

Comings and Goings, Migration and Scotland 24th Annual Conference of the Scottish Association of Family History Societies at Scottish Borders Campus, Galashiels 11th May 2013

A report of the proceedings of the conference composed by the Anglo-Scottish members in attendance: Michael Couper, Ina Penneyston, David Muil, David Kirkpatrick and Yvonne Gill Martin

Opening [MC]

The Conference was chaired by Peter Munro, who after opening the Conference, warned of fire regulations and exits, arrangements for refreshments after the talk and special offers available on the day to attendees before introducing the first speaker.

Scotland and Migration by Dr Ian Wotherspoon [MC]

Dr. Wotherspoon spent many years in China and the Pacific before returning to Scotland where he is now a tutor at the University of Edinburgh's Office of Lifelong Learning.

The migration from Scotland was to many different places and had a significant effect in them all. In the 19th century approximately 2 million left the country, equivalent to 42% of the number recorded in the 1911 census. Scotland had a culture of emigration and went all over the world with significant numbers to America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina and India. Although Queen Elizabeth had been succeeded by James in 1603 it was not until 1707 for a full union of the 2 countries. The Scottish attempt to colonise Darien had failed and Scots looked at the English colonies. Scots initially sought any areas not dominated by English colonies, the risks were high but the rewards could be great.

The absence of civil strife led in Scotland to a philosophical awakening that was reflected in the influence made by Scots overseas. Scotland was reaping the benefit of being the first European country with an effective educational system, by 1800 all parishes had a school and with more Universities than other countries of comparable size. Scottish migrants into new overseas territories were generally better educated than most others. In 1835 9 of the 11 trading houses in Mumbai were Scottish.

Scotland was at the forefront of the Industrial Revolution which led to urbanisation and then to emigration. The clearances, both of highlands and lowlands led to emigrants with a knowledge of agriculture. Life was hard but with tenacity a good life could be had. A third of population emigrated in the 1840-50's with more Scots in Nova Scotia than in the highlands.

Later the Empire Settlement Act saw many Scots going to Canada and The USA. After WW2 the £10 pom-assisted passage program saw many Scots going to Australia.

Wherever the Scots emigrated to, by adapting to the local conditions and hard work managed to make a contribution to their new country out of proportion to their numbers. This effect of Scottish emigration is not about numbers but by human endeavour. Wherever they went the Scots took their heritage and a sense of reality.

Droving and Drove Roads in Northumberland by Dr Ian Roberts [YGM]

Dr Ian Roberts, a member of the Institute of Historical Research at the University of London and an Honorary Fellow of the University of Durham, co-authored 'Drove Roads of Northumberland' with Richard Carlton and Alan Rushworth.

Dr Roberts gave a talk about the 'Golden Age' of droving, which is considered to be between 1650 and 1850.

There is evidence as far back as prehistoric times of animals being moved intentionally as part of organised husbandry. Transhumance [the seasonal movement of people with their livestock between different pastures] and market-orientated droving continued into Roman times. During the Anglo-Saxon period further laws were introduced to safeguard livestock and regulate sales. After the Norman Conquest there were manorial regulations to control movement within manors as well as pasture and meadow allocations. There was, however, less rigid control in Northern England. Royal Charters were used to administer rights to hold markets and fairs.

The historical context in which droving operated was as follows: The Black Death affected the Borders in the late Middle Ages. There was chaos after the death of Alexander III. During the reign of Edward I there was intense military activity in the region. From then until the beginning of the 16th century there was a diminished economic activity, followed by Anglo-Scottish warfare and localised disruption through reiver activity. The immediate effect of James VI/James I's accession to the throne in 1603 was the elimination of the most violent reivers and the pacification of the remaining families. Strong regional government under Dunbar saw the resumption of cross-border trade and the revival of agriculture in the Borders meant that the Southern Uplands were re-occupied. The agricultural revival resulted in a population growth in England and Scotland. Land was reclaimed and exploited and soon urban communities began to appear, creating a demand for food.

After the Act of Union new markets started, for instance at Crieff and Falkirk. New breeds of cattle were developed and supply networks were extended. With theirs of an industrial society and the growth of towns the 'Golden Age' of droving emerged. Specialisation in routes and products evolved along with growth in the trade of sheep.

All cattle traded in Scotland were known as 'black', regardless of their colour and breed! Highland cattle were commonly slaughtered at a greater age than we are used to nowadays. Older sheep meat was considered preferable to that of lambs. Thus 'fatstock' marketing began. There was no such thing as an 'average' journey. Some drove roads were within a limited range, e. g. Kelso to Morpeth, a distance of some 33 miles. This could take 4 or 5 days. Yet some journeys went from Scotland to London. Care was taken to avoid weight loss. Fatstock travelled no more than 10 miles per day. Other stock would cover up to 15 miles each day. Fairs were usually held at Whitsun and in the Autumn. It was not unusual to have 100,000 animals at a large fair. The organisation required to move such large herds should not be underestimated: turnpike roads had to be avoided for logistical reasons.

Scotland [Berwick, Kelso, Jedburgh and Hawick] to Stagshaw, near Corbridge, were popular droving routes because of the huge common area available to accommodate a cattle fair. The local population, however, did not always take kindly to such vast numbers of cattle encroaching on their own animals 'pastureland. Elsdon to Morpeth was another well-trodden route. Nowadays there is still evidence of troughs along the way, indicating stopping points, where cattle would be shod to cope with the metal roads. The coming of the railways initiated the end of the droving era.

Further reading include the classic authority, *The Drove Roads of Scotland*, by A. R. B. Haldane and *The Old Cattle Market at Morpeth*, [SANT/BEQ/28/1/12 in NCRO] – Recollections by former 19th century drover, George Robson of Morpeth.

Emigration and Immigration Records on the Internet by Ken Nisbet [IP]

Ken Nisbet, a native of Aberdeen, is well-known to the society both as Secretary of the Scottish Federation of Family History Societies [SAFHS], serving on the Association's Executive Committee, an active member of The Scottish Genealogical Society as well as a highly skilled speaker on many aspects of Scottish genealogy.

Ken began by outlining the reasons for Emigration and Immigration. These included forced migration and the impact of wars and religious persecution [e.g. actions against Jews and Huguenots]; famine [e.g. both the Irish and the Scottish Potato famines]; the Highland and Lowland Clearances; transportation of convicts; what he called Push & Pull Migration – where one member of the family migrates and the rest of the family follow on later.

He went on to identify various important web-sites for the researcher. These included many familiar and available to our members on the society's toolbar: The National Archives; Ancestry.com; the Census records of various countries including those available from Scotland's People [these are particularly useful to locate an individual migrant's place of birth] and FindMyPast.

The English 1911 census now states the actual place of birth of any Scots-born person.

He showed us a web site that stated where soldiers of Scottish nationality were transported to.

There is also a site on Ancestry of Scots banished to American Plantations

There are various sites for Passenger list and Shipping records. Principal passenger list sites among these are <http://www.ancestorsonboard.com/>, <http://www.theshipslist.com/index.html> and <http://www.immigrantships.net/>. All are available on the society's toolbar. Immigrants arriving in New York can be traced through the sites of the two main reception centres: <http://www.castlegarden.org/> [1820-1892] and <http://www.ellisland.org/> [1892 onwards].

Several sites hold data relating to Convicts who were transported to Australia, especially <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/info-guides/convicts> and Project Gutenberg, Australia at <http://gutenberg.net.au/first-fleet.html>.

Remember that in America and Australia each state has its own records. These can be Googled separately.

Trade Directories can often provide information about newly immigrant tradesmen who were establishing their business including some in unusual locations such as China.

Remember to check out local Family History Societies both at home and overseas. They may very well carry information specific to the locality, which is not always available in national archives. For the same reason, search among national and local newspapers for details of departing or arriving vessels and passengers. Many of these can be found online. Google can often be the best search engine to use for these enquiries and indeed Google Newspapers [also to be found on the society's toolbar] may just contain the detail you are looking for.

In closing Ken gave one of the best hints to remember: "Don't forget to keep going back to web sites as they are always adding information to them."

Exploring the Buccleuch Archives by Andrew Armstrong [DM]

Andrew Armstrong, himself a native of the Borders, has already presented today's talk to the Borders FHS, receiving a very much appreciative response together with a deal of correspondence.

He began by recommending the Farm Records of the Buccleuch Estates as an excellent and little known source for family historians with an interest in the Borders, Dumfriesshire and Midlothian. This valuable and often overlooked resource available to the family historian is to be found among the Buccleuch Muniments at the National Records of Scotland [NRS], repository GD 224. These holdings contain a collection of records relating to the Buccleuch family and estates from the 12th to the 20th centuries. They may be accessed by visitors in possession of a Reader's Ticket on application in person to the NRS in Edinburgh. It will also be necessary to sign a declaration agreeing not to publish anything obtained from the archive without checking with Buccleuch Estates in advance.

The records include deeds, accounts, family records and correspondence in addition to what may be the most valuable source for the family historian, Rental records.

The Buccleuch estates cover a range of counties in the borders, from Dumfriesshire in the west through the shires of Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles centrally and Midlothian in the east. Rentals are available between approximately 1630 and the middle of the 20th century. A fuller list of the estate names can be got by searching <http://www.nas.gov.uk/onlineCatalogue/> for repository GD 224, remembering that estate names did change over time and spellings often varied or were inconsistent. Andrew Armstrong recommends that a useful starting point for the researcher is a document which covers all estates over a period of five years –GD 224/528/1 1792-1797 Rental of the Duke of Buccleuch's estates in the counties of Dumfries, Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles, with accounts of variations.

One drawback in the rental records is that with the exception of 'the gift of tenancy' referred to below, often the detail recorded may be just the surname of the tenant [i.e. the head of the family] and the amount of the rent payable with little detail in respect of spouse or children, especially in the 17th or 18th centuries. The estates themselves may be found grouped in the boundaries of a parish or extend to cover a single county such as Selkirk or Midlothian.

Each estate was managed by the appointed chamberlain whose duties included the setting and collection of rents, the maintenance of records and accounts. However the classification and indexing of records can be sporadic and searches may be complicated by name changes and spelling peculiarities. For those records prior to the 1650s there is the added complication that recording was in secretarial script, which can take time for a working familiarity to be achieved.

The coverage of the 18th century can also be patchy coinciding with a period when the presiding Dukes' administrations were often less efficient and less well organised than previously. The period of the 19th and 20th centuries in contrast were better kept and can provide much valuable data.

The Dalkeith estates were acquired manor by manor but the record keeping was identical in case and offers not just a list of names. There was for instance a census of Langholm in 1777 when leases were granted for house building and lots were given to masons, labourers etc.

The presence of reiver families clustering around the river Esk present other opportunities for research since although surnames, for example Armstrong and Elliot, were often repeated locations such as Whitlock and Kinmont and nicknames common among reiver families come into play. These nicknames as ever were often descriptive of appearance or habit.

It was often a common event for the tenancy of any lease to pass to the son and heir of the family, known as 'the gift of tenancy' and it is thus possible to trace the holding of one family of several generations, often up to 500 years.

In summing up the approach likeliest to pay dividends, Andrew Armstrong suggests the researcher looks for such relationships, since the clues are often in the text and by comparison of the rentals year by year, combined with data from other sources, such as monumental inscriptions it is possible to piece together a family's occupation of Buccleuch property over the years.

Border Shepherds in Caithness by Jennifer Bruce [DM]

Jennifer Bruce combines her life as an artist with that of an historical researcher from her home in Wick, Caithness, whence she travelled to make her presentation. She has written a book on the genealogy of Border families.

Jennifer Bruce began her talk with a quotation from that great thriller writer and lover of border life, John Buchan, who knew a thing or two about border shepherds, *With patience and foresight, long stride and clever eye*, Buchan affirmed that he'd '*never known finer or better friends*'.

In those latter decades of the eighteenth century, immediately after defeat at Culloden, the ordinary people of Scotland suffered extreme poverty. Poor harvests and appalling weather: war with America and large-scale emigration of crofters there threatened the depopulation of the Highlands with a decline in the traditional occupation of cattle rearing. All this forced the British government to intervene with measures to halt the process. The re-introduction of tartan caused a surge in the cloth weaving industry and a consequent increase in mills to meet the growing demand for wool. This led to the introduction of sheep to the gentle slopes of the border-lands.

Sutherland and Caithness have traditionally been among the least densely populated counties of Scotland. Thus when the Earl of Sutherland, the principal landowner with 1.2 m acres, cast about him to find a solution to the depopulation of his vast estates in Sutherland he fastened onto the idea of introducing sheep onto the empty wastes of those northern-most counties of the kingdom. The principal landowner in Caithness, John Sinclair [he of the Statistical Account] followed his lead

The work of three organisations was pivotal to the solution agreed between landowners and government to improve the economy and the lifestyle of the Highlands. The Highland Society of Edinburgh was responsible for funding the emigration of thousands of estate workers to North America; the British Wool Board induced the families of many border shepherds to relocate to Caithness and Sutherland and the British Fish Society prompted the building of a harbour at the estuary of the river Wick in 1808 leading to the launch of a herring fishing industry from the ports along the northern and north-eastern coastline. The design and construction of a new town and harbour on the south side of the river was put into the hands of Britain's leading civil engineer, Thomas Telford by Sir William Pulteney, after whom the town was named Pulteneytown.

Telford himself hailed from Langholm in Roxburghshire from a family of border shepherds and his family name along with Andersons, Armstrongs, Ormiston, Rutherfords, Owens, Pringles, Elliots and Burnetts were among the families induced to send some of their folk to the two north-eastern counties to establish sheep farming there.

Jennifer concluded her presentation with a short talk about the border collie bred in the orders and its counterpart bred from the same stock for use in New Zealand.

Migration Stories at the National Portrait Gallery by Sheila Asante [DK]

Having previously taken part in a two-year fellowship at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery [SNPG] ending this year, Sheila Asante is currently a Freelance Migration Stories Curator. She combines her first-hand knowledge of the SNPG collection with her wide familiarity of Scotland's migration history in presenting a range of fascinating stories.

Sheila's presentation of immigrants to Scotland from the Asian sub-continent owed much to the portraits on display in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. Though there was much of general interest, there is little of particular interest to the researcher of Scottish roots and thus no detailed report has been filed.

Closing Remarks and Dunfermline 2014

A lively question and answer session heralded the closing session. This was followed by the formal closure of an extremely successful conference by SAFHS Chairman, Bruce B. Bishop. Bob Stewart, Chairman of Lanarkshire FHS brought the session to an end by unveiling plans for SAFHS 25th Annual Conference in 2014 to be held at the Carnegie Conference & Business Centre, Halbeath Road in Dunfermline, Fife, KY11 8DY on Saturday, 26th April 2014, on the theme of A Matter of Life and Death. This gathering will be one of many celebrating Scotland's ***Year of Homecoming*** festivities.