

HERITAGE HUB SOURCE LIST RECORDS OF DEATH AND BURIAL

**Tracing a death or burial often presents a challenge to family researchers.
Key sources of information are detailed below.**

DEATH CERTIFICATES

- Civil Registration was introduced in Scotland in 1855. Scottish death certificates are particularly valuable, as they give much more information than their English equivalent, with names of both parents (including the maiden name of the mother). The early records of 1855 also give the names and birthdates of children.
- The Heritage Hub does not hold certificates, which are in the care of the General Register Office of Scotland. For the Scottish Borders, contact the Registrar Genealogy Service on tel. 01450 378118, e-mail: registrar.genealogy@scotborders.gov.uk. There is a charge for this service.
- Deaths 1855-2006 can be accessed online on www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk, the official pay as you view site of the General Register Office for Scotland. Because of data protection legislation, images are not available of more recent records. .

MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS

- These are the transcriptions of gravestone information and are a good substitute for missing burial records. Much work has been done at a local level and monumental inscriptions can be a key to identifying not only dates of death but also several generations of a family. Not everyone, however, could afford a gravestone and many stones have fallen, are weathered or unreadable.
- The Heritage Hub holds an extensive collection of monumental inscriptions for the four Border counties and beyond, including the publications of the following organisations:
- Borders Family History Society [www.bordersfhs.org.uk] has published over 30 booklets of monumental inscriptions, covering parishes in Berwickshire and Roxburghshire.
- Scottish Genealogy Society [www.scotsgenealogy.com] publications include booklets on pre-1855 gravestones in Berwickshire, Liddesdale and Peeblesshire.
- Other useful sources of information on interpreting gravestones:
WILLSHER, Betty Understanding Scottish graveyards
Website - www.scottishgraveyards.org.uk

PRE-1855 OLD PARISH RECORDS (CHURCH OF SCOTLAND)

- In many parishes records of death or burial are patchy, basic or have not survived. Unlike with baptisms and marriages, there is no microfiche index to make the search easier. They can, however be accessed online at www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk.
- Heritage Hub staff can advise on the coverage of death records in specific Border parishes and you may feel it worthwhile to do a search through the Old Parish Records themselves, held on microfilm for all parishes in the four Border counties: Berwickshire, Peeblesshire, Roxburghshire and Selkirkshire.
- Other items in the Heritage Hub include:
 - > *Ancrum register of dead buried, 1702-1855 (SC/R/62)*
 - > *Midlem Hearse Society minute book, 1790-1900 (SC/S/12/3)*
 - > *James Wilson's register of deaths, Hawick 1825-1852. [From Hawick Archaeological Society Transactions, 1915]*

- A local project, Selkirk Genealogy, is transcribing death and burial records from the Scottish Borders Old Parish Records. For an up to date list of availability, see the website: www.sgtranscriptions.co.uk
- For records of other churches in Scotland contact the National Archives of Scotland, General Register House, Edinburgh, EH1 3YY. Tel. 0131 535 1314. E-mail: research@nas.gov.uk. Web: www.nas.gov.uk

MORTCLOTH RECORDS

- It was customary for the Kirk Session of the parish church to hire out a mortcloth (funeral pall) to cover a coffin or corpse during the funeral service. In many parishes the only burial record was that of the dues paid for the rental of the mortcloth. The poor were unable to pay for the hire of a mortcloth, and more wealthy families would not need to rent one.
- The Heritage Hub holds:
 - > *Smailholm Mortcloths, 1822-1847 (SBA/10/1)*
 - > *Index to Coldingham Mortcloth Records 1694-1759, compiled by Vivienne S. Dunstan, 1998*
 - > *Kelso Mortcloths: cashbook and register. In 2 volumes (microfiche) Volume 1 1784-1821 and Volume 2 1821- 1855. Transcribed & indexed by J. Perkins, 1994.*
- Other mortcloth records may be in Kirk Session papers held at:
The National Archives of Scotland, General Register House, Edinburgh, EH1 3YY.
Tel. 0131 535 1314. E-mail: research@nas.gov.uk. Web: www.nas.gov.uk

BURIAL RECORDS

- Since 1855 it has been compulsory for authorities maintaining cemeteries to keep a register of all burials. Apart from the location of the grave, the records are unlikely to give any more details beyond what appears on the death certificate. Please note: A charge is made per enquiry. For information contact Scottish Borders Council Cemeteries Offices at:

Ettrick & Lauderdale, Kelso & Newtown St. Boswells	Diane Munro, Cemeteries Office, Old School Building, Newtown St. Boswells	Tel. 01835 826842 EM: dmunro2@scotborders.gov.uk
Hawick, Jedburgh & rest of Roxburghshire	Sandra Riddell, Cemeteries Office, Town hall, Hawick.	Tel. 01450 364736 EM: sriddell@scotborders.gov.uk
Tweeddale & Berwickshire	Emma Bertram, Cemeteries Office, Rosetta road, Peebles	Tel. 01721 726313 EM: ebertram@scotborders.gov.uk

- To find online the location of local cemeteries, look up www.scotborders.gov.uk/localview. This offers current maps and allows you to pinpoint a locality to find information on local services and amenities.
- The Heritage Hub collections include:
 - > *Eddleston churchyard records, 1939-1948* P/PR/33/3
 - > *Innerleithen cemetery/churchyard records, 1877-1975* P/PR/33/1
 - > *Innerleithen ledger of interments, 1897-1973* P/PR/33/1/2
 - > *Kelso cemetery minute book, register etc, 1924-1965* SBA/9/1
 - > *Kelso cemetery mortality record, 1871-1930* R/PR/1/11/34
 - > *Kelso cemetery papers, 1924-1965* SBA/9/1
 - > *Peebles churchyard records, 1867-1955* P/PR/33/2
 - > *Peeblesshire cemeteries records, 1903-1964* P/PR/34
 - > *West Linton churchyard records, 1870-1975* P/PR/33/4

WILLS & TESTAMENTS

- A free searchable index to Scottish Wills & Testaments from 1500-1901, comprising over 500,000 names is available online at www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk. Images can be downloaded for a charge.
- Most records of wills, testaments and inventories are held at:
The National Archives of Scotland in General Register House, Edinburgh, EH1 3YY.
Tel. 0131 535 1314. E-mail: research@nas.gov.uk. Web: www.nas.gov.uk
- For a detailed explanation of inheritance, wills and testaments look up:
www.scan.org.uk/researchbase. The knowledge base section (record types) includes a fact sheet on wills & testaments. Or consult. "Tracing Your Scottish Ancestors: a guide to ancestry research in the National Archives of Scotland". Published by Mercat Press, 2003.

NEWSPAPERS

- Past newspaper announcements of birth, marriages and deaths were generally brief. However descriptions of funerals and obituaries of prominent people were often lengthy, with information on family and mourners. Accident reports were graphic and reports during the First World War are particularly poignant with pages filled with profiles of casualties.
- The Heritage Hub holds 25 titles of local newspapers on microfilm. These range from a complete run of the "Southern Reporter" first published in 1855 to papers which have long past into history such as the "Kelso Mail", "Teviotdale Record" and "St. Ronan's Standard".
- Few local newspapers have been indexed) so it can be a laborious search to find relevant information unless you have a very clear idea of the date i.e. at least month and year.
- A useful finding aid is "Index to Kelso Chronicle death notices 1853 and 1854", compiled by Vivienne S. Dunstan, 2000

SUDDEN DEATHS

- **Police record of sudden deaths and casualties, Roxburghshire, 1876-1906, 1941-1950. Ref. D/90/19**
Data Protection restrictions will apply to the later records. Staff will advise.

FATAL ACCIDENTS

- The Fatal Accidents Inquiry (Scotland) Act, 1895 provided for public inquiries by sheriff and jury into occupational fatal accidents and cases of sudden death where public interest was involved. Records are held (by county) with the sheriff court papers at the National Archives of Scotland, though not all have survived and there are none before 1895.
- Contact: The National Archives of Scotland General Register House, Edinburgh, EH1 3YY.
Tel. 0131 535 1314. E-mail: research@nas.gov.uk. Web: www.nas.gov.uk

ROLLS OF HONOUR

- The Commonwealth War Graves Commission website www.cwgc.org is the starting point for tracing a wartime casualty. The Debt of Honour Register offers a free search facility, with details on the scene of war and place of burial.
- The Heritage Hub local history collection includes the following publications relating to the First World War:
 - > *Roll of Honour – Cockburns who died in the Great War, by Andrew Cockburn*
 - > *The Book of Remembrance for Tweeddale, by Dr. C. Gunn*
 - > *Hawick and the Great War: a pictorial guide, by the Hawick News.*
 - > *Peeblesshire Roll of Honour*
 - > *The men who marched away, [from Liddesdale] by Derek Robertson*
 - > *All those fine fellows [Hawick and district] by Derek Robertson.*
 - > *Selkirk Roll of Honour – men from the burgh and parish of Selkirk who served.*

- The first national memorial dedicated to members of the armed forces killed on duty since World War Two was recently unveiled. Searches of the Roll of Honour, which provides information up to 31 December 2006, can be made at <http://www.forcesmemorial.org.uk/roll-of-honour.asp>

WAR MEMORIALS

- The Heritage Hub holds an extensive postcard collection which is indexed and includes photographs of war memorials in Border towns and villages.

Heritage Hub, Kirkstile, Hawick, Roxburghshire TD9 0AE. Tel. 01450 360699

E-mail: archives@scotborders.gov.uk

Web: www.heartofhawick.co.uk/heritagehub

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