



for a
sustainable
future



Population Matters Magazine

Issue 23 August 2013

The Injustice of Overpopulation

Malthus Revisited

Reviews of 10 Billion

Contents

More people, some movement	3
Annual General Meeting and Conference	4
The Injustice of Overpopulation	5
Malthus Revisited	6
When has a western politician ever stated publicly that humans should reproduce less?	9
Peak Sand?	10
PopOffsets - Member feedback	11
Spreading the Message	12
Reviews	13
Letters	18
Local groups and promotional items	19

About Population Matters

Population Matters is a membership charity working for a global population size providing a good standard of living for all, a healthy environment and environmental sustainability.

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.

Population Matters is the working name of the Optimum Population Trust, Regd. charity no. 1114109 and a company registered by guarantee. Registered in England and Wales Regd. no. 3019081. Regd. office 135-137 Station Road London E4 6AG

Support Population Matters

We are a growing organization and welcome new members. The membership fee rates are available on our website or on enquiry. We are grateful to those who contribute higher fees, donations or legacies.

All members can participate in our activities and receive the monthly Newsletter and the bi-annual Magazine and Journal. Active members can apply to become Guarantor Members. On acceptance, they can then vote at the AGM and nominate trustees for election. Visit the website or contact the administrator for further details.

Magazine

Members are warmly invited to submit material for consideration. These may include articles, letters, poems, reviews, comment on earlier magazine items, on current population issues in the media, or on how Population Matters operates.

Subjects can include all of mankind's impacts on the planet, and the social consequences of population growth – anything that you feel with a passion! In order to include more articles, and develop the diversity of the magazine, articles longer than 700 words may be abbreviated. All material may be edited and the editor's decision is final. Copy deadlines are the end of June and the end of December. Please include a sentence about yourself.

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 if 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 are happy 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. Inserts from other organisations are included for commercial reasons and do not imply endorsement in either direction.

This issue was edited by Simon Ross and distributed by Julie Lewis. We would like to thank the staff at Printhouse Corporation for designing and printing this issue.

Guest editor sought: if you would like to be content editor for the next issue of the magazine, contact enquiries@populationmatters.org.

Contacting us

Population Matters
135-137 Station Road, London, E4 6AG
Tel: 020 8123 9116 www.populationmatters.org

Chair: Roger Martin
roger.martin@populationmatters.org

Chief Executive: Simon Ross
simon.ross@populationmatters.org

Administrator/ Membership: Julie Lewis
julie.lewis@populationmatters.org

Magazine contributions:
enquiries@populationmatters.org

Contacting you

If you are a Population matters member, have we got your email address? If you would like to receive the monthly newsletter and occasional e-alerts, please email the administrator.

More people, some movement

Simon Ross, Chief Executive, Population Matters



Greece, Turkey, Egypt, Brazil. People are not happy. There have been street protests, particularly over unemployment and falling living standards.

In Europe, rising prices, declining real incomes and youth unemployment are bringing it home to many that the world's wealth is not unlimited. Elsewhere, economies are growing strongly, increasing pressure on the environment and on resources of all kinds.

One 'resource' we are not short of is people. The UN has revised its population projection upwards, based on better data from developing countries. From 7 billion today, they now believe that the most probable outcome is a world population of 9.6 billion by 2050 and 10.9 billion by 2100. Population in the 49 least developed countries is projected to double by 2050. UK population growth continues to head the European ranking, with the highest number of births for 40 years.

Some of the policies we promote are being adopted, though not always because governments are trying to limit population growth. While our lobbying is increasingly being heard in policy circles, we would not claim the credit for their adoption. Global efforts to provide family planning in developing countries

have been reinvigorated with the FP2020 programme, led by the UK government, of halving, in the next eight years, the number of women who wish to delay or avoid pregnancy but are not using modern contraception. Some campaign alliances and official agencies participating in developing the UN sponsored Post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals are talking about population dynamics, with input from us, though many are not, and gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights are more frequently referenced than in the past. In the UK, the government is making efforts to limit both subsidies for larger families and net migration, while we are participating in active campaigns on improving sex and relationship education and protecting family planning services.

However, the vital importance of population and sustainability has to be much more clearly acknowledged. Otherwise, such initiatives are all too easily undermined and obstructed. Developmental and environmental groups, particularly, seem determined to ignore the 'elephant in the room'. For example, the Enough IF campaign against malnutrition argues there will be enough food through redistribution (think Robin Hood) without stopping to consider the bigger picture of ever rising demand and of food supplies which are threatened by over-exploitation, input shortages and climate change. The Campaign to Protect Rural England's charter to "save our countryside" from development carefully avoids addressing England's high population density and population growth. Such groups are one focus for our lobbying but we may have to wait some time for a change of heart.

More broadly, though, much coverage of population has been generated both on the BBC and in the UK quality press by two books on the "coming ten billion" (now 11, of course), by demographer Danny Dorling and scientist Stephen Emmott. Both have their critics but the coverage is welcome. BBC Radio Four, in particular, has covered population in a series of programmes in recent months.

As we move towards firming up the Sustainable Development Goals and the next UK general election, we are in a reasonable position to strengthen our insistence that population must be taken into account.

Annual General Meeting and Conference

The Population Matters Annual General Meeting and Conference will be held in central London on Saturday October 12th. Members for whom we have an email address will be sent an online booking form which will help to reduce administration. Others may book using the form enclosed with this magazine. Once you have booked, you will be sent full details of the event.

Agenda

Annual General Meeting

10.30 am	Registration – Tea / Coffee
11.00 am	Welcome and report from the chair
11.15 am	Approval of minutes of previous annual general meeting
11.20 am	Financial report and re-appointment of independent examiners
11.35 am	Resolutions and election of trustees
11.50 am	Jack Parsons Awards ceremony
12.00 pm	Lunch

Note: While anyone can apply to attend the AGM, only guarantor members may vote and will receive a voting card and form on arrival. Supporter members who have been active on our behalf and support our policy goals may apply for guarantor membership using the website form. Applications take one month to be determined.

Conference

1.00 pm	Welcome from the chair
1.05 pm	External speaker
1.50 pm	Questions for the speaker
2.10 pm	Chief executive Simon Ross – Annual review and strategy
2.45 pm	Group co-ordinator David Hepper – Local groups
3.00 pm	Tea / Coffee
3.30 pm	Discussion session - Questions & Answers
5.00pm	Close

Note: Questions for the discussion session should be submitted in writing to the Population Matters conference reception on the day so that more questions may be discussed.

There will be an opportunity to meet other attendees informally after the event in the bar. If you can take notes during the proceedings which we can send to members unable to attend, please email supporters@populationmatters.org We look forward to seeing you in October.

The Injustice of Overpopulation

Chantal Lyons



Earlier this year, a coalition of charities launched the Enough Food For Everyone IF campaign. (1)

Its goal is to eliminate global hunger. It names the four issues which it believes to be the keystones of this goal: Aid, Tax, Land and Transparency.

But I was astonished that there was absolutely no mention of something equally, if not even more, important: overpopulation.

The global population now numbers 7 billion (2) and, even if the rate of increase is slowing as some believe, we are heading for disaster. All around the world the costs of our success are evident: to name but a few, forest cover is shrinking by 13 million hectare per year, (3) numerous fish species have experienced total collapse, (4) and climate change looms ever larger.

Overconsumption is responsible for much environmental degradation. North America and West Europe are responsible for 60% of private consumption spending (5) while overall, global human demand exceeds what the Earth can give - currently we are using one and a half planet's worth of resources per year (6). It might become two planets' worth by 2030 (7) if current population trends continue.

Most population growth is happening in the developing world. The clue is in the terminology - many developing nations are on their way up, both in terms of economics and population, and their citizens understandably aspire to the lifestyle we already enjoy in the developed world. But the environmental problems that the world faces won't be remedied simply by addressing overconsumption. Similar to how our increasing use of electronics easily offsets their improving efficiency, 'greening' the way we use the planet's resources will achieve little when more and more people require them.

I am sure many people tuned in to the last episode of 'Africa'. (8) David Attenborough used the episode to give us some frightening facts: Africa's population is currently around the one billion mark, and is growing at double the global rate, a trend expected to continue. (9) Africa is a vast continent, but as a result of human pressures it is steadily losing natural resources such as forests. 90% of its people are dependent on wood for their main energy source. (10) Even if commercial logging and agriculture were somehow reduced in scope, the needs of the burgeoning population would still have to be accommodated. But damaging our ecosystems always incurs costs. There is growing scientific evidence that rainforests generate rain, even as far as affecting the global climate, (11) while it is accepted that vegetation prevents soil erosion and thus the spread of desert and wasteland. Combined with climate change, Africa may well be facing a future of droughts and, ultimately, human suffering on a scale we have not yet seen.

Endeavouring to curb population growth can only be a positive thing. Many of the actions we could take are intrinsically humanitarian in themselves. Improving access to education and family planning for women encourages them to have fewer children and gives

them more control over their own lives. Preventing death from causes like malaria and starvation fosters a sense of assurance that parents do not need to have large families to ensure that at least some of their children make it to adulthood (this is where the IF campaign could fit in perfectly - if only it would make overpopulation one of its 'issues'). In a similar vein, stable states with functioning welfare systems reduce the incentive for parents to have large families as a means of ensuring that they will be cared for in old age. For some countries, these 'soft' actions might have to be bolstered by legal limits on reproduction. Such limits may result in social dysfunctions, as with sex-selective abortion in China. (12) But they may turn out to be the lesser evil. (Editor: Sex-selective abortion is also prevalent in some countries without population controls.)

Which of the following paths is more feasible: to persuade people in developed countries to give up much of what they take for granted, or to persuade everyone to have fewer children? We must choose at least one of these if we do not want to be pulled down the third path: population crash. Such a fate has been forecast before and seemingly averted; the 'Green Revolution' (13) of the mid 20th century ushered in methods of intensive farming that have kept the world fed since (well, some of the world). But the cost has been the proliferation of fertilisers which leach into the oceans and damages our food sources there, antibiotics which encourage the development of resistant diseases, and the continued destruction

of the forests and vegetation which hold soil together, keep back deserts, and produce much of the rain and waterways which people across the globe depend on.

The Worldwatch Institute writes "the world's poorest (people) will need to increase their level of consumption if they are to lead lives of dignity and opportunity" (14). If we truly want to see a world where social and environmental justice are realised together, we must all change.

References:

1. Enough Food For Everyone IF campaign <http://enoughfoodif.org/>
2. 7 billion www.prb.org/pdf12/2012-population-data-sheet_eng.pdf
3. 13 million hectare www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1757e/i1757e.pdf
4. total collapse irgc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Fisheries_Depletion_full_case_study_web.pdf
5. 60 percent <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/810>
6. 1 and a half http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/gfn/page/world_footprint/
7. 2 planets' worth <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/oct/29/climatechange-endangeredhabitats>
8. Africa <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p010jc6p>
9. expected to continue <http://www.prb.org/Publications/Datasheets/2012/world-population-data-sheet/fact-sheet-world-population.aspx>
10. 90% <http://web.mit.edu/africantech/www/articles/Deforestation.htm>
11. generate http://www.leeds.ac.uk/news/article/3284/loss_of_tropical_forests_reduces_rain
12. sex-selective abortion <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/03/110314132244.htm>
13. Green Revolution <http://geography.about.com/od/globalproblemsandissues/a/greenrevolution.htm>
14. writes <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/810>

Malthus revisited

Dr. William Gisby

When I was a schoolboy back in the 1960's, sitting solidly at the core of my introduction to early nineteenth century history was a comprehensive, memorable and thought provoking exposition of the work of the Reverend Thomas Robert Malthus (1766 – 1834); a man once described by no less an intellectual giant than Charles Darwin as "That great philosopher", and as the author whose work had inspired Darwin's own revolutionary thinking.

Fast forward to more than a century after Darwin's glowing compliment and it was still possible to find Malthus listed amongst the great and the good, with the reverend holding 80th place in Michael Hart's (1978) *The 100: A Ranking Of The Most Influential Persons In History*. Yet today, despite his once being the subject of such accolades, I find myself having

to ask: who now reads Malthus? So, in this article I want to address two questions: Why has interest in Malthus waned? And do his ideas still matter?

Of course, before I can properly take up these two themes, given how few people today seem to have a firm grasp of who Malthus was and what his once



much lauded insights were, I'd first like to furnish a brief synopsis of the key achievements of the great man.

Malthus graduated from Cambridge in 1788, having principally studied mathematics, but nevertheless managing to take prizes in English, Greek and Latin along the way.

Following his graduation Malthus took holy orders, as was quite usual for a man of his station at that time, subsequently becoming the Reverend Malthus as a consequence. In 1805, following several years' service as an Anglican parson, he accepted a Chair at the newly established East India Company College, in Hertfordshire, an appointment which established him as the world's first Professor of Political Economy. In 1818, in recognition of his contribution to the science of demographics, Malthus was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society. He died in 1834, aged 68.

Clearly Malthus was an accomplished man, but what really secured his place in history was his magnum opus: *An Essay On The Principle Of Population*, which first appeared in 1798, and which subsequently reappeared in revised form in a further six editions between 1803 and 1835. It remains in print to this day.

The big idea at the heart of the *Essay* was that humanity was always at risk of outstripping its capacity to feed itself due to the simple consequence of the human population tending to grow on a geometric basis (i.e. 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, 512...) whilst agricultural production tended only to increase arithmetically (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10...). Malthus advanced the view that this unfortunate relationship invariably condemned some portion of humanity to a miserable death from starvation, unless some other disaster, such as plague or war, depleted their numbers first.

Today this may not strike us as an especially novel or radical opinion, but in the closing years of the eighteenth century Malthus' insight was considered both profound and deeply controversial. For most of the following two hundred years Malthus has been both praised and vilified for his view. On the one hand humanitarians have tended to applaud his clarity of vision, especially his call for population control as the only appropriate measure via which a reduction in human misery might reasonably be achieved. On the other hand critics of his analysis, socialists in particular, have denounced him as both an unwarranted pessimist and an apologist for a corrupt status quo.

With the passage of time, interest in Malthus' ideas tended to remain undiminished, with reference to his work as likely to appear in a United Nations debate in the 1970's as it was in a coffee house discussion of the Dickensian era. At least this was the case until quite recently, when for the first time in almost two centuries mention of Malthus became conspicuous by its absence.

Why was this? Three reasons in particular suggest themselves. First amongst them is the impression of success created by proponents of the 'Green Revolution', a major initiative of the post-world war two era, which sought to modernise agriculture in both rich and poor countries, and in the process destroy once and for all the myth of an 'arithmetic' limitation to the scale and pace of agricultural production. Unfortunately, by the late 1970's it was evident that many Green Revolution projects had been less than successful, but such disappointing results notwithstanding, the impression created in the public mind was nevertheless of there being a 'technological fix' to the problem of world hunger and it being only a matter of time until that fix is in place. The current enthusiasm, in some quarters, for genetically modified organisms can easily be viewed as the latest phase of this search for a techno-fix. With the arrival of such a solution constantly presumed to be imminent, the issue of mass starvation, at least as understood in Malthusian terms, has gently slipped from the agenda.

A second reason for the loss of interest in Malthus is the influence of Amartya Sen's 1981 work on the causes of famine. Sen, a Harvard Professor and Nobel Laureate in economics, has convincingly shown that modern famines are really the consequence of political decisions regarding the distribution of already existing food, and not failures to produce sufficient food in the first place. Given this to be the case, Malthus' model, and its assumption that famine results implicitly from the underproduction of food, again no longer seems relevant.

A third reason for Malthus slipping from prominence is his close association with population control. For Malthus the solution to the problem of famine was for people to exercise restraint with regard to the urge to beget offspring: a simplistic, but not entirely ineffective, approach to population management. As recently as the 1970's prominent voices could still be heard calling for the adoption of a sober policy regarding the control of human population growth. Today, however, talk of population control is rapidly conflated in the public mind with support for eugenics, racism and a disregard of human rights. Consequently, to even skirt the issue of population control in most policy spheres is to court public disfavour, rendering all serious discussion of the issue, including reference to Malthus' views on the topic, a taboo pursuit amongst our politicians and public intellectuals.

Given these factors, especially the third, it is little surprise that Malthus is now regarded as someone who has nothing of contemporary relevance to say to us, but is this an accurate perception of his worth? Might his ideas, despite their seeming redundancy, actually still matter?

I'd like to suggest that they do, but in an amended form. This is a view known as Neo-Malthusianism.

This view acknowledges that for the time being it would thankfully appear that famine is unlikely to be the scourge that Malthus predicted, at least so far as most of the world's people are concerned. In this respect it would seem that Malthus was indeed mistaken. However, I still consider Malthus to have been prescient in terms of correctly predicting that at some point humanity would create serious problems for itself, as a consequence of indulging in imprudent levels of population expansion. In this respect, I think Malthus was right to express concern.

So whilst Malthus may have been mistaken about the specific form that the threat to humanity from population expansion is likely to take, I believe he was right to identify population expansion per se as a cause for concern. In other words, it is to suggest that either famine or some other form of catastrophe, rooted in there simply being too many people, will take its toll.

I think that support for this position is fairly self-evident today. Whether we look to climate change driven by our industrial life style, to rising levels of pollution, urban overcrowding, resource depletion, or other forms of environmental despoliation, the logical conclusion to draw is that none of these problems is made less of a threat as a consequence of there being more people.

I believe the same can be said of our specifically socio-economic problems, with wage rates, unemployment levels and housing prices all driven by demographics. More people equates to more pressure, whether on housing or job creation schemes, whilst fewer people equates to less pressure, as the historical record from the mid-fourteenth century episode of the Black Death onwards clearly serves to demonstrate.

In a nutshell: it is difficult to bring to mind a serious contemporary economic or environmental problem to which the solution is population expansion. We only have to consider the emerging crisis of the availability of fresh water supplies to grasp the veracity of this claim. We're already hearing warranted concern being expressed regarding humanity's capacity to source sufficient fresh water to sustain itself. Adding more people into this scenario can only exacerbate the situation. It would be very easy to read Malthus, with demand for drinking water substituted for demand for food, to find his classic argument newly relevant.

Of course, adopting this Neo-Malthusian position does nothing to dilute the optimism of those who continue to duck the issue of population out of a misguided sense of 'political correctness' or who yearn for salvation courtesy of a techno-fix. In this regard those of us who align with Malthus can only point to the continued absence of such a solution and take issue with the view that living in a human ant colony, stripped of comfort and natural wonders (due to over-crowding, resource scarcity, pollution, species extinction and wilderness despoliation), is desirable.

In conclusion; given our practice of honouring those who first draw our attention to a significant concept, I think it only fitting that Malthus be returned to the spotlight, as the thinker who not only gave us some of our first lessons in demographics, but also the uncomfortable insight that ~ for one reason or another ~ we are at serious risk of creating genuine misery for ourselves if we continue to expand our numbers beyond the capacity of our resource base to support us.

Seen in this light I consider Malthus to warrant our continued attention and his dire warning to be our proper concern, because as the twenty-first century continues to unfold it looks as though Malthus' ideas not only still matter, but matter more than ever before.



When has a western politician ever stated publicly that humans should reproduce less?

Derek Guzman

The root of humanity's problems lies in its numbers. While we feed one hungry child, provide benefits to one unemployed worker, treat one ill person, construct more housing for families in need, and accommodate one more immigrant, thousands of replacements are being born.

The formula is not subjective, theoretical or ideological; it's mathematical, and not difficult for even a young student to figure out.

The idea that the ability to support a planet of nine billion inhabitants (as projected by 2050) is within reach, around the corner - doable if we just hunker down, adopt more sustainable practices and buy electric cars and organic/fair trade food, construct more housing, cut spending here and add more benefits there, increase food growth, tackle global warming - is an illusion, an avoidance of the underlying cause of the problems and shortages: the overabundance of the human species. The UK, and the planet, are creaking and coughing under the weight of their populations. Nevertheless, we convince ourselves that the human species has the

power to shape its own prosperous destiny, if only the correct mechanisms are put in place.

The need for a reduction of the planet's human population - or, in politically-correct terms, **sustainable fertility rates** - applies to humankind from one end of the spectrum to the other, from dirt-poor to super-rich, from lily-white to black-as-night. The more money one has, the more one will produce trash, pollute, and hoard for oneself. The less one has, the more one will depend on government services for survival and/or harm others to compensate.

We are misled to believe that the solution lies in the creation of more food, more electric cars, more services, more benefits, more clean water, more lodging, more aid, **more babies to become working adults to pay taxes to support elderly people and our countries' social security systems**. These are stopgap measures, and those who know better simply don't dare to broach the explosive, taboo but all-vital point, because labelling humans' very existence as the primary cause of the planet's problems is socially/politically-incorrect and absent from any mainstream discourse.

Population reduction is the elephant in the room that no politician dares mention. However, this cannot but change in the future. 'The environment' is a relevant example for comparison.

To facilitate this, let's say that Earth Day in 1970 was the modern historical turning point regarding environmental awareness: the introduction to the masses, at the bare minimum level, of the need to 'protect the environment'. 40 + years later, 'the environment' is standard lexicon in any given politician's stump speech, be it genuine, half-hearted, or token, and regardless of whether or not the majority of voters themselves actually pay much heed to the subject. The point is that the word 'environment' is now a mainstream term and all politicians have been forced to jump on this bandwagon in order to cover all electoral bases.

The 'population awareness' turning point will occur when voters themselves realize that resource and service shortages, indebted/bankrupt institutions, and polluted/degraded food and ecosystems

that have a direct impact on their families are the ultimate result of overpopulation. This awakening will eventually cast doubt on whether starting a family, much less being fruitful and multiplying, is the right path to go down. It will also, crucially, move people with children to advocate for fewer other children who will compete with theirs for services and resources. This critical turning point will be that where campaigning politicians will be able to jump on the bandwagon and make population awareness part of their campaign platforms. The question is, which politicians will recognize first this once-in-history opportunity to be on the cutting edge and introduce a **truly** new idea into mainstream political discourse?

Suggested Reading

Philip Appleman (ed.),
An Essay On The Principle Of Population (1976).

Peak sand?

Derek Guzman

Sand is a natural resource which we hardly think about, so focused are we on hydrocarbons, water, wood, minerals, etc. Most of us see it as a free material, a staple of holidays spent on the shore, in unlimited supply.

Yet with an average consumption of 7 tons per year/person - compared to 1.5 tons of oil - sand is the most consumed natural resource on the planet. It is an essential ingredient in countless objects of our daily lives, from fibre optic cable, mobile phone components and computer chips to toothpaste and even powdered food. It surrounds us. According to Michel Welland, geologist and author of Sand, it is the "invisible hero" of our society.



More significantly, sand is a raw material vital to frenzied human development, providing the foundation of streets, houses, buildings, bridges and airports. Every day, the manic pace of construction work devours thousands of tons of it. Real estate booms and expansion of sovereign territory have an irreparable impact on sand reserves. From the construction of lodging and commercial space in Beijing to Dubai's artificial islands and the expansion of Singapore over the sea, astronomical quantities are being poured into the making of concrete and into the seas to create more territory.

As a logical consequence of this exploitation, sand's limited reserves are gravely threatened today. "Sand wars," triggered by human expansion, are raging everywhere in the world: 3/4 of the planet's beaches are in decline and bound to disappear, victims of erosion and, hard as it might be to comprehend, sand smuggling. This resource has become one of the big economic and environmental stakes of this century - a modern day gold rush.

The list of abuse and tragedy is long: illegal trafficking of sand, beach destruction, displacement of populations, even disappearance of entire islands.

In the UK, one need look no further for evidence of the sand wars than the beaches of St. Ives Bay in Cornwall, UK, which are on death row. The famous Avalon Beach in Australia, considered one of the most beautiful beaches in the world, has disappeared almost entirely due to dredging.

A British law from the sixth century named 'Sand Right', still in effect but forgotten by all, states that

“any beach possesses a supreme right over its sand and whoever takes a part of that sand will have to replace it personally.” The law was applied under the Roman emperor Justinian, famous for having stated these words: “Certain resources belong to everyone: these are air, the birds that fly in it, rivers and oceans, the creatures that swim in them, and the shores and sand that lay below them. Protecting these resources is everyone’s responsibility.”

PopOffsets – member feedback

John Charnock-Wilson



PopOffsets, an initiative of Population Matters, recently carried out a survey of PM members. The results are summarised below. As not all members are familiar with PopOffsets, however, we would like first to offer a bit of background.

PopOffsets is based on the following concepts:

1. Growth in global human population needs to be slowed, to avoid running out of space and resources and destroying our environment, while small families make good social, economic and environmental sense.
2. Global warming and climate change are realities, driven to a great extent by man-made CO₂ and other “carbon” emissions
3. Every human being is responsible for carbon emissions. The personal Carbon Footprint of a US resident is about 20 tonnes of CO₂ per annum; of a European, something over 10 tonnes; of a sub-Saharan African, 1-2 tonnes. While per capita emissions in the developed world are stabilising or declining however, per capita emissions in developing countries will only rise with economic growth and the natural desire for progress and betterment. So we’re all in this together.

The basic rationale of PopOffsets is simple and straight-forward. Unborn children have no Carbon Footprint – or to put it crudely: no feet, no footprint!

Projects which empower people in all countries to control their fertility can only help to save us from both overpopulation and climate change. Unlike most renewable energy, bio-fuel and similar projects, there is no environmental downside to family planning: we believe that PopOffsets offers only benefits for people and the planet.

We have helped to finance family planning projects in Africa and the UK, and are now considering a grant to a similar project in the US.

Carbon Offsetting is controversial in some quarters. We encourage everyone, especially in the “developed” world, to reduce the emissions for which they are responsible. Try as we may, however, we will all still have a considerable residual footprint, and this can be offset through this scheme.

Well over 500 PM members and supporters of PopOffsets responded to our survey, and the verdict was overwhelmingly positive. 96% support the concept of funding family planning to limit carbon emissions, while 66% of PM members said they would be prepared to promote PopOffsets to their friends and contacts, and 52% said they would consider offsetting via PopOffsets.

We received many suggestions as to where we should finance family planning projects, including India and the Far East, Eastern Europe and Latin America, as well as Africa. Many responses were complimentary about our website, which we encourage you to visit to see what PopOffsets is up to (see below).

PopOffsets gives those who care about a sustainable future for humanity a vehicle to cut carbon, reduce population growth, and help people decide the size and timing of their families. We invite PM members to offset your Carbon by donating to PopOffsets. Several supporters have set up Standing Orders. You can either donate the sum you wish, or calculate your annual footprint or the footprint of a particular activity and make a donation against that: the website shows you how. For example, if you drive an average family

car for 10,000 miles, its Carbon Footprint is about 4 tonnes. A daily commute of 50 miles by train would have an annual footprint of about 2.5 tonnes. A fortnight's holiday for four in Barbados (flights, hotel, etc) is about 18 tonnes. And if you buy a big 4 x 4 and drive it for 10 years, its total Carbon Footprint will be about 97 tonnes!

If you haven't done so recently, please visit our website www.popoffsets.com. If you would like to discuss any aspect of PopOffsets, please drop us an email to info@popoffsets.com.

Spreading the message

Norman Pasley

How many people have heard of Population Matters? Who is listening to our population message?

We spread our message using our resources – ourselves, our contacts, the website, our letter writing group, our newsletter and magazine, and so on. What else can we do to increase our reach? The examples below may encourage you to lend a hand.

Last year I remember a flurry of letters in the Hampshire Chronicle – mostly generated by members of the Winchester Population Matters local group – about the population pressure on Winchester's primary school places and classrooms, and the controversy about taking cherished green spaces for more housing.

In April this year, Jonathon Porritt, gave a talk entitled, Population Matters: 7 billion and Rising, to an audience of 225 people in Winchester. Jonathon, one of our patrons, has been campaigning for decades about population.

Also in April I gave a talk to 120 members of U3A in Fareham called, 'As we journey to 2050, do we need to look after the planet?' The audience were on-side, the hour went well, and they asked lots of questions.

Only 30 people took my hand-out (it seems you can't inspire everyone!).

Email is, of course, a great way to share population awareness. My address book includes about 40 people interested in population and the environment. I often forward emails to one or more of them, adding a comment of my own. Some recipients forward them to their contacts, and so the message radiates. I try not to spam the uninterested!

There is plenty we can say in our letters, talks, emails and articles. We can link overpopulation to a myriad of local, national and international problems. There is plenty of paper waiting for your words: the UK has 23 national newspapers, hundreds of local newspapers, and more than 8,000 magazine titles!

Do you read an in-house or national magazine? Could you respond to something in that magazine by writing a letter or article with a population angle? I send my pieces to New Civil Engineer magazine, GreenLight (the newsletter of my local Friends of the Earth group) and the Portsmouth News.

In my view, we need to show people everywhere that stabilising and reducing population is a great deal better than leaving a bigger problem to future generations. If we share our population facts and comments, new converts will spread our ripples wider.

Reviews

Population 10 Billion

Danny Dorling, Constable, 2013

Max Kummerow

Those concerned about humanity's future face a dilemma. Too much optimism invites complacency certain to make possible futures worse. But too much pessimism invites despair and passivity also certain to make possible futures worse. Danny Dorling claims to be a "realistic possibilist" rather than a pro-growth cornucopian or despairing pessimist. He says, with some uncertainties, that things are on a positive path. If the world can function with 7 billion people, surely it can function with 10 billion. He believes, however, that fertility will probably fall faster than expected because people realize that smaller families have better lives and that contraception is cheap.

To me, the best thing in this book are his insights that a system driven by pursuit of profits, with media and education dominated by pro-growth interests, will have great difficulty reducing consumption and achieving the steady state economy that is as important for sustainability as population stability. However, saying that equality helps promote fertility transitions, while admitting that inequality is increasing, sounds as if something is not going as planned. Dorling thinks the public will rise up, realize growing inequalities are unjust, and fix them.

He believes increasing immigration reduces fertility because immigrants from poor high fertility countries have fewer children when they move to richer low fertility countries. But in America, Mexican women have more children in the U.S. than they do in Mexico. And declining immigrant fertility rates still leave second generation immigrant rates above replacement levels in many European countries.

Dorling fails to address sustainability issues. Increases in output that might allow the world to support 10 billion people have been heavily subsidized by fossil fuels. The transition to non-carbon emitting energy may not happen in time to prevent collapse.

The latest U.N. 2013 projections raised the medium U.N. projection to 10.9 billion in 2100 from 10.1, the 2011 projection that Dorling considered too high. The future of population is highly uncertain and dependent on future fertility and mortality.

U.N. Population Projections 2013 (billions)				
	Medium	Low	High	Constant fertility
2050	9.5	8.3	10.9	11.1
2100	10.8	6.7	16.6	28.6

If fertility, currently at a global average of 2.5 children per woman, does not fall, the U.N. projects 28.6 billion by 2100. The medium U.N. projections are based on all countries' fertility rates converging to near replacement levels (about 2.1 children per woman) by 2050. Low and high projections respectively subtract and add half a child per woman to fertility rates. Once fertility drops below replacement, "demographic momentum" continues to increase population for 40 years or so. China began its one-child policy in 1979 when its population was 900 million and will reach peak population in around 2040 when its population will reach at 1.4 billion. Current country fertility rates range from less than 1 to over 7 children per woman. In my opinion, it is fantasy to forecast that all will converge to around 2 by 2050. Who has convinced high and low fertility groups to adopt radical changes to their family sizes, cultures, economies and religious beliefs?

Eric Kaufman's book *Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth* points out that fundamentalists in all religions have more children, so the percentages of these high fertility groups are increasing in many countries - Evangelicals and Mormons in America, ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel, fundamentalist Muslims in Egypt, for example. This "cultural selection" (as opposed to Darwinian natural selection) leads to increasing proportions of high fertility groups over time. It is not clear that overall fertility rates will fall as the proportion of descendants of high fertility cultures increases.

Dorling's book skates past the details of climate change and other ecological problems, how fertility transitions will actually happen and how to feed 10 billion with natural gas running out (the source of nitrogen for the fertilizer that helped double grain yields). *Population 10 Billion* may be seized upon as an excuse for complacency and inaction by those who want to continue business as usual.

If 10 billion is manageable and we probably won't grow that much anyway and fertility is falling, why worry? That's a bit harsh for a book that advocates strongly for lower population, less consumption and more equality, but Dorling's attempts to avoid despair leave too much room for denial and inaction. His book leaves out enough uncomfortable facts to make his optimistic conclusions doubtful. On a more positive note, the book may promote useful discussion of these issues and help consolidate the idea that a universal fertility transition must occur and the sooner the better.

10 Billion

Stephen Emmott, Penguin, 2013

Simon Ross

Stephen's Emmott's book is an alarming gallop through the latest scientific findings on humanity's systematic over-exploitation of its environment. The scope is wide, covering biodiversity, resources and climate change. By contrast, the treatment is brief, often just a few graphs or images and a few paragraphs on each issue. Emmott notes the limited response by governments, listing the international agreements which have failed to deliver substantive action. He also reviews the proposed technological and behavioural solutions and is pessimistic about their technical or political practicality. Population concern advocates will welcome his assertions that "Only an idiot would deny that there is a limit to how many people our earth can support...I think we've already gone past it. Well past it." And that "...the worst thing we can continue to do - globally - is have children at the current rate." Here too, though, he is pessimistic, noting the continuing high fertility rates and desired family sizes in the poorest countries, even where contraception has been available for some years.

Emmott offers no solutions in this book and many may think that his pessimistic prognosis is a refreshingly honest description of a situation where the obstacles to effective responses may be insuperable. Our view is different: that most people globally already choose to have smaller families, we know how to accelerate this trend and such measures are relatively affordable and broadly acceptable.

However, that aside, Emmott's book is a welcome antidote to those who would downplay the environmental and sustainable issue we face or would put their faith in partial or unlikely solutions.

Note: Some errors have been acknowledged by Emmott and will be corrected in the second edition.

Whole Earth Discipline

Stewart Brand, Atlantic Books 2013

James Morell

In a readable and well-referenced book, Stewart Brand concentrates on three topics, GM crops, urbanisation and population.

He argues that new agricultural techniques combined with genetic crop improvement increase the production of food and require fewer farmers. This encourages movement from rural meagre subsistence to cities where the family can achieve a better life even, surprisingly, in slum communities. They no longer need children to compensate for mortality of family workers to sustain the family's fortunes.

He quotes George Martine in the 2007 UN report "Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth". Some of the advantages of urban life include empowerment of women in family matters, social life, health services, education and job opportunities. These are all said to favour fertility reduction.

Enough is Enough

Rob Dietz and Dan O'Neill, Berrett-Koeler Publishers Inc./ Routledge, 2013

Max Kummerow

This book presents an outline of a viable future achievable by ending growth in human numbers and stabilizing throughput of natural resources. Settling for "enough is enough" while devoting more time to leisure, cultural enrichment, family and community will make us happier in a steady state economy.

Enough is Enough starts by pointing out that growth can't continue forever on a finite planet. In fact, the limits to growth have already been surpassed. The authors cite research showing that human numbers, economic output and "ecological footprint" already exceed long-run sustainable levels, while key resources and ecosystem processes are being depleted or irreversibly damaged.

The authors understand how deeply growth mania has become embedded in our notions of progress and prosperity and in the institutions that organize economic activity to promote endless growth. Rob Dietz confronted these issues while serving as executive director of CASSE, the Center for the Advancement of a Steady State Economy (steadystate.org), an NGO dedicated to spreading the message that humanity should accept the laws of physics and transition to a sustainable level of resources use.

In order to get to steady state economic output, several other issues require attention. The book's chapters deal with a number of key aspects of getting to a sustainable world.

For a start, achieving a steady state economy requires completing the world fertility transition in order to end growth of human populations. Dietz and O'Neill argue that, rather than accepting that growing populations require more jobs and more production, we should decide that the surest route to universal prosperity is to reduce human numbers to levels the planet can support. The problem is too many people and too many jobs rather than too few jobs. But population stability alone will not solve ecological problems if economic growth continues.

Some argue that poor countries must continue economic growth until their people are as well off as people in rich countries. But the argument that economic growth lifts everyone is belied by the fact that 2 billion people live on less than \$2/day, despite enormous economic growth over the past half century. In both rich and poor countries, greater equality of incomes, power and wealth could make the poor better off without economic growth. But continued growth and inequality will lead to ecological collapses and resource depletion that will fall most heavily on the poor.

Although it presents sophisticated ideas and cites empirical research, the book is written in easy to understand language. Consistent with their practical, down-to-earth writing and common sense thinking, the authors propose a number of specific measures to deal with inequality and other barriers to a steady state economy. One is replacing GDP, which measures dollars, with more meaningful statistics that measure human welfare and the status of the environment. More genuine accounting could lead to policies to correct market failures—for example, recognizing and internalizing external costs of climate change through a carbon tax.

The most interesting proposals to me were ideas about ending the “jobs” or unemployment problem by more equitable sharing of work and other policies governments could easily enact at little or no cost. Laws that extended vacations in America to the levels enjoyed by Europeans (5 weeks/year instead of 2 weeks) would go a long way towards reducing unemployment. Similarly, cutting the work week from the arbitrary 40 hours to a lower number—say 32 hours—would similarly reduce unemployment and provide many other benefits such as reduced stress, more time with families, and more time for personal growth, education and building stronger communities. Surveys show a majority of people would prefer more leisure. As technological progress allows economies to produce more with less labour, we could choose to work less and thereby avoid higher unemployment.

In addition, the authors recommend that governments step in to provide guaranteed employment for everyone rather than tolerate the corrosive effects of high long term unemployment. There are many jobs that would benefit society that market forces do not supply. Government could guarantee everyone jobs creating infrastructure or services that would make society as a whole better off.

Since the book is so broad-brush and all-encompassing in its vision of a practical steady state utopia, it is not surprising that some of the ideas presented lack crucial details. Institutional reforms in the structure of corporations and banking regulations could reduce reliance on debt and the short-run profits focus driving perceptions that growth must continue. The authors are right in saying that profit is not a sufficient motive for a healthy economy. But replacing the profit motive with structures like co-operatives or new measures to report corporate social responsibility or for economic value added by enterprises to be shared with the environment or communities would not be easy to implement.

Even harder may be replacing the information system and what follows from it: the consumer culture that trains people to buy, buy, buy. The author suggests replacing this with a culture focused on fostering long run community welfare. Deeply held cultural beliefs (even if they are only that we will be more lovable if we smell better or drive a bigger car), are hard to change when they've been reinforced by tens of thousands of commercial messages from skillful advertisers and societal influences. The authors have some practical suggestions like revising licensing for use of the airways to include obligations to provide information to the public

In a chapter entitled “Enough Unilateralism”, the authors recognize that many of the changes needed would require global cooperation. Otherwise, innovations such as carbon taxes or even high income and wealth taxes might drive economic activity to other countries and harm the more responsible countries that adopt steady state policies.

The book ends with a call to action. Citizen passivity allows unsustainable growth to continue towards inevitable limits and collapse. We must take action to choose and implement the future we want.

An inspiring aspect of this book is that the vision presented of a sustainable future has the ring of truth and common sense. It won't be easy to get there, but the future envisioned is logically consistent, physically possible and morally desirable.

It is really the mainstream call for growth that defies the laws of physics and the ethics of justice in a thoroughly utopian and unrealistic fashion. Economists are mostly united in calling for growth, but contradict each other on whether this can best be fostered via austerity or deficit spending. Either the austerity or deficit spending routes to growth will, in fact, fail in the end, because continuing to grow beyond the limits of the planet cannot happen. What can realistically succeed in creating universal prosperity is steady state population and economic output.

A Native American myth “the woodpecker feather cloak” tells the story of a greedy person who steals from the community. He can never be satisfied, his thefts from others continually leave him unfulfilled and insecure and his acquisitions disappear into thin air like waking from a dream. Once he accepts that enough is enough and renounces his avaricious ways, then and only then can he enjoy a life of abundance and sufficiency. The idea that endless greed makes us happy contradicts deep cultural wisdom. Enough is Enough points out that if we want abundance, we have to renounce greed.

Prosperity without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet

Tim Jackson, Earthscan/Routledge, 2009

Colin Gallagher

Economics has a well-deserved reputation for being dull and impenetrable. But its core issues are in fact not difficult to grasp, and Tim Jackson lays them bare in a clear and simple way. The author was Economics Commissioner for the Sustainable Development Commission, set up in 2000 by John Prescott to advise the UK Government on sustainable development. It was closed by the Coalition Government in 2011 as a contribution to their quango cull. Why should those concerned with population matters be interested in economic growth or non-growth? Because, as Jackson clearly explains, the environmental damage we are causing to the planet is a combination of three major factors: the number of people on the planet, the level of our affluence, and our technology.

This well-established relationship is known as the ‘Ehrlich equation’ after the man who identified it 40 years ago. The last two factors, affluence, and technology, are what modern economics is all about. To reduce our current high rate of damage to the

planet, and eventually stabilise it in the long term, we must address all three factors. As someone very aptly said ‘It’s no use reducing your footprint if you keep increasing the number of feet’.

The idea of a static economy may be anathema to an economist, but the idea of a continually growing economy is anathema to an ecologist. ‘We live in a finite world but with infinite demands. Human wants, political convenience and intellectual inertia trump planetary limits’. Every day the system in which we live tries to persuade us via TV news, politicians’ speeches, corporate pronouncements and inducements, to consume, that our prosperity is intimately linked to whether or not gross national product is growing and whether stock markets are riding high. These are the two main measuring sticks for the version of capitalism on which most countries base their economies today.

Other ways of measuring prosperity follow on from these. If GNP (Gross National Product, which is assumed to be the total national output of goods and services) is contracting, then unemployment will rise. If stock markets fall, then the value of pensions falls for people in retirement. So what is bad about growth? ‘Questioning growth is deemed to be the act of lunatics, idealists and revolutionaries. But question it we must.’ In the wake of the current economic crisis, an increasing number of people are indeed questioning the primacy of growth at all cost. Some even now argue that not only is prosperity possible without GNP growth, but that indeed prosperity will soon become impossible because of GNP growth.

In a brief appendix to the book, Herman Daly, economics professor at Maryland University, asks of economists a series of questions: ‘When the economy grows it ... gets bigger. So ... a. exactly what is it that is getting bigger? b. how big is it now? c. how big could it possibly get? d. how big should it be? Given that economic growth is a top priority for all nations, one would expect that these questions would get major attention in all economics textbooks. In fact b, c, and d, are not raised at all, and a, is answered unsatisfactorily ... the economic subsystem is now very large relative to the ecosystem that sustains it. How big can the economy possibly be before it overwhelms and destroys the ecosystem in the short run? We have decided apparently to do an experiment to answer that question empirically!’

The response to the financial crisis has been to try to restore the status quo as soon as possible, returning us to the accustomed pattern of steady growth that our capitalist model demands. ‘Stability – Growth – Jobs’ said the banner at the G20 summit. The problem is that in the longer term, stability and growth are incompatible. ‘An economy predicated on the perpetual expansion of debt-driven materialistic

consumption is unsustainable ecologically, problematic socially, and unstable economically’.

Jackson explains that there are three fundamental reasons why the growth model of economics is impossible to sustain.

1. It assumes that material wealth is an adequate measure of prosperity, when it is obvious that a life worth living is much more complicated than that. Slaves to rising GDP, we sacrifice community and wellbeing in the hope that just a little more, and just a little bit more after that, will make everything alright. This is futile. The growth model is now undermining our happiness and causing a ‘social recession’. ‘Our technologies, our economy and our social aspirations are all misaligned with any meaningful definition of prosperity’.
2. Growth is systemically unevenly distributed, and so is doomed to fail at providing a basic standard of living for everyone. Globally, the richest fifth of the world takes home 74% of the income, while the poorest fifth gets just 2%. Since poverty is relative, growth will never fix it. It’s a mathematical impossibility. You could grow the world economy for a million years and still not make poverty history.
3. We obviously can’t continue to grow the economy for a million years. We’ve already gone into ecological overshoot. ‘We simply don’t have the ecological capacity’. ‘By the end of the century, our children and grandchildren will face a hostile climate, depleted resources, the destruction of habitats, the decimation of species, food scarcities, mass migrations and, almost inevitably, war.’

Decoupling is the macroeconomic idea that you can grow without increasing material consumption. But it is largely a myth that only works up to a point. In theory, through time, an advanced economy becomes more efficient in its resource use, meaning for example, less CO₂ is emitted and fewer resources are needed. In reality, this doesn’t include imports, so all of the materials used and emissions created just happen elsewhere, for example in China. An example is the carbon economy. Even where true decoupling does happen, the economy gains carbon efficiency at a rate of 0.7% a year and it would need to be at least 11% a year to avoid climate change. The ‘Green New Deal’ is a promising idea and should be pursued, investing heavily in renewable energy and clean technology and stimulating the economy at the same time. But ultimately it still commits us to a growth strategy and is therefore not a long-term solution. Current incrementalist myths that growth and material consumption can be decoupled don’t stand up to empirical examination.

The tragedy is that our current economic system requires growth. Without it, we have recession and job losses. ‘The clearest message from the financial crisis of 2008 is that our current model of economic success is fundamentally flawed’. A revolution would be an appallingly messy business and a catastrophe. Nevertheless, social transformation is not just possible; it is vital. He writes ‘For the advanced economies of the western world, prosperity without growth is not a utopian dream. It is a financial and ecological necessity.’ By way of solutions, Jackson prescribes two major changes. Firstly, he proposes ‘a new ecologically literate macro-economics’ and, secondly, the need to ‘shift the social logic of consumerism’. Neither of these is an easy task, but nor are they impossible to achieve.

While it is easy to lament the unsustainable nature of growth economics; it is harder to detail how a transition might occur. How do you get from growth, to a steady state, without breaking the economy? Jackson doesn’t give a blueprint for such a transition, but he does show that it is possible. Growth is driven by the dynamic of production and consumption of novelty, and that somehow this needs to end.

Instead, we need to change the system, and at the same time change the culture that goes with it. A new macroeconomics could take shape around an alternative to GDP, ‘something that honours the broader realities of human flourishing’.

The endless but unsustainable pursuit of economic growth is now ‘wired into’ our materialist culture, in which consumerism is a key driver, and personal status is judged by wealth and acquisition. There are few villains; we are all victims of a collective self-delusion. Consumer goods become a part of ‘a social conversation’ with our families, friends and others because we invest them with meaning, and with emotion. Consequently weaning ourselves off retail therapy will not be straightforward.

But the ‘iron cage of consumerism’ can be taken apart, by reducing inequality and building community resilience. In the long term, the government can play a huge part in creating a level playing field, setting limits and resetting our national values.

In another appendix, the author Bill McKibben makes the point that ‘Spells are hard to break, especially if you’ve been under one for a long time – any reader of fairy-tales knows that. And it’s all the harder if they didn’t start out as fairy-tales.’

For a couple of hundred years economic growth really was enchanting. It brought problems, yes, but they were outweighed by steady improvements in many areas ... Some of that growth, in some form, is still needed – much of the under developing world needs more.

But the overdeveloped world clearly needs less, and not just for environmental reasons. One study after another has shown in recent years that the tie between more stuff and more happiness has broken down.'

Jackson proposes borrowing both from the small-scale example of social enterprises which employ (mostly) human resources to address community needs and following the inspiration of 'intentional communities': for example, Wheatley and Frieze, author of 'Walk Out, Walk On' and Amartya Sen, who defines well-being in terms of our capabilities for flourishing. He defines prosperity simply as a state which offers us all the ability to participate meaningfully in the life of society. Prosperity goes beyond basic material satisfactions (still to be achieved in many 'poorer' countries). He emphasises instead the quality of our lives and the health and happiness of our families; the strength of our relationships and our trust in the community; our sense of shared purpose and satisfaction at work. He also shows how well-being in this sense is more easily achieved in more equal societies.

His conclusion is that 'Every society clings to a myth by which it lives. Ours is the myth of economic growth. ... It's totally at odds with our scientific knowledge of the finite resource base and the fragile ecology on which we depend for survival. ... Prosperity consists in our ability to flourish as human beings - within the ecological limits of a finite planet. The challenge for our society is to create the conditions under which this is possible. It is the most urgent task of our times.' He proposes three public policies required to make the transition to a better future. First, establish clear limits to our use of non-renewable resources e.g. through caps on emissions and ecological tax reform. Second, change our economy through an ecological focus on low carbon and labour intensive activities and investment in 'green' technologies, infrastructure and jobs. Third, change our society through tackling systemic inequalities, sharing out employment, reducing working hours, and building more resilient communities, which promote equal citizenship and local self-sufficiency.

I recommend this book to anyone who wishes to understand the roots of our damaging impact on the planet, and of our continuing annihilation of its varied species. Tim Jackson can be seen giving a lecture on his work at TEDTalk, http://www.ted.com/talks/tim_jackson_s_economic_reality_check.html

Letters

Go Green

Bill Dowling

I think most of us would agree that to gain some real progress we need a meaningful government led policy on population. This must be one that is worthy of Population Matter's support, and is also capable of gaining popular support.

Unfortunately, no mainstream political party in the UK has ever published anything even remotely resembling a Population Policy that Population Matters could possibly support - except for the Green Party. Unlike all the other parties, full information on the Green Party's population policy is readily available via their website.

(Editor: Population Matters, as a charity, does not endorse any political party, while welcoming party policies which are in line with our views and policy goals.)

Stop right now

Barrie Skelcher

The world is outstripping its resources and there is a desperate need to restrain its population growth. The UK can try persuasion but has no power to constrain the population growth in other countries. It should not feel bound to accept their overspill. However it can, and should, control the population growth within the UK. Britain does not have the resources to support its present population, let alone more. This is why the country is deeply in debt and that debt is getting larger and larger every year. We used to be blessed with substantial reserves of fossil fuels but these are now all but exhausted. Years back, these, together with the right of free thinking, gave Britain the edge in industrial development and thereby made it able to sustain a population larger than it would otherwise have been able to. Now, without those advantages and the loss of traditional fishing rights to the EU, we must all accept a fall in our standard of living. During WW2 Britain made massive effort to feed and clothe its population. Even with strict rationing and the digging up of every bit of green land to grow food, it barely managed. Then the population, was less than 50m; now it is about 65m, a 30% increase. This growth cannot go on, it has to stop and stop right now.

Where's the beef?

Bryan Islip

I've just received Population Matters' latest glossy (issue 22). As usual, it contains a beautifully presented series of well intentioned, well-reasoned, well-written articles and letters. But it seems to me that all of them address the readership in the manner of a country parson haranguing a congregation of the already converted, if with less fire and brimstone, aka conviction, aka passion. Unfortunately, the difference here is that the message from Population Matters is critical to the future of humankind and of 'our' world. It is not optional as with those messages from the pulpit. Whether we want to know it or not (and the vast majority of us would rather not) the message is just a matter of fact rather than of simple belief. Yes, the problem is very well portrayed but where, oh where, is the proposition? Where the solution or solutions?

(Editor: Our policy goals and campaigns are set out on our website)

Local groups

Population Matters' local groups campaign locally on population issues. They staff stalls at fetes and in shopping areas, leaflet door to door, provide educational material to schools and libraries, give talks to schools, colleges and interest groups, engage with the local press and radio, and lobby their local authorities and political representatives. Areas with existing or nascent groups include Bedford & Luton, Brighton, Cambridge, Colchester & Ipswich, Cumbria, Guildford, Fareham, High Wycombe, Oxford, Scotland, St Albans, Stockport, West London, Winchester and Worcester.

If you would like to be put in touch with one of these groups, or ask about setting up one of your own, let us know at supporters@populationmatters.org

More information is available at <http://populationmatters.org/what-you-can-do/our-groups>

Promotional items

LEAFLETS AND WINDOW STICKERS

Attenborough flyer
Stripy Leaflet
Window stickers
(All free)

BADGES AND PENS

OPT Stop at Two badges - enamelled
Population Matters badges - tin
Population Matters pens
(All one for £0.50 or any three for £1)

CARDS AND STICKERS

David Attenborough pocket cards
David Attenborough bookmarks
(Ten of either for £1, or for £3 order a mixed selection of fifty - please state numbers of each to make up fifty)
Small envelope stickers for normal mail, A4 sheet of 24
Large envelope stickers, coloured, A4 sheet of 10
(Any two sheets for £1)

BRIEFING SHEETS

- 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
- 10 Ethical implications of population growth
- 11 Climate change and population

(10p each – also downloadable free from the website and included in the data disk below)

POSTERS

A4 - £1
A3 - £2
A1 Attenborough - £3
Data discs with approx. fifty posters, a selection of Powerpoint slides and academic studies - £3
Customise a poster for your local needs at no extra cost – ask Edmund Davey.

OTHER ITEMS

T-shirts of quality cotton, white with blue print, front: PM logo and For a sustainable future; back: A smaller family is a sustainable family and website. Sizes S, M, L, XL - £7 each or two for £12

Images of our promotional items are on our website.

SPECIAL OFFER

Santa Claus Christmas Cards: pack of ten with envelopes £2.50 (incl. p&p if orderdered alone).

ORDERING

Due to rising costs, please add £2 for postage and packing.

Your order should include: a receiving address, a daytime telephone number, quantity per item, itemised costs and a cheque for the total amount made out to Population Matters. Items may be despatched in several packages. Please allow ten working days for delivery. If the delivery address is outside the UK, please ask for a quote for postage and packing.

Orders should be sent to:

Edmund Davey
68 Croxall Road
Tamworth
B79 9JE

Enquiries:

Edmund.davey@populationmatters.org
01827 383437



for a
sustainable
future