

Minutes of the Centre User Group Meeting Held on Friday 12th December 2008 in the Lord Clerk Register's room, GRH at 14:00 Hours

1. Attendees

Duncan Macniven (GROS), George MacKenzie (NAS), Dee Williams (GROS), Gill Amos (GROS), Helen Ewing (GROS), Iain Ferguson (GROS), Ken Nisbet (Genealogist), Anne Garven (Genealogist), Angus Mitchell (Genealogist), Bruce Bishop (SAFHS)

Apologies: Paul Parr (GROS), Anne Cruickshank (Genealogist), Ewan Steed (Genealogist), Alison Horsburgh (NAS)

2. Previous Minutes of 14th August 2008

2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were accepted.

3. Matters Arising

Item 6.6 – A sign had been mounted in the café asking customers not to reserve seats.

Item 6.13 – Ken Nesbitt pointed out that groups attending evening visits have started to merge to reduce their costs per person.

4. ScotlandsPeople Network-Update

4.1 The opening of the shop and the Adam Dome for introductory taster sessions from 10:00-12:00 and 14:00-16:00 had taken place on the 25 August 2008. There had been around 200 users each week.

4.2 The need for the system to be robust once the Centre fully opened was acknowledged. A system of testing would take place prior to the full opening of the Centre, scheduled for the 12 January 2009.

4.3 The number of servers had been increased threefold but the next task would be to re-structure the search code because it was taking up so much memory.

4.4 The customer comment sheets received from people attending the introductory sessions were being reviewed. Some highlighted errors in indexing or poor images but other comments related to the operation of the system.

4.5 The indexes for adopted persons were being added to the system but images of the entries would continue to be only available on microfiche with a maximum of 3 fiche per day being issued per person.

4.6 Currently the indexes do not change colour when a search is made but this will be fixed within the next week.

[Dn. It has transpired since this change was made that the colours remain for the index number even when the customer has moved on to a different type of statutory record. Due to be fixed May 2009.]

4.7 The system does not allow a user to carry out a search of a marriage prior to 1929 using both the groom's and spouse's name. This issue should be rectified during 2009.

4.8 Eventually the system will be altered to allow customers to look at an entry for a particular year and then move up and down the years in the same manner as DIGROS.

5. Phased Changes For The Opening

5.1 General Register House

5.1.1 Once the Centre opens fully in January, the policy will be that each introductory session is meant to be an introductory session only and therefore customers should not use this facility more than once.

5.2 New Register House

5.2.1 The majority of the Dundas room will remain on the DIGROS system until proposed enhancements to the ScotlandsPeople network have been implemented.

5.3 Seat Bookings

5.3.1 There were no plans to have an on line seat booking system for the foreseeable future so bookings would be taken on 0131 314 4300 or by email.

5.4 Microfiche/Film Readers

5.4.1 Microfiche/film readers will be located in the Reid, Matheson and Dundas search rooms. Staff will regularly patrol the search rooms to pick up any requests for film or fiche and then pass them to the customer.

5.5 Stand Alone Computers

5.5.1 Stand alone computers will be located in the Dundas room and Reid room to replace the CD's for stand alone records. One computer will be located in each room. We do not have permission to make all of the information available on two computers so some information will only be available in one of the search rooms.
[Dn. Stand alone computers yet to be made operational.]

5.6 Census Books & Books in Search Rooms

5.6.1 It was confirmed that a range of reference books would be made available in the Reid, Matheson and Dundas search rooms. The Dundas search room will hold some library books but the main bulk of the library will continue to be stored in the NRH Dome area. Books stored in the Dome area will require to be requested.

5.7 Reporting Errors

5.7.1 Any problems with indexing or images should be reported to the supervisor. The errors are passed across to the departments responsible for making the updates who in turn update DIGROS.

[Dn. No updates have been to the SP system since the opening on the 12 January.]

5.8 Cafe

5.8.1 The café will open for a six month trial from around the 12 January 2009. The usage of the facility will be monitored. Heritage Portfolio will be operating the facility.

5.9 Shop

5.9.1 The shop sold a variety of products since it opened on the 25 August. It will take at least a year's operation to get a better idea of what customers are interested in buying. There had been one definite loss of a book entitled 'She Was Aye Working', which was possibly taken on the open doors day on the 26th September 2008.

5.9.2 Security for the Centre was debated. A security guard would start working in the shop area from the start of January 2010 because staff were feeling vulnerable.

6. Opening Date

6.1.1 It was hoped that Linda Fabiani would attend an official opening of the Centre either on or near to the 12 January 2009.

6.1.2 It was hoped that press releases would feature in the Evening News and Scotsman and on the Ancestral Tourism website with possibly some coverage by BBC Scotland.

7. Any Other Business

7.1.1 The separation of any Old Parish Register records from the Kirk session records was ongoing.

7.1.2 George MacKenzie (GM) explained how the Adam Dome and the Lord Clerk Register's room was now a Unique Event venue. The venue had been officially launched with a special reception that included a jazz duo playing on the gallery. Lighting suspended from the gallery had transformed the appearance of the room.

7.1.3 GM confirmed that the Famous Scots exhibition would commence with Billy Connolly and would then feature Sir James Black, who developed beta-blockers.

7.1.4 It was hoped that during the Year of the HomeComing tourists would be attracted to the Centre. ScotlandsPeople would be attending The Gathering in Holyrood Park on the 25/26th July 2009.

7.1.5 Bruce Bishop (BB) listed the following items which had been raised at a recent SAFHS meeting:

7.1.6 Some members found the Dundas room too noisy sometimes and reported that there had been instances of people using their mobile phones. Duncan Macniven (DM) confirmed that the Dundas room is not a silent area and that mobile phones should not be used. Customers should report any usage of mobile phones to the supervisor.

7.1.7 Family history societies were wanting to have their leaflets on display in the Centre. DW confirmed that a leaflet stand would be located by the Reid stair but whether there would be enough space for every society to place a leaflet was unknown at this point in time.

7.1.8 Part of the Dundas carpet had been taped down near to D31, which was considered to be a hazard by users.

Action: DW agreed to ascertain why the carpet had been taped down and whether it could be fixed.

7.1.9 The method by which customers would be able to provide feedback on the Centre was discussed. Customers will be able to provide feedback through the ScotlandsPeoplehub using the contact form.

[Dn. The electronic feedback function is still not operational but a manual feedback form is available.]

7.1.10 BB asked whether ScotlandsPeople would attend the Aberdeen Family History Fair that was scheduled to take place on the 25 April 2009. DM confirmed that SP would look at whether it was possible to attend.

7.1.11 GM confirmed that the Adam Dome would be an official venue for civil weddings.

8. The Future of the Centre User Group

8.1 Duncan Macniven (DM) detailed how the Centre User Group was now at the end of an era with the forthcoming opening of the Centre. He acknowledged the vast number of issues that had been addressed to date but queried whether such regular meetings would be necessary in the future. He suggested that the group should meet in approximately six months time to review the operation of the Centre.

8.2 DM explained how he was considering whether to amalgamate the Centre User and Internet User groups because some of the issues addressed by each group did overlap.

9. Date of Next Meeting

9.1 The date of the next meeting to be arranged during Summer 2009.

Dee Williams
30 April 2009