



Monthly Newsletter

Hibiscus Coast



February 2014

Did you make it to **February's Branch Meeting**? **Graeme McKenzie** lived up to the hype and captivated the audience. Not everyone was looking for a Scottish connection but the information and presentation will benefit them should they meet that challenge.



- After being piped in by Lindsey McLeod playing 'The Heights of Casino' Graeme was introduced to the meeting by our Branch Convenor - Wendy Inskip. Initially Graeme spoke about his book "Genealogy in the Gaidhealtachd Clan and Family History in the Highlands of Scotland" and the 20 years experience it is based on.
- Following this he mentioned how lucky a person was to have Scottish records to search. Due to the size of Scotland the records held at Register House mean there is a centralized repository. Register House is home of the Scottish National Archives and Scotlands People Centre. In addition they have the most advanced on-line search facilities available. www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk have Testaments, Inventories and Will's available - they also have Coat of Arms ... and the Roman Catholic Registers are available ... and soon the 'Free Church Registers' will be available as well. Post 1855 Valuation Rolls are currently being digitized.
- Patronymic Names gave us an understanding of the way Scotland, Wales and Ireland could be compared, (Scotland - "Mac" - Son of; Wales - "Ap" - Son of; Ireland - "Ua" - grandson of). Graeme also discussed how, in Scotland, the women almost always used their maiden names on certificates, even when married. The boon is that Scottish records also show more information on their BDM than you would find in the rest of the UK.
- Pre 1855 Births and Marriages were recorded in some parishes but, beware, not all records before this date have survived or even existed.
- Post 1855 it was compulsory for all Births Deaths and Marriages to be registered
- Best bit of information is that when it comes to "Mc" or "Mac" the spelling doesn't matter. Always try both if you are having difficulty finding your ancestor.
- Highland people spoke Gaelic and English, so take this into account when searching records as those taking records (Ministers, Clerks) would write what they 'heard' or what they 'thought' names should be.
- Graeme mentioned that he has a comprehensive listing of the Highland Gaelic & English names used in Highland Family History. A couple of pages in his book are devoted to assisting researchers understand they might be looking for a Donald or a Daniel if they are looking for Domhnall. As if that is not likely to be a hurdle for inexperienced researchers, remember 'Legal Documents' were written in Latin and you need to be aware how this impacts a search if you come across a document with names you don't understand.
- People often used naming patterns, BUT they also liked to mix and match these patterns.
- Don't trust a census for place of birth or age as many people did not know how old they were, and they remembered where they were raised, not necessarily where they were born.
- Ordinary people did not use surnames until after the late 18th early 19th century. Look to their Clan affiliation to help under these circumstances. Looking at Clan history can help you identify some ancestors too, an example was Allister roy M'Allister Duy = Alexander the Red son of Alexander the Black.
- To round off the afternoon Graeme spoke on Clan Names and Sept Names reminding us that Sept Names are different forms of the Clan names. Sept names link to a clan and in some cases they no longer exist as the descendants use the Clan name only now. Sept's were likely to remember a prominent clansmen, or they were smaller Clans following the Chief of a larger Clan.