
News from the Universities

The University of Cambridge

The Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure

The Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure (also known as CAMPOP, HPSS, or simply 'the Cambridge Group') last featured in 'News from the universities' in 2001, as we were about to relocate from Trumpington Street to our new home in the Department of Geography, where we have been based since.

Founded in 1964 by Tony Wrigley and the late Peter Laslett, the Group is best known for its pioneering work on English demographic history and on the history of family and household structures. Today the Group continues to provide a valuable research environment for academics and students across the University of Cambridge. Members of the Group come from a range of disciplines, bringing together expertise in demography, history, human geography, biological sciences, statistical analysis, social research and economics to name but a few. The research undertaken by its members reflect these interests and a shared commitment to rigorous empirical work. In the decade since moving to the Geography Department Group members have undertaken work on aspects of demographic, family and economic history extending from the thirteenth to the twentieth century involving all parts of the British Isles as well as Europe, China and East Africa. Many of these topics continue to form elements within the present array of research programmes described below. A particular feature of the work has been the commitment of the Group to research training, reflected in the large contribution made by postgraduates and post-doctoral fellows. In the period 2001–2011 over 20 doctoral dissertations have been supervised and over half of their authors have been elected to prestigious and highly competitive research fellowships in Cambridge Colleges. Five members of the Group have held British Academy Research Fellowships and another three secured Marie Curie Fellowships from the European Union during this period. Over half of these postgraduates and post-doctoral students have gone on to hold academic appointments in universities in the United Kingdom and abroad. Currently five graduates of the Group hold University of Cambridge appointments, three of whom have taken up their posts since 2001.

Eight PhD students are currently based at the Group, a number of whom are funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Their doctoral projects include work

on female employment, agrarian change, residential stability and mobility, and urban gardens. Members of HPSS have also been involved in the supervision of Masters' students within the History Faculty, Department of Geography and Institute of Continuing Education for the MPhils in Economic and Social History and Historical Geography, and the MSt in Local and Regional History. In addition, undergraduate research projects in fields relating to economic history and historical demography are supervised, with many of these students going on to do postgraduate research within the Group. The methodological and subject-specific knowledge of Group members continues to be employed in undergraduate teaching within both the Geography Department and the History Faculty, and such teaching is set to expand from 2012.

The past year has been an eventful one for HPSS, with a number of significant changes. In 2011 Richard Smith retired from his post in the Department of Geography and from his role as director of HPSS. Richard's leadership will be greatly missed, and we would like to express our gratitude for all he has done on behalf of the Group over the years, and particularly since he returned to Cambridge as Director of the Group in 1994. Richard does, however, remain an active member of HPSS and is now at more liberty to pursue his own research interests, which include revising the timing of mortality transition in England by considering life expectancies over the long sweep of time from 1250, as well as assessing the geography and demographic correlates of poor relief before 1834. Roger Schofield and Tony Wrigley also continue to contribute significantly to HPSS, and can be found in the Group most days. In this past decade Tony Wrigley has produced three major monographs published with either Cambridge or Oxford University Press.

Another major new development within the University is the creation of a chair in demography within the Geography Department, signalling a renewed commitment to the research and teaching of this discipline at Cambridge. The news is also of significance to the Group, as the new Professor will become Director of the Cambridge Group. The first holder of this new chair will be Professor Emily Grundy from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, who is to take up this position in May. We are very much looking forward to welcoming her to Cambridge. Leigh Shaw-Taylor will continue as deputy director, a role he has filled since 2007, following his appointment in 2006 to a University lectureship in the Faculty of History.

Membership of the Cambridge Group continues to be varied, with research interests spanning from the late medieval period to the twentieth century. At present the Group comprises c.30 members, a number of whom have contributed to many collaborative projects undertaken at HPSS. Group members have had considerable success in attracting funding grants from the British Academy, Economic History Society, ESRC, Leverhulme Trust and the Wellcome Trust for a number of these projects.

The Occupational Structure of Britain 1379–1911, known as the Occupations Project and launched by Leigh Shaw-Taylor and Tony Wrigley in 2003, is the major focus of work on

the history of social structure. Many members of the Group have been involved in this project since its commencement, including significant contributions from Ros Davies, Amy Erickson, Jacob Field, Peter Kitson, Gill Newton and Max Satchell. The project has had substantial funding from the ESRC and the Leverhulme Trust and has been awarded British Academy Research Project status. It aims to provide a broad overall picture of the development of England's occupational structure from the late Middle Ages through to the culmination of the industrial revolution during the nineteenth century. Data from the censuses have been re-examined and 'new' sources analysed. The key finding to date, which is heavily dependent on occupational designations given to over a million males recorded in parish registers, is that the secondary sector was perhaps twice as large, in terms of male employment, at the beginning of the eighteenth century than historians have previously suggested. This implies that most of the move of males into the secondary sector took place before the mid-eighteenth century, and that 'nationally there was more growth in the secondary sector between 1500 and 1750 than there was between 1750 and 1850'. The project has also analysed adult female employment in 1851; this has been mapped and is available on the website. Amy Erickson and others are now working on the history of female employment in the pre-census periods. They have examined 12 classes of sources which might provide information. As direct data which give a specific occupation to women are very limited, researchers are also analysing reports of their daily activities (often from evidence given in court cases). Working papers are available on the website, and articles by Amy and by Jacob Field have appeared in *Continuity & Change*, *History Workshop Journal*, and *The Economic History Review*.

In the area of the history of population, work at the Group over the last decade includes analysis of changing patterns in mortality over time, and the impact of social factors such as migration, urbanisation, and the role of infectious disease upon these changes.

Alice Reid, Eilidh Garrett and Ros Davies, together with Andrew Blaikie (University of Aberdeen) have created a major longitudinal data set by linking censuses and civil registration of births, deaths and marriages for four Scottish communities over the second half of the nineteenth century (funded by the ESRC). These data provide a rare opportunity to illuminate mechanisms of change and pathways of influence and causation in patterns of fertility, mortality, nuptiality and migration. A further project (with Richard Smith and funded by the Wellcome Trust) investigated the impact of individual medical men on geographical patterns in the medical certification of deaths. Alice and Eilidh's current research (with Simon Szreter and funded by the Leverhulme Trust), uses early twentieth century census returns and street directories to investigate the impact of residential mobility on the measurement of early age mortality and fertility using retrospective reports and to consider the impact of housing conditions and associated variables on mortality in Edwardian Belfast.

Romola Davenport's research interests also include assessment of mortality among different social groups. Her work is particularly concerned with the transformation of

urban centres from demographic sinks, consuming the population surplus of the countryside, to populations capable of natural increase in the period prior to civil registration. Romola has been heavily involved in the Paupers' Lives Project with Leonard Schwarz (University of Birmingham) and Jeremy Boulton (University of Newcastle), funded by the ESRC and Wellcome Trust, using parish burial records, sexton's books and workhouse records for St Martin-in-the-fields, London, to assess mortality among different social groups. She is particularly interested in the role of infectious disease, and her work on the decline in adult smallpox was recently published in *The Economic History Review*.

Mortality in early modern England is the focus of a new pilot project being undertaken by Richard Smith, Gill Newton and Peter Kitson with funding from the Wellcome Trust. They will use parish data to examine spatial patterns of yearly and monthly variations in burial totals to look for synchronisation in mortality across different locations, and how that might relate to population movement and the rise of transportation networks among other factors. Richard Smith and Gill Newton have also been involved as collaborative researchers with colleagues at the Centre for Metropolitan History, and Birkbeck College on a series of projects funded by AHRC, Wellcome Trust and ESRC on environmental change, housing and population growth in Cheapside, Clerkenwell and Aldgate selected to represent areas of the city and suburbs of London. Their contribution seeks to understand demographic changes, principally infant mortality in those parts of London c.1600–1750.

These project outlines reflect only a small selection of research interests at the Group. Details of all the main research projects and the specific research interests and publications of Group members can be found on the website at: <http://www.hpss.geog.cam.ac.uk/>

The Group holds a range of historically interesting material gathered over its life time, including a specialist research library on demographic history. After some years without a librarian, the Group has benefited greatly from the appointment of Leslie Glassmith as part-time librarian and administrator. She has done a great deal to bring order to our extensive archive, and has made the library space a more pleasant and user-friendly environment. With the help of Rebecca Tyler work is underway to create an electronic catalogue of the library collection. We hope to put this on the website soon.

The Cambridge Group holds electronic copies of many of its key datasets, including family reconstitution data. It also holds large quantities of historical demographic data in machine-readable form and a unique collection of photocopied and microfilmed unpublished census documents from England and elsewhere, primarily relating to the period before 1800. We hope to fully catalogue the Group's legacy of datasets over the next year or so. In the longer-term we hope to secure funding to improve the documentation and availability of the legacy datasets. For a list of datasets arising from the Occupations project see: <http://www.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/occupations/datasets/>

Richard Wall's untimely death in June 2011 brought great sadness to the Group. Richard was a member of staff for over 30 years during a period which constituted the halcyon days of demographic and family history. His work, particularly with Peter Laslett, was essential in establishing the Group as an international centre of household structural analysis and he was remarkably generous in sharing his time and technical expertise in this field with countless visitors to the premises first in Silver Street and then in Trumpington Street. His colleagues Kevin Schürer and Lloyd Bonfield have offered their warm appreciations, respectively in *LPS* and *Continuity and Change*, of his remarkable work as a journal editor from which so many scholars are the beneficiaries.

In 2014 the Cambridge Group will have been in existence for 50 years and this anniversary will certainly be celebrated. Further information on the nature of this celebration will be made available soon.