

## Use Of The Archive

The Archdeaconry records are mainly concerned with the work of the ecclesiastical court. Different series within the archive relate to particular official processes. The records of the court are generally expressed in legal terminology, are often abbreviated and are sometimes hard to decipher. Until the 1730s the majority of the records were written in Latin. The formulaic nature of the documents means that many can be easily read with practice. However, some series require skill and experience, especially the Act Books, which recorded business before the court.

## Catalogues

A brief finding aid to the Archdeaconry archive is available in the Reading Room. It explains the structure of the archive, and indicates the function and general content of different series.

In recent years work has been undertaken by volunteers to extend access to individual documents within different series. Abstracts and indexes supply answers to many research enquiries and limit the need to handle the original documents. Building on this, the Heritage Lottery Fund has supported a major project to deliver online access to descriptions of the Presentment Bills, with extensive indexes enabling researchers to trace particular people, places and subjects.

## Conservation

The fragile condition of many documents and volumes in the Archdeaconry archive has long been a barrier to access. While the majority of papers can be consulted, a significant proportion still awaits treatment and cannot meantime be handled.

In 1994-95, the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust supported a pilot project to clean, repair and process key bundles of Presentment Bills. This work is being extended and linked to the cataloguing of the 17th-century documents in the series, with backing from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Information about the cataloguing and conservation project can be found through the website for Manuscripts and Special Collections

### Location

*Manuscripts and Special Collections have moved to:*

University of Nottingham  
King's Meadow Campus  
Lenton Lane  
Nottingham  
NG7 2NR  
Tel: +44 (0)115 9514565  
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### Directions

#### From M1 Motorway:

Leave motorway at Junction 25 to join the A52 to Nottingham. Turn right at the Queens Medical Centre roundabout (about 5 miles from M1) following signs to Grantham. After going over the flyover get into the left hand lane marked A453 City Centre then turn left after the footbridge, signposted Lenton Lane Industrial Estate. Turn left at the T-junction and King's Meadow Campus is about a quarter of a mile on the right.

#### From Nottingham (approximately 3 miles):

There are regular Lnk 1 buses from the Victoria Centre, the Broadmarsh bus station or Nottingham train station. Alight at the Clifton Bridge North stop, then walk north along Lenton Lane via the subway. The Campus is about half a mile on the right. Nottingham City Transport's website provides timetables and information about other routes.

There are taxi ranks throughout the City Centre and immediately adjacent to the main railway and bus stations. The journey to the campus takes about 15 minutes.

#### From the main University Campus:

The University runs free Hopper bus services between its main Campuses. Timetables are available on the University website: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk>

### Access

Access is allowed to all bona fide researchers at the discretion of the Keeper. The University reserves the right to refuse admission. Applicants must provide proof of identity and complete a registration form.

***It is strongly recommended that researchers make an appointment in advance of their proposed visit to ensure that the material they wish to consult is available.***

## Records of the historic Archdeaconry of Nottingham



## The Archdeaconry of Nottingham

The old Archdeaconry of Nottingham, an extensive jurisdiction within the diocese of York, comprised almost the entire county of Nottingham, divided into the four deaneries of Nottingham, Newark, Bingham and Retford. The Peculiar of Southwell was excluded, as were a few parishes that answered directly

to the Dean and Chapter of York. Distance from the superior court at York added to the power of the Archdeaconry, which had its own Registrar.

This structure lasted well into the 19th century. In 1837 the Archdeaconry was transferred to the see of Lincoln in the Province of Canterbury. The parishes in former Peculiars, including the Peculiar of Southwell, were incorporated into the Archdeaconry in 1841-2, and the deaneries re-ordered. In 1884 the creation of the see of Southwell brought together the counties of Nottingham and Derby.

The ancient Archdeaconry of Nottingham ceased to exist in 1913, when Nottinghamshire was divided into two new Archdeaconries of Nottingham and Newark. Surviving records of the former jurisdiction were transferred to the Library of the University of Nottingham in 1943.

## Related Collections Held Elsewhere

- Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York  
Visitation records concerning the Archdeaconry of Nottingham are held as part of the archive of the Archdiocese of York. An online guide to the records of the Archbishop of York throws light on the Archdeaconry in this wider context:  
<http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/bihr/guidecont.htm#guide>
- Nottinghamshire Archives Office  
The Diocesan Record Office holds parish and other records which complement the Archdeaconry archive, together with the wills proved in the Archdeaconry of Nottingham before 1858.  
<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/leisure/archives.htm>

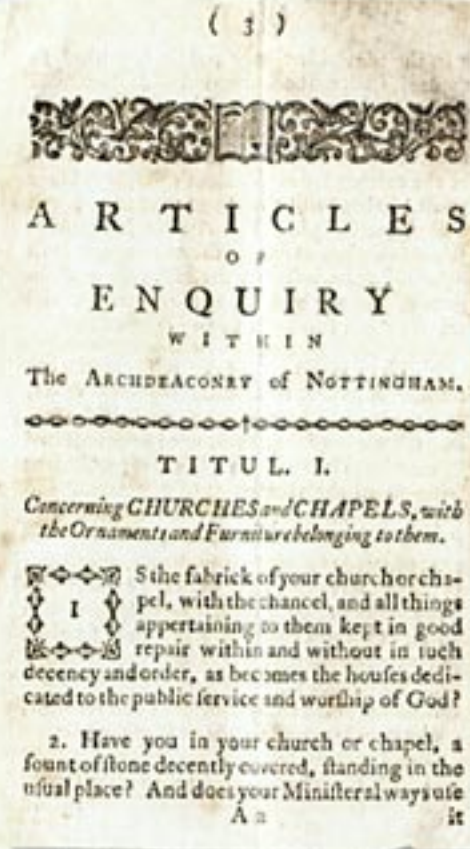
### Principal Areas Of Research Interest

The archive of the Archdeaconry of Nottingham is a rich historical resource, its evidence relevant not only within the primary context of ecclesiastical court history but touching also on many issues of parish and community concerns, local church estates and property, family structure and individual lives.

#### Local clergy and churchwardens

Several series in the archive provide information on the careers of beneficed clergymen, and the work of parish churchwardens who were elected each year.

- **Induction Mandates** (AN/IM), 1556-1942, preserve the Archbishop's official mandates for the induction of clergy into local benefices. A list of names, dates and places extracted from the records up to 1695 is available for consultation in the Reading Room.
- **Call Books** (AN/CL), 1609-1871, list the clergy, churchwardens and others summoned to attend the Archdeacon's annual or half-yearly visitations, arranged by parish. With two minor exceptions, Newark deanery Call Books survive only from 1663.
- **Declarations** (AN/D), 1849-1938, record the agreement of churchwardens, by signature or mark, to undertake their office.
- **Exhibit Books** (AN/EX), 1717-1864, provide particulars about newly-instituted clergy, including the dates and places of admittance as deacon and priest, and of institution to benefices.
- **Lists of clergy** (AN/L) form a small, artificial group of miscellaneous lists and stray items.
- **Presentment Bills** (AN/PB), 1587-1756, provide extensive information about those active in the parish. Indexes of names, places and subjects are being prepared. References to the clergy usually concern their conduct and the performance of their duties. Bills commonly identify acting churchwardens and any default in their responsibilities. Evidence of literacy can be seen in their signatures and marks.



### Parishioners

During the most active period of the Archdeaconry court, from the 16th to the end of the 18th century, ordinary people were subject to its control and influence in a number of ways. Even if they were Roman Catholic or had chosen to join dissenting congregations, their names might appear in records of the court. Three categories of business produced most documents relating to parishioners:

- **Marriage.** Although most couples were married after the calling of banns in their parishes, and can be traced through parish records in Nottinghamshire Archives Office, a significant minority were married by special licence granted from the Archdeaconry court. The **Marriage Bonds** (AN/MB) series preserves bonds and allegations used in the application for such licences.

Abstracts of most surviving Marriage Bonds (1590-1780 and 1790-1800) are available in a variety of publications, and indexes for further periods are in preparation. For details see the leaflet 'Marriage Bonds in the Records of the Archdeaconry of Nottingham', available in the Reading Room or by post.

- **Matters of faith and morality.** Up to the mid-17th century, people were brought before the court for a wide variety of offences, including religious dissent, non-payment of church dues, disorderly behaviour in church precincts and superstitious practices. By the mid-18th century, the court's attention was most focused on the problem of illegitimate births.

Social historians can access extensive evidence about local communities from analysis of the offences which were reported to the court in churchwardens' **Presentment Bills** (AN/PB). These were filed chronologically by deanery. Detailed catalogues provide online access to information about persons, places and subjects mentioned in the 17th-century Bills.



Supporting legal papers, including depositions detailing the basis of the cause, are filed by case and date in the **Libels** (AN/LB) series, while the **Act Books** contain information about proceedings and judgements.

#### Church Buildings And Property

The Archdeaconry administration sought to ensure that parish churches were in good repair and had the required fittings, furnishings and religious artefacts.

- Defects were reported by churchwardens in their **Presentment Bills** (AN/PB) up to the end of the 17th century.
- **Parochial Visitation Books** (AN/PV), 1718-1736, identified repair needs for the fabric of each parish church, parsonage or vicarage, and any outbuildings. They also mention church ornaments or fittings which were defective or absent.
- **Articles** issued by the Rural Deans before their Visitations (AN/AR) required churchwardens to report on repairs and deficiencies in the 19th and early 20th centuries.
- A few glebe terriers from Nottinghamshire parishes (early 17th century-1850) are in the **Miscellaneous** (AN/M 270) series.
- **Act Books** (AN/A) from the 18th century recording the issuing of faculties for repairs or renovations to parish churches.

**Act Books** (AN/A) provide the principal record of the business of the court, detailing all the stages in the progress of each case once the offender had been cited to appear. Evidence of the punishments issued by the court is found in **Excommunication Notices** (AN/E) and **Declarations of Penance** (AN/PN). Documents in these series are generally in poor physical state and access may be restricted.

- **Disputes between individuals.** In some causes before the court, proctors (ecclesiastical lawyers) acted on behalf of private individuals, revealing antagonisms between neighbours in the community. Common causes included allegations of defamation or slander, and actions brought by rectors against parishioners for non-payment of tithes and other ecclesiastical dues. Probate jurisdiction occasionally occurred, including actions to secure the payment of legacies.



### Administration Of The Archdeaconry

The work of the Archdeaconry court and its personnel is fully documented in the surviving records.

- **Precedent Books** (AN/PB) include formularies and related works which provide examples of wordings to be used in all types of business before the court.
- **Account Books** (AN/AC) record fees received and regular expenditure, as well as particular occasions of account such as the collection of funds for other churches and communities in special need. The issuing and receipt of marriage licences is recorded in **Marriage Licence Books** (AN/ML).
- **Citations** (AN/C), **Processes** (AN/PR) and records of **Visitations** (AN/V) all provide information relating to the holding of the Archdeaconry court at specified dates and places.

### Secondary Works About The Archdeaconry

A number of published works and theses relating to the Archdeaconry of Nottingham are available in the University Library. The website for Manuscripts and Special Collections includes further details about the records and the available finding aids, background information such as a bibliography and links to the archives of other Archdeaconries, and other resources intended to assist researchers.

