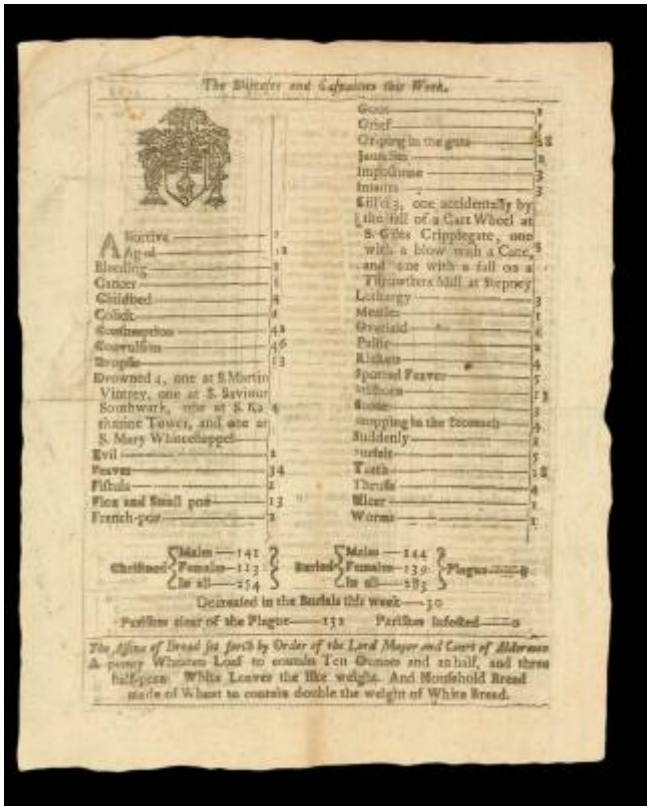


The Diseases and Casualties this Week.

Abortive — 7
Aged — 12
Bleeding — 1
Cancer — 1
Childbed — 4
Colick — 1
Consumption — 42
Convulsion — 46
Dropsie — 13
Drowned 4, one at S. Martin Vintry, one at S. Saviour Southwark, one at S. Katharine Tower, and one at S. Mary Whitechapel — 4
Evil — 1
Feaver — 34
Fistula — 1
Flux and Small pox — 13
French-pox — 2

Gout — 1
Grief — 4
Griping in the guts — 58
Jaundice — 8
Impostume — 3
Infants — 3
Kill'd 3, one accidentally by the fall of a Cart Wheel at S. Giles Cripplegate, one with a blow with a Cane, and one with a fall on a Tilt-wathers Mill at Stepney — 3
Lethargy — 3
Measles — 1
Overlaid — 6
Palsie — 2
Rickets — 4
Spotted Feaver — 5
Stone — 13
Stopping in the Stomach — 3
Suddenly — 4
Surfeit — 5
Teeth — 38
Thrush — 4
Ulcer — 1
Worms — 1

Christned: Males — 141, Females — 113, In all — 254
Buried: Males — 144, Females — 139, In all — 283
Plague — 8

Decreased in the Burials this week — 30
Parishes clear of the Plague — 131 Parishes Infected — 9

The Assize of Bread set forth by Order of the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen A penny Wheaten Loaf to contain Ten Ounces and an half, and three halfpence White Loaves the like weight. And Houshold Bread made of Wheat to contain double the weight of White Bread.

Handbill, printed on both sides.

DYING IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY LONDON

The Diseases and Casualties this Week. London 26.

Author
[BILL OF MORTALITY (Weekly)]

Publication date
From 5. August to the 12., 1679.

Publisher
Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks],

Publication place
[London,

Physical description
Handbill, printed on both sides.

Dimensions
220 by 180mm (8.75 by 7 inches).

Notes
One of the first examples of serious gathering of medical statistics in England. An alphabetic census of the different diseases and the number of deaths caused, on one side, and the number of deaths per parish on the other.

Since 1593, each of the parishes of London compiled a weekly census recording the births and

baptisms of their population. From the early 1660s, ‘Bills of Mortality’ [as here] were introduced to provide statistics on deaths caused by the plague. Until the 1830s they were the main source of mortality statistics.

This Bill, for the second week of August, 1679, reveals a striking statistic: of the total 579 bodies buried, only 208 were Christened. As only 14 babies were stillborn, the remainder must therefore have been itinerant and christened elsewhere, or of other faiths. The most disproportionate rates of death recorded (Christened versus un-Christened) occurred in the parishes “without the walls”, and in Middlesex and Surrey. Since “Griping of the guts” resulted in one hundred and sixty-one deaths, unsanitary conditions at the height of the summer heat may have made an overwhelming contribution. Many others died of Consumption (59), or Convulsion (75), or Feaver (62), but three drowned, and six were “Kill’d”. Of these latter, “one at S. Martin in the fields, one with a Sword at S. Dunstan in the West, two by a damp in a Well at S. Saviour Southward, and two by a wonderful flash of Lightening and Thunder at S. Mary Newington”. No one died of the plague.

Soon scholars, such as John Graunt (1620-1674), most famously in his ‘Natural and political observations mentioned in a following index and made upon the bills of mortality…with reference to the government, religion, trade, growth, ayre, diseases, and the several changes of the said city’ (1662), were making observations and drawing conclusions from these statistics. Gaunt “was the first to recognize the importance of vital statistics and the need for reducing them to order, which he found to be possible by mathematical calculation, leading to important conclusions on the social and economic conditions of the people…” (PMM).

Rare. A survey of OCLC reveals only a handful of surviving examples (Bloomington Lilly Library, Indiana; Dartmouth; Edinburgh; Folger Shakespeare Library; Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel; National Library of Medicine, Bethesda; Oxford; Yale), and we are unable to trace an example for sale at public auction.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 18126

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