

**HOW TO WRITE THE HISTORY OF
A PARISH: AN OUTLINE GUIDE
TO TOPOGRAPHICAL RECORDS,
MANUSCRIPTS, AND BOOKS**

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How to write the history of a parish: an outline guide to topographical records, manuscripts, and books by J. Charles Cox

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HOW TO WRITE THE HISTORY OF A PARISH

AN OUTLINE GUIDE TO TOPOGRAPHICAL
RECORDS, MANUSCRIPTS, AND BOOKS

BY

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ANNALE," "ROYAL FORESTS OF ENGLAND,"
"ENGLISH CHURCH FURNITURE," ETC.

"Every man's concern with the place where he lives, has something
more in it than the mere amount of rates and taxes that he has to pay."
—TULLIAN SMITH,

FIFTH EDITION, REVISED

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In Memoriam

M. C.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST
EDITION (1879)

SOME of the clergy of the diocese of Lincoln are responsible for the issue of this booklet. A much-needed county history of Lincolnshire is now being projected, upon the basis of separate parochial histories. A circular put forth in one of the rural deaneries was good enough to refer in laudatory terms to the introduction to the first volume of my "Notes on the Churches of Derbyshire." This led to my being asked to republish that introduction; but it applied so peculiarly to Derbyshire that I felt it would be of small avail to those outside the county. Hence I decided to put together some hints that might prove a help to those who may be desirous of undertaking parochial history in any part of the kingdom, whether manorial, ecclesiastical, or both. In the first part of these pages I am indebted to Thomas' "Handbook to the Public Records," and more especially to Sims' invaluable "Manual for the Topographer and

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Genealogist"; but I have not referred to any class of documents with which I am not in some measure personally conversant.

Those who have been engaged in any literary work are well aware how large a portion of time is often spent in merely learning the titles and somewhat of the contents of those books that treat of the different branches of the subject selected. Various books connected with parochial history, especially those that have been proved by experience to be the best handbooks, are therefore mentioned in these pages to facilitate reference. Space only has prevented me from considerably adding both to their number and description, but any further knowledge that I may have gleaned on topographical literature is heartily at the disposal of any *worker* who may privately apply to me. [This offer is now withdrawn through lack of time, 1909.]

I shall be grateful for any correction of errors, or for any suggestion as to deficiencies.

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION

IT is a pleasure to find that a fifth edition of this little work (the fourth edition came out in 1895), originally published thirty years ago, is now demanded, as it is a proof of the remarkable and continued growth of local interest in local history. The publication of the previous editions of this handbook brought me into correspondence with a large number of either actual or prospective local historians throughout the country. Much of such correspondence has been pleasurable and interesting, and I am grateful for various hints that have been given me with respect to the improvement of these pages, many of which have been adopted. Not a few of my correspondents have issued local histories since the publication of my first edition. The number of such histories has increased in a remarkable way during the last twenty years. Martial's three-fold verdict on his own epigrams may be accepted as a general criticism on these efforts.