

## 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.

### Parish poor children and nurse children in Enfield

Dear Sir,

In the summer of 1982 I was introduced to Roger Finlay, Librarian at the John Rylands Library, University of Manchester and a member of the **Local Population Studies Society**. The discussion which followed turned on London foundlings who had been put out to nurse in Enfield, Waltham Abbey and Ware in large numbers, and when I said I knew of a list of these children that had been sent to Enfield it was suggested that I would find it worthwhile to investigate it further.

There had been an occasion, years ago, when I had reason to visit the Westminster Record Office to enquire into the Vestry Minutes of St. Anne, Soho, and I had noticed in the catalogue an item 'Lists of children at nurse at Enfield'. And so, at Roger Finlay's urging I went back to Westminster.

Nurse children appear in the Enfield parish registers in three periods, 1581-95, when 5.5 per cent of all burials are of nurse children: in 1704-14 when they amount to 10 per cent and in 1735-37, when 2.5 per cent are so described. Undoubtedly many of these burials were of infants that had been sent to Enfield by London parents to be reared by wet nurses, a common practice in the past. I have not found evidence of foundling hospitals sending to Enfield in these earlier periods but inspection of St Anne archives revealed that they had a large number of parish poor children there in 1789 and onwards. The information in the lists of children is supported by the annual accounts of the overseers of the poor which reveal that quite large sums of money were being spent on them.

The lists of children are drawn up every four weeks and are complete for 1789 but for one week only in 1793. There were twenty nurses (presumably women) but also three males. In January they were caring for ninety-five children: this had risen to 108 by October. The 1793 list records eighteen nurses, two of them male, with seventy-one children in their care. During 1789 ten children died.

The St Anne baptism register was searched from 1780-1803 in an attempt to fix the age of children, without much success. The baptisms of only four foundlings were

found in that period, their names were not in the Enfield lists, however, six legitimate baptisms were found that were in the 1789 list, and that of two bastards who were in the 1793 list, two and six weeks after baptism. Also found was the baptism of Charles Youell, on 7-1-1787: he was a twin; he appears at Enfield in the 1793 list and would have been six years old.

Of the ninety-five children on the first list, seventeen were certainly alive in 1793, they must have been at least four and a half years old. Among all the children were fourteen sets of siblings. The nurses were being paid between 10s and 12s per four week period for each child. The first sheet shows that Nurse Parish had six children in her care and one of them, Mary Ann Jones, is marked 'sick'; however, she recovered and in 1793 was in the care of Nurse William Parish and was then the only child in his care.

Some information on medical care is provided by the lists of nurse children and others and later account books, for instance, in October 1789, a shilling was paid for 'Physick' in June 1789. Dr Sherwin was paid £1-1s for attendance on Elizabeth Roberts, 'one of the children at Enfield' in June 1806.

Nor was the education of the children neglected. The 1789 lists record the payment to Mr Poole of £4-13s-8d in various monthly sums for the purchase of both 'books and writing books'. In September 1805 a gratuity of £3-3s was paid to Mr Robinson, the schoolmaster at Enfield.

Mending the children's shoes in 1789 cost £6-9s-3d and in April 1793, one month only 13s-5d. The total expenses for 1789 were £843-10s.

The account books for the St Anne's overseers of the poor have survived and these make first mention of Enfield in 1807 with the entry 'Drawn to the nurses at Enfield for care and maintenance of the parish poor children and for clothing, education and other expenses attending them' — £905. The accounts continue with exactly the same entry but with steadily rising annual payments until 1822 when all the children were removed to a house in Edmonton. In these sixteen years the sum of £20,100 was spent.

In April 1824 an application to the St Anne's Vestry was made by the schoolmaster and nurses of the late establishment for the children at Enfield for some gratuity in consideration of their long service and the loss to them consequent on the removal of the children to Edmonton. Mr Robinson was awarded £10, nurses Naylor, Knight and Thorn £10 each, Nurses Newman, Dellar and Ellis £8 each, Nurses Field, Clerk, Parker, Pellet and Denton, £5 each and Nurse Poole, £3. The cost of going to Enfield to pay these recipients was £2.

From 1829 the Edmonton parish register records the burials of children from the Soho establishment in Fore Street. These continue to 1837 when apparently it was absorbed into the Strand Union and eventually to Millfield House. There is much further information about this in the Greater London Record Office. One day I may search it out, but one never has all the time one needs when retirement comes!

Yours faithfully  
Tom Lewis

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## **Shrewsbury butchers and fish merchants; and the cover illustration, LPS 31**

Dear Sir,

Your autumn number No. 31 is, as ever, full of good things, and I particularly enjoyed James Hindson's analysis of the Shrewsbury topography. I wanted to check the relative positions of the butchers and the fish merchants, who in the East would have been adjacent, but unfortunately the excellent Map ONE on p.23 omits the one vital clue for me — No. 11 Fish Street — though Table FIVE shows it as also being in Castle Ward.

We always appreciate your cover pictures, but it would be helpful if you could in future explain the activity pictured. Sometimes this may be obvious, this time not so; is the man in the centre shearing (leg of sheep sticking out under his right elbow), but what is the use of the brick held by the other man? And what is in the boy's basket? Turnips with the tops on?

Yours sincerely

Brigadier F R L Goadby

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### **James Hindson comments**

I would like to thank Brigadier Goadby for his enquiry about the relative position of butchers and fish merchants in Shrewsbury. To answer his question directly, Fish Street (No. 11) should, in fact, have been marked on Map One as being the lower end of Butcher Row (No. 3). The sketch below, which is part of Rocque's map of 1746 illustrates the relationship between the two streets in more detail than was possible in the article.

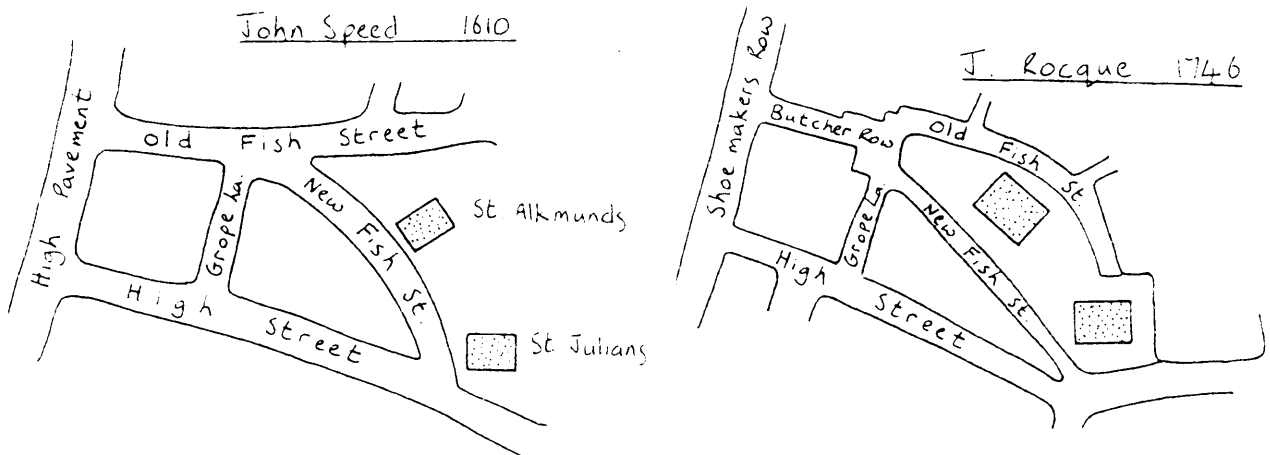
The situation in terms of the relative position of the two occupational groups however, is not as simple as the street names suggest.

It is probably safe to assume that a street with a name such as Fish Street or Butcher Row, will to some extent, reflect the occupational character of that street. If this is so, then a comparison of John Speed's map of 1610 and Rocque's map of 1746 illustrates how streets can change their occupational structure over time. Speed does not mark a Butcher row on his map, but does name both an Old and New Fish Street. This suggests that the fish merchants moved from one street to the other at some time before the map was drawn. On the other hand, Rocque, on his map does mark Butcher Row and it seems that this street then formed part of what used to be Old Fish Street. In fact this section of the street was probably called Butcher Row for a long time before 1746, as the street name 'Butcher Row and Fish Street' appears on tax lists dated from the 1670s. It is possible that the butchers occupied this section of Old Fish Street even at the time of John Speed's map, as street name changes are likely to have lagged a long way behind any changing occupational structure.

Even this is not the complete picture, however, for according to the listing return for 1698, New Fish Street was no longer occupied by fish merchants' households. This is of course assuming that at one point in time it had been the street where the fish merchants lived, and not just the location of the fish market. There were then some fifteen households in New Fish Street; eleven were headed by butchers and none by

fish merchants. In fact the listing only records four households in the whole of Shrewsbury as having anything to do with the fish trade 'fishermen'.

Therefore, although Butcher Row and New Fish Street were adjacent, butchers and fish merchants, at least in 1698, were not. It is possible that the two trades had at some time occupied adjacent streets at one point in time, but this would all depend on when the fish merchants no longer formed the majority of households in New Fish Street, and when the butchers became the majority in at least one part of Old Fish Street. It is rather puzzling in fact to find a street named after an occupation no longer present in the town in any great numbers. Perhaps a reader has the solution to the 'mystery of the disappearing fish merchants'?



**Editors' note.** The cover picture referred to by Brigadier Goadby in fact represents brick makers at work. We are sorry that the caption for this illustration was omitted by the printers.

## Access to the Civil Registers

Dear Sir,

I was interested, as always, to read your editorial (LPS 32) and fully support your conclusions concerning the records of the Registrar General.

There is in fact useful confirmatory evidence about the public access to registers of births, marriages and deaths in the **Report of the Royal Commission on Public Records, 1914** (see below).

At the time of this report the census enumerators' returns were regarded as entirely confidential, access being very rarely allowed. In spite of this, it should not be forgotten that the 1841 and 1851 census returns were open to public inspection by 1924 in order that persons might be able to prove their age for pension purposes. The 100-year rule did not appear until the 1861 census was opened to the public.

Yours faithfully,  
Michael Farrar,  
County Archivist,

County Record Office, Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 0AP.

**The Royal Commission on Public Records, 1914, pp. 74/5.**

(N.B. In this extract the footnotes have been renumbered); and part of the evidence of Master A. F. Ridsdale. (see **Royal Commission on Public Records, 1914, Minutes of Evidence, p.64**).

Prior to the year 1898, or thereabouts, it was usual to permit searchers, who were chiefly solicitors engaged in pedigree cases in Chancery, or professional record agents, to inspect the original registers in the repository itself.<sup>1</sup> The searcher, furnished with a list of references derived from the official indexes, went down to the vaults in charge of an attendant and examined successive registers until the list was worked off. There can be no doubt that this system was greatly to the advantage of the professional searcher and enabled him to obtain the desired information with greater certainty and in less time. It is also possible that this procedure may have been more convenient to the Department at that period. At the same time the practice presented two objections, the opportunity afforded for tampering with the registers and the evasion of the official fees prescribed by statute.<sup>2</sup> These objections appear to Your Commissioners to be sound; but, on the other hand, we are of opinion that the public should be entitled to production and inspection of the original registers in the search room on payment of a reasonable fee. It has been presented to us that under the later regulations the indexes alone are produced, and that references noted by the searchers are verified from the register, on demand, by an official attendant. It is further alleged that owing to the flaws in the official indexes,<sup>3</sup> and still more to the natural difficulty of obtaining exact information from family tradition,<sup>4</sup> a satisfactory search cannot be made without an actual inspection of the registers.

It appears to Your Commissioners that it was the evident intention of the Act that the public should be able to obtain certain information from the registers, and that the cost of these facilities should not be prohibitive.<sup>5</sup> In the circumstances mentioned above, the administration of the registry is placed in a somewhat invidious position. Owing to its desire to prevent any diminution of the revenue derived from fees for the copies, it refuses to give adequate facilities to searchers who pay fees for inspecting the records, and who are not satisfied with the substitution of an official index or an official search for a personal inspection of the actual register. Moreover, in the unanimous opinion of the Masters of the Supreme Court,<sup>6</sup> further facilities are desirable in the interests of justice. We have ascertained that the public are allowed to inspect the original records in other registries,<sup>7</sup> and we therefore recommend that arrangements should be made for the inspection of the Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths, in a public search room only and under proper official supervision, on payment of the usual fees and subject to the usual conditions as to certified copies. We have reason to believe that such an arrangement could be made without much extra expense, and as the revenue derived from fees for inspections is very considerable, we think that the facilities given to the public should be adequate. While we think it right that a proper fee should be charged for a certified copy, we see no good reason in principle for forbidding searchers to take copies at their own risk. The existing restriction rests merely on financial grounds, and we think that it should be removed. We also think that steps should be taken to render the non-parochial registers and other

miscellaneous records more easily accessible to searchers by means of proper indexes,<sup>8</sup> and that the fullest facilities should be given to learned societies and literary students for consulting these valuable public documents free of charge.

#### NOTES

1. Minutes of Evidence, Q.6163. The point as to the status of a solicitor as an officer of the High Court (Ibid., Qs.6159 sq.) is of professional importance, but we do not think it would be proper for us to express any opinion upon it.
2. By the Act of 6 & 7 Wm. IV., C.86, fees are chargeable both for an inspection of the official indexes and for an office copy of the register. It has been suggested that the latter charge could be in many cases dispensed with by astute searchers from an inspection of the registers alone.
3. Minutes of Evidence, Q. 6179, and Appendix VI., Nos. 13 and 15.
4. Ibid., Qs. 6168,6180.
5. It is true that the Act of 1836 provides that the indexes may be searched on payment of a fee, and that this provision would seem to imply (as the Registrar General contends) that the actual registers shall not be searched. Nevertheless, the Act permits the local registers to be searched by the public on payment of a fee, and in practice this was permitted (as stated above) at the General Register Office itself prior to the year 1898.
6. Appendix VI., No. 15.
7. E.G., the Probate Registry of Joint Stock Companies &c.
8. We have been informed by the Secretary General of the General Register Office that this work will now be put in hand. With regard to the inspection of the Census Papers, we have been officially assured that the information contained therein is confidential; though for how long this should be the case we have no means of forming an opinion.

#### Master Ridsdale's Evidence

My work was to search at Somerset House, and I used to make the difficult searches myself, and of course if I could not get information there, or it was before 1837, I used to write pretty fully to my country clients as to what was wanted.

I have had searches both before and since the inspection of the registers was refused by the Registrar General to the public. For a very long period (I am told by older men going back over 50 years) the practice was that if the person searching desired, he got his reference from the Index Room and then went down into the vaults to verify the entry by seeing the register. I had a very long search under that system about 1898. About a year or two afterwards the Registrar General closed the registers to the public, and since that time everybody, I mean outside Government officials, has been unable to see the registers. I have had a good many searches since I have been unable to see the registers, so that I can speak from my own experience as to the result.

#### Yorkshire Migrants

Dear Sir,

In his description of Yorkshire dated 3 January 1588/9, recently published in the **Yorkshire Archaeological Journal**, vol. 56, 1984, pp 95-118, James Ryther of Harewood refers to the number of unemployed poor, and continues:

'We breed of all sortes much faster then they do further south; so we seed that all northerne and colde regions increase people in more abundance then the hotter have don, as may appear by their superfluous nombres sent into Fraunce and Ittally and plantyd in Normandy and Lombardy.'

The same writer in a letter to Lord Burghley dated 7 August 1587, BL/MS Lansd. LIV, 60f.154, writes:

'too savage a thinge yt is . . . to see so many people unemployd for lacke of lande, . . . and our people heer in these north partes gone into other countries before they be arrestid with idellnes of this'

Taken together these two passages suggest that the writer had evidence of substantial movement of population from Yorkshire to other parts of the country ('other countries') though the implied comparison with Norman and Lombard occupations of parts of France and Italy seems rather a flight of fancy.

Any contributory evidence of such movement from Yorkshire southwards at this date would be of great interest.

Yours sincerely,  
W. J. Craig,

The Wynd, Gayle, Hawes, N. Yorkshire DL8 3SD.

### **Miss Morrison's comments on Chrisom Children (LPS 32)**

Dear Sir,

Although there are obviously regional variations in the use of this word I can confirm that it is used in south east Surrey to mean an unbaptised child.

During my family re-constitution of Reigate, Surrey (including the use of parish registers from contiguous parishes) the burial of chrisom children is never associated with an equivalent baptismal entry.

This can be further confirmed in the cases of twins where one was a chrisom, so there is no possibility of it just being a case of under registration.

Yours sincerely,  
J. Jeremy Greenwood,

51 London Road, Horsham, West Sussex.