

Local Population Studies Society

LPSS NEWSLETTER

No.3

August 1989

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear LPSS member,

1. To make room for other matters in this Newsletter, I shall be brief. The Nottingham conference in July had an attendance of about 40, including a satisfying proportion of both local historians from the district and new members - a full report will appear in LPS in due course. Our thanks to Dennis Mills who ably organised it; and my thanks to those attending who answered my pre-conference questionnaire (as a speaker I wanted to find out how experienced in handling PRs my audience were, and it turned out that most were more experienced than I am).

2. **CONFERENCES FORTHCOMING** You might care to make a note of the dates of our next residential conference - **6-8 April, 1990**, at Bishop Grosseteste College, **Lincoln**, theme 'The Census'. A booking notice for our **Cardiff** day conference is enclosed. After that, our next day conference will be in **London**, at the Institute of Historical Research, on **3 November, 1990**, the subject 'Disease and death in the modern period', and the speakers including Dr Irvine Loudon and Dr Audrey Eccles. We are still trying to organise a conference in Scotland.

Would any members be interested in spreading their wings and going European? Western Europe has demographic sources similar to our own and much work is going on in European population studies. However the PRs of some countries are fuller than ours. Here at Liverpool we have a European Population Studies Centre, and if there was sufficient interest I would be happy to organise a day conference at which speakers from the Centre would tell us about continental PRs, etc. Let me know if interested.

3. **LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS** Our list has been extended - our thanks to the volunteers - but we still need more, especially from the South and West. Add to the names in the last Newsletter the following -

Mrs Beryl Crowley (Welwyn Garden City district)
Mr Terry Shaw (Lancs. FLHS and Book Club assistance)
Dr Rosalin Barker (Yorkshire coast)
Mr Trevor Hill (Shropshire region)
Mr Harold Culling (NW group FFHS)
Mr John Perkins (Sheffield and FFHS)
Mr John Rowlands (AFHS Wales and FFHS)

On the suggestion of Mr Rowlands, attached is a list of all present LPSS members - this will enable local contacts to be made.

4. **BOOK CLUB** Please note that, following the resignation of Mrs Briscoe - we are grateful for her three years of service - communications should now be addressed to Dr Peter Franklin, 46 Fountain Street, Accrington, Lancs., BB5 0QP.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Paul Hair

Chairman of the LPSS executive committee

NOTES ON RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Trevor & Margaret Hill, 24 Wheatfield Drive Shifnal Shropshire.
TF11 8HL (Telephone 0952 461068)

Ongoing work on the small market town of Shifnal

The St. Andrews Archive Group formed back in the mid 1970s has been quietly collecting local history data. The first project was a transcription and card indexing a manor survey of 1720. Then extraction of data from parish registers for the Cambridge Group. From this it moved to indexing local directories and the 1851 census. In conjunction with a local history evening class the group transcribed and card indexed 16th and 17th century probate inventories, group member Sylvia Watts is using this source for her M.Phil studies. Two years were spent gathering old photographs, re-photographing them and preparing captions. A brief history of the town was written by Sylvia Watts and a book is being published by Phillimore in June 1989. The group is currently transcribing and card indexing the early 18th century Churchwardens and Overseer's account book. As part of the 900th celebration of the parish church in 1989 the group is organising a historical exhibition from 24-29 October.

Margaret Hill spent five years on a family reconstitution exercise for the period when Shifnal's PRs or BTs start in 1673 to 1812. The details are held on card index to which Trevor is adding information from other sources such as poor law records, apprenticeship indentures, will and probates, manor surveys etc. She is part way through indexing the 1841 census, and is now busy extracting information of life expectancy, marriage horizons etc. from the data. Trevor Hill, an OU graduate and ex D301 student, has reconstructed maps of the parish using Estate records and has produced a map of the parish with its Open field system in 1780. He is also collecting data on transport with particular reference to the growth of the town in the period 1750-1850, when it grew firstly into a coaching town which was then overtaken by the railway in 1849. Having taken early retirement and purchased an Amstrad 1640 HD20 he hopes to combine the data above with new found computer skills in writing his MA dissertation at the Department of English Local History at Leicester. Trevor and Margaret Hill also run the Shifnal Genealogical Centre which provides a tutoring service for family historians at local evening classes and at various residential colleges.

Contributed by Dr Rosalin Barker, Rygate, 58 Ruswerp Lane, Whitby, N.Yorks., YO21 1ND

Dr Barker reports that her University of Hull extra-mural group at Hindwell has completed a study of isonymous marriage and is engaged in a family reconstitution exercise. She herself is undertaking a study of economic and social change at Whitby 1650-1830, and apart from a demographic dimension is concerned to examine elite groups, links between sectarian groups, and the local generation and transmission of capital. Building on this, she hopes to develop an extra-mural group project at Whitby which will look at the density and distribution of township populations 1838-1861, using vote-books, censuses and large-scale maps. As she explained when speaking at our Durham conference, in steep-sided Whitby population change involves a vertical factor as well as the normal horizontal one! At Durham we also gave some thought to the possibly peculiar demography of seamen and their families - seamen had high occupational mortality and sometimes long absences from home. During the Napoleonic wars, some 200 British ships (some from Whitby) trading in the Baltic were caught in an embargo and a large number of British seamen found themselves prisoners in Russia. Continuing her interest in North Sea ports and their inhabitants, Dr Barker will be publishing soon a study of these captives.

LOCAL POPULATION STUDIES SOCIETY

REPORT OF THE GENERAL MEETING, 15 APRIL, 1989

The secretary and treasurer spoke briefly to their reports and the chairman, Professor Paul Hair, addressed the meeting by summarising recent developments and the present state of the Society. The Newsletter had been recently established in order to foster closer contacts between the committee and the membership, and its launch had been met by an enthusiastic response. Contributions from members on research in progress would be welcomed as a way of stimulating contact between members with similar interests. Steps had also been taken to set up a network of regional liaison officers in order to encourage membership in the regions and to plan conferences in response to regional needs.

Membership and Publicity.

The membership stood currently at 422, a good number but not enough to ensure financial stability. We should aim to build up to a thousand members to secure independence. It was suggested that new members might be recruited from Extra-Mural classes and Family History Societies. This related to ideas raised at the last general meeting but not adequately developed since then. The committee had recently met with George Pelling of the Federation of Family History Societies, and recruitment from the component Societies, including institutional membership, did seem a possibility. However, advertising conferences might not be enough to dispel the suspicions held by family historians about population studies. One possible approach might be for LPSS members to give talks to family history societies to present, in the Chairman's words, the history of *your* family in the context of the history of *the* family.

Proposal to alter the constitution.

A proposal was made to remove from the constitution the reference to a bookclub. The purpose of this change was to enable the bookclub to be hived off, thus removing the material benefit to members which at present prevented our covenanting membership should we wish to do so. The necessary change of wording - deletion of paragraph 3/B/IV - was proposed by Paul Hair, seconded by May Pickles, and accepted unanimously.

Membership of the Committee.

Gillian Briscoe, David Cooke, Peter Franklin, Paul Hair, Malcolm Smith and Grace Wyatt, were all proposed and seconded for continuing service. After four years work in the vital role of circulation secretary - inserting flyers and mailing LPS - Jeremy Greenwood has resigned as a member of the committee. He was warmly thanked for discharging this duty. Thanks were also due to Gillian Briscoe, who has resigned as bookclub manager though remaining a member of the committee. Peter Franklin now takes over this task. Christopher Charlton and May Pickles would continue to serve as members nominated by the LPS Editorial Board. Finally, the chairman recommended that Dr. Dennis Mills and Dr. Rhys Price be elected as the new regional organisers. These nominations were seconded by Rosalin Barker and Audrey Verdin respectively, and agreed by all.

Local Population Studies Society

Please reply to:-

ANNUAL ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st March 1989


I. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE	
EXPENDITURE	£
Purchase of LPS 39,40 and 41	2711.75
Travel	379.20
Printing, photocopying and Stationery	301.72
Postages	482.48
Federation of FHS	20
Subs to BALH	5.0
Auditor's Honorarium	20
Insurance	7.50
Bank charges	51.45
Conference payment Inst of Hist. Res. (March 1988)	153.50
Conference: Lincoln	
Deposit	40.00
Repayment loan LPS	100.00
	<u>4272.60</u>
INCOME	£
Subscriptions	3358.17
Sale of back journals	32.10
Conference payments in advance (Nottingham)	188.00
Book club profit	80.42
Deposit account	
Interest	18.94
	<u>3667.63</u>
Excess expenditure over Income	594.97

II. BOOK CLUB TRADING ACCOUNT	
Opening stock	£ 1111.25
Add purchases	375.70
	<u>1486.95</u>
Less closing stock	853.50
Cost of sales	633.45
Postages	62.10
	<u>695.55</u>
	80.42
	<u>775.97</u>
Profit	775.97

III. BALANCE at 31 March 1989	
General Fund at 31/3/88	£ 3823.48
Deduct excess expenditure over Income	594.97
	<u>3228.51</u>
Deposit Account	£ 237.60
Current Account (Midland)	408.87
Deposit Account	512.04
Current Account (TSB)	1299.00
	<u>2457.51</u>
Less unpaid cheques	82.50
	<u>2375.01</u>
Book stock	853.50
	<u>3228.51</u>

AUDITOR'S REPORT

I have examined the records of receipts and payments of the Society, and in my opinion the statements prepared therefrom present a true and fair view of the financial position of the LPS Society as recorded in the records.

Signed: 
 R. H. Heston
 Char. I. F. F. A.
 Honorary Auditor

An index of PR contents ?

Any attempt to define the content of parish registers - that is, the categories of data contained in a typical entry for a baptism, a marriage and a burial - faces the difficulty that there is no typical entry. Over the centuries the original minimum legal entry was enlarged with additional information. But while, because of secular and ecclesiastical command, the additional information increased consistently on **national average**, it increased in an **individual register** inconsistently and varyingly, in the main at the whim and interpretation of individual incumbents. Speaking at Nottingham, I made the case for a listing of the data content of PRs, and on my return home I began a trial **INDEX OF PR CONTENT**, by listing in detail the contents of three printed volumes of the Lancashire PR Society series. Here I summarise the results.

The register of **Rainford chapel 1718-1812**, supplemented by BT entries 1702-1707, represents a simple and probably untypical process - more or less consistent data increase. Like the other registers considered, it switches the **calendar year** from OS to NS in 1752. Baptisms begin in the 'standard' post-1600 form, 'John, s. William Smith, Rainford' (variant 'John, [bastard] s. Mary Smith, Rainford'), with **occupation** added when the PR begins in 1718; so continuing up to 1775, when **mother's name** is added; so continuing up to 1780 when **birth-date** is added (with a lapse 1775-1778 when occupation is lost); and so on up to 1812. Similarly, a 'standard' marriage entry (groom, place, bride, place) adds in 1719 **occupation** (irregularly up to 1743), and in 1754 **signature/mark, status of bride, and witnesses**. And a standard burial entry - (name, or forename + w/s/d of male relative or, if bastard, mother) plus **place** (even in the BT), plus **occupation** (only in the PR) - continues this way up to 1812 (with a lapse in regular occupation 1741-8).

In contrast, the other registers present more complex patterns of data increase. Also, whereas Rainford has few 'anomalous' entries, the others have many, both of the singleton kind and the repeated kind: I discuss these below.

The register of **Halton 1727-1837** begins with the 'standard' entries for baptisms and marriages defined above, but the marriage entry includes **bride status** and all categories enter **occupation**. From 1760 the **putative father** is added in baptism entries; from 1755 **marks** and **witnesses** are added to marriage entries; from 1769 baptism entries give the **mother's forename** and from 1808 **birth-dates**; and from 1808 burial entries give **age**. Over against this useful growth in information there is also fall-off in data; **occupation** becomes only occasional 1773-1791 and 1798-1807, **birth-date** in baptism entries only occasional 1826-1837, and **age** given occasionally in baptism entries 1798-1807 disappears thereafter. More strikingly, in 1813 (as a result of Rose's Act) the burial entry loses its **relationship** and **occupation**, and although the fuller data is resumed 1814-1825, the limited data of 1813 returns 1826-1837.

The register for **Church Kirk 1633-1746**, supplemented by BT entries 1600-1632, has an even more complex development (partly because of its earlier date). The BT entries are in **Latin** and tend to be minimal, baptisms and marriages giving only **date** and **name/s**. From 1633 the entries are more or less in 'standard' post-1600 form, except that in burials the **forename** of a wife or child is not always given, with **place** entered for marriages and burials but not for baptisms until 1643. In 1652-3 concessions were made to Commonwealth enactments, **birth-dates** occurring in baptism entries 1654-1661, **banns** in marriage entries 1653-6, and **forename** became regular in burial entries (instead of 'child' or 'uxor') - from then on. Lacking in this register is **occupation**, given only occasionally from 1661 in baptism entries and from 1704 in burial entries.

The point of this analysis is that it enables demographic exercises to be targetted on appropriate registers and sections of registers. Clearly an occupational exercise would pass over the Church Kirk register, but an exercise involving birth-dates could use the Commonwealth entries at Church Kirk, the 1780-1812 entries at Rainford and the 1808-1820 entries at Halton. And so on.

The **anomalous** entries are, however, also of importance, often throwing light on PR procedures and popular thought. Thus, unnamed children are 'born and buried' (one is not in the burial register) 1654-5 and a still-born is apparently baptized (26.1.1632); a child is baptized by a layman, 'there being no pastor in the parish' (22.8.1657); triplets are described as 'twins' (7.8.1721); a suicide is omitted from the BT (1.2.1694); burials out of the parish are entered (e.g. in 1707); a burial under the Communion table, being the 'custom' of a particular locality, is entered (12.5.1708); and note is taken in 1708 of missing affidavits for burial in wool - all these at Church Kirk. At Halton, 'abort' children are entered in the baptism and burial registers for a time; baptisms at a dependent chapel, omitted previously by a curate, are suddenly inserted in 1804; many private

baptisms occur in 1808; consent to marriage of minors is regularly entered; and in the 1780s 'duty' was paid.

The editions of the Lancs. PRS are rather superior ones (with good indexes), yet the introductions to these particular registers mention only a few of the varieties of entry. PR editors do not generally consider it part of their business to provide an analysis of the content of their registers. The analysis above, being in prose, is difficult to digest (although I have simplified the variety of entries somewhat), but it would be technically possible to have an **INDEX TO PR CONTENT** in tabulated and standard form, recording both regular and anomalous entries. I will discuss this possibility in a later note but meanwhile would welcome your comments. Would you find such an Index useful? Has it been done anywhere, to any extent, before? Would it be useful on other than a national basis?

P.E.H.H.
19.6.1989

For Your INFORMATION!

CORAL FUTURE DATES

30 September 1989

Sources for the study of the local economy.
Institute of Historical Research, University of London
Speakers, Dr Mark Overton, Dr Janet Blackman, Dr R.G. Wilson

6 October 1990

Regional Conference on the North West