

BENNACHIE LANDSCAPES PROJECT

Archives Group Report March 2014

This report rolls together all the work undertaken by the Group since it was set up in early 2013 under the guidance of Dr Jackson Armstrong of the University of Aberdeen. Specific outputs are listed below, but it is worth highlighting that research by members of the group has culminated in the discovery of primary documentary evidence concerning the Bennachie Colony, thus building on and extending the work already undertaken by the late Helen Fraser and others, extended by Jennifer Fagen and reported in Fagen's book on the Colony.

OUTPUTS

Core archival work

- Aids to archival work:
 - Research guides to the Bailies' Library and Archives.
 - Thomas Brochard's inventories of Balquhain documents.
 - List of newspaper articles relating to Bennachie.
- Original research:
 - Extracts of the diaries of Aberdeen naturalist George Sim.
 - Commonities.
 - Castle construction materials (re Druminnor).
 - 19th-century farming life in Aberdeenshire.
 - Vernacular buildings of the Colony era.
 - Colony family history research.
 - Balquhain Estate records about Colonists and other tenants, 1875 to 1884.
 - List of Colonists in 1859 with their newly imposed lease conditions.
- Responses to Colony-related enquiries: the Group has been contacted by a total of 5 people connected with Colony families, and has responded accordingly.
- Input to April 2014 Exhibition
- Publications: papers in
 - *Bennachie Landscapes 2*
 - Jackson Armstrong on 2012 archives research.
 - Jackie Cumberbirch on history of Forestry Commission land acquisition at Bennachie.
 - Colin Miller on 2012 research into Chapel of Garioch teinds document.
 - *Scottish History* -- Jeff Oliver on the 2013 archaeological work.
 - *Leopard* -- Chris Foster on the Colony.
 - *N E of Scotland Family History Society Newsletter* -- Alison Kennedy on Colony family histories.

Work relating to the Bailies' wider remit

- Completion of digitisation of the Cormack photograph collection.
- Digitisation of earlier plant lists.
- Oral history research (transcription etc. – Jo Vergunst).

From the above it is clear that the work of the Archives Group is not only significant in its own right, but it can furnish significant historical contextual data for the archaeological and other scientific work of the Project.

Future work

For 2014, the group will be consolidating and producing articles etc on the work of 2013.

Core archival work

- Original research:
 - Historical management of a peat moss on Bennachie.
 - (Possibly) Interpretations of the concept of commonty at Bennachie.
- Events:
 - Colony Walk, 26th April (Jackie Cumberbirch & Alison Kennedy).
 - Presentation at Scottish Records Association Conference, November 2014 (Colin Miller & Jeff Oliver on archaeology, archives and the commonty).
- Publications:
 - Revised *Colony Trail* leaflet – Barry & Chris Foster.
 - *Scottish Local History Forum Journal* – Ken Ledingham on Balquhain Estate records
 - *Northern Scotland* – Colin Miller on archives relating to Bennachie & Balquhain.
 - (in preparation) Ken Ledingham & Colin Miller on landlord/tenant relationships.

Work relating to the Bailies' wider remit

- Exhibition (Bennachie Centre; Inverurie Library; Kemnay (various venues); University).
- Populating the "Portfolio" image database.
- Aerial photography interpretation advice: Barry Foster, 20th April, Bennachie Centre.
- Possible further oral history interview(s).

Acknowledgments

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- Support staff Thomas Brochard, Aoife Gould, and student intern Franziska Lorenz.
- Special Collections Centre staff Siobhan Convery, Andrew MacGregor and the staff of the Wolfson Reading Room.

CM, March 2014