

REVIEW OF RECENT PERIODICAL LITERATURE

Nigel Goose and Andrew Hinde

All articles reviewed were published in 2000 unless otherwise stated.

N. Alvey, 'Growth in the population of St Albans from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries,' *Local Historian*, **30**, 150–9.

Alvey uses population estimates from the Hearth Taxes, estimates made using numbers of baptisms and birth rates, and data from the censuses of 1801–1851 to chart the course of population change in St Albans from the 1660s until 1851. The population increased over this period by about 50 per cent in the central Abbey parish, and by almost 300 per cent in outlying parishes. The bulk of the increase took place after 1750. Alvey is a statistician, and explores the fitting of various models to the population growth. The paper is a good example of how to use and interpret quantitative data cautiously.

F.W.G. Andrews, 'Employment on the railways in east Kent, 1841–1914', *Journal of Transport History*, **21**, 54–72.

At one level this paper can be seen as another illustration of the problems with nineteenth century census data on occupations. Andrews tries to work out the numbers employed by the railway companies of east Kent after 1841. He finds that the census enumerators' books are much better than the census reports for this purpose, but that there is a big difference between the number of employees recorded in company records and that reported in the census (compare the paper by Jennings reviewed below). He also laments the difficulty of working with company records, and their inability to provide employment data for a sequence of time points. Many local historians who have tried to use similar sources will share his frustration.

W.C. Baer, 'Housing the poor and the mechanic class in seventeenth-century London', *The London Journal*, **25**, 13–39.

This paper attempts to chart the distribution of the quality of housing enjoyed by most Londoners on the basis of their occupation and the number of hearths in their households. Tentative estimates of the cost of building new housing and the cost of leasing it lead to the conclusion that at least some of the 'mechanick class' could afford to live in new build. But demand for housing was so great that proclamations on housing standards were generally ineffective, and many of the poor had to resort to intensive use of cheap

housing, particularly in the form of divided houses and tenements. Housing for all income groups thus increased markedly during the seventeenth century, in the face of proclamations on quality.

G. Barnes, 'Enteric fever in Chester in the 1880s and 1890s', *Cheshire History*, **39** (1999–2000), 83–94.

This article shows the persistence of enteric fever in Chester through the last 20 years of the nineteenth century, as the city council continued to struggle with the problems of sewage disposal and water supply.

C.J. Bearman, 'Who were the folk? The demography of Cecil Sharp's Somerset folk singers', *Historical Journal*, **43**, 751–75.

This unusual paper uses material from the census enumerators' books, together with oral history and other documentary evidence, to describe the demography of around 300 Somerset folk singers identified by Cecil Sharp in his researches carried out between 1903 and 1909. Bearman shows that, relative to the population of Somerset as a whole, '[t]he singers represented an elderly and settled population, a high proportion of whom gained their living from agriculture or from the trades and occupations which support rural life' (p. 772). More than half of them, for example, were still living in the places where they had been born (compare the paper by Newton Taylor reviewed below). In addition, Bearman has some interesting remarks to make about the existence of a 'peasantry' in nineteenth-century England, a subject which has stirred considerable debate during the last 25 years among social and demographic historians.

J. Beckett and C. Smith, 'Urban renaissance and consumer revolution in Nottingham, 1688-1750', *Urban History*, **27**, 31–50.

Catherine Smith's work on Nottinghamshire market towns will be familiar to *LPS* readers from her article published in number 65, also reviewed below. Here, with John Beckett, she focuses upon the county town of Nottingham, a town which grew from a population of about 4,300 in 1670 to over 10,000 by 1740, during which time it also underwent substantial urban renewal, largely as the result of private enterprise. A total of 1,088 probate inventories, almost all proved in the archdeaconry court, are then analysed to show the strength of the 'middling sorts', and their consumer-conscious behaviour. It is then speculated that it was this 'group' that must have provided the driving force for urban renewal. The problems involved in analysing inventories are revealed by the fact that, contrary to expectations, their average value in Nottingham actually declined across the period under consideration, while familiar problems of definition are raised by the apparently all-inclusive definition of those deemed to be 'middling' (see the article by H.R. French reviewed below).

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I.K. Ben-Amos, 'Reciprocal bonding: parents and their offspring in early modern England,' *Journal of Family History*, 25, 291–312.

One of the more influential demographic theories of recent decades has been J.C. Caldwell's 'wealth flows' theory, in which he argues that the fertility transition takes place when the direction of the 'net inter-generational wealth flow' switches from being upwards (from child to parent) to downward (from parent to child). By 'net inter-generational wealth flow', Caldwell means the balance of the whole range of goods and services which might be provided by members of one generation to members of another over the whole period from the birth of the child to the death of the parents. English historical demographers have tended to argue that Caldwell's theory does not apply to England because even during the pre-industrial period, long before there was any inkling of fertility transition, the balance of wealth flowed from parent to child. In this important paper, Ben-Amos re-examines this issue, using qualitative evidence from sources such as diaries. The conclusion reached is that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, on balance, parents provided more support for their children than children did for their parents, including, for example, help while their children were away 'in service' and economic assistance immediately after the offspring left service. Nevertheless, children did reciprocate, especially when their parents were elderly. In poorer families, moreover, it seems that parent-child and child-parent flows were more in balance than they were among the better off. The paper also stresses the amount of inter-generational negotiation which went on, arguing that families were held together by 'bonds of exchange rather than by sacrifices or prescribed rules' (p. 305). Ben-Amos's view thus lies somewhere between the historical demographers' affective nuclear family (described, for example, in Mount, F., *The subversive family*, (London, 1992)), and the Stone-Ariès-Shorter view of 'a historical shift from domination to affection' (p. 291).

J.L. Bolton, 'Irish migration to England in the late middle ages: the evidence of 1394 and 1440', *Irish Historical Studies*, 32, 1–21.

Bolton re-examines the alien subsidy roll of 1440 analysed long ago by Sylvia Thrupp (which, unusually, included the Irish among aliens), to positively identify 706 Irish adult men in England, although the existence of gaps in the record and evidence of mis-identification suggests that a figure of *circa* 1,000 is probably more accurate, plus an unquantifiable number of itinerant workers. Like other aliens, they were mainly small-scale artisan-retailers, and their geographical concentration is explained partly by their point of entry to England but also by the need to avoid competition with other aliens who might well have practised similar trades. Both push and pull factors explain their migration. While there is evidence of English resentment towards them, it is patchy and inconsistent, and the topic of their reception by the indigenous population is one that requires further research.

J. Boulton, ' "It is extreme necessity that makes me do this": some "survival strategies" of pauper households in London's West End during the early eighteenth century', *International Review of Social History*, 45 (supplement 8), 47–69.

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J. Boulton, ' "It is extreme necessity that makes me do this": some "survival strategies" of pauper households in London's West End during the early eighteenth century', *International Review of Social History*, 45 (supplement 8), 47–69.

An important issue, as yet insufficiently examined, concerns the extent to which 'informal' sources of help were used by poor households in the past in an attempt to make ends meet. Poor relief records typically only record relief given 'formally' under the Old or New Poor Laws, and reliance on them can lead historians to under-estimate the amount of assistance given by kin, friends and neighbours. However, the parish of St Martin's in London's West End has a 'rich set of poor relief records which, unusually, can shed valuable light on less formal survival strategies' (p. 68). In this paper, Boulton uses these records to show that the range of responses to the threat of imminent destitution was very wide, and frequently involved recourse to kin or neighbours. Assistance was more commonly given by older generations to younger ones (for example 'surplus' offspring being boarded out with their grandparents) than by younger generations to their forebears (compare the paper by Ben-Amos reviewed above).

J. Broad, 'Housing the rural poor in southern England, 1650–1850', *Agricultural History Review*, **48**, 151–70.

Following his two papers reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, **65** (2000), this paper is a further contribution by Broad on the theme of parish-based welfare provision under the Old Poor Law. He shows that during the century and a half before the New Poor Law many parishes built up a substantial stock of community-owned housing which was let to their poor. These early examples of 'local authority housing' survived the rapid population growth of the eighteenth century and the pressure on the poor rates of the early nineteenth century. By the 1830s, more than half of the parishes in Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire had at least one such house, and a quarter had five or more. They did not, however, survive the New Poor Law of 1834, which, with its emphasis on the workhouse test and its restrictions on outdoor relief, made this kind of pauper housing redundant.

C.E. Challis, 'Apprentices, goldsmiths and the north in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England', *Northern History*, **37**, 61–70.

Although focusing mainly upon the rise of two northern emigrants to London to positions of prominence as controllers of the mint in the Tower of London, Challis also tabulates data on the regional and social origins of goldsmiths' apprentices in the capital 1580–1695. He demonstrates the proportional importance of the north as a source of London migrants in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, and also its declining relative share by the later seventeenth century. This reflects the trends found for other City companies, and is explained as the result of urbanisation in the provinces (offering alternative attractions to London) and a long-term shift in the social origins of London apprentices, who were decreasingly of humble origins.

A. Clark, 'The New Poor Law and the breadwinner wage: contrasting assumptions', *Journal of Social History*, **34**, 261–81.

Perhaps the main interest of this paper to population historians will lie in its discussion of the way in which T.R. Malthus's ideas were embodied in the

framing of the New Poor Law of 1834. Clark shows that the architects of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act were heavily influenced by the view that, for a man, being able to work and earn enough to support a family was a privilege not a right. It was only later in the nineteenth century that the notion of the 'breadwinner wage', first as a 'reward for respectability' (p. 269) and ultimately as a right, took over.

M. Clark, 'Foreigners and freedom: the Huguenot refuge in Dublin City, 1660–1700', *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 27, 382–9.

Clark describes the establishment of a Huguenot community in late-seventeenth-century Dublin, encouraged by the Dublin City Assembly. By the reign of Queen Anne the French Huguenots had already become well established within the civic structure of the city, and in turn contributed to its demographic and economic expansion.

B. Coates, 'Poor relief in London during the English Revolution revisited', *The London Journal*, 25, 40–58.

Coates agrees with Ronald Herlan's argument that poor relief did not *collapse* in London as a result of the Civil Wars, but concludes more pessimistically that the system by no means successfully contained the problem, as all poor relief institutions suffered from declining revenue caused by economic crisis and Parliamentary demands for money. The problem was most severe in the more recently urbanised parts of the capital, and in the hospitals and livery companies. Even where poor relief provision was strongest, in the City parishes, it was still unable to keep pace with increasing poverty in this period.

L.F. Cody, 'The politics of illegitimacy in an age of reform: women, reproduction, and political economy in England's New Poor Law of 1834', *Journal of Women's History*, 11, 131–56.

M. Levine-Clark, 'Engendering relief: women, ablebodiedness, and the New Poor Law in early Victorian England', *Journal of Women's History*, 11, 107–30.

These two papers are both concerned with the treatment of women by and under the New Poor Law (NPL). The first tells the story of the reform of the bastardy laws which was an integral part of the NPL. Under the paternalistic Old Poor Law, mothers of illegitimate children could name the fathers and thereby allow the relieving authorities to recoup the cost of relieving their illegitimate children from these errant men. However, the Old Poor Law came under increasing criticism from liberal political economists and others, who argued that men and women should take responsibility for their own actions and their consequences. This argument led to a view that the immorality and lack of self-control of women was the source of the problem of illegitimate children: hence the harshness of their treatment under the NPL, which placed responsibility for bastards solely with their mothers.

The second paper explores the ambiguous status of adult women under the NPL. The problem for the authorities was that two widely held beliefs came into conflict when able-bodied married women or widows with children applied for relief. One belief held that because they were able-bodied, they should be either in work or in the workhouse. The other held that because they were married women or widows with children, they should be at home looking after their families. Levine-Clark shows, using data from Sussex, London and the West Riding of Yorkshire, that no general resolution to this contradiction was reached. Instead, local poor law authorities tended to decide upon each case individually.

H. Compton, 'Staffing Oxford Canal – around 1851', *Cake and Cockhorse*, **14**, 230–46.

This local study is worthy of note for the manner in which it shows how the census of 1851 can be linked with an array of other sources (unfortunately not fully specified here) to gather background information on the employees in a local industry, in this case those working on the Oxford Canal.

C. Cubitt, 'Virginity and mysogyny in tenth- and eleventh-century England', *Gender and History*, **12**, 1–32.

Cubitt examines the ideology of virginity in the writings of the Benedictine Aelfric, and finds that he associates it with men rather than with women. This, it is argued, excluded women from playing a significant part in the new monasticism, a movement of great ecclesiastical and political power, and thus their contribution to religious life was diminished. Aelfric actually saw women as sexually dangerous, and thus his attitudes strengthened gender separation. Hence this period saw a hardening of gender roles, and was not – as is sometimes suggested – a time of exceptional freedom for women.

B. Dackombe, 'A Quaker perspective on migration: Ampthill and Hitchin preparative meetings, 1811–1840', *Family and Community History*, **3**, 49–64.

The Quaker removal certificates described in this paper are an interesting new source giving data on migration. Their advantage is that they are not socially specific, like poor law settlement examinations (which are heavily concentrated on the poor). However, they have the disadvantage that they only record moves which involved a change of meeting. Since Quaker meetings were often considerable distances from one another (the two neighbouring meetings studied in this paper were ten miles apart), many short-distance moves would not involve a change of meeting, and thus go unrecorded. Because of this, Dackombe's rejection of the 'hypothesis that Quaker migration was short-distance in nature' (p. 61) is probably not valid. There is no doubt that many Quakers moved longer distances, and that probably the average distance moved by Quakers was longer than the average distance moved by non-Quakers, but we do not know how many short-distance moves took place but did not require a removal certificate.

N. Durbach, "'They might as well brand us": working-class resistance to compulsory vaccination in Victorian England', *Social History of Medicine*, 13, 45–62.

This paper examines resistance to compulsory vaccination in Victorian England. Resistance was concentrated in the lower middle class and the 'respectable' working class, and was maintained right through into the early twentieth century. One of its driving forces was a belief that the vaccination regulations were part and parcel of the New Poor Law. This belief was fuelled by some local poor law authorities, who considered that free vaccination might be a form of outdoor relief, with the consequence that free vaccination by definition pauperised the recipients. The central authorities repeatedly and stoutly denied that there was any connection, to no avail. The paper includes descriptions of protest meetings and gatherings, noting that many of these took the form of galas or fairs.

M. Ecclestone, 'Life on a knife edge?', *Local Population Studies Society Newsletter*, 27, 10–12.

P. Franklin, 'Multiple occupations and the middle peasant, or, the real Eddie Grundy?', *Local Population Studies Society Newsletter*, 27, 12–13.

Ecclestone stresses that the variability of medieval peasant incomes mattered as much as the average value. He illustrates this with calculation based on data from the Bishop of Winchester's manors between 1277 and 1348, showing that 'middling' peasants would have struggled to make ends meet in almost half of these years. In his response, Franklin accepts that the position of these 'half virgaters' was difficult, and says that many of them probably sought non-agricultural sources of income to supplement farming. Unfortunately, medieval sources are often silent about these by-employments. The paper by Kitsikopoulos reviewed below adds more fuel to the pessimists fire by suggesting that historians have underestimated the size of a viable peasant holding in this period.

B. Eckstein and A. Hinde, 'Measuring fertility within marriage between 1841 and 1891 using parish registers and the census enumerators' books', *Local Population Studies*, 64, 38–53.

This paper is an attempt to show how family reconstitution-type rules for analysing fertility might be extended to incorporate data from the census enumerators' books (CEBs). By combining data from parish registers and the CEBs, it is possible to measure fertility within marriage during the second half of the nineteenth century using a much larger proportion of marriages than would be possible with conventional family reconstitution. The paper is mainly methodological in focus, but it does present some results from northern Hampshire which indicate that marital fertility there between 1851 and 1891 was at a similar level to that reported in the Cambridge Group's reconstitutions for the early modern period (see E.A. Wrigley, R.S. Davies, J.E. Oeppen and R.S. Schofield, *English population history from family reconstitution: 1580–1837*, (Cambridge, 1997), 355).

K. Fisher, ' "She was quite satisfied with the arrangements I made": gender and birth control in Britain 1920–1950', *Past and Present*, **169**, 161–93.

K. Fisher, 'Uncertain aims and tacit negotiation: birth control practices in Britain, 1925–50', *Population and Development Review*, **26**, 295–317.

Both these papers draw on Fisher's oral history study of knowledge about and attitudes towards sex and contraception among a sample of working-class couples from South Wales and the Oxford area who were married during the 1930s. In the first paper she challenges the belief, conventional among demographers, that the decline in fertility in the early-twentieth century was principally the result of changes in women's position concerning birth control. She argues persuasively that decisions about when to use birth control and what methods to use were largely (in many cases almost entirely) made by the husbands. In part this was because the available methods (principally the condom and *coitus interruptus*) were 'male methods'. In part, though, it was because women were happy to have these decisions made by their husbands: 'women successfully engineered a situation in which they abnegated responsibility for birth control and achieved their aim of remaining detached from sexual issues' (p. 189).

The second paper takes the challenge to the demographers further, by questioning the three preconditions for fertility decline set out in 1973 in A.J. Coale, 'The demographic transition', in *International Population Conference, Liège 1973, vol. 1* (Liège, 1973), 65. In so doing, she is striking at the heart of the theoretical edifice which has been constructed by demographers around the fertility transition, for these preconditions have attained an almost sacred status. In brief, they are (1) that fertility must be 'within the calculus of conscious choice' (Coale, 'Demographic transition', 65), (2) that reduced fertility must seem to confer some advantage to couples, and (3) that couples must know some means of birth control, be determined to use it, and communicate sufficiently to be able to use it effectively. Fisher argues, rather persuasively, that none of these preconditions is necessary. For in 1930s Britain 'contraceptive behaviour [was] ill-thought out, barely discussed, [and] haphazard' (p. 313), yet this messy, unfocused approach to contraception was enough to achieve below-replacement fertility.

H.R. French, 'Social status, localism and the "middle sort of people" in England 1620–1750', *Past and Present*, **166**, 66–99.

This paper is an attempt to locate the 'middle sort of people' in early modern England – a descriptive term that has achieved great currency in recent historiography despite the fact that it was virtually never employed by contemporaries themselves. Defining exactly who the 'middle sort of people' were is problematic, relying partly on self-description, and the most common term found in the documentary sources is reference to the 'chief inhabitants' of parishes. French attempts to identify these 'chief inhabitants' by examining the Hearth Tax, Ship Money and parish rate assessments of parish officers and vestry members in 13 Essex, Suffolk and Lancashire communities. He shows

that people describing themselves thus turn out to have similar characteristics throughout the country, despite different regional economic fortunes: they tended to be marked out from the bulk of inhabitants by their superior wealth, and they also coalesced into ruling groups by dominating parish government, not merely serving in it, while also exhibiting more settled residence patterns. Despite the ubiquity of this type, French maintains that '[i]n general, "middling" groups understood their status in the context of local hierarchies and they were united only by a failure to perceive their wider existence' (p. 98). In other words, the 'middle sort of people' in any one parish tended not to be aware that similar sorts of people existed in most parishes, and they certainly lacked the wider horizons of the gentry. Self-perceptions could also shift from one form of identification to another, and hence the use of the descriptor 'middling sort' is one of expediency rather than an explanation of social reality. For further discussion of this issue by the same author, see H.R. French, 'The search for the "middle sort of people" in England', *The Historical Journal*, 43, 2000, 277–93, which focuses at greater length on other historians' attempts to define and identify the 'middling sort'.

E. Gordon, and G. Nair, 'The economic role of middle-class women in Victorian Glasgow', *Women's History Review*, 9, 791–814.

Following their paper on middle-class family structure in Glasgow reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, 65 (2000), 69, this contribution from Gordon and Nair challenges the prevailing 'separate spheres' thesis that, during the Victorian era, middle-class women increasingly retreated from the wider economy to occupy themselves in domestic activity. They argue that although the census enumerators' books indicate that few middle class women had any form of employment, they are seriously deficient in this respect (although, for a contrasting view, see Anderson's paper reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, 65 (2000), 64–5). Wills, on the other hand, provide abundant evidence that women often had substantial wealth and were heavily involved in economic activities. Moreover, though 'surplus' middle class spinsters were perceived as a problem by contemporary commentators, even seriously 'decayed gentlewomen' were usually much better off than working-class women.

A.J. Gritt, 'The census and the servant: a reassessment of the decline and distribution of farm service in early nineteenth-century England', *Economic History Review*, 53, 84–106.

Following the publication of A. Kussmaul's book *Servants in husbandry in early modern England* (Cambridge, 1981), it has become widely believed that 'living-in' farm servants had become largely extinct in the arable south and east of England by the early-nineteenth century, but that they remained an important component of the farm labour force in the north and the west until much later. In this paper, Gritt challenges this interpretation as being too stark, using the 1831 census returns for parts of Lancashire. These returns permit the analysis of the rural workforce at a finer level of aggregation than do those of other nineteenth-century censuses. The main implication of Gritt's work is that the significance of servants in the north of England has been over-emphasised 'in all the literature to date' (p. 105).

D.M. Hadley, 'Burial practices in the northern Danelaw, c.650–1100', *Northern History*, 37, 199–216.

This article asks where the dead were buried in the middle and later Anglo-Saxon centuries in the Northern Danelaw (Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire) and how were they commemorated? There was no requirement for, nor expectation of, burial in a church cemetery much before the tenth century, and while burials did take place in or near churches from an early date this may only have been afforded to the local elites. There is far more evidence on place of burial in the eighth to eleventh centuries than is often supposed, and this shows that burial sites remained diverse. It is also apparent that social competition did not cease following the disappearance of the deployment of grave goods, but it rose above ground to take the form of ritual, ceremony and funerary monuments.

C.S. Hallas, 'Poverty and pragmatism in the northern uplands of England: the North Yorkshire Pennines c.1770–1900', *Social History*, 25, 67–84.

In this paper Hallas attempts to redress the geographical bias she sees in the historiography of the operation of both Old and New Poor Laws, which is heavily skewed in favour of the south and east of England. Examining the populations of Wensleydale and Swaledale, she shows how 'strong adherence to the land by many local people coupled with an economic structure of which by-employment was an integral part and migration the norm, enabled a non-hierarchical community to respond successfully to poverty. The community achieved this by pragmatically using a variety of support systems and by adapting the pre- and post-1834 Poor Laws to local advantage' (p. 84). Of particular interest to readers of *Local Population Studies* might be the comments she makes about the relationship between poverty and migration in these remote upland valleys.

M. Harrison, 'From medical astrology to medical astronomy: sol-lunar and planetary theories of disease in British medicine, c.1700–1865', *British Journal for the History of Science*, 33, 25–48.

Harrison argues that although astrology lost the respect it has once commanded in *mainstream* medical circles after 1700, the belief that the heavens could influence bodily health persisted. Those holding such views adopted the new empiricism, and amassed statistical evidence to 'prove' the influence of the moon upon fevers and diseases. Such ideas particularly flourished in the medical services of the armed forces and in the colonies. While such ideas remained untypical, some of their proponents were prominent men: they were by no means all marginal crackpots.

R. Hole, 'Incest, consanguinity and a monstrous birth in rural England, January 1600', *Social History*, 25, 183–99.

Hole focuses upon the birth of a deformed child to cousins-german in the Herefordshire village of Colwall in January 1600, and discusses how this was

portrayed in pamphlet literature. The author's main purpose is to reveal how representations of this birth demonstrate the gradual nature of the development of science and the new (Baconian) learning in early modern England, but the article also explores the laws of incest, their basis in scripture and in natural law, and the controversy surrounding its extent.

S. Horrell, and D. Oxley, 'Work and prudence: household responses to income variation in nineteenth-century Britain', *European Review of Economic History*, **4**, 27–57.

This paper uses data on household budgets collected in 1889–90 to compare the behaviour of single-earner households and households with several earners. Households with several earners were less vulnerable to economic recession than were single-earner households. It might have been thought, therefore, that single-earner households would be more likely to insure against the death or sickness of their sole breadwinner. However, it seems that the reverse was the case. 'Self-help' through life insurance, sickness insurance, and membership of labour organisations, was not greater among households in which the man was the sole breadwinner than it was among household with several earners.

G. Howells, 'Emigration and the New Poor Law: the Norfolk emigration fever of 1836', *Rural History*, **11**, 145–64.

'In 1836 under the auspices of ... the New Poor Law, 3,069 poor people from Norfolk were assisted to emigrate to North America' (p. 145). This paper tells the story of how these persons were selected, and how the phenomenon was viewed by the poor themselves and by the local poor law authorities. Howells argues that the coming of the New Poor Law (NPL) was viewed with trepidation by parish authorities. They feared that it would disrupt the arrangements for the relief of the poor which had evolved over the previous few decades, and which seemed to work satisfactorily (these arrangements effectively took the form of a wage subsidy to farmers). They realised, probably correctly, that the workhouse test could potentially result in increased expenditure, especially if whole families had to be accommodated in the workhouses. Consequently, they made use of the provision in the NPL to assist emigration, particularly of whole families, and most notably of families with young children. Although there was a risk that assisted emigration would be selective of the most ambitious and energetic members of the labouring classes, this did not seem to be a great concern to parish authorities. This was in part because they were genuinely concerned to do the best for their parishioners and, if a family requested assistance, it was not reasonable to deny it. In part, though, it derived from a belief that if only the labour supply could be reduced so that it balanced the available work, unemployment would be reduced, and 'the moral character of the unemployed would improve. Thus it did not matter who left, as long as some people left' (p. 160). Readers interested in this excellent paper would do well to look at the earlier papers by Howells and by Hudson and Mills reviewed respectively in *Local Population Studies* **63** (1999), 76; and **65** (2000), 70.

P. Hudson and S. King, 'Two textile townships, c.1660–1820: a comparative demographic analysis,' *Economic History Review*, **53**, 706–41.

In this paper, Hudson and King compare the demography of the two Yorkshire townships of Sowerby, west of Halifax, and Calverley, between Leeds and Bradford, during the long eighteenth century. The main points to emerge from their analysis are as follows. First, proto-industrial townships were different from agricultural ones. Second, the demography of proto-industrial townships was diverse. Age at marriage and infant mortality, for example, varied quite widely. Calverley and Sowerby were not only different from one another, but were also unlike the proto-industrial townships of Birstall and Shephed included in the Cambridge Group's family reconstitutions. Third, changes in the average values of demographic indicators often arose from changes in the behaviour of (sometimes extreme) population subgroups, which had the effect of shifting the means. Conventional family reconstitution is typically unable to capture the behaviour of these subgroups.

S. King and A. Weaver, 'Lives in many hands: the medical landscape in Lancashire, 1700–1820', *Medical History*, **44**, 173–200.

This article uses letters, account books, commonplace books and diaries in an attempt to reconstruct the medical landscape of Lancashire and its sub-regions in the eighteenth century. King and Weaver tentatively conclude that, despite the scattered and patchy nature of the evidence, sub-regional differences can indeed be identified, for example in the greater prominence of quack doctors in eastern Lancashire, while here too middling and landed families appear to have used doctors more intensively and involved them more closely in their family affairs. Hence structures of culture, custom, literacy, migration and regional identity all helped to shape the medical scene.

H. Kitsikopoulos, 'Standards of living and capital formation in pre-plague England: a peasant budget model', *Economic History Review*, **53**, 237–61.

This attempt to model peasant budgets is not a study in demography, but has important implications for the debate over the balance between population and resources in England in the first half of the fourteenth century. If Kitsikopoulos is correct, and the average size of a viable peasant holding was 18 acres rather than the 10–12 acres commonly assumed, then that balance was precarious indeed, and possibly half the English peasantry would have struggled to stay alive between harvests. Population growth during the thirteenth century may have created opportunities for some, but for the feudal economy more generally the limits to its potential had been reached well before the Black Death provided an exogenous resolution to the population and resources equation.

P. Jennings, 'Occupations in the nineteenth century censuses: the drink retailers of Bradford, West Yorkshire', *Local Population Studies*, **64**, 23–37.

The originality of this study lies in its comparison of two 'pictures' of the licensed trade in Bradford. One is the picture than might be drawn using the occupational descriptions in the census enumerators' books or the census reports. The other is a picture than can be painted using other contemporary sources (for example trade directories and newspaper articles). The somewhat disturbing finding is that the two pictures are quite different from one another, suggesting that the occupational descriptions in one (or perhaps both) of these sets of sources are inaccurate. In this, the paper reaches the same conclusion as Andrews does for the railway workers of Kent (see the paper reviewed above).

G. Kearns, 'Maps, models and registers: the historical geography of the population of England,' *Journal of Historical Geography*, **26**, 298–304.

This article reviews E.A. Wrigley, R. Davies, J. Oeppen and R.S. Schofield, *English population history from family reconstitution 1580–1837*, (Cambridge, 1997); and M. Dobson, *Contours of death and disease in early modern England*, (Cambridge, 1997). It includes a clear summary of the history of the Cambridge Group's work on parish registers, and of the findings of the Wrigley et al. volume, but it does not attempt a critical evaluation of the latter, along the lines of the articles by Levine and Ruggles reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, **63** (1999), 78 and **65** (2000), 73 respectively. By contrast, the article does discuss the strengths and weaknesses of Dobson's book.

J. Langton, 'Proletarianization in the industrial revolution: regionalism and kinship in the labour markets of the British coal industry from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, new series **25**, 31–49.

This impressive paper describes the operation of labour markets in Britain's coalfields, though its main focus is on south-west Lancashire. Langton shows that in the Lancashire coalfield around Wigan and Prescot, labour for the coal mines was recruited through kinship links and the employment of women and children was the rule. By contrast, in the north-east of England most miners were on annual contracts and the employment of women and children was very rare. A clear implication of Langton's analysis is that we should be wary of equating coal mining areas with a lack of work for women, at least before the labour laws of the nineteenth century placing restrictions on women's work came in (laws, incidentally, much resented in south-west Lancashire). Another implication of this is that the tradition of women working in industrial occupations outside the home in Lancashire predates the arrival of the cotton factories. The recruitment through kinship was able to keep pace with the rapid expansion of the industry during the eighteenth century because of high fertility. However, during the nineteenth century continued high fertility led to overstaffing and reduced productivity. *Local Population Studies* readers might also be interested in another paper recently published by the same author on

south-west Lancashire: J. Langton, 'People from the pits: the origins of colliers in eighteenth-century south-west Lancashire', in D.J. Siddle ed., *Migration, mobility and modernization*, (Liverpool, 2000), 60–79.

L. Leneman, 'Marriage north of the border', *History Today*, 50(4), 20–5.

Unlike in England, irregular marriages were rare in Scotland before 1689, a situation changed by the mass ousting of Scots episcopal parish ministers at that date. The fashion for clandestine marriage grew in eighteenth-century Scotland (as in England), and possibly as many as one-third of Scots marriages across the century were irregular (more than double the peak achieved in early-eighteenth-century England). Furthermore, Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753 did not apply here, so the practice continued through the century and only declined in the nineteenth century. Leneman goes on to examine the 506 Declarator of Marriage cases brought to the Edinburgh Commissary Court, and finds that they predominantly comprised women seeking confirmation of marriage (371 women compared to 46 men), while more men brought cases seeking their freedom (69 men compared to 20 women). To this day irregular marriage by habit and repute remains recognised in Scotland.

C. Maclean, 'Getting out and getting on: Scottish Highland migration in the first half of the twentieth century', *Rural History*, 11, 231–48.

Using oral history and ethnographic evidence, Maclean paints a fascinating picture of migration from an area of the Scottish Highlands during the first half of the twentieth century. The kind of evidence she uses provides her with more depth than conventional quantitative cross-sectional approaches, and allows her to develop an understanding of people's attitudes towards the possibilities of migration. Migration from the Highlands was a process rather than an event, worked out in a complex way over time in the minds of the members of crofting families. Respondents repeatedly mentioned the fundamental tension between the need to 'get out' in order to 'get on', and the need to stay at home in order, for example, to care for elderly relations. However, it is not clear whether the latter represented the true motives for staying in or returning to the Highlands, or whether they are *post hoc* rationalisations of decisions made on what were perceived to be less justifiable 'sentimental' grounds.

S. Matthews, 'Population change in Altrincham in the early nineteenth century', *Cheshire History*, 20 (2000–2001), 56–66.

Matthews employs the early censuses of 1801–31, trade directories and scattered references in contemporary publications to show that the small town of Altrincham and the hamlets surrounding it were overwhelmingly rural in 1801. By 1831 the population had risen, most notably in Altrincham itself, and the number of shops and service trades had multiplied in response to increased gentrification, though this more complex economy still existed within an essentially rural framework. The Altrincham region may thus represent a microcosm of broader economic developments, for recent research

at regional and national level has re-emphasised the increasing importance of industries engaged in providing goods and services to local markets in this period, first noted long ago by Sir John Clapham.

T. McIntosh, ' "An abortionist city": maternal mortality, abortion and birth control in Sheffield, 1920–1940', *Medical History*, **44**, 75–96.

This is a study of maternal mortality in Sheffield between the World Wars. Maternal mortality in the city was high relative to the national average, with a particularly high incidence of puerperal fever. McIntosh argues that the high maternal mortality rate was associated with a high rate of (illegal) abortion. Married women living in the heavy-industrial working-class culture of Sheffield did not have enough power within their homes to enable them to use contraception, and so resorted to abortion. In this, they were unlike women in the textile areas who, because they were employed outside the home, had greater leverage in the domestic sphere. Abortion rates in textile areas were correspondingly lower. This paper tends to focus on the position of women in relation to contraception, though the papers by Fisher reviewed above suggest that the attitudes of their husbands might have been at least as influential.

D. Mills and M. Edgar, 'Social history of Lincoln's Victorian residential streets', *Local Population Studies Society Newsletter*, **27** (2000), 4–10.

This short paper describes a project designed 'to bring together amateurs and professionals with a range of interests in Lincoln's past'. The analysis uses census enumerators' books and trade directories to compare the occupational structure of different zones within a predominantly working-class area of Lincoln. Quite pronounced differences are observed between, for example, the main streets and the courts lying behind them.

P. Newton Taylor, 'Residential continuity and problems of measurement in Aldington, Kent, 1801–1851', *Family and Community History*, **3**, 93–104.

There has been a tendency in the literature in recent years to emphasise the great mobility of people in the nineteenth century countryside. Although it is likely that villages contained 'movers' and 'stayers', recent studies have tended to conclude that the proportion of 'stayers' was rather small. In this paper, Newton Taylor attempts to redress the balance. He takes a sample of those aged over 50 years living in Aldington, Kent, in 1851 and tries to assess whether they had lived continuously in the parish during the first half of the century. To this end he uses a range of sources which might reveal their presence (Land Tax Assessments, parish registers, the 1841 census enumerators' books (CEBs) etc.). However, as he acknowledges, these sources cannot prove that people were continuously resident; rather, given various assumptions, they provide indications of presence or absence. Despite this, he finds a substantial core of 'stayers'. For a slightly later period, of course, the 1881 census index, together with the CEBs for the censuses of 1841–1871,

provide potentially better source materials for studies of this kind (see, for an example, C. Jones, 'Born in Great Oakley: what were they doing on Sunday 3rd April 1881?', *Local Population Studies Society Newsletter*, 24 (1999), 8–10).

C. Peters, 'Gender, sacrament and ritual in the making and meaning of marriage in late medieval and early modern England', *Past and Present*, 169, 63–96.

Peters discusses marriage as a sacrament, as well as a social and economic process, under the impact of the Reformation. The pre-Reformation idea of the sacrament of marriage stressed its role as a channel of grace: marriage could not be broken except by death, and the correct balance of love, support, obedience and fidelity had to be maintained. But this was not so very different from the content of early Protestant homilies on marriage, and nor did the new clerical use of the liturgy give any clear or novel direction. So, particularly in its early stages, the Reformation proved unable to transform marriage in its own image. The decline of spousals, in gender terms, was more significant than any changes in marriage doctrine, but this was primarily driven by secular pressures.

R. Pope, 'Unemployed women in inter-war Britain: the case of the Lancashire weaving district', *Women's History Review*, 9, 743–59.

In north-eastern Lancashire during the 1930s, unemployment among women, especially married women, was higher than that among men. This was the opposite of the national pattern. Why? Pope's explanation runs as follows. In this area women's employment was heavily concentrated in a declining staple, traditionally export-led industry (cotton textile weaving), and so they were very vulnerable to a slump in this industry. There were few alternative employment opportunities, and women were reluctant to take them. Employers and trades unions operated policies which discriminated against married women in the labour market. In fact, Pope suggests that the true rate of unemployment among married women might have been higher than that reported, as the Anomalies Regulations brought on following the report of the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance in 1931 required a married women to meet stringent criteria of eligibility for benefit. There is little evidence, on the other hand, that married women were 'playing the system' in order to augment the low earnings of their husbands.

D. Postles, 'Migration and mobility in a less mature economy: English internal migration, c. 1200–1350', *Social History*, 25, 285–99.

Here Postles attempts to examine the personal experience of migration, rather than simple broad quantitative measures of movement, a task rendered difficult by the intransigence of the sources available for this early period. He argues that lordship, and the variable degree to which it was exerted, was a distinctive and fundamental influence, and one that could both promote and restrict movement. This influence was achieved mainly through the control of persons, but also through seigneurial control of space, both secular and spiritual.

P. Razzell, 'Evaluating the same name technique as a way of measuring burial register reliability in England', *Local Population Studies*, **64**, 8–22.

In this paper Razzell takes advantage of the practice, common in the English past, of giving a subsequent child the same Christian name as that of an older but deceased sibling. The existence of this practice can be used, he argues, to estimate the reliability of burial registration in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He concludes that, contrary to the belief of many historians, the reliability of burial registration was not worse at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century than in earlier periods.

N.S. Rushton, 'Monastic charitable provision in Tudor England: quantifying and qualifying poor relief in the early sixteenth century', *Continuity and Change*, **16**, 9–44.

This lengthy article has important implications for all students of English social structure in the first half of the sixteenth century. Rushton re-examines the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535 to suggest that the amount of monastic charity provided in the 1530s should be revised upwards, possibly by as much as a factor of three as compared with the early calculations of Savine, while subsequent county commission reports indicate that the monasteries housed considerably more resident poor than the *Valor* had revealed. Furthermore, the evidence that is available suggests that outdoor relief was not doled out in an indiscriminate fashion, but was generally controlled in the interests of the self-reliant, resident poor and to discourage transient vagrants. The extent of poverty in this period remains debatable, and is not strenuously addressed here, but this article does suggest that the impact of the Dissolution might have been more severe than some revisionists have suggested.

L. Schwarz, 'Residential leisure towns in England towards the end of the eighteenth century', *Urban History*, **27**, 51–61.

This short article identifies leisure towns by using a list of employers of manservants registered for taxation in 1780, defining a leisure town as one with 30 or more such employers. It concludes that they were relatively few in number, particularly outside of the Home Counties, while the culture and wealth that led to large concentrations of manservants in southern towns was weaker in most parts of the Midlands and the north.

S. Scott, and C.J. Duncan, 'Interacting effects of nutrition and social class differentials on fertility and infant mortality in a pre-industrial population', *Population Studies*, **54**, 71–87.

In this paper, Susan Scott and C.J. Duncan continue their study of the parish of Penrith in Cumbria based on family reconstitution data (for earlier contributions, see *Local Population Studies*, **59** (1997), 62–5 and the papers reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, **65** (2000), 73–4). They manage

to classify the reconstituted families into three social groups which they call 'elite', 'tradesman' and 'subsistence' (this last referring to small farmers and smallholders). The paper makes three main points. First, compared with most of southern and midland England there was considerable subfecundity in Penrith, and this may well have been attributable to poor nutrition. Second, exogenous infant mortality (that is, that due to environmental factors) was high, especially among the 'subsistence' class, and this also was probably due to nutritional deficiency (notably in vitamins A, C and D). Among the 'elite' class, infant mortality was also rather high for male babies, possibly because of short periods of breastfeeding. Third, because it appears that poor nutrition can lead to subfecundity, the authors speculate that the improvement in nutrition throughout most of England during the eighteenth century should have been associated with an increase in marital fertility. Recently, E.A. Wrigley (in a paper reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, 63 (1999), 84) has shown that just such an increase did occur, lending weight to Scott and Duncan's argument that the nutritional status of the pre-industrial English population had an important bearing on its demography.

C. Scull, 'How the dead live: some current approaches to the mortuary archaeology of England in the fifth to eighth centuries A.D.', *The Archaeological Journal*, 157, 399–406.

This is a review article of three recently published doctoral theses which examine the most prominent aspect of the archaeological record of this period, the mortuary archaeology, at micro and macro levels: E. O'Brien, *Post-Roman Britain to Anglo Saxon England: burial practices reviewed*; S. Lucy, *The early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries of East Yorkshire. An analysis and interpretation*; and N. Stoodley, *The spindle and the spear. A critical enquiry into the construction and meaning of gender in the early Anglo-Saxon burial rite*. Scull offers a rigorous and often challenging critique of these volumes, which emphasises the need in a mature archaeology for a reflexive linkage between theory, method and data; a genuine empiricism; and a critical understanding of past scholarship – injunctions that clearly apply to historians as much as to archaeologists.

P. Sharpe, 'The shiners: framework-knitting households in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, 1840–1890', *Family and Community History*, 3, 105–20.

In this paper, Pamela Sharpe tries to test Richard Wall's 'adaptive family economy' model among the framework knitters of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. This group became a byword for poverty during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. However, those who remained in the business faced better prospects after 1845. Sharpe finds evidence to support Wall's ideas, with men and older boys working wide frames, and women and children being employed in separate areas of activity. The paper also contrasts the family economy of the framework knitters with that of mining households living in the same area.

A. Shepard, 'Manhood, credit and patriarchy in early modern England, c.1580–1640', *Past and Present*, 167, 75–106.

Using the extensive evidence generated by the courts of the University of Cambridge, Shepard demonstrates that – despite the prescriptive literature – the patriarchal dictates of male provision and exchange were countered in practice by the commercial pursuits of many married women (*how* many is not revealed), and hence further reinforces a line of argument concerning precept and practice in early modern gender relations that is by now quite familiar. Married women, it is argued, made a crucial contribution to the household economy, and the evidence suggests a routine acceptance of a household ideology far less differentiated by gender than is often supposed. Furthermore, for those men who could *not* claim patriarchal status there were alternative models of manliness in the form of excess, prodigality and violence, creating an inherent contradiction in early modern notions of manhood (and, one might add, one that remains familiar today).

C. Smith, 'Population growth and economic change in some Nottinghamshire market towns, 1680–1840', *Local Population Studies*, 65, 29–46.

This article charts the changing fortunes of six Nottinghamshire towns: Bingham, East Retford, Mansfield, Newark, Ollerton and Worksop, between 1680 and 1840. Smith shows that during this period some towns prospered while others became marginalised. In Nottinghamshire, the smaller towns experienced declining fortunes, but Smith warns us against generalising too hastily from the experience of one county. It is perhaps safer to conclude that the larger towns did well, but that the development of smaller towns depended on local circumstances.

K. Sneath, 'Huntingdonshire hearth taxes', *Records of Huntingdonshire*, 3(8), 25–39.

Sneath provides an analysis of the 1664 Michaelmas Hearth Tax in Huntingdonshire, a total of 5,038 households, and offers comparisons with similar published data for Rutland, Nottinghamshire, Kent and Essex, as well as a breakdown between the county's four hundreds. Comparisons are also made between status designations and numbers of hearths, and the generally low but variable level of exemptions is noted.

T. Sokoll, 'Negotiating a living: Essex pauper letters from London, 1800–1834', *International Review of Social History*, 45 (supplement 8), 19–46.

The main point made by this paper is that, although pauperisation was widespread in early-nineteenth-century southern England, being a pauper was not the same as being powerless and dependent. Sokoll's study of the letters written by non-resident Essex paupers living in London reveals that they were prepared to back up their requests for funds with threats. Their chief negotiating tactic was to point out to the overseers that failure to send them money (usually to tide them over temporary problems) would result in their own parishes incurring the much greater expense of removing them

from the capital back to the countryside, and then having to support them for the foreseeable future, employment opportunities in rural Essex being so much worse than those in London. In passing, the paper contains some interesting remarks about extended household structures, especially in the context of single women with children. Readers interested in this paper may also like to read the paper by Howells reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, 63 (1999), 76, which makes a similar point to this one.

D. Spencer, 'Reformulating the "closed" parish thesis: associations, interests and interaction', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 26, 83–98.

This is the latest blast against Dennis Mills's open/closed parish model. David Spencer maintains that the model as originally formulated is too empirical and 'positivistic'. He argues for a non-positivistic reinterpretation based on 'actor network theory'. Readers of *Local Population Studies* may not be fully cognisant of this approach, but the basic idea seems to be that the process of 'closure' not the fact of a parish being 'closed' is what matters. Closure was a process put in place by those who could wield power. An important feature of this process was that it involved actions at the regional or sub-regional level (for example where an estate straddled several parishes), not just actions within the parish. Readers should be warned that there is a lot of jargon in this paper, but they should also be advised that there are some good ideas to be discovered too. Not the least useful aspect is the comprehensive list of references dealing with the debate about the open/closed parish model which lies in its endnotes. Finally, those interested in the process of 'closure' might like to consult the paper by Broad on 'The fate of the Midland yeoman' reviewed in *Local Population Studies*, 65 (2000), 66, for a case study of a Buckinghamshire parish.

N. Spencer and D. Gatley, 'Investigating population mobility in mid nineteenth century England and Wales', *Local Population Studies*, 65, 47–57.

This paper extends a previous paper by Gatley (see *Local Population Studies*, 58 (1997), 37–47) which described the University of Staffordshire project designed to computerise the 1861 census and vital registration statistics at the registration-district level. This project produced an extremely useful (and user-friendly) database. In this paper, Spencer and Gatley show how cluster analysis can be used to detect geographical patterns in these data, and to classify the registration districts. One obvious use of this technique (though by no means the only one) is to assist in the selection of localities for more detailed study.

W.B. Stephens, 'Illiteracy in the north-east coalfield, c.1830–1870', *Northern History*, 37, 215–37.

This investigation begins with the presentation of a series of statistics about the proportions of brides and grooms in the counties of Northumberland and Durham who were not able to sign their names on marriage. Stephens notes that these proportions were higher in mining districts than in other areas, and that in the mining areas improvements in literacy (defined in this way) between the 1840s and the 1870s were much slower than the national, or even

the county-level, average. An enquiry into why this was reveals an educational system dominated by hopelessly inadequate private schools, supported only reluctantly by mining families, who wanted their sons to start working in the mines as soon as they were physically able to do so. The cultural antipathy of coal mining communities towards education was only overcome in the 1870s by the Education Acts which made it compulsory for children to be sent to school, and even then it was a further generation before the proportion of illiterate brides and grooms began to decline substantially.

S. Szreter and E. Garrett, 'Reproduction, compositional demography and economic growth: family planning in England long before the fertility decline', *Population and Development Review*, 26, 45–80.

This important paper is the culmination of a number of years' thought about the decline of fertility in England during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The authors argue that the conventional view of the English fertility decline as (1) beginning in the 1870s and (2) involving the adoption of 'stopping' behaviour, whereby couples use birth control methods to prevent further children being born once they have achieved their desired family size, is wrong. Integral to this view is the idea that conscious attempts by English married couples to control their fertility prior to the 1870s were almost unknown. Instead, the Malthusian preventive check of late and non-universal marriage acted as a brake on runaway population growth in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Szreter and Garrett want to replace this story by what they describe (p. 72) as a 'much more interesting' one which sees the late and variable marriage age of the English past as one of a number of strategies which were used quite consciously to limit fertility. These strategies included the spacing of births and, ultimately (though probably not until well into the twentieth century) 'stopping' behaviour. They argue that it may not be helpful to seek to identify specific years as 'turning points' but, if there was such a point, then 1816 (the year in which the gross reproduction rate in England peaked) is probably a more important one than 1876. Finally (and this may be of particular interest to readers of *Local Population Studies*), their paper argues that the pattern of reproductive change in eighteenth and nineteenth century England and Wales was 'more socially variegated, and geographically complex' than has been hitherto admitted (p. 69). With this admission from within the walls of its citadel, can the thesis of English demographic homogeneity finally be laid to rest?

P. Thane, "'An untiring zest for life": images and self-images of old women in England,' *Journal of Family History*, 25, 235–47.

This article looks at old women's self-perceptions of growing old, considering how these self-images conformed to the images which society had of them. Thane shows that there have been changes over time, and that the course of these changes is not simple. In the nineteenth century, quite positive images of old people were often projected, though images of old men tended to be more positive than those of old women. Since World War Two, more positive images of old women (at least relative to those of old men) have emerged.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the article for *Local Population Studies* readers will be the discussion of the debate about the appropriate age at which to pay old age pensions which took place before their introduction in 1908. (Those encouraged further to pursue Thane's insights upon the elderly should see her admirable *Old age in English history: past experiences, present issues* (Oxford, 2000)).

S. Wittering, 'How reliable are the government Poor Law Returns?', *Local Historian*, 30, 160–4.

This is a short note about the inconsistencies between the government's Poor Law Returns, overseers' accounts and 1801 census data for the Cambridgeshire hundred of Thriplow between 1771 and 1821. Wittering cautions against relying on the Poor Law Returns (published in British Parliamentary Papers) alone. They should always be checked against other local sources.

R. Woods and N. Shelton, 'Disease environments in Victorian England and Wales', *Historical Methods*, 33, 73–82.

Following on from their invaluable *An Atlas of Victorian Mortality* (Liverpool, 1997), Woods and Shelton focus here upon the differences in mortality experience of different places by considering how certain causes of death were associated with different environmental conditions. Three environmental factors – crowding, poor air and water supply – unsurprisingly accentuated mortality in many urban districts, and crowding and air were both unaffected by the Victorian public health movement which concentrated almost wholly upon water supply and sewage disposal. Pulmonary tuberculosis creates an additional complexity in any attempt to understand the decline of mortality in the later part of the nineteenth century, for this disease does not correspond with these environmental problems, showing significant concentrations in some rural areas and no clear urban focus. Woods and Shelton end with a note of scepticism about McKeown's thesis that declining tuberculosis mortality can be explained in terms of improved nutrition. As Bob Woods argued in his paper at the last LPS conference, there is still plenty to be learned about nineteenth-century mortality.

D. Woodward, 'Early modern servants in husbandry revisited', *Agricultural History Review*, 48, 141–50.

This paper makes two points. First, it suggests that the reason why farm service based on annual contracts stood the test of time, at least until the end of the eighteenth century, was that servants were available for work permanently and 'at all hours', rather than because there were economic reasons for employing servants instead of day labourers. Second, it presents a critique of A. Kussmaul's argument that the importance of farm servants in the rural work force before the end of the eighteenth century was characterised by long cyclical swings (see her *Servants in husbandry in early modern England* (Cambridge, 1981) and *A general view of*