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| TITLE | Branching Out: how to use pre-1858 wills for family history |
| TUTOR | Jemma Bezant  |

Dear Student,

Thank you for enrolling on this Lifelong Learning course. This letter gives you some further information. If you have any questions, please contact either:

**The LLL Office**: learning@aber.ac.uk

**The Tutor:** Jemma Bezant jeb52@aber.ac.uk

**The Co-ordinator:** Elin Mabbutt emm32@aber.ac.uk

We hope you enjoy the course.

Best Wishes,

**The Lifelong Learning Team**

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**GETTING STARTED**

**Aberystwyth University Student Account**

Before you can begin your course, you need to activate your **Aberystwyth University Student Account**. After you pay and enrol, you will be sent your **unique student number** by the Lifelong Learning Administrator. This will enable you to obtain your student username and set a password for your student account.

Having an account gives you many additional benefits such as access to the university library and online journals, an email address, and discounts for university services.

Please watch this [**video (link)**](https://aberystwyth.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Embed.aspx?id=8599b9f0-bb74-4e17-8a61-abb800c9c1b1&v=1) as it will give you all the instructions you will need to set up your student account.

Once you have completed this process login to your [Aberystwyth University email account here](https://login.microsoftonline.com/common/oauth2/authorize?client_id=00000002-0000-0ff1-ce00-000000000000&redirect_uri=https%3a%2f%2foutlook.office.com%2fowa%2f&resource=00000002-0000-0ff1-ce00-000000000000&response_mode=form_post&response_type=code+id_token&scope=openid&msafed=0&client-request-id=1a50f117-68e4-464d-b9c3-80fd788cb7e5&protectedtoken=true&claims=%7b%22id_token%22%3a%7b%22xms_cc%22%3a%7b%22values%22%3a%5b%22CP1%22%5d%7d%7d%7d&domain_hint=aber.ac.uk&nonce=637354312838097988.a0319ebd-6272-4475-a59a-e0b8afa5fbe1&state=Dcs7DoMwEEVRO1kJTTobf5lxgbKWNzBIUUCRkBK2HxfndtcaY-7drbOhx9CUKdeSY-LMoVFj9gg5NpXVTYmSK4WqQ21wGoSxoW6i0fZ3GD8Xxuep2I8ZoqfH4r_vx2-dL5UDr_0P)

**Online Learning Environment: Blackboard**

Once you have an active username and password you can login to our **online learning environment** called **Blackboard** by going to<https://blackboard.aber.ac.uk>. This is where you can access the learning materials for your course, interact online with your tutor and other students and submit your assignments. Here is a [**video (link)**](https://aberystwyth.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=d3b1a6e3-a555-4da3-be65-ac31007c1927) on how to access Blackboard and navigate the various pages and tools.

**Microsoft Teams**

Your course may include one or more live online learning webinars or seminars. If so, these will be held using the online platform **Microsoft Teams**. Like Blackboard, you can access Teams online by going to <https://teams.microsoft.com/> and logging in with your Aberystwyth University student username and password. Although not essential, we would recommend you download the Microsoft Teams software onto your desktop. Once you have logged in, you can do this from the Microsoft Teams homepage. Click on the circle in the top right-hand corner of the screen and select **Download the Desktop App.**

If an online meeting has been scheduled by your tutor you will receive an email to your **University Email Account** that will contain a link, which you can click on to join the meeting. Alternatively, if you go to your **Calendar** in Microsoft Teams, which is on the left-hand side of the screen, you will see a **Join button** appear by the meeting just before it begins, which you can click on.

If you haven’t used Microsoft Teams before I would recommend watching this one minute [**video (link)**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pauAUOl8v4) so you know what to expect.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

A will can be a treasure trove of information for a family historian, providing details of the testator, their family members and associates, as well as descriptions of land and properties. A will can be a rare opportunity to ‘hear’ your ancestor’s own words and find out more about their relationships and what was important to them in their lifetime. More broadly, wills are social documents, providing a window on a particular time and place in history.

‘Branching Out’ is a series of online, self-paced 5-credit modules, which focus on key documents, resources and collections for family history research. They give students an opportunity to study a key topic in depth, using relevant examples and collections.

This course focuses primarily on British research. Students will learn how to effectively search a number of subscription and free genealogical websites. Wherever possible, alternative free resources are highlighted, and the majority of the subscription websites used are available to access for free through local public library services. Some of the online resources referred to during this course do require a subscription, if accessed from home.

Branching Out: how to use pre-1858 wills for family history can be studied as a stand-alone course, but it is also an optional module for the Certificate of Higher Education in Genealogical Studies at Aberystwyth University. If you have already completed our 3-part series of modules Acorn to Oak: building a family tree, these 5 -credit modules will likely be of interest as you can explore a particular topic in much greater detail. This online, self-paced learning course enables students to study from home while participating in an online learning community. The course is delivered through Blackboard, the virtual learning environment, and will include one live webinar.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

On completion of this module, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the system within which wills were proved, pre-1858
2. Identify key online and archival pre-1858 will collections
3. Perform multipart online searches for wills
4. Identify and transcribe some of the letters and word structures found within these documents, from different time periods
5. Analyse a will and complete some further research in order to contextualise the document within a wider socio-historic context.

**COURSE PROGRAMME**

Activities and tasks will be embedded into each unit so students can practise the techniques they have learned and develop their skills. Students will be encouraged to share their own work and participate in discussions on Blackboard. Alongside the learning materials on Blackboard the tutor will be on hand via email to answer any queries and provide guidance throughout the course. They will also participate in the online discussions. There will be 1 live webinar.

 Unit 1 – Introduction

Unit 2 – Reading old handwriting

 Unit 3 – Post-1700 wills

Unit 4 – Pre-1700 wills

**ASSESSMENTS**

Transcription Task (20%)
Research Project 800 words (80%)

**Submission Policy**: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/lifelong-learning/virtual-student-centre/schemes_programmes/latesubmission/>

Find our full programme listings here: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/lifelong-learning/courses/>

Are you interested in completing a Certificate in Higher Education? If you are, speak to your tutor or contact the co-ordinator: emm32@aber.ac.uk