



Producing a Key of The National Archives references for Volume XIV of *Letters and Papers Henry VIII: Foreign and Domestic*

What are Letters and Papers Henry VIII?

Between 1862 and 1932, 22 volumes of *Letters and Papers Henry VIII: Foreign and Domestic*, were published calendaring a vast collection of documents from the reign of Henry VIII that are now held in The National Archives, British Library, and elsewhere. These calendars provide detailed summaries of the original documents listed. They cover topics such as early modern government, social and economic affairs, law and order, religious policy, crown possessions and intelligence gathering, as well as foreign policy. The documents calendared (or précised) might consist of private and official letters, reports, treaty papers, memoranda, council minutes and draft parliamentary bills; in fact, just about anything that sheds important light on this extraordinary reign.

Unfortunately, the marginal references (in the published *Letters and Papers*) to the original sources of summarised documents are often obscure and obsolete. For example, the only clue as to whether a document is held in The National Archives is the letters 'R.O.' A key in the Map Room at The National Archives does provide The National Archives' reference but requires having to look in two separate sections of the key, which is only available on site. The List and Index Society has produced simplified keys of The National Archives documents cited in volumes I-X of *Letters and Papers Henry VIII*, and The National Archives is currently working on volumes XII-XIII. These new keys require only one stage for searching and, since these are published works, can be accessed outside The National Archives. The need for such volumes has

become all the more pressing since the calendars are now searchable on the British History Online website <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/> and through State Papers Online.

We need YOU!

The National Archives therefore needs your assistance to produce the key for volume XIV of *Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic Henry VIII*. This will provide the reader with immediate access to the document references and allow a copy of the document to be requested by telephone. This is even more urgent now that this volume, along with the others, is available online. Without the published key the reader will only know that the document is held at 'R.O.', in other words somewhere in The National Archives.

What will the project involve?

The project will require you to modernise the old two-stage key (now in the Map Room) by creating a new list of single-stage document references for those entries in the published calendar describing The National Archives' documents. The old key can be accessed at The National Archives or copies from it supplied to you should you wish to work from home. In some instances, you will need to check the original document or microfilm to identify the folio or membrane. You might also be required to check grants in C 82 to ensure the correct reference.

What skills will you need?

- An eye for detail
- Basic Latin and palaeography (mainly to identify documents and read dates)
- Persistence !

Will there be any training?

We shall show you how to modernise the references from the old key and, although there will be no formal training in palaeography or Latin, you can use The National Archives' online tutorials as a refresher course:
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/palaeography/>

By volunteering you will ease access to key documents in The National Archives for the reign of Henry VIII and you will gain a fascinating insight into the records of his reign and the administrative processes behind them.

We look forward to working with you.

Adrian Ailes
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