

# bíoblaíocht fíamháil ríochtíocht



# comunn sloinntearachd na gaidhealtachd

# JOURNAL

Vol. 11 No. 4 August 1993

ISSN 0262-6659

Published by  
The Highland Family History Society  
Comunn Sloinntearachd na Gaidhealtachd

## A NOTICE AT NEW REGISTER HOUSE

by John McMillan

I'm very much a novice at this genealogy game. Having cut my teeth on my Highland connections using the facilities in the library at Inverness, I had to look to New Register House in Edinburgh to dig up a host of Lowland ancestors. Following the advice given in the book "Tracing Your Ancestors at the Scottish Records Office" I telephoned to reserve a seat to search the country's records thinking I may have to book several weeks in advance. The girl's voice at the end of the line was welcoming and encouraging.

"Oh there shouldn't be any problem, sir. Since we've increased the number of search rooms we've never yet had them filled to capacity. Just come in when you like and you'll get a numbered ticket at the reception desk. Take a seat in the waiting room until your number comes up on the display board and you then report to the Public Counter and pay the fee (£15 per day or £55 for a week). You'll then be given a pass and a seat in one of the search rooms and someone will show you what to do".

I wasn't sure how long I should book for.

"If you have approximate dates for the deaths or marriage of you grandparents you should be able to trace all your ancestors back to 1855 in a couple of hours".

That was encouraging but, with a distinct lack of information on one side of the family and a host of details required on the other, I decided to book for a couple of days anyway.

I called in at the accommodation bureau at Waverly Station and was told that the cheapest bed and breakfast in town (this was at the height of the season in July) was the Edinburgh University student halls of residence. By booking there and then I was offered a 10% discount. The Pollock Halls are only a few minutes bus ride away and you can also have an evening meal for an extra charge.

Next morning I arrived at NRH at four minutes past nine and was already number 40 on the waiting list. Ten minutes later I had declared the reason for my search ("family history" will do if your spelling isn't up to "genealogy"), received my pass and copy of Notes for Guidance and was shown to the supervisor in the West Search Room.

"This will be your desk for the two days. When you come in tomorrow, there's no need to go to the waiting room. Just come straight in here and start. Now, if you come over here to one of the vacant computers, I'll show you what to do". They were all very friendly.

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name and address they can be a starter for a point of contact. Thus after all my rattling on in the last few issues, this is what I've come down to.

The 1881 census has slowed down a bit for the summer holiday season but it does march on and it's had a late fillip due to the members of the LDS church in Inverness and Alness suddenly switching on to its needs. Altogether about a third of our batches have been transcribed for our area, and half of those are back for checking. The first few have now been returned to the GSU for data entry so they now know we really do exist. Many more people have offered to help than I was able to thank properly, but I do appreciate your offers. Please, please could someone in the Western Isles volunteer to be a local co-ordinator? It is a very important part of Scotland and the census for 1881 is naturally a very significant a set of documents for Gaelic speakers and ancestor-hunters.

Talking about transcribing censuses, we have only this week received the results of some very hard work by Margaret Shand, one of our Australian members. She has been indexing the 1861 census for Banffshire for the Aberdeen & North East of Scotland F.H.S. and she has abstracted all those she has found who were born in our area. She has some more parishes to do, but the alphabetic list she has sent contains 337 entries. It lists the name, relation to the householder, marital status, age, occupation, place of birth and the name of parish with book and page number where the entry can be found. Thank you, Margaret, this is an excellent addition to our growing library of family history data.

By the time you receive this Journal it will be less than two weeks to the 1993 SAFHS Conference and AGM, which our Society is hosting. The work involved in preparing for it is the main reason for the delay in producing this journal. As those of you who booked to come (142 at present) will know, we have had to move the venue as Culloden Academy suddenly discovered that they were double booked and the other lot (something to do with a Prince) outranked us. The conference will still be taking place as otherwise planned as we have moved the venue to Inverness Royal Academy.

Today is the first day of our new membership year and those members who have not paid their subscription in advance will find a reminder in the journal. Please pay as soon as possible as there will be no further reminders.

Cowlinge baptisms include "John Coling that was found in the cowcrib was baptised the 25th Dec 1691 being as they supposed a year and a half old at the least." Where was his mother when the church fathers found the child that Christmas? Hiding or at home pretending to be a good girl or out foraging? It sounds like she didn't come forward as they obviously baptised him with the name of this Suffolk village.

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