

Contacting Us

Please contact us to book a place before visiting our search rooms.

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This guide will help to explain some of the more commonly used records for researching the history of a house or building, including some useful records which are not held by West Yorkshire Archive Service [WYAS].

Please contact us using the 'contact us' details if you would like to visit WYAS to look at any of the records we do hold that are mentioned in this guide.

There is no charge for personal visits to our search rooms except for copies of documents and photography fees. We can also arrange for groups visits and offer a 30 minute research service.

If you are researching a particular person or family you might like to look at User Guide 11 'Sources for Family Historians' or if you are researching local history you may wish to look at User Guide 16 'Sources for Local History' User Guide 7 'West Riding Registry of Deeds Service for Family and Local Historians' is also useful if you are researching the history of a building

In this guide you will find information on:

- Electoral registers [1840 onwards]
- The West Riding Registry of Deeds [1704-1970]
- Maps
- 1910 Valuation Maps and Registers
- Wills

The history of every house and the people who lived there will be unique. To help with your research we have listed in this guide records that may help you. You may need to look at a number of different records in the course of your search.

STARTING YOUR RESEARCH

It may be helpful to make a list of all the information you already have about your house and the questions that you may want to ask

- How old is your house? Architectural features may give you a clue. For advice go to www.house-detectives.co.uk or <http://www.buildinghistory.org/>
- Who did you purchase your house from? Do you already have deeds or records about it? You may have information from the Land Registry, if not this can be obtained from www.land.reg.gov.uk
- Do you know the names of previous owners or occupants and when did they live there?
- Do you want to know about your house and/or the people who have lived in it?

ELECTORAL REGISTERS

Electoral registers will tell you about the people who were registered to vote at your address.

This may not mean that they owned the house. An address might not appear in the electoral registers if the residents were not eligible to vote.

The registers began in the 1830s and were published once a year, except during the First and Second World Wars when no registers were taken.

The entries are usually listed by wards and

the boundaries for these may change from time to time. In some registers there is also an alphabetical list of names.

Not everyone had the right to vote, for example women over 21 did not have the vote until 1928.

For more information about the history of electoral registration see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voting_age

Most of the Electoral Registers we hold are held by our Wakefield office. Please contact our Wakefield office to find out whether we have the registers.

1910 VALUATION OFFICE MAPS AND FIELD BOOKS

These were produced as a result of The Finance Act (1909-1910) for the levy and collection of duty on the value of all land in the UK and led to the compilation of a nationwide survey of property.

The field books are divided into Townships and list details of the names of owners of property and who lived there. The address is given, what the land was used for and the amount of tax payable.

The maps identify the address with a reference number that can then be traced to the field book. These are based on the 1909 ordnance survey maps.

Some of the draft field books and maps for parts of the West Riding of Yorkshire are held at WYAS Wakefield. There are areas which are not covered by the collection held at West Yorkshire Archive Service.

The authoritative valuation office maps and field books are held at The National Archives, Kew. For more details go to www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

THE WEST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE REGISTRY OF DEEDS

This unique collection records the ownership of property and land in the old West Riding of Yorkshire from 1704 to 1970. Over 13 million memorials were registered up to September 1970 when the Registry of Deeds closed.

The index of names lists those who registered conveyances, wills, leases over 21 years, as trustees or who made Deeds of Gift. In order to search these indexes you will need the name of someone who owned the house pre-1970. You may find a name in the 1910 valuation field books or electoral registers that will help you.

For more information about registration after 1970 go to the Land Registry website at www.land.reg.gov.uk

Also our User Guide 4 'West Riding Registry of Deed' and User Guide 7 'West Riding Registry of Deeds Service for Family and Local Historians' may also be of use

PROBATE RECORDS

Wills can provide important information about houses and their owners. A search of names in probate calendars can reveal

where someone lived when they died and who may have inherited the house. The records of the Wakefield Probate Registry are held at WYAS Wakefield and some earlier Richmond wills are held at WYAS Leeds. For further details on Wills see WYAS Collections Guide 4

You can search the Calendars of Probate on the Ancestry website at: www.ancestry.co.uk

ENCLOSURE MAPS

The Enclosures Acts took land out of common use and sold it into private hands. Most transactions took place in the late 18th and 19th centuries.

Plots of land were given a number on the maps and the details of ownership were recorded in the award books. They rarely provide details of named properties but do show who owned the land.

TITHE MAPS

Produced in 1835 to calculate the money payment alternative for tithes in kind these maps show each parish and the properties liable for the tithe. There is also an apportionment or award listing landowner, occupier, plot number and name and description of premises.

For more information please see our Collection Guide 9: Tithe Maps

See also <http://wytithemaps.org.uk>

OTHER RECORDS HELD BY WYAS

The West Yorkshire Archive Service holds many other records that could help you to find out even more about your house and the people who lived there.

These could include any of the following:

- Ordnance Survey maps
- Land Tax Returns
- Estate/Manorial records
- Building Plans
- School Log Books
- Parish registers and records
- Local Authority records

A search of our online catalogue on our website may help you to find even more records:

<http://www.catalogue.wyjs.org.uk/calmview/>

THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

The Historic Environment Record may hold information on older houses, particularly listed buildings. You can contact The Historic Environment Record, who are also part of West Yorkshire Joint Services by email: wyher@wyjs.org.uk or visit their website:

<http://www.wyjs.org.uk/archaeology-advisory/>

RECORDS HELD OUTSIDE WYAS

There may also be records related to your house held at Local Studies Libraries which may hold useful records such as Census Returns (also available online at www.ancestry.co.uk and other sites), Street and Trade Directories.

There may also be photographs of the area on website such as:

www.leodis.org

and

www.twixtaireandcalder.org.uk/default.htm

If you would like our assistance to continue with your research or have any further enquiries please contact us to discuss the options available.