



Coroners Records

Coroners undertake inquests and post-mortems to determine the cause of death particularly on those who have died suddenly, alone, in suspicious or violent circumstances.

Northumberland Archives holds records from the both the North Northumberland Coroner and the South Northumberland Coroner (including North Tyneside). Coroners' records for Tynemouth Borough and Newcastle City are held by Tyne and Wear Archives, based at Blandford House (Discovery Museum) in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Tyne & Wear Archives, Blandford House, Blandford Square, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4JA Tel: 0191 277 2248

Email: info@twarchives.org.uk Web: www.twarchives.org.uk

In order to protect the individuals concerned and their families, the majority of Coroners' records are closed to public inspection for 75 years. If you would like access to records that fall within the closed period, we will be pleased to seek permission from the relevant coroner's office. This is usually given only to researchers with a close family relationship to the deceased. Please make your initial enquiry in writing to Northumberland Archives, QEII Country Park, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 9YF or to archives@northumberland.gov.uk.

The South Northumberland Coroner (COS)

The records of the South Northumberland Coroner cover the period 1862-2003 and the main classes of records are:

Coroners' Inquests 1862-1886

A sample of inquest reports (18 items) from selected years, including seven reports from the 1862 Hartley Colliery Disaster

Inquest Reports 1870-1948

For the early period between 1870 and 1935 only a sample of the reports for each year has survived. The reports are listed and indexed up to 1946. Should the report in which you are interested not have survived, it is advisable to check back issues of local newspapers for the period, as inquests were often reported in detail.

Northumberland Archives has an extensive collection of Northumberland newspapers. Newcastle City Library has an extensive collection of Tyneside newspapers. Newspapers can be used to supplement the information found in the

original records as they can often include accounts from witnesses called and family details which do not appear in the official documents.

Police Reports (with Post Mortem Reports). 1935-1983

These normally accompany the autopsy report and include the following information; name (including maiden name, where applicable), age and abode of deceased, place and time of death and a summary of the circumstances, followed by the police officer's report. Later police reports can include witness statements and where the death has occurred as a result of an accident, related correspondence and plans of the accident site. This is particularly common for coalmining accidents. From 1960s, police reports can include photographs.

Roll Books 1887-1908, 1949-1965, 1965-1970

The roll books list each inquest undertaken by quarter. The information recorded includes; date and place of inquest, Name, age occupation and abode of deceased, verdict of jury and details of expenses for the case.

Daily Record Books 1952-1993

These provide a summary of the number of deaths reported to the coroner and lists names of the deceased with outcomes. The record books do not provide details of individual cases. The latter daily record books also encompass the North Tyneside Coroner summaries.

Other records

There is a range of other records for various periods including:

Coroner's Certificates 1978-1982

Deaths reported to the Coroner (where no inquest was held) selected years 1898, 1903, 1905,

Statistical returns to the Home Office 1872-1918

Applications to the Coroner for the Removal of a body out of England 1929-1933

The North Northumberland Coroner (CON)

For the North Northumberland Coroner, very few records survive. The records of the North Northumberland Coroner cover the period 1953-2007. It is assumed that earlier records from the North Northumberland Coroner have not survived. There is a summary listing of the North Northumberland Coroner material in the electronic catalogue (CON) but the 75yr closure period applies.

North Tyneside Coroner (COT) 1993-2003

Includes inquest and post mortem reports as well as daily record books.

Records held at Berwick Record Office

Berwick Borough Coroner 1740-1951.

As part of its privileges granted under its royal charters, the Borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed was given the power to appoint a Coroner for Berwick. The extant royal charters date back to 1415. Initially, the jurisdiction of the Coroner was the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed itself and its bounds with Scotland. However, in 1835, as a result of the Municipal Corporations Act and the change of local government in Berwick, the Coroner's jurisdiction was extended to include Tweedmouth and Spittal on the south side of the River Tweed. The post of Berwick Coroner ceased to exist in 1951, after which date Coroner's cases for the area were heard by the North Northumberland Coroner.

The Berwick-upon-Tweed Record Office has original copies of Coroners reports for the period from approximately 1745 to 1951. There are gaps in the series but there is certainly a good run of reports for the 18th and early 19th centuries. If any reports are missing, they can usually be replicated by looking in the local newspaper (Berwick Advertiser, established 1808).

Originally, the Coroner's reports did not contain much information. However, they should normally indicate :

- Date of the Inquest and where it took place
- Name of the deceased
- Where the death took place
- The circumstance in which it happened
- Verdict of the Coroner and Jury

The Berwick Record Office has a list of Coroners cases from 1745 – 1855 and 1870 – 1924 inclusive.

For further information about the Berwick Borough Coroners' records please contact The Berwick office berwickarvives@northumberland.gov.uk or telephone (01289) 301865

Northumberland Archives is committed to providing a quality service to all its users and therefore this information is available in Large Print and via the Internet. The Internet address is

www.northumberlandarchives.com

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