



EDGAR EVENTS

**Researching and sharing Edgar family
history No. 18, July 2008**



DNA Update

by James Edgar (Editor) (jamesedgar@sasktel.net)



Did I tell you what a wonderful time Steve and I had in the UK? I'm still afloat, re-living the good times we had over there. Here's the interesting part, from the DNA aspect – we have 6 tests back of the eight samples we sent in for analysis. And, did we ever get some surprises! For example, the one person who I thought was a real long shot, Don Edgar, in Wolseley, Saskatchewan, turns out to be an I1a from Scotland. But get this, his Norwegian ancestors went to Scotland in the mid-1800s, and they were named Eggie. It was afterwards that they changed their name to Edgar! How

about that?!! It proves a direct line to Norway for the Scottish Edgars – he is 41 generations away from me and my siblings — approximately, give or take 15 generations.

The DNA.Ancestry.com site has had some recent tweaking, improvements all. If you haven't already become a member, go to this site dna.ancestry.com/welcome.aspx. Scroll to the bottom and search in DNA Groups for "Edgar." You can request membership simply by clicking on the yellow button and follow the steps to obtain a MyFamily.com account (it's free and painless). The person named Bill Egger has a German ancestry, so this will be more and more interesting as we move along in our research, trying to connect his I1a Haplogroup to ours.

The other five tests give us these Haplogroup results:

Ian Edgar of Belfast – I1b

Leslie Edgar of Maryport, England – I1b

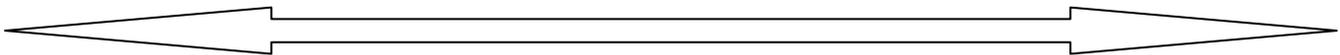
James Edgar of Dumfries – I

Tom Edgar of Kilkeel – R1b

Colin Edgar of Saintfield – R1b

Now here's a surprise – **Colin** shows as only **one** generation away from **Jim Edgar** of Glasgow! If that's true, then they are first cousins, sharing the same grandfather or possibly a granduncle is the common denominator. We're actively looking for more on this connection.

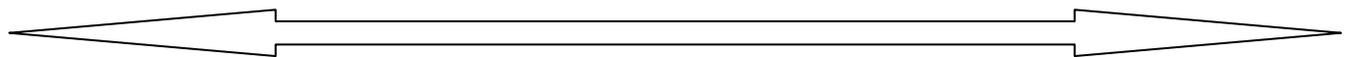
Ian Edgar of Belfast is **closely** related to **Leslie Edgar** of Maryport and **John Edgar** of B.C.; to **Jim Edgar** of Georgia; and to **Alfred Edgar** of Argentina. More research needed there, as well.



We found this park bench in Kippford, southwest of Dumfries, Scotland. Master Mariner, Capt. Robert Edgar was likely the grandfather of our next possible DNA test, Dr. Bill Edgar of Yorkshire. SteveUK has a test kit for him to provide the sample.



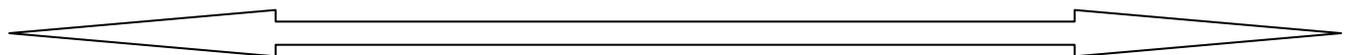
Steve Edgar took this picture of his family's ancient farmland at Keggal, right beside Camlough. We drove up a narrow road to a lookout on the side of Slieve Gullion, overlooking the water – en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slieve_Gullion. The photo gives a good idea of the weather we enjoyed on most of our trip.



In the next section, we begin a series written by Richard Edgar of Tandragee, NI. Richard has a passion for First World War memories, especially as they relate to Edgars who fell in the battles then. His insights may help some readers connect with their own past.

The first part begins with the Newfoundland Regiment; being a colony of Britain the Newfoundlanders were not a part of Canada at the time, thus we see the Union Jack flown at the memorial site.

Further on is another article about the Canadian contribution to the war. All colour photos were taken by Richard; the B&W images are from archives.



Edgars in the First World War

Part 1: Newfoundland

On the 1st July 1916, the men of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment took part in the big push planned by the British on the western front; they were to attack close to the village of Beaumont Hamel on the Somme. The British Generals expected this battle to be the major breakthrough they had been waiting for, they would push the Germans out of their trenches and into the open country ending the stalemate that had existed for almost two years. How wrong they would be, rather than a major breakthrough, the 1st July 1916 is remembered as the blackest day in British military history—on the opening day of the battle of the Somme the British would suffer 57,470 casualties, the highest loss of life on a single day in British history.



The Newfoundlanders were to attack as part of the British second wave, but as they moved forward they found the trenches pictured above clogged with the dead and wounded from the earlier assault. They had no other option than to climb out of the trenches 900 metres short of the British frontline and walk undefended across the open country, this presented the German gunners with clear and easy targets. It took the Newfoundlanders 30 minutes to reach the British frontline, by this time 733 of the 801 men who had begun the advance had fallen either dead or wounded; for the men of Newfoundland the Battle of the Somme was over before they had a chance to begin to fight.



On the 16th June 1925, Lord Haig unveiled the Caribou memorial at Beaumont Hamel on the Somme. The Caribou looks out across the battlefield, she is calling for her lost young, beneath the Caribou is a wall of remembrance bearing the names of the Newfoundlanders who died on this field and have no known grave.



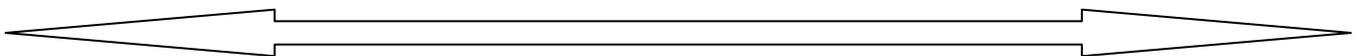
One of those commemorated on the wall is Edwin Edgar; his name can be seen in the middle column above listed as “Edgar. E.” Like the majority of the Newfoundlanders lost that day Edwin Edgar has no known grave. The picture on the right shows the grave of an unknown Newfoundland soldier in Beaumont Hamel. Note the British Union Jack on this grave rather than a Canadian flag, during the First World War Newfoundland was a British Dominion; Newfoundland did not become part of Canada until 31st March 1949.

Below are the details of Edgars from Newfoundland killed in the First World War:

Pte Edwin Edgar, 737
 Royal Newfoundland Regiment
 Died Saturday 1st July 1916, age 19
 Son of Edwin and Helen Edgar of Greenspond, Bonavista Bay
 Beaumont Hamel (Newfoundland) Memorial, Somme, France

Pte Albert Edgar, 2528
 1st Battalion Royal Newfoundland Regiment
 Died Tuesday 20th November 1917, age 20
 Son of Elizabeth Richards (formerly Edgar) of 35 Pennywell Rd, St John’s,
 Newfoundland, and the late John Edgar
 Grave Ref II.G.6. Marcoing British Cemetery, Nord, France

Sec Lieutenant Charles Edgar
 1st Battalion Royal Newfoundland Regiment
 Died Monday 26th February 1917, age 26
 Son of Joseph Highmore Edgar and Martha Edgar, 36 Freshwater Rd, St John’s,
 Newfoundland
 Grave Ref I.D.7. Guards Cemetery, Combles, Somme, France



Frankie Sawyer suggested this little bit about the Celtic Toe (she has one or two!)....

www.electricscotland.com/familytree/magazine/octnov2002/celts.htm

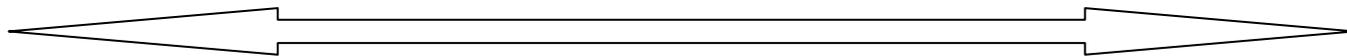
During World War II, a discovery was made that only recently has received meticulous research. A couple of doctors in medical centers in England noticed that there was a feature of Scots and Welsh soldiers wounded in battle that was not present with English, Germans, and other nationalities. The former frequently had a big toe (or great toe) that was the same length as the next toe; all others had great toes markedly longer. They marked that down for research after the war ended, but it was only a few years ago that definitive research was done that has led to a remarkable discovery. They found that there were burial sites across Britain where the skeletons were completely of one ethnic group, such as Celtic burial sites on islands along the Scottish northwest coast, and pre-Celtic burial sites in southern England. Results from studies of those burial sites showed that to a 95 probability Celtic remains had a big toe the same length as, or shorter than, the next toe, while pre-Celtic remains had a big toe longer than the one next to it. That study was expanded to cover burial sites in other parts of Europe and Asia, with the same results. Because the so-called Celtic toe can disappear after many generations of intermarriage, it is not a necessary condition to having a Celtic ancestor, but it is a sufficient one: if a person has the Celtic toe, he or she is almost certain to be of Celtic descent.



That discovery should allow a much better mapping of the extent of Celtic settlement across Europe. The Celtic toe has been found in abundance in southern and central Germany and across western and central Scandinavia. It has been found in present-day descendants of the Dutch Boers who settled in South Africa over a hundred years ago; the only source of that gene is from the Celtic Dutch of two thousand years ago. It could be used to map the Scottish migration route from the central Atlantic down through the Carolinas and into Georgia in the 1700s.



More on this fascinating topic can be found at
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1511/is_n6_v17/ai_18289437



While in Wales on May 15, the name of this town is so long, I was able to run fast enough to be at both ends during the exposure!



Now, getting back to the subject of Celtics, is it Seltic or Keltic — with a hard or soft “c”?

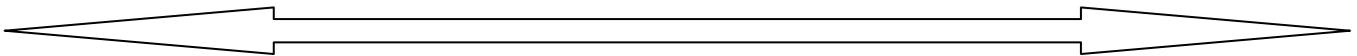
Here’s a short discussion found on Wikipedia

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names_of_the_Celts#Pronunciation

The pronunciation of the words *Celt* and *Celtic* in their various meanings has been surrounded by some confusion: the initial <c> can be realised either as /s/ or /k/. Both can be justified philologically and both are “correct” in terms of English prescriptive usage.

Although the word originated in an early Continental Celtic language, it comes to us from Greek (*Keltoi*), where it is spelled with a kappa; thus is the original pronunciation. This was borrowed into Latin (*Celtae*), where it was likewise pronounced. However in Mediaeval Latin, the letter <c>, originally pronounced /k/, shifted to /s/, a process known as palatalization, and many words and names borrowed from Latin into English after this sound shift are pronounced this way: *centre*, *Cicero*, *et cetera*. Thus /s/ is the inherited pronunciation in English.

Until the mid-20th century, *Celtic* was usually pronounced with /s/ in English except by academics, but the pronunciation with /k/ has been gaining ground rapidly. Following the usage of philologists, /k/ is now almost invariably used with reference to Celtic languages even in non-academic contexts. It is also the more popular pronunciation when talking about most other aspects of Celtic culture. However /s/ remains the only recognised pronunciation of the word when it occurs in the names of sports teams, most notably Celtic Football Club and the Boston Celtics basketball team; as these are proper names, the traditional pronunciation is entrenched.



This is what the shore just south of Kippford looked like, where we saw the park bench inscribed with the reference to Capt. Robert Edgar — loads and loads of sea shells.



Edgars in the First World War

Part 2: Canada

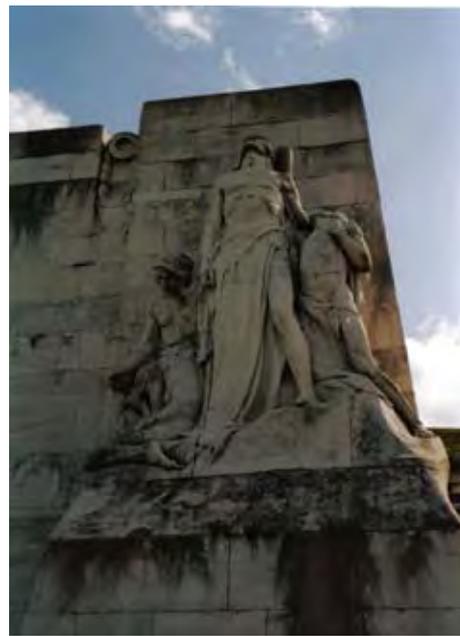


Canadians fought in nearly every major battle of the First World War, but one battle more than all the others put together has ingrained itself on the Canadian national identity, that battle was Vimy Ridge. Canada had four military divisions in France and Belgium; individually each of these divisions had seen action, but at Vimy Ridge in 1917 all four divisions would operate together for the first time, they were also under the command of Canadian officers — this was no longer a colonial force supporting the British, this was a Canadian army, and as many Canadians will tell you “On the field of Vimy Ridge, the nation of Canada was born”.

The Canadian National Memorial at Vimy was built in tribute to the 66,000 Canadian war dead and 11,285 with no known grave in France. Inscribed on the ramparts of the memorial are the names of the Canadian soldiers who were posted “missing, presumed dead” in France. Construction of the Vimy memorial commenced in 1925 and took eleven years to complete. The official unveiling was on 26th July 1936 by King Edward VIII.

One infamous visitor to the Vimy Ridge memorial was Adolf Hitler; he visited the memorial on 2nd June 1940, as his armies were over-running France. Hitler had served in the Vimy area during the First World War. One positive outcome from Hitler’s visit to the Vimy memorial was that he had a special battalion set-up within the German army to ensure that no German soldiers vandalised or damaged any of the British First World War memorials.

There is a lot of symbolism to be found on the Vimy memorial, the two central columns reaching up into the sky signify the nations of Canada and France standing side by side, but for me it is the three statues on the front of the memorial which tell the full story of just how big an impact the First World War was to have on Canada.



The figures on the left represent Canada's politicians, they are breaking the swords and shields so that Canada could never go to war again. The figures on the right are the families of Canada grieving at their loss.



It is the statue in the centre that has the biggest impact; this is of a young woman facing east towards the new day. She is mother Canada, the young mother of a young nation, she stands with her head bowed down looking at a tomb below her, and it is draped in laurel leaves and bears a helmet of a Canadian soldier.

Edgar family from Canada, lost in the First World War:

Pte D M Edgar, 475000
46th Canadian Infantry (Saskatchewan Regiment)
Died Saturday 31st March 1917
Grave Ref VI.H.12 Villers Station Cemetery, Villers-Au-Bois, Pas de Calais, France

Sgt D W Edgar, 79397
31st Battalion Canadian Infantry (Alberta Regiment)
Died Tuesday 6th June 1916
Panel Ref 24-28-30 Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Ieper, Belgium

Lieutenant Francis Edgar
2nd Battalion Canadian Machine Gun Corps
Died Tuesday 26th September 1916, age 27
The son of Robert Eadie Edgar and Catherine Chalmers Edgar, 10 Claremont Crescent,
Edinburgh, Scotland
Grave Ref I.A.9. Pozieres British Cemetery, Ovillers La Boisselle, Somme, France

Pte G Edgar, 2129301
27th Battalion Canadian Infantry (Manitoba Regiment)
Died Wednesday 16th October 1918, age 31
The son of George and Catherine Edgar, Dunnington, Burghead, Morayshire,
Scotland
Grave Ref III.J.17 Bucquoy Road Cemetery, Ficheux, Pas de Calais, France

Pte George Edgar, 132382
13th Battalion Canadian Infantry (Quebec Regiment)
Died Monday 4th September 1916
Grave Ref VII.F.14 Serre Road Cemetery No 1, Pas de Calais, France

Pte Robert Edgar, 790238
7th Battalion Canadian Infantry (British Columbia Regiment)
Died Wednesday 15th August 1917, age 35
The son of Mary Jane Edgar and the late Walter Edgar, Denecroft, Broomage Avenue,
Larbert, Scotland
Grave Ref II.H.9. St Patricks Cemetery, Loos, Pas de Calais, France

Pte T Edgar, 895336
49th Battalion Canadian Infantry (Alberta Regiment)
Died Sunday 29th September 1918
Grave Ref III. A.17 Drummond Cemetery, Raillencourt, Nord, France

Pte T Edgar, 46573
15th Battalion Canadian Infantry (Central Ontario Regiment)
Died Tuesday 11th January 1916, age 21
The son of Robert and Martha Edgar, Seaforth, Ontario. A native of Cumberland,
England
Grave Ref VI.A.5 La Plus Douve Fram Cemetery, Belgium

Driver Wilson Edgar, 504244
8th Field Company, Canadian Engineers
Died Thursday 18th April 1918, age 22
The brother-in-law of Dan Bray, 201 Avenue F, North, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Grave Ref II.F.6 Aix-Noulette Communal Cemetery Extension, Pas de Calais, France

Gunner William Robert Edgar, 304181
9th Battalion Canadian Field Artillery
Died Monday 2nd September 1918, age 22
The son of William and Emily Edgar, 374 Alfred St, Kingston, Ontario
Grave Ref II.D.5 Windmill British Cemetery, Monchy-Le-Preux, Pas de Calais, France



Canadians attack at Vimy Ridge



A Canadian soldier pays tribute to the fallen

[Ed Note: I was especially intrigued by the Covenanters label in the next article, and then I found this... <http://victorianweb.org/religion/covenant.html>

“The Covenanters were supporters of the Scottish Covenant of 1638, which was a national protest against the ecclesiastical innovations in the Scottish Church imposed at Edinburgh and subscribed to by various nobles, ministers, and burgesses. Those who signed the Covenant, which was initially neither anti-royalist nor anti-episcopalian, though it became both, declared that they would defend their religious beliefs against any changes not mandated by free assemblies and the Scottish Parliament. The term was also applied to their spiritual heirs who opposed the reintroduction of episcopacy in 1662.

“Some Covenanters were also signatories of the Apologetical Declaration which declared war on all established political officials, soldiers, judges, conformist ministers, and informers. This document, however, provoked a response upon the part of the authorities which became known as the Killing Times: during 1684-85, at least 78 persons were summarily executed for refusing to retract their allegiance to the declaration, and many others were executed after trial. Despite often brutal repression, especially during the period between 1678 and 1685, the excluded ministers, supported by the local aristocracy and independent peasantry, maintained an underground church in the south-western parts of Scotland.”

This next bit is from Sharon Edgar, who has helped us immensely with our research – she has a way of digging into the distant past and finding information that is most helpful, plus of interest to us all. Thank you, Sharon!]

THE COVENANTERS

Robert Mitchell

[COVENANTERS HOME PAGE](#)

Robert Mitchell
28th April 1685

The circumstances leading to Robert Mitchell's death were steeped in tragedy. Mitchell was one of a party of Covenanters that met late in 1684 to protest to Peter Pierson the Curate of Carsphairn about his intolerable behaviour towards the local people on matters of religious beliefs. The situation soon got out of hand and 'Black' James McMichael one of the protesting party shot the curate dead.

A few months later they were betrayed and five Covenanters Robert Mitchell, Robert Edgar, John Gibson, James Bennoch and Robert Grierson were cornered in a cave near Moniave. They were shot on the spot and all apart from Grierson were later buried in Glencairn kirkyard. Grierson is buried in Balmaclellan Kirkyard.



'HERE LYES ROBERT EDGAR AND ROBERT MITCHELL MARTYRS SHOT TO DEATH BY COL DUGLAS AND LIVINGSTONS DRAGOONS AT ENLISTON FOR ADHERING TO THE WORD OF GOD CHRISTS KINGLY GOVERNMENT IN HIS HOUSE AND THE COVENANTED WORK OF REFORMATION AGAINST TYRANY PERJURY APRYL 28 1685 REV-12-11'

Above: The Dalgarnoc Cross to 'The Nithsdale Martyrs'. The names of all those shot at Glencairn appear on the cross.



The Parish of Glencairn

By the Rev. John Monteith: Minister of the Parish

Published by University of Glasgow: 1876

The Church of Glencairn was a wealthy one, and the Dean and Chapter could well afford to manifest this gratitude. We read in Chalmers's *Caledonia* that "to the Church of Glencairn there belonged many lands." What these were we do not know. The only indication of them is given by the name "Kirkland," preserved in Kirkland village, "Kirkcudbright" property, and perhaps "Temp-land" in Ingleston. At the Reformation the tithes of the Church of Glencairn were let by the Chapter of Glasgow to **William Fergusson of Craighdarroch** and other parishioners for payment of 400 merks yearly. William Fergusson and the other parishioners, however, never seem to have paid a single merk. In 1587 the tithes and the patronage of the church became invested in the King, and in January 1591, were granted, along with those of other churches, by him to Sir James Douglas of Drumlanrig.

THE FERGUSSONS OF CRAIGDARROCH.

This is the most ancient family in Glencairn whose representatives are still living. It is impossible accurately to determine its antiquity. It was probably of Scoto-Irish extraction. But it is certain that at a very early period the Fergussons were a prominent family in Scotland, and had their possessions in this parish. In the "Liber de Melros" is a charter where their name appears as connected with Glencairn. The charter is undated, but the witnesses shew that it was in the reign of Alexander II (1214-1249). It is granted by Thomas de Colville, presenting a portion of ground to the Abbot and Monks of Melrose. The witnesses are — Domino Alano de Gallewei, Comite Patricio, Walteri filio Alani, **Roberto de Brus**, Dunecano de Carrie, **Edgaro filio de Dournald, Fergus de Glencam**, et multis aliis. Here we have Fergus of Glencairn **ranking with the noblest and most important personages at the Courts of William the Lion and Alexander II.**

Fergus of Glencairn is also a witness to a charter of the Abbey of Dryburgh, dated apud Eryvne (Irvine), 1222, in the reign of Alexander II, in which he is styled Fergutianus de Glenkarn, dominus de Crawmrd. We may therefore conclude that the Fergussons at that early period were of high importance in the south of Scotland.

My notes: the Fergusson history and genealogy carries on till the 1800s, very complete. If we determine that this Fergus de Glencairn is the son of Edgar, we have the complete Ferguson family. One of the Ferguson descendents Alexander married in 1709, Ann, daughter of Sir Robert Laurie of Maxwellton — the "Bonnie Annie Laurie" of Scottish song. He was succeeded by his son, Alexander, an eminent advocate, and the hero of Burns' song, "The Whistle," after referred to.

Same book, story of Robert Edgar:

The grave-stones in the church-yard are almost all of the same shape and colour, and, with a few recent exceptions, face the east. There are one or two interesting monuments. Of these the chief is the grave-stones of the martyrs who were shot on the

farm of Ingleston, at a spot in the garden marked by a grave-stone. They are enclosed by an iron railing. The present stones are apparently copies of older ones that have, with one exception, perished. The inscriptions on these stones tell the tale of the men they commemorate, and to which special reference is made hereafter.

The first of these is on John Gibson, and is as follows :

“My souls in heaven heres ray dust
By wicked sentence and unjust
Shot dead convicted of no crime
But non-compliance with the time
When Babel’s bastard had command
And monstrous tyrants ruled the land.”

The second is on James Bennoch :

“Here lyes a monument of Popish wrath
Because I’m not perjured I’m shot to death
By cruel hands — men Godless and unjust
Did sacrifice my blood to Babel’s lust.”

The third, which refers to two martyrs — **Robert Edgar** and Robert Mitchell :—

“Halt passenger tell if thou ever saw
Men shot to death without process of law
We two of four who in this church-yard lye
Thus felt the rage of Popish tyranny. “

Each of the inscriptions on the stones has, in addition to these verses, a short account of the death of each of the martyrs. We may here give one: —

“Here lyes **Robert Edgar** and Robert Mitchell martyrs shot to death by Col. Douglas and Livingston’s Dragoons at Eng’liston for adhering to the word of God Christ’s Kingly Government in his house and the Covenanted work of Reformation against Tyranny Perjury and Prelacy.
Apryl 28, 1685. Rev. xii. u.

The Colonel Douglas here referred to was brother of the Duke of Queensberry. He, along with Sir Robert Laurie of Maxwellton and a few others, were the chief colleagues of Claverhouse in his persecution of the Covenanters in this district. • Colonel Douglas afterwards forsook the party, and is said to have lamented bitterly the cruelty of which he had been guilty. Lieutenant Livingston, whose name appears along with Douglas, was one of the fiercest and most relentless enemies of the Covenanters.

by Steve Edgar of Weston, Crewe (steven-edgar at sky.com)



The DNA project continues to confound and amaze me with its results. The links and tie-ins to other Edgar families is forming the backbone to the solution to finding out where we came from in the Edgar annals.

We (James and I) have had a lot of communication with Sharon Edgar in Wayne, Michigan, who has been delving into the remote past in the Sanquhar area of Dumfries. She has unearthed some remarkable data and is on a mission to find out the truth about this particular root. Sharon is not put off by hard work and is extremely diligent in verifying what she finds. Enough to say that when we receive the final fruits of her labours it will be based on fact and not opinion.

Unfortunately some of the research carried out in the past is not that accurate when it comes to be tested. It appears that some connections were assumed, and, because of lack of evidence to the contrary, have been recorded incorrectly.

During our trip to Ireland and Scotland we met some new Edgars and obtained fresh DNA samples. It was amazing to find that the traditions and stories that the family has were repeated back to us yet again, the Four Edgar Brothers at the Battle of the Boyne, The Four Edgars from Germany, the Wedderlie connection, etc. All of these were talked about by various Edgars and assumed (rightly or wrongly, I can't comment) to be the history of that particular branch of the family. Someone in the past has got hold of the information and 'adopted' it; don't we all want to be the descendants of a King rather than of a murderer?!

At this point I would like to thank all the Edgars and their families for the wonderful hospitality extended. We walk up your garden path as complete strangers and within an hour we have had a cup of tea, biscuits and cake, taken details of your known history and are walking out with your DNA! Again, a big thank you for your hospitality!

We have Sharon working on the ancient history, each of us as individuals doing our own bit of recent history and some records from the middle ground and not a lot of connections (as yet) between the three areas. DNA will eventually pull all this together and find the correct links.

I believe we now need to get more focused on tracing particular Edgar families, these families have documented pasts in various books and research works carried out in the past. These works contain a wealth of data that needs to be corroborated and linked into living descendants.

These are: 'An Account of the Surname (sic) Edgar' by JH Lawrence-Archer, 'The Edgar Society Newsletters' and the 'Genealogical Collections concerning The Scottish House of Edgar'. These documents are very heavy going but do reveal an awful lot of history, no doubt many of us are related into these families but simply lost in the annals of time as to where. It is my intention over the next few editions to bring to light some of these families in the hope that it might 'ring a bell' with your family history and hopefully make the connection for you. More importantly, what I want to do is trace a known descendant and get a DNA sample. If we have DNA from known sources it is far more valuable. The first of these will be the Swan and Edgar family with connections to the Carlisle area and a supposed connection with the Huguenot 'Le Guerres'; if we can find a living descendant it will be a major coup. (Copies of these books are available as a PDFs. Please email me at steven-edgar@sky.com if you would like a copy, failing that they are available from Richard's Web site www.geocities.com/edgarwebsites. The detail is amazing, it's a shame it all can't be collated together to make total sense.