

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service



A visitor's guide

All you need to know to help you find your way around

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Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service are located on Level 2 (Explore the Past) at The Hive in the heart of Worcester.

Under our care thousands of archaeological sites, historic buildings and landscapes are recorded and 12 miles of original archives are collected and preserved. These are made available to our customers under the guidance of friendly, knowledgeable and experienced staff. All types of research on Worcestershire people and places can be undertaken using the comprehensive resources of the Historic Environment Record and the Archive Collections.

If you are visiting us for the first time, take a minute to read this guide, which will tell you all you need to know to get started.

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Opening Times

Day	Access to Original Archives	Access to staffed Historic Environment Record	Hive opening hours
Monday	No access to Original Archives	1.00pm to 4.00pm	08.30am to 10pm
Tuesday	10.30am to 4.00pm*	1.00pm to 4.00pm	08.30am to 10pm
Wednesday	1.30pm to 7.00pm	1.00pm to 4.00pm	08.30am to 10pm
Thursday	10.30am to 4.00pm*	1.00pm to 4.00pm	08.30am to 10pm
Friday	10.30am to 4.00pm*	1.00pm to 4.00pm	08.30am to 10pm
Saturday	10.30am to 4.00pm*	No access to staffed Historic Environment Record	08.30am to 10pm
Sunday	No access to original archives	No access to staffed Historic Environment Record	08.30am to 10pm

***Important Notice:** The Original Archive Area will be closed to the public for lunchtime between 1pm and 1.30pm on the days noted above. All documents will be secured away in our strong-rooms during this time and returned to users after the break.

The Hive is open seven days a week from 8.30am to 10pm, during which time visitors can freely access all of our self-service resources; our extensive Local Studies and Archaeology Library and our catalogues and indexes.

Explore the Past

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service is on Level 2 (Explore the Past) at The Hive. The floor has three key areas for users to visit:

Original Archive Area

The Original Archive Area is the place to visit if you wish to view any of the original documents held within our archive collections during our staffed hours (see Opening Times section for details). These records go back to the 1100's, and relate to every aspect of Worcestershire life, and include:

- private records of local families and estates
- school and hospital records
- business records
- records of Worcestershire County Council
- an extensive collection of Worcester City records

Self-Service Area

Our Self-Service area is fully accessible to users from 8.30am to 10pm, during which time you can freely access the wide-range of sources on offer. Sources such as:

- parish registers, newspapers and wills on microfilm
- extensive Local Studies and Archaeology reference library
- computers available for internet use and searching our electronic catalogues and indexes
- free access to the Ancestry website
- a wide range of finding aids and resources

Historic Environment Record

Simple enquiries can be dealt with during normal opening hours. This resource, which is fully accessible to the public, contains over 54,000 records relating to:

- archaeological sites
- historic buildings
- historic environment features: early prehistoric finds, medieval agricultural landscapes, recent industrial structures, large-scale excavations, building records
- individual stray finds.

Users wishing to speak to a member of staff to guide them through the resources on offer are able to book a 30 minute appointment free of charge (see Opening Times above for details). A member of the City of Worcester HER is present in The Hive on Tuesday mornings to answer detailed enquiries.

Keep reading for more information on using the areas mentioned above.

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Using the Original Archive Area

(i) Before you visit

To make your visit easier we recommend that you try to do a bit of research before you arrive. Gather together any information you may already have about the subject you are researching, and if possible check online catalogues to see if we have any documents relevant to your research. There are a number of sources you can check online:

- Our online catalogue: <http://e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/CalmView/>
- The National Archives' catalogue, Discovery: <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>
- We have a growing selection of online indexes, available at: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/waas under Search our Records

Remember to make a note of any reference numbers you find for documents you wish to view.

Please note: not all of our collections are available to search online. Hundreds more are available to search through our paper catalogues in branch.

(ii) Checklist of items to bring with you

- CARN ticket (see below for further information) or suitable ID with your current address, such as a driving licence or utility bill.
- Any research material you have already gathered.
- Pencils (we do not allow use of pens).
- A notebook or a laptop to keep track of your research and memory sticks to save work on. You can plug your laptops into the power supply here or use the computers in the building.
- Worcestershire Library card or University of Worcester Library card. These are required to log on to the computers for internet access and to issue locker keys for depositing coats and bags. Staff can issue you with a Worcestershire Library card if you don't already have one, on presentation of identification. These are available to non-Worcestershire residents too.
- Digital camera. Users can purchase a photo permit to take digital images of documents (restrictions may apply). You will need to sign a form when copying any documents so please always seek permission from a member of staff first. (See (vii) for current charges).
- Permission letters for access to records affected by closure periods.

(iii) CARN reader's tickets

If you wish to use the Original Archive Area you will need a CARN (County Archive Research Network) reader's ticket. If you already have a CARN ticket issued by

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another office please bring it along with you. If you do not have a valid ticket, or yours has now expired, please bring along a piece of ID which displays your current address. A driving licence or utility bill is ideal (please note passports are not accepted).

CARN tickets are free of charge to obtain. Once issued, tickets last for four years and can be used at any other archive repositories supporting the CARN system. Please note users must present their CARN ticket on each visit when using the Original Archive Area. If a CARN ticket is lost or stolen please inform a member of Archive staff immediately to prevent misuse. A replacement ticket will be issued.

(iv) Getting started

Users entering the Original Archive Area must sign our visitor's book, and in doing so agree to abide by our [Rules and Regulations](#).

When you arrive for the first time a member of the Archive Team will provide you with a short induction to using the Original Archive Area. This is designed to familiarise you with the layout of the service, to show you how to order documents and to give you an introduction to using our resources.

(v) Use of lockers

All bags must be deposited in lockers before entering the Original Archive Area. Our lockers are restricted to use by visitors to the Archive Service during our opening hours. Locker keys will be issued to customers on their library cards, so if users do not already have a Worcestershire Library card they will need to request one. This is a straightforward process, and identification showing a name and address is required. The closing times will be clearly displayed in branch and it is the customer's responsibility to return the key before closing time. Failure to return the key upon closing will result in a fine. This is £1 a day for the first 8 days, rising to £60 after that. £60 is the cost of replacing the locks and keys on the locker.

(vi) Ordering Items

Before you can order items you will need to check our electronic or paper catalogues to ascertain the correct finding numbers. You will then need to complete a Document Request Slip. Staff will guide you through this process during your User Induction on your first visit.

You may order a maximum of three items at one time, with a separate Document Request Slip required for each item. Staff will issue you with one item at a time; once you have finished viewing a box please return it to the desk so staff can give you your next item.

Please note where there is a surrogate copy of a document available on microfilm (such as parish registers, wills or electoral registers), you will be required to view

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these in the Self-Service Area instead of the originals. This is important as continued use of frequently accessed original items will cause them to deteriorate over time.

(vii) Use of cameras and copying of documents

You may be able to take copies of our documents, subject to restrictions and permission from staff. We offer a range of reprographic options and services, including:

Photographic permits

These can be purchased to allow you to take unlimited non-flash digital images using your own camera. This is a convenient, time saving option, allowing you to take copies at your own pace. Please note staff permission must be sought before taking any photographs and a copyright form must be signed. Photo permits can be purchased from staff at the following costs applicable from 1st April 2016:

Daily permit: £7.20

Five-day permit: £16.45 (valid for use on any five days over a three month period)

Annual permit: £51.40

Group permit: £87.40

Digitisation Service

We offer a professional Digitisation Service which can provide high quality digital images of documents in a range of formats. Please speak to a member of staff to obtain a quote for the work you require, or check our [website](#) for more information or see the back page of this guide for contact details.

Photocopying

We allow a limited amount of photocopying of original documents, however, this can damage documents because of the physical handling required, and the effects of the light. For this reason, whenever possible we encourage our customers to use non-flash photography or take advantage of our in-house digitisation service instead.

Photocopying will **not** be permitted if:

- A document has a seal
- A document is especially fragile
- A volume is bound tightly and photocopying would harm the spine
- A document or volume is large and will not fit properly on the photocopier

Please note that photocopies cannot be taken on the day of your visit. In order to ensure the security of our documents staff will take your order, complete the request outside of our opening hours and post it out to you at home. The charge is £2.10 for the first sheet plus 41p (A4) or 51p (A3) for each additional sheet required. For more information on photocopying please speak to a member of staff.

Using the Self-Service Area

A selection of guides and resources are available in the Self Service Area to help you to find your way around. Resources include:

Public access computers

The Hive has many computers available for public use, along with free access to Wi-Fi. In order to log on to a computer you will need either a Worcestershire library card or a University of Worcester student card. If you don't already have a card, simply bring along a piece of I.D. and staff will issue you with a Worcestershire library card. (Note: library cards can also be issued to non-Worcestershire residents permitting computer use only).

Once you log in to one our computers you can use the internet and enjoy our free access to the family history website Ancestry.co.uk.

Printing and Photocopying

While you are here you can print pages from the internet, print copies from microfilms and take photocopies. Printing and photocopying services are available on a self-service basis. In order to pay for your copies you will need to put credit on to your library or student card, using one of the top-up machines available on each floor. Details of our printing and copying charges are displayed next to each printer and copier.

Using Microfilm

We have 16 microfilm readers, which are available for the public to freely access. There is no need to book a space, simply come along and get started. Next to each reader you will find a box of items to help you, including a marker box to indicate where you have taken a microfilm from and markers for microfiche cards. Take up spools are attached to the machines.

Our microfilm cabinets are close to the readers, with clearly labelled drawers indicating the contents. We have numerous resources on microfilm, including parish registers, newspapers, electoral registers, wills, census records and various private collections.

We have two microfilm reader printers available for users who wish to print from the microfilm. These operate on the same system as printing from computers, so bring along your library or student card for print outs.

Finding aids and 'How to...' guides

We have numerous finding aids, indexes and handlists available that will help you to understand our self-service collections.

Printed 'How to...' guides are also available to guide you through some of our more frequently used processes such as loading and printing from a microfilm, searching for wills and searching for maps.

All of our books are available to search on the library catalogue, which is accessible via a computer from home or in The Hive:

Local Studies and Archaeology library

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service boasts one of the most extensive collections of books relating to Worcestershire, its history and archaeology. Our large reference only Local Studies library, is available for users to consult, as a vital resource for studying locality, family history or adding context to archival research. Our Archaeology library holds a wide-range of books providing both local and national coverage, along with a large selection of volumes relating to World War II defences.

Please remember that as these books are reference only they may not be taken out of The Hive.

Palfrey Library

The Palfrey library is a special collection which forms a part of our Local Studies library. This extensive collection was bequeathed to the County Council by Alderman H.E. Palfrey, Chairman of the Records Committee. Compiled over many years, the collection boasts a rare selection of antiquarian studies, first edition volumes and books useful to the study of Worcestershire.

Books held as part of this collection are stored in lockable, glass cabinets in the Self-Service Area and are accessible in the Original Archive Area.

Using the Historic Environment Record

This is the county of Worcestershire's primary source for archaeological and historic environment information. The Historic Environment Record (HER) holds approximately 54,000 records on all aspects of Worcestershire's archaeology and historic environment.

We are here in The Hive to provide information and advice based on user's requests and interests.

Here are some ideas of what our service can help you to research:

- Your area – e.g. village, a particular building, parish
- A particular period of interest – e.g. Roman, medieval, World War II

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- Different industries – e.g. lime kilns, carpet factories, needle manufacturing
- Artefact types – e.g. coins, pottery, plant and animal remains

As you can see there is a wealth of information available, whether you are a member of the public, a student, or a professional archaeologist.

Where do I start?

The best starting place is to get in touch with an HER Member of Staff by visiting during opening times or by [submitting an enquiry](#), which will enable staff to fully understand your research question(s) and assist you by providing an HER report of all the records that you may be interested in, along with location and historical mapping.

If you can't make it in to see us don't worry, you can start your research online using the resources listed below. A good starting place would be the [Heritage Gateway](#).

Now I have a HER report, what more can I do?

There are several resources you can make use of, both within The Hive and online at home:

- HER Sources and Aerial Photographs – these are situated in the Archaeology public office in the filing cabinets and on the shelves. The sources are filed under their **SWR** number, which is the unique number given to every document referenced in the HER. You can find a document's SWR number in the bibliographic section of the HER report provided.
- Tithe, Inclosure and Estate Maps – these are situated in the two vertical map cabinets in the Archaeology public office. The maps are filed alphabetically by parish/estate name. The majority of the maps are hand transcriptions copied at a scale of 1:10000.
- [Online Archaeology Library \(OAL\)](#) available to search on our website. Here you will find access to archaeological reports that are the result of the planning process (grey literature) and will give details of excavations, field walking, building recording and much more archaeological work. You can search for reports using the **SWR** numbers mentioned above; also you may choose to use the **WSM** number, which is the site specific number that you will find in the HER report. The search engine on the site also allows for keyword searches on title and authors.
- Heritage Gateway – English Heritage have created an online portal so that users can search many HERs (and other national datasets) all at once. This is a particularly useful tool for having an initial look at what the HER may hold.

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The web address is www.heritagegateway.org.uk. Please see our guide to using the Heritage Gateway for further details.

I have completed my research/project, are you interested?

Yes! One of the main ways the HER is updated and maintained is by people informing us of their discoveries, memories or points of interest. The minimum information that we would usually require is a location (a cross on a map is adequate); some information regarding what the project was or how the discovery was made and any photographs or reports available that we can add as references.

By letting us know what you have found we can enhance our database to help inform future enquirers and therefore continue to protect the County's historic environment.

Facilities at The Hive

Refreshments

The Hive has its own café, which serves sandwiches and light snacks as well as a variety of cakes and hot and cold drinks. The café is open from 8.30am to 9.00pm daily.

There are vending machines available on Level 0 for a range of hot and cold drinks and snacks.

You may bring along your own cold food. Please remember if you bring drinks onto the floor you will need to keep a lid on them in order to protect our resources.

Please note: no food or drinks are allowed in our Original Archive Area.

Accessibility

The Hive is fully accessible to wheelchair users, mobility scooters and pushchairs and has ramp access to all areas. We have disabled toilet facilities, a personal care suite and lifts to all floors.

Contact Us

By post:

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

By telephone:

01905 822866

Online:

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/waas



Blog:

www.explorethepast.co.uk



Twitter:

[@explorethepast](https://twitter.com/explorethepast)



Facebook:

[WorcsAAS](https://www.facebook.com/WorcsAAS)



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