

Explore the Past

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service

Discovering Family History at The Hive



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Want To Trace Your Family Tree?

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service have been providing excellent family history resources for over 75 years. Begin your family history trail with us.

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What's First?

- Read through some of the magazines and publications written about Family History that can be found at The Hive or ask the staff.
 - Can you use a computer? Many records that you need to look at are available online.
 - Decide which line of the family you want to trace.
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- Ask the family - Who married who? Where did they marry? Did they have any children? Have they got any old birth, marriage or death certificates or photos of your ancestors?
 - Check everything you have found for useful information and decide how you want to store it.

You're now ready to start researching using some basic records!

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Civil Registration

This was introduced in 1837 when all births, marriages and deaths had to be registered. However, the registration of births was not enforced until 1875.

To obtain copies of certificates it would be helpful to know the person's name, the approximate date of the event and the district where the event took place. You can then look through indexes of names to find the date of the event. Indexes can be found online (www.freebmd.org.uk) or, for dates between 1837 and 2004, on microfilm here in The Hive.

Certificates cannot be viewed online – they must be ordered from the local registrar, or from the General Register Office (<https://www.gov.uk/research-family-history>). They provide information such as dates, parents, and address.

Parish Registers

Parish registers provide lists of baptisms, marriages, and burials which occurred within the boundaries of an ecclesiastical or civil parish. We hold copies of these on microfilm here at The Hive.

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1862: Marriage solemnized by Banns in the Church of St. Andrew in the County of Worcester									
No.	When Solemnized	Name and Surname	Age	Sex	Rank or Profession	Residence at Day of Marriage	Parish	Name and Surname	Rank or Profession
61	April 21 1863	Henry Howley Annal Howley	23 26	Male Female	Merchant Spinster	Stebury Stebury	Stebury	Annal Howley James Howley	Spinster Groom

Solemnized in the Church of St. Andrew according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England in the presence of the Rev. Mr. Howley

The Marriage was celebrated by the Rev. Mr. Howley in the presence of the Parson of the Parish of Stebury

1862: Marriage solemnized by Banns in the Church of St. Andrew in the County of Worcester									
No.	When Solemnized	Name and Surname	Age	Sex	Rank or Profession	Residence at Day of Marriage	Parish	Name and Surname	Rank or Profession
62	May 17 1863	James Heath Martha Bennett	28 27	Male Female	Merchant Spinster	Stebury Stebury	Stebury	Martha Bennett James Heath	Spinster Groom

Solemnized in the Church of St. Andrew according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England in the presence of the Rev. Mr. Heath

The Marriage was celebrated by the Rev. Mr. Heath in the presence of the Parson of the Parish of Stebury



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Entries can provide such information as immediate relatives, age, address, or even profession. Even if entries often do not provide precise dates of birth or dates of death, it can usually be assumed that an entry is close in proximity to those events.

Copies of parish registers were kept centrally by the diocese. These are known as Bishop's Transcripts. They often provide the same information but can be used to clarify details if you suspect that a register entry was missed, damaged, destroyed, or illegible. Digital copies of our Bishop's Transcripts are available on Ancestry.

Please note that parish registers only recorded information relating to Anglican persons, and often related to churches under the Church of England.

We do hold some similar records relating to Catholic, Non-Conformist, and other Christian churches and organisations, or these can be located through respective administrative structures.

Family history resources for other faiths and faith-based organisations are often retained locally within places of worship and communities.



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Census

In the UK, population censuses have been taken every 10 years since 1801. However, names of individuals can only be found from 1841 onwards. Census records are released to the public 100 years from the date on which they occurred. Publicly available censuses currently range from 1841-1921. Census returns are government records, and so the originals are held at The National Archives, in Kew. Statistical data can be obtained from the Office for National Statistics.

We hold copies of Worcestershire census returns from 1841-1901 on microfilm, but the most convenient way to access this information is via online services such as Ancestry or Findmypast. These services can be accessed for free at any Worcestershire County Library, including The Hive.

The most recent census released was the 1921 census. We do **not** currently provide access to this census and is currently only available to access online through Findmypast. The originals can be consulted for free at The National Archives.

The 1931 census was destroyed in a fire, and the 1941 census didn't occur due to the Second World War. The next UK census won't be released until 2052. The



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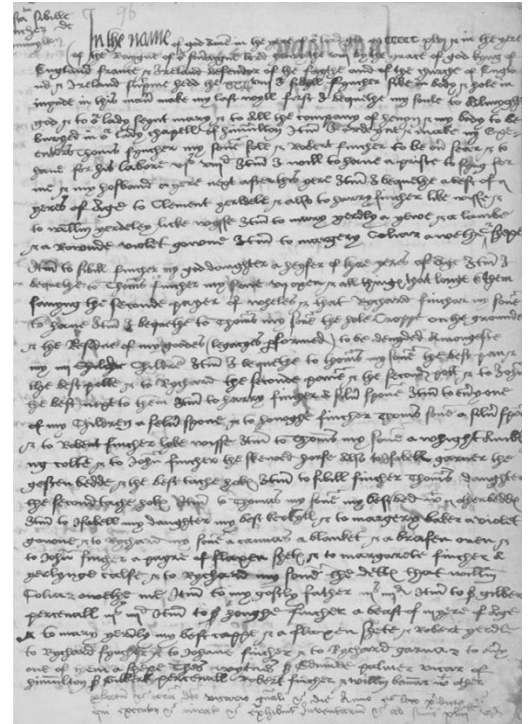
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1939 national register acts as a stand-in for census information and can be accessed in a digital format via Findmypast or Ancestry.

Wills and Probate Records

These records can reveal information about family members and their relationship to the deceased. They can often include such records as inventories of property, particularly for probate records in the 16th-18th centuries.

Worcestershire wills from 1451- 1928 are held at The Hive on microfilm, and our indexes are sorted by surname. The National Probate Index is found on microfiche and covers wills proved between 1858 -1943.



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Trade Directories

Trade directories became popular in the 18th century. They list tradespeople, local businesses, or some private residents for cities, towns, and villages across Worcestershire. Not everyone would have been included in these publications, but they can give a good description of a specific area, including information about schools, churches, and public buildings around at the time. We hold a collection of directories ranging from the 19th to 20th century in the Self-Service area of the archive, here in The Hive.



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Other Useful Sources

We have a huge range of records, including photographs, school records, hospital records, maps, plans, family, and estate papers, and we also hold diocesan archive for Worcestershire. You never know what could be useful to you.

Speak with a member of the team! Our archive staff are experts in the records we hold and are always happy to help. Enquiries can be submitted on our website or come in and talk to us on the desk when we're open.

Take a look at our collection.

The catalogue to our full collection of records is currently split into two: across an online database, available on our website, and a physical index based here in The Hive. Whilst these two ways to search our holdings do overlap, users should take a look at both for the best results.

Need to take a copy home?

Our specialist digitisation team can reproduce records to an excellent standard and with high resolution images. Submit an enquiry on our website to discuss what you need digitising.



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Can't make it into the Archive?

If you are unable to come in to see our records in person, we might be able to do some research for you. Our team can carry out a wide range of research requests – just submit an enquiry online at www.explorethepast.co.uk to find out what we can do for you.

Useful Online Resources

www.explorethepast.co.uk

Our website, listing all our available resources, including our online catalogue of records. You can also get in touch with us here.

www.familysearch.org

An incomplete database containing millions of names taken from national parish registers and other sources.

www.freebmd.org.uk

England and Wales civil registration indexes to recorded births, marriages, and deaths.

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

The website of the UK National Archives. TNA Discovery – a searchable database of the collections of most UK archives – and plenty of advice can be found here.



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Where to find us?

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The Hive, Level 2

Sawmill Walk

The Butts

Worcester

WR1 3PD

No need to book. Check our opening times at www.explorethepast.co.uk



New visitors to the Original Archive Area may need to register for an ARA Archives Card. This is a free, national scheme which permits entry to many local authority archives across the country. Sign up at: www.archivescard.com