



Guide to Statutory Registration

What are statutory registers?

The statutory registers comprise the official records of births, marriages and deaths in Scotland from 1 January 1855 when civil registration replaced the old system of registration by parishes of the Established Church (Church of Scotland).

From 1855, registration became compulsory, regardless of religious denomination, and followed a standard format for each record type. More information was required in order to register an event, particularly at the start of the new system. Many changes occurred to the amount of information required in subsequent years.

The National Records of Scotland holds statutory births, marriages and deaths for the whole of Scotland from 1855 to the present day.



RCEs

RCE stands for Register of Corrected Entries, or from 1965 onwards, Register of Corrections Etc. If an entry in a register was found to contain an error or some other amendment was required as a result of new information, the original entry could not be altered. Instead, each registrar kept a register of corrected entries in which such amendments were written, originally after they had been approved by a sheriff. Corrections might be to name, residence, identity, or as a result of a sheriff's finding in a paternity case, with the father's name being added as directed by the sheriff, or as a result of an illegitimate child being legitimised by its parents' subsequent marriage. When an extract certificate is issued of an entry to which an RCE relates, the extract must reflect the amendments recorded in the RCE.

Statutory Birth Registers

1855 birth records were very detailed and are a boon to the family historian. In addition to details about the child (date, place and time of birth, full name, sex), the parents' names (including maiden surname of mother), father's occupation, name of informant and relationship to child, an 1855 birth certificate also contains information on siblings, the ages and birthplaces of both parents, their usual residence and the date and place of their marriage.

Such detail proved difficult to sustain and entries were modified from 1856 onwards. Information on siblings was removed, as were ages and birthplaces of parents and date and place of parents' marriage. Fortunately however, details of the date and place of parents' marriage was reinstated in 1861.

No. and Surname.	When and Where Born.	Sex.	Name, Surname, & Rank or Profession of Father. Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother. Date and Place of Marriage.	Signature and Qualification of Informant, and Residence, if out of the House in which the Birth occurred.	When and Where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
Maggie Livingston Gillespie Watson	1897 February Wendy Street Glasgow	F	Alexander Watson Whiteman's Labourer Maggie Hunter Watson 1870. 5. Glasgow	Alex. H. Watson Father	1897 March 15 th Glasgow M. S. Stewart Registrar.
	8 Dundas Street Glasgow		1896 October 30 th Glasgow		

Example record

Use the information found on a statutory births entry to further your research by:

- Using the addresses shown to confirm census details, and to track the family in the earlier census returns.
- Using the details of the parents' marriage details on 1855 entries and those from 1861 onwards to help you to find the parent's marriage record. This will then give further information to help your search.



A common problem with using birth registers is that parents did not have to prove the date of their marriage prior to registering the birth of a child, therefore it is not unusual for the date of marriage to be incorrect, either by accident or by design e.g. to conceal an illegitimacy.

Don't be fooled if the dates don't add up!

Statutory Marriage Registers

1855 marriage records give full name, age, marital status, occupation, usual residence, date and place of marriage, name and occupation of father, name and maiden name of mother, and names of witnesses and the officiating clergy. They also include the birthplace and number of former marriages of each spouse (plus the number of children by those marriages). Birthplaces and previous marriage details were dropped after 1855, but the former was restored from 1972.

When, Where, and How Married.	Signature of Parties Rank or Profession, Whether Single or Widowed, and Relationship (if any).	Age.	Usual Residence.	Name, Surname, and Rank or Profession of Father. Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother.	If a regular Marriage, Signatures of officiating Minister and Witnesses. If irregular, Date of Conviction, Decree of Declarator, or Sheriff's Warrant.	When & Where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
1881 on the First day of January at St. Margaret's Church, St. Quivox.	(Signed) John McDermott, Joiner (Journeyman) (Bachelor).	24.	55 Wallace Street, St. Quivox.	John McDermott, General Labourer (Deed.) Catherine McDermott M.S. Donnelly.	(Signed) W. J. O'Shaughnessy, Parish Priest, Ayr.	1881, January 4 th at Ayr.
After Banns according to the Forms of the Roman Catholic Church.	(Signed) Rose Kilby, (Spinster).	22.	72 Cross Street, St. Quivox.	Michael Kilby, Dealer. Elizabeth Kilby M.S. McSwathy.	(Signed) John McKee Witness. Catherine Kilby Witness.	William Morgan Registrar.

Example record

Use the information gleaned from a statutory marriages entry to further your search by some of the following:

- Use the ages of bride and groom and their parents' names to help search for their births or baptisms.
- Look at the names of witnesses to the marriage, as they may be siblings to either the bride or groom.
- Use the addresses shown in the marriage entry to track the family in earlier census returns.

Some potential problems with marriage registers are:

- A father's name might be incorrect, perhaps to conceal illegitimacy
- Remember though that where a couple married and their usual residence may not be the same.
- If a parent is recorded as deceased at the time of the marriage, use this information to narrow down the search for their death.



Statutory Death Registers

1855 death records show the date, time and place of death, deceased's name, sex, marital status, age and occupation, cause of death, duration of last illness, doctor's name and details of the informant. In addition, they show the usual residence, the deceased's place of birth, spouse's name, parents' names, occupations (and whether they were deceased), names and ages of children or age and year of death if the child died before the parent.

Up to 1860, the place of burial, the name of the undertaker and when the doctor last saw the deceased alive, were also included. As with births and marriages, this amount of detail had proved difficult to maintain. The deceased's birthplace was removed from 1856, as were the names of any children. The spouses name was also not required from 1856, but was reinstated in 1861.

(1.) Name and Surname, Rank or Profession, and whether Single, Married, or Widowed.	(2.) When and Where Died.	(3.) Sex.	(4.) Age.	(5.) Name, Surname, & Rank or Profession of Father, Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother.	(6.) Cause of Death, Duration of Disease, and Medical Attendant by whom certified.	(7.) Signature & Qualification of Informant, and Residence, if out of the House in which the Death occurred.	(8.) When and where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
John Vishom	1805, July	M	49	Donald Vishom Wood Contractor	Fracture of femur Robert Blair	John Keith	1805, July 21
Parting Contractor Royal Infirmary	1805, Royal Infirmary			(deceased) Catherine Vishom	Robert Blair Robert Blair	Robert Blair	1805, July 21
Married to Hydie Keith	1805, Royal Infirmary			(deceased) M. S. Cross	Robert Blair Robert Blair	Robert Blair	1805, July 21
	1805, College Street			(deceased)	Robert Blair Robert Blair	Robert Blair	1805, July 21

Example record

You can use the information found on a statutory deaths entry to further your research by the following:

- Use the age recorded for the deceased to narrow down the search for their birth (bear in mind that all the information in the entry is dependent on what the informant knew about the deceased)
- Look up the names of the deceased's parents in the marriage index.
- Use the details of the informant to confirm any relationship with the deceased.
- Use the addresses of both deceased and informant to confirm census details and track remaining members of the family in earlier census returns.
- Use the date of death to check for gravestone inscriptions, newspaper obituaries, or a will.



Bear in mind when finding locations that place of death and usual residence may not be the same.

Minor Records

Minor Records comprise records of births, deaths and marriages of Scottish persons outside Scotland. The following lists are included on Scotlands People.

Minor Birth Records

- **Air Register** (from 1948) records births on UK registered aircraft anywhere in the world, where it appears that one of the child's parents was usually resident in Scotland.
- **Consular Returns** (from 1914) comprise registrations of birth by British consuls relating to persons of Scottish descent or birth.
- **Foreign Returns** (1860-1965) Register of Births in Foreign Countries, which comprises births of children of Scottish parentage.
- **High Commission Returns** (from 1964) relate to the returns of children born of Scottish descent in certain Commonwealth countries.
- **Marine Register** (from 1855) records births on British-registered merchant vessels at sea, where it appears that one of the child's parents was usually resident in Scotland.
- **Service Returns** (from 1881) include Army Returns of births of Scottish persons at military stations abroad (1881-1959) and Service Departments Registers (from 1959) incorporating births outside the United Kingdom of children of Scottish residents serving in or employed by HM forces.

Minor Marriage Records

- **Foreign Returns** include Consular Returns of marriages of persons of Scottish descent or birth (from 1917), and the Register of Marriages in Foreign Countries, which comprises marriages of Scottish persons (1860 - 1965).
- **Service Returns** (1881-1959) include Army returns of marriages of Scottish persons at military stations abroad.

Minor Death Records

- **Air Register** (from 1948) includes deaths on British-registered aircraft, where it appears that the deceased was usually resident in Scotland.
- **Consular Returns** (from 1914) comprise registrations of death by British consuls relating to persons of Scottish descent or birth.
- **Foreign Returns** (1860 - 1965) the Register of Deaths in Foreign Countries, which comprises deaths of Scottish subjects, entries being made on the basis of information supplied by parties concerned and after due consideration of the evidence.
- **High Commission Returns** (from 1964) relate to the returns of death of persons of Scottish descent in certain Commonwealth countries.

- **Marine Register** (from 1855) includes deaths on British-registered merchant vessels at sea, where it appears that the deceased was usually resident in Scotland and deaths at sea of Royal Navy and Royal Marine personnel during wartime, including Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and RNLI. Cause of death for RN personnel was recorded in the register as a number (1, 2, 3 or 4). Find out more
- **Service Returns** (from 1881) include Army returns of deaths of Scottish persons at military stations abroad (1881-1959), and Service Departments Registers of deaths outside the United Kingdom of persons ordinarily resident in Scotland who are serving in or employed by HM Forces, including families of members of the Forces (from 1959).
- **War Returns** include registers of deaths of Scottish soldiers in the South African War (1899-1902); Scottish persons serving as Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned officers or Men in the Army (not officers) and Petty Officers or Men in the Royal Navy in World War I (1914-1918); Scottish members of the Armed Forces in World War II (1939-1945).