

Minutes of the Centre User Group meeting held on Friday 12 August 2011 in meeting room 1, New Register House at 14:00 Hours

Attendees

George MacKenzie (Keeper & Registrar General, GM, chair), Dee Williams (DW, NRS), Gill Amos (GA, GROS), Alison Lindsay (AL, NRS), Bruce Bishop (BB, SAFHS), Janet Bishop (JB, ASGRA), Alison Fordyce (AF, NHS), Lloyd Pitcairn (LP, Genealogist), Val Wilson (VW, genealogist), Anne Garven (AG, Genealogist & ASGRA), Ken Nisbet (KN, Genealogist).

Apologies:

Iain Ferguson (NRS), Ewan Steed (Genealogist)

1. Previous Minutes of 14 May 2011

1.1 The content of the minutes of the last meeting were accepted subject to paragraph 6.1 being amended to state that 'Nic' means daughter of rather than son of.

2. Matters Arising

Item 4.1.4 – the door closer has been fitted to the south entrance door of the Dundas search room though further adjustments were being made that afternoon to make it close more gently.

Item 6.2 – DW had ascertained that when in cooling mode the units in the Dundas room and Reid search rooms do not introduce fresh air into the rooms. DW suggested that customers and staff try to open windows if the rooms are stuffy and that any windows that cannot be opened should be reported to staff.

3. Centre Software

3.1 Enhancements Since May 2011

3.2 Since the last meeting, the following changes have been made to the software:

- A new version of the software was issued. The only difference that customers would have noticed was the need for everyone to log on again as if they were new customers.

- An index update was carried out in July and the next one is scheduled for August 2011. These updates will continue on a regular basis now and should be carried out every 2 months or sooner. Weekly updates were requested by the user group but this was not possible to achieve for the foreseeable future.

Dn. Refresh now done fortnightly

- Street indexes for 1911 have been added to the main menu at the Centre. The street indexes for 1841-1901 have been scanned and should be available for free on the ScotlandsPeople websites later in the year.

3.3 Planned Changes to the Software

3.3.1 It is hoped that the Catholic registers will be available at the Centre by the end of December 2011. The codes have been done but the release is still awaited.

3.3.2 Staff are working on a black and white version of the ScotlandsPeople network to help customers with vision impairments.

3.3.3 The licence for DIGROS ends at the end of October 2011 so DIGROS will require to be switched off around this period.

3.3.4 A terminal will be located in the Matheson Dome and the Reid search room to give access to the virtual volumes, which can be viewed for free in the historical and legal search rooms. These terminals can allow customers to view some Kirk Session records and valuation rolls without walking up to the historical search room. Staff yet to be trained on how to access these records, however, staff in the historical search room are fully conversant with the system.

4. Centre Search Rooms

4.1 The genealogists asked why overflow customers are booked into seats at the south end of the room prior to seats in the north end seats adjacent to the supervisor being filled. New researchers tend to be noisier and therefore can be distracting because they tend to speak to their colleagues about their searches. DW explained that the search rooms are not silent areas but she would enquire with staff why the seats nearest the supervisor are not being filled first.

Action: DW to establish why bookable seats by supervisor in Dundas not booked first

4.2 As a general comment the genealogists felt that the noise in the search rooms had risen over the years.

4.3 Visitors are still getting lost in the corridor outside the café despite the new signage. It was suggested that a sign with an arrow stating 'back to search rooms' should be mounted for customers leaving the café.

Action: Iain Ferguson to be asked to review signage again

5. Local Family History Centres (LFHC) Update

5.1 The tenders for the equipment that will allow the Centre network to be connected to specific computer terminals in local family history centres is underway. The equipment should be in place by October 2011.

5.2 Letters were issued on 5 August 2011 to the Chief Executive of every Local Authority confirming the access arrangements for being linked to the ScotlandsPeople centre network. The strategy is to make ScotlandsPeople records available across Scotland, however, it is not possible to offer free access because NRS need to cover their costs.

5.3 Legislative amendments will be necessary to allow local registrars to charge for their local family history centres.

5.4 AF asked why no communication had been sent to the NHS. DW explained that the NHS was deemed to be a 'Public Body' and therefore their access arrangements would be different because NRS would charge under a different section of the legislation. A separate communication will be sent to NHS.

Action: DW to arrange for a separate communication to be sent to NHS

6. Any Other Business

6.1 GM explained that Duncan Macniven, the Registrar General for Scotland, had retired and that he was now the Registrar General for Scotland and Keeper of the Records. The post had not been combined since 1919. The genealogists asked whether they could see a structure diagram for the organisation and GM agreed that a copy could be emailed to them.

Action: DW to email a structure diagram to the genealogists

6.2 BB asked why people need to travel to Aberdeen or Inverness to view records for Moray? GM explained that Moray do not have an archive at the moment and therefore it is not possible to locate original records in Moray under charge and superintendence arrangements.

6.2 GM explained how NRS are working to digitise their suite of church records. The CH1 Assembly minutes and CH3 Free Church records have yet to be digitised but the CH2 Kirk Session records are complete.

6.3 A tender exercise is underway for the production of a logo for NRS.

7. Date of Next Meeting

7.1 The date of the next meeting is Thursday 17 November 2011 at 14:00 in meeting room 1, NRH.

Dee Williams
25 August 2011