National Records of Scotland

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Scottish Documents.com

TECHNICAL HELP
**Effective searching
Viewing and printing images
Getting the best out of Scottish Documents
Problem solver**

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Contents

1. The Gazetteer

1.1 Background to the Gazetteer

The search engine which drives the website is based on a gazetteer system developed by the National Archives of Scotland (NAS). It attempts to explain Scottish administrative history and historical geography, and to allow you to search for historical records relating to a particular parish, county, presbytery or synod. In due course it is hoped to extend this to include other types of place (burghs and islands).

The combination of gazetteer search and guidance mimics the advice of an archivist in an archive search-room, especially relating to Scottish church court records (the records of kirk sessions, presbyteries and synods).

Standardisation and variant names
Where a place has changed name or is known by several names, these have been treated as name variants. In each case we decide which name will be used as the standard entry and treat the others as variants. Usually we choose the name by which the place has been known in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For example, the parish of Aberchirder changed its name to Marnoch, so we have entered all of the information about the parish under 'Marnoch' and included 'Aberchirder' as a variant name, which appears in the Gazetteer but simply directs you to 'Marnoch'. This prevents duplication of data and confusion.

1.2 Searching and browsing

Simple search
The simple search function allows searching by the name of a place or by volume reference.

Advanced search
The advanced search device allows you to refine a search by place type, volume type, date range and by other ways, but read the caveat on advanced searching on page 4.

Browse
The browse function allows you to browse through the entire contents of the gazetteer alphabetically.

Your searches
The 'Your searches' area, at the bottom of the home page, shows you the last search you made and the last volume of images you looked at, which are useful short- cuts if you are working on a particular place or volume over several sessions.

Your Searches

The most recent search term you entered was 'fintray'. (view results)

The most recent search volume you viewed was 'CH2/155/4'. (view volume)

1.3 Common searches

Search for a parish
Use the simple search at the top of the page. If you are not sure of the spelling, use a partial name (for example, when you enter 'Fin' it will bring up results for the places in the gazetteer which contain the characters 'fin', including Findhorn, Fintray, Carfin and Kilfinan – the search function is not case sensitive). Alternatively use the browse function. Note the way city parishes are treated below under 'Cities'.

Search for a presbytery or synod
Use the simple search (using a partial name if in doubt), or browse or use the advanced search, selecting 'presbytery' or 'synod' in the place type. Note the way the cities are treated below, as this has a bearing on the presbyteries and synods of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow).

Cities (Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow)
The four most populous places in Scotland are Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow. These became classed as cities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They were subject to frequent changes and divisions in their constituent parishes and were the loci of large numbers of secession churches. City boundaries expanded over time and cities eventually incorporated neighbouring burghs and neighbouring parishes (either wholly or partly). Cities are treated as special cases in the Scottish Documents gazetteer. There is an entry on each city itself, which contains links to entries on constituent quoad omnia, quoad sacra and secession parishes. A search in the simple search for one of the four cities will take you to the city page first, rather than to the list of individual parishes in that city (if you want this you can get it by using the 'browse' function.

Searching by volume reference
The reference numbers for each volume are unique identifiers assigned by the National Archives of Scotland (NAS) or a local archive for cataloguing and administrative purposes. If you know the reference code for the parish or a specific volume, the reference number acts as a short-cut to the parish or volume without having to search or browse. For example CH2/155 = Fintray Church of Scotland kirk session and CH2/155/6 = Fintray kirk session minutes (1842-1897). If you search using CH2/155 it should take you directly to the list of records available for Fintray parish, and if you search using CH2/155/6 it should also take you to list of records available for Fintray parish but with the specific volume listed first. It does this to put the volume in context before you open up the images. See the **Your searches** area under section **1.2** above.

Searching for types of record
Using 'advanced search' you can search for particular types of record, but this should be used with caution. It is possible to search for things like presbytery separate registers and synod minutes but we do not advise searching for things like registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, because not every kirk session kept distinct registers like these. Some kirk sessions incorporated information on baptisms, marriages, burials and other things (like certificates of transference) within kirk session minute books. Expect each kirk session to have its own way of keeping records. Whatever aspect of a parish, presbytery or synod you are interested in, look at the range of records available in the entry for that place and make your selection accordingly. If you are looking for a distinct type of record (for example a register, statistical survey, account book or poor roll) and this does not appear in the list of records for a specific parish, looking in the kirk session minute books instead.
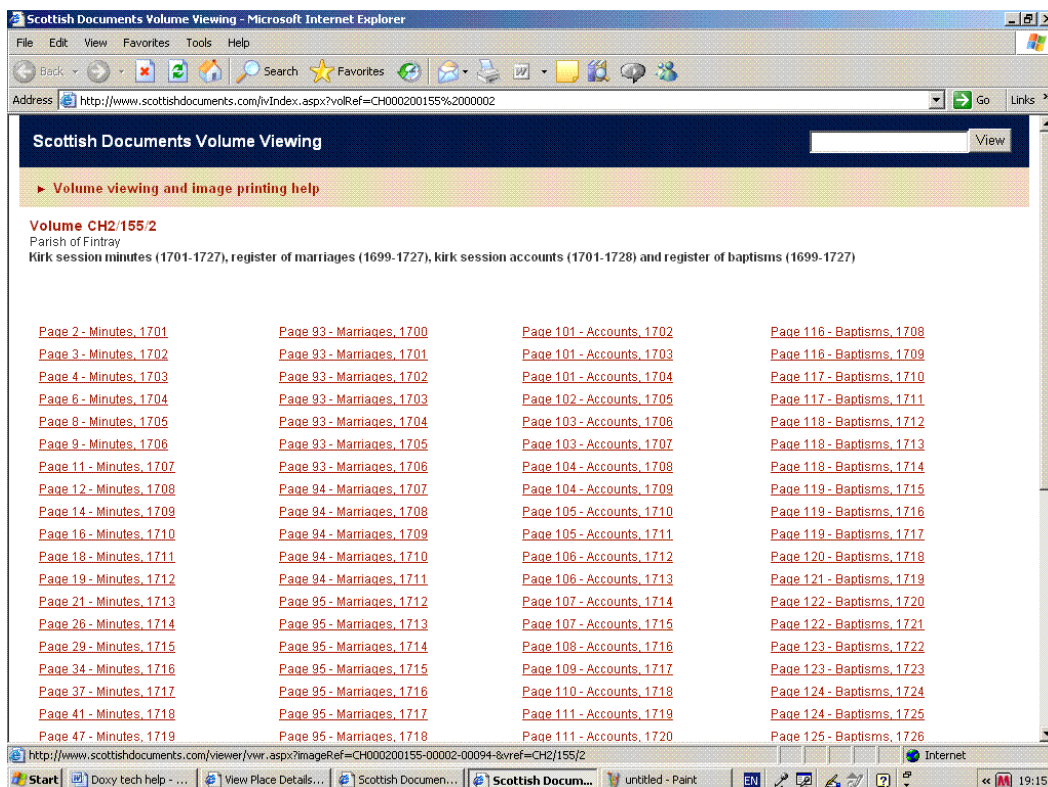
2. Volume viewer

2.1. Volumes and waypointing data

Most of the historical records accessible on the Scottish Documents website are volumes of church court records, which have not been indexed. These range from a few pages to several hundred pages. High quality digital cameras are used to create images of each page, but most of the capture is double-page (both pages of an open book are captured in a single image). Each page has a unique page number but the image of any two-page spread usually derives its name from the page number of the right hand page.

Although the volumes are not indexed most have been 'waypointed' in some way. This means that there is, in effect, a contents list to the volume. For example, minute books and accounts are usually waypointed by year, so that you can jump to the start of any year in the volume. Some volumes are waypointed alphabetically (for example communion rolls) and others are waypointed in other ways, as appropriate. A volume can be waypointed in less than an hour, whereas indexing it might take weeks or months.

Waypointing follows the order that the parts of the volume appear in that volume, so it is not an index and it is not infallible – clerks sometimes interrupt volumes to include out-of-date or out-of-place information. An example of waypointing is shown below.

2.2 Volume viewer function keys etc

View button . . . jumps to an image in the volume by entering the image reference number. For example if you wanted to jump 4 pages in the example opposite, you would over- write the final '1' in the reference with '5', that is 'CH2/30/1/5' then press the 'View' button and the image will load.

CH2/30/1/1   View

Volume contents page . . . takes you back to the contents page with the waypointing data (if waypointing has not been done, this link will not appear).

Volume CH2/155/6 contents page

Jump through volume . . . jumps to the first, previous, next or last image in a volume, without leaving the volume viewer.

|◀ ◀ CH2/30/1/1 ▶ ▶|
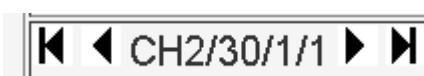
Print . . . creates a PDF document of the source image in a new browser window, which you can then print or save to your computer. See PRINTING AN IMAGE.

Save . . . saves a source image to your computer which you can then open using your default image viewing/editing software.

Reload image . . . reloads the source image.

Invert . . . inverts the image (for example, from dark writing on a light background to the opposite).

inv

Colour/greyscale . . . reduces image colours to 8-bit greyscale (white, black and shades of grey), which is often an effective way of making images of handwritten documents easier to read.
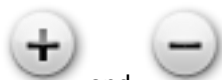
Brightness / contrast . . . increases or decreases brightness and contrast.

bright ⊖ ⊕ con ⊖ ⊕

Preview box . . . gives an overview of the image and shows which part is visible in the main part of the viewer. Dragging the selected rectangle will change your position on the main viewer.

Preview

Drag selection to change position

2.3 Volume viewer commands and selections

 and Zoom the image in and out. The rectangle in the Preview box will change size to show what area of the whole image you are currently viewing

Clicking on the image itself will also zoom in.

 Full page – this switches the viewer to full page mode, showing only the viewer panel on your screen. Click Esc on your keyboard to return to the normal mode with navigation etc visible.

 and rotate the image through 90 degrees left or right. A double click will rotate it to 180 degrees from the original

 Flip will flip the image horizontally, which can be useful for differentiating 'print-through' writing from the page overleaf

2.4 Saving an image

Remember that you can only save the original 'source' image. If you have altered an image, you cannot save the changes you have made. The only way to create a modified image on your own computer is to save the source image and edit it using your own image editing software.

When you click the 'save' button, the application will create an image file. How your browser will deal with this varies, as an example Microsoft Edge will save this to your default Downloads folder and give you a dialogue to allow you to open the file –
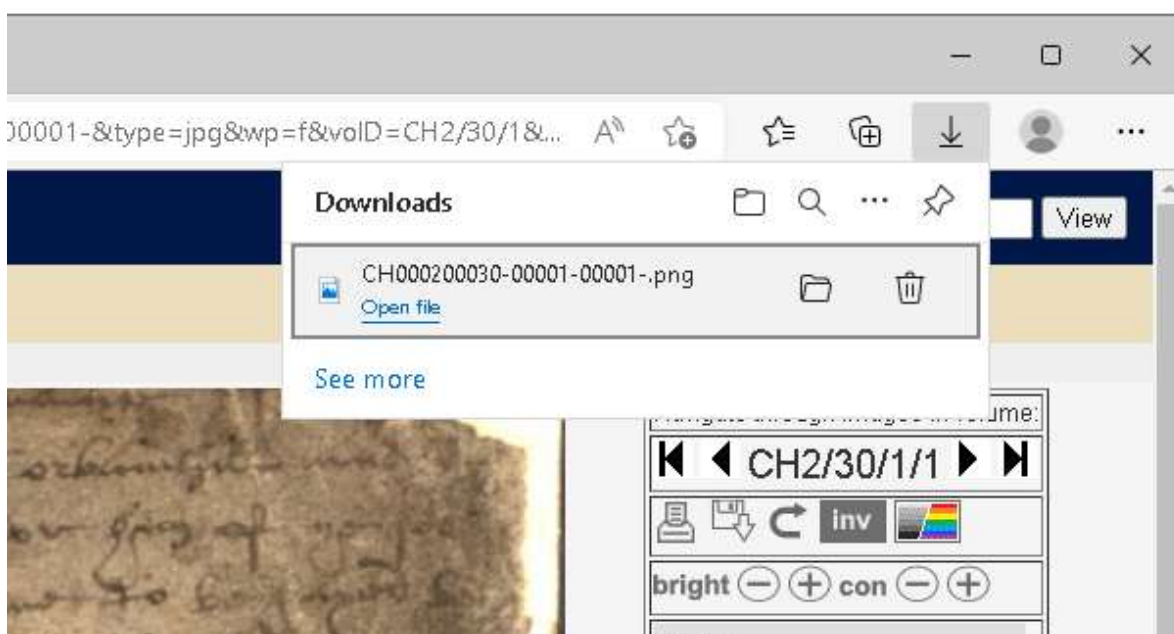
The saved image will be an uncompressed PNG (portable net graphics) file. This is the lowest common denominator of digital images, because it should be an almost universal format. It will be a large file; between 3 and 7 megabytes. This will allow you to magnify it to a high degree without pixilation but you should then use your own image editing software to make the image smaller (for example by converting it to a high quality JPEG or limited-colour GIF). If you are going to print it on a black and white printer, it is worth saving it as a limited colour greyscale (for example 16 or 32 colours) – see below under **3. Getting the Best Out of Scottish Documents**.

Note that the image name will be derived from the volume and page number (for example pages 192-193 in the volume of Fintray kirk session minutes, CH2/155/6, will be saved as CH000200155-00006-00193-png.

2.5 Printing an image

It is impossible to deliver a single online viewing and printing service to suit every IT and printing set-up and every Internet browser. Instead the volume viewer is designed to deliver a browsing/image-viewing function.

Remember that you can only print the original 'source' image. If you have cropped or altered an image, you cannot print the modified image you have made. The only way to print a modified image is to save the source image and edit it using your own image editing software, and then print it (usually by pasting it onto a word processing document) - see below under **3. Getting the Best Out of Scottish Documents**.

When you click the 'Print' button a PDF (portable file document) is created in a new browser window. Depending on your computer's settings, this may open in a new browser window or directly in Adobe Acrobat Reader if you have this installed. Adobe Acrobat is freely available software – if you do not have this installed on your computer it is possible to download it from Adobe and you might be prompted to do this. If you have any problems with this or objections to it, you can still save the source image and create a printable document yourself - see below under **3. Getting the Best Out of Scottish Documents**.

If you use the Adobe Acrobat PDF to print, remember that it will (in most cases) be two pages of text shrunk to a standard page size (A4 in the UK and letter size in the USA). This might be enough for your purposes but a lot of images will be illegible at that size. For example, if you have an A3 printer, it can be printed A3, but if you have an A4 printer and the document is not legible at A4, you need to save the source image, crop it in some way (for example by creating separate images of each page) - see below under **3. Getting the Best Out of Scottish Documents**.

3. Getting the best out of Scottish Documents

3.1. Maximise your browser.

The provided images can be quite large, o the more screen area available to the viewer the better. Also consider using the Full Screen mode to maximize the image itself.

3.2. Get to know the gazetteer function

Familiarise yourself with the way that the gazetteer deals with parishes, counties, presbyteries, synods, cities and variant names. Use the Guidance and Related Places areas on place pages (usually on the right side of the page).

3.3. Your searches

Use the 'Your searches' area of the home page, as a short cut to places and volumes you have recently used.

Your Searches

The most recent search term you entered was 'fintray'. (view results)

The most recent search volume you viewed was 'CH2/155/4'. (view volume)

3.4. Expect inconsistency in record keeping by parishes etc

Search for a parish, presbytery or synod and see what records are available – expect every parish to keep records in its own way and treat kirk session minutes as a default record, which often includes some of the other record types (such as accounts, baptisms, poor lists etc).

3.5. Big images – slow loading

The image viewer pulls a large image (typically 0.5 – 1 megabyte) from our server via our Internet Service Provider (ISP) and your ISP and loads it (along with the image viewer software) on your computer. Each time you move through the volume (loading a new image) or modify an image with the command tools, it will take several seconds for the image to load completely, depending on your Internet connection speed. Always allow each new or modified image a few seconds to load before doing something else.

3.6. Saving and modifying an image

It is impossible to deliver a single online viewing and printing service to suit every IT and printing set-up and every Internet browser. Instead the volume viewer is designed to deliver a browsing/image-viewing function.

If you don't use image editing software much, get to know your own image editing software. Practice saving an image to your computer (it will be in a PNG file) and open it using your own image editing software. This allows you to save parts of an image, for example by making separate images of each page, which is useful for preparing an image for printing.

You should decide what you want to do with the image and edit the image accordingly.

If you want maximum legibility on screen in colour, you can leave the image as a PNG or save it as an uncompressed GIF or TIFF file (usually this means 'exporting' the image).

3.7. Printing

When it comes to printing and image you have a choice:

        (a) use the Scottish Documents volume viewer's print command, **or**

        (b) save the source image to your computer and edit it to make a printable copy.

Remember that you can only print the original 'source' image using the Scottish Documents volume viewer's print command, even if you have cropped or altered the image in the volume viewer. If the source image is a double- page spread it might only be legible in A3 (which is fine if you have an A3 printer and can adjust the PDF file to print in A3. Most users will probably be printing in A4 or letter size in black and white and the advice below concerns how to get an effective print this way.

Printing an image on A4 or letter size in black and white

If the Adobe Acrobat PDF version produced by the volume viewer's print command is not legible we suggest you do the following:

1. Save the image to your computer (as a PNG), using the save button on the Scottish Documents volume viewer.
2. Open the image using your own editing software.
3. Make separate images of each page (or the parts of the image you are interested in) by cropping, trimming the image to remove as much of the surrounding image margins as you can get away with, and exporting as greyscale GIF files (limited to 16 or 32 colours).
4. Open a word processing document and, using 'Page Settings' (or the equivalent tool in your word processing software) reduce the document's margins to the minimum allowed or use a landscape setting. This will allow the maximum width for your image.
5. Paste in the image to the word processing file and adjust the size to your satisfaction.
6. Print in the normal way you would print a word processing document.

This gives you control over what you print and printing quality, but it relies on you to familiarise yourself with your image editing and word processing software.

3.8. Help us to help you

If you encounter a problem with a place entry in the gazetteer, a volume or an image, let us know but help us by quoting relevant data, such as any of the following which are appropriate:

The website address of the erroneous page (copy this from your browser address bar)
The name of the place (as given in the place entry)
The volume reference (e.g. CH2/155/6)
The image reference (e.g. CH000200155-00006-00193-png.)

Tell us what the problem is and if it is a technical problem it helps if you can make a screen shot to show us the nature of the problem and send us this as an email attachment.

4. Problem solver

Searching

I can't find the parish, presbytery or synod I'm looking for using the simple or advanced search.
- Use the **browse** function to look for name. If it is still not there and you think it should be, contact us and let us know.

Viewing images

There's no waypointing data for a volume (the volume opens at first image without waypoints).
- Probably this means that the volume has not been waypointed or something has gone wrong with the waypointing. Perhaps this is because the volume is impossible to waypoint in any meaningful way but this might also be an oversight on our part. Let us know, quoting the volume reference number.

The volume viewer 'freezes'.
- Usually this is because you have attempted to move to quickly to another image while the first image is still loading, or because you have attempted to modify an image while it is still loading. It can also happen because of slow Internet connection (this is usually temporary but can also indicate a problem with your Internet Service Provider).

- Try closing the browser window for the image viewer, then select the volume again from the list of records.

The volume viewer constricts the image horizontally or vertically.
- To begin with, maximize the size of your browser to give it the full screen width.

- Try refreshing the page using your Internet browser's refresh button.

- Try closing the browser window for the image viewer, then select the volume again from the list of records.

- If this fails contact us, letting us know what Internet browser you are using and some details of your IT set-up (e.g. whether you are using a lap-top, a stand-alone pc, a networked pc). It helps if you can make a screen shot of the problematical page and send this to us as an email attachment.

I've altered an image and I want to revert to original image.
- Use the reload button on the image viewer:

I want to save part of an image.
- The image viewer only allows you to save the original image. To edit and save an image, you must first save the original image to your computer, using the save button on the image viewer, then use your own image editing software to crop or edit the image – see sections 2.5 and 3.8-3.9 above.

I want to print part of an image.
- The image viewer only allows you to print the original image. To print part of an image you must first save the original image to your computer, using the save button on the image viewer, then use your own image editing software to crop or edit the image and use this image to make a printable copy see sections 2.4-2.5 and 3.8-3.9 above.

I want to publish an image (in print or on a website).
- The Scottish Documents website allows you to download and print individual images for your own personal research. The original records involved belong to the Church of Scotland in most cases and the images are the copyright of the National Records of Scotland. If you wish to publish an image or supply copies to anyone else you must obtain permission from us. We will ask you to acknowledge the copyright of the image and quote a reference number and in some circumstances we will levy a publication fee. Contact us, quoting the image reference number and tell us what you would like to do with the image. Please refer to our copyright disclaimer.