

DURHAM ARCHIVES RESEARCH SERVICE

**Durham County Record Office
County Hall
DURHAM
DH1 5UL**

**Telephone: (0191) 383 3253
E-mail: record.office@durham.gov.uk**

WHAT THE DURHAM ARCHIVES RESEARCH SERVICE OFFERS

The Durham Archives Research Service carries out research using the records and reference books available in the Durham County Record Office. It is intended to help people who want information from the Record Office but who cannot visit the Office and also those who may have used the Office but have run out of time to continue their research.

THE ADVANTAGES OF USING THE RESEARCH SERVICE

The Durham County Record Office employs experienced researchers to undertake research, and they are also able to call on the expertise of the other staff of the Durham County Record Office to provide a detailed and unrivalled knowledge of the holdings of the Record Office. The Research Service provides a professional and reliable service of a very high quality.

WHAT RESEARCH CAN BE UNDERTAKEN

The Research Service will carry out any kind of work using any of the archives available in the Durham County Record Office. Broadly the holdings of the Record Office consist of official records (records of local authorities), public records (records of statutory bodies), ecclesiastical records (Church of England parish records and non-conformist church records), and private records (records of estates, families, businesses, societies and other organisations and individuals).

The most popular area of research is that of family history and the records which can be consulted by the Research Service include parish and non-conformist registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, census returns (1841-1901), and indexes and transcripts. In most cases these records relate to the area of the historic county of Durham (between the River Tyne and the River Tees).

The Record Office does not hold probate records (wills, administrations and inventories) or civil registration records (birth and death registrations from 1837) and the Research Service is therefore unable to undertake searches in these areas.

USING THE RESEARCH SERVICE

To make use of the Research Service you should complete the *Application for Search* form which accompanies this leaflet (further copies are available from the Record Office). The researchers will carry out a **minimum** of one hour's research but you may request longer periods (in half-hour blocks) to a **maximum** of three hours. If you are unsure whether the Record Office holds the records in which you are interested you should contact the Office for further information before requesting a search.

Payment must be made at the time the *Application for Search* form is completed. The researchers will undertake the searches you request in the time allowed but we obviously cannot guarantee that any search will produce positive results.

Searches will be carried out in the order in which the requests are received; however, delays may occur at times when demands on the Research Service are high. The County Archivist reserves the right not to undertake a search if the information supplied is insufficient or for any other reason, but if this is the case you will be informed and your payment refunded.

It is important that the research instructions are as specific and clear as possible. Long and detailed accounts of background information can obscure the precise object of the search. It would be impractical to ask for a search for information about an Abraham Wearmouth who was alive in Durham in the nineteenth century, but reasonable to ask for a search to be made for his baptism in Barnard Castle in the 1850s.

It should be noted that the information entered in a parish register before the nineteenth century is not in a standard form and generally the earlier the date of the records the less standard is the information.

RECEIVING THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

The results of the research will be sent to you in the form of a typed report. In some cases photocopies of entries may be supplied if this is the most appropriate way of presenting the results of the search.

THE RESEARCH SERVICE AND THE DURHAM COUNTY RECORD OFFICE

The Research Service is an additional service provided by the Durham County Record Office and members of the public continue to be free to visit the Record Office personally and conduct their own research free of charge.

Postal enquiries will be answered free of charge if they ask for general information on the holdings of the Record Office or if they ask for advice about the use of archives for a particular area of research.

Enquiries asking for a search of one year in one baptism, marriage or burial register or one street in one census will normally continue to be answered and the cost of a photocopy charged. All enquiries requiring detailed research will be referred to the Research Service.

THE COST OF THE RESEARCH SERVICE

The current fee for the service is given on the *Application for Search* form. There are no additional charges for photocopies, travelling, postage or administrative costs.

Payments should be by cheque or postal order made payable to **Durham County Council**. Overseas payments should be made in pounds sterling by a cheque drawn on a London Clearing Bank, or by a banker's draft made out in sterling and drawn on a London Clearing Agent (this can be arranged by local banks). Payments in other currencies can only be accepted after consultation with the Record Office.

The Durham Archives Research Service is self-financing and by charging a fee the Record Office is able to employ experienced researchers to undertake the work. The search room staff are thus able to concentrate on assisting the thousands of researchers who visit the Record Office every year and the archivists are able to concentrate on cataloguing and making the records available to the public.



Making a difference where you live