

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY LONDON MIDWIVES:  
THEIR TRAINING, LICENSING AND SOCIAL PROFILE.

by

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**SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY LONDON MIDWIVES**

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## Abstract

This study is an exploration of seventeenth-century London midwives which is based, for the most part, on seventeenth-century archival sources. It is a study which challenges current and firmly entrenched perceptions of these women. The core of the thesis focuses on seventy-six midwives drawn from twelve parishes who have been examined within the context of their respective parishes. In addition, an index containing the names and other relevant information pertaining to some 900 midwives has been compiled. We will demonstrate by an investigation of the ecclesiastical licensing process, pre-licensed experience, midwives' clients, and the midwives' socio-economic circumstances, that London midwives in the Tudor-Stuart period were not incompetent and poor. Midwives were highly skilled and thoroughly experienced through their participation in a system of unofficial apprenticeship. They were, moreover, well respected both within their own parishes and by clients drawn from a broad spectrum of geographic and socio-economic settings. Many midwives were well-to-do and were the wives or widows of prosperous and influential parishioners. Throughout the seventeenth century London midwives made a valued and important contribution to the City's inhabitants who faced the perils and pleasures of childbirth.

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### List of Abbreviations

C.L.R.O.	Corporation of London Offices Library
G.L.R.O.	Greater London Record Office
G.L.	Guildhall Library
L.P.	Lambeth Palace Library
P.R.O.	Public Record Office (Chancery Lane)

Note: For purposes of this study the new year will commence on January the first.

## Introduction

The phenomenal growth of London in the seventeenth century has been a topic of debate and study by historians in recent years.<sup>1</sup> As England's biggest city, as well as one of the largest in early modern Europe, a paradox is apparent in the absence of secondary literature on London, particularly as it relates to both the causes of its growth and its effects on the social and economic life of its inhabitants.<sup>2</sup> Aside from demographic and economic attributes, the wider influence which London commanded adds increased importance to studies which deal with segments of its population. This influence extended to the provinces and was manifested in changing 'customs, prejudices and modes of action'.<sup>3</sup> Despite the capital's undeniable significance in the early modern period, the editors of a recent volume on London in the years 1500-1700 noted their inability to procure papers on a number of important topics, including 'the position of women'.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the last substantive work on the topic of women and work in the seventeenth century was that of Alice Clark, first published in 1919.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the social history of medicine is moving rapidly into the mainstream of historical research in the early modern period, a period when birth, sickness and

death were an inextricable part of the daily experience of all ranks of society.<sup>6</sup> Recent studies have pointed out the centrality of medicine in seventeenth-century culture and the way medical practice mirrored the remarkable changes in religious, philosophical and political thought.<sup>7</sup>

The identity of midwives has traditionally been shrouded in anonymity, but nowhere more so than in the bustling seventeenth-century metropolis of London. Frequently referred to in the records of their own parish as merely 'the midwife', who were these faceless women who moved so silently about their work which lay at the very heart of the human drama that touched the lives of London's richest and poorest citizens alike?<sup>8</sup> In a city flooded with migrants who were cut off from home ties, the role of a London midwife assumes even greater significance as a timeless symbol of the past, present and future, and as a bridge between the long-time resident and the newcomer who shared the universal experience of child birth.<sup>9</sup> This study of London midwives will contribute to our understanding not only of midwives themselves but also of women, women's work, the social history of medicine, and the larger topic of London's history in the seventeenth century.

Current perceptions of seventeenth-century English midwives have largely been shaped by historians who have not only accepted uncritically the testimony of male midwives

such as Percival Willughby but have also neglected any attempt at historical reconstruction of their lives.<sup>10</sup> Hence, the enduring stereotype of the early modern English midwife encompasses ignorance, incompetence and poverty. The single most influential source in the historiography of English midwifery has been Willughby's compilation of some 200 midwifery cases selected from his own forty year practice. Willughby's seventeenth-century manuscript was not published until 1863, but from that time up to the present it has continued to dominate our understanding of early modern midwifery.

The first historians of English midwifery were physicians whose accounts were inevitably biased in favour of the male professionals.<sup>11</sup> Working within the context of the late nineteenth century, J.H. Aveling M.D. reflected the bias of his period against female practitioners as well as the methodology which prevailed in the era of antiquarian historical writing. Aveling drew heavily on Willughby and the accounts of a few other male practitioners. As a result, his views of seventeenth and eighteenth-century midwifery encompassed the contemporary view of women's incapacity to assimilate scientific knowledge as well as an acceptance of their exclusion from institutions of higher learning.<sup>12</sup> Aveling introduced his influential account,

English Midwives: their History and Prospects (1872) with the following statement:

I am not standing up to plead the cause of women as obstetricians, because I think, if there is one occupation for which they are less fitted than another, it is that of attending the emergencies of obstetric practice.<sup>13</sup>

Aveling deals briefly with a few royal midwives as well as midwife and author Jane Sharpe and the political and highly visible Elizabeth Cellier, but reserves most of his praise for male practitioners William Harvey (who he says 'was the first to rescue English midwifery from its age of darkness'), Peter Chamberlen, William Sermon and Percival Willughby.<sup>14</sup> Aveling took great pains to point out the academic and professional qualifications of the four men and concludes:

...these self-constituted instructors of midwives were men of high social and medical position. Had they considered the study and practice of midwifery beneath their dignity, how disastrous would it have been to English mothers, and who can say how much longer the dark ages of midwifery would have continued in this country.<sup>15</sup>

Ten years later, Aveling published his tribute to the Chamberlen family, inventors of the midwifery forceps, which were described by Aveling as 'this most beneficent of instruments'. Aveling's description is an indication of the positive light in which he viewed the 'scientific' advances

being made by a small group of male practitioners of midwifery.<sup>16</sup>

Following Aveling, medical personnel have published midwifery studies which, again, found their inspiration in the earlier studies about male midwives and adhered to the narrow perspective of biographical writing rather than adopting the methodologies of the 'professional' historian. Physicians continue to adopt a patronizing stance toward female midwives in their studies of midwifery, while seeing male practitioners as 'the heroes of the piece'. As late as 1975, Dr. H. Arthure wrote: 'Nevertheless the 17th and 18th centuries saw considerable advances in obstetric knowledge by male obstetricians who were called man-midwives, and they recognized the importance of teaching midwives'.<sup>17</sup> More recently, Steven Brody M.D. was awarded the Osler Gold Medal for an essay on an eighteenth-century male midwife in which he traced the unilinear ascent of child birth from 'the hands of the unskilled sixteenth-century midwife to those of the trained accoucheur, or man midwife, and finally to those of the physician skilled in the art of healing'.<sup>18</sup>

Thomas Forbes was an early historian of medicine who began to publish on the subject of midwifery in the 1960s. Forbes, however, continued to perpetuate the stereotypes which had originated with Willughby via Aveling although he began to introduce limited archival evidence. In his

chapter 'Early Regulation of English Midwives' he has included reproductions of eight midwives' testimonials which he has mistakenly identified as midwives' licences.<sup>19</sup> When he concludes, however, that both the licensing and training of midwives were 'seriously inadequate by modern standards' he is not only guilty of 'presentism', but he has arrived at his position without attempting a serious analysis of the best available evidence about the licensing and training of seventeenth-century midwives.<sup>20</sup>

In a recent study of English obstetrics and gynaecology covering the years 1540-1740, Audrey Eccles based her conclusions regarding midwifery practice, for the most part, on published works by Willughby and other male medical practitioners.<sup>21</sup> Willughby's casebook documents selected cases from his seventeenth-century practice in Derby and London. They reflect the author's self-proclaimed competence, frequently at the expense of midwives whose characterization runs the gamut from ignorance and poverty to the perpetration of torture, even though his overall perception is that the routine work of midwifery should be carried out by women.<sup>22</sup> Eccles has left unchallenged the testimony of a few male midwives and practitioners who made a point of reporting labours and deliveries which turned out badly while leaving unacknowledged the work of many competent women whose practice involved thousands of

deliveries each year where no mishap occurred to mother or child. The resulting view of midwives and women's own experience of childbirth is a distorted one which merely echoes the male authors in labelling midwives as generally incompetent illiterates; it also promotes the image of male superiority in theory and technique.<sup>23</sup> Eccles' unsupported conclusion that the emergence of the male midwife was

more likely... due to a quite rational evaluation by women themselves of the respective merits of male and female midwives and a conscious decision to employ men...in the interests of the women's own safety and comfort

is, moreover, contradicted by available evidence from seventeenth-century women themselves.<sup>24</sup>

Jean Donnison in her study of interprofessional rivalry, Midwives and Medical Men, synthesized much of the work of earlier historians including Forbes' studies. Nonetheless, a work of this nature, while serving a useful purpose, does not lend itself to an extensive exploration of seventeenth-century sources. For this reason her conclusion that episcopal licensing was an ineffectual way of ensuring professional aptitude will be challenged by this study.<sup>25</sup>

Evidence from a few midwives' testimonial certificates was introduced by Donna Snell Smith, but again the richness of these documents has been virtually ignored. Based on her small sample, her conclusion is merely



speculative: '...there must have been a significant proportion of midwives who were practising their profession in an honourable fashion'.<sup>26</sup> Snell Smith then bows to the traditional acceptance of superior medical education as proof of advanced technical expertise in child delivery:

Real progress was next to be seen with the entrance of the man mid-wife to the ranks of the profession. He brought with him the obstetrical forceps and access to the new scientific knowledge that at this time was available only to men.<sup>27</sup>

The most recent major study relating to seventeenth-century child birth and midwifery incorporates archival sources such as visitation records and testimonial certificates from the diocese of Norwich.<sup>28</sup> Once more, however, historian Adrian Wilson has drawn heavily on Willughby's observations to support his conclusions. We will argue, for example, that Wilson's contention that child-bearing women saw the male practitioner as a more competent alternative to the female midwife is not supported by the present extensive analysis of more than 500 testimonials as well as other records from the archives of seventeenth-century London parishes.<sup>29</sup>

We see, then, a continuum which stretched from Willughby through Aveling to the present in which the historiography of midwifery has been dominated by a viewpoint which was restricted not only by the inherent

biases of the male midwife but also by the paucity of archival sources which historians have employed in their studies of seventeenth-century midwifery. In order to break free of this stereotype which was shaped by an antiquarian approach to the writing of history, an archivally based methodology was perceived as imperative.

In addition to recent major studies on the topic of Tudor-Stuart midwifery which have in the main accepted the image of the incompetent, maladroit midwife, the traditional view is reflected in the work of social historians such as Lawrence Stone, Keith Thomas and Ralph Houlbrooke whose works of synthesis rely, necessarily, on the work of earlier specialized studies such as those by Forbes.<sup>30</sup> While rejecting the blatant denigratory position of some seventeenth-century authors toward midwives, Hilda Smith's intended defence of midwives demonstrates how easily the historian is seduced by relying solely on printed material from the period, particularly literature produced by those with vested interests. Smith's final position is that of an apologia for midwives who were barred from attaining the necessary education and expertise for becoming competent practitioners of their art purely on the basis of gender.<sup>31</sup> It is a position which we will show is untenable in light of an examination of a wide variety of sources from the seventeenth century. So pervasive and enduring has been the

midwife stereotype that a recent literary analysis of seventeenth and eighteenth-century midwife books presents positive images of the midwife in the literature of the period on the one hand, but accepts uncritically the statements of historians such as Donnison and Forbes about her purported ineptness, ignorance and low social status, on the other, without any resolution of this paradox.<sup>32</sup>

Although recent investigators have leaned heavily upon Percival Willughby's writings for their conclusions about seventeenth-century midwifery practice, Willughby's remarks about London midwives -- which cast them in a more favourable light than their provincial counterparts -- have, surprisingly, failed to capture the interest of researchers.<sup>33</sup> To date, no full scale study of London midwives has been undertaken. This study, which focuses on the midwives of London, will look at their licensing under the auspices of the Church of England, their system of training, their clients, and their social and economic world. To this end, extensive use will be made of ecclesiastical records, churchwardens accounts, vestry minutes, tithe rolls, tax records (such as lay subsidy, hearth tax assessments and the 1695 'marriage duty' act) as well as wills.<sup>34</sup> Midwives' case and account books, seventeenth-century diaries and published material will also come under scrutiny. In particular, the midwives'

testimonial certificates will be intensively analyzed in an attempt to recover the lives of hundreds of women from anonymity and to redress the inequities imposed by neglect and selective reading of a few seventeenth-century sources. In so doing, the archival evidence of and about these female practitioners and their clients as individuals will, for the first time, play a key role in the history of early modern English midwifery. As a case in point which demonstrates the need for such a study, a recent attempt to reconstruct childbirth from the mother's point of view was based on standard sources, written, in the main, by men.<sup>35</sup> Roy Porter, in particular, has been critical of the way in which social historians of medicine have neglected the patient's viewpoint in their studies; it is a shortcoming which will be addressed in this study.<sup>36</sup>

This thesis is focused upon the social history of midwives. It is not a study about the technical aspects of midwifery, although some conclusions have been generated which reflect directly upon the technical competence of midwives of the period.<sup>37</sup> Nor is it a study which attempts to assess the merits of midwives through analyzing estimated case loads or maternal death rates. For the most part, the sources do not lend themselves to methodologies which address such concerns, although some conclusions will be drawn about infant mortality as it relates to an

anonymous midwife's late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century practice.<sup>38</sup> Because ecclesiastical licensing placed midwives under the aegis of the Church of England, dissenting midwives, among them Roman Catholics and Quakers, have not been included in this study.

There is only limited evidence about midwives of religious persuasions outside of the Church of England. When Thomas Taylor the minister of St. Olave Silver Street supplied Mary Taylor with a testimonial statement in 1661, he stressed the fact that she was 'no papist' indicating some concern on the part of church officials that Roman Catholics should be excluded from licensing.<sup>39</sup> There is no record of the licensing of Elizabeth Cellier, the highly visible seventeenth-century midwife and author who was a convert to Catholicism.<sup>40</sup> A preliminary inquiry at the archives housing the records of the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical organization of the seventeenth-century suggests that it will be difficult to study recusant midwives from official sources, but there may be other avenues which could be fruitfully investigated.<sup>41</sup> Recusant wives were among the most ardent defenders of the Roman Church and no doubt resisted engaging a midwife who had taken an oath to ensure that any infant in imminent danger of death be baptized into the Church of England.<sup>42</sup> In at least one instance in the sixteenth century, a 'papist'

midwife was granted a bishop's licence to practice midwifery although the circumstances appear to have been unusual.<sup>43</sup> The author of a recent article on recusant women believes that many recusant gentlewomen 'assisted poor women in child bed' but, aside from describing how the Countess of Arundel assisted a poor vagrant female who gave birth in the cage on the busy thoroughfare between Hammersmith and London, no further information has been provided.<sup>44</sup> Despite the wealth of information in Boulton's recent study of Southwark, the question of who delivered the women of the wealthy and influential Catholic Montague family remains a tantalizing enigma.<sup>45</sup>

There is the occasional mention of a Quaker midwife in diaries of the period; the wife of Dr. Francis Turner, Dean of Windsor, used the services of a Quaker midwife in 1678 but unfortunately the mother did not survive the delivery.<sup>46</sup> The skilful Quaker midwife who was recommended to Edmund Verney charged enormous fees for a delivery but refused traditional gifts from god parents on religious grounds.<sup>47</sup> In 1670 a Kendal midwife delivered the wife of George Taylor 'market place Quaker' of a daughter.<sup>48</sup> The clergyman at Enfield, Benjamin Younge experienced some problems with an unnamed Quaker midwife in 1675 whom he was encouraging to obtain a midwifery licence. Younge described the Quakers as 'stubborn and infractory' but was hopeful of

success in persuading the woman to apply for licensing.<sup>49</sup> The uncovering of Catholic and Quaker midwives is a challenge awaiting future investigators. At present the evidence is so severely restricted that no meaningful comparison with midwives licensed within the Anglican establishment can be attempted. Therefore, they are not included in the following study.

Historians of seventeenth-century England invariably confront the events of the civil war and its aftermath. Christopher Durston leaves us with the impression that it may have been more difficult to obtain a midwife's services because of disturbances created by the war, but the geographical boundaries of his generalization are undefined.<sup>50</sup> Certainly, no fighting took place in London or its suburbs and the civilian population was left largely undisturbed. On the other hand, the midwives of London apparently submitted their petition to parliament in 1643 asking that the war be stopped because their business was suffering with so many husbands called away from their wives at the behest of the military.<sup>51</sup> Aside from dealing with a few individual instances where the war touched the lives of midwives, no evidence has come to our attention that the work of child delivery was affected by the events of the war years.<sup>52</sup>

A picture of seventeenth-century London midwives will emerge in what follows that takes into account their training in a well-developed, albeit unofficial, system of apprenticeship under senior midwives. Within this system, most women had many years of empirical experience as deputy midwives before obtaining an ecclesiastical licence. Licensing depended not only on proof of character and church attendance but also on competence. Indeed, there is evidence to support the argument that competence was more important than moral rectitude in the minds of many, including at least some church officials.<sup>53</sup> The stereotype of the poor (and by extension 'dirty') midwife will disappear. London midwives were economically viable and generally of the middle class. Some were married to gentlemen as well as professional men; a number were wealthy widows while others were married to men of substance who held positions of the highest responsibility in their respective parishes.

The investigation of seventeenth-century London midwives which unfolds in ensuing chapters began with a search of ecclesiastical records to uncover the names of women who had been granted licenses by the Church of England to practise midwifery. This first step has been acknowledged by David Harley as the starting point of a detailed examination of primary sources which is mandatory



for an understanding of the midwife's position in English society.<sup>54</sup>

The registers of both the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury and testimonial certificates from the jurisdictions of London, Canterbury and the Peculiar of the Deanery and Chapter of St. Paul contain evidence which is central to this study of seventeenth-century London midwives. A brief introduction to these sources is therefore desirable. For the first four decades of the century, only the registers of the diocese of London and the archdiocese of Canterbury survive. The names of midwives who were licensed in the diocese of London are scattered throughout the Vicar General's records pertaining to the business of the consistory courts. Commencing with the year 1607 and ending in 1641, the names of at least 170 women who were licensed in this jurisdiction as midwives appear. Although a recent study has suggested that licensing of London midwives did not get underway until the second decade of the century, the names of some sixteen women who were licensed in the diocese of London in the years 1607-10 have been recorded.<sup>55</sup> The registers of Archbishops Abbott and Laud have disclosed another twenty London midwives who were licensed in the years covered by the registers of 1611-45.<sup>56</sup>

The quality of the evidence in both sets of registers from the early decades of the century is variable; in the first fifteen or twenty years, the clerks were relatively careful about transferring evidence from the midwives' testimonial certificates (which no longer survive) into the registers. They went to the trouble of recording the names of the six women who were giving sworn evidence of the midwife's competence and sometimes included husband's occupations, the names of church officials and information about a senior midwife and associate. Toward the end of the second decade, there are signs of carelessness in the recording process. Occasionally, the midwife's parish has been left out or only three clients' names were shown. By 1624, in some cases, merely the customary heading with the midwife's name and parish appears with the body of the text omitted.<sup>57</sup> In 1627, 1628 and 1629 lapses again occur, with only the midwife's name and in some, but not all, cases the parish appearing. In 1633, there are more examples of unfinished entries where the text trails off and space has been left for more information which, unfortunately, has never been added. Despite these omissions and the limitations they impose upon quantification, these early entries are useful for identifying a substantial number of early modern midwives who would otherwise go unrecognized. In addition, in some cases, useful information of a

qualitative nature has been included such as a midwife's age and the association with a senior midwife for training purposes. We have also been able to identify midwives who were licensed in this early period and were still active in the Restoration years; in at least one case, we have been able to establish a matriarchal link between three generations of midwives.

The absence of documentary evidence for the period 1642-1660 supports the conclusion that there was a complete breakdown in the ecclesiastical licensing process in the civil war period, a breakdown which extended until the period of episcopal restoration. The last midwifery license which was recorded before the hiatus was that issued to Mary Hubbard of St. Brigid's parish in January 1641.<sup>58</sup> Hubbard's license is followed by several blank pages in the register, indicative of a break in the licensing process. The next recorded license was that granted to Elizabeth Dowke of the parish of St. Bartholomew the Great by the chancellor Richard Chaworth in January 1661.<sup>59</sup> Elizabeth Cellier, London midwife, wrote in 1688 that the midwives were examined and licensed at Chirurgeon's Hall during the hiatus in ecclesiastical licensing, but the extant records of the Barber-Surgeon's Company offer no support for Cellier's account.<sup>60</sup>

For the period after the Restoration, we have both registers and testimonials. For the diocese of London, there are 439 surviving midwives' testimonial certificates from the years 1661-1699. Only 164 of these midwives are to be found in the registers for the period. The 275 names which have not been entered were victims of a faulty process whereby information received by the court, in many cases, did not reach the recording clerks. We can be confident that it was a defect in the recording procedure and not the failure of the court to issue a licence which resulted in the discrepancy between registers and testimonials because in almost all of the 275 cases the chancellor himself or his surrogate has clearly written on the testimonial certificate the date which the women (both midwives and clients) appeared before him and were sworn, in the same way he has done for the 164 names which were registered.<sup>61</sup> For example, in the year 1669 the testimonial certificates of eight women are plainly identified as having been licensed by the abbreviation 'lic.', followed by the signature of Chancellor Thomas Exton, but none of their names appear in the Vicar General's register.<sup>62</sup> Additional proof of an unreliable system of recording lies in the fact that no midwives licenses were recorded at all for thirteen years within the periods 1664-1668, 1671-1672, 1680-1685. In only seven cases (out of a total of 171 entries) there are no

surviving testimonials for women whose licences were registered, leading us to conclude that the testimonial certificates represent a reliable source of information about post-1660 licensed midwives in the diocese of London.

Similarly, a comparison between the testimonial certificates preserved at Lambeth Palace Library and the archbishops' registers show that twelve of the sixty-one women whose testimonials are extant from the years 1669-1700 are not recorded as licensed midwives in the register. Once again, in every case their testimonial certificates are clearly signed by the chancellor (in five cases by Thomas Exton) as an indication that they have been sworn before him as midwives. Five names appear in the registers for whom no testimonials exist.<sup>63</sup> For the twenty testimonials from the Peculiar of the Deanery and Chapter of St. Paul, 1664-98, we have no register for comparison but, once again, believe them to be a reliable source about licensed midwives in view of the evidence, not only from the jurisdictions of London and Canterbury, but because they bear the signature of a court official in all but one or two cases and it is unlikely that the testimonials of women who failed to receive their licences would be preserved. We have then a total of 521 testimonial certificates from the period 1661-1700 which will form a major source for our observations about the licensing, training and clientele of seventeenth-

century London midwives. It is impossible to make even an 'educated guess' at the total number of midwives who were working in London during this period.

In addition to the midwives recorded in registers and testimonial certificates, visitation records disclosed the names of other midwives practising in London in the seventeenth century. Diaries, letters and biographies have also revealed the names of London midwives, swelling the list to over 900 names (and still growing) from which a 'directory' of London midwives has been compiled. This directory contains the name of the midwife and her spouse, the year of licensing (or first reference) and the parish of residence (see below, Appendix G). The directory provides a basic reference aid, and is similar in concept to John Raach's often cited A Directory of English Country Physicians 1603-1643.<sup>64</sup>.

The names of such a large group of midwives became an 'embarrassment of riches'. Although observations of a general nature could be made (and in some instances are made) about the group as a whole, detailed study of such a large group is beyond the confines of this investigation. Time constraints are clearly a factor.<sup>65</sup> Unevenness of evidence is a principal limitation; in many instances -- especially where testimonial certificates are not extant -- important features of a midwife's life and career cannot be

reconstructed. Thus, for the 'fleshing out' of the formal ecclesiastical records in recreating the socio-economic lives of London midwives, a smaller group of midwives was selected. This core group became the focus of a more intensive search for wills, tax levies and information contained in other parish records such as churchwardens accounts and vestry minutes. We have attempted to piece together a brief biography for seventy-six midwives, with varying degrees of success, in a manner similar to that adopted by Boulton for one seventeenth-century Boroughside inhabitant.<sup>66</sup> Because of the nature of the evidence, the parish became the organizing unit for this segment of the study.<sup>67</sup>

The core group was drawn from eleven of the 97 parishes within the city walls and one large parish of the 13 outside of the walls was added. The selection of the twelve parishes was systematically undertaken. Surprisingly, a number of London parishes failed to yield the name of a single midwife throughout the century (See Appendices G and H). Of the remaining parishes, a balance had to be struck between a suitable number of midwives and the quality of existing parish records: important parish records were missing for some parishes which boasted goodly numbers of midwives nicely distributed across the century; conversely, superb records survived for parishes in which no

trace of a midwife had been found. Having made the accommodation between numbers of midwives and availability of records, other factors were considered to ensure that the core group was as representative as possible, displaying a wide range of socio-economic and demographic features. To this end, the categories devised by Tai Liu were adopted and parishes were chosen from four groups based on the tithable number of houses in the respective parishes. In addition to categorization by size, the relative wealth of the parishes in each of the four groups was taken into consideration (again from Liu).<sup>68</sup> Researchers have demonstrated the way in which the parish's location within the City itself influenced not only the size but the wealth of the parish.<sup>69</sup> The parishes included in this study lie close to the centre of the City as well as at the periphery to the east, west, north and south. As a result, the twelve parishes from which the core group was drawn represent a broad spectrum of demographic, economic and social attributes (see Table 1 below).



Table 1: Core Parishes

Parish	Size	Socio-economic category
<u>Intramural</u>		
Allhallows the Less	ii	poor
St. Andrew Wardrobe	iv	poor
St. Anne Blackfriars	iv	poor
St. Bartholomew by the Exchange	ii	mixed (poor pre- dominate)
St. Ethelburgha	iii	poor
St. Gregory by St. Pauls	iv	rich
St. John the Baptist	iii	rich
St. Katherine Coleman	iii	poor
St. Martin	i	(wealthy pre- dominate)
St. Mary Aldermanbury	ii	rich
St. Olave Silver Street	iii	poor
<u>Extramural</u>		
St. Dunstan in the West	iv	rich

(Group i-- parishes with no more than 50 tithable houses  
 ii--parishes with about 60-100 tithable houses  
 iii--parishes with about 100-200 tithable houses  
 iv--parishes with more than 200 tithable houses.)

All the foregoing categories were adapted from Tai Liu, see note 69 above.)

Aside from the usual difficulties besetting the historian attempting to bring seventeenth-century society to life, midwives of the period present particular problems. These arise in many cases, I suggest, from the very ubiquity of the work in which they were engaged. Although records of the parish such as vestry minutes and churchwardens' accounts contain valuable information about midwives in their professional role, they seldom give the midwife's name; she was, quite simply, 'the midwife'. Married women rarely appeared on tithe or tax rolls under their own names; fortunately, we have identified the names of many men who were married to midwives. Because midwifery was not organized into a craft guild or company and midwives never became citizens and freemen of the City, few midwives designated themselves by occupation for purposes of a census or for taxation. For example the so-called Marriage Duty Act of 1695, generally applauded for its reliability, lists only one midwife -- this at a time when licensing records and testimonials show that there were at least 123 midwives licensed by the Bishop of London alone in the years 1685-1700.<sup>70</sup> A recent comprehensive study of a large suburban London parish in the seventeenth century listed 123 occupational and social categories but failed to acknowledge the existence of a single midwife in a period which saw the area's population more than treble that of the mid-sixteenth

century.<sup>71</sup> Boulton's neglect of midwives is typical of studies involving occupational analysis in the early modern period; it is more than usually troublesome in view of his substantial discussion of the 'churching' of Southwark women, a tradition in which the midwife actively participated.<sup>72</sup> Historians have also failed to give adequate recognition to the special skills and status of the seventeenth-century midwives with the result that midwives have been lumped together with nurses and other lay practitioners in general studies, making it impossible to identify midwives as such.<sup>73</sup>

Finally, in order to set the scene for the archivally based study which is to follow, a brief overview is included of the character and limitations of printed material available to the seventeenth-century midwife in London.<sup>74</sup> The evidence presented below points to the fact that licensed midwives served lengthy informal or formal apprenticeships in which the educational experience was entirely pragmatic and practical. Similarly, women of all social classes, who were never licensed, witnessed and participated in community childbirths and, in some cases, became skilled in midwifery. Literate midwives and other female attendants could have utilized written medical information, but it is questionable to what extent this was either necessary or perceived to have been helpful when put

to the test of the actual child birth process. Certainly there existed not only a market for midwifery tracts but for a steady stream of medical works. Many of these claimed to have been written for midwives in particular and women in general, but they could have appealed only to the minority of women (including midwives) who were literate.<sup>75</sup>

The standard work The Birth of Mankind or the Woman's Book first appeared in English translation in 1540.<sup>76</sup> The English edition was a translation of Rosselin's Rosengarten which was first published in 1513 in Strassburg.

Wiesner points out that although the author, who was the City Physician of Worms, cites only classical sources 'clearly he had talked to midwives and women about their practices while writing his manual', and she believes the tract may have been an adjunct to the apprenticeship system in which Nuremberg's midwives were trained in the late mediaeval and early modern period.<sup>77</sup> The second and all subsequent editions bore the name of physician Thomas Raynald who, according to a recent analysis of text books of the period, probably lacked any personal experience of midwifery.<sup>78</sup> The prologue, addressed to 'women readers' expressed its intent to assist women in understanding their own anatomy as well as conception, child-bearing and the nursing of infants. This extremely popular book appeared in a number of editions and underwent numerous printings, the

last in 1654. After this date, D'Arcy Power has somewhat optimistically suggested that it was 'presently supplanted by the more scientific midwifery of modern times'.<sup>79</sup> The first edition was dedicated to Katherine Howard, wife of Henry VIII. In the second edition Raynald augmented the prologue with the suggestion that literate women could take the book to deliveries for the edification and instruction of the presiding midwife. His advice may or may not have been followed in the seventeenth century, but it would have had little practical value in view of the traditionally darkened chambers in which women of the period were brought to bed.<sup>80</sup>

In 1612, there appeared a translation of the French work by the physician Jaques Guillimeau, entitled, Child Birth or the Happy Deliverie of Women.<sup>81</sup> Guillimeau commented on the reason that women preferred midwives for their deliveries '... Necessitie (the mistresse of Arts) hath constrained women to learn and practice Physicke, one with another (for reasons of modesty)'.<sup>82</sup> Guillimeau's contribution was notable in that it contained the first description of podalic version to appear in English, although Guillimeau felt that in foot presentations it was safer to deliver the child by the feet rather than resorting to the technique of version.<sup>83</sup>

In the 1630s Peter Chamberlen, a member of the Chamberlen family, inventors and guardians of the first obstetrical forceps, proposed a scheme whereby London midwives would be incorporated into an association directly under his personal control. Some ten years after the rejection of his plan (which was supposedly intended to educate the midwives) Chamberlen published a diatribe against the midwives and physicians who had blocked his attempt.<sup>84</sup> Although the midwives rejected Chamberlen on the grounds that they had a far better knowledge of midwifery (based on practical experience) than Chamberlen, Chamberlen's defence of himself and his vitriolic attack on midwives whom he labelled 'femal-Arbiters of Life and Death' reveals --despite his stated aims -- no plan for implementing the so-called 'education' of midwives, nor affords any practical information for practising midwives.<sup>85</sup>

In 1651 the radical proponent of medical reform, Nicholas Culpeper, published A Directory for Midwives which bewailed the lack of educational opportunities for midwives.<sup>86</sup> There is no questioning Culpeper's genuine concern regarding the midwives' exclusion from formal education, but not only does Culpeper fail to appreciate the empirical knowledge of the midwives, he has, again, offered in his publication little or nothing by way of information

which would be of use during child delivery. This was not surprising since, by his own admission, he had no personal experience of the process.<sup>87</sup> Culpeper points out the futility of approaching the monopolistic College of Physicians for assistance in upgrading their education since the physicians are interested only in making money. He suggests instead that the midwives pray for wisdom.

De Morbis Foeminis (The Womans Counsellour) by Massarius was translated into English in 1657 by one R.T. Addressed to midwives and those intending to be midwives and typical of much of the pamphlet literature of the period, it promised much but delivered nothing instructive to women on the topic of midwifery.<sup>88</sup> Dr. William Sermon published The Ladies Companion or the English Midwife in 1671, acknowledging the traditional role of female midwives while setting out guidelines for their conduct and appearance.<sup>89</sup> Sermon's work combined common sense advice (not rushing the delivery) with harmless folk-lore (wearing wild carrot seed above the left elbow to increase fertility) and dangerous suggestions (applying plasters made from pigeon's dung to lacerations of the perineum).<sup>90</sup> Sermon's work is typical of the medical literature of the day (both lay and professional) which was an untidy mixture of Galenic or humoral theory, superstition and, in a few cases, common sense.<sup>91</sup> Eccles says of Sermon's treatise that it is not

only uninformative, it 'seems chiefly designed to advertise the author's famous cathartic and diuretic pills, only to be had of a certain bookseller'.<sup>92</sup>

In 1671 the first text book about midwifery written by a woman was published in London. Jane Sharp had been a midwife for more than thirty years by her own claim. As a literate individual with at least some education, she stressed that a midwife needed practical as well as theoretical knowledge but accepted the fact that women could not aspire to the educational opportunities which were afforded to men. Sharp believed that publications such as her Midwives Book would help to rectify what she perceived as the deficiency in midwives' training, although she went to great lengths to stress that empirical skill was more important in the final analysis.<sup>93</sup> Jean Donnison concluded that while Sharp's treatise contained 'much good sense', like other medical and midwifery treatises of the period, it was marred by superstition; another writer has pointed out Sharp's seeming unawareness of podalic version, but this was a shortcoming which was shared by most of the midwifery authors of the period.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, one of the foremost advocates of podalic version in theory, Percival Willughby, seldom used the manoeuvre in practice, possibly because of a perceived danger to the life of the mother.<sup>95</sup>



At the end of the century, John Pechey M.D. published Compleat Midwife's Practice Enlarged-Containing a perfect Directory or Rules for Midwives and Nurses.<sup>96</sup> Intended to instruct midwives, critical of previously published works, and purportedly endorsed by practitioners long dead, Pechey's treatise continued to propagate the errors typical of the period in his work which was obviously 'borrowed' from earlier authors.<sup>97</sup> He advocated, for example, that a placenta praevia should be 'cut off' by the midwife, a manoeuvre which would have resulted in instant death for the infant.<sup>98</sup> On the other hand, Pechey ridiculed the advice of midwives who urged their clients to eat a good diet in the post partum period to compensate for blood lost at the time of delivery since he considered what was lost 'unnecessary' blood.<sup>99</sup> Another example of the way in which midwives' common sense advice was devalued by doctors was reported by the Rev. John Ward. He noted that midwives who urged their clients to obtain exercise by walking in the last two months of pregnancy (to facilitate labour and delivery) were belittled by the doctors.<sup>100</sup>

Despite his obvious bias against many midwives, especially those in the country, Willughby's writings did contain useful observations on the work of child delivery. At least four manuscript copies of Willughby's treatise were produced, but inasmuch as the work was not published until

the nineteenth century the information about his practical experience could not have been widely disseminated.<sup>101</sup> Audrey Eccles considers two translations of Mauriceau's work produced by Hugh Chamberlen to be the first 'satisfactory' English textbooks on the topic of midwifery but they did not appear until 1673 and 1683.<sup>102</sup> However that may be, there is no way of assessing their impact, if any, on the quality of midwifery practised in the last quarter of the century in England's capital. We know nothing about what practising midwives actually read, if anything. With a medical profession still in the thrall of Galenic, Aristotelian and Hippocratic teachings and whose anatomical dissections were limited by widespread prejudices against the practice, seventeenth-century midwives received little or no practical help from the male medical professionals.<sup>103</sup> Throughout the century, midwives clearly relied, for the most part, on oral traditional knowledge conveyed through their own network and frequently through a close association with a senior midwife. This traditional knowledge supplemented what their own eyes, minds and hands taught them about the process of child birth.

In summary, this study will address in turn the themes of ecclesiastical licensing of midwives, the system of unofficial apprenticeship in which London midwives trained, the midwives' clients, the social world of the

larger population of London midwives and, in greater depth, the socio-economic circumstances of midwives in twelve selected parishes. In addition to a directory containing information about more than nine hundred midwives (Appendix G), appendixes will present documentary evidence relating to ecclesiastical licensing, as well as copies of a midwife's will and a midwife's estate inventory. Aside from the chapter on ecclesiastical licensing, a topic which has received attention from a number of historians, the remaining chapters will move into virtually uncharted waters.

## Notes

1. Roger Finlay, Population and Metropolis : The Demography of London 1580-1650 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); A. L. Beier & Roger Finlay eds., London 1500-1700 (London: Longman, 1986).
2. See Beier and Finlay 'The Significance of the Metropolis' in London 1500-1700 pp. 1-33. Beier and Finlay have challenged the argument that inadequate sources are at fault for the lack of substantive literature on London. (p.6) For an overview of the type of local history of London which is proliferating as a 'leisure-time occupation' with a 'market in nostalgia' but little or no analysis, see D.A. Reader, 'Keeping up with London's Past', Urban History Year Book (1977) pp.48-54.
3. E.A. Wrigley, 'A simple model of London's Importance in Changing English Society and Economy 1650-1750', Past and Present 37 (1967): 44-70, p.51.
4. Ibid, p.7.
5. Alice Clark, Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1919; reprint ed., Fairfield, N.J.: Augustus M. Kelley, 1978).
6. See, for example, Margaret Pelling 'Appearance and reality: barber-surgeons, the body and disease' in Beier and Finlay London 1500-1700 pp.82-112. See also Pelling's numerous other studies as well as the work of Charles Webster and Roy Porter, to mention only a few of the historians currently working in this field.
7. R.K. French and Andrew Wear eds., The Medical Revolution of the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) p.9.
8. The seventeenth-century artisan Nehemiah Wallington, a resident of St. Leonard Eastcheap, commented on the 'three score women with child and in child bed that died in one week in Shoreditch parish' from the plague in 1625. There are no reports of midwives abandoning these women in their hour of need. See Paul Seaver, Wallington's World (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985) p.86.
9. Beier and Finlay have suggested that 'isolation and insecurity' might have had considerable impact on the large migrant population. See London 1500-1700 p.20.

10. Percival Willughby, Observations in Midwifery (H.Blenkinsop, 1863; reprint ed., Wakefield: SR publishers, 1972).
11. This historiographical pattern is not uniquely English. Medical historians, in particular, have been taken to task by the scholar of continental Europe, M. Weisner, for adopting a blanket judgement of midwives as 'superstitious and bungling' while ignoring the bizarre practices of many physicians. Merry E. Wiesner, 'Early Modern Midwifery: A Case Study' in Barbara A. Hanawalt, Women and Work in Pre Industrial Europe (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986) p.94. For examples of bizarre medical treatments of the day see Evenden-Nagy Chapter iv 'Professional and Lay Medicine: Treatment and Practice' in Popular Medicine (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Press, 1988) pp.43-53. Simon Schama has commented on the way in which two doctors were responsible for the 'bad press' given to seventeenth-century midwives in the Netherlands. Simon Schama, The Embarrassment of Riches (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987) p.526. It is an image which is undergoing revision, see 'Mother and Child were Saved': The memoirs (1693-1740) of the Frisian midwife Catharina Schrader Trans. Hilary Marland (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1987).
12. For victorian attitudes toward women, higher education and the professions see Josephine Kamm, Hope Deferred: Girl's Education in English History (London: Methuen, 1965); Martha Vicinus, Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Enid Moberley Bell Storming the Citadel: the rise of the woman doctor (London: Constable, 1953).
13. James H. Aveling, English Midwives, Their History and Prospects (London, 1872; reprint ed., London: Hugh K. Elliott Ltd., 1967) 'Introduction' p.vi.
14. Aveling, p.35. It is highly unlikely that Harvey's work De Generatione Animalium (1651), which was based on experiments with fertilized hen's eggs, had any direct bearing on the practice of midwifery, particularly in the seventeenth century. For Sermon and Chamberlen see below pp. 30,33. See Hilda Smith, 'Gynecology and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England' in Liberating Women's History: Theoretical and Critical Essays. B.A. Carroll ed. (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1976) p.105. William Sermon was the author of The Ladies Companion or the English Midwife (London, 1671); for an assessment of his work see below. For other discussions of royal midwives see Harvey Graham, Eternal Eve (New York: Doubleday, 1951) and M. Carter, 'The Royal Midwives', Midwives Chronicle 90 (1977):300-1.

15. Ibid., p.46.

16. James H. Aveling, The Chamberlens and the Midwifery Forceps (London: J.&.A. Churchill,1882; reprint ed. AMS,1985) p.ix.

17. Humphrey Arthure, 'Early English Midwifery', Midwife, Health Visitor & Community Nurse 2 (June 1975):187. See also the account of Dr. Tate, 'Celebrated Midwives of the 17th and Beginning of the 18th Centuries' in St. Thomas's Hospital Gazette 5,no.3 (1895):33-36; Herbert Spencer, The History of British Midwifery from 1650-1800 (London: John Bale,Sons & Danielson, 1927).

18. Steven A. Brody, 'The Life and Times of Sir Fielding Gould: man midwife and master physician' Bulletin of the History of Medicine 52 (1978) :228-50. The emphasis is mine in order to draw attention to the fact that medical doctors have generally considered pregnancy and child birth an illness which demands medical attention in all cases, a position which was not held by seventeenth-century women and their midwives. Until recently, the history of medicine, in many cases the work of physicians, has exemplified the same 'whiggish' mind-set. See Evenden- Nagy.

19. Thomas Rogers Forbes, The Midwife and the Witch (New York: AMS Press, 1966) following p.144.

20. Forbes, p.155. 'Presentism' can be described as the tendency to assess past events in the light of current knowledge.

21. Audrey Eccles, Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Tudor and Stuart England (London: Croom Helm, 1982).

22. While Willughby practised almost forty years in Derby, his London practice was limited to the years 1656-60. (Willughby p.vi). Implicit in Willughby's exclusive direction of his remarks to midwives, is the understanding that he accepts midwifery as women's work.

23. On this point see also: Alice Clark, p.281; Robert Michel, 'English Attitudes Towards Women 1640-1700', Canadian Journal of History 13 ( April 1978): 36-60.

24. Eccles,p.124.

25. Jean Donnison, Midwives and Medical Men (London: Heinemann, 1977) p.7.

26. Donna Snell Smith, 'Tudor and Stuart Midwifery', PhD. thesis, University of Kentucky, 1980, p.96. She cites six testimonials in all.
27. Ibid., p.72; 97-8. Snell Smith's conclusions can be challenged for the seventeenth century. Aside from the Chamberlens, forceps were not in use until well into the eighteenth century. 'The new scientific knowledge' was neither widely disseminated nor accepted by physicians in the seventeenth century. See Evenden-Nagy p.80.
28. Adrian Wilson, 'Childbirth in seventeenth and eighteenth-century England' Ph. D. thesis University of Sussex, 1983.
29. An even more recent overview of the history of midwives, Jean Towler and Joan Bramall, Midwives in History and Society (London: Croom Helm, 1986) devotes little more than one short chapter to seventeenth-century midwives. Based mainly on secondary sources, a few primary sources were used descriptively with little or no attempt at analysis. See, for example, their treatment of the Kendal midwife's diary (p.90).
30. Lawrence Stone, Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800 (Harmondsworth, Middlesex : Penguin, 1979). p.64; Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic (Harmondsworth, Middlesex : Penguin, 1971). See p.15 where Thomas cites one of Willughby's most graphic vignettes in condemnation of an unnamed midwife's practices. Ralph A. Houlbrooke, The English Family 1450-1700 (London: Longman, 1984). Houlbrooke dismisses midwives with the customary comments about lack of proper training (p.129). He cites for support Audrey Eccles (see above, pp. 6-7) and a sixteenth-century midwife's oath (see below Appendix A). Hence, we would argue, even widely read historians have, to date, left unchallenged the traditional stereotype of seventeenth-century midwives which has been based on limited archival sources.
31. Hilda Smith, 'Gynaecology and Ideology in Seventeenth-century England' in Bernice A. Carroll, ed., Liberating Women's History (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1976) pp.109-113. Smith's problem was also noted by David Harley in 'Ignorant Midwives-a persistent stereotype', The Society for the History of Medicine Bulletin 28 (June 1981):6.

32. Robert A. Erickson, 'The books of generation: some observations on the style of the British Midwife books 1671-1764' in P.A. Boucé ed., Sexuality in eighteenth-century Britain (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982). See pp. 74-5 in particular for negative images and p.89 for the positive image. Erickson seems unaware of this contradiction in his work and does not include any explanation of the differences in seventeenth and twentieth-century perceptions of seventeenth-century midwives. For an eighteenth-century literary account of a delivery in which the midwife was presented in a better light than her male counterpart, Dr. Slop, see Laurence Sterne, The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy (Harmondsworth, Middlesex : Penguin, 1967); Arthur Cash 'The Birth of Tristram Shandy: Sterne and Dr. Burton' in Boucé, especially p.217.
33. Willughby, pp. 45,73,239.
34. For a discussion of churchwardens accounts, vestry minutes and other parish ecclesiastical records see W.E.Tate The Parish Chest (Cambridge: University Press, 1946).
35. Adrian Wilson, 'Participant or patient? Seventeenth century childbirth from the mother's point of view' Roy Porter ed., Patients and Practitioners: Lay Perceptions of Medicine in Pre-Industrial Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) pp. 129-144.
36. For Porter's most recent contribution toward rectifying the imbalance see Roy and Dorothy Porter, In Sickness and in Health: the British Experience 1650-1850 (London: Fourth Estate, 1988). See also his introduction to Roy Porter ed., Patients and Practitioners: Lay Perceptions of Medicine in Pre-Industrial Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
37. For a brief description of the midwife's role in a normal delivery see R.V. Schnucker, 'The English Puritans and Pregnancy, Delivery and Breast Feeding', History of Childhood Quarterly (Spring, 1974) pp. 641-2.
38. Adrian Wilson has been a strong proponent of attempting to establish annual case loads in order to assess not only the ability, but the essence of the 'typical' early modern midwife. However, the idea of a 'typical' midwife whose identity is tied solely to the number of deliveries which she carries out per year is unhelpful; the endeavour is also fraught with problems, some of which have been pointed out by B. and J. Boss in 'Ignorant Midwives- a Further Rejoinder' The



Society for the Social History of Medicine Bulletin 33 (Dec. 1983):71. The Bosses were responding to Adrian Wilson, 'Ignorant Midwives-a Rejoinder' The Society for the Social History of Medicine Bulletin 32 (June 1983): 48. For a discussion of mortality in child bed, see B.M. Willmott Dobbie, 'An Attempt to estimate the true rate of maternal mortality, sixteenth to eighteenth centuries' Medical History 26 (1982): 79-90 ; R. Schofield, 'Did the Mother's really die?' in L. Bonfield ed., The World We Have Gained (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) pp.231-260. Schofield concludes that the risk to the mother while higher than to-day, was not as high as previously believed (p.260). For an earlier estimate of maternal mortality see Thomas R. Forbes, Chronicle from Aldgate (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971) p.106. On infant mortality see Roger Schofield and E.A. Wrigley, 'Infant and child mortality in England in the late Tudor and early Stuart Period' in Charles Webster ed., Health, Medicine and Mortality in the Sixteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) pp. 61-95.

39. G.L. MS. 10,116/1.

40. J. Elise Gordon, 'Mrs. Elizabeth Cellier-"the Popish Midwife" of the Restoration' Midwife, Health Visitor & Community Nurse ,2 (May 1975): 139. The fact that Cellier was thrice married could also be a reason that no record of her licensing was found but she never describes herself as a 'licensed midwife' as did most of the women who had obtained licences. For a full description of the 'popish plot' and Cellier's role, see J.C.H. Aveling, The Handle and the Axe: The Catholic Recusants in England from Reformation to Emancipation (London: Blond and Briggs, 1976) pp. 204-221.

41. Archivist Miss E.R. Poyser of the Westminster Diocesan Archives in London has no knowledge of any records which would cast light upon seventeenth-century recusant midwives.

42. See John Bossy, The English Catholic Community 1570-1850 (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975); Marie B. Rowlands, 'Recusant Women 1560-1640' in Women in English Society 1500-1800 Mary Prior ed., (London: Methuen, 1985). The stillborn child of a Catholic gentlewoman delivered by a midwife who was a vicar's wife became the unfortunate subject of a tract published in 1646 under the title A Declaration of a strange and wonderful Monster. The woman's alleged defence of her recusancy was blamed for the fact that the child was reportedly born without a head. See R.C. Richardson, Puritanism in north-west England (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972) pp.166-7.

43. Aveling English Midwives p.19. Jane Scarisbrycke in West Derby was the midwife in question.

44. Marie Rowlands, p.164. The 'cage' was a structure for confining felons in full public view. For the description of a sixteenth and early seventeenth century recusant gentlewoman living in the country who made a point of ministering to the sick and needy see sister Joseph Damien Hanlon, 'These be But Women', based on the life of Doroth Lawson in Charles H. Carter ed., From the Renaissance to the Counter Reformation (New York: Random House, 1965)

45. Jeremy Boulton, Neighbourhood and Society: A London suburb in the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) p.266. Later in the century, there is evidence that midwives from the City on occasion travelled to Southwark to deliver women but such a large and growing population must have also demanded midwifery services from midwives who lived in the area. Bossy's maps of the distribution of Roman Catholics indicate that they were relatively sparsely settled in the London area which leads to the conclusion that there were correspondingly fewer popish midwives in London compared with the provinces.

46. Rev. Edward Lake, Diary of the Rev. Edward Lake (1641-1704) (Camden Miscellany ser.1 Vol.39, 1847; reprint New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation) p.22.

47. Frances P. and M.M. Verney, The Verney Memoirs vol.2 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1925) p.277. Fees of 5, 10 and 20 pounds are mentioned.

48. Cumbria Record Office MS.WD/Cn, Kendal Midwife's Diary fol.17. The last two examples probably reflect a certain flexibility on the part of the Quakers and the Church of England with regard to child delivery, particularly in outlying areas.

49. G.L. MS. 10,116/9.

50. Christopher Durston, The Family in the English Revolution (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989) pp.111-18. One delivery which was affected by war-time conditions was the birth of Princess Henrietta who was born at Exeter en route to Cornwall from where the queen embarked for France. The royal mother was attended by John Hinton, physician-in-ordinary to the King and who may or may not have had previous experience in child delivery. See Sir John Hinton, Memoirs of Sir John Hinton, Physitian in ordinary to His Majesties Person (London: T. Bentley, 1814) p.18.

51. The Midwives Just Petition (London, 1643; Thomason Tracts E 86(14)).
52. For examples of female lay practitioners who responded to the needs of the wounded in the Civil War period, see Evenden-Nagy p.61.
53. See below, chapter 1.
54. Harley, 'Ignorant midwives' p.7.
55. Wilson, 'Childbirth' p.62 ; G.L.R.O. DL/C 339 Fols.9-167 passim.
56. We have not included in this figure the half dozen or so women from Kent, Dorset and Hertfordshire who were licensed in this jurisdiction because no evidence has been uncovered that they practised in London. Lambeth Palace Library, Registers of Archbishop George Abbott (1611-33) vols.1-3, Archbishop William Laud (1633-45) ( no vol. no.). The last recorded pre-civil war midwifery license was issued in this jurisdiction in 1637.
57. G.L.R.O. DL/C 342 fols. 48v,80v.
58. G.L.R.O. MS. DL/C/344 fol. 97v.
59. G.L.R.O. MS. DL/C/344 fol.121.
60. Elizabeth Cellier, To Dr.-- an answer to His Queries, Concerning the Colledg of Midwives (London, 1688). Cellier's tract is dated January 16, 1687 which was the old style of dating. I am grateful to Ian Murray, archivist at Barber-Surgeons' Hall, London, for searching their records.
61. In the six cases where the chancellor or his surrogate has not signed the testimonial we believe it is an oversight since if the woman had been refused a licence her certificate would not have been preserved, especially without noting the same on the documents. Moreover, two of the six women were the first women to apply in the the Restoration period (January 7 and 10 1661) and the court official would not be familiar with what would become the accustomed way of noting the swearing and licensing process on the testimonial certificate itself.
62. G.L. MS. 10,116/6.

63. Two of these are from locations some distance from London, one from an unnamed parish, one from St. Sepulchre in 1666, well before the other testimonials which have been preserved and one from St. Sepulchre in 1679 whose testimonials were apparently lost.
64. John Raach, A Directory of Country Physicians 1603-1643 (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1962).
65. Adrian Wilson has suggested that a thorough study of several dozen midwives spread over a number of parishes would take years to complete. Adrian Wilson, 'Ignorant Midwives-a Rejoinder' p.47.
66. Boulton, p.8. Boulton points out the difficulties in attempting record linkage over a long period of time such as we have attempted in this study, see p.7.
67. While using the parish as the basic unit of analysis was helpful in most cases, where tax information was organized by wards, it precluded certain comparisons.
68. Tai Liu, Puritan London: A Study of Religion and Society in the City Parishes (Newark, N.J.: University of Delaware Press and Associated University Presses, 1986) pp. 23-43.
69. Emrys Jones, 'London in the Early Seventeenth Century: An Ecological Approach' London Journal 6 (1980): 123-133. Jones' study encompasses the work of Vance and Sjoberg and, more recently, Valerie Pearl.
70. Finlay, Population p.73. D.V. Glass, London Inhabitants Within the Walls 1695 (London: London Record Society 1972) p.226.
71. Jeremy Boulton Neighbourhood and Society: a London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1987) pp. 59, 184-86.
72. Boulton pp. 276-9. See below, page 54.
73. For example, Charles Webster, Health, Medicine and Mortality in the Sixteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) pp.182-3,235; Margaret Pelling 'Occupational Diversity: Barbersurgeons and the Trades of Norwich, 1550-1640.' Bulletin of the History of Medicine 56 (1982) p.508.

74. For a comprehensive overview of seventeenth-century obstetrical literature, see Eccles opening chapter 'English Obstetrical Textbooks Before 1740'.
75. See David Cressy, Literacy and the Social Order (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1980) p. 147. Particularly around mid-century (when a number of midwifery publications appeared) Cressy estimates that less than 22% of women could sign their names and thus possessed, by his definition, 'full literacy'.
76. E. Rosselin, The Byrth of Mankynde Trans. Thos. Raynald (London, 1540) S.T.C. No. 21154; see also D'Arcy Power, 'The Birth of Mankind or the Woman's Book: A Bibliographical Study' The Library Fourth Series 8 (June 1927): 1-33. A recent investigation has discovered the existence of a manuscript on midwifery in English which preceded the Birth of Mankind by almost a hundred years. The original manuscript may have been written or translated from Latin by a woman. See Beryl Rowland, Medieval Woman's Guide to Health (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 1981) p. xvi.
77. Wiesner p. 100.
78. Eccles p.12.
79. Power p.29. Powere has written a comprehensive bibliographical study of the book, but not ventured to offer an estimate of the total number of copies which were printed.
80. Donnison p.7 ; Power p.4; Wilson 'Ceremony' p.73.
81. Jaques Guillimeau, Child-Birth or the Happie Deliverie of Women (London, 1612; reprint ed., Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1972).
82. Guillimeau p.80. emphasis mine.
83. Eccles p.12. See Jaques Guillimeau, Child-birth (London, 1612; reprint ed., Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1972) p.152. Paré had earlier described this manoeuvre where the infant's foot was grasped and used to turn the child in utero in cases of malpresentation. Objections have been raised to Paré's being credited with inventing podalic version on the grounds that peasant midwives, in particular, would have had the opportunity to observe the births of animals and learned how to intervene in this way. See Bonnie Anderson and Judith Zinsser, A History of their Own: Women in Europe from

Prehistory to the Present (New York: Harper and Row, 1988) p.107.

84. Peter Chamberlen, A Voice in Rhama: or, The Crie of Women and Children (London, 1646; Thomason E 1181 (8)).

85. Aveling, The Chamberlens, pp. 34-60 gives an account of this affair.

86. Nicholas Culpeper, A Directorie for Midwives: or a Guide for Women, In their Conception, Bearing and Suckling their Children (London, 1651; Thomason E 1340 (1)). See below pp. 213-14 for information on Culpeper's wife, who was widowed at the age of 29 and subsequently became a midwife.

87. Eccles p.13.

88. A. Massarius, De Morbeis Foeminis. The Womans Counsellour or the Feminine Physitian. Trans. R.T. (London, 1657; Thomason E 1650)

89. William Sermon, The Ladies Companion or the English Midwife (London, 1671; Wing S2628)

90. Ibid., pp.13,167,92.

91. See Evenden-Nagy.

92. Eccles p.14.

93. Jane Sharp, The Midwives Book (London, 1671 ;reprint ed. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985) pp.2-5. Although Sharp began practising in the years when ecclesiastical licensing was interrupted, unlike at least some other venerable midwives, to our knowledge she did not acquire a license in the Restoration period.

94. Donnison p.15. Eccles seems to believe that since Paré's work on podalic version appeared in translation in 1612, the midwife should have known about it. Indeed, Sharp does describe different malpresentations and how they could be corrected but her descriptions are very brief so that what may be a description of podalic version (p.201), is not adequately presented. Perhaps midwife Sharp felt that any experienced midwife would know what to do in the various situations which she described in a very matter-of- fact manner (pp.199-204). There is no reason to believe that other experienced midwives, who unfortunately left no records, were unaware of or did not use podalic version when the occasion warranted it. For another brief appraisal of Sharp's work, see Elaine Hobby

Virtue of Necessity (London: Virago Press, 1988) pp.185-87.

95. Wilson 'Childbirth' p.293.

96. John Pechey, Compleat Midwife's Practice Enlarged (London, 1698; Wing P 220(7))

97. Although Pechey acknowledged Mayerne, Chamberlen and Culpeper (who died in 1654), parts of the treatise are drawn almost word for word from the work of William Sermon (see above).

98. Ibid., p.131.

99. Ibid., p.148.

100. Rev. John Ward, Diary of the Rev. John Ward A.M.: Vicar of Stratford-Upon-Avon 1648-79, C. Severn, ed. (London: Henry Colborn Pub., 1839) p.255. For examples of the early twentieth-century common-sense midwifery practices of a highly successful midwife with no formal education see Onnie Lee Logan as told to Katherine Clark, Motherwit: An Alabama Midwife's Story (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1989).

101. John L. Thornton, 'The First Printed English Edition of "Observations in Midwifery" By Percival Willughby (1596-1685)', Practitioner 208 (1972): 296.

102. Eccles p.14.

103. See 'The Legacy of the Ancients, and the Anatomists' in Eccles (pp.23-5). Snell Smith on the other hand assumes that midwifery manuals would have been useful to literate midwives, but her assumption is not supported by evidence from the manuals themselves. For the continuing difficulties faced by anatomists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries see P. Linebaugh, 'The Tyburn Riot against the Surgeons' in D. Hay, P. Linebaugh et al Albion's Fatal Tree (London: Pantheon Books, 1975) pp.65-117; Ruth Richardson Death, Dissection and the Destitute (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989).

## Chapter 1

### Ecclesiastical Licensing of Midwives

Licensing of midwives was the responsibility of the Church of England throughout the seventeenth century with the exception of the years 1641-1661 when the Church's authority collapsed along with the breakdown of the monarchical regime. Ecclesiastical licensing of midwives was reinstated with surprising alacrity less than nine months after the Book of Common Prayer was restored to usage and at least six women from London and its suburbs were licensed by the Church in January 1661.<sup>1</sup> Although the ecclesiastical licensing process continued outside of London until the last decades of the eighteenth century, within the capital itself the system was obsolete by the 1720s.<sup>2</sup>

Historians have generally theorized that the practice of licensing midwives by church authorities was legitimized by the legislation of Henry VIII in 1512 which regulated the practice of medicine and surgery.<sup>3</sup> But midwives were not mentioned in the act and the date when the church first began to issue midwifery licences, and by what authority, remains uncertain.<sup>4</sup> The frequently cited oath administered to Eleanor Peard by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1567 more than fifty years after Henry's legislation has



generally been accepted by historians as the earliest proof of the licensing of midwives.<sup>5</sup> In fact, at least three London midwives were licensed by Richard Fitzjames, Bishop of London, in the years 1506-1522.<sup>6</sup> One researcher has indeed suggested that 'the church's direct concern long pre-dates' the period of Henry the VIII's legislation regulating the practice of medicine and surgery.<sup>7</sup> His argument, however, is linked to ecclesiastical involvement with midwifery on the continent. Adrian Wilson has raised the question (but not attempted to answer it) of why there was 'increasing concern with midwife licensing during the early Stuart period'.<sup>8</sup> Margaret Pelling has claimed that licensing of midwives was most strictly enforced during the Laudian years of the 1630s but archival sources fail to support this view.<sup>9</sup>

According to a recent study, historians of early modern midwifery have traditionally posited five reasons for the Church's interest in midwives: its concerns relating to the rite of baptism; its preoccupation with sorcery; its anxiety over the question of bastardy; the association of midwifery with medicine (which became the responsibility of the Church with regard to licensing in 1512), and, finally, its wish to ensure that midwives were competent to carry out their work in child delivery.<sup>10</sup> In addition to the foregoing, John Guy has suggested that the Church's desire

to regulate midwives found its roots in the battle against recusancy because the midwife was in an optimum position to ensure that newborns were baptized into the 'true faith' of the Church of England.<sup>11</sup> Of the foregoing theories, the most widely accepted one has been that the Church was primarily interested in the moral suitability and ability of midwives to carry out the ceremony of baptism. As recently as 1982, baptism was cited as the main reason for ecclesiastical licensing, and this view is shared by numerous other historians.<sup>12</sup> More recently, however, Ralph Houlbrooke has pointed out that after the Reformation the mediaeval conviction that the soul of an unbaptized child was damned began to change. As early as 1560 the catechism explained that baptism with water was only a seal or confirmation that the child of Christian parents had already been received by God. It seems implausible, therefore, to argue that ecclesiastical licensing of midwives was undertaken primarily out of a concern with baptism of newborn infants who were unlikely to survive.<sup>13</sup> Closely allied to the baptismal function, in the opinion of historians, was the concern that the midwife might engage in witchcraft and place in jeopardy the soul of the unbaptized infant.<sup>14</sup> Again, however, the myth of the midwife as witch has finally been demolished in a recent scholarly study by David Harley.<sup>15</sup> The most recent major study of early

modern midwifery has concluded that the legal licensing of midwives was instigated as an extension of the licensing of medical practitioners (despite the fact that no evidence has been found directly linking the licensing of midwives and other medical practitioners), together with a concern for the competence of midwives.<sup>16</sup>

Despite the widespread belief of historians that the Church's concern focused narrowly on ecclesiastical concerns, it is noteworthy that the opening sentence of a sixteenth-century midwife's oath emphasizes the 'cunning' (or intelligence, ability and skill) as well as the knowledge which the midwife should bring to her task (Appendix A).<sup>17</sup> This early midwifery oath also sets forth other demands: the midwife must make her services available without qualification to both rich and poor women; she must report truthfully information involving suspected bastardy; she will never 'switch' infants; she will not engage in sorcery; she will not use instruments or mutilate the fetus; she will use the correct form of baptism (including the use of clean water) and notify the curate of any baptisms she has performed.<sup>18</sup> It is instructive to compare the Tudor oath to the one administered in 1713 to Mary Cooke, a widow formerly of Leire in Leicestershire (Appendix B). For the most part, it is almost identical to the oath administered in the same archdiocesan jurisdiction

to Eleanor Pead almost 150 years earlier.<sup>19</sup> The requirements regarding the baptism of the infant, however, are gone. Instead the final statement reads:

Moreover if I shall know any woman exercising the Office of a Midwife or doing anything contrary to the tenor of this mine Oath I will notifie and disclose the same to the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury for the time being or to his Vicar Generall or Chancellor or the ordinary of the place, soe far as I can conveniently.

The rather remarkable change in the oath argues for an increased interest on the part of the Church in the empirical rather than the spiritual qualifications of the midwife over the course of the Tudor-Stuart period. Not only has the requirement regarding baptism disappeared, a fact which may reflect the Church's moderated attitude toward the rite, but the midwife was being given an augmented role in the licensing process by promising to report unlicensed midwives.

Another midwife's oath dating from the middle of the seventeenth century appears to have been the oath administered to candidates who applied in a diocesan court—probably that of the Bishop of London (Appendix C).<sup>20</sup> It is a much more complex oath which reflects at least ten concerns of the licensing authorities not contained within the Canterbury oaths, four of which are related to the midwives themselves rather than to the practice of

midwifery. To her promise not to aid in procuring abortions, nor to extort an unreasonable fee, she must add her promises to maintain patient confidentiality while carrying out her work openly and to ensure that any child who dies in childbirth is buried in a secure place. She must also make sure that she is not a party to any child being baptized as a recusant or in any faith outside of the Church of England. But the portions of the oath which pertain to the midwife's relations with her peers are the features which are of the greatest significance for this study. The midwives are to report other midwives whose practices do not conform with the standards set forth (as above); they are to treat other licensed midwives with respect and co-operation; they are to report unlicensed midwives; they are to ensure that any women who act as their deputies should be competent in the practice of midwifery as well as being of good character; in difficult deliveries, as in the earlier oath, the midwife is forbidden to mutilate or kill the child to expedite delivery, but must instead call in 'other midwives and expert women in that facultie and use their advice and counsell in that behalfe.' The Church appears by mid-century, then, to be attempting not only to enforce licensing of midwifery practise; it is also acknowledging that the midwives themselves must accept the responsibility for ensuring that, in their work of 'bringing to bed' an

important segment of the population, they would function within a network of mutual assistance and co-operation that upheld the principles to which they had subscribed by oath. It is noteworthy also that the Church not only wanted the best possible care for mother and infant, but that it readily accepted that women were still the perceived 'experts' in child delivery. Church authorities remained unconvinced despite the claims of superior competence in difficult deliveries made by male practitioners such as the Chamberlens who had been proselytizing for several generations in an attempt to gain control over the training and licensing of midwives.<sup>21</sup>

Although not part of the midwife's oath, the visitation articles issued by Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London, in 1554 included two other duties which the midwife was expected to carry out:

Item, Whether any midwife, or any other woman denieth or letteth, so much as lieth in her, that the child being new born shall not be brought to the church, there to be decently, reverently and orderly baptized, and the mother thereof after a convenient time likewise purified, according to the old ancient and godly ceremonies and customs of the catholic church...<sup>22</sup>

In the first instance, the article is referring to the midwife's responsibility in encouraging the early baptism of the infant to ensure the preservation of its soul. More than a hundred years later, in 1663, the rector

and churchwardens of St. Paul's Covent Garden testified that Beatrix Pattison, a long time resident of their parish, had not only acquired the skills of a midwife through some years as a deputy midwife, but that she 'doth orderly bringe the children she is concerned with to the church.'<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, in 1679, the vicar and churchwardens of St. Leonard Shoreditch noted that Hanna Mason not only went to Church herself, but went 'also in the afternoon with children to be baptised', and rector Duckeson and churchwardens of St. Clement Danes testified in 1677 that Phillipa Sampson brought her children 'to the font to be baptised'.<sup>24</sup>

Bonner was also referring to the ancient ritual of 'churching', a ceremony taken seriously in this period by church and laity alike. The ceremony of churching sprang from the ancient belief that women who had given birth were unclean and must undergo a special rite of purification to be held at the beginning of the first church service they attended after giving birth.<sup>25</sup> After the ceremony they were restored to full membership in the Church, with all its attendant privileges.<sup>26</sup> At the end of the sixteenth century, parishioners of St. Botolph Aldgate paid two pence for being churched while non-residents paid four pence.<sup>27</sup> The fee for churching in St. Saviour's, Southwark, early in the seventeenth century was four pence for residents (one

pence if the child died) and ten pence for non-residents.<sup>28</sup> One particularly poignant entry in the clerk's memoranda book for St. Botolph Aldgate reveals that little Marmaduke Spyght, son of citizen and draper Marmaduke Spyght, was buried October the 28th, 1597, the same day that his mother was churched, with a total cost of four shillings and eight pence for both services.<sup>29</sup> Although included in the Book of Common Prayer (1662), scant attention has been paid to the ceremony, but recently Jeremy Boulton has used figures on churching in Southwark to try to measure popular religious conformity in the years 1619-25. He has found that almost 92% of women who had their infants baptised also partook in the churching rite.<sup>30</sup> The majority of these women were churched two to four weeks after they were delivered.<sup>31</sup> There are mixed views of how churching was perceived by seventeenth-century parishioners. Boulton himself presents evidence of its unpopularity with some segments of the population, especially radical protestants who felt it smacked of popery.<sup>32</sup> A recent study on the ceremonial aspects of childbirth takes the position that women enjoyed participating in churching early in the century and looked forward to the opportunity of giving thanks 'to somebody' for their recovery.<sup>33</sup> Another writer presents a different view of women's perception of the churching ritual: they disliked it but, for the most part,



meekly submitted.<sup>34</sup> There was opposition in some areas, moreover, to the then customary offering of 10 pence to the clergyman.<sup>35</sup> The visitation articles for Canterbury for 1605 specifically require the parish officials to name or present any married women who have refused to come for their churching, indicating that there was some resistance to the ritual.<sup>36</sup>

At least three London midwives' testimonials mention that the applicants carried out their responsibilities with regard to churching. Judging by their tone, particularly toward end of the century, women needed encouragement to conform with the Church's teachings on the ceremony. Edward Pelling, rector of St. Martin Ludgate, wrote in 1681 that widow Mary Garret 'doth bring children to the church to be baptiz'd and women to be churched', while in 1679, vicar Ambrose Atich of St. Leonard Shoreditch vouched for Hanna Mason's diligence in going to 'Divine service with women to be churched.'<sup>37</sup> Dr. Littleton, rector of Chelsey, stated in his testimonial certificate of 1690 that parishioner and midwife Elizabeth Forrest not only came to church herself but 'doth constantly bring her women whom she delivers to the church to pay their thanks in publick and their children to receive publick baptism'.<sup>38</sup> These testimonies demonstrate the continuing concern of the church for this aspect of a midwife's function, which it saw

as a reflection of her sound character and good citizenship in the 'godly commonwealth' that was England. Unlike baptisms, when midwives often received generous monetary gifts, midwives were not apparently tangibly rewarded for their zeal in encouraging their clients to be churched. This fact may have contributed to the eventual decline of the practice but it also reveals that many Stuart midwives were not simply interested in the pecuniary aspects of their vocation.<sup>39</sup>

In summary, although a firm date for the inception of licensing of London midwives has never been established, it is certain that the process was in place by the early sixteenth century and that it was originally intended to address a number of concerns involving (among others), the ability of midwives to carry out their work competently and to ensure that the soul of the newborn was not placed in jeopardy. By the middle of the seventeenth century more emphasis was placed on the role of the midwife as she related to other midwives, both in ensuring conformity to licensing regulations and cooperation with her peers to gain experience and to assist in difficult deliveries. The close of the century saw the Church encouraging midwives to participate in (and thus help to enforce) baptisms and churchings but the main purpose of licensing was to ensure that practising midwives met certain standards with regard

to empirical knowledge and hands on experience. There was, therefore, no single purpose for ecclesiastical licensing. It was the expression of multiple concerns whose relative emphases varied over time. An examination of testimonial certificates and episcopal registers will shed light on how the licensing process functioned for seventeenth-century midwives.

The first task facing the aspiring licensee in midwifery was the procurment of testimonial certificates (Appendix D). These were generally also endorsed by parish clergy or ward officials, and in some cases, neighbours, medical practitioners and female clients.<sup>40</sup> The testimonials were presented to the archbishop's or bishop's chancellor (or his representative) who administered an oath of office to the midwife. Six women who had personal knowledge of the candidate's ability also attended and were sworn before the chancellor who duly noted the same (in Latin) on the testimonial certificate.<sup>41</sup> This requirement in itself was a distinct departure from the requirements imposed on candidates seeking a license to practise surgery and physick. The latter two groups were required to present recommendations from practising peers regarding their ability, not from patients.<sup>42</sup> Testimonial certificates presented at the Archbishop of Canterbury's courts usually noted that the successful candidate was licensed to practise

throughout the province of Canterbury. Several, however, were licensed to practise in specific locations such as London, Winchester, Lincoln, Rochester and Canterbury while two midwives were authorized to work in London and Winchester.<sup>43</sup> Those licensed by the bishop could practise anywhere within the diocese of London.

Once the midwife was successful in her application, she was issued a license. It was this document that she was expected to present at parish visitations. An example of a midwife's licence has been preserved in the Lambeth Palace archives. Written in a fine hand on a small piece of parchment (approx. 7 in. x 6 in.) it was originally issued to Eyton Broughton of Lambeth, Surrey, by the Bishop of Winchester in 1686 and authorized her to practise in the Diocese of Winchester. It reads in part:

Whereas we understand by good Testimony and Credible Certificate that you the said Eyton Broughton... are apt, and able, cunning and expert to use and exercise the office, business and function of a midwife . Wee therefore as much as in us is, do admitt and give you power to use and exercise the said office, business and function of a midwife in and through our whole Diocese of Winchester aforesaid with the best diligence you may or can in this behalfe to poore and rich indifferently, and also to performe and accomplish all things about the same according to your oath...<sup>44</sup>

Eyton subsequently presented the document at a visitation in 1691. By 1700 she sought to have her license

extended to the larger jurisdiction of Canterbury. Such permission was granted on October 23, 1700 and noted on the bottom of her licence, which was signed by Robert Chapman, a court official, but for reasons unknown the midwife did not reclaim her license.<sup>45</sup>

The registers of both the Archbishops of Canterbury and the Bishops of London survive intact for the seventeenth century. These registers contain records of licenses granted to a great many, although not all, of the women who were licensed in the respective jurisdictions in the seventeenth century. The most obvious gap in the recording process was in the years 1641-1661, but there are other omissions both major and minor in nature. For example, the Vicar General's records for London have failed to record the names of dozens of women who were licensed between January 1664 and 1669.<sup>46</sup> In some instances the registers list the names of the individuals (both clergy and clients) who gave testimonial or sworn evidence for the midwife, but in many cases the clerk has recorded only such minimum details as the midwife's name, parish and date of licensing. Other variations of the recording formula provide random information about the midwife's marital status, her spouse's name, and perhaps his occupation.

There was sporadic licensing of London midwives in the early sixteenth century but the consistency and

exactness of the format implemented by the clerks who recorded information in the bishop's registers in the early seventeenth century regarding the midwife's testimonial certification (and also because of information on the extant testimonials themselves) suggest that regulations governing the requirements for women seeking a midwifery license in London were drafted later, possibly in the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>47</sup> This process required, as stated above, that sex mulieres or six women appear before the archbishop, the bishop or their representatives and give testimony under oath of personal knowledge about the expertise of the applicant.<sup>48</sup> As early as 1547, one observer urged that 'honest women of great gravitie' should testify to the Bishop on the midwife's behalf but who decided that it should be six women, the number which appears with such regularity in the Vicar General's registers as early as 1608?<sup>49</sup> The register of William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, recorded the licensing of Anne Greenewelle of Sevenoaks in Kent in 1636 and included the fact that six women testified on her behalf; the entry is unusual in that it also embodies the following statement, apparently taken directly from the precedent regulations governing the licensing of midwives:

The oath to be administered to these six women who shall be produced and witnessed, they being such as have been delivered of

child by the within named Anne Greenewell, who are first to take their oaths laying their hands upon the bible or new Testament you shall swear that through the experience and skill of Anne Greenewelle in the Art or faculty of midwifie which you & every of you have had seene or sworne you...<sup>50</sup>

Although the quality of testimony given by the midwife's clients has been devalued by historians who have assumed that the women testifying under oath had not necessarily been delivered by the midwife-applicant, the foregoing evidence from the archbishop's records and other primary sources from later in the century supports the view that the six women in question all had been delivered by the midwife.<sup>51</sup> In the Restoration period women testifying on behalf of the midwife continued to comply with the requirement that they attend personally before the bishop or his chancellor. Since the midwife in some cases sought the support of women who had been recently delivered, it was not an easy task to arrange court attendance for the oath-taking process of six clients, and, as we shall see below, applicants for a midwifery licence did not always have their full complement of six testators. An indication of the arrangements which were involved in assembling the various components (not to mention individuals) can be found in several of the testimonial certificates.

In 1676, Anne Watson was directed to seek out the bishop's surrogate, Newcourt, 'at his office by Doctor's

Commons', while some years later Elizabeth Syrette was instructed to meet 'at ye Crost Dagger near Doctors Comons at Eleven @ cloke for John Bonner'.<sup>52</sup> Five women testifying on behalf of Margaret Mitchell travelled to the City from the suburban parish of St. Martin in the Fields and were 'sworne all before Sir Thos. Exton in his Chamber 27 of Oct. 1685'. For some reason, the midwife could not attend herself that day but Exton noted 'The midwife sworn before me' and licensed her November 18, 1685.<sup>53</sup> When Susan Kempton of Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, travelled to London in her quest for a midwife's licence, the outside of her certificate carried the direction 'My Lord Compton Bishop of Lond. living att Fullsom' and 'Sir George Bramstone Chanceler att Doctors Commons'; a second note had been added at the bottom in a different hand 'Mr. Rupert Brewer will assist you he is to be found at the prerogative office.' Kempton and three clients (two from St. Brigid in London) managed to find their way to the right place and were sworn before Chancellor Bramston himself on August 16, 1694.<sup>54</sup> In one instance six women appeared to swear to midwife Laywood's competence in delivering their twenty-three children but the midwife herself (a busy senior midwife) was prevented from attending because of the demands of her practice. Presumably Dr. Chaworth accepted the



apology and allowed Laywood to use the services of a notary to complete the licensing process.<sup>55</sup>

The actual cost of obtaining a midwife's license was very high, a point which has previously been emphasised in Wilson's study of the diocese of Norwich in the early eighteenth century, employing figures for the year 1735.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, by charging a substantial fee, church officials helped ensure that only dependable and economically viable women were licensed to practise midwifery. Our evidence for what the midwife paid for her license is taken for the most part from the testimonial certificates presented in the diocese of London, which survive only for the years after the Restoration. As in Norwich, the fee was made up of a number of smaller sums charged for different services and paid to more than one individual. In some cases, it appears that the fee may have been predicated on the number of women who were 'sworn' by the church official, but in other cases the number of women giving sworn testimony does not seem to have had any bearing on what was charged. The earliest evidence of a London fee is found on the outside of the testimonial certificate of Ann Atkinson of High Holborne in the parish of St. Andrew Holborne, licensed in 1662. Surrogate Henry Smith swore six women as well as the midwife. Two sums have been recorded, - £0.6.8. and £0.1.9 for a total of £0.8.5. It is likely, however, that that is

not the full fee since it has been noted that the midwife had promised to add certification from 'Dr. Winter and Dr. Bowden'.<sup>57</sup> In 1673 Ellen Lowe, widow of St. Martin in the Fields, was charged £5.9.0 total, but only the sums of £0.18.6 and 6 pence have been recorded as two of the components of the fee. Perhaps there were non-related charges included in what would be an unusually high fee for a midwifery license.<sup>58</sup>

In the years 1673-4, the fee at licensing was recorded for six women but this fee did not take into account, for instance, what the women paid to have testimonial certificates drafted in the first place. As a general observation on the testimonial certificates, it is possible to ascertain (from the handwriting) that while in many cases, parish clergy drafted testimonial statements which were signed by churchwardens and other individuals, in some cases the women must have had the statements prepared by a professional scribe (at added expense) and taken them to be signed by the various officials as required. Therefore, when Elizabeth Beranger of St. Peter the Poor was licensed in 1674 and paid £1.7.8 to the court, she had possibly already paid a substantial sum to Dr. Hugh Chamberlen who addressed his testimonial statement to his 'honored friend Dr. Exton at his chamber in the Commons'.<sup>59</sup> Two days earlier Katherine Heath of St. Andrew Holborn had

been sworn (with five clients) before Exton and paid only a shilling more than Beranger at £1.8.8. Mary Carter of St. Andrew Holborne had paid £1.8.8 the previous month to be sworn with four women before surrogate Thomas Pinfold; Carter's fee had been broken down into the two smaller sums of £1.2.6 and £0.6.2. About the same time, Mary Jackson of St. Andrew Holborne was charged £1.7.8 by the court for the swearing of the midwife and the four women supporting her, but this time we have been told how the fee was divided: one pound went to 'Mr. Jones' (clerk Moses Jones at Doctor's Commons) and £0.7.8 went to Dr. Exton the Chancellor.<sup>60</sup> Eight months earlier, in December 1673, Elizabeth Crosley of St. Botolph Bishopsgate was charged £1.11.2 by the court. Appearing before Exton again, it is difficult to account for the fact that she paid almost four shillings more than midwife Jackson for the same service. She did, however, have her full complement of six women to be sworn.<sup>61</sup> The lowest fee charged at this time was that to Elizabeth Withers, whose parish was not recorded. She was licensed barely two months after Elizabeth Crosley and was sworn before Exton. Six women were sworn in addition to the midwife but the fee totalled less than a pound at £0.17.10. Three sums are noted on the outside of the document: £0.7.6 (Dr. Exton's fee), £0.6.3 and £0.3.8.

Four more examples of fees are found on testimonials from the years 1677-8. At the bottom of the sheet on which surrogate J. Disbury recorded the names of the five women who appeared before him (midwife Isobel Leigh and four clients) on January 31, 1677, four sums and a total are noted : £0.10.0, £0.2.6, £0.3.4, £0.18.8 = £1.14.6.<sup>62</sup> Two months later, when Ursula Stokes, the widow of John Stokes of Stepney, applied for her license, surrogate William Oldys recorded tersely: 'Reced. 20 [s] @ noe more by order for this lycense, for seal..@ other fees.' Midwife Stokes' testimonial certificate was signed by her minister, a churchwarden and an overseer of the poor. It is possible that the parish had secured a reduced fee or that it was paying for the license of widow Stokes described as 'altogether expert and every way able to follow the calling of a midwife' not only to meet the needs of parish women but to enable Stokes to be self sufficient and avoid becoming a parish charge.<sup>63</sup> In October, 1677, Thomas Exton charged Anne Goal of St. Giles in the Fields a total of only £0.11.2 (£0.4.10, £0.3.4, £0.3.0) for swearing her and four women before the court but three months later he charged Anne Hide of St. Mary Islington a total of one pound, one shilling for the same service for only three women.<sup>64</sup> Evidence from the years 1673-1678 leads to the conclusion that unknown variables influenced the fee which midwives paid to the

court for the swearing and licensing process, but that the majority of women in that period paid between £1.0.0 and £1.8.0 for the service.<sup>65</sup>

Examples of change in the testimonial documents themselves can be found in the year 1695. The usual practice with regard to the women giving sworn testimony in the court was to record their names as a group. In some cases the names appeared on the bottom or back of the clerical testimonial; occasionally they were written on a separate piece of paper. But when Ann Day of St. Alphage was sworn by George Bramston in 1695, the testimonial documents which have been preserved consisted of a statement by her curate Edward Lilly and four separate sheets of good quality paper each with an embossed seal stamped with the sum of six pence as well as the motto 'honi soit qui mal y pense'.<sup>66</sup> On each page appeared the name of one female client, with her parish, spouse's name and occupation, and the woman's signature or mark.<sup>67</sup> Practises like this must have resulted in increased cost to midwives seeking a licence, but unfortunately no fee has been recorded for the six or seven examples of this format which survive.<sup>68</sup> Information about what midwives paid for their licenses in the last five years of the century continues to support the view that fees were set with a fair degree of flexibility for a variety of reasons, most of which are beyond the ken

of a twentieth-century researcher. Of the four midwives whose fees for licensing were recorded in 1697, one woman paid £1.0.2, the second paid £1.15.0 and a third £1.19.0.<sup>69</sup> The fourth woman, Barbara Collop of St. James in the Fields, appeared on September 30 and was given until Christmas to pay the total cost of £2.5.0. She left a partial payment of five shillings and was to receive her license when the balance was paid.<sup>70</sup> It should be borne in mind that in this period when midwives were paying sums of £1.0.0 to 1.8.0 for a licence, those costs represented the equivalent of eight to ten days' wages for a London building craftsman or approximately fourteen to eighteen days' wages for a London labourer.<sup>71</sup> In the final years of the century, Susan Price of Acton paid the court twenty-three shillings with a promise to pay three shillings more, while Mary Gossett, widow of St. Bartholomew the Less, paid £2.5.2 for her licence on May 23, 1699. In midwife Gosset's case, the high fee was probably related to loss of documents; the only information contained in her testimonial file is the date of her licensing and the cryptic notation 'I have mislaid ye certificates'.<sup>72</sup> On the other hand, when Elizabeth Bush was licensed in 1679, she paid only £ 0.3.7 because her clergyman had accepted her certificates 'a great while since' and told her she needed to do nothing further (resulting in a reprimand).<sup>73</sup>

It is apparent that some midwives found it difficult to pay for a license or were unaware of the costs which were involved since in a number of cases the court was willing to accept a partial payment with the promise of further payment at a future date. Sara Wilkins of St. Martin Ludgate and Rebecca Smith of St. Giles in the Fields were both licensed in 1682 under Canterbury's jurisdiction; in both cases a partial payment of 10 shillings was accepted. In Rebecca's case we know that the total fee was £1.4.6.<sup>74</sup> In another case, the licence was not surrendered without payment; on the outside of Elizabeth Pennyell's certificate is written: '...Mr. Cooke desired me to keepe this by me till ye party did come for her Lyc: but left no money.'<sup>75</sup> There is no indication of why Hannah Mason of St. Leonard Shoreditch was exempted from paying for her licence in 1679; only the word gratis was written on her testimonial.<sup>76</sup> In Katherine Howell's case, however, Richard Butler (who acted as a surrogate for the chancellor in some cases) had personally assumed the responsibility of paying for Howell's licence when she and her clients were sworn before surrogate William Oldys in 1678. Butler wrote: 'I shall be accomptable unto Mr. Newcourt for Mrs. Howell's License.' and added a memorandum: 'I payd the Seele out of pocket'.<sup>77</sup> Perhaps the midwife, a deputy midwife of long standing, or her husband Peter was an acquaintance of the court official.

Personal friendship or social ties were probably the reason why Elizabeth Dean, wife of gentleman Richard Dean of St. James Weston, was excused from paying for her licence in 1688. In this case Richard Newcourt (notary public and court surrogate) requested that 'this license passe without fees'. Thomas Pinfold administered the oath to midwife Deane and four women and duly noted on the outside of the testimonial that it had been issued 'gratio'.<sup>78</sup> Not only did the clients of Sarah Ticer of Laughton sign a statement asking that she be 'favourably considered, for her estate being smale', but the vicar of Chigwell added his request that she be used 'as favourably as possibly you can in reference to the taking out of her Licence for the office of midwifery for I believe she is a very poore woman'.<sup>79</sup> Evidently the intercessions were effective and Ticer's fee was remitted.

In 1664, Temperance Pratt of St. Botolph Aldgate submitted her testimonial certificate from her clergyman. It was accompanied by another beautifully written 'petition' addressed to 'Humphrey Lord Bishop of London' which explained that midwife Pratt was born in Stepney and was sent overseas as a child where she grew up and began her practice of midwifery. She wanted to put her practical experience in child delivery to use now

but your Petitioner knowing she cannot soe  
freely exercise the same without approbation  
and licence to which she is ready and



willing to yield unto, But by reason of her Travelle and great charge of children (not haveing any provision or maintenance for herself and children but through her owne labour and Industry) is reduced to great poverty and soe not able to raise any monies for obtaining a licence.<sup>80</sup>

Although Pratt pleaded poverty, her petition was the work of a professional who asked that the licence be granted 'in forma pauperis'. Pratt's personal petition (the validity of which was certified by her minister, churchwardens, a constable and a Member of Parliament) conveys the sense of control which the Church exercised in the licensing of midwives. It proved successful and Humphrey Henchman, Bishop of London, personally instructed the court official to administer the midwife's oath to Pratt and grant her a licence without charge.

Only one other case of a license being granted in forma pauperis was found among the more than five hundred testimonial certificates. Sara Bent was described as a 'poor widow' who had lived in St. Giles in the Fields for more than sixteen years and was well experienced in midwifery according to her clergyman, churchwardens and six female clients. She was licensed by the chancellor Richard Chaworth in 1663.<sup>81</sup> It is apparent that even these two women who pled poverty were competent and experienced midwives and their licences were not granted solely on grounds of

economic need. Even though our evidence has not revealed a single fixed fee for a midwifery license, fees in seventeenth - century London compare reasonably well with those charged in Norwich in 1735 when the fee is estimated to have been nearly two pounds.<sup>82</sup>

The cost of a licence, however, was not the only charge incurred by midwives as part of the expense of practising their vocation. In the back of the Bishop's visitation register for London in the year 1669, there is a list of fees. It is apparently what the authorities charged to inspect the licenses and register the names of physicians, surgeons, school teachers, church lecturers and midwives during visitations; in each case, except for lecturers, the fee was £0.1.4.<sup>83</sup> Not only do fees charged at visitations need to be considered as part of the long-term cost of a midwifery licence, they should be regarded as part of the midwife's and the Church's ongoing commitment to licensing as a meaningful recognition of the midwife's skill. By charging a substantial sum to obtain a licence to practise midwifery, ecclesiastical authorities, in effect, excluded fly-by-night practitioners and ensured that responsible and stable women of good standing in their respective parishes carried on this important service to women of all ranks. In some cases, where a woman of proven ability but modest means applied, the Church moderated the

fee or licensed her without charge. There is no question, however, that the sizeable outlay of money, time and energy expended in the mechanics of obtaining a licence were deterrents to a number of midwives whose midwifery skills were on a par with those of licensed practitioners.

Keith Thomas has concluded that the importance of oath-taking declined in the seventeenth century and that the sanctity of the oath was no longer respected by many.<sup>84</sup> But there is every reason to believe that when the midwife and her clients appeared before the ecclesiastical courts they were fully cognizant of the importance of giving truthful sworn evidence. Sarah Fish, an elderly gentlewoman of Enfield, was certainly aware of the implications of the midwife's oath when her vicar, Joseph Gasgoine, sought to have her excused from taking the oath in 1697. Noting that Mistress Fish, the wife of gentleman Robert Fish, did not need to practise midwifery for profit, he wrote in part:

... she is therefore willing to take out a Licence for that purpose but being aged is loth to be hurried in ye night and in bad weather [for deliveries] to ye prejudice of her health, therefore, dos humbly desire she may be excused being sworn into that office, which she scruples not out of any singularity in her principles (being a very good churchwoman) but having never before taken any oath which if she could be dispensed with, would be a great benefitt to ye Neighbourhood, especially ye poorer sort of people to whom she is very usefull upon many occasions.<sup>85</sup>

Sara Fish was reluctant to take the oath because her conscience would then oblige her to answer every call for assistance, regardless of time or weather. It appears from Surrogate Cooke's entry that midwife Fish was not excused from taking the oath. In 1664 Mary Franck midwife of St. Anne Blackfriars refused to co-operate in the unorthodox baptism of an infant without godparents since 'shee Could not admitt ye child to bee baptised after that way it being contrary to her Oath'.<sup>86</sup> The only conclusion which can be drawn is that all concerned took the issue of oath-taking seriously, and it should not be assumed that it was a meaningless exercise. ..

The responsibility of the Church did not end with the issuing of a licence to the midwife. Midwives were expected to attend the periodic parochial visitations which the bishop or his representative carried out in his diocese. At these visitations, all midwives who had been issued licences were required to exhibit them.<sup>87</sup> An additional task of the ecclesiastical official conducting the visitation was to ascertain whether there were midwives carrying on unlicensed practice. Bishop Bonner's articles for the Diocese of London in 1554 state that one of the aims of the visitation was to establish

Whether there be any woman that doth occupy  
or exercise the office and room of a  
midwife, before she be examined and admitted

by the bishop, or ordinary of this diocese, or his chancellor or commissary, having sufficient authority, except in time of extreme necessity when the presence of the midwife cannot be had?<sup>88</sup>

Visitations were, in effect, the main avenue whereby the Church attempted to enforce its control of the licensing process. Midwives practising without licences were summoned to appear and ordered to take the necessary steps toward acquiring a licence. In some cases, licenses were issued at the visitation. The visitation process illustrates not only the Church's ongoing concern that midwives obtain a licence, but also the difficulties which faced church officials who were in many cases unsuccessful in enforcing the requirement that midwives be licensed. Visitation records for the diocese of London in the seventeenth century have survived for the years 1636, 1637, 1664, 1669 and 1680. For the Peculiar of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's, records are extant for the years 1667-1670. The visitation of 1636 was a metropolitan visitation under the agency of the Archbishop of Canterbury covering the entire province. As far as we can ascertain, for 1636, only thirteen parishes lying within the wall and four suburban parishes were visited. In six of the parishes which were visited no midwives were listed. St. Clement Danes which lay outside the walls noted the greatest number of midwives but, of its nine midwives, four failed to appear. The parish of St. Martin Ludgate showed

the greatest number of intramural midwives, with all five women marked present at the visitation.<sup>89</sup>

The bishop's visitation of 1637 appears to have benefitted from better organization and reduced scope. The visitation began in Essex on September 5, 1637 and arrived at the City of London three weeks later.<sup>90</sup> The visitation of City parishes began with the parish of St. Augustine where more than thirty parishes were 'visited' on September 26th. It moved in a westerly direction to the parish of St. Michael Cornhill on September 27 where another thirty or so parishes underwent examination. The next day the remaining parishes attended the visitation proceedings held in the parish church of Allhallows Barking which lies in the north-east corner of the City. A much greater number of parishes were visited than at the visitation of a year earlier: eighty intramural parishes, ten extramural parishes and seven suburban parishes are listed in the records.<sup>91</sup> Forty-two, or more than half, of the intramural parishes reported no midwives while four of the extramural parishes, or 40%, reported no midwives.<sup>92</sup> Of the intramural parishes which were visited, St. Martin Ludgate again reported the greatest number at six. Of the suburban parishes, St. Clement Danes listed its nine midwives once more (the greatest number for any parish outside of the walls) but this time there is no indication of attendance.<sup>93</sup>

Almost thirty years later, the first visitation of Humphrey Henchman, Bishop of London, began its first London segment in the parish church of Christ Church on October 6, 1664. The visitation appears to have covered most of the parishes, but again, not every parish reported the presence of midwives. In most cases, where a midwife has been listed, we know that she exhibited her licence because the date of licensing has been included in the visitation documents. The majority of the midwives had been licensed since the Restoration, but Mrs. Lyndsey of St. Martin Vintry displayed a licence dated July 27, 1637 and another venerable midwife, Elizabeth Boycot of St. Sepulchre, exhibited her licence from 1636.<sup>94</sup>

The visitation of 1669 concentrated on extramural and suburban parishes, according to the existing records. Only three intramural parishes were visited: St. Ethelburga, St. Stephen Coleman and Allhallows Barking. Although there is no indication of the date of licensing as there was in the previous visitation, by comparing the lists of women designated as midwives in the registers of the bishop and archbishop we have found that, in many cases, midwives who appeared at visitations were not listed in the registers. For example, the extramural parish of St. Andrew Holborn listed fifteen midwives in the visitation of 1669.<sup>95</sup> Of these, we can establish (by using testimonials and bishop's

registers) that six women had licenses to practise midwifery. Testimonial certificates and registration were found for a seventh midwife who was also shown as a 'licensed' midwife in the visitation records.<sup>96</sup> In three other cases it has also been noted in the visitation records that the women have produced their licences although there are no surviving testimonials for them nor are they found in the registers. This leaves five women who were practising as midwives and for whom there is no proof of licensing at all. One of the five, Mrs. Dodson, was probably the Anne Dodd of St. Andrew Holborn who was licensed in 1688 by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which suggests that she may have been a deputy midwife in 1669.<sup>97</sup> The visitation records for the year 1669 illustrate the haphazard nature of recording practices and emphasize the fragile nature of assumptions based on a single source when dealing with seventeenth-century midwives.<sup>98</sup> It is unlikely we will ever uncover all midwives who practised in seventeenth-century London although a thorough search of all documentation will yield sufficient numbers for a worthwhile examination.

At the visitation of 1680 fewer than half of the intramural parishes were covered according to extant records. The number of midwives shown for the parish of St. Andrew Holborn had dwindled to six: of these we know that



three were licensed, one (Dodson or Dodd) was eventually licensed while two new names have been added. One of the two, a Mrs. Hillyard, may have been associated with Elizabeth Hillyard of St. Botolph Aldersgate who was licensed in 1678 and whose testimonial mentions a female relative living in St. Andrew Holborn.<sup>99</sup> Once again, inconsistencies in the recording of information abound in most parishes. The extramural parish of St. Sepulchre lists seven women: four have been named as midwives although we have elsewhere found proof of licensing for only one. The names of two women, Joan Wooden, (licensed in 1663), and Katherine Desser, (licensed in 1673), appear in the visitation records without any indication of their function whatsoever. Finally, the clerk noted that Mrs. Shaw had displayed her licence but we have found no evidence of a licence having been issued to her.

Why did both licensed and unlicensed midwives attend visitation with, in many cases, no distinction made in visitation documentation? Or why did so many midwives for whom there is no record of licensing appear at visitations? Among the possible explanations is the most obvious one of deficient records: gaps in bishops' registers and loss of testimonial certificates or even of the licence itself, in addition to inconsistent recording practices. But other factors may be involved. The midwife may have been licensed

in another jurisdiction or been licensed, widowed and remarried, her new name having no association with her licensing records.<sup>100</sup> In one or two instances the clerk has noted that the women were deputies, but this type of information was seemingly added at the whim of the recording functionary. It may allow for the fact that some women were not yet licensed although practising as midwives, yet the number of London women in this category were certainly far greater than these stray notations indicate. A recent study has suggested that some unlicensed midwives were women who occasionally practised out of charity.<sup>101</sup> Whatever the reason for the disparity between the number of women for whom we have definite proof of licensing and the number of women who appeared as midwives at the visitation, there is every reason to believe that the Church endeavoured to ensure that midwives were licensed. Visitations were also relatively ineffectual in encouraging midwives to acquire licences. For example, in 1669, which was a visitation year, fewer licences (16) were issued than in the previous year (19).<sup>102</sup>

The parish of St. Dunstan in the West is one of the thirteen parishes which has been selected for detailed study (see below, chapter 5). Although the overall quality of its other records is good, it is instructive to see how the visitation records deal with the recording of its midwives.

Five midwives were listed in the 1664 visitation: midwives Wharton, Senior, Benson, Sumner and Hobby.<sup>103</sup> We have evidence of licensing from other sources in three cases. For Benson and Hobby, although we have no record of licensing in the bishop's registers or among the testimonials, the visitation records themselves show that Hobby was licensed in December 1661 and Mary Benson on August 24, 1663.<sup>104</sup> On the other hand, Joan Cockson, licensed in 1661 and still alive and living in the parish in 1664, was not listed among the midwives.<sup>105</sup> In the visitation records of 1680, only three midwives were shown for the parish. Of the three, we have proof of licensing for only Elizabeth Wharton. For Mary Farewell and Mrs. Carter the only information that we have is the fact that they were present and that they were designated as midwives in the same way as Elizabeth Wharton whose licensing is well documented.<sup>106</sup> But where are the other parish midwives? According to our records, at least five, possibly six, other midwives were licensed since 1661 (two as late as 1672 and 1675) and were still living in the parish.<sup>107</sup> The impression from the records themselves is one of haphazard and disorganized recording practises with regard to the visitation process. Once again the vulnerability of conclusions supported by evidence from one set of records, in this case visitation records, is evident. Clearly, with

a large volume of business to transact, of which verifying midwifery licences was only a small part, the episcopal visitation of several days could not hope to be thorough. The visitation provided a crude form of screening (and a historical source of some value) but the ecclesiastical control of midwifery certainly depended far more upon the regular process of licensing upon request by the presentation of testimonial certification.

The records of visitations for the Peculiar of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's Cathedral describe a process which is different from that adopted by either the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Bishop of London; they support our view that the Church was concerned that women who practised midwifery fulfilled certain requirements but that the various processes by which they attempted to enforce their requirements met with mixed success. Visitations were held monthly, or in some cases bimonthly, during the years 1667-74.<sup>108</sup> During this period the names of thirty-one women who were engaged in unlicensed midwifery practice, on one level or another, appeared in the visitation records.<sup>109</sup> Of these thirty-one women, fifteen eventually obtained licences, but in a variety of ways.

At least one of the women seems to have gone the usual route to Doctor's Commons to be sworn; Anne Hainsworth, of St. Giles Cripplegate, had attended a

visitation on May 12, 1672, and was given the stern warning that she must have her licence two weeks after the Feast of Pentecost. Hainsworth obtained a testimonial certificate from her vicar three days after the warning and finally received her licence from Thomas Exton on August 29, 1672.<sup>110</sup> No visitations were held between August 8 and September 16 and midwife Hainsworth must have decided that it was prudent to forestall possible recrimination at the first hearing in the autumn.<sup>111</sup> It is difficult to say with certainty, but another midwife, Mary Field, may have also been licensed at Doctor's Commons since her testimonial certificate from the clergy has been preserved with those of other midwives who took that route to licensing, although her clients appear to have attended the visitation hearing with her where they were sworn before notary Edward Paire.<sup>112</sup> In August 1673 midwife Field had failed to appear at a visitation and show proof of licensing; after two more absences her penalty--excommunication--was imposed.<sup>113</sup> By February 5 of the following year she had met the requirements for licensing. In 1679 her name appeared on the testimonial of Hanna Allen of St. Leonard Shoreditch, who was in all likelihood Field's deputy.<sup>114</sup> There is the possibility that Elizabeth Pendleton had misplaced her licence and that officials of the Peculiar were miffed that Pendleton, a midwife of St. Giles Cripplegate, had gone to

the court of the Bishop of London in February, 1670, to obtain her licence. At any rate, she was called before visitation authorities on three occasions between April and May 31, 1671 and was unable to produce her licence; after that the matter was apparently dropped.<sup>115</sup> Midwife Child was present at visitations on at least four occasions without a licence between November 1672 and January 1673. She was possibly acting as a deputy at that time since an Elizabeth Child of St. Giles Cripplegate was licensed in 1694 under the jurisdiction of Canterbury.<sup>116</sup> There is no record of action taken against her apart from her mandatory attendance at four visitations.

Ten women were licensed at the visitations themselves with their testimonial information written into the visitation records. Several of these women, including Cecilia Coggs and Sara Ross, were licensed at their first appearance.<sup>117</sup> The occasional tenacity of ecclesiastical authorities was demonstrated in the case of Martha Trumball of St. Giles Cripplegate who attended the visitation as an unlicensed midwife in September 1667. She appeared again the following month and then dropped out of sight until the visitation hearing of October 7, 1669 when she was summoned and told to acquire a licence. On October 30, 1669 Martha appeared with six women who swore to her ability and was issued her licence to practise midwifery.<sup>118</sup> Similarly,

Susan Shipley of St. Giles Cripplegate attended visitation hearings on at least three occasions starting in September 1667 before finally acquiring her licence at a hearing in July 1669. Mary Hotchkinson alias Osgood was excommunicated in September 1667, presumably for non-compliance. She must have been able to convince authorities of her good intentions because the excommunication was lifted. Hotchkinson attended at least three visitations between September 1667 and September 7, 1669 when she was evidently given a 'final' warning with which she complied on September 24, 1669 and was issued a licence.<sup>119</sup> Church authorities were much tougher with Barbara Sedgewick of St. Giles Cripplegate who received her first summons in January 1674 and was excommunicated 'under seal' in August of the same year because she had failed to obtain a license. Sedgewick managed to have her excommunication lifted and was licensed September 9, 1674 at the visitation proceedings.<sup>120</sup> Of the sixteen women who apparently failed to obtain licences, two were excused because they were deputies, one was a former deputy who was no longer practising and one, midwife Mary Godfrey, had not practised for several years.<sup>121</sup> Four of the remaining women were excommunicated for failing to answer the summons to attend; of these Jane Chaplain and Mary Jackson had been summoned no less than five times between May 16 and July 7, 1674 and were excommunicated for

failing to obey the final summons. All four dropped from view and did not, apparently, make any effort to obtain a licence. They may, or may not, have continued in unlicensed practice.<sup>122</sup> Only one instance of a fine has been recorded. In 1669, midwife Stainsmore of St. Giles Cripplegate was summoned and fined seven shillings with no recorded explanation. Several months later she was called again to appear and instructed to obtain a licence. There is no further mention of Stainsmore in the records of the Deanery and Chapter of St. Paul but we believe that she moved to the parish of St. John Zachary where one Ellen Stansmore was licensed in April, 1670 under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London.<sup>123</sup> Two of the clients who gave sworn testimony on Ellen Stansmore's behalf were from the parish of St. Giles Cripplegate, strengthening our belief that midwife Stainsmore from St. Giles Cripplegate and midwife Ellen Stansmore from St. John Zachary were one and the same person.<sup>124</sup> Of the remaining women who appeared in the visitation records, the general pattern seems to have been one or two warnings, in some cases over a period of two years, after which the the court took no further interest in the women.

The visitation records of the Peculiar of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's which have survived, then, are records associated with a different process than the



visitations of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London which involved the appearance of both previously licensed and unlicensed midwives. The Deanery and Chapter officials were in this instance attempting to ensure that unlicensed midwives within their limited jurisdiction would be compelled to obtain licences. This authority was not calling before it already licensed midwives because we know of at least three licensed midwives in the parish of St. Giles Cripplegate whose names do not appear in these records. Emmet Sare was licensed May 14, 1662, Elizabeth Ponsam was licensed in February 1664, and Elizabeth Ayre on June 6, 1664.<sup>125</sup> The name of a fourth licensed midwife, Ann White (licensed in 1662) appeared briefly in the records in 1667, probably because authorities did not realize she was already licensed; no further action was taken.<sup>126</sup>

As noted earlier, the time and expense involved in acquiring a licence were major obstacles for many women. Since the acquisition of a licence had no bearing on the quality of a midwife's performance, the Church was compelled to adopt other measures to enforce its requirement for licensing. Hence, the penalty of excommunication was imposed on midwives who failed to comply. As we have seen, excommunication was regularly employed by ecclesiastical officials of the chapter and deanery of St. Paul's to deal with recalcitrant midwives. Midwives who practised without

a licence in the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London were similarly liable to the penalty of excommunication. It was a penalty whose efficacy varied with the degree of religious commitment which individual midwives experienced. It was, moreover, totally ineffectual as a means of ensuring compliance in cases where a midwife was not a communicant of the Church of England. Aside from the fact that midwives themselves were under oath to report unlicensed midwives and would, therefore, be less likely to work and co-operate with excommunicated and, hence, unlicensed midwives, the penalty of excommunication had no relevance to the midwife's skill. In the overall scheme of licensing it was a deterrent to unlicensed practice which enhanced, in turn, the prestige and pride of the midwife in her profession.

In 1665 R. Boreman, the rector of St. Giles in the Fields, wrote to Sir Richard Chaworth, the Bishop of London's chancellor, on behalf of two of his parishioners who had been excommunicated for failing to appear in court to answer the charge of practising midwifery without a licence. Boreman asked that the excommunication be lifted for Mary Shelton and Sibil Lee and that they be granted licences on the grounds that they were experienced and reliable women who depended on their earnings from midwifery for their livelihood and, in Shelton's case, that of her seven children. Both Shelton and Lee were reinstated in the

Church and, after submitting testimonial support of former clients, received their licences in February, 1665.<sup>127</sup> In 1675, clergyman Benjamin Younge of Enfield wrote to Chancellor Thomas Exton asking him to lift the excommunication on Dennys Younge who, he said, had submitted to her clergyman's instruction and now wished to be licensed. Exton agreed, even though it was midwife Younge's second offense.<sup>128</sup>

The relative impotence of ecclesiastical authorities in imposing their will upon intransigent midwives who refused to apply for a midwifery licence was demonstrated by the report of an incident some fifty years after it occurred in 1634. A midwife apparently successfully challenged the Church when it tried to enforce its position on licensing; the court's decision was that 'the Church could not punish a midwife for unlicensed practice'.<sup>129</sup> Although no details about the case have been provided, the midwife, Mrs. Benskin, may have been the midwife Benskin whose name appears on the visitation record of St. Ethelburga parish in 1669.<sup>130</sup> In the intervening years, Mrs. Benskin possibly acquired a licence or she may have continued in unlicensed practice. Benskin's victory apparently had some short-term effect on the London midwives' compliance with the licensing process. The Vicar General's registers for the decade 1630-9 suggest a drop in the number of midwives who were licensed

in the diocese of London in 1634 and subsequent years up to the disruption of the Civil War period.

**Table 2: Recorded Midwifery Licences: London Diocese 1630-42**

year	no. of midwives	year	no. of midwives
1630	4	1636	0
1631	10	1637	4
1632	10	1638	5
1633	6	1639	8
1634	4	1640	4
1635	0	1641	1
		1642	0

(Sources: G.L.R.O. MSS.343,344.)

Later in the century, in 1662, Anne Spencer a widow of Holy Cross, Westgate, launched an appeal after a series of events had led to her arrest for producing a false midwifery licence. We do not know the eventual outcome of her appeal, but excommunication had been previously imposed on the 'contumacious' midwife for her refusal to obtain a legitimate midwifery licence.<sup>131</sup> The midwife's troubles with church authorities did not go unnoticed by her peers. In the years commencing January 1661 and 1662, twenty-two and twenty-four midwives, respectively, were licensed in

the diocese of London; in the year commencing January 1663, seventy-four women were licensed in midwifery according to surviving records.<sup>132</sup> Both the Benskin and Spencer incidents illustrate measures by which Church officials attempted to ensure compliance with midwifery licensing but they were measures rewarded by little or no success at the individual level, however their example might have affected their peers.

Although the origins of ecclesiastical licensing of midwives are hazy, the evidence reveals that the Church endeavoured to encourage the licensing of midwifery practice throughout the century because of its concern with the midwife's ability and competence in carrying out her work. Midwives themselves played an increasingly important role in the eyes of church authorities in ensuring that unlicensed midwives were reported to ecclesiastical officials. The Church also delegated to the midwives the responsibility for maintaining close and harmonious relationships in order to make available, not only to one another but to their clients, the years of accumulated empirical knowledge which they possessed. The issue is not whether licensed midwifery was actually of a higher quality than unlicensed practice; in all probability there was little difference in most cases.<sup>133</sup> In some cases the difference between licensed and non-licensed practitioners was presumably that of

religion, not skill, since excommunication was an ineffectual penalty for those outside the Church of England. When complications arose, however, the unlicensed midwife who needed assistance might be less likely to call upon other midwives who she feared may report her, thereby depriving her client of critical resources and expertise. The perception of church officials, clients and midwives themselves, was that by taking their oath and giving sworn evidence of satisfactory practice midwives were providing a better service than unlicensed practitioners. It is important to know about the way ecclesiastical licensing of midwives functioned in seventeenth-century London but it must also be borne in mind that, in what was essentially a self-regulated system of professional training, the inabilities of the Church to enforce licensing successfully had little actual effect on the way in which the midwives practised their art.

## Notes

1. G.H. MS. 10,116/1; J.R. Tanner, English Constitutional Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century 1603-1689 (Cambridge: University Press, 1928) p.225.
2. Donnison, p.22. Donnison notes that a midwifery licence was issued in Peterborough in 1818 (p.206, n.6). John Guy states that in theory, the bishops could have granted licenses until 1873. John Guy, 'The Episcopal Licensing of Physicians, Surgeons and Midwives', Bulletin of the History of Medicine 56 (1982): 537.
3. Gibson Codex Juris Ecclesiastici 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1761) pp. 1098,1321; Wilson 'Childbirth' p. 44; Forbes 'Regulation' p. 237; Donnison p.6.
4. John Guy points out that the bishops were not authorised by either canon or statute law to grant midwifery licenses. 'Episcopal Licensing' p.537.
5. Forbes The Midwife and the Witch p. 145; Donnison p.6; Towler and Bramall p.56.
6. J.Harvey Bloom and R. Rutson James, Medical Practitioners in the Diocese of London, Licensed under the Act of 3 Henry VIII, C.11 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935) p.84.
7. Guy p.538.
8. Wilson 'Childbirth' p.62.
9. Margaret Pelling, 'Medicine and Sanitation' in John F. Andrews, ed., William Shakespeare: His World. His Work. His Influence. (N.Y.: Scribner, 1985) p.81.
10. Wilson 'Childbirth ' pp.41-6. For discussions of bastardy and parish concerns see W.E. Tate, The Parish Chest (Cambridge: University Press, 1946) pp.213-20; Peter Laslett et al.eds., Bastardy and its Comparative History (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980). On the penalty for women giving birth to a bastard see Robert H. Michel, 'English Attitudes Towards Women, 1640-1700', Canadian Journal of History 13 (April 1978): 58.
11. Guy p.539.

12. See Edward Shorter, A History of Women's Bodies (New York: Basic Books, 1982) p. 41; Thomas R. Forbes, 'The Regulation of London Midwives in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries' Medical History 8 (1964):235-44 and The Midwife and The Witch p.141; Graham, p.175; Schnucker 639-40; R.W. Johnstone William Smellie: The Master of British Midwifery (Edinburgh and London: E.&S. Livingstone Ltd., 1952) p.30. Richard Petrelli has noted the concern of the church in France in the early modern period that midwives were fit to perform baptism. See Richard Petrelli, 'The Regulation of French Midwifery during the Ancien Regime' Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences 26 (1971):276,290. Although the licensing of midwives in seventeenth-century Nuremberg was a civic responsibility, the ability to baptise newborns was a concern of both city fathers and church officials. See Weisner pp.106-7. For examples from parish registers of midwives who baptised newborns see J. Charles Cox, The Parish Registers of England (Totawa N.J.: E.P. Publishing, Ltd.,1974) pp. 56-8.
13. Houlbrooke p. 130.
14. See Forbes 'Regulation' p.141 and 'Midwifery and Witchcraft' Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences 16 (1962):264-82; Keith Thomas Religion p.308.
15. David Harley 'Historians as Demonologists: The Myth of the Midwife-witch' Social History of Medicine 3 (April 1990):1-27.
16. Wilson 'Childbirth' p.61.
17. S.O.E.D. defines cunning in this way. See Appendix A for a copy of the oath (the one administered to Eleanor Pead in 1567).
18. However, the ambivalence of the Church with regard to the use of charms is illustrated by the fact that an eagle stone (a hollow stone supposedly found in an eagle's nest) was one of the prized possessions of Canterbury Cathedral in the 1670s. It was in frequent use, available to neighbourhood women, but in the care of Dean Bargrave's wife for safekeeping. Thomas Forbes, 'Midwifery and Witchcraft' p.273. Jane Sharp refers to their use in removing a dead fetus but indicates that she has not used one herself and that their efficacy is probably imagined. Sharp p.190.
19. L.P.L. MS. VX 1A/11 no.80.
20. Forbes The Midwife pp.146-7. The oath requires the midwife to report misdemeanours to 'me the said Bishop, or my Chancellour'.



21. The history of the Chamberlen family has been well documented by other historians. See Forbes The Midwife p. 152; Towler and Bramall pp. 77-81; Donnison pp.13-15 as well as the source from which most of their information has been culled J.H. Aveling, The Chamberlens and the Midwifery Forceps (London, J.& A. Churchill, 1882)

22. Edward Cardwell, Documentary Annals of the Reformed Church of England (Oxford: University Press, 1844) p.165.

23. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.

24. G.L. MS. 10,116/10.

25. For the origins and several interpretations of the significance of the churching ritual, see Adrian Wilson 'Ceremony' pp.78-80, 88-93.

26. Donnison pp.4, 13.

27. G.L. MSS. 9234/7 fol.6, 9234/8 fol.177.

28. Boulton p.277.

29. G.L. MS. 9234/7 fol.6.

30. Boulton p.278.

31. The custom was apparently not limited to England. Natalie Zemon Davis describes how the new fathers in early modern French urban centres took their newborns to be baptised while the mother stayed at home until her relevailles or purification period was over and she could go to be churched. See Natalie Zemon Davis, 'City Women and Religious Change', in Society and Culture in Early Modern France (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975) p.74.

32. Boulton pp.276-77.

33. Wilson 'Ceremony' p.89.

34. Patricia Crawford, 'The Construction and experience of maternity in seventeenth-century England', in Valerie Fildes, Women as Mothers in Preindustrial England (London: Routledge, 1990) p.25.

35. Phillimore's Ecclesiastical Law 2nd ed. (London, 1895) Vol.1 pp.645-47. For other brief comments on churching see Thomas pp. 68-9; Wilson 'Childbirth' pp. 137-38.

36. Visitation Articles, Canterbury, 1605 (London: 1605; reprint ed., Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1975) p.19.
37. G.L. MS. 10,116/11 and 10.
38. G.L. MS. 10,116/13. Perhaps by the late seventeenth century, the purpose of churching was seen in its more modern aspect as a service of thanksgiving. In the prayer book, it is entitled 'The Thanksgiving of Women after Childbirth Commonly called the Churching of Women' Donnison, n.54, p.205.
39. For examples of gifts to midwives at christenings see John Loftis, ed., The Memoirs of Ann, Lady Halkett and Ann Lady Fanshawe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979) p.62; Reports of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts Rutland MSS. Vol. 4, pp.466,522,540.; Frances P. Verney and M.M. Verney, Memoirs, Vol. 2, p.21.
40. For the clergy's statement see Richard Burn, The Ecclesiastical Law 2 (London, 1842):513.
41. Bloom and James in dealing with evidence about several sixteenth-century midwives have stated that 'four or more other women, experienced in midwifery, gave evidence' about the experience and skill of the midwife (p.11). They have missed the point that some of the women were, in fact, clients, and not other midwives. I am grateful to Dr. John Clinard for his assistance in translating these documents in Bloom and James (pp.84-5).
42. This difference is important if midwives were licensed under regulations other than those of Henry VIII. The requirements regarding testimonial certification were much more demanding for midwives than for physicians licensed by the church. See for example the testimonial for James Cleverley, licensed in physick in 1669 on the recommendation of the rector, two churchwardens, one man whose occupation was unspecified, a 'gentleman' and J.Astell M.D. G.L. MS. 10,116/6. For an example of the minimal theoretical knowledge required to become a surgeon licensed out of Surgeon's Hall in 1789, see George C. Peachey, ed. The Life of William Savory (London: J.J. Keliher & Co. Ltd., 1903) pp. 17-18.
43. Most of the midwives who were given permission to practise in other geographical areas were women who resided in London; one was married to a gentleman. L.P.L. MS vx 1A/11 nos. 5, 44, 46, 52, 61.
44. L.P.L. MS. vx 1A/11 no. 61. Adrian Wilson has speculated as to the probable 'impressive' appearance of the license itself. While they may have varied from place to place, this one was a very modest document. Wilson, p.80. In his book The Midwife and the

Witch, Thomas Forbes has included reproductions of testimonial certificates from the Guildhall archives which he has mistakenly identified as midwives' licenses.

45. The midwife may have died or been issued a new document to cover the larger area including Winchester.
46. G.L.R.O. MS. DL/C 345 fols.21-50v. We have evidence from the testimonials themselves about the women who were licensed during these years.
47. Bloom and James have included records of midwives licensed in 1528. In one case, the midwife presented a document attesting to her competence, but in several other cases, the midwife called on one or two women for support. Still later, in 1557, a midwife and three clients appeared before the Registrar of the Vicar General who subsequently granted the licence to practise midwifery in Essex. The foregoing records do not suggest any standardization of requirements or recording procedures. See Bloom and James pp.84-5.
48. It is the persistent recurrence of the Latin term itself which is indicative of a set of 'official' requirements regarding the licensing process. See also note 43 above.
49. Andrew Boorde in Forbes, The Midwife and the Witch p.143; Guy p.537. For examples of licensing requirements in 1609 see G.L.R.O. MS. DL/C 339 fols. 30, 32, 49.
50. L.P.L. Registers of the Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud 1633-1645 fol.244 (1636). Thomas Forbes had obviously overlooked the archbishops' and bishops' registers when he noted that he had not found the text of any licenses from the first half of the century. Forbes The Midwife and the Witch p.155.
51. Wilson 'Childbirth' p.79; Donnison p.6. See also chapter 3 above p. 162-66.
52. G.L. MS. 10,116/9 and 13. Bonner was probably a notary public.
53. G.L. MS. 10,116/12.
54. G.L. MS. 10,116/22.
55. G.L. MS. 10,116/2.
56. Wilson 'Childbirth' p.80.
57. G.L. MS. 10,116/2.

58. G.L. MS.10,116/6.

59. G.L. MS. 10,116/8. Chamberlen's statement appears to have been the only documentation which Beranger presented to the court and therefore we are reasonably certain that the amount recorded was the charge for the licensing process at the ecclesiastical court level, exclusive of any charges incurred by the applicant prior to this.

60. G.L. MS. 10,116/8.

61. G.L. MS. 10,116/8.

62. G.L. MS. 10,116/10.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid. The tallies on the outside edge of the testimonial were 3-11+3-11=7-10 and 3-11+1-8=5-7 total 1-1.

65. There also appears to be no connection between the size of the fee charged and whether or not the midwife's name appeared in the bishop's register after licensing.

66. This is the motto of the knights of the garter, the order to which the chancellor belonged.

67. G.L. MS. 10,116/13. In two cases the women signed with their own signatures. Two further examples of this type of document survive in the records for the city of London from the years 1698 and 1699 G.L. MS. 10,116/14. Four examples can be found in the Lambeth Palace archives, all from the last five years of the century. L.P.L VX 1A/11 nos.54-7.

68. With the greatly increased public expenditure as a result of waging a war against France, a number of duties were introduced in the 1690s. In 1698, a 'long term' duty on vellum, parchment and paper was imposed which may have been introduced temporarily a few years earlier and been reflected in these midwives' testimonial certificates. See P.G.M. Dickson, The Financial Revolution in England (London: St. Martin's Press, 1967) pp. 46-49.

69. G.L. MS. 10,116/14. The three women were Mary Russell, widow of Tottenham High Cross, Elizabeth Wynn of Hampton parish and Martha Tidmarsh of St. James in the Fields.

70. G.L. MS. 10,116/14. Two of the women were from the same parish; three women had three supporting clients. Collop was probably charged more because she did not have enough cash at the

time of her appearance at the court. There is the possibility moreover that Collop never did receive her licence since her name does not appear in the Vicar General's register.

71. John Chartres, 'Food Consumption and Internal Trade' in Beier and Finlay London p.171.

72. Ibid.

73. L.P.L.VX 1A/11 no.13.

74. L.P.L. VX 1A/11 nos. 21,22. In Sara's case it would be unlikely that she could not afford the full payment, married as she was to a citizen and clockmaker.

75. L.P.L. VX 1A11 no. 42.

76. G.L. MS. 10,116/10.

77. G.L. MS.10,116/10.

78. G.L. MS. 10,116/12.

79. G.L. MS. 10,116/3. Although Ticer was described as 'very poore' her four clients were described as being of the 'best ranck and qualitie in the parish of Laughton'.

80. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.

81. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.

82. Wilson 'Childbirth' p.80. p.11.

83. G.L. MS. 9537/19. The fee for church lecturer was £0.1.6. Wilson has estimated that the fee to exhibit in Norwich in 1735 was about £0.2.6. Wilson 'Childbirth' p.81. Visitations are examined below pp. 75-83.

84. Thomas Religion pp.76-8.

85. G.L. MS. 10,116/14. The reference to her unwillingness to take the oath being based on reasons of health and not on religious grounds is a reference to the fact that Quakers would not take oaths.

86. Brian Burch, 'The Parish of St. Anne's Blackfriars, London, to 1665,' The Guildhall Miscellany 3 (October, 1969):36.

87. J.S.Purvis, An Introduction to Ecclesiastical Records (London: St. Anthony's Press, 1953) p.47.

88. See Bonner's 'Articles of Visitation' (1554) Edward Cardwell Documentary Annals p. 164. For other examples of bishop's injunctions to midwives from this early period see W.H. Frere and W.M. Kennedy Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation Vol 2 1536-1558 (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1910) especially pp. 23, 49, 292, 385 and vol. 3, p.383. Most of the articles reflect concerns relating to the midwife's oath but one of the most interesting was that of Bishop Hooper (1551-2) which indicated that some midwives had been reluctant to deliver the wives of former Roman Catholic priests who had now married (vol. 2, p.292). For more about these unfortunate women see Mary Prior, 'Reviled and crucified marriage: the position of Tudor bishops' wives' in Prior ed. Women in English Society pp. 118-48.

89. G.L. MS. 9537/14 fol. 35-38.

90. The suburban parishes such as St. Clement Danes were visited before the parishes within the walls.

91. We are using the customary division of parishes with 97 parishes within the walls and 13 parishes considered as 'extra mural'. See Tai Liu pp.17-21. The seven suburban parishes were St. Mary Islington, St. James Clerkenwell, St. Leonard Shoreditch, St. Clement Danes, St. Martin in the Fields, St. Giles in the Fields and St. Mary Matfellow: G.L. MS. 9537/15 fols. 51-68 passim.

92. It is difficult to give a total number of midwives who were listed on the visitation records of intramural and extramural parishes at this visitation because for thirty odd parishes, two lists have been preserved which, in some cases, contain different names for the same parish. For example on one list St. Sepulchre has reported nine midwives and on the other, only seven. If we use the list containing the greatest number of parishes, there were at least 105 midwives listed.

93. G.L. MS. 9537/15 fols. 51v, 59.

94. G.L. MS. 9537/17 fol. 74 and unfol. It is difficult to be precise about these records because they seem to have been partially recopied and, once again, in some instances where two listings of a parish occur they contain different information.

95. G.L. MS. 9537/19 fol.64.

96. She was Elizabeth Collins G.L. MS. 10,116/2; G.L.R.O. DL/C 344 fol.218.
97. L.P.L. VX 1A/11 no.46. The possibility that she was a deputy is strengthened by the fact that her testimonial certificate establishes a connection with an older, licensed midwife.
98. Adrian Wilson, it may be noted, has relied mainly on one source, visitation records, for his study of Norwich midwives.
99. G.L. MS. 10,116/10.
100. For the difficulty of tracing the careers of widows( not to mention widowed midwives), see Barbara Todd 'The Remarrying Widow' in Mary Prior, ed. Women in English Society pp.57-8.
101. David Harley 'Historians as Demonologists' p.12. Harley has also included Catholics and Quakers with this group of unlicensed midwives but there is no evidence to indicate that the latter two groups would attend visitations. Since excommunication was the penalty for non-compliance, the Church would be powerless to enforce licensing among these women.
102. G.L. MS. 10,116/5&6. For a reference to the way ecclesiastical courts reacted to non-licensed midwifery practice, see: G.V. Bennett, The Tory Crisis in Church and State 1688-1730 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), p.7.
103. G.L. MS. 9537/17 fol. 66v. The records of 1664 are very disorganized with some parishes entered twice. In the case of St. Dunstan in the West, another entry shows only three midwives.
104. Hobby or Benson may have been licensed under the jurisdiction of Canterbury since 'cant.' has been written by one of the names, but no archbishop's testimonials survive from these years and their names do not appear in the registers of Archbishop William Juxon (I am grateful to Miss Melanie Barber, the archivist at Lambeth Palace Library for verifying this point).
105. G.L. MS. 10,116/1.
106. G.L. MS. 9537/22 unfol.
107. The others were midwives Cockson, Mary Duckett, Abigail Symonds, Anne Bradford, and Sara Benet. Mary Benson may also have still been a practising midwife.

108. In some respects these visitations resembled the comperta courts of Norwich described by A. Wilson. See p. 74 in 'Childbirth.'
109. G.L. MSS. 25,533/1 and 2.
110. G.L. MS. 25,598.
111. At the time of licensing, Hainsworth was long past the deadline, which was nine weeks after Easter.
112. G.L. MSS. 25,598; 25,533/2 fol.136v. While it is not clear where Field was actually licensed, her testimonial certificate and that of Hainsworth were the only ones preserved with testimonials of midwives who were licensed outside of the visitation process although their testimonial evidence was also found in the visitation records.
113. G.L. MS. 25,533/2 fols. 119, 121v.and 125v.
114. G.L. MS. 25,598.
115. G.L. MSS. 25,533/2 fols.12,17,18v; 10,116/7; G.L.R.O. MS. DL/C 345 fol.54.
116. G.L. MS. 25,533/2 fols. 85-92 passim; L.P.L VX 1A/11 no.51.
117. G.L. MSS. 25,533/1 fol.84v; 25,533/2 fol.94v. Both women were from St. Giles Cripplegate and were licensed in 1669 and 1674, respectively.
118. G.L. MS 25,533/1 fols. 18v.,22,93v and 95.
119. G.L. MS. 25,531/1 fols. 16v,36,80,91v.
120. G.L. MS. 25,533/2 fols. 134-8 passim, 164, 168 and 174.
121. G.L. MS. 25,533/2 fols. 6,121,133v and 173. One of the deputies, Elizabeth Walker, also pleaded poverty.
122. G.L. MS. 25,533/1 fol.85v; G.L. MS. 25,533/2 fols.40, 151v, 154, 161v, 164, 167. Once a woman had been summoned to appear at visitation for practising without a licence, it is reasonable to assume that, given the system of reporting and the intimacy of life in a London parish, she was guilty of the charge.
123. G.L. MS. 10,116/7.
124. G.L. MS. 25,533/1 fols.86v,94; G.L. MS.10,116/7.



125. G.L. MS. 25,598.

126. Ibid. and G.L.MS. 25,533/1 fols.18v,21v,22v. It is interesting to note that while Sare's, Ponsam's and Ayre's testimonial certificates were signed by churchwardens of the parish, White's was not, which may account for the fact that she was summoned to present proof of licensing.

127. G.L. MS. 10,116/4.

128. G.L. MS. 10,116/9. See Forbes The Midwife and the Witch p.151 for the full text of the letter. The midwife might have been related to clergyman Younge who mentioned a second midwife who was excommunicated for practising without a licence. The latter was probably Eleanor Maws of Enfield whose testimonial certificate from Benjamin Younge bore the same date as his letter concerning Dennys.

129. Wilson 'Childbirth' p.41. Although he gives virtually no details about this case, Wilson speculates that the Court of Audience in which it was held may have been that of Canterbury, one of the jurisdictions open to London midwives for licensing. This encourages our supposition that it was London midwife Benskin.

130. G.L. MS. 9537/18 fol.65v. Benskin would be a practising, elderly midwife by that date. We have uncovered no record of her licensing but because of the unreliability of recording practices, cannot exclude the possibility that she was licensed at some point.

131. The following information is taken from the records of the Court of Arches at Lambeth Palace Library: Process Books D1960 Spencer v Somner, 1665 Case No. 8596. I am indebted to Miss Melanie Barber of Lambeth Palace Library for bringing this case to my attention and to Tim Wales for his help in translating the court records.

132. G.L. MS. 10,116/1-3. Unfortunately, no testimonials from the jurisdiction of Canterbury have survived for the 1660's. We have used only testimonial evidence for this comparison because the Bishop of London's registers were spotty for the decade under consideration.

133. This view is supported by the research of David Harley. See 'Historians as Demonologists' pp. 9-10.

## Chapter 2

### Pre-Licensed Experience

Although there has been widespread acceptance on the part of historians that the intent of the ecclesiastical licensing process was to ensure that midwives met prescribed moral and spiritual standards, there is abundant evidence that training, experience and competence were also important to those responsible for issuing midwifery licenses. Women who sought a licence to practice midwifery in seventeenth-century London had undergone years of practical training, often under the supervision of a more experienced midwife. In some cases two or more experienced midwives provided guidance and encouragement to younger midwives seeking to acquire the skills which were necessary for a successful career in midwifery. Parish and ecclesiastical officials, as well as peers and neighbours, set great store by lengthy involvement in the child bed experience. It was an experience which the midwife shared not only with competent senior midwives, but also with other women who would eventually apply for midwifery licences themselves. Testimonial evidence from the 1660s to the end of the century reveals that representatives of the 'official'

branches of medicine as well as the community as a whole accepted the viability and adequacy of the 'unofficial' system in which seventeenth-century London midwives trained and worked.<sup>1</sup>

Over five hundred testimonials which London midwives presented to church officials between the years of 1661 and 1700 have been preserved in London archives. These documents are analyzed below and the results support the view that midwives usually had long experience in midwifery practice before obtaining a license to practice their art in the bustling metropolis. Testimonials which clergy, clients and others gave under oath to support the midwife's application for licensing in the years 1600-1659 have not survived. We must rely instead on the briefer and more dispassionate observations of the clerks who kept the registers of the Vicar General of the diocese of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Because of this difference in documentation, relatively few details regarding the length of time which the early Stuart midwife had trained or practised her calling before applying for a license were recorded in this early period. Nevertheless, the evidence which is extant tends to support continuity in training over the century as a whole.

We know that when Dorothy Chambers of St. Sepulchre's parish received her license to practise midwifery in

November 1608, she already had 13 years' experience in child delivery.<sup>2</sup> In 1611 Anne Ramsay, a widow living in St. Olave Hart Street, claimed in her application that she had 20 years' experience in midwifery. The readiness of the Vicar General's Office to accept this claim suggests the practice whereby extensive experience preceded licensing was routine. While Elizabeth Keyfar of St. Botolph's Algate and Julian Sutton of St. Leonard's Foster Lane both had 10 years' experience in their calling when they were licensed in 1611, Isabel Doubleday of St. Dunstan in the West attested to 30 years of midwifery experience the same year.<sup>3</sup> The following year three midwives were licensed whose practical experience totalled an impressive 50 years.<sup>4</sup> Midwives could be licensed after far shorter, albeit presumably still adequate periods of service. Several years later, Elizabeth Gilbank of St. Martin Ludgate and Sibil Douglas of St. Andrew Holborn were licensed with three and two years' 'hands on' experience respectively.<sup>5</sup> When Sara Garrot received her license in January 1627, it was noted that she had seven years' experience.<sup>6</sup> Subsequent entries for the period up to 1640, do not record length of experience and there is no way of ascertaining whether this is due to faulty recording practices or other factors.<sup>7</sup> The inclusion of information on length of practice prior to licensing was haphazard and seemingly at

the whim of the recording clerk. The recording of very short periods demonstrates that entries were not biased in favour of long service; the average length of unlicensed practice where information is available exceeded a decade. There is no way of determining precisely how many years of experience was acceptable to licensing authorities.

To date no record of ecclesiastical licensing has been found for the years 1641-1660 either in bishop's registers or by way of testimonial evidence. As we will see, the absence of an ecclesiastical licensing system during the period 1641-1660 did not mean that the system of apprenticeship and training practised by London midwives also collapsed. What it does mean is that we are less able to recover fully the names and practices of those women who had served their apprenticeships in the pre-1641 period, and who entered the system as fully qualified midwives in the 1640s and 1650s.

A collective analysis of all testimonials for seventeenth-century London from the jurisdictions of the Archbishop of Canterbury (61 testimonials), the Vicar General of London (439 testimonials), and the Chapter and Deanery of St. Paul's (20 testimonials) reveals certain trends regarding information about the length of time midwives trained before being licensed in midwifery. Early in the Restoration period, midwives' testimonials more

frequently contained details about the duration of their practical experience than they did toward the end of the century. Aside from the actual number of years, descriptive terms such as 'many years', 'long practised' and 'divers years' were often used. Since we will argue that these terms are an expression of the contemporary importance which was placed on the the adequacy of a midwife's training, testimonials employing such descriptions have been included in the analysis. Moreover, because this emphasis on a lengthy period of experience implies the mature age at which many midwives applied for licensing it is also indicative of society's fundamental approval of the midwives' judgement, practical wisdom and self-mastery', all qualities which not only commanded deference and respect in early modern England but which gave added authority to midwives as a group.<sup>8</sup>

For purposes of comparison the thirty-nine years covered by this analysis have been divided into four shorter periods: 1661-1671, 1672-1681, 1682-1691 and 1692-1700. In the first period, 1661-1672, 97 testimonials out of a total of 205 made mention of the length of time the midwife had practised midwifery. Some of this previous experience was under supervision, and some, especially that of 'deputy' midwives who had been called to substitute when a mentor was unable to attend, would necessarily be unsupervised but we have no way of differentiating between supervised and

unsupervised experience. Nevertheless, 47% of the testimonials considered the length of time which the midwife had been involved with the midwifery process relevant to the midwife's competence. In 1672-1681, of a total of 138 testimonials, 21, or 15%, mention midwifery experience (see table 1 below). The years 1682-1691 yielded 101 testimonials with only 10, or 10%, containing information about duration of 'training' or experience. Finally, in the years 1692-1700 only 6 testimonials out of 77, or 8%, contained information about the length of time the midwife had worked in her field before applying for her license.

**Table 3: Length of Experience (from Testimonials).**

	1661-1671	1672-1681	1682-1691	1692-1700
Descriptive term	41	7	4	4
2-5 years	14	5	1	0
6-10yrs.	15	7	4	1
11-20yrs.	21	2	0	0
20-30yrs.	6	0	1	1
30+yrs.	2	0	0	0
Total	97	21	10	6
Total test.	205	138	101	77

Sources: G.L. MS. 10/116, L.P. MS. VX1A/11 and G.L. MS. 598/2.

Although it would be possible to conclude that the length of time which midwives 'trained' or gained practical experience became increasingly irrelevant and/or increasingly shorter as the century wore on, it must be borne in mind that no licenses had been issued for almost two decades before 1661. A backlog of midwives who had accumulated many years of experience awaited the reinstatement of the licensing process in 1661. This can be seen more clearly if we consider the figures for the years 1661-1662 separately. In this period 36 out of 46 testimonials, or 78%, stress the length of time the midwife had practised. Under the circumstances it would be acceptable, even desirable, to cite lengthy periods of unlicensed practice when licensing was first reintroduced. It is true that many midwives customarily acted as deputy midwives for seven years or longer, but later in the century some midwives might have found it more of a liability than an asset to draw attention to the fact that they had been delivering children unassisted for ten years or more without a licence. Testimonial evidence for long periods of unlicensed service late in the century tend to have been in some ways exceptional. When Susan Kempton, the wife of yeoman Thomas Kempton of Cheshunt in the county of Hertfordshire, applied for a licence to practise midwifery in London in 1694, she presented sworn certificates



indicating that she '... hath used the employment of a midwife twenty or thirty years last past with good success...'.<sup>9</sup> The fact that Kempton lived at a distance from London was probably the reason for her tardiness in applying for a license even though she already had clientele in the capital, and it is also possible that she had earlier secured a license to practise in Hertfordshire. The vagaries of various officials who were responsible for issuing the midwife's license could also influence the recording of details regarding the length of the applicant's experience. For example, cryptic, personal notations, quite separate from the sworn testimony of clergy and clients, appear as additions at the bottom of pages or on the outer fold of testimonials; Rebecca Jeffery's and Margaret Pratten's testimonials, both sworn in January, 1662, contain this type of information, which has been added in the handwriting of the bishop's surrogate.<sup>10</sup> Although the notations reflect a lack of standardization in the recording process, they are more interesting as an indication of which type of information the official or his clerk considered important.

A different perspective on the experience and training of midwives can be gained by dealing with the testimonials which provide a numeric value for the women's experience and excluding those which use descriptive terms.

For the years 1661-1671, 58 testimonials mention the number of years of experience which the women had, for a total of 716 years. For these 58 women, then, the average length of experience prior to licensing was 12 years. In the second period, 1672-1681, the average length of experience was 11 years. By the period 1682-1691, the average length had dropped to 7.3 years. That was still, by any standards, a respectable length of time to acquire the necessary skills and competence required of a successful midwife, but the reasons for the change are unclear. In the last period, 1692-1700, only two testimonials contained the number of years of midwifery experience. The average of 17.5 years, however, was skewed because one woman had practised for an unusually long time; the other licensee had 10 years of experience.<sup>11</sup> The very partial evidence for the post 1682 period, therefore, suggests that 'training' times were falling, perhaps in response to the rapidly increasing population within the metropolis and increasing demands for midwifery services.<sup>12</sup> Despite this possibility, testimonial evidence supports the conclusion that the inhabitants of seventeenth-century London, both lay and clerical, valued lengthy midwifery experience. As we shall see, this experience encompassed active participation in the child birth process as well as simple observation.

A great many trainee London midwives had definite arrangements, including specific time commitments, for serving in the capacity of deputy midwives under experienced or senior midwives. Ecclesiastical records from the seventeenth century described the senior midwife as an obstetrix supros.<sup>13</sup> Ecclesiastical authorities, moreover, recognized the role of the deputy midwife as a legitimate one. A section of a midwife's oath to be administered by the bishop or his chancellor read:

Item you shall not make or assigne under you any Deputy or Deputies to exercise or occupie under you in your absence, but such you shall perfectly know to be of right, honest and discreet behaviour, also apt, able and having sufficient knowledge and experience to exercise the said room and office.<sup>14</sup>

Demonstration of the status of deputy was sufficient to excuse a midwife summoned before a visitation for unlicensed practice.<sup>15</sup>

London midwives had developed a system of training very much like the guild apprenticeship system in which artisans, craftsmen and tradesmen received their training.<sup>16</sup> In some cases, as in other apprenticeships, seven years was the specified length of time which the midwife served in the capacity of deputy; for other women the number of years could be less than seven or, as records have shown, it could

be considerably more. The system appears in general to have been similar to the training practices employed for midwives in early modern Nuremberg, France and probably elsewhere on the continent.<sup>17</sup> We have not found any evidence that London midwives paid a premium to their mentors, but we know that in 1696 Mary Griffen paid five pounds for three years' training to a licensed and venerable midwife of Deale.<sup>18</sup> Although male midwife Percival Willughby had few words of commendation for contemporary midwives, he was moved to acknowledge: 'The young midwives at London bee trained seven yeares first under the old midwives, before they bee allowed to practice for themselves'. On another occasion Willughby makes the distinction between 'young midwives' and 'older sort of midwives'.<sup>19</sup> This is a vital distinction which has to the present escaped investigation by modern scholars of the subject.

Because of the quality of evidence in the years 1661-1700, we know that many midwives served as deputy midwives under qualified and licensed midwives for varying lengths of time, thereby ensuring that they received both instruction and supervision as they acquired the skills of a midwife. There are indications that this system was already in place early in the century. Although the registers of the Vicar General of London tend to restrict their recording of testimonial information to a formula which excluded many

details, when Isobel Toller of St. Martins in the Fields received her license to practice midwifery on July 10, 1610, it was noted, along with the customary names of six female clients, that she had served as a deputy to Mary Darley, obstetrix, and wife of Matthew Darley.<sup>20</sup> The following year, Joan Joanes of St. Botolph without Aldgate, wife of Edward Joanes, painter stainer, applied for a license after serving her time as a deputata.<sup>21</sup> Sara Garrot's testimonial from the year 1627 not only recorded her seven year's experience, the length of time for most formal apprenticeships, it also included the name of Dorissa Robinson 'midwife'. Although not overtly stated, it is reasonable to assume that Garrot served her apprenticeship under senior midwife Robinson.<sup>22</sup> The Bishop's register for the year 1634 reported the sworn testimony by two midwives of long experience, Susan King and Editha Torshell, when Catherine Mannersley of St. Andrew Holborn applied for a midwifery license.<sup>23</sup> The accounts for the Overseers of the Poor of St. Dunstan in the West recorded payments in 1638 made to 'the midwife and her deputie' as well as to another woman who were all present at the labour and delivery of Elizabeth Gillam.<sup>24</sup> The infrequent acknowledgement of the midwife's professional capacity is a major obstacle in the research of the seventeenth-century midwife. Later in the century, when archival resources

permit cross-checking between testimonials and registers, we have found that frequently among the women named on the testimonials a midwife's name, without occupational designation, has been included. These individuals were testifying to the applicant's ability and in many cases they likely helped train the novice midwife, but without the opportunity to employ record-linkage they remain unidentified during the first half of the century. The problem is acute when a widow's name appears among the names of the six women who were, ostensibly, 'clients'. For this reason, it is possible that in 1608, when Thomas Pole, notary public, accepted the sworn testimony of Alice Vaughan, widow, regarding the competence of Susanna Williams of Stepney, Mistress Vaughan was acting in the capacity of mentor rather than a recently widowed client. Similarly, in the following year, Hannah Walker of St. Mary Mounthaw may have been the deputy of Alice Rikman, widow of St. Leonard Foster Lane.<sup>25</sup> There is evidence later in the century that midwives generally called upon women who had been recently delivered by them to support their applications for licensing; this strengthens the likelihood that at least some of the widows whose names are found on testimonials were not clients, but midwives.<sup>26</sup>

Moving to the period after the reinstatement of ecclesiastical licensing, we find that when the testimony of

Anne Boggs of St.Giles in the Fields was sworn before chancellor Thomas Exton in June 1671, the document stated that she:

... did article and covenant with Alice Herbert of the same parish, an ancient and skilful midwife to become her deputy, which tyme of her Deputyshypp is now ended and determined as may appear.<sup>27</sup>

Later that year, vicar Atfield of St. Leonard Shoreditch noted parishioner Hester Lermitt had 'served her due time' with midwife Ellen Stamprow in his recommendation that Hester be licensed as a midwife. Hester, for her part, had already assumed the role of mentor to Mary Burnham who served as her deputy for three years before being licensed in 1672.<sup>28</sup> This demonstrates how a contemporary, self-regulatory system of training operated alongside of, and only partly parallel to, the licensing system; an as yet unlicensed Lermitt was deemed by community standards to be already qualified to serve as a senior midwife to Burnham.

The great importance attached to training and working under a senior midwife is apparent in the documents supplied by Margaret Cooke of Chelsey when applying for her license in 1664. Because her senior associate, Mary Leverett, also of Chelsey and a practising midwife for '33 years or thereabouts' had lost the use of her limbs, she could not appear personally to swear to Cooke's abilities.

Instead, Sam Wilkinson, rector of Chelsey, took pains to convey Leverett's testimony to the appropriate authorities.<sup>29</sup> Sibil Lee of St. Giles in the Fields made her own statement on behalf of her deputy Mabella Hobson of the same parish in 1664: 'I Sibilala [sic] Lee testifie that Maibell Hobsess is by mee derected and is a nabell midwife laying many women for me.'<sup>30</sup> Mabella's testimonial also bore the signature of Anne Lamb, the daughter of a midwife, who would receive her own license to practise midwifery in 1678. While Hobson learned her craft, then, she could draw on the expertise of Lee, a midwife of long experience, and also tap the resources of Lamb who had been raised in the craft of midwifery and was already probably a midwife in training.

Among the most impressive demonstrations of the way in which traditional knowledge and skill in midwifery was passed down from generation to generation within a system of unofficial apprenticeship is the evidence of matriarchal links between two, and in some cases, three generations of midwives.<sup>31</sup> It would be difficult to surpass the qualifications of Elizabeth Love of St. James Clerkenwell, licensed in 1663, and who 'was for many years bred and brought up with her mother and grandmother both ancient and expert midwives'.<sup>32</sup> When Margaret Corney of St. Peter Paul's Wharf was licensed in November 1661, her rector, John



Wilkins, acknowledged 'her mother of knowne experience and ability in her profession of midwifery as by sufficient testimony of many persons she hath delivered will be made good'.<sup>33</sup> The signatures of two midwives appear on Mistress Corney's testimonial, that of Elizabeth Hales 'aged 83' and Mary Soedin 'aged 80'. There is no indication of which one (if either) was Margaret's mother but the accumulated experience of these aged midwives cannot be lightly discounted in any consideration of the quality of experience and subsequent competence of midwives trained in this system.

Mary Edwards, licensed midwife, signed the testimonial of her daughter Mary Cook of St. Mary Matfellow in 1669; Helen Orme, licensed midwife of St. James Clerkenwell, also signed her daughter's testimonial certifying that Hester Penney was 'able and skillful in the art of midwifery.' Hester was licensed in 1669 and her mother had already sponsored at least one other young midwife, Phoebe Forster of St. Sepulchre's Newgate, who was granted a license in the early sixties.<sup>34</sup> According to the beautifully written document in Lady Margaret Coventry's own hand and sealed with her seal, Anne Clark of St. Peter the Poor, with twelve years' experience in midwifery, was the daughter of a midwife 'above fortie years from whom she derived her skill.'<sup>35</sup> In some cases, a midwife who received her

training at the hands of her mother carried on the family tradition in midwifery in the same parish. The 1678 testimonial of Anne Lamb, St. Martins in the Fields, requested that she be granted a license to 'exercise the office, business and function of a midwife in the place of her mother now deceased...'.<sup>36</sup> Ann's mother was Mrs. Wright (alias Ramton) an 'ancient' midwife who had been licensed in 1611.<sup>37</sup> There is every likelihood that many of Anne's clients had been brought into the world by Anne's mother, a fact that would enhance the trust and confidence of the expectant mother as she was 'brought to bed'. Both the daughter and granddaughter of midwife Susanna Kent of St. Dunstan in the East were midwives although the daughter, Susanna Read, practised in the country.<sup>38</sup>

A revealing glimpse at the supportive network surrounding midwives-in-training is afforded by analyzing testimonial information as it relates to deputy midwives and their mentors. These documents reveal the complexity of the relationships which existed between midwives of different ages and stages of experience. In some cases candidates for licensing could claim an association with one, two, or three senior midwives as well as younger, deputy midwives. When Elizabeth Fletcher of St. Giles in the Fields applied for her license in 1664, she had been Mrs. Boshier's deputy for 3-4 years and Mrs. Elder's deputy for 3 years. In addition,

she had presided at successful deliveries in the presence of Mary Dowke, a licensed midwife.<sup>39</sup> Three licensed midwives signed the testimonial of Adrey Lucas of St. Andrew Holborn in 1667: Ann Adams, Alice Herbert and Esther Kilbury. Herbert and Kilbury, both of St. Giles in the Fields, frequently worked together and their signatures appear on an impressive number of midwives' testimonial certificates.<sup>40</sup> Later in the century, Joan Sinclair of St. Martin in the Fields presented credentials signed by midwives Elizabeth Bink, Martha Budd and Elizabeth Tracee who made the following statement on Sinclair's behalf:

Sir, this woman the wife of George Sinklare was my Deputy her full Terme and p'form'd it very carefully and faithfully and is very diligent and able witness my hand <sup>41</sup>

In addition to the support and instruction of senior, more experienced midwives, midwives applying for licenses also included the names of other fledgling or deputy midwives who had been present when they had successfully brought their clients to bed. When Elizabeth Dowke was licensed in 1661, she had already practised midwifery for 20 years; her deputy, Frances Stannard, had 10 years' experience and applied for her own licence later that year.<sup>42</sup> In the same year Margaret Hall of St. Martin in the Fields included sworn testimony by her deputy Mary Jackman. Jackman was subsequently licensed in 1669.<sup>43</sup>

There are other examples of women whose names were included among the clients of women applying for licences and who were not identified as deputies but who subsequently obtained licenses themselves: Margaret Williscott of St. Botolph Bishopsgate supported Sara Griffin of the same parish in 1663 and received her own midwifery license in 1666; Anne Lamb of St. Martin in the Fields testified for Mabel Hobson (St. Giles in the Fields) in 1663 and was licensed fifteen years later; Joan Wheeler of Stepney was licensed in 1666, three years after her name appeared on the testimonial of Eleanor Rickes, also of Stepney.<sup>44</sup> Later in the century, we find that Hanna Mason, who was licensed in 1679, had been present at successful deliveries attended by Anne Watson, licensed in 1676; both were of Stepney and Hanna, in her turn supervised Ann Johnson of Stepney who was her deputy and who was licensed in 1692.<sup>45</sup> Susan Budden of St. Andrew Holborn and Elizabeth Syrett of St. Giles in the Fields were both licensed in 1690. Widow Budden had testified on behalf of Elizabeth Green of St. Sepulchre in 1673 and Syrett on behalf of Susanna Hales of her own parish in 1676.<sup>46</sup>

The testimonial which William Cave, vicar of Isleworth, supplied for Elizabeth Clark in 1697 noted that she 'hath for several years past exercised the office as a Deputy midwife to several persons residing within our parish to

their great content and satisfaction.<sup>47</sup> By 1697, when Elizabeth Danzey of St. Giles in the Fields swore to the competence of Mary Sampson of St. Clement Danes, she had at least 5 years' experience and she herself was also licensed the same year. Danzey would appear to have been more of a contemporary than a senior in her relationship to Sampson, who in return gave sworn testimony to support Danzey.<sup>48</sup>

There are other examples in the testimonials which indicate that midwives were involved with the child bed process, often for many years, as deputies, assistants, or perhaps as observers who at a future date decided to pursue seriously a career in midwifery and become an integral part of the intricate network of experienced and competent women who supported women at this crucial point in their life cycle.<sup>49</sup> Examples of childbed assistants can be found in the accounts of the parish overseers of the poor of St. Dunstan in the West. After an entry that Goodwife Ayres had been delivered in April, 1638, it was noted : ' It. given unto two women that helped to Deliver her xii p'. An earlier entry for the year had also acknowledged the presence of a woman who had assisted the midwife and her deputy.<sup>50</sup> In 1663, we have the statements of two women who were present at five successful deliveries by Margaret Cook of Chelsey but who were neither licensed midwives nor clients.<sup>51</sup> Margaret Pelling's study of Norwich

practitioners mentions women 'standing instead of a midwife' in bastardy cases who may have been deputy midwives, or other women helpers and observers.<sup>52</sup> Physician William Sermon's midwifery treatise (1671) suggested that, ideally, four women should be in attendance to assist the midwife. These women should take an active part: two of them would lift the woman's pelvic area with each contraction while two others would restrain the upper part of her body.<sup>53</sup> Elizabeth Walker, wife of London clergyman A.W. Walker, was knowledgeable in 'physick and chyruvery' although not a midwife by profession. She would go to women in child bed at any time day or night and take with her 'what might be useful' to assist the midwife in her work.<sup>54</sup> Mrs. Walker exemplified the literate, well-educated woman whose years of attendance at deliveries afforded a further resource upon which midwives could draw. Early in the century, Lady Margaret Hoby took an active part in the delivery of women of all ranks.<sup>55</sup> Clergyman Josselin's wife Mary was attended in childbed by other women in addition to the midwife; she in turn participated in the deliveries of friends and neighbours.<sup>56</sup> In some instances, female attendants other than the midwife cut the umbilical cord.<sup>57</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis has described how female neighbours, as well as the midwife, attended deliveries in early modern

France, suggesting that the practice was not uniquely English.<sup>58</sup>

Extant testimonials for midwifery licenses from the years 1661-1700 have been analyzed to determine how many women successfully applying for licenses in this period claimed an association with experienced midwives, including mothers who had been midwives.

**Table 4: Associate midwives, 1661-1700.**

	1661-1671	1672-1681	1682-1691	1692-1700
worked with				
1 midwife	43	27	16	11
2 midwives	20	4	2	
3 midwives	4			
mother	7	3		

Sources: G.L. MS.10/116, L.P.L. MS. VX1A/11, G.L. MS. 25,598/2.

In the years 1661-1671, 36% of the testimonials indicate a relationship with at least one other experienced midwife. In the years 1672-1681, 24% of the testimonials mention a senior midwife. By the third period, 18% reveal such a connection and by 1692-1700, 14% of the testimonials convey information about another midwife with whom the licensee has been associated. Thus, whereas slightly less than 26% of all extant testimonials for the period 1661-1700 include an indication of the length of earlier practice/training, slightly more than 26% provide evidence of the role of one or more senior midwives in this training.

The appearance of a gradual but steady deterioration in the influence of senior midwives toward the end of the century is probably misleading. In general, there is a problem of under reporting as well as one of detection. Because midwives were frequently not given their professional designation on the testimonials, their names are frequently indistinguishable from those of female clients who were providing sworn testimony on the midwife's behalf. Although we have been able to identify senior midwives who have not been so designated, because we have a record of their licensing from other documents, licenses issued after 1700 have not been investigated and this will affect our knowledge of the 1690s, in particular. As has already been pointed out, careless recording and loss of



records has undoubtedly allowed more than a few midwives to remain undetected. We know, for example, that Sara Sidey of St. Ethelburga's parish, licensed in the early years of the Restoration, was the daughter of a prominent midwife of the same parish who was licensed in 1622. Sara does not mention her mother's profession in her own testimonial, although she had no doubt received much of her knowledge and training at her mother's hands.<sup>59</sup> Frances Austen, whose licensing records have not been recovered, gave sworn testimony for Rebecca Searles in 1663 and there is no hint of her occupation. Fortunately, when she supported Anne Alkin's application in 1670, her signed statement added the designation 'midwife' after her name.<sup>60</sup> For these reasons, we would argue that the number of midwives who had an apprenticeship with senior midwives before obtaining a license to practise on their own was higher than our figures have demonstrated, although it is not possible to assert that all London midwives developed within this system. It is noteworthy that the ecclesiastical licensing system encouraged the reporting of this type of training, without making such evidence mandatory. In the same way that only a substantial minority of the testimonials reported on the length of training, we will never know to what extent the role of senior midwives was under reported.

Aside from the problems of recording, it appears that during the 1660's there was a group of highly competent midwives who took an unusually active part in the training of young midwives. The most visible of these women was Alice Herbert of St. Giles in the Fields. Alice was responsible for at least seven younger midwives at various times between the years of 1661 and 1676. Her protegées included Anne Adams, St. Martin in the Fields, licensed in 1661; Gertrude Wigly, St. Giles in the Fields, 1662; Audrey Lucas, St. Andrew Holborn, 1667; Margaret Venable, St. Mary Islington, 1667; Elizabeth Martin, St. Giles in the Fields, 1669; Anne Boggs, St. Giles in the Fields, 1671; and Anne Dobson, also of St. Giles in the Fields, in 1676.<sup>61</sup> Three of the foregoing--Lucas, Venable and Martin--were also supervised by Esther Kilbury who worked closely with Herbert. When Herbert supplied a separate statement for Gertrude Wigly to include with her testimonial certificates in 1662 she wrote:

These are to certifie that the bearer above named hath served me in my imployment and she being my deputie in severall yeares officiate in my absences. She my deputy in being for the space of three yeares hath faiethfullie performed whatso[e]vear belonged to her in and upon any occasions so fare as eaver it it could heave by any whose soeaver I had employment for her. Witness my hand Alyce Herbeart midwife thes 22 yers.<sup>62</sup>

Once again it should be borne in mind that these trainers of midwives brought to their task skills and knowledge acquired through decades of empirical practice. Although excluded from access to formal education, the expertise of these women lay beyond the bounds of academic learning, learned, as it were, within the intimate circle of midwives and female friends which surrounded the child bed. Alice Herbert had more than twenty years' experience to bring to the task of training Anne Adams in 1661. Her associate Esther Kilbury had been supervised in her turn by the venerable midwife Susan Swanley of Shadwell in Stepney, who had begun her work as a midwife in the 1630s.<sup>63</sup> The early years of the Restoration, in particular, saw a group of senior midwives with long careers in the practice of midwifery who were actively involved in the training of younger midwives: Elizabeth Boycott of St. Sepulchre licensed in 1636; Eleanor Gillam, St. Olave Silver Street, 1637; Elizabeth Hales St. Nicholas Cole Abbey, 1636; Joan Rowley, St. Clement Danes, 1632; Helen Orme, St. Vedast Foster Lane, 1636; Elizabeth Somner, St. Dunstan in the West, 1639; and Mary Melsom, St. Thomas the Apostle, 1626.<sup>64</sup>

By the last decade of the century there are still examples of midwives of long experience who have an association with younger midwives. Eleanor Dickenson of St.

Martin in the Fields was licensed in 1669. By the time she sponsored Anne Alcroft's and Elizabeth Coleman's applications for midwifery licenses, she had over twenty years of experience in midwifery herself.<sup>65</sup> Also licensed in 1690, Bridgid Blackborrow of St. Botolph Aldgate and Susan Briscoe (whose parish has not been recorded) claimed the testimonial support of Elizabeth Harris and Anne Vere who had 17 and 13 years' experience respectively. Anne Vere of St. Botolph Aldersgate had 20 years' experience by the time Margaret Morse claimed her as mentor in 1697.<sup>66</sup>

There do not seem, however, to have been as many senior midwives with long experience in the last three decades as there were in the 1660s. Here again the evidence may be, in part, deceiving. It seems likely that either the church authorities in general expected a higher standard when issuing licenses in the first decade of reintroduction, or else that the candidates were not as certain of what was required and went beyond the authorities' expectations. In consequence, many testimonials are fuller. There exists, moreover, the likelihood that testimonials tended to include testimony primarily from senior midwives who had themselves already been licensed. Many fully experienced midwives of the 1642-60 period may, therefore, have been under reported as senior midwives in the early 1660s, leaving the

impression that training was predominantly in the hands of the more matronly pre-1641 generation.

Thus, the training of London midwives possessed similarities to the system followed by the male-dominated London guilds. Unlike a craft apprenticeship, an apprentice midwife would, unless related to her mentor, not live with her.<sup>67</sup> Since none of the London midwives about whom we have information had been unmarried, such a residency requirement would have been unrealistic. Many, but by no means all, trainee midwives resided in the same parish as their senior midwife. As we will see, trainee midwives had a more diverse age structure than the traditional young male apprentices. We are handicapped in our examination of a midwife's training because almost all the information comes from documentation of a licensing system which was designed to comment upon the end product (competence), and not, necessarily, upon the process. Since a number of midwives were literate, some recourse may have been had to the gynaecological treatises of the day. Without question, however, the core of the training was 'hands on' experience in child delivery. In those cases when senior midwives had several apprentices at one time (for example, Alice Herbert) it is likely that more than one trainee would be present at deliveries. Perhaps novices would have observed several deliveries before being called upon to take a more active

role. As several of the above testimonials make clear, more experienced deputies performed deliveries in the absence of their mentors.<sup>68</sup>

In assessing the competence of midwives trained in this system we are not limited simply to internal appraisals; endorsement of competence and skill came from the 'official' branches of medicine. Here the most active supporter of midwives seeking midwifery licenses was Hugh Chamberlen of the acclaimed Chamberlen family, inventor of the (secret) midwifery forceps. Chamberlen, appointed to the position of physician in ordinary to Charles the second in 1663, carried on his family's traditional interest in the practice of midwifery.<sup>69</sup> His first recorded endorsement of a midwife appears on the testimonial of Sarah Benet in 1674.<sup>70</sup> Chamberlen has added a statement below that of the curate, rector and churchwardens of St. Dunstan in the West indicating that he had 'examined' Mrs. Benet and found her qualified to practise midwifery.<sup>71</sup> In 1686, he made the following statement on behalf of Mary Lambert of Evesham, Surrey, who was subsequently licensed to practise midwifery in London under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury :

Having at the request of Mary Lambert ye bearer hereof examined her skill in that profession I do hereby certify that I find her sufficiently Qualified both in knowledge

and practice for to follow ye said profession.<sup>72</sup>

The following year Chamberlen noted that he had also 'examined' Mrs. Mary Bunce and found her 'fitt to be admitted to the practice of midwifery.'<sup>73</sup> Jane Cooke of St. Dunstan in the West presented testimonials in 1684 to which Chamberlen had appended a separate paragraph attesting to her ability as a midwife.<sup>74</sup> Chamberlen's most fulsome statement appears on the testimonial of Elizabeth Deane, wife of Richard Deane, gentleman, of St. James Weston in 1688:

These are to certify whom it may concern that upon the desire of the bearer hereof Mrs. Elizabeth Deane of St. James I have upon a strict examination found her fitt to follow the practice of midwifery she having also served four or five or more years as Deputy to able midwives.<sup>75</sup>

Chamberlen's statement was not only an endorsement of Deane's competence and skill, but also of the traditional system whereby midwives served as deputies under highly experienced senior midwives. Even more compelling than Chamberlen's statement on Deane's behalf, however, was the statement signed by four of Deane's clients:

These are to certify that the bearer hereof Elizabeth the wife of Richard Deane of the parish of St. James Weston, Gent. have layd us safe and well in Childbirth and delivered us by God's help and wee are all of us very much obliged to her care, skill, as a good midwife.<sup>76</sup>

An unusual expression of Chamberlen's interest in a midwife is found in the certificate of Elizabeth Beranger of the parish of St. Peter the Poor in 1674; in it he urged the chancellor, Dr. Thomas Exton, to license Beranger. He points out that in a previous communication he had forgotten to mention that Beranger was not only a staunch adherent of the Church of England, but that she had a certificate from the Hotel Dieu of Paris, 'famous all the world over for the Instruction of midwives'. Beranger received her license on the strength of Chamberlen's testimony without the benefit of testimony by clients or clergy. <sup>77</sup>

When Sarah Trip of Isleworth, Middlesex, presented her statement of competence to the licensing authorities in 1661, she obtained the signatures of medical doctor R. Hodges, surgeon John Gisby of Brentford, Frances Phillips, apothecary, also of Brentford, and Mary Elin, midwife of Richmond. All four attested to the fact that Sara had '...longtime performed the office of midwife in these parts with good success and with great approbation from all those who have made use of her'.<sup>78</sup> John Knapp 'Dr. medicina' and G. Constable, bachelor of medicine, signed the testimonial of Alice Thwaites of Stepney, the wife of Thomas Thwaites 'one of his majesties lifeguards' who subsequently was licensed to practice midwifery in February 1663.<sup>79</sup> Katherine Pinchon of St. Martin Vintry enclosed a separate statement



from N. Paget, a member of the 'London College of Medicine', which read: 'These may certify that I judge Mrs. Katherine Pinchion to be a sufficient midwife, July 20, 1663'.<sup>80</sup> Two medical doctors, Joseph Hinton and Edmond Cooper (who also claimed to be an honorary member of the 'Medical College of London'), spoke to the abilities of Elizabeth Mercer of St. Mary Savoy in 1666.<sup>81</sup> Apothecary Phillips, who had supported Sarah Trip some twenty years earlier, and the surgeon Deymount supported Mary Glasse of New Brentford when she applied for a license in 1669; in 1681, 'medicos' G. Williams found Katherine Coal of Shadwell 'worthy' of employment as a midwife based on his acquaintanceship of nine years.<sup>82</sup> On the 1697 testimonial of Elizabeth Hodges of Isleworth, the name of Thomas Ansell, a surgeon, appears among the signatures of clergyman William Cave and two churchwardens.<sup>83</sup>

Although historians have generally accepted the view of a medical author with vested interests such as Percival Willughby, that midwives were, as a group, poorly trained and ill prepared for their calling, some representatives of the medical professions were clearly prepared to give sworn testimony to the ability and competence of midwives. It should be borne in mind, however, that other factors such as social status may have had a bearing on the fact that these particular women obtained some accreditation from the

'professionals'. Elizabeth Deane, Mary Bunce and Mary Glasse were married to gentlemen; Alice Thwaites was married to a man who had a connection with the court; Katherine Coale was described as a 'gentlewoman' and Elizabeth Beranger's father was a Proctor of the Arches. It would, perhaps, be tempting to assume also that midwives of some social standing were working with male professionals who became the prototype for the male midwife. It is generally acknowledged, however, that the surgeon, or barber surgeon, as he was known in the seventeenth century, was the practitioner who worked most closely with the midwife because of his involvement in complicated deliveries when instruments were required for the removal of a dead infant. Of the twelve women above who claimed support from medical practitioners, only three included the support of surgeons. It is more likely that these women claimed an association with these men based on mutual social ties and friendships within the circles in which they moved. Support for this view can be found in the fact that on the outside of Elizabeth Deane's testimonial, court official Richard Newcombe had written: 'Let this pass without fees'; since Deane was married to a gentleman and could well afford the expense of obtaining her license, this can only be taken as an indication that she had friends of influence in high places.

Thus, it is apparent that the ecclesiastical authorities on occasion accepted the testimony of medical professionals as to the practical skills of applicants for midwifery licences. Of these individuals, Chamberlen was unique in asserting that he had examined the women's competence. In total, twelve testimonials, or 2% of all surviving testimonials contain these recommendations.<sup>84</sup> Since the sole reason for seeking the support of a medical professional was to facilitate the acquisition of a licence, this feature was not subject to under reporting. In this it differs from the evidence on training with senior midwives, and we can conclude with some degree of confidence that only a very small minority of seventeenth-century midwives were licensed following examination or recommendation by other branches of the medical profession.

Turning to an analysis of the testimonial evidence for training and competence derived from non-medical sources, we can begin by noting that the twentieth-century historian has, for the most part, neglected to pay sufficient attention to existing documents which contain a wealth of information about the requirements for obtaining a midwifery license in seventeenth-century London. Hence, Thomas Rogers Forbes concluded:

To modern eyes the striking feature of these documents [certificates or testimonials] is that the principal, and sometimes the only,

mentioned qualification of the midwife was that she was a person of good character. If there was any reference to her professional competence, it was usually the number of years she had functioned as a midwife, although laymen sometimes testified to her skill. Thus, like her training, the licensing of the midwife was seriously inadequate by modern standards.<sup>85</sup>

The consequence of this and similar statements is that it is generally (and erroneously) believed that the seventeenth-century ecclesiastical licensing system paid scant regard to the skill and training of midwives, with the obvious corollary that professional standards were low. Keith Thomas has allowed that there were numbers of both licensed and unlicensed midwives in the seventeenth century and then dismissed them as a group by concluding 'but their qualifications were rudimentary'. In justification of his overtly negative view, Thomas has cited two brief but damning comments, both taken from seventeenth-century writers with vested interests in changing midwifery practice.<sup>86</sup>

We have already seen how the licensing authorities were concerned with far more than the applicant's character (see above, chapter 1); here we will examine the evidence from the testimonials for clerical and lay assessments of candidates' qualifications. Contemporaries did not (as we will see) make a clear distinction between character and

professional competence; for them the two were obviously and intimately associated. Moreover, we will learn more about early modern England through understanding the perceptions of its inhabitants in relation to the adequacy or inadequacy of training and licensing than we will by imposing twentieth-century standards upon past societies.

It is true that a number of clerical testimonials (or in some cases, those of churchwardens) speak only of the character and high principles of the prospective midwife. In the context of licensing in the 1661-1700 period, however, far more testimonials comment on the midwife's skill and competence as well as her character than on her character alone. Indeed, in 1678, when Anne Hide of St. Mary Islington applied for her licence, the clergy and churchwardens acknowledged a midwife's priorities; they noted that Anne 'frequents her parish Church except at such times as shee is hindred by the business of her profession which is that of a midwife.'<sup>87</sup> Similarly, in 1693, the curate John Ewer and the churchwardens of St. Mary Mattfellow allowed that Mary Salmon 'hath and doth constantly come to her parish church on the Lords days (so often as her office will permit)'.<sup>88</sup> Mary Duckett of St. Dunstan in the West applied for a licence in 1669. Her testimonial certificate stressed her deputyship under a licensed midwife (Mrs. Hatton) but did not mention the fact

that she was the wife of a clergyman.<sup>89</sup> In 1661, of 20 testimonials signed by clergy, 17 attest to the midwife's competence as well as her character, 2 mention only her character and one speaks only of her skill. In addition to the testimonials of the clergy, one midwife was licensed who apparently presented only sworn testimony from female clients, although there is a possibility that some of her documents may have been lost.<sup>90</sup> Testimonials from representative years of 1672-74 still show that competence was not neglected in issuing midwifery licences: of 22 licenses signed by clergy, 7 refer to both skill and competence, 12 to character and one to competence only. In the years 1690-1695, of 23 clerical testimonials, 6 refer to the woman's competence as well as her character, 1 refers solely to her competence and 16 to her character alone.<sup>91</sup>

As a general observation, conformity to the tenets of the Church of England appears to have been an increasing preoccupation of clergy, as well as of the laity, who testified on the midwives' behalf in the last decade of the century. For example, female clients usually commented only on their knowledge of the midwife's skill, but in 1696 four women swore to Ann Pedro's experience in midwifery and, in a separate statement at the bottom of the page, it was noted 'All the persons above testified of Mrs. Pedro's conformity'.<sup>92</sup> One possible explanation for the increased

emphasis on a midwife' conformity could be heightened clerical apprehensions following the passage of the Toleration Act in 1689. When Lucy Wetherby of St. Giles in the Fields presented her accreditation from her minister and churchwarden in 1690, it consisted of a form, printed on good quality vellum, in which there were blanks for the name of the communicant, clergy and churchwarden. This communion certificate stated that Wetherby had taken the sacrament on April 13, 1690 and was signed by John Sharpe D.D. and Nathaniel Chandler, churchwarden.<sup>93</sup> Thomas Tenison (the future Archbishop of Canterbury) was particularly conscientious in mentioning the candidates' participation in the rite of sacrament.<sup>94</sup> The introduction of communion certificates suggests that in the closing decades of the century parish clergy were expected to comment only, or primarily, upon the applicant's faith, leaving considerations of professional ability to other deponents. Obviously, the cleric was in the best position to address this issue authoritatively for the licensing officials, but it does not necessarily follow that he possessed no interest in technical qualifications.

Although most of the testimonial documentation includes a statement of one sort or another by parish clergy, by no means all of the applicants supplied clerical testimony. Again, there is the possibility that loss of

documents is a factor. However, it does not appear that the licensing authorities absolutely required an authoritative statement on faith or character before issuing a midwifery licence.

There are other indications at the parish level of the Church's concern that midwifery licenses be issued on the basis of a woman's experience and skill in her chosen field. Rectors and vicars as well as church wardens frequently relayed information about the midwife's experience, particularly as it related to her association with another, more experienced midwife. The minister of the parish of Stepney, Spitalfields, presented the statement of Temperance Pratt, widow and midwife, that Ursula Stokes of the same parish was 'altogether expert and every way able to follow the calling of a midwife.'<sup>95</sup> Thomas Tenison, then rector of St. James Weston, took his responsibility seriously when he supplied sworn support for Anne Hopper, one of his parishoners in 1690: 'I have made inquiry about Ms. Ann Hopper of my parish'. He concluded, on the basis of reports by 'grave matrons', that Anne was 'well qualified... for ye office of a midwife.'<sup>96</sup> Before he swore that Elizabeth Syrett was fit for the office of midwife, Thomas Pettiplace, curate of St. Giles in the Fields, sought out the opinions of Syrett's neighbours.<sup>97</sup>



In the intimacy of the crowded London parish, who could better give an account of a midwife's abilities than her neighbours? Who better knew of her successes and failures? An unidentified London midwife who practised in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries recorded her deliveries of women who lived either side of her.<sup>98</sup> Dozens of testimonials stress the length of time that the midwife had lived in her parish.<sup>99</sup> Rector John Williams of St. Peter Paul's Wharf noted that his parishioner Margaret Corney, licensed in 1661, had lived in the same parish for forty years.<sup>100</sup> The churchwardens of Stepney pointed out that Martha Grymes had lived in their parish 'for twenty years or thereabouts'.<sup>101</sup> The 'good success' of long-time midwife Emmett Sare and her excellent personal qualities were known to 'hundreds' in her home parish of St. Giles Cripplegate.<sup>102</sup> Statements such as these were not only proof of the stability of the midwife; they are an indication of the high esteem in which these women were held as they worked and lived under the close scrutiny of neighbours, clients and other parish residents. In the words of the rector of Rayleigh, not only had Elizabeth Moors lived more than 20 years in her parish, she was 'well known to exercise the office of midwife among us'.<sup>103</sup> Elizabeth Dowke had lived for forty years in the parish of St. Bartholomew the Great with 'good credit and reputation

among her neighbourhood'.<sup>104</sup> Judith Newman of Allhallows the Less, was perceived to have 'demeaned herself honestly and in love and charity with her neighbours' throughout her more than thirty years of residence and 'many years past' of midwifery practise.<sup>105</sup> A resident of St. Giles in the Fields for more than twenty years, Dorothy Rosson 'always behaved herself justly, soberly and honestly among her neighbours', while Emma Cayford, also a twenty year resident of her parish, had 'always been observed' to have been an 'able midwife' as well as a woman of good life and conversation.<sup>106</sup>

This sense of neighbourhood endorsement emerges time after time and it is obvious that the parish clergy and churchwardens were acting as the semi-official voices of their parochial communities when they provided their testimonials. In 1663 both the rector and curate of St. Clement Danes swore that Clare Baxter was

...of honest life and conversation and an expert and skilful midwife who hath brought to bed and delivered many women with much commendation amongst her neighbours.<sup>107</sup>

Parish officials of St. Bride's noted that they 'have a report' from the neighbours of Margaret Stevens regarding her ability and character in 1663, while almost thirty years later the vicar and churchwardens of St. Dunstan in the West also cited the evidence of neighbours regarding Sara

Mainwaring's suitability for the office of midwife.<sup>108</sup>

Rector Barton and churchwarden Poole of St. Margaret's New Fish Street testified on behalf of neighbourhood women when Anne St. John applied for her license:

[Anne] Hath manifested both her skill and care in safe delivering some of her neighbours in the parish of child bearing as many women on theyr own experience can testifye and therefore we do conceive her to be fitt that she may be licensed for that office.<sup>109</sup>

The testimonial of Elizabeth Cooper of St. Martin in the Fields was a statement by her 'neighbours and parishoners'; it was signed not only by the curate, churchwardens, and six women including a senior midwife, but also by nine men of the parish.<sup>110</sup> The testimonial certificate of Alice Pinnock of Shadwell contained a brief statement by her next-door neighbour which vouched for her suitability as a midwife in 1673.<sup>111</sup> Parish clergy and their communities could not help but be concerned about both the technical competence and the moral conduct of the prospective licensee. Who would entrust one's wife, daughter or parishioners to an individual, no matter how well trained, who was untrustworthy? It seems clear that licensing was the end product of a system which began with extensive experience and a good reputation within a parish.

As a general rule, aside from clergy and churchwardens, the majority of witnesses giving sworn

testimony on behalf of women seeking a midwifery license were female. There was, however, some evidence that in a society where women gained their legitimacy as they related to a male (be he parent, sibling or spouse), midwives believed that male witnesses would give their application increased legitimacy. Frances Cloys of St. Botolph Aldgate obtained the statement of Valentine Waite, her landlord, as well that of her minister and one churchwarden to support her claim that she had gained competence and experience as a deputy to Jane Ward, a licensed midwife whom she had served for many years.<sup>112</sup> Joseph Peterburrow made the following statement on behalf of Alice Bunworth of St. Andrew Holborn in 1671:

She lived in my house and was marreyd out of my house & did always behave herself very modestly and faithfully during that time & I believe will doe in any place or employment whatsoere.<sup>113</sup>

Joan Cockson of St. Dunstan in the West obtained brief signed statements from three males including her neighbour of many years, John Jermyn, who commended her sufficiency in the office of midwife; Alice Pinnock of Shadwell included a statement by her 'next neighbour' that she was 'fitly qualified for the office'.<sup>114</sup> Although widow Jane Johnson of St. James Garilckhithe had obtained the sworn testimony of six clients and two senior midwives, her certificate also

contains the signatures of fourteen men with no indication of their function but we do know that they were not husbands of clients.<sup>115</sup>

Aside from the customary cleric and two churchwardens, various other parish officials were called upon to attest to a midwife's competence and character. Margaret Digborrow of St. Mary Woolchurch and Temperance Pratt of St. Botolph without Algate both obtained the signatures of parish constables.<sup>116</sup> Anne Goodwin of St. Andrew Wardrobe, Margaret Johnson of St. Clement Danes and Mary Knott of St. Bride's, licensed in 1661 and 1663, claimed support from their parish clerks.<sup>117</sup> Other women presented documents witnessed by parish overseers of the poor.<sup>118</sup> In addition to parish officials, civic and other government officials occasionally gave their stamp of approval to applicants: Judith Newman of Allhallows the Less and Jane Ward of Allhallows the Great both obtained the signatures of two common councilmen. Margaret Digborrow, Katherine Pinchon and Mary Duckett were among those whose documents were sworn by one common councilman, while Temperance Pratt's testimonial bore the signature of William Williams, Member of Parliament.<sup>119</sup>

A survey of testimonials was carried out to ascertain how many contained the signatures of men who could not be considered parish officials or clergy: in the period 1661-

1671, 60 women out of 205, or 29%, obtained male signatures beyond those of parish officials and clergy.<sup>120</sup> In the years 1672-1681, only four testimonials out of 138, or not quite 3%, carried additional male signatures. There was a slight increase in the period 1682- 1691 to just under 4%, or 4 out of 101 testimonials. By the last period 2.5%, or only 2 out of 77 testimonial documents, bore men's signatures which could not be associated with clergy and parish officials. Again, one possible explanation for the decreasing number of male signatures could lie in the fact that midwives in the period following the reinstatement of ecclesiastical licensing were uncertain of just how much documentation or certification they needed and were ensuring that they had enough support. For example, Jane Johnson's testimonial (1661) contained fourteen men's names and Charity Langton's (1663) contained nine.<sup>121</sup> Hence, it would appear that in some cases, the women obtained the signatures of vestry members as well as signatures of other men of standing in the parish. This, however, was a short-lived development. Those who testified on behalf of candidates were overwhelmingly drawn from the applicant's parish clergy, parish officials, fellow midwives, and former clients. Issues of training, competence, character and faith were addressed by testimony from all four groups.

In conclusion, midwives seeking licenses to practise midwifery in London secured sworn evidence which not only showed them to be of good character and upright conduct, but which also demonstrated that they had frequently undergone lengthy training by way of empirical practice under the supervision of highly skilled midwives whose expertise had been acquired through decades of midwifery practice. Fledgling midwives worked closely with senior midwives and with deputy midwives while they were acquiring the experience which was necessary for licensing. Members of the medical establishment acknowledged the competence of many of these midwives and, by extension, the adequacy of the unofficial system of apprenticeship which the women underwent. Neighbours, civic and parish officials, including clergy, testified under oath that midwives seeking licenses were women in every way qualified to carry out the work of child delivery successfully. In respect to training and competence, one important conclusion arising from the study of extant evidence is that the licensing system illuminates an apprenticeship system which was based upon self-regulated community standards. We know that it was self-regulatory both because it did not collapse with the removal of ecclesiastical licensing in the middle of the century and because we have evidence that the midwives themselves enforced the requirement for licensing. The

curate and churchwardens of Stepney parish noted that although Mary Burnham, a widow with children to support, had served as a deputy for three years (her testimonial bore the mark of Hester Laramitt, midwife) 'the midwives do threaten to prosecute her of being not sworn'.<sup>122</sup> The clerical hierarchy knew that this system existed and approved of it (as did a critic as caustic as Willughby), but it played no direct, perceivable role in controlling it. The Church's role was to regulate - through licences - the end product. It did so largely by accepting the testimonial evidence which was generated by the apprenticeship system and, more generally, from the applicant's parochial community. Since the testimonial and licensing system was not intended to reveal the full nature and characteristics of the training of midwives, what we find in this documentation is important but fragmentary evidence: a window into a larger world.



## Notes

1. By way of comparison, in Paris, midwives in the seventeenth century generally apprenticed to senior midwives, or, after 1630 were associated with the Hotel Dieu which trained a small number of the most competent fledgling midwives. Even at the Hotel Dieu, however, the instruction was practical rather than theoretical. Petrelli p.279-80.
2. G.L.R.O. M.S.DL/C/339, fol. 49.
3. G.L.R.O. M.S. DL/C/340 fols.3v,5v, & 11v.
4. Avis Mallett, 20 years, Barbara Porter, 20 years and Alice Palmer, 10 years. G.L.R.O. M.S. DL/C/340 fols.21v,22v & 44.
5. G.L.R.O. MS. DL/C/341 fols. 47 & 64.
6. G.L.R.O. MS. DL/C/342 fol. 257.
7. See for example G.L.R.O. MS. DL/C/ 343, fols. 143 & 165 for the year 1633.
8. Keith Thomas Age and Authority in Early Modern England (London: The British Academy, 1976) p.5.
9. G.L. MS. 10/116,13.
10. G.L. MS. 10,116/2. Rebecca Jeffery's testimonial contains the observation 'aged 58 yrs.-practiced 18 years.' Margaret Pratten's notes at the bottom 'practised for 7 yrs.'
11. G.L. MS. 10,116/13 & LPL vx 1A/11 no.52. The women were Susan Kempton of Cheshunt and Elizabeth Vesey of St.Edmond Lumber Street.
12. A recent study has shown that London's rapid growth in the first half of the century was surpassed in the second half. See Roger Finlay and Beatrice Shearer in Beier and Finlay, London, p.54. By way of comparison, in Nuremberg there were periodic shortages of midwives in the early modern period. This elicited a variety of responses but not a reduction in the length of time midwives were required to train. See Wiesner pp.95-8.

13. G.L. MS. 10,116/3. See the testimonial of Katherine Day. The term obstetrix supros indicates a midwife who was above or superior to other midwives.
14. T. R. Forbes, The Midwife and the Witch p.147, quoting from a book of oaths published in the mid seventeenth - century. See below, Appendix B.
15. See above chapter 1, p. 87
16. Barbara Hanawalt has pointed out the difficulty which European women faced with regard to guild membership in male guilds in the pre-industrial period. Moreover, women were discouraged from organizing their own guilds. England had no female guilds. Hanawalt, 'Introduction' Women and Work, p.xiii. For information on female apprenticeship in the eighteenth century see Bridget Hill Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England (Oxford: Basil Blackwell,1989) pp.85-102. It is difficult to locate information of a general nature on the apprenticeship system in seventeenth-century London and Stella Kramer has pointed out the complexity of the topic: Stella Kramer, The English Craft Gilds and the Government (New York AMS, 1968, reprint of 1905 edn.); Margaret Davies focuses on the seven year term requirement: Margaret Davies, The Enforcement of English Apprenticeship 1563-1642 (Cambridge:Harvard University Press,1956). See also Joan Lane, 'Provincial Medical Apprentices and Masters in Early Modern England', Eighteenth-Century Life 12 (November 1988): 353-71; O.Jocelyn Dunlop and Richard Denman, English Apprenticeship and Child Labour (London: T.Fisher Unwin, 1912) passim. The latter has a useful section on working women as well as information about child labour and apprenticeship.
17. In Nuremberg, where a well-defined system of midwifery apprenticeship was in place in the early modern period, the apprenticeship was for four years. A description of the system is found in Weisner, pp. 98-9. For the training of French midwives in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in a system described as resembling medieval apprenticeships, see Petrelli, pp.277-9. For eighteenth-century French midwifery training see Michael Ramsay Professional and Popular Medicine in France 1770-1830 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) pp. 23,53. The Dutch midwife Vrouw Schrader worked with other, more experienced midwives to gain expertise at the beginning of her long career even though she had evidently gained some knowledge of operative obstetrics from her first husband who was a barber-surgeon: Simon Schama The

Embarassment of Riches (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987) p.526. In turn, Schrader described one of her associates as 'pupil' and she herself was called in by other less experienced midwives to assist in difficult deliveries. Marland 'Mother and Child' p.19.

18. Donnison p.8.
19. Willughby, pp.73,208.
20. G.L.R.O. DL/C/339 fol. 132v.
21. G.L.R.O DL/C/339/vol.11 fol.4. 'Mistress Fleeke' was probably the senior midwife. The term deputata indicates a deputy midwife.
22. G.L.R.O. DL/C/ 342 fol. 257.
23. G.L.R.O. DL/C/343 fol. 193.
24. G.L. MS. 2999/1 unfol.
25. G.L.R.O. DL/C/339 fols. 30 & 75.
26. See the certificates of Anne Bell for the year 1677. G.L. MS. 10,116/10.
27. G.L.MS. 10,116/3.
28. G.L. MS.10,116/8.
29. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.
30. G.L. MS. 10,116/3. Mistress Lee was saying that her deputy was 'an able' midwife.
31. In France, senior midwives or matrones jurees in some cases instructed their daughters in midwifery. See Petrelli, p.277. For the role of mothers in the transmission of popular medical knowledge see also Evenden-Nagy pp. 60,62-68,81.
32. G.L. MS. 10,116/2.
33. G.L. MS. 10,116/1.
34. G.L. MSS. 10,116/6 and 10,116/2.

35. Signed and sealed December 12, 1673. G.L. MS. 10,116/8. Margaret Coventry was the daughter of the Earl of Thanet; she married George, third baron of Coventry in 1653. The midwife whose application she supported may have delivered Lady Coventry's two children. J.B. Burke, A Geneological History of the Dormant, Abeyant, Forfeited and Extinct Peerages of the British Empire (London: Harrison, 1883) pp.142-3.
36. G.L. MS. 10,116/10.
37. G.L.R.O. MS. DL/C/340 (fol. no. illegible).
38. L.P.L. VH 95/1136. Barbara Hanawalt has commented on the commonality of women's work experience in this period in Europe and the fact that their primary mentor was usually their mother or another female. Hanawalt, 'Introduction', Women and Work, p.viii. For a twentieth-century example of a third-generation American midwife whose early training was influenced by her mother see Logan, Motherwit passim.
39. G.L. MS. 10,116/4.
40. G.L. MS. 10,116/5.
41. G.L. MS. 10,116/11.
42. G.L. MS. 10,116/1.
43. G.L. MS. 10,116/1 & 6.
44. G.L. MS. 10,116/3,4 & 10.
45. G.L. MS. 10,116/9,10 & 13.
46. G.L. MS. 10,116/8 & 13.
47. G.L. MS. 10,116/14.
48. G.L. MS. 10,116/14. We know that Danzey was practising 5 years earlier when she gave sworn testimony for Elizabeth Wicks. G.L. MS. 10,116/13.
49. G.L. MS. 10,116/3 & 7 and MS.25,598/2; L.P.L. MS. VX 1A/11 nos. 40 & 58.
50. G.L. MS. 2999/1 unfol.
51. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.

52. Margaret Pelling, 'Occupational Diversity: Barber-surgeons and the Trades of Norwich, 1550-1640' Bulletin of the History of Medicine 56(1932):408.
53. William Sermon, The Ladies Companion or the English Midwife (London, 1671; Wing S2628), p.19. Contemporary Sermon assigns a much more active role to the female attendants than Adrian Wilson who sees their role as largely symbolic in his study of the ceremony of childbirth.
54. Anthony Walker, The Holy Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Walker (London, 1690; Wing W 305) p.180.
55. Dorothy Meads, ed. "Diary of Lady Hoby (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1930) pp. 63, 117, 195, 216.
56. Alan MacFarlane, ed. Diary of Ralph Josselin 1616-83 (London: Oxford University Press, 1976) pp. 12, 111, 165, 399, 415, 465.
57. Wilson 'Ceremony' p.73.
58. Natalie Zemon Davis 'City Women and Religious Change' in Natalie Zemon Davis, ed. Society and Culture in Early Modern France (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975) p.76.
59. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.
60. G.L. MS. 10,116/3&7.
61. G.L. MS. 10,116/1,2,5,6,7&9.
62. G.L. MS. 10,116/2.
63. G.L. MS. 10,116/6&3. Swanley had also supervised Christian Broadgate and Elizabeth Rickes, both of Stepney.
64. G.L. MS. 10,116/1,2&3.
65. G.L. MS.10,116/13 and L.P.VX 1A/11.
66. G.L. MS. 10,116/13 & 14. See appendix A for a list of midwives including senior midwives.
67. Apparently in Nuremberg where married women were discouraged from entering midwifery apprenticeships, midwifery apprentices resided with their mistresses. See Wiesner pp.98-9.

68. See end notes 15 and 26 above.
69. Aveling in Snell Smith p. 78.
70. Snell Smith seems to suggest that Chamberlen was acting in some sort of 'official 'capacity as an examiner for the ecclesiastical authorities. Too few testimonials bear his statement too support this view. It is more likely that he knew them personally and adopted his stance of superior expertise in a manner reminiscent of his father, Peter Chamberlen, who attempted to organize and monopolize the profession of midwifery half a century earlier. Snell Smith, p.79.
71. L.P. MS. VX 1A/11 no.6.
72. L.P. MS. VX 1A/11/41.
73. L.P. MS. VX 1A/11/45.
74. G.L. MS. 10,116/11.
75. G.L. MS. 10,116/12.
76. Ibid.
77. G.L. MS. 10,116/8. Donnison notes that in the eighteenth century there was a head midwife at the Hotel Dieu who was independent of the medical staff and who called in a surgeon only when she thought instruments were necessary. (Donnison, p.27).
78. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.
79. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.
80. G.L. MS. 10,116/3
81. G.L. MS. 10,116/4.
82. G.L. MS. 10,116/3 & 11.
83. G.L. MS. 10,116/14.
84. For purposes of this analysis, the testimonial of Elizabeth Francis who was licensed as a midwife and surgeon

was excluded. She will be dealt with in a later chapter. G.L. MS. 10,116/14.

85. Forbes, Midwives and Witches p.155.

86. K. Thomas Religion p.15. The two writers were Percival Willughby, male midwife, and Elizabeth Cellier, a midwife who wanted to found and head a school for midwives at a handsome profit for herself. See below, p. 366.

87. G.L. MS. 10,116/10.

88. G.L. MS. 10,116/13.

89. G.L. MS. 10,116/6 and pp. 324-25.

90. G.L. MS. 10,116/1. For these observations, only full statements by women with a personal knowledge of the midwife's work and not merely the usual listing of several women's names as sworn witnesses have been considered.

91. G.L. MS. 10,116/13.

92. G.L. MS. 10,116/14.

93. In addition to the certificate, Wetherby presented sworn testimony of four women. G.L. MS. 10,116/13. The same type of communion certificate was presented by Mary Higdon of St. Botolph Bishopgate in 1681. G.L. MS. 10,116/11.

94. G.L. MS. 10,116/12; see midwives Rathbone's and Walford's testimonials and LPL MS. VX 1A/11 no.35 which is another example of the vellum communion certificate; it was issued to Mary Wood by Thomas Tenison and the churchwarden. Tenison became the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1695.

95. G.L. MS. 10,116/10.

96. G.L. MS. 10,116/13.

97. G.L. MS. 10,116/13.

98. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson MS. D/1141 fols. 34 & 60.

99. Again, implicit in the idea of long-term parish residency are the concepts of respect and authority which these women commanded. Thomas, Age and Authority. Ancient is used in the sense of having the wisdom of age; S.O.E.D.

100. G.L. MS. 10,116/1.
101. G.L. MS. 10,116/1.
102. G.L. MS. 25,598, 1662.
103. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.
104. G.L. MS. 10,116/1.
105. G.L. MS. 10,116/1.
106. G.L. MS. 10,116/13 & 1.
107. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.
108. G.L. MS. 10,116/3 & 13.
109. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.
110. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.
111. G.L. MS. 10,116/8.
112. G.L. MS. 10,116/4.
113. L.P. VX 1A/11/2.
114. G.L. MS. 10,116/1 & 8.
115. G.L. MS. 10,116/1.
116. G.L. MS. 10,116/2 & 3.
117. G.L. MS. 10,116/1 & 3. Later in the century, Mistresses Fendell, Whitehorne and Fowler enlisted the support of their parish clerks. G.L. MS. 10,116/10 & 12.
118. G.L. MSS. 10,116/6 (Martyn) and 10,116/ 10 (North).
119. G.L. MS. 10,116/1,2,6&3.
120. For purposes of this survey, two signatures were arbitrarily allowed for churchwardens, even if they were not designated as such.
121. G.L. MS. 10,116/1&3. Anne Boggs licensed in 1671, who had 11 male signatures seems to be the last midwife to have a



large number of male signatures on her testimonial. G.L. MS. 10,116/7.

122. G.L. MS. 10,116/8. See above, p. 51. There may have been an element of professional rivalry at work here since the church officials note: "she earns a comfortable livelihood for her and her children". But it does illustrate the fact that the midwives exercised a fair degree of control over their own system. See also below, p. 218.

### Chapter 3

#### Clientele

The Bishop of London's registers for the early years of the seventeenth century reveal a remarkable conformity regarding the appearance and swearing before consistory court of women who had been successfully delivered by the apprentice midwife and who now supported her application for licensing by the ecclesiastical authorities. The usual requirement was that six women appear before the chancellor or his representative to testify under oath to the midwife's competence. This chapter will look at not only the women who appeared in consistory court to attest to their midwives' competence, but also at the clients of an anonymous London midwife as they were recorded in her account book for the period 1694-1723. We will learn something about the distribution of a midwife's practice with regard to repeat business, geography and social standing; we will examine the way in which midwives were recommended by one client to another, and we will hear what clients themselves thought about their midwives.

In 1608, Susanna Williams of Stepney, Agnes Godderd of St. James Clerkenwell, Dorothy Chambers of St.

Sepulchre's and Elizabeth Peerte of St. Bridgid's all produced their full complement of six women, a trend which continued throughout the first four decades of the century in compliance with ecclesiastical requirements.<sup>1</sup> Hence, as late in the pre civil war period as 1639, we have the names of six women willing to testify to the competence of Dorothy Walker of St. Martins in the Fields and Elizabeth Somner of St. Dunstan in the West.<sup>2</sup> There is periodic evidence of administrative carelessness as in the case of Catherine Wicks, whose 1630 entry states that six women were sworn but which shows only two names with space left for four more.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, although the name of a licensed midwife was occasionally included among those of clients later in the century (ostensibly as someone who had been in attendance at a successful delivery), in the period 1600-1639 the name of a senior midwife generally appeared separately from the list of female clients. For the years 1600-1639 midwives applying for licenses were consistent in their conformity and success in obtaining sworn testimony from six satisfied women who had personal knowledge of the midwife's expertise.

Midwives who applied for licenses in the years 1661-1700 did not always obtain sworn testimony from six women. In part, correlation of record series demonstrate that some documents have been lost. Elizabeth Dowke (Duke), licensed in 1661, whose testimonials at the Guildhall show only the

names of male deponents, actually obtained the additional sworn support of six women whose names have been recorded in the vicar general's registers deposited in the Greater London Record Office.<sup>4</sup> But, even when allowing for some loss of documents, there appears to have been some bending, in the last two or three decades of the century of the regulation requiring the testimony of six females. In the year 1662, of twenty-three successful applicants for licenses, eighteen applicants supplied testimony from six women, two had sworn support from five women, one called upon four former clients, and one woman obtained testimony from seven clients (Table 5 below). Ten years later, out of twenty-four women successfully applying for licences, only six obtained the prescribed number of supporters. The last two decades saw a further deterioration in the numbers of sworn clientele: in the representative years 1681-82, and again in 1691-92, none of the women seeking licences obtained the mandatory sworn oaths of six women, although, as it will be shown, former clients expressed their approval and support in ways which lay outside the prescribed formula which had been traditionally employed. Moreover, regardless of numbers, the capacity for identifying even some of the clients of over 500 London midwives provides a broad basis for a systematic analysis.

Table 5: Clients Giving Sworn Testimony, 1662-92

clients per candidate	sample years			
	1662	1671-72	1681-82	1691-2
7 clients	1	1		
6 clients	18	6		
5 clients	2	4		1
4 clients	1	7	4	6
3 clients	1	1	1	4
2 clients				1
0 clients		5		1

Note: In the years 1671-1672, the missing clients of the five licencees are probably the victims of careless record keeping since the bishop's registers for those years are also poorly kept. Source: G.L. MS. 10,116.

In assessing the relationship which existed in seventeenth-century London between midwives and clients the most illuminating themes are those of the extent of repeat business, and the nature and extent of personal referral from satisfied clients to prospective mothers. One might assume that midwifery services in a large cosmopolitan population centre such as London would develop along different lines from those of the more intimate rural parish. In fact, the evidence-- when it can be developed--

demonstrates the existence of long term and intricate relationships between many London midwives and their clients, similar to what might be expected for rural England.<sup>5</sup>

The evidence for repeat business falls into two categories. The testimonial documentation was normally focused upon the number of women who had been delivered successfully by the candidate for an ecclesiastical license. In some cases, however, the number of children already delivered by the candidate for the referees was specified. This information occurred too infrequently in the second half of the seventeenth century to be of much statistical use, with the exception of those testimonials presented in the year 1662 within the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London. In that year the testimonials for all twenty-four successful candidates specified the number of children they had delivered for each of their referees. Secondly, we possess the account book for an anonymous London midwife covering the years 1694 to 1723. We may, therefore, utilize the information on the number of deliveries per client to establish a reasonable indication of the relationships which existed in late Stuart London between midwives and clients, and to demonstrate that the midwife routinely carried out her work to the satisfaction of many of her clients who

continued to use her services throughout the child-bearing years of the life cycle.

We can assume that most women had carried out a minimum of six successful deliveries before applying for a licence.<sup>6</sup> The information about the number of deliveries provided in the 1662 records and sporadically elsewhere is more valuable, however, as an indication of the fact that the midwife carried out her work to the satisfaction of her clients. The six women delivered by Debora Bromfield of St. Andrew Holborn had borne a total of thirty-two children when they supported her application for a midwifery licence in 1663.<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Philips of St. Clement Danes had been delivered of five children by Bromfield; Susan Brownell of the parish of St. Andrew Holborn of three children; Susan White of St. Martin Iron Monger Lane of four children; Mary Huntley of St. Salvator's Southwark of seven children and Elizabeth Boggs of St. Benet Paul's Wharf had used Bromfield's services on thirteen occasions. The confidence which women placed in the skill of their midwives was exemplified by women such as Boggs and Bridgette Richards of St. Mildred Poultry who was also brought to bed thirteen times (the latter by Elizabeth Davis of St. Katherine Cree Church) and Martha Marshall, wife of a vintner from St. Martin-in-the-Fields, who was successfully delivered by midwife Elizabeth Laywood twelve times.<sup>8</sup> For the year 1662

twenty-four midwives presented the sworn testimony of 142 clients; of these, 86 clients were delivered more than once by the same midwife or better than 60% of the midwives' business could be termed 'repeat business'. For the number of women delivered more than once by the same midwife see Table 6, below.

**Table 6: Frequency of Contact with Clients 1662  
(Testimonials)**

no. of children	no. of women
1	56 (39%)
2	35 (23%)
3	17 (12%)
4	11 (8%)
5	13 (9%)
6	5 (4%)
7	4 (3%)
12	1 (0.7%)
13	2 (1%)

Note: Percentages are approximate having been rounded off in most cases. There is no indication of whether or not any of the foregoing included multiple deliveries; therefore our calculations have assumed they involve the delivery of a single child. Source: G.L. MS. 10,116/2.



It must be remembered that the testimonial evidence sheds light on the extent of repeat business at one specific point in the ongoing relationship between a midwife and a client: the time of an application for licensing. For many of these women, we could expect that their reliance upon a particular midwife would continue, and thus the actual extent of repeat business would exceed the figures provided above. Hence, a general pattern is discernable, and this is confirmed when we turn to the account book of 1694-1723 for the, as yet, unidentified midwife.<sup>9</sup> During that period, the active midwife attended over 376 clients, more than one third of whom she delivered several times. In addition to the 243 clients that Mistress X delivered on a single occasion, 433 deliveries involved clients who had previously utilized the midwife's services. That is, out of a total of 676 deliveries, 64% involved a client who had used the midwife on more than one occasion.<sup>10</sup> The midwife delivered eight sets of twins and in all but one of these cases, the women were delivered of other children by the midwife. It should also be born in mind that at least twenty-two of the clients who used the midwife's services only once did so in the last five years of her practice. This would decrease the opportunity for repeat business (Table 7 below).

Table 7: Frequency of Contact with Clients  
1694-1723 (Account Book)

No. of deliveries	No. of women
1	243 (65%) or 192 (58%) excluding last 5 yrs.
2	48 (13%)
3	38 (11%)
4	22 (6%)
5	10 (3%)
6	7 (2%)
7	1 (0.2%)
8	2 (0.5%)
9	3 (0.8%)
10	0 (0%)
11	1 (0.2%)
12	1 (0.2%)

Note: in most cases, the percentages have been rounded off to the closest whole number. The delivery of twins was counted as one contact. Source: Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson MS. D 1141.

Not only did the majority of Mistress X's clients express a high level of confidence in her skills by summoning her (presumably) each time they were brought to bed, they were quick to recommend her services to other

family members. Mrs. Page, who used her services three times, told her sister about the midwife, who then became a client as well.<sup>11</sup> Mrs. Duple of Blackfriars was delivered by Mrs. X six times between 1703 and 1714; her sister became a client in 1704 and again called on the midwife for her delivery in 1706.<sup>12</sup> One of our midwives most fecund clients, Mrs. Dangerfield of Whitechappel, first used her services in July, 1699. By March 1712, she had called upon the midwife nine times. Dangerfield's trust in and reliance on her midwife's skills undoubtedly influenced her own sister who became a client of Mrs. X in 1713.<sup>13</sup> Mrs. Osten, an apothecary's wife, and her sister both placed their confidence in our midwife's abilities.<sup>14</sup> All told, at least six clients referred their own sisters to the midwife. Madam Blackabe, an affluent client who had been brought to bed of two sons and two daughters, referred a kinswoman to the midwife, who paid her handsomely for her services.<sup>15</sup> The women of the prominent Barnardiston family demonstrated a high degree of confidence and trust in our midwife's abilities. Six Barnardiston women used her services on a regular basis. Madam Barnardiston from Leytonstone was delivered three times; Madam Barnardiston from The Fig Tree twice; Madam Barnardiston living in 'Cornewell' sought assistance in childbed four times and Madam Barnardiston of Budge Row used the midwife's

assistance on two occasions. Barnardiston women living on Granoch Street and Watlen Street were also delivered by the midwife. In total, fourteen small Barnardistons were brought into the world by the 'family midwife'.<sup>16</sup> The same pattern is found earlier in the seventeenth century. Lucy Lodge of St. Leonard Shoreditch, who was licensed in 1663, was supported in her application for a license by three female members of the Samwaye family in addition to eleven other women; Judith Tyler of Hendon, Middlesex, who was licensed in 1664, claimed four clients with the surname 'Nicoll'.<sup>17</sup> Since several of the anonymous midwife's clients were themselves children of women who had been brought to bed by the midwife, there is every possibility that Mistress X was attending women whom she herself had brought into the world, a remarkable tribute to the level of confidence and personal rapport within this relationship. For example, Mrs. Tabram of Butcher's Hall Lane was delivered by the midwife four times beginning in 1697; twenty years later, our midwife delivered 'Ms. Tabram's daughter' who was living in Chapter House Lane.<sup>18</sup> Altogether at least nine daughters of former clients were delivered by the popular midwife. Two clients, Mrs. Maret and Mrs. Benet, summoned Mrs. X when their serving women gave birth.<sup>19</sup>

London midwives did not restrict their practices to the parish in which they lived, a fact which has eluded the

author of a recent study of early modern midwifery. Adrian Wilson has erroneously reasoned that midwives of the parish of St. Clement Danes provided midwifery services to women only of their own parish, an assumption which has resulted in his belief that the midwives carried out too few deliveries to gain the experience necessary for competence.<sup>20</sup> But archival evidence shows, for example, that Bridgid Jake of St. Leonard Shoreditch, who presented her testimonials for licensing in 1610 was one of the relatively few seventeenth-century midwives whose six mandatory clients all resided in her home parish.<sup>21</sup> Even this, of course, did not mean that Jake's practice at that point in time or in the future was restricted to her own parish. On the other hand, the abundant evidence that midwives seeking licences normally provided references from satisfied clients who transcended parish borders demonstrates that even at that point in their professional career London midwives practised over a larger geographical area. Rose Cumber, licensed in the same year as Jake, presented sworn testimony from women who resided in St. Swithin's and St. Andrew Holborn although she herself resided in St. Bridgid's Fleet St.<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth Martin of St. Giles Cripplegate called on only one client from her own parish in 1626 when she applied for her licence; women from St. Antholin, St. Dunstan in the West, St. Martin in the

Fields and St. Michael Pater Noster added their testimonies.<sup>23</sup> In 1629, Alice Carnell of St. Dunstan in the West was licensed after presenting evidence from clients, none of whom resided in her parish.<sup>24</sup> After licensing was reinstated in 1661, the general distribution of clientele continued as it had done earlier in the century. Most testimonials indicated that midwives drew their clients from both their own parish and from other parishes. Within this pattern, some midwives found more of their clients close to home, in adjoining parishes, while others extended their practices far beyond parochial boundaries. When Elizabeth Field of Hexton in Hertfordshire presented her testimonials at Doctors Commons in London in 1697, they contained a lengthy statement by a number of inhabitants of Hexton which stated that she was 'apt, able and skilful in the office of midwife' and added that she had 'given sufficient proof of it upon ourselves and many others in our own parish as well as those of other parishes'.<sup>25</sup> While it must be born in mind that testimonial evidence applied to only a small fraction of a midwife's practice, it is still worthwhile as an indication of the geographical range of midwifery practice for the individual midwife.

The account book of our unidentified London midwife demonstrates both mobility and geographical diversity of practice. Although addresses were not recorded in every

case, clients from at least thirty parishes within the walls claimed the midwife's services.<sup>26</sup> But these formed only a part of her practice: in the years covered by her records the busy and popular midwife travelled far beyond the confines of the city walls. To the east she journeyed to Leytonstone, Spitalfields and Whitechappel where she attended, among others, Mrs. Dangerfield in her numerous confinements; to the north, to the area of Finsbury Fields and the northern reaches of the vast ward of Cripplegate Without, to the west, she delivered women in the Strand, the Haymarket district and Drury Lane; among her clients on the south bank was the prosperous Mrs. Sims who was brought to bed five times by the peripatetic midwife.<sup>27</sup> Her practice encompassed, therefore, almost all of suburban London north of the river as well as Southwark. The geographical diversity of the midwife's practice is all the more noteworthy in view of 'poor intra-metropolitan communications' and the lack of street maps for most of the century. At the time when the midwife was travelling the darkened streets to the numerous nighttime confinements which she has recorded, one visitor commented that the city was 'a great vast wilderness' in which few 'know the fourth part of its streets.'<sup>28</sup> We have no way of determining how representative this midwife was, but it is absolutely

certain that very few, if any, licenced midwives restricted their practice to a single parish.

There is no evidence that midwives advertised their child delivery skills by way of printed advertisements.<sup>29</sup> Word of mouth recommendation by satisfied clients living close to one another undoubtedly played a role in establishing pockets of women who used the midwife's services and may explain some of the cases which lay at the geographical periphery of the practice of Mistress X. Mrs. Rowden of Drury Lane employed her in March and less than six weeks later, a client from nearby Tower St. called on her.<sup>30</sup> On October 29, 1707, Mrs. Nicolls of St. Martin's St. was delivered; a few days later, on November 7, Mrs. Hampton of the same street called the midwife to her delivery; a month later, Mrs. Wood, also of St. Martin's, was delivered of an infant daughter by our anonymous midwife.<sup>31</sup> Mrs. Field and Mrs. Hobkins, both of Aldgate Street, were delivered within 3 days of each other. Also delivered within 3 days of one another were Mrs. Duple's sister (referred by Mrs. Duple) and her neighbour, the shoemaker's wife in Swan Yard.<sup>32</sup> Mistress X was close at hand for the deliveries of three of her own next door neighbours; Mrs. Clarke, Mrs. Buther and Mrs. Twedal, 'next dore', bore sons with the midwife's assistance in 1698, 1703 and 1705 respectively.<sup>33</sup>



Unconstrained by the 'ethical' considerations restricting twentieth-century practitioners, our anonymous midwife delivered a substantial number of family members. She attended her daughter, Elenor Campion, five times and had the satisfaction of bringing four grandsons and one granddaughter into the world.<sup>34</sup> In September, 1695, she delivered a niece and was handsomely reimbursed for the delivery at one pound and ten shillings. In addition, 'sister Parker' made her a present of seven shillings, six pence, and she received an additional pound at her niece's christening.<sup>35</sup> Four of the midwife's cousins were clients: 'Cusen Brown' was delivered of a daughter shortly after midnight on February 17, 1705; Mrs. Jackson sought her cousin's assistance with four deliveries between July 24, 1708 and Easter Day 1716; cousin Fowler was delivered several times beginning in 1706 and, unlike cousins Jackson and Brown who did not pay the midwife, gave between 15 shillings and one pound for each of the deliveries; similarly, cousin Dosen paid one pound for her delivery in 1707.<sup>36</sup> Since cousins Fowler and Dosen obviously chose to use the midwife for reasons other than those of economy, it is likely that they believed that they would receive skilful service from their relative, a reflection on her competence which extends beyond considerations of kinship.

Testimonial evidence suggests that female clients on occasion sought a midwife on the basis of recommendations by women whose husbands were employed in the same craft or trade as that of the prospective father. For example, when Mary Taylor of St. Olave Silver Street sought her licence in 1661, of the six clients who supported her application two were butchers' wives (one from Christ Church parish and one from St. Sepulchre) and two were shoemakers' wives, both from different parishes, indicating a link through their spouses' occupations.<sup>37</sup> The following year, Winnifred Allen of St. Andrew Wardrobe enlisted the wives of three tailors from two different parishes when she applied for a licence and Elizabeth Davis of St. Katherine Cree Church supplied the names of three women (one of whom had used her services six times) all of whom were married to men employed in the relatively exclusive goldsmith trades. Similarly, among the seven clients sworn for Elizabeth Ayre of St. Giles Cripplegate in 1664, Lucy Buffington was the wife of goldsmith John Buffington of the midwife's parish, and Elizabeth Swift was the wife of Abraham Swift, a goldsmith of St. Alban Wood Street; three of the remaining clients attesting to Ayre's expertise were wives of brewers.<sup>38</sup> Although all six of Eleanor Stanfro's clients were from her parish of St. Leonard Shoreditch, it is probably more than parochial influence which saw four of the women married to

weavers.<sup>39</sup> Although few individuals were designated as 'jewellers', Anne Cooper of St. Giles in the Field claimed two clients whose husbands were engaged in that craft in 1675.<sup>40</sup> The wives of seamen also apparently referred their midwives to other women whose husbands were similarly engaged. While the fact that all six of Elizabeth Willis' clients were married to seafaring men may be partially explained by the fact that midwife and clients lived in Stepney ( which contained a large population of individuals whose livelihood was related to the sea) all three of Mary Salmon's supporting clients were married to sailors, two from St. Mary Whitechappel, and one from St. Stephen Coleman. Sara Griffin of St. Botolph Bishopsgate had delivered four women, three of whom were married to sailors and one to a 'marriner', all living in her home parish in 1663.<sup>41</sup> In May, 1700, Elizabeth Arnold of Whitechappell presented sworn testimony from three women from two parishes; all three were wives of broad weavers.<sup>42</sup> Out of the 53 testimonials which gave occupational designations in 1663, 13 testimonials, or almost 25%, showed occupational similarities for two or more spouses of female clients. Similarly, in the years 1696-1700, out of the 40 testimonials which showed occupations, 12 testimonials, or 30% demonstrated the same occupation for at least two of the women's husbands.<sup>43</sup> Although the anonymous London midwife seldom recorded occupational

information for spouses, among the few instances where she has done so, we have two examples which confirm testimonial evidence of occupational links between clients of individual midwives: in 1704 the midwife 'laid' two shoemaker's wives within five weeks of one another; similarly, in 1715, two tailor's wives were delivered less than five weeks apart, one of whom lived in the Minories and the other at considerable distance to the west in the Strand.<sup>44</sup>

The existence of other networks between women and their clients can be traced in the testimonials. Mary DesOrmeaux, wife of Daniel, a jeweller of St. Giles in the Fields, was a member of the French church in the Savoy, the Huguenot congregation, when she applied for a midwifery license. The minister and two churchwardens who signed her certificate in February 1680 were all French. In addition, all five women who gave sworn testimony were French: Catherine Faure, Marguerite Gorget and Marguerite Fournie were residents of St. Giles in the Fields while Mere Lamare and Marie Colas were from the parish of St. Martin in the Fields. Catherine Bont of Stepney had been a member of the Dutch church in London for three years when she applied for a midwifery license in 1688. Catherine was the wife of Jonas Merese, but she retained her own name as was the custom of Dutch married women on the continent. Similarly, two of her clients, from Stepney and St. Leonard Shoreditch,

were Dutch women who gave their own (maiden) surnames when they testified under oath.<sup>45</sup> It is apparent, and understandably so, that female immigrants turned to midwives of their own nationality who spoke the same language and shared the same cultural heritage to assist them when they were brought to bed. Indeed, the denial of midwifery services by a woman of their Protestant faith was one of the precipitating factors in the flight of Huguenot women from France in the 1680s.<sup>46</sup>

Adrian Wilson and Audrey Eccles both concluded that women turned to male midwives because they believed that male practitioners could offer them better care.<sup>47</sup> If this was the case, wives of the educated upper class of seventeenth-century London society could reasonably be expected to be among the first to desert the traditional midwife and seek the services of the male midwife. Our evidence, however, points to a different conclusion. Wives of gentlemen continued to use the services of midwives well into the next century as both testimonials and the anonymous midwife's account book demonstrate. Midwives applying for licenses frequently included the name of a gentleman's wife among those of women giving sworn testimony on their behalf.

Debora Bromfield of St. Andrew Holborne was exceptional because three of the five clients shown on her 1662 testimonial, for whom she had delivered a total of

twelve children, were married to 'gentlemen': Elizabeth Philips of St. Clement Danes; Susan Brownell of St. Andrew Holborn; and Susan White of St. Martin Ironmonger Lane. Since all three women lived in different parishes, some distance apart, it is reasonable to assume that the midwife was referred by means of a social network among women of the urban gentry.<sup>48</sup> At least six midwives licensed between 1677 and 1700 included the names of two gentlewomen among those testifying on their behalf.<sup>49</sup> The curate of Laughton, the parish of midwife Sarah Tricer, in 1664 noted the fact that all four clients named in the testimonial were 'of the best ranck and qualitie in the parish of Laughton'.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, in 1669, the curate, vicar and churchwarden of Shadwell, Stepney, testified that Katherine Botts had been: 'very successful in the safe delivery of many persons of very great reputation and quality in the said parish'.<sup>51</sup> When Joan Cockson of St. Dunstan in the West applied for her licence in 1661, Lady Diana Bill, wife of Major William Bill of Blackfriars appeared as one of her clients. Almost four years later, Diana Bill, although not included in the seven clients giving sworn testimony on behalf of Mrs. Sell (parish unknown), stated in her own handwriting that Sell was 'very understanding and carfull in they imployment of middwifrie and so sucksesfull that I know not any ever failed under her hand.'<sup>52</sup>

In rural England a midwife's practice could reasonably be expected to cover a wide spectrum of social and occupational categories. For example, the diary of the Cumberland midwife lists deliveries of women whose husbands are drawn from more than fifty occupations covering a wide range of trades, crafts and occupations. In addition, she delivered the children of professionals, such as apothecaries, schoolmasters, attorneys and clergy and attended members of the gentry as well as the aristocracy.<sup>53</sup> In London, as well, individual midwives continued to administer to the needs of women from all classes of society. Of the 75 testimonials which have been preserved for the years 1663-64, 53 contain information regarding the status of the spouses of clients (Table 8). Of 249 possible designations, 9 clients were designated as 'gentleman'. This indicates that almost 4% of the clients testifying on the midwives' behalf were from the gentry. An indication of the continuing loyalty of the women of the gentry to their midwives can be found by comparing this to testimonial evidence at the end of the century. Of 75 testimonials presented to the vicar general for the city of London in the years 1690-1700, 65 contain occupational and status designations. Of 198 possible designations, 14 husbands were shown as members of the gentry, or 7% of the women supporting the midwives' applications were from the

upper level of society.<sup>54</sup> The testimonials preserved in archives at Lambeth Palace were analyzed separately to see if the clientele represented the same broad social spectrum of London society. Of the 62 testimonials which survive for the years 1669-1700, 50 testimonials include occupational information. Out of a possible 174 designations, 23 spouses were named as 'gentleman', or more than 13%. This would indicate that midwives who sought licences from the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury not only drew their clientele from a more influential and affluent sector of society, but that this group continued to use the services of the traditional midwife.<sup>55</sup> If the occupational designations for 1663 and the 1690s from the Bishop of London and those of the Archbishop of Canterbury are combined and averaged, we find that more than 7% of the designated clients giving testimonial evidence for midwives applying for licences to practice in the City of London and its environs were drawn from the gentry. Using Gregory King's estimates for the year 1688 we can assume that the gentry made up a little more than 2% of the population of England and Wales. Our figures, therefore, support the view that educated and affluent members of London society continued to look to midwives for delivering their offspring, at least throughout the seventeenth century.<sup>56</sup>



Table 8: Occupation/Status of Midwifery Clients,  
1663-64 and 1690-1700

	1663-64	1690-1700
Building	14	21
Clothing	54	48
Decorating/furnishing	7	2
Distribution/transport	54	33
Laboring	4	4
Land/farm workers	21	15
Leather	10	12
Merchants	5	3
Metal-Work	14	7
Miscellaneous production	8	4
Miscellaneous services	8	10
Officials	1(+2)*	0
Professions	9	4
Victualling	31	21
Gentlemen	9	14
Total	249	198

\* Two spouses were churchwardens in addition to their occupations. The foregoing classifications were adapted from A.L. Beier 'Engine of Manufacture: the trades of London' in A.L. Beier and Roger Finlay London 1500-1700 p.164.  
Sources: G.L. MS. 10,116/3, 13 & 14.

In seeking referees, midwives quite possibly looked for respectable members of society but, nonetheless, the practice of the anonymous midwife bears out these participation levels--indeed her accounts suggest a higher participation rate for the gentry. The account book makes a clear distinction regarding the status of clientele. Women from the lower and middle class are designated 'Ms' or mistress, while women of the upper ranks of society are given the more respectful form of address 'madam'. We are therefore able to identify a sizeable segment of her midwifery practice which is largely made up of women whose husbands were men of some degree of affluence and prestige. Although there is a very close connection between the size of the fee charged by the midwife and the social designation, there are indications that the courtesy title of 'madam' was extended for reasons more social than economic. Madam Andrews of St. Bartholomew Lane, for example, paid less for her deliveries than many a 'mistress' among the midwife's clients.<sup>57</sup>

Our anonymous midwife identified no fewer than 20 of her clients as 'madam' and in addition delivered a lady: Lady Clarke paid six pounds in 1720 when she was delivered of a daughter.<sup>58</sup> These 21 women, several of whom were extremely fertile, accounted for roughly 9% of the busy midwife's practice and provide some support for the argument

that midwives were not deserted by women of substance at the turn of the century in favour of male practitioners. On one of the last folios of the casebook, the name of the subsequent owner is given as that of Thomas Barnardiston of Saffron Walden.<sup>59</sup> It is apparently his hand that has written the names of the Barnardiston families who were served by the midwife: the names of Arthur Barnardiston (a wealthy merchant), Samuel Barnardiston, John Barnardiston and Lady Barnardiston appear as well as the names of Lady Shaw and Lady Clarke as an indication of the elite status of at least some of the anonymous practitioner's clientele.<sup>60</sup>

At the other end of the social scale we find evidence that midwives remained faithful to their oath which required that they not discriminate between rich and poor women who were in need of a midwife's services. Susan Kempton's testimonial (signed by her vicar) stated that 'she is not only helpfull to the rich and those that can pay her but also to the poore'.<sup>61</sup> Individual parishes frequently assumed the responsibility of paying the cost of delivery for poor women of the parish and also of vagrant women who could not be removed from the parish before they gave birth. Fees paid to the midwife by the parish ranged from the modest sum of two shillings, six pence, paid by the parish of St. Gregory by St. Paul's in 1677 for delivering a 'poore woman that fell in labour' in the parish, to the

five shillings paid in 1655 and the ten shillings paid in 1684 and 1686 by the wealthy parish of St. Mary Aldermanbury.<sup>62</sup> The anonymous London midwife was called upon to deliver a female felon held in the stocks at the market place in 1712 and was not paid for her services.<sup>63</sup>

In terms of literacy levels attained by clients it is very difficult to come to any conclusions based on evidence from testimonials presented to the Bishop of London's representatives; while some signatures are accompanied by statements which indicate that the women signed in their own 'hand', others could have been written by clerks. Women who signed with their own distinctive mark are readily distinguished and there were fifty-four women who signed the testimonials with their mark.<sup>64</sup> Of the 60 testimonials from midwives seeking a license from the Archbishop of Canterbury, on the other hand, 42 bear the signatures and/or marks of clients who testified under oath. This insistence that female clients personally sign the certification presented to the ecclesiastical court was probably an administrative requirement of this jurisdiction. For the 159 women sworn under oath in the courts of Canterbury then, 103 signed with a mark and 56 signed with their own signature.<sup>65</sup>

Since barber-surgeons were called upon when an operative procedure became necessary, male midwives might

reasonably be expected to evolve from this group of practitioners.<sup>66</sup> If an obstetrical 'disaster' occurred which required more than the manual removal of a dead fetus, midwives were obliged to call on the help of a barber-surgeon who owned the requisite instruments such as hooks, knives and crochets.<sup>67</sup> There is, however, evidence that the wives of barber-surgeons themselves continued to turn to midwives throughout the seventeenth century for their deliveries and not to their husbands' colleagues for assistance when they were brought to bed. By the year 1662 Rebecca Jeffery of St. Botolph Aldgate had delivered Susan Noxton, wife of surgeon Peter Noxton of the same parish, five times.<sup>68</sup> The following year, midwife Elizabeth Dunstall of St. Anne and St. Agnes included the names of two surgeons' wives among the satisfied clients who supported her application for licensing: Anne Harmer of Allhallows London Wall and Mary Hayes, wife of surgeon Thomas Hayes, St. Anne and St. Agnes. This pattern persisted throughout the century, with no evidence of change at this level. In 1689, Catherine Goswell of St. Andrew Holborn claimed among her clientele, Sara Pettit, wife of Gersham Pettit citizen and barber-surgeon of St. Katherine next to the Tower. Not only did Mistress Pettit live at considerable distance from the midwife, there is a possibility that her husband was the resident medical attendant for St. Katherine's, a hospital

for almswomen. Also in 1689, Mary Garland of St. Bridgid's obtained sworn testimony from Susan Corpson, a surgeon's wife from St. Dunstan in the West, Mary Littleboy of St. Sepulchre, and barber-surgeon's wife Mary Searle also of St. Sepulchre. Frances Sowden of St. Martin Outwich obtained sworn testimony from Alice Lovell, wife of a barber-surgeon from St. Sepulchre, in the same year.<sup>69</sup> As late as 1698, there is evidence in the testimonials that the wives of barber-surgeons continued to rely on the traditional skills and training of a competent midwife rather than the those of the barber-surgeon.<sup>70</sup> The account book of the anonymous London midwife contains scant reference to husbands' occupations.<sup>71</sup> In August 1712, however, a Mistress Mos who was a 'sirgung's' wife was delivered of a son while Mrs. Farnsley, a barber's wife from the Minories called for the midwife's services on seven occasions.<sup>72</sup> According to Irvine Loudon, before 1730, 'the surgeon-man-midwife had, ... little or none of the extensive experience of normal midwifery which is the basis of good obstetric practice.'<sup>73</sup> Seventeenth-century surgeons (and their wives) must have been aware of the deficiencies in their obstetrical knowledge and experience and ensured that when their own children were born, an experienced midwife was at hand.

Finally, we may consider directly the role of clients in the licensing process and the significance of the

testimonials as unmediated evidence of female involvement and concern for adequate midwifery services. It has already been noted that testimonials from the early years of the Restoration period frequently contained the names of men other than clergy and churchwardens. (See Chapter 2, pp. 145-149). As the century wore on, not only did men's names appear more infrequently, the names and signatures of women appeared with greater regularity and in substantial numbers on testimonial certificates presented to the courts of the Bishop of London. In the years 1661-62, out of 46 testimonials, only one, that of Mary Taylor of St. Olave Silver Street, contained a statement signed in the womens' own 'hands' These six women, from 5 different parishes, appended their signatures to a statement attesting to the bearer's 'sufficient experience and ability to perform and exercise the office of a midwife'<sup>74</sup>. In the years 1663-64, womens' voices are heard, unmediated, in five testimonials. The lengthiest list of names appeared on the documents of Isabel Ellis of St. Martins in the Fields: the twenty-four names are all written as signatures. The important point in this case is that twenty-four women were willing to vouch for the 'long experience', as well as the competence of Mrs. Ellis. In the case of Anne Gill of High Barnet, also licensed in 1664, all six women signed with their own distinctive marks.<sup>75</sup> The testimonial of Mary Dowdall of

Chipping Barnet contained the following statement about the woman who had been employed as a midwife 'these many years past':

wherein she hath had the blessing to be a meanes for the safe delivery of others whose names are here subscribed and many others whome we knowe witness our hands the 23 Day of May 1664.<sup>76</sup>

Similarly, the four women who signed in their own 'hands' Sara Tricer's certificate (and who were described as 'gentlewomen' by the curate of Laughton), noted:

... inhabitants of Laughton doo certifie that we have good tryall of the good skill and Gods blessings upon the endeavour of Sarah Tricer in the office of midwife; and have heard of the like good success to many more...we doe conceive her to be skilfull, discrete & honest...<sup>77</sup>

In 1665, we have the document written by Lady Diana Bill in support of Mrs. Sell. Seven women signed the acknowledgement of Sell's success in her employment, adding that no woman had ever 'failed under her hand'. The 1668 testimonial of Mary Parsons of St. Mary Matfellow contains the customary sworn testimony of six clients. Eleven other women added their names; one signed with a mark, but the other ten names appear as signatures, possibly executed by the women themselves.<sup>78</sup> In addition to the four women who gave sworn testimony in June, 1670, twenty other women signed a 'petition' on behalf of Elizabeth Paulson of St. Botolph Aldgate stating that they had 'good experience of the great



care and ability...in the safe delivery of women in childbearing'.<sup>79</sup> Two years later fifteen women set their marks to the certificate of Mary Burton of Rosemary Lane in the parish of Whitechapel, confirming her suitability for the office of midwife.<sup>80</sup> It is noteworthy that in the case of both Paulson and Burton, licenses were issued solely on the basis of the women's testimony: in both instances there is no evidence of clerical involvement. The testimony of women given under oath should not be underestimated; in 1662, both Elizabeth Fisher and Sara Smithson were licensed on the basis of evidence from six clients alone. Smithson's certificate stated 'Admit without certificate by the chancellor in cort uppõn testimony of these 6 women'.<sup>81</sup> The testimonial of Joan Elsey of Enfield, submitted in 1689, contained the names of ten women who had been delivered by her and done very well 'under her hands'.<sup>82</sup> The last five years of the century, in particular, demonstrate an increasing involvement by female clients in the formulation of testimonial certificates. Susan Warden of New Brentford and Elizabeth Thorowgood of Chipping Ongar presented statements containing the signatures of ten and seventeen women respectively in the years 1697 and 1698.<sup>83</sup>

While women became more visible in the licensing process of the Vicar General, there appears to have been a decrease in clerical involvement as the century drew to a

close. Of the forty testimonials presented to the chancellor for the Bishop of London in the years 1696-1700, eleven submissions do not contain a statement by clergy or churchwardens. The testimonial submitted in 1696 by Margery King of Chipping Ongar, Essex, was signed by twelve women and bore witness to her

good skill, experience and success in wifery...hath safely delivered severall women in childbed with good success, and more particularly some of us whose hands have subscribed to this testimoniall.<sup>84</sup>

The women also commented on her 'sober' life, thereby preempting one of the customary concerns of the clergy who were not represented in the testimonial.

In addition to the statements by groups of women, there are examples of individual women's voices. Ann Bell of St. Martins in the Fields secured sworn testimony from four women who appeared in the consistory court on October 13, 1677. She also obtained the following statements (all in different handwriting) from three other women:

For I will assure you that I was safe delivered by ye help of mistris bell the midwfe of a son september ye 10 my name is Filadelfa Rogers liveing next dore to ye doge and duck in Pickadily.

Sir my name is market Grimes I was safely delivered by ye hands of Mrs. Bell a midwife than is with her now that can justifie ye same

Ser i was safely deliverd by ye hands of Mrs  
bell the midwife the second of this present  
month my name is Susan Jackson <sup>85</sup>

It appears, then, that women were becoming more actively involved in the testimonial process of the Bishop of London's ecclesiastical courts. They were drafting petitions (either personally or with the assistance of a clerk), signing their own names (whether by mark or full signature), and continuing to appear before representatives of the Vicar General to deliver evidence under oath regarding the midwife's competence. One possible explanation for this trend could be that women were experiencing difficulty in obtaining the midwifery services that they needed in a city whose burgeoning population was placing increased demands on existing numbers of midwives. Women perhaps decided to take matters into their own hands and licensing authorities acquiesced to their petitions by waiving, in some cases, the requirement regarding clerical testimony.<sup>86</sup> The evidence clearly demonstrates the Church's perception of clients as being a (perhaps the) central feature of the testimonial system.

Clients of seventeenth-century London midwives were drawn from a broad spectrum of society. They lived not only in their midwife's parish but, in many cases well beyond its confines. Many of them turned time and time

again to the midwife who had already proven her competence and care in previous deliveries. The gentry, as well as the poorest parish residents, continued to call on midwives throughout the century. Clients voiced their satisfaction with the services provided by these women both by maintaining a network of referral among relatives, neighbours and wives of their husbands' co-workers and by becoming more individually (and personally) involved in the testimonial process. In all of these ways clients not only expressed their concern for and satisfaction with their midwives, but gave their implicit stamp of approval to the traditional system in which they were trained.

## Notes

1. G.L.R.O. DLC/339 vol.1, fols.30, 32, 49 & 55.
2. G.L.R.O. DLC/342 vol. 15 fols.59 & 61v.
3. G.L.R.O. DLC/342 vol. 14 fol.91.
4. 4. G.L.R.O. DLC/342 vol.15 fol. 121 & G.L. M.S. 10,116/1.
5. For a rural midwife's practice see a Kendal midwife's diary, covering the years 1665-75, Cumbria Record Office MS. WD/Cn. The 'diary' is a record of the midwife's practice which, as could be expected in an area where there were possibly one or (at most) two, practising midwives, demonstrates very extensive repeat business.
6. Most young internes to-day who have experience in delivering six infants would be deemed capable of carrying out deliveries in their own practices. (private conversations with general practitioners).
7. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.
8. All from G.L. MS. 10,116/2.
9. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson MS. D 1141.
10. We have counted each of the eight sets of twins that the midwife delivered as one delivery in terms of repeat business.
11. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson MS. D 1141 fols. 31,32,40 & 56.
12. Ibid. fols. 49, 55, 62, 63, 71, 6v, 13.
13. Ibid. fols. 35, 42, 50, 58, 65, 71, 2v, 5v, & 8.
14. Ibid. fols. 13,11.
15. Ibid. fols.19, 17, 23, 21v & 15v.
16. Ibid. fols. 5,8,9v,10,11,13,14,19,20,21,23,23v & 25.
17. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.

18. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson MS. D 1141 fol.15. The daughters of Mrs. Abel and Mrs. Chapman, both clients, were also delivered by the midwife. Rawlinson MS.D 1141 fol. 53,21,73,8.
19. Ibid. fols. 11,2v.
20. Wilson 'Childbirth' pp. 121-22.
21. G.L.R.O. DLC/339 vol.1, fol.102.
22. G.L.R.O. DCL/339 vol.1 fol.133.
23. G.L.R.O. vol.13 fol.172.
24. G.L.R.O. vol.14 fol.68v.
25. G.L. MS. 10,116/14.
26. It is impossible to state definitively the number of parishes the midwife worked in since addresses were not given in every case. Moreover, in some cases, we have been unable to place an address within a specific parish.
27. Ibid. fols. 49,52,54,59,72.
28. Boulton, p.231.
29. Patricia Crawford, 'Printed Advertisements for Women Medical Practitioners in London, 1670-1710', The Society for the Social History of Medicine Bulletin 35, December (1984) :266-9. In the early eighteenth century an anonymous woman purporting to be a midwife advertised her 'cure' for an illness which could develop into a malignant 'Womb'. William B. Ewald, The Newsmen of Queen Anne (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956) p.108.
30. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson MS. D 1141 fol.13.
31. Ibid. fol.71.
32. Ibid. fols. 10 & 55.
33. Ibid. fol. 29, 51 & 60. It is likely that the midwife delivered at least one more child for Ms. Clarke, a daughter in 1701, but no address was given and the name is very common in seventeenth-century London.

34. Ibid. fols. 69,8,13,26 & 14. The midwife noted a charge of ten shillings for the birth of her first grandchild (a male). In addition, the happy father, son-in-law Campion, gave her a present of a pound. She received no fee for the other four grandchildren.
35. Ibid. fol.28v.
36. Ibid. fols. 58,1,11,63,66 & 70. The midwife delivered at least one more cousin whose surname is illegible on July 31,1707.
37. G.L. MS. 10,116/1.
38. G.L. MSS. 10,116/2 & 25,598. All of Davis's clients were from different parishes.
39. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.
40. G.L. MS. 10,116/9.
41. G.L. MS. 10,116/16 2,3,&13.
42. L.P.L. VX 117/11 no.62.
43. G.L. MS. 10,116/3 & 14.
44. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson MS. D 1141 fols. 55, 25& 26.
45. G.L. MS. 10,116/11 & 13.
46. A.P.Hands and Irene Scouloudi, French Protestant Refugees Relieved Through the Threadneedle Street Church, London 1681-1687 (London: Huguenot Society of London, vol.49, 1971) p.9.
47. Wilson, in particular, has argued that women perceived the male midwives as offering the more certain 'expectation' of delivering a living child. Wilson 'Childbirth' pp.317-322; Eccles, p.124.
48. G.L. MS. 10,116/2.
49. G.L. MS. 10,116 files 10, 12 & 14. This number includes only those women whose husbands were designated 'gent.' It does not include the dozens of women whose names and signatures appear on these documents, many of whom were apparently literate and therefore probably at least reasonably well-to-do.

50. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.
51. G.L. MS. 10,116/6.
52. G.L. MS. 10,116/1 & 4.
53. Kendal midwife's diary, Cumbria Record Office MS.WD/Cn. The midwife delivered the children of at least four or five estate owners including a squire and the two children of Sir Thomas Braithwaite. Among the less common occupations which were represented were those of a tobacco cutter and a fiddler. The clientele of the Frisian midwife Catharina Schrader was also drawn from a wide occupational spectrum which included labourers, farmers and merchants as well as skippers and other occupations traditionally associated with the sea. See Marland, 'Mother and Child'.
54. G.L. MS. 10,116/3, 13&14.
55. L.P.L. VX 1A/11.
56. King in D.C.Coleman, The Economy of England 1450-1750 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) p.6. To the figure 2,675,520 which King estimates as the total population which is "increasing the wealth of the kingdom", we have added the numbers given for soldiers, seamen, labourers and servants although no servants and very few soldiers and labourers were shown on the testimonials. This means that our estimate of gentry at 2% of the population with which we are dealing is high, which would strengthen our argument. There is the added factor that King's figures are for all of England and Wales while we are dealing with London where the population would be more likely to contain proportionately fewer gentry and more tradesmen, craftsmen, shopkeepers and artisans.
57. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson MS. D 1141 fols.5v & 10. She paid £1.14 and £1.16.
58. Ibid. fol.21.
59. There is the possibility of a family connection between the midwife and the Barnardistons. The midwife mentions a 'sister' Parker whom she delivered and (at least in 1640), the aristocratic families of the Barnardistons and Parkers of Suffolk were related. Antonia Fraser The Weaker Vessel (London: Methuen,1984) p.258. I am grateful to Delphine Isaaman for suggesting the possible connection.



60. Bodleian Library Rawlinson MS. D 1141 fol.74. See also The Directory Containing an Alphabetical List of the names and Places of Abode of the Directors of Companies, Persons in Public Business, Merchants etc. (London, 1736). The midwife usually referred to Lady Clarke as 'Madam Clarke' and always referred to Lady Shaw as 'Madam Shaw'. At least one other client was the wife of a well to do member of London financial circles - Mrs. Bodicete - whom the midwife delivered on four occasions. See the above directory, p.8. Some sixty years earlier Thomas Barnardiston had been one of the City's parochial and civic leaders. Tai Liu p.238.

61. G.L. MS. 10,116/13.

62. G.L. MS. 1337/1 fol.16. Two years earlier the same parish had paid for the delivery of an Irish woman but the entry £1.13.4 included a payment to a 'nurse' and for other 'necessaries' as well as the midwife's fee. G.L. M.SS 3556/2 (unfol), 3556/3 fols. 33v,47. The midwife delivered 'Mr. Todds maide' in 1684 and was paid by the parish.

63. Bodleian Library, Oxford MS. Rawlinson D 1141 fol.8. For a full discussion of midwives fees see chapter four below, pp. 226-234.

64. G.L. MS. 10,116; of 163 possible 'signatures', 54 were appended to testimonials presented between the years of 1695 and 1700.

65. L.P.L. VX 1A/11.

66. Adrian Wilson, in particular, has developed this argument. See Wilson 'Childbirth' pp. 311,318,319 & 320.

67. See Eccles "'The Manuall Practize'--Operative Delivery" pp 109-118 for a discussion of the role of surgeons in the birth process which usually encompassed the death of the child, the mother or both. Midwife Elizabeth Cellier has attacked the medical profession for their lack of practical experience in delivering children in a scathing, albeit humorous, pamphlet To Dr.... An Answer to his Queries concerning the Colledq of Midwives (London, 1688).

68. G.L. MS. 10,116/2.

69. G.L. MS. 10,116/2,3,5 & 12.

70. Elizabeth Bright of St. Leonard Shoreditch cited the support of Elizabeth Harris, wife of John Harris, surgeon of Whitechapel. G.H. MS. 10,116/14.

71. Of some 376 clients, eight are identified only through their husband's occupations; an additional twenty-seven are identified by their surnames and husbands' occupations.

72. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson MS. D 1141 fol. 10.

73. Irvine Loudon Medical Care and the General Practitioner 1750-1850 (Oxford:Clarendon Press, 1986) p.86. Although Loudon dates the beginning of the male takeover of midwifery to about 1730, he is sketchy about details of how the surgeons acquired their midwifery training. He suggests that treatises published by Smellie (1752) and (Denman) (1786) were instructive as were Smellie's courses in London, which began in 1744. The latter, however, were not a requirement for the practice of midwifery (Loudon pp. 85-94). In the late 1740s when John D'Urban, already having completed an apprenticeship in surgery, wished to become knowledgeable in midwifery, he undertook a separate course of training in London (possibly the one offered by Smellie). After successfully completing an M.D.degree at Edinburgh in 1753, he became physician and man-midwife at Middlesex Hospital: British Library, Additional MS. 24,123 fol.82 As late as 1788 surgeons who had completed their apprenticeship were obliged to seek private courses in midwifery. That was the year William Savoury paid five guineas to a male midwife in London for two courses in midwifery, given at the doctor's own residence and his 'labour house' near St. Saviour's. See George C. Peachey The Life of William Savory (London: J.J. Keliher & Co. Ltd., 1903) p.12. The first professor of midwifery in England was appointed in 1828 (Loudon, p.92).

74. G.L. MS. 10,116/1.

75. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.

76. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.

77. Ibid.

78. G.L. MS. 10,116/5.

79. G.L. MS. 10,116/7.

80. Ibid. In addition, four women gave testimony under oath, one of whom was included in the fifteen signees.

81. G.L. MS. 10,116/2. No doubt the fact that Fisher had 20 years of experience and 18 deliveries for her 6 clients, and Smithson had 7 or 8 years of experience and 17 deliveries for her 6 women helped their cases considerably.

82. G.L. MS. 10,116/12.

83. G.L. MS. 10,116/14.

84. G.L. MS. 10,116/14.

85. G.L. MS.10,116/10.

86. Although I have not found any regulation which specifies that clerical testimony was a requirement for licensing, the evidence arising from the practice of the period indicates that it was a standard practice.

## Chapter 4

### A Social and Economic Profile of London Midwives.

Although the records generated by the licensing system provide details about some aspects of the midwives' socio-economic circumstances (usually the parish, spouses' names, and occasionally spouses' occupations), in order to understand this dimension of the lives and careers of London midwives, particularly within their parochial communities, the midwives of twelve representative parishes were chosen for systematic study. Before turning to the midwives from these selected parishes, evidence will be presented (from testimonials in particular) as it relates to the larger population of midwives. As we look at aspects of their personal lives such as their age at licensing, their children, spouses' occupations and midwifery fees, conclusions of a general nature can be drawn which will be developed further in the chapter which follows.

There is scant surviving information about the age at which women began practising midwifery or were deemed to be suitable candidates for licensing. Once again the individual recording practice of a particular chancellor or his clerk has yielded some evidence from early in the century regarding the age at which midwives applied for licenses. When Anne Ramsay, widow, of St. Olave Hart Street

presented her certificates for licensing in August, 1611, she was sixty-five years old and had twenty years experience in midwifery. In October of the same year, four women were licensed whose ages were recorded: Audrey Claybrook of St. Lawrence Jewry, a fifty year old widow; Elizabeth Keyfar, a fifty-four year old matron of St. Botolph Algate with ten years experience; Isobel Doubleday, St. Dunstan in the West, sixty years old with thirty years experience; and Sara Curry, a forty-five year old widow from St. Mary Matfellow. The following year, Alice Warner of Stratford, also widowed, was fifty-six years old when she applied for her license.<sup>1</sup> Later in the century, the information that Rebecca Jeffrey of St. Botolph Aldgate was fifty-eight years old at the time of applying for her license was added, as an afterthought, to the bottom of her testimonial of 1662.<sup>2</sup> If these women are at all representative, one must assume that licensed London midwives were mature women, again, with long experience in their chosen calling, who began practising midwifery in their thirties and forties.<sup>3</sup>

There are strong indications that one of the informal requirements for licensing in London was that a midwife be married or widowed.<sup>4</sup> Of twenty-six midwives identified in the Vicar General's Register between December 1607 and June 1611, seventeen were identified as married

women and nine as widows.<sup>5</sup> Although in the first four decades of the century there is an occasional omission regarding either a husband's first name or the designation vidua, there is no indication that any of the women who applied for licenses were unmarried. Similarly, in the period 1661-1700, testimonial records reveal that 346 married women were licensed. The same period saw eighty-five widows receiving licenses; ninety testimonials gave no indication of marital status. The percentages for the period 1661-1670, therefore, are: married 66%; widowed 16%; undesignated 17%. We suspect that in most cases the women whose marital status was undesignated were widows. There is no evidence here or elsewhere that any of the women licensed to practice in London or its suburbs were unmarried.<sup>6</sup>

We find scattered references to midwives' children in the testimonials: widow Elizabeth Collins of St. Peter Paul's Wharf had four children in 1662 while Mary Buskill of Whitechappel, a widow of eleven years, had three children to support in 1664. In the same year, parish clergy and other parish officials noted that Temperance Pratt, widow, of St. Botolph Aldgate had 'a great charge of children.'<sup>7</sup> We know that Joan Maxey of Hammersmith in Fulham had at least one child because she was helping to support her two orphaned grandchildren in 1666 when she applied for licensing --again encouraging the belief that midwives were of a mature age at

licensing. In 1665, Mary Shelton of St. Giles in the Fields presented credentials in which it was pointed out that widow Shelton had seven children.<sup>8</sup> The anonymous London midwife of 1695-1723 had at least one daughter, Elenor Campion. By examining wills, parish registers and other records we have been able to find evidence relating to the offspring of approximately half of the midwives from the twelve parishes subjected to detailed examination.<sup>9</sup> As could be expected, we were more successful at identifying the children of midwives in the period 1661-1700 than in the period 1600-1641. Since a number of midwives were identified only by their surname in visitation records (and in some cases in licensing records also) it is difficult to establish with certainty that there was a relationship between a given midwife and children with the same surname whose baptisms and burials were recorded in parish registers. Children were usually identified in parish records by their relationship to their father, but, in many instances (especially in records showing burial costs), even the father's name was not given. Where the midwife had a commonly occurring surname, and her spouse's Christian name was unknown, it becomes almost impossible to identify offspring. Assumptions are equally precarious when the spouse's name is known but the records give only the child's name, unless the surname is an unusual one.<sup>10</sup> Compounding

our difficulties is the fact that parish records frequently failed to distinguish between infants, children and adults who often shared the same Christian name as well as surname. For identifying mature children of midwives, wills proved the most valuable single source.

The evidence that we have been able to garner indicates that the majority of midwives had completed their own child-bearing cycle at the time of licensing. This was, indeed, the advice of Jaques Guillimeau's treatise on childbirth which had been published early in the seventeenth century and suggested that a midwife should be past child-bearing age.<sup>11</sup> They may, however, have been involved in the child delivery process either as a deputy or unofficial female attendant for many years. Once licensed they would be able to devote themselves to the needs of their clients without the demands of their own pregnancies.<sup>12</sup> We know, for example, that Barbara Crowd(son), of St. Mary Aldermanbury was married in October, 1586, in the parish of St. Mary Aldermanbury and that she bore a daughter, Mary, in 1589 who lived only a few months. Crowd was licensed as a midwife some thirty years later.<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Somner of St. Dunstan in the West buried infant sons in 1628 and 1629 and had at least one other child who survived. She was licensed in midwifery in 1639.<sup>14</sup> The parish registers of St. Anne Blackfriars show that Winnifred Allen, wife of John Allen,



tailor, bore sons in 1642, 1643 and 1645. Allen's midwifery license was issued in 1662, some seventeen years after the last recorded birth of her own children.<sup>15</sup> From the same parish, Mary Semor, licensed in 1663, was probably the mother of the three Semor infants who were buried several decades earlier in the years 1637-47.<sup>16</sup> Mary Benson, who was also a midwife from St. Dunstan in the West, was practising midwifery by 1664; Elizabeth Benson and Henry Benson, both children, were buried in 1638 and 1641 while infant Rowland Benson was buried in 1655.<sup>17</sup> At least eleven infants with the surname 'Symonds' were buried in the years 1645-1659 in the parish of St. Dunstan in the West. Two (and possibly more), were the children of Abigail Symonds, licensed in 1667 to practise midwifery.<sup>18</sup> When Elizabeth Whitehorne of St. Mary Aldermanbury was widowed in 1672, she had three children, one of whom was one year old. Mistress Whithorne became a licensed midwife in 1677.<sup>19</sup> Joyce Meagon, St. Dunstan in the West, combined her careers as mother and midwife: by the time she was licensed in 1616, she had already born two sons, one of whom had died in 1613. She subsequently bore two, possibly three daughters (in 1616, 1619? and 1621), one of whom died in 1620.<sup>20</sup>

Children of London midwives followed a variety of careers: Charles, the son of Anne Adams of St. Anne Blackfriars (who was practising midwifery in 1638) carried

on in his father's trade of gunsmith after the father's death in 1638.<sup>21</sup> William Garland was the son of Elizabeth Wharton, midwife of St. Dunstan in the West, by her first marriage. By 1681, he was a citizen and cutler of London.<sup>22</sup> Anne, the daughter of Isobel Halsey, of Allhallows the Less, was married to citizen and clothworker Thomas Moody. Isobel was predeceased by her son or, more probably, step-son Clement, who was a brewer at the time of his death in 1663; another son, John, was a citizen and brewer.<sup>23</sup>

There is evidence of the ways in which midwives and their spouses endeavoured to provide for the welfare and security of their children. Widow Alice Fox of St. Botolph Aldersgate was licensed in 1678 in midwifery; by the time of her death, four years later, she had appointed a friend and 'Aunt Joan Barton' to be executors of her estate and guardians of her three children. Money for the support of her two sons until they were old enough to be apprenticed (and for providing the apprenticeship premium) was to come from the interest on bonds and notes totalling 179 pounds, with the rest of the estate to be divided among the three children at age twenty-one or at the time of marriage.<sup>24</sup> Elizabeth Gaskar of St. Anne Blackfriars was widowed in 1651; her husband's will made provision for their son's education and apprenticeship. William Gaskar senior had

been a barber by profession, but we do not know if his son chose to follow the same trade as his father.<sup>25</sup> Honor Powell, the widow of a mariner, became the principal beneficiary of her mother's estate in 1678; she had two married sisters who had no claim to the estate. Her mother was Katherine Carpenter, midwife, of St. Mary Mattfellow.<sup>26</sup> Isobel Glover, midwife of St. Katherine Coleman, was widowed in 1642. Her husband Nathaniel, citizen and painter stainer, made generous provision for his widow and also for his son Richard and his daughters Isobel, Dorothy and Elen who were all under the age of twenty.<sup>27</sup> Midwife Alice Annet of St. John the Baptist predeceased her husband, Nicholas, citizen and haberdasher, who named his only surviving son, Nicholas, as his chief beneficiary in 1708. Nicholas, however, was 'now beyond the seas' and would forfeit his legacy if he did not return to England.<sup>28</sup> Veranurora Pepper, midwife of St. Botolph Aldersgate, also predeceased her husband Richard, citizen and grocer. At the time of Richard Pepper's death, five children of the midwife, three of whom were minors remained at home.<sup>29</sup>

Since we believe that all licensed midwives were married or widowed, we turn to an examination of their spouses. Early in the century, the recording of spouses' occupations for women who were licensed was not carried out routinely. In the years 1607-11, we know that three

midwives were married to haberdashers and two were married to bricklayers. Others were married to, variously, a mariner, armorer, citizen and joiner, yeoman, painter-stainer, merchant, barber-surgeon, tailor, weaver and dyer.<sup>30</sup> In 1617, Grace Allred, the wife of a barber-surgeon from St. Andrew Holborn, was licensed, as was Mary Page, the wife of William Page, a leatherseller of St. Botolph Algate. The following year, Elizabeth Bysey, the wife of gentleman Thomas Bysey, was licensed (Bysey's clients also included a gentleman's wife).<sup>31</sup> In the next decade, we find that Elizabeth Bartlett of St. Andrew Holborne was married to a cloth worker when she was licensed in 1627.<sup>32</sup> When licensed in 1638, Margaret Dodson, St. Sepulchre Newgate, was married to a goldsmith. Dina Ireland of St. Bridgid and Helenora Evans of St. Botolph Bishopsgate, both licensed in 1639, were married respectively to a gentleman and a merchant.<sup>33</sup>

For the period 1661-1700, 106 testimonials out of 521 show the occupation of the husband of the midwife who was applying for a license. The following table, based on information from testimonials, shows the various occupations of midwives' spouses:

**Table 9: Occupation/Status Midwives' Spouses**

Clothing (19%) : draper, dyer, citizen and haberdasher (3),  
haberdasher (3), framework knitter, milliner, tailor  
(7), citizen and weaver, weaver (2) Total:20

Gentlemen (18%): Total:19

Distribution/transport (10%): coachman (2), farrier (2),  
mariner (5), packer, porter. Total:11

Building (8%): bricklayer, carpenter (2), glazier, joiner,  
painter-stainer (2). Total:9

Metal-work (8%): citizen and blacksmith, blacksmith, cutler,  
citizen and goldsmith, gunsmith, silversmith, sword  
cutler, wiredrawer. Total 8.

Victualling (8%): baker (2), butcher (2), brewer's clerk,  
cooper, innholder, victualler. Total: 8

Misc production (7%): belt maker, boltmaker, box maker,  
caliury?, clockmaker, diamond cutter, instrument  
maker. Total: 7

Leather (7%): cordwainer (5), shoemaker, tanner. Total: 7

Professions (6%): clerk (2), clergyman, barber surgeon  
(2).Total:6

Merchants (5%): grocer (3), citizen and merchant tailor,  
merchant. Total: 5

Decorating/furnishing (3%): stationer, upholsterer (2).  
Total:3

Land(agricultural)/farm (3%): farmer, gardener (2). Total:3

Officials (2%): majestie's lifeguard, parish clerk. Total: 2

Labourer: 0

Note: The foregoing percentages were rounded off to the  
closest decimal point. Occupational categories were adapted  
from A.L.Beier 'Engine of Manufacture' in Beier and Finlay  
eds. London p.164. Sources: G.L. MSS. 10,116/1-14, 25,598;  
L.P.L.VX 1A/11.

In assessing the socio-economic status of Tudor-Stuart midwives, information about the occupational status of spouses provides valuable insights. Occupations associated with clothing production and sales afforded employment to the greatest number of midwives spouses' in the foregoing sample. Of the twenty spouses in the clothing trades, one was a draper and six were haberdashers. Both of these occupations have been linked with significant indications of prosperity in Restoration London.<sup>34</sup> The second greatest number of spouses (18) were designated as gentlemen. The remainder of the midwives were married to men of moderate status or better, with most engaged in skilled occupations. Of particular significance is the fact that only a few spouses were employed in semi-skilled trades or occupations and none were labourers or paupers.

We may single out for brief attention the widow of Nicholas Culpeper, one of the century's most prolific medical writers (described as having had 'a far greater influence on medical practice in England between 1650 and 1750 than either Harvey or Sydenham'<sup>35</sup>), who was licensed to practise midwifery in 1665, some eleven years after her husband's untimely death.<sup>36</sup> Alice Field was only fifteen years of age when she married Culpeper and was a widow who had borne seven children (only one of whom survived beyond childhood) by the age of twenty-nine. Nicholas Culpeper

spent a number of years at Cambridge but did not complete his studies in preparation for a career in the Church; instead he entered an apprenticeship to become an apothecary. His interests led him into the practice of physick and he had a thriving practice in which he treated large numbers of poor patients out of charity or for what they could afford. Alice Culpeper no doubt assisted her husband in his practice and became familiar with many of the treatments which her husband carried out. Culpeper's other preoccupation was the translation of medical treatises into English so that the lay person could avail himself of their contents. As a result, he authored or translated at least thirty-eight medical treatises, many of which were published after his death. In 1651, he published A Directory for Midwives.<sup>37</sup> Alice Culpeper was actively involved in the printing and publishing of many of her husband's posthumous works and the 'Forward' to one of his 1659 publications was purportedly written by her.<sup>38</sup> Peter Cole of Leadenhall was responsible for printing at least twenty-eight of Culpeper's publications and it is his name which appears (along with eight other men's names) on Alice Culpeper's testimonial certificate. Widow Culpeper's testimonial also points out her status as a responsible taxpayer of long standing in her community in Stepney.

Extant wills provide glimpses of essentially timeless personal domestic relationships in the families of midwives. In 1633, Solomon Tanfield, husband of midwife Sara Tanfield of St. Anne Blackfriars, left his daughter and son-in-law, Elizabeth and Thomas Cooper, the sum of ten pounds and enjoined them to 'avoid my house in Black Fryers London and dwell elsewhere leaving my executrix [the midwife Sara] free from being charged with them'.<sup>39</sup> Tanfield also ordered all of the Coopers' possessions removed from his house and delivered to them, and he released Cooper from debts which he owed him both in money and for 'diett'. Temperance Pratt, midwife and widow of St. Mary Whitechapel, died in 1687. She left to her only surviving daughter, Hanna Hare, 'one shilling and no more' because Pratt had already in her lifetime given Hanna goods and money 'to the utmost of my ability'.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, the second marriage of midwife Isobel Sweatman (alias Ellis) midwife, formerly of St. Martin in the Fields and, after her second marriage, of St. Andrew Holborn, successfully blended Ellis and Sweatman children who shared equally in William Sweatman's bequests.<sup>41</sup> The spouses of midwives who predeceased them and who left wills invariably made their wives their executrices. Susan Amussen has pointed out that when a man named his wife as the executrix of his estate, it indicated his confidence in her administrative ability.<sup>42</sup> Philip



Riden regards the appointment of a wife as executrix as a sign of affection.<sup>43</sup>

London midwives were grandmothers too. We know, for example, that Mary Sherwood of St. Martin Outwich had three granddaughters and three grandsons by the time she was widowed in 1705.<sup>44</sup> At the time of her death in 1646, Elizabeth Whipp left bequests to six grandchildren. Three of the children received twenty pounds each.<sup>45</sup> The remaining three children were orphans; to the two boys she left thirty pounds a piece and to their sister forty pounds. Mrs. Whipp also made clear that the orphans were to live with the families of her two married daughters: John Jones was to live with the Shepeards who were the parents of two sons; James and Elizabeth Jones were to live with the Sidey's and their son. Helen Ormes, licensed in 1622, made her two grandchildren, James and Elizabeth Ormes, the major beneficiaries of her substantial estate in 1673, bypassing her two sons and two daughters in the process.<sup>46</sup>

Temperance Pratt favoured her 'loving granddaughter' Temperance Hare, rather than her daughter Hanna, to inherit her estate in 1687 and Susanna Annet was a favourite grandchild of midwife Alice and her husband Nicholas of St. John the Baptist.<sup>47</sup> Ann Moody, granddaughter of Isobel Halsey of Allhallows the Less, was named the sole beneficiary of her grandmother's estate in 1666.<sup>48</sup> From

her modest estate, Anne Parrot of St. Sepulchre (formerly of St. Clement Danes) in 1698 left a bequest of five pounds to her grandson William Parrot, with further small bequests of twenty shillings apiece to grandchildren Mary, James and Elizabeth Parrot.<sup>49</sup> In 1682 Robert Glover, the grandson of midwife Deborah Glover of St. Gregory by St. Paul, inherited one third of a legacy which his grandmother had previously received from her brother, Thomas Strackly.<sup>50</sup> Frances Grant and Elizabeth Whipp of St. Ethelburga and Elizabeth Best of St. Botolph Aldersgate were godmothers who left bequests to their godchildren.<sup>51</sup>

At least three of the midwives had experienced personal tragedy as a result of the Civil War.<sup>52</sup> Rector John Williams of St. Peter Paul's Wharf testified in 1662 on behalf of Elizabeth Collins, the daughter of glazier John Baptist Sutton of St. Andrew Holborn.<sup>53</sup> He described how her husband, Thomas Collins, had been murdered by Thomas Howard, one of Colonel Pride's soldiers, leaving her with four small children to raise. Elizabeth, who was a lifelong resident of St. Andrew Holborn had five years experience as deputy to Francis Mabbs. Mabbs added a separate statement to the sworn testimony of Collins' five midwifery clients. The following year the rector of St. Martin in the Fields noted that applicant Elizabeth Wharton's husband, cutler Charles Wharton, 'suffered very much by imprisonment and

otherwise in tyme of the late usurpacon for his loyalty to his Sovereign'.<sup>54</sup> Six women from the midwife's own parish swore to her ability. Interestingly, midwife Collins (who had also suffered much because of the actions of the rebels) testified on Elizabeth Wharton's behalf. Joane Maxey, a six year resident of Hammersmith who became a licensed midwife in 1666, had come upon hard times through her support of the Royalists in Rutland where she had lived some years earlier.<sup>55</sup> Touched by a later battle, Mary Burnham of Stepney had been a deputy midwife for a year when her husband, mariner Thomas Burnham, was killed in 'the May Engagement in 1672'.<sup>56</sup> In 1674 she successfully applied for her licence in order to continue to support herself and two children.

As previously mentioned, not all London midwives were English. The city was a cosmopolitan centre which attracted individuals from overseas as well as from all parts of the British Isles. French and Dutch protestants who fled persecution in their homelands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries established their own London congregations. In 1593, at least three Dutch midwives, all members of the Dutch Church, were living and practising in the metropolis.<sup>57</sup> Mistress Alores, born in Ghent, was a widow who maintained her own household and employed two English servants.<sup>58</sup> Widow Klerine Molney of Antwerp came to

London in 1584. Nine years later she was living with her eleven year old daughter, who had been born in Antwerp, and a Dutch maid servant.<sup>59</sup> A parishioner of Broad Street Ward, midwife Kernell of Louvain had come to England thirty years earlier. Widow Kernell lived alone in her own dwelling place.<sup>60</sup>

By 1593 French midwife Phillis DePort had lived in England for forty years. The widow, who was a member of the French congregation, employed no servants and lived alone.<sup>61</sup> Practising midwife Elenor Gyllam was the wife of diamond cutter Anthony Gyllam, formerly of Antwerp but in 1593 a London resident for nine years. The prosperous Gyllam household in Bread Street Ward was made up of three children, a Dutch maid servant and three English men servants in addition to the parents. Members of the French Church in London, either Anthony or his wife had been born in Armentiers before going to Antwerp.<sup>62</sup> A number of years later midwife Gyllam appears as Gillam in the visitation records of another parish (see p. 306 below).

At least two French midwives were among the refugees fleeing persecution in France in the next century.<sup>63</sup>

Suzanne Piau, widow of Jaques Piau of Rochelle, arrived in London in 1681 with four daughters, aged fifteen to twenty-one, and a niece. The family received a total of more than eight pounds in relief from the funds administered by the

Threadneedle Street Church before they were established in their new home.<sup>64</sup> Midwife Piau may have been the midwife who received five shillings from the relief authorities for delivery of the newly arrived wife of ship's carpenter Samuel Masson.<sup>65</sup> Midwife Madelaine Maillet received only one pound and two shillings in relief assistance after her arrival on May 30, 1682.<sup>66</sup> We have no evidence that these two women were licensed in midwifery by the English ecclesiastical authorities but, as stated above, Piau, at least, seems to have been practising among the Huguenot refugees.

It is unclear whether foreign midwives who served only foreigners in England would have been required to take out a licence. Certainly, the penalty of Anglican excommunication would have been of little consequence to them. We know, however, that at least two other French midwives and a Dutch midwife were licensed by the Church of England to practise midwifery. Jaqueline de la Roche of St. Martin in the Fields was licensed in 1678.<sup>67</sup> Her testimonial certificate, which was signed by eight women in addition to a senior midwife and the parish vicar W. Lloyd, noted that she had practised 'many years' both in England and France.<sup>68</sup> It also stated that she was 'conformable to the Church of England as it is now established'. The minister of the French church, Richard Demonery, and

churchwardens Denise and Voisin signed the testimonial of Mary DesOrmeaux of St. Giles in the Fields, licensed in 1680 and whose practice was apparently drawn mainly from among her country women.<sup>69</sup> Although a member of the French church, her testimonial states that she was 'in all things conformable to the Church of England', demonstrating the requirement that foreigners who were licensed to practise in England held appropriate religious beliefs. A resident of Stepney, the Dutch woman Catherine Bont presented a testimonial signed by Samuel Biscope, minister of the Dutch church in London, which confirmed her membership in his church 'ever since the year 1685' and was licensed to practise midwifery in 1688.<sup>70</sup> Extant records fail to reveal whether the majority of London midwives were London born and bred although there are frequent references to their lengthy associations with a home parish. Documentation discloses, however, that at least some had come to the city from other parts of the country.<sup>71</sup>

The question of the literacy levels attained by some midwives has been of concern to historians who felt that midwives, as products of a system which blocked women's access to higher education, were at a disadvantage vis à vis male practitioners.<sup>72</sup> In view of our argument that the practice of good midwifery in the seventeenth century was linked far more closely to the practitioner's empirical

skills than to direct access to the inadequate information provided by midwifery books and pamphlets of the period, in one sense, the issue of literacy becomes peripheral (see above, Introduction, pp. 27-33). Since, however, this investigation is about the kind of women that London midwives were, any light which can be cast on the subject of literacy adds another dimension to their lives. Aside from Thomas Raynald's translation of Rosselin's midwifery book in the sixteenth century, which suggested that literate women of the upper class could take the book to deliveries as a reference manual, most of the seventeenth-century publications on the topic of midwifery were ostensibly directed to midwives themselves, with an implicit acceptance of their literacy or at least the literacy of a substantial number of midwives who could then disseminate the printed information. Two outstanding examples of highly literate midwives of the century have received ample recognition. Jane Sharp was the sole female author of a Stuart midwifery text and Elizabeth Cellier was the author of numerous pamphlets on political incidents, as well as of a self-aggrandizing scheme for a training school for London midwives. Midwife Sharp made much of the relative importance of practical knowledge over theory acquired from books. Her introduction, however, indicates that there was a need for some basic knowledge of female anatomy which,

presumably, could have been gained through practical experience, or through recourse to a publication such as hers. There may also have been an element of self-interest in her opening remarks, in the hope of greater sales for her book.<sup>73</sup>

While Sharp and Cellier were atypical, hints of literacy can be garnered here and there; the records of the anonymous London midwife are an insight into the world of a midwife with the tools of literacy and numeracy, including basic book-keeping.<sup>74</sup> An inventory from the home of one midwife disclosed that the family owned a number of books.<sup>75</sup> It is more difficult to find evidence of the literacy of the majority of midwives, but some indications can be found in the records associated with their licensing. Midwives applying for a licence at the Bishop of London's court were not required to sign their names in conjunction with their oath-taking. In some cases, however, senior midwives have signed a "statement on behalf of the applicant. As a result, in the period after the Restoration, we have a dozen or so signatures of midwives themselves.<sup>76</sup> Because a different format was adopted at the court of the Archbishop of Canterbury, whereby clients frequently, and midwives occasionally, signed by mark or signature, we have the signatures of seven midwives who were applying for licences or supporting applicants.<sup>77</sup> In one case, the



signature of the same midwife appears in the records of both courts.<sup>78</sup> Although these figures cannot be taken to represent the level of literacy among midwives as a whole, they are an indication of a literate core among the senior midwives. When all of the evidence is considered, a 'best guess' leads to the conclusion that the majority of London midwives had attained literacy skills, particularly those who were active toward the end of the century.

We know of the huge sums of money paid to royal midwives in the seventeenth century: 100 pounds in 1605 and 1606 to Alice Dennis for the deliveries of Princess Mary and Princess Sophia, and 500 guineas a piece to the two midwives who attended the birth of James II's son in 1688.<sup>79</sup> But what did the commoner pay for midwifery services in seventeenth-century London? It is a question which no historian has yet addressed. The best evidence which we have concerning the fees charged by London midwives is found in the account book of the London midwife whose records cover the years 1695 to 1723. Parish records also provide periodic evidence throughout the century of what the parish paid to midwives for their services to poor parish women or to transient women who gave birth in the parish (usually despite parish efforts to have them 'removed' before the impending delivery!).

The parish of St. Dunstan in the West recorded its payment to a midwife in 1633 for bringing a woman to bed; the unnamed midwife received two shillings, six per<sup>80</sup>

The same parish paid midwife Carnaby five shillings for two deliveries in 1639 but only one shilling, six pence in 1642.<sup>81</sup> The latter fee was paid to a parish midwife in 1649 while in 1664 midwife Wharton was paid two shillings and six pence. In 1674 Mrs. Parrett, a midwife from St. Clement Danes, was paid five shillings for delivering a woman in St. Dunstan's, which may indicate that in other parishes midwives were paid more generously for their services.<sup>82</sup>

The following year, a midwife was paid only two shillings for delivering a woman of the parish, 'Joseph Penny's wife'.<sup>83</sup> By 1688 the parish had increased its payment for deliveries to five shillings, the amount the midwife received for 'delivering a poor woman who fell into labour' in the parish.<sup>84</sup> The fee of five shillings was standard for the rest of the century for at least thirteen women brought to bed in St. Dunstan in the West when deliveries were paid for by the parish.<sup>85</sup> The fee of two shillings and six pence was paid by St. Gregory by St. Paul's as late as 1677, while St. Mary Aldermanbury, considered, like St. Dunstan in the West and St. Gregory, to be a wealthy parish, was paying five shillings as early as 1655 and the generous sum of ten shillings by 1684.<sup>86</sup> Although a number of

parishes noted specific payments to midwives, in many cases the midwife's fee was included in the total expenditure by the parish for the woman's post partum nursing and other necessities, making it impossible to establish with certainty how much the midwife was paid. For example, in 1679, the parish of St. John the Baptist paid the midwife ten shillings for her fee and for 'cloths for the child' and, in September 1688, the parish of St. Dunstan in the West paid one pound, seventeen shillings and six pence for 'a midwife, and nurses and other necessaries for two women who lay in'.<sup>87</sup>

By 1653 Hester Shaw, who had been a London midwife for several decades, had amassed a fortune of three thousand pounds although there is no way of ascertaining how much of her silver and gold was the direct result of her midwifery practice.<sup>88</sup> In the delightfully frank and ribald (at least by twentieth-century standards) petition to parliament in 1643, the 'London midwives' described themselves as 'formerly well paid' but now feeling the pinch because the Civil War had diminished their clients' chances of becoming pregnant; not only were their earnings reduced, their opportunity to 'feast high' at christenings had diminished.<sup>89</sup> Diaries and letters from the seventeenth century not infrequently mention christening gifts of ten to twenty shillings which could reach a total of ten pounds,

paid by the titled and well-to-do, both in the provinces and in London.<sup>90</sup> In 1661 Samuel Pepys attended two London christenings. At the first, he gave the midwife a gift of ten shillings while at the second, he gave twenty shillings to be divided between the midwife and two nurses.<sup>91</sup>

The anonymous London midwife of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century set her fees according to a scale of her own devising; it was extremely flexible and based upon considerations known only to herself.<sup>92</sup>

Undoubtedly some of her clients were not charged for their deliveries. Among the latter were a female felon and her own daughter, Mrs. Campion.<sup>93</sup> In total there are 119 entries in her account book where a fee was not entered. The lowest fees which the midwife charged were two shillings on one occasion, and two shillings and six pence, a fee which appeared less than a dozen times.<sup>94</sup> On two occasions, the midwife's next door neighbour, Mrs. Clarke, paid the low fee of two shillings, six pence.<sup>95</sup> Wealthier clients regularly paid four, five and six pounds, with one of the Barnardiston women paying eight pounds for her delivery in 1714.<sup>96</sup> 'Madam' Brand paid varying amounts for each of her nine deliveries between 1703 and 1718: the highest, at four pounds, six shillings, was for her first delivery in 1703 but she paid almost as much for her last delivery (four pounds, four shillings) and at least three pounds for the

rest except for the years 1711 and 1716 when she paid one pound, one shilling and six pence (in 1716, the child was stillborn).<sup>97</sup>

The fees paid by less prosperous clients demonstrated a similar lack of consistency: for her nine deliveries Mrs. Dangerfield paid a pound on two occasions and different amounts ranging from a low of two shillings and six pence in 1707 and a high of one pound, five shillings in 1705.<sup>98</sup> The midwife delivered eight sets of twins according to her records. For two deliveries of twins she received no fee; for the others she received as little as ten shillings (from Mrs. Bromwell the sugar baker's wife) and as much as three pounds, twelve shillings (from Mrs. Sample of Bread Street). On four occasions the midwife noted that the children were 'dead born' and she was always paid for their deliveries: for two of the stillbirths she was paid ten shillings; for one she was paid a pound; for delivering the wealthy Mrs. Young of a dead child in 1713 she received eight pounds.<sup>99</sup> The wide variation in fees charged depends upon factors not identified in the account book, but ability to pay was clearly one factor the midwife took into consideration.

Although the account book of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century midwife provides a good idea of the range of individual fees which were charged, it is less

reliable as a way of assessing annual income. It is possible to reorder the entries into a reasonable progression of months and years, but there are obvious gaps in the records such as those in the years 1698 (no entries for the first four months and the last month), 1699 (almost five months missing) 1710 and 1711 ( five month gaps) 1716 and 1720 (four and two months missing). In addition, the fee charged has not been entered in a number of cases. It is possible that the midwife did not receive a fee in some of these instances but where there are a number of fees missing in sequence it is more likely that the midwife recorded the entries at a later date and was unable to remember what she charged. Some pages as well as individual entries are impossible to read because of ink blots. The evidence is of variable quality. For example, the first dated entry, in January, 1695, recorded the name of the client and the time of day but no fee. The next entry was not made until May 14, 1695; of the eight deliveries recorded in this year, the midwife entered a delivery fee in five cases as well as two christening gifts and a personal gift from 'sister Parker' (7 shillings 6 pence apparently given as a token of her appreciation). All of the sources netted the midwife five pounds and five shillings. In several cases the midwife has noted the presence of 'gossops', which is probably an indication that the fee

which has been entered included a gift from the godparents.<sup>100</sup> In three cases, however, no fee or gift was entered. The account book ends abruptly in 1723 after a single entry for March 27 which shows that Mrs. Maret, a client of long standing, was delivered of a baby daughter; no fee was entered. Bearing in mind these limitations, the account book yields some valuable insights into the midwife's income and fee schedule.

Table 10, below, shows the total annual earnings for this midwife (including gifts presented at christenings) of which we have evidence, and the number of cases recorded; the number of deliveries for which no fee was shown or where the fee is illegible has also been specified.

Table 10: Anonymous Midwife's Earnings, 1695-1722

Year	Total cases	Total Income	Fee unrecorded
no date	3	0-19-6	2
1695*	8	5-5-0	3
1696	11	6-4-6	1
1697	19	21-12-9	3
1698*	12	8-2-6	1
1699*	23 (twinsx1)	28-15-0	4
1700	20 (twinsx1)	14-17-10	4
1701	25 (twinsx1)	28-15-6	5
1702	26	18-4-3	1
1703	42	44-9-9	5
1704	37	50-2-8	5
1705	36 (twinsx3)	23-8-11	7
1706	38	44-10-7	4
1707	33	37-9-11	6
1708	34	24-10-6	4
1709	35	33-10-6	12
1710*	18 (twinsx1)	16-19-6	3
1711*	37	34-12-4	5
1712	27	31-14-9	8
1713*	29	37-0-3	4
1714	27 (twinsx1)	29-9-9	5
1715	29	44-8-11	4
1716*	22	28-12-6	5
1717	30	43-11-6	6
1718	22	30-12-6	4
1719	23	26-12-9	2
1720	24	38-8-0	3
1721	18	17-3-6	4
1722	13	20-11-6	1

\* indicates the years in which the most obvious gaps occurred. Source: Bodleian Library, Oxford MS. Rawlinson D 1141.



By way of comparison, the case book of a Kendal midwife who practised in the 1660s and 1670s revealed an annual income which at its peak in 1673 yielded twenty-seven pounds, five shillings for eighty-nine deliveries.<sup>101</sup> The London midwife in her peak year of 1704 earned more than fifty pounds for thirty-seven deliveries, including five infants for whom no fee was recorded. An income of fifty pounds a year for this period has been described in a recent study as one of 'reasonable competence' allowing a middle class London family to eat well, employ a servant and enjoy a comfortable standard of living.<sup>102</sup> Thirty-seven deliveries meant, on average, one delivery every ten days, so a decent standard of living for an entire family could be secured (and up to five deliveries provided gratis for charity) without an exceptionally demanding schedule and without compromising the standard of care provided to clients. Judging from the available but incomplete records, the midwife's annual income was somewhat lower than fifty pounds in most years. We do not know, however, whether this midwife was providing the sole family support, and we do not know whether the years of lower levels of activity (assuming that the account book accurately records the bulk of her practice) were the consequence of personal choice or lack of business. London midwifery clearly could offer a reasonable livelihood for a widow, or a valuable supplement to a family

income; at its peak it could support an entire family at a reasonable, and very respectable level.<sup>103</sup> The Kendal midwife's records extend for only a six year period, 1669-1674, and give her annual income and number of deliveries. The total number of cases which she delivered was 419 or an average of sixty-nine deliveries a year which was considerably higher than our London midwife's (admittedly imperfect) records show. From a limited comparison of the two account books, it is evident that the London midwife was appreciably better paid for less work than her provincial counterpart several decades earlier.<sup>104</sup>

On at least one occasion when both a physician and midwife attended a confinement (in 1680), the midwife's fee was substantially higher than that of the physician.<sup>105</sup> Even so, at the end of the century the parish of St. Dunstan in the West paid the sum of one pound for the services of a male midwife described as 'doctor' when two midwives were unable to complete a difficult delivery; unfortunately there is no indication of whether the child was born alive or whether the male midwife was merely called, according to the custom of the period, to use his instruments to facilitate the delivery of the dead fetus.<sup>106</sup> At any rate, his fee was twice that paid to midwives of the parish when they delivered a child.<sup>107</sup> Given the rewards of a visibly successful midwifery practice, surgeons and physicians must

have been drawn more and more to child delivery as a means of augmenting their incomes and securing an entry into families which would then continue to use their services for the general practice of medicine. Did the eighteenth-century triumph of the man-midwife depend less upon superior qualifications than upon the aggressive enterprise of financially motivated practitioners who recognized that midwifery was a remunerative line of work? Would ignorant, 'dirty' midwives, drawn from the lowest levels of society populate traditional midwifery practice which was capable of affording a decent livelihood? The wholesale failure of scholars to investigate the economics of Stuart midwifery has seriously limited their ability to comprehend the nature of this profession and the changes that it underwent near the close of the early modern period.

Extant wills of midwives and their spouses cast light on the material comforts which London midwives enjoyed and seem to argue that the anonymous midwife whose financial records have survived was not atypical: silver plate, jewellery, clothing of good quality, well-furnished homes, books, linens and other niceties, not to mention luxuries, which, at least in part, must have been a result of their professional earnings.<sup>108</sup> The probate inventory of Elizabeth Heron, senior midwife of St. Giles in the Fields, drawn up on April 24, 1667 depicts a spacious house of nine

rooms with seven hearths and a cellar, plus a 'room in the yard' (Appendix E).<sup>109</sup> Aside from the kitchen, all rooms were well-furnished with beds and bedding, tables, stools and chairs. Most boasted rugs or carpets, curtains and valences and fireplace equipment. Other amenities included trunks, cupboards, couches, a desk, striped hangings, tapestry hangings, two settle beds as well as a trundle bed, nine pairs of sheets and three dozen napkins plus other linen. A variety of brass pieces brightened the parlour. These included two brass kettles, two brass pots, two brass skillets and a brass mortar. The kitchen contained two iron pots among its equipment as well as a cupboard for storage, one rack and one pair of pot racks. The cellar housed eight barrels of beer. The deceased midwife had clearly possessed a substantial London residence suggestive of the well-to-do middle class matron.

Mary Preston of St. John Hackney was licensed in midwifery in 1697.<sup>110</sup> She predeceased her husband, Edward, whose probate inventory was taken in 1724.<sup>111</sup> The Prestons had lived in an eight roomed house with a cellar, their own brew house and a stable. Their property fronted the river and they enjoyed fishing as well as the use of two 'ferry boats'. On warm summer days, the midwife and her family could pass the time pleasantly at the tables and benches placed along the riverside. Inside the house, at least two

rooms were furnished with stoves either as an adjunct to, or in place of, open fireplaces. The 'best chamber' contained blue chinese furniture including six blue chairs, a looking glass and a tea board. In the great parlour were other touches of affluence: cane chairs, five turkish embroidered chairs and pictures. Still another room displayed white window curtains, matted chairs, a coffer, a looking glass, an eight day clock and case, three prints, delftware, glasses, 'about twenty books' as well as a bible and a drum. The impressive list of kitchen equipment was valued at more than seven pounds, which was second in value only to the contents of the room which contained the clock and the books (valued at nine pounds, ten shillings) and bespoke a family which took great pains as well as pleasure with their 'diet'. While not all midwives lived as well as the women who have left such rich evidence of their material lives, still it is clear that midwives were not the ignorant, poverty stricken cronies of the enduring midwife-myth.

Broadly speaking, London midwives were usually of a mature age at licensing and in most cases had borne children themselves. They were married to or were the widows of men who were employed in a wide range of occupations and generally enjoyed some status, including that of 'gentleman'. Midwives charged their clients according to a flexible scale of their own devising and successful midwives

could make a substantial contribution to the family income. To establish with more clarity the full range of the socio-economic positions of London midwives, the next chapter will describe, as fully as the records permit, the midwives of the sample parishes.

## Notes

1. G.L.R.O. DL/C 340 fols. 3v, 10, 11, 11v, 13v, & 30v.
2. G.L. MS. 10,116/2.
3. In Nuremberg, 'young, light-headed' girls were discouraged from taking up the practice of midwifery in the early modern period. Wiesner p. 99. In sixteenth-century France, older midwives instructed 'young girls or daughters' according to Petrelli p.277. The Frisian midwife Catharina Schrader was 38 when she began practising and she delivered her last child at age 91. Schama p.526.
4. There may have been regulations, as yet uncovered, regarding the requirements for licensing of midwives which addressed marital status. By way of comparison, Nuremberg's midwives were described as older, unmarried women or widows. Wiesner p.99.
5. G.L.R.O. DL/C 339. Because of ensuing gaps in the recording process, we are unable to extend our analysis beyond this period.
6. Percival Willughby mentions his daughter in 1655. She was probably in her early twenties at the time, presumably unmarried and already practising midwifery on her own as well as in conjunction with her father in Derby; see Willughby p.119.
7. G.L. MS. 10,116/2.
8. G.L. MS. 10,116/4.
9. In the early period, we were able to find evidence about the relationship between twelve or thirteen midwives and their children while in the later period, there is some evidence of the maternal aspects of twenty-seven midwives.
10. See for example The Registers of the Church of St. Ethelburga The Virgin within Bishopsgate. (London: Press of the Church of St. Ethelburga, Bishopsgate, 1915) which records the baptisms of twelve 'Clark's (no fathers' names given), the marriages of six 'Clark's and the burials of eleven 'Clark's (one father's name given) between the years of 1673 and 1705.

11. Guillimeau Childbirth p.84.
12. It was probably for the same reason that training schools for midwives in the Netherlands, established in the nineteenth century, admitted women between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five, "preferably unmarried women or widows". See M.J. Van Lieburg and Hilary Marland, 'Midwife Regulation, Education, and Practice in the Netherlands During the Nineteenth Century' Medical History, 33(1989): 296-317.
13. Registers of St. Mary Aldermanbury pp. 51,54 & 55. G.L.R.O. DL/C/341 (fol.illeg.) The surname was Crowdson in the sixteenth century but was subsequently shortened to Crowd.
14. G.L. MS. 2968/3 fols. 344v & 366. The assessment for 1679 shows widow 'Sumner' living on Myter Close with two grandchildren: G.L. MS. 2969/4 unfol; G.L.R.O. DL/C 344 fol.61v.
15. Parish Registers of St. Andrew by the Wardrobe and St. Anne Blackfriars 1560-1837, 1558-1837, G.L. MS. 4514/02/03(micro form); G.L. MS. 10,116/2.
16. G.L.MS. 2968/3 fols. 423v & 666 and 2968/4 fol.57v; G.L. MS. 10,116/3.
17. G.L. MSS. 9537/17 fol.66v, 2968/3 fols. 551 & 595 and 2968/4 fol.255.
18. G.L. MSS. 2968/4 fols. 8v, 34, 135, 136, 233v, 254v, 258v, 304, 316v, and 321v, 10,116/5.
19. G.L. MS. 3556/2 unfol.;P.R.O. prob 11/351/96; G.L. MS. 10,116/10.
20. G.L. MS. 10342 fols. 63,69,73v,82,221v & 234; G.L.R.O. DL/C 340 fol. 211v.
21. G.L. MSS. 9537/14 fol.36v, 9171/27 fol.424v.
22. G.L. MSS. 9172/70, 10,116/1.
23. P.R.O. prob. 11/322/163, 312/114.
24. G.L. MS. 9172/70. We believe that the Alice Fox of St. Botolph Aldersgate and the Alice Fox of St. Bride whose will survives are the same person since the parishes lie close to one another (they touch at one point) and the clients who gave sworn testimony for Fox all resided in an area lying between



St. Sepulchre and St. Botolph Aldersgate.L.P. M.S. VX 117/11 no. 9.

25. P.R.O. prob. 11/217/102.

26. G.L. MS. 9172/67, May, 1678.

27. G.L. MS. 9052/11 (original will).

28. G.L. MSS. 9171/54, 10,116/9. Alice Annet was licensed in 1676.

29. G.L. MS. 9051/10/85.

30. G.L.R.O. DL/C 339 & 340.

31. G.L.R.O. DL/C 241, fols. 37,39 & 71v.

32. G.L.R.O. DL/C 343 fol. 23v.

33. G.L.R.O. DL/C 344 fols.37v,50v & 55.

34. M.J. Power 'The social topography of Restoration London' in Beier and Finlay p.214.

35. F.N.L. Poynter, 'Nicholas Culpeper and his Books.' Journal of the History of Medicine 17(1962):153.

36. G.L. MS. 10,116/4.

37. See 'Introduction' p. 29 for assessments of Culpeper's midwives' Directory.

38. N. Culpeper, Culpeper's School of Physick (London,1659; Thomason E 1739). This treatise also contains an eloquent plea on behalf of the sick poor (p.29).

39. G.L MS. 9168/18 fol. 195.

40. G.L. MSS. 9172/76, 10,116/3. Some twenty-four years earlier, Pratt had been described as having had 'a great charge of children', see above p. 72

41. G.L. MSS. 10,116/3, 9052 Box 32.

42. Susan Dwyer Amussen, An Ordered Society (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988) p.81.

43. Philip Riden ed., Probate Records and the Local Community (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1985) pp. 66-9.
44. P.R.O. prob. 11/485/1705.
45. G.L. MS. 9052/13.
46. G.L. MS. 9051/9/658.
47. G.L. MSS. 9171/54, 9171/76.
48. P.R.O. Prob. 11/322.
49. G.L. MS. 9172/88. Although we cannot say for certain, we believe that Anne Parrot of St. Clement Danes licensed in 1672, (G.L. MS. 10,116/7), is the same Anne Parrot who was living in St. Sepulchre at the time of her death in 1698.
50. G.L. MS. 9172/71. We believe that midwife Deborah Glover of St. Gregory by St. Paul, licensed in 1672 (G.L. MS. 10,116/7), and Deborah Glover of St. Lawrence Jewry who died in 1682 are one and the same. Glover may have moved to live with her son Joseph Glover, the eventual executor of her estate.
51. G.L. MSS. 9052/13, 9052/31, 9052/29.
52. In his study, The Family and the English Revolution, Christopher Durston has concluded that there were two types of damage to the family, one was ideological and the second was personal (p.161). The latter as a result of fatalities or through losses sustained by supporting the losing side of the Royalist cause. The three midwives are examples of both types of personal loss.
53. G.L. MS. 10,116/2.
54. G.L. MS. 10,116/3.
55. G.L. MS. 10,116/4. A victim of a later conflict, Mary Burnham, widowed when her husband Thomas a mariner from Stepney was killed in the 'May Engagement of 1672,' was licensed in 1672 after three years experience as a deputy midwife. G.L. MS. 10,116/8.
56. G.L. MS. 10,116/8. Known as the 'third Dutch War', France and England were allied against the Netherlands in the war of 1672 in which England was defeated. L.B. Smith This Realm of England (Toronto: D.C. Heath, 1976) p.282.

57. Anna Cornelys, another Dutch midwife, was practising in London as early as 1561. See R.E.G.Kirk and Earnest F. Kirk eds., Returns of Aliens Dwelling in the City and Suburbs of London part 1 1523-1571 (Aberdeen: Publications of the Huguenot Society of London, 1900; reprint, 1969) pp. 279, 282.
58. Irene Scouloudi, Returns of Strangers in the Metropolis 1593, 1627, 1635, 1639 (London: Huguenot Society of London, 1985) entry no. 11.
59. Ibid. no. 782.
60. Ibid. no. 639.
61. Ibid. no. 338.
62. There is some confusion regarding midwife Gyllam's (or Gillam's) origins. One entry states that she was English but a second entry says that she was formerly Elenor Mulbranck who was possibly born in Armentiers.
63. Under the edict of 1680, which stated that papist midwives must deliver Huguenot women, Huguenot midwives were unable to legally carry out the work of child delivery. Hands and Scouloudi p.9.
64. Ibid. p.155.
65. Ibid. p.14.
66. Hands and Scouloudi p.133.
67. G.L. MS. 10,116/10.
68. Only one of the eight women had a French name. This demonstrates that she had extended her practice to include English women.
69. G.L. MS. 10,116/11. See chapter three, p. 179.
70. G.L. MS. 10,116/12. See chapter three, p. 179-80
71. For example Mary Lambert, Surrey: L.P. MS VX 1A/11 #41, Susan Kempton of Hertfordshire: G.L. MS. 10,116/13.
72. See for example Hilda Smith, 'Gynecology and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England' in B. Carroll, ed. Liberating Women's History (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976)

pp. 109-113. For a critique of this view point see David Harley 'Ignorant Midwives' p.6.

73. Sharp pp.1-3.

74. See also the Kendal midwife's diary and the Frisian midwife's records. See David Harley 'Historians as Demonologists' p.11. and 'Ignorant Midwives' pp.8-9 for other examples of literate seventeenth and early eighteenth-century midwives.

75. G.L. MS. 9174/43.

76. In addition to these signatures, there are three or four others which may be those of midwives rather than scribes. We have accepted David Cressy's argument that a signature in this period is evidence of literacy. (Cressy p.55).

77. Considering the sizes of the respective collections of testimonials, it would appear at first glance that midwives applying to the archbishop's court were much more literate as a group than their counterparts at the bishop's court. But because signing was not a requirement at the bishop's court, this conclusion is very tentative. Moreover, the practice of having the midwife sign was apparently not a requirement but merely a carry over from the more regularly applied practice of clients' signing.

78. She is Elizabeth Best of St.Botolph Aldgate who signed on behalf of Elizabeth Lewys and Elizabeth Vesey. G.L. MS. 10,116/10; L.P.L.VX 1A/11 no.52.

79. J. Aveling English Midwives pp.31,33,60-62.

80. G.L. MS. 2999/1 unfol.

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid. Not only did the parish pay this relatively high fee to the midwife, it paid an additional three and six to two women for assisting her. Ann Parrott was licensed in 1671. See note 49 above.

83. G.L. MS. 2968/5 fol. 184.

84. G.L. MS. 2968/6 fol. 132.

85. G.L. MS. 2968/6 fols. 172, (January 27, 1690 unfol.) 197, 234v, 257v, 258, 294v, 322, 333.

86. G.L. MSS. 3556/2 unfol., 3556/3 fol.33v.
87. G.L. MSS. 7619 fol. 147, 2968/6 fol.154.
88. J. Donnison, p.10.
89. Anonymous, The Midwives Just Petition (London, 1643, Thomason E86(14) R 15).
90. See for example D. Gardiner, ed., The Oxinden Letters 1607-1642 (London: Constable and Company, 1933) p.251; John Loftus, ed. The Memoirs of Ann, Lady Halkett and Ann, Lady Fanshaw (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979) p.62 ; F. and M. Verney vol. 2 p.21. The Quaker midwife recommended to Edmund Verney charged a fee of five, ten or twenty pounds but would not accept christening gifts. Norman Penney, ed., The Account Book of Sarah Fell of Swarthmoor Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920) pp. 241, 335, 439. The records of the Earl of Rutland, see E. Upton, Guide to Sources of English History from 1603-1660: Early Reports of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts. 2nd edition (New York: Scarecrow Press, 1964) iv pp. 459, 466, 502. The 'new way' of holding christenings without gossips or godparents must have been a threat to at least some midwives' incomes. See F.W. Bennett, 'The Diary of Isabella, Wife of Sir Roger Twysden, Baronet, of Royden Hall, East Peckham, 1645-1651.' Archeologica Cantiana 51 (1939) : 117, 121. In 1584, midwife Agnes Bell was left four of Jane Magham's best sheep for her care of the Hull widow in what must have been a difficult delivery ; the woman survived, however, long enough to make her will: Borthwick Institute, York, Probate Register 22 part 11, fol. 538v. ( I am indebted to Claire Cross for the foregoing reference).
91. Robert Latham and William Matthews, eds., The Diary of Samuel Pepys (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970) vol.2, pp. 109, 216. In the second case it is reasonable to assume that the midwife again received ten shillings.
92. Wiesner has noted that sixteenth-century Nuremberg midwives who were regulated by the city charged fees according to their clients' social class and that their incomes compared favourably with those of craftsmen and journeymen. See p. 97 'Early Modern Midwifery'
93. Bodleian Library, Oxford Rawlinson D 1141 fol. 8.

94. Ibid. fol. 66. The midwife charged one Tily Coms 2 shillings and five pence in 1706 possibly because that was all the woman had and it was close to the more usual 2 shillings and six pence.
95. Ibid. fols.34,42v.
96. Ibid. fol.11.
97. Ibid. fols.51,59,60,71,5,7v,13,14&18.
98. Ibid. fols. 35,42,50,58,65,71,2v,5v,8.
99. Ibid fols. 22,22v,23,10. The midwife usually referred to client Young as 'madam' and had delivered her on twelve other occasions for sums of two to four pounds.
100. Ibid. fols. 4,5,6v.
101. Cumbria Record Office MS. WD/Cn fol.1: Transcript of a Kendal Midwife's Diary.
102. P. Earle The Making of the English Middle Class (London: Methuen, 1989) p.14.
103. Hilary Marland has pointed out that the Frisian midwife Catharina Schrader, who was widowed several times, practised midwifery when she was wealthy and when she was poor.
104. The London midwife was also less active than the Frisian midwife Catharina Schrader whose casebook covers the period 1693 to 1745 and who averaged 120 deliveries per annum in the period 1698-1712. In addition to frequently receiving no fee, the Frisian midwife was paid in kind, a practice to which the rural midwife of Kendal makes no reference. See H. Marland, trans. 'Mother and Child were Saved'. For other examples of the relatively low fees paid to rural midwives, see Forbes 'Registration' p.238 and Alice Clark p.279.
105. Alice Clark p.280.
106. See below 'Conclusion' especially p.376. Adrian Wilson has concluded that male midwife Percival Willughby was called in the majority of cases (whether by a midwife, the mother, father, or others) to deliver a dead child. (Wilson 'Childbirth' p.256).
107. G.L. MS. 2968/6 fol.334. The male midwife who delivered Judith Edwards in 1698 is described as 'Doctor' Johnson.

108. Detailed evidence of the material wealth of London midwives is provided below in chapter 5. See the wills of: Elizabeth Towers, widow of St. Michael Queenhithe 1664, G.L. MS. 9052 Box 14; Elizabeth Bincks, widow of St. Botolph Aldersgate 1665, G.L. MS.9052 Box 15; William Sweatman 1683, G.L. MS. 9052 Box 24; Helen Ormes St. James Clerkenwell, 1673, G.L. MS. 9051/9 658. For a provincial midwife who also had a well stocked- linen cupboard as well as other attractive items in her home see the will of Joane Norwood of Chertsey, Surrey, (probated October 2, 1612), P.R.O. prob.11/120/207.

109. G.L. MS. 9174/19. For a comparison with other seventeenth-century inventories, see J.S. Moore ed., The Goods and Chattels of Our Forefathers (London and Chichester: Phillimore, 1976).

110. G.L. MS. 10,116/14.

111. G.L. MS. 9174/43.

## Chapter 5

### Midwives of Twelve London Parishes: A Socio-Economic Case Study

The following section presents evidence which focuses on seventy-six seventeenth-century London midwives from twelve London parishes (listed in Appendix F). In order to place the women in the socio-economic context of their own parishes a brief introductory paragraph which incorporates information about each parish in turn has been included. Fragmentary descriptive evidence from the sixteenth century coupled with studies from the period immediately preceding the revolution and also near the end of the century, indicate that in most cases London parishes maintained their socio-economic characteristics throughout the century. Herlan has recently demonstrated that parishes which were poor at the middle of the century continued to be poor toward the end of the century.<sup>1</sup> The same parishes, in all likelihood, were poor at the beginning of the century. Although some parishes with a greater number of prosperous inhabitants may be roughly classified as 'wealthy' parishes, Emrys Jones has pointed out that parishes were rarely socially homogeneous and were characterized by 'great social mixing', with the result that the parish was more like a 'microcosm of the city as a whole than a social quarter'.<sup>2</sup>



Similarly, M.J. Power, working with hearth tax rolls, has recently concluded that in Restoration London, 'occupations and rich and poor are thoroughly jumbled' with labourers and professionals living cheek by jowel.<sup>3</sup> The classification of parishes as 'wealthy', 'mixed' or 'poor' is intended to ensure the most representative sampling of midwives possible. It is not a definitive characterization of the parishes.

#### **Allhallows the Less**

The parish of Allhallows the Less lay on the bank of the Thames toward the eastern boundary of the City. It contained between sixty and one hundred tithable residences on the eve of the English Revolution.<sup>4</sup> Although it was a poor parish, it was not completely devoid of inhabitants of wealth and influence since its northern end extended into areas where trade and commerce flourished.<sup>5</sup> By 1695 the parish had 455 inhabitants living in seventy-five homes and one third of the households in the parish were designated 'substantial'.<sup>6</sup> The following are the midwives which we have identified as resident in the parish in the seventeenth century. In all cases we can establish the year they were licensed (or appeared on visitation records) and the names of their spouses.

Alice Palmer	1612&1619	Edward (Doctor?)	V.G.tax
Isobel Halsey	1632	Clement	V.G. will tax visit.
Mrs. Could	1637	Humfrey	visit.tax
Judith Newman	1661	William	V.G. test. tax visit.

Note: the sources which yielded information about the women are as follows. V.G.= Vicar General's registers; test.=testimonial; visit. = visitation records; tax= tax assessments and tithe assessments etc.; admin. = probate administration; p.r.= other parish records.

Of the four midwives whom we have been able to identify in the parish of Allhallows the Less, all four spouses have been found on tithe assessment rolls for the parish.<sup>7</sup> There is a good likelihood that the Palmer family moved from Stepney to London sometime between the years of 1612 and 1619 since Alice Palmer, wife of Edward, was issued midwifery licenses in Stepney in 1612 and as a resident of Allhallows the Less in 1619.<sup>8</sup> Edward Palmer may have been a doctor since the name of a 'Doctor Palmer' appeared on a lay subsidy assessment list for this parish in the years 1621-23, where his assessment of more than ten pounds was one of the highest in his parish.<sup>9</sup> Edward Palmer's name is found on the parish assessment for clerk's wages and bread and wine in 1631 and 1632, paying an average parish rate (seven pence four times a year).<sup>10</sup> Although Edward Palmer disappeared from the records after 1631 (probably through

death), in 1655, John Palmer, possibly the midwife's son, appeared on the lists for scavenger rates.<sup>11</sup> Some forty years later a Palmer, who could be a grandson, was assessed for substantial property holdings in the parish.<sup>12</sup>

Isobel Halsey was licensed to practise midwifery in 1632 and we also find her name in the visitation records for 1637 as a midwife in her parish.<sup>13</sup> Her husband, Clement Halsey, paid his assessment for clerks' wages at a slightly higher than average rate of nine pence quarterly.<sup>14</sup> Halsey paid his assessment between the years of 1632-1642; parochial records were not kept for the years 1643 and 1644 but there is no trace of Halsey after 1642. Another indication of Halsey's prosperity is the high tithe rental which he paid in 1638 for his property in Cold Harbour; at nineteen pounds, ten pence, it placed him well within the upper quartile of moderated rents recorded for the parish.<sup>15</sup> Clement was the administrator of his brother Matthew's estate in 1636.<sup>16</sup> Isobel may have been Clement's second wife since parish records show that Clement Halsey married Elizabeth Pyam in 1626.<sup>17</sup> The brewer Clement Halsey, who died in 1663 leaving his estate to his brother John Halsey, citizen and brewer, was probably a stepson. This could partially explain why Isobel chose to name her granddaughter, the child of Thomas and Anne Moody, to inherit her estate upon her death in 1666.<sup>18</sup> John

Halsey's name appeared on the list compiled by City Aldermen in 1640 which named the inhabitants who were believed to be sufficiently wealthy to lend money to Charles I.<sup>19</sup> Clement Halsey, brewer, of St. Peter Paul's Wharf, who died in 1700, was quite possibly the grandson of Clement and Isobel.<sup>20</sup>

The name of Mrs. Could appeared among the midwives of Allhallows the Less who were listed in the visitation records of 1637.<sup>21</sup> Her husband, Humfrey Could, paid an assessment for clerks' wages between the years 1632-1642 which was well above the average at eleven pence a quarter, indicating some degree of parochial affluence.<sup>22</sup> Like Clement Halsey, Humfrey Could disappeared from the records after 1642. It was probably the midwife's son, William 'Cold' whose name appeared on tithe assessment records for the parish in 1681. At two shillings, two pence, Cold's assessment was below average for the parish, suggesting that he was either a younger son, or else a decline in family prosperity.<sup>23</sup>

When Judith Newman was licensed in 1661, her testimonial noted that she had been a resident of Allhallows the Less for more than thirty years; five of the six women who gave sworn testimony on her behalf were from her parish.<sup>24</sup> Her husband, William Newman, was assessed for the subsidy of 1621-1623 on the value of his real estate at the

above average rate of fifteen shillings, six pence. He paid the rate of seven pence (which was the rate paid by the majority of the parishioners who were listed) for clerk's wages and bread and wine between the years of 1631-35 and 1638-1640.<sup>25</sup> Newman paid only part of his assessment in 1637 and 1642, and he did not pay at all in 1636, 1640 and 1641. Perhaps that was why Judith Newman became actively involved in midwifery in the middle of the forties. The family had apparently recouped any possible losses by 1658 when Newman made a generous contribution of more than seventeen shillings for 'the beautifying and amending of the parish church'.<sup>26</sup> William Newman was found in the 6th precinct of Cripplegate ward. The family home in Allhallows the Less was probably destroyed by fire in 1666 and by 1670 the William Newman family was living in a substantial home with six hearths.<sup>27</sup> M.J. Power has recently analysed the Hearth taxes of twenty London parishes and according to his classification, a house with six hearths would be considered of medium size.<sup>28</sup> A William Newman is shown as a liveryman in the company of coopers in 1641 but we cannot say with certainty that he was the midwife's husband.<sup>29</sup>

Three Newman children were buried in the years 1660-1663 but it is likely that they were grandchildren rather than children of the midwife.<sup>30</sup>

In the seventeenth century Allhallows was a poor parish although it could boast a number of wealthy inhabitants and civic leaders.<sup>31</sup> The four midwives of Allhallows were at least at the parish median or above in their socio-economic circumstances.

#### St. Andrew Wardrobe

By the fourth decade of the century, the western parish of St. Andrew Wardrobe, whose southern boundary was defined by the Thames, was a 'decaying' parish containing 100-200 homes. Trade and commerce were negligible in a parish where the inhabitants were for the most part 'carmen, watermen and other handicraftsmen' and its civic leaders during the revolutionary years were undistinguished. Moreover, two breweries which had previously contributed to the support of large numbers of parish poor had ceased to flourish.<sup>32</sup> By 1695 slightly more than 500 inhabitants were living in 106 residences in the parish. Since 6.6% of the parish households were deemed to be 'substantial', it would appear that the decline which was evident at mid-century may have been halted but not reversed.<sup>33</sup> The midwives identified for this parish are:

Ann Coxe	1613	Henry	V.G. tax admin.
Ellinor Spinner	1615	widow	V.G.
Katherine Horner	1619	Joshua	V.G.
Juliana Cooke	1636	John?	visit.tax
Winnifred Allen	1662	John (tailor)	test. tax V.G.
Anne Goodwin	1663		test. tax V.G.
Mary Hodgkinson alias Osgood	1669	Thomas (printer)	visit. test.
Mary Hopkins	1680		visit.

The first midwife licensed for the parish of St. Andrew Wardrobe in the seventeenth century was Anne Coxe (wife of Henry Coxe) whose name appears in the register of the Vicar General for the year 1613.<sup>34</sup> The parish officials called on Mrs. Coxe, whom they designated 'the midwife' to carry out duties such as verifying the pregnancy of a vagrant female found in the parish in 1635.<sup>35</sup> Ann Coxe was still an active midwife in 1636 when her name appeared on the visitation record for St. Andrew Wardrobe.<sup>36</sup> In 1638, Mrs. Coxe was assessed for a moderated rent of six pounds or actual rent of eight pounds, which placed her in the upper half of rents for the

parish.<sup>37</sup> Mrs. Coxe's accommodations were at least those of a comfortable middle class parishioner. Widow Anne Coxe was not a pensioner at the time of her death in 1644, but the parish paid to have her goods appraised and inventoried perhaps to establish a claim against her estate, which was subsequently administered by her son Charles in 1645.<sup>38</sup> The name of Henry Coxe appears in the back of ward assessment records for 1645; he was apparently a tax collector and may have been a son of the midwife.<sup>39</sup>

Widow Ellinor Spinner was licensed to practise midwifery in October, 1615; her testimonial was signed by Dr. Thomas Proud, the parish rector, and six men. Her clients included women from St. Katherine Creechurch, Allhallows the Great, St. Bridgid and St. Mary Mattfellow.<sup>40</sup> Widow Spinner may have remarried since no other information has come to light about her or her family.<sup>41</sup>

In November 1619 Katherine Horner, wife of Joshua Horner, was licensed as a midwife.<sup>42</sup> At that time she could claim women from the parishes of St. Andrew Holborn, St. Benedict next to St. Paul and St. Michael Bassingshaw as clients whom she had successfully brought to bed. In 1631 she was still actively involved in attending the needs of parturient women of her parish; at her request, money was given to goodwife Illington who had recently been delivered



and was lacking some of the necessities of life.<sup>43</sup> No information on her or her family has been located in parish records.

The name of Juliana Cook(e), midwife, appears in the visitation record of her parish in 1636 and 1637. Five children were born to one John Cook and his wife (whose first name is not given) of St. Andrew Wardrobe in the years 1599-1612. Their oldest son, Matthew, was listed among the leading inhabitants of his ward, Castle Baynard in 1640.<sup>44</sup> In 1638 Mrs. Cook is shown on the assessment for yearly tithes and rents with an extremely high assessment of one pound, seven for tithes. Her annual rental of almost twenty-eight pounds a year would have placed her in very commodious, possibly lavish accommodations; only six householders out of 248 in the parish paid a higher rent.<sup>45</sup>

Winnifred Allen, the wife of tailor John Allen, received her license to practise midwifery in 1662 after more than ten years experience in midwifery. Three of the women giving sworn testimony for her were also married to tailors.<sup>46</sup> Mrs. Allen had born three children between 1642-45 almost a decade before she started to practise midwifery. Assessement for tithes and rents in 1638 indicate that the Allens were paying a rent of slightly more than five pounds a year, which would be appropriate for a young couple setting up their household, but which still

placed them in the middle third of rents for the parish.<sup>47</sup> Widowed by 1681, parish records for that year show that Mrs. Allen paid a parish poor rate assessment which was above average at 5 shillings, four pence.<sup>48</sup>

Anne Goodwin (Godwin) was licensed in 1663 and the following year appeared as a midwife of her parish in visitation records. Thirteen women endorsed her application for a midwifery license in addition to the parish clerk, Edward Finch.<sup>49</sup> Only one of the six women who gave additional sworn testimony was from Goodwin's own parish; two of her clients (for whom she had delivered a total of nine children) were from the adjoining wealthy parish of St. Gregory by St. Paul's. The remaining three women were from the poor neighbouring parish of St. Benet Paul's Wharf. The Edward Godwin who appeared in parish rate assessment rolls for St. Anne Blackfriars in 1681 was in all likelihood her son. Godwin's (Goodwin's) assessment of six shillings and six pence, was even higher than widow Allen's.<sup>50</sup>

The name of Mary Hodgkinson appeared on the testimonial submitted by Katherine Howell of St. Bridgid, who applied for a license in 1678. Howell had been Mrs. Hodgkinson's deputy for ten years and Hodgkinson herself was described as a 'licensed midwife'.<sup>51</sup> Mrs. Hodgkinson, now married for the second time, had (as Mary Osgood of St. Giles Cripplegate) been excommunicated in September 1667 for

her failure to show proof of licensing at the visitation. By September 1669 she was living in Purpoole Lane in St. Andrew Holborne and at the visitation of 1669 was licensed to practise midwifery. At that time she produced sworn testimony by five women : two from St. Andrew Holborne (one a neighbour on Purpoole Lane) and three from St. James Clerkenwell.<sup>52</sup> We know that her second husband, Thomas, was a printer but no other information is available about the family.

Mrs. Hopkins, midwife, appeared in visitation records for St. Andrew Wardrobe in 1680.<sup>53</sup> One Margaret Hopkins of Edmonton was licensed in 1670.<sup>54</sup> At the time of licensing, she had clients within the City including one from nearby St. Bridgid. Because of the distance between Edmonton and the midwife's City clients and inasmuch as midwife Hopkins' name was not included on the visitation record of the parish of Edmonton for 1680, we believe that she moved to St. Andrew Wardrobe by 1680 to be closer to her established clientele.<sup>55</sup> Her name does not appear in parish taxation records.

Two midwives of St. Andrew Wardrobe left indications of family incomes which were in the upper half of parish incomes while a third midwife paid a tithe on rents which suggested that she was one of the parish's affluent residents. Of the remaining five midwives, one was married

to a tradesman whose trade indicated a living of moderate comfort, three were licensed, demonstrating at least a measure of economic viability, and one midwife who was identified at a visitation left no other traces.

### **St. Anne Blackfriars**

St. Anne Blackfriars, at the extreme western boundary of the City and situated on the bank of the Thames was, like the neighbouring parish of St. Andrew Wardrobe, in a depressed condition by the middle of the century. As one study has revealed, a levelling process occurred throughout the century which resulted in decreased numbers of gentry and titled inhabitants and increased numbers of 'lodgers, foundlings, itinerants and foreigners', in addition to a large number of poor.<sup>56</sup> Toward the end of the century, the number of tithable houses in the parish had increased from 200 to 373, but poverty in the parish was still rife with only 1.1% of the households in the parish considered 'substantial'.<sup>57</sup> The figure of 1.1% was the lowest of all the eighty intramural parishes in the study by Jones and Judges.<sup>58</sup> For more than forty years (1608-53), the most influential person in the parish was the puritan reformer and clergyman Dr. William Gouge.<sup>59</sup> The eight midwives of the parish were:

Anne Adams	1636	Thomas (gunsmith)	visit. will
Elizabeth Cooper	1636	Richard?	visit. reg.
Elizabeth Gasker	1636	William (barber)	visit. will
Sara Tanfield	1636	Solomon	visit. will
Anne Alkin	1670	Francis (citizen merchant tailor)	test. V.G. will tax
Elizabeth Carpin	1680	Francis (deceased)	test. tax
Anne Fowler	1689	Elias	test. tax
Mary White	1689	William (gentleman)	test. tax will.

Anne Adams was listed among the parish midwives of St. Anne Blackfriars in the visitations of 1636 and 1637.<sup>60</sup> Her husband Thomas was a gunsmith who left all of his 'working tooles bellows, vices, anvils and hammers files...and wearing apparel' to his son Charles, who presumably followed his father's craft. Adams, whose will was probated in June, 1638, left the rest of his estate, which consisted of not only household goods (including pewter and linens) but also property leases of unspecified value, to his wife Anne. Midwife Adams was to be the sole executrix of her husband's brief will which allotted the sum of forty shillings to Adams' married daughter Elizabeth

Conley to purchase a memorial ring. Further provision for Elizabeth was left to her mother's discretion.<sup>61</sup>

The 1636 visitation records of St. Anne Blackfriars also show that Elizabeth Cooper was a midwife in the parish.<sup>62</sup> In 1637, visitation records contain her name but the entry has been crossed out, indicating that the midwife was no longer a parish resident. We believe that she was the Elizabeth Cooper, wife of Richard Cooper, who gave birth to a son in 1624 but we have uncovered no other information about her.<sup>63</sup>

Elizabeth Gasker attended as a midwife at the visitation of 1636. When she appeared at the visitation in 1637, she was described as a deputy, demonstrating that she was not yet licensed in midwifery.<sup>64</sup> We know that she was still alive in 1651, but she may have died before the licensing process was reinstated in 1661. When Elizabeth's husband William, a barber (possibly a barber-surgeon), died in 1651, she was named sole executrix and also inherited one half of his estate which was divided between the midwife and her only son.<sup>65</sup> Son William's share of the estate, which consisted of the rents and profits from 'messuages, tenements and their appurtenances' was substantial enough to provide for his education and an apprenticeship. The father suggested that some of William's inheritance be invested in stocks and held until his son's

apprenticeship was complete. In the event that William died without an heir, his share was to go to various nieces, nephews and a cousin. Having acquired at least half of the profits from rentals of her husband's holdings, widow Gasker, the mother of a young son, would have been eminently suitable for remarriage. This may be the reason we have not identified the date of her licensing. By 1673, William Gasker, the midwife's son, was an established citizen and distiller who still owned property in St. Anne Blackfriars.<sup>66</sup> Gasker's property, an owned 'freehold', had been leased, prior to the young distiller's death, to a gentleman who planned to build two 'substantial' tenements on it. Profits and rents from land and buildings were left to Gasker's widow, Mary, for use during her lifetime.

Sara Tanfield was the fourth midwife from St. Anne Blackfriars to be named on the visitation records of 1636 and 1637, although the records indicate that she did not make an appearance at the visitations.<sup>67</sup> Sara was widowed in 1633 when her husband Solomon died and there is a good likelihood that it had been a second marriage for both Sara and Solomon. The visitation record for 1637 shows Sara as Tanfield alias Parks. A second marriage could help to account for the strained relations between the Tanfields and Solomon's daughter and son-in-law Thomas Cooper. Solomon left his entire estate, including his house, to Sara

except for a few small legacies, among which was a gift of twelve pence to every poor pensioner of St. Anne Blackfriars.<sup>68</sup>

Anne Alkin was licensed in 1670, giving her parish as St. Anne Blackfriars.<sup>69</sup> Alkin's records illustrate the difficulties inherent in research which involves London records from the seventeenth century (or the proclivities of its peripetatic residents!). A case could be made for assigning each of three parishes as Alkin's home parish.<sup>70</sup> Part of the problem lies in the fact that her husband Francis, as a prosperous citizen and merchant tailor, owned property in various parts of the City and its environs. It is possible that the Alkins moved to the wealthier and more prestigious parish of St. Gregory by St. Paul's soon after Anne was licensed in 1670 since Francis Alkin's name appeared on a parish tithe roll for St. Gregory in 1673.<sup>71</sup> Alkin was the deputy of Mrs. Bissick of St. Clement Danes but her testimonials also included a separate statement from midwife Francis Austin. When Francis Alkin died in 1686 his estate was administered by his wife Anne, who encountered legal difficulties with a creditor in 1687.<sup>72</sup> In 1688 Anne Alkin of St. Gregory was assessed for a middling poll tax of ten shillings ten pence as a landlord.<sup>73</sup> The churchwardens' accounts for St. Gregory recorded that Mrs. Alkin 'the midwife' was paid sixteen shillings for



delivering a woman of a 'bastard child' on order of the Lord Mayor in 1692.<sup>74</sup> Widow Alkin was living in St. Andrew Wardrobe in the same house as her widowed daughter, Elizabeth Brown, by 1695.<sup>75</sup>

Elizabeth Carpin was a widow at the time of her licensing in 1680. She had been well provided for by her husband Francis. Already widowed by 1672, she was living in a commodious house with nine hearths.<sup>76</sup> Mrs. Carpin had born at least one child, a daughter Elizabeth, almost fifty years earlier.<sup>77</sup> Midwife Carpin had been an associate of licensed midwife Anne Alkin (licensed in 1670), probably in the capacity of deputy midwife, since midwife Alkin added her supporting testimony to that of Carpin's clients from St. Anne Blackfriars and Whitefriars.<sup>78</sup>

In 1685, Anne Fowler, wife of Elias Fowler, was licensed in midwifery. All of the women who testified on her behalf lived at a distance to the east from Fowler's home parish, possibly because Fowler was the deputy of midwife Mary Challoner who lived in the eastern suburb of Stepney.<sup>79</sup> John Stoning, the rector of St. Anne Blackfriars, noted in particular that Anne Fowler had received the sacrament of the last supper 'in the tabernacle of St. Anne Blackfriars' on Whitsunday in 1685.<sup>80</sup> An assessment for the Poll tax of 1689, located the Fowler's residence in Ireland Yard.<sup>81</sup> Their inclusion in the

marriage assessment roll of 1695 (Elias and Anne Fowler were both assessed at the customary rate of four shillings each for burial and two shillings for being of child bearing age) was an indication of their economic viability at the end of the century.<sup>82</sup>

Mary White, who was licensed to practise midwifery in 1689, was the last midwife licensed in St. Anne Blackfriars in the seventeenth century according to existing records.<sup>83</sup> As the wife of a gentleman, we have more information about midwife White than for any of the other midwives of her parish. Mary White had a working relationship with two senior midwives: Margaret Griffin, licensed in 1677, and Sara Slycer, licensed in 1684.<sup>84</sup> Mistress White drew her clientele, at least in part, from the gentry, some as far away as Surrey. Although the document may have been lost, Mary White's testimonial does not contain a certificate from the parish clergy. Parish rate and tithe assessment records for 1674 and 1681 show that her husband, William White, moved from Printing House Lane to Huyses Court; in both cases the assessments were slightly above average.<sup>85</sup> In 1692 William White, his wife and child were living in the home of widow Imens on Water St.<sup>86</sup> But two years later, the Whites were shown as the landlords in a house on Water Street with a servant and a lodger, Deborah Smith.<sup>87</sup> William and Mary White both appeared on

the Marriage Tax roll of 1695; their spacious house was large enough to accomodate their son Edmund and their servant Elizabeth Salisbury as well as three lodgers (a widow and a married couple).<sup>88</sup> William White was the owner of the George Inn in West Smithfield. Upon his death in 1700, White left to his wife Mary half the interest in their comfortable home (the other half to go to his son at age twenty-one) and all of their furnishings, silver, jewels and rings. Mary was also to have the entire house, the inn, and all the money out on loan if her son died before the age of twenty-one.<sup>89</sup>

As the wives of variously a gunsmith, barber, merchant tailor and gentleman (not to mention the wealthy widow Carpin), more than half of the midwives from this extremely depressed and economically deprived parish were drawn from the small segment of economically privileged inhabitants of the parish. Although some of the midwives were undistinguished, or at least left few traces in the documentation, none were in receipt of parish charity.

#### **St. Bartholomew by the Exchange**

The small (60-100 houses) parish of St. Bartholomew by the Exchange was situated slightly to the north and east of the City's centre. An oberver from the sixteenth century took pains to mention the beautiful homes lining St.

Bartholomew Lane.<sup>90</sup> In the seventeenth century the parish was a beehive of market activity inhabited for the most part by wealthy tradesmen who played leading political and religious roles particularly in the revolutionary years, but it also contained a significant number of parish poor which have been estimated at one in every thirty-five inhabitants for the seventeenth century.<sup>91</sup> The parish made substantial contributions to other less affluent parishes in the years 1639-1666.<sup>92</sup> By 1695, it was home to some 800 inhabitants living in 114 houses. One third of its households were considered wealthy.<sup>93</sup>

Elizabeth Lewis (Lewys)	1677	Charles (parish clerk)	test. V.G. visit. V.M.
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Elizabeth Lewis was the only licensed midwife of St. Bartholomew by the Exchange according to extant seventeenth-century sources. Earlier in the century, the name of 'Mrs. Rashborne' appeared on the parish visitation records but we have concluded that this was a clerical error and that Joan Rathborne was actually a licensed midwife from the parish of St. Margaret Lothbury.<sup>94</sup> The visitation record of the parish for the year 1680 recorded only the name of Elizabeth Lewis.<sup>95</sup> Charles Lewis paid the relatively low poor rate of four shillings and four pence yearly when his name first appeared on the assessment rolls for poor relief in 1654.<sup>96</sup>

By 1658, Lewis was also assessed a scavenger rate of one shilling, four pence, placing him in the lowest quartile for scavenger rates.<sup>97</sup> Twelve years later, his scavenger rate was set at seven shillings, probably as a result of increased property or business holdings.<sup>98</sup> By 1662, he was acting in the capacity of parish clerk and in receipt both of wages for his work as clerk and sexton and also of the various additional 'perks' which accompanied the position of parish clerk.<sup>99</sup> These included sharing the donations of cash and the bread, cheese and coal which were given periodically to the parish poor.<sup>100</sup> The annual gift of Richard Fishborne to the poor of the parish netted Lewis one pound in 1663, one pound, ten shillings in 1664 and two pounds in 1670.<sup>101</sup> The Lewises lived on Throgmorton Street, but Lewis was also assessed 12 shillings 'for the rector' in 1671 on his property in Jeley Alley.<sup>102</sup> The assessment of twelve shillings placed Lewis in the upper quartile of assessments.<sup>103</sup>

The enterprising Mr. Lewis requested permission to build a shop on St. Bartholomew Lane against a wall of the parish church in 1671 in return for an annual payment of six pounds to the parish poor. The vestry granted permission subject to approval by Mr. Netherway 'his majesties surveyor' and a parish resident. Netherway, however, vetoed the plan as unsuitable.<sup>104</sup> The year before she was

licensed to practise midwifery, Elizabeth Lewis and her maid received a payment of 8 shillings and 6 pence for tending several newborn parish children (foundlings or orphans) until they could be put out to nurse.<sup>105</sup> As one might expect from the wife of the parish clerk, Mistress Lewis's testimonial was a beautifully written document, but her husband's accomplishments extended to the incorporation of Latin phrases into the text of the certificate. The clients of Elizabeth Lewis were drawn from a group which were above average in literacy: four women (out of seven) appear to have signed their own signatures (one of them married to a bookbinder). Elizabeth Best, senior midwife of St. Butolph Aldgate, licensed in 1667, also signed her own name.<sup>106</sup> Lewis's clients were drawn from St. Sepulchre, St. Christopher le Stocks, St. Anne Blackfriars and her own parish.<sup>107</sup> By 1681, midwife Lewis was widowed, but still in receipt of 'four chaldron of coals', a courtesy extended to her as the widow of the parish clerk.<sup>108</sup> The practice of midwifery and her husband's estate provided well for widow Lewis; in 1689-1690, Elizabeth Lewis paid one of the parish's highest assessments for a pew at three pounds and eight pence.<sup>109</sup>

### St. Ethelburga

The parish of St. Ethelburga, which touched the Wall on its northern extremity and lay close to the eastern boundary of the City, contained one to two hundred tithable houses on the eve of the revolution. It was a poor parish in the seventeenth century; indeed, a century earlier the modest size of the parish church already reflected limited parish resources.<sup>110</sup> Innholders and minor tradesmen made up the parish's leaders in the revolutionary era. In 1659-60 St. Ethelburga was one of five parishes (out of 97) who failed to contribute to a special fund for poor relief, presumably because of its own poverty.<sup>111</sup> By 1695 the parish had 133 inhabited houses and a population of 645; one fifth of the households were headed by prosperous individuals.<sup>112</sup> Parish registers for only the last thirty to thirty-nine years of the century have survived, but eight parish midwives have left traces in wills, tax records and a variety of ecclesiastical records:

Elizabeth Whipp	1622	Robert	V.G. will
Sara Sydey	1663	Walde- grave (citizen merchant tailor)	test. V.G. wills
Mrs. Benskin	1669	Richard?	visit. tax
Mrs. Hensman	1669	William	visit.
Elizabeth Clarke	1673	William (haberdasher)	V.G. test. will

Margaret Ward	1676	Richard	V.G. test. visit.
Francis Grant	1680		visit.will

Elizabeth Whipp, the wife of Robert Whipp, received her ecclesiastical licence to practise midwifery in 1622.<sup>113</sup> She was the only midwife listed in the visitation records of 1637 for her parish.<sup>114</sup> Midwife Whipp was widowed in 1628 and she was granted an administration for her husband's estate.<sup>115</sup> Elizabeth Whipp's prominence was such that it was she who, along with Hester Shaw of Allhallows Barking, presented a petition to parliament in 1633 against the attempt of Peter Chamberlen the third to organize and incorporate London midwives under his direction. The midwives objected strenuously to Chamberlen's efforts, pointing out that he had little or no experience in normal deliveries having garnered his knowledge of child birth in 'desperate occasions' when he used his instruments with 'extraordinary violence'. The midwives' counter-petition was accepted by the bishop's enquiry held at Lambeth Palace in 1634 and Chamberlen's efforts were quashed, at least for the time being.<sup>116</sup> Whipp and Shaw, from parishes at opposite sides of the City, collaborated on this project, working together in the unofficial network which existed among members of their profession. Elizabeth



Whipp bore eight daughters and one son between the years of 1601 and 1617, at least two of whom died in infancy.<sup>117</sup> Mistress Whipp was a widow in 1635 when her name appeared among those making a contribution for church repairs: her assessment of thirteen shillings was not exceptional: of the 121 assessments, 50 were lower, 10 were the same as Whipp's (including that of her son-in-law, Waldegrave Sydey) and 60 were higher.<sup>118</sup> Whipp's moderated rent was seven pounds which was close to the median for the parish with 48 of 110 paying a higher rent and 51 paying less.<sup>119</sup> It was higher than both of her sons-in-law: Sydey, not yet fully established was shown at 6 pounds and George Shep(he)ard at four pounds and six pounds, although one of these was for property which Shepheard rented to four tenants and was not for his own use. By the time of her death in 1645, she was survived by a son, George Whipp, two married daughters, Sara Sidey and Ann Shepheard, an unmarried daughter, thirty-seven year old Hester Whipp, and six grandchildren. The latter included the three children of her daughter, Mrs. Jones, who had predeceased her mother.<sup>120</sup> Elizabeth Whipp's oldest daughter Anne was married to Dr. George Shepheard who was listed among the 'ablest' inhabitants of Bishopgate ward in 1640.<sup>121</sup> Mrs. Whipp's second daughter Sara married Waldegrave Sidey, a prominent citizen and merchant tailor.

Because of the care with which she set forth her bequests, we are afforded a glimpse into the well-stocked linen cupboard of our midwife. Her 'fine Holland sheets' were obviously items of pride while the 'fyne childbed sheete', which she left to each of her married daughters, reflected not only a concern with personal 'niceties' but also her professional pride.<sup>122</sup> Whipp's three married children each received flaxen and 'coarse' tablecloths, five dozen napkins, towels and 'rough sheets'--our midwife had lived very nicely indeed. A peep into Whipp's clothing cupboard, reveals a woman with considerable flair whose tastes ran to the sumptuous, if not flamboyant, with her damask gown and red petticoat with 'two gold laces' (left to Ann Shephard) and her watered taffeta gown with its crimson satin petticoat with 'small silver laces' (left to Sara Sydey). A Mrs. Clark was the recipient of a small bequest from Whipp and it is possible that she was Elizabeth Clarke, licensed in 1673 as a midwife in St. Ethelburga, and who may have had an association as deputy to the older midwife.<sup>123</sup> Eventually, Whipp's grandson and Clarke's niece would marry. Whipp's cash bequests to family and friends, set out in a lengthy and detailed will, totalled more than 520 pounds, a figure indicative of substantial personal wealth. In addition to linens and personal belongings which she left to each of her children, there was

ten pounds to each family specifically designated for the purchase of gowns for the women (at six pounds) and new cloaks for the men (four pounds). The rest of her estate was to go to her daughter, Hester, who was also her executrix. At the time of her death, Elizabeth Whipp was almost certainly living, along with her servant, Mary, in the home of her daughter Sara and son-in-law Waldegrave Sydey.<sup>124</sup> There is no question that Elizabeth Whipp was a London midwife who made her presence felt in a personal, political and professional sense.

Because of the hiatus in the ecclesiastical licensing process, the next midwife whose licence was recorded for the parish was that of Sara Sydey, the daughter of Elizabeth Whipp. At the time of her licensing in February 1663, Sara had already been practising as a midwife 'skilfully and carefully' for thirty-four years, as attested by the rector and churchwardens of St. Ethelburga.<sup>125</sup> Sara's name also appears on records of the visitation for her parish which was held at St. Katherine Creechurch on September 30, 1669.<sup>126</sup> There is abundant evidence of the wealth and prominence of the Sydey family. Citizen and merchant tailor Waldegrave Sydey played an active part in parish affairs, serving as a questman in 1646-1647, a churchwarden in 1649-1650 and auditor for the parish accounts in 1655, the year of his death.<sup>127</sup> The Sydey

residence on Helmut Court was comfortable and of moderate size with six hearths.<sup>128</sup> Indications of Sydey affluence were the high assessments against Mrs. Sydey in 1666 and 1668 for royal aid: the 1666 tax at 14 shillings was the second highest assessment in the parish.<sup>129</sup> In addition to the family home in St. Ethelburga, Waldegrave Sydey owned property on Ratcliffe Row in the suburbs of St. Leonard Shoreditch which included a building, 'yard, gardens and orchard'.<sup>130</sup> Sydey also owned lands and buildings in Bury St. Mary, Suffolk, all of which became his wife's property at his death. Aside from a bequest of 600 pounds to their son Waldegrave, Sara acquired a lifetime interest in her husband's entire estate for which she was also executrix. Sara Sydey's will, dated April 30, 1670, is a lengthy and complex document consisting of 'seven sheets of paper' to use Sara's own description.<sup>131</sup> It is a fascinating document because of the continuity which it establishes with family members already familiar to us through their relationship with Elizabeth Whipp. We find that Elizabeth's unmarried daughter Hester (who inherited the bulk of her mother's estate) was now married to Robert Langridge whom Sara named as overseer and advisor to the executors of her will. Two of her orphaned cousins, Elizabeth and James Jones, were among the beneficiaries of Sara's will; Elizabeth was now Elizabeth Forshaw the wife of Thomas

Forshaw of St. Benet Fink. Elizabeth was licensed in 1684 to practise midwifery, thus becoming a third generation midwife in this prominent London family.<sup>132</sup> Sara appointed her cousin Rowland Worsapp, the son of Elizabeth Whipp's 'sister Worshipp' (who received money from Whipp to buy a memorial ring), as one of her executors. Sara's only brother George was now dead and Sara left an annuity for her widowed sister-in-law, Martha Whipp, to be paid from rents of an agricultural property in Geldham, Essex. Sara's only son Waldegrave junior died in 1667; he noted in his will that he and his mother were joint owners of the Essex property and that it would eventually pass to his son, Waldegrave.<sup>133</sup> At the time of her death in 1673 Sara left the bulk of her estate to her two grandsons: John, the younger, was to receive 800 pounds at age 21 with the residue to go to Waldegrave. The sophisticated concepts regarding property bequests in her will attest to her keen grasp of financial matters and her competence in administering a complex and valuable estate. Sara Sydey, the midwife's great granddaughter, was baptised in the parish church of St. Ethelburga in 1676.<sup>134</sup>

The names of two midwives appeared on the visitation lists of 1669 -- Mrs. Bendskin and Mrs. Hensman.<sup>135</sup> Midwife Ben(d)skin was probably the wife of Richard Benskin, who gave one pound for a voluntary tithe in 1635, an amount

which was placed him in the upper third of donors for this tithe.<sup>136</sup> By 1638, Richard Benskin was estimated to have a value in rent of a little less than twelve pounds or a moderated rent of eight pounds which, again, was above the parish average.<sup>137</sup> Richard Benskin, a resident of Peachen Alley, was assessed for royal aid in 1666 for a total of 7 shillings and 6 pence (he was assessed both as a landlord and inhabitant), an amount which was average or slightly below average for the parish.<sup>138</sup> The hearth assessment of 1672, revealed that Mrs. Benskin, now a widow, was living in a small home with four hearths.<sup>139</sup> The registers of St. Ethelburga recorded the burial of Elizabeth Benskin in 1673; she was, in all likelihood, the midwife.

William Hensman of St. Ethelburga was probably the husband of midwife Hensman. Hensman, who lived on Clark's Alley (as did midwives Grant and Clark) paid an assessment of three shillings on land and one pound, two shillings on movable goods in 1672-1673, a rate which indicated a level of prosperity well above average (see midwives, Clark, Grant and Ward, below, for comparison). The Hensmans lived in a house of medium size with six hearths, but have left no other traces in parish records.<sup>140</sup>

Elizabeth Clarke, wife of William Clarke, haberdasher of St. Ethelburga, received her license to practise midwifery on June 28, 1673.<sup>141</sup> Her testimonial was

signed by Thomas Cox, her rector, and two churchwardens. Only one of Clarke's clients who gave sworn testimony came from St. Ethelburga. In her case we have independent confirmation of Alice Wright's safe delivery at the hands of midwife Clarke; the parish registers for 1673 record the baptism of tiny Sarah Wright. In 1672 the Clarke family was living in a home on Clark's Alley with six hearths.<sup>142</sup> William Clarke appeared in the churchwardens' account books of St. Ethelburga between the years of 1679-1692; his contribution to the poor receipts was generally four shillings and four pence per annum.<sup>143</sup> It is difficult to trace the careers of William and Elizabeth Clarke through information in the parish registers because of the large number of Clarkes sharing the same Christian name. I believe, however, that midwife Clarke died in 1705 and her husband in 1710.<sup>144</sup> The young, unmarried merchant William Clarke who died in 1672, was probably a nephew, son of John Clarke. This young man left a bequest of twenty pounds sterling to his sister Sara Sydey, widow of Waldegrave Sydey junior and to his nephews Waldegrave and John, ten pounds each. Thus, we can establish a family connection between midwives of three prominent parish families--the Whipps, the Sideys and the Clarkes.<sup>145</sup>

On November 24, 1676, Thomas Exton accepted the sworn testimony of Mary Pinck, Lettis Barns and Elizabeth

Poole and granted a license to practise midwifery to Margaret Ward, wife of Richard Ward of St. Ethelburga; her name also appears in the visitation records of the Bishop of London for 1680.<sup>146</sup> In 1672, the Wards were living in an unpretentious home on Helmut Court with three hearths.<sup>147</sup> The following year, Ward was assessed a total of three shillings and three pence as a landlord with stocks.<sup>148</sup> Richard Ward died intestate in 1677 and his estate was administered by his wife.<sup>149</sup> By 1678, Margaret Ward and her two children, who were now young adults, were no longer living on Helmut Court but churchwarden's accounts showing church receipts for 1679-79 place her in the 'middling' range of contributors.<sup>150</sup> In 1690, Mistress Ward was living alone in her home and her contributions to the poor of the parish were set at four shillings and five shillings, four pence except in 1697 when she paid six shillings, six pence, perhaps as a result of an expanding midwifery practice.<sup>151</sup> There is no trace of Margaret Ward in the records of St. Ethelburga after 1698. She may have died, remarried or moved to live with her married daughter Martha Humphreys.<sup>152</sup> The poll tax for St. Ethelburga shows a Richard Ward, sawyer, in 1690 who we believe was the midwife's son.<sup>153</sup>

Francis Grant presented herself in 1680 at the bishop's visitation alongside Margaret Ward as one of two



midwives for her parish. When her husband, John Grant, died in 1676, his wife inherited his entire estate and was named his executrix. Grant, a self-styled 'gentleman', was the owner of the King's Head in Fetter Lane which he rented out on lease.<sup>154</sup> He had already made his mark by 1640 when his name appeared among the principal inhabitants of London.<sup>155</sup> In the year following her husband's death, Francis Grant, with no surviving children, was living in her home on Clark's Alley with a kinswoman, Margaret Head.<sup>156</sup> Mrs. Grant's contributions to church receipts in 1680 (one pound ten shillings and four pence) and poor receipts in 1686-1688 (eight shillings) were indications of wealth.<sup>157</sup> Her contributions to the poor rate fell after 1688 and she paid nothing in the three or four years preceding her death in 1694, possibly because advancing age restricted her midwifery practice.<sup>158</sup> By 1690, Widow Grant was living with her maidservant, Hanna Layfield.<sup>159</sup> Layfield was subsequently the beneficiary of a generous bequest of twenty pounds; in addition midwife Grant, in a lengthy and detailed will, specified that the sum of thirty pounds should be spent on her own funeral. The account books of St. Ethelburga show how at least a part of that sum was spent: the cost of the burial ground was two pounds, six shillings and eight pence and for being buried in linen, two pounds, ten shillings. The parish also noted her contribution to

the parish poor of five pounds, which was left as a special bequest.<sup>160</sup> Francis Grant left the bulk of her estate, after numerous bequest's to relatives and friends, to her niece, Elizabeth Feezy.<sup>161</sup> Her extensive wardrobe of three 'best' gowns and petticoats and 'all the rest of my wearing Apparrell Silke linnen and Woollen' she left to be divided among Elizabeth Feezy, Feezy's daughter and Hanna her maid. The lease to the King's Head on Fetter Lane was left to Bridgid Ferrand, the unmarried daughter of William Ferrand who was a close friend and business associate of the widow.<sup>162</sup> Midwife Grant left a small bequest of five pounds to Barbara Roberts. A widow from Whitechappel with the same name was licensed to practise midwifery in 1686 and was in all likelihood Grant's former deputy.<sup>163</sup> Of the six midwives of St. Ethelburga, three were at the economic median for their parish or above. Three, possibly four others were well above the median. Of the latter three left wills which indicated substantial wealth and social prominence.

#### **St. Gregory by St. Paul's**

The large and prosperous parish of St. Gregory by St. Paul's was situated to the south and west of the City centre in the ward of Castle Baynard. Castle Baynard was noteworthy as the site of St. Paul's Cathedral, four other

parish churches, a castle and a number of homes which had belonged to sixteenth-century nobility.<sup>164</sup> Early in the seventeenth century it contained more than two hundred tithable houses.<sup>165</sup> At mid century, rich tradesmen formed a sizeable segment of its inhabitants. In particular, well-to-do merchant tailors congregated in the parish; parish inhabitants played an influential role in guild and civic life.<sup>166</sup> In 1658, St. Gregory by St. Paul gave the highest amount of 102 parishes to a special collection for the poor.<sup>167</sup> Toward the end of the century, the parish boasted 275 inhabited houses and almost one third of its households were designated substantial.<sup>168</sup>

Mary Hughes	1615	Richard	V.G.
Deborah Glover (alias Strackly)	1672	widow	test. V.G. will
Jane Winckles	1679	Jonathan (paver)	test. V.G. tax

Mary Hughes, wife of Richard of St. Gregory by St. Paul's, was licensed by the Vicar General of London in the practice of midwifery in February, 1615. In 1638, Widow Hughes was living on Knight rider Street in her own home for which she paid a rent of twelve pounds, placing her in one of this wealthy parish's more modest homes but indicating

her economic independence; nothing else is known about her.<sup>169</sup>

Deborah Glover was living in St. Paul's at the time of her licensing in 1672. Earlier, she had lived in St. Lawrence Jewry and it was her wish that she be buried in that parish after her death. In many instances this type of request indicated that the individual's family, especially a former spouse, were buried in the designated parish. It is likely that the Stracklys (Glover was a Strackly before her marriage), were buried in their home parish of St. Lawrence Jewry. Glover presented her testimonials with the sworn statement of five clients and two licensed midwives, Elizabeth Sumner and Elizabeth Davis. Her association with Elizabeth Davis was probably as deputy and it was a relationship of at least ten years standing since Glover had signed Davis' testimonial more than ten years earlier as a party who had been successfully delivered by by Davis on four occasions.<sup>170</sup> When Glover testified for Davis, she was probably already acting as Davis's deputy since she was shown as a widow residing in St. Lawrence Jewry. This is an interesting demonstration of how a widowed woman embarked upon a midwifery career by serving under the midwife who had earlier delivered her own children; obviously the service which she had received had been most satisfactory. The other midwife who signed Glover's testimonial, Elizabeth

Sumner, also signed Elizabeth Davis' application in 1662 as a senior midwife, again illustrating the complex and enduring relationships which extended among these women who carried on the practice of midwifery in London. It was possibly Glover who was the midwife paid by the parish in 1675 when an Irish woman was brought to bed in the parish; the sum of one pound thirteen shillings and four pence included the midwife's fee as well as the expense of a 'nurse' and 'other necessaries for the woman and child at the time of her lying in'.<sup>171</sup> In 1677 a midwife, who may or may not have been Glover, was paid the modest sum of two shillings and six pence by the parish on two occasions for delivering poor women.<sup>172</sup> In her will midwife Glover noted that her son Joseph Glöver had the use 'of other money of which he hath of mine in his hands'.<sup>173</sup> Glover named her son Joseph as her executor and her grandson, Robert, the son of John her deceased son, as the recipient of part of a legacy which midwife Glover had received from her brother Thomas Strackly; the original legacy of thirty pounds had provided a modest degree of financial independence for the midwife. Deborah died in 1682 and her will was signed with her own signature, placing her in the estimated 36% of London women of the period who were literate.<sup>174</sup> The 'Glover' whose name was listed on an assessment for building new church pews in 1686 would have been her son. His rate of

seventeen shillings and four pence was above average for the parish.<sup>175</sup>

Jane Winckles, licensed in 1679, was the last midwife licensed in her parish in the seventeenth century according to ecclesiastical records.<sup>176</sup> She was licensed under the jurisdiction of the dean and chapter of St. Paul's. All of her clients were from St. Giles Cripplegate parish. At least one of her clients was married to a man who was prominent in City politics.<sup>177</sup> Jonathan Winckles, the midwife's husband, was a paver and his work for the parish church alone in the years 1684-1698 suggests a comfortable livelihood; in 1692 he was paid more than thirty-seven pounds for 'paving before the churchyard'.<sup>178</sup> In April 1694, Jonathan was named churchwarden for his parish, a senior position of responsibility and trust which also reflected a degree of socio-economic prominence within the parish.<sup>179</sup> Winckles paid the same substantial assessment for church pews in 1686 as widow Glover's son. In 1695, the Winckles were living in their own residence, the household consisting of the parents, two daughters, a son, and a male servant.<sup>180</sup> Winckles was designated as an 'assessor' in 1695, perhaps as an adjunct to his paving business in which he was still actively engaged. Jane Winckles was probably the midwife whom the parish paid in

1700 as part of their care of Mistresses Emerson and Collins at the time of their 'lying in'.<sup>181</sup>

In this prosperous parish, then, two of the three licensed midwives who have come to light were well above the socio-economic median for their parish.

### St. John the Baptist

With one hundred to two hundred tithable houses, the parish of St. John the Baptist, lying close to the river and near the centre of the City, while not a wealthy parish, could claim a number of inhabitants of the 'better sort' as well as several civic leaders of note during the revolutionary years.<sup>182</sup> By the closing years of the century, only sixty-nine inhabited houses were tallied with a population of 419.<sup>183</sup> Groups of craftsmen in wood and textiles as well as members of semi-skilled building trades tended to cluster in the parish in 1666.<sup>184</sup> Toward the end of the century, the parish was crowded with an estimated 221 inhabitants per acre and only one fifth of its households were headed by individuals of means.<sup>185</sup>

Alice Annett	1676	Nicholas (citizen (haberdasher)	test.tax will
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According to available records, Alice Annett was the only midwife licensed to practise midwifery in the parish of

St. John the Baptist in the seventeenth century. Mrs. Annett was the wife of Nicholas, citizen and haberdasher of London. It may have been a second marriage for Nicholas or Alice because the testimonial submitted by minister Timothy Hatt and churchwardens Smyth and Byford described her as 'the now wife of Nicholas Annett'.<sup>186</sup> Since Alice's 1676 testimonial was supported by Anne Penn (licensed in 1670), she had probably acted as Penn's deputy.<sup>187</sup> Her practise extended to the south bank where she claimed as a client Mary Elwood of St. Olave's Southwark.<sup>188</sup> Alice had also delivered her sister-in-law Elizabeth Annett, wife of Richard Annett, her husband's brother. The Annetts had three sons, one of whom died as a child in 1673.<sup>189</sup> A number of tax assessments place Annett in the comfortable middle income range by 1688, although fifteen years earlier his assessment for parson's maintenance had been low.<sup>190</sup> Midwife Annett was employed on several occasions to deliver poor women of the parish. The usual parish fee to the midwife was five shillings, but in 1678 the churchwardens' accounts noted that Mrs. Annett the midwife had been given ten shillings to cover the cost of clothes for the child as well as her fee.<sup>191</sup> Mrs. Annett was still practising her profession in 1685 when she delivered a woman who had gone into labour in the street and been carried by porters to a nearby home.<sup>192</sup> Nicholas Annett became the parish's senior



churchwarden in 1687; he served in this position, the most important parish post, for the customary two years.<sup>193</sup> The midwife who delivered a poor parish woman during Annett's tenure of office was not named, but there is a possibility that Alice Annett was dead by 1691 when Mrs. Vaughan of Cloak Lane 'laid' a woman of the parish.<sup>194</sup> Alice certainly predeceased her husband, whose will was probated in 1707. Citizen and haberdasher Annett, as a member of the prosperous 'selling' occupations, was a man of considerable wealth.<sup>195</sup> He held leases on at least three properties, including one at Mile End Green, at the time of his death. Annett's personal goods, silver, and linens were extensive enough to be divided between his only surviving son, Nicholas junior, and his granddaughter, Susanna.<sup>196</sup> Annett senior requested an elaborate funeral, specifying that money equivalent to two years' rent from his properties be used to that end after his debts had been paid.

#### **St. Katherine Coleman**

The eastern tip of the poor parish of St. Katherine Coleman touched the eastern wall of the City north of Aldgate. Estimated to hold between 100 and 200 tithable houses in 1638, by 1695 there were 213 residences within its confines.<sup>197</sup> In the sixteenth century, Stowe had commented upon the conversion of the gardens of Northumberland House,

the estate of the former Earl of Northumberland, to space for 'great rents, small cottages for strangers and others.'<sup>198</sup> By 1638 the parish was one of the poorest within the walls by its own claim and was full of lodging houses and alleys which were home to a population composed mainly of manual labourers and devoid of the prosperity associated with inhabitants engaged in retail trade.<sup>199</sup> The parish did, in fact, receive financial assistance to its poor relief fund from the wealthier parish of St. Olave Jewry at some point between 1631 and 1666.<sup>200</sup> By 1666, occupational clustering has been demonstrated for craftsmen in wood as well as carriers.<sup>201</sup> Economic conditions in the parish may have improved toward the end of the century since it was estimated that slightly more than one fifth of the parish households were wealthy in 1695.<sup>202</sup>

Parish midwives:

Joan Nott	1637	John (doctor)	visit. tax, will
Isobel Glover	1637	Nathaniel (citizen painter stainer)	visit. tax will
Margaret Jey	1661	widow	test. V.G. tax visit.
Susan Chamberlain	1662	Robert (clerk)	test. V.G. tax
Ann Crouch	1680	John	visit. tax
Mrs. Humton	1680		visit.

Mary Bennett	1690	widow	test. tax, V.G.
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As the wife of John Nott, doctor of medicine, Joan Nott enjoyed a good standard of living in their residence on the south side of Pye Alley in St. Katherine Coleman.<sup>203</sup> Doctor Nott's name was recorded regularly between the years of 1616-27 on the assessment lists for his parish showing his contributions as above average. After his death in 1627, Mrs. Nott was charged with the assessment. By 1634, Mrs. Nott was shown as 'midwife' on the assessment roll for clerks' and sextons' wages, bread and wine and church repairs. Her assessment of two shillings was above average on that assessment.<sup>204</sup> Although we have been unable to find the record of her licensing, Mistress Nott was listed as a midwife in the visitation of 1637 for St. Katherine Coleman.<sup>205</sup> At the time of John's death in 1627, Mrs. Nott had at least three living children: an unmarried daughter, Dorothy, a married daughter, Anne Blankett, and a son, Thomas, were all alive in 1627 at the time of their father's death.<sup>206</sup> Nott was a substantial property owner with lands in Farnborough and Aynsford in Kent, Ratcliffe and the City of London. His wife and unmarried daughter were the major beneficiaries and executors of his estate, while his other two children were to share the proceeds of the Farnborough property. It is noteworthy that Mrs. Nott, a woman of

considerable wealth, continued to practise midwifery some ten years after her husband's death.<sup>207</sup> Midwife Nott may have moved to live with her children or have died by 1638 since her name does not appear in the tithe assessments of that year.

Isobel Glover appeared with Joan Nott at the visitation of 1637, and, like Nott, has left no record of her licensing. The mounting fortunes of the Glover family can be traced in the parish records between 1616 and 1632, including the increasing assessments which Nathaniel paid, particularly after the family moved from Northumberland Alley to Northside in 1632.<sup>208</sup> The skilled painter-stainer Nathaniel was hired by the barber-surgeons in 1632 to paint the company's coat of arms as well as the master's and wardens' names on the 'great Sunne Dyall'.<sup>209</sup> By 1633, Glover could afford to pay more than three pounds in fines to excuse himself from the duty of parish constable.<sup>210</sup> In 1638, Glover was paying a moderated rent of eight pounds which placed him in the upper third of rents for the parish.<sup>211</sup> Mr. Glover acted as the church beadle in 1624 and did various repair jobs for the church in 1637.<sup>212</sup> Nathaniel Glover rose to the prestigious office of churwarden of his parish in 1638-1639.<sup>213</sup> The Glovers raised three daughters to maturity as well as one son, Richard, who became a prosperous goldsmith.<sup>214</sup> At the

time of his death in late 1642 or early 1643 Isobel and Richard shared joint ownership of tenanted buildings on two acres of land in Stepney. Isobel was to have the use of the income which this property generated for her lifetime.<sup>215</sup> Glover's will also provided that each of his children was to have the three to five silver spoons that they had received as gifts at their christenings, which suggests that Glovers were a family with friends and relatives of means. A tailor, Nathaniel Glover, who was living with his wife in Playhouse Yard in 1692 may have been the midwife's grandson.

Margaret Jay (or Gay) was issued a license to practise midwifery in 1661. Her documentation was signed by two churchwardens and five other men who noted her long residency of thirty years in the parish and the fact that she had seven years of experience in midwifery.<sup>216</sup> Jay was the only midwife from her parish to appear at the visitation of 1664.<sup>217</sup> Widow Jay, who lived in Brown's Court, retained her economic independence and contributed a small amount regularly to the parish poor rates between 1687 and 1690 and to ward taxes in 1688. Midwife Jay paid the modest sum of four pence monthly for poor rates except during the last year when she paid two pence, possibly a sign of deteriorating health or means. After 1690 she disappeared from the records.<sup>218</sup> I suspect she died in 1691. Mistress Jay did not become a pensioner since her name is not among

those receiving assistance either regularly or occasionally from the parish.

At the time of her licensing in November, 1662, Susan Chamberlain was married to Robert, identified simply as a 'clerk'.<sup>219</sup> By 1670, she was widowed and living in a modest but comfortable home with four hearths in Northumberland Alley.<sup>220</sup> Between the years of 1687 and 1694, Widow Chamberlain's name appeared on the rolls of those who contributed to the poor rate, but no assessment was made against her. This was probably an indication of the modest nature of her resources which also provided for her daughter Katherine who lived with her.<sup>221</sup> It may be noted that parish householders can be divided into three groups in relation to the poor rate: impoverished householders, almsmen and children who were in receipt of poor relief; reasonably well-to-do householders who could afford to contribute, at varying levies, to the poor rate; and a middle band of householders who were self-reliant but judged to be of too modest in means to contribute. The inclusion of widow Chamberlain's name on the assessment lists but with the amount left unrecorded suggests that she was on the borderline between the well-to-do contributors to the tax and the self-reliant non-contributors. In 1695, however, widow Chamberlain and her daughter were included on the lists compiled for the national marriage tax. At that

time, Mrs. Chamberlain was the occupant and landlady of a house which accommodated four lodgers.<sup>222</sup> Despite the latter evidence of financial capacity, the Chamberlains, mother and daughter, joined the large number of parishioners who sought parish relief in 1694. There was a massive increase in relief recipients in this parish in 1694; in 1691-92, 36 adults and a number of children had received assistance but in 1694, 141 adults and 126 children were assisted financially.<sup>223</sup> Midwife Chamberlain did not have the resources to withstand the disaster and remained among those 'needing frequent assistance', until at least the end of the century. The widow's financial position clearly deteriorated quite rapidly from the later 1680s. Since she had been licensed in midwifery in 1662, and widowed by 1670, she was presumably very elderly and, if no longer able to practise midwifery actively, dependent upon the income from a small lodging house.

Anne Crouch was identified as a midwife at the visitation of 1680.<sup>224</sup> She was the wife of John Crouch who died intestate in 1684 and whose estate was administered by his widow.<sup>225</sup> Mistress Crouch was the mother of Anne and John Crouch, who were the beneficiaries of their grandmother's substantial estate (administered by their father in 1669).<sup>226</sup> In 1678 John Crouch, the midwife's husband, was paying a moderately high poor rate. Despite

these earlier indications of economic viability and the fact that her son John lived comfortably with his wife, child and two servants, widow Crouch was forced in 1692 and 1694 to seek parish relief 1694 along with many other economically disadvantaged of her parish.<sup>227</sup> After 1694 there is no further record of widow Crouch.

Midwife Humton of St. Katherine Coleman presented herself at the visitation of 1680, along with Anne Crouch.<sup>228</sup> She is one of the few midwives about whom we have no further information which leads us to conclude that she was a widow who remarried or that she died shortly after 1680. The family name of Humton does not appear in parish documentation.

Widow Mary Bennett was licensed in 1690 on the testimony of her rector, two churchwardens, the parish clerk and the sworn statement of three women, all the wives of weavers from St. Leonard Shoreditch.<sup>229</sup> She may have been the widow of Rubin Bennett, coachman, who was assessed in 1666 for the Hearth tax on four hearths in a home on Northumberland Alley.<sup>230</sup> By 1687, at least, Mary Bennett was a widow, contributing to the parish poor rate. She continued to pay her assessment of four pence monthly, except in 1690, until 1692.<sup>231</sup> Bennett may have been the midwife who attended Ellinor Elliston, a poor woman of the parish, when she was delivered in February, 1695.<sup>232</sup> Her



absence from assessment lists after 1692 suggests the possibility of remarriage, death, or removal from the parish.

In the poor parish of St. Katherine Coleman, the social standings and incomes of two midwives were well above that of their neighbours. Two midwives maintained at least average economic viability and two were forced to seek parish relief toward the end of their lives. It seems likely that one, and perhaps both of the latter, were no longer practising their profession by that point in their life cycles. Their financial difficulties were also apparently a reflection of temporary, undue hardship in the parish as a whole. One midwife left no traces except her name in a visitation record.

#### **St. Martin Outwich**

The small parish of St. Martin Outwich, with less than a hundred tithable houses, was situated within the north-eastern section of the City. In the sixteenth century, its poor had received relief from funds raised on lands owned by the mercers.<sup>233</sup> Evidently the small number of tithable houses in the parish posed a problem for parish administration but these difficulties were offset to a degree by the fact that by 1638 the majority of its inhabitants were well- to- do tradesmen who lived in fine

houses.<sup>234</sup> With sixty-eight inhabited houses and 444 inhabitants in 1695, almost 37% of its households were 'substantial' indicating no fundamental change in parish characteristics over the last decades of the century.<sup>235</sup>

Mary Sherwood	1676	Ralph (citizen grocer)	test. will V.G. tax
Frances Southen (Sowden)	1686	William	test. tax

Mary Sherwood of St. Martin Outwich was licensed in 1676 to practise midwifery. Her testimonial was signed by rector Richard Kidder, the future Bishop of Bath and Wells.<sup>236</sup> Of the four women who gave sworn testimony, we know that two of them were associated with midwifery. Elizabeth Forshaw, the niece of Sara Sydey of St. Ethelburga, would be licensed herself in 1684. At the time of Sherwood's licensing she was gaining experience, perhaps as a deputy midwife. The name of Sara Sydey (widow of Waldegrave junior) also appears on the testimonial. Ralph Sherwood, the midwife's husband, was a wealthy and prominent citizen and grocer of London. The family's links with the gentry were in place in 1679 when a gentlewoman was buried from their house. Other indications of wealth and social prominence were the high fees paid by Sherwood for the burial of their children in 1677 and 1678 and their burial place within the chapel of the parish church.<sup>237</sup> Sherwood

was a parish questman in 1680, and in the following year was chosen as churchwarden for his parish. In 1690, the Sherwood household was comprised of Ralph, his wife, one daughter, a grandchild, two maids and a journeyman. By 1695, Ralph Sherwood had attained the important City position of common councilman. Upon the death of her husband, whose will was probated in January, 1703, Mary Sherwood became the principal heiress of Sherwood's extensive property holdings, including their residence on Threadneedle Street in St. Martin Outwich, the adjoining residence leased to a gentleman, a vintner's shops, cellars and warehouses in St. Olave's Hart Street and two properties on Jay Lane in St. Faith the Virgin parish. Sherwood also made cash bequests totalling almost nine hundred pounds, indicating the magnitude of his personal resources.<sup>238</sup>

Sherwood indicated his previous generous provision for his two widowed daughters, but named them to inherit the various properties after his wife's death. Daughter Mary was the widow of Edward How, clerk, of Battersea; she was living with her parents at the time of her father's death. One of Mary's three daughter had also married a clerk, Richard Staverton of Eversley in Hampshire, while a second daughter married doctor of laws Thomas Taylor (doctor of laws) of Canterbury. Sherwoods' other daughter, Rebecca, had been widowed twice. She had one son, John Burman, by

her first husband.<sup>239</sup> Her second husband was Dr. Robert Plott, doctor of laws, whose prestigious career encompassed appointments as the first keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, 1683-90, secretary to the earl marshall (1687), registrar of the Court of Chivalry (1687), Mowbray herald extraordinary (1694) and registrar (1695), and historiographer royal (1688).<sup>240</sup> Plott had extensive property holdings in Kent, including a manor, timberlands and marshlands. The extent of Plott's personal wealth was reflected in the cash endowments and material bequests which he left to his wife and family at the time of his death in 1696.<sup>241</sup> His wife Rebecca, the daughter of our London midwife, received, among other valuables, a pearl necklace and bracelets. Indicative of the quality of the Plott household furnishings were the 'curtains vallence and bases of silke imbroidered now upon the bedd in the Chamber over the Parlour at Sutton Barne together with the imbroidered tablecloth belonging to them' which were left to John Burman, Plott's stepson (midwife Sherwood's grandson).<sup>242</sup> Plott specifically addressed midwife Sherwood in his will, requesting that his 'much honoured' mother and father-in-law assist with the guardianship of his two young children and in the administration of his estate which he left to his executrix, his 'intirely beloved wife' Rebecca. At the time of his death, Rebecca Plott was carrying their second son who was

named Ralph Sherwood Plott after the husband of midwife Mary Sherwood.<sup>243</sup>

In 1686 Frances Sowden (Southen), the wife of William, received her license in midwifery.<sup>244</sup> Two of the women who gave sworn testimony on her behalf were licensed midwives, once again illustrating the durable and intricate networks which existed among London midwives. One, Ursula Chesmore, had been licensed in 1677.<sup>245</sup> The name of Anne White appeared on both Chesmore's and Sowden's testimonials. White had been licensed in 1662 while living in St. Sepulchre but by 1686 she was widowed and resided in St. Mary Magdalen Old Fish Street.<sup>246</sup> Frances married William Sowden a widower with at least two small children some time between 1683, when his first wife died in childbed, and 1686 when Frances was licensed.<sup>247</sup> Midwife Sowden herself gave birth to a daughter in 1685. We know that William Sowden was above average in his economic position in the parish because his assessment for the scavenger rate, 1678-1690, of more than three shillings annually (as compared with the five shillings paid by the wealthy Sherwoods) placed him in the upper third of those paying scavenger rates.<sup>248</sup>

In this small parish both midwives were the wives of prosperous men; one of them, Mistress Sherwood, was also socially prominent.

### St. Mary Aldermanbury

The small (60-100 tithable houses) but wealthy parish of St. Mary Aldermanbury was close by the Guildhall in north-central London. Described as one of the 'most important parishes of Puritan London', its beautiful homes and prosperous inhabitants had drawn comment in the sixteenth century.<sup>249</sup> Particularly noteworthy were its lovely parish church with its churchyard and cloisters as well as the conduit which ran beside the church and carried water from the Tyburne river to supply London inhabitants. Strongly Puritan, it was the parish of the radical clergyman Edmund Calamy who was ejected by the church hierarchy in 1642 for nonconformity.<sup>250</sup> The parish made one of the largest contributions of any London parish to Parliament in 1642. In addition to a hub of wealthy merchants, at least five of its inhabitants were elected as aldermen of the City. By 1695 the number of inhabited houses in the parish had increased to 124 (at least a 25% increase) and the social composition of the parish may have deteriorated since fewer than 29% of the households were considered to be of substance.<sup>251</sup>

The parish midwives were:

Margaret Clark	(1610)	widow	parish reg.
Barbara Croud	1619	Michael	V.G.
Mary Manslawe	1637		Visit.
Rebecca Slarke	1664	John	test.
Elizabeth Whitehorne	1677	John (carpenter)	test. V.G. tax

The name of Margaret Clark 'widdow and mydwiffe' appears in the burial register of St. Mary Aldermanbury for the year 1610, but details about her life and practice, which belong for the most part to the sixteenth century, have not been uncovered.<sup>252</sup>

In November, 1619, Barbara Croud, wife of Michael Croud of St. Mary Aldermanbury, was licensed by the Vicar General of London to practise midwifery.<sup>253</sup> Mrs. Croud called upon six women, at least five of whom were from the upper ranks of London society, to attest to her abilities as a midwife. Three women, Anne Nicholls, Margaret Turberville and Susan Newham were gentry wives while Katherine Eversden, the wife of a linen draper, and Jane, the wife of grocer Ansell Carter, lived in houses which were among the finest in St. Dunstan in the West.<sup>254</sup> We know that Barbara Croud had been married thirty-three years at the time of her licensing and that she had given birth to two children, one

of whom died in infancy. A widow Crowson, probably the midwife, died in 1626.<sup>255</sup>

The visitation of 1637 listed Mrs. Mary Manslawe or Manshawe as a midwife of St. Mary Aldermanbury. To date, no further record of her or her family has been found.

Two churchwardens and six women endorsed the testimonial of Rebecca Slarke in 1664. Senior midwife Francis Austin was among the latter. The five clients who testified came from widely scattered parishes. There was Elizabeth Thomson of St. Giles Cripplegate in the north and from St. Olave's Southwark, a client and relative, Elizabeth Slarke. From the eastern suburbs there was the wife of a weaver. Within the City the wife of a butcher from St. Andrew Hubbard and the wife of a tailor of St. Antholin parish added their statements under oath. Again, some confusion existed over this midwife's name which appeared on the parish testimonial as Slarke but as Clarke in the statement added by notary John Williams at the time of her swearing before him. This may partially account for the fact that we have found no other definite information about her.

Elizabeth Whitehorne was widowed in 1672 and received her license to practise midwifery in 1677.<sup>256</sup> Visitation records for the year 1680 recorded her as a parish midwife.<sup>257</sup> Her husband, carpenter John Whitehorne, had died in 1672. In the year before his death very high



tithe assessments were made against him (almost five pounds in total for front ground, house and back ground), an indication of well above average living arrangements and financial status.<sup>258</sup> The same year, his assessment in Cripplegate ward for a subsidy for the King was also well above average.<sup>259</sup> By 1692, widow Whitehorne was still living comfortably, if not lavishly, in her home in St. Mary Aldermanbury<sup>260</sup>. Mrs. Whitehorne bore at least two sons, John and Bartholomew, and a daughter, Elizabeth, who, with a cousin, shared the estate of their uncle, Thomas Whitehorne, after his death in 1676.<sup>261</sup> Midwife Elizabeth Whitehorne's son John was a victualler who died in 1699, only four years after his mother. His brief will named his brother Bartholomew as his executor and commended his young daughter, Elizabeth, into her uncle's care.<sup>262</sup> Mrs. Whitehorne was paid by the parish on at least two occasions in 1684 and 1686 for her midwifery services. In each case she was paid the relatively generous sum of ten shillings.<sup>263</sup>

For the small but wealthy parish of St. Mary Aldermanbury we have recovered evidence about one midwife which places her above the economic median for her parish. Few (if any) details about the lives of the other four women have been uncovered, but we know they were self-sufficient

throughout their lives because they were never in receipt of parish poor relief. ..

#### St. Olave Silver Street

At the extreme north-west corner of the City, the parish of St. Olave Silver Street was included among a group of the five most prosperous London parishes of early seventeenth century London in a study of London charities. Indications from the sixteenth century, however, pointed to a parish with a modest economic base and few illustrious inhabitants.<sup>264</sup> Recent research, moreover, has concluded that by 1638 most of the parishioners were poor and that by the late 1650s the parish contained 'serious pockets of poverty or virtual slums'.<sup>265</sup> Unfortunately, St. Olave Silver Street was among the seventeen parishes missing from the study by Jones and Judges of the London population of 1695 but Herlan has pointed out that, overall, very little change took place in parochial poverty and social profile between the years of 1658-9 and 1695, leading us to conclude that the parish was a poor London parish throughout the century.<sup>266</sup>

## The parish midwives were:

Anne Clifton	1619	Kellam (beadle)	V.G. tax.
Joan Sension	1627		V.G. tax
Mrs. Gillam	1637	Anthony (diamond cutter)	visit.
Mary Taylor	1661	Thomas (citizen haberdasher)	test. V.G. will
Elizabeth Bickerstaffe	1679	James	test.visit tax
Ann Shorter	1680		visit.

Anne Clifton, wife of Kellam Clifton of St. Olave Silver Street, was licensed in 1619. Six women gave sworn testimony for Mrs. Clifton. At least one client, Ursula Terry, wife of the prosperous John Terry, was from her own parish while Ellemary Walleyne, the wife of jeweller Francis Walleyne, lived in the parish of St. Botolph Aldgate. Sara Sedon was the wife of pewterer William Sedon and Elizabeth Swayne was married to a cutler; the occupation of Elizabeth Dier's husband William was not given. The last name was, I believe, that of Joan Sention or Senchion, who was licensed in 1627, and who was possibly already acting in the capacity of deputy midwife.<sup>267</sup> The Clifton family was still residing in St. Olave Silver Street eighteen years later when Clifton's moderated rent was shown at six pounds, a sum

which placed him in the upper half of rent values for the parish.<sup>268</sup> Kellam Clifton had been appointed porter or 'under beadle' for the barber-surgeons' company in 1603. In 1617 he was suspended and then reinstated. Evidently the problems with his employers were not resolved satisfactorily and he was dismissed in 1621, two years after his wife was licensed.<sup>269</sup>

Among the names of Joan Sension's clients who testified on her behalf in 1627 was the name of Elizabeth Dyar whose name also appeared (spelled differently) on Anne Clifton's testimonial of some eight years earlier, leading us to conclude that Dyar was a senior midwife.<sup>270</sup> Joan Sension, who appeared at the visitation of 1637 (with one other midwife from her parish) was likely a widow at the time of her licensing and, in 1638, she headed her own household for which she was assessed the same tithe rent of six pounds as the Cliftons, again placing her in the upper half of the parish.<sup>271</sup> Parish records of the period contain several references to midwife Sension: in 1640-41, she received a shilling 'for her paines' and in 1652-3, the parish paid for 'a bond about Mrs.Sensions' house'.<sup>272</sup>

Mrs. Gillam was the other midwife from St. Olave Silver Street who attended the visitation of 1637.<sup>273</sup> Elinor Gillam, the wife of a prosperous diamond cutter, was still practising midwifery in 1661, and it was possibly in

the capacity of a senior midwife that she signed (in what appears to be her own handwriting) the testimonial of Joan Cockson.<sup>274</sup> The midwife had two sons and the Thomas Gillam who became a wealthy surgeon was almost certainly one of them.<sup>275</sup>

The first woman of the parish to be licensed after the Restoration was Mary Taylor, wife of citizen and haberdasher, Thomas Taylor.<sup>276</sup> Mrs. Taylor had the support of ten women when she applied for her license in 1661. Her husband, Thomas, died in 1663 naming his wife as sole heir and executrix in a short oral will.<sup>277</sup> Midwife Taylor may have remarried since we have found no further trace of her in parish records.

In 1679 Elizabeth Bickerstaffe received her license to practise midwifery under the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>278</sup> Four women, including the wife of gentleman Thomas Browne of St. Olave Silver Street (who signed her own name) testified on her behalf. Mrs. Bickerstaffe attended her parish's visitation in 1680 as one of the parish's two midwives.<sup>279</sup> Midwife Bickerstaffe was the wife of James Bickerstaffe whose tithe assessment in 1681 placed him in the third quartile for his parish.<sup>280</sup> In 1679-1680 a Bickerstaffe child was buried who may have been the midwife's son. The parish records also note the

death of a Mrs. Bickerstaffe in 1689-1690 who was possibly a relative of the midwife.<sup>281</sup>

Anne Shorter who attended the visitation of 1680 as a midwife was widowed in 1683. The estate of her husband William was granted by administration to his widow, midwife Shorter, who probably remarried.<sup>282</sup> Nothing further is known about her life and career.

Midwives Clifton, Sension and Bickerstaffe were probably not wealthy or socially distinguished, but they were self-sufficient householders occupying respectable positions in what was, admittedly, a poor parish. Gillam was prosperous and married to a skilled tradesman in a luxury craft. Taylor, as the wife of a citizen and haberdasher, in all likelihood enjoyed the material and economic advantages associated with her husband's occupation, one of the most profitable in Restoration London.<sup>283</sup>

#### **St. Dunstan in the West**

With more than 400 tithable houses on the eve of the revolution, and 436 inhabited houses in 1695, St. Dunstan in the West was a large and prosperous extramural parish lying next to the poor extramural parish of St. Bride which, in turn, abutted the western wall of the City.<sup>284</sup> Fleet Street, the most important link between the City and

Westminster, ran through the heart of the parish which was situated in the City's largest ward of Farringdon Without.<sup>285</sup> St. Dunstan was an exception to the rule that the wealthy tended to congregate at the centre of an early modern urban centre. As Emrys Jones has pointed out 'the entire parish of St. Dunstan's in the West was comparable to the city core, and it boasted four titled householders'.<sup>286</sup> It was also the home of an unusually high number of professional men as well as a substantial number of gentlemen. With two Inns of Court situated within its confines, not only legal practitioners but auxiliary tradesmen such as scriveners and stationers made their home in the parish; surgeons and physicians also congregated in St. Dunstan toward the beginning of the seventeenth century.<sup>287</sup> By 1640, many wealthy tradesmen were found among its parishioners as well as a number of radicals who were active during the revolutionary period.<sup>288</sup> Debtors prison on Fleet street and Bridewell for the poor and vagrant were both located within its confines, as was the busy meat market of Smithfield.<sup>289</sup> A recent study of poor relief during the revolutionary years has concluded that St. Dunstan in the West was wealthier than several other extramural parishes during that period.<sup>290</sup> With a population of 2,673 in 1695, there were 436 inhabited

houses. Slightly less than one third of the households were considered well-to-do.<sup>291</sup>

Parish midwives in the seventeenth century:

Isobel Doubleday	1611	widow	V.G. tax
Joyce Megon	1616	James	V.G. tax
Alice Carnell	1629	Frances (cooper)	V.G. tax visit
Catherine Wicks	1630	Richard?	V.G. visit. tax
Elizabeth Seeley	1636	George	visit.V.G. tax will
Alice Carnaby	1637		visit.tax
Elizabeth Somner	1639	William (goldsmith)	V.G. tax visit.
Abigail King	1647	Thomas?	tax parish records
Joan Cockson	1661	Thomas (tailor)	test. V.G.tax
Elizabeth Wharton	1661	Richard (upholst- erer)	test. V.G. tax
Mary Senior	1663	widow George (tailor)	test. V.G. tax
Mary Benson	1664	John (parish clerk; stationer)	visit. tax.
Mrs. Hobby	1664		visit.
Abigail Symonds	1667	widow	test. V.G. tax



Mary Duckett	1669	John (cleric)	test. V.G. tax.
Anne Bradford	1672	William	test. VG. tax
Sara Benet	1675	John (limner)	test. Arch.R.
(Mary) Farewell	1680	John (attorney gentleman)	visit.tax
(Elizabeth) Farewell		Henry	
Mrs. Carter	1680		visit.
Jane Cooke	1684	Edward (gentleman)	test. V.G.
Alice Burrell	1686	William (haberdasher)	test. V.G. tax
Sara Mainwaring	1690	Thomas	test. V.G. tax
Ellinor Wallis	1693	Solomon (cleric)?	test. V.G. tax
Joan Beadnell	1694	widow	test. V.G.

The large extra mural parish of St. Dunstan in the West claimed the services of at least twenty-four licensed midwives over the course of the century. This number appears disproportionately large at first glance, but when compared with the populations of other parishes the number of midwives to inhabitants is roughly the same. Widow Isobel Doubleday of Crown Court was sixty years old when she was licensed in 1611 and already had thirty years experience in midwifery.<sup>292</sup> The six clients testifying on her behalf

came from at least four parishes. Mistress Doubleday's name appeared on various assessment lists between 1596 and 1613. Her contribution of five shillings toward armour and munitions in 1596 was above average. By 1613, her levy of five shillings for church repairs was low, perhaps in deference to her age and marital status, but still indicative of her ability to contribute to parish causes above and beyond her own subsistence.<sup>293</sup>

Joyce Megon, the wife of James Megon received her license in May 1616. Two clients from St. Dunstan testified and two from St. Clement Danes. Three of her clients were married to tailors living in three different parishes.<sup>294</sup> At least two of midwife Megon's children died when they were very young. The burial charges for Anne, buried in 1620, were eleven shillings and eight pence for burial in the church.<sup>295</sup> The charges and the place of burial suggest that the Megon family were above average in income and social status in the parish but no other evidence has been uncovered.

Alice Carnell's practise extended to at least six widely scattered parishes in 1629, the year she was licensed.<sup>296</sup> That year her husband, Frances Carnell, a cooper, was assessed twelve pence for scavenger rates for his quarters in three Leg Ally, an amount which was low.<sup>297</sup> The Carnell's had lost at least one child, infant John in

1616.<sup>298</sup> Frances Carnell died in 1638 and the ill health which preceded his death strained the family resources. The parish records of the overseers of the poor note two payments to Frances in July 'in his sicknes' (one shilling) and in August 'contynnuing sicke' (one shilling).<sup>299</sup> He died soon after and Mrs. Carnell provided a respectable if modest funeral for her husband paying four shillings, four pence for the ground and knell and twelve pence for the pall.<sup>300</sup> Midwife Carnell may have been the midwife who received eight pence for examining a poor woman who was subsequently sent to another parish in November 1640.<sup>301</sup> By 1644 we find that widow Carnell was renting at least part of her home to Jane Fletcher, for whom the parish paid the rent of seven shillings, six pence at midsummer.<sup>302</sup> Despite the financial difficulties experienced at the time of her husband's illness and death there is no evidence of midwife Carnell becoming a parish charge.

When Catherine Wicks was licensed in April 1630 the bishop's registers failed to record the names of four of the six women who gave sworn testimony.<sup>303</sup> Mrs. Wicks was present at the visitations of 1636 and 1637 for her parish.<sup>304</sup> Eight years later, one Richard Wicks of Bell Lane of St. Dunstan in the West was paying the extremely high moderated rent of thirty pounds per year which placed him in the top ten percent of rent assessments for the parish.<sup>305</sup>

It is not clear whether Richard was the midwife's husband or son, but probably the former. Only 27 of the more than 460 rents were higher.

Elizabeth Seeley was present at the 1636 visitation along with midwives Carnell and Wicks.<sup>306</sup> She had been licensed in 1622 when living in the parish of St. Clement Danes. Her husband was George Seeley who died in 1638.<sup>307</sup> Seeley's moderated rent for his dwelling on Sheire Lane in the year of his death was twenty pounds, an amount which was in the upper half of rents for this wealthy parish.<sup>308</sup> The lease to his property in Sheire Lane and all of the goods in his house (except those belonging to an unspecified number of lodgers) were left to his wife Elizabeth upon his death.<sup>309</sup> Seeley also left a bequest of forty shillings to Christ's Hospital where, he had received his education. It was probably the midwife's daughter Joan who died in 1641 and her grandson, Robert, who died in his infancy in 1654.<sup>310</sup> In 1668 Richard Seeley of Clifford's Inn, who we believe was the midwife's son, was buried in the chapel of St. Dunstan in the West.<sup>311</sup> Richard's association with Clifford's Inn, his place of burial and the burial fee (one pound, five shillings) are signs of social prestige. The midwife herself may have remarried and moved to live with her son or to another parish since there are no further traces of her in parish records.

Alice Carnaby did not attend the visitation of 1637, where her name was listed with the parish midwives.<sup>312</sup> Three years later the parish paid Mrs. Carnaby, whom it called 'the midwife', five shillings for delivering two poor women. The only other information we have about midwife Carnaby is the date of her burial, May 18, 1649, and the fact that persons unknown paid the fee of two shillings and two pence for the burial charges, indicating that she was not a parish charge at the time of her death.<sup>313</sup>

Midwife Elizabeth Somner was licensed in 1639 on the presentation of testimonials from clergy, churchwardens and six women; in 1664 she attended the visitation of her parish and exhibited proof of her licensing.<sup>314</sup> Her six clients represented a broad spectrum of social backgrounds. Mariam Robinson lived in a modest home whose annual moderated rent was five pounds; Catherine Powell, on the other hand, was the wife of a wealthy vintner who paid a moderated rent of fifty pounds, among the highest in the parish.<sup>315</sup> Two clients were married to tailors, one to a sadler and one to goldsmith James East, who shared an occupational link with the midwife's husband. A parish assessment in 1629 placed William Somner above average in financial capacity.<sup>316</sup> At least a decade before she was licensed, Elizabeth Somner had borne and buried two infant sons.<sup>317</sup> In 1638 Fleet Street goldsmith William Somner's moderated rent of nine pounds was

below average for this parish.<sup>318</sup> Thirteen years later, in August 1651, the midwife's husband was buried in the body of the church and the costs of thirteen shillings, six pence suggest a moderate degree of affluence.<sup>319</sup> By 1660 Widow Somner and two of her adult sons were living in Ram's Alley but by 1663 son John, a sadler who was married and had a child Anne, born in 1660, had moved to another residence; he died in 1667.<sup>320</sup> A third son, William, was a goldsmith living in Fleet Street; he had at least two children, Mary, born in 1653, and Elizabeth, born in 1658.<sup>321</sup> Widow Somner moved to a larger house in Myter Court after her home on Ram's Alley was damaged by the fire of 1666 and sometime before 1671.<sup>322</sup> Subsequently, she paid an assessment on rents set at the extremely high sum of sixty shillings per annum; her son Henry (chosen as a parish scavenger in 1664) was still living with her but at the time of his death in 1675 his address was given as Fleet Street.<sup>323</sup> By 1679 Widow Somner was joined by her daughter or daughter-in-law (probably newly-widowed) and two grandchildren.<sup>324</sup> Mrs. Somner was paid the substantial sum of two pounds and ten shillings by the parish in 1672 for services unspecified to Mrs. Adams, an indication of her continued professional involvement some 33 years after the date of her licensing.<sup>325</sup> By the time of her death in 1687, Mrs. Somner was living in Fleet Street, perhaps with her son

William. As befitted her station and as a mark of the esteem in which she was held, she was buried in the vault of the parish church, as was her granddaughter and namesake who died the following year. Parish records for 1688 and 1689 noted Mistress Somner's generous legacy to the parish poor of five pounds per annum.<sup>326</sup>

Parish records for the years 1647-1648 show that a payment of two shillings, six pence was made to Mistress King 'the midwife' for her efforts in removing a woman from the parish before she gave birth.<sup>327</sup> We believe that she was Abigail King, wife of Thomas King, and the mother of at least three children. Daughter Abigail was born in 1629, Sara in 1631 and Susan in 1632.<sup>328</sup> Thomas King paid a moderated rent of eight pounds per annum in 1638, which would place the young family well within the lowest quartile of rents for the parish.<sup>329</sup> Widow King was still living in her home in Cock and Key Alley in 1658 when she was assessed the modest sum of five shillings for a tax 'By the Lord Protector and his Counsell'.<sup>330</sup>

November 1661 saw the licensing of Joan Cockson of St. Dunstan in the West. She was married to tailor Thomas Cockson, but it may have been a second marriage because her testimonials indicate a strong association with the parish of St. Clement Danes and the curate of that parish made his own statement regarding her virtue and skill in

midwifery.<sup>331</sup> In 1638 Thomas 'Croxsone', who was probably the midwife's husband, was paying a moderated rent of thirty pounds which he shared with William Dickins.<sup>332</sup> Midwife Cockson had been the deputy of Elenor Gillam and had at least seven years experience in midwifery. Lady Diana Bill of Blackfriars was among the seven clients who gave sworn testimony for her.<sup>333</sup> In 1661, a daughter, Arabella, was born to the couple, so this was a midwife who was clearly still of child-bearing age. A number of Cockson infants were buried in the years 1659-1663, but we have no idea of their relationship to the midwife.<sup>334</sup> In April, 1665, Mistress Cockson of Sheire Lane made a very generous contribution of twenty shillings toward repairs of the parish church.<sup>335</sup> There is a good possibility that the Cockson family succumbed to the plague since in August 1665 Thomas Cockson's name appeared on a list of those receiving a small sum of money as relief for the plague.<sup>336</sup> This ominous sign foreshadowed the disappearance of the Cocksons from parish records.

Elizabeth Garland was a widow who married upholsterer (and widower) Richard Wharton in 1654.<sup>337</sup> Her first husband had been William Garland, citizen and cutler of London.<sup>338</sup> In 1661 she was licensed in midwifery with the acknowledgment that she had followed the practice of midwifery for '16 years upwards', signed by her minister



Matthew Haviland, who was to be deprived of his charge the following year for nonconformity.<sup>339</sup> Midwife Wharton attended her parish's visitations in 1664 and 1680.<sup>340</sup> Elizabeth Wharton's testimonial contained the names of seven men in addition to the customary six clients, who had been delivered of a total of twenty-two children by the well-experienced midwife Wharton. Several of the men and clients had French names raising the possibility that the midwife had ties with the Huguenot community in London.<sup>341</sup> As a young man Wharton paid a moderated rent of thirteen pounds, six shillings and eight pence which placed him in the third quartile of rent for the parish.<sup>342</sup> Richard Wharton of Fleet Street was assessed moderate rates in the years 1661-64 for a variety of subsidies.<sup>343</sup> Mrs. Wharton was paid four shillings by the parish in August 1663 but we do not know if she was the intrepid midwife whom the parish had paid to deliver the twins born in the street two years earlier.<sup>344</sup> Mr. Wharton's burial charges in 1669 were twenty-five shillings and twelve pence which included burial in the church and were indicative of his relative prominence.<sup>345</sup> Elizabeth Wharton received the same burial, befitting a person of standing in her community, in September, 1681.<sup>346</sup> Her will (signed in her own hand) which was probated on October 15, 1681, left her entire estate to her son by her first husband.<sup>347</sup>

Mary Seignior or Senior was a widow at the time of her licensing in August 1663.<sup>348</sup> The following year she exhibited her licence at visitation.<sup>349</sup> Vicar Joseph Thompson noted that she had been an inhabitant of St. Dunstan in the West for thirty years. Two of her clients were married to tailors, the same craft as the midwife's deceased husband. In 1638 George Senior (who we believe had been the midwife's husband) was paying an extremely high moderated rent of thirty-five pounds per annum, an amount which was in the top 5% of rents for the parish.<sup>350</sup> In 1637 John Senior, who was probably the midwife's father-in-law, held the responsible position of parish churchwarden.<sup>351</sup> Mary and George Senior had at least four children: Simon, born in 1650, Randolph in 1651, Henry in 1654 and Elizabeth in 1655.<sup>352</sup> At least three infants were buried between the years of 1637 and 1647 who may have been Mary Senior's children.<sup>353</sup> George Senior was chosen as a collector for the poor in 1656.<sup>354</sup> George Senior was living in Fleet Sreet and paying a rent of of twenty-four pounds a year in the years 1656-1661, but by 1663 'widow Seignior' was paying the same high rent for the Fleet Street house which was owned by the parish.<sup>355</sup> The house on Fleet Street was damaged by the Fire and decisions about its fate were referred to specially appointed judges. Discussions in the vestry about Mrs. Senior's 'problem' regarding the house

continued well into 1667.<sup>356</sup> In the meantime, by December 1666, she was living in a spacious house with eight hearths in Two Crane Court.<sup>357</sup> Mary Senior was buried in the church in 1669. Funeral arrangements included the use of the family's own pall and a substantial burial fee.<sup>358</sup> The George Seignour, barber- surgeon, who was living in Fleet Street with one child and two servants in 1660 was no doubt a relative.<sup>359</sup> Widow Senior who was living in Crown Court in 1689 was possibly a daughter-in-law of the midwife.<sup>360</sup>

Mary Benson was licensed on August 24, 1663 and showed her license to church authorities in 1664 at the visitation.<sup>361</sup> We believe that Mary Benson was the wife of parish clerk John Benson who was a citizen and stationer. The parish records contain many references to the popular parish clerk who was paid ten pounds a year for his work as a scribe and received extra sums such as the two pounds, ten shillings in 1646 'for his paines taken in the busines of Sion Colledge'; he also received six pounds in 1649 to apprentice a poor parish child in his own trade.<sup>362</sup> Benson, a shop owner, borrowed twenty pounds from the parish, possibly to invest in his business. He repaid it (interest free) within a year, by July 1655.<sup>363</sup> The family of the enterprising stationer and clerk enjoyed a comfortable standard of living in their home on Fleet Street in which they employed two servants.<sup>364</sup> We know

relatively little about the midwife herself. Two Benson children were buried in 1638 and 1641 but son John, born in 1629, survived.<sup>365</sup> The wife of Bensons' son John bore them two grandchildren, Roland and John.<sup>366</sup> There is the possibility that Daniel Benson, who rented land which was owned by the parish, was also a son.<sup>367</sup> John Benson died in 1666. The widow Benson who broke her leg in 1696 and was afterward lame, was probably the midwife's daughter-in-law but there is the possibility that it was the midwife, now very aged. The parish paid the invalid two shillings a week for seventeen weeks, paid her rent of three pounds per annum and gave her several small sums of money.<sup>368</sup>

The name of Mrs. Hobby appeared on the list of midwives for the parish visitation of 1664. The scribe has noted that she was licensed in December 1661 but no testimonial certificates have survived and her name has not been entered in the bishop's registers. There is the strong likelihood that widowhood and remarriage had intervened in the years between licensing and visitation and that she was licensed under her first husband's surname. Without a first name and a husband's name it has proved impossible to unearth any details of her life and career.

Abigail Symonds was licensed in 1667 after more than three years experience, as a midwife according to the testimonial provided by curate John Duckett.<sup>369</sup> Two

churchwardens and four women also supported her application for licensing. The records of St. Dunstan in the West contain references to a great many Symonds so that we have been unable to establish with certainty the midwife's history. It is possible that she was the mother of Mary (born in 1654) and Abraham Symonds, an infant who was buried in 1662 and whose father Abraham died in 1665.<sup>370</sup> Abigail, whose testimonial certificate failed to mention a spouse may, however, have been the widow of Robert, Frances or William Symonds.<sup>371</sup>

In 1669 Joseph Thompson, the vicar of St. Dunstan in the West, signed the usual statement about conformity and loyalty for Mary Duckett and also added the information that Mrs. Duckett had served as a deputy for Mrs. Hatton, a licensed midwife, for two and a half years.<sup>372</sup> Vicar Thompson mentioned Mary Duckett's 'apprenticeship', but not the fact that Mrs. Duckett's husband who held the degree of Bachelor of Arts, was the parish curate.<sup>373</sup> In fact John Duckett's certificate or testimonial in support of that position had been signed by Thompson himself three years earlier. Two of the testifying clients were from St. Giles in the Fields, one was from St. Bridgid and one, the wife of gentleman Richard Pevey, was from St. Dunstan in the West. Common councilman Robert Rodway as well as two churchwardens gave evidence about midwife Duckett's suitability for

licensing. Shortly after Duckett's appointment, the family sustained losses in the Great Fire and received almost three pounds from the various funds allotted to the parish for relief of fire victims.<sup>374</sup> Early in 1667 a son, William, was born to John and Mary Duckett; John junior was probably born before Duckett's appointment as parish curate. John Duckett received the customary modest wage of a parish clergyman and between 1666 and 1670 he augmented his income by giving commemorative sermons for which he was paid ten shillings a sermon.<sup>375</sup> There was also the occasional christening or burial which paid one shilling.<sup>376</sup> John Duckett was buried November 25, 1670, in the chancel of the church as befitted his position as a member of the parish clergy; there was no charge for his burial.<sup>377</sup> Mary Duckett's difficulties in maintaining herself and her children were alleviated from time to time by the parish. Several payments of five shillings were possibly for services as midwife to poor parish women in 1675; at least two payments were made at the request of curate Franklin, John Duckett's successor.<sup>378</sup> Other small sums of money were given to her in 1675 when she was ill. In 1677 she was paid ten shillings 'by order of the vestry'.<sup>379</sup> Mary Duckett had joined the ranks of poor clergymen's widows by 1683 and her petition to the parish vestry netted her twenty shillings. In 1685 another petition resulted in her

receiving bread on Wednesdays and Fridays and being presented as a candidate for Sion College, a home for the invalided poor.<sup>380</sup> The burial of Mary Duckett, pensioner, was recorded on April 13, 1687.<sup>381</sup> The name of John Duckett, their son, appeared on a parish tax roll as a contributor to the Orphans' Tax in 1695.<sup>382</sup>

Chancellor Thomas Exton issued a midwifery license to Anne Bradford, wife of William, in October 1672. Her certificate was signed by Vicar Thompson, curate John Franklin and two churchwardens. There is no evidence that women gave sworn evidence on Mrs. Bradford's behalf.<sup>383</sup> In 1669 William Bradford and his wife were living in Fewter Lane and their son William was born that year.<sup>384</sup> By 1679 the Bradfords and their five children, William's mother, two apprentices and a servant all lived in a large house on Nevill's alley with six hearths.<sup>385</sup> In this year Bradford paid one of the highest parish assessments for the French war.<sup>386</sup> An earlier hearth assessment showed the Bradford home with nine hearths (probably the house in Fewter Lane).<sup>387</sup> William's occupation is unknown, but two apprentices suggest an independent master in either a retail trade or a skilled production craft. At least one Bradford child died in infancy and was buried in the church for a total cost of seven shillings, a sum which was high for an infant's burial and indicative of a family of means.<sup>388</sup>

William Bradford paid the substantial fine of twelve pounds in 1686 to be excused from serving as parish constable and questman.<sup>389</sup> By 1695 the Bradfords were living in St. Sepulchre parish with two servants; only one daughter, Rebecca, was still at home.<sup>390</sup>

In 1674 Mary Benet of St. Dunstan in the West was licensed by the Archbishop of Canterbury: she was married to a man who worked at the skilled craft of limning or illuminating manuscripts with gold.<sup>391</sup> In addition to the endorsements of vicar Thompson, curate Franklin and the two churchwardens, the statement of Hugh Chamberlain 'Med. Regius' was added stating that 'upon examination' he found her qualified to practise midwifery. Two of Mrs. Benet's clients were from St. Clement Danes: one was married to Marmaduke Bowyer, gentleman. Another of Sara's clients, Mary Acton, was the wife of schoolmaster Thomas Acton. Midwife Benet was licensed by the jurisdiction of Canterbury, received support from a medical doctor and had at least two clients of standing in the community, all of which point to a status of 'middling' rank, possibly higher.<sup>392</sup>

Parish visitation records for 1680 list the name of Farewell among the midwives. Midwife Farewell may have been Elizabeth Farewell, the wife of Henry Farewell and the mother of two children, who lived on Red Lyon Court and was



buried in the chancel of the parish church in 1689.<sup>393</sup> The other possibility was that the midwife was Mary, the wife of John Farewell, gentleman and attorney of Fleet Street, who was living with her husband and son John in 1695.<sup>394</sup> Lady Katherine Farewell (possibly the mother of Henry and John) was buried in the church vault in 1692. All indications point to the social prominence of the Farewell family.

Mrs. Carter also appeared at the visitation of 1680 where she was identified as a midwife of the parish. With no indication of a Christian name for the midwife or her husband, it is impossible to cull specific details of her life from among the myriad of references to 'Carters' of the parish. At least three Carters, John, Ralph and William, any one of whom may have been married to the midwife, were prominent in parish affairs and with a fourth, George, a grocer, have left indications of personal wealth.<sup>395</sup> The midwife may also have been the wealthy widow who lived on Red Lyon Court with her maid servant in the 1660s and 70s.<sup>396</sup>

Jane Cooke, wife of gentleman John Cooke of Bell Yard, was sworn as a midwife before George Oxinden in November, 1684.<sup>397</sup> Her statement of character was signed by vicar John Grant, churchwarden John Penn and two other men. Her certificate also included the statement from Hugh Chamberlen that she 'hath been long known by me' and that

she had 'for some years' applied herself to the practice of midwifery'. Chamberleñ does not say, as he did with the other midwives for whom he vouched, that he had 'examined her'; it is likely that his acquaintanceship with Mrs. Cook was a social, rather than a professional one. Below Chamberlain's remarks, there appears the statement of Edward Cooke, notary public, who may have been the midwife's brother-in-law.<sup>398</sup> The names of both John and Edward Cooke appeared on the parish assessment for monthly charges in 1673.<sup>399</sup> Two women, the wife of a tallow chandler and the wife of a gentleman, were also sworn by surrogate Oxinden.<sup>400</sup>

Alice Burrell was the wife of citizen and haberdasher William Burrell. Burrell was living on Nevill's Alley in 1666 in a substantial house with eight hearths but had moved to Hercules Pillars by 1679.<sup>401</sup> Bur(w)ell was given the courtesy title of 'esq.' on the tax roll of 1689 which was unusual; his assessment for the militia was higher than average.<sup>402</sup> Mistress Burrell was licensed by the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1686.<sup>403</sup> The parish curate and one churchwarden signed her testimonial. Two of her clients signed their own names: Mary Preston, wife of a goldsmith and Mary Watts, wife of a silkman, both of St. Dunstan in the West. Widowed by 1699, Alice Burrell

was living on Water Street where her assessment reflected her status as a widow with modest economic resources.<sup>404</sup>

In November 1690, the Vicar General of London issued a license for the practice of midwifery to Sarah Mainwaring, wife of Thomas of St. Dunstan in the West.<sup>405</sup> Vicar John Grant and churchwardens Philloppe and Cowdery noted Mrs. Mainwaring's good reputation among her neighbours. The three women who gave sworn testimony were from St. Bridgid and St. Vedast Foster Lane. In 1670 a Dr. Mainwaring was living in a substantial house in the parish but we do not know his relationship to the midwife. Several Mainwaring children died in in the decade after 1684 but the only one which can be linked to the midwife was Edmund Mainwaring, who died in 1689.<sup>406</sup> In 1689 Thomas Mainwaring and his family were living on Falcon Court where his assessment as a landlord at ten shillings, six pence was extremely high.<sup>407</sup> Midwife Mainwaring was widowed by 1695 and living in her own home, which she shared with Edward Hatton and his wife Sara (possibly the midwife's daughter) and a servant.<sup>408</sup>

Ellinor Wallis was sworn before surrogate Henry Newton in December 1693 and licensed as a midwife.<sup>409</sup> Four women testified on her behalf: two from St. Clement Danes and two from her own parish. Midwife Wallis was married to Solomon Wallis. The name 'Mr. Wallis' appeared on a tax reassessment for 1699 which noted that he was assessed for

the rectory of St. Dunstan's. Wallis was probably a member of the clergy which may explain why Mrs. Wallis' credentials do not contain the usual statement by clergy or parish officers.<sup>410</sup>

Curate Adam Angus made a statement regarding widow Joan Beadnell's conformity and suitability as a midwife in October 1694. Beadnell and three women were sworn before the Chancellor, Sir George Bramston. One client was the wife of a gentleman from Hertfordshire and one, Mary Beadnell, was a relative from St. Martin in the Fields.<sup>411</sup> We have been unable to recover any further information on this woman.

In summary, one woman listed in visitation records remained untraceable; four others about whom we have few details were probably in modest circumstances or better. Three midwives were at the median or slightly above in their socio-economic circumstances within their prosperous parish. Two midwives experienced financial difficulties; one apparently as a result of a spouse's illness and the other as the widow of an educated but poorly paid professional. The remaining fourteen women were all married to men who were prosperous members of their parish community. They were gentlemen, skilled trades or craftsmen and professionals with every evidence of substantial income and in some cases, real wealth.

### Overview

Of the 76 midwives we have uncovered in the twelve parishes, the occupations of 33 (43%) spouses are known.<sup>412</sup> At least 8 (11%) of the women were married to gentlemen or individuals in the professions; 5 (7%) were married to officials; 10 (13%) were married to dealers (citizens and haberdashers, grocers or tailors) 8 (11%) to skilled craftsmen or tradesmen including a goldsmith, diamond cutter and a limner, and two (3%) to workers in semi-skilled trades (carpenter and paver).<sup>413</sup>

**Table 11 : Identified Spousal Occupations for  
Midwives of Twelve Parishes**

Professional/Gentry: attorney (gentleman), barber (surgeon?), medical doctor (2), clerics (2), gentleman (2).

Officials: beadle, clerk(2), clerk and stationer, tax collector

Dealer: citizen and grocer, citizen and haberdasher (4), haberdasher, merchant tailor (2), tailor (2).

Skilled trades: cooper, diamond cutter, goldsmith, gunsmith, limner, citizen and painter stainer, printer, upholsterer.

Semi- skilled trades: carpenter, paver.

The occupations of 20 (26%) of the spouses who were alive at the time the midwives were licensed are unknown, these must be accepted as minimum figures. In addition, the occupation of only one spouse of the group of nine women who were designated as widows is known. Similarly of the fifteen women not specifically designated as widows but whose husbands' names are not given, we know the occupation of only one spouse.<sup>414</sup> If we were to assume for the moment that the sources which provided evidence on spousal occupations are not biased in favour of particular occupations, then a calculation based solely upon the known occupations of midwives' spouses produces the following (admittedly on a relatively small number of cases): 24% professional and/or gentlemen; 15% officials; 30% dealers; 24% skilled trades; 6% semi-skilled. We do not need to assert the accuracy of these specific figures in order to demonstrate that all available evidence indicates London midwives were drawn from the well-to-do and middling levels of London society. Poverty hit them, if at all, only at the end of the life cycle, and then only infrequently. They were, time and again, individuals of influence and respect within the parishes.

More research could be done, but it appears that on the evidence of this sample, Donnison's suggestion that 'most "professed" midwives came from the skilled artisan class'

with a modest representation from the middle ranks of society including 'gentlewomen', should well be revised to show that the majority of licensed London midwives were likely women who were married to men of the professional (including gentry), official or entrepreneurial segments of society, including merchants.<sup>415</sup> David Harley has cited examples of midwives who were married to affluent and educated men in the provinces, and indicated that a preliminary survey in Lancashire and Cheshire has revealed that 'many [midwives] were the wives of prosperous merchants and yeomen'.<sup>416</sup> His findings are clearly supported by this study of twelve London parishes. Four of the seventy-six women in this study were married to churchwardens, the most influential and prestigious position in the parish, while two others were married to men who held the respected and demanding post of parish clerk.

In seven of the twelve parishes under investigation, we have found evidence in tithe, tax lists and /or wills which give a firm indication of the economic viability or, in some cases, affluence of all of the midwives and their families of those parishes (for a total of sixty-one midwives). In the remaining five parishes, there were eleven midwives for whom we have evidence in testimonials and other ecclesiastical and parish records which places them among the financially secure inhabitants of their parishes.<sup>417</sup>

Indeed, among these eleven midwives, there are strong indications of at least upper middle class links by way of their husband's occupations and the status of individuals giving testimonial evidence. Of the four remaining midwives, three names appeared on visitation records and we have uncovered no further information about them. There is the possibility that these three women were unlicensed midwives, which, as David Harley has argued, does not reflect upon the quality of their practice.<sup>418</sup> It does, however, preclude the type of information provided by testimonial certificates and bishop's registers. The fourth woman was identified as a midwife in parish burial records from early in the century but the details of her life belong to sixteenth-century records outside of the confines of this study. Since, however, it was highly unusual for midwives to be identified in parish registers by their occupation, midwife Clark of the wealthy parish of St. Mary Aldermanbury was in all likelihood a respected member of her profession and valued member of her parish community. Seventy-two of the midwives, or approximately 95%, have left evidence, then, about their socio-economic positions in their parishes. They were women of good standing in their communities and most were wives and widows who enjoyed at least a comfortable standard of living and, in some cases, one of affluence and prestige as the wives or widows of



prosperous London citizens. In many cases their children and grandchildren have left their mark as substantial London inhabitants.

Although one or two women received occasional financial assistance from the parish toward the end of their lives and usually in connection with deteriorating health, only one woman, the widow of a clergyman, became a permanent charge of the parish. The midwives of London bore little resemblance to the stereotypical 'poverty-stricken' midwife of the seventeenth century.

## Notes

1. Ronald W. Herlan, 'Social Articulation and the Configuration of Parochial Poverty in London on the Eve of the Restoration' Guildhall Studies in London History 11 (1976):43-53.
2. Emrys Jones, 'London in the Early Seventeenth Century: An Ecological Approach' London Journal 6 (Winter 1980):126.
3. M.J. Power, 'The Social Topography of Restoration London' in Beier and Finlay London p.221.
4. Tai Liu p.31.
5. Tai Liu p.31.
6. P.E. Jones and A.V. Judges, 'London Population in the Late Seventeenth Century', Economic History Review 6 (1935-6):58. The term 'substantial householders' is defined as heads of households with a personal estate worth not less than 600 pounds or real estate worth not less than fifty pounds per year (as well it includes the titled, certain members of the hierarchy of the Church, doctors of divinity, law and medicine, a gentleman and a few other special categories). In other words, it encompasses 'very much the upper part of society in respect of income and status'. See D.V. Glass's introduction to his edition of London Inhabitants Within the Walls (London: London Record Society, 1966) p.xx.
7. G.L. MS. 823/1 unfol.
8. G.L.R.O. DL/C 340 fol.44 and DL/C 341 (fol.no. illeg.)
9. P.R.O. E 179/ 147/491 (19 James 1, 1621-23).
10. G.L. MS. 823/1 unfol. Approximately 100 parish inhabitants paid the same assessment as Palmer; 49 paid a higher assessment and one person paid less. Because of the imprecise nature of the sources which follow in this chapter and the fact that some assessments were made on the basis of ward instead of parish divisions, the term 'average' will be used occasionally with the understanding that it implies that

a particular assessment was shared by at least fifty percent of the persons named on the assessment roll.

11. Ibid., November 1655.

12. C.L.R.O. tithe rate assessments 1671, Assess. Box 45.17 and 1675, Box 45.11.

13. G.L.R.O. DL/C 343 fol. 139v; G.L. MS. 9537/15 fol. 65.

14. G.L. MS. 823/1.

15. L.P. MS. 272 fol.37. In 1638, records were made of the tithe rents in ninety-seven London parishes. The figures given were 'moderated' rents or three quarters of the actual rent values. Halsey was paying 26 pounds rent annually. T.C. Dale has compiled the information contained in these records at Lambeth Palace Library in MS. 272 under the title The Inhabitants of London in 1638 (London:Society of Genealogists, 1931). I have personally checked these manuscripts but since I have also made use of Dale, I will cite his work where appropriate. Halsey's name is found on page 15 of Dale. In Halsey's parish 77 recorded rents were lower, twenty were higher and one was the same as Halsey's, placing him in the upper quartile of rents.

16. M.Fitch, Index to Testamentary Records in Archdeaconry Courts of London 2 (London: British Record Society, 1985) p.169. Matthew was also a resident of Allhallows.

17. Parish Registers of St. Andrew Holborn and St. Anne Blackfriars 1560-1837, 1558-1837. microfilm no. 96468 Toronto Public Library.

18. P.R.O. prob.11/312/163 and 322/114.

19. W.J. Harvey, ed. List of the Principal Inhabitants of the City of London 1640 (Isle of Wight: Pinhorns, 1886) p.9. Halsey is shown under the parish of St. Gregory by St. Paul.

20. G.L. MS. 9172/90. The prosperous brewer also owned property in St.Katherine Coleman.

21. G.L. MS. 9537/15 fol. 65.

22. G.L. MS. 823/1.

23. C.L.R.O. Box.45.17.

24. G.L. MS. 10,116/1. Newman is also found in the visitation record for 1664: G.L. MS. 9537/17 fol.77v.
25. P.R.O. E 179 147/491 1621-23, and G.L. MS. 823/1. Parochial comparisons which would be more precise are not possible in the case of the subsidy of 1623-25 which was done on the basis of wards.
26. G.L. MS. 823/2 fol. 74.
27. C.L.R.O. Box 25.9/22.
28. See M.J. Power, 'The Social Topography of Restoration London' in Beier and Finlay London 1500-1700 p.210. He has also commented on the difficulty of attempting to make a correlation between house size and personal wealth. For other comment on the hearth tax see S. Dowell, A History of Taxation and Taxes in England vol.2 (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1965 reprint of 1884 ed.) p.38.
29. 'Members of the City Companies in 1641' Society of Genealogists, typescript, 1935, p.121.
30. G.L. MS. 823/2 fols. 110, 138 and 149.
31. Tai Liu p.31.
32. Tai Liu p.41.
33. Jones and Judges p.59.
34. C.L.R.O. DL/C 340 fol.117v. A Henry Coxe who was in receipt of a small pension between the years of 1615 and 1621 was probably the midwife's father-in-law since the payment of 1s.4d. was the minimum amount for single pensioners.G.L. MS. 2089/1 unfol.
35. G.L. MS. 2089/1 unfol.
36. G.L. MS. 9537/14 fol 36.
37. L.P. MS. 272 fol. 58v. Also shown were John Cox (fol.58) and Mr. Cox (fol. 59) who may have been sons. John Patten has suggested that in 1664 rent of less than one pound per annum was one of the criteria for being a member of the 'exempt poor' who were excused from paying the Hearth tax. See John Patten, 'The Hearth Taxes, 1662-1689' Local Population Studies 7 (1971):18.

38. G.L. MSS. 2089/1 unfol., 9050/7 fol. 172.
39. P.R.O. E179 252/15, records of Bread St, Cripplegate and Dowgate wards for 1645.
40. G.L.R.O. DL/C 340 fol 175v.
41. Barbara Todd has commented on the difficulty of tracing English widows in the early modern period. See Barbara Todd, 'The Remarrying Widow' in Mary Prior, p.57.
42. G.L.R.O. DL/C 341 (fol.no. illeg.)
43. G.L. MS. 2089/1 unfol.
44. Principal Inhabitants p.6.
45. L.P. MS. 272 fol. 56v. A Mr. Cook appears on the same assessment roll for St. Andrew Wardrobe with an assessment of £1.6.8 and 14 pounds (moderated rent) which is also well above average. He was probably the midwife's son Matthew.
46. G.L. 10,116/2, G.L.R.O. DL/C 344 fol. 178v.
47. L.P. MS. 272 fol.56.
48. G.L. MS. 9801 box 1.
49. G.L. MSS. 10,116/3, 9537 fol.62.
50. G.L. MS.9801 box 1.
51. G.L. MS. 10,116/10.
52. G.L. MS. 25,533/1 fols. 16v,91v.
53. G.L. MS. 9537/22 unfol.
54. G.L. M.S. 10,116/7.
55. G.L. MS. 9537/22 unfol. St. Bridgid is close to St. Andrew Wardrobe.
56. Tai Liu p.41.
57. Tai Liu p.213.
58. Jones and Judges p. 59.

59. Brian Burch, 'The Parish of St. Anne's Blackfriars, London, to 1665' The Guildhall Miscellany 3 (October 1969):21.
60. G.L. MSS. 9537/14 fol.36v, 9537/15 fol. 57. Mrs. Adams attended the visitation of 1636 but was absent in 1637 possibly due to the demands of her profession.
61. G.L. MS. 9171/27 fol. 424v. In 1661, Anne Adams (also married to a Thomas) of St. Martin in the Fields was licensed in midwifery but there is no apparent connection between the two Annes.
62. G.L. MSS. 9537/14 fol.36v, 9537/15 fol.57.
63. The registers of St. Anne Blackfriars, Oct. 24, 1624, Toronto Public Library, microfilm no. 96468.
64. G.L. MSS. 9537/14 fol.36v, 9537/15 fol.57.
65. P.R.O. prob. 11/ 217/102 January 31,1651. By this period the barbers and surgeons had been amalgamated as barber-surgeons.
66. P.R.O. prob. 11/344/19 January 22 1673.
67. G.L. MSS. 9537/14 fol. 36v, 9537/15 fol.57. Midwife Tanfield may have been prevented from attending because of her occupation.
68. G.L. MS. 9168/18/195. Tanfield appointed two overseers to help his wife administer his estate described merely as 'goods, chattels, debts, plate, monies and estate'. See also Chapter 4 above, p. 216.
69. G.L. MS. 10,116/7.
70. The three parishes are St. Anne Blackfriars, St. Andrew Wardrobe and St. Gregory by St. Paul's.
71. G.L. MS.9801/2.
72. G.L. MS. 25,625/4 fols. 93 and 109v. These documents give the Alkin's parish as St.Gregory by St. Paul's.
73. C.L.R.O. Assess. box 33.17 unfol.

74. G.L. MS. 1337/1. Sixteen shillings is a fair fee for the period. The parish had probably been unwilling to pay for the infant's delivery (which was usually only the first stage of assuming responsibility for the child's long-term support) and the Lord Mayor had intervened.
75. C.L.R.O. Marriage Act 1695 15.7.
76. C.L.R.O. Assess. box 25.9/27 fol.35. According to Power, this would be classified as a large house.
77. The registers of St. Anne Blackfriars July 18, 1631, Toronto Public Library, microfilm no. 96468.
78. G.L. MS. 10,116/11.
79. G.L. MS. 10,116/12.
80. It is interesting to note that five years earlier, Stoning had made no such reference to the receiving of sacrament when he testified on Carpin's behalf. The testimonial reflects the temper of the times.
81. G.L. MS. 7770.
82. C.L.R.O. Assess. 17.92 (Fryer St.). For a full discussion of these sources see D.V. Glass (ed.), 'Introduction' London Inhabitants pp. ix-xxxviii.
83. G.L. MSS. 10,116/12, 9532/1 fol.89.
84. G.L. MS. 10,116/10 and 11.
85. G.L. MSS. 9532/1 (parish rate assessment), 9801 Box 1 (tithe assessment).
86. G.L. MS. 7769 unfol.
87. Ibid. (1694).
88. C.L.R.O. Marriage Tax 1695 17.17.
89. P.R.O. prob. 11/456/108.
90. John Stowe, Survey of London C.L. Kingsford, ed., (London: J.M. Dent, 1960 reprint of 1908 edition) p. 162.

91. Tai Liu p.29. Ronald W. Herlan 'Poor Relief in London During the English Revolution' Journal of British Studies 18 (1979):41 n.27.
92. Herlan 'Poor Relief' p.38.
93. Jones and Judges p.59.
94. G.L.R.O. DL/C/342 fol.131; G.L. MS. 9537/15 fols. 61,62.
95. G.L. MS. 9537/22 unfol.
96. The rate of 4 shillings, 4 pence seems to have been the lowest basic rate: of 79 names, 53 were assessed at a higher rate, and 25 at the same rate. One person was assessed a few pence less than 4 shillings, 4 pence, but that may have been an error.
97. Edwin Freshfield ed., The Vestry Minute Books of St. Bartholomew Exchange in the City of London 1567-1676 (London: Rixon and Arnold, 1980) pp.49, 65.
98. Ibid. p.110.
99. For an antiquarian and somewhat romanticized study of the parish clerk based, for the most part, on literary sources see Peter H. Ditchfield, The Parish Clerk (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1907).
100. Freshfield pp. 96,102 (a petition for arrears in payment for his work totalling more than three pounds in 1665),107,115,127.
101. Ibid. pp.94,98,112. By 1665, Lewis was excused from paying the poor relief rate which would seem reasonable (and less hypocritical) in view of all the perks he was receiving from largesse designated for parish poor.
102. Freshfield p.117.
103. Of 37 assessments, 25 were lower, 8 were higher, and four were the same.
104. Ibid. p.119.
105. G.L. MS. 4383/1 fol 601. The fact that Mrs. Lewis employed a maid is an indication of her social rank.



106. According to David Cressy, in the 1670s only 22% of women in London were able to sign their names. (Cressy p. 147).
107. G.L. MS. 10,116/10 and 5.
108. G.L. MS. 4383/1 fol.3 under 1681. The widow of Mr. Jenkins, the previous parish clerk, continued to receive bread and cheese for some time after her husband's death and also submitted a petition to the parish for relief. (Freshfield, pp.96,98).
109. G.L. MS. 4383/1 assessment for 1689-90.
110. Stowe p.154; Tai Liu p. 38.
111. Herlan 'Social Articulation' p.47.
112. Jones and Judges p.59.
113. G.L.R.O. DL/C 341 fol. 267.
114. G.L. MS. 9537/15 fol.65v.
115. G.L.R.O. DL/C 342 fol.52 (blurred, may be 54).
116. Aveling, The Chamberlens, and the Midwifery Forceps. pp.40-8.
117. Bruce Bannerman, ed., The Registers of St. Mary Aldermanbury Part II, vol. 62 (London: Harleian Society Publications, 1932) pp. 92-96.
118. G.L. MS. 4241/1 fol. 341.
119. Dale p.55.
120. The source of this and most of the ensuing information about her is Elizabeth Whippe's original will, probated February 17, 1646: G.L.MS. 9052/13.
121. Principal Inhabitants p.3. St. Ethelburga was in Bishopsgate ward.
122. It is not clear what the purpose of these childbed sheets was. They may have been used, as William Sermon suggests, as a form of restraint during the delivery, (see above, p. 125) or if used during the post partum period, they could be regarded as part of the 'ceremony' of lying in as

suggested by Adrian Wilson. Wilson in Fildes 'Ceremony' passim.

123. G.L. MS.10,116/8.

124. We believe this is so because of bequests to three of Sideys' servants.

125. G.L.MS. 10,116/3. Sara Sydey was incorrectly catalogued in the Guildhall list of midwives licensed in 1663 as 'Hanna Hyde'.

126. G.L. 9537/18 fol.65v.

127. G.L. MS. 4241/1 see insert between fol. 423-424 and fol. 425-440, passim. The office of churchwarden was the most important parish office. For a description of his responsibilities see: Alice McCampbell, 'The London Parish and the London Precinct 1640-1660' Guildhall Studies in London History 2 (October 1976):115. For a discussion of churchwardens' accounts see Tate pp.83-107.

128. C.L.R.O. 25.9/34 and 25.9/5.

129. C.L.R.O. Assess. boxes 66.3 and 71.13.

130. P.R.O. prob. 11/222/318: will of Waldegrave Sydey probated December 19,1655.

131. P.R.O. prob. 11/343/136: will of Sara Sidey probated May 2, 1673.

132. L.P. VX 1A/11 no. 25. Since Elizabeth Whipp's will left legacies to the three Jones orphans with the provision that John Jones live with Dr. Shep(he)ard, who was to administer his funds, and James and Elizabeth were to live with Waldegrave Sydey, who was to receive and administer their legacies, Sara would have been, in effect, Elizabeth's mother. This would have strengthened even more the 'matriarchal' aspect linking the three generations. There is also the possibility that Sara Sydey's daughter-in-law, who was also named Sara Sydey, was a midwife since her name appeared as a deponent on the testimonial of Elizabeth Forshaw in 1676, with the designation 'widow'. We know she had been widowed for nine years and would therefore not likely be supporting Forshaw's application as a client.

133. P.R.O. prob. 11/ 323/11: will of Waldegrave Sydey Jr.

134. The Registers of the Church of St. Ethelburga The Virgin within Bishopsgate (London: Press of the Church of Saint Ethelburga Bishopsgate, 1915) unfol.
135. G.L. MS. 9537/18 fol. 65v.
136. G.L. MS. 4241/1. Of 38 donors, 14 gave a greater amount than Benskin.
137. Of 110 rents, 39 were higher, 4 the same. See above, p. 272 for comparison with Whipp and Sydey.
138. C.L.R.O. Assess. box 66.3.
139. C.L.R.O. MS. 25.9/34 1672?. There is some uncertainty about the date of this tax, but the sources at the C.L.R.O. state that it was in all likelihood levied in 1672.
140. C.L.R.O. 25.9/34 1672?
141. G.L. MS. 10,116/8; G.L.R.O. DL/C 345 fol. 104.
142. C.L.R.O. MS. 25.9/34.
143. G.L. MS. 4241/2 fols. 42-70, passim. The parish records are fairly consistent in their treatment of William Clarke but widows Grant and Ward, two parish midwives, paid varying amounts. Widow Ward paid a shilling more than Clarke for two years and the same amount as Clarke for two years. Widow Grant paid twice as much as Clarke in 1687, the same as Clarke for two years and no assessment for two years. The civic records, however, appear to confuse William and John Clarke and one assessment shows a William Clarke on Clarke's Ally and one on Helmet Court. The important point is that all of the William Clarkes are self sufficient individuals who are not on parish welfare, and in some cases are actually wealthy. See C.L.R.O. Asses. box 20 Ms. 6 and box 11 MS.4.
144. The Registers of the Church of St. Ethelburga: burials for 1705 and 1710 (unfol.).
145. P.R.O. prob. 11/340/133: will of William Clarke, merchant, of St. Ethelburga, probated June 6, 1672.
146. G.L. MS. 10,116/9; G.L.R.O DL/C 345 fol. 161; G.L. MS. 9537/22 unfol.
147. C.L.R.O. 25.9/34.

148. C.L.R.O. assess.box 20 MS.6.
149. Marc Fitch, ed., Index to Testamentary Records in the Archdeaconry Court of London Vol.2 (London: British Record Society, 1985): 146.
150. G.L. MS. 4241/1 p.569. Of 105 contributors, 39 paid less, 20 the same, and 46 paid higher amounts.
151. G.L. MS. 4241/2 pp. 40,49,56,81 and 140, poor rates for 1693-94 and 1696-97, no pagination.
152. Martha Ward married Robert Humphreys in 1684. The Registers of the Church of St. Ethelburga (unfol.).
153. C.L.R.O. assess. box 7.8 fol.11: Poll tax 1690.
154. P.R.O. prob. 11/350/38: will of John Graunt, gent., St. Ethelburga.
155. Principal Inhabitants. p.10, shows Grant in the parish of St. Mary Magdalen in 1640.
156. C.L.R.O. assess. box 11 MS.4: Poll tax 1677/8.
157. G.L. MSS. 4241/1 p.571 and 4241/2 pp.21,42.
158. G.L. MS. 4241/12 pp. 51,57,67,81.
159. C.L.R.O. assess.box 20, MS. 12: Poll tax 1690.
160. The original will of Francis Grant was probated April 6, 1695: G.L. MS. 9152/31, G.L. MS. 4241/2 fol.106.
161. Francis Grant left more than sixty individual legacies which totalled over four hundred pounds in addition to bonds, rents from leases and other assets. Grant calls Feezy her 'cousin' at one point but it appears from her initial remarks that she was her niece, the daughter of the midwife's deceased brother John Sanders.
162. Mrs. Grant left several bonds which she held to Ferrand as well as a lump sum of fifty pounds.
163. G.L. MS. 10,116/12.
164. Stowe p.325.
165. Tai Liu p.40.

166. Tai Liu p.40.
167. The parish gave almost forty pounds; see Herlan 'Social Articulation' p.45.
168. Jones and Judges p.59.
169. Dale, The Inhabitants of London p.67. The rents were shown for 205 inhabitants of the parish: 136 paid a higher rent, 55 paid a lower rent and 14 paid the same rent of 12 pounds annually.
170. G.L. MS. 10,116/2 and 7.
171. G.L. MS. 1337/1 fol.12.
172. G.L. MS. 1337/1. These amounts which were recorded in the churchwardens' accounts and are quite low for midwifery fees at that time.
173. G.L. MS. 9172/71, original will. An inventory was taken of midwife Glover's possessions but, unfortunately, it has not survived. There is a good chance that Glover moved to live with her son sometime between 1662 and 1672.
174. Cressy, p.147.
175. G.L. MS. 1337/1 fol. 38. Of 203 parishioners, 98 paid a higher rate, 105 paid a lower rate and 40 paid the same as Glover.
176. G.L. MS. 25,598.
177. Marjorie Carpenter was the wife of brewer John Carpenter, common counsellor for Portsoken (1680) and Without Aldgate (1689). See J.R. Woodhead, The Rulers of London 1660-1689 (London: London and Middlesex Archeological Society, 1965) p.43.
178. G.L. MS. 13337/1 fol.53v, and see also fols. 30, 43, 45v,49,51,53v,58v (the year he was churchwarden),65v and 68.
179. We note that in 1664 the parish of St. Bartholomew by the Exchange passed a motion that any man nominated to the position of churchwarden must possess personal assets of at least 300 pounds as a security (Freshfield p.98).
180. C.L.R.O. Marriage assessment, 1695 35.27.

181. G.L. MS. 13337/1 fol.71. The records refer merely to 'the midwife'.
182. Tai Liu p.36.
183. Jones and Judges p.59.
184. Power p.216.
185. Jones and Judges p.59. Approximately two thirds of the parishes in their study were less crowded than St. John the Baptist in 1695.
186. G.L. MS. 10,116/9.
187. G.L. MS.25,533/2 fol.6.
188. The parish of St. Olave was the largest of the five parishes on the south bank having an estimated 2004 householders in 1603 (Boulton, p.65). At least three midwives from the area were licensed in the eighteenth century by the Archbishop of Canterbury (L.P.L. MS. VX 1A/11).
189. G.L. MS.5771 extraordinary receipts for 1673-74. See also the will of Nicholas Annett: G.L. MS. 9171/54 probated March, 1704.
190. C.L.R.O. Assess. box 46.12; G.L. MSS. 7619 fol.11, 577/2 fol.26.
191. G.L. MS. 7619 fol. 147.
192. G.L. MS. 577/2 fol.46.
193. As a tribute to Annett's honesty or excessive efficiency, it was noted in the churchwarden's accounts for 1689-90, that more than seven pounds was donated to two charities 'being too much collected in Mr. Annet's year.' G.L. MS. 577/2 fol.76.
194. We are unable to identify Mrs. Vaughan as a midwife and the parish records do not call her a midwife. She may have been assisting in an emergency. She was paid 6 shillings for 'lying the woman and conveniences'.
195. Power p.214.

196. Annett had been predeceased by another son, Richard; his son Nicholas was overseas and his father's will stated that he must return to England if he wished to establish his claim to his father's estate.
197. Tai Liu p.38, Jones and Judges p.59.
198. Stowe pp. 135-6.
199. Tai Liu p.38. One recent study of London topography noted the correlation between alleys and humbler dwellings: see M.J. Power p. 209.
200. Ronald Herlan, 'Poor Relief' p.38.
201. Power p.216.
202. Jones and Judges p.59. More than one quarter of the eighty parishes in their study had a lower proportion of 'substantial' households than St. Katherine Coleman in 1695.
203. Although Nott's will describes him as a 'doctor of medicine' we have not been able to find him among the graduates of Oxford or Cambridge. Other routes to the M.D. degree were possible, although relatively uncommon.
204. G.L. Ms. 1124/1 fols. 22, 31, 40, 56, 58, 64v, 77, (the clerk incorrectly listed the midwife as 'Mr.' instead of 'Mrs.' in 1632).
205. G.L. MS. 9537/15 fol 66v.
206. P.R.O. prob. 11/153: will of John Nott, probated January 7, 1628.
207. Catharina Schrader, the Frisian midwife, also continued to practise midwifery as a well-to-do widow of her second husband. Marland 'Mother and Child' p.7.
208. G.L. MS. 1124/1 fols. 31,41,52,56,64v,94v. The rents on Northumberland Alley indicate that the houses were the most modest in the parish. Dale, p.82.
209. Glover was described as a 'dyall maker' and was paid three pounds and eight shillings for his work. See Sidney Young, The Annals of the Barber Surgeons of London (London: East & Blades, 1890, reprint N.Y. A.M.S., 1978) p.400.
210. G.L. MS. 1124/1 fol.101.

211. Dale p.81.
212. G.L. MS. 1124/1 fols. 54v,82.
213. G.L. M.S. 1125/1 fol.30v.
214. P.R.O. E179/252/32 no.2, hearth tax for 1666.
215. G.L. MS. 9052/11, original will of Nathaniel Glover, probated February 13, 1643.
216. G.L. MS. 10,116/11, G.L.R.O. DL/C/344 fol. 145. It is unfortunate that Jay's documents do not contain any women's names since the fact that she had practised for seven years suggests that she had been apprenticed to a senior midwife who remains unknown.
217. G.L. MS. 9537/17 fol. 79v.
218. G.L. MS. 1145/2 unfol. See also C.L.R.O. assess. box 6.13, 17 and 18 month assessments.
219. G.L. MS. 10,116/2; G.L.R.O. DL/C 344 fol.218v. The bishop's registers have recorded the surname as 'Chambers'. The Chamberlaine who earlier appeared on the tithe assessment rolls of 1638 may have been the midwife's husband. He was paying a moderated rent of five pounds which placed him roughly among the lowest third of rents for the parish.
220. C.L.R.O. 25.9/5 and 25.9/36.
221. G.L. MS. 1145/2 unfol.
222. C.L.R.O. Marriage tax of 1695 42.11.
223. G.L. MS. 1145/2 unfol.
224. G.L. MS. 9537/22.
225. G.L. MS. 9050/14 fol.86.
226. G.L. 9052/17: original will of Mistress Crouch, mother of John Crouch, probated October 17, 1669.
227. G.L. 1145/2; C.L.R.O. assess. box 33.2 fol.61. There is the possibility that the 'widow Crouch' who sought relief was not the midwife but her sister-in-law. There is no way that we can establish her identity with certainty. If our identification is correct, then midwife Crouch clearly



suffered financially in her later life by the fact that her husband's parent had chosen to skip a generation and bequeath her estate to the grandchildren. As a London widow, Crouch had the right to enjoy a minimum of one-third of her deceased husband's estate for the duration of her lifetime, but she had no claim upon the economic resources of adult children.

228. G.L. MS. 9537/22 unfol. She was marked present.

229. G.L. MSS. 10,116/13, 9532/1 fol.74v.

230. P.R.O. E 179/252/32 no.2.

231. G.L. M.S. 1145/2.

232. Stephen Macfarlane, 'Social Policy and the Poor in the Later Seventeenth Century' in Beier and Finlay London 1500-1700 p.256.

233. Stowe p.242.

234. Tai Liu p.36. Because of these two divergent factors, Tai Liu has categorized the parish as 'mixed' in economic composition.

235. Jones and Judges p.60.

236. G.L.MS. 10,116/9,C.L.R.O. DL/C/345 fol. 155. According to Calamy, Kidder was ejected as vicar of Stanground, Hunts. in 1662 but was reinstated after proof of conformity. A.G. Matthews, Calamy Revised (Oxford: Clarendon Press,1988) p.307.

237. G.L. MS. 11394/1 unfol.

238. P.R.O. prob. 11/485/100: the 1705 will of Ralph Sherwood. The marriage tax rolls of 1695 show Sherwood as having an estate of at least the value of 600 pounds. C.L.R.O. Marriage Tax 56.2.

239. The name of physician William Burman, who was probably a relative of Rebecca Sherwood's first husband, appears on a list of chemical physicians in 1665. See Henry Thomas 'The society of Chymical Physitians' in E.Underwood ed., Science, Medicine and History 2 (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1953) p.63.

240. Dictionary of National Biography (London: Oxford University Press, 1964) pp.1310-2.

241. P.R.O. prob. 11/432/99: the will of Dr. Robert Plott, probated June, 1696.

242. In the event that Rebecca Plott should die without surviving heirs, Plott requested in his will that the proceeds from some of his leases be used to establish a chair of Natural History at Oxford with the professor to be called 'Plotts Professor of Naturall History'. Plott wished his stepson John Burman to be the first appointee to the professorship if he were 'capable and willing'.

243. In a recent article on the midwife as witch, David Harley notes the scepticism of Plott with regard to 'the midwife as witch' image as it pertained to England. With a mother-in-law who was a respected midwife, Plott was in a good position to make this assessment. Harley 'Historians as Demonologists' p.10.

244. G.L. MSS. 10,116/12, 9532/1 fol.31. We have found three spellings of the surname (Sowden, Southen and Sowthen) but will use the spelling with which the midwife was identified for the purpose of licensing.

245. G.L.MS. 10,116/10. In 1695 midwife Chesmore and her husband Edmond were living very comfortably in their household in Hand Alley, St. Botolph Bishopsgate, employing two servants. C.L.R.O. Marriage Act MS. 103.

246. G.L. MS. 25,598. The fact that one of her mentors had resided in St. Sepulchre may explain why one of Sowden's clients, Alice Lovell, wife of barber-surgeon William Lovell, lived in St. Sepulchre, some distance from St. Martin Outwich.

247. The Registers of St. Martin Outwich, London vol.32 (London: Harleian Society, 1905) unfol.

248. G.L. MS. 11395 unfol.

249. Tai Liu pp.29,30; Stowe pp.100,262.

250. MacCambell, p.121. Calamy also compiled a biographical list of all clergy ejected at the time of the Restoration. See Matthews Calamy Revised passim.

251. Jones and Judges p.60.

252. The Registers of St. Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury, London vol. 61 (London: Harleian Society, 1931) p.86.

253. G.L.R.O. DL/C 341 (fol. illeg.).
254. Dale, pp.231, 232. Ansell Carter was one of St. Dunstan in the West's most prominent citizens who served as a churchwarden in 1645. G.L. MS. 3016/1 fol.259.
255. The bishop's registers use the spelling Croud but the parish registers show the surname as Crowdson or Crowson. See The Registers of St. Mary Aldermanbury Vol 1 pp. 51-84 passim and burials for 1626.
256. G.L. MS. 10,116/10; G.L.R.O. DL/C/345 fol. 161v.
257. G.L. MS. 9537/22 unfol.
258. Registers of St. Mary Aldermanbury vol.2, p.183; C.L.R.O. assess. box 5.7.
259. C.L.R.O. 57.19 unfol.
260. C.L.R.O. Assess. box 14.21 unfol.
261. P.R.O. prob. 11/ 351/96: will of Thomas Whitehorne, probated July 24, 1676. Registers of St. Mary Aldermanbury vol. 2 p.220.
262. G.L. MS. 9172/89: will of John Whitehorne probated March, 1699. John named his brother Bartholomew as his executor but Bartholomew must have died shortly after John because his will was probated by Bartholomew's widow.
263. G.L. MS. 3556/3 fols. 33v and 47. In 1684, a payment of ten shillings was also made to Mrs. Read, midwife. This was probably Elizabeth Read of St. Botolph Aldgate, licensed in 1672 (L.P. VX 1A/11) who may have been pressed into service when Elizabeth Whitehorne was occupied with another delivery.
264. W.K. Jordan, The Charities of London 1480-1660 (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1960) p.35. Stowe spoke disparagingly of the parish church as 'a small thing and without any noteworthy ornaments' (p.274).
265. Ronald Herlan 'Social Articulation' p.48.
266. Jones and Judges note that the records for these seventeen parishes have disappeared. See Herlan 'Social Articulation' p.49.
267. G.L.R.O. DL/C/341 (fol. illeg.).

268. Dale, p. 169. Of 130 rents, 47 were higher, 64 were lower and 19 were the same.
269. Young, p.303. It is not clear precisely what Clifton's duties were but they seem to have involved ceremonial aspects of the guild. The S.O.E.D. defines one role of the beadle as an apparitor for a trade guild.
270. G.L.R.O. DL/C/343 fol. 23v.
271. Dale, p. 169.
272. G.L. MS. 1257/1 fols. 34,67.
273. G.L. MS. 9537/15 fol. 63.
274. Scouloudi, Returns of Strangers p. 546; G.L. MS. 10,116/1.
275. Our belief that the surgeon was the midwife's son is strengthened by the fact that he was fined for dissecting a cadaver 'out of this [barber-surgeons'] Hall' in 1614 and the hall was located in St. Olave Silver Street, the midwife's parish. See Yonge pp. 331,334,494.
276. G.L. MS. 10,116/1, G.L.R.O. DL/C/344 fol. 166v.
277. G.L. MS. 9052 box 14.
278. L.P. VX 1A/11 no. 12, and Sancroft Register vol.2, fol. 221.
279. G.L. MS. 9537/22 unfol.
280. G.L. MS. 1262/1 unfol.; C.L.R.O. 18.13/5. There is every likelihood that James Bickerstaffe was the son of Anthony Bickerstaffe of Christ Church, London, a prosperous linen draper who was also described as a gentleman: P.R.O. E 320/46, 179/186/437.
281. G.L. MS. 1257/2, burials for the year 1680-89. There was another Bickerstaffe family in the parish, that of John Bickerstaffe, possibly the midwife's brother-in-law. There may also have been a connection with the gentry since Edward Bickerstaffe, gentleman, of St. Clement Danes was undoubtedly a relative. Indeed, on Elizabeth's testimonial, her spouse is given as 'Edward'; this I believe was an error since the registers and parish records show only a James and John for St. Olave Silver Street.

282. G.L. MS. 9050/14 fol.8.
283. Power p.214.
284. Dale pp.230-4. A recent study notes that along Fleet Street houses in the wealthy parish of St. Dunstan in the West have an average of 7.5 hearths while in the poor parish of St. Bride the average house has only 5.6 hearths. See Power p.174.
285. In 1631, the population of Farringdon Without was 20,846 with the other six extramural parishes having a total population of less than 20,000. See William McMurray, 'London: its population in 1631' Notes and Queries 11:1 (May 1910): 426.
286. Jones, p.131.
287. A.L. Beier 'Engine' in Beier and Finlay p.155.
288. Tai Liu pp. 41,42.
289. Herlan 'Poor Relief' pp.14-15.
290. Herlan 'Poor Relief' p.30.
291. Jones and Judges p.62.
292. G.L.R.O. DL/C/340 fol. 11v.
293. G.L. MSS. 2968/1 fols. 416,499 and 2968/2 fol. 80.
294. G.L.R.O. DL/C/340 fol. 211v. The third tailor lived in St. Bridgid parish.
295. G.L. MSS. 2968/2 fol. 53v, 178v and 10342 fols. 63,69,73v,221v,234. As far as we can ascertain, Anne and James died and daughter Frances and son Thomas survived.
296. G.L.R.O. DL//C/343 fol. 68v. The parishes were St. Trinity in the Minories, St. Martin in the Fields, St. Bridgid, St. Andrew Holborn and St. Giles in the Fields.
297. G.L. MS. 3783 C4v.
298. G.L. MS. 2968/2 fol. 128.
299. G.L. MS. 2999/1.

300. G.L. MS. 2968/3 fol. 543.
301. G.L. 2999/1 unfol. The parish was always on the alert to have women 'removed' before they gave birth, at which time the child would become the responsibility of the parish in which it was born.
302. G.L. MS. 2968/3 fols. 549, 661v. Perhaps Fletcher had been a poor woman who had been delivered by midwife Carnell.
303. G.L.R.O. DL/C/343 fol. 91.
304. G.L. MSS.99537/14 fol.37, 9537/15 fol. 58v.
305. L.P. 272 fol. 401v.
306. G.L. MS. 9537/14 fol. 37; G.L.R.O. DL/C 431 fol. 284 (spelled Ceeley).
307. G.L. MS.2968/3 fol. 547. Seeley's funeral expenses paid to the parish were eleven shillings and thirteen pence. For a comparison see above, the charges for Frances Carnell's burial.
308. Dale p.234. Although this was given as a 'moderated rent' in Seeley's will he mentions his rent as being twenty pounds: G.L. MS. 9172/45.
309. G.L. MS. 9172/45.
310. G.L. MSS. 2968/3 fol. 612, 2968/4 fol. 216v.
311. G.L. MS. 2968/5 fol.46.
312. G.L. MS. 9537/14 fol.37. The midwife's name is shown as Cranaby in the visitation records but parish records show her as Carnaby.
313. G.L. MS. 2968/4 fol. 109v.
314. G.L.R.O. DL/C/344 fol. 61v. G.L. MS. 9537/17 fols. 66v,52. This visitaion has recorded the parish twice.
315. Dale pp. 231,230.
316. G.L. MS. 2968/3 fol.455v. There is some question about the date shown in the records. It could well be that the clerk made a mistake and the date was 1634. Somner's assessment at twelve shillings was quite high.

317. G.L. MS. 2968/3 fols. 344v,366.
318. Dale p.231. Although rent of nine pounds would be above average in many parishes, in St. Dunstan in the West it placed Somner in the lowest quartile of rents.
319. G.L. MS. 2968/4 fol. 164.
320. G.L. MSS. 2961/1 fols.10 and 117, 2969/2. I believe that the clerk mistakenly showed two John Somners in Ram Alley instead of widow Somner and son John in 1660: 10,345, Oct. 1663 assessments for subsidies to his majesty: 2968/5 burials, October, 1667. John Somner's burial charges of twenty-one shillings and eight pence were very high; he was buried in the church. The John Somner who was named a parish vestryman in 1689 was probably the midwife's grandson.
321. G.L. MS. 10,345 fol. 50, 64v.
322. G.L. MS. 2969/2. See a valuation and assessment etc. for 1671 unfol. and list of names of those who were 'sufferers in the late fire' of Sept.1666 etc., unfol.
323. G.L. MS. 2969/2 'A valuation and assessment of and upon the lands, offices and stocks etc.' 1671 unfol. There is confusion over the addresses of the various Somner family members. Although I have no proof to date, Ram Alley was probably an adjunct of Fleet Street and the two seem to have been used interchangeably. After 1671, Ram Alley does not appear on tax rolls possibly because of damage sustained in the Great Fire of 1666. Our difficulties were further compounded by the appearance of a second 'Mrs. Sumner' in Morecroft Court in 1679 (see G.L. MS. 2969/4), who may have been a widowed daughter-in-law.
324. G.L. MS.2969/4.
325. G.L. MS. 2968/5..fol.131v.
326. G.L. MS.2968/6 fols. 120v, 129v, 140, 151.
327. G.L. MS. 2999/1 unfol. This incident is also mentioned in Herlan 'Poor Relief' p.28.
328. G.L. MS. 1034/2 fols. 97v, 101, 103v.
329. Dale, p.230.
330. G.L. MS. 2961/1 fol.5.

331. G.L. MS. 10,116/1; G.L.R.O. DL/C/344 fol. 164.
332. Dale p. 230. As previously noted, thirty pounds was an extremely high rent, even in this wealthy parish.
333. Dale p. 231.
334. G.L. MS. 2968/3 fols.331, 350v, 399v.
335. G.L. MS. 2968/4 fol.431v.
336. G.L. MS. 2968 fol. 455.
337. G.L. MS. 10,345 fol.120v.
338. G.L. M.S. 9152/70.
339. G.L. MS. 10,116/1;G.L.R.O. DL/C/344 fol.167. Matthews, p.252. Haviland was shown as the rector of Holy Trinity the Less in 1662, but there is no question that he signed Wharton's certification in 1661.
340. G.L. MSS. 9537/17 fols. 52,66v, 9537/22 unfol.
341. One of the men was Charles Walsh 'de Savoy' which could be a reference to the French Church; Aleyn Reade and Elizabeth Delovs (a client) were French names as possibly were Elizabeth Mount, Elizabeth Crayle and Grace Lawrence. One woman was married to a milliner, a traditionally French craft.
342. See Dale p.232.
343. G.L. MS. 2969/2 unfol.
344. G.L. MS. 2999/1 unfol.
345. G.L. MS. 2968/5 fol.61. For purposes of comparison it should be noted that the burial charges for Sir John Bowring the following month were the same.
346. G.L. MS. 2968/6 fol.9.
347. G.L. MS. 9172/70.
348. G.L. MS. 10,116/3; G.L.R.O. DL/C/345 fol.15.
349. G.L. MS. 9537/17 fols. 66v, 52.



350. Dale p.230. Only fifteen individual and non-commercial rents were higher and seven others paid the same rent out of 440.
351. G.L. MS. 2968/3 fol. 421.
352. G.L. MS. 10,345 fols. 44,47,53,58v.
353. G.L. MS. 2968/3 fol.423,666, 2968/4 fol.57v. Because the name appears to be 'Semor' we cannot say for certain that they were the midwife's babies but the fact that one of the children was named George is a strong indication that they were.
354. G.L. MS. 2968/4 fol. 243.
355. G.L. MSS. 2968/4 fols.268,279,287,261v,412, 2969 unfol. Rates, Taxes, etc. for 1661, 3016/2 fol.40v, 2968/5 fol. 7. The house on Fleet Street was a gift to the parish from Dr. White. Another example of Dr. White's largesse was the distribution of twenty shillings to twenty poor people on Dec.26 1657? out of his former residence at which George Senior presided (G.L. MS. 2968/4 fols. 279,284v).
356. G.L. MS. 3016/2 fols.40v,42,50v. There is no mention of how the problem was resolved. Evidently the midwife had some claim to the ground on which the house stood. The parish decided to rebuild at least one of its houses in Ram Alley.
357. P.R.O. E179/252/32 (unfol.).
358. G.L.MS. 2968/5 fol.61. The fee was 18 shillings, four pence.
359. G.L. MS. 2961/1fol. 112.
360. G.L. MS. 3014/1 unfol.
361. G.L. MS. 9537 fol.66v. Mary Benson's name appears on the second part of the visitation which commenced October 2, 1664 and duplicated some of the work of the first part. Midwives Wharton, Senior and Somner were listed under both parts.
362. G.L. MSS. 29868/4 fol.65v, 3016/1 fols.213,318v,349.
363. G.L. MS. 2968/4 fol.238.
364. G.L. MS. 2961/1 fol.121v.

365. G.L. MSS. 2968/3 fols. 551,595, 10,345 fol.120.
366. G.L. MSS. 2968/4 fol.255, 10,345 fol.60. Roland died in 1655.
367. G.L. 3016/2 fol. 42v.
368. G.L. MS. 2968/6 fols. 295, 306, 307, 307v, 323, 324.
369. G.L. MS. 10,116/5.
370. G.L. MSS.10,345 fols. 53v,236, 2968/4 fol. 381v.
371. If she was the widow of William Symonds, she was an extremely wealthy woman living in an enormous house with twenty-six hearths. See P.R.O. E 179/252/32 and E 179/147/627.
372. G.L. MS. 10,116/6.
373. Again, this is an indication of the Church's emphasis on the practical qualifications of a midwifery candidate.
374. G.L. MS. 2969/2 unfol.
375. G.L. MS. 2968/5 fols. 4v, 40, 88.
376. G.L. MS. 2999/1 unfol. Duckett was paid a shilling for burying a poor widow pensioner in September 1667 and for christening a poor woman's child in August 1668.
377. G.L. MS. 2968/5 fol. 85. Although the church-wardens' accounts show a payment to Duckett for a sermon after the date of his burial, I believe that, as frequently happened, it had been paid earlier and not been recorded at the time.
378. G.L. MS. 2968/5 fols.196, 197, 197v.
379. G.L. MS. 2968/5 fols. 197v, 225.
380. G.L. 3016/2 fols. 164, 173. Parish records are full of evidence regarding the plight of the widows of clergy. Mary Duckett was probably prevented by chronic ill health from practising her profession of midwifery full time.
381. G.L. MS. 2968/6 fol.96v.
382. He was living on Bolt and Ton Court: G.L. MS. 2996/1.

383. G.L. MS. 10,116/7.
384. G.L. MS. 10,345 fol. 91v.
385. P.R.O. E 179/147/627 fol. 29v.
386. G.L. MS. 2969/4.
387. C.L.R.O. Assess. box 25.9/9 fol.3.
388. G.L. MS. 2968/5 44v. A number of Bradford children and infants were buried in the years 1663-73 but some were from a family which was living on Sheere Lane.
389. G.L. MS. 2968/6 fol. 95v.
390. Marriage Tax C.L.R.O. 109.80. The child who was buried in 1668 was also named Rebecca.
391. L.P.L. VX 1A/11/6; Sheldon Register vol.2 fol. 255. See SOED for definition of limning.
392. It is impossible to chart Mrs. Benet's family status more precisely since there were at least four other families with the same surname. We are not certain whether she was widowed or not at the time of licensing as the records are not clear on this point; a John Benet had died fifteen years earlier who may or may not have been the midwife's husband (G.L. MS. 2968/4 fol.336v).
393. G.L. MSS. 2969/4 (1679), 2968/6 burials (1689). Farewell was still living on Red Lyon Court in 1699, G.L. MS. 3015.
394. C.L.R.O. Marriage Tax 106.2 When all relevant factors are considered such as age, children's ages and longevity, I believe that Mary Farewell was the midwife.
395. G.L. MSS. 3016/2 fols. 210, 211, 234v, 213v, 2968/5 fols. 8, 105v, 2968/5 fol. 289v. William Carter who was a 'clarke, died in 1679; 2968/6 fol. 120v. John Carter was buried in St. Anne's Chappel June 8, 1687.
396. G.L. MSS. 2969/2 1671 assessment for militia, 2969/4 1679 assessment for militia, 2969/3 1673 monthly charges for new river water.
397. G.L. MS. 10,116/11.

398. There is also the possibility that Edward Cooke was the midwife's husband since the baptism register records the birth of a child, Anne in 1654 who was the daughter of Jane and Edward Cooke, gentleman. In that case the testimonial certificate which gave her husband's name as John was wrong (G.L. MS. 10,345 fol.54).
399. G.L. MS. 2969/3 'Mr.' Edward Cooke of Nevill's Alley, paid almost double the usual assessment for an inhabitant, while John Cooke paid slightly above average assessment for landlords.
400. A widow Cooke living on Red Lyon Court was assessed for charges for the ward in 1678. By 1696, widow Cooke was ill and living at Sion College where she received parish relief which included periodic nursing care from January until her death sometime between July and November when the parish paid for an affidavit regarding her burial. We have no way of ascertaining whether or not widow Cooke was the midwife. G.L. MSS. 2969/3, 2968/6 fols. 293v, 294, 304v, 306, 308.
401. C.L.R.O. 25.9/18/4. According to Power's classification, a house with eight hearths was considered a large house.
402. G.L. MSS. 2969/4, 2969/2 unfol.
403. L.P.L. VX 117/11/38; Sancroft Register vol. 2 fol 262.
404. G.L. MS. 3015 unfol.
405. G.L. MSS. 10,116/ 13; 9532/1 fol. 75.
406. G.L. MS. 2968/6 fols. 48v.,164,285v.
407. G.L. MS. 3014/1.
408. Marriage tax C.L.R.O. 106.4.
409. G.L. MSS. 10.116/13; 9532/1 fol. 94v.
410. Women from this parish in particular included clerical testimony with their applications for licensing.
411. G.L. MS. 10,116/13.
412. This figure assumes that midwife Farewell was married to John Farewell.

413. The term 'professional' is used in the twentieth-century sense as an aid to categorization. Paver Jonathan Winckles is classified as a semi-skilled tradesman, a label which belies his high standing in the parish as churchwarden.

414. The two men who were married to women in the last two groups were included in the total of 32.

415. Donnison p.9.

416. Harley 'Ignorant Midwives' pp.8,9.

417. We have included midwife Carter here since all of the Carter males who were potential spouses were economically secure or well-to-do.

418. Harley 'Ignorant midwives' p.8.

### Conclusion

Our exploration of the lives of seventeenth-century London midwives has led to a new and different perception of this important group of women who lived and worked in the rapidly changing milieu of one of Europe's major centres. Based on a variety of contemporary sources, we believe this new picture to be closer to the realities of life in the seventeenth century than the more narrowly based traditional view which has depended upon limited sources and largely those sources generated by individuals with a negative view of midwifery.

Although ecclesiastical licensing was not concerned with supervision of licensed midwives, it did ensure that certain standards of competence and good conduct were met before a midwifery licence was issued. It also encouraged the supervision of inexperienced midwives or deputies and the interchange of knowledge and assistance among licensed midwives when difficult deliveries were encountered. The substantial outlay of cash which was required to obtain a midwifery license was, in itself, a form of insurance against the temptation to dabble in midwifery on a whim or merely to avoid the pangs of poverty. For many of these women we can establish that they were career professionals, who dedicated years to training and who went on to practise for decades.

The tracts of Elizabeth Cellier have been cited repeatedly as evidence from the midwives themselves that a new system of training was needed. When the terms of Cellier's grand scheme for a training school for midwives are examined, however, it becomes apparent that the major beneficiary would have been Mrs. Cellier and that her criticisms of ecclesiastical licensing were rooted in her Roman Catholicism which excluded her from the contemporary avenue for obtaining a midwifery licence.<sup>1</sup> Given the state of medical knowledge which prevailed, it is clear that the traditional system, whereby midwives of long experience worked alongside new midwives, was superior to any instruction which the doctors could offer, despite the sweeping accusations and allegations of some members of their profession.<sup>2</sup>

The overwhelming majority of births were normal and did not require the intervention of medical practitioners whose services were restricted to medical emergencies. The male professionals gave no details of any proposed curriculum whereby the 'ignorant midwives' of their diatribes could be taught the principles of midwifery. In 1634 when Chamberlen attempted to monopolize midwifery in London, offering 'instruction' in return for being the only practitioner authorized to answer a midwife's summons in cases of 'dangerous and unnaturall travile', the midwives

firmly pointed out his ignorance of the mechanics of normal child birth.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the College of Physicians gave its stamp of approval to the ecclesiastical system of licensing midwives, and the consequence of a hearing into Chamberlen's proposal was that he was ordered to stop harassing the midwives and to acquire a licence himself to practise as a physician.<sup>4</sup> Jane Sharp, moreover, had published midwifery information for midwives and noted in the 'forward' to The Midwives Book that some women who had no knowledge of anatomy undertook the role of midwife, she stressed the preeminence of practical experience over knowledge acquired from books in the actual child birth situation: 'It is not hard words that perform the work, as if none understood the Art that cannot understand Greek'. After bowing to the accepted thought of her time and allowing the suitability of men for contemplating the 'things of deeper Speculation than is required of the female sex' she continued: 'But the Art of Midwifry chiefly concerns us, which even the best learned men will grant.'<sup>5</sup>

Adrian Wilson, in particular, has dwelt at length on the fact that male midwife Willughby knew the technique of podalic version, implying that this granted him an expertise which female midwives lacked. Midwives, however, would certainly have been aware of the problems involved in abnormal presentations, which Wilson has estimated as



occurring four times in every hundred births.<sup>6</sup> In many cases experienced midwives undoubtedly devised a method of turning the child guided by their own observation and empirical knowledge.<sup>7</sup> Donegan has pointed out that the sexist attitudes of the age so coloured the thinking of male practitioners that they believed that gender rendered even a highly experienced midwife incapable of dealing with the deviations from the normal; if she occasionally performed a successful version it was only by chance.<sup>8</sup> Culpeper, it may be noted, in his popular A Directorie for Midwives of 1651 gave no practical instructions about how version could be carried out; he recommended that the midwife attempt to correct the malpresentation manually on the assumption that experienced midwives would understand how this could be accomplished.<sup>9</sup> Aside from the literate midwives who could avail themselves of published works, such as that of Guillimeau who described podalic version, there were other ways that knowledge of such obstetrical techniques could be acquired. Version techniques were taught at the famous Hotel Dieu in Paris and we have evidence of at least one London midwife who trained and received her certificate at the French hospital.<sup>10</sup> She may have taught other midwives these techniques and presumably used them when necessary in her own practice. Jane Donegan notes that there are examples of seventeenth-century midwives in the English

colonies in America who carried out podalic version.<sup>11</sup> Despite Jane Sharp's worry in 1671 that some midwives were deficient in their knowledge of anatomy, a London practitioner in the Stuart period actually gave evidence before the Royal College of Physicians that he had learned anatomy from a midwife who did dissections.<sup>12</sup> Eighteenth-century male midwife William Smellie credited an 'illiterate' Irish midwife, Mary Donally, with successfully performing a Caesarean section at a time when the operation was virtually unknown.<sup>13</sup> There is every reason to believe that for the great majority of deliveries which were, as now, free from complications London midwives offered services which were vastly superior, because of their extensive training and practice, to those of male practitioners. In the occasional instance where operative intervention was needed, the midwife was obliged to call on the services of a male practitioner and, in most cases, the child was sacrificed in the course of the procedure. We see, therefore, that midwives' training was not perceived as deficient except by a few parties motivated by self interest.

We have seen that midwives did not confine their practices to the boundaries of their home parishes. Within their own parishes, however, they were well-known, usually long time inhabitants who were customarily respected both as

practitioners and as members of their own community. The sense of a midwife's commitment to the greater good of society is sincerely expressed in two testimonial certificates from the early Restoration period. The minister of St. Giles Cripplegate described the long years that Ann White of St. Giles Cripplegate had 'studied to assist and comford the King's majesty's subjects' while two years later, Elizabeth Ayr of the same parish was described as 'very fitt for that [the practice of midwifery] as a publick employment'.<sup>14</sup>

London midwives, the spouses of artisans, skilled tradesmen and gentleman, were not the rag tag group of poor, elderly females which historians have conjured up for our disapproval and dismissal; they were a proud sisterhood who were aware of the responsibilities and obligations of their midwife's oath and did their best to live up to them. Shorter has pointed out that in a few communities the midwife was regarded with respect as a type of 'social authority'; no more so was this the case than in early modern London.<sup>15</sup> In London, at least, the midwife was also a 'specialist' whose expertise was concentrated in the area of child delivery. In some cases, they were required to determine whether a woman was actually pregnant. Midwives were given credit for having basic knowledge of common diseases, particularly since their clients were at risk when

outbreaks occurred. The Chemical physician George Starkey noted that every midwife knew that a laxative would be fatal to a smallpox victim.<sup>16</sup> The dearth of prescriptions for gynaecological problems in three English medical compendia by female authors in the seventeenth century leads to the conclusion that these were the preserve of the midwife who drew on a fund of orally transmitted knowledge in treating her clients, particularly those with post-partum complaints.<sup>17</sup> Jane Sharp includes a brief section on children's diseases in her midwifery book and there is the occasional reference to midwives who prescribed for children.<sup>18</sup> But in London, at least, midwives apparently confined their activities to child delivery in the main. Parish records make a clear separation between nurses (who were frequently poor elderly widows) and midwives. During the plague years, when the parishes were hard pressed to care for the dead and dying, there is no suggestion that midwives carried out work other than that of child delivery.<sup>19</sup> The account book of the anonymous London midwife contains no hint of a fee for services other than infant delivery.

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the midwife still proudly wore her red mantle of office as she made her rounds to every corner of the City and its suburbs, at all hours of the day or night, in fair

weather or foul. Earlier in the century the midwives had described the high respect in which they were held by their parishes for their 'great skill and midnight industry',<sup>20</sup> Susanna Kent of St. Dunstan in the East wrote her last will and testament in 1712; her most detailed instructions concerned her midwife's mantle :

Item I give and bequeath unto my said granddaughter Elizabeth Skinner my midwifes mantle upon this condition and it is my will and desire that my said Daughter Susanna Read have the use of it dureing her life on condition shee comes up to London to practise midwifery either before or after the Death of her husband my will and meaning is that it shall not goe unto the Country but be for use of my said Daughter for life as aforesaid and then to my Granddaughter Elizabeth.<sup>21</sup>

Women were, then, still very much in control of the whole birth process at the end of the century. Adrian Wilson's interpretation of the ceremony surrounding the birthing process presents a picture of a female ritual over which the midwife presided. The 'mysterious office of women' remained intact and apart from men.<sup>22</sup> To read the records of the anonymous London midwife is to step into a world of women where the male is alien. In contravention of the customs of the period, except in a few instances, women's identities in this account book are not conferred through their husbands or their husband's occupations but instead through the date and time of day which they were delivered and, in many cases, where they lived. Women bear the

children (whose sexes are given) and women's names are credited with the payment of the delivery fee. With the women of London so firmly in control of child bearing at the end of the century, how was the citadel stormed and the traditionally female role of midwife appropriated by the male practitioner?

In London, by 1720, the licensing system began to break down. With its demise, the midwives lost a significant symbol of their professional qualifications and child-bearing women lost an important avenue not only for expressing their views but for asserting some measure of control in the choice of the women who would be their midwives through the granting or withholding of their testimonial assent. In the last decade of the century there are some hints of the impending demise of midwifery licensing reflected in the quality of testimonial evidence. Previously, it was the confidence that women who had experienced child birth expressed on behalf of their midwives which was the most telling proof of the high esteem in which many of the midwives were held. Both the direct statements contained in the testimonial certificates and the evidence of the anonymous midwife's account book with its record of repeated visits to the child bed of former clients bespeak the confidence and trust which many London wives and mothers placed in their midwives.

By the closing decade of the century, however, the church appears to have relaxed significantly its rules requiring the testimony of six women as well as a statement from clergy. Not a single midwife of those licensed by the Bishop of London between 1695 and 1700 had the testimonial support of six women and a statement from the clergy. In two cases, 12 and 16 women respectively gave a statement on the midwife's behalf but were not sworn before the ecclesiastical official; no statement from the clergy accompanied these testimonials. In another seven cases women were granted licenses without the benefit of a clerical statement. Even more revealing are the records of the Archbishop of Canterbury where the eighteen midwives licensed between 1687 and 1700 were given licenses without a clerical statement even though between 1669 (the date from which the first testimonials survive) and 1687 every midwife who was licensed produced a testimonial certificate from her parish clergy. This suggests that although female clients were still strong in their support of their midwives, the Church hierarchy, beginning with Canterbury, was no longer as concerned with the function of midwives beyond establishing a basic competence in their profession. With the testimony of the parish clergy no longer central, the voices of the female clients, no matter how urgent or sincere, lacked the public authority and respect commanded

by a minister, vicar, or curate. While the change was not as abruptly reflected by the testimonial certificates accepted by the Bishop of London's representatives, the relaxing of Church control under this jurisdiction can also be seen in the paucity of licenses issued to midwives living in London; of 82 licences issued in the years 1690-1700, only four were granted to midwives living within the city proper; thirteen were issued to midwives from extramural parishes and the rest to midwives living in suburban parishes.

Donnison has linked the breakdown in the ecclesiastical licensing of midwives to the declining power of the Church.<sup>23</sup> The evidence which we present, however, indicates less a decline in power than a changing attitude toward the the role of the midwife. This change began in the closing years of the century in the centre of the metropolis and spread to the outlying areas until by 1720, midwifery licensing was apparently virtually defunct. Ecclesiastical licensing was not central to the expertise and competence of what was fundamentally a self-regulatory system of training and apprenticeship, but it does appear to have been important for the societal respect and credit of the traditional profession: Why else would so many hundreds of midwives go to the considerable trouble and expense of being licensed when the only penalty was excommunication? I



suggest that both the Church and London's female population had no quarrel with the traditional system of midwifery training and practice, but once the role of the Church was diminished and with it the status attached to licensing, the seeds of decay were sown. With male practitioners waiting in the wings with their shiny instruments and promises of 'scientific expertise', by the 1720's the midwives' traditional, empirical skill proved, on its own, no match for the claims of the male midwife.<sup>24</sup>

There is evidence of increasing competition among the male medical practitioners, particularly in the second half of the century, with apothecaries, barber-surgeons and physicians, as representatives of 'professional' medicine, all jostling for space in the health care system.<sup>25</sup> In addition to the medical 'regulars', Phyllis Allen has noted that unlicensed medical practitioners were 'worming their way into lucrative London practices' at the end of the century.<sup>26</sup> Young surgeons and apothecaries, struggling to become established, were enticed into midwifery as an untapped, pseudo-medical area of expansion and by the prospect of acquiring the family of the new mother as prospective patients for their general practice.<sup>27</sup> By 1745 surgeons were virtually 'compelled to practice midwifery' (as well as pharmacy) in order to survive.<sup>28</sup> Irving Loudon also believes that the man-midwife became popular after 1730

as aggressive surgeon-apothecaries sought ways of increasing their incomes and expanding their practices.<sup>29</sup> In describing the efforts of Dr. John Maubray to gain support for the male midwife in the opening decades of the eighteenth century, Beryl Rowland has remarked: 'Except among the poor, the business of the accoucheur was too lucrative to be passed over by the male physician'.<sup>30</sup> When Elizabeth Francis, whose parish is unknown, applied for a London license in 1690 to practise surgery as well as midwifery, she may have seen the handwriting on the wall. Her testimonial certificate was signed by two M.D.s, a surgeon, and Robert Johnson 'surgeon and man-midwife of London'; there is no testimony from women or parish clergy. Henry Newton administered the oath and noted that she was licensed in surgery and midwifery, March 31, 1690.<sup>31</sup> Although Mistress Frances undoubtedly acquired her knowledge of midwifery by practical experience from which the male practitioners who signed her testimonial certificate traditional were largely excluded, the four men attested to the following statement:

These are to certify whom it may concern having examined Mrs. Elizabeth Francis I find her to be very well instructed and practiced in the art of midwifery and also in the knowledge of medicines which may be of use to women in their several maladies...<sup>32</sup>

Midwife-surgeon Francis was, evidently, unique; the dual licence, however, would seemingly have offered an ideal combination of traditional female skills and permission to employ the instruments of the surgeon if the necessity arose. Perhaps if more women had been able to avail themselves of the opportunity to train in both fields, the history of obstetrics would have been written in a completely different way. As it is, Mrs. Francis' testimonial stands as an ominous portent of the way in which the male practitioners were assuming, with the consent of prospective midwives themselves, an authoritarian role in midwifery practice. The records of the Royal College of physicians note that in December 1689 'Mrs. Wolverston came to have our hands to her being a Licentiate in Midwifery. She was examined and modestly and prudently answered to our satisfaction'.<sup>33</sup> We have found no trace of an ecclesiastical licence for midwife Wolverston, who may have merely used the backing of the College to enhance her reputation as a midwife. It is another instance of the way in which authority in midwifery was becoming linked with the male professionals. The changes were slow and affected only a handful of individuals during the seventeenth century itself, but with the advantages of hindsight, they foreshadowed the more dramatic changes to come.

Aside from the difficulties inherent in his intrusion into a traditionally female event, the surgeon attempting to establish himself as a male midwife was faced with the problem of his inexperience in normal deliveries as well as the taint of an association with instrumental deliveries of dead fetuses and, in some cases, the death of the mother. As early as 1611 barber-surgeons were permitted by their company to intervene surgically in difficult labours by using their hooks and crochets to remove the child, thus sacrificing the infant to save the mother. The records of the barber surgeons note that James Blackborne 'was found fitt and allowed to practice 'in that Chirurgicall p'te of Surgery touching the generatyve pte of women and bringing them to bedd in their dangerous and difficult labours' [sic].<sup>34</sup> Members of the Chamberlen family who touted their services as male midwives ran into trouble with the College of Physicians on several occasions. The Chamberlens had their instruments but their knowledge of normal childbirth, like that of other male professionals of the day, was inadequate.

During the reign of James I, Peter Chamberlen senior faced 'a complaint of mala praxis in child-bed women' and was forbidden to practice for an unspecified period of time.<sup>35</sup> In the same reign, an unidentified midwife successfully proved charges against a surgeon, Mr. Douglas,

whose 'inhumane and unskilful' handling of a woman in labour resulted in the death of mother and child.<sup>36</sup> The surgeon was required to post a bond of 200 pounds against practising midwifery in the future as well repaying five pounds, presumably his fee. In 1634, the College decreed that Peter Chamberlen's use of 'iron instruments' was allied more to surgery than medicine and was not a part of normal midwifery.<sup>37</sup> Hugh Chamberlen was faced with a charge of malpractice in 1687 after a woman whom he had treated miscarried and died.<sup>38</sup> Although the College prosecuted a number of female empirics for malpractice in the pre-revolutionary period, none of them were midwives either unlicensed or licensed. By 1733, when the design of obstetrical forceps was published, surgeons were presented with an alternative to their destructive instruments when called upon by midwives in complicated deliveries. In theory, at least, when judiciously applied by a knowledgeable operator the baby could be safely delivered as a happy alternative to the previous destructive interventions. Several recent studies have attributed women's choice of the male midwife over the traditional female to their perception that a living child could be delivered by the use of forceps should complications arise. The forcep, then, has been seen as key to the decline the

midwife. But was the use of forceps a critical factor in ensuring safer deliveries for mother and child?<sup>39</sup>

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich has compared the record of an eighteenth-century New England midwife with those of contemporary New England physicians who delivered infants as part of their practice. Martha Ballard's rate of 1.8 stillbirths per 100 live births was lower than either of the physicians with whom her practice was compared while all rates were lower than 'impressionistic' data of the period normally cited by historians.<sup>40</sup> While we have no comparable physicians' records for the seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries, by analysing the anonymous midwife's account book we find that of 683 births, only four were 'born dead'; this yields a stillbirth rate of 0.6 per 100 births.<sup>41</sup> There is no mention of a maternal death in her records.

In any discussion of the displacement of female midwives, the question must be addressed of how the surgeons, called to only the occasional difficult delivery, acquired the necessary experience to supplant the highly skilled and competent midwife who maintained her authority in female matters. More than a hundred years before the design of forceps was published the Chamberlen family had access to their use. Even so, Peter Chamberlen endeavoured to become the only surgeon upon whom the midwives could call

in 1634 because he realized that the key to monopolizing not only the monetary rewards of the situation but, more importantly, to gaining practical knowledge of the parturient female anatomy and physiology lay in frequent access to women in labour. A close association, or better, an exclusive association with the experienced London midwives would give him the entree to what he sought. Percival Willughby described a delivery which his daughter was supervising and for which she wished a second opinion. Willughby was obliged to crawl into the room and carry out the examination shrouded by sheets to avoid detection by the woman, so strong was the taboo against male invasion of the child bed room. Willughby became the highly visible author and midwifery 'authority' and, although it has been commonly assumed that his daughter obtained her expertise from her father's instruction, there is every likelihood that the reverse is true and his most valuable experience and training were gained through an association with his midwife daughter.<sup>42</sup> Willughby also had the expertise of a Mrs. Willughby to call on. She was a kinswoman, living in London, whom Willughby described as 'long experimented...of much practice, and of good repute with women'.<sup>43</sup> In 1611 Laurence Higginson of St. Martin Ludgate was licensed as a barber-surgeon. His wife, Anne was a licensed midwife.<sup>44</sup> There is no evidence that Higginson was a male midwife, but

he may have learned midwifery techniques from his wife or they may have operated as a husband and wife team. When Alice Flewelling of St. Peter the Poor was licensed in midwifery in 1687, she gave her husband's occupation as surgeon, establishing another link between female midwifery knowledge and the male practitioner. Aside from the occasional instance of a midwife and surgeon liason, male practitioners were hard pressed to gain practical experience in midwifery.

There are scattered references in the literature of the period to private maternity hospitals which were located in homes in the City which, in some cases, had their own midwives.<sup>45</sup> In the seventeenth century at the parish level midwives were still called to deliver poor women at parish expense.<sup>46</sup> With the advent of the lying-in hospitals in the 1730s, however, poor women no longer remained in the parish where they had frequently been accomodated in private homes.<sup>47</sup> Instead, they were admitted to the hospitals which were presided over by male practitioners, who now had access to the labours of poor women.<sup>48</sup> In her study of childbearing in America in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Judith Walzer Leavitt has argued that the childbirth experience remained essentially female as long as the delivery took place at home; this changed when birthing moved to the hospital.<sup>49</sup> Although midwives in



London still carried out at least some of the deliveries in the lying-in hospitals, the birth process had passed into the control of males.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the traditional knowledge of the ancient midwives was no longer the exclusive preserve of women.

The displacement of the traditional midwife by a male practitioner during the eighteenth century can be seen as the result of the convergence of a number of factors. The Church's declining role in the process of licensing, the availability of forceps to male practitioners who were motivated by the desire to enjoy some of the monetary rewards of child delivery, the advent of the lying-in hospital and an intellectual climate of the 'Enlightenment' generally receptive to the claims of 'scientific' knowledge all contributed to the demise of the complex and effective system in which London midwives proudly functioned in the seventeenth century. Ahead lay the sordid chapter on puerperal sepsis and the doctors as well as other forms of iatrogenesis.<sup>51</sup> Despite male protestations to the contrary, women and their infants were to be the losers for generations to come.<sup>52</sup>

In conclusion, our study of seventeenth-century London midwives has not only identified hundreds of previously nameless women who carried out the important task of child delivery within one of Europe's most rapidly

expanding cities, it has brought to light information about a great many of them which was previously unknown. We now have a better appreciation of how the ecclesiastical licensing system functioned. We know the way the unofficial apprenticeship system produced a supportive network of more experienced midwives who worked alongside trainee midwives. We have a better idea of the fees they charged and the distribution of their practices. The picture which has emerged is one of mature married or widowed women who have themselves borne children and have acquired years of empirical experience. These women were respected and acclaimed for their expertise not only by their clients, but by members of their parish communities, both rich and poor. Almost without exception their spouses, as well as their children, were responsible parishioners who were economically viable. In the case of widows, the majority continued to be self-sufficient throughout their lives. Indeed, a substantial number of midwives (including widows) enjoyed a socio-economic position which befitted the well-to-do. It is our hope that, at least for London, the ghost of the indigent, slovenly and maladroit midwife has finally been laid to rest.

## Notes

1. Aveling pp.66,74.
2. Although I differ with Edward Shorter on a number of points, we are in agreement here. See Shorter A History p.47.
3. G.L. Bishop of London's Register vol. 9531 fols. 12-13.
4. For an interesting example of the gulf between midwives and male professionals of the early modern period see the account of events surrounding the death of a member of the French royal family in child birth in 1627. The renowned French midwife Louise Bourgeois and male practitioners became embroiled in a series of allegations and counter allegations. Wendy Perkins has seen the incident as a clash between theory and practice with elitist and gender overtones. See Wendy Perkins, 'Midwives versus Doctors: The case of Louise Bourgeois' The Seventeenth Century 3 (1988): 135-157. See also Thomas G. Benedek 'The Changing Relationship between Midwives and Physicians during the Renaissance', Bulletin of the History of Medicine 51 (1977) pp. 563-4.
5. Sharp pp. 1-3.
6. Adrian Wilson, 'William Hunter and the Varieties of Man-midwifery' in W.F. Bynum and Roy Porter eds. William Hunter and the eighteenth-century medical world (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) p.344. Elsewhere, Wilson has acknowledged that some midwives 'might have mastered the technique of podalic version' : Wilson, 'Participant or Patient?' p.137.
7. For version techniques practiced by German midwives in the early modern period see Wiesner, p.101. In the Netherlands, Vrouw Schrader was highly successful at performing manouvers to turn the fetus in utero. Marland "'Mother and Child'" p.37.
8. Donegan pp.40-1.
9. Donegan p.17.
10. She was Elizabeth Beranger , licensed in 1674. G.L. MS 10,116/8.
11. Donegan p.17.

12. Harold Cooke The Decline of the Old Medical Regime in Stuart London (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1986) p.33.
13. R.W. Johnston p.63.
14. G.L. MS. 25,598,1662 and 1664.
15. Shorter, p.44.
16. George Starkey, Nature's Explication and Helmont's Vindication or a short and sure way to a long and sound life (London,1656; Thomason E1635(2) p.257.
17. Evenden-Nagy pp.68-9. A seventeenth-century medical compendium contains a prescription for breast abscesses 'used by midwives and other skilful women in London'. See M.B. The Ladies Cabinet Enlarged and Opened (London, 1654; Wing B135) p.90.
18. In the Verney papers, a midwife was mentioned who prescribed medication for sick Verney children. Verney Memoirs vol.1,p.362.
19. G.L. MS. 2968/4 fol.443. Parish accounts of St. Dunstan in the West for Sept. 1665 list seven nurses, none of whom can be identified as midwives. The situation was different in Nuremberg where midwives were expected to act as auxillary medical attendants during outbreaks of the plague. Wiesner p.105. In rural areas the midwife may have been more active in prescribing medication. The Kendal midwife's diary contains a prescription but there is no indication of how it was used and the ingredients, typical of non-specific receipts of the day, give no clue. Presumably it was used to treat conditions associated with pregnancy.
20. Midwives Just Petition, 1643.
21. L.P. VH95/1136 The famous caricature of the midwife by Rowlandson shows her wearing a red cape. I have found no other evidence to date about the midwife's mantle, although the term 'mantle' was apparently reserved for apparel worn by the medical profession. Beryl Rowland refers to the 'splendid scarlet academic gown of the fully trained M.D.' (B.Rowland p.xv). Nurses wore white linen capes (introduced in 1686). See Phillis Cunnington and Catherine Lucas, Occupational Costume in England from the Eleventh Century to 1914 (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1967) pp.309,310,320.

22. The phrase 'The mysterious office of women' is the title of the first chapter of Jane Donegan's study, which deals with the history of midwifery in early America but which begins with a brief account of English midwifery up to the 1730s.
23. Donnison p.22.
24. For an account of the way in which women's traditional skills were replaced by scientific knowledge see Anne Oakley, The Captured Womb (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984).
25. See R.S. Roberts, 'Medicine in Tudor and Stuart England: part 2, London' Medical History 8 (1964):217-34. Roberts documents in particular the aggressive stance of the apothecaries in moving into general practice. For the opening up of the professions see Christopher Hill Change and Continuity in Seventeenth-Century England (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974) chapter 7 'The Medical Profession and Its Radical Critics'.
26. Phyllis Allen 'Medical Education in 17th Century England' Journal of the History of Medicine 1 (1946):141.
27. Donnison, p.23. On the continent as well, surgeons were envious of the incomes and status of midwives. (Schama p.520). The competition between young medical officers and midwives for the 'lucrative business of midwifery' extended into the nineteenth century. Noel Parry and Jose Parry, The Rise of the Medical Profession (London : Croom Helm, 1976) pp.144-5.
28. Bernice Hamilton 'The Medical Professions in the Eighteenth Century' The Economic History Review Second Series, 4 (1951):151. Competition was not as stiff in the provinces and as late as 1780 the majority of women in Warwickshire were delivered with the help of midwives and neighbours, although the parish surgeon would be called in to terminate complicated labours much as he had done a century earlier in London. See Joan Lane, 'The Provincial Practitioner and his Services to the Poor, 1750-1800' Society for the History of Medicine Bulletin 31 (1982)p.12. For the high cost of a medical education see James Axtell 'Education and Status in Stuart England: the London Physician' History of Education Quarterly 10 (1970): 141-59.
29. Loudon p.90. Loudon sees this aspect as more important than the proliferation of obstetrical forceps.

30. Beryl Rowland p.18. Ironically, another study has noted that in 1724 John Mowbray had little empirical experience but was called in on occasion for advice of a 'theoretical' nature. See H.R. Spencer The History of British Midwifery from 1650-1800 (London: John Bale, Sons & Danielsson, Ltd., 1927) pp. 7-8. Despite this limitation, Mowbray is described a few pages later as 'the first teacher of practical midwifery' thereby discounting at one stroke the traditional system of midwifery training in which countless women had been instructed since time immemorial (p.14).
31. This surgeon and man-midwife was no doubt the same 'Doctor Johnson' who was paid by St. Dunstan in the West after two midwives experienced difficulty with the delivery of Judith Edwards in 1698. See above. chapter 4, p.233.
32. G.L. MS. 10,116/13. Ian Murray the archivist at Barber-Surgeon's Hall in London has not been able to find a connection with the company for Mrs. Francis, which suggests that her training as a surgeon was not by way of serving a full apprenticeship. I am indebted to Mr. Murray for his assistance on this point.
33. Clark p.363. Mrs. Wolverston may well have taught her examiners something about midwifery under their guise of an holding an 'examination'.
34. Sidney Young, The Annals of the Barber Surgeons of London (London: East & Blades, 1890 ;reprint ed. N.Y. AMS Press, 1978) p.330.
35. Charles Goodall, The Royal College of Physicians of London. An Account of their proceedings against empirics (London,1684; Wing G 1081) p.367.
36. Goodall p.368.
37. Sir George Clark, A History of the Royal College of Physicians of London vol.1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964) p.162.
38. Ibid., p.362.
39. William Hunter, who was a well-known 'man-midwife' of the eighteenth century, opposed the use of forceps saying 'Where they save one, they murder twenty'. Adrian Wilson, 'William Hunter and the varieties of man-midwifery' in W.F. Bynum and Roy Porter William Hunter p.343. Wilson's

final position is that forceps were a key factor in the obstetrical revolution (p.362).

40. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich "The Living Mother of a Living Child": Midwifery and Mortality in Post-Revolutionary New England', William and Mary Quarterly 46 (January 1989) pp. 31-33. The doctors would have access to forceps to assist them in delivering a living child (by their own claim) in complicated cases. The twentieth-century Alabama midwife Onnie Lee Logan could recall 'only three stillbirths in her practice which spanned four or five decades. Logan p.124.

41. Bodleian Library, Oxford Rawlinson MS. D 1141. This is an extremely low rate of infant mortality at the time of delivery and we do not know if the pregnancies were full term. Since the midwife was keeping these records as an account of earnings, there is no reason to believe that she would hide any obstetrical disasters. If they are an accurate reflection of her practice, and we have no way of telling this, then they are an indication of her great skill in managing abnormal as well as normal deliveries. We are unable to compare this rate with, for example, Schofield's and Wrigley's work on infant mortality which includes death from all causes and is not restricted to perinatal or neonatal deaths: Schofield and Wrigley 'Infant and Child Mortality' in Webster. The Frisian midwife Vrouw Schrader had a perinatal mortality (single births) of 4.5%, which Marland states compares favourably with European and American figures before 1945. Marland 'Mother and Child' p.37.

42. Aveling pp.54-8.

43. Ibid. pp.59-60. Willughby ostensibly moved to London for reasons involving his 'children's' education. Since his children were adults at the time of Willughby's move (he himself was 60 years old) and he remained only 3 or 4 years in London, there is a good chance he came to London to work with this woman and learn from her. In the sixteenth century a German physician was burned at the stake for attending deliveries dressed as a woman in a desperate effort to learn about delivery processes. See E. Burton The Jacobean at Home (London: Secker and Warburg, 1962) p.228.

44. Bloom and James p.20.

45. MacLeod Yeardsley, Doctors in Elizabethan Drama (London: John Bale Sons and Danielson Ltd.. 1933) pp.88-9.

46. With the single exception of Dr. Johnson being called upon in what was probably a difficult delivery in 1698 in St. Dunstan in the West, see above, note 31.

47. See for example G.L. MS. 2999/1 Account Book of Overseers for St. Dunstan in the West, 1634 (unfol.) when the parish paid Goodwife Holden for a month's lodging and post partem care of Margaret Crowder; in 1658, the parish paid for a room for Jane Waters' lying in and for a woman to look after her for a month as well as the midwife's fee. See also Wilson 'Childbirth' pp.4-5.

48. Donnison pp.26-7.

49. Leavitt pp. 115, 202-3.

50. Judith Leavitt has argued the case for America and sees that female loss of control of the birthing situation coincides with the hospitalization of virtually all deliveries in the twentieth century. When doctors carried out home deliveries in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they were 'invited' into the women's homes and women remained in charge since the prospective mother was usually attended by 'birthing companions' with considerable experience. Judith Walzer Leavitt Brought to Bed (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) pp.4-5. To-day there is a growing awareness of the need for the attendance of an advocate to help women delivering in hospital to make informed decisions and retain some sense of dignity and autonomy in the experience of child birth.

51. See Donnison for the long-term developments of the struggle between the midwives and the medical profession. Donnison's observation that the 'United States' maternal mortality rate is higher than that of comparable European countries where midwives attend a majority of births' is supported by Leavitt's work; see pp.24, 183-4 in particular. In Great Britain, New Zealand and Scandinavia in the 1920s, deliveries attended by nurses and midwives (or completely unattended) generated lower death rates than those attended by physicians. In the years 1921-7 the maternal death rate in Manitoba hospitals was 8.6. For the same period outside of hospitals (where women attendants frequently assisted) it was 2.65. Both of the foregoing examples are from 'Doctoring the Family' CBC April 4, 1985 (we do not know if the physicians were called to deliver women at higher risk for complications nor if the hospital figures include women who were hospitalized in anticipation of difficult labours). Iatrogenesis is disease which is produced by medical



treatment. Its agents are remedies, physicians and hospitals. See Ivan Illich, Limits to Medicine (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1976).

52. Aside from the quantitative evidence of maternal and infant death rates, there has been in recent years a growing awareness of the extreme emotional and psychological isolation of the twentieth-century hospital delivery which intensifies our appreciation of the seventeenth-century setting for child delivery with its female bonding and other benefits which are impossible to quantify (Leavitt pp.189-90). Although Adrian Wilson has presented an idealized and somewhat romanticized view of the 'ceremony' of childbirth in the early modern period, it is still a picture which portrays the positive experience that child birth was in 'the world we have lost' (Wilson 'Ceremony').

## Appendix A

### A Sixteenth-century midwife's oath (Canterbury)

I, Eleonor Pead, admitted to the office and occupation of a midwife, will faithfully and diligently exercise the said office according to such cunning and knowledge as God hath given me and that I will be ready to help and aid as well poor as rich women being in labour and travail of child, and will always be ready both to poor and rich, in exercising and executing of my said office. Also, I will not permit or suffer that women being in labour or travail shall name any other to be the father of her child, than only he who is the right and true father thereof; and that I will not suffer any other body's child to be set, brought, or laid before any woman delivered of child in the place of her natural child, so far forth as I can know and understand. Also, I will not use any kind of sorcery or incantation in the time of the travail of any woman; and that I will not destroy the child born of any woman, nor cut, nor pull off the head thereof, or otherwise dismember or hurt the same, or suffer it to be so hurt or dismembered, by any manner of ways or means. Also, that in the ministration of the sacrament of baptism in the time of necessity I will use apt and the accustomed words of the same sacrament, that is to say, these words following, or the like in effect; 'I christen thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost', and none other profane words. And that in such time of necessity, in baptizing any infant born, and pouring water upon the head of the same infant, I will use pure and clean water, and not any rose or damask water, or water made of any confection or mixture: and that I will certify the curate of the parish church of every such baptizing.

Source: Forbes The Midwife and the Witch p.145.

Appendix B: Midwife's oath 1713 (Canterbury) L.P.L.vx1a/11  
no. 80.

*Mary Cooke* of the parish of *Loose*  
in the County of *Leicester* being to be  
admitted to the Office of a *Midwife* will faithfully  
and diligently exercise the said Office according to such  
experience and knowledge as God shall give me: and that  
I will be ready to help and aid as well Poor as Rich  
Women being in labour and travails with Child, and  
will all ways be ready both to Poor and Rich in  
exercising and executing of my said Office, Also I will  
not permit or suffer that any Woman being in labour  
and travails shall name any other to be the Father  
of her Child than only he who is the right and true  
Father thereof, and that I will not suffer any other  
body's Child to be sett brought or laid in the place of  
her naturall Child so farre forth as I can know and  
understand Also I will not use any kind of Sorcery or  
incantments in the time of the travails of any Woman,  
and that I will not destroy the Child bones of any  
Woman nor cut or pull of the head thereof or  
otherwise dismember or hurt the same or suffer it  
to be so hurt or dismembered by any manner of wayes  
or means, Moreover if I shall know any Woman  
exercising the Office of a Midwife or doing any thing  
contrary to the honor of this said Oath I will not  
notifie and divulge the same to the Lord Archbishop  
of *Canterbury* for the time being or to his Vicar  
Generall or Chanceller or to the ordinary of the  
place: so farre as I can conveniently

*Mary Cooke*

## Appendix C

### A Seventeenth-century midwife's oath

from a Book of Oaths 1649 (Anon.) (administered by a bishop or his chancellor)

You shall sweare, First, that you shall be diligent and faithfull, and readie to helpe every Woman labouring of Childe, as well the poore as the riche; and that in time of nessesitie[sic], you shall not forsake or leave the poore woman, to go to the Rich.

2. Item, Yee shall neither cause nor suffer any woman to name, or put any other Father to the childe, but onely him which is the very true Father thereof indeed.

3. Item, you shall not suffer any woman to pretend, faine, or surmize herselfe to be delivered of a Childe, who is not indeed; neither to claime any other womans Childe for her owne.

4. Item, you shall not suffer any Womans Childe to be murdered, maymed, or otherwise hurt, as much as you may; and so often as you shall perceive any perill or jeopardie, either in the Woman, or in the Childe, in any such wise, as you shall bee in doubt what shall chance thereof, you shal thenceforth in due time send for other Midwives and expert women in that facultie, and use their advice and counsell in that behalfe.

5. Item, that you shall not in any wise use or exercise any manner of Witchcraft, Charme; or Sorcery, Invocation, or other Prayers than may stand with Gods Laws and the Kings.

6. Item, you shall not give any counsell, or minister any Herbe, Medicine, or Potion, or any other thing, to any Woman being with Childe whereby she should destroy or cast out that she goeth withal before her time.

7. Item You shall not enforce any woman being with childe by any paine, or by any ungodly wayes or meanes, to give you any more for for your paines or labour in bringing her a[tol] bed, then they would otherwise do.

8. Item, you shall not consent, agree, give, or keepe counsell, that any woman be deliverd secretly of that which she goeth with, but in the presence of two or three lights readie.

9. Item, you shall be secret, and not open any matter appertaining to your Office in the presence of any man, unless necessity or great urgent cause do constrain you so to do.

10. Item, if any childe bee dead borne, you yourselfe shall see it buried in such secret place as neither Hogg nor Dogg, nor any other Beast may come unto it, and in such sort done, as it may not be found or perceived, as much as you may; And

that you shall not suffer any such childe to be cast into the Jaques or any other inconvenient place.

11. Item, if you shall know any Midwife using or doing any thing contrary to any of the premisses, or in any other wise than shall be seemely or convenient, you shall forthwith detect open to shew the same to me [the bishop] or my chancellor for the time being.

12. Item, you shall use yourself in honest behaviour unto the woman being lawfully admitted to the roome [station, rank] and Office of a Midwife in all things accordingly

13. Item, That you shall truly present to my selfe, or my Chancellor, all such women as you shall know from time to time to occupie and exercise the roome of a Midwife within my foresaid Diocesse and jurisdiction of A. [name of diocese] without my License and admission.

14. Item, you shall not make or assigne any Deputie or Deputies to exercise or occupie under you in your absence the Office or roome of a Midwife, but such as you shall perfectly know to be of right honest and discreet behaviour, as also apt, able, & having sufficient knowledge and experience to exercise the said roome and Office.

15. Item, you shall not be Privie, or consent, that any Priest, or other partie, shall in your absence, or in your companie, or of your knowledge or sufferance, Baptise any child, by any Masse, Latine Service, or Prayers, then such as are appointed by the Lawes of the Church of Englande; neither shall you consent, that any child, born by any woman, who shall be delivered by you, shall be carried away without being Baptised in the Parish by the Ordinarie Minister, where the said child is borne unless it be in the case of necessitie, Baptised privately, according to the Booke of Common Prayer: but you shall forthwith upon understanding thereof, either give knowledge thereof to me the said Bishop, or my Chancellour for the time being. All of which Articles and Charge you shall faithfully observe and keepe, so help you God and by the contents of this Booke [the Bible].

Source: Forbes The Midwife and the Witch pp. 146-7

The same fifteen items with very minor variations in language were incorporated into the license issued to Ellen Perkins of St. Martins in the Fields in 1686 by the Bishop of London. Christopher Charlton, ed. 'A Midwife's Certificate', Local Population Studies 4 (1970); 56-8.

A sixteenth-century midwife's license issued by John Aylmer in 1588 contains only the first fourteen items, again, in language typical of the sixteenth-century but otherwise

identical to the text of the seventeenth-century oath and license. James Hitchcock 'A Sixteenth Century Midwife's License' Bulletin of the History of Medicine 41 (1967):75-6.

Appendix D: Midwife's testimonial certificate 1685  
(Canterbury) L.P.L. vx 1a/11 no.33

See whose Names are hereunder written do  
 certify that Frances Manning of  
 the parish of St. Leonards in  
 the County of Middlesex a person of good  
 Life and conversation and that frequently  
 her Parish Church and in every way conform-  
 = in all to the Government of the Church of  
 England as now by Law is established and  
 that hath practised as a Midwife for the  
 space of about twenty five years  
 last past and is a person well qualified  
 to be a Licensed Midwife In witness  
 whereof We have herunto set our Hands this  
 fifth day of October in the  
 year of our Lord God One thousand six  
 hundred eighty and three and in the first year  
 of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord King  
 James the second of England &c

Alice Denerell  
 Anna Hartus  
 Anna Allen  
 Frances Bockle

J. Bradbury  
 J. J. [unclear]  
 Henry [unclear] [unclear]  
 Robert [unclear] [unclear]

vi. Octobris 1685.

See Alice Denerell, Anna Hartus, Anna Allen  
 et Frances Bockle iohanne de. spiritibus presbiteri  
 et ministris in ecclesia parochiali, in eadem parochia iurati sunt  
 et fidei et obedientiam officii, test. hinc et prout hinc  
 Tho: Reton

Appendix E

Probate Inventory for Elizabeth Heron, 1667 (G.L. MS. 9174/19)

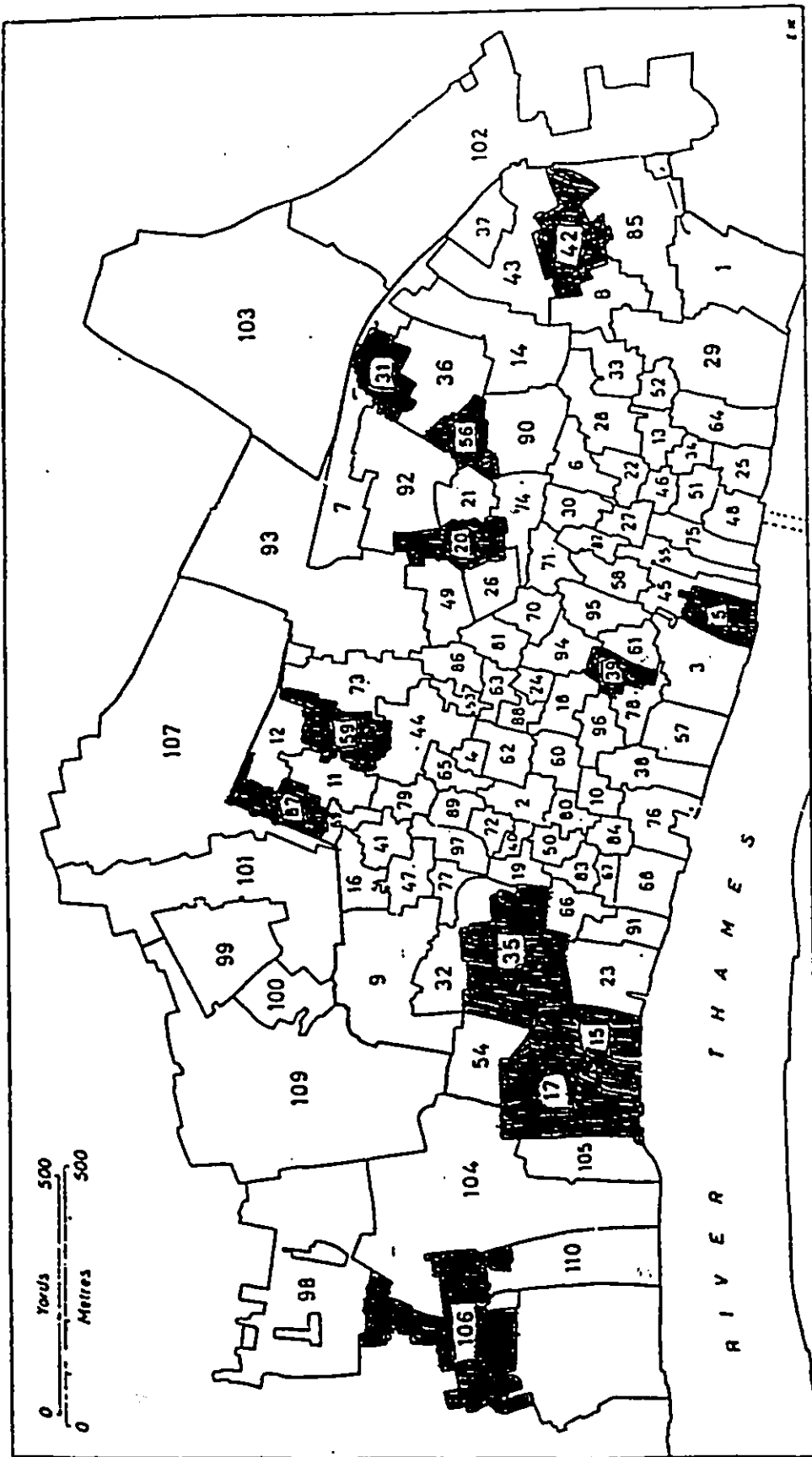
An inventory of the Goods and Chattels of Elizabeth Heron late of the pish of St. Giles in the Fields in ye county of Middx. widd. Taken that 24th day of April 1667.

Impns In the Fore Garrett one old Table foure stools Two chaires one table and Bedstead Coard @ matt and flocke bed & bolster and straw bolster four old Trunks and old hamper & and old desk	xxs
In the back Garrett one bedstead, mat @ Coard one fether bed bolster. Blankets curtains & vallances. Table & some old stools	xxs
In ye Chamber backward 2 pair of stairs one bolster matt @ Cord. Curtaines vallens & tester. one fether bed. bolster two pillowes one flock bed. three blankets one rugg and table seavon old chaires and stooles the hangings about the room one pr of fire irons and andirons tonges and shovell	ls
In ye fore room 2 pair of stairs one bedstead mat @ Cord. Curtins vallens @ tester. Stript hangings about ye room. one bolster bed two bolsters three blankets. one rugge one table. two cowch cupbords Tenn chaires @ stooles fire irons shovell @ tonges.	lvs xvs
In ye Chamber backward one pair stairs one bedstead, mat cord. tester, curtaines @ vallons. one fether bed bolster and pillow three blankets and rugg foure peires of tapestry hangings Tenn chaires @ stools. 2 tables one pre of andirons shovell tonges bellowes @ 2 strypt carpets	lxxs xxs
In the parlor backward one setlebed and trundlebed two bolster beds two flock beds three bolsters four blankets. 2 coverlids. two pillows one chest one Engg. four pillows old hangings about the room fire irons doggs. two shovells one fork tonges pot iron one Jack four spitts	lxxs xxs



five chaires @ stools wth some other Lumber	
Nyne pair of sheets three dozen of napkins and some other smale linin with some woollen cloathes	lxxs
two old bras kittles two bras potts one warming pan slice skinner and ladle. two bras skilletts one bras mortar	xxs
one hundred and eight pounds halfe of pewter at 9p ye pound	ivLxs
In the low room Forward one settled bed one tester bed @ bolster blankets @ coverlid two tables five chaires @ stooles five irons tonges @ shovell frying pan, skillet	xxxxs
The partitions about the room with some other Lumber therein	xxs
In the kitchen Two iron potts, one old cupboard three old stooles one andiron one rack one pair of pott racks	vs
In the Cellar Eight barrells of Beer and Stavings	ivL vs
In the room in the yard Two tables four formes five old stooles 2 pair of pott racks	xiis
In ready money	xls
In desperate notes	xii L
The lease of the house & back house	ivL
Sum totall	C iiiL xvii s

Passed by whose names are heer under subscribed the  
day & year before written [signed] Georg Nelson, F-- Munt



- 42. St. Katherine Coleman
- 56. St. Martin Outwich
- 59. St. Mary Aldermanbury
- 39. St. John Baptist
- 87. St. Olave Silver Street
- 104. St. Dunstan in the West
- 5. Allhallows the Less
- 15. St. Andrew Wardrobe
- 17. St. Anne Blackfriars
- 20. St. Bartholomew by the Exchange
- 35. St. Gregory by St. Paul's
- 31. St. Ethelburga

Appendix F: Map of Selected Parishes

Adapted from Tai Liu Puritan London.

## Appendix G

### London and Area Midwives' Directory for the Seventeenth Century

Numbering of the parishes (numbers 1-119) for the following directory has been adapted from Tai Liu to include the areas outside of the city where a number of midwives were licensed : see appendix F.

Where the year of licensing is known, it has been included; the year of licensing was established by testimonial certificates and/or bishops and archbishop's registers. If the midwife was identified only through a visitation, this is indicated by 'v' after the date. Where the parish of residence or date of licensing or visitation is unknown, it is indicated by n.p., or n.d. Duplications and omissions are inevitable because of incomplete records and inconsistencies in spelling. Senior midwives are indicated as s.m.w. In some cases, the midwives lived, and probably carried out most of their deliveries, at a distance from London. Their licences, however, were issued by the archbishop (or in some cases the bishop) to encompass London, hence their inclusion in the directory. Spouses' names where known are provided in parentheses.

#### A

Abbott, Mrs. 111; 1664 v.  
Aberell(?)Mrs. 8; 1637 v.  
Adams, Frances (Matthew) Richmond, Surrey; 1679  
Addams, Anne (Thomas) 112; 1661  
Addams, Anne (Thomas) 17; 1636  
Alcroft, Anne 112; 1690  
Aleworth, Margaret 113; 1672  
Alkin, Anne (Francis) 15; 1670  
Alkins, Elizabeth 112; 1680 v.  
Allen, Hannah (William) 114; 1679  
Allen, Winnifred (John) 15; 1662  
Allin, Mrs. 1; 1680 v.  
Allred, Grace (Thomas) 98; 1617.  
Annett, Alice (Nicholas) 39; 1676 s.m.w.  
Anson, Anne West Ham, Essex; 1679  
Appleby, Joan (Richard) St. Mary Newington; n.d.  
Arderne, Jane n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
Arnett, Elizabeth (William) 91; 1616  
Ashley, Mrs. 112; 1669 v.  
Ashley, Elizabeth (Thomas) 116; 1664  
Ashwell, Anne 54; 1633  
Askew, Ramath 113; 1685

Asterley, Mary (Thomas) 65; 1687  
 Atkins, Elizabeth n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Atkinson, Priscilla (Gregory) 93; 1619  
 Atkinson, Sara 103; 1637 v.  
 Atkinson, Anne (John) 98; 1662  
 Austen, Andrea (Robert) 3; 1628  
 Austin, Francis n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Awcett, Elizabeth (William) 119; 1619  
 Aynsworth, Civil (Robert) 114; 1616  
 Ayre, Elizabeth 107; 1664

## B

Bacon, Alice (Robert) Edmonton; 1676 s.m.w.  
 Bacon, Elizabeth n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Baker, Rebecca (Nathaniel) 112; 1675  
 Baldwin, Ann 113; 1664 v.  
 Banton, Ann 85; 1611  
 Banbury, Jane 99; 1640  
 Banton, Eleanor (Robert) Chelsey; 1669?  
 Barford, Anne 117; 1686  
 Barnett, Elizabeth (Richard) 102; 1662  
 Barr, Mrs. 104; 1680 v.  
 Bartlett, Elizabeth (John) 98; 1627  
 Barwick, Mrs. 118; 1669 v.  
 Basure, Mrs. 118; 1669 v.  
 Bateman, Rose (John) Herbill, Midds.; 1664  
 Bates, Mrs. 114 1669 v.  
 Baunton(Banton), Eleanor (Robert) Chelsey, Midds.; 1669  
 Baxter, 112; 1669 v.  
 Baxter, Anne 113; 1663  
 Beadnell, Joan 106; 1694  
 Bedford, Anne (Edward) 101; 1664 v.  
 Beikcon, Margaret 118; 1692  
 Belford, Mrs. 115; 1669 v.  
 Bell, Ann (William) 112; 1677  
 Bell, Jane (John) 86; 1686  
 Belson, Margaret (Thomas) 112; 1663 s.m.w.  
 Bendskin, Mrs. 31; 1669 v.  
 Benet, Sarah (John) 106; 1675  
 Benner, Grace 109; 1637 v.  
 Bennet, Frances John 115; 1697  
 Bennett, Mary 42; 1690  
 Benson, Mrs. 112; 1664 v.  
 Benson, Mary (John) 106; 1664  
 Bent, Sara 111; 1663  
 Beranger, Elizabeth 92; 1674  
 Best, Elizabeth (John) 102; 1667 s.m.w.  
 Bett, Katherine n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Bevis, Mary 98; 1662

Bickerstaffe, Elizabeth (James) 87; 1679  
 Biges, Mary 3; 1664 v. s.m.w.  
 Bingham, Mrs. 84; 1637 v.  
 Bink, Elizabeth n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Birch, Elizabeth 116; 1668  
 Eird, Anne (Richard) 109 ;n.d.  
 Bird, Anne Ouswele? 98; 1672  
 Bishop, Mrs. 101; 1680 v.  
 Bissick, Elizabeth 113; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Black, Mary 115; 1685  
 Blackborow, Bridgette 102; 1690  
 Blackett, Sara (John) 112; 1680  
 Blackmore, Mrs. n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Blague, Sarah 101; 1690  
 Blake, Mrs. 48; 1695  
 Blehemier, Elizabeth 12; 1676  
 Bleyart, Martha (Anthony) 102; 1639  
 Board, Joan (Richard) 109; 1662  
 Bogg, Anne (John) 111; 1671  
 Bolte, Debora (John) 113; 1674 s.m.w.  
 Bolton, Elizabeth 102; 1680 v.  
 Bont, Catherine (Jonas Morise) Stepney; 1688  
 Booker, Hester 98; 1634  
 Boone, Mrs. 14; 1637 v.  
 Booth, Jane (Thomas) 103; 1699  
 Booth, Winnifred (Edward) St. Ann Soho 1692  
 Boshier, Mrs. n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Botts, Katherine (Richard) Shadwell, Stepney; 1669  
 Boulton, Elizabeth 1; 1670  
 Boycott, Elizabeth (John) 109; 1636  
 Bracewell, Grace (Robert) 113; 1637 v.  
 Bradford, Anne (William) 106; 1672  
 Bradley, Anne n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Brampton, Dorothy 102; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Brandin, Mrs. 93; 1680 v.  
 Brasier, Mary (Thomas) Much Baddow; 1689  
 Brayne, Joan (William) 54; 1631  
 Brenton, Mrs. 111; 1664 v.  
 Bridge, Elizabeth (Samuel) 102; 1671  
 Bright, Elizabeth (William) 103; 1698  
 Briscoe, Susan (Frances) n.p.; 1690  
 Broadgate, Christiana Stepney; 1669 s.m.w.  
 Bromfield, Debora (William) 98; 1662  
 Bromlow, Mrs. 3; 1664 v.  
 Brooker, Joan (Edward) 111; 1620  
 Broughton, Eyton (Samuel) Lambeth, Surrey; 1700  
 Brown, Mary (Joseph) 14; 1680  
 Brown, Ann or Alice 109; 1637  
 Browne, Mrs. 112; 1680 v.

Budder, Susan 98; 1691  
 Bule, or Budd Martha 51; 1662 s.m.w.  
 Bumstead, Mrs. 104; 1637 v.  
 Bunce, Mary (Matthew) 103; 1687  
 Bunworth, Alice 98; 1671  
 Burnham, Mary (Thomas) widow Stepney 1674  
 Burrell, Alice (William) 106; 1686  
 Burton, Mary 109; 1633  
 Burton, Ellenor (John) Lambeth, Surrey; 1677  
 Burton, Mary 115; 1672  
 Bush, Elizabeth Croydon; 1679  
 Bushell, Lucy 112; 1685  
 Busie, Ann 111; 1637 v.  
 Buskell, Mary 115; 1664  
 Butcher, Margaret 111; 1637 v.  
 Butterfield, Mary 112; 1675  
 Byers, Mary (William) Walton, Surrey; 1685  
 Byrd, Alice 109; 1637 v.  
 Bysey, Elizabeth (Thomas) n.p.; 1618

## C

Cakewood, Elizabeth (Bartholomew) 109; 1666  
 Cardiffe, Jane (Charles) Lambeth, Surrey; 1685  
 Carlington, Elizabeth 54; 1637 v.  
 Carnaby, Alice 106; 1637  
 Carnell, Alice (Frances) 106; 1629  
 Carpender, Catherine 115; 1663 s.m.w.  
 Carpin, Elizabeth (Francis) widow 17; 1680  
 Carroll, Joan 114; 1637 v.  
 Carson, or Carter, Frances 102; 1676  
 Carter, Mrs. 106; 1680 v.  
 Carter, Elizabeth 113; 1664 v.  
 Carter, Mary (John) 98; 1674  
 Caulson, Elizabeth 101; (1670-73)  
 Cavere, Dorothy 79; 1671  
 Cavette, Mrs. 98; 1637 v.  
 Cayford, Emma 113; 1661  
 Ceeley, Anne George 113; 1622  
 Cellier, Elizabeth (Peter) 113; n.d.  
 Challenyse, Mary n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Chamberlain, Elizabeth 111; 1697  
 Chamberlain, or Chambers, Susan (Robert) 42; 1662  
 Chambers, Dorothy (Edward) 109; 1608  
 Champion, Joan 113; 1637 v.  
 Chanon, Joan 54; 1611  
 Chappell, Frances (Jonathan) 111; 1671  
 Charles, Edith Stepney; 1637  
 Charles, Bridgett (John) 112; 1673  
 Charneck, Sara 107; n.d. s.m.w.

Cheney, Susannah (John) 29; 1667  
Chesmore, Ursula (Edmund) 103; 1677  
Child, Elizabeth (John) 107; 1694  
Clare, Mrs. 101; 1680 v.  
Clark, Elizabeth (William) Isleworth Midds.; 1697  
Clarke, Anne (William) 111; 1622  
Clarke, Anne 92; 1673  
Clarke, Elizabeth (William) 31; 1673  
Claybrook, Audree 44; 1611  
Clayton, or Clapton 76; 1680 v.  
Cleaver, Mrs. 115; 1669 v.  
Clifton, Anne (Kellem) 87; 1619  
Cloys, Francis 102; 1666  
Coale, Katherine (John) Shadwell; 1681  
Coates, Joan n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
Cockrey, Dorothy (James) 86; 1633  
Cockson, Joan (Thomas) 106; 1661  
Coggs, Cecilia 107; 1669  
Cole, Grace n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
Coleman, Elizabeth 112; 1690  
Coles, Rachel (Benjamin) 112; 1662  
Collier, Alice (Richard) 111; 1674  
Collins, Elizabeth (Thomas) widow 98; 1662  
Collop, Barbara Lawrence 111; 1697  
Conay, Sara 113; 1664 v.  
Cooke, Elizabeth (Robert) 3; 1698  
Cooke, Jane (John) 106; 1684  
Cooke, Juliana (John?) 15; 1636  
Cooke, Margaret Chelsey; 1664  
Cooke, Mary (Richard) 115; 1669  
Cooper, Margaret (John) 103; 1616  
Cooper, Sarah (Daniel) 107; 1676  
Cooper, Anne (John) 111; 1675  
Cooper, Elizabeth (Richard) 17; 1636  
Cooper, Elizabeth (William) 112; 1663  
Cooper, Mary alias Holland 112; 1637 v.  
Cope, Margaret 111; 1675  
Cope, Mrs. 115; 1669 v.  
Coppniger, Mrs. 103; 1669 v.  
Corney, Margaret 91; 1661  
Coster, Isobel (Robert) 111; 1661  
Costin, Elizabeth (William) Newington Butts, Surrey; 1685  
Could, Mrs. 5; 1637 v.  
Cowlwell, Anne (Owen) 83; 1622  
Coxe, Ann (Henry) 15; 1613  
Coxon, or Croxon, Catherine 47; 1633  
Cozens, Elizabeth (William) 3; n.d.  
Cradle, or Cridle, Lucy 112; 1637 v.  
Cranford, or Crawford, Elizabeth (John) 113; 1629

Cranwell, Alice (Chidley) 92; 1663  
 Creed, Margaret (Frances) 98; 1619  
 Crocher, Anne (Thomas) 82; 1673  
 Crocksall Anne n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Crofford, Mrs. 85; 1664 v.  
 Crompton, Mrs. 111; 1637 v.  
 Crosley, Deborah 114; 1665  
 Crosley, Elizabeth (Robert) 103; 1673  
 Crouch Elizabeth n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Crowch, or Crouch, Ann 42; 1680 v.  
 Crowd, or Croud, Barbara (Michael) 59; 1619  
 Culpepper, Alice Stepney; 1665  
 Cumber, Rose (Roger) 104; 1610  
 Cunny, Elizabeth 115; 1671  
 Curry, Sara, 115; 1611  
 Curtis, Mary (John) Edmonton; 1697

## D

Danzey, Elizabeth 111; 1697  
 Davies, Joan (Wm.) 119; 1694  
 Davis, Elizabeth (Thomas) 43; 1662  
 Davis, Alice Stepney; 1663  
 Davis, Jane 112; 1664 v. s.m.w.  
 Dawes, Francis n.p.; n.p. s.m.w.  
 Dawling, Susan n.p.; 1674 s.m.w.  
 Dawson, Catherine (Richard) 113; 1686  
 Day, Ann 12; 1695  
 Day, Catherine Chelsey; 1664  
 de la Roche, Jaqueline 112; 1678  
 Deacon, Anne 109; 1637 v.  
 Deale, Rebecca (John) 9; 1680  
 Dean, Maryann 112; 1680 v.  
 Deane, Mary (John) 76; 1622  
 Deane, Elizabeth (Richard) St. James Weston; 1688  
 Deane, Sarah Bowe, Midds.; 1677  
 Deane, Mary 111; 1680  
 Dennis, Alice n.p.; n.d. (Aveling)  
 Dennis, Margaret (William) 111; n.d.  
 Desborow, or Digborow, Margaret (Thomas) 70 or 71; 1662  
 Desormeaux, Mary (Daniel) 111; 1680  
 Desser, Katherine 109; 1673  
 Dickenson, Ellenor 112; 1669 s.m.w.  
 Dickinson, Mrs. 118; 1669 v.  
 Dobson, Anne (William) 111; 1676  
 Dodd, or Dodson, Anne 98; 1688  
 Dodson, Margaret (Thomas) 109; 1638  
 Doman, or Dorman, Emma (Richard) 102; 1664  
 Doggett, Mary (Thos.) 112; 1671 7  
 Donne, Joan (John) 112; 1640



Dorell, Mrs. 113; 1680 v.  
 Dorrington, Faith n.p. 1671 v. (deputy m.w.)  
 Doubleday, Isobel 106; 1611  
 Douglas, Sibil (Edwin) 98; 1618  
 Dowdall, Mary (Nathaniel) Chipping Barnett, Hartford. 1664  
 Dowke, Elizabeth 99; 1661  
 Downs, Elizabeth 104; 1677  
 Drake, Rose (George) 85; 1607  
 Drake, Katherine (John) 104; 1677  
 Duckett, Mary (John) 106; 1669  
 Dunstall, Elizabeth (John) 16; 1664

## E

Eaton, Anne (Edward) 116; 1698  
 Edwards, Mary n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Edwards, Alice (Ralph) 102; 1690  
 Edwards, Susan (William) 104; 1674  
 Eggleston, Elizabeth 113; 1699  
 Elder, Elizabeth 113; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Eldridge, Alice (Richard) 109; 1667  
 Ellin, Mary n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Ellis, Mrs. 98; 1669 v.  
 Ellis, Isobel 112; 1664; 98; 1669 v.  
 Elmes, Mrs. 45; 1680 v.  
 Eley, or Ollsey, Joan Enfield; 1687  
 Elyot, Elizabeth n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Emery, Isobel (Thomas) 113; 1610  
 Evans, Elizabeth (Richard) 98; 1691  
 Evans, Helenora (Thomas) 103; 1639  
 Evans, Mary Robert St. James in the Fields; 1589  
 Everard, Margaret (George) Chelsey; 1684

## F

Farewell, Mrs. 106; 1680 v.  
 Faure, Katherine 111; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Fendele, Anne (Thomas) 115; 1679  
 Field, Jane 104 or 109; 1637 v.  
 Field, Elizabeth (Benjamin) Hexton, Herts; 1697  
 Field, Prudence 109; 1662 s.m.w.  
 Field, Mary (James) 107; 1674 s.m.w.  
 Fish, Sarah (Robert) Enfield; 1697  
 Fisher, Elizabeth 43; 1662  
 Fisher, Francis (Edward) Isleworth; 1664  
 Fletcher, Susan (Robt.) 74; 1626  
 Fletcher, Elizabeth (Leonard?) 111; 1665  
 Flewelling, Alice 92; 1687  
 Flood, Mrs. 68; 1637 v. s.m.w.  
 Flowers, Ann (James) 112; 1690  
 Floyd, Mary 89; 1666

Ford, Jane (John) 102; 1699  
 Forrest, Elizabeth (Samuel) Chelsey, 1690  
 Forshaw, Elizabeth (Thomas) 21; 1684  
 Forster, Phobe 109; 1662  
 Fortte, Anne (Edward) 112; 1618  
 Foster, Margaret n.p.; n.d. S.M.W.  
 Fowler, Joan 109; 1618  
 Fowler, Elizabeth (Joseph) 102; 1670  
 Fowler, Ann (Elias) 17; 1689  
 Fox, Alice (Richard) 101; 1678  
 Fox, Jane (Thomas) Fulham, Midds.; 1696  
 Francis, Elizabeth n.p.; 1690  
 Franck, Mrs. 98; 1669 v.  
 Franklin, Sara St. 32; 1632  
 Friend alias Hagger, Isobel n.p.; 1664  
 Fuller, Susan 1; 1661

## G

Garland, Mary 104; 1685  
 Garret, Mary 54; 1681  
 Garrote, Sara n.p.; 1627  
 Gasker, Elizabeth (William) 17; 1636  
 Gee, Elizabeth Fulham; 1675  
 Geery, Katherin (William) 109; 1662  
 George, Martha 112; 1670 (Martha Maye in 1680 v.)  
 Gibbons, Elizabeth (Richard) 113; 1679  
 Gilbank, alias Bancke (Robert) 54; 1617  
 Gilderson, Elizabeth (William) 85; 1611  
 Giles, Elizabeth 38; 1680 v.  
 Gillam, Elenor, (Anthony) 87; 1637 v.  
 Gill, Anne High Barnet; 1664  
 Girlington, Elizabeth (John) 54; 1628  
 Glasse, Mary (Walter) New Brentford; 1664  
 Glover, alias Strackley, Deborah 35; 1672 S.M.W.  
 Glover, Isobel (Nathaniel) 42; 1637  
 Goal, Anne 112; 1677  
 Godderd, Agnes (Robert) 117; 1608  
 Godfrey, Mary (John) n.p.; 1700  
 Godwin, Elizabeth (Thomas) 107; 1692  
 Goff, Mrs. 64; 1637 v.  
 Goodwin, Anne 15; 1663  
 Gossett, Mary 100; 1699  
 Goswell, Catherine (John) 98; 1689  
 Gould, Mrs. 109; 1680 v.  
 Grainger, Alice (John) 1; 1693  
 Grant, Francis 31; 1680 v.  
 Grasely, Mary Lower Shadwell, Stepney; 1669  
 Greene, Agnes (William) 112; 1617  
 Greene, Mary (Edward) 9; 1680

Greene, Mrs. 93; 1669 v.  
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 Welch, Rebecca (John) 98; 1688  
 West, Ann 113; 1640  
 Westwood, Mrs. 116; 1669 v.  
 Wetherby, Lucy (John) 111; 1690  
 Wharse, Margaret n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Wharton, Elizabeth (Richard) 106; 1661  
 Wharton, Elizabeth (Charles) 112; 1663

Wheeler, Mrs. 112; 1680 v.  
 Wheatley, Elizabeth (John) 115; 1619  
 Wheeler, Mary (Robert) 118; 1697  
 Wheeler, Joan Shadwell Stepney; 16664  
 Whippe, Elizabeth (Robert) 31; 1622  
 Whisher, Brigid 98; 1680 v.  
 White, Ann (Richard) 107; 1662  
 White, Susan Stepney; 1695  
 White, Anne 83; 1626  
 White, Francis (John) Stepney; 1626  
 White, Lucy 112; 1664  
 White, Mary (William) 17; 1689  
 Whithington, 112; n.d. s.m.w.  
 Whiting, Elizabeth 112; 1672  
 Whitehorne, Elizabeth (John) 59; 1677  
 Whyborough, Dorothy (Roger) Southweald, Essex; 1664  
 Whyte, Elizabeth (Humphrey) St. Paul Shadwell; 1675  
 Wickes, Elizabeth (Edward) 117; 1673 s.m.w.  
 Wicks, Elizabeth 112; 1692  
 Wicks, Catherine, 106; 1630  
 Wicks, Mrs. 113; 1680 v.  
 Wiggins Rebecca (Richard) 112; 1664  
 Wigly, or Wigby, Gertrude (Thomas) 111; 1662  
 Wilder, Hanna (Henry) 103; 1683  
 Wilkes, Dorcas (Roger) 43; 1684  
 Wilkins, Sarah (Robert) 54; 1682  
 Wilkins, Mrs. n.p.; n.d. (Percival Willughby)  
 Wilkinson, Isabel (Lynton) 98; 1609  
 Willcox, Elizabeth (John) 98; 1687  
 Williams, Mrs. 102; 1637 v.  
 Williams, Mary (Thomas) n.p.; 1697  
 Williams, Susanna (Edward) Watcliffe, Stepney; 1608  
 Willis, Margaret (Gregory) 115; 1631  
 Williscott, Margaret 103; 1666  
 Willoughby, Margaret 112; 1639  
 Wills, Elizabeth (Thomas) Stepney; 1663  
 Willson, Anne 113; 1663  
 Wilson, Mary (George) 68; 1637 v.  
 Wilson, Debora 104; 1677  
 Wilton, Catherine 37; 1630  
 Winchester, Hannah (Daniel) 104; 1699  
 Winchurch, or Winhurst Elizabeth (Walter?) Stepney; 1663  
 Winckles, Jane (Jonathan) 35; 1679  
 Withers, Elizabeth n.p.; 1673  
 Wood, Mary 112; 1685  
 Wooden, Jone (James) 109; 1664 s.m.w.  
 Woodford, Sara (John) 7; 1684  
 Woodward, Elizabeth (Joseph) Kingston on Thames, Surrey; 1684  
 Woole, Anne (John) 112; 1680

Wright, Anne Rampton; n.d. s.m.w.  
Wright, Sara 49; 1664 v.  
Wright, Barbara (Edward) 98; 1690  
Wright, Mary (Thomas) 112; 1671  
Wright, Susan 115; 1698  
Wynn, Elizabeth (William) Hampton; 1697

## Y

Yarwood, Joan n.p.; n.d. s.m.w.  
Yates, Phillis (William) Navestock; 1664  
Yates, Elizabeth (Robert) 47; 1685  
Young, Dionitia (Dennys) Enfield; 1675  
Younger, Hannah (Alexander) 60; 1676



## Appendix B

## Parishes Within the Wall

- 1 Allhallows Barking
- 2 Allhallows Bread Street
- 3 Allhallows the Great
- 4 Allhallows Honey Lane
- 5 Allhallows the Less
- 6 Allhallows Lombard Street
- 7 Allhallows London Wall
- 8 Allhallows Staining
- 9 Christ Church
- 10 Holy Trinity the Less
- 11 St. Alban Wood Street
- 12 St. Alphage
- 13 St. Andrew Hubbard
- 14 St. Andrew Undershaft
- 15 St. Andrew by the Wardrobe
- 16 St. Anne and St. Agnes Aldersgate
- 17 St. Anne Blackfriars
- 18 St. Antholin
- 19 St. Augustine
- 20 St. Bartholomew by the Exchange
- 21 St. Benet Fink
- 22 St. Benet Gracechurch
- 23 St. Benet Paul's Wharf
- 24 St. Benet Sherehog
- 25 St. Botolph Billingsgate
- 26 St. Christopher le Stocks
- 27 St. Clement Eastcheap
- 28 St. Dionis Backchurch
- 29 St. Dunstan in the East
- 30 St. Edmund Lombard Street
- 31 St. Ethelburga
- 32 St. Faith under St. Paul's
- 33 St. Gabriel Fenchurch
- 34 St. George Botolph Lane
- 35 St. Gregory by St. Paul's
- 36 St. Helen
- 37 St. James Duke's Palace
- 38 St. James Garlickhithe
- 39 St. John the Baptist
- 40 St. John the Evangelist
- 41 St. John Zachary
- 42 St. Katherine Coleman
- 43 St. Katherine Cree
- 44 St. Lawrence Jewry
- 45 St. Lawrence Pountney

- 46 St. Leonard Eastcheap
- 47 St. Leonard Foster Lane
- 48 St. Magnus the Martyr
- 49 St. Margaret Lothbury
- 50 St. Margaret Moses
- 51 St. Margaret New Fish Street
- 52 St. Margaret Pattens
- 53 St. Martin Ironmonger Lane
- 54 St. Martin Ludgate
- 55 St. Martin Orgar
- 56 St. Martin Outwich
- 57 St. Martin Vintry
- 58 St. Mary Abchurch
- 59 St. Mary Aldermanbury
- 60 St. Mary Aldermary
- 61 St. Mary Bothaw
- 62 St. Mary le Bow
- 63 St. Mary Colechurch
- 64 St. Mary at Hill
- 65 St. Mary Magdalen Milk Street
- 66 St. Mary Magdalen Old Fish Street
- 67 St. Mary Mounthaw
- 68 St. Mary Somerset
- 69 St. Mary Staining
- 70 St. Mary Woolchurch
- 71 St. Mary Woolnoth
- 72 St. Matthew Friday Street
- 73 St. Michael Bassishaw
- 74 St. Michael Cornhill
- 75 St. Michael Crooked Lane
- 76 St. Michael Queenhithe
- 77 St. Michael le Querne
- 78 St. Michael Paternoster Royal
- 79 St. Michael Wood Street
- 80 St. Mildred Bread Street
- 81 St. Mildred Poultry
- 82 St. Nicholas Acons
- 83 St. Nicholas Cole Abbey
- 84 St. Nicholas Olave
- 85 St. Olave Hart Street
- 86 St. Olave Old Jewry
- 87 St. Olave Silver Street
- 88 St. Pancras Soper Lane
- 89 St. Peter Westcheap
- 90 St. Peter Cornhill
- 91 St. Peter Paul's Wharf
- 92 St. Peter le Poor
- 93 St. Stephen Coleman Street
- 94 St. Stephen Walbrook

- 95 St. Swithin
- 96 St. Thomas the Apostle
- 97 St. Vedast

#### Parishes Outside the Wall

- 98 St. Andrew Holborn
- 99 St. Bartholomew the Great
- 100 St. Bartholomew the Less
- 101 St. Botolph without Aldersgate
- 102 St. Botolph without Aldgate
- 103 St. Botolph without Bishopsgate
- 104 St. Bride
- 105 Bridewell Precinct
- 106 St. Dunstan in the West
- 107 St. Giles without Gripplegate
- 108 St. Olave Southwark
- 109 St. Sepulchre
- 110 Whitefriars Precinct
- 111 St. Giles in the Fields
- 112 St. Martin in the Fields
- 113 St. Clement Danes
- 114 St. Leonard Shoreditch
- 115 St. Mary Matfellow / Whitechapel
- 116 St. Mary Savoy
- 117 St. James Clerkenwell
- 118 St. Paul Covent Gardens
- 119 St. Mary Islington

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