

# Oxford City

Oxford lies c 60 miles west of London at the confluence of the rivers Thames and Cherwell....there was some early suburban expansion on alluvial land to the west, but otherwise building activity in Oxford was restricted until the later 19<sup>th</sup> century by the wide flood plains of the Thames and the Cherwell. To the east, across the Cherwell, the small suburb of St Clements was established in the early Middle Ages, but it was not taken into the city until 1835.

Before it became a university town, 'the city of dreaming spires', and eventually a centre of the motor industry, Oxford was an important Anglo-Saxon and medieval town. It was a royal foundation on the ancient demesne, and its position as the county town was well-established by 1086... from the 13<sup>th</sup> century..the town was described as a vill or borough. More significant than its title were its extensive privileges...the town's liberties, based on those of London, became the model for those of several other towns.

With the creation of the see of Oxford, first at Oseney in 1542 and then at Christ Church in 1546, Oxford became a city. From 1889 it was a county borough [detached from the county] and from 1974 a district retaining its lord mayor and the title of a city.<sup>1</sup>

1: extracts from the Victoria History of the County of Oxford, vol 4

The Borough archives include:

- Council proceedings and lists of councillors 1528-1974
- Accounts and audits of city officers 1555-1856
- City lease books 1578-1826
- Taxation records: subsidies & poll tax
- Enrolments of hanasters (freemen) and apprentices 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries

- Medieval court rolls 15<sup>th</sup> century
- Husting and mayor's court proceedings 1572-1875
- Quarter & Petty Sessions rolls & minutes 1614-1880
- Paving Commissioners' minutes 1771-1865
- Local Board minutes 1864-1889
- City charters, deeds, wills, etc

### **Where are these records?**

The catalogued records of Oxford City Archive (OCA) are held at Oxfordshire History Centre.

A large amount of uncatalogued material is held at the town hall including:

- All records for the District Council (post-1974)
- Building control and planning applications since c 1875
- City Engineer's maps and plans since c 1870
- Town Clerk's correspondence since c 1890

Please contact [Oxford City Council](#) for further information

### **Where is the catalogue?**

The catalogue of Oxford City records is currently only available in hard copy in the searchroom and cannot be searched online

**[Visiting and contacting Oxfordshire History Centre.](#)**