Early English Handwriting

Some resources and helps
Palaeography

Palaeography, also spelt paleography, παλαιός palaiós, "old" and γράφειν graphein, "to write") is the study of ancient handwriting, and the practice of deciphering and reading historical manuscripts.
Palaeography

Palaeography: reading old handwriting
1500 - 1800
A practical online tutorial

Palaeography is the study of old handwriting. This web tutorial will help you learn to read the handwriting found in documents written in English between 1500 and 1800.

At first glance, many documents written at this time look illegible to the modern reader. By reading the practical tips and working through the documents in the Tutorial in order of difficulty, you will find that it becomes much easier to read old handwriting. You can find more documents on which to practise your skills in the further practice section.

This tutorial has been developed in partnership with the School of Library, Archive and Information Studies (SLAIS), University College London.
Welcome to Scottish Handwriting.com, the website offering online tuition in palaeography for historians, genealogists and other researchers who have problems reading manuscript historical records written in Scotland in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.

The emphasis of the website is on practical help to improve the palaeographical skills, rather than on the academic study of Scottish handwriting.

Weekly Poser

Refresh your skills with our weekly posers. Latest one added 9 April 2009.

Site Updates

Try the Glasgow Burgh Court tutorial and improve your reading skills while learning about urban life in the 1600s.

Interactive Tutorials
Test your palaeography skills with our interactive tutorials.

Coaching Manual
Use our coaching manual to help you decipher documents.
English Handwriting 1500-1700

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The Secretarie Alphabete
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

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Early English handwriting

A small selection of mid sixteenth to early seventeenth century English handwriting examples that we have collected and transcribed. Words within the quotation marks are those shown. Ten out of ten to anyone who can read number four without looking at the transcription - scroll down carefully!

Early English handwriting

Seven examples below from: 1547 / 1550 / 1563 / 1578 / 1604 / 1606 / 1612

1.

I bequethe to evry one "of my god chylldryn apeyste" xiii f
[Will of William Tyllcott, Nailstone, Leicestershire, 1547]
THE FIRST LEGAL SYSTEM: (1176) TO 1348
- Henry III
- Edward I
- Edward II
- Edward III (to 1348)

THE SECOND LEGAL SYSTEM: 1348 TO 1529
- Edward III (from 1348)
- Richard II
- Henry IV
- Henry V
- Henry VI
- Edward IV
- Edward V
- Richard III
- Henry VII
- Henry VIII (to 1529)

CONCEPTUALIZATION
- Legal Tradition and Legal Systems

TUTORIALS AND HELP
- Reading a case
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Where will we really need the ability to read ancient documents?

wills
manor documents
Poorhouse documents
civil litigations
parish records
Beginners' Latin

Latin 1086 – 1733:
a practical online tutorial for beginners

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/latin/beginners

This tutorial is a beginners’ guide to the Latin used in documents between 1086 and 1733. It is the first online tutorial to help you learn the Latin from this period. Try our new Advanced Latin

The tutorial covers the period between 1086 and 1733, when Latin was the official language of documents written in England.

Knowing Latin will help you to read documents from this period. After 1733, official documents were written in English.

No previous knowledge of Latin is required. This tutorial is suitable for everyone who wants to learn. You may

- Be a beginner
- Want to refresh your skills
- Have studied Classical Latin and want to find out about Latin from a different period

All of the grammar is fully explained. No previous knowledge is required.

You can practise by translating sentences taken from real documents held at The National Archives. For example, some are from the Domesday Book, written in 1086. It is the earliest surviving public record.

Where to start
Tips on learning Latin

Tutorial
Twelve lessons

Reference
Word list, common problems, dating Latin documents and much more

Activities
More documents to practise on. New documents will be added periodically.

Further practice
Learn how to read old handwriting 1500-1800 with our interactive online tutorial
Medway Ancestors Imagebase: list of parishes, in alphabetical order

- [Allhallows, see Hoo Allhallows]
- Ash next Ridley, St. Peter and St. Paul 1563-1997 (P8) [click here]
- [Birling, Lower, see also Snodland, below]
- Birling, Lower, Christ Church baptisms and marriages 1893-1969 (P29C) [click here]
- [Borstal, see also Rochester, St. Margaret]
- Borstal, St. Matthew baptisms 1879-1969 and marriages 1902-1954 (P305B) [click here]
- Bredhurst, St. Peter CMB 1546-1954 (P44) [click here]
- [Brompton, New, see Gillingham St. Augustine, Gillingham St. Barnabas, Gillingham St. Luke and Gillingham St. Mark]
- [Brompton, Old see also Gillingham St. Mary Magdalene and Gillingham, St. Mark]
- Brompton, Old, Holy Trinity baptisms 1848-1953, marriages 1849-1953 and burials in municipal cemeteries 1920-1925 (P153D) [click here]
- Brompton, Chatham Garrison Church (the Garrison Church of St. Barbara), Maxwell Road, Brompton baptisms 1847-1977 and marriages 1933-1955 (NP153D) [click here]
- Burham, St. Mary the Virgin CMB 1627-1981 (P52) [click here]
- Chalk, St. Mary the Virgin CMB 1661-1940 (P77) [click here]
- [Chatham, see also Luton, below]
- Chatham, All Saints baptisms (including Medway Poor Law Union Workhouse Chapel, described as Holy Trinity Church, County Hospital after 1931) 1899-1942 and marriages 1914-1954 (P85H) [click here]
- Chatham, St. John the Divine, Baptisms 1853-1969 and marriages 1853-1954 (P85B) [click here]
- Chatham, St. Mary the Virgin CMB 1568-1974 (P85) [click here]
- Chatham, St. Paul baptisms 1855-1975 and marriages 1855-1954 (P85C) [click here]
- Chatham, St. Philip (Wayfield) and St. James (Walderslade) baptisms 1950-1962 and marriages 1951-1956 (P85F) [click here]
  [See also Chatham, St. William's Church, Walderslade, below]
- Chatham, St. Stephen baptisms 1935-1980 and marriages 1942-1954 (P85E) [click here]
- Chatham, St. William (Walderslade Village) (previously Chatham, St. Philip and St. James, see above) baptisms 1960-1973 (P85G) [click here]
- Cliffe at Hoo, St. Helen CMB 1558-1980 (P94) [click here]
- Cobham, St. Mary Magdalene CMB 1655-1995 (P96) [click here]
- Cooling, St. James CMB 1707-1977 (P98) [click here]
- Crockenhill, All Souls baptisms 1852-1940 and marriages 1853-1954 (P139B) [click here]
- Cuxton. St. Michael and All Angels CMB 1560-1992 and parish customal 1631-1901 (P108) [click here]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Abode</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Davison</td>
<td>Child at Hill Chatham</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Annie</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Davison</td>
<td>Child at Hill Chatham</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 8</td>
<td>William</td>
<td>George</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>13 Bryant St Chatham</td>
<td>Shipwright</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1735

1735

Catherine D. of Michael and Elizabeth Compton.

John S. of Nicholas Middleton.

July 20. John, son of Walt Medhurst.


John Elizabeth D. of William Knight.


Mark Margaret D. of Henry Simmes.
1673

was Baptized March ye 28 Christned in 1672-22.

Christening book year 1673

John Wybrow died.

Margaret ye supposed bastard of Dennis Laming was
baptized April ye 6th —

Anne ye daughter of John Warren & Elizabeth his wife
was Baptized April ye 28th —

John ye sonne of John Phillips & Mary his wife was
Baptized April ye 27th —

Mary ye daughter of William Middelton & Angeshe
wife Baptized May ye 5th —

Susan ye daughter of Richard Cockeren & Abos his
wife Baptized June ye 8th —

Mary ye daughter of Nicholas Holcomb & Margaret —
1669

Decemb. 22. John, son of John Gillette was baptized.

Decemb. 27. A daughter of Edward Gold was baptized.

Anne Demin 6 2/9 1/10

January 20. Sarah, the daughter of George Clements, C. Anne Rui, wife was borne and baptized on the 27 of August 1668 not yet baptized.
Thomas Hunter

John Hunter

Mary

Ann his mother

Elizabeth daughter of James Hunter & Elizabeth Hunter

28 hants 8 25 60 of August

3 George 2 James 1


d 23 days 8 24 of May 1644

23 days 8 24 of May 1644

1644
Henry Caudle son of Phillip Caudle Esq
Baptiz'd y 16th day of February
Elizabeth Edmonds, y daughter of Richard Edmonds & Elizabeth his wife
Baptiz'd y 23rd day of February
Sethon Edmonds, y son of Richard Edmonds & Abigail his wife
23 aptiz'd y 2 day of March
Sethon Edmonds was buried y 9th day of March
Edward Narramore was buried y 10th day of April 1645
Robert Rampy, y son of Robert Rampy gent & Sarah his wife was
23 aptiz'd y 3 day of May
John B. Bowers & Ann Bakers was married y 7th of
Thomas B. Bowers, y son of Richard Bowers & Ann his wife
23 aptiz'd y 14th day of September
Robert Bowers & Jane Squire was married y 9th of
William Bowers, y son of John Bowers was buried y 16th day of October
Register book of all the christenings, weddings, and burials which have been in the parish of Bredhurst in the county of Kent from the year of our Lord, one thousand five hundredth fortie and five as follows...
Anno 1588

Primo Octobri Die frui mariti sunt

Randal tindsum de Paynsam et Beindur Paynt

Ultimo Die Novembrie Npord mariti

Sunt Georgius Walker et JohannaEvent

Anno 1589

Primo sermido die Septembris mariti

Sunt Edward Eden et fuit rebo.

Sermido die September mariti futurum

Robert Eden Godfrey et Johanna de sonle.

Anno 1590

Sermido die Augusti mariti futurum

Sultan Barret et Anna Sandby

Sermido quinto die September Npord

Mariti futurum Johamto Jeter et Maria

Tomste Godby.
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Page 69 Baptisms from 1776 to 1813

Revan m. d. childen
Revan d. wife
Jennison m. wife d. childen
Shephen m. wife d. childen

Page 68

Young son with
Wm. Blythe m. 2 childen
Jennty d. wife
Wm. Philip m. wife 2 childen
Wm. m. wife 2 childen

Page 69

Stephan m. wife d. childen

Page 29
1568

Burvings in Anno dni 1508.

Miller

Johano g. daughter of Rychard Miller of

Bourne

Walter Bourne of Hambesham was

bunched the 10 of August

Wright

Walter Wright of Ilmington was

bunched the 6 of March

Armstrong

Anthony Armstrong was bunched the 6 of February

ANO dni 1570.

Caldow

Alice g. daughter of WILITIES CALDO

bunched the 10 of November

Sydney

Margaret Sydney Noydon was bunched the

13 of November

ANO dni 1571.

Hovater

Johano daughter of Noydon was

bunched the 25 of April