

Banns

Banns of marriage

a proclamation of intended marriage , repeated three times at weekly intervals in the parish churches of both the bride and bridegroom. To dispense with banns required a marriage licence. Both banns and licences were valid for 3 months.

In 1753 , Hardwicke's Marriage Act brought Banns Registers into regular use, sometimes in separate books, sometimes in the parish marriage registers. A comparatively small number of Banns Books survive, the requirement to register banns continued until 1812. A banns record by itself is of course no guarantee that the marriage itself actually took place. People could always change their minds at the last minute, or parents might have stepped in to stop minors marrying, or previous spouses have come forward to prevent a bigamous marriage, the list goes on.

Marriages are sometimes said to take place " by certificate", before 1837 that would likely mean that one party came from another parish and had to provide written evidence[a certificate] that the banns had properly been called in the other parish too, and no objection made. After 1837 it may refer to a Registrar's certificate issued after notice of the intended marriage had been posted for the requisite 3 weeks in the RO, and when the marriage subsequently took place in a church.