

Explore

history / landscapes / family



Explore the Past
www.explorethepast.co.uk

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From the team

This research guide has been produced to introduce you to our collections.

It focuses on our most commonly used resources, and provides information on how to contact us for further guidance and services. All the examples provided are from Worcestershire's collections, but you can use this as a general guide to information you might find within English archive and archaeology services generally. There is more information available on [our website](#), so please do explore.

The expert staff here at Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (WAAS) collect, preserve and make available the records of Worcestershire's history and archaeology, enabling customers to connect with the stories behind Worcestershire's people and places. We provide access to these resources to thousands of people each year, both remotely and on-site at The Hive, Worcester, UK.



Our customers are global as well as local, either taking time during their holiday to research or specifically planning research trips to the UK.

If you're planning a visit there's plenty of helpful information and resources on [our website](#), including location and opening hours, a useful visitor's guide and information on our collections.

This guide is intended primarily as a resource for those unable to make the long journey to visit us, outlining the various services we offer to help get the resources to you.



Digitisation service

Stunning, high quality images of items in our collections can be ordered and delivered electronically.



Archive research service

We can identify useful sources, delve into the records on your behalf and transcribe and translate documents to aid your research.



Archaeology research service

Information on landscapes, archaeological sites and historic buildings in the County of Worcestershire can be ordered and delivered digitally in a range of formats including images, text, database and [GIS](#) (Geographical Information System).

Good luck, and have fun exploring Worcestershire's past!

Explore the Past
Worcestershire's Archive and Archaeology Team

Section 1

Researching Worcestershire

Whether you are researching your family, the area that they came from, or trying to find out more about a particular place at a particular time in the past, you will be looking for sources of information.

Have you ever asked any of the following questions?

How can I learn more details about my ancestors' lives?

How can I discover more about where they lived?

What would their town or village have looked like?

Who were the previous occupants of a property?

How can I discover what life was like for them?

What were the origins of this area?

How has it changed?



The answers may lie with **Explore the Past**

Although there are books written about Worcestershire, the county is made up of many small communities which have little or no information published about them. For these areas, you need to go back to **original documents, maps, photographs and archaeological information** to make the history and archaeology of the community come alive.

This guide has been produced to **explain what records and services are available to help you in your quest**. It is a starting point, helping you to discover the evidence, highlight the clues revealed, interpret the information and, most importantly, know where to look next.



We hold over

12 miles
of documents,

dating from the 12th to the 21st centuries, relating to the people, buildings and landscapes of historic Worcestershire. We also have **over 60,000 records of the archaeology of the county** from the Ice Ages to the present.

As our holdings are so large, we have included links to [our online catalogue and other resources](#) to help you pinpoint which documents may be useful to your research. Not all our holdings are available on our online catalogue, but this guide, in conjunction with the catalogues we have made available on [The National Archives website](#), will help you make a more comprehensive search to find what you're looking for.

We're here to help

If you are having problems finding what you require please [contact us](#). We are very happy to offer advice on sources and provide information about our holdings free of charge.

We can also undertake limited research or extract information from documents, and for this service we charge a fee to cover staff time. Please see our [enquiries policy](#) for further details.

Our [Digitisation Service](#) can also supply digital images of the collections, subject to copyright. If you have trouble deciphering the handwriting, or if the document is in Latin, we can translate and transcribe these for you to go alongside the original image. For information about these services and the fees we charge, please [see our website](#).

Over the course of the next few pages we have highlighted the resources most commonly used to research the history of people and places in Worcestershire.

We hope you find it useful.



Section 3

Maps and plans

Maps and plans give an immediate feel of what places looked like in the past and are used by both local and family historians. Our records cover the City of Worcester as well as parishes, towns and villages in the County of Worcestershire.



The maps we hold show countryside, towns, roads, waterways, building footprints and the boundaries of property.

This information is useful for understanding:

Community

Placing a property or family in its community context

Area

Understanding how an area developed and grew over time

Roads

Tracing the development of roads and railways

Landscape

Tracking changes in landscapes over time

Estates

Showing the boundaries of **large estates** for which we often hold the archives

Land

Understanding how land was used, what industries were located in the area and how these shaped the community



Accessing our maps

A list of the maps and plans we hold is available on [our website](#). Please note that as we are constantly receiving new deposits of records, this list may not include all our holdings, and some types of maps may be listed elsewhere on the website (e.g. Tithe maps). **Please [contact us](#) if you cannot find a map that you are interested in**, or if you have a specific query. We will respond within seven working days to confirm whether we hold anything of interest and give information on how it can be accessed.

If you have identified an item of interest on the list and would like a copy please [contact us](#) for a quote. We can also provide a geo-referenced image of maps in our collection (subject to copyright) for use in [GIS software](#) – please [contact us](#) for details of this service.

Any copies supplied and fees charged are provided based on personal research use only and not for commercial use or publication. If you do want to publish, please [contact us for further advice](#).

Most commonly used maps

Our maps and plans are hugely popular amongst researchers. Below is information on the most frequently used types of maps and plans, with the most recently produced collection listed first.

Ordnance Survey maps

[More](#)

Tithe maps

[More](#)

Enclosure maps

[More](#)

Estate maps

[More](#)

Other maps & plans of interest

[More](#)