

A Guide to Records of Warwickshire Floods and Flood Defences

Flooding in Warwickshire

Warwickshire has experienced several episodes of significant flooding, most recently in 1998 and 2007. Flooding can have devastating consequences for local communities and with rivers and canals large and small flowing through the county historical records can be invaluable in trying to understand and manage flood risks. Over the years, local authorities, national organisations and major landowners in the county have worked to create and maintain flood defences and there are many records available which document these activities.

What records are available and what can they tell us?

The following list covers the main sources of information about flooding and flood defences throughout Warwickshire, including collections of local government committees and water boards, the archives of landed families as well as solicitors' papers and parish records.

Local Government

Councils at all levels have responsibilities and interests in the management of water supplies, sewerage and drainage. These collections include the minutes of committees and subcommittees where these issues are decided, as well as detailed engineers' and surveyors' reports, maps, plans and related correspondence.

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| CR1574 | Alcester Rural District Council |
| CR1546 | Atherstone Rural District Council |
| CR2492 | Baddesley Ensor Parish Council |
| CR1538 | Leamington Spa Borough Council |
| CR1772 | Leamington Spa Corporation |
| CR1589 | Nuneaton Borough Council |
| CR1557 | Rugby Borough Council |
| CR1560 | Southam Rural District Council |
| CR1585 | Stratford Rural District Council |
| CR1618/W | Warwick Borough Council |
| CR1618/WA | Warwick Corporation |
| WCC0057 | Warwickshire County Council Committee minutes |

Water Boards

Prior to the creation of British Waterways Board (BWB) in 1962, the management of water resources was largely unco-ordinated, managed by individual private canal companies around the country. The BWB collection contains records of their activity in Warwickshire, including those of the Oxford, Coventry and Grand Union Canal companies, featuring extensive sets of engineers maps, plans and correspondence on all aspects of watercourse management and flooding control. Joint Water Boards were mergers between local authority to provide cross boundary management of water supplies in the mid twentieth century.

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| CR1590 | British Waterways Board |
| CR3095 | Rugby Joint Water Board |
| CR4769 | Severn Trent Water and predecessors |

The British Waterways Board became simply British Waterways in the 1970s and in 2012 was disbanded completely with its responsibilities passed to the [Canal and River Trust](#) charity. For information about more recent waterways records check their website.

Family Archives

Landed estates had a vested interest in ensuring their land was well-drained and protected from floods. Regular surveys of the estates provide maps of watercourses and drainage plans.

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| CR895 | Dormer Family of Grove Park |
| CR669 | Finch-Knightley Family of Packington |
| CR1461 | Lucy Family of Charlecote |
| CR1886 | Warwick Castle |
| CR1998 | Throckmorton Family of Coughton Court |

Photographs and Other Records

Images of floods in Warwickshire spanning over 100 years are available in several photograph and postcard collections with pictures taken by both amateur and professional photographers. Other types of records that may also mention incidences of local flooding including parish registers, school log books and personal diaries.

Newspapers

Contemporary articles about flooding incidents can provide invaluable information not readily obtainable elsewhere. Major Warwickshire newspapers, some dating from the 1700s, are available in bound hard copy or on microfilm, along with free access to the British Newspaper Archive.

Accessing the Records

Use our [online catalogue](#) to browse the collections using the references given as your search term, or visit the Searchroom to search our card indexes and catalogues.