
Editorial

The three articles in this edition of *Local Population Studies* again offer a fascinating variety of subjects, periods and approaches to the study of local history. Our first article, by Colin Pooley, compares migration patterns in Britain and Sweden, the British data employed originating in the individual level biographies which underpinned his important book (co-authored with Jean Turnbull), *Migration and mobility in Britain since the eighteenth century* (London, 1998), and the Swedish data drawn from the Swedish Demographic Database (DDB) held in the Centre for Population Studies, University of Umeå, Sweden, compiled from excellent Swedish population registers for a variety of parishes in Sweden. Despite enormous contrasts in population density and distribution between the two countries, it is argued that, at the national level, geography had little impact on migration, but at the local level most people in both countries were tied closely to particular localities. However, it is further suggested that this was not primarily due to the specific characteristics of a place but, rather, can be attributed to the ties to family, friends and community which, while being situated in a place, were not a product of it. In our second article Jonathan Healey uses the long run of landholding records extant for the village and manor of Troutbeck in the Lake District to explore changes in its agrarian structure between the mid-thirteenth century and 1800. He discovers that numbers of customary landholders grew in the fourteenth century in the face of famine and plague, and grew again between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The seventeenth century witnessed growth in the number of subtenants until the 1620s. Then, after restrictions on the division of tenements were lifted in the 1670s, landholdings started to fragment, and a group of small customary landholders developed and survived into the eighteenth century. Third, Robert Gant uses a combination of archival and household survey evidence to explore differences in the impact of developments in the railway industry on the growth and social profiles of three neighbouring villages in south east Monmouthshire, 1850–1965. He finds that economic transformation manifested itself in different ways in each village. Hence local circumstances interacted with economic processes to produce unique local social outcomes, and hence the ‘railway village,’ as a generic term, conceals marked local differences with regard to patterns of development, social profiles and identity.

Each of these three papers present a challenge. Colin Pooley’s discussion of migration challenges us to think about how we define lived space: whether we can dissociate the various elements that constitute attachment to a particular site of habitation from that place as a physical entity and geographical location. I know that my own editorial board were divided on this question. It is certainly one that is well worth asking, and I hope it will lead to further discussion both within and outside of this journal. In his discussion of landholding in Troutbeck Jonathan Healey challenges local historians to embrace *la longue*

durée, showing how a variety of sources from several different centuries can enable us to piece together aspects of long-term change in local communities. This approach was, of course, a feature of the French *Annales* school, but Healey suggests that political factors need to be taken on board alongside the environmental features given primacy by historians such as Le Roy Ladurie. We should also remember, of course, that examination of long-term change in local communities, even if it is rarely found among academic historians today, was also practised by some of the doyens of English local history, including H.P.R. Finberg and W.G. Hoskins. Finally Robert Gant challenges those who have expressed scepticism of the concept of ‘community’, to show—very effectively in my view—how a combination of archival and household survey evidence can be employed to examine community cohesion in local settings, ones, in this instance, that have been impacted by the arrival of the railway.

This issue also includes a report on the very successful conference held last November at Oxford Brookes University, ‘New research in local population studies’, written by Mary Cook, Rowena Burgess and Joanne Bailey. Our regular Spring features are also present. News from the Universities, now coordinated by Nicola Verdon, takes a slightly different form than usual by featuring activities at three institutions: the Universities of Glasgow, Sheffield Hallam and Southampton. And finally we have a valuable clutch of book reviews, this year coordinated by Chris Galley while Alys Levene is enjoying maternity leave.

LPSS conferences

The thirteenth LPSS Spring conference was held in at the Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London on Saturday 13 April 2013 on the theme of *Urban mortality in Britain*. My thanks to all of those who gave papers or attended, and to Karen Rothery for her help in organising the event. A full report on this successful and enjoyable meeting will appear in the Autumn issue of *LPS*. The Autumn conference 2013 will be held Lancaster University on Saturday 16 November, on the theme of *Immigrant communities in Britain*, with papers ranging from the later medieval period to the twentieth century. Speakers will include Colin Pooley, Mark Ormrod, Don MacRaild, Caroline Bressey, David Feldman, Kathey Burrell, Wendy Uglioni and Nissa Finney. Full information will be included in the next *LPSS Newsletter*.

Editorial matters

I am delighted to be able to announce that a new editor and a new home for *Local Population Studies* has now been agreed. Jonathan Healey will take over the editorship at the end of 2013, and hence will be responsible for the Spring issue 2014, *LPS* 92. Jonathan works in the Department of Continuing Education at Oxford University, which will provide the journal with its new administrative base. Jonathan is, of course, a current

member of the *LPS* editorial board, an enthusiast for local population history, and a prolific author in the field. His research interests in northern England, Lancashire in particular, and in welfare history will be familiar to many readers of this journal. He also fully embraces the philosophy of this journal with respect to a continuing alliance and interface between the professional (waged) historical community and the amateur (unwaged) historical community, and I offer no apologies for using the term 'amateur'... nor 'community'. A fuller profile on Jonathan will appear in the next LPSS Newsletter.

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

Nigel Goose
May 2013