

CORRESPONDENCE

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

Editor's 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.

The Dyfed Family History Society Project

Dear Sir,

At the beginning of 1986 the Dyfed Family History Society began a project to transcribe and index a large body of records from the nineteenth century relating to the County of Dyfed. By March 1987 the Society had created a database on computer which contains approximately 85,000 records and from it has produced printed typescripts and indexes of all its work.

The Society was able to mount this project — which involved employing two typists — by obtaining funding from the Manpower Services Commission under its Community Programme. Both during the year-long project, and in the preparatory period leading up to it, the Society had the active support of the National Library of Wales, Diocesan Archivist (St Davids), County Archivist and University College, Aberystwyth. The two typists were employed in the Department of Geography at the University and used equipment made available within the department. The printed typescripts and indexes which have been produced will soon be available to the public in a select number of locations. The discs containing the database are now held by the Department of Geography for future academic research.

For this project the Society has concentrated its efforts on marriage records and census returns. As a result, the database contains the following records:

- all marriages in the whole of Dyfed for the period 1813-37 (300 parishes, 43,000 marriages)
- The 1851 Census for the towns of Cardigan, Carmarthen, Haverfordwest, Llanelli and Pembroke Dock (Total pop. 42,000).

As the County of Dyfed is 28 percent of the land area of Wales, transcripts and indexes on this scale are obviously of considerable importance to family historians with an interest in the area. In addition, it may readily be appreciated that the project offers an opportunity, not only for research into the towns and rural communities of this part of West Wales, but also for comparisons to be drawn within the area and with other areas.

The successful completion of the project was not achieved without a great deal of effort by many dedicated people and it will come as no surprise to report that many difficulties had to be overcome along the way — particularly with the census returns. Unfortunately, it has not yet been possible to set out in a report the methods used and the ways in which the difficulties were overcome. This will be done over the next few months but, in the meantime, if any of your readers are considering embarking on similar work and consider that they could profit from our experiences, I should be only too pleased to answer any specific queries they may have.

Yours faithfully,
John Rowlands
Chairman

18 Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 2AZ.

Commemorating Civil Registration

Dear Sir,

In response to the request on page 12 of **Local Population Studies** no. 37, I am writing to let you know that an exhibition is being held in the Great Hall at Winchester to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Civil Registration. The exhibition will cover parish registers, as the predecessors of civil registration, as well as the work of district and general register offices. Tentative dates are 1-18 July 1987.

Yours faithfully,
E. M. Hughes (Mrs)
Assistant Archivist

The Hampshire Record Office, 20 Southgate Street, Winchester SO23 9EF.

Dear Sir,

The anniversary is to be marked in Cheshire by an exhibition of original material bearing on the history of registration since 1538. This will take place at County Hall on 14 May and will be opened by the Registrar General, Mrs Gillian Banks. In addition each of the six Register Offices in the County will be provided with a similar photographic exhibition which will be on show by 1 July. Some of the Register Offices are holding open days and we are also planning a short leaflet describing the history of registration in Cheshire and the role of the registration service.

Yours faithfully,
F. I. Dunn
County Archivist

Cheshire Record Office and Chester Diocesan Record Office, Duke Street,
Chester CH1 1RL.

Non-conformist registration in Halifax

Dear Sir,

Your readers may be interested to read the following which would appear to confirm Margaret Slack's conclusions as to the part played by non-conformist registration in Halifax at the end of the eighteenth century.

Halifax When the returns were made to the Stamp Office in 1792 and 1793 it appeared that the Dissenters including the Methodists baptised about one fourth of the whole number in this Parish. From the increase of dissenting meeting-houses the number of baptisms unentered in the register of the parish church, and its chapels, must have considerably increased. Perhaps the same may be said of burials. The marriages are solemnised in the Parish Church of Halifax from all the other chapelries in the district.

The quotation comes from the British Museum Additional Manuscript 6896 which consists of answers to the third question put to Church of England ministers in connection with the Census of 1811, viz. Are there any other matters which you may think it necessary to remark, in explanation of your answers to either of the preceding questions, especially whether any and what annual average number of baptisms, burials and marriages may (in your opinion) take place in your parish without being entered in the parish registers, assigning the reason of such non-entry.

Family historians may find the entry for the particular parish or parishes they are interested in a useful indicator of where information on the people they are looking for is to be found.

Yours faithfully,
Michael Drake

44 Parklands, Great Linford, Milton Keynes MK14 5DZ.

Centre for Metropolitan History

Dear Sir,

The Institute of Historical Research has recently established a new Centre for Metropolitan History. The aims of this body are as follows:

1. To provide a forum for the interchange of ideas on metropolitan history through seminars and other meetings.
2. To undertake original research into the society, economy, culture, and fabric of London, with regard to its role both within the British Isles and in the world at large.
3. To provide a practical service for those interested in the history of London by

bibliographical work, by organising and processing raw data so that it will be more readily usable, and by collecting and publishing news of research in progress.

4. To promote research into the history of other metropolises by inviting speakers and research fellows from other parts of the world to take part in its activities.

The centre is being set up in collaboration with the Museum of London and other organisations. It is seeking funds for a programme of research into aspects of the history of London and other metropolises from the beginning to the twentieth century and for the support of its information services.

A comprehensive bibliography of printed sources for London history to 1939 is already being compiled. In addition The Social and Economic Study of Medieval London, which since 1979 has been working on a pioneering reconstruction of the medieval City, will form part of the Centre's activities. A register of research in progress on London history is also being compiled by Miss H. J. Creaton.

If anyone would like to know more about the Centre's activities and its plans for the future they are welcome to write to either of the addresses given below.

Miss H. J. Creaton, Institute of Historical Research, Senate House, Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HU. Dr D. J. Keene, C/O Museum of London, 150 London Wall, London, EC2Y 5HN.

Yours faithfully,
H. J. Creaton

The LPS position on charges for the use of Archives

Dear Sir,

I read with interest the editorial comment in **Local Population Studies 37** 'Further News from the General Register Office'. The developments outlined will of course be significant for custodians, historians and administrators alike. The questions of the alleged confidentiality of records less than 100 years old and of charging for access to the microfilm records in the Public Record Office certainly raise important issues of principle.

A degree of concern was indeed felt by the Executive Committee of the Association of County Archivists at the open-mindedness of your comments on p.8. After reminding readers of your opposition to Lord Teviot's proposals in 1983 because of "the spectre of charges" they could raise, you write "In fairness we too must be prepared to consider the case again . . . we are open to persuasion." While open mindedness is almost always a virtue and the taking of entrenched positions a hindrance to progress, I hope that your group is not considering abandoning its opposition to the imposition of charges for the use of archives held on behalf of the public in central and local government record offices. The Association has recently revised its policy document on charges for access to county record offices, to which it remains entirely opposed. We

regard it as very important to have the support of user groups in maintaining this position.

Yours sincerely,
Rosemary Dunhill

Secretary, Association of County Archivists, Hampshire Record Office, 20 Southgate Street, Winchester SO23 9EF.

Editors' Note

Yes, we are open to persuasion but nothing we have heard so far in this or any other debate on access to archives has weakened our commitment to the principle of free public access.

University of Nottingham
DEPARTMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION
LOCAL HISTORY PUBLICATIONS

DIARIES OF HENRY HILL OF SLACKFIELDS FARM 1872-1896 (Derbyshire) Ed. J. Heath. 1982. £1.50.

DIARIES OF GEORGE BIRD: Victorian wheelwright 1862-1883 (Lincs.) Ed. J. Liddie. 1980. £2.50.

GUIDELINES: problems encountered in writing guidebooks to historic buildings. A. Tinniswood. 1982. £1.50.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE WORKHOUSE: the implementation of the New Poor Law throughout Nottinghamshire 1836-46. M. Caplan. 1985. £2.50.

LIFE AT LAXTON c.1880-1903: the childhood memories of Edith Hickson (Notts.) Ed. B. A. Wood et al. 1983. £3.50.

LIVELY PEOPLE: Methodism in Nottingham 1740-1979. R. C. Swift. 1983. £4.75.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE MINERS BETWEEN THE WARS: the Spencer Union revisited. C. P. Griffin. 1984. £2.00.

RIOT & POLITICAL DISAFFECTION IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE IN THE AGE OF REVOLUTIONS 1778-1803. R. A. E. Wells. 1985. £2.50.

BULLETIN OF LOCAL HISTORY: East Midland Region. Annual publication since 1966. (Vol XXI 1986. £2.95).

Publications available from:

Mrs. L. Thomas, University of Nottingham, Dept. of Adult Education, 'C' Block, Cherry Tree Buildings, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD. Tel. 0602-506101 ext. 2717.