

# 1921 Scottish census is unveiled after 100 years

BY LAURA POLLOCK

Insight into life across Scotland during 'an interesting time in history'

**T**HE 1921 census has officially been released by National Records of Scotland and will provide a glimpse into the home and working lives of Scotland's people 100 years ago.

Family history website ScotlandsPeople has been updated to include over 9000 volumes of enumeration district books, comprising more than 200,000 images of 4.8 million individual records.

Scanned images of the original handwritten census books detail each address from hotels to tenements, and from ships at sea to people in tents.

Recorded on the night of July 19, 1921, against the accommodation,

everyone present is listed with details including their relationships to each other, their age, their occupation and for the first-time information on orphanhood, dependent children and workplace.

The 1921 census reveals further details of the private lives of people living through social and economic turmoil. These are people struggling to emerge from the First World War and the Great Influenza Pandemic.

The census also records 73 people living on St Kilda, the remotest part of the British Isles, west of Benbecula in the Outer Hebrides. The individuals recorded are mostly crofters and hand loom weavers.

The island would be evacuated in 1930 making this the last time an indigenous community took part in a national census.

Jocelyn Grant, archivist at National Records of Scotland said: "The release of the 1921 census allows us to trace our ancestors and notable individuals in Scotland's history at a particular point in time.

"We can explore where a person was staying, what their home was like, who they were with, what their occupation was and who they worked for. This information makes the census a fantastic resource for

researchers and family historians.

Grant described 1921 as "an interesting time in history". A change in the law meant women could also now pursue careers in professions such as law, medicine and the civil service.

She added: "It is exciting to see Madge Easton Anderson the first woman in Britain to qualify as a solicitor recorded as a 'law agent' in the census. Margaret Kidd, is recorded as 'Law Student'."

Kidd would go on to become the first woman to be called to the Scottish bar, Britain's first female King's Counsel and the first female Sheriff Principal.

Grant said the data will reveal the truth of the 1920s in Scotland.

"This isn't the roaring 20s we're used to hearing about. Huge numbers live in poor, overcrowded conditions. Unemployment is high and there is widespread industrial unrest. The census shows soldiers stationed at collieries across central Scotland. A group of 156 soldiers are even using part of a school in Fife as a barracks.

"But there is fun too. St Andrews is poised to host the 1921 Golf Open and the town's hotels are crammed with the world's best players."

