

Electoral Registers

Electoral registers were introduced in 1832 and are a list of all the people registered to vote in a particular area.

Oxfordshire History Centre holds electoral registers for both the County of Oxfordshire and the City of Oxford. These are held in two different catalogue sequences.

Registration was suspended during the two World Wars, so there are no registers between 1916-1917 and 1940-1944. From 1918 Absent Voters lists were prepared, which contain additional service information about those who fought.

Key dates

- 1832 – Introduction of electoral registers. Voting rights given to men who rented property to a certain value
- 1867 – All male householders enfranchised
- 1872 – Introduction of the secret ballot
- 1918 – Property restrictions lifted for men. Women over 30 but with property restrictions could vote for the first time.
- 1928 – Woman's voting rights became equal with men's, allowing everyone aged 21 and over to vote.
- 1969 – Suffrage was extended to those aged 18 and over.
- 2003 – Two versions of the register, the full and the edited, were produced

What will I find?

The registers provide the names and the residence of the person you are searching for. Be warned that there is no name index, so it is helpful to know the name and street of the person you are looking for. Until the introduction of universal suffrage you will only find the names of those qualified to vote.

Interesting Example

EL/3/A1/40 City of Oxford Electoral register, 1952

Everyone has to register to vote. This register shows J.R.R. Tolkien, his wife Edith and daughter Priscilla, residing at no. 99 Holywell Street.

Where are these records?

The original registers for the City and County are held at Oxfordshire History Centre and are available for public consultation. The following microfilm or fiche copies are also available in the searchroom:

- County of Oxfordshire 1832-1938
- City of Oxford 1823-1940
- Berkshire 1839-1889
- Berkshire (Northern or Abingdon) 1903-1906

The [Ancestry Library](#) subscription website (free access in Oxfordshire History Centre) provides access to:

- Berkshire electoral registers 1840-1965

If you are looking for very recent Oxfordshire registers then you might find they have not yet been deposited with us. In this case you will need to contact the relevant District Council or City Council.

- [Cherwell District Council](#)
- [South Oxfordshire District Council](#)
- [Vale of White Horse District Council](#)
- [West Oxfordshire District Council](#)
- [Oxford City Council](#)

We only hold the registers for places in the Vale of White Horse area since it became part of Oxfordshire in 1974. For earlier registers of this area you will need to contact [Berkshire Record Office](#).

Where is the catalogue?

The catalogue for the County electoral registers is available online at [Heritage Search](#) and in the searchroom, where there is also an index by parish. The catalogue for the City of Oxford electoral registers is only available in the searchroom.