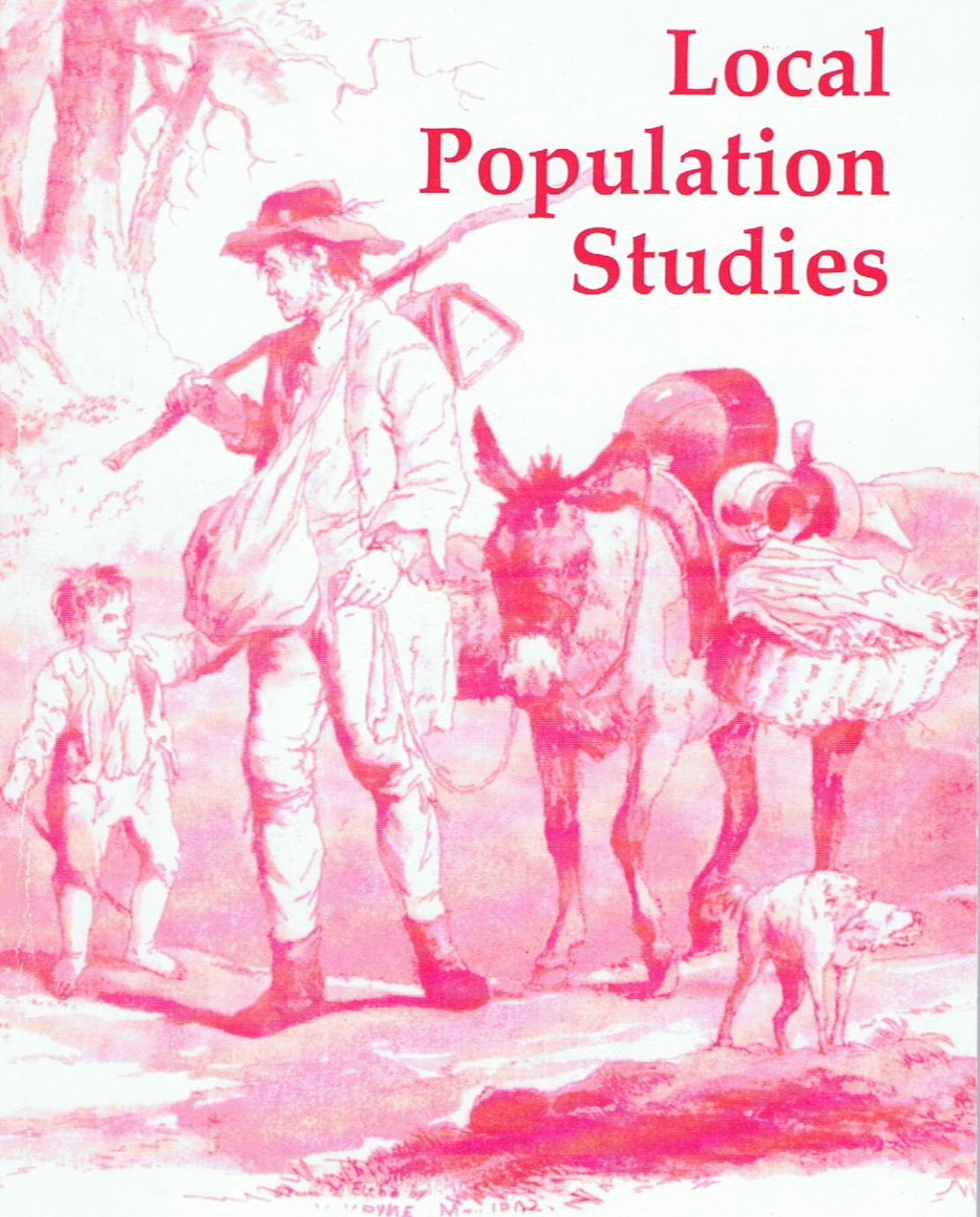


Local Population Studies



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EDITORIAL

Having featured three articles on the nineteenth century in the last issue, we manage to avoid that century altogether in this. The first of two seventeenth-century pieces is Sylvia Watts' examination of mortality in the three north Shropshire parishes of Wellington, Wem and Whitchurch, all of which encompassed market towns surrounded by agricultural hinterlands. She finds that only one of the three, Whitchurch, provides evidence of population stagnation or even loss across the middle of the seventeenth century, with plague mortality as an important factor, its greater susceptibility to disease possibly explained by its growing role as a thoroughfare town and its trading connections with London. Both Wellington and Wem appear to have largely escaped the plague, but analysis of seasonality, sex-specific and age-specific mortality suggest that measles, typhus and possibly also smallpox may all have been active. The more minor epidemic outbreaks in Wellington may have been associated with immigration to take up opportunities in coal mining and iron working, underlining the relationship between economic and social characteristics and demographic experience.

Our second article provides a valuable insight into the making of the 1901 census. Matthew Woollard guides us expertly through the political and administrative background, the conduct of the census and the nature of the published census reports. For the purposes of local historical analysis, much of the content of the census enumerators' books compiled in 1901 is comparable to that found in the six preceding censuses. However, two notable novel elements were the alteration to the question relating to employment status, which should render this information far more reliable than for 1891, and the inclusion for the first time of a question relating to homeworking, which will allow closer examination of the family economy in general and the role of women in the labour market in particular.

The second of our seventeenth-century articles takes a close look at the relationship between Hearth Tax assessments and valuations of moveable wealth found in probate inventories in the towns of Cambridge and Reading. While emphasising the time-consuming nature of nominal linkage of this kind, it is concluded that the Hearth Taxes do indeed indicate relative wealth and social status in towns, as they do in the countryside, but only in the most general of terms: Hearth Taxes cannot be used as a safe guide to the wealth of particular individuals. However, comparison with evidence from rural Cambridgeshire indicates that the median wealth of those assessed on particular numbers of hearths was consistently lower in town than countryside, which might lead one to speculate that there may be regional disparities in this respect too that require exploration. In making comparisons of this kind, it is demonstrated that the nature of the probate inventory sample employed requires careful

consideration as well as the quality of the Hearth Tax returns, and the absence of access to Prerogative Court of Canterbury probate inventories is highlighted as a particular problem.

Digitising the 1901 Census

The Public Record Office's 1901 Census project has been reported in previous editorials, in *LPS* 64 (1999) and *LPS* 65 (2000), and this is by way of an update. The 'Latest News' on the PRO website indicates that the enterprise is now in its final stages: the transcription upon which the indexes will be based is complete, and the coming months will be devoted to checking and loading of the data. The project is on schedule to deliver internet access to the 32 million names on 1.5 million pages included in the census by the first working day of January 2002.

There has been considerable concern regarding the cost of accessing this data, and there has been little change in this respect. The price of viewing an image has been reduced from 80p to 75p, which includes downloading and printing if facilities are available. Transcription of the details for an individual remains at 50p, with an extra 50p charge for transcription of the details of others in the same household. The minimum charge is £5, paid either by credit card or voucher. The range of discounts on vouchers has been extended: 10 per cent on orders valued at £100–499, 15 per cent on orders valued at £500–999 and 20 per cent on orders valued at £1,000 or above. There is thus little comfort here for the local historian hoping to access data for an entire village, while those wishing to conduct broader surveys are unlikely to be able to contemplate utilising this resource. Since our last update there has been a meeting of the Advisory Panel Sub-Committee of which our own Kevin Schürer is a member (7 June last), to explore the needs of local historians, at which appropriate representations were made. It was concluded, however, that no enhancement to the 1901 online service could be made until after the launch of the main service, while QinetiQ (the commercial contractor, formerly known as DERA) 'would in the meantime explore potential packages for meeting the particular needs of those researching the census beyond individuals and families', while Elizabeth Hallam Smith, 'reiterated the commitment of the Public Record Office to meet the needs of all groups requiring access to the records'. These sentiments notwithstanding, one cannot fail to appreciate the contrast between the 1901 project and that for 1881 organised by the Church of the Latter Day Saints, subsequently supported by the ESRC Data Archive. The 1881 census transcription was a labour of love which relied upon literally millions of hours of labour freely given by local volunteers, backed up by the resources of the Mormon Church, while the PRO project involves a commercial contract signed under the Private Finance Initiative, through which the contractor, QinetiQ, seeks to earn a 'reasonable commercial return' – an increasingly familiar, if depressing, feature of educational and public services these days. That said, the 1901 project has

been completed within three years, while that for 1881 took ten, and the latter transcription – while generally very good – has been found to be far from error free.

The good news, of course, is that access to the index will be entirely free, which will certainly facilitate the searches of family historians, who can then choose whether to pay to view identified images on-line, or to travel to local record offices or the Family Records Centre in London to view microfiche or microfilm copies in the time-honoured fashion. There is, of course, the danger that local archive offices may choose not to purchase microfiche copies of 1901 given on-line availability, and it is therefore imperative that both family and local historians apply concerted pressure in an attempt to ensure that this does not happen: such a policy would effectively deny access to the public records to those with modest financial capacity, to those who live distant from London and to those unable to contemplate the use of computers. For those who are not technophobic, the on-line indexes should prove invaluable. We are assured by the PRO that the Enterprise Supply Services (ESS), the agency of the prison service responsible for the transcription of the data upon which the indexes will be based, runs and manages its businesses to 'fully professional commercial standards': only fully trained operators who have demonstrated accuracy will be used, all entries will be blind double keyed, and transcripts will be checked in turn by the ESS and the PRO's own Quality Assessment team. Searches can be conducted by name, place, address, institution or vessel: those wishing to search by name will need to provide forename and surname, place and age (a range of ten years will be allowed) – so do not expect to be able to conduct blanket searches across the entire database. Refined searches using other variables (such as occupation or place of birth) will be available if the basic search returns too many results. Wildcards for single and multiple characters, a *soundex* match to identify names with similar phonetics and synonyms and abbreviations will all be available as part of the basic search facilities. Further consideration is currently being given to the possibility of providing a forename only search, and to provision of both a basic and an advanced means of searching by place name.

Work has also now commenced on the 1891 and 1881 censuses. It was always intended to digitise the 1891 returns once an income from the 1901 service was forthcoming, and the plan is to make it available on a county by county basis, starting with London, with a target completion date of the end of 2002. Initially there will be only a limited index, and the charging mechanism will be adjusted to reflect this. A systems analysis team has been appointed to advise on linking the 1881 machine-readable database to the original images of the 1881 census, and these images are already being scanned. Again it is hoped to have the linked service available by the end of 2002, and again with an amended charging system, this time to reflect the availability of the existing database.

For further information on all of these developments please consult the census website at www.census.pro.gov.uk, or telephone Margaret Brennand on 020 8392 5350. See also the article by Richard Ratcliffe, Liaison Officer of the Federation of Family History Societies, 'The 1901 Census – putting the record straight', published in the October issue of *Family Tree Magazine*.

The LPS Editorial Board

It is with great regret that I announce the retirement of Tom Arkell from the LPS Editorial Board. Tom has been a stalwart member of the Board for 15 years, and has carried much of the burden of the early modern work that has come our way. His industry has been matched by his highly developed critical abilities, which have consistently been deployed to maintain the high academic standards and reputation of LPS. After graduating from Oxford in 1958 and completing a PGCE in the following year, Tom spent ten years teaching history at grammar schools in Yorkshire and Oxfordshire. In 1969 he was appointed senior lecturer in history at Coventry College of Education, and following a ten-year stint there moved on to the University of Warwick for a further ten years as senior lecturer in arts education (history). His publications for schools include *Britain transformed: the development of British society since the mid-eighteenth century* (Penguin, 1973), *British social and economic history, 1750–1950* (OUP, 1983) and *Irish cultural studies: a teaching pack* (Trentham, 1988). Tom suffered two serious illnesses in 1985 and 1987 which encouraged early retirement, but Warwick's loss was LPS's gain. His initial brief when joining the Board in 1986 was to take over responsibility for the volume that eventually became K. Schürer and T. Arkell eds, *Surveying the people: the interpretation and use of document sources for the study of population in the later seventeenth century* (Oxford, 1992). Since then, of course, he has played a leading role in the production of our most recent supplement, T. Arkell, N. Evans and N. Goose eds, *When death do us part: understanding and interpreting the probate records of early modern England* (Oxford, 2000). As a co-editor and contributor to that volume I can fully testify to the rigour that Tom brings to an enterprise of which he is part, and I owe him a personal debt of gratitude for the role that he played in ensuring that the end product was a volume of which we can justifiably be proud. Tom's articles in LPS will, of course, be well known to our members: 'Multiplying factors for estimating population totals from the hearth tax' (LPS 28, 1982) must be one of our most regularly cited pieces. Here, and in articles published in *Social History* (1987), *Warwickshire History* (1986–7) and in various essay collections, he has made a major contribution to our understanding of the administration, content and interpretation of the Hearth Taxes, with important contributions too on the Compton Census, the interpretation of other census-type listings and the analysis of probate inventories, with the occasional foray into the nineteenth century in search of Cornish census enumerators. His next article, 'Identifying regional variations from the hearth tax', is due to be published in *The Local Historian* in May 2002. On my own behalf and on behalf of the LPS Editorial Board, I

would like to express both gratitude and appreciation to Tom, and to wish him well in all of his future endeavours.

On a more happy note the Board has recently gained two new members. Chris Galley, author of *The demography of early modern towns: York in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Liverpool, 1998), who lectures in the Humanities Department at Barnsley College, experienced his first Editorial Board meeting in September, and was not – thankfully – unduly deterred. He has kindly agreed to take over as Book Review Editor, and from henceforth all books for review should be sent directly to Chris at the address given on page 2. Graham Mooney has also recently agreed to join the Board. Graham will be known to readers as the author of numerous articles in a wide range of journals on aspects of mortality in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with a particular research expertise in London history. He is currently senior lecturer in geography at the University of Portsmouth. Both Chris and Graham have contributed publications to *LPS* in recent years, and their expertise in early modern and modern population history will considerably strengthen the Editorial Board team.

The Local Population Studies Essay Prize

At an Editorial Board meeting held 6 June last, it was agreed to institute an *LPS* Essay Prize to the value of £100. This will be awarded on a biennial basis to the author of the best full-length article published in *LPS*, but will be restricted to scholars who have not previously published an article in an academic journal. It is thus designed to encourage further submissions from population historians who are yet to become established demographers or authors. Decisions as to what qualifies as an academic journal will be made on an ad hoc basis by the Board, who will collectively act as adjudicators. The prize will be awarded retrospectively, and will be announced in *LPS*. The first award will be made for an article published in 2001/2002, and the Board's decision will be reached at a meeting to be held in January 2003. The Board will reserve the right to withhold the award should there not be any suitable candidate during the relevant two-year period. All scholars wishing to be considered for the Prize should indicate this fact with their submission, and submit a *curriculum vitae* together with certification that they have not previously published an article in an historical journal.

***LPS* projects**

By the time this issue has gone to press the latest *LPS* project, Dennis Mills' *Rural community history from trade directories*, will have been published. It turned out to be somewhat shorter, at 112 pages, than advertised in the last *LPS* editorial, but is none the worse for that. Full of fascinating contemporary images as well as practical examples demonstrating the possibilities and pitfalls involved in analysing trade directories in the rural context, this

volume will be essential reading for local historians in general and local population historians in particular. Copies are available from the *LPS* General Office, price £6 plus 75p post and packing (£1.50 overseas). For further details, see the flyer included in this issue.

LPS/LPSS conference 2002: Migration in Local, Regional and International Perspectives

Following the success of the inaugural LPS/LPSS conference held 7 April 2001, we will again meet in St Albans in April 2002, this time on 13 April to avoid a clash with the Economic History Society annual conference. The theme is Migration in Local, Regional and International Perspectives, and speakers are Colin Pooley, David Hey, Kevin Schürer, Mark Allen, Colin Holmes, Raingard Esser, Andrew Spicer and Lien Luu. A full programme and booking form is enclosed, and the cost this year will be £25. Thanks are due to the British Society for Population Studies for underwriting the loss of £260 that we incurred last year.

CAMPOP questionnaire

Many thanks to all of those members who took the time and trouble to complete the questionnaire concerning the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure sent out last August. We are pleased to have been invited by the Economic and Social Research Council to participate in this evaluation, and to register the collective voice of our membership. Professor Robert Lee of Liverpool University, who is leading the evaluation, reports that there was a considerable response from *LPS* readers, conveniently indicated by the return with the completed questionnaire of the covering letter issued from the General Office!

Editorial matters

All communications received regarding the new perfect bound *LPS* were resoundingly positive, so thanks to both of you for taking the trouble to write. We will continue with this format, but have quietly dropped the idea of changing the journal's title. Thanks are due to Ken Smith for typesetting this issue. The forthcoming spring issue of *LPS* will be edited by Andrew Hinde.

Nigel Goose
October 2001

The
Local Population Studies
Essay Prize

A prize of £100 will be offered on a biennial basis for the best full-length essay accepted for publication in *Local Population Studies* written by an author who has not previously published a full-length article in an academic historical journal.

All articles submitted should conform to the standard requirements of *LPS*, and should thus focus upon English local or regional population history, broadly defined to encompass related areas of social and economic history, should provide contextualisation within the wider historical context, and should not exceed 7,000 words in length (including endnotes).

The award will be made retrospectively at the end of each two-year period, and the first award will be available for articles published in 2001/2002 (*LPS* 66-69).

Adjudication of the award will be by the *LPS* Editorial Board, and will be decided at its January meeting, for the first time in 2003.

The Board reserves the right to withhold the award should no suitable candidate be forthcoming.

All authors wishing to be considered for the Prize should indicate this fact when making their submission, should provide a *curriculum vitae*, and should certify that they have not previously published a full-length article in an academic historical journal.

SOME ASPECTS OF MORTALITY IN THREE SHROPSHIRE PARISHES IN THE MID-SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Sylvia Watts

Sylvia Watts' interest in the demography of Shropshire extends over a period of twenty years. Having taught in primary schools for many years, she submitted her doctoral thesis to Wolverhampton University in 1995, and has since lectured part-time at Birmingham University, for Shropshire County Council and for the WEA.

Introduction

After relatively rapid population growth in the later sixteenth century and slower growth in the first four decades of the seventeenth century, the mid-seventeenth century nationally saw growth change to stagnation and even loss. Falling fertility, changes in nuptiality or worsening mortality, or a combination of all these, could have caused this phenomenon. The aim of this article is to examine whether three Shropshire parishes – Wellington, Wem and Whitchurch – followed this national trend, to investigate aspects of mortality in the three parishes during this highly significant period and to place this mortality in its economic and social context.

Wellington, Wem and Whitchurch are all in north Shropshire and all in the ancient Bradford Hundred. They are similar in many ways: all are very large parishes of between 11,000 and 15,000 acres, all have a small market town located roughly centrally, and all are surrounded by an agricultural hinterland of hamlets and isolated farmsteads. All the market towns were originally Saxon villages situated on the best soils in the parish, while the hamlets were for the most part settled in the later Saxon period or early Middle Ages, and the isolated farms were established on cleared woodland in the later Middle Ages. Their manorial lords stimulated the growth of all three towns in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by giving them market charters and laying out burgage plots. All three towns, however, remained unincorporated and under the control of the lord of the manor's court. All three towns fall into the lowest and most numerous category of Clark and Slack's typology of English early modern towns, the simple market town.¹

However, by the 17th century, despite these similarities and the basically agrarian character of their economies, differences between the three towns and their hamlets were emerging. Whitchurch was increasingly becoming a thoroughfare town on a major route to Chester, north Wales and Ireland, involved in long-distance provisioning of the London market with cheese and cattle. Wellington, though only a part of the parish actually lay on the east

Shropshire coalfield, was increasingly influenced by the development of coal and iron mining and served as the market town for the coalfield. In Wem there was much woodland clearance and drainage of marshy land and agriculture expanded and prospered, but there was no industry and it was remote from any major routes. Rough estimates based on the Hearth Tax of 1672 and the Compton Census of 1676 suggest that the population of Wellington parish was about 2,250, of Wem about 2,100 and Whitchurch about 2,750.² With these large multi-township parishes it can be difficult to disentangle the town population from that of the whole parish, but the evidence of various sources such as surveys, Easter Books and parish registers which record an individual's residence within the parish indicates that by the mid-seventeenth century about half the population of Whitchurch and Wellington parishes lived in the towns and about one-third of that of Wem.

Reliability of the parish registers

The halting of the population growth in the mid-seventeenth century is a demographic trend of great significance; as parish registers are the main source for examining this phenomenon, they must be approached particularly critically. It is generally assumed that baptisms, burials and marriages may all have been under-recorded. Rickman (as cited by Jones) gave the following general causes for under-registration of burials: the presence of Roman Catholics and dissenters who would not have been baptised according to the rites of the Church of England and would therefore not be eligible for the Church of England burial ceremony, people too poor to afford a burial ceremony, and negligence, particularly in small benefices where there were no resident clergy.³ Though there were groups of Baptists at Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury in the 1650s who may have objected to Church of England baptismal rites, Skinner found no evidence of Baptists in Wellington, Wem or Whitchurch during this period.⁴ The 1660s saw a growth of Presbyterianism in Whitchurch and the surrounding area stimulated in particular by the well-known preacher, Philip Henry. In his diary Henry mentioned a controversy in Whitchurch when local dissenters protested against Church of England baptism because they objected to the use of the sign of the cross and involvement of godparents, but Henry himself conformed to Anglican baptism. Roman Catholics were only strong in a few areas of Shropshire and the 1676 Compton Census shows very few in Wellington, Wem and Whitchurch.⁵ Whether the dead were unbaptised nonconformists or Roman Catholics or simply too poor for a burial ceremony, in most parishes there was no practicable alternative to interment in the parish churchyard. The question is, therefore, whether the register lists interments or ceremonies. Burial registers were intended to record burial ceremonies, and it is rarely explicitly stated whether entries record the ceremony or the interment. The Whitchurch, Wem and Wellington registers all included stillborn babies and all referred to 'son of' or 'daughter of' without a Christian name (which Jones suggests may imply an unbaptised child); it is probable, therefore, that in Wellington, Wem and Whitchurch recorded burials imply all interments.⁶ The causes of under-registration of baptisms proposed by Rickman were similar to the under-registration of burials with the addition of private baptism.⁷ The incidence of

private baptism and the extent to which this led to omissions in the register is essentially unquantifiable, but Jones suggests that it was only beginning to become fashionable in the mid-seventeenth century.⁸ Contemporaries believed that the problem of small parishes without resident clergy was the most likely cause of deficient registers: Wellington, Wem and Whitchurch, however, were all large parishes and all had resident clergy.

The changing religious requirements of the government during the Civil War years must have added an extra dimension to the perennial reasons for possible deficiencies in the registers. In 1643 a Presbyterian ministry was established and the Book of Common Prayer forbidden, the Directory for Public Worship prescribing in August 1645 the only legal rites.⁹ In June 1646 the government ordered that presbyteries or classes, voluntary associations of clergy and laity, should be established as an alternative form of organisation to the parish.¹⁰ Though this form of organisation, in many areas of the country, had hardly been implemented before it was abolished in 1654, it was quickly put into effect in north Shropshire. Disruption in the personnel of parish clergy was caused in 1643 by the requirement to sign the Covenant and again in 1654 when a committee of 38 members was appointed by Cromwell to enquire into the learning and fitness for office of parish clergy. This committee was mainly composed of Independents and was supported in the counties by assistants: there were 20 such assistants in Shropshire including the incumbents of Wellington, Wem and Whitchurch.¹¹ The impact of these changes in the church during the Civil War and the Interregnum inevitably created problems the significance of which varied from place to place and even from year to year and may have had repercussions on the keeping of the parish registers.

The main factor in determining the effect of these changes in particular parishes must have been the attitudes of their clergy and their degree of sympathy with the prevailing regime. In Wellington Francis Wright was vicar from 1621 until his death in 1659. He was reputed to be the first Puritan in Shropshire, and as a Puritan he remained in office on the outbreak of the Civil War, becoming an influential member of the first classis of north Shropshire.¹² Francis Wright was the registrar for Wellington and after he died in June 1659 the handwriting in the registers deteriorates markedly, but the registers were nevertheless still regularly maintained. The only obvious gaps in the registers are of marriages in the later 1640s and early 1650s.¹³

Nicholas Page who became rector of Wem in 1639 was a Royalist who signed the loyal address from the clergy to the King in 1642, and was ejected when Wem became a Parliamentary garrison in the autumn of 1643.¹⁴ His successor, Andrew Parsons, was a leading member of the fourth classis of which Thomas Porter of Whitchurch was president.¹⁵ He remained in office throughout the Civil War and the Interregnum, but was removed from Wem in 1660 and in 1661 was tried, fined and imprisoned for allegedly calling the King a devil.¹⁶ Although Andrew Parsons was rector throughout the 1650s, there are gaps in the baptism register from September 1649 to November 1652 and from January 1659 (new style calendar) to July 1663 and in the burial register from

July 1647 until November 1653. In 1653 John Smith, the parish clerk, was elected registrar and the burial register was thereafter apparently efficiently maintained.¹⁷

In Whitchurch Thomas Fowler was ejected in 1643 for his refusal to take the Covenant.¹⁸ His place was taken by Thomas Porter, of whom it was said that 'he was an instrument of much good... by his great prudence he so managed the ministers that on that side of the county where a Presbytery was settled that he found no need for compulsory laws.' In 1654 Thomas Porter and Francis Wright were amongst the ministers appointed to assist the Ejectors in their enquiry into the learning and beliefs of incumbents.¹⁹ Thomas Porter is known to have supported infant baptism, arguing the case for it in a public dispute with an Anabaptist at Ellesmere in 1656. He gave up the living in 1660, but the register appears to have been regularly maintained by his successor. The only obvious break in the Whitchurch registers (other than the marriage register) is a six week gap in February and the first half of March 1646 (new style) when the burial register states that, '...I was imprisoned and stayed about six weeks' (there is no parallel gap in the baptism register). The register earlier records the burial of a parish clerk describing him as 'my predecessor'; the actual writing of the register appears, therefore, to have been the responsibility of the clerk in Whitchurch.²⁰ It is significant that in Whitchurch the ordinary course of parochial administration continued throughout the upheavals of the 1640s and 1650s; the churchwardens' accounts were kept throughout as efficiently as they had been before the outbreak of war.²¹

None of the clergy of the three parishes was directly affected in 1662 when the Act of Uniformity demanded that they accept all the Thirty Nine Articles and every detail of the Prayer Book; Francis Wright of Wellington was dead and Andrew Parsons of Wem and Thomas Porter of Whitchurch had already left office.

Given the lack of organised groups who might have objected to Church of England ceremonies and the Puritan but tolerant views of Andrew Parsons of Wem, Thomas Porter of Whitchurch and Francis Wright of Wellington,²² it seems probable that most rites of passage in their respective communities would have taken place in their churches and that there was no specific reason arising from their attitudes to have made registration significantly worse in the troubled years of the mid-seventeenth century, other than the unexplained gaps in the Wem registers of the 1650s.

Upheavals resulting from involvement in the hostilities of the Civil War, in particular the use of churches as garrisons, may have been a further factor aggravating deficiencies in the registers in some areas. In the autumn of 1643 Wem was made a Parliamentary garrison, the only one in Shropshire at the time, and remained in Parliamentary hands for the remainder of the war.²³ In the spring of 1644 Wem was subject to several weeks of siege, but during this period the registers appear to have been efficiently maintained. Wellington was not a major centre in the war; the church was briefly garrisoned by the Royalists, and though when taken by the Parliamentarians in March 1644 the

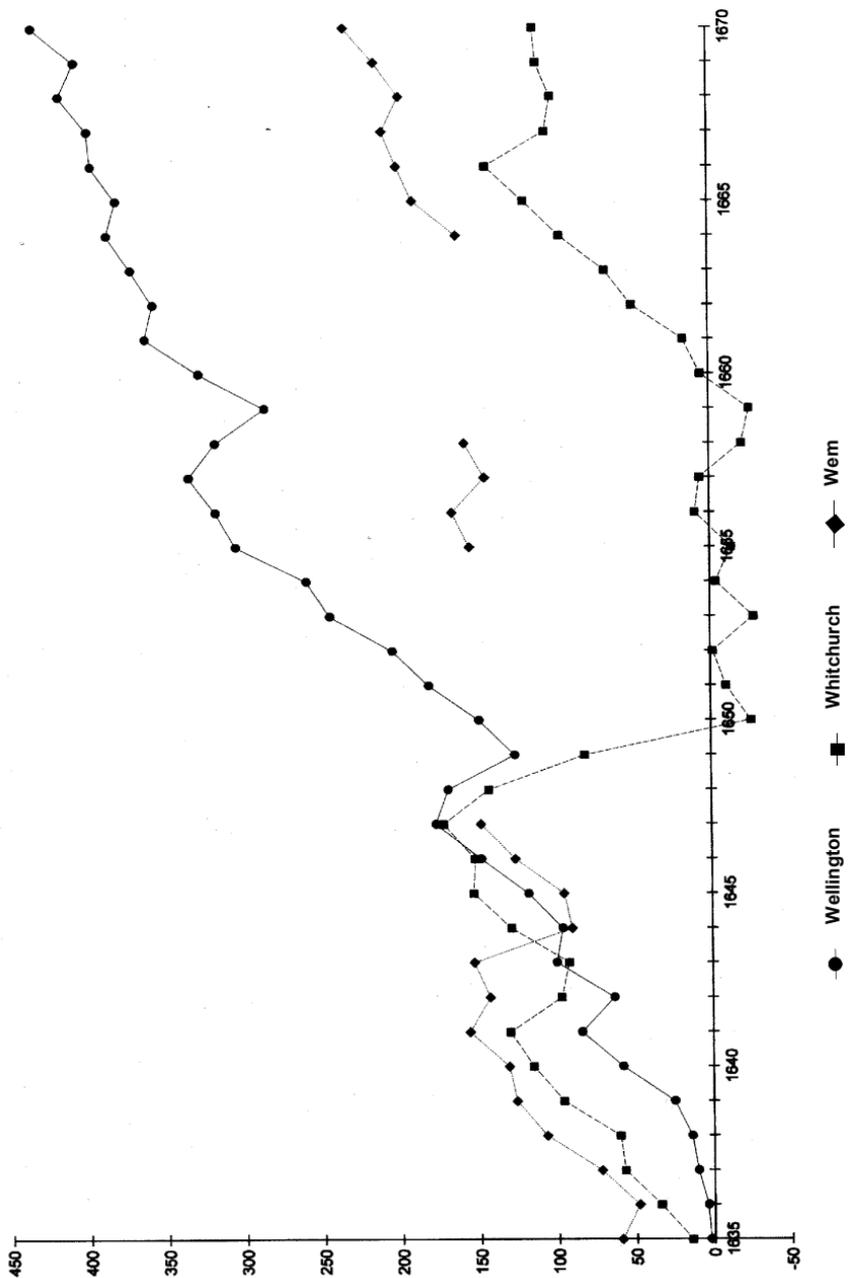


Fig. 1 Cumulative natural index

church was considerably damaged, the fighting lasted only a few hours.²⁴ Whitchurch was enthusiastically Royalist; Sir William Brereton called it a 'malignant place', but there was no major garrison in the town, only the church being from time to time briefly used as a garrison.²⁵ The parish register noted that on 30 May 1643 Whitchurch was surprised by the Parliamentary commander, Sir William Brereton, and recorded the burials of 28 soldiers and 3 prisoners.

Population trends and mortality

Nationally, according to Wrigley and Schofield, population was expanding rapidly in the late sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century, but the mid-seventeenth century was a time of slackening growth or even stagnation.²⁶ A cumulative natural index was constructed by adding the surplus of baptisms over burials year by year and deducting any surplus of burials in an attempt to determine whether population was rising or falling in Wellington, Wem and Whitchurch (see Figure 1).

This index suggests that the population of Wellington was growing throughout the period with only minor setbacks in 1642, 1649 and 1659. For Wem the picture is incomplete because of the gaps in the registers in the 1650s, but it suggests that growth was quickly resumed after a setback in 1644 and continued in the 1660s. Only in Whitchurch is there clear evidence for a mid-seventeenth century slump in population, showing a fall in the 1640s and 1650s and only sluggish growth in the 1660s. Figure 2, using a five-year moving average of baptisms calculated as a percentage of burials, shows the same trends.

The total population of the three parishes can be estimated only very approximately, and changes in mortality rates cannot, therefore, be calculated. Figure 3, however, shows that the period of the mid-seventeenth century was punctuated by peaks of higher numbers of burials varying in intensity and timing from parish to parish.

The effect of these episodes of higher numbers of burials on population trends varied considerably. It is usually assumed that an excess of burials in any particular epidemic would be quickly replaced. This appears to have been true of the episodes of minor surplus burials in Wellington; in 1635 the 22 surplus burials over baptisms were made up within four years and the 21 surplus burials in 1642 were made up the following year. The 49 surplus burials in 1649 was the largest surplus recorded for Wellington during this period, but the difference was made up within two years. In Wem 1644 was the only year in which there were substantially more burials than baptisms, 62, and it was four years before these were replaced. In Whitchurch the situation was rather more complicated; the 20 excess of burials in 1636 was made up the next year, the 33 excess in 1642 and a small excess of five in 1643 was replaced by 1645. However, there were three successive years of excess burials – 29 in 1648, 62 in 1649 and 107 in 1650 – a total of 198 burials exceeding baptisms, and these deaths had not been replaced by 1670, the end of the period under review.

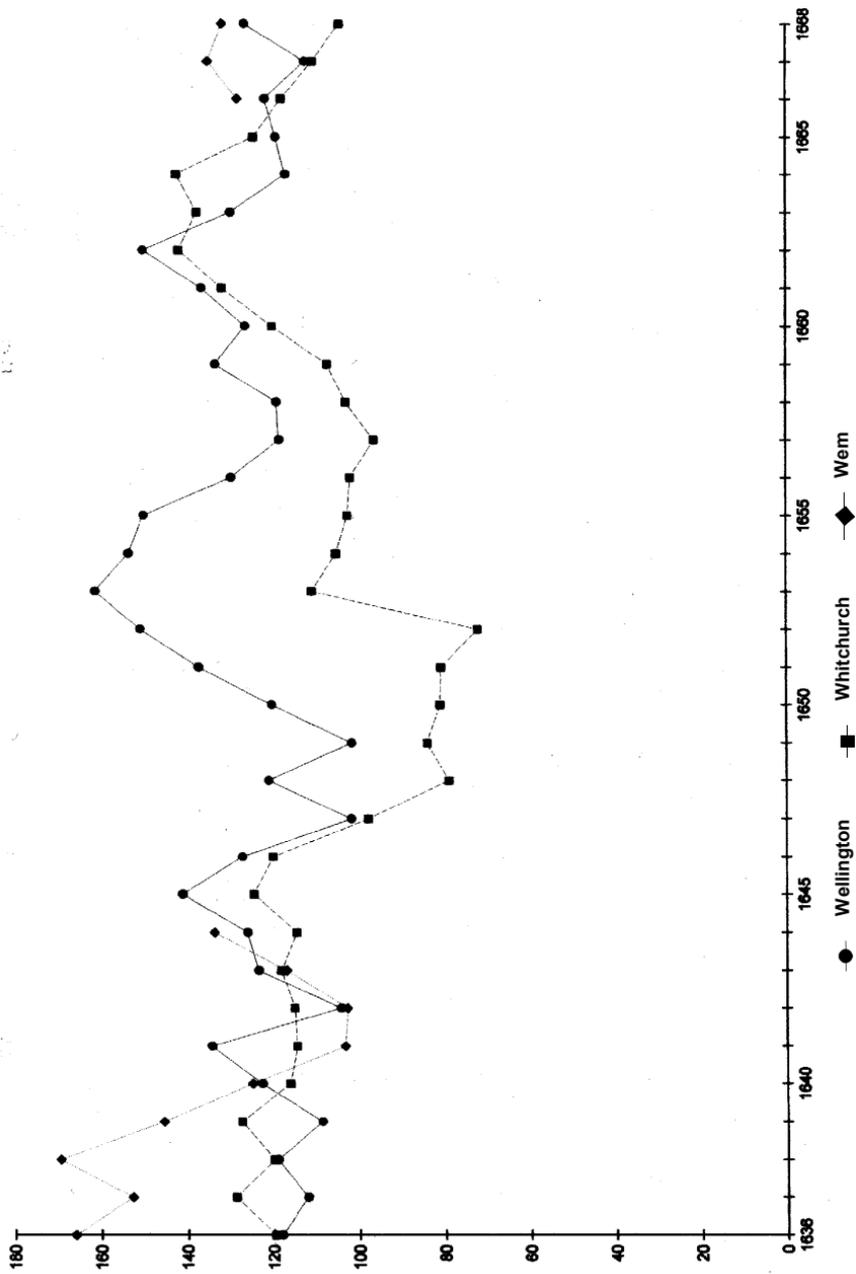


Fig. 2 Baptisms as a percentage of burials (five-year moving average)

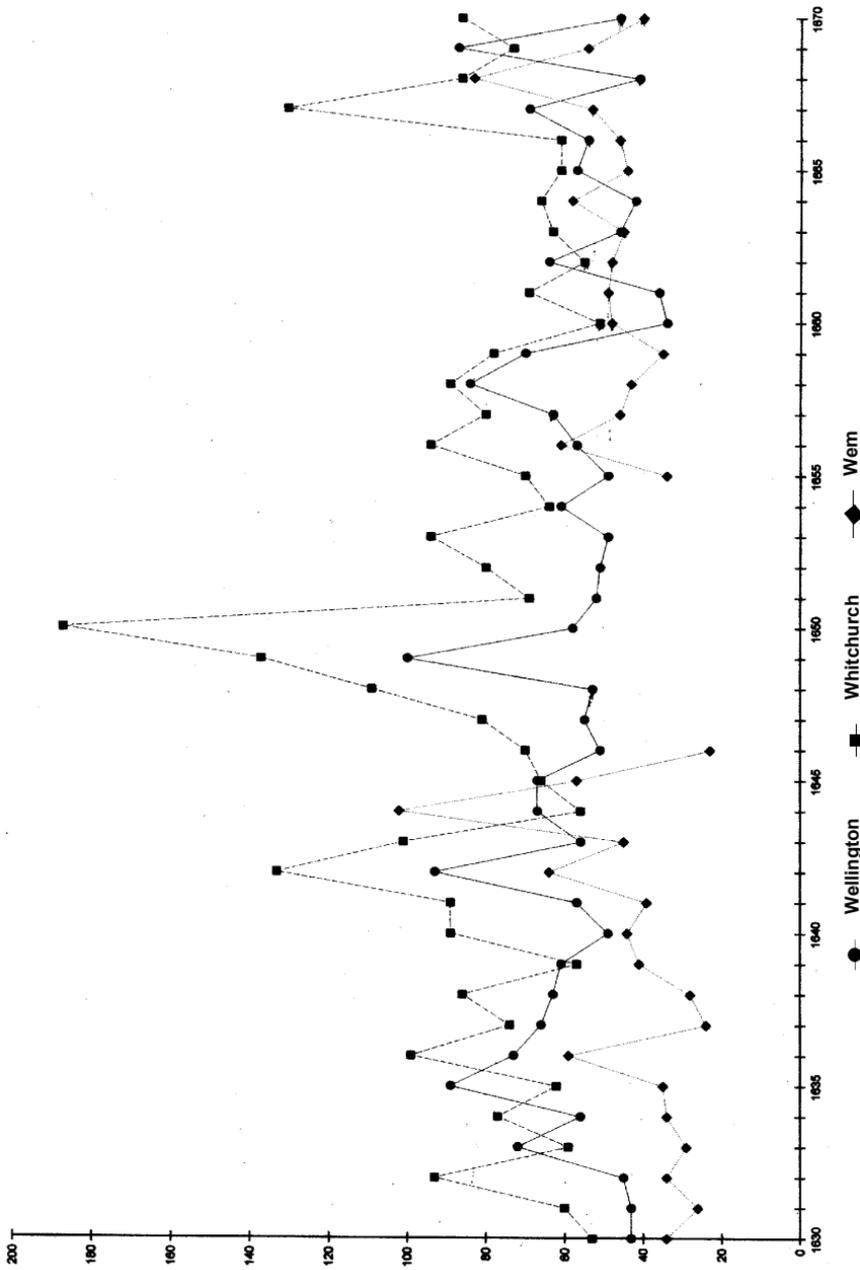


Fig. 3 Annual burials

In all three parishes, in Wem and Wellington where the population appears to have continued to grow and in Whitchurch where there seems to have been stagnation and loss, the basic pattern of mortality appears to have changed. Dyer has emphasised that worsening child mortality levels played an important role in the national population stagnation of the mid-seventeenth century.²⁷ Without figures for the total population at risk child mortality rates cannot be calculated, but aggregative analysis of the parish registers shows that an increase in the proportion of child burials in the mid-seventeenth century was a trend in all three parishes. Table 1 shows that the proportion of child burials in Wellington rose in each decade from the 1630s to the 1670s; in Wem there was little change until the 1650s, while in Whitchurch the proportion of child burials was higher than in Wem and Wellington from the time that the register begins. In the 1660s the proportion of child burials in all three parishes was on average 40–45 per cent of total burials.

Three of the years termed by Wrigley and Schofield as '3 star crises' occurred in the mid-seventeenth century, 1638/9, 1657/8 and 1665/6.²⁸ Locally, Jones found that in north Shropshire 1643, 1648–50, 1655–6, 1664 and 1667 were years of heavy mortality.²⁹ However, as Wrigley and Schofield stress, even in years of high national mortality, the local incidence of crises was highly variable and never universal.³⁰ A crisis in an individual parish cannot be defined simply by a rise in the death rate as the total population is rarely known, but as the average parish population rarely changed in the short term, large short-term increases in the number of deaths would mean a rise in mortality.³¹ The identification of a crisis, as many writers have pointed out, depends upon an arbitrary definition. Table 2 shows years of apparent crisis calculated according to Schofield's suggestion of using an 11-year moving average together with his further suggestion that the year in question be excluded to avoid an inflated average.³²

It can be seen from Table 2 that the experience of the three parishes varied considerably with Whitchurch experiencing considerably more years of high mortality than Wellington and Wem.

Wellington appears to have escaped outbreaks of plague. The year with the highest number of burials was 100 in 1649. The chief characteristic of the epidemic of this year was the particularly high proportion of child burials, 78 per cent. As shown in Table 3, about half of the children whose age at the time of death is known were one to nine years of age, and boys were substantially more severely affected. In his analysis of years of high mortality in Bolton between 1635/6 and 1655/6 where similarly high numbers of children were involved, Dyer suggests that measles may have been the cause.³³ While it seems clear that this was an epidemic which struck children rather than small babies, the 10-16 age group may be under-represented because of the tendency of older children to be living away from home. The deaths were concentrated in the spring and early summer, February to June, with a peak of 29 deaths in April. The characteristics of this epidemic appear similar to the possible outbreaks of measles in Bolton.

Table 1 Child burials as a proportion of total burials by decade

	Wem			Whitchurch			Wellington		
	Total	Child	%	Total	Child	%	Total	Child	%
1630s	354	117	33.0	756	303	40.1	617	178	28.8
1640s	365*	122	33.4	1029	436	42.4	676	257	39.1
1650s	293*	133	45.4	769	335	43.6	570	236	41.4
1660s	520	236	45.4	750	335	44.7	541	236	43.6

Note: * Incomplete figures for these decades

Table 2 Years of high mortality

Years of mortality above 11 year moving average			
		x 2.5	x 1.5
Wem		1644	1668
Wellington			1669
Whitchurch		1650	1642, 1648, 1649*

Note: * 1.8 times the 11 year average

In 1669 87 burials were recorded in the Wellington register with a minor peak of 10 in June, but 25 burials, more than a quarter, in November and December. With 45 of the burials, 51.7 per cent, being of children, this was not a year of exceptionally high infant/child mortality. The only striking feature of the mortality of Wellington in this year was that three times as many boys died compared to girls, but its cause is unknown.

Like Wellington, Wem appears to have escaped outbreaks of plague, though an epidemic of 1644 caused a sharp rise in the number of burials when 102 people died. The deaths were not said to be of soldiers, were not attributed directly to the war and the proportion of child burials was unusually low, 28 per cent. A chief characteristic of the epidemic was that almost all the deaths took place in the first half of the year, particularly from January to April, with the highest monthly total of 20 in January. Wem was from September 1643 occupied as a Parliamentary garrison, and though the numbers garrisoned in Wem do not appear to have been large, many houses had been destroyed when earthen defensive banks were constructed round the town and congestion in this restricted area must have been acute. Most of the deaths

Table 3 Wellington burials 1649: age of children dying

	Boys		Girls		All	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0–11 months	7		5		12	15.4
1–4 years	15		10		25	32.0
5–9 years	10		3		13	16.7
10 years +	3		4		7	8.9
Not known	12		9		21	26.9
Total	47	60.2	31	39.8	78	100.0

occurred before the weeks of siege in April 1644, but for some weeks Royalist troops had been crossing and re-crossing the area, food supplies were short, and the market could not operate.³⁴ The characteristics of this epidemic – the conditions of hardship and the low proportion of child deaths – suggest that the cause may have been typhus. According to Creighton, typhus was first described in the Civil War, when it was called a new disease.³⁵ A variety of fevers may have been responsible, but Wrigley and Schofield also argue that in the absence of pathological analysis, the age-specific incidence of mortality is probably the best indicator that typhus was the cause as typhus is unusual in rarely killing young children.³⁶

1668 was the only other year when Wem experienced a higher than average number of burials, when the profile of mortality was very different from that of 1644. Of the 82 deaths in this year exactly half were of children. Of the 29 children whose age could be traced from the baptism register 19 were under one year of age and a further 8 under four years. Though there was a fairly even spread of adult deaths over the year, the child deaths were mainly in the early part of the year from January to April. The data do not point to any one obvious disease, and it seems possible that more than one may have been involved.

Whitchurch appears to have been more prone to epidemics than Wellington and Wem, with particularly high numbers of burials in 1650 and higher than average numbers in 1642, 1648, 1649 and 1667. Though Schofield says that London plagues were not widespread around the country,³⁷ Whitchurch had apparently been involved in the outbreak in 1625; the churchwardens' accounts recorded prayers that the plague might be stayed and a few months later recorded thanksgiving when the death toll lessened. However, as the parish registers do not begin until 1630, the effect of this epidemic on the population cannot be analysed.³⁸ The characteristics of the mortality in each of

the five years of high numbers of burials in Table 2 varied considerably. In 1642 there were 137 burials and nearly half of these were in the autumn months of September, October and November. If the proposition is accepted that plague can be inferred from this seasonal incidence, it is possible that plague was, at least in part, the cause of the increased deaths. There was a high proportion of child burials (90 or 66 per cent) and of the 55 of these children whose age can be traced 23 were aged under one year and another 23 were aged between one and four years; this may suggest that other illnesses specific to childhood were also involved. Dyer has noted that child mortality was high in Shrewsbury in 1648 and that this may have been due to measles.³⁹ Whitchurch had many contacts with the county town.

In 1649 there were 137 deaths in Whitchurch, but the characteristics of this episode of higher than average burials were significantly different from 1642. Sixty-seven or 48.9 per cent of those dying were children; the age of 21 of these could not be traced, but of those whose ages were known the largest group, 25, were aged between one and four years. Most of the deaths were in the first four months of the year, with a further peak in June, the worst month being February with 25 deaths. There was little multiple incidence in families: in only three families was more than one child affected. This epidemic has some similar characteristics to that in Wellington in 1649 and to those in Bolton and may have been measles, but as adults were also affected, other respiratory illness may have been involved.

An epidemic mainly in 1650 but continuing into 1651 was specifically named as plague in the parish register, and the names of those believed to have died from plague were marked with a cross. Though the term 'plague' could simply mean any form of pestilence, in a town such as Whitchurch where outbreaks of plague had occurred previously, the symptoms of bubonic plague were presumably distressingly obvious and familiar. In this year 119 died from plague: 23 men, 32 women, 27 boys and 30 girls and 7 children whose sex was not given. Of the 184 burials in 1650, 111 or 60 per cent were attributed to plague. The outbreak began in August 1650 and the last recorded death was in May the following year, but the bulk of the deaths, 95 (80 per cent), occurred in August, September and October 1650, the worst month being September with 42 deaths. This outbreak of plague affected females rather more than males; 55 per cent were women and girls. Sixty-four (54 per cent) of the deaths were of children, but the ages at death of only 20 of these children can be traced; almost all were between five and 16 years of age, only one child being under four years. This epidemic showed a strong familial incidence, said by Slack to be characteristic of plague.⁴⁰ The 119 deaths involved 60 families and in only 21 of these did a single member die. In seven families the husband and wife died, in six the husband, wife and some of the children died, the most acutely affected families being those of John and Mary Wright with four of their children, and William and Mary Ranshall and five of their children. In a further six families the husband and some children died, including Thomas Cowper and five children. In seven families the wife and some children died, such as Joan Baker and three children and Magdalen Moore and four children. A further characteristic of this plague epidemic was

its strongly localised nature. The churchwardens' accounts include Christ-tide lists of the parishioners,⁴¹ and from these the residence of about three-quarters of those mentioned in the burial register for 1642 can be traced, and about half of these were in the town, a proportion reflecting the balance of population. In 1649 again the residence of about half of those dying could be traced, and rather more, about two-thirds, had lived in the town. Of the plague deaths in 1650 the place of residence of only half could be traced, but only three people lived in the hamlets, and one of those was a churchwarden who would have had to come into the town. The plague victims whose residence is known appear to have almost all lived in the High Street of Whitchurch (which was also the market) and a small street known as Pepper Street leading off the High Street, where the outbreak began and where the last plague death was recorded.

In 1667 perhaps more than one disease accounted for the 130 burials. Seventy-three or 56 per cent of burials were of children, a proportion higher than the average for the decade, but not markedly so. The age of 21 of these children could not be traced, but half of all those whose age is known were four years and under. The seasonal distribution of the burials also gives no clear evidence for a particular disease; burials were numerous in April and May, but again in July to October.

Conclusion

Although Wellington and Wem were not without episodes of higher than average mortality, they do not provide evidence of mid-seventeenth century population stagnation. Whitchurch, however, although only slightly larger than Wellington and Wem and still within Clark and Slack's category of small market towns, suffered population stagnation and even loss, as well as more epidemics. Wrigley and Schofield assert that, 'In the seventeenth century plague became relatively rare except in large urban centres';⁴² but Whitchurch, which could not be called a large urban centre, experienced plague in 1625 and 1650. It seems at least feasible that the vulnerability of Whitchurch was the result of its very different economy, for Whitchurch was a thoroughfare town on an increasingly busy route to Chester, North Wales and Ireland. In 1616 Thomas Egerton, Lord Chancellor and lord of the manor, urged James I that Whitchurch should have its own justices because of the press of business on market days.⁴³ Though the nature of the transmission of plague is still debatable, it is speculated that it could pass from flea to rat or flea to man and that the fleas or rats could travel in merchandise; this method of transmission could explain why plague followed lines of communication.⁴⁴ As well as drawing in people to its markets men from Whitchurch were also involved in increasing long-distance trading, droving of cattle and supplying cheese to the markets of London.⁴⁵ There is also evidence that the earlier growth of population had resulted in overcrowding within Whitchurch. From the 1590s the manor courts contain frequent presentments for the use of barns and other outbuildings on the rear of burgage plots being used for dwellings.⁴⁶

For Wellington the surplus of baptisms over burials suggests that the population continued to grow throughout the period under review. Wellington suffered no major population crisis but several minor ones. Evidence is elusive but it appears that coal mining and ironworking were becoming increasingly significant in Ketley and Lawley, hamlets in Wellington parish, and in the neighbouring parishes of Madeley, Dawley and Shifnal.⁴⁷ It is possible that immigration associated with industrial growth was the cause of Wellington's minor crises; diseases such as measles and smallpox may have hit particularly hard a population which included a continuing fresh influx of people without immunity.

In Wem also, though the registers are more defective, there is no obvious decline in population in the mid-seventeenth century. Wem was more isolated than Whitchurch, being distant from any major routes, and its economy was purely agricultural and remote from any area of industrial growth. The only interruption to its moderate prosperity was the accidental fact of becoming a Civil War garrison and a garrison which suffered a considerable siege, events unrelated to the economy of the parish.

Slack suggests that the size of settlements and transport facilities might affect the relative vulnerability of settlements to plague.⁴⁸ On the other hand Wrigley and Schofield, though postulating that the geographical pattern of the incidence of local crises might reflect the climate, local economy, size and density of population and the distance from a market town, found that there was actually a low correlation with the economic and social characteristics of a settlement.⁴⁹ The mortality patterns of Wellington, Wem and Whitchurch, however, suggest that these characteristics may be of considerable importance in studying demographic events at the local level.

NOTES

1. P. Clark and P. Slack, *English Towns in transition 1500–1700*, (Oxford, 1976), 8.
2. The Hearth Tax employed was that of 1672 as published in W. Watkins-Pritchard, *Shropshire Hearth Tax 1672*, (Shrewsbury, 1949), to which were added exemptions listed in Public Record Office E179/342. A multiplier of 4.3 was applied to convert households to population as suggested in T. Arkell, 'Multiplying factors for estimating population totals from the hearth tax', *Local Population Studies*, 28 (1982), 55. These calculations were cross-checked against the Compton Census, which appears to have included all inhabitants above the age of 16 in these parishes, and hence a multiplier of 1.5 was applied to allow for children, as suggested in A. Whiteman, ed., *The Compton Census of 1676: a critical edition*, (London, 1986), lxvii, 442–3. It should be noted, however, that the Compton returns for all three of these parishes are, for conformists at least, suspiciously rounded.
3. E.W. Jones, 'Parish registers and population history in north Shropshire 1538–1837', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1973), 25.
4. R.F. Skinner, *Nonconformity in Shropshire 1662–1816*, (Shrewsbury, 1964), 4.
5. Whiteman, *Compton Census*, 442–3.
6. Jones, 'Parish registers', 58.
7. Jones, 'Parish registers', 16.
8. Jones, 'Parish registers', 69.
9. J.E. Auden, 'Ecclesiastical history of Shropshire during the Civil War, the Commonwealth and the Restoration', *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society*, 7, (1907), 241–2.

10. Auden, 'Ecclesiastical history', 24–5.
11. Auden, 'Ecclesiastical history', 264.
12. R. Baxter, *History of Wellington*, (no place of publication, 1949), 69 – typescript in Shropshire Records and Research Centre (hereafter SRRC).
13. Wellington parish register, typescript in SRRC.
14. Auden, 'Ecclesiastical history', 262.
15. Auden, 'Ecclesiastical history', 265–7.
16. Auden, 'Ecclesiastical history', 301.
17. *Wem parish register*, (Shropshire Parish Register Society, 1908).
18. Auden, 'Ecclesiastical history', 254.
19. Auden, 'Ecclesiastical history', 284.
20. Whitchurch parish register, transcript in SRRC.
21. Whitchurch churchwardens' accounts, SRRC 3091/3.
22. Auden, 'Ecclesiastical history', 284.
23. S. Garbet, *History of Wem*, (Shrewsbury, 1982), 216–23.
24. Baxter, *History of Wellington*, 34.
25. W.J. Farrow, *The great Civil War in Shropshire*, (Shrewsbury, 1926), 23.
26. E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The population history of England 1541–1871: a reconstruction*, (London, 1981), 236.
27. A. Dyer, 'Epidemics of measles in a seventeenth-century English town', *Local Population Studies*, **34**, (1984), 35.
28. Wrigley and Schofield, *Population history*, 334.
29. Jones, 'Parish registers', 205.
30. Wrigley and Schofield, *Population history*, 670.
31. Wrigley and Schofield, *Population history*, 665.
32. R.S. Schofield, 'Crisis mortality', in M. Drake, ed., *Population studies from parish registers*, (Local Population Studies, 1982), 98.
33. Dyer, 'Epidemics of measles', 39–40.
34. Farrow, *The great Civil War*, 65.
35. C. Creighton, *A history of epidemics in Britain*, (London, 1968 edition), 534.
36. Wrigley and Schofield, *Population history*, 669.
37. Schofield, 'Crisis mortality', 108.
38. SRRC 3091/1/1.
39. Dyer, 'Epidemics of measles', 43.
40. P. Slack, introduction to *The plague reconsidered*, (Local Population Studies, Matlock, 1977), 6.
41. SRRC 3091/1/3.
42. Wrigley and Schofield, *Population history*, 668.
43. SRRC 212/60.
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45. P. Edwards, 'The farming economy of north-east Shropshire in the seventeenth century', (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1976), 188.
46. SRRC 212/54.
47. *Victoria County History: Shropshire*, (London, 1985), **11**, 270.
48. P. Slack, 'The local incidence of epidemic disease: the case of Bristol 1540–1650', in Slack, ed., *The plague reconsidered*, 59.
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THE 1901 CENSUS: AN INTRODUCTION

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The public release of a new series of census enumerators' books (CEBs) is a significant event in local population studies, making available information relating to every member of the population of Great Britain.¹ On 2 January 2002 the CEBs for the 1901 census will be made publicly available; and, as editorials in this journal have described, for the first time these data will be made available over the internet.² The manner of dissemination has not received universal approbation, especially by local and family historians who will feel that the cost of retrieving whole communities may prove prohibitive. The purpose of this article is not to discuss the controversial issues of dissemination but to consider the processes involved in the creation of the CEBs which impinge on their use by local and community historians, and also to examine some of the voluminous published material which was a product of the census process.

The first census of the twentieth century was not a radical departure from its immediate predecessor in terms of information collected; however, the consultation process involved in the planning of the census was wider and more visible than any previous enumeration had seen. The most important innovation in the 1901 census was in the manner of the publication of the results: for the first time separate county reports were published including a greater range of statistics over a wider range of geographical areas. This article considers the background to the census, along with the numerous proposals made to the Local Government Board (LGB), which superintended the census process in England and Wales but devolved the task to the General Register Office (GRO); the alterations in the questions on the householders' schedule and thus in the information collected; and discusses the implications of the newer methods of publication of the results.

Proposals

While the 1891 census was preceded by a Treasury Committee which made numerous recommendations, which were not wholly carried out, the 1901 census was marked by increased formality in the design process.³ Recommendations were proposed to the LGB by the Institute of Actuaries and the Royal Statistical Society (RSS), and the General Register Office set up

interdepartmental meetings with the Labour Department of the Board of Trade and the Factory Department of the Home Office, which specifically considered occupational classification.⁴ Other deputations were received from the Census Committee of British Registrars, the London County Council, the Conference of Poor Law Guardians, the Lunacy Commission, the Education Department and the Board of Trade.

The Royal Statistical Society (RSS), as had been usual, set up a committee to lobby the LGB.⁵ Its first salvo was to draw the attention of the President of the LGB, Henry Chaplin, to the contents of their report for the 1891 census, and to attempt, using the London census of 1896 as the prime example, to have quinquennial censuses.⁶ The RSS's committee was also anxious that the census machinery be put into place as soon as possible. Their second salvo was more concerned with the wording of the Census Act than with the information to be collected; including the use of the word 'tenement' rather than 'storey' (and vice versa!), that the householders' schedules should not necessarily be copied into enumerators' books (a process which had been carried out since 1841, but was not done in Ireland), that 'occupied' houses which were uninhabited on census night should be enumerated separately, that the schedules for England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, should be as uniform as possible, and that those born abroad should be grouped as either 'British subject', 'Naturalised British subject', or 'Foreign subject'. These proposals, as will be seen, were generally acted upon. The exception was the quinquennial census, which was eventually ruled out at the committee stage of the bill.

The Institute of Actuaries also petitioned the LGB. They had five main requests.⁷ To ensure better figures for actuarial statistics they highlighted the necessity to have the correct age enumerated, and also requested that the age statistics for each year of life should be published. Their third suggestion was to ensure that census returns along with death records, not only of the UK but also for India and the colonies, were presented in a uniform fashion. Fourth, they recommended that the 'card system' be used for tabulation of the results, as in the Australian colonies. (This is not a reference to the Hollerith tabulating machine, but to hand-written cards which would probably have been used instead of the enumerators' books.)⁸ Their final recommendation was for the formation of a permanent census office. The Institute were less successful than their RSS colleagues, as only the first of the suggestions listed here was actually carried out, and then annual age returns were only published for selected areas.⁹

The other recommendations can be swiftly outlined. The London County Council petitioned for more detailed tabulations for London boroughs and for analyses by enumeration districts.¹⁰ The Conference of Poor Law Guardians asked for returns on paupers and epileptics.¹¹ The Education Department requested further information on deaf people.¹² The Board of Trade, as will be shown later, wanted alterations in the occupational classification scheme, but also hoped for tabulations of heads of families according to the number of domestic servants.¹³ Finally, the Census Committee of British Registrars lobbied for, among other things, higher fees for all those involved with the census.¹⁴

Lest it be forgotten, the taking of a decennial census was not a foregone conclusion. Although it was traditionally held every ten years, it was not a permanent feature, and did not become one until the 1920 Census Act. The Bill for taking the 1901 census of Great Britain was introduced into Parliament on 19 February 1900. There was little debate in Parliament over the Census Bill—where there was concerned the provision of a quinquennial census and whether to include questions on religion. There were three peripheral areas of debate. First, over the exact date of the census: Herbert Robert, MP for Denbighshire, asked for the census to be taken on a day other than a Sunday, so that those who kept the Sabbath would not be forced to ‘work’ on a Sunday. This amendment was withdrawn. An amendment to have separate Acts for Scotland and England was defeated. A further amendment, made by David Lloyd-George, proposing that the language question (which was planned to be asked of Welsh speakers in Wales) should be extended to England in order to ascertain the numbers of Welsh speakers in England was also defeated.¹⁵ The Act was passed soon after on 27 March and, for the first time, parliamentary provision had been made for the census more than seven months before it was to occur.¹⁶ The Act laid down that the census should be taken on midnight of 31 March 1901. This Act also marked a return to the practice of having a single Act for the whole of Great Britain, the previous occasion being in 1851.¹⁷ Incidentally, this Act was the first Census Act to invoke the Official Secrets Act of 1889—anyone communicating any information from the census without the correct authority would be in breach of the Act.

Quinquennial censuses

The Treasury Committee’s report (1890) recommended limited quinquennial censuses, but this recommendation was never followed.¹⁸ There was a population-only census of London in 1896 connected with the collection of rates rather than for demographic, medical or economic reasons.¹⁹ Following this there were further calls for quinquennial censuses to be held with national coverage. Despite the good reasons put forward by many statisticians, it would seem that the Treasury was against the idea mainly because of the cost and the implicit need to establish a permanent census office. However, the government did say, in 1900, that they had considered the question and that if a census were to be held in 1906 provision would be made for it a year earlier.²⁰ No provision was made. In late 1904 the LGB requested estimates of the cost of both a full and partial census for 1906, but when the figures were presented to the Treasury the plan was vetoed. A draft Bill for an enumeration of London was prepared for 1906, along the same lines as the one taken in 1896, but it never entered parliament.²¹ Thus, by the middle of the decade, the GRO were willing to accept the need for quinquennial enumerations, but the Treasury were unwilling to sanction the cost.

A further case for quinquennial censuses surrounds the ‘Eastbourne fiasco’. The Registrar-General’s mid-year population estimate for 1899 for this town

was 51,227. Under the Trustee Act of 1893 towns with a population of over 50,000 were able to issue corporation stock. Accordingly Eastbourne Town Council issued such a prospectus, claiming that the Registrar-General's population estimate for 1900 would be over 54,000, which it would have been had the 1900 estimates been calculated as the other intercensal years. The later published estimate was only 47,629 and the census gave the population as 43,337. In October 1907 the Town Council took an informal census which gave the population as 50,696, but the LGB were reluctant to grant county borough status on the basis of this enumeration. The GRO were called in to take a census, which they did on 24 January 1909—revealing a population of 49,286.²²

Carrying out the census

The census of 1901 for England and Wales was organised very much the same as its immediate predecessors.²³ Local registrars decided on the boundaries of enumeration districts, which were later confirmed by the Census Office. Registrars also appointed the enumerators who were to work under them. As in 1891, men and women between the ages of 18 and 65 were invited to apply. Enumerators, as before, circulated schedules to the householders in their enumeration district, and filled in details of the houses along their route in a memorandum book.²⁴ They were also required to recover the schedules from the householders after census night and subsequently copy out the details into their enumeration book, as well as cast up the totals of houses and persons in the spaces provided at the front of the enumeration book. Special double schedules had been provided for schools and hotels and other such establishments, and institution schedules were provided for institutions with more than 200 residents (which were to be, as before, enumerated by the head of the institution rather than an ordinary enumerator.) Welsh schedules were provided for Welsh speakers in Monmouthshire and Wales, and a special circular was drawn up in Yiddish and German for the recently-arrived Jewish population in London and Manchester, explaining how to fill in the form. Once enumerators had completed their tasks, they were to forward the books (including their memorandum book) to the local registrar, who after checking would forward it to the superintendent-registrar, who after scrutinising these returns would return them all to the Census Office. By all accounts the enumeration proceeded smoothly though, as always, there were letters to the press from householders who had not received schedules, or from those who had received them but the enumerator had not returned to collect them.²⁵

The questions asked were little different to those posed to the householders in 1891, though there are some interesting and potentially significant alterations. Figure 1 shows the information that was asked for and students of the census will recognise most of the column headings. As for alterations, first, the columns which in 1891 related to employment status (headed 'employer', 'employee' and 'neither employer nor employed but working on own account') were altered from tick-boxes (actually cross-boxes) to a separate column where the words 'employer', 'worker' and 'own account' were to be written out in full by the occupier. The purpose of this alteration was, no

doubt, to get better quality information than in 1891. In the *General report* for 1891 the authors are almost scathing in their description of the information collected in these three columns:

In numerous cases...no cross at all was made; in many others, crosses were made in two or even three columns, and, even when only one cross was made, there were often very strong reasons for believing that it had been made in the wrong column.

The authors argued that sometimes the error was intentional, but for others they had a more withering conclusion:

It appears to us scarcely reasonable to expect such a man [—an ordinary working man or labourer] laboriously to spell out the instructions, and, follow them duly, to select out of three columns the proper one in which to make his cross.

At this point the commentary abruptly concludes that these data were 'excessively untrustworthy' and would not be commented on further.²⁶ Close examination of the CEBs for 1891 might vindicate the Registrar-General and his Statistical Superintendent, but it seems that this was more a case of being reluctant to deal adequately with a question which had been poorly framed and had been unwillingly foisted upon the GRO by the LGB.

The second innovation was the addition of a question on homeworking. Those who worked from their own home were asked to state whether they were working at home. This question was asked at the request of the Home Office, but the Labour Department was also certainly in favour:

while the proposed distinction would doubtless be of greater value to the Home Office than to the Board of Trade, it would be of considerable service in the compilation of Board of Trade statistics especially as regards women's employment which forms an important branch of the work of the labour department. I understand that the letter from the Home Office refers in more detail to the exact important public service which will be served by the distinction in facilitating their administrative work under the Factory Acts, and throwing light on questions which are likely to be the subject of legislative proposals.²⁷

The third change was made in the 'infirmary' column, the heading of which was altered from three categories—(i) deaf and dumb (ii) blind and (iii) lunatic, imbecile or idiot—to four categories; the third being sub-divided to (iii) lunatic and (iv) imbecile or feeble-minded.²⁸

The occupiers' schedules were also redesigned so that better quality information was likely to be recorded. The instructions provided on the reverse of the schedule were rewritten to assist those completing the forms, and a memorandum was circulated to the local census officers, detailing the occupational titles that were deemed to contain insufficient information for

precise classification. For example, sawyers were to provide information regarding the material or trade in which they worked, and terms like agent or inspector were deemed too vague to be returned alone.²⁹ The *General report* suggests that these innovations were reasonably successful: in terms of occupational information the report states that 'there is no doubt that occupations have been more definitely and correctly returned at the census of 1901 than at previous censuses.'³⁰

Publication of the reports

The most striking innovation in the 1901 census was in the publication of the reports. The form of the Scottish report was not significantly altered, but the tabular material for England and Wales was transformed substantially. The first results of the enumeration were published rapidly. The GRO released the first preliminary population figures in May. The total given was 32,525,716, which compares well with the final return of 32,527,843 (and with the Registrar-General's estimate for mid-1901 of 32,356,731). County information was compiled in separate county parts, which were published as soon as they were prepared (London first in January 1902 and finally Radnor in February 1903) and characterised by splendid heliozincographed maps of each county showing the major administrative boundaries down to registration sub-district level. A separate volume of summary tables for the whole of England and Wales was issued later along with a topographical index of all the places mentioned in the county reports as well as a multitude of other smaller places. For the local historian working with the 1901 returns this index will be of great value. The set was completed by a *General report* that contains a valuable 'official' history of the census. These publications are listed in the Appendix to this article, the county volumes in order of publication (see pp. 38–40, below). A further publication which should be mentioned is William Sanders's digest of the results, which provides a handy reference to the returns.³¹

The period after the 1891 census saw considerable changes in local government boundaries. The 1888 Local Government Act had simplified administrative areas by creating Administrative Counties.³² The later Local Government Act of 1894 simplified matters further by ensuring that each civil parish (with a single exception) was only located in a single Administrative County.³³ As a result of these acts and other lesser legislation, the main administrative units of the country were more tightly defined. However, the major geographic units which the GRO worked with remained Registration Districts which, as a result of this legislation, became even less closely related to the local government units. Over 30 per cent of the Registration Districts were located within two or more administrative districts (either Administrative Counties and/or County Boroughs) which makes some comparative analyses difficult.³⁴

The publication of the reports in the sequence shown in the Appendix obviously necessitated a transformation in the management of the tabulation process, which was mainly put into practice by the newly appointed Registrar-General Reginald McLeod. The census was planned while Brydges Hennicker was Registrar-General. At around his 65th birthday in 1900 he retired (through ill health) and was replaced by McLeod, who remained in post until 1902 when William Dunbar took office. Three Registrar-Generals in the space of three of the most important years for the census would seem not to have been detrimental to the smooth running of this massive operation. Most likely, Noel Humphreys (the Assistant Registrar-General) and Dr John Tatham (the Superintendent of Statistics) ensured consistency. The administration of the process was obviously improved, as considerably more time for planning had been made available. The Census Office opened in Somerset House in May 1900 and by February 1901, when it moved to temporary accommodation at Millbank behind the Tate Gallery, it had a staff of 33. Peak employment at the office was in September 1901 when a total of 185 clerks (including, for the first time, female clerks) were at work. The whole process finished in July 1904 when the *General report* was published, a little over three years from the actual enumeration.³⁵

Occupational classification

While the census was being prepared the Board of Trade and the Home Office asked for further changes in the classification of occupations to bring the census figures 'into closer harmony with those issued by the Department represented.'³⁶ The number of occupational headings used in the 1901 census was 382, compared with 414 in 1881 and 347 in 1891. 'This number would have been even higher if many numerically small occupational descriptions had not been deleted to provide for the further sub-division of certain important groups, and the separate tabulation of others'.³⁷

The new classification differed most noticeably in detail rather than in essence. The basic occupational orders were re-ordered, but their constituent parts were roughly comparable with the previous classification. In the detail however, significant changes were made in the agricultural order after consultation with the Board of Agriculture.³⁸ The most obvious alteration was to take the two groups 'Agricultural labourer, farm servant' and 'Horsekeeper, Horseman, Teamster' from 1891 and disaggregate them into 'Agricultural labourers, farm servants—distinguished as in charge of cattle', the same 'distinguished as in charge of horses' and the same 'not otherwise distinguished'. But these alterations are not as important as the changes in definition of the group 'Farmer, Grazier', which had the same heading in 1891 as in 1901 but in 1901 included fruit, hop and potato farmers, and poultry breeders and rearers, which had been in different categories in the past.

The headings in the mining sub-order were altered considerably to distinguish coal miners into 'hewers', 'others below ground' and 'workers above ground'. The headings relating to the manufacture of iron and steel were enlarged and

split into 'blast furnaces', 'puddling/rolling mills', 'steel smelting and founding', and 'iron founding' and 'manufacture of iron articles', and other divisions were created between other metal manufacturers and the manufacturers of metal goods. In the building trades, for the first time, labourers were separated from their respective masters. Sub-divisions were also made in the cotton, wool and silk industries to separate out spinning from weaving and other processes. A better distinction was made within occupational groups regarding makers and dealers (which had indeed been first introduced in Scotland in 1891) and in some cases a distinction to separate out artisans from labourers, 'although the records of previous experience did not lead us to anticipate that these efforts would yield useful results'.³⁹ The occupational classification was said to be so altered as to make comparison with the 1891 census figures very difficult, but Table 33 in the *General report* gives a detailed breakdown of the changes in each category in these two censuses, and Table 34 gives aggregated classifications for all three census years 1881–1901.⁴⁰ It must also be remembered that when the quality of information collected in the schedules increases, effective comparisons with earlier years can decrease. This is particularly pertinent for 'indefinite' occupations like labourer or artisan, numbers of which decline between 1891 and 1901 because of better occupational reporting. According to the *General report*, a complete revision of the occupational dictionary was produced for the 1901 census, rather than reformatted with some additions as was done in 1891.⁴¹

At the request of the Home Office and the Board of Trade, information was also collected for the first time on the numbers of people working at their own homes and, while the information collected would seem to have been for all people, it was only published for certain occupational groups and not consistently over the whole country. Sometimes the county tables have this information for almost all occupations, sometimes only for selected occupations, and sometimes not at all. Statistics were given again distinguishing between employers, workers and those working on their own account. Unusually the *General report* does not comment on the possible improvement in quality of these statistics due to the alteration in the form of the question.⁴² It is the information contained in the three columns asking questions about employment status that presents the most interesting challenge to the local historian. The occupational status column, first used in 1891, has hardly been exploited in historical analysis, possibly because it was as flawed as the General Register Office suggested, but with the release of the 1901 census data, comparisons could be made, to ascertain at a local level the possible significance and extent of these errors.⁴³ This could be carried out using other sources like local directories, but these will tend to be biased towards the occupationally stable.

There were other modifications in the publication of the occupational material. Administrative counties were used for the first time, rather than registration counties, which allow for better comparisons with other routinely produced statistical data, such as poor law statistics and employment data. Details were

also given for county boroughs and urban districts with populations greater than 5,000 (rather than 50,000 as previously). Tables showing occupations of women were broken down by marital status for the first time: two groups, the 'unmarried' and the 'married or widowed', were distinguished. As with the 1891 census, only the occupations of those aged 10 and over were required, but the age grouping in the published reports was increased, splitting the earlier 10–14 group into 10–13 and 14, and the group 65–74 was reinstated after having been used only in 1871. There were also supplementary tables showing the occupations of children aged 10–13, and of pensioners and the retired showing their previous occupations.⁴⁴

Other material

Regarding housing no dramatic changes were made from 1891, though dwelling houses which were usually inhabited but uninhabited on census night were enumerated separately from those which were either inhabited or uninhabited. The 1851 definition of a house was still used in 1901 (the alteration was to be made in 1911.)⁴⁵ No definition of a dwelling was provided to the householder, and there was no definition given of separate rooms, which the householder with less than five was supposed to return.⁴⁶

Population was published by the same quinquennial age groups as previously, with single numbers for those aged under five. The 1901 tabulations were augmented with separate age totals for those aged 13–21. The *General report* contains a long section concerning the accuracy of age reporting, resulting mainly from an experiment where the separate ages of approximately half a million people were tabulated.⁴⁷

As noted above the question on nationality was altered. Foreigners filling in the birthplace column in the occupiers' schedule were asked for country of nationality as well as country of birth. Previously those born abroad were only asked to add whether they were British subjects and, if appropriate, whether they had been naturalised.⁴⁸ As the *General report* makes clear this information was not answered uniformly and, as in 1891, those born abroad who had 'distinctly British surnames' were classified as British subjects (with the exception of United States natives).⁴⁹ Finally, as in the most recent censuses, there was a question on language spoken for those in Scotland and Wales (and Monmouthshire), but for the first time a similar question was asked in the Isle of Man.

Before concluding, it is worth mentioning that the British census of 1901 was, like its predecessors, a *de facto* census, meaning that people were enumerated where they were on census night, not where they should have been. It is estimated that over 200,000 men were on military service, mostly in southern Africa, at the time of the census who were not enumerated at their usual place of residence, an issue which might limit some analyses of this census.⁵⁰

The 1901 census and local population studies

For the student of local population studies the 1901 census and its CEBs provide further possibilities for analysis. The release of the CEBs in January 2002 will be unusual as for the first time access will be made (predominantly) via the internet. This fact notwithstanding, the usual analysis which has taken place with earlier CEBs will obviously be possible, though it may prove more difficult for some to get access to the CEBs. The aspirations of family and community historians should not be subordinated to those of genealogists, and it is to be hoped that satisfactory arrangements will be made for the dissemination of CEBs to this particular user-community.

It is not necessary here to recapitulate the centrality of CEBs for local population studies in the Victorian era as countless articles (many of which can be found in previous issues of *Local Population Studies*) attest to their usefulness and also to their limitations. The 1901 census is of especial importance as it is the last census which used the now-familiar CEBs. In 1911 machine-tabulation of the results was carried out for the first time and the enumerators' books were by-passed in this process, as information from the household schedules was punched directly onto cards. This does not mean that the schedules for 1911 will not be made available for general use, but doubts have been raised. The seven censuses for which CEBs exist are in many respects comparable, and the information collected was augmented year on year by changes in the questions and by the addition of new questions. The 1901 census was no exception, and a number of alterations were made which provide interesting points of analysis for local and community historians. For example, the explicit inclusion in CEBs of houses that were temporarily unoccupied will make studies attempting to 'repopulate' communities much easier and more accurate.⁵¹ The altered question on place of birth is likely to have minimal effect on the analysis of migration,⁵² just as the alteration to the question on infirmities is unlikely to change the main thrust of any analysis of disabilities, a subject which has not received its due attention. Information collected on age, marital status, relationship to head of household and on the extent of households were unaltered, allowing comparative analysis to be carried out in all these areas. The question on the number of rooms, another variable which has not received its share of interest, can also be taken into account in studies of the household, and used in comparative work with the 1891 census, though latitude must be made in both years when interpreting what householders considered to be a room. The form of question on occupation was the same, and while the newly created classification will affect the published returns, the availability of the CEBs will allow this classification to be stripped away and occupations will be able to be reclassified to create comparative statistics. The alteration to the question on employment status and the introduction of a question on homeworking are likely to have the most profound repercussions on CEB-based studies. These new (and revised) questions on employment will provide further evidence on the industrial questions of the time, most notably using the higher quality occupational information, but also with the question relating specifically to homeworking.

It will be difficult to assess the accuracy of the employment status question, because the form of the question differed from that in 1891, but community studies may provide sufficient evidence by linking individuals from these two censuses and using other local sources. Also in this area, figures relating to female employment should be re-examined. The published returns suggest a decrease of over 2 per cent in women working in domestic service between 1891 and 1901, which is usually taken as a result of structural alterations in the labour market. However, because the definitions of this occupational order changed between 1881 and 1891 and again by 1901, we should be chary of accepting these figures.⁵³ The new question on homeworking will allow further conclusions to be made on the internal family economy and the role of women within the labour market.⁵⁴ A number of vital questions in this area demand answers: what was the household situation of these homeworkers? Are these women deserted wives and/or those with large numbers of children? Furthermore, it should be asked whether homeworking was indeed solely 'woman's work'.⁵⁵ The 1901 CEBs will therefore allow further analysis of all of the 'traditional' questions for which they have already been put to use and widen the chronological scope of this analysis, but they will also be able to be used to answer more detailed questions about the relationship of employment to the family because of the revised or new questions on employment status. Finally, with the release of a second census with questions on employment status and 'overcrowding', it is to be hoped that work will be carried out in these areas as there would seem to have been some hesitation in their use to date.

Appendix: the published returns for the Census of Britain, 1901

Note: the British Parliamentary Paper references are in two parts, the first refers to the Command number of the report. The second, in square brackets here, refers to the volume number of combined reports and the first page of that particular report. References in the endnotes refer to the page numbers of the individual reports rather than that of the combined volume.

Census of England and Wales, 1901, *Preliminary report and tables of the population and houses*, BPP 1901 Cd. 616. [Vol. XC, 1-.]

Census of England and Wales, 1901, *Area, houses, and population, also population classified by ages, condition as to marriage, occupations, birthplaces, and infirmities. County of...* Published in 53 parts, as below:

London, BPP 1902 Cd. 875 [Vol. CXX, 1-]

Lancaster, BPP 1902 Cd. 1002 [Vol. CXIX, 389-.]

York, BPP 1902 Cd. 1107 [Vol. CXXI, 639-.]

Stafford, BPP 1902 Cd. 1125 [Vol. CXXI, 1-.]

Durham, BPP 1902 Cd. 1147 [Vol. CXVIII, 673-.]

Essex, BPP 1902 Cd. 1148 [Vol. CXVIII, 769-.]

Kent, BPP 1902 Cd. 1171 [Vol. CXIX, 279-.]

Warwick, BPP 1902 Cd. 1175 [Vol. CXXI, 389-.]

Middlesex, BPP 1902 Cd. 1211 [Vol. CXX, 195-]
Glanmorgan, BPP 1902 Cd. 1212 [Vol. CXVIII, 869-.]
Chester, BPP 1902 Cd. 1213 [Vol. CXVIII, 143-.]
Hants (Southampton), BPP 1902 Cd. 1270 [Vol. CXIX, 95-.]
Devon, BPP 1902 Cd. 1271 [Vol. CXVIII, 487-.]
Surrey, BPP 1902 Cd. 1272 [Vol. CXXI, 207-.]
Gloucester, BPP 1902 Cd. 1289 [Vol. CXIX, 1-.]
Sussex, BPP 1902 Cd. 1290 [Vol. CXXI, 287-.]
Nottingham, BPP 1902 Cd. 1292 [Vol. CXX, 347-.]
Worcester, BPP 1902 Cd. 1293 [Vol. CXXI, 553-.]
Northumberland, BPP 1902 Cd. 1294 [Vol. CXX, 613-.]
Derby, BPP 1902 Cd. 1303 [Vol. CXVIII, 399-.]
Lincoln, BPP 1902 Cd. 1304 [Vol. CXIX, 689-.]
Norfolk, BPP 1902 Cd. 1305 [Vol. CXX, 425-.]
Dorset, BPP 1902 Cd. 1320 [Vol. CXVIII, 601-.]
Oxford, BPP 1902 Cd. 1322 [Vol. CXX 705-.]
Cambridge, BPP 1902 Cd. 1362 [Vol. CXVIII, 73-.]
Suffolk, BPP 1902 Cd. 1345 [Vol. CXXI, 113-.]
Leicester, BPP 1902 Cd. 1346 [Vol. CXIX, 609-.]
Somerset, BPP 1902 Cd. 1347 [Vol. CXX, 775-.]
Northampton, BPP 1902 Cd. 1359 [Vol. CXX, 527-.]
Cornwall, BPP 1902 Cd. 1360 [Vol. CXVIII, 251-.]
Monmouth, BPP 1902 Cd. 1361 [Vol. CXX, 273-.]
Berkshire, BPP 1902 Cd. 1362 [Vol. CXVIII, 1-.]
Cumberland, BPP 1902 Cd. 1376 [Vol. CXVIII, 331-.]
Hertford, BPP 1902 Cd. 1377 [Vol. CXIX, 209-.]
Wiltshire, BPP 1902 Cd. 1378 [Vol. CXXI, 475-.]
Bedfordshire, BPP 1903 Cd. 1406 [Vol. LXXXIV, 415-.]
Buckingham, BPP 1903 Cd. 1407 [Vol. LXXXV, 1-.]
Carnarvon, BPP 1903 Cd. 1410 [Vol. LXXXV, 217-.]
Carmarthen, BPP 1903 Cd. 1411 [Vol. LXXXV, 165-.]
Denbigh, BPP 1903 Cd. 1412 [Vol. LXXXV, 271-.]
Cardigan, BPP 1903 Cd. 1425 [Vol. LXXXV, 115-.]
Hereford, BPP 1903 Cd. 1426 [Vol. LXXXV, 373-.]
Salop, BPP 1903 Cd. 1430 [Vol. LXXXVI, 81-.]
Westmoreland, BPP 1903 Cd. 1431 [Vol. LXXXVI, 157-.]
Pembroke, BPP 1903 Cd. 1432 [Vol. LXXXV, 575-.]
Montgomery, BPP 1903 Cd. 1435 [Vol. LXXXV, 527-.]
Merioneth, BPP 1903 Cd. 1436 [Vol. LXXXV, 479-.]
Brecknock, BPP 1903 Cd. 1437 [Vol. LXXXV, 65-.]
Huntingdon, BPP 1903 Cd. 1438 [Vol. LXXXV, 433-.]
Flint, BPP 1903 Cd. 1439 [Vol. LXXXV, 329-.]
Anglesey, BPP 1903 Cd. 1447 [Vol. LXXXIV, 371-.]
Rutland, BPP 1903 Cd. 1448 [Vol. LXXXVI, 45-.]
Radnor, BPP 1903 Cd. 1499 [Vol. LXXXVI, 1-.]

Census of England and Wales, 1901, *Islands in the British seas. Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey and adjacent islands*, BPP 1903 Cd. 1473 [Vol. LXXXIV, 313–.]

Census of England and Wales, 1901, *Summary tables, area, houses, and population, also population classified by ages, condition as to marriage, occupations, birthplaces, and infirmities*, BPP 1903 Cd. 1523 [Vol. LXXXIV, 1–.]

Census of England and Wales, 1901, *Index to population tables for England and Wales in the county volumes of the census report, 1901*, BPP 1904 Cd. 1826 [Vol. CVIII, 335–.]

Census of England and Wales, 1901, *General report with appendices*, BPP 1904 Cd. 2174 [Vol. CVIII, 1–.]

Census of Scotland, 1901, *Preliminary report*, BPP 1901 Cd. 644 [Vol. XC, 203–.]

Census of Scotland, 1901, *Parliamentary burghs, districts of burghs, etc. Counties, population, etc, 1901 and 1891*, BPP 1902 Cd. 898 [Vol. CXXIX, 1133–.]

Census of Scotland, 1901, *11th decennial census of population of Scotland with report, Vol. I*, BPP 1902 Cd. 1257 [Vol. CXXIX, 687–.]

Census of Scotland, 1901, *11th decennial census of population of Scotland with report, Vol. II*, BPP 1903 Cd. 1481 [Vol. LXXXVI, 205–.]

Census of Scotland, 1901, *11th decennial census of population of Scotland with report, Vol. III*, BPP 1904 Cd. 1798 [Vol. CVIII, 625–.]

NOTES

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1. The literature is large. The more important are: E.A. Wrigley, ed., *Nineteenth-century society. Essays in the use of quantitative methods for the study of social data* (Cambridge, 1972); E. Higgs, *A clearer sense of the census. The Victorian census and historical research* (London, 1996); D.R. Mills and K. Schürer, eds, *Local communities in the Victorian census enumerators' books* (Oxford, 1996) and R. Lawton, ed., *The census and social structure. An interpretative guide to nineteenth century censuses for England and Wales* (London, 1978).
2. Some of the CEBs for 1901 have previously been made available in an anonymised form to researchers. Dyos's pioneering study of Camberwell was the first: see H.J. Dyos and A.B.M. Baker, 'The possibilities of computerising census data', in H.J. Dyos, ed., *The study of urban history* (London, 1968), 87–112. Researchers from the Cambridge Group also had access to samples from selected communities: see, for example, E.M. Garrett, 'The dawning of a new era? Women's work in England and Wales at the turn of the twentieth century', *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 28 (1995), 421–464 and E. Garrett, A. Reid, K. Schürer and S. Szreter, *Changing family size in England and Wales, 1891–1911. Place, class and demography in England and Wales* (Cambridge, 2001).
3. *Report of the committee appointed by the Treasury to inquire into certain questions connected with the*

- taking of the census, BPP 1890 LVIII. For a discussion see K. Schürer, 'The 1891 census and local population studies', *Local Population Studies*, 47 (1991), 16–29.
4. PRO RG 19/10. Letter from Arthur Whitelegge to Reginald McLeod dated 11 January 1901.
 5. The file PRO RG 19/4 contains the RSS's recommendations. Their memorials to the LGB are also to be found in the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*. The initial approach was in March 1894 when a deputation met the President of the LGB. (*JRSS*, 57 (1894), 379–83.) Later approaches are reported in *JRSS*, 62 (1899), 385–9, 679–3; 63 (1900), 107–11. A further report on the proposed census of 1906 is in *JRSS*, 63 (1900), 335–6. See also J.A. Baines, 'On census taking and its limitations', *JRSS*, 63 (1900), 41–71.
 6. The census of London of 1896 was enacted under the London (Equalisation of Rates) Act, 1894 (57 & 58 Vict. c. 53). It only collected information on name, age and sex. Population totals for unions, parishes and wards resulting from the enumeration are published in *London Census, 1896, Copy of the return of the population enumerated in each of the civil parishes in the administrative county of London on the night of 29th March 1896...*, BPP 1896 LXXII. No other information would seem to have been published.
 7. The memorial is published in the *Journal of the Institute of Actuaries*, 25 (1901), 362–65. See also the files at PRO RG 19/3.
 8. By 1901 census authorities in USA, Canada, Austria and Russia had used Hollerith machines. See Herman Hollerith, 'The electrical tabulating machine', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 57 (1894), 678–82. Higgs suggests that the short lead time for any census (and the ill-health of the Registrar-General Brydges Hennicker) was the prime reason for tabulating machines not being tested and used in the 1901 census. See E. Higgs, 'The determinants of technological innovation and dissemination: the case of machine computation and data processing in the General Register Office, London, 1837–1920', *Yearbook of European Administrative History*, 9 (1997), 161–77.
 9. A further attempt to influence census-taking was made by G. H. Ryan, 'The case for census reform', *Journal of the Institute of Actuaries*, 26 (1902), 329–65. (Also issued as a separate pamphlet without the discussion.)
 10. PRO RG 19/5.
 11. PRO RG 19/6.
 12. PRO RG 19/8. A request which was rejected.
 13. PRO RG 19/9. (This request caused a change in the classification of domestic servants—separating out more closely domestic servants working in a household and servants working in hotels, clubs and eating houses, etc.) Nationally, there were some 18 female domestic servants to every 100 households. See *Census of England and Wales, 1901, General report with appendices*, BPP 1904 Cd. 2174, 95–6. Hereafter cited as *General report*.
 14. PRO RG 19/2.
 15. 63 & 64 Vict. c. 4. *Census (Great Britain) Act, 1900*. The main parliamentary proceedings were reported in *The Times*, 10 March 1900, 9d and 16 March 1900, 11c. G. Parry and M.A. Williams, *The Welsh language and the 1891 census* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1999) confine their discussion to the census of that year.
 16. This speedy administration wrong-footed some. Reginald Duffield, the Medical Officer for Health of Paddington, was to present a paper to the Institute of Actuaries in April 1900 with suggestions on the proposed census: the Act was passed a month before his paper. See Reginald Duffield, 'Census taking', *Journal of the Institute of Actuaries*, 25 (1901), 341–61.
 17. Separate acts were passed for the Scottish censuses between 1861 and 1891. The organisation of the census in Scotland in 1841 and 1851 was supervised from the General Register Office in London. After the passing of the Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages (Scotland) Act in 1854 and the creation of a Scottish General Register Office the census in Scotland was controlled by this body, and superintended by the Secretary of State for Scotland.
 18. *Report of the committee appointed by the Treasury to inquire into certain questions connected with the taking of the census*, BPP 1890 LVIII, vi–vii.
 19. See note 6 above.
 20. See the comments of Henry Chaplin reported in *The Times*, 16 March 1900, 11c.
 21. PRO RG 19/42.
 22. PRO RG 19/44B contains lengthy correspondence surrounding the Eastbourne census of 1909.

- RG 19/44A demonstrates the pains the GRO went to in securing acceptable enumerators at this very individual census.
23. Details of the enumeration process in 1901 and earlier censuses can be found in Higgs, *Clearer sense* and in D.R. Mills and K. Schürer, 'The enumeration process', in Mills and Schürer, eds, *Local communities*, 16–26.
 24. Higgs, *Clearer sense*, 204 notes that PRO RG 27/7 containing the instructions to the officers is 'wanting'. A copy of these instructions has subsequently been deposited at PRO RG 27/15.
 25. For example, the letters from 'Occupier', an outraged occupier in Peckham whose house with a 200 foot frontage had not received a schedule; 'Quis Custodiet?' a London mansion-block dweller, who had ascertained from his butler that the schedule had not been collected; and 'Colonel' who occupied chambers in Victoria Street who had not received a schedule. (Letters to *The Times*, 3 April 1901, 15c, 4 April 1901, 6e and 5 April 1901, 9d.)
 26. Census of England and Wales, 1891, *General report, with summary tables and appendices*, BPP 1893–4 CVI, 36. See also Schürer, '1891 census and local population studies', 24–6.
 27. PRO RG 19/10. Letter from H. Llewellyn Smith to A. J. Mundy (Secretary of the Census Office) 2 November 1900. A letter of the same date signed by Arthur Whitlegge and Malcolm Delevingne from the Home Office states: 'it is of very great importance for the purpose of the administration of the Factory Acts and future legislation that the Home Office should know the numbers of home workers.'
 28. This alteration was made after consultation with the Lunacy Commission. PRO RG 19/7. The correspondence between the Registrar-General and Sir John Hibbert and the Lunacy Commission suggest that the GRO was not in favour of this innovation.
 29. *General report*, Appendix B, 323–5.
 30. *General report*, 90. See also p. 74.
 31. William Sanders, comp., *A digest of the results of the census of England and Wales; arranged in tabular form, together with an explanatory introduction...produced under the general supervision of Thomas G. Ackland* (London, 1903).
 32. 51 & 52 Vict. c. 41. The population of the ancient county of Berkshire was 256,509 while that of the administrative county was 180,354. Even allowing for the County Borough of Reading with a population of 72,217 there is a shortfall.
 33. 56 & 57 Vict. c. 73. The exceptional parish was Stanground in the administrative counties of the Isle of Ely and Huntingdonshire.
 34. See *General report*, 11–15 for further details.
 35. *General report*, 189–91. However, the census work was not entirely over. In December 1905, the GRO completed a report on the census of the British Empire: *Census of British Empire, 1901, Report with summary*, BPP 1905 CII, 1–. A document of interest to those working on comparative census analysis, and also fulfilling some of the Institute of Actuaries requests.
 36. *General report*, 73. See also the considerable correspondence in PRO RG 19/10.
 37. *General report*, 73–4.
 38. *General report*, 103 and 247.
 39. *General report*, 74. The discussion in the *General report*, 97–8, describes the problems faced in this classification, and gives grounds for the Census Office not fully acceding to the wishes of the Home Office and Board of Trade.
 40. This can be usefully compared with the table in *Occupations of the people (England and Wales) enumerated in 1871, 1881 and 1891*, BPP 1890 LXXX.
 41. PRO RG 27/16. *Instructions to the clerks employed in classifying the occupations and ages of the people*. (A reproduction of one of the pages of the 1881 occupational dictionary can be found in Higgs, *Clearer sense*, 208.)
 42. Though it briefly comments that they thought the figures were untrustworthy in 1891 (*General report*, 10.)
 43. One of the few publications considering the use of employment data from the 1891 CEBs is P. Jennings, 'Occupations in the nineteenth century censuses: the drink retailers of Bradford, West Yorkshire, *Local Population Studies*, 64 (2000), 23–37.
 44. A useful, if somewhat haphazard guide to the occupational information, mainly relating to London was published in M.G. Spencer and H.J. Falk, *Employment pictures from the census* (London, 1906).

45. Defined as 'all the space within the external and party walls of a building'. See Higgs, *Clearer sense*, 53–6.
46. In Scotland, the Act read: 'the particulars to be furnished by the enumerators shall show, with respect to each dwelling-house, the number of rooms, including a kitchen (if any) as a room, having a window, not being a window with a borrowed light.' 63 & 64 Vict. c. 4., § 12 (4).
47. *General report*, 46–67.
48. The problem faced by some foreigners in understanding the distinction between these three categories in the absence of any explanation on the occupiers' schedule may invalidate some of the distinction between these categories. While the Jewish Board of Deputies may have clarified the position for this particular group there may be many instances of inadvertent error with this information. See the letter from Mr Charles Emanuel to *The Times*, 2 April, 1901, 4c. A point which had previously been made in correspondence between the London Committee of Deputies of the British Jews. See PRO RG 19/11.
49. *General report*, 139.
50. The Registrar-General estimated a net loss of 277,197 English and Welsh men in the army, navy, marines and merchant service. See *General report*, 43–4 and 17.
51. D.R. Mills and K. Schürer, 'Residential patterns', in Mills and Schürer, eds., *Local communities*, 348–62.
52. See K. Schürer, 'Work, migration and the family: the example of Bethnal Green, 1891–1921', in M. Woollard, ed., *New windows on London's past: information technology and the transformation of metropolitan history* (Glasgow, 2000), 75–132.
53. *General report*, 76–7. See also E. Higgs, 'Women, occupations and work in the nineteenth century censuses', *History Workshop Journal*, 23 (1987), 59–80.
54. See S. Pennington and B. Westover, *A hidden workforce. Homeworkers in England, 1850–1985* (London, 1985). This work does not even cite the published returns for homeworking.
55. The gendered title of V. de Vesselitsky's study *The homemaker and her outlook* (London, 1916) is presumably indicative of contemporary feeling.

HOW ACCURATELY DO THE HEARTH TAX RETURNS REFLECT WEALTH? A DISCUSSION OF SOME URBAN EVIDENCE

Nigel Goose

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The Hearth Taxes, levied at the rate of one shilling every six months on the numbers of hearths per household between 1662 and 1689, are well known to and widely used by historians of population and social structure. Enough has been written on the administration of the Hearth Taxes, the instructions issued for their implementation and the complexity and variety of the resultant returns for historians to appreciate that they must be used with some caution.¹ But while it is widely appreciated that some Hearth Tax returns are of better quality in terms of coverage than are others, few have paused to question how accurately these tax assessments reflect wealth. It might be deemed self-evident that the number of hearths in a household (and there is no doubt that the returns do apply to households and not to houses) should, possibly with the occasional exception, give an indication of the size of accommodation occupied, and hence also give an indication of the wealth of the occupier. All other things being equal, the relatively poor might be expected to live in smaller households, and the wealthy to live in larger ones, a *prima facie* conclusion that is certainly suggested by the established relationship between socio-occupational status and mean household size in pre-industrial England.² Again there will be exceptions, and it may not have been uncommon for those of advancing years to retire to a smaller and more manageable dwelling regardless of the material resources still available to them.³ Controlling for age is rarely possible in studies of pre-industrial social structure, and has very rarely been attempted in relation to the Hearth Tax, but we can take solace from the fact that those who were in this age category and financial position are unlikely to form a substantial proportion of the household heads captured in the cross section that the Hearth Taxes provide.⁴

There are, of course, studies that have indeed attempted to validate the Hearth Taxes as indicators of social status and social structure by comparing them with other sources, such as assessments made under the Free and Voluntary Gift and Present of 1661, freeman's registers or other sources providing occupational information, the evidence of vernacular architecture or – surprisingly rarely – probate inventories.⁵ Each approach presents problems.

Architectural studies have indicated that there was no *invariable* relationship between number of hearths and dwelling size, but local variety makes it impossible in the current state of knowledge to say much more than that. Occupational data, when available, is also problematic, for while it is generally possible to identify the relative social position of those with occupational descriptions such as 'gentleman' and 'labourer', the social status associated with many intermediate occupational titles is often far less clear, particularly in the case of craftsmen and tradesmen, which makes it impossible confidently to relate standing as revealed by hearths assessed to status as indicated by occupation. The Free and Voluntary Gift was a socially selective tax which failed to penetrate far down the social hierarchy of most communities. The list for the town of Reading, for example, which usefully gives occupational titles in most instances, includes some 171 names out of a total population of approximately 5,500, just 3 per cent of the population and possibly 14 per cent or so of heads of household; but among these are just three cordwainers (William Cowdrey, William Goodale and Richard Clack), one weaver (George Cole) and not a single labourer.⁶ It is not surprising, therefore, that the Free and Voluntary Gift has been found to show a fairly close correspondence with Hearth Tax assessments, for the relationship between hearths assessed and wealth is likely to be more clear cut towards the top of the social scale than it might be lower down.⁷

What about probate inventories? Once again there are difficulties. Probate evidence is, to some degree at least, socially selective, and although it has been found to encompass quite a wide range of socio-occupational groups it is inevitably skewed towards the wealthy and includes very few at all who one might categorise as poor.⁸ There is also the problem of a time lag between the appearance of a name in a Hearth Tax assessment and the date of death and hence the drawing up of an inventory, for an individual's circumstances might well have changed between those two dates. Property transferred before death will obviously be excluded from an inventory valuation, as will 'transfers' made between death and valuation.⁹ The treatment of debts is often problematic: they are sometimes inconsistently recorded, sometimes recorded as 'doubtful' or 'desperate' and hence possibly uncollectable, while debts owed *by* the deceased are very rarely listed. Inventories can also describe the situation of individuals at very different stages in their life-cycles: young men (occasionally) struggling to establish a business, middle-aged tradesmen at the peak of their success, or elderly men and (more rarely) women living on dwindling savings.¹⁰ Most basically of all, inventories provide an imperfect representation of wealth, for they generally only include moveable goods and exclude fixed property, although leases are often included as part of the valuation. As such, they represent a fundamentally different form of wealth to the fixed property upon which the Hearth Taxes were levied.

These various problems by no means negate the usefulness of probate inventories, however. If collections of inventories are socially biased, they are rarely socially exclusive. To prevent distortion caused by the passage of time, rules need to be applied to limit the inventories that are allowed to qualify for comparison. Substantial transfers before death are more likely to relate to fixed

property than to moveables: if they do relate to moveables they are unlikely severely to distort the value of total possessions. The issue of debts is more problematic, and there is no doubt that the pervasive use of credit and the size of debts, in some instances at least, could cause serious distortion.¹¹ It is also possible that the exclusion of fixed property from inventories could lead to serious undervaluation of a testator's assets. But neither factor renders useless the picture given by the personal assets listed in inventories, for not only does this have significance in itself, but it is also likely that there was, generally at least, a rough and ready correspondence between wealth held in the form of personal assets and wealth held in either fixed property or in the form of debts. In offering appropriate reservations concerning the historical value of the probate inventory, one must not lose sight of the fact that they are documents which provide a unique view of the personal possessions of the individuals for whom they survive, valued by appraisers who were well placed to carry out their task, and hence give an insight into testators' wealth that cannot be equalled by any other extant source.

W.G. Hoskins was an early pioneer of the use of inventories and the first to attempt to compare them with Hearth Taxes: his small sample for Wigston Magna appeared to testify to a strong association between hearths assessed and inventoried wealth.¹² But there is one notable, broadly-based, survey that has compared inventoried wealth with Hearth Tax evidence – Margaret Spufford's study of the county of Cambridgeshire: published as long ago as 1962, the results have recently been presented again in her 2000 Phillimore Lecture to the British Association for Local History.¹³ Here she compared Hearth Tax assessments for Michaelmas 1662, Michaelmas 1664 and Lady Day 1666 with probate inventories proved in the Ely Consistory Court covering the decade 1661-70, hence demanding a very close chronological match which produced 101 rigorous nominal links between the two classes of document.¹⁴ The main conclusion that she reached was the Hearth Tax could indeed 'be used as a general economic guide', for the medians of wealth of those with various numbers of hearths differed widely, although she also added the important rider that, 'The extent of economic and social overlap, and the blurring of economic and social divisions caused by inheritance and personal preference, means that although the tax may be used as a guide to status and wealth in general, it may not safely be used in any individual example'.¹⁵ Writing some 38 years later, she concluded, in very similar terms, that while 'houses with the same numbers of hearths might each shelter an assorted body of people ranging from rich to poor... yet, in general, an incontrovertible association existed between wealth and house size'.¹⁶

It has been pointed out that, despite the breadth of its coverage, the strict standards for nominal linkage applied by Spufford meant that her sample group represents less than one per cent of all the households in the county.¹⁷ Furthermore, although no full occupational breakdown is provided, it is clear that the great majority of her sample was rural – almost inevitably in this overwhelmingly rural county – and there is no mention at all of the city of Cambridge, for which just a handful of Consistory Court probate documents

survive. There are, however, a considerable number of inventories that pertain to the city that have been excluded from Spufford's analysis, for besides the few proved in the Ely Consistory Court there were many others proved in the Archdeaconry Court, which had prime responsibility for the city, and yet more in the University Vice-Chancellor's Court, which handled the testamentary business of employees of Cambridge colleges as well as of those deemed 'privileged persons' of the university by dint of a more indirect economic connection.¹⁸ There is therefore considerable scope for an examination of the urban evidence, and for comparisons to be made with rural Cambridgeshire. The remainder of this article will examine the relationship between the Hearth Tax assessments, house size and personal wealth for the city of Cambridge, supplemented by a similar study of the town of Reading in Berkshire, for which a large sample of archdeaconry and consistory court inventories has also been analysed and compared with extant Hearth Tax data.¹⁹

Hearths and wealth in Cambridge and Reading

Cambridge and Reading were both substantial urban communities, with populations of *circa* 8,000 and 5,500 respectively in the later seventeenth century, and were thus subject to the usual high levels of mobility found in towns of this stature.²⁰ In this context nominal linkage is extremely difficult, and hence to provide an adequate sample the inventories of those dying within 15 years of the relevant tax assessment were used. Because of the problem caused by inconsistent recording of debts and possibly also of leases, both of these categories of wealth were excluded from the analysis, except when making a direct comparison with Spufford's data. For Reading it is unfortunate that no Hearth Tax return that included those exempt from taxation could be traced, while no exemption certificates survive either, the best return available being the list of those taxed for Michaelmas 1664 which included a total of 432 names. For Cambridge the best identified return (which lists both those taxed and those 'discharged by certificate') was that for Lady Day 1674, which listed 1,660 names (1,423 taxed and 257 exempt).²¹ As it was only possible to trace the probate inventory of a single exempt individual in Cambridge, that of Edward Bittany (or Bitteny) of St Peter's parish, 3rd cook to Trinity College, this discrepancy in the quality of the Hearth Tax returns should not unduly prejudice the results.

The first stage of the analysis employed the extant probate inventories on their own, and involved a comparison between personal wealth and the number of rooms listed. Covering the last 30 years of the seventeenth century for Cambridge and the last 40 for Reading they provide quite substantial samples, although both include very few one-roomed dwellings: because inventories are not invariably divided into discrete rooms, it is often difficult to identify one-roomed cottages with confidence. Many inventories which do record rooms, of course, give confusing information, and for this analysis all such cases have been removed from the sample.²² The results presented in Tables 1 and 2 show that houses with up to three rooms most generally indicate a

Table 1 The relationship between personal wealth* and number of rooms in Cambridge 1670–99

Wealth £	Number of rooms													Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13+	
1-10	2	21	5	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	35
11-20	-	7	4	10	6	5	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	33
21-30	1	2	8	6	4	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	25
31-40	-	1	1	2	-	3	4	3	-	1	-	-	1	16
41-50	-	-	1	2	3	2	1	3	-	-	1	-	-	13
51-60	-	-	-	1	2	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	8
61-70	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	2	1	-	-	1	-	7
71-80	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	4
81-90	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	1	-	-	1	-	6
91-100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
101-150	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	6
151-200	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	3	-	-	-	1	7
201-250	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	5
251-300	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	4
301-350	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
351-400	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
401-450	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
451-500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
501+	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	3	31	20	30	17	21	14	16	9	5	1	2	4	173

Note: * excluding debts and leases

modest level of wealth, 93 per cent in this category in Cambridge owning personal wealth of £30 or under and 88 per cent in Reading. At the four-room level the range spreads, to include a handful of individuals with personal wealth valued in excess of £70, although the occupiers of both four and five-roomed dwellings are still quite heavily concentrated at the lower end of the spectrum of wealth, more noticeably in Cambridge than in Reading. Occasionally, however, even occupiers of four-roomed dwellings could exhibit considerable personal wealth by the standards of the day. In Cambridge Thomas King, plumber and glazier of Great St

Table 2 The relationship between personal wealth* and number of rooms in Reading 1660–99

Wealth £	Number of rooms													Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13+	
1-10	-	8	7	2	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21
11-20	-	2	8	10	6	2	2	3	2	-	-	-	-	35
21-30	-	2	2	3	5	2	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	20
31-40	-	1	1	4	2	6	2	1	-	-	-	1	-	18
41-50	-	-	-	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	-	1	1	13
51-60	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	3	-	-	1	-	-	6
61-70	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	7
71-80	-	-	-	2	1	2	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	8
81-90	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
91-100	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	3
101-150	-	-	-	-	3	3	-	3	1	1	1	-	3	15
151-200	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	1	1	2	7
201-250	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	4
251-300	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
301-350	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
351-400	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
401-450	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
451-500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
501+	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
Total	-	13	20	28	23	24	11	14	11	6	5	4	6	165

Note: * excluding debts and leases

Mary's parish, held net personal wealth of £315/19s/9d, rising to £590/19s/9d if his debts and leases are included; in Reading we find Jonathan Clack (sometimes Clark), maltster, holding £360/5s/0d in moveable wealth, plus a £20 lease and £10 in debts good and bad.²³

Those with six rooms tended to be wealthier, but still approaching one-third possessed personal wealth of £30 or under, and only at the level of nine or ten rooms is more substantial wealth generally to be expected, although even here the range is remarkably wide. In Reading, for example,

Table 3 The numerical relationship between rooms and hearths in Cambridge

No. of hearths	No. of rooms													Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13+	
1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
2	-	1	6	4	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	14
3	-	-	-	2	2	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
4	-	-	-	3	1	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	8
5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	4
6	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	2
14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total	-	2	6	9	4	7	3	4	3	1	-	1	1	41

Table 4 The numerical relationship between rooms and hearths in Reading

No. of hearths	No. of rooms													Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13+	
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	2	1	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	7
3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
4	-	-	-	-	1	3	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	6
5	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Total	-	-	-	2	2	7	2	1	2	-	2	-	-	18

five out of 11 occupiers of nine-roomed dwellings held net personal wealth valued at £30 or less: a cordwainer, a glazier, a clothier, a glover and an innkeeper.

Many factors might, of course, interfere with an expected correspondence between house size and wealth. Inventories give no precise information about the *size* of rooms, and nor does the number of rooms reveal anything about the *condition* of a dwelling. As already noted, the wealthy may not always have chosen to occupy a large house: other factors, including old age or family size, may well have been taken into consideration. But in towns there is another

prominent cause of distortion, and that is the large number of inns or victualling houses, which were necessarily commodious though no guarantee of great wealth. Hence in Cambridge the ten-roomed house in the £31-40 category that features in Table 1 was an inn, as were both of those with 12 rooms. In Reading the occupier of a ten-roomed house, worth only £41 in personal wealth, was a freemason and victualler or innkeeper.²⁴ It is unsurprising, therefore, that Tables 1 and 2 do no more than indicate a loose correspondence between house size as measured by the number of rooms and personal wealth, and that the range of wealth possessed by individuals dwelling in houses of various sizes could be quite considerable.

Tables 3 and 4 are the product of nominal linkage between those probate inventories that reveal numbers of rooms clearly, and Hearth Tax assessments. The number that could confidently be linked is very small, if a little larger than Spufford's sample, amounting to approximately 1.5 per cent of households in Reading and 2.3 per cent in Cambridge.²⁵ The association between rooms and hearths, like that between rooms and wealth, is again apparent only in general terms, and the range is again often wide. In the Cambridge sample houses with two hearths had from two to eight rooms, the majority possessing three or four. Most of the three- or four-hearth houses had four to six rooms, though the range spread as far as nine.²⁶ The one household with more hearths than rooms (10 rooms, 14 hearths) was an inn. The small Reading sample suggests that most two-hearth households contained from four to six rooms, the range for three- and four-hearth households running from five to nine. In Reading there are proportionally fewer very small households in this data compared to that for Cambridge, and none at all that was clearly a single-room dwelling.

In Tables 5-7 the two ends of the chain are joined in a direct comparison between number of hearths assessed and personal wealth. The samples remain small, now amounting to approximately 2.8 per cent and 1.9 per cent of Cambridge and Reading households respectively, and hence in these three tables the data is presented by range of numbers of hearths assessed. In each town these ranges are clearly and positively related to both the mean and the median level of personal wealth as given in inventory valuations, with the exception of the 10 plus hearth range in Cambridge, where the sample size is just two, both of whom were innholders.²⁷ One, Mr Thomas Ward of Holy Trinity parish whose premises included as many as 33 rooms and 22 hearths, held net personal assets valued at £218/7s/6d; the other was Thomas Tailor of Great St Mary's who – despite running premises with 10 rooms and 14 hearths – possessed personal net wealth valued at just £33/1s/8d. The spread of wealth to be found for each category of hearths assessed was, however, very broad, although the sample size for Reading is particularly small. The range of wealth is wide for Cambridge too, although it is encouraging that where numbers are largest – in the 1-2 hearths and 3-5 hearths range for Cambridge – there is very little overlap between the upper quartile of the former category and the lower quartile of the latter. The distinction between the 3-5 hearth and 6-9 hearth categories would also have been clearer were it not for the inclusion within the latter group of Henry Heckle, baker of Trinity

Table 5 The relationship between number of hearths and personal wealth* in Cambridge

No. of hearths	Number	Mean (£)	Median (£)	Lower quartile (£)	Upper quartile (£)
1-2	22	20	15	4	29
3-5	20	76	46	28	88
6-9	6	212	122	35	266
10+	2	126	(126)	-	-

Note: *excluding debts and leases

Table 6 The relationship between number of hearths and personal wealth* in Reading

No. of hearths	Number	Mean (£)	Median (£)	Lower quartile (£)	Upper quartile (£)
1-2	11	42	32	14	44
3-5	11	127	72	26	178
6-9	1	(217)	(217)	-	-
10+	-	-	-	-	-

Note: *excluding debts and leases

Table 7 The relationship between number of hearths and range of personal wealth* in Cambridge and Reading

No. of hearths	Cambridge (£)	Reading (£)
1-2	1-66	3-176
3-5	11-458	10-519
6-9	27-700	-
10+	33-218	-

Note: *excluding debts and leases

College and Sarah Fison, widow of Richard Fison baker to Peterhouse, possessing net wealth of just £35/5s/4d and £27/8s/8d respectively, for their ovens would have been included for the purposes of taxation.²⁸ Their households, however, did contain 7 and 6 rooms respectively, and in the case of Heckle his inventory valuation also included debts of £35 and a lease valued at £40.²⁹

Table 8 Detailed breakdown of the relationship between number of hearths and personal wealth in Cambridge, excluding debts and leases

Wealth (£)	Hearths								Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Under 10	2	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
10-19	-	5	-	2	-	-	-	-	7
20-29	1	2	2	1	-	-	1	-	7
30-39	-	1	2	-	1	-	1	1(14)	6
40-49	-	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	5
50-59	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	3
60-69	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	4
70-79	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
80-89	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
90-99	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
100-149	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
150-199	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	3
200-249	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1(22)	1
250-299	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
300-349	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
350-399	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
400-449	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
450-499	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
500-549	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
550-599	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
600-649	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
650-699	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
700+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1(9)	1
Total	4	18	8	8	4	2	3	3	50

Hearth Tax assessments and personal wealth in town and countryside

To allow closer comparison with the county-wide data for Cambridgeshire employed by Margaret Spufford, the Cambridge results for matches between hearths and personal wealth are presented in Tables 8 and 9 in the more detailed format she employs in her recent article published in *The Local Historian*, with

Table 9 Detailed breakdown of the relationship between number of hearths and personal wealth in Cambridge, including debts and leases

Wealth (£)	Hearths								Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Under 10	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
10-19	1	4	-	2	-	-	-	-	7
20-29	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	3
30-39	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	1(14)	4
40-49	-	1	2	2	-	-	-	-	5
50-59	-	1	2	-	1	-	-	-	4
60-69	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
70-79	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
80-89	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
90-99	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
100-149	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	3
150-199	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3
200-249	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1(22)	2
250-299	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	2
300-349	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
350-399	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
400-449	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
450-499	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
500-549	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
550-599	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
600-649	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
650-699	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
700+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1(9)	1
Total	4	18	8	8	4	2	3	3	50

Table 8 continuing to exclude debts and leases and Table 9 including both of these forms of wealth. One striking contrast between the Cambridge data and those presented by Spufford is the markedly smaller number of one-hearth households that could be identified and related to an inventory in the town as compared to the county at large, just 4 out of 50 (8 per cent) compared to 38

out of 101 (38 per cent). This might well be the product of the greater fluidity of urban populations, particularly towards the lower end of the social scale, rendering them less easy to trace in inventory evidence, but it might also represent a real difference between the social status of one-hearth households in town and countryside.³⁰ Proportions in the two- and three-hearth categories are similar, the shortfall of one-hearth households in Cambridge being compensated by considerably larger numbers with four hearths or more (40 per cent compared to 16 per cent). While this feature is, once again, partly the product of the number of innkeepers found in the town, who accounted for five out of the eight households with six hearths or more, it cannot be explained in these terms alone.

Looking in general terms at the relationship between inventoried wealth and number of hearths assessed, this more detailed presentation of the data gives no cause to deviate from the conclusion reached above: a rough and ready relative correspondence between Hearth Tax assessment and probate inventory valuation remains, though with a significant range of wealth for each category of hearths and some surprising anomalies, some of which can be explained (such as our innkeepers and bakers discussed above) and some of which remain mysterious. The inclusion of debts and leases in Table 9 fails to subvert this overall impression, although it does have the effect of extending even further the range of wealth, if not the centre of gravity, to be found among those taxed on two, three, four and five hearths. This is an important conclusion, for the manner in which the exclusion of debts *can* impact severely upon inventoried wealth in individual cases might give the opposite impression. Examples such as John Middleton of Cambridge, butcher, whose wealth falls from £278/0s/10d to a mere £28/0s/10d once his debts are omitted – although by no means unique – are the exception rather than the rule.³¹

With the data broken down in this way there are, however, now some evident contrasts with Spufford's county data, for at every level of Hearth Tax assessment median personal wealth was lower in town than in countryside. This is particularly evident in the two-hearth category, for in the town 10 out of the 18 in this group held personal wealth valued at under £20 (56 per cent), whereas across the county two-hearth households tended to display a considerably greater level of personal comfort, with only 5 out of 33 (15 per cent) falling below £20 in terms of assessed personal wealth. Hence in Cambridge the median wealth of those assessed on two hearths was just £15, compared with £60 in the county sample, a contrast which is large enough to suggest that we are dealing with rather different social categories here. Such a view is supported by occupational evidence, for in Cambridgeshire at large the level of median personal wealth held by occupants of two-hearth households was 'double that of the average husbandmen', while in Cambridge two-hearth households included a range of quite humble occupations, including two cordwainers, a tailor, a bricklayer, two porters and a waiter.³² A similar contrast remains at the level of three hearths. In the county at large, for three-hearth households median wealth rises to £140, a figure close to that 'at which the yeomen might be appraised'; in the town it stood at just £53, and

Table 10 Moveable wealth in Cambridgeshire 1661-70, Cambridge 1670-99 and Reading 1660-99, including debts and leases: number and percentage of inventories in different bands of wealth*

Wealth (£)	Cambridgeshire		Cambridge		Reading	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1-10	28	9.6	33	19.4	10	6.1
11-20	41	14.1	26	15.3	20	12.1
21-30	41	14.1	17	10.0	21	12.7
31-60	52	17.9	33	19.4	36	21.8
61-100	40	13.7	21	12.4	31	18.8
101-300	60	20.6	25	14.7	33	20.0
301-500	16	5.5	8	4.7	9	5.5
501+	13	4.5	7	4.1	5	3.0
Total	291	100.0	170	100.0	165	100.0
1-30	110	37.8	76	44.7	51	30.9

Note: * excludes all one-room dwellings

Source: Cambridgeshire data from Spufford, 'Significance', Table 4, 64.

again this group included a baker, a tailor, a cordwainer and three barbers. For four-hearth houses as well the urban median, at £101, stood well below the rural figure of £300 plus, although the range of wealth found in this category in the town was particularly wide, extending from Richard Billips (elsewhere, Billops alias Billings) of St Benedict's parish, a joiner of 67 years of age at his death, with moveable wealth and debts valued at just £11/6s/4d, to William Graves, senior, of Great St Mary's, a stationer and bookseller with personal wealth of £667/13s/4d, including debts of £10 and a lease valued at £200.³³ Only seven representatives appear in Spufford's data with five or more hearths, but their median wealth 'shot up to well over £500'; in the town there are 12 in this category, with a median level of personal wealth of just £158.³⁴ Only two of these possessed personal wealth in excess of £500: Mr George Foster of St Botolph's parish, gentleman, scholar's servant, and leaseholder of 'The Christopher', whose moveables were valued at £520/10s/4d, including debts of £255; and Mr Thomas Day of Great St Mary's, apothecary, with moveables valued at £1,502/13s/0d, including debts of £802/13s/0d.³⁵

Is this a Cambridgeshire anomaly, or is it a general feature of urban in comparison with rural society? The Reading evidence, which is unfortunately slight, points both ways. At the two-hearth level the median, at £49, stands closer to the Cambridgeshire county figure than it does to that for the town.

The nine individuals represented here were a weaver, a husbandman, a nailer, a saddler, a dyer, a glazier, a barber-surgeon and two grocers. As only two individuals were identified with three hearths (mean and median wealth £55) the data are rather meaningless, but the median wealth of the six assessed on four hearths, at just £104, stood far closer to the urban figure than to that for the county. Again the range found here was very wide indeed, extending from Edward Wilmer of St Mary's parish, scrivener, with moveables valued at just £9/17s/8d, to Robert James the elder, clothier, also of St Mary's, with personal wealth valued at £783/4s/11d, including debts of £225/1s/6d and leases to the value of £354. Although there are only four in the sample, those with five or more hearths also had more in common with residents of the town of Cambridge than with those in the countryside, for their median moveable wealth stood at just £192.

To explore this discrepancy further we return, in Table 10, to the larger sample of inventories included in Tables 1 and 2 above, to examine the relative levels of moveable wealth that the inventories reveal. To render the data comparable with that presented by Spufford, debts and leases have been included in these calculations, while the one-room category – described by Spufford in her tabulation as 'dubious' and omitted from the urban tabulations for the same reason – has been removed from both the urban and the rural data. What now becomes clear is that, with over 19 per cent of the sample for the town of Cambridge lying in the £1-10 category compared to under 10 per cent in Cambridgeshire and just 6 per cent in Reading, there is something unusual about the Cambridge figures. A cursory glance through the list of 33 with this modest level of wealth reveals the heavy presence of menial college servants, for among the 18 whose trade is revealed are two gardeners (one of Sidney Sussex), two beadsmen of Trinity College (one also a carpenter), a porter at Sidney Sussex and a bedder of Magdalene. Four barbers also feature, as well as – unusually for urban inventories – one labourer. It would appear, therefore, that the use of those inventories proved in the University Vice-Chancellor's Court has skewed the sample, resulting in the inclusion of a higher proportion of inventories of men of modest means, and providing greater possibilities of these providing links back to the Hearth Tax.

At higher levels of wealth there is nothing in these figures to suggest fundamental urban/rural contrasts, remembering that the proportions throughout for Cambridge will obviously be affected by the relatively large number of modest wealth-holders included here. There is no reason, therefore, to question the reality of the urban-rural contrast in levels of moveable wealth for those with more than two hearths noted above. While the lower median wealth of two-hearth householders in Cambridge, which was not mirrored in the Reading evidence, can now be explained as a product of skewed data, there is no similar distortion that can explain the lower levels of wealth in town than in countryside found in both Cambridge and Reading for those assessed on three hearths or more.³⁶

Conclusions

There are four main conclusions to be drawn from this discussion, the first of which concerns the procedure of record linkage. Record linkage is without doubt a powerful tool in the armoury of the local population historian. If it finds its ultimate expression in 'total reconstitution', it can also be used more simply but very successfully to test one demographic source against another, and this testing can take either global or nominal form.³⁷ It can be used to discredit, or at least to qualify, the value of an historical source or – as in the present instance – can be used primarily as a means of validation. Nominal record linkage can, however, prove to be exceedingly frustrating: it generally produces very small samples and is incredibly time-consuming.³⁸ And, as recently emphasised elsewhere, this is more true for the early modern than for the modern period, and is particularly true for larger towns as compared with market towns and villages.³⁹ Even in an early modern rural setting, as the relatively small number of matches between the Hearth Taxes and probate evidence achieved for an entire county by Margaret Spufford shows, the nature and survival of the sources, a mobile population and the need for rigour in ensuring correct matches all militate against the generation of anything but small samples. In the case of the urban evidence presented above, one can see that when the focus is upon particular communities, even large communities, the sample size is likely to be tiny. The fact that, in proportional terms, the urban sample used here – for Cambridge at least – was larger than in Spufford's rural survey is largely fortuitous, and was produced by the employment of additional evidence from a special court with only local jurisdiction, while it is also in part the product of a less rigorous methodology which allowed a considerably longer chronological gap between the Hearth Tax and an inventory qualifying as a nominal match. The research and analysis that underpinned the urban material presented here runs to many hundreds of man-hours, and hence researchers must seriously consider the opportunity cost involved when deciding whether or not to attempt nominal linkage work of this type. The rewards can be considerable, but they are hard won.

The second conclusion is that the urban data presented above does support the view that, in general terms at least, the Hearth Taxes can indeed be used in town as well as countryside to indicate relative wealth and social status, but emphasis must be firmly placed upon the phrases 'in general terms' and 'relative wealth' – not singly, but in combination. The range of wealth that could be held by individuals who were assessed on the same number of hearths could be very wide indeed, perhaps wider in the urban evidence than in the rural sample provided by Spufford, and hence they are not at all a safe guide to the wealth of particular individuals.⁴⁰ In towns, this fact is compounded by the influence of specific problematic occupations, notably that of innkeeper and baker. This positive conclusion can be further validated, for all of its vagueness and uncertainty, by occupational evidence where available. Hence in

Cambridge, of 54 one-two hearth householders identified by occupation, 15 followed the (usually) humble trades of cordwainer, tailor or labourer; very prominent among those living in households with the largest number of hearths were apothecaries, vintners, chandlers, doctors, public notaries, brewers and butchers, as well as our problematic innkeepers and bakers.⁴¹

A third conclusion arises from the contrasts discovered between Spufford's data and the urban evidence presented here, and this is that particular numbers of hearths may well indicate different median levels of wealth in town as compared with countryside. Conclusions about the wealth, and therefore possibly also the social standing, of groups assessed on particular numbers of hearths do not, therefore, readily translate from rural to urban society; in both towns, apart from at the two-hearth level in Reading, the evidence examined here suggests that median wealth was consistently lower for each level of Hearth Tax assessment. This again underlines the fact that the Hearth Tax cannot be taken as a general guide to *levels* of wealth, even if it does faithfully reflect the *shape* of local social structures. One might reflect, of course, that this conclusion could have more general implications for the admirable project led by Margaret Spufford to map the Hearth Tax across the country. Can we be sure that differences in the distribution of hearths *between regions* translate directly into differences in wealth, any more than we can between town and countryside within the same county? Do we not need to explore further the influence of vernacular architecture, cultural patterns, topography and demographic pressures? Surely there is a case for testing the Hearth Taxes more widely against probate inventory and other evidence from a variety of regions and types of settlement before drawing conclusions from such evidence, the time-consuming nature of such research notwithstanding?

A final conclusion arises almost as a by-product of this attempt to examine the validity of the Hearth Taxes as indicators of social structure, for it is quite clear that the prime sources used here to achieve this – probate inventories – can themselves vary in quality and coverage.⁴² Surprising as it may seem given the rigour with which most historians appraise the quality of the local sources upon which they rely, few seem to appreciate that collections of probate inventories are not all the same. We have seen here that the University Vice-Chancellor's Court appears to have dealt with an unusually high proportion of inventories exhibited by inhabitants of only modest means, skewing both the hierarchy of wealth that the inventories reveal as well as the levels of wealth revealed for those towards the lower end of the Hearth Tax hierarchy. In this case we are dealing with an exceptional instance, which can be identified and allowed for. But, while accepting that 'there was no single uniform pattern of church administration throughout all 26 dioceses', there was a reasonably clear hierarchy of ecclesiastical courts – in ascending order, archdeaconry, consistory and prerogative – towards which testators of different status would gravitate, by legal requirement and possibly also by choice.⁴³ In Cambridgeshire this hierarchy may not have operated in this way in practice, for the Bishop of Ely's Peculiar jurisdiction, and hence his Consistory Court, encompassed 110 parishes, leaving the town of Cambridge and some 38 more parishes to be dealt with by the Archdeaconry of Ely, creating a geographical rather than a hierarchical

distribution with very little overlap between the two, which is encouraging from the point of view of the comparison and contrast presented here.⁴⁴ Elsewhere, however, it is quite likely that collections of inventories exhibited in archdeaconry courts pertain – in general – to more humble men than do those in consistory courts.⁴⁵ The wealthiest men, however, in both town and country, proved their wills and exhibited their inventories in the Prerogative Courts of Canterbury and York – the great majority at Canterbury – and these do not survive in any quantity, have not been indexed or are not readily available for inspection, and hence have often been ignored by historians working with inventories.⁴⁶ The omission of the very wealthy from the Reading sample, for instance, is quite clear from an analysis of the content of their wills, including those proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, in the later seventeenth century: the top 12 in the period 1660-99 left bequests amounting to between £735 and £2370 *in cash alone*, while just two Reading inventories appear in the sample used here, covering the same period, indicating total moveable assets in excess of £700.⁴⁷ Now there is a sense in which this is encouraging, for if there is a general correspondence between Hearth Tax assessments and the wealth of the middling to middling wealthy as revealed in archdeaconry and consistory court inventories, then one would expect this to be even more marked at the very top of the social scale. But it is worrying too, for it is not clear that the Prerogative Court of Canterbury was used consistently, and if greater or lesser resort was had to it in different localities, this might again skew the sample of inventories exhibited in the lower courts that are available to researchers in local collections. What, for instance, are the implications of the fact that in excess of 50 per cent of extant Reading wills (and presumably also inventories) were processed by the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in the years 1660-99, compared to just 20 per cent of those that survive for Cambridge? In comparing Hearth Taxes with probate inventories, therefore, it is not only the quality and coverage of the various Hearth Tax assessments that must give pause for thought.

NOTES

1. C.A.F. Meekings, *The Surrey Hearth Tax of 1664*, Surrey Record Society, 17 (1940), Introduction; Meekings, 'Dorset Hearth Tax assessments 1662-4', *Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society* (Dorchester, 1951), 'Introduction'; T. Arkell, 'A student's guide to the Hearth Tax: some truths, half-truths and untruths', in N. Allridge ed., *The Hearth Tax: problems and possibilities*, (Hull, 1984), 23-44; T. Arkell, 'Printed instructions for administering the Hearth tax', in K. Schürer and T. Arkell, eds, *Surveying the people. The interpretation and use of document sources for the study of population in the later seventeenth century*, (Oxford, 1992), 38-64.
2. P. Laslett, 'Size and structure of the household in England over three centuries', *Population Studies*, 23 (1969).
3. An example might be William Stout of Lancaster. Though far from poor, after giving over his trade he gave up housekeeping on more than one occasion to become a lodger: J.D. Marshall, ed., *The autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster*, Chetham Society, 3rd series, 14 (1967), 102, 205, 216.
4. Age as determined by the year the freedom was gained has been compared to Hearth Tax assessments in Chester, and reveals the expected contraction in later life for the majority of craft

- and tradesmen, but continued expansion for the professional and distributive trades. Unfortunately, no indication of sample size is given: N.J. Alldridge, 'House and household in Restoration Chester', *Urban History Yearbook 1983*, (Leicester, 1983), 49-51.
5. A range of such studies are usefully discussed in C. Husbands, 'Hearths, wealth and occupations: an exploration of the Hearth tax in the later seventeenth century', in Schürer and Arkell, eds, *Surveying the people*, 65-77.
 6. Public Record Office (hereafter PRO), E179/243/21: Free and Voluntary Gift assessments may well have varied in their coverage, and these assessments deserve more attention than they have been given to date. This very approximate population estimate is based on parish register baptism evidence and assumes a baptism rate of 30/1000: Berkshire Record Office (hereafter BRO), D/P 96/1/1-4, 97/1/1-2, and G.P. Crawford, ed., *The registers of the parish of St Mary, Reading, 1583-1812*, (Reading, 1892).
 7. Husbands, 'Hearths, wealth and occupations', 71, and sources cited therein.
 8. N. Goose and N. Evans, 'Wills as an historical source', and T. Arkell, 'Interpreting probate inventories', in T. Arkell, N. Evans and N. Goose, eds, *When death do us part: understanding and interpreting the probate records of early modern England*, (Oxford, 2000), 44-5, 73-4.
 9. The will of Thomas Richards senior, cordwainer, of Reading, written in October 1617, lists his shop tools, but they are missing from his inventory of April 1620: BRO, MS wills Berks. (archdeaconry). See also R.P. Garrard, 'English probate inventories and their use in studying the significance of the domestic interior 1570-1700', in A. van der Woude and A. Schuurman, eds, *Probate inventories: a new source for the historical study of wealth, material culture and agricultural development*, (Utrecht, 1980), A.A.G. Bijdragen, 23, 69.
 10. Ambrose Turner of Reading, inventory dated April 1599, was probably a young beginner, possessing just £2 worth of apparel and £5 in the hands of an aunt; the inventory of Ralph Hide, husbandman, dated April 1600, is unusual in that it states that he was 'a young man and had not long been married but remained with his father'; Henry Head is described as a grocer in 1698, but his inventory mentions no shop, wares or debts, and he had probably given over his trade: BRO, MS wills Berks. (archdeaconry). See also J.P.P. Horn, 'The distribution of wealth in the Vale of Berkeley, Gloucestershire, 1660-1700', *Southern History*, 3 (1981), 81-109.
 11. See, for instance, R. Grassby, 'The personal wealth of the business community in seventeenth century England', *Economic History Review*, 23 (1970), Table 1, 223.
 12. W.G. Hoskins, *The Midland peasant*, (London, 1957), 299-301.
 13. H.M. Spufford, 'The significance of the Cambridgeshire Hearth Tax', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, 55 (1962), 53-64; M. Spufford, 'The scope of local history, and the potential of the Hearth Tax returns', *The Local Historian*, 30 (2000), 202-21.
 14. Spufford, 'Significance', 53.
 15. Spufford, 'Significance', 58.
 16. Spufford, 'Scope of local history', 204-5.
 17. Husbands, 'Hearths, wealth and occupations', 70-1.
 18. Cambridge University Library, EPR Archdeaconry, EPR Consistory; University Archives, V.C. probate, bundles 1-17. See also N. Evans, 'The occupations and status of male testators in Cambridgeshire, 1551-1800', in Arkell, Evans and Goose, eds, *When death do us part*, 178-9.
 19. BRO, MS wills Berks. (archdeaconry), 1660-99; Wiltshire County Record Office, Salisbury Consistory Court inventories, 1660-99.
 20. N. Goose, 'Fertility and mortality in pre-industrial English towns from probate and parish register evidence', in Arkell, Evans and Goose, eds, *When death do us part*, Table 10.1, 192.
 21. PRO, E79/244/23 (Cambridge), E179/76/460 (Reading).
 22. Garrets and cellars have been treated as rooms, 'closets' only when they housed a quantity of furniture; stables, barns and outhouses have been excluded. For some discussion of the difficulties here see M.W. Barley, *The English farmhouse and cottage*, (repr. Gloucester, 1987, 1st publ. 1961), 45-7; M.A. Havinden, ed., *Household and farm inventories in Oxfordshire 1550-1590* (London, 1965), esp. 16; J. Thirsk (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales, Vol. IV 1540-1640*, 729 *et sequ.*; Garrard, 'English probate inventories', 62-3; A. Dyer, 'Urban housing: a

- documentary study of four Midland towns 1530-1700', *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 15 (1981), esp. 208-10. Dyer offers different calculations based upon different interpretations of what constitutes a room. For the purposes of the present analysis, consistency across the sample of inventories is the key factor.
23. Inventories dated 1694 and 1687 respectively.
 24. For a similar situation in Exeter and Chester see W.G. Hoskins, ed., *Exeter in the seventeenth century: tax and rate assessments 1602-1699*, Devon and Cornwall Record Society, new series, 2 (1957), xvii; Alldrige, 'House and household', 42.
 25. These calculations, based upon estimated population sizes, assume 4.5 persons to a household.
 26. This is comparable to Richmond in Yorkshire: R. Fieldhouse, 'The hearth tax and social structure in the borough of Richmond in 1673', *Cleveland and Teeside Local History Bulletin*, 14 (1971), 14-15.
 27. The better measures of central tendency are the medians and quartiles, as means can be significantly affected by extreme values in a distribution: R. Floud, *An introduction to quantitative methods for historians*, (London, 1973), 72.
 28. By the statute of 16 Chas II c.3 any household with three hearths was liable: industrial hearths (such as kilns and furnaces) were not supposed to be taxed, but bakers' ovens were chargeable.
 29. For similar remarks regarding bakers in Chester see Alldrige, 'House and household', 44, 47.
 30. It is also the case that households with just one hearth, at 29 per cent, formed a low proportion of the total in Cambridge compared to the county as a whole, for in Cambridgeshire '30-50 per cent of the houses in each parish had one hearth' – Spufford, 'Significance', 59. The figure was also very low in comparison with the textile town of Colchester, where 46 per cent of households contained only one hearth (calculation from PRO E179/246/22). In this respect, as well as in regard to the proportion of households exempt – 15 per cent in Cambridge and 53 per cent in Colchester – there were clearly pronounced differences in social structure between towns of similar sizes, and not simply between town and country. Cambridge had more in common with York, another trading, service and administrative centre, than it did with textile towns: see D. Hibberd, 'Data-linkage and the Hearth Tax: the case of seventeenth-century York', in Alldrige ed., *The Hearth Tax*, 62.
 31. The same is true of Edward Westley of Little St Mary parish in Cambridge, cutler, tennis court keeper and coroner to Kings College, whose moveable wealth falls from £334/12s/9d to £59/15s/9d once a lease valued at £260 and debts of £14/7s/0d are removed.
 32. Spufford, 'Scope of local history', 205.
 33. Spufford, 'Scope of local history', 205; Billips age was established from a deposition recorded in an occupational database for Cambridge compiled from a wide range of sources.
 34. Spufford, 'Scope of local history', 205.
 35. For the influence of innholders of modest wealth at this level of hearths see above, 50-1.
 36. A possible contributing factor to this discrepancy *may* be the greater prevalence of heated rooms in town as compared to countryside, as found in Warwick in comparison with the rest of Kineton Hundred: P. Styles, *Studies in 17th century West Midlands history*, (Kineton, 1978), 157.
 37. For a 'global' example, N. Goose, 'The Bishops' Census of 1563: a re-examination of its reliability', *Local Population Studies*, 56 (1996), 43-53; for a nominal example, P. Razzell, 'The evaluation of baptism as a form of birth registration through cross-matching census and parish register data: a study in methodology', *Population Studies*, 26 (1972), 121-46. For 'total reconstitution' see, for example B. Reay, *Microhistories: demography, society and culture in rural England, 1800-1939*, (Cambridge, 1996).
 38. For similar concerns in the urban context see C. Galley, *The demography of early modern towns: York in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Liverpool, 1998), 74 and fn. 39. There is a large literature on record linkage, discussing both possibilities and pitfalls. See, for example, E. A. Wrigley, ed., *Identifying people in the past*, (London, 1973); A. Macfarlane, *Reconstructing historical communities*, (Cambridge, 1977); S. King, 'Multiple-source record linkage in a rural industrial community, 1680-1820', *History and Computing*, 6 (1994), 133-42; P. Tilley and C. French, 'Record linkage for nineteenth-century census returns: automatic or computer-aided?', *History and Computing*, 9 (1997), 122-33.

39. Unpublished paper delivered to first annual LPS/LPSS Conference, University of Hertfordshire, 7 April 2000: see report in *Local Population Studies*, 66 (2001), 11.
40. Alldrige's conclusion for Chester is similarly guarded, while here statistical comparison between Hearth Tax assessments and Poll Tax data failed to establish a necessary correlation: 'House and household', 41-3.
41. N. Goose, 'Economic and social aspects of provincial towns: a comparative study of Cambridge, Colchester and Reading, c.1500-1700', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1984), 354-5. Hibberd reached similar conclusions using occupational information for York: 'Data-linkage and the Hearth Tax', 68-9.
42. For some regional differences see Arkell, 'Interpreting probate inventories', 99-102.
43. T. Arkell, 'The probate process', and Goose and Evans, 'Wills as an historical source', in Arkell, Evans and Goose, eds, *When death do us part*, 9, 40.
44. Arkell, 'Probate process', 11.
45. Arkell, 'Probate process', 11.
46. Goose and Evans, 'Wills', 40-4; Arkell, 'Interpreting probate inventories', 73.
47. N.R. Goose. 'Decay and regeneration in seventeenth-century Reading: a study in a changing economy', *Southern History*, 6 (1984), Table 3, 65.

REVIEW OF RECENT PERIODICAL LITERATURE

Nigel Goose and Andrew Hinde

All articles reviewed were published in 2000 unless otherwise stated.

N. Alvey, 'Growth in the population of St Albans from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries,' *Local Historian*, **30**, 150–9.

Alvey uses population estimates from the Hearth Taxes, estimates made using numbers of baptisms and birth rates, and data from the censuses of 1801–1851 to chart the course of population change in St Albans from the 1660s until 1851. The population increased over this period by about 50 per cent in the central Abbey parish, and by almost 300 per cent in outlying parishes. The bulk of the increase took place after 1750. Alvey is a statistician, and explores the fitting of various models to the population growth. The paper is a good example of how to use and interpret quantitative data cautiously.

F.W.G. Andrews, 'Employment on the railways in east Kent, 1841–1914', *Journal of Transport History*, **21**, 54–72.

At one level this paper can be seen as another illustration of the problems with nineteenth century census data on occupations. Andrews tries to work out the numbers employed by the railway companies of east Kent after 1841. He finds that the census enumerators' books are much better than the census reports for this purpose, but that there is a big difference between the number of employees recorded in company records and that reported in the census (compare the paper by Jennings reviewed below). He also laments the difficulty of working with company records, and their inability to provide employment data for a sequence of time points. Many local historians who have tried to use similar sources will share his frustration.

W.C. Baer, 'Housing the poor and the mechanic class in seventeenth-century London', *The London Journal*, **25**, 13–39.

This paper attempts to chart the distribution of the quality of housing enjoyed by most Londoners on the basis of their occupation and the number of hearths in their households. Tentative estimates of the cost of building new housing and the cost of leasing it lead to the conclusion that at least some of the 'mechanick class' could afford to live in new build. But demand for housing was so great that proclamations on housing standards were generally ineffective, and many of the poor had to resort to intensive use of cheap

housing, particularly in the form of divided houses and tenements. Housing for all income groups thus increased markedly during the seventeenth century, in the face of proclamations on quality.

G. Barnes, 'Enteric fever in Chester in the 1880s and 1890s', *Cheshire History*, 39 (1999–2000), 83–94.

This article shows the persistence of enteric fever in Chester through the last 20 years of the nineteenth century, as the city council continued to struggle with the problems of sewage disposal and water supply.

C.J. Bearman, 'Who were the folk? The demography of Cecil Sharp's Somerset folk singers', *Historical Journal*, 43, 751–75.

This unusual paper uses material from the census enumerators' books, together with oral history and other documentary evidence, to describe the demography of around 300 Somerset folk singers identified by Cecil Sharp in his researches carried out between 1903 and 1909. Bearman shows that, relative to the population of Somerset as a whole, '[t]he singers represented an elderly and settled population, a high proportion of whom gained their living from agriculture or from the trades and occupations which support rural life' (p. 772). More than half of them, for example, were still living in the places where they had been born (compare the paper by Newton Taylor reviewed below). In addition, Bearman has some interesting remarks to make about the existence of a 'peasantry' in nineteenth-century England, a subject which has stirred considerable debate during the last 25 years among social and demographic historians.

J. Beckett and C. Smith, 'Urban renaissance and consumer revolution in Nottingham, 1688-1750', *Urban History*, 27, 31–50.

Catherine Smith's work on Nottinghamshire market towns will be familiar to *LPS* readers from her article published in number 65, also reviewed below. Here, with John Beckett, she focuses upon the county town of Nottingham, a town which grew from a population of about 4,300 in 1670 to over 10,000 by 1740, during which time it also underwent substantial urban renewal, largely as the result of private enterprise. A total of 1,088 probate inventories, almost all proved in the archdeaconry court, are then analysed to show the strength of the 'middling sorts', and their consumer-conscious behaviour. It is then speculated that it was this 'group' that must have provided the driving force for urban renewal. The problems involved in analysing inventories are revealed by the fact that, contrary to expectations, their average value in Nottingham actually declined across the period under consideration, while familiar problems of definition are raised by the apparently all-inclusive definition of those deemed to be 'middling' (see the article by H.R. French reviewed below).

I.K. Ben-Amos, 'Reciprocal bonding: parents and their offspring in early modern England,' *Journal of Family History*, 25, 291–312.

One of the more influential demographic theories of recent decades has been J.C. Caldwell's 'wealth flows' theory, in which he argues that the fertility transition takes place when the direction of the 'net inter-generational wealth flow' switches from being upwards (from child to parent) to downward (from parent to child). By 'net inter-generational wealth flow', Caldwell means the balance of the whole range of goods and services which might be provided by members of one generation to members of another over the whole period from the birth of the child to the death of the parents. English historical demographers have tended to argue that Caldwell's theory does not apply to England because even during the pre-industrial period, long before there was any inkling of fertility transition, the balance of wealth flowed from parent to child. In this important paper, Ben-Amos re-examines this issue, using qualitative evidence from sources such as diaries. The conclusion reached is that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, on balance, parents provided more support for their children than children did for their parents, including, for example, help while their children were away 'in service' and economic assistance immediately after the offspring left service. Nevertheless, children did reciprocate, especially when their parents were elderly. In poorer families, moreover, it seems that parent-child and child-parent flows were more in balance than they were among the better off. The paper also stresses the amount of inter-generational negotiation which went on, arguing that families were held together by 'bonds of exchange rather than by sacrifices or prescribed rules' (p. 305). Ben-Amos's view thus lies somewhere between the historical demographers' affective nuclear family (described, for example, in Mount, F., *The subversive family*, (London, 1992)), and the Stone-Ariès-Shorter view of 'a historical shift from domination to affection' (p. 291).

J.L. Bolton, 'Irish migration to England in the late middle ages: the evidence of 1394 and 1440', *Irish Historical Studies*, 32, 1–21.

Bolton re-examines the alien subsidy roll of 1440 analysed long ago by Sylvia Thrupp (which, unusually, included the Irish among aliens), to positively identify 706 Irish adult men in England, although the existence of gaps in the record and evidence of mis-identification suggests that a figure of *circa* 1,000 is probably more accurate, plus an unquantifiable number of itinerant workers. Like other aliens, they were mainly small-scale artisan-retailers, and their geographical concentration is explained partly by their point of entry to England but also by the need to avoid competition with other aliens who might well have practised similar trades. Both push and pull factors explain their migration. While there is evidence of English resentment towards them, it is patchy and inconsistent, and the topic of their reception by the indigenous population is one that requires further research.

J. Boulton, ' "It is extreme necessity that makes me do this": some "survival strategies" of pauper households in London's West End during the early eighteenth century', *International Review of Social History*, 45 (supplement 8), 47–69.

An important issue, as yet insufficiently examined, concerns the extent to which 'informal' sources of help were used by poor households in the past in an attempt to make ends meet. Poor relief records typically only record relief given 'formally' under the Old or New Poor Laws, and reliance on them can lead historians to under-estimate the amount of assistance given by kin, friends and neighbours. However, the parish of St Martin's in London's West End has a 'rich set of poor relief records which, unusually, can shed valuable light on less formal survival strategies' (p. 68). In this paper, Boulton uses these records to show that the range of responses to the threat of imminent destitution was very wide, and frequently involved recourse to kin or neighbours. Assistance was more commonly given by older generations to younger ones (for example 'surplus' offspring being boarded out with their grandparents) than by younger generations to their forebears (compare the paper by Ben-Amos reviewed above).

J. Broad, 'Housing the rural poor in southern England, 1650–1850', *Agricultural History Review*, **48**, 151–70.

Following his two papers reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, **65** (2000), this paper is a further contribution by Broad on the theme of parish-based welfare provision under the Old Poor Law. He shows that during the century and a half before the New Poor Law many parishes built up a substantial stock of community-owned housing which was let to their poor. These early examples of 'local authority housing' survived the rapid population growth of the eighteenth century and the pressure on the poor rates of the early nineteenth century. By the 1830s, more than half of the parishes in Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire had at least one such house, and a quarter had five or more. They did not, however, survive the New Poor Law of 1834, which, with its emphasis on the workhouse test and its restrictions on outdoor relief, made this kind of pauper housing redundant.

C.E. Challis, 'Apprentices, goldsmiths and the north in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England', *Northern History*, **37**, 61–70.

Although focusing mainly upon the rise of two northern emigrants to London to positions of prominence as controllers of the mint in the Tower of London, Challis also tabulates data on the regional and social origins of goldsmiths' apprentices in the capital 1580–1695. He demonstrates the proportional importance of the north as a source of London migrants in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, and also its declining relative share by the later seventeenth century. This reflects the trends found for other City companies, and is explained as the result of urbanisation in the provinces (offering alternative attractions to London) and a long-term shift in the social origins of London apprentices, who were decreasingly of humble origins.

A. Clark, 'The New Poor Law and the breadwinner wage: contrasting assumptions', *Journal of Social History*, **34**, 261–81.

Perhaps the main interest of this paper to population historians will lie in its discussion of the way in which T.R. Malthus's ideas were embodied in the

framing of the New Poor Law of 1834. Clark shows that the architects of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act were heavily influenced by the view that, for a man, being able to work and earn enough to support a family was a privilege not a right. It was only later in the nineteenth century that the notion of the 'breadwinner wage', first as a 'reward for respectability' (p. 269) and ultimately as a right, took over.

M. Clark, 'Foreigners and freedom: the Huguenot refuge in Dublin City, 1660–1700', *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 27, 382–9.

Clark describes the establishment of a Huguenot community in late-seventeenth-century Dublin, encouraged by the Dublin City Assembly. By the reign of Queen Anne the French Huguenots had already become well established within the civic structure of the city, and in turn contributed to its demographic and economic expansion.

B. Coates, 'Poor relief in London during the English Revolution revisited', *The London Journal*, 25, 40–58.

Coates agrees with Ronald Herlan's argument that poor relief did not *collapse* in London as a result of the Civil Wars, but concludes more pessimistically that the system by no means successfully contained the problem, as all poor relief institutions suffered from declining revenue caused by economic crisis and Parliamentary demands for money. The problem was most severe in the more recently urbanised parts of the capital, and in the hospitals and livery companies. Even where poor relief provision was strongest, in the City parishes, it was still unable to keep pace with increasing poverty in this period.

L.F. Cody, 'The politics of illegitimacy in an age of reform: women, reproduction, and political economy in England's New Poor Law of 1834', *Journal of Women's History*, 11, 131–56.

M. Levine-Clark, 'Engendering relief: women, ablebodiedness, and the New Poor Law in early Victorian England', *Journal of Women's History*, 11, 107–30.

These two papers are both concerned with the treatment of women by and under the New Poor Law (NPL). The first tells the story of the reform of the bastardy laws which was an integral part of the NPL. Under the paternalistic Old Poor Law, mothers of illegitimate children could name the fathers and thereby allow the relieving authorities to recoup the cost of relieving their illegitimate children from these errant men. However, the Old Poor Law came under increasing criticism from liberal political economists and others, who argued that men and women should take responsibility for their own actions and their consequences. This argument led to a view that the immorality and lack of self-control of women was the source of the problem of illegitimate children: hence the harshness of their treatment under the NPL, which placed responsibility for bastards solely with their mothers.

The second paper explores the ambiguous status of adult women under the NPL. The problem for the authorities was that two widely held beliefs came into conflict when able-bodied married women or widows with children applied for relief. One belief held that because they were able-bodied, they should be either in work or in the workhouse. The other held that because they were married women or widows with children, they should be at home looking after their families. Levine-Clark shows, using data from Sussex, London and the West Riding of Yorkshire, that no general resolution to this contradiction was reached. Instead, local poor law authorities tended to decide upon each case individually.

H. Compton, 'Staffing Oxford Canal – around 1851', *Cake and Cockhorse*, **14**, 230–46.

This local study is worthy of note for the manner in which it shows how the census of 1851 can be linked with an array of other sources (unfortunately not fully specified here) to gather background information on the employees in a local industry, in this case those working on the Oxford Canal.

C. Cubitt, 'Virginity and mysogyny in tenth- and eleventh-century England', *Gender and History*, **12**, 1–32.

Cubitt examines the ideology of virginity in the writings of the Benedictine Aelfric, and finds that he associates it with men rather than with women. This, it is argued, excluded women from playing a significant part in the new monasticism, a movement of great ecclesiastical and political power, and thus their contribution to religious life was diminished. Aelfric actually saw women as sexually dangerous, and thus his attitudes strengthened gender separation. Hence this period saw a hardening of gender roles, and was not – as is sometimes suggested – a time of exceptional freedom for women.

B. Dackombe, 'A Quaker perspective on migration: Ampthill and Hitchin preparative meetings, 1811–1840', *Family and Community History*, **3**, 49–64.

The Quaker removal certificates described in this paper are an interesting new source giving data on migration. Their advantage is that they are not socially specific, like poor law settlement examinations (which are heavily concentrated on the poor). However, they have the disadvantage that they only record moves which involved a change of meeting. Since Quaker meetings were often considerable distances from one another (the two neighbouring meetings studied in this paper were ten miles apart), many short-distance moves would not involve a change of meeting, and thus go unrecorded. Because of this, Dackombe's rejection of the 'hypothesis that Quaker migration was short-distance in nature' (p. 61) is probably not valid. There is no doubt that many Quakers moved longer distances, and that probably the average distance moved by Quakers was longer than the average distance moved by non-Quakers, but we do not know how many short-distance moves took place but did not require a removal certificate.

N. Durbach, "'They might as well brand us": working-class resistance to compulsory vaccination in Victorian England', *Social History of Medicine*, 13, 45–62.

This paper examines resistance to compulsory vaccination in Victorian England. Resistance was concentrated in the lower middle class and the 'respectable' working class, and was maintained right through into the early twentieth century. One of its driving forces was a belief that the vaccination regulations were part and parcel of the New Poor Law. This belief was fuelled by some local poor law authorities, who considered that free vaccination might be a form of outdoor relief, with the consequence that free vaccination by definition pauperised the recipients. The central authorities repeatedly and stoutly denied that there was any connection, to no avail. The paper includes descriptions of protest meetings and gatherings, noting that many of these took the form of galas or fairs.

M. Ecclestone, 'Life on a knife edge?', *Local Population Studies Society Newsletter*, 27, 10–12.

P. Franklin, 'Multiple occupations and the middle peasant, or, the real Eddie Grundy?', *Local Population Studies Society Newsletter*, 27, 12–13.

Ecclestone stresses that the variability of medieval peasant incomes mattered as much as the average value. He illustrates this with calculation based on data from the Bishop of Winchester's manors between 1277 and 1348, showing that 'middling' peasants would have struggled to make ends meet in almost half of these years. In his response, Franklin accepts that the position of these 'half virgaters' was difficult, and says that many of them probably sought non-agricultural sources of income to supplement farming. Unfortunately, medieval sources are often silent about these by-employments. The paper by Kitsikopoulos reviewed below adds more fuel to the pessimists fire by suggesting that historians have underestimated the size of a viable peasant holding in this period.

B. Eckstein and A. Hinde, 'Measuring fertility within marriage between 1841 and 1891 using parish registers and the census enumerators' books', *Local Population Studies*, 64, 38–53.

This paper is an attempt to show how family reconstitution-type rules for analysing fertility might be extended to incorporate data from the census enumerators' books (CEBs). By combining data from parish registers and the CEBs, it is possible to measure fertility within marriage during the second half of the nineteenth century using a much larger proportion of marriages than would be possible with conventional family reconstitution. The paper is mainly methodological in focus, but it does present some results from northern Hampshire which indicate that marital fertility there between 1851 and 1891 was at a similar level to that reported in the Cambridge Group's reconstitutions for the early modern period (see E.A. Wrigley, R.S. Davies, J.E. Oeppen and R.S. Schofield, *English population history from family reconstitution: 1580–1837*, (Cambridge, 1997), 355).

K. Fisher, ' "She was quite satisfied with the arrangements I made": gender and birth control in Britain 1920–1950', *Past and Present*, **169**, 161–93.

K. Fisher, 'Uncertain aims and tacit negotiation: birth control practices in Britain, 1925–50', *Population and Development Review*, **26**, 295–317.

Both these papers draw on Fisher's oral history study of knowledge about and attitudes towards sex and contraception among a sample of working-class couples from South Wales and the Oxford area who were married during the 1930s. In the first paper she challenges the belief, conventional among demographers, that the decline in fertility in the early-twentieth century was principally the result of changes in women's position concerning birth control. She argues persuasively that decisions about when to use birth control and what methods to use were largely (in many cases almost entirely) made by the husbands. In part this was because the available methods (principally the condom and *coitus interruptus*) were 'male methods'. In part, though, it was because women were happy to have these decisions made by their husbands: 'women successfully engineered a situation in which they abnegated responsibility for birth control and achieved their aim of remaining detached from sexual issues' (p. 189).

The second paper takes the challenge to the demographers further, by questioning the three preconditions for fertility decline set out in 1973 in A.J. Coale, 'The demographic transition', in *International Population Conference, Liège 1973*, vol. 1 (Liège, 1973), 65. In so doing, she is striking at the heart of the theoretical edifice which has been constructed by demographers around the fertility transition, for these preconditions have attained an almost sacred status. In brief, they are (1) that fertility must be 'within the calculus of conscious choice' (Coale, 'Demographic transition', 65), (2) that reduced fertility must seem to confer some advantage to couples, and (3) that couples must know some means of birth control, be determined to use it, and communicate sufficiently to be able to use it effectively. Fisher argues, rather persuasively, that none of these preconditions is necessary. For in 1930s Britain 'contraceptive behaviour [was] ill-thought out, barely discussed, [and] haphazard' (p. 313), yet this messy, unfocused approach to contraception was enough to achieve below-replacement fertility.

H.R. French, 'Social status, localism and the "middle sort of people" in England 1620–1750', *Past and Present*, **166**, 66–99.

This paper is an attempt to locate the 'middle sort of people' in early modern England – a descriptive term that has achieved great currency in recent historiography despite the fact that it was virtually never employed by contemporaries themselves. Defining exactly who the 'middle sort of people' were is problematic, relying partly on self-description, and the most common term found in the documentary sources is reference to the 'chief inhabitants' of parishes. French attempts to identify these 'chief inhabitants' by examining the Hearth Tax, Ship Money and parish rate assessments of parish officers and vestry members in 13 Essex, Suffolk and Lancashire communities. He shows

that people describing themselves thus turn out to have similar characteristics throughout the country, despite different regional economic fortunes: they tended to be marked out from the bulk of inhabitants by their superior wealth, and they also coalesced into ruling groups by dominating parish government, not merely serving in it, while also exhibiting more settled residence patterns. Despite the ubiquity of this type, French maintains that '[i]n general, "middling" groups understood their status in the context of local hierarchies and they were united only by a failure to perceive their wider existence' (p. 98). In other words, the 'middle sort of people' in any one parish tended not to be aware that similar sorts of people existed in most parishes, and they certainly lacked the wider horizons of the gentry. Self-perceptions could also shift from one form of identification to another, and hence the use of the descriptor 'middling sort' is one of expediency rather than an explanation of social reality. For further discussion of this issue by the same author, see H.R. French, 'The search for the "middle sort of people" in England', *The Historical Journal*, 43, 2000, 277–93, which focuses at greater length on other historians' attempts to define and identify the 'middling sort'.

E. Gordon, and G. Nair, 'The economic role of middle-class women in Victorian Glasgow', *Women's History Review*, 9, 791–814.

Following their paper on middle-class family structure in Glasgow reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, 65 (2000), 69, this contribution from Gordon and Nair challenges the prevailing 'separate spheres' thesis that, during the Victorian era, middle-class women increasingly retreated from the wider economy to occupy themselves in domestic activity. They argue that although the census enumerators' books indicate that few middle class women had any form of employment, they are seriously deficient in this respect (although, for a contrasting view, see Anderson's paper reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, 65 (2000), 64–5). Wills, on the other hand, provide abundant evidence that women often had substantial wealth and were heavily involved in economic activities. Moreover, though 'surplus' middle class spinsters were perceived as a problem by contemporary commentators, even seriously 'decayed gentlewomen' were usually much better off than working-class women.

A.J. Gritt, 'The census and the servant: a reassessment of the decline and distribution of farm service in early nineteenth-century England', *Economic History Review*, 53, 84–106.

Following the publication of A. Kussmaul's book *Servants in husbandry in early modern England* (Cambridge, 1981), it has become widely believed that 'living-in' farm servants had become largely extinct in the arable south and east of England by the early-nineteenth century, but that they remained an important component of the farm labour force in the north and the west until much later. In this paper, Gritt challenges this interpretation as being too stark, using the 1831 census returns for parts of Lancashire. These returns permit the analysis of the rural workforce at a finer level of aggregation than do those of other nineteenth-century censuses. The main implication of Gritt's work is that the significance of servants in the north of England has been over-emphasised 'in all the literature to date' (p. 105).

D.M. Hadley, 'Burial practices in the northern Danelaw, c.650–1100', *Northern History*, 37, 199–216.

This article asks where the dead were buried in the middle and later Anglo-Saxon centuries in the Northern Danelaw (Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire) and how were they commemorated? There was no requirement for, nor expectation of, burial in a church cemetery much before the tenth century, and while burials did take place in or near churches from an early date this may only have been afforded to the local elites. There is far more evidence on place of burial in the eighth to eleventh centuries than is often supposed, and this shows that burial sites remained diverse. It is also apparent that social competition did not cease following the disappearance of the deployment of grave goods, but it rose above ground to take the form of ritual, ceremony and funerary monuments.

C.S. Hallas, 'Poverty and pragmatism in the northern uplands of England: the North Yorkshire Pennines c.1770–1900', *Social History*, 25, 67–84.

In this paper Hallas attempts to redress the geographical bias she sees in the historiography of the operation of both Old and New Poor Laws, which is heavily skewed in favour of the south and east of England. Examining the populations of Wensleydale and Swaledale, she shows how 'strong adherence to the land by many local people coupled with an economic structure of which by-employment was an integral part and migration the norm, enabled a non-hierarchical community to respond successfully to poverty. The community achieved this by pragmatically using a variety of support systems and by adapting the pre- and post-1834 Poor Laws to local advantage' (p. 84). Of particular interest to readers of *Local Population Studies* might be the comments she makes about the relationship between poverty and migration in these remote upland valleys.

M. Harrison, 'From medical astrology to medical astronomy: sol-lunar and planetary theories of disease in British medicine, c.1700–1865', *British Journal for the History of Science*, 33, 25–48.

Harrison argues that although astrology lost the respect it has once commanded in *mainstream* medical circles after 1700, the belief that the heavens could influence bodily health persisted. Those holding such views adopted the new empiricism, and amassed statistical evidence to 'prove' the influence of the moon upon fevers and diseases. Such ideas particularly flourished in the medical services of the armed forces and in the colonies. While such ideas remained untypical, some of their proponents were prominent men: they were by no means all marginal crackpots.

R. Hole, 'Incest, consanguinity and a monstrous birth in rural England, January 1600', *Social History*, 25, 183–99.

Hole focuses upon the birth of a deformed child to cousins-german in the Herefordshire village of Colwall in January 1600, and discusses how this was

portrayed in pamphlet literature. The author's main purpose is to reveal how representations of this birth demonstrate the gradual nature of the development of science and the new (Baconian) learning in early modern England, but the article also explores the laws of incest, their basis in scripture and in natural law, and the controversy surrounding its extent.

S. Horrell, and D. Oxley, 'Work and prudence: household responses to income variation in nineteenth-century Britain', *European Review of Economic History*, **4**, 27–57.

This paper uses data on household budgets collected in 1889–90 to compare the behaviour of single-earner households and households with several earners. Households with several earners were less vulnerable to economic recession than were single-earner households. It might have been thought, therefore, that single-earner households would be more likely to insure against the death or sickness of their sole breadwinner. However, it seems that the reverse was the case. 'Self-help' through life insurance, sickness insurance, and membership of labour organisations, was not greater among households in which the man was the sole breadwinner than it was among household with several earners.

G. Howells, 'Emigration and the New Poor Law: the Norfolk emigration fever of 1836', *Rural History*, **11**, 145–64.

'In 1836 under the auspices of ... the New Poor Law, 3,069 poor people from Norfolk were assisted to emigrate to North America' (p. 145). This paper tells the story of how these persons were selected, and how the phenomenon was viewed by the poor themselves and by the local poor law authorities. Howells argues that the coming of the New Poor Law (NPL) was viewed with trepidation by parish authorities. They feared that it would disrupt the arrangements for the relief of the poor which had evolved over the previous few decades, and which seemed to work satisfactorily (these arrangements effectively took the form of a wage subsidy to farmers). They realised, probably correctly, that the workhouse test could potentially result in increased expenditure, especially if whole families had to be accommodated in the workhouses. Consequently, they made use of the provision in the NPL to assist emigration, particularly of whole families, and most notably of families with young children. Although there was a risk that assisted emigration would be selective of the most ambitious and energetic members of the labouring classes, this did not seem to be a great concern to parish authorities. This was in part because they were genuinely concerned to do the best for their parishioners and, if a family requested assistance, it was not reasonable to deny it. In part, though, it derived from a belief that if only the labour supply could be reduced so that it balanced the available work, unemployment would be reduced, and 'the moral character of the unemployed would improve. Thus it did not matter who left, as long as some people left' (p. 160). Readers interested in this excellent paper would do well to look at the earlier papers by Howells and by Hudson and Mills reviewed respectively in *Local Population Studies* **63** (1999), 76; and **65** (2000), 70.

P. Hudson and S. King, 'Two textile townships, c.1660–1820: a comparative demographic analysis,' *Economic History Review*, **53**, 706–41.

In this paper, Hudson and King compare the demography of the two Yorkshire townships of Sowerby, west of Halifax, and Calverley, between Leeds and Bradford, during the long eighteenth century. The main points to emerge from their analysis are as follows. First, proto-industrial townships were different from agricultural ones. Second, the demography of proto-industrial townships was diverse. Age at marriage and infant mortality, for example, varied quite widely. Calverley and Sowerby were not only different from one another, but were also unlike the proto-industrial townships of Birstall and Shephed included in the Cambridge Group's family reconstitutions. Third, changes in the average values of demographic indicators often arose from changes in the behaviour of (sometimes extreme) population subgroups, which had the effect of shifting the means. Conventional family reconstitution is typically unable to capture the behaviour of these subgroups.

S. King and A. Weaver, 'Lives in many hands: the medical landscape in Lancashire, 1700–1820', *Medical History*, **44**, 173–200.

This article uses letters, account books, commonplace books and diaries in an attempt to reconstruct the medical landscape of Lancashire and its sub-regions in the eighteenth century. King and Weaver tentatively conclude that, despite the scattered and patchy nature of the evidence, sub-regional differences can indeed be identified, for example in the greater prominence of quack doctors in eastern Lancashire, while here too middling and landed families appear to have used doctors more intensively and involved them more closely in their family affairs. Hence structures of culture, custom, literacy, migration and regional identity all helped to shape the medical scene.

H. Kitsikopoulos, 'Standards of living and capital formation in pre-plague England: a peasant budget model', *Economic History Review*, **53**, 237–61.

This attempt to model peasant budgets is not a study in demography, but has important implications for the debate over the balance between population and resources in England in the first half of the fourteenth century. If Kitsikopoulos is correct, and the average size of a viable peasant holding was 18 acres rather than the 10–12 acres commonly assumed, then that balance was precarious indeed, and possibly half the English peasantry would have struggled to stay alive between harvests. Population growth during the thirteenth century may have created opportunities for some, but for the feudal economy more generally the limits to its potential had been reached well before the Black Death provided an exogenous resolution to the population and resources equation.

P. Jennings, 'Occupations in the nineteenth century censuses: the drink retailers of Bradford, West Yorkshire', *Local Population Studies*, **64**, 23–37.

The originality of this study lies in its comparison of two 'pictures' of the licensed trade in Bradford. One is the picture that might be drawn using the occupational descriptions in the census enumerators' books or the census reports. The other is a picture that can be painted using other contemporary sources (for example trade directories and newspaper articles). The somewhat disturbing finding is that the two pictures are quite different from one another, suggesting that the occupational descriptions in one (or perhaps both) of these sets of sources are inaccurate. In this, the paper reaches the same conclusion as Andrews does for the railway workers of Kent (see the paper reviewed above).

G. Kearns, 'Maps, models and registers: the historical geography of the population of England', *Journal of Historical Geography*, **26**, 298–304.

This article reviews E.A. Wrigley, R. Davies, J. Oeppen and R.S. Schofield, *English population history from family reconstitution 1580–1837*, (Cambridge, 1997); and M. Dobson, *Contours of death and disease in early modern England*, (Cambridge, 1997). It includes a clear summary of the history of the Cambridge Group's work on parish registers, and of the findings of the Wrigley et al. volume, but it does not attempt a critical evaluation of the latter, along the lines of the articles by Levine and Ruggles reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, **63** (1999), 78 and **65** (2000), 73 respectively. By contrast, the article does discuss the strengths and weaknesses of Dobson's book.

J. Langton, 'Proletarianization in the industrial revolution: regionalism and kinship in the labour markets of the British coal industry from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, new series **25**, 31–49.

This impressive paper describes the operation of labour markets in Britain's coalfields, though its main focus is on south-west Lancashire. Langton shows that in the Lancashire coalfield around Wigan and Prescot, labour for the coal mines was recruited through kinship links and the employment of women and children was the rule. By contrast, in the north-east of England most miners were on annual contracts and the employment of women and children was very rare. A clear implication of Langton's analysis is that we should be wary of equating coal mining areas with a lack of work for women, at least before the labour laws of the nineteenth century placing restrictions on women's work came in (laws, incidentally, much resented in south-west Lancashire). Another implication of this is that the tradition of women working in industrial occupations outside the home in Lancashire predates the arrival of the cotton factories. The recruitment through kinship was able to keep pace with the rapid expansion of the industry during the eighteenth century because of high fertility. However, during the nineteenth century continued high fertility led to overstaffing and reduced productivity. *Local Population Studies* readers might also be interested in another paper recently published by the same author on

south-west Lancashire: J. Langton, 'People from the pits: the origins of colliers in eighteenth-century south-west Lancashire', in D.J. Siddle ed., *Migration, mobility and modernization*, (Liverpool, 2000), 60–79.

L. Leneman, 'Marriage north of the border', *History Today*, 50(4), 20–5.

Unlike in England, irregular marriages were rare in Scotland before 1689, a situation changed by the mass ousting of Scots episcopal parish ministers at that date. The fashion for clandestine marriage grew in eighteenth-century Scotland (as in England), and possibly as many as one-third of Scots marriages across the century were irregular (more than double the peak achieved in early-eighteenth-century England). Furthermore, Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753 did not apply here, so the practice continued through the century and only declined in the nineteenth century. Leneman goes on to examine the 506 Declarator of Marriage cases brought to the Edinburgh Commissary Court, and finds that they predominantly comprised women seeking confirmation of marriage (371 women compared to 46 men), while more men brought cases seeking their freedom (69 men compared to 20 women). To this day irregular marriage by habit and repute remains recognised in Scotland.

C. Maclean, 'Getting out and getting on: Scottish Highland migration in the first half of the twentieth century', *Rural History*, 11, 231–48.

Using oral history and ethnographic evidence, Maclean paints a fascinating picture of migration from an area of the Scottish Highlands during the first half of the twentieth century. The kind of evidence she uses provides her with more depth than conventional quantitative cross-sectional approaches, and allows her to develop an understanding of people's attitudes towards the possibilities of migration. Migration from the Highlands was a process rather than an event, worked out in a complex way over time in the minds of the members of crofting families. Respondents repeatedly mentioned the fundamental tension between the need to 'get out' in order to 'get on', and the need to stay at home in order, for example, to care for elderly relations. However, it is not clear whether the latter represented the true motives for staying in or returning to the Highlands, or whether they are *post hoc* rationalisations of decisions made on what were perceived to be less justifiable 'sentimental' grounds.

S. Matthews, 'Population change in Altrincham in the early nineteenth century', *Cheshire History*, 20 (2000–2001), 56–66.

Matthews employs the early censuses of 1801–31, trade directories and scattered references in contemporary publications to show that the small town of Altrincham and the hamlets surrounding it were overwhelmingly rural in 1801. By 1831 the population had risen, most notably in Altrincham itself, and the number of shops and service trades had multiplied in response to increased gentrification, though this more complex economy still existed within an essentially rural framework. The Altrincham region may thus represent a microcosm of broader economic developments, for recent research

at regional and national level has re-emphasised the increasing importance of industries engaged in providing goods and services to local markets in this period, first noted long ago by Sir John Clapham.

T. McIntosh, ' "An abortionist city": maternal mortality, abortion and birth control in Sheffield, 1920–1940', *Medical History*, **44**, 75–96.

This is a study of maternal mortality in Sheffield between the World Wars. Maternal mortality in the city was high relative to the national average, with a particularly high incidence of puerperal fever. McIntosh argues that the high maternal mortality rate was associated with a high rate of (illegal) abortion. Married women living in the heavy-industrial working-class culture of Sheffield did not have enough power within their homes to enable them to use contraception, and so resorted to abortion. In this, they were unlike women in the textile areas who, because they were employed outside the home, had greater leverage in the domestic sphere. Abortion rates in textile areas were correspondingly lower. This paper tends to focus on the position of women in relation to contraception, though the papers by Fisher reviewed above suggest that the attitudes of their husbands might have been at least as influential.

D. Mills and M. Edgar, 'Social history of Lincoln's Victorian residential streets', *Local Population Studies Society Newsletter*, **27** (2000), 4–10.

This short paper describes a project designed 'to bring together amateurs and professionals with a range of interests in Lincoln's past'. The analysis uses census enumerators' books and trade directories to compare the occupational structure of different zones within a predominantly working-class area of Lincoln. Quite pronounced differences are observed between, for example, the main streets and the courts lying behind them.

P. Newton Taylor, 'Residential continuity and problems of measurement in Aldington, Kent, 1801–1851', *Family and Community History*, **3**, 93–104.

There has been a tendency in the literature in recent years to emphasise the great mobility of people in the nineteenth century countryside. Although it is likely that villages contained 'movers' and 'stayers', recent studies have tended to conclude that the proportion of 'stayers' was rather small. In this paper, Newton Taylor attempts to redress the balance. He takes a sample of those aged over 50 years living in Aldington, Kent, in 1851 and tries to assess whether they had lived continuously in the parish during the first half of the century. To this end he uses a range of sources which might reveal their presence (Land Tax Assessments, parish registers, the 1841 census enumerators' books (CEBs) etc.). However, as he acknowledges, these sources cannot prove that people were continuously resident; rather, given various assumptions, they provide indications of presence or absence. Despite this, he finds a substantial core of 'stayers'. For a slightly later period, of course, the 1881 census index, together with the CEBs for the censuses of 1841–1871,

provide potentially better source materials for studies of this kind (see, for an example, C. Jones, 'Born in Great Oakley: what were they doing on Sunday 3rd April 1881?', *Local Population Studies Society Newsletter*, **24** (1999), 8–10).

C. Peters, 'Gender, sacrament and ritual in the making and meaning of marriage in late medieval and early modern England', *Past and Present*, **169**, 63–96.

Peters discusses marriage as a sacrament, as well as a social and economic process, under the impact of the Reformation. The pre-Reformation idea of the sacrament of marriage stressed its role as a channel of grace: marriage could not be broken except by death, and the correct balance of love, support, obedience and fidelity had to be maintained. But this was not so very different from the content of early Protestant homilies on marriage, and nor did the new clerical use of the liturgy give any clear or novel direction. So, particularly in its early stages, the Reformation proved unable to transform marriage in its own image. The decline of spousals, in gender terms, was more significant than any changes in marriage doctrine, but this was primarily driven by secular pressures.

R. Pope, 'Unemployed women in inter-war Britain: the case of the Lancashire weaving district', *Women's History Review*, **9**, 743–59.

In north-eastern Lancashire during the 1930s, unemployment among women, especially married women, was higher than that among men. This was the opposite of the national pattern. Why? Pope's explanation runs as follows. In this area women's employment was heavily concentrated in a declining staple, traditionally export-led industry (cotton textile weaving), and so they were very vulnerable to a slump in this industry. There were few alternative employment opportunities, and women were reluctant to take them. Employers and trades unions operated policies which discriminated against married women in the labour market. In fact, Pope suggests that the true rate of unemployment among married women might have been higher than that reported, as the Anomalies Regulations brought on following the report of the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance in 1931 required a married women to meet stringent criteria of eligibility for benefit. There is little evidence, on the other hand, that married women were 'playing the system' in order to augment the low earnings of their husbands.

D. Postles, 'Migration and mobility in a less mature economy: English internal migration, c. 1200–1350', *Social History*, **25**, 285–99.

Here Postles attempts to examine the personal experience of migration, rather than simple broad quantitative measures of movement, a task rendered difficult by the intransigence of the sources available for this early period. He argues that lordship, and the variable degree to which it was exerted, was a distinctive and fundamental influence, and one that could both promote and restrict movement. This influence was achieved mainly through the control of persons, but also through seigneurial control of space, both secular and spiritual.

P. Razzell, 'Evaluating the same name technique as a way of measuring burial register reliability in England', *Local Population Studies*, **64**, 8–22.

In this paper Razzell takes advantage of the practice, common in the English past, of giving a subsequent child the same Christian name as that of an older but deceased sibling. The existence of this practice can be used, he argues, to estimate the reliability of burial registration in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He concludes that, contrary to the belief of many historians, the reliability of burial registration was not worse at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century than in earlier periods.

N.S. Rushton, 'Monastic charitable provision in Tudor England: quantifying and qualifying poor relief in the early sixteenth century', *Continuity and Change*, **16**, 9–44.

This lengthy article has important implications for all students of English social structure in the first half of the sixteenth century. Rushton re-examines the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535 to suggest that the amount of monastic charity provided in the 1530s should be revised upwards, possibly by as much as a factor of three as compared with the early calculations of Savine, while subsequent county commission reports indicate that the monasteries housed considerably more resident poor than the *Valor* had revealed. Furthermore, the evidence that is available suggests that outdoor relief was not doled out in an indiscriminate fashion, but was generally controlled in the interests of the self-reliant, resident poor and to discourage transient vagrants. The extent of poverty in this period remains debatable, and is not strenuously addressed here, but this article does suggest that the impact of the Dissolution might have been more severe than some revisionists have suggested.

L. Schwarz, 'Residential leisure towns in England towards the end of the eighteenth century', *Urban History*, **27**, 51–61.

This short article identifies leisure towns by using a list of employers of manservants registered for taxation in 1780, defining a leisure town as one with 30 or more such employers. It concludes that they were relatively few in number, particularly outside of the Home Counties, while the culture and wealth that led to large concentrations of manservants in southern towns was weaker in most parts of the Midlands and the north.

S. Scott, and C.J. Duncan, 'Interacting effects of nutrition and social class differentials on fertility and infant mortality in a pre-industrial population', *Population Studies*, **54**, 71–87.

In this paper, Susan Scott and C.J. Duncan continue their study of the parish of Penrith in Cumbria based on family reconstitution data (for earlier contributions, see *Local Population Studies*, **59** (1997), 62–5 and the papers reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, **65** (2000), 73–4). They manage

to classify the reconstituted families into three social groups which they call 'elite', 'tradesman' and 'subsistence' (this last referring to small farmers and smallholders). The paper makes three main points. First, compared with most of southern and midland England there was considerable subfecundity in Penrith, and this may well have been attributable to poor nutrition. Second, exogenous infant mortality (that is, that due to environmental factors) was high, especially among the 'subsistence' class, and this also was probably due to nutritional deficiency (notably in vitamins A, C and D). Among the 'elite' class, infant mortality was also rather high for male babies, possibly because of short periods of breastfeeding. Third, because it appears that poor nutrition can lead to subfecundity, the authors speculate that the improvement in nutrition throughout most of England during the eighteenth century should have been associated with an increase in marital fertility. Recently, E.A. Wrigley (in a paper reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, 63 (1999), 84) has shown that just such an increase did occur, lending weight to Scott and Duncan's argument that the nutritional status of the pre-industrial English population had an important bearing on its demography.

C. Scull, 'How the dead live: some current approaches to the mortuary archaeology of England in the fifth to eighth centuries A.D.', *The Archaeological Journal*, 157, 399–406.

This is a review article of three recently published doctoral theses which examine the most prominent aspect of the archaeological record of this period, the mortuary archaeology, at micro and macro levels: E. O'Brien, *Post-Roman Britain to Anglo Saxon England: burial practices reviewed*; S. Lucy, *The early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries of East Yorkshire. An analysis and interpretation*; and N. Stoodley, *The spindle and the spear. A critical enquiry into the construction and meaning of gender in the early Anglo-Saxon burial rite*. Scull offers a rigorous and often challenging critique of these volumes, which emphasises the need in a mature archaeology for a reflexive linkage between theory, method and data; a genuine empiricism; and a critical understanding of past scholarship – injunctions that clearly apply to historians as much as to archaeologists.

P. Sharpe, 'The shiners: framework-knitting households in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, 1840–1890', *Family and Community History*, 3, 105–20.

In this paper, Pamela Sharpe tries to test Richard Wall's 'adaptive family economy' model among the framework knitters of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. This group became a byword for poverty during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. However, those who remained in the business faced better prospects after 1845. Sharpe finds evidence to support Wall's ideas, with men and older boys working wide frames, and women and children being employed in separate areas of activity. The paper also contrasts the family economy of the framework knitters with that of mining households living in the same area.

A. Shepard, 'Manhood, credit and patriarchy in early modern England, c.1580–1640', *Past and Present*, 167, 75–106.

Using the extensive evidence generated by the courts of the University of Cambridge, Shepard demonstrates that – despite the prescriptive literature – the patriarchal dictates of male provision and exchange were countered in practice by the commercial pursuits of many married women (*how* many is not revealed), and hence further reinforces a line of argument concerning precept and practice in early modern gender relations that is by now quite familiar. Married women, it is argued, made a crucial contribution to the household economy, and the evidence suggests a routine acceptance of a household ideology far less differentiated by gender than is often supposed. Furthermore, for those men who could *not* claim patriarchal status there were alternative models of manliness in the form of excess, prodigality and violence, creating an inherent contradiction in early modern notions of manhood (and, one might add, one that remains familiar today).

C. Smith, 'Population growth and economic change in some Nottinghamshire market towns, 1680–1840', *Local Population Studies*, 65, 29–46.

This article charts the changing fortunes of six Nottinghamshire towns: Bingham, East Retford, Mansfield, Newark, Ollerton and Worksop, between 1680 and 1840. Smith shows that during this period some towns prospered while others became marginalised. In Nottinghamshire, the smaller towns experienced declining fortunes, but Smith warns us against generalising too hastily from the experience of one county. It is perhaps safer to conclude that the larger towns did well, but that the development of smaller towns depended on local circumstances.

K. Sneath, 'Huntingdonshire hearth taxes', *Records of Huntingdonshire*, 3(8), 25–39.

Sneath provides an analysis of the 1664 Michaelmas Hearth Tax in Huntingdonshire, a total of 5,038 households, and offers comparisons with similar published data for Rutland, Nottinghamshire, Kent and Essex, as well as a breakdown between the county's four hundreds. Comparisons are also made between status designations and numbers of hearths, and the generally low but variable level of exemptions is noted.

T. Sokoll, 'Negotiating a living: Essex pauper letters from London, 1800–1834', *International Review of Social History*, 45 (supplement 8), 19–46.

The main point made by this paper is that, although pauperisation was widespread in early-nineteenth-century southern England, being a pauper was not the same as being powerless and dependent. Sokoll's study of the letters written by non-resident Essex paupers living in London reveals that they were prepared to back up their requests for funds with threats. Their chief negotiating tactic was to point out to the overseers that failure to send them money (usually to tide them over temporary problems) would result in their own parishes incurring the much greater expense of removing them

from the capital back to the countryside, and then having to support them for the foreseeable future, employment opportunities in rural Essex being so much worse than those in London. In passing, the paper contains some interesting remarks about extended household structures, especially in the context of single women with children. Readers interested in this paper may also like to read the paper by Howells reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, 63 (1999), 76, which makes a similar point to this one.

D. Spencer, 'Reformulating the "closed" parish thesis: associations, interests and interaction', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 26, 83–98.

This is the latest blast against Dennis Mills's open/closed parish model. David Spencer maintains that the model as originally formulated is too empirical and 'positivistic'. He argues for a non-positivistic reinterpretation based on 'actor network theory'. Readers of *Local Population Studies* may not be fully cognisant of this approach, but the basic idea seems to be that the process of 'closure' not the fact of a parish being 'closed' is what matters. Closure was a process put in place by those who could wield power. An important feature of this process was that it involved actions at the regional or sub-regional level (for example where an estate straddled several parishes), not just actions within the parish. Readers should be warned that there is a lot of jargon in this paper, but they should also be advised that there are some good ideas to be discovered too. Not the least useful aspect is the comprehensive list of references dealing with the debate about the open/closed parish model which lies in its endnotes. Finally, those interested in the process of 'closure' might like to consult the paper by Broad on 'The fate of the Midland yeoman' reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, 65 (2000), 66, for a case study of a Buckinghamshire parish.

N. Spencer and D. Gatley, 'Investigating population mobility in mid nineteenth century England and Wales', *Local Population Studies*, 65, 47–57.

This paper extends a previous paper by Gatley (see *Local Population Studies*, 58 (1997), 37–47) which described the University of Staffordshire project designed to computerise the 1861 census and vital registration statistics at the registration-district level. This project produced an extremely useful (and user-friendly) database. In this paper, Spencer and Gatley show how cluster analysis can be used to detect geographical patterns in these data, and to classify the registration districts. One obvious use of this technique (though by no means the only one) is to assist in the selection of localities for more detailed study.

W.B. Stephens, 'Illiteracy in the north-east coalfield, c.1830–1870', *Northern History*, 37, 215–37.

This investigation begins with the presentation of a series of statistics about the proportions of brides and grooms in the counties of Northumberland and Durham who were not able to sign their names on marriage. Stephens notes that these proportions were higher in mining districts than in other areas, and that in the mining areas improvements in literacy (defined in this way) between the 1840s and the 1870s were much slower than the national, or even

the county-level, average. An enquiry into why this was reveals an educational system dominated by hopelessly inadequate private schools, supported only reluctantly by mining families, who wanted their sons to start working in the mines as soon as they were physically able to do so. The cultural antipathy of coal mining communities towards education was only overcome in the 1870s by the Education Acts which made it compulsory for children to be sent to school, and even then it was a further generation before the proportion of illiterate brides and grooms began to decline substantially.

S. Szreter and E. Garrett, 'Reproduction, compositional demography and economic growth: family planning in England long before the fertility decline', *Population and Development Review*, 26, 45–80.

This important paper is the culmination of a number of years' thought about the decline of fertility in England during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The authors argue that the conventional view of the English fertility decline as (1) beginning in the 1870s and (2) involving the adoption of 'stopping' behaviour, whereby couples use birth control methods to prevent further children being born once they have achieved their desired family size, is wrong. Integral to this view is the idea that conscious attempts by English married couples to control their fertility prior to the 1870s were almost unknown. Instead, the Malthusian preventive check of late and non-universal marriage acted as a brake on runaway population growth in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Szreter and Garrett want to replace this story by what they describe (p. 72) as a 'much more interesting' one which sees the late and variable marriage age of the English past as one of a number of strategies which were used quite consciously to limit fertility. These strategies included the spacing of births and, ultimately (though probably not until well into the twentieth century) 'stopping' behaviour. They argue that it may not be helpful to seek to identify specific years as 'turning points' but, if there was such a point, then 1816 (the year in which the gross reproduction rate in England peaked) is probably a more important one than 1876. Finally (and this may be of particular interest to readers of *Local Population Studies*), their paper argues that the pattern of reproductive change in eighteenth and nineteenth century England and Wales was 'more socially variegated, and geographically complex' than has been hitherto admitted (p. 69). With this admission from within the walls of its citadel, can the thesis of English demographic homogeneity finally be laid to rest?

P. Thane, "'An untiring zest for life": images and self-images of old women in England,' *Journal of Family History*, 25, 235–47.

This article looks at old women's self-perceptions of growing old, considering how these self-images conformed to the images which society had of them. Thane shows that there have been changes over time, and that the course of these changes is not simple. In the nineteenth century, quite positive images of old people were often projected, though images of old men tended to be more positive than those of old women. Since World War Two, more positive images of old women (at least relative to those of old men) have emerged.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the article for *Local Population Studies* readers will be the discussion of the debate about the appropriate age at which to pay old age pensions which took place before their introduction in 1908. (Those encouraged further to pursue Thane's insights upon the elderly should see her admirable *Old age in English history: past experiences, present issues* (Oxford, 2000)).

S. Wittering, 'How reliable are the government Poor Law Returns?', *Local Historian*, 30, 160–4.

This is a short note about the inconsistencies between the government's Poor Law Returns, overseers' accounts and 1801 census data for the Cambridgeshire hundred of Thriplow between 1771 and 1821. Wittering cautions against relying on the Poor Law Returns (published in British Parliamentary Papers) alone. They should always be checked against other local sources.

R. Woods and N. Shelton, 'Disease environments in Victorian England and Wales', *Historical Methods*, 33, 73–82.

Following on from their invaluable *An Atlas of Victorian Mortality* (Liverpool, 1997), Woods and Shelton focus here upon the differences in mortality experience of different places by considering how certain causes of death were associated with different environmental conditions. Three environmental factors – crowding, poor air and water supply – unsurprisingly accentuated mortality in many urban districts, and crowding and air were both unaffected by the Victorian public health movement which concentrated almost wholly upon water supply and sewage disposal. Pulmonary tuberculosis creates an additional complexity in any attempt to understand the decline of mortality in the later part of the nineteenth century, for this disease does not correspond with these environmental problems, showing significant concentrations in some rural areas and no clear urban focus. Woods and Shelton end with a note of scepticism about McKeown's thesis that declining tuberculosis mortality can be explained in terms of improved nutrition. As Bob Woods argued in his paper at the last LPS conference, there is still plenty to be learned about nineteenth-century mortality.

D. Woodward, 'Early modern servants in husbandry revisited', *Agricultural History Review*, 48, 141–50.

This paper makes two points. First, it suggests that the reason why farm service based on annual contracts stood the test of time, at least until the end of the eighteenth century, was that servants were available for work permanently and 'at all hours', rather than because there were economic reasons for employing servants instead of day labourers. Second, it presents a critique of A. Kussmaul's argument that the importance of farm servants in the rural work force before the end of the eighteenth century was characterised by long cyclical swings (see her *Servants in husbandry in early modern England* (Cambridge, 1981) and *A general view of*

the rural economy of England, 1538–1840 (Cambridge, 1990)). The cornerstone of Woodward's critique is that the disruption to marriage patterns caused by the Marriage Act of 1653 means that Kussmaul's use of trends in the proportion of autumn marriages to make inferences about the importance of farm service during the mid-seventeenth century is not valid.

N. Woodward, 'Why did South Wales miners have high mortality? Evidence from the mid-twentieth century,' *Welsh History Review*, 20, 116–42.

Mortality among miners in South Wales in the mid-twentieth century was higher than that among other miners. Woodward's analysis suggests that no single factor was responsible for this. The high incidence of pneumoconiosis was a major contributor, caused by the nature of the Welsh coal and the great length of time which South Wales miners typically spent underground. Early recruitment led to exposure to coal dust from a young age, resulting in a high prevalence of bronchitis. Selective out-migration of healthy individuals may also have made a small contribution.

V. Worship, 'Cotton factory or workhouse? Poor law assisted migration from Buckinghamshire to northern England, 1835–1837', *Family and Community History*, 4, 33–48.

This paper reports on a study examining assisted migration from Buckinghamshire to north-eastern Cheshire just after the introduction of the New Poor Law. Its conclusion is that the experiences of those who were encouraged to leave the overpopulated southern countryside and to take up 'arranged' employment in the cotton factories were by no means all favourable. A minority of migrants prospered and settled permanently in the north, but many were struck down by smallpox, or suffered discrimination by mill owners and employers.

Symposium: the study of the early modern poor and poverty relief, *Albion*, 32.

P.A. Fideler, 'Introduction: impressions of a century of historiography', 381–407.

C.S. Evans, '“An echo of the multitude”: the intersection of governmental and private poverty initiatives in early modern Exeter', 408–28.

J.M. Hintermaier, 'The first modern refugees? Charity, entitlement, and persuasion in the Huguenot immigration of the 1680s', 429–49.

C.S. Schen, 'Constructing the poor in early seventeenth-century London', 450–63.

Fideler provides a useful, if by no means comprehensive, overview of some of the main contributions and approaches to the history of poverty and poor relief in early modern England, through from Leonard, Tawney and the Webbs to the recent work of Macintosh and Slack. He particularly emphasises

the contribution that has been made by local approaches to that history, particularly as inspired by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure in its earlier years, and is also appreciative of the importance of Slack's work in examining the interplay of centre and locality and in reintroducing ideological thought into the equation. He concludes that 'It would be difficult to find an area of study in early modern England that is more fruitful right now than the poor and poverty relief' (p. 407).

Evans' contribution is an analysis of the collection and disposal of public and private funds for the poor in Exeter between the 1560s and 1620s. This attempt to examine formal poor relief and philanthropy side by side is valuable, for they are so often considered separately, although the increasing involvement of the Exeter city council in the administration of private endowments blurs the line that is often drawn between public and private. Unfortunately, even the splendid Exeter archives offer only partial glimpses of the extent of poverty and its relief: to achieve an estimated sum for formal expenditure in the 1620s Evans extrapolates hazardously between the 1560s and 1699. Furthermore, only Prerogative Court of Canterbury wills are extant for Exeter, and hence the sample of 260 employed for the period 1558–1625 is only a fraction – and a biased fraction – of the total that would have been made, and cannot be used to establish the full extent of charitable provision, as is attempted here (p. 427). Evans finds, echoing W.K. Jordan, that endowed funds dominated relief provision, and that despite occasional difficulties they were generally soundly administered.

Hintermaier deals with relief of a different kind – the relief of refuge extended to the French Huguenots following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in October 1685. He examines the various discourses surrounding their reception, stemming from the crown, other proponents of assistance and from the refugees themselves, identifying a traditional focus upon the plight of fellow Protestants in the face of a universal Catholic conspiracy, but also a waning of the religious content of this discourse in favour of more factual reporting of their sufferings and an appreciation of them as 'deserving poor' who were entitled to Christian charity. He concludes that 'the French Protestant refugees occupied an uneasy and shifting boundary between the early modern refugee and the modern' (p. 449).

Schen is also mainly concerned with outsiders, both foreign and native, and the occasional relief afforded to them in early-seventeenth-century London as revealed by churchwardens' accounts. She demonstrates how the notion of the 'deserving poor' was extended well beyond the settled population, to incorporate those who had suffered through war, international politics and piracy – refugee ministers, poor soldiers and sailors or those more peripherally involved in such conflicts, such as the 'very pore woman' relieved in St Benet Gracechurch who claimed to have had her '2 children taken by the turkes (in the west cuntry) by night out of their bedes' (p. 457). The more physical or documentary evidence of suffering that could be supplied, the better the chance of relief, for while churchwardens exercised discretion their accounts were usually subject to audit by the parish elites. Schen concludes that in the criteria

adopted at parish level, the local officers generally reinforced Tudor and Stuart governments' conceptions of the 'deserving' poor.

'Emile Zola against Malthusianism', *Population and Development Review*, **26**, 145–52.

The journal *Population and Development Review* has a regular section called 'Archives' in which it looks at important historical documents or collections of documents which speak to us about population matters (usually about issues which were important when the documents were written). In this contribution, the arguments of the French novelist Emile Zola against Malthusian views, as articulated most forcefully in his novel *Fécondité* (Paris, 1899) are summarised.

CORRESPONDENCE

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Editor's note

Readers are reminded that the editorial board is always prepared to offer advice on subjects within the scope of *LPS*, so if you think we can help please do not hesitate to contact us.

The population of West Burford, Oxfordshire, in the nineteenth century

Dear Sir,

I would be grateful if you would allow me to use your columns to appeal for information and source material.

I am doing some research into the nineteenth-century population of West Burford, in west Oxfordshire, and am keen to trace any surviving memoirs, diaries, letters, reminiscences or other similar material from that area and period.

All correspondence or information will be gratefully received and acknowledged.

Yours sincerely

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