

CLISH-CLASH



The e-newsletter of the Scottish Local History Forum

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SLHF NEWS

Happy New Year to all our readers and welcome to this latest edition of *Clish Clash*. This is my first attempt as editor. I hope that I can live up to the high standards set by Diana Webster and James Kennedy, my predecessors. Please let me know about any events, initiatives or local history news associated with your society, workplace or area. **Steve Connelly, interim editor.** You can contact me here: [Contact SLHF | Scottish Local History Forum](#).

■ The Forum plans to hold a review of its activities in the near future and to this end we shall be circulating a short survey to individual and institutional members to help inform our deliberations. Your help with this will be much appreciated.

■ Issue 117 of *Scottish Local History* will be with members soon and available to purchase by non-members for £7.50. Along with the usual news features, reviews and notes & queries there will be the following articles: Menageries & Circuses in East Scotland (A. Drummond), The Dumfries Siller Gun (M. Kennedy), Fairfield Shipbuilding Company – Early Days (G. Manzor), Giffnock Sandstone (S. Nisbet) and George Young of Strelitz, Perthshire (C. Rice).

■ Issue 118 is also well in hand and will include these articles:

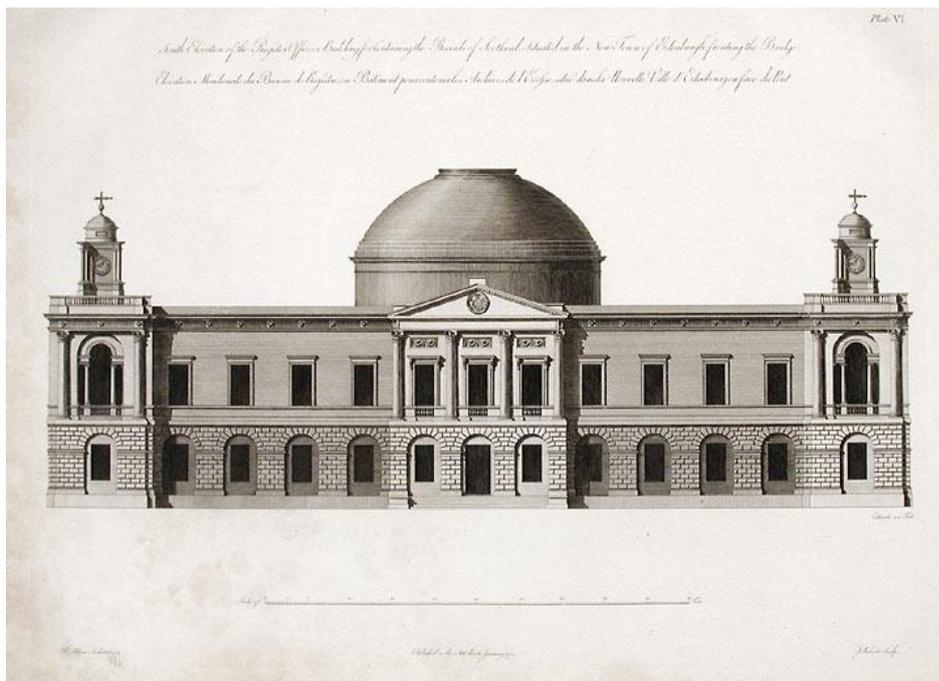
Paisley Grain Mills (A. Cooke), The Mitchellite Explosives Factory, Bonnybridge (J. Harris), Coatbridge Debating Society (L. Jenkins), From Legend to Literacy – Eaglesfield (M. Kennedy), Forfar Bazaar (D. Lockhart) and Escapes from Stobs Camp, Hawick (D. Smale).



If you have not already done so, this is a reminder from the Membership Secretary for individuals and societies to please renew your subscriptions.

LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES & MUSEUMS

■ **National Records of Scotland** The main entrance to General Register House has reopened following the completion of specialist repair work. Visitors to the Historical Search Room and ScotlandsPeople Centre should report to the front door at General Register House, via Princes Street. Signage is in place to direct customers and visitors. The accessible entrance to General Register House and New Register House are located at the Archivist's Garden. Customers should also be aware that significant works on New Register House began in June 2023. This work will future proof the building, ensuring it can continue to be used for the storage and protection of records into the future. Services and access will continue as usual and every effort will be made to minimise disruption. For further details: [Visit Us | National Records of Scotland \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk)



Adam Brothers – Elevation of West Register House, 1775

Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=542988>

■ **National Museums Scotland** NMS recently launched its Annual Review, which highlights its activities and achievements over the past year. This year's review is themed around connection, and explores the ways in which the National Collection connects NMS with people, cultures, communities and other museums.

[Annual Review | National Museums Scotland \(nms.ac.uk\)](https://www.nms.ac.uk)

■ **National Library of Scotland** On display at its George IV Bridge Building in Edinburgh until 24 April is *Encountering Political Texts: 1640-1770* which looks at how political ideas were consumed in a very different way to today's mass media and social networks. Details:

[Encountering political texts: 1640 to 1770 - Collections in Focus at the National Library of Scotland | National Library of Scotland \(nls.uk\)](https://www.nls.uk)

■ **Business Archives Council of Scotland** BACS has teamed up with TownsWeb Archiving to make its journals available on PastView. This gives access to articles covering many aspects of Scotland's business and industrial history in the newsletters, 1966-1977 and the journals, 1977-2023.

[Business Archives Council Of Scotland | Journal \(busarchscot.org.uk\)](https://www.busarchscot.org.uk)

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>

SOCIETIES

■ **The BALH and Historical Association** are working on a project to revamp and relaunch Local and Community History Month from 2025. They aim to emulate the success of other prominent history months and projects such as Heritage Open Days to create a national festival of local history. www.balh.org.uk

■ A prize of £500 is offered by the **Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society** to the winning author of an original research paper on a human or natural history topic relating to Dumfriesshire and Galloway. Entries must reach the Society by 1st October each year. Full details of the terms and conditions of the prize can be found on the Society's website: <https://dqnhas.org.uk/truckell-prize>. Please address any queries to Dr David Devereux: devereuxdf@gmail.com.

■ **Royal Historical Society** Call for papers for conference on **Histories of Scottish Politics in the Age of Union, c.1700-1945** to be held at the University of Durham on 23 and 24 July 2024. Deadline Friday, 1 March 2024.

[Histories of Scottish Politics in the Age of Union, c.1700-1945 – CALL FOR PAPERS | RHS \(royalhistsoc.org\)](https://www.royalhistsoc.org)

WHAT'S ON

- **Glen Finglas – a changing landscape** Bernard Love shares the outcome of his research with Loch Ard Local History Group. 19.30-21.00, Wednesday, 10 January 2024 in Kinlochard Village Hall, Kinlochard, FK8 3TL. Members free, guests £4. [Glen Finglas--A Changing Landscape | Scottish Local History Forum \(slhf.org\)](#)
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- **Gorebridge and Penicuik Heritage Regeneration** A talk to Dalkeith History Society by Rod Lugg, Heritage Regeneration Project Manager. 19.30-20.45, Monday, 12 February 2024 at Dalkeith Baptist Church Hall, 8 North Wynd, Dalkeith, EH22 1JE. Members free, visitors £2 Donation. [Gorebridge and Penicuik Heritage Regeneration | Scottish Local History Forum \(slhf.org\)](#)
- **Life and Death in Victorian Sunnyside** A talk by Nicol Ferrier to Abertay Historical Society in association with the Tayside Medical History Museum. 18.30-19.30, Wednesday, 14 February 2024 at The School of Medicine, Ninewells Hospital, James Arrott Drive, Dundee, DD2 1SG. Members free, non-members by donation. [Life and Death in Victorian Sunnyside | Abertay Historical Society](#)
- **Landscapes of the Galloway Hoard** Lecture by Orla Craig (PhD candidate, University of Glasgow) to Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society. 19.30-21.00, Friday, 16 February 2024 at The Bridge, Glasgow Road, Dumfries, DG2 9AW. Free to members; £4 for non-members [Landscapes of the Galloway Hoard | Scottish Local History Forum \(slhf.org\)](#)
- **History of Duntreath Castle and Estate** Illustrated talk to Drymen & District Local History Society by Eddie Edmonstone. 19.30-21.00, Thursday, 22 February 2024 at Drymen Village Hall, 3 Main Street, Drymen, G63 0BP. Free to members, visitors £3. [History of Duntreath Castle and Estate | Scottish Local History Forum \(slhf.org\)](#)
- **'Are we nearly there yet?'** Bruce Keith will speak to Gullane and Dirleton Local History Society about milestones and way markers, illustrating the theme of his title. 19.30-20.45, Wednesday, 28 February 2024 at Gullane Community Village Hall, Hall Crescent, Gullane, EH31 2HA. Members free, non-members donation of £3. [Are We Nearly There Yet? | Scottish Local History Forum \(slhf.org\)](#)

■ **The Story of MacGibbon and Ross and the castles they surveyed** Lecture by Dr Janet Brennan-Inglis to Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society. 19.30-21.00, Friday, 1 March 2024 at The Bridge, Glasgow Road, Dumfries, DG2 9AW. Free to members, £4 for non-members.

[The Story of MacGibbon and Ross and the castles they surveyed | Scottish Local History Forum \(slhf.org\)](https://www.slhf.org)

■ **'Are we nearly there yet?'** Bruce Keith will speak to Loch Ard Local History Group about milestones and way markers, illustrating the theme of his title. 19.30-21.00, Wednesday, 6 March 2024 - 7:30pm to 9:00pm at Kinlochard Village Hall, Kinlochard, FK8 3TL. Members free, £4 guests.

[Are We Nearly There Yet? | Scottish Local History Forum \(slhf.org\)](https://www.slhf.org)

PUBLICATIONS

■ **A Dundee Miscellany – Working, Schooling, Eating and Entertaining** "A Powerful Auxiliary in the Dundee Manufactures": A Journey Along the Dighty by Anthony Cooke; The Dundee School Board 1873-1918: Transforming Education in Dundee by Mary Nisbet; Jute, Jam and Journalism and Plenty of Pies and Pastries: A Social History of Dundee Bakeries 1890-1950 by Callum Stark and "Fun Without Vulgarity": A brief history of Dundee's Music Halls from the 1840s to the Great War by Billy Rough. Abertay Historical Society, December 2023. ISBN-978-0-900019-65-4. £7.50.

[A Dundee Miscellany - Working, Schooling, Eating and Entertaining | Scottish Local History Forum \(slhf.org\)](https://www.slhf.org)

■ **Old Bankfoot and Waterloo** by David Pettigrew. Stenlake Publishing Limited, 2023. ISBN-978-1-84033-946-8. £11.95.

■ **The Local Historian** – Journal of the British Association for Local History vol.53 no.4. November 2023. ISSN 00245585. £5 (free to members). Includes an article on ensuring continuing access to cited web resources.

■ **Local History News** No 149, Autumn 2023. British Association for Local History. ISSN 0969-3521. £3 (free to members). Includes an article on helping a society as a young person.

■ **Civic Dundee** - Journal of Dundee Civic Trust, 50th Anniversary Edition 1973-2023, November 2023. ISSN 2977-019X. [Civic Dundee – our annual journal – Dundee Civic Trust](https://www.dundee.gov.uk/civic-dundee)

■ **Celebrating Archaeology in Scotland 2023** Free to download.

[Celebrating Archaeology in Scotland Magazine – Archaeology Strategy Scotland](https://www.archaeologystrategy.scot.nhs.uk)

■ **History Scotland** volume 24, issue 1, January/February 2024. £4.99. Includes: Handshakes in a Pandemic – The Return of WWI POWs at the height of Spanish Flu fears; Resistance to the Clearances – Spotlight on the rebellious women of Coigach; Scotland's Women Singers – Entertaining the nation at the turn of the 20th century; Archaeology – Round-up of 2023 Digs and Discoveries; How jewellery techniques were preserved in the age of industry; Scotland's pre-Christian midwinter festivities.

WATCH AND LISTEN

BLOGS

■ **Scotland's Churches Trust** An informative blog by Peter Christie, one of the founders of an amazing small group of volunteer church heritage recorders based in Inverclyde that has done some amazing work this past year. [Inverclyde Church Recorders - Scotlands Churches Trust](https://www.inverclydechurchrecorders.co.uk)

■ **Historic Environment Scotland** Read about the designation of the wreck of The Comet, the pioneering paddle steamer and its creator Henry Bell.

[Henry Bell, Helensburgh and The Comet - Historic Environment Scotland Blog](https://www.historicenvironment.scot/blogs/henry-bell-helensburgh-and-the-comet)

■ **Historic Environment Scotland** Learn about Hansel Monday and its associated traditions. Happy New Year. <https://blog.historicenvironment.scot/2017/01/just-thought-comes-hansel-monday/>

■ **National Records of Scotland** The Freedom Machine: A celebration of cycling in Scotland. An exploration of the collections of NRS to trace the history of the bicycle and how it transformed peoples' lives.

[The 'Freedom Machine': A celebration of cycling in Scotland – Open Book \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/news/the-freedom-machine)

■ **Scottish Genes Newsletter** Chris Paton's latest newsletter is available. [Scottish GENES](https://www.scottishgenes.org)

■ **Witches in Neilston** Inverclyde's Archivist, Lorraine Murray, shares her recent research.

<https://archivisthistoryblog.wordpress.com/2023/12/30/witchcraft-in-neilston/>

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>

SPOTLIGHT ON SLHF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER – IAN COPLAND

Raised and educated in Aberdeenshire, my early working life was with Aberdeen County Library, from where I was encouraged to further my qualifications by attending what is now Robert Gordon University to become a qualified librarian. A series of professional posts took me to central Scotland, Stirling and Falkirk before settling at Cupar as the District Librarian for North East Fife. I was fortunate enough to find time to explore the local history of each place I worked in, and this naturally led me to engage with the local history society in Cupar on retiral.

Cupar Heritage is the local history society for Cupar and the surrounding area. Our organisation is volunteer led and managed and became a registered charity in 2012. Our group acquired premises at Cupar Railway Station through the goodwill of ScotRail and established a small museum and heritage centre that opened in 2012 in response to numerous calls for a town museum. In addition to acting as a volunteer, I act as a Trustee and Treasurer for Cupar Heritage.

However, what I enjoy most is researching and creating exhibitions that tell some of the town's stories. The effect of opening a museum has been to save important artefacts relating to the town's people and history that might otherwise have been lost. These include a time capsule from the base of the Mercat Cross at the time it was relocated, a Toll Board from the time of turnpike roads dated 1860, a casket presented to one of our most important freemen, John Duffus who gifted our local park, Duffus Park and cell doors from the local police station following its demolition. Our exhibitions have commemorated both little known and important events in our area, ranging from the effect of the 1914 -1918 War on Cupar and surrounding area, the hosting of the Highland Show at Cupar in 1912, celebrated the lives of prominent men and women from the town and revealed more about the secret Listening Station near Cupar that operated from the Second World War and through the Cold War.

We often find ourselves endeavouring to settle arguments about the location of retail establishments or the location of early sports venues. Our web site attracts enquiries from around the world and this often leads to visitors from overseas who want to follow up their interests.

Local involvement has seen my time liaising with organisations undertaking heritage related projects in the town. These have included Fife Historic Buildings Trust who undertook a Conservation Area Renewal Scheme in the town centre, a partnership with Cupar Development Trust to create interpretation boards showing aspects of the town's heritage and the annual Big Weekend Community Event.

I have had the pleasure of leading several guided walks to reveal features of the town to adult groups and local school classes. Quite often, I learn as much from these experiences as those joining the walks! The medieval street pattern of our town centre with its closes and wynds are always a source of fascination to visitors and a long-term ambition is to see more of these tidied up and made visitor friendly.

Our loyal membership is provided with a series of monthly talks on local heritage and we have been fortunate enough to attract speakers of quality from outside our organisation alongside contributions from within our members.

We continue to enhance our web site to reflect the work that our volunteers undertake and to encourage interest in the town's heritage locally and further afield. We welcome interest and comments through www.cuparheritage.org.uk and enlarge our social media presence through our Facebook page Cupar Museum and Heritage Centre-Fife.

MEET A LOCAL GROUP

Currie and District Local History Society, 1970 onwards

We are based in the upper valley of the Water of Leith to the west of Edinburgh within the old villages of Balerno, Currie and Juniper Green and the more recent settlement of Baberton. In the past the three villages were known as papermaking villages, surrounded by large agricultural areas and quarries. The Water of Leith and its major subsidiary the Bavelaw Burn according to the Statistical Account of 1791 "drives no less a number that 80-odd mills of different descriptions". These included paper mills, grain mills, snuff mills, flax mills wauk mills. The 1791 Statistical Account mentions the lately introduced paper mill of Messrs Nisbet and MacNiven (Balerno Paper Mill 1788) which is "perhaps, the most extensive, on one waterfall, of any at present in the island; and since its erection has increased the parish by 200 souls". In later years the villages came to be dominated by even larger mills; In 1882 Kinleith Mill in Currie was the



fourth largest mill in Scotland employing nearly 400 folk. In Balerno, Balerno Bank Mill was of similar size employing around 400 folk. The Balerno Branch of the Caledonian Railway was constructed up the Water of Leith principally to serve these mills and the smaller Woodhall Paper Mill in Juniper Green. However as we all know, times change. The Balerno Paper Mill became a glue works and then a tannery and relocated elsewhere. The closure of Kinleith Mill (1966) and Balerno Bank Mill (1971) really was the death knell for the Balerno Branch of the Railway. The railway line was lifted, resurfaced and now forms the popular Water of Leith Walkway. The mills are all now closed and the sites have been developed for housing. The villages have now all become dormitory suburbs for Edinburgh.

Into this time of change in 1970 came the Currie District History Society (changing its name to Currie & District Local History in the 1980s). Our early members, including John Tweedie, our founding father, did much research work, and together with the generosity of local folk assembled a great number of local photos, postcards and other ephemera. This set the Society on a firm foundation. John Tweedie went on to have three books on the local history of our area published which provide excellent research.

We have listed all of the gravestones in our local Currie kirkyard and one of our members has listed and fully researched all of the names on the local war memorials. We have a website <https://www.curriehistory.org> which is open to all, no charge, which gives access to our gravestones listing, the war memorial research, our large photo archive (2000+ photos) which have now been digitised and is held at the Heriot Watt University, Riccarton Campus, together with our latest ongoing project a Local History Guide of our area with interactive map. The website with the gravestones listed and the research on the war memorials has proved a benefit for folks carrying out family tree research.

Since 1973 the Society has published two newsletters (Currie Chronicle) annually for members, including news items and an article on some aspect of local history. Many of these feature articles on local mills, churches, our local castles, hill forts, large houses/prominent families, on historical local personalities and generally anything of local historical interest; water supplies, war memories, farming, the railway and how local folk fared over the centuries. These Currie Chronicles can be accessed through the website.

Over the years we have published “bumper” editions of the Currie Chronicle marking our 25th and 40th Anniversaries (our 50th plans were thwarted by Covid!). We published a Local Street and Place Names booklet and we keep this under review. We have also participated with the local authority giving advice on new street names.

We have 12 meetings a year, autumn to spring, giving local history slide show talks to members, and guests. The membership dropped post-covid but shows signs of picking up again.

We have had a regular column in our local community newspaper (Currie & Balerno News) for the past five years. This summer our members had a visit to one of our local castles, the 15th Century Lennox Tower.

Douglas Lowe
Secretary CDLHS

Lennox Tower, June 2023



Balerno Village 1905 – Police Station



31st Midlothian Scouts at St Margarets Church



Currie Alehouse Miller's House



HISTORY NEWS

■ **Archaeology Scotland** has moved its headquarters to Newbattle Abbey College and is looking at ways of working with the college to develop archaeological learning and events. Learn more

[New chapter at Newbattle | Archaeology Scotland](#)

■ **Historic Environment Scotland** recently held a consultation on how historic battlefields are managed within the Scottish planning system. Its response can be viewed on its website.

[HES publishes response to review of battlefield management | HistEnvScot \(historicenvironment.scot\)](#)

■ **Scotland's Churches Trust** Dr D J. Johnston-Smith has been in touch to let us know that with the rate of church closures expected to accelerate in 2024 SCT are hosting three online sessions in January about its rapid church recording methodology. These aim to assist local congregations and communities record the contents of as many of these beloved buildings as possible before they close. Places are limited at each, booking and information below:

- **Introduction to rapid church recording - Tues 16th January at 7pm on Zoom** - If you haven't been along to one of the church recording discussions before this one is for you. Explains the background to project and the basics involved in recording a church with a small group of volunteers in a single day.
- **Leading a rapid church recording project - Tues 23rd January at 7pm on Zoom** - This session is intended to assist those volunteers intending to take a lead with a group of volunteers recording their local church. Will look at



how to organise recording data, accessing Google forms and report-writing.

• **Scotland's Churches Trust Rapid Church Recording Conversation Space - Tues 30th January at 7pm on Zoom** - This session is intended for anyone currently involved in the church recording project who wants to have a chat with other volunteers, share best practice tips and ask any questions of the SCT team or other recorders. A church recording "surgery" for want of a better term!

■ St Marnock's, Fowlis Easter, near Dundee, is one of the churches deemed surplus to requirements by the Church of Scotland. There is strong local interest in preserving the building and in finding a continuing community use. As a Category A listed building, it and its remarkable pre-Reformation survivals have been well-documented. Not all surplus churches will be so well-recorded and once they have been sold no guarantees that memorials and items of unique local importance will be saved. Thanks to Bill and his family for the impromptu guided Ne'erday tour.

Photograph by Steve Connelly

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■ **The Drove Roads** A talk to Loch Ard Local History Group by Paul Wilson on the drove roads to the Falkirk Tryst including Gartmore and Aberfoyle. 19.30-21.00, Wednesday, 7 February 2024 at Kinlochard Village Hall, Kinlochard, FK8 3TL. Guests £4. [The Drove Roads | Scottish Local History Forum \(slhf.org\)](#)

■ **East Lothian at War** A presentation of photographs and film held in the Gullane and Dirleton History Society's archive will tell the story of how East Lothian was affected by the Second World War. 19.30-20.45, Thursday, 8 February 2024 at Dirleton Kirk Hall, Manse Road, Dirleton, EH39 5EL. Members free, non members asked for donation of £3. [East Lothian at War | Scottish Local History Forum \(slhf.org\)](#)

■ **Gorebridge and Penicuik Heritage Regeneration** A talk to Dalkeith History Society by Rod Lugg, Heritage Regeneration Project Manager. 19.30-20.45, Monday, 12 February 2024 at Dalkeith Baptist Church Hall, 8 North Wynd, Dalkeith, EH22 1JE. Members free, visitors £2 Donation.

[Gorebridge and Penicuik Heritage Regeneration | Scottish Local History Forum \(slhf.org\)](#)

■ **Life and Death in Victorian Sunnyside** A talk by Nicol Ferrier to Abertay Historical Society in association with the Tayside Medical History Museum. 18.30-19.30, Wednesday, 14 February 2024 at The School of Medicine, Ninewells Hospital, James Arrott Drive, Dundee, DD2 1SG. Members free, non-members by donation. [Life and Death in Victorian Sunnyside | Abertay Historical Society](#)

■ **Landscapes of the Galloway Hoard** Lecture by Orla Craig (PhD candidate, University of Glasgow) to Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society. 19.30-21.00, Friday, 16 February 2024 at The Bridge, Glasgow Road, Dumfries, DG2 9AW. Free to members; £4 for non-members

[Landscapes of the Galloway Hoard | Scottish Local History Forum \(slhf.org\)](#)

■ **History of Duntreath Castle and Estate** Illustrated talk to Drymen & District Local History Society by Eddie Edmonstone. 19.30-21.00, Thursday, 22 February 2024 at Drymen Village Hall, 3 Main Street, Drymen, G63 0BP. Free to members, visitors £3. [History of Duntreath Castle and Estate | Scottish Local History Forum \(slhf.org\)](#)

■ **'Are we nearly there yet?'** Bruce Keith will speak to Gullane and Dirleton Local History Society about milestones and way markers, illustrating the theme of his title. 19.30-20.45, Wednesday, 28 February 2024 at Gullane Community Village Hall, Hall Crescent, Gullane, EH31 2HA. Members free, non-members donation of £3. [Are We Nearly There Yet? | Scottish Local History Forum \(slhf.org\)](#)

■ **The Story of MacGibbon and Ross and the castles they surveyed** Lecture by Dr Janet Brennan-Inglis to Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society. 19.30-21.00, Friday, 1 March 2024 at The Bridge, Glasgow Road, Dumfries, DG2 9AW. Free to members, £4 for non-members.

[The Story of MacGibbon and Ross and the castles they surveyed | Scottish Local History Forum \(slhf.org\)](#)

■ **'Are we nearly there yet?'** Bruce Keith will speak to Loch Ard Local History Group about milestones and way markers, illustrating the theme of his title. 19.30-21.00, Wednesday, 6 March 2024 - 7:30pm to 9:00pm at Kinlochard Village Hall, Kinlochard, FK8 3TL. Members free, £4 guests.

[Are We Nearly There Yet? | Scottish Local History Forum \(slhf.org\)](#)

■ Dr Murray Cook, a member of SLHF Advisory Committee, has favoured us with this piece about plans for important anniversary celebrations in 2024:

David I and Stirling

2024 sees the 900th anniversary of the Coronation of David I on either 23 April or May. It is hard to overestimate just how radically Scotland changed over his lifetime and how much was due to his own reign. Remember the late Professor Geoffrey Barrow coined the term the Davidian Revolution which involved our first coinage, legal structures, mottes, burghs, high schools, monasteries and much more, and yet no one expected him to be King. The most recent biography of David by Professor Richard Oram underlines this legacy but concludes it is perhaps a little overstated.

I am an archaeologist so must always be careful about wading too far into history's murky depths lest the current sweep me away. I much prefer the solid but isolated stepping stones that archaeology recovers but one cannot work in Stirling (where I am the Council's Archaeologist) without thinking about David. David gave us our High School, our Burgh status, Cambuskenneth Abbey and perhaps The Church of the Holy Rude and our first bridge over the Forth. Stirling, along with Berwick, Roxburgh and Edinburgh is one of Scotland's first four burghs. Berwick and Roxburgh are of course no longer Scottish burghs and while born and schooled in Edinburgh my focus is now Stirling. Stirling is first recorded as a

burgh between 1124 and 1127 and so we are choosing to mark the earliest possible date 23 April 2024 and are having a year of celebration. The key event is the walking of our Burgh Marches on the 25 May. This ancient annual event was suspended in the mid-1970s with the abolition of Burghs and in its place Stirling got a shopping mall...the Marches. In recent years it has been resurrected by local man Andy McEwan and next year will be a gear change to a bigger and better event, if you are in Stirling please join us.

But what about David and that line that no one expected him to be king? His father was the fearsome Malcolm III, the subject of an excellent new biography by Dr Neil McGuigan. Malcolm was, of course, the hero of Shakespeare's MacBeth but far from the meek mild lamb of the play. He overthrew both of his predecessors, MacBeth and Lulach, married a saint, tussled with William the Conqueror and had 11 children of which David was the youngest. During Malcolm's reign Scotland or Alba's (as it was called) frontier was the Forth. Malcolm and then his successors: first his brother Donald III, then his children Duncan II, Edgar I and Alexander I all pushed south. South of the Forth Strathclyde and the northern rump of Northumbria were pulled back and forth between Alba and England. The solution was to create a buffer zone from the Forth to the Tweed ruled by David who was called the Prince of the Cumbrians (Strathclyde). With the death of his two older brothers Edgar and Alexander without legitimate heirs the unimaginable happened...David became king. This meant he combined Alba with his personal holdings and overnight Alba's border shifted from the Forth to the Tweed. This meant that a bridge over the Forth could be built to replace the ancient tidal fords used to date. Old Stirling Bridge, the one destroyed during the Battle of Stirling Bridge is first recorded around 1180 but it seems likely that David probably built it and Stirling's and thus Scotland's economy exploded! So, with such a legacy you would imagine that Stirling was full of David statues or even streets? I'm afraid not...there is a single solitary David head on the side of the Victorian iteration of the High School. But we will celebrate his legacy next year and we hope you will come along.



A reminder to Member Societies please take a few minutes to make sure that you put your latest programme on the SLHF website <https://www.slhf.org/events>

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QUOTE OF THE MOMENT

“The more you weigh, the harder you are to kidnap. Stay safe: eat cake.”
A sign outside a bakery in Berwick

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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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