British Official & Parliamentary Publications: print and online.

Introduction ........................................................................................................................................2
Parliamentary Papers ..........................................................................................................................4
    Parliamentary Papers : Sessional ..................................................................................................4
    House of Commons Papers .........................................................................................................4
    Command Papers .........................................................................................................................5
    Bills ...........................................................................................................................................6
    House of Lords Papers (HL Papers) .............................................................................................6
    The Weekly Information Bulletin and the Sessional Information Digest ........................................6
Parliamentary Papers : Proceedings .................................................................................................7
    Journal of the House of Commons ...............................................................................................7
    Journal of the House of Lords .......................................................................................................7
    Hansard (Parliamentary Debates – Official Record) ....................................................................7
Legislation ...........................................................................................................................................9
    Acts of Parliament (primary legislation) .......................................................................................9
    Printed volumes .............................................................................................................................9
    Statutory Instruments (secondary legislation) ................................................................................9
Social Legislation ...............................................................................................................................9
Non-Parliamentary Publications .......................................................................................................9
Devolved Government .......................................................................................................................10
    Wales .......................................................................................................................................10
    Scottish Parliament ......................................................................................................................10
    Northern Ireland Assembly .........................................................................................................10
Introduction

Who is this guide for?

Students and researchers in the social sciences, business, politics, economics, health science and 19th and 20th century history. Students in other subjects, such as law, may also find it useful but it does not cover older historical publications or legal information in any depth.

What are ‘official publications’?

All official bodies, including national, regional and local government and Parliament including international organisations, publish large amounts of information: records of meetings, annual reports, statistics, reports, books and journals designed to inform the public. The Highway Code is just one example of a ‘best-selling’ official publication. This guide concentrates on the publications of the British government, Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales.

Key points about official publications at Swansea University Library:

Many recent official publications (usually from the late 1990s onwards) can be obtained free of charge on the web. Please note that official websites tend to be in a state of flux so the web addresses in this guide may change.

We now collect print and microform copies of official publications very selectively. However, we have extensive older collections of British official publications from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in various formats including print, microform and electronic.

We do not usually catalogue official publications individually on iFind Discover, the library catalogue. To locate an individual document you may have to use one of the indexes or catalogues listed in this guide, or try one of the websites suggested.

There is no single section in the Library where official publications are kept. This guide points out the main locations but please ask for help if you are not sure where to look.

Finding out what there is

There are a number of ways to find out what has been published.

UK.GOV - Publications website
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications gives full-text access from May 2005 onwards to government departmental papers such as consultations, policies, guidance, corporate, research and analysis, statistics, notices and regulations

For alternative formats please contact:
Tel: 01792 295697 Email: library@swansea.ac.uk
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd
The Government Publications Catalogue: annual volume lists all parliamentary publications and non-parliamentary publications produced by the Stationery Office. 1937-present
Study Hall Reference Collection – Z2009 GOV
[NB. The Stationery Office (TSO) was known as Her Majesty’s Stationery Office (HMSO) until 1995.]


House of Commons Parliamentary Papers (1688 -2003/4)
http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/home.do
This contains the searchable full text of over 200,000 House of Commons sessional papers from 1688 to 2003/4, with supplementary material back to 1666 (such as Journals of both Houses of Parliament), together with subject indexing. Available free of charge

The Parliamentary Process and Organization of Parliamentary Papers

To be able to find and use Parliamentary papers, it helps to have a basic grasp of how Parliament works and how law is made. The process can be summarized as follows:
Queen’s Speech – opening of Parliament in November - sets out government policy.
Green Papers – consultative documents issued by government which contain policy proposals for debate, discussion & consultation. Often contain several policy options.
White papers – firmer recommendations - a preliminary to legislation.
Bill – First Reading - a formality, no debate.
Second reading – debate and vote.
Committee stage - examined by a Standing Committee and perhaps substantially amended.
Report stage – reviewed by the Commons.
Third Reading – House takes an overview of the bill as finally amended.
Lords – similar procedure.
For further detail consult the following websites:
Parliament : how Parliament works http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/ OR
Parliamentary Papers

Parliamentary Papers can be subdivided into sessional papers and proceedings:

**Sessional** These are the documents arising directly out of the business of Parliament, i.e. minutes of committee meetings, committee reports, bills, command papers etc. Sessional papers record what was done.

**Proceedings.** The proceedings record what was said (Hansard) and what action was taken (the journals are the official minute books of the House of Commons and the House of Lords):

House of Commons Journal;
House of Lords Journal;
House of Commons Hansard (Verbatim report);
House of Lords Hansard (Verbatim report).

Parliamentary Papers: Sessional

House of Commons Papers

These include:

a) Papers of Select Committees (Minutes of Evidence, Minutes of Proceedings and Reports to Parliament)
b) Papers of Standing Committees
c) Miscellaneous documents such as annual reports, financial papers and reports of Commissions.
d) Bills
e) Command papers (green and white papers)

We have access to House of Commons sessional papers in various formats. To locate a paper or a bill it's useful to know the sessional date as well as the individual paper or bill number.

1688 – 2003/4 House of Commons Parliamentary Papers

http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/home.do

1979/80 -2006/7 Microfiche A/V room, Level 2, West wing known as the Chadwyck-Healey microfiche series of House of Commons Sessional Papers. The Sessional Papers on microfiche are kept in two filing cabinets in the Audio Visual room which also contains a microfiche reader. A microfiche index is kept on top of one of the filing cabinets. There are three separate sequences: Papers (filed numerically by session); Command papers (filed numerically by series abbreviation ie Cmnd. or Cm.; Bills filed

For alternative formats please contact:
Tel: 01792 295697 Email: library@swansea.ac.uk
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd
numerically by session. There are also electronic indexes available for various years (see below).

2005 (May) onwards – **UK.Gov Publications** website at

If the publications you want are on the web or are listed in the Library catalogue then you may not need this section. However, if you need to trace publications in any of the bound volume sets of papers or in the microform sets, you may find the following useful:

A microfiche index to the Chadwyck Healey House of Commons Parliamentary Papers (see p.4) is kept on top of the filing cabinet containing the papers themselves.

A small collection of printed indexes and specialist guides to older parliamentary papers is in the Study Hall between J305.6 and J305.9. These include the Subject catalogue of the House of Commons parliamentary papers 1801-1900.

**HC Papers numbering system**

HC Papers are ordered by a running number within each session e.g. HC263 (1997/98) was the number given to the 2nd report of the Education and Employment Select Committee on the New Deal. HC263 I (1997/98) was the actual report, while HC263 II and III (1997/98) were the Minutes of Evidence and Appendices. At the start of each new session the numbering starts over with 1. Length of Parliamentary sessions varies but they start with the state opening of Parliament, normally in late autumn each year and end with the summer recess.

**Command Papers**

These cover all subjects and a very diverse range of documents which are of interest to MPs. They are so-called because they are ordered to be presented to the Commons by ‘command’ of the sovereign. They include Green Papers (consultation papers), White Papers (statements of government policy), annual reports, treaties, financial papers, government replies to reports of Select Committees and reports of Royal Commissions of Enquiry.

**Command Paper numbering system**

Command Papers are organised by a running number within each series. Instead of starting a new series with each Parliamentary session, the Command paper series can run over many Parliamentary sessions. The different series are distinguished by a different abbreviation for ‘command’.

For alternative formats please contact:
Tel: 01792 295697 Email: library@swansea.ac.uk
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd
The current one is **Cm.** e.g. **Adoption a new approach** is **Cm. 5017.** Others used in the past were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1833-1869</td>
<td>1 - 4222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1899</td>
<td>c.1 - c.9550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1918</td>
<td>cd.1 - Cd.9239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919-1956</td>
<td>Cmd.1 - Cmd.9889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956-1986</td>
<td>Cmd.1 - Cmd.9927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-</td>
<td>Cm.1-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bills**

Bills are the legislation going through Parliament. The full texts of recent Commons Bills are at [http://www.parliament.uk/business/bills-and-legislation/](http://www.parliament.uk/business/bills-and-legislation/)

**House of Lords Papers (HL Papers)**

These are much fewer in number and follow a similar numbering pattern. House of Lords Papers and Bills from about 2000 onwards are at: [http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/house-of-lords-publications/](http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/house-of-lords-publications/)

Older Parliamentary Papers for the House of Lords (back to the 1930s) and some other early 19th century Parliamentary sources are held in a mixture of bound volumes and microcard in various locations.


A collection of printed indexes and specialist guides to older parliamentary papers are kept in the Study Hall.

**The Weekly Information Bulletin and the Sessional Information Digest.**

The **Weekly Information Bulletin** is published by the Public Information Office of the House of Commons every week whilst Parliament is sitting. The Bulletin is an authoritative guide to the current business of the House of Commons. It’s available on the web from October 1996 onwards: [http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm/cmwib.htm](http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm/cmwib.htm)

The **Sessional Information Digest** is produced at the end of each parliamentary session. It cumulates and indexes much of the information previously given in the **Weekly Information Bulletin.** Available from 1995/96 onwards: [http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm/cmsid.htm](http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm/cmsid.htm)
Parliamentary Papers: Proceedings

Journal of the House of Commons

Online:
1547-1699 (Vols. 1-12) and 1830 (Vol. 85) available from British History Online http://www.british-history.ac.uk/subject.aspx?subject=6&gid=43

1688-1834 JoHoC is available on House of Commons Parliamentary Papers database http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/home.do


Print:
1547-1842 Folios J305.3 in the library store (off-campus)

Journal of the House of Lords


1685-1834 JoHoL is available on House of Commons Parliamentary Papers database http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/home.do


Hansard (Parliamentary Debates – Official Record)

The name Hansard has been used for about two hundred years to indicate the report of debates in Parliament. It is now published daily when Parliament is sitting and records what is said in both the House of Commons and House of Lords, for which separate reports have been issued since 1909.

The first detailed reports of debates in Parliament were published from 1803 onwards in William Cobbett's Political Register by the political journalist of the same name. In 1811 he sold his interest to Thomas Curson Hansard, the son of Luke Hansard (1752 - 1828) who was the printer of the House of Commons Journal from 1774 onwards.

Hansard on the Parliament website

For alternative formats please contact:
Tel: 01792 295697 Email: library@swansea.ac.uk
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd
1988-
Debates in the House of Commons and also in committees can be followed by live TV link, on Twitter, and in online verbatim documentation at http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/hansard/commons/

Historic Hansard
1803-2005
http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons
Contains debates from both houses plus written answers, written statements, Lords reports and Grand Committee reports.

Cobbett’s Parliamentary Debates 1803-1812 (which preceded Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates) are at J305.2 in the East wing, level 3 (south wall)

House of Commons Hansard:
Print : Up to 1999 East wing, level 3 (south wall) J305.2

Also available for 1803-2005 on House of Commons Parliamentary Papers http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/home.do

House of Lords Hansard:
1919-1929/30 and 1937/38-1947/48 Microfilm 700, A-V Room Level 2 West

1930-31 – 2004 Print : J305.2 Library store (off-campus)

1803 - present
http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/hansard/lords/

1803-2005 available on House of Commons Parliamentary Papers http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/home.do

Parliament: Welsh Grand Committee:
The Welsh Grand Committee consists of the 40 Welsh MPs, and currently up to 5 others. It debates issues relevant to Wales, such as the effects on Wales of the Government's programme announced in the Queen's Speech.

Welsh Grand Committee reports 1959-79 J305.5 (level 1 West)
Welsh Grand Committee debates 1974- present J305.5 (level 1 West)

WGC debates 2012/13
http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/hansard/commons/gc-debates/welsh-grand-committees/
Legislation

Acts of Parliament (primary legislation)

Printed volumes
We have various bound sets of these in the Law Library on Level 4, East wing. One example is Public General Acts and General Synod Measures, KF 22 with others shelved nearby.

Legislation.gov.uk: UK Public General Acts
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga
All Public Acts are available from 1988 to the present full-text, with some available from 1801.

Guide to revised legislation on legislation.gov.uk:
a useful guide, not just to the website but to legal documentation in general.

Statutory Instruments (secondary legislation)
Statutory Instruments are a minor form of legislation such as regulations.

Legislation.gov.uk: UK Statutory Instruments
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi
1987 onwards

Social Legislation

CANS database is a full-text online legal reference source from the Citizens Advice Bureaux of the UK. It is written in plain English and the legislation for the UK and for the devolved countries are denoted with national flags to help the user differentiate at a glance.

Available at http://www.cans.org.uk. To login off-campus click on Login via UK Federation

Non-Parliamentary Publications.

Government department publications and green papers.

Government departments publish vast amounts of information which is useful for researchers, including statistics. Some of these publications are available on the web. See gov.uk for a list of departments: http://www.gov.uk/

The Library buys the publications of government departments selectively and they are then catalogued individually on iFind Discover, the library catalogue and shelved with the books/journals on their subject.

For alternative formats please contact:
Tel: 01792 295697 Email: library@swansea.ac.uk
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd
Devolved Government

Wales

Welsh Government http://wales.gov.uk/

National Assembly for Wales http://www.assemblywales.org/

What’s the difference between the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government?

NAW is equivalent to the UK Parliament and the Welsh Government is the equivalent of the UK Government. The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account through its debating chamber – the Senedd, in Cardiff. It has 60 elected Assembly Members (AMs).

The role of the Welsh Government is to:
make decisions on certain matters such as health and welfare
develop policies and implement them;
propose Welsh laws (Assembly Bills).

There is also a printed Monthly list of National Assembly for Wales publications (current year only) at Z792.W24.

The Central Reference Library (public library) in Swansea receives a print copy of all Assembly documents for reference only.

See also Parliament: Welsh Grand Committee – page 8 of this guide.

Scottish Parliament
http://www.scottish.parliament.uk

Northern Ireland Assembly
http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/

Stormont Papers
http://stormontpapers.ahds.ac.uk
This consists of the Parliamentary Papers of the devolved government of Northern Ireland from 1921 to the dissolution of Parliament in 1972.
Guides to official publications


The House of Commons Parliamentary Papers database includes a guide to Parliamentary Papers >

http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/infoCentre/hcppguide.jsp

Reference books and directories


The standard reference work on Parliamentary procedure.

Dod's Parliamentary Companion (annual). - JN501 DOD

The most recent volume is in Study Hall Reference collection.

Vacher's Quarterly (previously known as Vacher's Parliamentary Companion) - JN1.V11 (Level 1 West)