

A VICAR AND HIS PARISH

"The manners of Joyce Burton represented by her faithful husband.

April 16, 1710.

My wife is poor
And yet a whore
She's very proud
Little and loud
She is a shrew
What must I do
Shall I bang her
Marry hang her
I will forsake her
Yet who will take her"

From Burton Joyce parish register for the period 1699-1747
apparently in the hand of the Vicar Thomas Tye M.A.
From Margaret Exley, correspondent, Burton Joyce W.E.A.
Population Study Group.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Sir,

In the burial registers of Tottenham High Cross, Middlesex, during the first half of the 17th century the letter "M" was written in the margin against a number of entries (about 20%). It is plain this was written at the time the entry was made, and occurs against the names of children and adults, of all social classes and a wide variety of occupations, buried within the church and in the churchyard, both natives and strangers to the parish. Have any other readers found this same marginal entry and has anyone a possible interpretation of it ?

Yours truly,

David Pam
Edmonton Reference Library
London N. 9.

Dear Mr. Editor,

The registers for Linton parish, Cambridgeshire, show that for centuries the most popular month for marriage was October, for from the 1560's until the period 1821-1840 there were more marriages in this month than any other. I wonder why ?

Perhaps it had something to do with the harvest, for the majority of people were connected with agriculture until the 19th century. There would be time to spare then, and energy too, and perhaps the surplus of food was important for the celebrations.

Does this custom appear from the registers of other parishes ?

Yours sincerely,

R.L. Stevens,
26 Cambridge Road
Linton, Cambs.

Dear Sir,

I write not as one trained in the timeless wisdom of history, but from the ephemeral world of writing advertising copy. I did, however, undertake some research for CAMPOP in the parish registers of Bromley, Kent. I discovered the following peculiarity which intrigued me, to wit : The little bastards of Bromley. In other parishes in which I worked the population was slightly immoral all the year round with bulges nine months after the harvest. In Bromley they seemed to be 100% virtuous except for a fine big bulge every December-January, both months inclusive, until the mid-18th century when their mishaps evened out.

I understand that Bromley had a vast common and a Spring Fair during which camps of travelling people were set up, and the May queens of the London parishes were crowned on the common. Presumably by harvest time the likely girls were pregnant anyway.

My Bromley friends had no idea that bastards were seasonal or that theirs kept a different time-table. But perhaps the readers of your publication know these things, or are above being entertained by them ?

Yours truly,

Bertha K. Barnardiston
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London S.W.1.