Church of England Registers

- About 12,000 ancient parishes in England and Wales
- 1538 – Parish Registers begin
  - Not many survive
- 1598 – Bishop’s Transcripts begin
  - Switch to parchment (from paper)
  - Made copies of earlier registers (on parchment)
- 1558 – more survive because of the 1598 order to copy at least to beginning of the reign of Elizabeth I
- Post-1837 should still be used to ease use of Civ Reg (marriage info is same and helps with under-reported births before 1875)

Phillimore’s Atlas

- Has 1834 topographical maps of Wales, Scotland, and England
- Has Maps of the ancient (pre-1830-ish) parishes along with what jurisdictions they belong to
- Contains basic information on indexes available for parishes

Baptisms

- Usually occurred within 2 months of birth
- 1538-1812
  - Date of baptism
  - Name of child
  - Name of father, and perhaps of mother
  - May have additional information depending on the curate/vicar/rector/priest
- 1813
  - 1812 Rose’s Act required all registers be kept on official pre-printed books (a separate one for each event: christenings, marriages, and burials)
  - Date of baptism
  - Name of child
  - Names of both parents
  - Residence of parents
  - Occupation
  - Person performing the ceremony

Burials

- 1538-1812
  - Name of deceased
  - Date of burial
  - May have additional information like the name of a spouse, occupation, age, name of a parent, cause of death, and residence
- 1813
– Rose’s Act of 1812 required pre-printed books be used
– Name of deceased
– Residence
– Date of burial
– Age
– Person who performed the funeral

Other Considerations
• Early registers were often entirely or partially in Latin
• Disruptions between 1640-1660 due to Civil War and the Commonwealth (though they kept a civil version of parish registers)
• Local conditions may have precluded the entry of events (taxes on entries, epidemics, natural disasters)
• Varies in what parish priests recorded
  – Dade Registers in Yorkshire/Lancashire (1770-1812)
• Compare with BTs whenever possible
• 1667 and 1678 Burial in Wool Acts (repealed in 1814)
  – All bodies had to be buried in wool only (unless they died from plague)
  – Penalty for not doing so was 5 pounds
• 1751-52 Lord Chesterfield’s Act
  – Calendar from Julian to Gregorian
  – 2 September to 14 September 1752
• 1783 Stamp Act (repealed 1794)
  – 3 pence tax on each entry in the parish registers

Marriages
• 1538-1754
  – Name of bride and groom
  – Date of marriage
  – May give occupation, residence, parent names, witness names, whether by banns or license, and condition

Lord Hardwicke’s Marriage Act 1753
• Went into effect 25 March 1754
• To prevent clandestine marriages
• Marriage had to be performed in home parish of one member of the couple
• Had to be done by Anglican clergy, with at least two witnesses and only after banns were published or license obtained
  – Did not apply to Jews and Quakers
  – Minors had to have parental permission

Effects of Lord Hardwicke’s Act
• Registers for marriage and banns kept separately from baptisms and burials
• Pre-printed books
  – Residences of both spouses
  – Marital status
- Banns or license
- Groom’s occupation
- Signatures/marks of bride, groom, two witnesses, and clergyman
  - One witness often churchwarden or parish clerk

Marriages
- After 1823 banns had to be published in both parishes
- Three weeks’ residence minimum requirement to be “of this parish”

Accessibility
- Most are stored at CROs
- FHL has an excellent filmed collection
- *National Index of Parish Registers* (SoG) lists information on coverage and location of surviving parish registers
  - HBLL Ref CD 1068 .A2 S8, several volumes
- *Gibson’s Bishop’s Transcripts and Marriage Licences*
  - Lists locations of all BTs
  - HBLL Ref CS 412.G52x 1983

Searching Parish Registers
- Always search any available Bishop’s Transcripts and Transcripts, even if you locate them in the PRs
- IGI (for both place and name)
  - Christenings and marriages only
- British Vital Records Index (BVRI)
  - Christenings and marriages only
  - Not exactly like IGI
- Online (see handout)
  - Ancestry, freecen.org.uk, ukbmd.org.uk, genuki, cyndislist

Burial Indexes
- National Burial Index
  - Compiled by FFHS
- Monumental Inscriptions
  - From local FHS

Marriage Indexes
- Boyd’s Marriage Index
  - Organized by county, then by surname
  - Available online at originsnetwork
  - FHL
  - See Pratt handout for details for your county
- Pallot’s Marriage Index
  - Card index
  - Mostly London and Middlesex
  - Available on ancestry.co.uk