

Wells City Archives Database Sacrament Certificates, 1689 – 1765

- **Introductory Notes**
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Introductory Notes

1. The information in this database has been obtained by examining the Sacrament Certificates held in Wells City Archives (WCC/94). The certificates cover the period 1689 to 1765.
2. The significance of the columns in the database is as follows:
 - Individual taking sacrament: Surname followed by forename(s) of the individual.
 - Residence: His/her residence where this is specifically stated.
 - Capacity; rank; profession: This is taken from the description given in the certificate of the office or status of the individual taking the sacrament.
 - Date (DD MM YYYY): The date on which the sacrament was taken. This may differ from the date on which the Sacrament Certificate was issued.
 - Parish: The parish church in which the taking of the sacrament took place.
 - Minister: The cleric conducting the service at which the sacrament was taken.
 - Churchwarden(s): Name(s) of the churchwarden(s) participating in the service.
 - Witnesses: Names of the witnesses present to confirm the taking of the sacrament and the preparation of the certificate; normally, two witnesses were present.
 - Notes: Additional notes related to a specific certificate.
3. In most instances, the taking of the sacrament occurred after a service and sermon. In some cases, the sermon seems to have been specifically omitted by the minister officiating.
4. The Sacrament Certificates require signatures from the minister, churchwardens and witnesses. In some instances the witnesses and, in a very small number of cases, the churchwarden, cannot write and therefore make their mark.
5. While there may be several certificates relating to the same parish and date, these may be prepared by different individuals, and this can give rise to different formulations of the wording and different spellings of the names of individuals. Significant variations in names are identified, particularly when these occur within a certificate. However, differences in the type of information recorded on similar certificates (e.g. some record the residence of witnesses while others prepared at the same time ignore the concept of residence) are simply carried over into the data recorded for each certificate; i.e. no attempt is made to 'fill in the gaps' even where this information could be deduced from another certificate.

How to Use this Resource

1. Choose which of the two versions of the database will be most useful to you: the one sorted by the name of the person taking the sacrament or the one sorted chronologically.
2. Click on the name of that database. It will open a searchable PDF. Use the + button at the top of the screen to enlarge the text to the size you want.
3. Search the database for the term (e.g. the name of the person, parish, rank or profession) you want to find by doing this:
 - Select **Edit | Find** (OR click the icon of a magnifying glass at the top left of the screen OR type CTRL + F). A search dialogue will open.
 - Type your search term (e.g. your family's surname) into the search box. A message will appear in the search dialogue which tells you how many exact matches there are.
 - Click anywhere on the screen, then click **Next** in the search dialogue OR click the down arrow in the dialogue. The first occurrence of your search term will be highlighted.
 - Continue clicking **Next** or clicking the down arrow to find each further occurrence of the search term.
4. If you want any further information or need any help, contact archives@wellsmuseum.org.uk. We'll be delighted to assist.
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