



population  
matters

for a  
sustainable  
future



**Population Matters Magazine**

Issue 19 August 2011

“Porritt on population”



**“In my work with wildlife, the impact of ever growing numbers of people, both in the UK and around the world, is all too clear. These affect nature through intensive agriculture, chemical pollution, disturbance, loss of habitat, pressure on water, over-hunting and over-fishing, and of course climate change.**

With the world population now approaching seven billion, and wild species becoming extinct at hundreds of times the normal rate, we really have to recognise the connection and think hard about our sheer numbers, as well as our consumption and technology, if we want a sustainable future for all of us, people and wildlife alike.

For me, it's not just wildlife that's running short. The record food prices we have seen this year are a wake up call people should not ignore; and ever more people make it ever harder to deal with climate change. We have to recognise that our lovely little planet has limits.”

Population Matters Patron Chris Packham, naturalist, nature photographer, television presenter and author

**“I've been a passionate supporter of population growth reduction for decades, and this issue is close to my heart.**

The world population will pass the seven billion mark this year. It's a frightening landmark. From biodiversity loss to food and energy security to climate change, the damaging impact of our growing numbers on our fragile little planet is clearer than ever.

The solutions – good reproductive health for everyone, women's empowerment, relieving poverty and encouraging smaller families – are widely accepted; but they lack the political support needed to ensure sufficient funding. We need to recognise that slowing population growth is one of the most cost-effective and reliable ways of easing pressure on our environment and securing a sustainable future for us all.”

Population Matters Patron Lionel Shriver, journalist and author

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## About Population Matters

Population Matters campaigns for environmentally sustainable populations in the UK and the world. We advocate gender equality, poverty alleviation, access to reproductive health services, balanced migration and smaller families.

We are a charity whose activities comprise education, research and policy promotion. We are funded entirely by our members and by donations and grants. We receive no funding from official or commercial bodies.

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## Support our campaign

Individuals can become Supporter Members of Population Matters from £20 per annum (£5 per annum for those who are under 25, unwaged or pensioners). Members can participate in our activities and receive the bi-monthly Newsletter and the bi-annual Magazine and Journal. Donations and legacies are welcome.

Supporter Members with a track record of activity can apply to become Guarantor Members, who can vote at the AGM and stand for election as trustees. Contact the administrator for details.

## Magazine

Members are welcome to contribute articles, reviews and letters for consideration. Contributions should be brief, informative and related to population concern; they may be edited for length and the editor's decision is final. Deadlines are end June and end December.

Views expressed are not necessarily those of Population Matters and no guarantee can be given as to the accuracy of the contents. Material may normally be reproduced providing written permission is obtained and its source attributed.

The magazine is printed using vegetable based inks on paper sourced from recycling and responsibly managed forests (FSC Mixed Credit). If you would prefer to receive the magazine by email, which reduces our costs and helps the environment, contact the administrator. Additional copies are available on request: a donation is appreciated.

This issue was edited by chief executive Simon Ross and distributed by administrator Julie Lewis.

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# From the Chief Executive

Simon Ross



**Our primary focus during the first six months of 2011 has been our website relaunch and our rebranding. This has been enormously time-consuming for a relatively small team, but we are confident it will bring dividends and is an essential precondition for our future development.**

Visits to the website have doubled since the relaunch and it is generating a lot of additional interest. It is continuing to evolve, so do visit it on a regular basis to see new material.

We have developed a range of promotional items with the revised branding for members to order and use and these are listed at the end of the magazine. One use of the material has been at festivals and conferences with environmental or population agendas where we have been actively recruiting and spreading the message. We have recruited our first Marketing and Communications Officer, Matt Williams, with a background in youth marketing and this will further build our capacity to communicate our message. We have also increased our participation in charity networks and alliances. At the same time, we have maintained our other advocacy and communication activities, including regularly issuing press releases and engaging with policymakers and opinion formers.

Looking forward to the next six months, we shall be building towards the Day of 7 billion on October 31st and using our additional resources and those freed up by the conclusion of the relaunch and rebranding to carry out more systematic and larger scale programmes of advocacy, communications and fundraising.

The external context within which we are working has been the growing profile of population in this year of seven billion. In addition to last year's disappointing RCEP study, the Royal Society is part way through their major study of the implications of a growing world population while the recent Population Footprints Symposium was a major event in terms of the speakers and issued raised. Even UNFPA is talking about population, launching a campaign around 7 billion actions. Here in the UK, we are seeing the fastest population growth for fifty years as net migration combines with growing longevity and a rising birth rate – one of Europe's highest.

The reason for the growing interest in population is not simply the seven billion milestone or that population growth is not slowing markedly in many countries, including the UK, despite the predictions of many. The underlying cause is the growing awareness of the environmental and sustainability consequences of continued growth in both numbers and per capita consumption. Increasingly, these consequences – biodiversity loss, climate change and resource price inflation - are not simply predicted but already happening. Most recently, the humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa, a region with one of the fastest growing populations in the world, reminds us of mankind's vulnerability to nature and resource scarcities.

# Annual General Meeting



**The Population Matters Annual General Meeting and Conference will be held on Saturday 15th October at the Park Crescent Conference Centre, near Great Portland Street underground station in London.**

The Annual General Meeting for the official business of the charity will commence at 11am (registration from 10.30am). This comprises the report of the chair, the financial report, voting on any resolutions and the election of trustees. The Conference will commence at 1.15pm and conclude by 5pm. This will include an external speaker, our plans, other internal speakers and the opportunity for discussion. All members may attend both parts of the day, although only guarantor members may vote in the morning session. Details of how to vote by proxy and how to stand as a trustee will be sent to guarantor members in due course. All members for whom we have an email address will be sent a booking form nearer the time. Others may book their place and that of a guest or guests by returning the form inserted in this magazine.

## Introducing our new trustee

### Nina Clarke

I was born in Britain and graduated in French and Italian from Trinity College, Dublin. My longest professional experience was the 23 years I spent with a training organisation in London. I taught English to foreign business people and trained both foreign and British business people and medical consultants to make presentations, negotiate, work in teams and work with different cultures. I was one of the directors for two years before I left to go freelance in 2000 which I still do on an occasional basis.



I first became aware of the excessive number of people in the world at around the age of 14. It has got a lot worse since then, as I am now 67 and a grandmother of three – my modest contribution. I joined OPT (now Population Matters) about four years ago. I was fairly inactive for my first three years, but in the last year I have run a speaker training session with a member, run a one

day speaker training course for a group of six from the Guildford group, manned a stand for a day at Olympia and started a West London group.

# Introducing our new manager



## **Matt Williams has been appointed as our first Marketing and Communications Manager.**

Born and bred in south London, Matt graduated from Leeds University and spent time travelling before advising the Greater London Development Board on youth communications.

Following a stint as a brand manager, Matt joined Levi's Europe to work on music-led marketing projects. Matt was then appointed as Head of Entertainment and Marketing Development at the National Union of Students. Tasked with 'repositioning' NUS, his roles comprised streamlining commercial and communications activities, including PR, advertising, campaign design and management, training incoming staff & officers, conference creation & production, managing agencies, media planning and its online presence.

Matt was then recruited by start-up marketing agency MC Ltd. Over a twelve year period, Matt established an office in Australia and ended up as Chief Marketing Director while the company grew to fifty staff. The agency's clients included Amazon, BBC, Orange, PlayStation and Pernod Ricard. Matt's experience included advising charities Action Aid, Scouts, Shelter Box and the Charlie Whaller Memorial Trust.

Matt is a member of Kent University Council, a Trustee of Kent University Student Union and a consultative member of the East Kent Hospitals Foundation Trust. In the past he has been a trustee of Kick A (a youth development charity). He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing and holds a Diploma in Marketing Communications.

Matt commented 'When the company was sold last year I took the opportunity to reassess my life. I moved out of London and decided to use my skills and experience in an area in which I held a life long interest. There is only so much satisfaction you can get from persuading people to spend a couple of hundred pounds on a games console! Education and population issues have always been passions and when I saw this post advertised I was determined to get the role! Now that I have, I'm really excited about working with colleagues, the trustees and volunteers. It will take me a couple of weeks to get up to speed but I'm confident I can use my skills to help grow the organisation's membership and influence.'

# Porritt on Population



**Jonathon Porritt, patron of Population Matters and founding member of Forum for the Future, addressed a packed public meeting organized by Population Matters at Cheltenham in June.**

Jonathon argued that population still seems to fall off the bottom of the list of things we might do, in the debate about world sustainability. Most recently, an authoritative report on food and water shortage in the Middle East,<sup>1</sup> which even broached the likelihood of having to abandon a capital city,<sup>2</sup> made no mention of population growth.

Everywhere, significant environmental issues have population at their core. Three years' study culminating in a workshop at Oxford<sup>3</sup> concluded that we are now entering a phase of extinction of marine species unprecedented in human history.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> "Blue Peace, Rethinking Middle East Water" 2011, Strategic Foresight Group, funded by Switzerland and Sweden, following consultations in Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the Palestinian territories and Israel
- <sup>2</sup> The possibility of abandoning Sana'a, Yemen's capital, was foreseen
- <sup>3</sup> International Programme on the State of the Ocean workshop at Oxford University; June 2011
- <sup>4</sup> Overpopulation and the Oceans; Centre for Biological Diversity; 2011; subsequently published in Scientific American
- <sup>5</sup> "Growing a Better Future"; Oxfam 2011

A recently published article<sup>4</sup> made the connection between the damage being done to the environment and the growth of human population, not only due to greater fishing, but also from increasing plastic waste such as the North Pacific gyre of marine litter and the use of fertilisers whose run-off causes dead zones in major oceanic areas such as the 20,000 sq km in the Gulf of Mexico. The global fish crisis has become so severe that scientists are breaking the population taboo by calling for "stabilization of the world's human population".

With demand for food expected to rise by 70% by 2050, already-high food prices are projected to rise further by a significant degree.<sup>5</sup> And yet, many don't connect the issues of land, food, water, climate change – and population.

Population Matters and Forum for the Future have consistently demonstrated that the issue of population affects both the poor world and the rich world, including the UK. Forum for the Future recently said<sup>6</sup> that the projected population rise from c61m to c70m by 2030 in the UK, already one of the most densely populated countries in Europe, should not simply be accepted without a coherent debate. There was little reaction, because we find it difficult to have the debate in the UK without lurching into controversial issues of religion, immigration and social policy.

Rather than a rapidly rising population Porritt sees the need for a gently declining UK population. Jonathon's proposals includes reducing the 40% of pregnancies in the UK which are unwanted, the highest in Europe, by improved quality of family planning and sex education, to reduce this to the European average. In some countries, the rate is as low as 15%. Secondly, the impact of the UK benefits system on the number of children should be reviewed to see whether incentives could instead promote smaller, rather than larger, families. Thirdly, we must look at how immigration can move towards Population Matters' aim of balanced migration. Many UK NGOs refuse to discuss population for fear that involving the immigration issue is too controversial for their members.

Jonathon supports Population Matters' family planning policy of "two or fewer", as the majority of women in the UK already do. Whilst the choice to have as many children as one wants has come to be seen as a right, it is not an absolute right exercisable without taking account of the impact on others in society, and later generations. The time might come when it will be seen as irresponsible to have more than two children.

<sup>6</sup> "Growing Pains" 2011 Forum for the Future

<sup>7</sup> "Reproduction and the carbon legacies of individuals" Paul Murtaugh and Michael Schlabach; Oregon State University 2009

<sup>8</sup> Population Matters news release 'Contraception is Greenest Technology,' September 2009

<sup>9</sup> The United Nations International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Egypt September 1994. Its resulting Program of Action is the steering document for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Looking at the carbon impact of population growth, a recent report<sup>7</sup> found that, by foregoing one additional child, a US citizen would save 9,441 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> – six times as much CO<sub>2</sub> as they would emit in their own lifetimes, or 2,500 return flights from NYC to London. All the other environmentally-friendly things like a more fuel-efficient car, reduced driving, more efficient domestic heating, household waste recycling etc, would save less than 500 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. Jonathon expected this comparison to have his fellow environmentalists “spitting tin tacks”.

This supports Population Matters’ own study<sup>8</sup> of cost-effectiveness of different ways to abate 1 tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> which found that it would cost just \$7 to promote the necessary family planning in the developing world, contrasting with, for example, \$24 to create enough wind-power to save that CO<sub>2</sub>, \$92 for plug-in hybrid vehicles, and \$131 for promoting electric vehicles. Promoting compassionate, intelligent, non-coercive family planning in those countries which are desperate to get help with their own family planning programmes would be a better way of working towards a low-carbon world than investments in current innovations – especially now, at a time of financial stringency.

Why do NGOs find it difficult to discuss this? First, there are those who say it is not a problem – indeed they perceive an increasing need for more, younger, people to generate wealth for an ageing population. The weakness of that argument is patent. Then there is the fear of association with those who advocate minimising population growth in the developing world, for the benefit of those in the developed world. By contrast, Jonathon urges the Cairo Conference<sup>9</sup> rights-based approach to family planning, which emphasises giving those estimated 215 million women without access to family planning the right to manage their own fertility. Lastly, much of the green lobby subordinates the perils of a rising population to the need to moderate consumption in the developed world. Porritt says that, of course it is important to be concerned about over-consumption, but that should not prevent efforts also to curtail population growth.

Over the past 40 years, said Jonathon, we have learned a lot about human impact on the world, enabling us to address the consumption issues. But at the same time, we must begin to address population issues – we must not turn our back on the opportunity to obtain health, education, economic and environmental benefits from a coherent, non-coercive, compassionate approach to family planning.

## A Heroic Voice from the Past Population Matters Chair Roger Martin

I visited Stockholm in February, and had a long talk with Carl Wahren, a pioneer of our movement who, as Director of the IPPF, played a key role in the early UN Population Conferences – a period he described as ‘the Awakening’.



As a measure of what he had to overcome in those days, he recalled that when he had persuaded the Swedish delegate to raise the importance of ‘family planning’ in the UN General Assembly for the first time, the Chairman of the Assembly retorted that if he used those words again, he would be expelled from the Chamber!

Wahren was on the commission investigating the abuses entailing forced vasectomies in Sanjay Gandhi’s notionally voluntary, incentive-based Indian population programme in the 1970s. He believed that, while some excesses undoubtedly took place in rural areas (so that the teams could meet their targets), they were relatively few and had been greatly exaggerated since. He was confident there had been no coercive tubal ligations on women; but he told of one middle-aged doctor, who cast a tough new light on ‘coercion’. She had told the commission (I paraphrase): “Of course I understand why any coercion seems terrible to you Europeans; but let me tell you how it looks to lots of

my female patients. The family earns a few rupees a week; but on Saturday night, their husbands take a large chunk of the income to go out, get drunk, and then come home and rape their wives. After a vasectomy, forced or not, the women still suffer the rape; but at least they don’t suffer yet another coercive pregnancy. So they don’t suffer the nine months of exhaustion, the dangerous childbirth with its potential for a painful death from septicaemia or the horrors of fistula; and they don’t suffer from seeing their hungry children become yearly more hungry because the pittance they have to live on has to be divided into ever smaller shares as the family grows”.

Carl was dismayed at the way in which so much of the progress of the ‘70s and ‘80s in taking population growth seriously had been reversed since the 1994 Cairo conference. Instead of adding human rights issues to a global programme of population stabilisation, so it could progress more humanely, lobbyists had substituted ‘rights’ for ‘population’ almost completely, formalizing the ‘mad taboo’ on discussing population which we still struggle to break. The effect had been to marginalize the issue as exclusively one of ‘sexual and reproductive health and rights’; so the priority had faded and the funds dwindled to their current derisory levels. Population growth has since continued unabated for 17 wasted years, with all the suffering it has entailed – mainly, and ironically, for the increasing number of poor women whose right to take control of their own fertility and free themselves from the burden of coercive pregnancy remains unrealised.

# What about wildlife?

Jon Quirk



**Population reduction is a highly emotive issue. It touches on the core of what it is to be human; the possessing of the right to procreate.**

The debate is largely framed and discussed in the developed world and yet the real crunch is happening in the developing world. Further, we are allowing the debate to be framed by the one issue of contraception that, whilst part of the issue, does not get to the heart of the issue, and thus distracts minds from the really serious underlying problem.

We as humanity, and as custodians for all animal and plant life, have a very real and moral imperative to act, for unless we do, we are all in for a very dismal future. It is not rich versus poor, the developed versus the undeveloped; we all need to adapt.

Consider these two facts alone. Global population has increased since around 1970 by 3 billion, almost all in the developing World – a 90% increase. Over the same period there has been a 70% decrease in most animal species in the Masai Mara.

The guilt of the affluent world blinds them to the reality that the problem is in the developing World; yet how can that be? Developing countries consume so little per capita and have had it rough for too long. Surely there is some mistake? And, of course, it is not their fault or problem per se; it is just that the last wild, natural areas of the World are within their domain. We have already denuded much of the developed world and therefore the need is all the more pressing to preserve that which remains – that which happens to be in the developing world, where rapid human population is pushing the equation the other way and in fact crowding out what remains of our collective natural world. “They” of course cannot do it alone, which is why those that can best afford it – the West - must do all in their power to preserve our wild spaces, whilst at the same time exerting maximum moral and other suasions to bring the rate of population increase in the developing World under control.

Population numbers are usually reduced to a set of detached economic considerations, conveniently sparing our consciences the human cost and possible consequences of ignoring them. Scientists respond: ‘We do not know but human ingenuity has always found a way and will continue to do so into the future.’

**Scientific confidence ultimately belies and totally neglects the inter-connectedness of our World and the fragility of ecosystems developed over thousands of years.**

To take just one example, birds are the World’s pollinators; migratory birds span the globe, enriching our lives and facilitating plant species to thrive and ultimately sustain and develop life. The avian migratory highways, like our motorways, have service stations, though in nature these are called wetlands; as these dry up and are overtaken by human settlements and needs migration will begin to cease. Whole bird species, whole plant species will begin to vanish, and as each species disappears, others will be taken in their wake. Each component in nature, as it comes to life, lives, dies or is consumed, is part of the whole, inter-connected rhythm of life.

What if the global statistics are as with the Masai Mara? They are likely to be not so very different. If so, then 70% of wild animal, bird and plant diversity has been lost, sacrificed to the global human population glut increase of 90%, all in the space of around forty years. Is this sustainable? Should we care? I certainly don’t want to be part of any world that is so human-centric that in order for us to selfishly survive, all other species must be sacrificed. I don’t want to have to explain to my grand children that we used to have elephant, lion, cheetah, giraffe, eagle, whale, panda, caribou, penguin, flying fish - the list is endless ... but we didn’t care enough, and now they are all gone.

# The slums of Manila

Rachel Mawle



**Last October Channel 4's Unreported World 'Philippines: The City with too Many People' featured footage of overcrowding and appalling living conditions within the slums of Manila.**

After watching the program I became interested in visiting the country to volunteer for reproductive health work. When researching possible options I came across Meaningful Volunteer (MV), a charity working primarily in Uganda and the Philippines on several different projects, including the provision of a natural method of contraception known as the Standard Day Method.

The Standard Day Method (SDM) is a fertility awareness based (FAB) method of family planning, developed by the Institute of Reproductive Health at Georgetown University, USA. This is a more scientific approach to the calendar, or rhythm method and established that women with regular menstrual cycles of between 26 and 32 days are fertile between day 8 and day 19 of their cycle. When unprotected sex is avoided on those days, the chances of pregnancy are reduced to 5%, comparable to other user

dependent methods of contraception such as the male and female condoms.

Although the Philippines is strongly influenced by the Catholic Church, contraception is provided by the state, and many politicians believe that the country would benefit from decreasing its rate of population growth. Currently the government is trying to pass the Reproductive Health (RH) bill, entitled "An Act Providing for a Comprehensive Policy on Responsible Parenthood, Reproductive Health and Population Development and for Other Purposes". The bill would increase the funding available to reproductive health and contraception.

On Tablas Island, where I was working, artificial contraception is available, but the medical staff only dispenses enough contraceptive pills for one month. This is due to a lack of finances, and users cannot be sure that there will be more available in the following month. Nor is there much choice as to which drug to take, resulting in many women suffering unpleasant side effects that could normally be avoided. A reliable FAB method of contraception can be attractive under such circumstances and MV undertook to introduce the SDM and CycleBeads (colour coded string of beads, facilitating the use of the SDM by helping women to track their menstrual cycle), to Tablas on behalf of the Department of Health under the title 'Project Lifecycle'.

The primary level of health care within a Filipino village, or barangay, is provided by a barangay health worker (BHW). These women were taught about the SDM and Cyclebeads so that they could disseminate the information to other women within their area. I spent four weeks working with the project and my role was to conduct interviews of the BHWs and users of the Cyclebeads to assess how effective the education and use of the beads has been.

I was able to interview 18 health workers, but could only identify and interview 12 women who use, or have previously used the Cyclebeads. Although the data sets are small I felt sufficiently confident to draw some conclusions from my work on Tablas. The vast majority of the people interviewed wanted access to reliable methods of contraception and thought that, despite their side effects, the preferred methods were the more convenient, artificial methods. Few people had started, or continued with the Cyclebeads as they had been told that strict abstinence was required during the 12-day fertile window, which was often unpopular with husbands. Although condom use would be appropriate during this time, they remain unpopular in the Philippines, more so than any other form of artificial contraception. Also the health workers' understanding of the menstrual cycle

and the SDM was often incomplete, and their teaching in some instances incorrect. A higher level of education and understanding is required for the successful use of the SDM than many other forms of contraception. The BHWs were not teaching the SDM regularly and therefore forgot a lot of the information. This seems to illustrate a lack of interest in the Cyclebeads and SDM. The most interested health worker was particularly active within the church. As the Catholic Church supports the use of SDM, targeting couples within church groups, who would be more likely to shun the artificial forms of contraception, is likely to encourage greater uptake of the method.

When working in the rural areas of Tablas Island the influence of, and interference by, the Church in the work of the health professionals seemed minimal, and so relaxed was the attitude about artificial contraception that I was given the opportunity to teach school children aged 15-17 years, in mixed-sex classes, about reproductive health and condom use. It was only when I returned to Manila that I saw how great the depth of feeling remains amongst a large sector of the population. Throughout the city there were posters opposing the Reproductive Health Bill and a rally of 40,000 people, organised by the Catholic Church, was held to campaign against it. The Bill, although it does not propose to legalise abortion, is opposed on the usual grounds of 'undermining the value of human life' and 'encouraging promiscuity'.

I believe that the SDM has a role to play in family planning in the Philippines, providing a more reliable alternative form of natural family planning to those who do not wish to use artificial contraceptives. However it was clear from the interviews the practicalities of using FAB methods are unattractive to many, therefore reducing the efficacy of their use and preventing the widespread uptake of the Cyclebeads and SDM. The introduction of the SDM alone will not, unsurprisingly, solve the overpopulation problems of the Philippines.

Whilst the rate of population increase has fallen, the Philippines lag behind other Asian countries in reducing the birth rate. A greater commitment by central government to a coherent policy of promoting reduced family size, including the more reliable provision of artificial contraception, is required to significantly reduce the total fertility rate from the current three babies per woman. However it is difficult to see how a meaningful, rapid change to the growth rate can take place against a background of such vociferous opposition by the Church and other influential sectors of society. Indeed it is hard to be optimistic when a man heavily tipped to become a future president, the highly successful boxer and national icon, Manny Pacquiao, sides with the Church and opposes the Bill. Unfortunately, nothing I experienced during my stay suggested that the slums of Manila will become any less crowded, anytime soon.

## The issue is clear

Matt Humphrey



**Humans don't actually need central heating and a power supply to survive. Anthropogenic global climate change is complicated. Energy on earth is plentiful, in a million different forms.**

If fossil fuels run out, you can create more from other sources, if you're willing to pay for it. People are tired of being told to do something about their carbon footprint when it is not intuitive to know what it is. So – non-essential, plentiful, complicated, and antagonistic – do we think that using energy and carbon as arguments to persuade the world to halt population growth is a good idea? Or are we backing the wrong horse?

Our blue planet is blessed with 1.4 billion cubic kilometres of water. Happily for fish, but unluckily for us, 98% of that water is salty, meaning 28 million cubic kilometres is drinkable. Happily for polar bears and skiers, but again unluckily for us, a further 1% of the world's water is locked up in ice and snow. We thus have 12,000 cubic kilometres available to us for growing food, and materials, industrial uses and of course brushing our teeth. That's it. OK, desalination could help out a few rich cities that live on the coast but that's not going to scratch the surface.

There are a couple of other big problems with water. Firstly, we're not great custodians, and the water we do have is getting dirtier. Secondly, water is unfairly distributed and even more unfairly consumed. But the worst problem is that in many places we are using more than we receive. The wells are getting deeper and the rivers smaller. And so we have the perfect synopsis of consumption x population = usage, compared to a finite resource.

So does it pass the test that energy failed? We can't survive without it. Our impact on available water is simple enough, pollution and over-use are not too hard to grasp. It truly is a finite resource, and to have an impact as an individual is relatively easy. Next time, instead of saying we should reduce per capita consumption and halt population growth to save the environment and our way of living, try saying that we should do it to save the world's most vulnerable from drought and future water conflict.

## It's Water Scarcity, Stupid

Access to clean water is a basic human right, but not all of it



Population Matters Trustee Nick Reeves.

South Africa is basking in the self-reflecting glory of a successful football World Cup. The soi-disant rainbow nation is full of confidence and is now preparing for a devastating water crisis. It has confronted an issue that other countries are only beginning to understand.

Water scarcity is the narrative that will define the 21st century and population growth is the root cause. Global water requirements are expected to grow by 50% by 2030 and water withdrawals will exceed natural renewal at the expense of the environment and the vulnerable. Without radical change, we will run out of water, heralding a humanitarian and ecological disaster. We must end water waste and water at throwaway prices; and it's time to set a price that more accurately values our most precious resource.

South Africa's constitution includes the right of access to water. A household monthly allocation via its free basic water subsidy programme allows for water for essential sanitation, cooking, and drinking, while charging the full cost of the infrastructure for non-essential use. Other countries can learn from this step-pricing approach. While it is a basic human right to have access to subsidised water for hygiene and hydration, why should filling a swimming pool or washing your car or watering a lawn be priced in exactly the same way? Full cost recovery for these activities will ensure that we are more ethical in our use and help improve our infrastructure.

But improvements in domestic supply will come to nothing unless we re-think agricultural practice. Farming represents 70% of global water usage. Even more than the huge volumes of embedded water in manufactured products, it is here that the greatest difference can be made. A rise in water prices for non-essential use would also improve efficiency. In areas where the price of water for agriculture has increased, agricultural production has been unaffected. It is the responsibility of all involved in water management to help farmers find ways to improve their water efficiency. This should take the form of training, and the promotion of water stewardship.

The OECD and the World Bank are accepting this point of view. But progress is frustratingly slow. Politicians are the great flaneurs of agricultural policy. With the global population set to increase from 7 billion now to around 10 billion by 2050, and with little sign of action to stem growth and consumption, improving agricultural water productivity is fundamental to addressing water shortages and food security. The UN has passed a resolution which acknowledges that access to clean, safe water is a basic human right. All countries, bar two, put their full weight behind it. The UK and the US abstained. Read in to that what you will.

## Hunger vs. Obesity, Loss vs. Waste

Today's greatest contradictions within the global food system.

Charlotte Rye

Today, there are 7 billion people who live on Earth and require the same sustenance to survive and lead a normal, healthy life. But only 6 billion receive sufficient provisions to grow up and live well. To put 1 billion people into context, think of it as the combined population of both Europe (excluding Russia) and the United States of America.

A common assumption is that there is just not enough food to go around. We are witnessing critical changes to our earth's environment, with water shortages, falling soil fertility and climate change all causing unpredictable and damaging effects on crops and livestock. These are serious problems that do and will have a devastating impact on the global food supply. But the contradiction today is that there is enough food to go around. In stark contrast to the hunger so many experience, there are 1.5 billion people who are overweight, of which 500 million – that's 1 in 14 - are clinically obese. So its not that there isn't enough food to supply the 7 billion people in the planet: what is causing the food shortages that affect 1 in 7 people and require many to spend up to 80% of their income on staple foods, is the vast inequalities between the developing and developed world. Prices are set by the interplay of demand and supply. In the past twenty years, such shocks to the market have resulted in the doubling of food prices.

Firstly we'll look at supply, and the weather is a key factor in why the growth rate in yields have halved in the past 20 years. Seasons have become more extreme which has devastated many regions' production. For example, flooding in Australia cut wheat production by an estimated \$1 billion, and affected banana and sugar cane production. Floods also devastated crops in Pakistan, Central Europe, Indonesia and Brazil. In contrast, Russia experienced severe drought causing fires across much of the country, which resulted in wheat shortages and a ban on exports. Drought has also recently affected southern US grain and livestock production, while one of the longest periods without rain suggests a bleak outlook for UK harvests this autumn. Without regulation-led decline in emissions, climate change will bring about further destructive and extreme weather.

Increasing demand for biofuels is another factor that contributes to the reduction of food supply. Although this is a positive move away from reliance on oil, it is estimated that 40% of US corn goes into the production of biofuels, meaning less is available for food.

On the demand side, increasingly affluent communities have amended their diets. There is a move away from staple foods and towards a diet rich in meat and dairy. This puts a strain on the food supply since livestock is more input intensive and much less efficient in productivity terms.

Other factors increasing prices of food include: the rising price of oil which means higher production costs; speculation in the global food commodity market which often creates short term panic; and the lack of a healthy reserve stock which puts pressure on farmers' ability to carry forward and moderate price fluctuations. Underlying all of this is the effect of the growing population.

Greater regulation and transparency of the global food market is a necessity. Without it, speculators will continue to trade food as a profitable commodity leaving the poor struggling with even higher food prices. Regulation is also required to ensure the minimum reserves required to prevent price peaks. We must limit the land used for biofuels, by reducing the demand for them. Population numbers need to fall to a sustainable level so that future generations are not worse off than today. Furthermore, a revolution in agriculture is required: smaller farms need investment and technological developments are required to protect crops from climate change and to increase yields. But we can't just correct the results of climate change – we need to prevent climate change itself.

It's not going to happen overnight, it requires the cooperation of governments and other organisations and a change in attitudes towards power. The clock is ticking; in the meantime we are putting future generations and our earth's vital natural resources at risk.

## Britain Before Rationing

Hazel Prowse

Before the Second World War, Britain 'had been able to maintain the standard of life of her people only with the assistance of a large income from export trade, from shipping services, from the overseas operations of bankers and merchants, and from the investments made abroad by industrialists out of their profits in the nineteenth century. Not since the beginning of the nineteenth century, when her total population was only 12 million people, had she been self-sufficient. Nearly three-quarters of all the food she ate had come from abroad, 55% of her meat, 75% of her wheat, 85% of her butter, all her tea, cocoa and coffee, three-quarters of her sugar. Every year before the war more than 20 million tons of imported food had been brought across the seas and unloaded at her docks.

Moreover, with the single exception of coal, the raw materials upon which her major industries depended were largely or wholly imported; all the cotton, all the rubber, five-sixths of the wool, practically all the petroleum, two-thirds of the iron ore and most of the timber. Altogether nearly 25% of her entire national income or, in other words, a quarter of the combined value of all the goods and services produced by her people, went in paying for imports of one kind or another. By 1938 Britain was spending abroad £40 million a year more than her overseas income.'

I found this in 'Fifty Years March, the rise of the Labour Party' by Francis Williams (1950). The book briefly mentioned rationing but not the problems of over 40 million people trying to survive WW2 on their own resources. It was certainly an early and tacit recognition that we had already reached or even passed our sustainable population limits.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Channel, the population in 1920's Germany had been increasing by nearly 900,000 a year. Several options for coping with this were given in 'Mein Kampf' – population restriction, improved agricultural production, the acquisition of more land and extensive overseas trade; the author of course recommended Lebensraum and later in the same book actually outlined some of his invasion plans...

## Population and energy

Population matters in many ways, energy demand is one ...

Norman Pasley

**I support wind turbines as an important contribution to the national need for renewable energy. Wind energy - together with solar, wave and tidal energy - is a non-carbon way forward.**

As a nation, we still rely on fossil fuels and nuclear energy for the bulk of our energy. We know deep water drilling for oil and gas is risky and can cause environmental damage. Nevertheless, deep water drilling is in progress now, in the Arctic Ocean off Greenland for example. And, following the US example, we have started drilling deep for shale gas. This desperation for fossil fuels is unsustainable. And we are all too aware that nuclear energy can be dangerous (Germany has decided to close its nuclear plants). And burning coal puts global-warming carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

What has this got to do with population? Energy production is driven by the demands of a single species - humans. Each one of us, in some way, is responsible for sustaining or increasing energy demand. Add up the needs of seven billion of us worldwide today and you can see what is driving future energy demand.

In 1960 when we were three billion, we required a fraction of today's energy. Fifty years on, and with over twice as many of us on planet Earth, is it not time for us to wake up and deal with both issues: individual energy demand and the new energy demand created by increasing population? The first issue requires us to reduce our per capita energy consumption; the second to stabilise our numbers. Wind farms can only do so much, and increasing population will only make it harder to progressively phase out non-renewable and other potentially dangerous sources of energy.

## Why Japan Needs Nuclear Power

By Carter Dillard, U.S. Research Fellow, Population Matters

Thanks to Japan's utter dependency on nuclear power the recent earthquake and tsunami are only the starting point of a slow-burning disaster. Why was Japan forced into relying on such a risky form of energy?



Japan has a population of 127 million people, with massive levels of per capita consumption. 73 percent of Japan is unsuitable for agricultural, industrial, or residential use. Considering its lack of fossil fuels and limited hydro-electric power, the problems associated with dependency on foreign fossil fuels, and the unavailability of alternatives, what other choice did Japan have to supply its population? It chose, or was forced to choose, an aggressive nuclear energy program, building 54 reactors to generate 30 percent of its electricity needs - with plans to increase the share to 50 percent by 2030. One can't expect 127 million people to simply go without power, perhaps even when the cost comes in the form of injured workers, a polluted sea, poisoned food, and impending birth defects.

Through a lack of demographic planning and foresight, Japan has become the demographic equivalent of an elephant living on a patch of grass more suitable for a cow. Japan

has six times as many people as its resource base can sustain. Thanks to Japan's growing itself into a corner of utter dependency on risky nuclear energy, its disaster will continue long into the future. Growth for the sake of growth, at all costs, without regard for the hard limits of one's environment, cannot be achieved without costs.

Despite all this, Japan is paying its citizens to have more children. In an effort to boost Japan's low birth rate, many Japanese municipalities have recently started to make monthly 13,000 yen (£100) payments to families for each child they have aged 15 and younger. Almost 18 million children are covered by the program. The amount paid was set to double this year, though with the impending fiscal crisis it seems unlikely that will happen. It is not clear why Japan's growth into one of the most crowded nations in the world made it better off. New Zealand looks very different. With its population of 4.5 million, it chose, or perhaps more accurately was able to choose, to avoid nuclear energy entirely.

## Whose population growth has the most environmental impact?

Dot Bennett

Some who agree that the size of the human population is a crucial part of the global environmental problems, and accept that the world is either already overpopulated or soon will be, nonetheless feel uneasy about taking action on this issue. There are various reasons for this but one widely held reservation is that this amounts to "rich white men telling poor black women to have fewer babies", that the main problem of excessive population growth is in poor nations such as those of Africa, and that we have no right to preach to those people about their families.

Analysing the figures tells a different tale. From the viewpoint of global environmental impact, using the proxy of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, the country that most urgently needs to address the issue of its population growth is the USA. Saudi Arabia and Australia are also in a position to make a contribution. China and India have already been working on this issue for some decades. But the countries of Africa hardly feature at all in the list of high emission countries. We see only Egypt, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the top 20, ranking between 12th and 16th, and with the impact of the population growth for all three combined totalling less than one seventh that of the USA. So, addressing global birth rates for the sake of the planet is not at all a question of rich white men telling poor black women to have fewer babies. It will continue to be important to provide education and the means for couples in every country to avoid unwanted babies. But what is more urgently needed than we may have realised is for many of those rich men and women to start to realise that they need to consider having fewer babies themselves.

# Can Greece sustain its pension system?

Ilias Anthopoulos

The European debt crisis has placed Greece under a spotlight. Most recently, the Greek parliament has voted in favour of a second package of austerity measures, plunging the capital into wild rioting and public discontent. Against this backdrop, there remains another issue that does not only require Greece's attention, but that of the whole global community. This article explores how population trends in Greece will render the pension system unsustainable and offers certain policy solutions that need to be implemented for the sake of future generations.

The future world population is projected to reach 9.3 billion by 2050. In contrast, the problem facing Greece and the rest of Europe is that of an ageing population arising from a decline in the fertility rate and an increased life expectancy. OECD research shows that between 1960 and 2010 the average life expectancy of its member states increased by 3.9 years for men and 5.4 years for women. The UN estimates that between 2010 and 2050 life expectancy will increase by a further 3.1 years for men and 3.6 years for women. In the case of Greece, the average life expectancy at birth is 79 years and 82.6 years at age 65, similar to that of the OECD average. However, the population of citizens over 65 years is one of the greatest in Europe amounting to 29.1% of the working age population. Thus, Greece is going to face, if not already facing, severe pension expenditure pressures.

When public pension systems were first established, people typically expected only a few years of retirement. By 2010, life expectancy increased, lengthening the pension periods and imposing great pressure on the system of public pensions. In Greece, the results of an ageing population have been greatly multiplied by pension rules. Greece's normal pension age is at 65 years. However, benefits are paid from any age after 37 years of contribution, which gives a potential early retirement at 57. In 2010, the average period in retirement for men in the OECD countries was 18.5 years compared to 24 years in Greece. The recent reform has pushed early retirement to 60, but it will still be possible to claim the pension at any age with 40 years of contribution.

Inefficiency and corruption are another cause for the large spending on pensions in Greece. A good example is the thousands who have been receiving pensions despite being long dead. In addition, successive governments have used populist practices to secure votes, which have translated into very generous pensions.

Public pensions are often the largest proportion of government expenditure, accounting for 17% of spending in OECD countries. In Greece, due to demographic trends and fiscal mismanagement, pensions account for 28% of public expenditure. Moreover, as a result of demographic change alone, while keeping the pension system and retirement behavior constant, the average pension spending of OECD countries is expected to increase from 9.2% of GDP in 2007 to 18% of GDP in 2060. This means that Greece, which currently spends 13% of its GDP on pensions, is projected to spend a staggering 30% by 2060.

The obvious solution is to increase the pension age and encourage longer working lives. However, the high unemployment figures in Greece, raises concerns that encouraging older people to work longer will deprive youngsters of jobs. It is encouraging that Greece is adopting a policy that will relate the pension age to life expectancy, hence increasing the working life of a citizen which will be implemented in 2020. While the recent reforms are a good step forward, action has to be taken faster in order to avoid pension provision placing unsustainable pressure on the future working population.

# Population Growth in the United Kingdom

Potential effects and summary population data.

Richard Swann

**Projected population growth in the UK will only make a minimal contribution to world population expansion, but its consequences are likely to have a major impact on our lives. While the potential global problem is also a serious concern for the UK, this summary focuses on UK population growth, its potential extent and likely effects.**

Potential effects of continuing population expansion - It seems likely that the effects of rising population will include: increasing competition for land for housing, agriculture, transport, recreation and wildlife conservation and a less sustainable UK. The Food and Drink Federation estimate that the UK is already only 60% self sufficient for agricultural produce.<sup>1</sup> There is likely to be increased competition for resources and less achievable climate change targets. Carbon emissions will increase and additional adaptation measures may be necessary.

Projected population growth - UK population estimates are 1961- c.53 million,<sup>2</sup> 2009 – c.62 million,<sup>3</sup> 2033 – c.72 million (16% increase on 2009);<sup>4</sup> average increase 1961-2009: 184,000 p.a. Projected average increase 2009-2033: 417,000 p.a. The UK, like the USA, is an exception to the general rule that the population of 'developed' countries will remain static or decrease during 2009-2033. A more short-term projection is that the UK population will increase by 4 million in the period from 2008 to 2018 – the equivalent of four cities the size of Birmingham.<sup>5</sup>

Population density - In the 2007 ranking of population density of European Union (EU) countries, the UK was fourth at 257 people per square kilometre, with only Malta, Holland and Belgium more densely populated.<sup>6,7</sup>

However if England alone, population 50 million, is considered, it is projected to have a population density of 402 people per square kilometer by 2011, higher than any EU country except Malta.<sup>8</sup>

**Natural Increase** - During the period 2001-02 to 2008-09 there was a rise in natural increase (excess of births over deaths) from 62,000 to 217,000 per annum, averaging 144,000 p.a.. Although deaths decreased by 5%, the principal cause of the elevated natural increase was a rise in annual births during the period of 19% by 2008-09.<sup>9</sup> The total fertility rate increased over this period reaching 1.96 (2008) and 1.94 (2009), levels last seen in the early 1970s.<sup>10</sup>

**Net migration** - The trend in annual net migration between 2001-02 and 2008-09 was also upward, averaging an additional 190,000 per annum. Net migration is the balance of inflows to and outflows from the UK. Using ONS tables to derive net migration inflows by country of birth suggests that non-EU countries contribute the largest share of total net inflows – around 75% in both 2008 and 2009.<sup>11</sup> Inflows from non-EU countries are not subject to EU regulation, allowing more scope for adjustment.

**Recent population growth** - The rate of population expansion can only be changed by alterations in the levels of natural increase and net migration. In the 8 years 2001-02 to 2008-09 the population of the UK increased by approximately 2,670,000, of which natural increase accounted for 1,150,000, and net migration for 1,520,000.

**Conclusion** - The intention of this micro summary is to outline the likely effects of population growth, and to provide authoritative data on UK population growth. These population data show that the UK is projected to grow in the 24 years from 2009 at over twice the rate it did in the last 49 years, increasing by 16% between 2009 and 2033. The current population density for England is not exceeded by any EU country except Malta. Population growth is a result of natural increase and net migration, with an upward trend for both over the 8 years 2001-2 to 2008-9.

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# Opinion survey results

Aimee Frances Smith

## What do the results mean for how we should conduct our campaign?

A YouGov Survey commissioned by Population Matters in May 2011, a repeat of one in 2009, analysed opinions on population. Most respondents were aware population growth was related to problems including unemployment, the loss of amenities and green spaces and the lack of affordable housing, and also agreed with the need to reduce population growth in the UK. This survey gives promising feedback for Population Matters, indicating a high level of support for some policies and providing crucial information for how campaigns should be conducted.

In spite of 84% of people agreeing that the global population is too high, only 1% of people were aware of the rate of increase. 74% of the population felt that the UK population was too high when considered alongside the impact on resources, the environment and general quality of life. 65% of people surveyed felt that the UK would be a better place to live in if there were fewer people.

There was a spread of answers on an ideal UK population size, with a high proportion (32%) saying they did not know. This suggests that the goal of a particular population size would be unlikely to benefit campaigns. Instead, matters that directly impact people should be the focus. 47% of respondents felt their quality of life would improve from having fewer people in their area, although this varied, ranging from 59% of people in London to 38% in Wales and Scotland.

Population-associated problems that obtained a high level of recognition were unemployment, traffic congestion and lack of affordable housing. These are the aspects of living in overpopulated areas to which people can relate directly. A relatively greater proportion of students and 18-24 year olds consider population growth to cause 'damage to the natural environment and biodiversity' (65% and 64% respectively) and 'losses in natural amenities and green space' (67% and 64% respectively) compared with the average (55% and 61% respectively). In contrast, full time students and 18-24 year olds were less likely to feel that unemployment and lack of affordable housing were attributable to population growth.

Suggested policies, including reducing net migration, improving family planning and limiting tax credit and automatic child credit, obtained support from most (ranging from 51%-63%). Other policies may require further clarification. Encouraging more open discussion of population, for example, gained support from 43% of the population.

Of all the policies, achieving balanced migration gained the most support (63%); however this policy also displayed the greatest difference of responses between groups, from only 39% of full time students to 76% in the over 55+ group. An important policy

of Population Matters is to improve contraceptive awareness and practice in the UK; however, only 40% of people agreed with providing free contraception pills from a pharmacy after a private consultation with the pharmacist, and only 46% agreed with provision of the morning after pill after a private consultation with the pharmacist. This level of agreement was relatively standard across all groups.

18-24 year olds and full time students showed a lower level of support than others on several policies, including balanced migration, policies urging couples to have two or fewer children and providing tax credit and child benefit for the first two children only. Campaigns associated with these policies should potentially approach 18-24 year olds and full time students differently.

Policies which involved government guidance gained less support than policies focusing on people taking personal responsibility. Hence campaigns should focus on allowing people to make their own decisions rather than be told what to think. In particular, people should be encouraged to consider impacts on resources and the environment which will result from an ever growing population, as well as more localized aspects such as unemployment and property availability.

The survey found strong support (68%) for the view that couples should consider future impacts on resources, quality of life and the environment when deciding how many children to have. However, despite 45% of full time students agreeing with the need to consider these issues, 51% of the group felt that the responsible maximum number of children to have would be three. Hence the focus should be convincing people who think that three is the right number to reduce that to two.

*Note: The full results of this and the 2009 survey are available on the website.*

## The art of explanations

### Chief Executive Simon Ross

How does one best explain carrying capacity, demographic dividend or optimum population? This BBC article has some tips on explaining abstruse concepts. They include:

- ensure you or your sources are seen as credible
- give your audience only what they need to know and focus on what is important
- break your message down into small, manageable chunks and check each chunk has been understood
- connect ideas to what people already know
- get people to see how the issue in question relates to them
- omit unfamiliar terminology
- avoid analogies, as these tend to obscure more than they illuminate.

[www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-13195537](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-13195537)

## Reviews

### “The Good Earth is Dying” by Isaac Asimov.

Essay from “The Faber Book of Science” edited by John Carey, Faber and Faber Ltd. 1995. First published in Der Spiegel in 1971.

Reviewed by Philip Jackson

As you would expect from a giant not only in science fiction but also in science fact he lays out the case for urgent addressing of the looming population problem. The forecast is chilling in any case but even more so when it is considered it was written 40 years ago, placing us even further down the slippery slope of over-population.

Asimov considers the question of how many people the Earth can support and at what quality of life. He estimates, as far as is possible, maximum numbers, the effects of probable technology, space colonisation, energy usage, land use and food supply and birth and death rates. We are led inevitably to a figure of two billion for the maximum world population. Although Asimov’s predictions on social breakdown and the other expected ills are a little premature, the essence is still true.

Steve Connor reporting from San Francisco in the Independent on 22nd February 1994 brings the study up to date. In a year-long study on optimum human population by David Pimentel, Professor of Ecology at Cornell University, the number the planet can comfortably support with a reasonable standard of living for all needs a reduction from the then 5.6 billion to 2 billion.

### “Democracy or Survival” by Geoffrey Harper.

Published by the author, available from [www.CPIBookDelivery.com](http://www.CPIBookDelivery.com)

Reviewed by Alan Stedall

Geoffrey Harper has sent us a copy of his book and asked us to provide a short review. Harper sets out to convince the reader of three things:

- The planet (“the biosphere”) is in crisis as a result of the scale of the numbers and activities of our species.
- The political and cultural development that we have achieved over the past millennia, which has delivered us individual liberties, rights, freedom and democracy, is incapable of solving the planet-wide crisis we presently face.
- Certain changes in our culture, value-set and political systems are essential if our civilisation is to survive.

While we concur with much of Harper's concerns, we cannot agree with the essential pessimism of his political analysis. Moreover, many of the proposals he makes would be unacceptable in a modern developed society.

Notwithstanding, Geoffrey Harper's book is a stimulating read and one that considers many of the perils and environmental and societal challenges we face.

## Letters

### No more negativity

I should like to congratulate you on the February issue of 'Population Matters'. I think it is infinitely better than any previous issue I have seen. I think both the style and content are much improved - both of which are illustrated by the articles "... it's how you say it" and "Why people just won't listen". I think the key point is that they avoid the undercurrent of hostility that seemed disturbingly prevalent before. There really can be a sense that people who are concerned with population dislike other humans, and the real solution would be a pure and unsullied planet with no people at all.

In contrast, these articles appeared to understand that people who do not have population matters at the top of their personal agenda are not necessarily ill disposed. They are more likely to be enmeshed with their own priorities, beliefs, attitudes, experiences and emotions. We do much better to be aware of these, and try to make population issues relevant and personal than to criticise them, implicitly or explicitly.

Rosalind Dean

### Politically incorrect

Here are a few politically incorrect suggestions for correcting the world population. Globally we should stop giving aid to developing countries, except voluntarily through charities. Apart from a few low-tech, low-cost projects, aid does more harm than good. Tanzania, for example, among the largest recipients of aid per capita, has increased its population from six million at independence to 40 million today. Julius Nyerere famously declared 'We have a right to breed, you have a duty to feed'. No country has ever become industrialised as a result of foreign aid. Development has always been a do-it-yourself challenge.

At home the paradox is that although the ageing and growth of our population is recognised as a socio-economic problem, our medical research and health propaganda programmes conspire to exacerbate this plight. They aim to force us all to live ever longer. Logically there is a case for stopping potentially life-saving research and just maintaining the current medical status quo. The point that should be recognised is that death usually matters only to family and friends, but is of no more than passing interest, if that, to the wider public. As practical measures for promoting population

reduction humanely we should consider discontinuing the campaigns against tobacco, alcohol, and obesity, legalising drugs, expelling drunks from A & E departments and legalising voluntary euthanasia/assisted suicide.

Victor Gordon

**Editor's comment: Some things are seen as politically incorrect for a reason...**

### Slogan

My submission to a recent request for slogans that sum up what we stand for is "An heir and a spare and then declare". If we could get Prince Charles to endorse the campaign it would become instantly international. However, even without this, it adds a dash of humour into what otherwise sounds a bit authoritarian and would certainly be a bumper sticker that most of us would be proud to sport.

David Powell

### Vegan response

I was very disappointed by the dismissive references to the vegan diet in the article "Food - a growing problem" in Jackdaw 17. It mentioned Vitamin B12 deficiency as if it were a likely consequence of becoming vegan in the U.K. today. Veganism began in the U.K. in 1944, and Vitamin B12 was not discovered until 1948 and its full significance not known for years, so Vitamin B12 deficiency did occur in some early pioneers of veganism, but things are very different today. All Vitamin B12 in animals was originally synthesized by bacteria. Humans only need to absorb 2 or 3 micrograms a day - a microgram is one millionth of a gram - and we usually store enough in the liver to last 3 to 5 years. Today it is added to vegan margarine, soya-milk, veggie-burgers, breakfast cereals, vegan yoghurt, etc as well as often being added to the nutritional yeast routinely used in a wide range of foods as a flavour - enhancer. Many ordinary foods today are fortified with various vitamins and minerals - margarine with Vitamins A and D, white and brown flour and bread with calcium, breakfast cereals often with several additions-and, in a hypothetical vegan U.K., adding Vitamin B12 to an even wider range of foods would not be difficult. The article attacked veganism by quoting the catastrophic consequences of the very restricted vegan diet given to four infants of the Black Hebrew sect in Israel more than 30 years ago. Things are very different in the U.K. today both with regards to information about Vitamin B12 and the ready availability of fortified foods and supplements. (Also this case involved stopping breast-feeding very early and giving a totally inadequate breast-milk substitute.) Can I finally quote:-"It is the position of the American Dietetic Association that appropriately planned vegetarian diets, including total vegetarian or vegan diets, are healthful, nutritionally-adequate and may provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases. Well planned vegetarian diets are appropriate for individuals during all stages of

the life-cycle, including pregnancy, lactation, infancy, childhood, and adolescence." Many of my fellow vegans are very sympathetic to OPT and disparaging comments in Jackdaw makes recruiting them very difficult.

Roger Waters, St. Johns, Worcester.

## Things to do and promotional items

Have you signed the *Petition and the Two or Fewer Pledge*? Just go to the website and search for Petition or Pledge.

You can join the debate on our active discussion groups on Facebook, Google, LinkedIn and Yahoo and pick us up on Twitter and Youtube.

The letter-writing group rebuts critics, supports friends and argues our case by writing to the press and opinion formers and posting comments online. Members share opportunities, example letters and tips. To join, contact the administrator.

If you'd like to volunteer in other areas, send the Administrator details of your interests and skills.

We provide the following campaign materials for use in associations and societies, schools and libraries or to pass to friends, neighbours and colleagues:

### **LEAFLETS** - Free

Bunnies (popular with younger groups)  
Capacity (eye-catching)  
How many is too many?  
Population Matters  
David Attenborough flyer NEW!

### **BRIEFING SHEETS** - 10p

01 Climate Change and Population  
02 Desertification and Migration  
03 A Population-Based Climate Strategy  
04 The sustainability of human populations  
05 What population policy should we have?  
06 Why the UK Needs a Population Policy  
07 Is there a "right" to have children?  
08 The green gains from smaller families  
09 Population, Environment, Migration

### **BADGES, POSTERS AND STICKERS**

Lapel Badges – stylishly enamelled with OPT logo and 'Stop at two' 50p.

Button Badges – with new logo 50p

Envelope Stickers – with new logo, 50p per sheet of 24 NEW!

Posters – A4 £1.00; A3 £1.75

Data discs – currently with full range of posters (approx 50) and selected Powerpoint presentations £2.50 incl. P & P.

### **OTHER ITEMS**

Car window stickers (updated) - Free

Pens – with new logo 50p

T-Shirts – with new logo £7.50 incl. P & P white, quality cotton, with blue print logos and website addresses: Front 'For a sustainable future', Back 'A smaller family is a sustainable family', Sizes: S, M, L, XL

Your order should include: a receiving address, a day-time telephone number, quantity per item, itemised costs (p&p is included in stated costs) and a cheque for the total amount made out to Population Matters. Items may be despatched separately.

A Christmas card is being planned. If you would like some, please get in touch to express an interest.

**If you require items by a specific date, please allow at least 5 working days from receipt of your request; guaranteed next-day delivery is expensive and guaranteed next-day Saturday delivery is exorbitant!**

**Send your order to:**  
**Edmund Davey, 68 Croxall Road,**  
**Tamworth, B79 9JE.**

**Enquiries to**  
**[edmund.davey@populationmatters.org](mailto:edmund.davey@populationmatters.org)**  
**or 01827 383 437**



**For a  
sustainable  
future**

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