



for a sustainable future



Population Matters Magazine

Issue 28 Spring 2016

Our 25th anniversary

Reverend Thomas Robert Malthus

Raising awareness through film

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About Population Matters

Population Matters is a membership charity working towards 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. We have a wide range of promotional items available, including clothing, greetings cards and briefing sheets.

Please visit our website www.populationmatters.org 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

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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 **20 June** and **20 December** and a maximum of 700 words per contribution is requested. Submissions may be edited and the editor's decision is final. Please note that it may not be possible to include all submissions.

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Please note that the inclusion of promotional materials from third parties does not imply our endorsement.

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Condoms and climate change

Simon Ross, Chief Executive



I know that some members challenge the climate change orthodoxy, notwithstanding the growing consensus around it.

It is not necessary for Population Matters to debate the technical details. However, given that it is the focus of so much environmentalist and political attention, we are involved in the campaign, raising the profile of population at London events, the recent conference in Paris and elsewhere. Our cause is helped by a recent study published by our carbon offsetting project, PopOffsets, which found that family planning with the potential of reducing unintended pregnancies was more cost effective than other offset schemes in reducing carbon emissions. That should not be surprising. Family planning methods are well established and low risk; their side-effects are mainly beneficial. As a consequence, family planning is inexpensive. Fully meeting the need for modern contraceptive services worldwide would cost less than \$7 billion annually. This is not a great deal of money at a global level.

Climate change, and environmental degradation more widely, is like population; politicians can ignore the underlying trends for some time; that does not mean that they will go away. Their impact increases to a level where they cannot be ignored. So it is with migration into Europe. Much of the recent crisis on Europe's southern and eastern borders is driven by conflict in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. The causes have been variously attributed to sectarianism, foreign intervention and the Arab Spring, with some countries alternating between tyranny and anarchy.

Climate change has also been blamed, and it is true that some countries have faced persistent droughts in this water-poor region. Less often mentioned, as we have sadly come to expect, is the role of population. The populations of Iraq and Syria have increased seven fold since 1950. Afghanistan and the countries south of the Sahara, from where many migrants come, have particularly high birth rates.

As the population of Africa increases from one to four billion this century, the pressure for migration can only increase. Any expectations that Africa will become a prosperous second Europe may be frustrated. There are plans to drive 'development corridors' through Africa, at great cost to biodiversity. However, given the ability of China and, to a lesser extent, India, to produce goods at low cost, there is a question as to whether Africa, with its limited infrastructure, can compete. Even if it can, a second question is whether a modern digital economy will generate the employment needed to satisfy the enormous size of rising generations. Frustrated youth may feel, as many do now, that migration or taking up arms are their only options.

Turning from gloomy scenarios to our immediate activity: since the last magazine, we have issued our first film and our first bus advertising campaign. We have another film under way, this time for adults, and are planning on making more in the future, as part of our communications activity. We are also increasing our outreach activities in schools, universities, and beyond. Our comments on the UK population estimates in the summer and population projections in the autumn were widely reported in the media.

We welcomed the call by British parliamentarians for 10 percent of aid to be spent on family planning and the government's proposal to limit child tax credits to the first two children per household, although the latter has been withdrawn for the present. We have been campaigning for statutory sex education and against public health cuts, alongside other bodies. Both campaigns are important in limiting unintended pregnancies. We also intend to campaign to raise awareness of the impact of population growth on people's lives, focusing on cost of living and quality of life, and to hold an event in parliament.

We will be marking our 25th anniversary as an organization this year, together with the 250th anniversary of the birth of the Reverend Thomas Malthus. They serve to remind us that the campaign for sustainability is a marathon, not a sprint.

2015 highlights

Communications Coordinator Lily Chamberlain summarizes the main developments in our work and beyond over the last year.

Alliances

In January we joined the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), which, with more than 150 members, is the largest federation of European citizens' organizations in Europe. With a focus on climate justice and sustainability, the EEB works by promoting the exchange of information between its members¹.

In December we joined the Post Growth Alliance – an international group of organizations concerned with environmental stability in a post-growth world. Members of the alliance promote each other's social media posts and campaigns².

Personnel

In January we welcomed American academic Malcolm Potts as a patron. Malcolm is a renowned obstetrician and reproductive scientist, who has been instrumental in introducing family planning methods to many developing countries³.

We increased our number of interns, from two to ten, mostly part-time, with each taking on a specific area of campaigning or development. They have been responsible for, amongst other things, writing briefings, producing the twice monthly Update, running campaigns, and attending events, including the COP21 talks in Paris, on our behalf.

Campaigns

In February, we supported a Valentine's Day campaign by the Climate Coalition to pressure UK politicians to act on climate change. Hundreds of people got involved in raising awareness of the importance of an international climate deal.

In the run-up to the UK general election, we asked our members and supporters to question candidates on population and environmental issues, as well as publishing a sustainability assessment of the main parties' manifestos on our website.

On 17 June, we attended the largest ever climate change lobbying event: the Speak Up for the Love Of... Climate Lobby in London. More than 9,000 people took part in lobbying their MPs for action on climate change, including a number of our members.

We also attended the People's March for Climate, Justice and Jobs in London in November. A contingent of a dozen or so of our supporters joined more than 70,000 others on the march.

On 29 July, the United Nations Population Division (UNDESA) released its 24th round of official population estimates and projections for the world and all individual countries. We released a briefing on the subject, focusing on UNDESA's increased estimate that world population will surpass 11 billion by 2100.

We part-funded the production of a documentary, Sense and Sustainability, about the expected impact of population growth in Europe.

In December, we launched a campaign calling on the UK government to reverse its £200 million cuts to public health services, which will affect sexual health and risk increasing unintended pregnancies. We launched a petition and are encouraging our members to write to their MP to ask that they take a stand on the issue.

Outreach

Following an appeal, we expanded our panel of speakers from 21 to 67 members, and are supporting them to ensure they are provided with sufficient training.

For the first time, we attended freshers' fairs (for new students) at King's College London, London School of Economics and University College London in September and October. Our coordinators received more than 500 newsletter sign-ups over the course of the three events, and it was interesting to hear students' views about population concern.

We also attended both VegFestUK and the Northern Vegan Festival in May and October respectively, which gave us the opportunity to engage with groups of people who didn't previously know a great deal about our cause. We again received dozens of newsletter sign-ups.



David and Yvette Willey during a break at the OPT AGM, 1997.

Our 25th Anniversary

Roger Martin, Chair

The Optimum Population Trust (OPT) was founded by David Willey and others in 1991. Its goals were: 'to collect, analyze and disseminate information about the sizes of global and national populations and to link this to a study of carrying capacities and inhabitants' quality of life in order to support policy decisions.'

One distinctive ambition was to get 'pherology' (the study of carrying capacity) recognized as a mainstream science. (The Global Footprint Network has since mainstreamed 'Footprinting'.)

Until 2005 it was an all-volunteer body, operating more as a think-tank than a campaigning organization. It had some impressive successes. It published a magazine, and later a scientific Journal, compiled by Andrew Ferguson, and gained some media coverage. Its membership reached around 100 by 2002.

The global population at the time of its founding was 5.5 billion (now 7.3 bn); and the UK's was 57.5 million (now 63.4 m). At the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, population was barely considered, though the Secretary-General did say, memorably and presciently: 'Either we reduce our population humanely, or nature will do it for us brutally.'

I joined as a humble provincial member in about 1993, recruited by founder member and geologist Willie Stanton. I was serving on a number of regional environmental bodies, where I started floating proposals to identify population growth as a multiplier of most of our problems. It was at this time that I first

encountered the 'mad taboo' that population must not be mentioned, which remains so damaging and still makes me angry.

The taboo arose after the 1994 Cairo Population Conference. Although its Programme of Action frequently mentioned the need to reduce population growth, certain women's groups from the United States successfully spread the lie that any talk of 'population' as such, or even 'family planning' must mean coercive 'population control'. These terms thus became politically incorrect, and were replaced by 'sexual and reproductive health and rights' ('SRHR'). One leader admitted that they wanted the money for contraception to be redirected to wider women's issues; but the effect was only to reduce funding for family planning programmes. The number of women with an unmet need for contraception steadily rose thereafter, causing immense suffering. The understandable diversion of funds for treatment of HIV/AIDS only made a bad situation worse.

This post-Cairo disaster has seriously handicapped OPT/Population Matters (PM) ever since. A whole generation of otherwise rational people, such as British environmental journalists George Monbiot and

¹ <http://www.eeb.org/index.cfm/about-eeb/how-the-eeb-works/>

² <http://postgrowth.org/connect/post-growth-alliance/>

³ <http://sph.berkeley.edu/malcolm-potts>

⁴ http://www.populationmatters.org/documents/world_population_prospects.pdf

Fred Pearce, are bizarrely inhibited about discussing population, sensing vaguely that it's 'not really nice', or even racist to do so. Our mission almost boils down to 'breaking the mad taboo'.

Returning to organizational development, David Willey sadly died in 2000. Edmund Davey became acting Chair of OPT, with strong support from Val Stevens and Bill Partridge. In 2002, Rosamund McDougall, who had a background in financial journalism and publishing, joined as one of two Co-Chairs, with Professor John Guillebaud.

OPT published high quality research and secured a steady stream of media coverage. It launched its first website in 2002 and obtained charitable status in 2006. It released John Guillebaud's 'Youthquake' report in 2007 and recruited a number of notable patrons. Membership figures rose steadily.

By 2005, OPT could afford to engage the environmental journalist David Nicholson-Lord and pay Rosamund for some of her work. A major boost occurred in 2007, when OPT received a large bequest from a founder member, Jack Parsons. A condition attached to the Will was that a home should be found for his huge population archive – a task which Edmund Davey laboured on for many months, with eventual success. The money enabled OPT to start paying for professional services. David and Rosamund teamed up as joint Policy Directors and Julie Lewis was engaged as Administrator. Meanwhile, Val Stevens became Chair, followed by Sue Birley and then Val Stevens again. Tragically, David became ill with a terminal condition in 2008 and died, much missed, in 2014.

I became Chair in 2009, and recruited David Attenborough as Patron the same year, which saw membership leap to 1500. The following year we appointed Simon Ross as Chief Executive. Activity has increased steadily since. Achievements include: the relaunch under the campaigning name of Population Matters; membership up to 3000; annual income up threefold to over £300,000; a new and expanded website and the launching of social media accounts; the letter-writing group; several new Patrons recruited; some 100 influential 'honorary members'; the launching of local and additional online groups; a productive research relationship with LSE and Lancaster University; a (barely successful) campaign to enlist support from environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs); the newsletter/Update frequency up from four to 24 per year; the introduction of the Joint International Position Statement; speaking at some 21 international conferences (at no cost to PM); founding sponsorship of PopOffsets, giving grants to some dozen NGOs so far; the creation of the European Population Alliance, lobbying the European Union (EU); two YouGov polls on UK attitudes to population; membership of numerous green and reproductive health alliances; more media coverage; more lobbying of politicians; more responses to government consultations; more briefings issued; and a General Election contact strategy reaching 40 percent of all candidates.

But outputs are not outcomes. Only when the British Government, the EU and the United Nations have declared population stabilization and reduction to sustainable levels to be a priority policy goal can we declare victory. Meanwhile, we keep fighting that blasted taboo.



Population Matters news

Governance

At our October Annual General Meeting and Conference, Baroness Jenny Tonge, Joint Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health, gave an impassioned speech about women's right to manage their fertility. In Board elections, Nina Clark, Colin Gallagher and Natalie WinterFrost stood down, while John Davies, Andrew Macnaughton and Ascanio Vitale were elected.

Subsequently, the Board re-appointed Roger Martin as Chair, and appointed Jill Rawlins and Andrew Macnaughton as Vice-Chair and Treasurer respectively.

The following awards were made at the AGM:

- Population and Sustainability Awareness Award: Joe Bish, the Director of Issue Advocacy of the Population Media Center, in recognition of his long record of raising awareness of the issues of population and sustainability.
- Jack Parsons Memorial Award: Mike Wheeler, for his valued contribution to our work through his role as Local Groups Facilitator.
- Jack Parsons Lifetime Achievement Award: Patron and former Chair John Guillebaud, for his dedication to Population Matters over many years.

Our 2016 AGM and Conference will be held on 8 October in central London.

Transparency

Population Matters has been named 'best small NGO' in Bond's 2015 Transparency Review. 'Transparency' refers to how open and honest an organization is when it comes to sharing information about activities, governance, decision-making processes and financial arrangements. It is an important part of ensuring Population Matters' accountability towards our staff, members and supporters.

Campaigning

We have promoted population concerns at climate change-related events in London and Paris (reported elsewhere in the magazine).

We are ramping up our own campaigning this year, with three new campaigns already launched. First off, we are campaigning to oppose the United Kingdom Government's decision to cut £200 million from the public health grant to local authorities (which includes sexual health) and to cut public health spending

by four percent per year. The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, the Faculty of Public Health and the NHS Confederation, as well as many other leading medical, care and wellbeing organizations have also stated their opposition to these cuts, labelling them 'a false economy'. Their long-term cost to the NHS and the economy is expected to be in the billions.

Cuts to sexual and reproductive health services will also lead to more unintended pregnancies and greater population growth. This will put even more stress on housing, public services, natural resources and the environment.

We are also campaigning in support of the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education bill. The bill would make PSHE, which includes sex and relationships education, and education on ending violence against women and girls, compulsory in all state-funded schools.

Finally, we are calling for national governments to increase funding for sexual and reproductive health services to 10 percent of international aid and domestic development budgets. Currently, more than 200 million women worldwide are seeking to avoid pregnancy but are not using modern contraception.

For more information, or to find out how you can support these campaigns, please visit www.populationmatters.org/campaigns

Media and Advertising

Our public relations agency, Champollion, helped to secure us hundreds of pieces of press coverage in 2015. This included our response to the latest UK population projections being featured in *The Guardian*, *Daily Mail*, *Express*, *Metro* and 180 local publications, as well as on a number of TV and radio stations. A letter signed by all of our patrons was published in *The Times*.

In September, we ran a two-week advertising campaign on London buses. The advertisements carried the slogans: '10,000 more people every hour' and 'We need to talk about population.' The ads will have been seen by an estimated two million people. Funding for the campaign was obtained through a special appeal to our members made earlier in the year.

We also launched our first commissioned short film, *Zombie Overpopulation*. Aimed at young people, it can be seen on our YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/PopulationMatters.

Introducing our new Board members

Ascanio Vitale, Andrew Macnaughton and John Davies were voted onto the Board at the 2015 annual general meeting. Here they talk about their background and their views on the issue of population growth.

Ascanio Vitale

Ascanio Vitale has volunteered and worked for several environmental non-governmental organizations, including as climate campaigner for Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund. He is currently Chief Executive Officer of the engineering consulting companies Stop CO2 and Flyzen.



The international community needs to establish a long-term policy on population overgrowth as much as it needs to tackle climate change. Sustainability can only be reached through a holistic approach.

Population growth is often an uncomfortable, but inevitable, issue that we need to take into account. Fighting poverty, decarbonizing our industrial system and handling our natural capital more efficiently are important pieces of the mosaic that we need to complete as soon as possible.

However, none of these are possible with an ever increasing population. This century will witness the biggest migrations in human history. Amid an increasingly unstable geopolitical configuration, climate change is already affecting agricultural production yields, as well as forcing millions to leave entire regions in search of water or secure land. The UN struggles to produce a compelling climate mitigation policy and even less has been done with regard to adaptation measures.

Only by bearing witness to best practices, scientific discoveries and technological advances can we achieve the critical mass needed to redesign our role on this planet and stabilize population within sustainable levels.

I am bringing my campaigning experience and my sound scientific background to Population Matters. Our future lies on the delicate balance between population and natural resources. We carry the responsibility, as well as the solution: there is no time to waste.

Andrew Macnaughton

A former career Army officer, Andrew Macnaughton is now involved in the environmental and developmental charity sectors. He is Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Onaway Trust and is currently completing a Master's degree in Environmental Management.



I have been fortunate in my career to have travelled widely and seen the wonders of the natural world. I have also seen the changes to it resulting from unconstrained population growth and demand. I strongly believe that if we are to bequeath a rich, vibrant and healthy world to the future then we must make people realize that a sustainable population is central to achieving this.

My previous career in the Army has given me a good deal of experience of strategy, planning, leadership and project management, which I bring to the Board. I have been elected Treasurer and intend to review Population Matters' ethical investment policy and investments to ensure that they are in line with our ethics. In addition, I am working to re-establish Population Matters in Scotland, where the government has an economic policy founded on increasing its population. So there's plenty to do!

John Davies

A retired science and technology teacher with experience in business, John Davies has been active in Population Matters at a local level.



My primary concern as a member of the Board is how we take Population Matters forward to make a significant impact on the population problem. We need to have a demonstrable effect on population numbers. I believe that we can achieve significant results, but we must be bolder and focused, building interactive, cost-effective and practical approaches, including the development of campaigns that achieve measurable change.

Actions we should take include supporting more projects via groups such as PopOffsets, raising local environmental issues, extending our education outreach, and well-organized lobbying of MPs and non-governmental organizations. Continual population growth means we have less time to achieve our goals; we need to act decisively, and now.

What matters is tomorrow.

Spotlight on a team member: Savannah-Leigh Rose, Outreach Manager

Savannah is the first point of contact for the Speakers Panel. Her role includes booking and organizing events for volunteers to speak at, looking after the library of DVDs for use at events, and compiling a database of presentations for speakers to use. The Speakers Panel has increased from 15 to more than 50 members in recent months, so Savannah has been helping speakers to settle into their roles, and exploring new ways for them to interact and communicate as a team.

What prompted you to get involved with Population Matters?

It was always expected that I would have children, yet I knew from an early age that I didn't want any. I saw the natural world around me slowly getting swallowed by more and more people and I didn't want to add to that problem. I have no issue with people choosing not to have children, but others view it as something unnatural. My philosophy is simple; never take more from the planet than you can give back. I've always lived my life my way, regardless of what others think, and I was brought up to be a child of nature.

If money was no object, what campaigns or marketing activities would you like to run?

Oh that's a hard one! I think I'd run a gameshow where people have a limited amount of land and they have to live, work and grow their food within that ecosystem without damaging it. Then when more people join the game the individual land areas grow smaller. It's pretty similar to what's happening on the planet now with the population increasing; more people means less land per head of population. With reality television being so popular, it may be a good way of getting the message across.

(See later in the magazine for more information about the Speakers Panel.)

Telling the climate movement about population: insights from Paris

Campaign coordinator Isabella Coin reflects on COP21

There was certainly an exciting end to 2015 for some Population Matters coordinators. At the People's Climate March, we met supporters who had come to London from as far away as New York and India. Days later, it was time to set off for Paris, to spread the word about population growth amongst the international public at the 21st Conference of Parties on Climate Change (COP21).

The link between population growth and climate change

Population is such a wide-reaching issue that there are very few global dynamics it does not affect. To name a few of the main links between population and climate:

- A larger population could exacerbate climate change, particularly when it comes to increased emissions from developed countries.¹
- Growing population densities will make it harder to adapt to changes and to react to natural disasters.²
- Population pressures often cause environmental degradation³, which can worsen the effects of climate change.

What happened in Paris

The COP21 site was divided into two areas: the Green Zone, for civil society, and the Blue Zone, where the UN negotiations were taking place. The Green Zone was mainly composed of stands where organizations presented their work, with side rooms where visitors could attend talks on specific topics, such as gender, agriculture and energy.

Coalition Climat, the French climate coalition, organized a series of side events, which saw some very lively debates. The 'Village of Alternatives' was held over the first weekend in December. It brought together representatives from more than 100 organizations, who manned stalls and held talks and film screenings focusing on ways in which grassroots movements might help to deal with climate change.

The following week, further discussions, art installations and presentations took place at the Climate Action Zone, a meeting place for those interested in COP21. Topics ranged from the Volkswagen scandal, to the connection between war and climate change, to natural resource conflicts.

Bustling with people interested in the environment, these events were a great place to talk about the population issue. A vast majority of attendees responded positively to our conversations and leaflets, which gave us hope for a future environment-population connection to grow. We did receive a few sceptical looks, but also many vigorous nods of approval!

Population growth still needs to be explicitly brought to the attention of the environmental movement, it seems. The false belief that population cannot be addressed from an environmental angle needs to be tackled. Population growth fits well with the rest of the climate movement's concerns, such as gender equality and social and environmental justice. By promoting the rights of women, we can also ensure a safer future for the environment and future generations. The most holistic way in which we can approach these issues together is by tackling global population growth as an aggravator of social and environmental conditions.

The Paris agreement

The Paris agreement was a reason to rejoice for some, and a reason to protest for others. The deal is aimed at ensuring that the average global surface temperature does not rise by more than 2°C above the pre-industrial average. Targets have been agreed by each nation, and will be revisited every five years. However, no specific goals were incorporated.

While COP21 President, Laurent Fabius, deemed it 'ambitious and balanced'⁴; others were not so content. Global Justice Now director, Nick Dearden, stated that it: 'undermines the rights of the world's most vulnerable communities'; also highlighting that it does not represent a binding agreement for the states involved.⁵

Population remained a marginal issue at the event, little addressed beyond side-talks and brief, inconsequential mentions. This is shocking, given the growing body of evidence demonstrating the impacts of population growth on climate change.⁶ It is clear that more grassroots action is needed to address the issues that negotiators at the UN conference continue to leave out.

Were the climate change movement to join forces with the population concern cause, both would be strengthened.

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.

⁴<http://www.reuters.com/article/climatechange-summit-draftdeal-idUSS3N13M00S20151212>

⁵<http://www.globaljustice.org.uk/news/2015/dec/12/final-cop-21-text-disaster-worlds-most-vulnerable-and-future-generations>

⁶Worldwatch Institute, Population, Climate Change and Women's Lives : <http://www.worldwatch.org/bookstore/publication/worldwatch-report-183-population-climate-change-and-women%E2%80%99s-lives>

Leave a legacy

Development coordinator Kristin Marin explains why you might want to consider leaving a gift to Population Matters in your will.

Continuity: You have diligently supported Population Matters in countless ways during your lifetime – whether through donations, membership, starting a letter writing group, purchasing t-shirts, running a marathon, or other actions. Leaving a gift in your will ensures that all the good work you supported can continue. Advocating and altering mindsets take a lot of time and resources. You can help to sustain that ongoing work for your children and grandchildren's generations.

Let your memory live on: As well as taking care of your family financially, you can also choose to set them a great example of giving back to society and helping to ensure its sustainability. You may even inspire them to take action themselves.

Motivation: Your belief in Population Matters helps to keep our campaigners and volunteers going when they face opposition. It gives us the drive to keep persevering and looking for new ways to make an impact.

Leaving a gift in your will is easier than you think. For more information, or to let us know that you have remembered us in your will, please see: <http://populationmatters.org/take-action/donate/leave-gift-will>, call 020 8123 9116, or email julie.lewis@populationmatters.org.

Thank you

¹<http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/sres/emission/index.php?idp=99>

²https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/special-reports/srex/SREX_Full_Report.pdf

³http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/population_and_sustainability/extinction/



The People's Climate March

Mike Wheeler, Local Groups Facilitator

This is becoming something of a habit: my fourth march in 15 months. I must be mad. Correction... 30 of us must be mad. We get up early, travel to London by train, fight our way on and off buses carrying banners, stand around for hours getting cold ... but have a great time!

This one was a special occasion, however; just one of dozens of protest demonstrations organized around the world in support of the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris.

Once you've done one march, there is a high probability that you will come back again and again. Yes, I certainly have moments of doubt, but once the music starts and the procession kicks off, any doubts are swamped by a sense of purpose. We are all here together to get our message across and we certainly seem to be doing that. Last year we acquired even more sailflags and tabards, which certainly give the impression of a professional outfit. No scruffy cardboard signs flapping on wooden sticks for us!

So what happened on Sunday 29 November? Well, 30 of us met up near Hyde Park Corner, along with thousands of protestors from numerous environmental organizations, in preparation for a slow walk to the Houses of Parliament. The weather could have been better (a lot better).

We tried raising our new Population Matters banner (ordered hurriedly for this event), but the wind was gusting Force 8, so after two attempts, lasting no more than 30 seconds, we admitted defeat and rolled it up ready for the next march. On the positive side, once the procession moved forward we kept ourselves busy distributing leaflets and bookmarks to the thousands of spectators who lined the route. Encouragingly, a large proportion of the public seemed happy to take either a leaflet or a bookmark, so this indeed was grounds for optimism.

Eventually, after a two hour amble, during which we were entertained by various bands and exotic street performers, including polar bears and giraffes (not often seen on the Embankment these days), we arrived at Westminster. This was the rallying point, where high profile speakers, including Caroline Lucas and Jeremy Corbyn, had congregated to lend their support to the campaign.

Yes it was a great occasion and 30 of us were able to go home thinking that we had done our little bit to promote Population Matters.



Introducing our patrons: Sara Parkin OBE

Founder Director and Trustee of Forum for the Future, Sara Parkin OBE is one of Population Matters' longest standing patrons. Parkin is also a Board member of the Natural Environment Research Council.



Sara Parkin OBE - photographed by Hugh Bowring

How and when did you first become concerned about the implications of population growth?

Whatever my world view beforehand, it was set firm by seeing the photograph of the Earth from space in 1968. The boundaries were so clear – and most of it was water! This meant I was sensitized to the public debate around the 1972 book *Limits to Growth* and others that highlighted the impact of human activities on the environment. One was *The Population Bomb*. I worked as a nurse in Edinburgh at the time and a group called *Doctors and Population* formed in the run up to 1974 World Population Year. My attempts to do the same with nurses failed, but I did do a fair number of talks.

How does awareness of population issues fit within your wider world view?

When I was born (1946), the world population was 2.2 billion. If I live to the age of my mother (92) it will have doubled twice in my lifetime. But just saying those numbers doesn't explain their implications – to the environment and society – or why doing not very much about it is a political no-no. We are living in a world dominated by an economic logic based on more-people-consuming-more-stuff. If that merry-go-round slows, panic sets in. Think about the angst around ageing populations in so-called 'mature' economies. No wonder calls to intervene in fertility rates etc. are viewed as dangerous to economic stability!

A sustainable world will have an economic logic based on fewer-people-consuming-less-stuff and, until we have an attractive story to tell about how to get there and what it would be like, nothing will change this side of catastrophe.

How have attitudes about population changed, in your experience?

Not enough, of course, but there is better understanding about how critical women are to the sort of society we want. It makes me angry to be told we should not worry about poor country population rises; that what matters is reducing the numbers of the big consuming rich. That implies it is OK for women to have lots of children (whether they want them or not) as long as they stay poor. Grotesque! I think we are moving away from the negative grip certain countries and international agencies had on the issue, and the interventions of people like Melinda Gates (a Catholic) have been important.

Family planning services in countries like the United Kingdom are disgracefully under-resourced, so it's not surprising that, just like in poor countries, 40% of women's

pregnancies are unplanned. I see this as an opportunity to promote a highly collaborative campaign to lower fertility 'accidents' for rich as well as poor women.

What have you learnt over the years about what works and what doesn't when talking about population?

Well, there is the numbers thing. Conceptualizing 7 billion is hard. I use terms like 'a huge number' a lot and stick to the impact on other people as much as I can. For example, talking about terrorism in north Africa (where 50% of people are under 25) I ask people to imagine what it is like to be young and without hope. I use examples where women in poor and troubled regions generally prefer to have fewer children, but only if they are confident those they do have will live to adulthood.

And I hit sex and misogyny on the nose whenever I can! Women enjoy sex and since forever have tried to avoid conception. It is men that have trouble with this, not women! Moreover, having worked in family planning in the past, I underline that abortion is not a contraceptive; it is the consequence of failed contraception. Great family planning services and culture would aim to reduce the need for abortion – but for now, it is an essential option.

What keeps you motivated in continuing to raise the issue?

Compassion! For women, who have been ill-rewarded for prioritizing family over power. And for my species as a whole; we are out of our ecological niche – large, aggressive mammals are normally rare. That makes us vulnerable, not all powerful.

The value of words: the work of the Speakers Panel

Savannah-Leigh Rose, Outreach Manager



There is a body of men and women who give their time again and again to spread the message about why population matters. These people are collectively known as the Speakers Panel.

The Speakers Panel has been in existence for a number of years now and they come from all walks of life: professors, teachers, medical professionals and explorers. But the one thing that they do have in common is dedication to the cause.

The work undertaken by the panel can be varied. Sometimes it's smaller groups who ask us to speak at their events, sometimes they are much larger.

A speaker can be at a university one night and a Women's Institute the next, but the value of the work they do can never be underestimated.

These are the people who are at the forefront of spreading the message that population DOES matter, and these are the people who freely give their time to the cause, often trudging out on a cold wet night to answer the call to present on Population Matters. Their collective knowledge on such an overwhelming issue is too vast to even begin to contemplate.

When I answered the call to volunteer to help Population Matters, my role was as the Outreach Coordinator. In other words, I contacted organizations to offer the services of the speakers at events around the country. At that point I had never met the members of the Speakers Panel; I didn't even know their names.

That was a couple of years ago now and since then I have watched the Speakers Panel grow from about 15 speakers to more than 50, and each one is so vital to the work we do. Three years ago we were doing about six talks a year; now we're doing on average two a month. So we've come a long way in the past few years, but we can still go much further.

After each event I ask the speaker to give me some feedback on how it went, and one comment, for me, summed everything up. It was from a young girl, who after the talk turned around and said:

'Well I'm one of seven and my sister has four and I didn't think that there was anything wrong with that until you came here.' It was the final words of that statement that struck me; she didn't think there was anything wrong with large families UNTIL we went there.

And that's the true value of the work the Speakers Panel do, because hopefully now when that young lady thinks about starting a family, she'll remember what she learned that day and will think twice before following in her family's tradition. Because when it comes to family planning a lot is down to parental pressure. I've lost count of the number of couples I know who are constantly asked by their parents when they are going to make them grandparents (one was even asked on her wedding day), and it's just expected that they are going to have children.

And that's what makes the work of the speakers so valuable. Because through their work you can find that you don't just have to accept the course your life is expected to take when it comes to having a family; you can challenge the expectations and choose to have two or fewer children and hold your head up high. You can break the tradition of large families.

We are always looking for speakers to join the panel; you don't need experience, as training can be given if needed. All you need is drive and dedication to spread the word as to why population matters.

My name is Savannah-Leigh Rose and I am proud to be the Outreach Manager who tries her best to look after this wonderful panel of people. And if you are interested in joining us, please get in touch at savannah.rose@populationmatters.org.

Raising awareness through film

Zombie Overpopulation

One of the main challenges we face as an organization is getting the problem of population growth across to those people who have yet to start their families.

Reaching this audience is a challenge in itself, and getting their attention is even harder. With these aims in mind, we have launched a short film aimed at teenagers and young people. The mock-documentary depicts a world overrun with zombies, who are mindlessly consuming everything in sight.

Simon Ross explains: 'We believe that zombies are a perfect metaphor for humanity's blind growth in numbers and heedless exploitation of resources. The film is set in London but references global population growth and could be set anywhere. It is our first foray into filmmaking for young people, who are a key audience for our message of the benefits of small families.'

The three minute film is narrated by actor Anthony Head, and produced by communications charity MediaTrust. Director Thomas Paul Martin told us, 'We wanted to get the issue of overpopulation across in a way that would appeal to young people. We know they don't like being lectured to, or to feel that they're being manipulated. Humour is a good way to keep them watching, while giving them something to consider. The main message we want viewers to take away is to use their brain and start thinking about the problem.'

We want to encourage them to make informed decisions that are right for them and the planet.'

Zombie Overpopulation was broadcast on the Community Channel several times around Halloween. It is available to watch on Youtube (www.youtube.com/PopulationMatters), where it has already been viewed some 4,000 times. Please do consider sharing it with people via social media and events.

Sense and Sustainability

Population Matters has also helped to support the production of another short film about population, entitled Sense and Sustainability. We spoke to Michael Connolly from the production company, Anchored Minds Productions, about his reasons for making the film and what he hopes to achieve with its release:

What inspired you to make the film?

We wanted to make a film that dealt with a lot of prominent issues, ranging from species extinction to climate change. But while researching the film we kept finding that one thing ties it all together – overpopulation, and sadly it is the puzzle piece that most people miss. It does not matter how many electric cars or solar panels we build; we will never have a sustainable society at our current population of 7.3 billion, let alone at 10-12 billion. We felt this was an issue that urgently needed to be addressed, no matter how unpopular a subject it is.

What do you hope people take away from watching the film?

We want people to realize that there is a problem and that it is affecting the biosphere today, it's not just a problem for the future. We give some solutions; we talk about a different economical system; we discuss re-evaluating consumption patterns and resource use, and we advocate gender equality and the empowerment of women. If people take something from the film we hope it is the realization that not only are we overpopulated and over-consuming, but we are part of the solution, and that solutions can be implemented immediately.

What do you see as the biggest challenges in getting the population crisis message across to a wide audience?

As we see it, there are two major factors. First is the taboo around the population subject that has formed because people immediately relate the subject with population control, coercion, genocide. We need people not to jump to conclusions before actually listening to the solutions we are suggesting. Secondly, people simply do not understand the scale of humanity and its impact on the natural world.

How can people watch the film?

We will be holding a good number of screenings in 2016-17 in the UK, after that it will be available for download. We do want people to share the information they learned from the film and to encourage others to watch it themselves. The three minute trailer is available on YouTube - <https://youtu.be/uQSaAAuGIKI>.

Visit www.Sense-Sustainability.com to find out more.

Recycle today, for a sustainable tomorrow

We have teamed up with Recycling for Good Causes to enable members to support us by recycling unwanted jewellery and old banknotes.

What can you do?

Do you have a broken chain sitting in your jewellery box, or a ring you no longer wear? Recycling small items of value helps to reduce the amount of raw materials that need to be taken from the Earth, and by donating them through the Recycling for Good Causes scheme, you can support Population Matters through no additional cost to yourself.

It is completely FREE for you to send in:

- Any jewellery, including gold, silver, costume jewellery, watches, broken and damaged items (such as odd earrings, snapped chains or items with missing stones).
- Any unwanted banknotes, old and new. Both UK and foreign banknotes are welcome, including all the pre-Euro notes that are now worthless to you. (No coins, please.)

Just pop your items into your own envelope or jiffy bag and post free of charge to:

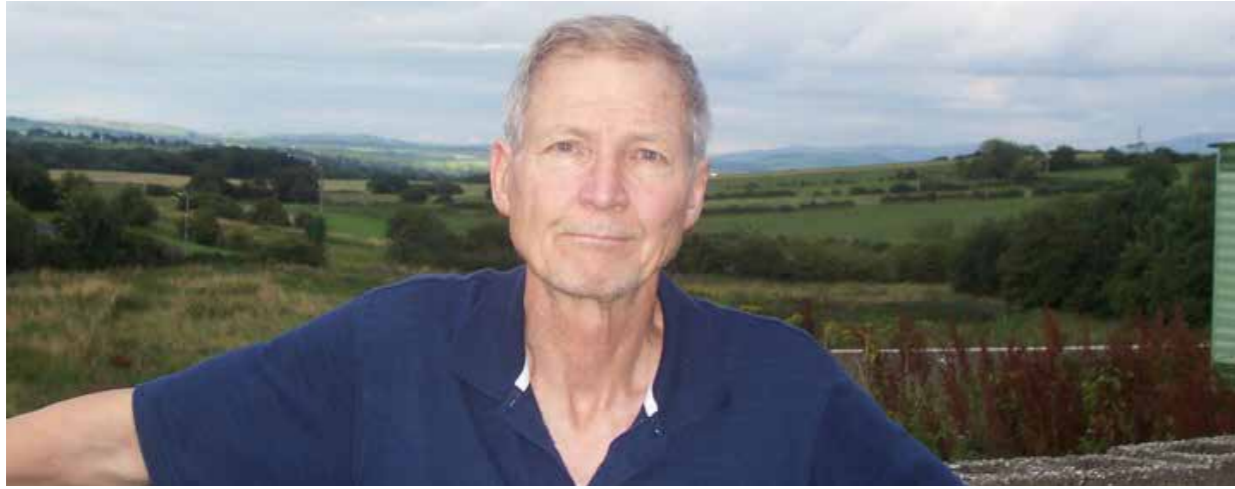
FREEPOST RSXA-GJBY-ARRZ
Population Matters
Unit 14
Amber Business Village
Amber Close
Tamworth
B77 4RP

You can also donate your stamps. All kinds of stamps are welcome, on or off paper.

Simply cut or carefully rip the postage stamp from the used envelope, being careful that you don't damage the stamp, and once you have a collection pop them in an envelope, making sure you have the correct postage, to:

Population Matters
PO Box 16992
Sutton Coldfield
B73 9YA

Please note that this is not a freepost address.



Running for Population Matters

Jonathan Coles tells us why he's running this year's British 10k London Run in support of Population Matters. Interview by Kristin Marin.

How long you have been a member of Population Matters?

I joined Population Matters when I moved back to the UK with my wife in 2008. But I have a Penguin book called Atlas of World Population History that I bought in 1984, so I must have been concerned long before I joined.

Why do you support Population Matters?

There is much justified talk of the dangers of overpopulation, but less of the plain silliness of it. When I was born in 1942 every human was morally entitled to a one in 2.3 billion share of the Earth's riches; now they are entitled to only a 7.4 billionth, so in a sense, the standard of living has fallen by more than one third. There have, of course, been countervailing improvements. In the UK, the greatest contributions to human happiness in my lifetime have probably been the indoor water closet; the development of convenient contraception; and, more recently, access to nearly all of the world's knowledge through the internet. But we have lost so much. In the coastal village I grew up in, one no longer hears the curlew trill; no schools of porpoises come into the bay; seabirds starve because humans take the fish. The hedgerows where in summer we looked for birds' nests, and the fields where we tobogganed in winter have been concreted over and houses built. Nice things, like ivory, caviar, or ebony, are too rare to be shared among the huge world population.

This is not to say that I am just a nostalgic romantic: I love wind turbines, wish that genetic engineering was exploited more, and have no objection to fracking or nuclear power stations.

Why you are running the British 10K London Run for Population Matters?

Journalists keep saying that countries with a stable or falling population, such as Japan, are facing a 'population time bomb' because more old people need to be supported by the young, so populations need to increase. Apart from the fact that one day populations must inevitably stabilize, so we must learn to live with that, children are a huge burden on society, as they have to be cared for and educated for about 20 years, while the age at which people become too 'old' to contribute to society is increasing. (Look at Dame Judi Dench, Sir David Attenborough, the Queen, the Pope, the volunteers in the charity shops...) At the time of the British 10k I will only be 73, but at least that is 13 years since I became entitled to a pensioner's bus pass. So I hope to make the point that an end to population growth is not a demographic disaster. I had never run until last year and wanted to try something new. I was very impressed by the atmosphere created by all the people running for charities and by the absence of cars and police. The London air smells unpleasant, but what can you expect with so many people?

Would you like to join Jonathan Coles in the British 10K on 10 July 10? Email christina.sexton@populationmatters.org to sign up or support our runners.

A global movement

Communications Coordinator Lily Chamberlain gives us a brief insight into the activities of other population concern organizations over recent months.

Europe

The German Foundation for World Population (DSW) released a report on global maternal and newborn health. The report shows the importance of safe, modern family planning methods: abortion complications accounted for 8 percent of all maternal deaths in 2014.¹

Population Europe released a briefing detailing the expected economic costs of ageing populations in Europe. The organization recommended that in order to adapt to these demographic changes, the welfare states of Europe will need to consider raising their retirement age and taking measures to increase productivity amongst the young.²

North America

The Population Reference Bureau (PRB), headquartered in Washington DC, issued its latest population datasheet, with a focus on the theme of 'women's empowerment'. One of the PRB's key findings was the increased prevalence of modern contraceptive methods worldwide. Some countries have seen considerable improvement in this area; in Senegal, for example, the demand for family planning that was satisfied increased from 13 to 43 percent from 1992 to 2014.³

The Center for Biological Diversity released the latest issue of its Endangered Earth magazine, which focused on the negative effect of the ivory trade and human consumption on elephant conservation.⁴

Population Connection staff ran their annual October road trips to deliver teacher training workshops right across the United States and Canada. In all, they presented more than 150 workshops during the month, demonstrating to students and teachers alike the importance of conservation and family planning.⁵

The Worldwatch Institute has released the first roadmap for a conversion to renewable energy in the Caribbean. The target is currently for the islands to use 48 percent renewable energy by 2027, with a complete conversion to renewables being 'a long-term goal'.⁶

Asia

Partners in Population and Development (PPD) hosted the 12th International Inter-Ministerial Conference on Population and Development in Dhaka on 21 November. The goal of the conference was to promote and ensure South to South Cooperation for continued commitment to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals in the PPD alliance and other developing countries.⁷

A year-long campaign against child marriage in Kurdistan has been launched by the High Council of Women Affairs in conjunction with a number of leading international organizations. The child marriage rate in Kurdistan currently stands at 23.4 percent, but it is hoped that the campaign, which will work to educate and raise awareness nationwide, will have some success in reducing this figure.⁸

Africa

Madagascan organization Blue Ventures released a report detailing how current laws are insufficient to protect marine fauna off the coast of the country. The report particularly focused on the impact of overfishing on the fragile ecosystems of the area.⁹ The problem of overfishing seems unlikely to go away, with Madagascar's population set to almost triple by 2075¹⁰, and it is possible the fragile legislation is a reflection of a trend for increasing consumption.

In response to lobbying by the Mauritanian Association for the Promotion of Family, the Ministry of Health in Mauritania increased funding for contraceptive security and family planning by 33 percent in its 2015 budget.¹¹

Worldwide

World Vasectomy Day took place on 13 November. 700 doctors in more than 40 countries participated, aiming to raise awareness of the procedure and its benefits. More than 4,000 men are believed to have had vasectomies performed in conjunction with the event.¹²

The United Nations Population Fund released its State of World Population 2015 report.

¹ http://www.dsw.org/uploads/tx_aedswpublication/WEB_RES.pdf

² <http://www.population-europe.eu/policy-brief/who-pays-demographic-change>

³ http://www.prb.org/pdf15/2015-world-population-data-sheet_eng.pdf

⁴ <http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/publications/earth/newsletter-fall-2015.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.populationconnection.org/article/an-october-road-trip-with-poped/>

⁶ <http://www.worldwatch.org/first-ever-sustainable-energy-roadmap-caribbean-launched>

⁷ http://www.dsw.org/uploads/tx_aedswpublication/WEB_RES.pdf

⁸ <http://www.population-europe.eu/policy-brief/who-pays-demographic-change>

⁹ http://www.prb.org/pdf15/2015-world-population-data-sheet_eng.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/publications/earth/newsletter-fall-2015.pdf>

¹¹ <http://www.populationconnection.org/article/an-october-road-trip-with-poped/>

¹² <http://www.worldwatch.org/first-ever-sustainable-energy-roadmap-caribbean-launched>

This had an especial focus on women and girls in situations of conflict and natural disaster. Finding that an average of 507 maternal deaths take place in 'emergency' situations every day, the report called for additional protection of women and adolescents in vulnerable situations.¹³

¹³ <http://www.unfpa.org/swop>

The Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations held an event on international policy responses to low fertility and ageing populations, in an attempt to make countries in question aware of the implications of low fertility and consequent ageing, as well as high fertility.¹⁴

¹⁴ <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/events/expert-group/24/index.shtml>

PopOffsets: family planning for a sustainable future

John Charnock-Wilson, Managing Director of PopOffsets, gives us an insight into the charity's work over the last few months. PopOffsets is the only project in the world which enables people to offset their carbon emissions by improving the provision of family planning.



Please note, Dr. Jane Goodall and the Jane Goodall Institute do not endorse handling or interfering with wild chimpanzees. The chimpanzee depicted in this photo was rescued and now lives and is cared for in a sanctuary. Photo by Michael Neugebauer.

PopOffsets is based on a simple idea – the more people there are, the more impact there is on the environment. That is why we ask people to offset their environmental impact by supporting us, so that we can support family planning projects around the world.

We have had a busy year: we renewed our support to three highly successful organizations/causes:

- CHASE and their partners in Kenya are conducting rural day clinics, which will provide some 1,500 women with long-acting reversible contraception.
- WINGS Guatemala provides marginalized communities with reproductive health services. Our grant is helping to provide contraception for hundreds of adolescent girls and women, as well as training youth workers who can help to promote family planning.
- World Vasectomy Day (WVD) 2015 was held on 13 November. PopOffsets has supported WVD since its inception three years ago. WVD is growing

exponentially: this year thousands of vasectomies were performed (some 4,000 in Bangladesh alone) by hundreds of doctors world-wide. In the UK some 25 doctors performed several hundred vasectomies.

The next project we hope to support with your help is Dr. Jane Goodall's chimpanzee conservation work in Gombe, Tanzania. Dr. Goodall is a patron of Population Matters, and this project is a perfect example of where PopOffsets can help not only with family planning, but also with preventing environmental degradation. The growing villages put increasing pressure on the chimps' habitat, so part of Jane's project is a family planning clinic. By supporting this initiative we are not only helping women to control their fertility, but are also helping these wonderful endangered animals to thrive in their natural homes.

With your help, PopOffsets has supported projects in Africa, Europe and the Americas. Now we would like to identify suitable projects in Asia. Many of you have worked in Asian countries or have contacts there. If you can suggest a project, please let us know at info@popoffsets.org. We want to make PopOffsets a truly global programme, and build up a pipeline of projects which we can support as we receive donations.

We also ask you to help us in another area. PopOffsets needs more support from the business world. All businesses have carbon footprints, and many of them offset that footprint: some because they have to by law, others because they believe they should. We know that many of you have excellent connections in the world of business. You may have your own firm, or know people of influence. All we ask is a contact, and we'll give them a call.

Smaller families = less carbon, less environmental damage, better life-chances for children, and a sustainable future for all.

www.popoffsets.org

Reverend Thomas Robert Malthus

Kate Duggan



This month marks the 250th anniversary of the birth of Reverend Thomas Robert Malthus, an English cleric and scholar, influential in the fields of political economy and demography. Born in Westcott, Surrey, in February 1766, Malthus was mainly educated at home, before entering Jesus College, Cambridge at 18. At 23, he took orders in the Church of England, becoming a curate for the parish of Wotton, Surrey, and a Fellow of Jesus College four years later. In 1805 he became a professor of history and political economy at the East India Company's college at Haileybury, Hertfordshire.

Over his working life, Malthus wrote many papers, mainly on economic questions, but it is his Essay on the Principle of Population for which he is best known. First published in 1798, the essay was updated six times as Malthus added material, refined his ideas and addressed critical comments. The essay argued that population grows when resources allow it to, but that it multiplies geometrically (1,2,4,8), while food production increases arithmetically (1,2,3,4). Therefore, the number of people tends to increase faster than the means to feed them, leading ultimately to famine, unless people adopt behaviours that limit birth rates. (See more on the following page.)

²³ <http://www.unfpa.org/swop>

²⁴ <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/events/expert-group/24/index.shtml>

As a devout Christian, Malthus advised celibacy before marriage and late marriage over artificial birth control (such as then existed) as a way of limiting family size. He himself married at 42 and had only three children, relatively few for the time.

Malthus believed that a rising population would increase the demands on resources and thus lead to a rise in the cost of living, notably food, and that a larger workforce would tend to keep wages low. Rising prices and depressed wages would prevent the poor from supporting their families, so the population would then fall until the demand for labour again rose above supply.

Malthus's ideas were widely discussed in his lifetime. His theories helped to establish a national population census for the UK and influenced many other works, including Charles Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection. He was criticized by some for ascribing the poverty of the poor to their own proactive behaviour and for opposing poor relief (he felt that it increased food prices and undermined self-reliance). He also supported the Corn Laws (tariffs on imported grains), which raised the price of food, arguing that it protected domestic producers and thus helped make Britain self-sufficient.

With the passage of time, Malthus' analysis has been proven wrong in some respects. The industrial revolution and globalization has meant that in much of the world incomes have risen, although they remain desperately low elsewhere. Modern agriculture methods have resulted in food production keeping pace with the rising population so far, although food certainly isn't evenly distributed and the increase in production has been at the expense of animal welfare and the environment. Although population growth has contributed to famine and conflicts, these have done little to slow the global rise in human numbers.

While Malthus has been criticized for some of his views, he did raise some of the potentially negative implications of population growth at a time when many believed in 'the more the better'. Malthus' world looked very different from ours today. There were then just 10 million people in the UK, compared to more than 60 million today, and the global population in his lifetime was just one billion, one seventh of today's level. The population is now growing at double the rate that Malthus foresaw and shows no sign of abating, with the UN forecasting an additional four billion by the end of the century. He was certainly right about one thing: population cannot grow indefinitely; sooner or later widespread famine, disease and war will halt or reverse the growth, if we do not act to reduce it first.

Malthus' arithmetic ratio

Matthew Nayler

As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the birth of Reverend Thomas Robert Malthus, let us also celebrate one of his most under-rated achievements – his recognition of the arithmetic growth of agrarian output.

The conventional wisdom holds that Malthus predicted a geometrically growing population that would, sooner or later, collide with an arithmetically growing food supply, but that disaster has been averted by agrarian progress far beyond what he could have foreseen. In short, Malthus was a duffer who got it all wrong.

In truth, Malthus's 'arithmetic ratio' is one of the all-time greats of social science modelling. There aren't many. Bear in mind William Petersen's observation: 'If we adopt the cynical definition of a classic, a work that everyone cites and no one reads, then the Essay on Population must be designated a super classic.'

Those who spout the conventional wisdom have neither read Malthus, nor understood the context in which he wrote. His 1798 Essay was a polemic aimed at William Godwin and the other Jacobins who had got rather carried away with the French Revolution and the potential for a perfect society.

Malthus used the arithmetic ratio to show that Godwin's Utopian vision would be crushed by the 'Principle of Population' within 30 years. The essence of the arithmetic ratio is that 'you might double agricultural output over a 25 year period but, if you do, the most you'll get in the next 25 years is a 50 percent increase'. Malthus was predicting the prospects for Godwin's Utopia, not the fate of mankind.

The suggested tendency for population unconstrained to double about every twenty-five years is rarely to be seen in the real world, because the actual observed rate of increase will nearly always have been constrained. What mattered to Malthus was how this happened. He had to look to New England for some idea of what to expect of a perfected society where the means of subsistence were readily available, enabling couples to marry – and to marry young.

Note that although the New England population and agriculture were growing in step, the former was nonetheless seen as growing geometrically and the latter arithmetically. The distinction is not only about the pace of growth but also the mechanism – population grows by multiplying upon itself; agricultural output by addition:

additional 'dressing' applied to the soil, additional technical progress and, for New England, additional land under cultivation.

How does plant breeding fit the model? The early days, starting in Malthus's time with Thomas Knight in Herefordshire, gave a mass of observations gradually allied to tentative explanations. Order replaced chaotic variation after the science of Darwin and Mendel fused in the early 1900s, eventually leading to the green revolution. Did this take agricultural improvement into a new dynamic: a knowledge bank paying compound interest – so growing geometrically?

The fastest rate of increase in world grain production across a 25 year period was the green revolution's 96 percent increase from 768 million tonnes a year for 1952-61, to the 1,503 million tonnes in 1977-86. But it did not double again in the following 25 years, increasing 'only' by 39 percent to 2,088 million tonnes.¹

For Britain, the fastest rate of increase in wheat yields across a 25 year period was the 86 percent achieved between 1968-72 and 1993-97. It is too early to tell what the following 25 years will deliver, but 2006-10 relative to 1981-85 has slowed to a 21 percent advance. Incidentally, that was an extra 1.34 tonnes per hectare, bang-on England's circa 1800 wheat yield – truly 'arithmetic'! Furthermore, wheat yields in England grew 5.8 fold between 1800-2000, well short of the nine-fold Malthusian limit.

Agricultural revolution; industrial revolution; fossil fuels; green revolution – none have contradicted the principle that it might be possible to double output in one 25 year period but not in two consecutive ones. Hence the 'Principle of Population': growth is always constrained. It's the basis for evolution, as both Darwin and Wallace acknowledged. The difference between us and other species is we get to choose how to constrain it.

The Survival game

William Partridge was one of the Optimum Population Trust's early activists. He was contributor and editor of this magazine's predecessor, *Jackdaw*, between 2004 and 2011.

¹ Information taken from the Earth Policy Institute's website, which accompanies the book by Lester Brown, *Full Planet, Empty Plates*.

In the beginning – I can't say how, or why or even by whom – the blue touch-paper was lit and a Universe was created.

Years have now passed. The fiery chaos of the 'big bang' is now a distant, starry heaven, for, as year has followed year, the debris from the explosion, as it has sped outwards into the voids of space, has actually reformed. Gravity. Simple, unceasing, omnipresent gravity is the fount of everything about us, from the trajectory of a dropped pencil to the position of the sun at noon. Yet not one of us has ever thought to worship Gravity. If there is a God, then wasn't gravity, and not us, His real master stroke?

Gravity is the bedrock of existence.

Gravity has set the conditions for both the clockwork regularity of the planets and our own creation, and this planet, presently so benign in its heat, light and material wealth, has been colonized by a force just as remarkable.

We call it Life.

Life on Earth began as a biological happenchance, billions of years ago. It arrived with no pretensions to individual immortality, but a built-in urge to achieve the same through procreation. God, assuming there is one, could have ordered things differently and introduced immortality on Earth, but He did not. Voltaire, admittedly thinking more about human suffering, summed it all up: 'All is for the best in the best of all worlds', meaning that if there was a better world out there God would surely have created it.

So we are left with the urge and power to reproduce and Jesus' promise of life after death. But what an urge it is!

The wider picture only began to emerge in 1859, with Charles Darwin's work *On the Origin of Species*. Evolution. His book aroused emotions that reverberate still and the Old Testament hasn't been the same since. Is Darwinism and 'Big Bang' really the new Book of Genesis?

The probability now is that, if we are all the products of evolution, the question is not how closely we might resemble the apes, but how closely we simply share a common and much more distant microbial past along with all the other species of life on Earth. The question is not how much the Old Testament has been cast into doubt by Darwinism, but where this leaves the New Testament also.

But Life, what of Life? We and everything that exists has it. It is common to every living thing. Don't we, in

the brief time we have it, concern ourselves more about death? But Life is no common thing, and maybe Life is not quite the close-bonded friend we assume it is ...

Deep within the make-up of its trillions of strange and varied physical hosts, Life waits. It has only the one goal – to exist. That is all. But, while the urge for self-preservation understandably grips each and every one of us, Life has another plan, one it pursues with unremitting intensity.

Quietly, in this atrophying world, Life's primal directive from the earliest of times is the unswerving pursuit of survival – and its chosen method is reproduction. Life has no compassion and no introspection. It has no inbuilt control and no stop button – and why should it? Life's plan is straightforward and uncompromising: to survive through the constant renewal brought about by reproduction – and as numerical expansion persists, population pressure has become the commonplace of the world. Competition for living-space and resources inevitably follows and the frustrated energies within Life's primal directive are redirected into the process we now know well thanks to Darwin – evolution. Amid the ever-changing environment, new species, better and better able to compete successfully with equally motivated neighbours, emerge to join the old and take up Life's baton. And maybe we humans are nought but one more of them; superlatively successful, yet still uncomprehending pawns in the larger game, indistinct from the bullfrog and the rabbit.

For Life has this survival-oriented dark side, this perpetual imbalance of new births over stability, that propels all living things towards conflict and misery. We, as thinking, rational creations, at last have a unique and perhaps God-given mental ability to counter it. We can avoid the stresses and the dangers that come with over-breeding and enter a secure life of ease beyond it. But will we use our unique powers or will Life's deep-seated directive prove too strong even for us? That is the question.

Reviews

Homo Sapiens: An Appraisal of Modern Humans. Rajan Jaisinghani

Siri Scientific Press, 2015
ISBN: 978-0992997922

Richard Vernon

Jaisinghani states that the purpose of his book is to sound an alarm over the need to pay serious and urgent attention to warnings from many sources over the risks humanity faces. He has not written a 'science book' on the grounds that the scientific method, with its rigorous pursuit and presentation of proofs, has failed, as have scientists by and large, to persuade the public of the importance and urgency of the issue. His goal is to instil in the lay reader some understanding of what humans are doing to the 'only planet that we know is hospitable to us'.

Chapter 1 explores the several components of the planet's environment: climate, atmosphere, water (oceans and freshwater), the land and biodiversity, and their interconnectivity. Then he describes how we have put ourselves into a woefully inadequate position to manage this planet sustainably, through our current behaviour patterns at personal, national and regional levels (Chap 2); our enormous surge in population following the Industrial Revolution such that our footprint is felt, mostly detrimentally, worldwide (Chap 3); and finally through our modern political and economic systems (Chap 4). Chapter 5 discusses pre-requisites for solutions, of which the author lists six where great change is needed, to be implemented simultaneously: leadership and education are particularly important. Others include voluntary population reduction incentives; change from consumption and growth to conservation; economic valuation changes; and the elimination of wars. Chapter 6 describes a fictional 2050.



No Nonsense Globalization (Fourth edition). Wayne Ellwood

New Internationalist Publications, 2015
ISBN: 978-1-78026-237-6

Claire Coveney

In this fully revised fourth edition of *No Nonsense Globalization*, Ellwood looks at the history of globalization, the speed at which global exchange continues to accelerate and, of course, the most recent financial crisis and its rolling repercussions.

I would never claim to have the most definitive grasp of global economics. However, Ellwood's approach of breaking down economic developments meant I was able to keep a grasp on even the most challenging of concepts.

I did, however, find it to be a difficult read. Despite it being described as 'an accessibly impartial study', I found there to be little impartiality. Even I, a self-proclaimed economics novice, am not ignorant of the impact that the world's largest organizations are having on the world's poorest countries, and understand wholeheartedly that the banks appear to have learnt nothing in the aftermath of the most serious economic crisis since the Great Depression. Nor was I expecting this little book to be filled with optimism, or have all the answers. It's just that I rather hankered for a little objectivity, so I could draw some of my own conclusions.

We do get a little of this in the last few pages. Ellwood considers some of the benefits that globalization has had on some developing countries, as well as giving a few suggestions of alternative strategies that might help create a more democratic financial system.

In all, I found this compact book to be a very interesting and worthwhile read. I would recommend it to anyone wanting to learn more about how globalization has come to be associated with all that is wrong in the world; just don't expect all the answers as to how we can fix it.

John McKeown, God's One Child. Sarah Conly

Oxford University Press, 2016
ISBN: 978-0190203436

Matthew Nayler

Climate change requires a 'one child' policy, argues the philosopher Sarah Conly: one child fulfils parents' interests in having a family almost as effectively as would more, and our right to control our own body is not absolute if 'serious and unjustified harm' results.

Much has already been written about procreative rights and responsibilities; the sticking point is often the acceptable degree of coercion: the means to prevent rather than the right to have.

Conly accepts that sanctions, not mere nudging, will be required, and fines are proposed but, ultimately, she ducks the problem: 'We can discover the best approach once we stop refusing to look at the issue.'

Education will convince us of the need for the policy and contraception provided to make it feasible. That education and the improved provision of contraception could be used to remove the need for the policy is not considered – the contrast throughout is the need to limit fertility versus the desire of people to have more than one child, never the desire of many to avoid having children, nor the incentive structure facing those who want many.

The book could usefully have looked at the move from 'population control' to 'reproductive rights' that happened between Rio '92 and Cairo '94. The 'control' agenda had grinding poverty through over-population as the plague children were to be saved from. Conly doesn't address how grinding poverty due to climate change alters the debate from that which has gone before, when 'control' was roundly rejected.

Move Upstream: a call to solve overpopulation. Karen I. Shragg

Freethought House, 2015
ISBN: 978-0988493834

Peter Graystone

Karen I. Shragg, who lives in Minnesota, is on the advisory board of World Population Balance and campaigns intelligently in the USA. She begins her readable, persuasive and inspiring book by stating her theme: 'Overpopulation is our biggest, most ignored problem ... and it is solvable.'

She makes the point that many activists campaign on 'downstream' issues, like saving the environment and feeding the hungry, while overlooking the main cause of such problems: the 'upstream' issue of population numbers.

So many organizations and influential individuals could be speaking out on overpopulation, but remain silent. She surveys those who could and should be raising the matter and their failure to do so: environmental and human rights organizations, religious faiths, climate change groupings, peace organizations, the media, artists, politicians. She notes the delusional messages given out at so many 'green' events. She gives the purpose of her book as a hope to awaken activists to include in their efforts an awareness of the reality of overpopulation.

Yet she notes that there are 'many wise and creative people speaking out' - including our own David Attenborough; and she has words of comfort for anyone who feels hopeless at the denial and dodging over the issue of overpopulation: concentrate on the journey, knowing that we are on the right path.

This book is thoroughly recommended.

The End of Plenty. Joel Bourne

Scribe Publications/W.W. Norton & Company, 2015
ISBN: 978 0393079531

Matthew Nayler

Joel Bourne studied agronomy, intending to run the family farm, before realizing that farming was no longer a family affair, but had become, disagreeably, 'agribusiness'. Journalism beckoned.

Starting out writing for trade magazines, he reached the dizzy heights of field editor for *Flue-Cured Tobacco Farmer*, before downshifting to cover the rural beat at *National Geographic*. In 2009, following soaring food prices, Bourne penned an article entitled *The End of Plenty*, now expanded into a book. With grain prices halved since their 2008 peak, cornucopians will quibble whether the title requires a question mark.

The first half of the book sets the scene – an excellent discussion of what Malthus was all about (he 'spent his life trying to understand why populations didn't collapse') and an equally enlightened look at Amartya Sen's 'Entitlement' theory, that food affordability matters as much as food availability. The history, benefits, costs and current status of the green revolution are detailed, as are the challenges of feeding China on pork, cars on biofuel, and nine billion 2050ers on anything.

The second half sees Bourne tour the world, appraising some of the suggested roads to plenty anew. There is an element of 'cut and paste' as he borrows from National Geographic pieces, but what it loses in text-book solidity it more than gains in travelogue readability. Copious references are provided for the pernickety. The final port of call is Iran, not for matters of food supply but to celebrate its action on food demand.

Thieves of State: Why Corruption Threatens Global Security.

Sarah Chayes

W.W. Norton & Company, 2015
ISBN: 978-0393239461

Max Kummerow

Corruption leads to insurgencies, violence against women, trafficking of women and, more generally, the chaos and violence of so called 'failed states'. How could one conceive of getting fertility rates down in countries such as Afghanistan or Nigeria, whilst corruption keeps schools under-funded and health care delivery minimal?

Chayes worked as a Peace Corps volunteer, journalist and consultant to the United States military in Afghanistan in one of the rare instances when the U.S. attempted, unsuccessfully, to target corruption. This book has the credibility of an insider's personal story. She builds a strong case showing how frustration has driven populations, victimized by corruption, to radical Islamist rebellions.

Where governments disrespect law and property rights, they risk loss of legitimacy and motivate their overthrow by populations desperate for justice. The more resources the U.S. spends fighting 'terrorism' or trying to prop up these illegitimate and corrupt governments, the more hatred of the U.S. will be generated.

After a decade of U.S. occupation, Afghan fertility rates are still near five children per woman, one of the highest in the world. Infant mortality is 7/100. These appalling statistics show the lack of improvement in the lives of ordinary Afghans.

Chayes' book ends with the insight that corruption comes from the top down and therefore cannot be cured without ending corruption in the U.S., whose military adventures and covert CIA meddling have so often found convenient allies in corrupt local governments.

Also released:

Tipping Point. Toby Clark. ISBN: 978-1310344596

The Human Population Tsunami. Martin Jacoby. ISBN: 978-1492282686

Letters

The current migration crisis has its roots in population growth

David Richardson

A close colleague, who is an environmentalist and fellow at the Templeton Green College, Oxford, Professor Norman Myers, warned the British public in the early 1990s that Europe should expect an enormous influx of migrants from its neighbours, due to war and famine brought about as a result of increased population pressures. How right he was! Because we failed to act on these prophetic words, we appear to be woefully ill-prepared to deal with the current situation.

Understanding the cause of this human tragedy is one thing, but planning an effective response is another. So far we have, as a human race, been extremely inept at dealing with this issue.

Open criticism by one nation of another about their respective family sizes has been considered an inappropriate intervention on a distinctly private matter ... a bit like a discussion on sex! Nations, therefore, have tended only to approach this problem indirectly. They will discuss the impacts of population growth: such as famine, poverty, disease, unemployment, war, migration and shortage of resources, but prefer to avoid drawing the obvious conclusions.

If we do want to address the real causes of population growth, we need to begin to discuss openly the effects of family size, both in the UK and in other countries. The average number of children an Afghan woman will currently bear in her own lifetime is 5.7, which will result in the population doubling inside 24 years. By contrast, the figure in Jersey, where I live, is 1.66 children per women (well below replacement level).

The message which Europe should be giving out as it takes in these migrants, is that Western governments must engage and invest in dynamic family planning and educational policies in the global south. Only then would this be helpful to those countries concerned. Countries which are embroiled in civil war need to know that population pressure is often at the core of their problem.

Unemployment and population

Fred Wright

Unemployment is a modern idea. There is no word for it in classical Latin or Greek or, I suspect, in any other language before the 19th century. If there is no word for it, it can't have been considered a serious matter. Suddenly, in the 19th century, the word occurs, and steadily becomes commoner and commoner. This fact is surely connected with the growth of population.

Before the 19th century, there was apparently no unemployment; people were too busy struggling to survive. Disease, famine and the occasional war served both to limit the size of the population and to occupy men's minds with survival. It was only when men came, at least for a time, to get the better of disease and famine, that on the one hand the population started to increase greatly, and on the other the struggle to survive became less difficult. You might think mankind could have just enjoyed a leisurely life, well fed and disease-free. But the urge to reproduce meant that the gains achieved by scientists, farmers and doctors were always soon swallowed up by the ever increasing population.

The millions who were no longer engaged in the struggle to stay alive had to be kept occupied in other ways. They had to be employed. A conscious effort had to be made to find something, anything, to occupy them. The so-called science of economics, not so much a science as a set of prescriptions for achieving (as it was thought) a well-functioning society, grew and nowadays promotes employment as the main such prescription. What people are employed on matters much less than that they should be employed. Some people make hydrogen bombs and other weapons of war. Others make cigarettes or motor cars. Some people drop litter for others to pick up. Some people get drunk and smash telephone kiosks, with the welcome result that others have to be employed on repair work.

Developers, as they call themselves, are encouraged by governments to knock down good buildings so that people can be employed putting up new ones, or to build houses on agricultural or pristine land. Millennia of human experience are cast aside in a feverish pursuit of 'growth', i.e. paid activity of any kind.

We have been told by economists like Keynes to give up old-fashioned ideas about thrift, living within your means, saving for a rainy day and saving before buying. Spend now, pay later (if at all), was the cry. Inflation (it used to be called debasing the currency)? Good idea, it encourages people to spend today. These economists didn't allow for, and didn't think they needed to allow for, the fact that the world's resources are limited. They thought the world was there for humans to play with and make use of.

What's the answer? One thing is obvious. If there were fewer people, there would be less need to find something, whether useful, useless or actually harmful, for them to do.

Rewarding smaller families

Frances Oliver

Concerning Jason C. Brent's letter in your last issue, I agree with the Chief Executive's response that heavy fines on too many children is coercive and undemocratic, but we could certainly promote a bigger carrot. One idea: a large benefit for a first child, a small one for a second, none for a third. People who want two children could then decide whether to split the benefit between two, or have one child with a big advantage. Another idea might be additional old-age pension for the childless, on the basis that they will have no help and support in their old age.

I also agree with your other correspondent Janet Graham that waiting around for the empowerment of women in developing nations, and developed nations to reduce consumption will be far too little and far too late. Surely a rational discussion of policies is not only desirable but necessary?

And – as the population is increasing at both ends – should we not also discuss the right of the old and ill, or those unable to care for themselves, if they will it, to die?



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