

# Local Population Studies Society

LPSS NEWSLETTER

No.2

January 1989

## A LETTER TO MEMBERS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear LPSS member,

A happy and 'research-prosperous' New Year !

1. **NOTES** You will remember that one of the reasons for starting this Newsletter was the desire to keep members in closer touch with each other and with the executive committee. In the present Newsletter you will find **NOTES ON CURRENT RESEARCH**, in which individual members briefly describe what they are working on and, when appropriate, their preliminary conclusions. Please send me a note on what you are working on in the field of population history, or what your local history society or some other group is doing in a team effort - up to 300 words. And if any aspect of what you read in these **NOTES** particularly interests or puzzles you, or links up with some research you are doing, please contact the contributor directly.

2. **LIAISON OFFICERS** Another aim of the Newsletter is to establish contact with local groups, particularly local history and family history societies, so that we can pass information on LPSS activities down the line and receive suggestions about these activities in return. I am glad to be able to report an encouraging early response to my asking for volunteers who would act as local liaison officers, and I can announce (and thank) the following volunteers.

Mrs K.Stirk (in respect of four Kent family history societies and the Kent Federation)

Mr Roger A.Bellingham (in respect of the East Yorkshire family and local history societies)

Mr R.G.Field (in respect of the Droitwich History and Archaeology Society)

3. We need volunteers for other parts of the country - please. Meanwhile we are compiling a guide for liaison officers, and will send it out as soon as possible. (While you wait patiently, could you please draw the attention of members of your societies to our forthcoming conferences, as announced below. If you would like to have booking forms to distribute, please contact the Conference Secretary.)

4. **REGIONAL ORGANISERS** We are also very delighted to announce that we now have two regional organisers, who are already involved in the organisation of conferences. They are Dr Dennis Mills (East Midlands) and Dr Rees Pryce (Wales and the West). We are most grateful for their coming forward to assist us. We still need organisers for other regions.

5. **CONFERENCES** This brings me to the subject of forthcoming conferences. First, however, let me say, that the Society's very first conference on medieval population history, held at Oxford in November, in collaboration with the Oxford Department for External Studies, was a distinct success. About 50 persons participated - LPSS members who attended found that it opened up new fields of population history. We thank the organisers and speakers (a fuller report will appear in **LPS 42**).

6. By the time you receive this Newsletter you will have seen in LPS 41 a preliminary notice about forthcoming conferences. In the first Newsletter I drew your attention to the fact that the Society is not responsible for the production of LPS. Hence we have not been able to do anything about the difficulties in production which have latterly made the appearance of issues of LPS unpunctual - we have regretted the delays as much as you have done, and not least when they prevented us from inserting notices of the Oxford conference, already prepared, in LPS 40. However, as you will have seen from LPS 41, some changes in the production process should now eliminate all delays.

**RESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE**, Durham, 14-16 April 1989. See the enclosed booking notice for details - please book early.

**DAY CONFERENCE**. Nottingham, 1 July 1989. At Trent Polytechnic, Clifton site. 10.00-4.00. Subject - **Parish Registers** (the conference will therefore be particularly suitable for those in the early stages of family or population history research). Speakers - Professor Tony Wrigley and myself. Plus workshops. Booking notice attached - please book early.

**DAY CONFERENCE**. Cardiff, 18 November 1989. At the Open University Centre. Subject - **Population history of Wales and the Marches**. Book the date.

**RESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE**. Lincoln, 6-8 April 1990. At Bishop Grosseteste College. Subject - **The Census**.

N.B. The above enlarges on and corrects the notice in LPS 41 which went to press some time ago. The 1990 day conferences in London and Scotland there listed are only a glint in the eye until we find organisers.

7. **BOOK CLUB** Lastly, let me remind you of the Book Club. In particular, if you have any suggestions for books (still in print) not already on our list, please send them direct to the Book Club Secretary. But remember that we can only deal with those publishers who allow a discount - not all do.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

*Paul Hair*

Chairman of the LPSS executive committee

Addresses

Professor P.E.H.Hair, Dept. of History, University of Liverpool, P.O.Box 147, Liverpool L69 3BX

Conference Secretary/Treasurer Mrs G.M. Wyatt, 302 Prescott Road, Aughton, Ormskirk, Lancs. L39 6RR

Book Club Secretary Mrs G. Briscoe, The Old Granary, Cross Mill, Old Skellow, Doncaster, DN6 8JW

## NOTES ON RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

1. Contributed by Roger A. Bellingham, 27 Garths End, Pocklington, York, YO4 2JB

### Late eighteenth-century migration to Pocklington (East Yorkshire)

Inspired by the example of Holderness,<sup>1</sup> I decided to use the Dade/Markham data available for Pocklington baptisms between 1779 and 1783 to study migration to Pocklington. In common with many other Yorkshire parishes during the period,<sup>2</sup> Pocklington's baptism register regularly shows, albeit in this case for only four years, the residence and occupation of the child's parents, grandparents, and sometimes even great grandparents.

My preliminary conclusion is that the attraction to would-be in-migrants of a small but growing market town at that period is more significant than Holderness has suggested. However, a conclusion based on 206 entries over four years must remain tentative. Perhaps more research using burial records and other data plus family reconstitution - and not least an Amstrad PC1640HD20 - may support this.

Meantime my research at least supports the views of Pain and Smith that marriage registers are not always reliable as a measure of marriage horizons.<sup>3</sup> A comparison between Pocklington's marriage and baptism registers has shown that in that town, at a time when the population was increasing and young women of marriageable age were in-migrating, marriage horizons deduced from the marriage register are a poor indication of mobility.

My admiration for those who have undertaken major statistical research without a computer is unbounded but is tinged with doubts as to margins of error, given the volume of index cards that must have been involved. Thus there is scope to use computer based research to exploit the comparable data which I understand is available in Yorkshire, Nottingham and Durham and perhaps elsewhere. It may be this has already occurred to others, but I have traced no published research other than mentioned below.

### NOTES

1. B.A. Holderness, 'Personal mobility in some rural parishes of Yorkshire, 1777-1812' *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 42, (1971), 444-54. See also M. Long and B. Maltby, 'Personal mobility in three West Riding parishes' 1777-1812, *Local Population Studies*, 24, (1980), 13-25.
2. C.C.A. Webb, *Guide to parish records in the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York*, (1987); W.J. Shiels, 'Mobility and registration in the north in the late eighteenth century', *Local Population Studies*, 23, (1979), 41-44.
3. A.J. Pain and M.T. Smith, 'Do marriage horizons accurately measure migration? : a test case from Stanhope Parish, County Durham', *Local Population Studies*, 33, (1984), 44-48

[At the time of writing Mr Bellingham was unaware of the research by Claire Davey who has noted that information on grandparents appears in the baptism registers of Moreton, Essex between 1796 and 1812, - see 'A note on mobility in an Essex parish in the early nineteenth century' *Local Population Studies*, 41, (1988), 61-66. P.E.H.H.]

2. Contributed by R.G. Field, 45 Moreland Road, Droitwich, Worcs. WR9 8RH

### A village project

Within the Droitwich History and Archaeological Society, there is a project group which has been accumulating information on the village of Salwarpe, 2 miles south-west of Droitwich in Worcestershire.

Various data has been assembled on the inhabitants of the village in past times, taken from the Parish Registers, which date from 1666 and appear to be fairly complete, and from the Census Enumerators' Books for each census between 1841 and 1881. Other details have been taken from the Banns Book (1824-1906) and Bishops's Transcripts (1608-1700 but not complete). The latter have been cross checked with the Parish Registers. All the above information has been transferred on to individual record cards and over 5,000 of these are now filed alphabetically. One member of the group is attempting a family reconstitution for one name (Tolley) which occurs many times in the records. In addition all legible monumental inscriptions in the church and graveyard have been recorded, something which we found was also carried out in 1861.

Many other miscellaneous items of population information are held - charity records, lists of constables and of confirmations, a large number of indentures, etc. We are currently recording details of wills and inventories and have already covered the period from 1666 onwards. We have also just found the electoral rolls commencing in 1843. The Enclosure Map of 1813 has been copied and coloured and a key to the land owners has been transcribed; and we possess an Ordnance Survey map of the parish in 1888.

We keep in touch with the Cambridge Group and have supplied them with our Parish Register information and also occupational data for their research. We are currently analysing census records for them

The group displayed its work at an exhibition in Dudley in 1987 and also exhibited in the Droitwich Library last October.

Our objective is to publish a local history of the village and we have just purchased a word processor to assist in this. We will be lodging all our records when suitably printed in the Worcester Record Office for the benefit of local and family history researchers.

3. Contributed by Grace Wyatt, 302 Prescott Road, Aughton, Ormskirk.  
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### Women's mortality

In Britain in 1985 the expectation of life at birth for men was 71.8 and for women was 77.7.<sup>1</sup> Living in the twentieth century, we have come to accept that this is the natural order of things - that on average women can expect to live about five years longer than men, and consequently since women on average marry men two years older than themselves, that they will usually be widows for several years. But was this the way it always was?

The answer to the question is that at present we do not know. Some historians tell us that it has always been so, because men, with their mainly out-door occupations in the past, were more at risk health-wise than women, and in particular that they experienced excess violent death on account of accidents. However, the violent death sex-differential may have been balanced out by a specific female risk, childbirth. Consider, for instance, the figures reported by the Registrar General for 1851-61. Violent deaths accounted for 0.100 per cent of all male deaths, mortality consequent on childbirth accounted for 0.089 per cent and if we add to this the figure 0.013 per cent for female deaths from violence, the female total exceeds the male figure. This is suggestive if not the whole story.<sup>2</sup>

More recently it has been known for insurance companies to charge women higher premiums for sickness benefits, on the grounds that women are ill more often than men and have more days off work.<sup>3</sup> If this sickness difference was also the case in the past, then the extra illnesses suffered by women may in many cases have led to premature death. For instance, the burial register of St John's, Chester records the death on 15 June and burial on 17 June 1802 of James, age 1 month the son of Joseph Boyes, innkeeper, and Elizabeth his wife, the cause of death convulsions; and two entries further on, records the death on 18 June and burial on 21 June of Elizabeth, age 41 years, wife of Joseph Boyes, innkeeper, the cause of death consumption.<sup>4</sup> According to the recorded cause of death of the mother, Elizabeth Boyes did not die in consequence of childbirth, and indeed if the recorded age of the death of the infant represented more than 42 days, (which we are unable to confirm, because the baptism of the infant is not recorded in the registers of St John's Chester), then the mother's death was outside the accepted period for maternal mortality. Yet the disease from which Elizabeth Boyes died, may well have been accelerated by the trauma of childbirth, so that she died sooner than she would otherwise have done.<sup>5</sup>

Again, more women than men died in the past from gastro-intestinal diseases. Shorter has suggested that a significant part of this differential may have arisen from infection following abortion or following upon childbed fever.<sup>6</sup> Finally in the 1980s one-fifth of all women undergo a hysterectomy before the age of 50. What happened to the women in earlier centuries who needed this operation and did not have it? Presumably a proportion of them died.

A possible, but necessarily speculative, conclusion is that in the past the sex-differential mortality may have been such that women of

child-bearing age and women slightly older suffered higher mortality than men of the same age, while at younger and older ages the reverse was the case thus making the expectation of life about equal.

Is it possible to investigate women's mortality in earlier centuries?. I am at present studying the Registrar General's Annual Reports and Decennial Supplements and a number of parish registers in an attempt to do just this. I am also considering other possible sources, such as hospital records.

If any reader is working on or has any interest in this topic, I would welcome comments.

#### NOTES

1. Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys. *Mortality statistics, 1985* DH.1. no. 17. (1987)
2. Supplement to the Twentyfifth Annual Report of the Registrar General of Births, Death and Marriages in England. London (1864)
3. *The Times*, 6 March 1987, p.3
4. Cheshire Record Office. Chester, St John's Parish Records: Register of Burials.
5. World Health Organisation *Manual of the international statistical classification of disease, injuries and cause of death*, vol. 1. Geneva, (1977), p. 772.
6. E. Shorter, *A history of women's bodies*, London, (1982), p.23.