

Explore the Past

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service

Discovering Local History at The Hive



www.explorethepast.co.uk



worcestershire
county council

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Explore the Past

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Discovering your Local History

Many people are fascinated by their local area and want to know more. We are a great place to come and get started.



What's First?

Start with what you already know:

- Where is it you're looking for? The majority of our collections are indexed by local civil parish, even within Worcester City.
- Explore the area and talk to local people. Is there a local history society?

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- Check out guides to local research and local history books. e.g.: The Victoria County History of Worcestershire and early trade directories, available at The Hive.

The Hive

We have a vast collection of archives, over twelve miles of shelving, covering 900 years of history. This is available for you to see and help you discover the past for yourself. A lot of what we have for each place can vary as it depends on what has survived over time. The following are a summary of the most useful sources.

Local Studies Library

We hold thousands of books on the history of Worcestershire and things within it. Some are up to 200 years old. This includes Worcestershire Archaeological Society transactions. These can be freely browsed on Level 2 of The Hive.



Trade Directories

You can find summaries of towns and villages and some of the tradespeople who lived there. These date from the late 18th century to mid-20th century.

Maps

We hold thousands of maps of the county, ranging from a county-wide to a local scale. This includes Ordnance Survey plans from the 1880s onwards, tithe maps with their apportionments, estate plans and many others. We have a full list of these available on our website.



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.

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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.

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.

Photographs

The Worcestershire Photographic Survey contains over 80,000 photos taken around the county, plus thousands more elsewhere in our collections. An index to these can be found on our website.

Electoral Registers

Registers and poll books date back to the mid-19th century, listing all voters by address. Digital copies of these records are available to view on Ancestry.

Newspapers

We have microfilm copies of many local Worcestershire newspapers, going back as far as 1712. In some cases, these facsimiles are the only complete sets available anywhere.



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Tax

We hold Land Tax and Hearth Tax returns. We also hold an extensive collection of 1910 Land Valuation Surveys – these were recorded assessments of property, their value, and their purpose. Most landowners in England and Wales were required to fill these out.



Quarter Sessions

We have legal and administrative documents from the 16th to 20th centuries, featuring criminal cases and the administration of the county.

School Records

Logbooks, punishment books and other documents are available to give an insight into school life in the past.

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Wills

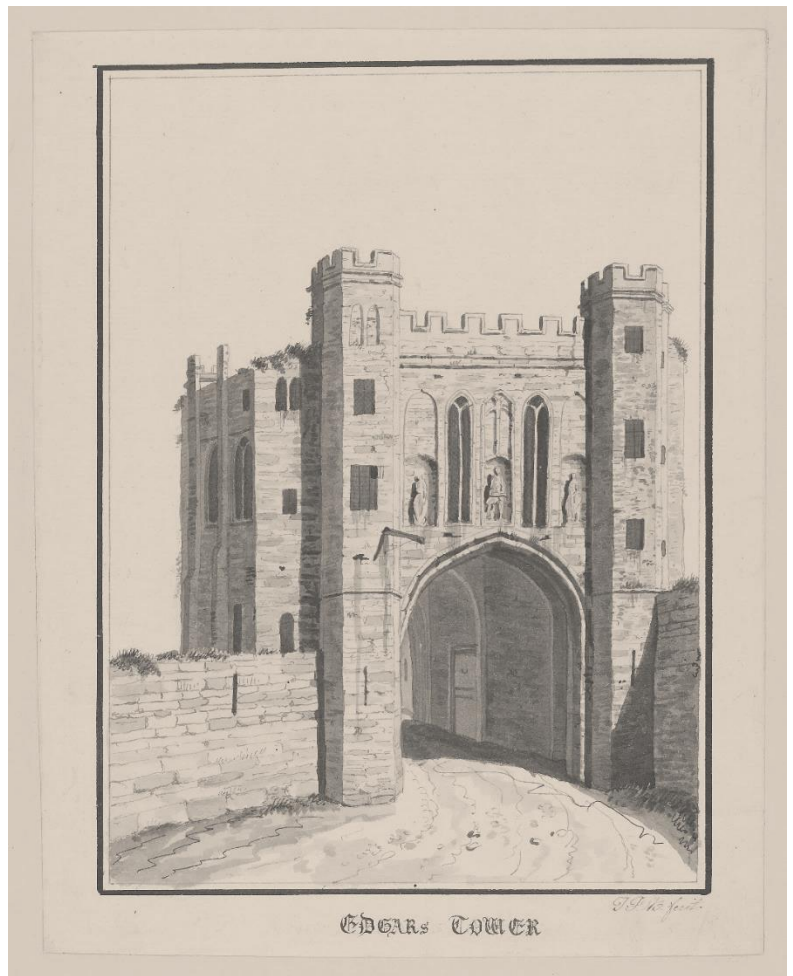
There are thousands of wills of Worcestershire people here dating from the 15th century through to 1928.

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.

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,



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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.

Historic Environment Record database

This is a searchable electronic database linked to digital mapping of land in the county. This includes over 26,000 records. As well as holding information on listed buildings, it also contains information, photographs, building recording reports and plans relating to the many other historic houses, farms, and other buildings in Worcestershire.

Questions about the Historic Environment Record or other archaeological queries should be directed towards the Archaeology Team, who can be reached via our website.



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Other Useful Sources

Our archive holds tens of thousands of deposits from a huge range of organisations and individuals, including hospitals, local councils, family estates, societies, organisations, businesses, and we also hold the diocesan archive for Worcestershire. You never know what might 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.



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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.

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 to find out what we can do for you.



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Useful Online Resources

www.explorethepast.co.uk

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

<https://maps.nls.uk/os/>

The National Library of Scotland hosts a practical, user-friendly resource which overlays historic editions of Ordnance Survey Plans onto a modern map of Great Britain. A great starting point.

www.kypworchester.org.uk

Know Your Place is an interactive plan of images and locations of note within Worcester City and the surrounding area. Users can contribute their own knowledge to the map.

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 archive searchroom 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



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