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# The Marginal Dead of London, c.1600-1800

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Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2021

I, Anna Cusack, hereby declare that this thesis, presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is the result of my own work.

## Abstract

This thesis explores what happened to the bodies of individuals who were considered marginalised from the mainstream Protestant population of seventeenth and eighteenth-century London. Four groups were analysed. First, two groups of individuals whose manner of death potentially caused marginalisation: suicides and executed criminals. Second, two communities whose religious beliefs resulted in the self-imposed marginalisation of their dead, Quakers and Jews. By investigating public perception of these dead and the variations in burial practices among these subgroups, the degree to which they were distinctive from the wider metropolitan population is made visible. The thesis argues that the degrees of marginalisation have been frequently overestimated and various categories of marginalisation exist. The question of what made these individuals marginalised even in death is examined by following the dead of each group to interment, exploring the treatment of the corpse and how these actions were shaped by the life of the deceased individual. This was achieved by gathering biographical information about thousands of individuals, establishing details related to their standing within their community prior to death and exploring how this translated to their post-mortem treatment. Looking at multiple groups with contrasting histories made this research distinctive from a simple case study and, although it filled a historiographical gap caused by a lack of research on particular minorities, the comparative nature of the analysis also went beyond this by illuminating how 'normality' and 'marginality' were defined and reinforced by early modern Londoners even after death.

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## List of Abbreviations

BHO	British History Online
BL	British Library
BPP	British Parliamentary Papers
FH	Friends House Library
GL	Guildhall Library
LL	London Lives Website
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
MOLA	Museum of London Archaeology
OBP	Old Bailey Proceedings Online
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
RCP	Royal College of Physicians
RCS	Royal College of Surgeons
TNA	The National Archives
WAC	Westminster Archive Centre
WT	Wellcome Trust Library

## Conventions

Dates are as recorded, but the year is taken to begin 1 January.

Original spelling has been retained excluding replacing ye (thorn) with 'th' and 'ff' with 'F'.

All texts prior to 1900 were published in London unless otherwise stated.

# Chapter 1 The Marginal Dead

## Introduction

'The dead seem to belong to us; they are of our company,' wrote the poet Thomas Miller in 1852.<sup>1</sup> In seventeenth and eighteenth-century London the dead were certainly in the company of the living. Death was omnipresent. It was measured, reported, registered, and tracked through semi-official and official means in each parish and by each community. But not all members of the community of the dead belonged to all members of the community of the living. The dead were not an undifferentiated mass and were not all treated equally. Even in death a divide was apparent between those of different social standing, those of different genders and ages, those who were accused of moral digressions, and those with different religious beliefs. Death was no great leveller, as has sometimes been claimed, and this is evident in the treatment of the bodies of individuals and groups who were considered marginalised, people who were outside the mainstream Protestant norm.

Studying the dead is important. As Miller acknowledged, the dead belong to the living, and when individuals and groups were treated differently it reflected the social relations of the time. The ways societies treat their dead allows glimpses into broader attitudes and mentalities, an aspect of history that is often otherwise elusive. As a result, for the early modern period there is a growing historiography focused on death and the dead. Scholars, however, have rarely paid attention to those who did not conform to the Protestant expectations of death and conventional burial practices.

In the Protestant custom reminders of one's own mortality were consistently deployed in sermons, books, tracts, and through witnessing funerals and the tolling of

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<sup>1</sup> T. Miller, *Picturesque sketches of London: past and present* (1852), p. 275.

church bells.<sup>2</sup> A Protestant deathbed was a place to demonstrate an individual's Christian faith and pass on advice to family and acquaintances. Prayers were encouraged and the clergy played an active role directing the deathbed scene and providing last rites. This was a 'good death', an ideal that was promoted and could be accomplished by all. These deaths took place at the home surrounded by the family and wider household, sometimes with neighbours and friends in attendance who would then bear witness to the deceased's body which was washed by the women then shrouded in preparation for the funeral. Funerals differed widely based on an individual's standing within society. They ranged from heraldic funerals for those from the upper spheres of society to the parish-funded interments for poorer members of the community. Differences were also apparent in the number of attendants, richness of funeral attire, use and craftsmanship of a coffin, eulogies, doles for the poor, grave markers or monuments, burial locations, and commemoration and mourning rituals after interment. However, similarities existed regardless of social standing. Bells tolled, payment for the funeral and burial were provided by the deceased individual or by the parish if the individual had been poor, food and drink was consumed, and the deceased were interred within consecrated ground upon an east-west axis with the clergy present.<sup>3</sup> The core aspects of these practices remained relatively constant across the seventeenth and eighteenth century, with two exceptions. Between 1645 and 1660 burial ceremony was minimised by Puritan dictate and during periods of plague the dead were sometimes interred without much ceremony nor the presence of the clergy. Changes were apparent in the rise in coffin usage, but this was rooted in earlier customs, as were changes in mourning attire; other changes were apparent in streamlining embalming techniques,

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<sup>2</sup> R. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England 1480-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 58-59.

<sup>3</sup> This is a very basic and brief overview of the mainstream Protestant norm. For a thorough examination of Protestant customs see: Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*; D. Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), especially pp. 379-473.



the establishment of the funeral trade, and the undertaker's role, but on the whole, there was a clear Protestant custom that was adhered to that dictated the proper courses of action from death to burial.<sup>4</sup> Even the growth of dissent over the period under examination resulted in surprisingly few changes when it came to dealing with the dead. In the 1620s the Laudians encouraged reintroducing more ceremonial practices in many aspects of worship, and this was apparent in burial practices as well as everyday veneration. Puritans opposed this move and during the Interregnum pared-down forms of worship and simple funerals and burial practices were practiced. In 1660 the 'high church' returned to pre-eminence. The separatist movements that developed over the period resulted in dissenters growing in numbers but most, apart from the Quakers who are discussed shortly, were still interred in parish burial grounds with the presence of a religious leader, the tolling of bells, and other common practices until the end of the eighteenth century. The main changes that occurred as a result of the rise in dissent was in the simplicity of funerals and interments for those following these movements.<sup>5</sup> The Protestant way of death was a subject of theological discourses that went through various understandings of what was and was not important in terms of how to die a 'good death', what greeted an individual in the afterlife, and the resurrection, but the practical on the ground funeral and burial practices remained relatively consistent. This consistency reaches back to pre-Reformation practices and is probably 'because so little of the traditional burial rite was based on church teachings in the first place'.<sup>6</sup> But what became of those who did not conform to these narratives?

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<sup>4</sup> These changes are covered in J. Litten, *The English Way of Death: The Common Funeral Since 1450* (London: Robert Hale, 1992).

<sup>5</sup> S. Tarlow, *Ritual, Belief and the Dead in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 54-56.

<sup>6</sup> Tarlow, *Ritual, Belief and the Dead*, p. 58.

It is the aim of this thesis to discover what happened to the bodies of individuals who were considered marginal to this Protestant mainstream in seventeenth and eighteenth-century London. By investigating public perception and the variations in burial practices among these subgroups, the degree to which they were distinctive from the wider metropolitan population will be made visible. The question of what made them marginalised even in death will be examined by following the dead of each group to interment, exploring the treatment of the corpse and how reactions to it were shaped by the life of the deceased individual. This will be achieved by gathering biographical information about thousands of individuals, establishing details about their standing within their community prior to death and exploring how this translated to their post-mortem treatment. Looking at multiple groups with contrasting histories makes this research distinctive from a simple case study and, although it will fill a historiographical gap caused by a lack of research on particular minorities, the comparative nature of the analysis will also go beyond this by illuminating how 'normality' and 'marginality' were defined and reinforced by early modern Londoners even after death.

Four groups have been chosen for analysis. First, the thesis examines two groups of individuals whose manner of death could cause marginalisation: suicides and executed criminals. Second, it addresses two communities whose religious beliefs caused marginalisation: Quakers and Jews. By observing the treatment of these dead, a more rounded image of early modern society can be added to the growing historiography of early modern death, the dead, and London.

This introduction will demonstrate how the thesis fits into the existing literature on the dead of the early modern period, before briefly touching upon the current historiography about each of the four groups of marginal dead. It will then turn to explaining the scope of the work and the problems encountered with concepts of

marginality, defining London, and periodisation. It concludes with the methodological approach undertaken, the sources that have been used, and the structure of the thesis.

## Historiographical Context

Death and, to a lesser extent, the dead have formed a discrete area of research within early modern history. As Vanessa Harding has put it, 'the process whereby a person becomes a body has always been mysterious'.<sup>7</sup> This process has held a long-standing fascination among scholars who explored early modern death and dying, whereas the dead body itself has only drawn limited attention. Thus, this thesis's main focus remains on the dead and the treatment of the corpse. The current historiography is broad, and this has laid an important foundation for comparative research. Without knowing how the ordinary Protestant dead were dealt with, it would be impossible to show how the methods of disposal employed by religious outsiders differed. Without all the studies on 'dying well' in the early modern world and the importance of a 'good death', the work in this thesis on suicides and criminals and when their death was considered a 'bad death' would be impossible. Coming to an examination of the dead at this point in its historiography, after a substantial amount of literature has already been produced, allows these insights, and shows that there is still scope for further study within these fields for, as Nigel Llewellyn stated: 'The whole subject is simply too complex to be treated in one single history'.<sup>8</sup>

The dead of the early modern world initially drew the interest of scholars through the work of two quite different pioneers in this field of research: the French Annales School's Philippe Ariès and the American historian David Stannard. Ariès' foundational work, *The Hour of our Death*, first published in French in 1977, built upon his earlier essays

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<sup>7</sup> V. Harding, 'Burial on the Margin: Distance and Discrimination in Early Modern London' in *Grave Concerns: Death and Burial in England 1700-1850* M. Cox, (ed.), (BA Research Report 113 Council for British Archaeology, York, 1998), p. 197.

<sup>8</sup> N. Llewellyn, *The Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual c.1500-c.1800* (London: V&A and Reaktion Books, 1991), p. 7.

and his book, *Western Attitudes Toward Death* (1974), and paved the way for historians, folklorists, anthropologists, archaeologists, and sociologists to explore different aspects of death and the dead.<sup>9</sup> Ariès influentially argued that far from being a continuous tradition, death has passed through various forms across the centuries, beginning with what he termed 'the tame death' in the early middle ages and ending with our modern 'invisible death', hidden away in hospitals.<sup>10</sup> Ariès' work largely neglected non-elites and religious differences which are the focus for this thesis, but he brought death and the dead as a subject worthy of historical analysis into the mainstream.

Since Ariès, many scholars have paid more attention to the deaths of people at the lower end of the social spectrum, and David Stannard was one of the earliest of these. His book concentrated on sociological and anthropological understandings of death, although it only examines New England.<sup>11</sup> For England, the Reformation, Civil Wars, Interregnum, and Restoration influenced and distinguished the practices around dealing with the dead, separating them from those carried out during the same period in Europe and the Americas. The declining role of the clergy and practice of intercessory rites, along with the growth in different types of funeral practices, will-making, and the medicalised aspect of the deathbed by the eighteenth century, all changed death in England during the period under consideration and were not examined within Stannard's work on the same period for North America.

These changes were first acknowledged by an important contribution to the historiography of death in England, *Death, Burial and the Individual* by Clare Gittings,

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<sup>9</sup> P. Ariès, *Western Attitudes Toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present* P. Ranum (trans.), (Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); P. Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death: The Classic History of Western Attitudes Toward Death Over the Last One Thousand Years* H. Weaver (trans.), (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 2008 edn.).

<sup>10</sup> Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, for the 'tame death', pp. 5-28, for the 'invisible death', pp. 559-601.

<sup>11</sup> D. Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

published in 1984. Gittings argued that many of the rituals around death retained and possibly even increased their social significance after the Reformation and by concentrating primarily 'on the experiences of the survivors and their reactions to bereavement, rather than attempting to analyse the somewhat more elusive subject of people's feelings about their own death', highlighted the changes over the period.<sup>12</sup> This focus on the social over the religious aspects of death, funerals, and burials aligns with the approach taken in this thesis. Yet there is only one chapter dedicated to the 'Funerals of the Unfortunate' and it is subsumed into her larger argument for the rise of the individual.<sup>13</sup> The geographical reach of the book is wide, focusing on Kent, Berkshire, Somerset, and Lincolnshire, but only occasionally mentioning London. Despite the minimal discussion of the metropolis or urban distinctiveness, Gittings offered a valuable initial look at the posthumous treatment of socially 'unfortunate' individuals.

In Gittings' work, the long-standing focus on death and dying, as opposed to the treatment of the dead and burial practices is evident. It is especially noticeable in the research of many scholars who followed Gittings, namely Ralph Houlbrooke and David Cressy.<sup>14</sup> They both, along with Peter Marshall who is only slightly removed as he aimed to focus more strongly on the dead, explored how the Reformation brought about changes and impacted social ideas and practices around death.<sup>15</sup> The individuals and groups that are under examination within this thesis were acknowledged by Houlbrooke but not Cressy nor Marshall, and for all three scholars the mainstream Protestant population was the main focus. They all rightly argued that the loss of purgatory as a concept deeply impacted rituals for the dead and became a crucial factor in changing the experiences around death and

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<sup>12</sup> C. Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1984), p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> For criminals see: Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, pp. 60-61, 68-71.

<sup>14</sup> R. Houlbrooke, (ed.), *Death, Ritual and Bereavement* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989); Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*; Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*.

<sup>15</sup> P. Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

deathbed rituals. However, they paid less attention to different religious practices and rituals which are addressed in this thesis. Research into the eighteenth century is sporadic. Houlbrooke's work reached 1750, although relatively few sources were used for the eighteenth century compared to the seventeenth. The latter part of the eighteenth century in England is especially sparse in the historiography of death and the dead; Paul S. Fritz and Julian Litten's work on the funeral trade are two of a few exceptions which do follow through to this point.<sup>16</sup> It is hoped that the long approach this research takes will assist in addressing this imbalance.

Another strand in the historiography has been research into visual and material sources relating to the dead, including archaeological investigations. One of Gittings' best-known contributions to the subject of death is a volume from 1999 edited with Peter C. Jupp, *Death in England: An Illustrated History*. This volume takes England as its focus for an analysis of death from the Neolithic to the 1990s with contributions from various scholars. The book does not present a fully formed long-term comparison but the individual chapters present insights into the sheer complexity that the history of death presents.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the use of material and visual culture as a lens with which to analyse the dead is a useful tool. This tool was employed by Nigel Llewellyn in *The Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual* (1991), a book published to accompany an exhibition at the V&A under the same name. Through a rich analysis of artefacts between 1500 and 1800, death is established as a process rather than a single event. The sheer variety of cultural artefacts and their wider significance on how life and death intersect show the value in exploring and

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<sup>16</sup> P. S. Fritz, 'The Undertaking Trade in England: Its Origins and Early Development, 1660-1830' *Eighteenth-Century Studies* Vol. 28, No. 2 (Winter, 1994-1995), pp. 241-253; Litten, *The English Way of Death*; J. Litten, 'The Funeral Trade in Hanoverian England 1714-1760' in *The Changing Face of Death: Historical Accounts of Death and Disposal* P. C. Jupp and G. Howarth, (eds.), (London: Macmillan Press, 1997), pp. 48-61; Litten, 'The English Funeral 1700-1850', *Grave Concerns*, pp. 3-16.

<sup>17</sup> For other edited volumes with overall themes see: Jupp and Howarth *The Changing Face of Death*; B. Gordon and P. Marshall, (eds.), *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

understanding death in early modern England through material and visual culture; but comparative analysis between different geographic locations, and different social groups, requires more attention. A limited amount of visual and material culture exists for the four categories of individuals considered. Grave goods were never employed for suicides nor most criminals. Quakers rarely used visual and material culture as a means of mourning and the Jewish religion had strict guidelines around mourning and signifiers of a deceased individual, although tombstones had a unique role within their burial and commemoration rituals and are discussed later in this thesis. The few pieces of material and visual memorialisation that have been attributed to these marginal groups mainly come from the dead themselves and not their mourners and have been discovered due to archaeological excavations.

Archaeology has often been neglected for the early modern period. There has, however, been a recent influx of information about the dead in London especially through the Crossrail Central development archaeology project. One excavation has been of particular value; the excavation of the New Churchyard. This burial ground was attractive to nonconformists and dissenters along with the poor, and a place where criminals and suicides were occasionally interred. For this excavation project a team from the Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) compiled the Bedlam burial register. The register records over 8,000 individuals who were buried in the New Churchyard and this data, although it is in no sense complete, has assisted in tracing various marginalised individuals to interment there.<sup>18</sup> This register, when combined with the reports on grave goods found during the excavation, has made it possible to shed new light on the dead of early modern London.

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<sup>18</sup> 'Bedlam Burial Register' (July 2008)

<http://www.crossrail.co.uk/sustainability/archaeology/bedlam-burial-ground-register> [first accessed, 10th October 2018]; R. Hartle, *The New Churchyard: From Moorfields Marsh to Bethlem Burial Ground, Brokers Row and Liverpool Street* (London: Museum of London Archaeology, 2017), p. 79.

Only quite recently have historians begun to combine the two disciplines of history and archaeology in the study of death and the dead, a practice that many medieval historians of the same subject have been doing far longer.<sup>19</sup> The first notable examples of this can be found in the works of Vanessa Harding, with more interest growing in this field since the beginnings of the twenty-first century.<sup>20</sup> For example, Sarah Tarlow, Annie Cherryson, and Zoë Crossland have taken an interdisciplinary approach to death in post-medieval Britain drawing on archaeology, theology, history, science, and folklore.<sup>21</sup> In 2016 an article published in *Post-Medieval Archaeology* again emphasised the neglect that this period has suffered from an archaeological standpoint and argued that ‘mortuary archaeology can shed light on marginalized histories’.<sup>22</sup> This is especially true of the Quakers and archaeological excavations are an important source within the chapter in this thesis that examines their dead. When dealing with archaeological records it is clearly the history of the dead rather than death or dying that is at the forefront of analysis.

A few historians have attempted to clarify the divide between studying death and studying the dead.<sup>23</sup> This distinction was best explained by Harding in her book *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London 1500-1670* published in the same year as another

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<sup>19</sup> For example, see: C. Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England 1066-1550* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997); S. Lucy and A. Reynolds, (eds.), *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales* (London: The Society for Medieval Archaeology, 2002); R. Gilchrist and B. Sloane, (eds.), *Requiem: The Medieval Monastic Cemetery in Britain* (London: Museum of London Archaeology Service, 2005).

<sup>20</sup> For Harding see: V. Harding ‘“And One More May Be Laid There”: The Location of Burials in Early Modern London’, *London Journal* 14 (1989), esp. p. 116; Harding’s essay and the whole volume *Grave Concerns: Death and Burial in England 1700-1850* M. Cox, (ed.), (BA Research Report 113 Council for British Archaeology, York, 1998); V. Harding, ‘Death in the City: Mortuary Archaeology to 1800’ *London Under Ground: The Archaeology of a City* I. Haynes, H. Sheldon, L. Hanningan, (eds.), (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2000), pp. 272-283; V. Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); For works from the early 2000s see: R. Gilchrist and D. Gaimster, (eds.), *The Archaeology of Reformation, 1480-1580* (Leeds: Maney Publishing for Society of Medieval Archaeology/Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology, 2003).

<sup>21</sup> S. Tarlow, A. Cherryson and Z. Crossland, *A Fine and Private Place: The Archaeology of Death and Burial in Post-Medieval Britain and Ireland* (Leicester: Leicester Archaeology Monograph No. 22, 2012). Tarlow used a similar approach in an earlier book: Tarlow, *Ritual, Belief and the Dead*.

<sup>22</sup> L. Renshaw and N. Powers, ‘The Archaeology of Post-Medieval Death and Burial’, *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 50:1 (2016), pp. 159-177, esp. p. 160.

<sup>23</sup> Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead*, p. 1.



volume that attempted this, Peter Marshall's *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England*. Unlike Marshall, who does not acknowledge the roles of social status, and instead focuses more on cultural changes around the dead rather than on the dead themselves, Harding has 'avoided the examination of eschatology and systems of belief' and instead focused purely on social practice.<sup>24</sup> She explored how the customs surrounding the dead were echoed and modelled onto the culture of London. Through a close exploration of burial locations and the challenges they posed to the metropolis, this volume sets itself apart from previous studies. Also acknowledged in the book are many of those who were not part of the mainstream Protestant population of London and the poorer, more vulnerable members of society. It therefore provides a valuable foundation for this thesis, while being focused primarily on an earlier period.

When dealing with a specific geographic location such as London, using a demographic lens to analyse the dead, as Harding incorporated into her work, is valuable in revealing a more complete picture. Demographic analysis of London has already resulted in fascinating surveys by others, namely John Landers, who was following in the footsteps of E. A. Wrigley and Roger Scholfield and their momentous study *The Population History of England 1541-1871* (1981). Landers' book *Death and the Metropolis: Studies in the Demographic History of London 1670-1830* (1993) is highly technical and does exactly what it says it will by providing a statistical analysis of the weekly and monthly *Bills of Mortality*, parish registers, and two Quaker houses. Perhaps more could have been done to acknowledge the issues that historians have taken with the *Bills*, including who was excluded from these records, but the survey is clearly at its best when relating the seasonality of death to the 'disease profile and epidemiologic regime'.<sup>25</sup> Both Harding's and

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<sup>24</sup> Harding, *The Dead and the Living*, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> As noted by J. C. Riley, 'Reviewed Work: Death and the Metropolis: Studies in the Demographic History of London, 1670-1830 by John Landers' *The American Historical Review* Vol. 100, No. 1 (Feb., 1995), pp. 159-160.

Landers' work in this area, especially as the former covers the period up to 1670 and the latter begins at 1670 and goes through to 1830, have proved an invaluable underpinning of the research on the marginal dead. Landers' chapter, 'Mortality among London Quakers', was possible due to the carefully maintained registers of the Quaker houses of Southwark and 'Peel'. The information in these registers was compiled by the same 'searchers' as those who provided material for the *Bills of Mortality*.<sup>26</sup> This work allowed the examination undertaken within this thesis to place itself within the wider demographic landscape of the metropolis.

The thanatological, methodological, and theoretical frameworks that most of the scholars mentioned have used in this field of study have all proved valuable. It is due to the work of Houlbrooke, Cressy, and Marshall that a comparative analysis of the marginal dead can be undertaken. The long-term cultural histories allow this research to be limited to a specific point in time while being aware of what went before and after.<sup>27</sup> The more closely focused social history and interdisciplinary approaches such as Harding's, Tarlow's and most recently Craig Spence's have similar methodological frameworks as those utilised for this thesis and have proved the most influential due to their example of using multiple approaches to this complex subject.<sup>28</sup>

However, there is no single study that has looked at those on the margins of mainstream London society, nor approached the dead of these groups as individuals. This thesis is less concerned with the ontological aspect of death discussed by so many previous scholars, and instead focuses on the individuals within categories of marginalisation in

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<sup>26</sup> J. Landers, *Death and the Metropolis: Studies in the Demographic History of London 1670-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 131; For information about searchers see, R. Munkhoff, 'Searchers of the Dead: Authority, Marginality, and the Interpretation of Plague in England, 1574-1665' *Gender & History* 11 (1999), pp. 1-29.

<sup>27</sup> For another long-term cultural history influenced by Ariès see, T. Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015).

<sup>28</sup> C. Spence, *Accidents and Violent Death in Early Modern London 1650-1750* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2016).

order to understand the dead within a social, community-based experience. Moreover, although all the groups examined in this thesis have received some degree of scholarly attention, each of them has scope for further study.

Early modern suicide has been subjected to in-depth studies most prominently through the work of Michael MacDonald.<sup>29</sup> His earlier essays culminated in a book written with Terrance Murphy, *Sleepless Souls: Suicide in Early Modern England* (1990). In response to this volume more attention was given to the subject including R. A. Houston's book *Punishing the Dead? Suicide, Lordship and Community in Britain, 1500-1830* (2010), which was a clear response to problems he had identified in his review of *Sleepless Souls* decades earlier.<sup>30</sup> Paul Seaver has also produced valuable work on early modern suicide both within an essay in a broader volume about the subject, and a two-part eight volume series that collected primary source material, *The History of Suicide in England, 1650–1850* (2012).<sup>31</sup> None of these studies, nor any of the others on this subject, have focused primarily on the treatment of the suicide corpse, nor examined which suicides were buried where, concerning themselves with the contemporary attitudes to the act itself rather than following the suicide to a place of interment.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> M. MacDonald, 'The Inner Side of Wisdom: Suicide in Early Modern England', *Psychological Medicine* 7 (1977), pp. 565-582; M. MacDonald, 'The Secularization of Suicide in England 1660-1800' *Past & Present*, No. 111 (May, 1986), pp. 50-100; M. MacDonald, 'Suicide and the Rise of the Popular Press in England' *Representations*, No. 22 (Spring, 1988), pp. 36-55; M. MacDonald, 'The Medicalization of Suicide in England: Laymen, Physicians, and Cultural Change, 1500-1870' *The Milbank Quarterly*, Vol. 67, Supplement 1. Framing Disease: The Creation and Negotiation of Explanatory Schemes (1989), pp. 69-91.

<sup>30</sup> R. A. Houston, 'Reviewed Work(s): Sleepless Souls: Suicide in Early Modern England' *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Spring, 1992), pp. 112-113.

<sup>31</sup> P. Seaver, 'Suicide and the Vicar General in London: A Mystery Solved?', *From Sin to Insanity: Suicide in Early Modern Europe* J. R. Watt, (ed.), (New York: Ithaca, 2004).

<sup>32</sup> An early examination of the subject is R. Bartel, 'Suicide in Eighteenth-Century England: The Myth of a Reputation' *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Feb., 1960, Vol 23, No. 2 (Feb., 1960), pp. 145-158, it takes the reputation of England having a high suicide rate apart to examine if this reputation was warranted; More recent works includes: D. T. Andrew, 'Debate: The Secularization of Suicide in England, 1660-1800', *Past & Present* 119 (1988), pp. 158-165; J. Clare, 'Buried in the Open Fields': Early Modern Suicide and the Case of Ofelia', *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, No. 2 (2013), pp. 241-252; L. G. Crocker, 'The Discussion of Suicide in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 13 (1952), pp. 47-72; E. K. Hunter, 'Between the bridge and the brook': Suicide and Salvation

The history of early modern crime has received vast amounts of scholarly attention.<sup>33</sup> But much of the early historiography stopped at the point of execution. Executed criminals who were brought to the surgeons and physicians have recently received attention, namely through the work of Kate Cregan, Elizabeth Hurren, and Richard Ward among others.<sup>34</sup> Some focus has been on the immediate aftermath of an execution, much however remains to be explored.<sup>35</sup> Although execution by burning has received limited attention, almost none has been given to the burnt remains of the criminal corpse, nor to those criminals who were displayed in gibbets or upon London landmarks such as Westminster Hall and London Bridge, after their executions.<sup>36</sup> The biggest gap in the historiography around this subject is in an exploration of individuals who were simply hanged and buried, something this thesis rectifies. The reactions from the communities that an executed individual belonged to have lacked focused attention. One exception to

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in England c. 1550-1650' *Reformation and Renaissance Review*, Vol. 15 No. 3, (November 2013), pp. 237-257; J. Harte, 'Maimed Rites: Suicide Burials in the English Landscape' *Time and Mind: The Journal of Archaeology, Consciousness and Culture* Vol. 4, Issue 3 (November 2011), pp. 263-282; E. Parisot, 'Suicide Notes and Popular Sensibility in the Eighteenth-Century British Press' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 3, Spring 2014, pp. 277-291; A. Milka, "'Preferring Death": Suicidal Criminals in Eighteenth-Century England' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Volume 53, Number 4, Summer 2020, pp. 685-705.

<sup>33</sup> For a sample see J. M. Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England 1660-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); J. A. Sharpe, *Crime in Early Modern England 1550-1750* (London and New York: Longman, 1999 edn.); M. Gaskill, *Crime and Mentalities in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>34</sup> K. Cregan, *The Theatre of the Body: Staging Death and Embodying Life in Early-Modern London* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009); E. Hurren, 'The Dangerous Dead: Dissecting the Criminal Corpse,' *The Lancet*, Vol. 382, No. 9889 (27 July, 2013), pp. 302-303; E. Hurren, *Dissecting the Criminal Corpse: Staging Post-Execution Punishment in Early Modern England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); R. Ward, 'The Criminal Corpse, Anatomists, and the Criminal Law: Parliamentary Attempts to Extend the Dissection of Offenders in Late Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of British Studies*, 54 (January 2015), pp. 63-87; R. Ward, (ed.), *A Global History of Execution and the Criminal Corpse* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Also S. Tarlow, 'Curious Afterlives: The Enduring Appeal of the Criminal Corpse', *Mortality*, Vol. 21, Issue 3 (June 2016), pp. 210-228.

<sup>35</sup> For the immediate aftermath of executions see: A. McKenzie, *Tyburn's Martyrs: Execution in England, 1675-1775* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007); V. A. C. Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People 1770-1868* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>36</sup> For execution by burning see: S. Devereaux, 'The Abolition of the Burning of Women in England Reconsidered', *Crime, History & Societies*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2005), pp. 73-98; for one mention of the responses to the burnt remains see: Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree*, p. 73.

this is Peter Linebaugh's work on the Irish reactions to one of their own being executed.<sup>37</sup>

Investigating who exactly received which post-mortem treatment will demonstrate the complexity of early modern death by execution.

The Quaker dead are discussed within broader studies of Quakerism, and are touched upon in the work of Gittings, Houlbrooke, Harding, and Tarlow.<sup>38</sup> As already mentioned Landers utilised the meticulously maintained Quaker records for part of his demographic study, but it is in another demographic study where the Quaker dead are more thoroughly investigated: Richard T. Vann and David Eversley's *Friends in Life and Death: British and Irish Quakers in the Demographic Transition* (1992). Other work that has examined the Quaker dead focuses on archaeological and osteological analysis which sometimes loses sight of the individuals that make up these surveys.<sup>39</sup> Looking at the individuals themselves, and the importance of independent burial grounds, this thesis will show variations within the practices around burial and post-mortem treatment more clearly and highlight the place of the individual within life and death in a way that has not been attempted before.

If the Quaker dead have received limited attention, then the Jewish dead of the early modern period have basically received none. Jacob Selwood's book *Diversity and Difference in Early Modern London* (2010) devotes its second section to the politics of

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<sup>37</sup> P. Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London New York: Verso, 2006 edn.).

<sup>38</sup> For death mentioned in broader studies of Quaker history see: A. Davies, *The Quakers in English Society 1655-1725* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), pp. 40-42, 79-81, 88-90, 199-200; Broader works: Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, pp. 54-55; Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, pp. 14, 179, 193, 195, 337; Harding, *The Dead and the Living*, pp. 100, 192, 271; Tarlow, *Ritual, Belief and the Dead*, pp. 1, 36, 55-58, 70, 94, 108, 141.

<sup>39</sup> For example, see G. Stock, 'Quaker Burial: Doctrine and Practice'; G. Stock, 'The 18th and early 19th century Quaker Burial Ground at Bathford, Bath and North-East Somerset'; L. Bashford and T. Pollard, 'In the burying place'-The Excavation of a Quaker Burial Ground'; H. Start and L. Kirk, 'The Bodies of Friends'-The Osteological Analysis of a Quaker Burial Ground' all essays in *Grave Concerns*, Cox, (ed.); L. Kirk, 'The excavation of a Quaker burial ground, 84 London Road, Kingston upon Thames' *The London Archaeologist*, (Winter 1998), Vol. 8 (11), pp. 100-154; L. Bashford, and L. Sibun, 'Excavations at the Quaker Burial Ground, Kingston-upon-Thames, London' *Post-Medieval Archaeology* Volume 41, 2007 - Issue 1, pp. 100-154.

inclusion and exclusion for the Jews of early modern London and how these were constantly negotiated and rewritten. There has been work done on the early modern Jewish dead of Europe but none specifically for London during the same period, apart from occasional mentions in bodies of work that cover a different period or location.<sup>40</sup> Sharman Kadish's research into Jewish funerary architecture and Kenneth Marks's work on Anglo-Jewish architecture explored Jewish death via their monuments and tombstones, but the individuals and broader burial rituals are ignored.<sup>41</sup> Following individuals from the Jewish community to their interment and examining the practices around the treatment of their bodies will illuminate the continued role they held within subsets of London life.

These four groups have never been analysed side by side. There are occasional overlaps in the secondary literature between suicides and criminals and between Quakers and Jews, but these do not examine interment customs.<sup>42</sup> How a dead body was treated provides a unique insight into past cultures, practices, and perceptions. Where certain scholars such as Selwood have examined belonging and exclusion by looking at the history of difference and how Londoners created difference.<sup>43</sup> This thesis pushes past the daily lives of individuals defined in this manner to demonstrate how these distinctions could change after death. Individuals and groups who were subjected to marginalisation in life were not

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<sup>40</sup> S. C. Reif, A. Lenhardt and A. Bar-Levav, (eds.) *Death in Jewish Life: Burial and Mourning Customs Among Jews of Europe and Nearby Communities* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014); A. Bar-Levav, 'We Are Where We Are Not: The Cemetery in Jewish Culture', *Jewish Studies* 41 (2002), pp. 15-46; There are a few references to London in the broader study by B. Langham, 'Jewish Burial Grounds: Understanding Values' *Historic England* (London: December 2015).

<sup>41</sup> S. Kadish, 'Jewish Funerary Architecture in Britain and Ireland since 1656' *Jewish Historical Studies*, Vol. 43 (2011), pp. 59-88; K. Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry in England and Wales 1656–c.1880* (Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology, 2014).

<sup>42</sup> For suicide and criminal overlaps see, Ward, (ed.), *A Global History of Execution*, especially A. Kästner and E. Luef, 'The Ill-Treated Body: Punishing and Utilising the Early Modern Suicide Corpse', pp. 147-169; F. McLynn, *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 51-55; Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree*, pp. 84-85; for overlap on Quakers and Jews see: D. Vlasblom, 'Islam in Early Modern Quaker Experience and Writing', *Quaker History* Vol. 100, No. 1 (Spring 2011), pp. 1-21.

<sup>43</sup> Selwood, *Diversity and Difference*, the who book examines the creation of difference and patterns of difference and how Londoners defined who belonged and who did not.

always marginalised to the same extent in death, and in many instances, a gentler view was projected upon the dead than that upon the living. Death was still no great leveller but toleration and even respect for the dead played a large part in softening the differences that had been apparent in life. Through contemplating the dead of these marginalised individuals and groups, a hitherto untapped aspect of seventeenth and eighteenth-century London will be illuminated.

## Scope

Until now, within this introduction, the term 'marginal' has been used without a specified definition. This next section rectifies this and explains how and why the groups and individuals under examination came to be chosen for this study. It will then turn to the problems around defining London, before explaining why the seventeenth and eighteenth century have been chosen for analysis.

The term 'marginal' and its variants were not words frequently used in seventeenth and eighteenth-century London. Similar words, however, were applied to individuals and groups outside mainstream Protestant society. A language of marginalisation and exclusion was employed in early modern treatises on suicide, such as when John Adams wrote that self-murder was 'destructive to the very Being of Society'.<sup>44</sup> Criminals were considered disruptive to social control, and outsiders. A grand jury in 1694 blamed the crime in the metropolis on a 'greate number of loose, idle and ill disposed' people, who, having no gainful employment turned to a life of crime.<sup>45</sup> In 1652 a letter from York referred to Quakers as 'an idle loose people'.<sup>46</sup> The *Public Advertiser* in 1753 insinuated that Jews were

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<sup>44</sup> J. Adams, *An essay concerning self-murder wherein is endeavour'd to prove that it is unlawful according to natural principles...* (1700), p. 25.

<sup>45</sup> CLRO: London Sess. Papers, January 1694, discussed in J. M. Beattie, *Policing and Punishment in London 1660-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 54.

<sup>46</sup> *Severall Proceedings in Parliament* (1649) (London), November 4 - November 11, 1652.

unable to be trusted and 'unfit for Society'.<sup>47</sup> The ideas and language of marginalisation were clear.

Social scientists have used marginalisation as a category of analysis for some time. In the 1960s Mary Douglas defined marginal people as 'people who are somehow left out in the patterning of society, who are placeless. They may be doing nothing morally wrong, but their status is indefinable'.<sup>48</sup> This thesis partially rejects this definition as it explores those who did do something morally wrong, such as in the case of suicides who were then marginalised in death even if they had not been so in life, and criminals whose very method of death was due to moral digressions. Douglas's definition also does not translate to the religious outsiders, as rather than being placeless, they formed their own marginalised place within society and for their own dead. But the marginal dead were frequently excluded from the patterning of the rest of society, especially in terms of their burial locations. Suicides, criminals, Quakers, and Jews were often separated from the community of the Protestant dead; therefore, this part of Douglas's definition is valid.

Concepts of marginalisation have also been used by historians, especially for the history of the poorer sort. In 1987 Bronistaw Geremek explored the margins of society in late medieval Paris. Geremek situated marginalisation on what he terms a 'fluctuating frontier' which included people both forced into, or who positioned themselves, on the 'margins of social life'. These, for Geremek, were groups and individuals who played no part in production, their way of life was abnormal, and they were the poorer and criminal sort. They were 'socially excluded groups who lived in a disorderly manner, or who engaged in shameful activities' which threatened social authority and control.<sup>49</sup> These marginal

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<sup>47</sup> *Public Advertiser* (London), Thursday, August 30, 1753; Issue 5878.

<sup>48</sup> M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002 edn. original edn. 1966), p. 118.

<sup>49</sup> B. Geremek, *The Margins of Society in Late Medieval Paris* J. Birrell trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 2-3, 7-8.



individuals were only ever encountered when they came into conflict 'with the accepted juridical norms'.<sup>50</sup> Barbara A. Hanawalt rightly took exception with Geremek lumping all 'marginals' into a single underclass of poor, low status, lawbreakers, all who fell outside the social and economic mainstream. This categorisation, she argued, 'presumes that only social outcasts will be on the margins of society', when in fact there were many reasons for marginalisation, including religious persecution.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, they could have an important social role, because a 'symbiotic relationship often existed between marginals and the social establishment'.<sup>52</sup> This point is evident in the relationships between the religious outsiders of London and the role they played in day-to-day society. Hanawalt also argues that the margins were a place where people from all rungs of the social ladder could move into and where they were tolerated 'by those outside the mainstream until attention was drawn to them by authorities'.<sup>53</sup>

In a similar vein to Hanawalt's interpretation of the margins, Natalie Zemon Davis concluded in her book, *Women on the Margins* that the women she examined were marginalised as they were 'removed from the centres of political power, royal, civic, and senatorial'.<sup>54</sup> Davis makes a point that margins were not just somewhere women lived: 'Many European men were distanced from power centres for reasons of birth, wealth, occupation, and religion, and men sometimes chose or embraced marginal locations for themselves'.<sup>55</sup> Both Hanawalt's and Davis' acknowledgement of religious outsiders being marginalised and the idea of self-marginalisation is appreciated, a point also raised by Christopher Friedrichs who noted that 'perpetual marginalisation was the norm for non-

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<sup>50</sup> Geremek, *The Margins of Society*, p. 12.

<sup>51</sup> B. Hanawalt, 'Introduction' *Living Dangerous: On the Margins in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* B. Hanawalt and A. Grotans, (eds.), (Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2007), p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> Hanawalt, 'Introduction' *Living Dangerous*, p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> Hanawalt, 'Introduction' *Living Dangerous*, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> N. Z. Davis, *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 209.

<sup>55</sup> Davis, *Women on the Margins*, p. 210.

Christians' across early modern Europe.<sup>56</sup> Some suicides, criminals, Quakers, and Jews were distanced from power centres, but some did come from well-to-do backgrounds. An argument was made by Adrian Davies that the Quaker population's isolation and marginalisation has been exaggerated due to studies focusing on the records where Quakers became visible only when in conflict with other groups.<sup>57</sup> This is a fair point however, Davies' book and all the current historiography on marginalisation has focused on how these people lived, none of it explores the marginalisation of the dead. The only time the marginalised dead are acknowledged is in a paper by Vanessa Harding on the physical marginalisation that certain dead bodies were subjected to.<sup>58</sup> As will be seen, social marginalisation in life was often linked to physical marginalisation in death. Sometimes this separation was self-inflicted and sometimes it was imposed as a form of post-mortem punishment. Therefore, both social and physical marginalisation will be considered within the following chapters.

The sociological definition of marginalisation is the one used throughout this thesis, namely when an individual or group is pushed to the metaphorical edge of a community due to their violation of norms or refusal to conform to the expectations of the dominant culture.<sup>59</sup> As Robert Shields has shown, this process is often one of 'cultural categorisation' in relation to presumed 'normality', rather than a more literal positioning on a 'topographical margin' or geographical boundary.<sup>60</sup> This definition has been used by the

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<sup>56</sup> C. R. Friedrichs, *The Early Modern City 1450-1750* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 239.

<sup>57</sup> Davies, *The Quakers in English Society*, p. 3.

<sup>58</sup> Harding, 'Burial on the Margin', pp. 54-64.

<sup>59</sup> In the 1990s and early 2000s several studies employed marginalisation as a category of analysis in the way it is used within this thesis. Much of this work was about the mid-1990s including D. Byrne, *Social Exclusion* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2005); D. M. Smith, *On the Margins of Inclusion: Changing Labour Markets and Social Exclusion in London* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2005). The earlier work of the Canadian sociologist Robert Shields also employed this methodology: R. Shields, *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991).

<sup>60</sup> Shields, *Places on the Margin*, p. 4.

historians mentioned above, especially Geremek, Hanawalt, and Davis, although not made as explicit as outlined here. Marginalisation is used instead of exclusion which is defined as to shut out or give no place to a subgroup for there were clear places given to the dead under examination. These places were both granted by the mainstream but also self-imposed in the cases of religious outsiders. Hence the term self-marginalisation has been utilised to demonstrate a conscious withdrawal to the edges but one that was not a complete exclusion from the mainstream norm nor one that excluded others from their practices. Therefore, the sociological definition has been adapted and expanded throughout this thesis to include the term self-marginalisation.

There are additional groups that could have been chosen for this study. There was an Islamic presence in London, especially from Turkey and North Africa in the form of merchants and ambassadors from far earlier than the seventeenth century.<sup>61</sup> But there were no burial grounds or organised communities until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, so examining patterns in their burial practices is problematic. Other Christians who did not conform to the Church of England were also present within seventeenth and eighteenth-century London. These included Catholics, Moravians, Baptists, and Methodists, among others, and their methods of disposal of their dead were, at times, different to those of their mainstream Protestant counterparts. They were not chosen as a category for this examination primarily due to space constraints. Their own particularities should not be ignored and await further study.<sup>62</sup> Along with suicides and criminals, vagrants, paupers, prostitutes, and indeed many of the poorer sort might be

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<sup>61</sup> N. Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 4-6, initially seen in J. Selwood, *Diversity and Difference in Early Modern London* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 161.

<sup>62</sup> Of these groups Catholics have received some attention, but more is needed, see, P. Marshall, 'Confessionalisation and Community in the Burial of English Catholics, c.1580-1700' *Getting Along?: Religious Identities and Confessional Relations in Early Modern England - Essays in Honour of Professor W.J. Sheils* N. Lewycky and A. Morton, (eds.), (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 57-76.

categorised as marginalised in life and occasionally in death. But here *occasionally* is the key word. Also, their manner of death was not what marginalised them, as it was in the case of suicides and criminals, therefore they have been excluded from this study.

London's heterogeneity lends itself to a study of marginalisation, especially across the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1593 a survey concluded there were 7,113 'strangers' (foreign-born immigrants, traders, and diplomats), among the wider metropolitan population of almost 200,000, and throughout the following centuries there was increasing diversity within the metropolis.<sup>63</sup> The establishment of the Church of England in 1538 resulted in detailed parish registers of baptism, marriages, and burials. These have been used to chart the population growth of the city alongside the *Bills of Mortality*. The *Bills* are reliable records of parochial burials, but not necessarily of parochial deaths.<sup>64</sup> However, even making allowances for the discrepancies within the *Bills* and the data omitted, it is possible to surmise that the population of London grew rapidly from roughly 200,000 in 1600 to at least 350,000 in the 1650s and to over half a million by 1700. By the 1750s approximately 675,000 people filled the metropolis.<sup>65</sup> London was clearly a large place and growing rapidly. It had many overlapping and conflicting jurisdictions which led to more social and religious diversity and marginalisation. The City of London alone was made up of twenty-six wards and 109 parishes, and the wards were split into 242 precincts

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<sup>63</sup> Discussed in Selwood, *Diversity and Difference*, p. 2, taken from I. Scouloudi, *Returns of Strangers in the Metropolis, 1593, 1627, 1635, 1639: A study of an Active Minority Huguenot Society of London* Quarto Series Vol. LVII, (London: Huguenot Society of London, 1985), p. 100.

<sup>64</sup> J. Boulton and L. Schwarz, 'Yet another inquiry into the trustworthiness of eighteenth-century London's Bills of Mortality', *Local Population Studies*, 85, (2010), p. 39.

<sup>65</sup> V. Harding, 'The Population of Early Modern London: A Review of the Published Evidence' *London Journal* 15:2, (1990), pp. 111-128; L. D. Schwarz, *London in the Age of Industrialisation: Entrepreneurs, Labour Force and Living Conditions, 1700-1850* (Cambridge Studies in Population, Economy and Society in Past Time) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 125-128; C. Spence, *London in the 1690s: A Social Atlas* (London: University of London Institute of Historical Research), pp. 63-66; also see A. Hinde, *England's Population: A History Since the Domesday Survey* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2003), p. 79.

with many overlapping and blurred borders.<sup>66</sup> These blurred borders extended to the environs. By the 1630s Westminster and the suburbs had grown, and a minority of Londoners were under City rule. By the 1690s the extramural London parishes were themselves as large as any other city in England, Scotland, Wales, or Ireland.<sup>67</sup> Paul Griffiths remarked that 'London was a city of overlapping circles and this disarray was a root cause of its tensions'.<sup>68</sup> Overlapping wards, parishes and neighbourhoods created concentrations of subgroups such as those of different religions that would not have been as prominent within a non-urban setting.

Across Europe, Paris was outstripped in size by London by the eighteenth century and it was only in the east where Istanbul and Edo were as populous that anything came close to matching the size of the metropolis.<sup>69</sup> The importance of the place that London held within the early modern western world cannot be denied. The metropolis has hundreds of histories, and as such, concessions regarding the scope of the subject matter covered must be made.<sup>70</sup> A rather loose definition of London is employed in this thesis which traverses the City, urban Middlesex, Southwark, Westminster, and as far as Greenwich; even Kingston Upon Thames has a brief mention due to the Quaker burial

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<sup>66</sup> P. Griffith, *Lost Londons: Change, Crime and Control in the Capital City 1550-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 67; M. S. R. Jenner and P. Griffiths, 'Introduction', in *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London* P. Griffiths and M. S. R. Jenner, (eds.), (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 1-23.

<sup>67</sup> Jenner and Griffiths, 'Introduction' *Londinopolis*, p. 2 they are summarising the work of R. Finlay and B. Shearer, 'Population Growth and Suburban Expansion' *Making of the Metropolis: London, 1500-1700* A. Beier and R. Finlay, (eds.), (London: Longman, 1986); V. Harding, 'Population of London'; and D. Keene, 'Medieval London and its region', *LJ*, p. 14 (1989); St Dunstan's Stepney had at least 47,000 inhabitants in the 1690s: J. Boulton, 'London widowhood revisited: the decline of female remarriage in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries', *Continuity and Change*, 5 (1990), p. 327.

<sup>68</sup> P. Griffiths, 'Overlapping Circles: Imagining Criminal Communities in London, 1545-1645' *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric* A. Shepard and P. Withington, (eds.), (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 115.

<sup>69</sup> For Edo and Istanbul see: H. Inalcik and D. Quataert, (eds.), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire Volume 2, 1600-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 652; J. L. McClain, J. M. Merriman and U. Kaoru, (eds.), *Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Period* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), esp. p. 13.

<sup>70</sup> Griffiths, *Lost Londons*, p. 67.

ground excavations there. The records of many of the parishes of the City and its environs have been consulted and one particularly has lent itself to a more in-depth analysis, that of St Giles, Cripplegate.

The parish of St Giles, Cripplegate kept meticulous records of those it interred and was one of the earliest to start recording the known cause of every death in response to an Act passed in 1653. The parish's population was around 25-30,000 during the seventeenth century, and they buried an average of over 1,100 bodies per annum.<sup>71</sup> The run of parish registers for St Giles, Cripplegate between 1600 and 1800 is very nearly complete. One register between 1657 and 1662 is missing and a few pages in other registers are damaged and unable to be deciphered. The parish registers do not definitively list the cause of death until October 1653, and the exact location of burials within the parish burial grounds are not noted until October 1663, but they do document unusual and interesting deaths in the earlier entries. Due to these records the parish lends itself to this study. It clearly records suicides and executed criminals and also had a substantial Quaker population. There is also a Jewish connection to Cripplegate. Before the 1290 expulsion of the Jews from England, they had been allowed one burial ground, Jewin Crescent, outside London Wall near Cripplegate.<sup>72</sup> After their return to the capital in 1656 they settled predominantly to the east of the City, therefore other parishes have been looked at, but St Giles, Cripplegate has received the most thorough exploration due to the reasons outlined.

It is the aim of this thesis to explore the seventeenth and eighteenth century, however, it does occasionally stray into both the sixteenth and indeed the very early nineteenth century, albeit extremely briefly. All periodisation boundaries are arbitrary and, much like defining London, a loose definition is employed throughout this work. There are

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<sup>71</sup> Harding, *The Dead and the Living*, pp. 37-39.

<sup>72</sup> Langham, 'Jewish Burial Grounds', p. 7.

reasons for choosing these two centuries, one of which was the wish to begin this research after the Reformation, when the changes this provoked in dealing with the dead had reached a certain point of solidification.

Much changed across these two centuries. For example, funerals went through a transformation mentioned briefly earlier. They became more simplified over the seventeenth century, so much so that in 1649 a contemporary could say 'The Burialls now among the Reformed in England, are in a manner prophane, in many places the dead being throwne into the ground like dogs, and not a word said'.<sup>73</sup> This was only one view and many other contemporary reports illuminate the fact that funerals became more social occasions, but no less important, although they may have ceased to hold a purely spiritual function.<sup>74</sup> It was still the presence and attention of others that promoted the spiritual effectiveness of a funeral.<sup>75</sup> There was an increased usage of coffins and a rise in the funeral trade.<sup>76</sup> The funeral as an act of disposing of the dead became the pivotal moment when individuals and communities displayed their sense of personal and collective identity.<sup>77</sup>

Legal changes were also important. Juries were, by the mid-eighteenth century, returning far more *non compos mentis* verdicts for suicide cases and these individuals were being granted far more Christian burials and burial ground interments than they had been permitted earlier. Execution rates declined towards the end of the seventeenth century, with transportation to the American colonies replacing it, only to then rise again in the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth.<sup>78</sup> But by 1789 imprisonment and

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<sup>73</sup> N. Strange, 'Preface' to B. Carier, *A missive to His Majesty of Great Britain, King James written divers yeers since by Doctor Carier* (1649), p. 12.

<sup>74</sup> C. Gittings, 'Sacred and secular: 1558-1660', *Death in England*, p. 153.

<sup>75</sup> Harding, *The Dead and the Living*, p. 234.

<sup>76</sup> Litten, 'The Funeral Trade' p. 48-61; Litten, 'The English Funeral', pp. 3-16; Fritz, 'The Undertaking Trade in England', pp. 241-253; Tarlow, *Ritual, Belief and the Dead*, pp. 106-109.

<sup>77</sup> Harding, 'Burial on the Margin', p. 54.

<sup>78</sup> Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree*, p. 7.

transportation were the most common sentences given by the courts in London and Middlesex, and over this entire period the execution of women declined.<sup>79</sup> As early as 1674 there were hints of conflict between the Tyburn crowd and the physicians and surgeons.<sup>80</sup> These tensions gradually built over the early eighteenth century and by the time that the Royal College of Surgeons was granted a royal charter in 1800, and set up their new facilities at Lincoln's Inn Fields, a number of legal changes around anatomising the criminal dead had been traversed. The 1790 Treason Act abolished burning at the stake for women convicted of high and petty treason and therefore an end date of roughly 1800 lends itself to the study of the criminal dead.

Finally, the position of those outside the Church of England also changed. Quakers emerged in the 1650s and membership of the London meetings peaked in the late 1670s and 1680s.<sup>81</sup> The process whereby they created their own places of burial changed their position among the early modern dead. Meanwhile, although officially absent between 1290 to 1656, 'Jewish stereotypes occupied a prominent position within English culture' and London played host to a very small community of Iberian Jews.<sup>82</sup> In 1656 when Oliver Cromwell informally permitted their return, the Sephardi Jews from Spain and Portugal or arriving indirectly via the Netherlands and the West Indies, almost immediately founded their own burial ground at Mile End. At the same time Ashkenazim Jews from the Low Countries and Germany arrived and a few decades later created another independent

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<sup>79</sup> T. Hitchcock and R. Shoemaker, *London Lives: Poverty, Crime and the Making of a Modern City, 1690-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 392; M. M. Feeley and D. L. Little, 'The Vanishing Female: The Decline of Women in the Criminal Process, 1687-1912', *Law & Society Review*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (1991), pp. 719-757; Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree*, p. 8.

<sup>80</sup> K. Cregan, 'Edward Ravenscroft's "The Anatomist" and "The Tyburn Riots Against the Surgeons"', *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Spring 2008), p. 19.

<sup>81</sup> S. Dixon, PhD Thesis, 'Quaker communities in London, 1667-c1714' (RHUL History), (2006), pp. 42-43.

<sup>82</sup> Selwood, *Diversity and Difference*, p. 131.



burial ground.<sup>83</sup> The differences between these Jewish communities and their grounds will be examined in Chapter 5.

## Methodology, Sources, and Structure

Most of our current understanding of the dead of London has come from studying the famous *Bills of Mortality* and parish registers. These are undoubtedly valuable sources – and will be used in this thesis – however, many of the ‘outsiders’ discussed are more visible when combining multiple sources. Thankfully, a host of primary materials can provide information about the marginal dead. Suicides appear in parish registers, newspapers, some coroners’ reports (for the late eighteenth century), sessions papers, ballads, pamphlet literature, and other contemporary writings. Executed criminals are visible in records from the Old Bailey, *Ordinary’s Accounts*, parish registers, newspapers, surgeons’ annals, ballads, pamphlets, and again in diaries and essays. The Quaker burial registers, along with contemporary writings, newspaper entries, and archaeological excavation reports, are invaluable sources for this research. Genealogical records for Jewish communities in London alongside reports from Jewish cemeteries remain an untapped resource that this thesis will utilise. Although none of these sources are without limitations, which will be explained in each chapter, all provide insights into the practices associated with the disposal and commemoration of the marginal dead of the metropolis.

This thesis is organised into four main chapters, each focused on a different social or religious group. Research into each group began by creating a spreadsheet of individuals from each category. These individuals were cross referenced with multiple sources and as much information as possible was collected and collated for each. From this it was often possible to create a clear picture of the individual in life and death. This nominal record linkage works best for the period after 1670, as after this point it is possible to compile a

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<sup>83</sup> Langham, ‘Jewish Burial Grounds’, p. 7.

list of Quakers, Jews, suicides, and criminals from parish registers, and cross reference them with other sources both those deposited online and those within archives. The rise of newspapers, the Ordinary's *Accounts*, and establishment of Quaker and Jewish communities with their own individual records make this a far easier task. Take, for example, a criminal case on 15 January 1720. The Old Bailey trial proceedings and punishment summaries give details of one Jane Griffin, from the Parish of St Sepulchres, Holborn, who was indicted for the wounds she had given a maid servant which resulted in said servant's death.<sup>84</sup> Griffin received a verdict of wilful murder and was sentenced to be executed. This information can be found both in the Old Bailey records and in newspapers.<sup>85</sup> Griffin next appears in the Ordinary's *Account* where her execution date of Friday 29 January is provided along with information about her person and reputation in life.<sup>86</sup> This death can be cross referenced with parish registers and after searching St Sepulchres, Holborn, as it was her home parish, she was discovered in another parish that often took executed individuals for burial, that of St Marylebone. Her entry states she was buried on the 30 January and simply reads 'Jane Griffin ex[ecute]d'.<sup>87</sup> This selection of sources allows a relatively clear picture of Griffin's life, crime, execution, and burial, and a similar cross-referencing approach has been used for all the marginal dead examined within the following chapters. The suicide and especially the criminal chapter include a substantial amount of quantitative analysis; 3,210 suicides and 5,034 criminals have been traced beyond death. For the Quaker and Jew chapters the research has been almost entirely qualitative. It was partway through research for the Quaker chapter and prior to

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<sup>84</sup> T. Hitchcock, R. Shoemaker, C. Emsley, S. Howard and J. McLaughlin, et al., *The Old Bailey Proceedings Online, 1674-1913* ([www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org), version 7.0, 24 March 2012), hereafter OBP, t17200115-35.

<sup>85</sup> OBP, s17200115-1; *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer* (London), Saturday, December 12, 1719; *Post Boy* (1695) (London), January 16 - January 19, 1720; Issue 475; *Post Man and the Historical Account* (London), January 19 - January 21, 1720; Issue 1772.

<sup>86</sup> OBP, OA17200129.

<sup>87</sup> LMA, P89/MRY1/002.

any research for the Jewish chapter that the Covid-19 pandemic began and access to archives and libraries was restricted hence the shift in methodology. However, many primary sources now appear online and search facilities on sites such as The Old Bailey Online, online newspaper archives, and Ancestry where many parish registers are now digitalised was possible. Therefore, it is predominantly the Jewish burial registers and writings by Jewish elders that were unable to be consulted for the final chapter and an alternative approach was undertaken which is discussed in that chapter.

Chapter 2 examines suicides and delves into who was buried where, and how these locations linked to the individual's actions while alive. It first examines the profane practices of crossroads, highways, and open field burials. The chapter then moves to explore suicides who obtained churchyard and burial ground interments. Chapter 3 begins by examining those who were executed by burning, those displayed upon gibbets or in such locations as London Bridge and Temple Bar, those who were taken for dissection, and those who were simply buried after their execution. Chapter 4 shifts to the religiously self-marginalised dead. It explores Quaker views on death, their burial grounds, and their funerals and burial practices. Chapter 5 follows a similar format to that of the Quaker chapter but takes Jewish practices into consideration, comparing the various communities of Jews to highlight their internal differences and their distinctiveness from other religious outsiders evident in their views on death, burial grounds, and burial practices. All chapters explore how these dead were treated and perceived by the rest of the population of London. Together this thesis will show how fluid and complex categories of marginalisation were within the metropolis.

## Chapter 2 Suicides

### Introduction

On 12 January 1681, a servant named Charity Philpot, employed at a property in Kent Street, Newington, entered the room where her mistress and the child of the house were sitting. The agitated manner of her entrance prompted the mistress, one Mrs Mathews, to enquire of Philpot what the matter was. Philpot responded, 'that she came to Kill her, and then she would fire her House'. Mrs Mathews ran from the room calling for help, whereupon Philpot moved to the child and 'Cut its Throat'. When Mrs Mathews returned with some neighbours, they restrained Philpot and interrogated her. Philpot's defence was 'That a Man in an High-crown'd Hat bid her do it, and that he had wheted the Knife and put it into her hand, and also told her she should fire the House'. When told she would hang for her actions Philpot answered, 'no but she would not, for she had taken Pyson'. She was locked in a garret of the house to await the constable. While confined she flung herself out of the window but 'received no hurt' and was once again secured. By the next morning, Philpot was dead due to the poison she had ingested, 'her face and body being hugely Swell'd'.<sup>1</sup> Charity Philpot next appears in the parish register for St Mary, Newington, buried on 16 January 1681, four days after the murder of the child and her suicide. The register simply records the burial as, 'Charrity Phillpott in the high way'.<sup>2</sup>

Philpot's tale is not uncommon within pamphlet literature that touches upon cases of suicide. The pamphlet frames the motives that drove her to the crime she committed and the suicide itself within religious discourses which would have been familiar to the early modern reader. Philpot was tempted by evil forces, specifically the devil, to carry out

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<sup>1</sup> Anon, *A true and wonderful relation of a murther committed in the parish of Newington, the 12th. day of this present January. By a maid who poysoned her self, and cut the throat of a child*, (1681).

<sup>2</sup> LMA, P92/MRY/007.

a heinous act, and in this instance the infanticide was equally as terrible a crime as the suicide itself. The punishment inflicted upon her corpse by burying it, not within consecrated grounds, but upon the highway was a common outcome in such tales. This corpse was clearly physically marginalised in death though as will be seen this was not always the case with bodies of suicides.

In this short narrative the term suicide has been used, however, the word suicide was not in use until the 1650s and even then, it was not in common use until the eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites a 1651 text, Walter Charlton's translation of Petronius's *Satyricon*, as the first appearance of the word, however it was possibly coined by Sir Thomas Browne, and used in his work *Religio Medici*, published in 1642.<sup>4</sup> Before Browne and Charlton's usage the term 'self-murder' was employed for suicide cases. Self-murder was considered the quintessential bad death. Not only this but it was considered a sin and a secular crime. A coroner and jury treated individuals who took their own lives as criminals. In the posthumous trials that followed acts of self-murder two verdicts could be given: *felo de se*, a felon against themselves and therefore a self-murderer; or *non compos mentis*, not of sound mind and hence a verdict of lunacy. Michael Dalton in *The Countrey Justice*, a manual for Justices of the Peace from 1626, noted that there were three kinds of people who could not be held responsible for their actions in cases of self-murder: 'a Fool natural', so a congenital idiot; a person who was once of sound mind, but afterwards 'by sickness, hurt or other accident or visitation of God, looseth his memory'; and, finally, a lunatic, who may be occasionally of 'good understanding and memory, and sometimes is *non compos mentis*'.<sup>5</sup> In 1661 the legal

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<sup>3</sup> M. MacDonald, 'The Secularization of Suicide in England 1660-1800' *Past & Present*, No. 111 (May, 1986), p. 53; M. MacDonald and T. Murphy, *Sleepless Souls: Suicide in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 145.

<sup>4</sup> M. Robson, 'General Introduction', *The History of Suicide in England, 1650-1850, Volume 1 1650-1673*, P. Seaver, (ed.), (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), p. xii.

<sup>5</sup> M. Dalton, *The Countrey Justice* (1626), p. 334, also discussed in MacDonald, 'The Inner Side of Wisdom: Suicide in Early Modern England' *Psychological Medicine*, (1977), 7, p. 571.

writer Edmund Wingate explained that you had to be sane and take your life intentionally in order to be guilty of self-murder.<sup>6</sup> The posthumous trail of Charity Philpot is lost, but given her burial method it is clear she received a *felo de se* verdict.

This chapter is concerned with deaths such as Charity Philpot's, individuals who may have had some sort of social standing within their own communities before their manner of death and subsequent interment transformed them into marginalised individuals. Before directly focusing on these dead, a brief overview of the current historiographical debates is needed.

Early modern suicide has been the subject of influential studies, namely by Michael MacDonald, Terence Murphy, R. A. Houston, and Paul Seaver. The subject is fraught with complexities, especially when it comes to debating the practice of forfeiture (when a suicide's goods were given to the lord of the manor or the crown), and the secularisation of suicide across early modern Britain. MacDonald and Murphy's *Sleepless Souls: Suicide in Early Modern England*, on which most of the current discourse about the history of suicide in early modern Britain is based, and which was built out of earlier articles by both historians, was by their own admission, constructed less on the statistical nature of earlier explorations on the subject. These earlier works such as Émile Durkheim's 1897 work *Le Suicide*, and Olive Anderson's 1987 book, *Suicide in Victorian and Edwardian England*, relied on a statistical analysis.<sup>7</sup> Instead, using a wide range of sources MacDonald and Murphy put forward various arguments around the trajectory of responses and understandings relating to early modern suicide. They claimed that the Tudor and early Stuart periods were an 'era of severity'. The central government and church condemned suicide with puritanical

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<sup>6</sup> E. Wingate, *Justice Revived: Being the Whole Office of a County Justice of the Peace* (1661), p. 61; also in MacDonald, 'The Secularization of Suicide', p. 53.

<sup>7</sup> É. Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* G. Simpson, (ed.), J. A. Spaulding and G. Simpson trans. (New York: Free Press, 1966), pp. 37-38; O. Anderson, *Suicide in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 96-97.

fervour. During the Tudor period, coroners and juries had been policed by Star Chamber, but when it was abolished in 1641 and during the Civil Wars and Interregnum, the legal and institutional basis for forfeiture was challenged. After the Restoration there was an increase in juries returning *non compos mentis* verdicts which resulted in the decline of forfeiture and people began to question the instigation of the devil in acts of self-murder. They also argue that after 1660 more medicalised theories were developed to understand what drove individuals to suicide.<sup>8</sup> MacDonald summarised: 'Religious and magical ideas that had justified savage punishments for self-murder were gradually eclipsed by medical and philosophical ideas that exculpated it'.<sup>9</sup> There is an emphasis in MacDonald and Murphy's book on the disparity between clergymen's views and those held by society at large, a reoccurring theme across all chapters within this thesis not just this chapter on suicides. R. A. Houston has argued against many points that MacDonald and Murphy raised in a book published in 2010, *Punishing the Dead? Suicide, Lordship and Community in Britain, 1500-1830*. Houston sees suicide as a mainly secular event which theological discourses had little influence on, stating that suicide was 'just another sudden death that left practical as well as symbolic problems for survivors'. Houston explains forfeiture as a practice that was less for fiscal reasons and more part of representing the role and authority of lordship within a community, therefore the rise in *non compos mentis* verdicts was due to transformations within legal institutions and not a softening of public opinion.<sup>10</sup> He also took exception with the ideas around the medicalisation of suicide arguing that although things such as melancholy and lunacy were recognised conditions they were not medicalised in the way that would be recognised today. The only medicalised aspect was in

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<sup>8</sup> M. MacDonald, 'The Medicalization of Suicide in England: Laymen, Physicians, and Cultural Change, 1500-1870' *The Milbank Quarterly* Vol. 67, Supplement 1. Framing Disease: The Creation and Negotiation of Explanatory Schemes (1989), pp. 69-91.

<sup>9</sup> MacDonald and Murphy, *Sleepless Souls*, pp. 5-7, 28-36, Ch. 1-6; MacDonald, 'The Secularization of Suicide', p. 52.

<sup>10</sup> R. A. Houston, *Punishing the Dead?: Suicide, Lordship, and Community in Britain, 1500-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 2.

post-mortem autopsies to determine if a death had been natural or not.<sup>11</sup> Paul Seaver has explored early modern suicide from a slightly different angle than the other historians mentioned. He acknowledged and accepted the arguments and trajectory of changing opinions put forward by MacDonald and Murphy but has focused on reactions to suicide. Seaver discovered that the diocese of London granted occasional licenses to permit Christian burials for suicides. He explores these petitions for burial and highlights the role that London played in English society and culture and its evolution.<sup>12</sup> Seaver's work will be returned to later in this chapter. Most recently Amy Milka has examined suicidal criminals, including those who were judicial suicides, individuals who deliberately committed crimes hoping for sentence of death.<sup>13</sup>

Although this is not an exhaustive list of all historians who have explored early modern suicide, these key debates and themes are prevalent in all current research. This chapter, however, departs from much of the traditional approach to this subject, such as the trajectory of posthumous verdicts, exploration of forfeiture, and political and religious debates on the subject, while still bearing these arguments in mind. It is the aim of this chapter to place the individual into discourses around suicide and explore what actually happened to the bodies of individuals who took their own lives. E. K. Hunter has claimed that 'examination of burial practices is not sufficient to fully understand how early modern people saw the relationship between suicide and damnation'.<sup>14</sup> This may indeed be correct for the spiritual debates around the suicide corpse, but examinations of burial practices

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<sup>11</sup> R. A. Houston, 'The Medicalisation of Suicide and the Law in Scotland and England, circa 1750-1850', *Histories of Suicide: International Perspectives on Self Destruction in the Modern World* J. Weaver and D. Wright, (eds.), (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2009), pp. 91-118.

<sup>12</sup> P. Seaver, 'Suicide and the Vicar General in London: A Mystery Solved?' *From Sin to Insanity: Suicide in Early Modern Europe* J. R. Watt, (ed.), (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 26.

<sup>13</sup> A. Milka, "'Preferring Death": Suicidal Criminals in Eighteenth-Century England' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Volume 53, Number 4, Summer 2020, pp. 685-705.

<sup>14</sup> E. K. Hunter, "'Between the bridge and the brook': Suicide and Salvation in England c. 1550-1650' *Reformation and Renaissance Review*, Vol. 15 No. 3, November 2013, p. 240.



highlight the community's response and relationship to the deceased, while also demonstrating the complex nature of the category of marginalisation as a tool for analysing these dead.

## Sources and Methodology

Suicide, in many ways, is that most private of deaths, often carried out in isolation, concealed by both the dying and those who discover them. Hence, finding information within early modern sources related to suicide cases is problematic. Suicide in the metropolis of London is arguably even more difficult to trace than in other parts of England. This is partly due to the topographical changes in population growth and administrative upheavals such as those during the Civil Wars, as well as particular local archival gaps.

London and Middlesex were anomalous jurisdictions in general and suffer from a lack of coroner inquisitions where suicides would be more visible. Coroners were elected officials and, since the formalisation of the office in 1194, they were typically appointed for life.<sup>15</sup> The coroners' role was to investigate sudden, suspicious, or violent deaths, habitually within a forty-eight-hour window after the incident. These investigations were conducted in front of a jury of local men near the location of the death, in a local alehouse, or parish workhouse. Because both coroners and the jurors were drawn from their local districts, they were regularly able to provide intimate knowledge about the self-murdered individual. They would also have been aware of the reputations of witnesses and know the local neighbourhood and topographical details. Jurors would examine the suicide corpse and scene of death, question family, friends, and listen to local gossip. On occasion they may

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<sup>15</sup> P. Fisher, PhD Thesis, 'The Politics of Sudden Death: The Office and Role of the Coroner in England and Wales, 1726-1888' (Leicester University, 2007), pp. 1,3; For a guide to the survival of records see, J. Gibson and C. Rogers, *Coroners' Records in England and Wales* (Birmingham: Federation of Family History Societies, 2000 edn.).

even have re-enacted the death.<sup>16</sup> From their findings they would produce the coroner inquisitions. Unfortunately, except for one coroner's roll from 1590 the coroners' inquests for the seventeenth century were never returned to the central courts and are missing.<sup>17</sup> The Middlesex coroners' inquests reappear in 1747, the Westminster coroners' inquests reappear in 1760, and the inquests from the City London only reappear in 1786 limiting the ability to trace verdicts relating to posthumous trials upon a suicide corpse in earlier cases. The summarised findings of the inquisitions are intermittently referenced in other sources, and by the eighteenth century were occasionally reported in newspapers. It is possible to sporadically come across some of the depositions taken before the coroners in London which have survived in various collections of sessions papers, such as one from the 'May Sessions' of 1676 concerning a woman named Sarah George. The informant was a Rachel Cooper, spinster, who reported that on the evening of Thursday 20 April, she had gone to visit Mr and Mrs George. When she arrived Mr George went upstairs to call his wife then 'ran down stairs presently crying out his wife had murdered her self'. Rachel Cooper went upstairs and 'saw Sarah George in her bed bleeding but alive'; later that evening she died. In the deposition Ms Cooper goes on to say that Sarah George 'did frequently talke of leaving her husband sayeing shee would not live w[i]th him any longer'. Apparently, Sarah George often beat and would bite her husband too, putting him in fear for his own life. In the bedroom there was 'a bloody Rasier lyeing in a Chaire and that from the Chaire upon the floore to the bed there were drops of blood'.<sup>18</sup> Sarah George had cut her throat. Her death was clearly investigated by the coroner but the verdict from the inquisition is lost, along with any other sources that reference this suicide. Even examining burial entries within parish registers produced no further information about this individual. This example

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<sup>16</sup> C. Loar, 'Medical Knowledge and the Early Modern English Coroner's Inquest', *Social History of Medicine*, Volume 23, Issue 3, 1 December 2010, p. 477.

<sup>17</sup> Coroners inquests from 1300 - 1378 and the single one from 1590 are at the LMA, CLA/04/IQ/01/001-011.

<sup>18</sup> LMA, CLA/047/LJ/13/1676/004.

underscores the problems the lack of coroners' inquisitions produces and the difficulties in tracing the suicide corpse beyond the point of death.

Suicides are evident in the famous London *Bills of Mortality*. In the *Bills*, first used between 1592 and 1595 then continuously from 1603, rough statistics of suicides are visible but not much detail about the individuals who took their own lives. The *Bills* prove problematic in their actual identification of suicides. For example, the 'diseases and casualties' for the week beginning 13 June 1665 (fig. 2.1) include one woman who clearly hanged herself at St Leonard, Shoreditch but there are also two individuals noted as drowned in this sample week. Both could prove to be potential suicides' if more information were presented.

*The Diseases and Casualties this Week,*

Jaundies	1
Impoſthume	4
Intians	9
Lethargy	1
Measles	2
Plague	112
Purples	1
Quintie	2
Rickets	13
Rifing of the Lights	12
Rupture	1
Scouring	1
Scurvy	4
Sore Breſt	1
Spotted Feaver	11
Striborn	5
Stone	6
Stopping of the ſtomach	8
Suddenly	3
Surfeit	24
Teeth	25
Thruſh	1
Tiffick	1
Winde	3
Wormes	1
Wounded at Sea	1

Aged	24
Apoplexie	1
Bloody flux	1
Burnt at St. Sepulchres	1
Childbed	9
Chriſomes	8
Conſumption	98
Conuulſion	38
Dropſie	28
Drowned 2, one at St. Martins Vintrey, and one at St. Mar- garets Weſtminſter	2
Feaver	54
Flox and Small-pox	12
Flux	1
French-pox	3
Gangrene	1
Griping in the Guts	23
Hanged her ſelf at St. Leonard Shoreditch	1

Chriſted	Males 97	Buried	Males 270	Plague	112
	Females 109		Females 288		
	In all 206		In all 558		

Increaſed in the Burials this Week 153  
Parishes clear of the Plague 118 Parishes Infected 12

*The Aſſize of Bread ſet forth by Order of the Lord Mayor and Courts of Aldermen*  
A penny Wheaten Loaf to contain Nine Ounces and a half, and three  
half-penny White Loaves the like weight.

Figure 2.1. London's dreadful visitation: or, a collection of all the Bills of Mortality for this present year: beginning the 20th of December 1664 and ending the 19th of December following, ©Wellcome Collection.

The *Bills* have been utilised in this chapter mainly as an additional statistical source, (see Appendix I for a breakdown of suicides in the *Bills*). This is not without its issues. For example, in the demographer John Graunt's collection of *Bills of Mortality* in 1665 there are eight clear suicides. One poisoned herself and seven hanged themselves. Fifty people drowned, and forty-seven were accidentally killed from such things as, falls out of windows or off ladders, kicks from horses, being run over by a cart, and so on. There are also a further twenty found dead in the street, two noted as distracted, one shot, and other cases such as deaths due to vomiting and stomach pains. Any of these could be potential candidates for suicide cases. The ingestion of poison could result in vomiting and stomach issues and indeed any of those noted as dying suddenly could be a concealed suicide.<sup>19</sup> Combining the *Bills* with known individuals who committed suicide each week also highlights the problematic nature of these sources. The *London Weekly Bill of Mortality* published in the *Gloucester Journal* for the week prior to 14 March 1727 does not list a single suicide. Conversely, the parish register for St Giles, Cripplegate notes at least one.<sup>20</sup> In 1633 no suicides appear within the *Bills of Mortality* but there are three petitions to allow Christian burial for suicides who died that year recorded in the Vicar General's Book.<sup>21</sup> Estimates for suicides in various jurisdictions within London vary across different spans of time, occasionally showing a rate comparable to today, but usually much lower. In Graunt's *Table of Casualties*, suicides who hanged themselves were over two and a half times as numerous as murders. The *Bills of Mortality* suicide statistics reached their height between 1720 and 1740 when over fifty a year were sometimes reported (see Appendix

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<sup>19</sup> J. Graunt, *London's dreadful visitation, or, A collection of all the bills of mortality for this present year beginning the 20th of December, 1664, and ending the 19th of December following*, (1665).

<sup>20</sup> *Gloucester Journal* (Gloucester), Tuesday, March 14, 1727; Issue 258; LMA, P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/016.

<sup>21</sup> Seaver, 'Suicide and the Vicar General', p. 39.

l).<sup>22</sup> In 1728 for example, the *Bills* report one person was poisoned, 26 died lunatics, 84 drowned, and 59 were dead due to acts of self-murder.<sup>23</sup>

As has been demonstrated, the source material for suicide cases is not without its difficulties, and therefore following the suicide corpse to its final resting place was accomplished through using a variety of sources. It is from pamphlet literature, diary entries, parish registers, churchwardens' accounts, session papers, newspapers, and, for those who committed suicide while held within prison, *Ordinary's Accounts*, alongside a few other miscellaneous records, that the early modern suicide corpse is made visible. Once named individuals were located within this fragmented material, they were cross referenced with other sources namely parish registers and newspapers to establish the location and manner of burial received. For example, in 1628 Dorothy Gale jumped out of a garret window and killed herself. Her family and friends petitioned for her burial, arguing for it on the grounds of her good character and drawing attention to the fact she suffered from 'a mergrim [migraine] in her head'. Her friends' request for burial in consecrated ground was granted.<sup>24</sup> This information was cross referenced with the parish register of Gale's home parish, St Stephen, Coleman Street. In this register Gale was found buried on the 23 December 1628 which matches up with the date of her burial license. Gale's last will and testament was also able to be traced. In her will, Gale had asked to be 'interred in the parish Church of St Olave in the Old Jury within the Charnell under the Communion Table where my late husband was laid'.<sup>25</sup> It appears that Gale was a relatively wealthy woman, which potentially assisted her petition for burial and in her will she left charitable donations to the church and the poor of her community. However, the reason why she was not

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<sup>22</sup> R. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England 1480-1750* (Oxford, 1998), p. 26.

<sup>23</sup> J. Postlethwayt, J. Graunt, W. Petty, C. Morris, W. Heberden, *Collection of Yearly Bills of Mortality, from 1657 to 1758 Inclusive* (1759), pp. 197-198.

<sup>24</sup> Seaver, 'Suicide and the Vicar General', p. 31; LMA DL/C/343, 56rv. Vicar General Book, 1627-37.

<sup>25</sup> LMA, P69/STE1/A/002/MS04449/001; TNA, PROB 11/155/269, Will of Dorothy Gale, Widow of Saint Stephen Coleman Street, City of London.

buried in St Olave as requested and instead in a church five minutes away is unknown but potentially down to the church's own discretion, something stipulated within the granting of the burial licence. Once named individuals such as Dorothy Gale were identified it was possible to create a list of suicides and trace them to burial locations, comparing different cases and interment practices.

The data collected is incomplete, both due to the lack of various sources and the fact that underreporting of suicide cases in general was rife. There are also problems identifying actual suicides as opposed to accidental deaths, as touched upon when discussing the *Bills*. Accidental falls out of windows and especially drownings prove a real difficulty. In the 1720s, the hymn writer Isaac Watts conjectured that almost all drownings were in fact suicides.<sup>26</sup> Take one John Allen in 1717, a barber in Smithfield, who had been missing for almost a week before he was found. The newspapers reported he was drowned 'in the New-River Head, standing upon his Legs in the Mud'.<sup>27</sup> Allen was buried at St James, Clerkenwell on 28 April 1717, the parish register notes, 'J[oh]n Allen found Dead in the N. River N.G'.<sup>28</sup> Was Allen a suicide or not? The newspapers certainly seemed to have thought so as they included his case with two others they were reporting on: a coachman from Islington who stabbed himself but did not die so then hanged himself instead, and a porter called Hobbie from 'Grays-inn Passage by Red-Lion Square' who slit his throat from ear to ear. Allen, however, could have been a poor unfortunate soul who had waded into the river and got stuck hence drowning during high tide. As this is the entirety of information known about Allen it is impossible to state that he was indeed a suicide. Other cases of suicide by drowning are far clearer. Eustace Budgell, the writer and politician, left no doubt that his drowning was indeed self-murder. On 4 May 1737 Budgell filled his pockets with stones,

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<sup>26</sup> I. Watts, *A Defence against the Temptation to Self-Murder* (1726), pp. iii-iv.

<sup>27</sup> *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer* (London), Saturday, May 11, 1717.

<sup>28</sup> LMA, P76/JS1/008.

took a boat from Dorset Steps and cast himself into the Thames by London Bridge. The *Gentlemen's Magazine* noted that his maid servant had been concerned for his state of mind prior to this and had hidden his sword. When he left his servant on 4 May, he apparently said he was not returning. It took a week to locate his body. When it was retrieved £161 in gold and bank notes were discovered along with the stones in his pockets. He had left a note which stated, 'What Cato did and Addison approv'd, Cannot be wrong'.<sup>29</sup> Budgell received a verdict of lunacy and was buried in an undisclosed location.<sup>30</sup>

This demonstrates another issue with early modern suicides: *non compos mentis* verdicts. Some suicides that bring in a verdict of lunacy are clearly suicides, defined for this purpose as someone who took their own life with some sort of intent, such as Budgell. Another example is that of John Vermease, who hanged himself in 1689. Vermease must have received a *non compos mentis* verdict as the parish register notes he was 'distracted' and is buried 'Below' (in the lower burial grounds) of St Giles, Cripplegate.<sup>31</sup> Vermease was no accidental self-hanging and it is probably due to his state of mind and the case made for him by those who knew him before his suicide that he was given a lunacy verdict and noted in the register as 'distracted'. Other entries are not so clearly self-murders. Some parish registers simply record the cause of death as 'lunacy' or 'distracted' and there are no further details. On the 12 September 1688, the parish register for St Stephen, Coleman Street has an entry for an 'Eliz Edwards A Lunatick Buryed at Bedlam Yard',<sup>32</sup> no other details are forthcoming which makes it difficult to conclusively count her and many similar

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<sup>29</sup> P. Baines, 'Budgell, Eustace (1686–1737), writer' *ODNB* January 03, 2008. [accessed, 1 Nov 2018]; MacDonald and Murphy, *Sleepless Souls*, p. 181; W. Thornbury, 'Introduction', in *Old and New London: Volume 1* (1878), pp. 1-16. BHO <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/old-new-london/vol1/pp1-16> [accessed, 8 May 2018].

<sup>30</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine* Vol. 7, 1737 p. 315.

<sup>31</sup> LMA, P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/011.

<sup>32</sup> LMA, P69/STE1/A/002/MS04449/002.

entries as suicides, as they could be individuals who died for other reasons and were already diagnosed as 'lunatics'.

For London, many parish registers and bishop's transcripts have survived and are a key source for finding suicides. Until the eighteenth century the cause of death is sporadically noted in burial registers, but there is still information that can be gleaned, as those who compiled the registers would often note if there was something slightly different about the person, manner of death, or burial location within their entry. One parish register particularly, as mentioned in the introduction, has been utilised: St Giles, Cripplegate.

The parish of St Giles, Cripplegate had various burial grounds which were laid out as described in William Denton's *Records of St. Giles' Cripplegate* (1883):

There were three burial-grounds in the parish over which the Vestry seems to have exercised considerable control: the churchyard lying round St. Giles's Church, called the Lower Burial-ground, which was enlarged by the additions in 1662 of a piece of ground south of the church near Crowder's well, and by another addition in 1667. One in Whitecross Street, known by the name of the Bear and Ragged Staff Burial-ground, also as the Upper churchyard; and one lying adjacent to the Pest House, where the poor of the parish were for the most part buried.<sup>33</sup>

There were at least three more burial sites over which the parish clerk possessed some authority: Bunhill Fields known as Tindall's or Tyndale's established in 1665, the Quaker burial ground adjacent to Bunhill Fields, and the New Churchyard, also referred to as Bedlam or Bethlem, established in 1569.

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<sup>33</sup> Denton, *Records of St. Giles' Cripplegate*, pp. 31-32.



They published two sets of burial rates in 1644 and 1664 which showed that the minimum cost of interment in the cheapest location (the upper ground) increased over that period from 1s 10d to 2s 6d, and in the lower ground, which was the second cheapest location, from 5s to 6s 6d.<sup>34</sup> Like any churchyard burial, the privileged locations for interment were controlled locations and more expensive. Information about the burial grounds and the expenses entailed for interments makes the parish registers even more interesting when it comes to locating suicides within their pages.

The parish registers do not definitively list the cause of death until October 1653, and the exact location of burials within the parish burial grounds is not noted until October 1663, but they do document unusual and interesting deaths in the earlier entries. In April 1607 Bryan Marow drowned in a ditch in 'the fields' and next to it is written 'Coroners Quest', words which appear next to several other burials. In November 1608, a boy was buried who was 'found dead in a dung cart in Old Street'. Sometimes they state 'Kild' in the margins and note others such as John Edwards 'A Vagrant died in the streete' from November 1613, and 'Katherin wife of Davy Wagner Clothworker Executed' February 1617. Also recorded are those who died in 'the cage' or were excommunicated. When a body was not interred in one of the main burial grounds, they record which parish the cadaver was sent to: St Fosters, St Alphege, St Thomas Apolstles, St Lawrence, St Michaels, Crooked Lane, and the New Churchyard appear frequently. However, the most common entries simply read as some variation on this example: 'John sonne of Robert Conet Yeoman' from 6 May 1607 showing the limited information available.<sup>35</sup>

The graph below, (fig. 2.2), illustrates the number of burials recorded within the parish registers of St Giles, Cripplegate between January 1600 and September 1653.

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<sup>34</sup> GL (Printed Books), Broad sides 12.79, 4.2. seen in Harding, *The Dead and the Living*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>35</sup> All samples from LMA, P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/002.

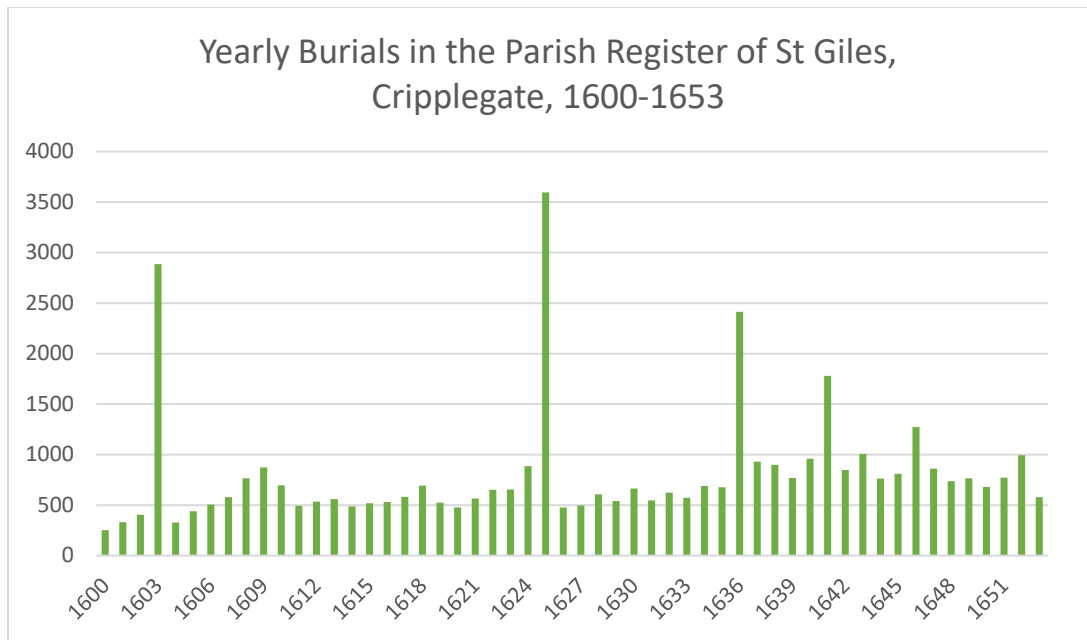


Figure 2.2. Yearly Burials in the Parish Registers of St Giles, Cripplegate.

The 43,548 individuals included in this graph are not the full total for the parish between January 1600 and October 1653 due to a few missing pages, but they do provide an idea of the burial patterns. The plague years are distinctly visible, as is the gentle increase in recorded deaths over the 53 years.

There are two very clearly noted suicides in these earlier entries: John Ludwell and Eliza Gerling who both hanged themselves in 1651 and 1652, respectively. The words ‘Coroners Quest’ appear in fifteen cases. The first is the aforementioned Bryan Marow, the next two, in 1610 and 1611, have no details other than the words coroner’s quest by the names. In 1614 a coroner’s inquest was held due to a body found dead in the fields. One coroner’s inquest was held because someone was ‘kild’, another due to a murder in a vault. One servant was found dead in a hayloft, which could be a possible suicide, another was shot with an arrow, another case was due to a woman drowning in a tub of water. The coroners also investigated an individual who fell down some stairs, had a cart fall on them, two children who were murdered, and someone killed with ‘the butt end of a musket’. Ten other notable entries record those who drowned, some of whom may have also been

suicides. No information is given to their burial location except when they were buried in the New Churchyard.<sup>36</sup>

The New Churchyard was on the north-eastern fringe of the city and was used by multiple parishes, often instead of St Paul's burial grounds due to its cheaper burial fees.<sup>37</sup> The burial ground was meant to be free for all burials with the charge for grave digging at 6d being the only permissible expense, however the parish that sent a body there for interment often charged a small fee.<sup>38</sup> The burial ground was attractive to nonconformists and dissenters along with the poor. Suicides were also occasionally interred there. The parish of St Vedast, Foster Lane recorded two suicides between 1646 and 1710. One was sent to the New Churchyard; the other was buried in an unspecified location outside the parish.<sup>39</sup> Fifty-eight individuals between 1600 and October 1653 from St Giles, Cripplegate were buried in the New Churchyard including the suicide, Eliza Gerling.

Individuals such as Charity Philpot, Dorothy Gale, and Eustace Budgell, along with thousands of others, have been examined for this chapter using the sources as laid out above. There is a bias towards eighteenth-century suicides purely due to the availability of sources. Some individuals are visible in multiple sources and others are just unknown individuals who committed suicide in one source and are absent in others. The mini biographies that form the basis for an analysis of what happened to the bodies of the suicide corpse and how it was and was not marginalised have revealed hitherto unknown patterns. Therefore, the remainder of this chapter is split into two sections. The first examines crossroad, highway, and open field burials, and the second looks at suicides buried within burial grounds.

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<sup>36</sup> All examples LMA, P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/001-P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/004.

<sup>37</sup> Harding, *The Dead and the Living*, p. 93.

<sup>38</sup> LMA, COL/CA/01/01/018 (Rep 16), 492 seen in R. Hartle, *The New Churchyard: From Moorfields Marsh to Bethlem Burial Ground, Brokers Row and Liverpool Street* (London: MOLA, 2017), p. 34.

<sup>39</sup> Hartle, *The New Churchyard*, p. 86.

## Crossroad, Highway, and Open Field Burials

The suicide corpse has attracted attention due to the practice of interment at crossroads, on highways, and in open fields. The origins of these burial rituals are obscure. The idea that voluntary death was a sin and a crime took its impetus from Augustine's polemics which in turn seem to have been based upon Plato's Pythagorean argument in the *Phaedo*. Here the severing of the bond between body and soul was seen as usurping a privilege that belonged to god.<sup>40</sup> This idea was translated into canon law through three sixth-century church councils. Between the sixth century and the Reformation, ecclesiastical proscription increasingly combined with secular law, which was broadened to encompass the practice of dishonouring the suicide corpse.<sup>41</sup>

As far back as 672 CE Christian burial rites for self-murderers in England had been denied.<sup>42</sup> In 740, Ecgbert, the Archbishop of York, instructed priests to exclude those 'who laid violent hands upon themselves' from Christian burial customs.<sup>43</sup> A tenth-century English writer translated and amended the works of Halitgar the bishop of Cambrai:

If a man slay himself of his own will with a weapon or with any means the devil offers, it is not allowed that Mass be sung for such a man, or that psalms be chanted when the corpse is committed to the earth, or that it should lie in an unpolluted tomb.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> A. J. Doroge and J. D. Tabour, *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom Among Christians and Jews in Antiquity* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992), p. 5.

<sup>41</sup> M. Cox, 'Eschatology, burial practice and continuity: a retrospection from Christ Church Spitalfields' *Grave Concerns: Death & Burial in England 1700-1850* M. Cox, (ed.), (BA Research Report 113 Council for British Archaeology, York, 1998), p. 119.

<sup>42</sup> Hunter, 'Between the bridge and the brook', p. 240.

<sup>43</sup> S. P. Bertram, *Funeral Customs: Their Origin and Development* (London: T.W. Laurie, Ltd, 1926), p. 106.

<sup>44</sup> J. Raith, (ed.), *Die altenglische Version des Halitgar'schen Bussbuches* 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., (Darmstadt, 1964), p. 77, discussed and translated in A. Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages: Volume 2: The Curse on Self-Murder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 264-265.

This position was reiterated in a canon falsely attributed to King Edgar from just after 1000. It proclaimed that it was 'neither lawful to celebrate mass for one who, by any diabolical instigation hath voluntarily committed murder on himself, nor to commit his body to the ground with hymns and psalmody or any rites of honorable sepulture'.<sup>45</sup> A Henrician canon mentioned that the clergy were not to bury self-murderers 'in their churches or churchyards, and that if they have in fact buried such people, they shall throw their remains out of the church or churchyard at the command of their ordinaries'.<sup>46</sup> Thomas Cranmer in his *Catechisms*, which was read in all Anglican churches, 'decreed that the self-murderer was cursed of God and damned for ever'.<sup>47</sup> It was not until 1662 that the next official church canon concerning suicides was created.<sup>48</sup> This was a rubric which was inserted into the Book of Common Prayer, again stating that ministers were not to perform Christian rites at the interment of self-murderers.<sup>49</sup> Common law had also been ostensibly concerned with suicides. In the thirteenth century Henry de Bracton outlined the concept and resulting punishment of a *felo de se* in his legal treatise *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliae* (on the Laws and Customs of England), although no explicit allowance was made for the manner of interment. William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* from 1765 also drew attention to the importance of inflicting the law upon a suicide both through the practice of forfeiture and by ignominious burial practice.<sup>50</sup> Secular law did direct suicides to be buried on the highway but nothing more detailed was established and

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<sup>45</sup> B. Thorpe, (ed.), *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England* (1840), p. 406, discussed in MacDonald and Murphy, *Sleepless Souls*, p. 19.

<sup>46</sup> G. Bray, *Tudor church reform: The Henrician canons of 1535 and the Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), p. 35; Houston, *Punishing the Dead?*, p. 196.

<sup>47</sup> W. A. Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants, 1520-1535* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964); D. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996); All seen in S. Moore, PhD Thesis, 'The Decriminalisation of Suicide' (Department of Law, London School of Economics and Political Science, January 2000), p. 30.

<sup>48</sup> C. Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England 1066-1550* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 105.

<sup>49</sup> F. Procter and W. H. Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer* (London: MacMillan, 1902), p. 636.

<sup>50</sup> W. Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England* 4 vols (1765-9), vol. 4, p. 190.

there was nothing in ecclesiastical legislation that specified exactly how the suicide corpse should be disposed of.<sup>51</sup> The practice of crossroad, highways, and open field burial seems to be one that has folkloric origins and was influenced by local agency.

Beliefs do not always conform to religious teachings, and such is true when looking at the burial of the suicide corpse. Anglo-Saxon charter bounds show the early origins of crossroad burials, but these rituals were not commonly enforced until the late fifteenth century.<sup>52</sup> The question of *why* crossroads were utilised for the burial of suicides was first broached in 1891 when John Atkinson dismissed the idea that these practices were a mark of 'ignominy, abhorrence, execration, or what not', instead putting forward the view that it was due to a fear of the dead that people were enticed to carry out these rituals.<sup>53</sup> In 1908 Westermarck's *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* put forward the theory that crossroads were chosen due to their ability to confuse any returning revenant and deny them the ability to find the correct path back to their living communities.<sup>54</sup> The evil influence of the body would also be dispersed in several directions. This eternally liminal status would prevent a malevolent revenant from returning to haunt the living.<sup>55</sup> Crossroads were neither here nor there places and would bewilder a returning ghost. Most anthropologists, folklorists, and historians who have explored early modern suicides have jumped on this revenant prevention concept.<sup>56</sup> However, contemporary sources do not

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<sup>51</sup> MacDonald and Murphy, *Sleepless Souls*, p. 20.

<sup>52</sup> A. Reynolds, *Anglo-Saxon Deviant Burial Customs* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2009), p. 52; Daniell, *Death and Burial*, p. 106.

<sup>53</sup> J. Atkinson, *Forty Years in a Moorland Parish: Reminiscences and Researches in Danby in Cleveland* (1891), p. 217.

<sup>54</sup> E. Westermarck, *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* Vol. 2, (London: Macmillan, 1908), pp. 254-257.

<sup>55</sup> S. Tarlow, *Ritual, Belief and the Dead in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 147; Liminality arguments stem from A. Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* M. B. Vizedom and G. L. Caffee trans. (London and New York: Routledge, 1960), especially pp. 160-161.

<sup>56</sup> For example, see: V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure (Foundations of Human Behaviour)* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017 edn.), p. 196; MacDonald and Murphy, *Sleepless Souls*, pp. 46-48; Tarlow, *Ritual, Belief and the Dead*, p. 147.

mention the disorientation of the suicide ghost as a main reason for crossroad burials. This is not a claim that people were not worried about ghosts in general and indeed concerned about a suicide's ghost returning. A few stories tell of such instances, the notable example being William Sampson's 1636 play, *The Vow Breaker*. In this play a young man commits self-murder after his lover marries someone else. The young woman who had married the other man remarks upon her past lover's suicide saying:

My best counsell is that you bury him as the custome of the Country is, and drive a stacke through him; so perhaps I that had no quietnes with him whil'st he liv'd, may sleepe in peace now he's dead.<sup>57</sup>

This contemporary source hints at the prevention of a suicide corpse rising through using the burial practice of running a stake through the corpse. There is no mention of crossroads being used for disorientation purposes and this passage can also be read as the woman wishing for these burial rituals for her own peace of mind rather than as a preventative measure against a returning revenant. The claim that crossroads were utilised as a means of avoiding ghostly interactions has very sparse contemporary records to back it up. The liminality of the crossroad location deserves closer inspection, but the ghost aspect should be set aside as the key reason for the practice of crossroad burials.

The idea of liminality is hinted at within contemporary commentary on crossroad burial practices. The crossroads in London where suicides were buried were frequently located at parish boundaries. This practice of casting-out the person who had committed self-murder showing that they no longer belonged to society and were subjected to a symbolic language of exclusion is clear. They would forever be in a place that was neither sacred nor profane, nor an area of production. This social casting-out seems more viable

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<sup>57</sup> W. Sampson, *The Vow Breaker. or, The Faire Maide of Clifton. In Notinghamshire as it hath benee diuers times Acted by severall Companies with great applause* (1636).

than considering this burial method purely as a preventative measure against malevolent ghosts.

Early folklorists 'tended to argue from first principles about what people must have believed, rather than finding out what they actually did'.<sup>58</sup> Jeremy Harte has examined these early folklorist theories that have held sway over research into crossroad burials, arguing that the everyday people of early modern England did not in fact fear suicides: 'they did not shun their bodies, or avoid their graves, nor did they feel any anxiety about being followed by their ghosts'.<sup>59</sup> This can be seen in London cases perhaps more clearly than those from provincial towns and villages. In 1723 the newspapers reported that:

Yesterday was Sev'night a Milk-man near May-Fair, bought some Arsenick under Pretence of killing Rats in the Cow House; but took it himself and died in 12 Hours; during that time he refused to declare the Motive of such an Action. The Coroner's Inquest having sat upon the Body, brought in their Verdict Self-Murder; and he was buried naked in the Cross-Way near Pimbluco.<sup>60</sup>

This was a busy crossroads surrounded by houses, as were other known locations of crossroad burials within London. These were not quiet secluded locations where the population of early modern England feared to tread but bustling busy places with many comings and goings. They were removed from the community of the dead but not so much so from the community of the living. Contemporary sources emphasise that crossroad burials were a method used to deter people from taking their lives, and to do this they were placed in locations with a significant amount of footfall.<sup>61</sup> For the living they remained

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<sup>58</sup> J. Harte, 'Maimed Rites: Suicide Burials in the English Landscape' *Time and Mind: The Journal of Archaeology, Consciousness and Culture* Vol. 4, Issue 3, November 2011, p. 264.

<sup>59</sup> Harte, 'Maimed Rites', p. 265.

<sup>60</sup> *London Journal* (1720) (London), Saturday, August 17, 1723; Issue CCXII.

<sup>61</sup> R. Halliday, 'The Roadside Burial of Suicides: An East Anglian Study', *Folklore*, Vol. 121, No. 1 (April, 2010) p. 82.



a constant reminder to passers-by of the official stand on the crime of self-murder. Crossroad burials were held for the most notorious cases, those that everyone heard about via local gossip, ballads, and in pamphlet literature, and, by the late seventeenth century, newspapers. Individuals were more often loathed for their past crimes over their own self-murder, and the neighbourhood and parish they belonged to would have been aware of their reputations prior to death. Interest in the dead person was prevalent, not as a ghost, but rather as an individual despised, pitied, or contemplated, according to circumstance.<sup>62</sup>

The practice of driving a stake through the body of a suicide corpse is well attested. Again, this has been argued as acting as a preventative measure against the return of a revenant. However, no contemporary commentary upon this practice confirms this. It seems more likely that it was a preventative measure against the resurrection of the suicide's body at the Last Judgment.<sup>63</sup> Or even more plausibly, a stake was utilised as a warning against the action of self-murder as John Weever explained in 1631:

we [English] use to bury such as lay violent hands upon themselves, in or neere to the high ways, with a stake thrust through their bodies, to terrifie all passengers by that so infamous and reproachful a burial, not to make such their final passage out of this present world. The fear of not having burial, or having an ignominious and dishonourable burial, hath ever affrighted the bravest spirits in the world.<sup>64</sup>

In his study of the office of the coroner Edward Umfreville noted that, 'I have heard also of the driving of a Stake through the Body, but this Practice hath no Countenance from the Coroner's Warrant, though it may serve to make the Ignominy the more notorious'.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Harte, 'Maimed Rites', p. 265.

<sup>63</sup> MacDonald and Murphey, *Sleepless Souls*, p. 45.

<sup>64</sup> J. Weever, *Ancient Funeral Monuments with in the United Monarchie of Great Britaine* (1631), p. 22.

<sup>65</sup> E. Umfreville, *Lex coronatoria: or, the office and duty of coroners. In three parts. Wherein the theory of the office is distinctly laid down; and the practice illustrated* Vol. 1, (1761), p. 8.

Again, commentary about this practice draws attention to the wrongness of the initial act of suicide, rather than the prevention of any returning revenant.

In 1755 a bookseller called Barlow from Star Alley near Fenchurch Street killed his two-year-old child then shot himself. He did not die immediately and attempted to strangle himself while being held at the Poultry Compter. After he had died his family managed to get their hands on his body and buried him privately, but the Lord Mayor, acting as chief magistrate, ordered the body exhumed. Barlow was then buried at a crossroads in Moorfields with a stake driven through him.<sup>66</sup> The use of a stake was down to local agency rather than state dictate, because the Lord Mayor had only requested Barlow be buried in the crossroad.

Criminals awaiting execution who committed suicide were frequently buried at crossroads, more often than suicides who had no prior criminal history. Criminals were also occasionally buried at the sites of where their execution would have been carried out, many of which, including London's most famous hanging site Tyburn, were on a crossroad. The linking of crossroad burials to execution sites again served as a warning against the heinousness of the crime of self-murder. In 1665 a pamphlet was printed that told the story of Marcy Clay, alias Jenny Fox, who was arrested for an unspecified theft. This woman had led a long life of crime both in London and the south-west as a highway woman and thief. Allegedly she had managed to escape from prison four times prior to this arrest and these prior offences did not help her case for she was sentenced to hang. The day before her execution Clay poisoned herself with '4 papers of white mercury'. It took her twelve hours to die. The pamphlet on her life reported that 'during this time, many hundred Spectators were admitted to see her, all who she desired to pray for her, and often cried to God for

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<sup>66</sup> *London Evening Post* (London), Thursday, August 28, 1755; Issue 4338; *Read's Weekly Journal Or British Gazetteer* (London), Saturday, September 6, 1755; Issue 2334; *London Evening Post* (London), Saturday, September 13, 1755; Issue 4345; Sylvanus Urban, 1755. 'Historical Chronicle, September 1755', *Gentleman's Magazine* 25: p. 423.

mercy'. Once she had died the surgeons were called to perform an autopsy and confirmed her death was due to ingesting poison. Her body was conveyed to Tyburn 'and there (hard by the Gallows) buried, with a stake driven through her bowels, as in Cases of self-Murther is usual'.<sup>67</sup> This pamphlet is the only evidence for Marcy Clay being a real individual, but the narrative was common. On 9 February 1657 Miles Sindercombe, a soldier originally from Kent and former apprentice to a surgeon before the Civil Wars, was tried for treason. He was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. While confined awaiting his execution he managed to procure some form of poison. The night before his execution, 13 February, he took his own life, first lapsing into a coma then dying. Miles had left a rare suicide note, in it he claimed:

I do take this course, because I would not have all the open shame of the world executed upon my Body. I desire all good people not to judge amiss of me; for I do not fear my life, but do trust God with my soule. I did this thing without the privity of any person in the world. I do, before God and the world, clear my keeper, my sisters, mother, or brother, or any other of my relations; but it was done alone by myself, I say by me, Miles Sindercom, 13 day, 1656.

His body was drawn to Tower Hill four days later and buried under the scaffold naked with a stake through his heart. Part of the stake remained above ground, plated with iron for all to see as an example of the punishment for self-murderers.<sup>68</sup> Hence stakes appear to hold multiple purposes, with this one also acting as a grave marker.

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<sup>67</sup> Anon, *The high-way woman, or, A true and perfect narrative of the wicked life, and deplorable death of Marcy Clay, otherwise called Jenny Fox*, (1665).

<sup>68</sup> Anon, *The whole business of Sindercombe, from first to last: it being a perfect narrative of his carriage, during the time of his imprisonment in the Tower of London* (1657); T. Burton, '10 February 1656-7', *Diary of Thomas Burton Esq: Volume 1, July 1653 - April 1657*, J. Towill Rutt, (ed.) (1828), p. 374; BHO, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/burton-diaries/vol1/p374> [accessed, 08 May 2018]; *Mercurius Politicus* (29 Jan–19 Feb 1657); A. Marshall, 'Sindercombe, Miles (d. 1657), parliamentarian soldier and conspirator' *ODNB* (2004): <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-25637> [accessed, 29 Nov. 2018].

Crossroad burials, with or without a stake through the body, seem to have been reserved for those whose prior crimes or notoriety had already placed them in a less than sympathetic position in the public's eyes, and especially those who had prior violent and distasteful actions to their name. In 1727 Major John Oneby was indicted upon a murder charge, held in Newgate, and sentenced to be executed. He cut his wrists in his cell and was buried at a crossroads in Islington.<sup>69</sup> Excluding prisoners of debt who committed suicide, most prisoners who took their own lives instead of waiting for the executioner to carry out the act were subjected to crossroad burial rituals. With the increasing popularity and number of newspapers in the latter part of the seventeenth century this was even more apparent. Criminals who committed suicide either before or after imprisonment received detailed journalistic entries. Such as the case of Thomas Wyton from 1744. Wyton was committed to Newgate for further examination, suspected of being involved in the burglary of Mr George Stinger's pawnshop on Drury Lane, some of the stolen goods being found upon his person. The newspapers made a note of when he was re-examined, then capitally convicted, and sentenced to execution.<sup>70</sup> This case began in January and his date of execution was set at 6 June. Each step along the way was reported. During the night before his execution, Wyton hanged himself in his cell.<sup>71</sup> The newspapers noted:

On Saturday last a special Jury, consisting of the Principal Inhabitants of Christ Church, Newgate-street, Summon'd by Virtue of a Warrant from John King, Esq; Coroner of the City of London, met to enquire into the Death of Thomas Wyton, who was to have been executed last Friday 7-Night at Tyburn, but hang'd himself in his Cell in Newgate the Thursday Night before, Upon examining some of the

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<sup>69</sup> OBP, t17260302-36; Anon, *A true and faithful narrative of the life and actions of John Oneby, Esq., commonly called Major Oneby*, (1727); Umfreville, *Lex coronatoria*, p. 2.

<sup>70</sup> *Daily Advertiser* (London), Monday, January 16, 1744; Issue 4055; *London Daily Post and General Advertiser* (London), Tuesday, January 17, 1744; Issue 2862; *Daily Gazetteer* (London), Friday, February 24, 1744; Issue 3114; *London Evening Post* (London), May 31 - June 2, 1744; Issue 2585.

<sup>71</sup> *London Evening Post* (London), June 7 - June 9, 1744; Issue 2588.

Persons who had the Care of him in his Cell, it appear'd, that he had often declar'd, whilst under Sentence of Death, that he would never be publickly hang'd; and that he had been chain'd down to the Floor for endeavouring to make his Escape; on which the Jury found that he was guilty of *Self-Murder*.; and he was therefore, last Sunday in the Afternoon buried in the Cross-Road, near the Hare and Hounds in Old-street Road, by particular Order, it being a House that Wyton formerly kept.<sup>72</sup>

Burial of a suicide near their own dwelling runs in line with a practice occasionally used for executed criminals who were hanged or displayed in chains near the site of their crime.<sup>73</sup>

Apart from the anonymous milkman mentioned earlier, of whom not enough is known to class him with the others, and a few other cases, again about whom not enough is known, almost all crossroad burials between 1600 and 1800 in London were for individuals who were either criminals awaiting execution, or those who had carried out violent and heinous crimes before their own suicide. After 1700, it is easier to find evidence for crossroad burials through using newspapers and parish registers and even trace these burial rituals to exact geographic locations. In November 1761, the newspapers reported that:

the body of John Duke, the Bricklayer, who murdered his wife in Thomas-street, Drury-Lane, and afterwards cut his own throat, and died in the hospital, was buried in the cross-road near St Gile's Pond, with a stake drove through his body; the Coroner's inquest having brought in their verdict *Felo de se*.<sup>74</sup>

This burial location is near the current Centrepont building at the crossroads between Oxford Street, New Oxford Street, Tottenham Court Road, and Charing Cross Road (fig. 2.3).

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<sup>72</sup> *Old England or The Constitutional Journal* (London), Saturday, June 16, 1744; Issue 72.

<sup>73</sup> T. W. Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015), p. 148.

<sup>74</sup> *Lloyd's Evening Post and British Chronicle* (London), November 18 - November 20, 1761; Issue 679.



Figure 2.3. John Rocque's Map of London 1746. Approximate burial location shown by the green cross.

Finding these specific interment locations demonstrate the physical marginalisation imposed upon the suicide corpse, in this instance Dukes body was interred on the border between the parishes of St Giles in the Field, St Anne, Soho, and St Marylebone.

In parish registers crossroad burials are recorded relatively rarely compared to suicides who were buried on the 'highway'. This is possibly because many crossroad burials were for criminals who died away from their parish and potentially the clerk of the parish did not see fit to include them. In St Giles, Cripplegate, between 1600 and 1700, only one is clearly identified; a soldier's wife Edee Fanner who hanged herself and was buried in a 'crossway' on 16 April 1688.<sup>75</sup> Between 1700 and 1800 the register records no crossroad burials at all, although some 'highway' burial may have been at crossroads.

Crossroad burials continued throughout the eighteenth century and into the early nineteenth. Familiar narratives such as that of the thief Jones who had robbed a banker's clerk in 1793 then hanged himself, were often reported in newspapers. *The Times* stated Jones committed suicide 'to evade the operations of public justice'. His body was placed upon a plank and brought out of Newgate on a cart. The corpse was conveyed to the top of

<sup>75</sup> LMA, P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/010.

Holborn Hill by a procession that included 'the Sheriffs, City Marshalls and near 50 constables'. Finally, it was deposited in a very deep pit and a stake was driven through it. The crowd who came to watch this spectacle were noted as very great.<sup>76</sup>

This examination of crossroad burial practices has brought to light a few key points. First, that the use of a stake and the ritual of crossroad burials was not a method utilised to prevent the returning ghost of a suicide but acted as a warning against the crime of self-murder. Second, and more importantly, crossroad burials were usually carried out for individuals whose reputations had been damaged beyond repair in life through prior heinous and criminal acts. Laws dictated that a suicide should not be buried in a Christian manner and this was adhered to. However, it was the local community who, once they gained control of a corpse, decided on its exact burial location, and inflicted profane practices, such as driving a stake through the body, upon the suicide's mortal remains. Thereby, the levels of official involvement receded, and local agency dictated the final treatment. Following this theory further can be done by exploring the next category of suicide interments, burial on the highway.

The earliest recorded burial on a highway in England dates from 1510 when Robert Brommer, prior of Butley in Suffolk, hanged himself after making a mess of the priory's finances. His burial took place outside the churchyard wall. A month later his friends dug him up and reburied him by the south porch. A year later, on the bishop's orders, his remains were again moved to be reinterred 'in the nearest road, leading from the said church as far as the way called Haufenstrete'.<sup>77</sup> The practice of reintering a suicide on the highway was not unheard of in seventeenth-century London. In 1676 a pamphlet disclosed the story of an apprentice hatter from Bride Lane. The pamphlet tells that he was in love

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<sup>76</sup> *The Times*, no. 2855 (10 Dec. 1793), 3; no. 2858 (13 Dec, 1793), p. 3, in MacDonald and Murphy, *Sleepless Souls*, pp. 137-138.

<sup>77</sup> A. G. Dickens, (ed.), *The Register or Chronicle of Butley Priory, Suffolk, 1510-1535* (Winchester: Warren & Son, 1951), pp. 25-26, discussed in Harte, 'Maimed Rites', p. 278.

with a 'young maiden' and when she slighted him, 'he poisoned himself'. He was then buried in a churchyard before being removed and reinterred on the highway 'neer Fleet-bridge'. This was a very different suicide to those who were buried at crossroads. The pamphlet appears almost sympathetic to the young man's plight, calling it a 'sad and unhappy Accident', but some form of example was still required to be set. This man had still committed a crime, that of self-murder, and the story was widely circulated within early modern society.<sup>78</sup> In September 1640 a pamphlet was published that told the story of Samuel How, a cobbler, who killed himself and was buried in the highway near Shoreditch. How was ridiculed for preaching a sermon to over a hundred people against human learning in the Nags-head Tavern near Coleman Street. The ridicule he received potentially led him to kill himself. The pamphlet contained an epitaph which concludes:

*Who having done his worke, by death is paid*

*His Wages, and in the high-way is laid.*

*Where he no foolish Arguments can hold:*

*For How, his zeale and corps in ground are cold:*

*He that was humans Learnings great Kil-kow,*

*Lies in the high way, you need not ask How?<sup>79</sup>*

Although this epitaph is less than complementary towards How and plays upon his name while continuing to ridicule him after death, How was not a suicide who committed heinous nor criminal acts in life and this is reflected in his highway burial. He was not a well-respected man, but there are no mentions of stakes, nor further punishment rituals inflicted upon his corpse. Much as the hatter before him, How gained notoriety through his actions, therefore some clear punishment should be inflicted, but nothing as harsh as that

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<sup>78</sup> Anon, *Sad and deplorable news from Bride-lane*, (Oldenburg, 1676).

<sup>79</sup> Anon, *The Coblers threed is cut, or, The Coblers monument wherein to the everlasting memory of the folly of Samuel How*, (1640).



reserved for the individuals who were given crossroad burials. Due to a lack of corroborating sources, it cannot be certain that these last two examples were real individuals, nevertheless, these types of narratives would have been familiar to early modern Londoners.

As already noted, in 1631 John Weever reiterated the practice of burial in or near the highway for suicides. Some were subjected to a stake through their remains, but many seem to have been simply buried without further ritual. The use of a stake for highway burials is clearer in general contemporary commentary upon the practice rather than being actually seen in specific cases. This is evident in the newspapers of the eighteenth century, where, alongside disdain at the frequency of *non compos mentis* verdicts, it was clear there was a wish to see more highway burials utilise the method of driving a stake through the body. A letter sent to the *General Evening Post* in 1735 reads:

Of late there has been so many Self-Murders, that it's a Pity there was not some Law to punish such People (if possible) even after Death; that would in a great measure, prevent such Practices. For such Persons as lay violent Hands on themselves, knowing a Verdict of *Non Compos Mentis* is so easily obtained, don't stick at the doing it; whereas if every one that commits so monstrous an Act, were to be publicly expos'd naked, for so many Days, and then buried in the Highway, with a Stake drove throw them; its thought this would in a great measure, help to cure this growing Evil.<sup>80</sup>

In 1736, when a 'China Man' cut his throat in Clare Street opposite Clare Court near Drury Lane, along with noting the incident, the newspapers again railed against *non compos mentis* verdicts and stated that:

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<sup>80</sup> *General Evening Post* (London), April 26 - April 29, 1735; Issue 246.

if Persons that destroy'd themselves were to be expos'd naked, and buried in the Highway, with a Stake drove through their Bodies, and this executed with Rigour, it's believed it would put an End to so cowardly a Practice as that of Self-murder.<sup>81</sup>

In 1738 the *London Evening Post* wrote:

The same Morning a Woman was found hanging on a Tree at the Fox under the Hill beyond Camberwell. She was warm when cut down, but all Endeavours (a Surgeon being present) to restore her to Life were ineffectual. - If all Persons that destroy'd themselves were to be expos'd naked buried in the Highway with a Stake drove thro them it would in a great measure put an End to this abominable Practice.<sup>82</sup>

All these cases also mention the punishment of being 'publicly expos'd naked'. There are no overt examples of this ever happening, but the existing profane burial rituals did not seem to be the deterrent these commentators hoped, therefore, additional humiliation through the display of a naked corpse was recommended to act as a further deterrent. Suicide bodies were occasionally buried naked but display beforehand never seems to have manifested in the way requested by commentators. The 1730s, when the idea of exposing the corpse of a suicide was most popular, was also the height of anatomy demonstrations in London which are covered in the following chapter. The two practices may have been conflated.

Churchwardens' accounts occasionally reference the fee for highway burials. One such, from St Helen, Bishopsgate in 1638, records that they paid 'for carrying John Blont that hangd himself to bee buried by the highway' 6s 6d, and one from St Martin in the Fields records a payment on the 15 February 1638 'for the buriall of a woman in the high

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<sup>81</sup> *Old Whig or The Consistent Protestant* (London), Thursday, January 29, 1736; Issue 47.

<sup>82</sup> *London Evening Post* (London), May 18 - May 20, 1738; Issue 1640.

way, found drowned in Pickadilly Pond' 6 shillings paid'.<sup>83</sup> The most inexpensive interment options for St Giles, Cripplegate back in 1644 were 1s 10d which is far cheaper than the above suicide burials. The Cripplegate registers from October 1663 note those buried on the highway but not their cost. A sample include Margaret Bayliffe on 7 March 1663 who hanged herself and was 'buried on the highway'; Edmund Abbot a labourer hanged himself and was buried in the highway, 3 February 1666; Richard Parson a glover hanged himself and was buried in the highway, 6 March 1666; Mary Powell a spinster who cut her throat and was buried in the highway in March of 1669; and Ralph Parshal who hanged himself and was buried in the highway in January 1670.<sup>84</sup> Occasionally, like crossroad burial, exact locations are traceable. For example, the parish of St Andrew, Holborn records the fate of John Johnson from 22 April 1664 as 'hanged himself in Robin Hood Court in Shoe Lane and was carried into the fields near Pinder of Wakefield [and buried] in the King's Highway'.<sup>85</sup> Even clearer is the case of a man who drowned himself in the Thames in August of 1708. This unnamed man was 'buried in the highway at the maypole in the Strand' (fig. 2.4).<sup>86</sup>

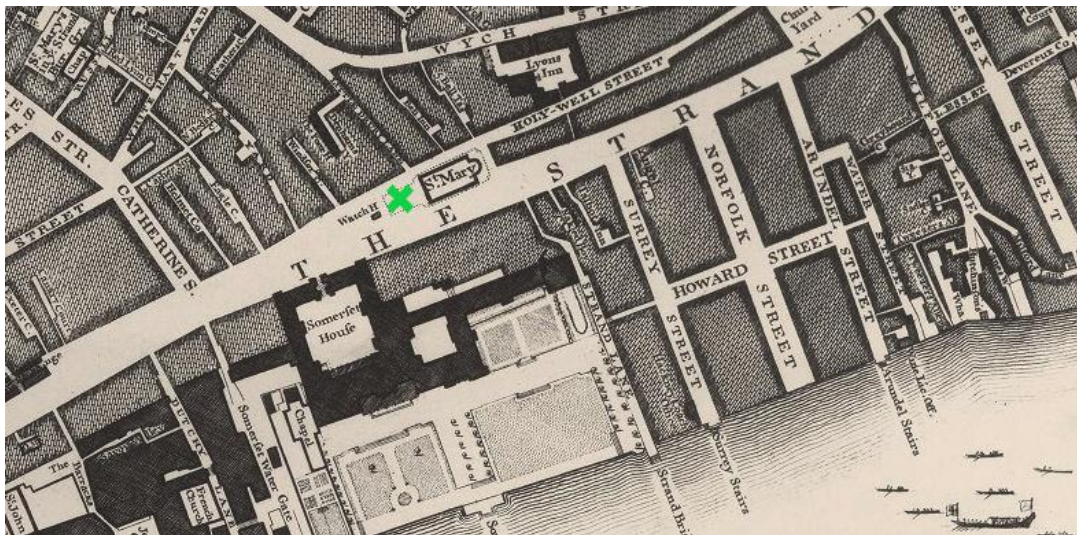


Figure 2.4. John Rocque's Map of London 1746. The Strand, Westminster, showing the approximate location of the Strand maypole with a green cross.

<sup>83</sup> WAC, p69/HEL/B/004/ms06836, St Helen Bishopsgate page 146 (not foliated); WAC, F3 f202r.

<sup>84</sup> LMA, P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/006; P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/007.

<sup>85</sup> LMA, P82/AND/A/010/MS06673/004.

<sup>86</sup> *BofM*, 10 August 1708 discussed in C. Spence, *Accidents and Violent Death in Early Modern London: 1650-1750* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2016), p. 33.

Just like crossroad burial locations, interments on the highways were at busy locations. In fact, highway burial locations were right in the centre of early modern London life.

By the end of the eighteenth century the *Bills of Mortality* were recording an average of thirty suicides a year. They could not of course all be buried in the highway, the ritual around the interment would have become a nuisance, as this figure averages close to one every twelve days. Only some exemplary suicides would be subjected to this practice.<sup>87</sup>

If crossroads were the locations used for the most notorious self-murderers followed by the highway, then the final location for suicides excluded from churchyards and burial grounds, that of open fields, could be considered the third tier in this triad. The idea of open field burials probably takes its impetus from the bible and the story of Judas Iscariot. There are differing accounts of Judas's death. In the New Testament Matthew 27:1-10, Judas, full of remorse tried to right his wrongs by returning the thirty pieces of silver, when this was denied, he flung them to the ground and then hanged himself. The silver was then used to buy potter's field, which became known as 'the Field of Blood' having been purchased with blood money. This field was then used to bury strangers and outsiders. Acts 1:18 tells the story of Judas' death slightly differently. It claims Judas himself purchased the field before falling headfirst and gushing out his bowels. The field became known as Akeldama, meaning 'the Field of Blood' in Aramaic, due to it being covered in Judas' blood. It is never made explicit in any sources that the practice of open field burials took its impetus from these stories, but the possibility should not be disregarded. Open field burials in England were first referenced in 1577 by the priest William Harrison who wrote that: 'Such as kill themselves are buried in the field with a stake driven through their bodies'.<sup>88</sup> Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, written around 1601 and performed a few years later at

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<sup>87</sup> Harte, 'Maimed Rites', p. 269.

<sup>88</sup> W. Harrison, *The Description of England: Classic Contemporary Account of Tudor Social Life* G. Edelen, (ed.), (Washington DC, New York: The Folger Shakespeare Library and Dover Publications, Inc, 1994 edn.), p. 190.

the Globe, also mentions the practice of open field burials for suicides. In the 1603 Quarto, Act V. Scene I opens with the two grave diggers debating whether Ophelia should be granted the Christian burial they are preparing for her. Later in the scene the King, Queen, Laertes, and other lords with the priest and coffin containing Ophelia arrive. Laertes requests that more ceremony is enacted, eliciting the priest to respond that this is the extent of ritual that the church will allow:

My Lord, we have done all that lies in us,  
And more than well the church can tolerate.  
She hath had a Dirge sung for her maiden soule:  
And but for favour of the King, and you,  
She had beene buried in the open fieldes,  
Where now she is allowed Christian buriall.<sup>89</sup>

Open field burials seem more common outside London. For example, the parish register of Birstall, Yorkshire, notes a case from 23 June 1586 where William Grym had 'drowned himself in a pitt nere unto Adwalton Townes end and was buried on the top of the common'.<sup>90</sup> In London it seems far more customary for the suicide corpse to be disposed of at crossroads and in highways. There is one case, that of 36-year-old Elizabeth Wickham who hanged herself 'upon a garden pale by her apron strings' in November 1595 in the parish of St Botolph, Aldgate and then was buried in the same alley where the act was carried out, which departs slightly from a strictly crossroad or highway burial.<sup>91</sup> But in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the metropolis is lacking in frequent open field

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<sup>89</sup> W. Shakespeare, *Hamlet: First Quarto 1603*, (Menston, Scolar Press, 1969) discussed and examined in J. Clare, "Buried in the Open Fields': Early Modern Suicide and the Case of Ofelia', *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, No. 2 (2013), especially p. 249.

<sup>90</sup> J. Nussey, (ed.), *The Parish Register of Birstall* vol. I, 1558-1635, (Yorkshire: Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 1983), p. 175.

<sup>91</sup> T. R. Forbes, *Chronicle from Aldgate: Life and Death in Shakespeare's London* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971), p. 168, discussed in Seaver, 'Suicide and the Vicar General', p. 26.

burial cases. Vanessa Harding examined thirteen suicides for a paper that covered the period up to 1670. She noted 'five were completely excluded from consecrated ground, three were buried in the street or highway, one 'in the field', and one at Mile End'. The others include five who were buried in the New Churchyard, one buried in their own parish churchyard, one's burial location was not given and one 'who stabbed herself but afterwards lived long enough to repent and receive the sacrament'.<sup>92</sup> For several of these cases a Bishop's licence for Christian burial was obtained which will be returned to shortly; however, it is the one that was buried 'in the field' which is of interest as it is a rare find. There is another example from 1722 of a bank robber who shot himself being buried on Blackheath wrapped in a blanket with a stake through his body.<sup>93</sup> Blackheath was an 'open field' but at this time also had a very prominent crossroad upon it and as the exact burial location is unknown it is possible this was more of a crossroad burial than an open field one. In January 1786, the newspapers reported another open field burial:

Thursday last the Coroner's Inquest sat on the body of [Charles] Price, who forged the Bank notes, and brought in their verdict Self-Murder; and the same night he was put in the ground in the fields, and a stake driven through his body.<sup>94</sup>

Charles Price is one of a small handful in London that received this treatment. Nevertheless, the practice or at least the rhetoric of open field burials would have been familiar to the people of London, through the works of Shakespeare, and within other media.

Even looking for open field burials in archaeological records is problematic. Indeed, crossroad, highways, and open field burials are rarely seen in archaeological excavations.

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<sup>92</sup> Harding, 'Burial on the Margin: Distance and Discrimination in Early Modern London' in *Grave Concerns*, p. 60.

<sup>93</sup> *Post Boy* (1695) (London), September 15 - September 18, 1722; Issue 5173.

<sup>94</sup> *General Evening Post* (London), January 28 - January 31, 1786; Issue 8150.

This lack of evidence 'may simply be the result of the bodies either not surviving or not being recognised'.<sup>95</sup> The bodies of suicides were also vulnerable to theft by resurrectionists, which could be a third reason for the lack of archaeological evidence.<sup>96</sup> There is a fourth possibility which is touched upon in the *General Evening Post* of February 1735:

Towards the latter end of the last Week some Workmen digging for Clay in the Road near the Cold-Bath of St. Agnes le Clare, near Hoxton, discover'd several Fragments of Coffins, which had been there long since buried, with Stakes in or near them, suppos'd to have been placed there for Self-Murder; one Coffin of Elm, well preserv'd, in it some Bones, and round the Neck a black Ribband: Of the Memory of any buried in this High Road, according to the Laws against Suicide, there are no Traces. The Estate belongs to the Prebendary of Earle-Street in the Church of St. Paul, London.<sup>97</sup>

These bodies at crossroads, upon highways, and in open fields may have already been removed.

There was a certain amount of curiosity about the dead body in general and this extended to the suicide corpse. The same intangible interest that drew crowds to witness the rituals of crossroad and highway burials drew them to other activities such as viewing a suicide corpse. In April 1684 Thomas Low received a *felo de se* verdict after he slashed his own throat. Low's corpse was laid out for people to view before being buried in St Pauls, Covent Garden.<sup>98</sup> His corpse does not seem to have been displayed naked as the

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<sup>95</sup> A. Cherryson, Z. Crossland and S. Tarlow, *A Fine and Private Place: The archaeology of death and burial in post-medieval Britain and Ireland* (Leicester: University of Leicester. Leicester Archaeology Monograph No. 22, 2012), p. 119.

<sup>96</sup> R. Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute: The Politics of the Corpse in Pre-Victorian Britain* (London: Phoenix Press, 2001 edn.), p. 195.

<sup>97</sup> *General Evening Post* (London), February 13 - February 15, 1735; Issue 215.

<sup>98</sup> Anon, *The sad and dreadful relation of a bloody and cruel murther committed by Mr. Thomas* (1684).

commentators from the 1730s wanted, and how common the viewing of a suicide corpse was is hard to establish. There are very few cases that make any mention of this practice, so Low may have been an anomaly. Given the violent and destructive methods that were used in the act of self-killing it may not have been too frequent an occurrence. Outside of London there may have been more interest in viewing the suicide corpse than within the metropolis. Folk beliefs in County Durham alleged that the hand of a suicide would cure goitre, a practice likened to the more common idea that the hand of an executed individual cured illnesses.<sup>99</sup> No cases of this have been uncovered for London.

There were calls for the suicide corpse to be used in anatomy demonstrations and in the mid-1750s a proposal was put forward to this end; ten years later the proposal was again suggested. In 1769 an article appeared in the *Middlesex Journal* arguing that, along with being anatomised, the suicide skeleton should be 'hung up in Surgeons Hall', another commentator, pointing out the lack of space in the Hall then suggested that a special 'charnel-house' should be built to accommodate the bones of suicides.<sup>100</sup> Peter King, in his examination of eighteenth-century punishments of the criminal corpse, wrote that 'dissection, or dissection followed by the public exhibition of the suicide's skeleton, [was] never enacted in England'.<sup>101</sup> This statement is inaccurate. It was not a common occurrence, but some suicides were certainly subjected to dissection. In a collection from the Royal College of Surgeons simply entitled *An account of the dissection of morbid bodies* there is one entry for someone who 'Died Mad', there is a description of 'What appeared in, the dissecting of a Lunatick', another entry reads 'Winter 1764/5 I dissected a lunatick woman at the lunatick Hospital', and a third is noted 'of the Dissection of a Mad

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<sup>99</sup> Tarlow, *Ritual, Belief and the Dead*, p. 163.

<sup>100</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, 24 (1754), pp. 506-507; *Gazetteer*, 20 July 1764; *Middlesex Journal*, 16 May 1769; *London Magazine*, 24 (1755), p. 23; P. King, *Punishing the Criminal Corpse, 1700-1840: Aggravated Forms of the Death Penalty in England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 133-134.

<sup>101</sup> King, *Punishing the Criminal Corpse*, p. 134.



Woman'.<sup>102</sup> In a second book, *Account of Bodies Opened*, an entry for 1739 reads 'Ralph Mosely found in a pond near Bloodybridge on the road to Chelsea, was opened before the Coroner and Jury' and a 1740 entry reads 'Ann Wis Stabbed herself'.<sup>103</sup> These may not have all been suicides, but the last one seems to be and there is one other case which is indisputably so, that of Francis David Stirn. On 10 September 1760 Stirn was on trial for the 'wilful Murder of Mr. Mathews, Surgeon and Man-Midwife, in Brook-Street Holbourn'. Stirn was found guilty and sentenced to execution.<sup>104</sup> On Friday 12 September at eleven at night Stirn died in his cell in Newgate due to ingesting poison.<sup>105</sup> The newspapers reported that:

Thomas Beech, Esq; Coroner for this City, summoned a Jury out of the Inhabitants of the Ward of Farringdon Within, to make an Inquest concerning the Death of Francis David Stirn; and after an Examination which lasted upwards of three Hours, they gave their Verdict *Felo de se*; and Yesterday the Coroner sent a Warrant to Newgate for the Body to be buried in a Cross-Way, with a Stake drove therein; but as he had received a Sentence that he should be anatomised, pursuant to the late Act to prevent Murder, it is doubtful as yet what way the Body will be disposed of.<sup>106</sup>

His body was sent to the surgeons and anatomised, then buried at a crossroads near the Black Mary's Hole area of Clerkenwell. A rumour spread that a post with an inscription describing the crime and following punishments was to be erected near the spot of his burial.<sup>107</sup> Whether this came to pass is unknown, but a pamphlet was published about his

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<sup>102</sup> RCS, MS0189/1/3 *An account of the Dissection of Morbid Bodies*.

<sup>103</sup> RCS, MS0313 *Accounts of Bodies Opened*.

<sup>104</sup> *Whitehall Evening Post or London Intelligencer* (London), September 11 - September 13, 1760; Issue 2261; *London Chronicle* (London), September 11 - September 13, 1760; Issue 580; OBP t17600910-19, s17600910-1.

<sup>105</sup> OBP, OA17600915; T. Hitchcock, R. Shoemaker, S. Howard and J. McLaughlin, et al., *London Lives, 1690-1800* (www.londonlives.org, version 1.1, 24 April 2012), hereafter LL, LMSMPS504860002.

<sup>106</sup> *Public Advertiser* (London), Monday, September 15, 1760; Issue 8069.

<sup>107</sup> *Lloyd's Evening Post and British Chronicle* (London), September 19 - September 22, 1760; Issue 497.

life, crime, suicide, dissection, and eventual crossroad burial; it sold for 6d.<sup>108</sup> The practice of dissection will be returned to in the next chapter on the executed criminal corpse where a more thorough examination will take place. Its brief inclusion here highlights that there was no consistent way in which the suicide corpse was treated. There were many factors that dictated the treatment of these human remains.

Through this examination of crossroad, highway, and open field burials it is clear staked and crossroad burials were reserved for suicides who had damaged their reputations beyond repair, especially criminals awaiting execution who circumvented the appropriate method of punishment by taking matters into their own hands away from official control. These individuals were used as examples through the medium of print culture and the practice of profane burials to show the harsh punishments received should anyone commit the sin and crime of self-murder. Highway burials were for individuals who may have had some standing in their community and then due to the instigation of the devil, being lovelorn, embarrassed, or ridiculed, or committing a less serious prior crime lost their reputation and standing. If newspapers, pamphlets, and local gossip covered the story, examples needed to be set. The language of open field burials was employed even if the practice itself was rarer within London and all three forms of interment acted as a preventative measure against the act of self-killing. However, not every suicide in seventeenth and eighteenth-century London was disposed of in these ways.

### Burials in Churchyards and Burial Grounds

Despite the seemingly clear ecclesiastical proscription that no suicides should be granted Christian burial and the numerous examples of excluding suicides from churchyards and burial grounds, many suicides were interred in them regardless. Excluding suicides that

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<sup>108</sup> Advertised in *Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser* (London), Friday, September 26, 1760; Issue 9816.

received *non compos mentis* verdicts for the moment, suicides who were *felo de se* had ways and means of obtaining a Christian burial and interment in burial grounds as was evident in the brief story of Low's interment at St Paul's mentioned earlier. In 1601, Richard Allen of St Mary, Magdalen, Milk Street cut his throat. His friend, Richard Hill from St Sepulchres, appeared before Dr Edward Stanhope, the chancellor and Vicar General of the diocese of London, with a petition for Allen to receive a Christian burial. This was granted based on Allen's repentance as he lay dying, apparent confession, and wish for a pardon from God. A license was granted in the name of the bishop if the parson of St Mary Magdalen consented, but Allen was to be buried 'without any great pomp or show'.<sup>109</sup> The parish register simply notes: 'Richard Allyn was buried Septembris decimo'.<sup>110</sup>

The example of Richard Allen begins Paul Seaver's examination of suicides that were granted permission for Christian burial by the Vicar General in the years before 1641. There seem to be no such licenses in Vicar General Books prior to 1601.<sup>111</sup> Over these forty years, thirty-one licenses were granted for the Christian burial of individuals who had been given a *felo de se* verdict. There were thirteen women and eighteen men included in Seaver's study. The method that each suicide used varied, 'thirteen hanged themselves, nine cut their throats, five took poison, two jumped to their deaths, and two stabbed or cut themselves mortally'.<sup>112</sup> There are noted similarities in each case that deserve repeating for the purpose of this chapter.

If a person lived for hours or days after their suicide attempt there was more of a chance that their family and friends could obtain a burial licence. The petitioners could highlight the penitent nature of the individual after the suicidal act if they survived for a

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<sup>109</sup> Quoted from LMA, DL/C/338, Vicar General Book, 1601-05, 2+-5, 4v-5v, spelling and punctuation modernised, by Seaver, 'Suicide and the Vicar General', p. 25.

<sup>110</sup> GL, P69/MRY9/A/01/Ms 6984.

<sup>111</sup> Seaver, 'Suicide and the Vicar General', p. 28.

<sup>112</sup> Seaver, 'Suicide and the Vicar General', p. 32.

short time. Therefore, the people who poisoned themselves or cut their throats and took longer to die are noted in each case as having, like Richard Allen, begged forgiveness from God and shown remorse for their actions.<sup>113</sup> Four of these thirty-one licenses were for three female servants and one male servant who had committed suicide. Requests for servants' burials were often submitted by the family they worked for and highlighted their hard work and good reputation. In 1616 a servant called Marie Playe or Play committed suicide by taking poison but did not die immediately. Play 'did confess and acknowledge what she had done' she 'desired to have salad oil and other things which she took and drank in great quantity to expel the said poison and prayed heartily to God to forgive her this great offence and all her sins'.<sup>114</sup> Play appears in the parish register of St Botolph, Aldgate in July 1616 as 'Mary Play a Maid who poysned herself servant to Mr John Barbour was buryed the seventh day'.<sup>115</sup>

Seaver has argued that a few factors were taken into consideration when granting licenses for burial. These were, the instigation of the devil, for they were addressing an officer of an ecclesiastical court, and the language of melancholy and lunacy.<sup>116</sup> It is also clear, through further research such as reading wills, that the prior reputation of these individuals was extremely important for their petitions to be duly considered. None of them carried out heinous nor criminal acts in their lifetimes and seem, by all accounts, to have led good, pious, gossip-free lives. They did not inspire pamphlet literature or ballads about their suicides and seem to have been otherwise upstanding members of their neighbourhoods and communities.

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<sup>113</sup> Seaver, 'Suicide and the Vicar General', p. 35.

<sup>114</sup> LMA, DL/C/341. Vicar General's Book, vol. 12, 1616-23; Seaver, 'Suicide and the Vicar General', p. 34.

<sup>115</sup> LMA, P69/BOT2/A/015/MS09222/001.

<sup>116</sup> Seaver, 'Suicide and the Vicar General', p. 38.

There are only two cases among these thirty-one petitions that allude to instigations of the devil, something altogether quite surprising considering who they were petitioning and contemporary thinkers' opinions about suicide.<sup>117</sup> John Sym's 1637 lengthy treatise against self-murder is full of references to the devil's involvement in acts of suicide claiming that:

*The devill labours to keep men in these temptations of self-murder, from disclosing the same, as hath beene shewed; that so, the same by concealement prevailing against them, they may in the end certainly perish.*<sup>118</sup>

The devil's appearance as a tempter was noted in other cases, including Charity Philpot's, and could assist in a softening of opinion towards the individual. Nehemiah Wallington blamed the devil for his eleven suicide attempts, and Richard Napier recorded symptoms of 139 men and women who were tempted to self-murder between 1597 and 1634, many of whom claimed they were tempted by demons or the devil.<sup>119</sup> The fact that the instigation of the devil was only utilised for two of the thirty-one petitions for Christian burial in the Vicar General's Books show that it was the individual's prior reputation that drew empathy above the possibility of devilish influence.

The thirty-one individuals who were granted Christian burial appear in burial registers just like any other entry. With only one exception, that of Marie Play, they would not have been identifiable as suicides within these records alone. The number of suicides whose family and friends petitioned for burial is rather low and only those successful are in the Vicar General's Books, but it must be remembered that suicides were a small percentage of all deaths. There were seven suicides in the *Bills of Mortality* for 1636, only

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<sup>117</sup> Seaver, 'Suicide and the Vicar General', pp. 37-38.

<sup>118</sup> J. Sym, *Lifes preservative against self-killing*, (1637), p. 321.

<sup>119</sup> For more on Wallington see R. M. Oswald III, PhD Thesis, 'Death, piety, and social engagement in the life of the seventeenth century London artisan, Nehemiah Wallington' (University of Edinburgh, 2011), especially chapter 4; MacDonald and Murphy, *Sleepless Souls*, pp. 51.

0.055% of the 12,650 deaths that year.<sup>120</sup> Another likely reason for the small numbers of petitions may be down to personal connections and their importance. The bishop was turned to by petitioners when the clergymen of their parish had often already refused a request for Christian burial, or when the family and friends felt unable or unwilling to ask it of them.<sup>121</sup> After 1640 and the closing of the church courts, there were no longer Christian burials being granted to *felo de se* suicides in the Vicar General's Books.<sup>122</sup> Seaver's research into these burial licenses brought to light the fact that all suicides were not subjected to profane burial practices and it has shown that there is more to be uncovered about the suicide corpse and what actually happened to it.

Petitions were not the only way in which to obtain interment in burial grounds or churchyards. In August 1690 Robert Knighton hanged himself and is noted as 'with permission of Coroner...buried in the south walk of the church yard' of St Benet Fink.<sup>123</sup> This could however just mean that the coroner had granted a *non compos mentis* verdict. In 1636 'Larence Jones hanged himselfe the Lords daie before. A license for his burial being first procured by Sr John Lambe', was noted in the Bedlam register as was the fact he came from All Hallows, Bread Street.<sup>124</sup> Surprisingly this year there were none who received a license for burial in the Vicar General's Books, so it shows other options were available. As noted earlier, if the family and friends of a suicide asked the parson or vicar of their parish for a quiet Christian burial there is no way of gauging how often bribes may have changed hands, nor a kind allowance made by the local clergymen.

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<sup>120</sup> Seaver, 'Suicide and the Vicar General', p. 30.

<sup>121</sup> Houston, *Punishing the Dead?*, p. 207.

<sup>122</sup> Seaver 'Suicide and the Vicar General' p. 47.

<sup>123</sup> LMA, P69/BEN/A/010/MS04098 first seen in Spence, *Accidents and Violent Death*, p. 33.

<sup>124</sup> MOLA, 'Bedlam Burial Ground Register' July 2018 [https://2577f60fe192df40d16a-ab656259048fb93837ecc0ecbcf0c557.ssl.cf3.rackcdn.com/assets/library/document/b/original/bedlam\\_burial\\_ground\\_database\\_july\\_2018.pdf](https://2577f60fe192df40d16a-ab656259048fb93837ecc0ecbcf0c557.ssl.cf3.rackcdn.com/assets/library/document/b/original/bedlam_burial_ground_database_july_2018.pdf) [first accessed, 10 October 2018]; Also in his local parish register, LMA, P69/ALH2/A/003/MS05032.

The non-parochial and non-denomination grounds, such as the New Churchyard and Bunhill Fields, were used for the burial of some suicides from various parishes across the metropolis. Out of the recorded 8,213 known individuals buried in the New Churchyard, thirteen are clear suicides and three others are noted as lunatics. These include Thomas Bradford from St Bartholomew the Great who hanged himself in 1625; William Loyd a servant who cut his throat in 1637 from St Mary, Colechurch; Benjamin Haddelow who poisoned himself in 1650 from St Vedast, Foster Lane; and Jane Lovejoy, another servant, who hanged herself in 1676 from St James, Garlickhithe.<sup>125</sup> Far more individuals have no cause of death recorded, therefore it is impossible to establish any kind of clear figure as to how many suicides were buried in the New Churchyard.<sup>126</sup> Bunhill Fields was founded to accommodate plague victims and subsequently became the dissenters' ground, popular with nonconformists.<sup>127</sup> The ground was never consecrated, therefore it is interesting that very few identifiable suicides were buried there. There is one from 2 April 1672, a Mary Chandler who cut her throat and is noted as buried at 'Tindall', and another from 3 September 1708, Benjamin Cooper a Glazier who hanged himself and was given a *non compos mentis* verdict.<sup>128</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain who was *felo de se* and who was granted a *non compos mentis* verdict in parish registers, especially during the seventeenth century. Information provided by the parishes who sent individuals to the New Churchyard for interment is normally limited to some variance on this example: 'Samuell Maw Weaver in Son yard in East Smithfield hanged himself and was buried in bedlam' from the parish register of St Botolph, Aldgate on 11 March 1655.<sup>129</sup> By the 1680s and into the eighteenth century, parish

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<sup>125</sup> Harleian Society, Vol 30, p. 360; LMA, P69/MRY8/A/001/MS04438; P69/BAT3/A/001/MS06777/001; P69/JS2/A/002/MS09140, p. 278.

<sup>126</sup> MOLA, Bedlam Burial Register, <http://www.crossrail.co.uk/sustainability/archaeology/bedlam-burial-ground-register> [accessed, 17 December 2018].

<sup>127</sup> Harding, *The Dead and the Living*, p. 99.

<sup>128</sup> LMA, P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/007; LMA, P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/013.

<sup>129</sup> LMA, P69/BOT2/A/015/MS09222/002.

registers are far better at noting if the suicide was ‘distracted’ or ‘lunatick’. This can be interpreted when combined with actions such as hanging, cutting their throat, or poisoning themselves, as actual suicides who potentially obtained *non compos mentis* verdicts as opposed to individuals who may have died in a hospital with what would be termed a form of mental illness today.

The parish registers for St Giles, Cripplegate have 145 clearly noted suicides within their records for the seventeenth and eighteenth century. This figure excludes those that just state ‘lunatick’ or ‘distracted’. It has also excluded those who drowned unless it states, ‘drowned him/herself’, and it excludes those noted as dying of a ‘fall’ some of whom would have been suicides. In October 1733, the new parish of St Luke, Finsbury was created from the Middlesex part of the parish, which substantially reduced the population of St Giles, Cripplegate.<sup>130</sup> The registers of St Luke have not been included within this figure. The burial locations of suicides were only recorded between October 1663 and May 1715 (fig. 2.5).

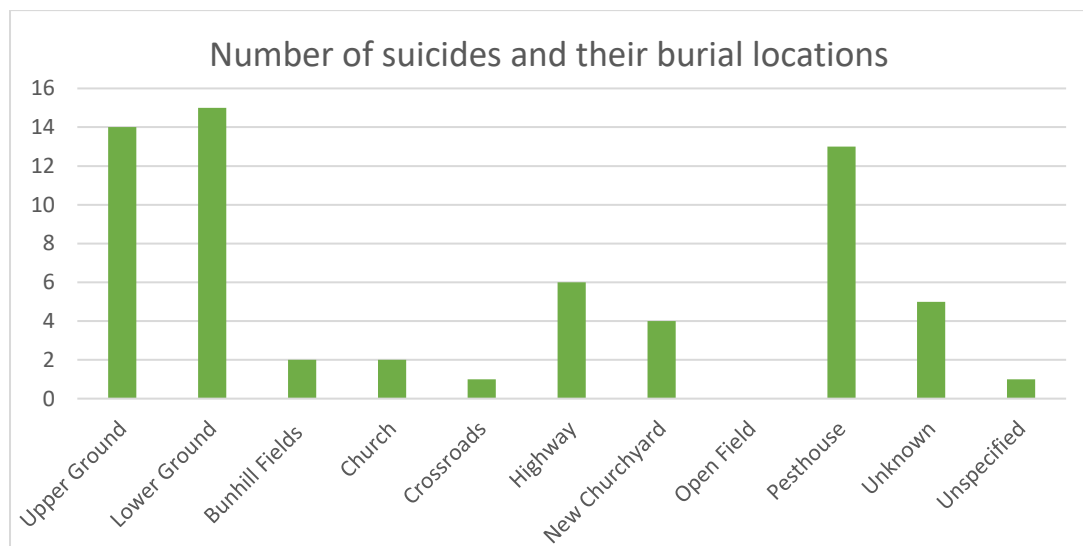


Figure 2.5. St Giles, Cripplegate, 1663-1715. The Upper Ground is also recorded as ‘Above’ and ‘Whitecross Street’; the Lower Ground is also recorded as ‘Below’. ‘Unspecified’ denotes those buried in a burial ground but the specifics are missing unlike ‘Unknown’ which gives no hints about the interment location.

<sup>130</sup> H. B. Wheatley and P. Cunningham, *London Past and Present* 2 volumes (London: Murray, 1891), p. 450; seen in T. R. Forbes, ‘Births and Deaths in a London Parish: The Record from the Registers, 1654-1693 and 1729-1743’ *History of Medicine*, Fall 1981: 55, 3, p. 372.



Of the 63 individuals whose burial locations are known, 32 were recorded as lunatics or distracted. Surprisingly, this is not as clear cut as those on the highway and crossroads being *felo de se* and others being *non compos mentis*. One of the church burials is not noted as a lunatic nor distracted, seven of those noted as buried above/Whitecross Street and six of those noted as buried below do not state lunatic or distracted, along with one in Bunhill Fields, two in the New Churchyard, and five near the pesthouse.

It seems unlikely that every suicide buried in burial grounds and churchyards from the St Giles, Cripplegate parish registers had received a *non compos mentis* verdict. Many indeed did, but the clerk compiling the register would not have missed off the words 'distracted' or 'lunatick' for some of the entries where it was put in for others. Cross-referencing the suicides that are not noted as lunatic or distracted with newspaper records has shown they were rarely reported on, though on 17 March 1753, the newspapers reported that:

Last Sunday one Mary Green, who for several Years have been deemed to be a Person of good Reputation, hanged herself at her Lodgings in Grub-street. It is believed that her indigent Circumstances occasioned her to commit this rash Action.<sup>131</sup>

The St Giles, Cripplegate register simply records 'Mary Green a Woman Hang'd herself'.<sup>132</sup> There are no notes as to the verdict given upon her corpse. It is possible that due to her good reputation she was granted burial ground interment irrespective of the post-mortem verdict. The silence on the other suicides who were not distracted nor lunatics and buried in burial grounds emphasise the clear difference between these suicides and those who were subjected to profane practises. If their reputations were not besmirched and they had

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<sup>131</sup> *Read's Weekly Journal Or British Gazetteer* (London), Saturday, March 17, 1753; Issue 1488.

<sup>132</sup> LMA, P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/018.

lived a quiet life and had a quiet death, even if it were a suicide, there was a high possibility that burial within a churchyard or burial ground would be granted.

If a suicide left a note their chances of a quiet unpublicised death and potential burial within churchyards and burial grounds were slimmer. The newspapers would publish suicide notes that came to their attention, especially in the eighteenth century, and these were a 'stylistically-diverse body of samples that perform[ed] a variety of functions in accordance with a range of motivations'.<sup>133</sup> Between 1750 and 1779 twenty-two suicide notes were printed in London newspapers. Some notes were fabricated but the majority appear to have been real.<sup>134</sup> In 1772 a German gentleman, Jacob Miers, cut his throat near Bethnal Green after writing a suicide note that was ineffectual in his appeal for a Christian burial. He had written: 'Gentlemen, you need not give yourselves any trouble: I was in my right mind and senses when I did the Deed'. The coroner brought in the verdict *felo de se* and Miers was buried on the highway facing the poor-house in Portugal Street.<sup>135</sup> The coroners' inquest exists for this case and shows a certain amount of license taken with the newspaper's reported note, although the sentiments remain the same.<sup>136</sup> Of all the suicides examined for this chapter none who left a note were granted churchyard or burial ground interment unless they were from the upper spheres of the social hierarchy, a detail which will be returned to shortly. Most of these notes were published in pamphlet form or in newspapers, therefore these were not quiet deaths.

The easiest way to obtain a Christian or burial ground interment after an act of suicide lay within the hands of the coroner and their verdict. A marked increase in *non*

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<sup>133</sup> E. Parisot, 'Suicide Notes and Popular Sensibility in the Eighteenth-Century British Press' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 3, Spring 2014, p. 278.

<sup>134</sup> Parisot, 'Suicide Notes' pp. 278-279.

<sup>135</sup> *Middlesex Journal or Universal Evening Post*, 1–3 Oct. 1772, and 3–6 Oct. 1772; For further reports see *General Evening Post*, 29 Sept.–1 Oct. 1772; *Daily Advertiser*, 2 Oct. 1772; Discussed in Parisot, 'Suicide Notes' p. 280.

<sup>136</sup> LL, WACWIC652120736 - WACWIC652120745.

*compos mentis* verdicts from around the 1680s, as noted by MacDonald and Murphy, is apparent. For 1772 there is a complete run of coroners' inquests from the City of Westminster Coroners. Within this run, thirty-two coroners' inquests relate to individuals who killed themselves. Apart from Jacob Miers who left the suicide note, every other case was given a lunacy verdict. For example, on the 26 February, Mary Sarjeant received the verdict that 'being Disordered in her senses Drowned herself in the River near Chelsea Bridge in the Parish of St George Hanr. Square within the Liberty of Westmr', James Haley received the verdict 'being a Lunatick, Shot himself on the Eighth day of May 1772 at the Parish of St. George Hanover within the Liberty of Westmr', and from 25 July the verdict on one Ann Nicholson reads, 'Hanged herself being Lunatick'.<sup>137</sup>

These types of verdicts could at times prove just as controversial as being given a *felo de se* verdict. As already mentioned, there was outcry against the frequency of *non compos mentis* verdicts. The issues that were of concern can be demonstrated by a short newspaper article from 1739.

On Saturday last Mrs. Young, Wife to a Carpenter in Paradise-Row near Gosvenor-Square, who had been delirious for some Months past, hang'd herself; and on Sunday the Coroner's Inquest sat on the Body, and brought in their Verdict Lunacy. Tis remarkable that Mr Mason, a Publican in that Neighbourhood, who sometime since attempted to commit the like Act, (but was then prevented) was on the Jury, and the heinous Crime of Self-Murder was largely spoke to by the Coroner; but it had no Effect, for on Monday Morning he likewise hang'd himself.<sup>138</sup>

The fact that Mr Mason, even after serving on the jury for a suicide did himself commit self-murder, potentially due to the ease with which a *non compos mentis* verdict and

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<sup>137</sup> LL, WACWIC652120088-WACWIC652120096; WACWIC652120272-WACWIC652120279; LL, WACWIC652120522-WACWIC652120533.

<sup>138</sup> *Country Journal or The Craftsman* (London), Saturday, June 23, 1739; Issue 676.

subsequent proper burial could be obtained, caused anxieties among those vocal against self-murder. In 1689 Francis Booney, a goldsmith, committed suicide prompting his wife to appeal to the coroners' jury for a *non compos mentis* verdict which was granted. Bishop William Lloyd, the king's almoner, was furious about her intervention.<sup>139</sup> A *non compos mentis* verdict resulted in a proper burial, but some ministers were allegedly opposed to this and believed even with this verdict profane burial should be carried out. In 1760 Edward Umfrevill wrote that he had heard:

of some Clergy who...have denied the Whole, or a Part of the Office, to a Lunatic (in whom there is no free Act of Will) who hath laid violent Hands upon himself; though by Law he can commit no Crime, not even Treason, or incur any Forfeiture, and have notwithstanding permitted the Body to the Grave in consecrated Ground, nay even in the Church, and have taken the Dues for the Church and Service, though by the common as well as the canon Law.<sup>140</sup>

The complaint hung on the detail concerning the word 'feloniously' which had not been inserted into the rubric forbidding Christian burial for suicides. Charles Wheatly endorsed this view in his 1715 commentary on the *Book of Common Prayer*, maintaining that those judged not of sound mind should not be excused from the profane burial practices carried out on the corpses of self-murderers:

Since neither the rubric nor our old ecclesiastical laws make any exception in favour of those who may kill themselves in distraction, and since the Office is in several parts of it improper in such a case. As to the Coroner's warrant, I take that to be no more than a certificate that the body is not demanded by the law, and

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<sup>139</sup> *Calendar of Treasury Books, 1689-92*, W. A. Shaw, (ed.), (London, 1931), seen in MacDonald and Murphy, *Sleepless Souls*, pp. 123-124.

<sup>140</sup> Umfreville, *Lex Coronatoria*, pp. 8-9, also discussed in MacDonald and Murphy, *Sleepless Souls*, pp. 205-206.

therefore the relations may dispose of it as they please. For I cannot apprehend that a Coroner is to determine the sense of a rubric, or to prescribe to the Minister when Christian burial is to be used.<sup>141</sup>

Richard Burn, a leading expert on ecclesiastical law opposed Wheatley's view and asserted that the rubric 'extendeth not to idiots, lunatics, or persons otherwise of insane mind'.<sup>142</sup> Regardless of these debates *non compos mentis* verdicts were frequent and remained the prerogative of the coroner. There are no cases in those examined for this chapter that clearly show any churchman refusing the interment of a suicide granted a *non compos mentis* verdict in London.

In the parish registers of St Giles, Cripplegate the suicides who have 'lunatic' or 'distracted' by their entries were commonly interred within the cheapest burial grounds. There are three suicides buried within the church itself in these parish registers. The first is Thomas George, a Dyer, who cut his throat and was buried on the 31 January 1679; he was noted as distracted.<sup>143</sup> In September 1680 John Haydon hanged himself 'being distracted' and was buried in the church, and an entry on the 3 March 1701 reads: 'Willi Boud Gent Shot himself Church'.<sup>144</sup> Being a gentleman may have worked in Boud's favour and the probability of a *non compos mentis* verdict seems high although in his entry it is not explicit.

Social standing and reputation were instrumental to obtaining *non compos mentis* verdicts and subsequent decent burial. On 19 December 1706 John Mounstevan 'a Cornish Parliament man' cut his throat from ear to ear at Brown's Coffee House in Kings Street,

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<sup>141</sup> C. Wheatly, *A Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer* (Cambridge, 1858 edn. First published in 1710, title from the fourth edition 1722), p. 568; discussed in MacDonald and Murphy, *Sleepless Souls*, p. 206.

<sup>142</sup> R. Burn, *Ecclesiastical Law* (London, 1768), ii. p. 35.

<sup>143</sup> LMA, P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/008.

<sup>144</sup> LMA, P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/010; P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/012.

Westminster. The pamphlet on his death explains that before the incident he was in the company of 'several Persons of Quality, and some Gentlemen of Note, who were likewise Members of Parliament' at the coffee house which was 'a Place of creditable Resort of most Gentlemen of good Behaviour'. The day after his death the jury 'brought him in as a Person affected to Lunacy; but however, as being a Person of great Loyalty, he is a Person much lamented by all that knows him'.<sup>145</sup> Sir George Newland, a knight and Tory MP, threw himself out of a window in March 1714 and due to the coroner finding 'he had been subject to melancholy Fits, on Account of a Contusion reciev'd in his Head some Time since, by a Fall from his Horse' brought in the verdict of lunacy.<sup>146</sup> Newland appears first in the parish register for St Bride, Fleet Street where it notes he was carried away. He was brought to St Sepulchre, Holborn, and the entry for 28 March reads: 'Sir George Newland, Kt, from St Brides parish in Middlesex in Chancel', a privileged location of interment.<sup>147</sup> Again, this illustrates the importance of a suicide's prior reputation.

One of the most famous suicide cases of seventeenth-century London was that of Arthur Capel, the 1st earl of Essex after the Restoration. Capel was imprisoned in the Tower of London suspected of participating in the Rye House Plot. He was awaiting trial on charges of high treason when on 13 July 1686 he slit his throat. His suicide was controversial. The use of a knife as his method of self-murder presented the opportunity for conspiracies to arise and murder suspicions to grow. Capel's Whig supporters failed to accept that it had indeed been an act of self-murder and Serjeant Jeffreys claimed Essex

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<sup>145</sup> Anon, *A full and true account of a most horrid, barbarous, and bloody murther, committed by one John Monstevens Esq*, (1706); D. Hayton, E. Cruickshanks, S. Handley, (eds.), *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1690-1715* <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1690-1715/member/mounstephen-%28mounsteven%29-john-1644-1706> [accessed, 8 January 2021].

<sup>146</sup> *British Mercury* (London), March 24 - March 31, 1714; Issue 456; *The History of Parliament*, <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1690-1715/member/newland-george-1646-1714> [accessed, 8 January 2021].

<sup>147</sup> LMA, P69/BRI/A/014/MS06550; P69/SEP/A/001/MS07219/003.

would never have taken his own life except 'to avoid the methods of public justice'.<sup>148</sup> The entire case was skilfully publicised by the government using newsheets and pamphlets, even releasing the transcript of the coroner's inquest. This helped the government to fortify the public conviction that the Whig radicals were guilty of treason, and in a rather turbulent period in English politics, it became a useful propaganda tool. Whig sympathisers were reluctant to believe that Essex had indeed committed self-murder along with others such as John Evelyn who knew the earl and believed him to be a deeply religious man.<sup>149</sup> Many argued for the entire incident being an elaborate murder plot. Lawrence Braddon, a party zealot, did extensive work to try and prove this, publishing well circulated pamphlets to that effect. He was not alone in creating pamphlets arguing this and other media also circulated insinuating that it had been a murder not a suicide. The use of self-murder for religious and political propaganda could only work due to a common set of assumptions about the significance of suicide. If most people continued to believe it was a heinous, even diabolical act, when a prominent religious or political figure took their own life, it was a 'disaster for his confession, sect, or party'.<sup>150</sup> Capel's death will always remain a mystery, but suicide is certainly not an implausible theory. Capel was buried in the Chapel of St Peter ad Vincula. The chance of proper interment was higher for those who were further up the social ladder such as Capel, even if their death was not an unobtrusive unpublicised one. Still, the quieter the death the better chance of proper interment.

In 1605 a man named John Harrison hanged himself in a barn. When his wife and daughter found him, they buried him quickly and secretly. They then bribed their servants and sent them to new posts in other counties.<sup>151</sup> This case is only known because it failed.

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<sup>148</sup> *State Trials*, ix, cols.602, 633, 800, discussed in MacDonald and Murphy, *Sleepless Souls*, p. 71.

<sup>149</sup> J. Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, O. Airy, (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 326-327; MacDonald and Murphy, *Sleepless Souls*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>150</sup> MacDonald and Murphy, *Sleepless Souls*, p. 74.

<sup>151</sup> STAC 8/1/7:1 seen in MacDonald, 'The Inner Sider of Wisdom', p. 568.

In November 1618 Margaret Cooke's friends and family conspired to obtain a murder verdict for her suicide.<sup>152</sup> Again this is only known due to the fact it failed. Concealment of suicides may have been widespread, there is no way of knowing, but supposing a number were successfully concealed it can be assumed that their interment would have been carried out in two ways. Either the funeral and burial followed normal procedures, if it were disguised as a 'normal' death, or it would have been carried out by the family and occasionally friends often at night and in secret, either within a burial ground or upon their own land should they have owned some.

Occasionally corpses of suicides were moved from one interment location to another. This has already been mentioned when looking at the case of Robert Brommer, the prior of Butley in Suffolk, and the 1676 tale of the apprentice hatter from Bride Lane. On the 25 August 1770, the poet Thomas Chatterton who had just moved to London from Bristol was found upon his bed at 39 Brook Street 'with remains of arsenic between his teeth'. He was interred, after the inquest granted him a *non compos mentis* verdict, with a pauper's burial, in the Shoe Lane burying-ground. He was recorded under the wrong name, 'William Chatterton Brook's Street 28'. The bodies buried in this ground were subsequently disinterred, the ground levelled and developed, and his final resting place is unknown. There is a story that Chatterton's body was taken back to Bristol 'and secretly stowed away in the churchyard of St. Mary Redcliffe'.<sup>153</sup> Reinterment by its very nature is hard to trace, but certainly occurred.

Burials within churchyards, burial grounds, and indeed the church itself are key to understanding attitudes towards the suicide corpse. There has been a recurring consensus

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<sup>152</sup> TNA, STAC 8/3/37.

<sup>153</sup> N. Groom, 'Chatterton, Thomas (1752–1770), poet' *ODNB* (2004), September 23, 2004. <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-5189> [accessed, 05 Jan. 2019]; W. Thornbury, 'Holborn: The northern tributaries', in *Old and New London: Vol. 2* (London, 1878), pp. 542-552. BHO <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/old-new-london/vol2/pp542-552> [accessed, 5 January 2019].



among historians that when suicides did receive a proper burial they were buried on the north side of the church.<sup>154</sup> Yet Vanessa Harding noted, 'Few urban churches had burial space all round them so there is little evidence for a prejudice against north churchyards, attested elsewhere by the burial of children and suicides in such locations'.<sup>155</sup> The practice of north side churchyard burials for suicides along with unbaptised children, criminals, and other undesirable individuals seems to have been one that rarely manifested within the metropolis. In John Stow's *Survey of London*, he describes that on the north side of St Paul's there was a cloister with a mural of the Dance of Death painted on it surrounding a plot of ground called 'Pardon churchyard', where many people of note were buried not just undesirable individuals.<sup>156</sup> The suicides from St Giles, Cripplegate, as has been demonstrated, were buried in various locations and this was not the only parish that shows this. In January 1669 Sarah Goulding is recorded in the parish register of St George the Martyr, Southwark, as: 'Sarah Goulding a blackmore hang herself'.<sup>157</sup> This churchyard was to the north and east of the church and although her location within this area is not known, given the boundaries of the churchyard it would be naive to think that the north section only housed those who were undesirable. In September 1715, the newspapers reported that a Mr Hargrave:

who kept the Rain-Bow Coffee-House near Temple-Bar, hath upon some great Discontent or other lay'd violent Hands upon himself. He attempted to compass his Death by the help of Poison, but as that did not operate so fast, as the evil Spirit of

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<sup>154</sup> MacDonald and Murphy, *Sleepless Souls*, pp. 48-49; Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, p. 73.

<sup>155</sup> Harding 'Burial on the Margin', p. 56.

<sup>156</sup> J. Stow, 'Faringdon ward infra, or within', in *A Survey of London*. Reprinted From the Text of 1603, C. L. Kingsford, (ed.), (Oxford, 1908), pp. 310-344. BHO <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/survey-of-london-stow/1603/pp310-344> [accessed, 4 January 2019].

<sup>157</sup> LMA, P92/GEO/141.

Suicide work'd in him, so to make a quicker Dispatch he Hang'd himself on Tuesday last.<sup>158</sup>

A Richard Hargrave who is a perfect match due to the date and location appears in the parish register for St Dunstan in the West buried 22 September.<sup>159</sup> St Dunstan in the West only had a churchyard on the north side. Other churches in London were similar: St Michael, Queenhithe only had a north side churchyard, as did St Benet, Paul's Wharf. St Lawrence, Jewry by the Guildhall also only had a north side churchyard, as did St Stephen, Coleman Street. St Luke, Finsbury had a decent sized north churchyard as well as other smaller burial grounds, and St Andrew, Holborn had a far larger churchyard on the north side than the south. Many London burial grounds were also removed from the churches themselves and additional removed grounds were purchased over the years due to increasing pressure on burial space.

There was a varied response to the interment of a suicide corpse. Far more suicides, regardless of whether they received post-mortem verdicts of *felo de se* or *non compos mentis*, were buried within churchyards and burial grounds than were buried at crossroads, on highways, or in open fields over the two hundred years this chapter examines. Londoners may have buried their friends and family who committed self-murder secretly, they may have concealed the cause of death from authorities and obtained a normal burial, or just struck deals with church officials. It is also possible that reinterment of suicides corpses took place. There was no standard response to dealing with the bodies of suicides and each interaction with such a corpse was navigated and understood on a case-by-case basis.

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<sup>158</sup> *Weekly Journal With Fresh Advices Foreign and Domestick* (London), Saturday, September 24, 1715.

<sup>159</sup> LMA, P69/DUN2/A/018/MS010350.

## Conclusion

In 1823 the last suicide to be buried at a crossroads, Able Griffiths, who had murdered his father before his suicide, was interred at the junction of Eaton Street, Grosvenor Place, and the King's Road.<sup>160</sup> A month later the Judgment of Death Act of 1823 was passed.<sup>161</sup> This Act required the clergy to allow churchyard burial for suicides between the hours of nine in the evening and midnight and prohibited coroners from advising interment at crossroads, highways or indeed in any public space. The same act officially terminated the practice of driving a stake through a suicide's body.<sup>162</sup> The Forfeiture Act of 1870 ended the practice of escheat of a suicide's property.<sup>163</sup> In 1880 the Burial Law Amendment Act eased the restrictions on religious rites at burial services, and the night time burial requirements were removed by the Interments (Felo de Se) Act of 1882.<sup>164</sup> Suicide itself was not fully decriminalised until 1961, and the Church of England only lifted its ban on full Christian funerals for suicides in 2017.<sup>165</sup> There remains a stigma attached to suicides which would have, in some guises, still been recognisable to the people of seventeenth and eighteenth-century London.

This chapter set out to discover what happened to the bodies of suicides in London between 1600 and 1800. A complex and often contradictory picture has emerged. Suicides were clearly removed from the community of the dead at times, but not from the

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<sup>160</sup> Many texts refer to this incident; the earliest source given is J. Ashton, *The Dawn of the Nineteenth Century in England 1866*, Vol. II, p. 283, discussed in Moore, 'The Decriminalisation of Suicide', p. 31.

<sup>161</sup> 4 Geo. 4, c. 52 (1823).

<sup>162</sup> Tarlow, *Ritual, Belief and the Dead*, p. 184.

<sup>163</sup> Chapter 23, 33, & 34 Vict., sec. 2. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/33-34/23/contents> [accessed, 6 January 2019].

<sup>164</sup> Burial Laws Amendment Act 1880, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/43-44/41/contents> [accessed, 6 January 2019].

<sup>165</sup> The Suicide Act of 1961, 9 & 10 Eliz. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/9-10/60/contents> [accessed, 6 January 2019]; *Church Times* Tuesday 14 July 2017 reported 'The Amending Canon received final approval in a vote by Houses: Bishops 21 nem. con.; Clergy 125 nem. con., with 1 recorded abstention; Laity 132-1. Dr Smith moved the petition for the Royal Assent, which was clearly carried'.

community of the living. Contradictory attitudes towards and about the treatment of a suicide's body were held simultaneously.

Certain 'folk' beliefs do not stand up to deeper examinations into what people actually did in response to the suicide corpse. The idea behind crossroad burials being a disorientation practice and staking corpses being a preventative measure against a returning revenant should no longer be considered a major reason for these profane practices, for London at least. Londoners did not fear the suicide corpse. There was a curiosity attached to it, but only if that individual's prior reputation inspired this. Rather a suicide would be despised, pitied, and contemplated, by their family, friends, neighbours, and communities.

Criminals who committed murders and other heinous acts prior to their demise were considered the epitome of a bad death and subjected to the most elaborate profane burial rituals. But there were always exceptions to this. Charity Philpot, due to the murder of the child before her own suicide, should, in theory, have been given a crossroad burial as her actions prior to her own self-murder were so monstrous. Her reputation before this is unknown. She could have been a well-regarded member of her neighbourhood, and this along with the claim that the devil tempted her to commit murder and self-murder, is potentially why she received a highway burial instead. Charles Price, the forger who committed suicide and was buried 'in the fields', was another criminal suicide who did not receive a crossroad burial. Price had never done harm to a person and although the authorities considered forgery a serious crime no trial had been held to prove his guilt. Local agency was recognised and accepted when it came to the disposal of a suicide and when a body was returned to its community, friends, and family, anomalous burials such as the case of the woman who was buried by her dwelling are visible.

A reputation damaged beyond repair, combined with pamphlet, ballad, or newspaper coverage, frequently resulted in profane burial practices. A reputation that was only moderately damaged, or an individual who had been subjected to ridicule and embarrassment and received a certain amount of attention from the populace, along with those 'lovelorn' individuals who found themselves receiving coverage in gossip and media were buried on the highway and occasionally in open fields with or without the stake. All these locations were still in the centre of seventeenth and eighteenth-century London life.

Many suicides who received *felo de se* verdicts were still able to obtain churchyard or burial ground interment. Petitions for burial and the licenses given were granted based on the suicide's reputation, repentance, and personal and familial ties to their parish church and community, along with the quietness of their death. The quieter the death the easier it was to procure a proper burial. Suicide notes rarely assisted in these situations, especially if such a note was known and circulated. However, an individual's place on the social ladder did help them obtain decent burials. There was an increase in the return of *non compos mentis* verdicts over the eighteenth century and more suicides, both those who obtained *non compos mentis* and *felo de se* verdicts, were buried in churchyards and burial grounds over this period too. Some were even granted burial within the church itself.

From the variation in treatment of a suicide corpse it is possible to see the range and power of the state and the lines demarcating authority. The suicide corpse was marginalised, but this marginalisation was complex and usually incomplete. First, in ecclesiastical and secular law and among theological and philosophical discourses the suicide corpse was highly marginalised. But due to contradictory attitudes towards a suicide being held simultaneously, marginalisation was never as clear cut nor as consistent as would have been expected. Second, the suicide was on occasion physically marginalised from the community of the dead but not that of the living, and only when the individual's

reputation in life had been sorely damaged. The suicides of seventeenth and eighteenth-century London highlight the nuanced nature of community-based reactions and attitudes towards this group of early modern dead.

## Chapter 3 Criminals

### Introduction

Not all execution days in London were the same. However, there were reoccurring similarities; the bustle and noise of the crowds, both along the route to the execution site and at the site itself, street sellers capitalising on the increase in footfall, pickpockets operating among the press of bodies, bells tolling, and alcohol being consumed by observers and handed out to the condemned as they were paraded through the streets of the metropolis towards their grisly end. On 9 May 1726 at Tyburn, that most famous of London execution sites, such a day took place. This day was slightly unusual. Not only were a substantial number of individuals executed for a wide variety of crimes, but every possible method of disposal of the executed corpse was carried out: burning, display, dissection, and burial.

The criminals executed were: Catherine Hayes, for petty treason; Thomas Billings, for a murder with Hayes; Henry Vigous, alias Shock, John Gillingham, and John Map for highway robberies; James Dupree and John Cotterel for burglaries; Gabriel Laurence and William Griffin for sodomy; and Thomas Wright for buggery.<sup>1</sup> Catherine Hayes was executed by burning, Billings was hanged and 'displayed in chains' on the road to Paddington, and Gabriel Laurence was hanged then dissected at Barber-Surgeons Hall in Monkwell Square. The other seven executed individuals were hanged and probably buried in various burial grounds; however, only three can be traced to specific locations. Henry Vigous is recorded in the parish register of St Giles, Cripplegate as 'Henry Vigus – Executed', buried the day after his execution, the same day as James Dupree who was interred at St Mary, Whitechapel, where he is recorded as, 'James Depree A Man Executed', and John

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<sup>1</sup> OBP, OA17260509.

Gillingham was recorded in the parish register of St James, Piccadilly.<sup>2</sup> The anatomised individual, Gabriel Laurence, appears in the parish register of St Olave, Silver Street, in the burial ground across the road from Barber-Surgeons Hall where his remains were interred following his dissection. He is mis-recorded as 'John Lawrence, Executed' and buried in the upper ground on the 20 May.<sup>3</sup> It was clearly the same individual as the newspapers reported his body was given to the surgeons for dissection before burial.<sup>4</sup>

It was Catharine Hayes who dominated the coverage of this execution day. She had, along with two accomplices and possible lovers, one of whom was her illegitimate son, murdered her husband, John Hayes. The men, Thomas Billings and Thomas Wood, along with Hayes, dismembered John Hayes after the murder. Parts of his body were found in different locations around London including his head in the Thames which, once identified, resulted in the charges being brought against Hayes, Billings, and Wood.<sup>5</sup> All three were committed to Newgate and went to trial on 19 April 1726. Narratives of the murder and dismemberment along with the trial were selling within days.<sup>6</sup> By the beginning of May, pamphlets about the case had already reached a third edition.<sup>7</sup> All three individuals were found guilty and sentenced to death. Thomas Wood died in Newgate before he reached the scaffold, and Hayes allegedly tried unsuccessfully to poison herself.<sup>8</sup>

The execution day was not without additional drama. Just before Hayes's execution, a viewing scaffold that had about 150 people upon it collapsed resulting in a few

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<sup>2</sup> LMA, P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/015; LMA, P93/MRY1/061; WAC, STG/PR/7/83.

<sup>3</sup> LMA, P69/OLA3/A/001/MS06534.

<sup>4</sup> *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer* (London), Saturday, May 14, 1726; Issue 55.

<sup>5</sup> *Daily Journal* (London), Friday, March 4, 1726; Issue 1602; *Mist's Weekly Journal* (London), Saturday, March 26, 1726; Issue 48; *London Journal* (1720) (London), Saturday, March 26, 1726; Issue 348; also see T. Hitchcock and R. Shoemaker, *Tales from the Hanging Court* (London, Hodder Arnold, 2006), pp. 48-54.

<sup>6</sup> *Daily Journal* (London), Friday, April 29, 1726; Issue 1650.

<sup>7</sup> *Daily Journal* (London), Monday, May 2, 1726; Issue 1652.

<sup>8</sup> *Evening Post* (London), May 3 - May 5, 1726; Issue 2618; also P. Carter, 'Catherine Hayes' *ODNB* <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12753> [accessed, 18th June 2019].



deaths and many injuries, which itself received sizable newspaper coverage.<sup>9</sup> Hayes was also accidentally burnt alive after all this. Some papers reported that she was burnt alive on purpose while others claimed it was due to the executioner's error. Hayes would go down in English history as the last person burnt 'alive', but it was the sensationalism of the crime she committed more than the manner of her death that would prove most popular. Even by 1739 pamphlets containing the story were still selling well.<sup>10</sup> The notoriety of her crime and the continued fascination with it was partly due to an early example of investigative journalism that many of the newspapers undertook. Every week a new clue was revealed about John Hayes's murder and by the eventual conclusion the population of London had invested their time and energy on the case. Due to the focus on Hayes's, and to a lesser extent Billings' execution, the other eight malefactors that were executed on the same day are often overlooked.

This chapter traces as many named individuals as possible, such as the ten from 9 May 1726, beyond their execution to discover what happened to their remains and establish how marginalised, if indeed at all, the corpses of executed criminals were. Beginning with a brief history of execution in the metropolis and examining the historians who have researched the subject, the chapter will then move on to the sources and methodology used before examining each form of post-execution disposal, burning, display, anatomisation, and burial.

Execution in London has a long history. As early as the fifth century hanging was used as the main method of carrying out sentence of death in the capital, and it remained the most common form of execution. By the seventeenth century other methods of execution were occasionally enacted, including burning, beheading, drawing, hanging, and

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<sup>9</sup> *Parker's Penny Post* (London), Wednesday, May 11, 1726; Issue 161.

<sup>10</sup> *Daily Gazetteer* (London), Friday, November 16, 1739; Issue 1375; *London Evening Post* (London), November 22 - November 24, 1739; Issue 1877; For more on Hayes see, K. T. Saxton, *Narratives of Women and Murder in England, 1680-1760: Deadly Plots* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 57-74.

quartering, and execution by firing squad. London's long history of execution predates the famous site at Tyburn, but it was this site that became synonymous with the sentence of death, across the seventeenth and eighteenth century (fig. 3.1).



Figure 3.1. William Hogarth, *The Idle 'Prentice Executed at Tyburn* etching 1747 ©The Trustees of the British Museum.

Tyburn was not the only execution site within the metropolis. Execution Dock, Smithfield, Charing Cross, Kennington Common, Tower Hill, Lincoln's Inn Fields, Old Palace Yard, St Paul's Churchyard, and for Charles I's execution, Banqueting House, along with occasional temporary gallows erected near the site of a crime, often that of murder, were all used as sites of executions. In December 1783, the main execution site moved from Tyburn to outside Newgate prison (fig. 3.2). The procession to Tyburn was considered inconvenient, the behaviour of the crowds along the route too rowdy, and the journey encouraged escape attempts. This move has been understood as a signifier of modernity. Simon Devereaux has convincingly challenged this, arguing it was not so much a move towards more modern practices, but rather 'one of the last stages of substantial innovation in an

older system of thinking about capital punishment and its potential effectiveness'.<sup>11</sup>

Executions continued outside Newgate until 1868.



Figure 3.2. Thomas Rowlandson, *An execution outside Newgate Prison* watercolour and ink (c.1805) ©Museum of London.

Historians have long been fascinated by early modern executions and the ‘theatre of punishment’. Some, especially those influenced by Michel Foucault’s work, view public executions as a place where social control was upheld and legitimised. Other historians see them a ‘carnavalesque’ occasion, where the intended lessons from the authorities were inverted, while Marxist historians view executions as the locus of class conflict.<sup>12</sup> Malcolm

<sup>11</sup> G. T. Smith, ‘Civilised People Don’t Want to See that Kind of Thing: The Decline of Public Physical Punishment in London, 1760-1840’, *Qualities of Mercy: Justice, Punishment, and Discretion* C. Strange, (ed.), (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996), pp. 21, 29; S. Devereaux, ‘Recasting the Theatre of Execution: The Abolition of the Tyburn Ritual’, *Past & Present*, No. 202 (February 2009), p. 172.

<sup>12</sup> M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* A. Sheridan trans. (London: Penguin, 1991 edn.); J. A. Sharpe, ‘“Last Dying Speeches”: Religion, Ideology and Public Execution in Seventeenth-Century England’, *Past & Present*, No. 107 (May 1985), pp. 144-167; For the carnivalesque aspect see, T. Laqueur, ‘Crowds, Carnival and the State in English Executions, 1604-1868’ *The First Modern Society: Essays in English History in Honour of Lawrence Stone* A. L. Beier, D. Cannadine and J. M. Rosenheim, (eds.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 305-355; for Marxist views see P. Linebaugh, ‘The Tyburn Riot Against the Surgeon’, in D. Hay, P. Linebaugh, J. G. Rule, E. P. Thompson and C. Winslow, (eds.), *Albion’s Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England* (London New York: Verso, 2011 edn.), pp. 65-117; P. Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London New York: Verso, 2nd edn., 2006).

Gaskill's work on crime and mentalities uses crime as a lens for allowing insights into what people saw, thought, wanted, and did.<sup>13</sup> This approach can be especially significant when looking at what was done with the criminal corpse and is considered throughout this chapter.

For criminals whose bodies were given to surgeons and physicians for dissection, Ruth Richardson's pioneering research, *Death, Dissection, and the Destitute*, published in 1987 and mostly concerned with the early nineteenth century, laid the groundwork for more recent scholars, namely Kate Cregan and Elizabeth Hurren, to contribute valuable research into criminals whose remains were anatomised.<sup>14</sup> The key concept that Cregan uses is the idea of 'abstraction' to show how drama, law, and medicine were interconnected. Hurren has taken a medical approach in her research and explores the years 1752 to 1832. Her aim was to uncover how capital legislation was utilised to disguise the practices that surgeons carried out. Their work has proved extremely valuable, but in ignoring the treatment of other executed individuals' bodies a less rounded image of the afterlife of the criminal corpse is exposed.

The historians who have researched the criminal corpse, but not specifically the dead who were given to the surgeons, have a strong focus on the Tyburn ritual itself. Since Peter Linebaugh's essay on the Tyburn Riots, where he investigated the scene of execution and the lengths to which family and friends would go to reclaim the corpse of one of their own, other historians have been interested in what occurred leading up to and during the process of an execution.<sup>15</sup> Andrea McKenzie and Vic Gatrell have taken differing views and

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<sup>13</sup> M. Gaskill, *Crime and Mentalities in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 3, 8.

<sup>14</sup> R. Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000 edn.); K. Cregan, *The Theatre of the Body: Staging Death and Embodying Life in Early-Modern London* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009); E. Hurren, *Dissecting the Criminal Corpse: Staging Post-Execution Punishment in Early Modern England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

<sup>15</sup> Linebaugh, 'The Tyburn Riot', pp. 65-117 and Linebaugh, *The London Hanged*.

explored slightly different aspects in this vein.<sup>16</sup> McKenzie covered the years 1675 to 1775 and where Linebaugh saw execution as part of the advances of capitalism and an unjust legal code, McKenzie instead explores the religious rhetoric employed and literature produced highlighting the felon's attempts to die well. Gatrell covers the years 1770 to 1868 and his analysis of execution rituals drew in part upon a history of emotions and the feelings or lack of feelings that those witnessing executions experienced. No work has been carried out comparing the different methods of disposal a criminal corpse received and especially lacking is an analysis of those who were simply buried after their execution, an oversight that this chapter will address.

### Sources and Methodology

In seventeenth and eighteenth-century London men and women were expected to die well. The ideals of a good death were transferrable to those who faced execution. A 1697 prayer book provided felons with a penitential template. It asked criminals to profess 'abhorrence and true Repentance of the Crime' for which they were to die while upon the scaffold, along with confessing their other sins, begging for forgiveness for all their wrongs, and forgiving those who passed sentence of death upon them.<sup>17</sup> Thus they achieved a 'good death'. A vast amount of literature was produced to show this achievement or when it failed, and this literature has been used throughout this chapter to trace executed individuals beyond the scaffold.

The scaffold's portrayal as a place to publicly achieve a good death gave rise to last dying speeches. J. A. Sharpe, in his influential study on these speeches, has traced the

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<sup>16</sup> A. McKenzie, *Tyburn's Martyrs: Execution in England, 1675-1775* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007); V. A. C. Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People 1770-1868* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>17</sup> J. Kettlewell, *An Office for Prisoners for Crimes, Together with Another for Prisoners for Debt* (1697), pp. 22-23.

practice to the Tudor period and claimed they ceased to hold much importance by 1700.<sup>18</sup> But Randall Martin argued that prior to the 1630s, 'confessions and gallows speeches were the exception rather than the rule, with most pamphlets simply recording the verdict or the fact of execution'.<sup>19</sup> This seems more plausible. Earlier speeches were few and far between, but by the seventeenth century more importance was placed upon the scaffold performance. By the 1670s, there was a veritable explosion of all manner of printed material that addressed a wide audience informing them of the lives, trials, and executions of criminals. Ballads and broadsides printed in their thousands and widely distributed were greatly popular. Many of these ballads and broadsides were concerned with real criminals and even when there is uncertainty about a character being fictional or non-fictional, the crimes and moral implications that were explored throughout were based on real cases.<sup>20</sup>

The most famous accounts of criminal lives and executions are the Ordinary's *Accounts*. The Ordinary of Newgate was the chaplain tasked with the spiritual welfare of the condemned prisoners and extracting their stories and confessions. The Ordinary's *Accounts* were published up to eight times a year from 1684, after each hanging day in London.<sup>21</sup> There were alterations in layout and price over the run, but the internal information largely remained the same.<sup>22</sup> There was a decline in the Ordinary's *Accounts* towards the end of the eighteenth century with only six editions published after 1767, the last one was in 1772.<sup>23</sup> This decline has been attributed to the idea that the criminal was

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<sup>18</sup> Sharpe, 'Last Dying Speeches', p. 165.

<sup>19</sup> R. Martin, *Women, Murder, and Equity in Early Modern England* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), p. 27.

<sup>20</sup> For more on ballads and broadsides see P. Fumerton, A. Guerrini, and K. McAbee, (eds.), *Ballads and Broadsides in Britain, 1500-1800* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

<sup>21</sup> P. Rawlings, *Drunks, Whores and Idle Apprentices: Criminal Biographies of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> P. Linebaugh, 'The Ordinary of Newgate and His Account' in J.S. Cockburn, (ed.), *Crime in England 1550-1800* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 248.

<sup>23</sup> T. Hitchcock and R. Shoemaker, *London Lives: Poverty, Crime and the Making of a Modern City, 1690-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 272; LL, OA177210147210140001; A. McKenzie, 'From True Confessions to True Reporting? The Decline and Fall of the Ordinary's Account', *London Journal*, Vol. 30, Issue 1 (2005), pp. 55-70.

not the 'everyman' they had been regarded as earlier in the period and now were thought to come from an inferior class, both morally and intellectually, leading readers to regard the Ordinary's *Accounts* as lacking instruction or entertainment.<sup>24</sup> The next set of publications that related the lives of felons and their executions was *The Newgate Calendar*. It was highly selective, featuring the most famous and notorious cases and did not lay them out in any type of chronological order, omitting many details but providing the viewer with some wonderful illustrations of the crime and sometimes the execution.<sup>25</sup> It ran from 1773 to 1826.

The Ordinary's *Accounts* have always been treated with caution by historians and there is much debate regarding their trustworthiness. Thomas Laqueur has suggested that the image presented in last dying speeches obscured common and extensive disorder and derision at the places of execution.<sup>26</sup> However, when examined alongside other evidence such as newspapers, diary entries, and letters, it is possible to gain insight into the lives and demise of the criminals within their pages and even occasionally follow them beyond their execution.<sup>27</sup> There are stories of some 2,500 criminals that ran to 400 editions contained within the *Accounts*, although these criminals are almost only ever those executed at Tyburn and not from the other execution sites that have also been examined in this chapter. The *Accounts* name many individuals, and these can then be traced through other sources such as newspapers and parish registers. Many criminals seem to have co-operated with the Ordinary in writing their biographies, and there are even cases of Ordinaries taking money from prisoners in return for writing well of them. This could, and did, result in the Ordinary being dismissed, as in the case of Dr John Allen in 1710 who was accused of

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<sup>24</sup> McKenzie, 'From True Confessions', pp. 59, 80.

<sup>25</sup> Originally a monthly bulletin the *Newgate Calendar* has been produced in numerous forms. For a discussion about it see, Linebaugh, *The London Hanged*, p. 363.

<sup>26</sup> Laqueur 'Crowds, Carnival and the State', pp. 305-355.

<sup>27</sup> For letters from prison see E. Foyster, 'Prisoners Writing Home: The Functions of Their Letters c. 1680-1800', *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Summer 2014), pp. 943-967.

extorting money from prisoners.<sup>28</sup> The co-operation between the prisoners and the Ordinary seems to have been down to religious belief, fear of the unknown, promises of life after death, and the need for prisoners to have money to maintain themselves in gaol, along with the occasional promises of a proper burial, and protection from being passed to surgeons or, to a lesser extent, physicians, to be dissected.<sup>29</sup>

Criminals awaiting execution were clearly aware of other criminal lives in pamphlet literature. On 22 December 1721, James Wright was executed at Tyburn and the newspapers noted that he went in his shroud.<sup>30</sup> This then became a fashion among those going to execution. On 5 August 1723, William Duce and James Butler also went to their executions dressed in shrouds.<sup>31</sup> The newspapers, reporting on an execution in December of the same year noted that the popularity of wearing a shroud to one's execution had become a 'whimsical and ridiculous Humour, practis'd by several of those miserable Wretches'.<sup>32</sup> The criminals awaiting execution knew what happened to those before them. The creation of this literature has been convincingly argued as a form of propaganda, a tool for the administration of the law.<sup>33</sup> It is safe to say the types of people reading this literature were from across the social hierarchy and reasons behind why it was written are clear, but what remains more complex is the question of *why* it was read. The reasons for the popularity in reading this type of literature can be attributed to the following theory put forward by McKenzie. Those awaiting execution and those executed became synonymous with the celebrity culture of London and 'as media personalities [their]

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<sup>28</sup> Rawlings, *Drunks, Whores and Idle Apprentices*, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> Rawlings, *Drunks, Whores and Idle Apprentices*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>30</sup> *Flying Post or The Post Master* (London), December 21 - December 23, 1721; Issue 4516.

<sup>31</sup> *British Journal* (1722) (London), Saturday, August 10, 1723; Issue XLVII.

<sup>32</sup> *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer* (London), Saturday, December 28, 1723.

<sup>33</sup> P. King, 'Making Crime News: Newspapers, Violent Crime and Selective Reporting of Old Bailey Trails in the late Eighteenth Century', *Crime, History & Societies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2009), pp. 91-116; especially R. Ward, 'Print Culture, Moral Panic, and the Administration of the Law: The London Crime Wave of 1744' *Crime, History & Societies*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (2012), pp. 5-24, expanded in R. Ward, *Print Culture, Crime and Justice in 18th-Century London* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).



currency transcended class lines'.<sup>34</sup> Here the simplified interpretation put forward by J. J. Richetti, that this type of literature was read as part of a 'latent social aggression' aroused in the course of reading, needs modification.<sup>35</sup> Richetti has failed to take into account the differing narratives that were produced for different crimes and the portrayal of different genders and types of executions within these narratives. The readers of this literature were drawn to the othering nature of crime and criminals and their method of death. The individuals that were recognisable as mothers, daughters, sons, husbands, wives, merchants, sailors, and so on but did not conform to stereotype and hence became 'other'. Therefore, even before their execution a sense of marginalisation is apparent.

The research for this chapter builds upon a vast amount of data collected and collated from London, Middlesex, and Southwark using last dying speeches, ballads, pamphlet literature, the Ordinary's *Accounts*, and newspapers to find named individuals and their date of execution. This data was then cross referenced with parish registers, and additional sources, namely the surgeons' annals, churchwardens' accounts, and newspapers again, to discover what happened to their bodies post-execution. Many individuals also died in gaol before execution, but no data has been gathered for them. No data has been gathered from executions further afield such as those in Kingston Upon Thames, even though the newspapers reported these executions within the London section. To include other locations and deaths within prisons was a task too vast for the scope of this chapter and the methodology undertaken.

The data collected is incomplete, especially for the first half of the seventeenth century where it may be possible to obtain figures for those indicted for felonies, but to

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<sup>34</sup> A. McKenzie, 'The Real Macheath: Social Satire, Appropriation, and Eighteenth-Century Criminal Biography' *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (December 2006), p. 583.

<sup>35</sup> J. J. Richetti, *Popular Fiction Before Richardson: Narrative Patterns 1700-1739* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 31,53,56, discussed in L. B. Faller, *Turned to Account: The Forms and Functions Criminal Biography in Late Seventeenth-and Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 45-47.

trace them to the certain point of execution is slightly more problematic. Not everyone who was sentenced to death was executed. From 1676 the Ordinary's *Accounts* are an invaluable source for notifying the reader about who actually made it to the scaffold. Although even here last-minute reprieves were not uncommon. For example, in 1686 Sarah Walker was indicted for grand larceny and sentenced to hang.<sup>36</sup> The Ordinary wrote about her life, but just before the execution itself she received a reprieve.<sup>37</sup> During the period when transportation was an option, many individuals sentenced to death had their sentence commuted to transportation. This was the case for Charlotte Walker, a notorious pickpocket and prostitute who escaped punishment many times until eventually receiving sentence of death that was then commuted to transportation.<sup>38</sup> Where the Ordinary's *Accounts* are unclear, and for all executions after it ceased publication, newspaper reports have been used to confirm that an execution took place. This was then cross referenced with Simon Devereaux's database 'Capital Punishment and Pardon at the Old Bailey, 1730-1837' which is a wonderful resource for confirming an execution took place and if the body was meant to be sent for dissection or gibbeting. But it does not follow the individuals to these conclusions to confirm if these punishments indeed took place, nor does it record those simply buried.<sup>39</sup> For example on 19 December 1733 John Beach a waterman was executed for highway robbery. He is noted in the database as being dissected but was in fact buried on the 22 December at St Saviours, Southwark and was recorded in the parish register as 'John Beach a Waterman'.<sup>40</sup> In the eighteenth century, due to the rise in

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<sup>36</sup> OBP, t16860114-18; OBP, s16860114-1.

<sup>37</sup> OBP, OA16860120.

<sup>38</sup> M. Clayton, 'The Life and Crimes of Charlotte Walker, Prostitute and Pickpocket', *The London Journal*, Vol. 33, Issue 1 (2008), pp. 3-19; LL, *Charlotte Walker 1777 – LL Set*, 1436, 78 Documents.

<sup>39</sup> S. Devereaux, 'Capital Punishment and Pardon at the Old Bailey, 1730-1837'

<https://hcmc.uvic.ca/project/oldbailey/index.php> [first accessed 2018, revisited 20 July 2021]. For examples on how this database can be used see, S. Devereaux, 'Peel, Pardon and Punishment: The Recorder's Report Revisited' *Penal Practice and Culture, 1500–1900: Punishing the English S.* Devereaux and P. Griffith (eds), (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). 258-284 and S. Devereaux, 'The Bloodiest Code: Counting Executions and Pardons at the Old Bailey, 1730-1837' *Law, Crime and History*, 6(1), 2016, pp. 83-102.

<sup>40</sup> LMA, LMA, P92/SAV/3084.

newspapers and survival of more documentation it is easier to follow executed bodies to a dissection table, display, or burial location.

This nominal record linkage approach to gathering information from various sources and cross-referencing it with others is time consuming but 5,034 identifiable individuals across the seventeenth and eighteenth century have been recorded, all who were unequivocally executed. Of these, many could not be traced beyond execution however, as figure 3.3 shows, a substantial number can be tracked down.

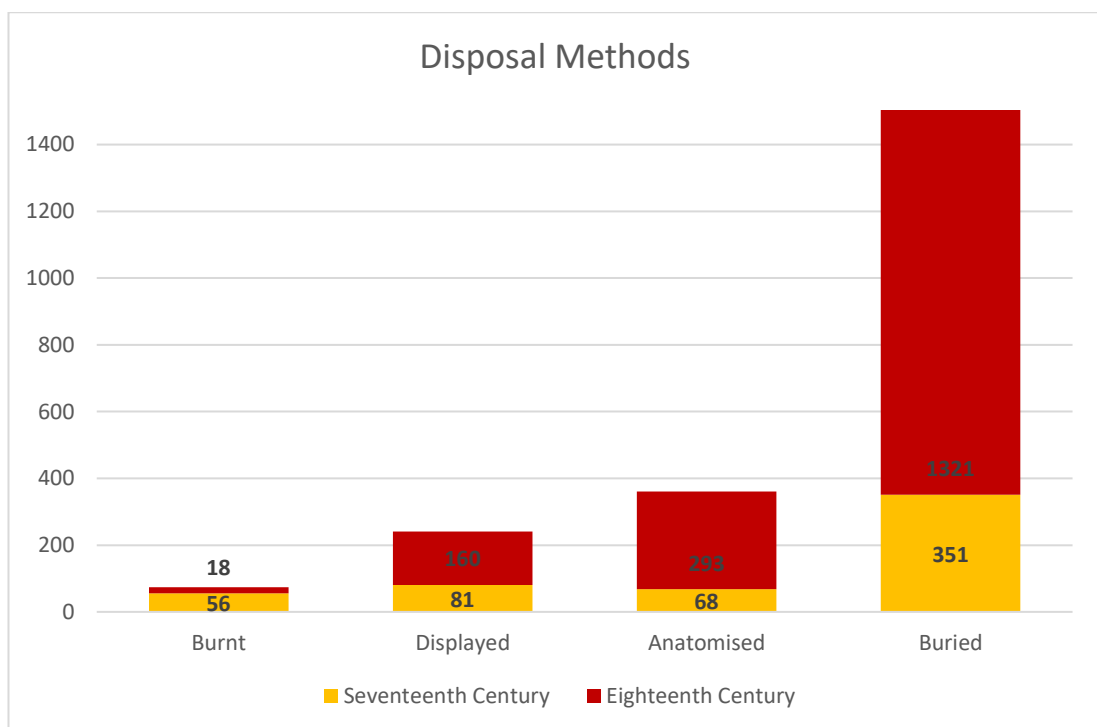


Figure 3.3. Disposal methods for 2,348 criminal corpses, 1600-1800.

Some 2,348 criminals have been traced beyond execution out of the 5,039 that were certainly executed. The executed individuals who have no evident post-execution journeys were probably simply buried and hence belong to the largest category of disposal. When individuals were burnt, displayed, or anatomised they tended to leave more detailed records than those who were simply buried. It is these 2,348 individuals across 200 years that form the basis for the following analysis into the criminal corpse, beginning with those who were burnt, followed by those who were displayed, be it in 'chains' or their heads and quarters exhibited on the City gates and at other prominent landmarks, before moving to

examine the anatomisation of the criminal cadaver, and finally turning to the most frequent method of disposal, that of burials.

## Burnt

On Friday 2 March 1689, Mary Aubry, a French midwife, stood in Leicester Fields awaiting her execution by burning. Aubry faced execution due to having murdered her husband, Dennis Aubry. She confessed to the crime, was convicted, and sentenced to be burnt. An anonymous account of her behaviour and execution imparts the story of how Aubry strangled then dismembered her husband and hid his body parts; the 'body was found in Parkers-Lane, his Arms, Legs, &c. in the Savoy House of Office, and his Head in another, near Exeter Exchange'.<sup>41</sup> This story is confirmed by the record of her trial at the Old Bailey. The sentence against Aubry was: 'That she should be carried from thence to the Place from whence she came, and thence be drawn to the Place of Execution, and there be burnt with Fire till she is dead'.<sup>42</sup> At about ten o'clock in the morning Aubry was collected from Newgate by the Sheriff's Officers, placed on a sledge, and drawn to Leicester Fields where a stake had been erected on the north side of the square. She arrived at half past ten and was reported as 'appearing very Penitent, often lifting up her Hands and Eyes to heaven, seeming to express much sorrow for the Crime that had been the occasion of this her shameful End'. Half an hour after her arrival, Aubry was set upon a small stool, a rope was fastened through a hole in the stake and around her neck. The stool was taken away and she hanged, slowly strangling to death for a quarter of an hour as wood was piled about her. Eventually the pile of wood was lit, it burnt until all that remained of Aubry were charred bones and ashes.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Anon, *An account of the manner, behaviour and execution of Mary Aubry*, (1687), p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> OBP, t16880222-24; OBP, s16880222-1.

<sup>43</sup> For more on Mary Aubry (sometimes spelt Aubrey, Awbry or Horbry) see F. E. Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550 – 1700* (Ithaca and London: Cornell

Since the end of the thirteenth century execution by fire had been the punishment for women accused of high and petty treason. Petty treason extended to wives slaying husbands as Aubry's case shows, and to the murder of masters or mistresses by servants and apprentices. High treason charges were brought against both men and women convicted of counterfeiting and forgery or slandering the sovereign. Men convicted of high treason would be hanged, then disembowelled, quartered and often displayed but, like the example of Aubry where strangulation was carried out first, executioners generally allowed men to die on the gallows before cutting them down and carrying out the rest of the sentence, at least by the eighteenth century.<sup>44</sup> Men charged with coining offences were not subjected to this execution method and were simply drawn to the place of execution and hanged, but women for the same crime were burnt.

In seventeenth and eighteenth-century London burnings were infrequent but not unusual. Contemporary writers such as Sir Matthew Hale, noted that women were burnt 'for the other judgment is unseemly for that sex'.<sup>45</sup> William Blackstone in his *Commentaries on the Laws of England* stated that women were burnt as 'decency due to the sex forbids the exposing and publicly mangling their bodies'.<sup>46</sup> Hale and Blackstone in this instance are surely incorrect and the solution misconceived. When the flames rose to consume the body, it would be the clothes that burnt first. The spectators would have been confronted with the nakedness of the female form.<sup>47</sup> In France, this was the exact reason why women

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University Press, 1994), pp. 34-38; D. J. Cox, *Crime in England 1688-1815* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 13-16.

<sup>44</sup> J. M. Beattie, *Crime and the Court in England 1660-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 451.

<sup>45</sup> M. Hale, *Historia Placitorum Coronae: The History of the Pleas of the Crown*, Volume 2 (1736), p. 399.

<sup>46</sup> W. Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England – Book IV: Of Public Wrongs* R. Paley, (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016 edn.), p. 303.

<sup>47</sup> C. Naish, *Death Comes to the Maiden: Sex and Execution 1431-1933* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 8.

were not burnt.<sup>48</sup>

The execution of women by burning in England has attracted remarkably little historical attention. The few studies that have considered it focus upon the crime that was committed, especially the crime of petty treason, and rarely consider the process of the execution itself.<sup>49</sup> Burnings have been included in broader examinations of execution, namely by Gatrell, McKenzie, and Gaskill, among others. Ruth Campbell wrote an article equating husbands with monarchs and viewing this form of execution as a strong symbol of the subjection of women.<sup>50</sup> An article by Shelley Gavigan considers the inequality within the law, and Simon Devereaux explored the abolition of this form of punishment towards the end of the eighteenth century, focusing on the legal and administrative processes that led to its eradication.<sup>51</sup> The performative aspect, sensory experience, and gendered nature of this form of execution leave much more to be explored along with a focus on both high and petty treason instead of just petty treason, a point beyond the scope of this work. The elusive nature of how people felt when confronted with this spectacle also deserves more attention and is a point that will be addressed shortly.

Fifty-six cases of women executed by burning have been identified for the seventeenth century. For the eighteenth century, burnings declined and only eighteen women were executed in this manner. The graph below (fig. 3.4) compares the executions

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<sup>48</sup> G. Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 140.

<sup>49</sup> For examples, Martin, *Women, Murder, and Equity*, passim; Beattie, *Crime and the Court*, especially pp. 74-113; Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars*, especially pp. 20-87; F. McLynn, *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth Century England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 45, 118-124.

<sup>50</sup> R. Campbell, 'Sentence of Death by Burning for Women', *Journal of Legal History*, Vol. 5 Issue 1 (1984), pp. 44-59.

<sup>51</sup> S. A. M. Gavigan, 'Petit Treason in Eighteenth Century England: Women's Inequality Before the Law', *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1989-1990), pp. 335-374; S. Devereaux, 'The Abolition of the Burning of Women in England Reconsidered' *Crime, History & Societies*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2005), pp. 73-98.

by burning carried out in each century and the crimes the individuals subjected to this form of execution were convicted of.

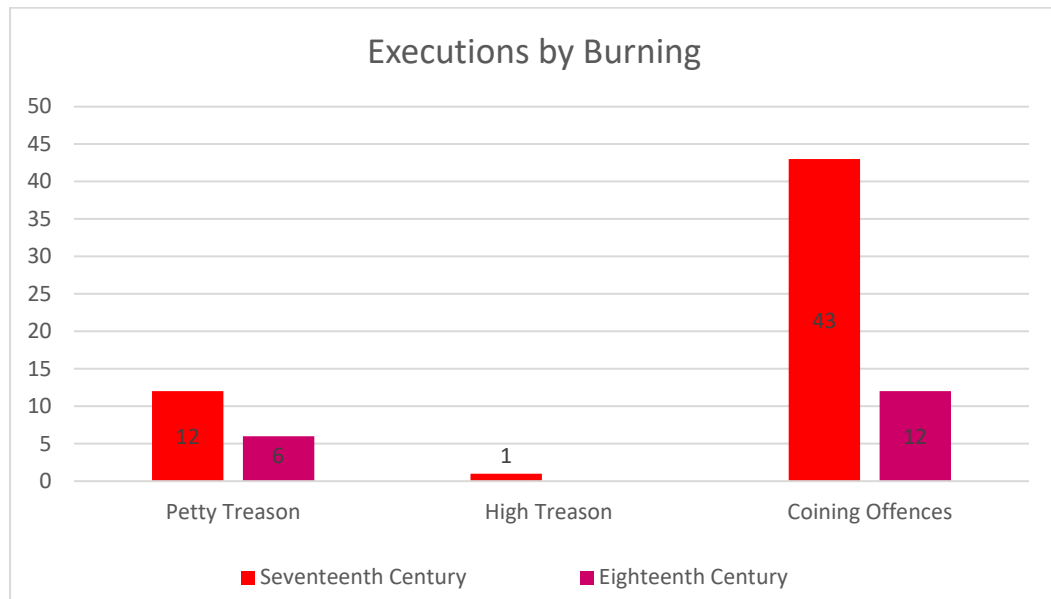


Figure 3.4. Crimes which resulted in execution by burning, 1600-1800.

As always with quantitative data this figure must be used with care. It does not include women burnt in areas outside London, Middlesex, and Southwark, and the accounts that predate 1674 are imprecise at best. In the earlier half of the seventeenth century the crime of petty treason was the most common, however, in the second half of the century coining replaced it. Indeed, in total, coining was the most prominent reason women faced this form of execution across both centuries. In 1685 Elizabeth Gaunt was executed for assisting rebels.<sup>52</sup> She was the last woman in London who was burnt for seditious libel (seditious words and treason against the monarch) and is the only woman over the two centuries who was executed for this form of high treason.

More women were sentenced to death by burning than suffered it. Pardons before the sentence was carried out were common.<sup>53</sup> One example of this is the case of Arrabella

<sup>52</sup> OBP, OA16851023.

<sup>53</sup> For more on reprieves see Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, pp. 400-450; J. M. Beattie, *Policing and Punishment in London 1660-1750: Urban Crime and the Limits of Terror* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), especially pp. 362-369; P. King and R. Ward, 'Rethinking the Bloody Code in Eighteenth-Century Britain: Capital Punishment at the Centre and on the Periphery', *Past & Present*, Vol. 228,

Reeves. Reeves was indicted for coining offences on 14 January 1687. She was caught in the act itself with a mould in her hand making false pieces of money, many more of which were found upon her person. Reeves denied the accusations but was found guilty and faced execution by burning. She pleaded her belly but was found to not be 'quick with child' and was returned to Newgate to await her execution. On the 27 January, the Ordinary published his *Account* which included a section about her life and how she turned to crime, however, this was not followed by a description of her execution. Reeves must have received a pardon for on 31 May 1688 she again appeared at the Old Bailey for coining. The proceedings stated, 'she is a known old Offender', she was found guilty, but only fined. On the 10 October 1688, an Arrabella Reeves is again mentioned in the Old Bailey Proceedings as having received a pardon.<sup>54</sup> Even a woman charged with high treason against the crown such as Ann Merryweather, who in 1693 printed Jacobite pamphlets, managed to obtain a reprieve.<sup>55</sup> Merryweather and Reeves may have avoided the stake but not everyone was so lucky. Those who did face death by burning were held up as examples in the literature of the day. Mary Aubry's story was retold in various formats including iconographic depictions, in ballads, and even on playing cards (fig. 3.5) for decades after her death. Even as late as 1813 Mary Aubry's story was still being printed.<sup>56</sup>

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Issue 1 (August 2015), pp. 159-205; P. King, *Crime, Justice, and Discretion in England, 1740-1820* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), especially pp. 297-333.

<sup>54</sup> OBP, t16870114-31; OBP, s16870114-1; OBP, OA16870127; OBP, t16880531-27; OBP, s16880531-1; OBP, o16881010-3.

<sup>55</sup> OBP, t16930116-57; OBP, OA16930127.

<sup>56</sup> J. Caulfield, *Portraits, Memoirs, and Characters, of Remarkable Persons from the Reign of Edward the Third to the Revolution* (1813).





Figure 3.5. Playing card depicting an etching of Mary Aubry's execution, 1689 ©Guildhall Library.

Images such as that on the playing card and those that appeared in ballads and pamphlets showing women being burnt mimic woodcuts by John Kid from Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*.<sup>57</sup> This shows a potential link between women and the earlier heretics of either sex. Both were not only held up as examples of what occurred if you challenged the 'state' and the church, but they were also physically eradicated. The utter destruction of their 'sin' and crime through the obliteration of individuality, gender, and bodily remains pushed them to the very margins of bodily integrity and self-autonomy.

Alice Davis, who killed her husband in 1628 and was burnt at Smithfield, and Katherine Francis, alias Stoke, executed by burning in 1629 after murdering her husband with a pair of scissors, both had ballads written about their lives. These ballads are full of warnings towards other women who might stray down murderous paths. Francis's ballad

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<sup>57</sup> Explored by Martin, *Women, Murder, and Equity*, p. 134.

includes the lines 'A death, though cruell, yet too milde' and 'let all good wives a warning take, / in Country and in City, / And thinke how they shall at stake / be burned without pittty'.<sup>58</sup> Henry Goodcole, a prison visitor and writer wrote a pamphlet about the life of Alice Clarke who was burnt in 1635 for poisoning her husband. In his tract Goodcole fashioned himself as a protector of truth and highlighted the sinful nature of the crime while praising Clarke for her penitence.<sup>59</sup> When Joyce Ebbs stabbed her husband in 1661 and was burnt ten months later after respite for pleading the belly, it was her penitent nature again that was highlighted in the pamphlet published after her death, showing how even criminals could die well.<sup>60</sup>

The one thing this outpouring of literature concerned with women who were burnt for petty or high treason rarely expands on is the reactions of the spectators witnessing these executions. They do occasionally explain the manner of death. A pamphlet that includes the confession of Prudence Lee, executed in 1652 for murdering her husband, illuminates the actual process of the execution:

Then the Executioner setting her in a pitch barrel, bound her to the stake, and placed the straw and Faggots about her; whereupon she lifting up her eyes towards Heaven, desired all that were present to pray for her; and the Executioner putting fire to the straw, she cried out; Lord Jesus have mercy on my soul; and after the fire was kindled she was heard to shriek out terribly some five or six several times.<sup>61</sup>

It seems Prudence Lee was not unconscious when the flames rose around her.

Unfortunately, there is little further information concerning her execution and why this

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<sup>58</sup> Anon, *A warning for all desperate VVomen*, (1628), Magdalene College Cambridge, Pepys Ballads 1.120-121; Anon, *A warning for wives, By the example of one Katherine Francis, alias Stoke*, (1629), Magdalene College Cambridge, Pepys Ballads 1.118-119.

<sup>59</sup> H. Goodcole, *The adulteresses funerall day in flaming, scorching, and consuming fire*, (1635).

<sup>60</sup> Anon, *The last speech, confession & prayer of Joyce Ebbs*, (1662).

<sup>61</sup> Anon, *The witch of Wapping*, (1652), p. 8.

may have been the case, as even her story is but a small digression in a longer tract on a different execution. Earlier executions did burn women alive but by the late seventeenth and especially in the eighteenth century they were, with the notable exception of Catharine Hayes, strangled before burning.

In 1652 John Evelyn wrote in his diary, almost in an offhand manner, that on the 10 May 'passing by Smithfield I saw a miserable creature burning, who had murdered her husband'.<sup>62</sup> He avoided writing a detailed description of what confronted the spectators witnessing the execution and how they interacted with any remains from the ashes. Smithfield had been the site of the earlier martyrs who were burnt for treason and there are noted examples of people carrying away pieces of bone from the ashes as relics.<sup>63</sup> No such similar examples can be found for anyone collecting the ashes of women burnt for high or petty treason.

Burning women for petty treason, as Gavigan argued, cannot simply be dismissed as yet another discriminatory legal practice, nor be sufficiently elucidated in more general terms by the trans-historical concept of male supremacy or patriarchy.<sup>64</sup> Petty treason 'both reflected and reinforced social and economic relations of gender'.<sup>65</sup> This reflection and reinforcement is also apparent in charges of high treason, especially coining. Coining was a threat against property and commerce and unlike other crimes there was no 'principal tenet of Christian morality, nor were there any immediately obvious biblical justifications for its prescription – particularly for its definition as an act of treason'.<sup>66</sup> It is possible to argue for coining as a social crime, 'a conscious, almost a political, challenge to

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<sup>62</sup> J. Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn* O. Airy, (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 275.

<sup>63</sup> D. Hughson, *London; Being an Accurate History and Description of the British Metropolis and its Neighbourhood* Vol 9 (1806), p. 222.

<sup>64</sup> Gavigan, 'Petit Treason', p. 337.

<sup>65</sup> Gavigan, 'Petit Treason', p. 338.

<sup>66</sup> Gaskill, *Crime and Mentalities*, p. 127.

the prevailing social and political order and its values'.<sup>67</sup> The appearance of coining in ballads from the 1670s, as Gaskill noted, 'emphasised the statutory severity of coining and its social impact, aiming to overturn indifference or bolster existing hostilities', which adds weight to this idea.<sup>68</sup> However, there was a growing awareness within the mentalities of early modern Londoners of the expanding domestic economy that they were part of and an affront to this was justification for this form of execution.<sup>69</sup> Public opinion towards the burning of women was complex and contradictory.

In 1721, Barbara Spencer was burnt for coining. Her execution was moved at the last minute from Smithfield to Tyburn. This was due to a petition from the inhabitants near the former location against having women burnt there.<sup>70</sup> The *Ordinary's Account* describes her last moments at Tyburn:

as she stood at the Stake by the Wood and Fuel, she seemed to have much less fear of Death, than the Day before, yet was she very desirous of Praying; but complained severely of the Clods of Dirt and stones thrown by Vagabonds behind the Crowd, which prevented her thinking at all of Heaven, and one Time beat her quite down.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> E. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1959); E. Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000 edn.); E. Hobsbawm, 'Distinctions between socio-political and other forms of crime' *Society for the Study of Labour History Bulletin*, 25, (Autumn 1972), pp. 5-6, quote in J. A. Sharpe, *Crime in Early Modern England 1550-1750* (London and New York: Longman, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. 1999), p. 176.

<sup>68</sup> Gaskill, *Crime and Mentalities*, p. 189.

<sup>69</sup> Gaskill, *Crime and Mentalities*, p. 198; also see A. Field, 'Coining Offences in England and Wales, c. 1675-1750: The Practical and the Personal', *Cultural and Social History* vol. 15, No. 2 (2018), pp. 177-196; C. Wennerlind, 'The Death Penalty as Monetary Policy: The Practice and Punishment of Monetary Crime, 1690-1830', *History of Political Economy* 36:1 (2004), pp. 131-161; R. McGowen, 'From Pillory to Gallows: The Punishment of Forgery in the Age of the Financial Revolution' *Past & Present*, No. 165 (Nov., 1999), pp. 107-140.

<sup>70</sup> *Daily Post* (London), Saturday, July 1, 1721; Issue 547; *Daily Journal* (London), Wednesday, July 5, 1721; Issue 141.

<sup>71</sup> OBP, t17210525-56; OBP, s17210525-1; OBP, OA17210705; *Ipswich Journal* - Saturday 01 July 1721, p. 5; *Evening Post* (London), July 1 - July 4, 1721; Issue 1861.

The petition for changing the location of execution appears to have served the needs of the local community rather than being sympathetic towards the woman being burnt. As the reaction of the crowd demonstrated, the population of London did not seem too concerned with this form of execution if it was carried out on the margins of everyday life as opposed to in their neighbourhood. Some mentalities may have been slowly changing towards burning women, but this change would come, as Devereaux has argued, not from the people but a group of elite men in government. Popular opinion accepted the burning of women more readily than the later legislation appears to demonstrate.<sup>72</sup>

By 1763 there were very occasional murmurs of discontent about the burning of women. The *Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser* published a letter that asked that 'the foolish, or rather barbarous method of burning women be changed into a milder death, one more adequate to the natural softness and delicacy of the female sex'.<sup>73</sup> By 1786, when Phoebe Harris was burnt for coining, it was clear that the execution of women in this manner was no longer accepted by at least some of the population of London.<sup>74</sup> Harris with Joseph and Elizabeth Yelland was discovered counterfeiting coins at lodgings in Drury Lane.<sup>75</sup> Only Harris was sentenced to die.<sup>76</sup> She was the first woman burnt outside Newgate, her execution on 21 June 1786 was described as follows:

About a quarter of an hour after the platform had dropped, the female convict was led by two officers of justice from Newgate to a stake fixed to the ground about the midway between the scaffold and the pump. The stake was about seven feet high, and near the top of it was inverted a curved piece of iron to which the end of the halter was tied. The prisoner stood on a low stool, which, after the ordinary had

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<sup>72</sup> Devereaux, 'The Abolition of the Burning of Women', pp. 73-98.

<sup>73</sup> *Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser* (London), Tuesday, July 26, 1763; Issue 10723.

<sup>74</sup> For more on Harris see, Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree*, p. 337.

<sup>75</sup> LMA, OB/SP/1786/02/022; LMA, OB/SP/1786/02/028.

<sup>76</sup> OBP, t17860426-9.

prayed with her a short time, being taken away, she was suspended by the neck (her feet being scarcely more than twelve or fourteen inches from the pavement). Soon after the signs of life had ceased, two cart loads of faggots were placed round her, and set on fire: the flames presently burning the halter, the convict fell a few inches, and was then sustained by an iron chain passed over her chest, and affixed to the stake. Some scattered remains of the body were perceptible in the fire at half past ten o'clock. The fire had not completely burnt out at twelve o'clock.<sup>77</sup>

This execution was witnessed by a 20,000-strong crowd who reportedly '*amused* themselves with kicking about her ashes', once the fire had died down.<sup>78</sup> Gatrell has interpreted this action as a way that 'people needed to assimilate the aura of the crime and punishment within themselves – through their feet, into their bones, as it were'.<sup>79</sup> However, it is possible that this behaviour fits into the rarely documented folklore ideas about healing through the touch of an executed criminal. This practice of assigning supernatural and medicinal properties to a corpse, was noted on several occasions from the mid-eighteenth century onwards.<sup>80</sup> Kicking about ashes could also be interpreted as an attempt to expunge all memory of the condemned. Or by destroying her ashes, they were attempting to block access to the afterlife, blocking all chance of resurrection on the day of judgment. But after all the emphasis placed upon dying well and debates about the resurrection not being a bodily experience but a spiritual one, this action was contradictory to theological tracts if not necessarily to popular opinion.

This is the only case where such actions were noted. The execution of Phoebe Harris was reported by a variety of newspapers in different ways; while some simply noted

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<sup>77</sup> *Reading Mercury* (Reading), Monday 26 June 1786.

<sup>78</sup> *Bury and Norwich Post* (Norwich), Wednesday 28 June 1786.

<sup>79</sup> Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree*, p. 73.

<sup>80</sup> O. Davies and F. Matteoni, 'A virtue beyond all medicine': The Hanged Man's Hand, Gallows Tradition and Healing in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-century England' *Social History of Medicine*, Volume 28, Issue 4, November 2015, pp. 687-688.

that she was executed by burning, others pointed out the behaviour of the crowds and yet others debated the moral implications of burning women. For example, *The Times* wrote:

The execution of a woman for *coining* on Wednesday morning, reflects a scandal upon the law, is a disgrace to the police, and was not only inhuman, but shamefully indelicate and shocking. Why should the law in this species of offence inflict a severer punishment upon a woman, than a man. It is not an offence which she can perpetrate alone - in every such case the insistence of a man has been found the operating motive upon the woman; yet the man is but hanged. This last execution was a nuisance of the most shocking kind. When remission of burning was refused, the scene of inhumanity should have been changed; the consequences have been serious; several persons in the neighbourhood of Newgate lying ill, have been severely affected by the smoke which issued from the body of the unhappy female victim.<sup>81</sup>

Six years after Phoebe Harris's execution, in 1789, the last woman to face execution by burning in London, Christian Murphy, alias Bowman, was hanged and burnt outside Newgate for coining offences.<sup>82</sup> It was reported that she was: 'drest in a clean striped gown, a white ribbon, and a black ribbon round her cap', and 'she was a decent looking woman, about 30 years of age. She behaved with great decency, but was much shocked at the dreadful punishment she was to undergo'.<sup>83</sup> Murphy may have been the last woman burnt in London, but she was not the last to receive the sentence of death by burning. Sophia Girton holds that title; she was sentenced to be burnt in April 1790. While awaiting her fate in gaol she received a week-long respite, then another, and another, until finally

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<sup>81</sup> *The Times* (London), Friday, June 23, 1786; Issue 469; emphasis in original. A shortened version of this passage is also discussed in Devereaux, 'The Abolition of the Burning of Women', p. 10.

<sup>82</sup> OBP, t17880910-102; OBP, s17880910-1.

<sup>83</sup> Anon. *The Life and Death of Christian Bowman, alias Murphy*, (1789).

her sentence was changed to transportation to New South Wales, Australia.<sup>84</sup> What Girton did not know was that during these respites, Sir Benjamin Hammett the MP for Taunton, had moved a bill in Parliament 'to alter the Law of burning for women', calling it 'a savage remnant of Norman policy'.<sup>85</sup> Hammett had witnessed the execution of Christian Murphy in his capacity as sheriff of London and this had prompted him to bring the bill to Parliament in May 1790.<sup>86</sup> As Devereaux has noted these 'sociocultural developments were decisively abetted by practical circumstances and principally advocated by a group of men - the sheriffs of London and Middlesex - whose appearance in the vanguard of reform may come as a surprise'.<sup>87</sup> Although there were occasional outcries against the burning of women, these were only a few raised voices. Christian Murphy was still a popular subject of print culture, which showed that people were still ready to read about and accept the burning of women.<sup>88</sup> The Act that passed to abolish the burning of women in 1790 made the substitution 'that in all cases of high and petty treason women were to be drawn and hanged'.<sup>89</sup>

The burning of women in London, although a small percentage of the total number of criminals and indeed total number of female criminals who were executed, was clearly imprinted upon early modern mentalities. Their charred bodily remains were probably treated as refuse, swept up with the ashes and burnt wood of the fire, even if they were kicked about beforehand. Contemporaries argued that displaying men in chains inflicted

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<sup>84</sup> OBP, t17900424-6; s17900424-1; *Whitehall Evening Post* (London), May 13 - May 15, 1790; Issue 6487; *Whitehall Evening Post* (London), May 18 - May 20, 1790; Issue 6489; *General Evening Post* (London), May 29 - June 1, 1790; Issue 8837; *General Evening Post* (London), June 12 - June 15, 1790; Issue 8844; *Whitehall Evening Post* (London), July 10 - July 13, 1790; Issue 6512.

<sup>85</sup> Discussed in E. J. Burford and S. Shulman, *Of Bridles and Burnings: The Punishment of Women* (New York and London: St. Martin's Press and Robert Hale, 1992), p. 47.

<sup>86</sup> L. Namier and J. Brooke, *The House of Commons 1754-1790 II*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1964), p. 575.

<sup>87</sup> Devereaux, 'The Abolition of the Burning of Women', p. 75.

<sup>88</sup> Devereaux, 'The Abolition of the Burning of Women', pp. 81-82.

<sup>89</sup> Discussed in Burford and Shulman, *Of Bridles and Burnings*, p. 47.



terror on would-be criminals who passed their exhibited corpses.<sup>90</sup> The burning of women would have served a similar role. When Elizabeth Hare was sentenced to death for coining in 1683 her execution took place at Bunhill Fields where it was described as a ‘sad Spectacle’ which ‘may be sufficient to warn others of the temptation’ of riches through coining as it led to ‘no other end then the Gates of Death and Destruction in this world, besides the great danger there is of eternal Destruction in the World to come’.<sup>91</sup> The image of a rotting corpse ‘hanging in chains’ would have had a stronger impact on passers-by than a pile of ash and bone, but the process of actually witnessing a woman burn, something that would have intensely impacted the senses, provided an image of total eradication. This eradication surely is the epitome of marginalisation when something is so far removed from the norm as to leave only a limited physical trace.

### Displayed

Men who were displayed after their executions fall into two categories. Those who were hanged, drawn, and quartered then displayed will be examined first, before turning to those who were ‘hanged in chains’. No women were ever disembowelled or hung in chains in England, although one woman was gibbeted overseas under English law and in Europe the practice was carried out.<sup>92</sup> For example, in 1664 a Danish girl named Elsje Christiaens who murdered her landlady was displayed at the Volewijk, a field on the northern shore of the IJ after her execution. Two images of her were drawn by Rembrandt (fig. 3.6).

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<sup>90</sup> T. Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015), p. 148.

<sup>91</sup> Anon, *The true narrative of the confession and execution of Elizabeth Hare*, (1683).

<sup>92</sup> F. E. Dolan, “‘Gentlemen, I Have One Thing More to Say’: Women on Scaffolds in England, 1563-1680’ *Modern Philology*, Vol. 92, No. 2 (Nov., 1994), p. 166; For the case of Marie-Josephte Corriveau who was gibbeted in Québec see S. Tarlow and E. Battell Lowman, *Harnessing the Power of the Criminal Corpse* Palgrave Historical Studies in the Criminal Corpse and its Afterlife (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 177-182.



Figure 3.6. Rembrandt van Rijn, Elsje Christiaens's body being displayed after her execution. The axe she used to kill is also exhibited, drawings (1664) © Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The practices of hanging, drawing, and quartering were settled by the Statute of Treason of Edward III in 1352. The first case in England predates this and is claimed to be that of the pirate William Marise in 1241. Arguably the most famous early case was that of William Wallace in 1305.<sup>93</sup> Wallace was drawn on a hurdle to the gallows at Smithfield, he was hanged but cut down while still alive his heart and bowels were taken out and burnt, then his body quartered. Wallace was decapitated and his head is recorded as the first one placed on London Bridge. His quarters were displayed at Newcastle, Berwick, Stirling, and Perth. The task of distributing the severed body parts to Scotland fell to Sir John Segrave who, 'for the carriage of the body of William le Waleys' was paid fifteen shillings.<sup>94</sup> For

<sup>93</sup> A. Hartshorne, *Hanging in Chains* (London: T.F. Unwin, 1891), pp. 18-119; W. Andrews, *Bygone Punishments* (2015 edn.), p. 38.

<sup>94</sup> (CDS, 2, no. 485) in A. Fisher, 'Wallace, Sir William (d. 1305), patriot and guardian of Scotland' *ODNB* September 23, 2004.

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-28544> [accessed, 12 Oct. 2019].

roughly the next 600 years this method of execution and display was used in the metropolis.

To be hanged, drawn, and quartered, or rather, drawn, hanged, and quartered, was the punishment for high treason, any attack on the sovereign, their family, and peers. Many of the quarters and especially the heads of individuals subjected to this form of execution would then be displayed around the outskirts of the City of London. The most famous of these locations was London Bridge. During the 1590s there were, according to the writer and traveller Paul Hentzner, about 30 heads on London Bridge.<sup>95</sup> Until 1577 these heads were displayed over Drawbridge Gate on the northern end of the bridge and thereafter relocated to the Great Stone Gate at the Southwark end. In the below image from 1610 (fig. 3.7), the heads are clearly visible on the southern end of the bridge.

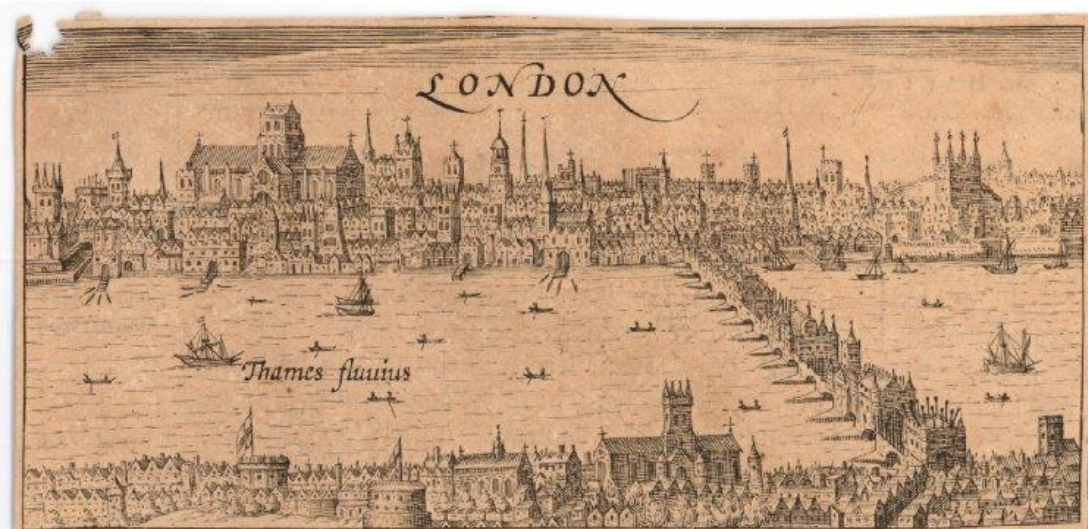


Figure 3.7. Long view of London, from the South Bank, as it appeared before the fire of 1666; fragment from the map of Great Britain and Ireland, published in John Speed's *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine* (1611-1612) ©The Trustees of the British Museum.

The last head to be placed upon London Bridge was that of William Stayley in 1678. Stayley was executed at Tyburn for a drunken threat made against the king during the 'Popish Plot' hysteria. After being drawn to the place of execution and the sentence carried out (fig. 3.8),

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<sup>95</sup> P. Hentzner, *Travels in England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth*, translated by Horace, late Earl of Orford, and first printed by him at Strawberry Hill, (1797), p. 30.

instead of his head and quarters being displayed after the execution the king allowed his relatives to collect them. A 'grand' funeral was arranged for Stayley before he was interred in St Paul's, Covent Garden.<sup>96</sup> This funeral ceremony incensed the king who:

Commanded the Coroner of the Liberty of *Westminster* to take up the Body of the said *William Stayley*, and deliver it to the Sheriff of the County of *Middlesex* and that the said Sheriff should cause the Quarters to be set up on the Gates of the City of *London* and his Head on *London Bridge*.<sup>97</sup>

The body was exhumed, and the quarters placed on some of the seven gates of the City and the head placed on London Bridge.



Figure 3.8. William Faithorne, *The manner how Mr. William Staley was drawne on a sledge to Execution November 27th, 1678* line engraving, c.1678-1679 ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

Exhuming a corpse and displaying it was not unheard of. In 1661, Oliver Cromwell, along with Henry Ireton and John Bradshaw, were disinterred and dragged on a sled to Tyburn where they were hanged and beheaded. Their bodies were buried in a pit at the gallows and their heads placed upon wooden poles above the south end of Westminster Hall.<sup>98</sup> The other regicides, Thomas Harrison, John Carew, Gregory Clement, Adrian Scroope, John Jones, Thomas Scot, along with Hugh Peter, a preacher, and the lawyer John

<sup>96</sup> J. W. Willis-Bund, *A selection of cases from the state trials*, vol. 2, pt. 2 (1882), p. 473.

<sup>97</sup> Anon, *An account of the digging up of the quarters of William Stayley, lately executed for high treason, for that his relations abused the Kings mercy* (1678).

<sup>98</sup> S. Tarlow, *Ritual, Belief and the Dead in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 118.

Cook were all executed as traitors at Charing Cross. The commanders of the guards at the King's trial, Francis Hacker and Daniel Axtell, were executed at Tyburn. Francis Hacker was only hanged, and his body given to his friends for burial. They interred him at the church of St Nicholas, Cole Abbey.<sup>99</sup> John Carew was drawn, hanged, and quartered but his parts were returned to his family for burial. The rest of the regicides were displayed, Harrison, Cook, Peter, and Axtell on Westminster Hall, and Clement, and Scot on London Bridge.<sup>100</sup> The heads of Scroope and Jones almost certainly went to either Westminster Hall or London Bridge, however, this is never made explicit.

Westminster Hall displayed many heads over the seventeenth century, including some of those executed for the Gunpowder Plot in 1606 and some of the Rye House plotters from 1683. Thomas Armstrong (one of the Rye House plotters) executed 20 June 1684 at Tower Hill had his head affixed to Westminster Hall, three of his quarters were displayed in London, and the fourth at Stafford.<sup>101</sup> Sending quarters outside of London, often returning the individual to their hometown or city to be displayed, was not uncommon. James Holloway the other Rye House plotter executed with Armstrong had his head and quarters sent to Bristol and fixed upon the gates there.<sup>102</sup>

Both London Bridge and Westminster Hall ceased to be used for displaying the heads of traitors by the eighteenth century, but this practice continued at Temple Bar. One of the earliest noted heads on Temple Bar was that of John Aylofffe from 30 October 1685. Aylofffe was a Whig involved in Argyll's Rising. He was executed at Inner Temple after a

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<sup>99</sup> Anon, *A true and perfect relation of the grand traytors execution, as at severall times they were drawn, hang'd, and quartered at Charing-crosse, and at Tiburne*, (1660).

<sup>100</sup> Anon, *The severall speeches, disputes, and conferences, betwixt the gentlemen of the Black Roll (actors in that most horrid and bloody tragedy, against our late Gracious Sovereign Lord King Charles)*, (1660).

<sup>101</sup> Anon, *An Elegy on Sir Thomas Armstrong: who was executed June the 20th 1684*, (1684); Anon, *An impartial account of all the material circumstances relating to Sir Thomas Armestrong Kt.*, (1684).

<sup>102</sup> *London Gazette* (London), April 28 - May 1, 1684; Issue 1925; *London Gazette* (London), June 19 - June 23, 1684; Issue 1940.

failed suicide attempt with a pen knife.<sup>103</sup> On 10 April 1696 John Evelyn noted in his diary: 'The quarters of Sir William Perkins and Sir John Friend, lately executed on the plot, with Perkins's head, were set up at Temple Bar, a dismal sight, which many pitied'.<sup>104</sup> Friend and Perkins (or Parkyns) were executed on 3 April.<sup>105</sup> Regardless of this hint at pity and slight repulsion, heads were continuously displayed at Temple Bar (fig. 3.9) until the end of the eighteenth century, long after the main gates of the City, Ludgate, Newgate, Aldersgate, Cripplegate, Moorgate, Bishopsgate, and Aldgate were demolished in the 1760s.

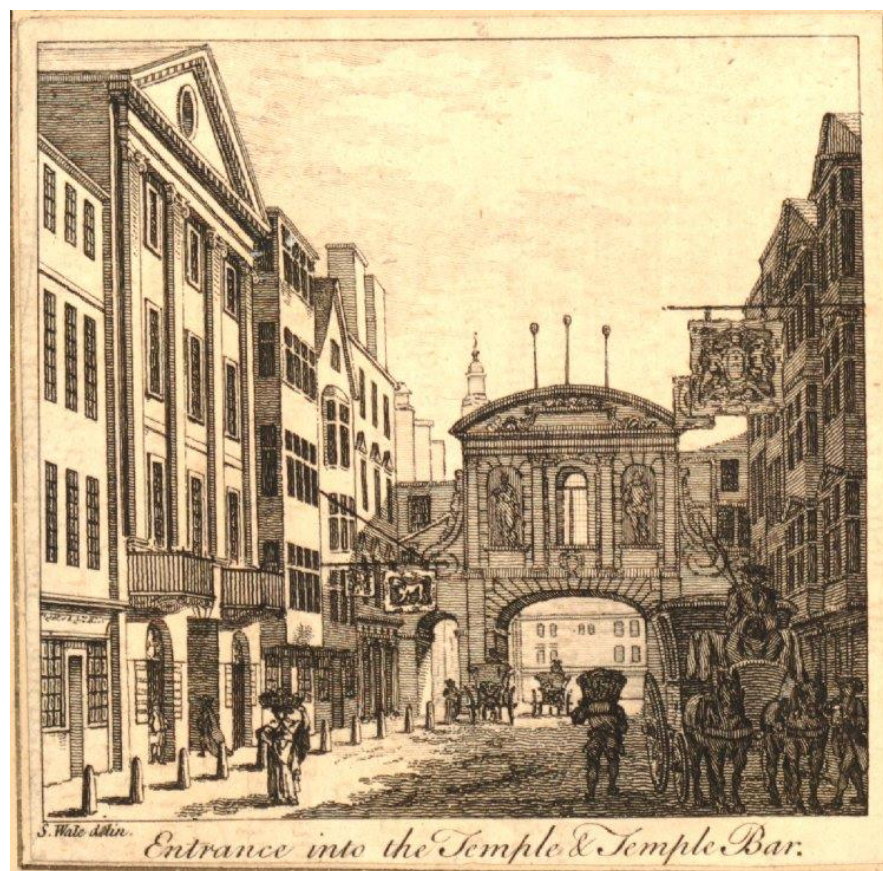


Figure 3.9. View of Temple Bar from the street, with three heads on spikes at top; illustration to Dodsley's *London and its Environs Described* (1761) ©The Trustees of The British Museum.

The population of London would have been confronted with the heads of executed traitors on a regular basis. Interactions with these bodily remains were also not unheard of.

<sup>103</sup> W. Chernaik, 'Ayloffe [Ayliffe], John (c. 1645–1685), satirist and conspirator', *ODNB* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-937>. 23 Sep. 2004; [accessed, 30 Oct. 2019].

<sup>104</sup> Evelyn, *The Diary*, p. 353.

<sup>105</sup> *London Gazette* (London), April 6 - April 9, 1696; Issue 3173.

The Jesuit Thomas Garnett, alias Rookwood, alias Saier, who was hanged, drawn, and quartered on 23 June 1609 is reported to have had some parts of his body stolen away and taken to St Omer.<sup>106</sup> In 1723 Christopher Layer was executed at Tyburn, 'his Head was sever'd from his Body and sent to Newgate, and this Morning about 9, was put up on Temple-Bar, and his Quarters were conveyed in a Herse to be disposed of according to the Directions of his Friends'. There is a story that Layer's head fell from atop Temple Gate and was bought by a 'well-known nonjuring attorney named Pearce, who resold it to Dr Richard Rawlinson, the Jacobite antiquary', who was said to have displayed the skull in his study and when Rawlinson died, he asked for the skull to be interred with him.<sup>107</sup> The Jacobites Francis Towneley and George Fletcher were hanged, drawn, and quartered on 30 July 1746 at Kennington Common. Towneley's body was buried in the churchyard of St Pancras; his head was displayed at Temple Bar (fig. 3.10) but was recovered and interred in the family crypt at Towneley Hall at some point shortly after being displayed.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> T. Cooper, and G. Bradley, 'Garnett, Thomas [St Thomas Garnett] (1575–1608), Jesuit', *ODNB* September 23, 2004

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-10394> [accessed, 30 Oct. 2019].

<sup>107</sup> R. Turner, 'Layer, Christopher (1683–1723), lawyer and Jacobite conspirator', *ODNB* January 03, 2008. <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-16221> [accessed, 30 Oct. 2019]; *London Gazette* (London), May 14 - May 18, 1723; Issue 6164; *Evening Post* (1709) (London), May 16 - May 18, 1723; Issue 2154.

<sup>108</sup> L. Gooch, 'Towneley, Francis (1709–1746), Jacobite army officer', *ODNB* May 25, 2006. <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-27603> [accessed, 30 Oct. 2019].



Figure 3.10. Unknown Artist, Francis Towneley; George Fletcher etching, published 20 September 1746 ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

Even though the sentence of being hanged, drawn, and quartered continued to be infrequently prescribed, the practice itself was no longer carried out after the 1780s. On the 27 July 1781, Francois de la Motte, a French spy, was executed. He was hanged until dead, his head was then cut off, and his heart taken out and burnt although the quartering was remitted. He was then buried in St Pancras Churchyard with no further ignominious customs inflicted upon his remains.<sup>109</sup> The last individuals in London who received the sentence to be hanged, drawn, and quartered were the Cato Street conspirators in 1820. They were only hanged and then decapitated.<sup>110</sup> In 1814 The Treason Act had removed the

<sup>109</sup> OBP, t17810711-1; *London Courant and Westminster Chronicle* (London), Monday, July 30, 1781.

<sup>110</sup> A. Knapp and W. Baldwin, *The Newgate Calendar; Comprising Interesting Memoirs of the Most Notorious Characters who have been convicted of outrages on the Laws of England* Vol. IV, (1826), pp. 253-272.



disembowelling and quartering requirements from the male punishment for high treason.

The heads and quarters of executed criminals were never displayed within the administrative centre of the City of London (fig. 3.11). First London Bridge after 1678, then Westminster Hall after 1696 ceased to be used for the practice of displaying the heads of traitors. By the middle of the eighteenth-century Temple Bar followed suit and this form of display within the metropolis ceased all together. But why was this the case? As the metropolis expanded and rapidly outgrew the City walls over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the severed heads and quarters of criminals which had acted as a warning beacon of sorts to all who migrated into the City became obsolete. Instead of being at the margins of London life, the locations where these grisly remains had once been located became the heart of the metropolis and no longer held the same efficacy as they would have done in earlier periods. Instead, it was the criminals who were 'hanged in chains' who now fulfilled the role that this form of display once held. These gibbeted individuals encircled the expanding metropolis on every major travel route in and out of London. Thereby even as the two practices had been carried out simultaneously for a long time, gibbeting increased and became the sole method of display used by officials as a deterrent against heinous criminal acts.



Figure 3.11. W. Faithorne and R. Newcourt (1658) A map of London before the Great Fire of 1666 showing the suburbs for the first time. Based on a survey completed in the 1640s. The locations for the display of heads are shown by red circles and the orange dots denote the seven gates of the City upon which quarters were displayed.

The practice of displaying executed felons by gibbeting them has only recently received scholarly attention, namely by Sarah Tarlow.<sup>111</sup> The practice itself has an unknown origin. Cases are recorded from 1341 just outside Chapel-en-le-Frith, and in Henry Chauncy's *The Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire* some early cases are noted, although this volume was written in the seventeenth century.<sup>112</sup> By the mid-sixteenth century it was a common form of post-mortem punishment. Earlier centuries may have seen individuals 'hanged in chains' who were displayed while alive. Their death would have been brought about due to starvation and attacks from the elements. This was allegedly the execution method used upon Robert Aske in York in 1537.<sup>113</sup> The English archaeologist Albert Hartshorne was the earliest scholar to pay this form of post-execution punishment any significant attention. His book pointed out that from the many enactments that were concerned with the administration of criminal law, 'no cognisance is taken of the hanging of bodies of criminals in chains' prior to the 1752 Murder Act.<sup>114</sup> Not unlike the profane suicide burials covered in the previous chapter, it was local agency rather than the law that dictated this practice.

For the seventeenth century 39 definite cases of being 'hanged in chains' have been uncovered. During the eighteenth century this figure increases to 142. Murder, robbery, desertion, piracy, mutiny, sedition, arson, horse theft, highway robbery, mail theft, burglary, housebreaking, smuggling, ship theft, serving on a French privateer, and shooting at someone could all result in being 'hanged in chains'.

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<sup>111</sup> S. Tarlow, 'The Technology of the Gibbet' *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (December 2014), pp. 668-699; S. Tarlow and Z. Dyndor, 'The Landscape of the Gibbet' *Landscape History*, 36:1, (April 2015), pp. 71-88; S. Tarlow, *The Golden and Ghoulish Age of the Gibbet in Britain* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Tarlow and Battell Lowman, *Harnessing the Power*, pp. 151-190.

<sup>112</sup> Andrews, *Bygone Punishments*, p. 22.

<sup>113</sup> R. W. Hoyle, 'Aske, Robert (c. 1500–1537), lawyer and rebel'. *ODNB* 23 Sep. 2004; <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-797> [accessed, 12 Sep. 2019].

<sup>114</sup> Hartshorne, *Hanging in Chains*, p. 14.

Earlier cases of individuals displayed in this manner would have used actual chains, not unlike what can be seen in the images Rembrandt drew of Elsje Christiaens, (fig. 3.6), hence the language that continued to be used to describe this form of punishment. However, 'hanging in chains' by the eighteenth century referred not to chains but rather iron cages. Chains did not offer the safeguard against theft of a body that cages did. The language slowly changed, in March 1748 William Whurrier was reported in the newspapers as being 'hanged in irons' at Finchley Common after his execution for murder.<sup>115</sup> 'Hanged in chains', 'hanged in irons', or 'fixed in irons' were used interchangeably from this point.

The gibbet individuals were displayed on was roughly 30 feet in height with a cross beam from which a short chain supported an iron cage which housed the body of the criminal.<sup>116</sup> Of these cages only one from London still exists, potentially from Execution Dock (fig. 3.12).



Figure 3.12. Wrought Iron Gibbet Cage ©Museum of London.

<sup>115</sup> *Whitehall Evening Post or London Intelligencer* (London), March 17 - March 19, 1748; Issue 328.

<sup>116</sup> Tarlow and Dyndor, 'The Landscape of the Gibbet', p. 76.

This cage has no support for the arms which presumably hung freely outside. The torso hoops and collar are hinged and bolted, therefore adjustable, but the leg sections are not. There is evidence of restoration and it appears this cage was possibly reused.<sup>117</sup> Reuse of cages was rare. Individuals were measured to fit cages exactly and they were commissioned and designed with one specific individual in mind; they were also made to be durable. When a sentence to be 'hanged in chains' was passed upon a criminal their body was taken after execution and possibly prepared in some manner. There are occasional mentions of the body being 'dipped in tar'. Within the letters of Monsieur Cesar de Saussure, a Swiss traveller to London during the eighteenth century he notes that:

They are first hung on the common gibbet, their bodies are then covered with tallow and fat substances, over this is placed a tarred shirt fastened down with iron bands, and the bodies are hung with chains to the gibbet, which is erected on the spot, or as near as possible to the place, where the crime was committed, and there it hangs till it falls to dust. This is what is called in this country to "hang in chains." The lower classes do not consider it a great disgrace to be simply hanged, but have a great horror of the hanging in chains, and the shame of it is terrible for the relatives of the condemned.<sup>118</sup>

Whether this occurred each time is unknown.

An essay by Tarlow explored the impact the presence a gibbet would have had upon the early modern English landscape. For this she used 'Sheriffs' Cravings', the expense claims of the Sheriffs. The Sheriffs oversaw the commission of gibbets, their erection, and the security needed for the performance of gibbeting someone, along with the cost of the

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<sup>117</sup> Tarlow, 'The Technology of the Gibbet', p. 685.

<sup>118</sup> C. de Saussure, *A foreign view of England in the reigns of George I and George II: The letters of Monsieur Cesar de Saussure to his family; translated and edited by Madame Van Muyden* (London: John Murray, 1902), pp. 126.

journey from the gallows to the site where a gibbet had been erected.<sup>119</sup> This was an expensive affair. In March 1731 William Williams was executed at Tyburn and then gibbeted at Turnham Green. The gibbeting expense was £10 9s with the cost of irons at £6 5s, a total for the entire execution expense of £19 11s was recorded in the Cravings.<sup>120</sup> A few years later, in 1735, four criminals were gibbeted at Edgeware, John Field, Joseph Rose, William Saunders, and Humphrey Walker. The last individual had died in Newgate before his execution but was still displayed. This was not uncommon, in May 1730 Hugh Horton, alias Norton or Houghton hanged himself in Newgate and was still 'hanged in chains' on Hounslow Heath.<sup>121</sup> The cost for the four at Edgeware came to a total of £48 17s.<sup>122</sup> Costs could increase based on the distance between the execution site itself and the gibbet site. On 26 April 1749 William Fairall, alias Sheppard, and Thomas Kingsmil, alias Staymaker of the Hawkhurst gang were executed at Tyburn for smuggling.<sup>123</sup> Both bodies were transported over 50 miles to their gibbet sites, Fairall in Horsemonden and Kingsmil in Goudhurst Gore, at a cost of £24 1s each.<sup>124</sup> Zoe Dyndor has explored the gibbeting locations of all the members of the Hawhurst gang arguing that different locations were chosen based on the different crimes members of the gang carried out.<sup>125</sup> There is an argument that, not unlike the locations of suicide burials, gibbets were located at parish boundaries.<sup>126</sup> For the metropolis this was less common.

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<sup>119</sup> Tarlow and Dyndor, 'The Landscape of the Gibbet', p. 72; Tarlow and Battell Lowman, *Harnessing the Power*, p. 155.

<sup>120</sup> Tarlow, 'The Technology of the Gibbet', p. 677.

<sup>121</sup> *Daily Journal* (London), Wednesday, May 13, 1730; Issue 2917.

<sup>122</sup> Tarlow, 'The Technology of the Gibbet', p. 677.

<sup>123</sup> OBP, OA17490426.

<sup>124</sup> Tarlow, 'The Technology of the Gibbet', p. 677.

<sup>125</sup> Z. Dyndor, 'The Gibbet in the Landscape: Locating the Criminal Corpse in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England' *A Global History of Execution and the Criminal Corpse* R. Ward, (ed.), (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 103.

<sup>126</sup> N. Whyte, 'The Deviant Dead in the Norfolk Landscape', *Landscapes* Vol. 4 (2003), pp. 24-39; Tarlow and Dyndor, 'The Landscape of the Gibbet', pp. 71-88.

London gibbeted more individuals than the rest of the country.<sup>127</sup> Known gibbets were located at various geographical locations that surrounded the metropolis, along the Thames, and at various ports and coastal towns, even as far afield as Yarmouth (table 3.1).

<i>Location of Gibbet</i>	<i>Execution Site</i>	<i>Miles from execution to gibbet site</i>	<i>Number of individuals</i>
Acton gravel pits	St James Street	5.3	1
Between Bow and Mile End	Brook Street	5.6	1
	Goodmans Fields	2.5	1
	Pall Mall	5.2	1
	Tyburn	6	2
Between Pancras Church and Kentish Town	Tyburn	3	1
Blackwall	Execution Dock	3	4
Blackwall Bridge	Execution Dock	3.2	3
Bow Common	Tyburn	6.2	2
Bugsby's Hole	Execution Dock	5.8	1
Cranleigh Common (Surrey)	Kennington Common	33.8	2
Cuckold's Point	Execution Dock	2.4	1
Deptford	Execution Dock	3.6	1
Deptford / Rotherhithe	Kennington Common	4.2	1
Dover coast	Execution Dock	75.4	2
Ealing Common	Tyburn	6.4	1
Edger	Tyburn	5	1
Edgware road	Newgate	5.4	2
	Tyburn	0.9	3
Enfield	Tyburn	11.8	1
Erith	Execution Dock	11.8	4
Execution Dock (near)	Execution Dock	0	48
Finchley Common	Finchley Common	0	1
	Fleet Street	8	2
	Islington	5.7	1
	Russel Street, Covent Garden	6.8	1
	Tyburn	6.5	4
Fulham Common	Tyburn	3.5	1
Gallions	Execution Dock	6.5	1

<sup>127</sup> Tarlow and Dyndor, 'The Landscape of the Gibbet', p. 76.

St George Fields	Kennington Common	1	6
Goudhurst (Kent)	Tyburn	50	1
Gravesend	Execution Dock	21	1
Hampstead Heath	Tyburn	3.8	1
Hampstead Road	Bromley Street End	6.4	1
Holloway	Clerkenwell Green	2.9	2
	Gitspur Street	3.2	1
Horsendown Green (Kent)	Tyburn	50	1
Houndsfield	Tyburn	11	2
Hounslow Heath	Haymarket	12.5	1
	Hounslow Heath	0	1
	Newgate	14.6	3
	Smallberry Green	3.5	1
	Tyburn	12	8
Islington (near)	Islington	0	1
Kennington Common	Kennington Common	0	3
	Kingston	10.6	2
Lewes (Sussex)	Tyburn	50	1
Limehouse (opposite Woolwich)	Execution Dock	1.3	1
Paddington Common	Tyburn	0.5	1
Portsmouth	Tyburn	74.8	1
Putney Common	Kingston	5.8	2
Queens Down	Queens Down	0	2
Rochester	Tyburn	33	1
Shepherds Bush	The Strand (Catherine Street)	5.8	1
	Tyburn	3.7	6
Shooters Hill	Tyburn	11.2	1
Stamford Hill	Bishopsgate	4	1
	Fleet Street	4.8	2
	Tottenham	2.7	1
	Stamford Hill	0	1
	Tyburn	6.4	5
Stone-Bridge	Bunhill Fields	1.8	1
	Stone-Bridge	0	2
Tilbury Point	Execution Dock	24	1
Turnham Green	Somerset House	6.6	1
	Turnham Green	0	1
	Tyburn	5	3



Wilsden	Tyburn	4.3	1
Winchmore Hill	Tyburn	10	2
Yarmouth	Execution Dock	166	1
Unknown			11

*Table 3.1* Distance between execution and gibbet site along with the number of criminals subjected to this journey.

Bodies travelled an average of 8.6 miles from their execution site to their gibbet site. They formed a circle around the metropolis on major roads, commons, heaths, and along the Thames, the key routes into the city. These physical locations mark this type of disposal of the criminal corpse as one of the most prominent visual marginalisation examples that this thesis explores. Being ‘hanged in chains’ was also the most feared method of disposal. In April 1761 Theodore Gardelle ‘seemed most affected at the Thoughts of being hanged in Chains’ and would much rather have been dissected. His wish was not fulfilled, and he was placed in a gibbet on Hounslow Heath.<sup>128</sup>

Gibbets were anthropomorphic even after the human remains had disintegrated and fallen through the cage or been taken out, and the eerie noise and movement that they produced must have played a role in how they were perceived by the populace.<sup>129</sup> Bodies were subjected to visible decay. Animals, insects, and the environment would have impacted the sensory experiences of viewing a gibbeted criminal and there were occasional petitions to relocate gibbets, especially when located near the properties of individuals from the upper spheres of society. When relocation did occur, it must have incurred additional work and expense.<sup>130</sup> In 1730 Drummond and Shrimpton, who were ‘hanged in chains’ on Stamford Hill, were removed with their gibbets to a more remote part of the common. There was no reason given for this, but it could have been down to a local complaint.<sup>131</sup> Samuel Hurlock, a gunsmith executed at Tyburn for murder on 31 July 1747

<sup>128</sup> *Whitehall Evening Post or London Intelligencer* (London), April 2 - April 4, 1761; Issue 2348.

<sup>129</sup> Tarlow and Battell Lowman, *Harnessing the Power*, p. 160.

<sup>130</sup> Tarlow and Battell Lowman, *Harnessing the Power*, p. 158.

<sup>131</sup> *Grub Street Journal* (London), Thursday, May 7, 1730; Issue 18.

and then 'hanged in chains' on Stamford Hill, was 'ordered to be taken down, the Stench of his Body being a Nuisance to the Inhabitants of the Neighbourhood' just over a week after being erected.<sup>132</sup> Other bodies within gibbets could be stolen away. In 1727 the *London Journal* reported:

On Tuesday Morning one Mr. Wilson, an Housekeeper in Southwark, who about 5 Months ago had lett a Room to two Men that gave Earnest for the same, and lay there but one Night, having never heard of them since, he caused the Door to be broke open, when, to his great Suprize, he found the Body of Burnworth alias Fraizier, that was hanged in Chains in St George's Fields, for the Murder of Thomas Ball, tied up in a Sack, which had lain there in his House all that Time.<sup>133</sup>

This body was probably stolen by resurrectionists who may have attempted to sell it on to a surgeon and failed. Edmond Tooly, hanged in 1700 for murder and displayed upon a gibbet on Finchley Common, was stolen away 'by some of his Accomplices'.<sup>134</sup> James Shaw, alias Smith, who was executed for assault and horse theft in 1721 then displayed near Pancras, 'was taken down from the Gibbet, and convey'd away by Persons unknown'.<sup>135</sup> The gibbets were designed to avoid these types of thefts often having nails along the wooden pole to deter people climbing them.<sup>136</sup> Nevertheless, although only a few cases have been unearthed, the persistence of some thieves could not be dissuaded.

As with any punishment, 'hanging in chains' was not always adhered to. On 2 May 1691 James Selby was hanged in Goodmans Fields and according to the Ordinary 'he was cut down, and carried to Mile-End, there to be hanged up in Chains'. Selby, however,

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<sup>132</sup> *Whitehall Evening Post or London Intelligencer* (London), August 11 - August 13, 1747; Issue 234.

<sup>133</sup> *British Journal* (1722) (London), Saturday, April 29, 1727; Issue 241.

<sup>134</sup> *Post Man and the Historical Account* (London), February 3 - February 6, 1700; Issue 708.

<sup>135</sup> OBP, OA17220208; *Post Boy* (1695) (London), February 8 - February 10, 1722; Issue 5079; *Daily Post* (London), Friday, February 16, 1722; Issue 744.

<sup>136</sup> Tarlow, *The Golden and Ghoulish*, p. 68.

appears in the parish register of St Mary, Whitechapel in an entry on 3 May as 'James Selby a man from Plough Street was executed', so he was buried and not displayed.<sup>137</sup> On 22 June 1698 Edmund Audley was executed for murder on temporary gallows against 'the Shop Door where the Crime was committed, and afterwards hang'd in Chains'. This was never carried out and Audley was instead anatomised and then buried in St Olave, Silver Street.<sup>138</sup> In March 1729, in a similar story to Audley's, Peter Kelly, alias Owen, alias Nisbit was meant to be 'hanged in chains' but instead was given to the surgeons and when they were finished anatomising him his remains were buried in St Olave, Silver Street.<sup>139</sup>

Occasionally a certain amount of leniency was shown by the authorities. The body of Emanuel Dickenson, who was executed at Kingston for murder along with five others who were all 'hanged in chains' at Kennington Common in 1726, was taken down and delivered to his relations after hanging for only one day. This favour was reported to be 'in Regard to the memory of his Father, a Lieutenant in the English Army, who signaliz'd himself at the Siege of Air (where he lost his Life)'.<sup>140</sup> The removal of a corpse 'hanging in chains' after such brief a period could only be possible with the gibbets that surrounded London because here, unlike elsewhere in the country, gibbets were reused. The reuse of gibbets would have saved money and therefore Dickinson's vacant gibbet was probably quickly filled. The irons in the Museum of London Docklands, as already mentioned, show evidence of reuse. Gibbets on Stamford Hill appear to have been reused. Arthur Gray executed on 11 May 1748 for smuggling was gibbeted on a post on Stamford Hill where Hosea Youell had been gibbeted a year earlier for murder. In 1738 Gill Smith was displayed

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<sup>137</sup> OBP, OA16910501; LMA, P93/MRY1/060.

<sup>138</sup> LMA, P69/OLA3/A/002/MS06534A; OBP, OA16980622; *Flying Post or The Post Master* (London), June 16 - June 18, 1698; Anon, *A True and impartial account of the birth, parentage, education, life, and conversation of Edmund Audley*, (1698).

<sup>139</sup> OBP, OA17290324; LMA, P69/OLA3/A/001/MS06534; *Daily Journal* (London), Tuesday, March 25, 1729; Issue 2562; *Flying Post or The Weekly Medley* (London), Saturday, April 5, 1729; Issue 27; *Applebee's Original Weekly Journal* (London), Saturday, March 8, 1729.

<sup>140</sup> *Daily Journal* (London), Monday, April 11, 1726; Issue 1634.

upon a 'spare limb of the gibbet from which two of his colleagues in crime had been hung' on Kennington Common, and William Corbett in April 1764 was 'hung upon Gallery Wall, between Rotherhithe and Deptford' on a 'vacant' gibbet.<sup>141</sup>

A gibbeting, much like the initial hanging, was a social occasion. Ben Child, a highwayman executed for theft from the Bristol mail in 1722, requested the smith who came to take measurement of him for the iron cage 'to make it as fine as possible, for he expected, he said, a vast Number of People to come and see him in his new Suit'.<sup>142</sup> Indeed many people did attend his gibbeting. In July 1770 Peter Conoway and Michael Richardson were 'hanged in chains' on Bow Common for murder and the newspapers reported on the behaviour of the gibbet crowd. They voiced outrage that a fair ground of sorts had been erected by the gibbet with booths selling items including alcohol and entertainment being provided. People even climbed up the gibbet with one man calling out 'Conoway, you and I have often smoked a pipe together, and so shall we again'. As he called this out, he lit two pipes, climbed the gibbet and stuck a lighted pipe 'in Connoway's mouth, and smoked the other as he sat across the gallows'.<sup>143</sup> In Greenwich telescopes were hired out for people to view gibbeted pirates on the opposite side of the river. When these bodies were removed some newspapers complained that 'holiday-makers were deprived of their amusements'.<sup>144</sup>

The gibbeted individuals who lined the Thames from Wapping to the Estuary and those sent further afield to other ports and coastlines fell under the jurisdiction of the Court of Admiralty. Their hangings were carried out slightly differently to those at Tyburn and other execution sites. Individuals were transported from Newgate and other locations where they were held in a similar procession to that from Newgate to Tyburn. A silver oar

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<sup>141</sup> These are covered by Tarlow and Dyndor, 'The Landscape of the Gibbet', p. 81; for Corbett's location see, *Public Advertiser* (London), Friday, April 6, 1764; Issue 9183.

<sup>142</sup> *Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post* (London), Saturday, May 26, 1722; Issue 182.

<sup>143</sup> Quote from *General Evening Post*, August 2 – August 4, 1770; Issue 5744; story also told in Tarlow and Dyndor, 'The Landscape of the Gibbet', p. 82.

<sup>144</sup> Hartshorne, *Hanging in Chains*, p. 75.

was held aloft at the forefront of the convoy. When they reached Execution Dock they were hanged then chained to a stake on the shore at low-water mark. Here they were meant to be left until three tides had washed over them.<sup>145</sup> This practice appears to have ceased in the eighteenth century.<sup>146</sup> Individuals hanged at Execution Dock were the most likely to receive a post-mortem sentence to be ‘hanged in chains’.

Over the eighteenth-century gibbeting locations were slowly swallowed up by the expanding metropolis. In 1764 it was reported that ‘Saturday night last the only remaining gibbet at Shepherd’s-bush was blown down, so that that place remains now without any marks of ignominy upon it; which has not before happened for a century past’.<sup>147</sup> In the last twenty years of the eighteenth century two people were gibbeted on Hounslow Heath, one on Finchley Common, one was sent from Execution Dock to Yarmouth, two were sent to Dover and ten were placed along the Thames at different points. After the 1752 Murder Act, where ‘hanging in chains’ became a sanctioned punishment, the choice of being dissected or hung in chains was left to the discretion of the judge.<sup>148</sup> The Admiralty Court seems to have favoured ‘hanging in chains’ over dissection as their concerns were with the visibility of the punishment. What did it matter if sailors were anatomised if the visual impact of such would not have been apparent to passing ships? Men continued to be gibbeted in England until 1832, but the practice had declined substantially, indeed it peaked before being formalised in law in 1752.<sup>149</sup> In 1834 it was abolished completely.

‘Hanging in chains’ placed the body in an ambiguous liminal space, a place neither sacred nor profane betwixt the earth and sky. Gibbeted bodies were recognisably the

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<sup>145</sup> W. Harrison, *A Description of England: Classic Contemporary Account of Tudor Social Life* G. Edelen, (ed.), (Washington D. C. and New York: A Joint Publication of The Folger Shakespeare Library and Dover Publications Inc, 1994 edn.), p. 192.

<sup>146</sup> Tarlow, *The Golden and Ghoulish*, p. 59.

<sup>147</sup> *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (London), Tuesday, March 26, 1765; Issue 11243, also in Tarlow and Dyndor, ‘The Landscape of the Gibbet’, p. 81.

<sup>148</sup> Tarlow and Dyndor, ‘The Landscape of the Gibbet’, p. 75.

<sup>149</sup> Tarlow and Battell Lowman, *Harnessing the Power*, pp. 152, 168.

bodies of individuals, yet they were, more often than not, left in situ to vanish over time as nature took its course. Not unlike women executed by burning, although over a far longer period, they were meant to disappear and fade away until nought was left except for the memory of their crime and death. Gibbets themselves were at the fringes of everyday life but they were not where the population feared to tread, nor where they would not be viewed. They were visible, albeit marginal, eerie, disconcerting, and attractive to early modern Londoners while functioning as a warning against committing heinous crimes.

### Anatomised

After the statutory incorporation of the Barber-Surgeons' Company in 1540 (32 Hen.8 c.42), the Barber-Surgeons were entitled to receive four criminal cadavers annually for dissection. This number rose to six bodies under Charles II. By 1752 the Act for 'Regulating the Disposal after Execution of the Bodies' or the 'Murder Act' as it came to be called, increased the number of bodies that could be claimed by the company. They were permitted to take the cadavers of any person executed for murder. This act was passed during a period of widely publicised murders that the newspapers reported as 'a pressing social problem'.<sup>150</sup> The act was designed explicitly to induce terror at the violation of the body through 'hanging in chains' or dissection and deny the offender burial in consecrated ground.<sup>151</sup> It was not only the Barber-Surgeons' Company and later the Surgeons' Company (after 1745 when the Act, 18 Geo.II c.15, split the company) that obtained bodies for dissection; the College of Physicians were also entitled to criminal corpses and many other private practitioners attempted to get their hands on these cadavers as well. On 2 July

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<sup>150</sup> 25 Geo II, c37, 1752; PA, HL/PO/JO/10/2/61, 'An Act for Regulating the Disposal after Execution of the Bodies of Criminals'; For more on the Murder Act see: Hitchcock and Shoemaker, *London Lives*, pp. 220-221; R. Ward, *Print Culture, Crime and Justice in 18th-Century London* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), pp. 158-169; N. Rogers, *Mayhem: Post-War Crime and Violence in Britain, 1748-53* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 61.

<sup>151</sup> J. Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London and New York, Routledge, 1995), p. 55.

1752 Thomas Wilford became the first person taken by the surgeons under the new act after he was executed for murder.<sup>152</sup> Until the Murder Act the history of taking executed felons for the purpose of anatomy had been fraught with complexities.

Finding records of anatomy demonstrations prior to the middle of the seventeenth century is difficult. The contents of the Barber-Surgeons' library were sold in 1742 meaning much primary source material has been lost. Over the years the Worshipful Company of Barbers and the Royal College of Surgeons have worked hard to rebuild their libraries.<sup>153</sup> Due to this rebuilding, in 1890 Sidney Young, a member of the Worshipful Company of Barbers was able to compile *The Annals of the Barber-Surgeons of London* utilising multiple sources from the collection to create an overview of the operations of the organisation. From this compilation, it is possible to trace the actions of the company and its rise over the seventeenth century and even occasionally glimpse the criminals who were dissected.

As Young's *Annals* describe, in 1605 a Charter of James I streamlined the structure of the Barber-Surgeons' Company, and they grew in strength and influence.<sup>154</sup> In 1636 a new anatomy theatre was designed by Inigo Jones. This was a response to complaints from the kitchen staff in the old hall about the dead bodies in the kitchen and all the remains they had to clean up.<sup>155</sup> A description from Edward Hatton's *New View of London* (1708) illustrates how this new theatre was laid out in an elliptical form:

...commodiously fitted up with four degrees of seats of cedar wood, and adorned with the figures of the seven liberal sciences, and the twelve signs of the zodiac.

Also containing the skeletons of an ostrich put up by Dr. Hobbs, 1682, with a busto

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<sup>152</sup> OBP, OA17520702.

<sup>153</sup> K. Cregan, 'Teaching the Anatomical Body in Seventeenth-Century London', *Medicine Studies*, Vol. 2 (2010), p. 29.

<sup>154</sup> S. Young, *Annals of the Barber-Surgeons of London, Compiled from their records and other sources* (London: Blades, East & Blades, 1890). pp. 112-114.

<sup>155</sup> Young, *Annals*, p. 334.

of King Charles I. Two humane skins on the wood frames, of a man and a woman, in imitation of Adam and Eve, put up in 1645; a mummy skull given by Mr. Loveday, 1655. The skeleton of Atherton with copper joints (he was executed) given by Mr. Knowles in 1693. The figure of a man slead, where all the muscles appear in due place and proportion, done after the life. The skeletons of Cambery Bess and Country Tom (as they then call them), 1638; and three other skeletons of humane bodies.<sup>156</sup>



Figure 3.13. William Hogarth, *The Reward of Cruelty* (Four Stages of Cruelty, plate 4), 1751 ©The Trustees of The British Museum.

According to the annals of the Barber-Surgeons a skeleton was placed in correspondence to each of the twelve signs of the zodiac.<sup>157</sup> This is visible in Hogarth's *The Four Stages of*

<sup>156</sup> E. Hatton, *A New View of London: Or, An Ample Account of that City*, Volume II (1708), pp. 596-597; Young, *Annals*, p. 134.

<sup>157</sup> Young, *Annals*, p. 134.



*Cruelty*, where the fictional criminal Tom Nero eventually ends up upon a dissection table (fig. 3.13). In the etching the two skeletons in the niches are of a highway robber, James Maclaime and a boxer, James Field. The woman and man mentioned in the description of the theatre layout are Elizabeth Evans, commonly known as Cambery Bess, and Thomas Sherwood, known as Country Tom. They were executed for a triple murder in 1635. Their story was recorded by Henry Goodcole, who noted that Tom laid the blame for his entire criminal past squarely at Bess's feet. Bess was portrayed in biblical terms likened to Eve, bearing the responsibility for male downfall, although Goodcole praised her penitent nature when she delivered her last dying speech upon the scaffold. The woodcut for the frontispiece of Goodcole's pamphlet shows Bess hanging and Tom tied in chains. (fig. 3.14).



Figure 3.14. *Heavens speedie hue and cry sent after lust and murder* London, 1635.

After Bess and Tom were hanged at Tyburn in April 1635. Bess was 'conveied to Barber Surgions Hal for a Skeleton having her bones reserved in a perfect forme of her body which

is to beseene, and now remains in the aforesaid Hall'.<sup>158</sup> The Barber-Surgeons' Court Minutes for 29 March 1638 note that her bones were to be 'placed on the Corbell stone of the Signe of Libra', presumably after dissection.<sup>159</sup> Here she was made a permanent exhibit. Tom was displayed in chains until eventually his skeleton was retrieved and joined Bess in Surgeons Hall, some time before 1638.

Tom's skeleton was placed over the sign of Taurus. His and Bess's placement was no accident. Bess was held up as an example of 'corrupt femininity'; the placing of her remains over Libra's judicial scales acted as an allusion to lust and judgment which would have been recognisable to the many visitors that came to witness public anatomy demonstrations.<sup>160</sup> Public anatomy demonstrations were held for the purpose of instruction four times a year, for the benefit of the masters and apprentices within the company, but other Londoners could and did request access to them.<sup>161</sup> Private anatomy demonstrations were also carried out, but visitors from outside the company were only admitted by invitation, such as Samuel Pepys in 1663.<sup>162</sup>

The College of Physicians appear to have performed dissections less frequently than the surgeons. Tensions between the College of Physicians and Barber-Surgeons were apparent; the Physicians wrote a letter against the latter as early as 1595 expressing frustration with some of the practices and medical treatments they were prescribing.<sup>163</sup> But both professions continued to work in tandem with their efforts to claim bodies for dissection throughout the seventeenth century.

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<sup>158</sup> H. Goodcole, *Heavens Speedie Hue and Cry Sent after Lust and Murder: manifested upon the suddaine apprehending of Thomas Shearwood, and Elizabeth Evans*, (1635). pp. 14-15. For more on Bess and Tom see Cregan, *The Theatre of the Body*, pp. 102-107.

<sup>159</sup> Young, *Annals*, p. 337.

<sup>160</sup> Cregan, *The Theatre of the Body*, p. 106.

<sup>161</sup> Cregan, 'Teaching the Anatomical Body', pp. 21, 31.

<sup>162</sup> S. Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* vol. 1 and 4, R. Latham and W. Matthews, (eds.), (London: Bell and Sons, 1971-83), pp. 59-60; for an analysis of Pepys's visit see, Cregan, 'Teaching the Anatomical Body', pp. 26, 32, 34.

<sup>163</sup> Young, *Annals*, p. 125.

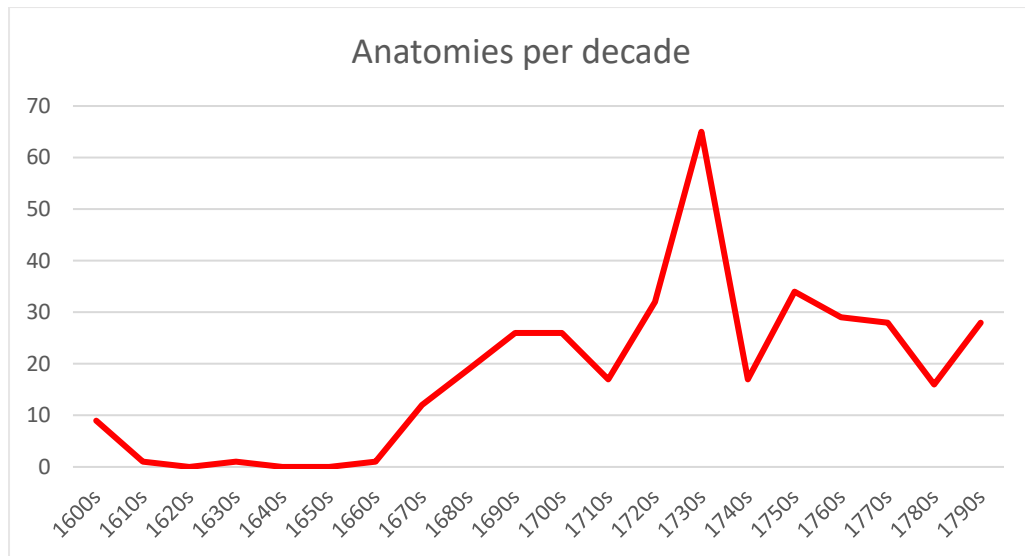


Figure 3.15. Known anatomies per decade.

The graph above reflects the 361 named individuals who have been traced to the anatomy table for this chapter. Data prior to the 1670s is more difficult to assess and it is here that Kate Cregan’s work on the parish records of St Olave, Silver Street can assist. This parish interred the dissected remains from the hall which was across the road. The three earliest anatomies that appear in this parish register are Henry Stanly from 8 March 1600, and William Dalton and Katerine Whackter from 17 June 1600. For the latter, the man who performed the anatomy upon her body is noted in the register, as ‘anatomized by Dr. Pallmer’. The other two just note they were anatomised by the ‘Chirurgions’ or ‘Churyrgeons’.<sup>164</sup> This Dr Pallmer is almost certainly the Cambridge educated physician Richard Palmer who treated Prince Henry in 1612 and was a practitioner at St Thomas’s Hospital. The issue with these three individuals and others that are unnamed in the burial register is the uncertainty about whether they were criminals or not.

From 1607 to 1670 there is a gap in the parish registers data. Eighty times in the *Churchwarden’s Accounts* for the parish there are records for burials of an anatomy, however none are named.<sup>165</sup> This would bring the total anatomies to 441 across both

<sup>164</sup> LMA, P69/OLA3/A/001/MS06534; Cregan, *Theatre of the Body*, p. 304.

<sup>165</sup> GL, MSS 1257/1. /2. /3, *Churchwarden’s Accounts, Parish of St Olave Silver Street 1630-1756* from Cregan, *Theatre of the Body*, p. 304.

decades, but this figure is still probably too low. Apart from Bess and Tom and a 'Tawny-Moor Woman' executed for infanticide in 1663, who 'was carried to Chirurgions Hall to be an Anatomy',<sup>166</sup> it is only in the 1670s that named individuals are again identifiable in both the St Olave, Silver Street parish registers and other sources.

Cregan's data for St Olave and the data for this chapter are not always aligned. On 31 December 1722 William Pincher was hanged for assault and robbery.<sup>167</sup> He was buried at St Olave, Silver Street on the 9 January: 'Willm Pincher upper ground'.<sup>168</sup> Pincher was missed by Cregan as the entry does not say he was executed or an anatomy. However, not only does the dating fit but the newspapers reported that:

The Surgeons of this City having had a Warrant from the Sheriff for a Body of one of the Malefactors executed on Monday last, and they having received it accordingly, the Mobb took it from them and carried it off, but the Surgeons recovered it next Morning.

Some of this 'mob' were put in Bridewell.<sup>169</sup> This example highlights the benefits of the cross-referencing approach used in this thesis.

Not all bodies that were dissected were criminals, a point that is often lost within the scholarship covering this subject. In *An account of the dissection of morbid bodies* dating from the mid to late eighteenth century from the Royal College of Surgeons library, 179 people are recorded, none of whom were criminals.<sup>170</sup> Likewise, an anonymous notebook, *Account of Bodies Opened* lists year by year from 1734 to 1741 those that were

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<sup>166</sup> Anon, *The Speech of the Queene of Sluts. At her Execution at Tyburne, on Wednesday February 25 1662 with A true Relation of Eleven more that were Executed the same time* (1662/3).

<sup>167</sup> OBP, OA17221231.

<sup>168</sup> LMA, P69/OLA3/A/001/MS06534.

<sup>169</sup> *London Journal* (1720) (London), Saturday, January 5, 1723; Issue CLXXX; for Bridewell see, *London Journal* (1720) (London), Saturday, January 12, 1723; Issue CLXXXI.

<sup>170</sup> RCS, MS0189/1/3.

anatomised; out of the 78 bodies that were dissected only 20 were criminals.<sup>171</sup> Public anatomy demonstrations, however, were only carried out on criminal cadavers so the others must have been private demonstrations or autopsies. The need for bodies led both physicians and surgeons to visit Newgate and attempt to convince individuals to sell their corpses to them for dissection. The two organisations would provide convicted felons who agreed to such a trade with decent clothes, a good meal, and any other necessities.<sup>172</sup> On top of the costs for fulfilling their side of this agreement, the additional cost of procuring a body was no small expense as the annals of the Barbers Surgeons show.<sup>173</sup>

In 1735, a woman named Elizabeth Ambrose was executed for infanticide.<sup>174</sup> She is one of two women mentioned among the 78 in the *Account of Bodies Opened* and must be the anonymous woman on the Beadles' Bill in the annals. For the public anatomy demonstration on the corpse of Ambrose a bill was transcribed by Sidney Young, from a source now lost. It appears that during the demonstration a comparison of Ambrose's body with animal specimens was undertaken, namely bullock eyes and sheep eyes (the hog bristles were used as pins), as can be seen listed below.

	£. s. p.
For a board to lay her head upon	0 0 4
For a board to shew her liver on	0 1 0
For two bullocks eyes	0 0 4
For sheeps eyes	0 0 4
For a quarter of soap	0 0 1 ½
For hog brissels	0 0 1
For a new sponge	0 0 3
For Borrowing a Hone to set the Instruments	0 0 3
For sticking up the Bills	0 2 6
For nine days attendance at 2s 6d per day	1 2 6
Total	£1 7 8 ½

Table 3.2. Beadle's Bill for the dissection of a female malefactor in 1735. *The Annals of the Barber-Surgeons of London*.

<sup>171</sup> RCS, MS0189/1/3; RCS, MS0313.

<sup>172</sup> Linebaugh, 'The Tyburn Riot', p. 71; Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, p. 527.

<sup>173</sup> Young, *Annals*, pp. 342-343, 353.

<sup>174</sup> OBP, t17350116-11; *Universal Spectator and Weekly Journal* (London), Saturday, March 15, 1735; Issue 336.

This record is unique as there appear to be no other surviving similar bills. Young notes that 'it was customary at the Demonstrations of Anatomy to provide specimens of parts of animals, presumably for comparison,' but only includes this one example where it can be seen clearly.<sup>175</sup> Two things can be taken from this bill. First it was cheaper to anatomise a criminal than to hang them in chains and second, the animal comparisons further marginalised the individuals remains.

The most common bills that have survived are for the collection of a body from Tyburn. For both companies, they are similar to the one below, which dates from May 1694 from the College of Physicians.<sup>176</sup>

	£. s. p.
Paid for a Body	00=13=04
Paid for a Coach	00=05=06
Paid for a Coffee	00=01=05
Paid for Wine	00=02=00
Paid a man for going w[i]th me to Tiburn	00=02=06
Charges in going to Tiburn	00=03=00
Paid for a Coffin	00=04=06
Paid for Ale	00=01=04
Paid for Wine	00=01=00
Paid for Burying the Body	00=11=06
Paid for Wine	00=03=04
Paid for a sponge	00=00=08
Paid for Wine	00=02=00
Paid the Porter for his attendance	00=10=00
Charges	00=01=00
For my going to Tiburn	00=02=06
For washing the Linnen	00=03=00
Paid for a Brush	00=00=08
Paid for washing the College and Theatre	00=05=05
Total	03=14=03

Table 3.3. RCP, ENV27/G7, Money Laid out for the College May 24th, 1694 by John Cole ©Royal College of Physicians.

The state that bodies were in once they reached the dissection table should be considered when thinking about the treatment of the hanged corpse and its

<sup>175</sup> Young, *Annals*, p. 356.

<sup>176</sup> RCP, ENV27/G7, Money laid out for the College by John Cole (Bedell's expenses) in fetching a dead body from Tiburn for a College Dissection (24 May 1694).

marginalisation. Executions were often bungled especially in warmer weather when the rope could become slippery causing mishaps. Even in cooler weather ropes could snap, severe bruising always occurred, eyes would bulge out of their sockets, and blood escaped through all orifices. The warmer weather also caused faster decomposition.<sup>177</sup> When criminals were hanged, it was not uncommon for them to wet or defecate themselves. Men could be prone to auto-erotic responses from the noose, which manifested itself in an erection and sometimes even ejaculation. When a woman hanged, they could menstruate spontaneously, due to the pull of gravity on the lining of the womb which led to a prolapse of the sexual organs as the torso stretched downwards.<sup>178</sup> The reaction in the female body is known through modern medical studies but no contemporary ever noted this. It is an unmentioned taboo but must have been apparent to eyewitnesses, especially as women were occasionally noted as being dressed in white at their executions. The responses within the male and female bodies as they hanged would surely have highlighted the marginalisation of criminals in general, by making public actions which were more often private.

Between the moment of death and the time a body reached the dissection table it would have gone through a series of transitions. The first phase was the bodily reactions while hanging, then how it was cut down and conveyed to the dissection table. The next phase was washing and preparing a corpse for viewing, and finally the anatomy demonstration itself. There are a few cases of hanged felons coming around on the dissection table, and other errors could occur even after the surgeons had procured a corpse.<sup>179</sup> On 6 July 1792 George Hindmarsh was executed for murder at Execution Dock, the newspapers reported:

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<sup>177</sup> Hurren, *Dissecting the Criminal Corpse*, pp. 14, 81-83.

<sup>178</sup> Hurren, *Dissecting the Criminal Corpse*, pp. 70, 84.

<sup>179</sup> Young, *Annals*, pp. 358-360.

The dissection of one of the Pirates lately executed at Execution Dock, was prevented through a ludicrous mistake by one of the Underlings at Surgeon's Hall - Owing to the heat of the day, it seems one of the Surgeons had said, "they should not be able to proceed in the dissection," which being understood in an absolute sense by the former, he disposed of the body to the friends of the decease, who had it interred immediately.<sup>180</sup>

Bodies were often fought for by family and friends and it is no surprise that Hindmarsh's friends jumped on the opportunity to have him interred, especially as this was after the 1752 Murder Act. Bodies were also occasionally claimed by people pretending to be family and friends of the deceased and then either sold, or privately dissected, sometimes without either company's permission. This caused surgeons to report the practice and attempt to discover who the people doing this were.<sup>181</sup> Issues about taking bodies illegally were at the forefront during 1729, when petitions to the king against this practice were lodged and general unease among the organisations that were entitled to these cadavers was prevalent.<sup>182</sup>

As early as 1674 there were hints of conflict between the Tyburn crowd and the physicians and surgeons.<sup>183</sup> These tensions gradually built over the early eighteenth century due to the social factors that have been explored by Linebaugh in his ground-breaking essay about the Tyburn riots. Both the physicians and surgeons petitioned the government to assist them in procuring bodies. The physicians asked for an Act of Parliament to assist them in obtaining cadavers in 1720 and when this was not forthcoming they desisted in

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<sup>180</sup> *Evening Mail* (London), July 20 - July 23, 1792; Issue 532.

<sup>181</sup> Young, *Annals*, pp. 349-350.

<sup>182</sup> Young, *Annals*, pp. 354-355.

<sup>183</sup> K. Cregan, 'Edward Ravenscroft's "The Anatomist" and "The Tyburn Riots Against the Surgeons"', *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Spring 2008), p. 19.



taking bodies from Tyburn.<sup>184</sup> The last noted body that went to the physicians was that of Thomas Butler, executed 8 February 1721 for highway robbery.<sup>185</sup> It was thereafter the surgeons who ran the monopoly on taking bodies from execution sites for anatomy and they who met with occasional hostilities and sometimes outright riots over the possession of criminal corpses.<sup>186</sup>

Executioners were noted as obstructing the beadles who went to claim bodies on several occasions, and between their actions, the family and friends of an executed felon, and the crowd in general, the collection of bodies by surgeons from the gallows became problematic.<sup>187</sup> The spike in the above graph during the 1730s demonstrates the moment when the surgeons were fighting tooth and nail for every cadaver they could get their hands on. Nevertheless, there were certain cases such as that of Sarah Metyard and her daughter when the Tyburn crowd were accommodating of the surgeons.

In 1762 Sarah Metyard and her daughter were hanged at Tyburn for the murder of their apprentices Ann and Mary Nailor; they had been beating and starving the two girls.<sup>188</sup> A 50,000-strong crowd witnessed their executions.<sup>189</sup> The crowd were hostile to these two criminals and without any protest their bodies were freely handed over to the surgeons for

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<sup>184</sup> RCP, MS804; Autograph letter to Sir George Caswall re dispute about supply of bodies of executed criminals at Tyburn to RCP for dissection. Signed by James Mead on behalf of the College; TNA, SP 35/2/48 Livery and Freemen of the Company of Barbers and Surgeons to the King. Petition requesting that foot guards attend public executions to protect the Company from members of the public who violently object when they remove newly executed bodies for dissection, a certain number of which the Company is granted by Act of Parliament 1715 or 1716; TNA, SP 35/19/57, Petition of the Company of Barbers and Surgeons asking for the occasional assistance of foot guards at public executions, as over the last few years a large rebellious group has caused violent disorder in which they have threatened and opposed officers removing the dead bodies of executed felons 1719; LMA, CLA/047/LJ/13/1728/002.

<sup>185</sup> OBP, OA17210208; *Daily Post* (London), Thursday, February 9, 1721; Issue 425.

<sup>186</sup> Linebaugh, 'The Tyburn Riot', p. 74.

<sup>187</sup> Young, *Annals*, pp. 119-120, 362, for executioners obstructing the beadles see p. 358; Linebaugh, 'The Tyburn Riot', p. 79.

<sup>188</sup> For more on the Metyard's see, LL, LMSMPS505120002; LL, Sarah Metyard 1762, Set 3710, 19 Documents; OBP t17620714-30; LMA, MJ/SP/1762/A/001; LMA, MJ/SP/1762/07/014.

<sup>189</sup> McKenzie, *Tyburn's Martyrs*, p. 13.

dissection.<sup>190</sup> The death of the apprentice Mary Clifford at the hands of Elizabeth Brownrigg, her husband James and son John, followed a similar series of events. In this case, the husband and son were acquitted, and only Elizabeth Brownrigg was hanged and handed to the surgeons.<sup>191</sup> Silas Neville, a medical man who followed the anatomies of London, wrote in his diary of the horror of being witness to Brownrigg's dissection.

*Wednesday 16 September 1767:* After waiting an hour in the Lobby of Surgeon's Hall, got by with great difficulty (the crowd being great and the screw stairs very narrow) to see the body of Mrs. Brownrigg, which, cut as it is, is a most shocking sight. I wish I had not seen it. How loathsome our vile bodies are, when separated from the soul! It is surprising what crowds of women and girls run to see what usually frightens them so much. The Hall is circular with niches in which are placed skeletons.<sup>192</sup>

The shock that Neville confessed to is interesting. As a student of medicine, he was more than familiar with the process of anatomy and would have attended many other dissections. It seems in this case he was more repulsed by the fact it was a female corpse. This and the burning of women emphasise the difference between male and female criminal cadavers and the variants of marginalisation evident between the two. After her dissection, Elizabeth Brownrigg's skeleton was cleaned and displayed in an alcove in the wall of surgeons' hall (fig. 3.16).

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<sup>190</sup> *Public Advertiser* (London), July 20, 1762; Issue 8645; Hitchcock and Shoemaker, *London Lives*, p. 288.

<sup>191</sup> LL, Elizabeth Brownrigg 1767, Set 3714, 30 Documents; Hitchcock and Shoemaker, *London Lives*, p. 289.

<sup>192</sup> S. Neville, *The Diary of Silas Neville* diary entries for 16 September – 17 October 1767, B. Crozens-Hardy, (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1908), pp. 24-25, discussed in Hurren, *Dissecting the Criminal Corpse*, pp. 128-130.

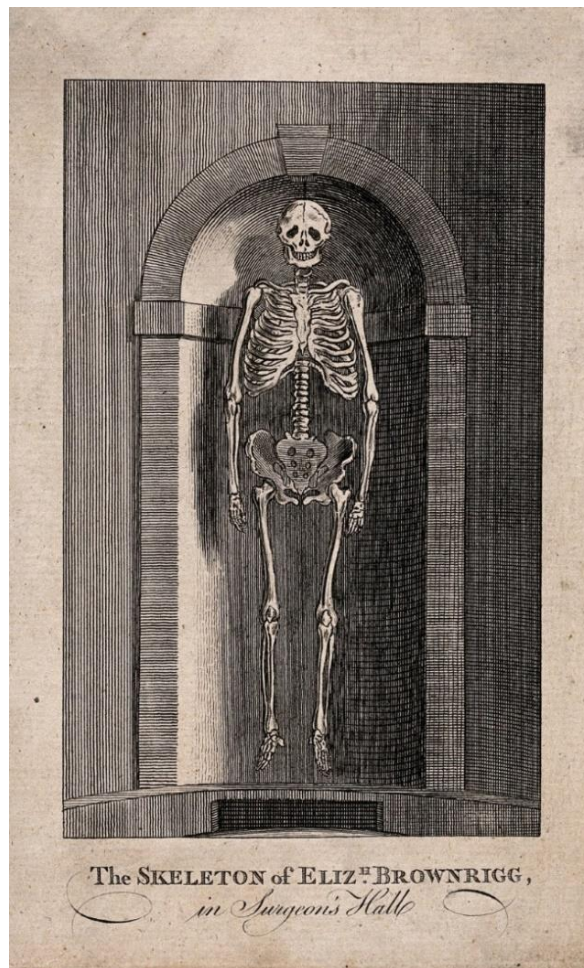


Figure 3.16. The skeleton of Elizb. Brownrigg, in Surgeon's Hall. Engraving ©Wellcome Trust Images.

Brownrigg's skeleton and Bess's before her demonstrate how certain categories of the dead no longer held the same status as the living. They became other while still being a former person, evident in their skeletal remains.

The Metyards and Brownrigg may have been taken for dissection with no problems arising, as were others such as in May 1750 when bodies were not claimed after an execution and simply 'left under the Gallows' and eventually 'carried away for the Purpose and Use of Anatomy'.<sup>193</sup> But many other instances were cause for concern for the surgeons. Especially when the executed individual had belonged to a trade, was a sailor, or part of a marginal group within London, such as the Irish, or when the crowd simply felt sympathy for them.<sup>194</sup> Anatomisation was referred to as 'more terrible than Death' and concerns over

<sup>193</sup> OBP, OA17500516.

<sup>194</sup> Linebaugh, 'The Tyburn Riot', pp. 83-84.

what would happen to criminals' bodies were evident.<sup>195</sup> No criminal mentioned the resurrection and Last Judgment as a reason for not wishing to be dissected, but Linebaugh correctly warns against excluding these considerations.<sup>196</sup> Dissection however seemed to have been preferable to some criminals over being 'hanged in chains' and, although they were not criminals and a special cases, Messenger Monsey who died in 1788 and Jeremy Bentham who died in 1832 both specified they were to be dissected and the latter requested he be preserved after their deaths.<sup>197</sup> Some surgeons took issue with the image of an unfeeling surgeon scrambling for any executed corpse at the gallows such as the well-respected surgeon Sir William Blizard who wrote a paper in 1785 showing his sympathy for some of those executed.<sup>198</sup>

Bodies of executed felons were not the only bodies that were dissected. As mentioned earlier, there were also many that were subjected to autopsies after other types of deaths and as early as the 1720s, body snatching was on the rise. Surgeons may themselves have started to rob graves, but they soon paid others to carry out this task for them.<sup>199</sup> Both John and William Hunter, anatomists originally from Edinburgh, were known to have worked with body snatchers.<sup>200</sup> The problem with corpses acquired this way was that they leave very little historical record and therefore it is harder to trace the criminals that were dug up and conveyed to Surgeons' Hall or private houses for the purpose of dissection. On 13 February 1727 Robert Haynes was executed for murder, the newspapers reported that: 'In the Night of Wednesday last, the Body of Robert Haynes, who had been executed at Tyburn last Monday, for Murder, was stollen out of a Grave in the New Chapel

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<sup>195</sup> Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, p. 528 he is quoting the *General Evening Post*, 18 September 1750.

<sup>196</sup> Linebaugh, 'The Tyburn Riot', p. 106.

<sup>197</sup> Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead*, pp. 356-358.

<sup>198</sup> W. Blizard, *Desultory reflections on police: with an essay on the means of preventing crimes and amending criminals* (1785), also discussed in, Hurren, *Dissecting the Criminal Corpse*, p. 157.

<sup>199</sup> Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute*, pp. xiv, 54-57.

<sup>200</sup> C. Berkowitz, 'Systems of Display: The Making of Anatomical Knowledge in Enlightenment Britain', *British Society for the History of Science*, Vol. 46, Issue 3 (September 2012), pp. 359-387.

Church-yard in St Margaret's Parish at Westminster' and occasionally other cases were noted.<sup>201</sup> This must have been an infrequent but known issue. Body snatching was a lucrative and far earlier phenomenon than has often been realised and one that served a growing demand. A dead body was not property. If the corpse was stripped and any items buried with it returned to the grave, the body snatchers, if caught, only faced a fine.

The selling of corpses to surgeons has been pointed to by Ruth Richardson as evidence of economic exploitation. She noted the coincidental rise of undertaking during the eighteenth century and the commercialisation of the body 'developed in tandem' with body snatching.<sup>202</sup> It also coincided with the rise in medical knowledge about the body. Nicholas Rogers has argued that 'no concession was made to science. The appropriation of the body for dissection was a violation, a travesty to the soul, a monstrous act that no amount of scientific pleading could dispel'.<sup>203</sup> This is very true; neither the crown nor legislators made any concessions about dissection from the standpoint of science, but popular opinion is elusive and there may have some interest in this.<sup>204</sup> Linebaugh has argued that 'dissection was considered less as a necessary method for enlarging the understanding of *homo corpus* than as a mutilation of the dead person, a form of aggravating capital punishment', and although he makes allowances for a minority of surgeons and sympathisers this argument does not seem to stand with the following evidence.<sup>205</sup> Scientific and medical knowledge *was* at the forefront of many surgeons' concerns, even if ignored by legislators. Percival Potts an eminent surgeon in the eighteenth century lectured about the importance of anatomical study. Writing that 'the frequent dissections of dead Bodies is absolutely necessary to know the situations and

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<sup>201</sup> OBP, OA17270213; *Daily Journal* (London), Friday, February 17, 1727; Issue 1902.

<sup>202</sup> Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute*, p. 272.

<sup>203</sup> Rogers, *Mayhem*, p. 56.

<sup>204</sup> Linebaugh, 'The Tyburn Riot', p. 73.

<sup>205</sup> Linebaugh, 'The Tyburn Riot', p. 76.

structures of the Parts, and their uses', he goes on to explain that this must be carried out by each student and not just witnessed.<sup>206</sup> And he was not alone in stressing the importance in gaining knowledge through the hands-on practice of dissection. In *The London Tradesman* R. S. Campbell wrote:

The young Surgeon must be an accurate Anatomist, not only a speculative but a practical Anatomist; Without which he must turn out a mere Bungler. It is not sufficient for him to attend Anatomical lectures, and see two or three Subjects cursorily dissected; but he must put his Hand to it himself, and be able to dissect every Part, with the same Accuracy that the Professor performs.<sup>207</sup>

For surgeons, then, the purpose of dissections was not further punishment of a felon, but to glean medical knowledge. Popular opinion on the other hand was more complex. Although allowances were made for those criminals whose crimes were truly horrible, conflicting emotions existed around dissecting criminal cadavers. In his book *Punishing the Criminal Corpse*, Peter King has argued that anatomising and displaying criminal cadavers was an 'important and functional part of the core penal policies that dominated the long eighteenth century'.<sup>208</sup> This is certainly true but as the statistics demonstrated within this chapter have shown they, even combined these two disposal methods were not as frequent as a simple burial after execution. The care taken to dispose of anatomised individuals within consecrated ground after their remains had been used in a demonstration also show how complex attitudes towards these criminal dead were.

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<sup>206</sup> RCS, MS0071, Surgical Lectures Oct 2, 1767: Papers of Percival Pott (1714-1788).

<sup>207</sup> R. S. Campbell, *The London Tradesman: Being a Compendious View of All the Trades, Professions, Arts, both Liberal and Mechanic, now practised in the Cities of London and Westminster* (1747), p. 50, also mentioned in Linebaugh, 'The Tyburn Riot', p. 70.

<sup>208</sup> P. King, P. King, *Punishing the Criminal Corpse, 1700-1840: Aggravated Forms of the Death Penalty in England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), quote at p. 183.

In 1797 Maria Theresa Phipoe, alias Mary Benson, was executed for a murder. She was the last female criminal of the eighteenth century to be anatomised.<sup>209</sup> Jean Baptist Prevost executed on 23 December 1799 at Execution Dock was the last man of the century to receive this form of post-mortem punishment, with his body, 'after hanging the usual time, being brought back for dissection, to Newcastle-street, Clerkenwell'.<sup>210</sup> The practice continued into the nineteenth century after the Royal College of Surgeons was granted a royal charter in 1800 and set up their new facilities at Lincoln's Inn Fields. The Anatomy Act of 1832 put a stop to body snatching and surgeons acquiring executed criminal cadavers. Anatomists were regulated and bodies were donated or taken from the poor of the parish.

As Sarah Tarlow has put it, 'to be an anatomist was to have total knowledge and thus total control, but to be the dissected subject of anatomy was to be fully exposed, to relinquish all secrets and all privacy'.<sup>211</sup> The bodily remains of anatomised criminals were either interred or kept as specimens. Even when they were buried and thus returned to the community of the dead their bodily integrity had been destroyed and all sense of individuality eradicated. After a dissection, there was often little left to bury. Two-thirds of human material was disposed of during the actual practice of dissection itself.<sup>212</sup> What was left was then prone to general decay which resulted in a loss of personal identification. Losing personal identification resulted in anxieties attached to this form of disposal of the criminal dead and further marginalisation of the cadaver. Unlike with simple burials, here the individual was expunged.

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<sup>209</sup> *St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post* (London), December 9 - December 12, 1797; Issue 6237.

<sup>210</sup> *Lloyd's Evening Post* (London), December 23 - December 25, 1799; Issue 6604.

<sup>211</sup> Tarlow, *Ritual, Belief and the Dead*, p. 62.

<sup>212</sup> Hurren, *Dissecting the Criminal Corpse*, pp. 219-220.

## Buried

On 4 May 1677, the siblings Robert Dine, William Dine, and Margaret Dine, of Enfield, were executed at Tyburn 'for barbarously wounding' one Jane King who had rejected Robert's advances. The siblings had cut out her eye, mangled her nose, cut off her lips, and slit her tongue, as well as slashing other parts of her body with a knife. All three denied the crime. They were noted by the Ordinary of Newgate as having attended chapel regularly and despite his pressing on the matter never confessed.<sup>213</sup> All three were returned to their home parish St Andrews, Enfield after their execution and an entry in the parish register reads: 'Deanes. Be it remembred that William Deanes Robert and Margarett Deanes were all three brought downe dead from London and were buried all three in one grave upon the – 6'.<sup>214</sup> Many criminals such as the Dines were returned to their home parishes after execution. Family members were often buried near to one another, and criminal siblings, spouses, or parents and children were subjected to this practice too.<sup>215</sup> Executed criminals would also occasionally be buried together forming their own post-mortem nucleus. In January 1780, John Maccarty and Peter Richardson were both interred next to each other in St Giles in the Fields, Holborn although the two criminals do not appear to have known one another.<sup>216</sup> This practice may have been for simple fiscal reasons but also shows a degree of separation from the wider community of the dead and hints at the criminal corpse being treated differently. By placing executed individuals together or with their own families they were separated from the rest of the parish dead, albeit very slightly.

Certain parish burial registers record far more executed criminals than those that would have simply been returned to them as a home parish. Therefore, many parishes took

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<sup>213</sup> OBP, OA16770504; Anon, *The Confession and execution of the seven prisoners suffering at Tyburn on Fryday the 4th of May, 1677*, (1677).

<sup>214</sup> LMA, DRO/004/A/01/004.

<sup>215</sup> For families being buried together see V. Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 62.

<sup>216</sup> LMA, P82/GIS/A/04, for their crimes see: OBP, OA16790121.



in executed cadavers for interment regardless of where their home parish was. Over both the seventeenth and eighteenth century many of these parishes remained constant in taking in criminal bodies.

For the seventeenth century St Giles in the Fields took in the most executed corpses for interment followed by St Giles, Cripplegate; St Andrew, Holborn; St Sepulchre, Holborn; St Dunstan and All Saints, Stepney; St Martin in the Fields; and St Mary, Whitechapel. For the eighteenth century these parishes continued to take in bodies with St Sepulchre, Holborn taking in the most followed by St George, Bloomsbury which was established in 1730 when St Giles in the Field was split; St Andrew, Holborn; St Marylebone; and St Giles in the Fields. Overall, the most executed bodies were taken in by St Sepulchre, Holborn followed by St Giles in the Fields; St Andrew Holborn; and St Giles Cripplegate. In the parish registers for St Giles, Cripplegate the graph below (fig. 3.17) demonstrates the frequency with which they accepted and interred executed individuals.

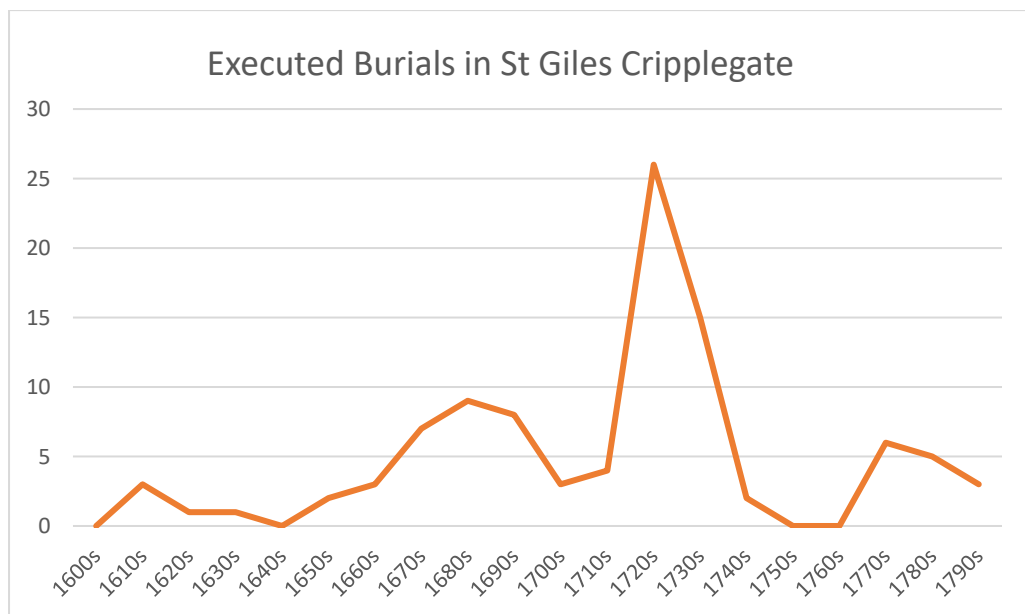


Figure 3.17. Burials of the 98 executed individuals in the St Giles, Cripplegate registers.

There were also a couple of executed criminal burials recorded in the Cripplegate register excluded from the graph above. These were those who were interred in the New Churchyard or Bunhill Fields, but who were still noted in the Cripplegate records. For

example, George Witmore's 1665 entry reads 'George Witmore Weaver – Executed bethlam', and Gabriell Holmes from 1667 was buried in 'Tindall' on 11 July.<sup>217</sup> Where exact burial locations are stated within the Cripplegate registers it is apparent that executed criminals were buried in the cheapest burial plots. Locations are only specified for the seventeenth century; seventeen were buried by the pesthouse, six at the Whitecross Street/(upper) burial ground, and four in the lower burial ground.

In October 1733, the new parish of St Luke, Finsbury was created from the Middlesex part of St Giles, Cripplegate.<sup>218</sup> The registers of St Luke's have not been included in the graph above but the sharp decline in accepting executed felons was potentially due to this split. St Luke's began frequently accepting executed cadavers from 1740. Indeed, on 17 February 1740 they record the burial of their first criminal, 'Robert Onion a Man – Executed'.<sup>219</sup> Onion was hanged on the 13 February for stealing brass fittings from St Paul's Cathedral.<sup>220</sup> From this point until the end of the eighteenth-century St Luke accepted over 50 named executed individuals for interment.

A list of the London parishes and burial sites that interred executed criminals can be found in Appendix II. Although some of the burial registers are for areas within the City walls, there is a trend over the 200 years for the interment of executed individuals to be slowly pushed beyond the walls. After 1753, with barely one or two exceptions, the City of London was no longer interring executed cadavers. This may simply have been due to space constraints, but most of these inner-city parishes still buried other marginalised individuals such as the poor and strangers. The nonconformist and non-parochial burial grounds frequently took in executed criminals for interment, especially towards the end of the

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<sup>217</sup> LMA, P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/006- P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/007.

<sup>218</sup> H. B. Wheatley and P. Cunningham, *London Past and Present; its history, associations, and traditions* 3 volumes (1891), p. 450; seen in T. R. Forbes, 'Births and Deaths in a London Parish: The Record from the Registers, 1654-1693 and 1729-1743' *History of Medicine*, Fall 1981: 55, 3, p. 372.

<sup>219</sup> LMA, P76/LUK/001.

<sup>220</sup> OBP, OA17400213.

eighteenth century. These included the New Churchyard; Bunhill Fields; Southwark, St Thomas Chapel; Union Street; Deadman's Place; Spa Fields; and City Road.

Executed individuals from the upper spheres of the social hierarchy were more frequently returned to their home parish and family crypts than those from the lower spheres, even individuals who were traitors. These individuals were spared the sentence of being hanged, drawn, and quartered, and instead were beheaded. The men who were executed in this manner included Robert Devereux in 1601, Walter Raleigh in 1618, William Laud in 1645, and most famously Charles I in 1649. Charles I head was held up to the crowd, before being sewn back onto his body which was then buried in St George's Chapel, Windsor.

Individuals who were simply beheaded were often buried straight after their execution: Charles Danvers, beheaded at Tower Hill on 18 March 1601 for treason due to his part in Essex's short-lived rebellion, was buried in St Peter ad Vincula, directly after his execution.<sup>221</sup> Sir John Fenwick, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baronet, the Jacobite conspirator, who was the last person ever to be beheaded under an Act of Attainder, was placed within a rich coffin that was buried by torchlight at St Martin in the Fields in the early hours of the morning the day after his execution in January 1697.<sup>222</sup> The last beheading in London was that of Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat at Tower Hill on 9 April 1747. He was buried in St Peter ad Vincula.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> P. E. J. Hammer, 'Danvers, Sir Charles (c. 1568–1601), soldier and conspirator', *ODNB* January 03, 2008. <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-7132> [accessed, 1 Nov. 2019].

<sup>222</sup> *Post Man and the Historical Account* (London), January 19 - January 21, 1697; Issue 266; BL, Add. MS 47608, letters and papers relating to trial and execution.

<sup>223</sup> E. M. Furgol, 'Fraser, Simon, eleventh Lord Lovat (1667/8–1747), Jacobite conspirator, army officer, and outlaw', *ODNB* January 07, 2010 <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-10122> [accessed, 1 Nov. 2019].

Crimes did not dictate burial locations and until the 1752 Murder Act, even murderers could be decently interred. On 31 August 1657 Nathaniel Butler was executed for murder:

So soon as he was dead, he was cut down, put into a Coffin and carried away in the same Coach wherein he was brought, in order to his interment, which at night by the care of some of his Relations and Friends was decently performed, in the Church yard of *Gregories by Pauls*.<sup>224</sup>

On 24 September 1722 Matthias Brinsden was hanged for the murder of his wife. He was not a sympathetic character, also being suspected of incest with his daughter but was nevertheless decently buried the same day at St Ann, Blackfriars.<sup>225</sup>

Not all bodies were interred within burial grounds in the metropolis. On 29 June 1612 Robert Crichton, eighth Lord Crichton of Sanquhar, was executed for murder by being hanged in a silken halter at the gates of Great Palace Yard, Westminster. When he was cut down his body was taken by Lord Dingwall and Robert Kerr, Lord Roxburgh to be sent to Scotland for interment.<sup>226</sup> Some bodies travelled even further than this. In 1616 the Catholic martyr Thomas Maxfield was hanged, drawn, and quartered for high treason, his remains were taken to Spain where they were placed in the family chapel of the count of Gondomar in Galicia and venerated. Today the relics are in Downside Abbey, Somerset.<sup>227</sup> This was the longest journey taken by a criminal corpse, but shorter journeys to interment were not uncommon. Bodies of executed criminals were returned to Berkshire,

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<sup>224</sup> Anon, *A Full and the truest narrative of the most horrid, barbarous and unparalleled murder, committed on the person of John Knight*, (1657).

<sup>225</sup> OBP, OA17220924; LMA, P69/ANN/A/008/MS04510/002.

<sup>226</sup> T. Birch, and F. Williams, (eds.), *The Court and Times of James First: Illustrated by Authentic and Confidential Letters, from Various Public and Private Collections: in Two Volumes* Vol.1, (1848), p. 178.

<sup>227</sup> A. C. Ryan, 'Macclesfield [Maxfield], Thomas (1585–1616), Roman Catholic priest and martyr', *ODNB* January 05, 2006

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-18396> [accessed, 1 Nov. 2019].

Buckinghamshire, Essex, Kent, Somerset, Suffolk, Surrey, Wiltshire, and Yorkshire, from the London execution sites across both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This cannot have always been an easy nor straightforward task. First a body needed to be removed from the gallows. An explanation of the process of cutting a body down from the scaffold was printed in 1785:

After hanging an hour, their bodies were cut down; the ceremony of which, though so often mentioned, is unknown to most of our readers. The executioner places himself under the body, which rests upon his shoulders, while the hands are brought over his reach. A man on each side also supports the body, and the executioner's man mounted upon steps, cuts the rope. The body is then tumbled over upon a plank which is in readiness, and is borne into Newgate to be carried away for interment as soon as may be convenient.<sup>228</sup>

There were also costs incurred with both transporting an executed corpse and burial costs once it reached its place of interment.

The expense of interment meant many unclaimed bodies, if not taken by the surgeons, were simply buried in a hole near the gallows. It is impossible to quantify how many criminal corpses received this treatment, but a newspaper report from 1753 highlights how common it must have been. They reported that: 'On Tuesday some Men digging for Ballast near Tyburn, they found above 40 Human Skulls and a Quantity of Bones, supposed to be the Remains of Persons who were executed and buried there for want of Friends'.<sup>229</sup> Rarely does a named individual appear buried at Tyburn, however, Sawney Douglas executed in September 1664 for highway robbery was 'buried in Tyburn road'.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> *Public Advertiser* (London), Thursday, August 18, 1785; Issue 15985.

<sup>229</sup> *London Daily Advertiser* (London), Friday, January 26, 1753; Issue 587.

<sup>230</sup> Newgate Calendar 'Sawny Douglas: A Scottish Highwayman who laid England under toll, and took a Copy of "Chevy Chase" to Tyburn when he was hanged on 10th of September 1664': <https://www.exclassics.com/newgate/ng26.htm> [accessed, 30 October 2019].

On the 26 July 1736 Thomas Reynolds executed for tearing down turnpikes had an interment story that even the Ordinary of Newgate saw fit to include in his *Accounts*. A coffin had been brought to the execution site for Reynolds where it was also intended to bury him. As they were putting the coffin into the grave a woman wished to see his corpse, so the coffin was opened. The sight that greeted the spectators was that of a breathing and moving body. 'The Mob favouring him, least the Officers should take and Execute him again, they carried the Coffin along the Oxford Road', a surgeon was called who attended and tested that he was indeed alive. Reynolds was carried two miles from Tyburn but died on the way 'and they dig'd another Grave by the Oxford-Road, and buried him'.<sup>231</sup> Bodies subjected to interment at the site of execution would have been attractive to resurrectionists and in 1749 a newspaper gave evidence of this:

On Thursday Morning the Bodies of Three of the Malefactors who were executed on Wednesday last at Tyburn, and buried afterwards near the Gallows, were dug up, put in a Cart, and carried to the Houses of some private Surgeons.<sup>232</sup>

Although again evidence is rare, those interred near gallows sites were in a vulnerable position.

The Admiralty Court also seem to have buried unclaimed executed individuals from Execution Dock near the gallows. On 7 December 1771, John Shoales, a Dane, was hanged for piracy. 'After hanging the usual time, he was cut down and buried in the marshes on the Kentish side of the river. The two Sheriffs attended'.<sup>233</sup> How frequent this practice was is unknown as only two cases have been uncovered in the research for this chapter, however, the example of Tyburn burials would caution against this being an uncommon practice.

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<sup>231</sup> OBP, OA17360726.

<sup>232</sup> *Penny London Post or The Morning Advertiser* (London), October 20 - October 23, 1749; Issue 1176.

<sup>233</sup> *General Evening Post* (London), December 10 - December 12, 1771; Issue 5954.

An executed criminal taken for burial would normally be interred quickly, within a day or two of their death. There was rarely much ceremony enacted and, on the occasions when there was, it could bring a whole plethora of social issues to the fore. Peter M'Cloud executed 27 May 1772 for a burglary was given a funeral by some of his acquaintances. The newspapers reported:

On Sunday evening Macloud, the boy executed last Wednesday at Tyburn, was buried at St. George's in the East; a very numerous concourse of people attended, as well as his father and mother, who were very roughly treated by them, on a presumption of their having been accessory to his crime.<sup>234</sup>

Here the public were taking ownership of the corpse and involving themselves in its disposal and attacking the family who were under local not legal suspicion. On 21 September 1716 after Thomas Beane's execution for rioting, the papers noted that he was buried at St Brides, Fleet Street 'with much Ceremony, follow'd by Mourners, and Men and Women, the latter drest in white Sarcenet Hoods, and the Men wearing white Favours; a numerous Crowd of Rabble gathering together upon that Occasion'.<sup>235</sup> Interments of criminal bodies, much like a gibbetting, appear to have sometimes been an extension of the execution itself and a social occasion.

Different execution sites had different execution and burial rituals. They ranged from the religious, to shows of authority, to local customs and practices. There were also different customs carried out for the corpses of executed individuals who came from differing faiths and backgrounds.

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<sup>234</sup> OBP, OA17720527; *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* (London), Tuesday, June 2, 1772; Issue 944.

<sup>235</sup> *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer* (London), Saturday, September 29, 1716.

Jewish criminals who were executed had their own traditions which were occasionally noted by the Ordinary of Newgate.<sup>236</sup> In February 1744, the *Accounts* divulge that 'four Jews were interr'd in their Burial-Ground at Mile-End, with their Cloaths on, and the Halters about their Necks, the Jews never stripping any Person, who does not die a natural Death'.<sup>237</sup> Jacob Canter, executed 12 October 1789 for uttering, received empathetic newspaper coverage stating: 'This unfortunate suffer's dying request was, that he might be interred in the wearing apparel and the halter he had on at his execution. We understand this request is not opposed by the Sherrifs'.<sup>238</sup> A newspaper in 1771 pointed out how strange some of these customs appeared to the mainstream Protestant population:

Jewish malefactors after execution are buried in the following manner; if any blood appears on the neck they are put into the coffin with their clothes on, the shroud lying by them; if no blood appears, they are shrouded, and their clothes lie by them. In the former case they are deemed to be *unclean*, in the latter *clean*. What superstition!<sup>239</sup>

These final two words shows the further social marginalisation of executed criminals even when they were allowed burials if the individual had different customs.

Catholic felons also had alternative rituals at the execution site, often turning their backs on the prayers and ignoring the Ordinary. However, when it came to the interment of executed criminals who were Catholic, there was little difference between them and their Protestant counterparts. Certain parishes took in many Catholic cadavers and buried them within their grounds. These include St Giles in the Field; St Pancras, Old Church; Collegiate

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<sup>236</sup> For Jewish traditions around burial see chapter 5 of this thesis.

<sup>237</sup> OBP, OA17440217.

<sup>238</sup> *General Evening Post* (London), October 10 - October 13, 1789; Issue 8733.

<sup>239</sup> *Craftsman or Say's Weekly Journal* (London), Saturday, May 11, 1771; Issue 668.



Church of St Katherine by the Tower; St John, Wapping; St Mary, Whitechapel; and especially St George, Bloomsbury. St George had its burial ground out in Lambs Conduit Fields, away from the built-up areas which may explain why it took in so many Catholic remains, also as a newer ground it was less crowded and could accommodate more bodies.

At the end of the eighteenth century the burials of executed individuals began to take place almost exclusively at St Sepulchres, Holborn and within Newgate gaol itself. Certainly, by the nineteenth century almost all executed individuals were buried in a passage in the prison. This passage was 10 feet wide and 85 feet long. Executed cadavers were placed in the walls and floor disposed in quicklime; and their names were carved into the passageway.<sup>240</sup> Today the executed individuals that were buried within Newgate have been reinterred in The City of London Cemetery at Aldersbrook.

Criminals who were buried after their executions avoided the complete eradication of their remains, but an emphasised exclusion was still visible. Burying criminals together in their own nucleus, or individually but within the poorest and cheapest burial grounds still marginalised them. Burials near execution sites were for those who were excluded further, for there they received a quick, often unceremonious interment in unconsecrated ground. Nevertheless, many criminals did receive funerals which became an extension of the execution itself, drawing large crowds, but instead of officials overseeing the procedure, as they did at executions, it was local agency that dictated the rituals around these practices. Criminals who were religious outsiders were subjected to their own interment traditions which were sometimes ridiculed and 'othered' by the mainstream Protestant population. Over the 200 years examined, the interment of executed corpses was slowly pushed beyond the City walls and out into the environs before finally being confined to the prison

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<sup>240</sup> I. Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds: Notes on their History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (1896), p. 190.

itself. Criminals were to some extent already marginalised in life, and even when they received a decent burial, echoes of this marginalisation continued in their death.

## Conclusion

In 1830 the last execution at Execution Dock took place although executions continued at Newgate until 1868. The Criminal Law Consolidation Act of 1861 reduced the number of capital crimes to four, therefore executions were far less frequent. Private executions continued long after the 1902 closure of Newgate, until 1964 when the last hangings in the British Isles were performed. But it took until 27 January 1999 for the British government to formally abolish the death penalty completely.

The executed criminal corpse was often both physically and socially marginalised. This marginalisation frequently began with the criminal themselves before their execution. Even with the expectation placed upon individuals who faced execution to die well, they were already subjected to 'othering' within the minds of the population of the metropolis. Certain factors contributed to the degree of marginalisation a criminal corpse received. These included the gender of the individual, their crime, and the way the said individual behaved upon the scaffold.

The utter destruction of a woman executed by burning, expunging her 'sin', and linking her with earlier martyrs in the process through the complete eradication of her individuality, gender, and any form of bodily integrity, was the epitome of marginalisation. The metropolitan population's response to this form of execution was complex and at times contradictory. There were occasional voices raised against burning women, but this, at times, was due to concerns about the proximity of these executions to everyday London life, and not about the actual method of execution nor concern for bodily remains. There was a wish instead to push the actual physical act of burning an individual beyond the boundaries of the urban environs and hence physically marginalise it. Change when it did

come came from above, whereas local agency seems to have accepted this execution method far more readily.

The display of decapitated heads and quarters confronted Londoners on a daily basis, but these were never within the City walls themselves and once these sites of display became the heart of the expanding metropolis it was 'hanging in chains' that took over as the warning beacons to all those who travelled into London. The gibbets that encircled the outer reaches of the metropolis had a strong impact on the landscape, they were costly and long journeys were occasionally taken by cadavers between an execution site and a gibbet site. These anthropomorphic cages were eerie, and the individuals held within them were prone to decay and destruction from time, animals, and the elements. They were placed in an ambiguous liminal space, both physically and metaphorically, left in situ to vanish over time on the fringes of everyday life.

Dissection of criminal cadavers marginalised the body which, even before it reached the dissection table, had already gone through various stages of disruption. Not all dissections were of criminals, but all public ones certainly were. The issues around taking bodies from Tyburn and other execution sites before the 1752 Murder Act, along with the rise of body snatching to supplement demand, turned the bodies of criminals into an economic commodity, removing all that made them individuals. Even those bodies freely handed over to surgeons and physicians, individuals whose crimes local agency had dictated deserved that treatment, or those who had no friends, family, or trade colleagues, were already marginalised. Concessions to science seem to have been made by the surgeons themselves but not within the minds of the general population of London. The burial of anatomised criminals after dissection shows a certain amount of empathy, especially in the seventeenth century, although little would have been left to dispose of.

Dissection was seen by most as an aggravated continued punishment where personal identity was expunged.

Yet, despite the important social role of burning, display, and dissection, burials were by far the most frequent method of disposal of the criminal corpse. If the individual came from the upper sphere of the social hierarchy, there was more chance of a decent funeral and interment. Corpses occasionally journeyed long distances to be interred in specific location but most were spread across the metropolis in a variety of burial grounds. They sometimes formed their own nucleus within the community of the dead, often buried together, with family, or in the cheapest burial grounds. Only in the eighteenth century did the burial of executed individuals begin to be pushed outside of the City walls, to grounds further afield, before being interred, at the end of the eighteenth century, within Newgate prison itself. Criminal burials remained ambiguously marginal throughout the two centuries under consideration. Sometimes they offer clear examples of further marginalisation, but often they show a reintegration into the community – to some degree – after death.

The 2,348 criminals that form the basis of this chapter and indeed those who were unable to be traced beyond execution were subjected to a loss of bodily autonomy. However, despite this commonality, changes occurred in all methods of disposal. Until the 1752 Murder Act, the crime that an individual was executed for had little to no bearing on their disposal method apart from burning women for high and petty treason. Display of executed cadavers was pushed out of the everyday life to encircle the growing metropolis. Anatomies were very slowly beginning to be recognised for their scientific merit and no longer purely as further post-mortem punishments. Even burials went through transformations, from taking place throughout the City to being pushed beyond the walls and eventually not taking place within a burial ground at all.

External factors impacted the marginalisation of criminal corpses. Their family, gender, trade, crime (especially after 1752), religion, and charisma, all affected how their post-mortem remains were treated and how the population of London reacted to them. The othering that criminals were subjected to manifested itself when issues around the disposal of a cadaver came to the fore. Both physically and socially through a loss of self-autonomy and bodily integrity, the executed corpse was vulnerable to the possibility of systematic eradication and exclusion. Nevertheless, as has been seen, in most cases the degree of marginalisation of the criminal corpse has been overestimated.

## Chapter 4 Quakers

### Introduction

The first two chapters explored individuals whose manner of death caused their remains to be subjected to various degrees of marginalisation. These next two chapters depart from this approach and instead turn to examine religious groups, specifically Quakers and Jews, whose beliefs resulted in the marginalisation of their dead. This marginalisation was normally self-imposed, and these two groups formed their own communities of both the living and the dead in various pockets of seventeenth and eighteenth-century London.

On 13 January 1691, shortly before ten o'clock in the evening, George Fox, the founder of Quakerism, died of congestive heart failure. Two days earlier he had preached at the Gracechurch Street Meeting, where he mentioned to some of those present that he felt a coldness near his heart. Fox retired to the nearby house of another Quaker, Henry Gouldney, and to reassure those who came to his bedside he said: 'All is well. The Seed of God reigns over all, and over Death it self'.<sup>1</sup> It was here in Gouldney's house that he died. William Penn, an eminent Quaker and founder of the Province of Pennsylvania was tasked with spreading the news. His first letter was to Fox's wife, Margaret Fell. In the brief correspondence he noted that Fox was 'sensible to the last breath' and shared his own grief at the loss of Fox, writing 'a prince indeed is fallen in Israel to day'.<sup>2</sup> For three days Friends (the term used by Quakers to describe themselves), were admitted to view Fox's body. A fellow Quaker, Robert Barrow, also wrote to spread the news about Fox's death and specifically share information about his funeral. In his letter he noted that Fox was 'the

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<sup>1</sup> G. Fox, *Journal* 1694, p. 614, as seen in H. Larry Ingle, 'Fox, George (1624–1691), a founder of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)'. *ODNB*. September 23, 2004. <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-10031> [accessed, 8 Jan. 2020].

<sup>2</sup> FH, MSS 16/16, William Penn to Margaret Fell letter.

pleasantest corpse that ever was looked upon & many hundreds of Friends came to see his face'.<sup>3</sup>

On Friday 16 January, a vast crowd assembled at the meeting house in Gracechurch Street, the area outside the house, and nearby Lombard Street. This crowd accompanied the woollen wrapped corpse within its simple coffin 'w[i]th out any bear of cloth or couler but the naturale wood, yet the Coffin was very smooth & comely', as it was carried on the shoulders of some thirty-six Friends from each of the six London monthly meetings.<sup>4</sup> They moved three abreast on one side of the street so as not to disrupt other Londoners going about their daily business.<sup>5</sup> The mile-long journey took two hours. The historian H. Larry Ingle described the procession:

Silently they trudged up Lombard Street, passed Threadneedle and Cornhill streets in the financial district and then moved into Moorgate, turning left into Whitecross Road to enter on the other side of the cemetery. The winter afternoon's dull sun, setting at 4:19 p.m., was almost gone before they arrived.<sup>6</sup>

Fox was interred with a simple ceremony at the Quaker burial ground near Bunhill Fields. Despite an existing gravestone, (fig. 4.1), the exact location of his remains within the ground are unknown.<sup>7</sup> There was, not long after Fox's death, a small stone erected at his place of burial; this drew pilgrimages and was removed in 1757 and replaced with a smaller stone with the initials G.F. and date of death upon it. Again, this drew too much attention and sometime before 1836 a Quaker named Robert Howard smashed it to pieces as he saw it as idolatrous. In 1881 another memorial headstone was placed near to where Fox was

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<sup>3</sup> FH, MSS 16/16, R. Barrow, 'Some Account of George Fox's Funeral', letter.

<sup>4</sup> Barrow, 'Some Account of George Fox's Funeral'.

<sup>5</sup> H. Larry Ingle, *First Among Friends: George Fox and the Creation of Quakerism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 284.

<sup>6</sup> Larry Ingle, *First Among Friends*, p. 285.

<sup>7</sup> Larry Ingle, 'Fox, George' *ODNB*.

thought to have been buried, but during World War II a bomb destroyed the main meeting house and other buildings adjacent to the burial grounds along with the headstone, so finally the existing marker was placed in the 1950s. It is said the original grave can 'be found by standing on the spot where twenty-one paces from the east wall and fourteen paces from the north wall would meet'.<sup>8</sup>



Figure 4.1. George Fox's Gravestone at the Quaker Ground near Bunhill Fields.

Fox's modern gravestone still follows certain rules set out by the community that date from the foundation of the movement. It is plain and simple with limited information and the month is recorded as a number, not a name. Fox's entry in the Quaker burial register reads:

George Fox Minister of the Gospell, Aged about Sixty & Six Years Departed this Life the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 11mo: 1690/1, and laid down his head in Peace with the Lord at Henry Goldney's House, in White hart Court, Gracechurch street, London, And being viewed by the Common Searchers they Report he Dyed of a Stoppage in the

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<sup>8</sup> All this is discussed in, W. Beck and T. Fredrick Ball, *The London Friends' Meetings Showing the Rise of The Society of Friends in London; Its Progress, and the Development of its Discipline; With Accounts of the Various Meeting-Houses and Burial-Grounds, Their History and General Associations* Reprint of the 1869 history, with a new introduction by Simon Dixon and Peter Daniels, illustrations and index (London: Pronoun Press, 2009); p. 331.



stomach, And was Buryed in Friends Burying Ground at Bunhill Fields the 16<sup>th</sup>  
ditto.<sup>9</sup>

Fox's burial was unique given his standing within the Quaker community, especially regarding the attention it garnered and the number of attendants, but other aspects were comparable to the treatment of less prominent Quakers' remains. These include the simplicity of the funeral, coffin, and shroud, and the detailed listing in the burial register.

This chapter will briefly introduce the history of Quakerism and the historiography surrounding their emergence and impact on early modern society, along with the sources and methodology used to explore the self-marginalisation of their dead. It will then examine Quaker views on death and the afterlife, before turning to explore the Quaker burial grounds of the metropolis, and finally the development of their autonomous funerals and burials. There was continuous tension between prescription and practice around the Quaker dead and their manner of interment. A clear desire to distinguish themselves was apparent, yet there were ongoing conflicts between Quakers wishing to partake of society while remaining distinct as a separate community. The attraction of older customs around the treatment of the dead and burial traditions were constantly navigated and rules were often rewritten as the Quaker communities adapted to their immediate surroundings.

George Fox was a shoemaker's apprentice from Leicestershire who, in 1647, at the age of 23, found enlightenment. In 1652, after travelling across the northern counties of England and experiencing transforming visions, Fox had a series of religious experiences at Pendle Hill, Firbank Fell, and Swarthmoor Hall which marked the beginning of the Quaker movement. He was not alone as a founder of what was to become Quakerism, others such as James Nayler, Richard Farnworth, William Dewsbury, Richard Hubberthorne, and Edward

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<sup>9</sup> TNA, RG 6/499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700). The inscrutable stoppage in the stomach is a regular cause of early modern death, but the reason for it being noted in the register is unknown. In all other sources cognitive heart failure was the clear cause of death.

Burrough were equally important to the early formation, but Fox largely dominates the existing view of early Quakerism through the journal he left behind.<sup>10</sup> The Quaker movement, with speed, travelled south to London. In the bustling metropolis of 1654, a woman named Isabel Buttery and her female companion arrived from the north and began distributing a paper written by George Fox. Two brothers, Simon and Robert Dring opened their homes to these women in Watling Street and Moorgate where they then established the first meeting of Friends in London. For their troubles, the two women were arrested for Sabbath breaking and put into Bridewell, an incident that would become a common occurrence among the early Quakers. The Quaker message had however caught hold and gained a firm footing within the metropolis.<sup>11</sup> It would continue to spread beyond England, to Ireland, Europe, and the Americas.<sup>12</sup>

Quakers' beliefs emphasised a participatory practice, both in how followers should interact with each other and with the world at large. Central to Quaker beliefs was the idea of the light of Christ's existence within everyone, and it was awakening this light that was at the forefront of Quaker campaigns. Quakers abandoned the formalised structures of other religions and honorific titles, believing everyone was spiritually equal. To this end they refused to doff hats, swear oaths, or pay tithes, and justified the inclusion of women participating fully and even preaching within their religion.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> B. Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* (London: Temple Smith, 1985), p. 8; R. Moor, *The Light in Their Consciences: The Early Quakers in Britain, 1646-1666* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), pp. 7-8, 15.

<sup>11</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends'*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>12</sup> For a well-rounded introduction to Quaker history see all entries in, S. W. Angell and P. Dandelion, (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> K. Peters, *Print Culture and the Early Quakers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 2; Beck and Ball, *The London Friends'*, p. 60; the inclusion of women has attracted a substantial amount of scholarship, for example see: C. Gill, *Women in the Seventeenth-Century Quaker Community: A Literary Study of Political Identities, 1650-1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); P. Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1994); S. Stanley Holton, *Quaker Women: Personal Life, Memory and Radicalism in the Lives of Women Friends, 1780-1930* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

Within a decade there were 35,000-40,000 Quakers across England.<sup>14</sup> These, it has been argued, were individuals of the middling sort: 'most belonged to the relatively comfortable middle section of the community and were slightly wealthier than the population at large'.<sup>15</sup> The movement initially attracted younger members. At a time when political uncertainty and religious expectation was rife numerous dissenting groups emerged including the Diggers, Fifth Monarchists, Muggletonians, Ranters, and Levellers. All these movements and indeed other nonconformist groups attracted different constituencies, and the nature of their social composition has spurred much discussion but is beyond the scope of this chapter.<sup>16</sup>

The early historians of Quakerism, such as Rufus Jones and William C. Braithwaite, with the influence and endorsement of John Wilhelm Rowntree, wanted to write a comprehensive history of the movement. Jones related the movement to the long tradition of mysticism within the Christian church.<sup>17</sup> Not everyone was convinced by his arguments. Geoffrey F. Nuttall argued for Quakers as a radical wing of puritan sectarians.<sup>18</sup> Richard L. Greaves pointed out their close relationship to Ranters.<sup>19</sup> Christopher Hill and Barry Reay emphasised the shared origins of other religious movements to Quakerism, such as the Muggletonians and Levellers, and stressed the social, rather than the religious radicalism of these, especially linking early Quakers to Levellers.<sup>20</sup> A lot of the historiography has focused on Quaker involvement in the Civil Wars and Interregnum, the period when the movement

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<sup>14</sup> Reay, *The Quakers*, pp. 9-11.

<sup>15</sup> Reay, *The Quakers*, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> This was also raised in 1985 by R. L. Greaves, 'The Puritan-Nonconformist Tradition in England, 1560-1700: Historiographical Reflections' *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, Winter, 1985, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Winter, 1985), p. 472.

<sup>17</sup> W. C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970 edn.); R. M. Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1923), discussed in H. Larry Ingle, 'From Mysticism to Radicalism: Recent Historiography of Quaker Beginnings', *Quaker History*, Vol. 76, No. 2 (Fall 1987), p. 80.

<sup>18</sup> G. F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1946), pp. 13-14.

<sup>19</sup> Greaves, 'The Puritan-Nonconformist', pp. 471-472.

<sup>20</sup> C. Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London: Penguin; New edn. 1991), p. 14.

formed. Hill viewed Quakers as political radicals in his examination of the 'English Revolution'.<sup>21</sup> In the 1950s Alan Cole's early discourse on Quakers saw them as pacifists and removed from political debates. This pacifism 'was forced upon them by the hostility of the outside world', however, they were still bound up by the political changes of the time.<sup>22</sup> In Reay's study, the reactions of authorities to Quakerism are explored. Reay's work depended heavily on non-Quaker sources. Using this approach brings the outsiders that caused trouble among the wider community to the fore, and these individuals are therefore made more visible than they would have been within Quakerism as a whole. Adrian Davies in his study, *Quakers in English Society*, has argued that 'the view of Quakers as isolated and marginalised is exaggerated since it is determined too much by a study of records in which Quakers became visible only at points of conflict'.<sup>23</sup> This is why a focus on self-marginalisation, examining how much the Quakers saw themselves as marginalised within their own sources using the example of their dead, will be at the forefront of this chapter.

There are differing interpretations of the Quakers' position in society around the Restoration. Richard Cromwell had promised leniency towards the movement and to release Friends who were imprisoned, parliament however did not support this and the slight moment of hope for more toleration was dashed with the arrival of Charles II.<sup>24</sup> A common view within some historiography saw Quakers as an almost defeated movement under siege by 1660.<sup>25</sup> Richard L. Greaves offered convincing modifications to this view, finding that: 'The dominant characteristics of Restoration Quakerism are not with-drawal

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<sup>21</sup> Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*.

<sup>22</sup> A. Cole, 'The Quakers and the English Revolution', *Past & Present* No. 10 (Nov., 1956), pp. 39-54, quote p. 42.

<sup>23</sup> A. Davies, *The Quakers in English Society 1655-1725* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, p. 33.

<sup>25</sup> R. Bauman, *Let Your Words Be Few: Symbolism of Speaking and Silence Among Seventeenth-Century Quakers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 1, 18-19; discussed in R. L. Greaves, 'Shattered Expectations? George Fox, the Quakers, and the Restoration State, 1660-1685', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Summer, 1992), p. 237.

and quiescence but engagement and vigor'.<sup>26</sup> John Morrill viewed the period slightly differently, suggesting that the politically anarchistic view of the movement resulted in 'ambitions to set up particular constitutional forms', and even as they criticised the regime, they were 'under no illusion that a Stuart Restoration would be much worse for them'.<sup>27</sup> Jonathan Scott claimed the period represented 'the turning of radical expectation decisively inward, away from 'carnal' agencies altogether'.<sup>28</sup> Suffering and persecution informed early Quaker identity, especially around the Restoration, and in the 1660s in general they were also subjected to violent attacks.<sup>29</sup> Suffering and attacks were prominent in the Quakers' curated narrative and the forging of the movement's identity, as they collected and published accounts that exposed this aspect of their early history.

The Quakers' own narrative and their output of printed material and detailed record keeping make them accessible to historians. The vast amount of sources they collected has also made them popular as subjects in the genre of historical biography.<sup>30</sup> Kate Peters examined the impact Quaker sources from the 1650s had within the movement itself and how print forged a recognisable Quaker identity and began a national campaign.<sup>31</sup> She shows that 'by understanding Quaker pamphleteering', the Quakers' role and participation in the 'political life of the interregnum' is visible and 'however threatening marginal and eccentric their ideas, Quakers engaged seriously with contemporary issues,

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<sup>26</sup> Greaves, 'Shattered Expectations?', p. 237.

<sup>27</sup> J. Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 27.

<sup>28</sup> J. Scott, *England's Troubles. Seventeenth-century English political instability in European context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 241.

<sup>29</sup> J. Miller, 'A Suffering People': English Quakers and Their Neighbours c. 1650-c. 1700' *Past & Present*, No. 188 (Aug., 2005), p. 72; T. Harris, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II: Propaganda and Politics from the Restoration until the Exclusion Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 52, 70.

<sup>30</sup> For example see: B. Kunze, *Margaret Fell and the Rise of Quakerism* (London: Macmillan, 1994); G. Skidmore, *Elizabeth Fry: A Quaker Life* (California: Alta Mira Press, 2005); A. Douglas Opperman, *While it is Yet Day; The Story of Elizabeth Fry* (Herefordshire: Orphans Publishing, 2015); J. Stuttard, *The Turbulent Quaker of Shaftesbury: John Rutter* (Gloucester: Hobnob Press, 2018); M. Rediker, *The Fearless Benjamin Lay: The Quaker Dwarf Who Became the First Revolutionary Abolitionist* (London and New York: Verso, 2017); Ingle, *First among Friends: George Fox and the Creation of Quakerism*.

<sup>31</sup> Peters, *Print Culture*, pp. 10-11.

and were able in consequence to build a national, successful movement and maintain a coherent and effective dialogue with the body politic'.<sup>32</sup> All aspects of the Quaker life cycle were included in this vast outpouring of printed material including reflections upon death and the afterlife which will be examined shortly.

Understanding Quakerism during the moment it sprung up and within the social and political landscape of the time is important. Missing from this literature however are discussions about the Quaker dead and how the practices that this movement developed around the treatment of their dead both separated them from and bound them to the wider Protestant community. The Quaker dead are discussed within broader studies of early modern death. Ralph Houlbrooke compared Quakers to the Protestant mainstream, using their records on life expectancy, which, for an adult male was 28 in 1650-99, and 26 in 1700-49, to show a drop where the corresponding norm had risen.<sup>33</sup> He has also examined Quaker deathbed behaviour, which was expected to be composed, calm, and quiet, with no sacramental help nor priestly support.<sup>34</sup> The locations of Quaker burial grounds and the wish for these to be separated from the grounds of other early modern Londoners has been noted in Vanessa Harding's work.<sup>35</sup> In John Landers' demographic study of London, the middle part of his book is dedicated to a survey of mortality among London Quakers, using records from two of London's meeting houses, Southwark and 'Peel'.<sup>36</sup> He explores infant, childhood, and adult mortality, seasonality of death, and spatial variations, again it is compared it to the mainstream norm. Other demographic work comments on the exclusion of Quaker burials (along with other dissenters, Jews, and some

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<sup>32</sup> Peters, *Print Culture*, p. 12.

<sup>33</sup> R. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England 1480-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 14.

<sup>34</sup> Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion*, p. 179.

<sup>35</sup> V. Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 100.

<sup>36</sup> J. Landers, *Death and the Metropolis: Studies in the Demographic History of London 1670- 1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 131-161.

nonconformists) from the *Bills of Mortality*.<sup>37</sup> The most thorough examination of the Quaker dead has been carried out by Gwynne Stock in an unpublished Postgraduate Research Diploma from 1997.<sup>38</sup> Parts of this work in a revised form was published in M. Cox, (ed.), *Grave Concerns: Death & Burial in England 1700-1850* which remains one of the most valuable secondary sources for this chapter. This edited volume also includes the reports on the 1996 excavations of the Quaker burial ground in London Road, Kingston Upon Thames, and an osteological analysis of the bodies from this archaeological excavation.<sup>39</sup> It is from Quakers themselves and scholars within their community that London Quakers and the Quaker burial grounds are most visible. William Beck and Thomas Fredrick Ball's 1864 survey of Quaker history, *The London Friends' Meetings showing the rise of the Society of Friends in London*, remains the most valuable volume for examining the Quakers of the metropolis during the seventeenth and eighteenth century. The Quaker burial grounds are also explored in Isabella Holmes's 1896 survey of London's burial grounds.<sup>40</sup> Yet scholarship on this topic is patchy and fragmented, so a focused examination of the London burial grounds will be undertaken within this chapter.

The Quaker population of England was never large. Between 1663 and 1700, when the average population of the country was over five million, there were only 40,000 members of the Society of Friends.<sup>41</sup> By 1700 the Quakers were more integrated than they

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<sup>37</sup> Beginning with E. A. Wrigley, and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010 edn.), especially pp. 92-96; and J. Boulton, and L. Schwarz, 'Yet another inquiry into the trustworthiness of eighteenth-century London's Bills of Mortality', *Local Population Studies*, 85, (2010), p. 32.

<sup>38</sup> G. Stock, 'An Evaluation of Quaker Burial Practices' (Bournemouth University in collaboration with Bristol and Frenchay Monthly Meetings: Unpublished Postgraduate Research Diploma, 1997).

<sup>39</sup> L. Bashford and T. Pollard, 'In the burying place' – Excavations of a Quaker burial ground', and H. Start and L. Kirk, 'The bodies of Friends' – the osteological analysis of a Quaker burial ground' in *Grave Concerns: Death & Burial in England 1700-1850* M. Cox, (ed.), (York: CBA Research Report 113 Council for British Archaeology, 1998), pp. 154-177.

<sup>40</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends'*; I. Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds: Notes on Their History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1896).

<sup>41</sup> E. Hanbury Hankin, *Common Sense and Its Cultivation* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1926), p. 266, seen in P. C. O'Donnell, 'This Side of the Grave: Navigating the Quaker Plainness

had been in the previous decades.<sup>42</sup> By 1750, when the general population had nearly doubled, the number of Quakers had declined to 30,000, roughly 0.3 percent.<sup>43</sup> However, unlike some of the other movements that sprang up at the same time, Quakerism has endured into the twenty-first century, adapting and transforming when necessary, but still retaining many of the core principles and practices from their foundation. The carefully maintained and treasured records of their own history played a part in this.

## Sources and Methodology

The key source for this chapter has been burial records, those compiled by the Quakers themselves and Church of England parish registers. Other sources include gravedigger's notes, information from the Quaker *Book of Discipline* now called *Quaker Faith and Practice*, newspapers, and a variety of pamphlets and letters from the Quakers of the metropolis. As mentioned in the introduction, due to the Covid-19 pandemic some archival sources were unable to be consulted such as the original burial ground leases and some Monthly Meeting minutes. It is therefore from Beck and Ball's 1864 survey of Quaker history, which helpfully transcribes many of these, that a certain amount of information, especially for the final section, has been available.

The Quaker reputation for meticulous record keeping is well founded. Records about deaths (along with marriages and births) began to be kept from the late 1650s by independent Quaker meetings. Generally, it was the Monthly Meeting that took responsibility for these records. The Monthly Meetings within London happened at various locations and those who attended the meetings were not confined by any parish boundary, convenience was all that mattered.<sup>44</sup> There were other meetings held by Quakers, including

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Testimony in London and Philadelphia in the Eighteenth Century' *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (Spring 2015), p. 40.

<sup>42</sup> Miller, 'A Suffering People', p. 103.

<sup>43</sup> Hanbury Hankin, *Common Sense*, p. 266.

<sup>44</sup> Stock, 'Quaker burial', p. 130.



the Six Week Meetings (from 1671), a Meeting for Sufferings (from 1675), Yearly Meetings, General Meetings, Women's Meetings, and Meetings for Discipline.<sup>45</sup> The Meetings for Discipline were streamlined in 1666 when Fox visited London and found that there was a need for clearer regulations. Fox drew up a paper in 1668 to this end, and this paper included two points that relate to the treatment of the dead. Item 15 stated that 'Friends do buy convenient burying-places, as Abraham did, who bought a place to bury his dead, and would not bury among the Egyptians and Canaanites', and item 16 laid out the importance of buying the necessary books to register births, marriages, and burials.<sup>46</sup> As later sections of this chapter demonstrate, these rules were followed diligently. Rules and regulations were needed across all the different meetings both within London and beyond. The Yearly Meeting created the *Book of Discipline* to bring clarity to these various rubrics. This book codified the rules and regulations and as such had sections that showed the expectations placed upon the community when disposing of their dead. The book has gone through numerous revisions since it was first issued in manuscript form in 1738 under the name 'Christian and Brotherly Advices' and was usually called the *Book of Extracts*. A printed version came into circulation in 1783. Six further versions were examined by Gwynne Stock to ascertain the reliability of the compilations and were found substantially alike.<sup>47</sup> It is now called *Quaker Faith & Practice* and is in its fifth edition, both as an online and printed version. Within this book the guiding principles by which Quakers were to live their lives was outlined. The Yearly Meeting had a legislative importance that was acquired gradually, with one element of it called the 'Queries'. These were in use from 1682 and provided an order to the meetings. The earliest Queries were:

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<sup>45</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends'*, these meetings are discussed throughout the book.

<sup>46</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends'*, pp. 47-52.

<sup>47</sup> Stock, 'Quaker burial', p. 131; the *Book of Discipline's* other names include: *Faith and Practice*, *Christian Faith and Practice*, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, *Church Government and Handbook of Practice and Procedure*.

1. What Friends in the ministry in their respective counties departed this life since the last Yearly Meeting?
2. What Friends imprisoned for their testimony have died since last Yearly meeting?
3. How the Truth hath prospered among themselves since the last Yearly Meeting, and how Friends are in peace and unity?

Two of these Queries are concerned with the Quaker dead. In 1696 the Queries were altered to the following questions:

1. What sufferings?
2. What present prisoners?
3. How many discharged, and when?
4. How many died prisoners, and the time when?
5. How many Public Friends died, and when?
6. How many meeting-houses builded, and what meetings added in each county, since last year?
7. What signal judgments have come upon persecutors?
8. How Truth prospers, and Friends are in unity, in their respective counties?

Again, two of these Queries are concerned with the dead and the importance of recording the movement's suffering is evident. During the eighteenth century the Queries were altered a few more times. Items were added and removed but the general scope of the questions and especially the inclusion of reporting on those who were suffering, prisoners, and the dead, remained constant.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends'*, pp. 54-59.

The Yearly Meetings produced the rules and regulations around responses to the dead, but the Monthly Meeting, as mentioned, were charged with the maintenance of burial records. These records were made up of information from various other meetings and sources, including information from parish searchers and parish clerks. Elizabeth Cock, who died in 1662 and was buried at the Quaker Ground near Bunhill Fields, has an entry that was common within the early records and shows the information taken from the parish searchers:

Elizabeth Cock the Daughter of Ambrose Cock of the Parish of Bottolphs Algate (so called) Deceased the 12<sup>th</sup> Day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Month 1662 of the Teeth as was reported by the Serchers of the said Parish. And was buryed in the said Ground.<sup>49</sup>

The searchers of various parishes appear in many similar entries and there must have been an informal agreement in place between the Quaker communities and the parish searchers to receive information about cause of death. These same searchers provided the information for the *Bills of Mortality*, however, except for sudden or violent deaths, non-Anglican congregations and communities were excluded from the *Bills* and habitually from Anglican parish records.<sup>50</sup> Here the word habitually is important as some parishes did record the Quaker dead who resided within their boundaries within their burial registers.

St Giles, Cripplegate included many of the Quaker community in their own registers. This may in part have been due to the high concentration of Friends who resided within the parish and its proximity to the earliest established Quaker burial ground, the one near Bunhill Fields. Elizabeth Clemenstone who was interred around 20 October 1663 had an entry in both the Quaker burial register and the Cripplegate register. In the Cripplegate entry it simply reads: 'Elizabeth Daughter of Robert Clementson Joyner – Consump[tion]

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<sup>49</sup> TNA, RG 6/499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700).

<sup>50</sup> C. Spence, *Accidents Violent Death in Early Modern London 1650-1750* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2016), pp. 14-15.

quakers gr[ound] 20'; the Quaker register reads: 'Elizabeth Clemenstone Daughter of Robert Clemenstone of Beeck Lane Died the 20<sup>th</sup> of the 8<sup>th</sup> Mo: 1663 of a Consumption as the Searchers of Cripplegate Parish Reported and was buried in the said Ground'.<sup>51</sup> Occasionally there were no clear notes in the Cripplegate registers that someone was buried in the Quaker ground, such as Allan Arnold whom the Quaker burial registers note as 'Allan Arnold of Golden Lane Mealeman Deceased the 2<sup>nd</sup> Day of the First Month 1663/4 of a Consumption as was reported by the Searchers of Criplegate parish (so called) and was buried in the aforesaid Burying Ground'; his entry in the Cripplegate register simply notes 'Arnold Allen Mealeman – Consump[tion] Bishops gate', therefore without checking the Quaker registers it would be impossible to establish if he was from the Quaker community or not.<sup>52</sup> Sometimes the Cripplegate registers do not record the Quakers from the parish in their records at all. In April 1665 Rebekah Clifford died of convulsion fits and this information was given to Friends by the Cripplegate searchers, however the only entry for her death is in the Quaker burial register, she is not mentioned within the Cripplegate one.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, the data collected for this chapter has been meticulously cross referenced with parish registers and the Quakers' own records to shed more light on the individuals interred.

St Giles, Cripplegate was not the only parish that recorded Quaker deaths within their registers, although it seems to have done so far more frequently than other parishes. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, with only one or two exceptions, the Cripplegate registers were almost the only non-Quaker registers that recorded Quaker deaths. By November 1716 St Giles, Cripplegate ceased recording the location of individual

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<sup>51</sup> LMA, P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/006; TNA, RG 6/499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700).

<sup>52</sup> LMA, P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/006; TNA, RG 6/499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700).

<sup>53</sup> TNA, RG 6/499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700).

burials altogether, and seems to have ceased recording Quaker interments around the same time.<sup>54</sup> The 1689 Act of Toleration which allowed Quakers to worship legally probably had some bearing on why the number of Quaker dead declined and then ceased to be recorded in Anglican parish registers.

Quakers desired parliamentary recognition, especially of their marriage ceremonies. When Hardwicke's Marriage Act was passed in 1753 Quakers were finally excluded from the requirement to marry in an Anglican church and by 1755 Quaker marriage became legal. Quaker burials seem to have left less of a legislative trail. It appears to have been widely accepted by the population and local authorities, if potentially not from the clergy who would lose out on burial fees, that the Quakers took care of their own dead within their own burial grounds. These they began to acquire from 1661 and with them began their detailed burial registers.<sup>55</sup>

Quaker burial registers continued relatively unchanged in their content until late in the eighteenth century. The amount of detail in Quaker registers sets them apart from parish registers. In most entries the individual's parish of residence is clearly recorded, although the registers rarely refer to the parishes of London with the word 'Saint'. Indeed, in many records they will write, 'the parish of Dunstons in the East (so called)', or the 'Parish of Bartholmews the great (by the World so called)', avoiding ecclesiastical connotations.<sup>56</sup> They contain details of the cause of death, age of the deceased, their vocation, and occasionally additional detail such as the street they lived on and family they belonged to.

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<sup>54</sup> LMA, P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/014.

<sup>55</sup> Davies, *Quakers in English Society*, p. 41; G. W. Hole, *The Quakers and the English Legal System, 1660-1688* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), p. 36.

<sup>56</sup> Examples from TNA, RG 6/499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700).

In 1776 the Quaker registration system for births, marriages, and deaths was overhauled, and a more systematic procedure introduced. Entries were standardised and printed books provided for Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. The notes about this change are included within one of the burial registers. They explain that a meeting was held to consider the necessity of having the burial records kept in a format that was as clear as possible. They add that each meeting should have burial notes for their members and these notes should not be issued until the searchers report was returned. These notes must state 'the place of abode, or street, and parish, as well as the occupation, of the deceased, be inserted: or wife of -, or widow of -, or son, or daughter, of -, a member of – Monthly-Meeting'. If the deceased were a 'stranger' information must be sought out as much as possible and included with their entry. The rules for the gravediggers and record keepers were also included. Gravedigger should not 'open the ground without Burial-Notes'. It goes on to say:

that all Burials be entered at the different grounds, in a book kept for that purpose, expressing the name of the deceased, the day of interment, and to what meeting the party belonged, or in the compass of which he resided, and that they carry the Notes when filled up, as soon after the burial as may be, to the Monthly-Meeting directed at the Bottom of the Note.<sup>57</sup>

These notes themselves were then placed into the burial register. They began with the name of the individual who dug the grave and date of the note followed by the date the grave was to be dug, location, the deceased's name, residence, age, date of death, and date of burial, finally the signature of the gravedigger and which meeting the individual belonged to were recorded (fig. 4.2).

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<sup>57</sup> TNA, RG 6/839: Monthly Meeting of Longford (comprising Staines and Uxbridge): Burials (1777-1799).

To *Sarah Arnold* Grave-Maker.

The *16<sup>th</sup>* Day of the *First* Month 1788 X

MAKE a Grave on or before next *First* Day, in Friends Burying-Ground, at or near *Westminster-Street in the Park* and therein lay the Body of *W<sup>m</sup> James Smith late of Royston in Hertfordshire but now of Falcon Court* in the Parish of *St George (so called) Southwark* in the County of *Surrey* a Member of *St John's* Monthly-Meeting, aged about *Fifty seven Years* who died the *Eleventh* Day of the *First* Month, called *January* - One Thousand *seven* Hundred and *Eighty eight* of a *Paralytick Stroke* according to the Report of *Two common Searchers* who viewed the said Body.

*Benj<sup>n</sup> Simkin*

The Body above mentioned was buried the *Twentieth* Day of the *First* Month, called *January* 1788

Witness *Sarah Arnold* Grave-Maker.

A true Copy, *Tho' Horn*  
 Register to *Horsleydown Monthly* Meeting. }

Figure 4.2. Gravedigger Note. TNA, RG 6/679: [St John] Horsleydown and Southwark: Burials (1788-1794).

The above gravedigger note is of particular interest as the gravedigger was a woman. Sarah Arnold was the gravedigger for the Southwark burial ground at Long Lane, Bermondsey from January 1786 to at least December 1794, possibly longer. Arnold was a widow, and through examining previous gravedigger notes, it is clear she took up the practice from her husband John Arnold who was the gravedigger from at least February 1785. Indeed, at a certain point she appears to have scratched out his name and replaced it with hers in the notes she received to fill out. She was not the first widow to take up the role of gravedigger upon her husband's death. Records show one Mary Davis was the gravedigger at Whitechapel from May 1785 to January 1786 and Mary Harper was the Wandsworth gravedigger in September 1786.<sup>58</sup> At the Quaker burial ground near Bunhill Fields Deborah Morris took the role on after her father died and she was the gravedigger from 1745 to 1757, after which her husband took over. Morris and Arnold appear to be the longest serving female gravediggers within the London Quaker records. Female

<sup>58</sup> All this can be found in, TNA, RG 6/1168D: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burial notes (1785-1794).

gravediggers were ubiquitous, especially from the mid-eighteenth century, even outside the Quaker community. Women Sextons (or Sextonesses) were common across the metropolis, and they were often tasked with organising the digging of graves in the parish churchyards they oversaw.<sup>59</sup> The role of female gravediggers both in the Anglican and Quaker communities deserves more attention, sadly beyond the scope of this work. As the sources indicate, women were very involved in the process of disposing of the Quaker dead, but this was not distinctive to Quaker communities.

By the very end of the eighteenth century, along with collecting burial notes, details about the deceased began to be recorded into pre-labelled columns within the burial registers. In 1837, when the civil registration was brought in, the Quakers, after an initial refusal to comply with the new requirement to surrender their registers to a central deposit, changed their mind when they saw the benefits such actions would have and now these registers are housed in The National Archives at Kew, with copies held by Friends House Library and Archive in London.

Newspapers have been a valuable source for insights into the Quaker dead and are used extensively in this chapter much as they were in the previous chapters on suicides and criminals. Newspaper readers seem to have had an interest in the Quakers of the metropolis and indeed those further afield, and newspapers reported on them frequently. During the seventeenth century the newspapers paint Quakers in a less than complimentary way with one of the earliest in 1652 calling them 'an idle loose people' and claiming that 'their actions are such as doth much trouble the godly people'.<sup>60</sup> Slowly the papers start noting individual stories such as one in 1680 concerning a Quaker living in St Clements Danes, who stated he would contribute 5l. towards the pulling down of the

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<sup>59</sup> W. Henry, 'Hester Hammerton and Women Sextons in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century England', *Gender & History*, Vol. 31 No. 2 July 2019, pp. 404-421 (my thanks to Professor Laura Gowing for this reference).

<sup>60</sup> *Severall Proceedings in Parliament* (London), November 11, 1652, p. 14.



church (which had been requested of him), 'but he would give nothing to the Rebuilding of it'.<sup>61</sup> The papers then begin to include theological discourses within their pages, often in the forms of letters and discussion pieces about the practices of Quakers.<sup>62</sup> By the end of the century Quaker advertisements were also being run in newspapers, however papers rarely reported Quaker deaths unless these were of a 'sensational' nature, such as murders.<sup>63</sup>

By the eighteenth-century newspapers were portraying Quakers in a far better light, often bringing attention to their honesty and the role they held within the wider community, even when reporting on their deaths which began to appear with frequency. For example, in May 1760 the *London Chronicle* reported:

Yesterday in the forenoon departed this life at his house at Peckham Rye, Mr. Resta Patching, of Pudding-lane, London, Wine-merchant, one of the people call'd Quakers; by whose death his family has lost an affectionate relation, his acquaintance a steady friend, and a most agreeable sensible companion, and the world an ingenious, worthy, honest man.<sup>64</sup>

The Quakers encouraged this narrative of honesty and used it to carve out a place for their members within wider London society. This led them to a position which became strongly linked to financial practices. Two prominent British banks were founded by Quakers: Lloyds and Barclays.

In November 1730, the newspapers reported that: 'Yesterday in the Evening Mr. Robert Freame, of Aldersgate street, a noted Quaker and Dealer in Hops, died suddenly at

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<sup>61</sup> *Protestant (Domestick) Intelligence or News Both from City and Country* (London), Tuesday, Apr. 6, 1680; Issue 79.

<sup>62</sup> For a debate about whether it was best being a papist or Quaker see: *Athenian Gazette* (London), Sunday, Nov. 29, 1691; Issue 19. For a question sent in by a young man who was having doubts about the Church of England after reading some Quaker material see: *Athenian Gazette* (London), Saturday, Oct. 14, 1693; Issue 28.

<sup>63</sup> For an example of the advertisements Quakers were placing by the 1690s see: *Post Man and the Historical Account* (London), November 25 - November 28, 1699; Issue 681.

<sup>64</sup> *London Chronicle* (London), May 20 - May 22, 1760; Issue 531.

the Three Tun Tavern in Gracechurch-street'.<sup>65</sup> This can be cross referenced with the burial records which confirm the date of death, give Freame the age of 60, record he came from the parish of St Botolph, Aldersgate, show the cause of death was apoplexy, and convey the fact he was buried in the ground near Bunhill Fields.<sup>66</sup> If a Quaker was considered 'eminent', or if their death had been unusual, they would receive more newspaper coverage. Take for example the death of one Mr Middleton in 1734. The newspapers reported:

Monday Morning the Workmen began to remove the Rubbish in the Cross Keys Inn in Gracechurch-street, when they found the Body of Mr. Middleton the Quaker under the Gateway, his Arms and Legs being burnt off; he was immediately conveyed to an Undertaker's in order for Burial.<sup>67</sup>

This story was told in various newspapers.<sup>68</sup> Mr Middleton has an entry in the Quaker burial records, it reads:

John Middleton of the North of England, aged about Fifty Five years, Burnt to Death in the Fire which hapned at the Cross keys Inn in Gracechurch Street the 20<sup>th</sup> Day of the 4<sup>th</sup> Month called June 1734. was Buried the 22d Day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month called July following near Bunhill Fields.<sup>69</sup>

Along with allowing insight into the most eminent Quakers and strange Quaker deaths, the newspapers offer a visible change in attitudes towards Quaker communities over the period examined. Newspapers are a source external from the Quakers' curated narrative but demonstrate the place that Quakers carved out for themselves. The newspaper

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<sup>65</sup> *Daily Journal* (London), Tuesday, Nov. 3, 1730; Issue 3065.

<sup>66</sup> TNA, RG 6/330: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1720-1758).

<sup>67</sup> *Weekly Miscellany* (London), Saturday, July 27, 1734; Issue 85.

<sup>68</sup> *Daily Courant* (London), Tuesday, July 23, 1734; Issue 5710; *Grub Street Journal* (London), Thursday, July 25, 1734; Issue 239; *County Journal or The Craftsman* (London), Saturday, July 27, 1734; Issue 421; *London Journal* (1720) (London), Saturday, July 27, 1734; Issue 787.

<sup>69</sup> TNA, RG 6/330: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1720-1758).

coverage shows the early external marginalisation of the movement by other Londoners and the self-marginalising actions taken by early Quakers. Eventually, there is a clear move towards more acceptance and even celebration of the movement, individuals within the community, and, by extension, their dead. By the mid-eighteenth century the marginalisation of Quakers in life and death was no longer so strongly influenced by outward exclusion while still being maintained internally.

The Quakers' own publishing habits have resulted in various sources used within this chapter. The vast amount of material written by Quakers is accessible due to meticulous record keeping and these records are instrumental to understanding the Quaker dead as the Quakers saw them. Kate Peters' work has shown that the published output by Quakers was vast. Her examination, and Brooke Sylvia Palmieri's PhD thesis from 2017, demonstrate how important the role of circulating their own texts was to the Quaker movement, both in order to share their views on how to live a devoted life that followed Quaker principles, and to develop a strong sense of community within the movement.<sup>70</sup> Between late 1652 and the end of 1656 alone, nearly 300 different titled works were printed.<sup>71</sup> Some of these texts and later ones deal with the Quaker ideals of a 'good death' and demonstrate how it can be achieved. They also allow insight into the consistency of the Quaker views on death which will be examined within the next section.

Combining the information from all the mentioned sources and scrupulously cross-referencing these records with one another has formed the basis of this chapter. Named individuals from various sources were compiled and their stories form the foundation of this examination into the marginalisation of the Quaker dead. This begins, unlike the

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<sup>70</sup> Peters, *Print Culture*; B. Sylvia Palmieri, PhD Thesis, 'Compelling Reading: The Circulation of Quaker Texts, 1650-1700' (University College London, 2017).

<sup>71</sup> Peters, *Print Culture*, p. 1.

preceding chapters, by exploring how Quakers viewed death, and why it became important that their dead were treated differently and distinctively to Anglican Londoners.

## Quaker Views on Death

Quakers beliefs about death and dying explain how and why the movement sought to separate their dead not only from the Anglican parish dead but also from other dissenting groups. Where other dissenting groups and nonconformists were less likely to have their own burial grounds and ended up disposing of their dead within burial grounds that grouped them together under one umbrella, Quakers were drawn to the idea of independent burial grounds.<sup>72</sup> There were however, constant clashes between theory and practice throughout the movement's early attempts to distinguish their customs around dying, funerals, interments, and mourning, and this began with their views on death and dying.

Quakers, in theory, were to focus on making this world and those who inhabit it better, rather than concentrating on death and an afterlife. In a miscellaneous collection of letters, poems, and other bits and pieces concerning religious subjects amassed from across England and Ireland by Richard Pike during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the opening lines from a short poem called *The Great Concerns of Life*, demonstrates this view:

Time Past is fled, and cannot be recall'd,  
To Future Time our Life may not extend,  
The Present Time is ours - . Improve it well.<sup>73</sup>

This is not to say that Quakers did not think upon death nor contemplate the afterlife. In this same miscellaneous collection, there are numerous entries including one entitled

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<sup>72</sup> Wrigley, and Schofield, *The Population History*, p. 138.

<sup>73</sup> FH, MS Vol S480, p. 93.

'Reflection's [*sic*] on Death' and another called 'On the Certainty of Death', which show that death and the afterlife were still contemplated by Quakers in a manner not unlike that of their mainstream Protestant counterparts.<sup>74</sup>

The leading Quaker preacher, author, and lobbyist George Whitehead, who became the acknowledged leader of the Quaker movement in 1692, certainly thought upon death often.<sup>75</sup> When his wife Ann died on 28 July 1686, Whitehead published a collection of personal testimonies to her memory. In the collection, friends of the deceased wrote about Ann's qualities but also about her death and the afterlife. One entry reads:

And altho her Body be removed from us; her memory lives in that which is beyond words. So unto that pure everlasting Power (which works in us and for us both to will and to do according to his good pleasure) be all Glory and Honour, with Everlasting pure holy Prayes it ascends and is ascribed and given unto him that lives for ever and for evermore.<sup>76</sup>

Remembering the dead was therefore important to Quaker beliefs. When Whitehead himself died in March 1723, his will stipulated no specific resting place for his mortal remains asking instead 'that my Body be buried in such place and decent manners to my Executors shall be thought fitting and convenient agreeable to my profession and Circumstances'.<sup>77</sup> His executors dutifully interred him at the Quaker ground near Bunhill Fields and the entry in the burial register reads:

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<sup>74</sup> FH, MS Vol S480, pp. 168, 217, see also one from Dublin about death p. 185.

<sup>75</sup> N. Smith, 'Whitehead, George (1637–1724), Quaker leader and writer'. *ODNB* 23 Sep. 2004; <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-29287> [accessed, 28 Feb. 2020].

<sup>76</sup> G. Whitehead, *Piety promoted by faithfulness manifested by several testimonies concerning that true servant of God Ann Whitehead* (1686), p. 109.

<sup>77</sup> TNA, PROB 11/590/153, Will of George Whitehead of Saint Botolph without Bishopgate, City of London.

George Whitehead of Houndsditch in the Parish of Botolphs Bishopgate, aged about 87 Years died the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> mo. 1722-3, of Age accord[in]g to the Report of 2 common Searchers who view'd the s[ai]d Body, & was buried the 13<sup>th</sup> of the same, in Friends Burying-Ground, near Bunhill-fields.<sup>78</sup>

Whitehead's will demonstrates his lack of concern about what happened to his bodily remains and his trust in his fellow Quakers to carry out the appropriate action on this account. The remainder of the will is concerned with bequeathing money to friends and family, and nothing further is mentioned about his final resting place nor any wish for commemoration. However, he did receive a eulogy which survives in a miscellaneous collection along with an epitaph which reads:

Within the place here he's interr'd  
A Servant of the Lord,  
Who never persecution fear'd  
But boldly preach'd his Word:  
This name exceeds the best perfumes,  
More Sweet more fragrant far,  
Than Civet's musk or Arab Gums,  
or Egypt's Spices are:  
Altho' no stone, or pompous Tomb  
Be to his Body given,  
His Soul no doubt is welcom'd home,  
By Jesus Christ in Heaven.  
And may we, that are left behind,

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<sup>78</sup> TNA, RG 6/673: Monthly Meeting of Devonshire House, Houndsditch, London: Burials (1718-1776).

By his, our Actions steer  
That we like him may comfort find,  
And like him persevere.

Finis<sup>79</sup>

Again, although there is no apparent concern relating to what *actually* happened to their mortal remains, the afterlife was clearly contemplated by members of the Quaker movement. Quakers understood the power of the written word, hence their vast output of pamphlet material. In the above epitaph the lines ‘Altho’ no stone, or pompous Tomb / Be to his Body given’ are telling. There was to be less energy spent on physically marking the place of the dead, and this epitaph reads like a performance of disdain or indifference to physical memorialisation, however, textual memorialisation was accepted. Written eulogies may have been even more important for Quakers than for Anglicans thanks to their potential audience. Due to higher levels of literacy and immersion in print culture, published material relating to the end of a Friends’ life could easily be shared with fellow Quakers.

On the odd occasion, however, a Quaker appears to break with the norm of simple inconspicuous interments. In April 1738, for example, the newspapers reported:

On Tuesday Night Mr. Conyers, a Bookseller in Little Britain, was interr'd at the Quaker Burial-Ground. The Coffin was cover'd with black Cloth and colour'd Nails, the Mourners wore Cloaks, and the Women had Scarves: This being an unusual Method of Burial amongst that Sort of People, the Body was, at first, refus'd to be interr'd; but the Deceas'd having left very considerably to the Poor of the Quakers, and the Executors being resolv'd not to pay it if this Part of his Will was not

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<sup>79</sup> FH, Temp MSS 97/1 Letchworth MSS, An Epitaph.

comply'd with, the Body was, after a long Debate, buried in pursuance of the Will of the Deceas'd.<sup>80</sup>

George Conyers was buried at the Quaker ground near Bunhill Fields. It transpires that his will did not in fact stipulate such actions upon his funeral unless there is a document that is now lost. His will simply states what he bequeathed to friends and family; the amount of money and items were very generous; however, his funeral wishes were not included.<sup>81</sup>

The newspapers may have been attempting to critique the Quakers for hypocrisy, implying that they were compromising their principles for financial support, although this is purely conjecture, for there appears to be no follow up entries or other records of this interment. By the mid-eighteenth century the ceremony around a Quaker burial does appear to have been more elaborate than earlier, for Conyers was not alone in enacting such observance, a point returned to later, but again the convention of a lack of concern about the individual's mortal remains still seems apparent.

In one of the earliest 'histories' of the Quakers, Gerard Croese, a Dutch Reformed minister and author, wrote about the beliefs Quakers held on the Resurrection.

We Believe, There shall be a Resurrection of the Dead, both of the Just and Unjust; they that have done good to the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done evil to the Resurrection of Damnation; Flesh and Blood cannot Inherit the Kingdom of God, neither doth Corruption Inherit Incorruption. Nor is that Body sown that shall be, but God giveth it a Body as it hath pleased him, and to every Seed his own Body: It is sown in Dishonour, it is raised in Glory; it is sown in Corruption, it is

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<sup>80</sup> *London Evening Post* (London), April 6 - April 8, 1738; Issue 1622.

<sup>81</sup> TNA, PROB 11/688/338, Will of George Conyers, Stationer of Saint Botolph Aldersgate, City of London.



rais'd in Incorruption; it is sown in Weakness, it is raised in Power; it is sown a Natural Body, it is raised a Spiritual Body.<sup>82</sup>

For Quakers, the resurrection was spiritual, not physical. Therefore, mortal remains were not needed. There was a strong emphasis on spiritual welfare, but the Quaker cadaver did not hold a place of importance.

In the very early years of the eighteenth century, the significance placed upon remembering the deceased and thinking upon the afterlife to promote this spiritual welfare manifested itself in published collections of last dying sayings from members of the Quaker community. The books were entitled *Piety promoted* and numerous London Quakers were included within these volumes. The first volume alone recounts the stories of some 205 individuals between 1654 and 1710, 34 of whom died in the metropolis.<sup>83</sup> Of these 34 Londoners, 20 were men and 14 women. The youngest person from the metropolis whose dying sayings were recorded is Ruth Middleton who died in 1701, aged 11 years, two months, and four days.<sup>84</sup> A 13-year-old boy, Joseph Broggins of Bartholomew Close London, who died in 1675 was another young individual.<sup>85</sup> Middleton was buried at the Bull and Mouth on Aldersgate Street and Broggins at 'Chequers Alley', the Quaker ground near Bunhill Fields.<sup>86</sup> Last dying words were rarely recorded by individuals who were so young within the Anglican practice (except when the individual was hanged). These collections of

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<sup>82</sup> G. Croese, *The general history of the Quakers containing the lives, tenents, sufferings, tryals, speeches and letters of the most eminent Quakers, both men and women : from the first rise of that sect down to this present time / being written originally in Latin by Gerard Croese ; to which is added a letter writ by George Keith and sent by him to the Author of this Book: Containing a Vindication of himself, and several Remarks on this History* (1696), in the section: *AN APPENDIX: CONTAINING The True Copy of a Latine Letter Writ by George Keith, and sent by him to Gerard Croes, Translated out of his Latine Manuscript into English*. p. 37.

<sup>83</sup> There are four volumes in total and seven parts within them all; W. Evans and T. Evans, (ed.), *Piety promoted, in a collection of dying sayings of many of the people called Quakers* (1854 edn.).

<sup>84</sup> Evans and Evans, *Piety promoted*, pp. 192-194.

<sup>85</sup> Evans and Evans, *Piety promoted*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>86</sup> TNA, RG 6/331: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1699-1723); RG 6/499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700).

last dying sayings have a relatively even split of male and female voices showing the equal standing in death that all members of the Quaker movement held, regardless of their gender. All the dying sayings have similar formulas. Each entry highlights the pious life of the individual and their good deeds while alive, along with their acceptance and peace of mind at death. Tudor Brian, a seventeen-year-old London Quaker who died in 1696, told those who were at his bedside: 'Be not troubled for me, for I am going to a better place'.<sup>87</sup> Many entries claim satisfaction at the end of life. For example, Elizabeth Harman who died in 1698, aged twenty-eight, is quoted as saying 'I pray God bless you, and grant to you all as happy an end as I am like to make;'.<sup>88</sup>

Only one entry from the London Quakers in *Piety promoted* shows a request for something specific at an individual's burial. This request came from Elizabeth Moss who, sensing she was soon to die, sent for some of the Quaker leaders including Samuel Waldenfield and George Whitehead. When Waldenfield arrived, she said: 'I had a desire to see thee, and to invite thee to my burial'. Later when George Whitehead visited; 'She desired George Whitehead also to be at her burial, and after he had spoken a few words in prayer and supplication on her behalf, she parted with him in much love and unity'. Moss died in 1702, aged about thirty-nine, and was buried in the Quaker ground near Bunhill Fields. It is unknown if those she requested to be at her burial actually did attend.<sup>89</sup> Only one other entry mentions an individual's burial out of the London Quakers included in the volume. William Gibson, a minister and haberdasher of some substantial wealth, leaving quite a sum to his wife and children in his will along with 500 acres of land in Pennsylvania, died of a fever on 20 November 1684 at 'about five in the afternoon'. His entry records that he was 'honourably buried at Friends' burying-ground, in Bunhill-fields, many hundreds of

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<sup>87</sup> Evans and Evans, *Piety promoted*, pp. 124-126.

<sup>88</sup> Evans and Evans, *Piety promoted*, pp. 139-144, quote at 143.

<sup>89</sup> Evans and Evans, *Piety promoted*, pp. 221-225; TNA, RG 6/331: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1699- 1723).

friends and brethren accompanying his corpse to the grave. Aged fifty-five years, a minister twenty-six years'.<sup>90</sup> Why these small details are included for this London Quaker and no others is unknown but may have simply been down to a decision by the individual who compiled this entry wishing to show how popular Gibson was by including the number of attendants at his interment.

The London Quakers' last dying sayings are reminiscent of mainstream Protestant tracts on how to die well and even reveal similarities to the last dying speeches of criminals upon the scaffold. However, instead of repentance it is the pious nature of a life well lived that resulted in a 'good death', and this was something that other members of the community should aspire to. Along with a clear focus on dying well and how this could be achieved, there were also included, both in this volume and in other sources, a prophetic awareness of one's own mortality. The significance of this inclusion is in its promotion of the Quaker faith as the correct belief system. A Quaker knows their own end. One such prophetic paper was collected in a miscellaneous folder simply entitled 'Extracts Relating to Friends 1660-1794'. This paper dates from December 1762 and begins with 'I thought I was dead, & behold my body lay like a Corps,' and continues to tell how this individual met a man who became his guide and led him to a vast house on a hill where a large company of people were sitting like they do 'at a Meeting of Solid Friends'. This dreamer was struck by the light shining brightly in the place and the peace upon the faces of those he met whose gender he could not discern. However, the guide then led him to other places, and he came upon people who,

smell'd so strong of Brimstone that I seem'd almost suffocated, all of them were talking to themselves & before they came to us look'd well but when they came near there appeared a blackness on ev'ry Face those that did not talk loud moved

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<sup>90</sup> Evans and Evans, *Piety promoted*, pp. 245-247.

their lips & seem'd to mutter to themselves which was also the manner of some who walked alone.

The guide, when questioned, explained these were the 'Miserable' and so they would be for evermore. Others, including people the dreamer had known in life who were now deceased, were also visited and the message they relayed was that they suffer because they had paid lip service but had not truly followed the Quaker path in their hearts. When the dreamer awoke the smell of brimstone still filled his nostrils and he endeavoured to live the remainder of his life (which was coming to an end), as well as he could, so as to join those he had seen in the first instance.<sup>91</sup> Other such premonition-like instances were recorded. Thomas Forster who died in 1660 was alleged to have foreseen the Great Fire and the Quaker sufferings that the 1660s would bring.<sup>92</sup> A Quaker named John Hill's prophetic revelation was written out both in English and Welsh. The English reads:

A Day of Persecution is near, my Weak, My Babes, my elects,  
my precious in Christ Jesus, you must be thrown into Holes  
and Prisons. But, the Lord will cause a time of Earthquaking  
that will cause all the Prison Doors in England to break  
open; and you the Saints of the Everlasting God shall be set  
at Liberty: And immediately after that Time a Great De=  
=struction shall come upon the ungodly.

Written in London the 13<sup>th</sup> of the 8mo 1661 by the Servant of the Lord

John Hill<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> FH, MS Vol 62/45, Extracts Relating to friends 1660-1794.

<sup>92</sup> Evans and Evans, *Piety promoted*, pp. 48-49; For his burial see: TNA, RG 6/499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700).

<sup>93</sup> FH, MS Vol 62/45, Extracts Relating to Friends 1660-1794: John Hill's Revelation in Welsh, and English, of a day of persecution, followed by an earthquake and an opening of all the prison doors, and then a great destruction of the ungodly, London 13/8/1661.

Along with a prophetic awareness of impending death, suffering before death became part of the death narrative within Quaker commentaries on dying.

In 1662 'An Act for preventing the Mischeifs and Dangers that may arise by certaine Persons called Quakers and others refusing to take lawfull Oaths', came into effect. This act was commonly known as 'The Quaker Act of 1662', it made it illegal for Quakers to refuse to 'take lawful Oath; or by printing, & maintaining such Doctrine; if such Persons depart from their Habitations, and assemble to the Number of Five, &c;'. This act resulted in the imprisonment of many Quakers across England and within London. In 1664, 'The Conventicle Act' forbade conventicles, defined as any non-Church of England religious gathering of five or more people. By 1665 the 'Five Mile Act' came into force which fined dissenting preachers 40 pounds should they come within five miles of towns.<sup>94</sup> Many Quakers were arrested due to these acts and imprisoned in Newgate and other gaols. Even before these acts Quakers had been subjected to harsh treatment by the authorities of London.

When Quakers who had been subjected to harsh punishments or imprisonment died, their suffering was woven into their death narrative. Richard Hubberthorn, a Quaker born in Lancashire who moved to London to spread the movement's message was,

taken from the Bull and Mouth meeting-house in London, and had before Sir Richard Brown, who with his own hands did violence to him, and then committed him to Newgate, where being thronged up in a nasty prison, he was taken sick, and in a few days grew weaker and weaker.<sup>95</sup>

He died in Newgate and was subjected to a Coroner's Inquest which decided the death was natural. The Quaker community were granted permission to bury Hubberthorn and duly did

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<sup>94</sup> For discussions about these acts see: Harris, *London Crowds*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>95</sup> Evans and Evans, *Piety promoted*, pp. 49-50.

so; he was interred in the ground near Bunhill Fields.<sup>96</sup> Edward Burrough, born in the county of Westmoreland around 1635, was also taken at the same time as Hubberthorn and grew sick in Newgate dying there in 1662.<sup>97</sup> While imprisoned Burrough wrote a letter to other Quakers that described the condition of their incarceration:

it would be large to relate, + piercing of your hearts to hear  
the Violence and crulty w[hi]ch friends have suffered in this Citty, in their Meet=  
=ings & in prisons it hath been very hard to bear the persecutions inflicted  
every way, tho the Lord hath given Strength and Boldness + this power alone  
hath carried thro', else many would have fainted & not been able to stand;

He goes on to explain that there were around 250 Quaker prisoners in Newgate, Bridewell, Southwark, and New Prison. In Newgate alone there were 'near a Hundred in one Room on the commonside amongst felons, and their Sufferings are great'. He also mentioned that there were many Baptists imprisoned with them and they felt compassion towards all those who were innocent and suffered.<sup>98</sup> Two months after this letter Burrough died, his entry in the burial register reads:

Prisoner: Edward Burrough A Prisoner at Newgate for the Testimony of Truth  
Departed this Life the 13<sup>th</sup> of the 12<sup>th</sup> Month 1662 was found by the Searchers  
to die of a Feaver and was interred in the Burying Ground aforesaid.<sup>99</sup>

The inclusion in the burial records of details about those who were imprisoned show how important the narrative of suffering became in the stories of Quaker deaths. Burrough's letter was copied numerous times and circulated throughout the Quaker community.

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<sup>96</sup> TNA, RG 6/499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700).

<sup>97</sup> Evans and Evans, *Piety Promoted*, pp. 51-53.

<sup>98</sup> FH, MS Vol 62/45, Extracts Relating to friends 1660-1794, Edward Burrough to Friends, Newgate 9/9/1662.

<sup>99</sup> TNA, RG 6/499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700).

Between September 1661 and July 1665, there are 52 entries out of 771, about 6.7%, in the Quaker burial registers that follow the same format as Burrough's where 'prisoner' is stated. They were, with two exceptions, buried in the Quaker Ground near Bunhill Fields. These entries also note those whose death happened after their release from prison, but the imprisonment still informs the register entry. In 1662 a Quaker named Robert Coss has an entry in the register that records he was a 'late prisoner in Newgate', but he died of a cold after release. The female prisoners' entries are the same. On 13 December 1664, for example, Dorothy Guy's entry reads: 'Prisoner. Dorothy Guy the wife of Richard Guy Departed this Life a Witness for Truth in the White Lyon Prison and was interred in the aforesaid Burying Ground the 13<sup>th</sup> Day of the 10<sup>th</sup> Month 1664'.<sup>100</sup> Bodies were even returned from those who died on ships that were taking them to the western plantations and the word 'prisoner' sometimes included for these cases.<sup>101</sup>

When a body was not returned from the prison to the Quaker community this was also recorded in the burial register. An entry from 9 September 1664 reads:

Prisoners: John Wilkinson & William Tomkins} having both been Prisoners in Newgate for the Testimony of Truth, and there contracted (through the noyssiness of the Place) Violent feavers whereof they both Died the 9<sup>th</sup> Day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month 1664 and were intended to be buried in the said Ground of Friends. But least the workes of Wickednes of the Citty Officers should be soon. The Citty Marshall steale their 2 Bodies at Midnight from the Bull and Mouth and Buried them at Annes Steeplehouse.<sup>102</sup>

The Bull and Mouth meeting house where these two corpses were waiting for their interment was one of the earliest meeting houses in London set up six months after a visit

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<sup>100</sup> Examples from TNA, RG 6/499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700).

<sup>101</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, p. 330.

<sup>102</sup> TNA, RG 6/499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700).

in summer 1654 by Francis Howgill and Edward Burrough.<sup>103</sup> The reason behind the theft of these bodies by officials is unknown but may well have had to do with one zealous individual named John Robinson. Robinson was an alderman who had served as Lord Mayor and been made a baronet before becoming Governor of the Tower of London. He was well known for his dislike of Quakers and according to their records often used his resources to disrupt and attack the movement, recurrently sending soldiers to break up Quaker gatherings.<sup>104</sup> There are not many cases of bodies being kept from Friends for interment. In fact, only this example has been uncovered in the initial sample years for London.

But the suffering narrative, whenever present, was always included in the burial register. A raid on a Quaker meeting in 1662 resulted in the death of one John Trowel from the 'wounds and bruises received at the Meeting'. The story about this incident was printed by the Quakers and widely circulated. Trowel's body was displayed at the Quaker Meeting House, which Palmieri has interpreted as 'an attempt to publicise government responsibility', and the pamphlet was witness to the brutality so: 'that the murder might be manifest, and not be hid in secret'.<sup>105</sup> In 1683 a Devonshire House meeting was violently broken up 'by Lieutenant Minchard and a band of soldier' who struck a Quaker named John Sparsfield violently on the head, the man went home ill and died ten days later. This case went through formal inquiry, an inquest was held, and the verdict given, 'death from natural causes'.<sup>106</sup> The narrative of suffering, in both life and death, became the focus for

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<sup>103</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, p. 24.

<sup>104</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, pp. 34, 37, 163-164; For an example see S. Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* vol. 1 and 4, R. Latham and W. Matthews, (eds.), (London: Bell and Sons, 1971-83), Tuesday 7 February 1659/60, p. 67, and Monday 10 August 1663, p. 271.

<sup>105</sup> E. Burrough, *A Brief Relation of the Persecutions and Cruelties That have been acted upon the People Called Quakers, In and about the City of London*, (1662) From page 19 onward lists of wounded and imprisoned Quakers by county are included, discussed in Palmieri, 'Compelling Reading', p. 100; another example of this is the broadside Anon, *For the King and both Houses of Parliament being a brief, plain, and true relation of some of the late sad sufferings of the people of God called Quakers*, (1663), also in Palmieri, 'Compelling Reading', p. 100.

<sup>106</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, p. 173.



the 'Meeting for Sufferings' which were established in 1675 and held four times a year to assess the persecution of Quakers and offer some redress to this.<sup>107</sup> By 1689, when the Act of Toleration came into effect, allowing Quaker worship, the narrative of suffering within tracts on death and in burial registers ceased to be so prominent, although was in no way eradicated.

Even though Quakers were not supposed to concentrate on death and the afterlife, in practice the afterlife and narratives around dying well were common. The pious lives of individuals within the community were highlighted as examples of how a good death could be achieved, but trust was placed in fellow Quakers to conduct an appropriate funeral and burial for their fellow Friends. An inclusion of prophetic death and a narrative around those who were subjected to suffering for their faith before death became frequent. The Quaker approach and practice around dying held some similarities to the mainstream Protestant views about dying and the afterlife. Yet, the funerals and burials of Quakers were self-marginalising especially with the establishment of their own burial grounds.

### Quaker Burial Grounds

Quakers were first buried, according to their own narrative and nothing to the contrary has been unearthed within this research, in their gardens, or orchards, and in fields. Only a few examples from surviving sources show burials in orchards and fields and they come from outside London. For example: 'The incumbent of the Cambridgeshire village of Over recorded the interments of twelve Quakers in the orchard of their co-religionist George Nash between 1667 and 1677'.<sup>108</sup> In London the young 11-year-old Quaker Ruth Middleton

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<sup>107</sup> FH, Meeting for Sufferings 1, before pagination, in Miller, 'A Suffering People', p. 73.

<sup>108</sup> RO, P129/1/2, Parish register, Over, Cambs., burials 1641-1717, Cambs. (unpaginated) in B. Stevenson, 'The social integration of post-Restoration dissenters, 1660-1725' *The World of Rural Dissenters, 1520-1725* M. Spufford ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 364, for other examples see: J. Charles Cox, *The parish registers of England* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1910), p. 109.

who was mentioned earlier appears to have been buried in the grounds behind the Bull and Mouth meeting house. This was an incredibly small space so cannot have been used for many interments. Some early Quakers were buried in the New Churchyard, because as a non-parochial ground it was attractive to them and other dissenters such as Lodowicke Muggleton who co-founded and gave his name to Muggletonianism. The earliest Quaker burial in this ground is Andrew Barranse of St Ann and St Agnes who died from a fever and was interred on the 13 January 1659.<sup>109</sup>

From the outset Quakers refused to be buried in grounds owned by the Church of England.<sup>110</sup> However, they were occasionally interred in parish burial grounds despite these wishes. There are a few records of non-Quaker relatives and friends digging up a Friend from a Quaker burial ground and reintering them within a parish burial ground. Although no cases of this have been uncovered for London, stories from further afield would caution against excluding this possibility for the metropolis. Gerard Croese claimed it was not uncommon in the 1660s:

It's a wonder, how much hatred also the odd and different way of managing and carrying their Funerals, and what storms of Reproaches and Trouble it brought upon the Quakers; they themselves Report, that the dead Carkasses of their Friends were dug up again, and buried in other places; and all this lasted till the next Year after this, wherein that Memorable Plague raged, and when the Quakers had free Liberty to Bury in their own Places, and perform their Funeral Rites as they themselves pleased.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> GL, P69/ANA/A/01/Ms 3701/35; <http://www.crossrail.co.uk/sustainability/archaeology/bedlam-burial-ground-register> [first accessed, 10 October 2018].

<sup>110</sup> Anon, *Friends' Intelligencer*, Vol. 22: March 11, 1865 (Classic Reprint, 2018), p. 483.

<sup>111</sup> Croese, *The general history of the Quakers*, p. 183.

The plague certainly assisted the Quakers' quest to bury their own 'Carkasses' in their own manner and grounds. The pressures on individual parishes to dispose of the plague dead must be a reason why Quakers did not meet much opposition to their independent burial practices. Isabella Holmes wrote that during the plague the Quakers 'had their own special dead-cart'.<sup>112</sup> They also, according to an entry in Samuel Pepys' diary, refused to have 'any bell ring for them'.<sup>113</sup> This lack of dependence upon the parish and broader mechanisms that responded to the plague outbreak clearly assisted the Quakers in their mission to distinguish their religious practice and by extension the actions they took with their dead.

Quakers believed that because all ground was 'God's ground', the idea of consecrated ground was unnecessary, and any convenient land was acceptable for interring members of the community.<sup>114</sup> One manuscript from 1669 noted: 'All friends who are not provided may speedily provide them selves Burying places Convenient, that thereby a testament may stand against the Superstisious Idolizing of those places Cal[!]ed holy grownd, formerly used to that purpose'.<sup>115</sup> This implies that if Quakers could not access a Quaker burial ground anywhere was sufficient for their interment, apart from Church of England burial grounds. This must have been the case until the first dedicated Quaker burial ground was procured in the metropolis.

The first parcel of ground purchased for the burials of London's Quakers was a site *near* Bunhill Fields in 1661. Nearby, in 1665, the Bunhill Fields burial ground was established, and it is important not to confuse the two. Across both sites there was already a long history of interment. The name Bunhill derived from 'Bonehill' and was the location where bones from the charnel house of Old St. Paul's Cathedral were once disposed of.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Holmes, *The London Burial grounds*, pp. 139-143.

<sup>113</sup> Pepys, *The Diary*, vol. 5, Thursday 31 August 1665, p. 208.

<sup>114</sup> Stock, 'Quaker burial', p. 129.

<sup>115</sup> FH, MSS Portfolio 39/19.

<sup>116</sup> C. Read, *History of the Bunhill Fields Burial Ground* (1893), p. 7.

The Bunhill Field ground was used for the interment of dissenters and the plague dead, and its topography is markedly different to the Quaker ground as many vaults and tombstones were erected on the site. The section of land under Quaker ownership was left undeveloped and used for grazing cattle and spreading out the wash, along with the burial of Friends. In the minutes of a Six Week Meeting in 1769 the grazing of sheep and cattle was forbidden on the Quaker plot, alongside a complaint about dirt and bones being thrown into the ground from some of the neighbours.<sup>117</sup> Other than this incident, during the final decades of the seventeenth century and until the mid-eighteenth century, the ground held this second function of providing for the community. The first burial entry in the Quaker registers for the ground near Bunhill Fields comes from the 8 September 1661 for one Enoch Farmer:

Enoch Farmer the Sonne of William and Mary Farmer of the Parish of Stepney (by the World so called) Deceased the 8<sup>th</sup> Day of the 7<sup>th</sup> Month in the Yeare One Thousand Six Hundred and Sixty and One and was buried in the Ground purchased by Friends for a Burying Place neer Bunn=hill Fields.<sup>118</sup>

The ground was closed for burials on 1 January 1855 by an Act of Parliament which shut down all graveyards within central London due to health concerns. This was after some 12,000 Quakers had been interred there over nearly two centuries.<sup>119</sup> The last burial was that of Herbert Clark of Ebury Street, Westminster, who was buried the 3 September 1854.

In the many sources that reference the burial ground near Bunhill Fields, the site was also referred to as the burial ground in 'Whitecross Street', the ground at 'Chequer Alley', the Quaker ground in 'Coleman Alley', or simply the 'Quaker ground'. The reason for the variety of names is straightforward; those are the alleys and streets that surrounded it.

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<sup>117</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, p. 333.

<sup>118</sup> TNA, RG 6/499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700).

<sup>119</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, p. 331

Over the period this ground was in use, it was enlarged and modified. In February 1665, the area was expanded to the east 'by buying two messuages and gardens in Coleman Alley, now Coleman Street, For this addition £210 was paid'.<sup>120</sup> In 1687 and 1689 extensions were made eastwards costing £85 and £100 respectively, and in 1696 another eastward extension was made costing £400. In the eighteenth century the ground continued to transform. In 1708 an extension again eastward was made at the cost of £190. By the time John Rocque produced his map of London in 1746 (fig. 4.3) the ground had not ceased in its evolution for in 1757 it was enlarged again, and in 1789 the western side of the burial ground was widened. The frontage onto Coleman Alley was obtained slowly by buying seven houses and gardens, starting in 1740, and finishing in 1788, and 1799. This also extended the site. There is still a plaque there today that reads: 'This wall and seven inches of the ground on the north side are the property of the Society of Friends 1799'.<sup>121</sup>

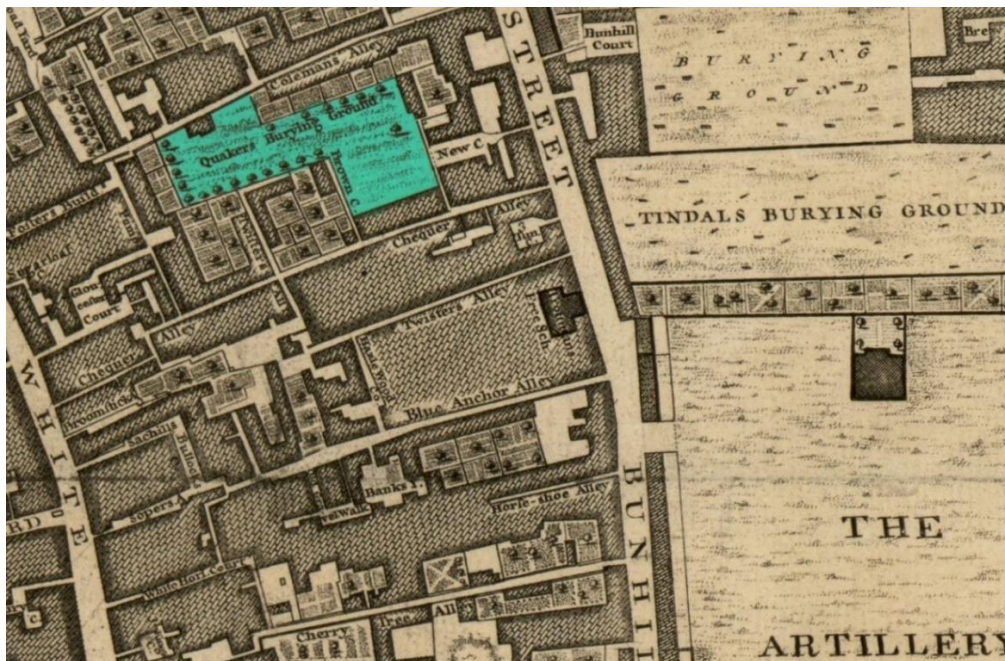


Figure 4.3. John Rocque's Map of London 1746. The Quaker Ground near Bunhill Fields.

Being the earliest of the established Quaker burial grounds, the one near Bunhill Fields accommodated Quakers from all over the metropolis and further afield (see

<sup>120</sup> Beck and Ball *The London Friends'*, p. 332.

<sup>121</sup> Beck and Ball *The London Friends'*, pp. 332-333.

appendix III). The two individuals from furthest afield were the wife of a Joseph Templeman in 1662 whose body was brought from the Isle of Sheppey in Kent to be interred in the Quaker ground near Bunhill Fields, and Rebekah Elkington who died while a prisoner in Rochester, Kent in 1663.<sup>122</sup> The Quaker movement stretched across early modern England (and beyond), but there was a sense of a universal community bound by their beliefs no matter how physically distant they were. It was not family, neighbourhoods, parishes, nor ethnicity that bound them, rather the movement's bonds were tied through their belief system, and this was reinforced through the symbolic self-marginalisation of their dead. Thus, their dead formed a post-mortem nucleus within the metropolis and this nucleus had no geographic restrictions.

There was a growing need for more Quaker burial grounds as the movement spread and pressure was placed upon the site near Bunhill Fields, no doubt additionally so due to the 1665/1666 plague. The graph below illustrates the number of individuals buried from September 1661 until the impact of plague was felt in August 1665 (fig. 4.4).

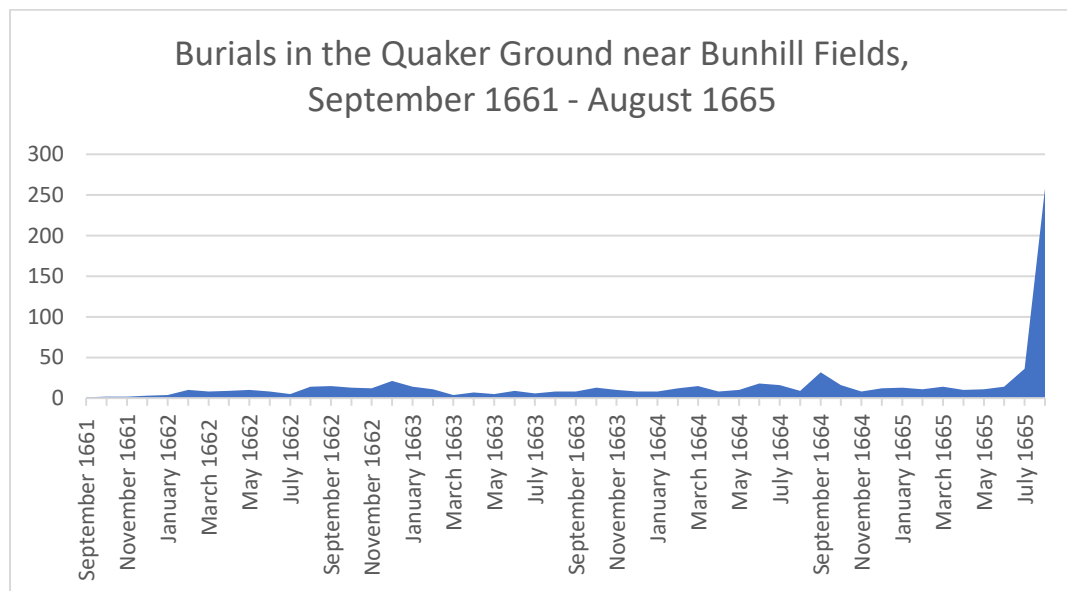


Figure 4.4. Interments at the Quaker Ground near Bunhill Fields September 1661 – August 1665.

<sup>122</sup> TNA, RG 6/499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700).

The pressure upon the site, going from 36 interments in July 1665 to 258 in August 1665 is clear, therefore it is of no surprise that Quaker communities began to establish additional burial grounds around the metropolis.

As appendix III demonstrates, Southwark had a significant Quaker population therefore it was here that the second Quaker burial ground was established. In 1654, after Edward Burrough and Francis Howgill had preached at an assembly in the borough, meetings sprang up in private houses in Lambeth, Newington, Southwark, Bermondsey, and Walworth. One was held in Mary Webb's house on Fair Street, and it eventually developed into the Horselydown Meeting. A second meeting originally in the house of Thomas Hackleton 'near the Falcon, in the Upperground' eventually became the Park Meeting. These two meeting houses became the largest meetings south of the river.<sup>123</sup> In the Quaker burial registers one Roger Game from Newington Butts in the County of Surrey is noted as 'The first in the Burying Ground in Southwarke', when he died in September 1665. The entry says he 'was interred in the Ground purchased by Friends for a Burying place in the Parke called Winchester Parke in Southwarke'.<sup>124</sup> Thereafter there are numerous entries for this ground which was known as the Park or Worcester Street burial ground and which occupied a rural spot, 'separated by wooden pales from the surrounding gardens' beyond the built-up area.<sup>125</sup> It appears there may have been another ground on Ewer Street, however, Holmes notes that the Ewer Street ground which adjoined the Old Park meeting 'may never have been used by them' (meaning the Quakers). By 1839 the Ewer Street ground 'was in private hands, and eventually disappeared under the railway'. The Worcester Street/Park ground was used extensively and, 'was very full, so that in 1733

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<sup>123</sup> I. Holmes, 'Haunts of the London Quakers' *The Antiquary* London Vol. 35, (Jul. 1899) p. 210, Holmes has her dates wrong, and the correct dates are included in Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, pp. 22, 215.

<sup>124</sup> TNA, RG 6/499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700).

<sup>125</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, pp. 221-222.

the surface was raised above the original level'. This ground was demolished in 1860 when Southwark Street was made; 'and the London bridge and Charing Cross Railway also runs over its site'.<sup>126</sup> It had been closed for interments since 1794 and for these construction projects the bodies were removed. This move was overseen by a Quaker who attended daily. He claimed a thousand skeletons and nineteen entire lead coffins were dug up. Wood coffins had disappeared along with any other organic material, the bones 'were packed in 111 shells of ordinary size, and carried by hearse to the Long Lane burial-ground'. Here the remains of Friends from this early popular burial ground were reinterred.<sup>127</sup>

This newer ground, Long Lane, Bermondsey, was purchased in 1697 for £120 (fig. 4.5). It was a quarter of an acre large, and some eminent Quakers were interred within it including Richard Partridge, Esq., 'Agent for the colonies of Pennsylvania Connecticut, and Rhode-Island'.<sup>128</sup>

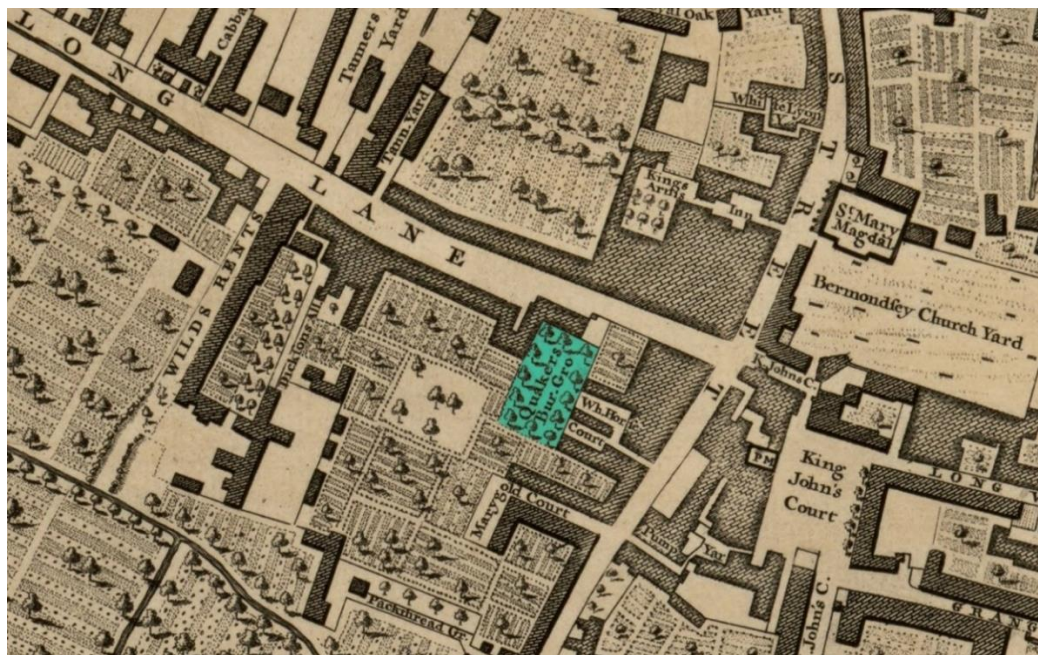


Figure 4.5. John Rocque's Map of London 1746. Long Lane Burial Ground Bermondsey.

<sup>126</sup> Holmes, *The London Burial grounds*, pp. 139-143.

<sup>127</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, p. 222.

<sup>128</sup> *Lloyd's Evening Post and British Chronicle* (London), March 14 - March 16, 1759; Issue 259.



This ground is reported to have had many old trees upon it whose roots became quite a nuisance, nevertheless it was a popular interment location for London Quakers. The ground had fallen into disuse by 1799 and was officially closed in 1854.<sup>129</sup>

Another early burial ground and one that came into existence due to a concentration of local Quakers was the Ratcliff burial ground on Brook Street near Limehouse and Wapping. It was 800 square yards and had a meeting house attached to it. The ground was acquired in 1666 and the first person interred there was James Fletcher of Stepney in October that year. His burial entry has a note next to it stating, 'The first buried in Ratcliffe burying Ground'.<sup>130</sup> Holmes explains that 'the land being originally copyhold', was 'enfranchised in 1734 for £21' (fig. 4.6).<sup>131</sup>

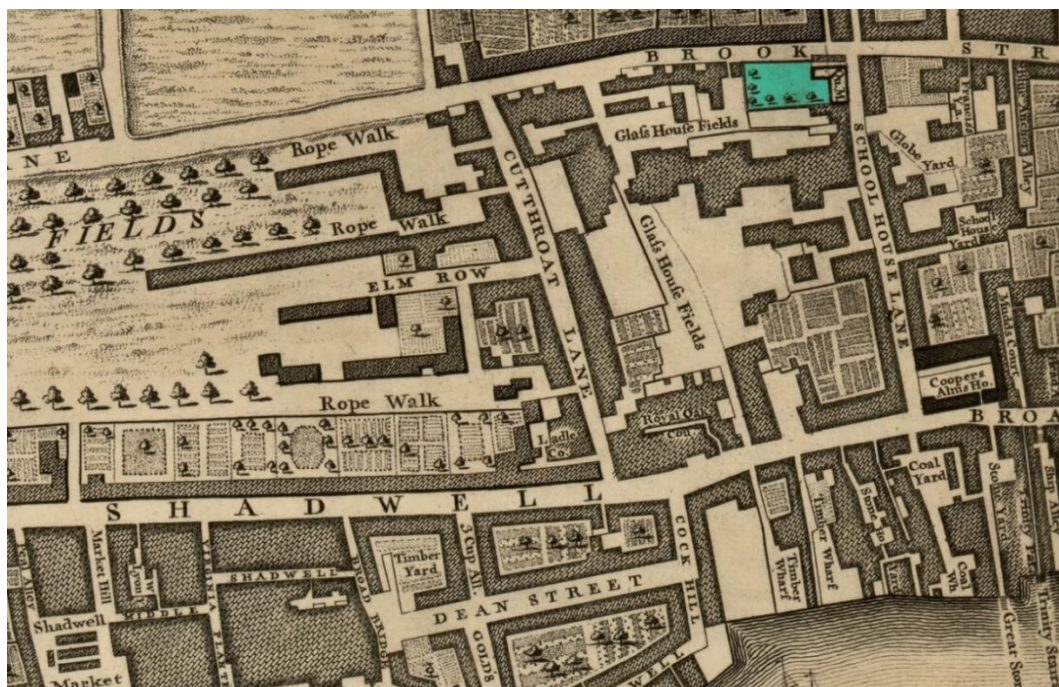


Figure 4.6. John Rocque's Map of London, 1746. Ratcliffe Burial Ground.

The Ratcliffe ground was used until 1857. It began as an enclosed piece of field and was levelled in 1686, but by 1689 more room was needed. The ground was then raised and

<sup>129</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, p. 223.

<sup>130</sup> TNA, RG 6/499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700).

<sup>131</sup> Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds*, p. 143.

continuously in use. Later eighteenth-century complaints were recorded of obstruction due to earlier lead coffins when the site was dug over for newer interments.<sup>132</sup>

Quaker burial grounds sprang up with speed across the metropolis. In 1675 the Westminster Quakers bought a small piece of land known as 'The Hole in the Wall' in Long Acre, by Castle Street, which housed a meeting house and land for burials. Around 510 individuals were buried there up until 1757. The site was rediscovered in July 1892 and the bodily remains unearthed were reburied at Isleworth (Brentford).<sup>133</sup> On Rocque's 1746 map this burial ground is not shown, perhaps because it was so tiny.

In Whitechapel, the Devonshire House Friends Meeting acquired a ground on Baker's Row in 1687 for their meeting house. A burial ground was also purchased near Coverley's Fields in Mile End:

This burial-ground was under the particular care of Devonshire House, and a very large number of Friends who dwelt in the eastern parts of the Metropolis were buried there; but it would seem that ministers and persons of note were almost always buried in Bunhill Fields.<sup>134</sup>

Here the discrepancy between prescription and practice is apparent. Despite their vocal dislike of hierarchy when it came to their dead, there does appear to be incongruity in practice. The ground near Bunhill Fields, being the oldest and most eminent, was the interment location for those within the Quaker community who were considered most important to the movement, followed it seems by the Southwark burial grounds.

Minutes in the Devonshire House Meetings observe the colourful history of the Whitechapel burial ground. They include the planting of twenty trees in 1690, the banning

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<sup>132</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends'*, p. 270.

<sup>133</sup> Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds*, p. 139; Beck and Ball, *The London Friends'*, pp. 247-248.

<sup>134</sup> Beck and Ball *The London Friends'*, p. 334.

of cattle and sheep grazing in 1695, sheep being allowed again in 1696 (but not cattle), a pond being filled, and the ground raised and levelled in 1698 to accommodate more interments, a Friend in 1700 paying £4 to keep his horse on the land, and a grave robbing incident. In 1716 the son of the gravedigger Michael Holmes, with a few friends, stole away some of the bodies of those interred presumably to sell on to surgeons. This caused concern for other Quaker grounds namely the one near Bunhill Fields which shut all its gates bar one which was locked no later than ten at night. Again, it is interesting that the ground near Bunhill Fields became so concerned about grave robbing. This may have been because of who they had interred within their ground, possibly again showing a contradiction between Quaker thought and Quaker practice when it came to the equality they preached. The Whitechapel burial ground was closed for interments in 1857.<sup>135</sup>

Circled on the 1746 John Rocque Map (fig. 4.7), are the Quaker burial grounds previously mentioned, showing where they sat in relation to the expanding metropolis.

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<sup>135</sup> Beck and Ball *The London Friends'*, pp. 334-335.



Figure 4.7. John Rocque's Map of London, 1746. The Quaker burial grounds clockwise from top: The ground near Bunhill Fields; Bakers Row; Ratcliffe burial ground; Long Lane, Bermondsey; and Covent Garden.

The locations of these grounds further physically removed the Quaker dead from their Protestant counterparts. This may have partially been influenced by the availability of burial space and cost of land. London was densely packed, especially within the City walls and the immediate surroundings and land was rarely available for purchase of a size that would have been sufficient to accommodate the deceased. As was noted in the previous chapters, additional parish burial grounds were being obtained throughout the period that were removed from the parish churches to accommodate the London dead. However, when these Quaker grounds were first established, the fact that they were on the margins of everyday London life may have assisted the Quaker directive to self-marginalise their dead.

Quaker burial grounds were set up in locations further afield too. In 1672 John Oakley, a Quaker weaver and silk merchant from Spitalfields, purchased an acre of land at Winchmore Hill. He gave the property to the local Quakers and, when he and his wife Elizabeth died in 1684, they became the first individuals to be interred in this new burial ground. Grounds were set up in High Street Wandsworth in 1697 and used until 1895, in Hammersmith (1677-1866), just off the High Street in Deptford (1693-1895), a half-acre of former orchard ground in Barking (1672-1980), and in a few other locations in what were once small villages surrounding the metropolis that have now been swallowed and are counted as part of Greater London, such as Uxbridge, Langford, South Mimms, etc. From the nineteenth century onwards, other Quaker burial grounds also sprang up in the metropolis. These were, for the most part, smaller burial grounds attached to different meeting houses.

There is one final Quaker burial ground from the edge of the metropolis that deserves mention and that is the Quaker burial ground at Kingston Upon Thames. This ground was purchased by subscription in 1663 for £24 18s and placed under the care 'of

the women Friends in 1690 at their request'.<sup>136</sup> It had previously been gardens and orchards. The size of the ground was increased in 1683, 1687, 1691, and 1739, and the first person interred there was a woman named Ann Stevens in 1664.<sup>137</sup> This site was subjected to the most extensive excavation of any Quaker burial ground in England. Archaeological work was carried out over a ten-week period at its location, London Road, Kingston Upon Thames, in autumn 1996 due to a proposed residential development. The project provided a rare opportunity to investigate an early Quaker community through their burial practices and physical remains. There were no prior precedents for excavating Quaker burials grounds which led to a 'partially experimental excavation strategy', splitting the site into two areas designated high and low resolution. It was intended that skeletal material from each area would receive differential treatment and different level of recording and osteological analysis. 'Any skeletons surviving in an exceptional state of preservation, showing signs of unusual pathology, or with legible coffin plates from the remainder of the site, were also to be treated as high resolution', a practice which unwittingly introduced a bias into the results.<sup>138</sup> Among the excavations twenty-eight empty graves were uncovered where the possibility of grave robbery was deemed high.<sup>139</sup> In total 497 burials were excavated, although the Quaker records only list 364 individuals interred at the site. The complete boundaries of the burial ground remain unknown, but those burials uncovered show how closely spaced and deeply intercut the graves were (fig. 4.8).<sup>140</sup> Osteological analysis was also carried out, and the findings have been published.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, pp. 312-313.

<sup>137</sup> Bashford and Pollard, "In the burying place", p. 155.

<sup>138</sup> Bashford and Pollard, "In the burying place", p. 155.

<sup>139</sup> L. Bashford and L. Sibun, 'Excavations at the Quaker Burial Ground, Kingston-upon-Thames, London' *Post-Medieval Archaeology* Volume 41, 2007 - Issue 1, p. 114.

<sup>140</sup> Bashford and Pollard, "In the burying place", p. 156.

<sup>141</sup> H. Start and L. Kirk, "The bodies of Friends' – the osteological analysis of a Quaker burial ground", *Grave Concerns*, pp. 167-177.

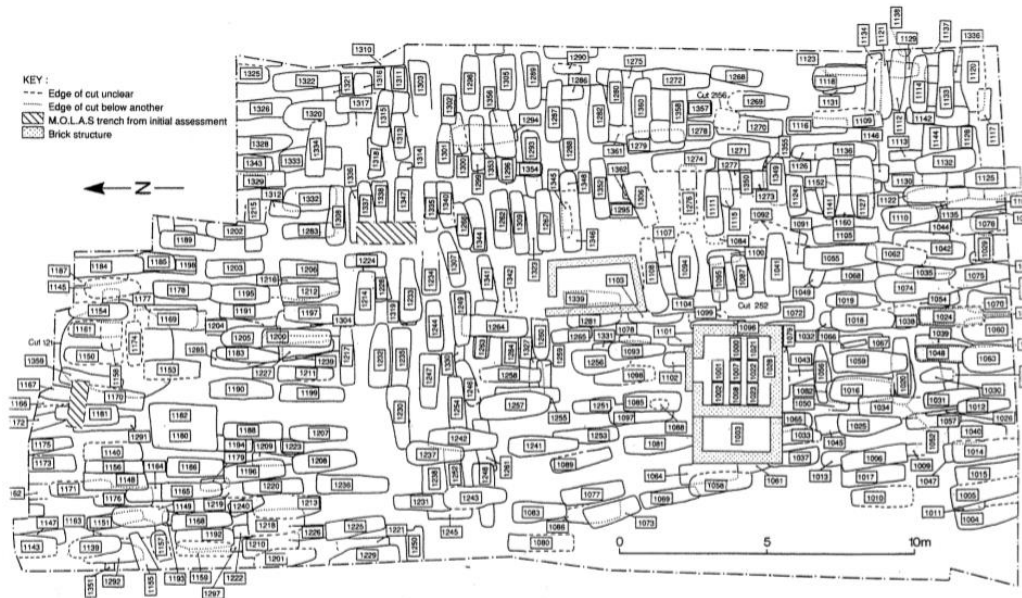


Figure 4.8. Plan of all excavated burials at London Road. The circular feature at the northern end of the site is a medieval well (illustration: Rob Goller).

This ground is revisited within the next section of this chapter along with the other grounds discussed above, but it is from the Kingston Upon Thames site that a broader understanding of other Quaker burial grounds can be established.

The connections between the London meeting houses and the Quaker burials ground were fluid. The meeting at White Hart Court had no space for burials attached to it, therefore bodies would be prepared there and then transported to the ground near Bunhill Fields for interment.<sup>142</sup> The Peel Friends, in 1716, raised a complaint about corpses from the Westminster meeting being brought to their meeting house before burial at Bunhill Fields and ‘very few Westminster Friends coming to help to carry’. They advised the Westminster meeting to take their corpses directly to the burial ground itself in future ‘in order that we may not sustain the hardship we have been at in that affair’. In 1724 it was announced that corpses must be delivered to the meeting house the evening before so as not to interrupt any gatherings.<sup>143</sup> Although for the most part if a Quaker from a certain

<sup>142</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, p. 154.

<sup>143</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, pp. 207-208.

meeting house died, they would be buried in the nearest burial ground to that meeting house, there were no hard and fast rules about this, further highlighting a difference between the normal parish dead and the Quaker dead.

There were no strict rules about who was buried where, with convenience playing a key role, but the Quaker dead were separated from the rest of the parish dead, both spatially and psychologically. The locations of their burial grounds tell the story of self-imposed marginalisation, and physical marginalisation assisted in this respect. The plague allowed Quakers to carry out their own interment methods at their own grounds with little opposition from London authorities, and in a city where the dead placed pressure upon the living due to their increasing number these same authorities accepted this. The Quaker movement was bound by the symbolic self-marginalisation of their dead but how different they really were to their Anglican neighbours was still in contention. This contention will be explored further in the following section on Quaker funerals and burials.

### Quaker Funerals and Burials

There were no last rites given to Quakers upon their deathbeds. Nevertheless, the deathbed scene was still significant. It was fellow Quakers, not the clergy, immediate family, or neighbours, that cared for the dying and saw them to their end. It was also fellow Friends (often the women), who prepared the bodies of the deceased.<sup>144</sup> Non-Quakers were not excluded from the deathbed nor the funeral and burial, but they were peripheral to it.<sup>145</sup> This inclusion of non-Quakers could cause confusion among other Londoners, even as late as 1778 when someone passed by a funeral at the Quaker Burial Ground in Long Lane, Bermondsey, the strangeness of who was in attendance caused them to write into the newspapers:

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<sup>144</sup> Davies, *The Quakers in English Society*, p. 88.

<sup>145</sup> Davies, *The Quakers in English Society*, p. 89.



SIR

Passing Yesterday by a Quaker's Burial Ground in Long-Lane, Southwark, and observing a Crowd, I enquired the Cause, and found it to be a Funeral of one of the People called Quakers, and that all the attendant Mourners were in deep Mourning a Circumstance very uncustomary among that Sect; but judge my Suprize when I was informed that the Deceased was only a Retailer of what is hard to be found, Good Spirits, and the chief Mourner, his only Son, a *young* Clergyman, not a hundred Miles from a Place called Henham, in Essex. N. B. It was almost a silent Meeting, owing, it is supposed to the Confusion the Friends were thrown into by the above Circumstance.<sup>146</sup>

This writer may have been mistaken as the attendance of non-Quakers at funerals was not rare. The silence was also typical to Quaker interment practices and therefore a common occurrence probably not brought on by the presence of a specific individual.

Just as Quaker funerals were by no means exclusive to Quakers, nor were their burial grounds. On 10 September 1664 Elizabeth Humenstone 'professing to owne the 7 Day Sabbeth' was 'by permission and advice of Friends buried in Friends Ground the 12<sup>th</sup> Day of the 7<sup>th</sup> Month 1664'.<sup>147</sup> She appears to have been a dissenter or sectarian of some kind. It seems the community were happy to take in other individuals for interment as long as permission was granted for this. Although they sought to distinguish themselves from their Anglican neighbours, anyone in need was still welcomed by the Quaker community. Early sympathies towards Baptists and other dissenters are also apparent within Quaker writings, such as Edward Burrough's letter from Newgate, and these sympathies allowed the inclusion of other dead within Quaker grounds. This is significant as it shows that there

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<sup>146</sup> *St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post* (London), November 7 - November 10, 1778; Issue 2755.

<sup>147</sup> TNA, RG 6/499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700).

was a wider 'human' community that Quakers felt they belonged to along with the movement's universal community, and although they had removed their own dead from the mainstream, it was not at the expense or the exclusion of others.

Expectations of Quaker funerals and burial procedures were described in the *Book of Discipline*. The key components of a Quaker funeral were plainness and simplicity. 'Friends should not adopt any rigid pattern for the conduct of funerals', according to the *Book*.<sup>148</sup> No set service and no distinction between rich and poor in both burial and interment materials was to be made. Quakers had a duty of care towards the poorer members of their community and their interment. In the Southwark Monthly Meetings there are many entries relating to rents and allowances for the poor of that meeting house, including funeral obsequies. In the eighteenth century, five shillings for a coffin and one shilling for a grave were the customary costs. In 1710 there was a complaint about too few Friends attending the funeral of a poorer member of the community and there not being enough people to carry the body. The Monthly Meeting agreed that they would pay to summon Friends for this purpose in the future.<sup>149</sup>

The first step in a Quaker funeral was to inform the wider community and the individual's friends and family, because 'an adequate presence at the funeral' was expected.<sup>150</sup> This was a pressing issue for Quakers and not always just for their poorer members. The number of attendants at a Friend's interment was of great importance. In a Monthly Meetings from 1673 it was noted that the community should 'consider of the most effectual way and means for gathering Friends to accompany corpses to the ground'. A letter from another Monthly Meeting in 1678 reiterated this recommending 'more men Friends being at burials than sometimes there are to help to perform the last office of love

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<sup>148</sup> *Book of Discipline* now called *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 17:03.

<sup>149</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, pp. 232-233.

<sup>150</sup> *Quaker Faith and Practice*, 17:09.

unto our deceased Friends'. The letter continues by saying these men were also needed for the purpose of carrying the coffins which should be:

of wainscot or deal, that Friends may not be oppressed with the weight of them, and when corps are large, and coffins heavy, that they get pads at the coffins, and take particular care to get them that are able to bear the same, and that such that are carried from their dwellings to meeting-houses be buried from the nearest to the burial-ground, that so we may in no wise oppress one another, but with ease and readiness of mind discharge that office of love one for another, not knowing how soon any of us may stand in need thereof, and therefore we do request and hope that none for the future may be backward herein, and in brotherly love remain.<sup>151</sup>

A body would have been prepared in much the same way as it was for any corpse, washing and dressing it in a manner fitting. Quakers agreed to the Burying in Woollen Acts of 1666–80 as they saw these as a 'Civill matter, & fit to be done'.<sup>152</sup> Once prepared, the body was then placed in a plain coffin, such as the one Fox was buried in, or the one Mary Harvey requested when she died in 1733. Harvey's case received newspaper coverage as her husband was a Justice of the Peace. It noted she, 'having been put, according to her Desire, in a plain Wallnut-tree Coffin', was then carried from her house in Islington 'and interr'd in a decent Manner in the Quakers Burial-Ground in Coleman-Alley, Bunhill-Fields'.<sup>153</sup>

As with Harvey's funeral, processions began from the Meeting House or private residence of the deceased individual where they had been washed, dressed, and laid out.

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<sup>151</sup> All examples transcribed in Beck and Ball, *The London Friends'*, p. 118.

<sup>152</sup> Six Weeks Meeting Minutes, Volume 1, recorded on 30<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> Month [July] 1678, seen in Stock, 'Quaker burial', p. 136, and Beck and Ball, *The London Friends'*, p. 118.

<sup>153</sup> *London Evening Post* (London), February 1 - February 3, 1733; Issue 208. For her burial entry see TNA, RG 6/330: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1720-1758).

These processions could take several hours as Fox’s did, or could be quite speedy, depending on the distance between the laying out location and the burial ground. At the graveside attendants who were moved to do so would speak and prayers were offered for the deceased.<sup>154</sup> Then the grave was covered over and an entry written in the burial registers.<sup>155</sup> This process was expected to be the same for any non-Quakers interred in Quaker grounds.<sup>156</sup> A note from the Women’s Meeting in Plaistow contains the costs laid out by one Henry Loveday for the burying of Alice Mander, a 13-year-old who died in 1693 (table 4.1).<sup>157</sup>

	s.	d.
for a coffin	6	6
for bread	1	0
for beer	1	8
for cheese	0	10
for the woman that stript her	1	0
for the evidence and the woman that went to the justice	1	0
	12	0

Table 4.1. Cost for Alice Mander’s funeral.

After the interment, simple celebrations were carried out as these payments show through their inclusion of bread, beer, and cheese, the cost of which was met by the local meeting if the deceased Quaker had been poor.<sup>158</sup>

Early in the Quakers’ history, holding a funeral and burial for a deceased Friend and a subsequent celebration could cause trouble. In Somerset, the Quaker historian William Sewel describes an incident where thirty people were fined for ‘having been at a Burial’, likewise in Derby ‘where Samuel Roe (his Wife being deceased) was fined twenty Pounds, because his Friends met in his House to conduct the Corps to the Grave’.<sup>159</sup> Instances of this

<sup>154</sup> *Book of Discipline* 17:04, 17:05.

<sup>155</sup> *Book of Discipline* 17:11.

<sup>156</sup> *Book of Discipline* 17:13.

<sup>157</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends’*, p. 277; TNA, RG 6/499: Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex: Burials (1661-1700).

<sup>158</sup> Davies, *The Quakers in English Society*, p. 89.

<sup>159</sup> W. Sewel, *The history of the rise, increase, and progress, of the Christian people called Quakers: intermixed with several remarkable occurrences* (1723), p. 508.

occurring in London have not been uncovered during this research, however considering the general zealous nature some officials of the city held towards the Quaker community it should not be disregarded.

Commemorating a deceased member of the Quaker community also occasionally met with discontent, sometimes even from within the Quaker movement itself. During the seventeenth and eighteenth century no gravestones were normally erected. In theory there should be no Quaker gravestones dated before 1850 and no vaults or other burial structures. However, Stock and the excavation teams at Kingston Upon Thames found that despite these rules, gravestones dated 1717 to 1850 do exist, and named rather than numbered months are occasionally inscribed upon them which, as already mentioned, was also against Quaker rules. Lead coffins, walled graves, and other structures have all been found.<sup>160</sup> There are even gravestones that date from earlier than this in other burial grounds. At the Barking burial ground a stone was found with the following inscription:

Here lieth the body of William Mead esq. who departed this life the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of April  
anno dni 1713 in the 86 year of his age and also Mrs. Sarah Mead died the 9<sup>th</sup> June  
1714 in the 71<sup>st</sup> year of her age.

Apparently, this stone was removed at one point and used as part of the pavement leading to the nearby meeting house, but the family insisted on it being put back which was dutifully done.<sup>161</sup>

Gravestones were of such contention to Quakers that a section in the *Book of Discipline* (1738), 'Concerning Tombstones', included minutes from a 1717 Meeting that showed the seriousness with which this issue was handled:

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<sup>160</sup> Stock, 'Quaker burial', p. 140.

<sup>161</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, p. 279 quoting an entry from the minute-book of Barking Monthly Meeting.

This Meeting being informed, That Friends in some places have gone into the vain, & empty Custom of erecting Monuments over the dead Bodies of Friends, by Stones, Incriptions, Tombstones &c, and being very desirous Friends should keep a commendable Plainness and Simplicity in this, as well as other Respects; It's therefore the Advice of this Meeting, That all such Monuments as are already in being over dead Bodies of Friends, should be removed as much as may be, with Discretion and Conveniency: And that none be any where made, or set up by, or over the dead Bodies of Friends, or others in Friends Burying-places for time to come.

This was not the end of the issue however, and 48 years later another plea for this was made. Only in the nineteenth century were plain gravestones officially permitted.<sup>162</sup>

Vaults were also contentious and an entry in 1774 from a Meeting again shows how seriously this was taken:

This Meeting being informed that an Attempt has lately been made to build a Vault in one of our Burial Grounds belonging to this City [London], and taking the same into Consideration, Do hereby direct the Grave-diggers of the respective Burial Grounds, that they shall not permit, or suffer any Vault, or Arch, to be built, Grave Stone set up, or Tomb erected, in any Burial Ground belonging to this Meeting.<sup>163</sup>

But as Stock and the excavation teams discovered, the Kingston Upon Thames burial ground had two 'abutting large brick vault-like structures with openings to the north'.<sup>164</sup>

The largest of these was named the Bernard vault. The vault was a brick construction with an added annex on one side dating from 1762 for Sarah Holden-Freame, an extended

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<sup>162</sup> Quoted in Stock, 'Quaker burial', p. 132.

<sup>163</sup> Six Week Meeting Minutes vol 14, 132, 6<sup>th</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> Month 1774, seen in Stock, 'Quaker burial', p. 136.

<sup>164</sup> Stock, 'Quaker burial', p. 136.

member of the family. Lead coffins encased in individual cells with brick dividing walls and the names inscribed on stone slabs above them were uncovered. The individuals buried there include an infant from 1742 in a coffin-shaped brick-lined vault between two adults. One of the members of this vault, John Barnard, died in Bramsott, Hampshire in 1715, so he must have been exhumed and moved to this burial ground after this vault was built in 1744. Thomas Barnard paid £10 to the Quaker meeting for permission to construct this vault, which is strange in and of itself; some special discussion must have taken place which is now lost. The last coffin placed in the vault was that of Anna Bernard in 1792.<sup>165</sup>

Coffin were, as already mentioned, meant to be plain and simple with no adornment. The Kingston Upon Thames coffin types however, are noticeably different and do seem to reflect the social status of the individuals interred.<sup>166</sup> Some Quakers appear to have spent more money on their funerals and burials than was considered appropriate by the wider community.<sup>167</sup> In 1740, for example, the newspapers reported that 'Last Night Lascells Metcalfe, the late rich Quaker, was interr'd at the Quaker Burial-Ground near Mile-End, a Train of no less than 20 Coaches attending the Ceremony'.<sup>168</sup>

Rich Quaker deaths were often reported in the papers, and they run counter to what was expected. Sometimes newspapers simply reported on the wealth of a deceased Quaker such as in 1733 when Mr Bendall died and the papers noted he was, 'an eminent quaker in the Minories, reputed worth 20,000l', or the report for Mr Humphry Smith who was also 'reputed worth upwards of 20,000 l.' when he died due to a fall from his horse in

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<sup>165</sup> FH, Minutes of 23 November 1745/6, Bashford and Pollard, "In the burying place", p. 161.

<sup>166</sup> Bashford and Pollard, "In the burying place", p. 161.

<sup>167</sup> Stock, 'Quaker burial', p. 138.

<sup>168</sup> *Daily Post* Friday (London), Oct. 10, 1740; Issue 6581.

1736.<sup>169</sup> However at other times the ostentatiousness of their funerals were reported on.

For example:

Yesterday in the Afternoon the Corpse of Mrs. Haistwell a Quaker, who died a few Days since at her House in Bloomsbury square, was carried from thence in a Hearse, close covered on the Top and Sides with Black Velvet, drawn with six Horses, followed by several Coaches filled with a great many People of that Persuasion, and interred in the Quaker Burial Ground in Ratcliff Highway, in a Lead Coffin inclosed in another of Walnut. She was Mother to Edward Haistwell, Esq; one of the Directors of the South-Sea Company.<sup>170</sup>

Likewise, in 1737:

The Corpse of Miss Bishop, a young Gentlewoman of the Quaker Persuasion, who died a few Days since at Reading, whither she went for the Benefit of the Air, having been brought from thence in a Lead Coffin, to her Father's, a Linnen-draper in Hollis-street near Temple-Bar ; and after being inclosed in another of Wallnut, having theron a silver'd Plate expressing her Age and Day of her Death, was carry'd from thence last Sunday in the Afternoon in a Hearse, the Body of which was entirely cover'd with black Velvet, the first known to be so ornamented, the Props which support the Feathers having been taken off for that Purpose; the Hearse was follow'd by 14 Coaces, and the Corpse decently interr'd in the Quakers Burial Ground in Whitecross-street'.<sup>171</sup>

Miss Bishop, as has just been demonstrated, was not the first to use black velvet as the newspapers claim, but both her and Mrs Haistwell appear to have started a trend among

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<sup>169</sup> *Grub Street Journal* (London), Thursday, Jan. 18, 1733; Issue 160; *Daily Journal* (London), Tuesday, Feb. 25, 1735; Issue 4402.

<sup>170</sup> *London Daily Post and General Advertiser* (London), Thursday, Sept. 11, 1735; Issue 268.

<sup>171</sup> *London Evening Post* (London), August 20 - August 23, 1737; Issue 1524.



the London Quakers for the inclusion of black velvet. In 1738 Mr Conyers, who has already been discussed, also used a black cloth. In 1698 the Six Week Meeting sent a list of things to the Monthly Meeting that were 'hurtful to our profession', these included the use of hearses, coaches, and wearing black. Item 3 stated: 'At burials, the frequent use of Hearses and Coaches in great numbers, too pompous for our self-denying testimony unless upon a case of necessity'. Item 4 stated: 'Upon the decease of a near relation some women have been observed of late to go into Black, too much imitating the world's custom in that they call mourning'.<sup>172</sup>

Black was not as strongly associated with mourning as it is today, but the practice was growing in popularity throughout the eighteenth century. Friends were advised in the *Book of Discipline* not to imitate the mourning habits of other Christians.<sup>173</sup> This was reiterated in other sources, even though it was not outrightly forbidden. William Sewel noted: 'In the burying of their Dead they mind Decency, and endeavour to avoid all Pomp; and the wearing of Mourning which is lawful, may be shewed sufficiently to the World by a modest and grave Deportment'.<sup>174</sup> The conflict between mainstream Protestant customs and a wish to differentiate the Quaker way was constantly present in these instances.

Quaker graves were also not meant to contain any grave goods. This, for the most part, seems to have been adhered to by members of the community. At Kingston Upon Thames a few items have been uncovered. There were two leather caps discovered, two simple leather ties, and some cuff links attached to leather cuffs.<sup>175</sup> These, more than likely, just show individuals who were ignoring the Burial in Woollen Act or belong to burials that date from when it expired in 1814 just before the ground closed for interments. Fragments

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<sup>172</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, p. 117, quoting 'Advice against great Dinners at Marriages, &c. &c., prepared by the 2 weeks Meeting, directed by the Six Weeks Mg. to be sent to the several Monthly Meetings'.

<sup>173</sup> Stock, 'Quaker burial', pp. 132-133.

<sup>174</sup> Sewel, *The history of the rise, increase, and progress*, p. 663.

<sup>175</sup> Bashford and Sibun 'Excavations at the Quaker Burial Ground', p. 121.

of shrouds and clothing other than these leather pieces have survived but in poorer condition, including bits of velvet, hessian, and wool.

In the Park burial ground plated coffin-handles were found which told of the wealth of some of the Quakers interred there.<sup>176</sup> During the removal of the bodies at the Park ground, mentioned in the previous section, the surveyor report noted a particular coffin that was exhumed bearing the date of 1765 and belonging to one Elizabeth Crosby. They wrote that it 'proved to have its inner wooden shell *quite perfect*, and on raising its lid, and removing the long wool with which it was closely packed, the body was found wrapped in a winding-sheet of fine linen'. It goes on to explain that this was a 'shroud expensively worked on its front, and ornamented with rosettes', which 'remained quite uninjured'.<sup>177</sup> Other oddities recorded in archaeological reports include two individuals who were placed in coffins with glass panels where an observer could look down upon the corpse. This may have been to contain infection. One further oddity is the inclusion of walnuts in some coffins. One case in particular had walnuts placed in the mouth, between the knees and between the feet of an adult male.<sup>178</sup> These walnuts have been interpreted by Bashford and Sibun as an indicator of what caused the individuals death. George Fox promoted natural remedies and walnuts were a popular medicine as a vermifuge and counter-poison, along with being associated with mental disease. They would be hung around the neck to cure falling fits and other disorders, and it is possible one of these led to this individual's demise.<sup>179</sup>

It is worth noting that there is no archaeological evidence that supports the often-heard statement that 'Quakers are buried standing up'.<sup>180</sup> However, one of the most

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<sup>176</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, p. 225.

<sup>177</sup> Beck and Ball, *The London Friends*, p. 237, quoting 'Report by the Surveyor to the Six-Weeks Meeting'.

<sup>178</sup> Bashford and Sibun, 'Excavations at the Quaker Burial Ground', pp. 121-129.

<sup>179</sup> Bashford and Sibun, 'Excavations at the Quaker Burial Ground', p. 122.

<sup>180</sup> Stock, 'Quaker burial', p. 140.

distinguishable elements of a Quaker burial ground is that the graves were not set up on an east-west alignment. Thomas Laqueur has interpreted the systematic rejection of the east-west axis of the dead as 'a genuinely radical gesture of self-exclusion and critique of an established order'.<sup>181</sup> The alignment of graves in Quaker grounds were more likely to do with spatial and chronological arrangements than a purposeful affront, and Quakers believed that Christ was in all directions and the direction of the burial alignment was simply not of importance. At the Kingston Upon Thames ground the north-south burials account for 55% of total burials and only 10% were east-west.<sup>182</sup>

There is absolutely no evidence that the manner of a Quakers death had any impact on their funeral and interment, unlike what can be witnessed in some Anglican burials, and those of suicides and criminals. A Quaker named Stephen Wheat who was hanged in 1766 for theft received a normal burial.<sup>183</sup> A suicide from 1675, reported to be a Quaker woman had two pamphlets written about her where it was argued that her self-murder was because of her wicked husband, has no further information about her interment and she may have been disowned by the Quakers, however it seems Quaker suicides were not vocally excluded in Quaker tracts as they were in other Anglican pamphlet literature.<sup>184</sup>

Despite the many discrepancies between Quaker theory and practice that have been discussed, their funerals and interments were still markedly different to those of their Protestant neighbours. This difference in Quaker interments did draw attention from

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<sup>181</sup> T. Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015), p. 127.

<sup>182</sup> Bashford and Pollard, "In the burying place", p. 159.

<sup>183</sup> *Lloyd's Evening Post* (London), January 13 - January 15, 1766; Issue 1329; TNA, RG 4/3983, Bunhill Field's Burial Ground, City Road, London, Denomination: Various: Burials.

<sup>184</sup> Anon, *The Sad Effects of Cruelty Detected, Being an Impartial Account of the Poor Woman, Near Temple-Barr, Lately Tempted in Her Distraction to Make Away with her self*, (1675).

outside the community. In the seventeenth century some negative views on the strangeness of the Quaker customs prompted Fox to write:

And all you that say, That we Bury like Dogs, because that we have not superfluous and needless things upon our Coffin, and white and black Cloth with Scutcheons, and do not go in Black, and hang Scarfs upon our Hats, and white Scarfs over our Shoulders, and give gold Rings, and have Springs of Rosemary in our hands, and Ring the Bells. How dare you say that we Bury our People like Dogs, because we cannot Bury them after the vain Poms and Glory of the World.<sup>185</sup>

These words still rang true across the period under consideration despite the constant issues that the Quaker community faced.

## Conclusion

Today Quaker funerals are still a simple affair. They are held at a meeting house, crematorium, or at the graveside, sometimes a reading or song is performed, and friends and family may give speeches if they feel moved to do so. These funerals and interments or cremations are open to anyone who wants to attend and 'the funeral ends when the time feels right' with everyone shaking hands.<sup>186</sup> Guidance is still taken from the *Book of Discipline*, members of the community and the deceased's family are informed, the meeting that the individual belonged to takes on the role of organising the memorial, and the deceased is interred or cremated as they request. Non-members are still allowed burial in Friends' burial grounds and non-members are often attendants at funerals. A focus is placed upon comforting those left behind while honouring the positive deeds of the deceased.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> G. Fox, *An Encouragement to trust in the Lord* (1682), p. 12.

<sup>186</sup> Quaker funerals: community and contribution: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/blog/quaker-funerals> [accessed, 4 June 2020].

<sup>187</sup> *Quaker Faith and Practice* <https://qfp.quaker.org.uk/chapter/17/> [accessed, 4 June 2020].

The Quaker communities of seventeenth and eighteenth-century London were bound together through the symbolic self-marginalisation of their dead. Their wish to be accepted by society while remaining a distinct and separate movement was partially navigated through the formalities around dying and the disposal of their dead. The constant pull of older customs and tensions within the political landscape informed the Quaker death narrative. The problems this chapter has highlighted between prescription and practice were prominent concerns for the leaders of the movement.

Quaker views on dying well, though holding similarities to their mainstream Protestant neighbours, had a stronger focus on a life well lived rather than a death well performed. The exception to this was the emphasis on the suffering narrative that wove its way into the stories of a Friend's death. This suffering narrative was used to distinguish their dead and differentiate them from their contemporaries. In all the death narratives that were produced by Quakers, the trust placed upon each other that they would care for one of their own in death was apparent.

The Quaker burial grounds across the metropolis were generally accepted by the wider population. The plague undoubtedly assisted in the tolerant view that was taken towards their creation and use as they lessened the pressure placed upon the mechanisms that the parishes had in place for disposing of their dead. These grounds were physically marginalised, on the edges of the built-up centre of London, although slowly swallowed by the expanding metropolis. How purposeful this physical marginalisation was is unknown. Nevertheless, a separation from the rest of the parish dead is clear. Within these grounds, despite written tracts insisting on the contrary, there was a hierarchy in the locations themselves, the coffins, the funerals, and burials that were carried out for various members of the Quaker community. Archaeological excavations have allowed a rare insight into the

Quaker dead and revealed the contradictions within the practice as the group attempted to navigate its space and place within the metropolis.

Over the c.150 years that have been examined in this chapter the Quaker movement adapted and changed but also maintained many of the original core teachings of its founders. The Quakers evolved from a movement under siege, where suffering deeply informed their death narratives, to a place of respect and often eminence among the wider communities of London, a place where even their dead were reported on empathetically within the newspapers.

The Quaker mission to self-marginalise their dead and create a distinctive narrative around their process of dealing with death was markedly different to what has been examined in the preceding chapters. Although suicides and criminals' bodies were not as marginal as they may first appear within pamphlets and other literature contemporary to the period, the systematic exclusion some received was forced upon them rather than embraced. Quakers instead withdrew and separated their own dead of their own accord. From the beginnings of the movement this separation was of paramount importance. When Fox died, he is reported to have said:

I am glad I was here. Now I am clear, I am fully clear... All is well; the Seed of God reigns over all and over death itself. And though I am weak in body, yet the power of God is over all, and the Seed reigns over all disorderly spirits.<sup>188</sup>

These sentiments remained the aim of Quaker death practices and cemented the place of the movement and its members, a place both within and separated from the wider London community.

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<sup>188</sup> George Fox, shortly before his death, 1691, included in the current *Book of Discipline* <https://qfp.quaker.org.uk/passage/21-49/> [accessed, 4 June 2020].

# Chapter 5 Jews

## Introduction

In February 1736, Francis Salvadore, ‘an eminent Jew Merchant’ died at his house in Lime Street. The newspapers reported that:

Yesterday the Corpse of Mr. Salvadore the Jew, who died last Week was carried about 12 at Noon, in a very handsome manner to the Burying Ground belonging to the Jews at Mile End, and interr’d according to the Ceremony of that people.<sup>1</sup>

The parish of St Dionis Backchurch, where Salvadore had resided, included his death in their parish burial register: ‘Francis Salvadore was carried to Jews Burying Ground to be interr’d Sunday Feb[ruar]y the 29<sup>th</sup>, 1735/6’.<sup>2</sup> Salvadore was a man of some affluence which his personal will attests to. He distributed his wealth to his wife and extended family, and ‘Poor Persons of the Jewish Religion’, but the lengthy will contained no clue as to his wishes for his funeral and burial.<sup>3</sup> This is unsurprising. While Quakers were a novel denomination, Jews have a far older history, and their methods of dealing with the dead can be traced back to strongly established traditions that Salvadore clearly believed did not warrant specification within his will.

Where Quaker burial grounds and practices around the disposal of the dead were used to highlight their difference as a movement and Quakers constantly navigated the temptation of popular Protestant customs, Jewish burial practices were based on ancient traditions. Rather than evolving within the early modern landscape Jewish practices were instead placed fully formed upon it with the readmittance of Jews to England in 1656. This

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<sup>1</sup> *London Daily Post and General Advertiser* (London), Thursday, Feb. 26, 1736; Issue 412; *London Daily Post and General Advertiser* (London), Monday, Mar. 1, 1736; Issue 415.

<sup>2</sup> LMA, P69/DIO/A/001/MS017602.

<sup>3</sup> TNA, PROB 11/676/13, Will of Francis Salvador alias Jacob Salvador, Merchant of Lyme Street London.

is not to say that there were not slight alterations and occasional contention between prescription and practice. In Salvadore's case, mentioned above, his burial took place at least a week after his death, a delay that was against Jewish doctrine which required that funerals and burials should happen very quickly, within one or two days after a death. However, the Jewish funerary traditions were not invented in the early modern period as part of forging an identity for their faith.

This chapter traces how the Jewish population of London dealt with their dead, including funerals and burials. It begins by looking at the history of Jews in the capital, the scholars who have explored this subject, and the methods and sources used. It then turns to examine Jewish views on death, the Jewish burial grounds established in the metropolis, and the rituals around the dead, the funeral, and burial. It will illuminate what sets them apart from both their Anglican neighbours and dissenting groups such as the Quakers. It argues that the self-marginalisation of the Jewish dead was, in many ways, less a conscious self-marginalisation and separation than that of the Quakers and more firmly rooted in ancient traditions that were important to Jewish identity.

Jewish communities existed in medieval London and across England until their expulsion in 1290.<sup>4</sup> It is estimated that there were between 100 to 200 Jewish communities throughout the country before this incident. Many of these communities were doubtless quite small and known to be highly mobile. In London they were based around the Broad Street area before moving to 'West Cheape', which is now the Old Jewry, and around the Guildhall. Another group of Jews settled within the jurisdiction of the 'Constable of the

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<sup>4</sup> For the history of the Jews in England who are first recorded around the Cornish coast and claimed to have had ties with that part of England since the era of Solomon and Hiram, King of Tyre c.900BCE along with the Jewish soldiers and Jewish slaves of the Romans under Julius Caesar, the ancient legends of the coronation stone and its ties to early Jews and the legend of the Lost Ten Tribes see: A. M. Hyamson, *A History of the Jews in England* (Published for the Jewish Historical Society of England by Chatto & Windus, London, 1908), especially pp. 1-17; Also for the build up to the expulsion see L. B. Abrahams, 'The Expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290' *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Oct., 1894, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 75-100.



Tower'. The churches, St Stephen's Church and St Mary, Colechurch were both once synagogues and St Anthony's Hospital also served as a synagogue, along with Bakewell Hall where Gresham College is now situated.<sup>5</sup>

In the medieval period Jews were initially only allowed one cemetery, located in London at Cripplegate. This burial ground was a walled enclosure of which no record of original acquisition exists. The earliest reference to the site dates from 1218 but it is thought much older. It became known as the Jew Garden.<sup>6</sup> Over time it was expanded. An extension slightly into St Botolph, Aldersgate was noted, then there was a southern extension in 1257-58, and in 1267 and 1285 extensions were made northward.<sup>7</sup> The burial ground was held by the Jews to bury at will 'even those condemned to death', therefore it became the resting place for executed criminals of the Jewish faith as well as the rest of the community.<sup>8</sup> In 1177 King Henry II permitted the establishment of other Jewish cemeteries throughout England, although few have been identified to date.<sup>9</sup>

On 18 July 1290, a writ was issued announcing the expulsion of Jews from England. During the lapse between the 1290 expulsion and the readmittance in 1656, the old London Jewish burial ground at Cripplegate disappeared. It was initially given to the Dean of St Paul's Cathedral in 1291 and was still evident, in a transformed state, during John Stow's time.<sup>10</sup> In 1598, Stow wrote that it 'is now turned into fair garden plots and summer-houses for pleasure'.<sup>11</sup> The cemetery had already been pillaged for stone during the

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<sup>5</sup> All the above is taken from Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>6</sup> M. B. Honeybourne, 'The Pre-Expulsion Cemetery of the Jews in London' *Transactions (Jewish Historical Society of England)* 1959-61, Vol. 20 pp. 145-159; J. Stow, *The Survey of London* (1598), Reprinted From the Text of 1603, C. L. Kingsford, (ed.), (Oxford, 1908), p. 270.

<sup>7</sup> Honeybourne, 'The Pre-Expulsion Cemetery', pp. 146, 149.

<sup>8</sup> This is C. Roth's interpretation of the Latin 'damnatoes et non damnatos' seen in Honeybourne, 'The Pre-Expulsion Cemetery', p. 148.

<sup>9</sup> J and C. Hillaby, *The Palgrave Dictionary of Medieval Anglo-Jewish History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 18; Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, p. 32.

<sup>10</sup> Honeybourne, 'The Pre-Expulsion Cemetery', p. 151.

<sup>11</sup> Stow, *The Survey* p. 270.

medieval period and even human remains may have been removed. There were Hebrew inscriptions on some old London buildings mentioned by Stow. He noted that they were taken 'from Jews' broken houses.'<sup>12</sup> These were in fact not from Jewish houses but reused funerary stones. The Ludgate stones that Stow also writes about have inscriptions on them that prove they came from the cemetery.<sup>13</sup> These tombstones were rediscovered in 1586 when Ludgate was being rebuilt. Four other tombstones built into Aldersgate were found when it was demolished and then rebuilt in 1617. Two of these stones were placed in Arundel House on the Strand then moved to Oxford and housed in the courtyard of the old Ashmolean Museum. They have since disappeared, but recordings of their inscriptions remain. Another tombstone was discovered in 1753 embedded face down in London Wall next to Bethlehem Hospital.<sup>14</sup>

There were Jews in England, and especially in London, during the period between the expulsion and readmittance, although there were no organised communities.<sup>15</sup> In 1492 Ferdinand and Isabella expelled the Jews from Spain and in 1497 Portuguese Jews were forcibly converted to Christianity. Many of these Jews fled to Turkey and the Low Countries, especially Antwerp, and a few crypto-Jew refugees settled in London in secret.<sup>16</sup> They appear very occasionally in archival records. In 1542 the presence of Jews was reported to the Privy Council.<sup>17</sup> By the reign of Elizabeth I there were some thirty-seven households, about 80-100 crypto-Jews in the capital.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Stow, *The Survey*, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Stow, *The Survey*, p. 37.

<sup>14</sup> Information about these stones can be found in Honeybourne, 'The Pre-Expulsion Cemetery', pp. 153-154.

<sup>15</sup> Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, p. 115.

<sup>16</sup> P. Berek, 'The Jew as Renaissance Man' *Renaissance Quarterly* Vol. 51, No. 1 (Spring, 1998), pp. 131-132; T. M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656-2000* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 16-17.

<sup>17</sup> Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, p. 124.

<sup>18</sup> N. Mater, *Turks, Moors and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University press, 1999), p. 3.

Queen Elizabeth herself had an interest in Jews and her physician-in-chief was Roderigo Lopez, a Portuguese Jew who settled in England in 1559. Lopez became the first house physician at St Bartholomew's Hospital and a member of the College of Physicians before taking up his post with Elizabeth. He was eventually hanged and quartered at Tyburn on 7 June 1594 after being found guilty of a plot to poison the Queen.<sup>19</sup> His quarters were 'set on the gates of the Citie' noted Stow, though which exact gates is unknown.<sup>20</sup> According to the historian Edgar Samuel, Lopez was the alleged inspiration for Shakespeare's murderous Jew, Shylock, from *The Merchant of Venice* and Jewish characters in plays and other literature ensured a place for the Jew within the early modern imagination.<sup>21</sup> *The Jew of Malta* by Christopher Marlow was one of the most popular plays at the end of the sixteenth century and both his and Shakespeare's depictions of Jews were imbedded within the psyche of the population. Only by the very end of the eighteenth century did portrayals of Jews on the London stage come to be viewed in a different light, mostly due to Richard Cumberland's play *The Jew*, where the playwright consciously sought to create a positive image of a Jewish man.<sup>22</sup> Before this, the Jew on stage was a negative stereotype, a concept rather than a person, and the Jews would have to combat this interpretation when they returned to England in the latter half of the seventeenth century. As Peter Berek has argued, Jewishness was used 'as a mode of figuring some emerging social energies which sought outlets in both action and story'. According to Berek, 'Despite

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<sup>19</sup> Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, pp. 134-139; S. Edgar, 'Lopez [Lopes], Roderigo [Ruy, Roger] (c. 1517-1594), physician and alleged conspirator' *ODNB* January 03, 2008.

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-17011> [accessed, 14 Jul, 2020]; Berek, 'The Jew as Renaissance Man', p. 152.

<sup>20</sup> J. Stow, *Annales, or, a generall chronicle of England* (1631), pp. 768-769.

<sup>21</sup> Edgar, 'Lopez [Lopes], Roderigo [Ruy, Roger]', *ODNB*; For discussions about the Jew in the early modern imagination, literature, and plays see: E. J. Holmberg, *Jews in the Early Modern English Imagination: A Scattered Nation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011); J. S. Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Berek, 'The Jew as Renaissance Man', pp. 128-162; for examples of other plays in these categories see: W. Hemmings, *The Jewes tragedy, or, Their fatal and final overthrow by Vespasian and Titus, his son agreeable to the authentick and famous history of Josephus* (1662).

<sup>22</sup> R. Cumberland, *The Jew* (1794).

being foreign, exotic, or 'other', the Jew came to be represented in England as a paradigmatic 'Renaissance Man'.<sup>23</sup> In contrast, James Shapiro has suggested that 'it proved much easier to identify those who were English by pointing to those who were assuredly not', i.e. the Jew.<sup>24</sup> It is possible that both of these views existed simultaneously thus creating conflict within the minds of the population, and like all the groups discussed in former chapters there was not a universally agreed opinion about this marginal community. By the seventeenth century, along with Jews within literature and on the stage, there were the continued glimpses of the secretive Jewish community of the metropolis.

In 1632 the crypto-Jewish community of Rouen, France, was broken up and some sought safety in London, the most notable of these individuals being Antonio Fernandez Carvajal who masqueraded as a Roman Catholic while playing an important role in the secret Jewish community. He helped set up the first Jewish burial ground once readmittance was allowed.<sup>25</sup> In 1643 a small influx of Jews from Amsterdam joined this guarded community. Therefore, when Manasseh Ben Israel travelled to London in 1655, several families of the Jewish faith numbering about 200 were already secretly established within the metropolis in the eastern part of the city around Leadenhall Street, Fenchurch Street, St Mary Axe, and Duke's Place.<sup>26</sup>

The first petition for the readmission of Jews to England was not that of Ben Israel but an earlier one from 1649 submitted by two Baptists living in Amsterdam, Johanna and Ebenezer Cartwright (mother and son). No reply to their petition has ever been

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<sup>23</sup> Berek, 'The Jew as Renaissance Man', pp. 128-129.

<sup>24</sup> Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, p. 5.

<sup>25</sup> D. S. Katz, 'Carvajal, Antonio Fernandez (d. 1659), merchant' *ODNB* September 23, 2004. <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-37263> [accessed, 14 Jul. 2020]; Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, p. 18.

<sup>26</sup> Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, pp. 174-175; L. Wolf, 'Status of the Jews in England after the Re-settlement' *Transactions (Jewish Historical Society of England)*, 1899-1901, Vol. 4, p. 178.

discovered.<sup>27</sup> In 1651 Ben Israel began his process of formally applying for Jewish readmission to England. He petitioned Oliver Cromwell on 24 March 1656.<sup>28</sup> The Whitehall Conference followed, but after lengthy discussion no official decision about readmittance was given.<sup>29</sup> However, this conference, the petition, and the Robles case of 1656, when the merchant Antonio Rodrigues Robles, a Jewish immigrant from the Canary Islands petitioned for the return of his seized property on account of his being 'of the Hebrew nation' rather than Spanish (which occurred during the war with Spain), and another petition from six leading members of the 'New Christian community' for permission to gather to worship and acquire a burial ground, allowed the informal readmittance of the Jews to England.<sup>30</sup> From the outset the establishment of a synagogue and an independent burial place was of principal concern. The importance of the burial ground specifically held a prominent place within petitions for readmittance. In the 24 March 1656 petition to Cromwell, for example, the supplicants wrote:

And being wee ar all mortall, wee alsoe Humbly pray yo[u]r. Highnesse to graunt Us Lisense that those which may dey of owr nation may be buryed in such place out of the cittye as wee shall thinck Convenient with the Proprietors Leave in whose Land the place shall be...<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> J and E. Cartwright, *The petition of the Jewes for the repealing of the Act of Parliament for their banishment out of England. Presented to his Excellency and the generall Councill of Officers on Fryday Jan. 5. 1648. With their favourable acceptance thereof. Also a petition of divers commanmanders [sic], prisoners in the Kings Bench, for the releasing of all prisoners for debt, according to the custome of other countries.* London: Printed for George Roberts, (1649); Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, p. 20.

<sup>28</sup> D. S. Katz, 'Menasseh ben Israel (1604–1657), rabbi and campaigner for the readmission of Jews to England'. *ODNB* October 04, 2007. <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-17916> [accessed, 14 Jul. 2020].

<sup>29</sup> For discussions about the Whitehall Conference see Wolf, 'Status of the Jew', pp. 177-179; D. S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England, 1603-1655* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 1,5; Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, p. 25.

<sup>30</sup> J. Selwood, 'Jewish immigration, Anti-Semitism and the Diversity of Early Modern London' *Jewish Culture and History*, 10:1, (2008), p. 1; Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, p. 26.

<sup>31</sup> TNA, SP 18/125, fol. 173, A petition by Manasseh ben Israel and others to Oliver Cromwell, asking for Jews to have the right to practise their religion in their own houses, dated 1656.

This request for a cemetery was clearly of special importance.

For the first c.80 years, the Jews of England were almost solely based within the metropolis.<sup>32</sup> The readmittance was not without its opposition and Jews stepped into ‘a confusing array of stereotypes’ when they returned to London, frequently facing hostility to their presence.<sup>33</sup> In 1660, the mayor and aldermen of the City of London petitioned the newly reinstated Charles II to have the Jews expelled, perhaps thinking a new regime would reverse the informal decision of Cromwell. They framed their grievances as economic.<sup>34</sup> Thomas Violet, an ‘notorious informer and pamphleteer’, produced numerous documents against the Jewish settlement, alongside petitions initially to Richard Cromwell then later to Charles II, each with increasingly violent and extortionate proposals against the Jews. No direct reply has been recorded to any of Violet’s documents, and none of the petitions were successful, but these sentiments should be borne in mind throughout this chapter.<sup>35</sup> Pamphlets circulated that targeted the Jewish faith on religious grounds including *Conviction for the Jewes and confirmation and comfort for the Christians, or, That Jesus Christ is the true Messiah and is already come*, which was published in 1656.<sup>36</sup> This type of rhetoric was common. Other pamphlet literature associated the Jews’ crucifixion of Christ with the execution of Charles I.<sup>37</sup> There were also many ballads that took Jews as the

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<sup>32</sup> K. Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry in England and Wales 1656–c.1880* (Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology, 2014), p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> J. Selwood, *Diversity and Difference in Early Modern London* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 157.

<sup>34</sup> Selwood, ‘Jewish immigration’, pp. 1, 9-12; Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, pp. 211-216; Selwood, *Diversity and Difference*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>35</sup> Wolf, ‘Status of the Jews’, pp. 181-182. Transcriptions of the petitions against the Jews are found at, pp. 186-193; Selwood, *Diversity and Difference*, pp. 149-153.

<sup>36</sup> J. Blacklach, *Conviction for the Jewes and confirmation and comfort for the Christians, or, That Jesus Christ is the true Messiah and is already come proved [sic] from and by the Sacred Scriptures the unerring rule of truth, and by other undeniable arguments : together with the principall and most weightie objections of the Jewes answered : all being a loving exhortation to the Jewes answered : all being a loving exhortation to the Jewes by him that earnestly desireth the salvation of all wearie and thirstie soules, both Jewes and Gentiles* (1656).

<sup>37</sup> R. Watson, *Regicidium Judaicum, or, A discourse about the Jewes crucifying Christ their king with an appendix, or supplement, upon the late murder of our blessed soveraigne Charles the first / delivered in a sermon at the Hague ... The Hague: Printed by Samuel Broun ... (1649); T. L, *Sad memorials of the royal martyr, or, A parallel betwixt the Jewes murder of Christ and the English**

murderer of Christ. The best known is *The Wandering Jew; or the Shoemaker of Jerusalem*. It tells the story of a man who cursed Christ when he was on the way to the crucifixion and was, in turn, cursed to wander until Christ came again.<sup>38</sup> All of this printed material marked the Jew out as 'other', something already separated from an everyday Londoner, and their wish for separate burial grounds and distinctive mortuary practices added to this image. Jewish stereotypes may have 'othered' the London Jews, but they potentially assisted them too, as the community gained the support of the crown.

It took until 1665 for Jews to *officially* be allowed settlement.<sup>39</sup> But the protection of the crown had been granted to them since the Restoration and was continuously reaffirmed.<sup>40</sup> For example the Conventicle Act of 1664 that had so affected Quakers and their meetings had no effect on the Jews who continued to meet to worship. A grievance against this was raised in 1673 but was almost instantaneously dismissed by Charles II.<sup>41</sup>

The Jewish community of London were only a tiny minority of the population. At the Restoration, Jews in London amounted to merely thirty-five families.<sup>42</sup> The original Sephardi settlers from Spain and Portugal were followed by Ashkenazi Jews, mostly from Amsterdam and elsewhere in the Low Countries. The Ashkenazi Jews formed their own congregation in 1690 and acquired a synagogue in Duke's Place. The Sephardi Jews had held a synagogue in Creechurch Lane since the readmittance and the possibility of a second synagogue existing in St Helens is hinted at, which may have been used predominantly by the Ashkenazi before their official synagogue, although records are elusive.<sup>43</sup> By 1690 there

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*murder of King Charls the First being a sermon preached on the solemnity of His Majestie's martyrdom in the Cathedral-Church of Sarum, An. Dom* (1670).

<sup>38</sup> For discussions on this see Holmberg, *Jews in the Early Modern English Imagination*, p. 16.

<sup>39</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 8.

<sup>40</sup> Wolf, 'Status of the Jews', p. 184.

<sup>41</sup> Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, pp. 219-220.

<sup>42</sup> Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, p. 212.

were around 400 Jews in London both Sephardi and Ashkenazi.<sup>44</sup> In the 1695 census list, 48 of 110 parishes in the metropolis had Jewish inhabitants. A total of 850 named Jews were recorded, 681 of which were in only six of the parishes of the city. These parishes were All Hallows, London Wall; St Andrew, Undershaft; St Helen, Bishopsgate; St James, Duke's Place; St Katherine Creechurch; and St Katherine, Coleman (fig. 5.1).<sup>45</sup>

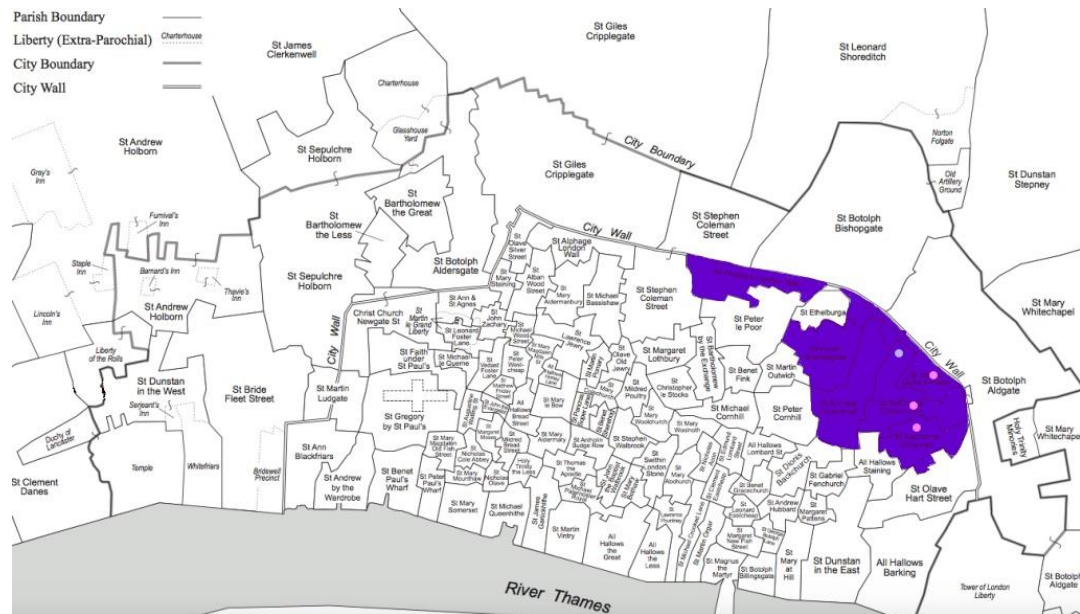


Figure 5.1. The parishes of All Hallows, London Wall; St Andrew, Undershaft; St Helen, Bishopsgate; St James, Duke's Place; St Katherine Creechurch; and St Katherine, Coleman. The Bevis Marks Synagogue is shown via the violet dot, the Ashkenazi synagogues are shown via the pink dots: The Great Synagogue in Dukes Place, the New Synagogue off Leadenhall Street, and the Hambro near St Katherine, Coleman Street. Map from M. Davies et al. *London and Middlesex Hearth Tax* (2014).

It was not uncommon to find multifaith households among these seventeenth century Jews of the metropolis. The wealthy Mendes da Costa family included members of Bevis Marks Synagogue (established in 1701 from the Creechurch Lane congregation), members of the Church of England, and members of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>46</sup> By c.1720 there were 5,000 to 6,000 Jews in London with a further 1,500 arriving shortly after this date fleeing the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal. By the second half of the eighteenth

<sup>44</sup> Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, p. 239.

<sup>45</sup> A. P. Arnold, 'A List of Jews and Their Households in London' *Miscellanies (Jewish Historical Society of England)*, Vol. 6 (1962), pp. 73-141.

<sup>46</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, p. 34; T. M. Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History, 1656-1945* (Indiana University Press: Indiana, 1990), pp. 14-15.



century more arrivals from Holland, Italy, North Africa, and Gibraltar were recorded, and the Ashkenazim Jews came to outnumber the Sephardim Jews.<sup>47</sup> Poorer Jewish migrants began to arrive across the eighteenth century, both Sephardi and Ashkenazi, although the latter were more numerous. The London synagogues often assisted in paying for the passage to England for these needier members of the community. Poorer Jews often became hawkers and peddlers a point which will be returned to towards the end of the chapter.<sup>48</sup> By the 1790s, the Jewish community of the metropolis numbered around 18,000, and by the end of the century there were c.20,000 Jews in England, mostly still concentrated in London.<sup>49</sup> By 1800 four synagogues were active in the city. These were Bevis Marks, the Great Synagogue at Duke's Place north of Aldgate which opened in 1690, the New Synagogue which opened in 1761 in Leadenhall Street, under the chief Rabbi R. Solomon Hirschell, and the Hambro which was initially in a house that was extended in 1725 (fig. 5.1).<sup>50</sup> There were also six Jewish burial grounds by the close of the century.

The Jewish dead are entirely missing from the wider scholarly literature that examines the dead of early modern England and London. They are not mentioned in the works of Gittings, Harding, Cressy, Houlbrooke, Marshall, Landers, and Tarlow. Indeed, the history of the Jews in general has been overlooked in much of the current historiography that explores early modern England.

At the turn of the twentieth century, historians who were Jewish themselves began to address this imbalance. Lucien Wolf, a historian, journalist, and advocate for Jewish rights, started publishing articles and books about the history of the Jews in Britain.<sup>51</sup> Cecil Roth's 1941 *History of the Jews in England* also tried to highlight the importance of this

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<sup>47</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 10.

<sup>48</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>49</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 11.

<sup>50</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 11.

<sup>51</sup> One of the most influential being: Wolf, 'Status of the Jews', pp. 177-195.

neglected part of British history. But as Todd M. Endelman observed in his more recent survey of the history of the Jews in Britain, these earlier scholars tended to 'serve apologetic as well as scholarly ends'.<sup>52</sup> Until the 1970s, most historical work on the Jews of Britain were 'the work of amateurs, communal dignitaries and functionaries'. Their aim was to 'defend Jews through research that emphasized their rootedness in England and their role in its development'. This early work is Whiggish, apologetic, triumphalist, and treated the subjects in isolation from English society and religious history.<sup>53</sup> Only slowly did some social historians begin to include the English Jews in research on urbanisation, social mobility, and class conflict.<sup>54</sup> Despite the earlier examinations of Jewish history in England having a clear agenda, they have proved useful for this chapter as, unlike later scholars on the subject, they did pay attention to the burial grounds of the metropolis.

In the *Jewish Historical Society of England* journal, D. Bueno de Mesquita wrote about the early Sephardi burial ground in Mile End and the individuals interred there.<sup>55</sup> In the 1950s the journal again published articles about the early burial ground, this time in a paper authored by A. S. Diamond who claimed de Mesquita was not always accurate. Diamond went back to the original records and examined the legal side of obtaining the land for burial.<sup>56</sup> In the 1960s R. D. Barnett helpfully transcribed the entries of the Spanish and Portuguese Jew's Burial Registers between 1657 and 1735.<sup>57</sup> All these articles have proved useful for this chapter.

Jews as a concept, rather than a reality, has been explored by Eliane Glaser and most recently Eva Johanna Holmberg. Holmberg used accounts from travel writers,

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<sup>52</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> These sentiments are from Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>54</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, p. 10.

<sup>55</sup> Bueno de Mesquita, 'The Historical Associations', pp. 225-254.

<sup>56</sup> Diamond, 'The Cemetery of the Resettlement', pp. 163-190.

<sup>57</sup> R. D. Barnett, 'The Burial Register of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews, London 1657-1735 (with some later entries)' *Miscellanies (Jewish Historical Society of England)*, 1962, Vol. 6 (1962), pp. 1-72.

contemporary historians, and clerics, that discussed Jews and their customs to gain insight into how Jews were portrayed and thought of in early modern England.<sup>58</sup> Glaser, like many historians that examine seventeenth-century English Jews, has a strong focus on the events leading up to and around the readmittance. Another influential study on the readmittance is David S. Katz's, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England, 1603-1655*.<sup>59</sup> In this book's title another common aspect in the scholarly works on the history of Jews is mentioned, the focus on Philo-Semitism. This, together with a focus on antisemitism, have informed other published works on the subject. However, as Holmberg points out, the early modern Jew cannot be easily categorised within these two terms.<sup>60</sup>

Unlike the subjects explored in the previous chapters of this thesis, the term 'marginal' and its variants occasionally occurs in the scholarship surrounding the Jews of England.<sup>61</sup> E. Narin van Count noted that medieval Jews were located in a place that was socially marginal but essential to Christian eschatology.<sup>62</sup> This idea continued into the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Alongside the term being used for the Jews of Britain, as Endelman and David B. Ruderman have noted, there is also a marginalisation of Britain within broader Jewish historiography.<sup>63</sup> The marginalisation, or rather self-marginalisation, discussed within this chapter does not follow the methodology of these other studies,

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<sup>58</sup> E. Glaser, *Judaism without Jews: Philosemitism and Christian Polemic in Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Holmberg, *Jews in the Early Modern English Imagination*.

<sup>59</sup> Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the readmission*, this was followed by D. S. Katz, *The Jews in the History of England, 1485-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

<sup>60</sup> Holmberg, *Jews in the Early Modern English Imagination*, p. 3; For more on these two attitudes see Selwood, *Diversity and Difference*, pp. 133-135.

<sup>61</sup> D. S. Katz, 'The Marginalization of early modern Anglo-Jewish History' *Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora* Volume 10, 1991 - Issue 1-2, pp. 60-77; D. S. Katz, 'The Marginalization of Early Modern Anglo-Jewish History' *The Jewish Heritage in British History: Englishness and Jewishness* T. Kushner, (ed.), (Oxon: Frank Cass, 2006), pp. 60-77; E. Narin van Count, 'Socially Marginal, Culturally Central: Representing Jews in Late Medieval English Literature' *Exemplaria* 2000 12:2, pp. 293-326.

<sup>62</sup> Narin van Count, 'Socially Marginal', p. 308.

<sup>63</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, pp. 3-4; D. B. Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key: Anglo-Jewry's Construction of Modern Jewish Thought* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000).

however the idea of a cultural centrality but social marginality is helpful for analysing the treatment of the dead.

Apart from the scholarship by the *Jewish Historical Society* mentioned above, there has been scant research examining the Jewish dead, especially within England. Avriel Bar-Levav has produced work on Jewish approaches to their dead and drawn evidence at times from the English Jews. However, as a general survey, his work is not specific to early modernity nor to a particular geographic place.<sup>64</sup> For England, it is Sharman Kadish's examination of Jewish funeral architecture in Britain and Ireland, in both his book and his earlier article, that have specifically focused on the early modern Jewish dead using the prism of their cemeteries, something Kenneth Marks has also done in his book. Both scholars work has been useful for an analysis of Jewish burial grounds found later in this chapter.<sup>65</sup>

There has been no comparative work carried out on the Jewish dead of seventeenth and eighteenth-century London, nor any attempt to discover the place that these dead held, not just for the Jewish community but within the wider landscape of the metropolis, something this chapter will go some way towards rectifying.

## Sources and Methodology

Burial registers, newspapers, wills, diary entries, and some pamphlets and ballads have again formed the main basis for an investigation into the Jewish dead. Again, and indeed more prominently, this chapter was hindered by access to archival sources due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the sources and methodology used for this chapter has

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<sup>64</sup> A. Bar-Levav, 'We Are Where We Are Not'. The Cemetery in Jewish Culture' *Jewish Studies* 41 (2002), pp. 15-46; also, his paper and the rest of the volume, although it deals mainly with Medieval Jews: S. C. Reif, A. Lehnardt, A. Bar-Levav, (eds.), *Death in Jewish Life: Burial and Mourning Customs Among Jews of Europe and Nearby Communities* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014).

<sup>65</sup> S. Kadish, 'Jewish Funeral Architecture in Britain and Ireland Since 1656' *Jewish Historical Studies*, Vol. 43 (2011), pp. 59-88; S. Kadish, *Jewish Heritage in Britain and Ireland: An Architectural Guide* (Swindon: Historic England, 2015); Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*.

not deviated in too much of an extreme way from that of the previous three although certain new problems were encountered which will be explained shortly and dependence was placed upon personal observations of Jewish burial grounds rather than archival sources.

Jews existed in English pamphlets and ballads long before the readmission. Early works painted Jews in stereotypical forms. In one example, presumably borrowing a trope from *The Merchant of Venice*, a money-lending Jew is portrayed as cruelly demanding a pound of flesh from a man who could not repay his debts, showing the link with money that has remained a staple in interpretations of Jews and Jewish culture.<sup>66</sup> Other types of pamphlets that were common include the 'dialogue' format, often between a Christian and a Jew engaged in theological discourses.<sup>67</sup> Others were simply direct conversion tracts.<sup>68</sup> Throughout these texts, religious and economic themes are prominent. Alongside these, the pamphlets both for and against readmission and what rights Jews should be allowed became popular around the 1650s.<sup>69</sup> Lacking from the ballads and pamphlets are almost any discussion of death and the dead and therefore, unlike in the chapter on criminals for example, ballads and pamphlets have not been used to a great extent within this analysis. There were also not many pamphlets produced by Jews themselves. Members of the

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<sup>66</sup> Anon, *A new song: shewing the crueltie of Gernutus a lew, who leading to a merchant a hundred crownes, would have a pound of his flesh, because he could not pay him at the day appointed. To the tune of Black and yellow* (1640).

<sup>67</sup> For example, see: T. Morgan, *The Moral Philosopher. In a Dialogue Between Philalethes, a Christian Deist, and Theophanes a Christian Jew* (1738); R. Mayo, *Two Disputations Concerning the Messiah. One Between a Papist and a Jew, The Other Between a Protestant and a Jew* (1756).

<sup>68</sup> J. Jacob, *אבן לראש פנה The Jew turned Christian; or, the Corner Stone: wherein is an assertion of Christ being the true Messiah. By John Jacob formerly a Jew, etc.* (1678/9); P. C. Scialitti, *A Letter written to the Jewes, by Rabbi Moses Scialitti, a Jew of Florence, baptized June 14, 1663, ... declaring the reasons of his conversion, and exhorting them to embrace the Christian Faith* (1663); Anon, *Letter from a Jew to Mr. Aran de Almanza, the Spanish merchant, that was converted from Judaism [sic] to the Church of England* (1703).

<sup>69</sup> For another example, see: B. B, *A Historical and Law Treatise against the Jews and Judaism: shewing that by the ... laws of the land, no Jew hath any right to live in England, nor to appear without yellow badges upon his or her upper garment ... Together with the confutation of two arguments us'd by some for the re-admission of the Jews* (1703).

Jewish community could not publish pamphlets or books without the permission of the *mahamad* (established in 1664), a three-person committee that made the London Jewish community's by-laws.<sup>70</sup> Many of the books and pamphlets that the Jews themselves read were imported from the continent and sometimes translated into English or left in the language of their origin.

A couple of pamphlets for Christian readers discuss the many rituals of the Jews and these occasionally touch upon death and burial practices.<sup>71</sup> One such pamphlet explains how a rabbi visits a Jew when they are on their deathbed and the individual who is dying has their kinsfolk summoned if the rabbi deems it terminal. The kinsfolk purportedly 'barter with him about his temporal estate: if poor, they spare their labour'.<sup>72</sup> The dying individual confesses their sins, and hence dies a 'good death'. After death those in attendance 'rent their garments' and mourn the loss. The pamphlet also outlines what happens next:

As soon as he is dead they cast forth all the water in the house into the streets; cover his face that from thenceforth none may behold it. Then they take his thumb and by wresting of it into the palme of his hand, make it to represent the name *Schaddai*, which is so great a terrour to the devil that he dare not approach the dead corps. They binde his thumb with the threads and stringes of his own coat, which otherwise would not remain crooked. For it is ordinary for a dead man always to stretch out his hands and fingers, thereby signifying that he hath left the world, and that there is nothing in it which he can now lay challenge unto: as on the contrary, the little infants at their birth have their hands shut; thereby intimating that God hath given, and as it were delivered unto them the riches of

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<sup>70</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, p. 31.

<sup>71</sup> A. B, and M. A, *The Jewish synagogue, or, An historical narration of the state of the Jewes, at this day dispersed over the face of the whole earth ... / Translated out of the learned Buxtorfius ...* (1663).

<sup>72</sup> B and A, *The Jewish synagogue*, p. 306.

this earthly Tabernacle. Then is he washed with hot water, that he may be clean when he shall give an account of his sins and offences.<sup>73</sup>

This description, although reasonably accurate, was written for readers who were not of the Jewish faith, and while it avoids opinionated embellishment, unlike a few other tracts, it was still not likely to be read and studied by Jews themselves. Instead, these practices would have been passed down from generation to generation within the community, often orally or directly from their spiritual leaders.

It is newspapers that shed most light upon how the Jewish dead of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century were viewed by the wider population. Newspaper entries immediately after the readmission tended to only share comical anecdotes, such as the story of a Jew who lived in 'Charter-house-lane' who had a 'Bitch' that died whom he adored so he held a fancy funeral for her. According to the paper the Jew went on a pilgrimage to her grave once a week and was said to lament there 'Oh my dear beloved Bitch, Felonica, / Since thou art dead my joys are fled away'.<sup>74</sup> Occasionally the newspapers reported on Jews who converted to Christianity, or Jews from elsewhere in the world, not those living in their midst.<sup>75</sup> For example, in June 1682 the papers shared the news from Lisbon where a 'great numbers of *Jews* have lately been burnt to Death'.<sup>76</sup> It seems that Jews in Europe and the Middle East garnered much more interest for the early modern population of London than those who dwelt among them, or at least that is the image conveyed by seventeenth century newspaper coverage.

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<sup>73</sup> B and A, *The Jewish synagogue*, p. 307.

<sup>74</sup> *Mercurius Democritus or a Perfect Nocturnal* (London), August 10 - August 26, 1659; Issue 13, p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> *Kingdoms Intelligencer* (London), April 8 -April 15, 1661; Issue 15; *London Gazette* (London), February 1 - February 5, 1666; Issue 24; *London Gazette* (London), January 18 - January 21, 1669; Issue 332; *London Gazette* (London), May 31 - June 3, 1669; Issue 370.

<sup>76</sup> *Loyal Protestant and True Domestick Intelligence* (Ludlow), Saturday, June 10, 1682; Issue 166.

In the 1690s Jews began to appear in newspapers more frequently, especially in the *Athenian Gazette* which was written in an advice column style. Questions were submitted by the readers and a question/answer format adopted in the printed response. Here early modern Londoners' curiosity about the Jews in their midst was finally evident. In 1692 a common question was published within the paper: 'Whether it be for the Advantage of England, that the Jews be permitted to live and Trade here?' The paragraph long answer concluded that as 'their Party is not strong enough to do us any Publick Mischief,' they should be tolerated.<sup>77</sup> The paper is evidence of a degree of grudging acceptance of the London Jews. In June 1695, a question was put to them about a Jew being in love with a Quaker who agreed to marry him, he then fell for another woman who became pregnant, so they enquired as to which woman he ought to marry. The answerer wrote 'We shou'd say he had done like a Jew, were there not too many who wou'd fain be called Christians, that are often guilty of as ill or baser actions', they advise he marry the first and provide for the second.<sup>78</sup> There appears to have been a growing awareness of the Jews of London which had been missing from earlier coverage, and the beginnings of an interest in Jewish rituals and customs emerges. This eventually led to newspaper coverage of Jewish deaths.

The earliest death notices in eighteenth-century newspapers were often very brief, such as in 1731 when the newspapers reported: 'On Friday last Week died in St. Mary Axe, Dr. Bass, a noted Jew Physician'.<sup>79</sup> If individuals were deemed 'eminent', 'noted', or 'wealthy', they were more likely to appear within the newspapers when they died. Or if they were the complete opposite to this and were poor, peddlers, hawkers, or criminals,

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<sup>77</sup> *Athenian Gazette* (London), Sunday, Mar. 27, 1692; Issue 19.

<sup>78</sup> *Athenian Gazette* (London), Wednesday, June 26, 1695; Issue 25; For other questions about the Jews in this paper see: *Athenian Gazette* (London), Tuesday, Oct. 8, 1695; Issue 25; *Athenian Gazette* (London), Tuesday, Nov. 5, 1695; Issue 3.

<sup>79</sup> *Universal Spectator and Weekly Journal* (London), Saturday, Sept. 25, 1731; Issue 155.



they too might receive newspaper coverage upon their demise. By the middle of the eighteenth century many individual Jews who held a favourable reputation within the metropolis received flattering and often more comprehensive newspaper entries, such as one from 1764 when a rich and respected gentleman and member of a famous Sephardi family died:

Benjamin Mendez da Costa, Esq; in convulsions, in Bury-street, St. Mary Axe, a Gentleman of the Jewish profession; but whose practice, as it adorned human nature, would do honour to the purest religion. His remains are deposited in the Jews Burial Ground, at Mile End.<sup>80</sup>

The format for this entry about Mendez da Costa – naming them, noting they were a Jew and where in London they were from, a profession or virtue that was valued, and where they were buried – became the common style used in newspapers until the end of the century.

Newspapers also tended to report on anyone of a great age and Jewish individuals were not excluded from this, indeed they gained a reputation for longevity. The papers would run short notices such as in 1758: 'Yesterday Morning died at his House in Fenchurch-street in the 80th Year of his Age, Mr. Abraham Franco, an eminent Jew Merchant',<sup>81</sup> and in 1766: 'A few Days since died, aged 84, Mr. Nicholas Osborn, who for near 60 Years kept a cutlers Shop in Holbourn, but had retired from Business for some Time'.<sup>82</sup> Right through the eighteenth century these were common entries. In 1776 the papers reported 'On Friday last died, aged 96, Mr. Levy Marks, of Whitechapel, who for many years was Master of the charity-school belonging to the late Henry Isaacs, Esq; and

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<sup>80</sup> *Lloyd's Evening Post* (London), April 27 - April 30, 1764; Issue 1061.

<sup>81</sup> *Public Advertiser* (London), Wednesday, Apr. 12, 1758, Volume 8; Issue 9797.

<sup>82</sup> *Public Advertiser* (London), Friday, May 30, 1766; Issue 9853.

principal Scribe to the Jews Synagogue',<sup>83</sup> and in 1799 when Ethan Moses died 'in the 108th year of his age' the papers were keen to expand on his life story reporting that: 'He retained his faculties nearly to the time of his death, and was the oldest member of the Dutch Jew Synagogue. He was attended to the grave by a vast number of Jews'.<sup>84</sup>

Sudden deaths were also reported in newspapers. For example, in 1739 Mr Abraham Nunes Fernandes died on a Sunday but 'He was in the Synagogue on Saturday Night in good health'.<sup>85</sup> In 1775 when a Jew was found dead in his bed at lodgings in Moorfields the newspapers reported that; 'on examining him it appeared a Bullet had entered his Body between the Shoulders, from whence it is imagined he had been shot in attempting to break open some House'. This conclusion was drawn because 'a Number of Pick-lock Keys, a Tinder-Box, and all the Apparatus compleat for that Profession, were found in his Apartment'.<sup>86</sup> These types of entries show how the perception of Jews changed over time within the metropolis, from anecdotal stories to curiosity to the celebration of individuals reputations and even demonstrating some respect, but also recognising the less fortunate individuals. Eventually the Jewish dead received newspaper entries that were similar to those of any other individual in London.

As was seen in the case of Francis Salvadore that began this chapter, Jewish individuals would occasionally be included within their local parish's burial registers, especially those who were leaders of the community. One such leader was Jacob Abendana who was originally from Spain and had travelled to Hamburg where he became a rabbi before moving to Amsterdam, then England, then back to Amsterdam before finally agreeing to become the leader for the Sephardi community in London. He was well-known among Christians, even hosting Princess Anne at the synagogue during Passover. In

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<sup>83</sup> *Morning Chronicle* (London), Tuesday, Oct. 29, 1776; Issue 2322.

<sup>84</sup> *Oracle* (London), Tuesday, June 18, 1799; Issue 22013.

<sup>85</sup> *London Daily Post and General Advertiser* (London), Tuesday, Jan. 30, 1739.

<sup>86</sup> *St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post* (London), March 30 - April 1, 1775; Issue 2204.

October 1685, aged 55, he died and the inscription on his gravestone reads: 'Haham Hashalem R. Jacob Abendana died 2nd Tishri 5446'.<sup>87</sup> He received an entry in the Jewish burial register, but he was also included within the parish register for St Katharine Cree: 'Jacob Abendana at Milend – buried October the 3'.<sup>88</sup>

The helpful transcriptions produced by R. D. Barnett of the entries in the burial register for the Velho cemetery (the first Jewish cemetery in the metropolis) for 1657 to 1735 has been a valuable source for this chapter.<sup>89</sup> The register is an imposing volume, measuring 14 and a half inches high and 10 inches wide. On the old cover there is an inscription in Hebrew that translates to 'protecting the pious' and another that translates to 'charity preserveth from death'.<sup>90</sup> The register is all written in the same handwriting until 1725, when a few extra burials are recorded in a different hand, which leads to the conclusion that it was written towards the end of the cemetery's use. The earlier entries must have been copied from the tombstones themselves and records of those buried without tombstones are probably from another earlier source that is now lost. This earlier lost source appears to have been a wooden board where the names of the deceased were inscribed, as the committee tasked with the upkeep of the burial grounds refer to something that sounds like this.<sup>91</sup> The register also includes seven folios which record the taxes and charges paid quarterly on the burial ground from October 1742 to September 1766, after it had closed for interments. These include the window-tax, for the house on the site, and payments to watchmen, to the Lord of the Manor, and to the poor.<sup>92</sup> The very

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<sup>87</sup> The Hebrew calendar follows a lunisolar pattern, months are based on the lunar pattern and years on the solar pattern with additional dates added when needed. Therefore, records of all early burial dates may have a small margin of error, however, later burial dates are recorded using both the Hebrew calendar and the Gregorian calendar which eradicates this problem. The 1 January 1600 is roughly equal to 14th of Tevet, 5360 and the 31 December 1799 is equal to 3rd of Tevet, 5560.

<sup>88</sup> LMA, P69/KAT2/A/001/MS07889/001.

<sup>89</sup> Barnett, 'The Burial Registers', pp. 1-72.

<sup>90</sup> Barnett, 'The Burial Registers', p. 2.

<sup>91</sup> Diamond, 'The Cemetery of the Resettlement', p. 171; Barnett, 'The Burial Registers', p. 2.

<sup>92</sup> Barnett, 'The Burial Registers', p. 3.

first burial on the site, according to these records, is that of Judith de Brito on the 4<sup>th</sup> Elul of 5417 which is 13 August 1657.<sup>93</sup> Her husband had been one of the original signatures to the petition for a burial ground, but he died before the site was granted to them and was interred in a non-Jewish burial ground in the parish of Hackney.<sup>94</sup>

The final source used within this chapter has been individuals' wills. Many members of the Jewish community left wills, especially wealthy Jewish merchants. Although these rarely give any indication of burial wishes, they do highlight the trust that the Jewish community placed upon one another when it came to dealing with the dead. In October 1741, the newspapers reported: 'Yesterday died Mr. Joshua Salvadore, a Jew Merchant in Lime-Street. He was the eldest of the three wealthy Brothers'.<sup>95</sup> Salvadore left a will and in it, as was the case of the other Salvadore that started this chapter, there are no specifications as to what should happen to his bodily remains. He simply directed:

I recommend my soul to almighty God and my Body to the Earth to be decently Burerred at the Discretion of my Executor hereafter named in the Burying Ground belonging my Brethren the Portugueze Jews residing in this City of London.<sup>96</sup>

Trust was placed upon the Jewish community to uphold funeral and burial conventions.

At this point the methodology normally undertaken in this thesis, i.e., cross-referencing an individual with the burial registers, was still carried out although proved slightly more difficult. One problem was that Jewish names were often spelt in a variety of ways and at times the Hebrew name in the burial register did not even bear a slight correlation with the name the individual may have used in their daily life or what was reported in newspapers and other sources. For example, David Abrabanel, who arrived in

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<sup>93</sup> Barnett, 'The Burial Registers', p. 1.

<sup>94</sup> Bueno de Mesquita, 'The Historical Associations', p. 227.

<sup>95</sup> *Daily Post Friday* (London), Oct. 16, 1741; Issue 6899.

<sup>96</sup> TNA, PROB 11/713/119, Will of Joshua Salvador, Gentleman of City of London.

London in 1654 and was involved in the petitions for readmission, died in 1667. He resided in Great St Helens and was also known as Manuel Martinez Dormido.<sup>97</sup> Despite these difficulties, a list of many named individuals of the Jewish faith was compiled. This was cross referenced with other records as the case of Joshua Salvadore demonstrated. These individual stories have formed the basis of the following examination of Jewish views on death, the burial grounds of the metropolis, and the Jewish funeral, and burial practices. The differentiation of the Jewish dead had ancient origins, and these traditions supported the Jewish community's identity.

### Jewish Views on Death

In Jewish belief, God taught humans to bury the dead when Adam and Eve became fully human, and death first entered the world. According to Jewish folklore the story of Cain and Abel is the story of the first dead body and the moment when lessons about how to look after the dead were imparted. The saga tells that a 'raven fell dead; another raven came, dug a hole in the ground, took hold of his companion, and placed the dead bird in the grave'. Adam then said, 'I will do as this raven did', and he buried the body of Abel.<sup>98</sup> The dead from thenceforth were to be buried and buried quickly after death.

The dead were important to the Jewish faith and bedside rituals around the dying were a focal point in the life cycle. No dying person was to be left alone.<sup>99</sup> Here, similarities with the Protestant belief are apparent. A 'good death' was one where an individual confessed their sins and died surrounded by their kin. The practice of last dying speeches, as examined in the chapters on criminals and Quakers, was less established for the Jewish

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<sup>97</sup> Bueno de Mesquita, 'The Historical Associations', pp. 235-237.

<sup>98</sup> T. W. Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015), p. 86; quoting a saga recorded in A. S. Rappoport, *Myth and Legend of Ancient Israel* (New York: Ktav, 1966), Vol. 1, p. 194 – note Laqueur misspelt Rappoport's name and includes the incorrect page number.

<sup>99</sup> Bar-Levav, 'Jewish Attitudes towards Death', p. 6.

faith, although there were occasional exceptions such as when Jewish criminals were executed. In the Ordinary's *Account* for 21 November 1743, 'the Behaviour, Confession, and Dying Words Of Abraham Pass, a Jew', were published.<sup>100</sup> Pass was executed for burglary. He was attended at the place of execution by a rabbi who performed prayers for him in Hebrew. When the Ordinary offered a reading, Pass turned him down and 'declared that he repented of his Sins, [and] that he had nothing more to Confess, and hoped and believed God would receive his Soul into everlasting Mercy'. A letter written by Pass was also included within the *Account*. This letter's layout and format is similar to a last dying speech. Pass cautions against his example and offers forgiveness and blessings to others.<sup>101</sup> Regardless of this case and others that are similar, last dying speeches were not central to Jewish rituals around death, nor did they hold the efficacy they held for Quakers and were not used as a method to achieve a 'good death'.

Additional rituals separated Jews from their Anglican neighbours such as removing all water from the house and binding an individual's thumb and hand. Other small rituals followed immediately after death, including breaking an egg and mixing it with wine to anoint the head of the corpse.<sup>102</sup> However, despite these examples showing the rituals that followed the immediate aftermath of a death, as Bar-Levav has stated, 'Jewish culture's basic position regarding death and the dead is in various respects to accord them a marginal standing. The occupation with death is marginal, and in some ways so are the dead themselves'. He goes on to explain:

death is marginal in time – mourning is structured and restricted to certain times and therefore is not supposed to be expressed on other times; regarding space – the dead are put in the cemetery which is almost always isolated and marginal;

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<sup>100</sup> OBP, OA17431121. For a similar case see: OBP, OA17471116.

<sup>101</sup> OBP, OA17431121.

<sup>102</sup> B and A, *The Jewish synagogue*, p. 307.

and, in the matter of society, death is also socially marginal, and has only a limited place in the Jewish community. These are different categories, but they share this marginality.<sup>103</sup>

Thus, Jewish views on death were less about forging an identity, a key factor for Quakers, and more about carrying on traditions, and in these traditions the dead were both socially and physically marginalised.

This is not to say that dead bodies were unimportant. Bodies mattered. Bodies and souls were partners in life and in death and hence great care was to be enacted when dealing with the dead. Jews strongly believed that as humans were born with nothing, they should leave this world with nothing, they should all be dressed similarly for burial, and everything should be simple and plain. The coffins, regardless of the wealth of an individual, should be undecorated and without handles.<sup>104</sup> Despite these rules, by the middle of the eighteenth century, much like with the Quakers, there was a conflict between prescription and practice. Many wealthier Jews seem to have been tempted by the customs of other faiths and displays of their own wealth and status, such as Samson Gideon who died in October 1762. The newspapers reported on his funeral:

Yesterday morning the remains of the late Samson Gideon, Esq; were brought to town from his seat called Belvidere in Kent to Pewterers Hall in Lime-street, from whence they were about eleven o'clock carried in another hearse drawn by six horses, hung with escutcheons, and followed by twelve coaches and fix, to the Jews burial-ground, Mile End, where they were interred with great funeral pomp and solemnity; according to the rites of the Jews. The orphans of the Jews charity-school sung before the corpse as it entered the burial-ground. The coffin was

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<sup>103</sup> Bar-Levav, 'Jewish Attitudes towards Death', p. 6.

<sup>104</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 133.

covered with black velvet, and the plate silver, with his name and age engraved thereon. He was in the 63<sup>rd</sup> year of his age.<sup>105</sup>

This tension between long-standing customs and contemporary practices reoccurs throughout the period.

Although a strong emphasis on the afterlife in Jewish belief was not prominent, the concept of *Tehi' at Ha Metim* (the resurrection of the dead) was basic doctrine.<sup>106</sup> Most Jews believed in the resurrection, although there were various interpretations of when and how it occurred. The Ashkenazi believed that, in their own terminology, *tehiyyat ha-metim* was the stage that would usher in the new post-historical age of *olam ha-ba* ('the world to come'). This had 'both spatial and temporal meanings'. When it occurred, God would raise the physical bodies of the dead and it was then that they would receive a punishment or a reward 'in a restored physical world'.<sup>107</sup> Jews who did not hold this or a similar belief would not have a share in the world to come.<sup>108</sup> Jews also believed in ghosts. Much like the Christian belief that shortly after a person's demise the dead could return, Jews too considered this a possibility. Some Jews believed in the possibility of a revenant that, 'comprised *actual* corporeal elements of the deceased, rather than a spiritual entity, such [as] a ghost, which may appear as a human being but is lacking any actual corporeal elements', as indeed did some Christians. This belief was not just held by uneducated 'superstitious folk' but also by the rabbinic elite.<sup>109</sup> Possibly this belief had its roots within the Torah and the story of Shaul HaMelech (King Saul) and the witch of Endor who summoned the recently deceased Shmuel HaNavi (Prophet Samuel) asking for help in

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<sup>105</sup> *London Evening Post* (London), October 23 - October 26, 1762; Issue 5455.

<sup>106</sup> Kadish, 'Jewish Funeral Architecture', p. 59.

<sup>107</sup> S. Shepkaru, 'From Here to the Hereafter: The Ashkenazi Concept of the Afterlife in a Crusading Milieu', in *Death in Jewish Life*, p. 51.

<sup>108</sup> Y. Y. Schur, 'When the Grave was Searched, the Bones of the Deceased were not Found': Corporeal Revenants in Medieval Ashkenaz', in *Death in Jewish Life*, p. 171.

<sup>109</sup> Schur, 'When the Grave was Searched', p. 174.



defeating the Philistines, an action that was prohibited (I Samuel 28). How widespread and continuous the belief in ghosts was awaits further study, but little rules such as the corpse's mouth having to be closed, for if they were left 'open' it invited death upon the community, seem to suggest there was an additional folkloric element to Jewish burial practices, potentially more pronounced than that of the Quakers and some other religious groups.<sup>110</sup> On *Hoshana Rabbah* night it was widely believed that the dead left their graves and drew together within the cemetery to pray for the mercy of the Jews.<sup>111</sup> The cemetery was therefore considered a meeting place between the dead and the living and not only this but a meeting place of ideas 'of spiritual, emotional, and aesthetic trends and conceptions' where the soul retained a connection to the corpse.<sup>112</sup>

A community was paramount to Jewish death, for they were needed to mourn properly and mark out days of remembrance.<sup>113</sup> Prayers for the dead were encouraged. The prayer book of graveyard liturgy, *Ma'ane Lashon*, that dates from 1615 Prague and has been widely translated including into English, shows the types of prayers that were used for the dead. These include 'request' prayers which asked for assistance and protection, and prayers that were offered to the dead, so the dead could assist the living in bearing children, their good health, and so on. Communications between the living and dead were also expressed in the form of eulogies and gravestones.<sup>114</sup> It was an honour to have a well-known and highly respected rabbi deliver a eulogy at a funeral and this practice very much came into its own in sixteenth-century Europe and was brought to seventeenth-century London.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Bar-Levav, "We Are Where We Are Not", p. 26.

<sup>111</sup> Seen in Bar-Levav, "We Are Where We Are Not", p. 26 with note: According to *Sefer Hasidim*, this was witnessed by two people who hid themselves in the graveyard that night; see no. 1543, p. 378.

<sup>112</sup> Bar-Levav, "We Are Where We Are Not", pp. 16, 24.

<sup>113</sup> Bar-Levav, 'Jewish Attitudes towards Death', p. 6.

<sup>114</sup> Bar-Levav, "We Are Where We Are Not", pp. 29-30.

<sup>115</sup> For the emergence of the eulogy in sixteenth century Italy see: E. Horowitz, 'Speaking of the Dead: The Emergence of the Eulogy among Italian Jewry of the Sixteenth Century', *Preachers of the*

For the Ashkenazi Jews, the *Sefer Hasidim*, or *Sefer Chassidim*, a text by Judah ben Samuel of Regensburg, which offers an account of the day-to-day religious life of Jews in medieval Germany, their customs, beliefs, and traditions, was an important source for conceptions relating to death. It contains the idea that the state of a corpse and the way a corpse was placed within the grave, its location relative to other graves, and the maintenance of the burial ground itself, all influenced the souls of the deceased.<sup>116</sup> To this end no grave was ever to be left empty, if it was dug too early 'either a chicken, or a living person, usually some pauper, was paid to sleep there', and if anyone other than the pauper was found in the cemetery at night it was cause for suspicion.<sup>117</sup> According to *halakhan* (orthodox Jewish law) it was forbidden to disturb the physical remains of the dead.<sup>118</sup> Those who visited a cemetery at night were suspected of doing this.

Jewish burial grounds were for Jews alone. They rarely allowed the interment of any non-Jews, especially over the seventeenth and eighteenth century. However, other Londoners who were not of Jewish origins but converted to Judaism were given Jewish burial rites and funerals and access to the grounds. There were certain amounts of suspicion around these types of conversions. Even as late as 1790 the *General Evening Post* reported: 'Tuesday, Mr. Vessel, of the Old Bailey. Though he lived a Christian, he died a Jew, and was buried on Thursday at their burying-ground, Mile-end'. *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* reported on Mr Vessel's death slightly differently writing: 'We have an account of a man lately, who lived a Christian, and died a Jew. His motive is supposed to have been to save the expenses of Christian burial'.<sup>119</sup> The writer of this second entry

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*Italian Ghetto* D. B. Ruderman, (ed.), (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 129-162, discussed in M. Saperstein, 'Education and Homiletics' J. Karp and A. Sutcliffe, (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism: Volume 7, The Early Modern World, 1500-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 429.

<sup>116</sup> Bar-Levav, 'Jewish Attitudes towards Death', p. 11.

<sup>117</sup> Bar-Levav, "We Are Where We Are Not", pp. 25, 35.

<sup>118</sup> Kadish, 'Jewish Funeral Architecture', p. 59.

<sup>119</sup> *General Evening Post* (London), September 4 - September 7, 1790; Issue 8892; *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (London), Tuesday, Sept. 14, 1790; Issue 19274.

evidently found the concept of conversion to Judaism hard to grasp therefore they attributed it to fiscal reasons.

The rituals around burying the Jewish dead have a long history. The dead were never to be left alone until burial took place and customs around the treatment of the corpse demonstrate the Jewish belief that bodies mattered. Tradition, even if occasionally it had to contend with the pull of more 'popular' customs, was held in high regard. The afterlife, resurrection, and ghosts, all held places within Jewish views on death, again these were rooted within ancient customs. When conversions to Judaism occurred, it could be viewed with suspicion from those outside the Jewish community, but converted Jews seem to have been treated the same in death as any other members of the community. The metropolis of London had no choice but to accommodate these ancient traditions within their landscape, and nowhere is this more evident than within Jewish burial grounds.

### Jewish Burial Grounds

Jewish burial grounds were a traditional part of Jewish life, but they were also not to distract from the everyday in any pronounced way. Bar-Levav wrote:

In Jewish culture there is a tension between two trends, one for which the cemetery is marginal and another for which it is central. In broad terms the marginality of the cemetery primarily represents an elitist trend, whereas its centrality is largely related to popular concepts.<sup>120</sup>

This was true of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century Jewish cemeteries in London, especially evident in the physical locations of the burial grounds.

The Jewish faith considers the dead impure and cemeteries were to be on the outskirts of the city, even if later they were swallowed by urban growth and

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<sup>120</sup> Bar-Levav, "We Are Where We Are Not", p. 17.

developments.<sup>121</sup> The London burial grounds were originally located beyond the built-up areas of the metropolis and were referred to by several names, *Bet Kevarot* ‘house of graves’, *Bet Hayim* ‘house of life’ or *Bet Olam* ‘house of eternity’.<sup>122</sup> These burial grounds differed in size, topography, and choice of location to those of other denominations in the metropolis, but also differed from each other contingent to their founding by either the Sephardi or Ashkenazi communities.

Prior to the readmission, the secretive small Jewish population of the earlier seventeenth century were probably buried within Roman Catholic grounds. Even after 1655 ‘of the individuals known to have been resident in England before 1659, only about one-third are buried in the first Jewish cemetery established after the readmission’.<sup>123</sup> Indeed in the first 27 years of the earliest Jewish burial ground, the Velho at Mile End, the numbers interred were very low (fig. 5.2).<sup>124</sup>

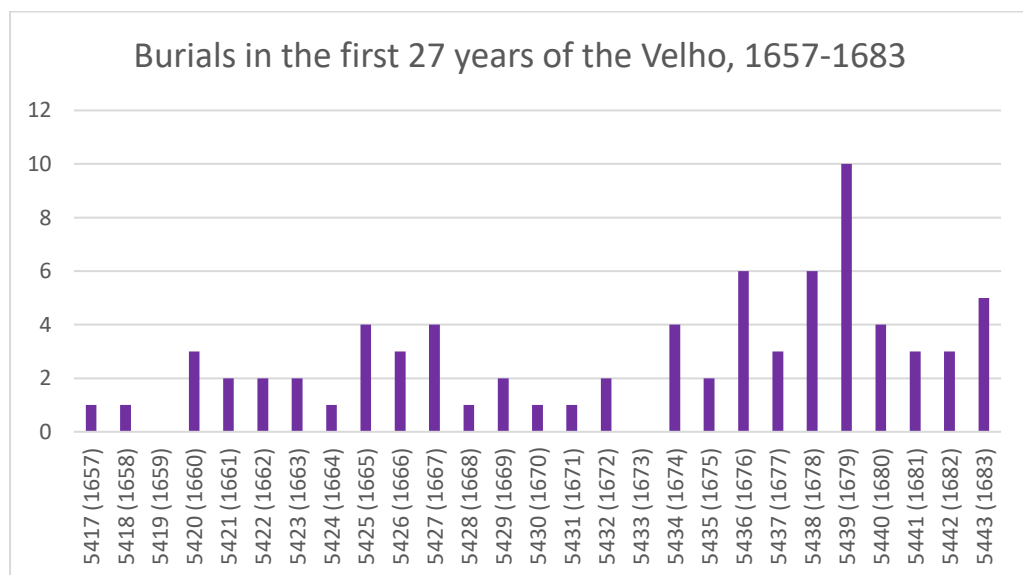


Figure 5.2. Data from Diamond, ‘The Cemetery of the Resettlement’, p. 181.

The Velho (meaning ‘old’), as the cemetery came to be known, was a Sephardic burial ground acquired in February 1657 by Antonio Fernandez Carvajal, the Portuguese

<sup>121</sup> Bar-Levav, ‘We Are Where We Are Not’, p. 18.

<sup>122</sup> Kadish, ‘Jewish Funeral Architecture’, p. 59.

<sup>123</sup> Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission*, p. 3; Barnett, ‘The Burial Register’, pp. 1-72.

<sup>124</sup> Data from Diamond, ‘The Cemetery of the Resettlement’, p. 181.

merchant mentioned earlier, and Simon de Cacaes, an Amsterdam-born merchant. It was located at Mile End (one mile from London) on part of the Manor of Steburn Heath (Stepney) where the Lord of the Manor was Richard Blackwell.<sup>125</sup> The Jewish community leased an old orchard next to an inn called 'The Soldier's Tenement' for an annual rent of ten pounds.<sup>126</sup> There are reasons for the extremely low figure of only 76 interments over the first 27 years of this cemetery's life, as seen in the figure above. Some of the Marranos (Christianised Jews) that had been in London prior to the readmission, although they became members of the Bevis Marks synagogue, were buried with their families in non-Jewish burial grounds.<sup>127</sup> If Marranos wanted to be buried in the Velho and were not circumcised, they had to seek approval from a council of community elders. If permission was granted their plots remained unmarked, and potentially unrecorded, situated near the walls away from the majority of the Jewish community interred there.<sup>128</sup> The burial rules for Marranos and the locations of their graves demonstrated a cultural rejection by the wider Jewish community. Marranos were considered renegades. Not only this but they also faced rejection by some Christians 'as Jews of impure blood'.<sup>129</sup> An internal marginalisation is evident, and it manifested in the physical separation of Marranos from the rest of the community's dead. Internal separations based on beliefs were not always the case though. The Ashkenazi Jews were permitted burial within the Velho until they established their own burial ground.<sup>130</sup> They were included alongside Sephardi Jews within the register and no internal marginalisation or distinction between the two, apart from their names, is apparent. Other individuals buried in this cemetery, about whom no records remain are

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<sup>125</sup> Diamond, 'The Cemetery of the Resettlement', p. 168.

<sup>126</sup> Bueno de Mesquita, 'The Historical Associations', p. 227; Diamond, 'The Cemetery of the Resettlement', p. 169; Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 9.

<sup>127</sup> C. Roth, *A History of the Jews in England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 141, discussed in Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 137.

<sup>128</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 137.

<sup>129</sup> Roth, *A History of the Jews*, p. 179. discussed in Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 137.

<sup>130</sup> B. Langham, 'Jewish Burial Grounds: Understanding Values' *Historic England*, (29 January 2016), p. 7.

some of the plague dead and children. It is possible that the plague allowed the Jewish community to deal with their dead with little to no interference from the parishes and broader governing bodies, much like it did the Quakers. Although no hard evidence for this is forthcoming, anything that lessened the pressure upon parish authorities and parish burial grounds would have been welcomed.

The burial registers show that only five tombstones were placed within the Velho prior to 1660.<sup>131</sup> One of these early tombstones belonged to Antonio Fernandez Carvajal. Carvajal had come to England from the Canary Islands sometime between 1630 and 1635 and resided in Leadenhall Street. He became an important merchant and owned his own fleet of ships.<sup>132</sup> Carvajal died in November 1659. In his will he wrote:

I doe Committ my Soule into the hands of my Creatour and my Bodie to be decentlie buried according to the discretion of my most deare and loving Wife Marie Fernandes Carvajall whom I doe hereby make nominate and appoynte full and sole Executrix of this my sole Will and Testement.<sup>133</sup>

A copy of the tombstone exists although the stone itself, except for a tiny fragment, has disappeared. The following is a translation of the epitaph:

The stone is witness, as also the heap  
To the honoured man who is buried here  
The good qualities which he made his own  
Will speak for him before the Most High.  
An open house he kept by the way,  
For he was generous to the needy and the poor.

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<sup>131</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 9.

<sup>132</sup> Bueno de Mesquita, 'The Historical Associations', pp. 228-229.

<sup>133</sup> TNA, PROB 11/296/118, Will of Anthony Fernandez Carvajall, Merchant of London.

His doings and his dealing with men were truth,  
Truth was familiar in his mouth, his words ever pure.  
Abraham Hhizqiah Carvajal,  
His memory is honoured, blessed with children.  
On Heshvan 26th. He was mown down  
In a ripe age, for his years were full.  
In the year 5420 his eyes were dim,  
But the eye of his soul rejoiced to see realms of bliss.

An epitaph was the written death of an individual and preserved the qualities that were revered within Jewish culture. They held commemorative function but also formed an aspect of Jewish communal memory.<sup>134</sup> Carvajal's wife survived him by forty-two years and was eventually buried beside him.<sup>135</sup> Carvajal inspired local respect both from within the Jewish community, but also from other Londoners. When he died the great bell of St Katharine Cree was rung in his honour and Samuel Pepys included information about him in a letter to Edward Montague from 3 December 1659.<sup>136</sup> 'Being this morning (for observation sake) at the Jewish Synagogue in London I heard many lamentations made by Portugal Jews for the death of Ferdinando the Merchant, who was lately cut (by the same hand as myself) of the Stone'.<sup>137</sup> Carvajal and his wife's tomb were restored in 1925 with a memorial plaque.<sup>138</sup>

Anglican church bells ringing for the Jewish dead was not uncommon and seems to demonstrate a level of local respect. Bells from Aldgate and along the Whitechapel Road

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<sup>134</sup> For more on communal memory see, R. L. Greenblatt, *To Tell Their Children: Jewish Communal Memory in Early Modern Prague* (Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).

<sup>135</sup> Bueno de Mesquita, 'The Historical Associations', p. 232.

<sup>136</sup> Katz, 'Carvajal, Antonio Fernandez ODNB.

<sup>137</sup> S. Pepys, 'Samuel Pepys to Edward Montague 3 Dec 1659', *The Letters of Samuel Pepys* G. De La Bédoyère, (ed.), (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009 edn.), p. 26.

<sup>138</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 135.

were rung as bodies were carried from the City to the burial ground on numerous occasions.<sup>139</sup> This bellringing and the inclusion within Anglican parish burial registers shows a more tolerant and respectful image of Jews than pamphlets and ballads would lead readers to expect.

The burial register for the Velho has more than 17,000 entries and some work has begun comparing this source to the remaining tombstones. It is from the tombstones that more information about the individuals is available. However, many tombstones are damaged due to their age, and some stones have disappeared completely. The Sephardi cemeteries, including the Velho, lay their tombstones flat, which causes them to receive rain damage in a different way to upright tombstones. The tombstones which were made of marble and limestone are mostly illegible. However recent work at the Velho has discovered that when the tombstones are wet the lettering is far more visible and a project of categorising the remaining stones is underway.<sup>140</sup> 'The earliest inscriptions that can be read are in Portuguese or Spanish and Hebrew; the later inscriptions are tri-lingual Portuguese or Spanish and Hebrew and English'.<sup>141</sup> The tombstone of Donna Esther Carvajal has an inscription in three languages – Hebrew, Spanish and English – in which she is described as 'The mirror of virtue and piety'.<sup>142</sup> Many of the legible tombstones are similar.

Ashkenazi cemeteries have upright tombstones. These too have been damaged by time, but many are still legible. The reasons for the difference in tombstone layout in Sephardi and Ashkenazi cemeteries have been attributed by some rabbis to a variety of ancient conventions. The first theory is that in Spain and Portugal, and hence in Sephardi cemeteries, 'the Church wanted to differentiate between Christian and Jewish burials, with

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<sup>139</sup> Glaser, *Judaism Without Jews*, p. 25.

<sup>140</sup> My gratitude to Barry Musikant (Chairman of S&P Disused Cemeteries) and Imogen Rush for long phone conversations about the history of the Velho and their plans for this project.

<sup>141</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 136.

<sup>142</sup> Bueno de Mesquita, 'The Historical Associations', p. 233.



Christian tombstones being upright'. The second theory is that horizontal tombstones 'symbolize that in death, all are equal, whether rich or poor'. Or, as the final theory surmises:

Sephardic Jews from Spain and Portugal originally placed their tombstones flat, from the time when Jewish cemeteries were sometimes located in swampy ground or areas subject to earthquakes. Lying the tombstone flat would help to keep the stone in place.<sup>143</sup>

Some prominent and richer members have larger monuments. For the Sephardi grounds this only occurs in newer grounds. In the Velho, all gravestones were the same level originally, including those of the hahams (fig. 5.3). However later additions to haham gravestones have caused them to appear raised, one such is evident in figure 5.3 and the example of Joshua de Silva's grave, figure 5.4.



*Figure 5.3.* The Velho as it appears today with its horizontal tombstones (author's photo).

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<sup>143</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 136.



Figure 5.4. Joshua de Silva's gravestones in the Velho (photo by Rabbi Shalom Morris).

Joshua da Silva became the first haham to be buried in the Velho in 1695.<sup>144</sup> As can be seen in the above image (fig. 5.4), de Silva's gravestone is legible due to a completely new slab having been placed over the original one, probably at some point in the nineteenth or early twentieth century. Other haham within this burial ground have also received this type of restoration work, sadly obscuring the original grave slabs. For example, Dr David Nieto, the Jewish theologian known for his published works in Spanish and Latin, who came to London in 1701 to serve as haham, has an inscription on his gravestone that reads: 'Haham Hashalem R Dr. David Nieto died 28 Tebet 5488 10th Jan 1728 aged 74' (fig. 5.5). There is an epitaph in Portuguese written by Dr Isaac de Sequeira Samuda the physician and poet. The English translation by Lionel D. Barnett reads:

Sublime theologian, profound sage, eminent physician, illustrious astronomer,  
sweet poet, eloquent preacher, subtle logician, ingenious scientist, fluent orator,

<sup>144</sup> Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, p. 226.

ready in tongues, famous in histories - since so much is here confined, in death a little earth holds what is much and little.<sup>145</sup>



Figure 5.5. Dr David Nieto tombstone at the Velho. It clearly has a new stone slab placed upon the original, (photo from findagrave.com).

The stones that have received these additions give the appearance that some gravestones were more important, however, at the point they were erected, all stones, whether that for a shopkeeper or a haham, would have appeared equal.

The Velho was extended in 1670 and again in 1684. A foundation stone was placed in the north wall when this latter extension occurred, on 21 Tamuz 5444 / 27 June 1684, and has upon it the names Ishac Barzilay, Aaron Levi Rizio, Parnasim of The Holy Congregation, Abraham Roiz Pinhel, Parnas of the Hebra, and David Israel Nunez, Administrator. These are some of the names of the early founders of the community. 'This stone is decorated with a winged cherub, described in the biblical tradition *'as attending to*

<sup>145</sup> Bueno de Mesquita, 'The Historical Associations', p. 247.

God'.<sup>146</sup> After the Velho was closed in 1733 there were still occasional interments for widows, widowers, and close relatives who had previously reserved plots.<sup>147</sup> The very last burial was in 1853 for haham Meldola and his wife.<sup>148</sup> By this point the Velho probably appeared quite different. It was situated behind Beth Holim Hospital (established 1792), and according to Isabella Holmes, it was turned into 'a sort of garden for the patients in the hospital, with trees in it, paths and seats'.<sup>149</sup> Here, although the cemetery was sacred and important, it was transformed at the end of the eighteenth century. This could possibly have been to financially assist in the maintenance of the ground.

The second cemetery established by the London Jews of the seventeenth century was the Alderney Road Ashkenazi cemetery acquired in 1696 by Benjamin Levy.<sup>150</sup> It was in use until 1852. Alderney Road was adjacent to the Velho but differed greatly in appearance due to its upright gravestones (fig. 5.6).

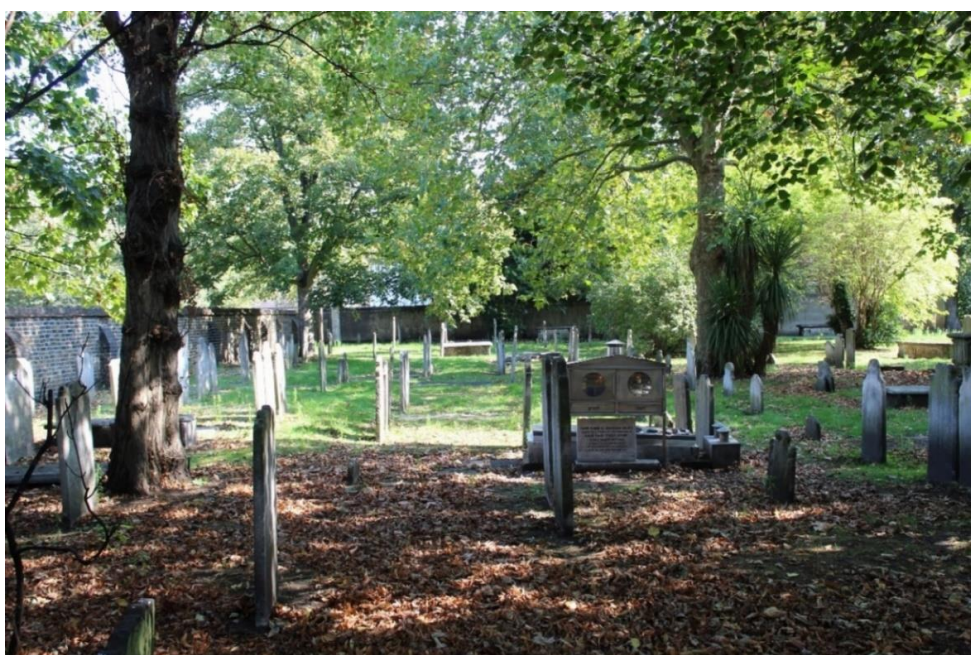


Figure 5.6. The Alderney Road cemetery (author's photo).

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<sup>146</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 136.

<sup>147</sup> Barnett, 'The Burial Registers', p. 2.

<sup>148</sup> Barnett, 'The Burial Registers', p. 3.

<sup>149</sup> I. Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds: Notes on Their History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1896), p. 159.

<sup>150</sup> Hyamson, *A History of the Jews*, p. 240.

The Alderney Road cemetery has received limited scholarly attention, but in 1996 Bernard Susser wrote about the ground for the Jewish Memorial Council. He claimed that this ground was created because 'The Sephardi authorities became anxious about the number of tudescos, as they called their Ashkenasi brethren, who were being buried in their cemetery, especially, perhaps, the number of poor dead who were a charge on their communal funds'.<sup>151</sup> A 999-year lease was purchased of this ground with a rent of £190 per annum. In the middle of the eighteenth century a further plot immediately adjacent to this original ground was purchased. 'This was in Three Colt Yard which subsequently became Colt Yard and eventually, the present name, Alderney Road'.<sup>152</sup> As can be seen in the Greenwood map (fig. 5.7) this cemetery had an unusual layout. There were three sections to the cemetery by the time this map was produced. The original area which was initially very small and bordered the Velho, and the extensions purchased in 1749, fronting onto Alderney Road. 'This additional land gives the cemetery an unusual shape, with the old and later plots narrowly joined at one corner and a path enabling one to walk from one side to the other'.<sup>153</sup> Therefore the layout of this ground is unique, and each section appears slightly different. The oldest section has graves orientated north-south and the later section orientates the graves east-west.

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<sup>151</sup> B. Susser 'Inscriptions in the Alderney Road, London E1 Cemetery 1697-1853' *Studies in Anglo-Jewish history (in Association with the Working party on Jewish Monuments in the UK & Ireland & The United Synagogue, London)* No. 5, 1996, p. 5.

<sup>152</sup> Susser 'Inscriptions in the Alderney Road', p. 6.

<sup>153</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 140.



Figure 5.7. C. and J. Greenwood Map 1828. In the map five separate Jewish burial grounds are visible. On the far left up from the Whitechapel Road is the Brady Street burial ground on what was then Upper North Street. The two on the near right are the Velho and the Alderney Road cemetery, the larger one on the right is the Novo cemetery, the one further up on East Street is an early nineteenth-century ground known as the Bancroft Road cemetery, it opened in 1810.

Benjamin Levy, who originally leased the ground was buried there in June 1704 next to his second wife. No record of their exact grave location remains.<sup>154</sup> His will survives, and its contents attest to his wealth and again demonstrate a trust placed on the Jewish community to bury him in line with their ancient traditions. It states:

my body I commit to the Earth to be decently buried at the discretion of my Executors herein after named according to the Jewish Rites and Ceremonyes And as for such temporall Estate as it hath pleased to blesse me with in this World my Debts and funeral expenses being thereout first paid and discharged...<sup>155</sup>

An entry of Levy's death was included in his local parish's burial register, St Katherine, Coleman. The simple entry reads: 'June 14 Benjamin Levey a Jew Broker'.<sup>156</sup>

The Alderney Road ground holds around 4,000 graves roughly 40% of which are the graves of children.<sup>157</sup> An original cemetery keeper's house still stands on the site. Much like the nearby Velho many gravestones have been damaged and are no longer entirely legible.<sup>158</sup> The earliest inscription that can be read is that of Joseph D'Azevedo – which is a Sephardi name not an Ashkenazi one – it dates from 1705.<sup>159</sup> Why a Sephardi Jew was buried within this ground and not the adjacent Velho remains unknown. The gravestones that are easiest to read are those made of granite, a stone which only the wealthier Jews could afford. This ground also has several identifiable family plots.<sup>160</sup>

Notable interments within the Alderney Road ground include Moses Hard who died in 1756 and had financed a large part of the original Great Synagogue's construction, Rabbi Aaron Hart, the first chief rabbi who served the London congregation between 1709 and

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<sup>154</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 140.

<sup>155</sup> TNA, PROB 11/477/227, Will of Benjamin Levy, Broker of London.

<sup>156</sup> LMA, P69/KAT1/A/002/MS017833.

<sup>157</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 140.

<sup>158</sup> Susser 'Inscriptions in the Alderney Road', p. 8; Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 140.

<sup>159</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 143.

<sup>160</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 138.

1756, and Rabbi David Tevele Schiff the second Chief rabbi who served 1756-1791. It also contains the remains of Rabbi Hayyim Samuel Jacob de Falk who died in 1782. His tomb is still visited by his followers and remains a controversial site of pilgrimage. Hayyim Samuel Jacob Falk ran his own private synagogue in Wellclose Square and ‘a kind of magical- alchemical laboratory on London Bridge’. He attracted attention beyond the Jewish community and was known for his bizarre life, occult activities, and the many visitors he received which ranged from Christian freemasons to kings and princes from across Europe. He demonstrated, according to David B. Ruderman, ‘how a mere Jewish magician and charlatan could make a greater impression in his time than his more sober and conventional Jewish contemporaries’.<sup>161</sup> He was certainly a known figure of eighteenth-century London, but arguably some of the earlier merchants also left a great impression upon their contemporaries. Falk had a tomb monument erected over his remains (fig. 5.8).



*Figure 5.8.* Tomb of Hayyim Samuel Jacob Falk (author's photo).

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<sup>161</sup> D. B. Ruderman, 'Falk, Samuel Jacob Hayyim (c. 1710–1782), alchemist' *ODNB* September 23, 2004. <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-59411> [accessed, 27 Aug. 2020].



Tomb monument graves are not found in the Velho but there is a collection of them in the Alderney Road cemetery. The Ashkenazi Jews seemed to accept them more readily within their burial grounds and they were normally for the wealthiest and most prominent members of the community.

In 1707 a small cemetery was established in Hoxton for the Hambro' Synagogue, Fenchurch Street. The ground was purchased by one Marcus Moses on 25 March under 150-year lease costing 10 shillings a year. Unfortunately, it does not appear to have been recorded on either the Greenwood or Rocque's map of London. The cemetery closed in 1878. It was described in 1896 by Holmes: 'There is no grass, but many tombstones, and some one is sent four times a year to clear away the weeds, &c. It is not a tidy ground'.<sup>162</sup> In 1960 The London County Council bought the land. Despite early twentieth-century pleas within *The Jewish Chronicle* (the oldest Jewish newspaper in the world) that if 'a few experts combined to make a thorough study of the Hoxton ground, they could probably recover a good deal of information that will presently be lost utterly', the ground fell into decay.<sup>163</sup> On the 18 July 1958, the same paper ran a story about how the site was about to be sold. In this issue is one of the few descriptions of the burial ground. It was described as having an entry through 'a plain green-painted door'. The writer continued to describe the cemetery as peaceful where 'Birch and fig trees grow amid the 500 graves', and a pathway weaved around the illegible tombstones. On the east side wall there was a plaque which stated: 'This wall was newly repaired May 30, 1781. Joseph Gompertz, Abraham Hart, governors and Rubin Salomon, treasurer'.<sup>164</sup> The few remaining tombstones and individuals interred in this burial ground were transferred to West Ham cemetery. The reinterments were in unmarked graves and the tombstones were laid flat along the main path.

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<sup>162</sup> Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds*, Appendix A, 98.

<sup>163</sup> *The Jewish Chronicle* December 4, 1908, p. 8.

<sup>164</sup> *The Jewish Chronicle* Jul 18, 1958, p. 5.

In 1733 the Nuevo/Novo (new) cemetery was established by the Sephardi Jews. It was located to the east of the Velho and was enlarged eastward in 1849-53 to the size of three acres, (fig. 5.9). The site originally contained 10,300 graves, 40% were of children, and the cemetery still contains around 2,000 graves.<sup>165</sup>



Figure 5.9. John Rocque's Map of London 1746. The Novo Cemetery with the Velho and Alderney Road Cemeteries on the left.

The Novo cemetery formally closed for burials for adults in 1905 and in 1918 for children. In 1941 bombs destroyed parts of the cemetery and in 1972 the land was sold to Queen Mary University of London. One last burial occurred in 1974. It was for John Gervase Lang who worked at Beth Holim. He died aged 93 and was buried beside his father. What is visible today at Queen Mary is the newer graves dating from 1855. The older sections were cleared, and 7,000 graves moved to Brentwood in Essex. The Novo cemetery was Grade II listed in 2014.<sup>166</sup>

<sup>165</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 138.

<sup>166</sup> Langham, 'Jewish Burial Grounds', p. 26; Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, pp. 139-140.

Unlike the Velho many of the tombstones in the Novo cemetery have inscriptions in Hebrew and English sometimes without Hebrew dates and longer epitaphs are also in use. Sadly, the oldest tombstones were, according to *The Jewish Chronicle*, crushed and buried near the remaining part of the cemetery when the works for Queen Mary were undertaken.<sup>167</sup> All grave rows ran north west to south east, in neat lines that were parallel to the Mile End Old Town Road. Holmes described it as 'bare of trees or shrubs, but is divided into plots, with paths between'. She goes on to note that 'there are many children's graves, marked by much smaller altar tombs dotted amongst the large ones, which are very unique and interesting'.<sup>168</sup> The physical topography of the two Sephardi cemeteries was markedly different to Anglican burial grounds and Ashkenazi grounds. From a distance Ashkenazi grounds could be mistaken for Church of England cemeteries but up close there were some key differences including the detailed tombstones and the orientations of the graves.

A second Ashkenazi cemetery was established on 4 June 1761 on land acquired by the New Synagogue. This became known as the Brady Street cemetery. The ground was obtained on a 95-year lease for an annual rent of £12 12 shillings. Described as a,

certain brick field situate on the north side of Whitechapel Road between the

Ducking pond there and Bethnal Green Church in the Parish of St Mary,

Whitechapel, to be used as a burial ground containing ... one acre, more or less.

It was extended in 1780 and enclosed with a wall costing £450. The ground housed 3,000 tombstones many of which were from the eighteenth century. 'It is chiefly remarkable for

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<sup>167</sup> *The Jewish Chronicle* August 30, 1996, p. 13; *The Jewish Chronicle* October 18, 1996, p. 8.

<sup>168</sup> Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds*, pp. 159-160.

the large mound in the centre which contains multiple layered burials, the only example of this practice in a Jewish cemetery in Britain' (fig. 5.10).<sup>169</sup>



Figure 5.10. The central mound at the Brady Street Cemetery as it appears today (author's photo).

Holmes wrote of this ground: 'there are walls running through it, and the southern half is higher than the northern half, having quite a hilly appearance'. Holmes goes on to say: 'This half of the ground was originally allotted to "strangers," Jews who belonged to no special congregation'. This ground was also used over, it was levelled, and 4 feet of earth separate each grave.<sup>170</sup> There are, therefore, cases where two gravestones stand back-to-back (fig. 5.11), and the ground appears more cramped than other early Jewish burial grounds (fig. 5.12).

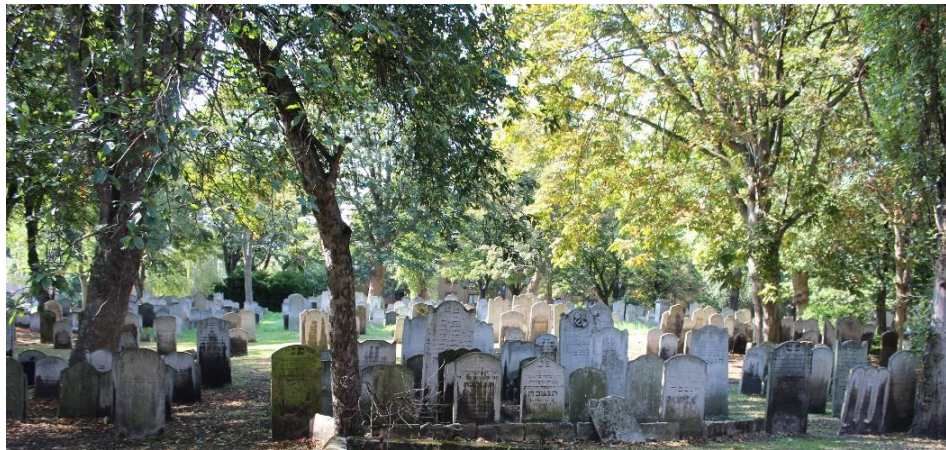
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<sup>169</sup> Kadish, 'Jewish Funeral Architecture', p. 61 from a description of the site noted as LMA, Acc/2712/GTS/337/1, although this now appears inaccurate; Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds*, p. 157.

<sup>170</sup> Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds*, pp. 156-157; Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 144.



*Figure 5.11.* Example of gravestones back-to-back in the Brady Street cemetery (author's photo).



*Figure 5.12.* The density of graves at the Brady Street cemetery (author's photo).

By 1800 this ground was used by both the New Synagogue and the Great Synagogue. It closed in 1858 although special permission was granted for one final burial in 1990 (Nathan Victor 3<sup>rd</sup> Baron Rothschild) which protected the burial ground from destruction for 100 years.



Figure 5.13. Right hand corner of John Rocque's Map of London 1746. The locations of the Jewish burial grounds mentioned so far are circled. At the top, just off the map, is the Hoxton ground, the larger of the two circles on the east encompasses the Novo, while the smaller one beside it is the Alderney Road and Velho grounds and the circle further in is the Brady Street ground, the synagogues are also marked.

The locations of the grounds mentioned above were concentrated to the east and north of the expanding metropolis, (fig. 5.13). There is one last late eighteenth-century Jewish burial ground that deserves a brief mention. The Lauriston Road cemetery (formally Grove Street) which was opened in 1788 and closed in 1886. It originally belonged to the Hambro Synagogue. It was situated slightly to the east and then north of the Novo cemetery, in Hackney. This was the final Jewish cemetery of the eighteenth century.

Certain rules were adhered to in all Jewish cemeteries. They were not to become overcrowded.<sup>171</sup> All the grounds had resident caretakers. No paths ran through the cemeteries, just small tracks, like sheep tracks between graves.<sup>172</sup> In the Velho what looks like paths are not, they are either full of the 'Angelitos' in every second row, or the plague dead. No food nor drink was to be consumed within a burial ground, nor was it permitted to step on or over a grave. Every cemetery was equipped with a wash basin near the

<sup>171</sup> Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds*, p. 156.

<sup>172</sup> Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds*, p. 159.

entrance/exit as it was, and still is, customary for any visitors to wash their hands after a visit and leave them to air dry so as not to 'wipe away' memories of the deceased.<sup>173</sup>

As this survey of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century Jewish burial grounds of London has shown, the physical marginality of their location does not detract from their importance. A cemetery was crucial to Jewish beliefs although it was outside of everyday life, hence marginalised both physically and socially. Having a burial ground did not mean that all Jews were buried within it. Unlike the Quakers who refused to be buried within any other ground, early Jews appear to have accepted interments within other grounds. Internal marginalisation within a Jewish burial ground can be seen in their treatment of Marranos, the poor, and the plague dead, although the latter may have allowed them, like the Quakers, to establish their own burial grounds and carry out their own burial practices with little opposition from the wider community. Children were also treated differently within Jewish burial grounds and a wealth divide is evident, especially in the later grounds despite prescription to the contrary. There are physical differences between Ashkenazi and Sephardi burial grounds but for both tombstones were important, more so than for any of the other groups examined within this thesis. Over the eighteenth century there were an increasing number of Jewish cemeteries, some eventually fell into disuse and were neglected, and reinternments were eventually allowed, something which went against official Jewish doctrine that declared the dead should not be disturbed. Here the disconnect between prescription and practice is apparent, something that occurs again when examining Jewish funeral and burial rituals.

### Jewish Funerals and Burials

It was not just Jewish views on death nor Jewish burial grounds that set early modern Jews apart. Their funeral and burial practices were markedly different from those of their

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<sup>173</sup> Langham, 'Jewish Burial Grounds', p. 6.

contemporaries. Specific rituals were carried out for each deceased individual, and strict rubrics governed funerals, adornment of graves, and the mourning period. All these practices were grounded in the rhetoric of tradition.

The immediate aftermath of a death has been mentioned in the section on Jewish views about death. Following those practices bodies were ritually washed, a practice called the *taharah* which was carried out by volunteers from the *Chevra Kadisha*. Bodies had to be cleansed of dirt, bodily fluids, solids, and anything else which may have been upon the skin. The body was then ritually purified by either a continuous flow of water from the head over the body, or wholly immersed within water. The *taharah* may refer to either the entire process, or to the ritual purification. When these rituals were complete the body was dressed in a *tachrichim*, or shroud. These were to be white and made of linen or muslin. Men could also be buried with their *tallith* (the fringed shawl traditionally worn by men at prayer).<sup>174</sup>

The *Chevra Kadisha* who prepared the body after death date from the early modern period. The earliest mention of this organisation in its recognisable modern form is from Prague in 1564. Being a member of the *Chevra Kadisha* was considered a great honour and tended to be a role taken on by the more prominent members of the community. 'Initially there were three classes within the burial society: (1) leaders of officers; (2) an interim class; (3) 'mlatch' – apprentices', they all had verbal and practical tasks.<sup>175</sup> Members of the organisation would first learn through observation, then work as apprentices, and only when they were older would they be allowed to wash the bodies, dig graves, and help the family and broader community with the correct rules for the mourning period. Unlike all the previous groups discussed, it was not family nor friends that

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<sup>174</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 133.

<sup>175</sup> Bar-Levav, 'Jewish Attitudes towards Death', p. 12.



controlled the stages before interment, but an elected body of individuals who may have had no personal connection to the deceased. After the *Chevra Kadisha* had completed their part in preparing the dead a funeral followed.

Levayah or Levaya was the term used for the funeral. Funeral services were generally held in a small building on the cemetery grounds, not in the synagogues, and occurred immediately prior to interments. This small chapel or prayer hall was called an *ohel* (literally meaning a tent) and was often combined with the *Bet Tohorah* ('house of purification'), the location where a body was washed and prepared prior to burial. The *Bet Tohorah* had the water supply used for the purification rituals. During the early modern period this was a well. They also housed a fireplace to heat the water and were the location where 'watchers' from the *Chevra Kadishah* stayed with the body until the funeral.<sup>176</sup> No *ohels* remain intact from the eighteenth century or earlier in England although one in Amsterdam from 1705 allows a glimpse into how they functioned.<sup>177</sup> The 1780 *ohel*, near the entrance of the Brady Street cemetery is shown on the 1871 Ordnance Survey Map in the *Gazetteer*.<sup>178</sup> Removing the deceased from their houses immediately after a death and placing them within a cemetery until their interments again reinforced the belief that the dead were impure.

Bodies were interred six feet down, one in each grave and no intercut nor stacked burials were permitted, although in the Brady Street cemetery this rule was clearly broken.<sup>179</sup> By the end of the eighteenth century the Jewish communities of London were eventually buried with an east-west orientation like Christian burials. In 1688 the New England Puritan lawyer and judge Samuel Sewall noted of his visit to the Sephardic burial ground in Mile End that, 'Some bodies were laide East and West, but now all are ordered to

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<sup>176</sup> Kadish, 'Jewish Funeral Architecture', p. 65; Langham, 'Jewish Burial Grounds', p. 5.

<sup>177</sup> Kadish, 'Jewish Funeral Architecture', pp. 65-67.

<sup>178</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, pp. 144-145.

<sup>179</sup> Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds*, p. 156.

be laid North and South'.<sup>180</sup> The orientation of graves does not appear to have been of great concern, but each cemetery was uniform in its chosen orientation, whether north-south, east-west, or something in between. The neat burial rows found in Jewish cemeteries were almost the inverse of the Quakers haphazard and deeply intercut burial grounds.

After a funeral and burial, those in attendance were required to act in a specific way. A seventeenth-century treatise explains this behaviour:

By the way some one of them stooping three times backward, pulls the grass from the earth, and with his hands lifting it up above his head, casts it behind him, hereby signifying that the dead shall rise again, and once more sprout out of the earth like unto grass; as the Prophet saith, *You shall see it, and your heart shall rejoice, Your bones shall flourish as the herbe*. Others say, that by this ceremony man is put into minde how he is dust and ashes.<sup>181</sup>

The cemetery's role as a place of tradition yet one that was marginal to everyday life within Jewish communities was played out in these funeral rituals. The pulling of grass and the washing of hands when exiting the cemetery seem to demonstrate the end point of the funeral and burial, the moment when everyday life is returned to.

There were, of course, additional tasks after a burial that needed to be carried out. Tombstones were to be erected over each grave. Tombstones were a prominent part of Jewish burial grounds. They have a long history as the medieval tombstones that were found reused in other London buildings attest to. For both the Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews tombstones were meant to be kept simple.<sup>182</sup> They do occasionally have motifs on

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<sup>180</sup> Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead*, p. 295 from S. Sewall, *Diary 1674-1729* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1878-1882), Vol. 1, p. 301.

<sup>181</sup> B. and A., *The Jewish synagogue*, p. 308.

<sup>182</sup> Kadish, 'Jewish Funeral Architecture', p. 67.

them. In Ashkenazi cemeteries many have a ‘representation of two outstretched hands with the thumbs joining, the symbol of descendants of Aaron, the High Priest’, and these individuals are nearly all given the title of Cohen (the descendants of the Biblical priestly tribe). These Cohens’ graves are sometimes found near the walls of a cemetery, although this is not a strict rule, especially in London (fig. 5.14).



*Figure 5.14.* Left, a Cohen gravestone in Alderney Road, early eighteenth century. Right, a Cohen gravestone in Brady Street, late eighteenth or early nineteenth-century. Note the increase in size of the later stone and English inscription (author’s photos).

Other graves have the motif of a hand pouring water out of a flagon and are over the graves of the Levites (those given the title Levy) whose duty in the synagogue was to pour water upon the hands of the Priests (the above-mentioned descendants of Aaron). Open hands and candlesticks denote the grave of ‘a pious woman who lights sabbath candles’, flocks of sheep, although rare, appear occasionally and recall ‘a key prayer in the High Holy day liturgy’; one can be found at the Brady Street burial ground dating from 1761. Other reliefs could relate to the name of the deceased, i.e., ‘a lion for Leib (Yiddish), Yehudah or Aryeh (Hebrew); a deer for Hirsch (Yiddish), Tsvi or Naftaili (Hebrew); a bear for

Dov Ber (Yiddish) or Issachar (Hebrew); a wolf for Volf (Yiddish), Ze'ev or Benjamin (Hebrew)'. Common women's names could also be tied to their motifs, such as 'Feigel, 'Bird' (Yiddish), Tsipora (Hebrew), Reizel, 'Rose' or Bluma, 'Flower' (Yiddish)', however, these are rare in Britain.<sup>183</sup> Flowers were also used as motifs for unmarried girls. Images of cut trees are quite common and mean a life cut short. They are found in both the Alderney Road and Brady Street grounds. These motifs show the well-established pan-European Jewish burial culture, and the importance of tradition. There are also some non-Jewish motifs on tombstones, such as drapery and hour glasses, which are typical of contemporary Christian cemeteries.<sup>184</sup> A skull and crossbones on a tombstone was claimed by Kadish as unique to British Jewish cemeteries where it 'reflects the assimilation of the elite of eighteenth-century London Jewry to the prevailing fashions of the day'.<sup>185</sup> However, skulls and crossbones appear in European Jewish burial grounds too, the most notable example being in Beth Haim of Ouderkerk aan de Amstel in the Netherlands established in 1614. There are at least four stone panel carvings of skulls and crossbones, probably from tombs, propped up on the north rear wall of the Velho (fig. 5.15).



Figure 5.15. One of the skulls motifs in the Velho dating between 1657-1733 (author's photo).

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<sup>183</sup> Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds*, pp. 157-158; Kadish, 'Jewish Funeral Architecture', p. 68.

<sup>184</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 142.

<sup>185</sup> Kadish, 'Jewish Funeral Architecture', p. 69.

Other examples of skulls in the London grounds are found in the Alderney Road cemetery (figs. 5.16 and 5.17).



*Figure 5.16.* A skull motif at Alderney Road dating between 1690 and c.1760 (author's photo).



*Figure 5.17.* Skulls on tomb monuments at Alderney Road dating between 1690 and c.1760 (author's photo).

The grave of Benjamin or Simon Francia, a junior London merchant who died in 1689 has a tombstone at Alderney Road that bares the family coat of arms alongside a skull

and crossbones, and a crossed spade and pickaxe.<sup>186</sup> He received an entry in the parish register of St Andrew, Undershaft: 'Mr Symon France was Buried at the Jewes Buriall place on the first day of July'.<sup>187</sup> These and other examples walk a fine line as it was against Jewish conventions to have human motifs on funeral imagery and skulls represent humans. Marks has hypothesised that 'these could have been carved by non-Jewish monumental masons'.<sup>188</sup> However they could purely have been down to personal requests, or an assimilation of local customs. There are no skulls in Brady Street nor other later cemeteries, therefore it seems to have only been fashionable in the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century.

Some tombstones have been noted as similar in design which Marks suggests is because 'families of the deceased purchased stones from monumental masons that were pre-designed or in stock, and then the stone mason would add the name of the deceased with an individual dedication'.<sup>189</sup> Some tombstones have eastern European motifs carved upon them, especially in the Ashkenazi cemeteries, for example an open book denoting a learned man. Occasionally tombstones hint at the origins of the deceased and their family connections across Europe.<sup>190</sup> Jewish individuals visiting a cemetery during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries would recognise many of the traditional aspects at play and understand the motifs upon each tombstone. Tombstones were a customary part of Jewish identity for everyone other than the poor and children (although by the nineteenth century children began to receive tombstones too), and important to their burial practices, more so than among the other marginal dead examined.

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<sup>186</sup> Bueno de Mesquita, 'The Historical Associations', pp. 237-238.

<sup>187</sup> LMA, P69/AND4/A/001/MS04107/002.

<sup>188</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 137.

<sup>189</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, pp. 142-143.

<sup>190</sup> Susser 'Inscriptions in the Alderney Road', p. 8; Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 143.

The reason for so few burial records in the early years of the Velho has been attributed to a lack of recording the burials of children and infants. It is only from 1708 that a list of 'Angelitos' is included. There was high infant mortality and burial space was precious hence infants and children were not given six-foot graves nor gravestones. 'They were buried in rows of three-foot graves, closely packed, about 82 to a row'. Between 1708 and 1734, 631 Angelitos are recorded as buried in the Velho, alongside 693 named graves over the same period. Therefore, they form 48% of the total average burials each year.<sup>191</sup> It is clear there may have been many earlier unrecorded burials too. Some of the poorer Jews of both the Sephardi and Ashkenazi communities were potentially buried in unmarked and unrecorded graves and possibly not even within Jewish cemeteries 'as the estimated Jews of the period cannot be reconciled with the number and size of known burial grounds in the period'.<sup>192</sup>

After a funeral, burial, and while awaiting the assembly of a tombstone, well-developed mourning rituals following a particular time frame – beginning with an individual's death, and through the funeral, and interment – were carried out. These were already established before the Jews returned to England.<sup>193</sup> Jewish women had a reputation as professional 'criers' and it was reported in England prior to the readmittance that the Greeks hired Jews to attend and cry at their funerals.<sup>194</sup> Evidence of this tradition is not forthcoming for the English Jews of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, but other rituals were followed. Male and female roles differed during the mourning period. No pregnant women were to visit graves and their mourning was to be outside the cemetery.<sup>195</sup> Men in mourning were only to eat with other men and women with other

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<sup>191</sup> Diamond, 'The Cemetery of the Resettlement', p. 184.

<sup>192</sup> Marks, *The Archaeology of Anglo-Jewry*, p. 133.

<sup>193</sup> Bar-Levav, "We Are Where We Are Not", p. 19.

<sup>194</sup> Holmberg, *Jews in the Early Modern English Imagination*, p. 97.

<sup>195</sup> Bar-Levav, "We Are Where We Are Not", p. 26.

women; they also could not eat their own food and instead received food from the community.<sup>196</sup> A lamp ought to burn for seven days to honour the soul of the deceased.<sup>197</sup> The structure of mourning being such an important part of traditional Jewish practice for the dead and following such strict rules differentiated this aspect of the treatment of the dead from their Protestant neighbours and other religious groups.

*Aninut* was the pre-burial mourning period, *Shivah* the seven-day period following burial; within the *shivah* the first three days were characterised by a more intense degree of mourning. *Shloshim*, was the 30-day mourning period. Next came The First Year, observed only by the children of the deceased.<sup>198</sup> Excessive grave visitation was discouraged, but the dead were not to be forgotten. They could be visited on days of personal calamity or decisive incidents and calendar days including the *yahrzeit*, the concluding day of *shivah* and *shloshim*, fast days, *Tishah be-Av*, before the High Holy Days, and the *erev* (eve) of *Rosh Chodesh*, along with the day prior to the first days of the month, especially the months of *Nisan* (first month of Spring) and *Elul* (roughly August/September time).<sup>199</sup> There was a model for proper mourning and this was far more important than ideas around a 'good death' which held sway over other Londoners.

Jewish funeral, burial, and mourning customs followed pan-European traditions that had been long established and were clearly distinct from the practices carried out by other religious groups within the metropolis. However, despite the difference in practices and emphasis on tradition, as was observed with all the marginal dead discussed in this thesis, there were occasional contentions between theory and practice. This was especially

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<sup>196</sup> A. B. and M. A., *The Jewish synagogue*, p. 309.

<sup>197</sup> A. B. and M. A., *The Jewish synagogue*, p. 310.

<sup>198</sup> Langham, 'Jewish Burial Grounds', p. 5.

<sup>199</sup> M. Lamm, *The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning* (New York: Jonathan David Publishers Inc, 2<sup>nd</sup> Revised edition, 2000) p. 194; Langham, 'Jewish Burial Grounds', p. 5.



apparent in the wealth divide. The dead were not supposed to be differentiated by wealth, but newspaper reports constantly highlighted this. One report from 1736 states:

Yesterday was brought to Town, and interr'd in the Jews Burial-Ground at Mile-End, in the Forenoon, according to the Custom of those People, the Corpse of Mr. Franks, a Merchant, who died so immensely rich last Week at the Bath. It was the longest Cavalcade that has been known at the Funeral of a private Gentleman, there being above 70 Coaches attending the Procession.

Another paper noted specifically that Franks 'tis said worth 300,000 l.'<sup>200</sup> The funerals of these wealthier individuals certainly appear more lavish than those of the middling and poorer sorts. In 1777 the newspaper ran the following story on the death of another rich Jew:

The noted Franco, the rich Jew merchant, who died a few days since at Clapton, in Middlesex, and there interred, aged 96, was no less singular at the point of death, than in the former part of his life, having lived in a very whimsical manner. About 25 years ago he made a journey to the Holy Land, in Jerusalem, at a vast expence, where he procured a great number of antiques; he also brought home with him a commodity something resembling linen, in quantity thirty-six yards, to be used at his funeral, which he directed in his will should be wrapped around his corpse, and in which he was to be interred without a coffin, or any other covering, in a grave dug in a direction from north to south, 15 feet deep. He left an immense fortune (not having any relations) to some Rabbi's and Priests of the Jewish persuasion, and invested in the hands of trustees a large sum of money for the purchase of ground, whereon to erect and maintain a synagogue. A prodigious number of Jews

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<sup>200</sup> *London Evening Post* (London), October 30 - November 2, 1736; Issue 1398; *London Daily Post and General Advertiser* (London), Tuesday, Nov. 2, 1736; Issue 626.

attended the funeral, and a grand monument is preparing by an eminent artist, to be placed over his remains.<sup>201</sup>

This detailed newspaper entry shows several things that have been touched upon earlier in this chapter. The man's great wealth is noted, as is his wish to have a grand monument erected over his remains, and this latter point goes against earlier assertions that all were equal in death and all gravestones should be uniform. He also had clearly been thinking upon his death and preparing for it through his procurement of linen from the holy land for his funeral. His request for a north-south burial is odd as most burials were east-west by this point, while the mere fact he outlined wishes for his funeral in his will show an assimilation of local customs that were removed from Jewish tradition. Prescription and practice are at odds in his case.

While some of these more eminent Jews were treated fairly and even respectfully by other Londoners, at the other end of the social spectrum the Jewish hawkers and peddlers of the metropolis were often treated negatively. Jewish hawkers and peddlers were identified with certain trades in particular goods. Oranges, lemons, spectacles, costume-jewellery, sponges, dried rhubarb, lead pencils, inexpensive framed pictures, and to a lesser extent, slippers, cakes and candies, glassware, sealing wax, belt buckles, and buttons were all common along with the 'Jew watches'. But by far the most common trade these itinerant Jews followed was the buying and selling of old clothes and in London they held a monopoly on the Rag Fair.<sup>202</sup> They also garnered an ill reputation for passing bad coin.<sup>203</sup> The older stereotypical images of Jews were firmly placed upon these itinerants. They appeared in ballads having a less than savoury reputation. One ballad begins with the telling line, 'A peddling Jew gets often jeer'd', which is revealing of how they were

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<sup>201</sup> *General Evening Post* (London), August 7 - August 9, 1777; Issue 6804.

<sup>202</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>203</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, p. 45.

perceived.<sup>204</sup> Itinerant Jews were frequently reported on within newspapers, and this coverage included information about their deaths. In 1778 the papers reported that: 'Tuesday morning a travelling Jew was found dead on Dulwich-common, by two gentlemen who were going a partridge-shooting; his box containing watches, buckles, &c. was slung to his back, and it is supposed he expired in a fit'.<sup>205</sup> Likewise in 1799:

A travelling Jew was found dead on Wednesday last in a barn near Enfield, where he had literally taken shelter from the pursuit of the country people, to whom he had sold razor-cases without razors, &c. and from one man near Tottenham he had contrived to steal both razors and case after he had sold them!<sup>206</sup>

The end of the eighteenth century saw many similar entries in newspapers. The congregation probably took care of the burial costs for these itinerant Jews much as they did for the poor.

As explained in the chapter on criminals. Jews encountered the criminal courts and the scaffold with some frequency. Jews were granted permission to swear on the Hebrew bible in court, showing the favour they held from the crown.<sup>207</sup> After execution Jewish criminals were taken by the community and buried in the grounds in Mile End. Although there may have been an internal marginalisation within the burial grounds related to exact interment locations, the Jewish community did take care of their own.

Rarely does outright hostility towards Jewish burial practices appear in the sources from this period. There was a case at the end of the eighteenth century when a mob 'insulted [sic] and otherwise ill used' a group of Jews while they were at a funeral, causing the wall of the burial ground to give way due to people climbing on it. This collapse

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<sup>204</sup> Anon, *The Jew pedlar*, (Norwich, 1780).

<sup>205</sup> *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (London), Saturday, Sept. 5, 1778; Issue 15464.

<sup>206</sup> *E. Johnson's British Gazette and Sunday Monitor* (London), Sunday, July 14, 1799; Issue 1028.

<sup>207</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Britain*, p. 36.

seriously injured one person, but this instance was not necessarily because the event taking place was a funeral.<sup>208</sup> It was apprehension about the speed of Jewish burials which drew the most hostility and anxieties from the non-Jewish inhabitants of the metropolis. In 1781 the *Public Advertiser* ran the following story:

One Day last Week apparently died in the Jews Hospital near Whitechapel, a Patient of that Persuasion; and his Friends attending in the Afternoon to convey the Body to the Place of Interment (according to the Practice of the People of that Profession, who always bury their Dead on the Day of their Decease) a Noise was thought to be heard in the Coffin, and, on its being opened, the Man was found to be alive, and is now said to be in a fair Way of doing well. Would not this great Success of the Humane Society, in recovering Persons seemingly dead lead one to apprehend, that many Persons of the Jewish religion have been really buried alive through their precipitate Manner of Interment?<sup>209</sup>

Despite apprehension about the speed of Jewish burials, for the most part Jewish funerals and interments appear to have been accepted or simply ignored by the wider population of the metropolis. The otherness of some of the rituals that were carried out within the community were possibly not widely known, including the importance of tombstones, and strict mourning period. Although these separated the Jewish community from their contemporaries and acted as part of their self-marginalisation, these practices were firmly rooted in established pan-European traditions. There was however contention at times between these traditions and local customs which has been a reoccurring theme across all marginal groups.

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<sup>208</sup> Endelman, *The Jews of Georgian England*, p. 115.

<sup>209</sup> *Public Advertiser* (London), Tuesday, Nov. 20, 1781; Issue 14698.

## Conclusion

Many of the practices around death, burials, funerals, mourning rituals, and the rules for a cemetery are still prevalent today for the Jewish communities of London. Jews are buried, rarely cremated, and there is no embalming, display, or autopsies performed unless absolutely necessary.<sup>210</sup> The *Chevra Kadisha* are still tasked with washing and ritually cleansing a body in preparation for burial, and it is still considered a great honour to be a member of this burial society.

Returning to Bar-Levav's explanation about the marginality of death in Jewish life and the three ways he identified it, in time, space, and socially, it is evident that this is relevant to the Jewish communities of seventeenth and eighteenth-century London. In all these aspects it was not a need to forge an identity for their faith that was the driving force behind their practices, but a deeply seated belief in ancient customs and a sense that doctrine and practice should be uniform across the whole pan-European community.

The readmittance of the Jews to England saw them step into a confusing array of stereotypes. The concept of 'the Jew' was far bigger than the small Jewish population. As the Jewish population increased and found a place within the metropolis, so did their visibility within newspapers, in other sources, and on the ground. Actions such as the ringing of church bells for an eminent Jewish individual at death demonstrated levels of local respect as did the inclusion of Jews in parish burial registers. As Selwood has noted: 'Given the legacy of the medieval expulsion and centuries of anti-Jewish theology, we might expect Jews to be the one group in early modern London to evince a singular "otherness"', but attitudes towards Jews and by extension their dead were far more complex and fluid.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Langham, 'Jewish Burial Grounds', p. 5.

<sup>211</sup> Selwood, *Diversity and Difference*, p. 130.

The ideas of a 'good death' were established in Jewish belief, with confession and dying peacefully given a place of respect, however last dying speeches (excluding those from some criminals) did not have a prominent place. The immediate aftermath of death and the rituals carried out were notably different to those of any other groups discussed in this thesis and among the wider London population. Bodies mattered but the dead were marginal to everyday life. They were immediately removed from their community of the living and placed among the community of the dead to await their funeral and interment. There was internal marginalisation evident in burial grounds, as the examples of the Marranos, poor, plague dead, children, itinerants, and criminals attest too, yet these individuals were still part of the Jewish community, and the community took care of their own in death. Burial grounds themselves were located at the physical margins of the metropolis (when first established) as the dead were impure and constant visual reminders of the deceased were discouraged.

There were clear topographical differences in Jewish burial grounds. Differences between the Sephardi and Ashkenazi grounds are evident, but for both tombstones were of great importance and unique in their importance to this marginal group. Tombstones symbolised a pan-European tradition that was placed fully formed upon the English landscape, however within this traditional practice contemporary Christian ideas were sometimes borrowed and adapted. This manifested in some variances in motifs upon these stones. There was contention between prescription and practice in certain aspects of the Jewish treatment of their dead, especially in these motifs but also in some elaborate funerals and the Brady Street double graves. However overall, the ancient Jewish customs were respected by those within the community.

Jewish cemeteries were a place of death, but they taught the visitor about life. The cemetery and conventions around the dead played a role within Jewish society shaping

how life should be led and providing a moral framework for the community. The self-marginalisation of the dead was due to long-standing customs and these traditions remained relatively constant throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century and beyond for these were the foundation of Jewish identity.

## Chapter 6 The Marginal Dead

### Conclusion

London in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a place of the dead and the living. A vast metropolis, ever expanding in both its physical reach and population size; adapting, assimilating, transforming, and diversifying along the way. The metropolis was always going to be a place where the margins were complex and the dead on those margins occupied an ambiguous place. The dead of London were omnipresent, but they were not all treated in the same way. Despite the proverbial wisdom of the age, death did not level social distinctions. But the dead still mattered. They mattered both to their families and immediate communities, but also to the fabric of wider metropolitan society, and their importance has been demonstrated throughout this thesis.

The treatment of the dead reflected the social relations and mentalities of Londoners over the two centuries examined. Investigating what happened to the bodies of individuals considered marginalised, and the degree to which they were treated distinctively, were the core aims of this thesis. The results of this examination help to fill a gap in the vast literature about the dead of the early modern period.<sup>1</sup> Although the dead discussed in each chapter had previously received varying degrees of scholarly attention, the treatment of their bodies had largely been neglected, and no systematic study exists looking at the disposal of the dead investigated within this thesis. By setting out to discover what happened to the bodies of suicides, criminals, Quakers, and Jews, this research picked up where many other scholars' research ended and in turn it delivers a clearer image of what happened to the dead of minority religious groups and individuals across c.200 years.

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<sup>1</sup> Literature that arguably begins with P. Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death: The Classic History of Western Attitudes Toward Death Over the Last One Thousand Years* H. Weaver (trans.), (New York: Random House, 2008 edn.); refer to the literature review section in the introduction.



Scholars such as Peter King and Jacob Selwood have drawn out the differences some of these groups encountered, namely criminals and Jews.<sup>2</sup> King has rightly argued that ‘the study of the punishment of the criminal corpse and of aggravated execution policies challenges both the eighteenth-century reformers own key “civilising” narrative, and many of the models modern historians have developed about the chronology of penal change’.<sup>3</sup> However, his emphasis on the ‘important’ and ‘significant’ role of these practices elides the fact that it was only a minority of criminals that served this end.<sup>4</sup> As has been demonstrated in this thesis, the vast majority of post-execution cadavers appear to have been treated with a certain amount of respect and afforded interment within consecrated ground and there was no sudden changes in this regard. Therefore, the practical on the ground response to these bodily remains demonstrates that King’s conclusion that ‘post-execution punishment played a significant role within the framework of ideas, policies and rationales that shaped that era’ is incomplete.<sup>5</sup> This thesis has shown the more uneven and discretionary reactions towards the criminal cadaver beyond the official dictate. Similarly, Selwood’s exploration of how Londoners conceived of Jews and other ‘aliens’ in their city shows how ‘the City tended to respond to difference as a threat, while the Crown embraced it as an opportunity’.<sup>6</sup> Yet his focus on ‘belonging’ as reflected in policies, petitions, and complaints means that other aspects are given little attention.<sup>7</sup> As Eleanor Hubbard noted in her review of Selwood’s book, his ‘reliance on institutional sources inevitably defines his conclusions, and other significant aspects of diversity are left out’.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> P. King, *Punishing the Criminal Corpse, 1700-1840: Aggravated Forms of the Death Penalty in England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); J. Selwood, *Diversity and Difference in Early Modern London* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> King, *Punishing the Criminal Corpse*, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> King, *Punishing the Criminal Corpse*, pp. 192-193, he rejects the sudden change that is argued for by V. A. C. Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People 1770-1868* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 9-10.

<sup>5</sup> King, *Punishing the Criminal Corpse*, p. 199.

<sup>6</sup> Selwood, *Diversity and Difference*, p. 158.

<sup>7</sup> Selwood, *Diversity and Difference*, pp. 189-191.

<sup>8</sup> E. Hubbard, ‘Reviewed Work: Diversity and Difference in Early Modern London by Jacob Selwood’ *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (Winter 2010), p. 1411.

This thesis has shown that following groups and individuals from the margins beyond life to their interments and the impact this had on localised and wider communities demonstrates a far more tolerant and inclusive image than the differences so magnified by an economic analysis.

London's heterogeneity lent itself to a study of the marginalised dead, and the four groups chosen for this thesis were distinct and separate enough from their mainstream counterparts to allow an investigation into the unique practices surrounding their post-mortem fates. Examining the dead within the landscape of the metropolis, and the interactions between neighbourhoods and wider communities concerning these dead, was possible due to the diversity of the city. A self-murderer's post-mortem verdict of *felo de se* could be overturned through the intervention of their neighbours or ignored and a proper burial obtained due to these types of interactions. Localised respect for individuals from every category influenced the handling of their remains, as the inclusion in parish registers and the tolling of church bells for the respected Jewish dead demonstrated. London was a macrocosm unto itself and, as has been hinted at, treatment of the marginal dead within London differed from the treatment of the marginal dead outside the metropolis. This is evident, for example, in the practice of north side churchyard burials for criminals, suicides, and other undesirable individuals, which was never prevalent in London. London Quakers do not seem to have been as frequently subjected to the challenges they faced outside the metropolis when it came to interring their dead. On the Isle of Wight, a Quaker widow called Priscilla Moe died in prison, where she had been held for refusing to pay a fine. When fellow Quakers came for her body, they were turned away and on the order of the town governor she was buried 'in a Christian manner'.<sup>9</sup> These types of incidents are far

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<sup>9</sup> G. Croese, *The general history of the Quakers containing the lives, tenents, sufferings, tryals, speeches and letters of the most eminent Quakers, both men and women : from the first rise of that sect down to this present time / being written originally in Latin by Gerard Croese ; to which is added a letter writ by George Keith and sent by him to the Author of this Book: Containing a Vindication of*

more frequent outside of London. Therefore, some assumptions about how the marginal dead were treated do not hold up when examined within the unique environment of the capital.

The marginal dead were nonetheless subjected to a language of marginalisation. In pamphlet literature, ballads, and early newspapers that touch upon each category, phrases such as 'an idle loose people' or 'destructive to the very Being of Society' were common.<sup>10</sup> People could find themselves on the margins regardless of their initial standing, something that is clear within the first two chapters on suicides and criminals. Social marginalisation in life and physical marginalisation in death were linked, occasionally self-inflicted and at other times imposed from outside. The margins existed, not as a common word in the language of the time, but within the minds and perceptions of early modern Londoners. But the margins were not static. They were far more fluid locations constantly in flux. It is easier to understand these margins from the position of what they were not; they were not the mainstream Protestant dead, they were not always interred in Church of England burial grounds, nor did they always follow the Church of England prescribed manner of dying well, or correct burial methods, and hence they disrupt the narrative that holds the most prominent place in the history of early modern London, that of the mainstream Protestant community.

Look a little closer and the margins become far more blurred as the sources used in this study attest. The groups in the margins are present in parish registers, a source that

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*himself, and several Remarks on this History* (London, 1696), in the section: *AN APPENDIX: CONTAINING The True Copy of a Latine Letter Writ by George Keith, and sent by him to Gerard Croes, Translated out of his Latine Manuscript into English*. 1696, p. 180, discussed in S. Tarlow, *Ritual, Belief and the Dead in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Severall Proceedings in Parliament* (1649) (London), November 4 - November 11, 1652; J. Adams, *An essay concerning self-murther wherein is endeavour'd to prove that it is unlawful according to natural principles: with some considerations upon what is pretended from the said principles, by the author of a treatise intituled, Biathanatos, and others* (1700), p. 25.

has been used extensively across all four chapters, and, from the latter part of the seventeenth century, newspapers. These two primary sources along with ballads, pamphlets, diary entries, wills, letters, and a smattering of other records, have brought the more marginalised dead into view. The nominal record linkage undertaken – finding individuals in a variety of sources and cross-referencing them with others to establish as much as possible about their story and specifically their final resting place – was purposely embarked upon in order to place individuals back into discourses about the dead, London, and marginality. There were problems with sources throughout. The first half of the seventeenth century does not have newspapers which proved so valuable for the latter half of the century and the eighteenth century. Therefore, early seventeenth century suicides and criminals were more difficult to track down, especially as the coroners' reports for London were never returned to the central courts and are lost. The Quaker records, although extensive and well maintained also have a certain bias which must be considered. Quaker records habitually had an agenda of their own, for example, the inclusion of the word 'prisoner' next to some burial entries when in fact that individual had been a prisoner previously but was not at the point of their death. Jewish records were written in multiple languages and some early records are lost, also proving problematic. The earlier wooden boards that would have recorded the burials in the Velho have not survived and records from the third decade of the eighteenth century have tried to rectify this, but their accuracy may have been compromised. Therefore, statistical evidence must be treated with care and the graphs compiled throughout this thesis should be seen as indicative rather than conclusive. As is normal with all sources the viewpoint of the commentators influenced how marginalisation was perceived and hence why such a splintered image of what was and was not considered marginal emerges. Even though each chapter within this thesis is distinct and separate from the next, there are themes that resonate across them all.

There was a disjuncture between attitudes and policies towards these groups and the actual treatment of individuals, as has been repeatedly demonstrated. However, much like the Jewish belief that the living were to learn from the dead, the marginal dead were meant to provide the living with certain lessons. The first two chapters on suicides and criminals demonstrate this most fully. Suicide was the quintessential 'bad death' yet not all suicides were the same. Despite the clear ecclesiastical prescription that the suicide corpse was to be subjected to profane burial practices and a systematic language of exclusion used for this group, there was leniency shown towards those individuals who had lived a 'good life' and had garnered good reputations. The petitions to hold Christian burials for suicides granted *felo de se* verdicts based upon their good deeds in life, and the subsequent granting of these petitions, show that the punishment for self-murder was not as static as first perceived. In theory suicides were to be made an example of, the treatment of their mortal remains were meant to inspire terror and warn against the crime of self-murder. Behave, follow the rules, or you too may be buried at a crossroads with a stake through your remains, in a highway, an open field, cut up by anatomists, displayed in chains, and so on. These dead therefore mattered in a twofold way, both from the point of view of the authorities where bodies were used to demonstrate warnings, but also to the individual's family and friends. Here, the individual mattered far more than the deed that had led to their death.

As was discussed in chapter one, the suicide corpse can occasionally be traced to specific interment locations, both those interred in burial grounds and those subjected to profane practices. The profane practices, burying individuals outside of consecrated ground, occasionally with a stake through the individual's body, show that these dead were removed from the community of the dead but not the community of the living. They were not interred in places where the early modern population feared to tread, nor were this same population anxious about encountering the revenants of self-murderers as some

more recent commentators believed. Instead, they became part of the everyday landscape. The literature that discusses the folk beliefs around suicide burials showed that some of these beliefs did not stand up under closer scrutiny, at least within the metropolis.<sup>11</sup> A certain amount of curiosity was certainly attached to the suicide corpse, but this was not born through a fear of revenants. As this chapter also demonstrated, far more suicides were interred in burial grounds than at crossroads, upon highways, and within open fields. The variable nature of community-based relations and attitudes to suicides were dependent on the reputation of the deceased individual. A criminal who cheated the executioner and authorities through self-murder received the harshest profane punishments, followed by those who were prominent enough to have obtained a certain level of notoriety and therefore needed to be made an example of. Those who led a quiet life, and had a quiet death, even if they were a suicide, were most likely to receive a proper interment. There was an increase in *non compos mentis* verdicts over the period under consideration and a decrease in profane burial practices. Yet suicides still occupied an ambiguous place in the later eighteenth-century.

Criminal cadavers, as chapter two has shown, were subjected to various methods of disposal. Communal agency played a part in these. There were four categories of disposal, burning, display, anatomisation, or burial. Burning women for high and petty treason, although the least common method of disposal, left a strong imprint upon the psyche of early modern people. The eradication of the human form was perhaps the epitome of marginalisation. No physical margins were occupied, as there was little left of an individual. Physical margins were used for the practice of displaying executed cadavers upon gibbets in iron cages where they were to remain until they had disintegrated. Gibbets surrounded the metropolis on every major road, heath, and along the Thames, and further

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<sup>11</sup> J. Harte, 'Maimed Rites: Suicide Burials in the English Landscape' *Time and Mind: The Journal of Archaeology, Consciousness and Culture* Vol. 4, Issue 3 November 2011, pp. 263-282.

afield. As the display of heads and other body parts on the gates of the City and at other prominent landmarks did, gibbeted individuals acted as warning beacons against the crimes individuals had committed. This would have been visible to anyone travelling into the metropolis. The visual reminders of the marginal dead, profane suicide burials, burnings, and the display of executed cadavers, held performative functions as did anatomy demonstrations. In the dramatic scenes at sites of execution when bodies were fought over, especially if they belonged to a group of individuals who were already sometimes marginalised in life such as the Irish, sailors, and members of religious minorities, the idea of bodies as economic commodities came to the fore. This was also evident in the emergence of body snatching, a practice that affected all marginal groups covered in this thesis. Public anatomy demonstrations resulted in complex popular opinions, and the belief that anatomisation was a further punishment upon an individual was commonplace. Allowances were made for those criminals whose crimes were truly horrible to receive this ongoing 'punishment', but conflicting emotions were evident when it came to the dissection of a criminal corpse. What was left after an anatomy demonstration was either buried or thrown away, and this loss of personal identification contributed to widespread anxieties attached to this practice. There were varying degrees of marginalisation of the criminal corpse but the degree to which it was marginalised has often been overestimated.

Burial was the most frequent and yet most overlooked method of disposal of an executed criminal's cadaver. As the least sensationalised disposal method it has been neglected by past historians of crime and death. Most executed criminal cadaver burials were in Church of England burial grounds and hence within consecrated ground. Many parishes within the metropolis took in additional cadavers along with those that were returned to them as a home parish, with some bodies travelling vast distances, especially those of individuals from the upper spheres of the social hierarchy. Executed cadavers would often be buried together forming their own post-mortem nucleus, although this was

not a set rule. Crimes did not dictate burial locations (until the 1752 Murder Act disallowed the interment of murderers). Burials avoided the complete eradication of an individual's remains, although gender, status, and wealth divides were still evident in the funeral and interment. Unclaimed individuals were buried in a 'hole near the gallows' and were further marginalised. The variants of marginalisation of a criminal corpse were played out in the contexts of gender, crime, behaviour, and social standing.

Suicides and executed criminals were subjected to a loss of self-autonomy and bodily integrity along with systematic eradication and exclusion, but this was imposed upon them from outside rather than implemented from within. Decisions around the treatment of these bodies were most often out of the hands of these individuals who had little say in their eventual resting places nor what ceremonies were to be enacted over their remains.

Self-imposed marginalisation was carried out in London by individual communities of the living for their own dead. At a time of political and religious upheaval dissenting groups sprang up, including the Quaker movement. Quakers wanted to separate and distinguish themselves from the wider Protestant community and other dissenters but were also inextricably bound to them. The importance of their dead being treated distinctively in order to assist in forging their unique identity was implemented through the establishment of independent burial grounds. Quakers were, in theory to focus on this life and not think upon death, but again, as with all the groups discussed, there is a disconnect between prescription and practice. Last dying sayings were adopted, suffering narratives informed both the day-to-day descriptions of Quaker life and were also carefully recorded as part of Quaker death narratives, and time and time again in Quaker meeting minutes Friends were reprimanded for things such as having tombstones, an elaborate funeral, or an expensive coffin. The rough terrain that the movement traversed in its attempt to



distinguish itself was partially played out through the conscious self-marginalisation of their dead.

Quaker burial grounds, like those of the Jews, were on the physical margins of everyday life when they were first established. This physical marginalisation was palpable. Establishing independent Quaker and Jewish cemeteries was accepted, partly due to the plague of 1665/6, for the creation of these grounds lessened pressures upon parish authorities. The Quaker community were bound together through the symbolic self-marginalisation of their dead, and this practice of self-marginalisation spread across England, to Ireland, the Netherlands, and North America. The manner of an individual's death had no impact on the treatment of Quaker remains, but rules were implemented and an etiquette enforced within the movement that demonstrated what was and was not appropriate in a burial ground. The lack of any physical markers for a grave resulted in Quaker burial grounds appearing topographically distinct, however archaeological excavations have given rare insight into these grounds and shown that once again prescription and practice are sometimes at odds. There were some elaborate monuments unearthed, grave goods, and ornate coffins.<sup>12</sup> The contradictions within Quaker burial grounds and the treatment of their dead have been revealed, as has the issues the community faced while navigating their place and space within the metropolis.

Unlike Quakers, the Jewish community, established after the informal readmission of the Jews in 1656, placed pan-European traditions around the treatment of their dead fully formed upon the early modern landscape. Individual Jews did not stipulate what was to be done with their remains, rather they accepted that the community would uphold their traditions. Therefore, the treatment of their dead was a less conscious self-

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<sup>12</sup> L. Bashford and L. Sibun, 'Excavations at the Quaker Burial Ground, Kingston-upon-Thames, London' *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, Volume 41, 2007 - Issue 1, pp. 100-154.

marginalisation than that of the Quakers and more firmly rooted in the customs important to their established identity. A burial ground was of the utmost importance from the offset and there was less assimilation of local customs. Again, prescription and practice were still occasionally in contention among the Jewish dead. A wealth divide, the conflicts surrounding Marranos, internal marginalisation, the treatment of children, the poor, itinerants, and the plague dead, were all issues that Jewish communities faced. For both Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews, the cemetery was a meeting place between the living and dead and governed in a strict manner. Tombstones were a visual distinguishing feature that separated Sephardi Jews from Ashkenazi Jews but also separated them from their Protestant neighbours. Community was important and the physical marginality of the burial grounds did not detract from the importance of the dead who were still crucial to understandings of everyday life.

The people who inhabited the metropolis of London showed increasing acceptance, and even respect, of their Jewish neighbours. Again, there is a divide between what was and what was not meant to happen with the dead which is apparent within the community itself. The strict rules of the cemetery and the rituals surrounding the *Chevra Kadisha*, uniformity of the burial rows, the strict mourning period, and mourning rituals in general, came up against Jewish folkloric ideas and the assimilation of local customs. This is perhaps seen most clearly in the inclusion of skull motifs on tombstones in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century in both Ashkenazi and Sephardi burial grounds, and the more elaborate funerals and monuments erected to the dead, especially during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Jews had to navigate a confusing array of stereotypes upon their return to England due to the narratives that had been circulated from travel writers, upon the early modern stage, and in ballads and pamphlets, and therefore just as they were placed at the margins in life, their dead too would find their place at the margins. It was self-marginalisation that remained fundamental to their identity as they

remained a separate community – both in their own eyes and in those of their Christian neighbours – upon their return to England.

Each group of marginal dead examined within the multi-faceted and complex society that made up the metropolis of London were subjected to burials having a performative function. The dead had a role to play. This role did change over time and was different for each observer. Arguably a more tolerant position was established by the middle of the eighteenth century across all four groups discussed. More *non compos mentis* verdicts were returned for suicides and profane burial practices became far rarer, yet suicide took until the 1960s to be decriminalised and the stigma attached to these marginal dead still exists. The burning of women for high and petty treason decreased and ceased to be a permitted punishment before the end of the eighteenth century. Anatomy demonstrations on criminal cadavers ceased shortly after the formation of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1800. The display of executed traitors' heads and body parts on the gates of London and prominent landmarks ceased by the middle of the eighteenth century. The display of criminals within gibbets was also waning by the end of the eighteenth century and no longer held the same efficacy it may have done earlier. Yet executions continued to be held in public and still attracted large numbers of spectators. The Quaker and Jewish dead had established their own place within the landscape of early modern London, both for their living and their dead. Quakers were no longer persecuted in the manner they had been earlier, nor did suffering influence their narratives to the extent it had, yet they were still 'othered' in popular culture. Jewish communities had continued their well-established burial rituals and achieved a certain level of respect, evident within newspapers and other literature of the time, yet during the nineteenth century and beyond, and even today, they were and are subjected to violent attacks and antisemitic incidents. The changes that occurred over the period were certainly a response to greater urbanisation and the ever-increasing diversity of the metropolis. People could not avoid the

differences in their midst. The urban population of the metropolis seemed to become less accepting of profane burial practices and post-execution punishment as it disrupted their daily lives. The Quaker and Jewish ways of dealing with their dead, and those of other religious groups such as the small Islamic community that became more organised at the end of the eighteenth century and established their own burial methods, was a result of the increasing diversity of London. Growing religious tolerance clearly had a role to play too. Although scholars have shown that such tolerance was often grudging and still excluded most religious minorities from full citizenship and national 'belonging', it nonetheless meant that the divisions between their practices and those of the Anglican majority became less sharp over time.<sup>13</sup> The marginalisation of these dead may have weakened across the period examined, although it never quite withdrew.

The differences between each marginal group discussed in this thesis should not be ignored. Those who were subjected to involuntary marginalisation were not bound through religion. They had little to no control over the treatment of their remains, and their marginalisation was linked to deeds rather than their identity. The self-marginalised were bound together through their religious beliefs. They placed trust in their respective communities to control their remains and treat their bodies in an appropriate manner, and their marginalisation was linked to their identity not necessarily to their deeds. This

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<sup>13</sup> For selected works on religious tolerance, see, A. Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500–1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006); A. Walsham, 'Cultures of Coexistence in Early Modern England: History, Literature and Religious Toleration' *The Seventeenth Century*, Vol. 28 Issue 2, 2013, pp. 115-137; C. Maurer and G. Gellera, 'Contexts of Religious Tolerance: New Perspectives from Early Modern Britain and Beyond' *Global Intellectual History* Vol. 5, Issue 2, 2020, pp. 125-136; C. Brown, 'Politeness, Hypocrisy and Protestant Dissent in England after the Toleration Act, c.1689-c.1750' *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 1, 2018, pp. 61-80, although she explicitly notes Quakers are not included in her study and further work is needed, p. 62; T. Claydon and I. McBride (eds.), *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c.1650–c.1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); For the Jewish situation see, J. Champion, 'Toleration and Citizenship in Enlightenment England: John Toland and the Naturalization of the Jews, 1714–1753' in *Toleration in Enlightenment Europe* O. P. Grell and R. Porter, (eds.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 133-156.

highlights the difficulties of marginal as a category of analysis and acts as a reminder that care should be taken with such terminology as the margins were complex and ever fluctuating locations.

The marginal dead had a contradictory and paradoxical status, however marginal should not be confused with insignificant. The dead discussed within this thesis contributed to society. They were held up as examples that influenced behaviour. They influenced perceptions of what was and was not considered ordinary, the day-to-day understandings of how life should be lived, and the very fabric of the metropolis of London. They had a place within seventeenth and eighteenth-century London. How society treats its dead reflects the mentalities of the time. How it treats its marginal dead show a practical response to individuals and groups that were sometimes considered 'other' and therefore highlight the complexity and shifting attitudes around what people considered normal and what they considered marginal.

## Appendix I

### *Bills of Mortality 1632, 1657, 1659-1758*

Records of potential suicides, actual suicides, and executed individuals in the Diseases and Casualties lists from the *Bills of Mortality*. The Great Fire of 1666 destroyed the Parish Clerk's Hall so there were no *Bills* between 28 August and 18 September 1666.

<i>Bills of Mortality</i>						
	Hanged Themselves	Poisoned	Lunatick/ Distracted	Drowned	Executed	Made away with themselves
1632	0	0	5	4	38	1
1657	24	0	13	63	20	
1659	11	0	14	57	7	
1660	36	0	14	48	18	
1661	13	2	11	57	16	
1662	14	1	12	43	14	
1663	12	3	6	56	31	
1664	18	1	6	62	38	
1665	7	1	5	50	21	
1666	9	1	4	68	10	
1667	9	4	16	72	9	
1668	16	3	8	68	12	
1669	20	2	7	62	11	
1670	13	0	4	82	12	
1671	10	0	6	78	11	
1672	18	5	9	74	9	
1673	13	2	7	153	31	
1674	18	0	0	83	17	
1675	19	4	12	57	18	
1676	17	6	8	83	17	
1677	22	3	7	69	8	
1678	12	0	13	85	23	
1679	19	4	12	69	30	
1680	23	5	14	83	24	
1681	17	1	16	80	8	

1682	16	3	15	91	10	
1683	18	3	25	79	6	
1684	10	2	38	65	15	
1685	22	3	30	66	19	
1686	14	2	31	92	16	
1687	22	1	36	74	12	
1688	20	2	26	66	17	
1689	10	2	22	71	12	
1690	23	1	24	77	22	
1691	10	3	19	81	36	
1692	24	3	23	43	18	
1693	17	3	16	66	29	
1694	17	3	20	61	40	
1695	25	1	8	46	27	
1696	21	3	4	80	17	
1697	21	2	27	50	31	
1698	20	0	19	59	22	
1699	30	1	20	58	18	
1700	28	0	35	48	29	
1701	40	1	28	81	15	
1702	23	0	35	66	7	
1703	21	0	34	61	6	
1704	25	0	46	52	9	
1705	27	0	18	66	8	
1706	40	0	26	74	2	
1707	38	0	14	72	5	Self-Murder
1708	0	0	22	63	6	28
1709	0	0	34	57	3	36
1710	0	1	26	49	3	33
1711	0	0	35	63	7	26
1712	0	0	29	64	0	24
1713	0	0	21	63	12	34
1714	0	0	24	51	16	34
1715	0	0	21	59	17	28
1716	0	0	27	45	30	28
1717	1	0	38	62	19	37
1718	0	4	29	81	15	31
1719	0	0	42	81	18	26
1720	0	0	44	66	20	27
1721	0	0	44	86	13	52
1722	0	1	35	50	23	41

1723	0	0	30	62	16	45
1724	0	0	25	83	17	38
1725	0	0	40	74	19	59
1726	0	1	35	98	21	59
1727	0	0	37	89	11	47
1728	0	1	26	84	37	59
1729	0	0	41	77	11	50
1730	0	1	29	83	13	49
1731	0	1	21	112	29	47
1732	0	0	25	98	25	52
1733	0	0	19	81	22	48
1734	0	0	22	78	15	62
1735	0	0	29	99	19	49
1736	0	0	30	120	8	65
1737	0	0	34	103	7	42
1738	0	0	39	82	17	42
1739	0	2	34	91	12	45
1740	0	0	90	97	13	55
1741	1	0	71	116	7	51
1742	1	1	80	104	17	33
1743	0	1	75	78	6	41
1744	0	0	0	0	0	0
1745	0	0	75	99	17	32
1746	0	0	90	94	20	34
1747	0	0	53	102	7	45
1748	0	0	59	107	6	40
1749	0	13	62	111	26	48
1750	0	0	66	100	27	27
1751	0	0	76	66	24	47
1752	0	1	69	98	17	44
1753	0	1	86	86	18	36
1754	0	0	86	103	10	25
1755	0	0	103	142	10	47
1756	0	0	79	125	2	44
1757	0	1	77	132	6	40
1758	0	0	72	109	14	30
TOTAL	975	117	3224	7774	1649	2062



## Appendix II

### Burial Locations of Executed Criminals from London, 1600-1800

Definition of London taken as explained within the Introduction.

<i>Burial Locations</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i># of Burials Seventeenth Century</i>	<i># of Burials Eighteenth Century</i>	<i>Totals</i>
All Hallows, Barking by the Tower	London	4	1	5
All Hallows the Great	London	0	1	1
All Hallows, Tottenham	London	0	2	2
All Saints, Edmonton	London	0	2	2
Christ Church, Newgate Street	London	2	1	3
Christ Church, Newington	London	0	1	1
Christ Church, Southwark	London	0	6	6
Christ Church, Spitalfields	London	0	21	21
Collegiate Church of St Katherine by the Tower	London	7	7	14
Hammersmith and Fulham	London	0	1	1
St Andrew by the Wardrobe	London	1	2	3
St Andrew, Enfield	London	3	1	4
St Andrew, Holborn	London	29	80	109
St Andrew, Undershaft	London	1	0	1
St Ann, Blackfriars	London	0	3	3
St Anne, Limehouse	London	0	1	1
St Anne, Soho	London	6	26	32
St Augustine, Hackney	London	1	0	1
St Bartholomew the Great	London	1	1	2
St Bartholomew the Less	London	0	1	1
St Benet, Paul's Wharf	London	1	1	2
St Botolph, Aldersgate	London	5	9	14
St Botolph, Aldgate	London	2	14	16
St Botolph, Bishopsgate	London	2	15	17
St Bride, Fleet Street	London	5	16	21
St Clement Danes	London	0	6	6
St Dunstan and All Saints, Stepney	London	15	42	57
St George in the East	London	0	20	20
St George the Martyr	London	10	7	17
St George, Bloomsbury	London	0	114	114
St George, Hanover Square	London	0	6	6

St Giles in the Fields	London	78	62	140
St Giles, Cripplegate	London	34	62	96
St Gregory by St Pauls	London	2	2	4
St James, Pentonville	London	0	1	1
St James, Clerkenwell	London	5	45	50
St James, Dukes Place	London	0	1	1
St James, Garlickhithe	London	0	1	1
St James, Paddington	London	6	5	11
St James, Piccadilly	London	9	19	28
St John Horsleydown, Bermondsey	London	0	3	3
St John the Baptist, Clerkenwell	London	0	3	3
St John the Baptist, Hillingdon	London	0	1	1
St John the Evangelist	London	0	2	2
St John, Hackney	London	0	2	2
St John, Hampstead	London	0	5	5
St John, Wapping	London	2	11	13
St Katherine Cree	London	0	1	1
St Lawrence Jewry	London	3	2	5
St Leonard, Shoreditch	London	0	30	30
St Leonard, Streatham	London	0	1	1
St Luke, Chelsea	London	0	3	3
St Luke, Finsbury	London	0	50	50
St Margaret, Westminster	London	4	19	23
St Martin in the Fields	London	13	17	30
St Mary at Finchley, Hendon	London	0	1	1
St Mary, Hampton	London	0	1	1
St Mary, Hanwell	London	0	1	1
St Mary Le Strand	London	0	3	3
St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey	London	0	3	3
St Mary the Virgin, Twickenham	London	0	1	1
St Mary, Abchurch	London	0	1	1
St Mary, Acton	London	0	2	2
St Mary, Aldermary	London	0	1	1
St Mary, Hornsey	London	0	3	3
St Mary, Islington	London	4	7	11
St Mary, Lambeth	London	2	3	5
St Mary, Newington	London	5	12	17
St Mary, Paddington Green	London	0	1	1
St Mary, Putney	London	0	4	4
St Mary, Rotherhithe	London	0	1	1
St Mary, Stoke Newington	London	0	1	1

St Mary, Whitechapel	London	11	53	64
St Marylebone	London	2	77	79
St Matthew, Bethnal Green	London	0	3	3
St Michael, Crooked Lane	London	0	1	1
St Michael, Wood Street	London	0	1	1
St Mildred, Poultry	London	1	0	1
St Nicholas Cole Abbey	London	1	1	2
St Nicholas, Deptford	London	0	1	1
St Olave, Bermondsey	London	1	5	6
St Olave, Silver Street	London	1	0	1
St Pancras, Old Church	London	1	45	46
St Pancras, Parish Chapel	London	0	2	2
St Paul, Hammersmith	London	0	2	2
St Paul, Shadwell	London	0	19	19
St Pauls, Covent Garden	London	3	4	7
St Peter ad Vincula	London	6	3	9
St Saviour's, Southwark	London	1	11	12
St Sepulchre, Holborn	London	16	141	157
St. Faiths church by St. Pauls	London	1	1	2
Bunhill Fields	Burial Ground	1	28	29
City Road	Burial Ground	0	1	1
Danish Church	Burial Ground	0	1	1
Jewish Burial Grounds	Burial Ground	0	4	4
New Churchyard	Burial Ground	2	1	3
Quaker Ground - Bunhill Fields	Burial Ground	0	1	1
Southwark St Thomas Chapel	Burial Ground	0	2	2
Spa Fields	Burial Ground	0	61	61
Union Street	Burial Ground	0	2	2
Execution Dock	Burial Site	1	1	2
Tower of London	Burial Site	0	3	3
Tyburn	Burial Site	2	4	6
Windsor	Berkshire	1	0	1
St. Michael, Chenies	Buckinghamshire	1	0	1
Essex	Essex	1	4	5
Shipbourne Church	Kent	1	0	1
St. John the Baptist Churchyard Penshurst	Kent	1	0	1
Middlesex (unspecified)	Middlesex	0	3	3
Uxbridge	Middlesex	0	1	1
Somerset (unspecified)	Somerset	0	1	1
Suffolk (unspecified)	Suffolk	0	1	1
Surrey (unspecified)	Surrey	0	4	4
Arundel	Sussex	1	0	1
Sussex (unspecified)	Sussex	0	1	1

Salisbury Cathedral	Wiltshire	1	0	1
Knaresborough church	Yorkshire	1	0	1
Wentworth Woodhouse	Yorkshire	1	0	1
Douai College	France	1	0	1
Scotland	Scotland	1	1	2
Spain	Spain	1	0	1

## Appendix III

### Burials at the Quaker Ground Near Bunhill Fields, 1661-1665

The area that individuals were transported from to the Quaker Ground near Bunhill Fields as they were recorded in their burial register. Beginning with the establishment of the ground, 8 September 1661, ending 31 August 1665.

<i>Area From</i>	<i>Count</i>
Unknown	113
Giles, Cripplegate	92
Stepney	68
Olave, Bermondsey	50
Newgate Prison	42
Botolph, Aldgate	34
Leonard, Shoreditch	32
Sepulchre, Holborn	29
Botolph, Bishopsgate	22
Bartholomew the Great	20
Mary, Whitechapel	16
James, Clerkenwell	15
Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey	12
Saviours, Southwark	11
Southwark (unspecified)	11
Ann, Blackfriars	11
John, Wapping	10
White Lyon Prison	10
On Ship	10
Bride's, Fleet Street	8
Clement Danes	8
Giles in the Fields	8
Martin in the Fields	7
Botolph, Aldersgate	7
Margaret, Westminster	6
Leonard, Foster Lane	6
Allhallows the Great	5
James, Garlickhithe	5
Martin's Le Grand	4
Ratcliff	4
Rotherhithe (Redriffe)	4
Barking, Essex	3
Alban, Wood Street	3

Michael's Wood Street	3
Christ Church, Newgate Street	3
Olave, Silver Street	3
Mary Le Strand	3
Gregory by St Paul	3
Dunstan in the East	3
Dunstan in the West	2
Katharine's by the Tower	2
Edmonton Middlesex	2
Surrey (unspecified)	2
Camberwell	2
Katherine, Coleman	2
Stephen, Coleman Street	2
Thomas, Southwark	2
Allhallows the Less	2
Andrew, Holborn	2
Dionis Backchurch	2
Stephen, Walbrook	2
All Hallows, Bread Street	2
All Hallows, Barking by the Tower	2
East Ham	2
Rickmansworth (Hertfordshire)	1
Mary Magdalen, Old Fish Street	1
Stockwell	1
Lambeth	1
Paul's, Covent Garden	1
Mary Abchurch	1
Liberties of the Tower	1
Great Minories	1
Andrew Undershaft	1
Rochester (Kent)	1
James Duke's Place	1
Mildred, Bread Street	1
Mary Aldermary	1
Redcliffe Parish, Surrey	1
Matthew, Friday Street	1
Bridewell	1
Margaret Lothbury	1
Gravesend	1
Isle of Sheppey	1
Benet Fink	1
Dorset	1
Bartholomew the Less	1
Battersea	1

Mary, Bothaw	1
Katharine Cree	1
Hampton, Middlesex	1
Westminster (unspecified)	1
Thomas the Apostle	1
Michael, Cornhill	1
Lawrence Jewry	1
All Hallows, Lombard Street	1
Olave, Hart Street	1
Kensington Middlesex	1
Hackney	1
East Smithfield	1
Crayford, Kent	1
Paul, Shadwell	1
TOTAL	771

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P92/GEO/141	Southwark St George the Martyr.
DRO/004/A/01/004	St Andrew, Enfield.
P69/AND2/A/010/MS06673/001	St Andrew, Holborn.
P82/AND/A/010/MS06673/004	St Andrew, Holborn.
P69/AND2/A/010/MS06673/006	St Andrew, Holborn.
P69/AND2/A/010/MS06673/007	St Andrew, Holborn.
P69/AND4/A/001/MS04107/002	St Andrew, Undershaft.
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P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/006	St Giles, Cripplegate.
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P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/008	St Giles, Cripplegate.
P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/010	St Giles, Cripplegate.
P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/011	St Giles, Cripplegate.
P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/012	St Giles, Cripplegate.
P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/013	St Giles, Cripplegate.
P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/014	St Giles, Cripplegate.
P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/015	St Giles, Cripplegate.
P69/GIS/A/002/MS06419/016	St Giles, Cripplegate.

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p69/HEL/B/004/ms06836, St Helen Bishopsgate, Churchwarden Accounts.

F3 f202r, St Martin in the Fields, Churchwarden Accounts.

Parish registers: (Comprising of a sample mostly used within the thesis, not including all registers examined for statistical analysis).

STA/PR/6/1	St Anne, Soho.
SJSS/PR/1/11	St Anne, Soho.
SJSS/PR/1/12	St Anne, Soho.
SML/PR/3/9	St Anne, Soho.
SML/PR/3/10	St Anne, Soho.
GC/PR/1/3	St Clement Danes.
SJSS/PR/5/8	St Clement Danes.
STA/PR/4/22	St George, Hanover Square.
STC/PR/5/22	St George, Hanover Square.
STJ/PR/6/39	St John the Evangelist.
STG/PR/7/83	St James, Piccadilly.
STG/PR/7/58	St James, Piccadilly.

STG/PR/7/83	St James, Piccadilly.
STM/PR/8/20	St James, Piccadilly.
STM/PR/5/12	St Martin in the Fields.
STM/PR/6/32	St Martin in the Fields.
STM/PR/6/66	St Martin in the Fields.
STM/PR/6/64	St Martin in the Fields.
STM/PR/6/60	St Martin in the Fields.
STM/PR/6/58	St Martin in the Fields.
STM/PR/5/13	St Martin in the Fields.
STM/PR/6/17	St Mary Le Strand.
SML/PR/4/9	St Mary Le Strand.
STP/PR/4/2	St Paul, Covent Garden.
STP/PR/1/3	St Paul, Covent Garden.
STP/PR/4/4	St Paul, Covent Garden.
STP/PR/4/5	St Paul, Covent Garden.

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August 1760.

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1762.

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14<sup>th</sup> October 1772.

Set 3710, 19 Documents, Sarah Metyard 1762.

Set, 3714, 30 Documents, Elizabeth Brownrigg 1767.

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WACWIC652120088; WACWIC652120089; WACWIC652120090;  
WACWIC652120091; WACWIC652120092; WACWIC652120093;  
WACWIC652120094; WACWIC652120095; WACWIC652120096;  
WACWIC652120272; WACWIC652120273; WACWIC652120274;  
WACWIC652120275; WACWIC652120276; WACWIC652120277;  
WACWIC652120278; WACWIC652120279; WACWIC652120522;  
WACWIC652120523; WACWIC652120524; WACWIC652120525;  
WACWIC652120526; WACWIC652120527; WACWIC652120528;  
WACWIC652120529; WACWIC652120530; WACWIC652120531;  
WACWIC652120532; WACWIC652120533; WACWIC652120736;  
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s16880222-1 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1688.

s16880531-1 31<sup>st</sup> May 1688.

s17200115-1 15<sup>th</sup> January 1720.

s17210525-1 25<sup>th</sup> May 1721.

s17600910-1 10<sup>th</sup> September 1760.

s17880910-1 10<sup>th</sup> September 1788.

s17900424-1 24<sup>th</sup> April 1790.

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OA16770504 4<sup>th</sup> May 1677.

OA16790121 21<sup>st</sup> January 1679.

OA16851023 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1685.

OA16860120 20<sup>th</sup> January 1686.

OA16870127 27<sup>th</sup> January 1687.

OA16910501 1<sup>st</sup> May 1691.

OA16930127 27<sup>th</sup> January 1693.

OA16980622 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1698.

OA17200129 29<sup>th</sup> January 1720.

OA17210208 8<sup>th</sup> February 1721.

OA17210705 5<sup>th</sup> July 1721.

OA17220208 8<sup>th</sup> February 1722.

OA17220924 24<sup>th</sup> September 1722.

OA17221231 31<sup>st</sup> December 1722.

OA17260509 9<sup>th</sup> May 1726.

OA17290324 24<sup>th</sup> March 1729.

OA17270213 13<sup>th</sup> February 1727.

OA17360726 26<sup>th</sup> July 1736.

OA17400213 13<sup>th</sup> February 1740.  
OA17431121 21<sup>st</sup> November 1742.  
OA17431121 21<sup>st</sup> November 1743.  
OA17440217 17<sup>th</sup> February 1744.  
OA17471116 16<sup>th</sup> November 1747.  
OA17490426 26<sup>th</sup> April 1749.  
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OA17600915 15<sup>th</sup> September 1760.  
OA17640611 11<sup>th</sup> June 1764.  
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Supplementary Material:

o16881010-3 10<sup>th</sup> October 1688.

Trial Proceedings:

t16870114-31 Arrabella Reeves, 14<sup>th</sup> January 1687.

t16880222-24 Mary Aubry, Dennis Fanet, John Fanet, John Desermo, 22<sup>nd</sup>  
February 1688.

t16880531-27 Arrabella Reeves, 31<sup>st</sup> May 1688.

t16930116-57 Ann Merryweather, 16<sup>th</sup> January 1693.

t17200115-35 Jane Griffin, 15<sup>th</sup> January 1720.

t17210525-56 Barbara Spencer, Alice Hall, Elizabeth Bray, 25<sup>th</sup> May 1721.

t17260302-36 John Oneby, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1726.

t17350116-11 Elizabeth Ambrook, 16<sup>th</sup> January 1735.

t17600910-19 Francis David Stirn, 10<sup>th</sup> September 1760.

t17620714-30 Sarah Metyard, Sarah Morgan Metyard, 14<sup>th</sup> July 1762.

t17810711-1 Francis Henry De la Motte, 11<sup>th</sup> July 1781.

t17860426-9 Joseph Yelland, Phebe Harris, Elizabeth Yelland, 26<sup>th</sup> April 1786.

t17880910-102 Hugh Murphy, Catharine Murphy, 10<sup>th</sup> September 1788.

t17900424-6 Thomas Parker, Sophia Girton, Charles Gearing, Elizabeth Gearing,  
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*Daily Journal* 1721-1737, (London, England).

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*Ipswich Journal* 1748-1799, (Ipswich, England).

*Kingdoms Intelligencer* 1616-1679, (London, England).

*Lloyd's Evening Post* 1757-1799, (London, England).

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*Weekly Miscellany 1732-1741, (London, England).*

*Whitehall Evening Post 1718-1800, (London, England).*

*Whitehall Evening Post or London Intelligencer 1746-1800, (London, England).*

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Adams, J., *An essay concerning self-murder wherein is endeavour'd to prove that it is unlawful according to natural principles: with some considerations upon what is pretended from the said principles, by the author of a treatise intituled, Biathanatos, and others* (London, 1700).

Anon., *A Brief account of the behaviour, &c. Axtel, Daniel, d. 1660., Carew, John, d. 1660., Cook, John, d. 1660., Hacker, Francis, d. 1660., Harrison, Thomas, 1609-1660., Jones, John, d. 1660., Peters, Hugh, 1598-1660., Scott, Thomas, d. 1660., Scrope, Adrian, d. 1660.* (London, 1660).

Anon., *A full and true account of a most horrid, barbarous, and bloody murther, committed by one John Monstevens Esq; a Cornish Parliament man upon his own person, in cutting his throat from ear to ear on Thursday the 19th. of December, at Brown's Coffee-House in King-street, Westminster., London: Printed by T. Bland, near Fleet-street, 1706.*

Anon., *A Full and the truest narrative of the most horrid, barbarous and unparalled murder, committed on the person of John Knight, apprentice to Mr. Arthur Worth, silk-man*

*in milk-street, London. Which ... was committed by the desperate and bloody hand of Nathaniel Butler ... on Thursday morning August 6. 1657. Together with the manner of his being apprehended and examined; and the confession from the mouth of the said Butler ... an account of the tryall, condemnation and sentence pronounced against him, which was executed upon him, on Monday August 31. 1657. And his last speech upon the ladder immediately before his death, which he desired might be printed after his death; and to that end gave it at large in writing from off the ladder, to Mr. Yearwood chaplain to the right honourable Sir Robert Titchbourn lord mayor of London ... (London, 1657).*

*Anon., A new song: shewing the crueltie of Gernutus a lew, who leading to a merchant a hundred crownes, would have a pound of his flesh, because he could not pay him at the day appointed. To the tune of Black and yellow London: By E.P. for I. Wright, dwelling in Gilt-spur-street, 1640.*

*Anon., A true and faithful narrative of the life and actions of John Oneby, Esq., commonly called Major Oneby, who was to have been executed last Monday at Tyburn for the murder of William Gower, Esq., giving an account of his birth, parentage and education of his killing Count Truxy a Saxon officer in Flanders, Lieut. Toolley in Jamaica, and the murder of himself in Newgate : with the copy of a letter he wrote to a gentleman an hour before he committed that violent action and of an amazing wicked declaration he made a few days before it of an undertaker's letter to him about his burial and his behaviour thereupon : also of a remarkable instance of generosity in one of his fellow-prisoners, with many other surprising particulars (London, 1727).*

*Anon., A True and impartial account of the birth, parentage, education, life, and conversation of Edmund Audley: who was executed at Tyburn on Wednesday the*

*22d of June, 1698, for the barbarous murther of Mrs. Hannah Bullevant in St. Martins Le Grand, near Aldersgate : as also, an account of his marriage to a ministers daughter at Exeter ... to which is added, the particulars of his tryal and condemnation ... (London, 1698).*

*Anon., A true and perfect relation of the grand traytors execution, as at severall times they were drawn, hang'd, and quartered at Charing-crosse, and at Tiburne. Together with their several speeches and confessions which every one of them made at the time of their execution (London, 1660).*

*Anon., A true and wonderful relation of a murther committed in the parish of Newington, the 12th. day of this present January. By a maid who poysoned her self, and cut the throat of a child (London, 1681).*

*Anon., A warning for all desperate VVomen. By the example of Alice DAVIS who for killing of her husband was burned in Smithfield; (1628), Magdalene College Cambridge, Pepys Ballads 1.120-121.*

*Anon., A warning for wives, By the example of one Katherine Francis, alias Stoke, who for killing her husband Robert Francis with a paire of Sizars, on the 8. of Aprill at night, was burned on Clarkenwell-greene, on Tuesday, the 21 of the same moneth, 1629. (1629), Magdalene College Cambridge, Pepys Ballads 1.118-119.*

*Anon., An account of the digging up of the quarters of William Stayley, lately executed for high treason, for that his relations abused the Kings mercy (London, 1678).*

*Anon., An account of the manner, behaviour and execution of Mary Aubry, who was burnt to ashes, in Leicester Fields, on Friday the 2d day of March, 1687 for the barbarous and inhumane murther, committed on the body of Dennis Aubry, her husband, in*

*the parish of St. Martins in the Fields, on the 27th of January last. And the same day, Daniel Sconley was executed at Tyburn (London, 1687).*

*Anon., An Elegy on Sir Thomas Armstrong: who was executed June the 20th 1684, for conspiring the death of the king, and his Royal Highness the Duke of York (London, 1684).*

*Anon., An impartial account of all the material circumstances relating to Sir Thomas Armestrong Kt. who was executed at Tyburn for high treason, on Friday the 20th of June, 1684. from the first discovery of the plot, to the day of his execution. As his being impeached of high treason, for conspiring the death of the King, &c. His flight, and his Majesties proclamation issued out thereupon, for his apprehending. His continuance in Holland. The indictment of high treason against him, and process of outlawry entered thereon. His being apprehended at Leyden in Holland, and brought into England. His commitment to Newgate, and the award of death against him at the Kings-Bench-Bar at Westminster. The manner of his behaviour till the day of his execution. Together with his last dying words at the place of execution, &c. Entered according to order (London, 1684).*

*Anon., Deeds against nature, and monsters by kinde tryed at the goale deliuerie of Newgate, at the sessions in the Old Bayly, the 18. and 19. of Iuly last, 1614. the one of a London cripple named Iohn Arthur, that to hide his shame and lust, strangled his betrothed wife. The other of a lasciuious young damsell named Martha Scambler, which made away the fru[i]t of her own womb, that the world might not see the seed of her owne shame: which two persons with diuers others vvere executed at Tyburne the 21. o[f] Iuly folowing. With two sorrowfull ditties of these two aforesaid persons, made by themselues in Newgate, the night before their execution (London, 1614).*

Anon., *For the King and both Houses of Parliament being a brief, plain, and true relation of some of the late sad sufferings of the people of God called Quakers for worshipping God and exercising a good conscience towards God and man : by reason whereof 89 have suffered till death, 32 of which dyed before the King came into England and 57 since of which 57, by hard imprisonment and cruel usage, 43 have dyed in this city of London and Southwark since the Act made against meetings / from the people of God called Quakers* (London, 1663).

Anon., *Friends' Intelligencer*, Vol. 22: March 11, 1865 (Classic Reprint, 2018).

Anon., *Hanging Not Punishment Enough for Murtherers, High-way Men, and House-breakers; Offered to the Consideration of the Two Houses of Parliament* (London, 1701).

Anon., *Letter from a Jew to Mr. Aran de Almanza, the Spanish merchant, that was converted from Juadism [sic] to the Church of England* (London, 1703).

Anon., *Sad and deplorable news from Bride-lane: or, A warning for lovers that are either inconstant or too fond Being a full and true relation of a young man, (by trade a hatter living in Bride-lane) an apprentice, that having been three years in love with a young maiden, and now fancying that she slighted him, poysoned himself on Tuesday the 21 of March last; and after having been buried some time in the Church-yard, was removed thence into the highway neer Fleetbridge*. Licensed April 3. 1676. Oldenburg.

Anon., *The Coblers threed is cut, or, The Coblers monument wherein to the everlasting memory of the folly of Samuel How, his doctrines are detected, and his life and death described, together with an epitaph ... he being buried in the high-way neer*



*Dame Annes a Clear (a place so called neer Shores-ditch, on Tuesday, Sept. 29, 1640*  
(London, 1640).

Anon., *The Confession and execution of the seven prisoners suffering at Tyburn on Fryday the 4th of May, 1677 viz, Robert Dine, William Dine, and Margaret Dine [brace] of Enfield, for barbarously wounding of Jane King, the sweet-heart of the said Robert, Margaret Spicer [brace] for murthering her bastard-childe, David Hackley, Jeremiah Dawson, and Mary Browne, [brace] all notorious offenders, and formerly burn'd in the hand for several felonies by them committed: together with their penitent behaviour in Newgate, since their condemnation, and last speeches at the place of execution* (London, 1677).

Anon., *The high-way woman, or, A true and perfect narrative of the wicked life, and deplorable death of Marcy Clay, otherwise called Jenny Fox, who being condemned to be hanged, with other malefactors, at Tyburn, on Wednesday, the 12th of April, instant, did on the Tuesday fore-going, poyson her self, to avoid the shame of that kind of death* (London, 1665).

Anon., *The Jew pedlar* Printed and Sold by R. Walker, near the Duke's Palace, (Norwich, 1780).

Anon., *The last speech, confession & prayer of Joyce Ebbs, to several ministers in the presseyard at Newgate, and at the place of execution in Smithfield Rounds on Thursday last in the fore-noon. Immediately before she was bound to the stake, to be burnt alive, to ashes, for that horrid act and bloody murdering of her own husband at Dog and Bitch Yard near Drury Lane: As also, the several passages that happened before her death; her heavie groans and shrieks in the fire, and the providing of a half sheet spread over with pitch, to shorten the time of her miserable torment* (London, 1662).

Anon., *The Life and Death of Christian Bowman, alias Murphy who was burnt at a stake, in the Old Bailey, on Wednesday the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 1789 for high treason, in feloniously and traitorously counterfeiting the silver coin of the realm. Containing her birth and parentage, youthful adventures, love amours, fatal marriage, unhappy connections, and untimely death [With "The Last Farewell to the World of the unfortunate Mrs. Bowman." In verse],* (London, 1789).

Anon., *The sad and dreadful relation of a bloody and cruel murder committed by Mr. Thomas Low a minister, in Heart-Street, Covent-Garden, upon his own person, on the 29th. or 30th. of March. 1684. Together with the circumstances that attended it, as they appeared before the coroners inquest, who sate upon the dead corps on the 30th. of the aforesaid month, and what else happened remarkable thereupon* (London: printed for Langley Curtis, 1684).

Anon., *The Sad Effects of Cruelty Detected; Being an Impartial Account of the poor Woman, near Temple-Barr, lately tempted in her Distraction to Make away her self. Whose Temptation and Distraction proceeded not from her Owning the Quakers, their Meetings or Principles (as hath been most Maliciously suggested) but from the Devil & a Wicked Husband (prevailing upon her own Infirmary) as is hereby briefly (yet apparently) evinced. In Pursuance of a late Malicious Pamphlet-and Fallacious Account, entituled, The Sad and Dreadful End of One of the QUAKERS, &c. Oppression maketh a Wise Man Mad.* Printed in the Year 1675.

Anon., *The several speeches, disputes, and conferences, betwixt the gentlemen of the Black Roll (actors in that most horrid and bloody tragedy, against our late Gracious Sovereign Lord King Charles of ever glorious memory) and divers of the independant party, in the common dungeon at Newgate. With several remarkable passages and observations on the lives and practises of those unhappy and trayterous politicians.*

*Also the names of divers; and their private proceedings and instructions to their friends* (London, 1661).

Anon., *The Speech of the Queene of Sluts. At her Execution at Tyburne, on Wednesday February 25 1662 with A true Relation of Eleven more that were Executed the same time* (London, 1662/3).

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