

Guide to:

Visiting Archives and Local Studies Libraries

STEP 1: Search online catalogues

Keep a record of the items you are interested in - you'll need the reference number and probably the title or description for easy identification.

STEP 2: Contact the archive or library

Ask about access conditions, when you might be able to visit and any special requirements, e.g. registering as a reader/user. Normally, library resources are accessible as a walk-in, but archival records often need to be ordered in advance.

STEP 3: Prepare for your visit

Check opening times (including planned closures) and any logistical issues like how to get there. You will need:

- Pencil and paper / notepad / laptop
- Phone or camera and change to pay for printing or photography
- ID or membership card
- A 'to-do' list which helps you decide in what order to look at material and what you hope to uncover

You won't be able to eat or drink in the archive, so make sure you have a good breakfast!

STEP 4: On the day of your visit

Follow any specialist instructions on how to handle the materials you are looking at (e.g. with supports, weighted string etc). Always start your notes with a clear indication of what source or record you are looking at, including date, author / copyright holder, page references - don't forget to keep a written list of photos you've taken too. Have fun!



Created by Parks & Pavements Past (Amy Graham)

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