

Rate books

Introduction

A rate is a levy for local purposes based on the yearly value of a property. The collection of rates started from the 14th century, but they become more common in the 18th Century after the Poor Relief Act of 1601. Rates were collected for the relief of the poor, as well as the maintenance of the church and the highways. After the creation of Poor Law Amendment act of 1834, unions continued to collect rates.

Most rate books at the record office are found within the records of the parish. Some have arrived in the records of the Poor Law unions local district councils. From the 1870s the predecessors of the district council took on responsibility for rates. They began collecting the general rate, combining the previous rates, from the 1920s.

Parish rates

Parish officials produced rate books on paper or parchment and typically only recorded a name, the rent they paid and the rate assessed on them. After the Poor Law Amendment, printed rate books became common. These varied in format but recorded more information. The tables list:

- Parish
- Type of rate
- Headings used in the book
- Covering dates
- Reference number

The headings are only a guide to what could be in the rate books as not all fields were completed. The reference numbers and dates given are for a range of rate books which share a common format. Please check our printed or online catalogues to find the reference number for an individual rate book.

General rates and valuations

The general rate books are also found in a variety of formats. As well as continuing to produce rate books, these authorities also produced valuation lists. The rate books and valuation lists can be found listed separately in the tables below. The tables list:

- Parish
- District
- Headings used in the book
- Covering dates
- Reference number

As with the parish rate books, the headings are only a guide to what could be in the rate books as not all fields were completed. Please check our paper catalogues to find the reference number of an individual volume.

If rate books have survived, they can provide useful family history information. The rateable value of the property can show the status of the occupant. Later books can also show both the owner and the occupant of a particular property and its size and value.