



Gateway to  
the history  
of Shropshire  
and Telford

## A short guide to poll books

- ◇ Poll books are a record of the **votes** cast at Parliamentary elections.
- ◇ Voting was not done in secret until 1872.
- ◇ From 1696, **returning officers** were required to compile a record of voters and how they voted at elections.
- ◇ The Reform Act of 1832 extended the right to vote and the Ballot Act of 1872 ensured a secret ballot, thereby ending the poll books.
- ◇ As well as the **names** of the voters and **how they voted**, **residence**, **occupation** and **qualification** for voting were sometimes given.
- ◇ Only a small percentage of the population was entitled to vote during the time when poll books were compiled.
- ◇ Some of the collections of landed estates such as Attingham (ref 112) and Powis (ref 552) give an insight into canvassing techniques.

### Summary of our holdings

- ◇ The list below just gives the covering dates and there are many gaps. Our *guide to family history sources* gives more detail. These books must be viewed in our Search Room (Reader's Ticket needed).

- *County of Salop*

1676	q C 55.7	
1713-1832	C 55.7	With gaps
1876	802/ Bdle 23	Notes on voters for some areas

- *North Shropshire*

1868	C 55.7
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- *South Shropshire*

1865, 1868	C 55.7
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- *Shrewsbury*

We have a name index to the Shrewsbury poll books on microfiche.

1734	6000/46	Fragile, but has been digitized
1747-1768	D 55.7	With gaps
1774	6001/2526	
1794-1819	D 55.7	
1822	802/Bdles 19 and 20	
1826-1852	D 55.7	
1857	4514/1	
1862	D 45 v.f.	
1868	140/2	
1870	D 55.7	

- *Ludlow*

1727-1806	LB Fiche 1026-1031
1832-1840	Q 55.7
1868	C 01/1726

- *Bridgnorth*

1705, 1741	5224/1
1784, 1826, 1830	BB/B/6/1/
1837	[O 55.7
1847, 1865, 1868	[2095/34-36

- *Bishop's Castle*

1754	599/1
1763	3719/5/1 and 599/4
1818-1820	3719/5/2

- *Wenlock*

1820	6001/6824
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