

# Explore the Past

Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service

## Guide to Using the Original Archive Area



The **Hive**

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# Introduction

Welcome to the **Original Archive Area**. This is where you may view and study original archival material from Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service. The archive collections date from the twelfth century to present day, and include items as diverse as photographs, diaries, maps and plans, accounts, minutes, and records of criminal activity.

To access this material, you will need to use our indexes, finding aids and online resources and follow some simple procedures. This guide will highlight the basic indexes and finding aids, and detail the procedures required to order archive documents.

# Accessing the Original Archive Area

## Before accessing the area

Obtain/produce a reader's ticket.

- These are available to anyone over the age of 14, **free of charge**. We are a member of the Archives Card scheme, but we will accept valid CARN (County Archive Research Network) tickets until they expire.
- If you do not already have one, please apply online **before you visit** at [www.archivescard.com](http://www.archivescard.com) . You do need a valid email address to apply.
- You can add your own photo when you apply but we can easily add one for you when you visit if you don't have one. You will have **3 months** to visit a participating archive to complete your registration after you apply.
- When you visit, you will need to provide two forms of ID to complete your registration, please see the list of possible forms of ID on the Archives Card website under 'How to Get a Card'. Once you have a card it will be valid for 5 years.

- If you do not have any of the identity documents listed on the Archives Card website, or if you do not have a fixed home address, please speak to a member of archive staff when you visit, who will help you to find a way to use the service.

Please note that we cannot guarantee that all members of the old scheme will continue to accept valid CARN tickets until their expiry date.

## Place any bags into one of our lockers.

Ask for a locker key from staff on the level 2 desk. **No pens** are allowed in the Original Archive Area (see General Rules below). Paper, pencils, and computer devices, e.g., laptops and tablets, can be brought in, but we ask that items are kept to the minimum needed. Clear plastic trays are available if you need one. You will need to note down your **Archives Card number** when requesting original archives so once your card is issued to you, it can be useful to keep it with you rather than placing it in a locker.

## Sign the visitors' book.

By signing, **visitors agree to adhere to the Rules and Regulations** and the Access to Information statement. These are displayed next to the Visitor's Book. Please ask a member of staff if you have any questions about this.

## General rules for the Area

Archives are unique items and **cannot be replaced** if lost or damaged. To protect these valuable resources, we have some rules that need to be followed:

- Irreparable damage can be caused to documents by ink. To prevent this, only pencils can be used in the Original Archive Area.
- No food or drink can be taken into the Area.
- Original documents must not be removed from the Original Archive Area.
- Staff should be consulted before taking photographs of documents.
- All resources in the Original Archive Area should be handled carefully, as guided by staff.
- A maximum of 3 document request slips may be submitted at a time. Items (boxes/documents) will be issued individually.

To maintain a pleasant research environment:

- Mobile phones must be on silent, and calls taken out of the Original Archive Area
- We fully understand conducting research as part of a group can have benefits. Please consider other users when doing so.

# How to Search the Collections

How you begin your research will depend on:

- What you are looking for
- What information you already have
- Resources we have available.

Our indexes, finding aids, and catalogues are available for you to browse freely, but unlike library collections, the archive collections are stored in secure, temperature and humidity-controlled strongrooms, accessed by Archive staff. Information is given below on how to search for items in our collections (see also [Completing a Document Request Slip](#) on p. 23 for how to order items).

To locate and request any document, you should search one or more of the following:

- The Index to Inventory
- The Inventory Books
- The Online Catalogue
- The Collections Boxes
- Calendared items



# The Index to Inventory

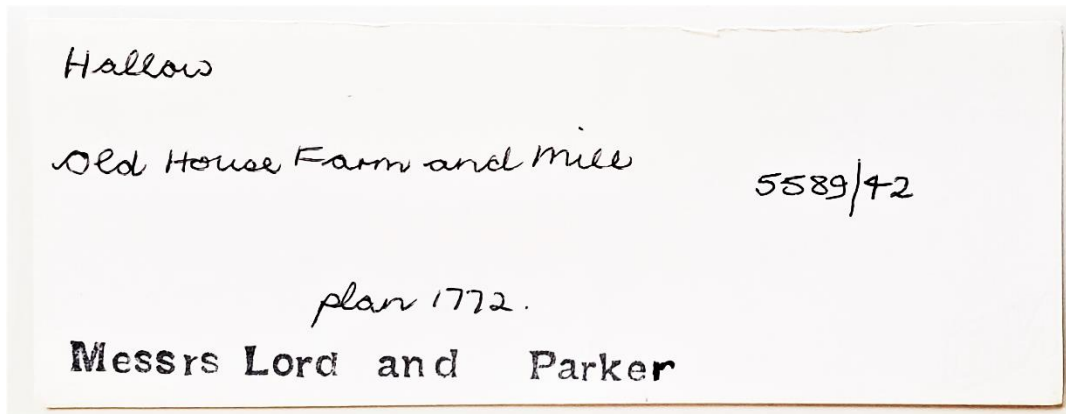
This is contained in the green boxes in the gold carpeted area immediately on the right of the entrance to the Original Archive Area



*Figure 1 Image of a person using the index slips*

This is an alphabetical slip index of place, person and specific subject, and the slips are cross-referenced. The slips are loose papers in index boxes and should not be removed from the boxes as the order can be lost.

The information given on the slips may vary but each slip will have a number in the top right-hand corner. This number is the Accession Number and relates to the Inventory books.



*Figure 2 Example of an index slip*

This slip shows information relating to a plan of a mill in Hallow. It is located within the Index under Hallow, then the property name, Old House Farm and Mill. Sometimes when searching by location you may need to locate the Parish, followed by the road name and then the property name.

**When an entry of interest is located, please take note of the Accession Number**, as information is needed from the Inventory Books when ordering items from secure storage.

# The Inventory Books

The Inventory Books are the large black volumes on shelves to the right, when directly facing the index slips. Staff might also refer to them as 'BA (Bulk Accession) books. They are in Accession Number order, each covering a range of accession numbers, as displayed on the spines. In the example above, **the Accession Number from the index slip is 5589**, and this appears in the top right-hand corner of the Inventory Book. The **parcel number is /42**, shown in the left-hand column of the page.

The text gives further information on the item and is followed by the date and the reference number column. The image below shows their location on the pages of the Inventory Books.

The **Reference Number, Accession Number, Parcel, and Description will all be needed to request the item.** (Please see Completing a Document Request Slip on p. 23)

Accession Number

Parcel Number

Bulk accession No. 5589  
Continuation Sheet 19

SCHEDULE (continued)

Parcel No.	Description	Date	Condition	Reference
41	(cont'd)			
	(v) 4 deeds relating to property in Hallow, Garrard, Dolphin, Whippy and other families.	1868	p' ment. good	705:192
42	(i) c.23 deeds, copies of court roll of the Manor of Hallow and other papers relating to property in Hallow, Dolphin, Bourne, Walker and other families.	1770-1851	paper & p' ment. good	
	Plan of the Old House Farm and Mill, Hallow, the property of the Revd. J. Stillingfleet. Measured and planned by John Aird of Worcester, surveyor. Scale 1":4 chains.	1772	p' ment. good	
	(ii) c.8 deeds and other papers relating to property in Hallow, Dolphin, Lord, Clifton and other families.	1799-1868	paper & p' ment. good	
	(iii) 3 deeds and order of the Inclosure Commissioners relating to property in Bengeworth [in Evesham] and Wickhamford. Sandys, Pratt, Lord and other families.	1861-4	do	
	(iv) 2 deeds being settlements on the marriage of John Pickup Lord of Elmley Park, Elmley Castle, and Constance Charlotte Hallett Thomson.	1858	p' ment. good	
43	c.85 deeds, copies of court roll of the Manor of Grimley with Hallow and other papers relating to property in Hallow. Hodges, Porter, Sharp and other families.	1762-1870	paper & p' ment. good	
44	(i) 3 deeds relating to property in Wickhamford. Widdows, Throckmorton, Holland and other families.	1594-1808	p' ment. good	
	(ii) Plan of Wickhamford Estate. Scale	1869	paper-fair	

Reference Number

Figure 3 Example of a page from an Inventory Book

# The Collections Boxes

These are the dark grey file boxes, with yellow title labels, found in the bottom section of the Original Archive Area.

These hold a copy (usually handwritten) of the pages of the Inventory Books, but they are filed in reference number order, rather than by accession number.

**Reference numbers** identify groups of archives, for example:

850 is the reference number given to all parish records from Worcester Diocese

705 is the reference number given to all private collections, such as those of a family or business. These are then further subdivided to indicate the particular body to which the collection relates, for example the reference for the archives of the Coventry family of Croome is 705:73, with 73 being the identifying number for this family.

By grouping in this way, the researcher can look through all accessions relating to a particular body, once the reference number has been identified. This can radically reduce time spent going through the Index to Inventory and back and forth to the Inventory Books.

# The Online Catalogue

This can be searched via our website on any of the computers in The Hive, on your device at The Hive or at home, at [Explore The Past Archive Catalogue \(worcestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/explorethepast) . A Worcestershire County Council Library Card will be needed to access the computers and Wi-Fi in The Hive, these can be issued by Hive staff on production of identification showing your address.

The online catalogue is continually being updated and added to as new deposits are catalogued, and as older deposits are retrospectively added. In addition, private collections, and collections on the parishes of the **Diocese of Worcester** are listed on **The National Archives Discovery Catalogue** at [Discovery | The National Archives](https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/). We also have a growing selection of **online indexes and guides to records**, available at [Our Collections - Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service \(explorethepast.co.uk\)](https://www.explorethepast.co.uk/collections).

Type in a **key word** e.g., place or person's name, a business or record creator's name such as a society, board, or local council/department.

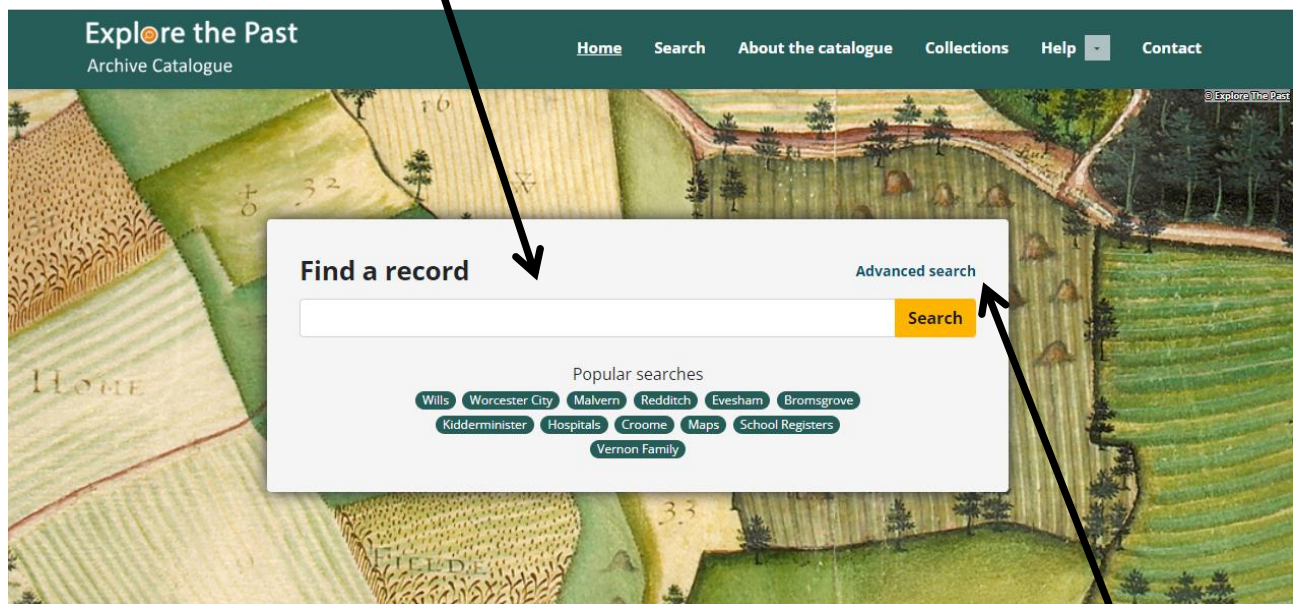


Figure 4 Home page of the online catalogue

Or click on **advanced search.**

Add a **Finding Number** here, if known e.g. '705:73 BA14450'.

Use **key words** to search in these boxes.

**Explore the Past**  
 Archive Catalogue

[Home](#) [Search](#) [About the Catalogue](#) [Collections](#) [Help](#) [Contact](#)

### Advanced Search

**Finding No**  
  
[Refine Search Criteria](#)

**Any Text**  
  
[Refine Search Criteria](#)

**Description**  
  
[Refine Search Criteria](#)

**Title**  
  
[Refine Search Criteria](#)

**Date**

[Map of the Pirton Estates](#)

**Useful Links**  
[The National Archives: Discovery](#)  
[Explore The Past Website](#)  
[Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service online indexes and handlists](#)  
[Visiting or contacting Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service](#)

**Tweets from @ExploreThePast**  
[explor...](#) @. · Jun 8  
 Check out this lively 1970s illustration, featured on a Redditch Development

Figure 5 Image of the Advanced Search Screen



**Finding Number.** Click for more detail.

Explore the Past  
Archive Catalogue

Home Search About the catalogue Collections Help Contact

Advanced Search >  
**Search Results**

Refine Search 20

FindingNo	Title	Description	Date
705:73 BA14450	Croome Collection - the family and estate papers of the Earls of Coventry		13th century-1935
<a href="#">View record</a>	Croome Estate Records-Somerset Record Office Catalogue	The Croome estate included the manor of Wiveliscombe and Fitzhead, which was leased from the...	1649-1807
705:7 (some b,r,s,x and f) BA7335/1-155	Vernon Family of Hanbury Hall, Hanbury and Shrawley	c13,400 records of the Vernon family of Hanbury Hall, Hanbury, and Shrawley Wood House, Shrawley...	[early 13th]-20th cent
705:73 BA14450/28/15	Croome: The Place, The People, The Treasures Revealed	Printed pamphlet "Croome: The Place, The People, The Treasures Revealed", by Jill Tovey, Croome...	2005
705:73 BA14450/30/4	Exhibition of pictures by Richard Wilson and his Circle at the Museum and Art	Printed catalogue entitled "Exhibition of pictures by Richard Wilson and his Circle	1948-1949

Humphry Littelton Warrant

**Useful Links**

- The National Archives: Discovery
- Explore The Past Website
- Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service online indexes and handlists
- Visiting or contacting Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service

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Check out this lively 1970s illustration, featured on a Redditch Development

Figure 6 Image of Search Results Screen

Example of a **Finding Number** with a **parcel number**. Click for more detail if required.

The **Finding No.** is the Reference Number in the Accession Books combined with the BA (Bulk Accession no.) otherwise referred to as the Accession Number. Alongside the BA, a **Parcel number** may be indicated, since finding numbers without the parcel number are for a whole collection you will need to specify a parcel unless it is a small collection with just one parcel. **All these numbers will be needed to request the item** (see Section 4 Completing a Request Slip on p. 12)

## Record

- 350 - 705:73 BA14450 - Croome Collection - the family and estate papers of the Earls of Coventry
  - 5 - 705:73 BA14450 - Household Records
    - 1 - 705:73 BA14450/ - Accounts
      - 1 - 705:73 BA14450/170-173 - Household account books

Hierarchy of collection or 'tree view'. Click to open, if required.

### Finding No

705:73 BA14450/173/9 (a-u); 10

### Title

Household account book

### Description

Bound volume detailing the amounts expended on household items, including provisions of food and drinks, fuel, occasional repair work and labouring, servants wages and expenses, board wages, payments for travel and turnpike charges, clothing and personal items, tradesmen's bills, donations given and other related expenses incurred by the Coventry family.

Entries relate to the Coventry family's various properties including Croome Court, Worcestershire, Coventry Hall, Streatham and Piccadilly House, London.

Volume includes 22 loose sheets, now stored in a separate folder at 705:73 BA14450/173/9 a-). These items include additional accounts, an account for carpentry work done, a bill for Lady Coventry's drawing up of a will (705:73 BA14450/173/9-h) and a memorandum regarding Lady Coventry's accounts with the late Mr Barbaroux, August 1836 (705:73 BA14450/173/9-q).

Folder 705:73 BA14450/173/10 contains 10 additional sheets that were separated from this account book whilst in the custody of the Croome Estate Trust. These include: a note on Thomas Coventry, Baron Coventry of Allesborough's properties, an 'Epitaph on one who never forgave', a list of 'things I have' by Anne Margaret Wright, an extract from 'Mr W. Rasen's letter to Mr Blackaston', regarding provisions for Miss Kitching; notes of servants wages, an account of linen purchased and several poems, including one submitted to the Morning Herald on death [person not named].

Description of the specific parcel.

Figure 7 Image of online catalogue showing hierarchy and description of an item

Clicking on the finding number in the Online Catalogue will display further information about the parcel and in turn, enable you to navigate around the hierarchy of the collection, for instance to get an idea of the amount of record 'types' (series) within a collection and the quantity of parcels within a series.

## Calendared Items

Calendared items do not appear in the Index to Inventory, or in our online catalogue. Unlike the other finding aids discussed, archival calendars contain summaries of the important information in individual documents and are arranged in chronological order.

There are several calendars within the archives. The largest is that of the Berrington Collection, and there are other smaller collections dating from 1124 to 1974.

The calendars are located next to the Index to Inventory.



*Figure 9 Image of the Calendars and their Indexes*

## Searching the Calendar

The calendar has a subject index which can be searched by name, place, or specific subject. Once an item has been identified a note should be made of the reference number (i.e., 705:24/2) and that number used to search the small red folders. The chronological calendars can be searched for a particular year.

Once the relevant reference numbers have been located items can be ordered using a document request slip (see Completing a Document Request Slip on p. 23).

# Completing a Document Request Slip

To order items out of the secure storage a Document Request Slip will need to be completed. These are available in the Original Archive Area. The information you have gathered from the Online Catalogue, Calendars or Inventory Books will be required at this stage.

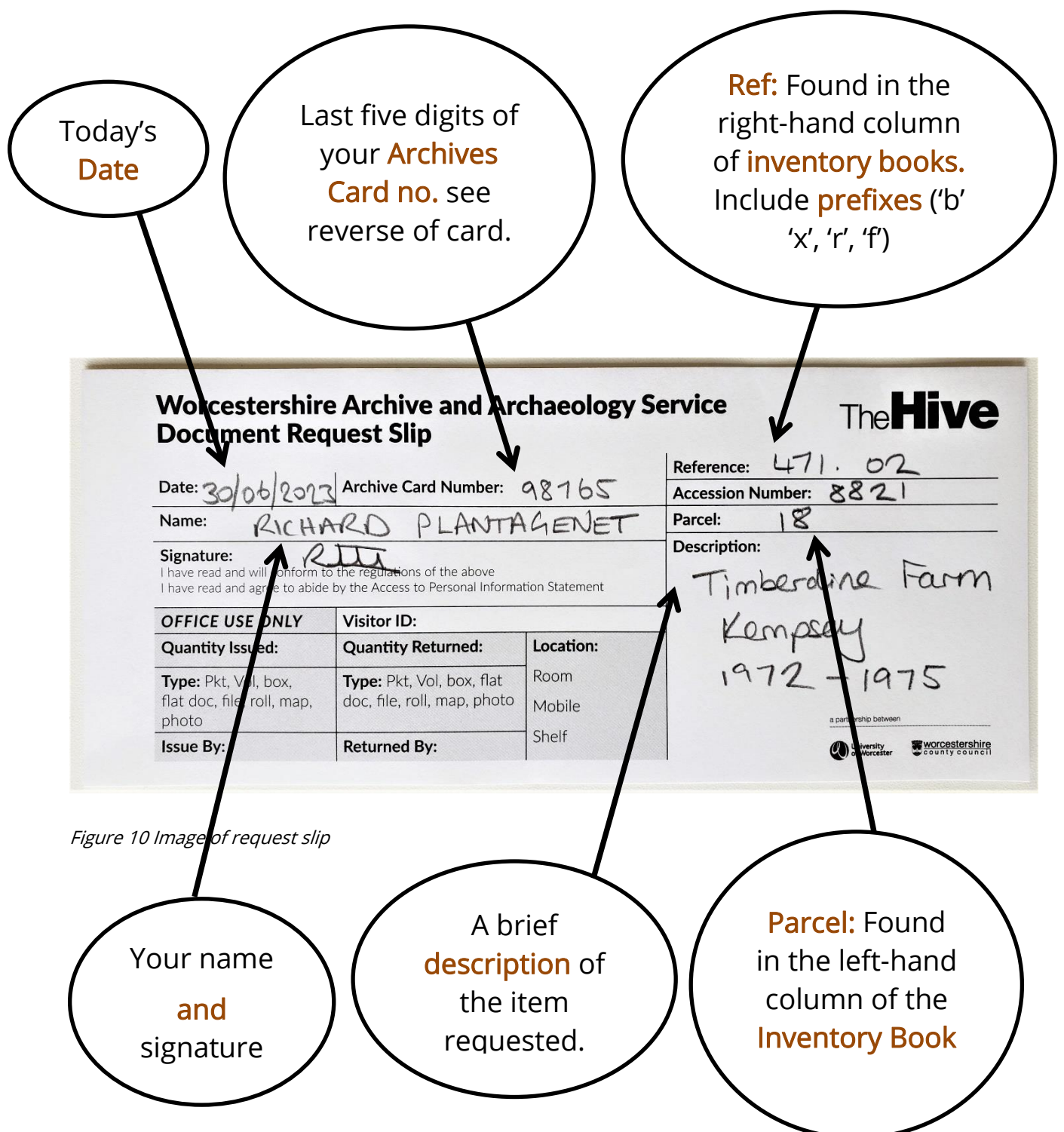


Figure 10 Image of request slip

Please note that not all deposits are divided into parcels; leave the parcel field blank if this is the case. On the other hand, some parcels are subdivided themselves, usually expressed as Roman Numerals, e.g., iii. The numerals should be included after the parcel number, in brackets e.g., parcel 2(iii).

If a Reference Number (or Finding Numbers) have been found via our website, (or elsewhere on the internet) it may be expressed as:  
705:192\5589\42. This divides into:

**Reference Number:** 705:192

**Accession Number:** 5589

**Parcel Number:** 42

Completed slips should be placed in the wooden box on the desk labelled  
Request Slips

## Ordering, Issue and Return of Items

**A maximum of 3 items may be ordered at one time**, with a separate Document Request Slip required for each item (parcel). Staff will issue the items/parcels one at a time. When finished, items, together with the slip should be returned to staff, who will weigh the item back in and issue the next one.

Items can be requested up to 30 minutes before the Original Document Area closes, and documents need to be returned to staff 10 minutes prior to closing.

On Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays the area is closed from 13:00 until 13:30. Original documents will need to be handed back to staff from 12:50 on these days. Items will be securely retained and re-issued at 13:30. Please tell staff if the item is no longer needed.

For security purposes each box/document is weighed prior to production and re-weighed when handed back. Any significant discrepancy in weight will be checked.

# Handling Documents

We want you to enjoy your experience of handling original archives. We place as much emphasis on providing access to them as we do to preserving them. Nonetheless, care must be taken when handling any original material to prevent damage. Staff will monitor the use of items and are very happy to advise on the most appropriate ways of handling and supporting them. There are weights, cushions, and guards available in the cupboards at the end of the Original Archive Area.

## Some guidelines:

- Ensure your hands are clean and dry before use. Gloves are not required as standard but should be used when handling photographs and illuminated parchment documents.
- Volumes should always be supported appropriately, restricting the opening angle to ease pressure on the binding. Cushions are available for this purpose.
- Documents are retained, as far as is practicable, in their original state and must be returned in the same way. Do not attempt to refold documents against previous folds. Staff are happy to help to re-fold or repackage a document so please do ask for assistance.



- Handle documents as little as is necessary to facilitate use. Use weights provided to hold down folded or rolled documents. Use transparent guards if following lines/lists on documents rather than fingers.
- Do not lean on or place other objects on the documents.

# Taking Copies of Original Material

Copies of documents may be taken, subject to the condition of the document and its Copyright status. Before taking a photograph, please speak to a member of staff. Flash photography is not permitted, as this could damage the document.

## Charges

Before photographs can be taken a Photographic Permit must be purchased. Several types are available:

- Single item, for £2.10. Valid for use with one request e.g., map, photograph, volume.
- A daily permit, for £8.40. This permit is valid for the day of issue.
- A 5-day permit, for £21. This permit is valid for 12 calendar months. It can be used on any 5 days within the six-month period.
- An annual permit, at £63. This permit is valid for one calendar year.
- A group annual permit, for £105. This permit is valid for one calendar year. Members of the group permitted to use the permit must be named at the point of purchase.
- Prices correct as of August 2023.

Our responsibility to the records in our care may mean that some material may not be suitable for copying and a member of staff must be consulted for advice before photography is undertaken.

Any document could be subject to copyright restrictions. Please ask a member of staff prior to taking any type of copy. A Copyright Declaration form will be supplied, and general advice on copyright is available.

Our in-house Digitisation Service is available on request. High quality digital copies of documents can be put onto disc, memory stick or external hard drive. For details, please see our website and click on the **Our Services** menu followed by **Archive Collections Service**.

# Beyond the Basics

## Further Finding Aids and Indexes:

Aids to accessing our records can be found on the shelves in the Original Archive Area, in the Self Service Area, and via the website [Home - Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service \(explorethepast.co.uk\)](#), click on the Our Services menu and then Archive Catalogue.

These aids are ways of grouping interest areas together, and include:

- School records
- Photographs
- Maps and plans
- Apprentices
- Newspapers
- Quarter sessions

Some of these are finding aids, highlighting records in our collections, for example our Schools Database and newspapers list, and others are indexes which reveal the contents of the documents, such as those for the Quarter Sessions.

These finding aids are being added to and updated, all the time. New ones are generally put straight on the website, so please keep checking.

# Additional Guides and Support

The following guides are available to aid use of the Archive resources:

- Guide to Self Service Resources
- Visitor's Guide
- Explore Archive & Archaeology Guide (our 70-page family history research guide)
- We also have specific guides for house history and local history.

These are available on Level 2 of The Hive or on our website free of charge at [Home - Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service \(explorethepast.co.uk\)](https://www.explorethepast.co.uk), click on the Our Services menu and then Archive Catalogue.

We also run a variety of courses and workshops on local history, family history, school records and parish records. For more information on these sessions visit our website at [Home - Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service \(explorethepast.co.uk\)](https://www.explorethepast.co.uk), click on the Latest News menu then What's On.

## Any Further Questions?

If you have a question relating to The Hive, please speak to any member of Hive staff. If you need to speak to a member of library staff, they can be found on levels 0, 1, and 3.

If you need to speak to a member of Archive and Archaeology staff, please visit during our staffed hours. Alternatively, archive enquiries submitted to us via our website will be answered within seven working days. Please see the Contact Us area of our website.

**Please note that enquiries may involve a charge. For more information, please see our enquiries policy on our website.**

# Contact Us

By post:

Worcestershire Archive  
& Archaeology Service  
The Hive,  
Sawmill Walk, The  
Butts  
Worcester,  
WR1 3PD

By telephone:

01905 822866

Website and Blog:

<http://www.explorethepast.co.uk>

Click '[Contact Us](#)' to ask us a question.

## Find us on social media:



Twitter / X: [www.twitter.com/explorethepast](https://www.twitter.com/explorethepast)



Facebook: [www.facebook.com/WorcsAAS](https://www.facebook.com/WorcsAAS) or search for 'Explore the Past'

