get to Park Circus during the day, these visits to the Scottish Record Office provide a useful alternative. With the bulk of accessible records now on the Digros system in Edinburgh researching has become so much easier.

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](mailto:gillian.bayne@btinternet.com)

## Summary

We have had another successful year even though there has been a fall in membership numbers. The new emphasis of promoting our image by moving outwards into the community through Open Doors Days, the West End Festival and providing courses on family history for the public, we hope will lead to new members joining us as a result. Our one weakness, however, is a shortage of volunteers. We would ask any members with some time to spare to get in touch with one of the office bearers at a members' meeting with a view to helping out. Thanks are due to John McCreadie who has filled Mary Buchanan's shoes magnificently during this past year.

J.Slavin  
Secretary