

Background

Each year's list was prepared by counting the surname of each child in that year's register of births, the surnames of both parties (for example the bride and the groom) in the register of marriages, and the surname of the deceased in the register of deaths. Different spellings (e.g. McDonald and MacDonald) were counted separately. Surnames which occurred at least ten times (in total) in a year's registers were included in the that year's list; surnames which occurred less often in a year are not shown in its list.

The surnames from the birth, marriage and death registers may not be representative of the surnames of the population of Scotland as a whole, as:

- (a) they include the surnames of non-residents who were born / married / died here;
- (b) they exclude the surnames of residents who were born / married / died elsewhere; and
- (c) some age-groups have very low birth, marriage and death rates, whereas others account for most births, marriages and deaths.