



Population Matters Magazine

Issue 26 February 2015

The Beaver Lake Cree Nation

**Trees and family planning:
a unique combination?**

**Population growth and the
British planning system**

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About Population Matters

Population Matters is a membership charity working for a global population size that can provide a good standard of living, a healthy environment and environmental sustainability. Our activities comprise education, research and policy promotion. We are funded by our members, donations and grants and receive no funding from official or commercial bodies.

We welcome new members. Members receive our publications and can take part in our activities. Active members can apply to become guarantor members and vote at our Annual General Meeting. Membership fee rates are available on our website; we are grateful to those who contribute higher fees, donations or legacies. Please note that membership fees will increase from April 1 2015.

We have a wide range of promotional items available, including clothing, cards and briefing sheets. Please visit our website to see the full range.

Until 2011, Population Matters was known as the Optimum Population Trust, which remains our registered name. We are a registered charity (no. 1114109) and a company registered in England and Wales (no. 3019081). Registered office: 135-137 Station Road, London E4 6AG.

Magazine

This magazine is printed using vegetable-based inks on 100% recycled paper. If you are willing to receive the magazine by email, which reduces our costs and helps the environment, please contact the administrator using the contact details below. Additional copies are available on request; a donation is appreciated. Population Matters does not necessarily endorse contributions nor guarantee their accuracy. Interested parties are invited to submit, ideally by email, material to be considered for inclusion, including articles, reviews and letters. Subjects may include the causes and consequences of, and cures for, unsustainable human population and consumption levels. Submissions should be in Word or equivalent and be accompanied by a brief description of the writer. Publication titles should be shown in italics and a single space used after full-stops.

Copy deadlines are the end of June and December and a maximum of 700 words per contribution is suggested. Submissions may be edited and the editor's decision is final. Please note that it may not be possible to include all submissions. This issue was edited by Kate Duggan; proofread by Peter Slater, Ivan Cacin-Sain, Dot Bennett, Elisabeth Richmond and Bay Haseler; designed and printed by Printhouse Corporation and distributed by our administrator, Julie Lewis. If you are interested in helping to produce the magazine, please let us know. If you would like to give us any feedback on the magazine, please contact kate.duggan@populationmatters.org

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Contacting you

If you are a member and do not receive our twice-monthly emailed Update and occasional e-alerts, but would like to, please contact the administrator.

Onwards and upwards

Simon Ross, Chief Executive



It was gratifying to see so many members, old and new, at our free-to-attend Annual General Meeting and Conference in October.

This was another record attendance and feedback was positive overall, though there were some suggestions for improvement that we shall look at. Our board was re-elected, and it subsequently re-elected our chair, vice-chair and treasurer. Do put next year's AGM and Conference date in your diary – Saturday October 10 in central London.

It has been a busy six months since the last magazine, although much of the work has not been visible, with our energies being largely spent in preparing for future activity. We are particularly grateful to the two members who, between them, donated almost £100,000 over the summer and autumn. We are not here for the money, but it is money, together with our volunteers, which enables us to do what we do. As a result, we are bringing in campaign co-ordinators, such as Sam Alvis and Elizabeth Wells, who are already making a difference in enabling us to move forward with projects that otherwise would have been postponed.

Educating the public on population and sustainability is our core charitable aim. It was good to hear supportive messages from Lily Cole and Bill Oddie. We are now working with a public relations agency, Champollion, to improve our messaging and communications strategy. We have revised and restocked our promotional items and our seasonal greeting cards were applauded by The Week. We are working on launching an online shop to

make ordering items easier. Members attended the People's Climate Change and Act for Nature marches in London in order to promote population concern, while our local groups were active at fetes and on high streets. Our outreach work with schools and adult groups is continuing, as is our lobbying of other campaign groups and celebrities. We intend to complete the planned video this year. Online, our Facebook page has now passed 30,000 likes. Our PopOffsets carbon offsetting project has made grants to projects in the United States, Africa and Latin America.

Our education is supported by our research. This year, all of our sponsored research papers passed their academic hurdles, some with distinction, and we are re-launching our journal. A summary of our recent research has been sent to the members of the UK House of Commons and House of Lords.

We have been responding to consultations on development policy, sex education and the global sustainable development goals process, and attending meetings with politicians and others. With the UK general election approaching, we have issued a manifesto setting out how the government can support education on population and sustainability. We have also issued the manifesto for elections in other countries where it has particular relevance. International efforts to improve women's rights in developing countries, particularly sexual and reproductive health and rights, are growing, with campaigns against child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation and the unmet need for family planning. In developed countries teenage pregnancies are falling. In the UK, and Europe in general, concern over the impact of rising population, in the form of net migration, has rarely been higher, while the across-the-board subsidy of large families is increasingly being questioned by senior politicians.

With so much going on, our members are more important to us than ever. Our newsletter, Update, which was issued once a quarter a few years ago, has now moved from monthly to twice a month. We are offering free writing and revision of wills to members, with no strings attached, at least for the first half of 2015. We are continuing to advertise for more members through leaflet distribution, online and magazine advertising, and are also appealing for funds for advertising on public transport.

With increased internal and external resources, a more favourable external environment and a stronger communications platform, we expect to make continued progress in 2015.



Population Matters Chair Roger Martin with Jack Parsons Memorial Award recipient Chris Padley, Manager of our Letter Writers Group

Population Matters news

Annual General Meeting and Conference report

Population Matters' 2015 AGM and Conference will be on Saturday October 10, in Central London. Registration details will be sent to members nearer the time.

Our 2014 AGM and Conference had the largest attendance to date. Speakers included Sir Crispin Tickell, former Director of the Policy Foresight Programme at the James Martin Institute, and former UK Permanent Representative on the United Nations Security Council. The following awards were made:

- Population and Sustainability Awareness Award: Rt. Hon. Sir Richard Ottaway, MP, in recognition of his long record of clarity on the issue of population.
- Jack Parsons Memorial Award: Chris Padley, Manager of our Letter Writers Group, for his significant and longstanding contribution towards our work.
- Jack Parsons Lifetime Achievement Award: Edmund Davey, former Chair and Local Group Co-ordinator, for his outstanding service in numerous roles for Population Matters over many years.

Membership fees increase

From April 1 2015 we shall be increasing our membership fees as follows:

- Standard annual rate: from £25 to £26
- Monthly rate: from £2 to £2.50
- Concessionary annual rate: from £12.50 to £13
- Life membership rate: from £375 to £390

Free will-writing service

We are delighted to be able to offer members a free will-writing service from a list of vetted and conveniently located solicitors. For further information, please contact: supporters@populationmatters.org

New patron: Malcolm Potts

We are pleased to welcome leading US academic Malcolm Potts as a patron. Malcolm is a Cambridge-trained obstetrician and reproductive scientist, and has been instrumental in introducing modern family planning to many developing countries. Professor Potts has observed that, 'Rapid population growth is at the centre of many of the world's pressing environmental, economic and security problems. The antidote is family planning, which is not only a universal need, but also a basic human right. It is not about telling people what to do; it is about listening to what women want. Having worked internationally for almost 50 years, I have learned that whenever women are offered a range of family planning methods, backed up by honest information about side effects, family size always falls.'

Public relations

We are planning to strengthen our communications in 2015. To that end, we have appointed our first public relations agency, Champollion (www.champollion.co.uk). Champollion specializes in print and broadcast media, along with digital communications. The agency predominantly works with charities, trusts and foundations, higher education establishments, human rights campaigners and international non-governmental organizations.

Message from the campaign co-ordinators

Sam Alvis and Elizabeth Wells joined Population Matters as campaign co-ordinators in November. Elizabeth's background is in research and event management for development charities. She has an MSc in Conflict Studies and an MA in International Relations and Social Anthropology. Sam is currently studying for an MSc in Climate Change, following the attainment of a BSc in Geography. He has experience within the fields of law and fundraising.

As campaign co-ordinators, our goal is to find new ways to spread awareness about Population Matters. Your support is fundamental to ensuring this. In particular, we are keen to follow the success of Karin Kuhlemann and Jem Randles, who have taken our Facebook page to more than 30,000 'likes', by expanding our presence on other social media channels, including Twitter. If you use Twitter, please do follow Population Matters @PopnMatters; tweet us, retweet us and help us to increase our reach.

There are many population and sustainability related events coming up, most of which are open to the public. Please visit the 'Attend an event' page under 'What you can do' on our website for more details. We are planning to organize new outreach events over the next few months and would appreciate any support that you can give us. Do you have an idea for promoting Population Matters in your town and would like help? If so, please email: sam.alvis@populationmatters.org or elizabeth.wells@populationmatters.org.

Journal of Population Matters

Cheryl Mills, Editor of the journal

We are pleased to announce that our longstanding publication, the Journal of Population Matters, will be re-launched in spring 2015.

This online, open-access journal will provide a hub for the reporting of developments and academic research on a wide range of population sustainability-related topics. The journal will enable readers to gain a current, comprehensive insight into relevant fields, such as science, technology, philosophy, sociology and economics.

The journal aims to facilitate open and evidence-based communication of population sustainability related concerns, with the view to facilitating further research and development within the field. As such, it will promote the recognition and advancement of population sustainability as an intellectual discipline in its own right.

Content will include research articles, book and academic paper reviews, speculative articles and features, ranging from the technical to philosophical.

High-quality contributions are being sought from a wide range of knowledgeable individuals and organizations. We welcome submissions from those whose research, specialisms or experiences are relevant to the journal's remit. Additionally, we would like to hear from anyone who is interested in becoming involved as a reviewer or proof-reader. Please contact: cheryl.mills@populationmatters.org.

Example topics that will be covered in the *Journal of Population Matters* include, but are not limited to: optimum population size; population trends; resource sustainability; energy; green technology; housing; sociology; economics; public finances; politics; conflict; moral/ethical issues; science communication; culture; religion; human rights and equality; public health; family planning; education; migration; climate change; biodiversity loss; and consumption.

Inspiring young minds

Jane Blank is Population Matters' Education Group Co-ordinator.

Here she explains what her role entails and how the group is aiming to influence young people's decisions before they start their families.

It is not yet nine o'clock and I can already hear the hearty baying of 30 teenagers waiting for me a corridor away. As I turn the corner, a 'scout' hisses a warning and the fun begins. As a teacher of 25 years, what is my top tip? Realize that you're only part of a complicated equation and that you cannot compete for a teenager's attention with snow, fire alarms, or the opposite sex.

But enough of my day job... In the Education Group there are three main areas where we want to make a difference. Our aim is to:

- make contact with young people before they have their families, educate them about the consequences of rising numbers of people and enable them to make informed choices;
- enable students, pupils and those who work with them to access high quality resources on population and its effects;
- position the debate about the population crisis right at the centre of the curriculum.

We are a small team of current and retired teachers, and others involved in education. We prefer the interactive workshop, illustrated talk or debate approach to the formal lecture; our focus is on opening young minds to the issues caused by a growing population. To facilitate this, we have developed a suite of effective PowerPoint presentations and other resources for use across the key stages.

As the curriculum changes, we are looking for opportunities to fill any gaps with population studies. In general, we find that both teachers and students are open to our ideas and are well-informed about many environmental issues. When we are in contact with our young audience, they are highly receptive to our message – but it is a huge challenge even to get into schools.

Our main frustration as a group is that, in the increasingly frenetic, assessment-based world of education, the curriculum is now minutely prescribed and pupils' time jealously guarded.

That is why I would like to appeal to you: if you have contact with a local school or college (perhaps as a parent, grandparent or governor), please try to persuade them to invite us in to work with their pupils. Perhaps they need a speaker for assembly or PHSE delivery, or for an environment or charities day? Do get in touch with the Education Group, via enquiries@populationmatters.org, if you have a lead for us and we will follow it up.

We have ambitious plans for 2015, including developing the education area of the Population Matters website, making it interactive and uploading workshop plans and resources to make them available to all. We are also looking at ways to harness young people's addiction to social media, by creating an online chat room facility and devising short, funny videos that young people might want to pass virally on their social networks. Our goal is to find ways of conveying the issue to a young audience, so this will make them want to seek us out and find out more.

The Education Group is keen to hear from teachers, educators, and other members with experience of working with young people, who are interested in offering their support. Please contact: enquiries@populationmatters.org in the first instance.

On the ground: news from local groups

Local Groups Facilitator, Mike Wheeler, gives an insight into recent activities.

Flying the flags

On September 21 2014, 34 Population Matters members joined 40,000 other protesters for the People's Climate March in London.



The London event was just one of more than 2,800 that took place across the globe ahead of the UN Climate Summit in New York. 675,000 participants took part in total, across 166 countries, making it the largest climate related protest in history. Participating in environmental campaigns is just one way in which Population Matters can raise its profile and increase awareness of population concerns.

The London march assembled at 12pm at Temple Place, before setting off on the mile-long walk to Parliament via Victoria Embankment. A rally at Parliament Square saw speeches from Emma Thompson, Bill McKibben and Vivienne Westwood. Due to the length of the procession, and the large crowd supporting it, those at the end of the procession, including Population Matters members, did not reach Parliament until late afternoon. However, it was certainly worth it. The day was sunny; spirits were high and we all enjoyed the banter with the public. Comments from participating members included:

‘It was great fun, among a very mixed bunch - all ages, all sexes, all political views. Several people came up to me to say how much they agreed with Population Matters,’ Hazel Prowse

‘Everyone made a huge effort and did their best, cheerfully and with fun. I very much like being with like-minded people who care about our world,’ Hilde Bartlett

‘Great spirit among us. Other people joined us too. Message well received. Many were intrigued,’ David Eagar

In conclusion, I think it is fair to say that it was a good day with some favourable publicity for Population Matters. We also received some useful feedback to consider when organizing other events.

Spreading the word

In 2015, our groups are continuing in their valiant efforts to ‘spread the word’. Clearly we are not all the same, so each group works to maximize its impact based on the capabilities and preferences of its members.



Some individuals have a preference for public speaking, so offer themselves as speakers for organizations as diverse as Rotary clubs, Probus clubs, schools and colleges, and the Women’s Institute. Speakers explain the core beliefs underpinning Population Matters, hand out leaflets and discuss with the audience any points they may wish to raise.

Other groups have been very successful in attending green fairs, where they have been able to interact with the public, handing out leaflets and recruiting new members. A variation on this theme has been to hold a bric-a-brac sale at a fair, with the group’s information stands on display for the public to read whilst passing by.

Clearly the success of all of these activities relies on utilizing the individual talents of all of the groups’ members and their continued efforts are to be applauded.

This year, I am keen to encourage groups to take on bigger, more ambitious, projects. This, for instance, might involve having a stand at a county show, spread over several days. Whilst the coverage and level of staffing required may be beyond the resources of a single group, if two or more groups work together it should be possible for us to manage such projects.

I am also keen to supply individual groups with sail-flags that they can display when meeting the public. These attract attention from a considerable distance away, and help to establish a sense of permanence.

As our groups plan their activities for the rest of the year, I would encourage them to consider opening a bank account, if they do not already have one. Experience has shown that having a bank account often attracts donations and certainly facilitates those activities where expenditure is incurred.

A global movement

Campaign Co-ordinator Sam Alvis gives us a brief insight into the activities of other population organizations over recent months.

Europe

Swiss group EcoPop's referendum on migration and international aid for family planning has grabbed recent headlines. They gathered the 100,000 signatures required to call a referendum to limit annual net migration to 0.2% of the population (about 17,000) and to dedicate 10% of Swiss international aid to family planning. Migrants account for around a quarter of the Swiss population, twice that of the UK. However, in the face of well-funded opposition from business interests, trade unions and some politicians, the proposition was defeated by three to one.

The UK All-Party Parliamentary Committee on Population, Development and Reproductive Health will be conducting parliamentary hearings into 'Population Dynamics in the Post 2015 World' in early 2015, in the context of discussions centred on sustainable development.

North America

The Helms Amendment prevents the American aid body USAID from funding abortion as part of family planning provision abroad. More than 80 US-based organizations, including Population Action International, are seeking clarification to allow funding for abortion when there is a risk to the mother or in cases of rape or incest.

Separately, Population Connection has been lobbying Congress to pass the Access to Birth Control Act, which strengthens the requirement for pharmacies to supply contraception promptly and without discrimination.

President Obama's Executive Action to allow illegal immigrants who have lived in America for more than five years to become citizens has caused concern amongst environmental organizations such as Negative Population Growth (NPG), which has pointed out that immigration is the most important contributor to American population growth.

The Canadian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development has launched a campaign in the run-up to this year's government elections, calling for leaders to explain how they will improve gender equality in Canada. The campaign asks for a live debate with Canadian leaders on issues identified by women.

Asia

In India, Population First has submitted its manifesto to all major Indian political parties, calling for statements and action addressing population growth.

Separately, the Population Foundation of India (PFI) has been instrumental in the investigation of the deaths of several women following procedures at a sterilization 'camp'. The Foundation has led the independent review panel and, along with the Population Council, called on the state to make the post-mortem results public. The work of PFI has helped to identify risks from contaminated medicines and infections such as septicæmia.

Oceania

Sustainable Population Australia has contacted major Australian environmental groups, including Greenpeace and WWF, to encourage them to make statements on population, and has launched an appeal to have population matters discussed in the 7th International Conference on Climate Change in Vancouver.

Worldwide

Family Planning 2020 (FP2020) is a global partnership that supports the rights of women and girls to decide how many children they have. According to the partnership's recent progress report, an additional 8.4 million women and girls in FP2020 focus countries had access to modern contraception in 2013 compared to the previous year.

It is calculated that the rise prevented two million unintended pregnancies, one million unsafe abortions and 5,000 maternal deaths.

Various significant papers on population have been released in recent months. These include:

- *World Population Stabilization Unlikely This Century*, by Patrick Gerland et al, gives an 80 per cent probability that world population will increase to between 9.6 and 12.3 billion by 2100.
- Wolfgang Lutz's *A Population Policy Rationale for the Twenty-First Century* declares that the international community needs a new rationale for population policies in the context of sustainable development, and that a focus on human capital development, in particular education and health, is the most promising approach.
- Ronald Lee and Andrew Mason's paper *Is low fertility really a problem? Population aging, dependency, and consumption* finds that 'moderately low fertility and population decline favour the broader material standard of living.'

Further information on significant papers and reports can be found at: www.populationmatters.org/resources/reports-papers



The Beaver Lake Cree Nation: the front line against tar sands

Colin Baines is Campaigns Manager at The Co-operative Group in the UK and has worked for 10 years in the field of ethics and sustainability. One of his campaigns included supporting the Beaver Lake Cree Nation's legal challenge, as part of efforts to prevent the expansion of unconventional fossil fuel production. Colin was recently listed in *The Guardian's* top 10 people to follow on Twitter regarding energy.

If you are concerned about carbon emissions, you have probably heard of Canada's tar sands. It is considered by many to be the single largest and most destructive industrial project on Earth and could mean 'game over' for the climate, according to leading climate scientist Professor James Hansen.¹

Tar sands are an unconventional fossil fuel and feedstock for synthetic crude oil. They consist of bitumen trapped in a complex mixture of sand, water and clay. Canada's proven reserves are second only to Saudi Arabia and their development is a national priority for Canada, leading to its withdrawal from the Kyoto Agreement and controversial lobbying against international climate action that could close potential export markets.² Most of the world's major oil companies are already involved and have huge expansion plans, with the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers claiming production will double between now and 2020 alone, to 3.7 million barrels of oil per day.

It forecasts total investment will exceed \$514 billion from 2014 to 2038.³

Opposing this juggernaut on the front line is the Beaver Lake Cree Nation. You may not have heard of them, but you can be sure that they bring shivers to the Canadian government and oil industry. That is because this small First Nation of just 900 people in the boreal forest of north east Alberta has the potential to derail the industry's plans, thanks to their protected treaty rights to hunt, fish and gather throughout their traditional territories. Gained in an 1876 treaty with the British Crown, these rights have since been enshrined in Canada's constitution.

The Beaver Lake Cree Nation's traditional territories cover an area roughly the size of Switzerland and around a third of current tar sands production (and half of all expansion plans). This formerly pristine boreal forest is now being rapidly degraded and destroyed.

Already there are tens of thousands of oil and gas well sites and tens of thousands of kilometres of seismic lines (tracts of cleared forest to prospect for tar sands), pipelines and access roads. This is having a huge cumulative impact on the Nation's ability to hunt, fish and gather.

One animal profoundly affected by tar sands production is the woodland caribou. Pre-development, these traditional territories were home to herds of thousands. Today just a few hundred remain, with numbers having declined by over 70% since the late 1990s. This nationally 'threatened' species requires undisturbed old growth forest, but with most tar sands development taking place within or near critical habitat and expanding, the prospect of local extinction looms large. It's not just direct physical loss of habitat taking its toll, the 'spider's web' of gas, steam and bitumen pipelines that spreads through the forest creates physical barriers to movement, and the thousands of square kilometres of seismic lines criss-crossing and fragmenting the forest destroy its habitat value.⁴

Studies such as those of University of Alberta biologist Professor David Schindler have also indicated that tar sands projects are polluting local water courses,⁵ with many anecdotes amongst First Nation communities of sick animals and tumorous fish.

In response, the Beaver Lake Cree Nation commenced a legal action against the governments of Alberta and Canada, to protect the ecological integrity of their traditional lands. On launching the legal action in 2008, now-retired Chief Lameman said, 'The governments have made a lot of promises to our people and we intend to see those promises kept. Governments and industry ignore our concerns. This is our home. This is where we live. We have a responsibility to our children to see that these lands remain inhabitable.'

The court action cites more than 19,000 infringements of their treaty rights and in the course of doing so names every major oil company in the world. Alberta and Canada spent several years trying to have the case thrown out of court on spurious grounds, but, in 2013, the Alberta Court of Appeal warned against further delay tactics and issued a precedent-setting decision to allow this comprehensive constitutional challenge to tar sands expansion. The case is now proceeding to trial.⁶

Success in this case would mean that it would become much harder, if not impossible, to expand tar sands projects over the objections of Beaver Lake Cree Nation and other First Nations in the region. This would dramatically curtail the number of new projects, or even stop expansion entirely.

The extraction and production of tar sands is extremely energy intensive, resulting in greenhouse gas emissions up to five times greater than conventional oil production.⁷ As a result, it is one of the world's most carbon intensive fuels. If Canada's recoverable tar sands reserves were fully exploited, it would result in emissions of 183 Gt CO₂, which some scientists believe could be enough to take us to the brink of runaway climate change.⁸ As identified by Professor James Hansen, 'The tar sands of Canada constitute one of our planet's greatest threats.'⁹

In the face of overwhelming market failure, failure of nation state intervention and so far failure to agree binding international climate action, it would appear a small impoverished First Nation, numbering just a few hundred people seeking to protect their wellbeing and traditional way of life, could be the only thing standing between us and global climate disaster.



Former Chief Lameman

¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/may/19/tar-sands-exploitation-climate-scientist>

² <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/eu-accused-caving-fossil-fuels-lobby-over-tar-sands-u-trun>

³ <http://calgaryherald.com/business/energy/in-situ-oilsands-production-reaches-new-heights-in-october>

⁴ <http://www.co-operative.coop/upload/ToxicFuels/docs/caribou-report.pdf>

⁵ EN Kelly, JW Short, DW Schindler, PV Hodson, M Ma, AK Kwan and BL Fortin. 2009. "Oil sands development contributes polycyclic aromatic compounds to the Athabasca River and its tributaries." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA 106: 22346-22351. 2010. "Oil sands development contributes elements toxic at low concentrations to the Athabasca River and its tributaries." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA 107: 16178-16183.

⁶ <http://raventrust.com/case/beaver-lake-cree/>

⁷ <http://www.pembina.org/oil-sands/os101/climate>

⁸ http://www.co-operative.coop/upload/ToxicFuels/docs/WWF_CFS_Unconventionals_report.pdf

⁹ <http://www.dirtyoilsands.org/tag/james-hansen/>



Trees and family planning: a unique combination

Robin Witt, Co-Chair of CHASE Africa, tells us about the charity's work to offer family planning services in rural Kenya. CHASE Africa has received financial support from our PopOffsets project, which enables individuals and organizations to offset their carbon footprint, by helping to improve family planning provision in both developed and developing countries.

CHASE Africa originally launched under the name The Rift Valley Tree Trust (RVTT). The charity's main focus was on planting trees near schools and on community land around the Mau Forest, in Kenya. But, year on year, the forest kept receding as the population grew. Why were women having so many children when life was so hard? (It is almost impossible for us, with our comfortable lives, to imagine how arduous life can be in rural Africa, particularly for women.) We found that the simple answer was the lack of access to family planning.

So, in 2012, the RVTT became CHASE Africa (Community Health And Sustainable Environment). We still plant trees, but we are also helping to meet the need for family planning. Being able to limit your family size can bring a host of benefits.

For instance, it is not always possible for parents in Kenya to afford to send all of their children to secondary school, and sons' education is generally given priority. So, one consequence of smaller families is that more girls can finish school. The total fertility rate in Kenya for women with no education is 6.7; it falls to 3.1 if they have some secondary education and falls even more if they finish school. Having fewer children can mean mothers have more time to work and their physical health is often better.

CHASE Africa is helping to deliver family planning services through three local partners. CHAT (Community Health Africa Trust) provides basic health care and family planning to remote communities in northern and central Kenya.

PopOffsets has provided financial support for one of CHAT'S 'backpack nurses'. These nurses travel to remote communities by whatever means possible, including camel, carrying all the necessary supplies in their backpack. Before the nurse's visit, one of CHAT's community mobilizers will have spoken to the community about the advantages of family planning, so on the nurse's arrival, there is typically a large number of women waiting to see her. In these rural areas, the most popular choice for family planning is the three or five year contraceptive implant.

The Mount Kenya Trust (MKT) has been working with women's groups to reforest cleared areas of the largest remaining contiguous forest in Kenya. Working with CHASE Africa, MKT has started a mobile clinic to offer family planning services and basic curatives to the women's groups. In addition, CHASE Africa has recently provided the funding to reforest 10 Ha.

CHASE Africa's partnership with Dandelion Africa has seen us set up a roving free clinic. The key factor to making this a success is a good community mobilizer, who can explain the benefits of family planning and address any concerns. At a recent clinic, 409 people were seen by medical staff, 232 children were immunized and 255 women chose to receive family planning services.

Our family planning and reforestation work often go hand in hand. In Lomolo, for instance, a successful family planning clinic was held in September 2014 and 7,000 trees were planted in November. And, with fewer people needing firewood, maybe there is a chance that the forest will survive for future generations to enjoy.

If you would like to support the work of CHASE Africa and other family planning projects, please consider offsetting your carbon emissions through PopOffsets: www.popoffsets.com.

CHASE Africa is also looking for a runner for the London Marathon, in order to raise funds for more mobile clinics. Please visit: www.chaseafrica.org.uk for information.

Population growth and the British planning system

Ian Grace is a professional planning officer with more than 30 years' planning experience.



Britain has one of the most comprehensive planning systems in the world. Land use is tightly controlled in both urban and rural areas. In the main, this system has served the country well. We are one of the most crowded and busiest countries in Europe and yet, even in the south east of England, where pressures are at their most intense, large tracts of unspoilt countryside remain.

The picture is not, however, wholly favourable. In order to preserve open spaces and attractive areas, housing is built at high densities, is very expensive and is crammed into every available space. This is because the system is, in effect, a 'predict and provide' process, where calculations of future needs are made and land is allocated to meet that need. All local plans seek to meet perceived needs, whilst minimizing the damage done by meeting that need.

In the British context this means that as our population rises we need to build more houses. The calculation is simple. If you want to house 100,000 people, you will need to build 56,000 housing units. To do this you will need to allocate 3,700 acres of land for housing. This population will also need land for schools, work places, shops etc., gobbling up more countryside.

The British public are becoming increasingly hostile to such provision. The Saint Index measures public attitudes towards new development. Their findings indicate that about 85% of the adult population are strongly opposed to further development in their area. In addition, the Saint Index suggests that a growth based agenda, such as that favoured by the Prime Minister and most senior British politicians, is actively supported by only 6% of the population!

There is a tendency to think of population growth as a third world problem. However, when I was born in 1959, Britain's population stood at 51 million. It is now 62 million and by the time I pass on it is likely to stand at 72 million. This is a 40% increase in our national population in one lifetime. Such a rate of population growth is very significant and, in my view, totally unsustainable, and yet our government, purportedly dedicated to sustainable development, has no opinion on the subject – other than that we must provide for it.

The government's planning policies for England are contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF). It describes sustainable development as the 'golden thread' running through planning systems and urges councils to approve developments which accord to sustainable principles. These principles are only loosely defined and the document makes no direct mention of population growth, or how to square perpetual economic and population growth with sustainable development. What the document is determined to achieve is for housing growth to meet demand. As a result, every town and large village in southern England is currently besieged by speculative housing proposals – many of which are likely to be approved.

Most of these proposals are met with ferocious local opposition from residents and their elected representatives. MPs, in particular, line up with the opposition and refuse to acknowledge that many of the unpopular developments in their constituencies are merely the result of policies which they voted for in Parliament. The dismayed public tends to blame 'the planners'.

Rather than argue and squabble over each field as it is lost, I would suggest that we should have a calm and measured debate, which deals with difficult questions, like how many people should live on one small crowded island and how and where they should live on that island. Without that debate, high levels of public dissatisfaction with the current system will remain.

What I can say is that the current politicians do not have a mandate to set the bulldozers free. Indeed I would be willing to bet a large sum of money that there is hardly an MP in the land who has had a member of the public come into their constituency surgery and say, 'What this place needs is a few thousand more people added to our population,' or, 'What this place needs is 10,000 more cars on our roads' – yet that is exactly the future that our MPs have in store for most of us.

Time for a national debate, I think.

The opinions expressed in this article are Ian Grace's own and not those of his employer.

On migration

Simon Ross, Chief Executive

People have been moving in search of a better life since we first appeared on the planet.

The Ancient Greeks and Romans established colonies around the Mediterranean. The plains of central Asia have always seen large-scale movements. Some fifty million Europeans emigrated to the Americas in the 19th century; in the 20th century, world wars and changing borders resulted in further large-scale migration.

Migration remains significant. More than 230 million people alive today, 3% of the global population, have moved between countries; that number is up by a third since 2000. Rising prosperity in some countries has been accompanied by political and economic dislocation in others. Improvements in communications and transport, together with links established by previous migrants, mean that people are more aware of opportunities elsewhere and how to reach them. Lack of political and other freedoms remains a driver. Conflict is often protracted and affects civilians: there are currently more than ten million refugees from conflict-affected countries, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Syria and Sudan.

Increasing pressure on resources can cause both conflict and migration, within and between countries. The pressure on resources can come from simple population growth. Continual subdivision of land amongst descendants results in barely viable farms. In poor environments, population growth can result in overexploitation of local resources, resulting in falling soil fertility or even desertification, and a reduction in fuel and edible plant species and wildlife. Pressure can also come from increased exploitation of resources by domestic or foreign operations. These can damage local livelihoods directly, through industrial fishing and agriculture, or indirectly, where logging opens forests up to large-scale hunting, or to mineral extraction which consumes or pollutes local water sources. There is increasing concern about the potential for climate change to cause rising sea levels, salination of water tables, less predictable rains, falling water supply and an increased number and severity of extreme weather events.

There are specific situations where people unarguably need our help. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that 'Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution'. Refugees from conflict or famine deserve our

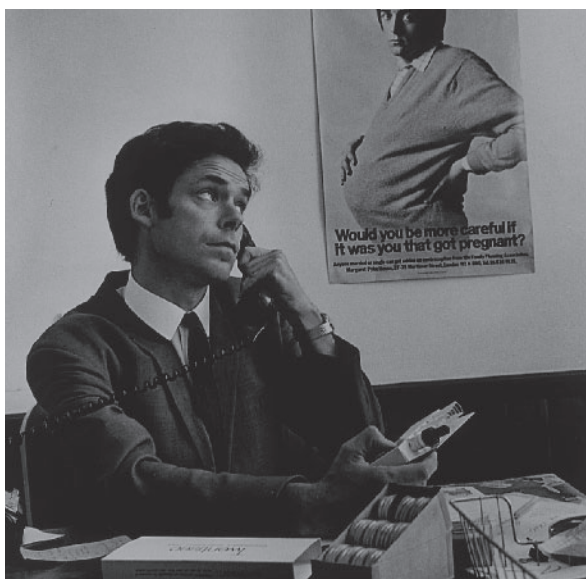
compassion, and we should seek to ensure that those so desperate that they risk their lives find a place of safety. However, in a world where there are rising differentials and where many face great pressures, the open borders proposed by a few would result in large scale and destabilizing movements.

How should environmentalists respond? While population and sustainability issues are global, power and responsibility largely rest with the nation state. When we call on countries and communities to think of future sustainability and not to depend on unbalanced flows in other countries' natural resources, something which is neither ethical nor reliable, we have to support their right to limit net migration. Only by limiting net migration, as well as calling on people to limit their consumption and have smaller families, can countries hope to reduce their populations and become sustainable. There is also something distasteful in

developed countries attracting educated people, the much discussed 'brightest and best', from developing regions which sorely need their expertise.

We should certainly reduce the 'push' factor driving people to emigrate, by supporting, in countries of origin, sustainable development, full employment, human rights, particularly women's rights and sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the promotion of the choice of smaller families. We should also reduce the 'pull' factor attracting people to destination countries, by supporting measures that enable existing populations to meet the demand for labour, for example by meeting the particular needs of older workers, working mothers and the unemployed and underemployed.

Ultimately, wealthier countries and groups of countries will have to limit net migration until the world is rather more equal than it is today.



An obituary of Dr. Tim Black

Roger Martin, Chair

The death in December of Dr. Tim Black CBE at the age of 77 loses our movement one of its greatest heroes, and Population Matters one of our most influential supporters.

As founder and long-term CEO of Marie Stopes International, Dr. Tim Black has arguably done more good for more people than almost anyone else in the development aid field, and arguably also in the field of human rights.

It was his early experience as a young doctor in a remote clinic in Papua New Guinea, facing the tragic predicament of desperately poor women who, for lack of access to contraception, were coerced into having more babies than they wanted or could feed, which persuaded him that preventing an unwanted life was as important as saving a valued one. He then realized that, in the words of UNICEF, 'family planning can do more good for more people at less cost than any other known technology' and devoted the rest of his life to making contraception and early abortion available to as many people as possible, both in developed and developing countries.

He also saw at first-hand the key role that rapid population growth plays in keeping poor people poor. Dr. Black returned to Britain to take a diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, before studying for a Master's in Population Dynamics in the US. While there, he and a fellow student went into business selling condoms by mail order, advertising their wares in college newspapers with the slogan 'What will you get her this Christmas – pregnant?'

The campaign was such a success that the pair decided to develop their venture in order to generate cash to fund projects overseas. The result was Population Services International (PSI), a 'social business' established to develop family planning services in developing countries. He believed strongly in combining business practices with charitable aims, rather than, like most charities, simply relying on donations.

He took over Marie Stopes's famous Mothers' Clinic in London, reopening it as Marie Stopes International (MSI), an organization offering contraception, pregnancy testing, screening, abortion and sterilization.

In Britain, Dr. Black set out to provide a more convenient alternative to the NHS, treating people as customers rather than patients. Vasectomies, promoted with an eye-catching publicity campaign featuring a pregnant man and the slogan 'Would you be more careful if it was you that got pregnant?' proved particularly profitable. He himself carried out some 15,000 procedures, and even performed one live on television in 2005. Profits from his British clinics funded family-planning clinics in the developing world.

MSI's services were in great demand in areas of civil unrest. When the Bosnian conflict was at its height in the 1990s, Tim was asked by the British government for help in addressing the problem of pregnancies caused by rape. Within a year he had opened 67 centres across the country, offering counselling and abortion services.

As chief executive of MSI for 30 years (1976-2006), he

built an organization from one that saw 150,000 women a year in the 1970s into one that offered family planning and abortion services to nearly five million annually. By 2012 MSI was providing services in 37 countries through more than 600 centres, 2,900 social franchises and 370 mobile clinical teams. MSI now rivals Oxfam among the top ten development NGOs worldwide - an extraordinary achievement.

I first got to know Tim in 2009, when he was a strong supporter of our PopOffsets initiative, though he prudently declined to accept grants from an organization devoted primarily to slowing population growth; like Melinda Gates and Andrew Mitchell with their excellent 'FP 2020' initiative, he preferred not to complicate his practical good work by overt engagement with the 'population' debate. By chance, I had a long and very friendly conversation with Tim the weekend before his death. I had asked him to be guest speaker at our next AGM, and he rang to say again how much he supported our work, but would decline the invitation on the grounds (with which I generally sympathize) that 'meetings take hours and produce minutes'. We have lost a great man, and a good friend.



An obituary of David Nicholson-Lord

Rosamund McDougall, Co-Chair,
OPT 2002-5; Advisory Council
Member / Policy Director 2006-9.

David Nicholson-Lord, leading environmental writer and former Research Associate and Policy Director of the Optimum Population Trust, now known as Population Matters, died on September 5 2014. For nearly five years he had suffered from MSA, a cruel degenerative disease, but the twinkle in his eye was never defeated.

David had long been an outstanding journalist before making his crucial contribution to OPT (known as Population Matters since 2011) which was cut short in 2010. Starting at the *Exeter Express and Echo* after graduating from Christ's College, Cambridge, he went on to become Deputy Night News Editor at *The Times*, where environment and sustainability issues were to become his passion and specialism. During a short sabbatical in 1983 as Press Fellow at Wolfson College, Cambridge, he did much of the research for his first book: *The Greening of the Cities*, published in 1987. After *The Times* became part of the Murdoch empire, David moved on to become Environment Editor of *The Independent on Sunday* when the newspaper started in 1990.

In 1995 he decided to embark on a freelance career, writing for magazines such as the *New Statesman* and *Resurgence* and serving as both Deputy Chair of the New Economics Foundation and Chair of the Urban Wildlife Network.

It was in 2003 that I first came across David, after an invitation to speak to the postgraduate journalism class he directed at City University, London (I too came from journalism, but my specialism had been in international banking), and in 2005 he joined us at the Optimum Population Trust as Research Associate. OPT was then a pioneering think tank with a tiny budget, virtually alone in the UK in aiming to get one of the world's and the UK's most important challenges – the need for environmentally sustainable population size – on to the political agenda. We had to act freely and fearlessly in a period of widespread ignorance about the links between demography and environmental degradation, and while working closely with David, as OPT's other Policy Director, anything seemed possible.

David, though mild-mannered and thoughtful, did not retreat in the face of those who then wanted to silence debate. Whether writing articles, conducting his own research or editing that of others for publication, he was always able to extract the kernel from complex arguments and focus on the points that mattered, and in 2005 he was shortlisted for the David Watt journalism prize for his piece *The fewer, the better**, written for *The New Statesman*. His judgement and timing in releasing OPT's work to the media, and therefore to politicians and the public, were deeply rooted in experience and invariably right.

David's ideas strengthened OPT's cause in many ways. He remained genuine and modest throughout, with a dry Fleet Street humour that lightened the task for all of us. And his lifelong love of form and meaning did not stop at writing thought-provoking articles. Always concerned with the clarity of words, he also explored their richness and variety in writing his own poetry, and before he died was able to publish his first novel, *Downrising* (Picus Press, 2013)**, with the constant support of his wife Angela and his daughters Katy and Rebecca. He will be remembered by all of us who worked with him at OPT, with great respect and affection.

*Some of David Nicholson-Lord's work can still be seen on the OPT website, archived from 2005-10 by the British Library at www.webarchive.org.uk/ukwa/target/113489/source/subject and on the website www.populationmatters.org which later replaced it.

** Available on Kindle.

Reviews

Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*

Allen Lane, 2014

ISBN: 978-1846145056

Elizabeth Wainwright

This Changes Everything looks at the deliberate side-lining of the climate agenda by influencers and deniers who know more about the implications of climate change than many, and who will do everything they can to make sure that business as usual prevails.

The book is ambitious and rich with research, interviews, stories and facts. It builds complexity, yet allows a simple common-sense thread to emerge – that climate change is a rallying cry, and we need to reform our systems before the climate system reforms us.

Klein interviews scientists who have long documented the climate cause, and who have solutions waiting in the wings. She gives a platform to the rich and the poor who will be affected by climate change in vastly different ways. She immerses the reader in communities who are mobilizing and leading change. Behind all this, she refers to a right wing mentality that binds resistance and threatens change – she joins dots between politics, people and consequences. I loved it.

Klein does not specifically highlight the strain of overpopulation, though she talks about ways of life that have emerged because of demand. A sustainable population is a useful lens through which to look at solutions such as closed production loops and renewable energy. But I craved tangible solutions that were as ambitious as the scope of the book itself.

This Changes Everything is the most insightful and powerful book I have read for a long time, being lauded as the most compelling call for change since Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. The local struggles and movements that Klein documents well are inspiring – but what would a new global system look like? Who will lead change? How do we move away from 'stuff' and individualism?

I left the book convinced of the need for a new system. But I didn't see a clear vision to bind us in action. *This Changes Everything* misses the final battle cry I was expecting. For an alternative system to come about, we need to see it first.

Katherine Maria Pinner, *The Greatest Moment in Human History: An Inspiring Vision of Humans, Art, and Nature in an Age of Change*

Self-published, 2014
ISBN: 978-0990982104

Sadie Hale

This short, interesting book takes as its starting point the prediction that we are on the brink of what could be humanity's greatest achievement: co-operation for a better future. Pinner envisages a world where we co-exist more harmoniously with nature, and the result is an overwhelmingly positive, life-affirming understanding of humanity, which shows how we, together, could tackle some of the biggest problems facing the world today.

Pinner's inspiring, unconventional approach to the state of humanity's development makes for an accessible read – although at times it seems somewhat quixotic, her combination of historical evidence with her own artistic interpretation of the future is compelling. She champions a change in individual attitudes in order to bring about global advancement, encouraging an optimistic view of the human race and its relationship with the environment. What, ultimately, is the solution to overpopulation? How can we all act differently to improve our collective future? Overall, this is a stimulating, thought-provoking read, which poses as many questions as it tries to answer.

John McKeown, *God's Babies: Natalism and Bible Interpretation in Modern America*

Open Book Publishers, 2014
ISBN: 978-1783740536

Max Kummerow

McKeown aims to argue, from within Christian tradition, that natalism, the promoting of population growth, is misguided. The essence of McKeown's argument is that Biblical scholarship must take some account of context. Inerrancy in Bible reading can't work, because context changes, so interpretation changes. Humanity has already exceeded the advice to 'fill the earth' and must now preserve it from destruction.

The fertility verses, notably 'Be fruitful and multiply', should be read in a broader context of other acts of God. Genesis chapter 1 (KJV) ends with 'And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.' Humans' mandate to 'fill the earth' did not include permission to destroy the other creatures that God had created. Mankind exists as part of creation, with a responsibility to manage creation.

Noah's story can be taken to show that multiplying is not always pleasing to God. We now know that a warm period wiped out 95% of all the species in the Permian seas 252 million years ago. And a near consensus of climate scientists expect a similar warming event if humans continue to increase fossil fuel use.

The way forward, McKeown says, is to change hearts and minds. Natalists need to be convinced that the earth is full and that the Christian Bible does not require followers to have large families.

This book is fairly long, with numerous footnotes, references and indices. It is somewhat repetitive, or perhaps a better interpretation would be that McKeown takes pains to make his points clear. There were certainly some highly informative and interesting passages, with concentrations of useful demographic information.

Clive Renton, *Chicks and Dogs*

www.lazybeescripts.co.uk

Members looking for an entertaining way of getting the message of population sustainability across to new audiences may want to consider this script by Clive Renton. Clive explains,

'*Chicks and Dogs* is a mildly bawdy comedy that includes a discussion on serious topical issues. Starting with whether it is necessarily a good idea to donate to charity, a debate between the two characters expands to include environmental breakdown and world population growth. It is pointed out that the results of the recent dramatic rise in population are compounded by the increasing physical aspirations of all the people of the world.

'What should come across to the audience is that more and more is being expected of the planet which, because of the way we treat it, is less and less able to provide for us all.'

John Pedler, *A Word Before Leaving*

Troubador, 2015
ISBN: 978-1784622237

Claire Coveney

If, like me, you have read many books on the subject of population growth and the impact of global warming, mass consumption and globalization, and fancy something a little less 'dry', shall we say, then I thoroughly recommend this book.

Described as 'a former diplomat's weltanschauung' (world-view), this book is essentially an essay that John Pedler (who is indeed a former British diplomat), describes as an effort to answer his children's questions about his life, his opinions and what he has learnt from many years of service.

It is not your average starting point for a book that covers such huge themes (including religion, war, terrorism, science and the media), with subjects stretching from World War II to Rupert Murdoch's media empire. However, the result is a captivatingly honest essay on how these factors have all collectively influenced the way in which governments and individuals consider the major issues that the world is facing today, such as population growth and climate destabilization.

This book is not despairing or preachy, but rather heart-felt, insightful, and at times even quite funny. The over-riding sentiment can, I believe, be felt in these imploring words by Pedler: 'A house is built of many bricks, but each one must be laid and each one plays its part however minuscule in the creation of the whole building.'

It is a message that, at times, can get lost in the sea of academic documentation on the major problems that the world is currently facing, which is why *'A Word Before Leaving'* is so refreshing.

Marilyn Hempel (Ed.), *Facing the Population Challenge – Wisdom from the Elders*

Blue Planet United, 2014
ISBN: 978-0692212271

Two members reviewed this book; we have included an extract from each.

Peter Graystone

Hempel includes 15 chapters written by American or USA-based senior experts in the field of population studies. Her intention is to gather their collective wisdom, by asking them to summarize the advice they would give to world leaders.

The points put forward by the 'elders' are familiar truths: population growth is unsustainable; growth in the consumption of resources cannot be infinite; all species have an equal claim to the land and natural resources; it is estimated that the Earth can support 1 to 2 billion people at an American standard of living; only through a sustainable population can we pass on a stable and safe world to our grandchildren.

Val Stevens

The elders airing their views are giants in the world of population and environment. Every word makes the case for ending population growth with urgency and great authority.

The book ends with a reprint of the *World Scientists' Warning to Humanity*, which was issued by 1,700 of the world's leading scientists in 1992. Its final words are, 'If we don't halt population growth with justice and compassion, it will be done for us by nature, brutally and without pity and will leave a ravaged world.'

The stature of these writers and their grasp of the infinitely complex issues discussed give one confidence that the movement we're involved in is a noble one, the foundations of which have been laid by some of the best brains in the world.

Letters

Population thoughts and wishes for 2015

Norman Pasley

Population growth is not happening on a planet far away. It's happening here. Remarks such as, 'You can't do anything about it,' are not acceptable, and neither is silence.

Overpopulation does not have to be forever, but it will be if people go on ignoring it. In 2014, who did not experience more congestion, delays, rising food prices, air pollution, and rising energy prices? And see reports of floods and famines and populations in distress?

Population Offsets (PopOffsets) is run by Population Matters. It raises funds (carbon offsets) to support programmes providing contraception and family planning, and sexual health and education.

Unless we act, fewer and fewer people (the richest and strongest) will share our reducing resources.

Lester R Brown¹ states, 'We have created an economy that is destroying its natural support systems.' He describes what we need to do. It includes stabilizing world population at no more than 8 billion by 2040.

Avaaz has won dozens of victories on climate change; won protection for vast areas of our oceans and forests; and upheld the global ban on whaling. 38 Degrees is also a successful petitioner to the UK government. Time to talk to them?

The Art of Living, by John Stuart Mill was published in 1848. His first paragraph reads, 'There is room in the world, no doubt, for a greater increase in population... But even if innocuous, I confess I see very little reason for desiring it.'

It is not possible to see all 7.3 billion of us at once, but we are all in one crowded 'boat' orbiting the sun. Each year about another 77 million² new people come on board. We have no lifeboat.

Opportunities exist for individuals to make a difference.

Now is the time to take our stalls and banners to the streets with our campaigning issues: smaller families, sensible consumption, saving nature and sustainable technology.

¹Let's save civilisation: a letter to the President of the United States, an essay in Facing the Population Challenge – wisdom from the elders, edited by Marilyn Hempel. Blue Planet United, California, 2014

²Globalnews.ca

Sustainability

Risteard Mulcahy

The failure to achieve any worthwhile progress in protecting Nature and humanity during the many government summits during the last 30 years or more is all too obvious. The solutions occasionally put forward for change are far removed from the fundamental problems.

There should be a prohibition of unnecessary travel by private car, plane and rail as long as they depend on fossil fuels. Energy must be curbed and sought from renewable sources only. We must revert to community living and provide our food as much as possible from our immediate surroundings. Rainwater can be utilized to a much greater extent and big reductions can be achieved. Goods and luxuries which are not necessary for our daily needs should be curbed. Food waste should be fully conserved for animals.

Of course, even the most effective and extreme measures of change will not suffice if we continue to increase in numbers by about 80 million people a year.

Humanity's current obsession with material acquisitions; its gross neglect of our natural surroundings; its waste of Nature's limited resources; added, above all, to its burgeoning human population, does not bode well for our immediate future, unless we are guided and led by our world leaders. And who is there to lead us?

Relaxing housing rules

Barrie Skelcher

It is not only for 'green belt', and private gardens that the Governments have relaxed development rules. The restricted development around nuclear power sites has also been abandoned. In the 1960s it was policy only to build these in remote areas and not to have any further domestic development nearby. This was to enable the population at risk to be fully protected and to limit the value of the social damage, i.e. loss of property, in the event of a nuclear disaster. The protection of the public is now downgraded to 'As far as is reasonably practical', so as not to restrict further housing developments. Such is the price we are paying for the overpopulation of the UK largely brought about by the open door immigration policy. The politicians don't give a damn about the indigenous population, they are only interested in getting votes at the next general election.

The ultimate dilemma

Bob Booth

Homo sapiens have been endowed with the unique mental faculties which give us dominance, control and power over ever more on this planet – but with this power should go responsibility.

It has repeatedly and predictably been shown that crowding amongst mammals (mice to men) increases violent conflict. The UN calculates that the population now is almost eight times more than it was in the early 19th century. If we were confronted by this fact for any other species our reaction might be, 'they should be culled.' However we do not even think of this as we have morals – where we are involved.

Life is the most precious thing we have and we value and respect it. Can we plan to limit it for our own and other species' survival? This presents the ultimate but unavoidable dilemma.

Energy and population

Walter Youngquist

When I was born world population was less than two billion. Now it is more than seven billion, projected to be 10+ billion by 2100. Human dignity becomes lost with overpopulation; the individual is submerged in the masses. Life is cheapened.

Nearly all our problems are related to continued population growth. Almost all would be easier to solve in a smaller, stabilized population. More people demand more of supporting resources. Each day at the world dinner table we have 232,000 more mouths to feed than were there yesterday. Agricultural land quantity per capita is shrinking.

But our political leaders and the business community seem unaware that Earth and its human-supporting resources are finite, and cannot continue to maintain economic growth as we have known it.

Continued population growth precludes the prospect of a more prosperous future for all, contrary to political rhetoric. From what I have seen in more than 70 countries, a voluntary reduction in population seems unlikely. But as resources diminish, population will eventually decrease. This will be a hard, impassive solution, but nature bats last. Can this conclusion be in some way avoided? This problem is now immediately before us. And time is not on our side.

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Please visit www.populationmatters.org for details.

The population problem solved?

Conall Boyle

To be criticised by perverse contrarians like the online magazine *Spiked* is one thing, but when a whole bunch of decent, rational wise men tell us that the population problem is solved, this should really make us all stop and think.

Fred Pearce is the Environment Consultant of *New Scientist* magazine. He claims that global population will stabilise at 7-8 billion around 2040, and start falling after that. Hans Rosling tells of the coming global population stasis followed by its decline, 'We will be just 10 billion in this world, if the poorest people get out of poverty, their children survive, they get access to family planning.' Danny Dorling is a distinguished social geographer at Oxford. In his 2013 book *Population 10 billion* he states that, 'It is suggested that 9.1 billion would be achieved much earlier, maybe by 2050 or before, and by 2100 there would be 10.1 billion of us.' Dorling thinks we should not worry so much and that, whatever impending doom may be around the corner, we will deal with it when it comes.

By claiming that the population problem is 'solved' they firstly down-play the essential conditions for this: that social progress, especially for women, must be expanded, and that huge disparities in wealth must be broken down. Secondly, whether 10 billion humans enjoying a decent standard of living is sustainable requires heroic assumptions of technological advances.

Sadly, the caveats of these authors will be ignored, and the politicians will jump on these dubious texts and lectures to play down any need to engage with population matters. In this way Pearce, Rosling and Dorling are a sinister threat to a decent future by their optimistic rationality.



for a
sustainable
future



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