



Scotland's People - www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk

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INTRODUCTION

The official Scottish genealogy resource, Scotlandspeople holds the largest online source of original genealogical information for Scotland. With almost 80 million records accessible to the public, this site is invaluable and affordable to anyone doing family history research. It also includes a Free Surname Search on the home page.

Registering at the site

- No charge to register
- Create a Username when registering
- Need to have an e-mail address
- Password will be e-mailed within 20 minutes
- Password can be changed after log on – go to “My Details”

Buying Credits

- Cost is £7 per 30 credits
- Not cheaper to purchase larger 30-credit increments
- Easily and safely purchased by credit card online
- Credits expire after 1 year (can be re-claimed with further credit purchase)

Archived Searches & Images

- Always accessible - saved indefinitely
- Archived by date
- Can filter by record type or surname

AVAILABLE DATABASES

Statutory Registers – (Civil Registration)

- Statutory registers comprise the official records of births, marriages and deaths in Scotland from 1 January 1855 when civil registration replaced the old system of registration by parishes of the Established Church (Church of Scotland).
- From 1855, registration became compulsory, regardless of religious denomination, and followed a standard format for each record type. More information was required in order to register an event, particularly at the start of the new system.

Key contents of Civil Registration Records

Births:

- Name and sex of child
- Date and place of birth
- Name and occupation of father; name and maiden name of mother
- Parents' date and place of marriage given in 1855 and from 1860 onwards
- Name and residence of informant

Marriages:

- Names, ages, marital condition, occupations, and residences
- Date, place, and form of marriage
- Names and occupations of their fathers; whether deceased
- Names of their mothers, including maiden names; whether deceased
- Names of witnesses

Deaths:

- Name, sex, age and occupation
- Marital status and spouse's name
- Date, place, and cause of death
- Parents' names including mother's maiden name; whether deceased
- Name, description, and residence of the informant

Old Parish Registers (Parochial Registers)

- For centuries, the Church of Scotland was the governing body over parishes.
- Parish registers contain the entries for baptisms (christenings), marriages & sometimes burials for parish members.
- The amount of information recorded can be varied and many entries contain few details.
- Parochial Registers are a valuable tool for finding information about ancestors prior to 1855; most registers begin after 1650.
- **Usual content of Baptisms:**
 - Name and sex of child
 - Date and place
 - Father's name and residence
 - Mother's name and maiden name
- **Usual content of Marriages:**
 - Date and place
 - Names of bride and groom
 - Residences
- **Burials:**

Of all the OPR records, those of deaths and/or burials are acknowledged to be the most sparsely kept. Since there was no requirement to record these, a great many parishes simply did not bother and of those that did, many have not survived.

Catholic Registers

- Covers all Scottish parishes in existence by 1855.
- Includes records of the main Catholic cemeteries in Edinburgh & Glasgow.
- Also records of the RC Bishopric of the Forces - all sacramental events for British service men and women serving in the armed forces worldwide.

Census Records: 1841-1911

- Using census records is one of the best ways to locate ancestors at a given place and time.
- Some things to know about census records:
 - A statistical count of the population of the country; a snapshot of a community.
 - Noted whoever stayed in the home on night of the census.
 - No children listed who were born and died between censuses.
 - Widows/married women may use maiden name.
 - Records released 100 years after census taken.

Valuation Rolls

- Lands Valuation Act, 1854 – established a uniform valuation of landed property throughout Scotland.
- Valuation rolls compiled annually listing every house or piece of ground, along with names & designations of proprietor, tenant and occupier plus annual rateable value.
- Occupations of occupiers are frequently but not always included.

Wills & Testaments

- If a person wished to settle his or her affairs before death, they drew up a will, which set down their instructions as to the disposal of their possessions and named the executor whom they wished to administer the estate.
- The executor had to be confirmed by the court and the document drawn up by the court for this purpose is known as a testament.
- If a person died intestate (without leaving a will), a testament dative was created in order to appoint and confirm an executor on behalf of the deceased – an administration (admon).

Coat of Arms

- The Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland contains all recordings of Coats of Arms in Scotland from 1672 to the present day.
- The Register is maintained by the Court of the Lord Lyon, the office responsible for heraldic matters in Scotland.
- The website provides access to digital images from the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland from 1672 until 1907.
- These entries can include a considerable amount of genealogical information.

HOME PAGE REVIEW - Tabs on toolbar:

- Search the records
- About our records
- Help & resources
- FAQs
- Features

Help & Resources - Choose from the following links:

Getting Started – Use this guide to help with your family history research in Scotland.

Help With Searching – to assist with the search process and includes:

- Information about the free surname search - how surname and forename variations and illegitimacy can affect the success of a search; how to employ soundex or wildcards in a search and how to refine searches in the statutory records.
- Extant OPRs - discover when a particular parish register existed and the covering dates for births & baptisms, banns & marriages and deaths & burials in each parish.
- Extant CPRs - find out when a particular Catholic parish register existed.
- About The Courts - the part they play in the research of wills & testaments.
- Lists of Parishes & Maps – understand the relationship between Scotland's counties and the courts using the Counties & Commissariots List and the Counties & Sheriff Courts List; use the Parish Descriptions of the Statistical Accounts to enhance knowledge of individual parishes.

Help With Results - Once an index result has been viewed, this gives instructions on where to go next and what to do if a search has been unsuccessful.

Research Tools – helps with reading difficult handwriting; definitions of occupations, medical terms and unfamiliar, archaic or unusual words in documents as well as abbreviations used to denote the types of documents included in the Wills & Testaments index.

All Help Topics – Help & Other Resources has step-by-step help including:

- Customer Information - a guide to registration, information on charges, how to change account details, what to do if a password is forgotten, an explanation of how the credits system works, how to order extracts, information on the payment process and assistance with viewing and printing images.
- Technical Information - offers advice on system requirements, browser compatibility, viewing & printing images and has a troubleshooting section dealing with technical problems.

TIPS FOR FINDING SCOTTISH ANCESTORS

- Understand historical timeline; keep a research log
- Search family members to help find the records
- Search for record indexes online. Indexes point to original records – ALWAYS obtain copy of original.
- Understand traditional naming patterns
 - Sons: 1st - paternal grandfather; 2nd - maternal grandfather; 3rd – father
 - Daughters: 1st - maternal grandmother; 2nd - paternal grandmother; 3rd – mother
- Interchangeable given names in Scotland:

Alexander: Alistair or Alisdair	Janet: Jennet
Catherine: Kate	John: Ian
Christine: Christian	Margaret: Margery or Maisie
Daniel: Donald	Nancy: Ann
Elaine: Helen or Ellen	Patrick: Peter
Elizabeth: Elsbeth or Elsbit	Robert: Robin
Jane: Jean, Jessie, Jean, Janet	
- Try different spelling variations for names

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