

A BRIEF GUIDE TO SOURCES FOR GENEALOGY AND FAMILY HISTORY AT THE BORTHWICK INSTITUTE FOR ARCHIVES

This leaflet is designed to give a brief introduction to the main and most useful sources available at the Borthwick for genealogists and family historians. It is by no means exhaustive and more detailed information on these and other relevant records is given on our website.

PARISH REGISTERS AND BISHOPS' TRANSCRIPTS (PARISH REGISTER TRANSCRIPTS)

The Borthwick holds the parish records for the modern archdeaconry of York (which includes the city and approximately 20 miles around). This includes original registers of baptisms, marriages and burials as well as other documents and papers deposited by the parish officers. The earliest registers start in 1538 and many continue up into the 21st century. A list of the parishes and dates we cover is available online on our **Research Guides** page. We do not hold parish records for the archdeaconry of the East Riding or the archdeaconry of Cleveland. These are held by the East Yorkshire Record Office at Beverley and the North Yorkshire County Record Office at Northallerton respectively. Similarly the parish records for West Yorkshire are held by the West Yorkshire Archive Service; microfilm copies of the parish registers can be consulted at the WYAS Headquarters in Wakefield.

In addition we hold Bishops' transcripts (also known as Parish Register transcripts) for most of Yorkshire. These are contemporary copies of the parish registers of baptism, marriage and burial which were sent annually to the archbishop. These records can be very useful in supplementing gaps in original parish registers; occasionally there are entries in the BTs which do not appear in the original register and vice-versa. The earliest dates from 1598 but returns tend to be patchy until the late seventeenth century and none survive for the Commonwealth period (c. 1642-1660). Most parishes stopped returning Bishop's transcripts between 1830 and 1860. Please note that we do not hold the transcripts for the north-west of the county, specifically the deaneries of Richmond and Catterick. These transcripts are held at the West Yorkshire Archive Service office in Leeds. A detailed list of the Bishop's transcripts held at the Borthwick can be found in Norah K.M. Gurney, *A Handlist of Parish Register Transcripts in the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research*. This volume is now out of print but may be consulted at the Borthwick and in libraries. A basic list of parishes covered can be seen on our website, see our **Research Guides** page.

Some Yorkshire parish registers and Bishop's transcripts have been transcribed and published by the Yorkshire Parish Register Society and can therefore be consulted in reference libraries or ordered through inter-library loan. In addition we have copies of other register transcriptions produced by local or family history societies and individuals. A list of our transcripts is available on request in the search room reception.

MARRIAGE BONDS AND ALLEGATIONS

A marriage bond and allegation were drawn up when a couple wished for permission to marry by licence rather than the normal method of banns. They typically provide the names of the bride and groom, their parishes of residence, estimated ages and the name of the parish in which they intended to marry, although the quality of this information can vary. Bonds and allegations survive from c. 1660 to 1822, after which date only allegations were kept. The Borthwick has published surname indexes to bonds and allegations

issued by the authority of the archbishop for the period 1660 – 1839, and for the period 1630-1839 for those issued by the authority of the Dean and Chapter of York. An index is also available for marriage bonds issued by the Peculiar jurisdictions of Acomb, Alne and Tollerton, Bishop Wilton, Fenton, Hexham, Howdenshire, Selby, Snaith and South Cave. Licences themselves rarely survive, but an index for the period 1374-1531 is printed in *Surtees Society* vol. 45 and for 1567-1714 in the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, vols.7-20, *Yorkshire Archaeological Society Extra Series*, vol.2, and in *the Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series* vols. 40, 43 and 46.

PROBATE RECORDS

The Borthwick Institute holds probate records (wills, inventories, administration bonds and other related records) which passed through the Exchequer and Prerogative Courts at York between 1389 and January 1858. The Exchequer court had jurisdiction over individuals with land or property in the Diocese of York. This covered most of Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, with the exception of the deaneries of Richmond and Catterick. The Prerogative court had jurisdiction over individuals who held land or property in more than one jurisdiction of the Northern Province (covering the counties of Cheshire, Lancashire, Westmorland, Cumberland, Northumberland, Durham, Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire). The series is continuous except for the period of the Commonwealth (1653-1660) when probate was dealt with at a central court in London. After January 1858 responsibility for probate was removed from the church and transferred to a new national, civil probate court. Enquiries regarding probate after January 1858 should be directed to the York Probate Sub-Registry in York.

In addition there were many smaller courts within the diocese capable of granting probate, for which records exist from the 14th century onwards. These are often known as 'Peculiar' jurisdictions. The records of these courts are also held at the Borthwick Institute, although they survive with differing degrees of completeness. The largest collection of material relates to probate passed by the Dean and Chapter court, which had jurisdiction over much of York city and other areas of the Diocese. This court also had responsibility for all probate passed during periods of vacancy when there was no Archbishop. The Chancery court, which probated the estates of clergymen, amongst others, is also sizeable.

Alphabetical surname indexes to the probate records of the main Exchequer and Prerogative courts between 1389 and 1688, the jurisdiction of the Dean and Chapter, 1321-1724, and of the Chancery court 1316-1822 have been published in the *Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series*, volumes 4, 6, 11, 14, 19, 22, 24, 26, 28, 32, 35, 49, 60, 68, 73, 78, 89, 93. Alphabetical surname indexes to the Exchequer and Prerogative courts between 1688 and 1731 are available in the Borthwick search room, or via the Latter Day Saints Family History Centres. The indexes for the Exchequer and Prerogative Courts between 1389 and 1500, and 1731 and January 1858, are now available to search online via the Origins Network (www.origins.net). These indexes can be searched remotely at the payment of a small fee, or onsite at the Borthwick Institute for free. The indexes for the thirty or so Peculiar jurisdiction are also available on Origins. We anticipate that eventually all of our probate indexes will be searchable in this way. For up-to-date information please check our website.

Onsite visitors are able to consult microfilms of all probate registers (contemporary copies of wills copied into large volumes) for the main Exchequer and Prerogative courts, and microfilms of the probate files for the Peculiar courts.

CENSUS RECORDS

No population census material is held at the Borthwick Institute and we do not have an institutional subscription to Ancestry.co.uk. For locations of census returns see *Census Returns 1841-1891 in microform: A directory to local holdings in Great Britain*, Jeremy Gibson & Elizabeth Hampson, 6th edn 1994, Federation of Family History Societies.

VISITING US

The Borthwick Institute is open to anyone who wishes to use our archive material for research. However, as the search room and microfilm room are often busy we recommend that you contact us in advance to book a seat or microfilm reader. Staff are also available via telephone (01904 321166) or email (bihr500@york.ac.uk) to answer questions about our holdings or to help you plan your visit.

Many genealogical records are only available for consultation on microfilm. This includes parish registers, bishop's transcripts (also known as parish register transcripts), probate records and marriage bonds. This step has been taken to ensure the long-term preservation of documents which would otherwise receive very heavy use. A majority of these microfilms can also be consulted by arrangement and payment of a small fee at one of the many Family History Centres run by the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. See <http://www.familysearch.org> for a searchable list of locations.

SEARCHING SERVICE

If you are unable to visit us in person, it is possible to commission a member of our staff to consult the records on your behalf under the remit of our searching service. There is a minimum fee of £15.00 payable in advance which covers the first half-hour of research time. Thereafter payment is at the rate of £15.00 per half-hour. We can also offer transcription and translation services for documents in our custody. Further information can be found on our **Research Support** page.

COPIES OF DOCUMENTS

A copying service is available for many categories of archives including probate documents, marriage bonds and allegations, and parish registers. For conservation reasons the Borthwick will not make photocopies from parish registers or Bishop's transcripts, or from any other bound volumes, although this material may be suitable for digital reproduction from microfilm or the original record. Certified copies can also be provided for statutory purposes and typed transcripts can be obtained through our searching service. Further information about these services, as well as our pricing structure, is available on our **Copying** page.

For further advice or information, please see our website www.york.ac.uk/borthwick or contact us via email at bihr500@york.ac.uk.

The Borthwick Institute for Archives
University of York
Heslington
YORK
YO10 5DD
Searchrooms: (01904) 321166 | bihr500@york.ac.uk