



Contacting us

We recommend that you contact us to make a seat reservation before visiting to do your research.

WYAS Wakefield
Registry of Deeds
Newstead Road
Wakefield
WF1 2DE

Telephone +44 (0)1924 305980
Facsimile +44 (0)1924 305983

e-mail general enquiries
wakefield@wyjs.org.uk

e-mail deeds enquiries
deeds@wyjs.org.uk

Web site www.archives.wyjs.org.uk
DX 713273

What is the 'Registry of Deeds'?

Established by Act of Parliament in September 1704, the Registry is one of the oldest in the country and one of only five in England. It was created to allow land holders to register publicly deeds relating to their property. The Registry contains summaries of properties located in the West Riding. It closed for registrations in September 1970.

Was every property registered?

It was customary to register deeds but not compulsory. Between 1704 and 1914 some 1.5 million deeds were registered. The growth of owner occupation led to an increased rate of registration, adding several million more deeds between 1910 and 1970. Not all types of deeds were registered e.g. leases shorter than twenty-one years and copyhold deeds.

What is a registered Deed?

The deeds held are not originals but summaries or 'memorials'. They give the date of the deed, the names and addresses of the parties (buyers/sellers) and a brief description of the property. Other details sometimes included are land boundaries and any restrictive covenants, plans or rights of access. Later memorials often include plans. From 1884 the format of registration changed allowing deeds to be registered on either 'form 1' for fuller details or 'form 7' for summary details.

Who registered the Deeds?

Owners of properties or companies registered deeds and some used this to act as security for loans. Large areas of land in the West

Riding were copyhold i.e. subject to the jurisdiction of the lords of the manor and were not registered in the Registry of Deeds.

How are the Deeds kept?

The memorials are kept in large bound volumes.

How can I find a Deed?

The principal way to locate a deed is by using the **personal name indexes**. From 1704 to 1763 only the name of the vendor (seller) is indexed. After 1763 the names of all parties are indexed. Up to 1794 surnames are arranged under the initial letter of the surname only. After 1794 the index is fully alphabetical.

The **place name indexes** can also be used. These are incomplete. They cover 1704 to 1787 and 1884 to 1923. They are useful for the period up to 1763 if the location of the property is known but the owner's name is not. The index is organised by parish or township and is not strictly alphabetical.

Index of Wills

The Registry of Deeds holds indexes of wills covering the period 1704 to 1879 and 1885 to 1890. Outside of these dates wills can be found in the personal name indexes.

What do I need to do to find a Deed?

You will need the address of the property and the name of an owner prior to 1970. If you do not have this information please contact us for advice before you visit.

Using the Deeds in the Registry

Appointments to use the Registry of Deeds are recommended as it can get very busy.

Begin your search by consulting the **personal name indexes**. These are arranged in year order and then alphabetically by surname, forenames and/or initials.

Staff will show you how the different series of deeds volumes are arranged, how to request volumes and where to return them to.

Please use **Order Form 1** to request legal copies of deeds or the Deeds Research Application Form on **User Guide 7** to request copies for family or local history purposes.

For current charges please ask staff or see our website.

We ask you not to use mobile telephones or cameras in the Registry.

How can I find out if property or land is registered at the current Land Registry?

It is now compulsory to register land at the national Land Registry. If you know the address of a property you can check their website at:

www.landregisteronline.gov.uk

and download details of title deeds and current plans for a fee.

Be aware that for most areas covered by the West Riding Registry of Deeds there is a gap between the closure of the Registry in 1970 and compulsory land registration. Registration was compulsory by 1974 in most areas, but land in some areas of North Yorkshire did not have to be registered until as late as 1988.

Unable to visit the Registry?

We can do the searching for you. If you cannot visit our Wakefield office in person, or simply have insufficient spare time to conduct research yourself, our experienced staff can search the deeds indexes on your behalf.

How do I use the deeds service for legal purposes?

To order a search for, or a copy of a deed for legal purposes please complete Order Form 1 West Riding Registry of Deeds

How do I use the deeds service for family and local historians?

To order a search for, or a copy of a deed for family or local history purposes please complete a Deeds Research Application Form which can be found on User Guide 7 Family/Local Historians Deeds Service.

Definitions of words and phrases found in Deeds

The language used in Deeds is often unfamiliar and the main points are often introduced by the use of certain words or phrases in larger writing.

This indenture made [usually the date follows here] **between** [the names of the parties to the deed]

Hath	what the deed is for e.g. Sale of land, mortgage
All that	tells you what and where the property is
For and in consideration of	how much the property is going to be sold for
Whereas	this often shows the history of the property
To have and to hold	the conditions of any special terms that apply to the transaction
Appurtenance	property that belongs to something else e.g. sheds and gardens of a building
Assignment	transfer from one person to another
Burgage	land ownership involving lands in ancient boroughs
Close	an enclosed area of land
Conveyance	a document (other than a Will) that transfers property from one owner to another
Copyhold	land forming part of a manor/estate
Covenant	agreement that obliges someone to do or not do something
Deed	a legal document usually dealing with ownership or occupation of land
Deed Poll	a deed involving just one party
Easement	the rights a landowner has over the lands of someone else, such as a right of way, rights of light, drainage etc
Enfranchisement	when copyhold land is converted into freehold land
Freehold	absolute ownership of the land
Hereditament	property that can be inherited, includes rights and profits
Indenture	a deed with two or more parties involved
Lease and release	the normal method of conveying land until 1841
Leasehold	owner of property allows tenant to occupy land for length of time, usually in return for rent
Memorial	summary of the important parts of a deed.
Messuage	a house, including gardens, outbuildings, orchards etc.
Moiety	one of two or more parts of property ownership
Parcel	a portion of land

Peppercorn rent	a purely nominal rent
Right of way	right of passage over lands owned by another person, some are public and others for neighbours or specified persons
Tenement	a house
Toft	land where a building once stood
Trust	one person holds property on behalf of and benefit of another
Unadopted Road	road for the use of residents and maintained at their own expense, not maintained by the council or local authority