

# *Tracing your Family history*

*in Inverclyde*

1938



1866



1951



*How we can  
help you trace  
your Inverclyde  
family tree*

1943

1922

**Inverclyde**  
council



# Family and local history information sources

## *Introduction*

Do your family roots lie in Inverclyde? Did your family leave Scotland for further afield from one of the Inverclyde ports? Are you convinced that you have a Scottish heritage with a history in Inverclyde.

Whether you're from Inverclyde or returning to search for your roots this booklet provide you with information that will help you to trace your ancestry.

## *The Watt Library*

9 Union Street, Greenock PA16 9JH tel: **01475 715628**

Opening times: contact Greenock Central Library, tel: **01475 712323**

The Watt Library holds a wide range of source materials for the study of local and family history for the Inverclyde towns and villages of: Greenock, Gourock, Port Glasgow, Kilmacolm, Inverkip. These include census returns, parish registers, valuation rolls, council records, maps, photographs and books. Some material is also held at the Central Library, Greenock.

## **Census Returns**

The Library holds on microfilm the Census returns for 1841 to 1901 for the old Renfrew County area including the area now covered by Inverclyde Council. From 1851 onwards you can find the full name, age, marital status, relationship to the head of household, sex, occupation, parish and county of birth for every person within each household. The Census is arranged by parish and then by street name. There is an index for each Census, compiled by Watt Library staff, although the 1901 index has still to be completed. By means of the Census you can find details which enable you to go back further in time, perhaps by consulting the Old Parish Registers (OPRs).

## Old Parish Registers

The Old Parish Registers from 1690 to 1854 are available on microfilm at The Watt Library. There is an index covering the period 1698 to 1854. These are the principle source of information on births, marriages and deaths for the period before the introduction of official registration in 1855. These registers were maintained by parish churches of the Church of Scotland.

## Valuation Rolls

Valuation rolls record property, listing owners, occupiers and rateable values. They can be a useful source for locating people at a particular address between census returns. The Library holds a large collection of these.

## Official Records

The Library holds the official records of the former burghs of Greenock, Gourock, Port Glasgow and the Fifth District of Renfrew ie. Kilmacolm. These records are diverse and include the official minutes of the magistrates, town council, parochial boards, police boards, school boards, the Water Trust, licensing courts and the Harbour Trust. All Inverclyde District Council minutes from 1975 to 1996 and Inverclyde Council minutes from 1996 to the present are also held.

## Maps

The Library has pre-Ordnance Survey maps from 1857 to 1860, 1898 to 1899 and 1930, as well as Ordnance Survey map series 1, 2 and 3. Old maps such as these can often be useful to the family historian, such as for establishing the location of addresses obtained from census returns.

## Photographs

The Library has large collections of local photographs dating back to the 19th century. These collections cover a wide range of subjects - street scenes, schools, harbours, factories, churches, shipping, farms, public buildings, monuments, municipal improvement works, etc.



## Industrial Records

Local historians can find much of interest relating to the history of industry and industrial relations in the Inverclyde area at the Watt Library. Examples of records include Kincaid's Employee Records 1930-1960, Greenock Harbour Trust 1886-1926, Amalgamated Society of Engineers 1913-1948, Master Wrights Society 1767 to 1882, Caledonian Foundry 1915 to 1974, Rankin & Blackmore, Lloyd's Register 1830 to 2000, and the records of shipbuilding companies, shipping lines, sugar warehouses, rope works, among others.



## Post Office directories

A valuable source of information for both local and family historians is old Post Office directories. The Watt Library has directories from the early 1800s to the 1950s. These list individuals and their occupations, and local businesses, and include maps of the area.

## Book Collection

The Watt Library has an extensive collection of books on all aspects of Inverclyde local and family history. These include books on the history of local shipbuilders, shipping lines, rope works, churches, clubs and societies, Greenock Morton Football Club, biographies, trade directories, cinemas, music halls, maritime and transport history. Many books were written pre-1900 and some are almost contemporary to the people and events they describe.

## Grimshaw Collection

A collection of photographs, magazines, diaries, timetables and maritime books on the history of Clyde passenger steamships, which ferried people from Clydeside to seaside, resorts such as Rothesay, Millport, Largs, Saltcoats and on excursions such as to the Kyles of Bute. Access to this collection is by arrangement with library staff.

## Newspapers

Newspapers are an invaluable source of local and family history. The Watt Library has back issues of several local newspapers on microfilm, including:

<b>Greenock Telegraph</b>	<b>1866 to date</b>
<b>Greenock Advertiser</b>	<b>1802 to 1864</b>
<b>Gourock Times</b>	<b>1915 to 1980</b>
<b>Port Glasgow Express</b>	<b>1894 to 1967</b>
<b>Kilmacolm Advertiser</b>	<b>1974 to date</b> <i>(printed copies only)</i>
<b>Greenock Herald</b>	<b>1852 to 1937</b>
<b>Greenock &amp; District Election Squib</b>	<b>1905 to 1907</b> <i>(printed copies only)</i>

There is also an index for birth, death and marriage announcements in local newspapers covering the period 1802 to 1914.

# *Burial grounds records*

Inverclyde Council is responsible for burials & cremations records at the following locations:

<b>Kilmacolm Cemetery</b>	<b>Port Glasgow Road, Kilmacolm</b>
<b>Port Glasgow Cemetery</b>	<b>High Carnegie Rd, Port Glasgow</b>
<b>Knocknairshill Cemetery</b>	<b>Kilmacolm Road, Greenock</b>
<b>Greenock Crematorium</b>	<b>1 South Street, Greenock</b>
<b>Greenock Cemetery</b>	<b>1 South Street, Greenock</b>
<b>Gourock Cemetery</b>	<b>Larkfield Road, Gourock</b>
<b>Inverkip Cemetery</b>	<b>Millhouse Road, Inverkip</b>

The four Churchyards records are held at:

<b>The Watt Library</b>	<b>Union Street, Greenock tel : 01475 715628</b>
<b>Kilmacolm Parish Churchyard</b>	<b>Main Street, Kilmacolm</b>
<b>St Andrew's Churchyard</b>	<b>Church Street, Port Glasgow</b>
<b>Newark Parish Churchyard</b>	<b>Glen Avenue, Port Glasgow</b>
<b>Inverkip Street Cemetery</b>	<b>Inverkip Street, Greenock</b>

All enquiries should be made to:

Burial Grounds Officer, Greenock Crematorium, 1 South Street, Greenock PA16 8UG  
**tel: 01475 715658** fax: 01475 730345

Office hours:

08:30 - 16:30 Monday to Thursday / 08:30 - 16:15 Friday / 08:30 - 12:00 Saturday

The Book of Remembrance can be viewed at Greenock Crematorium:

08:30 - 16:45 Monday to Thursday / 08:30 - 16:00 Friday / 08:30 - 12:00 Saturday  
14:00 - 16:00 Sunday

*Public holidays hours may vary (contact Greenock Crematorium for details)*





## *Tracing your family tree?*

All burial and cremation records for the locations listed below are held at Greenock Crematorium, where genealogical searches can be carried out. The minimum information required to carry out a search is: name, month and year of death. (*A charge is levied for this service*).

Cemetery Records date back to:

Kilmacolm	August 1897, Port Glasgow July 1859,
Knocknairshell	February 1994, Greenock May 1846,
Gourock	November 1876, Inverkip July 1852,
Greenock Crematorium	November 1959

## *Registration Service of births, deaths and marriages*

40 West Stewart Street, Greenock PA15 1YA

Records of births, deaths and marriages dating back to 1855 are held in the registration office, which hold the records for the Inverclyde area.

Our offices also have on-line access to the indexes held at General Register Office. These indexes cover the statutory records from 1855; Old Parish Registers and the Census Records of 1881, 1891 and 1901.

General Registrar Office for Scotland (GROS) is currently engaged in a major project to transform the way it makes its records available to the public. Digital Imaging of Genealogical Records Of Scotland's People will be introduced. This facility will provide more extensive genealogical research locally. DIGROS will lead to the creation of digital images of all the paper records, but equally importantly DIGROS will allow registrars to search within local registration offices for it's customers and the actual register entry traced - regardless of where in Scotland the event was registered. The records available will include the statutory records from 1855, the Old Parish Registers and the Census Records up to 1901.

## *Can we help you?*

If you are planning to make a trip to Inverclyde to research your family history, be as prepared as possible for your visit. Make an appointment at the Registrars 01475 714250 There is an hourly charge for this service, we advise you to book two hours as the appointment will be worked around Registration and if the time elapses then you may have to book another.

The following information is required: name, approximate years of birth this can be your starting point. If you haven't been able to find any documentation, bring along some background information about your family, including names, dates, places etc. It is very useful to have this information written out as a basic outline family tree, with the dates filled in where possible.

Prepare yourself a list of questions before you visit.

## *Local & Family History Societies*

Throughout Scotland there are various clubs and societies, which promote the study of family and local history. They arrange talks by speakers on various topics including: how to compile your family tree, the history of a specific area and how to use archives. Their members are often willing to help beginners with their research by sharing their knowledge and experience. There are two in Inverclyde: the Renfrewshire Family History Society and the Inverclyde Historical Society.



## Renfrewshire Family History Society - Inverclyde Sub-Group

Monthly local meetings of the RFHS Inverclyde Sub-Group are held at the Waterfront Campus of the James Watt College, Greenock on the fourth Tuesday of every month. Membership costs £10 per year. For more information please contact:

### The Secretary

Renfrewshire Family History Society  
c/o Paisley Museum & Art Galleries, High Street, Paisley PA1 2BA  
or e-mail the RFHS at: [andrew.cadie@net.nfl.com](mailto:andrew.cadie@net.nfl.com)

Information on forthcoming meetings is available on the Society's website:  
[www.renfrewshirefhs.org.uk](http://www.renfrewshirefhs.org.uk).

### Inverclyde Historical Society

The Inverclyde Historical Society holds meetings on the second Wednesday of each month at the RAF Club, 11 Ardgowan Square, Greenock at 7.45 pm. Recent meetings held have covered the history of John G Kincaid & Company, Captain Kidd, musicals in Greenock and church history. For more information about future meetings and membership please contact:  
Mr. Rodger H. Clark (Secretary)

Inverclyde Historical Society, 103 South Street, Greenock **Tel: 01475 792451**

## *Websites of Interest*

Family and local history researchers will find many websites of interest to them and of much use as sources of information. The following list just a few of these. Inverclyde Libraries offer free Internet access to anyone visiting our People's network Learning Centres which are located within our Central and branch libraries.





**SCRAN** - Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network  
[www.scran.ac.uk](http://www.scran.ac.uk)

A database of images, documents, etc relating to Scottish history and culture, contributed by museums, archives, universities, libraries, etc. Lots of material for use in school projects.

## **BBC History**

[www.bbc.co.uk/history/lj/locallj/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/lj/locallj/index.shtml)

A website giving to a vast amount of information on the history of Britain from 55 BC to the present. Search site by topic, time or people.

## **National Archives**

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/gettingstarted/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/gettingstarted/)  
National Archives (formerly Historical Manuscripts Commission) introduction to studying archives as historical resources.

## **Scottish Archive Network (SCAN)**

[www.scan.org.uk](http://www.scan.org.uk)

Created by the National Archives of Scotland. Includes descriptions of holdings of NAS and local archives throughout Scotland. Provides access to the written history of Scotland. Invaluable for anyone interested in local history.

## **National Library of Scotland Digital Library**

[www.nls.uk/digitallibrary](http://www.nls.uk/digitallibrary)

Digital information derived from the NLS special collections e.g. on Churchill, RL Stevenson, maps of Scotland from 1560 onwards.





## Statistical Accounts of Scotland

[edina.ac.uk/statacc/](http://edina.ac.uk/statacc/)

The two Statistical Accounts of Scotland, covering the 1790s and the 1830s, are among the best contemporary reports of life during the agricultural and industrial revolutions in Europe. Learn more about the area in which you or your ancestors have lived, or use this key source to study the emergence of the modern British State and the economic and social impact of the world's first industrial nation.

## International Genealogical Index

[www.familysearch.org/](http://www.familysearch.org/)

The IGI is an index compiled on computer by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (the Mormons), of Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. The list of names shows events such as Baptisms, Births, and Marriages, the Parish where the event took place and the date of the event, extracted from Parish Registers. Most of the records are for the period up to 1837. There are, however, some entries of a later date, from other sources

## Tracing Your Scottish Ancestry

[www.geo.ed.ac.uk/home/Scotland/genealogy.html](http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/home/Scotland/genealogy.html)

Contains links to various sites including the Statistical Account for Scotland, General Register Office, Index of parishes.

## Scottish Genealogy Society

[www.scotsgenealogy.com](http://www.scotsgenealogy.com)

## Scottish Roots (BBC)

[www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/history/scottishroots](http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/history/scottishroots)

## Gen UKI - UK & Ireland Genealogy

[www.genuki.org.uk](http://www.genuki.org.uk)

Links to county information, archives, church records.

## UK Genealogy

[www.ukgenealogy.co.uk](http://www.ukgenealogy.co.uk)

## Scottish Documents

[www.scottishdocuments.com](http://www.scottishdocuments.com)

Full text of Scottish wills from 1500 to 1875 provided by the Scottish Archives Network

## Family Records

[www.familyrecords.gov.uk](http://www.familyrecords.gov.uk)

This Government-run site is a gateway to many resources, with information on national records centres for Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

## Magic Torch

[www.magictorch.net/home.htm](http://www.magictorch.net/home.htm)

Magic Torch is an Inverclyde based Arts and Heritage group which aims to be a leading contributor to the arts, offering the community a wide range of high quality media in order to educate, enlighten and entertain. In doing so the hope to stimulate and encourage creativity and involvement within the community. Their primary focus for arts projects, is cultural heritage and folklore.

## National Archives of Scotland

[www.nas.gov.uk/index.html](http://www.nas.gov.uk/index.html)

The NAS is the repository for the public and legal records of Scotland but also holds many local and private archives. It also advises Scottish government departments, institutions, businesses and private individuals on the care of their records





Designed by Corporate Communications, Chief Executive's Office, July 2004.

Inverclyde  
council

For more information contact: 01475 715555  
[www.inverclyde.gov.uk](http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk)