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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

Norcestershire's Archive and Archaeology Team

## **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?

Who were the

previous occupants

of a property?

What would their town or village have looked like?

How can I discover what life was like for them?

How has it changed?

What were the origins of this area?

# 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.

## 

dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> 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 <u>contact us</u>. 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 <u>enquiries policy</u> 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.

## Local Studies & Archaeology Reference Library

At the start of any research project, whether about a family, a building or a place, our first suggestion is to read up on information already published.

We hold an extensive Local Studies and Archaeology Reference Library containing approximately

## 20,000 books,

including texts about people and places in Worcestershire, as well as some of the crafts and trades for which the county is famed.

### The library contains:



Biographies of local notable people and families



Topics such as military history, crime and transport, including rivers, railways and canals



Information on local industries, including light manufacture, needles, gloving, iron founding, carpets, and local agriculture



Volumes about sport and leisure activities in the county



## There are also key publications on the history and archaeology of Worcestershire, including:

TRANSACTIONS OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



THIRD SERIES VOL. 24

The journal Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society, which contains reports on archaeological fieldwork and on the study of historic buildings

#### THE VICTORIA HISTORY

OF THE COUNTIES OF ENGLAND

WORCESTERSHIRE



THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH REPRINTED FROM THE ORIGONAL IDDTION OF 1913 BY DAWSONS OF PALL MALL FOLKESTORIE & LONDON 1971

#### Victoria History of the County of Worcester,

part of the Victoria County History series intended to produce a history of each English county. Five Worcestershire volumes were produced between 1901 and 1926, capturing many aspects of county life

Although many of these are widely available, some are written by committed enthusiasts and have very small print runs. In some cases, **we hold the only copy of an out-of-print item.**  The books are listed on the **Worcestershire Library Catalogue** and we are happy to provide information from them or copies from particular volumes for a small charge (copyright restrictions may apply). Please <u>contact us</u> for further information if you would like to use this service.

# 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

**Landscape** Tracking changes in landscapes over time **Area** Understanding how an area developed and grew over time

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

Tracing the development of roads and railways

#### Land

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



## Accessing our maps

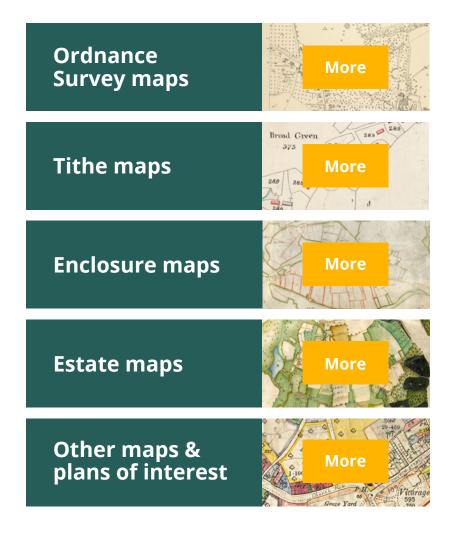
A list of the maps and plans we hold is available on our website. Please note that as we are constantly receiving new deposits of records, this list may not include all our holdings, and some types of maps may be listed elsewhere on the website (e.g. Tithe maps). Please contact us if you cannot find 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 <u>contact us for further advice.</u>

#### 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.



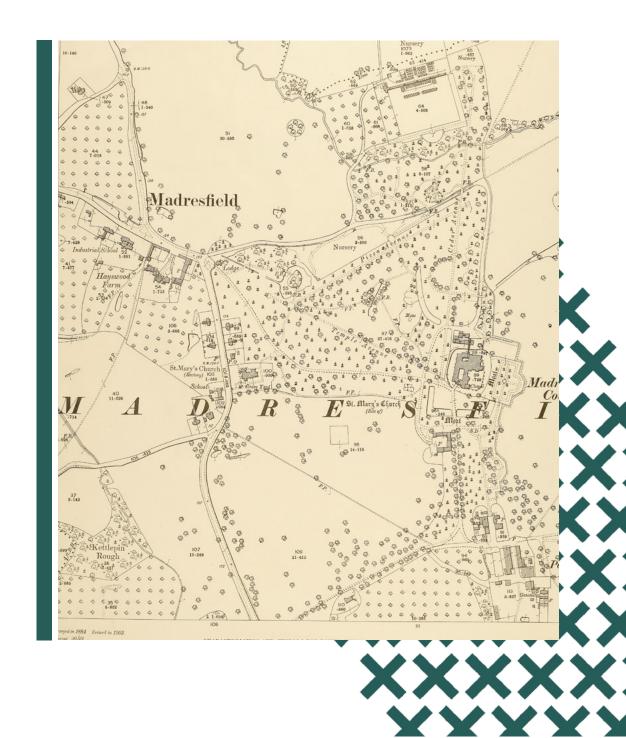
## Ordnance Survey maps

#### These are the maps we suggest looking at first, starting with the most recent and working backwards.

They were created on behalf of the British Government with the aim of mapping the country for military purposes. Detailed Ordnance Survey (OS) maps began around 1880, and **Worcestershire was first mapped in 1884.** 

The county was covered at the scale of 6 inches to the mile and 25 inches to the mile. **The 6-inch plans show a larger area than the 25-inch, but not in so much** 

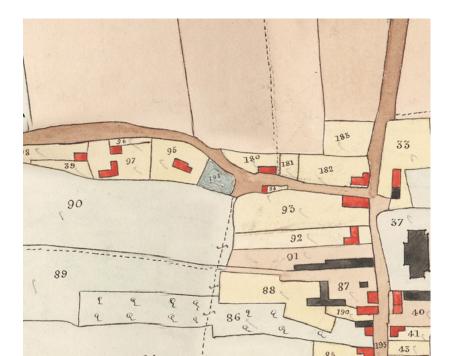
**detail.** The country was resurveyed around 1900, 1927 and 1945. Around 1950 different scales were created, and periodic revisions continue to this day.



## **Tithe maps**

Tithe maps were produced **slightly earlier than OS maps**, with the majority drawn up in the 1840s and 1850s following the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836.

Tithes were payments to the Church of England and were originally paid 'in kind', with goods such as crops and animals. As this became harder to administer, the 1836 Act required payment in cash. To calculate the amount owed by each landowner, **tithe maps and apportionments were drawn up for each <u>parish</u> in England and Wales.** 



The maps show the parcels of land in each parish, and each parcel was allocated a number. The accompanying apportionment (or award) lists information about each piece of land, including:

#### The name of the land owner

#### The name of the occupier

#### The name of the field

(for example Limebatch, Hop Yard, Three Cornered Orchard, Flaxlands, etc.), which can give an indication of previous land use or physical features on the land

#### The acreage & use

(for example pasture, woodland, crops, orchard, arable, meadow and garden)

#### The amount of rent charged

These documents can be used to help trace:

> The actual house your family were living in

The extent of the land they owned or rented

What that land was used for

Buildings which they would have used such as the village pubs, shops and blacksmiths

The landscape they would have seen such as orchards, meadows, woodlands and land used for crops A list of tithe plans we hold is available on **our website**, where you can also **access tithe maps online**.

You can also download a quick guide to help you find what you're looking for.

Download quick guide

Tithe plans and awards were not produced for every parish. For example, some urban areas and some communities where properties were already owned by the church were not liable to duty and so are not mapped. If this is the case, useful information might be available on the Enclosure plans.

## Enclosure plans

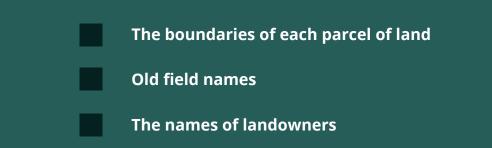
Enclosure plans were not created for every parish, but where they do exist they take you back a little further in time. They are often the **first accurate mapping of a particular area** and include much valuable information about the rural landscape.

Between 1760 and 1860 a series of Acts of Parliament enclosed open fields and common lands in the country, **creating legal property rights to land that was previously considered common**. Once enclosed, use of the land became restricted to the owner, and it ceased to be common land for communal use. This was the process that ended the ancient system of crop farming in open fields.

A Parliamentary Enclosure Act was necessary to allow these changes to happen and commissioners were appointed to work out the details. The documents produced provide a record of their decisions. This decision, called the award, was usually accompanied by a plan and **details of the land and the owners.** 



Whilst the plan provides the visual information about the process, the awards give details of:



#### For a list of the enclosure plans we hold please

See our website

## Estate maps

Like most rural counties, Worcestershire was home to great families who played an important part in the local community.

They owned large estates consisting of buildings, land, woodlands and parks, with hundreds of tenants and employees.

In Worcestershire some of the **most notable landowners were:** 

Earl of Coventry, Croome Court Earl Beauchamp, Madresfield Court Lord Sandys of Ombersley Lord Cobham of Hagley Hall The Vernon family of Hanbury Hall



To help with the administration of their estates, landowners often commissioned detailed maps.



These were very expensive and so also served as statements of wealth and power. Estate maps can be very inconsistent, often varying in scale and in accuracy. When using them **it is important to understand why any map was made and to interpret its content with care**. Detail which was not relevant to their purpose was often omitted or certain features were overemphasised to suit the whims of the landowner.

Even the wealthiest landowners may not have owned every plot of land in a parish, and may not have been willing to pay for an accurate survey of the land they did not own. **The result can be a map with 'missing' parts,** like an incomplete jigsaw.

Despite their inconsistencies, estate maps are very useful to show the extent of the land and the features. The documents that often accompanied these maps (referred to as Terriers) give further information about the land, including **tenants, the rent paid and details of what the land was being used for.** 



## **Other maps & plans of interest**

After studying the maps described above, you may wish to investigate whether we hold any of the types of maps described below for your area. These are less commonly used, but can provide really useful information.

#### Fire insurance maps and plans (Goad maps)

These maps were originally created for insurance companies and fire brigades by the Charles E Goad Company in the late 19th and early 20th century. They record the footprint of a building, its occupants and addresses, and information about its use.



Because the maps were created for insurance companies and fire brigades, they also included **information about:** 

Construction materials Fire hazards (Including chemicals & ovens) Water supply locations (For firefighting)

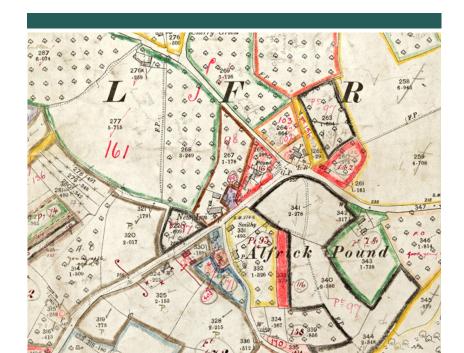
These documents provide an interesting snapshot of urban areas at a particular time in history.

#### We hold these maps for Worcester City, Evesham and Kidderminster

**Contact us for information** 

## 1910 land tax survey

In 1910 an Act of Parliament initiated a survey of all the land in the United Kingdom to evaluate the amount of tax owed to the government for the rise in value of their land. The aim was for private owners to surrender to the state part of the increase in value of their land resulting from expenditure of public money – this might include gains resulting from better roads or public services.



The resulting documents (maps and valuation books) contain a **great deal of information on who owned land and how it was used.** 

#### The documents provide:

- Names of occupiers
- Name and residence of owner
- Description and location of the property
- Estimated extent of the property, as determined by the surveyor
- Gross annual value and rateable value (its open market rental value)
- Deductions made, for example for buildings, machinery, crops growing on the land, fixed charges on the land, public rights of way or rights of common etc
- Information for various values, including any capital expenditure, site value, the value of any minerals on the land and the value of agriculture
- Comments concerning the property

## The evidence of archaeology and historic buildings

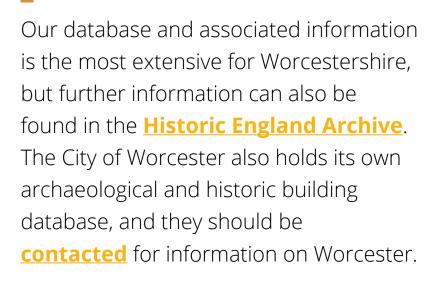
If you are interested in a particular area of Worcestershire then we can help. We hold archaeological records which span from the earliest human occupation in the county around 300,000 years ago right up to the 20th century.

## **Records span from** 300,000 years ago

Our database, which is known as the Historic Environment Record (HER), is an index of archaeological information for the county and includes:

Monuments **Excavations Historic buildings Battlefields Objects** 

**Buried sites** 





Environmental evidence. such as seeds, bones, pollen etc.



#### Our database is constantly being updated and at present it contains:

### Over 32,000

records of above- and below-ground archaeology

## Over **8,000**

records of archaeological investigations

## <sup>Over</sup> 17,000

records of historic buildings and ancient landscapes

## Over **23,000**

records of references such as archaeological reports, articles, books and photographs



It is linked to a **GIS system** which allows the extent of archaeological sites and the location of historic buildings to be mapped spatially.

#### There are many ways in which our database can be searched:

We can provide information in the form of a report which usually covers a 500-metre radius around the focus of your research e.g. a village.

Parish reports can also be provided and both options can be ordered **via our website**.

We can also provide reports which focus on a specific area of interest. You may be researching a family member who worked in a Worcestershire-based industry such as carpet manufacture or metal working or who belonged to a particular religious group, and want to know what records we have of this across the county.

<u>Please contact us to discuss your</u> <u>particular requirements.</u>

## What's in the report?

Our reports are produced electronically and include:



#### A summary of the information found

Modern maps of the area showing location of our records



All individual database records contained within your search area

Modern mapping in GIS format, if required

#### The report on its own is very useful, but **each individual** record in the report will direct you to other sources of information.

Many of these are published works but others only exist in a few copies and can be found on our **Online Archaeology Library.** 

Other sources provided may be links to websites of **other organisations that hold information relevant to your search**. A great many sources of further information are in paper format only, including **newspaper clippings, letters or images.** If you have trouble locating one of these sources please <u>contact us</u> and, where copyright allows, we can provide you with digital copies.

For a more detailed report or images of a building, a village or an area of a town that you are interested in please <u>contact us</u> for a quote. Examples of reports can be found on our <u>website</u>.

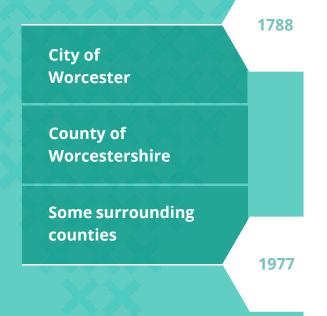
## What if there's not much information on your area?

Occasionally there won't be very much information in your area of interest because little archaeological work, building recording, or historical research has been carried out at that location. However, this does not mean that the area is not interesting, and **our expert team will assess the potential for any surviving archaeology** in the report we provide.

## **Trade directories**

Trade directories offer a fantastic snapshot of a city, parish or town at a given time. The volumes are considered the precursors to modern day telephone directories, but they contain much more information.

#### We hold trade directories for:



Each trade directory entry starts with a short history and description of the place and its prominent buildings, as well as any notable landscape and building features. Kelly's Directory of Worcestershire for 1912, for example, tells us that 'the views from the vicarage and Cropthorne Court are extremely beautiful' and that the iron bridge linking it to Fladbury was erected in 1889-91. This section also tells us of institutions in the area, such as schools, charities, hospitals and workhouses, along with details of public transport timetables and even what time the post arrives.

The second part of each entry is a list of the names and the addresses of private residents, which are likely to be notable figures such as the local landowners and the vicar.

This is followed by details of commercial activity in the area, including the name and occupation of some of the inhabitants, for example the local shopkeepers, publicans, blacksmiths and other trades. This is unlikely to include all private residents or commercial activity, as a fee was charged for entry in the trade directory and not everyone could afford it.

182 BENTLEY'S	DIRECTORY OF
182 BENTLEY'S	DIRECTORY OF
	Pemberton Isaac, 17, High-st.
Baldwyn John, 98, High-street	Pemberton Sarah, 15, Broad-st.
Stinton John, (piano forte tuner)	PAWNBROKERS.
Sidbury	Haywood Richard, 8, High-st.
PAINTERS,	Walter James, Corn Market,
PLUMBERS, AND	and 36, Broad-street
GLAZIERS.	und bo, proutonet
Adams C. (painter) George's	PERFUMERS.
buildings Foregate-st.	Birley G. and Co. 18, Foregate-
Anderson John, (painter) 59,	street
Bourne W. 104, High-street	Bosley Robert, 88, High-street
Brock Thomas Tallow-hill	Vernal James, 71, High-street
Chambers Thomas, 76, High-st.	Viney John, 26, Cross
Close James, Sidbury-st.	PAPER RULERS,
Coldwell Henry, 50, Broad-st	MACHINE.
Constance R. 5, Newport-street	Condie David, Mendicity office.
Corner William, College-street	Blackfriars
Cotterell William, 14, High-st.	Freeman Edward, 102, High-st.
Davis Jeremiah, Angel-street	recommendation real, rights.
Davis William, Lovesgrove	PHYSICIANS.
Farley James, New-street	Hastings Charles, 48, Foregate-
Fildes G. and J. St. John's	Malden J. 51, Foregate-st. [st.
Garratt Richard, 74, High-street	
Harrington T. 47, Broad-street Hodges Thomas (painter) Sid-	Nash James, 13, High-street
bury-place (walk	PLATE GLASS
Howell James (painter) Factory	FACTORS.
Hughes William, New-st.	
Jevons S. and T. Lowesmoor	Freame Ann & Charles, 11, St.
Merryday C. 4, Newport-street	Swithin-street Sterry George, 42, High-st.
Pressdee T. (painter) Charles-st.	Sterry George, 42, migu-st.
Price C. (painter) Sansom-walk	PORCELAIN
Raven Samuel, Bull-ring	MANUFACTURERS.
Scott William, Mealcheapen st.	Chamberlain W. & Co., Diglis,
Spicer John, Silver-st.	shew rooms, 59, High-st. &
Skinner James, Copenhagen-st. Stephens E. Copenhagen-street	155, New Bond-st., London
Taylor T. (painter) Cripplegate	Flight, Barr, & Barr, Royal
Williams Thomas, Pierpoint-st.	rorcenam works, show
Willis Herbert, Tything-street	rooms 45, High-st., and 1,
	Coventry-st. London
PATTEN AND CLOG	Grainger and Co., Factory walk
MAKERS.	shew rooms 17, Foregate
Bond James, Sidbury-street	PRINTERS, COPPER-
Bridgwater S. 2, St. Swithin-st.	PLATE.
Brookes T. 50, Tything-street Brookes T. F. 14, Broad-street	
Green William, New-street	Condie David, Blackfriars
Jackson T. Copenhagen-street	Deighton Anne, 53, High-st.
Jenkins William, Sidbury-st.	Edward George, Little Angel-st.
st,	Stratford Thomas, N. 5, Cross

Full details of the directories are to be found on the **Worcestershire**. Library Catalogue. If you would like to use our enquiry service to look up information in the trade directories, or would like copies of relevant parts of a directory, please contact us.

**Contact us** 

## Census

Censuses of the population are a very popular resource for local and family historians alike. With the exception of 1941, they have been taken in England and Wales every 10 years since 1801. The 1841 census was the first to list the names of individuals.



Between 1801 and 1831, the census was statistical only, with **no information collected about individuals**. Between 1851 and 1901 the census includes **fuller details of relationships** and **place of birth** as well as **any disabilities**.

The 1841 census includes brief details such as **name**, **age** (rounded down to the nearest five years for those aged 15 or over) **trade** and **place of origin**. Family relationships were not given. The 1911 census noted the **number** of children born and the **number** of those still living, as well as how long couples had been married. This census was the first to be filled

out by the householder themselves, rather than the enumerator, and a **signature** is also included.

1801 1831 1841 1901 1911

#### Censuses are invaluable to any historian as:



- They record the names of the **ordinary men, women and children** who are missing from most historical sources
- They contain **personal details that are very difficult to get elsewhere,** including occupation and familial relationships
- Whole households are listed, so you can **find siblings and other relations**
- As they were taken every ten years you will be able to use them to trace **who lived in an area** over a long period of time



The description of the route taken around the district to collect information gives the researcher **a sense of the local geography** 



Any **increase or decrease in population** can be determined and analysed to find the cause



They can be used to draw conclusions about **changes in the size and makeup of family units** over time



The **social composition of an area** can be traced by looking at the profession of individuals, and the degree of mobility in and between areas can potentially be determined Access to UK census material is restricted to information over 100 years old, **so 1911 is currently the most recent census available.** 

The Worcestershire census, 1841–1911, is available on microfilm at The Hive, and also free of charge via **Ancestry.co.uk** onsite at The Hive, Worcester.

Ancestry can be accessed on a subscription basis if you cannot visit us.







Most of the Irish census records have not survived, but the 1901 and 1911 censuses are available via the National Archives of Ireland

Explore

## Photographs, prints & engravings

These are a very visual record of this history of people and places.

We hold the Worcestershire Photographic Survey (WPS), which is a collection of over

85,000

#### Photographs

- Photographs of engravings
- Prints of the county



Photographs, prints and engravings are excellent resources for tracing how an area has changed over time and what people, their homes and their communities looked like

The WPS collection ranges in date from the **16th to the 21st century**, with the majority from the late 19th century onwards. A list of what we hold in the WPS can be found on our website, and there is a separate list for **aerial photographs.** 



In addition to the WPS we hold thousands more photographs elsewhere in our collections.

The images themselves are not available to view online but they can be studied on-site at The Hive. Alternatively, subject to copyright restrictions, digital copies can be purchased.

#### To view a photograph on-site or to purchase a copy we need to know the following:

- Reference number
- Name of parish or street



- Date
- Name of copyright holder

Once you have these details, you can place your order on our website. If the index does not give you enough information to decide what to order please **contact us.** 

#### **Place order**

## Newspapers

Newspapers are a marvellous source of information about events, social activity, crime, politics and opinion. As literacy levels increased, so did the demand for newspapers, and local tradesmen cashed in by advertising profusely within them.

#### Newspapers provide both international and

county news and can be used to find out about:

- The business of community life, for example sporting and social events, local council meetings and other activities
- Local reactions to national events
- Local events, especially scandalous ones
- The lives of important local people, particularly through obituaries
- Reports from the local criminal court, indicating criminal activity in the area and the associated punishments
- Inquests into deaths
- What businesses were in the area
- Advertisements, showing products available for purchase
- Local and family announcements, such as births, marriages, deaths, obituaries and appointments to community roles



In the early 20th century the Berrows Worcester Journal also published **a separate pictorial supplement.** In these volumes, there are:

Photographs of local events

Images of soldiers who went to war, 1914 to 1918.

We hold copies of the Berrows Worcester Journal for the period 1712 to 2012. We also have copies of The Worcester Evening News and runs of several other local newspapers, although these are limited.





Our **website** gives full details of the extent of our holdings, which are available on microfilm at The Hive. You can request searches of the newspapers by contacting us.

**Contact us** 

# **Church of England records**

In the past, the Church of England played a prominent role in the local community. Church responsibilities included maintaining highways, upholding the law (through the parish constables) and looking after their poor through the payment of rates. This wide-ranging role of the various layers of the church structure created a vast amount of documentation relating to the parish and its parishioners, and we hold records for the <u>Diocese of Worcester.</u>



### The most commonly used sources within these collections are:

All of which are detailed below, as well as some less frequently used but nonetheless useful resources.



# Records of the parish

#### Parish registers are the **records of baptisms, marriages and burials conducted in Anglican churches.**

We hold the registers for the Diocese of Worcester from the mid-16th century onwards. A list of the registers that we hold can be found on **our website**. Please **contact us** if the register that you are interested in is not on the list, as we frequently receive new deposits of parish records.



The registers are **vital records for constructing your family tree** as they provide information about life events before the civil registration of births, marriages and deaths started in 1837. Early parish registers may contain minimal information, but from the early 19th century onwards they contain much more detail.

# Douember 1644

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### **Baptism registers**

These are a really useful source of family information such as:

The names of the baptised child's parents



Where they lived

The father's profession

They are also useful for **assessing changes in professions in the community**, and can also be **an indication of changing social attitudes** through the levels of illegitimate births listed. The comments of the vicars in some of the registers can also offer a glimpse into social attitudes at the time!



## **Marriage registers**

These show information about the people involved, including:

- The names of both parties
- Their ages at marriage, or in the earlier registers whether they were 'of age' (over 21)
- Which parish they were from
- In later entries, the name of the father of each party and the profession of those marrying
- Whether the parties could sign their names (indicated by a signature rather than an 'X')

Like baptism registers, marriage registers can also reveal **information about the community** and social changes that took place. This could include trends in the age people were when they married, levels of literacy, changes in professional status etc.



# **Marriage licence registers**

Then, as now, couples could marry by banns (an announcement in church of the intention to marry) or by licence. Couples married by licence would have required sufficient finances, as a licence was more expensive than banns.

Parishioners would choose to marry by licence:



- If the marriage needed to be 'speedy'
- If the parish church was not available
- As a status symbol for the wealthy who preferred to keep their plans private rather than announced to all at church.



Someone on the groom's side, often his father, would be required to stand as guarantor to obtain a licence.

Registers of licences were compiled as part of this process and these are available at The Hive to research. Please <u>contact us</u> if you would like us to undertake a search on your behalf.

# **Burial registers**

These show that a funeral service took place in the church. They include:

The date of burial

The name and age of the deceased

Where they lived

As well as ancestral research, burial registers lend themselves to studies of the community, including **infant and maternal mortality rates, outbreaks of diseases and the average age at death** for certain periods.

Parish registers are available to view on microfilm at The Hive. Copies can be ordered subject to our **<u>enquiries policy</u>**.

Please **contact us** to place an order.

# **Other parish records**

# **Vestry minutes**

From the 16th century onwards the records of the Vestry, as the administrative body for the parish, provide a valuable insight into community life. The minutes often contain lists of those attending Vestry meetings and their role in the church, and record decisions made about things like:

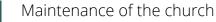


The giving of poor relief









Information about bastardy cases

# **Poor Law papers**

Before the New Poor Law of 1834 each parish was responsible for looking after their poor. Documents relating to this responsibility, where they survive, can be found in the parish collections. These include:

**Accounts of the Overseers of the Poor**, which show who was in receipt of assistance from the parish.

**Poor Rate books,** which list the parishioners liable to pay the poor rate. This was a tax on property, which was then used to provide poor relief.

**Settlement and examination papers,** which confirm (or otherwise) that a claimant was entitled to assistance from the parish. These often give details of family members, previous occupations and previous places of residence.

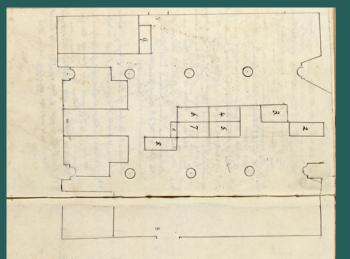
**Bastardy cases,** which resulted from the examination of an unmarried mother to prevent both her and the baby becoming chargeable to the parish. The putative father was then asked to sign a bastardy bond to pay maintenance.

**Apprenticeship indentures,** which bound children to a master or mistress to learn a trade. They were mostly apprenticed into husbandry or housewifery. A list of apprenticeship indentures is available on our **website.** 

# Graveyard records

# **Graveyard plans**

Some churches, whose churchyards are now no longer used for burials, have deposited plans at The Hive. **Contact us** for more information on these.



It's hereby certify that the accompanying is a correct copy of the ground than of the Church of I Faith, boorbury, shewing the position of the grandstreed lying an ander the present floor in the original site ; and also of the moniplion thereon as

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#### **Monumental Inscriptions**

Also known as **Memorial Inscriptions**, these are books created by volunteers who set out to record all the inscriptions on the tombstone memorials in the graveyards and churches of Worcestershire. These books are listed on the **Worcestershire Library Catalogue**, and we can undertake a search of them on your behalf. Please **contact us** and let us know which graveyard you would like us to search.

# Records of the Diocese of Worcester

## **Bishops' transcripts**

From 1538 parishes were required to **record all baptisms, marriages, and burials.** These entries were often made on loose sheets of parchment, which were sometimes lost or destroyed. In 1597 Elizabeth I ordered that these records should not only be recorded in a bound register (the parish registers), but that an annual transcript should be copied and sent to the **Bishop**. In theory, these records should mirror the entries found in the parish registers, but **they're still worth looking at as an alternative source,** as:

- They may cover gaps in the original parish registers
- They are available if the original registers are in a fragile condition
- They may be written in a different hand and so can be useful where there is difficulty in interpreting handwriting

#### However, they are not without difficulty, for the following reasons

- They can be as fragile or as damaged as the original registers
- There can be differences between the Bishops' transcripts and the parish register entries and handwriting can be illegible
- Very few survive before 1608
- As the office of Bishop was abolished during the Commonwealth (1646–1660) there are no transcripts for this period
- The transcripts are grouped together by **Deanery** rather than parish. **Contact us** for help in determining the Deanery and we can help progress your research

To find out which Bishops' transcripts we hold, please refer to <u>our website</u>. You can request a search or a copy of a record by <u>contacting us</u>.

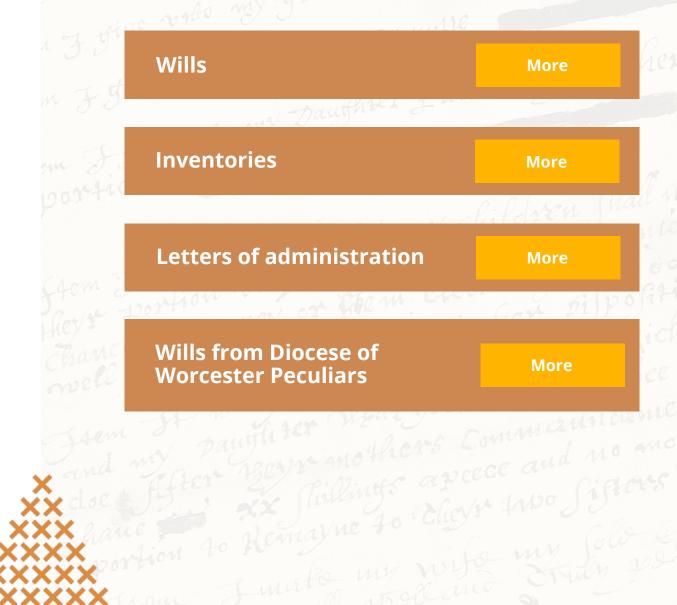
# Wills & probate records

Before 1858 the church was responsible for probate in the Diocese. As a result, **we hold thousands of wills and other probate documents** 

of Worcestershire people, dating from as early as the 15th century.

In 1858 probate became a civil responsibility, and wills were proved by the Probate Registry. We hold copies of wills from this date to 1928.

#### The main types of probate records are:



# Wills

Legal documents in which individuals record their last wishes and **describe the rights of others over their property** after their death.

These contain:

- Names of family members and other people associated with the deceased
- Details of the occupation of the deceased, which can be helpful in charting the growth of a community or a trade
- Names and descriptions of the contents of a property
- Value of belongings
- Descriptions of property sizes

Insight into the actions of the deceased, such as whether they gave charitable bequests

# Inventories

Until 1782 it was obligatory for every executor or administrator to return to the registry of the court an **inventory of the deceased's goods.** 

These records have not always survived, but where they have, they provide **fascinating insights into the life of the deceased person** and a room-byroom description of the contents of the property.

These documents give **personal information on how people lived** – they list beds, cushions, kitchenware, cloth and spices, and even livestock.

hoora



#### Letters of Administration (Admons)

If a person died without making a will they are described as 'intestate', and in these cases the court could grant letters of administration which **appointed individuals to administer the estate.** 

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# **Wills from Diocese of Worcester Peculiars**

Some parishes in the Diocese of Worcester were outside the jurisdiction of the <u>Archdeacon</u> or the <u>Bishop</u>. These parishes were known as Peculiars, and were under the management of the <u>Dean and Chapter</u> of Worcester and others, including an Archbishop, another Bishop or Lord of the <u>Manor</u>.

People living within a Peculiar could have their wills proved in the relevant Peculiar Court. A list of wills from the Diocese of Worcester Peculiars is available on **our website**. Between 1653 and 1660 all wills were proved in London and details of these wills can be found at **The National Archives**.

For wills proved after 1928 you will need to apply to the **Probate Office.** 



# Accessing the parish & diocesan records

You can find out what records we have for each parish using the following:



Vestry minutes, Poor Law papers & graveyard plans

Please see The National Archives website for lists of Worcestershire holdings, and then contact us for enquiries, copies or transcription requests.

**The National Archives** 

Contact us



See the list

**Contact us** 

**Contact us** 



# Records of other denominations

As well as the records of the Church of England, we also hold the records of some other Christian denominations, including Quaker, Catholic, Methodist and Baptist.

Our collections from other denominations can contain records of baptisms, marriages and burials, while Catholic records sometimes provide registers of confirmations and first communicants. There are also records relating to the administration of the church or chapel as well as published items such as newsletters.

Coverage can be patchy as there is **no requirement to deposit such records with local record offices.** Records may still be held at the church or chapel, held centrally, (for example Catholic records at the **Archdiocese of Birmingham Archives**) or at **The National Archives.** For details of our holdings please see our **website**.

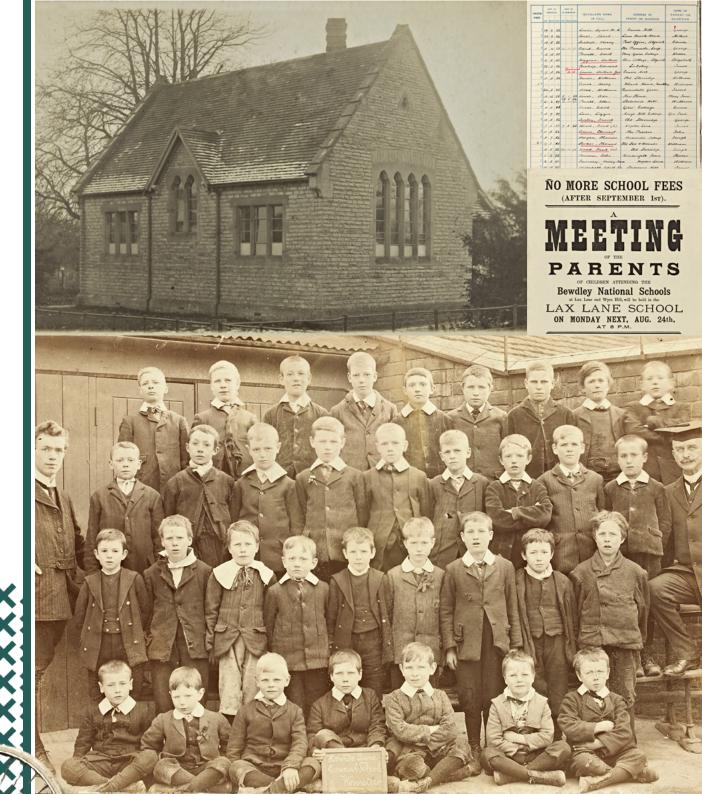


# **School records**

Compulsory education in England and Wales was introduced in 1870, much later than most researchers expect. It set the framework for the compulsory schooling of all children between the ages of 5 and 13. Before this date, the education of children was not mandatory and usually consisted of a private tutor, public (fee-paying) school or charity and church schools.

Few documents exist from before 1870 but after that date there are large numbers of **log books**, admission registers, punishment books and other documents in

our collection.



# Log books

Log books were kept by the Head Teacher who had to write an entry at least once a week. The log books **do not list pupil names,** but they do give a fascinating insight into school and community life.

These can include all of the following insights

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#### The number of children present

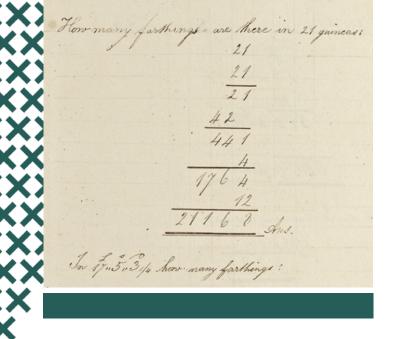
and some reasons for absences. Entries highlight the impact of epidemics, such as measles or typhus, upon the school population, or even the weather.



# A very wet day and consequently a small school.

Recorded by the Head Teacher of St Peter's Girls' School in Worcester

In rural schools the seasonal absences often show how much the children were involved in working upon the land, demonstrating how vital child labour was to the economy of the area. In rural areas, the summer holidays were staggered according to whether the harvest was expected to be late or early.



#### A record of social events

such as fairs and parish picnics

#### The curriculum

and the topics covered, showing how the pupils were educated to fulfil what was seen to be their allotted role in life

# Reports following the yearly inspections

As conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectors, these highlight the achievements of pupils and show the priorities of the inspectors in terms of education

#### Details of charity within the community such as:

Accounts of local dignitaries providing gifts and food for a Christmas celebration

Visits by local ladies bringing bolts of cloth for the girls to make clothes for their families and representatives of the police bringing pairs of boots for distribution amongst the poor The church putting on picnics and outings for the children

At St Peter's Boys' School, Worcester, in March 1886 23 boys 'had free dinners at the Coffee Tavern through the kindness of F. Parkes who proposes to give them three times a week during the present depression'

#### **Glimpses of school life**

For example, in December 1873 George Handley of Kidderminster Board Infants' School was severely punished for:

#### 'taking one of the teachers' dinners and eating the whole lot of it'

and in April 1875 William Underwood was sent home to get washed...

#### **Punishment books**

These can give a vivid picture of the type of behaviour that was expected of children, and the severity of punishments can vary from school to school.

Entries can provide an **insight into the social hierarchy of the area**, who would be called upon to approach the parents concerning certain incidents of poor behaviour by the pupils. Parents did not always show the degree of deference to authority that one would expect...

# Worcestershire admission registers

These list the children at the school, their parents' names, their address, and when they left the school (often including the reason, such as moving away or falling ill). These registers, to 1914, can be accessed via the **Find My Past website**. This is a subscription site but can be accessed for free at The Hive.

#### Accessing the school records

Please use **our website** to see what school records we hold, and contact us if you would like us to undertake a search on your behalf.

**Contact us** 

#### Please note:

Some school records contain personal information. In compliance with the Data Protection Act there is a **closure period of 100 years applicable to any school records containing personal information**, including admission registers and log books.

If you wish to view any school records that are less than 100 years old please contact us and staff will be happy to advise on a caseby-case basis. You can find out more about our procedure for accessing school records in our online guide.

Download our online guide



# **Electoral registers**

A great deal of political change took place during the 18th and 19th centuries. A series of Acts of Parliament extended the right to vote to increasing numbers of the population. The 1832 Act extended the vote to males aged 21 years and over who satisfied a property qualification. This meant that 3% of the population were eligible to vote.

1832

1867

1884

1918

1928

1969

The 1867 Act doubled the number of those eligible to vote by including working class males over 21 who were householders, or lodgers who paid £10 per year in rural areas and £12 in the towns.

Under the 1884 Act, all males over 21 who were householders or lodgers who paid over £10 per year became eligible to vote.

> In 1918, for the first time, some women were able to vote. This Act extended the vote to all males over 21 as well as to females over 30 who were householders, or wives of householders or graduates.

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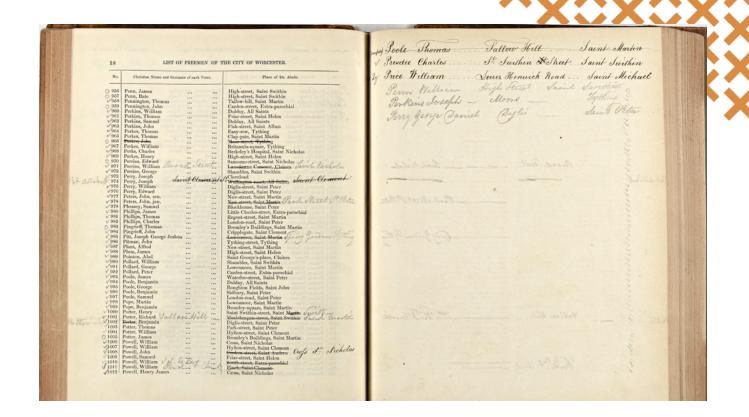
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In 1928, all women and men over the age of 21 became eligible to vote.

The voting age for all was reduced to 18 years.

The name and address of each person entitled to vote were listed in a **series of electoral registers**, which were published for each electoral area. The registers also list their qualification for voting, which can be a good indication of an individual's wealth.



Electoral registers were produced annually, apart from the war years 1916–17 and 1940–44. Following both wars registers of absent voters were produced, which included those away from home still involved in military service. The name, rank, regiment and service number are provided.

Information gleaned from absent voter registers can be extremely useful, as it can direct you towards the military records available on **Ancestry**, a subscription website, where you may be able to obtain service records.

A list of electoral registers held at The Hive is available on our website. Please **contact the team** if you would like us to look up an individual in an electoral register on your behalf. Just tell us the name of the person you are interested in and give details of where they were living.

# Records of the Court of the Quarter Sessions

Whether you're a local historian or you're tracking your family, these records can give a valuable understanding of the structure and administration of the county as well as providing fascinating insights into criminal activity and subsequent punishment. We hold records for two courts in Worcestershire: the Quarter Sessions for the County of Worcestershire and for the City of Worcester. The courts were established by an Act in 1361, which stated that Justices of the Peace – usually wealthy landowners – should meet to conduct local business four times a year, once a quarter:



Quarter Sessions papers include all kinds of interesting information, from criminal activity to details of premises licensed as alehouses. The records of the Quarter Sessions are incredibly varied, and could include:

Administrative records	Judicial records
<u>Alehouse licenses</u>	Sessions files
<u>Militia lists</u>	Calendars of prisoners
<u>Aliens</u> ' certificates	Papers relating to the removal of the poor
Canal and railway plans	Bonds for the transportation of convicted criminals
Tax returns (land tax and hearth tax)	Debtors' papers
<u>Gamekeepers' deputations</u>	<u>Recognizances</u>
List of men eligible to serve on a jury	Bills of Indictment
Information relating to the maintenance of highways	<u>Constables' presentments</u>

Records of the <u>Worcester City Quarter Sessions are listed on our catalogue</u>, and the County of Worcestershire collection (1591-1841) can be found by searching on <u>The National Archives'</u> website either by an individual's name or item type. Our <u>website</u> includes lists of those individuals presented to court in the years 1830 and 1850–1854. Please <u>contact us</u> if you would like us to undertake a limited search of these records on your behalf or if you would like to order copies.

# Copyright

# Archive collections

#### We can supply single copies of most items in our care if the copies are for personal research use.

When placing an order, customers are requested to sign a copyright declaration form.

On some occasions, **the permission of the copyright owner may be required before copies can be supplied,** and you will be advised if this is the case. It will be up to you to locate the copyright holder and provide evidence of the permission, but we will advise as far as we are able.

If you're obtaining copies for use in publications rather than for personal use, please <u>contact us</u> and we can advise further.

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# Archaeology online library collection

Many of the sources used within the Historic Environment Record (HER) are reports produced through the modern planning and development process and are not formally published. Worcestershire HER holds its library online.

If we have provided you with a HER search in PDF format, direct links to these reports are included as each is referenced. **Please take note of the <u>copyright statement</u>** before downloading the reports from this website or the HER search.



Plate 1 Phase 1 roof structure, looking north-east



Plate 2 Phase 1 roof structure, looking north-east

# Frequently asked questions

#### What is available online?

# How do l locate a reference number?

In this guide we have tried to provide as much information as possible on the collections that we hold and how to access our services. There are, however, more indexes, guides, libraries and resources than we could possibly mention here, so make sure you take some time to **explore our website.** 

More and more information is becoming available online and on our website, and we'd like to make many more of our collections available online over the next few years. This process has already started, with the school admission registers (to 1914) now available on **FindMyPast.co.uk.**  Reference numbers are required
to view or order a copy of a
document, and there are various
ways to find out what we hold
and locate the relevant reference
numbers. There is a section
on our website that holds our
electronic catalogue and a number
of databases — for photographs,
plans and school records — as well
as other indexes and guides.

The National Archives hosts a catalogue called **Discovery**, which not only lists the collections they hold but also many other collections from across UK archives. Some of our collections are included on this catalogue.

# Can you provide copies of documents?

Yes, we can provide single copies providing the copyright holder has not stated otherwise and that the copies are for personal research use only and not for publication.

When ordering copies customers will be asked to sign a copyright declaration form to confirm that this is the case. There are charges for supplying copies and these will vary depending on the request, so please <u>contact us</u> for a quote.

# Can you help me with translations?

Yes, we can often help with translations from Latin to English. Our hourly fee for this is listed on **our website**, but the total cost will depend on the complexity and amount of text. Please **contact us** for a quote.

# Can you help me with transcriptions?

Yes, we can often help with transcriptions of documents that are difficult to read. Our hourly fee for this is listed on **our website**, but the total cost will depend on the complexity and amount of text. Please **contact us** for a quote.

#### Are certain records prohibited from public viewing?

- Our emphasis is very much on access to archives, so we make as much available for research as we can. The reasons that collections might be restricted are:
- They come under Data
   Protection legislation which seeks to protect information about living individuals and to ensure that information remains confidential. Some records are closed for up to 100 years; these include medical and hospital records, school records, some religious records, court records, social services, coroners, and poor law records.

The item is considered by staff to be too fragile to be used and handling would cause damage. If at all possible we will supply a digital copy of these, providing there is no risk of further damage by the copying process.

An owner or depositor has requested that the items are closed (not available) for a period of time.

#### If this is the case, we will:

- Explain why it cannot be used or copied
- Suggest other suitable sources or alternatives which might provide similar information

Where possible, advise on how

to apply for permission to view

the item

# What happens if my search area crosses county boundaries?

Our resources generally relate to Worcestershire only but we do hold some records relating to surrounding areas. If there is any doubt, please **contact us** and we can let you know if we hold information for that area. Contact details for our neighbouring archive services can be found on **The National Archives website**. What is the difference between the Diocese of Worcester and the County of Worcestershire?

The Diocese is part of the structure of the Church of England whereas the County of Worcestershire is a local authority area. Historically the Diocese has been larger than the County, covering parts of the Counties of Warwickshire and Gloucestershire. This means that some towns and villages in the County of Warwickshire, for example, are in the Diocese of Worcester and some records relating to them might be held with us in Worcester rather than in Warwickshire Record Office. The Diocese of Worcester is smaller now, but its boundary is still different to that of the County of Worcestershire.

Where can I get advice on how to research family, local or house history?

There is a lot of useful information available, online and in book form, on how to undertake historical research. On our website we hold three **information guides** specifically advising on how to undertake this research in Worcestershire. These are available to download free of charge. The National Archives has also produced a number of **research guides** on a wide range of subjects.

# Can you undertake research for me?

- We are very happy to provide information about our services and our collections free of charge, and provide information that can be obtained by checking our indexes or catalogues. This might include confirming that we hold a baptism register for a particular parish.
- Enquiries that involve looking at documents to provide an answer are subject to a **fee**, which is **listed on our website**, and are limited to a maximum of 30 minutes. These searches may include the following:
- An entry in a parish registerAn entry in an electoral register
- An entry from a website such as Ancestry

- A specific report in a newspaper
- An entry in a vehicle license register
- A specific will
- As the charge is for staff time, there will be no refund if the search is unsuccessful. However in the event of a successful search a copy and postage is included in this charge.
- Work will be undertaken when specific information is given to guide the search, including names, places, dates and reference numbers as appropriate.
  Please <u>contact us</u> if you would like us to undertake a limited search on your behalf.

# What if I want more in-depth research?

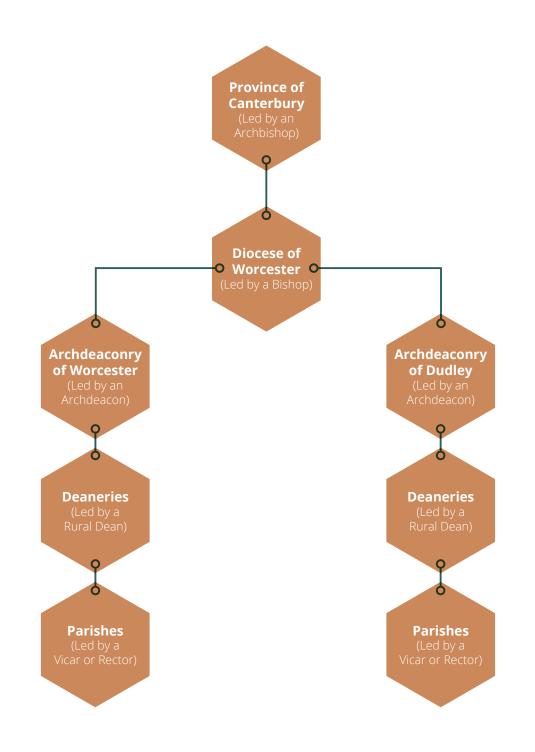
We have links with a **Research** Service, who will undertake more in-depth enquiries. Please contact us for information on how to contact the Research Service.



# **Appendix A: Glossary of terms**

Alehouse licenses	A list of those permitted to sell ale at specified premises		
Aliens' certificates	Record of workers from oversees		
Archdeaconry	The Diocese of Worcester is divided into two archdeaconries (Worcester and Dudley), each led by an archdeacon		
Bills of indictment	Formal charge for which a person appeared before the court		
Bishop	Oversees the work of the diocese, including consecrating other clergy		
Calendar of prisoners	List of prisoners held in custody awaiting trial as well as prisoners held having been found guilty at a previous session		
Constable's presentments	A report provided to the court by parish constables of offences within their parish		
Dean and Chapter	The governing body of a cathedral		
Deanery	Each archdeaconry is divided into a number of deaneries (groups of parishes), led by a rural dean responsible for co-ordinating between the parishes		
Diocese	A larger district comprising of many different parishes (there are 263 parishes in the Diocese of Worcester) under the jurisdiction of a Bishop		
Estate	A term in common law for a person's property, entitlements and obligations		
Gamekeeper's deputations	Lists of gamekeepers on manors in Worcestershire, provided to the Quarter Sessions by the Lord of the Manor		
GIS (geographic information system)	A system designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyse, manage and present spatial or geographic data., enabling databases to be linked to digital maps		
Manor	Defined as an estate in land with the right to hold a court. Documents from Worcestershire Manors are listed on the Manorial Documents Register		
Militia lists	Drawn up by county and parish officials, often annually, of eligible men over 18 to serve in local defence forces		
Parish	A small administrative district of the Anglican church, typically having its own priest or pastor		
Recognizance	An obligation that a person undertook before the court to observe a particular act, for example to keep the peace; be of good behaviour; to attend a court and give evidence; to attend a court to answer a charge		
Sessions files	The working papers of each session and may contain details of the charge (indictment), pre-trial examinations of the accused, witness statements and lists of prisoners held in custody in the gaol (jail) awaiting trial		

Appendix B: Church of England Structure for the Diocese of Worcester





Whatever your enquiry, we would love to hear from you. Give us a call or come and visit us at The Hive in Worcester.

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