

## Abstracts

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Marriage, migration, servanthood and life-cycle in Yorkshire towns of the later Middle Ages: Some York cause paper evidence  
Jeremy Goldberg, *Clare College, Cambridge*

There is considerable debate about the nature and structure of marriage formation in England before the era of parish registration. This article presents some rare substantive evidence relating to Yorkshire towns of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries drawn from Church court records. A range of demographic data derived from biographical details of witnesses are analysed. Migration, service and age at marriage are all considered, and a coherent pattern of late, companionate marriage is suggested from the sources. The evidence is further analysed in qualitative terms and the social context of marriage formation that underlies this regime is reviewed, particular attention being paid to the independent role of women.

Women's social life and common action in England from the fifteenth century to the eve of the Civil War  
Ralph Houlbrooke, *University of Reading*

Between the 1420s and the Civil War common action by women to protest about grievances or to remedy them was made possible by their being brought together in work and social life. It reflected their own opinions and concerns. This article links the work of previous historians of women's activities and popular disturbances respectively. It also shows that common action by women has a longer history than is often supposed, and throws fresh light on its social, economic and legal contexts. It draws on much unpublished or little known evidence, most of it from court records, especially those of Star Chamber.

**Consumer behaviour and social status in England, 1660–1750**Lorna Weatherill, *University of St Andrews*

The article examines the social dynamics behind the increasing consumption of manufactured goods and clothing in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The analysis involves measuring variations in the frequency of ownership of approximately fifteen household goods in a sample of nearly 3,000 probate inventories from eight parts of England. It emerges that the bulk of consumers came from the middle ranks of society and that household goods could act as markers of rank.

**‘A share of the honeycomb’. Education, emigration and Irish women**David Fitzpatrick, *Trinity College, Dublin*

Between the Famine of the 1840s and the First World War, female access to employment and marriage partners in Ireland diminished. The response of many Irish women to domestic constrictions is reflected in patterns of literacy and migration. Despite initial disadvantage, girls were more likely to be literate than boys by the 1880s, having shown greater eagerness to take advantage of the state education system. Helped by persistent foreign demand for domestic servants, females also became more inclined to emigrate by the turn of the century. The two processes interacted, Irish schooling being viewed by many as a necessary preparation for service or marriage overseas.

**German socialism, the state and family policy, 1918–33**David Crew, *University of Texas at Austin*

The Revolution of 1918–19 did not produce socialism in Germany. The democratisation of politics after 1918 did, however, appear to offer the Social Democrats and the working class the opportunity to use the state to construct elements of ‘socialism’ within the existing capitalist order. The Weimar welfare system was to be one of the foundations for the future socialist society. Social Democrats supported comprehensive state intervention into the everyday lives of thousands of ordinary men, women and children with the aim of raising living standards and promoting stable family lives. This article discusses the nature and the effects of this ‘family policy’ and it considers some of the political implications of the activities of the Weimar welfare state.