

Archives Galore!

Intro: Welcome to Hampshire HistBites. Join us as we delve into the past and go on a journey to discover some of the county's best and occasionally unknown history. We'll be speaking to experts and enthusiasts, asking them to reveal some of our hidden heritage, as well as share with you a few fascinating untold stories.

Barry: Hello. My name is Barry Shurlock. I'm a trustee of the Hampshire Archives Trust. We're an umbrella come information hub for all archives and archive related activities in Hampshire, though we don't actually own any archives ourselves. We publish a very informative newsletter, more a journal really, and have a generous grant scheme. We encourage applications for appropriate projects as detailed on our website, where there's much more on what I'm about to tell you. The website address is simply www.hampshirearchivestrust.co.uk. The only thing you might get wrong is to use 'archive' instead of 'archives', plural. If you in any way use archives, we encourage you to join the Hampshire Archives Trust.

One general point, as we know, the pandemic has changed the way we all work and especially the access or lack of access to public archives and other sources. It's still not clear what will change, but at this time of uncertainty and making little attempt to account for them, it's a pleasure to be asked, by the Hampshire History Trust to talk about archives under the title Archives Galore! I'm aiming to give a general introduction, which hopefully will be of interest to researchers at all levels, the beginner, as well as those with more experience. I'm talking as a user of archives, not a professional Archivist, and so I shall be concentrating on a practical hands-on approach to researching information for use in a variety of ways - for writing articles or blogs, for teaching, for local history research, even playwriting or merely to tell stories and have fun.

Like most people with an interest in the past, I believe you cannot understand a place, a person or even a company without knowing their history. And the bedrock for all this is the information to be found in archives. And I'm using the word archives in the widest possible sense. Obviously, this includes official archives, such as the National Archives at Kew and the Record Offices in Winchester, Southampton and Portsmouth. I might also mention Winchester College, whose archives contain important papers on many places in Hampshire. Then there are the archives that belong to local history societies of which there are well over a hundred of all kinds in Hampshire. Perhaps as many as 140, if you include amenity groups. Also, it includes the archives in museums and other significant centres such as the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu, the Florence Nightingale Museum, London, local museums, such as the one at Bishop's Waltham, military museums, such as the Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum, the Willis Museum, Basingstoke and all the others run at the Hampshire Cultural Trust.

Then there are the county and national societies, there's hardly a subject that does not have one or more societies devoted to it, whether it's railways, mills, workhouses, Methodism, architecture, or on particular subjects, such as the Friends of Gilbert White, the Selborne Society, The Mayflower Society etc.

Also, many well-known companies, past and present, have archives that may be useful for the history of a particular place at a particular time. The archives of Wallis & Steevens, the Basingstoke traction engine manufacturer are, for example, kept at the Museum of English Rural Life, at the University of Reading.

So, these are all 'archives' of various kinds. And then there are many individuals who hold a personal collection of information on a subject. I call them squirrels. If you want to find out something about

any place, there's bound to be someone there who will know. And for any firm, still in business or no longer active, there will almost certainly be someone who once worked there and has an archive of some kind. Also, I take the word archives to include libraries, not only special collections, like the Cope Collection of antiquarian books on Hampshire in the University of Southampton library, but also those holding runs of difficult-to-find local publications.

Finally, we all know that today, the first port of call for any inquiry is the internet. Many of the archives mentioned above can be accessed in some way or other on the net. And this has completely changed the way that research is carried out. The implications of the net are still to be worked out, but ask yourself: even before the pandemic, when did you last go to a reference library or a physical archive?

So, I now want to start with the three Record Offices in the county. These are staffed by professional archivists who have a passion for history and a wide knowledge of their collections. So don't be shy at asking them questions. Local public record offices are in fact a relatively modern facility, only being made a requirement by a key act in 1958. Before that, some corporations did have important archives that were known and accessible to historians, whilst others did not. Southampton was in the first category and Portsmouth in the second. The formation of the Southampton Record Society in 1905, gave the City a good start and led the publication of the Southampton record series. In 1953, the city record office opened its doors to the public.

In contrast at this time, the city records at Portsmouth were still virtually unknown to historians, and it required an order in 1960, from the Lord Chancellor's department to force the council to comply with the public records act 1958. As a result, a full-time archivist was appointed, and in 1971, Portsmouth started to publish its own record series.

In Winchester, the lead was taken by the City, which appointed Barbara Carpenter-Turner Honorary Archivist in 1946. A year later, the County followed suit, with Eleanor Cottrill, the first full-time county archivist. Much of this was impelled by the Hampshire Field Club, whose president, in 1945, made it a priority in his inaugural speech.

In Southampton, there are two relevant locations for archives: in the civic centre of the Southampton archives themselves and then in the nearby public library is the local history and maritime library. Southampton archives holds material from 1199 to the present day. As a port with a flux of people from all corners of the world, there are rich holdings on many minority communities. Huguenots, Afro-Caribbeans, Poles, Asians and many others. Also, as might be expected, there is much on ships and their crews in the 19th and 20th centuries. The Central Index Register of Merchant Seaman 1914-1941 is the national archive held at Southampton. It gives details of the sailors who served on the ships with personal detail, sometimes photographs, even details of tattoos.

Southampton also has a collection of 800 recordings of conversations with a huge variety of people and associated documents, covering many subjects, such as cinema, football, memories of World War II, the blitz, etc. There's also much on the City and its administration, on property ownership, finance, and trade, justice and poor relief. There are records of the local boards, the pavement commissioners, boards of health, building control, education, hospitals and the police. Also on special boards, such as that which oversaw the building of Northam Bridge. Individual items include an earlier terrier of Southampton of 1454 giving a layout of buildings and people and customs books that show the goods that pass through the Bargate in the 15th and 16th centuries. And there are brokerage books giving details of trade in the port - silk, spices, herring and much else - and the ships that carried them.

Much of this material has been worked on by academics and distilled into the Southampton Record Series, an extremely valuable resource, now comprising almost a hundred volumes on all manner of

subjects. Close by is the Southampton Local History and Maritime Library, holding not only local material, but also records of national importance, such as shipping and yacht registers and Board of Trade wreck reports. Particularly useful is its Local History and Maritime Digital Archive, which is searchable online.

The library also has runs of journals, such as *Ships Monthly* and *Sea Breezes* with an index for items on Southampton. And there are reports on all kinds of accidents -maritime ones such as boiler explosions, and many others.

The author Frank Bowen, 1894 - 1957, left a huge collection of press cuttings and notebooks, etc. on maritime subjects. And there are many illustrations of all kinds of ships in the library. Notably those of John H Isherwood who was around from 1925 - 1971, a prolific contributor to *Sea Breezes*. And as you might expect, if you want to know anything about the Titanic disaster, go to Southampton and its SeaCity Museum.

Amongst the large collection of maps and plans of the city or the late 19th century Goad fire insurance plans – that's G O A D. They give detailed street by street information on buildings, land use, and urban development.

Finally, much on the city is posted on the Sotonopedia website, which is billed as an A-Z of Southampton's history.

Now moving onto Portsmouth and its History Centre, the collections which are in the Guildhall and start in the 14th century before the port was even a major Naval centre. Associated finding aids include the Portsmouth Encyclopaedia prepared by Alan King in 2011, which is downloadable. Other finding aids are a guide to tracing houses and other buildings in the city and an A-Z Guide to parish registers.

The Portsmouth History Centre has thousands of books and other items on the city. These include some 1500 books on the Royal Navy alone and a special collection on Nelson. There are also about 2000 indexed photographs of ships and other naval subjects. There's also a large collection of nearly 1700 recorded interviews with a wide variety of people covering many subjects, including World War II and D-Day, the Royal dockyard, working the ferrys, making corsets, etc. There are even interviews with local pop musicians. And the Portsmouth history centre also holds two other huge collections of national importance, namely one on the novelist, Charles Dickens in the city of his birth and another on Sherlock Holmes and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who, as a young GP, worked in Southsea and wrote the first Watson and Holmes story there.

The Hampshire Record Office in Winchester caters for everything outside Southampton and Portsmouth. There's long been the responsibility of the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire as the representative of the Crown, to look after the county's records. As it happens, appropriately enough, the current Lord Lieutenant, Nigel Atkinson, is president of the Hampshire Archives Trust. County records were traditionally kept in the chest with several locks, but in 1773 the JPs decided to build a room 'with proper shelves and conveniences for depositing books and records of the County'. After many changes, the current purpose-built office was opened in 1993 by Her Majesty the Queen.

In normal times, the Hampshire Record Office can be visited without an appointment, merely by presenting a reader's card. And if you don't have one, this can be issued with ID. Current arrangements for visiting the Record Office have however been perturbed by the pandemic. And one only hopes that they will soon be simplified and brought back to their normal form.

The Record Office has a splendid search room with an extensive library of reference books, with an A-Z local studies collection, providing a wealth of printed sources, many locally published. There are card indexes of wills, parish registers, and much else. And there are computers which are necessary for ordering items from the strongroom and also offer free access to a number of commercial finding sites. There are well over a million items stored on more than eight miles of shelving. They cover all levels of local government, religious organizations, families and individuals, schools, charities, societies, and sports clubs, military organizations, hospitals, magistrates, coroners, and much else. Also, the collection includes the archives of Winchester City and the records of the Diocese of Winchester.

Significant collections include those of about 70 prominent landowners and Hampshire families and businesses such as Portals, the paper makers and military organizations, such as the Royal Green Jackets Regiment, and many others.

The Hampshire Record Office also holds the Wessex Film and Sound Archives, an incredibly rich collection of films and sound recordings covering Hampshire and adjacent counties with the material for local and regional TV and radio, as well as amateurs. There are special booths for viewing and listening to the material. This is really a treasure house for local historians.

Of course, as with any other major archive, the challenge with the Hampshire Record Office is often to find out what you want. Fortunately, it has a brilliant online catalogue. If you have specific items of interest, the easiest thing to do is to search online at home before visiting. In fact, this is essential during the pandemic, though in normal times, it can also be done at the visit. There is a simple search function, which would deliver all items that contain a given word or several words or a phrase put in inverted commas. And there's also the so-called advanced search, which offers a range of other options.

It's not complicated to use the online catalogue, but equally it's not easy to explain. The easiest way to learn about it is probably to play around at home with a specific inquiry. But I will try to present an example. Imagine you're interested in the Manor of West Boarhunt, which is said 'Borunt'. First, having established that the answer to your query is not in the Victoria Country History, accessed online from the British History site. With a simple search of the catalogue entering in quotes "Manor of West Boarhunt", you find 18 items on the subject. Similarly in quotes, "West Boarhunt Manor" yields another two items. Looking at these, you might notice that most have a finding number starting with 4M53, which refers to a collection of nearly 2000 items in the Hampshire record office relating to Southwick Priory, and 4M53/23 is a reference to West Boarhunt, where the Priory owned property. There are actually 25 items in this category. So for example, 4M53/23/6 is the sixth of these 25 items. So you found a fair number of items and established some understanding of the ownership of West Boarhunt by Southwick Priory will help the research.

Unless you're familiar with the catalogue, you probably won't remember the details of this exercise, but hopefully it does demonstrate how the Hampshire record office online catalogue can be interrogated in a number of ways to find items relating to a specific inquiry and in so doing, how to get a clearer idea of what sources there are and how they might relate to your inquiry.

So, this is a rapid survey of the three record offices in Hampshire. Obviously, the National Archives at Kew should also be explored, especially as so much is online, but even more is available at a visit. There's a huge amount of material there on subjects administered for the County, but by central government, such as schools, public health, poor relief, and the like. The national archives has an excellent website. And in particular, its discovery domain covers the whole country with more than 32 million records of which nearly 30% are downloadable. They're held by two and a half thousand

archives across the County, including the Hampshire record office and the offices at Southampton and Portsmouth.

Particularly useful for tracing relatively wealthy individuals who owned property in more than one diocese, are the wills of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, which can be downloaded for a modest sum, even free during the pandemic.

The National Archives website also has a large number of 'how to look for' guides for special recollections, on no less than 360 subjects. There is much on family history, service records, World Wars, courts, prisons, foreign and colonial history and much, much more. Even if you're dealing with inquiries relating only to Hampshire, it's worth exploring the National Archives website as material was sometimes held out of county, besides which the expertise to hand in an online guide on any subject will generally help to understand better the records available.

As already mentioned, another important deposit of thousands of records relating to many places, by no means all in Hampshire, are the archives of Winchester College, which cover more than 600 years. Because so many people of influence went to Winchester, they may be found in the Registers of Scholars and Commoners or mentioned in the school magazines or in the War Service Rolls for both World Wars. Much material is online at www.winchestercollegearchives.org and can be consulted by appointment at the school. Also online is a three-volume catalogue, Winchester College Muniments, published between 1976 and 1984, which is indexed in fine detail and lists virtually the entire archive.

Because Winchester was endowed with extensive estates, many which continued in ownership until relatively recently, the Muniments provide a window on their past, especially regarding property ownership. The Manor of Eling on Southampton Water was purchased in 1372 by the College's founder, William of Wykeham and granted to the school in 1385. The documents relating to the Manor cover 25 pages in the published catalogue online. Similarly, those for the Priory at Hamble covers 35 pages.

Moving now to the Hampshire Field Club, which was founded in Southampton by TW Shaw and a few others in 1885. It's main publication has been the Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club & Archaeological Society since 1996 called Hampshire Studies. All volumes published between 1887 and 2017 can be viewed on the website, more recent volumes are accessible only by members of the Field Club, which is a good reason to join! Periodic indexes of the Proceedings were published in appropriate volumes and can be viewed online. In addition, Professor Anthony King has prepared an online index of all volumes, arranged by period. This also covers the Hampshire Field Club newsletter.

Another countywide source of information on a wide range of subjects, as well as a source of illustrations, is the Hampshire Cultural Trust, a charity founded in 2014 to oversee many of the museums in the County. Its website gives access to many of its collections and can be searched. For example, entering 'Wallis and Steevens' in the search box gives three photographs of traction engines and steam and diesel rollers manufactured in Basingstoke by the well-known engineering firm. Entering 'Southwick', finds a print of the Prior's chair. Similarly, 'Porchester' yields many prints and paintings of Portchester Castle, as well as a painting of a jigsaw puzzle of the 1790s made by a French prisoner of war.

Specialist organizations concerned with archives are often useful. For example, as its name suggests, the Business Archives Council may be of interest if a specific business is being researched in a specific place. It has an online bibliography of 40,000 items, which is accessible for a fee. And it publishes a number of research guides on subjects such as brewing, shipbuilding, banking and the pharmaceutical industry.

There are many other specialist sources. If you have an interest in non-conformity, there is the Strict Baptist History Society. And Peter Higginbotham has created a brilliant website on Workhouses. For science and medicine, there's the Wellcome Collection. That's W E L L C O M E, a free museum and library with a huge selection of archives and images that can be used free of charge.

If you're interested in, for example, in the discovery of treatments for scurvy, there are more than a thousand items in the Wellcome Collection, this would be valuable for study of the work of Dr. James Lind at the Royal Naval hospital at Haslar in Gosport. Alternatively, you might go to the website of the James Lind library.

Sometimes you'll need to find out about a place that is not well-known to you. A quick trawl on Google or Wikipedia is the obvious first step. Next might be the historic Ordnance Survey maps on the website of the National Library of Scotland. Trade directories are another prime source. Large number of them is available online from Leicester University. It takes a bit of practice to use the site, but it could all be done at home.

Other useful websites include British History Online, essentially the Victoria County History, another called Hampshire History, Find a Grave, Visions of Britain and of course the website of the Hampshire Archives Trust.

The Hampshire Genealogical Society is obviously not only a very important source of information on family history, but it also publishes a series of books and booklets giving basic information on particular Hampshire villages, these can be purchased online. Also, for members, there is a walk-in research centre, which is at the moment, in the process of being relocated from Cosham to the Hampshire Record Office at Winchester.

This takes me on to the 140 or so local societies in the county. Some are concerned just with local history, others with conservation and community. They vary considerably in their scope and activity, but there is scarcely a place that does not somewhere, have a group of people or perhaps an individual who has a great deal of knowledge on the area and is generally very willing to share it. Their websites are often extremely informative. I point you particularly to one like the re-engineered site of the Tadley & District History Society.

Many of these local societies have an archive of some kind. It may be a collection in an individual's house or a cupboard in the village hall, or increasingly, it may be entirely digital. Some such archives are catalogued online or accessible by other means. The Milford on Sea Historical Record Society, for example, probably the oldest society in the county, founded in 1909, has a searchable catalogue with filters for date and format. For example, entering 'aircraft' turns up an interesting item about the sale of the Efford Park Estate, which mentioned that it had a 'private aircraft landing ground'. To take another example, if you're interested in Edward Gibbon, the author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, whose family had a small estate in Buriton, near Petersfield, a Hampshire Record Office search with 'Gibbon Buriton' yields 23 items whilst the useful account of his time in the village is on the website of the local society, Buriton Heritage.

If you have an interest in Havant and its surroundings, including Bedhampton, Hayling Island, Rowland's Castle, etc., there's a huge collection, almost an archive, of more than 150 booklets on a huge range of subjects. It could be downloaded for free from www.thespring.co.uk.

Bitterne near Southampton has a similar collection of about 50 booklets on many local subjects, they're not downloadable, but can be purchased for a modest sum, online. Also, there are many large

collections of photographs and postcards relating to a given place, including the commercial Francis Frith collection, many of which have been purchased by the Hampshire Record Office.

Alresford Heritage is another example of a personal endeavour that contains hundreds of images of the town of Alresford, and these may be used with permission.

As already mentioned, the University of Southampton library holds the Cope Collection of Antiquarian Books on Hampshire. They were collected by the Rev. Sir William Henry Cope, who lived at Bramshill in the county, and who in 1879, produced a catalogue of the 700 books or so he owned, this is reproduced in Turley's Hampshire & Isle of Wight Bibliographies, published in 1975, which is very useful for tracking early works. It might also be noted that the University of Southampton library holds the papers of the Duke of Wellington.

So this is merely an overview of a huge subject. I have not, for example, mentioned newspapers. It hardly needs saying that getting to know sources, their strengths and weaknesses, accessibility, previous studies of them, etc., is a key part of any research project.

I hope that this talk has given you some ideas. In the end, every researcher becomes an expert on the archives relating to their corner and can therefore help others with similar interests. One way of getting to know people in the field is to join the Hampshire Archives Trust either as a corporate member or a personal member. Just go to the website, www.hampshirearchivetrust.co.uk. It costs very little and delivers a lot.

I'm grateful to Sue Woolgar, former Southampton City Archivist and secretary of the Hampshire Archives Trust, for comments on an early draft of this talk. Thank you very much for listening.

Outro: We hope you enjoyed listening to today's episode. If you would like to find out a little bit more about what we've been talking about, then please visit the website, www.winchesterheritageopendays.org, click on Hampshire HistBites, and there you'll find today's show notes as well as some links to more information.