LOCAL POPULATION STUDIES
No. 83
Autumn 2009

Published twice yearly with support from the
School of Humanities, University of Hertfordshire

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Registered charity number 326626
ISSN 0143–2974
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Editorial

I am delighted to be able to report that the new format of Local Population Studies has met with almost universal approval, and I have received just one communication that (trenchantly!) demurred. Most commentators agree that we have managed to keep the traditional LPS look and feel, retaining a degree of informality while at the same time offering a more professional-looking product. The text is now more readable, and there is now also more room to lay out tables. The quality of the figures (and particularly the maps) reproduced is still a cause for concern, and we will be imposing more stringent standards upon our contributors in future. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Matthew Woollard, whose help in the long, drawn-out process of redesign was invaluable, and also our type-setter Margaret Smith, who produced numerous samples for us to choose between and patiently reconstituted the hybrid that eventually formed LPS 82.

LPS 83 includes three articles on very contrasting themes. Our first article (unusually for this journal) takes us overseas, where Robert Tyler assesses Welsh settlement patterns in the mining towns of nineteenth-century Australia. Nicola Sheldon, focusing upon the last quarter of the nineteenth century, provides an analysis of prosecutions for truancy in Coventry, while for our third piece Adrian Ager and Catherine Lee have teamed up to develop the papers they gave at the LPSS conference held in St Albans in April 2008 on prostitution in the Medway towns of Kent in the mid-later Victorian era. Clive Leivers, a leading light within the Family and Community Historical Research Society and contributor to the Almshouse Project described in previous editorials in this journal, has produced a research note that compares almshouse and workhouse populations in Derbyshire, while Rebecca Probert provides a short article on compliance with the Clandestine Marriages Act of 1753. This issue also includes our regular Autumn feature, the annual 'Review of recent periodical literature'.

Marketing Local Population Studies

While LPS regularly loses subscribers, usually for demographic reasons, we have been quite successful in recent years in making the numbers good with new recruits. Aware, however, that historical demography is perhaps not quite such a vibrant field within university departments as it once was we are always keen to find new ways of expanding our membership. In terms of the content of the journal, we have introduced a number of new features in recent years, have regularised those features so that readers will know what to expect to find in each issue, and have also included a wider range of topics in areas of social and economic history that are related to historical demography rather than integral to it.

Our latest initiative has been to offer trial subscriptions to the journal (and newsletter) to groups of students that we think might be interested in long-term membership. To date...
we have made this offer to students on the internet-based course in English local history in the Continuing Education Department at Oxford University and to all postgraduate students attached to the Centre for English Local History at the University of Leicester. Both have enthusiastically taken up our offer. We are, however, open to suggestions regarding other groups of students who might be interested in a one-year trial subscription, and staff and students involved in such courses are invited to write either to the LPSS Secretary, Christine Jones, or to the General Office, at the addresses given on the inside front cover on this journal.

LPSS publications projects

_The New Poor Law and English society 1834–1909: local and regional perspectives_ remains on our agenda and we are still looking for more potential contributors, who can contact the editors via the General Office at the address given on the inside front cover. Unfortunately, however, the proposal for a new book on parish registers has been withdrawn for the time being due to new responsibilities taken on by the proposed editors. New publication proposals are always welcome, and can be submitted to the LPSS 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

By the time this issue appears our Autumn meeting, held in the Geography Department at the University of Cambridge on Saturday 21 November on the theme of ‘Local populations and their institutions’, will be a recent memory, and we will present a full report in the Spring issue of the journal. Meanwhile we have been busy planning the next Spring conference, which will be held in St Albans on Saturday 17 April, on the theme of ‘Famine, Diet and Nutrition’. The speakers will be Rachel Duffett, Ian Gazeley, Bernard Harris, Violetta Hionidou, Sara Horrell, Avner Offer and Peter Razzell. The full programme, complete with booking form, accompanies this mailing.

The National Archives

Many readers will be aware that funding cuts have resulted in some reorganisation at TNA, and in particular the decision to close its doors on Mondays. You will no doubt also be aware that many individuals and organisations have made representations, emphasising the particular needs of researchers, and how these might differ from those of genealogists. This is to report some better news. A meeting was held on October 29 last at TNA attended, _inter alia_, by Natalie Ceeney (Chief Executive Officer at TNA), Miles Taylor (Director of the Institute of Historical Research) and Colin Jones (President of the Royal Historical Society). Colin reports that one of the key outcomes was an agreement to hold high level meetings on a twice-yearly basis to discuss strategy, to consider TNA concerns and pressures and to identify ways in which TNA and the academic community can best offer mutual support. Participation in these academic meetings will be based on
the present meeting (TNA senior management and academic representatives) with the possibility of slight augmentation. In addition, TNA will give consideration to refocusing academic panels so as to bring specialist knowledge to inform future TNA projects. The role, composition and operations of such groups will be considered at the first meeting of the liaison group, scheduled for late January 2010. TNA will also be monitoring the impact of 2009 changes and will provide us with reports in due course. For a full report please go to the Royal Historical Society web-site at http://www.royalhistoricalsociety.org/

**The Family and Community Historical Research Society**

FACHRS continues to be very active in promoting research and study in English local history, and held a very successful conference on 23 May last on the broad theme of children in English history from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. The next meeting will be held in Aspley Guise, Bedfordshire, on 8 May 2010 on the subject of ‘School and community’. For further information please contact Janet Cumner at cumnerjanet@aol.com.

The FACHRS Almshouse Project that has been conducted under my academic guidance and led by Anne Langley is now drawing to a close, with a deadline of 31 December 2009 for the submission of data. In celebration of what has been a fascinating and stimulating project we held a conference entitled ‘English almshouses revisited’ at the University of Hertfordshire last March, where Professor Marjorie Macintosh gave an excellent keynote address on ‘The founding and operation of English hospitals and almshouses, 1350–1699’, during which she gave us an insight into the content of her forthcoming book on the subject. This project has produced further spin-offs too. I was invited to give the British Association for Local History Annual Lecture last June, which will be published early next year in the *Local Historian* under the title ‘The English almshouse and the mixed economy of welfare: medieval to modern’, while another project funded by the Knowledge East of England Partnership (KEEP3) under the aegis of the AHRC and the East of England Development Agency has produced a book on *Doughty’s Hospital, Norwich, 1687–2009*, co-authored with Leanne Moden, which will be published by the University of Hertfordshire Press next Spring. Finally, realisation of the scope that remains for quantifying Victorian philanthropy with more precision has resulted in a further project based at the University of Hertfordshire to analyse the *Digests of Endowed Charities*, published among the British Parliamentary Papers from 1867 and covering the years 1861–1876, to produce an historical geography of endowed charity.

FACHRS has now moved on to a major new project to analyse another badly neglected source, school log books, to determine interactions between schools and the communities they served. The project leader is Don Dickson and the co-ordinator is Brita Wood.
Further information is available from the society’s web-site at http://www.fachrs.com/slb/slb.htm.

Promoting local population history

Should any society, department or other group have information on activities within the broad remit of this journal that they would like to promote, please contact the editor via the General Office, address on the inside front cover.

Editorial matters

It is with great regret that I have to announce that Matthew Woollard is standing down from the Editorial Board, due to the growing pressures of his professional employment at the UK Data Archive. Matthew was one of the ‘new blood’ appointments made in 1996, which also included myself, Martin Ecclestone and Andrew Hinde, and hence he has served the journal and the society for 13 years. During his term Matthew has been an enthusiastic supporter of the society and its various activities, has taken on more than his share of responsibility for seeing articles through to publication, and has played a major part in the development of the journal, in terms of both its content and its standards of production. Readers will be aware that he has also made regular contributions to the journal. He has been an unfailing source of support to me during my time as Editor, and a most cheerful and affable colleague. I will miss working with him.

Our new board member is Mark Freeman, senior lecturer at the University of Glasgow. Mark has published widely in the field of nineteenth-century social history, with particular interests in social investigation, agrarian history and poverty and philanthropy. His recent work includes publications on eighteenth and nineteenth century joint stock companies, and a history of St Albans from its origins to the present day. I am delighted that he has agreed to join us.

My thanks, as ever, to Ken and Margaret Smith for laying out this issue of LPS.

Nigel Goose
November 2009
List of contributors

Adrian Ager is an Associate Lecturer in History at Oxford Brookes University. His particular areas of interest cover welfare mechanisms, makeshift economies and criminality in the nineteenth century.

Catherine Lee was recently awarded her PhD by the Open University for a thesis on the regulation of prostitution and the Contagious Diseases Acts in nineteenth-century Kent.

Clive Leivers had a career in the Civil Service until taking early retirement in 1994. He was the inaugural chairman of the Family and Community Historical Research Society and regards the establishment of the Society’s programme of collaborative research projects as the highlight of his term of office.

Rebecca Probert is a Senior Lecturer in Law at the University of Warwick. She specialises in family law and is the author of *Marriage law and practice in the long eighteenth century: a reassessment* (Cambridge, 2009). Liam D’Arcy Brown is her husband and chief research assistant.

Nicola Sheldon is a post-doctoral researcher at the Institute of Historical Research, University of London. She completed her doctorate in 2007 at Oxford University, and is currently working on the History in Education Project looking at the teaching of history in schools over the past 100 years.

Robert Tyler was until recently Visiting Lecturer at University of Wales, Newport, and is now the Fulbright Visiting Professor in British History at Westminster College, Missouri.
Welsh settlement patterns in a nineteenth-century Australian gold town

Robert Tyler

Abstract
The adjacent gold mining settlements of Ballarat and Sebastopol in the colony of Victoria are universally acknowledged as the major focal point for Welsh immigrants in Australia in the second half of the nineteenth century. Here, the Welsh had congregated in sufficient numbers to establish an identifiable and highly visible ethnolinguistic community. Factors such as the necessity of acquiring the English language, movement out of the mining industry, high rates of exogamy, the failure to unite within one religious denomination and the conscious desire to integrate into mainstream Australian society, all served to undermine the integrity of that community. This paper argues that the more fundamental issue of residential propinquity was of primary importance in this process; that it was the failure of the Welsh immigrant group to establish and maintain long term exclusively Welsh areas of settlement that ensured the eventual dilution and absorption of the Welsh as a distinct community.

Introduction
Any study of nineteenth-century emigration from Wales must first acknowledge the numbers involved, and it is true to say that Welsh emigrants have always been few in number. This was due not only to the small size of the Welsh population, which did not register as more than one million until the 1841 census, but also to the rate of emigration...
from Wales, which was significantly lower than that from England, Scotland or Ireland.  
From its beginning in 1788, the arrival of individuals to Australia from the United Kingdom was dominated by the transportation of convicts, initially to New South Wales and Tasmania but eventually spreading throughout the continent with the exception of the colony of South Australia. By the 1830s, however, the numerical balance had begun to shift in favour of free newcomers. This was due to the arrival of young, largely male, adventurers in search of their fortunes; the arrival of assisted migrants was prompted by the desire of British governments to find an outlet for an apparently surplus, and frequently poor, population; and the attempts of the various colonial governments to attract free, productive settlers. However, if by the dawn of the 1850s the colonies were increasingly viable, stable settlements with a diminishing gender imbalance, they were also, as Catriona Elder has put it, ‘in no way spectacular successes’.

The gold rushes, initiated in the colony of Victoria in 1851, radically altered immigration levels and, consequently, the social and economic landscape of Australia, with the decade of the 1850s seeing the non-indigenous population of the continent increase from 405,400 to 1,145,600. The Welsh were not exempt from this phenomenon and, as Table 1 indicates, although relatively few people from Wales emigrated to the Australian colonies during the nineteenth century, by the fourth quarter of that century Welsh-born individuals were to be found in every colonised part of the continent. Despite this widespread penetration, the Welsh presence in Australia was largely concentrated into a relatively few areas. Besides the existence of small groups in the major cities, immigrants from Wales tended to congregate in the various mining centres: the copper mines of Burra Burra, Kapunda and Wallaroo in South Australia, the coal mining districts of Newcastle in New South Wales and Ipswich in Queensland and, most notably, the gold bearing regions of Victoria.

2 The reasons for this phenomenon are still very much open to debate. For analyses of the emigration decision see, B. Thomas, Migration and economic growth. A study of Great Britain and the Atlantic economy (Cambridge, 1973); D. Baines, Migration in a mature economy—emigration and internal migration in England and Wales, 1861-1900 (Cambridge, 1985) and Emigration from Europe, 1815-1930 (Cambridge, 1995). More specifically, see W. Ross Johnston, ‘The Welsh diaspora: emigrating around the world in the late nineteenth century’, Llafur, 6, 2 (1993), 50-74; L. Walker, ‘“Two jobs for every man”: the emigration decision from Wales to New South Wales, 1850-1900’, Australian Studies, 13 (1998), 99-118 and W. D. Jones, ““Raising the wind”: emigrating from Wales to the USA in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries’, Annual Public Lecture, School of Welsh, Cardiff University, 2003.


5 All statistical evidence relating to population is, unless otherwise indicated, drawn from the following three sources: Census Reports for the Colony of Victoria, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, B.R. Mitchell, British historical statistics (Cambridge, 1988) and J. Jupp and B. York, Birthplaces of the Australian people: Colonial and Commonwealth Census, 1828—1991 (Canberra, 1995). Censuses were held at differing times in the various colonies and the Welsh were not always listed separately.

6 The second half of the nineteenth century saw Welsh immigrants similarly concentrated in industrial areas in the United States; primarily those associated with the mining and metallurgical industries. See W.D. Jones, Wales in America: Scranton and the Welsh, 1860-1920 (Cardiff, 1993).
Welsh settlement patterns in a nineteenth-century Australian gold town

Both contemporary observers and modern historians have specifically identified the Ballarat/Sebastopol area in the colony of Victoria as a centre of Welsh settlement and culture in Australia in the second half of the nineteenth century, and here the Welsh were to be found in sufficient numbers to enable the emergence of a vibrant, identifiable ethnolinguistic community. From the outset, however, the existence of that Welsh community was threatened by a variety of forces. These included the necessity of acquiring the English language, occupational diversification, religious schisms, high rates of exogamy and the desire of many to cast off their old-world cultural shackles. These factors have received consideration elsewhere and this paper seeks to address the more fundamental issue of residential propinquity. It argues that, ultimately, it was the failure of the Welsh immigrant group to establish long-term enclaves that proved to be the major factor in fracturing Welsh ethnolinguistic identity in the area.

Table 1 Welsh-born in Australia, 1851–1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>TAS</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>WA</th>
<th>VIC</th>
<th>QLD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>558</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>1,378</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6,055</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>1,870</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6,614</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>3,100</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>1,161</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,547</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>4,997</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>1,098</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>5,094</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>3,622</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>3,676</td>
<td>2,658</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: NSW: New South Wales; TAS: Tasmania; SA: South Australia; WA: Western Australia; VIC: Victoria; QLD: Queensland.


Early Welsh Victorians

Contemporary Welsh newspapers and periodicals identified the Welsh among the first to make the journey to the Victorian goldfields. $^9$ Yr Amserau, for 27 October 1852 contained a poem on the occasion of the marriage between D.H. Evans (Daniel Ddu o Fon), who was to become a well-known figure in Welsh literary circles in Victoria, and Miss Rachel Evans, Bassaleg, Monmouthshire, and their departure with other friends to Australia. $^{10}$ Y Cymro reported in August 1854 that, ‘Over twelve young men left Holyhead and its neighbourhood last week, from which port they took their passage to the diggings. ... They are strong and powerful and likely to earn their living in the colony’. $^{11}$ The Reverend J. Farr, a Congregational minister from Aberdare, Glamorgan, who was to serve for many years in Ballarat, whilst bound for Melbourne on the ‘Monarch of the Sea’ in 1857, was ‘agreeably surprised to find that there were from eighty to ninety other Welsh people amongst the passengers’. Farr took the opportunity to preach in Welsh to his fellow countrymen and in English to English and Scottish passengers, his ‘first attempt to speak publicly in the resonant language of the conquering Saxon’. $^{12}$

The Welsh were in evidence both in Melbourne and on the diggings from the earliest days.

In a letter to a friend in Wales, dated 19 May 1854, Robert Lewis, who was to become a prominent Ballarat businessman and politician, wrote from Melbourne, ‘There are a great many Welsh people in this Colony’. Four months later he wrote, ‘I have not regretted coming here myself, there are a great many Welsh here’. $^{13}$ In September 1854, Griffith Jones wrote from the diggings at Mount Alexander, ‘There were here too quite a number from Pontypridd and other districts in Glamorgan, but most of them were an ungodly and shameless crowd’. $^{14}$ In March 1855, Daniel Evans of Llanberis, Caernarfonshire, wrote from the Castlemaine area, ‘There are many scores of Welshmen in this place. I hear Welsh and see Welsh people as if I was there in Wales. There are people here from every part of Wales, and, as far as I know, from every part of the world too’. $^{15}$

As Table 2 indicates, however, even in Victoria, the colony attracting the largest number of Welsh immigrants in the decades following 1850, the Welsh were swamped by their Celtic contemporaries.

Goldfield concentration

Nevertheless, as early as 1854, census returns indicated a concentration of Welsh migrants within Victoria itself. As Table 3 shows, while those born in Wales comprised only 0.98

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$^{12}$ Merthyr Telegraph, 14 March 1879.

$^{13}$ Letters from Robert Lewis, Melbourne to Philip Williams, Aberystwyth, 19 May 1854 and 9 September 1854, National Library of Australia (NLA), MS 2452.


Welsh settlement patterns in a nineteenth-century Australian gold town

Table 2  Welsh, Scottish and Irish-born in Victoria, 1854–1891

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1854</th>
<th>1857</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welsh</td>
<td>2,326</td>
<td>4,576</td>
<td>6,055</td>
<td>6,614</td>
<td>4,547</td>
<td>5,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish</td>
<td>36,044</td>
<td>53,798</td>
<td>60,701</td>
<td>56,210</td>
<td>48,153</td>
<td>50,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>39,728</td>
<td>65,264</td>
<td>87,160</td>
<td>100,468</td>
<td>86,733</td>
<td>85,307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>236,798</td>
<td>409,038</td>
<td>540,322</td>
<td>731,528</td>
<td>862,346</td>
<td>1,140,405</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Reports for the Colony of Victoria.

Table 3 Percentage by birthplace on the goldfields and in the colony of Victoria as a whole, 1854 and 1857

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1854</th>
<th>1857</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colony</td>
<td>Goldfields</td>
<td>Colony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>15.22</td>
<td>12.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>16.78</td>
<td>14.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Reports for the Colony of Victoria.

Table 4 Percentage of each nationality found on the goldfields, 1854 and 1857

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Welsh</th>
<th>Scottish</th>
<th>Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>46.44</td>
<td>22.87</td>
<td>22.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>51.27</td>
<td>27.45</td>
<td>25.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Reports for the Colony of Victoria.

per cent of the colony’s population, within the goldfields they made up 1.66 per cent of the total. This was in direct contrast to the Irish and Scottish whose goldfield presence was weaker than that in the colony as a whole. The propensity of the Welsh to concentrate in the gold-mining districts was again underlined by the returns of the 1857 census. While the Welsh-born comprised a mere 1.12 per cent of the colony’s population, they made up a more significant 1.61 per cent of goldfield residents. Table 4, which shows the extent to which each national group was concentrated on the goldfields in the 1850s, further highlights this tendency. As is apparent, the Welsh, with around 50 per cent of their number resident on the goldfields, far outstripped the Scots and Irish.

The Ballart/Sebastopol concentration

By the late 1850s, therefore, a pattern had emerged that saw a small Welsh presence made more visible by its concentration in gold-mining areas and within these areas centres such as Ballarat were becoming noted for their Welsh populations. The Ballarat newspaper, *The Miner and Weekly Star*, in its issue for 1 January 1858, contained an article describing the Christmas celebrations at the Welsh Church on the town's Bakery Hill.
This event drew people from ‘all parts of this district. … the little Chapel was too small to accommodate the numbers present, the tables were filled and emptied several times in succession’.\textsuperscript{16} Welsh cultural vitality in the area was further revealed by the activities of the Ballarat Welsh Literary Society, formed as early as January 1857, which was described at the end of the decade as ‘the most flourishing Welsh Literary Society in Australia’.\textsuperscript{17} The existence of the Sebastopol Welsh Choir, which performed at the Welsh Chapel in Sebastopol in honour of Wales’ patron saint, St David, on 1 March 1859, also suggests the presence of a vibrant Welsh community.\textsuperscript{18}

The year 1861 saw the number of Welsh-born individuals in Victoria standing at 6,055 and still comprising 1.12 per cent of the total population. The census, while again revealing a disproportionate Welsh presence in the goldfields (1.71 per cent of the population) also provided details which indicated further concentration. The census furnished information at corporate town and municipality level and showed that, while the Welsh-born were to be found throughout the colony, only in limited areas were they in significant numbers and comprising a proportion in excess of 2 per cent of the total population. The numbers and percentages for the Ballarat area are presented in Table 5. Unfortunately, it is unclear from the census reports whether or not Sebastopol, which did not constitute a corporate town or municipality at the time, was included in the figures for the mining district. The boundaries between Ballarat and the Ballarat Mining District are likewise unclear. The total for the Welsh-born in corporate towns and municipalities in 1861 was 2,367 with those in mining districts numbering 3,900, a total for Victoria of 6,267 which is 212 in excess of the actual number of Welsh-born in the colony. Despite the vagaries of the reports, the assertion made by the Welsh periodical,\textit{Ser en Cymru}, in April 1859, that in Ballarat and its neighbourhood a third of the colony’s 6,000 Welsh were to be found, could not have far from the truth.\textsuperscript{19}

The Australian Welsh-language periodicals, \textit{Yr Australydd} and \textit{Yr Ymwelydd}, which provided information on the activities of the Welsh community during the years of their existence, 1866–1876, clearly indicate that community’s strength in Ballarat and Sebastopol.\textsuperscript{20} The April 1868 issue of \textit{Yr Australydd}, for example, which contains reports of events which had taken place during the previous month, highlights the richness of the area’s Welsh cultural life. This issue describes a meeting of the Ballarat Welsh Independent Church, the Ballarat Welsh Bible Society and the St David’s Day celebrations held at the town’s Craig’s Royal Hotel. In Sebastopol, March had witnessed

\begin{thebibliography}{10}
\bibitem{16} \textit{Miner and Weekly Star}, 1 January 1858.
\bibitem{17} William Griffith Parry Papers, ‘Notes on religious and cultural life and material relating to the Ballarat Welsh Literary Society’, NLW FACS 449.
\bibitem{18} \textit{Miner and Weekly Star}, 18 March 1859.
\bibitem{19} \textit{Seren Cymru}, 16 April 1859.
\bibitem{20} \textit{Yr Australydd}, Welsh language newspaper published in Ballarat and Melbourne, Victoria, July 1866 to February 1871, April 1871 to September 1872; \textit{Yr Ymwelydd}, Welsh language newspaper published in Melbourne, Victoria October 1874 to December 1876 held at Victoria State Library, Melbourne, Australia and the National Library of Wales.
\end{thebibliography}
Welsh settlement patterns in a nineteenth-century Australian gold town

Table 5 Numbers of Welsh, Scottish and Irish-born in Ballarat, Sebastopol and the Associated Mining District and as a percentage of the total population, 1861

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mining District</th>
<th>Sebastopol</th>
<th>Ballarat East</th>
<th>Ballarat West</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welsh</td>
<td>1,144</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish</td>
<td>6,814</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>7,307</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1,713</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Report for the Colony of Victoria 1861.

Table 6 Numbers of Welsh, Scottish and Irish-Born in Ballarat, Sebastopol and the Associated Mining District and as a percentage of the total population, 1871

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mining District</th>
<th>Sebastopol</th>
<th>Ballarat East</th>
<th>Ballarat West</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welsh</td>
<td>1,851</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish</td>
<td>6,741</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>1,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>10,238</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>1,632</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Report for the Colony of Victoria 1871.

...the Calvinistic Methodist Church’s Band of Hope trip to Ballarat Gardens, two literary meetings involving singing and recitation, the Welsh Independent Church’s Sunday School trip to Ballarat Gardens, the Welsh Baptist’s prayer meeting and tea party, a lecture on Milton and a meeting of the Cymdeithas y Beiblau a Thraethodau Crefyddol (The Bible and Religious Tracts Society). Although the ethnic composition of audiences at these functions is impossible to ascertain, evidence exists that they were, at least during the early years, predominantly patronised by Welsh people. For example, the Ballarat Star noted that the Mechanics’ Institute, Ballarat, which hosted a concert held by the Sebastopol Welsh Choir at the end of 1863, was ‘filled, and mainly with a Welsh audience’.

The returns of the 1871 census serve to illustrate further the trends outlined above. Again, however, due to the nature of the census reports, which do not clearly delineate the extent of the ‘Mining Districts’, it remains obvious that the same individuals have been included in two sets of figures. The total Welsh-born listed as resident in mining districts in the colony in 1871 was 4,186 and those in Cities Towns and Boroughs, 3,653 a total of 7,839, well in excess of the 6,614 Welsh in the colony. Obviously a significant number had been counted twice. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Ballarat area had the highest number of Welsh-born in the colony, which was still in the region of some 2,000 individuals (Table 6).

21 Yr Australydd, April 1868.
22 Ballarat Star, 11 December 1863.
By 1871, therefore, the Welsh, although found throughout the gold-bearing districts and in numbers within the boroughs of Melbourne, remained at their greatest strength, both numerically and proportionally, in the settlements which had emerged following the rushes, notably Castlemaine, Clunes, Sandhurst, Stawell, Maldon and, ultimately, Ballarat/Sebastopol. This was in contrast to the other Celtic nationalities which, although outnumbering the Welsh almost everywhere, were not so disproportionately drawn to the mining areas.23 This phenomenon was, of course, related to the occupational concentration of Welshmen in the mining industry and evidence exists showing Welshmen to have had a far greater involvement in, and thus dependency on, that industry than other ethnic groups.24 Research, drawing on information contained on death certificates for the Ballarat/Sebastopol area, while revealing mining as a major employer for the migrant community in general, also shows the Welsh as far more likely to have been found within that industry than their Scottish and Irish contemporaries.25 Of the 288 Welsh-born males, whose occupation was listed on the death certificate and who died in Ballarat and Sebastopol between 1853 and 1891, 150 (52.1 per cent), were associated with the mining industry. This compares to percentages of 22.3 and 24.9 for the Irish and Scottish.26 A decennial breakdown, provided by Table 7, reveals information of further interest. While the table indicates that for each group there was a movement out of mining, it also shows that the Welsh were more likely to remain in the industry, with 40 per cent still being listed as miners in the decade 1882–1891. This contrasts with the other two groups and especially the Scottish, whose miners fell from a percentage of almost 50 in 1853–1861, to a mere 16.5 per cent in the decade 1882–1891.

The Welsh themselves were certainly aware of their strength in this gold-mining world. The editorial in the April 1871 issue of Yr Australydd could state of Ballarat, ‘there are

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**Table 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>1850s</th>
<th>1860s</th>
<th>1870s</th>
<th>1880s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welsh</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Death Certificates for Ballarat, 1853–1891, Sebastopol, 1866–1891.

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23 For accounts of the experiences of other ethnic groups on the goldfields, particularly the Irish, Scots and Cornish, see K. Cardell and C., Cumming eds., *A world turned upside down: cultural change on Australia’s goldfields 1851—2001* (Canberra, 2001).


25 Death Certificates for Ballarat, 1853–91, Sebastopol, 1866-91. Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

26 For an explanation of research methodology and further details of occupational specialisation and mobility see Tyler, ‘Occupational mobility’.
Welsh settlement patterns in a nineteenth-century Australian gold town

many hundreds of our countrymen residing in this town and its environs. Although they are not in the majority, they are, in every sense, strong enough to be of influence in the place.27 The numerical strength of the Welsh in the area is apparent in a report of a ‘cyfarfod te’ (tea meeting) held by the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists at their Carmel Chapel in Sebastopol on 21 May 1872, which attracted between three and four hundred people.28 Again, although the ethnicity of attendees at these functions is largely a matter of conjecture, as this chapel was still functioning entirely in Welsh at this time it can reasonably be assumed that meetings of this nature, although held with the intention of attracting new members, remained largely Welsh in ethos and language.29

Further concentration within the district

If Ballarat/Sebastopol was the focal point of Welsh immigration during the 1860s and 1870s, not only in Victoria but in Australia as a whole, to what extent were the Welsh further concentrated within the area itself? Official statistics are, unfortunately, of little help in identifying specific areas of Welsh settlement at micro-level. The census of 1871 broke down the Ballarat conurbation into wards, but this indicates no specific area of Welsh settlement within the urban area, and no further detail can be obtained from the census. Further demographic analysis requires alternative sources and city directories, which began to be produced in the 1850s, are the best available indicators of ethnic settlement patterns. These directories do pose their own difficulties, not least of which is that they were not compiled to a set format. Nevertheless, data concerning name, address and occupation can be successfully gleaned from these sources for Ballarat and Ballarat East for the years 1862, 1866, 1868, 1875, and 1882, and for Sebastopol in 1868, 1869, 1875, and 1882.30

The use of directories, however, involves a more fundamental difficulty: the identification of the Welsh as group, with the only feasible method necessitating a reliance on surname as an indicator of ethnicity.31 This is, of course, decidedly problematic and subject to a high degree of error. The patronymic derivation and relative paucity of Welsh surnames is of some assistance, but even with such obviously Welsh names as Evans, Price, Lewis and Griffiths, Welsh ethnicity is far from assured, with numerous English, Scots, Irish and

27 Yr Australydd, April 1871.
28 Yr Australydd, June 1872.
29 Yr Australydd, Yr Ymwelydd, passim. That Welsh remained the language of most of the religious activities of the Welsh Chapels into the 1870s is left in no doubt by a close study of the periodicals.
30 Directories used: Birtchnell’s Ballarat directory 1862, compiled by J. Butler; Ballarat and district directory 1865–1866, compiled by F.M. Dicker; Ballier’s directory 1868; The Ballarat directory 1869, compiled by J. Windler; Niven’s directory for the city of Ballarat, Ballarat east and Sebastopol 1875; Niven’s directory for the city of Ballarat, Ballarat east and Sebastopol 1882.
31 For a comprehensive clarification of the Welsh surname see T.J. Morgan and P. Morgan, Welsh surnames (Cardiff, 1985). A study which specifically analyses the incidence of Welsh surnames overseas is ‘The Welsh diaspora: analysis of the geography of Welsh names’, Project undertaken for the National Assembly, R. Webber, Visiting Professor, Department of Geography, University College London, n.d.
Americans of distant Welsh origin present to confuse the issue. Likewise, Welsh ethnics sometimes bore non-Welsh surnames, the Reverend Farr, minister of the Armstrong Street United Welsh Protestant Church in Ballarat, being a case in point. Furthermore, there exist surnames which, simply put, may or may not be of Welsh origin. Nevertheless, a district or street where 50 per cent of household heads had ‘typically’ Welsh surnames can safely be said to have had a stronger Welsh presence than one which contained a mere 5 per cent. Surnames, therefore, although a poor indicator of individual ethnicity, provide a general indication of a Welsh presence, and enable qualified observations to be made regarding the nature of Welsh settlement patterns. Listing all household heads with Welsh surnames and noting their percentage strength by street provides, therefore, a fair indication of the Welsh presence at micro-level.

For Ballarat, data obtained from the directories revealed no significant concentrations of migrants which could be said to have constituted specific Welsh districts. Indeed, not one street revealed percentages that would suggest that the Welsh constituted the largest group. Moreover, even the streets with a relatively high proportion of individuals with Welsh surnames were found scattered throughout the city. The residential patterns of Welsh immigrants within the streets themselves could have provided the propinquity necessary for the maintenance of ethnic ties, and the directories do contain sufficient information to test this suggestion. Evidence gleaned from those directories that did not alphabetise but listed the residents of each street as they were encountered did not, however, suggest a grouping of Welsh households. Moreover, from 1875 onwards, the directories for Ballarat City gave house numbers, which clearly scuppered any notions of ethnic clustering. In general, therefore, the data obtained from the directories reveal no significant concentrations of migrants that could be said to have constituted specific Welsh districts within Ballarat.

Despite this, the Welsh were very much a part of the city’s public face. Indeed, their very dispersal was reflected in the distribution of Welsh businesses which, along with the chapels, provide the clearest indication of the Welsh presence and which were present throughout the settlement, particularly in the 1860s and 1870s. On Main Road there was the chemist shop of one John Aloysuis Williams, who had arrived in the colony in 1859 from Dowlais near Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorgan; Evan Evans, the son of a Brecon farmer, who had arrived in the colony in 1857, maintained a grocer shop on Armstrong Street until his death in 1883; John William Jones of Neath had an ironmongers shop at 2 Ligar Street; and Ellis Richards, a native of Newmarket in the north of Wales, was in business as a butcher on Dana Street. Welsh-run hotels (public houses) existed in profusion and liquid refreshment was obtainable from numerous outlets. John Griffith, for example—an Anglesey man who had arrived in Victoria in 1860 and established himself as a publican—was, at the time of his death in 1874, the landlord of the Barkly Street Hotel.

32 It is instructive to note that Welsh immigrants in the Ballarat/Sebastopol area overwhelmingly had Welsh surnames. Of the 300 Welsh-born males who died in the area between 1853 and 1891, 264 (88 per cent) had recognisably Welsh surnames.
Welsh settlement patterns in a nineteenth-century Australian gold town

The sartorial needs of Welsh people could be catered to by Llewellyn Roberts and Son, Practical Tailors and Outfitters on Morres Street, and their ailments could be attended to by Dr George Bartlemen of Neath, after being driven to his Main Road surgery by Daniel Jacob Edwards of Glamorgan, who owned and drove a cab in the city until his death in 1876. The images of all these Welsh people could have been recorded for posterity by Jonah Roberts of Roberts Brothers, photographers, who were to be found on Sturt Street. All of these individuals were Welsh-born.

If the Welsh were scattered throughout Ballarat, the situation in the adjacent township of Sebastopol was markedly different. Following the procedure outlined above for Ballarat, individual streets within Sebastopol show percentages in excess of 40, 50 and 60 per cent. Queen Street in 1869 with 21 household heads, some 65.7 per cent of the total and 23 household heads, 52.5 per cent of the total in 1875 identifiable as Welsh by surname, can, at the very least, be said to have had a strong Welsh presence. It appears, therefore, that the Welsh were significantly more concentrated in Sebastopol and had established an enclave in the southern part of the township, known as Cobblers. There significant concentrations could be found in converging streets, including Queen and Grant (33.3 per cent in 1875), Edward (45.8 per cent in 1868), Charlotte (44.4 per cent in 1869), Morgan (47.8 per cent in 1875), Nelson (50 per cent in 1875) and Miles (50 per cent in 1869). The general presence of the Welsh in Sebastopol was reflected by Welsh businessmen such as Thomas Edward Miles, the son of a Merthyr miner who had arrived in Victoria in 1857 and died aged 78 in 1887, who was to be found plying his trade as a blacksmith on Albert Street. Also on Albert Street was the butcher shop of one Evan Jenkins, the second-generation Welsh-speaking son of Jacob Jenkins from Abercarn, Monmouthshire. In the Welsh enclave of Cobblers, at the very south of the township, Welsh businesses were in greater evidence. John Hopkins, who had arrived from Glamorgan in 1854, and William Williams from Merthyr, ran grocery shops on Queen and Morgan Streets respectively. Robert Miles, yet another Merthyr man, ran a general store on Queen Street, where Tredgar-born William Jones’ Monmouth Bakery was also located. The literary needs of the Welsh community were met by Benjamin S. Evans, whose bookstore on Queen Street held scores of Welsh-language titles. Ellis Richards had his butcher shop on Princes Street and those in need of sustenance other than that of the mind could, and no doubt did, find succour at the Prince of Wales Hotel on Queen Street run by John and Ann Davies from Glamorgan.

Dispersal

The proliferation of Welsh-owned businesses clearly reflected the numerical strength of the Welsh in the area which was at its zenith in the 1860s and 1870s. The censuses of 1881, 1891 and 1901 show a continued presence of the Welsh in Ballarat and Sebastopol. The information for these examples was gleaned from city directories, advertisements in Yr Australydd and death certificates.

33 Lloyd, Australians, 227.
34 The information for these examples came from death certificates, city directories, advertisements in the local press and the assistance of Arthur J. Jenkins of the Sebastopol Historical Society.
Robert Tyler

Table 8  Welsh-born in Ballarat and Sebastopol, 1881–1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1881 %</th>
<th>1881 No.</th>
<th>1891 %</th>
<th>1891 No.</th>
<th>1901 %</th>
<th>1901 No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballarat</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballarat East</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sebastopol</td>
<td>6.04</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Reports for the Colony of Victoria.

Table 9  Percentage of males by nationality in Victoria, 1857–1891

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Wales</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th>Ireland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>1871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>56.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Reports for the Colony of Victoria.

1891 and 1901, however, revealed both continuity and change in Ballarat/Sebastopol and in Victoria as a whole. The various districts of Melbourne retained significant numbers of Welsh-born individuals and elsewhere in the colony, with the exception of the inland towns associated with gold, the Welsh presence remained negligible. Within the goldfield towns, however, the Welsh-born were in continuous decline throughout the period, with Ballarat/Sebastopol proving no exception (see Table 8).

The forces behind this decline represented not only natural loss through the death of the older generation coupled with a cessation of immigration from Wales, but also population shifts within the colony itself. It is significant to note that many Welsh immigrants in Victoria had no intention of taking up permanent residence in the colony and, especially in the early years, immigrants were often single men in search of their fortune with every intention of returning home. Drawing on census returns, Table 9 shows the proportion of males in the three Celtic national groups in the colony and reveals that a male/female gender imbalance existed among the Welsh to a far greater degree than among the Irish and Scots.

Although gender imbalance was a general feature of frontier areas, the figures indicate that this imbalance affected certain migrant groups to a greater degree than others. Welsh men outnumbered Welsh women by more than two to one for much of the period and, as late as 1891, over 62 of every 100 Welsh-born Victorians were men. This stands in contrast to the other Celtic nationalities, especially the Irish, whose gender ratio reached equilibrium as early as the 1860s. This suggests that the Welsh presence in the colony was of a more transitory nature than that of some other migrant groups.
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This is reinforced by evidence of a qualitative nature. William Williams of Holywell, in a letter home from the goldfields which appeared in the Welsh newspaper *Y Cymro* in March 1853, wrote, ‘I would advise everyone to stay at home if they are at all comfortable, for the change is very great from a quiet home to a canvas tent, sleeping with a loaded pistol by your side. ... As soon as ever I shall make money I shall return to Cymru bach (little Wales)’.36 In a letter to his wife Mari and three children in Wales, William Jones wrote from Emu, Victoria, in the 1850s, indicating gold as his sole reason for being in Australia which would, ‘provide for us for ever’ so that ‘you, I and the children can come along a little in the world’. He expressed his longing for his home and his family, his regret for having failed to return when he had intended and continued, ‘I hope that I will be able to come home myself very soon’. William Jones never returned, however, and was buried in Dunnoly.37 Although, as noted, men made up the majority of Welsh immigrants, women were by no means exempt from the desire to return home. On 13 November 1858, Mary Jones wrote home to Merionethshire from Ballarat, ‘I have a great longing for all of you, but, dear mother, don’t worry at all I’ll be coming home very soon’.38 Two years later, 24 November 1860, Mary, although still at Ballarat, noted, ‘There are many returning home every month’.39 Moreover, a decision to remain in the colony did not necessarily mean a settled existence. The extent to which Welsh-born individuals remained resident in any one district is, in the absence of aggregated data, difficult to quantify. Once again, however, the identification of Welsh individuals by surname in the city directories for Ballarat and Sebastopol provides at least an indication of the trends that were underway. In this analysis, Welsh household heads were identified only by the more specifically Welsh surnames such as Bevan, Evans, Griffiths, Howells, Jenkins, Lewis, Llewellyn, Morgan, Powell, Pritchard and Price, especially those with both a Welsh first and second name, as adult males such as Lewis Pritchard and Llewellyn Powell were, at this time, almost certainly Welsh-born. Table 10, therefore, goes some way towards revealing the extent to which the Welsh population in Ballarat remained for any length of time.

Of 44 household heads identified as Welsh in 1862, only 26, constituting 59.1 per cent, could be identified as still being resident in Ballarat six years later and a mere 13, constituting 32.5 per cent, 20 years later.40 This pattern was repeated to a slightly greater or lesser extent for the other time periods under consideration. Of course, the vagaries of the directories and the death of some individuals would account in part for this loss, but the statistics outlined above do suggest that the existence of a distinct Welsh community,

37 NLW FACS 369 6.
38 NLW MS 22846 D.
39 NLW MS 22846 D.
40 It should be noted that 13 individuals are 32.5 per cent of 40 not 44. The other four individuals were removed from the sample as their continued residence was uncertain due to more than one individual having the same name in the 1882 directory. Only those whose presence or absence could be ascertained at the later date remained in the sample.
as indicated by numerical presence and contemporary evidence, was due as much to
continuous new arrivals from elsewhere in the colony as to a permanently resident
population of Welsh-born people. Welsh people, it appears, were continuously moving
into and out of the area; much of the Welsh population was in a state of flux.

The same analysis was performed for Sebastopol and revealed a pattern broadly similar
to Ballarat until 1875. The year 1875 saw the flooding of the mines in the township that
resulted in a collapse in the population as a whole, regardless of ethnicity, as entire
families left the area. As Table 11 clearly indicates, the Welsh immigrants who
congregated in Sebastopol, a community dominated by, and dependent upon, the gold-
mining industry, were subject to the uncertainties of that industry. The collapse of
mining in 1875, therefore, led to their dispersal.

Again, this is reinforced by qualitative evidence. In a letter to Yr Ymwelydd, in March
1875, Ap Gwynet wrote from New South Wales, ‘Many Welsh people from Victoria have
landed safely on this side recently, and the majority have been successful in finding
work’. Similarly, an article that appeared in the May issue Yr Ymwelydd on the Welsh in
Greta, New South Wales, could state, ‘Coal provides the work here, and there are many

Table 10  Persistence of Welsh settlement in Ballarat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Percentage identified in subsequent directories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: See footnote 30.

Table 11  Persistence of Welsh settlement in Sebastopol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Percentage identified in subsequent directories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: See footnote 30.

41 See E.D. Jenkins and A. J. Jenkins, The golden chain: a history of Sebastopol with special reference to gold mining
(Marybourough, Victoria, 1980).

42 Undoubtedly, some Welsh migrants made the move to Ballarat, but as the Welsh-born population of Ballarat itself
was also in decline it may be assumed that these were few in number.
Welsh settlement patterns in a nineteenth-century Australian gold town

Welsh people living here, the majority having come over from Victoria’. The announcement of the marriage in Walsend, New South Wales, on 1 August 1876, of William Evans and Ann Parry, indicated that both were previously resident in Sebastopol. Indeed, a report from the Calvinistic Methodist Sunday School at Sebastopol, which appeared in *Yr Ymwelydd* in July 1875, expressed regret that, ‘Some think that the Welsh have completely left Sebastopol’.

**Conclusion**

The Welsh immigrants in the Ballarat/Sebastopol area of the colony of Victoria in the second half of the nineteenth existed as an identifiable and highly visible ethnolinguistic community. The demographic context within which that community emerged, however, must be acknowledged. Although in Ballarat itself the Welsh had the numerical strength to make culture maintenance viable, those numbers were never found in sufficient concentrations to make that maintenance likely. Conversely, Sebastopol, while achieving the numbers and residential proximity necessary for the formation of a geographically-defined community, experienced population shifts which severely and suddenly undermined the group’s unity. In neither area, therefore, were the Welsh to be found as the dominant group in a stable, long-term enclave, and this, along with other forces, ensured the eventual dilution and absorption of the Welsh as a distinct community.

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43 *Yr Ymwelydd*, March 1875.
44 *Yr Ymwelydd*, May 1875.
45 *Yr Ymwelydd*, September 1876.
46 *Yr Ymwelydd*, July 1875.
Families in the firing line: prosecutions for truancy in Coventry, 1874–1899

Nicola Sheldon

Abstract

This case study of truancy in Coventry puts into a local context a national phenomenon of considerable concern to local authorities in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The records of parents prosecuted for their child’s truancy over a twenty-five year period provided the data for analysis. It was possible to produce a profile of the truants and their families within the socio-economic context of a Midlands industrial town with a unique mix of occupational sectors. Parental involvement in local textile, watchmaking and cycle industries certainly affected the propensity of children to truant, but other factors such as housing and neighbourhood seem also to have been important factors as indicators of truancy. Underlying all of these issues was the effect of poverty on parental attitudes to schooling, exemplified most starkly by the experience of lone mothers who figured more prominently in the truancy figures by the 1890s, and by when more parents conformed to school attendance laws.

Introduction

Two different approaches are commonly used by historians in dealing with the question of school attendance. One is to examine changes in the law and the gradually-developing efficiency of the policing authorities over time.1 The other is to place truancy within a particular socio-economic context and explain its decline as a gradual absorption of new social expectations into family life, with some resistance related to the issue of child labour, particularly in rural areas and the textile districts of northern England.2 In this local case study of Coventry, different ‘official’ sources have been cross-referenced in an attempt to do both—that is to understand what the authorities were doing about truancy and also to analyse the characteristics of the families prosecuted for non-attendance at school, within the context of the particular industrial and social conditions of Coventry in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Coventry was pre-eminently a working-class, industrial town with three ‘unique’ industries for the West Midlands: watchmaking, silk weaving and, from the late 1880s, the emergent cycle industry. The latter became the basis for Coventry’s twentieth-

Prosecutions for truancy in Coventry 1874–1899

century flowering as a centre for light engineering. John Prest’s account of the crises in the silk weaving industry in the 1860s shows that industrial conditions in Coventry were frequently unstable, with many skilled workers being forced to leave the city as trade declined.³ The population declined from 41,000 in 1861 to 37,670 by 1871 but it had recovered to 44,831 by 1881 and grew to 52,724 by 1891. This fairly modest growth (especially compared with Coventry’s expansion in the twentieth century) reflects the precariousness of both the long-established and new trades in the last quarter of the nineteenth century as new factory-based production in silk weaving and continental competition in the watchmaking trade affected the livelihoods of skilled workers and their families.

The introduction of universal elementary schooling both from the national perspective and that of the Coventry working population has to be set against the insecurity of many family incomes at the time. Forster’s Act of 1870 is usually taken to be the landmark act in the introduction of universal elementary education. Yet it was a permissive act with respect to attendance; compulsion was not enacted until 1880 and then not practically enforced, especially in rural areas, for several years after that.⁴ However, the 1870 Act was designed to enable action most urgently in the burgeoning cities and towns, where thousands of children roamed the streets unsupervised by parents during the working day.⁵ Coventry was in the ‘second wave’ of (mainly urban) school boards to pass their compulsory attendance bye-laws in 1873, following London and the large cities. School provision reflected the social circumstances of the town with relatively few middle-class patrons and a major deficit of school places. Despite some support from nonconformists for early elementary schools, provision in Coventry was inadequate. This ensured the setting up of a school board after the 1870 Act, which then constructed and later expanded several large elementary schools, catering for up to 800 children in each. The Board’s activity provoked Anglicans in the city to expand their schools in the 1890s to accommodate the city’s growing child population.⁶ Nonetheless, during the period 1874–1899, there was for most of the time a shortage of school places, which must have made it difficult to enforce attendance or to place recalcitrant truants in alternative schools.

For a short period following the implementation of compulsion in Coventry a large number of parents, including skilled workers and shop traders, fell foul of the new bye-laws but, by the late 1870s, the number of absentees recorded by the city’s attendance officers fell away dramatically.⁷ Yet the records of the Coventry School Board show that

⁷ Coventry School Board (hereafter CoSB) *Visiting officer’s daily report book*, Coventry History Centre, Bayley Lane, Coventry CV1 5QP (hereafter CHC), SLA/S/4/1. Figures for 1873–1876 include occupations such as tailor and butcher as well as watchmakers, etc. The number of absentees recorded per month fell from 233 in March 1873 to 62 in March 1876.
persistent absenteeism by a minority continued to cause considerable concern both to schools and to those responsible for improving attendance. The Board expressed frustration at the limited impact which sanctions appeared to have on the behaviour of parents and children who continued to truant.8

This situation was replicated in many local authorities across the country, yet there is little information on the truanting children and the families prosecuted.9 The aim of this local study is to make use of an unusual source to shed some light on the social condition of truants and their families in Coventry and perhaps also of their wider communities in which truants was common. It aims to come to some understanding of the reasons why these working-class families ‘resisted’ the state’s requirement that they send their children regularly to school, and perhaps also to shed light on why this was a problem for local authorities across the country.

Sources

Few sources offer the opportunity to investigate the social circumstances of those involved in truancy, although the perceptions of the authorities and their tactics in dealing with it are evident from school board records. During research into truancy across a number of local authorities, an unusual source came to light—the Coventry Summons Book, a handwritten record over 80 pages long covering 3,166 prosecutions for truancy in the Coventry magistrates’ court from 1874–1899.10 It is a rare, possibly unique, source covering nineteenth-century truancy.11 It is not possible to estimate what proportion of truanting children the Summons Book includes. Partly this is because truancy itself is an elastic term which may refer to a range of reasons for absence which are unacceptable to those in authority. School attendance rates in Coventry are available only for sporadic dates in the late 1870s and early 1880s. Although there are records showing how many absentees were visited by each attendance officer, many of these children were listed as sick or ‘absent through other reasonable causes’.12 Thus it is difficult to quantify rates of truancy. Certainly, local authorities sought to avoid the expense of prosecution in all but recalcitrant cases. The parents listed in the Summons Book had reached the end of a long process of visits and warnings and their children were presumably ‘confirmed’ as persistent truants, so the data can be considered a valuable historical source of information about truancy in Coventry if not a record of the full picture.

8 CoSB Minutes, 19.1.1882, CHC, SLA/5/1/1.
10 CoSB Register of summonses for non-attendance, 1874-99 CHC, SLA/5/4/2.
11 There appear to be no similar sources listed on Access to Archives <URL http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/advanced-search.aspx?tab=1 [Accessed 19.03.09].
In each case listed in the Coventry Summons Book, the parent’s name, address, name of child and his/her age plus the outcome of the proceedings were recorded. It was therefore possible to create a database of families and analyse the pattern of prosecution, the ages of the children involved and the incidence of different types of penalty. For some years, occupational data was recorded for the fathers, and it was also possible to determine the number of female-headed households involved where mothers were prosecuted as the head of household. A more detailed social analysis of family circumstances was completed for a group of nearly 250 families from the Summons Book. This smaller group was chosen because their prosecutions occurred in one of the census years (1881 and 1891) and this maximised the chance of tracing them on the census returns. Cross-referencing between the Summons Book and the census enabled a process of ‘family reconstruction’ which built up a detailed social profile of the truants and their families. Contextual information was drawn from local manuscript sources such as school board minute books and secondary works on the socio-economic conditions in Coventry during the period.

This local study demonstrates the ways in which electronic media can facilitate the management of sources which in the past would have been difficult to search and analyse without considerable research support. By reproducing the Summons Book as a series of digital photographs, it was much easier to zoom in on details, decipher faded handwriting and compile a large database, with the continual ability to reference back to the original source. Use of the online census made the cross-referencing of family details much quicker than would have been the case if microfiche records had been used. Recording of the key details from the online census took on average three minutes per family, whereas a search for eight ‘missing’ families on the census microfiches in Coventry Local Studies Library took a whole morning. The study of population data is already benefiting from many online sources, but this study shows the potential for individual work on unusual manuscript sources available in local archives.

**Coventry compared with national trends**

Figure 1 shows that the trend in prosecutions for non-attendance in Coventry appears to have mirrored the national trend, with a peak in the late 1870s, a plateau through the 1880s with some variation from year to year, then a steady decline after 1892 and another lower peak from 1897–1898. Coventry School Board, like many urban authorities, began enforcing its attendance bye-laws systematically in the mid-1870s. It instituted a big push on attendance in 1878 and continued to maintain a slightly lower level of prosecutions throughout the 1880s. The prosecutions did not fall away immediately after the ending of school fees in 1891, but within a year they were declining rapidly. This may indicate that there had not been the expected immediate increase in attendance of children from the poorest families, previously unable to pay fees, but that increasing the number of prosecutions in 1892 and cancelling arrears of fees did have an effect on attendance. 13

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Unfortunately, there are no figures for overall school attendance for Coventry for the 1890s to enable a comparison between prosecutions and attendance levels around the date that school fees ended. The minor peak in prosecutions from 1897–1898 seems to have been related to increased prosecution of older children, possibly following the raising of the school leaving age in 1893.

**Neighbourhood and truantsing**

The Summons Book reveals a great deal about the characteristics of the families involved. To some extent, the pattern of non-attendance reflected a cost to families, both in terms of fees and the loss of child-help or income to the family, so it must have been influenced by local economic conditions and family arrangements.\(^\text{14}\) The decision to truant would not always be a ‘family’ decision, but it was one which arose out of a set of circumstances within a family and was susceptible to influences from the local context—such as the occupations of parents, their ability to supervise their children, their need for the child’s labour, income or time and the influence of community ‘culture’ on children’s expectations. The decision to prosecute might also have been affected by a range of factors: for instance, the gender and age of the child concerned and the reasons for its absence from school. There is evidence that many local authorities were lenient towards mothers who kept older girls at home to help with younger siblings and that

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some were sympathetic to widows or the very poor who could not afford school fees.\textsuperscript{15}

Coventry was a largely working-class town and there were no significant middle-class districts. Its housing was distinctive in terms of its density and lack of facilities, even amongst nineteenth-century urban industrial centres.\textsuperscript{16} Housing density reached its peak at the turn of the century following an industrial boom in the mid-1890s. For instance, in the centre of the city, where a disproportionate number of the families in the truants’ sample lived, housing density was 17.2 per acre by 1901, compared with four per acre for the city as a whole (see Figure 2).\textsuperscript{17} This was caused by the infilling of gardens and plots occupied by larger houses on the main streets with two-storey back-to-back houses and small factories, built in virtually enclosed courtyards accessed by a single narrow alleyway from the main road. This housing pattern produced self-contained ‘pockets’ of

\textbf{Figure 2}  \hspace{1cm} Map of Coventry city centre, 1906

Source: OS Map of Coventry city centre (2\textsuperscript{nd} Edition, 1906, scale 1:2500)

Note: Well Street (upper left) with ‘infill’ slum housing clearly visible. The majority of the families in the Summons Book lived in this area of the city. Hillfields, the weavers’ ‘suburb’, lay to the north and Chapelfields, the watchmakers’ ‘suburb’, to the west.


\textsuperscript{16} B. Lancaster and A. Mason eds, \textit{Life and labour in a twentieth century city: the experience of Coventry} (Warwick, 1987), 342.

poverty behind better-off residences. Analysis of the addresses of those prosecuted showed as expected that there were concentrations of truants in the enclosed courtyards of the central area.

The lists of prosecutions show that the authorities carried out occasional ‘truancy blitzes’, by taking a large number of the parents living in a particular yard or street to court at the same time. For instance, on 10 July 1880 all 12 respondents lived in courtyards behind Well Street and neighbouring Bond Street, two streets just to the north of the city centre. Of these 12, five were in court again in 1881 or 1882. Occasionally, repeated ‘blitzes’ feature in the record. A number of residents of Castle Street, situated in the crowded centre of the city, appeared in February 1883 and then again in September 1884. The prosecution of poor ‘neighbourhoods’ was characteristic only of the 1880s: by the 1890s, the distribution of the prosecuted was much wider across the city. The reputations of certain districts, even of particular streets and courtyards, in terms of poverty and respectability, may well have led the authorities to focus on those areas, as much as information obtained from schools. The fine gradations of the working-class social scale were apparent not only to the authorities but to each neighbourhood’s occupants, even though its occupational make-up might be diverse. At the same time, families and children were influenced by the ‘habits’ of their local community, the courtyard or street.

‘Blitz’ tactics must have been a policy of last resort to some extent, as individuals’ addresses were difficult to track down. Coventry’s topography was ideally suited to the avoidance of detection by school attendance officers, as children and parents could keep out of sight in what was effectively a hidden world of back-to-back houses behind the main streets. The house numbering itself was imprecise and confusing, since up to a dozen houses in each courtyard took the number of the house on the street in front of it, and this led to more difficulties in tracking down truants and identifying addresses in court. For the frustrated authorities, a clamp-down from time to time might have seemed the best way to ‘send a message’ to certain districts that school attendance was going to be enforced.

**Child labour and the age of truants**

The truanting children listed ranged in age from 6 to 13. The very few six-year olds in the Summons Book were the siblings of older children also being prosecuted. The number of children aged nine or under, however, was quite significant, forming 32 per cent of all cases. It is unlikely that a child of this age would have been in paid employment in the 1870s, and less so by the 1890s, but it was certainly possible that parents kept them at home for domestic tasks or to assist in small-scale textile work. Child labour, whether casual paid work or unpaid helping at home, is a more plausible

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Prosecutions for truancy in Coventry 1874–1899

The proportions of truants of different ages remained fairly constant over the years recorded, although there was a trend towards the prosecution of older children, within the declining number of total prosecutions, in the later 1890s. Coventry had approximately 600 half-timers in school each year during the 1880s, which reflected significant opportunities for child labour in the local silk textile trade, though half-time working was not integral to the schooling system to the same extent as in parts of Lancashire and West Yorkshire.19 Absenteeism among older children may also have increased due to the uncertainty of work for adults, both men and women, in the Coventry trades from the 1860s onwards.20 Almost all prosecutions were of parents rather than employers. In 1878, there were ‘exemplary’ prosecutions of a group of small-scale employers, typical of Coventry businesses, but this was exceptional.

**Occupations and pressures on family incomes**

Beyond their names and addresses, the data on parents was patchy, as occupations were only recorded in two sections of the Summons Book, part of 1878 and three years from 1885–1888. These are compared in Figure 3. The entries for 1878 include 36 different

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19 CoSB Minutes, SLA/5/1/3 21.5.1891 refers to the Coventry Cotton Company having established its own school to cater for half-timers.

20 Prest, *Industrial revolution*, 84–8, 130–5; Lancaster and Mason, *Life and labour*, 12–21 describe the period 1880–1914 as one of ‘industrial transition’ in Coventry.
occupations. This variety—including a newsagent, coal dealer, hairdresser and even a policeman—shows the wide social spread of families involved in non-attendance in the 1870s. By the late 1870s truancy was already associated with a minority of children, but certainly not limited to the poor or marginal groups. This is clear from the fact that 50 per cent of the fathers prosecuted were working in the skilled trades of silk ribbon weaving and watchmaking, while under 20 per cent were listed as general labourers.

Many male silk ribbon weavers of Coventry, however, were members of a declining domestic production system, while the trade as a whole was becoming an increasingly factory-based and feminised one. By the 1880s, new weaving factories were replacing the domestic system, with elastic weaving, cotton thread and frillings, plus silk book-markers emerging, but by no means filling the gap in terms of employment capacity. Manufacturing was still largely concentrated in small workshops, some of them on the top storey of terraces of workers’ cottages, to enable weavers and their families to access steam-driven machinery for ‘domestic’ production. Women were commonly involved in assisting the weavers, often as winders and warpers, and children as fillers and pickers-up.21 Possibly the weavers were using the labour of their children, as well as their wives, to sustain family incomes in a situation of increasing competition and low wages.

Similarly the watchmaking trade, although ostensibly a skilled occupation, was characterised in Coventry by an elaborate assembly process organised on an outworking system, with each worker concentrating on a single aspect of the production process.22 The watchmaking trade was certainly under threat from continental competition by the 1870s, but it was not turning towards mechanised production as was the case with silk manufacture. Instead, the response of the industry had been to sub-divide the assembly process to an even greater degree, producing a lot of intra-occupational variation in earnings and insecure employment. Some watchmakers lived in houses with extensive workshops attached to their homes. However, most of the watchmakers prosecuted for truancy lived in the centre of Coventry, and in the back-to-back courtyards rather than the purpose-built watchmakers’ housing of Chapelfields. Probably the men prosecuted were journeymen on the fringes of the trade and likely to have intermittent or insecure income.23

It is noticeable that, by the mid-1880s, the number of weavers and watchmakers as a proportion of those being prosecuted had declined. In the case of the watchmakers this reflected a decline in the numbers employed in Coventry.24 They had been replaced by a

24 Census figures for 1881 and 1891 show a decline of watchmakers in the Coventry workforce from 25.7 per cent to 15.5 per cent, whereas weavers were 4–5 per cent at both dates. Employment in cycles increased from 3.25 per cent to 19.7 per cent. These figures should be treated with caution as occupational data is not available for Coventry alone in the 1881 census, so figures for Warwickshire have been used.
premises or machinery as most of the parts were made elsewhere. Little capital was needed to set up a bicycle factory, and consequently the pattern of employment was similar to Coventry’s other trades, with numerous small employers, often transient ones, working in a boom and bust environment as orders for bicycles fluctuated widely in the 1880s and 1890s. The work in sewing machines and bicycles was well-paid assembly work, but insecure and seasonal, so perhaps contributing to a demand for child labour when the breadwinner’s income was interrupted by a lack of work.

Weavers form 20 per cent of the sample in the Summons Book in 1878 but only 9 per cent of it in 1885–1888. One explanation for the higher levels of non-attendance by their children at the earlier date is that there was still a significant demand for child labour in small workshops in 1878, but this had declined somewhat by 1885–1888. Nonetheless,

small workshops in 1878, but this had declined somewhat by 1885–1888. Nonetheless, weaving families were over-represented at both dates compared with their numbers in Coventry as a whole, and this could be attributed to endemic poverty, insecure employment and the demand for child labour in domestic production.

The more ‘middle-class’ occupations mentioned in 1878, such as hairdresser and newsagent, were absent in the mid-1880s sample, but parents with skilled trades still appeared. The distinguishing feature of them all is that they lived in the same districts, streets and courtyards as those prosecuted in 1878, and this is the major common factor between the two samples. There were a few from the 1885–1888 sample who lived out in the weavers’ ‘suburb’ of Hillfields, and some near the new bicycle works to the east of the city (see Figure 4), but most lived in the old central area, with its crowded back-to-back housing (see Figure 2). The absence of better-off parents perhaps indicates that the latter were now conforming to the attendance laws, whereas the poor of the central districts remained the main target of attention.

**Single parent families and truancy**

Figure 3 also shows the incidence of female-headed households in the lists for 1878 and the mid-1880s. It is clear that prosecutions of such women increased over time. Because women were generally summoned only when they were the householder, it is possible to analyse the incidence of female-headed households across the whole period 1874–1899. Most of the women named were probably widows, though some could have been deserted wives or even unmarried mothers.27 They make up 8.4 per cent of the total sample of 3,166 cases in the Summons Book, but from 1894 onwards they constituted more than 20 per cent of all cases coming to court. For the period of 1885–1888, out of a total of 375 cases, there are 39 involving female heads of household, representing 10.4 per cent of the sample, but half of the cases involved repeat offences—there are only 25 individual names. The high incidence of repeat offences for non-attendance amongst lone mothers suggests that, in their cases, the problem of non-attendance had become a chronic one. Possibly the authorities chose to concentrate only on those who repeatedly failed to heed warnings to get their children to school.

Evidence about the type of penalties imposed on widows and lone mothers suggests there were particular moral judgements at work in these cases. Table 1 shows that cases involving female-headed households had a higher than average conviction rate and were less likely to be fined (though more than half of cases involving lone mothers did still result in a fine). The lower incidence of fines must have been due to the patent inability of many women to pay fines, and thus magistrates preferred an attendance order which required monitoring of school attendance for a defined period (usually a month or six weeks) with a return to court if there was insufficient improvement. Fewer lone mothers

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27 The assumption that female heads of household were mainly widowed women is supported by the census analysis of the smaller sample for 1881 and 1891. Only one woman from those listed in those years as head of household was not designated as a widow on the census return.
Prosecutions for truancy in Coventry 1874–1899

Table 1  Summary of penalties imposed by the court on parents for non-attendance in Coventry, 1874–1899

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of cases</th>
<th>Conviction rate %</th>
<th>Fines as % of convictions</th>
<th>Attendance orders as % of convictions</th>
<th>Industrial school as % of convictions</th>
<th>Withdrawn (i.e. not convicted) %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>3,166</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>63.8 *</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male head of household</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>65.0 *</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female head of household</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>75.9</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: * The convictions plus withdrawals exceed 100% because some fathers were prosecuted for two or three truanting children at the same time and were then served with multiple fines or attendance orders.

had their cases withdrawn after adjournment, perhaps because they had already been given numerous chances to improve. On the other hand, their children were more likely to be sent to an industrial school as an outcome of a prosecution under the Education Acts. Industrial schools were residential schools for children referred by the courts for petty or first offences, or because of neglect or homelessness. Most industrial schools were in rural areas in order to separate the children from former influences and they were committed for several years (often to age 14 or 16). Removal to an industrial school was costly to the local authority and therefore only used for extreme cases. Possibly magistrates considered some of these mothers were unable to provide an adequate home for their children, through lack of income, lack of control over them or simply the burden of having too many children to care for alone. This bias in penalties signifies both moral and economic judgements by magistrates and the school board about the viability of the female-headed household. Widowhood or desertion usually resulted in a rapid descent into poverty and marginalisation, with little chance of recovery before the eldest children were of earning age. The increase nationally in committal of children to industrial schools for truancy between 1880 and 1900 was just one of the bitter fruits of a patriarchal system of justice in a period when poor law out-relief was being tightened up considerably, and the pressure of school fees was still a problem for these—the poorest—parents.28

Coventry School Board’s overall use of industrial schools to punish truancy, however, was modest. Only 36 Coventry children were committed to industrial school over the 25 year period 1874–1899. Typically they were boys aged 10–11. Thirteen of the children came from female-headed households, representing 36 per cent of the total. The consignment of successive children from the same family to industrial school occurred rarely, but usually in cases where the mother had moved house frequently, perhaps indicating to the magistrates that she could not maintain a stable family home for her children.

28 The Home Office, Annual reports of the chief inspector of reformatories and industrial schools, BPP 1880–1900.
Family reconstruction and the pattern of truancy over time: a comparison of families prosecuted in Coventry in 1881 and 1891

Using census information alongside the personal details in the Summons Book, it was possible to reconstruct the characteristics of a smaller group of families, whose heads were prosecuted for non-attendance in 1881 and 1891. These years were chosen as they coincide with the census and were likely to result in the maximum number of traceable cases on the enumerators’ forms. An electronic search of the relevant census unearthed information on each family: the parents’ ages and occupations, their places of birth and the characteristics of the neighbourhood in terms of occupational categories and type of housing. In relation to the child, the birth order and size of family were the major characteristics of interest. The number of individual families traced on the census was 163 in the 1881 sample and 81 in the 1891 sample. Only three families in each of the census years proved impossible to trace accurately in the census record, probably because they had moved into or out of Coventry between the census date and the prosecution. In all other cases, the family was identified using an online index, with supplementary checking at Coventry Local Studies Library.29

In both the 1881 and 1891 samples, a sizeable minority of parents was prosecuted more than once. While only 7 per cent were prosecuted again for the same child’s non-attendance within the year, if one extends the analysis to the end of the following year, the proportion prosecuted for the second or even third time rose to 21 per cent of the sample for 1881 and 22 per cent for 1891.30 This indicates the relative ineffectiveness of the penalties used by the local authorities and their lack of a deterrent effect for a significant minority of parents.

The 1881 and 1891 samples

The key data on the families prosecuted in 1881 and 1891 are shown in Tables 2 and 3. Table 2 confirms a high degree of stability in the characteristics of the truanting children between the two dates. Though there were some very large families in the 1881 sample (including one with 9 children and another with 11) the mean number of children, at 4.6 for both 1881 and 1891, appears close to the average for working-class families in the period.31

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30 Belfiore, ‘Family strategies’, 279 claims 47 per cent of her Essex sample appeared in court more than once, but this was for up to 5 years after the first prosecution.

31 Szreter, Fertility, 312 and 344, shows fertility rates for artisans comparable to the watchmakers and silk weavers to be between 4.5 and 6 children, but these are mean completed family fertility rates so not directly comparable with the samples; A. McLaren, A history of contraception from antiquity to the present day (Oxford, 1990), 179, records the average number of children as 6.16 in couples marrying from 1861–1869 and 4.13 for those marrying 1890–1899 and the samples are in this range; Lancaster and Mason eds, Life and labour, 65, note that Coventry’s birth rate was ‘a few points’ higher than the national average from the 1880s onwards.
The gender balance of those prosecuted remained the same at both dates. It is perhaps surprising to find more boys were being identified as truants, given the evidence that girls were more prone to absenteeism from school.\(^{32}\) Possibly the school board was reluctant to prosecute older girls who were fulfilling domestic duties at home as this was seen as a more ‘legitimate’ form of absence than the truancy of boys or younger girls.

Table 3 shows that most of the fathers were skilled workers at both dates. In 1881, these parents were predominantly working in watchmaking and silk weaving, the declining trades of Coventry.\(^{33}\) Persistent truancy was not therefore associated predominantly or even mostly with unskilled workers, though labourers do form a significant minority of those prosecuted. However, there were also parents listed as ‘master tailor’, ‘confectioner’ and ‘cabinet maker’, as well as one running a hat shop and another father recorded in the census as a ‘chemical experimentalist’, who was clearly from a middle-class background and by 1891 had become a factory manager. Similarly, the 1891 sample includes five parents who were employers or sole traders, and their addresses confirm that they were more affluent than the rest. Four of these ‘middle-class’ families were larger than the average, which may have made their children more prone to truancy from school than other shopkeepers’ families, especially where the mother was assisting in the family business and unable to supervise them as effectively.

\(^{32}\) Davin, Growing up, 102.

\(^{33}\) The differentiation between skilled and semi-skilled work in Coventry is problematic, given the dilution of craft status which was affecting both silk manufacture and watch-making at the time. Bicycle assembly
The population of Coventry was not a mobile one, and migration was very local with over 80 per cent of residents of Coventry born in the city itself or in the county of Warwickshire in the period 1871–1891. Data in Table 3 on the parents’ birthplaces confirms that the families of truants were ‘typical’ of the wider population, with the majority born in the city. Very few of the families in either 1881 or 1891 had moved away during the years of child-bearing, since most of their children were also born in the city.

Table 3 shows that the participation of the mothers in the 1881 sample in paid work was significant. Most of the working mothers in both 1881 and 1891 were working in silk weaving, whatever their husbands’ occupations. Two-thirds of the wives of the silk weavers in the 1881 sample had occupations noted on the census, almost all of them in the supporting functions of winder, warper, and similar occupations. Nearly a third of watchmakers’ wives were also participating in the labour market, seemingly a high figure given the tradition that watchmakers’ wives did not undertake paid work. Evidence from earlier in the century links working mothers with fewer years of schooling for their children. A working mother might also be more likely to have truanting children, as they were less likely to be well supervised during the day. However, it is possible that some of these mothers were still working at least near to home in silk manufacture, since workshops were distributed throughout the central district and even in the crowded courtyards, where many of the truants’ parents lived.

The most significant change between the two samples of truanting families was a decline in the mothers’ employment over the decade 1881–1891. Although this reflected a general trend, in that the proportion of the female population in paid work in Coventry fell from 46 per cent of the employed population in 1861 to 31.8 per cent by 1901, the proportion of working mothers in the two samples declined much more steeply between 1881 and 1891. Table 3 shows that in the 1881 sample nearly 45 per cent (70) of mothers had an occupational status but in 1891 only 21 per cent (17) of the sample had one, two of them the wives of sole traders, assisting with the business. A plausible reason for this sharper decline in employment of mothers of school-age children might relate to the drop in opportunities for women’s domestic production in Coventry during the 1880s when silk manufacture in small workshops was replaced by factory work. New sectors such as cigar manufacture and factory-based silk production expanded over the period

35 Pugh, VCH, 171.
36 J. Humphries, “Because they are too menny.” Children, mothers and fertility decline: the evidence from working-class autobiographies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,” University of Oxford discussion papers in economic and social history, no. 64 (September 2006), 21, links working mothers with fewer years at school for their children in the pre-compulsory period.
37 Marson, ‘Coventry: urban geography’, 112.
38 Lancaster and Mason eds, Life and labour, 16.
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but mostly attracted younger, unmarried, women, and therefore opportunities for working mothers probably fell even more than for women in general. Charring and cleaning—the usual resorts of working mothers—were not as widely available as an alternative in Coventry because its industrial sectors were dominated by small businesses, sole traders, and master craftsmen who lived only a little more comfortably than the men who worked for them. There was therefore a significant decline in work opportunities within or close to the home suitable for working mothers in the 1880s, and this decline seems to have had a major effect on the numbers of working mothers in the two samples ten years apart.

An additional explanation for the decline in working mothers listed could be that, in the 1891 census, enumerators were recording women’s paid employment on a less systematic basis and this affected the census records. While possible, such a change in recording is unlikely to have taken place in relation to silk weaving, as opposed to ‘household’ employment such as laundry work. The bulk of working mothers in both samples were working in silk manufacture and, in 1891, if they were still working in textiles they were more likely to be working outside the home in a factory than in 1881, and were therefore more likely to have their paid employment recorded in the census. Thus the census information is probably an accurate reflection of a difference in working patterns amongst the women in the two samples.

Table 3 also shows that the families in the 1881 sample, most of whom were headed by a skilled worker, lived mainly in the poorest type of housing in the yards behind the main streets in the centre of Coventry, a fact which exposes the intra-occupational differences of income and status which were not evident from the occupational labels in the census. A total of 66 per cent lived in the back-to-back houses in enclosed courtyards, while only 34 per cent lived at addresses fronting roads or streets. These proportions are not a measure of the extent of poverty amongst the families prosecuted, since some of the city centre streets in Coventry were also well known for their poor housing and tenements. However, the yard addresses were certain to be of poorer standard and stand as a good proxy for family poverty. While the decline in working mothers might suggest that the 1891 families were living in greater poverty than the 1881 sample because they did not have access to a mother’s income, the evidence about the type of housing the families occupied suggests the opposite—that the 1891 sample was not actually as poor as the families prosecuted a decade earlier. Although certain streets appear in both samples, a major shift was observed in the type of housing occupied by the families in the 1891 sample. Only 36 per cent of them lived at addresses in enclosed courtyards, whereas 64 per cent were recorded living on main streets or side roads. There was no significant slum clearance in Coventry between the two dates to account for this change.39 The

neighbourhoods for some of the streets were obviously as poor as any courtyard, but there was a significant difference in the occupational profile of several of the neighbourhoods included and of the parents who were prosecuted for truancy.

Several working in the bicycle industry lived in the new streets to the east of the city (see Figure 4, p. 30). Two fathers were journeymen carpenters living next door to each other: their sons had probably truanted together. Another, a bicycle worker, had a carpenter, hairdresser, butcher and church army captain as neighbours. Yet another lived close to the school attendance officer. This difference in addresses in the 1891 sample, taken together with the much lower incidence of working mothers, points to a shift in the status of those coming to the attention of the School Board. Even so, not a single parent prosecuted in the 1891 sample lived in the more select watchmakers’ district of Chapelfields. However, the prosecuted families in 1891 were spread more widely across Coventry, suggesting that the earlier policy of ‘truancy blitzes’ of certain poor areas of the city had given way to a more systematic pursuit of long-term or intermittent absentees using school attendance data. This still included the very poor, such as the lone mothers whose children may have been truanting to supplement family income or release the mother to work, but it hints also at the diversity of causation behind truancy, so that in 1891 poverty was not the major indicator of the likelihood of truancy, or prosecution for it, in Coventry.

Conclusions

The main findings of the work on this unique set of data confirm the link between poverty and truancy. Many of the city’s truants came from households headed by artisan workers trapped in insecure employment and living in poor-quality housing at the back of the main streets. Skipping school from time to time was a widespread practice in poorer districts and simply a matter of course for many working-class children from the narrow alleyways of Coventry’s packed city centre. The authorities’ approach was characterised by a ‘blitz’ on particular well-known poor neighbourhoods in the 1880s, but gradually enforcement took on a more systematic approach with families from across the city rather than just in the centre being prosecuted, presumably based on more accurate information about absentees from the schools. It is also possible that the reluctance of the poor to send their children to school had been largely overcome, and this would have been assisted by the ending of school fees in 1891.

The data shows that the School Board also concentrated progressively on the recalcitrant and repeat offenders, including lone mothers, in the 1890s. Poverty was an undercurrent to much of the non-attendance which reached the courts in Coventry, but essentially the authorities were dealing with the ordinary working population of the city, not simply the destitute and marginalised—though of course, some of the defendants were in this category both economically and socially. Family circumstances must have been crucial to the decisions of some parents to make calls on their children’s time or labour to support
the family at times of perceived need, especially the widows and lone mothers in the sample, but this was not the case for all of the families. Furthermore it was less the case in 1891, when the families involved in truancy seem to have been on average slightly better off in terms of their housing, and fewer of the mothers were working. For some of those who were prosecuted in 1891, it may have been more to do with parental attitude than poverty which led to persistent non-attendance.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the helpfulness of Coventry Archives staff in supporting my source work for this article.
Prostitution in the Medway towns, 1860–1885

Adrian Ager and Catherine Lee

Abstract

Nineteenth-century prostitution has been the subject of a number of regionally-focused historical studies, yet surprisingly little of this scholarly attention has been directed towards the ports, dockyards and garrison towns of Kent. Levels of prostitution were high in these districts due to the presence of large numbers of resident military personnel combined with a range of supply-side factors related to the local economy, which provided limited employment opportunities for women at this time. Surviving statistical evidence is scant, and tells only part of the story of the women who made a livelihood in this way. A fuller understanding can be reached by a process of nominal record linkage, allowing individuals to be tracked over time. The resulting partially-reconstructed life histories shed more light on questions such as prostitutes’ ages, backgrounds and ultimate outcomes, and their experience of regulation and control at the hands of the local authorities than can be ascertained from single records. Thus they add qualitatively to the evidence furnished by statistical sources, and enable a challenge to be made to the existing literature particularly with regard to the heterogeneous nature of prostitution at his time.

Introduction

The 1970s saw an upsurge of academic interest in the economic and social lives of women who worked as prostitutes during the nineteenth century. This interest in the world’s oldest profession was stimulated by the work of Judith and Daniel Walkowitz, who argued that prostitution was often seen as an inevitable and transitional part of life in the working class neighbourhoods of Plymouth and Southampton, where employment opportunities for women were limited. In doing so they challenged the Victorian stereotype that portrayed prostitutes as social outcasts.1 Instead they suggested that there was little differentiation between the social and economic identities of the women who worked as prostitutes and other people living in the working class districts of the towns.2

In a similar study Frances Finnegan drew on a variety of local sources to reconstruct the life-histories of some 1,400 prostitutes and brothel-keepers living in York between 1837 and 1887.3 Although Gail S. Clark argues that Finnegan’s study breaks few theoretical or methodological boundaries because it contains little in the way of quantitative evidence, it nevertheless offers an alternative viewpoint to the hypothesis that prostitution was a transitory stage through which many women in poorer districts passed when they were

1 J. R. Walkowitz and D. J. Walkowitz, ’’We are not beasts of the field’’: prostitution and the poor in Plymouth and Southampton under the Contagious Diseases Acts’, Feminist Studies, 1 (1973), 73–106.
2 Walkowitz and Walkowitz, ’We are not beasts of the field’, 73.
faced with economic uncertainty. Finnegan suggests that social conditions like alcoholism, disease and poverty created insurmountable barriers which prevented prostitutes from entering or occupying a more conventional place in society.  

It is evident that these studies reach very different conclusions about the nature of prostitution in two different geographical localities, albeit they both acknowledge the significance of poverty as a causal factor. More recently, in her study of prostitution in Ireland Maria Luddy, whilst making the general link between prostitution and financial hardship, has pointed specifically to the Irish economic structure as a significant feature, noting the lack of employment opportunities available to women in an economy in which industrialism played little part. Luddy shows a greater appreciation of the heterogeneous nature of women who took to prostitution than is demonstrated by either the Walkowitz or the Finnegan models, noting that ‘for some women prostitution was a way of life, but for others it was a casual occupation.’

Kent’s prostitution trade has received relatively little attention from historians. The only significant study of this kind was carried out by Brian Joyce in the late 1990s. Joyce’s survey concentrates on prostitution in the garrison and naval districts of Chatham during the later part of the nineteenth century and argues convincingly that the dockyards and garrisons dominated the local economy, thus limiting the employment opportunities open to women in the town. However, he also notes that the large numbers of servicemen stationed in the area provided prostitutes with a willing clientele, suggesting that prostitution in Chatham was driven by a combination of supply and demand factors. Joyce’s monograph clearly has its merits but since references to primary and secondary sources are not cited Joyce’s claims do not stand up to academic scrutiny.

This article goes some way toward filling the gap in the existing academic literature outlined above by focussing on prostitution in the Medway towns of Kent between 1860 and 1885. It has two main aims. The first is to explore the links between prostitution and the range of ‘supply’ factors associated with the local economic structure, financial hardship and the makeshift strategies adopted by women of the labouring poor, in the light of the findings of Walkowitz, Finnegan, Luddy and Joyce. Secondly, using the methodology of nominal record linkage, we investigate the personal circumstances of some of the individual women who resorted to prostitution for their livelihoods in the Medway basin at this time. This methodology allows individuals to be traced over time.
and sheds some light on questions such as prostitutes’ backgrounds, ultimate outcomes and experience of regulation and control at the hands of the local authorities. The resulting composite profiles, supported by other sources such as Parliamentary Papers connected with the implementation of the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869 (CD Acts), add qualitatively to our understanding of the character of prostitution and of the means employed by the authorities to control the trade in the region.

By definition, attempts to examine and quantify levels of prostitution pose difficulties. Aside from the obvious problems associated with the ‘dark figure’ (the unknown total number of occurrences that went undetected and unreported), much of the documentary evidence that has survived (for example Petty Sessions records and local newspaper reports) is biased towards those women who passed before the benches of local magistrates. It should also be noted that many of the women worked under assumed names and thus records need to be approached with care. Nevertheless, a methodology of critical and systematic nominal record linkage between these sources and others (such as census materials and Poor Law Union records) that were created by routine bureaucracy enables us partially to reconstruct the lives of a large number of women who practised prostitution in the Medway area of Kent. By linking references to named individuals between sources and over time a combination of quantitative and qualitative data is produced, which in the absence of alternative detailed documentary evidence provides some understanding of a social sub-group that, by definition, had a vested interest in remaining as far as possible beyond the reach of officialdom and which might otherwise have remained largely unrecorded.

The local economy

In 1863 William Hughes gave some indication of the character of the Medway basin when he observed:

Kent is principally an agricultural county, excepting along its extensive seaboard, where commercial industry, in connection with maritime pursuits, forms the prevailing characteristic of its industry [...] Hops are extensively grown in some districts, particularly in the low grounds of Canterbury and Maidstone. Orchards are numerous, and cherries are an especial object of culture. The wheat and other grains are of the best description.9

It is clear from these remarks that many of the inhabitants living in the region still depended on agriculture for their livelihoods during the second half of the nineteenth century. According to the 1871 census, 11 per cent of the Kentish workforce was employed in agriculture, compared with a national figure of 7.9 per cent.10

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discussed at length elsewhere, however, census data has limitations as a measurement of women’s seasonal employment.11 These figures, which record only 3,551 Kentish females as having been engaged in agricultural occupations, mask the fact that a workforce estimated to be between 80,000 and 150,000 was required each year during the hopping season, of whom women were prized as ‘excellent pickers’ due to their manual dexterity.12 The seasonal nature of this work meant, however, that hoppers were forced into vagrancy and into the towns during the winter months.13 Under these circumstances, prostitution may have offered temporary relief from financial hardship since, according to one contemporary observer, ‘formidable and rampant was the vice commonly practised by the hop-pickers’.14

Population figures suggest that the three principal towns in the area—Rochester, Chatham and Maidstone—were vibrant urban centres. Expansion in the Chatham area was due largely to increased activity in the dockyards.15 During the 1850s and 1860s further growth occurred because the shipyard was enlarged and cement and paper manufacturers began to establish a presence in the region.16 Rochester and Strood saw their populations increase by nearly 20 per cent between 1871 and 1881.17 The expansion of industry in the Lower Medway Valley during the second half of the nineteenth century likewise led to an increase in the number of people living in the borough of Maidstone, by nearly 7,000.18 Remarks made by J. Woolmer give some sense of the scale of the change. He noted, ‘there are cement works and lime work, with tall chimneys smoking away; and thousands of people in Snodland where there used only to be hundreds’.19

One would assume the presence of so much industry had a positive effect on employment prospects in the region. However, it is clear from census reports that industrial activity was centred on heavy industry, such as shipbuilding, munitions and cement works, which offered employment opportunities predominantly to men. Kent had little light manufacturing industry and so, for the most part, women continued to be employed in low-paid occupations like domestic service, agriculture and the garment

13 Maidstone Journal, 6 February 1871.
14 Stratton, Hops and hop-pickers, 57.
16 F.G. Willmott, Cement mud and muddles a history of the A. P. C. M. Barges (Kent, 1977), 2–3.
19 J. Woolmer, Historical jottings of the parish of Snodland (Snodland, 1894), Preston, Industrial Medway, 65.
manufacturing sector. Opportunities offered by the latter were irregular and conducted on piece-working and out-working lines. The 1881 census recorded 233,007 of Kent’s females over the age of five years old (75 per cent of the total number in this age range) as having no occupation.20 Even where women were employed in the limited manufacturing sector, such as Maidstone’s paper industry, they were not well remunerated when compared with their male colleagues. The Turkey paper mill, for example, employed 263 women and 26 girls in 1865 (70 per cent and 7 per cent respectively of the total workforce), but these statistics mask the fact that women were largely engaged in low-paid occupations such as sorting, cutting, macerating and boiling rags whilst the more skilled tasks were performed by a small number of well-paid adult males. 21

Welfare provision and women’s employment

What, therefore, was the response of the authorities to the difficulties caused by the paucity of employment opportunities for women in the region? On first appearance, the poor law records appear to suggest that welfare provision was successfully addressing the problem of poverty. This is evidenced by the fact that the number of paupers who received assistance from the Medway Union was relatively low, in comparison to the number of inhabitants who lived within its bounds. For example, 1,364 paupers of all classes were assisted by the union in January 1861. 22 At this time, more than 50,000 individuals were living in the seven parishes that made up the union.23

Unfortunately, these early reports give no indication of the sex ratio or age of the population. Figures for the whole of the county, however, suggest males may have been in a slight majority.24 The figures therefore seem to suggest that a disproportionate number of able-bodied females were assisted by the Medway Union.25 In fact 99 able-bodied women, nearly twice the number of able-bodied men, were assisted inside of the

20 1881 Census of England and Wales, III, Age, condition as to marriage, occupation and birth place, BPP 1881 LXXX.1 [C.3722] [hereafter 1881 Census, III], 56, 63.
22 This number represents all indoor and outdoor poor, including the insane, lunatics, vagrants, able-bodied, infirm and children. For more on this see Comparative Statement of Number of Paupers relieved, January: 1860 and 1861, BPP 1860 LVIII.183 [383B.1] [hereafter Comparative Statement, January 1860/61], 24–5
24 In 1861, there were 368,450 males and 365,225 females living in the county. Whilst the population of Kent continued to expand into the 1870s, the sex ratio was less evenly distributed than it had been in earlier decades. Census reports show that women were now in a slight majority.
25 Recent studies by Nigel Goose and George R. Boyer and Timothy P. Schmidle imply that the elderly poor were often the main recipients of any out-relief that was provided by poor law unions. Moreover, the records of the North Aylesford Union for the late 1840s suggest that relief outside of the workhouse often took the form of small doles of food items with little monetary value. For more on this see Goose, Poverty, old age and gender in nineteenth-century England: the case of Hertfordshire, Continuity and Change, 20 (2005), 351–84. See also George R. Boyer & Timothy P. Schmidle, ‘Poverty among the elderly in late Victorian England’, Economic History Review, 62 (2009), 249–78. Also see, G/St AR11; (TLPSCS).
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Figure 1  Indoor relief provided by the Medway Union to the able poor January 1861–July 1882.

Figure 2  Outdoor relief provided by the Medway Union to the able poor January 1861–July 1882.

Note:  The datasets used in figures 1. and 2. were chosen for continuity purposes and to provide a more complete understanding of indoor/outdoor relief patterns for the Medway union between January 1861 and July 1882.

Source:  Comparative Statements of Number of Paupers relieved: 1861–1882;
BPP 1860 LVIII.183[383B.1]; BPP 1861 LIII.183 [324B.1]; BPP 1862 LXVIII.121 [307.B];
BPP 1862 LVIII.121 [307B]; BPP 1862 XLVIII.183 [307B1]; BPP 1871; LIX.163 [140B];
BPP 1871; LIX.219 [140B.1]; BPP 1872 LII.105 [126B]; BPP 1872 Li.157 [126B.1];
BPP 1881 LXVIII.515 [60B]; BPP 1881 LXVIII.569 [60B.1]; BPP 1882 LVIII.395 [100B];
BPP 1882 LVIII.449 [1000B.1].
workhouse in January 1861 (see Figure 1). The figures for outdoor relief were no less remarkable. Payments of one sort of another were made to 135 able-bodied females. In contrast, only 17 able-bodied males were assisted away from the workhouse during the same period.

As we have already seen, the population of the Medway basin continued to grow as new industries moved into the area. What is also certain, however, is that these industries offered few new employment opportunities for women. Again, this might go some way to explaining why many more women than men were relieved by the Medway Union. In January 1871, around one and a half times more able-bodied females than males were assisted inside of the workhouse (see Figure 2). Similarly, able-bodied women were in the majority when it came to outdoor relief. This particular class of female outnumbered their male counterparts by more than four to one.

This pattern continued into the next decade. In July of 1881 the population of the Medway Union stood at more than 61,000 inhabitants of whom 571 individuals were receiving assistance inside of the workhouse at Chatham. Those with some form of infirmity made up more than 54 per cent of this number. A third group representing vagrants and able-bodied children under the age of ten added another 26 per cent to this figure. While there was little difference between the number of males and females who were classified as ‘infirm’ or ‘not able bodied’, a closer inspection reveals that 79 of the 109 able-bodied adults who received indoor assistance were women.

A similar pattern emerges when the figures for outdoor relief are examined. Whilst only six able-bodied males received assistance outside of the workhouse, a total of 183 women were given some form of payment in the community. The ratio of male to female paupers who were classed as infirm was no less remarkable. Ninety-eight men were given some form of outdoor relief; in contrast, 433 women were assisted in this way. Of course these figures can be interpreted in a number of ways. On the surface it would appear that the Medway Union, in line with the New Poor Law more generally, had a punitive policy

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27 Similarly, the figures for July also show great disparity between male/female indoor/outdoor relief patterns. For instance, the ratio of able-bodied males to females relieved inside the workhouse was 22:77. In contrast, the ratio of able-bodied males to females relieved outside of the workhouse was 38:153. What is all the more surprising about these figures is that they relate to the summer months when employment opportunities for both males and females were at their best. 
28 Preston, Industrial Medway. See also Frank G. Willmott, Bricks and Brickies (Chatham, 1972). 
29 In all cases, figures were arrived at by dividing the number of male paupers into the number of female paupers. Able-bodied indoor and outdoor female paupers were also in the majority during the summer 1871, the ratios being 47:88 and 57:256 respectively.
30 1881 Comparative statement of number of paupers relieved, July 1880 and 1881 (hereafter Comparative Statement 1881) BPP 1881 LXXVIII.569 [87.600–69]. 
32 Comparative Statement 1881.
towards able-bodied males and that females were treated less harshly. A more likely scenario, given the structure of the local economy, is that women found it difficult to secure employment that enabled them to live independent lives.

Earlier, it was shown that nearly a quarter of a million women were registered as having no occupation in the county of Kent. It is also clear from the above figures that a disproportionate number of those who received relief from the Medway Union in the summer of 1881 were women. A different picture emerges when we look at the winter months. A total of 179 individuals classed as able-bodied were maintained inside the union workhouse in January 1882; of these 110 were females. Relief was also given to 194 able-bodied adults outside of the workhouse. It is clear that women and children received the bulk of this assistance; payments made to females outnumbered those given to men by more than sixteen to one, whilst able-bodied children under the age of 10 received more than two and a half times more relief than the total allowed for the able-bodied of both sexes. However, it seems unlikely that children were the sole

33 1882 Return of paupers in receipt of relief, January 1881 and 1882, BPP 1882 LVIII.395 [88.486], 13.
beneficiaries of these payments. Hugh Cunningham has suggested that parents often saw the poor laws as an additional resource, which could be used to reduce the financial burden of raising children.\textsuperscript{34}

Moreover, the summer and winter figures suggest the number of women who received relief outside of the workhouse remained fairly constant throughout the year. Unfortunately, these figures give little indication of the age or personal circumstances of individuals. The only way to improve this understanding is to supplement these records with other census material. For example the 1881 census records 61,644 individuals as living within the bounds of the Medway Union. The sex ratio was 32,107 males to 20,537 females.\textsuperscript{35} Of these individuals, 26,424 lived in Chatham. Again men were in the majority (13,670 males; 12,754 females). The records also reveal that 1,207 females were aged between 15 and 20 years, whilst 3,952 were between the ages of 20 and 45.\textsuperscript{36}

It is not possible to determine from these records how many single women lived in the town; however, information of this sort is available for the whole of the Union. The census shows that 2,637 single females aged between 20 and 45 were living within the bounds of the Medway Union in 1881. When widows in the same age range are included, this figure grows to 3,029.\textsuperscript{37} What the records do not show is whether these women had any dependents.

There is of course little in the above figures to suggest how many of these women were vulnerable or needed assistance from the Union. Clearly, there is insufficient space in this article to investigate this concern further. However, our brief survey of poor law records shows that payments to women in the summer of 1881 outnumbered those made to men by a ratio of four to one. Similarly, the figures for the winter of 1882 show the Union was spending more than three and a half times more on women than men. It is also significant that single young females made up a large proportion of the population living in vicinity of Chatham at this time.

It is precisely this category of women that Walkowitz suggested may have turned to prostitution. She argued that economic necessity and occupational dislocation were major contributing factors behind the profession in Plymouth and Southampton.\textsuperscript{38} Walkowitz noted that women in low paid occupations like dressmaking and domestic service rarely earned more than six to eight shillings a week. Moreover, she observed that,

Much of this work was highly casual, structured around the demands of the local season and the provisioning trade. […] Placed in vulnerable economic and

\textsuperscript{35} 1881 Census, III, 31.
\textsuperscript{36} 1881 Census, III, 31–51.
\textsuperscript{37} 1881 Census, III, 31–51.
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social position, some women who could not rely on family, relatives, or lovers may have found the shorter hours and better pay of prostitution a temporary and relatively attractive solution to their immediate difficulties.39

Prostitution

In addition to supply-side factors the ports, dockyards and large military presence in the area contributed to high levels of prostitution. The 1871 census for Chatham, for example, lists a total of 4,654 resident army and naval personnel including 2,859 soldiers. This figure compares with the 19,508 total number of males aged 20 years and over (for Chatham combined with the adjacent City of Rochester).40 In Maidstone in the same year, military personnel numbered 528, relative to a male population of 7,071 aged 20 years and upwards.41

Clearly the link between prostitution and poverty is one of association rather than of cause and effect, and not all women made this particular choice. Attempts to quantify the problem of prostitution, for the reasons outlined previously, are fraught with difficulty. The few statistics that are available were compiled by the Metropolitan Police under the provisions of the CD legislation (in force from 1864 until suspended in 1883) and whilst these figures were generally believed by contemporaries to under-record the number of women making a living in this way, they do provide some indication of the size of the trade.42 The 1871 census recorded 6,099 single and widowed women between the ages of 15 and 45 in the Medway registration district, during which year 203 women were registered by police as prostitutes in the Chatham district (including Rochester and Strood).43 In Maidstone the corresponding figures were 5,387 and 40, in Dover 5,094 and 95, in Gravesend 3,212 and 40 and in Canterbury 2,176 and 42.44 Expressed as ratios the number of prostitutes in Chatham relative to the number of unsupported women aged 15 to 45 was therefore 1:30. In Canterbury the figure was 1:52, Dover 1:54, Gravesend 1:80 and Maidstone 1:134. Even allowing for inconsistencies between the geographical territories encompassed by the two sets of data, these figures do strongly suggest that levels of prostitution were exceptionally high in Chatham at this period when compared with neighbouring towns with military installations. One possible explanation, as suggested by Joyce, is the limited opportunities for domestic service offered by the

39 Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian society, 195.
40 1871 Census, III, 88.
41 1871 Census, III, 88.
42 Annual Reports of Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police on the operation of the Contagious Diseases Acts, (hereafter Annual Reports of Assistant Commissioner), BPP 1875 LXL337 [C.97]; 1876 LXL33 [C.276]; 1877 LXIX.95 [C.255]; 1878 LXIII.675 [C.96]; 1878–1879 LIX.405 [C.235]; 1880 LIX.469 [C.231]; 1881 LXXVI.591 [C.140]; 1882 LIII.383 [C.291]
43 This register was kept in accordance with the Contagious Diseases Acts in ten Kentish ports, dockyards and garrisons.
44 1871 Census, III, 147; Annual Report of the Assistant Commissioner 1878.
structure of the local economy in Chatham. This hypothesis is supported by census data, which shows that the 726 domestic servants recorded in 1871 represents some 4.4 per cent of the female population aged 20 and above, compared with a figure of 12.2 per cent for the whole of Kent.

What, then, does the evidence reveal about the individual women who made up these statistics? As we have already seen, single sources reveal little personal detail. This is where record linkage or composite profiling comes into its own. The following examples, of Ann Kelly and of the Lucas sisters, demonstrate how partial life histories, reconstructed from a number of different sources, can add qualitatively to the evidence provided by raw economic and social statistical data.

In the case of Ann Kelly, registration records, census materials and local press reports combine to provide the following outline life story. Ann was born in Ireland some time in the late 1820s or early 1830s. It is not clear exactly when she arrived in Chatham, but she is said to have taken to getting a living ‘on the streets’ some time in the early 1850s. In 1861 she was lodging at the King’s Head public house in the notorious Brook district, a pub known to the local police as being ‘used for immoral purposes’. The census of that year recorded Ann as being without any occupation, as it also did three of her unmarried female co-lodgers. The following April Ann was convicted on a charge of being ‘drunk and riotous’, she was described in court as a prostitute and sentenced to one month with hard labour at Maidstone Gaol. Some time after this Ann moved lodgings to the Bell, another Chatham public house known to police as having links with prostitution. It was here that in early 1864 she was subjected to a violent physical assault and rape perpetrated by two soldiers who had lain in wait for her to return home. Appearing to give evidence at the Magistrates’ Court, Ann was described by the newspaper reporter as being bruised about the face and body and having two black eyes. The report of the case also reveals that Ann had a child, who was being minded by a neighbour on the night in question. Ann Kelly died the following year from exposure, having passed out in the snow on a cold February morning. She was reported to have been drunk and was dead on arrival at the Medway Union workhouse.

What can one woman’s history tell us about the widely heterogeneous group of women who practised prostitution in the Medway basin and the dockyards and ports of industrial north Kent in the third quarter of the nineteenth-century? It is clearly difficult...

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Joyce, Chatham scandal, 36.
1871 Census, III, 69, 92.
Chatham News, 27 February 1864.
Return of number of public houses and beerhouses used as brothels or houses for immoral purposes in districts subjected to Contagious Diseases Acts 1865–1881, BPP 1882 LIII.421.
1861 MSS Census, (RG9: 481).
Chatham News, 26 April 1862.
Chatham News, 27 February 1864.
Quoted by Joyce, Chatham scandal, 147.
to establish precisely how typical Ann Kelly’s story and circumstances were. What evidence has survived suggests that in a number of respects she was representative.

With regard to her Irish origins, however, Ann was unusual, since analysis of the birthplaces of 75 women known to have been involved in prostitution in Kent during the period in question and for whom the information can be ascertained reveals that 50 (66 per cent) had been born in the county. Of these, ten came from rural districts thus suggesting economic migration into the larger towns. A further 11 (8 per cent) had origins in London or the other Home Counties while eight (6 per cent) were born elsewhere in England, predominantly Devon and Hampshire. Significantly, these counties were both home to large naval dockyards. It is possible that young women attracted into Devonport and Portsmouth from surrounding rural areas subsequently followed naval personnel to the Kentish ports, following a ‘step migration’ pattern (whereby longer distance migration takes place by means of a series of intermediate steps).

In respect of her age, Ann Kelly was more representative. While there is some discrepancy between sources as to her precise date of birth it is clear that she was not exceptionally young at the time of her move into prostitution, having apparently taken to the streets some time in her early twenties. The alleged extreme youth of prostitutes was the subject of a good deal of controversy in the latter part of the nineteenth century but Walkowitz has questioned this notion, concluding that ‘the throngs of child prostitutes so highly advertised during the white-slavery campaign of 1885 must be dismissed as imaginary products of sensational journalism intended to capture the attention of a prurient Victorian public’.

Statistical evidence relating to the ages of Kentish prostitutes is scarce and contradictory and has to be used with care. Of the 590 women admitted to the Chatham Lock Hospital during the six months to March 1871, for example, only 35 (6 per cent) were under 20 years old. However, the ages of these women receiving treatment in the Lock Hospital are an unreliable indicator of prostitutes’ average ages. Given the nature of venereal diseases and the state of medical knowledge at the time, considerable intervals of time could pass between first exposure to risk of infection and diagnosable symptoms. The age of these hospitalised women would therefore necessarily be higher than the average. Likewise, statistics compiled by the Metropolitan Police in relation to women registered as prostitutes under the CD Acts must be used with a measure of caution. These show that of the 203 women registered during 1871 in Chatham, for example, the most common age group was between 21 and 26 (81 women representing 40 per cent of the total).

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53 Data collected from court records, newspaper reports and census materials.
55 Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian society, 17.
56 Report of the Royal Commission upon administration and operation of the Contagious Diseases Acts, BPP 1871 XIX.1, 29 [C.408], xiii.
However, contemporaries questioned the police statistics and in 1879 a petition was presented to parliament from 56 Maidstone residents casting doubt on their accuracy. Nevertheless, they do conform remarkably closely to central government judicial statistics compiled from local returns, which also suggest that the number of very young girls who practised prostitution was small. Of the 795 prostitutes known to local police forces in Kent in 1868, for example, 26 (3 per cent), were under the age of 16. The equivalent national figure was 5 per cent.

At the time of her death, Ann Kelly was described as having been involved in street prostitution for about 14 years. As we have seen, historians remain divided over the outcome of prostitution, debating whether for most women it was an entrenched way of life that was difficult to escape and which led inevitably to dissipation and destitution, or whether it was a casual and temporary occupation that was followed by rehabilitation into the ranks of the respectable poor. One measure of the temporal nature of prostitution is the average length of time that prostitutes spent on the streets. Evidence from Kent suggests that, for some younger women and girls, prostitution represented a transitional phase, and for others it was a step on a downward path. Some older women appear to have practised prostitution as part of an established, long-term mixed strategy of survival alongside, for example, periods spent in cohabitation and applications to the Poor Law Union. The Chatham Board of Guardians received numerous applications for welfare help from sick prostitutes including, for example, a 23 year-old woman who was described as being ‘in a dreadful state, and had been for several months.’ Another was apparently ‘almost dying from disease and starvation’ and the Board had been obliged to send a ‘conveyance’ to bring her to the Union, suggesting that she was too unwell to walk there.

Registration records provide evidence about the legal marriages of a number of women known to the authorities to have been living from prostitution, whilst census material and death records indicate that numerous women who had previously practised prostitution became inmates of, and often died in, either the county lunatic asylum or one of the union workhouses. Twenty-two of the 375 inmates (6 per cent) of the Kent County Lunatic Asylum, for example, were described as prostitutes in the 1881 census. Clearly, therefore, the outcomes for women who gained money from prostitution were varied.

58 Report from the Select Committee on the Contagious Diseases Acts, BPP 1882 IX.1, 44.
60 Chatham News, 23 March 1861.
61 Chatham News, 3 May 1862.
62 Centre for Kentish Studies (hereafter CKS), Gravesend Poor Law Union death register 1871–1914 (G/G Wld) 10 Feb 1890; 1881 MSS Census (HO/107:978); General Register Office Death Indices (Vol. 2a) June 1881.
63 1881 MSS Census, (RG11:954).
Analysis of the interval of time between the first and last documented mentions in court and other records of nearly 100 named prostitutes from throughout Kent suggests how long each might have spent on the streets. Of this sample, 61 per cent appear in the documentary records within a time-frame of less than two years, suggesting that many left the life after a short period. However, 15 per cent of the sample were arrested periodically on charges of soliciting, drunkenness or disorderly behaviour over periods of longer than five years. 64 Eliza O’Mally of Chatham, who seems to have achieved some notoriety in the courtroom having made over 100 appearances there, has been traced over a period of seven years, suggesting that her career lasted at least that long.65 O’Mally’s ultimate fate is unknown whilst Ann Kelly, as we have seen, experienced a premature and tragic demise. Although an extreme case, Kelly’s story indicates that Finnegan’s ‘demoralised creature treading the downward path’ stereotype did have some substance.66

The case of Ann Kelly has illuminated a number of factors relative to the practice of prostitution in the Medway towns, but sources tell us little about the economic circumstances that may have driven her onto the streets. The life histories of Leonora and Clara Lucas are more revealing in this regard. The financial circumstances of the Lucas family were much reduced on the death of Robert Lucas who farmed in rural Boxley near Maidstone, following which his widow, Eleanor, moved into Maidstone with two of her younger daughters and took work as a charwoman.67 Leonora was already living independently of the family by this time and whilst it is not known at what age she entered prostitution, she was described in this way in the Maidstone Magistrates’ Court at the age of 26, when she was summoned on a charge of assault.68 Some time after this, her younger sister Clara took lodgings with fellow prostitute Elizabeth Cripps in Camden Street Maidstone, where she is captured by the 1871 census, her occupation being recorded as ‘dressmaker’.69 Clara was, however, convicted later that year of being a ‘disorderly prostitute’ under the Vagrancy Act, for which she served a seven day sentence.70 Clara died at the age of 31, and the following year’s census records Leonora living alone in Woollett Street in Maidstone, a location that was home to several prostitutes, her occupation also recorded as dressmaker.71

The partially reconstructed life-stories of the Lucas sisters shed additional light on the experience of prostitutes in the Medway towns in a number of respects. Firstly, the

64 Taken from Petty Sessions records and reports of magistrates’ court hearings in Kentish newspapers, 1856–1878.
65 Chatham News, 27 April 1861; 26 October 1867; 25 April 1868.
66 Finnegan, Poverty and prostitution, 8.
68 Maidstone Telegraph and Kent Messenger, 8 February 1866.
69 1871 MSS Census, (RG10: 944).
70 CKS Maidstone Petty Session records, minutes (PS/Md Sm 4, 5, and 6), 14 December 1871.
71 General Register Office Death Indices (Vol. 2a) September 1880; 1881 MSS Census (RG11: 931).
Adrian Ager and Catherine Lee

sisters were representative in that their father’s early death affected the family’s economic security. Historian Donald Thomas has noted that the ‘road to prostitution often began when the death or absence of a father quickly obliged the mother to go out to work’, and this would appear to have been true of the Lucases together with a substantial number of Kentish prostitutes.\textsuperscript{72} Orphaned and single-parent family status is a common factor amongst a group of 36 identified prostitutes from across Kent for whom parental status has been ascertained. Of this group 22 per cent had lost their mother, 22 per cent their father, and 6 per cent both parents by the age of 20. Thus only 50 per cent of the group identified by our research had both parents still living when they reached this age. The difficulties experienced by single parents, particularly widowed mothers in maintaining a family, are well illustrated by the Lucas example.

We have seen that the Lucas sisters were both described on census returns as dressmakers, despite being known to police as being involved in prostitution, thus illustrating Finnegans’s observation that very few women recorded their occupation as ‘prostitute’.\textsuperscript{73} It is unclear from the evidence whether either of these women did engage in any dressmaking or whether the term was used solely for appearance’s sake, but it is evident that women sometimes used prostitution to subsidise their earnings from more legitimate employment. Frederick Wheeler, a local philanthropist, believed that ‘in most cases, it is not that they are getting their living as much as supplementing ordinary wages by prostitution.’\textsuperscript{74} Analysis of other types of employment associated with 49 Kentish prostitutes for whom the information can be ascertained gives some indication of these women’s socio-economic status. Of this group, 34 women (69 per cent) had worked as dressmakers, servants, laundresses or charwomen.

The prosecutions of Ann Kelly and Clara Lucas on charges of being ‘drunk and riotous’ and ‘being a disorderly prostitute’, and the custodial sentences with hard labour of one month and seven days they served respectively, tell us something about the regimes of regulation and control that were brought to bear on street prostitutes in the port and dockyard towns of Kent at this period. Streetwalking and soliciting were controlled in Kent with reference to a combination of both national and local statutory instruments, formulated to regulate behaviour in the streets and public highways.

Petty Sessions records suggest that it was the preferred practice of Maidstone magistrates, for example, to charge prostitutes under the 1824 Vagrancy Act for being riotous.\textsuperscript{75} When Chatham prostitutes Ellen Gladstone and Dinah Butcher were arrested, for example, PC Hibbard told the bench that their conduct had been of the ‘most

\textsuperscript{72} D. Thomas, \textit{The Victorian underworld} (London, 2003), 86.
\textsuperscript{73} Finnegan, \textit{Poverty and prostitution}, 14.
\textsuperscript{74} Quoted in Joyce, \textit{Chatham scandal}, 48.
\textsuperscript{75} CKS, Maidstone Petty Sessions records, minutes (PS/Md Sm 4, 5, and 6), 14 December 1871, 10 July 1872.
Prostitution in the Medway towns 1860–1885

indecent kind’. This, it transpired, consisted of ‘calling to gentlemen as they passed down the street’. One of the gentlemen ‘insulted’ by the women in this way was a clergyman. Gladstone was sentenced to fourteen days imprisonment and Butcher to ten days.76 Furthermore, evidence suggests that known prostitutes were punished more severely than other offenders prosecuted for the same transgression, indicating that the judiciary used a wide range of street nuisance offences over and above those directly related to prostitution to curtail the activities of streetwalkers. In December 1861, for example, magistrates heard two unconnected cases of drunkenness that had occurred in Chatham on the same day. Elizabeth Brown, named in court as a ‘common prostitute’, was sentenced to 14 days with hard labour, whilst an un-named ‘young man from the country’, who had been found drunk and incapable, was discharged.77 Likewise when Julia Swift, described in court as an ‘unfortunate’, and Sophia Winn were arrested together for being drunk and disorderly in June 1867, Swift was sentenced to 21 days with hard labour whilst Winn, whose occupation was not mentioned, was fined five shillings.78 For many of the street prostitutes identified by this study, custodial sentences appear to have been a routine and integral part of a life on the streets. In 1860 prostitutes comprised 25.4 per cent of the total number of women prosecuted summarily and by indictment in Kent compared with a national rate of 24 percent, whilst the corresponding figures for 1875 were 19.1 per cent and 16 per cent respectively.79

Conclusion

The Kentish evidence supports previous historians’ findings concerning the nature of prostitution in other locations in a number of respects, including the close association with poverty as argued by Walkowitz and Finnegan. Evidence specifically points to the particular characteristics of the local economic structure, which offered limited and poorly paid employment opportunities for women, as a significant factor. Additionally, immigrant and single-parent family of origin status had a part to play in women’s recourse to prostitution, as illustrated by the Kelly and Lucas case studies. The link between poverty and prostitution is not a simple one of cause and effect, however, and we may never know what drove some women to make this choice, which, it could be argued, is an example of what Thompson called the ‘tenacity of self-preservation’.80

76 Chatham News, 15 April 1865.
77 Chatham News, 7 December 1861.
78 Gravesend and Dartford Reporter, 20 June 1867.
79 Returns of judicial statistics of England and Wales, BPP 1857-58 LVII.383 [C.2407]; 1859 XXVI.339 [C.2508]; 1860 LXIV.473 (C. 2692); 1861 LX.477 (C.2860); 1862 LVI.491(C.3025); 1863 LVX.437 (C.3181); 1864 LVII.445 [C.3370]; 1865 LII.445 [C.3534]; 1866 LVIII.485 [C.3726]; 1867 LXVI.523 [C.3919]; 1867-68 LVII.519 [C.4062]; 1868-69 LVIII.513 [C.4196]; 1870 LXIII.525 [C.195]; 1871 LXIV.1 [C.442]; 1872 LXV.1 [C.600]; 1873 LXI.1 [C.871]; 1874 LXXI.1 [C.1055]; 1875 LXXXI.1 [C.1315]; 1876 LXXIX.1 [C.1595]; 1877 LXXXVI.1 [C.1871]; 1878 LXXIX.1 [C.2154].
80 E.P. Thompson, The making of the English working class (Harmondsworth, 1968), 63
This article has additionally argued for a greater degree of heterogeneity than has hitherto been acknowledged in discussions of the category ‘prostitute’, thus contributing to the ongoing debate about whether prostitution should be viewed as a transitory phase in the lives of poor working women, or whether it led inevitably to destitution, disease and early decline. The chosen methodology, a process of reconstructing individual lives by nominal record linkage, throws additional light on the origins, careers and ultimate outcomes of a number of women who came to the attention of the authorities as living from prostitution since it enables individuals to be tracked over time. The findings suggest that Kentish prostitutes encompassed a wider range of circumstances in respect of age, length of time spent in prostitution and subsequent careers than is recognised by either of the Walkowitz or Finnegan models.

Moreover, nominal record linkage adds qualitatively to our understanding of prostitution by allowing wider research findings to be contextualised by individual life-histories. The case studies presented here were chosen from a much larger number on the basis that they illustrate a number of characteristics common to the women identified by research as having been involved in prostitution in the ports and garrison towns of Kent, including the Medway towns. Further research is clearly necessary to increase the database size to a level of statistical significance, which will allow firmer conclusions to be drawn about the degree to which Ann Kelly, the Lucas sisters and many others were typical or representative. In this way, we can come to a greater understanding of the women who resorted to prostitution in Medway in this period.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank Dr Anne-Marie Kilday of Oxford Brookes University for her helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.
Housing the elderly in nineteenth-century Derbyshire: a comparison of almshouse and workhouse provision

Clive Leivers

Introduction

One of the aims of the research project currently being undertaken under the auspices of the Family and Community Historical Research Society (FACHRS), highlighted in a recent editorial in this journal, is to establish the contribution made by almshouses to the ‘mixed economy of welfare’. One element of this assessment will be to compare the extent of residential accommodation provided by almshouses and workhouses in the second half of the nineteenth century. In his survey of the populations of Hertfordshire workhouses, Nigel Goose found a ‘pronounced skew towards men amongst elderly inmates’, and suggested that one possible reason could be the ‘relative provision of almshouse accommodation for men and women’. This article contributes to that assessment by evaluating the relative contributions of almshouses and workhouses in the county of Derbyshire for residents aged 60 and upwards based on an analysis of the relevant Census Enumerators Books (CEBs) for 1851, 1881 and 1901.

The study area

At the end of the nineteenth century there were 35 almshouses in Derbyshire; in mid-century there were 32 with seven new foundations between 1851 and 1901 more than compensating for the four almshouses that had closed during that period. There were nine post-1834 Poor Law Unions (PLUs) in Derbyshire, each with their own workhouse, at Ashbourne, Bakewell, Belper, Chapel-en-le Frith, Chesterfield, Derby, Glossop, Hayfield and Shardlow. Six of the Unions comprised exclusively Derbyshire parishes; the other three also covered parishes in neighbouring counties: Ashbourne included 15 parishes in Staffordshire; Hayfield included the Cheshire parish of Disley; and Shardlow included 15 parishes in Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. Nine Derbyshire
almshouses were located in parishes served by Unions in other counties—Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire and Yorkshire. So, in drawing comparisons, those PLUs including non- Derbyshire parishes have been excluded from this analysis, as have Chapel-en-le Frith and Glossop which contained no nineteenth-century almshouses and Hayfield which included only one almshouse in its area—a foundation of 1880 at New Mills. This review will therefore concentrate on the Unions of Bakewell, Belper, Chesterfield and Derby.

Bakewell covered some 50, mainly rural, parishes within the White Peak, with its workhouse—opened in 1841—able to accommodate 200 inmates. There were two long-established almshouses in Bakewell and Cromford and a new foundation at Matlock was opened in 1898. Belper comprised 35 parishes to the south of the Bakewell Union and had an industrial character (45 per cent of the population were employed in manufacturing and 12 per cent in mining in 1851), with fair-sized towns at Alfreton, Belper, Ripley and Wirksworth.3 The union workhouse opened in 1840, with a capacity of 300. There were five almshouses in the territory of the union—at Belper, Duffield, Holbrook, Morley and Wirksworth. Chesterfield Union embraced 141 square miles and 34 parishes in the north-east of the county, with small towns at Bolsover, Clay Cross, Dronfield and Staveley; Chesterfield itself was the largest town in the county after the county town. The area was a mix of industrial villages—mainly coalmining and iron manufacture which accounted for 20 per cent of the population—and some agricultural parishes with almost 28 per cent of the population employed in farming and breeding.4 The workhouse was built in 1839 to accommodate 300 paupers. There were two almshouses in the town of Chesterfield (merged into one new building in 1875) and other foundations at Newbold and Staveley. Derby Union essentially comprised the five parishes of the county town and three immediately adjacent townships which were to be incorporated within the town boundaries by the end of the century. So the whole PLU area was essentially urban in nature with 56 per cent of the population engaged in manufacture and 10 per cent in domestic service.5 The original workhouse (built 1837–1838) could provide accommodation for 300 but was replaced by a larger structure in 1878. In 1851 there were four almshouses in the town but in the last decade of the century the institution founded by Bess of Hardwick had closed.

The composition of workhouse and almshouse populations

Table 1 sets out the basic data from the three decennial censuses used in this exercise. The total number of workhouse inmates increased significantly over the 50 years, from 575 in 1851 to 1,294 in 1901, particularly in Chesterfield and Derby, with the former showing almost a fourfold increase and Derby an increase of 330 per cent. Bakewell saw

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3 A.D. Smith, The Derbyshire economy in 1851 (Derby, 1977), 7-8, 34.
4 Smith, Derbyshire economy, 8–10, 34.
5 Smith, Derbyshire economy, 35–6.
only a slight increase of 27 per cent, mainly in male inmates, with Belper experiencing a similar degree of growth and gender distribution.

At every date, the majority of inmates were male, with proportions ranging from a bare majority of 51 per cent in Bakewell in 1881 to 70 per cent in Belper in 1901. The proportion of over 60s also grew over the period, rising from under one fifth in 1851 to almost a half 50 years later. In 1851 and 1881 the figures are more or less comparable to those in earlier studies; in the examples used by Hinde and Turnbull the proportions ranged between 18 per cent in Basingstoke in 1851 (very close to the Derbyshire figure of 19 per cent) and 38 per cent in Leicester in 1881 (10 per cent higher than the overall Derbyshire figure, although for the urban PLU of Derby the proportion was also above 30 per cent). The Hertfordshire results for 1851 reported by Goose give a higher figure of 30 per cent with a sex ratio (male per 100 females) of 236. By 1901, however over 40 per cent of residents in all four workhouses were aged 60 and above, as was the case in Hertfordshire in 1891.6

Analysing the population over the age of 60, throughout the period there was a preponderance of elderly male inmates, particularly in Chesterfield and Belper: 90 per cent in Chesterfield in 1851 and 80 per cent in Belper in both 1881 and 1901. Apart from the Derby in 1851, where 54 per cent of elderly residents were male, the proportion of elderly male to female was consistently above a ratio of 2:1, with about one third of the female inmates being over 60.

The data for the residents of almshouses presents a more varied picture due to the residential qualifications determined by the founders. Of the three institutions in Bakewell PLU, one was for single men (Bakewell), one for widows (Cromford) while Matlock provided for single women or married couples, though the great majority of residents here were widows or spinsters. The emphasis on provision for women becomes more apparent in the figures for elderly residents, with two-thirds being women in all three enumerations. In Chesterfield Union the only almshouse catering for men was that at Staveley, which took both sexes. Despite one of the three original almshouses in Chesterfield being endowed for three men or women, by the nineteenth century no men were in residence, so 80 per cent of inmates were women, most aged over 60.

The reverse situation applied in the Belper Union. Two establishments (Wirksworth and Morley) were exclusively male; the other three catered for both men and women, who at Duffield and Holbrook had to be over the age of 60. The census data reflects this gender balance with male residents, both overall and 60 plus, being in the majority at every census.

Table 1  Age Profile of Derbyshire workhouse and almshouse inmates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total residents</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Total 60+</th>
<th>Males 60+</th>
<th>Females 60+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>Bakewell Workhouse</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bakewell Almshouses</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belper Workhouse</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belper Almshouses</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chesterfield Workhouse</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chesterfield Almshouses</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Derby Workhouse</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Derby Almshouses</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Workhouse</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Almshouses</td>
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<td>56</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>Bakewell Workhouse</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Bakewell Almshouses</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belper Workhouse</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Belper Almshouses</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>330</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chesterfield Almshouses</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>70.4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Derby Workhouse</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>157</td>
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<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Derby Almshouses</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Workhouse</td>
<td>1,188</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Almshouses</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Bakewell Workhouse</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bakewell Almshouses</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belper Workhouse</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chesterfield Workhouse</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

59
Three of the almshouses in Derby provided for both men and women, including that run by the Liversage charity, which was the largest establishment in the county with over 50 residents recorded in the census returns. The fourth institution was one of the three almshouses in the county devoted to housing the widows of Anglican clergymen. But here again the majority of residents were female, with overall more than two-thirds of those enumerated being women; the proportion of over 60s was broadly similar.

A preliminary analysis of the results from the FACHRS project, based upon a sample of 7,655 census entries for the years 1841–1901 from nine counties (with a distinct skew towards south-east England) indicates that three-quarters (74.39 per cent) of almshouse residents were female, with ratios ranging from 4.76:1 in Middlesex to 1.44:1 in Norfolk. The equivalent ratio for the Derbyshire almshouses found in the study area covered in the present survey is 1.89:1, although the result for almshouses in all Derbyshire PLUs comes a little higher, at 2.2:1.

Drawing these findings together in a comparison of workhouse and almshouse provision for the elderly, Chesterfield in 1851 saw a virtual equality in overall numbers although, as stated earlier, the majority of almshouse residents were women. 1881 and 1901 show a significant growth in the provision of male places in the workhouse, rather less marked for women, but by the end of the century twice as many aged women were housed in the workhouse than in the almshouses, while the workhouse continued to dominate provision for men.

The almshouses in Bakewell Union in both 1851 and 1881 housed virtually the same number of elderly women as did the workhouse, By 1901, however, despite the opening

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### Table: Housing the elderly in nineteenth-century Derbyshire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1901 (continued)</th>
<th>Total residents</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Males 60+</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>% of total 60+</th>
<th>Females 60+</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>% of total 60+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Derby</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Workhouse</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>31.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Almshouses</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,294</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workhouse</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>65.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Almshouses</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Totals</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Workhouse</td>
<td>3,057</td>
<td>1,820</td>
<td>1,237</td>
<td>1,031</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almshouses</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


---

of the new foundation at Matlock, the three almshouses contained only half the number of elderly women that were found in the workhouse. Throughout the period under review there were significantly more aged men in the workhouse than had found almshouse places. A similar widening of the relative differences in workhouse and almshouse provision was found in Belper. There was no marked change in the number of almshouse residents over the 50 years but there were five times as many elderly workhouse residents in 1901 as there had been 50 years earlier—with an even greater growth in the number of elderly males.

Derby saw perhaps the greatest change in the relative provision. In 1851 the four almshouses provided more places for the over 60s than did the workhouse, even (marginally) for men. Half of these places were found in the Liversage Almshouses, which played an ever larger role in almshouse provision in the town for the rest of the century as additional places were provided. But with the opening of the new workhouse in 1878, almshouse provision was overshadowed, and by 1901 the number of elderly workhouse residents had increased to the same degree as in Belper, with more than seven times the number of elderly men accommodated there than had been the case in 1851.

So, in broad terms, the findings confirm that—as in other areas of the country—the county’s almshouses were directed more towards the provision of sheltered accommodation for elderly women, while it was to the workhouse that majority of poor elderly men had to look for institutional accommodation. This situation became increasingly apparent by the end of the century. In 1901 there were 424 elderly men residing in the four workhouses studied compared to the 40 found in the almshouses, and exactly half of these were in the Liversage institution in Derby. For elderly women the situation was less dramatic at the turn of the century, with 167 in the workhouses compared to the 77 almshouse residents.

One other measure of the respective contribution made by the two types of institution in providing residential accommodation for the elderly is provided in Table 2. This shows the number of workhouse/almshouse residents as a percentage of the total population over 60 in the four Union areas. Bakewell Union had the smallest increase in population over the 50 years but the highest proportion of elderly people of both sexes throughout. The percentage of the elderly in Belper stayed roughly the same throughout the period despite a steady rise in overall population. Chesterfield Union saw almost a threefold increase in population over the 50 years due, in some measure, to an influx of workers into the industrial sector, with ironworks expanding and the opening of numerous deep coal mines, but the proportion of over 60s changed far less dramatically, exhibiting virtually the same percentages in 1851 and 1901.8 Derby’s rise in overall population was

8 P. Riden and D. Fowkes, Bolsover: castle, town and colliery (Chichester, 2008), 101–2; D Hey, Derbyshire: a history (Lancaster, 2008), 389.
## Housing the elderly in nineteenth-century Derbyshire

### Table 2  Selected Derbyshire poor law union populations aged 60 and over

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bakewell</th>
<th></th>
<th>Belper*</th>
<th>Chesterfield</th>
<th>Derby*</th>
<th>Overall Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>1881</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>1881</td>
<td>1891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>14,753</td>
<td>15,127</td>
<td>14,909</td>
<td>15,613</td>
<td>16,220</td>
<td>17,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total over 60</td>
<td>1,271</td>
<td>1,241</td>
<td>1,395</td>
<td>1,415</td>
<td>1,436</td>
<td>1,694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% over 60</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident in workhouse</td>
<td>14(1.1%)</td>
<td>5(0.4%)</td>
<td>14(1.0%)</td>
<td>6(0.4%)</td>
<td>38(2.6%)</td>
<td>20(1.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident in almshouses</td>
<td>3(0.2%)</td>
<td>6(0.5%)</td>
<td>4(0.3%)</td>
<td>7(0.5%)</td>
<td>6(0.4%)</td>
<td>11(0.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes:
- Percentages in brackets show residents as percentage of over 60 population.
- * in 1890 one parish transferred from Belper to Derby which also gained one parish and part of another from Shardlow PLU.

### Source:
Census enumerators books Derbyshire as for Table 1; population data from [http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/historical statistics/population/age & sex structure](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/historical statistics/population/age & sex structure).
also significant but again proportions of the elderly showed little change. However, the percentage figures for the elderly population do mask a considerable numerical change, with almost a tripling of numbers for both sexes over the 50 years in Chesterfield and Derby; an increase of between 700 and 800 in Belper; and Bakewell showing an increase of 150 for men and 450 for women.

The percentage of the elderly in the union workhouses grew over time from less than one per cent in 1851 to 2.5 per cent 50 years later. As the earlier analysis would suggest, this was particularly marked in the case of men, the percentages rising from 1.3 per cent in 1851 to 3.7 per cent in 1901. However, these figures were markedly lower for this age group than those reported for Hertfordshire, where the overall percentages were 4.60 in 1851 and 3.09 in 1891, with the male percentages standing at 6.80 in 1851 and 4.89 in 1891.9 Throughout the 50 years it was Derby that housed the highest proportion in its workhouse, with the male percentage rising from 2.2 in 1851 to 5.5 in 1901. The provision for males in Belper showed a marked rise from 0.8 per cent in 1851 to 3.8 per cent 50 years later. As a result of these rising numbers of elderly residents in Derbyshire workhouses, the percentage contribution made by the almshouse sector shrank, since the only new establishment in the period was the Matlock Almshouse (in Bakewell Union) and, despite some expansion at Derby Liversage, this was offset by the closure of the Devonshire institution.

Conclusion

This survey has broadly confirmed previous findings that elderly men were more likely to find accommodation in the workhouse than in almshouses, and that in the workhouses they outnumbered their female counterparts. It has also revealed that this situation was not restricted to the southern agricultural counties examined in earlier research. Various reasons have been suggested for this gender imbalance: that elderly women were better able to look after themselves; that they were more useful to relatives (in, for example, caring for children and helping with household chores); and that more arduous male employment resulted in earlier and greater need for residential accommodation for men.10 Nigel Goose has drawn attention to the special problems faced by the aged agricultural labourer in Hertfordshire, where 73 per cent of elderly male workhouse inmates in 1851 had been so employed.11 Derbyshire had a more mixed economy than Hertfordshire, and in the county as a whole the agricultural sector employed less than a quarter of the county’s workforce in 1851 with the manufacturing sector accounting for 42 per cent.12 But even in the Ashbourne PLU, where half of those

12 Smith, Derbyshire economy, 34.
Housing the elderly in nineteenth-century Derbyshire

employed worked in the agricultural sector, the agricultural labourer was not predominant among the elderly men in the workhouse. In 1851 there were only two agricultural labourers among the eight elderly male residents; in 1881 they numbered seven in a total of 29 men over 60 with six other labourers of varying kinds and 12 other occupations represented.

In reviewing almshouse provision, the terms of the endowment are significant factors. Of the almshouses in this study, four were reserved for men; six for women and six catered for both sexes. And, as Alannah Tompkins has pointed out, almshouse trustees could be more choosy in the selection of inmates, while poor law officers had restricted options for dealing with the aged poor. In three of the Derbyshire almshouses, the receipt of poor relief was, in fact, a bar to admission. Furthermore, in assessing the contribution of almshouse provision within a particular PLU, one has to keep in mind that, in some cases, admission to almshouses did not depend on a specific residential qualification and does not, therefore, as Goose and Basten point out, ‘necessarily reflect the local system of welfare’. The Derby almshouses illustrate this point. Large’s Hospital provided accommodation for the widows of Anglican clergymen with no apparent restriction on residential qualification. Three widows of Derbyshire clergymen were among the inmates, but all were from outside the Derby PLU, while at an enquiry by the Charity Commissioners in 1860 one almswoman was said to be ‘to all intents a non-resident, as she keeps a lodging house in London’. Nor did the foundation contribute significantly towards housing the over 60s: throughout the period the majority of residents were below that age.

The almshouses founded by the Countess of Shrewsbury and Robert Wilmot similarly accepted inmates from outside the town. At the 1860 enquiry mentioned above, the then governor of Wilmots, Sir Henry Wilmot, stated, ‘I name whoever I please as inmates... They do not necessarily belong to Derby, but I think they should be connected to the family, old tenants or servants’. Similarly, the Duke of Devonshire chose the people to be allocated places in the Shrewsbury Almshouse, who came from ‘either old diseased servants of the Devonshires or old decayed burghers of Derby’. So, of the four establishments, only Liversages was restricted to residents of the town—indeed to the specific parish of St Peter, which in 1881 contained only 19 per cent of the total population in the PLU but provided 63 per cent of the almshouse inhabitants. Such was the attraction of the facilities offered by the charity that the clerk to the PLU told the Charity Commissioners that there was an ‘influx of persons into the parish who wish to obtain a

14 See also Goose and Basten, ‘Almshouse residency’, 74.
16 Derby Mercury, 22 August 1860.
17 Derby Mercury, 29 August 1860.
settlement, in order to become recipients of the Charity’. This was despite the Commissioners criticising the low rate of allowances paid to the inmates (then 4s. to 6s. weekly), commenting that ‘Almshouses were of no use whatever if the inmates were to be no better than paupers’.19

This review has hopefully shown that useful information can be obtained from a broad, quantitative survey of the respective contributions made by almshouses and workhouses to the relief of the elderly. But in reviewing the contribution of almshouse provision, it is equally important to take account of the residential and social qualifications for admission. As part of the FACHRS almshouse research project, similar data should become available for other localities and will thus allow further studies to be undertaken, enabling a wider, comparative analysis across the differing economic and social areas of the country.

19 Derby Mercury, 22 August 1860.
In 1765 the Rector of Hinton Ampner, Thomas Wingfield DD, inveighed against the Act for the Better Preventing of Clandestine Marriages that had been passed in 1753, requiring all marriages to be celebrated in the parties’ local parish church after the calling of banns or the obtaining of a licence. In his response to the Bishop’s inquiries about compliance with the legislation, he expressed the wish that it should be repealed, ‘because I think it is attended with very bad consequences, having not had any one marriage for more than seven years, the time that I have been rector of this parish’.1

Wingfield’s evaluation of the 1753 Act fits with that of many modern scholars. John Gillis, for example, talks of ‘massive non-compliance’ and suggests that cohabitation actually increased in the wake of the Act.2 More tentatively, Lawrence Stone suggests that while ‘the lower levels of the middling sort’ would have complied with the Act, others would have ‘relapsed into concubinage’.3 Others have similarly contended that the Act was a failure, and that many couples did not comply with its requirements.4 Drawing on such analyses, Douglas Hay and Nicholas Rogers portray the popular response to the Act as a rare example of a situation in which custom was able to triumph over law.5 That these analyses of the Act appear to be supported by the evidence of one who was actually ‘on the spot’ and in a position to observe the impact of the Act might be thought a weighty consideration in their favour. But how far were Wingfield’s criticisms justified?

3 L. Stone, Road to divorce (Oxford, 1990), 129.
A first glance at the register might seem to confirm his story: since his induction as rector of the parish on 28 April 1758 he had not personally celebrated a single marriage. But this does not mean that the parishioners of Hinton Ampner were choosing not to marry. One marriage had in fact taken place in Hinton Ampner during this period, on 6 December 1759, but it was solemnised by James Richardson, the curate. The reason for this is likely to have been Wingfield’s state of health: as he noted in his response to his bishop’s inquiries, he had been away from his parish during the winter, ‘labouring under a very grievous paralytic disorder’.⁶

Indeed, further perusal of the registers suggests that dissatisfaction with Wingfield, rather than opposition to the 1753 Act, accounts for the decline in the number of marriages in this period. After all, marriages had been celebrated in Hinton Ampner in 1755 and 1756—after the Act came into force on 25 March 1754 but before Wingfield’s arrival in 1758. And in the wake of Wingfield’s complaint in 1765, marriages began to be celebrated in the parish once more. But again they were not solemnised by Wingfield himself: the officiating minister was usually Thomas Durnford, rector of the neighbouring parish of Bramdean, although occasionally a curate—or, once, a chaplain of the Royal Navy—took the service. While it is not possible to ascertain Wingfield’s whereabouts while others were officiating on his behalf, the dates of the marriages celebrated during this period do sometimes suggest that the parishioners took advantage of their rector’s absences from the parish. Of the three marriages celebrated in 1767, for example, two were in July, while, in 1769, two of the three marriages occurred within ten days of each other, in October, and in 1768 one marriage was solemnised on 11 October and one a mere two days later.

Further confirmation that the absence of marriages in the Hinton Ampner register was not attributable to any dislike of the new Act may be found by examining the marital status of those whose children were baptised in the parish during Wingfield’s incumbency. Of the 24 couples whose children were baptised between 1758 and 1773, marriages have been traced for at least 18, or 75 per cent, a figure that is certainly comparable to the proportions traced in other parishes from sources of this nature and quality.⁷ In the remaining cases, one suspects potential misrecordings may be responsible for obscuring potential matches. We know, for example, that Charles Hawkins married Catharine Camiss in December 1762 in the neighbouring parish of East Meon, and that two of their children were baptised in Hinton Ampner in 1769 and 1774. It seems likely, therefore, that the entry in the baptism register that records the baptism of a child of Thomas and Catharine Hawkins in 1763 was erroneous. Similarly, the baptism of a child of Charles and Mary Kemp in 1769 followed shortly after the marriage of Charles Kemp to Elizabeth in 1768. The lack of continuity in recording—the entries in

⁶ Ward, Parson and parish, 193.
the baptism register are in a variety of different hands—made such mistakes all the more likely.  

It should be admitted that relying on the baptism register to provide a cohort of couples whose marital status can be tested poses its own problems: is such a sample genuinely representative of the parish as a whole? In this case the problems are exacerbated by the suspicion that the baptism register itself is deficient. In the decade before Wingfield’s arrival, the average number of baptisms per year was 6.9. After his arrival in April 1758, the register shows an average of 2.2 children being baptised in the first seven years of his rectorship. This rose to an average of 5.3 per year in the following nine years—the period during which Thomas Durnford and others were solemnising marriages. And, under a new incumbent, the average number of recorded baptisms for the years 1774 to 1779 rose to 10.2 per year. But while this deficiency in the baptism register may make it unsafe to draw more general conclusions about compliance with the 1753 Act from a case study of Hinton Ampner, it does at least reinforce the point that the behaviour of the parishioners cannot be attributed to that particular piece of legislation, but rather to their reluctance to involve Wingfield in such important rites.

Of course, the fact that Wingfield’s fulminations about non-compliance in his own parish can be shown to be ill-founded does not of itself establish that the population as a whole did comply with the Act. But there is ample evidence elsewhere that this was the case. One very visible result of the Act was that record-keeping improved considerably, making it easier to trace those marriages that did take place. Another consequence was an increase in the number of marriages celebrated in those parishes that had previously lost out to places that conducted clandestine ceremonies. This was particularly marked in London, where prior to the 1753 Act many couples had taken advantage of the option of being married by parsons operating out of the Fleet Prison. A survey conducted in the early 1760s found that almost all London parishes had witnessed an increase in the number of marriages celebrated after the Act: at St Clement Danes, for example, the number more than doubled, while at St James Westminster the rise was even more dramatic, as shown in Table 1. The extent of the increase clearly came as a surprise to some of those who responded to the survey: the clerk of St Botolph Aldersgate—which had seen the number of marriages increase from 83 in the six years before the Act to 281 in the six that followed it—frankly admitted that ‘[b]efore I examined I expected to have

11 Lambeth Palace Library, Fulham Papers, Terrick 6, fol. 2.
12 Ibid., fol. 3.
Clive Leivers

69

the Difference on the contrary side’, which reinforces the importance of not taking
contemporary statements at face value.13

Outside London, by contrast, some parishes saw an increase and some a fall
in the wake of the Act.14 But this simply reflected the fact that the provinces had not
had the same facilities for celebrating marriages clandestinely as had been available
in London. Rural clandestinity had tended to involve marriages being celebrated
in the wrong church—that is, one in a parish where the parties were not
resident—rather than in no church. As a result of the Act, any parish which
had previously attracted a high number of couples—whether because of cost,
convenience, or other factors—experienced a fall in the number of marriages after
the Act, as couples dutifully complied with the residential requirements. But if
one examines the numbers marrying across a large number of parishes, the gains
and losses of individual parishes evened out.15

That compliance with the 1753 Act was—contrary to Wingfield’s claim—almost
universal can therefore be clearly demonstrated.16 What Wingfield’s story
does tell us is that even apparently unequivocal evidence from contemporary
commentators must be treated with caution. Thomas Wingfield may have
convinced himself that the lack of marriages at Hinton Ampner was due to the Act;
that it was due to some failing on his part may have been a painful truth that he
did not wish to contemplate.

Table 1   Marriages in selected London parishes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Marriages 1747–1753</th>
<th>Marriages 1754–1760</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Clement Danes</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>+133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St James, Clerkenwell</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>+75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John, Clerkenwell</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St George, Bloomsbury</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>+101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Giles in the Fields</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>1,167</td>
<td>+396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St James, Westminster</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>2,172</td>
<td>+253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Martin’s in the Fields</td>
<td>752</td>
<td>1,724</td>
<td>+129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary le Bone</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>+205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Lambeth Palace Library, Fulham Papers, Terrick 6, fols. 2–4.

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that it was due to some failing on his part may have been a painful truth that he
did not wish to contemplate.

13 Ibid., fol. 67.
14 Ibid., fols 6–8.
15 See R. Probert, Marriage law and practice in the long eighteenth Century: a reassessment (Cambridge, 2009),
chapter 7.
16 See further, Probert, Marriage law and practice, chapter 7.
Review of recent periodical literature

Jon Healey, Andrew Hinde and Jon Stobart

Unless otherwise stated, all articles reviewed in this issue were published in 2008.


For those of us whose enthusiasm for agricultural history far outstrips our knowledge of plant science this is a hugely welcome article. Asking why there was an increase in English grain yields from medieval times to the nineteenth century, and why it happened so slowly, Allen offers a fascinating analysis of the role of nitrogen in such developments. To grow, plants need water and nutrients, notably nitrogen, potassium and phosphorous. These are used in generally fixed proportions, so a shortfall in one can significantly limit development; in medieval England the key limiting factor was nitrogen, thus an increase in nitrogen stocks meant more crop growth, whereas increases in the availability of other nutrients had little effect. Two broad developments, Allen argues, lay at the core of the ‘early modern revolution’ in agriculture. First, improvements to basic agricultural techniques, notably the selection of seeds and the preparation of fields through drainage, weeding, ploughing, and the folding of animals on the fallow which created conditions in which plants could use nitrogen more efficiently. This, it is suggested, accounted for about half of the increase in wheat yields between the fourteenth and the eighteenth centuries.

The main purpose of the article, however, is to explain the other half. This happened, Allen argues, thanks to a long-term increase in soil nitrogen stocks, which came in three stages. In the two centuries after the demographic catastrophe of the fourteenth century, arable lands were laid to grass, thus giving them a chance to recover from the over-intensive cultivation of the thirteenth century. Following this, the spread of convertible or up-and-down husbandry allowed the maintenance of this soil nitrogen level. Finally, the development of four-course rotations involving beans and clover led to a significant increase in soil nitrogen content. Animal husbandry had an important part in this story, but not the one it is usually given: rather than manure adding to the amount of nitrogen in the soil it merely recycled that which was already in the system. In reality, it was the crops grown to feed animals—the beans and clover cultivated in four-course rotations—which were decisive.


Focusing on the west of the county of Somerset, Ashford shows that the industry’s appetite for raw materials had outstripped local supplies by the time of Elizabeth I. Indeed, this was a developed trade in Somerset products by this time which served markets as distant as Ireland and Spain. By the middle of the next century, Somerset cloths were being vented across the Atlantic in colonial America.

Jackson’s piece on broadcloth entrepreneurs in Berkshire is a delightfully nuanced and detailed study. Berkshire’s broadcloth industry was unusually dominated by rich industrial capitalists, in contrast to the (equally rich) merchants prominent elsewhere. Indeed, two of its most successful industrialists, Thomas Winchcombe senior and junior, were the models for one of the age’s most famous celebrity-industrialists: ‘Jack of Newbury’. The wealth produced by the industry allowed many capitalists to buy land and ape the local gentry, creating predictable envy and distaste from established families. By the late sixteenth century, from which we have several surviving houses built by such industrialists, their trade had entered into choppy waters, thanks to the mid-century depression, competition from the New Draperies, and the long-term decline of Antwerp.


Housing is a fundamental human need. The provision of housing for expanding urban populations has long been a problematic area, with urban authorities seeking to regulate rather than facilitate or engage in house building, at least until the very end of the nineteenth century. As this paper makes clear, housing was a real issue for seventeenth-century Londoners, especially those who had recently arrived in the capital. One solution adopted by builders was to build in-fill housing in courtyards and gardens (often in the form of wooden structures abutting onto existing buildings, tellingly described by the author as ‘dwelling sheds’); another was to sub-divide existing dwellings. Both practices were frowned upon by the authorities, with ‘certificates’ issued for the former and a special survey undertaken of the latter. Drawing on these sources, Baer illustrates the types of dwelling under consideration and then goes on to discuss their importance to housing the urban poor, especially immigrants. What comes across most strongly from the descriptions, and the sources themselves, is the extreme overcrowding routinely experienced by the London poor during the seventeenth century. Indeed, densities of 2–3 persons per room were so routine as to be scarcely worth mentioning.
H. Barker, ‘Soul, purse and family: middling and lower-class masculinity in eighteenth century Manchester’, *Social History*, 33, 12–35.

With the study of masculinity becoming an increasingly popular area for historical research, this study attempts to broaden the subject, firstly by exploring the position of a relatively lowly group of men—a set of shopkeepers and tradesmen—and secondly by drawing upon their personal accounts and recollections, chiefly in terms of diaries. This situates the discussion of identity firmly in the realm of the commercial and subjective, rather than the public and polite sphere that structures much debate about identity in the eighteenth century. Barker shows that the men were firmly linked to traditional notions of manhood. Their points of reference and their spheres of activity were home, workplace and church, reminding us of the importance of continuity as well as change in any historical enquiry.


Marriage is seen as one of the defining demographic moments, recorded as an unambiguous fact in parish registers, along with baptisms and burials. In this provocative article, Beattie argues that being married or single was, in reality, far more complex. At one level, there were those people who lived alone because they were separated or divorced, a group which could be quite considerable in size. Here, the law blurred any easy distinction between married and single. At another level, the author draws on evidence from a number of court cases to suggest that marital status can be seen as a ‘performance’ that had to be acted out to make it visible. This would normally involve, among other things, living together after vows were exchanged and surrendering economic rights to the husband. Yet some married women lived alone and behaved as if single, whilst others carried on a trade as a single woman, but then took refuge behind the common law position of *femme covert* if financial difficulties arose. Such actions make the state and status of marriage much more than a simple demographic ‘fact’.


This paper examines the past, present and future of the Victoria County History (VCH) in the light of its recent grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to run a project called England’s Past for Everyone. Beckett also examines how attitudes towards local history have evolved over the twentieth century since the VCH was set up. For decades, local history was dismissed by academic historians as parochial or worse antiquarian, and was certainly not considered a suitable activity for any professional historian interested in enhancing his or her reputation with the Universities’ Research Assessment Exercise. Beckett illustrates how these attitudes have moderated somewhat in recent years, but
nevertheless he wishes local historians to be judged strictly by their peers so that they maintain the highest standards of scholarship. He hopes that the continued development of the VCH project can contribute to maintaining and enhancing these standards within the field of local history.


Demographic historians have long acknowledged that Malthus wrote his original 1798 Essay on the Principle of Population partly as a response to the utopian views of the philosopher William Godwin on the perfectibility of human society. Eventually, of course, it achieved fame as the first exposition of Malthus’s views on the relationship between population, economy and society. Yet, if the author of this article is to be believed, it was not conceived by Malthus as an economic or sociological treatise. Bederman argues that ‘Malthus ... designed his first Essay, and indeed the population principle itself, as an anti-Jacobin polemic that derived its force from satirizing Godwin’s sexual radicalism’ (p. 772). In other words, Malthus was intending to mount a specific attack on the ‘sexual egalitarianism’ of Godwin and his late wife Mary Wollstonecraft, arguing particularly that this kind of sexual licence would lead to explosive population growth. Malthus’s ideas about population in the first Essay were based almost wholly on those found in Godwin’s writings, and there is no evidence that he consulted the writings on population of economic historians of the time. Put crudely, the first Essay was intended to be no more or less than a demolition job on Godwin. It was only in 1803, in the second Essay, that Malthus started to develop the economic, social and political implications of his ideas.

M. Brown, ‘From foetid air to filth: the cultural transformation of British epidemiological thought, ca. 1780–1848’, Bulletin of the History of Medicine, 82, 515–44.

This paper traces the evolution of ideas about the spread of epidemic disease. In the eighteenth century, the main theories were that diseases like typhus spread from person to person, or were contracted through exposure to bad air. By the mid nineteenth century, an alternative thesis that ‘putrefying animal and vegetable matter’ (p. 515) was implicated was in the ascendant. Brown examines the role of two important figures, Charles Maclean and Thomas Southwood Smith, in this transformation, which was of more than academic importance because of Southwood Smith’s association with, and influence over, Edwin Chadwick, and hence over the well-known Public Health Act of 1848, which began ‘a sanitarian “revolution” [involving] the construction of sewage systems for the disposal of human and animal waste’ (p. 516).


This article presents a broad yet detailed survey of the level of development across the
British Isles at what might be taken as the high point of the medieval economy. It draws on a wide range of sources, including customs revenues, tax records, exchequer rolls and lay subsidies to trace the absolute and relative level of economic development in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. These reveal a high degree of variation both between and within these four countries, with a wealthy south and east contrasting with a poorer north and west (a pattern which was strongest in England, but held good in Scotland, Ireland and, to an extent, Wales). As well as providing an enormously useful context into which more detailed local studies might be placed, Campbell also suggests that one reason for the economic difficulties that followed this period (in England at least) was the lack of alternatives to agricultural activities. Not until the early modern period did manufacturing and building provide viable alternatives for a significant number of rural households.


Local population studies has often involved a consideration of local politics many studies of the operation of the poor law in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries exemplifying this well. However, the relationship between local population change and *party* politics has received very little attention. This study of the impact of the Labour administration’s housing policy in Southwark during the second half of the twentieth century shows how attempts to use access to housing to enhance community solidarity had consequences opposite to those intended. For by restricting access to scarce social housing in the immediate post-war years to the relatively ‘respectable’ poor, the Labour authorities effectively forced the ‘non-respectable’ poor into substandard, privately-rented accommodation. When the policy of slum clearance was then adopted in the 1960s and 1970s, many of these ‘non-respectable’ poor had claims to be re-housed in social housing which competed with the offspring of the previous generation of ‘respectable’ poor. The result was that many of the more prosperous of the latter either moved out of the area or changed their political allegiance from Labour to the Liberal (subsequently the Liberal Democrat) Party. The problems caused for the administration by access to housing were compounded by immigration which led to tension between the ‘white working class’ and ethnic minorities.


Economic historians continue to debate the effect of the British industrial revolution on living standards. New real wage series have been constructed and refined, yet still there is disagreement over the evolution of human well-being over the century between 1750 and 1850. More recently, beginning with the work of R. Floud, K. Wachter and A. Gregory, *Height, health and history: nutritional status in the United Kingdom, 1750-1980* (Cambridge, 1990), attention has been devoted to inferring changes in living standards by examining
the evolution of mean attained heights, on the grounds that heights reflect nutritional status in childhood, and nutrition is closely related to living standards. Floud and his colleagues analysed height data from army recruits and concluded that ‘the long-term trend of the average nutritional status of adults was generally increasing from the middle of the eighteenth century until the 1820s, thereafter decreasing until the 1860s’ (p. 327). In this paper, Cinnirella re-analyses the same data and reaches different conclusions, specifically that average height declined between 1760 and 1800, improved slightly between 1800 and 1820, and then fell again between 1820 and 1860. Height seems to have varied regionally, being greatest in the north and lowest in the low-wage areas of southern and eastern England. It is interesting to note that the period between 1820 and 1860 for which there is agreement that nutritional status was declining (in so far as it is reflected in the average height data) is also the one during which the mortality decline in England and Wales appears to have stalled. The conventional account of the stalling in the mortality decline is that it is the result of rapid urbanisation, yet perhaps the height data are indicating that nutritional status might also have had a role to play?


These papers appear in a special issue of History of the Family entitled ‘Ireland: church, state and society 1900-1975’. In the first paper, Cousins looks at the ways in which poor relief supported families in Ireland at the turn of the twentieth century. She points out that Ireland had a higher proportion of complex households than did England and Wales at that time, but the system of poor relief was still designed around the nuclear family. The paper focuses on the population relieved in workhouses (because census data are easily available) and includes details of the populations of Irish workhouses which may be compared with those reported for various English workhouses in previous issues of Local Population Studies (LPS) (see the articles by Hinde and Turnbull in LPS, 61 (1998), 38–53; Goose in LPS, 62 (1999), 52–69; and Jackson in LPS, 69 (2002), 51–64).

The second paper reports a study of the relationships between religious denomination and certain demographic measures in the linen town of Lurgan, south-west of Belfast, in the first decade of the twentieth century. The main source of data used is the Irish population census of 1911, including the questions on fertility within marriage, the responses to which are already available for analysis at the individual level in Ireland. In a series of econometric analyses, Ó Gráda finds that the effect of religious denomination on fertility and infant mortality is weak once social and economic status is taken into account. Catholics were poorer than non-Catholics and it was their poverty and low social status
that determined their demography. As he puts it in his conclusion, religious denomination was partly ‘a cloak for living standards and socio-economic advantage’ (p. 359).


The origins and history of the craft companies of this small Northamptonshire town are traced in some detail using the Corporation and Company record books. The author tells a familiar story of their rise and fall. The primary function of the companies was, of course, to protect the interests of their members—which they did through a combination of entry fines for ‘strangers’ wishing to trade in the town, restrictions on the goods to be traded, regulations concerning the employment of apprentices and journeymen, and legal action against interlopers. The company records are also used to reconstruct the changing economy of the town, chiefly in terms of its structural composition, and to provide insights into social life, including dinners and a certain level of craft-based pageantry. The demise of the companies followed the renewal of Daventry’s charter: their political function was diminished and their economic significance gradually waned.


F. Heal, ‘Food gifts, the household and the politics of exchange in early modern England’, *Past and Present*, 199, 41–70.


This has been a bumper year for studies of early-modern food. Aside from the articles in the special issue of the *Economic History Review*, in which the focus is very much on tough years (see the articles by Hindle and Hipkin reviewed below), two local studies by Dawson and Trinder focus on consumption across longer periods. Dawson’s work on Nottinghamshire looks at the period from the 1540s to the Civil War, and draws in particular on probate inventories from four parishes. He finds diversity in the diets of ordinary Nottinghamshire folk. This accords with Trinder’s article, which is based upon a qualitative survey of some 7,000 inventories from the Restoration to the mid eighteenth century. Pointing out that most work on food has focused on either the poor or the rich, his is a useful attempt at putting together the experience of the ‘middling sort’, who again enjoyed a reasonable degree of variety on their tables. It is rather difficult, however, to tease out any regional or chronological differences between Nottinghamshire and Shropshire, as the two studies use different methods and sample sizes. There is room, then, for future scholars to approach the same questions, but this time by comparing more than one county from, say, opposite ends of the country.

A different perspective on food is provided by Heal, who examines the social significance of food gifts amongst the English elites. Food constituted the perfect gift for
those wishing to maintain long-term relationships with clients: it could come from the estate itself (and was therefore cheap) and could be given in small quantities but frequently. Gift-giving was overlain with social and cultural significance, which were reflected in the targeting of certain foods at specific recipients. Gifts of venison, for example, had a rather different significance than gifts of apples and pears: the former circulated within the elite, the latter amongst the poor. Vegetables hardly seem to have figured at all, though the Denbigh assize judges were given at least one gift of cabbage. The message of all this research for those of us who work on quantitative economic and demographic history is that food is not simply fuel: it is something imbued with social and cultural significance, and this—as much for the social elites as for the rural middling sorts—was a key influence on consumption and production.


This article will be of interest to readers of Local Population Studies on two levels. Generally, its main theme is to examine the kind of organisational model which will most effectively allow professional and non-professional historians to co-operate on archival projects. Dixon discusses fairly and accurately the sometimes conflicting aims of academics and amateurs, and the different pressures affecting the two groups. The example which used to illustrate this general theme is a project undertaken in Devon between 2005 and 2007, the specific aim of which was to create and make publicly available sources of data from which population totals for the eighteenth century could be estimated. The sources used were the 1723 oath of allegiance rolls (recording details of all those who ‘swore allegiance to George I under legislation passed in the aftermath of the Atterbury plot of the preceding years), and several sets of Bishops’ visitation returns similar to those which have been published for other counties.


Using evidence from criminal court records, the charity school known as Christ’s Hospital, and the London Livery Companies, Erickson provides convincing evidence that in eighteenth-century London, the vast majority of married women had productive employment. The ramifications of this finding are wide-ranging. First, eighteenth-century wives were not first and foremost defined in terms of the marriage, but ‘occupational identity was at least as important as marital status’ (p. 292). Second, women’s engagement with paid employment was as much a feature of their childbearing years as of the childless years before, or the child-free years after. Third, a high proportion of married women worked in occupations, and even occupational sectors, different from those of their husbands. Women’s occupations, however, did tend to be of a lower status than those of men. It seems, therefore, that the retreat of married women
from work which can be seen during the nineteenth century was a phenomenon restricted to that century, and that the rise in married women’s employment outside the home since the 1960s may well represent a return to a pre-Victorian pattern.

C.D. Field, ‘Churchgoing in the cradle of English Christianity: Kentish evidence from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries’, *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 128, 335–63.

This article uses a range of sources, including the Canterbury diocesan returns of 1758 and 1786–1788, the 1851 Census of Religious Worship and more recent twentieth-century surveys to examine trends in religious attendance in Kent over several centuries. Despite the fact that Kent was the ‘cradle of Christianity’ in England, the proportion of people attending Church in the county was no more than average. One reason for this might be the disproportionate dependence on the Church of England, with Roman Catholicism being historically very weak, and Methodism and other dissenting denominations not strong either.


This paper describes how those who worked on the first four population censuses of England created a spatial framework to carry out the census, drawing together the complex administrative geography of the country and laying the foundations for future censuses. Fletcher praises the achievement of John Rickman and his colleagues in successfully creating a reasonably consistent set of areal units out of a sometimes bewildering variety of local administrative areas.


This is the latest in a series of articles by French and his colleagues on the demography of Victorian Kingston upon Thames (for earlier articles, see those reviewed in *Local Population Studies (LPS)*, 73 (2004) 84; *LPS*, 75 (2005), 94–5; *LPS*, 79 (2007), 105–6; and *LPS*, 81 (2008), 101–2). In this paper, he looks at the characteristics of those individuals who were resident in the town for at least four consecutive censuses from 1851 to 1891. Clearly it is possible that some of these people left the town and returned between censuses, but most of them will have remained resident continuously for 30 or more years. The analysis reveals that, relative to the population of Kingston as a whole, these ‘persisters’ were concentrated in manufacturing and the building trades (and consequently in social class III); they were more likely to be men; and they exhibited rather low rates of social mobility. On the other hand they changed their place residence *within the town* frequently. French presents estimates of the proportion of the population in any one census who were still resident in the town at the next census. This was roughly constant over the period at between 35 and 40 per cent, a figure which is similar to that produced by most previous research into the issue.
Ideas of masculinity have become an increasingly popular focus for historical research in recent years. In this article, a rather different approach is taken by exploring private understandings of masculine norms as they were expressed and communicated through personal correspondence. The authors focus in particular on the events around a son’s departure from the family home and entry into the world. They argue that this involved a need to resolve parental concerns through the inculcation of family values and especially through the selection of appropriate role models for the son to follow. The sons, meanwhile, are shown to have an unsurprising, if complex, mix of conformity to parental expectations and rejection of attempts to mould their character and actions. What comes across most strongly in the correspondence is the importance of mothers in advising and admonishing their sons. More generally, this article reveals that, while personal letters must be carefully read and deployed, they are powerful sources for social and cultural history.


The village of Sudbrook in south-east Monmouthshire was built to house the workers who constructed the Severn Tunnel in the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s. Unlike many other ‘tin towns’ which grew up to house those engaged in construction projects (see the papers by Bevan and Leivers reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, 79 (2007), 98–9), it has survived to the present day. In this paper, Gant shows how the records of the village school, in combination with census returns, can shed light on the population dynamics of Sudbrook during the construction of the tunnel and afterwards. It provides data on the origins of those who came to work on the tunnel, and their persistence in the village after the construction period ended.


Previous research on nuptiality in nineteenth-century England has found an inverse relationship between female employment and the prevalence of marriage. In areas where female employment outside the home was common, whether in domestic service or in factory work, marriage for women tended to be later than in areas where female employment was scarce. There is a degree of uncertainty as to how much of this relationship is a direct effect of the employment of women, and how much is an indirect consequence of the impact of sex-selective migration on the population sex ratio in the marrying age groups. In this study, Goose sheds additional light on the issue by examining the relationship between the prevalence of marriage for women and female
employment in a cottage industry, specifically straw plaiting and hat making in Hertfordshire. He is able to isolate the impact of the straw plaiting industry because it was concentrated in certain parts of the county, so that a comparison is possible between ‘straw’ areas and ‘non-straw’ areas. The conclusions of his analysis are that, although the population sex ratio was indeed skewed in favour of females in those regions where straw plaiting was carried on, this did not discourage early marriage for women. Indeed, there was a ‘tendency towards earlier marriage in the straw areas’ although ‘this did not translate into ... higher proportions ultimately married’ (p. 816). As the straw industry declined in the last three decades of the century, the differential nuptiality between the ‘straw’ areas and the ‘non-straw’ areas diminished. Thus Goose’s analysis suggests that this cottage industry which provided employment for females had both a direct impact in encouraging early marriage and a more diffuse indirect impact on the marriage market through its impact on the population sex ratio. These two effects worked in opposite directions.


Although it is perhaps of more interest to historical sociologists than to demographic historians, this paper may interest some readers of *Local Population Studies*. Seebohm Rowntree is justly famous for his studies of poverty in York during the early twentieth century. This paper describes a later survey he conducted with a colleague in York and High Wycombe in 1947-1948, the results of which were published in 1951 as *English life and leisure: a social study*. A key feature of this work was Rowntree’s discovery of a decline in church attendance and religiosity. Green describes what Rowntree found, and then considers the widespread criticism which the study drew from social scientists. He defends Rowntree, pointing out that many of the critics later cited the findings from *English life and leisure: a social study* in their own analyses of social change in the mid-twentieth century.


The problem of draining land for agricultural purposes has long occupied both land owners and rural historians. This article focuses on successive attempts to drain and improve low-lying marsh land in west Lancashire. While much has been made of the role of nineteenth-century technological developments, the author argues that the key to success was the marrying of appropriate administrative structures with financial incentives. Seventeenth-century schemes in west Lancashire were characterised by a piecemeal approach, primitive technology, under-investment and poor management. Some later and larger-scale programmes were undertaken by major landowners, but it was not until an Act of Parliament of 1779 empowering Drainage Commissioners that schemes could encompass whole ecosystems. Even then, conflicts with landowners proved a stumbling block until they themselves provided the administrative and financial
resources to invest in technological solutions. From the 1840s, this drained land became some of the most productive in the county—a development which the author argues was significant in allowing the sustained industrialisation of the county, with food for a growing industrial workforce being provided by local producers.


The past few years has seen a series of papers published in Local Population Studies (LPS) describing the populations of various workhouses. Generally, these have made use of listings of workhouse populations in the census returns of the second half of the nineteenth century (see, for example, N. Goose, ‘Workhouse populations in the mid-nineteenth century: the case of Hertfordshire’, LPS, 62 (1999), 52-69; and D.G. Jackson, ‘Kent workhouse populations in 1881: a study based on the census enumerators’ books’, LPS, 69 (2002), 51-66). However, the first paper in the series, by A. Hinde and F. Turnbull (‘The populations of two Hampshire workhouses, 1851-1861, LPS, 61 (1998), 38-53) and a more recent paper by Jackson (‘The Medway Union workhouse 1876-1881: a study based on admission and discharge registers and the census enumerators’ books’, LPS, 75 (2005), 51–66) also used workhouse admissions registers, and it is this source which is exploited in these two papers.

The paper by Hall deals with the workhouse in Coventry. She looks at the different reasons given for the admission of persons to the workhouse, noting how the distribution of ostensible reasons for admission changes over time, with, for example, ‘destitution’ replacing ‘unemployment’ as a stated reason after 1874. She also considers the challenges inherent in tracing those admitted to the workhouse in other sources, and thereby discovering more about their personal circumstances.

Perkyns’s paper focuses on children, who comprised about one out of every three people admitted to the Milton Union workhouse in Kent during the first half century of the New Poor Law. Perkyns describes the situation of the children who were admitted, classifying them according to the other family members admitted at the same time, and according to the stated reasons for admission. Only a minority of children were admitted with both parents, and as the years progressed this proportion declined, partly because the local economy improved and partly because the poor law authorities relaxed their very strict policy on outdoor relief to able-bodied males. However, admissions of children for other reasons (for example being orphaned, or being deserted by their fathers) were important throughout the period Perkyns studies. The Milton Union poor law authorities zealously examined the moral qualities of claimants, trying to distinguish the ‘deserving’ from the ‘undeserving’ poor.
Review of recent periodic literature


The role of women in the provision of health care has long been an area of controversy. Male medical authors in the Elizabethan era were certainly vocal in their objections to female medical practitioners, whose practices were, they claimed, unprofessional and unregulated. However, as Harkness argues, this rhetoric both belied and revealed the importance of women in the medical marketplace of sixteenth-century London. Drawing on a wide range of sources—including parish records, probate records, lists of immigrants to London, and hospital records—Harkness shows just how active women were in the provision of healthcare. They provided a wide range of nursing, medical, pharmaceutical, and surgical services, not merely tending to the needs of the urban poor or other women, but also engaging in the structures of local administration including parishes and hospitals. This acceptance within the city’s organised systems of healthcare was reflected in the positive view of female practitioners held by their neighbours and patients. Perhaps, as Harkness suggests, this was why so many male practitioners found them so threatening.


In this paper, Hill uses a set of 144 published letters written from Canada between 1832 and 1837 by poor emigrants from the parishes of Petworth and Dorking in Sussex and Surrey respectively. These emigrants had travelled under the auspices of emigration schemes described in a paper reviewed in Local Population Studies 75 (2005), 99. The letters contrast the lives of the migrants in Canada with their former lives in England. The most widely mentioned differences include the greater opportunities for individual advancement, the much reduced social distance between farmers and their hired workers, and the possibility in Canada of rural workers availing themselves of benefits in kind (grazing rights, hunting and fishing and the collection of fuelwood) which were no longer open to them in England.


Economic and constitutional crises have an unhappy knack of kicking on each others’ heels, and the most dramatic such occasion was not—as the Daily Mail would have it—under New Labour in 2008–2009, but in the late 1640s. The political collapse after the First Civil War is, of course, widely written about, but the serious dearth of 1647–1650, probably the worst harvest crisis of the century, has received surprisingly little attention. The crisis, Hindle argues in this important piece, has been neglected because it sits uncomfortably between two historiographical periods, but this neglect has also reflected the research on parish registers by Wrigley and Schofield, which suggested the crisis was
not a serious one in terms of its impact on mortality. Hindle questions this, citing Brian Outhwaite’s more dramatic interpretation of the data: we shall have to await more detailed work on local demographic data in the worst affected areas to be certain. The main focus of this article, however, is the local political response to the crisis, and the crux of the argument is that popular petitioning cajoled magistrates to instigate market regulations along the lines of the older books of orders. This was despite their long-held reluctance to do so, something which in turn may have reflected their economic roles as middlemen. Hindle suggests, then, that the late 1640s were a watershed in English political economy: the regulation of the food market in times of crisis was no longer a role for the central government, but passed into the hands of the ‘moral economy of the poor’. Of course, this all supports Hindle’s earlier argument that the ‘middling sorts’, associated with parochial elites of vestrymen, officers, and ratepayers, were the critical driving force of ‘state formation’ in early modern England. That said, the fact that they petitioned for assistance through the mechanisms of county government says something about the limitations of pure ‘bottom-up’ political agency. The other missing element of all this is the poor law, but perhaps this is simply a trick of the documentary light: attempts to regulate the grain market required widely-based coordination and so left a paper trail; a decision to increase or reinvigorate poor relief was, by contrast, more likely to take place at the parish or petty sessions divisional level.


The Midland ‘Rising’ of 1607 (arguably little more than a semi-coordinated series of riots) has received surprisingly little historiographical attention, and so it is good to see one of the foremost social historians of his generation dip his pen into it. Rather than approach rebellion from the traditional vantage point of the social historian, Hindle tackles literary representations of the rising. Four writers, all of whom wrote at some length about the upheaval, are discussed: John Reynolds, the commoner who—under the nom de guerre of ‘Captain Pouch’—was supposed to have led the rising; King James I; Robert Wilkinson, the chaplain to the Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire; and Solicitor-General Sir Francis Bacon. In their own ways, each writer tackled issues of what caused the rising, and whether in principle hunger could ever justify rebellion. A fifth commentator is then introduced: William Shakespeare, a Midlander himself of course, is increasingly thought to have based Coriolanus partly on events of 1607, and Hindle argues that the play is in part a comment on the politics of dearth, indeed Shakespeare may even have been directly influenced by Wilkinson and Bacon themselves. This is stimulating work, though for readers of this journal, the author’s suggestion that the rising was caused as much by dearth as it was by anger at enclosure (though of course the two were intimately related) may be his most interesting point.

S. Hipkin, ‘The structure, development, and politics of the Kent grain trade, 1552–1647’,
In a characteristically detailed and well-tabulated piece, Hipkin considers the politics of the grain trade in Kent in the century or so leading up to the Civil War. The politics of food in Kent were particularly fraught, of course, owing to the proximity of the capital, which could lead to conflict between central and local government. The most interesting aspect of this careful study, though, is its reconstruction of some of the horizontal politics of grain supply, which set different groups of governors, with their client-poor, against each other. This is in addition to the better understood 'vertical' politics which have formed the chief fodder of most studies of this type.


K. Levitan, ‘Redundancy, the “surplus woman” problem and the British census, 1851–1861’, *Women’s History Review*, 17, 359–76.


These three papers appear in a special issue of *Women’s History Review* entitled *Winners or Losers? Single Women in History 1000–2000*.

Levitan’s paper deals with the consequences of new information about single women becoming available in 1851, when a question about marital status (or, as it was described, ‘condition as to marriage’) was asked for the first time in the census. She examines the implications of the new data on the numbers of women classified by marital status and age for the so-called ‘surplus women’ problem, or the existence of a substantial number of adult women who were neither married nor (apparently) engaged in any gainful activity. A wide range of contemporary opinion-formers lamented the unproductive character of these women, and various policies which might render them productive were discussed, many of which involved social and cultural changes which would encourage more of them to undertake paid work in occupations such as nursing and teaching. An alternative proposal was that these women should be persuaded to migrate to north America and Australia where there was a shortage of women, and where they might readily find husbands. Levitan discusses the views of a wide range of individuals, from statisticians such as William Farr, through feminists such as Harriet Martineau to essayists like William Rathbone Greg.

The main point of Hobbs’s paper is that the illegitimacy ratio can tell a different story about non-marital fertility than can the illegitimacy rate. The former, being the proportion of births which is illegitimate, is influenced both by the incidence of non-marital births and by the incidence of births within marriage. In a town such as Blackpool, fertility within marriage was low and this of itself would tend to inflate the
illegitimacy ratio. Hobbs contends that a failure to understand this point is partly (perhaps largely) to blame for Blackpool’s reputation as a hotbed of extra-marital liaisons. There is a further problem with the measurement of illegitimate fertility in Blackpool, which is that many of the single women to whom births took place in Blackpool were not enumerated there by the population census, so they do not appear in the denominator of illegitimate fertility rates, which means the rates are higher than they should be. The paper also includes some interesting observations about views of illegitimacy in the mid twentieth century, including those of Medical Officers of Health, and about the organisations working with single mothers. (For further discussion of the measurement of illegitimate fertility see N. Goose, ‘Measuring illegitimate fertility’, Local Population Studies, 80 (2008), 83–9).

The question of how single women were viewed in the mid-twentieth century is taken up by Redmond in her study of single female migrants from Ireland. She contrasts opinions held about single women who left Ireland with those held about single men. The men were considered to be migrating for respectable economic reasons which were rational and understandable. The women, by contrast, were condemned for denying Irish men brides and Ireland children, and upbraided for placing themselves in moral (that is, sexual) danger in the big, bad world of Britain. Yet Redmond suggests that the motives of single women in moving from Ireland to Britain were similar to those of men. They wanted to improve their economic lot and their marriage chances. The cleavage was not between the motivations of men and women so much as between Irish single women’s view of themselves and the Irish establishment’s view of their role within Irish society.

S. Hobbs, ‘“The abstracts and brief chronicles of the time”: memoranda and annotations in parish registers, 1538–1812’, Local Historian, 38, 95–110.

Readers of Local Population Studies will be well versed in the use of the Church of England parish registers to measure demographic change for the post-1538 period. But we have also often noted how registers had another function, removed from that given to them by Thomas Cromwell’s statute in 1538, namely that they could act as a book of record for the community more generally. Hobbs’s study focuses on Wiltshire, where he finds a wealth of parish memoranda covering issues as diverse as the weather, church seating and the poor law. Indeed, the parish register may have been a crucial site in which the social memory of the community was stored, anchoring a concept of locality in the minds of families who might themselves have arrived relatively recently. This kind of research is time consuming, given the relative infrequency of such ad hoc notes within the lengthy lists of vital events, but it is the kind of work that local historical societies, with their armies of dedicated scholars, might productively set their minds to. And it is the kind of work which would find a willing home in Local Population Studies.

In 1981 Ann Kussmaul famously declared in her book *Servants in husbandry in early modern England* (Cambridge 1981) that by 1851 the institution of farm service, whereby farm workers were hired for periods of six months or a year, and boarded in the farmhouse with the farmer and his family, had largely died out in eastern and southern England and in much of the Midlands, though it continued to exist in the north and west until the end of the nineteenth century. Since then several researchers have explored this dichotomy in more detail. Some have studied apparently ‘anomalous’ regions, such as the East Riding of Yorkshire, an arable area where farm servants continued to be common well into the twentieth century. Others have examined certain areas in the south of England in more detail, and concluded that there was greater variability at the local level than had been previously thought (see, for example, N. Goose, ‘Farm service in southern England in the mid-nineteenth century’, *Local Population Studies*, 72 (2004), 77–82). Still others have commented on the persistence of farm service in certain agriculturally ‘backward’ areas such as the Weald of Sussex, Surrey and Kent. However, Howkins and Verdon’s paper marks the most systematic and wide-ranging attempt to chart the extent to which farm service remained important in 1851 and afterwards in the south-eastern half of Britain. Using data for 196 parishes in seven counties (Berkshire, Norfolk, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Somerset, Staffordshire and Sussex), they provide abundant evidence of local variation in the proportion of the agricultural labour force which was comprised of ‘living-in’ farm servants. In some areas, such as Norfolk, farm servants were almost unknown in 1851. Elsewhere, such as on the Berkshire Downs, more than a quarter of the agricultural work force was made up of farm servants as late as 1891. They argue that the persistence of farm service was made possible by the institution’s adaptability. One major change, for example, was the tendency for farm servants no longer to live in the farmhouse, but to board in groups in cottages or ‘bothys’, overseen by a farm bailiff or a steward. As a consequence, the institution could prosper wherever the nature of the farming and the conditions in the local economy made hiring labour by the year or half year an economically sensible strategy for farmers. This was true even where agriculture was avowedly ‘capitalist’ it was not restricted to areas dominated by small family farms.


In *Local Population Studies*, 77 (2006), 24–41, Hudson published a paper entitled ‘Parish population reconstruction in Stonehouse, Gloucestershire: an experiment using Wrigley and Schofield’s correction factors’, in which she described a method for reconstructing the evolution of the total population of a parish during the pre-censal period. The
method relies upon deriving population estimates from numbers of baptisms and burials in the Church of England parish registers. It worked well in the parish of Stonehouse, to which it was applied. However, the parish of Stonehouse had a low level of nonconformity, and it is not clear how well the method would perform in parishes where nonconformists were more numerous. In this companion paper, Hudson extends her method to incorporate information about nonconformity from sources such as nonconformist registers, the Diocesan surveys of Anglican bishops, and the Compton Census of 1676. She applies the extended model to nine Gloucestershire parishes (including Stonehouse) and shows that it is ‘more locally sensitive, and therefore more widely applicable, than the original … model’ (p. 56).


C. Rattigan, ‘“Done to death by father or relatives”: Irish families and infanticide cases, 1922-1950’, *History of the Family*, 13, 370–83.

The first of these two articles is an introduction to a special issue of *Family and Community History* dealing with the history of infanticide. The authors describe the three substantive papers which make up the special issue, and raise some more general questions. One key development in social responses to infanticide occurred between the early modern period and the nineteenth century, when responsibility for dealing with suspected cases of infanticide switched from the local community—and especially local women—to the police. This development went alongside a change in how infanticidal women were viewed in that they began to be ‘understood rather than dismissed as abnormal, abhorrent and essentially evil’ (p. 91). Another important theme is the relationship between infanticide and religious belief. Kilday and Watson wonder whether ‘the pressure to maintain respectability in a religiously observant community, might actually have tended to encourage infanticide’ (p. 85). Related to this is the even more interesting point that women who committed infanticide frequently justified their actions to themselves as being the least bad of several morally undesirable options (for example, by freeing a child from a prospective life of misery and poverty), and therefore the ‘right thing to do under the circumstances’. The three substantive papers are by Kilday on Scotland, Watson on England and by Clíona Rattigan on Ireland.

Rattigan is also the author of the second paper listed above, which looks at infanticide in Ireland in the twentieth century. The intense social stigma against the bearing of children outside wedlock not only encouraged some mothers of illegitimate children to kill them, but also the families of those mothers to connive and assist in the deed. In some cases, relatives of the ‘fallen woman’ performed the task themselves. Using records from the criminal courts on both sides of the border, Rattigan illustrates the kinds of pressures which influenced the responses of (mainly) working-class families to pregnancies outside marriage.

This article considers a set of letters written by paupers living in urban areas asking for support from their parishes of settlement, the latter being mainly in Northamptonshire. It uses these letters to assess how these urban paupers, who were by definition migrants, viewed their situation in the towns to which they had journeyed. King argues that many of these letters stress a profound sense of belonging to their host town, and that the paupers had put down roots in their destination communities and become integrated into their neighbourhoods. However, at times this belonging was viewed as fragile, and the reputation a migrant had built up within a host community could easily be lost, for example by failure to repay debts.


Using data from an early seventeenth-century list of Testaments, which give information about people dying between 1611 and 1650 and hence mainly marrying at the end of the sixteenth century, Knooihuizen examines marriage patterns in Shetland following the migration of Scots into the previously mainly Norse community living in the islands. The main interest of the paper is in the extent to which the new migrants were integrated into the Norse population through inter-marriage. This requires the ethnic origins of each individual member of couples mentioned in the Testaments to be identified. The only evidence available to achieve this is that of surnames, and Knooihuizen presents a fascinating discussion of the pitfalls attendant upon inferring ethnicity from surname data. The conclusions of the analysis are that inter-ethnic marriages formed about 35 per cent of all marriages; that both Scots and Norse married within their own group more than would be expected under a model of random mate choice, and that women were more likely than men to marry a Scots partner (probably because there was a surplus of males among the migrants).


Both these papers are about the experiences of children in London. The first looks at the late eighteenth century, a period which saw ‘an apparent change in family relations and attitudes to children, an increased preference for maternal breastfeeding, a greater market for consumer goods aimed specifically at children, improving social prospects for infants, and the beginning of a widespread system of elementary education’ (p. 42). Using data from the admissions and discharge books of the St Marylebone workhouse, Levene tries to discover why children were admitted to the workhouse and to assess the
role of agency on the part of the children’s families (and, from time to time, the children themselves). She is also concerned to reveal the workhouse authorities’ attitudes towards family life and the appropriate care of children, and how these determined their treatment of dysfunctional families in which the care of children was inadequate.

The second paper reports a study of the experiences of children at the London Foundling Hospital when they were sent out to be apprentices. The results suggest that relationships between these children and their masters and mistresses were generally harmonious, contradicting the ‘contemporary fear of unruliness and social disruption’ (p. 200) which was expressed by late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century commentators and which has permeated the historical literature since then.


Local population data for London boroughs from the censuses from the mid nineteenth century onwards are used in this paper to assess how closely the geographical expansion of London’s rail network matched the growth of the population. Levinson finds that there was a generally high, but not perfect, correlation between the two, though the association became slightly less strong in the second half of the twentieth century. Some highly populated boroughs, such as Hackney and Tower Hamlets, were poorly served. Of course, the correlation between the two probably involved causality in both directions: in some places railways were built speculatively, and people migrated to live close to the new transport links; elsewhere railways and stations were built in response to demand from a rising population.

L. McCormick, ‘“The scarlet women in person”: the establishment of a family planning service in Northern Ireland, 1950-1974’, *Social History of Medicine*, 21, 345–60.

The development of family planning services in Northern Ireland lagged behind that in most of the rest of the United Kingdom. Although Marie Stopes had opened a clinic in Belfast in 1936, it was never successful, and closed in 1947. It was not until 1951 that the Belfast Women’s Welfare Clinic opened in a Belfast hospital, and not until 1961 that a second clinic opened. This article discusses the very delicate line that those wishing to promote family planning had to tread in order to avoid offending political and religious sensibilities. Publicity for family planning services was a major problem, and was largely achieved through indirect channels and personal communication through female networks. Studies like these cast valuable light on the ways in which the institutionalisation of family planning services in the mid twentieth century depended on local sensibilities (and sometimes on the views of prominent local individuals).

Working-class autobiographies have a great deal to tell the historian of local and regional demography. The one described in this paper is of Louise Jermy, who worked in domestic service in London, the Midlands and East Anglia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. McDermid describes the autobiography by situating it within the relevant social and demographic context, outlining such trends as the general rise and decline of employment in domestic service, changes in family life and childbearing, migration patterns and the reasons for migration, and changing attitudes towards the work of women in agriculture. She explains how these broader social changes affected Mrs Jermy’s own life, and distinguishing occasions on which Mrs Jermy was following the trend from those where she was fighting against it (for example when she returned to work in agriculture in Norfolk in 1921 following the death of her husband).

E. McKay, “‘For refreshment and preserving health’: the definition and function of recreation in early modern England’, Historical Research, 81, 52–74.

The early modern period saw the publication of a growing number of advice manuals. Some of these concerned the nature of recreation suitable for the physical, moral and mental well-being of the gentleman or gentlewoman. Such literature forms the starting point of this study, which discusses at some length the contemporary and historiographical debates over recreation and leisure. However, the real substance of the piece lies in its investigation of 144 diaries and journals covering the period 1442–1700. These are analysed for the ways in which they portray recreation as an idea and an activity. Its association with refreshment brings a wide range of behaviour under the heading of recreation, including charitable giving; its connection to regeneration brought connotations of moral improvement, and its link to ideas of leisure is apparent in the range of diversions and pastimes viewed by diarists as recreation. In all, the article reveals recreation as a powerful focus in contemporary society and a useful lens through which historians might explore past societies.


Personal freedom is a relatively modern concept; yet, as this article demonstrates, the English peasantry was starting to develop notions of freedom in the Middle Ages. Drawing on a range of charter rolls and other legal documents, the author draws a detailed picture of the legal disputes between the sokemen of Rothley and their manorial lords, the Templars. These show how peasants were able to use the law and a growing knowledge of the law to change the nature of their land tenure and to resist undue demands for tax payments. Of critical importance to McLoughlin’s argument is the way in which the sokemen, when in dispute with their lords in 1377, not only resorted to earlier rulings and agreements (including those made in the previous century) but were able to mobilise the financial resources necessary to mount legal action. Such findings
throw new light on the character and freedom of the medieval peasantry.


In the midst of our own ‘flu epidemic (technically now a pandemic), most media comparisons have been with the infamous ‘Spanish Flu’ which swept the world in the aftermath of the First World War. Little attention was paid to the epidemics of the 1550s, which were—so far as we can tell—England’s worst mortality crisis since the mid-fourteenth century. ‘Fisher’s Flu’, so named after Jack Fisher, the first modern historian to write about the crisis, has received only fleeting attention from historians. It is often referred to as one component of a supposed ‘mid-Tudor crisis’ as if it formed some kind of ‘context’ to the great affairs of state at what was admittedly a critical juncture in English political history. But there have also been attempts by historians of a more social and quantitative outlook to assess the severity of the epidemic. Their conclusions have depended to a large extent on their methodology. The Cambridge Group used surviving parish registers to suggest mortality rates of around 5 per cent, but these were never really supposed to be definitive, and the profound deficiencies of the data probably mean this is far too low. Another route, argued by the author of these articles, is to use wills, which (it has been suggested) show much higher mortality rates, even as great as 15 and 20 per cent. Again, however, there are methodological problems: it is logical to expect that will making became more widespread during an epidemic: we have seen this year how the circulation of disease can have a powerful impact on the popular psyche.

These articles, focusing on the north-east and north-west of England, attempt to deploy a new methodology: the comparison of two population snapshots, namely the Chantry Certificates of the 1540s and the (recently published) diocesan population returns of 1563. All told, these suggest that, in Durham, the population fell by 12.5 per cent between the two dates, while in Lancashire the fall was as high as 20 per cent. These are, of course, terrifyingly high levels of mortality, and it would seem odd then that contemporary commentators did not make more of the crisis. But there are once again obvious problems with comparing snapshots across two very different sets of source material, as evidenced by the degree of surgical moulding which had to go into the data in both of these articles. Moore’s interpretation will remain controversial, therefore. Indeed, it is also a pity that there seems no way of disentangling the respective roles of the ‘sweat’ of 1550–1552, the ‘new ague’ of 1556–1560, and the ‘two worst harvests of the entire sixteenth century’ in 1554 and 1555.


Cumberland is a county replete with planned towns constructed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries during the period of industrialisation. Some of these, such as Whitehaven, became successful in the long term; others, like Port Carlisle, were conspicuous failures. Still others enjoyed a period of success before declining. Harrington fell into the last category. After the construction of the first harbour in 1760 the town was built in the 1780s and by the beginning of the nineteenth century was ‘a flourishing place’ (p. 162), with two shipbuilding yards. The coming of the railway in the 1840s and the development of an ironworks perhaps marked the high point of Harrington’s short life, but the silting of the harbour and the exhaustion of local coal resources led to a decline, and the town was eventually demolished as part of a slum clearance programme in the 1960s.

Somewhat surprisingly, given its situation well inland, Carlisle also had a shipping trade, though this was really a technicality. In the sixteenth century, the Border town was created as a ‘headport’ for the Cumberland coast, giving it the role of overseeing coastal trade in the region. This trade was small, and by the period covered by Robinson’s article it was being challenged by the developing (and genuinely coastal) port of Whitehaven, which took over the management of shipping from the River Ellen southwards in 1681. Most of Carlisle’s seaborne trade by the late seventeenth century, which in fact cleared from small rural harbours, came from the import of consumer goods balanced by the export of grain. Indeed, the region’s ability to export often substantial quantities of grain, mostly to Liverpool but occasionally as far as London, is impressive given the barrenness of much of the local soil and hints, perhaps, at the limits of regional agricultural specialisation in pasture farming.


This long and complex paper examines changes in the marriage market for both males and females in England and Wales during the twentieth century. Until 1951 the marriage market was unfavourable to women, but the position of females improved between 1951 and 1971. Conversely, for males the position deteriorated, especially at older ages. The main reasons for these trends were changes in the supply of never-married and previously married potential partners not changes in fertility affecting relative cohort sizes. For example, in 1951 the supply of potential partners for men aged 45 years and above was very high, the biggest single factor causing this being the availability of never-married women. It is possible that the copious supply of such women was an indirect effect of the relative shortage of men in the years after World War I resulting
from excess male mortality during the war, which adversely affected the marriage changes of a cohort of women and led to increased rates of spinsterhood (see the paper by Holden reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, 77 (2006), 86).


Some readers of *Local Population Studies* (*LPS*) may have come across the series of articles about ‘Labour and the poor’ which were published in the *Morning Chronicle* between 1849 and 1851. One set of these, written by Henry Mayhew, were about London; another set, written by several different people, dealt with provincial regions, and a selection of the latter have been re-printed in P.E. Razzell and R.W. Wainwright eds, *The Victorian working class: selections from letters to the* Morning Chronicle, (London, 1973). In this article, O’Leary uses the letters about the Welsh town of Merthyr Tydfil to contrast the description of the 3,000 or so Irish immigrants with the portrayal of the Welsh working class. The Welsh are industrious and orderly; their houses are clean and filled with material possessions; they are fully participating in the ‘mass commodity culture’ which had recently developed. By contrast, the Irish are disorderly and lacking in initiative; they have few material possessions and live in dark, damp houses; they are alien and outside mainstream society. O’Leary argues that presenting the Irish in this way allowed the author to construct a vision of Britishness and belonging to the community which included the ‘respectable Welsh urban working class’ but excluded the immigrant Irish (p. 254). It is worth pointing out that Merthyr Tydfil was the largest town in Wales in 1851: its demographic development is described in an article by B. Jones reviewed in *LPS*, 77 (2006), 75.


Pennington looks at huckstering in Southampton in the century or so after 1550. The word ‘huckster’ was gendered, denoting a female engaged in petty street retailing, but in Southampton around two thirds of those fined for it in the court leet were men. Whether this is robust evidence that huckstering was a largely male practice is, however, debatable. It may be that courts were more tolerant of female hucksters, recognising petty retailing as an important female survival strategy. Indeed, the author suggests at the end of the article that this was precisely their practice.

Postles, meanwhile, offers a short survey of the occupational profile of the small Midland town of Loughborough in the early seventeenth century. The town was characterised by a fairly varied labour force, reinforced by employment provided by public works such as the maintenance of bridges and the parish church. Indeed, Loughborough’s diverse occupation
profile suggests that the town constituted more than just a small rural market-town.


Both these papers look at the impact of Lord Hardwicke’s 1753 Clandestine Marriages Act, which came into force in 1754. The Act is sometimes thought to have changed the recording of marriages in the Church of England parish registers significantly. It made all marriages which were not solemnised according to the rites of the Church of England, and preceded by the calling of banns, illegal and thereby void. In the first paper, the authors assess the impact of the Act on the recording of marriages by attempting to trace in the parish registers three sets of marriages: those of parents who had children baptised in the Northamptonshire parish of Kilsby; those of the inhabitants of Cardington in Bedfordshire in 1782, and those mentioned in settlement examinations in Bradford-on-Avon in Wiltshire between 1725 and 1798. The conclusions are that a high percentage of marriages could be traced in the Church of England marriage registers both before and after 1754, that it is dangerous to ‘infer non-compliance from the absence of a record in the registers of a particular parish’ (p. 323) and that the 1753 Act had more impact on where people married (by forcing them to marry in the church of a parish where they had a relevant connection) than upon how people married.

It has been suggested in earlier work that the reaction of many Roman Catholics to Hardwicke’s Act (which required that they undergo an Anglican ceremony) was one of refusal. This conclusion was reached on the basis of a failure to find the marriages of couples known to have married according to a Catholic ceremony in the marriage register of the neighbouring Anglican parish. In the second paper, Probert and D’Arcy Brown refute this suggestion on the basis a study of 95 couples recorded as marrying in a Catholic ceremony at the recusant centre of Coughton Court in Warwickshire between 1758 and 1795. Having searched for these marriages in the registers of the nearest Anglican parish church they could only find 31, but by looking further afield, and eventually using indexes, they were able to show that all 95 couples underwent an Anglican ceremony in addition to the Catholic one. It seems that the couples generally held the Catholic ceremony first, with the Church of England one being held shortly afterwards (sometimes on the same day, sometimes on the following day), suggesting that Catholic brides and grooms regarded their own religious ceremony as the more significant, with the Church of England one being a formality they needed to go through to satisfy the law.

This is a companion article to the one by the same author reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, 81 (2008), 110–11. In this paper the author looks more deeply into the social context of the typhoid outbreak in Uppingham in the 1870s, explaining how the school and the town depended upon each other, and examining the role played in the public administration by local landowners.


Leather was an important material in pre-industrial economies, with a wide range of uses. Yet it was a scarce material, the supply of which was dependent upon the availability of cattle, and on the policies and regulations of national governments. This article examines the different approaches taken by the state in France and Britain. In the former, the state played an active and central role in organising a national leather market. The result was an endemic shortage of leather. In Britain, the state chose to regulate the existing market; a policy which allowed Britain to satisfy its increasing demand for leather in an efficient manner. Alongside an analysis of these grand strategies, Riello also provides some welcome clarity and fascinating detail about the ways in which leather moved from the animal to the end consumer.


Edinburgh exporters form the subject of a useful study by Rorke. While hardly comparable to the premier-league entrepôt of London, Auld Reekie was home to a vibrant community of overseas traders in the sixteenth century. In 1565, when Baltic supplies were threatened with failure, Edinburgh was even lined up as a supplier of grain to the Netherlands, although the volume eventually shipped was fairly small. Some 60 per cent of Scottish export customs were paid by the town, reinforcing the power of the urban merchant elite. The trade was technically less restricted than London’s, where the great merchant companies held sway, though in Edinburgh one nonetheless had to be a burgess to export legally. Despite this comparative openness, the author uses a snapshot of the exporter community in 1566 to argue that most of the trade was controlled by a restricted group of merchants, though they were bolstered by an army of small-timers. In fact, the burgh’s trade was getting more oligarchic: whereas in the 1530s there were around 800 exporters active each year, by the 1590s there were just 400.


Historians have often suggested that the medieval village was a kind of moral economy, in which informal charity was extended to the poorer sections of society, especially during economic crises. Exploring in detail the land market activity and provision of
credit in a single East Anglian manor (Hinderclay) in the early fourteenth century, Schofield argues that there is little evidence for such charitable activity. Drawing on court and account rolls, surveys, rental and taxation assessments, he finds that wealthier villagers, rather than seeking to assist their unfortunate neighbours, were more inclined to remain focused on the market and their own economic interests. This confirms R.H. Tawney’s suggestion that property tended to accumulate in the hands of more prosperous tenants—a process he referred to as ‘petty commercialism’. It also paints a rather grim picture of those less-advantaged villagers who saw their economic and livelihoods further undermined.


In a lean year for the early-modern poor law, Alex Shepard’s study of status descriptions by poor witnesses in the diocesan courts of Canterbury, Chester, Chichester, Ely, Salisbury and York, the archdeacon’s courts of Lewes and Richmond, and the Cambridge University court, stands out. The fact that around one in four witnesses at the church courts described themselves as in some sense poor could be taken to suggest either widespread deprivation, a wide participatory basis for the courts, or (most likely) both. Witnesses were, however, reluctant to refer specifically to receiving alms, which may tell us that any sense of deservingness conferred by the receipt of poor relief was outweighed by the shame of dependency.


In this article, Sheppard uses the census enumerators’ books for the 1861 census to examine the local geography of those districts of Brighton inhabited by railway workers. These were not wealthy parts of the town, but neither were they the poorest areas. There was a loose relationship between the income of railway workers and the rateable value of the houses they occupied, but this was complicated by multi-occupation, the need for larger families to live in larger dwellings and the practice of sub-letting.

S. Sovič, ‘European family history: moving beyond stereotypes of “East” and “West”’, *Cultural and Social History*, 5, 141–64.

This paper may be somewhat anachronistic, but perhaps its point still needs making. Sovič’s thesis is that the division of family formation systems in Europe into ‘East’ and ‘West’ which emerged during the 1960s and early 1970s, exemplified by studies such as John Hajnal’s ‘European marriage patterns in perspective’ (in D.V. Glass and D.E.C. Eversley eds, *Population in history: essays in historical demography* (London, 1965), 101–43); and the papers in R. Wall, J. Robin and P. Laslett eds, *Family forms in historic Europe* (Cambridge, 1983), is still accepted too uncritically by historical demographers and historians of the family. Although it is now acknowledged that Hajnal’s original division
of the continent using a line drawn from what is now St Petersburg to Trieste was too simple, in that the area to the west of that line is, at the very least, divisible into a ‘north-western’ and a ‘south-western’ zone, characterised by nuclear families and by the greater importance of stem families respectively, Sovič claims that local variation within this western area was greater than historians generally appreciate. More seriously, she claims that many historians still regard the area to the east of the St Petersburg-Trieste line as a monolith characterised by a young age at marriage and complex households. Much of her paper is devoted to showing that this is, at best, a gross oversimplification and, at worst, plain wrong.

P. Scott, ‘Did owner-occupation lead to smaller families for interwar working-class households?’ Economic History Review, 61, 99–124.

It is well known that fertility in inter-war England and Wales fell below what is normally considered the replacement level of just over two children per woman. It is also now clear that this low level of fertility was achieved without modern contraceptive devices, most married couples relying on abstinence and withdrawal. What is much less clear is why fertility during this period fell to such low levels, when it was to rise substantially during and after World War Two. In this paper, Scott argues that the costs of housing were a major reason. In particular, those couples who were first-generation owner-occupiers (mainly in the newly-developed suburban housing estates) found themselves particularly squeezed financially by the costs of maintaining their new lifestyles. Accordingly, they tended to have smaller families than couples who were living in rented housing. Scott’s argument is a special case of more general arguments that have from time to time been put forward in the literature on the determinants of fertility, that upwardly mobile couples tend to have smaller families, and that the cost of positional goods that is those which are ‘markers’ of being a member of a particular social class has a profound impact on fertility (on the latter, see J.A. Banks, Prosperity and parenthood: a study of family planning among the Victorian middle classes (London 1954)). The paper presents some fairly convincing evidence from a range of contemporary survey data in support of the impact of owner-occupation on fertility.


In this important piece, Spicksley tackles the complex issues of female money-lending, inheritance practice, and ultimately marital decisions in early-modern England. Deploying a sizeable dataset of wills from the diocese of Lincoln, as well as smaller samples from Durham and Kent, the author reconstructs trends in the endowment of single women from the 1570s to the 1690s. She finds a striking decline in the percentage of elder daughters receiving endowments of livestock, with a concomitant increase in the percentage left cash. This, it is suggested, reflected the impact of the 1571 Usury Act, which allowed lending by orphans, and a more general societal tolerance of usury by
single women. Furthermore, there is evidence that bequests to single daughters were increasingly stipulated to be released on attainment of a specific age, usually 21 years, rather than on marriage. Single women, then, contributed greatly to rural liquidity, but it is also possible, Spicksley hypothesises intriguingly, that this access to cash led them to alter their marital behaviour. The seventeenth century, particularly its later decades, were characterised by high rates of celibacy: perhaps access to inherited wealth, and a steady income gained through lending it out, allowed more women to forgo marriage altogether.


In this paper, Stobart and Schwarz compare the characteristics of the towns identified by Schwarz in an earlier paper (‘Residential leisure towns in England towards the end of the eighteenth century’ Urban History, 27 (2000), 51–61) to be ‘residential leisure towns’ with a control group of other towns. According to Schwarz, a ‘residential leisure town’ had at least 30 employers of manservants in 1780. Into this category fell a range of places, including large centres such as Manchester and Liverpool, ports like Southampton, and old-established county towns like Chester, Colchester and Shrewsbury. It turns out that the factors that distinguished these towns were the range of opportunities for leisure and improvement, a kind of ‘cultural depth’ involving things like ‘the production of town histories’ and the presence of good company (p. 226), and ‘the availability of a range of luxury goods and services’ (p. 227). Large centres were more likely than small ones to possess these characteristics on the basis of size alone, but several smaller places, like Stamford, Berwick and Beverley, fell into the category, being distinguished by a ‘combination of social profile, built environment and cultural-economy ... not their demographic, political or socio-economic make up’ (p. 235). It is as if these places provided a gracious and luxurious social and cultural ambience, and by virtue of that fact attracted gentry and persons of similar rank to live in them, thus intensifying their gentility.


In an important article for historians of labour, Wallis takes to task the traditional economic historical model in which apprentices spent their early years as a drain on their masters’ resources, through the costs of training, board and lodgings, but then repaid this investment in their later years, when they worked for below-market remuneration. Three assumptions on which the standard model is based are questioned in this perceptive analysis: that apprentice labour only became useful after some training had been undertaken; that this training was therefore concentrated at the beginning of the term; and that training costs were high relative to the labour value of a new apprentice. In fact, the author suggests that training was low-cost (for the master) and took place in
parallel with the apprentice’s labour. Thus, the costs versus benefits for both parties remained broadly similar across the term of work. Indeed, this had to have been so, because a large proportion of apprentices did not finish their term, either dying, or leaving their master for some other reason. There is a longer-term implication to this, too, for the ‘traditional’ model of apprenticeship appears more applicable to modern times, so a transition is postulated around 1800, after which the rise of the large modern firm, much more able to enforce contracts, substantially removed the worry that apprentices would not serve their full term. The theoretical analysis here is very plausible, and represents an important development in our understanding of apprenticeship as an economic institution, and although Wallis’s evidential basis is fairly slight, he has effectively set down a promising research agenda for future social and economic historians.


Portsmouth, ‘with its volatile mix of sailors, soldiers, and prostitutes’, was England’s ‘most violent town’, or at least that is what the authors of this interesting study suggest. With the aid of a quantitative analysis of the town’s excellent series of Sessions papers for the period, they aim to get to the bottom of instances of co-belligerence by men and women within the same household. Even within the context of fighting a common enemy, violence appears to have been gendered: men punched, women spat and slapped. Despite the fact that such instances accounted for under 5 per cent of all recorded cases of assault, their very existence suggests that, as historians like Craig Muldrew, Garthine Walker, Alex Shepard, Elizabeth Foyster and Faramerz Dabhoiwala have argued, individual honour was closely bound up with that of one’s household.


The good and evil of metropolitan cultural influence is a subject which today remains firmly rooted in the public discourse. The old idea that London somehow floats above geography is dying hard, and commentators today still trot out the idea that the capital is the capital, whereas the rest of the country constitutes ‘the regions’, doing violence both to economic geography and ‘provincial’ pride. In the seventeenth century, despite the difficulties of communication and the strength of local institutions of government, the idea of a London aloof from provincial society is more justifiable. In particular, the relationship between the elites and the capital was a detached one: whereas today London houses a disproportionate number of the movers and shakers, in the seventeenth century—while the capital was where aristocrats and gentlemen undertook important business of politics, trade or the law—they only spent a small portion of their time there. It was a place to get things done, not somewhere to call home. Thus, as Warren argues in this interesting study, while a large proportion of the Worcester gentry
spent some time in the capital, it was a place of ‘business and brief errands’ and its cultural impact on them remained limited. The relationship between London (and towns more generally) is not always a subject which local historians take up with much relish; but Warren’s article can be taken to suggest there is an intriguing development in this relationship between early modern and modern times. Today, London has the strongest local identity of all the English regions (perhaps Cornwall and Yorkshire are exceptions), and while it clearly had its own identity in the seventeenth century, Warren shows that this was not melded to the national discourse in the same way as today. Local historians, particularly those of a cultural bent, have a lot to tell us about how this change came about.


Laudianism is usually seen as one of the major root causes of the tumultuous civil conflict which broke out in England in 1642 (earlier in Scotland and Ireland). But its impact at the local level is still comparatively under-researched, despite the existence by the 1630s of enough parish and visitation records to make historians of earlier ‘reformations’ drool. Focussing tightly on Staffordshire and north Shropshire, Watts argues that while there was some resistance to Laud’s ‘impositions’, the overall picture is one of conformity. It is possible that this reflects the power of episcopal authority, but it might also reflect ordinary peoples’ broad support for the Arminian reforms.

R. Wilson, ‘”The mystical character of commodities”: the consumer society in 18th century England’, *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 42, 144–56.

Consumption has emerged in recent years as a major topic of historical enquiry. Nowhere is this truer than for the eighteenth century which, it has been argued, saw the birth of a consumer society. Wilson takes issue this these ideas, arguing against the idea that people were consumers of goods which could be utilised in an unproblematic way to communicate status or social aspiration. Instead, he draws on courtesy books and novels to argue that we should focus much more closely on the relationship between people and objects. Some readers might question his use of Bruno Latour’s ideas of hybridity and his argument that objects used people as well as people using objects. However, Wilson makes the important points that people (particularly women) were and are sometimes seen as objects; and that we should be alive to the nuances of social relationship constructed with and through material objects.

J. Wolffe, ‘The 1851 census and religious change in nineteenth century Yorkshire’, *Northern History*, 45, 71–86.

This article examines the 1851 Census of Religious Worship in a dynamic way, viewing it as a snapshot of a complex process of change in the level and nature of attendance at religious services. Wolffe argues that Yorkshire in the mid-nineteenth century was not,
as has sometimes been suggested, a secularising place. Rather, it was ‘rechristianising’ itself, different denominations ebbing (for example Quakers in rural areas) and flowing (for example Roman Catholics). A key feature of the period was the change in the relative fortunes of the Wesleyan Methodists and the Church of England. The paper considers three local areas in detail: Huddersfield, upper Wharfedale and the Vale of York.


What was the population of England and Wales in 1801? It might seem that there should be an agreed total, but in this paper Woollard shows that this is not the case. The original total in the Abstract presented to the House of Commons in 1801 differs from that in the 1801 Enumeration Returns, and in the summary of the population of England in the first six censuses which is given in the 1851 census report the figure for 1801 is different again. In this paper Woollard digs down into the details of the calculations to account for the inconsistencies. Some of them are due to definitional differences, and others to the correction of manifest errors which sometimes only came to light decades after the original computations were carried out. It is likely that similar inconsistencies will be found in other early censuses.