

GUIDELINES ON USING THE PUBLIC SEARCH ROOM

On arriving at the Record Office you should report to the Enquiries Desk in the Search Room. You will be asked to sign the Visitors' Book and issued with a reader's ticket, if you do not already have one. There are two types of tickets available:-

- **Day Tickets:** These give you access to the Office for one day and are suitable for those who intend to visit the Office either once or occasionally. You will need to give details of your name and address, but will not require proof of identification.
- **C.A.R.N. Tickets** Those who visit the Office regularly should obtain a C.A.R.N. (County Archive Research Network) ticket. These tickets are free; they are valid for four years and will give you access to any record office that belongs to the Research Network. You will need to produce some proof of identification containing a name and address eg. driving licence, utility bill or bank statement. (Please note that passports do not contain addresses.)

INDEXES & CATALOGUES

There are various indexes and catalogues to help you to decide which records to examine. In some cases you will find that the information provided by the finding aids is so detailed that there is no need to consult the original document.

Names Index: This is the most extensive index. It records all entries in the parish registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, as well as including references to some nonconformist material and numerous miscellaneous items. The index principally covers the period 1539 – 1900, and is arranged alphabetically by surname.

Place Index: This provides details about documents relating to specific parishes – in particular, it includes numerous references to title deeds. The index is arranged alphabetically by place, and then subdivided into 5 sections: miscellaneous, maps & plans, title deeds, manors and wills. Within each section the cards are arranged in date order.

Subject Index: This is fairly limited in its scope. The topics covered include agriculture, mills, poor law, transport, public houses. The subjects are in alphabetical order and within each subject group there is a chronological arrangement. A thesaurus is available listing all the subjects covered by the index.

Ecclesiastical Index: This index records the names and dates of various office holders (eg. churchwardens, incumbents) in the parishes, and has been compiled largely from information provided by parish records. It is arranged alphabetically by parish and then organised chronologically.

Estates Index: This is an index to the various estate collections held by the Record Office. Within each estate the cards are grouped in date order.

Catalogues: These include catalogues to estate collections, parish records, nonconformist records, records of local government, schools, hospitals and businesses.

Library: There is a small library of reference books and published works about both the Isle of Wight and historical sources.

Members of staff will be pleased to provide guidance on using the Office's facilities. Please ask if you require assistance.

REQUESTING DOCUMENTS

- Each document has a unique reference number by which it is identified. The reference numbers are obtained from the indexes and catalogues.
- If you wish to see a particular document, you should write its reference number and details on a request slip, and then sign and date it. The request slips are kept on the Enquiry Desk. You may request up to 4 items at one time, but you should use a separate slip for each item.
- The completed slips should be handed, together with your reader's ticket, to a member of staff or placed in the request box on the Enquiry Desk. **PLEASE NOTE THAT LAST ORDERS FOR DOCUMENTS ARE HALF AN HOUR BEFORE CLOSING TIME.**

CONSULTING DOCUMENTS

- A member of staff will fetch the documents that you have requested, and they should be produced within 5 – 10 minutes. (Production times may be longer if the Search Room is particularly busy.)
- Please remember that each record is unique and historically precious, and should therefore be handled carefully. Use a PENCIL when taking notes and do not lean on the documents. **EATING, DRINKING & SMOKING** are not allowed in the Search Room. Please show consideration to other researchers by keeping as quiet as possible.
- It is advisable to record the reference numbers of any records that you consult in case you wish to refer to them again.

Documents should be handed back at the Enquiry Desk. Once you have finished consulting original material, your reader's ticket will be returned.