Local Population Studies

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Spring 1989
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EDITORIAL

Registration: a modern service. The government’s proposals for the revision of the registration service and access to registration records

So much is turning green these days perhaps we can be forgiven for promising our readers a White Paper on the registration service (see LPS 40 and 41), only to find when Registration: A Modern Service (Cm 531) arrived in December that it was green. Of course we welcome this change of colour through which we have gained an official consultation period and, in theory at least, a prospect of altering minds before these proposals assume the form in which they are to be placed before Parliament. It is unfortunate that the deadline for comment on the Green Paper, March 31st, was so tight. It will preclude many organisations and individuals with an interest in the subject from expressing their views; and this we know from some of our readers was exacerbated by the difficulties some people experienced in obtaining copies of the document from HMSO. Nor has there been much press comment. Not even Edwina Currie, who introduced the Green Paper to the media, could save it from obscurity once the implications of the new provisions for ‘designer marriages’ had been exploited.

In LPS 40 we described in some detail contents of the report which preceded the Green Paper. The importance of this report is now clear; in almost every respect the Green Paper follows its recommendations. Administrative responsibility for the new service, at present divided uneasily between Central and Local Government, will be placed unequivocally with the Local Authorities. The Registrar General will continue to provide technical guidance but the County Councils, Metropolitan Districts and London Boroughs will determine premises and staffing and the staff will be Local Government Officers. Funding on the other hand will continue to be shared between fees collected by the Local Authorities underpinned by block grant allocation from Central Government. Overall it is the Government’s intention to ensure that the proposals contained in the Green Paper do not increase the cost of the service, which in 1986-7 incurred expenditure of £31 million against a fee income of £11 million. Savings will be made through a reduction in the number of professional staff and a more flexible use of staff time but these savings will be balanced initially against the increases in costs which Local Authorities will incur in implementing the new measures. It is however the Government’s view that increased fee income will cover these costs.

This point takes on profound significance for those interested in access to the historic registration records when it is recognised that much of a Local Authority’s new cost burden could be the price of implementing the Green Paper’s recommendations for access to the historical records. All this expenditure will have to be recouped from fee income. Like the Working Group
Report, the Green Paper steers clear of publishing quantified forecasts either for income or for expenditure, though we assume some calculations must have been made. Perhaps it was considered tactically unwise to reveal the level at which fees will have to be pitched to pay for the service. However we are warned in paragraph 7.11 that one of the charges which is to be levied, in this case a new one, for admission to the public search room to consult the indexes, should produce not only 'revenue to help fund the facilities there' but also should deter 'the merely curious from entering it and so adding to the frequent congestion'. Surely an invitation to push the admission fee above the nominal level which, if any fee has to be charged, would be all that could be justified by the quality and scope of the facilities which are likely to be offered. (Our estimate which is based on the cost of providing a London search room as stated in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report, and adjusted for inflation, is that a charge of sixty - seventy pence per visit would be adequate to meet present needs). In any case where is the evidence that the present search room attracts casual visitors who have no serious purpose there? We are reminded of the observation in the Efficiency Scrutiny Report which gave so much offence to Genealogists describing them as using the London Search Room to 'browse through the indexes'. Are the 'browsers' of 1985 now the 'merely curious'? Has there been a survey identifying the proportion of the search room's 500,000 annual visitors who fall within this category? If so what criteria were used in making such a judgement? We are concerned that such people if they exist at all should not be confused with the first time user or other novice who may indeed appear disoriented and lacking in clearly articulated objectives to the often charmless though no doubt overworked officials who staff St Catherine's House to whom he or she may turn for help. No doubt many other public servants would like the protection of a deterrent fee between them and the public at large but it is no more justified here than it would be in a library or indeed in a job centre or any other public facility.

The fees to be charged in the central search room will be determined nationally as will the charges for 'standard' services. As at present there will be no fee for actual registration. The Green Paper is committed to the principle of leaving Local Authorities free to charge what the market will bear for enhanced and extra services particularly in connection with marriage. It was this development coupled with the Green Paper's relaxation of the present restrictions on where marriages can take place which gave the press their headlines when the Green Paper was first announced to the public. But the subject was soon forgotten. Neither the day to day procedural changes in the registration service advocated by the Green Paper nor the radical changes proposed for access to the registration records have attracted serious comment or debate so far. It is hoped that the registration authorities, the professional associations, the unions and the consumer organisations will scrutinize and comment on the new developments and that the record using public will make its views heard. The Secretary of State for Health sought comment on the Green Paper by 31st March but no doubt the deadline is not totally rigid. In any case the issues raised by the Green Paper need to be taken up with Members of both Houses of Parliament in preparation for the White Paper which we understand will follow at the end of the year.
We shall confine our observations to the Green Paper's proposals for access to the historic records. In some respects the Green Paper clarifies the Working Party's recommendations; nevertheless it remains obscure and new issues are raised. As we outlined in LPS 40 the new thinking on access to the registration records is based on a division of these records into 'historic' and 'recent'. Those deemed to be old enough for the designation historic are to be made available centrally in the form of microfilm copies which will be sold by the reel, or may be consulted at a central search room; locally they may be seen wherever a Local Authority chooses to provide the facility. This could be through a library or in a specially created County Register office. On the other hand the recent records will continue to be made available much as at present through certificates; there will be no right of general access.

The Green Paper develops these proposals paragraph by paragraph in a series of steps which to the uninformed reader may sound rational, plausible and even generous. We are assured 'the Government has much sympathy with those people who would like to be able to look at registration records but do not need certified copies'. It recognises the need of the historian and genealogist 'to browse through' the records noting information and photocopying as necessary. It also identifies the general access required by social and medical historians. But, it is argued, these needs are primarily focused on the records of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The same demand does not exist for the records of living people. Thus 'it would be appropriate to cater for [historians] by allowing registration records, like other records, to become open to the public after a specified time. This is common practice elsewhere. Under the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967 Cabinet papers and other official documents are opened to the public 30 years after their creation... Census records become available after 100 years... The Government is persuaded that there is no case for keeping registration records closed indefinitely and would wish to legislate to open 'historic' records after a suitable lapse of time' (Paragraph 6.7).

It all sounds so plausible. But what shabby magic it is. The trick is in creating a false analogy between the registration records and certain well known public records. There is no fair comparison to be made between registration records which have always been open in the sense that the information they contain is not confidential and classes of public records such as Cabinet Papers or Census Archives which are from the time of their creation explicitly confidential and remain so until the decision is made to open them. The tradition of open registration is long and honourable, it predates civil registration, the 1837 system inheriting open access from parish registration. As we have noted on an earlier occasion (see LPS 37 p.5), the notion that the civil registers are or should be in any sense confidential is of recent origin. It seems to date from 1978 when Lord Teviot made his first attempt to amend the Public Records Act. It acquired respectibility four years later when Lord Hailsham then Lord Chancellor, speaking in the House of Lords, assured their Lordships that the need to preserve personal privacy was 'the reason why the current records are not generally available'.

There is of course no hint of this sleight of hand in the Green Paper. Having triumphantly established the need to divide the records between historic and
recent the debate moves on to determine the age at which the division should be made. We are offered four options; one hundred years; thirty years; seventy-five years; or, if different ages are to be considered for different registers, a hundred years for births, sixty years for marriages and thirty years for deaths. The Government preference is for seventy-five years but comment is invited and it would be unwise to assume that a firm decision has been made in favour of the seventy-five year division. Those who argued the case for a hundred year rule at the Working Party Stage may not have abandoned hope of winning this argument.

The Green Paper then turns its attention to the form in which copies of the registers will be made available. Very properly the point is made that access to the paper copy registers held by the Registrar General would be neither feasible nor desirable. It must be the microfilm copies which are used and these - on the basis of a seventy-five year division, there would be nearly 30,000 cassettes - should be available for purchase. At the same time facilities should be provided for individuals to consult the microfilms and purchase copies of the entries in which they are interested. The Green Paper acknowledges that this could be managed in a number of different ways. OPCS could establish a central library but not at St Catherine's house 'because there is not sufficient space and the cost would be prohibitive'; alternatively OPCS could use PRO accommodation at Kew. The third identified option would involve the private sector either alone or in collaboration with the Registrar General. It is stressed that whichever option is adopted it must be self financing.

There are a number of points which require clarification before any final comment can be made on the proposals for the sale of microfilm copies of the registers and the provision of a central reading room. It is not clear for example what a purchaser would be buying. If LPS purchased a complete set of the microfilms would it be allowed to retail copies from them in whatever quantities were sought and at whatever price it could obtain; or, if it could afford to be so generous, to give away copies to anyone who wanted them? LPS is unlikely to seek such a deal but what about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints? Their libraries offer free access to a range of material. Can these records be added on the same basis?

The analogy with the Census microfilms is interesting here. When these first came on the market, libraries purchasing them received specific approval to sell or make available copies as they thought fit. Is this what the authors of the Green Paper have in mind? It will of course reduce their potential revenue and if so will their books still balance? Above all we need to know the price tag which will be attached to these cassettes.

At a local level the Green Paper seeks to encourage each Local Authority to make similar provision to that which will be available at the central reading room by purchasing the filmed records for its area and making them available to the public. In addition, or as an alternative, local authorities would be free to open their own registers either by transfer to the Record Office or by transfer to a new County Register Office. In addition they may choose to place copies of the registers in local libraries or they may even choose to film their own
registers and put them on sale. Here again there is much that is obscure. Surely the Green Paper is not inviting a Local Authority to open its registers to the public? These are the original registers and if the Green Paper considers the centrally held copy registers to be too vulnerable why should the locally held originals be put at risk? We also question how realistic it is to expect Local Authorities to establish County register Offices, to find funds to purchase films from OPCS or to film their own registers. At the heart of the matter lies the question of cost. Is it really supposed that the substantial capital investment which such developments would require could be recovered from fees charged to users? We would like to see the arithmetic on which this judgement was based.

In respect of the recent records the Government proposes to maintain the current system of access via the indexes and the purchase of certificates but to add major restrictions. At present anyone may purchase a certificate. In future a purchaser will have to provide certain particulars about the entry that is required. For a birth certificate this would be the date and place of birth, the father’s name and surname and the mother’s name, surname and maiden name. For a death certificate the required details would be the full name of the deceased, the date and place of the death, the age or year of birth and the occupation. For a marriage certificate the requirement would be the names of both parties, the date of the marriage and the town or city where it took place. In cases where applicants cannot provide all the prescribed particulars, proof of identity and an explanation of the need for a certificate will be required and a certificate will then only be supplied at the discretion of the Registrar General or the Local Authority.

The justification for these restrictions will be familiar to LPS readers; we are told of the increasing volume of cases of personation (the Green Paper cites the Stonehouse case), commercial fraud and the need to protect personal privacy as for example in the case of an Aids death. We considered these issues at some length in LPS 37. As we pointed out then the security problem should not be allowed to outweigh all other considerations. If certificates were issued only on the basis of proven identity established so far as possible without dependence on information in the registers there would be no good reason to withhold access to film copies of the registers or to providing photocopies as required. Certificates would then assume their proper role as items of legal coinage. Nor in the light of 150 years of successful operation is the argument for privacy compelling. Has society suddenly become so much more squeamish? If so it is not evident in many of the other social transactions which are accepted a commonplace.

The Government’s only concession to genealogists and researchers is contained in paragraphs 6.21 and 6.22. Here it is suggested that regular users such as legal researchers and record agents, and we assume genealogists, could apply for accreditation and so obtain exemption from the need to supply prescribed particulars in obtaining certificates. Once again the Green Paper is silent on the question of cost but we understand that enquiries made by one of the professional associations involved suggest that this is another area in which a deterrent cost policy may be adopted.
We have no doubt that there will be many who will be prepared to support the Green Paper in its present form. In our view those who do so are signing a blank cheque; so much remains to be resolved and clarified. We shall be writing to the Secretary of State inviting answers to our questions and making our own position clear. We cannot support the division of the registers into historic and recent, nor the restriction of access to the recent registers for research purposes. In our view there is no justification legally or historically for the Government’s proposed course of action but we recognise that ultimately it is Parliament which determines new legislation. If the records are to be divided we would advocate a thirty year division.

On the question of a central search room, while we fully support the need for such a facility we are not enthusiastic about any if the present proposals. If St Catherine’s House is deemed to be too expensive we fear that any other central location run by OPCS will be unsuitable for the same reasons and that the user could end up paying a high price for the service. Nor are we convinced that the Public Record Office would benefit from the association with OPCS. There is already a shortage of space at Kew and we can scarcely believe that the Government is proposing a new building on that site to house the microfilm material. The other suggestion, that private enterprise should play a part, is perhaps predictable but we do not see that it is appropriate for profit to be made from what are in effect public records. We would like to see an attempt to establish a Trust solution; a registered educational charity which would administer the search room on a non-profit making basis. Surely it would not be beyond the existing records using groups to fund and establish such a body?

It is in the Local Authority arena that the greatest doubts exist. We fear that implementation of the Green Paper in its present form would leave many parts of the country unserved by any of the new structure so creating inequality of provision and opportunity. We would prefer legislation which compels Local Authorities to establish at least a basic framework of provision. Without such pressure we do not believe that they will invest in County Register Offices or in more than a handful of cases find the resources to purchase sets of microfilm. We are in the process of circulating a questionnaire which will establish the views of some Local Authorities and we will report further in due course.

Time and again we return to the question of cost. From the enquiries we have made amongst the potential users of these records this is the central issue and this is especially true for those who live some distance from London. As a representative of one of the family history groups which might use these records put it to us, ‘if we have to use the central search room, what will it cost for a day and how much will we have to pay for copies? All these costs are on top of the rail fare to London and if this is not borne in mind in setting charges, we fear that many of our members will be priced out’.

We are also concerned for the educational potential of this archive. What about use of the registration records for GCSE and other educational projects? The proposed legislation offers an opportunity to unlock a new archive of unique importance. It could set in motion a wave of historical research such as we have seen at many different levels within and outside the educational system
over the last twenty-five years in Census studies. But this will only happen if
the price is right and if the new legislation establishes a clear and realistic
framework within which the providers can offer all the potential users of these
records wherever they live, whether they be professional, amateur, rich or poor,
a consistent and reliable service.

The LPS Research Fund

As announced in an earlier editorial, grants from £50 to £3000 are available to
help individuals and groups meet expenses connected with research on any
aspect of local population history. For example, they can be used to cover
research costs, such as copying charges or travelling expenses, or as personal
scholarships to enable research projects or dissertations to be completed.

The Fund has now been in operation for two years and scholarships have been
awarded to two post-graduate students working in the field of local population
history to enable them to complete their dissertations. In addition, grants have
been awarded to local historians to cover copying charges, travelling expenses
to county record offices, and payments for help with data entry and
programming.

The fund is administered with the minimum of formality. If individuals or
groups would like to have their past, or future, expenses refunded, all they
need to do is to write a short letter to Dr R.S. Schofield, at 27, Trumpington
Street, Cambridge, CB2 1QA, with a brief description of the research project
and details of the expenses for which support is being sought. In the case of
applications for personal scholarships, the names and addresses of two referees
should also be given. At the end of each calendar quarter, all the letters
received during the previous three months are considered, and awards are
made.

A summary of grants awarded to date is listed below:

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<td>R. Barker</td>
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<td>R. Adair</td>
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<tr>
<td>G. Clark</td>
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A. Fletcher £ 800 (Social and demographic effects of railways)
R. Field £ 250 (Research into history of Droitwich)
W. Atkins £ 272 (Analysis of Sleaford enumerators’ books)
M. Gerrish £ 650 (Registration fees; travel for research)
S. Neave £ 300 (Research on contracting settlement 1600-1760)
C. Galley £ 555 (Ph.D. Sheffield; travel to Borthwick)
C. Whiteway £ 277 (Purchase of computer equipment)
S. Royle £ 350 (Irish historical towns atlas project)
G. Wyatt £ 300 (Research on women’s mortality)
A. Keir £ 250 (Analysis of 1881 census for Roath)
J. Hunter £ 250 (Ph.D. research on alehouses; travel)
M. Davies £ 288 (Research into Liverpool Chinese community)

April 1989

Tom Arkell
Christopher Charlton
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Roger Schofield
Kevin Schurer
Malcolm Smith
Geoffrey Stevenson
NEWS FROM THE CAMBRIDGE GROUP FOR THE HISTORY OF POPULATION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Regular and long-standing readers of this column will probably know that over the twenty-five year period of the Cambridge Group’s existence many contacts with international researchers and institutions have been cultivated and developed. However, it is doubtful if one of the collaborative research projects currently being undertaken could have been envisaged when the Group was formed in 1964.

During the summer of 1984 a delegation of various academics from The People’s Republic of China visited Cambridge. Among the delegation a party of demographers from Beijing (Peking) requested to pay a visit to the Cambridge Group. From this short, relatively impromptu and informal initial meeting grew the desire to hold a second meeting, at which common research interests could be discussed at greater length and the basis of a more formal interchange of methods, ideas and information mapped out. After much difficult negotiation, language differences proving to be a fundamental barrier, a three day meeting was planned to be held in Cambridge during December 1986. With the help of financial support from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the meeting took place in Trinity College and was attended by six Chinese demographers from Beijing, various Chinese demography students already studying in the UK, members from the Cambridge Group and the Oriental Studies Faculty in Cambridge, and other experts from the United States, France and Sweden.

The meeting proved to be a great success, and before the Chinese delegation returned plans were made for a follow-up meeting to take place in Beijing in October 1987. This was to be a much more ambitious affair. At the insistence of the Cambridge Group it was to include not only those from Beijing, but gather together demographic researchers from all over China: Shanghai, Shangdong, Hangchow, Hunan, Tienjing and elsewhere. Again, this was made possible by a generous financial contribution from ESRC. The Population Research Institute of Peking University, with whom most contact had been made, acted as hosts to the Beijing conference, the focus of which was the implementation of the ‘one-child’ policy to reduce fertility levels and consequential ageing of the population. Thirty Chinese demographers attended the conference in addition to some twenty ‘westerners’, from the United States, Canada, Japan, New Zealand as well as Europe and five from Cambridge. The conference drew much attention in China, being one of the first such meetings between Chinese and ‘westerners’ to be held in Beijing, the opening session of the conference was even reported on the front page of the China Daily newspaper.
### Figure 1

**A Chinese Household Survey Form, Bajie 1983**

#### 一九八一年（第三次）全国人口普查登记表（单表）

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Building on this conference, and following a successful application to the ESRC for additional funds to finance the project, the Chinese Social Structure Survey Unit has been established in Cambridge. This is a collaborative venture between the Cambridge Group and the Oriental Studies Faculty, Cambridge, and is supported by the Population Research Institute of Peking University. The initial aim of the unit is to computerise and analyse a series of household surveys relating to three villages in the county of Changping (Bajie, Bei Xin Cun and Xia Zhvang), not far from the capital Beijing, the surveys having been undertaken annually by the Population Research Institute since 1979. The survey forms, one of which for 1981 is illustrated in figure 1, cover the same households each year, so a longitudinal picture showing changes and developments in household structure can be fitted together. The questions asked on the survey form differ slightly from year to year, yet in addition to core questions on the age, sex, marital status, education, occupation, birthplace and relationship of individual household members (much like the mid-nineteenth century censuses of Britain), information has been gathered on the collective income of the household: household amenities, consumer expenditure, medical history and, as you would expect in a country with a population of one thousand million, female fertility and contraception.

Having received the survey forms in Cambridge earlier this year, the lengthy process of inputting the data onto the computer and checking the entries has only just got underway. Many a long hour will pass by before all the data are ready to be analysed, yet the Unit is extremely fortunate to have two bilingual doctoral students working on the project. Lastly, if some readers of this journal think that early-sixteenth-century parish registers are difficult to read, I might suggest they try late-twentieth century Chinese handwriting!
NEWS FROM THE LOCAL POPULATION STUDIES SOCIETY


The last LPSS event of 1988 was a joint conference with Oxford University's Department for External Studies, which was held in the Department's headquarters at Rewley house. The conference was opened by Dr Kate Tiller (OUDES) and by Professor Paul Hair (Chairman of LPSS) who welcomed an audience of almost fifty people to the Society's first extensive venture into the Middle Ages.

Dr Peter Franklin (LPSS Comm.) then gave the first paper, on 'English population history 1200-1348 and the role of local studies', which presented an overview of wide-ranging theories and detailed studies covering the period before the Black Death. He stressed the difficulties of obtaining trustworthy figures for national population size and trends in this most important period. Local records were not without their problems and deficiencies, but they made the difficulties of the task much more manageable, especially if manorial court rolls were combined with other written records and with the evidence of landscape. His own study of the manor of Thornbury, Gloucestershire, revealed that the 'Malthusian' crisis situation of high population, land shortage, falling yields, famine and heavy mortality predicted by Professor Postan had never occurred there. Thornbury had a relatively low population in the long term and only occasional years of high mortality, both of which may reflect the influence of English malaria. (The paper which Dr Mary Dobson had been due to present on this subject had to be cancelled owing to illness.) Other 'medieval village studies', including Zvi Razi's work on Halesowen, had also failed to produce evidence for a pre-Black Death subsistence crisis and had shown that different parts of England had very different population histories. Malaria itself must have had a complicated incidence and was only one of the factors at work.

After a break for coffee, we had the pleasure of hearing Professor Zvi Razi (University of Tel Aviv) speak on 'The peasant family and the population crisis in fourteenth century England'. His work on the very extensive series of manorial court rolls which survive from Halesowen, Worcestershire, is known to members of this Society chiefly from the introduction to its published results given by Mr Paul Booth at our Liverpool Conference in March 1986. Professor Razi's recent Halesowen research shows the breadth and depth of results which a 'medieval village study' using manorial court rolls can produce, and reaffirms the fundamental contribution which local studies can make to debates on many issues of demographic, social and economic history. His results stressed the major differences within the English peasantry, showing how rich tenants had
larger families than their poorer neighbours and greater numbers of recorded contacts with them. Rich peasants were the group most likely to stand as sureties ('pledges') for those the court ordered to pay fines or fulfil obligations, but for them this seemed to be a means of linking families, for it was the poorest peasants who were the most likely to have sureties from within their own families. His work on kinship links between Halesowen tenants had revealed that, although most were still inter-related in the generations after the Black Death, continued plague casualties and the increased mobility of peasants anxious to escape from a strongly patriarchal society produced dramatic changes later, so that by the year 1500 most of the tenants were not related to other local people. We are particularly grateful to him for presenting his paper at very short notice.

Professor Razi's paper was followed by some discussion of how peasants were best divided into groups and how feudal lordship and peasant custom affected their development. On some estates, including Thornbury, where the lords were absentee and landed provision was rarely made for younger sons or daughters, some rich freemen turned their holdings into little manors and moved towards gentry status, but Halesowen's resident lords and local custom for providing some land for children beyond the eldest son combined to prevent this interesting social development. Discussions continued in the bar the dining hall of Rewley House, where lunch was taken.

The afternoon began with a paper on 'The incidence of marriage and population crisis in late fourteenth century England', given by Dr Richard Smith (All Souls College). He took the opportunity offered by this second paper on the post-Black Death world to discuss both national demographic trends and the results of a fascinating variety of local and regional studies, extending his arguments to the close of the Middle Ages. Fifteenth century England had a demographic history which was complicated by the recurrence of bubonic plague and by the influence of other serious diseases. Changes in mortality and in fertility - and medieval demographers still find the latter very difficult to approach - continue to provide plenty of scope for controversy, and comparison with work undertaken on parts of fifteenth century Normandy suggests that the English population was curiously slow to recover from the numerous troubles of the period. He was able to counterbalance the strong tendency to concentrate on rural areas which most medieval studies of this kind share with many LPSS members by introducing us to R.H. Britnell's study of the town of Colchester. Dr Smith, however, reserved his highest accolade for the most strongly-constructed piece of medieval demographic research for J. Hatcher's Economic History Review paper on mortality among the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury - perhaps the most unusual local population to be mentioned at one of our gatherings!

For the last part of the day we divided into groups for the 'workshop' sessions which are a popular feature of our conferences. Drs Smith and Franklin reappeared in a new guise as workshop masters joined by C. Day and A. Crossley (Victoria County History of Oxfordshire), and initiated us respectively into the pleasures and pitfalls of measuring the mortality of the Black Death, reconstructing peasant families, and tracing the history of a deserted medieval
Drs Franklin and Tiller organized the event on behalf of LPSS and OUDES, and their cheerful mien reflected its smooth running on the day, after a number of practical problems encountered in its planning. Colonel Sir David Cooke organized and ran the LPSS bookstall.

Dates for your diary

Population from Parish Registers, a day school to be held at Clifton Campus of Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham, Saturday 1 July 1989. Speakers to include Paul Hair and Tony Wrigley.

Population Studies in Wales, a day school at the Open University in Wales, at Cardiff, date to be arranged. Speakers to include Dr Rees Pryce on ‘Census taking in past times’, and Philip Riden on ‘Problems and possibilities offered by the documentary records of Wales since 1563’.

Also three workshops:- Ernest Sandberg on Linking census data to cartographic records; C. Roy Lewis on Using trade directories and rate books; and Brian L. James on Nonconformist records and their problems.

The next residential conference is in Lincoln, 6-8 April, 1990, at Bishop Grosseteste College. The topics will be mainly nineteenth century with emphasis on the Census.

We are also pleased to advertise the following CORAL conferences:
Annual Conference, 2-3 September, Centre for Local History, University of Keele; ‘Twentieth Century Local History, Sources and Themes’. Enquiries to Secretary, CORAL, Centre for NW Regional Studies, University of Lancaster.

Sources for the Study of the Local Economy, day seminar, Institute of Historical Research, Saturday 30 September. Speakers include Dr Janet Blackman, Dr R.G. Wilson and Dr Mark Overton. Registration fee £5 to CORAL Secretary as above.

Next years History and Computing Association annual conference will also focus on ‘Local and Regional History’. The conference will be held over three days at Wolverhampton Polytechnic, provisional dates are 6-8th April, 1990. Further details can be obtained from the conference organizer: Peter Wakelin, School of Humanities and Cultural Studies, Wolverhampton Polytechnic, Castle View, Dudley, DY1 3HR. Telephone (0902) 313001 ext 2333.
A GUIDE TO EASTER BOOKS AND RELATED PARISH LISTINGS

S. J. Wright

Sue Wright was until recently working as a research fellow in the Department of English Local History, Leicester. She now works for Christian Aid and is an Honorary Research Fellow at the Centre for Urban History, Leicester.

Introduction

In 1735 the compiler of a terrier of the lands and dues belonging to the Rector of St Laurence, Ludlow noted that ‘every householder within the parish ought to pay yearly (at Easter) one penny smoke and one penny garden; every Master tradesman to pay yearly twelve pence, every journeyman six pence, every servant male or female (above the age of sixteen years) receiving wages, to pay six pence, every day labourer four pence, and every other person whomsoever (above the age of sixteen) two pence’.¹ Whilst the exact amount contributed by each communicant and the methods for collecting it varied from one parish to another, this Easter tithing system was a crucial part of the parish financial system and has left behind it a remarkable class of documents known as Easter Books, or, less commonly, as Paschal or Easter Rolls. The earliest date from the mid-sixteenth century, the latest run until 1836, the year of the Tithe Commutation Act.² This article is intended to provide a brief description of Easter Books, the ways in which they are compiled, where they can be found and to note some of their uses. An annotated list of Easter Books known to the author will follow in the next issue of Local Population Studies.

The tithe system

In order to appreciate the significance of Easter Books we need to be aware of the complexity of the tithing system.³ It involved a number of different collections, some of which were the prerogative of the rector, the institution or individual who had the right of patronage, and some the prerogative of the minister. Traditionally the latter derived his income from fees, mandatory offerings, of which the most important was the small sum of two pence or a groat collected from every communicant at Easter, and from tithes. There were three different kinds of tithe. The best known are ‘praedial tithes’ which were due on crops and a major part of which were collected by the rector or his agents. Tithes were also due on livestock, milk, eggs and garden produce. These ‘mixed tithes’ were collected by the priest. He also had a right to the ‘personal tithe’ which was assessed on the profits of trade and crafts or on wages and was generally collected with the Easter offering.⁴
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| 15 Mar | Confirmation | in St. John's Church
| 20 Apr | Marriage | John and Jane Smith
| 15 Jul | Death   | John Smith
| 1 Oct  | Baptism | in St. Paul's Church
| 1 Nov  | Confirmation | in St. John's Church
| 1 Dec  | Death   | Jane Smith

Source: Shropshire Record Office 2881/1/78. I should like to thank Revd J. Baulch the incumbent of Ludlow parish for granting permission for this page of the Easter Book to be reproduced.
Tithes on crops and livestock formed a major part of the rural clergy's income, whilst privy tithes were particularly important in towns and especially in urban parishes where agriculture did not play a major part in the economy. However, as inflation rose from the early sixteenth century onwards the amount due from this source dwindled. Moreover it became increasingly difficult to assess how much each individual owed and in some towns a simpler system of fixed payments was adopted. In Ludlow payments were graded according to status, the master tradesman paying ten pence in addition to the basic Easter duty of 2d, his dependants and day labourers contributing smaller sums. A similar scheme operated in St John's parish, Chester. The parish élite paid 'xii d. for pryvie tythes, iii d. for four offeringe dayes, i d. for a garden, i d. for smoke', and varying amounts for the other members of their households. Meanwhile 'handy trades and laboringe men' paid only 4d for their personal tithes or, as it was termed 'for the hand'. However, the incorporation of an amount which varied according to the value of the individual's property was more common than the system in St John's. In Coventry, for instance, it was agreed in 1538 that the inhabitants were to be tithed at the rate of twelve pence for every 'ten shillings rent by year of all and every house and houses, ships, warehouses, sellars and stables' with a slightly lower rate for dyehouses, kilns, brewhouses and malthouses, whilst in the parish of St Margaret, Leicester, 'every house under £10 a year pays one shilling, every house under £20 pays two shillings and six pence, another one shilling in every five pounds by ancient custom'. A similar element on housing must also have been included with the personal tithe in Ludlow for many of the householders paid slightly more than the sum of twelve pence referred to in the memorandum of 1735.

To facilitate the collection of tithes and offerings, and to ensure that everyone paid the correct amount, the officials responsible compiled a variety of notebooks and ledgers. In some parishes one ledger was used to list all the annual payments to the church including the fixed Easter duty and praedial and mixed tithes. Elsewhere one finds ledgers devoted to tithes or others which simply recorded Easter offerings or the fixed duty and the privy tithe. Most of the examples mentioned in this article fall into the last category. Some of the ledgers just list the names of the contributors and their respective payments. Others are very detailed.

The collection of information

To explain exactly how the system worked and to illustrate the type of information which we might expect to find in an Easter Book let us return to Ludlow. The town is unusual, both because of the number of Easter Books which survive, there being over eighty available between 1717 and 1835, and because of the meticulous way in which they were drawn up. As figure 1 illustrates all the householders in the four city wards were listed in alphabetical order with their wives, servants and any children over sixteen or relatives and lodgers who lived with them. These dependants were named and their relationship to the head was also given in most cases. If the householder took in lodgers they would be noted last. Their names were slightly indented so that if they were not actually described as sojourners, the practice during the
1720s, their status can be assumed. In the right hand margin the clerks noted the amount owed by the group with ticks to indicate payment. The sum in question was sometimes broken down into its component elements, with a figure for each member of the household. However, although each individual could be presented in court for non-payment, in practice the householder was responsible for the members of his family and one total is often given for the group. This explains why some Easter Books only list householders. In the parish of St John’s in Chester for instance, the householder was expected to pay ‘ii d. for every servant’ and unusually, ‘nothinge for childdr and prentizes’. The compilers of the Easter Books rarely noted these younger people.

Occasionally the payments of servants were recorded in a separate ledger or on another page in the Easter Book, as was the case in Ledbury and in St Ewen’s, Bristol. Such lists make it clear that, although no longer assessed on a tenth of their earnings, servants could be rated according to their status and whether or not they took wages or were simply given bed and board. In Ledbury and Bristol the wage earner paid the standard duty of 2d and an additional sum for his or her wages. As a terrier dating from 1712 illustrates, in St Margaret’s, Leicester the system was even more complex. ‘Every man servant pays twelve pence, every maid servant six pence and every apprentice two pence, paid by the master or mistress, all other servants receiving wages pay for themselves’. Meanwhile, ‘every son or daughter betwixt the age of sixteen and twenty-one pays two pence, and after twenty-one every son pays twelve pence and every daughter six pence’.

The alphabetical arrangement of the Ludlow lists is unusual for the collection of Easter duties and privy tithes, which began shortly before Easter, was normally organised in circuit fashion, the officials going round the streets noting down the payments household by household. They evidently followed the same route every year and were therefore able to use earlier ledgers to facilitate the collection as the occasional note about someone who had recently left or arrived in the parish makes clear.

In large parishes it took some time to visit each household and it was often necessary to make several trips to deal with arrears. As time went on it became harder and harder to persuade people to contribute and parish records often include lists of offenders whose debts went back several years. In Ludlow not only does one find a record of defaulters at the back of the earlier ledgers, but during the 1720s the clerk often indicated why a person had failed to pay his duty. Such marginal notes help one to pinpoint the poor and those who failed to attend church or, in one unique year, the families which had been hit by smallpox. Other additional material which one might expect to find in an Easter Book includes notes about the payments for bread and wine and lists of outsiders who attended the parish church at Easter, for, like the parson of Holy Trinity in Chester, the priest was entitled to demand an offering from ‘strangers which soworne but for a tyme in the parish’. In several of the Easter Books from the parish of Madeley in Shropshire, illustrated in figure 2, sojourners and workmen who only lived in the parish for a short time were noted separately and in St Thomas, Salisbury the offerings of ‘such as receauide the communion and not doune vppon the Easter Book’ were itemised in the
churchwardens' accounts.

Figure 2  An extract from the Madeley Easter Book, 1646-1760

Source:  Shropshire Record Office 2280/2/1. The document is reproduced with the kind permission of the incumbent of the parish.
So far I have concentrated on urban Easter Books, ledgers which generally only recorded the Easter offering and personal tithes. The records for a rural parish are likely to be far more complex. For instance, in the Burton Easter Dues Book of 1784 to 1804 payments were laid out in columns beginning with the Easter offering, the householders in this community evidently paying for their dependants, and a penny on gardens, small sums for bees and livestock and finally a tithe on crops. A similar system operated in Dalton in Cumberland, where the clerk recorded ‘smoke’ and ‘garth’ payments for hearths and gardens, and tithes on ploughs, bees and wax and various animals. Meanwhile, in St Just, a Cornish parish with a mixed economy, tithes were not only due on agricultural produce but also on fish and tin. From a very detailed list of the ‘Lawdable Customs’ of the parish which opens the Easter Book we know that these collections were made at various times of the year and that the parishioner was responsible for bringing his tithes to the chancel or to a stone in the church known as the ‘vannntone’. Here too we know that servants paid four pence for every 6s 8d that they earned in addition to the standard Easter duty of two pence for a married person and a penny for every single person.

Related sources

Most of the records listed in the appendix to be published in the following issue of Local Population Studies could be described as Easter Books or Tithe Books, but it is also worth mentioning briefly several other types of parish listing, which although compiled for slightly different purposes contain similar types of information and have similar applications. Easter was not merely the time when the clergy collected their Easter duties and tithe eggs. It was also one of the three occasions during the year when it was mandatory to attend communion. In the larger parish the church would have been crowded on Easter Sunday and for a few weeks before and after the festival. Only by issuing communion tokens could the churchwardens check who had attended and who failed to participate. Churchwardens’ accounts often contain references to the sale of tokens, and in the parish of St Saviour’s in Southwark a series of records was compiled to organise the distribution of tokens. Like Easter Books these listings were arranged topographically with the names of all the householders and notes of the tokens to be allocated to each family. As the tokens were sold the roundsmen crossed them off. They also noted newcomers and people who had moved away or recently died. Although Token Books like those from St Saviour’s are rare, similar systems were evidently adopted elsewhere.

The provision of bread and wine at Easter, another parish responsibility, also entailed a house to house collection which was sometimes recorded in a separate ledger. The system was well organised in Salisbury where the parishioners from St Edmund’s agreed in 1603 that ‘the bread and wine shalbe gathered in three severall circuits’, and the churchwardens in neighbouring St Thomas’s drew up at least one account book to record the payments. Churchwardens’ accounts elsewhere also include notes concerning the provision of bread and wine. Whilst the Easter tithing system should not be confused
with the collections for the communion elements or for token money, for the latter were the responsibility of the churchwardens and did not normally involve either the priest or the rector, in some parishes the different collections must have coincided.24

The ‘communion silver’, as it was sometimes called, was just one of the payments which the parishioner was expected to make towards the upkeep of his local church and the maintenance of the clergy. From the age of sixteen upwards, the parishioners were supposed to contribute towards the purchase of items like books and candles and could be assessed at periodic intervals for church repairs. The parish also paid the wages of the clerk and the sexton, and in ‘unbeneficed livings’, the priest’s stipend.25 Churchwardens’ accounts often refer to collections for wages and in some parishes the historian may be fortunate enough to find the Rate Books which were used to assess each individual for repairs or for the purchase of a bell or an extension to the church. The churchwardens in Chester were particularly meticulous in their record keeping and a large number of ‘leys’ or assessments survive for the nine city parishes. In Holy Trinity, St Michael’s and St Oswald’s, for instance, one finds long series of what were described as Quarterage or Morning Prayer lists. These record the amount collected for the clerk’s and minister’s wages, one list sometimes being used several years running with notches to indicate payments in the margins.26

Being governed by local custom, rather than by statute, the organisation of these levies varied considerably from place to place, and the records they generated were normally less comprehensive than Easter Books, for they were confined to householders and included fewer poorer inhabitants. Nevertheless, they share certain features in common with Easter Books and can be used for similar purposes.27 Indeed it has been suggested that the Easter Book often acted as an administrative ‘master list’ for other assessments, many Rate Books and Wage Books also being compiled topographically.28

Not all tithe documents take the form of nominal lists. Indeed a number of the Easter lists referred to in the Appendix were found in Tithe Books or general Memoranda Books.29 Such documents include a lot of useful information concerning rural life. The Oundle Easter lists for instance are mixed with notes of the payments made to labourers who worked on the vicar’s land and the amounts of ale produced by their wives. Other books mention disputes between the incumbent and his parishioners and include simple totals of tithes collected or in arrears or the number of farms and inhabitants in the parish.30 It is always worth checking amongst the miscellaneous papers in the Parish Chest for incidental material of this nature, although as it became more convenient to commute tithes for a fixed payment, a trend which increased between the later eighteenth century and the passing of the Tithe Commutation Act in 1836, such documents became less informative.
The uses of Easter Books

Easter Books have many applications and can be used in conjunction with a number of other records. Unlike most population listings they often survive as part of a series and can therefore be used to study the turnover of households within a community and to check for abnormalities caused by adverse conditions. Long series like those from Dalton, which date from 1673 to 1765, or from Ludlow and Oundle where over fifty ledgers survive, are unusual. But if one is fortunate to find a run lasting for a decade or more, and if street names are given, it is possible to study the developmental cycle of the household, noting how often property passed from man to wife and father to son, and to trace people’s movements within the parish.31

It is obviously far easier to carry out topographical surveys in an urban parish where the collectors moved from house to house and named each street, than in a rural parish of dispersed settlements like Burton or Penwith.32 Where all communicants are recorded, rather than householders only, it can be interesting to compare the structure and stability of the household in different streets. Similar comparisons can be made by using the householder’s annual contribution as a guide to social status or correlating the ledgers with records such as tax lists and freemen’s registers.

One detail which was not mentioned when discussing the format and compilation of Easter Books was that of occupational status. As the appendix to this article illustrates, in most of the Easter Books analysed such details are sporadic. We may find that occupations are only given for the élite, as in Ledbury, or that a particularly diligent clerk noted occupations one year but not the next, as in St Thomas’s in Salisbury. To use Easter Books for occupational surveys one would therefore need to resort to supplementary material. In this respect the Ludlow Easter Books are again remarkable for the clerks consistently recorded the occupational status of most of the householders and quite a number of their dependants. Quite why they should have bothered with this detail is uncertain for the personal tithe was no longer based on the profits of trade. But in Oundle, the only parish to rival Ludlow in this respect, we can see how this element had been modified so that ‘every man or woman for their trade pays 13 1/2d yearly, and they that haue two trades pays double for soe much, or 3 trades trible’.33 In order to pinpoint people with dual occupations the Easter Books were arranged according to trades rather than following the standard circuit format, and ended with lists of the élite, those ‘inhabitants that exercise no trade’ and of the labouring population. Unfortunately, the latter were only included in the earliest surviving ledgers so, although this is another parish with a remarkably long series of Easter Books, the fact that they do not cover the entire adult community limits their use.

The comprehensiveness of the source is obviously a crucial issue, for one of the most important uses of an Easter Book is to ascertain the size of the community in question by multiplying the number of households or adding in an element for children under communicable age. We cannot go into detail here about the most suitable multipliers, an issue which has been covered elsewhere.34 However, it is important to note some of the problems which need to be
considered when using Parish Rate Books as a demographic source and to stress that any totals should be treated as rough guides rather than precise estimates. In some ledgers it is not always clear where one household ends and another begins, so unless checks can be made between books or the units are numbered or separated by gaps or brackets, it is probably safer to use the number of communicants as a population guide.

There can be few population listings which do not omit a certain proportion of the community because of error, evasion or deliberate policy. However, in the communities which have been studied using Easter Books comparing different ledgers, suggests that, on the whole, the degree of under-registration was fairly low. Each series needs to be assessed on its own merits and, if possible, compared with other population sources. The greatest care should be taken when dealing with a large, rural parish of widely dispersed settlements. But in an urban parish the local officials perambulated the streets at regular intervals and must have been aware of changes in tenure as householders died or migrated. Possibly they would have had a greater knowledge of the stabler members of the community than of mobile groups such as children, servants and lodgers. But again, where checks have been carried out, the registration of the other communicant members of the household seems to have been fairly reliable. From marginal notes and other evidence one gets the impression that the organisers of the Easter collection took great pains to keep their records as up-to-date as possible. This was certainly true in the large parish of St Michael in Coventry where the late sixteenth century Rate Books include notes of newcomers and where they had come from or of inhabitants who had recently died. Meanwhile the incumbent at Ledbury always listed the young people who had recently taken the sacrament for the first time and who, in his parish at least, were only expected to pay half the standard Easter offering.

The care which individual officials took to check up on newcomers was extended to those people who, because of dissenting beliefs or apathy to all forms of religious observance, failed to attend church. Such ‘non-attenders’ were still conceived of as members of the parish and even if the local officials abandoned the attempt to ensure that they fulfilled their spiritual obligations, they tried diligently to assert their right to collect tithes and offerings from the entire community. In Salisbury, Ludlow and Bristol those who did not take communion were still entered in the Easter Books. In Madeley in Shropshire, the parent parish of the Ironbridge community, the Quaker Abraham Darby and his family appear in many of the surviving Easter Books despite never paying their duties, see figure 2. In other parishes too the very fact that defaulters were listed regularly testifies to the determination to catch all potential rate payers whether they attended church or not.

Although individual cases may reduce our concern about the impact of non-conformity and papism on the coverage of Easter Books, it is hard to generalise, for the strength of the dissenting community varied from place to place and from one date to the next. The Established Church’s hold on the population was weakest in towns and in areas characterised by pastoralism and rural industry and it declined in the second half of the nineteenth century as the trend towards separatism and irreligion gathered momentum.
some of the later Easter Books it is therefore important to ascertain whether or not there was a flourishing Independent group in the locality and to bear in mind that, in towns in particular, many of the poorer sort never went to church. In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the effect of papism also needs to be considered, although at this point many Catholics and Independents were still 'partial-conformists'.

The final issue which needs to be taken into account before using Easter Books as a demographic tool is the coverage of the poor. Here too the evidence suggests that exclusion on the grounds of poverty was not a serious problem. There is also evidence to show that the exclusion of the poor was not a serious problem, for almshen and the recipients of parish relief were expected to pay their Easter dues and, although occasionally excused payment, would still normally be listed. In the parish of St Martin in Salisbury, it was found that less than 5 per cent of those listed in the 1635 Census of the Poor did not feature in the Easter Books which date from 1635 to 1639, a very low margin of error when one considered that some would have died or left the parish. Similar results were obtained in neighbouring St Thomas's when the 1603 Easter Book was correlated with a list of 123 householders who were given relief during the plague of 1604. Many of the other Easter Books which have been mentioned also include lists of almshen or indicate pauper status with marginal notes.

Given their wide social coverage, it is interesting to compare the number of communicants per household in the wealthier and poorer parts of a parish, or if data areavailable, between units headed by people of different occupational or marital status. The study of household structure is, of course, only possible with the more detailed ledgers which record communicants rather than householders only, and cannot hope to be as detailed as studies involving the entire population. Nonetheless some interesting results can be obtained by focusing on the adult population alone. For instance, in Salisbury where the records from two parishes were subjected to close analysis, it was found that there were significant variations between the central market streets and the less densely populated back streets, and that the stability of the household had a significant bearing on its composition.

Whatever one's interests, care needs to be taken when using Easter Books and similar Rate Books. Much depends on the men who actually drew up the ledgers, and before starting to use them one needs to establish how the collection was organised and whether certain sections of the community are likely to be underregistered. It is also important to compare one list with another, for certain officials may have been less diligent than others, and to make as much use of supplementary materials as possible. Easter Books may not be ideal population sources yet the fact that they often survive in serial form and that they include a lot of incidental material means that they can be a very rewarding tool. Moreover, they are far more widely available than some of the population listings which have been exploited by historians in the past.
Conclusion

Why then is so little known about Easter Books? To answer this question we need to return to the subject of parish finance. At the beginning of the article it was pointed out that some tithes were collected by the rector and others, including the personal tithe and the Easter offering, by the incumbent. However, in practice the system was rather more complex. In some parishes the rector collected everything and gave the priest a regular stipend instead. Such ‘unbeneficed’ livings were particularly common in towns. In towns too the corporation or the vestry often assumed responsibility for the collection of parish rates and the payment of the minister’s wages. The system was very flexible and what was true of one parish or one incumbency was not necessarily true of the next. As a result Easter Books are to be found in a variety of repositories and one needs to ascertain the officials in charge of the collection in order to locate the source. Sometimes Easter Books are found amongst estate papers, the Oundle ledgers, which were organised by the rector’s agents, being a case in point. Sometimes they form part of the parish archive along with churchwarden’s accounts, as was true in Salisbury and in Chester. In Leicester, however, where the Corporation held the advowson (the right of patronage), and in Coventry, where one of the incumbents during the seventeenth century arranged that ‘hee might without trouble of collecting or gathering his tythes ... have and receve from the mayor ... £100 yearly as an annual rent’, the Easter Books were found amongst the city records. The fact that such records may be known under a variety of names and that they vary considerably in content and compilation adds to the problems of tracking them down. As the list in the following issue of LPS indicates, it has already been possible to find a significant number of urban Easter Books and a limited number from rural parishes. But undoubtedly many more of these interesting and immensely valuable records must survive.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the ESRC and the Twenty Seven Foundation for funding whilst carrying out research using Easter Books and to the many colleagues and archivists who have helped me to locate the sources discussed in the article.

The following abbreviations have been used in the accompanying notes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BCRL</td>
<td>Bristol City Reference Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCRO</td>
<td>Chester City Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDRO</td>
<td>Chester Diocesan Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRO</td>
<td>Coventry Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMRO</td>
<td>Cumbria Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRO</td>
<td>Durham Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDRO</td>
<td>Gloucester Diocesan Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GL</td>
<td>Guildhall Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLRO</td>
<td>Greater London Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HWRO</td>
<td>Hereford and Worcester Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRO</td>
<td>Leicester Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCRO</td>
<td>Lancashire Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRO</td>
<td>Northamptonshire Record Office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTES

2. For more details on Easter Books and the origins of the system see S.J. Wright, ‘Easter books and parish rate books: a new source for the urban historian’, *Urban History Yearbook*, 1985, pp.30-45. I am grateful to Pinter Press for permission to use material from this article. The earliest known examples of Easter Rolls are found in the churchwarden’s accounts for Holy Trinity, Chester. Details concerning the lists and the other sources mentioned in the following discussion, including references, are given in the Appendix to be printed in the following issue of *Local Population Studies*. It is emphasised that the list is by no means exhaustive, but includes records which were discovered by the author during the course of her research. She would be interested to learn of the whereabouts of similar listings.
5. Details concerning the arrangements in St John’s were appended to the Easter Rolls which date from 1670 to 1730. Their survival seems to be due to the fact that they were used in a local tithe case. The smoke penny had its origins in a tithe upon firewood, and whilst more common in rural parishes, was customary in a number of towns. In Exeter, for instance, a penny was charged for ‘smoke’ on houses with a kitchen, chimney and hall and a half penny for poorer dwellings. W. MacCaffrey, *Exeter, 1540-1640*, 1978, p.179.
7. A similar system evidently operated in many other towns, Wright, ‘Easter books’, p.33.
8. As the designation of loggers in population listings is very unusual the Ludlow lists are particularly valuable. For an analysis of the group see S.J. Wright, ‘Sojourners and loggers in a provincial town’, forthcoming in *Urban History Yearbook*, 1990. Sojourners are also noted in some of the Easter books from Madeley in Shropshire. See also Appendix in next issue of *Local Population Studies*.
10. Elsewhere the standard Easter duty of 2d was levied on children.
11. Wright, ‘Easter books’, p.33. In St Ewen’s the offerings of servants and youths were possibly collected in the church when they took communion, the lists of their payments being pretixed with various dates during the Easter season. Special collections for younger communicants were also taken in St Michael’s, Chester and St Martin’s, Leicester. St Michael’s Churchwardens’ accounts, 1558-1678, CDRO P65/8/1 ffs.101, 60, 62, 87; T. North, (ed) *The accounts of the churchwardens of St Martin’s, Leicester*, 1459-1844, 1844, p.117.
12. LRO 18D62 13a. In some parishes the fact that the householder paid for non wage-earners meant that journeymen and maid servants were included in the lists, but not apprentices. In St Thomas, Salisbury, for instance, the latter only appear in any number in three of the Easter Books which survive between 1574 and 1607 and even then they were generally numbered rather than named.
14. In Salisbury a number of ledgers from the parish of St Thomas included lists of ‘casualties’. defaulter who might eventually be taken to court if they persistently withheld their tithes and in St John’s Chester notches were appended for every year unpaid.
15. The smallpox epidemic occurred in 1726.
17. If the parish included part of the neighbouring rural hinterland one might also expect to find
references to tithes on crops and livestock. In Ledbury, for instance, the vicar was entitled to tithes on eggs, honey and wax, vegetables and fruit, hemp, wool and flax and in the Easter Books for Oundle and St Mary’s, Leicester certain householders were noted for a tithe on livestock.

18. Where a name is followed by a ‘P’ this probably indicates pauper status. The numbers by several other householders could be an indication of the number of years they were in arrears.


21. The books survive from 1593 to 1643 and in 1620, 1621 and 1622 all communicants were named and numbered. See J. Boulton, p.15. GLRO P92/Sav/187-315. In Salisbury the churchwardens’ accounts included payments for money spent striking and delivering the tokens. Here each communicant had to notify the clerk of his intention to take communion during the week preceding the service and to pay a halfpenny for a token. The token was then given back at the service. J. Cox, Churchwardens’ Accounts, 1913, p.100.

22. In St Botolph’s Without Aldgate, lists of householders and the tokens issued to them are found in the Parish Daybooks, (GL MS 9234), and the Easter Book for Christchurch, Bristol in 1595 concluded with the note ‘there followeth the names of all those ye do receave and hath token’, although unfortunately the list itself has not survived.

23. H.J.F. Swayne, The Churchwardens’ Accounts of St Edmund and St Thomas, Sarum, 1443-1702, (n.d.), p.194. WRO, St Thomas Records, 1900, No.65. In Berkhamstead it was agreed in 1601 that ‘all single communicants shall paye for ever hereafter towards the charge of the bread and wine at Easter for evir of themselves 1d and all the rest of the parishioners according to their abilities’ and in Spelibusbury in 1575 the accountants noted the decision that every communicant should pay a farthing for the communion elements ‘not only against Easter, but to serve for every month in ye eere for ye same purpose’. J. Cox, pp.99-100.

24. Certainly the Easter Book could be used to indicate the communicants who had ‘not recyved’, as was true in Christchurch, Bristol in 1558 and in Ludlow during the 1720s, and the compiler of the Ludlow Easter Books also noted money collected for bread and wine at different dates.

25. Churchwardens relied not only on mandatory assessments, but also on voluntary contributions to finance their work. Parochial responsibilities are discussed by C. Burgess in ‘A fond thing vainly imagined’: an essay on Purgatory and pious motive in late medieval England’, in Wright, (ed) Parish, church and people, pp.72-5, and by S.J. Wright, ‘Catechism, confirmation and communion’, ibid., p.218.

26. See N. Alltridge, ‘Loyalty and identity in Chester parishes 1540-1640’, in Wright, (ed) Parish, church and people, pp.91-4, for a discussion of the organisation of parish affairs in Chester. Another type of listing used in Chester and elsewhere was the pew rent book.


29. This was true of the lists for St Martin’s, Salisbury which date from 1634-1640; the Daventry Easter Book of 1732 and the Easter Silver list from Bishops Stortford. See the Appendix for details of these sources.

30. Dr Whitemans notes that incumbents often referred to Tithe Books when asked the number of families in their parish. Anne Whiteman, (ed), The Compton Census of 1676, 1989, p.xlv.


32. Although in Penwith the farms are actually named so it is easier to pinpoint were each family lived.

33. NRO, Smith of Oundle Papers Box 515/8, 1650 Easter Book.


35. Wright ‘Easter books’, pp.36-7. In Ludlow the population totals derived from the Easter Books are very stable throughout the eighteenth century.

36. Although the records in question were described as rate books it is clear from their format that they were Easter Books.

37. In Ludlow newcomers to the sacrament were listed in the 1720s, the ages of these younger
communicants ranging between fourteen and twenty-two. I am grateful to the members of the Ludlow Historic Research Group for help on this issue. In St Margaret's, Leicester marginal notes giving ages suggest that young people were sometimes rated erroneously.

38. See note 24.
39. SRO, 2280/2/1-11, Madeley Easter Books, 1646-1760.
40. In St John's in Chester it is clear that by the later seventeenth century over a third of the householders had not paid when the Easter Book was handed to the rector.
41. E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, pp.89-96.
42. Occasional conformity and the various reasons for attending a number of churches are discussed in Whiteman, pp.xxxvi-xl; and by J. Triffitt, in 'Believing and belonging. Church behaviour in Plymouth and Dartmouth, 1710-1730', in Wright, S.J. (ed), Parish, church and people, pp.177-83. Dr Whiteman's work is also a very useful guide to the strength of non-conformity in the seventeenth century.
43. A more detailed discussion of the coverage of the poor is included in Wright, 'Easter Books', p.37; and in N. Alldridge, 'Loyalty and identity', pp.93-4.
44. See Wright 'Thesis' and 'Household structure and residential mobility in early modern Salisbury', University of Leicester, Department of English Local History, Occasional Paper, forthcoming.
47. Easter Books are often mentioned in churchwarden's accounts so that even if they have not actually survived it is clear that this method of collecting and recording the Easter collection was fairly standard.
LITERACY AND GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY IN NINETEENTH CENTURY PROVINCIAL FRANCE: SOME EVIDENCE FROM THE DÉPARTEMENT OF ILLE-ET-VILAINE

Michael J. Heffernan

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Introduction

The development of a French literate culture and the changing scale and pattern of French geographical mobility have been objects of considerable interest over many years. Recent computer-assisted research has revealed a great deal about the nature and development of French literate culture. We know that literacy developed slowly and gradually from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century over a consistent geographical pattern. Throughout this period, males were 10 to 20 per cent more literate than their female contemporaries (table 1 and figures 1 and 2). Research has also uncovered a considerable amount about the increasing scale and the changing nature of French population mobility, particularly the movement from country to town, and has also provided new insights about the importance of migration within the broader social, economic and political development of modern France. Although it is often tacitly assumed that rising popular literacy rates must have been connected with increasing mobility, such a relationship has never been clearly demonstrated in France. For the most part, studies of literacy and migration have been undertaken independently of one another. Using evidence from Ille-et-Vilaine, a département in western France, this paper examines whether improved literacy and increases in the levels of geographical mobility during the nineteenth century were in fact related.

Sources

The rapidity of social, economic and political change in nineteenth century Europe stimulated a major increase in the measurement and analysis of population statistics, particularly those relating to social, moral and educational attributes. In France, this concern was fuelled by a growing sensitivity to the relative slowness of French population growth and by broader political conflict between the Roman Catholic church and an increasingly secular civil state over the question of educational control. This Gallic preoccupation with social and
Table 1  Illiteracy rates in France, 1686-1876

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1686-90</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1786-90</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816-20</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872-76</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: These figures certainly overestimate the actual level of illiteracy in France at each date. Due to the greater bureaucratic difficulties of gaining access to urban marriage registers, towns and cities, which tended to be more literate, are under-represented. These figures do not include those départements which were not continuously under French administration throughout this period.

Source: Ministère de l'Instruction Publique: statistique rétrospective - état recapitulatif et comparatif indiquant par département, le nombre des conjoints qui ont signé l'acte de leur mariage aux XVIIe, XVIIIe. et XIXe. siècles. Documents fournis par 15923 instituteurs, recueillis et classés par M. Maggiolo, recteur honoraire, chargé d'une mission spéciale par M. le Ministre de l'Instruction Publique, Paris, 1879.

Figure 1  Male illiteracy in France, 1866

demographic science has bequeathed a range of historical sources which can be used to trace the development of literacy and uncover the nature and range of geographical mobility in nineteenth century France. At least two major historical registers allow both the literacy and the geographical mobility of individuals to be analysed simultaneously. These are firstly, the military conscription registers and secondly, the civil marriage registers of the *état civil*.

Military conscription registers date back to 1793 and follow conscription laws which required all able-bodied twenty-year-old Frenchmen to serve in the revolutionary armies. For Ille-et-Vilaine, systematic records on conscripts begin in year VII of the republic (1798-9). As with the rest of the country, these records become more organised and detailed after the law of March 18, 1818 which re-organised the annual *tirage au sort*. Under this system, each commune established a *conseil de revision* to examine all would-be conscripts and record their physical and mental suitability for service. For each conscript, information was recorded on occupation, birthplace, current residence, height, colouring, parental residence and reasons for exemption. Following an ordinance of
February 1, 1827, literacy rates were also recorded. Conscripts were classified as either illiterate (unable to read or write), partially-literate (able to read only) or literate (able to read and write). Although no precise instructions were given on how to measure literacy, the Ministère de l'Instruction Publique, aware of the importance of these figures, carried out an independent verification on 3,750 conscripts from nine départements in the class of 1862 (those called up in 1863) which suggested that 'except for a few barely noticeable differences, the declarations gathered at the time of registration for the young men of each contingent, are recognised as correct'. Unfortunately, although literacy was being measured in each commune, the early nineteenth century figures are only available at an aggregate level. For Ille-et-Vilaine, the highly detailed local registers giving named individuals do not contain literacy rates until the mid-1840s.

The principal drawback of the conscription registers is the lack of information on the female population. This can be offset by reference to the actes de mariage of the état civil which include data on the female population. After the 1789 Revolution, the state began to maintain records of births, deaths and marriages in each newly-created commune. The handwritten actes de mariage are a particularly rich source of demographic information and provide, at a maximum, the age, occupation, birthplace and residence of the bride, the groom, both sets of parents (if present) and the four male witnesses. Following the Royal Ordinance of 1667 all marrying couples and the four witnesses were obliged to sign the acte de mariage if capable of doing so. It is therefore possible to use the presence or absence of a signature as a surrogate index of literacy rates.

The validity of the signature as a valid approximation of literacy rates is subject to debate. Certainly, signature-literacy rates reduce the continuous variable of literacy to a binary, true-or-false dichotomy in a fairly arbitrary manner. Unlike direct measurement, which is in itself problematic, the signature provides no sure indication that a person can write more than their name and gives no guide about other skills such as numeracy. It also fails to offer any incontrovertible evidence about the ability to read. However, in this historical context, a signature is probably an acceptable literacy index as nineteenth century educational practice tended to draw a clear distinction between the mastery of reading on the one hand, and writing on the other, with the latter proceeding from the former. As paper and writing implements were relatively scarce, a signature implies at least a rudimentary familiarity with the handwritten word and therefore suggests some knowledge of reading. Moreover, it is not the absolute significance of the signature which is under consideration but its aggregative and comparative merit. The signature on an acte de mariage represents a measureable 'universal, standard and direct index with sufficient spatial, temporal and socio-economic coverage to allow large and representative statistical samples to be drawn'.

Although these two sets of data are quite distinct, it is possible to demonstrate their complementary nature by comparing the average literacy rates of the grooms in a given year with that of the conscripts eight years earlier. This rather crude comparison of different male cohorts assumes that the average age

35
of marriage for males from the mid-1840s was about twenty-eight. This comparison shows, however, that with the exception of five years in the late 1850s, the illiteracy rates for each cohort of grooms and conscripts were never separated by more than four percentage points.

Methodology

Information from both these data-sources for nineteenth century Ille-et-Vilaine was analysed using a computer to discern if any relationship existed between literacy rates and a simple index of geographical mobility. The conscript registers for every fifth year between 1846 and 1900 were used to generate a set of twelve computer files representing a total of nearly 60,000 conscripts. The brides and grooms of 13,000 marriages from twenty-three sample communes covering the period 1800 to 1880 represented a second set of eighty-one computer files, one for each year. The two sets of files were analysed separately, firstly because each set contains information pertaining to distinct sub-populations recorded over different periods and secondly because the literacy scores of each set is recorded in different ways. In the case of the conscripts, literacy was coded as either 0 (illiterate), 1 (partially-literate) or 2 (literate). In the case of the brides and grooms, the literacy score was either 0 (non-signers) or 1 (signers).

Alongside the literacy rates, information was recorded for each conscript, groom and bride of the commune of birth and the commune of current residence. For all 363 communes existing in nineteenth century Ille-et-Vilaine, a hypothetical grid reference was derived from a detailed commune map of the département. A FORTRAN programme, based upon Pythagoras' theorem, calculated for each individual, a straight 'as-the-crow-flies' distance between the commune of birth and the commune of residence which was then multiplied by a constant factor derived from the scale of the original map used to construct the grid to produce the real distance in kilometres between the commune of birth and the commune of residence. If individuals were born and lived in the same commune, the mobility index would obviously be zero. If individuals were neither born nor currently resided in Ille-et-Vilaine, they were excluded from the analysis. Where either the birthplace or the current residence lay outside the boundaries of Ille-et-Vilaine, a simple shortcut was used. Each département in France was allocated to one of seven unequal groups corresponding to its distance from the boundaries of Ille-et-Vilaine so that if, for example, an individual was born in another département but lived in Ille-et-Vilaine, the birthplace would be represented by a grid-reference corresponding to the category in which the département found itself. These 'external' grid references were accommodated within the FORTRAN programme in order to compute an average distance in kilometres from that category of départements to the boundary of Ille-et-Vilaine. All locations outside France itself were included in the seventh and final category of départements, representing those areas furthest from Ille-et-Vilaine. This simple exercise obviously sacrifices considerable detail and must therefore be regarded as providing only a crude index of the changing levels of geographical mobility. At the end of the analysis, individuals from both data-sets were represented, for each year of the
analysis, by a single literacy score and a single crude index of geographical mobility.

Figure 3 Conscript mobility, 1846-1900

Source: Etat Militaire - listes du tirage au sort. AD Série R

Results

For both sets of data, average literacy percentages and average geographical mobility indices were calculated for each year analysed. The conscript data demonstrates that, even when measured in this crude way, the average geographical mobility of twenty-year old Frenchmen was increasing steadily during the second half of the nineteenth century (figure 3). Moreover, when the evidence is examined according to the three categories of literacy (illiterates,
partial literates and literates) it seems that for much of the period under scrutiny, literates and partial literates were noticeably more mobile than illiterates (figure 4). There does not appear to have been any appreciable difference between the mobility characteristics of full and partial literates.

Figure 4  Conscript mobility by literacy category, 1846-1900

Source:  Etat Militaire - listes du tirage au sort. AD Série R
Figure 5  Mobility of male and female partners, 1800-1880

Figure 6  Mobility of literate and illiterate males, 1800-1880

Source:  For Figures 5 & 6, Etat Civil - actes de mariage. AD Série M
The average mobility scores from the *actes de mariage* also suggest a population that was becoming increasingly mobile. It seems that males tended to be more mobile than females, although there were a few years when this was not the case (figure 5). The relationship between male signature-literacy rates and geographical mobility lends credence to the conscript data (figure 6). Within the increasingly mobile male population of Ille-et-Vilaine, literates were continually more migratory than their illiterate contemporaries. Amongst the female population, there does not appear to have been any clear relationship between literacy and mobility (figure 7).

**Conclusion**

The measures used in this analysis are obviously crude and the claims that can be made must be limited by that fact. Literacy rates and geographical mobility were both changing over time in response to a range of external forces which were themselves varying in their importance. It is also debatable whether literacy was the independent variable in its relationship with geographical mobility. Although male mobility may well have been facilitated by the acquisition of literate skills, it is also possible that mobility may have actively increased literacy. Nevertheless, the clarity and consistency of the relationship between male literacy and male geographical mobility does suggest that these two variables were positively related in this region of France.
These results suggest three conclusions about the nature of literacy and mobility in nineteenth century France. Firstly, the superior literacy rates of the migrant male population might partially explain the differential levels of literacy in town and country. Throughout most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, French towns and cities were more literate than their rural hinterlands even though the incoming population often overstretched the formal and informal urban education provision. The evidence presented here suggests that this general cultural division between town and countryside may have been sustained by literacy-specific rural-urban migration. This implies not only that literate males were likely to be more aware of the possibilities for economic and social advancement beyond their immediate locality but also that the demand for male labour may have been determined by educational attainments. It must be stressed, however, that this relationship was not universal. In the case of rapid, large-scale in-migration to industrial cities, literacy seems to have been unimportant in promoting migration. Indeed, the immigration to the developing cities in the north-eastern industrial belt of France and in industrialising Lancashire seems to have increased the level of urban literacy above that of the surrounding countryside. The relationship between literacy and mobility was therefore partly determined by the dynamic of economic development and by the nature of the labour process in the regions and towns which received migrant populations.

Secondly, this exercise suggests that, in terms of their mobility, the crucial division was between those males able to read and those males unable to read. As there was no discernible distinction between the mobility of male partial literates, the skill of writing appears to have been of secondary importance as a factor influencing mobility rates.

Thirdly, the lack of any relationship between female literacy and female mobility suggests that the nature and motives for women’s migration were different from their male contemporaries. Female labour opportunities were certainly more restricted in range and were therefore less dependent on cultural and educational attainment.

NOTES


3. For an exception see Sewell, pp.196-7.


5. Archives Nationales F9 193.


9. The twenty-three communes selected for detailed study were St Coulomb, Miniac Morvan, Bazouges-la-Pérouse, Louvigné-du-Desert, St Etienne-en-Cogles, Fougères, Dingé, Hédé, St Aubin d’Aubigné, Liffre, Quedillac, St Gilles, Rennes, Balazé, Argenté-du-Plessis, Domloup, Bruz, Amaniis, Paimpont, Guignen, Pipriac, Martigné-Ferchaud and Redon.


FAIRS, FESTIVALS AND FERTILITY IN ALKMAAR, NORTH HOLLAND, 1650-1810

Evelyn Lord

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Introduction

The study of the seasonal trends of vital statistics in pre-contraception societies can shed light on the behaviour of such societies. This is especially true of seasonal fluctuations in baptisms, as these not only provide evidence of sexual activity in the past but also of the dual nature of sexuality in man, with its double function of pleasure and reproduction.

Humans are the only animals not to have a chemically dictated mating cycle but to mate on impulse: an impulse, which is, however, influenced by social and physiological factors. A modern example of this can be seen in the peak of conceptions on English Bank Holidays. Increased leisure results in a population more inclined towards pleasurable activities, with a more relaxed atmosphere increasing sexual awareness and heightening sexual activity. The same phenomena would appear to have influenced the timing of conceptions in pre-contraception societies with fairs and festivals leading to a peak in births nine months later. Dyer suggests that Christmas and Shrove Tuesday produced the most recognizable peaks although conceptions generally were highest from April to July. Vandenbroek sees May with its fairs and festivals as being the most fertile period in pre-industrial Flanders. Alkmaar and its neighbourhood in North Holland however had fairs and holidays in the latter part of the year. The purpose of this article is to see what effect these had on the conception level and whether or not any difference can be observed between these and other societies where festivals fell in the early part of the year.

High days and holidays in Alkmaar can be divided into three types. There were a number of local fairs. These were the Fair Week at the end of August or beginning of September; Alkmaar-Onzet held on 8th October, a celebration of the expulsion of the Spaniards and lifting of the siege of Alkmaar; and the St Martin's Eve festival of light and gifts celebrated on 11 November. There were also two national fairs; the statutory fair held on 3 May and the St Nicholas Eve fair, a feast of gifts and merrymaking held on 5 December. In addition five international festivals must be included. These were Drie Koningen 6 January; Shrove Tuesday, a celebration to mark the beginning of Lent which was moveable but always falling between the second week of February and the second week of March; May Day; St John’s Eve or Midsummer celebrated on 24 June and Christmas. Christmas was and is not so important as a secular holiday in Holland as it is in England, but in the past 6 January was a holiday devoted to visiting neighbours and general merrymaking. The fairs and festivals in May
and June are associated with fertility festivals across Europe, and St John’s wort, the plant associated with 24 June, was considered to be aphrodisiac. The custom in Holland on May Day was for the young men to wake the young women early and inveigle them outside by making a noise outside their windows. This tradition has survived in a diluted form but has shifted to Whit Sunday (Luilakdag or lazybones day) when children go round the streets early to wake up lazybones. Table 1 shows the feast date and possible related birth/baptism peak with a gestation period of thirty-eight weeks.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feast</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Possible birth peak</th>
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<tr>
<td>Drie Koningen</td>
<td>6 January</td>
<td>September period 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shrove Tuesday</td>
<td>Feb, week 2 - March week 2</td>
<td>October period 4 - Nov. period 4</td>
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<td>May Day</td>
<td>1 May</td>
<td>January periods 3 and 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>May Fair</td>
<td>3 May</td>
<td>January periods 3 and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midsummer/St John’s Eve</td>
<td>24 June</td>
<td>March periods 3 and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Week</td>
<td>30 August - 3 September</td>
<td>May periods 2 and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alkmaar Onzet</td>
<td>8 October</td>
<td>July periods 1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Martin’s Eve</td>
<td>11 November</td>
<td>August periods 1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Nicholas Eve</td>
<td>5 December</td>
<td>August period 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas</td>
<td>25 December</td>
<td>September period 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Location and Sources**

The location of this study is Alkmaar in North Holland and some of its nearby settlements. Alkmaar lies thirty-eight kilometres north of Amsterdam. In the seventeenth century it was a walled town almost totally surrounded by water. The population in 1622 was around 12,417 and had fallen to circa 8,373 by 1795. The land to the north was reclaimed from the sea in 1630 with Heerhugowaard a new settlement in the middle of the polder, and Oudorp and Ursem older settlements lying to the east and west of the new land. Egmond-aan-Zee lies to the west of the dune line. It had a fishing fleet of thirty-eight vessels in 1750. Bergen lies on the eastern foot of the dunes. Alkmaar provided the central focus for the region, providing a range of services, most notably its cheese market, famous since the fourteenth century. The agriculture of the area was mainly pastoral with dairy produce the area’s most important industry. Alkmaar was also famous for its religious toleration. Table 2 shows the church congregations returned in the religious census of 1809.

None of the settlements was a single religion community though Egmond-aan-Zee had a strong bias towards Old Catholics with 62.7 per cent of the population belonging to that denomination. In the case of the outlying settlements the smallness of the sample made it necessary to combine the denominations, also in Alkmaar it was necessary to amalgamate the Lutheran and Remonstranse registers. Nothing is available for the Jewish and Mennonite congregations.
Table 2. Alkmaar church congregations in 1809

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>% of population</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reformed Church</td>
<td>53.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>37.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>6.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mennonite</td>
<td>1.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>1.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remonstranse</td>
<td>0.9</td>
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A problem which besets all studies of conceptional seasonality is the gap between birth and baptism. Some registers give birth and baptismal dates throughout and all do so from the mid-eighteenth century. The trend in the birth-baptism interval is similar to that in England: a delay of a few days in the early period but increasing considerably towards the end of the eighteenth century. If the baptismal candidate is not a baby this is noted in the register. Where no birth date is given in the early part of the study it has been allocated to the period in which the baptism falls. The switch from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar took place in the late sixteenth century in Holland. All dates given in the paper are therefore in accordance with the latter and so conform to present day practice. In order to facilitate data collection each month was divided into four periods as follows: One = days 1-7, Two = days 8-15, Three = days 16-23, Four = days 24-30/31, each baptism was allocated to one of these four periods as appropriate.

Baptismal peaks and conception

If the feast day stimulated sexual activity this should be recognisable as a peak of baptisms nine months later, but what is a recognisable peak? How far above the mean percentage of births can be seen as indicating increased sexual activity within a specified time rather than the culmination of a general trend of heightened fertility? A known demographic peak is the increased level of births in the immediate post war years of 1946-7. Table 3 shows the number of births per year for Alkmaar for the decade 1942-51. The 1946 peak for the frequency of births is equal to the mean number of births for the decade, plus the standard deviation (S.D.) from the mean of the frequency distribution, plus 70 per cent of the standard deviation. For the percentage of births in the decade the 1946 peak represents the mean percentage distribution plus the standard deviation from the mean and a further 69.4 per cent of the standard deviation. As a rough guide therefore, based on local experience (the 1946 peak at Alkmaar was probably lower than a similar town in Britain because of the ‘hungry winter’ of 1945) I shall define a peak of births in this study as being:

\[ P = \text{mean} + 1.7 \text{ (S.D.)} \]

The mean being a constant 2.08 per cent, with the year divided into forty-eight periods.
Table 3. Births in Alkmaar 1942-1951

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of births</th>
<th>% of decadal births</th>
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<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>8.24</td>
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<td>1943</td>
<td>794</td>
<td>8.83</td>
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<td>1944</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>10.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>822</td>
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<td>1946</td>
<td>1079</td>
<td>12.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>1048</td>
<td>11.66</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>913</td>
<td>10.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>9.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>9.41</td>
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Total 8987 100
Mean 898.7 10
Standard Deviation from Mean 106.8 1.18

Figure 1 shows the period percentage of the aggregate baptisms from 1650-1809. It shows that the above average peaks for both urban and rural settlements taken together lie in the months January-April or from the end of August-October, and the end of December, i.e. conceptions are highest April-July, and December-February. Are these apparent peaks actual peaks as defined above? Table 4 isolates the peaks and shows those periods above or below the standard deviation. (Values of S.D.s and peaks are shown in the appendix). In 384 entries there are twenty-three peaks, i.e. 5.97 per cent. Table 5 shows the relationship of the peaks to the festivals in rank order.

As can be seen those peaks are not related specifically to festivals are part of a trend of heightened sexuality that spreads across April-July with the holidays of May Day and St John’s Eve marking the high spots. However, October 4 is a more noticeable peak except in the strict Protestant Lutheran and Remonstranse churches at Alkmaar. In the rural settlements October 2-November 2 (i.e. conceptions February-March) shows an upwards trend of baptisms that could be related to pre-Lenten feasting. The October 4 peak could be the result of this as well, but Lent is a moveable feast and the October 4 period shows consistently high baptisms throughout. A possible explanation is that it is related to ‘Old Lady Day’, February 2, which was a pre-Christian feast taken over by the Christians,9 marked in Holland by candle-lit processions. It was also the day domestic servants hired themselves out.9 The concentration of baptisms in the last period of December could also stem from another pre-Christian ceremony. In Holland this became grafted onto Palm Sunday with processions of ‘palm stokken’- rods topped with blossoms or a hen made of dough or fruits, all fertility symbols.10

The May Day/Fair period, January 4, shows peaks of above the standard deviation for six out of the eight communities, and midsummer conceptions,
Figure 1 Distribution of births over year: proportion accounted for by each period

- Reformed Church
- Roman Catholic
- Remonstrant/Lutheran

Heerhugowaard 1740-1809
Oudorp 1650-1809
Ursem 1650-1809

Bergen 1720-1804
Egmond aan Zee 1730-1809
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</table>

48
periods March 3 and 4 shows peaks in both urban and rural communities. The peaks that might be associated with January 6 feasting (September period 4) are concentrated in the close-knit communities. As the feast consisted of visiting neighbours this would have been much more difficult in a scattered community in winter. On the other hand the rural communities show a higher baptismal rate for conceptions that took place around the September Fair days, even though the fair is held in Alkmaar. There is a modern parallel for this as the fair is preceded by an agricultural show in the town centre which attracts the farming community to the town in great numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baptismal period</th>
<th>Possible related feast*</th>
<th>Number of peaks</th>
<th>Number over S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>May Day and Fair*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>Midsummer/St John*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 4</td>
<td>Shrove Tuesday*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 4</td>
<td>January 6*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 4</td>
<td>St Nicholas*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 4</td>
<td>First week April</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>Shrove Tuesday*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 1</td>
<td>Second week July</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>September Fair*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1</td>
<td>Second week April</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 1</td>
<td>First week July</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Total per cent of peaks related to feasts = 82.60 %

The different religious denominations show a remarkable uniformity with two exceptions. First, the two peaks associated with early December conceptions, St Nicholas, are in the Roman Catholic church at Alkmaar and at Egmond-aan-Zee with its bias to Old Catholic. Second, there is a fall-off of baptisms at the end of the year in the Lutheran and Remonstranse congregation which suggests that either they eschewed pre-Lenten festivity or practised a stricter observance of Lenten self-denial than was the case in other churches. With regard to Christmas, all churches show an upward movement at the end of September and it is difficult to disentangle the Christmas conceptions from those of January 6. It is possible however that the lack of peaks in September period 3
reflects the religious as opposed to the social significance of Christmas for the Dutch. The other holiday that might have produced a peak was the local celebration of the expulsion of the Spaniards on October 8. This should have produced a baptismal peak in July periods 1-2, but appears to have had no effect whatsoever.

To sum up so far: the peaks associated with May Day and mid-summer are part of a trend of heightened sexuality that started about the first week of April and lasted until mid July. The holidays mark expressions of this trend rather than cause it. At the opposite season of the year, mid-winter, there is another period of heightened sexuality with October period 4 being its most visible manifestation.

Table 6. Kolmogorov - Smirnoff one sample test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Value of D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alkmaar Reformed</td>
<td>7.82 &gt; 0.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alkmaar Roman Catholic</td>
<td>3.59 &gt; 0.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alkmaar Remonstranse/Lutheran</td>
<td>1.09 &gt; 0.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bergen Reformed &amp; Roman Catholic</td>
<td>0.50 &gt; 0.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emond-aan-Zee Reformed &amp; Old Catholic</td>
<td>1.06 &gt; 0.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heerhugowaard. Reformed &amp; Roman Catholic</td>
<td>0.20 &gt; 0.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oudorp Reformed &amp; Roman Catholic</td>
<td>0.24 &gt; 0.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ursem Reformed &amp; Roman Catholic</td>
<td>0.28 &gt; 0.196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is possible, however, that there is a random distribution of peaks. Table 6 shows the result of the Kolmogorov-Smirnoff one sample test on the data. From this one can conclude that there is little possibility of the figures being produced randomly nor could the observed concentration of conceptions in May-July have occurred by chance. If public holidays heightened sexual activity, were there any other factors that might have had the same effect? First, hours of darkness and work patterns appear to have had no effect on conceptions. May-July not only had the longest day-light hours and therefore the longest working days but it also had the highest level of conceptions. It could be that the warmer weather encouraged sexuality, but the opposite time of the year, mid-winter, when days and working hours were short, also produced a high level of conceptions. Second, a common factor between the two seasons of peak sexual activity could be the food supply. Food was plentiful in mid-summer and at the mid-winter feasts. De Castro suggests, however, that it is not just the quantity but the type of food that is important, a high protein diet being more conducive to fertility. Both dairy produce in mid-summer and the meat based feasts of mid-winter were protein rich. This raises several points. Firstly in winter it was the existence of the feasts that generated the food supply with scarce resources being saved up for the holiday. If nutrition is a factor in causing the heightened fertility of mid-winter then the feast may have helped to cause this. Conversely both the English and Dutch material show that the Lenten season of self-denial and lack of meat had little effect on the birth rate. On the contrary both countries show a slump of births in June and July, i.e. a shortfall of conceptions in September-October, just after
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birth period</th>
<th>Conception period</th>
<th>Number of churches below S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 2</td>
<td>Sept. 3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2</td>
<td>Oct. 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>Sept. 2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>Oct. 2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>Aug. 3-4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 3</td>
<td>Sept. 4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 3</td>
<td>Oct. 4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 1</td>
<td>Nov. 2-3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 2</td>
<td>Jan. 3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 4</td>
<td>Oct. 1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 3</td>
<td>Dec. 4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 2</td>
<td>Nov. 1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 2</td>
<td>May 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 1</td>
<td>June 2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>July 2-3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 2</td>
<td>Feb. 3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 2-3</td>
<td>Mar. 2-3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the harvest when food would usually be plentiful. Does this justify De Castro’s theory in showing that quality rather than quantity was important? Did diet have any effect on seasonal sexuality? This seems unlikely since resources would have been at their lowest in January and February, but the slumps in births are consistently related to the harvest months.

Harvest Slump?

Table 7 shows the distribution of those periods in which the frequency of births falls below the mean minus the standard deviation of the frequency distribution. The table shows that sexuality was generally low from mid-August to mid-November, reaching a nadir in mid-September. Such periods of low baptismal figures are akin to those found by Dyer. He attributes this to a lessening of intercourse consequent on the fatigue brought about by the heavy harvest work-load. However the heaviest work-load in a dairy region is May-June when the hay harvest and cheese-making are at their height. So can the apparent slump in conceptions actually be related to the harvest or is there some other factor? The harvest in Alkmaar was reckoned to be over by the end of August, called in Holland the ‘harvest month’.

The September Fair marked the end of the harvest and the winding down of the agricultural year. The festivals in October and November had little effect on the low level of conceptions at this time. The population like the year was exhausted, an exhaustion that could be caused not so much by harvest but by processing the products of harvest e.g. baking for the winter, brewing, laying down meat. (November in Holland is called ‘butcher’s month’). This work would involve women as much as men and might account for the lack of any difference between town and country so far as the level of conceptions was concerned. The original hypothesis however stated that sexuality in man was social and
physiological and I would like to consider the latter briefly. The level of fertility is determined by the frequency of intercourse; the number of fecund women and the number of potent men.\textsuperscript{15} In a closed population such as a church congregation there can only be a limited number of women at risk of pregnancy so that a high fertility in the early part of the year will mean fewer women at risk in the later part. The late December/January conception peaks could contain some women whose children contributed to the late September/October birth peaks but whose babies died or were wet-nursed so that they re-entered the population at risk almost immediately.

Furthermore in an agricultural community how much more convenient to have women active and participating in the work-force from May-August rather than just having given birth or being heavily pregnant. It could be that the breeding cycle in man was evolved through the agricultural calendar and that the pagan festivals later incorporated into the Christian calendar were pegged to this need. It would be interesting to examine pre-contraception season birth rates in the southern hemisphere to see if the slumps and peaks there were reversed.

Conclusion

The relationship between festivals and fertility is problematical. As far as sexual behaviour can be assessed from baptismal figures some festivals such as Shrove Tuesday did produce heightened sexual activity, but others, notably those in early and mid-summer were part of a trend of heightened sexuality. The local and civil festivals that took place in the latter part of the year in the Alkmaar area appear to have had little impact on the conception rate. The fertility peaks of April to July together with the troughs from September to November are similar to those observed in English work on seasonality, notably Dyer's, despite differences in the agricultural economy of England and Holland. This raises the question of 'how local is local?' when it comes to something as universal as human sexuality. Is there for instance a trend that can be traced across pre-industrial Europe? What difference did the festivals associated with the Orthodox churches make, or is there a variation between the seasonal patterns of Moorish and Christian Spain? Further cross-religious and cross-cultural studies of demographic seasonality in the past are obviously called for.

Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Peak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alkmaar Reformed</td>
<td>0.4548</td>
<td>2.853+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alkmaar Roman Catholic</td>
<td>0.4990</td>
<td>2.910+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alkmaar Rem/Lutheran</td>
<td>0.4850</td>
<td>2.850+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bergen</td>
<td>0.5600</td>
<td>3.080+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egmond-aan-Zee</td>
<td>0.6000</td>
<td>3.090+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heerhugowaard</td>
<td>1.0200</td>
<td>3.770+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oudorp</td>
<td>0.6860</td>
<td>3.230+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ursem</td>
<td>0.5900</td>
<td>3.073+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTES

6. O. Jong, Godsdienst in Alkmaar 1573-1795. See also Van de Woude, 1962.
14. Ibid.
RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

CHILDBIRTH DEATHS IN SHIPTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD, 1565-1665

T.A.I. McQuay

Statistical data on the maternal mortality rate which prevailed in England and Wales are easily available for the post-civil registration period from the Annual Reports of the Registrar General, but reliable data for all earlier periods are rare.\(^1\) This paper presents the findings of research based on parish records in Shipton-under-Wychwood. These records are most unusual because of the details which they provide, details from which the maternal mortality rate can be estimated for a country parish three hundred years ago, and estimated with a degree of confidence which is rarely possible for this period.

The Shipton-under-Wychwood parish burial and baptism registers are continuous and unbroken since 1538. The parish lies in north-west Oxfordshire, and includes a similar rural village, Milton-under-Wychwood, and some smaller hamlets in the Wychwood forest, once a royal hunting forest. In 1565 a new vicar\(^2\) provided comments in the registers so that there is considerable information between 1565 and 1593 and some information until 1670 when the registers became merely a list of names. The parish population, assessed by multiplying the decennial averages of baptisms by thirty, appears to have been 700 in 1565 and approximately 1200 in 1664.\(^3\)

Table 1. Comparative rates of maternal mortality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Rate per 100,000 births</th>
<th>Index (Shipton=100)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shipton-under-Wychwood (1)</td>
<td>1565-1665</td>
<td>1270</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden (2)</td>
<td>1756-1760</td>
<td>1090</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden (2)</td>
<td>1801-1805</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden (2)</td>
<td>1856-1860</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England and Wales (3)</td>
<td>1911-1914</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England and Wales (4)</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England and Wales (4)</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1. Oxfordshire County Record Office MS. DD. Parish, Shipton-under-Wychwood, d.1 & d.2
2. Roger Schofield, 'Did the mothers really die? Three centuries of maternal mortality in 'The world we have lost", in, L. Bonfield, R. Smith and K. Wrightson (eds). The world we have gained: histories of population and social structure, Oxford. 1986, p.238.
In the 100 years from 1565 there appear to have been fifty-two maternal deaths in childbirth. There were 3970 baptisms and 120 stillbirths, undelivered babies or babies dead before christening. There is a source of possible error in assuming that each baptism corresponded exactly with a birth and that each burial corresponded exactly with a death, but the figures nevertheless suggest some 4090 confinements and a maternal death rate of 1270 per 100,000 births. Compared with 1986, when the maternal mortality rate for England and Wales was 6 per 100,000 births, death in childbirth appears to have been two hundred times more frequent in the early modern period than it is today (table 1).

There is no comment in the register about twenty-one (40 per cent) of the fifty-two deaths, but the mother’s burial took place within four weeks (table 2) of her infant’s baptism. Fourteen of these babies survived the maternal death.

**Table 2. Interval from delivery to death, Shipton-under-Wychwood, 1565-1665.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interval from delivery to death (days)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>58.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>76.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>79.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>90.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>93.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>96.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>99.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 34, 100, 100

A further eleven (21 per cent) had the diagnosis of ‘Dyed in her travail’ or ‘Dead of childbirth in her labour’, and in one case it was stated specifically ‘Dyed in her travail with her child being not delivered.’ None of these infants appear to have survived. None appear in the baptism register or were given separate burial. Unfortunately there is no way of telling the exact number of undelivered babies, where an obstructed labour would have led to maternal death from shock and haemorrhage due to a ruptured uterus.

The third and final group of twenty mothers (39 per cent) ‘died in childbed’. Of these eight of the babies did not appear in the baptism register nor were they interred separately, five were christened before burial, four were stillborn or died before baptism and two survived. In one case it is specified that burial took place along with the mother; ‘died in childbed and her lettel sonne and were both interred together’.

There is therefore some evidence that the vicars, in their diagnostic labelling, differentiated between mothers who died before parturition, labelling them
‘died in labour or travail’, and those who died after the confinement ‘died in childbed’. Haemorrhage, shock or puerperal sepsis would have been the commoner causes of post-partum death.

Parity was assessed from the baptism register. Fifty of the fifty-two mothers who died could be traced, and twenty-two appear to have succumbed when they were having their first baby. This figure of 45 per cent reflects the higher risk associated with a first confinement. Otherwise the mortality figures bear no relation to parity. One mother died having her eighth baby and this was the highest number of deliveries recorded in the series.

The remarkably complete and detailed parish records of late sixteenth and seventeenth century Shipton-under-Wychwood reveal a high maternal mortality in comparison with data recorded for the nineteenth century and the present day. However, the levels are not dissimilar to those calculated by Schofield from family reconstitution data using indirect techniques. Schofield suggests a best estimate maternal mortality rate of 930 per 100,000 births for the period 1550-99 and 1160 for 1600-49. Unfortunately no parish register with information comparable to that of Shipton-under-Wychwood has yet emerged, so we shall have to wait to see if these findings are representative of the period in general.

Acknowledgements
The writing of this research note was helped and encouraged by several people, and I should like to thank Professor E.A. Wrigley of All Souls College, Oxford, Dr H. McQuay of Balliol College, Oxford, and Dr I. Louden and Dr M. Pelling of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine at Oxford University.

NOTES

1. Rates of maternal mortality are available from 1847, see Annual Report of the Registrar General of England and Wales, 1847-., London.
5. The practice of burying dead mother and child together is illustrated vividly by the following passage: ‘The skeleton of a mother of our race folding fleshless arms round the little bones of the child she bore’. B.S. Puckle, Funeral customs, London, 1926, p.53.
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NOTES AND QUERIES

A QUERY ABOUT CHAPELRIES

Contributed by P.E.H. Hair

Recently I have been looking over some analyses of parish registers where the unit is notionally anomalous, being not a parish but a chapelry. I note that some researchers disregard the anomaly and proceed as if, for demographic purposes, a chapelry can be treated in exactly the same way as a parish. This may be dangerous. Little has been written about chapelries, either their general history or their demographic standing, so that their equation with ‘the parish’ in population analyses remains an open question. But until more work is done, it might be wise to proceed with some additional caution when investigating the registers of a chapelry. (For instance, it is far from clear that before the nineteenth century a chapelry had as defined and firm a territorial boundary as did a parish).

I suggest that any investigation of chapelry populations should begin by considering the ecclesiastical relationship of the chapelry to its ‘mother parish’. Certain chapelries were (and are) totally dependent, to the extent that they were not allowed to carry out the church events which required a register. That is, baptisms, marriages and burials were all performed and registered at the mother church - so we have no problem. At the other extreme, some chapelries were so ‘ancient’ that they had long ago won the privilege of doing most of the things that a parish could do, which after 1537 could include the performance and registration of the above events (or at least certain of them). Many chapelries fell between these two extremes, having emerged or having gained a degree of independence only in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, and only step-by-step ascending to the privileged status of a separate register and total registration. Yet even in the case of an ‘ancient chapelry’, the chapelry was likely to differ from the parish in its clerical manning. Whereas every parish had to have a beneficed and possibly lifelong incumbent (that is, a vicar or rector) who had responsibility for pastoral care including parish registration - even when he was occasionally supported by short-term curates - any chapelry was liable to be served only by lesser clergy, hence often only by short-term curates. And perhaps this mattered for registration.

To move into the ‘Dark Ages’ of parish register study, another category of chapelries reached parish status only in the era of secular registration. Had their promotion (say, after 1860) any effect on local parochial registration? A before-and-after investigation might be revealing.
A point worth remembering with all parish register analyses is that entries are not mechanical and automatic productions, like a word-count on a computer, but are socially determined, each entry being the outcome of varying social interactions between families, clergy, and register clerk. Hence, before entries can be statistically analysed en masse, their validity and meaning as individual items need to be assessed and evaluated, in the present context by considering the behaviour of the participants. Questions that should be asked about a chapelry register might therefore include the following.

1. At any particular period, what was the exact constitutional relationship between the chapelry minister/priest who carried out the register-able events and the parish incumbent? What was the complex of current legal relations between the two, and between each and the registration ‘customers’, in terms of the laws both of the state and of the Church? Were some events reserved for the parish, and if so why - was it because of fees? And what were the rules regarding fees? How irregular or changing were the chapel ministers and did this affect their registration activities and even the entries? Which clergyman was pastorally responsible for encouraging families to cooperate on the register-able events, and did this affect whether the events appeared in the register of the parish or that of the chapel?

2. Who wrote the entries in the chapel register - if a layman, was it the parish clerk or another person? If the parish clerk, or the parish incumbent, where did he live and how well did he know the chapel locality and hence the chapel ‘customers’ (I suspect that degrees of recognition affected some entries, for instance, those of occupation)? Is the chapel register significantly different from the parish register of the same period, in care, in spelling, in particulars (for instance, degree of details of residence)? Again, does it display the same balance of opinion and expression in those entries which could involve subjective bias and whose meaning is therefore debatable (for instance, occupations and occupational nomenclature), suggesting that the same interpreting mind was at work?

3. Since at least those families who lived midway between the parish church and the chapel might well take their business to either (and it may be that this choice could be more general in many chapelries), is there any evidence of reasons other than mere geographical appropinquity likely to affect that choice? Such reasons might be differential fees, personal knowledge of a particular clergyman (for or against him), the prestige of a ceremony in the mother church, the desire to have a ceremony of a particular kind performed in the building where a previous ceremony of a different kind had been - and legally only could be - performed. Did families deliberately take some ceremonies to the more distant church/chapel, to avoid publicity (e.g. of bastardy), or, alternatively, to the nearest church/chapel, to gain publicity?

All these behaviour possibilities suggest that the normal relationship between a ‘parish’ register and an identifiable and fixed territorial area may not hold good in the case of a chapelry register - and hence, of course, in the case of the register of its mother parish. There could, for instance, be extensive ‘leakage’ of registration entries from the chapelry to the mother parish. Up to a point, these
possibilities may be proved or disproved by analyses of registers. To give a single instance, I know of one eighteenth century Lancashire family which, apparently without moving residence, registered baptisms alternately in a chapelry and at the parish church.

A simple rule might be that a chapelry analysis always needs a mother parish analysis to accompany it. Residence entries in each register may go some way towards proving or disproving that the chapel and the parish church drew on different geographical areas, thus assessing whether leakage was significant or not. Unfortunately residence entries are not always supplied in registers. Further, those that do appear may not always be reliable - customers from grey areas between settlements might at different times be counted as belonging to the particular settlement thought appropriate to the particular register, or might themselves declare their residence differently to suit the register. Family reconstitution may or may not help to clarify these issues. (While the issue of leakage in one form or another occurs to some extent with any parish register, it would appear to have special relevance where chapelries are concerned).

I do not know the answers to the questions above. Hence I do not know whether my concern about chapelries represents a serious issue for population studies, or is merely a false alarm. Can anyone help? First, we need information about the legal niceties regarding chapelries, at different periods, not only about the statutes but about the extent to which they actually operated (at a sheer guess, differentially in different dioceses). Secondly, we need some checking in those registers that happen to provide material that can answer some of the questions. Possibly some of them have already been answered, explicitly or implicitly, in research that has escaped me or publications I have overlooked. Or it may turn out that here, as in many other historical matters, we lack the evidence to get to the bottom of a puzzling issue - but at least we should ask the questions and attempt the investigation. Meanwhile, extra caution in drawing conclusions from chapelry analysis should probably be the order of the day.
SOME RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Notes on articles compiled by Terry Gwynne, book reviews by Kevin Schurer

Michael Anderson

Michael Anderson provides a useful update on the project to produce a National Sample from the enumerators’ books of the 1851 census of Great Britain which discusses the data, methods, the household and the family. A further stage is indicated in terms of the use of more subsamples to explore a wide range of issues. In addition, the endnotes supply helpful bibliographical references and information about access to materials.

Tom Arkell

Tom Arkell examines Gregory King's calculations, and exemptions from the hearth tax, in an exploration of contemporary perceptions of poverty and the numbers receiving poor relief. The conclusion is that it must be accepted that poverty occurred at several different levels and that the poor formed a minority of society in the later seventeenth century: perhaps about one quarter of the population lived in some form of poverty and about one seventh in or near destitution. He ends by pointing to the urgent need for an accumulation of local studies.

Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos

This article examines recent work on the institution of service in modern England and argues that in some ways service fostered the early maturation of young men. The basis of the study is autobiographies and data on apprentices in Bristol.

David Cressy

David Cressy reviews the current state of knowledge with regard to kinship and undertakes some further investigation. This article begins with a useful survey of the literature on kinship, and goes on to demonstrate the range of available evidence including wills.
Jane Emerson

Using the printed census abstracts for 1851, 1871 and 1881, the enumerators' schedules for Exeter 1851, 1861, 1871 and 1881, and other local records, Jane Emerson analyses the significance of lodgings for different groups of lodgers and landlords or landladies in Exeter. She concludes that the significance is seen in terms of the social and economic impact on urban communities, in reflecting and determining family and household adjustment to the pressures of urban migration and the growing separation of work and home, and in contributing to an environment where young adults saw themselves first and foremost as members of a peer group rather than their parental family.

Richard J Evans

This is an investigation of Asiatic cholera set in the context of the important role played by epidemics in history, which seeks to illuminate the part played by cholera in the political upheavals of the nineteenth century. For *LPS* readers there is a useful discussion of the disease and its mortality (pp.127-31) and of governmental policies to deal with it (pp.139-43). In conclusion the author argues it is perhaps asking too much of an epidemic disease if one expects it to lead directly to social upheaval and revolution.

Barbara A Hanawalt
'Seeking the flesh and blood of manorial families', *Journal of Medieval History*, 14, 1, 1988, pp.33-45.

Professor Hanawalt demonstrates how the coroners' rolls located in the Public Record Office can be used to study peasant family life, using them both quantitatively and descriptively. The article begins with a brief but helpful survey of the historiography of manorial life.

Maryanne Kowaleski

Professor Kowaleski analyses borough pleas to throw light on many aspects of family structure and domestic life, and the working of urban marriage markets. Important matters considered include marriage formation, age at first marriage, dowry rights, family size, sex ratios and incidence of multiple marriage. A useful historiographical survey opens the article.
Norma Landau

The author sets this investigation of the extent to which parish officials used the 1662-97 settlement laws to monitor the movement of migrants during the eighteenth century in the context of the relative lack of previous work in this area, in part the result of the intractable nature of the sources. The author herself has drawn heavily upon petty sessions minute books to which she provides a very useful introduction.

Peter Laslett
'Family, kinship and collectivity as systems of support in pre-industrial Europe: a consideration of the 'nuclear-hardship' hypothesis', *Continuity and Change*, 3, 2, 1988, pp.153-75.

Peter Laslett places the nuclear-hardship hypothesis in the context of the significance of transfers through the collectivity, e.g. charitable organisations such as the Church, municipalities and the state. The conclusion that in England and north-west Europe such transfers through the collectivity were of great importance is set alongside the cautionary note that transfers through the collectivity were extensive in other areas where the simple-family household was less dominant.

Angus McInnes

The author places leisure and luxury as the central theme in the life of a particular urban community. For LPS readers the points of interest are likely to be the use of evidence such as Freemen Admissions to investigate the significance of changes in occupational categories, the use of Frankpledge lists to check the evidence from the freemen records (pp.55-65). The study is all set within the general context of the transformation of Shrewsbury between 1660-1750 from a marketing and manufacturing centre to a leisure town, which in turn is seen as part of a wider move towards specialization as the dominating feature of English economic development in the post-1660 years. An appendix lists in full the occupations from Freemen Admissions and Frankpledge lists under three different time periods.

Dennis and Joan Mills
'Rural mobility in the Victorian censuses: experience with a micro-computer program', *The Local Historian*, 18, 2, 1988, pp.69-75.

The authors demonstrate the case for establishing the general experience of local communities as opposed to their distinctive experiences; for which the census enumerators' books provide a particularly good case in point. The need
to set small-scale local studies in the context of the overall social and demographic experience is seen as essential. The article reports early results from a study of Buckinghamshire villages using a computer-program: Analysis of Nineteenth Century Censuses, which runs on BBC Model B and Acorn computers.

C G Pearce and D R Mills

A description of a project which anticipates a conventionally printed bibliography to be published in 1989 by the Historical Geography Research Group of the Institute of British Geographers.

Margaret Pelling

The author seeks to focus more directly upon the sick-poor, rather than upon the poor in general. Making use of a uniquely comprehensive listing for Norwich in 1570 she investigates the question of morbidity as a broader indication of social experience than can be provided by mortality alone. The importance of the rich as a group is seen as complicating definitions of the poor in general, and this is argued to be as true for action as it is for attitudes.

Penny Nell
'Some early censuses and their enumerators', The Local Historian, 18, 1, 1988, pp.19-20.

A brief account of fifteen enumerators' books 1801-31 for Hendon, Middlesex which unusually have survived, which encourages local historians to continue digging into parish records.

Sonya E Rose

The author examines the living arrangements of the elderly (age 55 or over) in relation to the communities in which they resided, and changes in economic circumstances and employment. The data are provided by the 1851 and 1881 censuses of the villages of Arnold, Bulwell and Brinsley. The conclusion is that age per se did not differentiate the ways in which the elderly lived. Future investigation is suggested into the relationship between adult dependency and household composition by use of records from Poor Law authorities in conjunction with detailed information about the economic circumstances of residents in the local community.
Charles W J Withers

Charles Withers examines patterns of directed labour mobility following the Highland potato famines of 1836-50 against the background of studies of permanent Highland-Lowland migration in eighteenth and nineteenth century Scotland. The principal data sources are nominal lists of migrants kept by the Central Board of Management of the Fund for the Relief of the Destitute Inhabitants of the Highlands. LPS readers might usefully read this article in conjunction with Lockhart (LPS 21 pp.40-2) and the Whytes (LPS 32 pp.45-52).

Book Reviews

E. Burgess and M. Rance (eds)

This book provides a very good example of what can be acheived by an enthusiastic and active local history group. The book is a collection of essays contributed by some fifteen separate authors, a reflection of the fact that it is very much a group book, with all of the members contributing to some degree. The content is wide and varied, again reflecting the individual interests of the group members. Some essays are based on oral evidence, others documentary, some personal reflection and recollection. Throughout, the text is accompanied by a wealth of illustration: photographs of inhabitants, old postcards, maps and prints. Since the spine of this book displays the legend 'Vol.1', one can only assume that the work of the Boreham group continues, and that further publications can be expected in the future. Let us hope they are as good and as inspirational as this one. Copies of the book can be obtained from Mrs E Burgess, Mulberries, Boreham, near Chelmsford, Essex.

J. Gibson
E. McLaughlin

Since access to the actual certificates of births, marriages and deaths for the post-1837 period of civil registration is blocked, the usefulness of the General Register Office indexes for demographers wishing to study whole communities or populations is limited. Yet for the genealogist in search of a particular person or group of persons, the system is invaluable, yet also frustrating. These two short booklets provide important information for those using these sources,
particularly those about to embark on a quest in search of their ancestry. The McLaughlin guide provides many useful practical tips and hints concerning the structure of the indexes, the information given, and how to use the indexes to track down and order the certificate required. It even points out useful information along the lines as: the books are dirty, so don't wear new clothes; the room gets hot, so don't come over dressed; it gets very busy, so get there before 11.00 am. Since the London Office (St Catherine's House) does get so crowded, for those intending to use these indexes, it is wise to refer where possible to microfilm copies held outside of central London. A list of such repositories and the conditions of use is given in both booklets, and should be checked before setting off to London.

The booklet by Gibson also gives details of another large index used primarily by genealogists, the Mormon International Genealogical Index. This is an alphabetically arranged index of information taken primarily from parish registers, relating chiefly to baptisms (christenings), marriages and burials. The coverage of the index varies geographically and temporally, and it is often best to verify the transcriptions that have been made, yet the index still remains a key genealogical aid. Copies of the index are now available throughout the country, and details of their locations can be found in the booklet by Gibson.

Edward Higgs

There are probably very few, if any, readers of this journal who are unaware of the census enumerators' books of the nineteenth century. Indeed, many will have already searched through, transcribed and analysed the returns for a parish or groups of parishes, or at least have thought about doing so. The fact that the previous issue of Local Population Studies (No.41) contained no less than three articles based substantially on the census enumerators' books stands as testimony to this statement. For those investigating the economic or social structure of mid to late nineteenth century communities, searching to answer questions on various aspects of social history, or tracing the everyday lives of their ancestors, like it or not, the census remains a central, if not the key source for their enquiries. It is the most used of all the deposits in the Public Record Office, and judging by the number of microfilm copies of the enumerators' books held in county record offices, libraries and various institutions, the census is probably the most used historical source of all time. Consequently, Edward Higgs' highly authoritative guide to this source of sources is a most welcome addition.

The aim, content and structure of the book are perhaps best summarised by the authors' opening remarks to the introductory chapter, in which he states that: 'The book is a guide to the manuscript census returns for the period 1801 to 1901, and can be used both as a general introduction and as a means of reference when working on the records. To this end each section is as self-contained as possible. It approaches the subject from an archival point of view to provide an administrative background to the census to describe the
documents in detail, and to comment on the nature and reliability of the information they contain'. This is certainly a true reflection of the approach adopted in the book, and it seems clear that the volume will be an invaluable aid and not only for those coming to the census documents for the first time, but also for old hands (like myself). Indeed, reading the chapter on interpreting census information will, I am sure, make many researchers who have taken the data they collected and analysed them at 'face value' think again about their conclusions.

The book is thoroughly researched and well written. The administrative framework, content, structure and scope of the enumerators' books are set out in detail year by year as the author reconstructs the whole process of enumeration. 'Grey-areas' of census enumeration, such as the changing definitions of households over time and the enumerations of those on merchant ships, fishing vessels or similar craft in British waters, which have baffled and confused many a researcher in the past, are dealt with clearly and concisely. Unfortunately the publication does not cover the process of census enumeration in either Scotland or Ireland where some differences in the enumeration process occur, the census being prepared and executed under the control of registrar generals with separate responsibilities for these kingdoms since 1861. Likewise, the book stands clear of discussing the various enumerations that were carried out in overseas colonies in conjunction with the British census. It is true that these were often little more than headcounts or general estimations, but still little is known about them and they have been seldom used. However, one should not let these understandable omissions detract from the vast effort that has gone into the preparation of this book. It should be essential reading for all those working or about to embark on a census-based research project and, I am sure, is destined to become a 'bible' for all census users.

(Note: The book was reviewed from pre-publication proofs supplied by HMSO. I am informed that the book is due to be published in May, and will cost around £10 - KS)

R.A. Houston


For a long time the Scots have been proud of their educational standards. If the subject arises in conversation, a Scot will often be quick to point out that their education system is rather different from that of England and Wales - and probably better. This difference in standards was noted and acknowledged in the writings of Daniel Defoe following his various travels of the British Isles in the early eighteenth century. The origins of this favourable situation, it is often stated, lie in the fact that the basis for a state-instituted national system of education was established in Scotland during the seventeenth century, and that the doctrines of Calvinism acted as a strong, positive social and political influence over the principles of mass education.
These traditional views of the Scottish education system are challenged in this book. Using a variety of sources to provide a measure of literacy levels, the standard although perhaps inappropriate and erroneous benchmark of educational levels, Houston points to the fact that throughout the period from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, literacy levels varied quite considerably within Scotland, with the Highlands consistently recording higher levels of illiteracy than lowland Scotland. Moreover, during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the levels of literacy in lowland Scotland were not dissimilar to those recorded for northern England from the same sources. Although Scottish literacy levels were generally more favourable than those for England from the mid eighteenth century onwards, this, Houston argues, was primarily the result of the particularly low literacy levels of south-eastern England, rather than high levels in Scotland. Even up to the very end of the nineteenth century, illiteracy in the Scottish Highlands was worse than in England as a whole. Indeed, despite overall comparable levels of literacy in lowland Scotland and northern England, any lead in educational standards was accounted for primarily by males, with females in the Scottish lowlands, especially in the lower social orders, being more illiterate than their English counterparts.

Having put forward his case, the author goes on to point out that if little difference can be detected between the educational standards of the English and the Scots, then it is surely wrong to attribute either Calvinism or early state education as having had a dominant or influencing rôle. Instead, the ‘contrast between Scotland and England may lie less in the institutional features of their societies than in less significant aspects of social customs’ (p.257). In this one can see echoes of the regional pattern of emigration described for late eighteenth century Britain in B. Bailyn’s Voyagers to the west (London, 1987: reviewed in LPS 40), and are reminded, yet again, that national, political or administrative divisions may not be the most appropriate geographical units for the purpose of social, economic or cultural investigation.

J.E. Knodel

Anyone who has worked with English parish registers will know that the information they contain is severely lacking for the purposes of anything other than general demographic analysis. Information on the ages of those being buried and those being married invariably goes unrecorded, and the age of mothers at the time of childbirth was neglected until an amendment to the civil registration system of births in 1938. Yet all of these items of information are vital to our understanding of demographic structures and processes. To overcome these shortcomings, the method of family reconstitution, in which the records of baptisms, marriages and burials are linked together to form family records, can and has been applied to parish registers. Yet as many readers of this journal will know to their own cost, even with the help of computer techniques, family reconstitution can be a painstakingly laborious and time-
consuming operation. However, this hefty volume by Knodel illustrates what can be achieved with family reconstitution records for those who persist. The book provides detailed information on a whole range of topics, all of which are unavailable from studying register material in isolation: nuptiality patterns, marital fertility, birth spacing, illegitimate fertility, child and infant mortality, relationships between fertility and mortality patterns.

Fortunately for the author, the villages described in this volume came with relatively ready-made family reconstitutions. These are the Ortssippenbuch village genealogies or 'books of local kinsmen', which were produced in German from the 1930s as a by-product of Nazi ideology - to help people to establish their Aryan descent and promote feelings of national unity and concepts of 'blood and folk' (p.13). The fourteen villages selected for study cover a wide geographical area in what is now West Germany, but are concentrated into two groups in the south of the country, together with a central and a northern group. This geographical diversity is important since almost regardless of the demographic feature under investigation, differences in behaviour, often quite sharp, are noticed from place to place. Indeed, it is sometimes the case that even neighbouring settlements display quite contrasting demographic patterns. This is particularly true of the timing of the adoption of family limitation. It is also interesting to note that in various instances geographical variation overshadows any socio-economic differences within a village or region.

The focus of the book is the period of demographic transition, analysing in particular the process and course of fertility decline and reductions in infant and child mortality levels. When viewed at a regional or macro-level it appears that the villages in which family limitation emerged earliest did not show signs of having significantly reduced levels of child mortality, indicating that a 'reduction in mortality was not necessary to precipitate changing reproductive patterns' (p.458). Yet at a micro, intra-village level evidence is found to suggest that those individual families implementing family limitation also enjoyed the most favourable levels of child mortality, and vice versa. Along with others, this key finding points to the need for greater research at a community level, particularly in the central period of demographic transition. Unfortunately, with the deficiencies of parish registration in the nineteenth century and access barred to the civil registration documents of post-1837, there does not seem to be too much hope for researchers in this country. Yet this book strongly suggests that research along the lines of a family reconstitution is urgently required for the communities of nineteenth century England and Wales.

P.P. Viazzo


Ever since the days of Wordsworth, Turner and other Lakeland poets and artists, people have had a tendency to romanticise about mountain areas. They have been seen as a place to escape to, where one can break away from the
industrial urbanised world, where one can ‘journey-back-in-time’. Mountain communities have for a long time been viewed as being isolated not only geographically, but also economically and culturally, and as a result being closed and inward-looking. In this book Paolo Viazzo challenges all of these commonly held beliefs. The evidence presented in the book questions the stereotyped image of mountain regions; firstly by showing that it is a fallacy to picture all mountain communities as having a common identity, clearly differences can be seen from place to place; and secondly, by illustrating that they evolve and change along with their lowland counterparts, and cannot be seen as timeless entities. In demographic terms, the traditional view is often to associate mountain regions with having high levels of fertility and mortality, in which population size in regulated by the classic Malthusian positive check, with outward migration acting as a much needed safety valve. Using local census and parish register data from the village of Alagna in the Piedmontese Alps, situated in present day Italy, this view is also challenged. In its place a picture is put forward of a finely balanced homeostatic demographic system, not unlike that described for much of north-western Europe, in which fertility levels are controlled through late marriage and high levels of celibacy. Equally, the ‘safety valve’ aspect of migration is also dismissed, the author claiming that much, if not most, migration was the result of ‘pull’ factors from the economically developing central plain of Italy, rather than ‘push’ factors from within the mountain community, although I would think that this point is impossible to substantiate. The book adds greatly to our understanding of mountain communities, but also provides an admirable example of a local community study, combining with much effect a host of both quantitative and qualitative sources.

R. Wall and J. Winter (eds)

The title of this book is most appropriate. Throughout Europe the Great War of 1914-1918 proved to be an upheaval influencing many aspects of everyday life: political, economic, social and, of course, demographic. The number of British casualties totalled some 634,000 men, a figure equivalent to seven per cent of the male population aged between fifteen and forty-nine in 1911, with deaths accounting for a reduction of sixteen per cent in the number of males aged twenty to twenty-five. Much has been written on the political and economic framework of the First World War, yet little is known of the social consequences of war, in particular the lives of those left at home. This book aims to amend this omission.

The contents of the book are set out in four sections: the first outlines a comparative demographic framework; the second investigates the conditions and standards of living for those remaining at home; the third examines the war-time employment of women; while the final section explores the rôle and nature of family ideology, and in particular the destabilising effects of war on domestic and family life. Of the four sections the chapters on women’s
employment are particularly rewarding. It is often argued that the First World War brought about a transformation in the rôle of female employment and a general acceptance of women working in industry, probably as a result of females working in munitions factories and other key sectors as part of the general war effort. In her study of French employment patterns Jean-Louis Robert challenges this orthodox view and argues that in France the war resulted in very few employment opportunities for women, indeed, instead coincided with a sharp decline in extra-domestic employment. This general view is shared by both Ute Daniel’s work on Germany and Deborah Thom’s work on Britain, both of whom suggest that the war increased long-term female employment only in the case of a select number of specialist ‘white-collar’ jobs. These findings are paralleled by the various chapters of the following section, all of which all to a greater or lesser degree to the fact that throughout Europe the popular concept of women’s war service was one of producing and raising children. This view is put forward most forcefully in the essay by Marie-Monique Huss with her analysis of French pronatalist propaganda as captured by the illustrations of war-time picture postcards, and is supported by both Soloway’s and Usborne’s study of pronatalism in Britain and Germany respectively. Such policies were aimed not just at replacing the war dead, but were also an attempt to emphasise the values of family and domesticity, endeavouring to ensure that the upheavals of war did not act to undermine the traditional patterns of authority within the family.

In terms of demographic and family history, it is clear that as yet little is known about the early twentieth century. Hopefully this book will encourage others to pursue research into this not too distant but still little charted ocean.

E.A. Wrigley

The short length of this book is a reflection of the fact that its four chapters were originally delivered as the Ellen MacArthur series of lectures at the University in Cambridge in 1987. The book skilfully combines the subject matter that first gripped the authors’ attention as a doctoral student, namely industrial change, with the study of demographic transition, the field with which readers of this journal perhaps more readily associate him. The need and desire to build links and map correlations between these two forces is obvious, yet in reading this book one comes away with the impression that the orthodox view of the relationship between them should in reality be inverted. That is to say that population growth, rather than industrial development, should be viewed as a dependent instead of an independent variable. In other words, the demographic upheaval of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was a driving force rather than a consequence of the chain of technical and economic developments loosely termed the ‘industrial revolution’.

The authors’ dissatisfaction with the notion of the so-called ‘industrial revolution’ as an all encompassing, single event forms a central theme running throughout the book. The starting point of the argument is the work of the
classical economists, those working and writing during the first phases of industrialization, in particular Adam Smith. Wrigley points to the peculiar paradox in which contemporary economists, including Adam Smith himself, failed to foresee that increased levels in real wages could be sustained, indeed argued positively that the limit to economic growth was both fixed and subject to diminishing returns. Why was it that even the leading political, economic and social observers of the day failed to detect what was really going on around them?

The answer to this dilemma, Wrigley argues, lies in the fact that the transition referred to as the ‘industrial revolution’ was characterised by two separate and distinct developments. The early phases of the industrial revolution witnessed advancements primarily in what Wrigley terms the late ‘organic economy’, while later developments concentrated on the ‘inorganic economy’. These two types of economy are defined and separated by the basic means of production upon which they are based. In an organic economy the major industries are based on natural products, and moreover, are produced by energy sources also dependent on natural products: heat from the burning of wood; animal or human muscle power fuelled by the intake of organically grown foodstuffs. In contrast, the inorganic economy is based primarily on inorganic materials, notably iron, and powered by inorganic fossil fuels, principally coal, which in turn is used via steam to drive machines, themselves fashioned from inorganic materials such as iron and steel.

The fundamental difference between the two economic regimes is their potential for growth. In the organic economy, even in a well-advanced one such as the late eighteenth century, the growth of the economy is ultimately limited by the productivity of the land. The main sources of energy, food to build up the muscles of animals or humans, and trees to burn, all require land to be grown. Equally, the main raw materials of industrial production, for example wool and leather, require land to produce them, in this case to graze animals and provide additional foodstuffs with which to feed them. Every industrial advance only adds in some way a new pressure on the limited land resources. One only breaks away from this fundamental conflict on land use with the development of an inorganic economy, in which the prime sources of energy and raw materials are not dependent on land. It is this basic shift in the economic base, argues Wrigley, that the classical economists failed to recognise. Their knowledge and understanding of economic development was based firmly in the world of the organic society. They were witnessing developments in the last stages of the organic economy, limited as it was by the availability of land, unaware of the emerging inorganic economy, overlapping in time, yet very different in nature.

The book clearly challenges the orthodox notion that the industrial revolution was a ‘cumulative, progressive and unitary phenomenon’ (p.3), erecting in its place the concept of two temporally overlapping yet distinct and separate economic developments. The author claims that the book was written to provoke further thought on the nature and character of the industrial revolution. The book seems sure to succeed in achieving this aim and should be essential reading for anyone studying or reflecting on the transition from a pre-
industrial to an industrial world.

Why not join

THE LPS SOCIETY

Membership includes the opportunity to buy books by post, including the demographic book of the decade, The Population History of England 1541-1871 by E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, on terms which make the subscriptions of £8.00 (student members £7.50) an investment.

For further details contact the Honorary Secretary,
Dr Malcolm T. Smith, Department of Anthropology, The University of Durham, 43 Old Elvet, Durham DH1 3HN.

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Letters intended for publication in LPS should be sent to Kevin Schurer, 27 Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1QA

Editors' note

LPS readers are reminded that the editorial board is always prepared to offer advice on subjects within the scope of LPS. Sometimes queries which have been raised are discussed in print in this section of the journal but there are many others which are not published, so if you think we can help do not hesitate to contact us.

Baptised incognito?

Dear Sir

With reference to the letter from Duncan Harrington concerning the baptism of the sons of Mary Light (and spouse?) published in LPS 40, I think the father of Peter may have been a foundling and baptised Incognito. A fourteenth century workman at Marlborough was named in building accounts as John Nulleseyt, amended by the clerk to John Dieuleseit. A carpenter in London at about the same time is John Godwot, who might even be the same man. This idea is perpetuated on the tomb of the unknown warrior.

Yours faithfully
M.W. Farr
County Archivist, Warwickshire County Record Office, Warwick CV34 4JS.

Small towns in England research project

Dear Sir

As reported in LPS 34, a project was set up in 1985 at Leicester University on ‘Small towns in England 1600-1850’, directed by Prof. Peter Clark. The project has been funded by the ESRC, by the Nuffield Foundation and for a time by the Manpower Services Commission. Several volunteer local historians, responding to the first notice in LPS, have kindly come forward with materials. In these ways, the project has assembled some 68 parish register aggregations from small towns. In addition, the Cambridge Group has generously made available a further 97 aggregations from small-town parishes within their master group of 404 parishes.

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The project aims to chart the changing fortunes of the 800 or so small towns of early-modern England, and to specify the reasons for the patterns which emerge. Initially a sample will be used, but it is hoped to augment this progressively as the project proceeds. Demographic and occupational data form the principal foci of investigation, using sources such as parish registers, the Compton Census, tax listings, and directories. In addition descriptive information is being compiled from a wide range of further sources, and a bibliography of published work on individual small towns is being developed. Thus the project is creating a permanent database on small towns, as one of the resources of the Urban History Centre at Leicester. Valuable help with computerising the demographic and occupational information is being supplied by neighbouring Loughborough University.

From 1988 the research officer for the project is Dr Adrian Wilson. We hope to report on the interim findings of the project in a forthcoming issue of LPS. In the meantime we would be glad to hear from other local historians who may be interested in taking part in the project.

Yours faithfully

Peter Clark and Adrian Wilson

Department of Economic and Social History, Leicester University, LE1 7RH. Tel: (0533) 522591

Microfilm copies of the Registration Indexes

Dear Sir

In LPS 41 you republish a letter that appeared in The Times relating to overcrowding at St Catherine’s House and a reply from the Registrar General recommending the use of microfilm copies of the indexes now fairly widely available.

The locations of these indexes have been published by the Federation of Family History Societies in 1987 and in my General Register Office and International Genealogical Indexes: Where to find them (updated 1988) and subsequently (and superseding this) in the new edition of Eve McLaughlin’s St Catherine’s House (autumn 1988). I would like to acknowledge the co-operation of staff at the G.R.O. in providing information on libraries and record offices who were acquiring these indexes.

However, suggestions that such publications should actually be available on sale at St Catherine’s House (or even publicised) have met with no response. Although copies of all editions are always sent to the G.R.O., the Registrar General’s letter makes no reference to their existence.
The two booklets are available (price £1.25 incl. p&p) from the F.F.H.S., c/o The
Benson Room, Birmingham and Midland Institute, Margaret Street, Birmingham
B3 3BS (or from myself); but not from the G.R.O.

Yours faithfully
J.S.W. Gibson
Harts Cottage, Church Hanborough, Oxford OX7 2AB.

(Note - A short review of the two booklets mentioned in this letter is given on
pages 65-66 - Ed.)

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