

Useful Information

ScotlandsPeople

www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk

National Records of Scotland

www.scan.org.uk

National Archives of Scotland

www.nas.gov.uk

National Library of Scotland

www.nls.uk

Ancestry

www.ancestry.co.uk

FindMyPast

www.findmypast.co.uk

Deceasedonline

www.deceasedonline.com

Find A Grave in Scotland

www.findagrave.com

Burial Grounds in Scotland


www.safhs.org.uk/burialgrounds.asp

Scottish War Graves Project

www.scottishwargraves.phpbb.web.com

Statistical Accounts of Scotland

www.edina.ac.uk/stat.acc-scot



Why not prepare your research visit to the NRS Edinburgh with a visit to our Help Desk at Manchester Central Library?



For more detailed information:

www.mlfhs.org.uk/guides

Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society

3rd Floor, Manchester Central Library,
St. Peter's Square, Manchester, M2 5PD

Telephone: 0161- 234 1060 Email: office@mlfhs.org.uk

Archives +



Scottish Research

Often the first indication that you have a Scottish ancestor is a census that records "born in Scotland". Unless you can determine where in Scotland, then you have reached a brickwall. With a location, researching your ancestors is much the same as if they were English born. The difference is the timing, content and access to Statutory Records, census returns and parish records. Certificates are available to download from ScotlandsPeople, subject to 100, 75 or 50 year delay for birth, marriages or deaths.

Searching Statutory Records

Compulsory civil registration of births, marriages and deaths began in Scotland on 1st January 1855. Before this date, responsibility for maintaining registers fell to the Established Church.

Birth records, in addition to details about the child (date, place and time of birth, full name, sex), the parents' names (including maiden surname of mother), father's occupation, name of informant and relationship to child, an 1855 birth certificate also contains information on siblings, the ages and birthplaces of both parents, their usual residence and the date and place of their marriage.

Marriage records give full name, age, marital status, occupation, usual residence, date and place of marriage, name and occupation of father, name and maiden name of mother, and names of witnesses and the officiating clergy. They also include the birthplace and number of former marriages of each spouse (plus the number of children by those marriages).

Death records show the date, time and place of death, deceased's name, sex, marital status, age and occupation, cause of death, duration of last illness, certifying doctor's name and details of the informant. In addition, they show the usual residence, the deceased's place of birth, spouse's name, parents' names, occupations and whether they were deceased, names and ages of children or age and year of death if the child pre-deceased the parent. Such detail proved difficult to sustain and entries were modified from 1856. However, much, but not all, was reinstated in 1861.

Searching Parish Registers

Old Parish Registers (OPR'S) record the births/baptisms, proclamations of banns/marriages, deaths/burials recorded by parish ministers or session clerks of the Established (Presbyterian) Church of Scotland before the beginning of compulsory civil registration in 1855. The earliest date from 1553, but most began after 1600 and some are much later. However, the condition of the registers varied enormously - some were well looked after and neatly written, while others were incomplete, badly kept, eaten by mice, affected by damp or missing altogether. Recording of deaths/burials was particularly sparse.

As with the condition of the registers, the standard of record keeping was variable and the amount of information recorded can affect the outcome of your research. You should not expect too much from OPR's, when compared to the information found in the statutory records. However you may find more than in a typical English register, even names of witnesses. Occasionally, as in, for example, Dundee, witnesses' relationship to the child (if any) may be recorded. On the other hand, it is quite common for the mother's name to be unrecorded in some parishes in certain years. A burial entry might just be a name and a date recording payment of the fee for use of the mortcloth (the pall used to cover the coffin), with no age given.

Not every event was actually recorded - many people simply did not bother, particularly if they had to pay a fee (or tax as was the case 1783-1794). Rapid urbanisation during the 19th century contributed to the diminishing influence of the Church and a decrease in registration in these areas. As such, it was estimated at the time that as few as 30% of events actually occurring were being recorded for some urban parishes. A number of people belonged to other religious denominations altogether and although some non-conformists can be found in Established Church registers, many preferred to register in their own church. These are available in the National Archives of Scotland

Searching Census Returns

Census records for Scotland are basically the same as for England. The content of the 1841-1881 censuses is covered by a separate advice sheet. For 1891 & 1901 the Scottish census records whether person is a Gaelic speaker or a Gaelic and English speaker.

The 1911 census however is different. Unlike in England the householder schedule was not retained, but the enumerators schedule was much more comprehensive and gives the same information, except for the signature of the householder.

Sources

National Records of Scotland

Currently all records may be consulted at General Register House, which holds the original registers for the whole of Scotland, but searchable on computer. Family and historical research for Parish records, statutory records and census can be carried out in this building at the ScotlandsPeople Centre. For a fixed fee you can view as many documents as you wish, but only download those within the stipulated timeframe. Certified copies of more recent are available at £10. Documents previously held in West Register House are now only available to order.

There are local Archive Centres across Scotland, much the same as in England.

Online research

On the [ScotlandsPeople website](#), you can carry out family history research. In addition to birth, marriage, death and census records, digital copies of 17th-19th century tax rolls, Ordnance Survey name books and maps and plans are available.

National Records of Scotland maintains the website of the [Scottish Archive Network](#), giving information about the records held by 52 archives throughout Scotland.

The [National Archives of Scotland](#) website takes you to the National Archives of Scotland online catalogue and the National Register of Archives for Scotland online register.

