

Parish Registers



What is a Parish Register?

- Record of baptisms, marriages, and burials made by the Church
- Useful source for information before 1837 (civil registration) & first full census in 1841
- Issued by Cromwell in 1538 after split with Rome for every parish to keep a register

History of PRs

- 1538 parish registers introduced
- 1597 parchment book to be used
 - previous records copied into new books
 - copy of year's entries sent to bishop
- 1642-51 (English Civil War) many PRs lost or destroyed
- 1753 Hardwicke's Marriage Act, stop "clandestine" marriages
 - marriages in licensed place (parish church) by banns or licence
 - separate marriage registers to be kept
- 1812 Standardisation pre-printed registers for separate baptisms, marriages and burials
- 1836 Marriage Act
 - allowed non-conformists & Catholics to marry in their own church
 - non-religious marriages could be held in register offices

What is a Parish ?

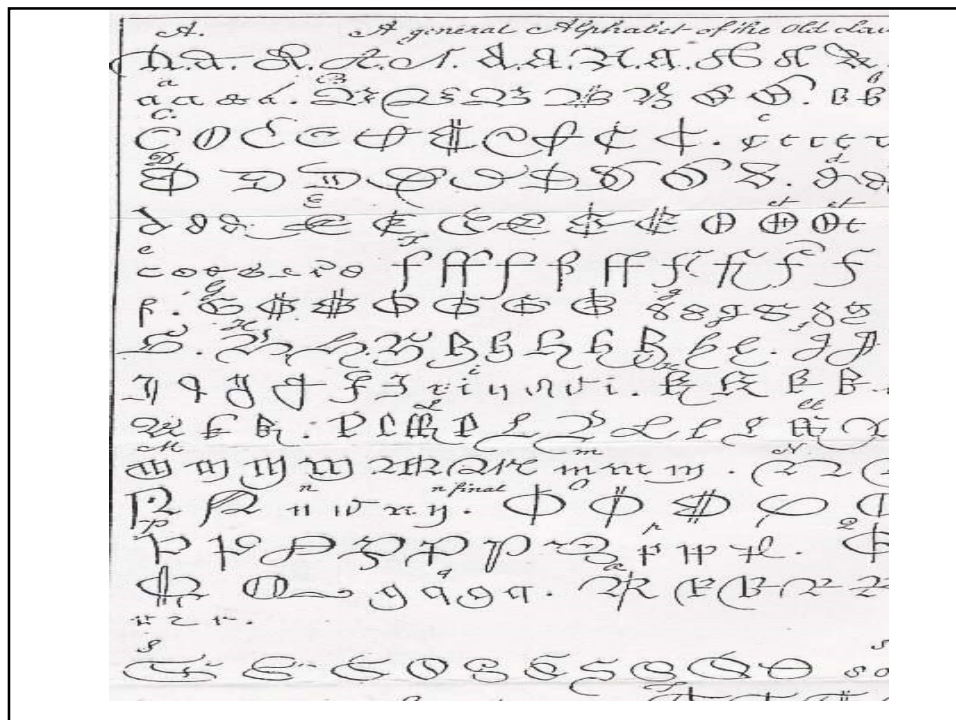
- "Ancient" parishes with a parish church (often mapped onto area of manor)
- Population growth in 1800s → creation of new ecclesiastical parishes
- Lancashire had few ancient parishes, often covering large area
 - subdivided into chapelries, each with church (chapel of ease)
 - later became parishes in their own right
- New churches could not always carry out all ceremonies
- Census pages show ecclesiastical parish, civil parish etc.
- GENUKI website good source for parish information

Early Parish Registers

- Little detail on early PRs – e.g. name only
- Latin commonly used until mid 1700s
- Julian calendar used until 1752
- Many registers missing, destroyed, or unreadable
- No standard size register or page layout
- Handwriting style can be tricky to read
- Sometimes baptisms, burials & marriages in same register

Handwriting – Alphabet Examples

Aa	Bb	Cc	Dd	Ee	Ff	Gg	Hh	Ii	Jj	Kk	Ll	Mm	Nn	Oo	Pp	Qq	Rr	Ss	Tt	Uu	Vv	Ww	Xx	Yy	Zz
<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>K</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Q</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>Z</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>K</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Q</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>Z</i>
<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>q</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>y</i>	<i>z</i>
<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>q</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>y</i>	<i>z</i>



Baptism records usually show:

- Name of child
- Baptism date & place
- Father's name
- Mother's name (not maiden name)
- Possibly :- (* = required after 1813)
 - Abode*
 - Father's occupation*
 - Birth date
- Earlier records generally show less information

Parish Bantism Record						
BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of <u>Newham</u> in the County of <u>Northampton</u> in the Year 18 <u>27</u>						
When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parent's Name.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, Or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
18 27 11 th February No. 268	George son of	John Mey.	Hood	Newham	Shoe maker	P. Green
25 th March No. 266	John son of	John Jenny	Moul	Newham	Labourer	P. Green
23 ^d July No. 272	Harriet Daughter of	James Maria	Leeson	Newham	Labourer	P. Green
6 th May No. 269	Letitia Daughter of	Joseph Ran	Johnson	Newham	Labourer	P. Green
20 th May No. 270	Mary Daughter of	James May	Watts	Newham	Labourer	P. Green
3 ^d June No. 271	James son of	Martin Mary	Brown	Newham	Labourer	P. Green

Burial records usually show:

- Date of burial
- Name of deceased
- If deceased is a child, father's name might be given
- If married woman, husband's name might be given
- If widow, this might be noted
- Possibly:- (* = required after 1813)
 - Abode*
 - Age at death*
 - Occupation

Parish Burial Record

BURIALS in the Parish of <u>Newnham</u> in the County of <u>Northants</u> in the Year 18 <u>87</u>				
Name	Abode	Where buried	Age	By whom the Ceremony was performed
<i>George Russell</i> No. 785	<i>Newnham</i>	<i>Oct 17</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>At Newnham</i>
<i>Mary Russell</i> No. 786	<i>Newnham</i>	<i>Oct 22</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>At Newnham</i>
<i>Dorothy Walker</i> No. 787	<i>Newnham</i>	<i>Jan 30</i>	<i>2 days</i>	<i>At Newnham</i>
<i>James Tison</i> No. 788	<i>Newnham</i>	<i>Jan 28</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>At Newnham</i>
<i>Rosa Shaw</i> No. 789	<i>Newnham</i>	<i>March 9</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>At Newnham</i>
<i>John Bird</i> No. 790	<i>Newnham</i>	<i>May 2</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>W. Stratton</i>
<i>Henry Thomas Robinson</i> No. 791	<i>Newnham</i>	<i>May 12</i>	<i>9 days</i>	<i>At Newnham</i>
<i>Edel Mary Cox</i> No. 792	<i>Newnham</i>	<i>May 30</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>At Newnham</i>

Marriage records usually show:

- Date of marriage
- Name of bride & groom
- Abode of bride & groom
- Marital status of bride & groom
- Signature of bride & groom (from 1753)
- Names of two witnesses (from 1753)
- Age of bride & groom (from 1837)
- Name & occupation of fathers (from 1837)

Parish Marriage Record

MARRIAGES solemnized in the Parish of Newnham
in the County of Northampton
James Leeson Bachelor
and Mariah Falkner Spinster
were married in this Church by Banns
this second
July in the Year One thousand eight hundred and twent
By me Richard Welfield officiating
This Marriage was solemnized between us { The T of James Leeson
The Y of Mariah Falkner

RC Baptism records

- Can contain very useful information
- Baptism register often shows:-
 - Date of birth
 - Mother's maiden name
 - Godparents' names
 - Marriage details (of person baptised)
- Often get comments, e.g. baptised at home, conditional etc.

Where to find Parish Registers

- There is no overall index to parish registers
- Many original PRs stored in County Record Offices & Archives
 - may have microfilm/fiche copies
- Some churches still keep original PRs
- Books/CDs of transcribed & indexed PRs
 - usually by church, PR Society, FH society
- LDS Family History Centres
 - access to many pre 1900 PRs filmed & transcribed by LDS
- Various websites (some free, some pay for)

Useful Websites (1)

- GENUKI – “virtual reference library of genealogical information on towns, parishes, churches”
- UKBMD – links to websites offering PRs
- Online Parish Clerks - e.g. Lancashire OPC
 - transcribed & indexed parish registers
 - parish histories
- Lancashire (& other) Archives catalogue
 - shows registers held
- Family Search (LDS church)
 - access to IGI transcribed records
 - mainly baptisms & marriages pre 1900

Useful Websites (2)

- National Archives
- Ancestry (£) – some PRs with images
- Find My Past (£) – some PRs with images
- Scotland's People (£) – some PRs with images
- Roots Ireland (£) – some transcribed PRs
- The Genealogist (£) – claims more non-conformist PRs

Using Parish Registers - Things to remember

- Not all PRs have survived
- No overall “catalogue” of PRs
- Be aware of main parish church & district churches – what/when they could perform
- Different websites have different selections
- Not everyone was baptised
 - child died very young
 - some baptised later in life
 - some families baptised children in “batches”
 - gaps due to fees in late 1700s

Using Parish Registers – Some Tips

- Marriages often in bride's home parish
- LBMD website gives church used for marriage
- Burials not always where person died
 - check town cemeteries (from late 1800s)
- If problems, check churches nearby & parish church
- Check which church other family members used
- Always try to see original register if possible
- Check for Bishop's Transcripts if PR not found
- Keep a research log & keep trying !
 - more records may appear online in future