

# Worcester County Council

Extracts from the Records Service at [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/records](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/records)

## Records Indexes - Manorial Handlists

### History of Manorial Documents

The manorial framework, normally associated with the medieval period, was already in existence by the time of the Domesday survey in 1086 and lasted until it was abolished by Parliament in the 1920s. The system evolved slowly, and began to decline in the later middle ages and Tudor period.

The manor was a local administrative, territorial, economic, legal and social unit under the leadership of a lord. The lord could be lay or ecclesiastical, a tenant-in-chief of the monarch, or a subtenant. The lord normally held land by feudal tenure, i.e. he or she owed knight service, an obligation passed on to the tenants.

A manor could form a small part of a parish, coincide with a single parish or village, or could be very large, encompassing several parishes and/or villages. A manor typically included demesne land set aside for the use of the lord and his or her household. Unfree (or customary) tenants were required to work this land in addition to their own. Tenants also held strips of land in open fields and possessed rights to graze their animals on common lands and wastes. Other rights included bote (right to timber) and turbarry (right to dig peat for fuel). Manors could also contain meadow, woodland and mills at which tenants were required to process their grain. Customary land (known as copyhold from the later middle ages) held according to the will of the lord could exist alongside freehold land (held free from manorial obligations such as labour services or suit of court).

Manorial administration produced a wide variety of documents. The most well known are court rolls, the earliest of which date from the first half of the thirteenth century. The two most common types of court were the manorial court (court baron) and the franchisal court (a court deriving its authority from royal grant, known as court leet). The court baron, held every three weeks, dealt mainly with land transfer, manorial customs and disputes between tenants. The greater franchisal court leet was associated with the view of frankpledge, or tithing system (decenna), a local policing system in which males over the age of 12 were placed into groups of 12. Tithing members were responsible for overseeing the behaviour of their fellow members and reporting infractions to the court. The court leet also dealt with petty crime and offences against the assizes of bread and ale. The functions of the two courts were often combined in practice (Court Baron with View of Frankpledge).

As the manor declined in the 16th century, many of its functions were transferred to the parish. At the same time, copyhold tenure evolved into leasehold. By the 17th century, manor courts dealt

mainly with land transactions. The manorial system ended when copyhold was abolished in 1922. Shortly thereafter, the Manorial Documents Rules were established, giving the documents statutory protection, and listing them in the Manorial Documents Register, kept by the National Archives. The Rules define manorial documents as: 'court rolls, surveys, maps, terriers, documents and books of every description relating to the boundaries, franchises, wastes, customs or courts of a manor'. Title deeds and similar documents are not included. The Register is helpful because documents relating to a single manor may be held in several different locations, such as county record offices, private estate archives and cathedral and university collections. The Register only covers the nature and whereabouts of surviving documents, and does not provide any information on the current lord of the manor. Only some counties have been computerized so far. Worcestershire manorial documents are not as yet available to be searched on the National Archives' Manorial Documents Register website (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/mdr/>), but it is hoped that this handlist will provide an alternative.

## **Information Provided by Manorial Documents**

Manorial documents are useful for both family and local history, including social and economic history. They give information about a wide cross section of rural society, especially people of lower socio-economic status. They are also good for tracing lines of descent, since court rolls in particular record the names of heirs entering into possession of a property upon the death of a tenant. Views of Frankpledge give the names of all men over 12 years of age. Lists of jurors and free and unfree (customary) tenants are also useful. Records of disputes and misdemeanours provide insights into the social interactions of the past, while bye-laws and customs give information about agricultural practices.

## **Manorial Documents at the Worcestershire Record Office**

The earliest manorial documents held at the Record Office date from the second half of the 13th century. We also have some material pertaining to Warwickshire and Gloucestershire manors. Examples of the types of records held are:

- Accounts [Latin Compotus Rolls]—usually kept by manorial officials such as the reeve or bailiff. These often survive from earlier periods than court rolls
- Surveys—there are several types:
  1. Rentals/Rent Rolls = lists of tenants and the rents they owed
  2. Extents or Valuations [Latin *extenta manerii*] = type of survey including valuations of land and other things belonging to the manor. Mainly 13th-14th century
  3. Customary/Custumals = type of survey including lists of tenants and the customs by they held land. Some survive for the twelfth century
- Court Rolls and Court Books. Book form is more common from the 16th century Records Service [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/records](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/records)
- Minutes or Minute Books. These may be described as court rolls

- Views of Frankpledge. These may be found either within court roll/books or separately
- Presentments = lists, drawn up by jurors, of matters to be dealt with in court. These may be found either within court rolls/books or separately
- Amercement Rolls, Estreats or Pains = lists of by-laws, ordinances or orders with accompanying penalties. These are likely to be found either within court rolls/books or separately
- Resiants Rolls = Lists of residents/householders, not necessarily tenants
- Appointments of manorial officials (e. g. bailiff, reeve, constable). These are often found toward the end of a court roll

Note: As with the national Manorial Documents Register, this handlist of Manorial Documents held at the Worcestershire Record Office does not include title deeds.

## Limitations of Manorial Documents

The manorial system did not encompass the entire country. For the areas that did fall under manorial jurisdiction, the survival of documents varies greatly. Some may be very fragile.

Manorial documents were written mainly in Latin, often with heavy use of abbreviations, until the sixteenth century. Thereafter some may be found in English, particularly during the Commonwealth period, but it was only in 1733 that the use of Latin in manorial documents was abolished.

Many documents feature difficult handwriting, and are often dated according to saints' feast days and the regnal year of the current monarch rather than in the modern format of day, month and year. The use of the old-style Julian calendar prior to 1752 is another source of confusion. Reference books such as C. R. Cheney's Handbook of Dates will assist researchers with these issues.

## Arrangement of Manorial Documents

Manorial documents may be found in several different types of collections at the Record Office. They are most likely to be found in private estate collections or within the collections of ecclesiastical bodies, such as the Bishop of Worcester. The private collections are often known by the family name of the depositor. You do not need to know this name in order to access documents in the handlist.

The Reference Numbers for private deposits begin with 705. The Reference Number for ecclesiastical deposits begins with 009:1 (denoting Church Commissioners).

Some manorial documents may also be found under Reference Number 899 (denoting Artificial Collections, Strays, Compilations, Photocopies, Copies, Transcripts, Calendars). Some have also been deposited by individual parishes (Reference Number beginning 850).

## Using this Handlist

The Handlist is arranged alphabetically by the name of the manor itself, or by the name of the parish within which the manor was located. For example, there was both a manor and parish named

Ombersley. The handlist also provides the type(s) of documents available, their dates, and the Reference Numbers you will need to order documents. To request an original document:

1. Find the relevant manor or parish in the handlist
2. Make a note of the Reference No. followed by the BA No. followed by the Box No. followed by the Item No. (E.g. 899:799/BA 9175/1). If there is no reference, this usually means that we do not have any manorial documents for that particular location within our holdings.
3. Fill in a Document Requisition slip, giving all the above information. No more than 10 requests may be made in any one session.

Note: The recently acquired Croome collection, comprising the extensive records of the Earls of Coventry, contains some manorial material which does not appear on this handlist. Some documents from older Croome accessions have been microfilmed. Please ask a member of staff if you wish to access manorial documents that belonged to this estate.

This document includes only the references to the Parish of Shrawley. For a full manorial handlist of documents held in Worcestershire go to [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/records](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/records)

Rushbury (Salop)	Rushbury	Salop	Surveys and particulars of property	17th-19th century	2636	009.1
[Rushwick]	[Crown East]	Worcestershire	Court roll	[1356-57]	8965/6(xvii)	705.962
Rushwick	Wick Episcopi	Worcestershire	Accounts and receipts	1832-6, 1839	7335/98(ii), (iii)	705.7
Rushwick	Wick Episcopi	Worcestershire	Compotus rolls	[1524-25]	8789/(i)	899.49
Rushwick	Wick Episcopi	Worcestershire	Reserved and chief rents	1742-1834	5589/59	705.192
St John in Bedwardine	St Fagan's	Glamorgan	Accounts and rentals	1800-1810	1946	5705.128
St John in Bedwardine	Hardwick	Worcestershire	Manor books	18th and 19th century	2602	009.1
St John in Bedwardine	Wick, Episcopi	Worcestershire	Court roll	1546-53	2636	009.1
Bedwardine	Scrooby [Notts]	[Notts.]	Extent	16th century	3910	705.56
Sedgeberron	Sedgeberron	Worcestershire	Manor books	18th and 19th century	2602	009.1
Sedgeberron	Sedgeberron	Worcestershire	Manor Court Books (draft)	1812-1907	5410	009.1
Shingay cum Wendy	[Cams]	Cambridgeshire	Abstract of court rolls	1688/89, 1717, 1746	3910	705.56
Shingay cum Wendy	[Cams]	Cambridgeshire	Rentals	1677-1768	3910	705.56
Shipston-on-Stour [Warwicks]	Shipston and Blackwell	Warwickshire	Manor book	c. 1785, 18th and 19th century	2602	009.1
Shipston-on-Stour	Shipston and Blackwell	Warwickshire	Manor Court Books (draft)	1812-1907	5410	009.1
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	Collection of heriots, rents and services	[15th century]	7335/20	705.7
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	Court Baron: extract of issues, fines and amercements	1650	7335/20	705.7
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	Court rolls	[1637], 1650, [1468], [1471], [1458], [1457], [1455], [1453], [1450], [1451-2], [1447], [1425-6], [1434], [1463], [1472], [1469], [1489], [1443], [1441], [1436], [1439], [1443-4], [1548], [1550-1], [c1550], [1424], [1426], [1549-50], [1647], [1571], [1580], [1579], [1575], [1553], [1556-99], 1647, [1503], [1552], [1545], [1548], [1564], [1584], [1567], [1569], [1570], [1499], [1566], [1563], [1549], [1585], [1586], [1587], [1588], [1589], [1590], [1593], [1600], [1557]	7335/49(ii), 50	705.7
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	Court rolls	[1405]-1661	7335/39	705.7
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	Court roll	[1624]	7335/134(iii)	705.7
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	Court rolls	1659, 1627, 1628-30, 1771, 1771	7335/107 (i), (ii)	705.7
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	List of presentments	[17th century]	7335/20	705.7

Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	Names of copy-holders making composition	[17th cent]	7335/20	705.7
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	Note of evidence	1612	7335/20	705.7
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	Particulars	[17th century]	7335/20	705.7
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	Particular of the desmesnes	[c. 16th century]	7335/20	705.7
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	6 Rent rolls	1548-1693	7335/20	705.7
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	Survey (assigned to Catherine Parr)	1544-5	7335/47(ii)	705.7
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	Chief rent books	1794, 1808, 1829-34	5589/47 & 48	705.192
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	Comptus rolls	1389-1434	4221/7	705.86
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	Court books	1680-1854, 1857-97	5589/46	b705:192
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	Court books	1901-1927	1638	b705:192
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	Court rolls	1512-1540	4221/7	705.86
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	Custumal	18th Century	5589/48	705.192
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	List of copy holders	18th-19th centuries	5589/48(i)	705.192
Shrawley	Shrawley	Worcestershire	Minutes (draft)	1629-1866	5589/47, 48	705.192
Sidmanton	Sidmanton	Warwickshire	Surveys and particulars of property	17th - 19th centuries	2636	009:1
[Warwicks]	Skellon	Yorkshire	Extent	16th century	3910	705.56
South Littleton	Littleton	Worcestershire	See Littleton			
Staverton [Glos]	Staverton	Gloucestershire	See Uckington and Staverton			
Stock and Stoke Bishop [Glos.]	Stock and Stoke Episcopi	Worcestershire Gloucestershire	Comptus rolls Comptus rolls	1524-5 1388-9, 1486-7, 1447-8, 1474-5, 1435-6, 1389-90, 1427-8, 1417-8, 1377-8, 1462-3, 1410-1, 1455-6, 1443-4, 1380-1, 1381-2, 1386-7, 1387-8, 1454-5, 1457-8, 1458-9, 1467-8, 1476-7, 1477-8, 1478-9, 1483-4	2636 2636	009:1 009:1
Stoke Bishop [in Gloucs]	Stoke Episcopi	Gloucestershire	Comptus roll	[1524-25]	8789(i)	899.49
Stoke Bishop [Glos.]	Stoke	Gloucestershire	Comptus rolls	1506-1507, 1369-70, 1372-3	2636	009:1
Stoke Prior	Stoke Prior	Worcestershire	Court books	1720-43, 1789-1832	7599	6009:1
Stoke Prior	Stoke Prior	Worcestershire	Court book	1869-1893	1342/2	6009:1
Stoke Prior	Stoke Prior	Worcestershire	Court books	1894-1935, 1935-41, 1669-89, 1694-1704, 1704-20, 1744-58	1230	6009:1 & 009:1
Stoke Prior	Stoke Prior	Worcestershire	Manor Court Book	1758-88	11687/2	6899:795
Stoulton	Stoulton cum Wadborough	Worcestershire	Accounts	1744-48, 1747-49	8782/72(iii)	899:749