

## **Minutes of the Search Room User Group meeting held on Wednesday 13 March 2013 in meeting room 2, New Register House at 14:00 Hours**

### **Attendees**

Anne Slater (Head of Public Services), Dee Williams (DW, NRS & chair), Gill Amos (GA, NRS), Alison Lindsay (AL, NRS), Iain Ferguson (IF, NRS), Bruce Bishop (BB, SAFHS), Alison Fordyce (AF, NSS), Lloyd Pitcairn (LP, Genealogist), Val Wilson, (VW, ASGRA & Genealogist), Janet Bishop, ASGRA, Ken Nisbet (Genealogist)

### **Apologies:**

Dr Irene O'Brien (IOB, Chair SCA & senior archivist)

### **1. Previous Minutes of 1 November 2012**

1.1 The content of the minutes of the last meeting were accepted.

### **2. Centre & Historical Search Rooms**

2.0.1 It was reported that the scaffolding around New Register House was scheduled to be removed by the end of March 2013.

2.0.2 Refurbishment of all customer toilets in New Register House would commence on Tuesday 26 March and would last four weeks. During this period customers need to use the toilets in General Register House. Season ticket holders in the Dundas search room will be relocated to General Register House if requested.

2.0.3 The genealogists requested access to wifi in search room areas. The current arrangement does not allow for wifi but it was hoped that this would be possible in the future. NRS IT specialists were aware of their request.

### **2.1 Historical Search Room**

2.1.1 AL confirmed that it was not possible to save digital images of the Kirk Session records in the historical search room. AL explained that the agreement between the NRS and the Church of Scotland did not allow digital images to be made.

2.1.2 AL confirmed that only A3 prints are given to customers in the historical search room because it allows customers to read the detail contained on the record.

2.1.3 BB highlighted the fact that he had found a number of births, deaths and marriages in the Kirk Session records for Banff and Moray areas. BB was willing to share his findings with NRS to see whether it would be possible to augment the Old Parish Registers with his findings. NRS to check whether there are any copyright issues in relation to making the Kirk Session images available linked to an Old Parish Register (OPR) index.

**Action:** NRS to check whether copyright issues exist linking OPR indexes to events in Kirk Session records

2.1.4 JB mentioned that the instruction manual available in the historical search room was not user friendly and needed to be updated. NRS agreed to review the user manuals available in all search rooms.

**Action:** NRS to review user manuals available in all search rooms

## 2.2 Centre Search Rooms

2.2.1 IF confirmed that evening visits during the month of April would take place in General Register House due to the refurbishment of the customer toilets in New Register House.

2.2.2 Following the closure of the Matheson Dome, the computer giving access to the virtual volumes, that can also be viewed in the historical search room, had been relocated to the Reid search room.

2.2.3 GA confirmed that currently due to the cabling configurations it was not possible to offer access to the virtual volumes in New Register House. NRS planned to put staff on one computer network during 2013 and thereafter it was hoped that access to the virtual volumes for customers in New Register House might be possible.

2.2.4 JB explained that season ticket holders, if planning to arrive later than 11:00, objected to ringing to confirm whether they would be attending because they felt that NRS should not be re-selling their seat. IF explained that season ticket holder seats had only been sold in exceptional circumstances. (For instance, search rooms needing to be shut in General Register House due to an emergency.) It was agreed that season ticket holder holders would not need to telephone to confirm their attendance if they planned to arrive later in the day.

*Dn. Since the meeting a communication has been issued to the season ticket holders to confirm that they do not need to ring to confirm their attendance*

2.2.5 JB suggested that a contract between NRS and season ticket holders should be available to detail the service offered. It was pointed out that the season ticket holders get a very good deal because they only pay £1,450 per annum and up to five people can be on one pass. If the season ticket holders wanted to have a specific contract then NRS would need to consider the cost of ensuring that the services detailed were available as well as the cost of drawing up the contract, which would impact on the cost of the season ticket.

**Action:** JB to consider whether the season ticket holders want a contract drawn up

2.2.6 AS confirmed that the Matheson Dome was only closed whilst visitor numbers were lower. If visitor numbers do increase, then consideration will be given to re-opening the facility if environmental conditions can be agreed with the conservationists, who prefer lower room temperatures for the records stored in the Dome.

2.2.7 JB highlighted the fact that more than one person from the police are using the Dundas room terminal and that they are using mobile phones whilst in the room.

**Action:** IF to arrange for notice to be put on police computer terminal to remind users to be considerate to other customers

2.2.8 There have been ongoing problems with the computer located at seat D20 in the Dundas search room. IF confirmed that this is now scheduled to be replaced.

### **3. Centre Software**

#### **3.1 Planned Enhancements**

3.1.1 The 1902 to 1925 wills and testaments were released during November 2012 and the 1905 valuation rolls during January 2013 on the internet website at [www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk) and at the ScotlandsPeople Centre and local family history centres.

3.1.2 Work continues on the 1895 valuation rolls, which NRS hoped to release during the next few months.

#### **3.2 Performance Issues**

3.2.1 GA reported that there had been network issues, which had resulted in system slow downs. It was also noted that since the viewer update there had been performance issues. Work was ongoing to try and resolve the problems.

3.2.2 GA explained that problems with the replication server had been resolved and was now fully functional.

3.2.3 AF asked whether staff were working to resolve the linkage errors for RCEs, and in particular the RCEs linked to deaths in the Glasgow region. DW asked AF to report all known errors to allow staff to rectify the errors.

### **4. Local Family History Centres (LFHC) Update**

5.1 NRS was in discussion with local registrars and local archivists at Perth and Inverness with a view to opening local family history centres in their areas during 2013.

### **5. Any Other Business**

5.1 The genealogists queried why a transcribed version of the 1911 Scottish Census was not available on competitor websites. It was suggested that this work had not taken place because microfiche copies of this census had not been made.

5.2 BB asked the group to note that the next Scottish Association of Scottish Family History Societies (SAFHS) conference would take place on 11 May 2013 at Galashiels. ScotlandsPeople will be attending the conference. BB highlighted the fact that the 2014 conference takes place in the Carnegie Conference Centre in Dunfermline on the 26 April 2014.

5.3 In response to customer demands, NRS plan to carry out a review of their charges during 2013/14. It was hoped that there would be scope to offer different mechanisms for searching the records.

5.4 The fact that the internet search facility does not offer a search box for the mother's maiden name was raised, because this is different to the search facility

available at the Centre. The mother's maiden name for births has only been fully recorded by NRS since 1929. DW confirmed that the inclusion of the mother's maiden name was being considered for the internet at [www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk).

5.5 BB asked NRS to confirm what was happening to burial records that have been digitised for the Glasgow area. DW was aware that some had been digitised only, rather than digitised and indexed, and returned to the Mitchell library but would get a full update for the next meeting.

**Action:** DW to check position of digitised burial records for Glasgow area

## **6. Date of Next Meeting**

6.1 The date of the next meeting was planned for Wednesday 19 June 2013 at 14:00 in meeting room 2, NRH.

**Dee Williams**  
2 April 2013