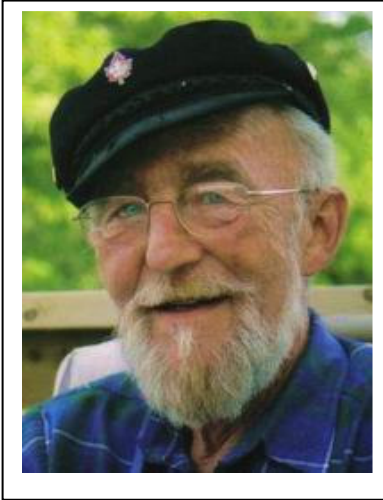


Scottish Records



A number of readers have contacted me about problems finding online sources for Scottish research. For researchers who are used to the wealth of resources available on Canadian and American websites, it can be a bit of a shock to find that this is not a universal phenomenon.

The two major portals for Scottish research are: www.scotlandgenweb.org and www.genuki.org.uk/big/sct. Neither of these is exactly loaded with resources and many of the links they provide (and that look exciting) are to lists of books on the subject. Of the two, I slightly prefer Genuki although both do have a few useful links.

Rootsweb has a link to Tara's BMD's which is a developing resource. The General Record Office (GRO) seems to be trying to intimidate people who are doing these lists by sending them e-mails informing them that the GRO claims copyright in all these

records. I am not a lawyer but I doubt that such a claim has any legal merit. It is a fundamental principle of copyright that historical data is in the public domain.

For most purposes, I think that the most useful resource is the Rootsweb system of County Query Boards. Here you can leave messages or queries that other researchers in the same area will see and might respond to.

If you don't know what county your ancestor's town or parish is in, you can go to: www.genuki.org.uk/big/churchdb. I did a search for the town of Forres (pop. 4711) and found that it was in Moray County (Shire) and I was given a list of the churches in that area and their distance from Forres.

The county pages for both Genuki and Rootsweb do have some resource material and are definitely worth checking out. I looked at several and was able to contain my excitement without difficulty. Again, many of the links are to lists of published material or to institutions that have no resources on their websites.

Another developing resource that bears watching is an online Scottish Names Directory. You can find it at: www.list.jaunay.com/sctnames/index.html. The list is based on submissions so it is developing slowly and lacks reliability but it can give something to start with.

The hard fact of the matter is that, if you want to make any headway with your Scottish ancestors, you will have to bite the bullet and open your wallet. Over 43 million records are available at www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk. They have BMD's from the Statutory Registers from 1855 and from old church registers from 1553; wills and testaments from 1513; census records of 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, and 1901.

This is a "pay to see" proposition and it is a little complicated. First of all you have to register at the site. They will then e-mail you with a password. With this you can enter their site. I did a search for the name 'McCuish' and they told me that they had a list of 18 hits. It would cost me one credit to see this list.

I went to the payment set-up page and found that I could buy 30 credits for 6 British Pounds. A quick visit to www.xe.com/ucc, which is a site with a currency exchanger, told me that, at that moment, one British Pound was equivalent to \$2.16525 Canadian. After doing the math, I realized that each credit was costing \$0.44.

They will place up to 25 items on a page and I could see the list for \$0.44. To see the actual documents that these items are extracted from will, of course, cost more and they have all kinds of different fees. An image costs 5 credits; a will costs 5 Pounds.

While all this seems a bit convoluted, I am sure there is a good reason for it and the prices are really not out of line with what archives in North America charge for copies of documents. Above all, they have the goods that many of us are looking for.