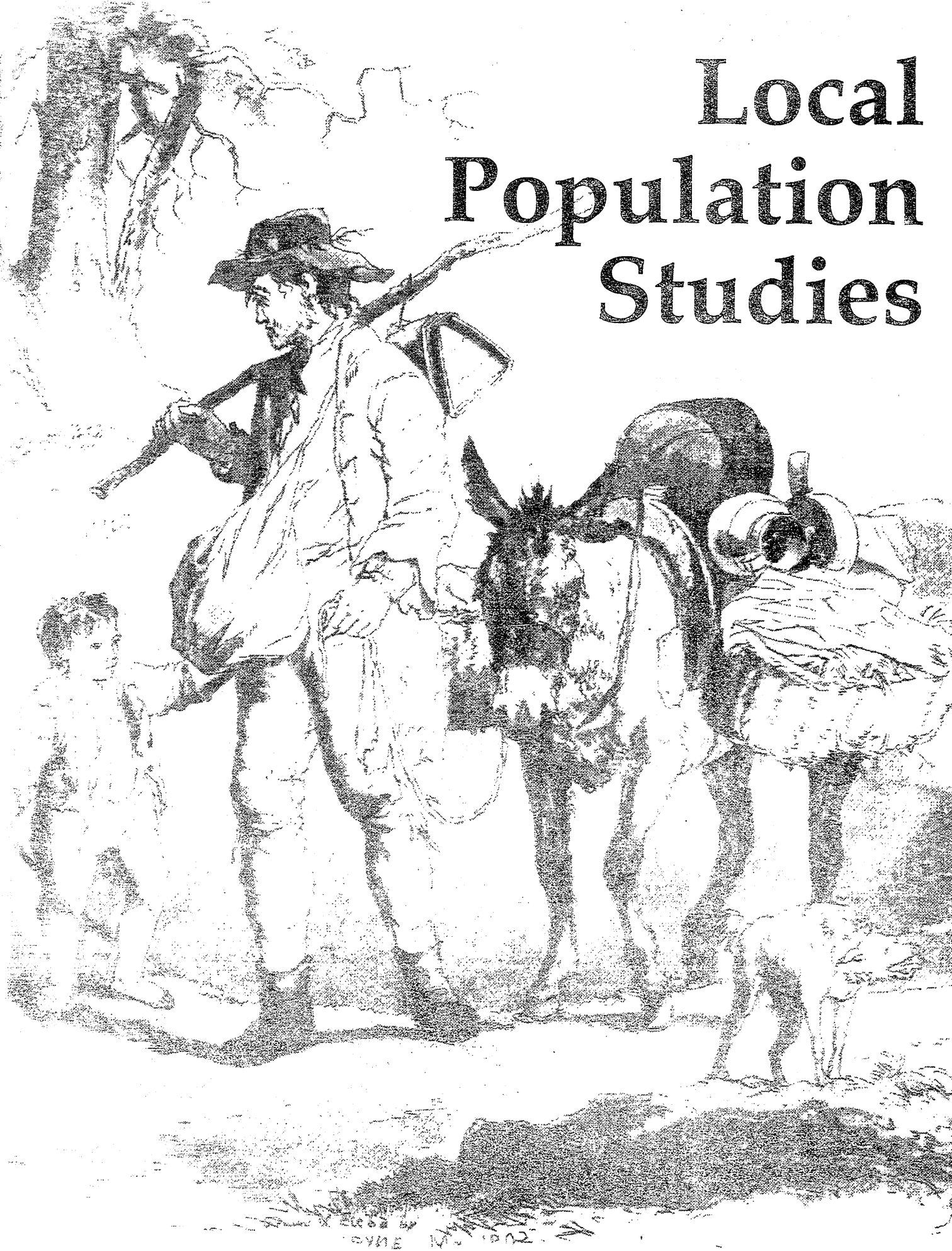


# Local Population Studies



No. 60 Spring 1998

# LOCAL POPULATION STUDIES

No. 60

Spring 1998

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# CONTENTS

## EDITORIAL AND NEWS

Correspondence and the Internet	4
News from the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure	11
News from the Local Population Studies Society	15

## ARTICLES

T. Arkell and A. Whiteman	<b>Mean household size in mid-tudor England: Clackclose hundred, Norfolk</b>	20
A. Blaikie	<b>Infant survival chances, unmarried motherhood and domestic arrangements in rural Scotland, 1845–1945</b>	34
E. Parkinson	<b>Interpreting the Compton census returns of 1676 for the diocese of Llandaff</b>	48

## RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

M. Anderson	<b>Mis-specification of servant occupations in the 1851 census: a problem revisited</b>	58
-------------	---	----

## MISCELLANY

A comment on "Rules for the religious conduct of a family"	65
--	----

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Compiled by T. Gwynne, K. Schürer and M. Woollard	69
---	----

## CORRESPONDENCE

Marking the millennium	80
------------------------	----



## EDITORIAL

### Correspondence and the Internet

Attention has recently been paid in these pages to a general decline in the volume of correspondence and queries sent for publication (see the editorial in *LPS* 56). Reflecting on this issue, we wonder if the flow of questions and answers on issues of historical demography and community history which has in previous years been a major feature of this journal has not dissipated as such, but rather simply changed direction. When this issue was discussed previously, it was suggested that most of the queries on methods and sources that would in times gone by have been aired within the pages of *LPS* were perhaps now being sent to the *LPSS Newsletter*. Although this is in part clearly the case, it is probably not the entire picture. In particular, an increasing amount of debate and discussion is taking place on the Internet.

Much is talked about the Internet these days, and the vast of information out there somewhere just waiting to be tapped into. One thing that the development of the Internet and more especially electronic mail systems has brought about is the growth of so-called 'discussion lists'. These lists can take various forms but in essence they are usually administered by a society or individual and run via a mailbase service. Anyone with an electronic mail (hereafter e-mail) address is then able to 'subscribe' to the list. For most discussion lists the subscription is free of charge, all that is required to join the list is for an individual to send an e-mail message to the list administrator requesting that they be joined to the list. Likewise, individuals can unsubscribe in much the same way. All registered members of a given discussion list automatically receive copies of any mail posted to it. Thus one of the members might wish to submit a query to the list, this will be passed onto all of the other members who can, should they wish, respond accordingly. In turn, each member of the list receives copies of the various replies to the original query as well.

In order to provide a clearer picture of how discussion lists function, it is appropriate to take an example from a discussion list that has specific interests for *LPS* readers. The local-history discussion list, as the name implies, has been established to facilitate exchanges on any matters relating to the study of local history. This might include news about meetings, conferences, publications, or as suggested above general queries relating to members' research interests. One of the questions posted to the local-history list was as follows:

Can anyone please advise on parish church collection 'briefs'. In our parish records are details of many of these charitable collections. I wish to know how they were organised. Some appear to be nation-wide, e.g. 'For redemption of English slaves in Algiers' others seem to be initiated by a named individual.

On the same day that this message was sent out, the following two replies were sent back.

May I point you in the direction of W. E. Tate, *The parish chest*, (Cambridge, 1969) pp. 120–5, 164. Good hunting!

and

Church Briefs were based upon the theory that if an Act of God occurred then the people of God should pay restitution. Dependent upon the size of the loss e.g. from fire or piracy, the person suffering the loss could go to an appropriate level within the church, from Pope to Archdeacon to secure a Brief. This required each and every church within a particular jurisdiction to pay a certain amount which eventually would find its way back to the person suffering a loss.

Henry VIII forbade appeals to the Pope from England so most later Briefs are either National, Diocese wide or Archdeaconary wide. They got in intermediaries who would either guarantee to take a fixed percentage of the amount raised or to provide a fixed sum regardless of how much was collected. The former were known as undertakers and the latter as underwriters.

In the 16th and 17th centuries the Brief would be read as part of the morning service and the churchwardens collected the money on the way out. Every one know roughly how much they were expected to give by their social status and the size of the demand upon the parish.

By the early 1800s the churchwardens used to just take the money out of the poor box and send it off to the archdeacon. The system was abolished by Act of Parliament in 1836 and replaced by insurance.

The Algiers Brief in 1678 was particularly interesting as it was set up by letters patent after a petition was lodged in the Commons. It related to 971 persons captured by Algerian pirates who were subjected to the most awful atrocities. In our local church the Brief was read 29th August 1680 and raised 14s. 2d. Another National one was read 18th Sept. 1678 for the rebuilding of St Paul's church and it was noted that five of the residents of Wrotham in Kent refused to contribute on the grounds that St Paul's was a hot bed of Popery.

The classic book on the subject is by W. A. Bewes (1898).

Then over the next couple of days, further responses to the original query were received.

The *Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 84 (p. 87 onwards) has an article on Lancashire and Cheshire briefs in a Rutland Parish which gives as references on the general subject of briefs C. A.

Walford 'Church briefs', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* X 1 (1882) as well as W. A. Bewes *Church briefs* (1896), already mentioned by in another response. A register of briefs was supposed to be kept in each parish in conformity with an act of the time of Queen Ann. 4 Anne C14 An Act for the better collecting of money by church briefs. In this Rutland parish, Hambleton, the register of briefs was kept in the parish register.

and

As far as briefs 'for the relief of poor French Protestants' are concerned, the first was issued by Charles II in 1681 and others followed (including briefs issued by James II and William & Mary).

These were to raise money for Protestants fleeing to England to escape persecution under the Catholic monarchs in France—a movement of flight which gathered even greater momentum after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes .

As I understand it, the briefs (which were effectively open letters, exhorting charity for various purposes) were circulated to the parish priests who were responsible for reading them out, collecting the money and then forwarding it to their Bishop, who in turn forwarded it London. In the case of money collected for the French Protestants, it was then put into the care of the Chamber of London at the Guildhall (which was the Treasury of the Corporation of London) and distributed by a 'French Committee'. To give some idea of the amounts involved, over £14,000 was collected under the brief of 1681.

As is sometimes the case, the last of these replies brought in turn another response.

The briefs were not handled by the Bishop, but rather were usually handled by the Archdeacon who dealt direct with the undertakers.

The actual sum collected for the 1681 brief was much higher: £17,950 13s. and a farthing by 14 May 1689 and £42,687 13s. 11d. by 9th Sept. 1690. The 1694 brief realised £11,829 when the account was closed on 17 February, 1701.

The second brief of 1688/9 is particularly interesting as the bishops had to pay up specified amounts personally.

This single example, hopefully illustrates some of the advantages offered by such discussion lists. The most important factor is probably the immediacy of the exchange of information. Questions can be asked and answered within a matter of days, or maybe even hours. Multiple responses might also be received, but be careful, the authority of any of the answers has to be taken on trust! For those readers wishing to join this world of electronic discussion, reproduced below is a summary of history-orientated discussion lists which are administered by the

mailbase system of the UK higher education computer service. This information has been taken from the mailbase pages available over the Internet (<http://www.mailbase.ac.uk>) where those with Internet access can find further information.

- **ahc-uk** For members of the Association of History and Computing-UK Branch and interested others to discuss the uses of computers and computer-assisted methods in research and teaching within the UK.
- **ahds-all** List for disseminating news about the Arts and Humanities Data Service, focusing on collection and preservation in electronic resources for history, visual arts, performing arts, archaeology and textual studies and on promoting good standards in creation and use of electronic data
- **arch-theory** The arch-theory list is for international discussions, reviews, and exchanges of information in archaeological theory and associated fields of interest. All contributions are welcomed, in all languages.
- **britarch** For information circulation and general discussion of issues relating to archaeology in the United Kingdom. This list will be used by the Council for British Archaeology information service to announce relevant items of news or information.
- **chart** Chart is the discussion list of CHArt, the Computers and History of Art group. It provides a forum for queries and debating issues related to the use of Computers for art historical research and scholarship.
- **eahw** The European Archaeological Heritage Web project attempts to implement and integrate Internet services for the discipline of Archaeology. This list is a forum for international discussion on ways and means to attain that goal.
- **essex-history** This list has been set up to discuss the role the History Data Unit will play in facilitating data sharing and the provision of data for research and teaching. Contributions are welcome from all creators and potential users and all those interested in the wider issues of sharing historical data.
- **euro-business-history** A list devoted to scholarly discussion of business history in the UK and elsewhere in Europe. Its purpose is threefold: to disseminate information across the Continent, to act as a forum for expressing opinion within the discipline, and to present useful ideas and methods from other fields.
- **french-history** This list facilitates discussion between historians with common interests in the area of French History. It is promoted by the Society for the Study of French History (UK).
- **gem** List for discussion of issues in museum education in the UK, in particular the use of IT, learning in and from museums, and related research.
- **german-history** This list is intended as a news service and discussion forum for historians of Germany based in the UK and beyond. Membership is open to everyone with an interest in German history - academic or research student.
- **hisma** HISMA (Historical International Social Mobility Analysis) is a networking and research project for those with an interest in the patterns, determinants and consequences of social mobility and stratification over a broad historical sweep, and from a comparative perspective.

- **history-child-family** To enable exchange of ideas and resources among teachers and researchers of childhood and family history in Britain and Europe.
- **history-econ** A post-graduate economic history conference and newsletter.
- **history-gis** List for the discussion of applications of Geographical Information Systems technology to historical research, with special emphasis on the UK and on the problems of incorporating historical sources and representing the time dimension within a GIS.
- **history-heritage** List for historians, heritage providers and other interested parties to discuss issues raised by a critical examination of the ways in which the past is, and has been, preserved, presented and consumed.
- **history-ideas** This list is a forum for the discussion of intellectual history, the history of ideas and the sociology of knowledge. Particular emphasis will be placed upon theoretical and methodological issues within these disciplines.
- **history-news** History-News is a news service run by the Computers in Teaching Initiative Centre for History with Archaeology and Art History, and replaces a bulletin-board of the same name.
- **history-of-computing-uk** This list is for the exchange of information and discussion about the history of computing in the United Kingdom. Historians of computing, business historians, museum curators, and others with an interest in this expanding interdisciplinary historical speciality are encouraged to join.
- **history-sources** History-sources is to co-ordinate the collection of on-line and written sources for the NISS/BUBL Subject Tree project. On-line sources will be included as Gopher or WWW pointers while off-line sources will be WAIS archived.
- **ind-arch** List to encourage discussion within the area of Industrial Archaeology - it aims to help establish links between fieldwork, research, individuals and establishments.
- **local-history** This list facilitates discussion between scholars with common interests in the field of British local history. It is promoted by the British Association for Local History.
- **teaching-history** This list is for all involved in work around the pedagogy of history. Exchange and dissemination of information and a forum to discuss policy practice and research about the improvement of practice in history teaching needs of theological libraries (especially in the developing world).
- **wells-and-spas** List for discussion of all aspects of study of holy wells, healing wells, springs, spouts & spas, their social history, folklore, archaeology, architecture, place-name etymology, etc.
- **women-soc-econ-history** To provide a forum for discussion in economic & social history with reference to women's history. It will provide information on academic jobs in economic & social history, advertise seminars in women's history & distribute the Newsletter of the Women's Committee of the Economic History Society.

In order to join any of these discussion lists, assuming that you have an e-mail address, all you need to do is send an e-mail message to the chosen list using the address [mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk](mailto:mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk). The message should be of the format:

JOIN <list-name> <your-first-name> <your-last-name>

For example,

JOIN local-history John Smith

The mailbase administrator will automatically do the rest. Obviously, there are also a large number of discussion lists hosted in countries other than the UK, indeed, the United States is very much the home of the discussion list. Perhaps the most important recent development has been the H-Net discussion lists sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities administered by Michigan State University. The titles of the history associated discussion lists are set-out below. To subscribe or join any of these lists one needs to send a message to the list administrator in much the same way as the UK mailbase lists mentioned above. An e-mail should be sent to listserv@h-net.msu.edu with the text of the message taking the following format:

SUBSCRIBE H-URBAN <your-full-name>

For example,

SUBSCRIBE H-URBAN John J. Smith

A summary of history related H-Net discussion lists is as follows:

- H-Africa African History
- H-AHC Association for History and Computing
- H-Albion British and Irish History
- H-ASEH Environmental History
- H-Asia Asian Studies and History
- H-Business History of Business and Commerce
- H-Canada Canadian History and Studies
- H-CivWar U.S. Civil War History
- H-Demog Demographic History
- H-Diplo Diplomatic History and International Affairs
- H-Ethnic Ethnic and Immigration History
- H-France French History and Culture
- H-Frauen-L Women and Gender
- H-German German History
- H-Italy Italian History and Culture
- H-Japan Japanese History and Culture
- H-Judaic Judaica, Jewish History
- H-LatAm Latin American History
- H-Law Legal and Constitutional History
- H-LIS History of Library and Information Science
- H-Local State and Local History; Museums
- H-Mexico Mexican History and Mexican Studies
- H-Mideast- Medieval Islamic Lands of the Medieval Period
- H-Minerva Women and War and Women and the Military

- **H-OIEAHC** Colonial and Early American History
- **H-Pol** United States Political History
- **H-Rural** Rural and Agricultural History
- **H-Russia** Russian History
- **H-SAfrica** South African History
- **H-Sci-Med-Tech** History of Science, Medicine and Technology
- **H-Skand** Scandinavian History
- **H-Urban** Urban History
- **H-War** Military History
- **H-Women** Women's History

May, 1998

Tom Arkell  
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## NEWS FROM THE CAMBRIDGE GROUP FOR THE HISTORY OF POPULATION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The Cambridge Group is currently hosting (1997–99) a project funded by the Volkswagen Foundation through the University of Vienna on the social structure of Bohemia from c.1500–1800 on which two principal investigators are working. During the current academic year (1997–98) Dr. Markus Cerman is one of these investigators while holding a visiting research associate at the Group and a visiting fellowship at Robinson College. In 1998–99 Dr. Sheilagh Ogilvie will be a visiting research associate at the Group while on leave from her post as university lecturer in the Faculty of Economics and Politics at the University of Cambridge. Dr. Cerman's principal interest concerns the relation between social structure and proto-industry in this area of East-Central Europe. The research of these two scholars focuses upon northern Bohemia, today part of the Czech republic. It was an area which experienced the 'second serfdom' from the later middle ages which had wide-ranging social consequences for the rural subject population, severely restricting their mobility and burdening them with increasing labour dues to be rendered on the demesne farms of the landlords. This was also an area which saw significant growth in proto-industry linked principally to the expansion of linen manufacture. One key interest of this work concerns the social structure and demographic processes that characterise this area. Habsburg efforts to bring Bohemia back under effective fiscal and religious control after the Thirty Years' War led to the generation of rich documentation, in particular a religious census of 1651 and a tax register of 1654, renewed in 1677 and 1722. The enormous increase in landlord powers over rural subjects in this area during the early modern period also generated voluminous documentary sources, especially unusually rich manorial court records.

Dr Cerman focuses his work on the social and institutional determinants of proto-industrial growth—a theme which has frequently interested students of English local demographic history. It has sometimes been claimed that Bohemia acquired a substantial proto-industry because the second serfdom assumed a 'weaker' form in this area. Dr. Cerman's work shows this argument to carry limited weight since landlord-serf relations were far from weakly developed. It seems that a key development was a phase of marked social polarization caused by substantial growth in the a sub-peasant population who held little or no land, while the number of land-holding peasants remained basically stable. Furthermore while landlords, to a limited extent, were implicated in the development of proto-industries, their principal influence stemmed from their control of feudal monopolies over such items as beer, agricultural produce and industrial raw material markets. Such findings suggest that the whole relationship between the second serfdom and proto-industrial development must be reassessed and also indicates the importance that should be attached to comparative research across European societies before one particular model of



proto-industrialization is allowed to carry too much weight as an explanatory factor in inducing social and demographic change.

Dr. Ogilvie's work in this project concentrates principally on the economic world of the peasant serfs of Bohemia between 1580 and 1790. A major preoccupation of this work is with the assumptions that tend to dominate debates about the dynamic qualities of rural societies in this area of Europe—frequently assumed to have been impervious to change and to have preserved the appearance of a traditional peasant society until well into the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. This work reveals Bohemia to have conformed to certain of these stereotypical notions but to rest uncomfortably with many others. Dr. Ogilvie, by making novel use of the manorial court sources and the information in the taxation sources bearing upon household and family structure, is able to provide new empirical and theoretical insights to these issues which will have great significance to many who work on peasant societies and their transformations. Her research explores how enserfed women and men lived their everyday lives: it considers the peasant family, the village community, serfs' relations with the feudal lord, the incursion of the central state, rural industry, small-scale trade, social stratification and gender relations during the 'second serfdom'. Sheilagh Ogilvie's work on these issues will provide material for systematic comparisons with that of Dr. Richard Smith in the Cambridge Group whose research has focused on many of these issues that are central to our understanding of matters to do with kinship, community and demographic processes in the serf sections of English rural society before 1500.

Another area of research currently being undertaken at the Cambridge Group is producing important new results. In a recent issue of *Local Population Studies* the subject matter of Leigh Shaw-Taylor's Cambridge Ph.D. was described. He began research in October 1996 on the household economies of labourers and cottagers in eighteenth-century England with particular reference to the contribution of common rights to total household incomes within this section of society. His work has progressed well subsequently and he has recently been elected to a research fellowship at Jesus College, Cambridge where he will extend his research on this subject while holding a research associateship at the Cambridge Group. The subject of one part of Leigh Shaw-Taylor's research has been to do with a classic issue in English economic and social history—the extent to which parliamentary enclosure both proletarianised and immiserated the agricultural workforce in the eighteenth century as argued by the Hammonds in *The Village Labourer* (1911) and reaffirmed more recently by Jeanette Neeson in her *Commoners: common right, enclosure and social change in England 1700-1820* (1993). Leigh Shaw-Taylor has argued that despite the claims of such scholars there has been little if any solid empirical investigation of the social distribution of common rights. He has developed an innovative means of record linkage making use of the schedules by which all owners of open-field and common rights were required to submit a description of their property and rights on the eve of enclosure. By nominally linking such documents with land tax assessments he has been able to identify most of the tenants of common-right dwellings and through a second linkage exercise using militia lists he has been able to identify the occupations of owners and tenants. So far it has been possible

to perform these intricate and time-consuming task on seven settlements in Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire as well as the Cambridgeshire fen-edge community of Willingham and Cheshunt in Hertfordshire. A striking finding of this work is the almost total absence of labourers as owners or tenants of any common-field land. Furthermore, farmers and substantial owners owned just over 80 per cent of common-right dwellings. Labourers appear to have had extremely restricted access to such properties and hence very limited access to common rights. Enclosure in these areas could not have served to proletarianise such important sectors of local society since they would appear to have been fully proletarianised prior to enclosure. Leigh Shaw-Taylor's work suggests that farmers already had control of the lion share of such resources, although the principal plebeian commoners (still a minority) were not labourers but artisans—a group that have received far less attention by students of rural social structure than they would appear to deserve. When work such as this can be extended to incorporate demographic and poor-law sources as part of the record linkage it may prove possible to re-visit another currently unresolved issue to do with the demographic consequences of parliamentary enclosure in the eighteenth century.

Systematic engagement with oral historical research has been a noteworthy absentee from the portfolio of interests that has characterised work in the Cambridge Group. This absence has now been partially rectified with the recent completion of a doctoral thesis by Kate Fisher entitled 'An oral history of fertility and contraceptive practices in England and Wales c.1930-1950' under Richard Smith's supervision. This thesis focuses on 100 working class individuals who married between 1920 and 1940 from South Wales and Oxford. This has enabled Kate Fisher to construct a set of approaches to be further refined as she works on a larger oral historical study of this subject that was initiated in the second half of 1996-97 under the direction of Dr. Simon Szreter and Dr. Richard Smith. Kate Fisher's doctoral research has produced some important results that may necessitate serious reconsideration of certain of the assumptions that are apparent in the secondary literature on this subject. Her thesis is the first major oral historical investigation of this theme concerned with pre-World War II couples that has involved both males and females. The retrospective interpretation of contraceptive behaviour offered by the sample of interviewees, in sharp contrast with the prevalent image of contraceptive users in the secondary literature, emphatically presents their contraceptive behaviour as ill-thought out, barely discussed, haphazard actions that could not be relied upon. It also shows that many couples adopted strategies without explicit discussion. Overwhelmingly the evidence from both regional samples points towards the primacy of men's role in all areas of contraceptive use, contrary to the view that wives were the primary instigators. The testimonies also suggested that there is a need to acknowledge the role played by sexuality and sexual attitudes since discussions about contraceptive practices were as much about sex as about family size or the advantages and disadvantages of having children. Contrary to a view implicit in much of the secondary literature that as birth control developed and appliances became more refined, cheaper and more widely available so birth control behaviour increased, is the finding that respondents were deeply distrustful of new methods. Furthermore, there is little to indicate a sense that respondents felt themselves to have been sexually deprived by their

use of withdrawal which was frequently presented as a method that interfered least with the fullest expression of sexuality. The new project on which Kate Fisher will work is to a considerable degree concerned with establishing how widespread within different regional samples were the views obtained from the interviewees in the pilot samples from Oxford and South Wales.

# NEWS FROM THE LOCAL POPULATION STUDIES SOCIETY

## Forthcoming Conferences and Day Schools

*Stoke-on-Trent, 4 July 1998.* It is with some regret that we have found it necessary to replace this year's planned residential conference at Staffordshire University with a one-day conference. This change has been necessitated because it has not proved possible to arrange adequate overnight accommodation, with meals, at a reasonable price. Nevertheless, we hope that the revised programme will provide sufficient interest. The one-day conference will go ahead on Saturday 4 July 1998. Full details are to be found below and a booking form appears at the end of this section.

### **Hatches and Dispatches: Birth and Death in the 18th and 19th Centuries**

A Joint Day Conference (LPSS and Staffordshire University)  
at Staffordshire University, Saturday 4th July 1998

#### **Programme**

- 9.20 am. Registration, tea and coffee
- 9.50 am. **Pamela Sambrook**, "Childhood and Sudden Death in Staffordshire in 1850 and 1860"
- 10.45 am. Tea and coffee
- 11.10 am. **Mary Morris**, "Reclining Years: Growing Old in Cheshire in the Mid-Nineteenth Century"
- 12.00 noon **Michael Drake** and/or **Peter Razzell**: "'Slaughter of the Innocents': Infants' Deaths in England 1871-1910"
- 1.00 pm. Buffet lunch
- 2.00 pm. **Sheena Bateman**, "The Stoke-upon-Trent Parish Listing of 1701: Breast Feeding and Child Limitation in the late 17th century"
- 3.00 pm. Tea and Coffee
- 3.15 pm. Choice of **David Alan Gatley**, "Introduction to SECOS and the 19th century censuses" or **Andrew Dobraszczycy** Tour of Shelton
- 4.30 pm. Conference closes

Some members may still wish to spend a longer period in the Stoke-on-Trent area. If you require details of local bed and breakfast accommodation, please tick the box on the booking form which is enclosed separately within this issue of the journal. It may also be possible to arrange an evening meal on Friday 3 July at a local hotel, at a price of approximately £17 per head.

Members who are disappointed by the lack of an LPSS residential conference in 1998 might be interested in attending the British Society for Population Studies' annual conference at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, from Wednesday 2 to Friday 4 September 1998. The conference will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the publication of Malthus' first *Essay on the Principle of Population*. Further details of the conference and of BSPS can be obtained from: The Honorary Secretary, British Society for Population Studies, London School of Economics, Houghton Street, Aldwych, London, WC2A 2AE.

*Derby, 26 September 1998.* We visit the University of Derby for a one-day conference on the local experience of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century economic and social change outside the main industrial districts. The LPSS Annual General Meeting will be held at this conference, full details are as follows and a separate booking form is enclosed in this issue of the journal.

### Changing Communities

Day Conference, Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September 1998  
University of Derby (Room OL1), Kedleston Road, Derby DE22 1GB

#### Programme

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 10.00 am. | Registration, tea and coffee   |
| 10.30 am. | <b>Janet Smith</b> "Property Ownership and Occupancy in two County Towns: Leicester and Northampton contrasted 1745-55"            |
| 11.30 am. | <b>Denise McCue</b> "Late Industrialisation and the Urban Elite in a Midland County Town: late Victorian Lincoln"                  |
| 12.30 pm. | Buffet lunch   |
| 1.30 pm.  | LPSS Annual General Meeting  |
| 2.30 pm.  | <b>Kathy Smith</b> "The Impact of Industry on Nottinghamshire Towns 1770-1840"   |
| 3.30 pm.  | Tea and Coffee   |
| 3.45 pm.  | <b>Neil Raven</b> "Local experiences of de-industrialisation: the decline of manufacturing in a north Essex township c. 1790-1810" |

## Local Population History Book Club

In addition to running bookstalls at nearly all LPSS conferences, and at occasional local history fairs, the LPH Book Club runs a full postal service, supplying copies of about 90 titles on demographic, social and economic history.

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The following list updates that printed in LPSS Newsletter 22. In the brief interlude since that appeared, copies of another new title have arrived, namely M. Pember Reeves, *Round About a Pound a Week*, (Virago, reprint of 1913). We will sell copies at £6-35, plus postage.

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# MEAN HOUSEHOLD SIZE IN MID-TUDOR ENGLAND: CLACKCLOSE HUNDRED, NORFOLK

Tom Arkell and Anne Whiteman

Prior to retirement, Tom Arkell lectured at the University of Warwick. He has published extensively on pre-industrial household structures, and was co-editor for the *LPS* supplement, *Surveying the People* (1992). Anne Whiteman is a retired Fellow of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, and the leading authority on the Compton Census. She has edited, with the assistance of Mary Clapinson, *The Compton Census of 1676: a critical edition* (1986).

## Introduction

Mean household size is a dangerous concept. When used as a simple tool for deriving population size from pre-census household or family totals, it should always be accompanied by the equivalent of flashing hazard lights to warn of its limited reliability. Peter Laslett included such warnings rather obscurely in the middle of his seminal article on 'Mean household size in England since the sixteenth century', which gave an enormous boost nearly thirty years ago to the practice of using mean household size (MHS) as a single multiplier 'to calculate total population from numbers of households'.<sup>1</sup> The impact of this article was so great that for a generation all but a handful of scholars accepted 4.75 or some slight variant as a valid multiplier for almost automatic application to virtually all household totals in England before the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

One of the few dissenting voices against this practice of using a single MHS as a multiplier to create population totals was raised in the pages of *LPS* over fifteen years ago, when Tom Arkell argued that population estimates should only be derived from household totals taken from the best hearth tax lists by applying a multiplying range of at least plus or minus ten per cent (round 4.3).<sup>3</sup> The reason for this approach was the wide range of MHSs to be found in the individual communities for which sufficient data has survived from the later seventeenth century. But this argument has had very little influence on the practice of estimating population totals, with N. W. Alcock's excellent study of two Warwickshire parishes being a very rare exception.<sup>4</sup> Although the argument for using a multiplying range, rather than a single multiplier, has remained virtually unheeded, it is our contention that it could and should be applied to other periods for similar reasons.<sup>5</sup>

Laslett, of course, did appreciate that household composition tended to vary according to social class, the lower social groups containing smaller households and the higher social groups larger ones, mainly due to the different number of servants they employed. This relationship between social class and variant household size has been elaborated further in several studies of larger pre-industrial towns. Paul Slack found that households were often very small indeed

among the very poor. In the poorer areas of Coventry in the 1520s, households were also relatively small, with economic decline acting as another cause that reduced the overall mean in the city.<sup>6</sup> Households in the suburbs of Canterbury in the 1560s again tended to be small, while in Cambridge in the 1620s there was a clear contrast between the size of households in the more central wealthier parishes and those in the suburbs, which Nigel Goose has explained in terms of the combined impact on the latter of poverty, in-migration and epidemic disease.<sup>7</sup>

The lessons we can draw from these studies are, however, limited, for they were all based on larger towns, and furthermore only related to parts of them. In Tudor times, some 90 per cent or so of the English population still lived in the countryside and small towns, for which census-type evidence is remarkably rare.<sup>8</sup> In this article we examine the few which have survived for the later sixteenth century and concentrate in particular on one major source for part of Norfolk, which has been seriously under used so far.

### **Corn certificates**

Clackclose hundred lies to the south of King's Lynn in south-west Norfolk close to the River Ouse. For this area a unique corn certificate of March 1557 listed a total of 987 households with a population of 4,998 persons in its 23 parishes or pairs of small parishes.<sup>9</sup> Paul Slack was one of the first scholars to recognise the special nature of these Clackclose data because they apparently enumerated all households in the hundred and not just those which held some grain. However, he remained prudently cautious about interpreting the document and it is only more recently that others have claimed, misleadingly, that it was a census which might be taken as a reliable guide to the national mean household size of early Elizabethan England.<sup>10</sup> It therefore seems important to us that the details of this Clackclose corn certificate should be explored further so that its potential and the limitations for its use can be understood better.

For over a century from the 1520s onwards, the Tudor and early Stuart governments tried to ameliorate famine with a wide-ranging policy for its control. When poor harvests were followed by rapidly rising prices, they attempted to prevent corn supplies from leaving the country and also to distribute them to those who needed them most. In times of dearth, therefore, searches and surveys of corn supplies were initiated in the most affected counties by their sheriffs and JPs and the results reported to the Privy Council. Their first task was to establish precisely how much corn remained in the most threatened parishes and to identify those households which had more than they needed for their own consumption until the next harvest. Usually they did this by listing the number of people attached to the households of the more substantial farmers together with the amount of grain which they had stored in their barns or stacks. There was considerable diversity in the way in which this information was returned to the Privy Council. Sometimes farmers who had no more than enough food for their own families were included and sometimes the lists recorded only the grain that was surplus to each farmer's household needs and the next harvest's seed corn.<sup>11</sup>

In 1557, for example, 496 households were recorded in Clackclose hundred as having at least some grain, whereas a later corn certificate, of November 1596, for the same hundred, listed only 228 households.<sup>12</sup> Clearly the later survey was concerned with identifying a much more select group of food producers than the earlier one so that no significance should be read into the difference between the mean household sizes for those with grain of 6.31 in 1557 and 8.75 in 1596. But demographic historians must approach these data very cautiously for other reasons too. Later instructions of 1608 to the sheriffs and JPs told them to establish the number of persons that 'every householder that hath corn ... have in their houses feeding, lying and uprising, or otherwise to be fed'. In other words, in the seventeenth century and maybe earlier, some household totals must have included not just those who slept in a particular house, but also those who worked and fed there during the day as day-labourers and so on. That this was so is brought out clearly in the heading of one report from south Devon: 'A note of the corn that is in the custody of those whose names are here under written ... and the number of company every of them keep in their houses besides workmen.'<sup>13</sup>

The Clackclose document is not so precise. It merely lists the number of persons to be found in each family or household, describing them as one or the other or, alternatively, just naming their head. Altogether just over one third were recorded as being in families, one in seven in households and the remaining half were not described as either. Very occasionally one individual is listed as heading two households or families in different parishes, either itemised separately or aggregated together. It must be remembered therefore that some of these Clackclose households may possibly have contained not just 'sleeping' members, but some 'eating' ones as well.

Trying to ascertain the exact number of households and persons recorded in the Clackclose certificate of 1557 is not a simple exercise because of occasional ambiguities in the text and some obscurities in reading the Roman numerals. One problem is distinguishing some singletons from those that only owned land in a particular parish without an occupied house and so were also listed as a single name. Another stems from numbers which may include a rather faint stroke that leaves it unclear whether it is a ii or a iii, for example, or a iiiii or an viii. This will explain why our figures differ slightly from those obtained by Slack.<sup>14</sup> However, we are confident that those presented here are as accurate as they can be because they derive from our original separate transcripts, which we then compared and later checked and rechecked for all divergences. We reached a consensus eventually on all the more intractable cases, although in a few instances we had to settle for the most probable interpretation rather than a definitive one.

### **Assessing the data**

Our analysis of the main data for Clackclose hundred's 23 parishes, or pairs of small parishes, is presented in the accompanying tables. Table 1 contains the salient details for all these parishes arranged in ascending order of their mean household size. This shows that two-thirds of them are covered by a range of 0.9

**Table 1 Clackclose hundred 1557: mean household size of all parishes**

Parish	Households	Persons	MHS
<i>Low</i>			
Watlington	47	202	4.30
Wimbotsham & Stow Bardolph	112	489	4.37
Runcton Holme	26	115	4.42
Denver	54	241	4.46
Stoke Ferry & Wretton	62	278	4.48
Dereham & Roxham	64	289	4.52
Stradsett	24	112	4.67
Wormegay & Tottenhill	45	211	4.69
<i>Medium</i>			
Wereham	20	99	4.95
Hilgay & Modney	60	299	4.98
Garbysthorpe	29	145	5.00
Southery	28	140	5.00
Boughton	17	86	5.06
Downham Market	70	357	5.10
Marham	62	321	5.18
Shouldham	46	239	5.20
<i>High</i>			
Barton & Eastmoor	63	353	5.60
Wallington & Thorpland	14	80	5.71
Bexwell & Ryston	12	73	6.08
Fordham	11	69	6.27
Beechamwell & Shingham	32	202	6.31
Crimplesham	22	147	6.68
Fincham	67	451	6.73
Clackclose hundred	987	4998	5.06

**Source:** NRO, PRA 652.

**Table 2 Clackclose hundred 1557: household size in three groups**

	Low MHS	Medium MHS	High MHS	All hundred
n. parishes	8	8	7	23
n. persons	1937	1686	1375	4998
n. households	434	332	221	987
MHS	4.46	5.08	6.22	5.06
Range of MHSs	4.30–4.69	4.95–5.20	5.60–6.73	4.30–6.73

**Source:** NRO, PRA 652.

(from 4.3 to 5.2), but the remaining third reflects a very different pattern with much larger mean household sizes from 5.6 to 6.7. The mere statement that the MHS for the whole hundred was 5.06 would ignore this wide diversity and give

**Table 3 Clackclose hundred 1557: Variations in household size**

Persons per household	Low MHS %	Medium MHS %	High MHS %	All %
1	2.3	3.0	1.8	2.4
2	17.7	9.6	5.9	12.4
3-4	38.5	36.4	29.0	35.7
5-6	24.9	29.5	27.6	27.1
7-9	14.1	16.0	23.1	16.7
10-12	1.4	3.0	9.0	3.6
13+	1.2	2.4	3.6	2.1
Households without grain	54.6	51.8	37.1	49.7
Female headed households	11.9	14.4	8.1	11.9

**Source:** NRO, PRA 652.

the misleading impression that the MHS for most of these 23 parishes came close to this figure. In fact 13, or over half of them, fall outside the range of 5.06, plus or minus 10 per cent. An analysis of these 23 parishes shows that they fall naturally into three groups and Table 2 summarises the main differences between them. The MHS of the lowest group of eight parishes was only 4.46, while in the highest one of seven parishes it was as much as 6.22. These differences are not be explained by the parishes' topographical location

Unfortunately there is no direct evidence to test the reliability of these data. Instead we must rely only on internal and circumstantial clues. Table 3 shows that the main difference between the parishes in the lower and higher MHS groups lay in their proportions of very large households with ten or more people (2.6 per cent and 13 per cent) and of very small households with one or two members (20 per cent and 8 per cent). Table 3 also records significant differences between these lower and higher MHS groups in the proportions of households headed by women (12 per cent and 8 per cent) as well as of the more vulnerable ones without any grain (54.6 per cent and 37 per cent). Because the initial work of collecting and recording this information must have been conducted by different local officials in each parish, we should not assume that all were composed with similar efficiency. If some households were omitted from some lists they would probably have been the poorer and smaller ones and so would have included a higher proportion of those without grain, and also female heads. However, attempts to detect such omissions cannot be conducted with any certainty.

Table 4 compares our Norfolk data with a composite analysis from over a century later for five scattered, but much larger, rural parishes, which together add up to a very similar size. It also contains one smaller separate parish, Ealing, from the end of the Elizabethan era.<sup>15</sup> All six are drawn from census-type lists which name each inhabitant, with a few exceptions, and often provide additional detail as well. Unlike Clackclose, therefore, the composition of almost all

**Table 4 Comparative distribution of household sizes**

Place	Date	n. households	Household size					
			1 %	2 %	3-4 %	5-6 %	7-9 %	10+ %
Clackclose hundred	1557	987	2.4	12.4	35.7	27.1	16.7	5.7
Ealing	1599	84	8.3	14.3	32.1	20.2	19.0	6.0
Broughton (Lancs.)	1676	200	7.0	19.5	38.0	24.0	10.5	1.0
Chilvers Coton (Warks.)	1684	176	7.4	13.1	41.5	24.4	9.1	4.5
Clayworth (Notts.)	1688	96	6.3	14.6	42.7	18.8	16.7	1.0
Harefield (Middx.)	1699	121	8.3	14.9	28.9	28.1	14.9	5.0
Stoke-on-Trent (Staffs.)	1701	373	6.2	14.7	37.0	24.7	15.8	1.6
Total 5 parishes	1676- 1701	966	6.8	15.4	37.6	24.3	13.5	2.4

**Source:** as note 15.

households can be studied and the reliability of the recording of the larger ones in particular can be assessed.

Altogether only three of the 1,050 households (0.3%) listed in these six parishes had more than thirteen members. The larger one of the two in Ealing with 23 inhabitants was a small boys' boarding school with 18 resident scholars. Peter Laslett omitted it, quite logically, from both his calculations for the domestic MHS of the parish. However, the last entry on the Ealing list for a lone woman aged 26 was crossed through so that it would seem to be more consistent if she were omitted also from such calculations.<sup>16</sup> By doing this, Ealing's apparent MHS in 1599 is raised from 4.75 to 4.8, but if both the school and the woman are included it rises to 4.95 or, with just the school alone, to 5.0. Such statistical jugglery should provide a salutary reminder that MHSs were not engraved on tablets of stone, but are subject to assumptions behind the calculations as well as to the accuracy or precision of the original recorded data.

By comparison with this control group, 19 of the 987 Clackclose households (1.9%) had more than 13 members, including eight very big ones with 18 persons or more. It is very clear that the largest of these households or families should not be treated as just one, but its certificate does not provide sufficient information for us to unscramble it into its constituent elements. The list for the parish of Wormegay notes that John Dethek esquire had 43 persons in his family at Wormegay and Fincham. The entry for his family in Fincham recorded originally 11 persons, but this was crossed out and 43 inserted. We might conclude therefore that the remaining 32 persons occupied his household in Wormegay if the quantity of corn which he possessed had not named five shepherds and two smiths to all of whom the same amount of mixed corn (six Coombs) had been allocated. As a result it is impossible to deduce how many

households John Dethek's family of 43 comprised. What is certain is that it must have contained more than the one which we feel obliged to register.

It is similarly misleading to treat Fincham's Guild Hall as a household of eight just because it was listed with eight persons 'that be found at the town's cost', but without further detail about them and their living arrangements it is all that can be done. No doubt the number of persons recorded for several of the other larger households should not be taken at face value either, but, because the corn certificate does not provide any additional information, we will never know how many and for what reasons.

Much stronger circumstantial evidence suggests that the recording of the smallest households in Clackclose hundred was affected by a greater degree of under enumeration, for which the main source is the much more detailed census-type lists from the later six control parishes. In these one and a half times as many households were recorded with one or two persons than in the earlier Clackclose list, where the proportion of one-member households was particularly low (see Table 5). In addition, the proportion of two-member households was equally low among those Clackclose parishes with the highest MHSs. We are not for one moment suggesting that the breakdown of household size in Tudor rural Norfolk should be the same as elsewhere in England under the later Stuarts, especially since it has been established that during the seventeenth century older widows in particular remarried less often.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, where substantial differences do appear between the two groups, they should be regarded as probable indicators of some deficiencies in the Clackclose list.

Additional support for our suggestion that some of the smallest Clackclose households were probably omitted emerges from an examination of the differing proportions of households headed by women. Tables 5 and 6 show that these were as low as 12 per cent in Clackclose, compared with nearly 17 per cent in Ealing and 21 per cent in the later seventeenth-century communities. The range among the latter was also very wide, from 16 per cent in Chilvers Coton to 30 per cent in Broughton, but an even more telling analysis concerns the different size of households. Nearly half the female-headed households had one or two members in the five communities of 1676-1701, while in Clackclose the proportion was under one third. On the other hand, the contrasting discrepancies between the larger households in these two groups were much smaller. Taken together, therefore, these two tables imply strongly that significant numbers of both the smallest households and female-headed ones were probably omitted from the Clackclose list, but without giving any indication as to how many they may have been, because we must not assume that their proportions remained constant over time and space.

The very large number of female heads recorded in Broughton inevitably distorts the proportion for the whole later Stuart sample. If Broughton were excluded, it would fall to 19 per cent, which is closer to the figure for Ealing as well as to a sample from some of the entries in the best Warwickshire hearth tax lists of the 1670s. There, in a rural area of 2,200 households to the south and west of the town of Warwick, the female entries accounted for 16 per cent, but when all or

**Table 5 Comparative small and female-headed households**

Place	Household size		Female-headed households		
	1 %	2 %	1 & 2 %	1 & 2 %	All %
<b>Clackclose hundred</b>					
Low MHS	2.3	17.7	20.0	28.7	11.9
Medium MHS	3.0	9.6	12.7	35.7	14.4
High MHS	1.8	5.9	7.7	17.6	8.1
<i>All</i>	<i>2.4</i>	<i>12.4</i>	<i>14.8</i>	<i>29.4</i>	<i>11.9</i>
Ealing	8.3	4.3	22.6	42.1	16.7
<b>1676–1701 5 parishes</b>					
<i>All</i>	<i>6.8</i>	<i>15.4</i>	<i>22.2</i>	<i>47.4</i>	<i>21.2</i>
Broughton	7.0	19.5	26.5	50.9	30.0
Chilvers Coton	7.4	13.1	20.5	47.2	15.9
Clayworth	6.3	14.6	20.9	50.0	21.9
Harefield	8.3	14.9	23.2	60.7	22.3
Stoke-on-Trent	6.2	14.7	20.9	39.7	18.5

**Source:** as note 15.

**Table 6 Comparative female-headed households**

Place	Size of households headed by women				All %
	1 & 2 %	3 & 4 %	5 & 6 %	7+ %	
Clackclose hundred	29.4	11.6	8.9	4.5	11.9
Ealing	42.1	14.8	11.8	-	16.7
1676–1701 5 parishes	47.4	19.6	10.6	4.6	21.2

**Source:** as note 15.

most of the non-chargeable were omitted earlier in the 1660s, the female proportion fell to as low as 8.5 per cent (out of 1,350 households) in one return and 10 per cent (out of 1,520) in another.<sup>18</sup> As one might expect, the proportion of female heads in Warwick town was somewhat higher (18.6 per cent) than in its rural hinterland, but for purposes of tentative comparison with Clackclose hundred the analysis of the rural area is much more relevant. Taking into account the decline in the remarriage rate of widows, it might therefore be tenable to assume that had the enumeration of Clackclose hundred been complete in 1557, it might well have recorded the proportion of households headed by women as being somewhere in the region of 14 to 15 per cent.



This discussion leaves us arguing that the MHS in Clackclose hundred in 1557 was somewhat lower than the 5.06 which a straightforward calculation from the data implies. It was skewed by the omission of some of the smallest households, although we have no firm ground for suggesting how many. It is possible that there may have been about 30 to 40 unrecorded single households and perhaps another missing 20 or so two-member households, but such figures are merely guestimates. In addition, some of the totals which appear to record just one large household may actually have subsumed two or more and/or may have contained some day-labourers who ate and worked there without sleeping as well. In these circumstances it seems that in 1557 the actual mean household size for Clackclose hundred was much more likely to have been in the region of 4.8 to 4.85 rather than 5.05 or 5.06.

### **Comparative sources**

The two nearest surviving contemporary sources which might provide a helpful context in which to assess the typicality of the Clackclose hundred MHS are Poole, Dorset from 1574 and Duffield Frith, Derbyshire in 1587.<sup>19</sup> Peter Laslett calculated in 1969 that the MHS in Poole was 6.05, but three years later reduced it to 5.28, while the one for Duffield Frith has been reported as 4.5.<sup>20</sup>

On closer inspection the evidence behind the figure for Duffield Frith is quite unconvincing. It is based solely on a statement in a petition from the inhabitants and borderers of Duffield Frith, part of the royal forest of Duffield, 'that where your honours humble suppliantes inhabiting and borderinge the same Chase being of Coppie houlders free houlders and auncient Cottagers and householders In number five hundred and nine and of their wifes children and families in number eighteen hundred' may be allowed to enjoy the various privileges afforded them in the forest time out of mind. Such a declaration cannot form the basis of any reliable MHS, whether it be interpreted as 4.50 or 4.54; petitioners' estimates of their numbers are notoriously unreliable so that no serious credence can be given to this estimate.

The listing of the inhabitants, young and old, in the Dorset borough of Poole is much more worthy of serious attention, although in the event it proves as difficult to interpret as the Clackclose corn certificate, but for very different reasons. The enumeration for Poole was made by two constables, beginning on 3 May 1574 and concluding with a note dated 5 May. It is headed: 'There was a notte taken of every house holldar and of ther sarvantes and Fameny'.<sup>21</sup> It contains sixteen pages of names, set out in what appear to be separate houses, with the number of occupants given on the left-hand side of the page. There is little obvious separation of the names into households, though it does seem clear that a number of the houses must have been in multiple occupation. A summary at the end of the document reports a total of 1,373 persons, of which number there are 165 'howse holderes and under tenetts', and in addition 21 poor people relieved in two almshouses.

It is not difficult to see how a total of 1,373 persons, excluding the almshouse-dwellers, has been arrived at, although 1,371 is the more probable total once

**Table 7 Poole 1574: Distribution of household sizes**

Persons per household	Main households	Alms houses	Total %	All households Male-headed %	Female-headed %
1	9	3	4.2	1.6	20.5
2	35	6	14.3	12.1	28.2
3-4	89	2	31.8	31.2	35.9
5-6	75	-	26.2	28.3	12.8
7-9	54	-	18.9	21.4	2.6
10-12	10	-	3.5	4.0	-
13+	3	-	1.0	1.2	-
Total households	275	11	286	247	39
Total persons	1371	21	1392	1280	112
MHS	4.99	1.91	4.87	5.18	2.87

**Source:** I. K. D. Andrews ed., *Poole Census, 1574*, (Poole, 1992).

the addition of the number of inhabitants given on each page has been adjusted. By contrast, the figure of 165, apparently of householders, is a complete puzzle. The sum of what appear to be the houses comes to 224, or rather 226, once two unnumbered ones have been included. An examination of the names of the inhabitants given for each 'house' seems to require about 39 of them to be split into a total of 86 separate households; that is to say, into families of husband and wife, often with children and sometimes with servants. Occasionally these households consisted of adults living alone, sometimes with one or two dependants. These calculations yield a total of 275 separate households for Poole, 12 per cent of which were headed by a woman (see Table 7).

We cannot, of course, be sure that all these subdivisions have been carried out correctly. We have no means of discovering, for instance, whether some of those families, which we have separated from others in their 'house', may not in fact have lived as one unit, sharing a kitchen and feeding together. Alternatively, where we have assumed that two couples bearing the same name and living in the same house formed one household and not two, we may have been mistaken. Overall, therefore, it is possible that we may have either underestimated or overestimated the number of separate households that obtained in Poole in 1574, but by avoiding both the highest and lowest probable totals, we trust that our margin of error is not very large. In making this claim, it should also be remembered that there was no generally-accepted contemporary definition of what constituted a household or even a family in Elizabethan England, which must inevitably throw an additional element of doubt on all precise calculations for mean household size in this period anyway.

It is also unclear how the 21 inmates of the two almshouses in Poole should be treated for these purposes. They are grouped in what appear to be 11 small households within them, which would make it tenable to regard them as comprising either 11 or 2 households or even to omit them altogether. When we

do the former, we get an MHS of 4.87, while the latter yields one of 4.99. Most alternative calculations that are not based on extreme assumptions fall somewhere in between these two figures so that it is perhaps reasonable to accept that in 1574 the MHS for Poole probably lay somewhere in the region of 4.9, which places it more than one third of a person lower than the Laslett recalculation.

## **National MHS**

This discussion leaves us convinced that a mean household size for the whole of England during the Elizabethan period cannot be calculated from the available data. They are far too sketchy, exist for far too few areas and are scattered over too long a time span for any such attempts to be credible.

This point is perhaps best reinforced by moving forward 250 years in time. The printed abstracts of the earliest nineteenth century censuses reveal that, in spite of their instructions, many enumerators were quite confused over the difference between houses and families or households and a comparison between one decade and the next reveals that often their figures are quite untrustworthy. But even assuming that this was not so, if all the data that we had for the first half of the nineteenth century were the total number of people in each household in one Norfolk hundred in, say, 1811 and detailed enumerations for one small seaport in 1831 and one parish of 400 people in 1851, we could not claim to be able to establish from such a base the national mean household size for this period.

Taken at face value, the printed abstracts for Norfolk in 1811 record a range of 4.4 to 5.3 for the MHS of the county's 33 complete hundreds; Clackclose, which then had a population of over 13,000, was twelfth highest, equal with three other hundreds, all with an MHS of 4.92. In the four largest towns, which were enumerated separately, the MHS ranged from 3.85 in Norwich to 4.72 in Great Yarmouth, although some doubt must be cast on the validity of the Yarmouth figure because the MHS there was recorded as 4.19 in 1801 and 4.18 in 1821.<sup>22</sup> Overall Norfolk's MHS in 1811 was 4.65, somewhat lower than the 4.74 which was the average for England as a whole, but if either of these figures coincided with those for one particular hundred, it would merely be by accident.

This excursion into the nineteenth century reinforces two issues which we have established already for the Elizabethan period. Then, as later, a variety of different assumptions affected the calculations of a community's MHS and so often it cannot be established with one single precise figure. In addition, these MHSs varied considerably between different settlements and areas so that any attempt to impose a standard one on all of them can be quite misleading. If, for example, the number of households for each Clackclose parish had only been available without their number of persons, the application of a crude MHS multiplier of 5.06 to all their household totals would have raised the estimated population of Wimbotsham from 489 to 567 and reduced that of Fincham from 451 to 339.

In attempting to estimate population totals from the number of families in the Bishops' Census of 1563, J. S. Moore understandably 'adopted Laslett's well-known figure of 4.75 for average household size, since the figure does seem to be broadly valid for England throughout the period from 1066 to 1871', but for those tempted into such an approach the word broadly must be emphasised very strongly indeed.<sup>23</sup> Alan Dyer, on the other hand, has argued that 'it is essential to the burden of the remainder of this paper that we establish the proposition that the average household was unusually large in 1563' and he used the Clackclose data, despite some reservations, to support the proposition that 'perhaps something in the area of 5.1 might be nearer the mark'.<sup>24</sup> This argument carried such conviction for Peter Clark and Jean Hosking in their *Population Estimates of English Small Towns* that they applied a multiplier of 5.05 consistently to the data for all available towns in the Bishops' Census of 1563.<sup>25</sup>

According to Dyer, the whole country's demographic structure was altered temporarily in the early 1560s by the very severe mortality crisis of the late 1550s, described by Slack as 'the worst demographic disaster in the country's history in the whole period covered by parish registers'.<sup>26</sup> But, even if the total population really did fall by about 15 per cent in this period, as Moore and Dyer have claimed, rather than the 5 per cent estimated by Wrigley and Schofield, the evidence to support Dyer's assertions that the elderly were the chief victims of these epidemics which culled in particular the smaller households and so increased the national MHS is highly speculative.<sup>27</sup> And yet, even if the data supporting an MHS of 5.06 for Clackclose hundred were more robust, they could never sustain Dyer's hypothesis because they were gathered in March 1557 before the mortality crisis's peak period (from May 1557 to June 1559) began.<sup>28</sup>

## Conclusion

Although the available evidence does not support the claim that the national MHS was as high as 5.05 in the 1560s, we would never suggest that it should be replaced by a simple substitute of about 4.85 or so. The apparent accuracy of any such figure would be merely the product of an exercise of spurious statistical jugglery. It would also disguise the very considerable differences which we know occurred between individual communities. Therefore the only acceptable alternative is to calculate a range of MHSs which covered most but not all communities between its lowest and highest figures. For the mid-Tudor period a cautious range from 4.3 to 5.3 might err on the side of safety; a tauter but more tentative one would reduce it to between about 4.5 and 5.1. The latter range coincides neatly with the assumptions behind Nigel Goose's adoption of a hypothetical range of mean household sizes, in which he sought to reconcile credibly the totals of families and baptisms in 31 Hertfordshire parishes in 1563.<sup>29</sup>

## NOTES

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# INFANT SURVIVAL CHANCES, UNMARRIED MOTHERHOOD AND DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENTS IN RURAL SCOTLAND, 1845–1945

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## Introduction

This paper assesses patterns of infant mortality and childhood survival in areas of Scotland where illegitimacy was high during the later nineteenth century and earlier twentieth centuries. The focus will be on nominal record linkage based on rural parishes in north-east and south-west Scotland between 1845 and 1945.

The period chosen reflects the accessibility of sources and covers the years during which the administration of poor relief was conducted via the parochial boards.<sup>1</sup> During this time the growing divergence between English and infant mortality rates gave rise to new and perplexing problems that remain unsolved. While infant and child mortality are broadly regarded, as sensitive indicators of social conditions, domestic circumstances require closer specification if significant causes are to be isolated. Although at a regional level census figures and Registrar General for Scotland's *Detailed Annual Reports* allow for the establishment of age- and disease-specific causes of death, on a parish scale, the numbers are too small to be statistically viable. However, considerable insights may be gained from a detailed qualitative analysis. Thus, a micro-level approach has been developed using nominal record linkage to trace individuals across a range of sources and reconstruct biographies.

Having selected one high-illegitimacy parish from each region—Rothiemay in Banffshire in north-east Scotland and Torthorwald in Dumfriesshire in the south-west—four nominal data sets—civil birth and death certificates (1855–1955), census enumeration schedules (1861–1891), and relief applications (1845–1930)—were created. These were then merged so that, for each parish, linked details for every child were collated into biographies. In some cases, a child's birth or death may be all that was recorded, but for many children who survived an entry appeared in the following census, thus supplying details of household circumstances.<sup>2</sup> Such information could then be supplemented by detailed consecutive entries of applications for poor relief, thus allowing longitudinal reconstruction. This involved detailed transcription of all biographical material relating to applications for poor relief where children were ten years of age and under. The data were then filed alphabetically.

The research builds upon extant research into the family circumstances and welfare experiences of unmarried mothers in nineteenth century Scotland, the purpose being to reconstruct a biographical picture of the factors affecting the balance between collective and household support for unmarried mothers and their children at different points in their individual life courses.<sup>3</sup> The data from which such biographies are generated can be used to link the household and welfare circumstances of both married and single parents to the life chances of their offspring. The family arrangements of illegitimate infants and children who died can be compared with those of survivors, legitimates forming a control group. Thus the study aims to draw on and contribute to an emerging body of work on medical and social aspects of infant mortality in nineteenth-century Scotland while developing an analysis of childhood death and life chances that relies on unexploited but potentially valuable sources.<sup>4</sup> In Scotland, access is granted to important categories of civil registration and welfare records collected in the period after 1837 and into the present century that are not available for academic consultation in England and Wales. In the long term, and more broadly, therefore, this research is designed to stimulate awareness of the possibilities inherent in Scottish material for the study of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century social and demographic trends.

### **Historical background**

From 1860 until 1912 the overall infant mortality rate for Scotland was lower than that south of the border. However, during the earlier twentieth century, Scotland's rate began to decline at a much slower rate than those of England and Wales. Prompted by the necessity to explain and reduce this puzzling discrepancy, the Scottish Health Department commissioned an investigation under the chairmanship of Sir John Boyd Orr.<sup>5</sup> The Committee's published evidence and recommendations emphasised the significance of environmental factors, indicating that death was class determined and laying stress on maternal malnutrition, overcrowding and the shortage of welfare clinics.

Although, nationally, the pattern of deaths indicated the significance of urbanisation, relatively high levels prevailed in some rural pockets. In the first month of life, babies were dying frequently because of 'congenital debility' due to causes 'operative before birth' (reflecting the poor health of the mother), while between one and twelve months it was infectious diseases attributable to 'adverse environmental conditions' that were mostly responsible. The quality of the mother's milk was also implicated. More recent studies also conclude that the standard of living was the crucial variable. The discussion of 'the urban effect' is relatively well-advanced, and it is clear that overcrowding and unemployment played a major part in sustaining the dreadfully high death rates in the single-ends of Gorbals and Govan, as intestinal and respiratory infections continued to exact a high toll.<sup>6</sup> In 1907, the Aberdeen Medical Officer of Health, Matthew Hay, dispensed staff armed with thirty-question schedules to visit the parents of all infants who had died under age two. The inquiry revealed the precise circumstances of some 659 deaths. Among the findings were the fact that 92.72 per cent (611) occurred in houses of three rooms or fewer, 68.13 per cent (449) in houses of two rooms or fewer, leaving just 7.28 per cent (48) in houses containing



four or more rooms. Secondly, bearing in mind that crowding tends to be greater in smaller houses, Hay found that 'the mortality rate in houses with an average of more than three persons per room was twice as high as in houses with an average of one person or under'.<sup>7</sup> He went on to note that: 'Generally, for every disease the mortality decreases with increase in size of house ... the death-rate from prematurity among breast-fed children distinctly lessens with increase in size of house, as it would appear to indicate that prematurity, as the single largest cause of death, might be considerably reduced if only the prematurely born child could be nurtured under better conditions'.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, I know of no comparable investigations conducted in rural environments which, despite the availability of sources, remain undocumented.<sup>9</sup>

In Scotland the recording of causes of death was inadequate before the advent of civil registration in 1855 and diagnostic inaccuracies and terminological ambiguities weaken the validity of what data there are for the earlier nineteenth century. Thereafter, information from civil certificates may be linked to census figures to construct age-specific mortality rates according to particular diseases. Such statistics indicate that the positive impact of diminution in the incidence of a limited spectrum of infections was markedly uneven. Although a decline in overall death rates became apparent from around 1870 infant mortality remained high. Between 1860 and 1890 two-thirds of the reduction in mortality in Scotland occurred within the 1–9 age range, but neonatal mortality failed to decline and maternal deaths remained stable.<sup>10</sup> The incidence of death among illegitimate infants was far higher than among the legitimate and Scottish illegitimacy levels were consistently higher than in England and Wales. And, significantly, it was rural regions that recorded illegitimacy ratios well above the Scottish mean. Nevertheless, from 1860 until 1912 the infant mortality rate for Scotland was lower than south of the border.<sup>11</sup> Paradoxically, in the later nineteenth century, Scotland had the odd distinction of combining 'a relatively low infant mortality rate with high illegitimacy, which is surprising since in both countries the mortality of illegitimate infants was far higher than of legitimate'.<sup>12</sup> This pattern suggests that in Scotland considerable numbers of illegitimate children must have been born and survived in conditions approximating those of their legitimate counterparts, although a minority died because of comparatively poor health circumstances. In what ways, therefore, did the circumstances in which bastards were born and reared, rather than the simple fact of being born out of wedlock, contribute to the pattern of mortality decline? Clearly, both phenomena were associated with poverty, but to what extent did the character of rural poverty in particular areas shield infants from its worst effects?

### **Connecting mortality and motherhood**

Whilst infant mortality was predominantly urban, illegitimacy was a mainly rural affair. Between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries patterns of illegitimate fertility in Scotland demonstrated a very marked regional persistence. The rural, farming regions of the north-east and south-west showed consistently high ratios, with many parishes returning proportions of over 25 per cent, whilst the cities and industrial areas of the Central Belt presented only average quotas of around 8 per cent. In later nineteenth-century Europe,

illegitimate fertility presents a distinctive regional distribution, with the extent of variation between localities greater in Scotland than in England although less than in Ireland and considerably less than in Portugal.<sup>13</sup> A space-time analysis of variance shows Scotland to have differed from England in two respects: the spatial variable was more conspicuous than the temporal and persistence values by locality were, intriguingly, higher for legitimate than illegitimate fertility. As Laslett remarks, these differences appear to reflect Scotland's overall demographic individuality.<sup>14</sup> A comparison of quinquennial bastardy ratios by counties between 1855 and 1939 illustrates a pronounced regional emphasis, with levels consistently highest in the north-eastern and south-western peninsular provinces. Banffshire (in the north-east), indeed, maintained its position as the county with the highest index of extramarital fertility ( $I_h$ ) right through from 1861 to 1921,<sup>15</sup> and comparison of age-specific illegitimate fertility rates indicated that in 1855 'a teenage girl in Banff was more than twenty times as likely to have a bastard as one in Ross'.<sup>16</sup>

By contrast, infant mortality was traditionally highest in the big cities, especially Glasgow, where rates remained alarmingly high until World War II (at 87 per thousand in 1938, it compared with 34 for Chicago). Yet both north-east and south-west Scotland were distinctive, in that between 1861 and 1901 their infant mortality rates [hereafter IMRs] were amongst the lowest in Britain. Of the 55 British counties and regions,<sup>17</sup> only Strathclyde North, Dumfries and Galloway, Grampian, and Highland recorded IMRs of less than 100 prior to 1901.<sup>18</sup> The Grampian region (the north-east) was significant in that between 1861 and 1901 its IMR rose gradually from 86 per thousand live births to 116; Dumfries and Galloway (south-west) was marginally more consistent, fluctuating between 95 and 107. To a degree the rise in Grampian was due to the urban influence of Aberdeen, which, by 1901–5 had an IMR of 143 (worse than that of Glasgow and second only to Dundee among the Scottish cities). By 1938, with an IMR of 71 per thousand, Aberdeen fared better than Dundee (77), but markedly worse than Edinburgh (61), Greater London (50) or New York (38). The Boyd Orr Committee attributed differentials to poor housing conditions and poverty, in particular to overcrowded tenements which encouraged the spread of droplet infections and where sanitation was inadequate. Of greatest interest to us, however, is the finding that, although by 1941 all 55 areas had reduced their IMRs substantially, with IMRs of 70 and 68 respectively Dumfries and Galloway, and Grampian, now returned the fifth and sixth highest IMRs in Britain.<sup>19</sup> The Grampian case was unusual in that its urban illegitimacy was also comparatively high and was probably a contributory factor.<sup>20</sup> But if the continuing urban effect limited the decline in Grampian, this was not the case in Dumfries and Galloway which contained no cities and only one town with a population above 10,000.<sup>21</sup>

In the countryside, as elsewhere, illegitimate children were proportionately more prone to early death than the legitimate. However, considerable variation existed between one area and another. Our two study parishes present a case in point. Rothiemay in Banffshire and Torthorwald in Dumfriesshire were both farming parishes. Between 1855 and 1900, Rothiemay had an illegitimacy ratio of 24 per cent while Torthorwald's was 29 per cent—both high. Furthermore, the proportion of illegitimate to total infant deaths was disproportionately (and

**Table 1** Distribution of infant deaths, 1855–1900

Rothiemay (n=106)			
Lifespan	Legitimate	Illegitimate	% Illegitimate
0–1 day	8	3	27.3
7 days	7	4	36.4
29 days	17	12	41.4
6 months	21	13	38.2
1 year	16	5	23.8
0–1 year	69	37	34.9

Torthorwald (n=205)			
Lifespan	Legitimate	Illegitimate	% Illegitimate
0–1 day	17	4	19.0
7 days	10	7	41.2
29 days	27	28	50.9
6 months	36	26	41.9
1 year	34	16	31.4
0–1 year	124	81	39.5

**Source:** Civil Registration Certificates, New Register House, Edinburgh.

expectedly) high in both cases (35 per cent in Rothiemay and 40 per cent in Torthorwald). Nevertheless, as Table 1 indicates, there was a remarkable divergence in infant mortality rates.

In comparison with a national IMR of between 118 and 127 over the period,<sup>22</sup> Rothiemay's rates were low, both generally (60 per thousand—less than half the Scottish mean) and for illegitimates (96 per thousand); but in Torthorwald rates were far higher (143 per thousand and 190 per thousand respectively). The discrepancy was particularly marked amongst infants dying in the first month, with Rothiemay's very low overall rate (29 per thousand) complementing the figure for illegitimates (49 per thousand) while Torthorwald's 62 per thousand matched a rate of 87 for illegitimates. In Rothiemay, the ratio of illegitimate deaths to total deaths falls appreciably after the first year of life, with just 21.1 per cent of deaths of children between 1 and 5 years being bastards, a proportion 3 per cent below the illegitimacy ratio over the period. For Torthorwald, however, the respective proportion rises to 31.0 per cent, a ratio that exceeds the illegitimacy ratio by some 2 per cent. Since the pattern of disease incidence was similar in both areas, we have to conclude that these divergences must largely be explained by environmental causes. Other things being equal, the inference to be drawn is that perinatal domestic circumstances contributed to better health and survival potential in Rothiemay than Torthorwald.

Rory Paddock finds similar correlations between high illegitimacy and high infant mortality in his comparative study of two Dumfriesshire parishes, both of which are adjacent to Torthorwald. In Dryfesdale (illegitimacy ratio 10 per cent) and Lochmaben (22 per cent), legitimate infant mortality rates were respectively 72 and 97 in the five years to 1881 (well below the national average of 127), while illegitimate IMRs were between 168 and 222 (well above the Scottish mean). In Lochmaben, the illegitimate birth cohort demonstrated an IMR double that of their legitimate peers, whilst in Dryfesdale—with a lower overall incidence of bastardy—the proportion was over three times greater.<sup>23</sup> Compared to the impact of illegitimacy on life expectancy in these southwest parishes, Rothiemay clearly emerges as a decidedly healthy place to be born, legitimate or otherwise. Whereas high illegitimacy appeared to lead to high infant mortality in Dumfriesshire, in Banffshire the marital status of the mother appears to have had a far less significant effect.

### **Unregistered infanticide?**

Against this, however, one must set the lack of professional monitoring regarding the deaths of illegitimates. For 10 out of 19 bastards who died within a month of birth in Rothiemay no qualified medical attendant had been present to certify the cause of death; amongst legitimate infants this was so in just 3 out of 32 instances. In three cases of uncertified death amongst illegitimates (and one legitimate case) the probable cause was given as 'asphyxia from being overlain in bed'.<sup>24</sup> Although such isolated instances far from guarantee even the occasional instance of infanticide, the fact that post-mortems were carried out on three illegitimate infants, but none otherwise, does suggest an element of official suspicion.<sup>25</sup>

It has been argued that pre-Victorian infanticide probably followed the birth of a bastard in fewer than 1 per cent of cases.<sup>26</sup> However, in the absence of medical attendance, death by overlaying, supposedly accidental, was said to have been communicated to local registrars in the 1860s by 'elderly women of suspicious appearance and character ... who can scarcely tell their errand ... without betraying a guilty blush'.<sup>27</sup> This comment relates to urban Dundee, where different circumstances may be said to have prevailed. Nevertheless, an anonymous pamphleteer, styling her [or him?]-self 'A North-Country Woman', maintained that in the northeast countryside the main cause of infanticide was the refusal of alimony to desperate unmarried mothers by fathers who had deserted.<sup>28</sup> Such a contention forces us to look to Poor Law records for corroboration.

The onset of motherhood without a source of regular financial support was frequently crippling, but it was considered 'better for the parish to support the family, than incur the expense of prosecuting the parent who deserts his offspring'.<sup>29</sup> Where fathers who had deserted were run to ground, non-payment continued to be a common cause of distress. Money did arrive for some mothers, though seldom from every father responsible and in varying amounts. There are instances where one from two fathers contributed, where neither contributed, or where one from three did so. Moreover, payment was sometimes forestalled.<sup>30</sup> In

the event of one two-week old child dying in destitute circumstances; the father was prosecuted for non-payment. However, such a case was rare, as was the single instance of relief being discontinued because the father of a child had reclaimed it.<sup>31</sup>

The precarious position in which some women found themselves, particularly after the punitive recommendations of the 1870s, caused some official disquiet. After 1868, the Board of Supervision urged parochial boards to offer only indoor relief to unmarried mothers. Pressure continued throughout the 1870s as 'a distinctive ideology of pauperism—adequate but discriminatory relief—was created'.<sup>32</sup> And in 1877 the Sheriff-Substitute for Aberdeenshire remarked on the close correlation between illegitimacy and infanticide, a link which it is impossible to verify. By refusing to enter or remain in the poorhouse, mothers not only deprived themselves of all formal support, but, as an earlier Sheriff-Substitute commented, putative fathers were 'enabled with impunity to neglect their children' because Parochial Boards would not now prosecute them in terms of the Poor Law Act.<sup>33</sup> Many, however, succeeded in qualifying for interim outdoor relief if, like one woman, they were 'far advanced in pregnancy with no likelihood of establishing who the father was'. But, although only one instance of concealed pregnancy occurs in the records studied, cases of infants being overlain or asphyxiated are less scarce and malnutrition cannot be discounted as a cause of death.<sup>34</sup> In 1876, an official remarked that one local parochial board (Old Deer) 'had been assured again and again by the Medical Officer that refusal to afford outdoor relief in such cases led almost inevitably to the death of the children, from inattention and starvation', since it was impossible 'to induce mothers to go to the Poorhouse, and the children are farmed out with the too well-known result of baby-farming'. The Board of Supervision investigated, finding that the deaths of 24 children, where no application had been made to the parish, were due to insufficient food, yet they were 'quite satisfied' to find that among seven fatalities where applications had been made, malnutrition was the cause in only two instances. Nevertheless, when women complained of inadequate relief, claims were not generally upheld and the poorhouse was offered.<sup>35</sup>

### Forms of support

Earlier analysis has revealed the crucial role played by grandparents as sources of support. Further research should therefore consider the degree to which cross-generational interdependence acted both as a form of insurance for unmarried mothers, and, in terms of the support subsequently offered by their offspring, as a source of care-giving for ageing grandparents. Whilst infant and child mortality are broadly regarded as sensitive indicators of social conditions, specific domestic circumstances require closer inspection if significant causes are to be isolated. Indeed, recent Swedish work indicates that the household and welfare arrangements pursued by individual families are most significant.<sup>36</sup>

In Scotland unmarried motherhood was very highly concentrated amongst farm and domestic servants,<sup>37</sup> and the cushioning provided by grandparents and extended family was crucial: a common experience involved becoming pregnant

while in service locally, 'losing' the father sometime during gestation when he removed to another area, moving to her parents during confinement, then returning to work after a short weaning spell to leave the infant in the care of its grandparents. If the woman bore further children, then she may, as she grew older and her parents became frail or died, become a lone parent, now co-residing with her offspring and temporarily relying on outdoor relief payments to see her through. Different coping strategies probably operated elsewhere, although for both areas cross-matching between family reconstitution forms and census enumeration schedules indicates that a close correlation existed between parishes where considerable numbers of children lived in households with their grandparents and high illegitimacy. In Paddock's study parishes of south-west Scotland, over 96 per cent of legitimate children lived in households headed by a parent (and less than 3 per cent in grandparent-headed homes) in 1881, but nearly 80 per cent of illegitimate children lived in households headed by a grandparent.<sup>38</sup> In the same census year, 80.5 per cent of Rothiemay households containing grandchildren also contained bastards (mostly the grandchildren themselves), whereas only 10.8 per cent of households without grandchildren included illegitimates.<sup>39</sup> The grandparents were not the cause of these children being born, but their existence, and relative willingness to accept babies into their care, helps to account for survival of infants who might otherwise have been aborted, adopted or become dependent upon the Poor Law. Indeed, collective welfare support, arranged by the parish either to supplement extended household care, or to aid lone unmarried mothers, was an important prop. Could it be, perhaps, that differences in the level and type of poor relief, together with differing household arrangements, explain the variation in infant life chances between the two parishes? How might we investigate such a supposition?

### **Vocabularies of causation**

As C. Wright Mills once remarked, actors seek to persuade others of the acceptability of their actions and to justify their motives, by employing particular terminologies and classifications. These he termed 'vocabularies of motive'. By extension, Prior has coined the phrase 'vocabulary of causation' to refer to the ways in which a pathological model of disease frames and fragments the categorisation of deaths while extinguishing social motives: death certificates record proximate medical causes, far more readily than underlying social reasons.<sup>40</sup> In this way, the model of classification renders environmental conditions difficult to discern. While the nosology of different illnesses allows for some measure of inference, the fact that, say, a 5 month-old illegitimate child named John Brown, whose mother was a domestic servant, died from 'broncho-pneumonia' after an 8-day period of illness tells us nothing directly about the social context of his death, save the occupation and marital status of his mother.

However, cross-reference to applications for poor relief can provide considerable circumstantial detail. These folios possess superlative biographical coverage of paupers chargeable to each parish (whether resident or not) since, once admitted, a person retained the same folio despite being struck off for long periods or moving elsewhere. Surprisingly, nevertheless, the source remains unresearched.

The case notes detail income, cause and level of disability, household relationships and changes in circumstances—both immediate and long-term—for unmarried mothers and their children, as well as orphaned, deserted and boarded-out children and the aged poor. Significantly, too, they record pregnant and nursing women who were refused relief and the comments of local inspectors. These latter reflect a 'language of deservingness', evidenced in the differential treatments meted out locally to different individuals and categories of pauper. Moral presuppositions affected treatment and subsequent life chances. Thus, the death of John Brown can be linked to the fact that he was living apart from his mother, who worked in another parish, but paid partially for his upkeep by an aunt, herself a pauper, 'vacuous' and suffering from 'chronic rheumatism'. Relief sums granted to his aunt for his maintenance had been reduced following information as to his mother's earnings and promises from the absent father to pay alimony.

There are a good many criteria on which one might judge the attitudes and influence of local Poor Law inspectors,<sup>41</sup> but the key point to note is that, despite national directives as to treatment, there existed considerable variation between one parish and the next, often within the same region as regards the appropriateness of granting relief to this class of pauper. In Rothiemay, the system was hardly generous, but it did recognise desperation: although sometimes refusing claims from women whose children were over a month old, when a nursing mother with an 18-day old infant turned up in the parish 'homeless and penniless', but with a settlement in another parish, she was instantly relieved.<sup>42</sup> In Torthorwald, case details confirm that relief was similarly given to mothers nursing infants. And women claiming to have been deserted by absconding suitors and children deserted by both parents were always aided. Indeed, the relative leniency of both parochial boards helps to explain the high incidence of bastardy—both were relatively sympathetic places if you were confined with a child and destitute. In 1878, however, the central Board of Supervision stipulated that: 'No outdoor relief whatever should be given to mothers of illegitimate children if disability arises from the fact of having such children; and where health may admit of their removal to the Poorhouse'. Thereafter, the ruling was steadfastly applied by some local parochial boards, but stoically, though rarely successfully, resisted by others, including both our parishes.

### **The influence of baby-farming**

When pregnant or nursing mothers were refused relief, they often in turn refused the poorhouse, and the mechanism through which they continued to earn a living was baby-farming, a practice whereby local women (mostly impoverished) were paid to wetnurse and wean other women's infants. As noted above, since the 1860s the evil results of this system had been amply demonstrated throughout Britain, with many shocking stories of malnutrition, starvation, strangling and exposure. Although far from absent from the north-east, as we have seen, there exists no evidence of such a practice in Rothiemay, but, crucially perhaps, baby-farmers were abundant in Torthorwald. By the turn of the century three such women were regularly being named in applications.

Payments were not being received and the baby-farmers themselves were having recourse to the parish. The local board, noting that they had 'numerous requests from baby-farmers to collect for them', ordered the inspector to 'tell her to return the child where she got it'. (The mother was eventually traced in Glasgow, some 75 miles distant.) Bessie Lockerbie took in several infants named in the applications while she herself bore several bastards. Meanwhile, the most eloquent testimony lies in the record of Agnes Murray, a farmworker in her thirties who claimed poor relief 'owing to destitution and starvation'. The inspector remarked: 'Applicant lives with her mother who keeps a baby-farm. She has been out of work for some weeks, and seems completely destitute. Her own child, and one of the baby-farm children have a pinched and hungry look'. Agnes Murray was granted five shillings temporary relief, and the children survived. But given the clear connection between the practice and high mortality, it is not surprising that one means used by medical officers to track down baby-farms was to ask registrars to locate houses from which unusual numbers of death certificate applications for infants were emanating.<sup>43</sup>

With such information to hand, there is less danger of making spurious correlations between possibly unrelated factors. Certainly, the gross assumption that illegitimacy *per se* led to a greater risk of infant death becomes questionable, whereas the translation of moral indignation into policies of material discrimination begins to look more culpable and the resultant response of farming out babies appears decidedly so. Yet the one big fly in the ointment is that if one actually examines the households in which infant deaths occur, very few are baby-farms. A further common factor revealed in studies of both illegitimacy and infant mortality is that neither is capable of explanation by a single cause. Indeed, both appear to be determined by a highly complex amalgam of factors. One might hypothesize that working conditions were critical in that where women were allowed time to breastfeed while at work, babies had a greater chance of survival; alternatively, women would be able to remain in work longer when high mortality left them with fewer offspring to care for. Or again, if a woman resorted to farming out her child, would the infant be wetnursed at the breast or did it perish because it was fed cow's milk or weaned too soon? And what about those women who left their infant in the care of their mothers? Medical Officers of Health and registrars frequently made spurious links between women's employment outside the home and high levels of infant mortality, but how can we test the validity of their conjectures?

### **A multi-source approach**

To date most researchers have considered the English experience, where because of the inaccessibility of original birth and death certificates they have had to rely on correlations between aggregate death statistics and other variables. Without micro-level studies that can capture longitudinally the demographic behaviour of individual mothers over their reproductive lifespans, connections between period fertility, occupation and mortality can only be guessed at. The 'freeze frame' of the census can be positively misleading. Moreover, in England no case-history material exists, comparable with the Scottish Poor Law. The present study is unprecedented, therefore, in assessing patterns of mortality and



childhood survival by using detailed nominative linkage (i.e., tracing the same named individual within and across sources) based on civil registration certificates, census enumerators' books, applications for poor relief and the General Register of Poor in the two parishes. The object of the exercise was to reconstruct a longitudinal picture of the factors affecting the balance between collective and household support for unmarried mothers and their children at different points in their individual life courses. It also considers the degree to which cross-generational interdependence acted as a form of insurance for unmarried mothers. The following example testifies to the fine complexity of detail that can be reconstructed.

William Mitchel and Anne Hay married in Rothiemay in 1827 having already had a bastard two years earlier when she lived on a small farm in the parish but he was a servant in nearby Grange. They went on to have a total of 13 children whilst at the farm of Backdykes. Two of the children sired and bore bastards and subsequently married, although not to the same respective partners, whilst two other sisters also bore illegitimates. The 1851 census shows eight children in the household plus one very young grandchild, who was daughter Jane's illegitimate daughter. By 1871, the household had dwindled in size to five. William and Anne, working still, but now into their sixties and seventies, again provided shelter for an errant daughter, this time Elizabeth, who had been a domestic servant, but was now partially reliant upon out-relief supplement to aid in supporting (financially) her two bastards, each sired by a different man.<sup>44</sup> Meanwhile, her sister Anne had given birth to three bastards between 1864 and 1867, the Register of Poor noting in November 1870 that:

This Pauper's child, Elizabeth Anne (whose father is now dead) is boarded with her maternal aunt, Widow Simpson, who receives direct from the Inspector 2s. 6d. weekly ....The mother is in service and pays for the upkeep of the child Jane. The other is kept by the paternal grandfather in the parish of Skene—the father is now in America.<sup>45</sup>

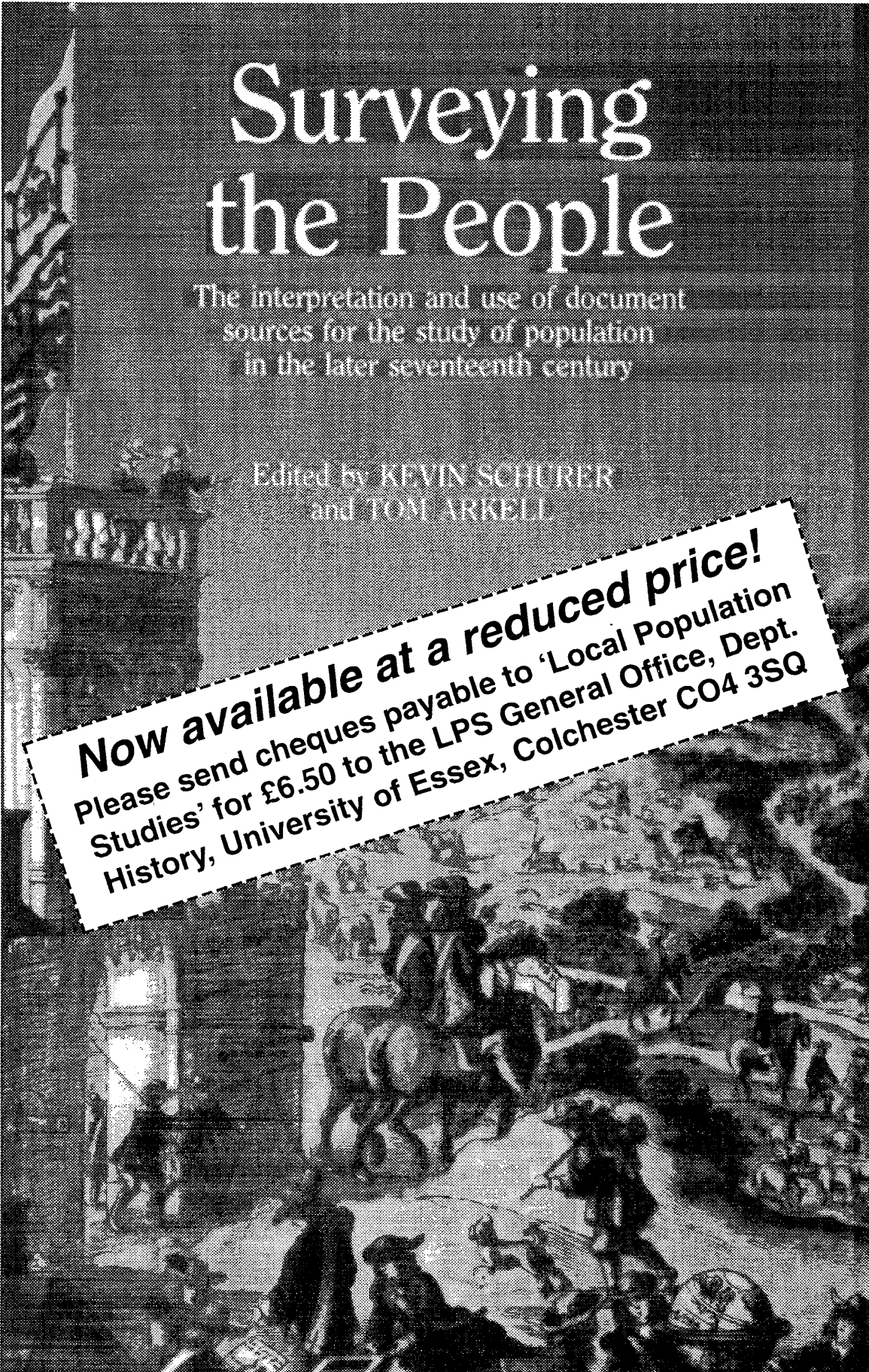
Personal motives and survival strategies can only be gleaned, or inferred, from close biographical observation, and this is a microdemographic and largely qualitative undertaking. In this family there were no infant deaths recorded, and we might plausibly assume that the finely tuned balance of community and kin support provided something like a safety net. In what circumstances, therefore, did infants die? What domestic patterns created conditions of highest vulnerability? Furnished with an heuristic model that may be applied to a good number of Scottish parishes, the first task will be to recover some of the richness and depth of family patterning that existed in those places, like Torthorwald, where infants were rather less fortunate than in Rothiemay.

## NOTES

1. No continuous runs of birth (as distinct from baptism) and death records exist for Scottish parishes prior to the advent of Civil Registration in 1855.
2. In Rothiemay, 106 infants died within 12 months of birth between 1855 and 1900. Of these, 37 (35 per cent) were illegitimate, whilst in the Rothiemay General Register of Poor (1845–1900), 185 children under 9 years are mentioned by name, 62 (33.5 per cent) being known bastards.
3. A. Blaikie, *Illegitimacy, sex, and society: Northeast Scotland, 1750–1900* (Oxford, 1993), chapters 5 and 6.
4. See C. H. Lee, 'Regional infant mortality in Britain, 1861–1971: patterns and hypotheses', *Population Studies*, 45 (1991), 55–65; R. A. Cage, 'Infant mortality rates and housing: twentieth century Glasgow', *Scottish Economic and Social History*, 14 (1994), 77–92; D. Kemmer, 'Infant mortality in early twentieth century Scotland using the civil registers: Aberdeen and Dundee compared', *Scottish Economic and Social History*, 17 (1997), 1–19. Eilidh Garrett and Alice Reid of the Cambridge Group are researching age-specific patterns in textile towns, including Dundee, and Elspeth Graham (St Andrews) is investigating smallpox in Fife, 1750–1830. Apart from Rory Paddock's unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 'Aspects of illegitimacy in Victorian Dumfriesshire' (University of Edinburgh, 1990), relevant demographic research on southwest Scotland is singularly lacking.
5. The Scottish Health Department, *Infant mortality in Scotland: the report of a sub-committee of the Scientific Advisory Committee* (Edinburgh, 1943).
6. R. I. Woods, P. A. Watterson and J. H. Woodward, 'The causes of rapid infant mortality decline in England and Wales, 1861–1921', *Population Studies*, 42 (1988), 343–66 and 43 (1989), 113–32. Recent research suggests that density per room was the crucial component in Glasgow (Cage, 'Infant mortality rates').
7. MOH Report, *Aberdeen, 1907*, (1908), 55 (Table C), 59.
8. MOH Report, *Aberdeen, 1907*, (1908), 60.
9. The census enumerators' books allow, at least, for the calculation of numbers of persons per windowed room.
10. R. Mitchison, *British population change since 1860*, (London, 1977), 49.
11. W. Flinn et al, *Scottish population history*, (Cambridge, 1977), 418.
12. Mitchison, *British population change*, 49.
13. P. Laslett, 'Introduction', in P. Laslett, K. Oosterveen and R. M. Smith eds, *Bastardy and its comparative history*, (London, 1980), 1–68 (p. 41).
14. Laslett, 'Introduction', 41–47.
15. M.S. Teitelbaum, *The British fertility decline: demographic transition in the crucible of the industrial revolution*, (Princeton, 1984), 149; Table 6.10b (p. 152).
16. Flinn et al, *Scottish population history*, 353.
17. Lee, 'Regional infant mortality', Table 1, 57. English counties, Welsh and Scottish regions.
18. Westmorland achieved 88 in 1881, and Devon managed 99 in 1891, but in all other years both recorded higher rates.
19. Lee, 'Regional infant mortality', 58.
20. Although low compared to its hinterland, the level of illegitimacy in Aberdeen has long been higher than other Scottish towns. In the later 1850s its rate stood at 15.2 per cent, some 4.8 per cent higher than the next highest city, Dundee. After the 1850s illegitimacy maintained its relatively high level, falling below 10 per cent for the first time in 1883 and ranging between 8 and 12 per cent, with occasional exceptions, until the 1930s. These data from Registrar General for Scotland's *Detailed Annual Reports*.
21. The constructs of rural and urban are possibly deceptive in that a number of micro-level studies have shown that within country parishes bastardy appears to have been lower in the purely rural districts than in the more densely populated village streets (see Blaikie, *Illegitimacy*, 130–33, on sharp distinctions in Marnoch (Banffshire); J. Robin, 'Illegitimacy in Colyton, 1851–1881', *Continuity and Change*, 2 (1987), 307–42 (p. 335); Paddock, 'Illegitimacy in Victorian Dumfriesshire', 127–29; J. M. Phayer, 'Subcommunal bastardy and rural religion: micro and macro aspects of the debate on the sexual revolution', *Journal of Sex Research*, 17 (1981), 74–95). If it can be demonstrated that infant

mortality is also (as we would expect) concentrated in the more densely populated parts of rural parishes, then an hypothesis emphasising the role of housing density, and proximity between persons—such as that advocated by Cage ('Infant Mortality Rates') for earlier twentieth-century Glasgow—would appear plausible, although, of course, significant differentials in household circumstances between illegitimate and other children would also have to be evident.

22. Mitchison, *British population change*, 50.
23. Paddock, 'Illegitimacy in Victorian Dumfriesshire', 124, 139–40.
24. Another post-mortem revealed 'suffocation, the result of natural causes'.
25. Of the 51 infants dying within one month, 23 appear to have died from endogenous causes (10, all legitimate were premature). Of these, 18 were illegitimate and 5 illegitimate. The comparatively low ratio for illegitimates here has to be seen in the context of the 8 bastard deaths in the first month for which no medical details were forthcoming.
26. L. Leneman and R. Mitchison, 'Girls in trouble: the social and geographical setting of illegitimacy in early modern Scotland', *Journal of Social History*, 22, 483–97 (p. 495).
27. Seton, *The causes of illegitimacy particularly in Scotland*, (Edinburgh, 1860), Appendix V.
28. 'A North-Country Woman', *Infanticide and its cause*, (London, 1862).
29. *Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law*, (Scotland), PP 1844, Appendix, Pt. III, p. 102, Qs. 631–2.
30. Rothiemay Parochial Board, Record of Applications, 1855–69 (hereafter Rothiemay Apps.), 62 (16/1/64); Marnoch General Register of Poor (hereafter GRP), 14 (12/1/80); Rothiemay Apps., 19 (15/4/58); Marnoch GRP, 99 (15/2/86).
31. Rothiemay Apps., 37 (21/3/61); Rothiemay GRP, 112 (6/5/82).
32. I. Levitt, *Poverty and welfare in Scotland, 1890–1948* (Edinburgh, 1988), 7.
33. W. Watson, 'The Poor Law from the Poor Man's Standpoint', in T. Ivory ed., *Pauperism and the Poor Laws*, (Edinburgh, 1870), 13.
34. Rothiemay Apps., 83 (4/6/67); see J. D. Wilson et al, 'Law of infanticide', *Transactions of National Association for the Promotion of Social Science*, (1877), 284–312 (p. 307): 'There could not be a greater temptation to infanticide than the workhouse [meaning poorhouse] treatment of women in Scotland. A woman with one child is refused entry but when qualified by having two she is admitted.' Foundling hospitals were subsequently advocated. 'A North-Country Woman' ('Infanticide') claimed that infanticide and abortion were 'unknown in the countryside', but, as with rape and incest, the threat of capital punishment meant that cases very rarely came to light although they doubtless occurred. The fact that 'general debility' was sometimes given as the cause of death for illegitimates would tend to strengthen the malnutrition hypothesis.
35. T. Ferguson, *Scottish social welfare, 1864–1914*, (London, 1958), 260–61; 49th Report of the Board of Supervision for the Relief of the Poor and Public Health in Scotland, 1893–94, PP 1894 (C7515), xli, Appendix (B), No.2, p. 84.
36. M. Bengtsson, *Det hotade barnet: tre generationers spädbarns—och barnadödlighet i 1800-talets Linköping*, (Linköping, 1996).
37. Blaikie, *Illegitimacy*, 125.
38. Paddock, 'Illegitimacy in Victorian Dumfriesshire', 297–303.
39. A. Blaikie, 'A kind of loving: illegitimacy, grandparents and the rural economy of NorthEast Scotland, 1750–1900', *Scottish Economic and Social History*, 14 (1994), 41–57.
40. C. W. Mills, 'Situating actions and vocabularies of motive', *American Sociological Review*, 5 (1940), 904–13; L. Prior, *The social organisation of death* (London, 1989); I. Loudon, 'Maternal mortality, 1880–1950: some regional and international comparisons', *Social History of Medicine*, 1 (1988), 183–228.
41. Blaikie, *Illegitimacy*, 158–84.
42. Rothiemay Apps., 34 (3/12/60).
43. Above details from Torthorwald Parochial Board/ Local Government Board, Register of Applications for Poor Relief, 1891–1916.
44. Details from family reconstitution forms—see Blaikie, *Illegitimacy*, 149.
45. Rothiemay GRP, 69 (8/11/70).



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# INTERPRETING THE COMPTON CENSUS RETURNS OF 1676 FOR THE DIOCESE OF LLANDAFF

Elizabeth Parkinson

Elizabeth Parkinson is the author of *The Glamorgan Hearth Tax Assessment of 1670* (South Wales Record Society, 10, 1994). She is currently engaged in a nation-wide study of the hearth tax from 1662–6, for her doctoral thesis at Roehampton Institute.

## Introduction

One of the main sources for estimating population totals in the later-seventeenth century is the Compton census of 1676. This ecclesiastical census was intended to provide estimates, made up from individual parish returns, of the number of conformists, popish recusants and protestant dissenters in England and Wales. Whiteman in her critical edition of the census discusses very fully the problems of interpreting the data, particularly with regard to the inconsistency of the individual returns.<sup>1</sup> Whiteman and Arkell have shown that in some areas, with certain qualifications, the Compton returns can be compared with the returns of the contemporary Hearth Tax in order to throw some light on these inconsistencies.<sup>2</sup> Since publication of the critical edition, Whiteman has suggested that the very low totals returned for the diocese of Llandaff may be due to the omission of the cottagers from the incumbents' returns.<sup>3</sup> This paper examines the Compton returns for part of Llandaff diocese, and by a comparison with the Hearth Tax returns, shows that Whiteman's supposition may well be correct. Such an exercise could be applied to other dioceses, in order to elucidate the Compton returns more fully, and thus obtain a more accurate tool for estimating population numbers.

To ensure a valid comparison, the Compton census and Hearth Tax data must first be examined to sift out those totals, which appear to be reliable, and where the areas of collection coincide.

## The Compton census

Most of the returns for the province of Canterbury have survived only in a copied form known as the Salt manuscript. There the information for most (but not all) parishes is listed under the three headings: conformists, papists and nonconformists. Superficially, these columns appear to accord with the inquiries sent out to each diocese in the southern province for the Archbishop of Canterbury, by Bishop Compton of London, but the neat well-written figures recorded in the Salt manuscript pose several problems for their twentieth-century interpreters.

The first question, as sent out by Compton, asked the incumbent the number of persons in the parish, rather than the number of conformists. The second question requested the number of popish recusants and the third how many of its other dissenters refused to take part in the services of the Church of England. Richards, in his study of the Compton census, mainly with reference to Wales,<sup>4</sup> was convinced that the number of dissenters was severely underestimated, but Whiteman, supported by Jackson's work on Devon has shown for a variety of reasons, that this is unlikely.<sup>5</sup> Her view is that the incumbents endeavoured to give a truthful answer to each of the three questions. Such endeavour was further hampered by the difficulty of categorising the dissenters. There is evidence to show that the Quakers and some of the Baptists refused to go to church, but that some of the Presbyterians and Congregationalists regularly attended both church and a conventicle as a matter of course.<sup>6</sup> Such differences in worshipping practices provide further scope for individual interpretation of question three by the incumbent.

In answer to all three questions, the figures given in the Salt manuscript represent the final stage in a process in which the figures were collected at parish level, then tabulated at diocesan level before transmission to London. In some places, the number of persons as given in column one was further altered at the diocesan level, to create a conformist total by subtracting the last two columns from the first. Thus for certain dioceses, the total number of persons is found in column one, while for others, the figures from all three columns should be added to obtain a total of persons. Whiteman and Clapinson's evidence shows that the figures in column one for Llandaff diocese were not recalculated, so that they ostensibly represent the number of persons—the estimate with which this study is concerned.<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately the first question was worded so loosely that few actually recorded the total number of persons in their parish. In fact the Archbishop of Canterbury really wanted to know how many men and women of 16 years and over, which was then regarded as the age to receive communion, were living in the given parish. In some dioceses this explanation was added to the original question or the question was rephrased to make this clear; in many it was not. Whiteman has shown that many totals do reflect the number of communicants in each parish, but some include children as well, while others are merely confined to men aged 16, or just the number of households or families.

### **The Hearth Tax**

The Hearth Tax returns list the names of the householders liable for the annual two-shilling tax (payable half yearly) and the number of hearths for which they had to pay. Certain categories of the population were exempted from the tax—those not paying church or poor rates; those dwelling in houses worth not more than 20 shillings a year, and certain properties such as almshouses, furnaces, blowing houses and kilns. Such exemptions are not always listed and even within the exempt categories, sometimes those receiving poor relief were omitted.



The administrative boundaries of the Hearth Tax normally conformed to the areas of jurisdiction of the petty constables, whose areas were often smaller than those of the parishes. In many cases, the constabularies were listed according to parish, and since the non-tax payers were exempted on a parish basis, it is generally possible to calculate the household totals also on a parish basis. Those parishes where there is doubt about the geographical areas have been omitted from the study.

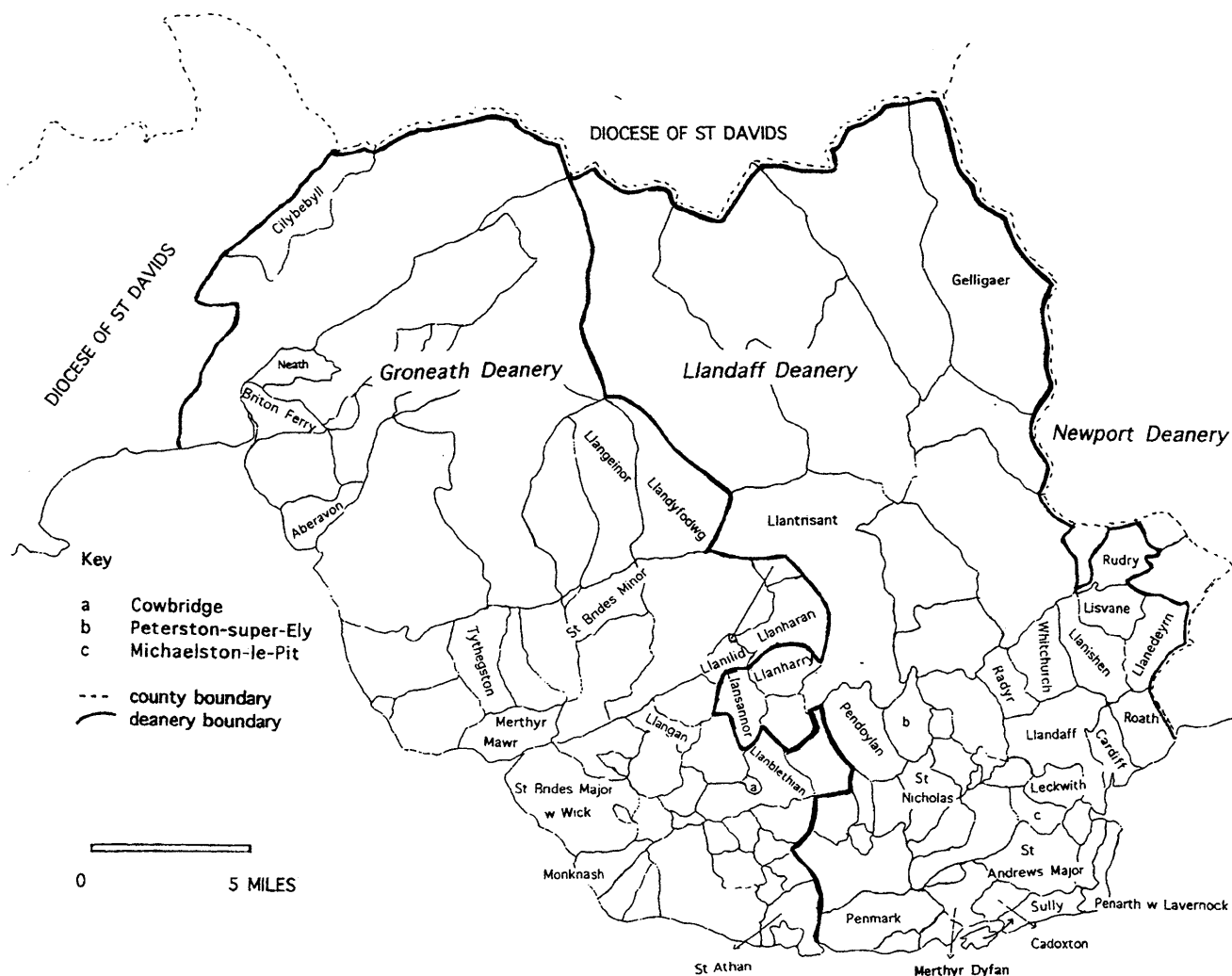
The interpretation of the Hearth Tax returns is further complicated by the fact that throughout the life of the tax from 1662 to 1689 its collection was administered in several different ways affecting both how the households were recorded and the number recorded.<sup>8</sup> Most of the surviving lists date from two periods of 1662–6 and 1669–74 when detailed accounts were sent for auditing to the Exchequer. From 1664 onwards, all householders both liable and exempt should have been listed but this did not always happen. Occupiers rather than owners were supposed to be taxed, but empty and tenanted properties provided loopholes and thus are recorded inconsistently. Some individual entries include several households so these have to be adjusted in order to obtain an estimate of total household numbers. Finally, within each administration, the local collectors of the tax exhibited different collecting procedures so the return listing the most accurate number of households for each parish may not be of the same date as that for its neighbouring parish.

### **The data for Llandaff diocese**

Whiteman comments that the Compton returns for Llandaff diocese present a particular problem. 'The figures given in the "conformists" column are so small that it is clear that most cannot represent either conformists or inhabitants .... In many parishes, householders, households or families must have been reported.'<sup>9</sup> Guy has shown that in the replies to the 1763 Visitation queries in Llandaff diocese, a number of the clergy distinguished between families and cottagers.<sup>10</sup> Whiteman considers that perhaps the clergy in their 1676 returns drew the same distinctions, and omitted some of the cottagers, hence the very low Compton totals.

The diocese of Llandaff at this time was the poorest in England and Wales and was viewed as a stepping stone to higher things. Bishop William Lloyd had been nominated to the See in 1675. He has been described as an exact and aggressive prelate although in his favour he was resident and Welsh-speaking.<sup>11</sup> The diocese had no dean and there is no evidence of the activities of rural deans. The administrative problems were further compounded by the fact that the diocese straddled the two counties of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire and the bishop's palace was a long way from the cathedral. More importantly the bishop had little control over his see because not a single living in Glamorgan was in his gift.<sup>12</sup> Against such a background it is perhaps surprising that the Llandaff response to Bishop Compton was received during Lent, only a few weeks after the receipt of the Bishop's letter.

Figure 1 Map of Glamorgan showing the boundaries of the two deaneries in Llandaff diocese



Of the Llandaff returns to Bishop Compton, this paper is confined to the Glamorgan parishes, for which there are two sets of Hearth Tax data for comparison. Within the county, the 82 parishes were divided into the 2 deaneries of Groneath to the west and Llandaff to the east as shown in Figure 1.<sup>13</sup> Both deaneries had their share of smaller coastal parishes of the nucleated lowland type and some huge upland parishes of scattered communities, where Welsh was the predominant language. Furthermore, the urban development of the county was such that some of the towns were served by chapels of rural parishes such as the wealthy market town of Cowbridge, a chapelry in the parish of Llanblethian. In Groneath deanery there were two other towns, Aberavon and Neath, while Cardiff, the largest town of the diocese, was in Llandaff deanery.



The Salt manuscript records 24 parishes in Groneath and 29 in Llandaff deanery. Aberavon, Cardiff and Neath are included in the list. Eighteen parishes in Groneath and 11 in Llandaff deanery are not listed probably for a variety of reasons. The living could have been vacant or some of the returns may have been lost. In possibly 12 of the 18 upland parishes, the incumbents did send in a return, in spite of the huge areas and the moorland terrain.

Glamorgan has two surviving Hearth Tax returns of 1666 and 1670 which include all the parishes in the county.<sup>14</sup> For some parishes, the total number of households is similar in both returns but for others there are appreciable differences between the numbers recorded in 1666 and 1670 and also in the number of exempt noted.<sup>15</sup> Whether those receiving poor relief are included among the exempt is open to conjecture. Comparison of the two lists does throw up anomalies which cast doubt on the accuracy of some of the household totals and hence their use as a valid yardstick for elucidating Compton Census totals. In the parish of Newton Nottage, for example, the higher household total in 1670 omits the exempt, while the lower 1666 total includes both chargeable and not chargeable households. On this evidence, it is difficult to know which is the more reliable total, so that figures from such parishes have been excluded.

### **The comparison of Compton/Hearth Tax ratios**

A comparison of the Compton returns with those of the Hearth Tax, where the latter totals are reliable and the areas coincide, can help elucidate which category of population the incumbents returned. Where the Compton return for a certain parish is the same as, or very similar to the Hearth Tax total, this would suggest that the incumbent probably returned the number of households rather than the number of males or all the adults. In this instance, the ratio of Compton census total/Hearth Tax total would be close to one. Whiteman has suggested that the low Compton returns in Llandaff diocese may be due to omission of some households and probably the poorer ones. One way of testing this hypothesis is to compare the Compton returns with the chargeable Hearth Tax totals which include only those households paying church and poor rates or whose rent was more than 20 shillings a year. If such revised ratios are close to one, it implies that the incumbent did omit the poorer households in his return, though his idea of poverty was no doubt different from that required for Hearth Tax exemption.

This exercise can only be conducted with a proportion of the Glamorgan parishes listed in the Salt manuscript. Some parishes have been omitted because it is uncertain what geographical area they represent. The huge parish of Llantrisant, for example, had five dependant chapelries, two of which were entered separately in the Compton return, but how many of the remainder were included under Llantrisant is impossible to say. Similarly with the return for Tythegston. This was a chapelry and so may or may not have included its mother church and its sister chapelries. Cardiff has also been omitted because a Compton return of 2,407, even if interpreted as the total number of inhabitants, does not correlate with Hearth Tax household totals of 342 and 375. Radyr and Rudry have been excluded since the Salt versions of 'Ruddry' and 'Rudry' make it impossible to distinguish between them. Some parishes have been omitted

**Table 1 Compton/Hearth Tax ratios**

Compton category	Possible range	Ratio
Inhabitants	upper limit - (100 per cent of 5.2)	5.2
	lower limit - (100 per cent of 3.7)	3.7
Adult males	upper limit - (36 per cent of 5.2)	1.9
	lower limit - (27 per cent of 3.7)	1.0
Households	upper limit	1.2
	lower limit	0.9
Chargeable households	upper limit	1.3
	lower limit	0.8

because with a Hearth Tax total of under 15 households the level of inaccuracy would be proportionately too great. Other parishes with dubious Hearth Tax totals, as shown by widely varying figures for 1666 and 1670, have also been left out.

For the remaining parishes, we cannot be sure that the Hearth Tax totals recorded all the households, and it is probable that most, if not all of those people in receipt of poor relief were excluded. Such an underestimate would result in a ratio of greater than one, and for this reason the upper ratio range has been extended arbitrarily to 1.2. To take account of a possible underestimate by the incumbent when noting his return, the lower limit has been set at 0.9. Thus a ratio range of 0.9 to 1.2 would indicate that the Compton census returned all households. Similar allowances must be made when using ratios based on chargeable household totals, but here there is a further variable to consider. Each incumbent was interested in the number of his parishioners, rather than those who were eligible for a civil tax. Thus, his return may have included people exempted from the tax, or he could have omitted distant parishioners who paid duty on all their hearths. To allow for such eventualities, the ratio range has been extended from 0.8 to 1.3.

Compton/Hearth Tax ratios greater than 1.3 can also help to elucidate the category of population noted in the Compton return. If one assumes that the mean household size ranged between 3.7 and 5.2 and that both the Compton total and the total households number given in the Hearth Tax are reliable, then a ratio of between 3.7 and 5.2 would indicate that the Compton return represented all inhabitants i.e. children as well as men and women. Whiteman has identified some parishes where the count probably included only those males over 16 years of age. Arkell has suggested that the proportion of adult males in most communities varied from about 27 to 36 per cent.<sup>16</sup> If the mean household size varied between 3.2 and 5.2, then the mean number of adult males in most

communities would vary between 27 per cent of 3.7 and 36 per cent of 5.2; that is a Compton/Hearth Tax ratio of 1.0 to 1.9. The proposed ranges of the Compton/Hearth Tax ratios can be summarised as shown in Table 1.

Arkell has used this method to interpret the Compton returns for four counties in England, but in Glamorgan most of the ratios fall below the value of 1.3 and some below 0.8.<sup>17</sup> A Compton/Hearth Tax ratio of less than 0.8 could mean that the incumbent under-recorded his count. If he was counting in terms of households, he could have omitted some, as occurred in 1763, or included the single-member households with larger family groups.

An analysis of the Glamorgan ratios is given in Table 2 in which the parishes are listed in descending order of the Compton/Hearth Tax ratio as given in column 3. Deanery or geographical location appeared to have little effect on the ratios, so those differences have been ignored. Those parishes with Compton returns of 20 or less are so small that they have been listed separately and will be discussed later. Column 4 lists the chargeable household totals from the Hearth Tax and column 5 the revised Compton/chargeable household ratio. Column 6 lists the likely interpretation of the Compton return based on these ratios which will now be discussed more fully.

Starting at the top of the table, a ratio of 1.9 in column 3 for St. Brides Minor indicates that the Compton return records the number of adult males. Pendoylan with a ratio of 1.2 may indicate a count of adult males or if the Hearth Tax total is an underestimate then a count of households. For Whitchurch and Penarth with Lavernock a ratio of 0.9 would suggest a count of total households. A ratio of 0.8 (in column 3) could indicate a count of total households if the Compton return is an underestimate. When the ratios are recalculated using chargeable Hearth Tax totals, that is omitting the non-chargeable (see column 5), the ratios for 13 parishes fall between 0.8 and 1.3 and so suggest that the incumbents did omit some households and probably the poorer ones. In St. Nicholas and Cadoxton (marked with a cross in column 6) the incumbent appears to be counting more than the chargeable household total but less than the total of all households. In both these parishes the Hearth Tax list records a large proportion of exempt households. In the group of parishes shown by a question mark in column 6, the Compton returns are much lower than the chargeable Hearth Tax household totals. There may be a variety of reasons why this should be. Such apparent under-recording may be due to the incumbent's count relating to a smaller area than that covered by the Hearth Tax or perhaps he omitted the single-member households entered as separate entries in the Hearth Tax or he omitted some of the chargeable households that were least well-off.

The parishes with Compton returns of 20 or less present their own particular problems partly because with small total numbers, slight differences can result in a proportionately large shift in the ratios. Such small parishes are also more likely to have a mean household size outside the range 3.7 to 5.2 and the proportion of males to females may be outside the normal range.

**Table 2 Compton census and Hearth Tax totals**

Parish	1 1676 CC Total	2 1670 HT Total ho	3 CC:HT Ratio	4 1670 HT Ch ho	5 CC:Ch ho Ratio	6 Compton Category
<b>Compton total of 21 and over</b>						
St. Brides Minor	63	*33	1.9	-	-	males?
Pedoylan	81	*69	1.2	-	-	ho?
Whitchurch	70	*82	0.9	-	-	ho
Penarth with Lavenock	29	33	0.9	-	-	ho
St. Nicholas	74	89	0.8	32	2.3	X
Sully	28	*35	0.8	22	1.3	n-p ho
Llanharry	34	40	0.8	32	1.1	n-p ho
Llandaff	155	*183	0.8	151	1.0	n-p ho
Llangeinor <sup>u</sup>	39	*48	0.8	421	0.9	n-p ho
Llanharan	34	*44	0.8	36	0.9	n-p ho
Cadoxton	28	*38	0.7	19	1.5	X
St. Andrews Major	58	77	0.7	44	1.3	n-p ho
Merthyr Mawr	25	33	0.7	23	1.1	n-p ho
Preston-super-Ely	32	*46	0.7	36	0.9	n-p ho
Penmark	51	79	0.6	51	1.0	n-p ho
Gelligaer <sup>u</sup>	107	*175	0.6	106	1.0	n-p ho
St. Brides Major with Wick	123	*200	0.6	141	0.9	n-p ho
Cilybebyll <sup>u</sup>	30	51	0.6	44	0.7	?
Llandyfodwg <sup>u</sup>	26	49	0.5	28	0.9	n-p ho
St. Athan	28	*59	0.5	44	0.6	?
Lisvane	31	62	0.5	59	0.5	?
Llanilid	23	47	0.5	30	0.8	n-p ho
Llanedeym	35	91	0.4	65	0.5	?
Llanishen	33	76	0.4	46	0.7	?
<b>Compton total of 20 and under</b>						
Leckwith	15	*20	0.7	12	1.2	n-p ho
Briton Ferry <sup>u</sup>	11	20	0.6	16	0.7	?
Llansannor	16	35	0.5	18	0.9	n-p ho
Michaelston-le-Pit	9	*19	0.5	10	0.9	n-p ho
Monknash	14	27	0.5	18	0.8	n-p ho
Merthyr Dyfan	16	*34	0.5	24	0.7	?
Llangan	19	*48	0.4	36	0.5	?
Roath	20	67	0.3	46	0.4	?

**Notes:** CC = Compton census; Ch ho = chargeable households; u = upland parish; HT = Hearth Tax;  
\* = the higher total of 1666 rather than that of 1670; n-p ho = non-poor household.

To account for this, the ratio range in column 3 could be extended to 0.8 to 1.3, but for these Glamorgan parishes none of the ratios fell within this range. When considering the Compton/chargeable household ratios, a further extension of the ratio range beyond 0.8 to 1.3 is not viable because the total numbers are so small. Thus in four of these parishes, namely Leckwith, Llansannor, Michaelston-le-Pit and Monkash, the ratios in column 5 fall between 0.8 and 1.3, suggesting that the poorest households were omitted from their Compton returns. In the remaining four parishes marked with a question mark in column 6, the ratios are less than 0.8, and the possible reasons for such under-recording have been suggested earlier.

## Conclusion

Within the limits prescribed, this comparison of the Compton returns with those of the Hearth Tax has shed some light on the interpretation of the Compton figures for Llandaff diocese. To ensure validity, the analysis is restricted to those returns which relate to similar areas and where the figures can be considered reliable. Thus an interpretation can be made for 32 of the 53 Glamorgan parishes listed in the Salt manuscript. Of these 32 returns, one is probably a count of adult males, and three are counts of total households. A further 17 Compton returns would appear to be a count of households which omit the cottagers. In two parishes the Hearth Tax returns appear to be unreliable and in a further nine, the Compton returns appear to be very low indicating that the incumbents not only omitted the cottagers, but also other households. In four of these nine parishes, the returns were so small that the comparison is of questionable value.

For Glamorgan in particular, the incompleteness of the Compton returns makes them unreliable as a source for seventeenth-century population estimates. Elsewhere in England and Wales, this method of comparison (where the areas are similar and the returns are reliable) can be used to interpret more of the Compton Census returns and hence highlight their reliability as a source for seventeenth-century population estimates.

## Acknowledgement

I should like to thank Tom Arkell and Anne Whiteman for their encouragement and help in the preparation of this article.

## NOTES

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## RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

### MIS-SPECIFICATION OF SERVANT OCCUPATIONS IN THE 1851 CENSUS: A PROBLEM REVISITED

Michael Anderson

The recent re-publication of 25 papers from *Local Population Studies*, concerned with various aspects of the study of local communities in the Victorian census books, will hopefully encourage renewed interest in comparing similar behaviour in different parts of the country by use of the census enumerators' books.<sup>1</sup> It should also remind us of the importance of understanding the procedures through which the personal and family situations of individuals were transformed into the statistics of the published volumes, mediated as these were by the responses of individual householders, and by the activities of the enumerators, registrars, superintendent registrars, and the central Census Office staff. This short paper will hopefully act as a stimulus to further research on both these fronts.

In a paper originally published in *LPS* in 1982, and included in a slightly updated form in the recent volume, Higgs drew attention to the problem faced, both by the census authorities and by those using the CEBs today, when men and women were listed with domestic service occupational titles in the column headed 'Rank, Profession or Occupation' but as something other than 'servant' in the column 'Relation to Head of Family'.<sup>2</sup> In Higgs's one in four sample from the CEBs for Rochdale in 1851, he found that 40 per cent of females aged twenty and over with 'servant' occupational titles did not have 'service' relationships to the head of their household. The inconsistency was especially frequent among what he calls 'General servants' (27 per cent of whom were not recorded with a 'servant' relationship), 'Housemaids' (half were inconsistent) and, above all, among 'Housekeepers', where 85 per cent had a non-servant relationship, more than a third being reported as heads of households and more than another fifth being the wives of heads. In some ways even more disturbing was Higgs's suggestion that the published census figures for Rochdale for 1851 appeared to have included all these 'familial housekeepers' as domestic servants, thus markedly over-reporting the numbers in service in the town. The same problem of housekeeper recording recurred in the CEBs for 1861 and 1871, but at these censuses the procedures in the Census Office seemed to have changed, implying that in some way the checkers were rectifying what Higgs neatly calls this 'mis-specification of servant occupations'.

#### **An England and Wales perspective**

How typical was Rochdale? And are there any further clues in the 1851 returns that may point to how this problem may have been handled in 1861 and thereafter? This paper seeks to throw some light on this issue, using data for

England and Wales from the National Sample from the 1851 Census of Great Britain.<sup>3</sup> The National Sample comprises the total population of two per cent of all 'settlements' with populations of less than 2,000 (the 'rural' sample), and every fiftieth enumeration book from the remainder of the country (the 'non-rural' sample). The complete data set contains more than 400,000 people, but the subset used here consists of three separate 2.5 per cent systematic subsamples from the rural sample and six separate 2.5 per cent subsamples from the non-rural sample; where national estimates of percentages are provided, the rural sample has been double-weighted, but the numbers of cases shown in the tables are the unweighted figures. The analysis is confined to female servants in 'domestic service' occupations, thus excluding such groups as dairymaids, farm servants, laundresses and nurses. Removing those servants who were in institutions, or whose occupational title included supplementary information such as 'Pauper', 'Formerly', or 'Out of place', left the 2,114 girls and women whose occupation titles are summarised in the first column of Table 1.

The main body of Table 1 shows how these 2,114 'servants' were described in the relationship column of the CEBs. In all, the population equivalent of 72.5 per cent were designated as 'servants' of some kind, and another 6.1 per cent had either no entry or were recorded, potentially quite 'correctly', as lodgers or visitors. As in Higgs's work, there were considerable differences in relationships between the different categories of 'servant', but there were two groups that were especially likely not to have a 'servant' designation. One was the substantial number of persons who were given simply the designation 'Domestic' or 'Dom'. Only a maximum of 12.5 per cent of this group appear to have had anything approaching a 'purely open market' relationship to their head of household, and it seems very likely that this designation was in general used simply to describe a person primarily responsible for housework activity—and that the census checkers tabulated it as such. The other group where non-servant relationships were in a majority is 'Housekeepers', though the figure is somewhat below that recorded by Higgs in Rochdale. When these two groups are set aside, 81 per cent of the population with service occupational titles had relationships to the household head as 'servants', the major remaining exceptions being the considerable numbers of daughters who are recorded as 'Servant', 'General servant' or 'Domestic servant'.

### **A regional and local view**

The problem identified by Higgs for Rochdale thus also appears in 1851 at the national level, but it occurs at a markedly lower frequency. Moreover, when its occurrence is examined at a regional level, a clear pattern seems to emerge. In the National Sample, Census Division VIII (Lancashire and Cheshire) had 14 per cent of the population in 1851, but it had 28 per cent of the female 'servants' who were identified in the relationship column as heads of households or as kin of the head, and 48 per cent of all 'Housekeepers' in such a situation, these being concentrated particularly in the Lancashire textile manufacturing towns. Division IX (Yorkshire) had 10 per cent of the 1851 population, but 13 per cent of servants listed as heads or with a kin relationship to the head. It had only 5 per cent of 'Housekeepers' in this position, but it contained 55 per cent of all heads or kin of



**Table 1 Relationship to Head of Household of female servants**

Occupational title	No entry	Head or wife	Daughter	Other kin	Lodger or visitor	Servant wife	All	Unadjusted no.
Servant or general servant	4.4	0.8	17.6	5.5	5.0	66.7	100.0	519
Domestic servant	5.4	0.0	10.7	0.0	3.6	80.4	100.0	54
House servant	1.6	0.6	5.3	2.9	1.2	88.4	100.0	819
Maid (excluding lady's or nurse)	6.9	1.9	5.6	2.3	2.8	80.6	100.0	185
Lady's maid or companion	0.0	4.8	2.4	4.8	11.9	76.2	100.0	38
Nursemaid	3.7	0.0	9.3	3.7	5.6	77.8	100.0	43
Cook	2.8	4.2	0.0	1.4	1.4	90.3	100.0	128
Housekeeper or Asst. Housekeeper	5.0	34.2	10.2	21.7	2.2	26.7	100.0	272
'Domestic'	0.0	50.0	23.2	8.9	5.4	12.5	100.0	56
<i>All except HK and 'Dom'</i>	<i>3.1</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>8.6</i>	<i>3.4</i>	<i>2.8</i>	<i>81.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>1786</i>
All	3.3	6.4	9.1	5.9	2.8	72.5	100.0	2114

heads who were described simply as 'Domestic' (though, unlike in Lancashire where 'Housekeepers' were widely distributed through the sample EDs, a substantial majority of the Yorkshire occurrences of 'Domestic' were clustered in just two enumeration books—and this may therefore reflect either the practice of particular enumerators or a very localised use of the term).

It would thus seem that, while it was quite a common practice nationally for women to be listed with a servant title in the occupation column but as kin in the relationship column, the misleading appearance of the description 'Housekeeper' may have been disproportionately common in the Lancashire textile towns. There are clearly, as Higgs points out, several plausible reasons why some of those engaged in service occupations should be listed as relatives of the head: many were in the households where the head was a farmer, an innkeeper or engaged in some other kind of business where servants would need to be employed. In these cases, relatives might quite reasonably be doing jobs in the family business and were thus quite correctly returned as engaged in service occupations. A particular extension of this kind of case may be the significant number of girls in all-female households where the head was described as 'laundress' or 'charwoman'; presumably in these cases the girls helped the head with her work. In other cases, some of the grand-daughters, cousins and nieces, for example,

were probably taken on preferentially as servants in direct substitution for a non-relative (perhaps because they were orphans or their families had fallen on hard times, or just as a favour), and these women would have worked and perhaps been treated in ways little different from a non-relative in a similar role.<sup>4</sup> Some others would have been living-out servants, going daily to their employer, or perhaps employed only during the week. And some would have been 'ordinary' domestic servants, normally resident with their employers, but visiting their parents' home for census night or for a few days.<sup>6</sup> In this connection it is significant that the 1851 census was held on Mothering Sunday when, in certain parts of the country, it was conventional to give servants leave to pay a visit to their parents.

However, in the textile districts of Lancashire and Cheshire, and perhaps also in the West Riding of Yorkshire, in a situation where large numbers of married women were in factory or domestic manufacturing employment, there may well have been a very different origin to the listing of so many widowed heads of household, wives, daughters and sisters as employed in 'service' occupations. Examination of all the 69 Lancashire and Cheshire enumeration books in the National Sample gives a clear impression that many enumerators quite explicitly recorded 'housework', 'housekeeper', 'domestic duties', or 'at home' against wives, children and other relatives of textile workers who might otherwise have been employed in textile work. In doing so, enumerators (and perhaps—but by no means certainly—heads of household who completed schedules) may well have quite explicitly been identifying those particular women and girls who were playing a key role in the household economy by undertaking the task of the domestic minder of a house where all other members were in remunerated employment.

### **Census Office tabulation**

This in turn links to the other important question raised by Higgs: how did the census office officials deal with such cases? In Rochdale, where these domestic minders were listed by the enumerator as 'housekeepers', Higgs suggests that almost all were included under that domestic service heading in the tabulations that became in due course the published census statistics. But this was clearly not always the case. Examination of photocopied pages from any CEB clearly shows marks made by the census office checkers, and sometimes also shows corrections made by the registrars before the books were forwarded to London. Most of the checkers' marks are simply ticks made against entries to assist in tabulation (for example, there are usually ticks against all female ages and against all birthplaces, which are outside the county of residence). But some marks are rather different, showing how checkers interpreted particular entries—for example, where they underlined the occupation that they had selected for tabulation when a multiple occupation (for example 'farmer and weaver') was returned. Sometimes, additionally, checkers crossed through whole entries or write annotations against them—and it is this practice that provides some clue as to how they handled servants who were also kin. Unfortunately, working from photocopies it is not always easy to be sure when a checker has made a mark or

just what he has written. Nevertheless, in many cases the markings are unambiguous.

In order to explore the consequence of the checkers' work, each of the 467 'servants who were also kin' in the dataset used for Table 1 were looked for in the photocopies from which the National Sample was punched. 465 were located. Of these, 132 occupational entries had unambiguously either been crossed through or had been annotated by a registrar or by a checker in a way which clearly showed that the person had not been allocated to a domestic service occupation. In at least another 15 cases (and probably a number more) there was a reasonable presumption that this had happened, but these were not included in the analysis that follows.

Table 2 shows the effect of removing from the analysis the cases where either a registrar or a checker had unambiguously excluded the entry from the 'servant' occupational category. 78 per cent of the population listed as 'servants' in the occupation column are now classified as servants in the relationship column. This figure rises to 84 per cent if housekeepers and entries saying simply 'domestic' are ignored. By far the largest exclusions are from the category of 'Housekeeper', where at least 22 per cent were removed before tabulation (though even so this still leaves only 34 per cent of all 'housekeepers' with a servant relationship to the head).

However, examination of the regional distribution of the deletions hints at a surprising finding, but one which may provide a clue to the question raised by Higgs when he points out that while the term 'housekeeper' continued to be used in the 1861 and 1871 CEBs for Rochdale to describe the person responsible for housework, in the published tabulations for these censuses most of these individuals must have been excluded. In the 1851 CEBs in the National Sample, deletions of this group of women seem to vary considerably across different parts of England, presumably mainly reflecting some mixture of random sampling error, varying checker practice, and genuine differences in the situations in which 'housekeepers' found themselves. But, in the subsample used here, in the six Welsh books in which such 'housekeepers' appear, all 16 cases are deleted. And it is not just 'housekeepers' that were treated in this way. Of the 34 cases (spread across more than a dozen sample CEBs) where the holder of any 'servant' occupation is recorded as head of household or as having a kinship relation to the head, 25 were unambiguously deleted and three more probably were. This is a far higher rate than the England and Wales figures shown in Table 2, or than is found in any other Division in the sample data. The deleted cases include a number that arguably would have been appropriately classified as servants, for example two daughters of a victualler where the daughters almost certainly did serve the customers.

**Table 2 Relationship to Head of Household of female servants, after omission of cases excluded by checkers**

Occupational title	No entry	Head or wife	Daughter	Other kin	Lodger or visitor	Servant	All	Unadjusted n.	Per cent cut before tabulation
Servant or general servant	4.7	0.9	12.2	4.5	5.4	72.2	100.0	485	7.7
Domestic servant	5.4	0.0	10.7	0.0	3.6	80.4	100.0	54	0.0
House servant	1.7	0.3	3.3	2.7	1.2	90.9	100.0	798	2.7
Maid (ex lady's or nurse)	7.1	1.9	3.3	2.4	2.8	82.5	100.0	181	2.3
Lady's maid or companion	0.0	4.8	2.4	4.8	11.9	76.2	100.0	38	0.0
Nursemaid	3.9	0.0	5.9	2.0	5.9	82.4	100.0	40	5.6
Cook	2.8	3.5	0.0	1.4	1.4	90.9	100.0	127	0.7
Housekeeper or Asst HK	6.0	32.0	5.6	20.4	1.6	34.4	100.0	210	22.4
'Domestic'	0.0	55.1	18.4	6.1	6.1	14.3	100.0	49	12.5
<i>All except HK and 'Dom'</i>	3.2	0.9	5.7	3.0	2.9	84.2	100.0	1723	3.9
All	3.5	5.3	5.9	4.9	2.8	77.5	100.0	1982	6.0

One distinct possibility that this raises is that occupational analysis of the Welsh books was undertaken rather late (or even last) in the sequence of tabulation and that at about this time the problem of servants who were also relatives was confronted in the Census Office and new instructions were issued. This then led to many more such cases not being included in the occupational tabulation.<sup>5</sup> This lesson was then kept in mind in the planning of the census for 1861 and thereafter. Indeed, what is more generally striking about the Welsh CEBs in the National Sample is a markedly higher level of all kinds of explicit annotation not in the enumerators' hand. So the treatment of servants may not be the only area affected by a new and more rigorous approach.

## Conclusion

This paper raises several issues which might be developed in future work. First, it reminds us on the one hand of the dangers of national averages and on the other of the need to be aware of local and regional diversity in generalising from data from the CEBs for one place. Secondly, it invites further investigation of the circumstances under which relatives of the head may sometimes be returned in

the occupation column of the CEBs, and, in particular, it suggests that, in areas where married women were commonly in paid employment, household heads and/or enumerators may have been especially likely to identify one or more women in a household as the person engaged in domestic duties in ways which can confuse the unwary but may in fact provide interesting insight into a largely unknown aspect of the workings of the household economy.<sup>7</sup> Thirdly, the findings suggest that there may be some interesting further work to be done in studying on a comparative basis an almost unexamined topic: the work of the census office checkers at the nineteenth century censuses.

#### NOTES

1. D. Mills and K. Schürer eds, *Local Communities in the Victorian Census Enumerators' Books*, (Oxford, 1996).
2. E. Higgs, 'The tabulation of occupations in the nineteenth-century census, with special reference to domestic servants' in *Local Communities*, 27–35 (original in *Local Population Studies*, 28 (1982), 58–66).
3. The complete National Sample machine-readable dataset and associated documentation is held by the ESRC Data Archive at the University of Essex. A microfiche transcript was published by Chadwyck-Healey in 1987. For a brief account see M. Anderson, 'Households, families and individuals: some preliminary results from the National Sample from the 1851 Census of Great Britain.', *Continuity and Change*, 3 (1988), 421–38.
4. Indeed, as D. Cooper and M. Donald have pointed out ('Households and "hidden" kin in early nineteenth-century England: four case studies in suburban Exeter, 1821–1861', *Continuity and Change*, 10 (1995), 257–78), there were probably significant numbers of servants who had some kinship relationship to some other member of their households but were reported as servants in both the occupation and the relationship columns of the census. The great majority of these were probably unambiguously providing domestic services, even if their recruitment, as with so many other servants at the same date, was the result of a personal connection rather than open market activity.
5. See also E. Higgs, 'Women, occupations and work in the nineteenth century censuses', *History Workshop Journal*, 23 (1987), 59–80; E. Higgs, 'Domestic service and household production' in A. V. John ed., *Unequal opportunities: women's employment in England 1800–1918*, (Oxford, 1986), 124–50.
6. Examination of the published tables shows that 'housekeepers' form a very low proportion of all servants in Wales, at 7.4 per cent compared with an England and Wales average of 10.9 per cent and a Lancashire and Cheshire figure of 15.6 per cent. But the lowest figure is for London (5.2 per cent), and the highest (21.2 per cent) is for East Anglia, for reasons which remain unclear and may merit further research; the East Midlands have the second highest rate of recording.
7. I understand from a discussion with Bob Morris that a similar phenomenon can be observed in at least one textile village in Fife.

## MISCELLANY

### A COMMENT ON "RULES FOR THE RELIGIOUS CONDUCT OF A FAMILY"

Contributed by P. Laslett

The manuscript which is reproduced below consists of one small sheet folded lengthways and written on one side only. The original was found loose in a copy in my possession of *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, by John Locke, 5th edition, London, 1705, a small octavo volume. The handwriting could be dated between 1705 and 1730 or 50 and is exceptionally clear and readable. To anyone familiar with opinions about families and the duties of children and servants held at that time, the sentiments expressed are commonplace.

Their interest to readers of this journal who are at all concerned with families and family life at that time is as follows. The authority of the head of the household, here called the family though the word household could have appeared, was not simply secular and economic, but also religious and spiritual. He or she (for widows could be household heads in succession to their husbands since they were parents) was a priest as well as a master or mistress and responsible for the religious life of the children and servants under his or her authority, and no doubt for that of any other persons resident in the household. The priest/master or priest/mistress was here enjoined to ensure that all of them were baptised, although it is assumed that it was virtually only servants, all of whom had entered the household from outside, who were still unbaptised. The point of cardinal significance is that servants are referred to here and everywhere else as in the identical position of children within the family, most decidedly in respect of the duty of obedience to the family head.

The scriptural obligation to obey, not only on the part of children themselves but of all inferiors in respect of their superiors, can likewise be confirmed as a commonplace sentiment and injunction, appearing in innumerable published treatises. This can be confirmed from another volume chosen at random out of the others in my library, published in 1701 by William Nichols, D.D., *The Duty of Inferiours towards their Superiours ... the Duty of Subjects to their Princes ... of Servants to their Masters ... of Wives to their Husbands ... of the Layety to their Pastors*. Here the biblical injunction of the subjection of servants is based on the text in Colossians, 3: 32, and it is vital to the understanding of how society then worked to observe that political obedience, though not expounded in our manuscript, rested on the same basis as familial obedience and was likewise a religious duty. The family head is a 'Prince' and the patriarchalism which is so vigorously rejected in our time is being spelled out in full.<sup>1</sup>

## Rules for the Religious Conduct of a Family.

Every Parent & Master of a Family is both a Prince & a Priest in his own House: God hath invested him with a Sovereignty over his little Society, a Priesthood over his little Flock. And this Dominion is founded in Nature & Reason, & in all those Facts of Scripture, where Children & Servants are enjoined Honour & Obedience towards their Parents & Masters; to whom God has committed the Guidance & Government of 'em, & intrusted the Care both of their Bodies & Souls.

That therefore they may successfully discharge this great Duty incumbent on them, it will be necessary to observe & Practice the following Rules;

1. To bring their Children to Baptism in their Infancy, & dedicate 'em to God in that holy Sacrament. And if they take any Servants into their Household, that were never baptized, to admonish, encourage, & oblige 'em to it, that being born anew of Water & of the Holy Ghost, they may be made Members of Christ, Children of God, & Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.
2. To instill good Principles of Religion & Piety into the minds of their Children & Servants; teaching 'em their Catechism; & instructing 'em from time to time in all those Things which every Christian ought to know & believe to his Soul's Health.
3. To keep 'em constantly to a Reading of some Portion of holy Scripture every Day; and if any cannot read, to oblige 'em attentively to listen to those that can; & by familiar Discourse to make the Subject matter of what is read plain & intelligible to their Capacities, & imprint it the deeper into their Minds & Memories.
4. To see that they do constantly every day worship God in devout & solemn Prayer & Praise, to beg

his Blessing & Protection, & to thank him for all his Mercies. And it is highly necessary for every Parent or Master to have Prayers in his Family every Day, Morning & Evening if it may be, but at least once a Day in the Evening, when all meet together; & He, as the most honourable Person to read 'em himself, either out of the Book of Common Prayer, or some other Book of Devotions, & to require every Member of the Family to be present, & join with him therein.

5. To oblige 'em to a strict & religious Observation of the Lord's Day; not to suffer any of 'em to spend it idly, much less to profane it in vain or forbidden Sports & Recreations: but to oblige all w<sup>th</sup> Sickness or necessary Occasions do not detain at home, to attend him to the House of God, & see that they demean themselves there soberly & decently as becomes both the Place & Presence they are in. And after the Publick Service in the Church is ended, to call 'em to an Account of what they remember, to hear 'em read some Portion of Holy Scripture, & to examine & instruct 'em in their Catechism.
6. To rebuke, chastise & punish 'em severely for any Profaneness or Immorality, or vicious Actions; as for Lying & Stealing, Cursing & Swearing, Drunkenness, & filthy or obscene Discourse; for keeping ill Company, or ill Hours at night, or any other Criminal Misbehaviour.
7. To give 'em a good Example in their own Practice.
8. To settle their Children in some useful & lawful Calling, wherein they may honestly employ themselves & be serviceable in their Generation.



But we must not lose sight of the author's particular purpose which is to refer all these obligations to religion and to set down the duties of the master as to catechising, maintenance of morality and settling children in a useful calling. These injunctions might persuade us that the author, almost certainly a pastor himself, was a Puritan. But the patriarchal attitude was universal and he could have been any parish priest writing things out for the necessary instruction of his flock. It will be noticed that he provides for the members of his spiritual society not being able to read. Cambridge Group estimates of literacy defined as the ability to sign the marriage register vary between 2 per cent and 22 per cent from Elizabethan to Georgian times for servants, and for women in general from 11 per cent to 25 percent.<sup>2</sup> Most of the reading therefore would have had to be done out loud.

#### NOTES

1. For the patriarchal system see Laslett's edition of Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha and other political works* (Oxford, 1949), the discussion in his essay *The world we have lost – further explored* (London, 1983), and for its prevalence and persistence see J. C. D. Clark, *English Society, 1685–1832*, (Cambridge, 1985).
2. Laslett, *World we have lost*, 231.

## SOME RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Notes on articles compiled by T. Gwynne, book notices by K. Schürer  
and M. Woollard

Our series of statements of aims, ethos and interests by journals which appear frequently in this section continues with *Continuity and Change*. *Continuity and Change* was first published in May 1986 by Cambridge University Press. It is published in annual volumes in three parts: in May, August and December. The journal aims to define a field of historical sociology concerned with long-term continuities and discontinuities in the structure of past societies, including basic institutions of society such as the family, law, economic organisation, culture and government. There is an emphasis upon studies whose agenda or methodologies combine elements from traditional fields such as history, sociology, law, demography, economics or anthropology, or ranges freely between them. There is a strong commitment to comparative studies over a broad range of cultures and time-spans.

The editors are Lloyd Bonfield, Richard Wall and L. R. Poos and they are supported by an international editorial board. The journal has a commitment to securing presentation in language intelligible to the non-specialist and seeks a balance between quantitative and qualitative data. Abstracts are printed for all articles and in addition there is a Debate/Review section and a section on Book Reviews.

Some of the articles whilst not directly related to local population studies provide valuable background: e.g. George C. Alter and Ann G. Carmichael, 'Reflections on the classification of causes of death'; Gunter B Risse, 'Cause of death as a history problem'; both in Volume 3, Part 2 (pp. 169–88) which is a special issue with guest editors devoted to the classification and cause of death. Directly relevant articles are, of course, routinely noted in *LPS Recent Publications*.

Subscriptions are £65 per volume for institutions, £37 for individuals. Single parts are available at £22. Subscription enquiries should be made to the publishers. Information on *Continuity and Change* (and indeed all Cambridge journals) can be accessed via <http://www.cup.cam.ac.uk>

### Notes on articles

Richard Adair, Joseph Melling and Bill Forsythe, 'Migration, family structure and pauper lunacy in Victorian England: admissions to the Devon County Pauper Lunatic Asylum, 1845–1900', *Continuity and Change*, 12 3 (1997), 373–402.

Evidence from the County Asylum at Exminster in Devon, Poor Law documents, censuses and other sources from 1845–1900 is used to question the view arising

from Lancashire evidence that the rise in pauper lunacy can be directly attributed to increased migration and the weakening of family ties. The article begins with a useful survey of the literature on the social history of lunacy (pp.373–6).

George R. Boyer and Timothy J. Hatton, 'Migration and labour market integration in late nineteenth-century England and Wales', *Economic History Review*, 50 4 (November 1997), 697–734.

Whilst this article has a thoroughly economic focus and makes use of complex mathematical equations it may well be of interest to *LPS* readers for its general discussion of migration and its historiographical survey beginning with Ravenstein. The authors examine the magnitude and the direction of migration flow in Victorian England and Wales and identify incentives to migration. Late nineteenth-century migration is seen to be driven by economic incentives; the major determinants of migration flow were the magnitude of the benefits from moving, the costs of moving and the availability of information concerning urban job opportunities.

Alasdair Crockett and K. D. M. Snell, 'From the 1676 Compton Census to the 1851 Census of Religious Worship: Religious Continuity and Discontinuity', *Rural History*, 8 1 (April 1997), 55–89.

As part of their study of continuities between Compton and 1851 the authors discuss the nature of each key source, including their uses as demographic sources. The more problematical Compton Census receives more detailed treatment, and is well-referenced in the notes which thus in effect provide an excellent bibliography.

Clive D. Field, 'The 1851 Religious Census of Great Britain: a Bibliographical Guide for Local and Regional Historians', *The Local Historian*, 27 4 (1997), 194–217.

Following an introduction to the 1851 Religious Census of Great Britain including a general historiographical perspective, the author provides a bibliographical guide based on regional divisions: Southern England 201–3, Midlands 203–5, Northern England 205–6, Wales 206 and Scotland 206–7. He concludes with seven aspects for future research. Some six pages of references provide the details of the bibliographical references.

Nigel Goose, 'Participatory and collaborative research in English Regional and Local History: the Hertfordshire Historical Resources Project', *Archives*, 22 97 (October 1997), 98–110

Nigel Goose, a member of the *LPS* editorial board, provides a very useful survey of the development of research, both professional and amateur, into English regional and local history., including the significant role of W G Hoskins in helping to 'bridge the gap'. The University of Hertfordshire's Historical Resources Project is offered as an example of the way in which further progress can be made in bridging this gap between amateur and professionals to the

benefit of all concerned. He ends with some helpful lessons learned during the course of the project.

Laura Gowing, 'Secret Birth and Infanticide in Seventeenth-Century England', *Past and Present*, 156 (August 1997), 87–115

Dr Gowing uses examinations and information for seventy cases of neonatal infanticide tried at the Northern Circuit Assizes between 1642 and 1680 from across Yorkshire, Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmoreland to investigate the culture of seventeenth-century pregnancy and infanticide.

D. R. Green and A. Owens, 'Metropolitan estates of the middle class, 1800–50: probates and death duties revisited', *Historical Research*, 70 173 (October 1997), 294–311.

*LPS* readers will be particularly interested in the discussion of the nature of probate records and death duty registers as demographic sources. In the context of London the authors demonstrate how probate records can be used to examine the geography of wealth, the relationship between occupations and wealth and the role of gender. On the last topic it can usefully be read alongside the work of Maxine Berg, e.g. her article on women's property noted in *LPS*, 52 p.57.

David Hey, 'The local history of family names', *The Local Historian*, 27 4 (November 1997), i–xx.

This is Professor Hey's 1997 Phillimore Lecture, printed in an edited version as a pull-out supplement.

Clare Holdsworth, 'Women's work and family health: evidence from the Staffordshire Potteries, 1890–1920', *Continuity and Change*, 12 1 (May 1997), 103–128.

Using survey data on births, infant deaths and women's maternity history the author considers the relationship between infant mortality and women's work at the local level.

E. D. Jones, 'Medieval merchets as demographic data: some evidence from the Spalding Priory estates, Lincolnshire', *Continuity and Change*, 11 3 (December 1997), 459–70.

In a research note E. D. Jones offers evidence to support the 1984 challenge by R. M. Smith and L. P. Poos to the argument that merchets (or marriage payments) reflected faithfully the actual numbers of marriages taking place.

Steve King, 'Reconstructing lives: the poor, the Poor Law and welfare in Calversley, 1650–1820', *Social History*, 22 3 (October 1997), 318–38.

As part of an examination of the new positive view of the Old Poor Law Dr King draws upon family reconstitution data for the West Riding township of

Calverley cum Farsley. He is able to generate 6,000 individual life cycles of different lengths and degrees of enrichment and link them to 14,000 individual Poor Law account records: it was thus possible to reconstruct the demographic, economic, social and kinship lives of a community.

Steve King, 'Power, representation and the historical individual: problems with sources for record linkage in two Yorkshire townships, 1650–1820', *The Local Historian*, 27 2 (May 1997), 78–90.

Dr King examines issues of record linkage, using two townships in Yorkshire: Calverley cum Farsley and Sowerby Bridge. A range of sources is considered from parish registers to depositions.

Richard I. Lawless, 'Muslim migration to the north-east of England during the early twentieth century', *The Local Historian*, 27 4 (November 1997), 225–44.

This is an interesting study of migration in the early twentieth century which draws upon a wide range of sources such as Reports of Immigration Officers available in the Public Record Office, newspapers and personal papers and photographs.

J. R. Maddicott, 'Plague in seventh-century England', *Past and Present*, 156 (August 1997), 7–54.

Whilst *LPS* has generally been more aware of plague in the seventeenth (rather than the seventh) century this article is of much interest dealing as it does with issues such as source materials, transmission and spread of disease, the nature of epidemic disease, mortality rates (however imprecise they may be) and the effects upon communities and their reactions to it (e.g. flight). Unlike the later plague of the fourteenth century the population of Anglo-Saxon England seems to have made an unimpeded and rapid recovery; the plague of the seventh century was but a brief and temporary intermission in an upward demographic trend.

Dennis and Joan Mills, 'Farms, farmers and farm workers in the nineteenth-century census enumerators' books: a Lincolnshire study', *The Local Historian*, 27 3 (August 1997), 130–43.

Dennis and Joan Mills consider a variety of ways in which information about farms and farm populations was recorded in the census enumerators' books. In the course of the article there are very helpful comments on the value of the census-information and on the identification and classification of rural occupational groups.

Dennis Mills, Michael Edgar and Andrew Hinde, 'Southern historians and their exploitation of the Victorian Censuses' *Southern History*, 18 (1996), 61–86.

A former and a current member of the *LPS* editorial board, Dennis Mills and Andrew Hinde, together with Michael Edgar attempt to redress the relative neglect of the south of England in popular census studies by providing local

historians of southern England with an introduction to the nineteenth-century censuses. In so doing they offer a helpful survey of census enumerators' books to a much wider readership. Kinds of analysis that can be undertaken are illustrated by an examination of the occupational structure of seven rural Dorset parishes. *LPS* is noted as an exemplification of what has been done by many individual local historians since 1968. If the authors are successful, and we very much hope that they are, southern England may soon yield a fresh batch of local demographic studies based upon the Victorian censuses.

Christine Peters, 'Single women in early modern England: attitudes and expectations' *Continuity and Change*, 12 3 (December 1997), 325–46.

The author examines arguments about the centrality of marriage in the life cycles of women in the early modern period and investigates the roles of single women and changes to the models of single women over the period: from daughters semi-sustained by their families to more independent individuals defined by occupation. Evidence used includes post-mortem inheritance material from manorial court rolls.

Gervase Philips, 'An army of giants: height and medical characteristics of Welsh soldiers, 1914–1918', *Archives*, 22 97 (October 1997), 141–46.

This article examines the Service Records of soldiers held in the Ministry of Defence archives in Hayes and Harlington (currently held under the 75-year rule but soon, it is hoped, to be available to researchers). Difficulties in using this source are discussed and the potential value noted. The author also offers some preliminary conclusions, e.g. that a battalion of Welsh soldiers of the 1914–18 war would by today's standards be noticeably short.

Sandra Raban, 'The making of the 1279–80 hundred rolls', *Historical Research*, 70 172 (June 1997), 123–45.

This is a timely article for *LPS* readers who will have seen the article drawing very considerably upon the Warwickshire hundred rolls in the last issue. Dr Raban offers a general study of the surviving texts for the 1279–80 hundred roll inquiry. Directions for further work are indicated on this important yet relatively neglected source. An appendix sets out the Articles of the 1279–80 Inquiry—in Latin.

Douglas A. Reid, 'Weddings, Weekdays, Work and Leisure in urban England, 1791–1911: the decline of St. Monday revisited', *Past and Present*, 153 (November 1996), 135–63.

The author examines the timing of weddings within the framework of the week in relation to distinct socio-economic patterns: specifically that the timing of marriages in the factory-towns of Blackburn and Manchester would differ markedly from the more workshop-dominated economies of Birmingham and Bristol. The study is based upon Anglican parish registers. St. Monday was found to be at its most widespread in Blackburn in the first quarter of the

nineteenth century but it rapidly declined as Blackburn developed into a fully-fledged factory-town in the 1840s and 1850s. By contrast the much more workshop based economies of Birmingham and Bristol remained loyal to Monday marriages up to and beyond the 1890s.

J. C. Robertson, 'Reckoning with London: interpreting the Bills of Mortality before John Graunt', *Urban History*, 23 3 (December 1996), 325–50.

Dr Robertson examines factors that shaped the original weekly Bills of Mortality and the inferences contemporaries drew from them. Statistics derived from the annual summaries of the London Bills provided in 1662 the basis for John Graunt's actuarial calculations.

E. A. Wrigley, 'How reliable is our knowledge of the demographic characteristics of the English population in the early modern period', *The Historical Journal*, 40 3 (September 1997), 571–95.

This article is probably a must-read for most *LPS* readers: the Anglican parish registers as a source and family reconstitution as a technique are discussed in the context of recent work and scholarship by Tony Wrigley, the pioneer of the technique in this country and co-founder of the Cambridge Group. Footnote 1 in which important publications in historical population studies are identified is a roll call of key names up to the 1960s; generally the footnotes provide an excellent bibliography of all aspects of historical demography. *LPS* readers will be relieved to find that provided great care is taken in the selection of suitable registers, and rigorous tests are employed to monitor internal consistency and the demographic plausibility of findings reliable results can be obtained.

### Notices of new books

D. Cressy, *Birth, marriage, and death. Ritual, religion, and the life-cycle in Tudor and Stuart England*, (Oxford, University Press, 1997) 641pp+xv. ISBN 0 19 820168 0. £25 (h/b).

This is a most readable and highly detailed examination of family life in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Taking the life-cycle as its central theme it is essential reading for anyone studying the patterns and rituals of family life in the pre-industrial age. Combining a fascinating exploration of available source materials it is clearly destined to become a classic work on the subject. (KS)

M. Dobson, *Contours of death and disease in early modern England*, (Cambridge, University Press, 1997) 647pp+xix. ISBN 0 521 40464 9. £65 (h/b).

Whatever the criteria applied, this is an outstanding work. For those engaged in local population studies it is a book to fascinate, instruct and inspire. The sheer volume of research that underpins this study is in itself breath-taking. And breath-taking is perhaps exactly the right phrase to be associated with this publication since the basic subject matter of the text is very much the quality of air; how and why it differed across local environments, and the extent to which it

dictated or influenced the mortality characteristics of local populations. The fundamental message of the book, undoubtedly welcome to all students of local populations in past times, is that place matters. Indeed, although researching very different periods, using different sources and taking rather different approaches, in this regard the book through its central message has much in common with that by Woods and Shelton, noted below. The judgement of both books is clear—where you lived had a great impact not only on when you were most likely to die, but also on what you were most likely to die of. Readers might also like to note that this emphasis on geography and regional variations in mortality patterns in part would seem to contradict the general emphasis placed on homogeneity in the work of Wrigley *et al* also mentioned below.

The text is a detailed study of Sussex, Kent and Essex, at the base of which is an analysis of 637 parish registers spread across three counties, over half of the some 1,185 ecclesiastical parishes into which the counties were divided. The parish register material is in turn handsomely supplemented by other demographic sources such as Hearth tax and Compton census returns and a wealth of qualitative evidence, gathered from countless contemporary accounts of diarists, letter writers, travellers and antiquarians. Through the analysis a stark contrast is drawn between the mortality patterns of low-lying coastal parishes and those with 'cleaner air' situated further inland on higher ground. Living below or above an altitude of around the 200 foot mark could greatly affect one's life changes, morbidity and eventual mortality—hence the book's well chosen title, contours of death and disease. Although rather less conclusive, the book also attempts an analysis of short term fluctuations in the weather and the resulting impact of harvests on mortality structures.

In summary, the book is a must for anyone studying local historical demography in the early modern period, even if one's chosen area of interest lies outside the south eastern countries. Lastly, it is perhaps worth commenting that books such as this are rapidly becoming an endangered species. It is the product of at least fifteen years solid work in the archives and at the writing desk, highly detailed and extensively researched. In the age of the university Research Assessment Exercise it is doubtful if scholarship on such a scale can survive outside of a few dedicated research establishments and a small number of institutions immune to the pressures to publish on a regular basis. (KS)

R. Woods and N. Shelton, *An atlas of Victorian mortality*, (Liverpool, University Press, 1997) 160pp. ISBN 0 85323 542 2. £15 (p/b).

This book is, in essence, an analysis of the wealth of statistical information on mortality contained within the *Annual reports* and *Decennial supplements* of the Registrars General of births, deaths and marriages in England and Wales, supplemented by summary population data from the decennial *Census reports*. The key to the Economic and Social Research Council-funded project, of which this publication is a product, has been to convert this mass of relatively indigestible tabular data into a standardised computerised database from which easier to interpret cartographic representations of the information can be readily produced. Indeed, the publication is a veritable feast of visual illustration. The 34



maps and 51 figures take up a large proportion of the book's content, and the overall impact of the visual material is greatly enhanced by the fact that nearly all of the maps and figures are printed in colour. A further aid to the use of the various maps of mortality variations over England and Wales are three pull-out outline maps showing registration counties, London districts and a number of selected registration districts, all bound at the back of the book, which can be viewed alongside the maps contained within the main text.

The concentration of the analyses presented is on age-specific aspects of mortality and causes of death pictured across 614 registration districts. The basic conclusion, which should not surprise local population historians, is that 'Where one lived in Victorian England critically affected not only one's life chances, but also the manner in which death might occur' (p.142). Towns formed the country's mortality black spots, with rural areas providing a comparatively healthy contrast. Yet as the book illustrates there was also quite a lot of 'grey' between these two extremes, which could be seen to diminish over time. In the author's commentary on changing mortality patterns of Victorian England and Wales, they refer to the recently resurrected 'McKeown' debate concerning the relative impact of rising living standards versus improved public health and sanitation measures on declining mortality levels. In assessing this debate they rightly point out that the decline in mortality during the nineteenth century was actually rather modest, noting that 'compared with the geographical variation in mortality, temporal change in the nineteenth century was small indeed' (p.145). In conclusion, the authors suggest that the Victorian mortality decline needs to be viewed in the context of the quite dramatic re-distribution of population that also took place during the period.

Finally, readers may like to note that much of the data on which this volume is based are available to research from the History Data Service at the University of Essex, as Study number 3552, *Causes of death in England and Wales, 1851-60 to 1891-1900: the decennial supplement*. Researchers wishing to acquire copies of the database should contact the History Data Service on 01206 873984 or via their Internet site (<http://hds.essex.ac.uk>). (KS)

S. Szreter, *Fertility, class and gender in Britain, 1860-1940*, (Cambridge, University Press, 1996), 704pp+xix. ISBN 0 521 34343 7. £50.00 (h/b)

This complex re-working of the data presented in T. H. C. Stevenson's *Fertility of Marriage Report* of 1917 and 1923, is prefaced by a lengthy section on the historiography of (predominantly, but not exclusively British) fertility decline and an even longer, but extraordinarily fascinating, section on the intellectual history of the 1911 fertility census concentrating on the development of the social classification scheme first used for this census. Szreter demonstrates how the new classification was almost certainly flawed by Stevenson's preconceptions on fertility and the reasons for its decline.

It is the third section which will probably interest *LPS* readers most. In this section he demonstrates that the so-called 'professional' model of fertility decline, where, simply speaking, the diffusion of contraceptive use from the

higher professional classes to the lower caused a staggered decline in marital fertility, was not a valid interpretation of the figures. With a re-working the published figures he suggests that the picture was rather different and that the causes of decline while based on traditional methods, i.e., abstinence or coitus interruptus were often not differentiated by class, but often by occupation. Textile workers had low marital fertility, while, for example, coal miners had higher rates. More economic reasons are suggested for fertility decline, most particularly the perceived relative costs of child rearing, leading to greater spacing between births. However, while Szreter breaks down national fertility decline by occupation, there is no attempt to discuss these developments in geographic terms. This is unsurprising given that the *Fertility of Marriage Report* does not break the figures down geographically. This aspect of the study of fertility will have to wait until after the 1911 census enumerators' books are made public, though Szreter has demonstrated the way in which such studies will be able to be made.

This is an extraordinarily important work which will impinge on all matters of the history of family and society of the late-nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries. If it were shorter and less densely written it would gain the readership that the reputation it will gain deserves. (MW)

B. Short, *Land and society in Edwardian Britain*, (Cambridge, University Press, 1997) 378pp+xvii. ISBN 0 521 57035 2. £45 (h/b).

This book does not include much in the way of demographic history *per se*, but will be of great interest of the readers of *LPS* due to the detailed description it contains of the so-called 'New Domesday' survey of landownership and land values undertaken as a result of Lloyd George's Finance Act of 1909–10. The archival materials generated as a result of this act have already been described in brief in an article published in *LPS* 51, but this publication provides the fullest description of the materials and the administrative processes under which they were generated to date. A large number of maps, field books and administrative forms were created in order to assess tax liabilities, some have been archived locally in county record offices, others centrally in the Public Record Office. Where they survive the assorted documents provide a key source, still very under-used and under-researched, for community history in the early twentieth century period. They should be a starting point for anyone embarking on a local study covering this period, and as such this publication is a must for anyone planning to undertake research using this rich but complex source. (KS)

E. A. Wrigley, R. S. Davies, J. E. Oeppen and R. S. Schofield, *English population history from family reconstitution 1580–1837*, (Cambridge, University Press, 1997) 657pp+xxii. ISBN 0 521 59015 9. £60 (h/b).

This is the long awaited sequel to Wrigley and Schofield's earlier *Population history of England*, which, as the title suggests, is based on analyses of a series of family reconstitution studies rather than aggregate analysis combined with back projection. As one might expect, the book contains much of interest to readers of *LPS*, indeed much more than can be adequately summarized in this short

publication notice. Perhaps the first and most important thing to note is that in general terms the broad findings of this new book support and confirm the demographic picture painted by the *Population history of England*. The country's demographic system was clearly a classic 'low-pressure' regime within which population growth was principally driven via changes in fertility, with age at marriage assuming central importance. However, although the general picture remains unchanged, 'the richness of detail afforded by reconstitution floods the canvas with additional colour' (p.550).

The book is organised into three main sections. The first discusses the nature of family reconstitution, the reliability of the parish registers for this task and the representativeness of the 26 parishes selected for analysis. The last part compares the findings from back projection, generalized inverse projection and family reconstitution techniques, and discusses the new set of projection estimates produced in the light of the family reconstitution data. The middle section, however, accounts for the bulk of the book, contributing 390 of the book's 657 pages. This central section is in turn divided into three long chapters on nuptiality, mortality and fertility, in which the key observations can be found.

Although the analysis is derived from the family reconstitutions of just 26 parishes scattered across England (many of which were undertaken by readers of *LPS* and members of *LPSS*) extensive testing of the data—in particular comparing the occupational structure of the selected parishes with national figures—and comparison with demographic trends and levels derived from the earlier aggregate analysis/back projection work allow the authors to conclude that when viewed together the 26 parishes in combination provide an adequate representation of the country as a whole. In consequence, most of the analyses presented in the book are based on data aggregated across all 26 parishes (albeit with a variety of weights and filters applied to take account of deficiencies within the contributing parish registers and the differing balance between the composite parishes) in order to provide a national framework, rather presenting a series of local population studies.

Nuptiality remains pretty much central stage. The family reconstitutions confirm the important of marriage in the English demographic system, and especially the important of the sharp decline of about three years in the age of first marriage during the middle decades of the eighteenth century to the spectacular population growth rates that were achieved slightly later. This fall in marriage age was, however, further boosted by a parallel rise in illegitimate fertility and a rise in marital fertility—average birth intervals were shortened and fecundity of longer-married women declined rather less towards the end of the eighteenth century than previously. Effectively, the onset of sterility amongst fecund women was delayed in the later eighteenth century. Moreover, the decline in marriage ages in terms of timing and extent was relatively homogeneous across the 26 parishes, in agricultural area and small towns alike. The same was broadly true also of changes in marital fertility. Unfortunately family reconstitution cannot by its very nature tell us much about the proportions of the population marrying, but other evidence would seem to suggest that in the seventeenth century proportions remaining unmarried may have been an important factor in

determining overall fertility levels. Detailed analysis of birth intervals would indicate that breastfeeding was an important feature in determining the spacing of births and that physiological conditions caused by low levels of nutrition or as a result of disease did not have a major impact in reducing overall fertility levels. Equally, given the prevalence of breastfeeding, coital episodes must have been maintained at a relative high frequency throughout the childbearing period. Given the achieved levels of fertility, neither miscarriage nor deliberate abortion were witnessed at a high level.

Much of the earlier work on mortality rates derived from family reconstitution data has concentrated on infant and child mortality and results reported in this book would suggest that this has perhaps blurred our view of changing mortality patterns in the past. As with nuptiality and fertility the general story runs as before. Mortality levels, short term crises apart, were relatively low in late Tudor England, rising gradually in the first half of the seventeenth century. Thereafter mortality levels remained virtually unchanged for fifty or so years, then from the early 1740s rates began a steady and continuous fall through to the beginning of the nineteenth century, by which time expectations of life at birth had again reached levels equal to those witnessed in the late sixteenth century, at about 41/42 years. However, the detail provided by the full range of family reconstitution data suggests that in the first half of the eighteenth century a fundamental shift in the age structure of mortality took place. Improvements in the overall levels of mortality were gained by a sharp decline in the rates of adult mortality, while infant and child mortality levels remained high. This finding, the authors claim, is one of the most surprising features of the reconstitution analysis. (KS)

### **Other books received**

C. Ipsen, *Dictating demography. The problem of population in Fascist Italy*, (Cambridge, University Press, 1996) 281pp+xvii. ISBN 0 521 55452 7. £35 (h/b).

J. Lee and C. Campbell, *Fate and fortune in rural China. Social organization and population behavior in Liaoning 1774–1873*, (Cambridge, University Press, 1997) 280pp+xxi. ISBN 0521 58119 2. £35 (h/b).

## CORRESPONDENCE

Letters intended for publication in the journal should be sent to the *LPS* General Office, Department of History, University of Essex, Colchester, CO4 3SQ.

### 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.

### Marking the millennium

Dear Sir,

To mark the millennium, my village plans to create a 'time-capsule' containing a variety of documents likely to be of interest to future generations. We are also including a parish listing based on a census-like questionnaire and residential map with which it can be correlated; this is intended to give a more rounded picture than the official census and, rather than a 'snap-shot' of a single day, will illustrate the evolution of the village over the millennial year. Undoubtedly, other parishes will be doing something of a similar nature. It occurs to me that if we worked together to an identical format the comparative data generated would be of real academic worth. Our questionnaire is in the early stages of development and I should be very interested to hear from any local historians interested in becoming involved.

Yours faithfully

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