

# WHY HERTFORDSHIRE MARRIAGE LINKS?

## WHAT ARE THEY?

The records transcribed by the Society range from 1538 to 1837. The Allen Marriage Index 1538–1837, as amended by Brian Gravestock, forms the basis of the Marriage Index available to search online on the website of Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS)

Even after Brian Gravestock's sterling work, there still remained useful genealogical information in Allen's material that had not been made generally available. This work by the Society is an addition and extension to the current Marriage Index.

Here can be found details of:

1. Stray marriages from outside the county where one or both parties were Hertfordshire people;
2. Marriage licences or banns where one party was from Hertfordshire;
3. Marriage licences giving a Hertfordshire church as a choice, when neither party was from the county (as there may be a family connection);
4. And a few instances of forbidden banns.

## THE ALLEN MARRIAGE INDEX 1538–1837

The Allen Index of Hertfordshire Marriages was created by Thomas Frederick Allen, FSG, in the 1950s and 1960s. Inspired by the Boyd's Marriage Index, which included partial entries from 48 Hertfordshire parishes, he was keen to compile a county-wide and comprehensive index to marriages taking place in Hertfordshire.

He transcribed entries from parish registers or, where these were not available, from bishops' transcripts, and created a card index that was kept at the Hertfordshire County Record Office (now Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies or HALS); researchers who consulted that index will recall that it was written sometimes on the backs of old medical cards, old menus and odd scraps of paper.

It was later noted by Anthony Camp, past Director of the Society of Genealogists that the index was particularly rich in marriages of Londoners in the southern part of the county, and also contained many banns for marriages of Hertfordshire folk which took place outside the county. He was one of the first to note the many marriages in the Commonwealth period were recorded in the registers of more than one parish. Sometimes, of course, the two entries did not agree at all.

In 1960 the few surviving 17th century bishops' transcripts of the Diocese of London were made available at the Guildhall and he was able to include Hertfordshire ones (1629–30). In nine parishes no registers survived from that period. He scoured other sources and by June 1963 he had completed the county before 1837.

Later work on the Allen index by Brian Gravestock included checking and extending the original index. Where

Mr Allen had to rely on Bishops' transcripts for post-1812 marriage events, all of these have now been checked against the original registers. This has resulted in many significant surname corrections and other marriages being included that did not appear in the Bishops' transcripts.

As well as marriages that took place in Hertfordshire parishes, Allen included some out of county marriages of Hertfordshire people (unfortunately, he did not always quote his source).

Gravestock added sources from the Gentleman's Magazine, roughly 1730–1800. Additionally, a collection of papers has emerged belonging to a S H Ward's work on the London Magazine, London Chronicle and Town and Country. Included in them are many marriages of Hertfordshire people. Work is still continuing.

## THE SOCIETY'S INDEXING WORK

In Hertfordshire licences were issued under the Archdeaconry of Huntingdonshire (Hitchin Division) and the Archdeaconry of St Albans. Note that licences issued under the Archdeaconry of Middlesex (Essex and Herts Division) are held at the Essex County Record Office). References within this index will also be found to licences issued by the Bishop of London and the Vicar-General (of the Archbishop of Canterbury). It may be noted that the issue of a licence does not prove that a marriage took place. Evidence of the marriage itself must still be sought. Also, information given on licences may be incomplete (shown as "Caveat noted" in this index).

The licence would name one, possibly two, parishes where the marriage was intended to take place. However, clergymen were often quite relaxed about accepting a licence for any church the couple happened to choose.

Please note that this is not intended to be a full list of licences issued in Hertfordshire. It does not include, for instance, those issued where both parties came from outside Hertfordshire and married outside Hertfordshire; i.e. there had to be a Hertfordshire connection for them to be in this index.

When using the index, be aware of the variability in the spelling of names. A list of the names found is provided in a separate document.

Be also aware of errors or statements that could mislead in the licences:

1. Albury/Aldbury
2. Berkhamsted/Little Berkhamstead
3. St Mary-le-Bow/St Marylebone
4. St Mary Aldermanbury/St Mary Aldermay
5. St Pancras, City of London/St Pancras, Middlesex
6. Barking by the Tower, City of London/Barking, Essex