
Book Reviews

R.W. Hoyle (ed.), *Histories of People and Landscape: Essays on the Sheffield Region in Memory of David Hey* (Hatfield, University of Hertfordshire Press, 2021). xiv + 204pp. ISBN 978-1-912260-39-3. £35 (h/b).

David Hey was well known to readers of *Local Population Studies*, both as chair of the society and for his many books and articles on local, regional and family history. His wide academic interests are celebrated in this memorial volume of essays which examines Sheffield and its hinterland, the focus of much of David's research. The essays cover a range of subjects and periods, from the medieval period to the twentieth century, and include topics such as deer parks, Sheffield's cutlers, Domesday landscapes, enclosure, food production during the First World War and, of course, naming patterns.

The volume begins with a touching personal tribute and assessment of Hey's academic career by Charles Phythian-Adams. Next is Melvyn Jones' well-illustrated discussion of the documentary and landscape evidence for the at least 27 deer parks that existed in South Yorkshire. The discussion encompasses their creation, mainly in the medieval period, their form and function, how they were stocked, the hunting methods used in the parks and their demise. Some long-lost parks are reconstructed. By 1610 only 10 remained as their function changed from 'game preserve and a valuable source of wood and timber to be the adornment of a country house' (p. 22). Over time many parks were subdivided, leased out and built over so that now only two remain with deer. Richard Hoyle then offers a re-interpretation of the role of the earls of Shrewsbury in the incorporation by statute of Sheffield's cutlers in 1624. Instead of viewing this as a response to their withdrawal from the town, he argues that this event relates to 'the much larger issue of how you manage a rural craft industry, in the sense of both controlling entry into the trade and maintaining standards among its practitioners' (p. 45). As a complement to Hoyle's paper, Dorian Gerhold examines the early history of the steel industry from 1614 to its growth into a substantial industry during the early eighteenth century. Gerhold provides a connected history of the beginnings of steel working in England which places Hey's work on south Yorkshire into a wider context.

Two chapters concern family history. The first discusses William Cavendish's wardship of his 12-year-old stepson Francis Wortley. Peter Edwards demonstrates that, while there were benefits for Cavendish in this relationship, his careful management of Wortley's assets 'made him the perfect manager of his ward's estate' (p. 63). Alan Crosby then provides an engaging account of a Peak District yeoman family, the Bagshaws of Hazlebridge (his direct ancestors). Compared with families living on the great estates, yeoman families have been less studied in part because their archives have rarely survived intact. Crosby gathers evidence for one such 'core family' that Hey considered remained rooted in their 'country'. His chapter recounts how the family gradually accumulated freehold and leasehold

properties, enhanced its social position, diversified beyond farming and then how the family was ‘destroyed by drink and financial recklessness in the early decades of the nineteenth century’ (p. 130). In the 1830s the farm passed to the husband of one of the Bagshaw sisters and therefore was retained within the extended family. It remained so until the twentieth century when the family eventually died out.

The rest of the chapters include almost a miscellany of topics which reflect Hey’s wide research interests. Ian Rotherham’s chapter, ‘Searching for lost Domesday landscapes’, uses a multidisciplinary approach to examine the evidence of lost Peak District and Pennine upland landscapes, thereby providing vital data for those involved in rewilding schemes. John Beckett then examines opposition to parliamentary enclosure in Nottinghamshire, revealing that it was far more prevalent than some historians such as W.E. Tate who mainly relied on official objections to enclosure have argued. In the absence of court records, Beckett mainly employs newspaper reports and, while this evidence for Nottinghamshire is relatively meagre, it is still sufficient to show that ‘popular resistance to enclosure was more extensive than Tate assumed’ (p. 126). Beckett’s methodology could easily be applied to other places. Nicola Verdon’s chapter focusses on the expansion of arable production during the First World War in Derbyshire, a county more suited to pastoral farming. This was achieved through a combination of persuasion and compulsion, despite considerable skilled labour shortages, and was testament to the hard work and dedication of the individual farmers. John Broad examines the evolution of different types of settlement boundaries, such as chapelries, extra-parochial places and fragmented parishes, through a series of illuminating case studies. Similar issues affected hundred and county boundaries and these were not entirely resolved following nineteenth-century reform. Uncertainty over exactly who had jurisdiction in these places led to both increases in commerce, religious dissent and, in the case of Tunbridge Wells, whose theatre was built across the Sussex/Kent border, caused judicial problems and averted censorship (p. 182). Broad ends the chapter by examining the many small settlements named ‘Little Londons’ which were often, but not exclusively, located near such boundaries. The volume ends fittingly with George Redmonds discussing how detailed investigation is required to examine how some south Pennine places became named after certain individuals.

In such a short review it is impossible to do full justice to the individual chapters, but for anyone with an interest in this region, or in the individual topics, this volume is to be recommended. Each contribution is a welcome addition to the literature and cumulatively they provide a fitting tribute to a much-missed pioneer in this type of history.

Chris Galley

Stephanie Appleton and Mairi Macdonald (eds), *Stratford-upon-Avon Wills: 1348–1701*, 2 vols, (Bristol, Dugdale Society, 2020). 978pp. ISBN 978–0–85220–106–0. £45.00 (h/b).

Wills and testaments survive in their hundreds of thousands in record offices across England and the compilation of these records into printed volumes has a rich history.

These two volumes of all the extant wills and testaments for Stratford-upon-Avon in the period 1348–1701 are valuable contributions to this body of work. They will prove to be a useful resource for those interested in the history of the town as well as those interested in wills and will-making, material culture, gender, social organisation, religion and kinship.

These volumes are published by the Dugdale Society, an organisation founded in order to preserve historical documents and encourage the study of local history. They are therefore part of a series of works which open up historical sources to a wider audience. At the beginning of the volume the editors situate the work among the Dugdale Society's other publications—namely the *Stratford-upon-Avon Inventories, 1568–1699* (edited by Jeanne Jones) and the giving of Jones's inventory reference along with each will (where this exists) serves to create an interconnecting network of sources with usability at its centre. Accessibility is at the heart of these volumes and there has been a lot of consideration given to the non-specialist. Any documents which were in Latin have been translated and yoghs and thorns are replaced with more familiar characters. Throughout, the editors have provided glosses and explanations where words or phrases are unclear. At the end of the second volume there is a useful glossary listing some of the more unusual terms and some spelling variants. There are also footnotes giving details about the testators' lives and, where applicable, connections to other testators whose wills are included in the volumes are also noted.

The volumes are very well organised. The first volume contains an introduction of good length and scope, as well as a list of testators (organised by surname). The introduction itself gives a useful overview of the topic of wills and testaments but it is not excessive. A short history of the town helps to situate the documents in the context in which they were made. I am sure that a great many researchers will find the section on 'Will-making in Stratford' to be particularly interesting, especially the information about the 50 wills and testaments drawn up by scribe William Gilbard alias Higgs. An appendix listing these would have been a delightful addition. Other subheadings divide the text up into helpful sections which will be of use to the researcher who is new to these documents. Subjects include 'Will-making: in precept and practice,' 'Wills and religion,' 'Wills and their contents,' and each of these provides a brief overview with plenty of references to follow up should a particular theme be of interest. Throughout the introduction the editors have included quotations from the documents themselves, providing a texture of the materials which follow. One gets a sense of the most interesting and unusual examples from the collection, but there is little indication of typicality here. Still, there is much to enjoy, and particularly effective is the inclusion of five case studies of Stratford families and their testamentary records. These demonstrate the utility of the documents in exploring kinship networks, patterns of bequest, and the significance of life course on testamentary form. The family trees are a lovely inclusion and demonstrate just how much information can be gleaned from this source base.

The wills themselves are organised chronologically, with bold headings giving the testator's name and occupation (and/or marital status). Below this is the archival reference,

as one would expect, but the particularly valuable additional pieces of information supplied here are the four dates listed under each entry. Where known, the date of the will, the place of the testator's burial, information about the inventory information and the probate date are given. This 'at-a-glance' information will make life easier for many researchers.

It is sometimes easy to forget about the textuality of the original documents when one uses a book of transcribed source materials. The editors have however been sensitive to the original documents; where one will was written on the back of an old letter the transcript of this document, too, has been included. Images of some wills and testaments are provided—notably in the introduction a wonderful example is given of an illustration within a testament. There are some other images of wills showing marks and signatures but there is little editorial commentary here and the significance of these inclusions is not always clear.

Great care has been taken to ensure that these volumes are usable by all, but there is also much here for those who are more familiar with the sources. The editorial method is clearly outlined at the end of the introduction and the editorial decisions that have been made serve to make these documents more available. The transparency of the editorial method is helpful for those interested in the texts themselves. An index of persons (by surname) lists all instances of individuals who are named in the wills and testaments, which will be an invaluable inclusion for those researching families, examining kinship networks, or tracing particular individuals. There follows an index of places, again which lists all of the places identified in the documents by name. There are also entries for various types of place within Stratford: specific churches appear here, as well as all reference to bridges, inns, and mills, to name but a few. A final 'Index of subjects' lists everything else. Within this there are four sections. Of these, the list of occupations, professions and statuses provides a fascinating insight into the kind of people who were making these documents. It might have been helpful if 'widow' and 'wife' had appeared on the list so as to have a more straightforward method of identifying the women's wills in the volume. Overall, the indexes are a useful tool to navigate these volumes and have been well planned out.

The care which has been taken over the compilation of these volumes should be applauded. They will be of widespread interest and use—for those less familiar with wills and testaments they will be of great utility; and for those who are already well acquainted with this source base they will enrich any collection.

Alexandra Marchbank

Mark Forrest, *Reading Early Handwriting 1500–1700* (Macclesfield, British Association for Local History, 2019). 87pp. ISBN: 978-0-948140-04-4. £10 (p/b).

Mark Forrest's guide to early palaeography is a replacement for the British Association for Local History publication *Reading Tudor and Stuart Handwriting* by Lionel Munby (1988), which was revised by Steve Hobbs and Alan Crosby and published as a second edition in 2002. The aim of this new work, to be 'a concise and practical palaeographical guide to the

hands in use during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', is amply fulfilled. The book does not purport to be an in-depth or exhaustive guide to the handwriting of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; rather, it is aimed at 'the local or family historian, student or researcher beginning to work with English documents' of the period. It assumes little prior knowledge, making it particularly useful for family or local historians who are expanding their research into archives or for students new to working with early modern manuscripts.

The book contains 25 colour reproductions of manuscripts and their transcriptions, with notes, of which 17 are new and 8 are retained from the previous edition. The examples, selected from a range of English counties and archives, are usefully divided into three categories: family, estate and manorial; legal and local government; and church records. The context and historical significance of each group is explained, with particular points to note. Each category provides diverse examples of the types of record likely to be encountered, and together they offer a good representation of the range of hands used. Most of the selected manuscripts employ secretary hand, but the earlier facsimiles also demonstrate some use of medieval hand, with later examples showing the use of italic. The inclusion of one or two other documents written in italic hand would have been helpful, however, given how varied informal handwriting was across the period. Furthermore, the examples could usefully have included a letter composed by a woman and written in her own hand.

The documents are arranged in reverse chronological order, the first dating from 1680, the last from 1490. This composition, as the book states, is 'to demonstrate the development of handwriting' over the period covered. Helpful notes at the end of each transcription explain the hand used and direct the reader's attention to particular strokes, letters, and usages that might lead to confusion or misinterpretation.

The illustrations are of documents that have survived in at least a good state of repair, but any historian who works with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century archival material will be certain to encounter numerous documents that have suffered from misfortunes such as fading, water damage, mould, creasing, and insect or rodent damage. This is referenced in the notes accompanying 'Love letter from Fulke Madeley' (46–47), although in the reproduction this example appears to be relatively free from such problems. Although the introduction provides guidance on procedures to follow in these cases, at least one facsimile example of a poor-quality manuscript where the text is difficult to read, with guidance in the notes, would be a welcome addition.

An informative introduction, expanded in this new edition, discusses many of the pitfalls and challenges that arise when analysing the text of early modern documents, while a short but informative bibliography directs readers to further sources, both in print and on-line. The introduction provides useful summaries of the commonest hands and writing styles, with pictorial examples, as well as an explanation of how numbers were written and instructions for their transcription. It also includes explanations of currency and measurements, and there is a comprehensive section on dating conventions. A full explanation of letter forms comprising the secretary alphabet and a table of regnal years from Henry VII to Anne are particularly useful additions.

Despite the comprehensive nature of the above, there are some omissions that may leave the reader with unanswered questions. While the guide describes the letters *Uu* and *Vv* as being interchangeable, there is not a recommendation for how to transcribe these, especially where *Uu* is used for *Vv*. Further, there is a lack of specific guidance about the transcription of *ff* as capital F, whether it is preferable to retain the former, or adapt to the latter. Additionally, although the notes point to instances where the definite article is run into the following word, ‘thoungar’ for ‘the younger’, for example (72–73), the text does not state whether this should be transcribed as written, or expanded, with missing letters and spaces in square brackets. Other useful points, such as the use of # to transcribe meaningless characters or when to use *sic*, appear in the notes to the documents, but could also have been included in the introduction.

While the transcriptions are consistent in style, there appear to be a number of minor errors, primarily missed or omitted letters, capitals transcribed as lower-case letters, or superscripts not acknowledged. Despite these, however, the book provides an accessible and succinct overview of the main points to note in palaeography, as well as some of its difficulties, and it is portable enough to be taken to an archive for on-site reference. While not exhaustive, it will prove a valuable guide for anyone embarking on the daunting task of learning to read sixteenth- and seventeenth-century handwriting, while providing researchers with sufficient guidance to help them avoid mistakes commonly made when learning the art of palaeography.

Diane Strange

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David Cressy, *England's Islands in a Sea of Troubles* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020). 410pp. ISBN 978–0–19–885660–3. £30 (h/b).

David Cressy, as many readers of *Local Population Studies* will know, was a former student of Roger Schofield and presented a paper at the Roger Schofield Memorial Conference in September 2020. This is his latest book, and the fifth to be published by Oxford University Press. In it he describes the experiences of ‘England’s islands’ between the late sixteenth and the early eighteenth centuries, although most of the book concerns their experiences during the English Civil War, the Interregnum and the first 25 years after the Restoration. By ‘England’s islands’, Cressy means what are now called the Channel Islands, the Isles of Scilly, Anglesey, the Isle of Man, and the Isle of Wight, together with the smaller islands of Lundy, Holy Island off the coast of Northumberland, and the island formerly called St Nicholas Island (now Drake’s Island) in Plymouth Sound.

The first part of the book sets the scene by looking at island life in general, and at the historiography of island communities. Cressy outlines the particular legal situation of each of the islands. Some (the Isle of Wight and Anglesey) were integrated into the legal and governmental system of the mainland whereas others (the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) were largely independent and benefitted from a range of rights and

privileges. In the case of the Channel Islands, these privileges were guarded jealously by the inhabitants. In the Isle of Man they effectively allowed the Stanley family to govern as independent rulers, although the degree of independence they asserted was somewhat greater than the degree they actually possessed. Cressy describes the island economies, which depended partly on agriculture and domestic manufacture (such as knitting), but also benefited from the opportunities for trade, not to mention piracy and bounty from shipwrecks.

In the second part, the book examines particular themes relating to England's islands. Underpinning all of these are three geographical facts. First, the islands were set apart: the sea imposed a barrier that was significant even for those islands like Anglesey and the Isle of Wight that lay close to the mainland. Second, the islands were borderlands, in that they represented outposts of England. In the case of the Channel Islands, the outposts were parlously near to a potential (and at times actual) enemy. But even the Isle of Wight and Anglesey were vulnerable to attack (in the case of the Isle of Wight, for example, from Dutch pirates). Third, the islands were strategic assets: the Isle of Wight guarded the entrances to Portsmouth and Southampton, and the Isles of Scilly were a base from which the western approaches could be monitored. Cressy explores the implications of these three geographical givens for various aspects of island life: religion, military garrisoning, and the use of the islands as a refuge during the Civil War by various factions.

As important as the usefulness of islands as a refuge was the great potential they had for temporarily getting rid of undesirable elements. The islands were almost all used at various times as prisons. Puritans were sent there in the early seventeenth century by the established Church, royalists were imprisoned there by Parliament (including, famously, King Charles I in Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight) and, after the Restoration, die-hard supporters of the Commonwealth were sent there by the new regime. In the third part of the book, Cressy tells the story of a whole range of prisoners, from the puritans William Prynne, Henry Burton and John Bastwick through King Charles I himself to the Restoration prisoner John Lambert, who might have succeeded Oliver Cromwell, and who was interned on various islands until his death in 1684.

This is not a conventional work of local history, or of social, economic or demographic history. Much of what is written here deals with political and constitutional matters. It is, however, a book about peculiar localities and the implications of geographical separation. And the feelings of separateness and uniqueness that the ordinary inhabitants of each of these islands felt are a constant backdrop to the events Cressy describes. The book is well written and meticulously referenced. It is among the most enjoyable history books I have read, and I recommend it to readers of the journal.

Andrew Hinde
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Chris Upton, *The Birmingham Parish Workhouse, 1730–1840* (Hatfield, University of Hertfordshire Press, 2019). vii + 261pp. ISBN 978–1–912260–14–0. £16.99 (p/b).

The Birmingham Parish Workhouse was built near the bottom of Lichfield Street in the middle of the eighteenth century and remained there for a century. With reorganisation of poor law services in 1850, the institution was relocated to Winson Green, where it sat alongside a prison, asylum and fever hospital. Prior to this move, the workhouse itself served the Birmingham population as fever hospital, prison, asylum, and more. As Chris Upton states early on in this study, '[i]t was both infirmary and maternity hospital, school and crèche, asylum and care home' (p. 2). Yet Upton reminds us that only a minority of applicants for poor relief were admitted to the workhouse itself. In the early nineteenth century, while around 1,000 persons were in residential care in Birmingham workhouse, those dependent on the parish exceeded 16,000. The town's general hospital, with just over 100 beds at the time, like other voluntary hospitals, has been the focus of numerous histories, while studies of workhouses and their infirmaries remain limited. This wonderful study of an early state institution in many ways remedies this paucity.

Upton's work challenges a number of the myths that have surrounded workhouses over the past decades, and begins with the claim of a chronically-ill pauper who was determined to enter Birmingham workhouse because 'it was better than the workhouses of other places' (p. 7). Conditions, however, were liable to fluctuate, and the growth of the town and the strength of the economy determined the quality of care on offer at the institution over the years covered by this study. Interestingly, while Upton's story ends in 1840, a date justified by the transition from Old to New Poor Law, or parish to union, the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 appears to have had less of an effect on inmates than the economic slump that hit the region a few years later. And just as the cost of poor relief would rise in these years, expenditure had noticeably risen from £1,168 in 1750 to £22,000 in 1810. With 10,000 out of 130,000 people receiving charitable support in 1837, Upton navigates the fine line between 'carrot and stick' or 'protection and deterrent' in the story of parish relief.

A key myth that Upton tackles is that the workhouse was built in 1732. Previously, historians have unquestioningly accepted the verdict of Birmingham's first historian, William Hutton. However, as Upton reminds us, Hutton wrote some fifty years after the event and did not have access to the parish records. Employing accounts from the years 1739 to 1748, Upton also addresses the cost and the layout of the workhouse, to which Hutton claimed an infirmary wing was added in 1766; maps from 1750 reveal a workhouse already in possession of two wings. There is less doubt that the building was in decay by the 1870s when it was swept away under the terms of Joseph Chamberlain's Improvement Scheme (1875). Upton also traces the story of poor relief backwards into an era predating the workhouse by examining the Elizabethan Poor Act of 1601 to demonstrate how regularly workhouses and houses of correction came and went in the seventeenth century. In this respect, the dates on the cover of this book do not do it justice, for Chapter 5 covers a century or more before 1730.

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The volume is a collection of snapshots in the history of the workhouse. One such document from 1830 provides an overview into a day in the life of the institution. At the time, the workhouse accommodated 478 pauper inmates. Their day started with the ringing of the workhouse bell and the porter unlocked the gates allowing the able bodied to travel to their workplaces after breakfast. A handful were sent to work at the flour mills on Steelhouse Lane, others to the parish sand mine at Key Hill, others to a parish farm. A few boys were sent to work at the town's factories and an asylum for infants had also existed since 1797. The rest of the male population of the workhouse was engaged in stone breaking and road making and paid a shilling a day for their labour. More than a hundred children were working in the pin factory next door, 11 were engaged in glass polishing and more than 50 were making lace. All were provided with midday allowances of bread and cheese and would return for their supper in the evening. All wages earned on the day were also then handed in to the cashier at the workhouse.

More information is available for those with settlements outside Birmingham. Each month in the 1830s and 1840s the backgrounds of approximately 17 people were inquired into because they came from outside Birmingham before falling on hard times. If the institution was as clearly driven by numbers in the way Upton suggests, his research efforts have gone some way towards giving it a human face. Upton also attempts to provide the otherwise 108 anonymous guardians who oversaw the institution's management with an identity. By 1819, elections for the post of guardian had become contested events, and by the 1830s, when poor relief amounted to £45,000, their appointment had become fully politicised. Members of staff are also traced from at least 1783, when the guardians' minutes begin to list each new appointment and changes in personnel. Besides agreeing fairly early on to appoint a husband and wife to run the enterprise, by 1831 the guardians also employed six people to handle the growing paperwork associated with bills and receipts and visit the outdoor poor. More importantly, the late Chris Upton's own familiarity with a multitude of local records made this fascinating book possible, and it is a suitable legacy to remember this knowledgeable and compassionate Midland scholar.

Jonathan Reinartz

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John Simpson (ed.), *Managing Poverty: Cheltenham Settlement Examinations and Removal Orders, 1831–52*, Gloucestershire Record Series Vol. 34 (Cheltenham, Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, 2020). lxxvii + 459pp. ISBN 978-0-900197-99-4. £30 (h/b).

The English poor laws have bequeathed to historians a wealth of documentary records. The system of poor relief was based around the parish, and relied upon each person having entitlement to assistance from one, and only one, parish. This entitlement was known as a *settlement*. A person acquired a settlement at birth (not necessarily in the parish where he or she was born) but this could change over the life course as a result of the person fulfilling certain criteria, known as 'heads of settlement'. For example, working in a particular parish

for a continuous period of 52 weeks would entitle the person to a settlement in that parish, and that parish would supersede the previous parish of settlement and become liable to support the person should he or she become needful of relief under the poor laws.

When an individual applied for poor relief in a particular parish, the poor law authorities in that parish would try to establish whether they were liable to support the person and, if not, which parish held that liability. This process was known as a *settlement examination* and, typically, involved constructing a potted biography of the person to work out the parish in which he or she had most recently acquired a settlement. If it was established that a person's settlement was in another parish, the person could by law be physically 'removed' to the parish that was liable to support him or her. This was achieved by a *removal order*.

The New Poor Law of 1834 involved the creation of poor law unions involving groups of parishes, and the transfer of some poor law activities from the parish level to the union level, but financial liability stayed at the parish level until 1865, so the examination of settlements and removal orders remained important.

This volume contains transcripts of the settlement examinations and removal orders for the parish of Cheltenham in Gloucestershire from 1831 to 1852, covering around 1,400 poor relief applicants and their families. These are preceded by an introduction detailing the editorial methods used, the historical and local contexts of the poor laws in Cheltenham, how settlement examinations were actually conducted, and the criteria for removal (or for establishing settlement in Cheltenham). It finishes with some illustrative pauper profiles, and some maps showing both the counties of birth of the paupers examined in Cheltenham, and the places of residence within the town of those who came before the poor law authorities. This introduction is a very useful guide to the practical operation of the poor laws in an English country town during a period which straddles the introduction of the New Poor Law, and is well worth reading by anyone interested in how the New Poor Law was introduced in provincial England, whether or not he or she has a particular interest in Cheltenham.

To give an example of one of the entries, here is an extract from the examination of Samuel Stone, which took place on 18 November 1843.

I am about 39 Years of age. About 28 Years ago ... I was hired by Mr Barry then residing in the Crescent Minories in the parish of St Botolph Aldgate in the City of London as Postillion for a Year at the wages of Fifteen pounds. That he [sic] served five years under such hiring and slept in his ... Masters house at the Cresnet aforesaid the greater part of the time ... I have done no Act since to gain a settlement. About nine years ago I was married to my present Wife Eliza in the parish Church of Cheltenham (p. 277).

Mr Stone had gained a settlement in the parish of St Botolph Aldgate by working there for a continuous period of at least a year. This settlement had not been superseded, even though he was living in Cheltenham and had married in Cheltenham. Accordingly, he was removed to the parish of St Botolph Aldgate, London.

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An especially useful feature of this book is that each transcript is accompanied by notes describing information about the individual concerned and his or her family in other sources, such as the 1841 and 1851 census enumerators' books, and the parish registers. A substantial amount of record linkage has therefore been done, and the details of the links reported. This provides a wealth of information that could be used by local historians and demographers.

The book is beautifully produced, and includes indexes of people, places and occupations, to facilitate searches for specific sub-groups of the population. John Simpson has done a wonderful job of organising this material, and I hope and expect that many future researchers will benefit from his work.

Andrew Hinde

University of Southampton

Emma Griffin, *Bread Winner: an Intimate History of the Victorian Economy* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2020). 320pp. ISBN 9780300230062. £20 (h/b).

This insightful book by Emma Griffin examines the breadwinner model of wage earning from 1830–1914. It builds on her previous book, *Liberty's Dawn*, which used autobiographies to reconstruct the lived experience for the working-classes in the Industrial Revolution.¹ By drawing on 662 working-class autobiographies, Griffin casts light on the 'interior workings' of family life and argues that we should consider the 'domestic' as the 'mainstream' (pp. ix, 5). Only by bringing together the 'social' and the 'economic', Griffin posits, can we truly make sense of what life was like for families in Victorian and Edwardian Britain. The main argument of the book is that the breadwinner model failed: the real wage gains that men made in the nineteenth century did not translate into higher living standards for their families. Using autobiographies, Griffin is able convincingly to prove that, for urban families at least, economic progress deepened gender inequality and childhood poverty. The autobiographers reveal that women and children did not share in the narratives of nineteenth-century economic progress.

The book opens by examining women's work. Of her 140 female autobiographies, the authors of 38 per cent revealed that they undertook unpaid domestic work at home as girls or adolescents, and several of these went on to work in service, the 'most significant employer' of unmarried women (p. 37). Griffin also shows how many shop owners paid artificially low wages to female employees under the pretext that they were 'teaching the girl the trade' (p. 53). In Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire, however, female employment in mills was readily available and comparatively well paid, but wages never reached a level sufficient for the female operatives to live independently. Griffin argues that the low wages paid to women were a crucial component of the breadwinner model as it led to a dependency

1 E. Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn: a People's History of the Industrial Revolution* (New Haven, CT, 2013).

on the male wage. The lack of opportunities for women confined them to a narrow range of employment and, as a result, limited their opportunities for economic independence.

The second part of the book charts male wages. She shows how even in the 'low-wage' sectors of the economy, male earnings were sufficient for independent living and, of course, supporting a family. In practice, however, as male wages rose, so too did inequality between the sexes. In the majority of cases there was no correlation between rising male wages and the rising living standards of their dependents and this was particularly acute in urban areas. Of the 491 autobiographers who knew their fathers, 57 per cent of them revealed that their fathers were unreliable breadwinners. A small number of the autobiographies identified that this was due to unemployment or health conditions, but the vast majority indicated that their fathers spent their earnings on themselves. Accounts of heavy drinking, Griffin shows, run 'like a thread' through accounts of working-class life and were clearly detrimental to family finances and the family's peace (pp. 117–18). One result of the high wages paid to male urban workers was a disinclination to work when they had earned enough to spend on their chosen pastime—the backward bending supply of labour curve—and, sadly, drink was often prioritised over families.

In contrast, in rural areas, the breadwinner model was more effective. Only 14 out of the 142 autobiographers raised in agricultural villages indicated that their fathers were 'unreliable providers' (p. 122). Griffin posits two explanations why this was the case: the scarcity of work meant that not turning up was too risky; and the low wages meant fathers had less 'freedom to spend any money on themselves' (p. 125). Many historians have been cautious to endorse the censorial viewpoints of Victorian temperance advocates and social commentators on working-class culture. The autobiographers, in contrast, suggest that these views may have been more accurate reflections of urban life than has been recognised by later scholars

Griffin moves on to chart the economic and social impact of absent fathers. Out of the 662 autobiographers, 171 (26 per cent) revealed that they had spent part of their childhood in a fatherless household. Death accounted for 12 per cent, illegitimacy 3 per cent, and desertion 11 per cent. Desertion had a more serious impact on family finances than death. Griffin shows how women could, and did, remarry after the death of their husband and plug the drain of family finances with another male wage (if, of course, their new husband was a reliable breadwinner). Desertion, in contrast, left women and their dependants stranded with no access to another source of income. Griffin convincingly proves an intimate connection between high wages and desertion. Indeed, the autobiographers highlight how the 'loss of father's earnings' was the 'defining feature of paternal separation' (p. 155). In contrast, agricultural areas had lower mortality, illegitimacy, and desertion rates, further emphasising how the breadwinner model worked in the British countryside. Of course, when a father died, deserted, or was unreliable as a breadwinner, women had no option but to work in a 'desperate attempt' to substitute for a male wage (p. 173). Griffin reveals that this work was often irregular: laundry work, lodgers and dressmaking, for instance, all helped keep urban households solvent. In rural areas, women's work was

widespread, even with a quality breadwinner. Griffin suggests that this reflects local custom and tradition, rather than economic necessity.

One of the most interesting aspects of this book is the study of diets. Griffin shows how hunger remained ever-present for many working-class children, but food supply problems, such as harvest failures, had been eliminated by the mid nineteenth century. Before 1840, diets were controlled by wages and the price of bread and large swathes of the population were affected when harvests failed. The repeal of the Corn Laws, mechanisation, and distribution all helped to lower food costs so that by the end of the nineteenth century, childhood hunger resulted not from a lack of resources, but from 'failures in the distribution of resources' (p. 208). Griffin also examines what was eaten by families and how this changed over time. Between 1830 and 1914, diets changed from being predominantly vegetarian, to one where meat was regarded as an aspiration for even the 'poorest of households' (p. 212). The analysis of diets closes by examining how hungry children fed themselves in the late Victorian city. Some autobiographers admitted to begging, such as Jack Lanigan, who begged bread from the workmen leaving an engineering works, whilst others revealed that stealing and scrounging was an effective way to feed themselves (p. 222). Griffin also shows how the growing network of charitable activities helped fill empty bellies: soup kitchens made a 'substantial contribution to the diets of the poorest children'. Some autobiographers recalled the stigma of accepting food from the soup kitchen, whilst others suggested that it was 'too normal a part of life' to occasion feelings of shame (p. 225). The testament of so many hungry children is a constituent part of Griffin's argument: rising male wages did not translate into rising living standards for most families in Victorian and Edwardian Britain.

The penultimate chapter of the book traces the 'history of emotions' of children towards their families. Griffin reveals how negative emotions towards fathers, especially those who earned high wages and drank heavily, was a key feature of many autobiographies. In contrast, males who earned low wages or were made redundant through no fault of their own, were 'praised and respected' by their offspring; it was the 'commitment to the family' not the 'size of the wage packet' that many autobiographers remembered (p. 235). Griffin also pays particular attention to the physical chastisement of children and shows that it was a more quotidian experience of family life than has been recognised before. The autobiographers reveal that many mothers were deeply unhappy with their lives, especially those who had no option but to work, and that ultimately took its toll on the wellbeing of their mothers (p. 256).

The final chapter examines the later life of many of Griffin's autobiographers. Of the 450 male autobiographers, 140 reveal that they were politically active, and 57 became members of parliament (MPs). Tom Mann, Harry Pollitt, and Walter Citrine, for instance, all wrote autobiographies. In contrast, only 34 female autobiographers mentioned any form of political activism, and only 4 became MPs: Margaret Bondfield, Bessie Braddock, Jennie Lee, and Ellen Wilkinson. Of these four, two never married, and none had children. Motherhood, Griffin concludes, 'was a serious impediment to political

engagement' (p. 285). Many of the male politicians underscored the importance of work and high wages to their political journey. Work provided the opportunity to meet new people and to share political ideas; wages allowed them to spend time at night school to improve their education facilitating entry into the political sphere. Conversely, the need for household labour, and the low wages paid to women when they did work, combined to confine women to the home.

Emma Griffin's book convincingly proves that the breadwinner model failed so many women and children. The rise in real wages that many men shared in did not translate into higher living standards for their dependents. If anything, the opposite is true. The dominance of the breadwinner model widened inequality between men and women between 1830 and 1914. A few more dates of when the autobiographers were writing would have helped the reader make sense of change and continuity; however, this possibly reflects the fact that the autobiographers themselves did not specify when something happened. Overall, this is a remarkable and fascinating book that brilliantly illuminates the human character of economic life in Victorian and Edwardian Britain.

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Alan Munden (ed.), *The Religious Census of Cumbria, 1851: Cumberland, Westmorland and Furness* (The Surtees Society, Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 2019). 487pp. ISBN 9780854440788. £50 (h/b).

For anyone who is familiar with the other county volumes on the 1851 Religious Census, this one follows the same format. Written for the Surtees Society (who contributed to the Northumberland and Durham volume), and the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, the same attention to detail and additional historical information has been provided. This is the 28th volume to be published. The reason for the Religious Census was to determine the extent of church and chapel attendance and where more places of worship may be required. This volume covers the ancient counties of Cumberland and Westmorland plus the northern part of Lancashire, known as Furness. When the Religious Census was taken a Diocese of Carlisle and Chester existed and gradually, parts of Chester Diocese were added to Diocese of Carlisle.

It was not compulsory to complete the returns of the Religious Census. The editor of this volume, Alan Munden, describes in detail the reason for the Religious Census, how it was conducted, the forms used to gather the data, and the registrar responsible for producing the report. Munden, together with his co-authors, provide additional information, not required in the census, such as the occupations of laymen completing the forms, the names of the clergy and ministers, and background information on the parish and its building. The problems occurring when parts of a parish may be in a different registration sub-district are highlighted, together with the ordering of denominations within each parish.

As with the other counties, substantial information drawn from many sources enhances each entry and this is added in square brackets. It helps considerably to read the editorial conventions before attempting to view the parish a researcher is looking for. For example, the Wesleyan Methodist chapel in George Street, Wigton was erected in 1828, and the additional information tells us that a new chapel opened in 1883. The steward who completed the census form was a watchmaker employing three men. Census Sunday was not a normal Sunday for this chapel and the remarks recorded it as a 'Missionary Anniversary' (p. 102).

There is one glaring error in the book on page ciii, when the caption for the map is headed 'Northumberland and Durham' and should read 'Cumberland and Westmorland'. Although reference is made to Northumberland and Durham on the map (these counties form a boundary on the east), it is clearly the Lake District that is shown. The Editorial Conventions chapter notes that 40 places of worship were not listed in the census and Appendix 3 provides such a list. The authors chose to include only the names of the Church of England churches missing within each parish record, and not the Roman Catholic or nonconformist chapels.

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Boris Starling with David Bradbury, *The Official History of Britain: our Story in Numbers as Told by the Office for National Statistics* (London, HarperCollins, 2020). 298pp. ISBN 978-0-00-841219-7. £14.99 (h/b).

This book was written in part to publicise the 2021 census that took place in March of this year (the Scottish census will take place in 2022). The front cover and title appear to suggest that it might be an official history of the Office for National Statistics (ONS), or at least a detailed account of the population of England and Wales using material published by that organisation. Readers of *Local Population Studies (LPS)* might therefore be expecting an updating of Muriel Nissel's history of the General Register Office to take in the wider work of ONS.² Instead the book is aimed at a general readership (no harm in that) and is intended to be a 'lively take on what official data past and present tell us about our nation' (p. 5) using 'the census snapshots over the past two centuries, as well as other official sources'.

The book begins with an introduction containing a short history of census taking followed by sections on 'Who we are' (which examines families, religion, education and leisure), 'What we do' (employment), 'Where we live', and two final ones looking back to the census of 1921 and forward to what the 2121 census might look like. The section on 'Who we are' begins with an interesting graph of births in the United Kingdom from 1887 to 2019 (although I could not work out the reason why you would start such a graph at that date), and then goes on to discuss the causes of fertility decline, which of course began

2 M. Nissel, *People Count: a History of the General Register Office* (London, 1987).

before 1887. So far so good, but afterwards we are treated to an almost random series of topics which include teenage pregnancies, popular names, marriage, families, religion, ethnicity, digital shopping, education and mortality. Along the way we are told that in 1895 Septimus and Jane Hill began a family of 22 children, two of which became notorious criminals (pp. 62–3). While mildly interesting, I am not sure how their criminal activities, which are detailed in the book, can be gleaned from ONS data. Likewise, in the section on causes of death we learn that Sir William Payne Gallwey died because he shot himself stumbling in a turnip field, not from his death certificate, but from the *Northern Echo* newspaper (p. 117). Later there is a short section on blue plaques, which at best can only have only a tenuous link to ONS.

Alongside this almost miscellany of topics, the text is littered with attempts at humour and while some of these are amusing, at times they can become jarring. Consider this from the section on teenage pregnancy:

[c]ertain media outlets would have you believe that pretty much every teenage girl in the land was a feckless sex-maniac getting herself knocked up by an equally feckless boy and condemning mother and child to a life on benefits (p. 46).

The author then goes on to discuss levels of teenage pregnancy, and while we are told that in 2018 the figure was 16.8 conceptions per 1,000 women aged 15 to 17 years, the lowest since records began, I was still left wondering whether this figure was high in comparison with other countries and whether it should still be of concern to us. Similar examples occur throughout the book. I know that it is difficult to write an accessible book that covers a wide range of topics, but I was expecting something better and I cannot imagine that many readers of *LPS* will find much that is new for them here. The last section of 19 pages encapsulates everything I did not like about this book. It attempts to envisage what the census of 2121 will look like. Thus, we are told that there ‘were 801,603 live births in 2120, of which 272,572 (34 per cent) came via ectogenesis, artificial wombs that negate the need for mothers to undergo nine months of uncomfortable and possibly painful pregnancy’ (p. 254), and referring to jobs that appear in 2121, but not in 2021, some individuals will be working as ‘[m]emory augmentation surgeon[s], inserting and maintaining neural meshes and quantum chip implants’ (p. 262) whatever that means.

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