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USER GUIDE 14

LAW AND ORDER

This User Guide details sources at the Archives Service relating to the enforcement and administration of law and order in Tyne and Wear.

Please note that it is not normally possible to produce unlisted collections for consultation in the Search Room and that records are closed to access until thirty years after the last entry, unless indicated otherwise.

CRIMINAL COURTS

Assize Courts

North-Eastern Circuit, (Counties of Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland and Durham). Only Assize Courts could deal with offences which carried the death penalty or transportation for life. These records, covering the period 1607-1972, are held at the Public Record Office, Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU.

A few records are held by Tyne and Wear Archives Service as follows: precepts to the justices 1738, 1773; jury lists 1738, 1773, 1835-1838; calendars of justices 1738, 1773; calendars of prisoners 1738, 1881-1895; papers from assize cases involving Newcastle Corporation 1738-c1830; papers from debt recovery cases 1879-1887; Examinations 1737-1738. **[AZ.NC]**

Crown Courts

Crown Court records from 1972 onwards will be preserved at the Public Record Office.

Quarter Sessions

Since the early 14th century the sovereign has appointed justices of the peace in every county to ensure that order was kept. In 1388 their powers and duties were formulated and they were required to sit four times a year. In time these courts became known as Quarter Sessions. These courts were replaced by Crown Courts in 1972.

Newcastle Borough Quarter Sessions: order books 1650-1651, 1665-1671, 1700-1802, 1818-1855, 1867-1971; indictment books 1957-1968; sessions minutes 1838-1911; Recorders' notebooks [judges notes] 1889-1890, 1895-1914, 1919-1923, 1948-1956, 1970-1971; Assistant Recorders' notebooks 1945-1959, 1965-1971; registers of recognisances 1646-1647; register of ale-house recognisances 1822-1827; commissions of the peace 1837,1878; applications for legal aid 1930-1971; register of names and real estate held by Catholic and other non-conformists who refuse to take an Oath of Allegiance to the crown 1717-1783; Clerk of the Peace's notebooks 1915-1943, 1963-1971; Assistant Clerk of the Peace's notebooks 1965-1971; Clerk of the Peace's letterbooks and files 1929-1932, 1962-1969; returns of Freemasons Lodges 1936-1940; sessions papers c1553-1968; tape recording of sessions August 1970 **[QS.NC, part MF]**

Sunderland Borough Quarter Sessions: order books 1907-1944; draft order books 1907-1949, 1963-1966; calendars of prisoners 1968, 1970-1971 **[acc 270, 1721]**

Quarter session records for other areas of Tyne and Wear are preserved in Northumberland and Durham Record Offices.

Petty Sessions and Magistrates Courts

Before 1849 individual magistrates could hear petty criminal offences almost anywhere. However in that year the Petty Sessions Act dictated that two or more local magistrates must sit in a petty sessional court house. Compulsory record keeping only commenced in 1880, although licensing records may survive earlier.

Chester-le-Street Division: Court registers 1955-1986; defaulters register 1978-1979; juvenile court registers 1978-1984 **[MG.WS]**

Castle Ward (East) County Division, Northumberland: Court registers 1894-95, 1915-1980; juvenile court registers 1933-1979; special sessions registers 1894-1971; registers of premises for explosives 1910-1956; registers of licences to sell alcohol 1872-1960; music, dancing and theatrical licences register 1925-53; register of clubs 1903-1962; stores licences register 1906-1944 **[MG.WB]**

Castle Ward (West) County Division, Northumberland: Court registers (Court No.1) 1915-1974, (Court No.2) 1919-1953; juvenile court registers 1933-1974; clubs registers 1922-1960; married women's orders and bastardy orders 1873-1916; licensing registers 1872-1960; licensing plans 1874-1948; registers of premises for explosives 1933-1953, 1959-1970 **[MG.CW]**

Gateshead: Court registers (including domestic cases to 1966) 1911-1973; juvenile court registers 1909-1972; education case registers 1911-1945; domestic court registers 1967-1972; adoption orders 1927-1943; bastardy orders 1886-1911; matrimonial orders 1885-1911; alehouse and beerhouse registers 1879-1955; billiards register 1894-1957; music, singing and dancing licences 1893-1955 **[MG.GA]**

Gateshead County Division (later Blaydon Division): Court registers 1904-1974; juvenile court registers 1933-1974; theatre, cinema and music and dancing licensing register

1923-1953; billiard licences register 1913-1957; clubs registers 1904-1962; beer, wine and spirits licensing registers 1900-1963 **[MG.BL]**

Houghton-le-Spring Division (previously Easington Ward County Division): Court registers 1880-1986; juvenile court registers 1933-1986, minutes of evidence [Courts Nos 1 + 2] 1902-1975; theatre and cinema licensing registers 1911-1965; registers of premises for explosives 1885-1975; licensing (alehouses etc) registers 1903-1976; clubs registers 1903-1962; adoption registers 1927-1948; adoption files 1927-1974; administrative papers 1929-1960 **[MG.HS; 3985(unlisted)]**

Jarrow Borough: Court registers 1901-1910, 1929-1955; juvenile court registers 1933-1955; licensing register for alehouses, beer, wine and spirits (on + off) licences, cinema, theatres, music and singing, and billiards 1903-1955; adoptions 1927-1955 **[MG.JA]**

Jarrow Division: Court registers 1955-1974; juvenile court registers 1956-1974; adoptions 1955-1974 **[MG.JD]**

Newcastle: Court registers 1880-1987; juvenile court registers 1933-1987; matrimonial case registers 1975-1977; minutes of Justices Meetings 1837-1945; publicans licences registers 1872-1965; beer, wine and spirits licences registers 1872-1972; music, singing and dancing licences register 1931-1964; hackney coach proprietors and drivers licences registers 1877-1909; carriage proprietors and drivers and conductors licences register 1887-1888; licensing minutes 1873-1945 **[MG.NC, part MF]**

North Tyneside Division (incorporating Tynemouth Borough, Wallsend Borough and Castle Ward (East) Division): Court registers 1931-32, 1941-88; juvenile court registers 1944-1986; matrimonial orders 1932-1949; bastardy orders 1915-1963; licensing registers for publicans, beerhouses, on and off licence sales of beer, wines and spirits 1925-1965; music, singing and dancing licensing registers 1933-1982; minutes 1903-1973; domestic registers 1974-1989; plans of public houses submitted to licensing justices c1903-1974 **[MG.NT]**

South Shields Borough: Court registers 1890-1974; juvenile court registers 1933-1974; probation committee minutes 1926-1951; adoptions 1927-1973; licensing records 1903-1958 **[MG.SS]**

South Shields County and Hebburn Division (previously East Chester Ward): Court registers 1915-1956; juvenile court registers 1933-1958; absconders register 1891-1957; licensing registers for theatres, cinemas, alehouses, music, dancing and billiards 1912-1960; register of premises for explosives 1876-1935; adoptions 1927-1954 **[MG.SSH]**

South Tyneside Division: Court registers 1974-1994; juvenile court registers 1974-1994; domestic court registers 1988-1992; family court registers 1991-1994; local taxation defaulters registers 1983-1994; enforcement court registers 1984-1996; adoption records 1974 **[MG.ST]**

Sunderland: Court registers 1864-1969; convictions register 1863-1874; adoption applications 1927-1974; adoption orders 1940-1956 **[MG.SU]**

Sunderland County Division (previously Easington Ward): Court registers 1935-1967; minutes 1881-1966; juvenile court registers 1942-1966; register of premises for explosives 1916-1960; register of clubs 1919-1958; married women's orders 1914-1947; bastardy orders 1931-1953; adoption files 1945-1954 **[MG.SUC]**

Tynemouth Borough: see North Tyneside Division

Wallsend Borough: Court registers 1938-39, 1962-64, 1966-1981, (for cases heard 1939-1961, some information may be found in commitment books 1926-1931, 1936-1964, fine and fee books 1935-1954 and married women's orders ledgers 1898-1936), juvenile court registers 1971-1981; registers of premises for explosives 1935-1957; wine and spirit licences registers 1910-1972; music and dancing licences register 1925-1974; register of clubs 1910-1937, and administrative records **[MG.WA]**

CIVIL COURTS

County Courts and District Registries of the High Court

County Courts were reformed by the County Courts Act 1846. The main functions of county courts are actions relating to bankruptcy and chancery matters such as actions of equity such as trusts, mortgages and land disputes. In addition to these functions and other actions founded on contract and tort, some county courts also deal with Admiralty matters; eg South Shields County Court handles Admiralty business on behalf of North Shields County Court.

District Registries of the High Court hear more complex liability cases and divorce proceedings.

Please note: not all county courts in Tyne and Wear have the same jurisdictions. For instance, South Shields bankruptcy actions are the responsibility of Sunderland County Court and Gateshead County Court has no bankruptcy or chancery functions.

Gateshead County Court: ordinary summonses (plaint registers), 1868-1968; default summonses (plaint registers) 1877-1969; Workmen's Compensation Acts registers 1907-1971; Judges and Registrars notebooks 1930-1984; equity suits etc 1867-1935 **[acc 2160]**

Newcastle County Court and District Registry: bankruptcy registers 1884-1959; judges notebooks c1935 ff; divorce cause books 1926-1950; registry cause books 1956-1980 **[acc 2166-unlisted]**

North Shields County Court and District Registry: plaint books 1962-1970; judges notebooks 1959-1978; special summons 1974-1979 **[acc 2142-unlisted]**

Sunderland County Court and District Registry: plaint and minute books 1881-1966; register of winding-up orders 1893-1957; bankruptcy registers 1884-1952; judges notebooks nd **[acc 2140]**

South Shields County Court and District Registry: judgements 1852-1930, plaint books 1941-1969; divorce cause books 1899-1975; judges notebooks 1939-1984 [**acc 2156; 2381-unlisted**]

Newcastle Borough Courts

Newcastle Corporation had the right to hold certain courts. These included the Mayor's and Sheriff's Courts, their successors the Burgess and Non-burgess Courts, the Court of Conscience, the River Court and the Admiralty Court.

The jurisdiction of these courts, with the exception of the River Court and Admiralty Court, was limited mostly to actions for small debts. The Civil County Courts, which have no criminal jurisdiction, eventually superseded the Borough Courts following the County Courts Act of 1846.

Admiralty Court: The right to hold this court is said to have been granted by Henry VI in 1444, and the powers were extended by Henry VIII in 1527. Lord Effingham was admiral to this port and the River Tyne from 1522 to 1605 when he assigned it to the Mayor and burgesses.

Grants of jurisdiction 1528–1605; court book containing names of plaintiffs and defendants, names of the ships involved in cases and their place of origin and copies of writs to arrest ships, etc 1664–1748; case papers, including evidence given by sailors concerning damage to ships; warrants to arrest ships; bonds to indemnify those arresting; affidavits of being owed money and pleas of action 1697-1756; John Delavall, Vice Admiral, papers 1709-1727; commissions to take bail 1791-1792 etc [**BC.AD**]

Assize of Buildings and Nuisance: 1647-1733 [**acc 616 unlisted; see MF308**]

Court of Conscience: court books 1697-1847 (not complete); alphabet books (index to court books) 1783-1842 (not complete); execution books 1720-1847; commissioners oath books 1831-1843 [**BC.CO**]

Mayor and Sheriff Courts, later Burgess and Non-burgess

The Mayor's Court is said to have been in existence as early as the reign of Henry I. The right to hold a Sheriff's Court was conferred by a charter of Henry VI (1400). The Mayor's Court was held before the Mayor as judge and was the court where free burgesses or their widows could be sued. The Sheriff's Court was the court where all persons other than free burgesses could be sued. Both courts dealt with cases of debt, and minor land and property disputes. Following the passing of the Municipal Act of 1835, Burgess and Non-burgess Courts took the place of the Mayor's and Sheriff's Courts.

These courts were superseded by the County Courts.

Although these court records have previously been catalogued by each individual court, many of the series of records follow through from the old borough courts of mayor and sheriff to burgess and non-burgess. In addition some of the volumes include entries for both mayor's and sheriff's courts as the recorder compiling the records was the same for

both courts. As a result of this, the records are now organized by record series, some of which span all the courts. More details are included in the catalogue.

Court books (all courts) 1647-1893; court books (only Sheriff's Court) 1613-1713; entry books (all courts) 1675-1842; entry books (only Sheriff's Court) 1656-1777; execution books (all courts) 1683-1917; execution returns, Mayor's and Sheriff's Court 1812-1838 (incomplete); judgement books (Sheriff's Court) 1725-1795; judgements, summons and orders (burgess and non-burgess) 1862-1909; judgements (burgess and non-burgess) 1854-1917; alphabet books (Mayor's Court) 1677-1811; alphabet books (Sheriff's Court) 1716-1811; returns of writ (Mayor's and Sheriff's Court) 1759-1853; petitions (Mayor's and Sheriff's Court) 1823-1828; special bail books (Sheriff's Court) 1726-1767; admittance of attorneys into the courts 1695-1748 **[BC.NC]**

River Court

The jurisdiction for this court was granted to the Corporation of Newcastle "time out of mind". The court dealt with matters relating to the conservancy of the River Tyne and included such matters as building staithes, which blocked the River, the dumping of ballast etc. The court was held before the mayor of the town and other officials and some matters were held before jurors of the River Court who were sworn in on a yearly basis.

Court books 1645-1834; list of questions put to three Tyne pilots, nd [c1820] **[BC.RV]**

Manorial Courts

These courts deal with admissions to copyhold tenure of land within the manor, the recovery of rents and certain kinds of minor disputes.

They are usually part of the records of estate administration.

Benwell manor: 1534-1925 **[acc 2092]**

Bishopwearmouth manor: court roll 1788 **[acc 2209]**

Gateshead manor: court papers 1703-1736 **[acc 3415/CI]**; court book 1751-1774 **[MN.GA]**; notes to manorial juries re history and duties and riots at Gateshead 1725-1733 **[DF.HUG/106]**

Longbenton manor: court rolls 1710, 1749-1751, 1753-1755, 1757, 1759, 1761, 1763, 1765-1766, 1768, 1770, 1778; call books, 1710, 1737-1738, 1740, 1744, 1749-1751, 1753, 1755, 1757, 1759, 1761, 1763, 1765-1766, 1768, 1770, 1776, 1778 **[acc 1870]**

Ryton manor: accounts 1735-1814 **[MN.RY]**

Tynemouth manor: deeds, wills, surrenders of and admissions to copyhold properties 1724-1860; indexes to surrenders 1832-1932; index of admittances 1907-1925; plan book 1905; copyhold terrier 1905-1925 **[MN.TY, 9, 1313, 1383 (unlisted), 2088]**

Coroners Courts

The public office of coroners dates from the 12th century. The chief duties of a coroner are:

- (i) To enquire into the cause of death of certain persons either by holding an inquest or by ordering a post mortem examination.
- (ii) To hold inquests on treasure trove.

Medieval coroners' records are held at the Public Record Office.

Coroners records for North Tyneside are at Northumberland Record Office.

Please note: access to coroners records is closed for 75 years except with prior permission of the coroner.

Newcastle upon Tyne: registers 1904-1991, inquest files 1939-1991, non-inquest files 1971-1991 **[CR.NC]**

South Tyneside and Gateshead (previously North East Durham/East Chester Ward): death registers 1954-2003, case files 1954-2003, indexes 1974-2001 **[CR.ND]**

Sunderland: registers of deaths 1953-1977; annual returns 1962-1977; inquest files 1962-2004; coroner's daily record books 1952-2002; indexes 1981-1990 **[CR.SU, T200, T523, acc 4265, acc 4315, acc 4353, acc 4396, acc 4453, acc 4527 (unlisted)]**

Tynemouth, Castle Ward and Haltwhistle: coroner's notebook 1839-1841 **[DX427]**

POLICE RECORDS

Durham County Constabulary

This area of Tyne and Wear south of the Tyne became part of the Durham Police Authority in 1968 and was incorporated into Northumbria Police in 1974.

Barnwell: occurrence books 1950-1969; **Birtley:** occurrence books 1944-1970; **Chopwell:** occurrence books 1946-1950; **Felling:** letter books 1913-1934; **Fencehouses:** occurrence books 1946-1969; **Hetton-le-Hole:** occurrence books 1946-1960; **Houghton-le-Spring:** occurrence books 1933-1970; Ryhope: occurrence books 1951-1962; **Silksworth:** occurrence books 1949-1951; **Washington:** property damage reports 1957-1970; occurrence books 1946-1970; **Whickham:** occurrence books 1959-1974 **[T148, T162]**

Gateshead Borough Constabulary

Established in 1835 by the Gateshead Watch Committee (see Watch Committee minutes TWAS CB.GA/57) The functions of the Gateshead Constabulary were transferred to the Durham Police Authority in 1968. In 1974 it became part of Northumbria Police.

Attestation book 1836-1968 (includes special constables 1963-1968, policewomen 1948-1966 and first police reserve 1912-1926); service records 1842-1968; pensions and

gratuities 1894-1922; sickness registers 1901-1920; property registers 1966-1974; officers' notebooks 1968-1972; wanted persons information slips 1958 [T144, T149]

Newcastle upon Tyne Borough Police

A Lighting and Watch Commission for Newcastle came into being in 1763. Until 1812 its authority was strictly confined to the area within the town walls. After 1812 lighting and night police were provided in the suburbs. In 1829 the Home Secretary, Sir Robert Peel, laid the foundations of the modern police system and in 1836 Newcastle created a permanent professional constabulary controlled by the Watch Committee (see Watch Committee minutes TWAS MD.NC). A separate force of River Police was established in 1845. It became part of Northumbria Police in 1974.

Chief Constable's Committee, minutes 1898-1933; general orders 1901-1960; service records 1857-1971, (see also Watch Committee minutes for recruitment and discipline of police officers); returns of police resignations 1895-1897; daily strength of force 1965-1969; sickness records 1961-1966; discipline book 1911-1949; crime rate returns 1891-1932, 1963; warrant and commitment books 1893-1968; prisoners identifications 1951-1971; registers of licensed premises 1869-1966; explosives and petroleum inspection registers 1952-1974; wartime emergency orders etc 1939-1945; photographs of police offices and police headquarters 1930-1931; plans and particulars of city police stations 19th c; rolls of first and second police reserve 1912-1948; Police Court, Pilgrim Street plans 1871 [PA.NC, D.NCP]

Northumberland Constabulary

Index to warrants, 1972; F and G Divisions commitment books 1969-71; record of warrants and commitments 1970-1972 [PA.NO]

Northumberland County Police

Gosforth Division: letter books 1913-1945; inspection register 1938-1944; officers' journals 1935-1938 [PA.NP, T162]

Northumbria Police

Prosecutions department warrant books 1976-77 [PA.NA]

South Shields Borough Constabulary

The first regular police force for South Shields was appointed by the Town Improvement Commission in 1830. During the 1840s the Police and Street Committee supervised the policing of the Borough. These powers were taken over by the Watch Committee in 1850 and in 1968 the Durham Police Authority assumed control of the force (see Watch Committee minutes TWAS T179, acc 218)

Police and Street Committee, minutes 1845-1851; Chief Constables' annual reports 1900-1961; Home Office circulars 1926; occurrence books 1948-1968; crimes registers 1950-1962; juvenile crime register 1957-1966; complaints register 1946-1968; refused charges register 1898-1968; warrant and commitment books 1914-1968; minutes of convictions 1890-1908; information books 1964-1967; prisoners records 1950-1968; identification parade register 1931-1959; registration of public houses 1867-1902, 1931-1952; registration of pawnbrokers 1894-1954; registration and licensing of clubs 1903-1959; registration of seamens lodging houses 1929-1965; registration of firearms 1954-1968; registration of explosives 1952-1961, personnel records 1890-1970 **[T151, T417]**

Sunderland Borough Constabulary

Established 1836 (see Watch Committee minutes TWAS CB.SU). Integrated into Northumbria Police in 1974.

Personnel records 1939-1967. Chief Constables' annual reports 1950-1957; general orders 1912-1965; attestation book 1837-1865; charge books 1837-1843; information book 1947-1959; summons book 1972-1976; prosecutions at Quarter Sessions and Assizes 1951-1972 **[209/636-640, T163, T164, T433]**

Tynemouth Borough Constabulary

Established 1841. Integrated into Northumbria Police in 1974.

Personnel records c1861-1967. Chief Constables' annual reports 1961-1966; correspondence, presentation of medals 1952-1970; traffic accident register 1938-1955 **[PA.TY]**

River Police

River Tyne Police (later Northumbria Police, Marine Division) nominal roll 1887-1957; charge books 1905-1957; defaulters' book 1845-1902; plans of police patrol launch 1923; police pension fund cash books 1891-1931; police pension fund journals 1891-1945; police pension fund ledgers 1891-1953; papers re Police Act 1890; reports of visits of inspection 1880-1968 **[acc 148, 1356, 2006, T143, T151]**

River Wear Watch Commission

Created in 1840 to oversee the river Wear and prevent and punish crimes against shipping, navigation, cargoes and trade. The Commission was dissolved in 1966.

Minutes 1907-1966; committee minutes 1927-1961; general orders 1864-1916; commissioners' declarations 1840-1959; letter books 1924-1966; attestation book 1913-1961; occurrence books 1846-1961; defaulters book 1906-1949; superannuation, gratuities and pay 1880, 1932-1961; Clerk's files 1941-1966 **[acc 746]**

PENAL INSTITUTIONS AND REFORM SCHOOL AND ASYLUM

Borough Gaol and House of Correction, Newcastle upon Tyne

The last of Newcastle's prisons, the Borough Gaol, was closed in 1925. It was situated in Carloli Square and was built between 1823-1831, to designs by John Dobson. Prior to that the Newgate or north gate of the ancient town walls was used to house town prisoners and the Castle Keep for Assize prisoners.

The House of Correction was situated in the Manors. It was closed in 1827 and demolished in 1857.

Gaol Committee minutes 1820-1821; Justices' minutes 1837-1899, (see also Common Council minutes and Chamberlain's accounts 1561-1835); rules and regulations 1830s; cash books 1820-1860; ledgers 1829-1836; maintenance of prisoners cash book 1835-1836; accounts for feeding of prisoners 1812-1817 (Newgate prison and House of Correction); Gaolers returns 1828-1829; construction plans and contracts 1823, 1861-1925; H M Inspector of Prisons reports 1876-1879; particulars of prisoners 1873; plans 1823-1925 [**PR.NC, QS.NC, D.NCP, acc 279**]

Reform School and Asylum

Newcastle Ragged and Industrial School, (Axwell Park): records 1847-1969 [**acc 174**]

Asylum for Female Penitents, Newcastle: reports and accounts 1841-1919 [**acc 586**]

PRIVATE SOCIETIES AND CHARITIES

Association for the Prosecution of Felons, Gateshead: minutes etc 1833-1873 [**S.APF3**]

Association for the Prosecution of Felons, Newcastle: rules 1846, 1853 [**DX891/3**]

Association for the Prosecution of Felons, Tynemouth, Killingworth, Longbenton and Weetslade: minutes, wanted posters etc 1808-1887 [**S.APF1**]

Association for the Prosecution of Felons, North Shields and Tynemouth: minutes 1831-1845 [**S.APF2**]

Brandling Place Home for Penitent Women, Newcastle: 1860-1897 [**acc 584**]

OTHER

Alderman William Bramble antiquarian collection 17th century-20th century [**acc 1074**]

Diaries of Thomas Davidson, clerk to Newcastle magistrates 1844-1846 [DX55]

Police identification book of thieves, Newcastle upon Tyne c1930s [DX1190]

Printed accounts of murders etc in Newcastle, Shields and Hexham etc 1820-1832 [acc 1422]

Printed accounts of murders, trials and executions in Durham and Northumberland 1822-1835 [DX17]

Rogues File 1750-c1800 [acc 616 - unlisted]

Papers giving physical descriptions of criminals and details of their crimes etc. They were sent by the Lord Mayors of other towns to the Lord Mayor of Newcastle.

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