

**Subject:** Access to closed prison records (HH21/66/18 and HH21/67/2)

**FOI reference:** 202000047188

**Date received:** 15 June 2020

**Date responded:** 18 June 2020

**Information requested:**

Access to a 1924 Aberdeen prison record in either HH21/66/18 Aberdeen Register of Criminal Records 1916-1927 or HH21/67/2 Aberdeen Register of Criminal Prisoners 1873-1938.

**NRS Response:**

National Records of Scotland (NRS) holds both prison registers for Aberdeen that have been requested.

We carried out a search of HH21/66/18 (Aberdeen Register of Criminal Prisoners and their Religious Persuasions covering period from 1916 to 1927) and found an entry 594 on pages 219-220 related to John Alexander Thain charged with bigamy and sentenced for 30 days.

HH21/66/18 is open for public access and available in digital form at National Records of Scotland. This record can be usually viewed in the Historical Search Room at General Register House (GRH), 2 Princes Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3YY. Further information is available on our website at:

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/visit-us/historical-search-room>.

Unfortunately, we are not able to provide access to this record right now as, in line with advice from the UK and the Scottish Government and to delay the spread of the coronavirus (Covid-19), we have taken the decision to close our buildings and restrict non-critical services.

Since the information cannot be accessed in the GRH we provided a full transcription of the relevant entry in the annex to this letter.

HH21/67/2 is Aberdeen Register of Civil and not Criminal Prisoners covering period from 1873 to 1938. This record is closed to public access and it is unlikely to contain an entry related for the requested individual since this register is for civil prisoners and not for those who committed a criminal offence.

Please note that there may be other records i.e. sheriff court records relating to the conviction. However, the court records are unlikely to provide any more details than the prison register as the trial would have been held in a summary court and not

before a jury. The transcription mentions a previous conviction visit to prison in 1903 but we cannot be certain of this until exploring registers for 1903.

To request access to the court records and/or find out about the previous conviction a new request is required under FOISA. Court records are closed for public access and due to the current situation we will not be able to inspect them until our normal services resume.

## ANNEX

The following is an accurate transcription from the Aberdeen Prison register (NRS reference HH21/66/18):

Registration No. and Sex: 594 M

Date of Admission: Dec 14 1923

Committing Magistrate or Court: Commissioners [of Police] Banff

Previous Imprisonments in any prison, No: 1

Last Reg. No. in this prison: 465/03

Name: John Alexr Thain

Age: 49

Height: 5 foot, 4 ½ inches

Education: 2

Where Born: Buckie

Nationality: S

Prisoner's Home: 15 Castle Hill, Turriff

Occupation: Seaman

Religion: P

Health as reported by Medical Officer: Good

Offence: Bigamy

Particulars of Trial: Date: Dec 4, Court: Sheriff S 31 Where: Banff

Sentence if Convicted: 30 days

Liberated or Removed – Date: Jan 3 1924, By whose authority: Sent Ex/c, To what place: [left blank]

Remarks: 10 days Banff Pol Cell