Lambeth Palace Library Research Guide
Biographical Sources for Anglican Clergy

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1 Introduction
This guide is an introduction to sources for those engaged in biographical research on individuals who have served as members of the Anglican clergy.

It refers to archival, manuscript and printed resources. Please note that not all the sources mentioned are held at Lambeth Palace Library. Many of the published works included here will be held by local reference or local studies libraries.

When researching the life of Anglican clergy, it can be worthwhile consulting the Library’s related guide: Sources for Family History and Genealogy. Peter Towey, My Ancestor was an Anglican Clergyman (London, 2006) may also be a good starting point.

2  Birth, Adoption, Marriage and Death

Basic genealogical information on births, marriages and deaths can be found for clergymen in just the same way as for other members of the population. It is likely that a clergyman would have been baptised, married and buried as an Anglican and that a record of these events would have been kept in the parish register of the church concerned.

Relevant registers may be identified using:


After 1837 these events were registered nationally and certificates may be obtained from the General Register Office ([www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/research/index.asp](http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/research/index.asp))

Copies of all wills admitted to probate in England and Wales from 1858 are held by the Principal Registry of the Family Division, 1st Avenue House, 42-49 High Holborn, London WC1V 6NP, ([www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk/infoabout/civil/probate/index.htm](http://www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk/infoabout/civil/probate/index.htm))

For further information, contact the Society of Genealogists, 14 Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Road, London EC1M 7BA, UK, ([www.sog.org.uk](http://www.sog.org.uk)) or your local record office (a list is maintained by the National Archives: ([www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archon](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archon)). Another useful online guide to the location of sources for family history is Familia: ([www.familia.org.uk](http://www.familia.org.uk))

3  University Education

The vast majority of Church of England clergymen were university graduates. Degrees prior to the 19th century would almost invariably have been at Oxford or Cambridge. The Oxbridge registers include biographical information. Registers of graduates of several of the Cambridge and Oxford colleges have also been published.

J. and J.A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses : a biographical list of all known students, graduates and holders of office at the University of Cambridge, from the earliest times to 1900* (Cambridge, 1922-54). Also now available online as a searchable database through ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)) (subscription required).


See also [http://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk/Documents/acad/2016/search-2016.html](http://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk/Documents/acad/2016/search-2016.html)

For glossaries to terms, see:
J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: the members of the University of Oxford, 1500-1714…*, (Oxford, 1891-92)


G.D. Burtchaell and T.U. Sadleir (eds.), *Alumni Dublinenses: a register of the students, graduates, professors and provosts of Trinity college in the University of Dublin (1593-1860)*, (Dublin, 2001, reprint with supplement) (List only, no biographical information)

Printed registers have been produced for some other universities including Durham and London (England); Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and St. Andrews (Scotland).

There are also a number of published registers of schools (mainly the older public establishments).

A small number of degrees were awarded by the Archbishop of Canterbury through the Faculty Office. For information on these ‘Lambeth degrees’ see the Lambeth Palace Library website: [www.lambethpalacelibrary.org/content/churchadministration](http://www.lambethpalacelibrary.org/content/churchadministration)

Theological colleges were founded from the early nineteenth century onwards and provided education and training for non-graduates. See:

Munden and N. Pollard, *Anglican theological, missionary and educational institutions in the United Kingdom and Ireland* (Coventry, 1998). (The Library has only limited holdings).

For recent information, see the latest edition of the *Church of England Year Book*.

For historical background on clergy education/training, see published works such as:


For university education of Archbishops of Canterbury, see the Lambeth Palace Library website: [www.lambethpalacelibrary.org/files/archbishops_universities.pdf](http://www.lambethpalacelibrary.org/files/archbishops_universities.pdf)
4 Clerical Directories

For information on Crockford’s and other clerical directories, a key source of information for clerical biography, see the related Research Guide.

LOCAL SOURCES

In addition, there are many local and diocesan publications – church calendars, yearbooks and directories (e.g. London Diocese Yearbook and Canterbury Diocesan Directory) - which often contain career information and obituaries. The majority of these started publication in the 19th century. A few are held at Lambeth Palace Library but they should also be held at local reference libraries and record offices. They do not usually include detailed genealogical or biographical information.

HIGHER CLERGY

The Church of England Year Book... (London, 1883-). It includes a ‘Who’s Who’ section (a directory of General Synod members, suffragan bishops, deans, provosts, and archdeacons who are not members of General Synod).

J. Le Neve, Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae. (London, 1716). (Revised and enlarged by T. Duffus Hardy in 1854.) This contains referenced lists of higher clergy of the Church, tracing the chronology and careers of all bishops, deans, archdeacons and canons of England and Wales from 1066 to the mid-nineteenth century, when Crockford’s Clerical Directory was first published. The Institute of Historical Research is making some of the indexes available online: www.history.ac.uk/fasti/index.html

The companion volumes for the Church of Ireland are H. Cotton, Fasti Ecclesiae Hibernicae... (Dublin, 1848-60) and for the Episcopal Church in Scotland: D.M. Bertie, Scottish Episcopal Clergy, 1689-2000 (Edinburgh, 2000).

J. Smallwood, typescript lists with biographical details of bishops, by diocese (41 volumes held by Lambeth Palace Library)

For other Anglican Churches overseas, see the list at the end of this guide.

5 General Reference Books

Many higher clergy are included in general reference works, which can provide a starting-point for research. For Archbishops of Canterbury see the Library’s Biographical Sources for Archbishops of Canterbury 597-1070 and Biographical Sources for Archbishops of Canterbury 1052-present.

Archbishops, many bishops and significant members of the clergy have entries in the Dictionary of National Biography (DNB), the standard biographical source (with bibliographies) for people of Britain, Ireland and the colonies.

See also the Peart-Binns episcopal biography archive: [www.brad.ac.uk/library/special/pbepisc.php](http://www.brad.ac.uk/library/special/pbepisc.php)

For the names of consecrating bishops at bishops’ consecrations [England only], try:

- Archbishops’ Registers
- *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entries
- William Stubbs’ *Registrum Sacrum Anglicanum* (O.U.P., 1858). Copy in Library reading room; also available online in the [Internet Archive](http://www.archive.org) and [Google Books](http://www.google.co.uk).  

The historical successions of bishops are listed in Crockford’s: [www.crockford.org.uk/listings-section/historical-successions](http://www.crockford.org.uk/listings-section/historical-successions)

Information at the National Archives on ecclesiastical appointments is at reference PREM 5: [http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk)

For episcopal heraldry, the Library holds various sources, including MSS 4732-4733 (Episcopal Armorial, c.1692-94), and printed sources including:

William Kirkpatrick Riland Bedford, *The blazon of episcopacy: being the arms borne by or attributed to the archbishops and bishops of England and Wales, with an ordinary of the coats described and of other episcopal arms ...* (O.U.P., 1897)


For the 19th century, the following covers less well-known individuals, and supplements information in the DNB:

F. Boase, *Modern English Biography...of persons who have died since 1850* (London, [1892-1921] 1965)

*Who’s Who: An Annual Biographical Dictionary*. Has been published annually since 1849, containing detailed information on many major figures around the world. The earlier issues simply contain lists of names. The Library holds current issues only.


The Library also has a large collection of biographies of Anglican clergy. They
include memoirs of relatively obscure individuals as well as better-known clerics. See the Library’s online catalogue of printed books for further information.

6 Local Information

Local record and history society publications and directories can be very helpful in unearthing information about individuals associated with a particular area, as can published family and local histories and the journals of national and local historical, genealogical and record societies.


Official diocesan publications (e.g. Canterbury and London) are noted under clerical directories, above. Diocesan histories may also be useful. The Library also has substantial holdings of Irish diocesan clergy lists/biographies and histories.


G. Hennessy, Chichester Diocese Clergy Lists...to the year 1900 (London, 1900)

G. Hennessy, Novum Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Parochiale Londinense: or, London diocesan clergy (London, 1898) covers the period 1321-1898, giving details of institutions and collations of incumbents.

Virginia Davis, Clergy in London in the Late Middle Ages: a register of clergy ordained in the diocese of London based on episcopal ordination lists, 1361-1539 (London 2000), including lists on CD-ROM

Longden H.I., (ed.) Northamptonshire and Rutland clergy from 1500 (Northampton, 1938-43)

Nicholas Bennett, Lincolnshire Parish Clergy, c.1214-1968: A Biographical Register: Part I: The Deaneries of Aslaco and Aveland (Lincoln Record Society, 2013), and succeeding volumes.

MS. 1611 is a typescript alphabetical list of Hampshire clergy, 1250-1910, compiled by Dr S. Anderson.

Diocesan records may also contain information about the career of an individual clergyman, though they are usually formal documents with little personal detail. D.M. Owen, Records of the Established Church in England, excluding parochial records (London: British Records Association, 1970; Archives and the user; no. 1). These
include ordination records and records of appointments of parochial and other clergy.

Occasionally personal details about a clergyman are given in visitation returns, answers to visitation articles circulated by a diocesan bishop or archdeacon. The articles usually asked whether the incumbent was resident in the parish, and if not whether the duty was being performed by a licensed curate. The Library has visitation returns for the diocese of Canterbury, 1758-1935, the Archbishop’s peculiar, 1717-1807, and the diocese of London, 1763-1900. Call books (Libri cleri) record the names of clergy summoned to appear during a visitation. The Library has call books for the bishop of London, 1763-1803 passim (Fulham Papers), the archbishop’s peculiar, 1637-1845 (Vicar General: VH 56), and the archdeaconry of Cornwall, 1713-1749 (Court of Arches Exhibits Ff 35c-v). The Cornish series records dates of induction of incumbents.

Details from the 1758 visitation returns for the diocese and peculiar of Canterbury were recorded by Archbishop Secker in his diocesan survey or speculum, which has recently been published: Jeremy Gregory, The Speculum of Archbishop Thomas Secker, [1758-1768] (Church of England Record Society, vol. 2, 1995). Other visitation returns have been published.

Parish records may contain information about the living held by an individual clergyman; sometimes personal correspondence and papers are also contained in such an archive. Parish records should be held at the local record office.

Lambeth Palace Library holds a very large collection of printed parish guides. Search the online catalogue for more information, using the name of the parish as the subject, corporate author and/or keyword.

7 Periodical Publications and Obituaries

Biographical information (including obituary notices) can be found in church and national newspapers, journal publications and annual reports, but please note that few of these are well or reliably indexed.

The Church Times...(weekly), 1863-.
This is available online to subscribers (www.churchtimes.co.uk/archive)
The Ecclesiastical Gazette... (monthly), July 1838-May 1900.
The Church of England Newspaper (Lambeth holds 1992-)

Biographical information and obituaries figure in most national and local newspapers, which may be identified from the British Library: (www.bl.uk/collections/newspapers.html)

Obituaries may also be found in other periodicals, in particular the Gentleman’s Magazine (1731-1868), a set of which has been transferred to Lambeth. NB The
Library does not usually hold runs of these non-ecclesiastical publications although we do hold F.C. Roberts, Obituaries from The Times, 1951-60; 1961-70; 1971-1975, (Reading, 1975-79).

8 Ordination Records

Lambeth Palace Library is not a local record office and has relatively few records of ordination (admission to holy orders). They are generally housed at the diocesan record office of the bishop who carried out the ordination which will usually be the county record office. Bishops may be identified from F.M. Powicke and E.B. Fryde, Handbook of British Chronology (London, 1986).

For further information on this and on records kept by the diocesan administration, see:


Ordination records usually contain information on the date and place of ordination and the name of the ordaining bishop. The records may contain details of the qualifications of the individual (such as the examination of literacy) and testimonials, but they do not usually contain detailed genealogical information. Candidates applying for ordination were required to provide letters testimonial, and evidence of a title, often a curacy, to which the ordinand was subsequently licensed. The papers may also include dates of birth and education.

Towards the end of the 19th century, ordination papers may in addition include reports from incumbents on ordinands officiating as curates during their year’s diaconate. From the early 20th century, candidates were required to fill out detailed printed forms, which provide information on their parentage, education, and reasons for applying for orders.

The Library has incomplete holdings for London diocese for the mid-18th century, primarily of the colonial clergy. The Fulham Papers (Colonial) include the ordination papers for clergy ordained to officiate in America, 1752-1802, in Canada, and in the West Indies, 1749-1822 (Fulham Papers, vols. 21-32). There are also a few ordinations papers in the Fulham Papers (London) series, eg. Lowth 2. Records of other colonial clergy are in the papers of the Bishops of London in the Guildhall Library: (www.history.ac.uk/gh)


For office convenience, some diocesan officials maintained separate lists or books of ordinands. William Dickes, secretary to the bishop of London, extracted details of
ordinands from the London diocesan subscription books and produced partly alphabetical and chronological lists of candidates ordained for work in the diocese of London and in the colonies, c. 1723-1780 (Fulham Papers, vols. 38, 39, 42).

Ordination papers for the diocese of Canterbury, 1902-1944, formerly held at Lambeth Palace Library are now held at Canterbury Cathedral Archives: (www.canterbury-cathedral.org/history/archives.htm)

For Randall Davidson's tenure of the see of Rochester, 1894-5, and Winchester, 1895-1902, his small collection of ordination papers formerly held in Lambeth Palace Library are now held at Hampshire Record Office: (www.hants.gov.uk/record-office)

Bishops often kept more informal notes on their ordinands, see for example the ordination book of Archbishop Herring, covering his tenure at both York and Canterbury, 1747-58 (Archbishops' Papers: Herring 1). This notes names of ordinands, their degrees, and the curacy to which they were being licensed. More detailed notebooks on ordinands were kept by the Bishops of London, such as Richard Terrick, 1764-77 (Fulham Papers: Terrick 7), C.J. Blomfield 1828-56, A.C.Tait, 1856-68 (Tait 390-4, including some Blomfield entries), John Jackson, 1869-84 (Fulham Papers: Jackson 3-9) and Arthur Winnington-Ingram, 1901-39 (Fulham Papers: Winnington-Ingram 10), and by the Archbishops from 1869-83 (Archbishops’ Papers: Davidson Papers, 556-8, including some entries under Archbishop Lang). The Davidson Papers also include notes on his ordinands as bishop of Rochester, 1894-5, and of Winchester, 1895-1902 (Archbishops' Papers: Davidson Papers, 555-556).

Where the ordination papers have not survived, dates of orders can be gleaned from other sources. From the Restoration, dates of ordinations held by the archbishop of Canterbury are entered in the act books of the archbishops. These volumes also record letters dimissory issued for candidates applying to the archbishop for orders, but permitted to be ordained by another bishop in his stead. Applications for dispensations for illegitimacy, ordination under-age, to receive the orders of deacon and priest together, or to be ordained by any bishop ‘extra tempore’ were submitted to the Master of the Faculties and the ensuing dispensation were registered in the Faculty Office muniment books.

During the late 17th and early 18th century, the archbishop of Canterbury at times required information on ordinations held by his suffragan bishops within the province. The returns are fairly haphazard and incomplete, but relate to the bishops of Bristol, Chichester, Lincoln, Norwich, St. Davids (See MSS. 639, ff. 318-54; 942/27; Vicar General records VX 1A/4a/2-5).

The archbishop also kept a register of ordinands, arranged by diocese, with notes of those refused orders, 1694 -1704 (Vicar General records VX 1A/4a/1).

From the early 18th century, records of appointments to benefices and dispensations
to hold benefices in plurality entered in the act books of the archbishops often conclude with details of the applicant’s orders (eg. d. 20 May 1744, N. Exon: p. 11 June 1745 Benj. Winchester - ie ordained deacon 20 May 1744 by Nicholas Claget, bishop of Exeter, and priest 11 June by Benjamin Hoadley, bishop of Winchester).

On ordination, all candidates were required to subscribe to the thirty-nine articles, and subscriptions for all of those clergy ordained by the archbishop are entered in the archbishops’ subscription books.

9 Appointments of Parish Clergy

Records of the appointments of clergy by the Archbishop in the diocese and peculiars (ie. exempt jurisdictions) of Canterbury and in other dioceses within the province of Canterbury during a vacancy, or during a metropolitical visitation (mainly pre-Restoration) are normally to be located in the Archbishops’ Registers, 1272-1928.

Before the Restoration, the register was the principal record of appointments of clergy to benefices. But from the primacy of Archbishop Sheldon (1663-77), information on appointments of clergy is more easily accessible in the Act Books of the Archbishops of Canterbury, 1663-1963.

With a few exceptions, records of the institution of clergy during the vacancy of the see of Canterbury are entered in the registers of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury which are in Canterbury Cathedral Library. However, following the suspension of Archbishop Sancroft (1689-91), the see was administered by the Dean and Chapter, but the Dean and Chapter Register is in the Library, within the Archbishops’ Registers.

For the 19th century, the key source for the exact dates of clerical appointments is the Ecclesiastical Gazette, for which the Library holds a set for 1838-1899.

The Archbishops’ Registers and Act Books of the Archbishops include few details of the licensing of stipendiary curates, and most of these relate to the Peculiars (exempt jurisdictions) of Croydon, Shoreham and the Arches.

All clergy on licensing and institution were required to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles, and these are recorded in the subscription books, mainly from 1660.

10 Service Chaplains

The standard works on the service chaplains are:

A.G. Kealy, Chaplains of the Royal Navy, 1626-1903 (Portsmouth, 1905?)


There is also a Museum of Army Chaplaincy, including an online index to Anglican chaplains 1914-18: [www.chaplains-museum.co.uk](http://www.chaplains-museum.co.uk)

See also the *Army List* (copies held at National Army Museum).

The Library holds records of Gerald Ellison, Bishop of London, which include his papers as a naval chaplain during World War Two.

### 11 Noblemen’s Chaplains

Peers of the Realm could appoint their own domestic chaplains, and provided that these chaplains showed evidence of learning (usually an M.A.), and had their appointment registered by the Faculty Office, they could apply to the latter to hold more than one benefice in plurality.

From 1660 to 1914, there are registers of noblemen’s chaplains which record the dates of the appointment and registration. Most volumes include an index of noblemen. Records of dispensations to hold benefices in plurality are recorded in the Faculty Office muniment books from 1660 onwards. For the years, 1660-3, these are the principal record for the issue of dispensations.

Thereafter, the Act Books of the Archbishops record all the salient details relating to grants of dispensation to hold in plurality, such as name of cleric, the nobleman for whom he was chaplain, the two benefices, county, diocese, values, and date. This aspect of the Archbishop’s jurisdiction exercised through the Faculty Office extended over the whole of England and Wales, and not just the province of Canterbury.

However, noblemen’s chaplains seem generally only to appear in the records if they need a dispensation to held benefices in plurality. A nobleman could have as many chaplains as he liked but these chaplains would only appear in the records in the case of a dispensation being requested.

Some records relating to chaplains serving royalty are found in the Lambeth records. However, records relating to chaplains serving royalty were generally created through a different administrative process and will therefore be kept elsewhere e.g. at Windsor. Royalty would sometimes have many chaplains and use them on a rotational basis; so that each chaplain would only be the ‘official’ chaplain for a month at a time.
Note that there is a list of chaplains to the Archbishop of Canterbury c.1881-1939 in MS 5078.

12 Members of the Chapel Royal

There is a list of personnel in D. Baldwin, *The Chapel Royal: Ancient and Modern* (London, 1990). There are some other sources at the Library.

13 Missionaries and Anglican Clergymen Abroad

The most useful sources for missionaries are often the records of the missionary society with which the individual served. The principal Anglican missionary societies are the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Church Missionary Society. For the location of records of missionary societies, contact the National Archives or consult the Mundus website: (www.mundus.ac.uk).

The Library holds some records of the SPG, for which a calendar has been published. These records are also available on microfilm from World Microfilms: (www.microworld.uk.com) or on loan from the British Library: (www.bl.uk).

The archives of SPG have been deposited at the Weston Library, the Bodleian Library’s Special Collections department: www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/weston

The SPCK archive is held at the Cambridge University Library: www.lib.cam.ac.uk/MSS and the Church Missionary Society archive is held at the Birmingham University Library: www.is.bham.ac.uk

Prior to the establishment of dioceses abroad, the activities of Anglicans overseas were generally administered by the bishops of London. The records of this administration (the Fulham Papers) are held by the Library and a calendar has been published. The records are also available on microfilm from World Microfilms or on loan from the British Library. See above for ordination records for colonial clergy.

Further information on clergy in Europe may be held at London Metropolitan Archives, including records of the Colonial and Continetal Church Society, and the diocese of Gibraltar.

Some records e.g. embassy chaplains and chaplaincies will be found at the National Archives www.nationalarchives.gov.uk mostly in the Foreign Office (FO) series.

For colonial clergy it may be worth investigating sources at the National Archives www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/colonies-dependencies-further-research and at the Borthwick Institute https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/data/gb193-ordination&licensing/col.c.

After the establishment of dioceses abroad, records of their administration should be held locally. For the addresses of foreign dioceses, see *The Church of England*.
Yearbook. The Library holds some published directories for foreign dioceses and other Anglican churches, but the series are by no means complete. Many Anglican clergy were educated or trained in England and information may be obtainable from the other sources detailed in this guide.

For Anglican clergy in New Zealand, Polynesia and Melanesia, prior to 1930, the following directory may be useful http://anglicanhistory.org/nz/blain_directory and for Australia see http://anglicanhistory.org/aus/cci

The following publications may also be helpful:


14 The Commonwealth Period (1642-1662)

The standard reference sources for persecuted clergy are:


A.G. Matthews, Calamy revised: being a revision of Edmund Calamy's Account of the Ministers and others ejected and silenced, 1660-2 (Oxford, 1988) gives biographical accounts of the Puritan clergy ejected from their livings.

The Library holds records of church administration during the Commonwealth period which includes some details of ministers (Commonwealth Records; MSS 1643-68).

15 Other Anglican Churches

Many individual Anglican provinces publish annual clerical directories and lists, including:

Anglican Church in Australia, The Australian Anglican Directory
Anglican Church of Canada, *The Anglican Year Book*
Church of Ireland, *Church of Ireland Directory*
Raymond Refausse, *Church of Ireland Records*, (Maynooth Research Guides for Irish Local History: Number 2, 2006)
James G. Ryan, *Irish church records: their history, availability and use in family and local history research* (Glenageary, 1992)

The Church of Ireland Representative Church Body Library may also be of interest: (www.ireland.anglican.org/library)

See also [succession lists for clergy in various Irish dioceses](#).

Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, *Clerical directory*
Episcopal Church in Scotland, *Scottish Episcopal Church Directory*
Church of the Province of Southern Africa, *Clerical Directory*
Protestant Episcopal Church USA, *The Episcopal Clerical Directory* (also available at www.ecdplus.org)

Further information on directories of the Anglican provinces can be found in *Crockford's*.

Many dioceses of the Anglican Churches overseas also issue directories and yearbooks. There are also compilations on the clergy of individual dioceses, many of which are held at Lambeth.

### 16 Further Collections at Lambeth Palace Library

The previous sections describe the most likely sources for clerical biographical information at Lambeth, but almost any area of the Library’s holdings might include biographical information on Anglican clerics, depending on their interests and career. For example:

- Ecclesiastical court cases (Court of Arches records; published cases)
- Archbishops’ Papers (possible correspondence)
- Bishop of London Papers (possible correspondence)
- Canterbury Convocation records
- Anglican societies (eg Church of England Men's Society, Church of England Temperance Society, English Church Union, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel etc.)
- Main manuscripts sequence (includes clerical papers etc.)
- Printed works by Anglican clerics (see our online catalogue of printed books)