

History Records

Introduction

The History Records collection forms part of the History Reference Collections, located in Zone 5C of the Main Library. It is a reference collection of c. 3,500 volumes comprising a wide range of both source and bibliographic material, including the Victoria County Histories, Rolls Series, Royal Historical Society Bibliography, and guides to research materials; as well as publications of the Public Record Office.

The National Archives at Kew (previously known as the Public Record Office or PRO) is the main repository of original state papers and documents in England. Its publications provide a great deal of information about the original documents and records it contains in the British National Archives – such as state papers, rolls, papal registers, judicial records, chronicles, and official correspondence. They constitute an invaluable source of information for the study of the history of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

In 2012 the Library purchased State Papers Online which covers some material in the History records Collection. You can access it via the Library catalogue at <http://findit.bham.ac.uk/>

PRO publications include calendars, lists, and indexes:

- **Calendars** are in précis form, usually in English, but are full enough for most purposes to replace the original documents.
- **Lists** enumerate the units composing a class of records, with dates and simple descriptions.
- **Indexes** contain alphabetically organised references to people, places or subjects mentioned in the records.

The History Records collection also includes the journals of both Houses of Parliament, the Monumenta Germaniae Historica and Rymer's Foedera.

- **Note:** Although it is mainly a reference collection, when there are two copies of the same work, the second copy can be borrowed. The volumes that can be borrowed are shelved with those that are reference only, but they will not have the 'Reference only' label inside, or if they do, the label will have been 'cancelled'.

It should also be noted that, while the History Records Collection contains key bibliographic and source materials, further such resources can be found throughout the library, most especially amongst the History periodicals section (zone 4D) in publications of the local records societies, Camden Series and other similar publications; and also in English Historical Documents (DA 25-12); Records of Social and Economic History (DA 25/DA 25-B7); and the Early English Text Society (PR 1119.A2).

Contents of the collection

The list below includes some of the most important titles of the collection. The documents have been organised into broad categories. The categories and the documents within each category are listed alphabetically. Some works are listed at the end under the heading 'Miscellaneous'. Where appropriate, a description of the nature of the documents is included.

GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Chancery records

Calendar of Chancery Warrants, 1244-1326 DA 25.F1 - 41

Contains Writs of privy seal from the reigns of Edward I and II which are not mentioned in the Inquisitions or enrolled in Fine, Close, Charter or Patent Rolls.

Calendar of Charter Rolls, 1199-1516 [6 vols] DA 25.F1 – 34

Charter Rolls contained copies of formal grants by the Crown of privileges, lands, and other possessions to corporations and individuals. After 1516 such grants were made in the form of letters patent, and from the reign of Charles I appear in the Patent Rolls. Charter Rolls differ from letters patent in that they are made in the presence of witnesses.

Calendar of Close Rolls, 1227-1509 DA 25.F1 – 29

Close Rolls were so called because the letters copied therein were folded and 'closed'; ie sealed with the Great Seal. They usually contained instructions and orders from the sovereign. From about 1540 they gradually ceased to be used to record the administration of government, whilst the long-standing practice of using the reverse (ie the back) of the Close Rolls for the enrolment of private deeds increased. Thus, later Close Rolls are often blank, apart from on the reverse.

Calendar of Fine Rolls, 1272-1509 DA 25.F1 – 36

Fine Rolls (also called Oblata Rolls until after the reign of King John) contained details of payments, in money or kind, to the King by way of oblation or fine for the enjoyment of privileges granted. These included lands, wardships, charters, liberties, grants etc.

Calendar of Inquisitions and Calendar of Inquisitions Post-mortem, 1236-1509 vols 1-20 (1st series), 1-3 (2nd series) DA 25.F1 – 32

Inquisitions reported on enquiries carried out by the Crown, most usually after the death of people who held land directly of the King, to establish whether an heir existed and to detail the exact nature and extent of the property. They also include proofs of age, assignments of dower, and inquisitions on idiots and lunatics.

Calendar of Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic - Henry VIII, vols 1-21 DA 25.F1 - 15

Contains details of State Papers held both in the National Archives and elsewhere, and also a wide range of other documents relevant to the social, political and cultural history of the time, including details of pensions assigned to monks following the dissolution of the monasteries, and detailed statements of charges against them.

Calendar of Liberate Rolls, 1226-1272 DA 25.F1 – 43

Liberate Rolls contained enrolments of writs under the Great Seal relating to expenditure. Early volumes are in reality Close Rolls, but from 1226, in the reign of Henry III, the Liberate Rolls became a distinct series. Their importance declined from the 14th century.

Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1216-1582 DA 25.F1 - 25

Patent Rolls contained copies of letters which were sent 'patent' or open, with the Great Seal appended at the bottom of the letter – in this they differ from letters 'close'. They cover diverse subjects such as letters of protection and safe conduct, treaties, truces, grants and confirmations of liberties and privileges, creations of nobility, presentations to churches and chapels, etc.

Calendar of Various Chancery Rolls, 1277-1326 DA 25.F1 - 37

Compilation of Chancery Rolls from the reigns of Edward I and II which do not properly belong to the larger series. Includes Supplementary Close Rolls 1277-1326 (close and patent letters on a particular subject with large correspondences, eg. the exportation of wool); Welsh Rolls 1277-1294 (relating to Welsh affairs, including the struggle with Llewellyn ap Griffin and commissioners' reports on laws and customs of Wales); and Scutage Rolls 1285-1324 (recording grants of relief from payment of scutage (a fine levied on those eligible yet refusing to fight in the King's army) to those doing service in the armies in Scotland and Wales).

Calendarium Genealogicum - Henry III and Edward I DA 25.F1 – 01

Contains largely genealogical material, extracted from records of inquisitions.

Gascon Rolls, 1307-1317 DA 25.F1 – 39

Gascon Rolls comprised treaties, administrative instructions, and various letters patent and close relating to Gascony, whilst the province was under the English Crown.

Rotuli Parliamentorum, 1278-1503 [6 vols] DA 25.F5 - 49

The Rotuli Parliamentorum, or Parliament Rolls, contain details of all the proceedings of parliament. Before the reign of Richard III (1483), a very few actual Statutes are also included – but this is rare; usually the petitions and answers are given, but no indication as to whether a Statute arose. From 1483 to 1533, during the reign of Henry VIII, the Rolls include all the Acts, public and private, passed in each session.

Treaty Rolls, 1234-1339 DA 25.F1 – 53

The Treaty Rolls were created in the 18th century, by bringing together a number of different series of Chancery Rolls containing diplomatic documents.

Calendar of State Papers - Domestic series, 1547-1704 DA 25.F1 - 02 to 08

The Secretary of State became an important figure under Henry VIII, having responsibility for both domestic and foreign matters. The Calendar of State Papers details the papers of the Secretary of State that are located in the Public Record Office (PRO) (those in private collections can be found in the reports of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts (DA 25.M1)). Access via State Papers Online is from 1509-1603. The Domestic series covers domestic matters, and runs until the permanent separation of Foreign and Domestic responsibilities resulted in the creation of distinct Home and Foreign Offices in 1782.

Calendar of State Papers - Foreign series, 1547-1589 DA 25.F1 - 02 to 08

The Secretary of State became an important figure under Henry VIII, having responsibility for both domestic and foreign matters. The Calendar of State Papers details the papers of the Secretary of State that are located in the Public Record Office (PRO) (those in private collections can be found in the reports of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts (DA 25.M1)). Access via State Papers Online is from 1509-1603. The Foreign series covers foreign affairs, and runs until the permanent separation of Foreign and Domestic responsibilities resulted in the creation of distinct Home and Foreign Offices in 1782.

Exchequer records

Book of Fees, 1198-1293 DA 25.F1 - 45

Commonly called Testa de Nevill or Liber Feodorum; this details carucage accounts, and other tax assessments and accounts, and contains extracts from the Rolls of Justices in Eyre.

Calendar of Memoranda Rolls, 1326-1327 DA 25.F1 – 50

There are two series of Memoranda Rolls – those of the King's Remembrancer, and those of the Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer. The King's Remembrancer was broadly responsible for the collection of 'casual' revenue – arising from debts, taxation etc; while the Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer was broadly responsible for the collection of 'fixed' revenues, mainly from land. The Memoranda Rolls detail fines issued, seizures of land, accounts, enrolments of deeds etc.

Calendar of Treasury Books, 1660-1718 DA 25.F1 - 19

Calendar of Treasury Books and Papers, 1731-1745 DA 25.F1 - 19

Calendar of Treasury Papers, 1556-1730 DA 25.F1 - 19

Contain treasury minutes, warrants, commissions etc. along with statements of national revenue and expenditure.

Feudal Aids vols 1-6 DA 25.F1 – 33

Combines information found in 'Kirkby's Quest', Nomina Villarum, or Book of Aids, and the Book of Knights' Fees. Essentially covers inquisitions into property ownership and the calculation of taxes owed – arranged by county or shire.

Pipe Rolls (NB. These are published by the 'Pipe Roll Society' and are not found in History Records, but at per DA 20.P5 in zone 4D. It should also be noted that the publication of the Pipe Rolls is an ongoing project – there are originals dating as late as the 19th century, yet the PRS has so far reached the early 13th century.)

The Pipe Rolls, or Great Rolls of the Exchequer, contain details of the audit of accounts in the Exchequer. The debts and revenues of each shire were recorded, with the Sheriff being responsible for their payment. The summonses of the Pipe were sent to the Sheriff, detailing fixed or ordinary revenue of the shire and outstanding debts; new debts were sent via the summonses of the Green Wax.

Records of the Wardrobe and Household, 1285-1289 DA 25.F1 – 55

Contain the accounts of the Master and Keeper of the Great Wardrobe (the Wardrobe being the department of the Royal Household devoted to finance).

Register of Edward the Black Prince, Parts 1-4 DA 25.F1 – 48

Calendar of documents containing grants, warrants, correspondence etc. relating to the management of the Black Prince's affairs, estates, and household in England.

Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae Auctoritate P. Nicholai IV circa AD 1291 DA 25.F5-54

(also available on the Internet at: <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/taxatio/index.html>)

Contains the valuation, plus related details, of the English and Welsh parish churches and prebends listed in the ecclesiastical taxation assessment of 1291-2. This assessment remained in force until the Valor Ecclesiasticus (below).

Valor Ecclesiasticus DA 25.F5-9

Contains details of the survey undertaken by Henry VIII, on the eve of the Reformation, into the nature, extent and value of ecclesiastical property in England and Wales. Arranged by dioceses.

Foreign Office

Index to the Correspondence of the Foreign Office, 1920-1951 q DA 25.F2 - 56

Home Office records

Calendar of Home Office Papers, 1760-1775 DA 25.F1 - 09

Judicial records

Calendar of Assize Records DA 25.F1 – 52

Contains details of indictments, verdicts and sentences from the Home Circuit of Assizes (Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Surrey, and Sussex) during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I.

Calendar of London Trailbaston Trials under Commissions of 1305 and 1306 DA 25.F1 - 54

Abstract of a sequence of trials conducted under special commission of oyer and terminer (commission to hear and determine indictments on specified offences), known as the Trailbaston Commission. Commission was in response to a sharp rise in violent crime and disorder, and aimed to deal swiftly with prisoners held in custody in Newgate, the Prison of London, and the Gatehouse awaiting arraignment on charges of serious or violent crimes.

Curia Regis Rolls, 1194-1273 vols 1-18 DA 25.F1 – 47

Continued by the Coram Rege Rolls, the Curia Regis Rolls contain records of some of the Crown Pleas at the King's Bench. The King's Bench was the most powerful of the Law Courts, dealing with treason and other serious crimes.

Statutes at Large f KC 35.A1

Published in 1758 in 8 volumes, and containing details of all public and private Acts from the Magna Carta to 1756. From the reign of Richard III onwards Acts of Parliament in their final form can also be found detailed in the Parliament Rolls

Statutes of the Realm 1235-1719 f DA 25.F5 - 08

Eleven volumes, commissioned by George IV in 1810, and containing details of public and private Statutes. From the reign of Richard III onwards Acts of Parliament in their final form can also be found detailed in the Parliament Rolls.

Houses of Parliament

Journals of the House of Commons, 1547- f J 301.K3

Contains transcribed proceedings of the House of Commons.

Journals of the House of Lords, 1509- f J 301.J3

Contains transcribed proceedings of the House of Lords.

Reports from Committees of the House of Commons, 1715-1800 f JN 683

Nb. Copies of Parliamentary Debates (commonly known as Hansard, but issued under various titles) can be found at per J 310.K2H3 (House of Commons) and per J 301.J2 (House of Lords), covering the period from 1066, and some are available via the library catalogue (<http://findit.bham.ac.uk/>) (1803-2005). Grey's Debates of the House of Commons and Lords, covering 1667-1803 can be found at per J 301.G7. Reports of Select Committees are also available, and are catalogued and classified by subject – searching the catalogue (<http://findit.bham.ac.uk/>) for the name of the Committee will retrieve the required information.

Privy Council

Acts of the Privy Council, 1542-1983 DA 25.F3 – 01/02

Designed to continue the 'Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council', below. Contains registers of meetings of the Privy Council – detailing attendees and matters discussed (although not all matters discussed are entered in the register). The register was introduced in 1540 and was kept continuously from then on.

Privy Council Register, 1637-1645 f DA 25.F3 – 03

Reproduces in facsimile registers of meetings of the Privy Council.

Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England 1386-1542 DA 25.F5-16

Contains details of matters discussed by the Privy Council, correspondence from the King to the Privy Council members, instructions issued from the Council, and petitions to the King and Council.

Secret writings

Secret Writing in the Public Records - Henry VIII-George II DA 25.F1 – 51

Selection of 100 documents, originally written in cipher, deciphered and transcribed. The documents aim to be a representative sample to demonstrate the types of document written in cipher. Several relate to Mary Queen of Scots, and to the English Civil War.

Colonial records

Calendar of State Papers - Colonial series (East Indies, America and West Indies), 1513-1739 DA 25.F1 – 14

Contains a wide range of official documents and correspondence relating to America, the West Indies and the East Indies.

Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, 1704-1782 DA 25.F1 - 44

Usually known as the Board of Trade Journals, these represent the proceedings and activities of the Board of Trade, and Inspectors of Plantations. Journals for 1675-1704 are contained in the Calendar of State Papers – Colonial Series, above.

Foreign records

Calendar of Documents - France, 918-1206 DA 25.F1 – 31

Contains details of State papers and archives preserved in France and relating to the history of Great Britain and Ireland.

Calendar of Papal Registers (papal letters) 1198-1513 DA 25.F1 – 30

Contains details of letters from the Pope, preserved in the Vatican in the Papal Registers and relating to Great Britain and Ireland. For 14th century materials, however, these are incomplete as they are based on the Vatican rather than the Avignon Registers – you will need to see also the series produced by the French School at Rome (q BX 1241-86). It should also be noted that this is an ongoing series, which is not yet complete.

Calendar of Papal Registers (petitions) 1342-1419 DA 25.F1 – 30

Contains details of petitions to the Pope, preserved in the Vatican in the Papal Registers and relating to Great Britain and Ireland. These are, however, incomplete as they are based on the Vatican rather than the Avignon Registers – you will need to see also the series produced by the French School at Rome (q BX 1241-86). It should also be noted that this is an ongoing series, which is not yet complete.

Calendar of State Papers - Milan, 1385-1618 DA 25.F1 – 40

Contains details of State papers preserved in archives and collections of Milan and relating to the history of Great Britain and Ireland.

Calendar of State Papers – Rome 1558-1578 DA 25.F1-30

Contains details of State papers preserved in Rome, mostly in the archives of the Vatican and relating to the history of Great Britain and Ireland during the reign of Elizabeth I.

Calendar of State Papers - Spanish, 1485-1603 DA 25.F1 – 21

Contains details of State Papers, Treaties and correspondence contained in both British and Spanish archives and collections and relating to Anglo-Spanish relations.

Calendar of State Papers - Venetian, 1202-1675 DA 25.F1 – 22

Contains details of State Papers preserved in the archives and collections of Venice and relating to the history of Great Britain and Ireland.

Scotland

Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland, 1473-1580 DA 25.F6 – 04

Details of national expenditure, grants etc.

The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland, 1124-1707 f DA 25.F5 – 36

Calendar of Border Papers 1560-1603 DA 25.F6 - 10

Details of official documents and papers regarding issues relating to the Scottish/English border.

Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland 1108-1509 DA 25.F6 - 7

Contains details of English official documents and correspondence relating to Scotland, Scottish affairs, and Anglo-Scottish relations.

Calendar of Scottish Papers, 1547-1603 DA 25.F6 – 11

Contains details of English official papers relating to Scotland, Scottish affairs, and Anglo-Scottish relations.

Calendar of State Papers - Scotland, 1509-1603 DA 25.F1 – 10

Contains details of English State Papers relating to Scotland, Scottish affairs, and Anglo-Scottish relations.

The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, 1264-1600 DA 25.F6 – 06

Details income to the Scottish Treasury, in the form of taxes, land etc.

Hamilton Papers DA 25.F6 – 9

Contains details of letters and papers regarding relations between England and Scotland in the sixteenth century.

Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, 1545-1691 DA 25.F6 – 05
Contains records of attendance and matters discussed by the Scottish Privy Council.

Ireland

Calendar of Documents - Ireland, 1171-1307 DA 25.F1 – 11
Contains details of English official papers and documents relating to Ireland.

Calendar of State Papers - Ireland, 1509-1670 (After 1670 state papers relating to Ireland are included in the Calendar of State Papers - Domestic series.) DA 25.F1 - 12/13
Contains details of English official papers and documents relating to Ireland.

Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts (State Papers), 1515-1624 DA 25.F1 – 20
Contains details of papers, held in Lambeth Palace library and consisting of correspondence, official papers and manuscripts relating to the Carew family. The Carew family were key political and administrative figures in Ireland during the period covered.

Report on the Carte and Carew Papers DA 25.F1 – 20
Details the content of the Calendar above.

CHRONICLES

Rerum Britannicarum Medii AEvi Scriptores, or, Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages DA 25.F4

Known as the 'Rolls Series', this 250-volume work reproduces some of the key medieval documents, chronicles and records written in Britain and Ireland. This series appears in the Online Catalogue only under the series title – the quickest way to locate an individual volume/title is to search on the Union Catalogue of UK Research Libraries ([search for COPAC in the library catalogue - http://findit.bham.ac.uk/](http://findit.bham.ac.uk/)). Once you have established that the title you require has been published by the Rolls series, you can simply go to the shelves to locate it. If you already know that a title was published in the Rolls Series, the quickest practical way to find out if we have it is simply to scan the shelves.

There are a number of other series that reproduce early texts, for example: Nelson/Oxford/York Medieval Texts (each volume catalogued and classified individually); and Early English Text Society (PR 1119.A2).

MISCELLANEOUS

Catalogue of Ancient Deeds, vols 1-6 DA 25.F1 - 24
Dating from before the reign of Elizabeth I (later deeds were compiled as Modern Deeds), this catalogue contains many charters and deeds between private persons, including those of religious houses which were taken over by the State following the dissolution of the monasteries.

Domesday Book, vols 1-2 f DA 25.F5

Harleian Miscellany DA 35.H3-1808
12 volumes of collected manuscripts, letters, pamphlets and other writings from the collection of the Earl of Oxford. An index to the content is filed with the volumes.

Monumenta Germaniae Historica (c 200 vols) DD 3.M8/9
This series contains medieval texts relating to Germany, Austria and Switzerland, dating from between 500 and 1500 AD. Begun in 1824, it is divided into five sections: chronicles (Scriptores), laws (Leges), charters (Diplomata), letters (Epistolae), and writings of antiquarian interest (Antiquitates). It now represents an almost complete library of source materials for medieval German history, and contains texts relevant to France, Italy, the Low Countries, and Great Britain, as well as to Germany and Central Europe.

PRO lists and indexes published by the List and Index Society, vols 1-277 and special series, vols 1-29 q DA 25.F2A1

Public Record Office (PRO) lists q DA 25.F2A1

These contain indexes to a vast range of manuscripts and papers in the Public Record Office – see the University of Birmingham 'Special Guide' to subjects covered at q DA 25.F2A1 for

further details. Similar material can also often be found in periodicals (especially wills) – use a bibliographic index such as the Royal Historical Society Bibliography (available via the eLibrary) to locate details.

Reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission DA 25.M1

Numbering about 170 volumes, this series details manuscripts and papers housed in private collections in stately homes of the UK. An index to what is included can be found in two volumes at DA 25.M1-17

Rymer's Foedera 17 vols q JX 639

Compiled in the 18th century, this is a collection of State Papers, manuscripts and documents dating from the Norman Conquest to the 18th century. It was intended to focus on English foreign relations, but ended up being much broader and more eclectic in its final version.

Syllabus (in English) of the documents contained in ... 'Rymer's Foedera' DA 25.F1

Details, in three volumes, the content of Rymer's Foedera above.

Report [later called Annual Report] of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, 1840-1963

q DA 25.F2A1

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLECTION

The National Archives via the library catalogue - <http://findit.bham.ac.uk/>

This website gives you access to a wide range of national archive material – including an online catalogue of records, and over 100 leaflets to help you with your research. It also contains Documents Online which provides access to the National Archives' collection of digitised public records.

British National Archives, sectional list no.24. London : HMSO, [19--] History Records DA 25.F1: most of the items listed in this publication are contained in the History Records collection. This list, in addition to providing brief details about many of the series, has been annotated with the shelfmark of items contained in History Records.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF USEFUL GUIDES TO USING HISTORICAL RECORDS

MACFARLANE, ALAN (1983) *A Guide to English Historical Records*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press.

MULLINS, ELC (1958) *Texts and Calendars: An Analytical Guide to Serial Publications*. London; Royal Historical Society

MULLINS, ELC (1983) *Texts and Calendars II: An Analytical Guide to Serial Publications 1957-1982*. London; Royal Historical Society

Public Record Office (1963) *Guide to the Contents of the Public Record Office*. London, HMSO.

Stevenson, D & WR (1987) *Scottish Texts and Calendars: An Analytical Guide to Serial Publications*. London; Royal Historical Society, and Edinburgh; Scottish History Society

All Library Services documents are available in other formats, please contact Library Services on 0121 414 5828 or <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/libraryservices/library/contact/justask.aspx> for information

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