

Criminal Lunatics

HO 20/13 (PRO, Kew)

**Bethlem Hospital and
County Asylums, 1799-1843**

Indexed by Stuart Tamblin

Introduction

I have been visiting the Public Record Office since 1989 when I investigated the story of my great great great grandmother who had been convicted of larceny in 1825. More recently, I have been involved in researching the military careers of various relations. As a result of this work, I have compiled a database from which this microfiche index has been produced.

HO 20/13 is a box containing three books. One is a register of criminal lunatics and the names of all inmates recorded therein have been included in this publication. In the original, a few others are named, such as doctors and prison warders.

The book reads from both ends. At one end, there is a register of the inmates of Bethlem Hospital (the original "Bedlam"). The nominal dates covered are 1819-1841 but dates in the period 1799-1843 are evident. Although many entries just give the basic details which are reproduced here, some patients' case histories are recorded. These can run to a good paragraph or even a whole page.

Turning the book over, we find a ruled register recording the criminal lunatics held at institutions other than Bethlem. These are the "County" and the "Licensed" Asylums. Dates are similar, being 1800-1839.

Layout of the index

The surname and forename are shown offset to the left and the remainder of the details are given on four lines. At the top is shown "Bethlem Hospital" or is shown "Lunatic Asylum" followed by a name. This is usually a county or suburban asylum but is sometimes the name of an individual or partners having charge of a private establishment. Occasionally, a patient is shown as being discharged into the care of a relative. At the far right is the date of the register entry. On the next line, "Entry" gives information about the date of arrival at the current establishment. This is not often shown to be any different from the date of the register entry but can be so in the case of re-admission or a long history. "From" indicates a person's previous whereabouts. This may be a committing court or previous prison.

The next line gives the date of birth (in 20% of cases). Lastly, "Notes" gives details on crimes and aliases. Anybody with an alias is indexed under all their names with full cross-referencing.

If an entry of interest is found in this index, then it is recommended that the original document be viewed. Also, it is very likely that a person will be found in other records. Therefore, it may be of use to research other, similar, classes of record. "Criminal Ancestors" by David T Hawkings, published by Alan Sutton, Stroud, in 1992, gives details of all types of records relating to criminals in repositories throughout England & Wales.

The Public Record Office document reference number is made up of three parts. The initial lettercode relates to the department in which the document originated. The first number indicates the class, which is a collection of documents of the same type. After the oblique stroke (slash), the other number refers to the actual document within the class. The full reference (eg HO 27/5) is required when you wish to order an item to be seen at Kew.

Any extracts from or references to this index should please make full reference to Stuart Tamblin as compiler and indexer. Please quote the full PRO piece number with any extracts.

Sample

Smith	Lunatic Asylum Worcester	Aug 1829
Benjamin	Entry: From: Worcester Date of Birth: Notes: assault	
Smith	Lunatic Asylum Bedfordshire	
Charles	Entry: From: Bedford Date of Birth: Notes: offence against the game laws	
Smith	Lunatic Asylum Gloucestershire	1838
Edmund	Entry: From: Gloucester Date of Birth: Notes:	
Smith	Lunatic Asylum Surrey	1837
Hannah	Entry: From: Stafford Date of Birth: Notes:	
Smith	Bethlem Hospital	26 Sep 1819
Jane	Entry: From: Old Bailey Date of Birth: c1796 Notes:	
Smith	Bethlem Hospital	Apr 1821
Jane	Entry: From: Old Bailey Date of Birth: c1795 Notes:	
Smith	Bethlem Hospital	Jun 1821
Mary	Entry: From: Old Bailey Date of Birth: c1795 Notes:	