

Mrs Collins

County of ~~Down~~ ^{Down}

of the Parish of ~~St Mary Magdalen~~ ^{St Mary Magdalen} ~~Bermundoo~~ ^{Bermundoo} maketh Oath, That ~~for and for the~~ ^{for and for the} ~~County of Down~~ ^{County of Down} in the

lately Deceased, was not put in, wrapt or wound up, or Bried, in any Shirt, Shift, Sheet or Sroud, made or mingled with Flax, Hemp, Silk, Hair, Gold or Silver, or other than what is made of Sheeps Wooll only; nor in any Coffin lined or faced with any Cloth, Stuff, or any other thing whatsoever, made or mingled with Flax, Hemp, Silk, Hair, Gold or Silver, or any other Material contrary to the late Act of Parliament for Burying in Woollen, but Sheeps Wooll only. Dated the 22 day of ~~November~~ ^{the fifth} ~~in the fifth~~ ^{Year of the} ~~Reign of our Sovereign lady Ann Queen~~ ^{Year of the} of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defended of the Faith &c. And in the Year of our Lord God, 1706



Sealed and Subscribed by us who were present, and Witnesses to the Swearing of the abovesaid Affidavit,

I ~~John Lewis Esquire~~ ^{John Lewis Esquire} one of her majesties Justices of the Peace for the sd County

do hereby Certify, that the Day and Year abovesaid, the said ~~John Collins~~ ^{John Collins} came before me, and made such Affidavit as is abovementioned, according to the said late Act of Parliament, Intituled, *An Act for Burying in Woollen*. Witnesses my Hand the Day and Year above-written

John Collins

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For Table of Contents see page two of cover

Burial in Woollen

WE present our readers with a reproduction of a certificate of burial in woollen, taken from the Southwark M.M. papers, deposited in **D**. The original is endorsed: "An Colens [her mark only] giues in a Child aged 3 yeare ould an a hafe with the Confolchens in the Bouels."

The first Act "for burying in woollen" came into force in 1666, and was followed in 1678 by another with more stringent provisions, as detailed in the quotation from Oliver Heywood. The Act came before the Six Weeks Meeting of London on the 30th of Fifth Month, 1678, and was thus dealt with:

The Act for burying in Wollen being presented to the Consideration of this Meeting—Doe agree: that the Compliance therewith as to burying in wollen is a civill matter, & fit to be done—and to procuring the makeing oath thereof they meddle not therewth but Leave it to friends freedome in the Truth, & this to be sent to each Monthly Meeting.

Many instances of Friends' obedience to the law in this respect are on record. The Wandsworth Registers in **D** note this and there are several certificates extant.

Book iii. of the Registers of Bengoe, co. Herts., is a record of burials in woollen, 1672 to 1812, and includes the entries of burials in the Friends' burial ground (*Middlesex and Hertfordshire Notes and Queries*, iii. 14). See

Satterthwaite's *Colthouse Records*, 1914; Longstaff's *Langstaffs*, 1906, p. 49; Reynolds's *Quaker Wooing*, 1905, p. 40. A reproduction of an affidavit (non-Quaker), dated 1714, appears in *Antiquarian Notes*, iii., 117 (1904), edited by G. Eyre Evans.¹ See also THE JOURNAL, v. 173.

The following extract is from the *Diaries* of Oliver Heywood (1630-1702), printed in 1881, vol. ii., p. 194 :

At the Parlt. begun at Westminster 8 of May, 1661, by several prorogations, adjournments continued till 15 of July, 1678: An Act for Burying in Woollen. The former act made in 18 year of Reign ineffectual for lessening the importation of linnen from beyond sea and encouragement of woollen and paper manufactures in this kingdom, but unobserved—repealed, this inforce from Aug. 1, 1678, from thence no corpse must be interred in any shirt, shift, sheet or shroud made or mingled with flax, hemp, silk, hair, gold or silver or any stuff other than is made of sheeps wool, or be put into any coffin, lead faced, with anything but made of sheeps wool only upon pain of forfeiture of 5 li. All persons in holy orders—keep a register of persons buried in their precincts. One or more of the relations shall within 8 days after make affidavit under the hands and seales of two or more credible witnesses . . . that the person was not buried in linnen . . . persons dying of the plague are excepted.

Heywood cites a case of a Friend who disregarded the law in the hope of personal benefit :

Abraham Hodgson near Halifax, a quaker buried a daughter in linnen, gave 50 sh to the poor according to the act, went to Justice ffarrer, informed him of it, and claimed the other 50 sh to himself being informer, but Dr. Hook after got hold of it, makes for that latter 50 sh to himself as informer, prosecutes the business with much zeal—*Diaries*, ii. 260.

The Act was repealed in 1814.

¹ The editor mentions the case of Mrs. Ann Oldfield, "buried in Westminster Abbey in 1730, who was by her express request wrapped 'in a very fine Brussels lace headdress, a holland shift with a tucker and double ruffles of the same lace and a pair of new kid gloves, and was then wrapped in a winding sheet of fine linen.' Her posthumous vanity has been immortalised by Pope in the well-known lines—

'Odious! in woollen! 'twould a saint provoke
(Were the last words that poor Narsissa spoke);
No, let a charming chintz and Brussels lace
Wrap my cold limbs and shade my lifeless face.'"