

Learning Activity

This resource provides learning activities for your students using People's Collection Wales. It can also be used as a template for creating your own activities using the People's Collection Wales website.



Progression Step

3



Subject

Using Archives to Explore Local History



Title

On Your Doorstep—Trade Directories

Using archives to explore local history



Author

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales and the following local archives: Gwent Archives; Pembrokeshire Archives; Anglesey Archives; Wrexham Archives and Local Studies Services.

Using Archives to Explore Local History - Trade Directories

This resource explores how you can investigate the history of your locality using trade directories as a type of source found in local and national archives or record offices in Wales. It forms part of a series forming the basic building blocks for finding out about local history.

The resource is intended as a guide for teachers, helping them to use primary sources in the classroom. The resource can also help teachers work with their local archive to locate similar sources for their own locality. It aims to introduce teachers and students to the types of archival sources used for local history and to familiarise them with the form, appearance and content of the sources.

On Your Doorstep - Trade Directories - Learning Objectives

Learners will understand:

- The role of the archives in providing important historical sources.
- The role of using trade directories as a type of historical source.
- What life was like in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century for their own locality compared to other localities across Wales.

Learners will be able to:

Subject Curriculum—History

- Use a range of sources, including ICT, to search for information.
- Use timelines to sequence events.
- Ask and answer relevant questions about the past.
- Identify differences between ways of life at different times.
- Identify the ways in which the past is represented and interpreted.
- Select, record and organise historical information.
- Communicate ideas, opinions and conclusions with increasing independence in a variety of ways.

Literacy Framework

- Contribute to discussions and presentations.
- Use a range of appropriate reading strategies to make sense of texts.
- Gain an understanding of unfamiliar information.
- Make connections within/across a range of texts/themes.
- Carry out research to develop a full understanding.
- Use a structure that is appropriate to the purpose and focus of the writing.
- Use language that is appropriate to the writing.

Subject Curriculum—Geography

- Identify similarities and differences to describe, compare and contrast places.
- Observe and ask questions about a place.

On Your Doorstep - Trade Directories - Skills Focus

Thinking

- Asking questions.
- Activating prior knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Determining the process/method and strategy.
- Generating and developing ideas.
- Considering evidence, information and ideas.
- Reviewing the process/method.

Communication

- Developing and presenting information and ideas.
- Organising ideas and information.
- Writing accurately.
- Communicating information.

ICT

- Finding and developing information and ideas.
- Creating and presenting information and ideas.

On Your Doorstep - Introductory Text

Introduction

This resource forms part of a series of eight. Each resource in the series introduces a different type of historical source. The types of historical sources introduced in this resource are typically what you might look at during a local history project and they are all available from local archives.

The different types of sources introduced are:

- The Census
- Tithe and Ordnance Survey Maps
- School Log Books
- Photographs
- Parish Registers – baptisms and deaths
- Trade Directories**
- Sales Catalogues
- Newspapers

The exemplar historical sources in each resource come from four localities across Wales: Holyhead, Blaenavon, Saundersfoot and Wrexham. They cover the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Using these as examples, it is possible to explore, make connections and comparisons, ask and answer questions, discover landscapes and people, and the links between them.

There is a short film introducing archives and for each type of source there is an additional short film explaining the type of source and how we can use it to find out more about local history. A transcript of the films and thumbnail images are included in the **teachers' notes**. The full size images are available by following the links to the People's Collection Wales website.

Each resource in the series has several **online tasks** for pupils which use the sources from the four localities. These sources can be viewed online at the People's Collection Wales website by following the links on the pupil task sheets. There are also **additional activities** that suggest ways in which pupils could use sources from local archives to investigate local history on their doorstep. These additional activities enable pupils to compare and contrast their own locality with those across Wales. There is a contact list for local and national archives throughout Wales at the end of the teachers' notes.

[View the film - The Archive and the Archivist](#)

On Your Doorstep - Introductory Film - Trade Directories

This is a short filmed introduction with an archivist explaining trade directories as a type of source and how we can use them to find out more about local history.

[Trade Directories | Peoples Collection Wales](#)

Looking at Archives — Trade Directories



Using trade directories

Trade directories are very useful for exploring local history. Directories can give you a window into the past. They help you to build up a picture of life in your town, or even in your house, during a particular year. You might discover streets and trades that no longer exist, or find information about people who lived there in the past. Directories first started to be printed in the late seventeenth century because people wanted more accurate information about trade, industry and business. Directories usually contained:

- Descriptions of cities, parishes, towns and villages. These may include geographical, historical and statistical details.
- Information about local facilities, institutions and associations.
- Listings for private residents, traders, trades and professions.
- Details of important people.
- Advertisements.

There are five examples of trade directories which should be used with the online pupil investigations:

Bennett's Business Directory for North Wales 1910 (Holyhead)

Kelly's Directory 1891 (Blaenavon)

Kelly's Directory 1914 (Saundersfoot and St Issell's)

Red Book Directory Wrexham 1892-1893

"Wrexham Leader" Commercial Directory 1934

During the tasks, look at all the trade directories in the online collections on the People's Collection Wales website. Comparing the trade directories gives us a lot of useful information about similarities and differences in various parts of Wales in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Use the links to the People's Collection Wales website to see the trade directories online.

On Your Doorstep - Trade Directories / Task 1

What can we learn about the trades, shops and jobs people did in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century from trade directories?

Study the trade directories from the collection below to help you answer this question.

Here are some questions to help you with your investigation.

Look at the list of occupations on page 59 of the Wrexham Directory 1892-3 from Auctioneers to Bookbinders. Which occupations are still in existence today? Which ones have disappeared?

Look at the occupations for Saundersfoot in 1914. List all the occupations associated with the sea. Do the same for Holyhead. Are they similar in both areas?

Look at the sorts of occupations women had, as shown in the trade directories. See if this is the same for all the areas in the directory pages in the collection.

Collection for Task 1

[Link to collection on People's Collection Wales website](#)

On Your Doorstep - Trade Directories / Task 2

How do trade directories connect with other primary sources such as maps, census returns and parish records?

Study the primary sources from the collection below—see if you can link the sources together.

Here are some questions to help you with your investigation.

Look at the 1891 census example for Wrexham and see who was living at 4 Charles Street. What is the occupation of the head of the household? Look at the list of people with that occupation in the 1892-3 trade directory for Wrexham. Is there someone with that occupation living and working from 4 Charles Street? Is this the same person? What explanation can you suggest for this?

Look at the extract for the burial register for Saundersfoot 1896. Find Charles Ranken Vickerman. Now see if you can find someone with the same name in the 1914 directory. Is this the same person? If not, can you explain the name?

Collection for Task 2

[Link to collection on People's Collection Wales website](#)

On Your Doorstep - Trade Directories / Task 3

Can trade directories help us to find more information about photographs?

Study the trade directories and photographs from the collection below.

Here are some questions to help you with your investigation.

Look at the photograph of Saundersfoot. See if you can make out the signs above the shop on the left corner of the street and one further down the street on the left hand side. Both of these shops are listed in the 1914 directory. What do they sell?

Look at the photograph of Broad Street, Blaenavon. You can see the shop sign COOKE on the left of the photograph. Look up the name COOKE in the Blaenavon directory. What does this tell us about this shop?

Collection for Task 3

[Link to collection on People's Collection Wales website](#)

Well done you have finished your tasks and you have collected lots of information using trade directories.

Now it's over to you to find out more.

You can visit or ask your local record office or archive for examples of trade directories for your own area. Walk through your local area, village, high street etc. See if you can identify any remaining businesses from the directories. Are they also on the census returns and the maps? Can you find any photographs of them?

What new questions would you like answers to?

You can do more research online, at archives, local record offices, museums and at your local library.

Find your local archive or record office @ <http://www.archiveswales.org.uk/>

Find your local museum @ <http://www.culture24.org.uk/places+to+go/wales>

The National Library of Wales @ <http://www.llgc.org.uk>

People's Collection Wales @ www.peoplescollectionwales.co.uk

RCAHMW @ <http://www.rcahmw.gov.uk>

Coflein @ <http://www.coflein.gov.uk/>

Additional Activities - Trade and Occupations

Using trade directories from your local archives compare how trade and occupations in your local area differs from the other localities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Discussion

Look at trade directories from your local area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. What are the main trades and occupations? How does this differ from the other localities?

Looking at trades and occupations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century - business advertising

After studying the trade directories from the local archives and the other localities, design advertisements for some of the businesses in the directories. Look online for late nineteenth and early twentieth century advertisements for inspiration.

Discussion topics might include the following:

- The market they are targeting with their advertising—who does the business sell to?
- The range of products.
- Where the business is located.

Ideas for further follow on activities:

Let's Go Shopping!

- What could you buy in the 1890s to 1914? Use the directories in [Collection 1](#) to go shopping and record when you have found a place where you can buy the following:
Pork chops and bacon; fresh fish; fresh loaf of bread; potatoes and fresh vegetables; sweets and ice creams; medicine and pills; writing paper and envelopes; a new shirt; coal for your fire; a glass dish; a packet of tea; sugar; some sewing cotton and needles; milk; a hat or cap.
Are they available in all the localities?
- Who would do this for you? Using the directories in [Collection 1](#) find where you can get the following errands done in each of the localities:
Get your horse re-shoed; get your garden spade repaired; get a new wooden bench made; buy a barrel or wooden bucket; get your father's pocket watch repaired; get your boots resoled; post a letter; get your hair cut; have a new pair of trousers made; get some goods transported to Cardiff; get a new wheel made for your pony cart; get a sore throat looked at; order a new saddle for your horse; buy some nails to fix your roof.



Additional Activities - Using other primary sources

Using trade directories and other primary sources from your local archives compare how trade and occupations in your local area differ from the other localities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Discussion

Look at the trade directories, census returns and parish registers from your local area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Can you make any links between people's occupations in the trade directories and those listed on the census returns? Can you find any of the same people on the parish records?

Looking at trade directories and other primary sources in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century - history detective

After studying the trade directories and other primary sources from the local archive, each pupil or group of pupils presents a series of case studies where there are clear links between the trade directories, the census returns or the parish registers and any photographs or maps.

Discussion topics might include the following information:

- The persons name and their occupation
- The primary sources where they can be found.
- Are there any gaps or broken links?

Ideas for further follow on activities:

Using the sources in [Collection 4](#) look at the 1891 census page for Prince St, Blaenavon. Find Gwen Price who at 74 is the hotel keeper of the Victoria Hotel. Can you find Gwen in the Blaenavon directory for the same year? There is only one other person from the census extract who lives in Prince St listed in the directory, the sexton John Griffiths. You will find his name under the description of the town, just after the population numbers. What does a sexton do? Why do you think that the other residents of Prince Street are not in the directory?



Additional Activities - Changes in Local Businesses

Using trade directories and photographs from your local archives compare how businesses in your local area have changed since the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Discussion

Look at trade directories and photographs from your local area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Are any of the businesses still there today? How have the trades and occupations changed over time in your area? Can you find photographs that reflect the changes?

Looking at trades and occupations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century - timeline of local businesses

Using trade directories and photographs from the local archives create a timeline of local businesses, including maps, photographs and trade directory entries.

Discussion topics might include using the following:

- A modern day plan or map of the street with modern day photographs of existing businesses and buildings.
- Photographs from different time periods showing changes in trade.
- Trade directory entries for the businesses through time.
- Are any of the businesses still trading under the existing name? Have they changed ownership or are they still in the same family?

Ideas for further follow on activities:

- Using [Collection 5](#) look at the Wrexham photograph of Powell Brothers' Engineering Works 1914 -1918. The earlier directory tells us that Powells was in Wrexham in 1892-3 - can you find out exactly where? You can also find an advertisement for what Powell Brothers manufactured in 1892-3. What sort of people would have bought the machines that Powell Brothers manufactured? What were they manufacturing when the photograph was taken in 1914?
- Now look at the photograph of the watchmaker's shop in Holyhead in [Collection 5](#). Can you find this shop in the 1910 directory? Where is it located?
- Look at the photographs of Saundersfoot in [Collection 5](#). One of these shows the Cambrian Hotel on the left and the Hean Castle Hotel facing on the right. These are both mentioned as places to stay in the introduction on page 867 of the Saundersfoot trade directory. Who was in charge of these hotels in 1914?



So what is a trade directory?

Today we have yellow pages, telephone books and the internet which can tell us where people live and who to phone if we need someone to carry out work or if we want to buy something. Before the internet people relied on trade directories for this information. They are called trade directories because it was how local businesses advertised their goods and services. Professional people also paid to be entered in the directory to advertise their position in local society. The directories were printed by both local and national publishers.

Trade directories are held in local libraries and by county archives who collect directories that relate to their local area. For Wrexham there are trade directories between 1815-1970s although there isn't one for every year.

So what information can we find in trade directories?

Trade directories will usually include a description of the local town or area and may also include information about surrounding villages. Names and details of local public servants such as the mayor, school teachers and judges are also provided along with a list of principal residents and lists of professional and trades people with addresses. Directories for large towns also have lists of houses in street order giving the name of the person living in each address.

Because they contain lists of professionals and tradespeople, they are very useful for looking for individual people. They can tell you what their job was and where they lived. They can also tell you about the local community and give clues about what life was like. Some directories even include the time of the local buses and when the mail was going to be delivered, which was important. Before people had telephones and the internet they communicated by writing letters and posting them for delivery by the postal service.

The Red Book Directory Wrexham 1892-1893 includes information about the towns within the Wrexham area, such as the population, what schools existed, the churches, who the important people were who ran the town and advertisements for local businesses. They also include lists of residents and tradesmen arranged in order of street name and also by trade name. You can find out who lived in a particular street and what their occupation was and you can see how many people were listed under each occupation and their individual names. So if you wanted to know who was a baker by trade in Wrexham in 1892, you can look under the list of names for bakers. You can tell what the main occupations were in Wrexham, and the goods that were being produced and sold, by looking at how many names are listed under each profession or trade. The longer the list of names, the more popular the trade must have been.

From the pages for the 1892-1893 directory, there is a page of advertisements also telling us about the range of businesses carried out in Wrexham at that time. They provide information about what was made, and the goods and services sold and provided. There were a wide range of goods being made in Wrexham.

On this page there is an advert for a company called Powell Brothers & Whittaker. They started out as manufacturers of iron and were later joined by John Whittaker who made farming and agricultural equipment. At the time of this directory in 1892 they were making farm implements and machinery which were designed to be pulled by horsepower. The advert shows the machinery for sale. This is similar to the machinery described in the sales catalogue for Broughton Farm near Wrexham.



[Link to image](#)

Trade directories can also show how an area has changed over a period of time and how a place has developed and businesses/residents in a particular area altered. The page from the 1892 directory showing street names, lists the residents living in a street called Grove Park, Wrexham. At that time a Mr Davies lived in the house called "Roseneath". The house was next to a school. In this street there were mainly houses that people lived in, but in other streets in the town, such as Henblas Street, which you can also see on this page, there were a lot of businesses including picture frame makers, accountants and insurers, a bakery and dining rooms, grocers and many others. We can compare the entries for the same streets in another directory to see what changes have happened. For example, in the pages for Grove Park in a later directory for 1934, we do not see an entry for the house "Roseneath" so we can tell from this that by 1934, the house was no longer there. The school it stood next to is still there, but by 1934, a hospital had been built where "Roseneath" had once stood. Also we can see that the accountants at Number 7 Henblas Street in the 1892 trade directory had become a cycle depot in 1934 and the bakery and dining rooms at number 13 had become a drapers shop, that is, someone who sold cloth and clothing. There were more shops selling food in Henblas Street in 1934 than there were in Henblas Street in 1892.

Today there are no longer firms making leather goods and farming equipment in Wrexham town centre, but there is still a local bakery selling bread, cakes and sandwiches, there are still insurance companies and there are still food shops and market stalls. In the nineteenth century farm animals were brought in to Wrexham town to be sold in the market. Today the area where they were sold has been turned into a shopping centre.

Further Information - Local Archives

Find your local archive below:

- [Aberystwyth University Archives](#) archives@aber.ac.uk Tel: 01970 628593
- [Anglesey Archives](#) archives@anglesey.gov.uk Tel: 01248 751930
- [Bangor University Archives](#) archives@bangor.ac.uk Tel: 01248 382966
- [Cardiff University, Special Collections and Archives](#) keelanp@cardiff.ac.uk Tel: 029 2087 5678
- [Carmarthenshire Archive Service](#) archives@carmarthenshire.gov.uk Tel: 01267 228232
- [Ceredigion Archives](#) archives@ceredigion.gov.uk Tel: 01970 633697/633698
- [Conwy Archives Service](#) archifau.archives@conwy.gov.uk Tel: 01492 577550
- [Denbighshire Record Office](#) archives@denbighshire.gov.uk Tel: 01824 708250
- [Flintshire Record Office](#) archives@flintshire.gov.uk Tel: 01244 532364
- [Glamorgan Archives](#) glamro@cardiff.gov.uk Tel: 029 2087 2200
- [Gwent Archives](#) enquiries@gwentarchives.gov.uk Tel: 01495 353363
- [Gwynedd Archives, Caernarfon](#) archives.caernarfon@gwynedd.gov.uk Tel: 01286 679095
- [Gwynedd Archives, Meirionnydd](#) archives.dolgellau@gwynedd.gov.uk Tel: 01341 424 682
- [Neath Antiquarian Society Archives](#) westglam.archives@swansea.gov.uk Tel: 01639 620139
- [Pembrokeshire Record Office](#) record.office@pembrokeshire.gov.uk Tel: 01437 775456
- [Powys Archives](#) archives@powys.gov.uk Tel: 01597 826088
- [Swansea University Archives](#) archives@swansea.ac.uk Tel: 01792 295021
- [University of Wales, Trinity St David Archives](#) rodericbownlibrary@tsd.ac.uk Tel: 01248 38296
- [West Glamorgan Archive Service, Swansea](#) westglam.archives@swansea.gov.uk Tel: 01792 636589
- [Wrexham Archives and Local Studies Service](#) archives@wrexham.gov.uk Tel: 01978 297480

You can find more resources online, at archives, local record offices and museums.

Find your local archive or record office @ <http://www.archiveswales.org.uk/>

Find your local museum @ <http://www.culture24.org.uk/places+to+go/wales>

The National Library of Wales @ <http://www.llgc.org.uk>

People's Collection Wales @ www.peoplescollectionwales.co.uk

RCAHMW @ <http://www.rcahmw.gov.uk>

Coflein @ <http://www.coflein.gov.uk/>