

ART. XII.—*The population of Broughton-in-Furness in the eighteenth century.* By Professor G. P. JONES, M.A., Litt.D.

Read at Penrith, April 25th, 1953.

THE undeniable and phenomenal growth of population in 18th-century England and Wales, despite the explanations which have so far been offered, still remains something of a mystery and it may well be that a deeper understanding of it is to be sought not only by studies on a national scale but also by inquiries into the particular facts of individual parishes or groups of parishes, and especially rural parishes, where cotton-mills or vast iron works did not exist to draw great numbers of people into them from outside. The continuing activity of societies existing to publish parish registers should make such investigations easier; and the present study is offered as an attempt, largely based on parochial records, to throw a little light on what happened in a Furness chapelry whose rural peace has never been directly broken by the voice of any imperious factory siren.

According to the first census, carried out in 1801, there were in the township of "Broughton-in-Furnace" 1,005 people.¹ To this something should be added on account of Dunnerdale, which, together with Seathwaite, then had a population of 298. On the whole we may not be far out if we put the population of Broughton, at the opening of the 19th century, at about 1,100 or 1,150. Taking this as a base, we may, by means of the parish registers,² estimate the population a hundred years earlier.

¹ Figure supplied by the Registrar General. See, for Lancashire population generally, *V.C.H. Lancs.* ii, pp. 330 folg.

² J. Clark and B. Dickinson, *The Registers of the Broughton-in-Furness Chapel in the Parish of Kirkby Ireleth, 1634-1812.* (Preston, 1950).

The baptisms therein recorded between 1700 and 1799 exceeded the burials by 613, and, deducting this figure from that of the population in 1801, we may conclude that Broughton contained some 500 or 550 people in 1700. Several objections might be urged against this conclusion. In the first place, not all the children christened in Broughton may have continued to live there; in the second, some of the people buried there may have lived elsewhere; in the third, some of the 1,005 inhabitants in 1801, or of the smaller number of inhabitants in 1700 or 1750, perhaps were neither baptized in Broughton church nor buried in Broughton churchyard. Nevertheless, the estimate may not be entirely useless. Assuming that the baptisms and burials give at least an indication of the trend of population, we may examine that trend to see how far it agrees with the tendency in the country generally and how far it can be explained.

In the first place it may be observed that the estimate given above of the population in 1700 is not in violent conflict with such data, difficult though those may be, as we have for the latter part of the previous century. In a bound volume of the records of the Broughton manorial court from 1658 to 1680³ there occurs a list of the tenants who were bound to attend in 1679. It contains 113 names. A later list,⁴ for 1683, contains 147 names but it is possible that at least 16 of these should be deducted,⁵ making a total of 131. Neither list gives the holding of every tenant and, since the number of surnames was relatively small, we cannot be sure that the same tenants do not occur more than once, possibly as holders of land in different parts of the manor. If this was not the case, and if the 1679 list be regarded as

³ Now in the possession of the Lancashire County Council. For facilities to read this and other Broughton records I am much in the debt of the county archivist, Mr R. Sharpe France.

⁴ Lancashire C. C. Records, C.C.E. 1/3.

⁵ Two were outside the parish. Fourteen names, written in the margin, were perhaps intended as substitutes for, or corrections of, the names opposite or above which they are entered.

incomplete, we may perhaps take it that about 1680 there were some 120 or 130 holders of land in the manor; and if, further, we assume all or most of these to have been heads of families with an average of four persons in each, we may guess (for that is all we can do) that between them they constituted a population of about 480 or 500. This estimate agrees fairly well with that arrived at by another means. Rickman⁶ suggests that for Cumberland parishes the average yearly number of burials during the five years 1796-1800, if multiplied by 38, will give the approximate population in 1801. The same multiplier, applied to the average number of burials per annum between 1700 and 1709, would give 505 as the population of Broughton in 1710.

If the figure suggested for 1700 is anywhere near the truth, the population of Broughton grew more rapidly than that of England and Wales as a whole. There is, indeed, no certain knowledge to be had about the total population of the country before 1801; but it is now believed that the estimates of Finlaison and Rickman, old as these are, may be taken as reliable guides. According to the latter the population of England and Wales grew as follows⁷:—

Year	Population
1700	5,134,516
1750	6,139,684
1800	9,187,176

Thus, in a period when the population of England and Wales as a whole increased by 78 per cent., that of Broughton grew by between 100 and 109 per cent. This disparity, which is somewhere between 22 and 31 per cent., may be thought large enough to cause doubt about the estimate for Broughton, for at first sight it seems

⁶ *Census of 1831, Preface*, p. xxxii. Applied to the decade 1790-1799, Rickman's multiplier of baptisms would give 1182 as the population of Broughton in 1800. His multiplier for burials (54) would give a population 448 in 1710 and 983 in 1800.

⁷ G. Talbot Griffith, *Population Problems of the Age of Malthus* (Cambridge, 1926), p. 13.

unlikely that the population of a parish situated in a remote part of the country, away from centres of industry and off the great arteries of trade, should increase more quickly, by a quarter or a third, than that of the country in general.

It can be shown, however, that the growth of Broughton was by no means unique. That is clear from what happened in the mother-parish of Kirkby Ireleth and the neighbouring parish of Torver,⁸ though the latter is, admittedly, only a very small sample, for its population in 1801 was only 182. Its registers make it possible to compute the excess of baptisms over burials from 1700 to 1792, the number being 85. Adding to that, on account of each of the remaining seven years, the annual average for the preceding period, the growth may be estimated at 91 or 92, and, accordingly, it may be said that the Torver population increased by almost exactly 100 per cent. in the whole period. The Kirkby Ireleth registers being incomplete, the increase during the whole century cannot be computed; but from 1730 to 1799 the excess of baptisms over burials was 634. Deducting this from the 1,041 given as the population in 1801, we may conclude that in 70 years the population of the township increased by approximately 156 per cent., an average of 2.2 per cent. *per annum*. The Torver population, that is to say, was growing about as fast as that of Broughton; that of Kirkby Ireleth was growing twice as fast, or very nearly so.⁹

Assuming, on the ground of the instances quoted, that our conclusion is not in itself incredible, we may set out the increase in a table as follows:—

⁸ *The Registers of the Parish Church of Torver, near Coniston, 1599-1792*, transcribed by Henry Brierley [1912].

⁹ As examples drawn from further afield, though the circumstances were no doubt different from those of Broughton, we may take the old town of Tavistock and the "bleak upland parish of Darwen". In the former the excess of baptisms over burials between 1780 and 1830 was at the rate of one per cent *per annum*; in the latter, during seven years before 1774, it was at the rate of 2.4 per cent. *per annum*. See C. Barham, "Remarks on the Abstract of the Parish Registers of Tavistock" (*Statistical Journal*, 1841, p. 45) and C. Creighton, *History of Epidemics in Britain* (Cambridge, 1894) vol. ii, p. 146

Year	Approximate Population	Year	Approximate Population
1700	500	1760	696
1710	546	1770	761
1720	562	1780	871
1730	576	1790	1,002
1740	600	1800	1,132
1750	637		

The two halves of the century were, according to the table, markedly different. During the first, population rose by 137, or 27.4 per cent and during the second by 495, or 77.7 per cent, a difference which corresponds, though by no means exactly, to that shown in the figures for all England and Wales. Even if the table exaggerates the trend it is evident that after 1750, and especially after 1770, Broughton was rapidly becoming more populous, and that, unless the existing houses were becoming more crowded, they must have been enlarged or repaired, and certainly new houses were added. Sykehouse was *rebudded*, as the inscription over its door says, in 1740. The house opposite, at the end of the lane leading to Greenslack land, was built in 1739 and Low Sykehouse, further down the lane, probably in 1780. A special jury at the Court Baron found in May 1751 that "Several New Houses are of late Built and Added to the Aincient Tenements" in the Marsh Farthing.¹⁰ We may also take it, probably, that the houses in Broughton Square, certainly taller than those in other parts of the village, provided more accommodation than any dwellings which may have existed previously on or near the site.

The native growth, whatever its amount, must have been the result of two factors, the birth-rate and the death-rate. Since the total population is not certainly known neither births nor deaths can be expressed as proportions of it, and with regard to births there is the further trouble that, because the number of women capable of child-bearing is not known, a "real" as distinct from a "crude" birth-rate cannot be stated. Nevertheless, the following

¹⁰ *Farthing* means 'quarter, district'.

table, in which the baptisms are given as a percentage of the estimated population at the beginning of each decade, may serve as an indication of the trend:—

Years	Population	Baptisms	Percentage	Annual Average %
1700-1709	500	133	26.6	2.7
1710-1719	546	131	24.0	2.4
1720-1729	562	188	33.45	3.3
1730-1739	576	168	29.0	2.9
1740-1749	600	145	24.1	2.4
1750-1759	637	186	29.2	2.9
1760-1769	696	249	35.76	3.6
1770-1779	761	309	40.6	4.0
1780-1789	871	318	36.5	3.7
1790-1799	1,002	311	31.1	3.1

It will be observed that the decade 1720-1729 is, for reasons difficult now even to conjecture, exceptional. Despite the relatively high figure for this decade, however, there is a marked difference between the earlier and the later half of the century, the mean of the last column being 2.7 for the period 1700-1749 and 3.4 for the period 1750-1799. It is accordingly highly probable that the birth-rate in Broughton rose after 1750 and especially during the three decades between 1760 and 1789.

Meanwhile, there are indications that the death-rate was falling, though in this respect the difference between the two halves of the century is not so pronounced, the mean of the last column in the following table being 2.34 for the first and 2.22 for the second half of the century:—

Years	Population	Burials	Percentage	Annual Average %
1700-1709	500	83	16.6	1.7
1710-1719	546	114	20.87	2.1
1720-1729	562	174	30.96	3.1
1730-1739	576	156	27.0	2.7
1740-1749	600	128	21.3	2.1
1750-1759	637	113	17.7	1.8
1760-1769	696	184	26.3	2.6
1770-1779	761	209	27.4	2.7
1780-1789	871	189	21.7	2.2
1790-1799	1,002	182	18.2	1.8

In this, as in the previous table, the decade 1720-1729 is exceptional, largely because of the high mortality in its last year, during which no fewer than 34 people were buried, amounting to about six *per cent.* of the total population. That high proportion, as well as the distribution of the deaths between the months of the year, suggests a visitation which might then have seemed very alarming. Of the 34 deaths, 12 occurred in May and 7 in September. Statistical examination¹¹ of a table showing the number of burials in each month of every fifth year throughout the century makes it clear that the figures for 1729 cannot be regarded as coming about by chance, and much the most probable cause was an epidemic of some kind, or two outbreaks of the same or of different epidemics, in that year. The nature of the disease or diseases can now only be conjectured. Unfortunately the ages of people buried are not recorded in this part of the register; but there are indications that children did not form any abnormal proportion of those buried in 1729, and the epidemic was probably, therefore, not infantile diarrhoea.

Whatever the cause or causes may have been, there is clear evidence to show that Broughton was by no means the only parish in which this year 1729 proved unusually fatal. In Millom, some seven miles away from Broughton, there were about twice as many burials in that year as in an ordinary year and that is true also of the Furness parish of Colton. In the more urban parish of Ulverston, eight and a half miles away from Broughton, the mortality was markedly above the average, and the registers of St Andrew's, Penrith, suggest that the high mortality may have been widespread in these northern counties. It was above the average for the decade, in some instances markedly, in Bootle, Lamplugh and Whicham (Cumberland), Barton (Westmorland) and

¹¹ For which I have to thank my colleagues, Dr J. Thoday and Mr G. H. Jowett.

Bentham, Bolton by Bolland, Gargrave, Ingleton and Thornton in Lonsdale (West Riding). The number of burials in four parishes may be tabulated, for various years, as follows:—

Place	Burials in					
	1700	1710	1720	1729	1730	1731
Millom	—	—	23	42	20	21
Ulverston	50	40	34	69	40	67
Colton	23	14	18	38	18	9
St Andrew's, Penrith	51	34	—	87	55	45

It will be observed that in 1729 Broughton was remarkable not only for high mortality but also because of the distribution of burials between the months. In that respect there is some, but no very striking, similarity between Broughton, Ulverston, Colton and Penrith, as the following table,¹² indicating the average monthly mortality and the months with mortality above that figure, shows:—

Place	Monthly Average	Months with burials above average
Millom	3.5	January (14), February (17), March (5), April (4).
Ulverston	5.75	January (10), February (12), March (8), April (7), June (9), September (8).
Colton	3.2	March (6), April (5), May (5), August (4), December (6).
St Andrew's	7.25	January (8), March (10), April (9), May (11), June (12), November (9), December (8).

Until a good deal more work has been done on parish registers it would be imprudent to hazard an opinion on the direction in which epidemics may have travelled in 1729 or on their range. With regard to Broughton it may be stated that in very few subsequent years were

¹² Based on computations from the following: J. F. Haswell, *The Registers of Millom, Cumberland, 1591-1812* (Kendal, 1925); C. W. Bardsley and L. R. Ayre, *The Registers of Ulverston Parish Church* (Ulverston, 1886); A. A. Williams and J. P. Burns, *The Registers of Colton Parish Church* (Kendal and London, 1891); J. F. Haswell, *The Registers of St Andrew's Parish Church, Penrith* (vol. iii, 1940; vol. iv, 1941).

the deaths anywhere near as numerous as in 1729¹³ and the mortality of those few years constituted a smaller percentage of the population. Next to nothing is known about the state of public health in Furness and the neighbouring region at this period. Smallpox was severe in Ulverston in 1772.¹⁴ Backbarrow is said to have suffered badly during 1782, 1783 and 1784; in one of those years 180 cases of typhoid occurred there and in the same year "typhus raged with uncommon severity in Ulverston". In Broughton, however, the mortality in those years was relatively low, and it was not much higher in 1785, when contagious fever raged in Whitehaven.¹⁵

Though it is not possible to measure with any precision what movement there may have been into Broughton and out of it during the 18th century, there are indications that the increase of population is not simply explained by a rising birth-rate or falling death-rate among the descendants of what may be regarded as original Broughton stocks. That new-comers were entering the parish is suggested by an order of the manor court in 1728:—

Wee order that if any person within this Mannor shall henceforth without the Consent of the Lord of the Mannor or of the Overseers of the Poor, Demise or let to ffarm any House or Land to any person not being an Inhabitant legally settled within the said Mannor nor haveing a Certificate of the Place of his or her last legal Settlement, such person so demiseing . . . shall be and is hereby amercyed the Summe of One Pound Nineteen Shillings for every such Default.

John Pritt of Scraithwaite was in fact presented in 1729 "for settling a family at Sandgapp without producing a Certificate" and was to pay the fine unless he could produce a certificate within forty days.

¹³ There were 29 deaths in 1734, 27 in 1763, 28 in 1765, 27 in 1778 and 33 in 1779.

¹⁴ C. W. Bardsley and L. R. Ayre, *op. cit.* p. xi.

¹⁵ Creighton, *op. cit.* vol. ii, p. 153.

Of the surnames occurring in the registers at least 35 indicate that the ancestors of those who bore them came at some time or other from places outside the parish, some relatively near (e.g. Bowness, Satterthwaite and possibly Kirkby and Barrow), others further off (e.g. Kendal, Bentham and Lancaster) and still others at a considerable distance (e.g. Elland, Blackburn and Bristow). Moreover, especially during the latter part of the century, at least eleven surnames indicate that their bearers were of Manx (e.g. Quailey), Welsh (e.g. Jones), or Scottish or Irish (e.g. Dalziel, Macellan, Macowen, Macnash) descent. Some idea of the inflow may be obtained by comparing the names occurring in the 17th-century part of the register with those occurring between 1700 and 1800. If for this purpose the century be divided into its four quarters, the result may be tabulated as follows:—

1.	<i>Surnames recorded before 1700</i>	.	.	.	86 ¹⁶
	Of these there do not occur thereafter			10	
	Surnames recurring in all quarters of the eighteenth century	.	.	42	
	Surnames otherwise recurring	.	.	34	
2.	<i>New Surnames, 1700-1725</i>	.	.	.	37
	Not recurring thereafter	.	.	8	
	Recurring in all remaining quarters	.	.	8	
	Otherwise recurring	.	.	21	
3.	<i>New Surnames, 1726-1750</i>	.	.	.	40
	Not recurring thereafter	.	.	15	
	Recurring in remaining quarters	.	.	12	
	Recurring otherwise	.	.	13	
4.	<i>New Surnames, 1751-1775</i>	.	.	.	70
	Not recurring thereafter	.	.	41	
	Recurring	.	.	29	
5.	<i>New Surnames, 1776-1800</i>	.	.	.	62
	(Recurring 1800-1812	.	.	19)	

It would be wrong to take the table as being anything but the most general kind of indication, since it does not necessarily follow that the recurrence of the same surname

¹⁶ Of these 86 names no fewer than 47 occur as early as 1577 in a rental of The Lordship (Lancs. County Council, C.C.E. 1/20).

means a continuance of the same family. Ashburners, for instance, abound in the district and it might well be that an Ashburner recorded in 1730 was an immigrant, not descended from any Ashburner living in Broughton in the 17th century. Moreover the disappearance of a surname need not mean the disappearance of the stock, since an Ashburner whose children were all girls might be the grandfather of many Addisons or Atkinsons. On the whole the table may be taken as showing the persistence throughout the century of a relatively large number of indigenous¹⁷ families, to which a slightly larger number of new stocks may have been added. What brought these new stocks in can, so far, only be conjectured. The opening of the iron-smelting establishment at Duddon Bridge in 1736 no doubt had some effect; some came to be gardeners or servants of another kind at Broughton Tower; some, doubtless, came as shepherds, hinds or labourers, to the farms in the parish.

Since Broughton, so far as is known, had few or no amenities and attractions to induce people of independent means to settle in it, there must have existed within its boundaries or in its neighbourhood opportunities of profit or employment sufficient to maintain its increasing population. We cannot at this distance in time hope for any very precise notion of their number or value; but some indication, at least, may be obtained from such entries in the parish registers as make any mention of trades or status. During the 19th century the making of baskets, especially swills, was important among the local crafts, but there is no direct evidence in the registers to prove that the trade was an old one in Broughton. The first mention of a basket-maker occurs in 1801; but it is, of course, possible that baskets had been produced, and perhaps for a long time, as a bye-employment

¹⁷ Indigenous in the sense of having been established in Broughton before 1700, though, judging by the surnames (e.g. Muncaster, Pennington, Sawrey), some of these had originated elsewhere.

of people whose main business was of another kind. It may have been so, for instance, with the 3 cloggers, 5 hoopers and 2 coopers mentioned in the register. The wood-working trades provided more employment than might at first have been thought likely; 9 carpenters, 2 joiners, 3 sawyers, a wheel-maker and a wood-cutter occur in the baptismal registers, the earliest carpenter in 1715 and the joiner in 1724. The leather trades also had a certain importance, for the same registers mention 16 cordwainers (including shoemakers) and 9 skinnners (including tanners). Such building as was required, and the carrying of stone dykes up the fell sides, employed the eight wallers (including one mason) mentioned in the registers. The occurrence of 8 weavers,¹⁸ 2 woolspinnners, a fuller and a wool manufacturer probably indicate that up to the end of the 18th century the local sheep, small and light as their fleeces were,¹⁹ provided materials for industry; and we may take it that the two wool-spinnners were by no means the only ones in the parish so engaged, for according to Samuel Lewis²⁰ "previously to the introduction of machinery, the spinning of woollen yarn prevailed to a considerable extent in private houses."

As might be expected in what was, in a small way, a market town, there were barbers, butchers, blacksmiths, chandlers, mercers (i.e. probably, shop-keepers), inn-keepers, a sickle-maker, a soap-boiler, surgeons, tailors, watchmakers and a carrier, and the occurrence of mariners may be connected with the fact that the Duddon was navigable, for light craft and at certain states of the tide, up to Duddon Bridge. The main occupation of the inhabitants, however, is beyond doubt, since for every one tradesman of the kind mentioned above there were yeomen or husbandmen by the score. These, no doubt,

¹⁸ A Statute of 1609-10 (7 James I c. 16) was intended to encourage the production of cloth in Cumberland, Westmorland, Hawkshead, Broughton and Cartmel.

¹⁹ See John Holt, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Lancaster* (London, 1795), pp. 167, 235.

²⁰ *Topographical Dictionary of England* (1840), vol. I, p. 358.

grew some corn crops but it is probable that in the main they were rearers of cattle and sheep. The pasture-land and the sheep runs on the fells, together with the coppices and woods, were the basis of Broughton's economic activity; the latter provided materials for charcoal-burners, cloggers and swillers as well as carpenters, and the former for skimmers, tanners, weavers and spinsters. These resources sufficed to maintain a growing population until, during the 19th century, the development of factory production of textiles, the disappearance of charcoal iron and the growth of industries elsewhere, tended to draw people away from Broughton and to limit the market for what it had hitherto produced by hand.