

## **The National Archives**



[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)

TNA 30-minute webinars on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?reload=9&list=PLddhSH7bW0pVGcxnswdeZpu1DKURtwcAP>

Introduction to The National Archives (TNA)

- TNA is not a library
- TNA is not a family history site

The National Archives of where?

- England and Wales (from 1536)
- the United Kingdom (which included Ireland)
- records from central UK government departments and agencies, plus parts of the legal system of England and Wales
- British or English colonies or dependencies (including America colonial records)
- certain historical documents, such as Domesday Book (1086)

What is Britain? – by Audrey Collins <https://www.familysearch.org/ask/learningViewer/706>

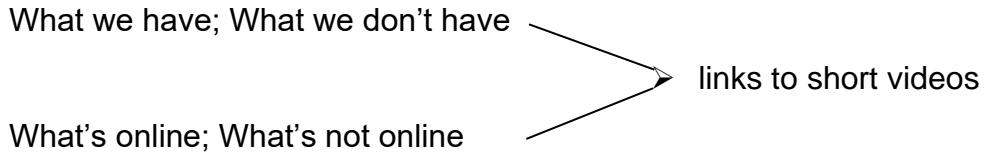
Formation of The National Archives

Public Records Act of 1958 governs what records come into TNA; established 2003

Public Record Office, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Her Majesty's Stationery Office

Navigating – Getting started:

TNA website > “Help with your research” button > “Start here” button:



Research Guides: 358 guides in 12 subject categories

- family history	- political and economic history
- World War I	- foreign and colonial history
- World War II	- land and maps
- military and maritime	- medieval and early modern
- social and cultural history	- records for current legal purposes
- criminals, courts and prisons	- online collections

To search research guides by Category: Begin on TNA home page > Click on “Help with your research” button > Click on “Use our A-Z Index” button > Click on “Choose a different subject” link > select category of your choice > select a guide from the results list for your category.

To search with A-Z Index to keywords: Click on “Our A-Z Index” link > Step 1: select a letter in the alphabetical list > Step 2: select a keyword in the list > select a guide from the results list for your keyword.

To search by subject: Click on “Search all guides” link > enter your name of your topic or subject in the search box and click Enter > select a guide from the results list for your subject.

Another path to searching Research Guides: Begin on TNA home page >  > under “Help with your research” click on “Research guides A-Z” > this takes you to main search page for research guides > search by category, keyword or subject as described above.

Note for searching research guides: When searching by category, searching for only guides with all records online is not recommended for initial search by category.

## Navigation tips:

- Click on TNA logo  to return to main page
- Use Menu button  for shortcuts/links to other parts of website

Currency Converter: TNA home page > Menu button  > Education heading > in the “Time Periods” panel click on any of the period links such as Medieval 974-1485 > select Currency converter: 1270-2017 <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/>

Useful links in the “Help with your research” heading:

- Menu button > “Help with your research” > “Family history” link > displays 191 research guides for the family history category; use panel on left to select other categories and to refine results in your list of guides within categories
- Menu button > “Help with your research” > “Start your research here” link: What we have – What we don’t have – What’s online – What’s not online

## Discovery – The National Archives’ catalog

Discovery help: searching guide > glossary included in guide

Search options: basic search; advanced search; browse

The London Gazette – official journal of record and public notices [www.thegazette.co.uk](http://www.thegazette.co.uk)

## Military service records

### Army

- For officers: WO 25 and WO 76
- For soldiers pensions: WO 97 (view in Findmypast)
- For pensions of officers and their widows: WO 23-25
- Officers - family papers: WO 42
- Other records – see research guides under “army”

### Navy

- For ordinary seamen - ships' musters: ADM 36-39, 41; pay books: ADM 31-35
- Pension records: ADM 6 and 22; and WO 22
- For merchant seamensee “merchant navy” in research guides
- Other records – see research guides under “navy”

- When searching records series, search by hierarchy as well as by reference
- Read content of descriptions in records series and levels
- Use the navigation aid at top of page to help guide you:

You are currently viewing

[WO - Records created or inherited by the War Office, Armed Forces, Judge Advocate General, and related bodies](#)

↳ [Division within WO - General records of the War Office and predecessors and successor](#)

↳ [WO 25 - War Office and predecessors: Secretary-at-War, Secretary of State for War, and Related Bodies, Registers](#)

↳ [Subseries within WO 25 - Commission Books \(Series I\)](#)

## Audrey's tips

- TNA is not a library
- TNA is not a family history site
- Always start with the research guides
- Use Discovery > advanced search
- Nobody has everything

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## Selected Bibliography

Annal, David and Audrey Collins. *Birth, Marriage and Death Records: a guide for family historians*; Pen & Sword, 2012.

Bevan, Amanda. *Tracing Your Ancestors in the National Archives: the website and beyond*; The National Archives, 2006, 7<sup>th</sup> edition.

Grannum, Karen and Nigel Taylor. *Wills and probate records: a guide for family historians*; The National Archives, 2009.

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