

Notes of the Search Room User Group meeting held on 10 May 2016 in meeting room 2, New Register House at 13:30 Hours

Attendees

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

Apologies: None

1. Previous Minutes of 4 February 2016

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

2. Centre Software

2.1 NRS explained that as a result of the virus attack on the ScotlandsPeople network from 23 March to 1 April 2016, some changes had been made to the network to prevent further attacks taking place. The main change that affects users is the removal of the replication system, which had actually stopped working since the start of March due to technical problems.

2.2 The network has effectively been frozen to allow customers to continue to search the system and prevent any further risk of a virus attack so no updates are being made to any part of the system, including indexes and images.

2.3 The genealogists asked why there was such a delay between a vital event like a birth being registered and the image appearing on the system. NRS explained that images are not made available until the register has been sent to New Register House and then scanned. Before each completed register is sent in to New Register House, it needs to be checked and signed off by the district registrar. Last year there had been issues with resources for the checking of the completed registers but this was now resolved and registers are being received much more quickly. However, due to the freeze on the system no new registrations are being added.

2.4 NRS confirmed that the civil registration system for use by staff is being updated with images and indexes. Staff in the Dundas search room have access to this system.

2.5 It was agreed that NRS staff would look up new entries on the staff system and share the results if a customer needed a search to be carried out of the latest events or to find a re-scanned image. NHS staff raised concerns because they have remote access. NRS will advise the group if the freeze to the system is lifted. There are no timescales at this moment in time.

2.6 It was agreed that EW (NHS Genetic Health), would email the ScotlandsPeoplehub address if she needed information from a new record.

2.7 No changes to the search system had been made by NRS since the last meeting. It was hoped that the indexes for dissolutions would be added in the near future.

2.8 The genealogists explained that the inability to save to memory stick meant that their copies were lower quality because they had to scan prints for their own electronic records. NRS confirmed that there are no plans to allow memory sticks to be used in the ScotlandsPeople, historical or legal search rooms in the near future.

3. Centre & Historical Search Rooms

3.1 The genealogists asked whether wifi could be introduced in the search rooms. NRS confirmed that there are no plans to introduce this facility.

3.2 AL explained that NRS planned to upgrade and quicken the sasine search tool available in the legal search room. To allow for this upgrade, the system will be unavailable for around one month. During this period customers will need to use the virtual volumes to source sasine records. VW offered to circulate her notes detailing how to use virtual volumes to help customers wanting access to these records. AL also highlighted that staff are on hand to help.

3.3 AL pointed out that there is a special plaque above the curatorial desk in the historical search room for a member of staff who died in the Great War and that the anniversary of the plaque takes place on 16 May 2016.

4. Records

4.1 The 1930 valuation rolls had been released on 3 March 2016.

4.2 NRS have completed the indexing of additional Old Parish Registers and these will be made available on the ScotlandsPeople network and on the internet once the database team have added them to the collection.

4.3 NRS are in the process of indexing the registers recording births & baptisms, marriages and banns of marriage and deaths and burials for the Presbyterian church court records (from the NRS CH3 record set). Ultimately this record set will be launched on ScotlandsPeople.

5. ScotlandsPeople Project Update

5.1 NRS have continued to work with the development contractor CACI Ltd., to redesign the ScotlandsPeople website. DW asked whether it would be a concern if the census street index books were only available on the NRS website. NRS are keen to keep access to this record set on the NRS website because the copies are pdf and don't suit the environment that is being designed for the new website. The genealogists didn't foresee a problem with this as long as access to the NRS website was available in the search rooms.

5.2 KN asked whether the vouchers sold through the ScotlandsPeople website would be usable on the new website once it is launched during September 2016. NRS confirmed that work was in progress to ensure that all data from customer accounts would be available at launch and that all vouchers purchased prior to launch would be usable. For the future, NRS plan to make e-vouchers available rather than hard copy vouchers, which is more environmentally friendly option.

6. Any Other Business

6.1 JB asked whether NRS planned to take ScotlandsPeople to next year's SAFHS annual conference at South Queensferry. NRS confirmed that they would be attending.

6.2 NRS confirmed their intention to attend Who do you think you are? 2017.

6.3 DW was hopeful that the new website could be demonstrated at the next meeting.

7. Date of Next Meeting

7.1 The date of the next meeting will take place on Wednesday 20 July 2016 at 13:30 in the media room in the basement of General Register House. Genealogists to meet in shop to collect passes at 13:25.

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