

**ARCHIFAU
CYMRU**



**ARCHIVES
WALES**



Archives Made Easy

Quick Start Guide

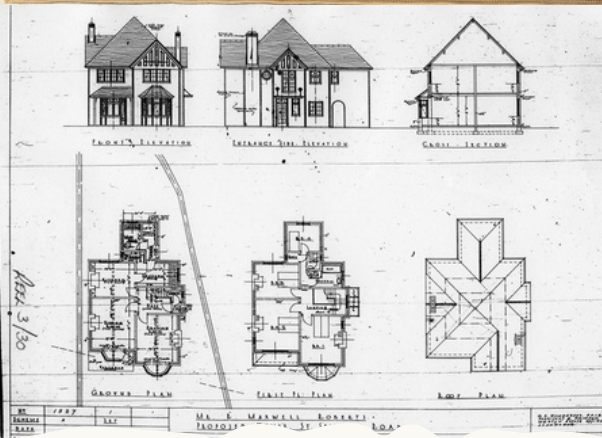


PARISH OF *St. Michael's*

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in the undersigned, who hereby declare that one of us or some persons on our behalf has examined and ascertained the several valuations in the respective columns of the above table and the valuations have been made under the authority of the several assessment committees and we are not aware of any person or persons who have been assessed in the above table who have not been assessed in the above table.

John A. Thomas *John A. Thomas*



Welcome to your story.

Archives are the written record of our lives. Evidence of who we were at home, in our communities, and at work.

From letters on parchment to photographs of our villages, towns and cities, archives tell the story of our past. Audio recordings preserving lost voices and stories. Personal diaries with sketches in the margin. Films capturing a moment in time.

Archives hold our memories and safeguard our histories for future generations.

You don't need to be an expert to use an archive. Archives are for everyone, and they're free!

All you need to bring is your curiosity – and some idea of what you'd like to see.

Whether you're looking for the missing piece of your family tree, a glimpse into our shared past, or inspiration for a creative project, archives are for you.



Archivists across Wales have created this step-by-step guide to help you get started.

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Step 1

What's your interest?

Visiting archives – whether online or in person – is easier if you know roughly what you're looking for.

There are millions of unique items held across Wales, which is exciting, but can also be overwhelming!

The first step is to think about what interests you and what questions you may want to answer. It's OK not to have a fully formed question at this stage – maybe it's a topic or wider theme that sparks an interest, or a conversation you've had with family or friends.



You might be interested in LGBTQ+ history, Global Majority stories, our sporting heritage, or Welsh writers and artists.



Whatever your interest, this step is about working out what you already know, and what you'd like to find out next.

You may already know more than you think: if you're interested in family history, you may have old photographs, birth or marriage certificates, family stories. If you're interested in the history of your village, town or community, you may have read some books or searched online.

Gather this information together and identify the gaps. What's missing? What can't you find out?

The answers that you're looking for might be in the archive!

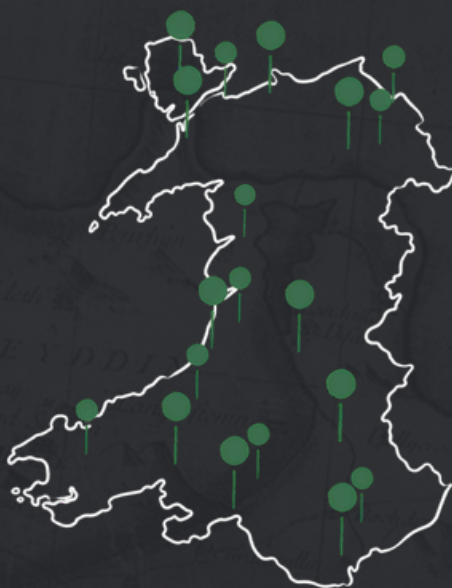
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Step 2

Get in touch

Now that you roughly know what you're looking for, get in touch with an archive!

If you're interested in family or local history, your local archive is your first port of call. You can find contact details for services across Wales at archives.wales.



Find your local archive at
archives.wales



If you're interested in national organisations or historical figures, you might need to travel further afield. To identify the archive with collections most helpful for your research, try searching a UK-wide catalogue like Jisc Archives Hub.

For archive catalogue search tips, visit archives.wales.

Once you know the archive service you'd like to start with, get in touch by email or visit in person.

Our archives teams love a challenge and will be pleased to help you with your query. Just let them know what you've found so far and what you'd like to find next.



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Step 3

Explore the collections

With guidance and support from archives staff, it's time to explore the collections!

This might mean doing some more research using the archive's catalogue or available research guides. Archivists across Wales have put together handy guides on everything from becoming a house detective, to researching public health, to working with maps from across the centuries. These guides can help you uncover the answers you're looking for.



Sometimes your query might lead straight to a particular item or collection. In which case, you're ready to view it online or in-person.

More items are being digitised and made available online every year, either on individual archive websites or websites like **People's Collection Wales, Welsh Newspapers Online, Tithe Maps of Wales, Ancestry** and **Find My Past**.

Most records will still need to be viewed in person.

You can find tips and checklists to help you prepare for your first archive visit at archives.wales.

There's also advice on remote research services offered by Welsh archives for those who can't visit in-person.



Many visitors get bitten by the archives bug and keep coming back. Archives are addictive: people love feeling like a detective, tracing stories across time and space. There are often false starts and dead ends, but the discoveries make the journey worthwhile.

The photograph of your relative.

The archive footage of your school.

The handwritten letter which
changes your story.

What will you discover?

Thank you to Conwy Archive Service, Gwent Archives,
and The National Library of Wales for the images used
throughout this guide.



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