



RESEARCH

Resource 1: online catalogues and databases

This guide has been created by Scotland's Urban Past (SUP), a five-year community-engagement project from Historic Environment Scotland.

We support communities to record, research and celebrate the history on their doorsteps.

Through our free training and resources, people of all ages can discover and share the fascinating stories of Scotland's towns and cities.

www.scotlandsurbanpast.org.uk

Historical research online

When you are researching a site or building, you may want to investigate archival material and historical records. Your nearest council and university archives, and your library's local-history and/or special collections departments, will be extremely useful places to visit. Many have online catalogues so that people can search for archival material before visiting. Increasingly archives are also making copies of items from their collections available online. Please ask archivists and librarians for assistance before, during or after your visits.

National Library of Scotland

The [National Library of Scotland](#) is the legal deposit library of Scotland. Since the Copyright Act of 1911, it has received a copy of every book, map and music sheet published in Britain. The library holds the most comprehensive collection of early printed books, maps and music in Scotland, as well as a large number of manuscript collections. Catalogues to both printed and manuscript collections are available online, though these are not yet comprehensive. The main reading room is on George IV Bridge in Edinburgh, UK.

The National Library of Scotland [map collection](#) is the largest in Scotland and one of the biggest in the world, holding over two million cartographic items covering some 700 years, from medieval manuscript maps to current digital mapping.

Archives Hub

[Archives Hub](#) is an online catalogue to archives and some libraries held by universities, colleges and other educational institutions in Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The libraries of Scotland's oldest universities (St Andrew's, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh) hold important collections of antiquarian and estate papers. The University of Glasgow archive collections include the Scottish Business Archive and Scottish Brewing Archive.

Scottish Archive Network (SCAN)

The [Scottish Archive Network](#) is an online catalogue to the archives held by most Scottish local authorities and some Scottish university archives.

National Records of Scotland

The [National Records of Scotland](#) was created in 2011 when the General Register Office for Scotland merged with the National Archives of Scotland. It is the largest single source of archival material in Scotland and holds a vast collection of public and private records, including estate papers and maps relating to all parts of the country.

The National Records of Scotland website allows you to search online catalogues and indexes, and to read an overview of historical records in their collections. The National Records of Scotland has produced research guides on the types of records they hold as well as on popular research topics. Each collection held by the National Records of Scotland has its own catalogue or index.

Enquiries about the National Records of Scotland collections can also be made by email, telephone or post.

To view items, you will need to visit the search rooms at General Register House, Princes Street, Edinburgh, UK. There, you will have full access to a range of research facilities and to any records open to public access in the Historical and Legal Search Rooms, and in the Scotland's People Centre. On your first visit, you will need to sign up for a reader's ticket (passport-sized photo required). Personal historical research does not usually incur a charge.

Discovery at The National Archives

[Discovery at the The National Archives](#) includes a national index of archives held in public and private hands across the British Isles. It is updated and maintained by staff in The National Archives at Kew, Surrey.

Results of a successful search will provide you with a brief summary of the records found, together with the dates of the records, details of their location and a link to a relevant online catalogue, where one is available. It is not unusual for collections to have been divided up over time, so you may find records which historically belonged together now spread across various public archives or even, occasionally, still in private hands.

Notes

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