

GRACE NOTES

Newsletter of the Memphis Scottish Society, Inc.

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President's Letter

It has been an honor to serve as President of the Memphis Scottish Society for the past two years, and now it's time for someone else to have a turn! That is right, it is almost time to elect a new Board of Directors. The Nomination Committee consists of the Past President (Joe Lile), one member I will appoint, and one who will be chosen by the membership at our October meeting. If you are interested in serving on the Board, please don't be shy about it. Talk to one of the committee members and volunteer your time. We have a monthly meeting which lasts about an hour, and each Board member has, in the past, chaired one of the events that MSSSI hosts each year. The committee will present a proposed slate of officers at the November meeting, and the election will be in December. There will be a chance to make nominations from the floor. The new Board will be introduced at Burns Night and will begin their term then.

What a nice segue into Burns Night.....Be sure to make your reservations soon! It will be held at Woodland Hills Event Center again, and will feature the Wolf River Pipes and Drums and the duo Chambless and Muse, haggis, a feast with some Scottish fare, a demonstration by the Scottish Dance group, a silent auction to benefit the scholarship fund, and more! January 24, 2015 is the date, and there is a reception on January 16 for Patrons and Benefactors.

October Meeting

Ladies and Gentlemen, you are in for a treat at this month's meeting. Our presenter is Graeme Mackenzie, the Seanachaidh (historian and genealogist) for Clans MacMillan and Mackenzie. Graeme very graciously accepted our invitation to come and speak to us while he's in the States after a speaking engagement in Minneapolis and before the Stone Mountain Games, where he will be featured.

He will be presenting two sessions, a condensed 45-minute talk on Clans, Septs, and Surnames, and will take a short break then will give us a little more information and have a question and answer session lasting approximately 45 minutes. If you like to leave by 8, there will be no problem with that, but if you want to hear everything he has to say, in his Scottish accent, plan on staying until about 8:45. See you then!



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MSSI Halloween Party

The annual MSSI Halloween Party will be held Saturday, October 25, 2014 starting at 2PM at the home of Joe and Debbie Sellmansberger, 14670 Highway 93 in Williston, TN. For all of you who have attended previous Halloween parties at Joe and Debbie's you already know that it is the perfect place for an outdoor party.

This year we are planning a "Catfish Fry". The society will buy the catfish fillets, hush puppies, drinks and paper products. We will also have chicken tenders for those who are allergic to cats. Members are asked to bring sides, salads and desserts. I promise only locally farm-raised catfish will be cooked, none of those "furners."

There will be fishing for Bass and Bluegill in one of 2 ponds on Joe and Debbie's farm. You may keep what you catch or throw them back, but please bring your own cooler to preserve your catch. Debbie now has added 5 sheep to her growing menagerie of animals. Maybe we can get her to give us a lesson on "how to shear a sheep".

After we all fill ourselves with catfish and hush puppies, we hope you will stay for the bonfire and roasting of marshmallows.

So please wear your favorite Halloween costume and plan for a day of fun, food and fellowship.

Directions to Joe and Debbie's:

Take Highway 64 E toward Somerville. Merge onto TN-385E toward Collierville. Turn left onto Highway 193. 14670 Highway 193 is about 15 miles on the right.

Genealogy in the Gaidhealtachd: Clan and Family History in the Highlands of Scotland

by Graeme M. Mackenzie (Highland Family History Society, Inverness, 2013).

"Genealogy in the Gaidhealtachd" distills some of the knowledge Graeme has gained working for 25 years as a professional genealogist specialising in Highland clans and families. He uses examples to illustrate particular problems from research into his own family and the families of clients, as well as the experience he has gained over many years acting as the Seanachaidh (historian & genealogist) for Clan MacKenzie and Clan MacMillan. The chapter titles illustrate the main subjects covered:

Getting On the Ancestral Trail; Certificates, Censuses, and Spelling; Church Registers and Naming Traditions; Given Names and Nicknames; Surnames and Septs; Clans and Parent Kindreds; Charter Chests and Traditional Tales; Emigrants and Explorers; Soldiers, Sailors, and East Indianmen; Connecting Cousins and Coming Home to the Highlands.

The 21 appendices form an extensive guide to sources for clan & family history in the Highlands, listing and locating such things as church registers, valuation rolls, sasine registers, kirk session minutes, poor law records, burial grounds and transcriptions, archive centres, public libraries, clan centres, museums, and local heritage groups.

Graeme will have copies of his book available at the monthly meeting, signed-\$25 and orders will be taken for unsigned copies for \$20 to be shipped from Scotland.



Grace Notes is the official publication of the Memphis Scottish Society, Inc. It is published monthly. Like the Society itself, the credo of *Grace Notes* is "to foster education and promote understanding of things Scottish."

If you have something of interest to readers of this newsletter, please submit a typewritten manuscript to the editorial staff. If the article or notice is very brief (30 words or fewer), e-mail or just use the telephone. *Grace Notes* will accept and publish good quality photographs.

The deadline for all submissions is the fourth week of each month preceding the month of publication. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope with each submission, if you want the material returned.

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and promote understanding
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Genealogy in the Gaidhealtachd:

Alison Mason (Highland Archivist, Highland Archive Centre)

This is a very comprehensive and valuable book for anyone contemplating research into their Highland forebears. The content is especially helpful for those researchers who want to find out what Highland resources are available, and more importantly how and where to access them. Graeme begins the book with an honest 'step by step' account of how he initiated the research into his own family beginning back in the 1980's. Much of this initial work was done before the availability of on-line resources which have dramatically eased the modern researchers' work. Graeme describes the possible puzzles which appeared then, and which still apply now when carrying out research and he goes on to provide examples from his own experience of common issues which you may encounter while researching your own family history research using Highland resources.

A substantial section of the book comprises naming traditions and patterns, descriptive by- names and nicknames; lists of name equivalents; surnames, clan information, septs and related names. Graeme displays the vast extent of his own research by providing numerous examples of name changes including alternative names, additional names and patronymics in his own family history research, all showing that while researchers must be vigilant to differences between spellings, they should not rule out an entry purely because it is spelt differently. (See extract on this page)

Further chapters explore Highland history and the diaspora and Graeme provides some fascinating examples from his own research of Highlanders throughout Asia, North America and the West Indies. One particular account concerns the treachery after the battle of Culloden on the part of the Laird of Grant; who after the battle swiftly sided with the Duke of Cumberland. He then sought to trick his Jacobite supporting tenants by promising them protection if they surrendered their arms to him. The unfortunate 84 men, who took him at

his word, were promptly shipped off to the West Indies in shackles, whence few ever returned.

Throughout the book Graeme includes references, and provides useful illustrations, photographs and family trees which add to the flow for the reader as well as providing handy tips covering many sources and records such as statutory birth, marriage and death certificates, census records, Old Parish Registers, Memorial Inscriptions, Valuation Rolls, Rent Rolls, Sasines, Military

Records, Newspapers and Immigrant records. Graeme's research also highlights the breadth of Highland material which can be accessed from additional sources, in particular burgh records.

There are many appendices at the end of the book which are extremely helpful as they provide a comprehensive guide to the wide variety of Highland specific resources which are available to researchers, and most importantly where and how these might be accessed. Also included in the appendices are details of pre-1855 resources and where they are located, dates of commencement for Highland Old Parish Registers

listed by county, as well as details of burial grounds listed by county and parish which have accompanying monumental inscriptions compiled. Finally Graeme provides useful lists of contact details for all relevant archives, libraries, museums, heritage centres as well as Family History, Local History and Heritage Groups in the Highlands.

Graeme is quick to point out that he did not want to duplicate the numerous books on 'How to Research Your Scottish Ancestors' and I believe he has achieved this goal. However, the content of the book makes it apparent that Graeme has gained invaluable experience throughout his many years as a professional genealogist and family historian. I would recommend this book to anyone in the process of studying Highland genealogy and family history or indeed studying any aspect of the Highland history in general.

