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Editorial

Journal redesign

After 40 years of publishing Local Population Studies in A5 format we have finally bitten the bullet and made a major change in this issue, the key feature of which is the larger page size which will no doubt already have caught your attention. When this was first proposed a few years ago, some readers complained that this would disrupt the symmetry of their book shelves, notwithstanding the fact that some of the earlier issues fluctuated in size by the odd centimetre or so. When I first became editor in 1999 I inaugurated a policy of standardisation, of both content and format, so that readers would know what they could expect in each issue and could indeed line them up neatly on their shelves, with identification and symmetry aided by the introduction of a spine for the first time in LPS 66 (Spring 2001). I hope readers will agree that the appearance of the journal has improved in recent years, and the content too, without becoming excessively formal. However, I and the LPS Editorial Board have now decided that the benefits of a larger format outweigh the disadvantages, allowing the adoption of a clearer font and leading, easier reproduction of graphical material and maps, and—above all—greater clarity of presentation of the complex tabular data that so often features in local population history. The Neo-Platonists among you will have to start a new shelf, beginning with issue 82.

At the same time we have taken the opportunity to make a few more small changes. This issue is burst bound rather than perfect bound, which will make it easier to open the journal without putting pressure on the spine. The cover has been redesigned, while retaining the image that formerly wrapped the two covers but now reproduced on the front of the journal—from horse’s derrière to donkey’s visage. This has made it possible for us to present the contents of the journal on the back cover. The information about the Society, the journal and related activities is now included on the two inside covers, and is hopefully clearer and more useful than the previous iteration. A list of contributors, with a brief biography of each, is now included after the editorial, and each article is prefaced by an abstract. The essential content, however, remains the same. Each issue will contain three full articles, the Spring issue will include book reviews, and the Autumn issue will include the Review of Recent Periodical Literature. Research Notes, Research in Progress, Electronic Resources for Local Population History, Debates, and Sources and Methods items will appear as they become available, and as space allows. We will also continue to publish correspondence, and I would be delighted to hear your thoughts on the new journal format and design.

Local Population Studies No. 82

As each article is now prefaced by an abstract, there is little to be gained from the inclusion of the summaries that have been printed in this editorial in recent years. Suffice it to say that we
have a rich and varied diet in this issue, and that we are particularly pleased to be able to include articles on aspects of the seventeenth, nineteenth and later twentieth centuries, and on such diverse topics as urban morbidity, Irish immigration to rural England and the lives of the elderly in York after the Second World War. This issue also includes a Research in Progress item by Colin Pooley on the experience of migration, while Chris Galley contributes to Sources and Methods with a piece on infant mortality. Katrina Honeyman provides news from the University of Leeds, while our new book review editor, Alysa Levene, has elicited fourteen reviews for this issue.

The 1911 census online

Largely for the benefit of family historians, the 1911 census, taken Sunday 2 April 1911, has been released early, and is now available at http://www.1911census.co.uk. This early release was possible because this census was not covered by the 1920 Census Act, which introduced the 100 year closure rule. However, information which is regarded as ‘sensitive’ has been redacted, or digitally obscured. This includes all information on disability, information about family relationships that might have been kept secret, and details of children born to women in prison who were aged three or under at the census date. The full census, without redactions, will be released on 3 January 1912.

In the 1911 census women were asked to state the ‘years the present marriage has lasted’, the number of children born alive to the present marriage (not just those who were living in the house) and how many had died, so there is clearly scope here for fuller examination of fertility and mortality from this source which is not possible for previous censuses. A further novelty is that for the first time people were asked to state which industry they worked in, in addition to their profession or trade. This request was often misinterpreted, and many provided more information than they needed to, additionally giving the name (and sometimes address) of their employer.

While, as with previous online censuses, it is free to consult the index, viewing the actual records is expensive. It costs ten ‘credits’ (which are available in various packages) to view a transcript of a household, which can therefore cost between 83p and £1.16p depending upon which package has been purchased. To view the original pages relating to a household costs from £2.50p to £3.48p, and will allow access to between two and seven images, because for the first time all individual household schedules have been preserved. It is because all the individual household schedules have been preserved that there are over ten times the number of images (around 16 million) compared to the 1901 census. The census also had to be scanned from the original documents, rather than created from film, which involved the handling and conservation of fragile documents, which significantly increased the costs of digitisation. This, at least, is how these charges are justified on the web-site, and all I will say is that it seems a little odd to blame high charges on the size of the dataset when prices are set in relation to the number of images that will need to be viewed to see a full record. Family historians who are able accurately to target their ancestors may well be happy to bear these
charges, but for the local population historian who wants to study a community, rather than to trace specific individuals, the site as presently constructed and financed is virtually useless.

**Grants and awards available from the Economic History Society**

The Economic History Society is keen to encourage greater take up of its various grants and awards, so as I am a member of the Society’s Executive, and have recently been responsible for conducting a review of the Society’s spending initiatives, I am taking the opportunity to publicise these here. The Society offers either three or four one-year Research Fellowships annually, awarded either to postdoctoral candidates who should normally have recently completed a doctoral degree in economic/social history or to graduates who are engaged in the completion of a doctoral degree in economic/social history and who must have completed at least 3 years’ full-time or 6 years’ part-time research. The Society has also recently agreed to supplement these major awards with a PhD studentship each year, on either a ‘one plus three’ (one year Masters plus three years PhD) or a ‘plus three’ (three years PhD for qualified Masters students) basis.

The Society also maintains a fund to encourage workshops, special meetings and other interesting ‘initiatives’ in economic and social history. Activities which might encourage wider participation in the Society, innovative research proposals (especially by those who are not full-time university academics) or work that would lead to journal publications are particularly eligible for support. Grants are available up to £2,000, with a limit of £1,000 to support a one-day workshop. The Economic History Society has been generous enough regularly to fund LPSS Spring and Autumn conferences in recent years. The Society will consider applications for grants—normally of up to £500—to assist postgraduate students (Master’s Degree and PhD) in UK colleges and universities with travel and subsistence expenses incurred in the undertaking of research into any aspect of economic and social history. Small grants (normally no more than £150) are also available to support the preparation of undergraduate dissertations in economic and social history.

Full details of all of these grants and awards can be found on the Economic History Society web-site at http://www.ehs.org.uk.

**LPSS publications projects**

It has unfortunately been necessary to abandon our proposed volume on *Agricultural labour and agrarian society in England and Wales, 1700-1970* due to the pressures or work currently being experienced by the proposed editors. *The New Poor Law and English society 1834-1908: local and regional perspectives* remains on the agenda, however, and potential contributors can contact the editors via the General Office at the address given on the inside front cover. At a meeting of the LPSS Committee held 9 July 2008 it was agreed to support a revised proposal for a new book on parish registers, to be edited by Christine Jones and Matthew Woollard, but there is no further progress to report at this stage. Publication proposals are welcomed, and can be submitted to the LPS Editorial Board (which acts as the society’s publications
committee) via the General Office at any time, though they will be subject to approval by both the Board and the LPSS Committee.

**LPSS conferences**

A highly successful conference on the theme of ‘Household economies and household structures’ was held at the Law Faculty of the University of Hertfordshire in St Albans on 19 April, a full report on which can be found below. This was the ninth St Albans Spring conference and we are hoping to achieve our tenth anniversary next year, but as plans are afoot to move the Law Faculty to Hatfield and to dispose of the St Albans site the future venue for the Spring conference remains uncertain. Meanwhile Samantha Williams has been busy organising our Autumn meeting, which this year will be held in the Geography Department at the University of Cambridge, on Saturday 21 November, on the theme of ‘Local populations and their institutions’. The full programme complete with a booking form is enclosed.

**Editorial matters**

Particularly warm thanks are due to Ken and Margaret Smith for all their hard work and good humour in helping to redesign the journal, and for laying out this issue.

Nigel Goose
April 2009
List of contributors

Mark Freeman is a Senior Lecturer in Economic and Social History at the University of Glasgow. He is the author of Social Investigation and Rural England 1870–1914 (2003), The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (2004), St Albans: A History (2008), and a number of articles on modern British social history.

Chris Galley lectures in geography at Barnsley College. He is the author of The demography of early modern towns: York in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and a number of articles about infant mortality.

Colin Pooley is Professor of Social and Historical Geography at Lancaster University. His research has focused on the social geography of Britain and continental Europe over the past 200 years, especially aspects of migration, mobility, health, ethnicity, housing, crime and social change.

Dave Postles is University Fellow, School of English, University of Leicester. Current research interests are: early-modern Loughborough; literature and early-modern society; credit relations in the Chesapeake in the middle decades of the seventeenth century.

Malcolm T. Smith teaches biological anthropology at Durham University, and is a member of the Anthropology Department’s Evolutionary Anthropology Research Group. His research includes the demography of marriage and migration, including post-Famine Irish migration to Britain and the evolutionary analysis of surnames and forenames.

Peter M. Solar teaches economics at Vesalius College and the Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis, and has worked primarily on Irish economic history and the history of the linen and cotton industries in Europe. He recently published, with Liam Kennedy, Irish agriculture: a price history (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 2007).

Louise Wannell works on the social and cultural history of modern Britain with particular focus upon the history of ‘madness’ and psychiatry, women’s and gender history and the history of the self and subjectivities. She is currently working on an edited collection of Asylum writings in nineteenth-century Britain, to be published by Pickering and Chatto in 2010.
LPSS Spring conference report, 2009

Household economies and household structures in Britain

The ninth annual Spring conference of the Local Population Studies Society was held at the Law Faculty, University of Hertfordshire, in St Albans on Saturday 18 April 2009, and was attended by 68 delegates, including ten free student places funded by a generous grant from the Economic History Society.

The three sessions were arranged chronologically with the first considering the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Jameson Wooders, of the University of Reading, began with ‘Production and consumption in English households, 1660–1740: a local view from rural Berkshire’. The economic changes which led to the development of capitalism have proved hard to define country-wide. Overton et al looked at probate inventories in Kent and Cornwall, but were unable to establish common trends. Prosperity in Kent led to diversification rather than specialisation, and Cornwall saw increased poverty linked to the mining industry. Other researchers have observed great economic diversity in small areas. Jameson therefore looked at the economies of the four ecological regions of Berkshire: the fertile White Horse Vale in the north, the sheep country of the central Downs, the mixed arable and woodland of the Kennet Vale in the south and west, and Windsor Forest in the east. The density of hearth distribution, in the Hearth Tax of 1663–1664, was highest in Windsor Forest, and lowest on the Downs, with the Vales in between. This distribution may relate to prosperity, there being more multiple-hearth houses in the Forest, and more one-hearth dwellings on the Downs.

Jameson’s main dataset was derived from over 4,000 probate inventories, for 57 selected parishes. He showed that agricultural production was represented in over 60 per cent of all the inventories, with predictably less in the towns. Subsistence farming by cottagers and smallholders can be distinguished from commercial pastoral or arable farming. The inventories showed a decline in commercial agriculture and an increase in specialisation in south-west Berkshire, with a rising proportion offering no evidence of agriculture, and increasing numbers for labourers after 1700. In the east of the county, evidence for commercial agriculture also declines, but there is no rise in inventories showing no evidence of agriculture. Farmers may have survived here by subsistence or diversification. The largest herds of cattle were in the White Horse Vale area, and sheep flock sizes on the Downs increased after 1700. Farms in south-west Berkshire were apparently amalgamating into larger units, while in the north and east there was diversification into cheese making, baking and brewing, with some textiles in the Forest.
Consumption was highest in the east of the county, where larger houses had more servants and more specialised rooms. Inventories from the Forest and the eastern region show new furniture styles and luxury goods, although there are more clocks in the Kennet Vale. The situations observed in Cornwall and Kent were both present in Berkshire. In the west, increased poverty was linked to the emergence of large capitalist landlords, while in the east prosperity grew from diversification, perhaps related to the market demands of London. Most luxury goods were found in the east and in the towns, where visible status may have been more important. The older farming families of the south-west may have felt less need for display. The relationship between production and consumption needs further study, but it seems that the origins of capitalism should be looked for on a more local basis than the county.

Questions to Jameson established that although there were no clear local styles of inventory, they do become less detailed over time. Diversification in the Windsor Forest region may be linked to supply needs at the royal court, as well as London in general. It was also suggested that as inventories only list the personal goods at death of individuals, who may already have ‘retired’ from economic activity, arguments based on lack of reference in inventories to farming might need supporting evidence.

Our second speaker was Joanne Bailey, of Oxford Brookes University, who discussed ‘Marriage and the household economy in eighteenth-century England’. Different roles for husbands and wives in the household were thought desirable but were not clearly defined, while being complicated by the emotional element. Both spouses were expected to contribute to the marital economy, and women put in both labour and income. Women also found ways of overcoming legal coverture, which in theory prevented them from entering into contracts. The qualitative evidence considered here looked at how the gender division worked in provisioning the household. It was derived from 1,500 cases of marital disputes in the consistory courts of north-eastern and southern England, involving all but the very poor and the very rich. Life-writing and prescriptive literature were also considered.

It appears that supposedly demarcated gender roles were far from distinct in everyday life. Court cases portray the wife’s role as care giver, consumer and manager, subject to her husband’s authority. Her work in household management could include keeping accounts and paying bills, as well as housework and childcare. Her economic value was in maintaining the stability of the household, and therefore its credit worthiness in local networks. The husband’s role was as provider, as part of the expression of love, but also as a sign of economic independence. Studies have shown, however, that real relationships were not so simple. Married women regarded themselves as providers of household supplies and equipment. Disputes arose over the money contributed by women. Husbands might complain that a wife was extravagant, while a wife might claim to be prevented from working. Most people saw provision as a joint venture, and ‘assistance’ and ‘contribution’ were frequently used words. Some women portrayed child rearing as part of provisioning, including teaching household skills. Men sometimes portrayed themselves as willing
providers thwarted by illness or injury, which prevented them from caring properly for their children.

Management responsibility is not the same thing as overall control, which is assumed to have been retained by men. However, women extended their scope in the eighteenth century, and could at times effectively be the master or sole parent, entitled to respect. Such women were often contrasted in the court cases with an ineffectual husband or father. The emotional configuration of the marital economy should not be ignored. Husbands might be told that in law and religion they were the dominant partners, but in reality they knew that a good wife would help them to achieve credit and stability in the community, and to share the concept of care. Questions to Joanne found that the kind of marital complaints investigated were not locally specific, although the response of different Quarter Sessions might vary. Some judgements may also have been intended to offer social instruction.

Katie Barclay of the University of Warwick ended the session with her paper ‘Negotiating the marital economy: the Scottish elite in the long-eighteenth century’. This was a qualitative study of correspondence between husbands and wives in the Scottish elite, ranging from aristocracy to merchants and professionals, although complicated by the clan system. Few of its members could draw enough income from their land alone, although most held land beside their industrial, professional, military or political incomes. There was therefore no stigma attached to trade, and many couples spent long periods apart for business reasons, generating much correspondence between travelling husbands, and wives managing households and farms and sending money to their spouses. Men were not at home setting the budget, yet both sexes accepted the divine ordinance of the subordinate woman, and wives rejected the idea of disobedience. The marital economy was negotiated in practice by tactical misinterpretation of a husband’s instructions, with repeated requests for clarification, sometimes amounting to obstruction. Husbands and wives expected each other to be able to manage their affairs alone if necessary, yet both felt the need to justify their actions and explain funding decisions to the other.

During the eighteenth century attitudes changed, as it became more undesirable to take on the perceived role of a spouse. The principle that man was the provider and woman the manager was expressed more frequently, and mostly by men. The new idea of ‘pocket money’ for women was introduced. Men expected their wives to maintain an appearance which would command respect, rather than being frugal for economic reasons. Wives began to distance themselves socially from estate management, although there was not much change in practice. By the end of the century wives were still active managers, but their language put more emphasis on domesticity. This change seems to have arisen from an increased concern for individuals in society, moving away from older set models, and perhaps linked to the rise of nonconformist religion. Letters which in the seventeenth century were formally expressed and signed ‘your obedient wife’, were now signed with names and expressions of love. The mixed Scottish economy was, as always, open to new ideas.
Questions to Katie suggested that as this correspondence was the product of separation, the relationships it reveals may have been unusual. However, her evidence shows that wives had considerable understanding of household and servant management, whether the husband was at home or not. If he was present, tactics of interpretation might be less effective, but they were still used, wives sometimes resorting to writing letters from another room. Wifely management could be very independent indeed, such as among the families of exiled Jacobites, where the husband’s authority had been removed. A strong mother could try to set a model for a child’s marriage. The study looked at a small social group across all Scotland, but there were some regional differences between the more Presbyterian Lowlands, and the more Catholic Highlands, where the clan system was more active in constraining estate management decisions.

The second session focused on rural household economies and comprised two contrasting papers. The first by Nicola Verdon, senior lecturer at the University of Sussex, examined ‘Farmers’ wives and the farmhouse economy in England, c.1800–1939’. Nicola began by providing an historiographical overview. She argued, using a range of choice examples, that whilst the farmer’s wife was traditionally recognised as an important and often decisive member of the family farm economy, by the nineteenth century she had become a figure derided for alleged affectation and indolence, having withdrawn from the economic life of the farm. Nicola then questioned these assumptions by focusing on sources from the early twentieth century, especially publications such as *Farmer and Stock Breeder* and *Farmer’s Weekly*, that explored the range of productive functions on the farm and in the household that the farmer’s wife performed. Far from being inactive, the domestic management of the farmhouse, the ability to exploit expanding markets and diversify into new income-generating ventures gave the farmers’ wife a renewed importance at the centre of survival and regeneration during a period of national agricultural depression. We learnt that most farmers’ wives performed multiple tasks such as home keeper, farm manager, unpaid labourer, food producer and entrepreneur, as well as playing key roles within the wider community. They also contributed significantly to farm income by caring for small animals such as rabbits, pigs and bees, producing and selling food such as ice cream or strawberries and by taking in paying guests or supplying teas for the burgeoning tourist industry.

The second paper in this session was delivered by Anne Beckett, a former student at Cambridge University, who talked about ‘Contrasting household structures: miners and agricultural labourers families in County Durham, 1841–1901’. Whilst the previous paper had employed qualitative source material, Anne’s was mainly quantitative and relied heavily on an analysis of the Census Enumerators Returns for the parish of Pelton, Durham, in the centre of what was the Great Northern Coalfield. The Durham region was industrialising rapidly throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and the opening of new pits caused in-migration and led to several periods of rapid population growth. Anne found that agricultural households tended to be smaller and included more of the elderly, possibly indicating that they lived longer. By comparison mining households were generally larger.
and more youthful with a greater number of children, indicating a higher fertility rate. There were a large number of extended families in all sorts of permutations giving benefits to all parties concerned. The high fertility and the hazardous nature of mining meant that there were large proportions of young widows and widowers in the community. The residential situation of the widowed demonstrated that in nearly all cases they lived with relatives, who gave them support wherever possible. In questions at the end it was pointed out that useful comparisons could be made with other similar studies of mining areas.

After the LPSS AGM, our usual hearty lunch and a visit to the LPSS bookstall, the third and final session of the day focused on the struggles to make shift among working-class households. Jane Humphries, Professor of Economic History at All Souls College, Oxford, gave an informative and engaging paper entitled ‘Industrious households: household economies and household structures’, which examined the balance between breadwinning and parenting gleaned from working-class autobiographies written between the late seventeenth and the late nineteenth centuries. Quantitative analysis shows that while fathers were overwhelmingly the breadwinners in working-class families, they were emotionally distant parents. In fact, mothers appear as the central nurturing figure in autobiographies, while also performing a vital function in transforming their partner’s wages into the means of subsistence, even if not contributing directly themselves. However, many fathers were missing or unable to contribute enough to keep the family functioning. This ‘breadwinner frailty’ was a strong contributing factor in the growth of child labour and reliance on the poor law, and illustrates the way that household economies can highlight the functioning of the poor family during the Industrial Revolution.

The theme of frailty was also picked up in the final paper, which was delivered by Emily Sandy, a third-year PhD student at Selwyn College, Cambridge. Her paper was entitled ‘Lone motherhood in the late Victorian East End’, and used census and poor law data to examine how widows with dependent children made shift in the working-class district of Poplar. These mothers were found in a range of household types, most commonly with some of their children, or with their own parents or unmarried siblings. Over time, however, household compositions shifted somewhat, so that widows became increasingly likely to live with older offspring rather than younger ones. Emily suggested that this was linked to falling fertility, falling male mortality (reducing the risk of widowing at a young age) and the waning of live-in service for the young. Older children represented significant contributors to the household economy, making their co-residence a rational choice for the mother. The widowed mothers were also common welfare recipients from the poor law, but this trend also changed over time, again reflecting a slight decrease in vulnerability. This in turn promoted a more sympathetic response to the provision of long-term relief from poor law guardians, giving widowed mothers greater security.

The question period highlighted the range of common factors between the two papers, particularly the significance of older children’s earnings to the household economy and the frailty of the unit when the father was absent. The speakers also stoutly defended the regional
and wider applicability of their findings when provoked by compere Professor Goose, illustrating nicely that both local and population studies are very much thriving among our members!

The conference then broke for further discussion over refreshments. Thanks must be given to Nigel Goose who once again proved to be an exemplary conference organiser, and to Nick Hawkes for administering the event. Peter Franklin and Terry Shaw organised the well-stocked bookstall which provided bargains spread over three tables. Thanks are also due to the administrative, catering and security staff at the Law Faculty for their support both before and during the day.

Chris Galley
Janet Hudson
Alysa Levene
The family and community lives of older people after the Second World War: new evidence from York

Mark Freeman and Louise Wannell

Abstract
This article uses the findings of a detailed and unpublished survey, carried out in York in 1947 and 1948, to examine the support networks, social lives and economic conditions of older people in a period when considerable sociological attention was being paid to this section of the population. It is argued that the sociology of old age in this period overstated the role of families, and downplayed the involvement of the wider community, in the social networks of older people. The article also shows that even many of those who were physically restricted in some way could participate fully in social activities. Friends, visiting and social clubs played an important role in many lives. However, the financial circumstances of many older people restricted many areas of social participation, and contemporaneous poverty surveys probably understated the real extent of poverty among the elderly. These high levels of poverty themselves underscore the importance of the family and community support networks that are uncovered using the York data.

Introduction
The economic, medical and social problems associated with an ageing population have been the subject of widespread attention in the early twenty-first century. Increasing life expectancy, the impending retirement of the ‘baby boomer’ generation and the pensions crisis have all stimulated concern about the cost of supporting older people. Revelations of neglect in care homes, lonely older people abandoned by their children, inability to pay fuel bills, and older people as victims of crime, have brought old age to the forefront of political debate. However, concern about the costs of supporting old age, and the health and conditions of the elderly, are not new.1 One wave of concern, on which this article will concentrate, arose during and after the Second World War. As a Nuffield Foundation survey committee, set up in 1942, acknowledged in 1947, ‘[i]n recent years there has been a considerable awakening of public interest in the problems of old age, an awakening that has manifested itself in a sympathetic attitude to old people and in a widespread desire to be generous to them.’2

In the two decades after the war, considerable sociological attention was paid to the lives of the elderly. Early post-war research included the Nuffield Foundation survey, together with associated work at the University of Liverpool by Ellinor Black and Doris Read.3 The

1 On the longer history of old age, see P. Thane, Old age in English history: past experiences, present issues (Oxford, 2000).
2 Old people: report of a survey committee on the problems of ageing and the care of old people under the chairmanship of B. Sebokon Rowntree (London, 1947), 95.
3 Old people; E.I. Black and D.B. Read, Old people’s welfare on Merseyside (Liverpool, 1947).
awareness of an ageing population, and a concern that modern life worsened the long-standing problem of isolation and helplessness among the old, who were abandoned by an increasingly mobile younger generation, stimulated several major studies of older people. These were followed by J. H. Sheldon’s pioneering book on *The social medicine of old age* in 1948, which concentrated on a sample in Wolverhampton. Thereafter, a flood of studies appeared including, in the 1950s, books by Peter Townsend on *The family life of old people* in Bethnal Green, and Peter Willmott and Michael Young, who studied community life in Bethnal Green and, later, in the London suburb of Woodford. In the 1960s Dorothy Cole and J. E. G. Utting studied *The economic circumstances of old people* in seven geographical areas, and Jeremy Tunstall investigated old age in four areas; Harrow, Northampton, Oldham and South Norfolk. Although this group of researchers had different methods and preoccupations, together they challenged the view that older people were increasingly isolated, and emphasised the importance of family and kinship in the lives of the elderly. Of particular significance was the residential proximity of family members: although an older person or couple might appear to live alone, the dimensions of the household very often extended beyond its bricks and mortar. In other words, non-co-resident kin provided a significant degree of support for the elderly. This support was often financial, and also practical (helping with the shopping, cooking, and so on) and emotional (preventing loneliness and isolation). These studies were located within a wider debate on the welfare state: the survival in a modern context of close kinship support networks could be viewed either as showing the power of traditional forms of association to adapt to modern circumstances, or as illustrating the failure of the welfare state to provide for the needs of the elderly, and a consequent need to rely on familial support. Their findings clearly and repeatedly showed that for many older people close links with family members, co-resident or otherwise, were essential elements of support and sociability. Further research carried out at the University of Liverpool, and by the National Council for Social Service, in the early 1950s, considered many of the same themes and came to similar conclusions.

This article contends that community and friendship networks were more significant in the 1940s and 1950s than sociologists of the period acknowledged. One of those sociologists, Peter Willmott, remarked in 1987 that ‘though information about the respective roles of relatives and neighbours is also limited, even less is known about friends … because research on them is more difficult to do’. Although difficult, it is important: Ray Pahl has argued that friends in

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7 *Social contacts in old age: report of a survey undertaken by the Liverpool Personal Service Society in conjunction with the Department of Social Science at the University of Liverpool* (London, 1953); *Over seventy: report of an investigation into the social and economic circumstances of one hundred people over seventy years of age* (London, 1954).

contemporary Britain are replacing relatives as ‘families of choice’, partly as a result of the increasing geographical distance between family members, a tendency that can be identified among elderly and non-elderly populations. This echoes the concerns about the impact of geographical mobility on older people’s support networks in the 1940s, suggesting that the origins of ‘families of choice’ among older people might go back further than contemporary sociologists suggest.

Indeed, in a recent book, suggestively entitled The family and community life of older people, Chris Phillipson et al have argued that concentration on the family limited the development of the sociology of old age and marginalised many important features of the experience of the elderly.\(^9\) In their words, this focus ‘seemed to fix older people as being in some way inseparable from the family’, as a result of which ‘[t]he sociology of old age became invariably a sociology of the family, and not much else.’\(^10\) Phillipson et al argue that a wider range of social relationships should be studied in order to identify and analyse the social, cultural and familial contexts of ageing. These were not examined in full by an earlier generation of sociologists. For example, Townsend suggested tentatively that friends might be ‘substitutes for relatives’, commented on old-age clubs and organised outings, and recognised the importance of the ‘sense of community’ that existed among the elderly in Bethnal Green; however, he asserted that, in spite of all this, most older people were dependent on relatives for their ‘day-to-day interests’.\(^11\) This article will challenge this assertion, using an unpublished study of older people in York carried out in the later 1940s.\(^12\)

In particular, we find evidence for the ‘support convoy’ model, in which support relationships are seen to vary across the life cycle, which Phillipson et al have described.\(^13\) We will examine social participation, consumption and poverty among a large sample of older people, in a period when Britain was still in the age of post-war austerity. We show that family and community gave many, perhaps most, older people a sense of belonging and protected them from isolation, but also that the help of relatives and friends was often necessary to protect them from the consequences of financial hardship.

The York survey

The York survey was commissioned in 1947 by the Joseph Rowntree Village Trust (JRVT), with which Seebohm Rowntree was closely associated.\(^14\) (Rowntree was also chairman of the Nuffield Foundation committee appointed in 1942). The survey was carried out in 1947 and


\(^10\) Ibid., 4–5.


\(^12\) Research Services Limited, ‘A survey of aged people in York’: Borthwick Institute of Archives (BIA), York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation papers, BSR93/XI/6 (hereafter, JRVT report). These papers were held in the Joseph Rowntree Foundation library, the Homestead, York, before being transferred to the Borthwick Institute.

\(^13\) Phillipson et al., Family and community lives, 27–30.

The family and community lives of older people

1948 by Research Services Limited (RSL), a company established in 1946 by the social investigator and market researcher Mark Abrams, who later became research director at Age Concern. The research involved a number of interviewers, all female, and Abrams himself drafted the report. The extent of the population covered by the survey, and the range of topics included, make it a valuable source for the historian of old age. Despite some limitations, it is possible to use many of its findings, together with other sources, to present a detailed picture of aspects of the ‘family and community lives’ of older people.

The investigators aimed to interview every man aged 65 and over and every woman aged 60 and over in York and neighbouring Flaxton; a total of 10,360 people were interviewed. This was 82.8 per cent of the 12,510 older people who were found in the population of the two districts. We cannot tell how those who were interviewed differed from those who were not. The interviewees were asked to give answers to a questionnaire comprising 15 questions—referred to as the ‘universal’ questionnaire—referring to their living arrangements, income and other basic matters. Of these, a number were selected to answer a second, much more detailed, questionnaire, referred to as the ‘case’ questionnaire. A ‘case’ interview was carried out with older people who appeared to qualify on one or more of three grounds: if their health was seriously impeded; if their accommodation was substandard in terms of overcrowding, sanitation or having more than two flights of stairs separating important rooms; or on grounds of income—if they lived alone with an income of less than 45s. per week, in a 2-person household with less than 90s. per week, in a 3-person household with less than £7 per week, or in a 4-person household with less than £10 per week. Such prima facie ‘problem cases’ numbered 6,379, or 61.6 per cent of the ‘universal’ group; and of these 5,966 gave a ‘case’ interview, comprising 57.6 per cent of the ‘universal’ group. Of the ‘case’ sample, 2,128 or 35.7 per cent were men and 3,838 or 64.3 per cent women. The size of the two York samples contrasts with the relatively modest sample sizes in the contemporaneous studies by Townsend (203 in Bethnal Green), Tunstall (a total of 538 across his four areas) and Sheldon (583 in Wolverhampton). The ‘case’ questionnaire contained 172 questions. We focus on those questions that shed light on support networks, social contacts and economic circumstances, although many other aspects of the lives of older people could also be investigated. Although the ‘case’ sample was not random—it was specifically defined as comprising ‘that section of old people who are, or are likely soon to become, social problems’—their circumstances as reported in the survey shed much light on the lives of the

17 In the County Borough of York in 1951 there were 4,472 men aged 65 and over, and 9,327 women aged 60 and over; the figures for Flaxton Rural District were 863 and 1,712 respectively. This gave a total for the whole area covered by the inquiry of 16,375. See General Register Office, Census 1951, England and Wales, county report: Yorkshire, West Riding (London, 1954), table 21; Yorkshire, East and North Ridings (London, 1954), table 22.
18 JRVT report, 4.
elderly in a mid-twentieth-century provincial town, and suggest some revisions of the picture obtained from Townsend and others.

Practical support: cooking and shopping

The role of family members in the support of many older people is clear from the York data, especially in the tables that consider help with practical tasks. For example, the interviewers asked the case sample, ‘who cooks for you?’ They found that 746 men and 873 women did not do all their own cooking; of these, 35.6 per cent of the men and 29.6 per cent of the women were cooked for by their spouse; 48.1 per cent of men and 55.1 per cent of women by another relative; and 7.2 per cent of men and 7.3 per cent of women by a friend. Friends, therefore, were relatively insignificant compared with relatives in this respect. The last percentages represent 54 men and 64 women, most of whom must have lived alone, because, of the 102 people who lived alone and did not do all their own cooking, 79.4 per cent were helped by a friend. The dominance of help from friends among those who lived alone shows that those without family support could often rely on alternative networks.

The interviewers also asked, ‘who shops for you?’ As Table 1 shows, a total of 2,602 case respondents did not do all their own shopping, and of these 26.7 per cent were helped by a spouse and 53.9 per cent by another member of the household, while 19.1 per cent were helped by a ‘friend or relative outside [the] household’. The latter figure rose to 22.4 per cent in the case of women who did not do all their own shopping, and 26.1 per cent of women aged 70 and over who did not, while among those living alone (a total of 285 did not do all their own shopping), 86.0 per cent were helped by a ‘friend or relative’. Friends were probably more likely to assist with shopping than with cooking, which was a more intrusive task, involving entry into someone else’s home and use of their kitchen facilities. It should be emphasised here that, as Townsend remarked, the distinction between friends and relatives may have been somewhat confused: some relatives were also neighbours, and may have been referred to as friends. The JRVT survey, in addressing shopping patterns, made no attempt to separate friends and relatives, and even more vaguely, when asking about housework, distinguished only between paid and unpaid ‘domestic help’. However, the answers to the interviewers’ questions do seem to suggest that older people living alone—at least those with poor health, poor housing or low incomes, and who thus appeared in the case sample—had ‘friends of choice’, or perhaps ‘friends of necessity’, who in some respects and in the provision of some support took the place of their family members. There was some scope for friends and neighbours to participate in the practical support of the elderly population, although, as we will see, their role was considerably greater in their social life rather than in the provision of support.

19 JRVT report, tables 95–9.
20 JRVT report, tables 87–90.
21 Townsend, Family life, 139–40.
22 JRVT report, tables 100–5.
Nevertheless, the findings of the survey lend considerable weight to the notion of the ‘support convoy’. The circumstances of older people can change in significant ways, above all with widowhood. Of 5,966 case informants, 2,520 or 42.2 per cent had experienced a change in the composition of their household in the past five years. Among those living alone, the proportion was almost 50 per cent (in many cases probably because of the death of a spouse), and it was even higher among those living with other members of their family.23 These changing household circumstances must have entailed changes in support mechanisms and social arrangements. We can also trace aspects of the support convoy through differences between age groups, particularly among men. For example, as Table 1 shows, among men aged under 70 who did not do all their own shopping, 49.3 per cent said that their wife shopped for them, whereas among those aged 70 and over, 58.0 per cent named another member of their household. The proportion of these men who relied on a friend or relative outside the household for their shopping increased from 4.9 per cent among the under-70s to 12.9 per cent among those aged 70 and over. The corresponding figures for women were 16.9 per cent and 26.1 per cent, a considerably higher proportion than for men, although in other respects women’s shopping arrangements changed less with age.24 Among men, similar changes are apparent in regard to cooking arrangements: of men aged under 70 who did not do

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informants not doing all own shopping (base for percentages)</th>
<th>All men</th>
<th>All women</th>
<th>Men aged 69 &amp; under</th>
<th>Men aged 70 &amp; over</th>
<th>Women aged 69 &amp; under</th>
<th>Women aged 70 &amp; over</th>
<th>All those living alone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other member of household (except domestic servant)</td>
<td>1,402</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>53.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend or relative outside household</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeper, domestic servant, landlady</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other person</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivered by shop</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information unobtainable</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100, because some informants gave more than one answer. The question was asked only to ‘first’ case interviewees, i.e. the first case interviewee in each household, some of which contained two or more case interviewees.

Source: JRVT report, table 89.

Nevertheless, the findings of the survey lend considerable weight to the notion of the ‘support convoy’. The circumstances of older people can change in significant ways, above all with widowhood. Of 5,966 case informants, 2,520 or 42.2 per cent had experienced a change in the composition of their household in the past five years. Among those living alone, the proportion was almost 50 per cent (in many cases probably because of the death of a spouse), and it was even higher among those living with other members of their family.23 These changing household circumstances must have entailed changes in support mechanisms and social arrangements. We can also trace aspects of the support convoy through differences between age groups, particularly among men. For example, as Table 1 shows, among men aged under 70 who did not do all their own shopping, 49.3 per cent said that their wife shopped for them, whereas among those aged 70 and over, 58.0 per cent named another member of their household. The proportion of these men who relied on a friend or relative outside the household for their shopping increased from 4.9 per cent among the under-70s to 12.9 per cent among those aged 70 and over. The corresponding figures for women were 16.9 per cent and 26.1 per cent, a considerably higher proportion than for men, although in other respects women’s shopping arrangements changed less with age.24 Among men, similar changes are apparent in regard to cooking arrangements: of men aged under 70 who did not do

23 JRVT report, table 209.
24 JRVT report, table 89.
their own cooking, 51.2 per cent relied on their wife and 30.3 per cent on another relative, while
the corresponding figures for those aged 70 and over were 29.5 per cent and 55.1 per cent.\footnote{JRVT report, table 97.}

**Visiting and social contact**

The importance of friends and neighbours, as well as family members, is emphasised by the
statistics on recent visitors. The interviewers asked about visitors ‘yesterday’, ‘the day before
yesterday’ and ‘last weekend’.\footnote{As noted above, the interviews were undertaken over a long period. Some of the interviews were carried out on a
Monday or Tuesday. It appears from table 52 in the report that, by ‘yesterday’ the interviewers meant the last
weekday, and by the ‘day before yesterday’, they meant the last weekday but one. However, this is not entirely
certain.} Of the whole case sample, 36.6 per cent of men, 46.9 per cent of women and 53.4 per cent of those who lived alone, had had one or more visitors on the day preceding the interview.\footnote{JRVT report, table 48. According to table 54 of the report, 494 had received two visitors, and 140 three or more, amounting in total to 24.6 per cent of those who had received visitors ‘yesterday’. A further 113 did not state the number.} As shown in Table 2(a), sons and daughters were the commonest category of visitor, comprising almost a quarter of the total, and more where the older person lived with his or her spouse only. However, among older people living alone, the commonest kind of visitor was a friend of the same sex. Although in all groups relatives made up more than half of ‘yesterday’s’ visitors, friends were important. In total, 777 older people were visited by friends of the same, and 145 by friends of the opposite, sex, on the preceding day, and this was the case for around a quarter of those who lived alone. The survey report commented that same-sex friendships were ‘particularly important for women living on their
own’.\footnote{JRVT report, 39.} On the ‘day before yesterday’ (Table 2(b)) the proportion of older people receiving visitors was considerably lower, at 30.7 per cent of men, 38.8 per cent of women and 43.7 per cent of those who lived alone. These lower figures could largely be attributed to deficiencies of memory. Nevertheless, the relative proportions of relatives and non-relatives visiting on the ‘day before yesterday’ were roughly similar to ‘yesterday’.

Visits paid by relatives, especially sons and daughters, were a more significant component of
the social lives of older people at weekends (Table 2(c)). Sons and daughters were more likely to be of working age, and therefore less able to visit on weekdays.\footnote{Older men themselves were more likely to be in employment than older women, and therefore less able to pay or receive visits. However, the nature of the case sample was such that participation in employment was relatively low: only 134 in the sample had not retired from work, and only 233 reported having any part-time employment. See JRVT report, tables 201–3.} When asked about visitors ‘last weekend’, 33.3 per cent of all older people in the case sample mentioned sons or daughters, and only 11.1 per cent friends of the same, and 2.5 per cent friends of the opposite, sex. Weekend visits from friends were most important for those living alone: 18.1 per cent of these people mentioned friends of the same, and 2.1 per cent friends of the opposite, sex, although among this group visits from sons and daughters were more numerous at the weekend. More than half of the whole case sample had received visitors the previous
### Table 2  Visitors recently received, case sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Visitors received ‘yesterday’</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Domestic organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All informants (base for percentages)</td>
<td>5,966</td>
<td>2,127</td>
<td>3,839</td>
<td>1,039</td>
<td>1,620</td>
<td>1,727</td>
<td>1,228</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any visitors(s)</td>
<td>2,580</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers, sisters</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons, daughters</td>
<td>1,411</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends - same sex</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends - opposite sex</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official visitor</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other visitors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No visitors</td>
<td>3,386</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>63.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Domestic organisation,
A = Alone    B = With spouse only       C = Without spouse as part of family
D = With spouse as part of family     E = Other ways       F = In institutions
* = less than 0.05 %

Except for those in institutions some percentages do not sum to 100, as some older people had more than one visitor. Visits by doctors are not included in this table.

Sources: a) and b) JRVT report, table 48, c) JRVT report, table 50
weekend. In total, covering all three questions, 62.5 per cent of men had received at least one visitor ‘yesterday’, the day before, or at the weekend, as had 73.0 per cent of women and 74.4 per cent of those living alone. Among the whole case sample, 69.2 per cent had been visited, and 22.9 per cent had answered ‘yes’ to all three questions. A separate question revealed that more a tenth of the case sample were visited monthly or more often by their doctor, representing another, if perhaps less welcome, form of personal contact.

The investigators were at pains to point out that, although 70.9 per cent of the case sample had ‘regular’ visits from relatives, a number did not, even where they had relatives (including sons and daughters), many of whom lived in York. (The definition of ‘regular’ is not entirely clear.) Of the 1,734 (29.1 per cent of the case sample) who were not visited regularly by any relatives, 740 said that a son or daughter was their next-of-kin, and 669 others named brothers, sisters and other relatives, including in-laws. Although lack of regular visits did not mean a complete break from other family members, these figures suggest that a not insignificant proportion of older people had lost contact with children and siblings. It is likely that many of those who had lost contact with children or other next-of-kin relied more heavily on friends and neighbours for practical support and social contacts. Moreover, a proportion of older people in all communities have no living children, and necessarily rely on alternative ‘social and emotional resources’.

Older people were almost as likely to pay visits as to receive them, although exact comparisons are not possible because the interviewers only asked whether they had paid any visits within the previous week. It should be emphasised that many of those who received visits also paid them, probably often to each other. A fairly small proportion could not pay visits because they were confined to their homes: this was true of 529 members of the sample, or 8.9 per cent. Among the members of the case sample who were not confined to their homes, 43.7 per cent of men, 53.9 per cent of women, and 66.6 per cent of those living alone had visited someone in the previous week (even 21.2 per cent of the 99 people living in an institution had done so). As Table 3(a) shows, 2,727 older people had paid visits, amounting to 50.2 per cent of the 5,437 unconfined members of the sample. The proportions were 43.7 per cent of men, 53.9 per cent of women, and 66.6 per cent of the 992 older people who lived alone and were not confined indoors. Again, it should be emphasised that, because of mobility difficulties, those in the case sample were less likely to be in a position to visit others than were those in the elderly population as a whole. Here, as Table 3(b) shows, friends of the same sex were the largest single category of person visited, being mentioned by 37.9 per cent of all those who had paid visits, including 45.1 per cent of the 661 unconfined older people living

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30 JRVT report, table 52.
31 JRVT report, table 171.
32 JRVT report, table 62.
33 G.C. Wenger, *The supportive network: coping with old age* (London, 1984), 71, 76. In this survey, the proportion with no living children was 31 per cent.
34 JRVT report, table 67. Information was ‘unobtainable’ in 57 cases, while 2,653 had not paid any visits in the previous week.
The family and community lives of older people

alone who had paid visits. Moreover, 182 people had visited friends of the opposite sex. It is not possible to cross-tabulate the proportions paying and receiving visits, but the impression from these figures for the case sample is of an elderly population that, on the whole, enjoyed a reasonable level of social participation.35 Friends had an important place in the lives of older people. As one anthropologist has concluded, ‘friends play a part in the acceptance of physical ageing, in the management of transitions such as retirement and widowhood, and in coping with such age-related losses as youthful appearance, health and fitness, of home, kin and other friends’,36

Clubs, social participation and contentment

Visits were only one way of ensuring social contact; social clubs were another. In his study of Bethnal Green in the 1950s, Townsend downplayed the significance of clubs in the life of the elderly. However, given that almost one in four of his sample attended clubs of one sort or another,37 they may have played a role of considerable importance in the lives of many elderly people. The Nuffield survey emphasised this, especially in relation to men:

old men enjoy belonging to clubs, where they can spend much of their time. Old women are not, apparently, as interested in clubs, perhaps because they are usually more fully occupied in their own houses. An old man who has been accustomed to go daily to work finds that he is a positive nuisance to his wife and to himself when he has nothing to do except to potter around the house all day … a well run club for old men often changes a life of dull and dreary loneliness to one of happy contentment.38

Among the York case sample, 797 were members of clubs, representing 13.4 per cent of the total. Unlike in Bethnal Green, club membership was heavily concentrated among men, of whom 28.2 per cent were members, compared with just 5.2 per cent of women. These figures support the comments of the Nuffield committee, and reflect the strength of the working men’s clubs in the north of England:39 56.2 per cent of club members were members of these organisations, compared with just 6.5 per cent who were members of old age pensioners’ clubs,40 8.9 per cent who were in church and chapel clubs, and 2.4 per cent in the British Legion and similar organisations.41 Among both men and women, there were not significant variations in club membership by age. Although among men there was a slight falling away

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35 Of the case sample, 42.3 per cent had received at least one personal letter in the preceding fortnight, and 32.8 per cent had sent one (JRVT report, tables 70–1). It is not possible to tell who these correspondents were.
36 D. Jerrome, Good company: an anthropological study of old people in groups (Edinburgh, 1992), xii.
38 Old people, 80.
41 Other types of club included political clubs and a large and vague category comprising ‘Other clubs’, to which 21.8 per cent of club members belonged.
Table 3  Visits paid in the past seven days, case sample

(a) Number of older people paying visits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic organisation</th>
<th>Whole sample</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informants paying no visits in past seven days (%)</td>
<td>5,437</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>3,437</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>1,533</td>
<td>1,521</td>
<td>1,136</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informants paying visits in the past seven days (%)</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information unobtainable</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Persons visited in the past seven days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic organisation</th>
<th>Whole sample</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informants paying visits in the past seven days (number; base for percentages below)</td>
<td>2,727</td>
<td>873</td>
<td>1,854</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons visited</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughters</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sisters</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends, same sex</td>
<td>1,033</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends, opposite sex</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials, clergymen, etc.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other people</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Domestic organisation, 
A = Alone 
B = With spouse only 
C = Without spouse as part of family 
D = With spouse as part of family 
E = Other ways 
F = In institution 
Percentages do not sum to 100, because some older people paid more than one visit. Visits to doctors are not included in this table.

Source: (a) JRVT report, table 67, (b) JRVT report, table 68

from club membership after the age of 70, more than a quarter of all men aged 70 and over were club members. Among male club members, 37.7 per cent had visited their club on the day preceding the interview, and the figure was slightly higher among those aged 70 and over. Among all club members of both sexes—including all club memberships where an individual was a member of more than one—34.9 per cent went to their club more than once a week, and 35.4 per cent once a week. Among men the figures were 47.9 per cent and 30.0 per
The family and community lives of older people

cent respectively. These figures suggest that the clubs played a considerable role in the lives of
the proportion of the elderly population who were club members, particularly men. We
cannot tell whether non-members also visited clubs: if so, they may have played an even
larger role than was documented in the York survey. Whereas women were more likely to
have had visitors and paid visits, men were more likely to obtain social contact through
clubs, although it should be emphasised here that a tenth of men had been visited by a friend
on the previous day alone (see Table 2(a)).

The investigators also asked informants about the duration of their last visit to their club.
Table 4 shows the frequency of visits and the duration of the last visit. From this, it is possible
to estimate the average length of time that club members spent at their club, and the amount
of time spent per week. This is complicated by the fact that 80 individuals were members of
more than one club. However, a calculation based on Table 4 shows that, on a low estimate,
the average club visit lasted around an hour and fifty minutes, and that the average club
member spent over four hours a week at their club. This means that, across the whole case
sample, including club members and non-club members, men spent an average of an hour
and quarter at a club each week, a figure that would, presumably, be higher among the non-
case sample. The investigators asked what members did at the clubs, and what their
favourite activity was: 93.5 per cent of members talked to their friends, and more than half
took refreshments and played cards, while 55.5 per cent named talking to friends as their
favourite club activity. These figures suggest that clubs were, particularly for many elderly
men in York, an important way in which social contacts were maintained. Townsend himself
noted that there was a considerable demand for clubs, finding that 30 per cent of non-
members did not join because they were in employment, infirm or had caring
responsibilities, not because they simply did not want to. The view of Seebohm Rowntree
and his collaborator G. R. Lavers was that most clubs were ‘desirable institutions, performing
a thoroughly useful function’, and this was particularly clear in the case of the large minority
of elderly men in the case sample who were members. Pubs also provided an opportunity
for socialising, although the investigators did not ask specifically about them.

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42 6.4 per cent had been visited by friends of the same sex, and 3.9 per cent by friends of the opposite sex. It is not
possible to tell how much overlap there was between these two groups, but the majority of men who had been
visited on the previous day had had only one visitor (JRVT report, table 54).

43 Here we also assume that men and women had the same average length of visit, and number of weekly visits.

44 If the calculations above excluded the 111 men in the case sample who were confined to the house, and therefore
not able to go to a club, the proportions being club members, and the average length of time per person spent at a
club, would be even higher.

45 Townsend, Family life, 144.


47 JRVT report, table 78, summarising the case sample diaries. Here, 145 individuals reported that they had been at
a club in the evening (compared with 85 in the afternoon and 41 in the morning), but only 31 reported that they
had spent part of the evening at a pub. Using a similar multiplier leads one to the conclusion that only around
100 people in the case sample went to pubs, or less than 2 per cent of the total, which seems implausibly low. It
seems likely that pub visits were under-reported in the survey, perhaps due to reluctance on the part of the
interviewees to admit to drinking.
Table 4  Frequency of visits to club, and duration of last visit to club, all club members in the case sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All club members (base for percentages)*</th>
<th>All men</th>
<th>All women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>231</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency of visits</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than once a day</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 or 3 times a week</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>66.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less often than once a week</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration of last visit</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 hour</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hour to 1½ hours</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 hours to 2½ hours</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 hours and over</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot remember</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**  * The informants who belonged to two clubs were counted twice in this table, the frequency with which they attended both clubs, and the duration of their last visit to both clubs, being included. There were 797 club members, 80 of whom belonged to two clubs. None belonged to more than two. The report gave the wrong figure, 797, as the base for percentages. The number of men and women was not given in the report, and has been calculated from the percentages.

**Source:** JRVT report, tables 2–3.

Lavers were far from thinking that pubs were ‘desirable institutions’, but they did admit that they ‘are not infrequently social institutions of considerable importance to the communal life of the neighbourhood’.48 Given the characteristics of the non-case sample, it is distinctly possible that clubs and pubs played a larger role in the life of the male population than was indicated by the case sample data.

Churchgoing also fostered social participation. More than a fifth of the case sample attended a religious service monthly or more frequently, with 15.7 per cent attending once a week or more. As with other social activities, churchgoing was more likely and more frequent among those who were mobile—of the 3,848 people who were ‘able to go out and move about at will’, 18.6 per cent attended once a week or more—and it was also more common among women than men. The York figures were higher than those for Bethnal Green, where Townsend found that only 13 per cent attended church or chapel at least monthly, predominantly women.49 In addition to attendance at services, 9.6 per cent of the York case sample had attended ‘church or chapel functions’ in the previous six months: these were mostly women, and the most common functions were ‘socials, dances, parties’, mothers’ meetings, whist drives and jumble sales.

Cinemas also played a role in the lives of the elderly population: 16.7 per cent of the case sample had visited the cinema in the fortnight prior to being interviewed, a figure that was slightly higher among women. The popularity of the cinema is underlined by the fact that, apparently, even among those who were confined to bed, 15, or 12.0 per cent, claimed to have been during the preceding fortnight. The attendance ‘at the pictures’ of those confined to bed may be explained by institutional film shows, which were attended by 3.8 per cent of those who had visited the cinema in the past fortnight. Most, however, travelled to the cinema, many went with their spouses or children, and 10.1 per cent with their friends. However, the extent to which cinemas fulfilled a social function is less clear, because among those who had been to the cinema in the preceding fortnight, almost a third went alone.

Overall, the impression given by the survey was of a mostly contented elderly population. For each case informant, an opinion was obtained from the interviewer as to his or her level of contentment. It should be emphasised that this was only the opinion of the interviewer, and not the outcome of a direct question. In total, 20.5 per cent of the case sample was considered ‘very contented’ and 74.7 per cent ‘contented’, with only 4.0 per cent ‘discontented’. There were not significant variations between men and women, by age, or by domestic arrangements: among all categories of domestic arrangements, only a small proportion of older people, between two and five per cent, were considered ‘discontented’ by the interviewer. However, among the small numbers confined to bed (125) and confined indoors and restricted in movement (347), the proportions ‘discontented’ were predictably somewhat higher, at 15.2 per cent and 8.9 per cent respectively. The low level of ‘discontentment’, among most groups, was reflected in social participation and meaningful activities. Thus, when five different activities were considered—the extent to which people went to church, visited the cinema, practised a handicraft, had a hobby, and spent a day away from home—it was found that, while a predictably small 0.9 per cent of the case sample did all five of these things, 23.7 per cent did at least three, and only 8.2 per cent did none of them. Partly owing to the nature of the five activities chosen, men were less likely to do more than two of these things, but the proportions of men and women doing none (9.0 per cent and 7.7 per cent respectively) were not very different. It is not possible to tell what proportion of these elderly people who did none of these things were in the ‘discontented’ group, but it may well have been high. Again, it must be remembered that the case sample contained those who were in circumstances that made it more difficult to participate in these activities.

**Poverty and economic well-being**

Although older people in York were mostly able to participate in social activities, the extent of their participation could be severely restricted by their financial circumstances. This was
emphasised a decade later in Cole and Utting’s study, which concluded that the ‘meagre incomes’ of the elderly restricted their independence and social participation, and advocated higher old-age pensions for those aged 70 and over, as well as better private pensions.\(^5^3\) The York data gives an insight into the straitened financial circumstances of many of the elderly population, particularly when examined in conjunction with Rowntree and Lavers’s study of poverty in York, which was carried out in 1950 and emphasised the importance of old age as a cause of poverty in the era of the welfare state.

Rowntree and Lavers, using a sample survey of the households in York, calculated a poverty line which varied according to the size of household, and whether members of that household were in employment. They found that 1,746 persons, corresponding to 2.8 per cent of the ‘working-class’ population,\(^5^4\) or 1.7 per cent of the total population, were below the poverty line. There were 846 ‘families’ in poverty, 4.7 per cent of the ‘working-class’ total, or somewhere below 3 per cent of the total number of families in York. Of the families in poverty, the main cause of poverty was old age in 576, or 68.1 per cent, of cases. Many of the older people in poverty were in receipt of old age pensions: the pension for a single person was 26s. and for a couple 40s., while in both cases the poverty line, after rent and rates, stood considerably higher than this.\(^5^5\) Therefore, a single elderly person, or an elderly couple, living with nobody else and with no source of income other than the old age pension, would be in poverty. Indeed, many on supplementary pensions were also in poverty, as Rowntree and Lavers emphasised: ‘Among the large percentage of cases where poverty is due to old age, a good many of the families concerned are in receipt of supplementary pensions, thus demonstrating that even with our stringent definition of poverty, supplementary pensions are no longer a guarantee against poverty.’\(^5^6\)

Old age was the most significant cause of poverty, and the elderly people in poverty constituted a significant proportion of the elderly population, probably more than 10 per cent. Of all those interviewed for the JRVT survey (not just the case sample), the old-age pension was the only source of income for 33.7 per cent of informants. Although some of the recipients of old-age pensions would have been lifted out of poverty by the earnings of other members of the household, the pension was the only source of income for 20.1 per cent of those living alone, and for 35.3 per cent of those living with their spouse only. These two groups alone numbered 1,316 people, or 12.7 per cent of the elderly population interviewed.

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\(^5^3\) Cole and Utting, *Economic circumstances*, 103; see also Townsend, *Family life*, 166–8.

\(^5^4\) The ‘working-class’ population was defined as those households where the chief wage-earner (and spouse, where appropriate) earned less than £550 a year; B. Seebohm Rowntree and G.R. Lavers, *Poverty and the welfare state: a third social survey of York, dealing only with economic questions* (London, 1951), 1.

\(^5^5\) The poverty line for a single man was 36s.1d. or 37s.11d. depending on whether he was in employment. The figures for a single woman were 31s.1d. or 33s.2d., and for a married couple 56s.2d. or 57s.2d. See Rowntree and Lavers, *Poverty and the welfare state*, 28–9. Some of the figures presented here were not given in Rowntree and Lavers’s study, and have been calculated. They did not give the numbers of individuals affected by each cause of poverty, and it is not possible to calculate this from the data given in the survey.

\(^5^6\) Rowntree and Lavers, *Poverty and the welfare state*, 35.
The family and community lives of older people

for the purposes of the survey.\textsuperscript{57} This suggests that Rowntree and Lavers underestimated the extent of poverty in their survey, as recent scholars have also concluded using other evidence.\textsuperscript{58} Moreover, given that only 971 individuals in the JRVT survey had any income from employment, even our figure of 12.7 per cent is likely to underestimate significantly the level of poverty among older people in York in 1947–8. Among case interviewees, the pension was the sole source of income for 43.2 per cent, and for 28.1 per cent of those living alone, and 49.1 per cent of those living with their spouse only.\textsuperscript{59} This means that at least 18.2 per cent of those in the case sample were living below Rowntree and Lavers’s poverty line, and probably rather more. Under Rowntree’s chairmanship, the Nuffield Foundation study of 1947 had optimistically considered the old age pension to be sufficient for ‘bare subsistence’, even where people lived alone or with their spouse only.\textsuperscript{60} This was obviously not the case, even given the strictness of the Rowntree and Lavers poverty line.

Of course, the JRVT survey questions about income did not necessarily capture other sources of material support that might not have been defined as ‘income’: for example, meals cooked by relatives. However, it is clear that the extent of participation in consumerism and social life was restricted, for many elderly people, by their limited income as much as by any difficulties with mobility. The lack of resources among the case sample is repeatedly emphasised in the tabulated results of the survey. Table 5 summarises the percentages of the case sample citing lack of money as the reason for not engaging in particular activities. It shows that 33.0 per cent of the case sample claimed that they could not afford a holiday (this figure increased to 57.0 per cent among those living alone), 13.5 per cent told the interviewer that they could not afford to visit the cinema (a matinee ticket at the Clifton Realto cinema cost 2s.3d., or 1s.9d. for concessions, in 1947),\textsuperscript{61} 34.8 per cent said that they lacked the means to eat in a restaurant, 30.9 per cent cited cost as reason for not buying the local weekly newspaper (the \textit{Yorkshire Gazette} cost 1½d.), and 5.3 per cent could not, or so they claimed, afford enough bedding to keep themselves warm. Another question revealed that, of 4,434 householders in the case sample, 1,634 needed repairs to their home\textsuperscript{62} this emphasises the extent of ‘amenity deprivation’ that existed among older people, and according to other sources persisted into the 1960s.\textsuperscript{63} Because of these levels of deprivation, many members of

\textsuperscript{57} Calculated from JRVT report, table 23. The table shows that the old-age pension was the only source of income for 28.1 per cent of the 1,086 ‘problem’ cases living alone, 48.5 per cent of the 1,760 ‘problem’ cases living with a spouse only, none of the 438 ‘non-problem’ cases living alone, and 14.3 per cent of the 1,103 ‘non-problem’ cases living with a spouse only. Adding these percentages together gives a figure for those living on old-age pensions only of 1,316, to the nearest whole number.


\textsuperscript{59} Calculated from JRVT report, table 23C.

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Old people}, 23–4. The Nuffield report noted that most older people were not in this situation, and that where they lived with relatives, the pension was enough to provide for subsistence and modest personal expenditure.

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Yorkshire Evening Press}, 6 January 1947.

\textsuperscript{62} JRVT report, table 289.

\textsuperscript{63} I. Gazeley, \textit{Poverty in Britain 1900–1965} (Basingstoke, 2003), 176.
the elderly population were particularly reliant on the various support networks that existed for them, and on inexpensive or free forms of entertainment, particularly visiting, and being visited by, friends and relatives. Holidays, in particular, were beyond the reach of many, and remained so into the 1950s and 1960s. As the Nuffield study acknowledged, ‘few old people can afford holidays away from their own homes’, the cinema was often too expensive, and attendance as spectators at sporting events was ‘limited by the comparatively high cost of admission’. Even those whose circumstances placed them comfortably above the Rowntree and Lavers poverty line were denied—or at least considered themselves unable to afford—minor luxuries such as the cinema and weekly newspapers.

Table 5  Percentage of case sample not doing/having selected things, and percentage citing lack of means as a reason

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Number</th>
<th>(b) % of case sample</th>
<th>(c) Number citing lack of means</th>
<th>(d) % of case sample citing lack of means</th>
<th>(e) % of those in column (a) citing lack of means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not owning a wireless set</td>
<td>961</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not visiting cinema in preceding fortnight</td>
<td>4,968</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not taking a holiday in the past year</td>
<td>3,998</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>1,967</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not eating in a restaurant in the past month</td>
<td>5,332</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>2,074</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not reading a newspaper ‘yesterday’</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not reading a Sunday newspaper ‘last Sunday’</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not reading a weekly newspaper in the past week</td>
<td>5,039</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>1,844</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not using cooking facilities ‘yesterday’</td>
<td>2,059</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not having enough bedding to keep warm</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * The figures given here refer to the number and proportion giving the reason that the cooker ‘uses too much fuel to be used every day’.

Source: JRVT report, tables 12, 16, 41, 44, 122, 124, 126, 279, 217.

The situation of some older people improved when the rates of old-age pensions were increased in 1951, to 30s. a week for a single person and 50s. for a couple. Rowntree and Lavers showed that, had these rates been in force when they carried out their survey, the number of families in poverty would have been reduced from 846 to 351. Assuming the entire reduction to be among families in poverty due to old age, the impact would have been to cut this number from 576 families to just 81: calculated from Rowntree and Lavers, Poverty and the welfare state, 35–6.

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64 Townsend, Family life, 168; Cole and Utting, Economic circumstances, 103.
66 The situation of some older people improved when the rates of old-age pensions were increased in 1951, to 30s. a week for a single person and 50s. for a couple. Rowntree and Lavers showed that, had these rates been in force when they carried out their survey, the number of families in poverty would have been reduced from 846 to 351. Assuming the entire reduction to be among families in poverty due to old age, the impact would have been to cut this number from 576 families to just 81: calculated from Rowntree and Lavers, Poverty and the welfare state, 35–6.
Conclusion

The overall impression given by the York survey is of a relatively contented elderly population, but without the means to pursue some of the activities that they might have wished to. Nevertheless, activities of little or no cost—such as visiting friends and relatives, talking to friends at a social club, and going to church—were pursued by many older people, even in the case sample, in which mobility and participation were more restricted than among older people as a whole. Seebohm Rowntree’s dispiriting claim that ‘by far the worst evil of old age was loneliness’ was not borne out by the survey, at least as far as the majority was concerned.67 Most older people had something to do with their time, and few seemed to be ‘discontented’, even among the case sample, whose members may have had more reason to be unhappy than the non-case sample. Around a tenth of older people were in precarious financial circumstances and poor health, and their social participation was severely restricted, albeit in some cases partly through personal choice. The remainder of the elderly population seems to have relied on a range of support networks, and these varied with age and circumstances. There is some evidence for a ‘convoy’ model of practical support, and considerable evidence that the role of friends and the wider community loomed large in the day-to-day social interactions of older people in York after the Second World War. However, lifestyles were still very much circumscribed by poverty: if retirement from work was not the ‘tragic event’ that Townsend painted, these older people were far from enjoying a modern version of the ‘third age’.68 The level of poverty uncovered by the JRVT survey emphasises the importance of the support networks that were available, and of both the family and community lives of older people.

Acknowledgement

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Morbidity in an early-modern small town: Loughborough in the seventeenth century

Dave Postles

Abstract

While the incidence of sickness has been explored for a few, large urban centres in early-modern England from the evidence of ‘static’ (‘snapshot’) surveys of the poor, another perspective can be obtained by scrutinising churchwardens’ accounts for smaller towns. What the latter approach can reveal is something of the life-course of the sick—duration of sickness, life-stage sickness; and to what extent institutions in unincorporated towns (like Loughborough) could ameliorate the position of the sick—when and how, with limited resources, they could intervene. Despite some inherent problems of these accounts (payments to the sick selectively), their dissection can, in conjunction with the material in the surveys, assist in constructing a picture of early-modern morbidity.

Introduction

Much of the recent discussion of the experience of sickness in early-modern populations has concentrated on the larger urban centres, rightly so because of the particular concern of urban authorities with health and welfare in response to the impact of disease there. These places had an institutional authority which, as Margaret Pelling and Paul Slack have illustrated, actively engaged with the collection of information and surveillance, as well as some sort of political and constitutional infrastructure, if not institutional organisation in bricks and mortar.1 As well as their corporate organisation, mayor, aldermen and burgesses in council(s), these larger urban places sometimes contained gilds which sponsored, if they could not regulate, medical practitioners, as Patrick Wallis has so felicitously demonstrated.2 We thus know most about the lives of the poor, sick and elderly in London, Norwich, Warwick and Ipswich, where surveys of the poor were conducted.3 The uncovering of the extent of morbidity in these larger urban places through their better documentation—surveys of the poor in the last decades of the sixteenth and early decades of the seventeenth centuries—has opened a new perspective on the ‘common lot’, below the lifestyles of the urban elite.4

3 Pelling, Common lot.
4 Pelling, Common lot.
Loughborough’s context

Early-modern England was, nonetheless, a world of urban motion in numerous respects. One significant aspect was the development of smaller urban places which lacked that very form of corporate government. Such places were being transformed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, without a unitary political authority to intervene to mitigate the effects of sickness and disease: one aspect of the search for stability in a time of dislocation. Belonging to this lower echelon of smaller towns without that unitary corporate authority, Loughborough has yet a richness of documentation which permits some insight into the issue of morbidity. Although lacking a survey of the sick and poor, Loughborough does have the compensatory survival of some detailed listings of the recipients of doles from the

5 Pelling, Common lot, 15, reviews the wider applicability of the Norwich material.
churchwardens from which we can address some of the issues of morbidity in this small town. In two senses at least, this material allows a more dynamic examination of the well-being of the urban population than is permitted by the static surveys, since we can perceive the reaction of the churchwardens over a period of time, not just at one moment, and we can also estimate the duration of interventions to assist individuals or families. We also obtain some idea of the level of response to sickness. Importantly, perhaps, we can also reconnect morbidity to mortality.

In the late nineteenth century, the parish of Loughborough contained 5,460 acres—a not inconsiderable size for a parish in the heart of the Midlands (see Figure 1). At its centre was an urban precinct which had evolved during the middle ages, perhaps during the twelfth century. The urban centre remained an unincorporated town until towards the end of the nineteenth century. It is indeed this characteristic—a small town within a large single parish—which makes Loughborough an intriguing place to consider. The topography of the urban centre within its parish is shown in Figure 2. Further than that, however, the parish consisted of polyfocal, dispersed settlement with hamlets in Knighthorpe, Shelthorpe and Woodthorpe, as well as large gentry houses.

Meandering around the parish, the River Soar remained a valuable resource for lord and tenants, maintaining the meadows and osier beds and willows. It is not surprising, then, that the articles enquired of the tenants at the turn of the century investigated the attributes of the river: ‘Item wheather is the Ryver or water strame called the Soare wholly to the ladie of this manour, yea or no, and yf it bee, than howe farre Doeth her streame goe, where begynneth yt, and where endeth yt.’ This article, number 19, was followed by two further questions about who should receive the profits of the reed beds and osiers and what leases had been made of these resources.

By 1563, the rank order of Loughborough and Melton Mowbray, the two principal market towns in Leicestershire, had been reversed in terms of population. Melton now contained 80 households, with additionally another 86 if the chapelries of Sysonby, Eye Kettleby, Freeby and Burton Lazars are included. By comparison, Loughborough parish contained 256 households in Loughborough with 6 and 13 in the hamlets of Knighthorpe and Woodthorpe respectively. Ashby de la Zouch was probably inhabited by 164 households and Castle Donington, in some decay, 70. In demographic terms, then, Melton had slipped down the small town hierarchy whilst Loughborough had risen. Loughborough was, moreover, surrounded by parishes with high population densities: Shepshed (103 households), Barrow

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8 Pelling, Common lot, 149, on the snapshot nature of the census.  
9 Given the attention previously directed to mortality, Pelling was concerned to recover morbidity as a more accurate reflection of the social conditions of the environment of the urban poor: Pelling, Common lot, 13, 64–5, 77, 131.  
11 Huntington Library, San Marino, California, Hastings Manuscripts (HAM) Box 25, folder 3, p. 8.
(64), Quorn (60), Kegworth (68), Wymeswold (79) and Sileby (78). To place Loughborough in comparative terms, now second in the urban hierarchy in Leicestershire, it had a population 43 per cent of that of the county town of Leicester (just under 600 households). By 1603 Loughborough parish contained 1,200 communicants and in 1676 1,123 persons of communicable age (over 16 years). To the south, the composite parish of Barrow with Quorn, Woodhouse, part of Mountsorrel and hamlets hosted 1,109 persons over 16 in 1676. If we compare the 360 persons over the age of 14 counted in 1377 with the 1,200 communicants over 16 in 1603, we can conclude that the population of Loughborough parish had trebled in 225 years. Investigating further, however, the 256 households in 1563 suggest that the level of morbidity in an early-modern small town

Figure 2 The topography of Loughborough, c.1550

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13 Dyer and Palliser, Diocesan population returns for 1563 and 1603, 214.

population might have reached almost 1,300 inhabitants, if a standard household multiplier is applied.\textsuperscript{15} We might convert the taxed population of 360 aged under 14 in 1377 to around 540 people, taking a compromise position on multipliers and evasion. The population expansion between 1377 and 1563 might thus have involved a factor of the order of 2.4. We should assume, then, rapid demographic growth in the decades before 1563 succeeded by less rapid increase in the last half of the century. Between 1603 and 1676, there was some demographic contraction, perhaps of the order of 6 per cent of the global population.\textsuperscript{16}

**Problems of the parish and the poor**

Complications arise from the socio-geographical composition of the parish of Loughborough, which, although containing an urban core, comprised also a large rural element. While industrial, retail and commercial occupations congregated in the urban precinct, the predominantly copyhold tenements (for three lives) in the parochial centre were held by parishioners engaged in agriculture (tenants of lands in the fields as well as labourers) as well as those engaged in urban processes. Briefly, the supervision, regulation and governance of the parish was exercised through three different institutions: lordship (manorial court—court baron—and view of frankpledge); parish (churchwardens and other officers); and trustees (the bridgemasters' trust which was also responsible for the grammar school).

Loughborough was somewhat anomalous in its organisation of support for the poor, which is reflected in the non-existence of any accounts of the overseers of the poor. Four officials were involved in the collections for the poor and the disbursements for their maintenance. The collectors for the poor, of which there were two, were apparently junior officers to the churchwardens. The two men selected as collectors for the poor in one year graduated to become churchwardens in the subsequent year. The appointment of all four officials was recorded together in the churchwardens' accounts. The provision for the poor in the churchwardens’ accounts thus consists of both pensions for those permanently unable to work and relief for those temporarily incapacitated.

Unfortunately, the years for which the detailed lists of recipients of relief were entered in the churchwardens’ accounts are limited to 1599–1600, 1615–1619, 1622–1626, and 1635. In total, then, we have details for 12 years, many consecutive, but with overall discontinuity. While obviously not ideal, these listings do allow a dynamic investigation of the nature of, and

\textsuperscript{15} In the local context, the difference between multipliers suggested does not have too much impact as the numbers are so small: for an argument for 5.05 per household, P. Clark, K. Gaskin and A. Wilson, *Population estimates of English small towns* (Leicester, 1989), v.

Morbidity in an early-modern small town

Table 1  Statistics of provision for the sick poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total assisted</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>‘ould’</th>
<th>burial costs</th>
<th>help before death*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No. (%)</td>
<td>No. (%)</td>
<td>No. (%)</td>
<td>No. (%)</td>
<td>No. (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>286</td>
<td>168 (59)</td>
<td>118 (41)</td>
<td>37 (13)</td>
<td>52 (18)</td>
<td>64 (24)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:  *Assistance immediately prior to the registration of burial.

support during, sickness in this small urban place within its rural parish. During these 12 years, approximately 286 people received doles, 168 (59 per cent) of whom were male and 118 (41 per cent) female (see Table 1). Several ambiguities inhere in these data. First, the identification of some individuals is constantly complicated. Second, there are ambivalences too about the recipients: who actually received the money and for what purpose?

It is easier to address the second complication first. For example, Nicholas Bal(l)ance benefited from nine doles from the churchwardens between 1619 and 1625 whilst he and/or his wife succumbed to sickness. In numerous instances first husband and then wife were allocated the money: husband first for his sickness and then wife for his (her husband’s) sickness. In particular, when a child was sick, the payments might be directed to the husband or ‘for his wife’. When the children of Robert and Mary Bradshaw fell sick, the couple received at least 20 payments, 11 of which were directed to Mary. The responsibility for the children was assumed to be his wife’s. In resolving this issue, the solution adopted has been to assign the money to the male where families were involved. The 118 females thus represent singletons, either unmarried or widows.

The issue of ambiguous identification is less easily resolved and so the numbers attributed to particular categories remain approximate, strong indicators rather than absolutely accurate. Some recipients were identified in the listings by a sobriquet associated with their disability: Lame Ann; Lame Emmot; Lame Randell; Blind Tom; the lame saddler; Old Elizabeth; Great Joan; Great Ralph; Northern Bess; or some other colloquial or familiar identification. In some cases, it is possible to reconcile some of these anomalies. We can assume with some degree of certainty that Lame Emmot was identical with Em or Emmot Marshall. Lame Emmot was allowed 6d. in 1622 and Emmot Marshall received 4d. in the same year as she was lame. Similarly, Lame Randell should be correlated with Robert Randell who was reported to be sick and lame in 1617. There remain, nonetheless, some unresolved epithets. The aspect of gender confuses some identifications too, especially in the case of widows. In most instances, the conundrum is not insurmountable. For example, it seems fairly conclusive that Elizabeth Ormston, the recipient of two doles of 6d. in 1616 was identical with Widow Ormston who

17 Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR) DE667/62, fos 25v, 121r, 127r, 128r, 133r, 138v.
18 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 103r, 109r, 112r.
19 See Pelling, Common lot, 111.
20 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 25r–v, 103v, 111r, 112v, 120v, 121r–v, 127v, 162v–163r, for example.
21 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 110v–111r, 112v, 121v.
22 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 109v, 120v.
was allocated amounts of 6d., 6d., and 5d., in 1616–1617. So for this issue, some confusion persists, although it is marginal.

We can take one example as illustrating the whole range of intervention by the churchwardens. In 1616–1617, nine payments were delivered to ‘ould’ Abbot for him and his wife; first his wife was ill, then they both succumbed to sickness. For her debility, his wife was allocated two doles each of 4d.; they each then received 6d. They were both then allowed 6d. and four allocations of 4d. while still sick. Subsequently he died. His widow received three payments in 1617, each of 4d., because she was still incapacitated. From these events we can elicit several aspects of the churchwardens’ role in alleviating temporary disruption to lives caused by sickness. First, that succour was often provided towards the end of life, sometimes in the sickness immediately before death. Second, their response was to make provision specifically to compensate for the inability to work. Third, their assistance extended to a widow immediately after the loss of her spouse. We follow through some of these suggestions in more detail below.

**Assistance at the end of life**

In perhaps a fifth of cases, the churchwardens’ intervention was associated with disability related to age. Some 37 recipients (13 per cent) were identified by the description ‘ould’ and surname. Although that description was in use as an affective title, in the accounts it would appear also as a justification for payment. While that is not necessarily conclusive evidence of the association of relief with age, more certain are the payments by the churchwardens towards the burial and winding sheets of 52 inhabitants: that is, 18 per cent of the recipients of distributions. These subventions for burial exceeded the usual amounts allowed for doles, of course. Almost half of the payments ranged between 1s. and 2s., with half a dozen extending to more than 2s.

Indeed, some of these interventions were associated with the period of illness of the recipient immediately prior to death. Perhaps we can postulate that in these cases age incurred indignity rather than the dignity of age and authority. Accordingly, Henry Blackshaw was allowed at least 23 payments in 1622–1623, 15 consisting of 4d., before a final payment of 1s. 4d. towards the costs of his burial and winding sheet. So too William

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23 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 103v, 104v, 110v.
24 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 103v, 104v, 105r, 109v, 110v.
25 For this imperative to work see Pelling, *Common lot*, 5, 64–5, 75, 82, 137, 141, 149, 150, 153.
27 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 112r, 121v, 127r–v, 128r.
Calladine, who was the beneficiary of numerous payments during his sickness and lameness in 1618 and 1622. He received doles through 1618 when he was both sick and lame, in 1622 he was awarded more for his lameness, followed shortly afterwards by 8d. to his wife towards his burial.28

Perhaps most illustrative of this association of relief for morbidity and defrayal of costs at mortality is the end of the life of William Ferro. This poor man received six payments in 1615 while lying very sick and remaining still sick. He was washed while sick at a cost of 2d. to the wardens. They allowed 1s. 2d. for a further three and a half days of care. Another 1s. was allocated for the period of prayers for him, undoubtedly as he visibly declined towards death. The churchwardens’ final costs for his tending and burial amounted to 2s. 4d.29

The episode of the final days of Clement Farra(y) provides further illustration. In 1624, while sick, he was allotted six payments, and his wife then received 1s. towards her husband’s burial.30 The wardens annotated their payments to Livvy Jesson in July, August and September that he was sick; they also provided 1s. towards his burial.31 Before furnishing 1s. towards the burial of Richard Nicholls in 1625, the churchwardens had sustained him with at least 14 payments between 1617 and his decease.32 They supported Robert Noble through his sickness in 1625–1626 with at least 15 payments, concluding with a modest 6d. towards his burial in 1626.33

In many instances, then, the churchwardens recorded their assistance for the burial of the recipient. It becomes obvious however—by comparing the wardens’ accounts with the registration of burials—that many more people received doles leading up to their burial. This comparison of the two sources (churchwardens’ accounts and parish register) is not without its difficulties. An illustrative example is Widow Sutton who received relief in 1635, but two Widow Suttions were interred, one in March 1637 and another in July 1639. The figures cited below, therefore, relate only to conclusive identifications. The result is that some 68 people received relief in the months leading up to their burial. Others, of course, lived for some years after their last receipt of relief: one received relief within a year of burial; eight within two years; nine within three years; four within four years; and the lives of eight extended for five years after the last payment. Fifteen lived a further ten years and a few (fewer than half a dozen) longer. We must, of course, take into account the hiatus in the lists of distributions, so that these figures of people living for a few years after their relief are maxima which might conceal a closer relationship between relief, morbidity and mortality.

28 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 24v–25v, 112r, 120v, 122r. His burial is seemingly not in the register, although it is recorded in the churchwardens’ accounts at fo. 122r.
29 ROLLR DE667/62, 96r–97r.
30 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 133r–v.
31 ROLLR DE667/62, fo. 25r.
32 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 24v–25v, 137r.
33 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 138v–143r.
Assistance to widows

Age, but also gender, were factors in the case of widows. Just over 70 of the female recipients of doles were widows: a little more than 60 per cent of all the women. Widows received doles in their sickness, occasionally in child-bed, and for the sickness of their children. In child-bed in 1616, Widow Galloway was allowed 6d. and was afforded further payments in 1617 during her subsequent sickness. A widow delivering her husband’s posthumous child had no other means of support. Some, however, also received benefactions immediately after the death of a husband, an event which no doubt plunged them into considerable distress. In other circumstances, the husband died during the illness of both spouses. During 1616–1617, when he and his wife were sick, Ananias Wilkinson received at least 11 payments from the churchwardens. After his death in April 1618, his widow needed additional support.

Bereft of their spouses, widows sometimes still had to sustain a family and household. Illustrative of the needs of widows in this situation was the Widow Gamble who received 6s. in her own sickness in 1617, 6d. for her sick child in 1618, 1s. when one of her children became lame in 1619, another 6d. for a sick child in that year, three allocations of 6d. for her lame son in 1622 and another 1s. in that year when her child was interred. In 1624 she received another 4d. for her sick son, being allowed 6d. more on his burial shortly thereafter.

Some widows, moreover, were susceptible to sickness, no doubt age-related. Between 1623 and 1626, Widow Blackshew required intermittent help in her sicknesses to the extent of at least 18 payments: three of 2d., one of 3d., eight of 4d., and six of 6d. Widow Brian was allowed eight payments of 6d. and three of 4d. in 1635 when she was sick, sick and lame, and still sick. Widow Clemenson had constant recourse to the churchwardens when she was sick and lame, sick, still sick and lame, very sick and lame, and still sick, extending to at least 23 doles of 2d. to 6d. merely in 1635. Widow Paper belonged to those widows who were unable to sustain themselves without constant support from the wardens, receiving at least a dozen payments of 2d., 4d., or 6d., in 1615–1617.

In some cases, of course, the continuous assistance to a widow extended up to death. Between 1623 and 1626 Widow Clay was constantly in need of help from the churchwardens, receiving at least 25 allocations, culminating in 1s. 6d. for her winding sheet and 3d. towards her burial. The two Widows Kitchley succumbed in the same way, both experiencing long

34 For working opportunities for older women, Pelling, Common lot, 142, 155–75.
35 ROLLR DE667/62, 103r.
36 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 102v–103r, 110r–11v. The date of his burial is from the register: DE667/1.
37 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 25v, 109r, 112r–v, 121r, 128r, 133r–v, 163v.
38 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 128r, 133r–v, 137v, 143r–v.
39 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 162v–163r.
40 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 162v–163v.
41 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 97v–105r.
42 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 126v–128r, 133v, 137r–v, 138v, 142v: 3x2d.; 6x3d.; 9x4d.; 5x6d.; and the two at her death.
illness during which the churchwardens made awards to support them, but both consequently dying and requiring the wardens to make additional allocations of 1s. 6d. and 2s. for winding sheets. Widow Thorpe suffered sickness on a fairly regular basis between 1616 and 1626, relief being constantly supplied by the wardens, including six payments of 4d. and ten of 6d. Their final allocation of 10d. was occasioned by the burial of ‘ould Thorpe wife’. By contrast, of course, some widows were able to continue to maintain themselves right up to death, although their poverty might induce the churchwardens to assist their burial. Thus Old Widow Longly’s burial was helped by the wardens with 10d. for her interment and 1s. 10d. for her winding sheet. Widow Seele may only have made demands on the wardens at her burial, when they provided 2s. 2d. for her winding sheet and for the woman that laid her forth in 1635. Individual circumstances were contingent: the ability to work varied.

Categories of the sick

The predominant categories for assistance in the churchwardens’ accounts replicate those vague terms encountered in the surveys: sick, still sick, very sick (175 subjects); lame (ten); sick and lame (nine); but also in (great) need or distress (six). The numbers here exceed the list of recipients above since they include husbands, wives and children rather than just the (male) receiver of the allowance for the family. As has been demonstrated by Pelling, the criterion for relief was less disability than the inability to work at a particular time. The churchwardens’ payments were emergency relief rather than continuous payments for disability, the contributions compensating for loss of income. Parishioners were otherwise expected to work. This expectation is reflected in different sorts of payment: the intermittent relief for those with physical disability who were normally expected to provide for themselves; and the relief furnished to males whose wives or children were sick, inhibiting the males from working to earn their livelihood for a short duration.

We can illustrate the first category easily enough. Blind Arnold was allowed three payments in 1635; Blind Oliver three in the same year, once because his wife was sick; Blind Hardy two allocations in that year; Blind Tom, who was married, like Blind Oliver, two payments in 1622–1623; and Blind Jane Evatt three allocations when she was sick. Fewer than ten blind inhabitants received occasional relief and then only for a short period. Only once did Lame Ann apparently benefit from the allowances when she was allocated 4d. in 1622. The enigmatic lame saddler seemingly acquired only two payments, each of 4d., in 1635, although
problems of identification might mislead us here. These people with physical disabilities feature in the lists of doles only intermittently, usually only a few times when they were temporarily prevented from working.

**Sickness within the family**

Inability of males to work was understood within the context of the family. The disruption that sometimes accompanied childbirth constituted a genuine reason for relief. Several men were treated to compassionate relief whilst their wives were in child-bed. The consequences could be more painful. In 1625, John Sharpe reported the sickness of his wife. In 1626, his great need was evident; he received 1s. 4d. for the winding sheet to bury his wife. In his great distress, he was allocated six further payments of 6d.; his children were looked after by Whyniad. The register of burials reveals that his wife, Joan, died in childbirth in October 1626, delivering stillborn twins. The incapacity of wives might mean the distraction of husbands from working in order to care for wives and family. So Thomas Green was in receipt of nine payments, mostly for his wife's sickness. Numerous such payments were made to other husbands. For example, William Ball benefited from three doles of 4d. while his wife was sick in 1623. When his wife was sick and he had to look after the four children, Thomas Mathewe was allocated some funds.

Wives were, indeed, important contributors to household income, so payments were offered to assist their recovery from impediments to work. Thus Lecester was proffered 1s. for his wife's sore hand. In 1600, Thomas Dore was allocated a large sum towards healing his wife's hand. In some of these cases, the relief counterbalanced the inability of the male to work while he was occupied in caring for his family, but in others it compensated for the loss of contributions to household income by wife and children.

These more specific references to the exact nature of the sickness are infrequent. Excluding the wives above, we have complaints of sore legs twice and a sore hand. In 1615, Thomas Heggglestone was given 6d. when he was hurt by a fall and subsequently another 1s. 6d. while he was ill and for his burial; he was interred in November 1615. The exception to this reticence of the record is the episode surrounding the lameness of John Tompson. When he became lame in 1625, he was allocated several doles of money which escalated to a higher

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50 ROLLR DE667/62, fos. 162v–163r.
51 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 44v, 112r, 133r–v.
52 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 137r, 142v.
53 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 97v, 121v, 133r–v, 138v–139r.
54 ROLLR DE667/62, fo. 127v.
55 ROLLR DE667/62, fo. 163v.
56 ROLLR DE667/62, fo. 44r.
57 ROLLR DE667/62, fo. 44v.
59 ROLLR DE667/62, fos 44r-v.
60 ROLLR DE667/62, fo. 97r; the date of burial is from the register.
level, to the extent that he received payments of 1s. twice, 2s. on 13 occasions, and 1s. 8d. once. Mr Johnstone was summoned from Hinckley to examine his leg. The doctor was also remunerated to the tune of 5s. to inspect it. Another 1s. was expended on the bone-setter, Valentine Alline, to re-set the leg. The result must have been a successful return to work, for no payments were made after 1625.61

Changes in responsiveness to sickness

The policy of the churchwardens was not continuous, but was altered, perhaps in response to the immense impact of the infectious disease of 1609–1610.62 During its incidence the churchwardens were probably unable to make any effective intervention apart from the construction of the pest-house. The futility in this situation may have induced them to revise their policy towards the sick. Before then, at least in 1599–1600, the churchwardens had distributed larger one-off payments to the sick. Of the 31 allocations to the sick in those two years, 18 consisted of a payment of 1s., one of 1s. 8d., two of 2s., and one even of 5s.63 By 1615, the next year with extant details of distributions, the churchwardens had adopted a much more cautious approach to allocations to the sick. Incremental payments were now the order of the day. This circumspection can perhaps be illustrated by the relief offered to Northern Bess between 1618 and 1622.64 When she first succumbed to sickness in June 1618, the churchwardens allowed her the minimal amount of 2d. Immediately thereafter, however, she received four doles each of 6d., and between October and January following six amounts of 6d. and two of 4d.

Although Loughborough lacked unitary, corporate authority, the inhabitants made concerted efforts to make provision for their neighbours. Two collective enterprises surfaced in the churchwardens’ accounts. Collections for the diligent poor were organised around communions. In 1618, for example, the following amounts were received for the poor at communions: April 7s. 6d.; 1 July 10s. 2d.; 21 October 12s. 1½d.; February 9s. 6d.; Palm Sunday 1s. 10d.; and Easter Day 11s. 1d.65 Collections at communions varied considerably, with larger amounts donated at the more significant times of the year. The annual number of communions at which the churchwardens received money fluctuated between four and seven. At its maximum, the income at communions did not exceed £5, and fluctuated year on year.

From the mid 1630s to the mid 1640s, fasts were also inaugurated for collecting for the poor. Such fasts were usually arranged weekly during the part of the year associated with the life-
course of Christ: as in 1636–1637, 30 November, 7 December, 14 December, 21 December, 28 December, 4 January, 11 January, 18 January, 8 February, 22 February, 15 March. This observation of the ‘temporale’ as one ritual part of the year was thus not confined to Catholicism, but featured as much in the Protestant reformed calendar for the purpose of charity. The disruption of the mid 1640s inevitably caused dislocation; fasts for raising money for the poor were discontinued from 1645. This evangelical episode proved important, for larger amounts were collected at the church door at fasts than were contributed at the communions. In 1641, for example, £4 3s. 7d. accrued at a thanksgiving with further sums of 17s. 4d., 18s., and 17s. at fasts. The voluntary contributions at fasts also equalled the amounts collected by lays (levies or rates).

Even with lays, the amount of money available to alleviate distress was severely limited. In the 25 years between 1600 and 1624 (allowing for a few missing years), the disbursements for the poor did not exceed £3 in 22 years. From 1625, the distributions for the poor increased (in line with the augmentation of the income of the churchwardens). Between that year and 1658, nevertheless, in half the years less than £6 was expended on the poor, whilst in another 50 per cent of the years the sum fell between £6 and £10. The ability of the churchwardens to intervene to mitigate distress was thus limited.

Conclusion

It is difficult to compare the extent of morbidity in the small, unincorporated town of Loughborough with the occurrence of sickness in larger urban centres. The topography of Loughborough was probably more salubrious than the built density of larger urban places. Payments to the poor during sickness were discretionary, not an entitlement but contingent on the resources of the churchwardens and the reputation and credit of the invalid. The response of the churchwardens of this small town seems to have consisted of intervention as a last resort. What their late involvement resulted in, then, was a close association between the morbidity and mortality of their clients.

The material from Loughborough thus complements the surveys from larger, incorporated boroughs. Such surveys were static, a snapshot of sickness in their urban environments, but probably more comprehensive in their recording of the sick poor. All the sick were encompassed without selectivity or discrimination. What is missing, nonetheless, is some

66 ROLLR DE667/62, fo. 169v.
67 Most of these issues are now encapsulated in I. Ben-Amos, The culture of giving. Informal support and gift exchange in early-modern England (Cambridge, 2008), esp. 84–95, 244–55.
68 ROLLR DE667/62, fo. 190v.
69 ROLLR DE667/62, fo. 182v.
Morbidity in an early-modern small town

diachronic perception of the fortunes of the sick poor, in particular how their sickness and their support related to their life-course. Even if they addressed the sick in a discriminatory fashion, excluding those who were deemed to be undeserving, the Loughborough churchwardens’ accounts furnish information about the effects of sickness in the life-course (and death).

Acknowledgements

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Abstract

Relatively few Irish had settled in Hertfordshire by the time of the 1851 census. Those that did were older, more skilled, less residentially segregated, and more likely to be married to a local person than were the Irish-born in London and other large cities in Britain. The Irish-born in Hertfordshire were also less skilled and less intermarried than were county residents born in Scotland, Wales and Yorkshire. All of these migrant groups were very rare in rural areas of the county and very few of the migrants were involved in agriculture, despite the passage of large numbers of Irish harvesters through the county each year.

Introduction

In the early nineteenth century the Irish knew Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire knew the Irish. Hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of Irish harvest migrants passed through the county each year. The experience was not always mutually agreeable. In 1830, for example, it was reported that

The town of Barnett has for some days been the scene of much distress, from the accumulation of poor Irish detained there, deprived by bad weather of employment as hay-makers. The generosity of Mr Byng, and other gentlemen, who have subscribed liberally for their relief, had hitherto kept them quiet, but the ordinary distributions were this day discontinued. The consequence was much disappointment on the part of the Irish, and at five o’clock yesterday nearly 2,000 met together, and surrounded the premises of a gentleman, residing in Hadley, demanding an order for bread, and threatening vengeance in the event of a refusal…. The cry of ‘Bread or blood’ was then raised, and the neighbouring shops were immediately broken into, the property scattered, and the lives of the proprietors threatened.¹

The local gentry raised a force of two hundred, captured the ringleaders and drove the rest from the town. But that was not the end, since ‘the violence of the country people against the Irish was as great, that much exertion was necessary to save them from their anger. As it is, it is thought that many of them must be seriously hurt.’² On a lighter note, just a few years later Thomas Newcome, rector of Shenley, near Barnet, and J.M. Winter, a local J.P., replied to the

Poor Law Commissioners that 'hundreds of Irish, with wives and babies, (and to ly-in sometimes, and to lie about, and lie in every sense,) come at hay-time'.

Few of these harvest migrants seem to have stayed in Hertfordshire. In 1841 the published census returns recorded only 526 persons of Irish birth residing in the county, and in 1851 not many more, just 628. The Irish-born in Hertfordshire were only a tiny fraction of the Irish living in England, not quite 0.2 per cent in 1841, closer to 0.1 per cent in 1851. The Irish-born were also a rarity in Hertfordshire: there were only three to four Irish-born per thousand inhabitants in both 1841 and 1851. Although the English residents of the county may have seen many Irish pass through, very few had Irish neighbours.

This study takes a closer look at the relatively few Irish-born in Hertfordshire. It will be shown that they represent what might be called the 'other Irish' in mid-Victorian Britain. A long tradition of research, discussed in the following section, has used the manuscript enumerators’ books from the 1851 census (and subsequent censuses) to investigate various aspects of Irish communities in the cities of Britain. This work has been focused, and rightly so, on the urban poor, many of whom had just escaped the ravages of famine in Ireland. The census schedules made it possible to see where the Irish lived, with whom they lived, and what they did to make a living. Yet few studies have strayed much beyond the cities to examine those of Irish birth who lived in the small towns or in the countryside of Britain.

There were not nearly so many of them. In 1851 most of the Irish-born in Britain lived in just a handful of cities, notably London, Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow. In all, four-fifths of the Irish-born resided in cities with more than 10,000 inhabitants. That few Irish migrants had settled in the English countryside is itself significant. In Ireland the vast majority of the population lived in the countryside and what skills it had were agricultural in nature. Moreover, southern English agricultural wages were more than double the level prevalent in Ireland and farm employment was probably more regular during the year. It may thus be interesting to have a closer look at those Irish men and women who did settle in rural England.

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5 Evidence given to the English poor law commissioners shows rural wages in Hertfordshire of 10 to 12 shillings per week (Report Poor Laws, appendix B, 217a–227a). Bowley’s estimates for weekly wages in Ireland, taken from evidence to the Irish poor enquiry, are from 3s. 8d. in Connaught to 5s. 4d. in Ulster: A.L. Bowley, Wages in the United Kingdom in the nineteenth century (Cambridge, 1900), 50. In 1830, returns for wages across Irish counties showed a range from 8d. to 12d. per day, which would be 4–6 shillings per week: Report of the Select Committee on the State of the Poor in Ireland. BPP 1830 VII (Cd.), p. 64.
Studies of the Irish in mid-Victorian Britain have generally taken as their reference population the Irish elsewhere, in other British cities, in America, or in Ireland itself. Here the Hertfordshire Irish will also be seen in these contexts, but they will, in addition, be compared to other migrant groups in Hertfordshire, notably those people who were born in Scotland, Wales and Yorkshire. This article thus represents a small step towards ‘four nations’ history.\(^6\) (Throughout the article Yorkshire will, for convenience, be treated as a ‘nation’. Although some from Yorkshire, as well as some from other parts of England, may regard this as only right and proper, our purpose is to take Yorkshire as a source of English migrants more or less the same distance from Hertfordshire as was Wales.)

The choice of Hertfordshire has, in the first instance, been one of convenience. Thanks to the diligent and careful efforts of many local historians and the entrepreneurship of the Centre for Regional and Local History at the University of Hertfordshire, an easily useable transcription of the 1851 census enumerators’ books for the county is available on a single compact disc.\(^7\) That said, Hertfordshire is arguably representative of the swathe of largely rural counties that stretches across the south of England. While it had several towns, none of them had as many as 10,000 inhabitants. The county had regions that reflected a variety of economic activities. Part was almost purely agricultural; part had significant pockets of rural industrial activity, most notably straw plaiting and straw hat making; part was within metropolitan London’s orbit.\(^8\)

One feature of Hertfordshire, and of much of southern England, that deserves emphasis is that it was an area of net out-migration. In 1851 there were 44,109 adults who were born in Hertfordshire and living elsewhere in England and Wales as against 34,170 adults who were born elsewhere and living in the county.\(^9\) Hence the individuals born in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Yorkshire who are the subject of this article were swimming against the stream. It will be suggested that, relative to the major flows of long-distance migration in the mid-Victorian United Kingdom, they formed a part of a sort of background migration comparable to the cosmic microwave background radiation in the universe. This migration was at a very low level, was probably very old, and may have looked the much the same from any direction.

The historiography of the Irish in Britain

The literature on the Irish in mid nineteenth-century Britain is large and has been ably summarised by a number of authors.\(^10\) This work has drawn on a wide variety of sources:


newspapers, national and local government documents, workhouse admission registers and the deliberations of poor law authorities, parish registers and other records of the Catholic church. But one source, the manuscript census enumerators’ books, has been particularly prominent since its use was pioneered in the late 1950s by the historical geographer Richard Lawton in his study of the Irish in Liverpool.11 Lawton was particularly concerned with where the Irish lived and what they did for a living. Subsequent work, partly under the influence of Michael Anderson’s study of Preston, has also been concerned with the structure of the households in which Irish migrants lived.12

There has been a steady stream of studies based, at least in part, on the census enumerators’ books. In addition to Liverpool and Preston, this work has dealt with the Irish in Bradford, Greenock, Leeds, London, Cardiff, Dundee, Paisley, York, Bristol, Birmingham, Stafford, and districts in Lancashire and Durham.13 Most researchers have used the 1851 census, though some have also drawn on the 1861 and 1871 censuses in order to examine questions of mobility, both social and residential.

What has been learned? The Irish in mid-Victorian Britain were, as Fitzpatrick has put it, ‘over-represented among the unskilled and semi-skilled workers, under-represented among...
skilled and professional people'. That is, they were poor. They generally lived in close proximity to others of Irish ancestry, leading to the formation of largely Irish neighbourhoods. Their housing was often of poor quality and situated near the industrial establishments at which they found work. Many were young and single, and lived as lodgers, often with other Irish people. When they married, they also tended to choose partners who were also Irish.

Different interpretations have been put on these facts. Fitzpatrick has emphasised the transience of the Irish in Britain. Not only did they move about within Britain, many considered residence in Britain only a staging post for emigration to America. Fitzpatrick’s interpretation has not gone unchallenged. Joe Lee has questioned the underlying evidence, while Mary Hickman has challenged what she calls the ‘segregation/assimilation model’ on which she claims it is based.

One might also suggest the limitations of the literature that draws on the census-based studies for other reasons. First, as noted above, it neglects the small minority of Irish immigrants in Britain who lived in small towns or in the countryside. Whilst not nearly so numerous as the Irish in London, Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow, this Irish-born population is likely to have been different from the urban poor. Second, the studies that have drawn mainly on the 1851 census are likely to be heavily influenced by the distress migration from Ireland in the late 1840s. Of course, the fate of those fleeing the famine is of interest in itself, but it might well distort any attempt to draw conclusions about the nature of Irish settlement in Britain in the more normal times before the famine, and in later decades as well.

This paper will cast light on the minority of Irish-born outside the big cities. It will also suggest that they may better represent some older pathways of migration to Britain.

The Irish (and other strangers) in Hertfordshire

In 1851, householders in England were required to record their birthplace, both the county and locality. For those born in Ireland, Scotland and Wales, all that was required in the birthplace column was the larger entity. Any information on county or place of birth, which is available for three-eighths of the Irish entries, was a bonus. A few of the localities given were difficult to locate, due to variant spellings or the existence of several places with the same or similar name.

Not all of the Irish-born were retained for analysis. (Similar procedures were used for those born in Scotland, Wales and Yorkshire.) Of the three groups excluded, two were not migrants in the usual sense. First, there were a small number described as visitors and

The Irish in mid-Victorian Hertfordshire

travellers. The visitors included an 18 year-old needlewoman coming to see a widowed coal dealer in Baldock; a 70 year-old widow visiting an army captain and his family in Hertford and the Marquis of Sligo, his wife and infant daughter staying with the M.P. Henry Baillie near St Albans. A handful of travellers, not gypsies but people in transit, were staying in various towns. The second group excluded were students, among whom were 16 attending Christ’s Hospital School in Hertford, five attending St Edmund’s College in Standon, and two at the East India College near Ware. It is possible that some of the visitors, travellers and students were resident elsewhere in Hertfordshire or elsewhere in England, but the assumption here is that most were not.

The third group excluded were those who were Irish only by accident.16 Their parents were British, as often were some of their siblings, and had obviously spent some time in Ireland, usually for professional reasons. The steward at Ashridge House, near Berkhamsted, had three young children born in Dublin. A captain in the Royal Engineers had a son aged 17 born in Derry and one aged 15 born in Suffolk. An Inland Revenue officer had three children in Ireland, then one each in Shropshire and Hertfordshire. Only one of Lady Louisa Clinton’s daughters was born in Ireland. Some of the accidental Irish were from humbler circumstances. A Chelsea Pensioner and his wife, both native to Hertfordshire, had had two children in Ireland and then one in Berkshire. None of these individuals could be counted as Irish in any meaningful sense.

There were probably many more accidental Irish, Scots, Welsh and Yorkshiremen and women among adults, but they are difficult to pick out. Consider the case of a coachman, aged 29, who was born in Ireland, married a woman of Irish birth and had a child there. He would seem to be quintessentially Irish and would be counted as such if in 1851 he and his family were not living in Hatfield in the household of his father, a stud groom born in Norfolk. Both were probably in the employ of the Marquis of Salisbury at nearby Hatfield House. This coachman’s Irishness most likely comes from his father’s previous employment at some landed estate in Ireland, and hence he has been excluded from the analysis.

Altogether visitors, students, and ‘accidental Irish’ made up 11 per cent of the Irish-born in Hertfordshire. They were even more numerous among the three other nations, accounting for 17 per cent of the Scots- and Welsh-born and 19 per cent of the Yorkshire-born. These groups have been excluded from the analysis that follows.

One sort of visitor to Hertfordshire was unlikely to show up in the census. Each year, as noted at the start of this article, large numbers of Irish workers passed through the county to assist in bringing in the hay and cereal harvests, but census day, the 30th of March, was too early to capture them in the enumerators’ books.17

16 Herson (‘Migration’, 160) notes the presence of these ‘accidental Irish’ in his study of Stafford.
There was no need to take a sample of the Irish-born in Hertfordshire since there were not that many of them, and there were even fewer natives of Scotland, Wales and Yorkshire. Table 1 shows both the total number of individuals recorded as being born in Ireland and the number excluding the three categories discussed above. All of the four nations’ migrants together made up only 1 per cent of the county’s population.

Although there were more migrants from Ireland than from the other nations, the Irish were not actually more inclined to migrate to Hertfordshire. As shown in Table 1, relative to their home populations, the Irish were only half as likely as the Scots and only a third as likely as natives of Yorkshire to move to the county. (Here we use the 1841 populations, rather than the famine-influenced 1851 populations, as the relevant pool from which migrants were drawn.)

The Irish in Hertfordshire seem to have been a relatively aged and fairly well-established population. There were few children: only 13 per cent of the Irish-born (after excluding visitors, students and the ‘accidental’ Irish) were less than 20 years of age. This is comparable to the share of the young among the Welsh- and Yorkshire-born. Among the Scots there were even fewer young people, only 9 per cent. Even so, the share of children is very low. In 1851 45 per cent of the English population was under 20 and in Hertfordshire it was 47 per cent.18

The relative absence of the young is to some extent the result of not counting the English-born children of these migrants. Figure 1 shows the age distributions of the Irish-born in Hertfordshire, of the Irish-born with their English-born children, and of the Hertfordshire population as a whole. Even adding back in the English-born children leaves the Irish-born with fewer children. The low number of children might have been the result of recent immigration by young unmarried Irish men and women. Yet for a recent immigrant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Recorded in 1851 as born in...</th>
<th>Migration rate per million</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>Excluding visitors,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>586</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The migration rates are based on the figures excluding visitors, students and ‘accidentals’. These totals are taken from the enumerators’ books; the published census report gives totals of 628 for Ireland, 440 for Scotland, 217 for Wales and 424 for Yorkshire (Census of Great Britain, 1851, Population tables, II. Ages, civil condition, occupations, and birth place of the people, Vol. I, BPP 1852–3, LXXXVIII, cxxi).


population there seem to be fewer people in their late teens and 20s than would be expected in the total population, though this may be due in part to some of the English-born children of Irish parents residing outside the family home at this age and thus escaping notice as being of Irish descent. This is particularly the case since Irish migrants tended to be concentrated in these age groups: over 65 per cent of the emigrants recorded at Irish ports in 1851–1855 were between the ages of 10 and 30.19

The census returns give few indications of Fitzpatrick’s ‘mobile’ Irish. A handful were described as ‘tramp labourers’ or ‘tramps’. To these might be added some of the 22 paupers, in or out of the workhouses, and some of the seven Irish-born who were in gaol on the day of the census. Lodging has sometimes been taken as a sign of transience, though it could also be a longer-term living arrangement.20 Of the adult Irish-born in Hertfordshire more than half were heads of households or lived with heads of household and less than a third were lodgers. However, as Table 2 shows, the other nations were even more settled. Very few migrants from Scotland, Wales and Yorkshire were lodgers, and fewer of them were to be found living in institutions like the workhouses or the county gaol.

19 Census of Ireland, 1851, Part VI, General Report, BPP 1856 LIII, Iv.
Most of the Irish-born in Hertfordshire thus seem to have been reasonably well settled in the county. What did they do? The stated occupations of the immigrants were coded according to the HISCO system and the broad distribution of occupations is shown in Table 3. (HISCO is a classification system for occupations that was developed to facilitate cross-national comparisons of social mobility.) In addition, the wealthy—landed proprietors, fundholders, proprietors of houses, and others—have been included. Although they did not hold jobs as such (and are thus not classified by HISCO), they represented a small but significant stream of migrants. The unskilled category includes street sellers of one sort or another.21

One thing that is obvious from Table 3 is that the occupational structure of all of the migrant groups were quite different from that of the county as a whole. The shares of migrants in high status occupations—independently wealthy, professional, government and commercial—were twice as high or more than the share of these occupations in the entire population.

That said, half of the Irish-born were still in the classic low-skilled jobs often held by immigrants. Labourers of one sort or another were by far the largest individual occupation, though they accounted for less than a quarter of all those for whom an occupation was recorded. Domestic servants made up somewhat less than 10 per cent. Hawkers accounted for just over 10 per cent. The prominence of the latter suggests that itinerant retailing in Hertfordshire may have become a minor outpost of London, where over 10,000 Irish made their living by street selling.22

The other half of the Irish-born in Hertfordshire was quite diverse. There was a surprisingly large number of professionals of one sort or another. Five per cent of the Irish-born were involved in some form of government service. Most of these migrants were likely to have

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21 The HISCO system also excludes those described as almspersons, paupers and vagrants (like gentlemen, retirees and others not active in the labour market they receive a code of ‘-1’ instead of a five digit occupational code). There were more of these from Ireland though not disproportionately so. In any case most of the people so described were under 20 or over 60. For information on the HISCO system see the History of Work Information System site maintained at the International Institute for Social History (URL: http://historyofwork.iisg.nl/ [14 Feb 2009]).

22 Lees, Exiles, 96–7.
been brought into the county by an employer such as the army, the police or the Inland Revenue. (The absence of any significant military installations in Hertfordshire certainly kept down the numbers of Irish and Scots, who were greatly over-represented in the early nineteenth-century army.) But most of the professionals either chose Hertfordshire or were chosen by it. This would have been the case for the teachers, clergymen, land agents and surveyors. What is truly remarkable is the number of doctors who were Irish-born, 17 of them, 5 per cent of the occupied Irish-born. They were roughly 15 per cent of the doctors practising in the county. This small ‘brain drain’ from Ireland seems to have flowed out along various paths in so far as it is possible to trace the careers of these doctors. Six appear in the matriculation records of Trinity College Dublin. Another four had medical degrees from Scottish universities. Two served as military doctors before arriving in Hertfordshire. The makings of a religious community among the Irish in Hertfordshire are not evident in the census returns: among the Irish-born were a curate and a minister, but no priests.

The Irish-born practised a great variety of skilled trades. The most common were tailoring and shoemaking. There were seven tailors including one ‘tailor and draper’ and six shoemakers, including a ‘master shoemaker’ and a ‘broguemaker’. In addition to the carpenters, bricklayers and painters, the more unusual occupations were silversmith, clockmaker and dolls eye maker. Among commercial activities in which the Irish-born were engaged, there were a publican, a tea dealer and beer seller, a commercial brewer, a corn dealer and grocer, and a clothier.


24 G.D. Burtchaell and T.U. Sadleir eds, Alumni Dublinenses: A register of the students, graduates, professors and protecs of Trinity College in the University of Dublin (1593–1860) (new edn, Dublin, 1935); A catalogue of graduates who have proceeded to degrees in the University of Dublin, from the earliest recorded commencements to July, 1866; with supplement to December 16, 1868 (Dublin, 1869); London & provincial medical directory (London, 1852–5).
Although Irish migration into Hertfordshire was more diverse and less concentrated among the unskilled than was Irish migration to Britain’s industrial cities or the Hertfordshire population itself, it was still distinctive by comparison to the other immigrant groups. As shown in Table 3, the share of unskilled workers was much lower among migrants from Scotland, Wales and Yorkshire. There were also large differences in the composition of this group. Where domestic servants accounted for less than a quarter of the unskilled Irish-born, they were 59 per cent of those born in Scotland, 71 per cent of those born in Yorkshire and 83 per cent of those born in Wales. Hawkers, over 20 per cent of the Irish unskilled, were essentially absent from the other migrant groups. Agricultural labourers were also much less prominent. The number of general labourers was only kept up in the case of Scotland by a cluster of railway labourers.

Although the share of government workers was lower among the other migrant groups, the share of those with professional and managerial occupations was even higher than it was for the Irish-born. If Ireland was relatively prominent in supplying doctors to Hertfordshire, Yorkshire’s specialities were teachers and clergy and Scotland’s were land stewards and farm bailiffs.

One occupation that very few of the Irish, or of the other nations’, migrants seem to have taken up was straw plaiting and straw hat making. This trade accounted for about a quarter of those with recorded occupations in south-west Hertfordshire, yet there were only a handful of migrants among them. Migrants seem to have brought their own skills rather than learning them in situ.

How did the Irish get to Hertfordshire? This is a difficult question for the census to answer but there are certain clues. One thing that can be said is that the answer is likely to involve many different individual stories. Although there were large swathes of the county that had no Irish-born residents, the areas where there were numbers of Irish showed little evidence of obvious residential segregation. The names of migrants and their reported origins within Ireland do not suggest the sorts of chain migration characteristic of many of the industrial towns. Partial evidence on where the Irish-born came from in Ireland is given in Table 4. As noted above, the place of origin at county level was only recorded for 37 per cent of the adults. These individuals came from all over—only county Leitrim was unrecorded—but were primarily from the south of Ireland. The counties that were clearly over-represented were Dublin and Cork, perhaps because the migrants may have come from southern Ireland’s two largest cities and were disproportionately urban in origin, or perhaps because individuals only noted their port of embarkation for England.

26 Exceptions may be Queen Street in Hemel Hempstead, Butcherley Green Lodging House in Hertford, and Ballard Buildings in Watford. Though by no means a lodging house, one of the most concentrated Irish settlements in the county was Garston House, near Watford, where Henry Bachelor, a landed proprietor, lived with his wife, six children, brother and gardener, all of whom were Irish-born. Only the cook was born in England.
The origins of the Irish-born migrants can also be inferred from their names. Figure 2 shows the computed random isonymy between the Hertfordshire Irish and the Irish population as represented by the Index to Griffith’s Valuation. This comprehensive valuation of property in Ireland was carried out in the 1850s and early 1860s, and the names listed there were subsequently indexed by parish. The shading in Figure 2 represents the value of random isonymy for each Poor Law Union, which can be interpreted in a probabilistic fashion to mean that the areas with the highest values were the most likely population sources for the emigrant group. The analysis of names confirms that the Irish-born in Hertfordshire were likely to have come primarily from the south of Ireland, with the south west being the area of greatest concentration. That said, this Irish-born population does not really show any particular concentration by area of origin.

The occupations in the census give a few further clues about how the Irish-born got to Hertfordshire. As noted above, some were certainly transferred there by the army, the police or the revenue. There were a number of railway labourers—18 Irish, 14 Scots and 3 Yorkshiremen—but they were scattered over the county. This suggests that most were full-time employees rather than gang labourers engaged in major construction works. Some of the hawkers probably drifted in, if not directly from Ireland then from the large pool of immigrants in London, although it should be noted that there were not a lot of London- or Middlesex-born children of Irish parents in this group.

Over half of the Irish-born were either single or married to another Irish person (see Table 5). But a substantial minority arrived by marrying an English person, often a Hertfordshire native. Of all the adult Irish-born in Hertfordshire 29 per cent had an English spouse, most of whom were born locally. It may also be the case that many of the Irish-born widows and widowers had been married to English spouses, in which case the share of the Irish-born that may have settled in Hertfordshire by marriage might have been as high as 40 per cent. That said, the share of adult migrants from the other nations involved in ‘mixed marriages’ was

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27 M.T. Smith and D.M. MacRaild, ‘Nineteenth-century population structure of Ireland and of the Irish in England and Wales: an analysis by isonymy’, American Journal of Human Biology, 21 (2009), forthcoming. This research was supported by the ESRC Research Methods Programme, grant no. H333250057.
even higher. The Scots stand out from the other nations in one respect. There were more Irish-, Welsh- and Yorkshire-born wives than there were husbands, but among the Scottish-born there were almost twice as many husbands as wives.

How did the men and women of Hertfordshire find Irish spouses? Some hints might be found in the occupations of the husbands in these ‘mixed marriages’, which are summarised in Table 6. Mixed marriages are defined as those in which one spouse was from Ireland, Scotland, Wales or Yorkshire, and the other spouse was from Hertfordshire or a neighbouring county. Note first that the Irish-born husbands with local wives were less likely to be
unskilled than were the English-born husbands with Irish-born wives. 28 Given that the Irish population was more unskilled than that of Hertfordshire, one would expect just the opposite. But the same contrast was also the case for mixed marriages involving people from Scotland, Wales and Yorkshire, places in which the skill mix was more similar to that in Hertfordshire. Marrying into Hertfordshire may thus be related to greater geographical mobility among skilled workers.

The reason why the Hertfordshire husbands with Irish-born wives were less skilled may have to do with the military connections of these men. There were several officers, but also five Chelsea Pensioners, as well as one Greenwich Pensioner, with Irish-born wives. They may have acquired their wives while serving in Ireland. One suspects that this may also have been true of other English labourers. Many of these men were over 40 and could have had a passage through the military when younger. The unskilled Irish with English wives, though far fewer, also tended to be older men who could possibly have done military service. It should be remembered that during and after the French wars more than a third of the army was Irish-born. One suspects that there would have been more mixed marriages involving men in uniform had there been any large barracks situated in Hertfordshire.

It is much easier to explain how the wealthy and the professionals, who were particularly prominent among Irish husbands, found their wives. Well-to-do families often had branches on both sides of the Irish Sea, and London and other venues of sociability created a marriage

Table 5  Civil status of immigrants, 1851

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Irish %</th>
<th>Scots %</th>
<th>Welsh %</th>
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<tr>
<td>Married person</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both non-native</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband non-native</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife non-native</td>
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<td>27</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>500</td>
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‘Mixed marriages’

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Irish %</th>
<th>Scots %</th>
<th>Welsh %</th>
<th>Yorks. %</th>
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<tr>
<td>minimum</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>maximum</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>56</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Notes:  ‘Non-native’ means not born in Hertfordshire; ‘solitaries’ were those living alone. The minimum estimate for ‘mixed marriages’ is the sum of the ‘husband non-native’ and ‘wife non-native’ rows; the maximum estimate also includes widows and widowers. The percentage columns may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Source:  See Table 1.

unskilled than were the English-born husbands with Irish-born wives. 28 Given that the Irish population was more unskilled than that of Hertfordshire, one would expect just the opposite.
market of UK dimensions. Men who served the wealthy—coachmen, grooms, gardeners and butlers—may have freeloaded on their masters’ mobility, giving them more chance of entering into a mixed marriage.

Among Irish husbands those involved in commercial activity were also prominent. While men in this group probably did not have the ready-made connections of the elite, they had the wealth to pursue opportunities more broadly and to set up in England. Among the English husbands skilled tradesmen were relatively more prominent. These individuals may at some point have taken advantage of the relative scarcity of skilled labour in Ireland. Finally, there were the hawkers. Here, as noted already, the point of contact was likely to have been the large Irish community in nearby London.

Some implications for migration with the United Kingdom

It is striking how the characteristics of the Irish, Scots, Welsh and Yorkshire men and women in Hertfordshire resemble those of the Londoners in Armstrong’s study of Canterbury. The

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 6 ‘Mixed marriages’</th>
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<th>Yorks</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-native husbands, native wives</td>
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<td></td>
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Note: The percentage columns may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
Source: See Table 1.

The Irish in mid-Victorian Hertfordshire

London-born were older, were generally involved in ‘mixed’ households, and were more likely to have higher status occupations or have independent means. They were also spread fairly evenly across the town.

These results suggest that underlying the large and well-known movements of people within the mid-Victorian United Kingdom—the flows into London and the industrial towns—there were a variety of low-level streams of long-distance migration, a sort of background migration.31 There were movements of elites and their servants, of government officials, and of professionals, some of which could also result in ‘mixed’ marriages. Others who could move relatively easily were shopkeepers and merchants. Further down the social scale service in the military or movements of skilled labourers could occasionally lead to mixed marriages.

It should be kept in mind that all of this background long-distance movement did not amount to that much. Only 3.7 per cent of Hertfordshire’s population was born outside the south-east of England. As Keith Snell has recently emphasised, settlement and marriage were profoundly local in this period.32 What has been highlighted here are a few of the ways that strangers could have come to reside in rural and small town Britain.

Even in these underlying streams of migration the Irish seem to have participated less. As was shown in Table 1, the Irish rate of migration to Hertfordshire was much lower than that from Scotland, Wales, and Yorkshire. Moreover, few British people moved to Ireland. In 1851 the share of the Irish population born in Britain or in some foreign country was less than 1 per cent.33

Some implications for the history of the Irish in Britain

One minor implication of this study of the ‘other Irish’ in Britain is a methodological point. The Hertfordshire evidence suggests that as a measure of Irish migration to Britain the census totals for the Irish-born are a slight overestimate. Three categories probably merit exclusion. Two should be non-controversial: students, and visitors and travellers. These were people who were, for the most part, temporarily in Britain and not likely to have been economically active. The other category is the ‘accidental Irish’, those whose parents were English but who just happened to have been born in Ireland. These would have been people who almost certainly regarded themselves as English. How much of an overstatement might be involved in counting these categories? On the heroic assumption that Hertfordshire was representative of Britain, the visitors and travellers, students and accidental Irish probably amounted to just under 10,000 people, a little bit more than 1 per cent of the 727,000 Irish-born in Britain. Thus, one should probably not make too much, at least for the 1851 census, of Fitzpatrick’s observation that a ‘considerable but unknown

33 Census of Ireland, 1851, Part VI, General Report, BPP 1856 XXXI, 646–9.
proportion of Britain’s Irish population on census day consisted of visitors, lodgers, jobbers or harvesters awaiting passage home or overseas’. The Irish-born in Hertfordshire were on average better off than the Irish-born in Britain’s cities. In London two-thirds of the Irish men were unskilled labourers and less than 5 per cent were shopkeepers, professionals or independently wealthy. In Hertfordshire the unskilled amounted to less than half and the latter category to somewhat over a quarter.

In Hertfordshire the Irish were more integrated. Even in the towns with the most Irish-born residents there is little obvious residential segregation, which was indeed unlikely given the small numbers. The Irish in Hertfordshire were often married into the local community. Of the married couples containing at least one Irish-born spouse, over three-quarters were mixed marriages. In this sense there does not seem to be much of an Irish community in Hertfordshire. In London, by contrast, there seems to have been little intermarriage. Although Lees found that 24 per cent of families had one Irish and one English spouse, she argued on the basis of other information that ‘virtually all of the technically English spouses were second- or third-generation Irish’. It is interesting, in this respect, that the only other case of extensive intermarriage in the literature is in York, where Finnegan found that two-thirds of couples involving at least one Irish partner were mixed (English-Irish) marriages. York, as a destination for migrants, may have been more similar to Hertfordshire than to the industrial towns. The Irish-born in Hertfordshire may also have been better integrated because they had been there longer. Compared to the London Irish there were fewer children, fewer people in their 20s and early 30s, and more at all ages from the mid-30s upward.

The Hertfordshire Irish may actually be more representative of some older pathways of Irish migration to Britain. Some of the sorts of migration seen in Hertfordshire are likely to have been relatively more important in the pre-famine period. Elite migration is one case in point. But perhaps more important was migration mediated by military experience. The large numbers of English and Irish men who were drawn into the military during the French wars, then shifted around the two islands, was likely to have produced far more mixed marriages than were the much smaller numbers in the post-Waterloo army. How important could mixed marriages have been? Again, on the heroic assumption that Hertfordshire was representative of Britain, the total number of mixed marriages in 1851 may have been upwards of 20,000. This is not particularly large as a share of the Irish-born in Britain in 1851. But the people involved in mixed marriages were relatively old, which suggests that

34 Fitzpatrick, “A peculiar tramping people”, 627. The inclusion of lodgers and jobbers here is peculiar. Many English residents were also lodgers. Moreover, lodging was not necessarily an indicator that an Irish-born person would be returning to Ireland. Jobbers may also have been permanently resident in Britain.
36 Lees, Exiles, 153-4.
37 Finnegan, Poverty and prejudice, 6.
38 Lees, Exiles, Appendix B, figure A.1. The Irish in Hertfordshire also had a completely different gender profile than did the Irish in London. Men significantly outnumbered women overall and in all age groups from 15–24 to 45–54, almost exactly the opposite of the London pattern (Lees, Exiles, 49).
The Irish in mid-Victorian Hertfordshire

they would have been a larger share of the smaller numbers of Irish-born in Britain in the 1820s and 1830s.

It is worth noting, as a general point, how unfortunate it is that the studies based on the 1851 census, including this one, may be heavily influenced by the distress migration arising from the famine of the late 1840s. They are probably also influenced, to a lesser extent, by the boom in British railway construction during the 1840s. (Six to eight per cent of the migrants with recorded occupations were involved either in constructing or running the railways.) Although a number of researchers have gone on to look at the enumerators’ books for later censuses, it is unfortunate that only Finnegan seems to have gone back to the 1841 census. Whilst the 1841 census may be less rich in the detail it gives with respect to age, family relationship, marital status and occupation, it does avoid the turmoil of the late 1840s.

Finally, this study of Hertfordshire confirms that previous researchers were right to look for the Irish in the cities.39 There were large swathes of the county, particularly in the north and east, in which there was essentially no Irish presence. Of the 152 enumeration districts, 69 recorded no-one of Irish birth and 25 only one person. The same is true of migrants from the other nations, whose pattern of settlement is quite similar to that of the Irish. Even in Hertfordshire the Irish were concentrated in the towns. Just under half resided in ten towns, led by Hertford, Ware, Watford and Hemel Hempstead.40

Very few of the Irish, or other four nations migrants for that matter, settled in the countryside. The number of immigrant agricultural labourers was tiny, and most of them resided in the towns. In the entire county there were just 33 Irish-born agricultural labourers and only 45 from all of the four nations. This was not enough to supply even one modest-sized parish. The parish of Bengeo, near Hertford, with a population of 1,519, returned 103 agricultural labourers, 23 farm labourers and 52 labourers.

There were only a few ways for the Irish-born males to settle in the Hertfordshire countryside. One was to marry in, as in 21 of the 67 cases recorded in the census. Another was to buy in, as did five landed proprietors. A third way was to be stationed there, like the two rural policemen. The fourth, and most common (23 cases), was to serve the local gentry, not only as maid, cook or gardener but as agent, steward, private tutor or governess. Finally, one could work on the land—just 12 cases, and here it helped either to be married to an Englishwoman or to be young and single.

Yet rural Hertfordshire was not unfamiliar with Irish farm workers, nor were the Irish unfamiliar with rural Hertfordshire. As noted above, large numbers of harvest workers came through each summer. Despite familiarity with Hertfordshire, and agricultural wages almost twice as high as those in Ireland, few of the Irish had settled permanently in the county, and

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39 The Irish did come in large numbers to some rural mining communities, for example, that in Whitwick, Leicestershire: Snell and Ell, Rival Jerusalems, 253.
40 Hertford St John (35), Hertford All Saints (7) and Hertford St Andrews (11), Ware (40); Watford (36); Hemel Hempstead (35); Cheshunt (30); Hatfield (30); Hitchin (28); St Albans (25).
those only through the various pathways enumerated above. Irish agricultural labourers would have found it difficult to obtain permanent housing or jobs in rural Hertfordshire, not least because they would have been likely to displace natives onto local relief rolls. This excursion into the English countryside serves to highlight how selective and how limited was Irish permanent migration to Britain in the early nineteenth century.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Brenda Collins, Cormac Ó Gráda, Keith Snell and Ron Weir for their most helpful comments on an earlier draft and to Nigel Goose for extensive comments and correspondence, for making available to us some of his unpublished work, and for serving as our faithful guide in all things to do with Hertfordshire. Seminar participants at the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure and the LPS editorial board also made major contributions that are much appreciated.

Research in progress

How people moved: researching the experience of mobility in the past

Colin Pooley

Defining the problem

The migration history of Britain is reasonably well known. A number of original studies and broader surveys provide detailed evidence about where and why people moved, and about the characteristics of different groups of migrants. For instance, for the nineteenth century we know that most moves were over relatively short distances and usually took place within well-established migration areas: some 40 per cent of moves had both the origin and destination within the same settlement, and over 50 per cent of moves were less than ten kilometres in length. Most moves were undertaken as family groups, although those who moved over longer distances were more likely to travel alone. The most important reasons for residential migration were employment and marriage: in particular, movement for employment accounted for most longer-distance migration. This pattern changed relatively little in the first half of the twentieth century, although mean migration distances increased slightly and short-distance movement for housing and environmental reasons became relatively more important. However, while most migration research has focused on the spatial pattern of movement, its causes and its consequences, we still know very little about the actual experience of residential migration. From personal experience we know that moving home can be traumatic, but studies of migration in the past tend to take for granted that moves took place, without focusing either on how this was carried out or on the impact of the experience of relocation on individuals and families. This on-going research, still in its very early stages, is examining these neglected aspects of migration history.

There is always a tendency for social science history to emphasise the big picture and to ignore the mundane and everyday. In the context of migration, this has led to a focus on long-distance moves thought to be disruptive for the individuals and places involved, and to concentration on the impacts of migration on origins and destinations. The everyday


experience of moving home, usually over a short distance, has been neglected even in studies of local history which have focused detailed attention on specific places. However, recent research has emphasised the role and significance of everyday practices in other walks of life, and there is a need to examine the practice and performance of migration as well as its causes and consequences. There are a number of reasons why the act of moving home is significant. First, it is undoubtedly a stressful experience for many people, with particular worries about the loss or breakage of possessions and the inevitable disruption to familiar routines. Second, and potentially more importantly, if people have negative memories of moving home, these may have an impact on future mobility. A bad experience when moving could reduce the propensity to move again, with significant consequences for the labour and housing markets. Third, and following from the above, reluctance to move may have social consequences for individuals and families as people find themselves in unsuitable accommodation or far from relatives, but feel that they cannot face the upheaval of a removal which could potentially improve the situation. It can thus be suggested that in the past, as in the present, consequences of the experience of moving can extend well beyond the act itself.

Migration and materiality

Many factors potentially influence the experience of moving home, and most have changed radically over the past 200 years. On the one hand, transport technology and, more importantly, access to different forms of transport, have changed significantly, in theory making moving easier. On the other hand, changes in housing tenure, particularly the rise of home ownership, could have made moving more problematic because of the increased difficulties of financing and negotiating the sale and purchase of a house. Other factors of potential importance include the distance over which a move is made (short distances ought to be easier); the purpose of the move (a forced move that is made reluctantly is unlikely to be a pleasant experience); and personal and family characteristics, including factors such as the presence of small children (usually difficult to move!), the availability of friends or kin to assist, and personal income (which affects the degree of assistance that can be purchased). All of these are much more personal and are unlikely to have changed over time in a consistent direction, although in the twentieth century most people have experienced rising real incomes (but with no reduction in inequalities).

5 Moving home regularly appears relatively high on lists of the most stressful events in life, after events such as death of a spouse, major illness and unemployment. See for instance: <http://www.stresstips.com/social_readjustment_rating_scale.htm>.
One characteristic that has changed for most people, and which has a direct effect on the experience of moving, is the quantity of personal possessions that people own (and thus have to move). It can be argued that, in the past, most people had relatively few possessions and thus they were easily transported, but that as British society has become more acquisitive and materialistic—linked in part to increasing affluence but also to changed expectations—then the physical movement of belongings becomes much more difficult, and relocation raises greater concerns about potential loss or damage to those possessions. There has been extensive academic research on changing patterns of consumption and associated materiality, but rarely has this been linked directly to movement. Most research on materiality and movement focuses on the artefacts of travel: the development of travel infrastructure, of new transport technologies and, especially, the growth of mobile technologies that allow both virtual mobility and communication whilst on the move. There has also been research on the possessions that people use to remind themselves of their previous home environment, especially in circumstances of long-distance or forced relocation. However, the degree to which increases in personal possessions, and the development of a more materialistic society, have affected residential migration has not been examined, despite its obvious potential impact. This on-going research will attempt to fill this gap.

Problems of evidence

One good reason why this topic has not been extensively researched is that there are no readily available data sources. Moving home was a routine experience, rarely recorded in any detail beyond the fact that it occurred. Furthermore, the very fact that moving home is a time-consuming and potentially disruptive event means that few people would bother to record this in any way, beyond the necessity of informing key contacts of a change in address. Research on this topic must thus rely on discovering snippets of information embedded in other sources that could have been produced for a whole variety of reasons. The list of potential sources is almost unlimited, but some of the most likely starting places to look for material include personal diaries and life histories, some of which may give information beyond the simple fact that a move took place; oral history archives, where information on moving home may have been either directly or indirectly collected; newspapers, where a range of reports may include information on how people moved in the past; and business archives pertaining to removal companies. In addition to archival sources, of which there

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13 For an example of a business history compiled from the archives of a long-standing removal company, see G. Turnbull, Traffic and transport: an economic history of Pickfords (London 1979).
are many more possible examples, some information may be gained (with care) from contemporary novels where moving may be an important part of the plot; and, for the most recent past, additional information may be collected from surveys of respondents about their recent migration experiences. All such sources do, of course, raise problems of representativeness. Diaries and life histories tend to be written by those with more education and leisure time; newspaper reports (for instance of court proceedings) focus on a particular sub-set of society that is considered to be newsworthy; oral evidence will be affected by memory; and literary sources are, by definition, fiction. Moreover, the researcher will only ever find a fragment of the potential information that is located in such sources, but the total population of information is unknown and thus the quality of the sample cannot be assessed.14 None of these problems is peculiar to research on moving home, but the ephemeral and fragmentary nature of the evidence make investigation particularly problematic. The remainder of this paper is used to provide selected examples of people’s experiences of moving home. There is insufficient evidence so far to draw any firm conclusions, but the examples do illustrate that data are available and that they can provide real insights into a neglected, but important, aspect of migration history.

Moving home in the past

In this section, four main sources are used to examine the process of moving home in the past: one personal life history; evidence from an oral history archive; coroner’s evidence reported in a newspaper; and extracts from two well-known novels. The life history of Henry Jaques provides one unusually detailed account of a residential move.15 Interestingly, this does not relate to any of the frequent moves that he undertook himself (he rarely recorded more than the fact that he moved) but rather to the move of a relative with which he assisted. In 1857 Henry helped his aunt to move some 45 kilometres from Islington (London) to the village of Shorne in Kent: while showing signs of Dickensian elaboration, his account is suggestive of many of the worst nightmares that some people might have about the transport of their valued possessions when moving home:

…it was thought that one large van would take all the goods and accordingly they were subsequently packed into one vehicle piled up to a great height. Soon after the disaster came. We had not proceeded 200 yards when one of the springs gave way, and most of the goods were toppled over into the road. The services of a wheelwright were called into requisition, the breakages made good, a small two wheel cart obtained which was filled with goods thus easing the van, and after a delay of three hours, and about 12 o/c midday a fresh start was made for our 30 miles journey.


One thing noted by me on the journey was the frequent stoppages at the road-side Inns and the condition of the driver in consequence. Progress was slow but at 1 o/c the following morning we entered the quiet village of Shorne, all was quiet, not a soul to be seen. The exact locality of the house was not known so we had to wake up some of the sleeping villagers to guide us to the Ridgeway. So about 2 o/c we drew up at the house ... The unloading was all over by 5 o/c by which time the village was all alive and we were regaled with a crowd of small children with open mouths wondering what it all meant.16

Such potentially off-putting experiences of moving home can also be found in other and much later sources: the Ambleside oral history archive has a number of relevant transcripts.17 One respondent recalled a move made in 1946 from the north east of England to Grasmere in Westmorland (now Cumbria). This quote clearly demonstrates a train of events in relation to the removal of possessions, starting with a probably wrong decision to take a cheap quote for the removal, through a removal that took longer than expected, to a house which was not ready to receive those possessions when they arrived.

So it was arranged that we would come in the October holiday [1946] and we booked in at the Moss Grove to start with whilst the removal was taking place. The removal was a nightmare. Because Jim got, I think, three estimates for the removal and the lowest estimate was from a local furnishing firm that also did removals and it was much cheaper than Pickfords or whoever the other one was so he contacted them again and said why was it so cheap, and they said because we have got a new extra big van. Right. So they would do it all in one do. By teatime on the removal day the van was full and they hadn’t got all the furniture on. They needed the van next day so they would have to come through to Grasmere and dump the furniture and come back with the other load overnight. So they decided to do that and we went and stayed with my sister in West Hartlepool for the night and came on the next day. Well, apparently what had happened was that everything wasn’t finished, the main work was finished but the house was not decorated. And there were two painters in and they had left all their painting materials in the front porch, all their pots of paint, and this van came in the middle of the night, it had to remove all their paints in order to get in and then they just dumped all the furniture and came back and got the next lot.18

Not all moves were as traumatic as the first two examples, but other, less spectacular, accounts can also reveal important details about the removal process. Another Ambleside respondent recalled a move made in 1919 over the relatively short distance of some 30 kilometres within what is now south Cumbria. This move took two days and relied on the local coal merchant to carry out the removal.

16 Life history of Henry Jaques (private collection).
17 Ambleside oral history archive: http://www.aohg.org.uk/search.html.
18 Ambleside oral history archive: Respondent HP; DoB 1909.
So father got the job see. And that was it, that was how we came over here in July 1919. Our furniture - our sticks as you might call it in them days, they were transported by a chap called Billy Lowther who was the coal merchant at Broughton-in-Furness, with a flat lorry and two horses. We loaded up as today, and all the furniture was to carry up on to the main road from the house, and Billy Lowther set off from Stonestar down to Broughton-in-Furness. I don't know what time it would be, but he would get his tea and bait his horses, and he was up at 5 o'clock next morning and he'd tramped through from Broughton-in-Furness to High Barn with our sticks. And that was how our sticks came from Broughton to High Barn.19

Reliance on local carriers, and especially coal merchants, to carry out removals is a theme that comes through in a number of other testimonies. Particularly in rural areas such as Cumbria, there were relatively few businesses that specialised in furniture removal in the early twentieth century, and any traders who owned appropriate transport could be used to carry furniture and effect a removal.20 Thus, coal and slate wagons had to be cleaned and made suitable for transporting furniture, and many carriers were happy to adapt their business to transport whatever was needed at the time. Such points are emphasised by two further examples from the Ambleside oral history archive:

Well my grandfather was a carrier and he had a business in Ambleside … I think my father had quite a lot to do with the coal side of it. And also a wagon would take slate from the quarries to Windermere Good's Yards and often come back with a load of coal. Things like that. Now they did do quite a trade with furniture removing. They took furniture all over England I am told.21

I. How far afield did you go [for furniture removals]?
R. More or less locally. I've been as far as Morecambe once or twice.
I. Langdale?
R. Oh yes, Langdale and Grasmere and……..
I. Hawkshead?
R. Hawkshead and Windermere, Coniston.
I. Coal wagon’s a mucky job, did you have to clean it out for these folk?
R. Oh yes. It was clean, when they asked me to do a job. I did a lot of furniture removing, because there was no-one else, really.22

Unusual insights into the possessions that some people had, and the methods they used to transport them, can also be gained from newspapers and other contemporary publications. The following account, from the Burnley Gazette for 1881, is drawn from a report of a

19 Ambleside oral history archive: Respondent DX1; DoB 1910.
21 Ambleside oral history archive: Respondent EE; DoB 1922.
22 Ambleside oral history archive: Respondent IL; DoB 1913.
coroner’s inquest into a drowning in a canal. The story itself is tragic but, in passing, the report reveals both the limited possessions that one man had when he ‘flit’ his home, and the fact that—Dick Whittington-like—he carried them in handkerchiefs (which he returned to his wife before apparently falling into the canal).

Elizabeth Hargreaves, widow of the deceased, residing at 16 Lorne-st, said he came home drunk on Monday night week about a quarter to ten. She remonstrated with him about his conduct and some harsh words passed between them. The following morning she charged him with not maintaining himself and he said he would ‘flit’, packed up his clothes and left home. She saw him again on Monday night when he brought the handkerchiefs back in which he had packed his clothes.23

Fictional writing must be used with even more caution than other sources, but many contemporary writers have been shown to provide fictional accounts that were accurate reflections of contemporary society and environment.24 Two examples will suffice, both drawn from very well-known sources. Thomas Hardy’s account of the movement of agricultural labourers from one hiring to another on Lady Day emphasises the impact of weather on the process of moving. This was obviously especially significant in the past when possessions would mostly be transported on an open wagon, but even today most people dread wet weather when moving. Mrs Gaskell’s account of the Hale family’s move to Milton in North and South focuses on the equally universal fear of unpreparedness and dealing with the unknown. Even for an affluent family, such as the protagonists in this novel, moving was portrayed as a daunting task, quite possibly because they would have had substantial and valuable possessions.

It was a relief to Tess, when she looked out of the window that morning, to find that though the weather was windy and louring it did not rain, and the waggon had come. A wet Lady-Day was a spectre that removing families never forgot; damp furniture, damp bedding, damp clothing, accompanied it, and left a long train of ills.25

‘Why on earth has your father fixed on Milton-Northern to live in!’ ...’And the furniture – how in the world are we to manage the removal! I never removed in my life and only a fortnight to think about it!’26

Next steps

This brief report on research in progress has highlighted the potential significance of moving home as an event, over and above other more commonly researched impacts that follow from residential change. It has focused on the ways in which, by definition, a residential move also

23 Burnley Gazette. 26/02/1881: Report of a coroner’s inquest. Thanks to Siân Pooley for drawing this example to my attention.
25 Thomas Hardy, Tess of the D’Urbervilles, Chapter LII (first published 1891).
26 Elizabeth Gaskell, North and south, Chapter V (various editions, first published 1855).
required the relocation of possessions (however meagre); it has highlighted the various means by which this process could be effected in the past; and it has discussed some of the problems that could arise. Sources consulted so far do not allow any firm conclusions to be drawn, but they do raise many questions for further investigation, only a few of which are outlined here. First, given changes in material possessions over time, and the fact that moving is often a time when people reappraise their possessions, how have migrants made decisions about what to take and what to leave behind when moving home? Second, we need to know more about who carried out removals at different times and how migrants made decisions about who to trust with their possessions. Third, there is potential to investigate the strategies that people have adopted to limit anxiety when moving home. Today we rely heavily on insurance to provide at least financial (if not emotional) recompense for the loss of valued possessions. How, if at all, did migrants seek to minimise such losses in the past? The fact that possessions were limited does not mean they were without personal value and, for many, replacing lost possessions in the past would have been much harder than today. Fourth, there is scope to examine the extent to which the circumstances of removal affected experience of the event itself. For instance, did people required to move at short notice against their will have very different experiences to those able to plan a move in more detail? Certainly, evidence presented above suggests that careful planning did not necessarily avert disasters. Fifth, at all times there have been some people with relatively mobile life-styles and others who are much more sedentary. To what extent does prior experience of mobility (daily as well as residential) influence the capacity of individuals to deal with the removal of their possessions to a new home? Finally, all these (and other) questions need to be investigated in the context of change and continuity. As personal possessions have increased, has moving home become more difficult and stressful, or have other changes such as the development of professional removal services, insurance for personal goods, greater affluence and longer formal education made the process less traumatic for most people?

To answer such questions there is need to collect a very much larger database of evidence on moving home, drawn from a variety of time periods and sources. This is where I need the help of readers of this journal. As the examples cited above demonstrate, information on moving home can occur in almost any source. It is rarely indexed or easy to find, and is usually discovered by chance while researching another topic more obviously related to the source in hand. If readers have in their possession, or come across by chance, information on the experience of moving home that relates to the topics outlined above (or to others I have not thought of), I would really like to hear from you. Please e-mail or post to me details of the source (with full reference) and of the relevant content.27 Building up a sufficiently large database to provide anything more than anecdotal evidence will be very time-consuming, but I expect to be able to add examples gradually from a range of time periods and locations in an attempt to begin to answer some of the questions outlined above. All contributions will be acknowledged and very gratefully received.

27 Contact details are: Professor Colin Pooley, Geography, Lancaster Environment Centre, Lancaster University, LA1 4YQ; e-mail: c.pooley@lancaster.ac.uk; tel: 01524 510241.
Sources and methods

This item considers a range of sources and methods commonly used in local population history. These vary in sophistication and complexity, but are intended to be of benefit to the broad LPS readership, and are accompanied by worked examples. Each item is written by an experienced population history practitioner, and will usually address both the possibilities and the pitfalls of the respective sources and methods under discussion. The LPS Board are happy to enter into correspondence on this item, which should be addressed in the first instance to the LPS General Office.

Infant mortality

Chris Galley

Infancy covers the first year of life (ages 0–1) and the infant mortality rate (IMR) measures the proportion of infants who do not survive their first year. The first formal definition of the IMR was published by William Farr in the Registrar General’s Annual Report for 1875 and by the end of the nineteenth century it had become adopted as a primary demographic indicator.1 In 1938 even Neville Chamberlain, the then Prime Minister, was conversant with it, noting that ‘sometimes we take the infant mortality rate as a sort of pointer to show how health is improving’.2 Many contemporary publications, such as UNICEF’s The state of the world’s children, continue to use the IMR as a surrogate measure of well-being and infant mortality has been, and still is, the focus of much research aimed at lowering rates.3 The literature on infant mortality is vast with both contemporary and historical demographers having expended much effort in seeking to explain social, spatial and temporal variations in IMRs. This article does not seek to engage in any of the debates concerning how and why IMRs in the past may have changed; instead it aims to explain how the rate may be calculated using historical population sources. In many publications, including from 1875 the majority produced by the General Register Office, the IMR is simply reported. When it is not, the rate can be calculated relatively easily, but care needs to be taken in order to ensure that the correct formula is used.4

2 Quoted by Richard Titmuss, Population and poverty (London, 1938), 77.
3 The latest volume, UNICEF, The state of the world’s children 2009 (UNICEF, 2009) discusses maternal and newborn health. As with previous issues, the IMR is used to assess demographic progress.
The IMR is one of many age-specific mortality rates and represents, within a given population, the probability of a live birth surviving to age one. Conventionally, an age-specific mortality rate is calculated by dividing the number of deaths at a given age by the population of that age at the mid-year point. This implies that in order to calculate an IMR it is necessary to divide the number of infant deaths by the population of infants:

\[ \text{IMR} = \frac{\text{number of infant deaths}}{\text{mid-year population of infants}} \]

Unfortunately, unlike most other age groups, which experience a similar risk of dying throughout the year, infants experience far higher risks close to birth (for example, in 1906, 49 per cent of infant deaths in England and Wales were aged 0-3 months, 21 per cent aged 3-6 months and 30 per cent aged 6-12 months). This means that a mid-year count of infants will not necessarily represent the true population at risk. Instead, a better way to represent the population at risk is to use the number of live births within the year. The conventional way of calculating the annual IMR is therefore to divide the annual number of infant deaths by the annual number of live births. Thus:

\[ \text{IMR} = \frac{\text{infant deaths}}{\text{live births}} \]

By convention the IMR is usually expressed as the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births.

The above formula is usually used to calculate annual IMRs, but it can also be used for longer periods (five years—quinquennia—for instance). It is less useful for periods shorter than one year because in many historical populations the seasonality of both births and infant deaths could be substantial, and such fluctuations may cause the births not to be representative of the population at risk. For example, in 1911 the hot summer caused many infants to die from diarrhoea during the third quarter of the year with infants aged over three months being at greatest risk. If a third quarter IMR is calculated for this year, then the majority of infant deaths in this period will have been born in previous quarters. This example illustrates a wider problem of using the above formula to calculate the IMR: within any year, some infants, especially those born towards the end of the year, will die in the following year and hence the numerator and denominator in the infant mortality calculations do not refer to exactly the same populations. Figure 1, a Lexis chart, illustrates this problem. The dashed lines represent the life courses of individual infants. In the first example the infant is born towards the beginning of 1900, but dies mid-year. The second infant is born towards the end of 1900 and dies in 1901. If it is possible to trace all the births in 1900 throughout their first year then the proportion that did not survive infancy can be determined. This method

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5 A. Hinde, *Demographic methods* (London, 1998), 9–12, discusses age-specific mortality rates. Strictly speaking the mid-year point is 2 July, although 30 June is often used.
Infant mortality

Figure 1  Cohort and period IMRs

requires some form of nominal record linkage procedure such as family reconstitution to be carried out. In Figure 1, if the deaths in the parallelogram B-C can be related to the births in 1900 then this measure is known as the cohort IMR. To get a better indication of the risks to infants for periods of less than one year it is always better to use a cohort rate, but in many instances limitations in the data may not allow this measure to be calculated. Figure 1 also illustrates the conventional method of calculating the IMR described above—in this instance, the infant deaths in the rectangle A-B are related to the births in 1900 and this measure is known as the period IMR.

In practice there is likely to be little difference between period and cohort IMRs and in the vast majority of cases the period rate will be used because it is much easier to calculate. For example, as part of a larger study of York’s population I made calculations of IMRs (cohort rates) throughout the city between 1570 and 1800. This took me the equivalent of one year’s full-time work. Later when I decided to extend the series using published data, it took less than an afternoon to produce a series of IMRs (period rates) from 1837, the start of Civil Registration, until 1950. Unless otherwise mentioned, all reported IMRs are likely to be period rates and in most cases these should adequately reflect the life chances of the infant population. In exceptional circumstances, such as when the birth rate changes abruptly, a different formula may be deemed necessary: in some cases it may be appropriate to use the average of the births in two consecutive years to represent the population at risk. Corrections were also needed during the First World War when the number of births fell as many men left home to fight in the war. Such minor adjustments are not usually necessary and most IMRs are calculated simply by dividing infant deaths by the number of live births.

8 Family reconstitution will be the subject of a future Sources and Methods item.
Any infant mortality calculation is, of course, dependent on the quality of the source material and for IMRs to be accurate it is necessary that: (1) all births and deaths are reported; and (2) accurate ages at death are provided or can be calculated easily. In any registration system, especially an historical one, perfection is unlikely, but both national and local estimates of IMRs have been made for England stretching back to the sixteenth century.\(^\text{10}\) Before discussing the methods used to derive these estimates it is necessary to be aware of the problems that may result if the IMR is calculated using inaccurate data. Table 1 shows the effects of both under- and over-registration on the accuracy of the infant mortality rate (infant mortality rate = 100 if registration is perfect).

![Table 1](https://www.example.com/table1.png)

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\(^{10}\) E. A. Wrigley et al., *English population history from family reconstitution 1580-1837* (Cambridge, 1997), 224.

\(^{11}\) M. Slack, ‘Non-conformist and Anglican registration in the Halifax area 1740-99’, *Local Population Studies*, 38 (1987), 44–5, showed that in Halifax during the 1790s nonconformist registers recorded 47 per cent of baptisms in the town, but only 16 per cent of burials.
calculated to be 841 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. The explanation for this astonishingly high IMR is of course nothing to do with social conditions within the parish; instead it is related to registration practices. Between 1831 and 1836, annual numbers of baptisms were 24, 24, 29, 25 and 35 while annual numbers of burials were 66, 76, 84, 115, 132 and 148. Presumably with plenty of space in this new churchyard, burial plots were easy to obtain and some individuals buried their infants there even though they may have been baptised elsewhere.

After the commencement of Civil Registration in 1837 the calculation of IMRs is generally straightforward, although reliance on published data means, paradoxically, that it becomes difficult if not impossible to verify the accuracy of the data used. Before 1837 it is necessary to use ecclesiastical registers and in general these recorded baptisms and burials instead of births and deaths. In most calculations of infant mortality using these sources, baptisms and burials have to be used as surrogates for births and deaths. In most cases this should not cause too many problems since the probability of dying declines considerably as infants grow older. The classic means of extracting age-specific demographic data from parish registers is via a technique known as family reconstitution which was devised by the French demographer Louis Henry and adapted for English registers by Tony Wrigley. This technique involves the linking together of all events recorded in a parish register that relate to a particular marriage. Once sufficient families have been reconstituted inter-generational links are made and a wide variety of representative demographic rates can then be calculated, although results often have to be combined into cohorts of 25 years or more to ensure a sufficiently high population at risk. This technique yields robust demographic data, although it is imperative to ensure that the register is complete and contains sufficient detail over a long period of time so that correct links can be established.

Reconstitution represents a considerable investment of time and it is unlikely that the student of infant mortality will wish to undertake this procedure just to calculate IMRs. In order to speed up the linking process a simplified form of data linkage can be adopted. In this case it is not necessary to link baptisms and burials directly to a marriage; instead for each baptism the burial register is searched over the following year to determine if the infant died within

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12 ‘Registers of St Peter’s, Ashton-under-Lyne, St Peter’s Blackley and St Lawrence’s Chorley’, Lancashire Parish Register Society, 127 (1990), 1-36.
13 For a short period during the Commonwealth period (1653 onwards) many registers recorded births alongside baptisms and a few deaths alongside burials. Quaker and some nonconformist registers consistently recorded births and deaths.
one year. In practice this procedure is easier to carry out if the method is reversed. Then events that specifically refer to adults can be automatically excluded from the linking process, which is just confined to those burials listed as ‘son or daughter of’. This method works best if the register has been printed, since the baptism register can be photocopied and as the burial register is searched links can then be noted on the copy. Once the linking process has been completed rates can be calculated in the usual way. This method has a number of advantages over reconstitution. All baptisms are in observation—including illegitimates and migrant ones that may be omitted from a reconstitution study. Any short gap in the register, which would preclude a full reconstitution from taking place, will only result in a similar small gap in the series of calculated IMRs. Its major advantage over reconstitution is that it is much quicker to carry out and thus it enables a far greater range of registers to be included in any study. This method does, however, have one major disadvantage. Within any ecclesiastical registration system some infants will die before they can be baptised, and while obviously these infants will not appear in the baptism register there is a possibility that they may also be absent from the burial register since the unbaptised were not supposed to be interred in consecrated ground. However, many unbaptised infant burials were recorded in parish registers, and if they are consistently identified or age at death is given, then ‘dummy’ births for these infants can be created and cohort IMRs calculated. Only a small minority of parish registers recorded unbaptised infant burials, but those that did are likely to be among the most accurate of registers since if parish clerks took the trouble to record information that was not required it is likely that similar levels of care were taken to ensure that they accurately recorded the true numbers of baptisms and burials occurring within the parish. In practice once the linking procedure is underway deficiencies within the register often become immediately apparent, since one of the first signs of poor registration is that links between baptisms and burials become harder to establish.16

As awareness and concern about issues relating to infants increased, the various components of infant mortality began to be examined and this led to the introduction and use of additional measures. The most important ones are:

1) neonatal mortality—deaths in the first 28 days (or occasionally the first month);
2) post-neonatal mortality—infant deaths aged over 28 days (or one month);
3) stillbirth—the expulsion of a dead foetus that has reached the age that it is capable of independent survival (which is usually considered to be 28 weeks). The stillbirth rate is therefore the number of stillbirths divided by the total of live births and stillbirths;
4) perinatal mortality—sum of stillbirths and infants in the first week of life.

Other terms, such as ‘early neonatal’ (deaths in the first week), are sometimes employed and, as with all measures relating to infant mortality, it is important to refer back to the precise

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16 If the simple linking procedure is undertaken on a register that does not specifically identify unbaptised infant burials then the resulting IMR will be under-recorded, although with further work it may be possible to provide correction factors. See Table 1 and the discussion in C. Galley, The demography of early modern towns (Liverpool, 1998), 92–100.
definition given in the text. There are two final terms that are often encountered in studies of infant mortality, endogenous and exogenous mortality. These result from the so-called biometric analysis of infant mortality. This technique, devised by the French demographer Bourgeois-Pichat, examined the distribution of infant deaths and attempted to differentiate, in the absence of any cause of death data, exogenous deaths (those associated with the external environment) from endogenous deaths (those associated with disorders inherited from the mother and birth injuries). Bourgeois-Pichat postulated that the cumulative IMR, and hence exogenous mortality, should be proportional to the function \( \log (n+1) \) where \( n \) = age at death in days. Thus, by drawing a graph of this relationship it should be possible to split endogenous from exogenous mortality, since where the line of cumulative IMR crosses the y axis will give the endogenous IMR. In 1977, Wrigley adapted this technique to investigate the plausibility of IMRs produced via reconstitution and thereby establish the accuracy of parochial registration. In many instances, when IMRs calculated from parish registers are subjected to this examination, the lines of cumulative infant mortality are straight and levels of endogenous mortality are well above zero. However, this technique is not subject to independent verification since detailed cause of death data for infants is not provided in parish registers and as a greater amount of work has been undertaken on this technique a significant number of exceptions have been found to this so-called ‘rule’.

Once the technicalities of measuring the IMR have been overcome, the challenge remains to seek to understand how and why rates varied between different groups and places. In England the national IMR was \( \text{circa} \ 175 \) per 1,000 live births in 1581, it increased to \( \text{circa} \ 200 \) by the late seventeenth century and then decreased to \( \text{circa} \ 150 \) by the early nineteenth century. Throughout the nineteenth century the national rate in England and Wales remained relatively stable. It was 151 in 1901 and then steadily declined, reaching 5 in 2001. These national averages do, however, mask considerable spatial variations across the country. During the eighteenth century the IMR was as low as \( \text{circa} \ 80 \) in some isolated rural parishes and perhaps over 350 in parts of eighteenth-century London. These variations decreased during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but even by the first decade of the twentieth century IMRs ranged from 47 to 204 within individual registration districts. Infants are among the most vulnerable members of all societies; they are often subject to higher risks of dying than other age groups and demographic change keenly affects this group. Moreover, with sources relevant to this subject being plentiful in archives throughout the country real progress will be made in understanding the processes of change if a greater number of local studies are undertaken.

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19 Wrigley et al., *English population history*, 224.
News from the universities

The University of Leeds and the history of the North

The School of History at the University of Leeds is characterised above all by its diversity of research and teaching expertise. Its 35 academic staff, who between them deliver modules to over 900 undergraduates (all levels, both single and joint honours) include specialists in the cultural history of the United States, south Asia and Europe; in international and military history; in modern British political and social history; in medieval and early modern religious and medical history; in the history of labour and protest, gender and industry. The flexibility of Leeds history degrees and wide range of module choice is enhanced by the opportunity to study University-wide electives. Specialist study and research-based dissertations form core components of final year studies. Lecturers specialising in local and regional and/or demographic history may be few but those with such interests make a significant impact on the research environment at Leeds, and sustain a long established MA programme in Local and Regional History. This scheme, one of six mastership programmes run solely or jointly by the School of History, contains a dedicated research methods module: ‘Key concepts in Local and Regional History’; three core modules in medieval, early modern and modern local and regional history, which are delivered collaboratively; and a research dissertation. Students taking the MA in Local and Regional History have historically demonstrated a healthy propensity to convert to PhD study.

The School of History at Leeds has a proud tradition of promoting innovative work on the history of the North. Such scholarship, building on the pioneering work of Asa Briggs and Maurice Beresford, and now demonstrated by the production of monographs and learned articles, is sustained by the rich resources of the Brotherton Library, the British Library Document Supply centre at Boston Spa, various regional archives, and the Yorkshire Archaeological Society. The dynamism of the history of the North in the School of History at Leeds is reflected not only in quality publications and externally funded research, but also through collaborative interdisciplinary activity, knowledge transfer and exchange, and widening participation projects.

Since its foundation in 1966, *Northern History*, the first English regional historical journal, has been produced by historians at Leeds University. It aims to stimulate and encourage research on the history of all parts of the North, including the Borders, from Roman times to the twentieth century. Edited by Gordon Forster (one of the original team and currently honorary lecturer in the School) and Simon Green, it publishes articles on topics treated regionally, on the history of particular localities set in a wider context, and those which compare the history
of the North with that of other parts of the country. Recent articles have included ‘Social science and the discovery of a “post Protestant people”: Rowntree’s surveys of York and their other legacy’, by Simon Green; and Katrina Honeyman’s ‘The poor law, the parish apprentice and the textile industries of the north of England, 1780-1830’, in which her recent revision of early industrial child labour is set in local and regional context.

Other historians of the North—or those who count the North among their interests— include John Chartres, whose work on the history of gin in the north east, and of liquorice in Pontefract, has enhanced our knowledge of local and regional consumption patterns since the eighteenth century. The work of Malcolm Chase, especially on Chartism, can be positioned in both local and regional history and the history of work and protest. Labour history, like northern history, has an impressive pedigree at Leeds: the Society for the Study of Labour History was founded in 1960 largely by staff from the University of Leeds: Asa Briggs (again), J.F.C. Harrison and E.P. Thompson. Malcolm sustains this tradition with his editorship of Labour History Review and the Ashgate series of Studies in Labour History. His recent publications include “‘The original to the life’: portraiture and the Northern Star’, in Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor eds, Picture and press in the nineteenth century: the lure of illustration (Palgrave, 2009); and “‘Labour’s candidates’: Chartism at the parliamentary polls’, Labour History Review, 75:1 (April 2009); and in July 2009 he will be presenting a paper on ‘Twentieth century labour histories’ within the theme ‘Local history now’ at a conference entitled ‘Local History in Britain after Hoskins’, to be held at the University of Leicester. Malcolm is also known for his role on ‘Who do you think you are?’, where he patiently enlightened Jeremy Irons on his ancestor’s Chartist connections; and in other ways engages with the wider community. He has spoken on ‘Chartism’s black activists’, at an anti-slavery day school at the Barnsley Trade Council Black & Ethnic Minorities Initiative; and on ‘Using Home Office Papers for local historical research’, at Cleveland & Teesside Local History Society, Middlesbrough.

Recent external grant winners include Emilia Jamroziak, whose research interests include the social and religious history of northern England and Scotland between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. In 2008 she completed the project ‘Border loyalties and disloyalties: a comparative study’, funded by the AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society programme, which considered the role of Cistercian monasteries on the frontiers of northern Europe. Wide-ranging in scope, and spanning the years 1100-1400, this project explored six case studies of Cistercian foundations, including those on the Scottish-English border as well as those in Pomerania and Neumark. Fellow medievalist and prolific publisher Ian Wood includes among his many research interests the study of Northumbrian monasticism.

A key feature of the research environment at Leeds is its buoyant postgraduate community, from which stems much new research in historical demography and local and regional economic and social history. Over a quarter of our PhD students are writing theses in these categories. Paul Atkinson, for example, is attempting to specify ‘Working class attitudes to maternity in Yorkshire, 1860–1920’; and Alison Henesey, recipient of the prestigious W.B.
Crump scholarship for ‘research into the North of England generally, and Yorkshire and the Pennines in particular’, is investigating the nineteenth-century development of the mining community of Garforth, West Yorkshire. Others include Janette Martin, holder of a coveted White Rose Graduate studentship, who is researching ‘Popular political oratory and itinerant lecturing in Yorkshire and the North-East in the age of Chartism (c.1837-60)’; John Shaw, exploring ‘Demographic change in a West Yorkshire settlement during the nineteenth century’; Daylin Myers (USAF formerly stationed at Menwith Hill, currently based in Afghanistan) investigating ‘Conversion, worship and history: the development of a religious identity in women of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Leeds and Chorley, England’; and Vine Joss who is unearthing ‘The women’s suffrage movement in Leeds 1866-1914’. Recently completed research degrees include a study of capital punishment in northern England 1750-1870, produced by former judge David Bentley, who undertook this research as a retirement project, and which he is now pursuing further as a writer for the popular local history market. Through the auspices of the White Rose Universities network, research students in the School organise annual conferences, which in 2008 included a session on Yorkshire in the late eighteenth century.

Turning to specifically demographic research, Shane Doyle, one of our historians of Africa, has been investigating AIDS in East Africa, funded by the ESRC, The British Institute in Eastern Africa, the British Academy and the AHRC. The resulting monograph, Before HIV: sexuality, fertility and mortality in East Africa, 1900-1980, is to be published by the British Academy and Oxford University Press, and examines the medical and demographic histories of three neighbouring societies in East Africa to explain why patterns of sexual behaviour, fertility and mortality changed so dramatically in the decades before the emergence of HIV. Relying on innovative research methods, Shane has used parish baptism and marriage registers to identify variations in demographic trends between ethnic groups through the techniques of family reconstitution. Trends in sexual attitudes and behaviour were identified through a detailed media survey, and single-sex group discussions. The most important findings of the project are that, in this region, fertility increased earlier in the colonial period than has previously been demonstrated, mainly through shorter birth intervals, but this was a response primarily to falling rates of child mortality, which must be regarded as the key factor prompting Africa’s shift to rapid population growth. The project has also challenged assumptions about the uniformity and permissiveness of sexual attitudes in pre-colonial Africa, and finds that the most significant developments in sexual behaviour occurred between the 1940s and 1960s, a period when the patterns of activity which would facilitate the rapid spread of HIV decades later took shape.

Research at Leeds increasingly adopts a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach, in which Kate Dossett has been particularly active. Building on her research interest in twentieth-century black male captivity narratives, a cultural-social history of black male incarceration between the 1890s and 1930s, she has developed a network on ‘“Incarceration cultures”: new directions and interdisciplinary approaches’, which brings together colleagues

Katrina Honeyman

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from the Universities of Sheffield, Manchester, Warwick, Leicester and Nottingham, in the fields of history, archaeology, literature, sociology and criminology. to consider the different methodologies used in studying experiences of incarceration and the diverse connections—cultural, spatial, political and personal—between prisons, convicts and wider society.

Active pursuit of the Knowledge Transfer agenda forms an integral part of the research strategy at Leeds. Among current projects is Katrina Honeyman’s work with Leeds museums on ‘Style for the High Street’, which develops research on the local menswear trade. With others, she has been involved with the West Yorkshire Playhouse (WYP) in a KT project investigating the links between history and theatre, specifically drawing on the growing interest in local history and local theatre whereby historians and playwrights address the meaning, criticism and performance of plays from a historical perspective. Activities within this project have included the exploration of the prize-winning *Hounding of David Oluwale*, whose author, Kester Aspden, taught in the School of History before becoming a freelance writer, and which details the life of a Nigerian immigrant from his arrival in Leeds in the later 1940s to his death at the hands of two local police officers 20 years later. The book, and the equally well-received play, were discussed at a workshop held at the WYP in February 2009, with the help of historical researchers experienced in the practice of oral history, African history and local and regional history. The link with the WYP is currently being pursued in the context of a Widening Participation Project, ‘Leeds Routes’, which explores the cultures and traditions of the diverse communities of Leeds. Historians from the School of History will work with young people, concentrating on how cultural traditions have been practised and have evolved in Leeds. The emerging histories will then be shared with the wider communities of Leeds, thus developing a greater understanding of the city, its culture and heritage.

Widening participation activities are also reflected in the work of Will Gould, another major grant holder, who is investigating the politics of religious conflict and ‘communalism’ in South Asia. Will’s work contributes to our understanding of local and regional demographic history through an exploration of the historical narratives of South Asian migrants to the UK, and especially west Yorkshire, after 1947. Andrew Thompson, whose main research and teaching interests have focused on the consequences of colonialism in the past and its legacies for today, is also involved in various forms of interdisciplinary research and public outreach. A project on ‘Asian Britishness’—undertaken jointly with the Institute of Public Policy Research and Tameside Council in Manchester—led to an invitation to speak to the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit. Andrew has also discussed his work on public memories of empire with Laurie Taylor on Radio 4.

The history of the North is thus thriving in Leeds, in ways that the founders of the journal *Northern History* in 1966 would not have expected. Or, as Simon Green recently observed: ‘there is now a potential value to the understanding of England’s regional history that might not have been apparent in 1966...it is entirely possible that the British phase of English history
is now “coming to an end”...for if the growth of our understanding of the history of the North has taught us anything these past forty years, it is surely that for many of our fellow countrymen, the mere recognition of an English identity invariably and variously constituted a form of moral pluralism in itself'.¹

Katrina Honeyman
School of History
University of Leeds

¹ S.J.D. Green, ‘Northern History and the history of the North: forty years on’, Northern History, 42 (2005), p. 27.
Book reviews


Many readers will be familiar with Joyce Burnette’s publications on the topic of female agricultural labour in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century England. Here she develops that work to produce a survey that encompasses the economy as a whole during the period of the industrial revolution.

This is a highly coherent study, the main thesis of which can be easily summarised: the main explanation as to why women earned less than men in industrial revolution Britain was economic rather than cultural. Although market efficiency and custom usually prescribed the same outcomes, it was the former that was usually the driver and the latter a rationalisation. As Burnette graphically explains in her introduction, ‘The question is not whether gender ideology existed, but whether it was the engine driving the train or just the caboose. Most research on the subject makes ideology the engine; I think it was the caboose’ (p. 6). Biology lies at the heart of this materialist explanation, with relative strength the most important determining factor, and child-bearing a secondary issue. These were the crucial considerations in the more competitive parts of the labour market, but, where competition was limited, trade unions and professional organisations were able to exert their power effectively to exclude women from certain forms of employment. In such instances ideology was again often employed as a justification, but the motivation remained an economic one, in this case ruled by self-interest rather than market efficiency. This thesis is vigorously pursued in a series of chapters devoted in turn to women’s occupations, women’s wages, occupational sorting, occupational barriers in agriculture, industry and self-employment, and women’s labour force participation.

In chapter 1, on women’s occupations, we are told that census data ‘is not an accurate measure of women’s employment’ (p. 16), a statement that at its very best is a half-truth. The 1841 census, of course, dramatically understates female employment. But from 1851, where women worked with some regularity, and where a culture of female employment existed, women’s work is usually recorded in the census with a high degree of accuracy. Ironically, the statement that ‘census enumerators expected women to be dependents’ (p. 21) gives undue primacy to ideology. Female employment in agriculture that was less than full-time, and participation in family businesses (particularly in the service sector), is less fully recorded in the census, although the inclusion in the 1851 published report of those designated ‘wife of’ a specified number of occupations will go some way towards rectifying that problem outside of agriculture. Nevertheless, Burnette is surely right to attempt to rely on as wide a range of sources as possible, both quantitative and anecdotal: the 1841 and 1851 census data,
information on individual occupations extracted from British Parliamentary Papers and various secondary sources, and a selection of trade directories from large towns and industrial counties. She uses these sources to show that whilst women worked in a wide variety of occupations, some of which were not typically ‘women’s work’, there was also substantial occupational sorting by gender. The evidence, even leaving the census aside, remains problematic: parliamentary commissions of enquiry tended to focus upon years of particular difficulty, and trade directories do not reach very far down the social scale. Furthermore, there are some worrying interpretations of the evidence here, none less worrying for this reviewer than to hear that straw plaiting had ‘dwindled to insignificance by the mid-nineteenth century’ (p. 48), when in fact it did not reach its peak in terms of female employment until 1871.

Chapter 2 explores wages. Burnette has again to rely heavily upon parliamentary committees, as well upon as the occasional observations of such as Arthur Young, to discover that women’s wages usually ranged between one-third and two-thirds those of men (p. 73). This, it is argued, was due to their lower productivity, at least in competitive areas of the labour market, for the majority of the evidence indicates that when men and women did the same work they were paid the same piece-rate. Time-rate wage data, it is next argued (a little confusingly) sets women’s earnings at between one-third and three-quarters of those of men (p. 93), but part of this gap is due to the fact that they worked shorter hours, and thus overall women earned about two-thirds as much as men—a substantial corrective on the commonly quoted ratio of one-third to one-half. The importance of strength to productivity in agriculture and a range of industries in industrial England is reasserted, with human capital playing a smaller role. The acquisition of skills was largely achieved through experience, and women tended to acquire different skills to men, those requiring manual dexterity rather than strength. It was women’s misfortune that these very skills were so often replaced by machines during the industrial revolution and hence the relative fall in women’s wages (a feature of the period that has not been fully established) ‘was probably due to bad luck’ (p. 122). The fact that women’s wages were responsive to changing market conditions is offered as further evidence that they were not customary, even if they were commonly justified in ideological terms.

Chapter 3, on occupational sorting, similarly claims required strength was the principal influence. When technology changed these strength requirements, the gender division of labour changed too, and women became more productive as child-carers than employed workers. The following chapter focuses upon agriculture, undoubtedly the author’s strongest suit, to demonstrate that men and women competed in the same labour markets throughout the industrial revolution, for positive correlations between male and female wages (although in many cases small) persisted from 1770 to 1860.

Barriers to women’s employment are the subject of chapters 5 and 6, and it is here that uncompetitive markets, within which men could use their power to exclude women, are explored. Women were absent from a number of skilled trades, and from much of the white
collar sector. Male workers who formed successful unions or exclusive professional organisations were the major force at work, for the actions of employers and government regulation had only a minor impact. With regard to self-employment, women were adversely affected by their inferior legal status, their relative lack of access to capital and in some instances by consumer discrimination. Trade directories, however, do not suggest increasing segregation among business owners before the mid-nineteenth century, even though this was a feature of the labour market as a whole. Increased household income in the later nineteenth century, however, also made it possible for more women to choose not to work, and such a choice was reinforced (or encouraged?) by a gender ideology that ascribed higher status to the male-breadwinner household.

In her conclusion, Burnette reiterates the primacy of the market in producing a gender division of labour that operated on the principle of comparative advantage, governed by relative strength and women’s role in child-bearing and child-care. Greater competition was advantageous to women because it directed them to employment that was suited to their strength and child-care responsibilities, while also helping to break down barriers where uncompetitive labour markets had allowed these to be erected. Gender ideology, therefore, was ‘formed in response to needs created by the market’ (p. 330).

When I started to read this book I was of a mind to tend to agree with the overarching thesis; by the time I had finished it, I was not so sure. Although a wide variety of source material is called upon, some of it is very problematic. The difficulties in using government commissions of enquiry and trade directories have been rehearsed above, but is odd that the 1841 census is called into play on a number of occasions in this study (for example, pp. 168, 221), when it is by far the least reliable of the nineteenth-century censuses, and is recognised as such by the author (p. 21). The evidence from agricultural farm account books is also relied upon very heavily in this study. There are also various recalcitrant facts to which Burnette draws attention—the piece-rate discrimination by gender in handloom weaving in the south west, the dominance of women in the strength-intensive laundry trades, or the prevalence of men as hairdressers—and others to which she does not—such as the more physically demanding duties carried out by many female as compared to male servants, or the fact that men quite regularly undertook domestic work in late nineteenth-century Lancashire, or that numerous women worked as independent agricultural labourers (not just as bondagers) in Northumberland at the same date. The whole issue of social conditioning also requires fuller consideration. For Burnette it ranks as a secondary consideration, but the expectations raised in childhood cannot be reduced to lack of opportunities for education or apprenticeship. The very fact that most households were headed by men, and that virtually no-one thought that the situation should be otherwise, reflects both power relationships and cultural expectations that are very difficult to reduce to the product of physical strength in competitive labour markets. And if women more regularly worked in trades requiring manual dexterity, and these were learned as girls rather than innate skills, why could they not be learned by boys? In fact they were in the case of straw plait, which employed many hundreds of young boys in the south
Midlands from the age of four upwards, most of whom gravitated to agricultural labour by their early teens. Did this really make economic sense in an overstocked agricultural labour market? Why would they make this transition even when straw plait wages were so high during the Napoleonic Wars? The answer given by Edwin Grey in his reminiscences of the village of Harpenden in the 1860s was that, although ‘children, both boys and girls, learned to plait when very young… the men looked upon this work more as appertaining to the women, so that although many men and youths did the plaiting at nights or odd times they preferred to do the work indoors…’ (E. Grey, Cottage life in a Hertfordshire village (St Albans, 1935), pp. 70, 83). If boys could learn to plait, women could learn to labour: physical strength is not merely innate, but can also be developed, and can cover a very wide spectrum within each sex. One might even wonder how large and heavy to operate mule spinning machines would have become if they had been designed by women? It is to Joyce Burnette’s credit that these and other questions are raised by her stimulating account.

Nigel Goose
University of Hertfordshire


The title of this work may seem slightly misleading to those with little interest in tracing ancestors, as the book is firmly aimed towards the personal family researcher. The unstated aim is for the reader to become an expert in using the various online resources which provide indexes and images to the census enumerators’ books (1841–1901) and schedules and summary books for 1911. In this respect the book succeeds admirably. The first two chapters contain a succinct history of census taking in England which many LPS readers will already be familiar with, but which are neatly summarised for the target audience and beyond.

The third chapter provides detailed examples of why individuals may be (or may seem to be) missing from the returns, along with a discussion of the quality of information in the enumerators’ books. To many LPS readers this is probably the chapter which makes the book worth its price, detailing as it does a handful of reasons for omissions (or possible omissions) based on research on individuals rather than communities.

The bulk of the book is concerned with the online versions of digitised images and indexes from the census enumerators’ books and their successors. Both the major free and commercial sites are discussed with details on costs, how to optimise searching and what is available. Most interestingly perhaps are the details of the recycling of indexes amongst the major commercial sites, so the 1841 and 1871 indexes made by Origins (http://www.origins.net/) are those used on the Origins and the FindmyPast (http://www.findmypast.com/) sites. These chapters are packed with useful examples and techniques and tips are given for the different sources. For those seeking individuals these chapters will prove invaluable, though as the authors note, the web changes rapidly, and some links may be out of date. The authors’
discussion of the merits (and limitations) of the various commercial providers seems balanced and evidence-based.

The penultimate chapter on using CDs containing indices and images shows the extent to which the big commercial suppliers have ignored the needs of local and community historians by focussing on individual searches.

The book has its own mini-website (http://www.spub.co.uk/census/) which includes some useful statistics on transcription errors of some of the commercially available census sites. Comparing three indices of a single enumeration district in Sussex, the authors find a range of surname entry errors ranging from 2.7 to 11.7 per cent; and for birthplace ranging from 5.4 to 30.5 per cent. Another example (from Islington, 1891) gives much wider variations. In this sample, surname errors range from 12.1 to 43.5 per cent error by entry and birthplaces from 4.6 to 34.1 per cent. Some of these errors are trivial, others are gross: King in the original becomes Shirling in the transcript, Chard becomes Oates. In birthplaces Bucks becomes Bures, Hampton Court becomes Hampton, Cornwall and so on. These are problems for personal family researchers, but the strength of the problem is magnified by those who depend on the indexes for larger scale studies.

In all this work is invaluable to genealogists, and of more than passing interest to local and community historians.

Matthew Woollard
UK Data Archive


This is the second volume of late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century Bedfordshire poll books. The first (vol. 85, 2006) covers the period 1685–1715 and the second the years 1715–1735. A large section of each volume is devoted to transcripts of the manuscript poll books for the county and borough seats of Bedford held in at Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Research Services. The first volume provides transcriptions of the poll books for four county and one borough election between 1685 and 1715, as well as election accounts showing candidates’ expenditure. The second volume contains transcriptions of the poll books for four Bedford borough elections and three country elections and draws upon other primary sources.

Ideally the two volumes need to be read alongside each other, since the first provides the crucial local and national context and assesses the poll books as a source for the entire period of both books, 1716–1735. The introduction to volume I discusses the value of poll books as evidence and explains who was entitled to vote. Who voters were in the county and how they voted are assessed, as well as the relative importance of landowners and clergy (Anglican and
Protestant Nonconformists) in determining the outcome of elections. Major landowners were important in Bedfordshire politics, but not dominant, and the local gentry also played a crucial role. The importance of parochial and regional loyalties is emphasised.

The second volume begins with an introduction outlining the national political picture between 1715 and 1734. Each chapter has its own introduction, bringing together the national and the county context and highlighting the sometimes close interplay in both by leading Bedfordshire families and key figures, as well as the national and local impact of the South Sea Bubble (1720), Catholicism, the Workhouse Test Act (1722), and the Atterbury plot to assassinate George I (1722). How Bedfordshire MPs voted on national issues is also examined. The background of candidates is thoroughly researched. Each manuscript poll book is described for the reader. The poll books provide varying levels of information, including voters’ names, order of voting, status (senior, junior, esquire, gentleman, clerk, burgesses, freemen, householders, indemnity certificate men, those not entitled to vote or whose vote was not allowed), occasionally occupations, office holding, place of residence and place of freehold, eligibility to vote, deaths, property sales, and finally, of course, who they voted for. In some cases more than one copy of the poll book survives and discrepancies are evident. These poll books were frequently used to canvass at subsequent elections.

This second volume also draws upon other primary sources from a number of collections in the archive—including letters, petitions and The London Journal—to provide an insight into the political allegiances at work in the selection of candidates and a selection of these are reproduced in a number of plates. The book contains four tables which provide some analysis of the poll books: they contain results for the country elections by hundred and by parish (1722, 1727 and 1734). The volume is easy to use with place and subject indexes. The two volumes combined contain some 18,500 personal names. Abbreviations and conventions are set out clearly and the referencing makes it very easy to identify and locate primary sources for further research.

As source books, these volumes will be of enormous value to local historians of Bedfordshire, as well as those interested in the analysis of voting patterns at the level of the community and county. Much of the original evidence is hitherto unpublished manuscripts, thus these two volumes make these sources available to a wider audience for the first time. Family historians will be able to find ancestors between the 1671 Hearth Tax and the 1841 Census.

Samantha Williams
Institute of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge


At the start of the nineteenth century, Guernsey was an island which could be characterised as comprising one town surrounded by areas of subsistence farming where, as William Berry remarked in 1814, ‘the old Norman French’ was ‘generally spoken by all ranks’ (p. 275). By
the end of the century, however, all ten of the island’s parishes had moved away from subsistence agriculture and had, indeed, overtaken St Peter Port as the island’s primary source of insular revenue. Much of this economic development was due to the doubling of the island’s population. In order to counterbalance considerable emigration, a constant influx of youthful immigrants arrived, whose relative economic and social freedom spurred local demographic growth. Culturally, despite being hampered by a degree of religious and social prejudice, as well a ‘blanket denial of any non-native right to welfare assistance’ (p. 276), the effect of this immigration was great. Mainly congregating in St Peter Port, immigrants transformed the island’s capital from a ‘Franco-Norman community into what was essentially an English ethnic and cultural enclave’ (p. 276). The impact was also felt across the island, with the island’s distinctive linguistic, social and political culture ‘turned on its head’ (p. 274) by 1900, culminating in the use of English in States’ debates from 1898.

Crossan’s narrative is grounded in a thorough analysis, deep understanding and astute presentation of the most relevant demographic sources. By using census data, civil registers and government-generated documents, Crossan is able to document the extent, structure and characteristics of migration to and from Guernsey. Some splendid mapping has been performed which very clearly demonstrates the origins of immigrants at national, county and even town level. Particularly striking was the nature and extent of immigration from the southern counties of Ireland—particularly Cork, Kerry and Limerick—which would have clear parallels with Malcolm Smith’s study of Irish agricultural labourers migrating to England from Connaught.

Unusually, however, the cultural implications of migration are explored with the kind of light touch not normally associated with economic history. Perhaps this is something to do with the author’s original training as a linguist. In the section ‘Impacts on the Host Community’, Crossan employs a wide variety of sources—Parliamentary Papers; local and regional histories, periodicals and newspapers; demographic data—to reflect more deeply on the interaction between natives and immigrants on both a micro- and macro-level. By examining aspects of life from welfare relief to religion to inter-marriage, Crossan carefully paints a meticulously framed picture of what became a highly dynamic and culturally shifting society.

When spotted on this reviewer’s desk, a ‘media’ friend remarked that ‘Guernsey, 1814–1914’ might be renamed ‘Guernsey, the uninteresting bit in the middle’. The suggestion, one assumes, was that eighteenth-century smuggling and twentieth-century occupation constituted the most dramatic elements of the modern history of this Channel Island. However, a reading of Crossan’s book would convince most sceptics that for truly seismic social and economic change, nineteenth-century Guernsey is not a bad place to start. This is a fascinating and well-researched account of the economic and demographic development of Guernsey. Why the book is really impressive, however, is because Crossan is always at pains to situate Guernsey in its rather unique geographical context. Indeed, this is not a local history per se. Rather, Guernsey, 1814–1914 sheds much light on the socio-demographic histories of France, Southern England and Ireland too. After economic and demographic studies of
interactions in ‘the Atlantic World’ and the ‘North Sea’ basin, perhaps Crossan’s greatest contribution is alerting us to the migratory and economic patterns of the nineteenth-century ‘Channel World’ (le monde du Manche?).

Crossan’s book does for nineteenth-century Guernsey what Gregory Stevens Cox’s meticulously researched and nationally relevant St Peter Port, 1680–1830 does for the eighteenth. By asking the same kind of questions as Cox, who focussed on an economic-demographic-cultural analysis of the island’s capital, Crossan has, in effect, contributed greatly to the historical canon of the Channel Islands by presenting what I would suggest is the ‘next chapter’ in the definitive social and economic history of Guernsey. However, apart from those interested in the history of the Channel Islands, I would heartily recommend Crossan’s book to all historians interested in migration, mapping, the use of census data, economic and cultural change and British history in general.

Stuart Basten
St John’s College, Oxford


As the title suggests, this is book is unashamedly about Colchester. Rather than being framed by conceptual or historiographical discussion, the introduction launches straight into the narrative of Colchester’s changing economic and political fortunes through the eighteenth century. However, this is not to say that it ignores the big questions with which urban and social historians have grappled over recent years: indeed, D’Cruze has much to say about, among other things, the idea of separate spheres, the changing place of violence in English society, and the relationship between provincial and metropolitan culture. Yet these issues, along with many others, are raised, examined and sometimes challenged as the author unfolds her story about the changing nature of Colchester and the changing experience of living in the town. The central thread that ties together D’Cruze’s analysis is a concern with the middling sorts, ‘who both produced and consumed the tangibles of eighteenth-century urban culture, who were part of the structures and institutions of urban governance and who both gained and lost as Colchester’s economy moved’ (p. 201). In short, her argument is that the middling sorts lay at the heart of provincial towns and provincial urban life: a better understanding of their role, experiences and motivations thus illuminates eighteenth-century society and culture.

This theme is explored through a variety of topics, each the focus of a separate chapter. We begin with a sketch of the changing economic fortunes of the town, relating not just the familiar story of a declining textile industry, but also the importance of the river trade and a burgeoning service economy. Chapter 2 discusses Colchester’s experience of urban renaissance, running through a typical list of improvements and architectural makeovers. The
analysis becomes more compelling when we step inside the houses and gardens of the middling sorts. These offer fascinating insights into their domestic and social arrangements, but might usefully have been subjected to the same kind of spatial analysis that D’Cruze offers of the ceremonial spaces of the town. The inter-relationship between public and private is explored further in the following chapter which centres on the family—an institution which formed a bulwark in socially and economically uncertain times. As well as forming a reservoir of emotional and domestic support, the family was also a source of capital and human resources, without which many tradesmen and professionals would have floundered. Much the same was true of friends—the subject of chapter 4. D’Cruze examines friendship through the notion of credit, but extends this beyond the financial to consider the social aspects of mutual inter-dependence that tied together the fortunes of individuals and families. Perhaps surprisingly, there is little attempt to build on her earlier research on social networks or to theorise these relationships in terms of social capital. Rather, the focus switches to the frailties of the system in terms of the proceedings of small debt courts and bankruptcy.

If credit formed one logic for social interaction, politeness offered another. In chapter 5, D’Cruze outlines the growing array of venues for polite sociability in Colchester, before critically examining the ways in which politeness operated to include and later exclude sections of society. Of particular interest here are the different forms that polite sociability might take (the theatre, masons, medical and musical societies are all highlighted) and the varied ways in which these structured individual lives and urban society more generally. Association could also come in the form of political activity. These are dealt with in some detail over two chapters in which D’Cruze emphasises the close links which existed between borough and parliamentary politics, not least because of the wide franchise of the town. The activities of the corporation in particular created opportunities for a wide section of society to be involved in the governance of their community. However, as with politeness, it served to exclude as well as include: whilst up to 280 men each year might be involved as jurors or constables, for instance, real political power was the preserve of a self-appointing oligarchy. What D’Cruze reveals in tremendous detail is the rich and complex texture of local politics, and the ways in which localism was gradually eroded as Colchester grew and the electorate expanded well beyond the geographical boundaries of the town. It is often too easy to see the lives and activities of the middling sorts as consensual. In the final chapter, though, we are shown something of the darker side of seemingly respectable citizens. In tracing court cases of violent crime, D’Cruze demonstrates that politeness and violence were not mutually exclusive, and that middling status was fragile in social as well as economic terms.

All of these themes are explored in great depth—a testimony to meticulous research in local archives. The use of ‘thick description’ and detailed case studies is central to the success of this book. It is through the careful unfolding of the stories of particular families, clubs, bankruptcies and court cases that we truly get to grips with the nuances and contingencies, but also the inter-related nature of each aspect of provincial urban life. The unwavering focus
on providing detailed analysis of Colchester makes it understandable that there is not greater reference to other towns. Yet knowing something of how Colchester compared to other specific places would certainly help us to understand, for instance, the significance of changing occupational structures or developing cultural infrastructure. Moreover, there are some surprising gaps. Little is said about migration to the town or about its social geography, and the economy is treated largely as a backdrop to social and cultural change, rather than being an integral part of these processes of urban development. That said, this book has much to offer, both in terms of its approach and its content. It provides much new information about Colchester and uses this to challenge our understanding of the role of the middling sorts in processes of social, cultural and urban change.

Jon Stobart
University of Northampton


As late as 1952 Conrad Gill in the official History of Birmingham mistakenly claimed that the town Birmingham, as opposed to the agricultural settlement, did not emerge until the sixteenth century. By 1964 the VCH for Warwickshire had called this into question and 19 years later Gill’s original thesis was demolished by Richard Holt in a paper subsequently published by the Dugdale Society in 1985. Nevertheless, the documentary basis of Holt’s thesis remained thin because of the destruction of town records in a fire of 1879. This makes this edition of two early rentals of particular importance because it establishes beyond doubt the existence of a significant urban settlement in Birmingham by the late thirteenth century and reveals much about the structure of that urban development. It is worth noting that the rentals were found by the author whilst pursuing another project and were located in an uncatalogued collection of Robert Dudley’s papers at Longleat. As is so often the case, serendipity (and the assistance of an archivist) brought new and vital evidence to light.

Both rentals are of four membranes, the former in good condition, the latter less so. Both record only burgages and other urban tenements, not the rural tenancies in the ‘Foreign’, although the earlier rental does list 85 censarii on the dorse of membrane 2 which may include some of the rural tenants. The rental of 1296 lists 336 unique rents, the later one of 1344–1345 lists 377, an indication of continuing urban development up to the Great Pestilence of 1348/9. There is no sign of demographic or economic decline following the Great Famine of the early fourteenth century, and that suggests a truly vigorous urban economy.

Rentals are essentially dull documents, mere lists of tenants and holdings; they do not have the dynamic of a set of court rolls. It is to the credit of the editor that he has managed to bring alive such unpromising material. One feels at the end of reading his illuminating introduction that one really knows a great deal more about Birmingham prior to the advent of plague than was known hitherto.
For each survey, the editor has produced a map, relating the topographical information in the rentals to later evidence thus plotting both the extent and the changes in the layout and nomenclature of the main streets and districts in 1296 and 1344–1345. No doubt some of his assumptions will be questioned, but the overall picture is clear. This was a town not only in name but in layout. My only regret is that there is no overlay to plot the pre-Plague town against its sixteenth-century successor.

Through surname analysis Demidowicz establishes beyond reasonable doubt that the majority of the inhabitants (and traders) came from within a ten mile radius of the town, in line with towns elsewhere. The population of this small Midland town is calculated as at least 1,250, excluding the very poor. This made it the third largest town after Coventry (c.3,500–4,000) and Warwick in the area. Some surnames also give indications of occupation thus revealing in part the trade and manufacturing base of the town. There were bakers and a miller, tailors and cappers, carpenters, masons and woodworkers, tanners and glovers. Already metal working was established with four forges noted. There was even an armourer. And, of course, there were butchers, and by 1344–1345 a clear indication of the location of a shambles. The author also intriguingly uses surname analysis of the censarii or chensarii listed in the 1296 rental to conclude that these probably included both itinerant traders paying a nominal penny to trade in the town and resident but non-burgage holders from the town and the ‘Foreign’ paying to trade.

Last but not least there is an analysis of the distribution of wealth in pre-Plague Birmingham. In 1296 there were 136 tenants but c.250 dwellings recorded which indicates over 100 sub-tenancies. Thus wealth and status was unevenly divided within the urban population. This is also reflected in the uneven level of rents paid, with a few rich townsmen paying substantial rents, and many poorer tenants. By 1344–1345 this inequality was even more pronounced with John le moul paying at least 23 shillings in rent, the equivalent of nearly 34 burgage tenements. It would seem that the changing demographics following the Great Famine did not cause economic decline but did create greater inequalities.

The book concludes with three appendices. In the three pages of text and one map in Appendix 1 the editor speculates on the location of rural Birmingham, concluding that the borough was planted within the lord’s demesne and along existing streets with the exception of New Street and had the manor house as its focus. So, on this analysis, the borough was surrounded by the pre-existing rural community and not carved out of the waste or marginal lands. Appendices 2 and 3 consist of transcripts of the two rentals. These are clearly laid out and easy to follow, but best studied after first reading the introduction which explains some of the more obscure terms. Sensibly, the original roman numerals have been transposed into arabic. Each entry is given its unique number. The earlier rental is not only complete and undamaged but also fuller in detail. For example in a number of cases it lists former tenants thus extending its chronological range. It also lists 18 former or present female tenants which reminds one that women had a role, albeit a small one, in pre-Plague towns. It also records the existence of a communitatis ville which suggests a nascent essentially urban organisation.
The later rental has much detail although incomplete because of damage, and hence there are some doubtful readings.

This is a major contribution to the history of pre-plague Birmingham and provides for the first time a secure record of both the topography and inhabitants. The introduction is clear and relevant; the speculation informed and convincing; the maps and tables helpful; the transcript clear and easy to read. No future history of medieval Birmingham can ignore this significant find.

Christopher J. Harrison
University of Keele


This is a beautiful book on an increasingly popular topic, covering many original testimonies and a wide range of life-cycle points and encounters. It is divided into three parts: ‘Prescription’ (what parents were told to do), ‘Parenting’ (what they did) and ‘Children’ (what the young experienced). Fletcher places gender at the centre of his discussion—both of parenting styles and experiences of childhood, considering, inter alia, home life, schooling, maternity, play and friendships. But, despite this focus and spread of sources, we must ask how does this book sets itself apart in this crowded market of works on childhood? In fact it comes from quite an ‘old-fashioned’ approach to the history of childhood, dealing unashamedly with upper-class and professional families, and using the most traditional of source types: diaries, letters and portraits. Its focus on gender is not really as new as it styles itself to be. There is no reference to works by feminist historians on motherhood and parenting, for example, and the distinction between sexes is at times artificial: for example, fathers’ involvement with boys’ education refers also to mothers, and girls in the schoolroom also to younger boys. Assumptions about what a gendered approach to the literature means are clumsy: the discussion on boyhood, for example, hones in on violence, chivalry and honour, while failing to explore what more basic assumptions about boyhood can tell us. While the gender theme is a useful one and does run as a core through the book, it is thus not completely successful, especially in the early sections of the book.

Fletcher starts his study with little reference to the long and embattled historiography on childhood and children (and little distinction is made between the two here). Perhaps he felt that it was very old ground and there would certainly be a case for arguing this point. However, by not setting out the background progression of ideas on parenting and childhood through Aries, Stone, Pollock and so on, Fletcher fails to engage with the way that these concepts have changed. He starts as if it were a given that children were always cherished in the past, which, while mainly accepted now, has not always been so. This sets his study up with a very particular set of reference points on parenting and attitudes to children which he
arguably then confirms by failing to engage with any other possibilities. However, some of the discussion is situated on very similar ground to that traversed by these earlier scholars, and calls upon many of the same, very familiar, diarists and writers—including Ralph Josselin, Nicholas Blundell and Hester Thrale. The discussions on childhood death, child-rearing and nursing, for example, are very derivative and offer little that is new. This sits uneasily alongside the opening claim that the book is ‘an entirely fresh view of the upbringing of English children’ (p. xiii).

Fletcher’s own stamp on the field does emerge more as the book progresses. The middle—and significantly the largest—section is on ‘modes of parenting’, divided into considerations of affection, gendered marital roles, experiences of mothering and fathering, education, and training. Again, the early chapters have little new to offer, but Fletcher offers more insight in his discussion of motherly and fatherly performance, based on a number of less familiar case studies. It is only here that he starts to move beyond what the diaries and letters tell us to begin to analyse what they say about variety and commonality of experiences. The sections on education and training are easily the most authoritative and novel, no doubt reflecting the author’s previous expertise. Here he moves away from the old ground to consider boys at public schools and universities as well as the range of skills taught to girls. Although the latter is framed by the notion of subjugation and accomplishments, it actually reveals the very large amount of time spent by girls in training of one sort or another.

The final section is again more innovative, using children’s own diaries to reveal their experiences of home life, friendship, travel, school and identity as high-class British boys and girls. Fletcher writes warmly and interestingly about his subjects, and his analysis is clearly based on a very wide range of personal testimonies. Worryingly, however, he rarely addresses the nature of these sources and the dangers of interpretation they present. He confidently presents the children’s own voices as being unrestrained by adult expectations, and refutes Heywood’s claims that their diaries were often read by their parents. However, he later characterises one diary as being written as ‘the crucial aide memoire of [the author, Louisa Bowater’s] spiritual progress’ (p. 366). A diary did not have to be written for someone else’s eyes to be censored or styled in a certain way. Bias and self-projection are even greater dangers in correspondence and memoirs, but this is not really considered. Other assumptions on gender also pervade the work: that mothers wanted their boys to become loving adults, for example; that they wrote to reassure themselves about their parenting; that fathers were ‘always more stiff with boys than girls’ (p. 129). There is a tendency to read a large amount of continuity into the period, with 1914 held up as a turning point in the experience of childhood. Yet there is little consideration of how Victorian ideals differed from Georgian ones; surely another significant change in emphasis if not experience.

This book is thus not without its problems which largely derive from the way in which it is set up. But it is a lovingly written and researched book and, as it progresses, makes increasing use of new and less familiar case studies. It is a shame that its gentle approach fails to set out
exactly what it is achieving in a field in which work is forging ahead in sub-specialisms such as child health, poverty, employment and leisure. Its treatment of depictions of childhood and reactions to death are less innovative than those of Bob Woods in his recent monograph (*Children remembered: responses to untimely death in the past*, Liverpool University Press, 2007), which must unfortunately have been published too late to be referenced in this book. The analysis of portraiture is also heavily reliant on Kate Retford’s work, and it is a shame that the references to material culture are not made more of, as this is clearly a strength of the author’s and one which has not been so heavily commented on in the past. Ultimately, those working in developing fields of childhood studies may be disappointed that this book fails to develop much that is new, but it is a readable and charming work, which has much to recommend it to those interested in parenting and childhood.

Alysa Levene
*Oxford Brookes University*


The bondager system was a form of employment contract once common on farms in Northumberland and south-east Scotland. A regular male farm labourer—a hind—had to supply a female outdoor worker as part of his employment bond. She could be a relative (such as wife or daughter) or an unrelated independent woman. This female worker—the bondager—was normally hired by the hind for a year (or sometimes six months) and lived in his cottage, but she was paid directly by the farmer for the days she worked in the fields. Although the precise origins of the system are not known, it probably dated back to the seventeenth century and guaranteed a labour supply in regions where farms were isolated and the local population was scarce. Although the system had undergone considerable change by the end of the nineteenth century, it did not finally die out until after the Second World War. In recent years, with increasing interest amongst historians in the gendered nature of the labour force in agriculture, the bondager system has received some academic attention. Both Karen Sayer and Judy Gielgud have provided interesting perspectives on the working lives and representations of this class of female farm worker in the nineteenth century.

Dinah Ireldale’s new book is a welcome addition to previous work on bondagers, although it is trying to do something slightly different, being written in an accessible style for a popular but knowledgeable audience. It is an attractively packaged book, full of reprinted primary source material taken from official enquiries, local newspapers, farm account books, hiring agreements, and a wide range of contemporary comments, and it also includes some wonderful photographs and illustrations. The author sets out to provide ‘a comprehensive picture’ of the bondager system, the women workers and the farming world in which they lived (p. 3). It does so by firstly providing an overview of the development of the system and the impact of changing farming practices from the late eighteenth century onwards. This was
an area of outstandingly fertile agriculture and progressive farming and Iredale notes the incongruence between forward-thinking agricultural practices and the bondager system of hiring labour, which was firmly rooted in the past. Later chapters go on to detail how the workers were hired at the local fairs, their terms and conditions, the state of their accommodation and work practices. The bondagers were physically strong women, often praised for their dexterity and speed. Their work consisted of a range of tasks including planting, tending and harvesting root crops, haymaking and harvesting, threshing, and dung spreading, and these could often cover the whole of the annual farming cycle (although there was no guarantee of constant work). In the nineteenth century she usually received between 8d. and 10d. a day for such work, although harvest payments were higher at 1s. a day. Towards the end of the century, day wages for women had risen to around 1s. 6d. a day for ordinary work and 3s. a day for harvesting (p. 29). Chapter 10 includes personal reminiscences from bondagers and helps to illuminate the working life of these women at the turn of the twentieth century.

The bondager system aroused considerable attention by the nineteenth century and the book is strong on the various perspectives offered, not only from official enquiries, parliamentary commissioners and the clergy but also from among the farming community itself. Many commentators were complimentary about the health and decency of the women workers, with one parliamentary reporter for example praising them as ‘a fine race of women’ in 1867. However, many Victorian moralists raised concerns about the system, which often took young women away from their own families to live in the house of strangers, and many drew parallels (incorrectly) to slavery. Chapter 6 includes some fascinating material on the grievances against the system articulated by the hinds themselves and attempts to overthrow the practice at two key dates in the nineteenth century, 1837 and 1866. Their arguments tended to centre not on morality but on practicalities: the inconvenience of having to find a bondager, the necessity of having to provide extra labour even if the bondager fell ill, and the drain on resources in having to house and feed a bondager. Although the farm workers were not successful in their attempts to get rid of the bond, from the 1870s the system, and the language of the system, was modified: bondagers were more usually described as ‘women workers’ or ‘outworkers’ and the family contract, usually deploying daughters of the hind, became more common. Although the voice of the bondager is absent from these debates, the source material is very rich.

This book will appeal to a wide audience: to those interested in local history, rural society and regional farming practices, gender and labour. It is based upon a wide bibliography and is packed full of interesting primary source material, which will be of use to teachers at both school and undergraduate level. It does not provide an in-depth academic analysis of its material but it certainly delivers on what it sets out to do, providing a broad, interesting picture of the life and work of the bondager.

Nicola Verdon
University of Sussex

*The culture of giving* is a fascinating and wide-ranging treatment of an elusive topic: gifting, charity and networks in early modern England. Krausman Ben-Amos goes much further than the narrowest definitions of informal support to include kin ties, sociability between peers, and patronage as well as alms, doles and charity. She also frames her discussion with an intelligent discussion of the rhetoric and language behind giving and exchange, illustrating how it reflected on the giver as well as the recipient and how it shored up social and economic networks on a personal, business and credit basis. The author challenges the old wisdom that the development of an increasingly complex market economy had an adverse impact on charity and informal support. Instead, she argues, it revitalised and redirected many aspects of the gift economy. Ultimately, there was much greater interchange between the formal and informal economies than is usually appreciated, but the latter is revealed to be far more accessible than its basis in intangibles like trust and deference would imply.

*The culture of giving* is divided into three sections. The first presents an overview and analysis of informal support—where gift exchange and charitable support was found and what forms it took. The second part situates these types of giving in their broader cultural context: the dynamics of giving; the ways that it was encouraged and maintained; how well it operated in practice; and the discourses on which it was based. Finally, the third section discusses overtly how these ways of giving interacted with the growth of the state apparatus and the increasing complexity of the market economy between the end of the sixteenth and the middle of the eighteenth centuries. All have their merits and novelties, but the second and third are perhaps the most innovative. The use of language analysis and reflection on the quality of gift relationships, plus the challenging discussion of informal support and formal state and market ties, are particularly to be credited.

The qualities of the first section lie particularly in the range of types of giving which are revealed. While the discussion of parents’ bequests to children does not break such new ground, that of children’s reciprocal—but unequal and often deferred—gifts and support for parents is much more so. The variety of levels on which the gift economy operated is also interesting, both in terms of social scale and location. Thus, for example, gifts between higher-class peers or patrons and petitioners were vital in ‘enhancing and legitimizing the bonding of patronage and friendship that tied elite members to one another and to those beneath’ (p. 256). This does much to move away from the narrow reference points with which this type of support is generally viewed.

The impact of the second section is also cumulative: while the range of topics covered might not all be new, discussing them within a common framework is. This section is rooted in the relationships at work behind giving, and the ways in which they were cultivated and sometimes broke down. Much attention is paid to discourses and the language which was
presented to, and used by, potential donors. These discourses were not necessarily uniform, for example, simultaneously preaching both discrimination in giving and generosity. However, sermons, catechisms, letters and diaries all reveal that this translated into a range of models on which people could base their behaviour and expectations. These expectations were not always carried through in reality, however, and the discussion of breakdown in the gifting relationship is also interesting. The failure of the informal economy is not usually acknowledged, but Krausman Ben-Amos highlights how this was a significant risk when relationships were built on such fragile qualities as trust, honour and creditworthiness.

Finally, the discussion of the relationship between the formal and informal economies is both challenging and creatively argued. Widening markets, trade links and urban sociability are all shown to have increased the range of common networks which were vital to the economy of gifting. Money and credit was always a part of gift exchange, and in some cases its increased sophistication allowed forms and scales of giving to grow rather than recede. Moreover, new tools of marketing and funding increased the scope of charitable foundations by allowing risks to be shared (for example via subscriptions) and successes and donations publicised. While some forms of giving disappeared (such as ales and feasts based in private houses) this does not necessarily indicate a move towards a collectivised and state-based form of support.

One of the hardest aspects of state-directed support to square with the argument on growing vitality in the informal economy is the role of the poor laws. Krausman Ben-Amos simultaneously acknowledges the growth of the state’s function in supporting the needy and argues for its role in prompting further charitable giving from individuals. The two strands need not be mutually exclusive (indeed, it is a central part of her argument that they are not) but they sit somewhat uneasily within the larger argument. The poor laws were increasingly based on a sense of entitlement from paupers, which is not discussed with reference to other types of gift. It could be argued that this in itself puts giving associated with statutory poor relief (such as extraordinary collections in times of dearth or disaster, or the enforced lodging of fellow-paupers and kin) on a different footing. Similarly, the relationship between the formal court apparatus and the ‘culture of giving’ is not made explicit, although it is developed more on its second consideration, in section three (the suggestion is that courts mediated between the two worlds but this is not entirely clear). Nonetheless, the attempt to tackle the interaction between formal structures and informal gifting should not be underestimated: this is an area which could have been left out entirely and it is to the author’s credit that she makes such links.

Overall this is a very impressive work, covering a wide range of source types and social levels. Parts of the discussion are inevitably based heavily on the diaries and correspondence of the higher sorts, but use is also made of records from the Old Bailey (although, curiously, apparently not its online database), as well as records from an array of parishes. While informal giving cannot, by its very nature, be quantified, Krausman Ben-Amos makes a convincing case for being able to capture its increased scope and variety over the period. She also freely acknowledges that the newer types of giving, such as associational charities,
hospitals and coffee-house-based mutual aid societies were heavily urban in character, but points out how much further their networks ranged over the country. This wider context highlights the range of interests pursued here, and will give the book great interest outside the realm of charity and gift relations. Anyone interested in honour, credit, sociability, network-formation and social relationships will find much to interest them here. The conclusion ends on a curiously down-beat note of pessimism about the success of the informal economy of giving in the early modern period, but in fact what is revealed is both its vibrancy, and its accessibility to the historian who takes the trouble to look.

Alysa Levene  
Oxford Brookes University


Archaeology can provide fascinating insights into certain aspects of social history during the early modern period. This publication produced by MOLAS (Museum of London Archaeology Service) illustrates both the potential and limitations of archaeology in this respect. It reports on excavations carried out in 1994–1996 by MOLAS at 1 Poultry (close to St Pancras) in the city of London, the site of St Benet Sherehog burial ground. This small, wealthy parish failed to survive the ecclesiastical reorganisation following the Great Fire of 1666, although the burial ground remained in use until 1853. In total evidence of 280 in situ burials were found together with an unquantifiable amount of disarticulated bone.

Much of this richly illustrated volume is devoted to placing the various archaeological finds into an appropriate historical context. Thus, following a brief introductory chapter, Chapter 2 examines the documentary evidence and provides a rounded picture of St Benet Sherehog and its inhabitants. Population estimates are provided (only 227 in 1695), together with an examination of occupations, wealth, health and mortality in the parish. Chapter 3 charts the development of the church buildings and religious life.

It is only from chapter 4 that an attempt is made to integrate the documentary and archaeological evidence. The haphazard way in which graves were dug meant that many burials were superimposed onto older ones and only 56 burials could be positively identified as pre-Fire. Likewise, with the exception of coffin furniture, few artefacts could be associated with specific burials. Most of the identified burials were in coffins, mainly along an East-West axis, and no location within the burial ground was identified as having an association with particular types of burials. Since coffins only became commonplace during the seventeenth century the vast majority of early modern and medieval burials were not identified. Chapter 4 provides an excellent analysis of the documentary records concerning burial practices in St Sherehog, but it is less successful in identifying particular burials. An exception occurs with the family vault of Michael Davison (died 24 June 1676), the main above-ground feature of
the site. A further six burials could be identified as a result of coffin plates (pp. 58–65), yet even within this small sample the standard techniques for ageing skeletons did not always match the ages as stated on the coffin plates.

Chapter 5 discusses the skeletal remains. About 28 per cent of all burials were children (a quarter of which were infants) and both these proportions were much lower than would be expected in this type of population. The skeletons presented evidence of arthritis, fractures, TB, rickets, cancer and even a post-mortem was carried out on the skull of one child. The dental evidence shows that this population was relatively healthy, compared with other post-medieval sites, which suggests that some form of teeth cleaning was probably carried out.

For any LPS reader with an interest in how archaeology can illuminate social and economic life in the early modern period, this volume is highly recommended. It is well illustrated and is particularly good at placing the various archaeological finds into an appropriate documentary and historical context. Thus, while the documentary evidence sheds considerable light on the archaeology, I am not sure the extent to which the reverse relationship applies. In particular, the rather restricted size of the identified burial sample in St Benet Sherehog means that little is added to our knowledge of London’s demography in this period.

Chris Galley
Barnsley College


It is very hard to know precisely where to place Larry Patriquin’s study. It is a work of social science that uses as its exemplar a specific (and peculiar) set of historical relationships, the administration of poor relief in England between 1601 and 1834; it is a proud piece of polemic—at one point Patriquin states that ‘my analysis of the context of English poor relief is different from almost all the literature on the subject’, a bold claim given that he relies entirely on the work of others for his sources; and it is an avowed attempt to bring Marx back into the debate over the development of early modern social relations in England. Further, in pursuit of his case Patriquin takes specific issue with a whole raft of social scientists and historians, from Immanuel Wallerstein and Eric Wolf, to Paul Slack and Joanna Innes. Yet for all its bold assertion and apparent controversy there seems little in the book that is truly innovative. The main problem, I would suggest, is that it is based on a false premise: in reality Marx never left the room in the first place, or if he did he continues to look back mischievously through a crack in the door.

Patriquin’s stated aim is to demonstrate that ‘poor relief was an intervention in the slow evolving class relations that coincided with the origins and development of agrarian
capitalism’ (p. 115): in other words, he wants to show that England was peculiar in developing a national system of assistance to the poor, funded from local taxation, precisely because ‘in the early-modern era, only England witnessed the complete subjection of commodified labour-power to capital in the wage relation, together with the virtual disappearance of the peasantry’ (p. 45). His preferred method is to break the discussion down into bite-sized chunks, providing chapters on the long-run development of capitalism, and the specific case of post-medieval England, and moving on to an analysis of the development of the English poor laws. He finishes, by way of contradistinction, with a brief investigation into why other countries—most notably Scotland and Ireland—did not develop a system of relief on the English model. Once again, it is important to recognise that his method throughout is first to describe, and then to take issue with the work of a number of prominent historians and social scientists; often, the very people he relies upon for his sources. In terms of the development of English poor relief, for example, he believes that ‘far too much emphasis has been placed on the institutions of English government; a pan-European commercial capitalism; and the abstract form of mercantilism’, and suggests instead that ‘if we place the spotlight on agrarian capitalism, we will have a better understanding of the development of the peculiar treatment of the poor in England’ (p. 87).

This is all well and good, and in fact Patriquin is very successful in placing agrarian change once again at the heart of the debate over the development of the English poor laws. But in reality his central thesis is both commonplace and simplistic, and consists in the suggestion that English agrarian capitalism necessitated the development of a poor law because otherwise a disinherited populace would never have put up with the resulting land grab. One might point to the fact that Edward Thompson put it rather more pithily 45 years ago when he described enclosure and engrossment as ‘a plain enough case of class robbery’ (The making of the English working class (Penguin, New Edition, 1991), p. 237). But more problematically, Patriquin fails to recognise the possibility that any of the historians and theorists he takes issue with might already have taken this perspective into account. Instead, he constructs a rather tiresome dialectic, whereby his ‘agrarian capitalist’ model is placed in opposition to other, supposedly singular, explanations. The reality, of course, is that just about all those who have written extensively on the history of the poor laws have implicitly accepted that the peculiar trajectory of agrarian capitalism in England was fundamental to their development. Indeed, some have made the connection explicit, and a few (most notably, Roger Wells) have placed it at the centre of their work on eighteenth-century poor relief and social relations. What none of those whose work he cites, not even E.P. Thompson, would do, though (but what Patriquin does consistently throughout his work) is to suggest that this peculiar trajectory was the only relevant factor.

If the character of the English poor laws can be summarised in a few words, it is that they were complex and multivalent—something that is not only recognised in, but is absolutely pivotal to, most modern work on the subject. Undoubtedly, the slow development of agrarian
capitalism was highly influential in their formulation, but so too were many other factors, including most of those Patriquin seeks to jettison in support of his naïve reductionism. At one stage, he himself demonstrates convincingly that the poor law was, in its earliest days, an essentially corporate, urban and (by extension) mercantilist response to poverty, not an agrarian one (pp. 91–3); and while there is not enough space here to list the number of basic errors he makes in his analysis of the work of others, it is fair to say that they mostly stem from a partial (and, one might suggest, wilful) misreading which he makes in support of his reductionist case. All of which is a shame, really, because in many ways this is a very useful overview of the state of the current historiography in relation to rural social relations, the growth of agrarian capitalism, and the English poor laws during the early modern period. But before it is given to undergraduates as a useful textbook on these terms, might I suggest that a warning be given that this is not the whole story by some considerable margin?

Peter Jones
Oxford Brookes University


This collection of 14 wide-ranging essays together with an introduction reflects some of David Postles’ recent research interests. It is broadly concerned with how space and place impacted on English society during the medieval and early modern periods and attempts to understand how different social groups interacted with the spaces they inhabited. Six of the 14 essays are new, the rest being revised versions of papers published in a variety of journals or edited collections. However, the relatively modest cost of the volume means that it is worth acquiring just for this new material.

The introduction provides a theoretical and practical discussion of how place and space affected medieval and early modern life thereby justifying the structure of the book which is divided into three sections: the formation of locality, sacred spaces and ‘in and out of space’. The first section examines migration, the idea of ‘localism’ and marriage horizons. Chapters 1 and 2 are revised versions of Postles’ well-known accounts of migration in medieval England and Leicestershire that have previously appeared in Social History and Continuity and Change. They employ a diverse range of sources such as admission to the freedom of cities, apprenticeship registers, litigation and rental evidence and surname analysis. The following three chapters are new and discuss other aspects of movement. Chapter 3 considers how the church was responsible for various types of movement, both voluntarily in the case of pilgrimage and also forced, as part of a disciplinary regime. Chapter 4 considers ‘localism’ and the sense of belonging to a particular area, largely via an analysis of testamentary bequests. The section ends with a discussion of marriage horizons based on a large sample of Midland parish registers. All these essays are interesting and should be required reading for any LPS reader with an interest in mobility.
Part II consists of three chapters dealing with ‘sacred spaces’. Topics discussed include: how and where the ritual of penance was carried out, the varied violations of church spaces and how church porches had specific meanings and uses. Each chapter contains a wealth of detail, all of which should be of interest to the student of English social history. For instance, we learn that church porches had important roles in the ceremonies of marriage and the churching of mothers; they were used to carry out penalties imposed by church courts and they acted as social spaces, places where debts were settled and as burial sites.

The final part is mainly concerned with marginal geographies—the impact of in-migrants on urban housing stock and the movement of poor single mothers—although it also discusses how persistence of core families, measured via an analysis of surnames recorded in the parish registers of Barkby, created stability within local communities and how market places could act as centres for penance and punishment.

Within such a short review it is difficult to do justice to the wide-ranging ideas that this set of essays encompass. While some LPS readers may find the social theories introduced in some of the essays challenging, they will nevertheless find the volume stimulating. The overall scholarship is first class and it provides an illuminating account of a range of neglected aspects of English social history.

Chris Galley
Barnsley College


The European family, explored in terms of processes of formation, types of domestic units and immediate member relationships has been of central, long-standing interest to social historians ever since the early 1960s. Yet, it was only recently that the assumed priority of its nuclear form in Western history has been questioned, and its dichotomised contrast to the ‘rest’ of the non-Western world—as related to an allegedly ‘modern’ decrease in the role and relevance of kin relationships—challenged. The present volume, *Kinship in Europe: approaches to long-term development (1300–1900)*, is yet another successful scholarly contribution paying tribute to the enduring, though changing, importance of kin networks over space and time. Employing ample empirical evidence interpreted within the methodological framework of liberal anthropology, the collection spans Continental Europe from Hungary to Germany, Italy, Switzerland and France, encompassing the reconfigurations of kinship for a period of seven centuries. It offers a well-grounded recognition of the presence of highly structured, complex kin systems throughout European history, and biological descent emerges as a powerful constituent and functional element in a multitude of social micro- and macro-structures well into the modern era.
The volume grew out of a collection of 15 essays presented at three international conferences within the period 2000–2002. Edited by scholars of international reputation, it falls into three parts devoted to fundamental methodological issues in kinship theory and is analytically organised around two major transitions in the history of descent. The two essays in the first section chart out the suggested new approach to the long-term development of European kinship (Sabean, Teuscher), to be further elucidated and illustrated by specific case studies in the following two parts. They also set the tone for a tolerant, interdisciplinary discourse on the manifestations of kinship in history, drawing on the lessons and findings of anthropology (Yanagisako). Each part contains a useful introductory note outlining the overarching topics of exploration and summarising the individual research results. A short, yet concise, glossary of kinship-related terminology will in particular serve eager non-specialists in the field.

A key merit is the volume’s attempt to reach beyond the linear approach towards the evolution of kinship, routinely construed as a process of contraction and decline. Instead, it proposes a stimulating interpretation of the variations and shifts in the development of kinship networks, generated by a succession of distinct transitional stages in the European past. The latter were marked by significant changes in the processes of state building, property arrangements, class formation, and political modernisation.

As stated by the editors, the volume aims to present ‘a synthetic argument about a chronology for kinship in Europe’, with the individual contributions offering single, comparative reflections in the fields of property regimes, ecclesiastical rules, state institutions, and gender and class relationships. The late Middle Ages and the early modern period evolve as watersheds in the long-term process of European kin reorganisation, affected by and reciprocally influencing the changing historical milieu. Between the fourteenth and the seventeenth centuries, hitherto relatively egalitarian kin ties are found to have been replaced by increasingly vertical, unequal, patrilineal relationships, while horizontal interactions of a new, alliance-based nature developed since the mid-eighteenth century. As a result, the first transitional period in kin reconfiguration is seen to have been marked by the enforcement of the institution of primogeniture, other forms of single-heir succession, and vertical patron-client ties through an increasing range of exogamous marriage arrangements. In contrast, the horizontal dynamics of the second period was lined by a strongly endogamous shift in marriage alliances, dominated by consanguinity and class adherence.

On the level of macro-history, the volume opposes earlier research findings, which track a direct relationship between the growth of political institutions and the declining authority of kin networks in the past. Instead, the collection in its second part, entitled ‘Transition 1’, argues in favour of a mounting relevance of the vertical forms of kin organisation in the late medieval period. These are found to have been interrelated to the rise of formalised power among different political and corporate groups and wealth strata. In fact, the establishment of vertical kin ties is recognised as actively contributing to the stabilisation of state-like structures in the first transitional period under consideration. In contrast, the

Book reviews
enhanced processes of class formation and class reproduction since the mid-eighteenth century which are the focus of the next section (‘Transition 2’) are analysed against the background of the undergoing reconfigurations in property rights, state service and the circulation of capital, bolstered by close kin, cousin marriages. This is said to have favoured a closure in and reinforcement of kin-constructed networks, enhanced by feelings of familiarity and romantic love. It is also argued to have brought the issue of gender roles into the limelight, by turning women into valuable brokers in marriage, business and political connections, and significantly undermining any clear-cut boundaries between the private and the public.

*Kinship in Europe* is a fine, well-illustrated study, which offers new, exciting ways of looking into the history of the European family and its extensive forms of manifestation within the context of a multitude of linking, bridging and bonding social functions. Deliberately avoiding the dead-end of completely exhaustive arguments, the volume intends to provoke further research and debates on the relevance of kin ties in the past, and evokes reflections about their role and meaning in the present. Written (and parts of it translated into English) in an elegant, easy-flowing style, it will undoubtedly prove a valuable asset to the libraries of experts and students in the fields of the humanities and the social, political and economic sciences, and serves the curiosity of the non-academic reading audience equally well.

Svetla Baloutzova
*Sofia University ‘St Kliment Ohridski’, Bulgaria*


This book comprises a collection of essays and grew out of two weekend conferences in Cambridge in 2003 and 2005. With 14 different contributors there is almost inevitably a variation in the chronological focus and the perspectives of the authors but this variation frequently adds weight to the volume. Of particular value are the overviews of the county from four different perspectives. Tom Williamson surveys the changing location and topography of the county’s medieval towns. Mark Bailey sets out the medieval economic history of Hertfordshire which altered dramatically over time and during which period a number of new towns were founded. Terry Slater focuses on the roads and boundaries of these medieval towns whilst Nigel Goose considers their development in the early modern period. These contributions are followed by individual chapters on the ‘main’ Hertfordshire towns: Hertford and Ware, Ashwell, Royston, Hitchin, Berkhamsted, Barnet, Watford and St Albans. The chapter on Hertford and Ware has a strong archaeological component with little material beyond the medieval period whereas Hitchin has a greater chronological balance. That on Ashwell is somewhat limited in scope with a principal focus on the geography and layout of the town.
The book stresses the importance of the proximity of the county to London which dominated the county’s economy. Thus Hertfordshire failed to develop a single urban community of true regional significance and to quote the sub-title of the book Hertfordshire remained ‘a county of small towns’. These small towns served their rural hinterlands and people on the road to London. These might be those who stopped to pasture their animals on the way to the London meat market or the wide variety of travellers making their way to London. The argument is convincing, for Hertford, the largest town, had a population of only 3,360 in 1801. Some historians would challenge the extent to which these communities were truly urban in nature. Some of these towns were very small in size and Cheshunt did not have a regular market. Goose recognises this problem and admits that ‘the status of those towards the bottom of the hierarchy was often precarious’ (p. 103). However, readers of this journal will be fully aware that population calculations are never precise.

The sources used in the volume are very extensive and include archaeological material, maps, tax records, ecclesiastical censuses, parish registers and the civil census. The archaeological evidence is important both in supplementing historical analysis and in making available a great deal of material which has not been previously published. Non-survival of sources is a problem for many historical studies and Hertfordshire is no exception, for many important tax records from the medieval period have not survived.

The particular strengths of this volume include the range of coverage both in chronology and use of sources. It is not limited to the strictly historical and analyses of the beginnings of the communities extend backwards to the late Palaeolithic period. Whilst focussing on Hertfordshire it engages with many wider historical debates. To give just one example, the ‘minister-church hypothesis’ for the development of towns in the tenth and eleventh centuries is strongly supported. With the exception of the chapter on Watford, the maps are good and aid interpretation and understanding for readers not familiar with the towns in question. The lessons learned from many years of population studies are evident in Goose’s chapter on urban growth. In particular, he addresses the issue of parishes which contain a mixture of both urban and rural elements in which agriculture is dominant, and applies widely varying correction factors to a number of such parishes in an attempt to isolate the truly urban nucleus.

Some of the weaknesses stem from the origin of the volume, that is, as conference papers. Despite the best efforts of the editors, there is an unevenness of approach and major omissions. The end of the book is rather odd. The final chapter covers the impact of industry but only on east Hertfordshire. The book title suggests a somewhat arbitrary end point of 1800 although this is not strictly complied with and there are several forays well into the nineteenth century within the text. There is also no concluding chapter bringing the themes together. This suggests that the volume represents something of a work in progress, a point stressed by Goose and Slater in the closing words of their introduction. A second volume focusing on the changes in Hertfordshire in the twentieth century has a great deal of
economic history to address: the growth of Watford, Stevenage and Hemel Hempstead, new towns and garden cities. London has now swallowed up parts of Hertfordshire and road (M1 and M25) and rail links to the capital have developed strongly as have business, shopping and leisure facilities.

No volume is ever complete but the present book will have wide appeal, particularly to urban historians, economic and social historians and local historians. It is also an indispensible aid for any student of the history of Hertfordshire and the Home Counties in general.

Ken Sneath
*Darwin College, University of Cambridge*
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