



Quarter Sessions

Background

Before the creation of Gloucestershire County Council in 1888, many local powers were held by the county Quarter Sessions. These were run by men called Justices of the Peace. They oversaw roads, canals, prisons, police, licensing, weights and measures, lunatic asylums and much more. The Justices sat at a court known as the Quarter Sessions (as it met 4 times a year). As well as exercising administrative powers, the Justices also heard criminal cases at Quarter Sessions. More minor crimes were heard at the smaller and more frequent Petty Sessions (see Research Mini Guide 32: *Petty Sessions*). The most serious crimes such as murder were dealt the by the Assize court, see Research Guide 53: *Court Records* for more information. The Clerk of the Peace wrote up and collected documents for use in the quarter sessions court.

What records are there and what information will they contain?

The Quarter Sessions archive is large and varied. It includes:

Court Records (Reference: Q/S)

- Including minute books (Q/SM), order rolls (Q/SO), indictments (Q/Si) and depositions (Q/SD).
- For more information see Research Mini Guide 53: *Court Records*.

Gaol Records (Reference: Q/SG and Q/G)

- Including calendars of prisoners, reports, staff records and plans.
- For more information see Research Mini Guide 12: *Gaol Records*.

Police Records (Reference: Q/Y)

- Includes personnel records, registers of constabulary, police station diaries.
- For more information please see Research Mini Guide 5: *Police Records*

Roads and Bridges Records (Reference: Q/Srh, Q/AB, Q/Rum, Q/Rut)

- For more information please see the Research Mini Guide 51: *Railways, Roads and Canals*

Electoral Registers (Reference: Q/Rer)

- For more information please see Research Mini Guide 6: *Electoral Registers*.

Inclosure Maps (Reference: Q/RI)

- For more information please see Research Mini Guide 31: *Inclosure Maps*

Alehouse Licensing Records

- Few records have survived. See Research Mini Guide 20: *Alehouse Licensing*.

Please note: Gloucester City had its own separate Quarter Sessions and these documents are held under the reference GBR/G3.

How to Find the Records

To view a list of records in these collections please use the references given above to search our online catalogue www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives. (See our online Help page & FAQs for further guidance, or watch our short YouTube tutorial)

Many of our electoral registers and gaol records have been digitised. They can be viewed and searched online via www.ancestry.co.uk

Our inclosure maps have been digitised and can be viewed online at www.kypwest.org.uk