General Guide to Local Studies

The Local Studies collection in the library has a wide variety of materials for those interested in the history of Southend and Essex plus those interested in their own family history (see also Fact Sheet 2 – Local Family History Resources).

- There is a large collection of lending and reference books and some DVDs on open shelves in the Local Studies area.

- The book collection is organised using a mixture of the Dewey subject classification system and the place-name. This means there will either be a letter E before the subject number if the item refers to Essex or E and the first three letters of the town name with a number if there are more places starting with the same three letters for example E.SOU.2 for Southend or E.ROC for Rochford. If the book is on a specific subject eg Essex railways it would be E.385 or Southend Pier E.SOU.2.725.87.

- The book collection includes The Victoria History of the County of Essex; Morant – The history and antiquities of the County of Essex; Benton – The history of the Rochford Hundred; general and pictorial histories of towns throughout Essex; biographies and autobiographies of Essex people; books on Essex during the war; many books on Southend, the Pier and Southend United FC and much, much more. This is listed on the library online catalogue.

- A large reference collection of local maps including Ordnance Survey maps; Goad plans; street maps; land use maps and the Chapman and Andre map of Essex from 1777 (see Fact Sheet 4 – Maps). Current Ordnance Survey Landranger 1:50,000 and Explorer 1:25,000 series maps are available to borrow.

- Electoral registers for the Borough from 1949 to date. The full registers for the last 10 years are kept in the Local Studies reserve stock and are only available by appointment. The current year is only available in the Civic Centre; access is by appointment only.

- Southend Borough street directories (mainly Kelly’s) covering 1900 to 1974 – it was not printed every year and we do not have a complete collection. An incomplete set of Essex County directories from the mid 19th century to the 1930s. Some of the earlier ones are available on microfiche.
Local Studies Fact Sheet 1

- Local newspapers on microfilm and in hard copy (see Fact Sheet 3 - Local Newspapers).

- Within Local Studies there is an Essex Record Office Access Point, with parish registers for the historic county of Essex on microfilm or microfiche. Other records in microform include Chelmsford Chronicle 1764 to 1810; tithe awards; Register of Wills; Land Tax Assessments; Estate and Family Records.


- A Cuttings collection from local newspapers dating back to 1921. Organised initially in year books (up to 1974) and then in categories such as Town Development, Sport, Education and Obituaries.

- Illustrations covering the Rochford Hundred (See Fact Sheet 5 – Illustrations).

- Local magazines and parish magazines (See Fact Sheet 6 – Local Magazines).

Please Note

- Some Local Studies materials such as newspapers and parish registers are only available on microfilm or fiche. There are 2 microfilm/microfiche scanners which must be booked in advance. Both have a USB socket. Printing costs 30p per A4 sheet.

- If you wish to view anything from the Map, Illustrations or Cuttings collections you will need to make an appointment with a User Support Officer.