
Editorial

The three articles in this edition of *Local Population Studies* present a rich and varied diet, and I am delighted that—at last!—the first of these focuses upon the medieval period. Rebecca Oakes' article presents new information on mortality in the late medieval period. Using data collated from the records of Winchester College, she follows the lives of 2,692 individuals and analyses adolescent mortality (10–18 year olds) for the period 1393–1540 and places within the context of other medieval population samples, notably studies of medieval monastic groups. She finds that the death rates at Winchester College in 1401 and 1430 are exceedingly high when compared to mortality observed at monasteries for the late medieval period, possibly suggesting that epidemic or contagious disease may have had a greater impact among those at Winchester College, either due to their age, or resulting from differences in their standards of living that set them apart from the monastic communities. Furthermore, the general lack of correlation between peaks in the death rate across different datasets suggests a possible regionalisation of mortality in the fifteenth century. In our second article John Hall discusses the appearance in England from the 1850s of 'cottage hospitals', and examines their history and shift in function to 'community hospitals' within their regional setting in the period up to 2000. The impact of National Health Service organisational and planning mechanisms on smaller hospitals is explored through case studies at two levels: the strategy for community hospitals of the Oxford NHS Region, and the impact of that strategy on one hospital—Watlington Cottage Hospital—is critically examined through its existence from 1874 to 2000. Our third paper studies the birthplaces of spouses married in two parishes in England—Stourton and Kilmington in Wiltshire—to consider the effect of local topography, religion and occupation on pre-marital geographic mobility. It is based upon an impressive database of over 22,000 individuals who lived in south-west Wiltshire in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which includes information on birthplace, religious affiliation, occupation and many other variables. Day finds that geographical mobility calculated from birthplace was higher than estimates derived from residence prior to marriage, and that brides moved shorter distances than grooms. The Somerset-Wiltshire border formed a barrier, although a porous one, while occupation also influenced geographical mobility, and Catholic grooms were less mobile than Protestant ones.

Additional items in this issue are a report on our Autumn 2011 conference, a research note on the traffic in corpses provided by Stuart Basten, and a 'final salvo' in the debate about same-name siblings. News from the Universities returns us to the home of *Local Population Studies*—The Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure—while this Spring issue closes with our usual Book Review item.

LPSS conferences

The twelfth LPSS Spring conference was held in Welwyn Garden City on 21 April 2012 on the theme of *Regional development in industrialising Britain, c.1670–1860*. A full report on this very successful and enjoyable meeting will appear in the Autumn issue of *LPS*. The Autumn conference 2012 will be held at Oxford Brookes University on Saturday 3 November, on the theme of *New Research in local population studies*. Professor Steve King will give the keynote address, with the remaining contributions coming from scholars who have either recently completed their PhDs, or are current PhD students. Full information will be included in the next *LPSS Newsletter*.

Editorial matters

After 14 year before the mast and after much heart-searching, I have decided it is time to stand down as editor of *Local Population Studies*. It has been both a privilege and a pleasure to have been able to serve the journal for so long. I can recall as a postgraduate at Cambridge University aspiring to publish in *LPS*, and being delighted when Richard Wall accepted my research note on the 1563 ecclesiastical census, which appeared in *LPS* 34 (1985), and which subsequently led to a lively debate between Alan Dyer and me in *LPS* 49 (1992) and *LPS* 56 (1996). Little did I know then that *LPS* would eventually become such an important part of my academic life. And important it has been, for editing the journal has given me the opportunity to help develop the infrastructure of our discipline—always important to me, and reflected in my various efforts to provide outlets for publications in social and economic history, whether through the University of Hertfordshire Press or via the Economic History Society. My self-appointed brief when taking on the editorship of *LPS* was to ensure that the journal appeared on time, to regularise its content and to add new features, and to produce a more professional product while maintaining the *LPS* ethos of straddling the professional/amateur divide. I believe that all of these things have now been achieved (though the more observant amongst you will see that this issue is just a *little* late), and that the journal has never had a higher academic reputation. As they say where I now live in Suffolk—‘job done’—and it is now time for someone new to take over the reins.

When I first joined the *LPS* Board, I was surprised to discover that the Board regularly entered into long, interminable discussions about merging the two once distinct charities—*LPS* and LPSS—as well as equally interminable considerations of the minutiae of *LPS* finances. We have now successfully ended both of those performances, the first by merging the two charities and the second by ensuring that financial matters are the purview of the Society and not the Board. So the Board now discusses academic issues, relating to the journal and to associated publications projects. Better still, Board meetings, which are usually held three times a year, have now become akin to an *LPS* dining club—if I may be immodest for a moment, the product of my own culinary endeavours, and the

aspiration of other Board members to equal or surpass those endeavours. So now we spend a healthy amount of time eating lovingly prepared lunches, and only the amount of time that is necessary to conduct *LPS* business. What is more, I could not ask for a better, more amenable and friendly team to work with than the one we have now. Over the years I have received excellent support from a number of past and present Board members, and I hope it will seem invidious if I offer a particular vote of thanks to Matthew Woollard, Andy Hinde and Chris Galley. But the whole team as presently constituted is a true pleasure to work with, and the new editor will be very fortunately placed in that regard. Formal expressions of interest in taking over the editorship should be addressed in the first instance to the Chair of LPSS, Professor Colin Pooley (c.pooley@lancaster.ac.uk). In due course I will be more than happy to talk to prospective candidates informally about what the position entails.

My thanks once again go to Viv Williams of Cambrian Typesetters for laying out this issue, and to our printer, Halstan.

Nigel Goose
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