

Editorial*

This issue of *Local Population Studies*

It is only around three months since the last issue of *Local Population Studies* was published. We are trying to catch up after delays caused by the pandemic, the need to update the Local Population Studies Society web site and the retirement of successive printers. I am hopeful that the next issue, issue 113, will be published in November or December of 2024 and that this will complete the catching up process.

This issue contains two articles and an important Sources and Methods piece. The first article is by Romola Davenport and Max Satchell of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure. Davenport and Satchell use parish register data to examine the veracity of Daniel Defoe's comments about the frequency of remarriage among the farmers of the Essex marshlands. It is well known that malaria was endemic in these marshes. Defoe argued that the local farmers were resistant to malaria but that they had the habit of taking brides from the uplands to the north and bringing their brides into the marshes to live. Lacking resistance to malaria, these brides soon perished so that their husbands had frequently to remarry. The eventual consequence, Defoe observed, was a process by which women were imported from the Essex uplands to the marshes to die, the marshes acting as a population sink for women of reproductive age from the rest of the county of Essex, much as the London in the seventeenth century acted as a population sink for the whole country. It turns out that this is an interesting story but the parish register evidence strongly suggests that it is just a story. Davenport and Satchell find no evidence of remarriage by marshland farmers to anything like the extent that Defoe suggested. None of Defoe's observations on this topic withstand confrontation with the empirical evidence from parish registers.

The second paper is by Peter Jolly and takes further his work on charwomen in Berkshire which was the subject of his earlier paper in *Local Population Studies*.¹ In this paper Jolly examines the size and structure of the households in which the charwomen lived. He finds that many charwomen were widows and many lived alone. Children leaving the family home and the death of their husbands precipitated this. Of course, the fact that a woman was left alone without means of support was often the reason that she took up work as a charwoman. Married women were less common among charwomen than in the population as a whole,

* <https://doi.org/10.35488/lps112.2024.1>.

1 P. Jolly, 'Strategies for survival: charwomen in rural Berkshire', *Local Population Studies* 108 (2022), pp. 58–67.

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which suggests that women with alternative means of support were disinclined to take up charring. On the other hand, young widows, especially those with dependent children, were quite prominent as a group within the population of charwomen.

This issue of the journal devotes a substantial number of pages to Philip Thornborow's Sources and Methods contribution on Methodist Registers. We feel that this is justified, as many population historians are much less familiar with these registers than they are with the Church of England registers, even though Methodists formed a substantial minority of the population in several parts of England and Wales in the nineteenth century. Thornborow takes us systematically through the different branches of Methodism that emerged from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. He describes the survival of Methodist registers and how population historians might gain access to them, and their content. Many are in The National Archives, as they were surrendered to the Registrar General when civil registration began in 1837. We hope that Thornborow's contribution will encourage more population historians to use these registers to write the history of localities where Methodism was common.

Local Population Studies Society web site

Readers are encouraged to visit the Local Population Studies Society (LPSS) web site and to make any comments or suggestions for items to be posted there to the Editor of *Local Population Studies* (editor@localpopulationstudies.org.uk OR PRAHinde@aol.com). Requests for changes to the structure of the web site or for additional features (such as interactive maps) should be directed to Dr Andrew Burn, LPSS's webmaster (web@localpopulationstudies.org.uk).

Access to *Local Population Studies*

Readers are reminded that electronic access to all issues of the journal is available as follows. First, go to the web page <http://www.localpopulationstudies.org.uk/>. By moving your cursor on to 'The Journal' you will reveal a drop-down menu. Clicking on any of the items in the drop-down menu will give access to the relevant current and past issues of the journal. 'First view articles' are those that have not yet been consolidated into an issue. These are only available to members of LPSS and/or subscribers to this journal. The same is true for issues 108-111 of *Local Population Studies*. However, issues 1-107 are Open Access and available to anyone. Note that clicking on 'Past issues' will take you to a legacy web page containing issues 1-87 of the journal.

Local Population Studies Prize

It is with great pleasure that I can announce the winner of the *Local Population Studies Prize* for articles published in 2022 (issues 108 and 109). The winner is Dr Sadie McMullon for her article entitled 'Marriage horizons in Fletton: the hidden narrative behind the parish marriage registers', *Local Population Studies* 108, pp. 13-34. Congratulations to Sadie for an excellent contribution to the journal!

Readers are reminded that the *Local Population Studies Prize* will be awarded again in 2024 and 2025, provided suitable entries are available. 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 the Local Population Studies Society (LPSS), to include the registration fees for all conferences organised by LPSS during those three years. The prize is being offered in 2024 for the best article by an eligible author published in *Local Population Studies* issues 112 and 113, and in 2025 for the best article by an eligible author published in *Local Population Studies* issues 114 and 115. 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. If you are interested in writing a contribution and are eligible, there is still space for you to have your work published in *Local Population Studies* issues 114 and 115.

Publishing in Local Population Studies

Local Population Studies has traditionally been a forum in which both professional and non-professional historians can publish the results of their research. The journal is keen to attract more submissions from non-professionals, and to publish a greater proportion of research notes of 2,000-3,000 words, while still welcoming 'full articles' of 5,000-7,000 words. We are also happy to publish 'miscellanea' and other short contributions which may interest readers and which may be as little as 500 words in length. For members of the Local Population Studies Society (LPSS) these contributions would include pieces which might formerly have been sent to the LPSS *Newsletter*. If any reader has come across an interesting event or trend in a specific locality and would like to write a short piece about it, we should be happy to receive it.

Roger Schofield Local Population Studies Research Fund

Small research grants are available to researchers in the field of local population history from the Roger Schofield Local Population Studies Research Fund.

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Subject to annual financial constraints, the Fund Committee will consider applications of between £75 and £1,000. Applicants should be aware, however, that grants exceeding £500 will only be awarded in exceptional cases.

The kinds of activities that the Fund is interested in supporting are travel to archives or libraries, overnight accommodation, the cost of photocopying or other reproduction of documents, data entry and programming, or the costs of putting data online to allow other historians to access them. The grants could also contribute to personal scholarships to enable research projects or dissertations to be completed. For further details and eligibility criteria see the Local Population Studies Society web site at <http://www.localpopulationstudies.org.uk/the-society/funding-for-research/> or contact Dr Chris Galley at chrisgalley77@gmail.com.

Successful applicants will be asked to write a short report about the research project to which the grant contributed, and to submit this for publication in *Local Population Studies*.

Editorial Board

We have room to expand the membership of the *Local Population Studies* Editorial Board by one or two people. If anyone is interested in joining the Board, please feel free to contact the Editor (editor@localpopulationstudies.org.uk OR PRAHinde@aol.com) and I can provide more information about the duties and the time commitment involved.

Can I 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 work in producing this issue and for Antony Dales and his colleagues at Evolve Print for creating and distributing the hard copies.

Andrew Hinde