

**Norfolk Chronicle 22 January & Reading Mercury, 24
January 1780**

Original wording retained; the long “f” is rendered as “s”, and words split across lines have been joined.

On Friday se’nnight the coroner’s inquest sat on the body of the female infant, which was found the preceding day in the river near Trinity-college, Cambridge.—It appeared on the inquest, that the body of the infant was found about eleven o’clock on Thursday morning, by a boy who went to the boggs, Mr. Bond, surgeon, deposed, that he examined the body, when he found the head swelled and bruised, the skull fractured in several places; that on opening the body, the lungs appeared distended, and were on trial specifically lighter than water; and that he is of opinion the child was born alive, and received its death by the wounds in the head.

Esther Hall, the wife of William Hall, brewer to Trinity-college, whose dwelling-house is within the college gates, at no great distance from the place where the child was found, deposed, that her niece, Elizabeth Butchill, had lived about three years with her in the capacity of a bed-maker in the said college; that about three o’clock in the morning of the 6th inst. she heard her niece groan very much, and getting up to enquire into the cause, found her complaining of a violent cholic; that she heated some pepper-mint water, &c. and gave to her, with some hot flannels, which seemed to give her ease; that about six in the morning, the said Esther Hall went to college, leaving her niece in bed, where she found her on her return about ten o’clock.

William Hall, husband to the last witness, deposed, that when he heard a child had been found, he then suspected the said Elizabeth Butchill, and sent for a surgeon to examine her. After hearing

these depositions, the coroner's inquest adjourned to Monday, when the voluntary examination of the said Elizabeth Butchill, taken before the Mayor and Dr. Ewin, was read to the jury, wherein she confessed that she was delivered of a female child on Thursday morning about half past six o'clock, by herself; that the child cried some little time after its birth; and that in a short time after, about 20 minutes, she herself carried the said infant, and threw it down one of the holes of the necessary into the river, and buried the placenta, &c. in the dunghill near the house.

Upon this evidence the jury brought in their verdict wilful murder, but did not charge Elizabeth Butchill as the mother; she will therefore be committed to the castle on her own confession, as soon as she can be removed with safety.

Cambridge General Advertiser, 13 April 1850

EXECUTION OF THE LAST FEMALE IN CAMBRIDGE.

The last female that was executed at Cambridge, in a place called the Gallows Hole, at the County Gaol, was Elizabeth Butchill. She was a native of Saffron Walden, and lived for a considerable time with her aunt, who was a bedmaker belonging to Trinity College. Till the unhappy affair which brought her to an ignominious end, she was generally esteemed for the decency and modesty of her conduct; and it is to be lamented that a mistaken fear of shame should have induced her to commit an action at which nature shudders—the destruction of her own offspring.

On Friday the 7th of January, 1780, about eleven in the morning, the body of a new born female was found in the river near Trinity College bogs, which was immediately taken out, and a coroner's

jury summoned to sit upon the body. Mr. Bond, a surgeon, deposed that the child was born alive; that the head was much swollen and bruised and the skull fractured in several places, and that the infant's death was caused by the wounds in the head. The jury returned a verdict of Wilful Murder against Elizabeth Butchill, who was committed to the Castle; and in her voluntary confession, taken before the mayor and Dr. Ewin, she stated that she was delivered of a female child on Thursday morning, about half-past six o'clock, by herself; that the child cried some little time after its birth, and in about twenty minutes after, she herself threw the infant down one of the holes into the river, previously dashing its head against the wall.

She was tried before Judge Buller on her own confession, and, many corroborating circumstances appearing in evidence, the jury found her Guilty. The judge passed sentence on her in a very pathetic and affecting manner, when the unhappy culprit, in extreme agony, solicited mercy; but the judge told her that, as she had been deaf to the cries of the innocent, no mercy could be extended to her in this world; he therefore exhorted her to seek for a sincere repentance. He then sentenced her to be executed on the following Friday, and her body anatomised.