

Notes of the Search Room User Group meeting held on 24 November 2015 in meeting room 1, New Register House at 13:30 Hours

Attendees

Dee Williams (DW, NRS & chair), Iain Ferguson (NRS), Gill Amos (GA, NRS), Pippa Gardner (PG, NRS), Alison Lindsay (NRS), Emma Williamson (EW, NSS), Val Wilson, (ASGRA & Genealogist), Bruce Bishop, SAFHS, Janet Bishop, ASGRA, Lloyd Pitcairn (Genealogist), Ken Nisbet (Genealogist).

Apologies:

None

1. Previous Minutes of 2 September 2015

1.1 The group accepted the content of the notes of the last meeting.

2. Centre Software

2.1 The proposal to offer the option of selecting 'both' as well as female or male when searching the statutory records had not yet been progressed.

2.2 The option of using soundex or name variants for marriage searches for the spouse's surname wasn't yet available.

2.3 NRS plan to add 'dissolution' records, which register the formal ending of civil partnerships, in the near future. This will complete the suite of modern day statutory records that can be viewed in the search rooms.

2.4 NRS yet to review the Leith records for both statutory and Old Parish Registers and establish whether customers can be given the option of searching Leith North or Leith South rather than just all of Leith (registration district numbers are 692/1 for Leith North and 692/2 for Leith South up to 1920).

2.5 Messages from Java viewer saying that the version is out of date still appear when customers view an image. NRS to investigate why?

2.6 When viewing a birth record, messages still appear asking the customer whether they want to run the 'ViewTIFF' application. NRS to investigate whether these can be removed?

2.7 The images of valuation rolls were not available one Monday during November. GA explained that weekend work to enlarge the capacity of the server had resulted in some of the valuation rolls not being copied across. The problem was rectified once it was reported and the images were available the following day.

2.8 The genealogists report an issue with the search system whereby the system wasn't clearing when they started a new search.

Dn. NRS have since confirmed that the system doesn't clear itself unless a user logs out before starting the new search.

3. Centre & Historical Search Rooms

3.1 The season ticket holders had complained that other customers were using their chairs . They asked whether seat numbers could be put on the backs of the chairs. NRS to consider what is possible.

3.2 The genealogists asked whether they now needed to order some trade directories from the historical search room rather than the Dundas search room because one customer had recently been directed to the historical search room to view a trade directory where they had to obtain a reader's ticket. NRS was not aware of such an arrangement and agreed to check the procedure.

DN. Since the meeting NRS has established that the scenario raised was the exception rather than the rule and it related to the particular document requested. Customers should be able to request to view trade directories and these will be brought to the Dundas search room if they are located there. The limited space for reference books in the Dundas means that it is not possible to have all publications on display. If any further problems are experienced then the customers should speak to a member of staff.

4. Records

4.1 1855 valuation rolls were released on 29 September 2015.

4.2 The Military service appeal tribunal records were released on 19 November 2015.

4.3 NRS are working to complete the indexing of additional Old Parish Registers. Once complete these extra entries will be made available on the ScotlandsPeople network and on the internet.

4.4 The images of the divorces were recently removed from the ScotlandsPeople network because a small number contained additional personal information. NRS are unable to ascertain which records do contain the additional personal information without opening the image and therefore if a customer does want to see a record they need to ask a member of staff. The image shown by staff will detail the court location and case reference number, date of decree, divorcee addresses and date of marriage.

4.5 The genealogists asked whether NRS planned to digitise and index the 1939 National Register in the same manner as England and Wales. NRS confirmed that Scotland currently only makes the entries available as an extract once the applicant has provided evidence that the individual searched for is deceased. There are no plans to change this arrangement, particularly when the number of requests are so small.

5. ScotlandsPeople Project Update

5.1 NRS had evaluated the feedback received from people who had been invited to view website layout prototypes for the replacement ScotlandsPeople website that will be available September 2016. The final version adopted will

include a Scottish theme and ensure that there is adequate space between text and images to ensure that the composition is clean and easy to read.

5.2 The replacement website was being developed such that it can operate on mobile, desktop and tablet appliances.

5.3 A clickable prototype for simple statutory and census record searches will be tested next.

6. Any Other Business

5.1 DW was asked to check whether professional researchers acting for clients or legal firms could receive special dispensation with regards the number of microfiche that can be viewed per day for adopted individuals. DW agreed to make enquiries.

5.3 LP raised the fact that additional search results are occurring in some instances.

Dn. NRS have since established that re-registered events seem to be indexed differently and are investigating exactly what has been changed.

7. Date of Next Meeting

7.1 The date of the next meeting will take place on Thursday 4th February 2016 at 13:30 in meeting room 1, NRH.

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