

Local and family history resources: a select list of books, pamphlets, online and social media, and organisations

This blog offers a selective list of books, social media, and websites for people embarking on the rewarding adventure of local and family history. There are more books covering many aspects of local and family history than we could ever hope to cover in this list. Many titles in this list are only available second-hand, and we recommend looking at the catalogue in your local library.

The broad range of resources are a decent starting point to any research project. Subjects covered are studying and research methods, genealogy, maps, deeds and seals, editing documents, manor court records and title deeds, paleography [reading of old handwriting], business, house, and religious themes. We also include a selection of organisations that have an interest in archives and history at the local, regional, and national levels along with details for Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

We especially recommend the three books listed below: David Dymond's book is an excellent introduction on how to research and write local history; David Hey's book on family and local history includes thematic essays and a comprehensive A-Z guide of terms; and for those with an interest in reading the handwriting of the 16th and 17th centuries then Alf Ison's booklet is a great introduction on how to distinguish between the various letter shapes common to the alphabet in those times.

- 1) David Dymond. *Researching and writing history: a guide for historians*. 3rd ed. Lancaster: Carnegie, 2009.
- 2) David Hey. (Ed.). *Oxford companion to family and local history*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- 3) Alf Ison. *A Secretary hand ABC book*. Reading: Berkshire Family History Society Research Centre, 1982.

Studying/research methods

David Dymond. *Researching and writing history: a guide for historians*. 3rd ed. Lancaster: Carnegie, 2009.

W.G. Hoskins. *The making of the English landscape*. London: Book Club Associates, 1981.

W.G. Hoskins. *Fieldwork in local history*. 2nd ed. London: Faber and Faber, 1982.

A.J. Pickard. *Research methods in information*. London: Facet, 2013.

Johnny Saldana. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. 4th ed. London: Sage, 2021.

Genealogy

Amanda Bevan. *Tracing Your Ancestors in the National Archives: The Website and Beyond*. 7th ed. Kew, Surrey: The National Archives, 2006.

Mark Herber. *Ancestral trails: the complete guide to British genealogy and family history*. 2nd ed. Stroud: Gloucestershire, 2005.

Maps

Brian Paul Hindle. *Maps for local history*. London: BT Batsford, 1988.

Paul Hindle. *Maps for historians*. Chichester, Sussex: Phillimore, 1998 (2006 printing).

David Smith. *Maps and plans: for the local historian and collector*. London: BT Batsford, 1988.

Deeds and seals

Dr Patricia M. Barnes and L.C. Hector. *A guide to the seals in the Public Record Office*. Public Record Office Handbooks, no. 1. 2nd ed. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1968.

Roger H. Ellis. *Catalogue of seals in the Public Record Office: monastic seals: volume 1*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1986.

P.D.A Harvey and Andrew McGuiness. *A guide to British medieval seals*. British Library and Public Record Office, 1996.

T.A. Heslop. "English seals in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries." In *Age of Chivalry: art in Plantagenet England 1200-1400* edited by Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski, 114-117. London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1987.

Editing documents

P.D.A. Harvey. *Editing Historical Records*. London: British Library, 2001.

R.F. Hunnisett. *Indexing for editors*. Archives and the user, no.2. British Records Association. 1972.

R.F. Hunnisett. *Editing records for publication*. Archives and the user, no. 4. London: British Records Association. 1977.

Manor Court records and title deeds

N.W. Alcock. *Old title deeds: a guide for local and family historians*. Chichester: Phillimore, 1986.

Mark Bailey. *The English manor: c.1200-c.1500*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002.

Mary Ellis. *Using Manorial records*. Public Record Office Readers' Guide, no.6. Kew: Public Record Office Publications, 1997.

P.D.A. Harvey. *Manorial records*. Archives and the user, no.5. London: British Records Association, 1984.

Dennis Stuart. *Manorial Records: an introduction to their transcription and translation*. Chichester: Phillimore, 1992.

Palaeography

Giles E. Dawson and Laetitia Kennedy-Skipton. *Elizabethan handwriting 1500-1650: a guide to the reading of documents and manuscripts*. London: Faber and Faber, 1966.

F.G. Emmison. *How to read local archives 1550-1700*. London: Historical Association, 1967.

Hilda E.P. Grieve. *Examples of English handwriting: 1150–1750*. Essex Record Office Publications, no. 21. Essex Education Committee, 1954.

P.M. Hoskin, S.L. Slinn, & C.C. Webb. *Reading the past: sixteenth and seventeenth century English handwriting: facsimiles, transcripts and reading notes*. York: Borthwick Institute, University of York, 2001.

Alf Ison. *A Secretary hand ABC book*. Reading: Berkshire Family History Society Research Centre, 1982 (2000 printing).

Hilary Marshall. *Palaeography for family and local historians*. Andover, Hampshire: Phillimore, 2004.

Eve McLaughlin. *Reading old handwriting*. 4th ed. 2007.

Preston, J.F. & Yeandle, L. *English handwriting 1400–1650: an introductory manual*. Asheville, North Carolina, 1999.

The National Archives. *Palaeography: reading old handwriting 1500–1800: a practical online tutorial*. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/palaeography/default.htm>.

Latin

Eugene Ehrlich. *Nil desperandum: a dictionary of Latin tags and useful phrases*. London: BCA, 1992.

John L. Fisher. *A medieval farming glossary of Latin and English words: taken mainly from Essex records*. National Council of Social Service (on behalf of Standing Conference for Local History), 1968.

Eve McLaughlin. *Simple Latin for historians*. 7th ed. Varneys Press, 2005.

Janet Morris. *A Latin glossary: for family and local historians*. Bury: Federation of Family History Societies (Publications), 1989 (2002 printing).

Charles Trice Martin. *The record interpreter*. 2nd ed. Chichester, Sussex: Phillimore, 1910 (1982 printing).

Denis Stuart. *Latin for local and family historians: a beginner's guide*. Stroud, Gloucestershire: Phillimore, 1995.

Guides to records

Colin R. Chapman. *How heavy, how much and how long? weights, money and other measures used by our ancestors*. Dursley: Lochin, 1995.

Colin R. Chapman. *Marriage laws, rites, records and customs*. 2nd ed. Dursley: Lochin, 2008.

C.R. Cheney and Michael Jones. *A handbook of dates: for students of British history*. 2nd ed. Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks, no.4. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

M.T. Clanchy. *From memory to written record: England 1066–1307*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.

Peter Franklin. *Some medieval records for family historians*. Federation of Family History Societies. Birmingham, 1994.

V.H. Galbraith. *An introduction to the use of public records*. London: OUP/Clarendon Press, 1934.

Cecil R. Humphery-Smith (ed.). *The Phillimore atlas and index*. 3rd ed. Chichester: Phillimore, 2003.

Rosemary Milward. *A glossary of household, farming, and trade terms from Probate inventories*. Occasional Paper, no.1. 3rd ed. Chesterfield: Derbyshire Record Society, 1986.

John Richardson. *The local historian's encyclopedia*. 2nd ed. New Barnett: Historical Publications, 1986.

Philip Riden. *Record sources for local history*. London: B.T. Batsford, 1987.

W.B. Stephens. *Sources for English local history*. Chichester: Phillimore, 1994.

Dr K.M. Thompson (ed.). *Short guides to records: first series: guides 1-24*. London: Historical Association, 1994.

Dr K.M. Thompson (ed.). *Short guides to records: second series: guides 25-48*. London: Historical Association, 1997.

John West. *Town Records*. Chichester, Sussex: Phillimore, 1983.

John West. *Village Records*. 3rd ed. Chichester, Sussex: Phillimore, 1997.

Steven Hollowell. *Enclosure records for historians*. Chichester, Sussex: Phillimore, 2000.

Family, local, religious, brewing, business, and house histories

Stephen Allen, Liz Hollinshead, and Sue Wilkinson. *Using houses and homes*. London: English Heritage, 1998.

Nick Barratt. *Tracing the history of your house*. 2nd ed. Kew: The National Archives, 2006.

Alan Cox. *Sources for the study of public housing*. Guildhall Library, 1993.

John H. Harvey. *Sources for the history of houses*. Archives and the user, no.3. London: British Records Association. 1974.

David Hey. (Ed.). *Oxford companion to family and local history*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Jeremy Jones. *How to record graveyards*. Council for British Archaeology and RESCUE (The Trust for British Archaeology), 1976.

John Orbell. *A guide to tracing the history of a business*. Business Archives Council and Gower, Aldershot, 1987.

Dorothy M. Owen. *The records of the Established Church in England: excluding parochial records*. British Records Association. Archives and the user, no.1. 1970.

Anne Tarver. *Church court records: an introduction for family and local historians*. Chichester, Sussex: Phillimore, 1995.

W.E. Tate. *The Parish Chest: A Study of the Records of Parochial Administration in England*. Chichester, Sussex: Phillimore, 1983.

Local groups

Bourne Society
bournesoc.org.uk/

Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society
cnhss.co.uk/

Friends of Shirley Windmill
shirleywindmill.org.uk/

Friends of Old Palace
friendsofoldpalace.org/

Historic Croydon Airport Trust
historiccroydonairport.org.uk/
Twitter: @CroydonAirport

Norbury & South London Transport Group
norburyclub.org.uk/

Android and Apple apps

A history of English Places
aimermedia.com/app/english-places/

Archives

Archives Hub
The Archives Hub brings together descriptions of thousands of the UK's archive collections.
Archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk
Twitter: @archiveshub
Facebook: Archives Hub

Black Cultural Archives
BCA collects, preserves, and celebrates the histories of people of African and Caribbean descent in the United Kingdom.
blackculturalarchives.org/
Twitter: @bcaheritage
Instagram: bcaheritage
Facebook: Black Cultural Archives

Bromley Historic Collections
bromley.gov.uk/records-archives/historic-collections-resources
Twitter: @BromleyArchives

Lambeth Archives
lambeth.gov.uk/libraries-archives/lambeth-archives
Twitter: @LambethArchives
Instagram: LambethArchives

Lambeth Palace Library
lambethpalacelibrary.org/
Twitter: @lampallib
Instagram: lampallib
Facebook: Lambeth Palace Library

London Metropolitan Archives
cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/history-and-heritage/london-metropolitan-archives
Twitter: @LdnMetArchives
Instagram: ldnmetarchives
Facebook: London Metropolitan Archives

Museum of Croydon
museumofcroydon.com/collections
Twitter: @MuseumOfCroydon
Instagram: Museum of Croydon
Facebook: @MuseumofCroydonofficial

The National Archives
nationalarchives.gov.uk/
Twitter: UkJatArchives
Instagram: nationalarchivesuk
Facebook: @TheNationalArchives
TikTok: uknatarchives

Surrey History Centre
surreycc.gov.uk/culture-and-leisure/history-centre
Twitter: @SurreyHeritage
Instagram: surreyhistorycentre
Facebook: @surreyheritage

Sutton Archives & Local Studies
libraries.sutton.gov.uk/digital-content/sutton-heritage/local-studies-archives-and-family-history-centre
Twitter: @SuttonArchives

Other organizations

Archives for London

AfL brings together users, researchers, and enthusiasts interested in archives in or about the history of London.

archivesforlondon.org

Twitter: @archives4london

Facebook: Archives for London

British Association of Local History

BALH promotes and serves local historians.

balh.org.uk/

Twitter: @BALHNews

Instagram: balhnews

Facebook: British Association for Local History - BALH

British History Online

BHO is a mix of free and subscription-based content relating to British and Irish history.

british-history.ac.uk

Twitter: @bho_history

Facebook: British History Online

British and Irish Furniture Makers Online (BIFMO)

BIFMO is a free database for British and Irish furniture makers from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the onset of the Great War.

bifmo.history.ac.uk/

British Library

bl.uk/

Twitter: @britishlibrary

Facebook: The British Library

British Records Association

The BRA promotes, for the public benefit, the preservation, understanding, accessibility and study of our recorded heritage.

britishrecordsassociation.org.uk/

Twitter: @BritRecs

Facebook: British Records Association

Business Archives Council

The Council promotes the preservation of business records of historical importance and encourages interest in the history of business in Britain.

businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/

Twitter: @_BusinessArch

Centre for the History of People, Place and Community

Focuses on research in local, rural, urban, and metropolitan history.

history.ac.uk/research/centre-history-people-place-and-community

Twitter: @CHPPC_IHR

Community Archives and Heritage Group

Supports and promotes community archives in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

communityarchives.org.uk/content/about/history-and-purpose

Twitter: @CArchives

Federation of Family History Societies

Promotes interest in researching family history and encourages membership of member societies.

familyhistoryfederation.com/

Twitter: @FederationFHS

Facebook: Family History Federation

House History Hour

Twitter: @HouseHistoryHr

Institute of Historical Research (IHR)

Through its academic and public resources, the IHR helps support the growth of the social, cultural, and economic importance of history. The IHR Library is open to independent researchers.

history.ac.uk/

history.ac.uk/library/library-membership#independent-researchers

Twitter: @ihr_history

Instagram: [instituteofhistoricalresearch](https://www.instagram.com/instituteofhistoricalresearch)

Facebook: Institute of Historical Research

Layers of London

A crowd-sourced history project based on maps of London. Users can contribute stories, memories, and histories to create a social history resource about their area.

layersoflondon.org/

Twitter: @Layers of London

Facebook: Layers of London

YouTube: Layers of London @layersoflondon2572

London Historians

A club for Londoners who like to learn more about their city's history.

londonhistorians.org

Twitter: @LondonHistorian

Facebook: London Historians

Manorial Documents Register

'The Manorial Documents Register (MDR) is the official index to English and Welsh manorial records. It provides brief descriptions of documents and their locations in public and private hands. Title deeds are not included in the MDR.'

discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/manor-search

Nottingham University

Has a collection of useful research guidance covering subjects such as weights and measures, dating documents, deeds, accounting, manorial records, maps and plans, and medieval documents.

www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/researchguidance/introduction.aspx

Society of Antiquaries of London

Promotes, supports, and communicates understanding of the human past.

sal.org.uk

Twitter: @SocAntiquaries
Instagram: socantiquaries
Facebook: Society of Antiquaries of London

Society of Genealogists
Provides the education, skills, and standards for genealogical research.
sog.org.uk/
Twitter: @SocGenealogists
Instagram: sogenealogists
Facebook: Society of Genealogists

Society for One-Place Studies
For anyone studying the family and local history of places around the world.
one-place-studies.org
Twitter: @OnePlaceStudies
Instagram: societyforoneplacestudies
Facebook: Society for One-Place Studies

Victoria County History
The VCH aims to complete authoritative, encyclopaedic histories of each county.
history.ac.uk/research/victoria-county-history
Twitter: @VCH_London

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