

CORRESPONDENCE

Letters intended for publication in **LPS** should be sent to Richard Wall, 27 Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1QA.

Editors' Note

LPS readers are reminded that the editorial board is always prepared to offer advice on subjects within the scope of **LPS**. Sometimes queries which have been raised are discussed in print in this section of the journal but there are many others which are not published, so if you think we can help do not hesitate to contact us.

An unusual occupation

Dear Sir,

While indexing the quarterly court books of the city of Carlisle — recently found — I came upon the following entry:

CHRISTOPHER ARMSTRONG, ALUROTOR CANE

He was defendant in a case of debt in 1614.

No-one seems to be able to say exactly what occupation this could be. Probably it would be quite a humble one.

I should be very grateful if any of your readers could help me with its meaning, as it would add an extra item to our knowledge of the social structure in this district, in the seventeenth century.

Yours sincerely,
Esther E. Beattie (Mrs.).

134 Blackwell Road, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA2 4DT.

Is this how you see LPS?

Dear Sirs,

I am producing a 'research-essay' on property holding and its effect on household formation, and I have identified aspects of my study which I hope to publish with a variety of journals: house repopulation with the **Local Historian**, the assessment of land tax returns with **Agricultural History Review**, the household economy with **Social History**, the nineteenth century peasant village with **Victorian Studies**. I write to ask if **LPS** would be interested in an article which I could compile from the results I am obtaining from my work on reconstitution which is probably too narrowly demographic to find a place in any other journal.

Yours sincerely,
Jane Doe.

Editors' note:

This letter is based on one received recently by the editorial board. Jane Doe clearly implies certain views about **LPS**. Do you share them?

A survey of Christian names

Dear Sir,

You will remember that you published in No. 12 of **Local Population Studies** a letter of mine telling that I was engaged upon a Christian name survey, particularly, at the time, on eighteenth century Christian names, and that I would be very grateful for any help your readers could give me in the recording of baptismal names for the years 1700, 1725, 1750, 1775 and 1800.

The response has been most gratifying: many of your students have sent me lists, culled from parish registers all over the country, and I am now the proud possessor of over 70,000 baptismal entries. The eighteenth century has been well and truly covered and I wish to express my thanks to you and to your readers in the most potent terms.

Perhaps, after such a display of generous enthusiasm, I may be excused for asking for yet another display, this time on sixteenth and seventeenth century names. I have not quite the coverage I should like on these centuries and should welcome whatever additions I can conjure up, irrespective this time of the years in either century. I feel that after experiencing the enthusiasm following my previous letter, I shall not be asking in vain.

Again my warmest thanks.

Yours sincerely,
W. F. Gosling.

2 Harcourt Spinney, Barton Road, Market Bosworth, Nuneaton CV13 0LH.

Servants

Dear Sir,

Although we have long been taught that adolescents hiring themselves out on an annual basis as living-in servants were an integral feature of that world which we have lost, sources for the study of servants and their turnover and mobility are notoriously scarce. Readers of **LPS** may therefore be interested in exploring the possibilities of using journals, account books and diaries for such a study.

A prime example would appear to be the possibilities from Ruth Bird's edition of **The journal of Giles Moore** [Rector of Horstead Keynes, 1656-79], Sussex Record Society, LXVIII (Lewes, 1971). This enormously detailed set of household accounts reports the coming and going of servants, the agreements and payments made, as well as recording payments to tradesmen, craftsmen, women of the parish for making clothes and weeding the garden, and even to Moore's wife for such tasks as bringing in loads of stone. In these accounts twenty-nine people are recorded as working directly for Moore, of whom a few were casually employed or when the household was temporarily without a servant. Some servants lasted only a short time, being unsuitable or falling sick;

two were dismissed when they were discovered in bed together. Men servants were less likely to stay long than women: only five of the eighteen men stayed a year or more, and eleven stayed six months or less, whilst eight women out of the eleven stayed for a year or more, three for six months or less. As Moore reached the end of his life, his servants were more permanent.

The potential of such analysis was recognized earlier by Alan Macfarlane in his study of **The family life of Ralph Josselin, a seventeenth century clergyman** (Cambridge UP: 1970), pp. 145-8, 205-10. However **The diary of Ralph Josselin 1616-83**, recently edited by Dr Macfarlane (British Academy; 1977), shows that such an analysis is not possible there, since Josselin often failed to record the hiring and departure of his servants. They appear to have been peripheral to his interests, and are usually most clearly recorded when household affairs went awry or when they stayed particularly long. Thus in 1658 things went badly, with one maid falling ill and returning home, one found to be unsuitable, and one leaving abruptly; in 1668 and 1672 his maid died. Most of the servants appear to have stayed only the year; the men servants are mentioned even less often, the exceptions being his nephew Thomas who served him for almost five years, and one Peter who left him to get married after some two and a half years.

A number of such detailed accounts and diaries are likely to exist, particularly in manuscript form either in local record offices or in private hands. Readers of **LPS** who are interested in such problems might well like to consider undertaking such studies, or pass on information as to the whereabouts of such material to the journal. Through such household material we can begin to build a more detailed picture of servants and their mobility than the somewhat underidentified one we have at present.

Yours sincerely,
David Souden.

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