

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—Sales Catalogues

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 - Sales Catalogues

This resource explores how you can investigate the history of your locality using sales catalogues 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 - Sales Catalogues - Learning Objectives

Learners will understand:

- The role of the archives in providing important historical sources.
- The role of using sales catalogues 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.
- 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.
- Plan the investigative approach to be used, suggesting how to find relevant information.
- 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 and language that is appropriate to the purpose and focus of the writing.

Subject Curriculum—Geography

- Identify similarities and differences to describe, compare and contrast places.
- Observe and ask questions about a place.
- Identify and locate places using maps and use maps, imagery and ICT to find and present locational information.

On Your Doorstep - Sales Catalogues - Skills Focus

Thinking

- Asking questions.
- Activating prior knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Determining the process/method and strategy.
- Gathering information.
- Generating and developing ideas.
- Considering evidence, information and ideas.
- Thinking logically and seeking patterns.

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 - Sales Catalogues

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

[Sales catalogues | Peoples Collection Wales](#)

Looking at Archives — Sales Catalogues



Using sale catalogues

Sales catalogues are very useful for exploring local history because they often give detailed information about a property, its owners or occupiers and the buildings and contents at a particular moment in time. They were created by solicitors and auctioneers, the people or companies which sold the properties. Some include maps or plans as part of the catalogue and later ones sometimes include interior and exterior photographs. Most sales catalogues did not survive; they would usually have been thrown away after the auction. We still have examples of sales catalogues because some survived in the papers of solicitors and auctioneers which came to the local archives.

Sales catalogues are valuable sources for local history because they often give detailed descriptions and plans of properties and how they were divided up into lots for sale. Many show the sale of individual farms and small areas of land called smallholdings. There are also catalogues for the sale of large estates.

Some of the catalogues even list the furnishings of houses or farm animals, implements and machinery that were also for sale.

There are five examples of sales catalogues and one for an advertisement of an auction:

Blaenavon 1895 – advertisement for the auction of three properties near Blaenavon.

Holyhead 1894 part of a sales catalogue for properties and land at Bodrewyn and a map showing the locations of the properties and land.

Saundersfoot 1901 – five pages of a sales catalogue for estates and a small farm.

Wrexham 1867 – title page and first page from sale of all the livestock and contents from Broughton Farm.

Wrexham 1886 – sale of three lots – “Roseneath” mansion, shops, land and cottage at Gresford.

Wrexham 1890 – three pages of a catalogue for the sale of furniture and effects from “Roseneath”.

During the tasks, use the links to the collections on the People’s Collection Wales website to look at all the sales catalogues online. Comparing the sales catalogues gives a lot of useful information about similarities and differences in various parts of Wales in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

On Your Doorstep - Sales Catalogues / Task 1

What can we learn about the types and sizes of properties in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century from the sales catalogues?

Study the sales catalogues from the collection below.

Here are some questions to help you with your task.

Look at the sales catalogues in the collection. What types of properties are they?

Look at the catalogue for the sale of Broughton Farm in 1867. Why are the farming implements and livestock being sold? Look at the two pages of the catalogue. What do the lists tell us about the sort of activities that took place at Broughton Farm. There are lots of terms or words that we don't use today. Choose a term or word and research what it means. Use the internet to find a picture of the implement that it describes.

Look at the sale advertisement for properties near Blaenavon in the parish of Trevethin. Unfortunately we do not have the sales catalogue for this property. Look at the measurements for the three properties. What are the modern equivalents for acres, rods and perches? Can you find out how much land each farm has in modern measurements?

Collection for Task 1

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

On Your Doorstep - Sales Catalogues / Task 2

What can we learn about how properties have changed since the late nineteenth and early twentieth century from the sales catalogues?

Study the sales catalogues from the collection below.

Here are some questions to help you with your task.

There is a sales catalogue from 1901 for three farms on the Trewayne Estate and six small farms or holdings at St Issell's. What makes this a very valuable source for studying the local history of the countryside around Saundersfoot? Give at least three reasons.

Use the map section of the People's Collection Wales website to find what is there today – do these farms still exist? Sometimes modern streets are called after the farms or cottages that used to be there. How many of the names of the small holdings can you find? Are any of the farms still there? You can use the search button to see if the names still exist in or near Saundersfoot.

Look at the cover of the catalogue. Reread the information about the smallholdings near Saundersfoot. What does the catalogue suggest could be done with the smallholdings? What does this tell us about what is happening in Saundersfoot at the very beginning of the twentieth century?

Collection for Task 2

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

On Your Doorstep - Sales Catalogues / Task 3

How do sales catalogues connect with other sources which we can use from the archives?

Exploring local history is about making connections between the different kinds of sources. Like a jigsaw puzzle, it is about detective work and looking for links. Use the sources from the collection below to help you answer the question.

Here are some questions to help you with your task.

Look at the map and the 1894 sales catalogue for properties and land at Bodrewyn (Holyhead) and the map. Find the Steam Mill and Steam Mill Road. Look at the different lots that were going to be sold. Now look at the OS Map for Holyhead in 1900. What has happened to the land since the 1894 sale? Lot 89 was a tannery in 1894. Is it still the same in 1900?

Look at the 1886 and 1890 sales particulars for "Roseneath". Can you find "Roseneath" in the 1892-93 Wrexham Directory in the streets listings? Hint – Roseneath is described in 1896 as being in Grove Park. Look for a street with the same name. Who is living there in 1892? Is Roseneath still listed in the 1934 directory?

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 sales catalogues.

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

You can visit or ask your local record office or archive for examples of sales catalogues for your own area. Many catalogues have been scanned and are now available online.

Walk through your local area, village, high street etc and see if you can identify any remaining properties from the catalogues. Take a photograph of the properties now. Have any names of the properties changed?

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

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales @ <http://www.rcahmw.gov.uk>

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

Additional Activities - Type and Size of Property

Using sales catalogues and inventories from your local archives compare how the type and size of property in your local area differs from that of the other localities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Discussion

Look at sales catalogues and inventories from your local area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. What are the main types of property? What size are they? How does this differ from the other localities?

Looking at sales catalogues and inventories— design a sales catalogue for the school

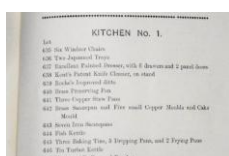
After studying the sales catalogues, each pupil or group of pupils designs and writes a sales catalogue for their school based on those of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The pupils may wish to include the following information:

- The name and location of the school.
- The sizes of the rooms.
- Decide if any effects are to be sold with the school—if so what?
- Date and place that the auction will be held.

Ideas for further follow on activities:

- Look at the sales catalogues in the [Bodrewyn and Roseneath Collection](#). The 1894 sales catalogue for properties and land at Bodrewyn (Holyhead) also has a map which shows their location. For sale are lots 79-94. Lot 89 is a tannery. What a tannery is? Decide whether you would be interested in buying land near a tannery. Why or why not?
- Who is the tenant of the land being sold and how long has he been leasing the tannery?
- Use the maps on the People's Collection Wales website to find what is there today – does Steam Mill Road still exist? Has it been renamed? Are the houses built between 1894 and 1900 still there? *Hint – look for Holborn and Station Street on the OS map – then you should be able to work out where the auction lots in the sales catalogue were. How much has this area changed since 1900?*



Additional Activities - How Properties have Changed

Using sales catalogues and inventories from your local archives compare how properties in your local area changed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to those in the other localities.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Discussion

Look at sales catalogues and inventories from your local area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. How have properties and the area around them changed? How does this differ from the other localities?

Looking at sales catalogues and inventories — researching a property in your local area

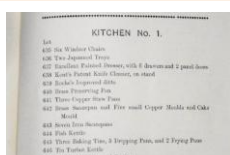
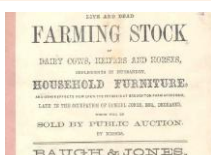
After studying the sales catalogues from your local archive, each pupil or group of pupils researches one or more properties and produces a short presentation on the property and how the property has changed since the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The pupils can use the mapping feature on the People's Collection Wales website, aerial photographs from websites such as Coflein or Britain from Above.

Discussion topics might include the following information:

- Any changes to the name of the property.
- Whether the property still exists and whether it has been modified
- Whether another property has been built on the site of the original property.

Ideas for further follow on activities:

- Using the [Sales Catalogue Collection](#) find the example of an auction sale advertisement for properties near Blaenavon in the parish of Trevechin. In 1895 most local people would know where these three farms were by their names even though no address is given. Do they still exist today? Use the maps on People's Collection Wales website, or other online maps, to find Cwmavon – follow Cwmavon Road south from Blaenavon and see if you can find “Bailey Glas”. (it may not be spelt the same). What is there now? How much has this area changed since 1900? If you can't find Cwmavon Farm and Penyrheol Medwen Farm, what do you think might have happened to them since 1895?
- Unlike the catalogues for the other places, which are only for one year, the three Wrexham sale catalogues date from 1867, 1886 and 1890 and two of them are for the same property, “Roseneath”. Where was Roseneath situated in Wrexham? How useful is the description of Lot 1 for someone trying to find out about “Roseneath”? You can find a picture of “Roseneath” on <http://freepages.history.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~richardsonsmith/COCH%20History/wrexham.html> after it had become a hospital for elderly sick people. What additional information does the sales catalogue give that a picture doesn't? The 1890 catalogue lists all of the furniture and effects at “Roseneath”. What clue is there in the catalogue for why these are all being sold? What information in the list for kitchen No. 1 and the lamps tells us how “Roseneath” was heated and lit and what energy was used for cooking in 1890?



Additional Activities - Using Several Sources

Using sales catalogues combined with other sources from your local archives investigate properties in your local area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Discussion

Look at sales catalogues and other sources, including for example, the census returns, photographs, maps and trade directories from your local area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. What do they tell us about the properties of that time and how have they changed?

Look at sales catalogues and other sources from the archives - how do the sources link together to help us with our investigations?

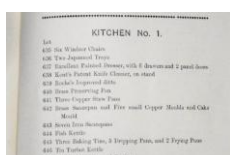
After studying the sales catalogues each pupil or group of pupils chooses one or more properties to use as a case study. They then use the trade directories, OS maps, tithe maps, the census returns and photographs from the archive to show how the sources can be linked together to provide information when researching properties.

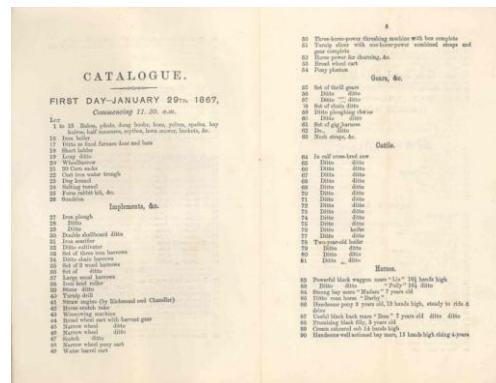
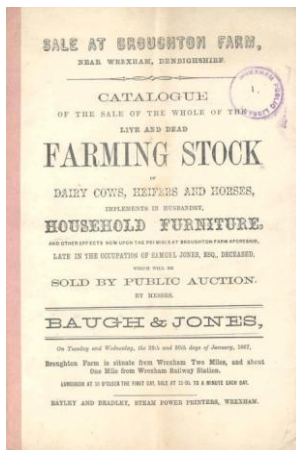
Pupils may wish to include the following information in their case studies:

- The property name and whether the name has changed
- Is the property listed in the census returns or the trade directories? Who owned the property?
- Is the property on the OS maps or the tithe maps. What does this tell us?
- Is the property still there today? Who owns the property now?

Ideas for further follow on activities:

- Using the [Saundersfoot Sales Catalogue Collection](#), look at the sales catalogue for estates and small farms near Saundersfoot in 1901. Note the names of the farms or small holdings. Now look at the OS maps for Saundersfoot in 1907. How many of the farms and small holdings can you find on the maps? Hint – the Trevayne Estate is south, between Saundersfoot and Tenby and the St Issell small holdings will be north-west of Saundersfoot. Look at the Kelly's Directory of 1914 for Saundersfoot and St Issell's. Look for the farms in the listings. Which ones can you find and who is listed as living there in 1914? Look back at the sales catalogue – are they the same occupiers as were there in 1901?





Sales catalogue of Broughton Farm, near Wrexham, 1867

[Link to image](#)

So what are sales catalogues?

Sales catalogues are documents which a solicitor would have used to advertise a property for sale. Nowadays properties for sale are advertised by estate agents. Very often property was sold at auction and the auction was advertised giving details of the buildings and land that were to be sold. The advertisements include important information about whether it was a house or land, or offices and shops. The auction would very often include a number of properties that were for sale.

In addition to advertisements for the sale by auction, catalogues provided more detailed lists of the individual items that were to be sold in connection with a building. They included items inside the buildings, which were usually arranged room by room, and outside the buildings, which might include garden equipment and also livestock such as farm animals.

Sales catalogues are held at local County Archives, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales, in Aberystwyth, and some local libraries, The National Archives in London, and The National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth. They are often found in collections relating to large estates. When large estates were split up in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the grand houses, cottages, farms and plots of land were sold off very often in separate lots.

So what information can we find in sales catalogues and inventories?

The advertisement for sale of the mansion house called "Roseneath" in 1886 tells us where the house was situated and the size of the property. It also provides a detailed description of what the house looked like and what type of building material it was constructed from, just as estate agents today describe modern houses for sale. The advert is also describing the layout of the house, how many rooms there are and the size of the rooms. So from this we can tell that it was a substantial house with a servants' hall, two kitchens, fourteen bedrooms and a stable yard. The advertisement also tells us who was renting the house and how much they were paying each year. There are a number of other properties for sale at the same auction including shops and offices in Wrexham.

The catalogue which dates from a later sale of the same house "Roseneath" in 1890 provides even more detail of individual items belonging to each room in the house and this can tell us

about how life was lived in a big house with servants. For example, in kitchen number 1 there are lists of cooking pots with different names designed to cook different kinds of food. The list of lamps in the lamp room shows that oil lamps were used for lighting and there are gas brackets in some of the rooms which means that the house was lit by gas lamps rather than by electricity as houses are today. The sales catalogue even provides information about the colour of curtains and foot-stools and what they were made of.

The sales catalogue for Broughton Farm provides a detailed listing of the farming stock, that is the animals for sale, the farm equipment and household furniture for sale.

Records about how houses were built often don't survive and are rare. So in order to find out about buildings, we need to look at how people lived at the time and what the local community was like. Maps can show what other houses and buildings existed in the area at that time. Other records such as census records and trade directories tell us about who was living in a particular place at a particular time.

We can tell from the sales catalogue for "Roseneath" that it was a grand house but who might have lived there?

The house was built by a man named William Low in 1864-1865. William Low was a railway engineer. He was famous for designing the first channel tunnel that would join England and France by land under the sea. He drew plans for the tunnel at Roseneath House in 1867. Unfortunately war broke out in France in 1870 and people were no longer interested in making it easier to cross from England to France by train under the sea. They were afraid that the war would come to England. Many years later the idea for building a tunnel became popular again and a tunnel was completed. Today we can go to France by train travelling under the sea on Eurostar but the man who drew the first plans for this was William Low.

When William Low died in 1886, Roseneath House was sold. The house later became a school and a hospital for sick soldiers. Unfortunately, the house is no longer there today and Yale College has been built on the plot of land where it once stood.

We can tell from the sales catalogue for Broughton Farm, situated a short distance outside of Wrexham town, that this was not as large a house as "Roseneath" because of the number of rooms described. There are lists of the animals which were used to carry out work on the farm which were also for sale.

Unlike farming today, the work on the farm was carried out by horses who pulled the pieces of farm equipment to prepare the soil for sowing crops and for digging them up once they were ready to harvest. We know this because there are no tractors for sale as there might be if a farm was sold today. Instead a number of horses are listed for sale such as "the powerful black wagon mare". There are also clues about what crops were grown at the farm from the equipment for sale.

Some local museums will have 'handling boxes' of artifacts, which they will loan out to schools. These are an excellent way to bring history in the classroom to support learning.

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

RCAHMMW @ <http://www.rcahmmw.gov.uk>

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