Introduction to UK Parliamentary and Government Publications

Hannah Chandler Official Papers Librarian
Andrew Milner Official Papers
Julie Alden Official Papers
• Parliamentary proceedings
• 18th century parliamentary material
• Parliamentary material post 1801
• Legislation
• Departmental material
• Useful resources
Parliamentary proceedings

- **Parliament Rolls of Medieval England** PROME search by title in **SOLO** or **OxLIP+** (British History Online or Scholarly Digital Edition, SDE)

  The parliamentary rolls were the first official records of the meetings of the English Parliament covering the period 1272-1509.

  PROME (SDE) has an introduction to each parliament and shows the text in the original language parallel to the translation.

  The rolls were first edited in the 18th century and published under the title **Rotuli Parliamentorum** in 6 volumes. Upper Reading Room K.7.85

More resources for early parliamentary material:  
http://ox.libguides.com/earlypp
Journal of the House of Commons and Lords
House of Lords 1510 – present day
House of Commons 1547 – present day

Daily record of the “proceedings” of the Commons and Lords. The journals record “what happened” (decisions and actions) rather than “what was said” (debates)

• Voting records
• Progress of bills
• Early sessional papers
• Lists of members appointed to committees
• Daily record of members present
In print
• Full set on open shelf in the Official Papers reading room, Bodleian Law Library

Available online
• British History Online search by title in SOLO or OxLIP+
  Commons: v.1-v.12 1547-1699; v.85 1830
  Lords: v.1-v.39 1510-1793,. 1830-1832, v.62-64

• U.K. Parliamentary Papers (ProQuest database) search by title in SOLO or OxLIP+
  Commons: v.10-v.89 1688-1834
  Lords: v.14-v.66 1685-1834
3 Jac. I.  Journals of the House of Commons.

The Burgesses of Lynne:—To-morrow, in the Temple Hall.

This last Night the Upper House of Parliament was searched by Sir Tho. Knevett; and one Johnson, Servant to Mr. Thomas Percy, was there apprehended; who had placed Thirty-six Barrels of Gunpowder in the Vault under the House, with a Purpose to blow King, and the whole Company, when they should there assemble.

Afterwards divers other Gentlemen were discovered to be of the Plot.

A Warrant to be directed Knight for Wiltshire.

Sir John Herbert, and Four Chamberlain, to desire his Lord House, that he will be pleased House, that are not of it, that the Members of the House.

Sir John reporteth, that my remove all that were present, both

Mercurii, 6° Die Novembris, 1605.

2. Reading:—THE Bill for the better Execution of penal Statutes:—Mr. Gore:—Committed to Sir Tho. Smyth, Mr. Fuller, Mr. D. Parkins, Mr. James, Sir Tho. Ridgeway, Sir Rob. Wroth, Mr. Moore, all the Members of the House, with Mr. Gore.
Early debates

Reporting of Parliamentary debates was illegal until the 19th century. However, reports were made and published by a variety of people. Most of these were collated by William Cobbett and reprinted in:

**Cobbett’s Parliamentary History of England** in 36 volumes, covering 1066-1803.

- Available in print in the Bodleian Law Library
- Oxford Digital Library [http://www.odl.ox.ac.uk/collections/index.html](http://www.odl.ox.ac.uk/collections/index.html)
- Google Books free access [http://ox.libguides.com/hansard](http://ox.libguides.com/hansard)
It can be useful to look at the original debates that Cobbett collated – British History Online and U.K. Parliamentary Papers (ProQuest database) search by title in SOLO or OxLIP+

For information about the content of Cobbett’s Parliamentary History of England and debates that are not covered in that series:


‘General collection of parliamentary debates for the period since 1660’ H.H. Bellot, Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research 10, No.30 (1932-1933) 171-77

Eighteenth Century Collections Online
In 1803 Cobbett began publishing his ‘Parliamentary Debates’. Cobbett sold his interests to T.C. Hansard in 1811.

Series 1-4 contains debates from both the House of Lords and Commons in the same volume. These debates are not verbatim. For example, speeches of backbenchers were summarized and reported in the third person.

1\textsuperscript{st} series 1803-1819  \hspace{1cm} 2\textsuperscript{nd} series 1820-1830
3\textsuperscript{rd} series 1830-1891  \hspace{1cm} 4\textsuperscript{th} series 1892-1908

True verbatim reporting begins in 1907.

Series 5-6 are split into two sets, House of Lords and House of Commons.

5\textsuperscript{th} series 1909-1981  \hspace{1cm} 6\textsuperscript{th} series 1981-
• Full set in print situated in the Bodleian Law Library, Cobbett to the present day.


• Hansard 1803-2005 U.K Parliamentary Papers (Proquest database) search by title in SOLO or OxLIP+

• British Parliament (Hansard ) [http://www.hansard-corpus.org/](http://www.hansard-corpus.org/)

  Commons debates, 1988- Lords debates, 1995

• Hansard Online [https://hansard.parliament.uk/](https://hansard.parliament.uk/) May 2010-
Parliamentary papers before 1800

The arrangement of Parliamentary Papers printed before 1800 is complicated. Until the beginning of the 19th century no orderly way of preserving the papers had been implemented, although papers deemed important enough had been published in the House of Lords and Commons Journals.

• **House of Commons Sessional papers of the 18th Century**  On open shelf in the BLL. Available at UK Parliamentary Papers database via OxLIP+. For more information and resources on early parliamentary and proceedings please see: [http://ox.libguides.com/parliament](http://ox.libguides.com/parliament)
Useful resources

• **Early English Books Online EEBO** contains digital facsimile page images of virtually every work printed in the UK, Ireland from 1473-1700 via OxLIP+

• **Eighteenth Century Collections Online** ECCO 1701-1800 via OxLIP+


• **Parliamentary Archives** 1437- [http://www.portcullis.parliament.uk/](http://www.portcullis.parliament.uk/)

  **N.B.** Apart from the printed and manuscript Journals, all the records of the House of Commons before 1834 were destroyed in the fire of that year which burnt down the old Houses of Parliament

• **The National Archives** a useful place to start are their subject guides: [http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/atoz/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/atoz/)
• **Access to archives** [http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/](http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/)  
Database of 2500 archives hosted at The National Archives

• **Archives Hub** [http://www.archiveshub.ac.uk/](http://www.archiveshub.ac.uk/)  
Search across descriptions of archives of over 250 institutions.

• **Print Still Matters**  
Descriptions of official papers collections held by higher education institutions across the UK

• **Bodleian Libraries Special Collections**  
[http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/bodley/finding-resources/special/guides/early_modern_papers](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/bodley/finding-resources/special/guides/early_modern_papers)

• Many more resources [http://ox.libguides.com/earlypp](http://ox.libguides.com/earlypp)
Parliamentary Papers 1800-

Parliamentary Papers are the most detailed primary source for 19th & 20th century Britain, its colonies, and the wider world. They are the working documents of government for all areas of social, political, economic, and foreign policy. They influenced public opinion and social and political philosophy, and provided a forum for the ideas of hundreds of thinkers, among them Jenner, Arnold, Trollope, Mill, Faraday, Babbage, Telford, and Brunel. They include large runs of statistics and annual reports as well as reports presented to government and the reports of parliamentary committees.
There are five main classes of Parliamentary Papers which date from 1801 to the present day. Organised by annual parliamentary session.

- House of Commons Papers (also known as sessional papers)
- House of Commons Bills
- Command Papers (main types: treaties, white papers which are government proposals for legislation, reports of Royal Commission, government replies to select committees and annual reports)
- House of Lords Papers
- House of Lords Bills

- Printed indexes: sessional indexes for both Lords and Commons 1830s-, HMSO/TSO annual catalogues as well as various subject catalogues.
Bills, HL Papers, HC Papers start at 1 at the beginning of each parliamentary session.

Command paper

[1] to [4222] 1833-1868/69
C.1 to C.9550 1870-1899
Cd.1 to Cd.9239 1900-1918
Cmd.1 to Cmd.9889 1919-1955/56
Cmdnd.1 to Cmdnd.9927 1956/57-1985/86
Cm.1 1986/87 to date

Remember when you are citing a reference to make sure include the sessional year, volume no., paper number and title.
U.K. Parliamentary Papers (ProQuest database)

- Search by title in SOLO or OxLIP+ SSO can be used for remote access
- Important to note that no library has systematically catalogued the parliamentary papers
- House of Lords paper only included if they are published by a joint Committee with the House of Commons
- More tips on how to use the database: http://ox.libguides.com/hcpp

FULL SET OF BOTH HOUSE OF COMMONS AND LORDS PAPERS IN THE OFFICIAL PAPERS READING ROOM ON OPEN SHELF
Useful resources

• Parliamentary Archives [http://www.parliament.uk/archives](http://www.parliament.uk/archives)
• HISTPOP [http://www.histpop.org/](http://www.histpop.org/) online access to the complete British population reports for Britain and Ireland from 1801 to 1911 – freely available
• Guide to the Census [http://ox.libguides.com/census](http://ox.libguides.com/census)
• Documenting Ireland: Parliament, People and Migration DIPPAM [http://www.dippam.ac.uk/](http://www.dippam.ac.uk/) complete set of British Parliamentary Papers relating to Ireland and Irish affairs published during the period of the Act of Union (1801-1922) – freely available
• Parliamentary papers, proceedings and departmental papers [http://ox.libguides.com/parliament](http://ox.libguides.com/parliament)
• Criminal and Judicial Statistics, 1800 to present
http://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/crimstats

• Bodleian Library Special collections. Modern political papers
http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/bodley/finding-resources/special/guides/early_modern_papers

• Bodleian Library Commonwealth and African Collections
http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/bodley/finding-resources/special/guides/commonwealth_african
Legislation sources

National Health Service Act, 1946.

9 & 10 Geo. 6. Ch. 81.

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS.

PART I.

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION.

Section.
1. Duty of Minister.
2. Central Health Services Council and Standing Advisory Committees.

PART II.

HOSPITAL AND SPECIALIST SERVICES.

Provision of Services by Minister.

3. Provision of hospital and specialist services.
4. Accommodation available on part payment.
5. Accommodation for private patients.

Transfer of hospitals to the Minister.

6. Transfer of hospitals to the Minister.
7. Endowments of voluntary hospitals.
8. Exception for medical and dental schools.
9. Supplementary provisions relating to transfer of hospital property and liabilities.
10. Power to acquire hospital equipment.
Oxford LibGuides

http://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk

- Link to LibGuides through tab on SOLO home page
- Useful introduction & overview of UK legislation with links to resources
- Law Libguide for: Sources of Law, UK & England legislation both current and historic
Public Acts

• Useful databases:
  • LexisLibrary or Westlaw for current, amended text. Justis for the text (as originally promulgated) of repealed acts from 1714 (Geo I) onwards.
  • Databases can be found through SOLO or Oxlip+
**Statutes of the Realm - HeinOnline**

http://heinonline.org/HOL/Welcome

- **The Statutes of the Realm** (published between 1810 and 1827) for the text of legislation passed before 1714 (before George I).
- Paper copies to be found on open shelf in the Bodleian Upper Reading Room and at the Law Library.
- Electronic versions are available either in **Making of the Modern World** or **HeinOnline** – links to both can be found in the LibGuide.
- Also **Eighteenth Century Collections Online** and **Early English Books Online**
- Bodleian Law Library has Acts in paper copy bound by year.
Acts and ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660

- For Acts passed during the Republican period
- Available from British History Online
- Paper copies on open shelf in the Bodleian and Law Library
British History Online

http://www.british-history.ac.uk/

British History Online is a digital library of key printed primary and secondary sources for the history of Britain and Ireland, with a primary focus on the period between 1300 and 1800. We aim to support the learning, teaching and research of our users from around the world.

BHO was founded by the Institute of Historical Research and the History of Parliament Trust in 2003. Our collection currently contains over 1,260 volumes and is always growing.

See what’s new on British History Online.
Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660

http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum

Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660

Edited by C H Phyth and R S Rait. The full text of legislation passed into law during the Interregnum. Contains over 500 pieces of legislation, ranging from that concerning the trial and execution of William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury to the regulation of trade in currants, and from the propagation of the Gospel in the New World to the draining of the Great Fen. Originally published in three volumes, it is here given together, along with a table of acts passed and a substantial introduction.


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Legislation.gov

Legislation.gov http://www.legislation.gov.uk/
Local, Private & Personal Acts

• In hard copy at the Law Library from 1820 (George IV)
• **Justis** database has Local Acts from 1797 onwards and a growing number of Private Acts
• **U.K. Parliamentary Papers** (ProQuest) database from C18th onward
61 Results  Sort By Relevance •

Select 1-20  0 Selected Items  [Clear]

- A Bill, Entitled, An Act to repeal so much of an Act, passed in the Ninth Year of the Reign of His late Majesty King George the Second, intituled, An Act to restrain the Disposition of Lands, whereby the same become unalienable, as restrains the Two Universities of Oxford and Cambridge from purchas...

  Paper Series: House of Lords Papers  Paper Type: Bills
  Citation/Abstract  Full text - PDF  Permalink

- An Act for enabling the President and Scholars of Saint John Baptist College, in the University of Oxford, to sell and convey to the Trustees of the Will of Doctor John Radcliffe, a Piece of Ground in the Parish of Saint Giles in the Suburbs of the City of Oxford, and the Observatory and other Build...

  Citation/Abstract  Full text - PDF  Permalink

- An Act for effectuating an Exchange between the Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars of the University of Oxford, and the Right Honourable Jacob Earl of Radnor. [27th June 1865.]

  Document Features: Tables / Graphs
  Citation/Abstract  Full text - PDF  Permalink

- An Act for enlarging the Term and Powers of Two Acts of His present Majesty, for amending certain Mileways leading to Oxford, and making improvements in the University and City of Oxford, the Suburbs thereof, and adjoining Parish of Saint Clement, and for other Purposes. [5th May 1812.]

  Document Features: Tables / Graphs
  Citation/Abstract  Full text - PDF  Permalink
Bills

- In paper at Official Papers and Law Library from C18th
- Online from U.K. Parliamentary Papers database from C18th
Listing, Numbering and Annotations of Acts

• Practice of distinguishing **Public General Acts, Local Acts and Private/Personal Acts**:
  • Arabic numerals (c.1) (c.20) for **Public General Acts**
  • Small Roman numerals (c.i) (c.xx) for **Local Acts**
  • Italicised Arabic numerals (*c. 1*) (*c. 20*) for **Private / Personal Acts**.
Human Rights Act 1998

1998 CHAPTER 42

An Act to give further effect to rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights; to make provision with respect to holders of certain judicial offices who become judges of the European Court of Human Rights; and for connected purposes.

[9th November 1998]
Local Acts

[51 & 62 Vict.] North British Railway (General Powers) Act, 1898.

CHAPTER ccxxviii.

An Act to confer further powers upon the North British Railway Company in connexion with their undertaking to authorise the Burntisland Harbour Commissioners to lease certain of their lands and for other purposes.

[12th August 1898.]

WHEREAS it is expedient that the North British Railway Company (in this Act called "the Company") should be authorised as in this Act provided—

(1) To make a railway from their Charleston Branch Railway at Dunfermline to join their Alloa and Kincardine Branch Railway at Kincardine;

(2) To make a branch railway to Corrourphine;

(3) To make deviations in their Knightswood Branch Railway;

(4) To make railways at Cowdenbeath to form junctions between their Inverkeithing and Perth Railway their Dunfermline and Thornton Railway and their Lumphanans and Kelty Branch Railway;

(5) To acquire additional lands for the general purposes of their undertaking;

(6) To stop up and discontinue as a public street North Queen Street in the city of Glasgow and to erect an hotel on a portion of the site of the street so stopped up:
Private & Personal Acts

ANNO TRICESIMO & TRICESIMO PRIMO

VICTORIAE REGINAE.

Cap. 9.

An Act for the better Regulation of Skipton Grammar School. [21st August 1867.]

WHEREAS Her Majesty's Attorney General on the Fifteenth Day of November One thousand eight hundred and sixty-five filed an Information in the High Court of Chancery as Informant, which was afterwards amended, and as amended was against Sir Charles Robert Teeswater Baronet (since deceased), Matthew Wilson, John Benson Sidgwick, Henry Atcock, Stephen Bailey Hall (since deceased), Thomas Heila, and John Cauldharl, the Trustees of the Free Grammar School hereinafter mentioned, the Reverend Philip Chater Kidd, the Vicar of the Parish of Skipton, William Puget, Angua Nicolain, John Hodis, Thomas Gill, Richard Rathwell, and Henry Lister, Churchwardens of the said Parish, and the Reverend William Caulman, Doctor of Divinity, Head Master of the said School, as Defendants, showing among other things, (as the Facts were,) that the Free Grammar School at Skipton-in-Craven in the County of York, in the Parish of Skipton in the Diocese of York, was

...
Regnal years (Acts before 1963)

• Before 1963 Acts were numbered using the year of the sovereign’s reign in which the Act was passed.

• Under the regnal year system, an Act passed early in a parliamentary session has a citation such as 5 Edw. 7, c. 9, for the ninth chapter in the session that commenced in the fifth year of the reign of King Edward 7th. It was common for a session to extend into a second regnal year, giving rise to a citation such as 8 & 9 Geo. 6, c. 4. Occasionally, a session could extend into a third regnal year, with citations such as 12 13 & 14 Geo. 6, c. 87.
Regnal years – Justis


To determine the calendar year(s) corresponding to a regnal year, select the name of a monarch in the following list, and look for the regnal year in the first column of the table for that monarch.
5 Edw. 7, c. 9 = 1905

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<tr>
<td>9 Edw. 7</td>
<td>1909</td>
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</table>
2.4.3 Older statutes
For older statutes, it may be helpful to give the regnal year and chapter number.

Crown Debts Act 1801 (41 Geo 3 c 90)

In this example, the information in brackets indicates that the Act was given royal assent in the forty-first year of the reign of George III. The abbreviation c stands for chapter. The Crown Debts Act 1801 was the ninetieth Act to receive royal assent in that session of Parliament, and so is chapter 90. Citation by chapter number must be used for older statutes without short titles.

2.4.4 Explanatory notes to statutes
When citing explanatory notes to statutes, precede the name of the statute with the words ‘Explanatory Notes to the …’. When pinpointing, cite the paragraph number(s), preceded by ‘para(s)’. 
Material post 2000-

- GOV.UK [https://www.gov.uk/](https://www.gov.uk/)
Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales

- http://ox.libguides.com/parliament
Departmental material

- As a legal deposit library the Bodleian has an excellent collection of departmental material.
- Early material can have poor records
- Not all material is catalogued
- In the first instance search SOLO
- British Library [http://explore.bl.uk/](http://explore.bl.uk/)
- COPAC [http://copac.ac.uk/](http://copac.ac.uk/)
- WORLDCAT via OxLIP+
Major series

- **Documents on British Policy Overseas** primary source documents from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office via OxLIP+ 1889-1939


- **Parliamentary Labour Party papers, 1968/69-1993/94** via OxLIP+

- **Foreign Office Confidential Print** [http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/official_papers/fo_prints](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/official_papers/fo_prints)

- **Colonial Office Confidential Print** [http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/official_papers/colonial-office-confidential-prints](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/official_papers/colonial-office-confidential-prints)
Libguides

• Official Papers: a guide to the collections http://ox.libguides.com/op

• Bodleian Law Library research guides http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/law/guides

• General directory: http://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/

• Bodleian Law Library: Book a librarian http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/law/using-this-library/book-a-librarian

• Officialpapersuk – BLOG https://officialpapersuk.wordpress.com/

• Email: official.papers@bodleian.ox.ac.uk