

Scottish Archive Network

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Introduction

Many Scottish records useful for genealogical research are available online and indexed. The casual, less experienced researcher will search websites like ScotlandsPeople, Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org and Findmypast and stop there. As proverbial “brick walls” are hit, they find themselves feeling like “all” of the records have been searched. The purpose of this course is to introduce those doing Scottish research to the resources of the Scottish Archive Network.

What is the Scottish Archive Network?

The Scottish Archive Network, or SCAN, began as a collaboration of the National Archives of Scotland, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Genealogical Society of Utah. It brought together the holdings of more than 50 Scottish archives into one catalog. It also included digitizing records. It still does the same, however it is under the umbrella of websites now maintained by the National Records of Scotland. It refers to itself as “Internet access to the written history of Scotland”.

Overview

Access the SCAN website at <https://www.scan.org.uk/> or by clicking on a link at the bottom of the National Records of Scotland homepage (<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/>). The homepage has links to the following key areas: Online Catalogue, Research Tools, Digital Archive, Directory, and Forums. It also as links to three websites: Scottish Documents (not for a general audience), Scottish Handwriting and Education Modules. These latter two are worth exploring.

Online Catalogue

The SCAN Online Catalogue contains information on more than 20,000 collections from 62 archives around Scotland. To best understand the references of the catalogue, click on the link labeled “about our online catalogue.” To search the catalogue, click on the “SCAN online catalogue” link at the bottom of the page.

The search link has two primary tools “[Browse]” and “[Search]”. The Browse option is great to explore because it lists all 62 archives with links to the collections of each. This gives the searcher an idea of the archives and the kinds of collection contained in them.

The Search option is the key resources available at SCAN. All of the archives can be searched at one time or the search can be filtered to a specific archive by using the archive code found under the Browse option. Once an item of interest has been found,

the collection can be “googled” to see if it is online in some way, the website and contact information for the archive can be found by clicking on “What now?” in the upper right corner.

Research Tools

The Research Tools tab includes links to:

- Knowledge Base: This is a hidden gem of information on a variety of record types and subjects. It also has a link to the ScotlandsPlaces website.
- Glossary: This is an alphabetical list of Scots terms, many of them legal. Because the Glossary is effectively archived, it also has a link to an excellent Dictionary of the Scots Language at <https://dsl.ac.uk/>.
- Scots Currency Converter: Prior to the Act of Union in 1707, Scotland had it's own currency. While this resource is no longer directly available, the link does have additional links to calculate the value of Scots money manually using the Knowledge Base above as well as to the Economic History Services website which has several links to help with calculating monetary value.

Digital Archive

The Digital Archive is an eclectic mix of digitized records that cover a wide variety of record types. Many of these records date to the 1600's and overall demonstrate the variety of records that may exist. The original scans were done between 1999 and 2003.

Directory

The Directory is a directory of participating and non-participating archives all across Scotland. It contains address and contact information.

Forum

When SCAN was turned over to the National Records of Scotland, the discussion forums were ended. However, by clicking on the link, it will refer you to a link at the bottom of the page for Talking Scot (<http://www.talkingscot.com/>). The Talking Scot website has links to many help resources.

Scottish Handwriting

The Scottish Handwriting website is a great place to learn the Scottish palaeography with tutorials, weekly “Posers” (with transcriptions), and even a “Coaching Manual”.

Education Modules

The Education Modules are designed for educators but do provide some informative historical education with photos and links on topics such as coal mining, women's suffrage, and health and housing.