

BEYOND THE CENSUS

Using Scottish Kirk Session Records

Janice Smith from Roslin Roots

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AIMS

Develop an understanding of what the Kirk Session Records contain

How to use them to further your research

Where to find them



APPROACH

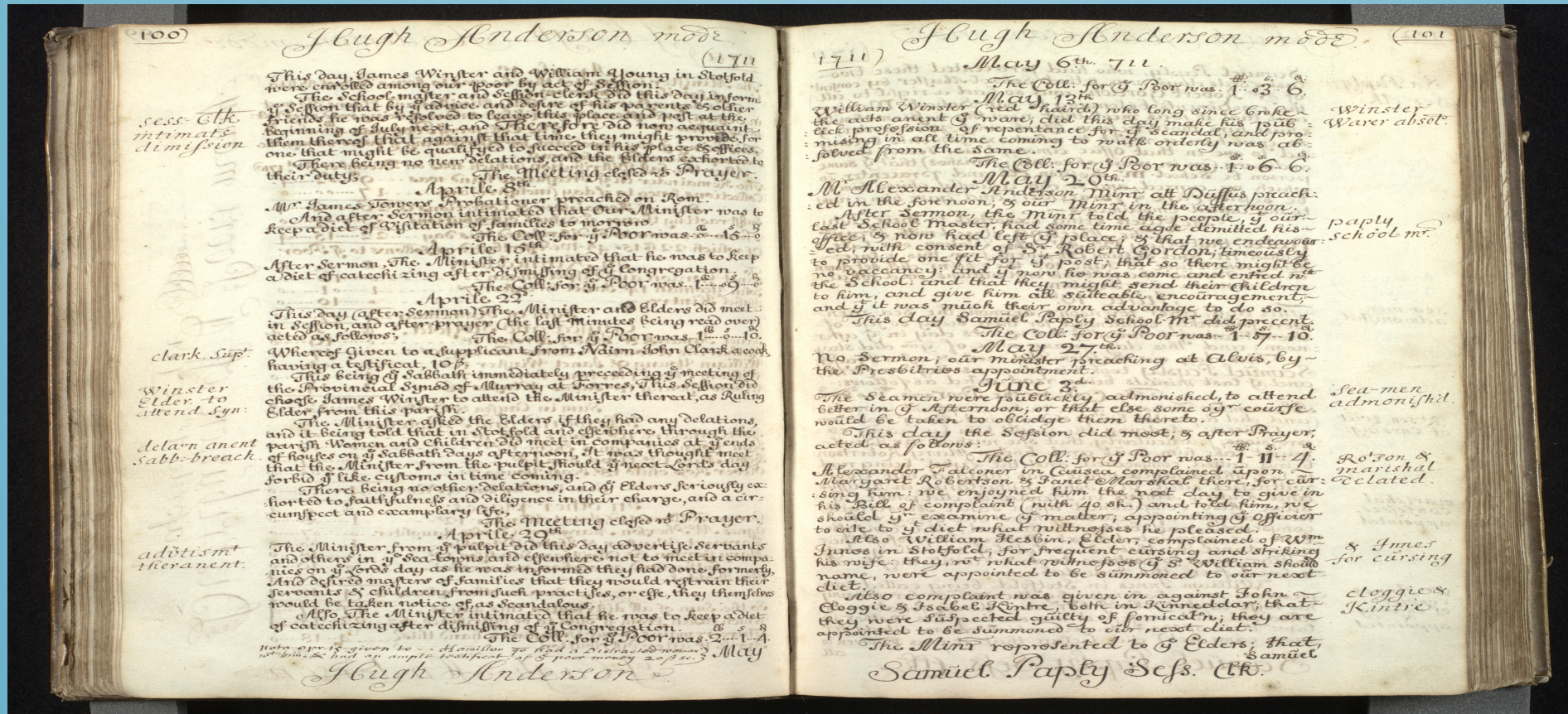
Background

Show you what the records contain with some examples

Challenges using these records

How to access them online

KIRK SESSION AND THEIR RECORDS



WHAT DO THE RECORDS CONTAIN

Records from 1560 to 1900

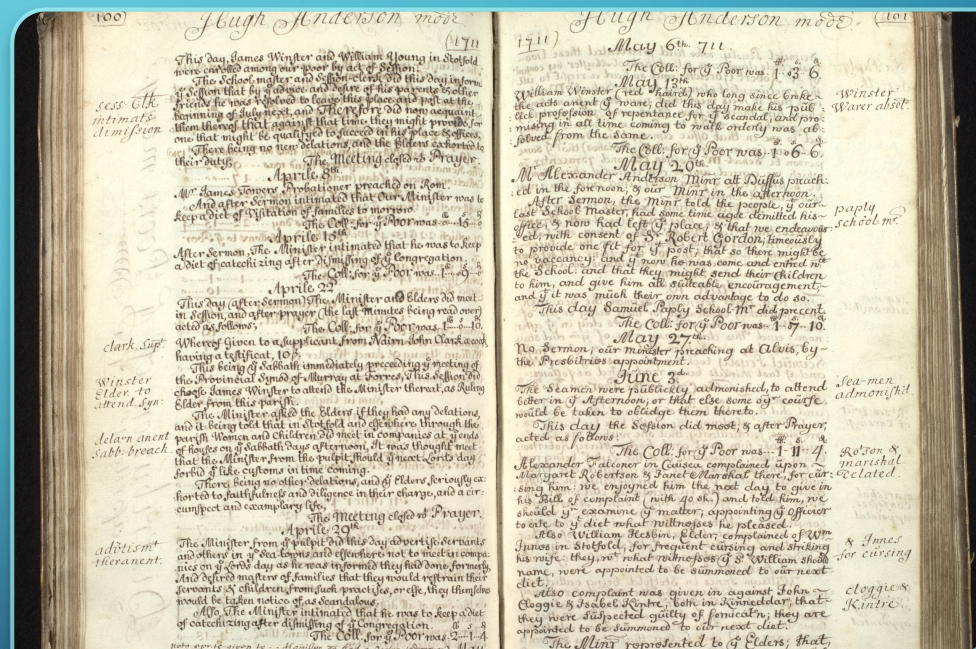
Minutes of regular meetings

Concerns about the morality of the congregation

Spiritual needs of the congregation

Management of local education before 1872

Administration of poor relief before 1845



National Records of Scotland, CH2/384/2 p100-101. With kind permission of the Church of Scotland.



POOR RELIEF AND ISABELLA ARMSTRONG

**Penicuik kirk session, Minutes (1812-1856,
Communion roll (1834), 297/6 Image number 27**





POOR RELIEF AND ISABELLA ARMSTRONG

Transcript

WHAT THE EXTRACT TELLS US

the names of her parents

where she was brought up

where she went to work

where she met and possibly married her husband

the locations of the births of her children

details of her husband's regiment

Her experience following her husband to war

CHILD MAINTENANCE AND MARION BARROWMAN

**Penicuik kirk session, Minutes (1812-1856, Communion roll
(1834), 297/6 Image number 5**



CHILD MAINTENANCE AND MARION BARROWMAN

Transcript



WHAT THE EXTRACT TELLS US

Who was the father of Marion Barrowman's son

Where she lived

Where he came from (his parish) and
where she was brought up
who his father was

The occupation of John McGregor and his father.

CHALLENGES

No indexing or
searching by name

Time consuming to
search if you are
looking for specific
people

Only covers Church
of Scotland, though
this can include its
various schisms in the
nineteenth century

The quality of the
handwriting can be
variable, some are
difficult to read

The quantity and
standard of the
minutes is also
variable

Not all records exist
and of those that do
not all are online

WHAT INFORMATION CAN YOU EXPECT TO FIND?

Ordinary people

Families prior to the census and state registration of births, marriages and deaths

The fathers of illegitimate children

People claiming poor relief

The people who were involved in the church and community

Ministers, members of the kirk session and teachers



Author's own family photograph

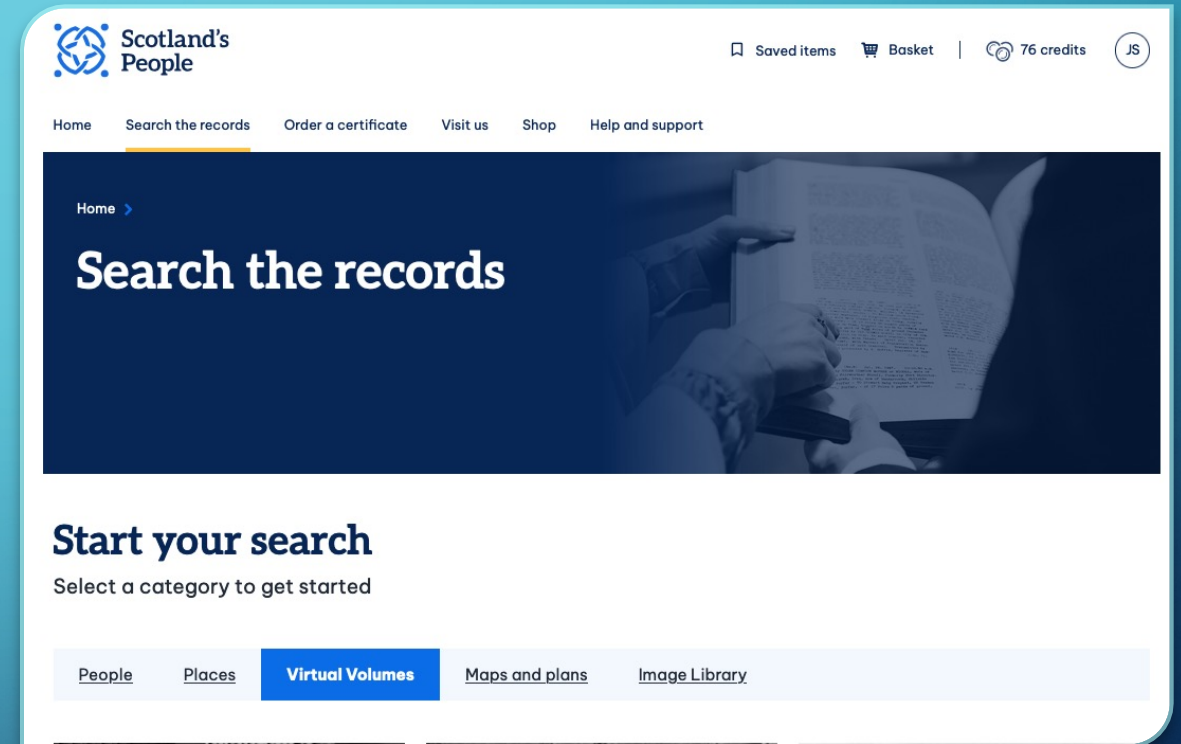


HOW TO FIND STORIES

- ❖ First locate the parish and be aware that some parishes had more than one church
- ❖ Find the volume with the date range you are interested in
- ❖ Then scan read through the entries
- ❖ Some have 'indexes' in the margins, which can be useful if you are following a story about an individual as these are often spread over a period of time.

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

[People](#) [Places](#) [Virtual Volumes](#) [Maps and plans](#) [Image Library](#)



Volume search

Search for a specific volume by reference or search all volumes by date range.

[Search for a volume >](#)



Record creator search

Search for records of a kirk session, presbytery or other court or institution.

[Search record creators >](#)



Place search

Search for all records relating to a place such as a parish, county or city.

[Search places >](#)





 Scotland's People

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[Home](#) > [Search the records](#) > [Virtual Volumes](#) >

Place search

Place name ⓘ

[Search](#)



You searched for – Place name: **"Penicuik"**

Showing 1 to 1 of 1 (1 pages)

Penicuik

A parish in the county of Midlothian. It was a quoad omnia parish (a parish for civil and religious purposes).

FINDING THE PARISH



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Records for Penicuik

A parish in the county of Midlothian. It was a quoad

Back

Records in Virtual Volume

Kirk session records

- [Penicuik kirk session](#)



Virtual Volumes results

Back

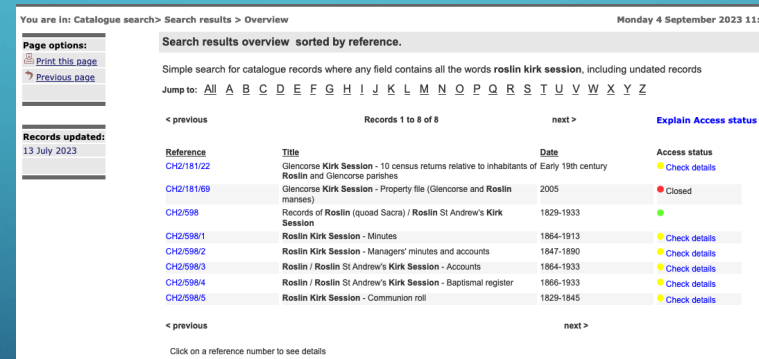
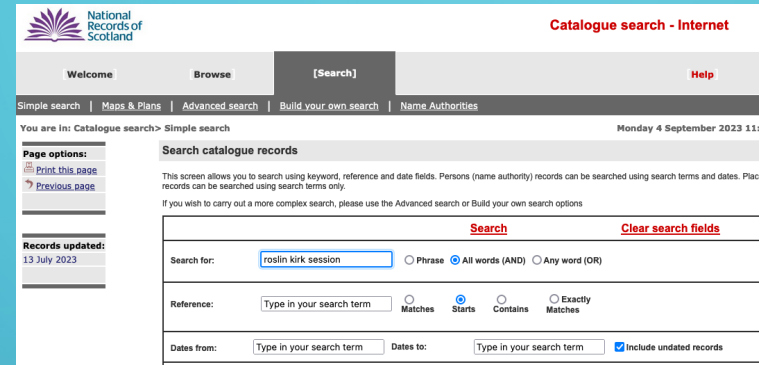
Penicuik kirk session

A church court that sat within the presbytery of Dalkeith and the syn

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)
- Testimonials (1680-1683) ([CH2/297/5](#))

IF YOU CAN'T FIND THE PARISH



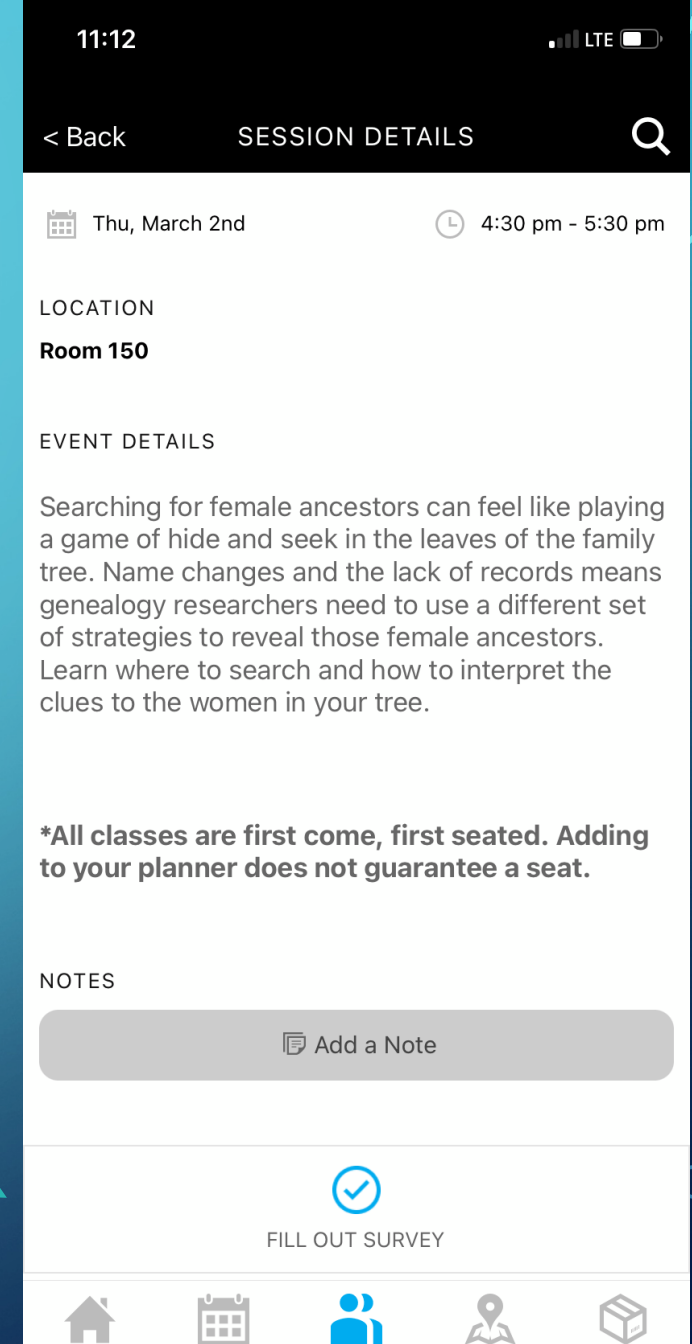
Search kirk session records on the National Records of Scotland Research catalogue

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

Feedback

Remember to give feedback in the app!

1. Find this session in the RootsTech Mobile App
2. Scroll down to Fill Out Survey
3. Let us know how this session was



Presenter Contact Information



: roslinroots@btinternet.com



: www.roslinroots.co.uk



: www.roslinroots.co.uk/blog-3



: www.facebook.com/roslinroots/

: BlueSky Janice Smith @roslinroots.bsky.social



: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/janice-smith-4035291aa>

USEFUL LINKS

- ❖ Scotland's People – search and access kirk session records on virtual volumes

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

- ❖ Kirk session record guide on Scotland's People

<https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/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/research-guides/reading-older-handwriting>