

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 Guide: Petty Sessions*). The most serious crimes such as murder were dealt the by the Assize court, see *Research Guide: 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 (but is not limited to):

Court Records (Reference: Q/S)

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

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

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

Police Records (Reference: Q/Y)

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

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

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

Electoral Registers (Reference: Q/Rer)

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

Inclosure/Enclosure Maps (Reference: Q/RI)

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

Alehouse Licensing Records

- Few records have survived. See *Research Guide: 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 available at: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives. (See our online 'Help' page & FAQs for further guidance or watch our 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, and can also be accessed on site via the Gloucestershire Family History Society.

Our Inclosure/Enclosure maps have been digitised and can be viewed online on Know Your Place. You will need to select either the Gloucestershire or South Gloucestershire maps depending on where you are searching.

Gloucestershire maps are available at: <https://maps.bristol.gov.uk/kyp/?edition=glos>

South Gloucestershire maps are available at: <https://maps.bristol.gov.uk/kyp/?edition=southglos>

The Apportionments have also been digitised and can be accessed via a desktop in the Searchroom. To find out more about accessing this, please email us at: archives@gloucestershire.gov.uk