

Norfolk Record Office Information leaflet 46

Archdeacons' and Bishop's Transcripts

1. Introduction

These are contemporary copies of parish registers made annually by each incumbent and sent to the diocesan authorities. Before 1812, incumbents in the diocese of Norwich made the returns to their archdeacons for approximately six years out of every seven, the exceptions being bishop's visitation years, when the transcript was sent to the bishop. From 1813 onwards, all transcripts were sent to the bishop. Therefore, which series of records you need will depend on which years you wish to search.

The earliest transcripts survive from 1600 onwards. However, there are gaps in both series of transcripts, as incumbents sometimes did not send them in to the authorities, and some transcripts simply have not survived.

2. When to use the transcripts:

It is usually best to use the parish registers if they survive, but the transcripts are useful if:

- the parish register has been lost or
 - the parish register is still in the parish or
 - the parish register is too fragile to use or
 - the parish register is thought to be incomplete or
- the parish register is difficult to read – the transcript may be easier.

The practice of sending copies of the registers to the diocesan authorities died out after the introduction of civil registration in 1837, although some parishes continued with the practice well into the twentieth century. However, it is very rare to find a marriage entry in a transcript after 1837.

3. The Archdeacons' Transcripts:

These are arranged alphabetically by parish, and are available on microfiche in the NRO public searchroom. They are available prior to 1812 only, as from 1813 onwards all returns went to the bishop. The earliest archdeacons' transcripts survive from 1600 onwards, but for many parishes they do not survive until the eighteenth century. If you are searching for an entry prior to 1812 and you do not have a specific year in mind, it is easier to search the archdeacons' transcripts first and fill in the gaps with the bishop's transcripts.

4. The Bishop's Transcripts (BTs):

The BTs are arranged differently to the Ats as they are in two series, for the Norwich Archdeaconry and the Norfolk Archdeaconry. Within the Archdeaconry, they are in yearly bundles, and the parishes are arranged

alphabetically on the microfiche/film for each year. The pre-1812 BTs are available on microfilm, the post-1812 on microfiche.

5. Exceptions:

- Parishes which were historically in the County of Suffolk and the archdeaconry of Suffolk are **Belton, Bradwell, Burgh Castle, Fritton near Yarmouth** and **Gorleston**. archdeacons' and bishop's transcripts for these parishes are held at the Suffolk Record Office.
- **Norwich Parishes:** to make it easier to search the whole city, all the archdeacons' transcripts are grouped together by year with the exceptions of **St James Pockthorpe, St Mary in the Marsh** and **St Paul** – these have their own series of archdeacons' transcripts. **St Helen** is another exception as no transcripts at all for this parish survive before 1813.
- **Great Yarmouth:** as well as the archdeacons' and bishop's transcripts, Yarmouth has another alternative source in the form of the Weekly Register Bills – these cover the period 1773-1841 and are often much easier to read than the archdeacons' and bishop's transcripts. They are available on microfiche in the public searchroom and are kept in the binder marked **Great Yarmouth Weekly Register Bills**.
- **Castle Rising:** archdeacons' transcripts for this parish continue beyond 1812 up to 1818.
- **Great Cressingham:** No archdeacons' transcripts survive.
- **Thorpe St Andrew:** all transcripts were sent to the Bishop.
- **Emneth:** this parish was in the Diocese of Ely. All archdeacons' and bishop's transcripts are among the Ely diocesan records at the University of Cambridge Library.



If you need this leaflet in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language, please contact the County Archivist on 01603 222599 and we will do our best to help.

Produced by:

Norfolk Record Office

Tel: 01603 222599

The Archive Centre
Martineau Lane
Norwich
NR1 2DQ

Fax: 01603 761885
E-mail: norfec@norfolk.gov.uk
Website:
<http://archives.norfolk.gov.uk/>



© Norfolk Record Office, May 2006

