

This is my first editorial since joining the Journal team earlier this year and I would like to start by expressing my thanks to Steve King and Carol Beardmore for offering me the chance to contribute to the development of such a great journal. The unique way in which this Journal connects academic and community scholars is something to be protected and cherished. I first became aware of *Family and Community History* as an MA History student at the University of Exeter. My then personal tutor, Moira Donald, showed me a copy and suggested I submit an article. That article proved to be my first publication, a very proud moment. I have yet to meet the members of FACRS, due to the COVID-19 crisis, but I very much look forward to doing so over the coming months. Carol and I are very keen to move the Journal on in ways that can benefit the Society as well as the wider field of scholars working in the areas of family and community. We are especially focused on including more articles from postgraduate and early career historians and we hope to develop new projects with FACRS. More of which is to come.

All of this happened, of course, in the context of much more pressing issues, a continuing global pandemic. This is the second editorial to be shaped by this crisis. There are numerous outcomes from the crisis deserving of mention here. Firstly, the crisis in Higher Education. This has gradually built throughout the lockdown and morphed into an ever more serious set of issues. Initially academics were concerned about finishing off teaching in the Spring Term, then how the burden of marking throughout the summer would affect home and family life. Later in the summer issues around student recruitment and the numbers of students that would defer became the main concern and the debacle of Ofqual, CAGS and the A-Level results has only added to these anxieties.

Throughout all of this the main concern of every colleague I've spoken to has been for the welfare and experience of our students, despite the very real threat of redundancies and diminished contracts. Those in government and elsewhere who consider the 'Post-92' part of the sector to be 'phony', especially if it offers humanities degrees, ought to consider the great professionalism and wisdom of academics in these institutions. They might also consider the way they provide widened access at a time when inequality has been laid bare for all to see by COVID-19, yet another episode in the human experience of the relationship between dearth, disease and death.

The much higher proportion of infections and deaths for BAME peoples really illustrated the way this relationship works. This was a part of the Black Lives Matter protest, which in Britain rightly came to focus on the uses and abuses of history. The demonstrations around the Edward Colston Statue in Bristol harbour, his role in the slave trade and the political symbolism of memorialising those who tortured and murdered slaves, really emphasised the significance of history and the way it can (and should be) politicised. Though the fires of this movement may have lessened somewhat in recent weeks the embers will no doubt continue to burn and surely it is the sincere hope of all of us that it produces some lasting change. Certainly the 'decolonisation' process currently going on with university curriculums is a very positive outcome – if we want to improve access and achievement we must make our subjects as relevant to as many people as possible.

All these events are of great relevance to family and community historians and no doubt our readers will have taken great interest in them as I'm sure they will in our three articles in this volume. Our first article by Liz Lowry explores the household textiles for practical rather than decorative use. Liz uses probate inventories and sales catalogues to explore how these items were acquired, what meanings they held for their owners and how they were maintained and stored. The article considers the role that linens played in sociability and comfort within the country house, an increasingly important focus of attention for historians in this area and one that connects usefully to the emerging field of emotions. What arises out of this research is some beautifully textured detail

on the consumption and ownership of everyday linens in the country house, data that will be of great service to a range of different scholars.

In our second Olwen Purdue focuses on a nineteenth century case of alleged abuse of poor law children boarded out from Belfast to a remote rural community called Hannahstown. The 1872 Poor Law Enquiry forms the main source for this paper. The prevailing attitudes towards these destitute children and the welfare services designed to help them out of the workhouse, although complex and layered, can be summarised as 'NIMBY' or 'not in my backyard'. The case in question lay at the intersection of wider changes in the urban environment of Belfast and in attitudes to child welfare.

Our third and final article, from Colin and Marilyn Pooley, explores migration and the movement of people, a subject of great relevance in our world today. This is a microhistory of one diarist, Betty, and her experiences of short-range migration from a farm in a remote part of upland Lancashire to a suburban community. This was a significant change in Betty's everyday life but the memories and cultures of farming and rural community stayed with her. Overall this diary, and theories of mobility underpinned by this microhistory illustrate the importance and significance of mobility for shaping perceptions over the long term and for shaping a range of other aspects of social life.

It only remains to thank our contributors to this volume for their fascinating work, to the book reviewers for their pieces and to thank Dick Hunter who, as ever, has done a sterling job in getting all the book reviews commissioned and completed.

Mark Rothery