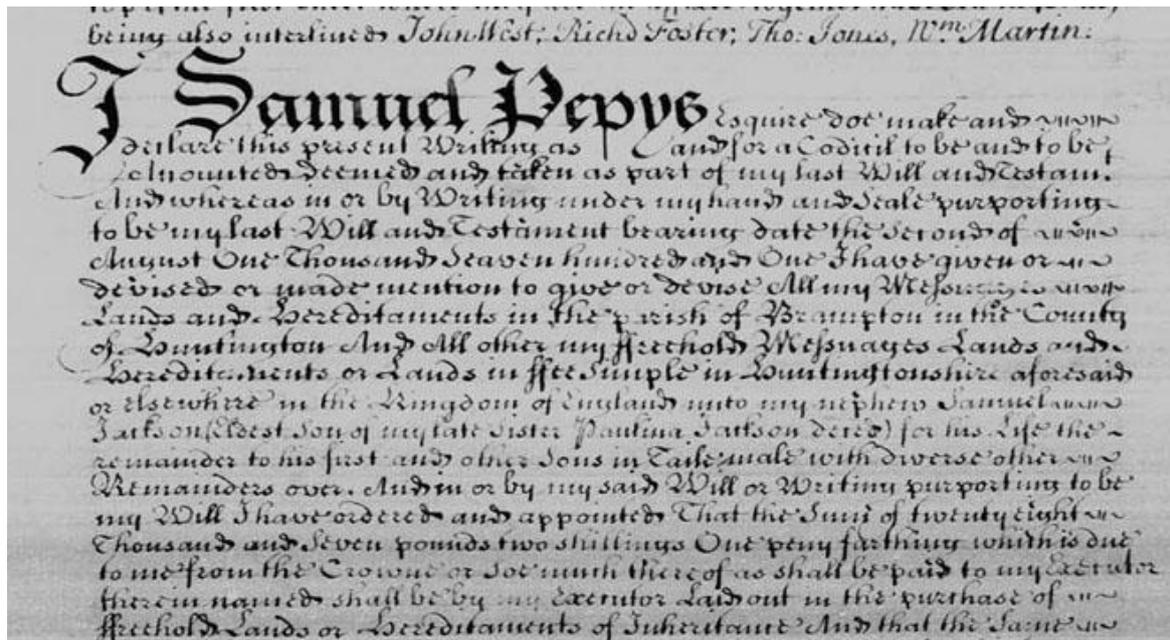


Gen-Guide to

UK PROBATES INDEX and PURCHASING SERVICE



The NZSG UK Probates Index and Purchasing Service allows members to locate and purchase a copy of a probate from England and Wales, if it is available.



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UK Probates Index and Purchasing Service

The UK Probates Index and Purchasing Service enables members to locate a probate from the indexes, and then purchase a copy of the probate if it is available. These are New Zealand Society of Genealogists (NZSG) members-only services. Summary information can be found in the website under the Resources > Purchasing Services > UK Probates Index.

Note: The definition of UK (United Kingdom) in this context refers to probates in England and Wales only; it excludes Scotland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.

Access to the probates index and to the purchasing of probates can be made entirely online, or in combination with assistance from NZSG Research Services and/or the UK Probate Purchasing Officer. Instructions are contained in this guide.

There are two stages in discovering and obtaining copies of probates from the UK:

- Finding the reference number, or index, for the probate
- Purchasing a copy of the probate via the NZSG Probates Purchasing Service.

For the probates indexing, information is contained in this guide. Probates reference numbers/indexes are now available online; some assistance may be given via Research Services at the Family Research Centre.

For the probates purchasing service, log in as a member, then head to Resources > Purchasing Services > UK Probates Index :

https://www.genealogy.org.nz/uk-probates-index_247

This guide is written in two parts to cover the services offered:

- UK Probates Index Service (starts on this page).
- UK Probates Purchasing Service (page 5).

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF USE

This service is only available to members of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists. Members receive information on the understanding that it is to be used for their personal research only. Information gained from the service should not be passed on to non-members, nor should access to the service be made available to non-members.

Any changes in the way the services operate will be posted on the website and will also be notified in the 'Where to Write' page in *The New Zealand Genealogist*.

1. UK Probates Index Service

When someone dies leaving a will, the executor appointed under the will applies to the court for a grant of probate, which authorises him or her to deal with the estate. Probates are of interest to genealogists because wills are found with the probate records. Where someone dies without a will, letters of administration are granted to next-of-kin or some other persons, allowing that person to administer the property of an intestate.

Before 1858, probates and letters of administration were granted by the ecclesiastical courts and some manorial courts. The busiest and most prestigious of these courts was the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) based in London, but the other court worth mentioning is that of the Prerogative Court of York (PCY) which had jurisdiction in the northern province of York.

On 12 January 1858 a centralised probate system for England and Wales came into operation, and a Principal Probate Registry was established in London with a chain of district probate registries in important centres. An index of grants of probate and letters of administration was produced for each year.

What information can I obtain?

The 1701–1749 Wills and Administrations Index, 1750–1800, 1853–1857 PCC Wills Index and the 1858–1996 Probates and Letters Of Administration Index is held in the England and Wales section of the NZSG library and is available to members using a lookup service.

The printout for PCC wills 1701–1800 and 1853–1857 will give you surname, forename(s), place of probate registration, year and month of registration, and reference number to registered wills.

The printout for wills and administrations 1858–1996 will give you surname, forename(s), occupation, date and place of death, date and place of probate registration, amount of estate, occupation of executor(s), and reference number for the will or letters of administration.

Once you receive your reply, you will have all the information you need to request a copy of the will or letters of administration through the NZSG UK Probates Purchasing Service.

How do I find the reference number?

You must have a reference number before requesting a probate. There are several different ways you can do this, as are listed below.

1. Through the NZSG Research Service - email only. Research Services do not normally provide a probate index service, but may offer advice if you strike problems.

The NZSG holds the indexes to probates and letters of administration 1858-1996 on microfiche and will look up the fiche if you are unable to access the indexes yourself. The printout for wills and administrations 1858-1943 or 1966 will give you surname, forename(s), occupation, date and place of death, date and place of probate registration, amount of estate, occupation of executor(s).

Email enquiries to ResearchServices@genealogy.org.nz should provide name, email address, subject, and comments. Complete the details and click on the 'Send email' button.

You will receive a reply by email to the address supplied.

2. Wills and Letters of Administration of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) can be searched online, through the National Archives (UK) website now named **Discovery**. The address is :

<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C1249>

In the very top right-hand corner of the website, look for a search window which says ‘Search our website...’. Type in the name of your person of interest. A successful search will return something similar to this –

1 - 15 of **77** results sorted by: Relevance ≡ Simple view Print Download

[Will of Richard Waine, Gentleman of Aldsworth, Gloucestershire](#)

Prerogative Court of Canterbury and related Probate Jurisdictions: Will Registers. Will of **Richard Waine**, Gentleman of Aldsworth, Gloucestershire.

Collection:	Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury
Date range:	08 December 1826
Reference:	PROB 11/1719/165
Subjects:	Wills and probate

[Browse by hierarchy](#) | [Browse by reference](#)

The reference number in this case is PROB 11/1719/165

3. Through commercial websites.

Ancestry holds the indexes to probates from 1858–1996, either as part of a subscription or on a “pay per view” basis. Go to <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>

2. UK Probates Purchasing Service

Up-to-date information about the UK probates purchasing service can be found on the Society's website. Log in as a member, then select Resources > Purchasing Services > UK Probates Index : https://www.genealogy.org.nz/uk-probates-index_247

About the UK Probates purchasing service

If your search of the UK Probates Index is successful, you will have the information you need to send for a copy of the will or letters of administration. The crucial piece of information is the reference number - you must have a reference number in order to purchase a copy of the probate.

How much does a copy of a will or letters of administration cost?

The current cost for Probates from England and Wales 1858-1996 is NZ\$24.00, but this is subject to fluctuations in the NZ/UK exchange rate. Check the latest ‘Where to Write’ page in *The New Zealand Genealogist* or the NZSG website for the current cost. Any change to this amount will be notified through the magazine and on the website.

How do I purchase a copy of a Will or Letters of Administration?

There are two ways that copies of wills or Letters of Administration can be obtained – either online, or, for those who have no personal computer or who wish not to purchase online, through the services offered by the UK Probate Purchasing Service.

1. **UK Probates from 1996 onwards can now be ordered/searched online** as announced by HM Courts and Tribunals Service in November 2014. UK in this context refers to Probates in England and Wales only, and excludes Scotland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. [UK Probates for 1858-1995 can still be ordered by postal methods.]
 - (a) Go to the website <https://www.gov.uk/search-will-probate>
 - (b) Click on the 'Start now' button to commence a search.
 - (c) On the 'Find a Will' page, there are 3 tabbed options along the top of the panel.
 - Wills and Probate 1996 to present
 - Wills and Probate 1858-1996
 - Soldier's Wills
 Select the appropriate tab. In each case, you are asked to supply a surname and year of death. Click on 'Search' when entered.
 - (d) Proceed to find the document of interest and order a copy.
2. The cost is UK£10 (approximately \$21 at today's exchange rates). The documents can be paid for only with a credit card. Probates will be available online up to a maximum of 10 days following confirmation of the order.
3. **NB:** Soldier's Probates are also available online, provided the Soldier died in a war zone as a member of British Armed Forces between the years of 1850 and 1986.

2. **Using the NZSG Probate Purchasing Service.**

- (a) Print out the request form for purchase from the NZSG website:

<https://www.genealogy.org.nz/data/media/documents/Forms/F102%20UK%20Probate%20Service%20072012.pdf>

 - or request one from the appropriate Purchasing Officer with a stamped addressed envelope.
- (b) Complete the form, making sure you include your membership number and your name and address.
- (c) Check that you have included:
 - Your completed purchase request form;
 - A cheque made out to New Zealand Society of Genealogists for the correct amount for the number of certificates that you are requesting; and
 - A stamped, self-addressed standard DLE envelope (business sized 225mm x 114mm). Your certificate(s) will be sent to you in this envelope.

Post your request to the NZSG's UK Probate Purchasing Officer:

Check the 'Where to Write' page in the latest *The New Zealand Genealogist* or the NZSG website for the current costs of probates, and the officer's current address at

UKProbates@genealogy.org.nz

Probates are ordered in bulk monthly and take approximately 8 weeks to be delivered to members.

For enquiries contact UKProbates@genealogy.org.nz

