

EXPLORING LOCAL HISTORY – NORMAN NEWTON

Sources for the study of local history in the Highlands and Islands

Books

- Highland Libraries: network of 50 libraries, many with local history collections, + interlibrary loans as required.
- Small collections in many local societies and museums
- Private collections

Periodicals

- Highland Libraries; interlibrary loans
- Local societies and museums
- Private collections

Newspapers

- Highland Libraries; main collection at Inverness Library but local newspapers on microfilm in Thurso, Wick, Brora, Nairn, Portree and Fort William
- Local societies and museums
- Newspaper publishers
- Community newspapers and newsletters

Maps

- Old editions of OS maps available from Highland Archives at Inverness Library
- Copies of historic printed maps in Highland Archives
- Photocopies of local coverage in some libraries
- Pont mss maps available from National Library of Scotland website; copies can be ordered from NLS
- Roy's Military Survey available to view in 35mm slides in Highland Archives; copies of local areas can be ordered from British Library; SCRAN website (printouts for subscribers only); NLS website

Family History

- Censuses: complete coverage for Highland Council area, Argyll, Western Isles and Orkney at Inverness Library, 1841-1901
- Local census reels at Thurso, Portree and Fort William
- Old Parish Registers (OPRs) available at Inverness Library
- Highland Libraries: books and periodicals
- Highland Archives employ full-time genealogist, with part-time assistant; private family history researchers available

- Local societies and museums
- Family history websites

Photographs

- Whyte photographic archive maintained by Highland Council
- Highland Archives collections
- Some material at local libraries
- Am Baile website
- Local societies and museums
- Private collections

Archives

- Highland Archives
- Local societies and museums
- National Archives of Scotland
- Private collections

Archaeology

- Highland Council: Highland Historic Environment Record
- Local societies and museums
- Free-lance consultants
- Highland Libraries: books and periodicals
- National Museums of Scotland
- RCAHMS & National Monument Record
- Society of Antiquaries of Scotland: Proceedings and website

Oral History

- Highland Council Museum Service
- Local societies and museums
- Voluntary organisations (eg WEA)
- National and local oral history projects
- School of Scottish Studies
- Gaelic agencies

GENEALOGY ON THE INTERNET

Family history sites now make up the second most popular category of material on the internet (after sex and porn sites!). Much of the genealogy on the internet is of interest only to specific individuals, but there are some sites containing original source material from national records, or listings of resources, which are of particular interest to ancestor-hunters in Scotland.

www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk

This is the website of the **General Register Office for Scotland (GROS)**. Here are all of the **Births and Marriages from the Old Parish Registers (OPRs) from 1553 to 1854, and from the Civil Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths which started in 1855:**

- Births 1855-2006
- Marriages 1855-1932
- Deaths 1855-2006

This site also has all the data from the 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901 **Censuses** – a fully searchable database of 40 million names. There is a charge to use this GROS site - £6.00 buys 90 days access and 30 'page credits' for copies. Scottish wills from 1513 to 1901 are included – copies cost £5.00. See also www.nas.gov.uk (National Archives of Scotland).

www.findmypast.com

The site formerly known as 1837online.com, containing births, marriages and deaths for England and Wales. Costs £5.00 for 50 units, valid for 90 days. Contains births, marriages and deaths, 1837-2004. Census records so far include 1841, 1861, 1871, 1891. Tedious to search. Includes passenger lists on ships leaving the UK, 1890-1960; searching is free but viewing images of the original ship records incurs a charge.

www.cwgc.org

The website of **The Commonwealth War Graves Commission** is a fully searchable database of 1,700,000 men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died in the two world wars, and in other conflicts. It includes some civilians. It is free and easy to use. A useful feature of the site is the historical material relating to battles or campaigns. There are also detailed instructions about how to visit cemeteries, and individual grave plots are identified, where known. Does not include pre-1914 deaths.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>

The website of the **Historic Manuscripts Commission** and the **Public Record Office** is a searchable finding list based on the National Register of Archives, with 43,000 unpublished catalogued and listed manuscript collections. The indexes contain 150,000 references, with a further 300,000 connected records. Some digitised documents and audio files. A wealth of information on where to find original sources.

www.familysearch.com

A vast site, freely searchable, from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (the Mormons). It contains information from statutory sources as well as data deposited by members of the church and by people willing to share their information.

One of the databases in this resource is the **International Genealogical Index** (IGI) which lists 760 million names, with worldwide coverage. Not without pitfalls.

www.genuki.org.uk

The aim of **GENUKI** is to serve as a 'virtual reference library' of genealogical information that is of particular relevance to the UK and Ireland. Links to thousands of sites, with information explaining different kinds of sources and their relevance.

www.cyndislist.com

Cyndi's List of genealogical sites on the internet gives thousands of links to web pages, arranged by place and subject, with global coverage. The site has had more than 30 million hits since 1996 – so it must be doing something right! Anarchic but useful.

www.safhs.org.uk

The **Scottish Association of Family History Societies** was founded in 1986 to enable individual societies to communicate with one another. Its main aims are to promote and encourage the study of Scottish family history and to provide a forum for the exchange, collection and distribution of information among members. It is very useful for finding local contacts.

www.ancestralscotland.com

The 'portal' website of visitscotland.com, the home page for what used to be the Scottish Tourist Board. Good introduction for beginners, as it is primarily aimed at "the 28 million people in the world who can claim Scots ancestry." Good links to Scottish family history organisations but beware of its commercial nature.

www.edina.ac.uk/StatAcc/

This site contains the fully searchable text of the **Statistical Accounts**: the Old Statistical Account (published 1791-1799 and edited by Sir John Sinclair) and the New Statistical Account (published 1834-1845). There are digital images of all the pages, with searchable indexes. The Statistical Accounts are one of the most important reference sources for Scottish history, geography and society. Based on detailed parish reports from local ministers, the Statistical Accounts enumerate and describe such topics as agriculture, antiquities, industrial production, population and natural history. A fabulous resource to put flesh on the bones of our ancestors' lives.

www.ellisland.org

From 1892 to 1924, more than 22 million immigrants, passengers and crew members came through **Ellis Island** and the Port of New York. The shipping companies kept detailed passenger lists – 'ship manifests' – which have been transcribed into this vast electronic archive, fully searchable by name.

This handout is based on material prepared for LOCSOT, the magazine of the Scottish Branch of the CILIP Local Studies Group (Vol 4, No 1, Autumn 2002), by Elizabeth Carmichael of The Mitchell Library, Glasgow. She states: "According to the Scottish Tourist Board site www.ancestralscotland.com over 28 million people in the world can claim Scottish ancestors, but this seems to me to be a conservative estimate. It also seems to me that a goodly proportion of these 28 million are actively trying to trace their ancestors, and many of them are coming to, or contacting, libraries to look for resources and advice to help with their searches. Most local studies librarians in Scotland have identified large amounts of printed material from their collections which is useful to family historians – directories, maps, Statistical Accounts, published histories of families, newspapers, monumental inscriptions, etc. Most have also bought microfilm copies of censuses and OPRs for their local areas. These resources, combined with the wealth of expertise that we have acquired over the years, have enabled us to help and direct our enquirers in their tireless pursuit of their family histories. But an increasingly powerful resource in the search for our ancestors is at hand in the form of the World Wide Web."

MAP SITES ON THE INTERNET

www.nls.uk/pont

Excellent site run by the National Library of Scotland, from whom copies can be obtained. Timothy Pont walked around all of Scotland, including the islands, during the period 1585-95. Many of his manuscript maps are lost, but 77 maps survive. All Pont's maps are on the website; the facility to enlarge detail is particularly useful.

Essential reading:

Stone, Jeffrey C.

The Pont Manuscript Maps of Scotland: sixteenth century origins of a Blaeu atlas (Map Collector Publications Ltd, 1989).

This remains the definitive work on Pont and offers the fullest available description of his maps and their content.

Cunningham, Ian C. (editor)

The Nation Surveyor's: essays on late sixteenth-century Scotland as depicted by Timothy Pont (Tuckwell Press, 2001)

Additional books and articles relating to Pont can be found on the NLS website, along with basic information on the history of the maps and the biography of Timothy Pont.

<http://www.nls.uk/maps/index.html>

Over 1300 other maps, including the entire Blaeu Atlas (1654), can be found on this NLS Digital Library site. You can search either by geographic area (eg county) or mapmaker. This site includes town plans and Roy's Military Survey (1747-55).

www.chartingthenation.lib.ed.ac.uk

Blaeu's Atlas Novus (1654), derived largely from Timothy Pont's surveys, can also be found on the Charting the Nation project website, managed by Edinburgh University Library, which includes over 3500 digital images of historic maps of Scotland. It is supported by the NLS, SCRAN and other academic institutions and covers the period 1550-1740. It includes the important Board of Ordnance collection of military maps and architectural plans held by the NLS.

www.scran.ac.uk

William Roy's Military Survey of Scotland (1747-55) is reproduced in full on the SCRAN website (Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network). SCRAN is an online database of over 1 million records relating to Scottish cultural history. It includes many museum collections and photographic archives. Full access requires a subscription but 'thumbnail' images can be viewed on their free site, www.scran.ac.uk – enter Roy Map in the search box. The original of Roy's Map is in the British Library in London, from whom reproductions can be obtained. Subscribers to SCRAN can print out a poor quality digital image from the website.

www.old-maps.co.uk

This website has Ordnance Survey maps at the scale of 6 inches to 1 mile (1:10560), covering the period 1846-99. You can search by place name or by a County Gazetteer. You can enlarge the images and print them out, or copy them into another document on your word processor. A useful feature is a link to a modern map of the area being viewed.

www.multimap.com

This website contains modern maps, including 1:50000, 1:25000 and 1:10000 scales. It includes street maps of towns and is fully searchable.

DIGITAL ANCESTORS

BOOKLIST

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF SCOTLAND

Tracing your Scottish ancestors: a guide to ancestry research in the National Archives of Scotland. 4th ed.

NAS/Mercat Press, 2007. £9.99 pbk

Detailed account of the records of the National Archives of Scotland and the General Register for Scotland, including internet research.

ADOLPH, Anthony

Tracing your Scottish family history

Collins, 2008. £17.99 hbk

Lots of examples, lots of web links; very good on searching on the internet and very up to date, including DNA testing!

BIGWOOD, Rosemary

The Scottish family tree detective: tracing your ancestors in Scotland.

Manchester University Press, 2006. £9.99 pbk

Comprehensive, in-depth guide by an experienced Scottish genealogist. Very good for problem solving and even experienced researchers will find suggestions for further study.

CORY, Kathleen B.

Tracing your Scottish ancestry. 3rd edition

Polygon, 2004. £9.99 pbk

A useful companion to the NAS 'official' guide; contains addresses for local authority archives and local family history societies.

CHRISTIAN, Peter

The genealogist's internet. 3rd edition

The National Archives, 2005. £12.99 pbk

Up to date and extremely comprehensive; highly recommended. Gives extensive detail and analysis of websites discussed on this course, as well as many more. Watch out for later editions as it will inevitably date rapidly.

HERBER, Mark D.

Ancestral trails: the complete guide to British genealogy and family history

Sutton Publishing/Society of Genealogists, 2000. £19.99 pbk

Comprehensive guide to documentary sources of all kinds. Basic text is written in 1997, but will serve as the standard work for many years to come, though sections on access to documents on the internet is dating rapidly.

WADDELL, Dan

Who do you think you are?

BBC Books, 2004. £12.99 pbk

Linked to the TV series, this book has been described as 'a jargon-free idiot's guide to tracing your family history,' and as 'inclusive, non-patronising and lively,' emphasizing human and emotional issues. Two further books with the same title have been published to accompany the TV series.

LIVELY, Penelope

Moon tiger

Penguin Books, 1988. £6.99 pbk

Winner of the 1987 Booker Prize, this book is about the relationship between mother and daughter, set in wartime Egypt and in modern times. A complex tapestry, a mosaic of human experience. About time, and continuity, like all her books.

LIVELY, Penelope

The photograph

Penguin Books, 2004. £7.99 pbk

Rummaging in a cupboard, a husband finds an old photograph...

LIVELY, Penelope

A house unlocked

Penguin Books, 2002. £7.99 pbk

A very personal memoir: "I thought that I would see if the private life of a house could be made to bear witness to the public traumas of a century."

MORRISON, Blake

And when did you last see your father?

Granta Books, 1998. £6.99 pbk

A new way of writing family history or biography, as much about the author's personal journey as the death of his father, the relationship between father and son, and 'Auntie Beaty'.

MORRISON, Blake

Things my mother never told me

Granta Books, 2004. £6.99 pbk

Unravelling the Irish side of the author's family; genealogy as archaeology, peeling away the layers of truth, delving into previously unknown territory. Family history without a family tree. How a girl from County Kerry reinvented herself.

SAGE, Lorna

Bad blood

Fourth Estate, 2001. £6.99 pbk

Family history as memoir; growing up in postwar Britain, full of nuance and subtle resonances, brilliantly written but ultimately a tragic memorial.

HALEY, Alex

Roots

Vintage, 1994. £8.99 pbk

First published in 1977, the book that started it all! The advent of cheap travel, across the continents and the oceans, and the arrival of the internet in the last decade, has opened up 'Roots Tourism' as a growth industry. With a credit card, a personal computer, and average curiosity, anybody can unravel their ancestry, once the domain of the privileged few but now available to every citizen with the time and persistence to learn the necessary detective skills. As people become more skilled in the mechanics of genealogy, their expectations and interest rise, and a pilgrimage 'home', to 'the old country', becomes an irresistible goal.

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BASU, Paul

Narratives in a landscape: monuments and memories of the Sutherland clearances

Dept of Anthropology, University of London, 1997

<http://www.btinternet.com/~paulbasu/narratives/nl-frame.html>

"A study of the embodiment of social and personal memory in the landscape" – an anthropologist explores the phenomenon of 'roots tourism'.