
Editorial*

This issue of *Local Population Studies*

Most of this issue of *Local Population Studies* is devoted to publishing the papers delivered at the Roger Schofield Memorial Conference held on 12 September 2020, which was a celebration and a commemoration of the life and work of Roger, the founding editor of this journal. The conference was originally scheduled as a face-to-face event in Cambridge on 4 April 2020, but the coronavirus epidemic resulted in its postponement and eventual incarnation in a virtual form. Thanks to the sterling work of Eilidh Garrett, Alice Reid and Karen Rothery, the virtual format worked very well, and more than 60 people participated.

The seven papers from the Conference that are included here divide into three groups. First, there are two papers by colleagues of Roger at Cambridge. Richard Smith presents a detailed description of Roger's contribution to the disciplines of both history and demography, emphasising his excellence as an historian as well as his (perhaps better appreciated) contributions to demography. Smith's paper provides a magisterial summary of the breadth and depth of Roger's work, and finishes with a discussion of his steadfast support for the Local Population Studies Society and for this journal. In the second contribution, Simon Szepter takes one of Roger's contributions (to a book edited with John Walter entitled *Famine, Disease and the Social Order in Early Modern Society*, and published in 1989) and shows how it turned the conventional perspective around to argue that demographic and epidemiological factors can affect economic features (such as productivity), rather than being consequences of economic factors. This has implications for public policy in the present day.

One of Roger Schofield's sometimes overlooked contributions to historical population research was his setting up and personally financing a research fund to provide grants to individual researchers whose work promotes the historical study of population within local and regional contexts, addressing questions that relate not only to historical demography, but also to wider issues in the social and economic history of Britain and Ireland. The grants are intended to cover a variety of research expenses, such as travel to archives, conference fees and accommodation, and the costs of photocopying. The next two papers in the special issue are from academics who received support from the Roger Schofield Fund. Both (perhaps fittingly in the light of our experience in 2020) deal with aspects of historical epidemic disease. Rosemary Leadbeater discusses familial perspectives on smallpox inoculation in the eighteenth century, and looks also at the nature of smallpox transmission during local epidemics in Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. Samantha Williams examines the extent to which poor relief helped to meet the costs of a plague

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epidemic in Cambridge in 1665–1666. Both these papers have something to contribute to our understanding of issues surrounding the current epidemic of coronavirus.

The final three papers from the Conference are from people who were taught by, or worked with Roger. David Cressy takes up Roger's interest in the study of literacy (or, perhaps better, illiteracy) through the analysis of whether individuals were able to sign their names in the marriage registers. His paper then discusses other potential sources of data on illiteracy, which often describe local social events, in which the politics of the parish intersect the history of the nation, and social, cultural, and political history come together. Linking these records to other local sources may reveal how kinship, neighbourliness, or economic associations drove participation in ritual, cultural, and quasi-political activities. David Levine's paper is interesting partly as a period-piece, in that its central section consists of a paper delivered at the Social Science History Association meeting in 1988 in which some of the limitations of parish register demography were outlined. That historical demography based solely on parish registers provides only a partial view of life in the past has been reiterated by many others since then. However, Levine's paper ends with a postscript in which he outlines some ways in which parish registers—used imaginatively and in combination with other sources—still have potential to cast light on many important questions about historical populations and societies, and on life as it was lived by ordinary people. Finally, DeLloyd Guth provides a personal reflection on his friendship with Roger over many years. He also describes an aspect of Roger's work that is, perhaps, not well known among population historians: his PhD thesis, written in 1963 on the subject of taxation under the early Tudors, and eventually published in 2004.

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In addition to the papers from the Conference, we have 'regular' papers on Chepstow by Robert Gant, and on the analysis of sixteenth-century parish registers by Michael Slater. Gant's contribution is an analysis of the social and economic structure of Chepstow in 1901, and is welcome for several reasons. First, the 1901 census has been analysed to a lesser extent than previous censuses. Second, Gant takes advantage of the information on house, or tenement, size to compare those living in small tenements of fewer than five rooms with those living in larger dwellings, and hence to highlight social and economic differentials. Third, although it is not possible to infer process from form, a detailed analysis of a town at one point in time can at least highlight the outcome of the processes which preceded that time point, and indicate which combinations of processes are more likely.

Slater's paper introduces a statistical technique, called cross-correlation, and applies it to the estimation of the expectation of life at birth from sixteenth-century parish registers. Cross-correlation is an attractive method in theory, but there are challenges with its application to parish register data. Slater's paper discusses these by illustrating the results obtained for two parishes in Yorkshire, Giggleswick and Horton in Ribblesdale, together with several other parishes in central and southern England.

Local Population Studies Prize

The Local Population Studies Society (LPSS) has decided to reintroduce a prize for the best article published in *Local Population Studies* by a student, a young academic or a non-University-based author. There was, in the past, a similar prize (referred to as the Local Population Studies Essay Prize) but it fell into abeyance. If you are either a student (at any stage), a young academic (within five years of completing a PhD) or not based in a university, you stand a chance of winning three years' membership of LPSS, to include the registration fees for all conferences organised by LPSS during those three years. The reintroduced prize will be offered for the best article by an eligible author published in *Local Population Studies* issues 106 or 107. Papers written by more than one author are eligible, but all authors must meet the criteria, and only one prize will be offered for each paper.

Editorial Board

It is with regret that we report that Annie Tindley has decided to step down from the Editorial Board. Over the last few years Annie has offered much sound advice on individual papers and on how we might publicise the journal to a wider audience. Her experience with historical journals in Scotland has informed much of what she has contributed. She also organised—before the pandemic hit—the first 'hybrid' meeting of the Editorial Board, combining a face-to-face meeting with contributions made remotely using Zoom. In her place, we have appointed Tom Heritage. Tom has been supervised by two editors of *Local Population Studies*, Nigel Goose at the University of Hertfordshire and myself at the University of Southampton. He completed his MA at the University of Hertfordshire in 2014 and his PhD at Southampton in 2019 on the subject of the older-age population of late nineteenth century England and Wales.

Can we remind all readers that the members of the Editorial Board are always happy to offer advice and support in the editorial process to those who have limited experience of publishing their work? Please do send us anything you think might be worth publishing, even if it is in a very preliminary form, and we can suggest ways to improve it, or new avenues to investigate.

Thanks and acknowledgements

My thanks are due to the members of the Editorial Board for their contribution to this issue. The copy-editing and proof-reading were very much a team effort this time. Viv Williams at Cambrian Typesetters and Malcolm George at Argent Litho have played their part with their customary goodwill and efficiency.

Andrew Hinde