

## A simple guide to finding PROBATE RECORDS

This is intended only to be a rough guide for researchers using the Borthwick. Researchers who would like a detailed guide as to where probate records may be found may find J.S.W Gibson, *Probate Jurisdictions: Where to Look for Wills* (4<sup>th</sup> edn. Federation of Family History Societies, 1994) useful.

### When was the will proved? (proving usually took place with a year of death)

- o **Proved after Jan. 1858** Contact Probate Copies and Searches Dept, York House, 31 York Place, Leeds, LS1 2BA (0113) 3896133
- o **Proved before Jan. 1858** See below.

### Where did the testator live?

- o **Yorkshire, within the diocese of York** Most records are held at the Borthwick Institute, York.  
For a map of the diocese of York click see end.
- o **Yorkshire, within the diocese of Chester** Most records will be held by WYAS, Leeds – West Yorkshire Joint Services Building, Nepshaw Lane South, Gildersome, Morley, LS27 7JQ

To see which parts of Yorkshire were in the diocese of Chester see end. This area was known as Richmondshire.

If you cannot find the will you want then it will be worth checking the Prerogative Court of York wills (at the Borthwick) and then the Prerogative Court of Canterbury wills (Family Record Centre, 1 Myddleton Street, London, EC1R 1UW)

- o **Nottinghamshire**

#### Probate Records after 1630

Nottinghamshire was part of the diocese of York until 1837, so until that date probate business was dealt with by the York church courts. However, all original probate bundles for people who came from Nottinghamshire and whose wills were proved in the Exchequer Court of York were transferred in 1972 to Nottinghamshire Archives, County House, Castle Meadow Road, Nottingham, NG2 1AG.

## Nottinghamshire

### Probate Records before 1630

Please note that before c.1630 it is unusual to find surviving original probate material. However, registered copies of Nottinghamshire wills survive in the probate registers at the Borthwick.

### What if I can't find probate material at Nottinghamshire Archives?

One possibility is that it was proved in the Prerogative Court of York (records at the Borthwick), or the Prerogative Court of Canterbury will (Family Record Centre, 1 Myddleton Street, London, EC1R 1UW).

There were also a few places in Nottinghamshire that came under peculiar jurisdictions e.g. Apesthorpe and Bole so it may be worth checking the indexes to these records, again at the Borthwick.

Registered copies of Nottinghamshire wills survive in the probate registers which remain at the Borthwick. If an original Nottinghamshire will is missing it may well be that we can provide a copy of the registered will, although not any associated documentation.

### Other places in the Northern Province

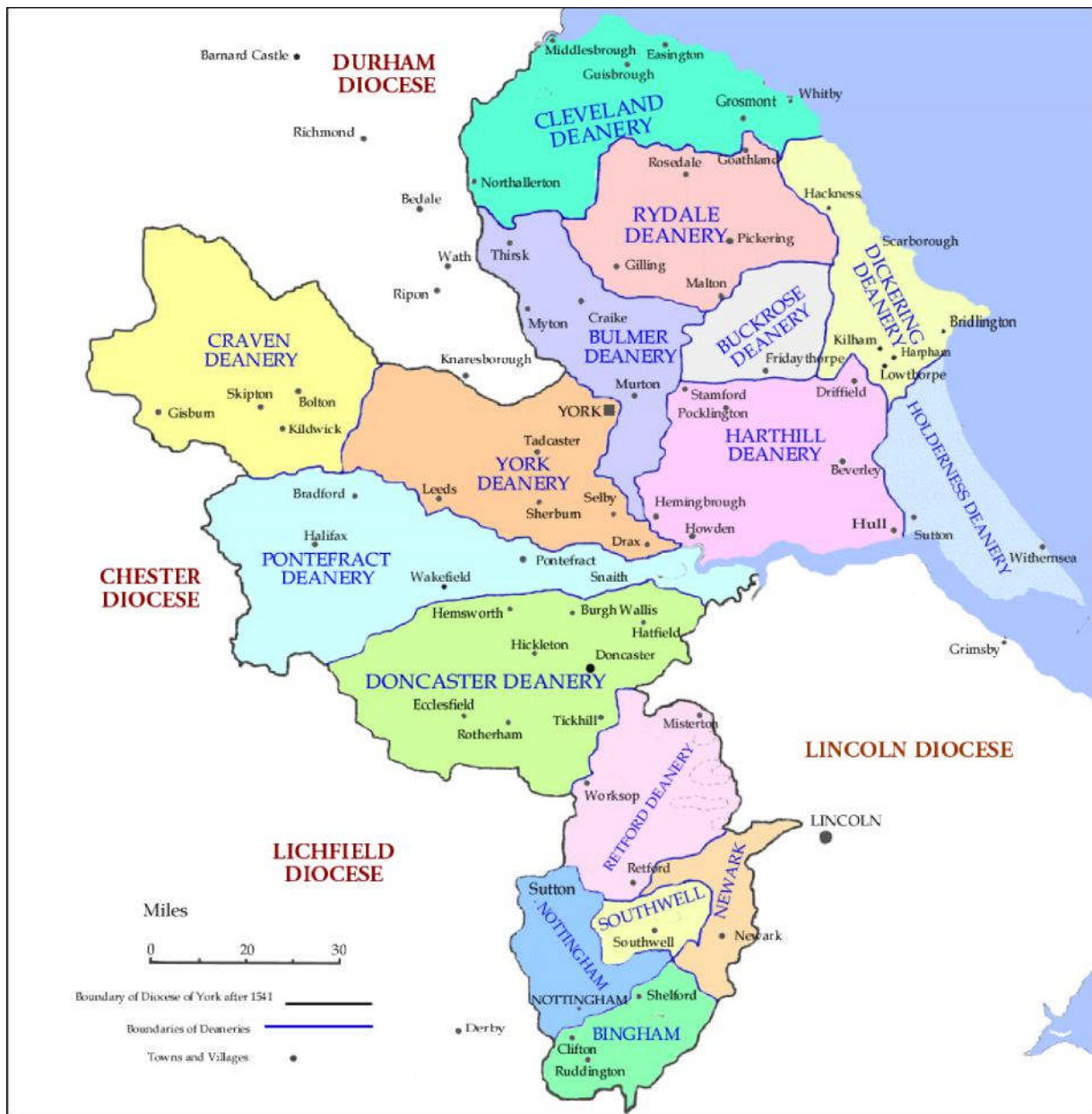
diocese of Chester, Carlisle, Durham; counties Cheshire, Lancashire, Westmorland, Cumberland, Northumberland, Durham.

The first place to approach is the county record office of the county concerned.

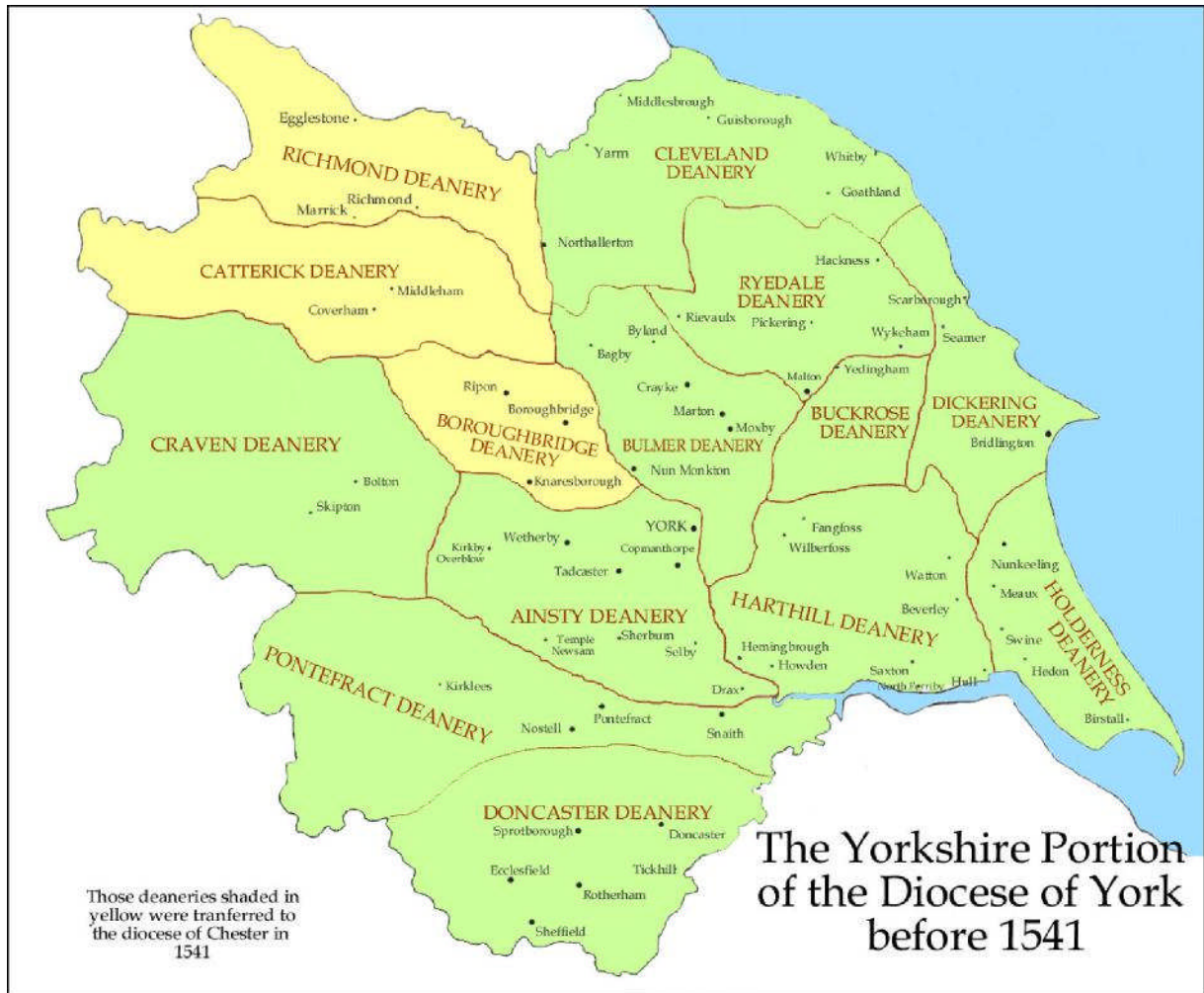
If probate was not proved in one of these courts then it may have been proved in the Prerogative Court of York (records at the Borthwick) - usually if the deceased was fairly wealthy and had left goods in more than one jurisdiction within the Northern province.

### Places in the Southern Province.

Start by contacting the local county record office who will be able to give you advice. The highest level probate court in the country was the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (contact the Family Record Centre, 1 Myddleton Street, London, EC1R 1UW, [www.pro.gov.uk](http://www.pro.gov.uk)). When a deceased had possessions in more than one jurisdiction, including the Southern Province, probate was proved at the PCC.



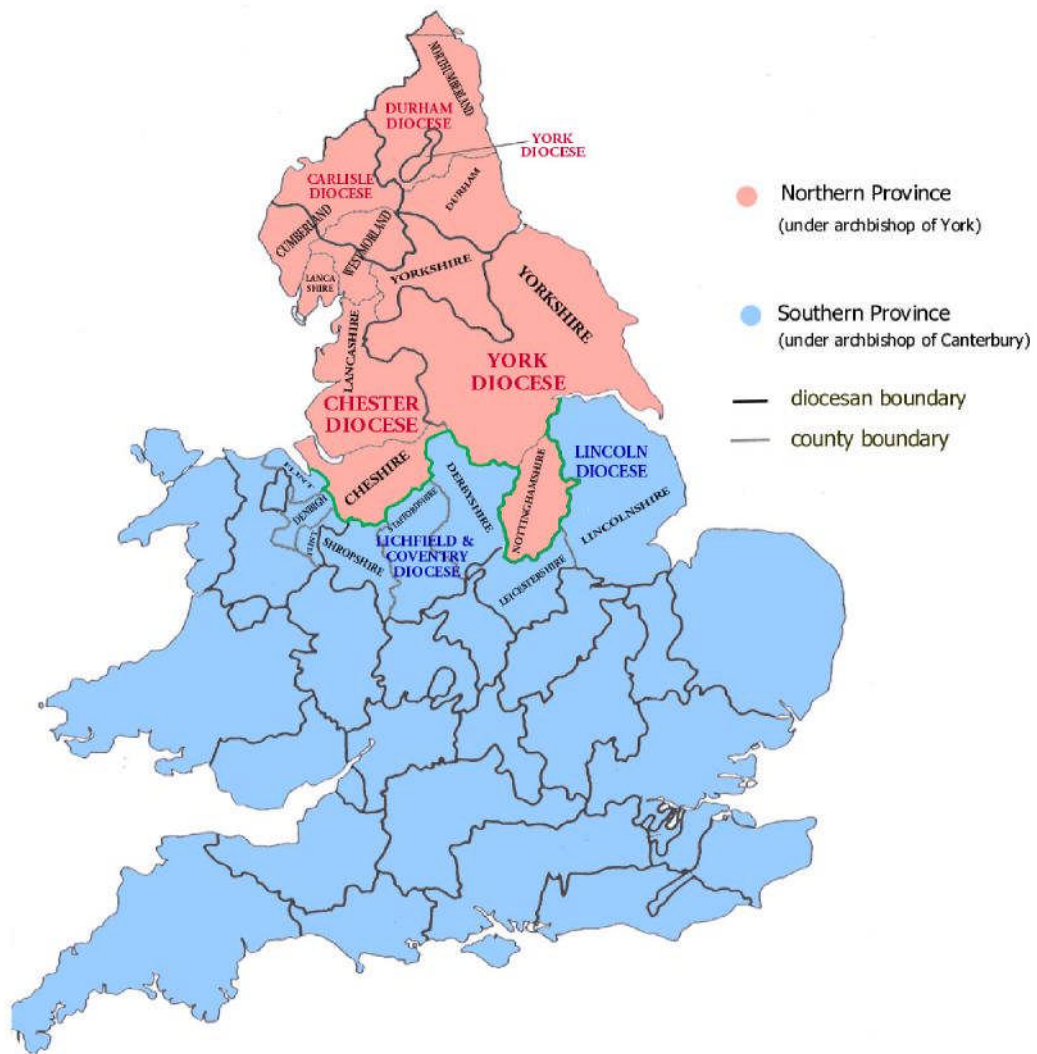
This map shows the diocese of York at about 1541. It is split into its individual deaneries. Note that the far north west of the county of Yorkshire (Richmondshire) was not part of the diocese at this date. For a map showing Richmondshire click [here](#).



This map shows the diocese of Yorkshire before the archdeaconry of Richmondshire (shaded yellow) was transferred to the diocese of Chester in 1541.



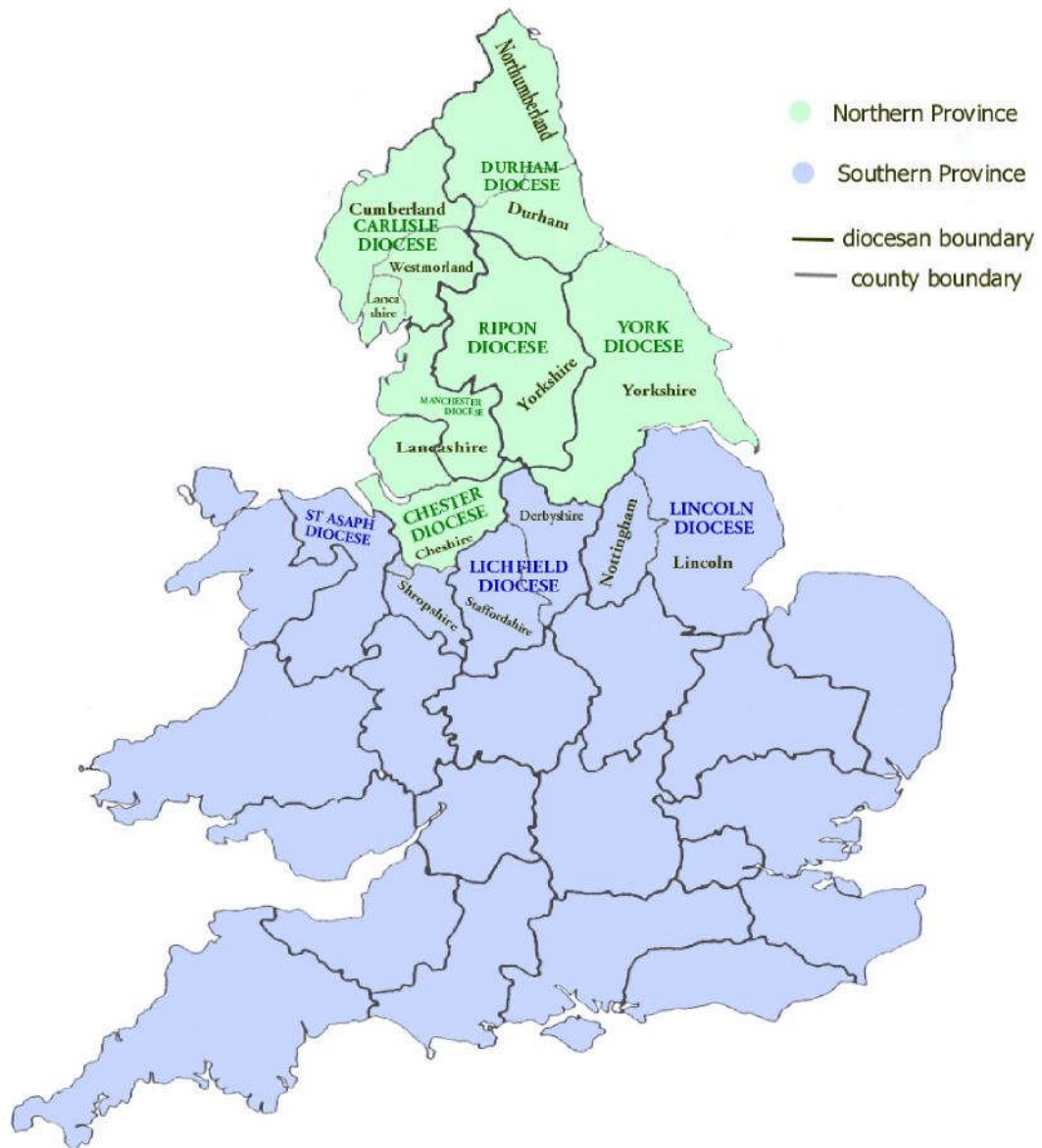
## The English Provinces of the Anglican Church c. 1835



This map shows the two major divisions of the Anglican Church - the Northern and Southern Province, as they were in about 1835. The northern province was comprised of 4 dioceses and this map also marks the positions of the counties which lay in the province. Only the positions of the Northern Province's immediate neighbours are shown in the Southern Province.

For a map of how the provinces were organised in c. 1850 click [here](#).

## The English Provinces of the Anglican Church c. 1850



This map shows the rearrangement that had taken place in the Northern Province between 1835 and 1850. Note that the new diocese of Ripon incorporated areas that had previously lain in York and Chester dioceses. York diocese also lost the archdeaconry of Nottingham, which became part of the Southern province.