

## **Minutes of the Centre User Group meeting held on Friday 13 November 2009 in the Lord Clerk Register's room, GRH at 14:00 Hours**

### **1. Attendees**

George MacKenzie (GM, NAS & Chair), Dee Williams (DW, GROS), Gill Amos (GA, GROS), Helen Ewing (HE, GROS), Ken Nisbet (KN, Genealogist), Anne Garven (AG, Genealogist & ASGRA), Angus Mitchell (AM, Genealogist), Bruce Bishop (BB, SAFHS), Alison Fordyce (AF, NHS), Lloyd Pitcairn (LP, Genealogist)

**Apologies:** Duncan Macniven (GROS), Ewan Steed (Genealogist), Anne Cruickshank (Genealogist), Paul Parr (GROS), Iain Ferguson (GROS)

### **2. Previous Minutes of 12 June 2009**

2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were accepted subject to the word 'manse' in section 5.14 being replaced by 'names'.

### **3. Matters Arising**

Item 5.8 – The electronic feedback form is now operational on the ScotlandsPeoplehub system.

Item 5.10 – Forms are now available in the search rooms for customers to report errors or poor images.

Item 6.3 – A sign has been erected on the notice board outside the Dundas room stating that it is not permissible to drink within the search rooms.

Item 6.10 – Helen Borthwick, GROS, now issues library updates to both SAFHS & ASGRA.

Item 8.2 – A PDF version of the Centre leaflet is now available on the website. Photos of the Centre will follow.

### **4. Centre Software**

4.1 GA provided details of the computer failure that started at 13:00 on Wednesday 14 October to Friday 16 October. The original problem was resolved by 19:30 on the Thursday night, however, during the incident some data was lost from the Centre system. The lost data comprised some of the statutory records and some of the census records. A temporary configuration was set up which allowed the Centre to open on Monday 19 October.

4.2 The Centre was able to revert to its standard configuration the following week.

4.3 GA confirmed that another copy of GROS records had now been created such that it would be quicker to provide back up copies in the future.

4.4 The incident demonstrated the vulnerability of the system. In response to this, a business continuity document, which identified the parts of the system that are

vulnerable to a single point of failure, has been drafted by NAS. NAS will consider what changes should be implemented such that there a balance is struck between reliability and the cost of the alterations proposed.

4.5 DW explained how the Centre had managed to accommodate all customers who had pre-paid their seats in the Dundas Room by removing the stand alone computers to maximise the number of seats available for the customers using the DIGROS system. BB confirmed that this action had upset the professional researchers because they regularly use the stand alone computers to carry out their research and therefore they had lost working hours.

4.5.1 GA confirmed that there had been problems with the DIGROS system due to a faulty cable, which limited the availability of access to the system in the Dundas room on 28 & 29 September. That fault was now rectified.

4.6 GA explained how the DIGROS system used by customers in the Dundas room now operated on a virtual clone, which meant that customers no longer had access the same system as GROS staff. This change had been implemented to satisfy the government security requirements. The major change for customers was that the system would not be updated until early 2010. Once it was possible to update the system it would only be done on a regular basis rather within 24 hours.

4.7 DW confirmed that in future communications would be sent to Chris Paton, Ken Nesbit and Bruce Bishop if any emergency situations arise to allow them to inform genealogists through their networks and websites.

4.8 LP had provisionally booked in a group of customers but found that they had all been given the same username. LP commented that it had been rather time consuming to create separate usernames on the day and customers had lost search time whilst the amendments were made. GA suggested that in future separate usernames should be provided by the person making the booking so that they can be set up on the system by the supervisor prior to their visit.

4.9 AG asked whether it would be possible to have a similar facility to the ScotlandsPeople internet website whereby it is possible to search on two forenames for a census. GA said that this would not be possible because a different search engine is used by Brightsolid, who operate the ScotlandsPeople internet website.

4.10 GA was hopeful that the facility whereby a customer can track up and down the years for the modern day records rather than across a five year period would be available quite soon.

## **5. Centre Search Rooms**

5.1 BB explained how members of ASGRA had complained to him that requests for microfiche and microfilm were placed with the supervisor for checking before being handed to the RA. Members felt that this was adding unnecessary delay to the process. DW explained how requests were now made through the supervisor to ensure that the problem was logged and rectified where possible on the software.

5.1.1 DW circulated a spreadsheet, which had been presented to the Executive Committee the previous day (12 November). The spreadsheet detailed possible options for removing customer access to the microfiche and microfilm. One option was to remove all access to microfiche and microfilm for the GROS records and there were various intermediate options.

5.1.2 By way of background information, GROS was proposing to move the Old Parish Registers (OPRs) to the ground floor area off the NRH Dome. In recent years there have been three occasions when water had penetrated the alcove housing the OPRs. Major upgrade work had now taken place to the NRH roof to rectify the inherent fault in the roof design. GROS therefore proposed to move the OPRs to the ground floor area where they would be less vulnerable.

5.1.3 The contentious part of the work was to remove public access to microfilm and microfiche stored in the area earmarked for the OPRs and remove it from NRH to Station Road. Due to the need to spend the monies this financial year, work had already commenced to modify shelving on the ground floor.

5.1.4 The Executive Committee had requested that the Centre User Group be approached for their views on the proposal.

5.2 The lack of notice given to the Centre User Group meant that it was not possible to request a decision at the meeting and thus DW asked for comments on the proposal to be submitted to herself by Monday 23 November though this deadline could be extended if required.

**Action:** Comments on proposal to remove customer access to fiche and film to be submitted by Monday 23 November

5.3 DW asked that customers report any known errors in the indexes or poor images to the supervisors to allow them to be rectified where possible.

5.4 BB thanked the Centre for putting out the computer wipes, which were appreciated by the customers and members of SAFHS.

5.5 Problems with websense, which monitors web usage continued and customers were still finding that they were blocked from websites that were on the approved weblist. This problem was in the process of being investigated.

**Action:** Blocking of websites on the whitelist to be investigated

5.6 Monies left in accounts by customers for over a year was discussed. It was suggested that it would be helpful if the software could flag the fact that money had been left in their account when the customer logs off the system. Due to the need for various other changes to the software which are a higher priority, this facility was not a viable option in the near future.

5.7 ScotlandsPeople staff would start to email customers who had left money in their account untouched for over a year, however, there needed to be a balance against the sum of money and the costs associated with contacting and refunding customers remote from the Centre.

## **6. Local Family History Centres Update**

6.1 During October 2009, letters were issued to the Local Authorities in relation to the establishment of local family history centres. They had asked whether they would be interested in attending a workshop to consider how a local family history centre could be established in their area. To date 9 responses had been received but the closing date was 30 November so more responses were expected.

6.2 Moray Council had confirmed that they had no plans to have a local family history service.

## **7. Any Other Business**

7.1 DW confirmed that Gateway Review No. 5 – Benefits Realisation was taking place on the 12-14 January. The review requires users of the Centre to provide feedback on the service provided. It was suggested that KN, BB and AG should attend the interviews to represent the users.

7.2 A new website at [www.scotlandsplaces.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandsplaces.gov.uk) had been launched on the 22 October 2009, which provides information to geographic information held by both the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) and the National Archives of Scotland. Users are able to enter a place name or coordinate to search across the collections and maps are available to help define their search.

7.3 DW confirmed that a travel trade evening reception was being arranged for January/February 2010 (date to be confirmed), for local people who have contact with tourists to view the ScotlandsPeople. Familiarity with the service offered by the Centre might generate more business by way recommendations.

## **8. Date of Next Meeting**

9.1 The date of the next meeting will be arranged during Spring 2010, once there were more definitive dates for when the updates will be made to the ScotlandsPeople network.

**Dee Williams**  
11 January 2010