

List of titles and abstracts

Plenary speakers

Professor Stewart Jay Brown (School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh), ‘“Where are our dead?” Changing Views of Death and the Afterlife in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Scotland’

Dr Elizabeth Cumming (Honorary Fellow, University of Edinburgh; Honorary Senior Research Fellow, University of Glasgow), ‘Phoebe Anna Traquair, angels and changing concepts of the supernatural in fin-de-siècle Scotland’

Professor Hilary J. Grainger (London College of Fashion, University of the Arts, London; Chair of the Victorian Society), ‘Designs on Death: the architecture of Scottish crematoria, 1895-1955’

Professor Elaine McFarland (Department of Social Sciences, Media and Journalism, Caledonian University), ‘War and Remembrance in modern Scotland’

Speakers

Dr Isobel Broome (Southampton University): ‘A Scottish pioneer in palliative care: Frances Davidson (1840-1920)’

Dr Susan Buckham (Historic Scotland/Kirkyard Consulting), ‘Not Architects of Decay: the Influence of Cemetery Management on Burial Landscapes’

Dr Glenys Caswell (University of Nottingham), ‘“We can do nothing for the dead”’: comparing approaches to the funeral of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in the early 20th and 21st centuries’

Dr Gayle Davis (Wellcome Lecturer in the History of Medicine, University of Edinburgh), ‘Dead Man Knocking’: Issues Surrounding Medical Certification of Death in Scotland, c.1893-1960’

Christopher Dingwall (Landscape Historian & Honorary Research Adviser to the Garden History Society in Scotland), ‘Landscaping for the Dead: The Garden Cemetery Movement in Dundee and Angus’

Professor Owen Dudley-Edwards (Department of History, Classics and Archaeology, University of Edinburgh), ‘Death as the ultimate success: John Buchan’s fortieth step’

Professor Alastair Fowler (Regius Professor Emeritus in English Literature in the University of Edinburgh), ‘Attitudes to death in the work of Robert Louis Stevenson and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’

Dr Helen Frisby (University of the West of England): ‘Comparing Scottish and English funerary folklore, c.1840-1920’

Dr Eilidh Garrett (University of St Andrew's) and Dr Alice Reid (Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, University of Cambridge), "Drowned while ... lobster fishing" versus "Run over by a railway wagon", a rural-urban comparison of cause of, and age at, death; Skye and Kilmarnock 1861-1901'

Ms Caroline Gerard (Editor of *The Scottish Genealogist*), 'Death Certification in Scotland 1855 – 1955'

Dr Martyn L. Gorman (Department of Zoology, Aberdeen University) 'Echoes of the Scottish Resurrection Men'

Eleanor Harris (University of Stirling), 'Changing ways to die amongst nineteenth-century Edinburgh Episcopalians'

The Revd Dr Peter Howson (Minister at Byfleet and Weybridge Methodist Churches), "'Anthem for Doomed Youth": Scottish Chaplains and World War One'

Professor Ronald D. S. Jack (Edinburgh University), "'To die will be an awfully big adventure": on *Peter Pan* and the development of J. M. Barrie's metaphysical views at Edinburgh University'

Revd Dr Peter C. Jupp (Edinburgh University), 'Cremation in inter-war Scotland: failure and success'

Mr Paul Laxton (Visiting Scholar, University of Edinburgh), 'A sanitary measure of no small importance': the persistence of private cemeteries in Edinburgh'

Dr Juliette MacDonald (Edinburgh College of Art), 'Death, mourning and memory: two Apocalypse windows by Douglas Strachan'

Hilda Maclean (University of Queensland), 'Deith comes tae Brisbane'

Dr Ruth McManus (University of Christchurch, New Zealand), 'Finding Solace in Death and Destruction: from Clydebank to Christchurch'

Dr Brian Parsons (CeDAS, Bath University), 'Funeral Directors in 20th century Scotland'

Mr Gordon Raeburn (Durham University), 'The Rise of the Cemeteries and the Free Church of Scotland'

Dr Alice Reid (Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, Cambridge University) and Dr Eilidh Garrett (University of St Andrews), 'From ague to pyrexia and from smallpox to heart disease: an overview of causes of death in Scotland 1855-1955'

Dr Terri Sabatos (Associate Professor of Art History, United States Military Academy West Point, New York, US), "'The Glen of Gloom": The massacre at Glencoe in Victorian visual culture'

Dr R Scott (Centre for Open Studies, University of Glasgow), 'Together in toil, divided in death: remembering the victims of the Cadder Pit Disaster 1913'

Dr Robert S. Shiels (Solicitor in Scotland; and formerly of the Procurator Fiscal Service), 'Scots law and the investigation of deaths from 1855 to 1955'

Mr Edward Small (University of Dundee), 'Gender dynamics around the culture of death in Scotland: A selling point or a societal shift?'

Dr Michael Smith (Glasgow University), 'The development of the funeral industry in nineteenth century Edinburgh'

Stephen White (Cardiff University), 'The Legal Status of Corpses and Cremains: When and where can you steal a dead body?'

Plenary Panel:

Chair: Dr Ronnie Scott (Centre for Open Studies, University of Glasgow)

Dr Marion Bowman (Head of Religious Studies, The Open University, UK).

Dr Harriet Harris (Chaplain to the University of Edinburgh)

The Revd Dr Ewan Kelly (University of Edinburgh and NHS Education for Scotland)

Dr Julie Rugg (Director, The Cemetery Research Group, University of York).

Titles and abstracts

Dr Isobel Broome (University of Southampton)

hib@wyncourt.net

Abstract

'Frances Mary Davidson: a pioneer in care of the dying'

The Friedenheim, Home of Peace for the Dying, was the idea and life's work of a Scotswoman, Frances Mary Davidson (1840-1920). Founded in 1885, it was the first institution in England solely devoted to the physical and spiritual care of those at the end of life. Alone among the later proto-hospices of the nineteenth- and early twentieth centuries, it was wholly independent and unaffiliated with any formal religious organisation. The name was changed to St. Columba's Hospital in 1914, and it was absorbed into the National Health Service in 1948. It closed in 1981. Hailed by a contemporary as accommodating the dying 'the right way', the Friedenheim pioneered care for the poor or friendless who had been rejected by hospitals and literally had no place to die. This paper first explores the influence of Davidson's upbringing in Scotland on the values and expectations she brought to her London institution, and then considers the physical and emotional space she offered in the Home itself. As an early expression of compassionate physical, emotional and

spiritual care for the dying, the Friedenheim holds a unique position in the history of end-of-life care.

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Professor Stewart Jay Brown (Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Head of the School of Divinity, Edinburgh University)

j.brown@ed.ac.uk

“Where are our dead?” Changing Views of Death and the Afterlife in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Scottish Presbyterianism’

Abstract

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed fundamental changes in Christian views of the afterlife throughout the North Atlantic world. These changes had a profound impact on the Scottish Presbyterian Churches, including the national Church of Scotland. A growing number of Presbyterian clergy and laity no longer held to the doctrines of predestination and the eternal punishment of the reprobate, as those doctrines were enshrined in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Anthropological studies of the development of religion, the higher criticism of Scripture, comparative studies of world faiths, new religious movements such as spiritualism, and the new science of psychology all combined to throw doubt on traditional Christian teachings about the soul and an afterlife. There was, moreover, a growing sense that to act morally out of concern for reward or punishment in an afterlife was self-seeking; it was far more elevated, many argued, to work for a more just society in this world as a good in itself. The result of such developments was declining attention to an afterlife in sermons, and uncertainty in the Presbyterian Churches about what happened after death.

And yet, many Christians felt a deep need, especially at times of bereavement, to hear the promise of eternal salvation. This need became especially acute during the First World War, as so many young Scots died violently, and so many families were left devastated. They looked to the Presbyterian Churches to answer the question of ‘Where are our dead?’ In response, during and after the First World War, a number of leading Scottish Presbyterian authors, including H. R. MacIntosh, John Baillie, G. Galloway, and especially Norman Maclean, sought to address the question of the survival and destiny of personality after death. This lecture will explore some of these works and what they reveal about changing late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Presbyterian attitudes to the fundamental questions surrounding death, judgement, and the afterlife.

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Dr Susan Buckham (Historic Scotland, Edinburgh)

Susan.buckham@yahoo.co.uk

‘Not Architects of Decay: the Influence of Cemetery Management on Burial Landscapes’

Abstract

This paper explores the influence of cemetery managers upon the appearance and organisation of burial landscapes from the mid-nineteenth century into the twentieth century. The introduction of garden cemeteries in Britain during the first half of the nineteenth century has been seen as heralding a radical change in attitudes towards burial and commemoration. By the turn of the twentieth century a new form of cemetery aesthetic, the lawn cemetery, started to emerge. Until recently, lawn cemeteries have largely been viewed as a triumph of the economy of management over cultural values and as evidence of society's emotional disengagement with death. This paper proposes that in order to more fully appreciate the material variety, aesthetic qualities and the evolving nature of burial landscapes a greater emphasis needs to be placed on understanding how sites were managed. This study of Scottish cemetery management will consider two key points. Firstly, that the layout and appearance of churchyards were also subject to widespread change, suggesting that differences between burial landscape types may be more fluid than previously acknowledged. Secondly, the role of Scottish cemetery managers in advancing the lawn cemetery involved drivers of change that drew upon ideology as well as practice.

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Dr Glenys Caswell (Research Fellow, Department of Nursing, University of Nottingham, Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham)

glenys.caswell@nottingham.ac.uk

“We can do nothing for the dead”: comparing approaches to the funeral of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in the early 20th and 21st centuries’

Abstract

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland (FPC) was formed in 1893, when a small group of ministers and elders separated from the Free Church of Scotland. Today it describes itself as ‘an evangelical, Calvinistic denomination, reformed in doctrine, worship and practice.’ The FPC approach to death is one which promotes the belief that, when a saved person dies, he or she has gone ‘to be with Christ, which is far better’. Any worship or observance after death is in the interests of the living, which may be served through the comfort of the scriptures or in timely reminders of their own mortality and sin. In practice the FPC has a number of practices which, when transferred into the funeral setting, have led some people to describe their services as cold, impersonal and unfeeling. This paper will compare the approaches of the FPC to death in the early years of the 20th and 21st centuries, and consider the impact this had on funeral practices.

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Dr Elizabeth Cumming (Honorary Fellow, University of Edinburgh; Honorary Senior Research Fellow, University of Glasgow)

e_cumming@lineone.net

‘Phoebe Anna Traquair, angels and changing concepts of the supernatural in fin-de-siècle Scotland’

Abstract

Phoebe Traquair was a multidisciplinary artist and Scotland’s most celebrated woman painter of the 1890s. Drawn to the worlds of the imagination, much of her career was given to celebrating the journey of the spirit through life. This paper explores the meaning behind some of her mural decorations in Edinburgh buildings and her applied art, notably her remarkable quartet of embroideries, *The Progress of a Soul*. Set within the twin contexts of evolving Scottish theology and British aesthetics, the paper discusses the purpose, sources and realisation of her art, and in particular her fascination with balancing imagery of the physical and spiritual worlds, making the unseen visible. For her, only such an art could adequately express the true fullness of life and, crucially, play its part in modern society.

Traquair’s circle of friends included the Pre-Raphaelite painter William Holman Hunt and the theologian Dr Alexander Whyte, both of whom personally influenced her art. However, her inspiration for brave work which visualised not only life to the point of death but a life beyond also came from reading texts which were popular at the time, notably by Alfred Lord Tennyson and John Henry Newman. Her interpretation of their ideas contributed to the imagery and the character of her art.

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Dr Gayle Davis (Wellcome Lecturer in the History of Medicine, School of History, Classics and Archaeology, University of Edinburgh)

Gayle.Davis@ed.ac.uk

‘Dead Man Knocking’: Issues Surrounding Medical Certification of Death in Scotland, c.1893-1960’

Abstract

This paper is based on a Wellcome-funded project which examines the interface between civil registration, the medical profession and the State in twentieth-century Scotland, and utilises the valuable records and correspondence of the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS), previously unexploited by historians and much better preserved than the corresponding archives for England. It will examine the processes and complexities of medical certification of death in Scotland from the 1893 Select Committee on death certification to attempts to revise registration processes in the mid-twentieth century.

The paper will chart the GROS’s relationship with, and attempts to control, the medical profession, and will problematise the historiographic notion that certification of death was ‘medicalised’ in this period. State efforts to determine cause of death as accurately as possible required a particular effort to draw the medical profession into greater co-operation with the State, as well as related personnel such as medical officers of health and procurators fiscal, the public prosecutor in Scotland. However, this could be a strained and complicated relationship, since the needs of the State at times conflicted directly with medical priorities, as well as with the families of the dead. It will be considered to what extent certification and registration of death

reflected the concerns of the State, the medical profession or the family, and the relationship between the three.

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Christopher Dingwall (Landscape Historian & Honorary Research Adviser to the Garden History Society in Scotland)
dingwall@guidelines.demon.co.uk

‘Landscaping for the Dead: the Garden Cemetery Movement in Dundee and Angus’

Abstract

Along with Glasgow and Edinburgh, Dundee was quick to embrace the fashion for creating non-denominational garden cemeteries, in response to its rapidly growing industrial population in the mid-19th century. Starting with the New Cemetery formed by Dundee Town Council in the 1830s, this paper will describe subsequent developments, including the Western Cemetery (1844), the Eastern Necropolis (1863) and the Western Necropolis (1870) – the first of these by a joint stock company, the other two as Town Council ventures. Consideration will also be given to the influence of the garden cemetery movement on the design of other cemeteries in the county of Angus, notably Kirriemuir Cemetery, the Western Cemetery in Arbroath, and Sleepyhillock Cemetery in Montrose.

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Professor Owen Dudley-Edwards (Department of History, Classics and Archaeology, University of Edinburgh), ‘Death as the ultimate success: John Buchan’s fortieth step’

Abstract to follow

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Professor Alastair Fowler (former Regius Professor of English and Rhetoric, University of Edinburgh)
11, East Claremont Street, Edinburgh EH7 4HT

‘Attitudes to death in the work of Robert Louis Stevenson and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’.

Abstract

The near-contemporaries Stevenson and Conan Doyle, both highly popular writers with great public influence, present sharp contrasts in their thinking about death. Throughout much of his life, Stevenson had near-death experiences in the form of copious haemorrhaging: perhaps in consequence representations of death occur frequently in his literary work, from *Will o’ the Mill* (1877) on. Conan Doyle’s work, by contrast, reflects his medical training and observer’s objectivity towards death. Nevertheless, his response to photographs of fairies and his interest in spiritualism have in different ways given rise to a false notion: the idea that he was credulous and superstitious. But his attitude to spiritualism was in fact quite the reverse: he was

extremely sceptical, and brought about the unmasking of several fake mediums. In general his experimental approach to what lies behind death was a scientific one.

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Dr Helen Frisby (University of the West of England, UK)
Helen.Frisby@uwe.ac.uk

‘Comparing Scottish and English funerary folklore, c.1840-1920’

Abstract

Recent scholarship has alerted historians to the so-called “Celtic myth,” the notion that the Celts are for the most part a modern fabrication, a product of eighteenth and early-nineteenth century Romantic nationalism rather than empirically verifiable fact. It is within this context that I will compare Scottish and English funerary folklore from the period c.1840-1920. For instance, in 1881 Revd. Walter Gregor recorded that in north east Scotland, “[t]he last thing done on the last day of the year was to cover up the live coals [of the household fire] with the ashes [...]” If on New Year’s morning there were a mark resembling “a human foot with the toes pointing towards the door [...] one was to be removed from the family before the year was run.” The very similar custom of ‘ass-riddling’ was also recorded south of the border, in Yorkshire, Revd. J.C. Atkinson disapprovingly describing it as “a superstition which has led to many a thoughtless, but very cruel and mischievous joke.” Numerous other funerary portents, beliefs and rituals can also be found in folklore collections from both north and south of the border during the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, whereas the English folklorists’ coverage veered awkwardly between outright hostility and sentimental nostalgia, their Scottish colleagues were largely neutral, or even sympathetic toward their subjects, being generally agreed that the folk and their customs represented the precious vestiges of an ancient, authentic Celtic heritage.

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Dr Eilidh Garrett (University of St Andrews) and Alice Reid (Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, University of Cambridge).
Eilidh.garret@btinternet.com

“Drowned while ... lobster fishing” versus “Run over by a railway wagon”, a rural-urban comparison of cause of, and age at, death; Skye and Kilmarnock 1861-1901.

Abstract

Was the experience of death in urban Scotland different from that in rural areas of the country in the second half of the nineteenth century?

This paper will examine this question using information provided by individual entries in the civil registers of death from the Isle of Skye and the town of Kilmarnock between 1861 and 1901. Levels of, and trends in, mortality will be compared between the two communities, and variations in the causes of death reported, and the age profile of those dying will be considered. The role of doctors in the registration

process and the implications of rural-urban differences in medical provision will be discussed.

This paper will conclude by examining how the recording of deaths is influenced by location and factors such as occupational structure and medical provision which vary by location. The implications of this for our understanding of death in urban and rural Scotland more generally will be considered.

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Caroline Gerard (Editor of *The Scottish Genealogist*),
Caroline.Gerard@btinternet.com

‘Death Certification in Scotland 1855 – 1955’

Abstract

My short presentation would demonstrate the development of Scottish death registration between 1855 and 1955 and include the changes in information recorded, as well describing the variable quality thereof. Much of the quality – or reliability – of such detail is dependent on the knowledge of the Informant, of course. In the earlier days family members might not have relevant documents, while other Informants, such as staff at Institutions, might have only the scantiest personal details.

I would include also an outline of the developments in stated causes of death, from the simple but factual “Old Age” to the more modern medical descriptions, such as “Bronchopneumonia”. Some examples would be shown to illustrate these points. As running through legislation and so on is a tad “dry”, I would ensure that some of the examples were “interesting”.

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Dr Martyn L. Gorman (Reader in Zoology, The University of Aberdeen)
m.gorman@abdn.ac.uk

‘Echoes of the Scottish Resurrection Men’

Abstract

Prior to the Anatomy Act of 1832 the number of corpses legally available for anatomical studies was small and quite inadequate to meet the competing demands of private and university anatomy schools. The shortfall in supply was made good by the activity of the resurrection men who dug up newly buried bodies and sold them to the anatomists.

The populace were much distressed by this activity and went to great lengths to try to prevent it happening. In this paper I will describe the various methods and devices that were used in an attempt to thwart the depredations of grave robbers and the physical evidence that can still be seen in many Scottish graveyards.

Following the publication of the Anatomy Act of 1832, the various mort-stones, mort-safes, mort-houses, watch-houses and towers that had been used to prevent grave robbing became obsolete and many of them disappeared. However, as I shall show, some of them were put to a variety of new uses, with a number of them still serving a useful function right up to the present time.

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Professor Hilary J. Grainger (Dean, London College of Fashion, University of the Arts, London: Chair of the Victorian Society)
h.j.grainger@fashion.arts.ac.uk

‘Designs on Death: the architecture of Scottish crematoria, 1895-1955’.

Abstract

With the notable exception of Mortonhall, Edinburgh (1967) designed by the internationally acclaimed architect Sir Basil Spence, hitherto any consideration of crematoria has been notably absent from architectural histories of Scotland. Pevsner makes only fleeting reference to a handful of crematoria in his comprehensive *Buildings of Scotland* volumes, commenting that, despite the early opening of Maryhill, Glasgow in 1893, ‘cremation came late to Scotland’.

From the outset, the lack of a shared and clear expectation of what was required from a crematorium as a building, gave rise to the cultural ambivalence lying at the heart of many designs. Not surprisingly, architectural responses have often been ambiguous and evasive. At once utilitarian and symbolic, religious and secular, crematoria are fraught with complexity and present a series of challenges for architects. Despite the fact that crematoria remain the invisible buildings of twentieth century Scotland, each one of its 29 tells us a great deal about the country’s social and cultural attitudes, not least changing attitudes towards the disposal of the dead in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Research suggests that Scotland’s architectural expression of cremation differs in some ways from the remainder of the UK and this lecture considers the reasons behind differences in planning, conception and architectural style in relationship to ritual. Through an analysis of the crematoria in Edinburgh, (Warriston and Leith) Glasgow (Maryhill and Daldowie), Dundee, Aberdeen and Paisley - all opened before 1955 - the lecture will explore the ways in which architects sought to address the challenges presented by an environment required to satisfy both the complex needs of mourners and the practical aspects of cremation.

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Eleanor Harris (University of Stirling),
eleanormharris@gmail.com

‘Changing ways to die amongst nineteenth-century Edinburgh Episcopalians’;

Abstract

This paper explores the changes in the culture of death -- wills, graves and commemorations -- of some of the 430 people connected with the Episcopal congregation of Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh. While the chapel only existed from 1794 to 1818, and the earliest deaths are from its funeral register, some members lived to the 1870s. They therefore present an interesting study in changes in the spiritual, material and social understanding of death as the century progressed.

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The Revd Dr Peter Howson (Minister at Byfleet and Weybridge Methodist Churches; formerly at Inverness),

Petros.howson@btinternet.com

“‘Anthem for Doomed Youth’’: Scottish Chaplains and World War One’

Abstract

The impact of World War One was sudden and dramatic. It continued to provide new challenges throughout the fifty one months of hostilities and into the period covered by the armistice before peace was agreed in 1919. For everyone concerned the scale of the casualties brought new requirements. Young men died at times in numbers approaching biblical proportions. No wonder the motto on the memorial to the Machine Gun Corps was ‘Saul has slain his thousands but David his tens of thousands.’ (1 Samuel 18.7)

For Scottish chaplains the challenges were numerous. Some, such as the decision to bury everyone in the battle area, were decided without their input. Others, such as the theology of burial, were influenced by close contact with an army that was dominated by ‘English’ practices. For some the inability to carry out worship as they believed it should be done resulted in one denomination turning its back on providing spiritual support for the army.

The paper will look at the men who faced these challenges. It will consider the structure under which they operated. From their own writings it will provide evidence of how they buried the dead. It will offer suggestions for further research in the approach to the hundredth anniversary of the start of the ‘War to end all Wars’.

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Professor Ronald D. S. Jack (Honorary Fellow, Department of English Literature, Edinburgh University)

R.D.S.Jack@ed.ac.uk

“‘To die will be an awfully big adventure’” on *Peter Pan* and the development of J M Barrie's metaphysical views at Edinburgh University’.

Abstract

Peter Pan's famous line introduces two fictional and three biographical insights into J. M. Barrie views on death. Pan's hypocritical martyrdom - he is after all immortal! - is broadly contextualized within the earlier childish games of birth and copulation shared by the Darling children. That it is preceded by childish power battles in other works is also examined. The final chapters of *Tommy and Grizel* are then analyzed as they offer a parallel insight into the kinds of death he really rather than imaginatively did fear.

The biographical section challenges the belief that the death of David Barrie was traumatic for his younger brother. The two brief, inaccurate and self-contradictory descriptions he provides of that incident are set against his own claim (made over and over again) to have a personality which "contains multitudes" and as such is ideal histrionically. More briefly, the 'paternal' pain he felt over the death of Michael Llewellyn Davies along with Dearth's fate in *Dear Brutus* is used to show how intensely he longed to live on via children. Finally, the sophistic claim that his writing for London audiences made him a traitor is countered by his demand for a humble grave in Kirriemuir.

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Revd Dr Peter C. Jupp (Honorary Fellow, School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh)
Peterc.jupp@btinternet.com

'Cremation in inter-war Scotland, 1918-1939: failure and success'

Abstract

Scotland's experiences of the First World War exposed the nation to mass violent death abroad and to widespread bereavement at home. It affected attitudes to the dead and their destiny, funerals, grief, mourning and memorialisation. Yet the burial traditional remained dominant. In 1918 Glasgow's Maryhill remained the only crematorium in Scotland but held only two funerals a week.

By 1930, attitudes were visibly changing. This paper will narrate how the Edinburgh Cremation Society, founded in 1909, finally secured a crematorium site which met the demands of the Cremation Act 1902. Unable to persuade the Council to build a crematorium, the Society formed a company in 1928 and opened Warriston Crematorium in 1929. This immediately accelerated the progress of cremation. By 1938, Warriston had become the third busiest crematorium in the UK. Its success stimulated the revival of Maryhill and several other crematorium projects. Four of these, Aberdeen, Dundee, Leith and Paisley, were privately funded.

One main reason for the failure of local government attempts was the effect of the economic depression on social priorities. A comparison between Maryhill and Warriston will help isolate the factors behind the different developments behind their emergence as the leaders of the inter-war cremation movement. This story will be placed in three other contexts: Scotland's changing demography, the nature of crematorium provision in England, and the advance of cremation in the changed politics of post-1918 Europe.

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Dr Paul Laxton (Visiting Fellow, University of Edinburgh)

Paul.laxton@gmail.com

“A sanitary measure of no small importance”: the persistence of private cemeteries in Edinburgh’

Abstract

As late as the 1950s Edinburgh, alone amongst British cities, lacked a publicly owned and managed burial ground. When Mortonhall opened (1960) some observers were no doubt surprised that the capital should open its first municipal cemetery almost 100 years after Dundee. In 1862 Edinburgh Town Council took the contested decision to appoint Dr Henry Littlejohn – the first Medical Officer of Health in Scotland. His *Report on the sanitary condition of the city of Edinburgh* (1865) was a forensic analysis of the public health of the city, and an enduring blueprint for improvement. Littlejohn’s holistic approach to social wellbeing, not merely to technical consideration of drains and disease, included cemeteries. As a threat to human health intramural interment stretches back through the ages: *Hominem mortuum in urbe sepelito neve urito* as Roman law had it. The revelation of its consequences in London in the 1820s, and Chadwick’s subsequent parliamentary enquiries, is well known; what I wish to present are the arguments of a remarkable medical officer to persuade his employers, the magistrates of Edinburgh, to understand that it is a public duty for the elected city administrators to provide decent and sanitary burials to all its citizens as part of the common good.

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Dr Juliette MacDonald (Associate Head, School of Design, Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh University)

juliette.macdonald@ed.ac.uk

‘Death, mourning and memory: two Apocalypse windows by Douglas Strachan’

Abstract

The Scottish stained-glass artist Douglas Strachan designed approximately 350 windows between 1899 and 1950, many of which were intended as a commemoration of the lives of people. Often commissioned as a public expression of private grief, one of his best-known schemes was created for the Scottish National War Memorial (1925-27). The windows serve as a reminder of a shared sacred and secular past and to this end the scheme successfully draws upon collective experiences in order to create a specific metaphorical space. A lesser-known commission can be found in the Lawson Memorial Kirk in Forfar, which was built as a memorial to Provost John Lawson, and comprises four large stained-glass windows, all designed between 1914 and 1916. Here too the scheme presents a landscape, which is associated with the events and people crucial to the identity of the community.

The Lawson Memorial Kirk *Apocalypse* window, created before the full extent of the carnage of the First World War was evident, is of particular interest as this theme is

revisited in the narrative in the windows created for the Shrine in the National War Memorial. This paper will provide a comparison of the two apocalyptic schemes in order to evaluate some of the changes in Strachan's approach to the depiction of death, grief and mourning in his work and will question the role and efficacy of these designs in contributing to a specific social memory and attitude.

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Professor Elaine McFarland (Department of Social Sciences, Media and Journalism,
Glasgow Caledonian University)
E.Mcfarland@gcu.ac.uk

'War and Remembrance in modern Scotland'

Abstract

My paper will focus on how the dead of two world wars were commemorated in Scotland. This is a useful case study for understanding the relationship between war and remembrance. For although war memorials share important similarities across cultures, they also function as powerful shared symbols of national and community identities. In Scotland, this symbolism was particularly crucial, because national identity was linked with a carefully nurtured military tradition.

Placing the Scottish experience in its European context, the discussion considers 3 main questions:

- What motivated the builders of war memorials?
- What commemorative forms were used and why?
- What were the messages that the memorials sought to communicate?

A common theme to emerge in the commemoration of the war dead during the twentieth century was the celebration of the rank and file soldier as 'hero' in the dramatic narrative of war. However, there were also key distinctions between the memorials of World War One and World War Two, notably in terms of the shifting balance between functionality and abstract remembrance. These can be understood not only in relation to the changing experience of modern warfare but also developing notions of national identity.

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Hilda Maclean (PhD Candidate, School of Social Sciences, The University of
Queensland, Brisbane, Australia)
h.maclean@uq.edu.au

'Deith comes tae Brisbane'

Abstract

From its earliest days, Brisbane, in the colony of Queensland, was under a distinct Presbyterian influence. Under the auspices of the Greenock-born Reverend John Dunmore Lang, three ships carrying predominately Scottish protestant migrants

arrived in 1849 to counteract his perceived threat of the spread of Catholicism in the antipodes. The social network established by this group of immigrants was to have a profound influence on Brisbane burial practices for the next century, shaping everything from: the establishment of burial grounds and cemeteries; the adoption of cremation in 1934; and the conduct of burial services. Colloquially known as the ‘Lang Migration Scheme’, this is the first piece of research which has been conducted into its legacy regarding death and burial practices in Brisbane.

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Dr Ruth McManus (University of Canterbury, Christchurch New Zealand)

Ruth.mcmanus@canterbury.ac.nz

‘Finding Solace in death and destruction: From Clydebank to Christchurch’

Abstract

War and natural disasters share many features including great loss of life, traumatised populations and haunting memories. Many histories recount such memories in a disembodied way –as narratives of events long ago that are intriguing because they seem alien and unrecognisable from the present point of view. Their influence on contemporary grief and death-ways is indirect. This project focuses on how connections through time are made and remade and how the past is brought out in the service of the present in direct and at times confronting ways. This paper discusses the connections getting made between the Clydebank Blitz, March 1941 and Christchurch earthquake February 2011. It examines how Blitz stories and the grief-ways they contain have been drawn out and taken up by a contemporary community suffering through a devastating and long lasting earthquake event.

The project is gathering narratives of past trauma and loss that are getting heard in new disaster contexts. This paper describes a selection of these narratives to reflect on the role of oral histories in contemporary disaster management.

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Dr Brian Parsons (Centre for Death and Society, University of Bath, UK; formerly Editor of the *Funeral Service Journal*)
bparsonsfstl@gmail.com

‘Funeral Directing in 20th Century Scotland’

Abstract

A comparative analysis of the development of funeral service in Scotland from the late nineteenth century with other parts of the UK reveals many parallels. The introduction of embalming, the provision of chapels of rest, the shift to motor transport, the formation of trade associations along with the emergence of large organisations follows a similar timeline, during which the ‘undertaker’ morphed to that of ‘funeral director.’ It was also a period when the industry was challenged though coping with two world wars, the Spanish ‘flu pandemic, disasters and scandals along with the growing preference for cremation. Drawing from trade journals,

newspapers and archival material, this paper assesses the key factors that have impacted on funeral directors in Scotland during the twentieth century.

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Mr Gordon Raeburn (Leverhulme Scholar, University of Durham)
gordonraeburn@hotmail.com
'The Rise of the Cemeteries and the Free Church of Scotland'

Abstract

This paper will investigate the relationship between the rise of the public cemeteries in Scotland in the middle of the nineteenth century, and the Free Church of Scotland's adoption of them following the Disruption. Why were members of the Free Church denied access to burial grounds owned by the Church of Scotland, and why did the public cemeteries prove so popular with early members of the Free Church such as Thomas Chalmers and Hugh Miller? This paper aims to explain the reasons behind this situation.

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Dr Alice Reid (Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, Cambridge University) and Dr Eilidh Garrett (University of St Andrews)
amr1001@cam.ac.uk

'From ague to pyrexia and from smallpox to heart disease: an overview of causes of death in Scotland 1855-1955.'

Abstract

This paper will provide a broad overview of mortality in Scotland for the century following the inception of civil registration in 1855, paying particular attention to the changes in the causes of death in Scotland over the 100 year period. It will use the detailed returns of deaths by cause of death, age and year given in the Annual Reports of the Registrar General for Scotland to examine how changes in nosology, medical knowledge and fashion, age structure, and disease environment affected the evolution of trends in the causes of death reported over the first century of civil registration.

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Dr Terri Sabatos (Associate Professor of Art History, United States Military Academy West Point, NY, USA)
tsabatos@gmail.com
terri.sabatos@usma.edu

“‘The Glen of Gloom’: The massacre at Glencoe in Victorian visual culture.’

Abstract

In 1892, Colin Hunter (ARA) exhibited his painting *Burial of the MacDonalds of Glencoe* at the Royal Academy exhibition in London. The image marked the 200th anniversary of the death of thirty- eight members of the MacDonald clan of Glencoe

who were slaughtered by government troops on 13 February 1692. Hunter's painting, along with other works such as James Hamilton's *Refugees: Glencoe 1692* (RA 1884) and John Blake Macdonald's *Glencoe, 1692* (RSA 1877) demonstrate the fascination for Scottish history and culture that had developed in the nineteenth century due in part to Sir Walter Scott's romantic tales. Along with the defeat of the Jacobites at Culloden Moor years later, the massacre at Glencoe became an iconic tragedy in Scottish history and the "haunted" glen eventually became a favorite site for Victorian tourists. This paper will examine nineteenth century paintings, illustrations, and other texts concerning the massacre at Glencoe to investigate why this event had such a hold on the Victorian popular imagination. As will be explored, the various nineteenth century re-imaginings of this massacre resonated strongly with the Victorians. Not only did the story contribute to romanticized narratives of the "doomed" Highland culture, the plot of Highlanders struggling against cruel government forces seemed to be playing out once again in the crofter's agitation and rent strikes of the 1880s.

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Dr Ronnie Scott (Centre for Open Studies, University of Glasgow),
ronnie@ronnie-scott.com

'Together in toil, divided in death: remembering the victims of the Cadder Pit Disaster 1913'

Abstract

Twenty two miners died after a fire in Number 15 Pit at the Carron Company's collieries in Cadder, north of Glasgow, in August 1913. The company contracted Wylie & Lockhead, funeral directors, to organise the burial of the victims, but all were not equally commemorated. This paper explores, from a cultural historical perspective, how the local Roman Catholic and Protestant communities mourned and remembered the dead, and the role played by Father James Mullin of St Agnes's RC Church, who was parish priest to ten of the men. The presentation further examines the campaign to build a collective monument in St Kentigern's RC Cemetery to the eleven Catholic dead, while the equal number of Protestants were accorded individual monuments in other local burying grounds. To provide a wider context, the paper discusses industrial and community relations among the Protestant and Catholic working classes in the Scottish mining industry in the early twentieth century.

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Dr Robert S. Shiels (Solicitor in Scotland; and formerly of the Procurator Fiscal Service)

robertshiels@hotmail.com

‘Scots law and the investigation of deaths from 1855 to 1955’

The investigation of sudden, suspicious and unexplained deaths in Scotland has traditionally been carried out by the Procurator Fiscal, as local public prosecutor, under the direction of legal staff in Crown Office. The principal duty in the period 1855 to 1955 was to investigate all sudden deaths and deaths from accidents brought to the notice of the Procurator Fiscal for the relevant district. If criminality was excluded then there was still a residual requirement to obtain a cause of death as certification was required. If criminality was indeed detected then the matter was dealt with as an actual or potential prosecution. These were settled principles of practice that (in the absence of the office of coroner) have been carried out for generations at common law and without certain statutory authority. The great change of the era was the public hearing. This followed from the development of alternative modes of public inquiry as the Imperial Parliament made various and increasing provision for examination of various types of industrial incidents.

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Edward Small (University of Dundee)

e.small@dundee.ac.uk

‘Gender dynamics around the culture of death in Scotland: A selling point or a societal shift?’

Abstract

A picture of the graveside at the typical Scottish Funeral in 1955 would have revealed a sombre scene largely bereft of the presence of women, a scene that was quite universal and that would have changed little throughout the 20th century. The Scottish crematorium, too, was populated very predominantly by men in the 50s, and all this at a time when many more women than men attended church in Scotland. This paper will chart the rise in the involvement of women in all aspects of the funeral - as conductors of the Funeral, as Funeral Directors, as Eulogists, Cord-Holders and congregation – and describe the factors which seem to have predicated this change. It will also examine the growing differences in allegiance to the spectre of tradition at the funeral between urban Scotland and its rural communities and consider any influence of gender dynamics on this situation.

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Dr Michael Smith (Glasgow Caledonian University)

masmith371@gmail.com

‘The Funeral Industry in Victorian Edinburgh’

Abstract

The middle of the nineteenth century marked a turning point for death practices in Edinburgh. It is from this period that we witness the foundations being laid for much of the modern experience of how we handle death. This paper will consider the emergence of modern logistical approaches to death. The discussion will focus mainly on the development of funeral undertaking in the capital, from its status as an adjunct trade to its arrival as a profession in its own right. Some scholars of this period and many contemporary accounts have placed the undertaker at the nadir of the social scale, describing an individual who preyed on misery and exploited the vulnerable. This paper will seek to challenge these conceptions. It will situate this profession within the context of a city experiencing the pitfalls of demographic change, while acknowledging evolving patterns of consumption and the trade’s integration with the modern cemeteries that emerged from the 1840s. Woven throughout the discussion will be the plight of the greatest casualty of the modern funeral industry in Victorian Edinburgh, the Church of Scotland. This institution entered the nineteenth century as the gatekeeper of death in the capital, but by its close it found itself marginalized to such an extent that it had become a commercial irrelevance. Its demise, it will be suggested, reflects more broadly the general retreat of traditional death customs by the beginning of the twentieth century.

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Mr Stephen White (University of Bath; University of Cardiff)
whitesr@srgw.demon.co.uk

‘The Legal Status of Corpses and Cremains: When and where can you steal a dead body?’

Abstract

The trial of James Dewar in 1944 for stealing coffins, coffin lids and shrouds from cremations at the crematorium he managed in Aberdeen was a pivotal moment for the development of cremation in Britain. One of the issues raised at the trial was how the rule about the stealability (to coin a word) of dead bodies before and after burial applied, if at all, to dead bodies destined for cremation and after. This paper will recount the different approaches of lawyers north and south of the Tweed to the stealability of corpses and examine what the judgements given at Dewar's appeal against his conviction have to tell us about the legal status of bodies sent for cremation and of their ashes afterwards.

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