

Using Scottish Kirk Session Records

What are Scottish Kirk Session records?

- Records of the Established and Free Church of Scotland from the late 16th Century to the mid 20th century.
- Can include:
 - Parish accounts
 - Communion lists
 - Seat rents
 - Minute books. These are particularly useful. These contain
 - Poor relief records – who and how much
 - People brought before the session or congregation for misdemeanors
 - Cases of fornication
 - Cases of illegitimate births
 - Fund raising
 - Records of baptisms, marriages and burials (these have been extracted by Scotland's People and can be searched on their website)

Where can you find them?

Scotland's People Website

- Scotland's People Website – search and access kirk session records on virtual volumes
<https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/virtual-volumes>

Challenges

- These records are not indexed so you have to read through the records associated with a place and date.
- Limited to the Established Church of Scotland and sometimes the Free Church.
- Quality of the handwriting can be variable, so have a look at Scotland's People guide on handwriting. Link below.

Useful Guides

- ❖ Kirk session record guide on Scotland's People
<https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/help-and-support/guides/kirk-session-records>

- ❖ Using Virtual Volumes on Scotland's People

<https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/content/using-virtual-volumes>

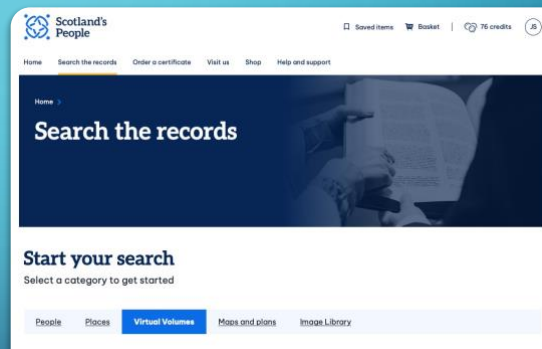
- ❖ Scotland's People – guide for reading older handwriting (paleography)

<https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/help-and-support/guides/reading-older-handwriting-palaeography>

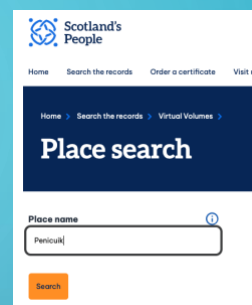
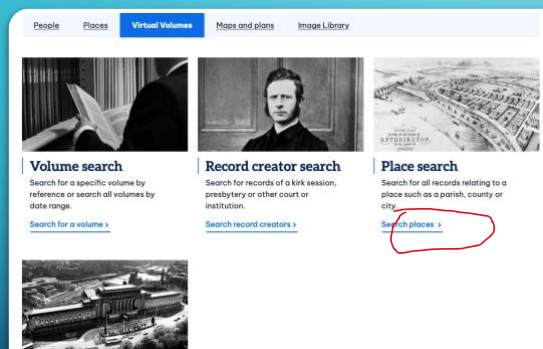
How to Access

WHERE TO ACCESS THE MINUTES

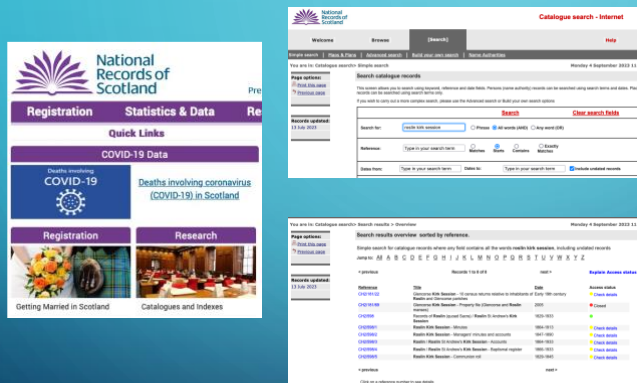
- You can view most but not all kirk session records on **Virtual Volumes** on Scotland's people's website
- Those not available online can be viewed at National Records Of Scotland in Edinburgh



FINDING THE PARISH



IF YOU CAN'T FIND THE PARISH



Search kirk session records on the National Records of Scotland Research catalogue

These can be consulted via Virtual Volumes on-site at the National Records of Scotland building in Edinburgh

FINDING THE PARISH



Virtual Volumes results

Penicuik kirk session

A church court that sat within the presbytery of Dalkeith and the synod of Edinburgh

Records available

- Accounts (1733-1798) ([CH2/297/4](#))
- Accounts (1857-1866) ([CH2/297/23](#))
- Minutes (1654-1662) ([CH2/297/1](#))
- Minutes (1674-1685), Accounts (1674-1744) ([CH2/297/2](#))
- Minutes (1708-1812) ([CH2/297/3](#))
- Minutes (1812-1856), Communion roll (1834) ([CH2/297/6](#))
- Seat rents (1837-1859), Session school committee minutes (1845-1859)
- Testimonials (1680-1683) ([CH2/297/5](#))

Click on the record that fits the time period you are researching.

Good Luck!