

Help is at hand: The Family History Help Desk

If you are new to family history research, or are trying to find your way through the maze of information and resources, don't worry - expert advice and guidance to help you on your way is available.

The Family History Help Desk is open once every four weeks in all Knowsley branch libraries and it is run by a knowledgeable and helpful member of the ARK Team.

Sessions are run on a drop-in basis. We will do our best to answer your questions on the day, but more complicated queries may need to be followed up after your visit or require an additional appointment.

Contact your branch library or the ARK team for details of forthcoming dates.

We collect items relating to Knowsley, its people and its past and we are keen to add to the range of materials we hold. If you have any photographs or other documents which you think researchers will find interesting, get in touch with us and help us to build an archive for the future.

Get in touch

The ARK: Archive Resource for Knowsley

Kirkby Library
The Kirkby Centre,
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Kirkby
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Archive Resource for Knowsley

Archive Services User Guide



There are a range of archive materials in Knowsley to help you discover your family history or explore the history of your local community. You'll find them in the ARK (Archive Resource for Knowsley) inside Kirkby Library, creating a rich resource for all local and family historians and researchers.

The ARK at the Kirkby Centre

As an approved Place of Deposit for certain public records, the ARK is home to a wide range of collections which have local, regional and national importance, from public records, official documents, manorial records and business materials to maps, photographs and personal items donated by private individuals.

The ARK repository has a public search room which offers four research seats and houses two dedicated PCs for web-based genealogical research. There are also two microfilm scanners for viewing and printing microfilm and microfiche and a VISIO magnifier to enlarge documents. The ARK houses a collection of rare books covering topics of local and regional interest, as well as a small selection of reference books.

In addition to the fascinating archive collections and published materials held in the archive, you can find the following resources:

- Electoral Rolls on microfilm, 1832 - 1949
- Electoral registers (In-force, current electoral register is available in all branches)
- Gore's and Kelly's trade and street directories, broken sequence, 1872 - 1970
- Trade Directories on microfilm, 1766 - 1952 (broken sequence with many gaps)
- Parish Registers and Cemetery Records on microfilm
- Non-conformist parish registers on microfilm
- Cemetery burial records on microfilm
- Civil Registration Indices (GRO) England and Wales on microfiche: births, deaths and marriages
- Census Returns on microfilm/microfiche
- Hearth Tax returns, Lancashire, 1662 - 1663, 1664, 1673
- Local Newspapers on microfilm
- Maps and plans including:
 - Ordnance Survey maps covering the borough of Knowsley, including the Second Series OS, 1839 - 1940
 - Tithe maps and apportionments - useful for tracing landowners, occupiers, houses, land use and field names
 - Goad plans

We also hold a significant collection of local studies reference books and proceedings of local and family history societies, covering a variety of topics relating to Knowsley, Merseyside and the wider Lancashire area. Please contact us for more details.

All of Knowsley's branch libraries have smaller local history collections and books explaining how to trace your ancestors.

Online resources

Knowsley's libraries can help you to find family history resources online, either via one of the many free websites or through free access to our subscription service, Ancestry (Library Edition), in all Knowsley libraries.

You can search many types of information, including: birth, marriage and death records, census returns 1841 - 1911, directories and membership lists, court, land and probate records, military records and immigration and naturalisation records.

Thinking of visiting us?

The ARK is based in Kirkby Library on the first floor of the Kirkby Centre and is accessible by stairs and a lift.

You can drop in to view the collections between 10am and 1pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Please contact us if you'd like an appointment outside these times on **0151 443 4291/ 4365** or by emailing **infoheritage@knowsley.gov.uk**.

When you come to view archive materials, there are a few tips to remember:

- If possible, phone ahead to let us know what you are looking for - we can often source materials for you in advance
- When you book in at the ARK counter in the public search room, you will be asked to store your personal belongings in a secure locker
- Come prepared with a pencil and notebook. You may only use pencil to make notes because ink can permanently damage archive documents
- Once you have searched the archive catalogue for the material you wish to view, fill in an Archive Request Form and hand it to a member of staff for retrieval. Staff will issue you with a maximum of three items at any one time
- Any photocopies you require will be made by the ARK staff, subject to conditions, and photography is subject to the completion of a conditions of use form
- Food and drink are not allowed in the search room