
Editorial*

This issue of *Local Population Studies*

This issue of *Local Population Studies* contains four papers and the usual complement of book reviews. The first paper is by Marion Hardy, and builds on her previous article on the fishermen who travelled from Devon to the waters around Newfoundland in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹ In this paper, Hardy analyses the impact of the Newfoundland fishing trade on marriage and baptism seasonality. She demonstrates that, in parishes linked to seafaring, the seasonal patterns were quite marked during the eighteenth century, but reduced in magnitude as the Newfoundland trade changed and declined.

Dealing with a similar period, our second paper, by Dave Postles, investigates literacy in the two Leicestershire parishes of Loughborough and Shepshed during their period of industrialisation. Postles uses the ability to sign the marriage register, rather than make a mark, as the criterion of literacy. He argues that the domestic textile industry did not require literacy, but it did need the labour of children so, in parishes where textiles dominated the economy, the education of children was not a priority and literacy rates lagged those in parishes with a more diverse economy. For individuals, attaining literacy was less important in places where illiteracy carried no social stigma.

The marriage registers feature prominently in the third paper, which covers a period from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries and examines marriage prospects in the south-west England parishes of Stourton and Kilmington. The author, Cathy Day, sets out to answer the question: did being the mother or father of an illegitimate child reduce one's prospects of marriage? She finds that, for men, having an illegitimate child did not impact their chances of subsequent marriage. In contrast, women who had an illegitimate child and who were living with that child did find that their future marriage prospects were impeded.

The final paper, by Sarah Rafferty, examines the reporting of mortality in late nineteenth and early twentieth century London. It is well known to population geographers that spatial mortality patterns can be distorted if deaths are recorded according to the place where they occurred, rather than the place of usual residence of the deceased. This is especially likely in large urban areas, where administrative units are geographically small and many deaths take place in institutions. Rafferty looks at infant mortality in London and shows that, whereas the geographical pattern obtained from the 'official' death rates is distorted, the use of either indirect methods of estimation or additional source material allows the researcher to correct the distortion.

* <https://doi.org/10.35488/lps106.2021.1>.

1 M. Hardy, 'The Newfoundland trade and Devonian migration c. 1600–1850', *Local Population Studies*, 89 (2012), pp. 31–53, <https://doi.org/10.35488/lps89.2012.31>.

For readers of the electronic version, the third instalment of Chris Galley's monograph on infant mortality in England since the dawn of the parish register era is published as a supplement to this issue. It can be read only on the IngentaConnect web site, where it has been designated as Open Access, meaning that anyone can read and download it, whether or not they are members of the Local Population Studies Society or have paid for access to the journal. This third instalment deals with infant mortality in the Victorian and Edwardian period (1837–1910), and is both a synthesis of what is known about infant mortality during this period and a summary of work that remains to be done. The article also includes a research agenda for future studies of infant mortality in the civil register era. It will be essential reading for anyone interested in the history of infant mortality in England, and of interest to those working on the history of infant mortality in general.

Dennis Mills

Readers of the journal and members of the Local Population Studies Society (LPSS) will be sad to learn of the death of Dennis Mills on 25 March 2020. Dennis was a member of the Editorial Board of the journal from 1993 to 1996 and was the co-editor (with Kevin Schürer) of *Local Communities in the Victorian Census Enumerators' Books* (Oxford, 1996) and the author of *Rural Community History from Trade Directories* (Hatfield, 2001), both published by LPSS. His best-known book is probably *Lord and Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London, 1980), in which he took issue with the tripartite division of the Victorian countryside into landlords, tenant farmers and landless labourers, and demonstrated that in many areas a substantial and heterogeneous class of what he described as 'peasants' formed an important part of the rural economy and society. Dennis was a leading figure in the development of the 'open' and 'closed' village model, which linked landownership to demographic and social change between around 1750 and 1900. Although this model has been challenged, it remains useful for understanding English rural life during this period, not least because villages that were 'open' still look and feel different 200 years later than villages that were 'closed'.² An appreciation and assessment of Dennis's work was published in the *Local Historian* earlier this year.³

Roger Bellingham

It is with sadness also that we record the death of a long-standing member of the Local Population Studies Society and a contributor to this journal, Roger Bellingham. Roger's PhD, entitled 'Demographic, economic and social change in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: some conclusions from a study of four small towns in Yorkshire from

2 Readers who want to check this out could do worse than take a walk from a village that was 'open' to a nearby village that was 'closed'. A good example would be the one-mile walk from Wylye in Wiltshire to the neighbouring Fisherton de la Mere.

3 A.J.H. Jackson and A. Walker, 'Dennis Mills (1931–2020): an appreciation and assessment', *Local Historian*, 51 (2021), pp. 57–61.

circa 1750 to *circa* 1830', was awarded by the University of Leicester in 2000. It was based on an analysis of parish registers. He published several papers in the journal, including R.A. Bellingham, 'The use of marriage horizons to study migration', *Local Population Studies*, 44 (1990), pp. 52–5; R.A. Bellingham, 'Age at marriage in the late eighteenth century', *Local Population Studies*, 61 (1998), pp. 54–6; and R.A. Bellingham, 'Dade parish registers', *Local Population Studies*, 73 (2004), pp. 51–60.

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

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