

## Introduction

Archives provide us with a unique way into the past. They are a contemporary record of what real people did and thought. Because they were created by individual people, they can be biased, misleading or inaccurate. Using archives is like being a detective. We start with a puzzle which raises questions; the archives provide evidence and clues, which we can interpret using any background knowledge we have about the story. And the result - is history!



The world of archives can be confusing to first-time users, who may be more familiar with using secondary sources such as printed books. This unit provides a general introduction to what archives are, where they are kept, how to find relevant material, and what to expect on a visit to an archives office. However, the scope of this unit principally reflects the archival holdings of the University of Nottingham and the needs of our users.

Throughout the unit, illustrative images are taken from the collections held by Manuscripts and Special Collections at the University of Nottingham.

This unit was written in April 2007.

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## What are archives?

**Archives are records created or collected by a person or organisation in the course of their business and retained by them as evidence of their activities, or because of the information they contain.**

Archives are inactive documents no longer needed for day to day business. An archive is not the same as a filing system: archive records have usually been chosen for retention because of their long-term importance.

Archives are usually unique items which cannot be replaced. Printed items held in archives may not be unique, but their existence in that archive can help you build up a picture of the kind of person who collected them.

The word 'archive' can also be used for the building in which the archives are stored, as can 'record office', and 'archive office'. The person in charge of preserving the archive is called an archivist. Archivists make archives available to historians and other researchers, who use them as a way to find out about the past.

Archives are primary sources, that is they were written during the period you are researching and can therefore tell you something about contemporary events and what people thought about them.

Manuscripts are, strictly speaking, any documents which have been handwritten. However, the term is often used to mean a collection of documents brought together by one particular person, or a series of correspondence, personal papers or other documents which perhaps have a common subject matter. They have generally been retained for the second reason in the general definition above: because of the information they contain.

### **Archives record what happened in the past, how it happened, and sometimes even why it happened....**

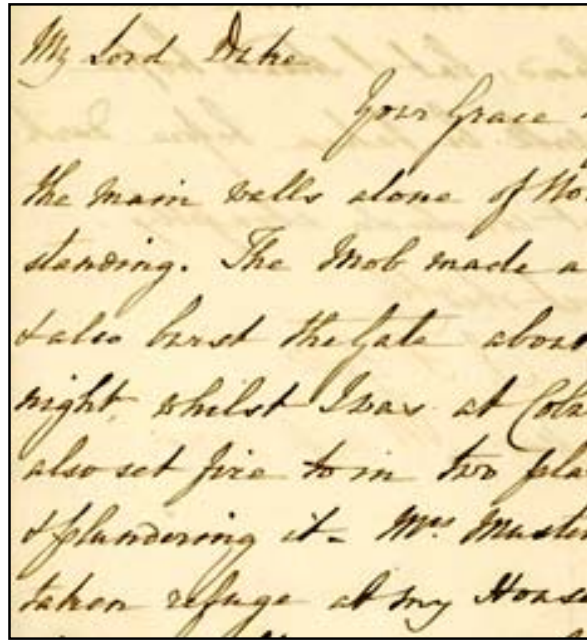
During the Reform Riots of 1831 a 'mob' attacked and burned Nottingham Castle.

The castle was targeted because it was the property of Henry Pelham-Clinton, 4th Duke of Newcastle under Lyne, who was a staunch opponent of the Reform Bill.

The burning down of the Castle and the subsequent trial of the rioters are recorded in a number of sources, including the duke's own diaries and letters, providing different viewpoints of the same events.



Contemporary illustration of Nottingham Castle in flames, with a jubilant mob celebrating the scene.



Letter from the High Sheriff of Nottingham to the duke, giving an account of events as he saw them developing, 12 October 1831 (Ne C 5004/1-4)

[See full image with transcript](#)

## They can be single documents....

The Wollaton Antiphonal is a 15th-century service book associated almost since its creation with the parish church of St. Leonard's, Wollaton, Nottinghamshire.

It is very large and is beautifully illustrated. In the past it has suffered damp and other damage and is currently undergoing restoration with support from the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust, the Pilgrim Trust and other charitable bodies.

## ...or large collections.

Large collections can be VERY large!

These archives may contain many different types of documents and may be held by a number of record offices, so it can be necessary to visit several repositories to see all their family papers.

For example, the archives of the Cavendish-Bentincks, Dukes of Portland, include papers of related families. The different collections within the archives were divided between a number of different libraries and record offices:

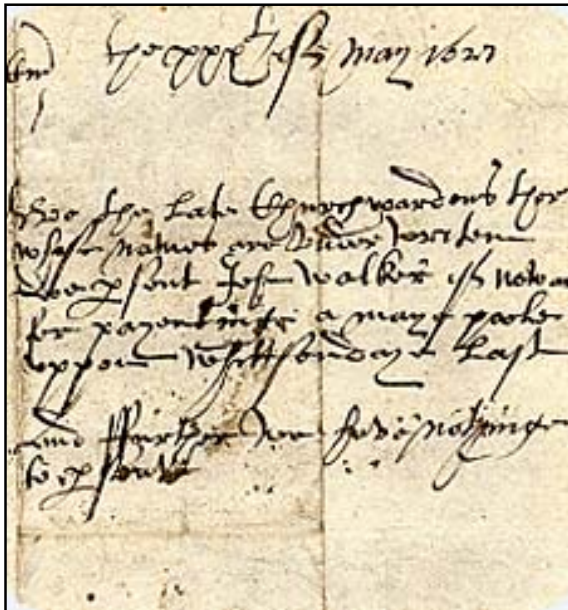
- The Portland (Welbeck) Collection (Pw) at The University of Nottingham contains over 428 boxes containing many different types of documents, including private letters, poetry, advertisements and even locks of hair
- The Portland (London) Collection (Pl), also at the University, contains over 1230 boxes and includes medieval deeds, accounts, surveys, maps and plans and architectural drawings
- Nottinghamshire Archives holds over 250 boxes of deeds and estate papers
- Hampshire Record Office holds more estate papers relating mainly to properties in that county
- The British Library and the Bodleian Library at Oxford also hold personal papers

All these Portland collections provide a wealth of research resources for a wide range of studies. [Access to Archives](#) (A2A) is helping researchers to find out about these scattered resources.

## People often think of archives as being handwritten documents...

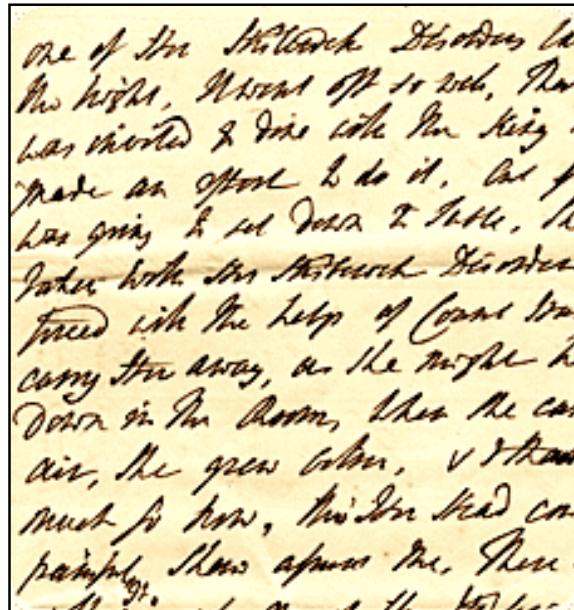
Palaeographic skills are required as early documents are likely to be in abbreviated medieval Latin, and even early English handwriting used different letter forms to those used today.

A well educated aristocrat would have taken pride in his illegible writing (as only professional clerks were trained to write clearly) and it was not until the late 19th century that spelling became standardised!



Archdeaconry of Nottingham presentment bill accusing John Walker of Newark of painting a Maypole on the Sabbath day (AN/PB 326/2/36).

*'We the late Churchwardens ther whose names are under writen doe p[re]sent John Walker of Newark for payenting a maye poole upon Whittsonday last.'*



Letter from Thomas Pelham-Holles, 1st Duke of Newcastle under Lyne to his brother, Henry Pelham (Ne C 1121).

It describes how his wife Henrietta collapsed with a 'hysterik attack' at the dinner table at the court of George II in Hanover. At that time, court life was so formal that even coughing in the King's presence was considered a social disaster.

...but archives can take many forms!

Detail of the Great Seal, a large wax pendant seal, attached to Letters Patent dated 26 November 23 Victoria (1859).

This document appointed Henry Pelham-Clinton, 5th Duke of Newcastle under Lyne as Secretary of State for the Colonies, and was witnessed by the Queen herself. (Ne 5 Da 15)



Two items of clothing from the University archives:

University College; cricket and hockey club caps, 1919-1921 (MS 520/1-2)

University College blazer of W.H. Hine, c.1925 (ACC 1808)

William R Webb (1858-1928) was a lace designer who worked in Philadelphia, U.S.A. from 1892 to 1895, and then established his own business in Nottingham.

He was also an artist in water colours and was featured in local exhibitions. We believe that this is an example of his design work.



**Our experiences today - recorded on disc, tape and other media - will be the archives of the future.**

Technologies can become obsolete very quickly, as the [BBC Domesday Project](#) discovered.

The multimedia results of the 1986 national survey were effectively near-unreadable by the end of the 1990s and required an urgent salvage mission.

The length of life and durability of disks, audio and video tape, CDs and DVDs have not yet been tested by time in the way that parchment or even paper have been.

But the physical safety and longevity of a storage medium are not the only issues. Eventually the (once state-of-the-art) hardware required to access data may become obsolete and impossible to maintain, so an institution must make long-term provision for data migration to ensure continued accessibility.

What will be preserved for future researchers as more and more people use email and electronic formats for their work? Also, as technology develops at an ever-increasing rate, how will such data be archived and made available to researchers when that technology and those formats are no longer current?

### Some examples of different types of documents found in archive collections:



Newspaper



Map

My dear Sir,  
 Your grace is probably aware that  
 the main well stone of Nottingham hath been  
 wanting. The best made a search in the hills  
 taken last the 14th. about one furlong last  
 night about three or four, which they had  
 also cut five to six for place, after nearly taking  
 & hammering it. The master then found there  
 when 40 yds. it lay down in the sand hills.  
 Having obtained 10 pebbles & 5 Dragoon I  
 succeeded in clearing the well about one  
 furlong this morning. The best here being here  
 to be seen. I can see a well hole there in  
 Rome. The parish magistrates are now asking  
 and the frequency it ordered to defend people

Letter



Printed item

1776  
 Mr. Harriott To James Watkins

1813	To work in y <sup>e</sup> garden	
March 13	2 Hundred of Cabbage plants	0:1:4
16	20 of onion seed	0:3:0
	20 of Carrot seed	0:0:6
	25 Half a bushel of potatoes	0:3:0
	4 bushels of sweet potatoes	0:0:9
April 20	3 Fints of french beans	0:2:9
	Lettuce seed	0:0:9
	2 Tons of Cauliflowers plant	1:6
June 7 15	Much	0:2:0
	A Hundred of nails	0:1:4
July 9 5	To 30 days work in y <sup>e</sup> garden at two shillings per Day	3:0:0
		£ 3:15:5
	James Hill 1776	9 9 6
		£ 13 4 4

Accounts



Title deed

Next page: [Where are archives held?](#)

## Where are archives held?

- [What institutions hold which archives?](#)
- [How to find information about archives held in the United Kingdom?](#)
- [How to find information about collections held abroad?](#)
- [What archives are available online?](#)

## What institutions hold which archives?

- Records of central government and courts of law are held at [The National Archives](#) (for England, Wales and the UK as a whole), the [National Archives of Scotland](#), the [Public Record Office of Northern Ireland](#), and [The National Archives of Ireland](#)
- County and local record offices collect records of local government, Quarter Sessions, churches, schools, businesses, families and people in their areas
- The [British Library](#) holds books and manuscript material of national importance
- [The National Library of Wales](#) does the same for Wales
- Some universities have archive or manuscript departments. In some cases, archives were often deposited there before local record offices were set up. Some universities hold rich local collections. Others have specialised in particular subject areas such as Trade Union archives
- Many businesses and organisations maintain their own archives

### User beware! Archives relating to your research could be scattered across a number of these different archive offices:

- Personal letters received by a particular person may have been given by his descendents to the local record office
- Letters sent by him would have been kept by the recipients. Each of whom could have kept them, given them away, or destroyed them
- Records relating to his business concerns would have been kept with the archive of that business
- Records of his birth, marriage and death would be found either in the local record office or at the [Family Records Centre](#)
- Any organisations with which he was involved, e.g. schools, universities, clubs and societies, would have maintained their own archives

## How to find information about archives held in the United Kingdom

The web pages of [The National Archives](#) (TNA) are a good first place to find out about archival sources in the United Kingdom. TNA hosts the National Register of Archives (see below), and the research guides available on its website give a great deal of useful information about archives held at TNA and elsewhere.



## [National Register of Archives](#)

The UK National Register of Archives (NRA) is the central point for information about the nature and location of archives relating to British history. It is maintained by the Historical Manuscripts Commission at The National Archives in Kew. The NRA contains information on the nature and location of manuscripts and historical records that relate to British history. It is probably the most comprehensive point of information about holdings of archives in the UK. Indexes of personal, family and corporate names, and also places in the can be searched online through the NRA website. Search results are linked to ARCHON, an up-to-date register of all UK archive repositories, which provides contact details and web addresses. The NRA is the quickest and easiest way to find out where relevant archive collections are held, but it does not provide detailed online catalogues.

## [UK Higher Education Archives Hub](#)

The Hub contains collection level descriptions for archives held by many UK Higher Education institutions, including The University of Nottingham. It does not describe individual documents but gives information about the scope and content of collections, and details about access to the original material.

## [Aim 25](#)

Similar to the Archives Hub, Aim 25 provides collection level descriptions of the archives held by over fifty higher education institutions and learned societies within the greater London area. Again this is not a comprehensive coverage of all the holdings but is extensive and includes collections relating to subjects far beyond the London area.

[Archives and Records Council Wales](#) provides links to record offices in Wales

[Archives Network Wales](#) allows easy searching of collections held by record offices, universities, museums and libraries in Wales

[The Scottish Archive Network](#) provides links to record offices in Scotland, and collection level descriptions of records held by 52 Scottish archive offices

## [Gateway to Archives of Scottish Higher Education](#)

The GASHE project provides electronic access to descriptions of the archives produced by ten higher education institutions and their predecessors in Scotland, dating from 1215 to the present day

## **How to find information about collections held abroad**

There are a growing number of web sites providing varying levels of information about holdings in archives around the world. These can be useful for tracking down archives relating to British history which have been taken overseas, in particular to holdings in the United States where there are many historical and literary archives relating to the United Kingdom.

## [UNESCO Archives Portal](#)

Provides to links to archives worldwide arranged by categories

## [Ready, Net, Go](#)

This service provides links to all the major indexes, lists, and databases of archival resources worldwide

## [Repositories of Primary Sources](#)

This provides a listing of over 5000 websites describing holdings of manuscripts, archives, rare books, historical photographs, and other primary sources for the research scholar

## [National Union Catalogue of Manuscript Collections \(NUCMC\)](#)

This is a gateway, provided by the Library of Congress, to the OCLC Catalog of archival and manuscript collections in

libraries, principally in North America but from all around the world

## What archives are available online?

Digitised versions of archives are increasingly available, but coverage is patchy and it can be difficult to find out what is available.

[Intute](#) (formerly, a variety of organisations such as the Humbul Humanities Hub) is a free online service providing access to quality internet resources for education and research, including archive digitisation projects. Each website is evaluated and described by subject specialists. Researchers are much more likely to find useful material by searching Intute than by doing a simple search using a search engine such as Google.

Many of the major archive repositories have online exhibitions, e-learning resources, and searchable banks of digitised material available through their websites. For example, the British Library's [Images Online](#), and [Online Gallery](#); and The National Archives' [Exhibitions](#) pages.

Students and staff at the University of Nottingham can access a number of important research resources, free of charge, through the [e-Library gateway](#). The resources include the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography; The Times Digital archive, 1785-1985; *British and Irish Women's Letters and Diaries*; Early English Books Online, and Eighteenth-Century Collections Online; The Gerritsen Collection: Women's History Online, 1543-1945; 19th century House of Commons Parliamentary Papers (HCPP); The Parliamentary Rolls of Medieval England (PROME); and many more.

Next page: [How do I start my research?](#)

## How do I start my research?

- Be clear on exactly what you are researching. It is easier to research a number of narrow topics one-by-one than to try to research an entire subject in one go
- Use the library to undertake background reading of your chosen area before trying to use original documents. You might find that someone else has already done the research, or provided a complete transcription of the document
- Read footnotes and bibliographies. They often provide references of useful documents, or reveal the location of original records
- Make use of published guides and the internet to determine where appropriate material is held
- Finally, visit the archive office. The background work you have done will help you make the most of your time there

Here are some useful websites which describe how to set about using historical records:

### [The Internet for Historians](#)

A tutorial produced by the Intute Virtual Training Suite, which gives advice on using the internet for historical research

### [The National Archives](#)

A number of different in-depth online guides to researching family, house and local history.

### [BBC History, 'How to Do History'](#)

This resource is intended for students and those new to researching history, and provides tips on how to work with original sources - but not how to find them.

### [The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Manuscripts Research Tutorial](#)

This is designed to introduce researchers to the methods of finding and using primary source materials, and includes quick quiz questions at the bottom of each page to check understanding. It has an American focus, but is very useful

### [Yale University Manuscripts and Archives Tutorial](#)

This is another American site of general interest

### [Using Archives: a practical guide for researchers](#)

This site is produced by Libraries and Archives Canada

Next page: [Catalogues and Finding Aids](#)

## Catalogues & Finding Aids

Archives and manuscripts are catalogued differently from library collections. In libraries, items relating to a particular subject are brought together into one place. In contrast, archives and manuscripts are kept as they were found, in their original groupings. This is because it is important for researchers to understand where a particular document came from, and its context in relation to other documents found with it.

The basic unit of an archive is a **collection** (sometimes called a 'fonds'), which is a group of items created or collected by one particular person or organisation. Related collections or documents might be found in the same repository or in another archive altogether. For instance, lawyers would draw up two copies of any particular title deed - one for the seller and one for the purchaser of the land. It is quite possible for both to have survived, but to be in different archive repositories, because the deeds were passed down through two different families.

Items within collections are usually arranged into a logical order and divided up into a number of series. Family and estate collections, for instance, might contain series such as 'Title Deeds', 'Maps and Plans', 'Rentals', 'Correspondence' and 'Personal Papers'. Where possible, the original order in which the items were kept by the creator of the archive is maintained. Where this cannot be determined, archivists usually arrange the items by type or format, in chronological order, or in some other way which will be easy to use.



Traditional archive catalogues

Ge M	Date	Content
40	[1759] 19 July	Vaudreuil to Monckton. He has received his letter informing him of the manoeuvres and number of ships. He counts upon his accuracy in this respect and has much confidence in him.
41	[1759] 1 July	St. Laurent. Isaac Barré to Brig. General Monckton. Ordered by the General to instruct him to fortify his Camp. He recommends the defence of the Church and a house near the water side should be taken possession of and fortified. Marines from the fleet may be employed as Pioneers and provisions will be supplied.
42	[1759] 7 July	Point of Orleans. Isaac Barré to Brig. General Monckton. The Grenadiers, and indeed the whole body of troops should hold themselves in readiness to embark, in addition to the light infantry.
43	[1759] 16 July	Montmorenci. Isaac Barré to Brigadier [General] Monckton. Some provisions having been lost in disembarking, one days provisions extraordinary have been given to the troops. The General seems to extend this indulgence to R.M.'s troops, but recommends the greatest management and care of the provisions in the future.
44	[1759] 24 July	Montmorenci. Isaac Barré to [Brigadier] General Monckton. R.M. is to order the construction of a battery of six guns, four of which

Traditionally, each collection had a typed or printed catalogue which could be seen in the reading room of the particular archive office. Copies of many catalogues from all over the UK can also be found in The National Archives Reader Enquiries Room at Kew.

The records are described in the catalogue in the order in which they are arranged. The level of detail given about each individual item varies between catalogues. Some older catalogues describing medieval or early modern documents provide very full summaries of each item in chronological order. These catalogues are often called 'calendars'. Other catalogues describe entire bundles of documents very briefly. Catalogues of correspondence usually list the writer, the recipient and the date, but they may not give any indication of the content of the letter. Some catalogues are supplemented by indexes.

## Online catalogues

It is now common for archive offices to have some, if not all of their catalogues available electronically. Electronic catalogues mean that users can search for relevant documents in seconds. They may also be able to search across a number of catalogues at the same time. Some electronic catalogues are only available in the reading room of that particular archive office. Others are made available online. The websites of archive offices will include links to any online catalogues, and usually some advice as to whether they are comprehensive or still in development. Here are some examples of online catalogues:

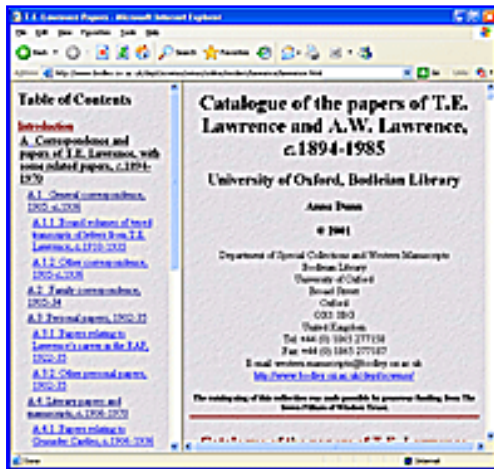
The University of Nottingham's Manuscripts Online Catalogue



The British Library, Manuscripts Catalogue

The National Archives: The Catalogue  
The Catalogue is a database containing descriptions of central government records. The catalogue is supplemented by a large number of guidance pages to help researchers. There are also increasing numbers of digitised resources on the National Archives website, accessed through the Documents Online portal





Online Catalogues of Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford

## Networked online catalogues

It is increasingly common for institutions to collaborate to create combined online catalogues. On these websites, detailed catalogues from multiple archive offices can be browsed or searched at once. Here are three of the most prominent and useful examples:

### [A2A \(Access to Archives\)](#)

This database contains detailed catalogues of archives held in over 400 repositories in England and Wales, including many from The University of Nottingham. It offers searches by keyword, dates and repository

### [The National Archives](#)

The Global Search mechanism allows cross-searching of The National Archives Catalogue, the National Register of Archives, and A2A

### [National Union Catalogue of Manuscript Collections \(NUCMC\)](#)

This is a gateway, provided by the Library of Congress, to the OCLC Catalog of archival and manuscript collections in libraries, principally in North America but from all around the world

## Using Online Resources

- Most online resources will allow researchers to search for people, places or a subject term, as well as do a 'free text' search
- Take a methodical approach to searching: this will avoid wasting time on material which is not relevant to your topic area. Look for variants of words and spellings if you do not find a result first time
- Be aware that each online resource operates slightly differently. Read the 'help' pages to get hints on optimising your search
- There are also differences in the level of detail provided. Sometimes a whole document has been digitised and transcribed for you to read onscreen; but often there may only be a very brief description of a whole bundle of documents
- Don't give up! Not everything has been made available electronically. Contact an archivist for more advice on relevant sources

Next page: [Using archival material](#)

## Using archival material

Each archive office has its own regulations and ways of working. It will help your visit if you find out about procedures in advance by looking at their web pages, telephoning, e-mailing or writing to the office.

- Always check opening times. Most places are open during normal office hours, with only occasional evening and Saturday openings
- Check what facilities are provided. You might need to take a packed lunch if the office is out of town
- It is always best to make an appointment, as they help you to make the best use of your visit. Staff can reserve your seat or microform reader; make material ready (saving time once you're there); note any potential problems such as material held off-site or requiring conservation; and arrange for colleagues to be available
- Most offices require new visitors to register with them. This is a security measure to help safeguard the unique material, and it also helps offices understand who their users are
- You will need to take some identification with you. Some offices require photographic ID such as a passport or drivers licence, and something with an address such as a utility bill
- Some offices require references or letters of introduction
- If you are issued with a reader's ticket you must remember to take it with you on all subsequent visits
- During the registration process you will normally be asked to abide by the repository's own rules and regulations



Regulations in archive offices and rare book reading rooms are generally stricter than those enforced in public libraries. This reflects the fact that archive holdings and early printed materials are unique and irreplaceable, and need to be treated with great care. Regulations vary across offices, but clauses may include:

- No food or drink in areas where original material is used, to avoid spillages
- Use of supports and weights so that the documents are not damaged when they are opened
- Use of pencil only: pens and biros can leak and cause permanent marks on the documents
- Restriction on the number of items issued at one time, to allow proper stock-checking
- Restrictions on photocopying and photographing of original documents. Most reprographic requests are carried out by staff and for the purposes of private study and research only. They normally have to be requested on a special form which includes a copyright statement which must be signed. Some offices allow users to take photographs using their own digital cameras, but many do not allow this because of issues over copyright and ownership of the original documents



The majority of material in archive offices is kept in restricted access stores and brought out for use in the reading room only. Researchers cannot browse the shelves as in a library.

Some popular material may be available in microform. In this case you may be required to use the surrogate copy rather than the original, to safeguard the original from wear and tear.

All offices will have staff on hand to advise on procedures for ordering documents. These vary between offices, but will often involve filling out a ticket for each item which you want to see.

Some offices operate a policy of timed document collection, so there may be a wait for your material. To make best use of your time, ask if you can order some documents in advance of your visit.



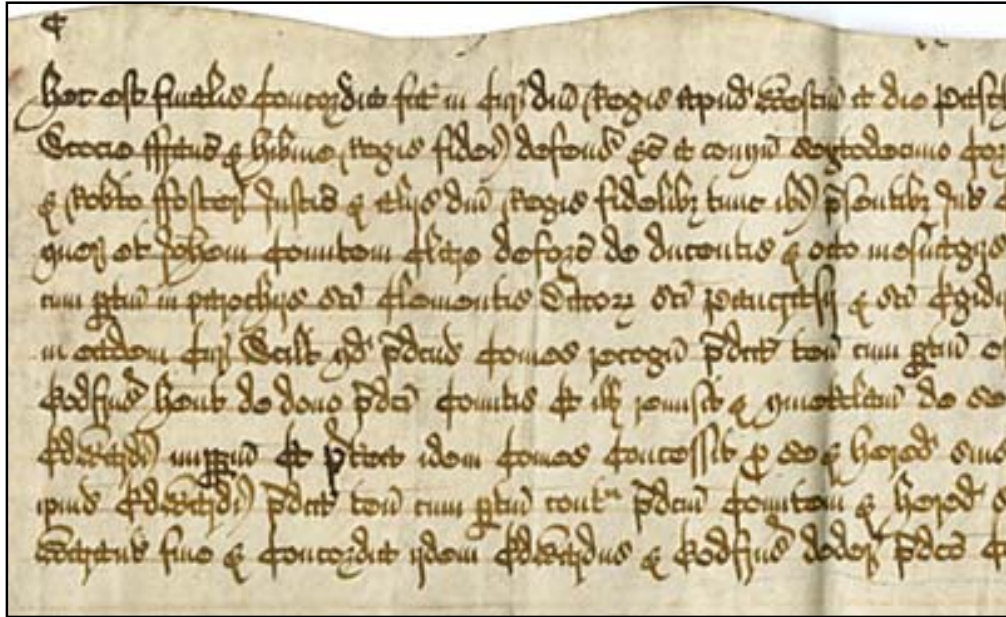
A [visual guide and virtual tour](#) of the facilities at Manuscripts and Special Collections at The University of Nottingham is available on our website.

Next page: [What to expect from archives](#)

## What to expect from archives

### Language and handwriting

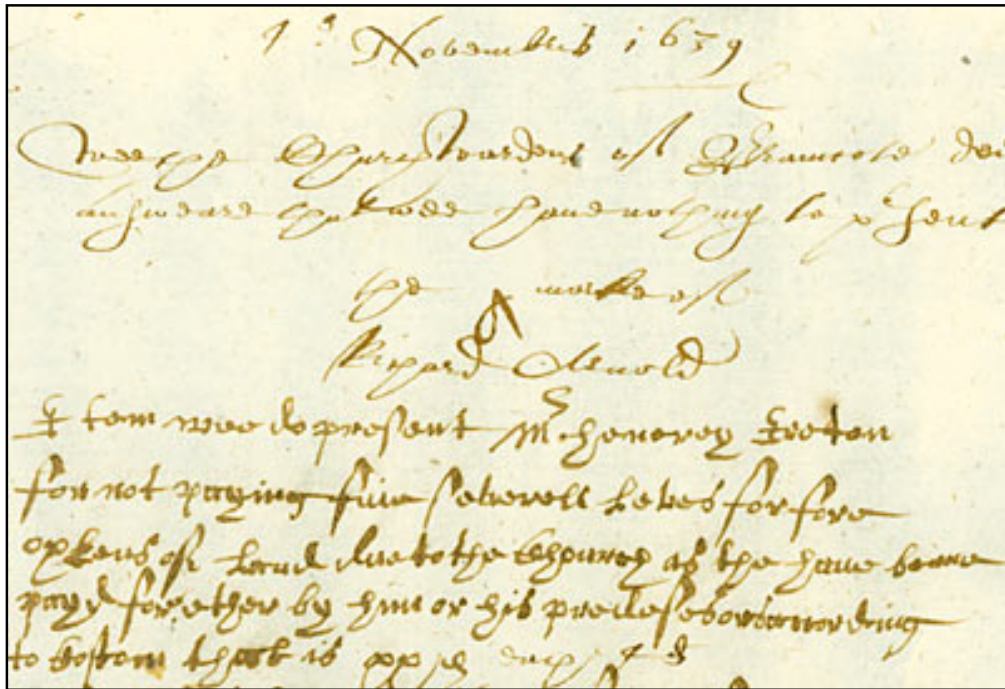
First time users of archives may find difficulties and challenges in using some documents.



Final concord, written in Latin, 1640 (Ne D 32)

Some documents may require language skills. Most official documents were written in Latin up to 1733. Diplomatic papers or correspondence may be written in European foreign languages. Even documents written in older styles of English can be quite hard to understand!

An excellent [Beginners' Latin](#) online tutorial is available on the website of The National Archives.



Presentment Bill, written in English, 1639 (AN/PB 303/679)

The technique of reading old handwriting is called palaeography and is an important skill for researchers. There are several high-quality web sites providing skills in palaeography and 'diplomatic' (the physical make-up and structure of the information found in old documents). Users may find the following useful:

[English Handwriting 1500-1700: an online course](#)

Produced by the Cambridge English Renaissance Electronic Service

[Palaeography: reading old handwriting 1500 - 1800](#)

This resource has been created by The National Archives, in partnership with the School of Library, Archive and Information Studies (SLAIS), University College London

[Medieval and Early Modern Palaeography](#)

This site is written by Dave Postles, Marc Fitch Research Fellow, University of Leicester

## Vocabulary and specialist skills

Archives were written using the conventions of the time. You might find:

- Words which are no longer in common use
- Old weights and measures such as bushels, firkins and roods
- Old currency (£, s, d)
- Dialect terms
- Abbreviations
- Archaic methods of accounting
- 'Old Style' dating (until 1752 the civil year began on 25th March)

Most archive offices have a number of reference works and information leaflets available for users of archives to consult, to assist them in their research.

Manuscripts and Special Collections has developed a series of [Skills Resources](#). This present unit on Using Archives is one of the Skills Resources. You can see the others in the navigation bar on the left hand side of this page. Other units give advice on how to determine the date of documents, how to interpret old weights, measures and money, and how to use maps and plans, deeds, and manorial records.

## Research techniques

- Be methodical. Always keep clear notes of the reference numbers of documents you have consulted. Include items which had nothing of interest in them - you won't want to look at them twice!
- You may have to prioritise your research if you only have limited time available. Ask staff which items can be photocopied for you to work on at home, and concentrate on those which can't
- Archives were created for a specific purpose at the time - they were not written with future researchers in mind. As a result, it can be time-consuming to find and extract the information you want. An understanding of the historical context behind the creation of the documents can help
- Take the time to look at a complicated document in its entirety - does it have its own index, or a list of contents? Can you work out how it was meant to be used? Many pieces of valuable information are 'hidden' and can be challenging to find. However, the process of discovery can be very satisfying. The more time you spend with archives, they easier they are to use.

Next page: [Glossary](#)

## Glossary

Archives	Original items (e.g. documents, files, letters, photographs) created or collected by a particular person or organisation and retained over time
Archives office	Place where <b>archives</b> are stored and made available to researchers. See also <b>record office</b> , <b>repository</b> , <b>muniments</b>
Archivist	The person in charge of preserving <b>archives</b>
Calendar	List of a collection of deeds or documents in chronological order, including summaries or detailed transcriptions of the contents of each document. Often created in the 19th and 20th centuries for older records of central or local government
Catalogue	Descriptive list of items within an archive <b>collection</b>
Collection	Items created or collected by one particular person or organisation, and maintained as a distinct grouping in the <b>archives</b>
Family Records Centre	Part of <b>The National Archives</b> ; holds copies of birth, marriage, death, census and probate records
Finding aid	Descriptive list of items within an archive <b>collection</b>
Fonds	Another word for <b>collection</b>
Manuscripts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Handwritten documents</li> <li>2. Collection of original documents or papers brought together because of the information they contain</li> </ol>
Microform	Generic word for microfilm or microfiche: method of reproducing and viewing copies of original documents

Muniments	Another word for <b>archives</b> , not often used nowadays. Also (muniments room) a place where archives are stored and made available to researchers. See also <b>archives office, record office, repository</b>
National Register of Archives	Hosted by <b>The National Archives</b> : contains information on the nature and location of <b>manuscripts</b> and historical records that relate to British history
Palaeography	The study of old handwriting and the skills required to read it
Primary source	Contemporary document or book which can be used as historical evidence by researchers
Public Record Office	Old name for <b>The National Archives</b> , no longer used
Record office	Place where <b>archives</b> are stored and made available to researchers. See also <b>archives office, repository, muniments</b>
Reference number	Unique code given to each individual document in an <b>archive</b>
Repository	Place where <b>archives</b> are stored and made available to researchers. See also <b>archives office, record office, muniments</b>
Secondary source	Book, thesis or article written by a researcher who has used <b>primary sources</b>
Series	Sub-group within a <b>collection</b> , e.g. deeds, correspondence, accounts
Store	Secure room used to store <b>archives</b> . Also sometimes called a strongroom or a <b>muniments room</b> . Modern stores are environmentally monitored and controlled
Surrogate	Facsimile version of an original document made to look as close to the original as possible
The National Archives	Archives office in Kew which holds the records of central government in England and the United Kingdom

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## Bibliography

In recent years a wide range of guides to using original records have been published, many with a focus on researching family or local history. The world of archives is a fast-changing one, and details of addresses, telephone numbers and websites can quickly become out of date. Most of the most useful and popular guides are regularly updated, so make sure you are using the latest edition.

This bibliography includes classmarks of copies of the books held by the University of Nottingham library. Most are reference only, but some can be borrowed by library members. You can search the University of Nottingham Library Online Catalogue ([UNLOC](#)) to find more publications.

### Where to find record offices

- J. Foster and J. Sheppard. *British Archives: A Guide to Archive Resources in the UK*, 4th edn (London, 2002)
  - Hallward Library 4/Ref CD1042.F6 and King's Meadow Campus Ref CD1042.F6. Also available to University of Nottingham library members as an electronic resource
- Jeremy Gibson and Pamela Peskett. *Record offices : how to find them*, 9th edn (Bury, 2002).
  - Hallward Library 4/Ref CS434.G4 and Shakespeare Street LRC CS434.G4
- Ian Mortimer. *Record repositories in Great Britain*, 11th edn (Kew, 1999)
  - Hallward Library 4/Ref DA9.H4 and King's Meadow Campus Ref DA9.H4
- Lesley Richmond and Alison Turton, *Directory of corporate archives : a guide to British business which maintain archive facilities* (London, 1997)
  - King's Meadow Campus Ref HD2713.D4
- Iain Walker (ed). *The libraries directory : a guide to the libraries and archives of the United Kingdom and Ireland*, 49th edn (Cambridge, 2004)
  - Available to University of Nottingham library members as an electronic resource

### General guides to using archives for research

- R.J. Olney. *Manuscript Sources for British History* (London, 1995)
  - This booklet is now available online (<http://www.history.ac.uk/msarchives/>)
- F.G. Emmison and W.J. Smith. *Material for theses in local record offices and libraries*, 2nd edn (London, 1979)
  - King's Meadow Campus Ref D8.H3.H87
- David Iredale. *Enjoying archives : what they are, where to find them, how to use them* (Newton Abbot, 1973)



- DLRC, Jubilee Campus LB1603.I7
- Philip C. Brooks. *Research in archives : the use of unpublished primary sources* (Chicago, 1969)
  - Hallward Library D16.B7

## Subject-based guides to using archives for research

There are hundreds of books available giving advice on using particular types of record, or researching a particular type of history (family history, local history, house history, etc.). In addition, The National Archives has produced a wide range of [leaflets and research guides](#), available at its offices at Kew and also online.

The following are four examples of series of research guides which aim to cover a wide range of topics.

*Guides to Sources for British History*, published by the Historical Manuscripts Commission [Hallward Library DA9.H4/12, and King's Meadow Campus Ref DA9.H4]:

- Papers of British antiquaries and historians (2003)
- Principal family and estate collections. Family names (1996-1999)
- Records of British business and industry 1760-1914. Metal processing and engineering (1994)
- Records of British business and industry, 1760-1914. Textiles and leather (1990)
- Papers of British politicians 1782-1900 (1989)
- Papers of British churchmen 1780-1940 (1987)
- Private papers of British colonial governors 1782-1900 (1986)
- Private papers of British diplomats 1782-1900 (1984)
- The manuscript papers of British scientists 1600-1940 (1982)
- Papers of British Cabinet ministers 1782-1900 (1982)

*Guides for genealogists, family and local historians*, written by Jeremy Gibson and collaborators, published by the Federation of Family History Societies [Hallward Library 4/Ref CS434.G4, Hallward Library 4/Ref CD1026.A2.G4, and King's Meadow Campus Ref CS434.G4]:

- The Protestation Returns 1641-42 and other listings ( 2nd edn, 2004)
- Militia Lists and Musters, 1757-1876 (4th edn, 2004)
- Land and Window Tax Assessments, 1690-1950 (updated 2nd edn, 2004)
- Probate Jurisdictions: Where to Look for Wills (5th edn, 2002)
- Local Newspapers, 1750-1920: A Select Location List (2nd edn, 2002)
- Bishops' Transcripts and Marriage Licences, Bonds and Allegations: A Guide to their Location and Indexes (5th edn, 2001)
- Marriage, Census and Other Indexes for Family Historians (8th edn, 2000)
- Lists of Londoners (3rd edn, 1999)
- Local Census Listings, 1522-1930: Holdings in the British Isles (3rd edn, 1997)

- Coroners' Records in England and Wales (2nd edn, 1997)
- Victuallers' Licences: Records for Family and Local Historians (2nd edn, 1997)
- The Hearth Tax, Other Later Stuart Tax Lists and the Association Oath Rolls (2nd edn, 1996)
- Quarter Sessions Records for Family Historians (4th edn, 1995)
- Poll Books, c.1695-1872: A Directory to holdings in Great Britain (3rd edn, 1994)
- Census Returns 1841-1891 in Microform: A Directory to Local Holdings in Great Britain (6th edn, 1994)
- Poor Law Union Records, 1834-1930 (in four parts, various edns, 1993-2005)
- Tudor and Stuart Muster Rolls (1989)

Publications by Colin R. Chapman [King's Meadow Campus Ref CS434.C4]. Including:

- Basic facts about using education records (1999)
- Tracing your British ancestors (revised 2nd edn, 1999)
- Pre-1841 censuses & population listings in the British Isles (5th edn, 1998)
- Sin, sex and probate : ecclesiastical courts, officials & records (2nd edn, 1997)
- An introduction to using newspapers and periodicals (revised edn, 1996)
- Marriage laws, rites, records & customs : was your ancestor really married? (1996)

L. M. Munby (ed). *Short guides to records*. First series - guides 1-24. New edn (London, 1994). King's Meadow Campus Ref D8.H4.S1

K.M. Thompson (ed). *Short guides to records*. Second series - guides 25-48 (London, 1997). King's Meadow Campus Ref D8.H4.S25