

## Royal Court Records

### General Information

Royal Court records are concerned with the civil and criminal matters that were presented to the courts. The courts are divided into different sections dealing with separate actions. The sections of the Royal Court have been reflected in the way the records are listed on the Jersey Archive catalogue.

### Research Uses of the Royal Court Records

- Family History – The Royal Court Records give fascinating details into the lives of individuals. In particular the testaments from the Probate Division can be used for Family History.
- Social History – The Magistrates Court and Poursuites Criminelles registers give evidence of misdemeanours and punishments.
- Business History – The registration of wine and spirits licences and inventions give evidence of business activity in Jersey.
- Legal History – The Royal Court records are often used by lawyers and presented in court for evidence.
- Land and House History – The Cour d'Héritage contains details of boundary disputes and disputes over hereditary contracts and the Public Registry contains details of all property transactions carried out in the island.

### Access

Each collection held by the Jersey Archive has a unique reference code. These references have been included in the information on this leaflet. Should you wish to find out about a certain collection, go to the Archives and Collections Online (ACO) website at [www.jerseyheritage.org/aco](http://www.jerseyheritage.org/aco), click on 'Advanced Search' and enter the reference in the 'Item Reference' search box.

Many of these records are being digitised, indexed and attached to ACO so that they can be searched for by name and viewed online. For help searching for records, please see the video tutorials at <https://catalogue.jerseyheritage.org/online-tutorials/>

## Royal Court Divisions

### Probate Division, D/Y/A & D/Y/B

The Jersey Archive holds wills and testaments of movable property from 1660 – 2004, which can contain information on family heirs and division of property. They can be searched for on ACO under 'Person or institution' for names and 'Subject or place' for places. Wills from 1981 onward are currently being catalogued - please ask a member of staff if you would like to consult them. Wills of real estate are also available on the Public Registry's PRIDE system (see below).

### **D/Y/A - Probate Division, pre 1949**

- D/Y/A/1-120 - Testaments of movable property, c.1660 – 1948
- D/Y/A1 - Copy Testaments
- D/Y/A2 - Letters of Administration
- D/Y/A3 - Redactions

### **D/Y/B - Probate Division, post 1949**

- D/Y/B1 - Testaments of movable property, 1949 onward
- D/Y/B2 - Indexed Copy Testaments
- D/Y/B3 - Letters of Administration

### **Cour d'Héritage, D/Y/C**

The Cour d'Héritage deals with cases relating to title to real property, the ownership of immovable property and its division on intestacy, the annulment of hereditary contracts and boundary disputes. Originally held three times a year, the court was reduced to two sittings in 1771 and to one in the 1980s.

- D/Y/C1 - Registers
- D/Y/C2 - Indexes to the Registers, 1795 – 1880
- D/Y/C3 - Transcription of Registers, 1506 – 1587

### **Cour du Billet, D/Y/D**

The Cour du Billet is sometimes known as the Cour Extraordinaire. The Bailiff sat with two or three jurats and dealt with cases mainly relating to debts and promissory notes. The court was created in 1646 and abolished in 1964.

- D/Y/D1 - Registers
- D/Y/D2 - Indexes to the Registers, 1795 – 1855

### **Cour de Cattel, D/Y/E**

One of the divisions of the Royal Court in which the Bailiff sat with three jurats and dealt primarily with chattels and criminals. It was also the court of appeal from the seigneurial courts. The court was abolished in 1862.

### **Cour du Samedi, D/Y/F1**

This court is referred to as an extraordinary court since it sat out of term, unlike the Cour d'Héritage and the Cour du Cattel. If a Sénéchal of a seigneurial court required advice he would apply to this court. The court sits on a Saturday, with the Bailiff and at least two jurats and is the 'general business' court, covering all general civil cases not covered elsewhere. There has never been an Admiralty court in Jersey but the Cour du Samedi would sit in such cases if needed.

Many types of cases are contained in the Samedi Court Registers, including:

- Elections of Centeniers and Connétables
- Confirmations of Orders of Justice
- Declarations and abandonments of procurations
- Payments agreed by creditors
- Prevots' statements to the Court
- Authorisations for elections to be held
- Separation of property between husband and wife
- Resignations of Centeniers and Connétables
- Registration of medical practitioners
- Registration of managers for hotels and businesses
- Declarations of insolvency
- Settlements of family disputes
- Deed-poll changes

### **Livres de Décrets, D/Y/F3**

The Livres de Décret contains cases of bankruptcy in Jersey. In a décret the property of the bankrupt is treated together as a single entity, therefore a décret could include movable property. The registers of décrets include lists of creditors and acquirors of bankrupt individuals and give a history of their financial debts.

### **Orders in Council, D/Y/F7**

Orders in Council were made by the Privy Council of England and relate to numerous affairs. The responses of petitions sent to the Privy Council are included in these volumes.

### **Letters Patent, D/Y/F9**

Letters Patent were sent by His/Her Majesty in Council and were designed and issued for publication.

### **Brevets d'Inventions, D/Y/F11**

Brevets d'Inventions were patents giving rights to new ideas and inventions – similar to patents issued today.

### **Registres des Hommes d'Enquete, D/Y/F12**

Jury lists of those serving in the Royal Court juries.

### **Causes Remises Registers, D/Y/F13**

An appeal from any one of the divisions of the Royal Court could be heard at the Causes Remises. In the Causes Remises as many jurats as possible sat. At least seven were required.

- D/Y/F13 - Registers
- D/Y/F13/A - Indexes to the Registers, 1676 – 1880

### **Assemblée Registre de Licenses, D/Y/F16**

Registration of wines and spirits licenses, beginning in 1936. Previous registrations can be found in the main Cour du Samedi volumes, D/Y/F1.

### **Maintenance Orders and Reciprocal enforcements in the Petty Debts Court, D/Y/F19**

### **Arbitrations, D/Y/F20**

### **Poursuites Criminelles, D/Y/G**

The registers of the Poursuites Criminelles contain all cases tried under criminal law in the Royal Court. These registers are closed for 100 years.

- D/Y/G1 - Registers
- D/Y/G2 – Indexes to the Registers, 1787-1983

### **Visite Royale, D/Y/H**

Members of the Royal Court would walk around the parishes inspecting the roads and also certain of the parish records. Twelve voyeurs guide the Royal Court members on their visit and an arpenteur also has to be present.

### **Magistrates Court, D/Y/N**

The Magistrates Court is concerned with cases tried under civil law (Causes Civiles) and cases of a less serious nature tried under criminal law (Cause Criminelles), beginning in 1854. These registers have a closure period of 100 years. The Magistrates Court is also responsible for the Youth and Petty Debts Courts. Petty Debts Court records begin in 1968, and previous records of this nature can be found in the Cour du Billet which ran from 1646 to 1964.

### **D/Y/N - Magistrates Court**

- D/Y/N2 - Causes Civiles Registers (civil cases)
- D/Y/N3 - Indexes to the Causes Civiles Registers
- D/Y/N4 - Causes Criminelles Registers (criminal cases)
- D/Y/N5 - Indexes to the Causes Criminelles Registers

### **Miscellaneous Court Proceedings, D/Y/P**

- D/Y/P1 - General Indexes/Tables of the Royal Court
- D/Y/P2 - Acts of Parliament
- D/Y/P4 - de Carteret v Dumaresq and others
- D/Y/P5 - Code of Law
- D/Y/P6 - Indexes to Privy Council registers

### **Public Registry - PRIDE System**

The Public Registry contains details of all property transactions that take place in the Island. The Public Registry Index and Document Enrolment (PRIDE) computer system allows you to search the Public Registry volumes, starting in around 1798. The system is administered and housed at the Public Registry, and is available for use at the Jersey Archive via a website. The registers have all been indexed so that property transactions can be searched for using the names of the parties involved with the transactions, and after 1984, the name or address of the house. The registers have all been digitally photographed and once you have identified the correct transaction you can view the digital image of the page in the register.

The original volumes (Livres) and indexes (Tables) of the Public Registry going back to 1602 are held at the archive under the references D/Y/K3 and D/Y/K4. Copies of the records earlier than those on the PRIDE system can be viewed on microfilm in the archive reading room.

## **Printed Sources**

Aubin, C N, *A Glossary for the Historian of Jersey*, Jersey Heritage, 2011

Bois, F de Lisle, *A Constitutional History of Jersey*, States Greffe, 1970

The purpose of the Jersey Archive is to identify, select, collect, manage, preserve and provide access to the Island's records on behalf of the whole community, promoting Jersey's culture, heritage and sense of place, both within its shores and beyond.

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Opening Hours: 9am to 1pm & 2pm to 5pm, Tuesday to Thursday.  
Open 9am to 1pm on the third Saturday of the month.  
To book an appointment, please phone or email.

The information in this leaflet is accurate as of October 2020. Please be aware that the Jersey Archive receives new collections on a regular basis and ask staff if you have any queries.