

'YOUR ANCESTRY

Most people are very curious as to their origins and often wonder what their ancestors did and where they lived. This leaflet aims to tell you how to discover this information.

First of all it is important to speak to older relatives, listen to and record their reminiscences as too often we do not pay any attention to what the older generation has to say. Once they are no longer with us we realise that all their knowledge has died with them. Many people do not have any living relatives to provide family information which is where the services of a professional researcher are invaluable. It is great fun to undertake research yourself but plenty of time needs to be set aside for this purpose. Many people start searching on their own then realise that they are unable to continue any further without professional help.

There are several sources which can be consulted during the course of a search

STATUTORY RECORDS

1855 was the year when the Civil Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths became compulsory in Scotland. Scottish Certificates contain a great deal of family information. Birth certificates give birthdate, birthplace, the child's name, parents' names and marriage date. Marriage certificates give the place of marriage, names of both parties, addresses, parents' names and witnesses; Death certificates give the name of deceased, cause of death, marital status, occupations, addresses and parent's names.

CENSUS RETURNS

As is still done today, a Census of the population was taken every ten years. The years open to the general public are from 1841-1901. These census returns are an interesting and important source of social history. All the census have now been indexed for the whole of Scotland by surname and are available online..

OLD PARISH REGISTERS

Prior to 1855 the main source of information are the Parish Registers of the Established Church of Scotland. There were 901 parishes in Scotland and the registers of Births/Baptisms and Marriages for these parishes have been indexed for the whole of the country. These registers vary in quality from parish to parish. Only some parishes have death registers and, apart from city parishes, are usually unindexed. Although over 40% of the population did register there is no absolute guarantee of finding your ancestors as there was no compulsion to register with the local parish church. If they belonged to a different religion from the Church of Scotland i.e. Roman Catholic, Episcopalian or one of the Seceder Churches which sprang up in the 18th and 19th centuries it may be more difficult to locate them. These have now been indexed and available online

OTHER SOURCES

There are many other sources available to the researcher including Maps, Kirk Session Minutes, Minor Church Records, Register of Deeds and Post Office Directories for the main cities. The most commonly used ones are as follows:

WILLS

Scottish Wills are now indexed for the whole country from 1560 –1901 on the website www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk There are also indexes from 1901 to 1995 in paper and fiche format. Recent wills from 1995 have to be consulted at the Commissariat Office in Edinburgh where there is a charge for the search. There is no legal requirement to probate in Scotland

SASINES

A Sasine is the record of the transfer of heritable property or land. When a house is sold in Scotland this is the record of the sale. From 1781 to the present day there are abridgements of the documents indexed according to county. Most pertinent details can be found from the abridgement but the actual document can be consulted if fuller information is required

MEMORIAL INSCRIPTIONS

Memorial Inscriptions are gravestone inscriptions which have been recorded by enthusiastic volunteers. Gravestones often give a great deal of family information.

IGI

The International Genealogical Index or IGI has been compiled by the Mormon Church using sources such as Old Parish Registers and from family histories submitted by interested persons. The information it contains is incomplete and therefore it is used as a tool to aid research. It is available on CD Rom for the British Isles and other European countries, the Americas and Asia.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How much information must I have?

It is not necessary to have a great deal of information to proceed with a search; all that is required is a name and date of birth, marriage or death pertaining to Scotland and I can do the rest! Obviously it is helpful to give as much information as possible to avoid spending time and money searching for known facts. Hearsay is useful but cannot always be accepted as accurate.

How much will the search cost?

It is unnecessary to spend a lot of money at one time. Charges are £18.00 per hour inclusive of all fees incurred except for photocopying costs. Payment can be made in sterling, local currency or by credit card via paypal. If using either of the two latter methods of payment these are subject to a bank commission charge. There is a list of charges for individual searches i.e. one birth, marriage, death certificate etc.

How long will the search take?

It is difficult to give an exact estimate of the time it will take to undertake a search as it depends on the availability of information for your particular family and how much information you may already have. An initial search of four-six hours is usually suggested to ascertain how much information may be found for your family. This can then be followed by further research building up your family history over a period of time. Longer or shorter searches are, of course, undertaken. If there is no information to be found the search will be curtailed before too much expense is incurred.

How is the information presented?

This is presented in the form of a comprehensive report containing full transcriptions of all certificates (unless otherwise stated) together with references to all sources consulted during the course of the search. The report is usually accompanied by a brief pedigree chart.

Can I trace living relatives?

It is possible to trace forwards to find living relatives either for legal or family reasons. It is one aspect of research which I find particularly satisfying. It usually takes longer to search forwards depending on what period of time the search starts from. An estimate of time required will be given when the enquiry is received.

and finally--

Many people wish only to have the male line researched but do not forget the importance the female lines play in your family history. Remember you can always be sure who was the mother of the child but never 100% who the father was!!



Accepted through Paypal

SCOTTISH ANCESTRY RESEARCH

“Not to know what happened before we were born is to remain perpetually a child. For what is the worth of a human life unless it is woven into the life of our ancestor.”

Cicero

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Charlotte has been a professional genealogist and record agent since 1986.

She offers friendly helpful advice with no obligation to commission a search.

SCOTTISH ANCESTRY RESEARCH

Genealogist

Charlotte L. Cowe

Record Agent

Fees at April 2009

- Transcription of single entry of birth, marriage, death, census, OPR where exact details are known £ 4.00
- 10 year search (five years on either side of known date) for birth or marriage from 1855 with transcription £ 6.00
- 10 year search (five years on either side of known date) for birth or marriage which is unsuccessful £ 2.00
- Certified copies of births, marriages, deaths, census returns, OPR entries where the exact date is given £11.00
- Certified copies of births, marriages, deaths, OPR entries plus index search £14.00
- Digitised copy of certificates of birth (up to 1905), marriage (up to 1930), death (up to 1955) £2.00
- Digitised copy of certificates of (up to 1905), marriage (up to 1930), death (up to 1955) plus index search £2.50
- Hourly rate for all other searches £18.00

No specific amount is given for census searches (where no addresses are known) or death searches as search time for these vary depending on how long it takes to find the information. It is usually more economical to have these undertaken within the hourly rate.

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