

The Bookworm

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The Family Tree Detective : Tracing Your Ancestors In England and Wales. 3rd ed. / Colin Darlington Rogers. Manchester: Manchester University Press, c1997. Has recently been purchased for the library and is reviewed here by Betty Warburton

According to the parish register, John, son of Thos. and Elizabeth Bliss, was baptized on July 24, 1783. On May 23, 1783 John Bliss was buried. Wait a minute! He can't be buried before he is baptized, or can he?

Further research revealed that a second son of Thomas and Elizabeth by the name of John was baptized and buried in 1786 and a third son also named John was baptized in 1794. This third John lived to marry and have children. So I am reasonably certain that a mistake was made entering the dates in the register in 1783. I turned to Colin Rogers' manual, *The Family Tree Detective*, for an explanation of this discrepancy in dates. On page 97 I found a possible explanation. At that time, apparently, many clergymen had a practice of keeping a 'first draft' of entries for the register on scraps of paper. I suspect that this was the practice of this curate and that he misread or misfiled his notes.

Colin Rogers has divided this useful genealogy handbook into five sections. The *Introduction* is about starting and organizing a family history. In the second section, *Looking for parents*, he discusses birth certificates, from 1837 to the present day. The failure to find a birth entry in the indexes or finding more than one possible birth and alternative sources, such as military or education records, are all examined in detail. Census records, since they list whole families, are included in this section. Next Mr. Rogers deals with church baptism from 1538 to the present day and its many pitfalls. And finally he discusses the problems of finding births in the Middle Ages and suggests many alternative sources. The sections, *Looking for marriages* and *Looking for deaths*, are handled in a similar manner. The *Epilogue* is a brief discussion of the Federation of Family History Societies. Appendices include *Registration districts of England and Wales* (with their addresses), *Registration districts abolished or renamed since 1929* and *Employing professional help*. There is an index and extensive bibliographical references.

There is a wealth of information in this scholarly publication. Heartily recommended for the advanced genealogist or for someone who has come up against a roadblock in his search for ancestors. ©