

Criminals and prisoners

This paid search guide will help you to decide whether to use The National Archives' paid search service.

What information can you find out?

We will always carry out a search of our records to a high standard based on our expertise and professionalism. With any search, there is never a guarantee that you will find the information you are looking for. There are often a number of possible reasons for an unsuccessful search, including the possibility that records were destroyed or lost, or that there are multiple records for individuals with identical names and we have insufficient information to distinguish between them.

Search 1: criminals in England and Wales 1805-1902 (Middlesex 1791-1849)

This is a search in record series HO 26 and HO 27, the county criminal registers. A successful search can return the following details:

- crime person convicted of
- when and where criminal was tried
- sentence
- sometimes personal details such as age

Search 2: calendars of prisoners 1868-1971

This is a search record series HO 140, the calendars of prisoners, listing pre- and post-trial prisoners. A successful search will typically reveal the following details:

- age
- trade
- previous convictions
- name and address of committing magistrates
- date of warrant
- when received into custody
- offence (includes name of victim before 1969)
- when tried
- before whom tried
- verdict
- sentence or order of the court

Please note that these records are usually closed for 75 to 100 years from the date of their creation, except those from 1969 onwards which are closed for 30 years.

Search 3: details of criminal trials 1524-1974

This is a search in record series CRIM 4-6, J 268 as well as across series in departments ASSI, CHES, DURH and PL as appropriate. This covers indictments files 1573-1974, Crown & Gaol Minute Books 1524-1951 and court books 1834-1949. A successful search may reveal some or all of the following information:

- charge or charges against the accused

- verdict
- sentence
- gaol deliveries (earlier trials only)
- coroners' inquests (earlier trials only)
- jury summonses (earlier trials only)
- recognisances (earlier trials only)
- brief notes of after trial decisions by the judge, such as a reduction in sentence
- names of jurors, judge and counsel
- times of hearings
- adjournments and resumptions
- occasional incidental information relating to the conduct of the trial

Not all records for trials in assize courts have survived.

Search 4: depositions 1839-1998

This is a search in CRIM 1, J 267 as well as across the ASSI, DURH and PL departments. for statements made under oath that were used as evidence in trials (depositions) in assize courts and the Central Criminal Court

All depositions for murder, sedition, treason, riot and political conspiracy trials are preserved. A 2% sample of other trials has been preserved. Covering dates may vary and we may not hold records for the period requested. Some records may also be closed.

Search 5: Central Criminal Court depositions 1923-1966

This is a search in record series CRIM 2, the Central Criminal Court calendars of depositions 1923-1966. These are calendars of cases sent up to the Central Criminal Court from coroners', magistrates' or police courts. These records provide:

- date
- court
- name of the defendant

There are no details of the charge. No calendars survive for the period before 1923.

Search 6: evidence given at the Central Criminal Court 1834-1912

This is a search in record series CRIM 10, minutes of evidence given in the court. The results of a successful search will contain shorthand notes on evidence given at trial.

There are no documents for some of the years included in the range covered by this search as they have not survived.

Search 7: details of Central Criminal Court trials 1855-1949

This is a search in records series CRIM 9, the after-trial calendars of prisoners for the Central Criminal Court. A successful search will reveal all or some of the following:

- details of the prisoner/s
- offences shown on indictment
- date of trial
- previous convictions
- verdict of jury,
- sentence or order of court

- names of jurors, judge and counsel
- times of hearings
- adjournments and resumptions
- occasional incidental information relating to the conduct of the trial

Search 8: prison registers 1799-1909

This is a search in records series HO 8, HO 23/1-20, HO 24/1-19, PCOM 2 and WO 25/2956-2961 as appropriate. A successful search can reveal a prisoner's:

- physical description
- photograph (very rarely)
- birthplace

Search 9: convicts living in the community 1853-1887

This is a search for licences issued to convicts to live at large in the community, and notes of revocation of such licences. The search is in PCOM 3, PCOM 4 and PCOM 6. A successful search will reveal all or some of the following:

- photographs (from 1875 only and more likely from 1883)
- age
- trade
- date and place of conviction
- sentence
- place of imprisonment

Search 10: criminal petitions 1819-1854

This is a search in records of criminal petitions, in record series HO 17, HO 18 and HO 19, made by or on behalf of prisoners seeking the revocation or reduction of their sentences. A successful search will reveal correspondence relating to appeals for clemency.

Search 11: criminal petitions and judges' reports 1784-1951

This is a search in records of criminal petitions and judges' reports, in record series HO 45, HO 144, HO 47. A successful search will reveal correspondence relating to appeals for clemency.

What are the charges?

Listed below are our standard charges for each search. However, the fee is likely to be higher than our standard charge if:

- you do not provide us with the essential information we need for a search
- the individual has a very common surname
- you want us to search on a variation of the individual's name (such as with or without middle names, or middle names used as first names)

We will only search for a name as you provide it to us. If you ask us to search for a Charles Marshall Burr, we will not search for Charles Burr. Similarly, if you ask us to search for a Fred Cheeseman, we will not search for Frederick Cheeseman.

Searches 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10 and 11

Standard charge: £84.06

Search 2

Standard charge: £84.06 for the first year and £56.04 for each additional year

Search 3

Standard charge: £112.08. A higher fee may be required for pre-1733 indictments which are in Latin.

Search 8

Standard charge: £112.08. This covers a search in one volume of prison/hulk registers.

Search 9

Standard charge: £84.06. This covers a search in one volume of indexes and the corresponding register.

What information do we need for a search?

Please send as much information as you can. The following details are either essential or desirable for a search at our standard charge:

Essential	Desirable
full name of the prisoner/criminal/defendant	type of criminal offence (Search 4, 5, 6 and 7 only)
year of conviction/trial (Search 6 also requires month of trial)	
county, or court, where the trial took place	
prison or hulk where prisoner was held (Search 8)	
dates of imprisonment (Search 8)	
approximate range of years to be searched	

For Search 9 we also require:

- gender (male or female) of prisoner
- year of granting, or revocation, of licence

If you would like to request any of the paid searches listed in this guide, please contact us either by completing our [online enquiries form](#) or by completing one of our paper response forms.

You may decide, instead, to do the research yourself. For advice on conducting your own research you should consult the relevant research guides, accessible through our online [guidance index](#).

Research guidance

[Criminals and convicts](#)

[Prisoners](#)

[Serious crimes: trials in the Old Bailey and the Central Criminal Court](#)

[Criminal trials in the assize courts 1559-1971](#)

