Dear Sir,

Population change in Moreton Say

Mr. Jones warned his readers at the beginning of his article (L.P.S. No. 1) that the statistical bases of several of the tables he used were of an inadequate size (page 7). Indeed some of his statistics are based on absurdly small samples, e.g. the mean age at first marriage of farmers married during 1701-1720 is based on one case. If however, one confines one's attention to findings based on more or less adequate samples (say 50 or more) the following conclusions emerge:-

(1) The mean completed family size of farmers for the whole period 1681-1820 was about 5.1 (Total number 59), while that of labourers was about 4.7 (Total number 118).

(2) The average age at first marriage of farmer's wives was somewhat lower than that of labourers for the whole period 1701-1840 - a mean of 26.49 (total number 70) as against 28.10 (total number 105.).

(3) The mean age at first marriage of all women rose from 27.2 during 1701-1780 (total number 60) to 27.8 in 1781-1840 (total number 115).

(4) The mean age at first marriage of labourers' wives fell from 28.7 in 1701-1800 (total number 53) to 28.0 in 1801-1840 (total number 52).

(5) Child mortality had fallen from 168/1,000 in 1701-1720 (total number 196) to 86/1,000 in 1801-1820 (total number 256).

(6) The child mortality rate amongst farmers' families was significantly higher than that amongst labourers for the whole period 1691-1831, namely 171/1,000 as against 128/1,000.

If one were asked to generalise about the demographic history of the parish of Moreton Say during the eighteenth century on the
basis of these findings one might conclude as follows:-

(a) The differences in fertility and marriage partners between farmers and labourers were relatively insignificant, and the differences which do occur are in the direction of higher fertility amongst farmers.

(b) There was no significant change in the mean age at marriage of women during the eighteenth century.

(c) Inasmuch as fertility of labourers' families was lower than that of farmers, the social structural growth of labourers as a proportion of the total population would tend to reduce fertility (the same argument applies to labourers' wives higher mean age at first marriage).

(d) Child mortality fell very significantly during the eighteenth century, which directly contradicts Jones's conclusion that "the burial rate ... seems to have been less important in the overall demographic context".

(e) Child mortality amongst farmers' families was significantly higher than that amongst labourers, contradicting the Malthusian assumption that economic factors must influence mortality by raising it under conditions of relative poverty.

**Smallpox in Winchester**

With reference to Mr. W.H. Boorman's article on 'Smallpox in Eighteenth Century Winchester', there are just one or two particular points that I would like to make. I have somewhat modified my view about the possibility of inoculation spreading smallpox since I wrote the *Economic History Review* article (1); my new position will be expounded at some length in a forthcoming book. I now believe that inoculation did occasionally spread smallpox, but only on very rare occasions when the inoculation was a very severe one producing effects similar to natural smallpox. I have always accepted that contemporaries unanimously believed that inoculation spread smallpox, but have argued that this was because they believed it to be a form of natural smallpox rather than because of observations they made about the spread of smallpox from inoculation (evidence on the actual rarity of inoculation spreading smallpox will be found in my book).