

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear LPS

The Tottenham Moniers

In my article on male occupations in a rural Middlesex parish, 1574-1592, I referred to the moniers recorded in the burial register of Tottenham High Cross, and hazarded some guesses at the nature of their work. A number of readers have written to me making suggestions and, in particular, Tom Lewis of the Edmonton Hundred Historical Society has drawn my attention to some interesting material.

During the period covered by the article, Richard Martyn a London goldsmith (b.1543, d.1617) had a house in Tottenham, (though not himself the subject of any entries in the Tottenham parish registers, he occurs as the employer of certain servants who were.) His wife was Dorcas Ecclestone, the daughter of a Tottenham parishioner and this may have influenced his decision to have a house in the parish as well as in London. (Brian I'Anson, The Martin Family, 1935; Harl.Soc.65,22). In 1572 he was appointed Warden of the Royal Mint by letters patent as a result of a re-organisation scheme providing for dual control under a warden and a master. The latter was overseer of the moniers, whose work was to shear the blanks to size and stamp them with the dies. (M.B.Donald, Elizabethan Monopolies, 1961,44.)

It seems, therefore, quite likely that the Tottenham-moniers were employees of the Mint, perhaps recruited from Tottenham men known personally to Martyn. Presumably they commuted daily to London (some 5 miles distant), though there is the possibility that they may have been on the strength of the Mint but worked at Martyn's Tottenham premises.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century the Tottenham moniers had ceased to be mentioned in the parish registers. In August 1602 Martyne (who had been Lord Mayor in 1589 and made a knight) was dismissed from his office of alderman on account of bankruptcy. An examination of his affairs showed that at Tottenham he was £174 in debt and his fifteen employees had been reduced to four. Donald, op.cit. quoting B.M. Add. MSS 38170, F282).

Martyn's bankruptcy and the disappearance of the Tottenham moniers may thus be connected.

Yours sincerely,

David Avery,
11a Kingly Street,
LONDON, W.1

Pre-1841 Census Enumerators' Schedules

Dear Sir,

I noted with interest the enquiry about pre-1841 Census Enumerators' Schedules, on p.53 of LPS.2.

There is in my keeping an 1831 census for the Parish of St. John-at-Hackney. This covers the present districts of Hackney, Homerton, Clapton and Dalston. The Schedules have been bound and are in good condition; they can be seen here during normal library hours (9-7; Sats. 9-6).

Yours faithfully,

S.C. Tongue,
Archivist,
London Borough of
Hackney,
Libraries Department

Enquiries should be addressed to:

Shoreditch Central Library,
Pitfield Street,
London, N.1.

Buried Alive

Dear Editors,

Mr. M. E. Speight's letter in LPS No. 1 concerning the burial alive of a girl at Enfield reminds me of the precautions taken by a Stoke Newington man prior to his death. This was John Wilmer, born at Ealing 13th September 1696, died Stoke Newington 22nd January 1764, who, because he was a Quaker, refused to be buried in the churchyard and insisted on burial in the garden of his house, the present 187 Stoke Newington High Street. Fearing that by mistake he might be buried alive, he ordered that a wire be attached in a loop around his wrist, passed by means of a tube through the coffin and the earth above, and then attached to a bell in his nearby coach-house, so that if he revived after burial he could ring for assistance. The story is told in C. W. Foster and J. Green, History of the Wilmer Family (London) 1886. The house, which in the nineteenth century was for a time a rest home for respectable housemaids, not unnaturally became the subject of local ghost stories.

The garden is now detached from the house and is part of Wingcropp's Wood Yard, the entrance of which is in Stoke Newington Church Street. The foreman at these premises is happy to show the grave to visitors, though the wire is now disconnected.

Yours sincerely,

D. O. PAM,
Edmonton Reference Library
Fore Street,
London, N. 9.