

WHAT'S IN YOUR PARISH CHEST

The "Parish Chest", with its three locks, was used to store not only the registers of baptisms, marriages and burials but also a great variety of other records produced by and for assorted parish officials.

The office of churchwarden is an ancient one, but between the sixteenth and the nineteenth century, the parish gradually became more involved in the local government of their area, especially where manorial control was weak. Over the centuries, various acts of parliament also increased parish responsibility, such as the maintenance of the poor, highways, law and order, etc.

The majority of these records are to be found in the local diocesan (county) record offices. However, their survival depended not only upon the local mouse population, but also the housekeeping enthusiasm of various people keen to clear away old 'rubbish'.

This talk aims to introduce you to some of those parish officials and the records they produced - with special emphasis on those sources which include personal names.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY / BOOK LIST

BASIC FACTS SERIES: ... using *BAPTISM Records for FH*, P M LITTON (FFHS, 1996)

... using *MARRIAGE Records for FH*, PM LITTON & CR CHAPMAN (FFHS, 1996)

... using *DEATH & BURIAL Records for FH*, L GIBBENS (FFHS, 2nd, 1999)

T BENTON: *Irregular Marriage in London before 1754* (SOG, 1993)

BOURNE & CHICKEN: *Records of the Church of England* (1991)

C R CHAPMAN: *Sin, Sex and Probate: Ecclesiastical Courts, Officials & Records* (Lochin Pubs, 1992)

T V H FITZHUGH: *Dictionary of Genealogy*, (A & C BLACK, 4th, 1994)

W FOOT: *Maps for Family History - Readers' Guide no.9* (PRO, 1994)

GIBSON Guide: *Bishops' Transcripts & Marriage Licences* (FFHS, 5th, 2000)

GIBSON Guide: *Marriage & Census & other Indexes* (FFHS, 8th, 2000)

GIBSON Guide: *Specialist Indexes for family historians* (FFHS, 2nd, 2000)

INTRODUCTION SERIES: ... to *Poor Law Documents before 1834*, A COLE (FFHS, 2nd, 2000)

... to *Church Registers*, L GIBBENS (FFHS, 1997)

LDS CHURCH: *The I.G.I.* - on microfiche, CD-ROM or Web-site (various dates)

E L C MULLINS: *Texts & Calendars* (RHS, 2 vols, 1958 & 1983) - Parish registers, etc. in print

E L NICHOLS: *The International Genealogical Index, 1992 ed* (SOG, 1995)

S RAYMOND: *English Genealogy* (FFHS, 3rd, 1996)

S RAYMOND: *Genealogical Bibliography* - by county (FFHS, various dates).

J RICHARDSON: *Local Historian's Encyclopedia*, (Historical Publications Ltd, 1993)

M E BRYANT ROSIER: *Index to Parishes in Phillimore's Marriage Registers* (FTM, 1991)

P SAUL: *The Family Historian's ENQUIRE WITHIN* (FFHS, 5th, 1995)

IHGS: *Parish Register Maps* - English counties, Wales (3) & Scotland (12) (IHGS)

SOG: *County Sources at the Society of Genealogists*, by county (various dates)

SOG: *Marriage Licences: Abstracts & Indexes in SOG Library (LS-2)* (SOG, 1991)

SOG: *List of Parishes in Boyd's Marriage Index (LS-3)* (SOG, 1994)

SOG: *National Index of Parish Registers* - series, by county

W E TATE: *The Parish Chest* (Phillimore 1946, 1983)

WILTS. FHS: *The Compleat Parish Officer* (Wilts FHS, facsimile reprint [1774] 1996)

WILTS. FHS: *The Handy Book of Parish Law* (Wilts FHS, facsimile reprint)

Abbreviations

IGI - International Genealogical Index

IHGS - Institute of Heraldic & Genealogical Studies

NIPR - National Index of Parish Registers

SOG - Society of Genealogists

Jean DEBNEY (May 2001)

8 Huckleberry Close, Purley on Thames, Reading, Berks RG8 8EH

Tel: 0118 941 3223; e-mail <jeandebney@onename.demon.co.uk>