



## History Online

### Accessing the Statistical Accounts

by Andrew Wale, Director of Libraries, University of Glasgow

Working with the Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries (SCURL), EDINA is to provide a service which gives online access to a key national electronic resource for students and researchers who study the development of the first industrial nation and the emergence of the modern British State.

The **First and Second Statistical Accounts of Scotland** are a parish-by-parish record of Scotland in the 1790s and in the 1830s. They are unique in Europe – no other country successfully conducted such a comprehensive large-scale survey at that time. Based on information supplied by parish ministers, these are contemporary accounts of life in local communities during the agricultural and industrial revolutions, including industry, health, education and levels of ‘happiness’.

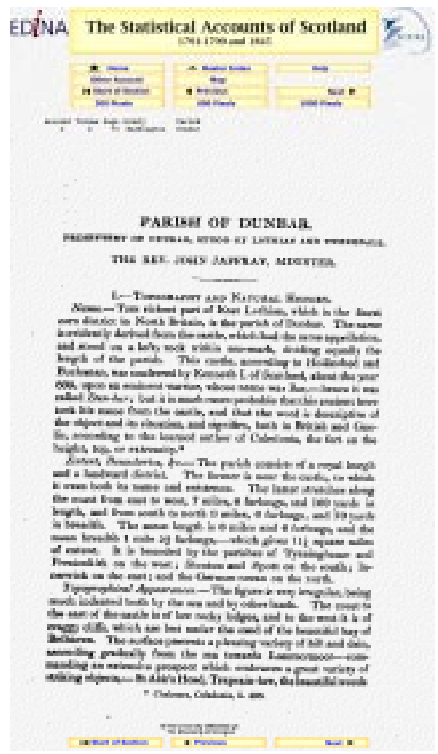
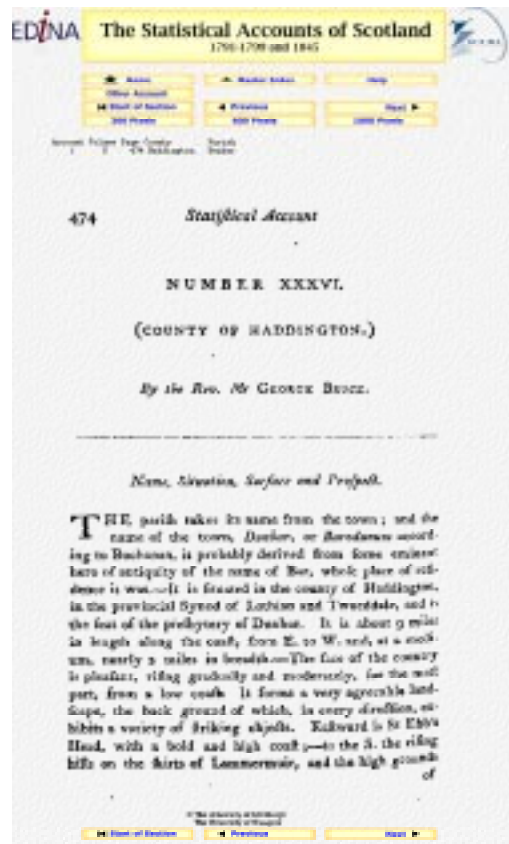
The launch of the EDINA service, planned for use in Spring 2000, will represent a successful outcome to the proposal put to the JISC ‘fast track’ digitisation programme by Glasgow University Library on behalf of SCURL. The original volumes are not easy to use as the parishes of a single county could be spread across several volumes and, in frequent demand, they have faced risk of damage.

The first release of the EDINA service, which is currently being made available to specialists in the field, has the facility to display the pages of the accounts using a simple Web browser. In addition to funding to create approximately 28,000 digital page images, JISC also provided funding to key in the entries from the original indexes and to provide database access using these terms as means of subject access. Additional funding is being sought from other sources to allow both full-text searching and further indexing of the many tables embedded in the text.



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Left: A portion of the map of Haddingtonshire showing Dunbar Parish.



Two accounts of Dunbar Parish. Above left: page one of the earlier account. Above right: page one of the later account.

# Digimap is coming...

*Hugh Buchanan, Digimap Support Officer, looks at the state of play with EDINA's latest, ground-breaking service.*

**D**igimap is EDINA's new service (to be launched on 10 January 2000) providing access to Ordnance Survey (OS) map data at a range of scales through a web interface; for a general description see <http://edina.ac.uk/digimap/about.html>.

I am writing this piece on the way home from the first Digimap training courses. Our course participants were potential site representatives from 10 different institutions. Their backgrounds have been widely varied, from Digimap pilot site representatives who have been working with the prototype system for the last couple of years, to librarians with no particular background in mapping.

By the time you read this article, the training courses will have been run on two further occasions. Current numbers indicate that by the end of December, 49 potential local support staff from 32 institutions will have attended the courses. For details of future training dates, have a look at the Digimap newsletter (<http://edina.ac.uk/digimap/support/newsletter.html>).

The material used in the training sessions (both slide presentations and other resources) will be available through the EDINA web site (<http://edina.ac.uk/digimap>). We have designed these materials so that they will also be useful as training resources for site representatives to use with colleagues or end users.

The courses have reminded us that the service launch is approaching rapidly, and that there are many institutions who are keen to subscribe and get their users working with digital map data. We now have a detailed and very full work programme to see us through to the service launch – and beyond.

We have been asked on a number of occasions about the sorts of things OS digital map data can be used for. The eLib-funded Digimap Project has provided many real examples, and proved that as a map data service Digimap is useful in a wide range of disciplines. A list of examples drawn from our pilot project can be found at <http://edina.ac.uk/digimap/using/index.html>. (See sidebar at right for two examples.)

## Lie of the Land

The most detailed map dataset available through Digimap is Land-Line.Plus®: this provides large-scale map data which shows street-level features. Only 30% of this dataset is to be made available through Digimap. One of our biggest challenges has been in developing a mechanism to allow subscribing institutions to determine which 30% of Land-Line to make available. This will ensure that users can plan their use of the data during an academic year with confidence.

The mechanism that has been agreed gives each subscribing institution control over a share of the 30% (amounting to some 70,000 map tiles), with incentives for early selection, and for early subscription.

We have developed a map-based software tool which allows site representatives to identify and select which tiles they want for their users. During the training courses attendees found that the tool made tile selection an approachable and not a daunting task.

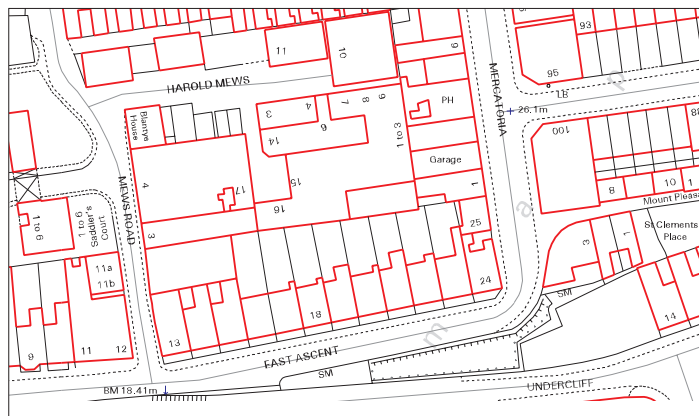
## Putting Digimap to Work

### Example 1: Teaching Mapping Awareness

First-year undergraduate students are set a project to raise their awareness of the available map products in Great Britain. The project gives them the task of using Digimap to produce a map centred on their term-time addresses, which they then use for data collection. The exercise teaches students the important map concepts of scale and resolution, while also enhancing their computer (and particularly Internet) skills by using the Digimap service. This exercise would be useful in any subject where students have to work with map-based data.

### Example 2: Research

A wide range of research case studies is given at <http://edina.ac.uk/digimap/using/casestudies.html>. One is to do with monitoring low-level atmospheric pollution and air quality in a large pedestrianisation scheme in a city centre. The aim is to identify those areas which were likely to receive the highest levels of pollution. For this purpose large-scale Land-Line.Plus® data is used with the intention of expanding this method to other sites with clean air monitoring programmes.



Land-Line.Plus map showing an area of Hastings (© Crown copyright)

# ... to a web browser near you

*Digimap lets you produce the maps you need. Use the 'legend' tool (a sample portion shown below left) to switch on and off any combination of map features at any scale of map (different features apply to different scales). When you create a map, or a series of maps, you can keep them in your 'map chest'. From the map chest they can be downloaded for display on the web or for printing paper copies.*

# [ Digimap ]

Series of maps showing Penrith and the north-eastern Lake District, with the following feature sets (clockwise from top left): 1. Full set of features. 2. Towns, water features, major roads and railways. 3. Towns, water features, woodland and miscellaneous land-use features. 4. Towns and water features only.

Digimap Legend tool

Make new map

**Railways**

Railways

- Standard gauge railway
- Narrow gauge railway
- Tunnel
- Railway station
- Level crossing (classified roads)

Make new map

**Air Travel**

Airports

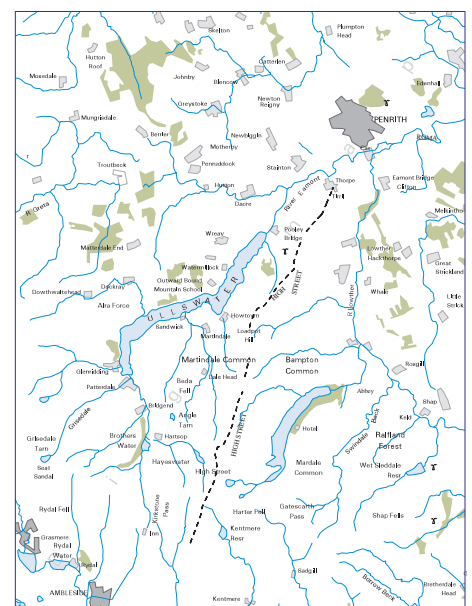
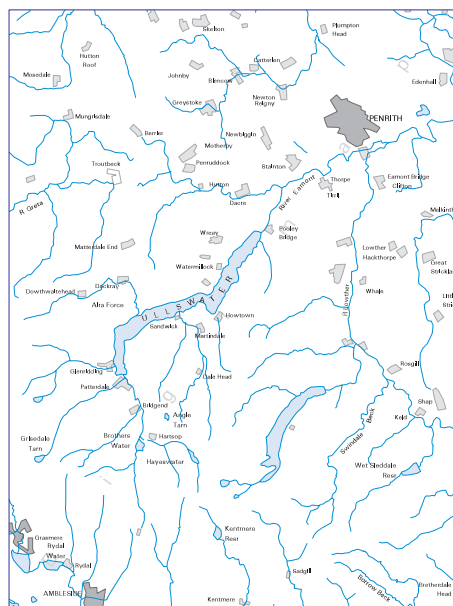
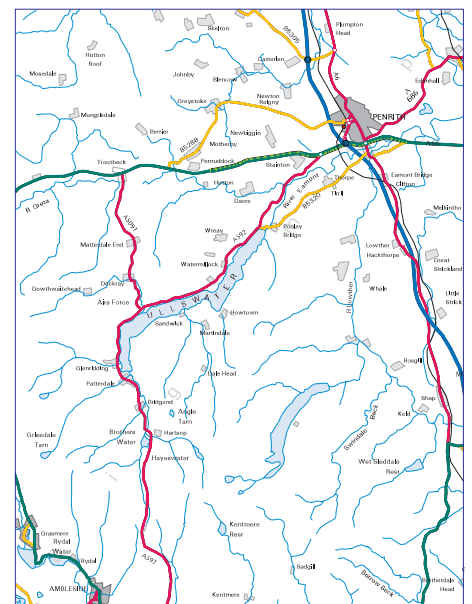
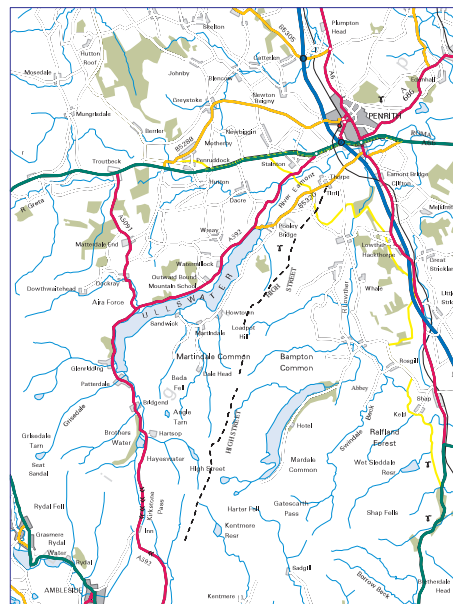
- Airport with customs
- Airport without customs facility
- Helipoint

Make new map

**Water features**

Coastal features

- Natural coastline/High Water Mark
- Man-made coastline
- Sand forshore area
- Sand foreshore boundary



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# News in Brief

## EDINA Server Platform

After a long period of stability in the EDINA twin Sun Enterprise 4000 UltraSPARC servers, we encountered a series of problems in the late Summer, mostly related to hardware upgrades. These were finally resolved in mid-October. Following this experience we reviewed our dependence on individual components of our hardware configuration, with a view to increasing resilience and improving our ability to keep the user community informed of system status when components have failed. As a result:

- The EDINA helpdesk email account ([edina@ed.ac.uk](mailto:edina@ed.ac.uk)) will shortly be moved to a separate University of Edinburgh server; currently it is on PENTLANDS, one of the EDINA servers. The move will enable it to be used when PENTLANDS is down.
- Service-specific messages-of-the-day have been added to each of the login pages for our web services, so that users will now get the messages even if they did not come in through the EDINA home page, but went directly to the (bookmarked) login page.
- The EDINA website on PENTLANDS – including the login pages for each of our web services – will shortly be mirrored on the other EDINA server, PENTLANDS2, so that users will be able to reach each login page, with its status message, even if PENTLANDS is down.

We have also reviewed our use of Mailbase lists and the web for keeping the user community in touch with our service status. If the situation is volatile it is possible that Mailbase lists could be bombarded with current-status messages. On the other hand, if we restrict the circulation we may fail to warn someone who needs to know. The JIBS User Group committee were consulted about this at the end of October. Their view was that they would rather the relevant Mailbase lists were heavily used with such messages than that there was any danger of service unavailability not being reported to someone who needed to know.

## Edinburgh Data and Information Access

<http://edina.ac.uk>

EDINA, based at Edinburgh University Data Library, is a JISC-funded national datacentre. It offers the UK tertiary education and research community networked access to a library of data, information and research resources. All EDINA services are free of charge at the point of use. For information on institutional subscription fees, visit the EDINA web site, or contact us by email (details below).

EDINA services are:

- |                          |                               |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • AGDEX                  | • ESPMD                       |
| • Art Abstracts          | • INSPEC                      |
| • BIOSIS                 | • Palmer's Index to The Times |
| • CAB Abstracts          | • Periodicals Contents Index  |
| • Digimap (from 10/1/00) | • SALSER                      |
| • Ei Compendex®          | • UKBORDERS                   |

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URL: <http://edina.ac.uk>

## Ei Compendex® Update

The Ei Compendex service run by EDINA is approaching its first anniversary. New features and capabilities for this service are now nearing completion and will be available in the near future. Some of these – including a more intuitive and canonical formulation of author terms, and better searching on scientific terms – have required a complete rebuild of the 30-year Compendex\*Plus database. This rebuild will be apparent to the end user indirectly through the improved matching capabilities. Other improvements include: a more human-readable form of the scientific notation that Ei use in their title and abstract fields; and sorting and some 'profiling' abilities (the ability to set various default options for the behaviour and appearance of a session) – these settings will be remembered across sessions. Many of the new features have been added as a direct response to user feedback, which is always highly valued.

## Readers' Survey

Many thanks to those who filled in the Readers' Survey enclosed in a number of copies of the previous edition of *Newsline*. To those of you who did not return your survey, it's not too late. You can now use a new online form, which, when submitted, is put into email form and posted to the Editor. Because the form is generated by a CGI script, your anonymity is maintained. You can find the form at <http://edina.ac.uk/newsline/survey.html>. We invite any *Newsline* reader, not just those originally contacted, to feel free to use this form to let us know what you think of *Newsline*, and how you think it can be improved.

## Forthcoming events:

EDINA will be at **Stand 307** for the Online Information 99 exhibition and conference at Olympia, London from 7-9 December 1999 (<http://www.online-information.co.uk/ol99/index.html>).

EDINA will also be at the JISC conference: *Supporting the Use of Information Systems and Information Technology in Higher and Further Education*, at the Royal Horticultural Hall, London on 20 January 2000 (<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/events/jisconf2000.html>).

## EDINA subscription and registration

Most EDINA services require the completion of a licence agreement before those services can be made available to users. Free 30-day trials are available for most of these services. Please see the EDINA web site for details of the requirement of individual services.

For UKBORDERS, there is no fee for academic institutions within the UK, but a licence agreement must be signed (email [edina@ed.ac.uk](mailto:edina@ed.ac.uk)), and individual users must sign an End User Licence.

SALSER is a completely free service, with no subscription fee. No licence or prior registration is required.

EDINA *Newsline* is published four times a year by the Edinburgh University Data Library. Suggestions and comments on *Newsline* may be sent to [edina@ed.ac.uk](mailto:edina@ed.ac.uk).

The next issue of *Newsline* will appear in Spring 2000.

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