

Useful Information

MCC Archives and Local Collections – Electoral Registers

www.manchester.gov.uk/info/448/archives_and_local_history/4670/archive_and_local_collections/9

Manchester UK

www.manchester2002-uk.com/maps/manc1938-map.html

Family Search

www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Electoral_Rolls_or_Registers_in_England

Poll Books in England and Wales

www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Poll_Books_in_England_and_Wales

192.Com

www.192.com

Electoral Services Unit

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Town Hall Extension
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M60 2LA
esu@manchester.gov.uk

Did you know?

Lily Maxwell was the first woman to vote in Britain in 1867 after the Great Reform Act of 1832.



For more detailed information:

www.mlfhs.org.uk/guides

Archives +

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Electoral Registers

What are Electoral Registers?

An Electoral Register is a list of names recording everyone who is registered to vote in a local area. These registers can also be referred to as Electoral rolls, Electoral lists or Voters Registers. However, their formal name is 'Register of Electors'.

How can these registers help me with Family History research?

Besides showing the voters name and place of abode, these registers can help you place your ancestor in between the Census years and identify them at a particular address. It must be stressed that these registers are not arranged alphabetically by name, and therefore you will need know an address or a precise local area in order to use them. They never show a place or birth or details of children under the age of 18.

History

Electoral Registration has been a requirement since 1832 and was brought into effect in order to make the voting system fairer. Reform was desperately needed because of the abuse which had crept into the voting system and because of the inconsistency of voting requirements which varied drastically from borough to borough.

The Electoral registers have been published annually since 1832 however, there are a few exceptions where you will not find any registers.

- Registration was suspended during both World Wars
- No registers exist from 1916-1917 (1915-1917 in Scotland)
- No registers exist from 1940-1944
- From 1919-1926 there were two registers called *Spring* and *Autumn*.
- There were two registers each in 1945 and 1946; in addition to the regular register in October there was a special register in 1945 for the General election and a supplementary register of service voters in March 1946.

Electoral Registers available

The Electoral Registers currently available at Manchester Central Library are dated 1832-2001.

- Electoral rolls dated 1832-1993 are on microfilm
- Electoral rolls dated 1993-2001 are in bound volumes.

Absent Voters Lists

Absent Voters Lists were produced for 1918-1923 and were used for servicemen. These are on separate lists. They give information such as the regiment, regimental number, rank, battalion.

New Electoral Registers

In Manchester, the current edited and full electoral registers are held at the Electoral Services Unit in the Town Hall. Unfortunately, because of legislation they are not accessible to the public until they are 10 years old.

Searching the Electoral Registers

Information available from Archives + advises that the Electoral Registers are arranged as follows:

- **1832-1839**-arranged by township (e.g. Ardwick, Chorlton-upon-Medlock, Hulme, Manchester) and then alphabetically by surname
- **1839-1878**-local election registers, arranged by ward, then alphabetically by surname
- **1879-1886**-You will need to use the 1886 index book to look up the polling district for a particular street. The registers are then in straight polling district number order, the polling district number appearing at the top of each page besides the ward. Check the polling district number TWICE - in Division 1 (those who could vote in local AND parliamentary elections) then in Division 3 (those who could only vote in local elections). Streets are then alphabetical within each polling district
- **1887-1916**-Use the same formula as above but use the street index on the first microfilm for each year
- **1918-1949**-Use the 1934 street index book to look up the

parliamentary division and polling district number. The parliamentary division will be on the microfilm box (e.g.Ardwick), then look for the polling district number on the microfilm. These numbers are made up of a letter and a number (e.g. A38) or two letters and a number. Those with two letters appear **after** the sequence with one letter

- **1950-1982**-use information as above but use 1950 street index book for 1950-60, the 1961 index book for 1961-5, the 1966 index book for 1966-71, the 1972 index book for 1972-79 and the 1980 index book for 1980-81.
- **1982-2001**-These are arranged by ward, then alphabetically by street. Use the 1982 index book for 1982-91, the 1992 index book for 1992-8, the 1999 index book for 1999, the 2000 index book for 2000 and the 2001 index book for 2001 to look up ward (a three figure abbreviation, for example DDA)

The arrangement of registers by Poll district and then Ward followed by street or road is a big drawback for the genealogist, and even with a street index any search may take a long time. Another problem to be aware of is finding the correct constituency that will cover a particular street or area of a large town. Boundary changes many complicate a search over many years.

Eligibility to Vote

Voting had not been viewed as a universal right but as a privilege for the wealthiest class of society and before 1832 the right to vote depended on three things : gender, property and location. It will be helpful for you when using the Electoral Registers to note the following dates and eligibility requirements:

- 1832-67: only men over 21 who owned a certain amount of land/property or who were tenants paying a certain amount of rent.
- 1867-1918: men who were owners/tenants or who were lodgers paying at least £10 per annum
- 1918-1928: all men over 21 and women over 30
- 1928-1971: all men and women over 21
- 1971-to date: all men and women over 18