

CAMBRIDGESHIRE PARISH REGISTER TRANSCRIPTS

F. Parish Register Transcripts

The Royal Injunctions of 1538 first ordered the parochial clergy to compile registers of the marriages, baptisms and burials which they celebrated and as early as 1562 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners had ordered the annual transmission of a copy of the year's entries in the register to the diocesan registries. This order was repeated in a constitution of 1597, which prescribed that the copy was to reach the registry within one month of Lady Day. Finally canon LXX in 1603, codified the procedure for transmission of the 'transcripts' or 'bills' to the diocesan registry. In the Ely diocese it seems that the transcripts for the county parishes were brought in to the Archdeacon's Easter visitation while those for the Isle were collected at the Chancellor's visitation at the same period of the year. After the Parochial Register Act of 1812, 52 Geo. 111, c. 146, all transcripts were copied on printed forms similar to the pages of the parish registers prescribed by the same Act. These printed returns were filed separately from the earlier transcripts and were unknown to Gibbons, who included at pp. 226–36 notes of the dates covered by the earlier series and on pages 238–391 printed long extracts from them. It seems certain that the transcripts were originally filed as deanery bundles for a single year and it will be noticed that the bundles for the western deaneries of Bourn, Shingay and Cambridge are wanting for the years 1783–1812. It is not clear who was responsible for sorting the transcripts into parish order, but this may well have done by Gibbons himself.