



# Tracing your family tree in Inverclyde

**McLean**  
MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

# 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 provides you with information that will help you to trace your ancestry.

### ● The Watt Library

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

**10am - 5pm** Mon, Tue, Thu, **Fri & 10am - 1pm** Wed, Sat

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.

## ● **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. 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 and the Museum hold extensive 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. A large selection of these is available online at [www.inverclyde.gov.uk](http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk), **Museum, Collections Online.**

# Archives



Inverclyde Council Archives service looks after documents and records covering the last 400 years of Inverclyde's fascinating history. These include the records of local government including the three historic Burghs of Greenock, Gourock and Port Glasgow. The Archives also hold the records of local businesses, community organisations, clubs, local societies and family papers. Rare historic maps and plans are also held in the archive.





## ● **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 1976. 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:

**Greenock Telegraph** 1857 to date

**Greenock Herald** 1852 to 1872; 1874 to 1875; 1877 to 1879; 1894 to 1930

**Greenock Commonwealth** 1928 to 1931 and 1936

**Greenock and District News** 1947 to 1950

**Greenock Advertiser** 1802 to 1844 and 1846 to 1884

**West Coast Courier** 1931 to 1937

**Gourock Times** 1915 to 1980

**Port Glasgow and Kilmacolm Advertiser** 1858 to 1859

**Port Glasgow Observer** 1875 to 1884 and 1891 to 1894

**Port Glasgow Express** 1894 to 1967

**Evening News/(Greenock)/ and Family Weekly Press** 1866 to 1870

**Greenock & District Election Squib** 1905 to 1907 (printed copies only)

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

# Burial records, births deaths and marriages



## ● Burials and cremations

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

**Kilmacolm Cemetery**  
**Port Glasgow Cemetery**  
**Knocknairshill Cemetery**  
**Greenock Crematorium**  
**Greenock Cemetery**  
**Gourock Cemetery**  
**Inverkip Cemetery**

Port Glasgow Road, Kilmacolm  
High Carnegie Rd, Port Glasgow  
Kilmacolm Road, Greenock  
1 South Street, Greenock  
1 South Street, Greenock  
Larkfield Road, Gourock  
Millhouse Road, Inverkip

The four Churchyards records are held at:

**The Watt Library**  
**Kilmacolm Parish Churchyard**  
**St Andrew's Churchyard**  
**Newark Parish Churchyard**  
**Inverkip Street Cemetery**

Union Street, Greenock, 01475 715628  
Main Street, Kilmacolm  
Church Street, Port Glasgow  
Glen Avenue, Port Glasgow  
Inverkip Street, Greenock

**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:** Mon to Thu 8.30am to 4.45pm / Fri 8.30am - 3.50pm /  
Sat 8.30am - 12.00pm.

**The Book of Remembrance, Greenock Crematorium:**

The Book of Remembrance is on view daily at the Crematorium.  
There is now a digitalised version which can be found in the Book of  
Remembrance room. The Digital Book works by using touchscreen technology  
whilst following the on-screen instructions. Inscriptions can also be viewed on  
the Internet at: <http://greenock.bookofremembrance.eu>

**The Books can be viewed at the following times:**

Mon to Thu 8.30am - 4.45pm, Fri 8.30am - 4.00pm,  
Saturday 8.30am - 12.00pm and Sun 2.00pm - 4.00pm

## ● 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, Knocknairshill February 1994, Greenock May 1846, Gourrock  
November 1876 Inverkip July 1852, Greenock Crematorium November 1959.

## ● Registration Service of births, deaths and marriages

40 Municipal Buildings, Clyde Square, Greenock PA15 1LY Tel: 01475 714250

Records of births, deaths and marriages for Inverclyde dating back to 1855 are  
held within the registration office. We also have access to Scotland's People,  
one of the largest online sources of original genealogical information if you are  
researching your Scottish ancestry or building your Scottish family tree.

Anyone wishing to explore this history can visit the Registration Office for  
access to digitised sources through the Scotland's People search system.

**The records cover:** Births 1855 to date, Marriages 1855 to date, Deaths 1855  
to date, Divorces 1984 to date, Civil Partnerships 2005 to date.  
Old Parish Registers Births 1553 - 1854 Marriages 1553 - 1854  
Deaths 1553 - 1854 Census 1841 - 1911

Staff are on hand to assist and user guides are available.

# 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 by telephoning 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.

Record names and approximate years of birth. 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.



## ● Local and 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

Monthly meetings are held at the Paisley Museum, High Street, Paisley.

Details can be found on the RFHS website: <http://renfrewshirefhs.co.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.



# 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 list on the following page is just a few of these.**

**Inverclyde Libraries offer free Internet access to anyone visiting our Learn Direct accredited Learning Centres which are located within our Central and branch libraries.**

**Inverclyde also has an online Heritage Hub available and this can be accessed by contacting the McLean Museum on 01475 715624.**

**Heritage Hub**

**[www.mcleanmuseum.proboards.com](http://www.mcleanmuseum.proboards.com)**

- **BBC History** [www.bbc.co.uk/history](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history)  
Vast amount of information on Britain's history from 55 BC to present day.
- **National Archives** [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)  
National Archives 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. Holdings of NAS and local archives.
- **National Library of Scotland Digital Library**  
[www.nls.uk/digitalibrary](http://www.nls.uk/digitalibrary)  
Information from the NLS special collections 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 1830s, are the best contemporary reports during the agricultural and industrial revolutions in Europe. Learn more about the area in which you or your ancestors lived.
- **International Genealogical Index**  
[www.familysearch.org/eng/default.asp](http://www.familysearch.org/eng/default.asp)  
Compiled by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (the Mormons), of Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. Events such as Baptisms, Births, and Marriages, the Parish where the event took place and the date, extracted from Parish Registers. For the period up to 1837.
- **Tracing Your Scottish Ancestry** [www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk)  
Links to Statistical Account for Scotland, General Register Office, Index of parishes.
- **Scottish Genealogy Society** [www.scotsgenealogy.com](http://www.scotsgenealogy.com)
- **Gen UKI - UK & Ireland** [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)  
Scottish wills from 1500 to 1875.
- **National Archives of Scotland** [www.nas.gov.uk](http://www.nas.gov.uk)  
Public and legal records of Scotland. Local and private archives. Advises Scottish government departments, institutions, businesses and private individuals on the care of their records.
- **Births, Deaths and Marriages** [www.inverclyde.gov.uk](http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk)  
[www.mcleanmuseum.proboards.com](http://www.mcleanmuseum.proboards.com)



For more information contact:

**The Watt Library on 01475 715628**

**[www.inverclyde.gov.uk](http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk)**

**[www.mcleanmuseum.proboards.com](http://www.mcleanmuseum.proboards.com)**

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council

