

## Useful sources for family history in the Bath Record Office

The Record Office holds a large number of resources for those tracing their family history in Bath. Brief details of some of these sources are given below.

Note that access to sources naming people who may still be alive may be restricted under the Data Protection Act 1988.

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### Registers for parish churches

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Baptism, marriage and burial registers for parish (Anglican) churches in all of Bath and North-East Somerset and some of the surrounding villages are available on microfiche. A full list of the parishes covered can be found on our website.

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### Registers of other churches

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The Record Office holds a small number of original registers for nonconformist churches, as well as microfilm copies and transcripts of the registers of other churches.

Registers and transcripts held include:

	<b>Baptisms</b>	<b>Marriages</b>	<b>Burials</b>
<b>Methodist Registers, Bath Circuit</b>			
New King Street Chapel	1782-1817 1877-1942	1860-1942	
Walcot Chapel	1816-1961		1815-1928
Westgate Buildings	1839-1862 1882-1964	1908-1963	
Dafford Street, Larkhall	1891-1967		
Broad Street	1851-1867		
Quiet Street	1868-1881		
Claremont	1862-1995		
<b>Unitarian Chapel, Trim Street</b>	1719-1789		1820-1871
<b>Argyle Independent Chapel</b>	1783-1854		
<b>Catholic Church</b>	1780-1825	1781-1824	1780-1819

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## Wills

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We hold a small collection (about 400) of office-copy wills for the 18th-20th centuries, mostly from local solicitors' offices.

Wills for people who lived in Bath may be in:

The [Somerset Record Office](#), Taunton - for wills proved in the Bath and Wells diocese before 1858. Note that a number of wills were destroyed by enemy action during World War II.

The [National Archives website](#) - for pre-1858 wills of people who owned property in more than one diocese; their will would probably have been proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, and these wills are now in the National Archives.

The National Probate Registry - for all wills proved since 1858. These wills are now available online; follow [this link](#) to the Gov.uk website to find out more.

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## Registers of Electors

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Registers of electors were compiled annually from 1832 to the present day, except 1916-17 and 1940-44.

They list only those entitled to vote. From 1832 until 1918, only men who owned or leased property of a certain value had the right to vote. From 1918 all adult males, and females aged 30 and over, could vote. Females over the age of 21 were given the right to vote in 1928.

Registers are arranged by Wards: 1832-1885 in alphabetical order of surname; 1886 onwards, in alphabetical order of street.

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## Street Directories

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Directories list tradespeople and householders, rather like a present-day telephone directory. They also include useful general information, for example on schools, churches and charities.

New editions were produced at intervals, usually every other year or every year.

Areas which lay outside the city boundary until the 20th century such as Twerton and Weston, are included in the 'Village Directories' at the end of each volume.

The Record Office holds directories for the period 1833-1974.

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## School registers

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School admission registers can be a useful source of information for family historians. However, only a small number of registers have been deposited in the Record Office. This is a list of admission or attendance registers we hold:

Bathforum Free School	1856-1900
Bluecoat School	1711-1868 (with gaps)
Combe Down Mixed evening School	1910-1919
Compton Dando C of E School	1892-1959
Corston National School	1895-1983
Englishcombe Council School	1927-1984
Kingsmead Junior Mixed	1942-1943
Oldfield Council Infants	1935-1956
St Paul's Non-Provided School, Avon Street	1889-1912
Twerton East Board School	1882-1898
Tytherington Council School	1941-1984
East Walcot / Walcot Infants School	1890-1972
Walcot Central Boys School	1890-1931
West Central Girls School	1904-1921
West Harptree Voluntary Aided Primary School	1907-1926
Weymouth House Boys	1824-1839, 1884-1896

The registers for Bathforum and Bluecoat Schools have been transcribed and indexed and are included in our Bath Ancestors database.

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## Records of poor relief

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If you find you have ancestors who fell on hard times, they may have had to apply for poor relief. Before 1834, poor relief was administered locally by each parish. After 1834, poor relief was administered by poor law unions, consisting of a number of parishes. Each poor law union was run by an elected Board of Guardians.

### Records of Parish poor relief

Before 1834, parish officers called overseers were responsible for giving out the relief, either as money payments or in kind (for example, loaves of bread). The overseers and other parish officers kept records relating to their work, but unfortunately many of these records have not survived. The Record Office holds only a small number of records of parish poor relief, as follows:

	<b>Abbey Parish</b>	<b>St James Parish</b>	<b>Walcot Parish</b>
Lists of paupers in receipt of relief, or in workhouse	1785-1791, 1822-1835	1792-1807, 1826-1836	1793-1798
Bastardy bonds	1762-1817	1773-1836	
Pauper apprenticeship indentures	1712-1816	1752-1836	
Settlement and Removal papers	1742-1839	1694-1880	

We also hold Settlement Examinations for city parishes, 1758-1774 and 1811-1866.

Note that some of these records have been transcribed and indexed and are included in our Bath Ancestors database.

### Board of Guardians Records

The Bath Poor Law Union included all the parishes in Bath and some from the surrounding area. A complete set of the minutes of the Board of Guardians is held by the Record Office, but unfortunately the survival of other records is very patchy. No workhouse admission and discharge registers have survived, apart from

Registers of Casuals (vagrants who were allowed to stay only for one night), 1915-1934.

A full catalogue of the records can be found on our online catalogue. The reference code is BGB - put this in the 'Ref No' search box to find the catalogue.

Some of the records which are of particular interest to family historians are:

BGB/1/42	Printed 'List of Paupers', 1894
BGB/2/7	Registers of baptisms in the workhouse 1846-1963
BGB/2/9	Registers of burials in the workhouse 1847-1899
BGB/1/26	Register of persons ordered to the workhouse, 1878-1886
BGB/2/10	'Addresses of Paupers' Friends', 1897-1906
BGB/1/32	Pauper Removal Registers, 1845-1863
BGB/1/34	Maintenance Case Books, 1891-1927
BGB/1/35	Maintenance Payments Ledgers, 1877-1881
BGB/1/37	Register of Orders in Bastardy, 1844-1885
BGB/3/1	Cottage (Children's) Homes Indoor Relief Lists, 1896-1917
BGB/3/2	Cottage (Children's) Homes Creed Registers, 1896-1901
BGB/3/4	Cottage (Children's) Homes Health Record Books, 1911-1918
BGB/1/30	Registers of Children Boarded Out, 1869-1918 (with gaps)
BGB/1/28	Register of Young Persons Hired from Bath Workhouse 1851-1897
BGB/1/29	Register of Visits to Apprentices sent from Workhouse, 1869-1918
BGB/1/22	Register of payments for people sent to other institutions, 1903-1918
BGB/8	Various registers relating to caring for children for payment, 1872-1930

Note that some of these records have been transcribed and indexed and are included in our Bath Ancestors database.

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## **Court and police records**

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If you think an ancestor was in trouble with the law, you might find the following records useful:

QS/2	Bath Quarter Sessions Court minute books, 1682 to 1941 (Some of the minute books have been transcribed and indexed and are included in our Bath Ancestors database).
QS/3	Quarter Sessions papers, 1776-1971. (These are currently being catalogued in detail; the catalogue can be found on our online catalogue – put QS/3 in the Ref No search box)
QS/6	Records of commitments to the House of Correction, 1799-1859. (Some of these have been transcribed and indexed and are included in our Bath Ancestors database).

0661/4/1 Bath City Police 'Prisoners' Portrait Books', 1892-1950. (The first of these volumes, covering the period 1892-1909 is included in our Bath Ancestors database).

Quarter sessions dealt only with certain types of crime, the nature of which varied over time. However, very serious cases (such as murder or manslaughter) were always sent for trial at the County Assizes. The Record Office holds no Assize records; these are all held by the [National Archives](#).

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## Records of Bath freemen and tradesmen

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**Apprentices.** Register of those apprenticed to Bath Freemen, 1697-1776 (indexed). Small collection of apprenticeship indentures 1735-1885.

**Freemen.** Registers of those who gained Freedom of the City by apprenticeship, gift or purchase, 1712-1888. Since that date, Honorary Freedom is only occasionally granted by the Council.

**Licences: Public Houses.** Victuallers' recognizances, 1682-1789 and 1806-1814; Victuallers' registers 1871-1970.

**Chairmen** licences for the operators of sedan chairs, 1741-1756.

**Wheelchairs** registers of Bath-chair operators 1908-1945.

**Canal Boats** registers of boats and their owners 1885-1926

**Aliens** licences issued to foreigners entering the country, surrendered on arrival in Bath (1798 only).

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## Property Records - Rate Books and Title Deeds

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Property records can show how long an ancestor lived at a particular address, and suggest how wealthy (or poor) he or she may have been.

The Record Office holds rate books of different types from the late eighteenth century to the 1960s.

We also hold a number of collections of title deeds.