

## FEATURE ARTICLES



### Researching Your Scottish Ancestry Online, Par 1 of 2

by Richard Crowhurst

In my last series of articles, I looked at the information that is available on the Internet for people tracing their English and Welsh ancestry, particularly census records. However, as readers with other British ancestry will no doubt be aware, the records for other areas of the United Kingdom, such as Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man, are held in their own archive departments. The devolution of the Scottish government resulted in something of a hiatus in the availability of records, but since spring 2005 most of those that are available have been collated on a handful of useful sites. This article should help you find your way around them.

At first the novice might find it strange that in many areas Scottish archives are treated and held in a different manner to south of the border. There are sound reasons for this—not just nationalistic pride. The Scottish legal system has been different from the English for centuries, long before devolution and despite the Treaty of Union in 1707.

If you're looking to trace infor-

mation held in Scottish records or are after Scottish sources (such as newspapers), then remember that there are significant differences between Scottish history and the rest of the UK. For example, Scotland adopted the Gregorian calendar more than 150 years before England, and this will obviously affect the way in which you search indexes and archives. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were crucial periods of Scottish history with its religious upheaval and the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745.

People wishing to go further than the most cursory of searches can do far worse than arm themselves with Cecil Sinclair's *Tracing your Scottish ancestors: a guide to ancestry research in the Scottish Record Office* (which is available from Amazon), or *Tracing Scottish Local History: A Guide to Local History Research in the Scottish Record Office* (available from Abe books). Alternatively, look at GEN-UKI (<http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/sct/intro.html>) which has a lot of interesting and useful information for beginners.

Civil registration only began in Scotland in 1855, but for most years (except those between 1856 and 1860) you will find more details for each entry in the record than is found on the English equivalent.

When looking for ancestors who were Canadian immigrants, the best starting place is the Scottish Emigration Database, hosted by Aberdeen University at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/emigration>. This can be searched by a number of criteria and holds over 8,000 entries for Canada alone.

Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com>) and <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>) is the lead-

ing source for family history records on the Internet, but, at the moment, they only provide census data for England and Wales. The site does provide some Parish and Probate records for Scotland and Ireland, but for a wider range of data researchers need to look elsewhere.

Overall, Scottish data may seem harder to come by than its English equivalent, but with a bit more time, money, and patience, you can do just as much as your Sassenach friends.

NEXT MONTH: Recommended sites.

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Richard Crowhurst is a freelance writer from Lincolnshire in England. He writes about many things but specialises in British history and heritage subjects. He is a keen amateur genealogist and (with help) has researched his own family history back to the early 1600s.

### Texas Rangers

by Ronald K. Culbertson

I've always loved the old west. I don't know how many toy cap pistols I wore out before I was ten, pretending I was Tom Mix or Buck Jones, cowboy stars of the old nine-cent movies that played at the Empire Theater in Baker, Oregon.

A Big Little book about Billy the Kid captured my interest and I went from shoot-em-up movies to reading about western outlaws and the men who corralled them. I

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