

FAMILY HISTORY RESOURCES IN THE BERWICK UPON-TWEED RECORD OFFICE

The Berwick-upon-Tweed Record Office, a branch office of the Northumberland Archives Service holds sources relating to the present Borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed which extends from Berwick, south to Ellingham and across to the Cheviots.

These include a number of sources which will help people trace their Family History, if their ancestors came from North Northumberland as well as further afield.

To consult the sources, an appointment must be made in advance. A microfilm/ microfiche reader can only be booked for a two hour session each day. However, visitors will find that a number of parish registers and census returns are available in transcript form.

The Berwick-upon-Tweed Record Office is only open to the public on :
Wednesdays, 9.30 to 1.00 and 2.00 to 5.00
Thursdays, 9.30 to 1.00 and 2.00 to 5.00

To make an appointment, please telephone (01289) 301865 (direct dial) or (01289) 330044 ext 265 or by e-mail : lb@berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk

SOURCES RELATING TO NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND

The following sources are available relating mainly to North Northumberland:

ANGLICAN REGISTERS

Anglican parish registers of baptisms, marriages and burials from the 1600s to approximately 1900 can be consulted on microfilm. Even if your ancestors were non conformist, they had to marry in an Anglican church prior to 1837 and be buried there, if there was no Civic Cemetery. Marriage and burial indexes for Northumberland and Durham are available from 1813 to 1837 as well as various transcripts of registers. A list is available in the Record Office.

NON CONFORMIST REGISTERS

Presbyterianism was very strong in North Northumberland because of its proximity to Scotland. The Record Office has baptism registers for a number of Presbyterian churches in the area, many of which have been transcribed and are not indexed on the "IGI".

Most of the North Northumberland area was covered by the Berwick-upon-Tweed/Lowick Methodist Circuit for which baptism registers and other records are available from approximately 1838 to 1932

Roman Catholic registers of baptisms, marriages and burials are available for St Cuthbert and Our Lady Roman Catholic Church in Berwick from the early 19th century. Transcripts of registers for Haggerston, Lowick and Wooler are also available.

CENSUS RETURNS

The Record Office has copies of the census returns for North Northumberland from 1841 to 1891, as well as returns for all of Northumberland for 1901, including Newcastle and North Shields. The 1841 to 1881 returns are on microfilm and can be consulted at the Library on days when the Record Office is closed. The 1891 and 1901 returns are on microfiche and are only available at the Record Office.

Transcripts and indexes have been compiled for many places in North Northumberland. A list is available from the Archivist. 1851 census indexes have been compiled for all of North Northumberland, whilst an 1881 census index is available for the whole country. The Record Office also has CD Roms for the following census – Northumberland (1861 – 1891; Durham (1861 – 1891); Yorkshire (1891)

The 1841, 1891 and 1901 censuses for Berwick-upon-Tweed have been transcribed.

MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS

Monumental Inscriptions of gravestones in various North Northumberland churchyards can be consulted at the Record Office. A list is available.

BERWICK FREEMEN RECORDS

The records of the Freemen of Berwick are available from the early 1500s to 1974. These include admissions of Freemen and enrolments of apprentices. To become a Freeman, one had to be a son of a Freeman, aged at least 21 (eldest sons only prior to 1782) or serve a 7 year apprenticeship to a Freeman.

Various indexes and printed rolls (from 1796 to present) have been compiled to help Family Historians use the records.

TRADE DIRECTORIES

Trade directories not only give the names of trades people in an area but also some private residents. The Record Office has copies of 19th and early 20th century trade directories for North Northumberland including Parson and White's directory, 1828 and various Kelly's directories from 1858 to 1938.

There is also a very detailed 1806 directory for Berwick itself.

ELECTORAL REGISTERS

Electoral registers for Berwick, Tweedmouth and Spittal are available from 1835 to 1912; 1922 to 1952 and from 1975 to the present.

Electoral registers for the rest of the present Borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed are available from 1885 to 1900 (on microfilm only) and 1974 to present. Copies of registers for the period 1900 to 1974 can be consulted at the Morpeth Records Centre.

CIVIC CEMETERY BURIAL GROUNDS

By the mid 19th century many of the burial grounds were becoming overcrowded and so civic cemeteries were opened. The Record Office has burial registers for the Civic Cemeteries at Berwick, Tweedmouth and North Sunderland. A computer database can be consulted in the Office for burials at Berwick from 1856 to 1888.

DURHAM DIOCESE WILLS

Prior to 1858, wills from the North Northumberland area had to be proved at the Consistory Court of Durham Diocese. The Record Office has copies of the wills for this Diocese on microfilm from approximately 1769 to 1858. An index of wills relating to North Northumberland for this period has been compiled.

GENERAL FAMILY HISTORY SOURCES

ST CATHERINE'S HOUSE INDEXES (GRO INDEXES)

The Record Office has copies of the St Catherine's House indexes of births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales on microfiche from 1837 to 1955 inclusive.

INTERNATIONAL GENEALOGICAL INDEX" (IGI)

This index of christenings and marriages has been compiled by the Church of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) from parish register that they have microfilmed. Please note that it does not cover every parish and within Northumberland, it only covers the majority of Anglican parishes prior to 1813 and non conformist churches prior to 1837. The Record Office has copies of the index which is arranged by surname and county for England, Scotland and Ireland (1992 edition)

SOURCES RELATING TO SCOTLAND

As the area borders on Scotland, the Record Office has a number of sources which will help people tracing their ancestors in Scotland. These include:

Pre 1855 Old Parish register baptism indexes for all Scottish counties

Pre 1855 Old Parish register marriage indexes for all Scottish counties Microfilm copies of pre 1855 registers are available for Coldingham, Coldstream, Eyemouth, Hutton, Ladykirk, Mordington, Sprouston and Yetholm.

Pre 1855 Monumental Inscriptions for Berwickshire
"IGI" for Scotland

1851,1861 and 1901 census microfilms for Berwickshire

1881 census indexes for Berwickshire, Roxburghshire, Selkirkshire, Peebleshire, East Lothian and Haddington.

1891 census indexes for Berwickshire and Roxburghshire.

In addition, there are also some Irregular Border marriage registers. Prior to the Introduction of civil registration in Scotland in 1855 and even afterwards, couples could marry by declaration. Thus couples married at the East Coast equivalents of Gretna Green , Lamberton Toll and Coldstream Bridge. It is often difficult to find written proof of such marriages but the following are available :

Coldstream Bridge marriages, 1793 – 1797

Lamberton Toll marriages, 1833 – 1849

Irregular Border marriage entries in local newspapers, 1808- 1864

For further sources relating to the Scottish Borders, including census returns and the Old Parish Registers, Family Historians should contact:

Border Archives, Regional Library Headquarters, St Mary's Mill, Selkirk TD7 5EW

If you require any further information about Family History resources kept at the Berwick Record Office or would like details of the Office's **Genealogical Research Service**, please contact :**Mrs Linda Bankier, Berwick-upon-Tweed Record Office, Council Offices, Wallace Green, Berwick-upon-Tweed TD15 1ED.**

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