

Library of Birmingham Archives & Collections

Manor of Birmingham

The manorial system dates back to before the Norman Conquest, and continues in some form to the present day. The system was widespread across much of England and parts of Wales, but did not cover the whole country. The purpose and structure of the manor have, of course, changed much over the centuries, which makes the concept of the manor difficult to define. For most purposes it can be seen as an area of land owned by one person (the lord of the manor), who leased land to his tenants. The lord of the manor dwelt in the manor house, or 'capital messuage', and the land he held himself was known as the 'demesne'. His tenants held their land from him in the form of 'copyhold', a system which was only abolished in 1922.

Very few of the manorial records survive. A *Local Notes & Queries* article of 4 May 1867 (Local Studies & History Dept. 99081 L F7L061) records that the court leet was said to have met until 'a few years ago' but that the whereabouts of its records, or any other of the court records was not known.

Archives:

106036 [ZZ34]	Record of proceedings at town's meetings in Birmingham.	1826-1832
569340 [IIR82]	Copy manorial survey in Smalbroke account book.	1553
90377 [IIR20]	Transcripts of documents re. Manor, including an extent.	1543-6
MS 725/23	List of lords of the manor to 1555.	1555
MS 1098/87, 98	Receipts for chief rents and related letter.	1667-1719
MS 1432/R/1	Correspondence re. Task rolls.	1954
MS 2196	Records of the Court Leet of the Manor of Birmingham	1756-1821

Secondary Sources:

L60.2 Descent of Birmingham Manors [c.1960]

Bibliography **664080, 664081**

University of Birmingham History Journal Vol. 5 No. 2 pp.191-200:

2 letters re. Manor and rectory 1704-1713 (**589751/1956** Gooder, Arthur)

List of manorial documents re. Birmingham other than those in the library, compiled from the PRO schedules in 1956 (**660484**)

Inventories of manorial documents, compiled 1926 (**366510**)