

17th and 18th century Little Munden parish records

Compiled and submitted by Peter Cuffley

Researching the parish of Little Munden (or Munden Parva) in the seventeenth and eighteenth century can have its joys and its disappointments.

For family historians there is both good news and bad news. The good news is that the parish rates and accounts are remarkably detailed and cover most of the period 1589-1783. The Vestry Minutes and Overseers' Accounts then run from 1786 - 1852. The bad news is that no registers of baptisms, burials and marriages survive before 1680.

As some compensation, a scattering of baptisms, burials and marriages survive in the Bishop's Transcripts, which begin in 1604. Sadly, of these surviving records, many are unreadable or very difficult to transcribe from microfilm. For the seventy-five years up to the beginning of the first surviving parish register, some thirty years are completely missing, so finding relevant entries is something of a lottery. If you do manage to identify ancestors in Little Munden, the parish accounts are so complete that you are likely to be able to construct a detailed timeline of their payment of parish rates or conversely what they received in charity. Parish officials are also well recorded, while the rates and taxes usually recorded land holdings.

All of this has been made more real with the publication of *The Protected Valley, A History of Little Munden*, by Anne Rowe (1999). This most interesting and informative work was published on behalf of the Little Munden Parish Council to mark the year A.D. 2000. Apart from giving an overview of the history of the parish from ancient times, it contains many maps and illustrations including a page covering the Hearth Tax Return for Little Munden, Michaelmas 1663. Three readable Hearth Tax lists have survived, Michaelmas 1662, Lady Day 1663 and Michaelmas 1663. Householders who were too poor to pay the tax were excused and there are 47 or 48 taxpayers in Little Munden in 1662/3.

In a record of a rate made for the churchwardens in September 1639, there are 67 names and of these 35 are landholders. The acreages given provide a picture of the relative prosperity of the seven more substantial landholders who have between 120 and 366 acres. Eight other landholders hold between 40 and 84 acres and 22 between 4 and 36 acres.

Microfilm of the parish registers, Bishops transcripts and parish accounts are held at Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, County Hall, Hertford. Happily these films can also be hired through the Family History Centres of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The film numbers are as follows:

- Parish registers 1680-1812, FBL British film 1040815
- Modern transcript of baptisms, marriages and burials 1680-1812, FBL British Film 1040863
- Bishop's transcripts 1604-1850, FIHL British Film 569747
- Churchwardens' Accounts 1589-1783, Vestry Accounts 1786-1852, FIHL British Film 575459

Family historians using that marvellous website www.familysearch.com (or www.familysearch.org) will find that there are Little Munden christenings and marriages back to 1604 in the International Genealogical Index. The 'Custom Search' facility enables you to enter the Batch numbers to do a general search for Little Munden entries. Christenings for the seventeenth and eighteenth century have the batch number P017851. Marriages have the batch number MO17851.

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