

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.

What was she selling?

Dear Amanda Copley,

Your letter to **LPS 39** (Another word for Prostitute) was very intriguing. I am sure you will get a great many learned suggestions, and this isn't one of them. However, it does seem to me possible that, on the second entry, there was a correction of the first, approximate, very aural attempt at occupational designation. Could the women be rather casual sellers of painted kitchen stuff who happened to be based in Clerkenwell for a few months, and known by their activity but not by name? Clerks had their own way of putting things, but there were so many more obvious words to hand to use for prostitution that it seems surprising that they would resort to such obscurity.

Another possibility of course is that the second word is not at all a version of the first, but an alternative, familiar description, and that the women were selling novelties of some kind for the kitchen — painted ones!

If you get an answer that satisfies you I hope you will publish the result!

Yours sincerely,
Margaret Pelling

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45 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 6PE.

Individuals reaching late ages

Dear Sir,

Readers of **LPS** are urgently requested to send any mention they may find of individuals reaching eighty-five years or more. The information is wanted for research into the human life span, as distinct from life expectation. The crucial question is whether the life span has increased over time.

Everyone knows that older people often exaggerated their ages in the past, and sometimes do so now. All such evidence has therefore to be treated with some scepticism as a realistic record. But it is useful to know what claims were in fact made. In my experience they appear in many places, in diaries, letters, reports of events, accounts of communities, in court cases and in parish registers. I would like everything, but everything.

Best of all would be age statements backed up with an entry of the birth of the person concerned in a civil or parish register, or even a genealogy, a diary and so on. This would make possible, among other things, an estimation of the frequency and extent of exaggeration. Such information would be greeted with enthusiasm, but as I said, anything of this character would be welcomed by me.

Yours faithfully,
Peter Laslett

The Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, 27
Trumpington Street, Cambridge, CB2 1QA.

Baptised Incognito?

Dear Sir,

We have located a rather unusual entry and would be most interested in your interpretation and also to know whether you or anyone else at the LPS has come across the format. The problem entry occurs in the parish registers of Dallinghoo in Suffolk:

C. 5 Oct 1739 Peter son of Incognito and Mary LIGHT.

There is a similar baptism for his brother:

C. 15 Dec 1740 Francis son of Incognito and Mary LIGHT

and the entries in the 1739 and 1740 Bishop's transcripts read the same. My problem is, is this a bastard birth? There is only one other illegitimate baptism in the parish between 1730 and 1750 and this is described as base child and I cannot rid myself of the suspicion that Incognito is a name and the (rather mixed!) blessing of a (rather odd!) parent.

I should be grateful for any light you may be able to shed on this.

Yours sincerely,
Duncan W. Harrington

Ashton Lodge, Church Road, Lyminge, Folkestone,
Kent CT18 8JA.

Entries in the Hackness Parish Registers

Dear Sir,

I have recently come across a copy of the registers of Hackness Parish Co. York transcribed and published in 1906 by the Yorkshire Parish Register Society vol. XXV. It contains many annotated entries during the period 1630 to 1668 when John Richardson held the office of 'Parish Register', as he styles himself. Richardson shows a true diarist's interest in the world around him, combining disinterested observation of detail with compassion for the people whose lives he records. The following extracts are among the fullest:-

Tewsdai the Third of January was an exceeding stormie day and dyd drive and snowe verie fearsely and that day towards the Eveninge Richard Dickinson's wiffe of Trouts dale (his house standinge under the North Syde of the hill) shee beinge in the Chamber there fell a greate drifte of shelve of snowe from the hill and drave downe the House all but the Chimney and the next day shee was found under the Thatch and snowe dead and their daughter and Child that ware in ye Chimney were saved alive and fower horses that were in the Stable were Laimed and Spoyed and dyed there was also a waine broken; after she was buryed the Crouner came and she was unburyed the xxvth day of Jann. to be viewed, which was nere as snowey and stormmy as the Tewsdai.

Burials, 1659 Civil Year 1660;

Grace the wyffe of William Baxster beinge aboute three weekes before her tyme was brought in bedd the first day of December aboute three of the Clocke in the afternoone of two children. Their bellies were growne and joyned together from their breastes to their navells but their navells might be seen and their faces were together but the supposed man child was not soe longe as the daughter for that his face reached but to the chine of the other. And of the backe partes from the shoulders of the supposed manchild was a lump almoste as bigg as the head, was softe and verily thought by the Middwife to be the coddess and members being turned on the backe partes wrong placed and out of eyther side the sayd lumpe was a smale legg and a foote and the feet were turned backwardes but noe thighes to be seen and had noe fundament nor passage for water but had a prettie face and head shouders body breaste armes handes and feete but the daughter was a large child and had all the proportion of a child the Middwives name was Jaine Cockerell who is a good old woman and after the children were borne she told me she tooke them in her handes and sayd to the wives wee muste take heed we mingle not truth and falshood together

Births, 1655

Robert Coulson of Hagg house within the parish of Wykham and Marie Cockerell daughter of Henrie Cockerell of Sharpegate were married by Mr Francis Proude minr. of Hacknes in the Church and in the midst of the marriage Mary dreeped down by reason of a swame and after she was had to the Queer Doore into the Ayre shee recovered verie well againe and

there they were married in the presence of the Congregacon the xxvth day
of October

John Richardson
Parish Register

Marriages, 1659

Through Richardson's notes we can feel to the full that fellowship with the ordinary people of the past which is not least of the rewards given to users of parish registers, whatever their main objectives.

Yours faithfully,
Malcolm Smith

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