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Description automatically generated**William Dugdale – Research Guide**

**Guide to records**

**Coventry Archives** is located in the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Jordan Well, Coventry, CV1 5QP. Admission to both the Reading Room and Research Room is free. Documents and books can be consulted without charge, but a charge is made for photocopying or the taking of digital images. Visitors are required to make an appointment to view original documents in the Research Room. Material in the Reading Room is available without the need of an appointment.

**Opening hours:** The Coventry Archives Reading and Research Rooms are open, 10.30 am – 3.30pm, Wednesdays – Fridays; the Reading Room is additionally open on alternate Saturdays, 10.30 am – 3.30pm. Please refer to the Coventry collections online catalogue at <http://coventrycollections.org/> or further details, or email [archives@cvlife.co.uk](mailto:archives@cvlife.co.uk)

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BA/H/Q/A79/Y/13 – Engraving by Wenceslaus Hollar

**Introduction**

William Dugdale (1605 – 1686) was an eminent antiquarian who dedicated much of his work to Coventry’s medieval heritage. Our archival records highlight the scrupulous nature of his research, in addition to how it was received and furthered by local people.

Dugdale was born in Shustoke, Warwickshire in 1605. He was educated from age 10 at the Old Grammar School in Coventry, under the schoolmaster Philemon Holland. He left school at 15, before marrying a couple of years later, and purchasing Blyth Hall in 1624. Through various connections, such as Sir Henry Spelman, the founding member of the Elizabethan Society of Antiquaries, Dugdale embarked on a career as a historian. In 1641, he began recording the major monasteries, cathedrals and churches across London, the Midlands and the North. He was given access to the Tower of London records by Sir Christopher Hatton, the cousin of Elizabeth I’s Lord Chancellor, and future comptroller to Charles I. Hatton supported the appeal to make Dugdale a Herald, and in this role Dugdale was sent by the King to demand the submission of the garrisons at Coventry, Warwick and Banbury. He was later advanced to the position of Chester Herald, and subsequently Garter King of Arms in 1677. He died in 1686 at his home in Blyth Hall.

Dugdale’s work recorded the details of various regions, including their ancient origins, the significant buildings and monuments, and members of the nobility. His most significant work for Coventry Archives is the *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, which was completed in 1656. Much of his writing about Coventry, including the ancient nunnery of St Osburga, the legend of Lady Godiva, and the network of guilds associated with St Mary’s Guildhall, were reproduced by later scholars. He also had a personal motivation for writing: to lament the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII’s rule. As such, he introduced Coventry as ‘still a city of eminent note, yet much short in glory and riches to what heretofore it hath been’.

Perhaps the most famous element of the *Antiquities of Warwickshire* is Dugdale’s mention of Shakespeare in Stratford-Upon-Avon, where he describes the poet’s grave bust in Holy Trinity Church almost as an after-thought. This was the first published account of Shakespeare’s monument, but the inaccuracies of Dugdale’s original sketch led scholars to believe for some time that it actually depicted Shakespeare’s father, a glover, rather than a playwright. Whether intentionally or otherwise, some have suggested that the *Antiquities* kickstarted Warwickshire tourism, owing to Dugdale’s lavish descriptions and the intricate engravings provided by Wenceslaus Hollar.

Our Dugdale records in particular offer a unique insight into the working mind of an antiquarian. In a hand-written extract of the *Antiquities* about Bond’s Hospital, an almshouse that was founded in AD 1506, Dugdale jots down some caveats at the bottom of the page. He disputes the accuracy of certain payments mentioned in his work, such as the amount paid for ‘38 yards of black cloth to make gowns for the said poor men’, and notes in general that ‘we must be cautious and do as well as we can’. This allows us to see the level of scrutiny and revision that went into the final published piece.



BA/D/4/3/4 – Extract from the *Antiquities of Warwickshire*

Within our archives we can also track the publishing history of the *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, as attitudes towards local history changed over time. William Reader, a topographer from Coventry, wrote to the London publisher Longman & Co in 1884, calling for Dugdale’s work to be republished. He argued that editions were now very scarce, meaning that they ‘are entirely monopolised by the affluent and are utterly unobtainable by the general inhabitants of the county’. Reader offered to personally edit the work himself, and while this project did not come to fruition, he achieved many of his aims through his own work on Coventry history. We have several copies of his *New Coventry Guide, Containing the History and Antiquities of that City*, originally published in 1831, which credits entire sections to Dugdale, and also updates his research by commenting on the industrial developments in the Midlands.

Other notable scholars who have expanded upon Dugdale’s work include Thomas Sharp (1770 – 1841) and Mary Dormer Harris (1867 – 1936). In 1920, the Dugdale Society was established to publish original documents relating to the history of Warwickshire. Their major publications have covered school, parish and guild records in Birmingham, Coventry and Stratford-Upon-Avon.

**Archival Materials**

BA/D/4/3/4,5 – Extracts from Dugdale’s *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, concerning Bond’s Hospital

Involvement with Robert Bedford’s estate, 1678 – 79: BA/A/D/127/7; BA/H/H/324/7-10; BA/H/H/325/2; BA/H/H/330/5, 6; BA/H/H/332/5, 9

BA/H/Q/A79/Y/13 – Engraving of Dugdale by Wenceslas Hollar (1684 – 1756)

CCA/2/3/19/2 – Bequeaths a two-volume edition of the *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, 1735

PA1484/77/973 – Correspondence on Lord Lifford’s copy of Dugdale’s works, 1772

PA526/165/15 – Letter from William Reader to Longman & Co publishers, requesting a reprint of the *Antiquities of Warwickshire* and outlining the publishing history of the work in Coventry, 1884

PA492/2, folio 22 – Dugdale’s arms displayed on the Council House

PA2831/1/8 – Dugdale’s references to Coventry Priory, used as part of archaeological research/correspondence

**Books (in Archives Basement 1)**

*Antiquities of Warwickshire*, 1656, William Reader’s copy, with ms. Annotations to the text and ms. Notes and newscuttings inserted

*The Antiquities of Warwickshire* – 2nd edition – Manchester, reprinted by E.J. Morten

*The Antiquities of Warwickshire*, continued down to this present time by William Thomas, 1730, printed by Thomas Osburn and Thomas Longman

*The Antiquities of Coventre*, Illustrated. From records, ledger-books, manuscripts, charters, evidences, tombes and armes. Beautified with many curious copper-plate cuts, by Sir William Dugdale, carefully collected from his edition of the *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, published in the year 1656. Coventry, printed by J. Jones, facing the Cross, 1765

*The Antiquities of Warwick, and Warwick Castle*; extracted from Sir William Dugdale’s *Antiquities of Warwickshire*. To which is added, from an ancient manuscript in the possession of the Corporation of Warwick, a detail of the Earl of Leicester’s arrival at Warwick, and celebrating the French Order of St Michael, in the year 1571; and also, an account of Elizabeth’s reception in Warwick, in 1572

*The History of St Paul’s Cathedral in London, from its Foundation Until These Times*, extracted out of original charters, records, ledger books, and other manuscripts. Beautified with sundry prospects of the church, figures of tombes, and monuments, 1658

*Origines Juridiciales*, or Historical Memorials of the English Laws, courts of justice, forms of tryal, punishment in cases criminal, law-writers, law-books, grants and settlements of estates, decree of serjeant, innes of court and chancery, 2nd ed, 1671.

*The Baronage of England, or an Historical Account of the Lives and Most Memorable Actions of our English Nobility*[…]deduced from public records, ancient historians and other authorities, 1675-6

*A Short View of the Late Troubles in England*, Briefly Setting Forth their Rise, Growth and Tragical Conclusion, 1681

*The Ancient Usage in Bearing of such Emblems of Honour as are Commonly Called Arms, with a Catalogue of the Present Nobility of England*, 1682

*A Perfect Copy of all Summons of the Nobility to the Great Councils and Parliaments of this Realm*, from the XLIX of King Henry the IIId, until these present times; extracted from public records, 1685

*The Life, Diary and Correspondence of Sir William Dugdale*, Knight, sometime Garter Principal King of Arms, 1827

*Monasticum Anglicanum*: a History of the Abbies and other Monasteries, Hospitals, Frieries, and Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, with their Dependencies, in England and Wales, re-print, 1846

*Sir William Dugdale 1605 – 1686: a List of his Printed Works and of his Portraits, with Notes on his Life and the Manuscript Sources*, by Francis Maddison, Dorothy Styles and Anthony Wood, 1953

*His Life, His Writings and His County*, eds. by Christopher Dyer & Catherine Richardson, 2009