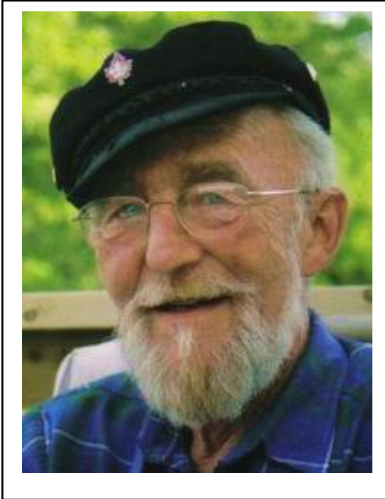


### Palaeography



In an earlier column I introduced a few resources to help decipher old handwritten documents. Well, I have found two more that are just too exciting to keep to myself.

The National Archives in the UK has produced an online learning resource that should win awards. You can find it at: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/palaeography/>.

There is considerable reference material on abbreviations, dating, the use of numbers, money and measurements but the heart of the site is ten tutorials.

Each tutorial focuses on one document. A discussion of the document and its historical context is followed by specific tips for reading it. The abbreviations used, peculiar forms of letters or words, and confusing spellings are noted and related to the numbered line in the document. A Glossary is provided for terms used in the document. There is even an alphabet of all the letters used in the document and their modern counterparts.

An online tutorial allows you to transcribe the document one line at a time and submit for verification. An immediate response will show you where you have made any errors, if you have made any (I certainly did).

You can download a PDF file of the whole tutorial to your computer. When I tried to do this, I had to give up after waiting 30 minutes for what has to be the slowest process in cyberdom. I found it easier to print out directly from the screen. You have the option of printing out the whole document and the correct transcription of it.

This is really worth taking a look at.

If you are dealing with Scottish documents or will be, then I have another resource for you. The Scottish Archive Network has three interactive tutorials online at: <http://www.scottishhandwriting.com/>. Apparent they are planning on adding a few more. These tutorials take you through the common 'Secretary Hand', which was used throughout western Europe and some of the particulars of its application in Scotland.

The second tutorial shows how individual differences develop among writers, just as they do in our time.

The third one is an introduction to Court records with information on Scottish vocabulary and legal jargon.

This is a great resource for the Scottish researcher.

### English Newspapers

Richard Heaton has been indexing names and transcribing the items from over forty English newspapers and is placing the database on his Family History website. The papers cover a fair geographical range in England:-Bath, Bristol, London, Yorkshire, etc, as well as a few from Ireland:-Dublin, Kilkenny, and Belfast. Although there is some 18<sup>th</sup> century material, most of what I saw was from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

You can either explore the site, and it is very easy to navigate, or you can use the 'Fast Find' search engine he has included to look for a specific name.

The project grew out of his own family research and is certainly not comprehensive but it represents a lot of work and has a lot of material in it. If you are looking for relatives in England, this is an easy resource to check.

I found that I had to be careful because, once I read the entry I had called up, the tendency was to scroll down to the next one and they are so interesting that you can easily be beguiled into spending a fair bit of time enjoying these historical tidbits.

His website is available at: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~dutilleul/index.html>. Select the 'Local Newspapers Index' and carry on from there.