

Introduction

Genealogy is a popular and growing pastime and this leaflet aims to provide some basic information on how to begin researching your own family history. Although it is written principally for people whose families come from North-East Scotland, most of the books and documents mentioned are local examples of records available in other parts of Scotland.

A more detailed source sheet on family history records in the City Archives is also available, entitled Family History Sources in the City Archives.

First Steps

There are a number of preliminary steps which will help you get off to the best start in your research:

- collect as much information as you can from members of your own family such as names, dates, places of birth and addresses
- gather together certificates and papers
- read one of the many guides to family history research now available to familiarise yourself with the main classes of records you may encounter
- contact your local family history society: they often maintain a register of members' interests and you may find that someone has already done work on your particular family.

The local group, Aberdeen & North-East Scotland Family History Society (ANESFHS), runs a busy shop which is staffed by enthusiastic volunteers who are happy to advise and assist where possible. Family history starters packs are also available for sale.

Main Sources

Once you have gathered as much preliminary information as possible you are ready to start looking at archival sources. Listed below are the main classes of records you are likely to meet in the course of your research and where they can be located.

Certificates of birth, marriage and death

Probably the best way to begin tracing your family's history is to work backwards from yourself: your birth certificate contains your parents' names, and the date of their marriage, and their marriage certificate gives their ages which in turn will lead you to their birth certificates, and so on. Statutory civil registration was introduced in Scotland in 1855 and these records are held in Edinburgh by the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS). An index and digital images of many of these records are available to view at www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk for a small fee. The Registrar's Office in Aberdeen holds local copies of the registers for most of the North-East from 1855 onwards. A national computer index, Lola, is also available at the Registrar's Office and covers baptisms/births and banns/marriages from 1553 and deaths from 1855.

Old Parish Registers

Commonly known as OPRs, the old parish registers were compiled by local Church of Scotland ministers and are the main source of information on baptisms/births, banns/marriages and, occasionally, burials/deaths before official registration began in 1855. They often date from the 17th or 18th centuries and while the originals are held by the GROS in Edinburgh, microfilm copies can be accessed locally at Aberdeen Central Library, ANESFHS and Aberdeenshire Library & Information Service (ALIS) along with microfiche OPR indexes. Alternatively, an index and digital images of the baptism/birth and banns/marriage records can be accessed for a fee at www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk

Census returns

The GROS also holds the census returns for the period 1841–1901. Arranged by address within civil parishes, these records give an individual's name, relationship to head of household, age, marital status, occupation and parish of birth. Microfilm copies of the returns are widely available at the Central Library, ANESFHS, ALIS and the Mormon Genealogical Library in Aberdeen. The 1881 census is now also on CD-Rom and can be consulted in both City Archives searchrooms. Census records for the decennial censuses between 1841 and 1901 can also be searched and viewed online for a fee at www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk

IGI

The International Genealogical Index, (IGI), has been compiled from the above records by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. It is a useful source for identifying individuals by baptism or marriage. However, the IGI is patchy and should not be relied on as the principal source of information. It is available on CD-Rom at the Mormon Genealogical Library. Microfiche versions can also be accessed at Aberdeen Central Library, ANESFHS and ALIS. The IGI is available on the internet at www.familysearch.org

Monumental inscriptions

Gravestones are often the only surviving burial record prior to civil registration in 1855. As part of an on-going project, the ANESFHS have produced transcriptions to around fifty North-East churchyards, some of which are available to search on their website at www.anesfhs.org.uk

Directories

Postal Directories for Aberdeen begin in 1824 and can be found in Aberdeen Central Library. As well as alphabetical lists of residents, many include trades sections and street lists. There are fewer general directories for rural areas with the notable exception of Worrall's directory of 1877 and the County Directories which cover the Counties of Aberdeen, Kincardine and Banff.

Local newspapers

Newspapers are a valuable source of information for the family historian, largely for their obituaries and death notices. Obituaries from the Aberdeen Journal for the period 1748–1854 have been indexed and published, copies are available at Aberdeen Central Library or the Town House searchroom. Complete runs of many of the Aberdeen newspapers are maintained by Aberdeen Central Library with microfilms available for the Aberdeen Journal, (now Press & Journal), from 1747, Aberdeen Herald from 1832 to 1876 and the Aberdeen Free Press from 1853 to 1886. For press outwith the City contact ALIS.

Wills and testaments

Wills and testaments are another source that can be very useful for family historians. In these, you can hope to find names of family members, their relationships and details of everyday possessions. An index linked to digital images of these records from 1514 to 1901 has been made available by the National Archives of Scotland (NAS) at www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk. Copies of the digital images can be purchased through the site, although the index is free to search. Wills and testaments after 1901 are available to view in Edinburgh at the NAS.

Useful addresses

Aberdeen & North-East Scotland Family History Society
164 King Street,
Aberdeen, AB24 5BD
tel 01224 646323
email:
enquiries@anesfhs.org.uk
www.anesfhs.f9.co.uk

Aberdeen Central Library
Reference & Local Studies Department,
Rosemount Viaduct,
Aberdeen, AB25 1GW
tel 01224 652512
email:
LocalStudiesLibrary@aberdeencity.gov.uk
www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Aberdeen City Registrar
St Nicholas House,
Upperkirkgate, Aberdeen,
AB10 1BA
tel 01224 522033
email: searchroom@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Aberdeenshire Library & Information Service
Mel drum Meg Way,
The Meadows Industrial Estate, Oldmeldrum,
Aberdeenshire,
AB51 0GN
tel 01651 872707
www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/k/alis/index.htm

General Register Office for Scotland
New Register House,
Edinburgh, EH1 3YT
tel 0131 334 0380
www.gro-scotland.gov.uk

National Archives of Scotland
HM General Register House, Edinburgh,
EH1 3YY
tel 0131 535 1314
www.nas.gov.uk

Scottish Archives Network
www.scan.org.uk

Useful publications

North-East Roots: a guide to sources,
Lesley Diack
(A&NESFHS, 1999)

Tracing your Scottish Ancestors: the Official Guide, National Archives of Scotland
(Mercat Press, 2003)

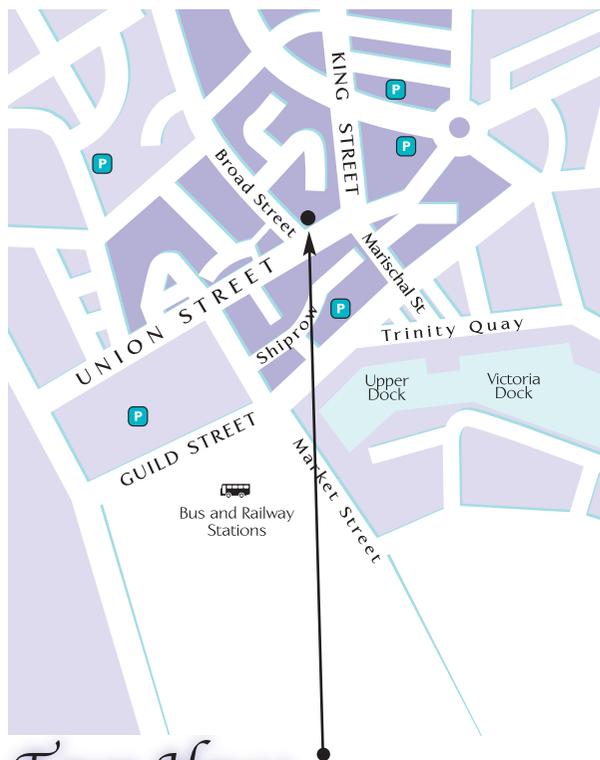
Jock Tamson's Bairs: a history of the records of the General Register Office for Scotland,
Cecil Sinclair, (GRO(S), 2000)

Census Records for Scottish Families at Home & Abroad,
Gordon Johnson
(A&NESFHS, 1997)

Town House

Town House | Broad Street | Aberdeen | AB10 1AQ
Tel: 01224 522513 | **Fax:** 01224 638556 |
e-mail: archives@aberdeencity.gov.uk
 www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/archives

Searchroom opening hours | Wednesday - Friday,
 9.30am - 4.30pm | Please telephone in advance to make an
 appointment | Pencils only may be used in the searchroom



Town House

Facilities

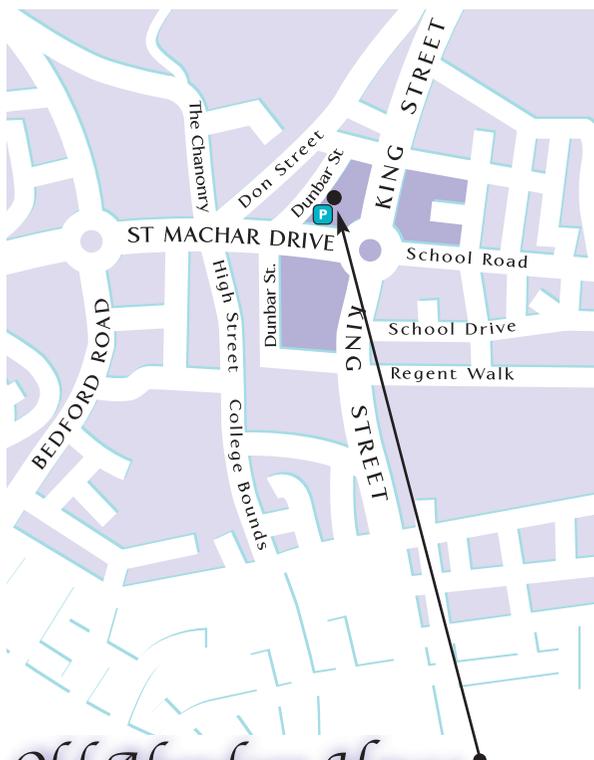
reference library | sources leaflets | photocopying
 available | microfilm reader | e-mail, telephone & postal
 enquiries answered | research service | internet access



Old Aberdeen House

Old Aberdeen House | Dunbar Street | Aberdeen | AB24 3UJ
Tel: 01224 481775 | **Fax:** 01224 495830 |
e-mail: archives@aberdeencity.gov.uk
 www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/archives

Searchroom opening hours | Monday - Wednesday, 9.30am -
 1pm, 2pm - 4.30pm | Please telephone in advance to make an
 appointment | Pencils only may be used in the searchroom



Old Aberdeen House

Facilities

car parking | reference library | sources leaflets |
 photocopying available | e-mail, telephone & postal
 enquiries answered | research service | internet access



Aberdeen CITY ARCHIVES

Starting your Family History



114 GENERAL DIRECTORY.

Farquhar, Miss, milliner, 218 Gallowgate	Finnister, John, surveyor of taxes; office, 4 Belmont street, h. 2 Lingstone place
Farquharson & Co. grocers, tea, wine and spirit merchants, 131 Union street	Findlater, James, plasterer, 47 Causewayend
John, stabler, &c., 6 Little Belmont-st.	Findlay, A. & J. watchmakers, jewellers, and manufacturers of german silver plate, 7, 8, & 9 South Gallery, New market, h. Orchard Cottage, Old Aberdeen
Thomas, boot and shoemaker, 155 1/2 Gallowgate	Alexander, boot and shoe warehouse, 11 and 17 Broad street, h. Milner's court, 25 Guestrow
Mrs. lodgings, 107 George street	George, wholesale and retail general
Mrs Dr., 8 Bon-accord terrace	
Misses, of Ballogie, 249 Union street	
Fearnside, John, druggist, 45 Green	
Female School of Industry (Sheriff Watson's)	



A Guide

