

# Bishop's Registers and Act Books

The sequence of registers runs from 1544 to 1930. The registers basically consist of records of institutions and ordinations of clergy, but there are some consecrations, resignations, grants of licences and patents, appointments of diocesan officials and a few memoranda.

The Act Books, 1777 to 1868, contain largely similar material.

A series of Subscription Books runs from 1604 to 1916. These were subscriptions to the tenets of the Church of England made by the clergy, teachers, surgeons and midwives before they were allowed to practice. A further sequence runs from 1856 to 1967 and includes the declarations of ordinands and ordination candidates.

## Interesting Examples

The subscription books include warnings by the Archbishop of Canterbury not to allow certain persons to officiate: "Thomas Stretton, who officiated at Burnham in Essex some months ago, falsely pretending to have been ordained on the Isle of Man, and is supposed by his manner to have been on the stage. W H Rawlins, ordained by the Bishop of London, convicted of manslaughter committed in the Island of St Christopher. Joseph Prendergast, ordained deacon by the Bishop of Gloucester, a man of infamous character." (1819)

## Where are these records?

The Diocesan records are all with the Oxfordshire History Centre, including those after 1836 relating to Berkshire and those after 1845 relating to Buckinghamshire. The records themselves are not online.

## Where is the catalogue?

The Diocesan catalogue is unfortunately not on the History Centre's Heritage Search online catalogue, but an overview catalogue exists on [A2A](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a) <link to <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a> > . You will need to visit the History Centre to look at the full catalogue in printed form.

## [Visiting the Oxfordshire History Centre](#)