

Minutes of the Search Room User Group meeting held on Thursday 7 August 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), Gill Amos (GA, NRS), Alison Fordyce (AF, NSS), Ken Nisbet (Genealogist), Val Wilson, (ASGRA & Genealogist), Bruce Bishop, SAFHS, Lloyd Pitcairn (Genealogist).

Apologies:

Dr Irene O'Brien (Chair SCA & senior archivist), Janet Bishop, ASGRA,

1. Previous Minutes of 1 May 2014

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

2. Centre Software

2.1 Enhancements Since May 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 response time for displaying results of searches.

2.2 Performance Issues

3.2.1 The ScotlandsPeople network has been working with no standby image store for the last few months and thus IT specialists have been working to re-connect a duplicate server which broke down some time ago.

3.2.2 Unfortunately, during work to install the server on the 6 August 2014, a connection to the live network was accidentally made which resulted in the system failing such that it wasn't possible to view images of some documents. Despite efforts to resurrect the connection, locations out with the Edinburgh campus remained affected for the rest of the afternoon and problems were experienced with some types of records across the search rooms.

3.2.3 The image server was fully operational the following day and work is on-going to re-connect the second server.

3.2.4 NRS was asked whether refunds to customers would be given. Being that the terms and conditions refer to refunds being given if the statutory indexes cannot be viewed, no refunds are due. However, DW accepted that a review of the terms and conditions should take place.

Action: NRS to review their terms and conditions for the Centre

3.2.5 The Genealogists reported that the Java update kept appearing on their screens. GA reported that the Java update mentioned has now been applied and expected Java messages to no longer display but meantime requested that the genealogists advise her directly if further messages appear on their screens.

3.2.6 Issues with 'websense' software blocking access to external websites had not yet been resolved. GA explained that whilst the main page for a website might be security cleared, if the next web page has a completely different web address

then the new address needs to be cleared. GA asked that the genealogists copy the web address at the top of the screen and send her details if access to the website is refused.

3.2.7 A specialist consultant was due to start work on 18th August 2014 to assess why the system was suffering from slowdowns.

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 NRS website when it is re-launched in September 2014 and in the search rooms. The manual includes details of how to search the records.

3.2 The genealogists asked why the Kirk Session records and other virtual volume records, which can be viewed in search rooms in General Register House could not be made available in the Dundas search room in New Register House. GA explained that currently there was no suitable connection between the buildings. Even if a connection was enabled there would be issues with the size of the servers because these record sets have high quality colour images which require a large amount of storage space.

3.3 NRS have appointed consultants to review the scope of data sets made publically available by NRS and how access might be made available in the future both over the internet, in NRS search rooms and at local family history centres. The intention is to have a road map detailing how access to digitised records could be improved over the years. The report should be finalised by the end of 2014.

3.4 A wifi connection was requested by the genealogists. It was agreed that this was desirable, however, the priority for NRS IT specialists at this moment in time was create a single network for the staff across NRS (currently staff work on two separate networks) and re-launch the NRS website in September and all resources were diverted on to these tasks at present.

3.5 LP requested a meeting with NRS to discuss how access to the historical search room could be improved, particularly for new starts. LP to offer some dates to AL to allow a meeting to be arranged.

4. Records

4.1 Soldiers' wills were released at the ScotlandsPeople Centre, local family history centres and over the internet at www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk on 27 May 2014. The internet has altered the downloads such that the wills are downloaded as a pdf document rather than separate pages. There are no plans to make similar changes on the ScotlandsPeople network which is used in Edinburgh and at local family history centre because customers are charged to copy each page.

4.2 A very small number of recent divorces (23 to date) are sometimes covering more than one page, however, existing software is set up only to display one page so NRS are checking how best to set up the system for these divorces. The issue is the fact that the numbering doesn't flag the fact that more pages exist.

4.3 The 1875 valuation rolls will be released September 2014 and will be followed by the 1925 valuation rolls later in the year.

5. Any Other Business

5.1 Alloa Family History Centre is scheduled to open in October 2014.

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

5.3 NRS will be hosting its largest ever stand at the Who do you think you are? show at the SECC in August 2014 and offering free access to ScotlandsPeople at 6 computer terminals.

5.4 NRS requested that the season ticket holders complete forms that will be made available adjacent to the stand alone computers and confirm any records currently available on the computers that are no longer required. The computers are scheduled to be replaced and NRS does not want to load documents on to the new machines that are no longer required.

6. Date of Next Meeting

6.1 The date of the next meeting will take place on Tuesday 11 November 2014 at 14:00 in meeting room 2, NRH.

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20 August 2014