

Tracing property in England

from Domesday to present day

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Some of the key resources for tracing land and property in England from the Domesday Survey in 1086 to today.

Background

Websites:

- GENUKI – resources by county and parish for UK and Ireland: <https://www.genuki.org.uk/>
- British History Online: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/>
- A vision of Britain through time: <https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/>

Recommended book:

Blanchard, Gill. *Tracing your house history: a guide for family historians*. Pen & Sword Family History (Barnsley: 2013).

Historic England listed buildings

The National Heritage List for England (NHLE) is the official register of all nationally protected historic buildings and sites in England.

- <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

Domesday Survey (1086)

A land survey commissioned by William the Conqueror to assess the extent of land and resources in England. Undertaken in 1086, covering most of England.

- <https://opendomesday.org/>
- [Domesday Online \(TNA\) research guide](#)

Medieval Sources

Site providing guides and links to medieval source material for genealogy and local history.

- Medieval Genealogy: <http://www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/sources/olmed.shtml>

Title deeds (c1100 -)

Documents recording transfer of property or land proving entitlement to ownership.

The University of Nottingham has some good resources on identifying and understanding title deeds.

- Deeds in Depth: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/researchguidance/deedsindepth/introduction.aspx>
- Identification flowchart: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/researchguidance/deedsindepth/flowchart.aspx>

Recommended book:

Alcock, N.W. *Old Title Deeds: A Guide for Local and Family Historians*. Second edition. Phillimore (Chichester: 2001).

Manorial records (c1300 – 1922)

Documents relating to the administration of a manor which can include court rolls, surveys, accounts, maps, terriers, rentals, and records concerning boundaries, customs or courts of a manor.

- Manorial Documents Register (TNA): <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/manor-search>
- [TNA research guide on Manorial documents](#)

Recommended book:

Barber, Geoffrey. *Manorial records for family historians*. Unlock the Past (St Agnes, SA: 2017).

Land Tax assessments (1693-1963)

Land tax was levied year-by-year on all land held by landowners with an annual value of more than 20 shillings. Most documents survive from 1780 to 1832, and are organised by county, hundred and then parish. From 1772, returns included the names of occupiers as well as owners of each property.

- FamilySearch catalog, search by parish: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/>
Images available to view at a FamilySearch affiliate library such as National Library in Wellington.
- 1798 Land Tax Redemption, Ancestry (\$): <https://www.ancestry.com.au/search/collections/2319/>

Recommended book (lists surviving records for each county):

Gibson, Jeremy. *Land and Window Tax Assessments*. 2nd ed. Federation of Family History Societies. (Bury: 2004).

Newspapers (1750s-)

Useful for sales and auctions notices, place and property names at the time, business premises.

- British Newspaper Archive (\$): <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/find>
- Findmypast (\$): <https://search.findmypast.co.uk/search/british-newspapers>
- The Gazette (Belfast, Edinburgh and London): <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/help>
- The Times Archive (1785-2006): <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/archive/>

Recommended book (lists known surviving newspapers for England & Wales and location):

Gibson, Jeremy. *Local Newspapers 1750-1920*. The Family History Partnership (Bury: 2011).

Ordnance Survey maps (1801-)

The first comprehensive mapping project undertaken in Britain, the maps are in four main groups: the one inch, the six inch, the 'town scales', and the 1:2500 maps. Many maps between 1840 to 1970 can be viewed online through the National Library of Scotland website.

- Ordnance Survey maps: <https://maps.nls.uk/os/>
- The Genealogist's Map Explorer (\$): <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/>
Ordnance Survey and other maps linked to record sets such as census returns, tithe records, Valuation Survey, 1939 Register, and the Domesday Book

Tithe records (1836-1856)

Records covering England and Wales generated from the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 which allowed tithes (tenths) to be converted into cash payments. There were various records generated and the most useful are the tithe apportionments and the accompanying tithe map. Original maps are held at The National Archives, and copies can usually be found in the relevant local archive. Both the maps and apportionments are available online through The Genealogist website.

- The Genealogist (\$): <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/>
Subscription required, or free access at National Library.

Recommended book:

Kain, Roger J. P., & Prince, Hugh C. *Tithe Surveys for Historians*. Phillimore & Co. Ltd. (Chichester: 2000).

Census returns (1841-1921)

Decennial censuses began in 1801, and recorded individual names in households from 1841.

1841-1911 censuses:

- Ancestry (\$): <https://www.ancestry.com.au/>
- Findmypast (\$): <https://www.findmypast.com.au/>
- The Genealogist (\$): <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/>
- FamilySearch (up to 1901 and transcriptions only): <https://www.familysearch.org/>

1921 census:

- Findmypast (\$): <https://www.findmypast.com.au/1921-census>
Free to search, pay per view for transcript or image, no subscription required. Address search available.

Valuation Office Survey (1910)

The survey produced several types of records invaluable in identifying a property and its owner and main occupier(s). The two main types of records are the maps and the field books, both of which are held at TNA. The Genealogist has begun digitising the records, and have published City of London and Paddington maps and associated field books.

- The Genealogist (\$): <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/search/advanced/landowner/1910-survey/>
- TNA Research guide: <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/valuation-office-survey-land-value-ownership-1910-1915/>

1939 Register

Registration of every household member on the night of 29th September 1939, except members of the armed forces on active duty.

- Findmypast (\$): <https://search.findmypast.com.au/search-world-records/1939-register>
Includes address search function and maps
- Ancestry (\$): <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/61596/>
- The Genealogist (\$): <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/> (Transcript only)

HM Land Registry

Find information about a property in England or Wales, even if you do not own it. Search by address to find the owner and how far its general boundaries extend. It costs £3 for each copy of a title register or a title plan.

- <https://www.gov.uk/search-property-information-land-registry>

Council Planning Applications

Many councils now publish historic and current planning applications online. You can see what building work has been done, and sometimes follow the building history of a property back several decades. Supporting document may occasionally include plans. See example:

- Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council: <https://publicaccess2.tmbc.gov.uk/online-applications/>

Other resources

- Historical directories: <http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p16445coll4>
- One Place Society: <https://www.one-place-studies.org/>
- British Association for Local History: <https://www.balh.org.uk/>
- London Street name changes: https://www.maps.thehunthouse.com/Streets/Street_Name_Changes.htm
Street name changes occurring between 1857 and 1945
- Charles Booth's London – Poverty maps and police notebook: <https://booth.lse.ac.uk/>

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