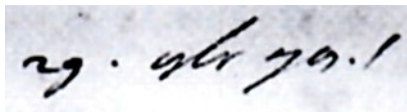


- Always write down exactly what is written and do not 'correct' spellings.
- If necessary prepare an alphabet. Copy out individual letters into an alphabet - upper and lower case.

*Cutler*

Cutler

- Place names and Surnames can be a guide to capital letters. Parish names - Use Phillimore's Atlas or a gazetteer.
- Get to know the format of standard documents.
- Dates are sometimes shown in ways unfamiliar to us.



This is a nice puzzle. It is fairly obvious that the number at the front is 29 but the last two digits are not 79. The '9's are completely different. No the last number is 78. It is a loose laid back 8 that is easier to write with a quill pen.

But look again. The first character of the middle word is an 8, and is followed by br. So that makes it October.

In the same way we could have had -

7br	September
8br	October
9br	November
10br	December

Answer 29 October (16)78

- Count the short vertical strokes in some words. (Minims) For example mum has 8 minims and the word minim has 10. Here are two for you.

*Annual* Annual  
*minimum* Minimum

## Abbreviations

We have a lot of ways of abbreviating words.

- Stop at the end of a word to indicate missing letters. Co. Ltd. - Company Limited, e.g. i.e. lb. No.
- Apostrophe in the middle of a word to indicate missing letters. He'd, we'll, won't etc.
- Superscript Nov<sup>br</sup>
- LFHHS, acronyms LOL
- Special Characters &, @, #

In the past, abbreviations were widely used, but many differ from ours.

- All are abbreviations for either Per Par Por for example—  
A long 's', 'u' and 'per' (super) *Per*
- In a similar way a 'p' written this way is 'pro' *pro*

*ony* This symbol marks where letters are missing evy—every

*intest* Again missing letters intest—interest

*Willo* This time it is a line Willo—Willelmo—William

*landes* Four abbreviations here—'es' making landes, the ampersand, the line over indicating missing letters and 'es' again.

All making landes & tenements.

LFHHS Chorley Branch

LFHHS Chorley Family  
History Research Centre



## Tips for reading old Handwriting

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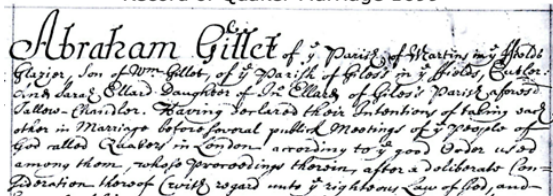
[www.lfhhschorleybranch.com](http://www.lfhhschorleybranch.com)

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# Tips for Reading Old Handwriting

Record of Quaker Marriage 1699



At first sight the task might seem daunting. Many old texts seem at first, impossible to read, but with the help of a few hints and tips much of it might become clearer.

As with many things practice makes perfect.

Prior to 1733 legal texts could be in English or Latin. After this date they had to be in English. So as you can see from the example above it is in English.

Key to understanding why writing styles developed as they did you need to take into account what was being written on and what they wrote with. For example the Quill Pen was not good at doing an upward stroke. So for example the lower case d is often written thus -



But letter shapes can differ. In this case the d is written quite differently - it is the same word, in the same document!



This is also with the 's' and the 'h' in Parish.



## Tips

Here are some tips that show some ways how we might go about it.

1. Always consider the context of the words.



This is an entry for marriage so the translation is fairly obvious. The only difficulty is with the capital letters. This chap likes his fancy letters. Can you work out what they are?

There are other things to notice. The 'y' with an 'e' over it. The 'y' is a thorn a letter that has fallen out of use and represents 'th'. The e makes it 'the'. Thus 'yt' means that.



Three things to note. At this time they had no widely accepted capital letter 'F'. They used a double lower case 'f' (ff) instead. So Ffarrington is wrong and ffarrington is correct. The second thing is the backward 'e' in ffieldes which was very common. Thirdly the last character on the line is an abbreviation character for 'es'.

So it becomes 'of the Parish of Martins in the ffieldes'.

2. If you cannot read a word then Translate / Transcribe the text letter by letter.

Try this but also consider the context -



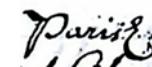
There are two things to note here. The backward 'e' we have seen before but the line through the d is another abbreviation character. In the same way in the word 'won't' the apostrophe indicates missing letter or letters the line is exactly the same.

So it becomes 'afores(ai)d'.

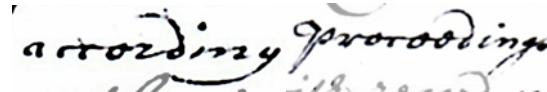
3. Compare words or letter with others within the text. Write down the letters you do know and compare the ones you don't to the words you do know. Try this -



Initially you might only be certain of one letter \_ a \_ \_ but we have come across one other letter



it is the letter 'h'. So now we have \_ a \_ h. The third letter could be an 'r' but it is not like the 'r' in Parish above. Look around the text for other examples-



Can you read these words they are 'according' and 'proceedings' so our word becomes \_ a c h. I cannot find that first character within the supplied text but the context solves it 'of taking \_ach other in marriage'. The word is 'each'.