

## **Minutes of the Search Room User Group meeting held on Thursday 1 May 2014 in meeting room 2, New Register House at 14:00 Hours**

### **Attendees**

Dee Williams (DW, NRS & chair), Alison Lindsay (AL, NRS), Iain Ferguson (IF, NRS), Alison Fordyce (AF, NSS), Ken Nisbet (Genealogist), Val Wilson, (ASGRA & Genealogist).

### **Apologies:**

Gill Amos, NRS, Dr Irene O'Brien (Chair SCA & senior archivist), Janet Bishop, ASGRA, Bruce Bishop, SAFHS, Lloyd Pitcairn (Genealogist).

## **1. Previous Minutes of 22 January 2014**

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

## **2. Centre Software**

### **2.1 Enhancements Since January 2014**

2.1.1 All computers in the search rooms have been replaced and have Windows 7 with internet explorer 9 installed. These updates have reduced the amount of search time for displaying results of searches.

2.1.2 VW confirmed that the issues with 'Websense' have not been resolved through this update. Thus access to some external genealogy websites is restricted and their images cannot be viewed. This issue to be raised with NRS IT staff.

**Action:** NRS to explore why 'Websense' is still blocking access to images on other genealogy websites

### **2.2 Performance Issues**

3.2.1 There were some performance issues during March 2014 that resulted in a cumulative total downtime of over one hour for customers at both the ScotlandsPeople Centre and local family history centres. During the latter part of April and early May the system appeared to have settled. NRS are still assessing what causes the slow downs and in turn the need to re-boot the system.

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

3.1 An updated manual for the ScotlandsPeople search rooms is complete but has yet to be formatted. It is hoped that this work will be completed in the near future so that it can be made available on the websites and in the search rooms. The manual includes details of how to search the records.

3.2 NRS was still working to have all their staff on one IT network. It was hoped that this work would be complete by the end of 2014. Once this work is complete, NRS will be able to assess whether it might be possible to offer more access to selected virtual volumes in the Dundas search room.

3.3 AL pointed out that data protection issues apply to some records and therefore access may require to be limited unless a system is introduced whereby

data protection forms are signed by the people accessing the system. Also, catalogues that are currently only available in the historical search room need to be accessed for some file reference numbers. These catalogues would therefore need to be digitised.

3.4 New blinds have been installed at the windows at the front of General Register House with the National Records of Scotland (NRS) logo.

3.5 The genealogists were asked for their views on access arrangements for the historical and legal search rooms. They pointed out that because the lift is located in a staff secure area, it means that anyone using the lift needs to be escorted. There are no problems with existing access via the Reid staircase.

#### **4. Records**

4.1 Soldiers' wills are due to be released at both the ScotlandsPeople Centre, local family history centres and over the internet at [www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk) w/c 26 May 2014.

*Dn: Soldiers' wills were released on 27 May*

4.2 More valuations rolls will be released at some point in the future. Currently the NRS plans to release 1875 valuation rolls next. KN and VW queried why 1875 was being given priority ahead of 1925. DW explained that a questionnaire had been sent out in the past to registered internet ScotlandsPeople customers who had voted that the older valuation rolls be digitised ahead of the more modern rolls. They asked that customers be asked again which set of valuation rolls they would like to see digitised. DW agreed to see if such an action was possible though she thought that work on the 1875 rolls had already commenced.

*Dn: As a compromise NRS are considering releasing the 1925 after 1875 valuation rolls but this will be dependent on there being no privacy issues*

#### **5. Local Family History Centre's Update**

5.1 Highland Archives Centre is officially opening on Tuesday 17 June 2014.

5.2 South Ayrshire plan to open a local family history centre later in the year. Details are still being formalised.

#### **6. Any Other Business**

6.1 The NRS website at [www.nrscotland.gov.uk](http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk) is still in the process of being re-vamped such that it includes all topics covered from the websites available at [www.nas.gov.uk](http://www.nas.gov.uk) , [www.gro-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk) and [www.scotlandspeoplehub.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspeoplehub.gov.uk) .

6.2 All information from the three websites is expected to be transferred by the end of 2014 with the possible exception of the on-line catalogue. The original websites will remain in place but will effectively be mothballed and not updated. Visitors will be re-directed to the NRS website.

6.3 DW queried whether more hobbyist genealogists who use both the ScotlandsPeople and historical search rooms could attend meetings. The issue would be keeping the number of attendees to a manageable number. It was

suggested that the NRS website could be used as a means of feedback instead of attending meetings.

6.4 AL confirmed that the Public Services Quality Group (PSQG) will run a bi-annual audit of our historical and legal search room customers and their views on the services provided during 2014.

6.5 BB confirmed that the SAFHS annual conference in 2015 would take place in Stirling.

## **7. Date of Next Meeting**

7.1 The date of the next meeting will take place on Thursday 7 August 2014 at 14:00 in meeting room 2, NRH.

Dee Williams  
Head of ScotlandsPeople Centre  
New Register House  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3YT

7 May 2014