

Business Records

Oxfordshire History Centre houses a variety of business archives, mainly covering the 18th to 20th centuries. Some of the chief examples include:

- Early's Blanket Company (Witney)
- Frank Cooper, marmalade manufacturers (Oxford)
- Brakespear & Sons, brewers (Henley)
- Shepherd & Woodward, tailors & outfitters (Oxford)
- Hunt, Edmunds & Co., brewers (Banbury)
- Cape & Co., drapers (Oxford)
- Daniel Young, mechanical engineers (Witney)
- Morrells Brewery (Oxford)
- Symm & Co. Ltd., builders (Oxford)

Many of the records encountered in these collections are financial; the range includes ledgers, cash books, journals and day books (all giving details of a company's transactions), as well as account books, bank books and bank statements.

You may also find minute books of meetings of boards or shareholders, annual reports, correspondence files and letter books, engineers' drawings, order books, contract files, and publicity material such as photographs, posters and brochures. However, most collections will only incorporate a selection of these types of documentation.

Employee and personnel records do not turn up as often as may be expected: the Early Blanket Company archives contain series of apprenticeship indentures, and wage/salary books are not uncommon generally, but we hold very little material about Guilds and Trade Unions. Some business collections will include papers concerning the families involved in the firm.

Oxfordshire solicitors donate or deposit with us collections of records on a regular basis, but these tend to be bundles of property deeds, title deeds and associated papers, rather than records of the legal firms themselves.

Interesting examples

Plans, estimates and specifications can provide fascinating information on the development of individual buildings or sites. For example, the Symm & Co collection contains plans and specifications for a number of buildings in Oxford and the rest of the county; including Hertford Bridge (nicknamed the Bridge of Sighs) over New College Lane, Oxford (reference number B27/1/A3/8/1).

Where are these records?

A wide range of business collections are held here at the History Centre. However records of Morris Motors, one of the most significant businesses in Oxfordshire, are instead held at the [Heritage Motor Centre in Gaydon, Warwickshire.](#)

Where is the catalogue

Many but by no means all business records have a catalogue online. Enter the name of the business into our [Heritage Search](#) and choose the "Archive Catalogue" collection to see if the catalogue you want is there. If the business you are interested in does not appear you will need to visit the History Centre to look at the catalogue in printed form.

[Visiting Oxfordshire History Centre](#)