

Reading old handwriting

Session three 16th century

Mayor's book, Abingdon 1589

- First page of official borough record of mayors, other benefactors and leases of town property.
- Original is almost A4 size
- Professionally written and illuminated - initials possibly of the scrivener –EDWARD BATTEN
- Classic Secretary hand
- Larger letters in bold are the beginning of paragraphs or new sections
- NB use of i for y in Maiors y for i in is, and vice-versa in Conteyned; c not t in Corporacion; difference between f in of and long s in burgesses
- Use of tild (line above word) to indicate letter(s) as in Corporac[i]on, Ten[emen]tes. Use square brackets if you cannot be sure how the writer would have spelled the word.
- S with a 'tail' at end of word means es

Abingdon Mayor's book – first few lines



Mayor's book, Abingdon 1589



Hungerford parish register burials 1591-2

- Points to notice
- Date – legal year began on 25 March so burials we would place in February 1592 are placed here in 1591. Show correct date as February 1591/2
- Note frequent use of capital / upper case letters where we would use lower case - Daie, Buried, Servante
- use of ‘e’ at end of word in streete, Servante
- Spelling Februarie, Daie, sonne, wiffe, yeman
- Letter shapes – r –like upside down n, long s ʃ
- capitals The, Daie, Buried, Austen, Gibbes Richar , Susanna, Carpenter, Eddington

Childrey churchwardens' account for 1594

- Points to notice:
- Abbreviation for letter omitted is a tild, a line above word as in doe (do[[~]min]e n[[~]ost]re), com[[~]m]ing, Sum[[~]m]a, Su[[~]ummo]ner
- Roman numerals: i = 1, ij = 2 (last i always j)
- v = 5; x = 10; l = 50; xl = 40 (10 before 50)
- li libra pounds
- s with tail going up shilling
- d with tail going down denarius or penny
- Low(e)Sunday is Sunday after Easter Day
- ſ long s at end of word is 'es' as in Souldieres, Recusantes, lockes, handes
- idiosyncratic spelling – don't modernise

Probate inventory of William Lawde, cloth worker of Reading 1594

- No will made by William Lawde – administration of estate
- Professionally written in sloping Secretary hand
- Use capitals in preamble as patterns – Lawde, Readinge, April, Edward, Burmingha[m], Dell, Philip
- Goods listed room by room so some useful letters like capital H in Hall and lower case h in hall on same line. Note the C
- abbreviation using letter p in *parler*. There is no need to use square brackets round ‘ar’ because the sign for the abbreviation is ‘ar’.
- i and j are interchangeable so ioyned = joined – made with proper joints by joiner
- extended ‘tail’ of e at end of dogges (5th item, 2nd line) means it is ‘es’.
- E at the end of words we would not use – payre (pair), tonges (tongs)
- Court cupboard – cupboard with ‘shelf’ above used to display plate etc
- Andirons, dogs, fyer shelve (fire shovel), (fire) dogs all equipment for tending a fire in a fireplace
- Wainscot (wooden panelling) and stayned clothes (cloths – painted thick possibly woollen hangings) are wall decorations.
- For more details of Lawde /Laud and his inventory see *Reading Book of Days* or my book *Reading: a history*

