

How to use the Scotland's People website for your Scottish Research - and when not to!

Morag Hughson

<https://unstmorag.wordpress.com>

moraghughson@hotmail.com

 @UnstMorag

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Abstract

- The Scotland's People website is the only place you can see the images of Scottish records such as Old Parish Records and Statutory Records (which provide you with dates for births, baptisms, marriages and death) and Scottish Census returns where you can learn about the familial relationships of people who lived in the same households and start to put together a picture of your ancestral families. Scotland's People is a pay-per-records website and you can find yourself spending a lot of money on the website. In this presentation we will look at how to use the Scotland's People website search facilities, but also we will discuss when it is prudent not to spend money on the website and look elsewhere for transcriptions.

Create a user id

The screenshot shows the ScotlandsPeople website interface. At the top right, there are two buttons: 'Login' and 'Register'. The 'Register' button is highlighted with a red box. Below the navigation bar, there is a search bar and a 'Search' button. The main content area features a large image of a boat on the water. Overlaid on this is a registration form with the following fields and options:

- Register** (with a close 'X' button)
- Text: "If you do not have a ScotlandsPeople account."
- Form fields: "First name" (Morag ✓), "Last name" (Hughson ✓), "Email address" (moraghughson@hotmail.com ✓), "Set a password" (masked with dots, "Show" button ✓), and "Repeat password" (masked with dots, "Show" button ✓).
- Text: "Your password needs to contain"
- Checkmarks for password requirements: "No spaces", "Minimum 8 characters", "At least one uppercase letter", "At least one lowercase letter", and "At least one number".
- Form options: "I agree to the Terms and Conditions" (checked) and "Subscribe to newsletter" (unchecked).
- Green "Register >" button at the bottom.

On the right side of the registration form, there is a "Login" section with the text "If you have already registered." and a link "Login instead".

Create a user id

- However you intend to use the Scotland's People website, you will need to create yourself a login user id. Even if you just want to make use of the free indexes, you will still need one.
- This is easy to obtain, so long as you have an email address. In the top right corner of the website, you have choice to Login or Register. If you don't yet have a user id, click on Register the first time you visit and fill in the fields.

Log in

The screenshot shows the ScotlandsPeople website interface. At the top right, there are 'Login' and 'Register' buttons. A 'Login' pop-up window is open, displaying the following fields and options:

- Header:** Login (with a close 'X' button)
- Text:** If you have already registered a ScotlandsPeople account.
- Email address:** Input field containing 'moraghughson@hotmail.com' with a checkmark icon.
- Text:** The email address you used to register your account.
- Link:** [Forgotten your login details?](#)
- Password:** Input field with masked characters '.....' and a 'Show' checkbox with a checkmark icon.
- Checkbox:** Remember me
- Button:** Log in >

A 'Register' pop-up window is also visible, with the following content:

- Header:** Register
- Text:** If you do not have a ScotlandsPeople account.
- Link:** [Register instead](#)

The background website shows the ScotlandsPeople logo, search options, and a 'Find your Scottish' banner.

NOTES

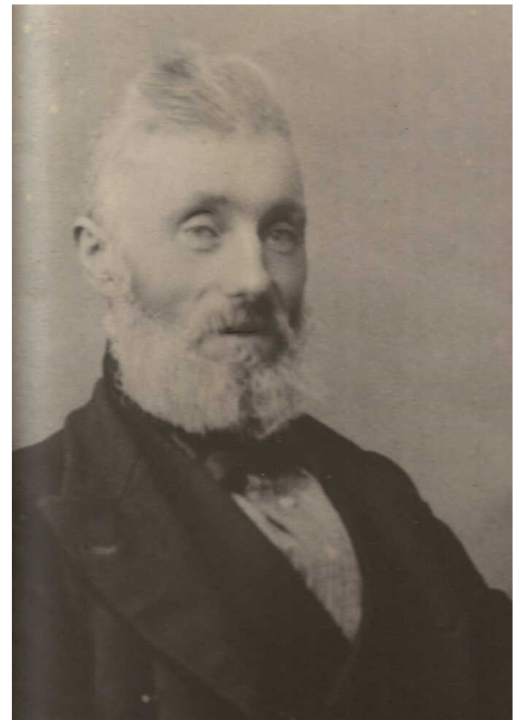
Log in

- Once you have your user id, you can get logged into the website and start searching.

Let's Search!

- Trying to find my great-great-grandfather
- From census he was
 - born around 1838
 - married between 1861 and 1871
- Can we find his birth, marriage and death records?

1841 – living with parents	3
1851 – living with parents	13
1861 – living with parents	23
1871 – married with children	33
1881 – married with children	43
1891 – married with children	54
1901 – married with children	63



Let' Search!

- We're going to use my great-great-grandfather as an example to search for. From census records that I have found through Ancestry, I know he was born around 1838 in Unst, Shetland, and I have found him in census transcriptions up to 1901. His wife shows up in the census in 1871 suggesting they married between 1861 and 1871
- We're going to see if we can find his birth and marriage records. Helpfully these will illustrate the difference between pre-1855 Old Parish Records, and post-1855 Statutory Records.

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Front Page or Advanced Search?



Find your Scottish ancestors

People ▾ Hughson John From 1835 To 1841 Search >

Advanced people search >

Front Page or Advanced Search?

- While it is possible to use Scotland's People to do a wide-ranging search by filling in the search boxes on the front page, I would argue that when you come to the Scotland's People website, you are after something a bit more specific.
- I always go straight into the "Advanced people search" so that I can add more details to my search, and I know exactly what kind of records I want to look for.
- If you do not have a specific record in mind that you are trying to find, you could waste money looking at images of records that are not for your ancestors. Use the library access to things like Ancestry and Find My Past to narrow down your search criteria – using census records transcriptions are an excellent resource to use for this and are how I found the details just mentioned about my great-great-grandfather.

Advanced Search - Categories

Advanced Search

Start your search for records relating to people by selecting a category and record type from the options below or search across all record categories with our [quick people search](#).

Please select a category:

Turn off 'Tips'

Statutory registers Search the statutory (civil) registers of births, marriages and deaths in Scotland from 1855 to the present.	Church registers Search church registers of births (or baptisms), marriages and burials in Scotland from 1553 onwards.	Census returns Search the lists of people recorded in censuses taken every 10 years in Scotland from 1841 onwards.	Valuation rolls Search lists of owners and occupiers of buildings and other properties in Scotland from 1855 onwards.	Legal records Search wills and testaments, coats of arms, soldiers' and airmen's wills and the records of military service appeals tribunals.
Poor relief and migration records Search the records for the emigration society, set up to relieve Highland destitution 1852-57.	Kirk sessions Kirk session and other church court records can be found in Virtual Volumes.			

Record guides >
Buy credits >

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Advanced Search - Categories

- When you select Advanced Search you are presented with several categories to choose from, since you are doing a more directed search. These categories are all the different types of records you can search.
- We are looking for a birth and marriage record, so we need to either look in the Statutory registers or the Church Registers. Which should we choose? Well the answer to that depends on whether the year we are aiming for is before or after 1855.

What happened in 1855?

- Statutory Registration began
 - Replacing the previous Old Parish Records
 - Records kept by Church of Scotland session clerks
 - Method failing due to population migration to the cities, and ministers and session clerks no longer having a good knowledge of their parishioners.

1855 onwards

✓ Statutory registers

Search the statutory (civil) registers of births, marriages and deaths in Scotland from 1855 to the present.

Pre-1855

Church registers

Search church registers of births (or baptisms), marriages and burials in Scotland from 1553 onwards.

What happened in 1855?

- 1855 was the year that Statutory Registration of births, deaths and marriages began in Scotland after the 1854 Registration Act was finally passed.
- This replaced the previous mechanism which was records kept by Church of Scotland session clerks – now commonly referred to as the Old Parish Records.
- “After 1800, the industrialisation of Scotland proceeded apace, and with that huge migrations of the population from rural parishes to the larger burghs. In particular, the cities became urban conurbations, with the poorer classes crammed into insanitary tenements. In the countryside, the parish system still worked, but in the slums of the cities the ministers and the session clerks lost control of and often did not know their parishioners.” *
- If the date of the event you are searching for is pre-1855 you need to look in the “Church registers” section, and if 1855 onwards, you need to look in the “Statutory registers” section. You also need to bear in mind that if the date is pre-1855 and the parish is an urban one, you may find that registration simply hadn’t happened and no record can be found.

Searching for ~1838 Birth

Advanced Search

Start your search for records relating to people by selecting a category and record type from the options below or search across all record categories with our [quick people search](#).

Please select a category:

Turn off 'Tips'

Statutory registers

Search the statutory (civil) registers of births, marriages and deaths in Scotland from 1855 to the present.

✓ Church registers

Search church registers of births (or baptisms), marriages and burials in Scotland from 1553 onwards.

Census returns

Search the lists of people recorded in censuses taken every 10 years in Scotland from 1841 onwards.

Valuation rolls

Search lists of owners and occupiers of buildings and other properties in Scotland from 1855 onwards.

Legal records

Search wills and testaments, coats of arms, soldiers' and airmen's wills and the records of military service appeals tribunals.

Poor relief and migration records

Search the records for the emigration society, set up to relieve Highland destitution 1852-57.

Kirk sessions

Kirk session and other church court records can be found in Virtual Volumes.

Record guides >

Buy credits >

Searching for ~1838 Birth

- If you recall, my great-great-grandfather was born around 1838 according to the census records found for him. Therefore we need to be looking in the pre-1855 Church registers. So we'll select that, and then below we are offered a further choice. We want to search for a birth record so we choose "Births and baptisms".

Fill in Search Criteria

Births and baptisms

Search registers of births and baptisms kept by churches in Scotland from the sixteenth century onwards.

Read how to search registers of births and baptisms and understand their contents in our [church registers guide](#) and how to [sort and filter search results](#) and how to activate [search tips](#) on this page.

- Name fields – Search Options
 - Default for Surname is Exact
 - Default for Forename is Starts with
- Year range
 - I've added 3 years on either side
- County
 - Wait while parishes are discovered
- Parish
 - Can Select multiples (Hold down <Ctrl> key)
 - I selected Fetlar, North Yell and Unst
- Now press “Search”

Please select church

Church of Scotland (old parish registers)
 Roman Catholic Church
 Other churches

Surname: Search Options

Forename:

Gender: Male
 Female
 Both

Year range: to

County/City:

Parish/congregation:

[Clear form and start again](#)

Search Options

- Exact names only
- Fuzzy matching
- Wild cards allowed
- Names that begin with
- Name Variants
- Phonetic matching

Fill in Search Criteria

- Fill in as much as you know in the search boxes.
- Here I have filled in the surname “Hughson” and forename “John” and I have selected Male. There are search options for each of the name fields and clicking on the “Search Options” text to the right of the name entry box will bring up a small blue menu where you can select different options. The default if you don’t change anything is “Exact names only” for the surname field, and “Names that begin with” for the forename field – helpful if there are middle names that you are not aware of.
- Even though I am fairly certain of the year of birth because, unusually, all the census returns seem to agree, I have still added 3 years to either side of my expected birth year.
- Finally, I know from census returns that John was born in Unst, but after choosing the county as Shetland, and waiting a moment for the website to distil which parishes are in Shetland, I choose to select the three neighbouring parishes of Fetlar, North Yell and Unst in the parish box, just in case.

Results

[Search our records](#) | [Help and guidance](#) | [Certificates and copies](#) | [Our charges](#) | [News and features](#)

Church registers - Old Parish Registers Births and baptisms - Search results

[Advanced people search](#) >

You searched for: Event: '(B OR C OR S)', Church_type: 'Old Parish Registers', Surname: 'Hughson', Surname Option: 'Exact', Forename: 'John', Forename Option: 'Starts', Gender: 'M', From_year: '1835', To_year: '1841', County: 'SHETLAND', RD: 'FETLAR, NORTH YELL, UNST'

2 Results

Showing 1-2 of 2 (1 page)

Turn off 'Tips'

[Save search](#) >

Please select church

Church of Scotland (old parish registers)

Surname	Forename	Parents/ Other Details	Gender	Date	Parish Number	Ref	Parish	Image View
HUGHSON	JOHN	JAMES HUGHSON/	M	20/08/1837	011/	20 38	Unst	View image (paid)
HUGHSON	JOHN NICOLSON	LAUCE, HUGHSON/CATHE. ANDERSON FR134 (FR134)	M	27/12/1835	004/	20 31	Fetlar and North Yell	View image (6 credits)

Results

- Here are my search results. I have two hits, and the first one is from the parish of Unst. I already know from the 1851 and 1861 census where John was still living with his parents, that his father's name is James, so I am very confident that the first result is the one I am after.
- This is the free index into the records, I have not yet paid for anything here.
- On the right of the result, there is a blue "View image" button. If you have already purchased the image, the button will instead show a green "View image" button. So long as you continue to use the same user id you won't pay for the same record more than once.

NOTES

Credits

Advanced Search

Start your search for records relating to people by selecting a category and record type from the options below or search across all record categories with our [quick people search](#).

Record guides >

Buy credits >

30 credits	£ 7.50
40 credits	£ 10.00
80 credits	£ 20.00
160 credits	£ 40.00

£0.25 per credit

6 credits / record

£1.50 per record

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Credits

- Let's talk about credits in the Scotland's People website.
- In order to view an image, you must pay 6 credits (£1.50) .To buy credits, you click on the Buy Credits link which is at the top of many of the pages, one example is at the top of the "Advanced Search" page where we chose categories to search earlier.
- There are several packages of credits that you can buy. There is no advantage to buying large numbers, the credits are always the same price. 1 credit costs £0.25 however you purchase it. Don't buy too many as they do expire after two years if you haven't bought any more in that time. So long as you buy some within the two years, your old ones will not expire.
- When you are logged into the Scotland's People website, the top right corner shows your name and how many credits are currently in your account.

Previously viewed images

- View any previously purchased images
- Add descriptions to them to help remember what they are
- Use the filter to find images by their record header or your description
 - Handy if you have a lot of them!

ScotlandsPeople

Search our records | Help and guidance | Certificates and copies | Our charges | News and features

Welcome, Morag

Your saved images are stored here for easy access. Personalise an image by adding your own description.

When using the search filter, please note that record headers are listed in the format 'Surname, forename', so if you are searching for a full name, you should list the surname first and include the comma.

My account | **Saved images** | Saved searches | Seat Bookings | Timelines | Orders | Address Book

Record header: Description: Filter results > Reset >

Year	Record header	Description	Date viewed	Actions
1852	1852-07-13 ANDERSON, JOHN, Highlands and Islands Emigration Society Passenger List, HD4/5, Page 12		15/07/2019	View image Delete image
1905	1905 JACKSON, DAVID KERR (Statutory registers Births 647/ 1396)		31/08/2018	View image Delete image
1906	1906 SLATER, JANE (Statutory registers Births 155/A2 39)		31/08/2018	View image

NOTES

Previously viewed images

- As noted already, if you have previously purchased an image, you will not have to pay for it again – if you run a search where the results are something you have previously bought it will show that by displaying the different “View” button as we just saw.
- In addition, at any time you can look at your set of purchased images from the top bar of the website, by clicking on “Saved images”.

Value for money?

(25)

Births & Baptisms

<i>Date Birth</i>	<i>Date Baptism</i>	<i>Names of Parents</i>	<i>Residence</i>	<i>Children</i>
1839	July 13	George Brown	Lund	a Daughter
"	" 13	John Sutherland	Haroldswick	Son William
"	" 15	John Johnson & Agnes Duncan	Norwich	son Duncan
"	" 16	Thomas Clark & Ursula Lodge	Buragarth	son Henry
"	" 18	Alexander Harper	Humron	Daughter Charlotte
"	" 22	David Jameson	Lund	son Robert
"	" 28	James Hughson	Colvadale	a Son John
"	" 24	Magnus Hughson	Stouhoul	a son James
"	"	Mr. & Mrs. Stewart	Marwick	Charles Henderson

Date Birth | Date Baptism | Names of Parents | Residence | Children

July 28 | Aug 20 | James Hughson | Colvadale | a Son John

NOTES

Value for money?

- Now that you know how to spend money on credits for the Scotland's People website, let's see whether that money is worth spending. Purchasing the record we just searched for results in obtaining a single page from the Unst Parish, Births & Baptisms Old Parish Record.
- Let's look at the lines on that page that are specifically for our John Hughson.

Compare to Index

Date Birth | Date Baptism | Names of Parents | Residence | Children
July 28 | Aug 20 | James Hughson | Colvadale | a Son John ?

Surname	Forename	Parents/ Other Details	Gender	Date	Parish Number	Ref	Parish
HUGHSON	JOHN	JAMES HUGHSON/	M	20/08/1837	011/	20 38	Unst

Name: John Hughson
Gender: Male
Birth Date: 28 Jul 1837
Baptism Date: 20 Aug 1837
Baptism Place: Unst, Shetland, Scotland
Father: James Hughson
FHL Film Number: 919495

Compare to Index

- The question here is whether it was worth spending 6 credits to purchase that image, or were we as well just to stick with the data from the index. Here we compare the two.
- The index only reports one date, and we have a record here that gives two dates – the birth and baptism date. Many (most?) baptism records don't give the birth date. The index also doesn't tell us the place of residence – "Colvadale", but that might be more detail than some want to discover anyway. You know that the baptism took place in the parish of Unst, and that might be enough of a location for many people.
- Transcriptions of Old Parish Records are also available on the various subscriptions sites that you can access free in your library. Here is the transcription from Ancestry. It shows both dates, but again omits the place of residence.
- It was probably not worth the credits to purchase this record.
- Both indexes also show some information that is NOT in the record, they show the surname of the child, but they have made an assumption in doing this that the child will have the same surname as the father, and this is not always the case.

Child's Surname

Date Birth | Date Baptism | Names of Parents | Residence | Children

July 28 | Aug 20 | James Hughson | Colvadale | a Son John

- The child in the above record might have been known as John Jameson – patronymic surname
- Searching for John Jameson would not find this record
 - It is indexed as John Hughson
- Try searches without surname
- Extra reading material for patronymic puzzles I've solved.

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Child's Surname

- Please keep in mind the era you are searching in and the use of patronymic surnames. What is not clear from either the Scotland's People Index record or the Ancestry Transcription, is that the boy's surname is not actually recorded as Hughson! All the record actually says is that James Hughson had a son called John. It does not say he had a son called John Hughson. Both transcriptions have made the assumption that the child's surname is the same as the parent.
- This is not always the case.
- Patronymic surnames are where the child's surname is made up from the first name of the father (or mother in some countries still today) followed by "son" (or sometimes "dottir". Patronymics were still in use in Scotland in the early 1800s so take care. If you fail to find what you are looking for you can change your search criteria, omitting the surname for example – you will of course get more results returned!

Tracking Martha Johnson

I was contacted through this blog by the great-great-grandson of Martha. He was looking for information on her birth and death details.

Birth

We knew from her marriage record to Donald Sutherland on 23 Jan 1840 that her maiden name is Martha Johnson, and that she lived in Ungersta. Interestingly, on her son James's marriage record she is recorded as Martha Jamieson. Being a little less specific about her surname and searching for Martha J* soon reveals the following record in the Old Parish Records of Births and Baptisms in Unst.

<i>Day of the Childs Birth</i>	<i>Day of the Childs Baptism</i>	<i>Baptisms 1816</i>
<i>1816 April 1</i>	<i>1816 April 3</i>	<i>John Jameson in Ungersta a Daur Martha</i>

Seeing this record explains the discrepancy and also the difficulty in finding it. This is a common problem with patronymic surnames, since that record is indexed as Martha Jameson, not Johnson as she was actually known.

Death

Finding her death record was a little more difficult however. From census returns we know she died between 1861 and 1871 since in 1861 she is in Unst with her family, but in 1871 she is nowhere to be found and her husband, who is still living in Skaw, is recorded as Widowed. She didn't die in Unst though as there is no sign of her in the Unst death records.

So, since I was in Edinburgh at the ScotlandsPeople Centre I had a thorough look at all the Martha's who died anywhere in Shetland between 1861 and 1871, still no sign. Expanding my search for Martha Sutherland's in the whole of Scotland I found one possibility, a married woman called Martha Sutherland who died in The Sunnyside Lunatic Asylum in Montrose – a long way from Unst!

No.	Name and Surname Rank or Profession, and whether Single, Married, or Widowed.	When and Where Died.	Sex.	Age.	Name, Surname, & Rank or Profession of Father. Name, and Maiden Surnames of Mother.	Cause of Death, Duration of Disease, and Medical Attendant by whom certified.
77	<i>Martha Sutherland Married</i>	<i>1867 March Thirteenth Lunatic Asylum Sunnyside Parish of Montrose</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>50 Years</i>		<i>Phthisis Six Months as certified by J.C.Howden M.D.</i>

The informant didn't know enough about her, or didn't bother to find out enough, to fill in her husband's name, which is usually recorded below the word *Married*, nor her parents names. So, this **could** be her, but equally it could be anyone.

Upstairs in Register House, above the ScotlandsPeople search rooms, is the Historical Records search room, so I looked for admission records for the *Sunnyside hospital* in their catalog index. I found them, but they are not digitised, and they are stored in the University of Dundee Archives. I was ready to pop over to Dundee the following day to get a look at them, only to discover that Thursday (the last day of my visit to Scotland this time) was the day their archives are closed! I definitely had a "so near, and yet so far" feeling then.



Sunnyside Hospital. Photo courtesy of the Memories of Sunnyside webpage.

So, I emailed the Dundee Archives in the hope that they could look up the Admission records and find the Martha Sutherland who died in the Hospital and see if there was any additional information recorded that would refute or prove that she was the one we were looking for. I wasn't sure how well indexed such records were, whether looking one person up, even with such a narrow date window (1861 – 1867), would mean literally turning every page.

Well, I was very pleasantly surprised. It was an easy look up for the archivist to do, and by the time I left Register House on Thursday afternoon (where there is no internet access) and could read my email for the day, I had a response from them with the details from the Hospital Records. It was a woman from Unst, with a husband Donald Sutherland who lived in Skaw. It was our girl! She checked into the Hospital on 9 January 1865, at age 48. It was recorded as her third attack, the first being when she was 36 years of age.

The record also shed some light on why she was there. It records the Supposed Cause as “Death of an infant from being overlaid and death of a child thereafter from burning.”

It just shows that it really is worth following every possible lead, even if you don't think it's likely that someone would be so far from home when they died, Unst to Montrose is quite a long way from home.

I'd like to try and find the children who died but that will be the subject of a future blog post.

Tracking Thomas Johnson

I can't resist a puzzle, and when someone posted a question about an Unst ancestor in the *Shetland Genealogy Facebook Group*, I couldn't resist taking a closer look. Their 4th Great-Grandparents were John Thomason and Barbara Jane Winwick who I had in the Unst Family Tree already, and they were trying to determine John's parents. John died on 8 April 1847 which is before 1855 and thus part of the Old Parish Records which means that no parents of the deceased are recorded.

<i>Obituary. Burials at Baliasta 1847</i>			
	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried</i>	
<i>John Thomason, Watquoy</i>	<i>8 April</i>	<i>10 Apr</i>	<i>at Baliasta</i>

She had found a John Thomason born to parents Thomas Johnson and Ann Williamson, and wondered whether that John could be the same one.

Thomas Johnson from Unst, and Ann Williamson from Yell (the neighbouring island) were married in Unst on 29 November 1801. From the Old Parish Record of their marriage contract we also know that Thomas was from Clipragrath.

<i>1801</i>	<i>Contracts of Marriage</i>
<i>Nov 29</i>	<i>Thomas Johnson, Clipragarth and Ann Williamson</i>

Ann Williamson/Johnson can be found in the 1841 and 1851 census returns living with her daughter Mary. She is recorded as a widow in the 1851 census, and was likely a widow in 1841 as well, but that early census does not record such data. To double check this is the same Ann Williamson, I found her daughter Mary's death record in Unst on 10 July 1877 which shows her parents to be Thomas Johnson and Ann Williamson. So we have the correct person here. Finding all the siblings seemed to be the right thing to follow.

Looking through the Unst Old Parish Baptism Records from 1800 until 1823 (starting just before they were married in case there was a first child out of wedlock) for all children born to a father of Thomas Johnson, yields the following list.

- 1802 Oct 24 Thomas Johnson Cliprogarth a Son John
- 1804 May 2 Thomas Johnson Cliprogarth a daughter Mary (this one is written on the end of the list of 1804, after all the December entries, it could be an infant who died young, or a recording error.)
- 1805 May 10 Thomas Johnson Cliprogarth a daughter Mary
- 1808 July 15 Thomas Johnson Cliprogarth a daughter Jean Barbara
- 1808 July 15 Thomas Johnson Cliprogarth a daughter Elizabeth
- 1814 Feb 17 Thomas Johnson Cliprogarth a daughter Margaret
- 1818 Aug 23 Thomas Johnston Gardie a Son William born 20 Aug
- 1819 Nov 1 Thomas Johnson Midyell a daughter Ann
- 1820 May 14 Thomas Johnson Haroldswick a Son Thomas born 7 May
- 1822 Sep 1 Thomas Johnston Skaw a Son John born 11 Aug

Clearly these are not all the same father, however, the first five children (with Mary recorded twice) all born to a Thomas Johnson of Cliprogarth look very likely to be siblings.

To double-check sibling-ship, we need to find the death records for those who died after 1855.

- Mary Thomason we found already, died in Unst on 10 July 1877. Her death record confirms both parents.
- Elizabeth Thomason died in Unst on 17 May 1899. Her death record confirms both parents.
- Jean Thomason is living with her twin sister in the 1861 census, and the relationship recorded confirms her as Elizabeth's sister.
- Margaret Thomson died in Unst on 18 December 1884. Her death record confirms both parents.

Confirmation of the parentage of all the sisters, who died after 1855, and the high likelihood that all the children born to Thomas Johnson of Cliprogarth are siblings, leaves me in no doubt that John Thomason was the son of Thomas Johnson and Ann Williamson as well.

Finally we must ask, could there be any other John Thomason born around the same time who is the man married to Barbara Jane Winwick? All we really know of John is from the 1841 census return where his age (*which will have been rounded down*) is given as 40.

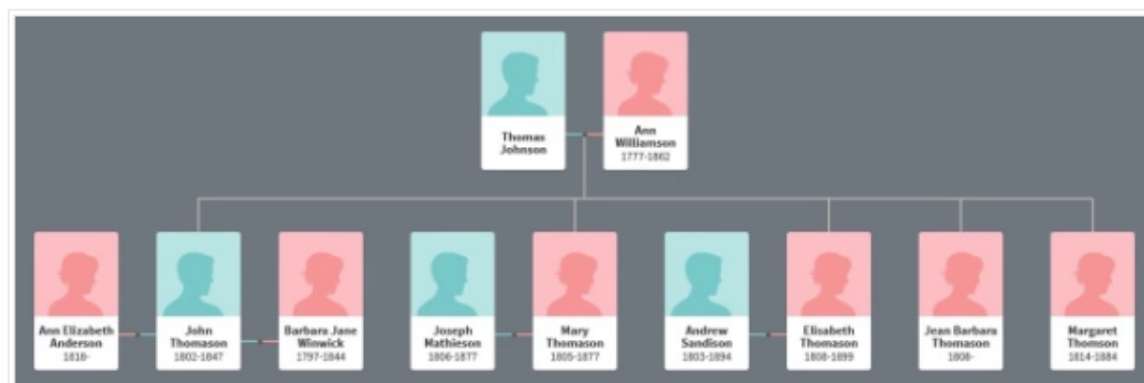
Looking through the Unst Old Parish Baptism Records from 1795 until 1805 for all children called John, yielded a list of 46 Johns. It is unknown when looking at such entries, what surname the child will use in future records, as patronymic surnames were still very much in use at this time and the OPR entry only records the child's given name (regardless of how some genealogy websites choose to transcribe it!). Considering both surname forms, we end up with the following list of John's to follow-up on.

OPR Baptism Entry	Patronymic Name	Name
1798 June 17 George Thomson Gunister, a twin Son John	John-Georgeson	John Thomson
1798 Sep 9 Thomas Miller, Skreveld, a Son John	John-Thomason	John Miller
1802 Oct 24 Thomas Johnson Cliprogarth a Son John	John Thomason	John-Johnson
1804 Mar 10 Laurence Thomson Setter a Son John	John-Laurensen	John Thomson
1804 July 8 Thomas Harrison & Ursula Williamson a Son John	John-Thomason	John Harrison
1804 Dec 14 Thomas Anderson Cliff a Son John	John-Thomason	John Anderson

Here's what we know about the above John's.

- John Thom[p]son, son of George Thom[p]son, lived and died in Bighton and married Ann Spence Trail. He is not the John we are looking for.
- John Miller, son of Thomas Miller, lived and died in Petister and married Catherine Thomson. He is not the John we are looking for.
- John Thomson, son of Laurence Thomson, married Margaret Mathewson. He is not the John we are looking for.
- John Harrison, son of Thomas Harrison & Ursula Williamson, was a mariner, lived outside of Shetland, and married Margaret and Sarah. He is not the John we are looking for.
- I don't know anything about John son of Thomas Anderson, but the other children born to Thomas Anderson of Cliff used the surname Anderson, so I don't believe he is the John we are looking for.

Through a process of elimination, we can therefore confidently say that John Thomason, son of Thomas Johnson of Cliprogarth, is the same man that married Barbara Jane Winwick. There is no other man it could be.



John Thomason and Siblings with their spouses

Searching for all children

Surname: [Search Options](#)

Forename: [Search Options](#)

Gender:
 Male Female Both

Year range:
1825 to 1855

1st Parent Name:
James Hughson [Search Options](#)

2nd Parent Name: [Search Options](#)

County/City:
SHETLAND

Parish/congregation:
SANDWICK (SHETLAND)
SKERRIES
TINGWALL
UNST

[Update results >](#)

- Clear the name
- Select both Genders
- Widen the date range
- Include father's name
- Restrict Parish
 - if census results give us confidence to do so

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Searching for all children

- You can also use Scotland's People to search for more than one child's birth record at once. We can make some changes to our search from before to look for John Hughson AND all his siblings.
- We'll remove the first name, select both genders, and widen the date range, and perhaps if we have confidence from our census findings, select only one parish, in this case "Unst".

All Children Results

Surname	Forename	Parents/ Other Details	Gender	Date ▾	Parish Number	Ref	Parish
HUGHSON	THOMAS	JAMES HUGHSON/	M	07/12/1834	011/	20 33	Unst
HUGHSON	JOHN	JAMES HUGHSON/	M	20/08/1837	011/	20 38	Unst
HUGHSON	MARY	JAMES HUGHSON/	F	31/07/1840	011/	30 117	Unst
HUGHSON	WILLIAM	JAMES HUGHSON/ROBINA WILLIAMSON FR 194 (FR194)	M	07/06/1844	011/	20 50	Unst
HUGHSON	BATHSHEBA	JAMES HUGHSON/ROBINA WILLIAMSON FR 194 (FR194)	F	07/06/1844	011/	20 50	Unst

All Children Results

- This search returns a number of records. Sorting the result by clicking on the Date column heading helps to see them in birth order.
- The results show me five children born to James Hughson in Unst. I however know from census records that there are actually seven children. How come Joanna, who was born about 1849, and Mary who was born about 1854 (after her sibling and namesake died young) are not shown in the results?

NOTES

Gaps in Old Parish Records

- Reasons for defects and gaps
 - No standard format
 - Registration not compulsory
 - Some session clerks/ministers not so good at recording
 - Some dissenters objected to being registered by the Established Church
 - Between 1783-1794 fee of three pence to register (£1 in today's money) (with fine of five pounds if you failed to register) (£384 in today's money)
 - Rapid Urbanisation (as mentioned earlier)
 - Damage to volumes (damp, rodents, fire)
- Check the published dates for your parish
 - That's not always the whole story though

DETAILED LIST OF THE OLD PAROCHIAL REGISTERS OF SCOTLAND.

No.	PARISHES.	No. of Vols.	In the custody of the Registrar-General. Dates embraced.	No. of Vols.	In the custody of the Local Registrar.* Dates embraced.	REMARKS Relative to Blanks, Defects, Condition of Registers, &c.
11	I. SHETLAND. Unst	1	B. 1776-1820; M. 1797-1819.	1	B. 1820-54; M. 1819-54; D. 1883-54.	<i>Unst.</i> —B. Twelve pages of irregular entries 1778-1832, at the end of the Record for 1801. Three leaves at beginning of vol. much injured by damp. M. blank Feb. 1802-Oct. 1811. * The Letters B. D. and M. indicate Births (or Baptisms), Deaths (or Burials), and Marriages (or Proclamations of Banns) respectively.

* After the 1st January 1885, the portions of the Records from 1820 to 1854 inclusive, now in the custody of the various Local Registrars, will be transmitted to the Registrar-General.

Gaps in Old Parish Records

- There are many reasons for gaps to be found in Old Parish Records. Some are as a result of the record never having been written, and some are as a result of the records being destroyed some time after having been written.
- National Records for Scotland provides a list of the years covered for each parish – know what to expect in your parish. Check out the detailed list at <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/guides/old-parish-registers/list-of-old-parish-registers>
- In the case of the parish we are looking at today, Unst in Shetland, it reports:-
 - B: 1776 – 1820; 1820 – 1854
 - M: 1797 – 1819; 1819 – 1854
 - D: 1883 – 1854
- However, when you view all the pages you actually discover that there is a gap between late 1849 – 1854. This gap covers the two missing siblings I was looking for.

So far...

- Born 28 July 1837; baptised 20 August 1837
- From census he was
 - married between 1861 and 1871
 - to a woman called Jemima

Birth/Baptism OPR	b. 28 Jul 1837 bap. 20 Aug 1837 To James Hughson	
Census	1841 – living with parents	3
Census	1851 – living with parents	13
Census	1861 – living with parents	23
Census	1871 – married with children	33
Census	1881 – married with children	43
Census	1891 – married with children	54
Census	1901 – married with children	63



John Hughson
My great-great-grandfather

NOTES

So far...

- So far we have found the birth and baptism dates for my great-great-grandfather John Hughson in the Old Parish Records.
- Next we are going to look for his marriage record to his wife Jemima. We know her first name from the census records, and we know that they married at some point between 1861 and 1871 due to her appearance in the 1871 census.
- With this information we can start to search. This time though, we will be looking at the “Statutory registers” because we have a date after 1855.

Searching for > 1855 marriage

Advanced Search

Start your search for records relating to people by selecting a category and record type from the options below or search across all record categories with our [quick people search](#).

Please select a category:

Turn off 'Tips'

Statutory registers

Search the statutory (civil) registers of births, marriages and deaths in Scotland from 1855 to the present.

Church registers

Search church registers of births (or baptisms), marriages and burials in Scotland from 1553 onwards.

Census returns

Search the lists of people recorded in censuses taken every 10 years in Scotland from 1841 onwards.

Valuation rolls

Search lists of owners and occupiers of buildings and other properties in Scotland from 1855 onwards.

Legal records

Search wills and testaments, coats of arms, soldiers' and airmen's wills and the records of military service appeals tribunals.

Poor relief and migration records

Search the records for the emigration society, set up to relieve Highland destitution 1852-57.

Kirk sessions

Kirk session and other church court records can be found in Virtual Volumes.

Record guides >

Buy credits >

Searching for > 1855 marriage

- This time we select “Statutory registers” since the marriage we are looking for is after 1855. And then we’ll select a record type of “Marriages”. As you can see the civil registers have a few more types than the church registers did.

Fill in Search Criteria

- I know John's full name
- But only Jemima's first name
- My year range is between the two census (1861-1871)
- I leave my search to all counties
 - travelling somewhere else to get married?
- Now press "Search"

Marriages

Surname:	<input type="text" value="Hughson"/>	Search Options
Forename:	<input type="text" value="John"/>	Search Options
Spouse surname:	<input type="text"/>	Search Options
Spouse forename:	<input type="text" value="Jemima"/>	Search Options
Gender:	<input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female <input checked="" type="radio"/> Both	
Year range:	<input type="text" value="1861"/> to <input type="text" value="1871"/>	
County/city/minor records:	<input type="text" value="All"/>	
District:	<input type="text" value="All"/> ABBEY ABBEY ST BATHANS ABBOTRULE	
<input type="button" value="Search >"/>		
Clear form and start again		

Fill in Search Criteria

- Fill in as much as you know in the search boxes.
- I know John's full name, so I fill in the surname "Hughson" and forename "John". I only know his wife's first name though, so I fill in the spouse forename as "Jemima" but leave the spouse surname blank.
- All I know about dates is that it happened sometime between the 1861 and 1871 census so that becomes my date range.
- I leave my search to all counties as people have a nasty habit of going somewhere else to get married. If there are too many results I can try narrowing down later.

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Results

Showing 1-1 of 1 (1 page)

Surname ▼	Forename	Spouse Surname	Spouse Forename	Year	Ref	RD Name
HUGHSON	JOHN	JOHNSON	JEMIMA	1863	011/4	Unst

No.	When, Where, and How Married.	Signatures of Parties. Rank or Profession, whether Single or Widowed, and Relationship (if any).	Age.	Usual Residence.	Name, Surname, and Rank or Profession of Father. Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother.	If a regular Marriage, Signatures of officiating Minister and Witnesses. If irregular, Date of Conviction, Decree of Declarator, or Sheriff's Warrant.	When & Where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
4	1863 on the eighth day of January St. Mary's Free Church	Signed, John Hughson Fisherman Bachelor	25	Coleridge Unst.	James Hughson Mason Rahena Hughson M. S. Williamson	Signed, John Ingram Minister Signed, Thomas Webster Witness Susan Webster Witness	1863 January 10 th at Unst. Geo Robertson Registrar
	At the Banns according to the Forms of the Free Church of Scotland.	Signed, Jemima Johnson Knitter of hosiery Spinster	25	Underhill Unst.	Arthur Johnson Fisherman Jemima Johnson M. S. Lamb, deceased		









NOTES

Results

- Amazingly, there is only one possible result of a John Hughson marrying a Jemima in that decade, in the entirety of Scotland! I think it is the “Hughson” that is the less common name in this.
- Of course, with two names to search for, you will in general find less hits than when looking for one name for a birth or death record.
- The index record is a little bit lean. We have both parties full names, and a year, but not even a complete date.
- Let's compare the record that we purchase with the index.
- In addition to the date and place of the marriage; you also get the occupation and marital status of the two parties (and if they were german cousins – 1st cousins – this will also be noted); you get their ages and usual residence; and you get both their parents names, mothers maiden name, and father's occupation. If any of the parents are deceased, this will also be noted.
- Note, that in England, it is only in very recent years that mother's name is even on marriage records. In fact when I married in 2015, it still wasn't!
- I think we can all agree that this record is worth the purchase price!

OPR vs Statutory

- Statutory Records contain more information than OPRs
- Also, the more people involved, the more valuable the record
 - E.g. Marriage Record = 2 people = 2 x value!

	Births/Baptisms	Marriages	Deaths
Old Parish			*
1855			
Statutory >1855			

* In general not indexed so only option is Scotland's People

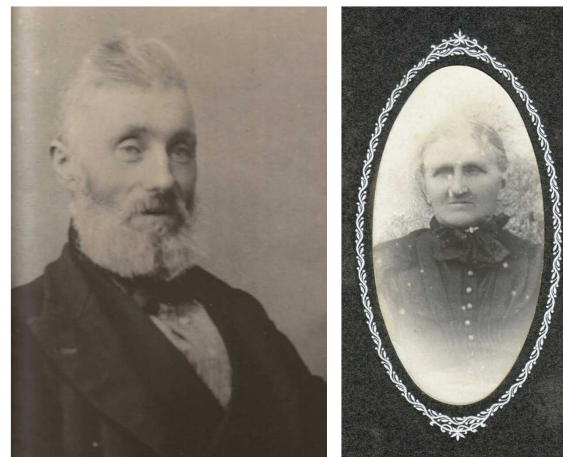
OPR vs Statutory

- The difference that we have seen here is illustrative of the difference between Old Parish Records and Statutory Records.
- As a general rule, Statutory records have more information than OPRs, and the more people involved, the more valuable the record as well.
- It is the subject of a whole other presentation, looking in detail at these differences and deciding which records are worth purchasing from Scotland's People and which you can find transcriptions of elsewhere to save your money. The summary from that presentation is shown here.

So far...

- Married to Jemima Johnson
 - 8 Jan 1863
- How long did he live?
 - 1911 census?

Birth/Baptism OPR	b. 28 Jul 1837 bap. 20 Aug 1837 To James Hughson	
Census	1841 – living with parents	3
Census	1851 – living with parents	13
Census	1861 – living with parents	23
Marriage	8 Jan 1863	25
Census	1871 – married with children	33
Census	1881 – married with children	43
Census	1891 – married with children	54
Census	1901 – married with children	63



John Hughson and Jemima née Johnson
My great-great-grandparents

NOTES

So far...

- So far we have found the birth and baptism dates for my great-great-grandfather John Hughson in the Old Parish Records and the marriage record to his wife Jemima Johnson in the Statutory records.
- We have found John living in the census records up to and including 1901 using other resources, namely Ancestry and/or Find My Past.
- Let's look at census records in more detail now.

Census

- The best place to start with your UK Ancestors
- Transcriptions of 1841-1901 Scottish census are available on Ancestry & FMP
 - Good enough
 - Not worth buying the images from Scotland's People (more in a moment)
- 1911 census
 - Not transcribed by Ancestry or FMP
 - Only place to get the information is Scotland's People
- As an aside – get to know the parish your ancestor is from with maps from the National Library of Scotland – Extra reading material

NOTES

Census

- When researching your Scottish Ancestors, the best place to start is census records. Census records allow you to understand the familial relationships, and build a good picture of the family; husband, wife, children, perhaps elderly parents. Census records will give you an approximate birth year since the ages of people are recorded. You also can discover a starting point for searching for marriage dates if you find a married couple in one census decade, when they were not married in the previous decade.
- Both Ancestry and Find My Past have adequate transcriptions of Scottish census records, which you can access for free through your library. There is little need to use Scotland's People website to look at the images of census records from 1841 – 1901.
- The same cannot be said for the 1911 census. There are still no transcriptions for this decade available on the major subscription websites, and so your only access to this data is to use Scotland's People.
- We're going to search for John and his wife Jemima in the 1911 census in a moment.

Old Maps

Although I lived on Unst from birth and through my teenage years, and although my father and his father before him were postmen on Unst, I don't recognise all the house names that I find when working through the old census records. Helpfully, the houses are recorded in areas so the neighbouring houses are next to each other on the census returns.

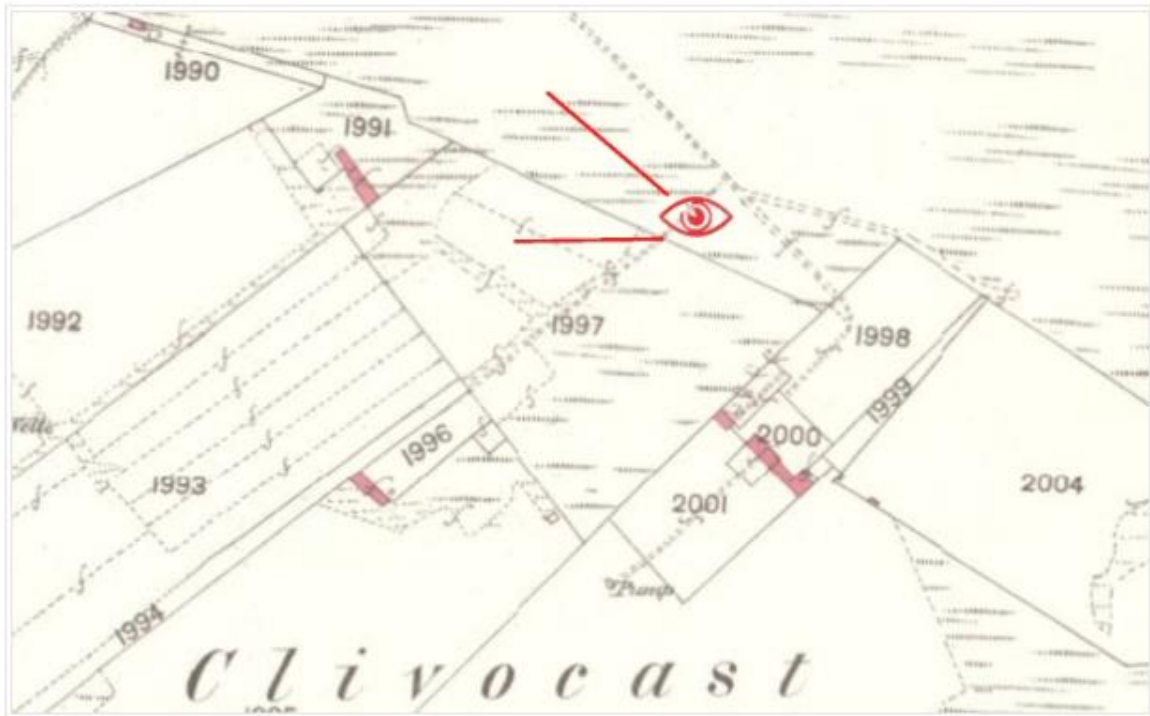
I found a great site on the web which provides online, zoom-able maps from way back. The specific ones I've been using are the *Ordnance Survey Maps – 25 inch 1st edition, Scotland, 1855-1882*. Easiest way to start is to use the *graphic index* to work out what page you want and then open it from the list directly.

This a photo of the area that the map below shows. It shows the house I grew up in, in the foreground. I've tried to indicate the direction in which the photo was taken on the map. Click on the map to go straight to the zoom-able version on the NLS website.



A view of Uyeasound with Clivocast croft house in the foreground.

Photo Source: Shetland Museum



Map showing the direction the above photo was taken in. Click on the map to go to the zoom-able version on the NLS website

Beware, these old maps are addictive, you can lose hours scrolling around looking at places you recognise!

To find maps of your own parishes, start at <https://maps.nls.uk/>

Page 12] The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the

Parish of <i>Uinst</i>		Quoad Sacra Parish of	Parliamentary Burgh of	Royal Burgh of	Town of	Village of						
No. of Schedule	Road, Street, &c., and No. or Name of House.	HOUSES.		Name and Surname of each Person.	Relation to Head of Family.	Condition.	Age of	Rank, Profession, or Occupation.	Where Born.	Whether Blind, Deaf, or Dumb.	No. of Children under 16 years of Age in the Family.	No. of Children under 5 years of Age in the Family.
		Inhabited (A.) or Building (B.)	Uninhabited (C.) or Building (D.)									
50	<i>Settlely Cliff</i>	1		<i>Barbara Harper</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Un</i>	50	<i>Crofter</i>	<i>Scotland West</i>			
				<i>Margaret Do</i>	<i>Sister</i>	<i>Un</i>	53	<i>Spinner</i>	<i>Do Do</i>			
51	<i>Cliff</i>	1		<i>Thomas Houston</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Un</i>	33	<i>Fisherman</i>	<i>Do Do</i>			
				<i>John Peter</i>	<i>Lodger</i>	<i>Un</i>	43	<i>Miner</i>	<i>Scotland</i>			
53	<i>Cliff</i>	1		<i>Christina Bruce</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Un</i>	70	<i>Spinner</i>	<i>Scotland West</i>			
54	<i>Cliff</i>	1		<i>Peter Laurensen</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Un</i>	50	<i>Fisherman, Crofter</i>	<i>Do Do</i>			
				<i>Ardina Do</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Un</i>	53		<i>Do Do</i>			
				<i>Laurence Do</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>Un</i>	22	<i>Shoemaker, Quarryman</i>	<i>Do Do</i>			
				<i>Janet Do</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Un</i>	20	<i>Shawl Knitter</i>	<i>Do Do</i>			
				<i>Ardina Do</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	-	19	<i>Do</i>	<i>Do Do</i>			
				<i>Marion Do</i>	<i>Do</i>	-	17	<i>Do</i>	<i>Do Do</i>			
				<i>Barbara Do</i>	<i>Do</i>	-	15	<i>Do</i>	<i>Do Do</i>			
				<i>Moula Do</i>	<i>Do</i>	-	12	<i>Do</i>	<i>Do Do</i>			
				<i>John Do</i>	<i>Do</i>	-	10	-	<i>Do Do</i>			
				<i>Mary Do</i>	<i>Do</i>	-	5	-	<i>Do Do</i>			
55	<i>Cliff</i>	1		<i>Laurence Houston</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Un</i>	38	<i>Crofter & Miner</i>	<i>Do Do</i>			
				<i>Joan Do</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Un</i>	33	<i>Miner's Wife</i>	<i>Do Do</i>			
				<i>James Do</i>	<i>Son</i>	-	5	-	<i>Do Do</i>			
				<i>Jessie Do</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	-	4	-	<i>Do Do</i>			
				<i>Joseph P. Do</i>	<i>Son</i>	-	3	-	<i>Do Do</i>			
				<i>William P. Do</i>	<i>Son</i>	-	17	<i>Crofter & Miner</i>	<i>Do Do</i>			
				<i>James Houston</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>Un</i>	31	<i>Shoemaker, Crofter</i>	<i>Do Do</i>			
				<i>Charlotte Do</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Un</i>	58	-	<i>Do Do</i>			
				<i>Grace Do</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Un</i>	24	<i>Ag. Lab</i>	<i>Do Do</i>			
Total of Houses...		6		Total of Males and Females...		13		Total of School Children and Windowed Rooms...		16		

NOTES

Census (1851 – 1901)

- Let's take a quick look at census records. These are one of the mainstays of your Scottish research. You have census returns from the years 1841 through to 1911 at the moment. Transcriptions of 1841 – 1901 census returns are available on Ancestry and Find My Past and therefore free for you to look at through your local library. For the most part these transcriptions are fairly complete and you can avoid going to Scotland's People for them. To illustrate, let's look at an 1861 census image from Scotland's People and compare it to the transcriptions that both Ancestry and Find My Past have for the same.

Name:	Laurence Thomson
Age:	35
Estimated Birth Year:	abt 1826
Relationship:	Head
Spouse's name:	Joan Thomson
Gender:	Male
Where born:	Unst, Shetland
Registration Number:	11
Registration district:	Unst
Civil Parish:	Unst
County:	Shetland
Address:	Cliff
Occupation:	Chromater Miner
ED:	2
Household schedule number:	55
LINE:	17
Roll:	CSSCT1861_2
Household Members:	
Name	Age
Laurence Thomson	35
Joan Thomson	53
James Thomson	5
Jemima Thomson	4
Joseph P Thomson	2
James G S Nisbet	17

First name(s)	Last name	Relationship	Marital status	Sex	Age	Birth year	Occupation	Birth place
Laurence	Thomson	Head	Married	Male	36	1825	Chromate Miner	Unst, Shetland Islands, Scotland
Joan	Thomson	Wife	Married	Female	33	1828	Miner's Wife	Unst, Shetland Islands, Scotland
James	Thomson	Son	-	Male	6	1855	-	Unst, Shetland Islands, Scotland
Jemima	Thomson	Daughter	-	Female	4	1857	-	Unst, Shetland Islands, Scotland
Joseph P	Thomson	Son	-	Male	2	1859	-	Unst, Shetland Islands, Scotland
Tamar J	Nisbet	Servant	-	Female	17	1844	Domestic Serv	Unst, Shetland Islands, Scotland

Census details

First name(s)	Laurence
Last name	Thomson
Relationship	Head
Marital status	Married
Sex	Male
Age	36
Birth year	1825
Occupation	Chromate Miner
Birth town	Unst
Birth town as transcribed	UNST
Birth county	Shetland Islands

Census Transcription (1851 – 1901)

- You may notice one or a few columns are missing from the transcription on Ancestry, and perhaps the most useful of these to a genealogist is the marital status. As you can see the FMP transcription is better and has the marital status transcribed.
- Most of the time this will be obvious though, with the relation to the head of the household identifying the Wife and Children with the same name being unmarried. Where it can sometimes be useful is with parents-in-law being widowed. If you are struggling to find a death date for a spouse you might look for their census records to get a 10 year bracket.

Parish of Unst

PLA ^{ce}	HOUSES	NAME and SURNAME, SEX and AGE, of each Person who abode in each House on the Night of 6th June.		OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN
		NAME and SURNAME	AGE		
Vinstrick	1	Andrew Moir	45	Fa & Fm	Y
		Isabella do	54		Y
		Catherine do	12		Y
		Jean do	10		Y
		Charlotte do	60		Y
		Charlotte Monat	20	Fa & Fm	Y
Gunnister	1	Magnus Nesbet	33	Fa & Fm	Y
		Bruce do	25		Y
		Thomas do	12		Y
		John do	10		Y
		Mary do	6		Y
		Robert do	4		Y
		Catherine do	4		Y
do	1	Samuel Edvardson	41	Fa & Fm	Y
		Elizabeth do	60		Y
		Robert do	16		Y
		Incebinia do	14		Y

Name: Andrew Moir

Age: 45

Estimated Birth Year: abt 1796

Gender: Male

Where born: Orkney and Shetland, Scotland

Civil Parish: Unst

County: Orkney and Shetland

Address: Vinstrick

Occupation: Fa & Fm

Parish Number: 11

Household Members:

Name	Age
Andrew Moir	45
Isabella Moir	54
Catherine Moir	12
Jean Moir	10
Charlotte Moir	60
Charlotte Monat	20

Save Cancel

NOTES

Census (1841)

- You may have noticed in your use of Scottish census records that there is less information in the transcriptions of the 1841 census than of the others. This in fact is the most accurately transcribed census. There simply is less information in the 1841 census than in others. It is almost never worth purchasing the census image for 1841 over and above what you get from the transcriptions (unless you don't believe they have transcribed it correctly of course).
- One thing to note, when the transcription says they were born in "Orkney and Shetland", this is conveying the Y/N in the column "Born in County". If they were born outside of the parish, you wouldn't be told where they were born. Ancestry correctly shows "Orkney and Shetland" whereas Find My Past just shows "Shetland" – perhaps unaware that in the 1841 census, Orkney and Shetland were all considered one county.

Searching in 1911 census

Advanced Search

Start your search for records relating to people by selecting a category and record type from the options below or search across all record categories with our [quick people search](#).

Please select a category:

Turn off 'Tips'

Statutory registers

Search the statutory (civil) registers of births, marriages and deaths in Scotland from 1855 to the present.

Church registers

Search church registers of births (or baptisms), marriages and burials in Scotland from 1553 onwards.

✓ Census returns

Search the lists of people recorded in censuses taken every 10 years in Scotland from 1841 onwards.

Valuation rolls

Search lists of owners and occupiers of buildings and other properties in Scotland from 1855 onwards.

Legal records

Search wills and testaments, coats of arms, soldiers' and airmen's wills and the records of military service appeals tribunals.

Poor relief and migration records

Search the records for the emigration society, set up to relieve Highland destitution 1852-57.

Kirk sessions

Kirk session and other church court records can be found in Virtual Volumes.

Record guides >

Buy credits >

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Searching in 1911 census

- To search the census, we are selecting a different category again. This time, the “Census returns” category.

Fill in Search Criteria

Census returns

Search the lists of people recorded in censuses taken every 10 years in Scotland from 1841 onwards.

Read how to search the censuses and understand their contents in our [census returns guide](#) or how to [sort and filter search results](#) and how to activate [search tips](#) on this page

- Chose year(s) of interest
- Fill in name and gender
- We expect to find him at age 73 in the 1911 census
 - Broaden the age range to start with
- We expect he'll still be in Unst
 - search whole County of Shetland to start with

Please select record types: 1841 1851 1861
 1871 1881 1891
 1901 1911 1881 (LDS)

Surname: [Search Options](#)

Forename: [Search Options](#)

Forename of other person on that census page: [Search Options](#)

Gender: Male Female Both

Age range: to

County/City: [Search Options](#)

District:
ABBEY
ABBEY ST BATHANS
ABBOTRULE

Fill in Search Criteria

- It is generally easier to search one census year at a time, mainly because you have to supply the age you expect them to be on the census. If you select multiple census years, the age range you have to input wouldn't be as useful.
- On all previous census, John's age has been quite consistent, so he clearly knows when he was born and isn't trying to hide anything from the enumerators, so I fully expect if I can find him in 1911 he will be recorded as being aged 73. However, I will still widen the age range a bit regardless.
- Again, I fully expect that if I find him, he will be living in Unst, where he has lived his whole life. However, I'll start my search with the whole county of Shetland, just in case he has moved in his old age, say to live with one of his children.

NOTES

Results

Surname ▾ Forename Year Gender Age at Census Ref RD Name County/ City Image View

Sorry, there are no results for your search.

Please refine your search, or alternatively you can [start a new search](#).

- I found nothing.
- Does this mean he has died?
- Can I find his wife? She is the same age as her husband.

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Results

- My search yielded no results. Does this mean that John has died, or have I simply failed to find where he is in 1911.
- Let's try to find his wife instead. She is the same age as her husband, as far as the earlier census tell me.
- I can make a couple of tweaks to the search in the side-bar next to my empty results and try again.

1911
 1881 (LDS)

Surname:
 [Search Options](#)

Forename:
 [Search Options](#)

Forename of other person on that census page:

Gender:
 Male Female
 Both

Age range:
 to

County/City:

District:

[Update results](#) >
[Start a new search](#) >

Using the search side bar

- Change the name to Jemima
 - Using fuzzy matching
 - Jemima is spelled in a variety of ways in my experience!
- Change the gender
- Same age range will do
- Press “Update results”

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Using the search side bar

- When you are looking at your results in Scotland’s People, the search criteria you use are shown in the side bar. This allows you to make quick tweaks to the search very easily to update the result.
- We’re going to change them to look for Jemima, with the same age range. We’ll also remember to change the gender.

Results

Surname	Forename	Year	Gender	Age at Census	Ref	RD Name	County/ City
HUGHSON	JAMIMA	1911	F	73	011/5/1	Unst	Shetland

No. of Substrate	ROAD, STREET, etc., and No. or NAME of HOUSE.	HOUSES.		Rooms with one or more Windows.	NAME and SURNAME of each Person.	Number of Persons in House.	RELATION to Head of Family.	AGE (last birthday) and Sex.		Gaelic or G. & E.	Particulars as to Marriage.		
		No. Inhabited.	Total (No. of Buildings (B.)).					Males.	Females.		State, Married, Widower, or Single.	Widow.	Married Women.
9	2 Do.	1	3	3	Jamima Hughson	12	Head	73		Widow			
10					Jamima Spence		Serv.	43					
11					Euphemia Hughson		Serv.	35					
12					Patricia Hughson		Serv.	32					
13					John W. Hughson		Serv.	26					
14					John T. Hughson		Grand Son	16					
15					Jamima J. Spence		Grand Daughter	10					
16					John W. Spence		Grand Son	6					
17					Jamima W. Spence		Grand Son	4					
18					James Williamson		Grandson	85					
19					John W. Hughson		Grand Son	18					
20					John J. Hughson		Grand Son	17					

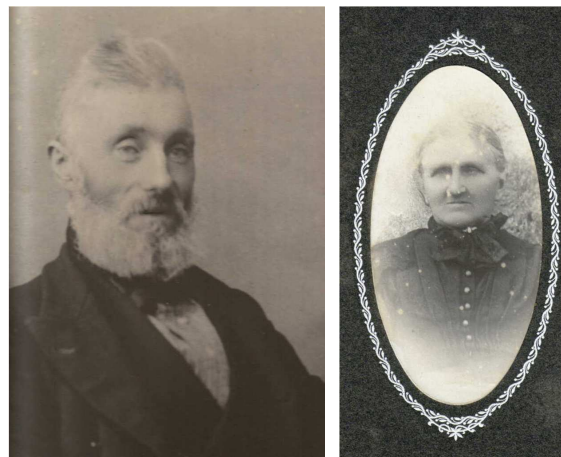
Results

- We got one result. This is possibly the most difficult decision in terms of “is it worth it?”. The index shows little more than I told it! We have found a woman with an appropriate name and age living in the parish we expected. We don’t get the house name in the index, so can’t compare it to the previous decade to see if it is likely. We just have to take a punt.
- The household that Jamima is in, is a busy one. She is recorded as Head of the household, and 4 of her adult children also live there, along with 6 of her grandchildren. These names line up with what we know from previous census records and confirm that this is the correct person.
- The one really important fact that we get from this census record though, that might make it worth the credits, is that Jamima is recorded as Widowed. So now we know why we can’t find John. Time to search the death records.

So far...

- Married to Jemima Johnson
 - 8 Jan 1863
- How long did he live?
 - Died sometime between 1901 and 1911

Birth/Baptism OPR	b. 28 Jul 1837 bap. 20 Aug 1837 To James Hughson	
Census	1841 – living with parents	3
Census	1851 – living with parents	13
Census	1861 – living with parents	23
Marriage	8 Jan 1863	25
Census	1871 – married with children	33
Census	1881 – married with children	43
Census	1891 – married with children	54
Census	1901 – married with children	63



John Hughson and Jemima née Johnson
My great-great-grandparents

NOTES

So far...

- So far we have found the birth and baptism dates for my great-great-grandfather John Hughson in the Old Parish Records and the marriage record to his wife Jemima Johnson in the Statutory records.
- We have found John living in the census records up to and including 1901 using other resources, namely Ancestry and/or Find My Past, and when we found and viewed the 1911 census record for his wife Jemima, we discover she is widowed.
- Let's do a search in the Statutory death registers now.

Searching for > 1855 death record

Advanced Search

Start your search for records relating to people by selecting a category and record type from the options below or search across all record categories with our [quick people search](#).

Please select a category:

Turn off 'Tips'

✓ Statutory registers

Search the statutory (civil) registers of births, marriages and deaths in Scotland from 1855 to the present.

Church registers

Search church registers of births (or baptisms), marriages and burials in Scotland from 1553 onwards.

Census returns

Search the lists of people recorded in censuses taken every 10 years in Scotland from 1841 onwards.

Valuation rolls

Search lists of owners and occupiers of buildings and other properties in Scotland from 1855 onwards.

Legal records

Search wills and testaments, coats of arms, soldiers' and airmen's wills and the records of military service appeals tribunals.

Poor relief and migration records

Search the records for the emigration society, set up to relieve Highland destitution 1852-57

Kirk sessions

Kirk session and other church court records can be found in Virtual Volumes.

Record guides >

Buy credits >

Searching for > 1855 death record

- As we did when searching for John and Jemima's marriage record, we select "Statutory registers" since the death we are looking for is after 1855. And then we'll select a record type of "Deaths".

Fill in Search criteria

- Fill in name and gender
- Death year range
 - We know the death occurred sometime between the 1901 census and the 1911 census
- Year of birth
 - We know his exact year of birth, but that doesn't mean it will be correct on the death record – widen the range a little
- Location
 - Leaving a broad range – whole county of Shetland as a starting point

Deaths

The statutory register of deaths dates from 1 January 1855 when compulsory, civil registration was introduced in Scotland.

Read how to search for deaths and understand their contents in our [statutory registers of deaths guide](#) or how to [sort and filter search results](#) and how to activate [search tips](#) on this page.

Surname:	<input type="text" value="Hughson"/>	Search Options
Forename:	<input type="text" value="John"/>	Search Options
Other surname:	<input type="text"/>	Search Options
Mother's maiden surname:	<input type="text" value="Records from 1974"/>	Search Options
	<input type="checkbox"/> Include unrecorded mother's maiden surname	
Gender:	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/> Both	
Year of death range:	<input type="text" value="1901"/> to <input type="text" value="1911"/>	
Age range:	<input type="text"/> to <input type="text"/>	
Year of birth:	<input type="text" value="1837"/> +/- <input type="text" value="5"/>	
County/city/minor records:	<input type="text" value="SHETLAND"/>	
District:	<input type="text" value="All"/> ABBEY ABBEY ST BATHANS ABBOTRULE	
<input type="button" value="Search >"/>		

NOTES

Fill in Search criteria

- Fill in as much as you know in the search boxes.
- Here I have filled in the surname "Hughson" and forename "John" and I have selected Male.
- I know the death occurred between the 1901 census and the 1911 census so that becomes my date range.
- Even though I know the exact year of birth I broaden the range, because I don't know whether the informant on the death record will know the exact year of birth.
- I've left the location quite broad to start with, the whole county of Shetland, till we see what we get.

Results

Surname ▼	Forename	Age at death	Mother's Maiden Name	Year	Ref	RD Name
HUGHSON	JOHN	71		1909	011/13	Unst

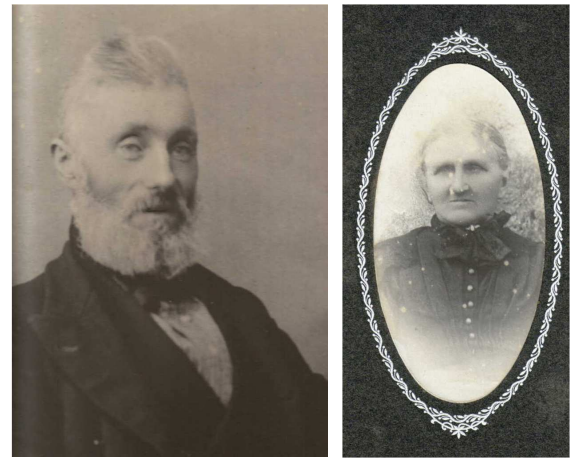
No.	Name and Surname. Rank or Profession, and whether Single, Married, or Widowed.	When and Where Died.	Sex.	Age.	Name, Surname, & Rank or Profession of Father. Name and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Cause of Death, Duration of Disease, and Medical Attendant by whom certified.	Signature & Qualification of Informant, and Residence, if out of the House in which the Death occurred.	When and where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
13	John Hughson	1909 at home Dunblane	Male	71	James Hughson Fisherman (deceased)	Family Alcoholism	James William Warpe Brother-in-law	1909 at home Dunblane
	Maiden to Annina Johnson	Colvendale Unst.			Robert Elizabeth Hughson (deceased)	Acc. by S. R. G. P. S.	(Witness) S. R. G. P. S. Registrar.	

Results

- Again, we got one result – clearly the name John Hughson is more unique than I gave it credit for! This time though, I have no qualms in recommending that you spend credits to buy this record – especially for a person who was born before 1855 and for which you may not yet know the mothers name.
- There is a lot of information in a death record, far more than the index gives you, although you do get the year of death from index, which may be all some people are after.
- You get the full date and location of death; spouse's name; parents names and occupation of father and maiden surname of mother; cause of death; and then sometimes you will get an extra gem of information in the informant box – since it is often a relative, you might be able to make another link or two on the family tree as a result.

John Hughson

Event	Date	Age
Birth/Baptism OPR	b. 28 Jul 1837 bap. 20 Aug 1837 To James Hughson and Robina Elizabeth Williamson	
Census	1841 – living with parents	3
Census	1851 – living with parents	13
Census	1861 – living with parents	23
Marriage	8 Jan 1863	25
Census	1871 – married with children	33
Census	1881 – married with children	43
Census	1891 – married with children	54
Census	1901 – married with children	63
Died	4 May 1901	71



John Hughson and Jemima née Johnson
My great-great-grandparents

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John Hughson

- This is the final summary of what we found out about John Hughson using Scotland's People with direct advanced searches on specific records.

S U M M A R Y

Searching using Scotland's People

- Using Advanced Search in Scotland's People
- Come here once you have found people in census records (1841-1901) using other free/subscription services
 - Scotland's People is Pay-per-Record
- Know whether you are searching for something pre-1855 or after
 - Search appropriate collection as required

N O T E S

Searching using Scotland's People

- In this presentation we have looked in detail at how to use the search facilities of the Scotland's People website. We recommend that you use this website once you have found out a little about your ancestors using census transcriptions that are available on the subscription websites such as Ancestry and Find My Past (which are available for free at your local library).
- Scotland's People is a Pay-per-Record website, so you need to be choosy about what you spend your credits on. As a general rule, statutory records provide a higher value of information than the Old Parish Records.
- When searching, keep in mind that you need to know whether you are looking for something in the pre-1855 or post-1855 era in order to search the correct collection.