

Forfeited Estates handout

What we hold

National Records of Scotland (NRS) holds around 80 km (49.7 miles) of records which are stored in secure and temperature controlled rooms. The records span from the 12th to the 21st centuries, touching on virtually every aspect of Scottish life.

We are responsible for the public and legal records of Scotland, but we also have many local and private archives. They relate to a variety of subjects including: government, the church, courts of law, private and corporate bodies, and everyday life. We hold and make available one of the most varied archive collections of records in Britain.

It is hoped that these links and resources may be helpful for furthering your research.

Start with:

- **National Records of Scotland (NRS)**, www.nrscotland.gov.uk
For information on: records relating to Scotland's people and history; 'Quick Links' to 'Catalogues and Indexes', 'Research Guides' and 'Visit Us' pages, start with the NRS website.
- **NRS Online Catalogue**, www.nrscotland.gov.uk/catalogue
Each collection of records held by NRS has a **catalogue or index** to help you find the right material, whether it's a file or a single document. Most of the records we hold are described on an electronic database: the NRS catalogue. This allows you to search for descriptions of our records and is a good starting point for any research you wish to conduct.

On the **NRS YouTube Channel**, there is a short tutorial which provides a brief introduction on how to use the NRS' online catalogue:
https://youtu.be/2g1my_bKKlo
- **Online Research Guides**, www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/guides/a-z
The **online research guides** have been compiled by members of staff and provide useful information about some of our most popular record sets, and how they can be accessed. These provide instructions on how to search the records, and also often give suggested archive references, which are invaluable for searching the archive catalogue.
- On the **NRS YouTube Channel**, there is a short tutorial which provides a brief introduction on how to access the NRS Research Guides and how they can help with your research: <https://youtu.be/ZTwiLy46LPw>

The Forfeited Estates papers:

These are found among the Exchequer records in NRS. These papers are the records of the administration of the estates forfeited in 1690, 1715 and 1745 because their owners supported the Jacobite cause.

Arrangement of the 1745 forfeited estate papers:

The collection has been divided into two main groups:

- 1) The first relate to the **general management** of the estates, both forfeited and annexed, the records of the Barons of Exchequer coming first and then those of the Commissioners of the Annexed Estates.
- 2) The second includes the documents which relate to the **particular management** of the individual estates, both forfeited and annexed, arranged in alphabetical order.

In the case of the Annexed Estates, the records of the Barons of Exchequer appear first, **NRS reference E700-E720**, followed by those of the Commissioners, **NRS reference E721-E733**. The further arrangement of the documents under each estate illustrates the way in which the administration was carried out. Within these are the rentals and surveys, then papers relating to claims, royal and treasury warrants, letters, petitions, papers relating to the general management of the property and its improvement, documents concerning its sale, if a forfeited estate or its restoration and, lastly, the factors' accounts. This general pattern has been followed for all the estates.

To access the papers, start by looking first at the records of general management, **NRS reference E721-733**, for entries in minute books, letter books, general reports etc. for an estate, before consulting the records relating to that estate in the particular management section, **NRS reference E734-E788**.

There are rentals of all the estates (with contents lists by name of the forfeited owners) for the period 1747-76, **NRS reference E707**, and rentals of particular estates under the reference number for that estate. These rentals include some 'judicial rentals', which are records of statements by tenants about their tenancies and which supply slightly more information than an ordinary rental.

In the particular management section, **NRS reference E734-E788**, you can find the documents relating to a specific estate organised by county and parish. For example, the records for Perth Estate, Perth County, are **NRS reference E777**.

Before you visit the search rooms:

- Read the 'Visit Us' and 'Historical & Digital Archive Search Room' pages on the NRS website. The guidance explains what you can expect during your visit and the range of services which are currently available from our search rooms: www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/visit-us/historical-and-digital-archive-search-rooms
- Information on how to request and access records in the Historical Search Room can be found at: www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/visit-us/historical-digital-archive-search-rooms/how-to-request-and-access-our-records
- Bring identification (proof of address, photographic ID) and two passport sized colour photographs to obtain a reader's ticket: www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/visit-us/historical-digital-archive-search-rooms/readers-ticket
- Bring pencils and paper for conducting your research and your laptop/mobile device.

- For further guidance, please contact search room staff at LSRHE@scotlandspeople.gov.uk

Researchers and record agents:

- If you are unable to visit the search room in person, you may wish to employ a professional researcher to consult the records on your behalf. A list of names is available on the NRS website:
www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/researching-online/paying-for-research

Palaeography:

- Scottish Handwriting resource on the Scotland's People website: free online tuition in palaeography for historians, genealogists and other researchers who are looking for guidance on reading manuscript historical records written in Scotland in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries:
www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/scottish-handwriting
- Scottish Handwriting Kit: A step-by-step guide to reading the handwriting of Scottish documents dating between 1500 to 1700 using facsimiles, mainly from the NRS archives: www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/shop/scottish-handwriting-kit. Free version downloadable version from NRS website at: www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//research/publications/NRS-Scottish_handwriting_self-help_kit-Web_ready_version.pdf
- University of Glasgow course: www.futurelearn.com/courses/ems-palaeography
- Dictionary of Scots language: for tracking down the meaning and historical origin of Scots words: www.dsl.ac.uk

Further reading:

You can explore more stories we have found in our records on the News and Articles page on the Scotland's People website as well as on the NRS blog, Open Book:

- www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/news-and-articles
- <https://blog.nrscotland.gov.uk/>
- National Records of Scotland, Tracing Your Scottish Ancestors The Official Guide: 7th Edition (Birlinn, 2020) Available in paperback via the Scotland's People shop: www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/shop. The eBook edition is available from bookshops online.
- Wills, Virginia (ed.), Reports on the Annexed Estates 1755-1769. From the records of the Forfeited Estates preserved in the Scottish Record Office (Edinburgh, HMSO, 1973) (out of print but available from a good library.)
- Wills, Virginia (ed.), Statistics of the Annexed Estates 1755-1756. From the records of the Forfeited Estates preserved in the Scottish Record Office (Edinburgh, HMSO, 1973) (out of print but available from a good library.)

Keep up-to-date: by following NRS and Scotland's People on X and Facebook:

- <https://x.com/ScotlandsPeople> @ScotlandsPeople
- <https://x.com/NatRecordsScot> @NatRecordsScot
- www.facebook.com/ScotlandsPeople
- Sign up to the Scotland's People newsletter.

Contact us at: education@nrscotland.gov.uk