

**Moving Home and Changing Lives: Diary Evidence for the Study of Migration and
Mobility.**

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Abstract

This paper examines the ways in which connections to family, community and associated activities changed following a residential move. Evidence is taken from a single diary written by a woman who lived in north Lancashire in the twentieth century. Initially the diarist retained quite strong links back to her home community, but these gradually weakened over time. However, the activities that she undertook changed relatively little, they were simply transferred to new locations and contacts. The diarist came from a farming family and one constant in her life was a strong interest in agriculture and rural life. This continued long after she ceased to be directly involved with farming. In conclusion we use a selection of other diaries to consider more general issues relating to the use of diary material to study migration and mobility.

Key words

Migration, Mobility, Community, Family, Travel, Diaries

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Introduction: linking migration and mobility

Residential migration impacts on everyday life in many ways. It can fundamentally change personal circumstances with regard to factors such as employment, income and housing quality; it may alter contact and interaction with friends and family; it may create difficulties of communication and cultural dissonance; and it can require adjustment to new physical environments and surroundings. It is usually assumed that long distance migration between distant and culturally different nations creates the most severe disruptive effects, and most research in migration history has tended to focus on such moves,¹ but shorter distance moves within a single country or locality will also require adjustments to routines and everyday lived experiences.² The impact of a move on a person's life will also vary with a wide range of other factors, including the age and life-cycle stage of the migrant, the length of residence at a previous address, the degree of attachment to a locality, and the commitments and contacts that have been constructed there.

In this paper we first examine the residential move of one woman over a short distance in north Lancashire in the twentieth century and explore the ways in which this relatively minor residential move altered her everyday life. To what extent, in what ways and over what time period did she alter her everyday activities to reflect her changed location? Did she cling to old contacts and places or forge new routines and friendships? The detailed analysis of a long run of personal diaries allows such questions to be answered with much more precision than is usually the case in studies of migration history. This micro-historical approach to migration and place attachment undertaken through a focus on one woman allows the exploration of

small-scale variations in everyday mobility and routines.³ We argue that although such changes may be individually insignificant, cumulatively they constructed an important fabric of everyday life that supported the diarist throughout her life. Furthermore, we demonstrate how the diarist negotiated her personal attachments to places and people following a residential move, maintaining some connections while forging new relationships and interests.

We then examine some of the strengths and weaknesses of using personal testimonies written in diaries and journals for the study of migration and mobility in the past, drawing on evidence from the diaries of some 60 different authors. This provides contextual information on the use of diaries in historical research and places the life and mobility of the diarist within a broader context. The research is primarily empirical but draws on conceptual frameworks from mobility theories and concepts of place attachment. There is a range of research in geography, psychology and related social science disciplines on the ways in which people form attachments to people and places, on the action spaces through which they move in their everyday lives, and the ways in which this might influence their day to day mobility.⁴ The so-called ‘new mobility paradigm’ developed by Sheller and Urry⁵ is particularly relevant. In brief, they argue for the centrality of mobility to everyday life, and the ways in which the mobility experience itself helps to shape other aspects of social and cultural life. Detailed analysis of one set of diaries provides empirical evidence to support such theories.

The diary

The diarist (Betty)⁶ was born in April 1928 on a farm in a remote upland part of north Lancashire (England). She began her diary in January 1942 aged 13, just three months before she left school, and she kept a detailed record of her activities every year until shortly before

her death in November 2018. In an interview Betty said that she started keeping a diary because she was encouraged by her schoolteacher who said that she had good handwriting and should keep practising it after she left school. Diary writing then became a daily habit that she continued for almost all her life. We have access to all her diaries, and one of us was also able to interview Betty shortly before she died. The entries are clearly written and appear to provide a brief, mainly factual, account of almost all Betty's everyday activities. In this paper we concentrate on the first 40 years of the diary from 1942 to 1982. The diaries have been read in their entirety and all relevant mentions of mobility, migration and associated activities transcribed. This has produced some 47,000 words of notes. For the purposes of this paper selected extracts have been used to illustrate the argument made.

The family had moved some 15km to another upland farm when Betty was a young girl (and before the first diary was written); they remained there until October 1952 when, mainly due to old age, her father gave up farming, and Betty (now age 24) moved some 14km with her parents to a semi-detached house in a suburban community close to a small town in north Lancashire. Although at this time the locality was still semi-rural, with fields adjacent to the house, this was a very different environment compared to the remote farm on which Betty had grown up. Her mother died in 1969 and her father in 1977 after a long period of illness, but Betty remained single all her life and lived in the same house until she went into a care home shortly before she died. While Betty lived on the family farm, she worked in the house and on the farm providing extra labour for the family business but, after her move to a more suburban location, she had to go out to work and became the main wage earner in the household. She had several different jobs: cleaning in the homes of nearby families; working at a chicken farm; mainly office-based work with a local agricultural merchant, in a garden centre, at a fuel supplier, and lastly at a cotton mill. Her transport modes also changed markedly over the period under study. When she lived on the farm almost all her local travel

was on foot or by bike, with occasional lifts in the car with her father, and on the bus for rare longer trips to the nearest towns. After her move she initially continued to cycle regularly, especially to and from work, but increasingly during the 1950s both walking and cycling diminished and she mainly travelled by bus. She passed her driving test in 1958 and from this point travelled mainly by car, initially using her father's car (he now rarely drove), but in 1964 she bought her own car and from that point rarely travelled by any other means. In short, her modal shifts represent a classic transformation from low impact travel to high impact automobile-dominated mobility.⁷ Although the residential move that Betty made in 1952 was over a relatively short distance, the relocation did not only necessitate a change in her employment. During her life she gradually shifted her allegiances from one locality to another, preserving some contacts and activities from the past but also creating new ones. In this paper we now examine in some detail the ways in which Betty's short move from a rural farm to a suburban location altered her links to people, places and everyday activities.

Links to people

Family and friends were important to Betty. Like many who grew up within a close-knit farming community, she seemed to know people all over the locality (within a radius of at least 35km of her parents' farm) and almost all her immediate family continued to live locally. As a result of frequent inter-marriage between farming families, she seemed to have an almost limitless supply of 'aunts', 'uncles' and 'cousins' (exact relationships are often hard to determine) scattered over the district, but all within easy visiting distance. A common weekend activity throughout her life was to go (initially) for a bike ride or walk, and later in life for a drive (at first with her father and later alone or with a friend) and to call

unannounced on family or friends. Two examples from 1942/43 are typical of the very local visits that Betty and her family paid to relatives who lived and farmed nearby:

Mother, Dad and I went to Clough [by car] ... came back to Crow Trees, and then home, I was walking [c.4km], arrived home 7.30;’⁸

Went to Crow Trees to see L, she came up to Grandads and there my chain broke, so I had to walk home.⁹

Some ten years later, soon after the family left their farm, this pattern of activities continued in much the same way, with frequent (now longer) trips back to see the friends and relatives that had previously lived nearby, including helping on the farm when appropriate:

Mother and I went on 8.10 bus to Preston, then on 9.30 to Chipping, got off at H Lane walked to Crow Trees, was helping to haytime. Dad brought us home at night and stoped [sic]’¹⁰

Dad took me to the bottom of D Lane, and I biked the rest of the way to Lower Core in the afternoon, at night M, B and C came to Lower Core, and would bring me home.¹¹

However, by the early 1960s such visits had become much less frequent and were usually combined with outings for reasons other than making a social call. Thus in 1961 just one visit to Crow Trees (where close relatives still lived) was recorded: ‘Mother and I went to Chipping for L, and we went to R, called at L, after tea Mother and I came home picked up my Dad and we went to Crow Trees. Home at 12.’¹² There were no visits in 1962. In 1971 the Crow Trees relatives moved to a new farm slightly nearer to where Betty now lived (about 12km distant), but recorded contact remained intermittent and mostly occurred at first when

Betty's family helped with their relatives' move, and again in 1977 when Betty's father became seriously ill and Betty kept her aunt (her father's sister) informed:

M from Catforth rang at 9.30. I went to Catforth for dinner, then Aunty S and I went to Sharoe Green¹³ about 3pm, we left at 6.30pm, went back to Catforth, I left at 10pm. Home at 10.20.¹⁴

Thus, over a period of some 20 years contact with these close relatives diminished after Betty moved away from the immediate vicinity. Initially visits were frequent but by the 1970s they had become infrequent and mainly instrumental – focused on particular events or responsibilities – rather than purely social.

The network of friends that Betty met for recreation and social activities also shifted over time. Initially her main friends were at a nearby farm. She walked or cycled to see them several times a week and went on outings with them: 'Night I walked to Lower Core, went in the taxi with [six names] to Bertram Mills Circus on Moor Park [Preston], ... Stood up for 2/6.'¹⁵ As in the previous example, these contacts initially persisted after Betty moved away from the immediate locality, but after a few years they diminished rapidly. Older friendships were replaced by new acquaintances, most often generated through work, church or the Women's Institute (WI), and contact with her previous friends tended to be only for special occasions such as birthdays or weddings: 'Mother, Dad and I went to church. We went to Chipping, I got out at Lower Core, and stood Godmother to P along with D and E. Home 11.15.'¹⁶ However, distance was not the only factor producing shifting friendships. Many of the friends of about her own age whom she had socialised with when she lived at the farm were getting married and having families. Inevitably their priorities and social activities changed, and Betty found herself mixing more with single women much younger than she was. Once she could drive, Betty seemed particularly popular with her younger work

colleagues as she could provide transport for outings at a time when most young women did not have access to a car:

D J [work] 7.15 to 4.15. Rushed home got washed and changed & went to DJs, picked up E and V, went to Blackpool & was joined by the others. We went to the “Lobster Pot” for our tea, then to the “Tower Lounge Bar” for a drink. Home 11.15.¹⁷

Betty did forge some new friendships with women of her own age, and these became increasingly important after her father died in 1977 and she was left on her own. Interactions were mainly focused on the church, Mothers’ Union and the Women’s Institute, with a few female friends that she met regularly, together with a small number of relatives who lived close by and with whom she sometimes undertook longer trips away:

GFS [work] 8.30 to 5pm. ... A came, we were picked up by coach run by St Thomas’s church, Garstang, and picked up some more from Churchtown, we went to the Winter Gardens at Blackpool to the Mothers’ Union Diocesan Ball. ... Home at 1.30pm.¹⁸

Ir and I went to Preston. Put the car on the market car park. We went to the bus station and booked a week’s holiday the 2nd week of Preston Holiday Week, to Bournemouth, with Premier Motors. We had a look round, got back to Ir’s for tea. I left at 8.30pm.¹⁹

These latter friendships were the ones that persisted for the rest of her life.

Links to place

Clearly personal connections to people, places and activities are closely intertwined, and many of the people that Betty socialised with lived in localities that were also important to

her. In this section we focus on those locations and environments that seemed to be of particular importance and meaning for Betty, and we examine the ways in which they persisted over time despite her moving between two rather different environments. The village close to the farm in which Betty lived for the first few years of her life (before the start of the diary) continued to be important to her. The village churchyard was the location of the family grave and included the grave of her only sibling, a brother who had died very young. Betty and her parents regularly visited the churchyard to tend the grave and sometimes to attend a church service; later the ashes of both Betty's parents were buried in this grave and she continued to visit the grave after their deaths. Although Betty had only lived near this location for a short time as a young child, the presence of the family grave gave it meaning for her and drew her back throughout her life:

We went to Whitwell through the Trough of Bowland, and called in at Chipping.

Planted some crocus on the grave. Home at 11pm'²⁰

GFS [work] 8.30 to 2.45. J, P and I went in P' car to Whitwell Churchyard to intern

[sic] Dads ashes, at 4pm we went into Whitwell Hotel for a cup of tea.²¹

The village and surrounding farms close to where she lived until 1952 were also important to her, but these were linked as much to the people she knew as to the places themselves.

Although initially she returned frequently to these places, over time such visits became less regular and were mainly confined to special events. What Betty did continue to do was to drive quite long distances around the fells where she grew up and clearly took great pleasure in being in that upland environment. Sometimes she would combine the drive with a visit (usually unannounced), but other outings would be simply for the pleasure of seeing the landscape and visiting old haunts. This was something she did with her parents after they moved, and continued with long after both her mother and father were dead: 'After dinner we

went through the Trough of Bowland, stopped at J W's in Dolphinholme, we went to Whitwell, back by Chipping and Bleasdale. Home 6.30. Nice day but very cold'.²² Betty also seemed very fond of the coast, and in the summer she and her parents would drive to one of the small Lancashire resorts or other coastal communities. Often, she would do no more than have a short walk or just sit in the car looking at the view while knitting or sewing. She and he family sometimes took a packed tea and ate it in the car before returning home. Such outings, which continued after her parents died, were very low key but clearly had meaning for Betty and gave her pleasure:

After tea we went onto Cockerham Sands, sat in the car knitting.²³

After dinner we went to Morecambe and sat in the car on the prom, near Regent Road, home 9.30.²⁴

In many ways Betty's connections to places and environments were more stable over time than her links to people. In part this may be because environments do not change in the ways in which people can (for instance many of her early friends married and had lives that took them away from Betty), but there is also a sense that, having grown up in the countryside, Betty retained a strong affection for both upland and coastal landscapes. She rarely directly expressed emotion or even commented on a view in her diary, although she did rigorously record her reactions to the weather each day, even rather incongruously writing 'smashing day'²⁵ at the end of her diary entry on the day her mother died.

Links to activities

Inevitably the activities that one undertakes alter with age and life-cycle stage, but it is also possible to identify continuities and changes in the use of leisure time in the context of a

residential move. Like most people much of Betty's time was taken up with paid work or housework and, during quite long periods as her parents aged, with providing a caring role for them. These (for her) non-negotiable commitments took up much of her time. However, Betty was an active person and made the most of evenings and weekends to undertake a range of activities both alone and with others. Throughout her life she was a keen needlewoman; she attended classes in Preston for many years and made many of her own clothes. Together with baking (which she enjoyed) and household chores, this occupied much of her time at home in both locations. She never recorded reading a book and only rarely mentioned a magazine or newspaper. The family bought their first TV set in October 1963, but Betty only rarely recorded watching TV programs and she would have had limited time in her busy schedule of other activities to do so.

The way in which Betty's short residential move affected her activities, beyond mundane chores such as where she did her everyday shopping, can be seen through her changing connections with the farming community. When she lived on the family farm, almost her entire life revolved around agriculture. Not only did she live and work on the farm, but almost all her friends and neighbours worked in agriculture, and she was an active member of the local branch of the Young Farmers' Club which provided many of her outings and other social activities:

Helped to milk. Was at Chipping at 9. Went on the Young Farmers Club trip, which went to Ingleton we went round the falls and then to Blackpool, to the circus, good show. Arrived just after 12, home 12.30.²⁶

After Betty moved from the farm, she did not completely sever her connections with farming but contact quite rapidly diminished. She only mentioned the Young Farmers' Club on four

occasions after her move, and in each instance this was to return to her home community for a special event such as the annual ball:

Went to Miss C's 9 to 3 [work]. Had a bath. I went on 6.30 bus to Preston, and caught [sic] 7.30 to Chipping, went to Young Farmers Club Ball, Dad brought me home and stoped [sic] here. Home at 1 pm [am].²⁷

The other main contact that she maintained with the agricultural community she left was through the annual agricultural show. She and her family regularly returned for this event and used it as an occasion to see farming friends and relatives that they may not have interacted with for some time:

Wallings [work] 8 to 9. Went on 7.15 bus and came home with R. Dad and I went to Chipping show, it was a grand day. Dad went to F, and I went to Dance. Home 12.15.²⁸

We went to Chipping Show, got there at about 2pm, saw quite a few people I knew who stoped [sic] to speak to me.²⁹

Betty also continued to go to some other events organised by the farming community, especially annual dinners of relevant associations which were usually held in Blackpool. For a period Betty's cousin (P), to whom she seemed very close, was president of the Ladies section of the local National Farmers' Union (NFU), and this gave Betty easy access to relevant events long after she left farming herself:

D J 7.15-4.45 [work]. Tom N called and we went to Blackpool with F & D, T, J and M, to Shorthorn Breeders Annual Dinner Dance at Winter Gardens, Blackpool. I took our car, & Tom got lost going and coming home',³⁰

Was ready for 6.30pm and R picked me up. We went to Winter Gardens, Blackpool into the Spanish Ballroom, to the Ladies NFU Ball, we had reserved places through P being President ... got home at 1.45pm [sic].³¹

Moving away from the farming community in which she grew up did mean that many of her ties to agriculture were weakened, but they were never extinguished completely. She continued to attend some agricultural events and some of her relatives (including her cousin P) continued to farm. Perhaps the diminishing nature of the influence of farming on Betty's life can be seen from the diaries that she chose to use for her entries. At first, she simply wrote in old school exercise books or notebooks, but from 1946 to 1951 she bought various small printed year diaries. However, for the first time in 1952 (the year her family moved from the farm) she bought a 'Preston and District Farmers' Trading Society' diary and, except for 1954, continued to buy a Preston Farmers' diary until 1964. This suggests a deliberate attempt to maintain a link to farming after her move. However, from 1965 onwards all her diaries were standard shop-bought diaries with no connection to agriculture. It can be suggested that some 12 years after leaving farming, Betty's connections with the agricultural community were beginning to diminish (though not disappear completely) and were being replaced with activities more firmly based in the locality in which she now lived. There is little evidence that Betty adopted any new pastimes to replace her links with the farming community, but rather that things she did before became slightly more important and shifted their focus to the new locality. For example, she continued to be heavily involved in the church, Mothers' Union and Women's Institute, visited and went out with friends, and started going to local events (including the agricultural show held in her nearest town), but all now in her new location. Three examples illustrate this:

Wallings 8 to 12.30. Dad brought me to work, came home with J to Garstang at 12.30.

Mother and I went to Garstang on 4.45 bus and saw the prossionion [sic, procession],

had a walk round the fair afterwards to see who was there, lots of Chippingers, came home with Dad in car at 9.30.³²

Night took Dad up to Ainspool. P and I went with the Mothers Union to Pilling M U Hot Pot Supper and slides on America. P went to Harrisons, I came home on the coach, went for Dad. Home 11pm.³³

I went to St Helens for 10.30 service. Had a bit of fun getting home with the car, M came and put some oil in the breaks [sic], this did the trick.³⁴

During the period studied in this paper, Betty's activities rarely took her far from her local area and most trips by public bus or car were within a 35km radius of her home. The longest journey that she undertook independently (as opposed to on an organised coach outing) was to visit a cousin (M) who originally lived locally, and with whom Betty spent quite a lot of time when she lived on the farm, but in 1951 M married and moved south to Worcestershire. Betty's first trip to Worcestershire came in 1957 when she went to stay with M for a week and travelled (alone) by bus via Liverpool and Cheltenham. However, it was another 21 years before Betty repeated this trip, this time driving with a friend. On this occasion, and some others when she drove somewhere new, she had some difficulty finding her way:

Up at 4.45, left Garstang 5.40 arrived Liverpool 7.15, had to change on to Cheltenham bus, with no conductor, Warrington, Whitchurch, Wellington, Bridgenorth, Kidderminster, Worcester 12.30. Pershore 1.40. Wrote home, went for a walk round with M and kids.³⁵

Got up at 7am. Hovered [sic] the car out. Got washed and ready. J came at 9.15, R went at about 9.30. J and I sent off to Worcester, missed the M5, carried on the M6, came off the M6 into Walsall and West Bromwich, got back on the M5, then we stoped [sic] at

a motorway service station. J then started to drive and finished the journey to Pershore.

Arrived at M's at 2.30. Had a walk round Pershore.³⁶

Most other longer excursions, usually day or evening trips organised by the local church or Women's Institute, were by coach, but by the time Betty was in her 50s she and a friend also booked at least one longer holiday per year through a coach tour company. Such activities became increasingly common later in her life and meant that she did not have to drive long distances:

Had a quick tea then I went to get the coach at 6.20pm to Bolton to the Octagon Theatre, run by the Social Committee of St Helen's church to see 'The Merry-Go-Round', afterwards we had a pizza and salad in the coffee bar, we arrived back home at 11.30.³⁷

Got up at 5.30am, had breakfast and packed. P arrived at 7.15am, picked I up at 7.30am, went to the bus station, boarded our coach and was off by 8am. Via M6 & M5 to Stroud, in to Tetbury, Malmesbury, to Devizes, had our buttys, then across Salisbury Plain to visit Stonehenge, on to Bournemouth to the 'Fern Mount Hotel', arriving at 4.30pm.³⁸

Reflections on the use of diaries to study mobility and migration

Previous research using diary evidence has demonstrated that most young women in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had the ability to move relatively freely around their local areas, and from time to time to travel much further afield.³⁹ They did, of course, encounter constraints but for the most part were able to negotiate these. Betty was no exception and her mobility was not dissimilar from that of others of the time, though probably more spatially constrained than some. This microhistory of one person over 40 years of their life has demonstrated the ways in which even a short-distance move can lead to changes in everyday

patterns of activity, mobility and personal contacts. At the same time some other links and activities are maintained, though in the case of Betty they tended to diminish and alter over time. However, any historical analysis is only as good as the sources that are available, and no personal diary is likely to reveal everything that an individual did. In this final section we examine some of the specific issues that arise when using personal diaries to study migration and mobility.

The more generic limitations of all life writing – including factors such as legibility, survival, a lack of representation of some groups of people, and the tendency for diaries to under-record more routine and mundane events – are taken for granted and are not discussed in detail here.⁴⁰

The diaries that Betty wrote are in many ways unusually informative and give an insight into often neglected aspects of ordinary life.⁴¹ In this paper we focus on migration and mobility, but other aspects of the diarist's everyday routine could also be explored. Most entries are relatively long and seem to detail most of her daily activities, usually in chronological order. There is little time in her day for significant unrecorded activities. However, while providing a quite detailed factual account of her day, Betty's diaries give very few clues about motives or feelings. Only rarely does she explain why she was doing something – and indeed she may not have thought consciously about this at the time – and she also very rarely expressed opinions or emotions. Although a sense of completeness is given by the diligent way in which Betty wrote her diary, she also kept much hidden. What she was really thinking is rarely revealed. With a view to studying mobility and migration in the context of individual life circumstances, we have now read diaries from some 60 different people, and such characteristics are not uncommon. Strongly expressed feelings, emotions and reasons for an action are most frequently recorded in situations that are perceived to be unusual, stressful or risky. These are not necessarily typical of the everyday experiences that formed the bulk of a diarist's life.

Not surprisingly, emotions were most often expressed in the context of romance, often in conjunction with some form of travel as much courtship took place outside the home. The words of a young female diarist living in south Manchester in the first decade of the twentieth century are typical:

It was a beautiful 'starlight' night and Norman took me for a walk through Spath Road etc. and behind the 'Park'. As we were coming down Northen Grove we saw a large 'Comet' fall from the sky, it looked lovely, just like a large rocket.⁴²

Strong views were even more likely to be expressed on the rare (recorded) occasions when travel led to unwanted encounters. Annie Rudolph's⁴³ diary of her life in London in 1923 when she was 17 is more expressive than most in that she frequently displayed annoyance or irritation when her life did not go as she wished. One example of how she dealt with unwanted male attention while walking home from college is typical:

Had a most annoying experience this evening. I was returning from evening school. On my ownsome of course. I heard quick foot marks behind me, and a voice said 'do you mind if I walk with you? I'm going your way!' I got the wind up and crossed the road, but would you believe it, he crossed over too. Isn't it absurd to walk zig-zag to avoid someone one doesn't know, so I said 'I don't know you and don't want to know you. If you don't skiddadle – in other words vamoose – I'll call someone'. So he said 'Now don't talk like that kid. I want to know you '. But I turned my nose up and flew!!!
Positively.⁴⁴

More frequently diaries gloss over the inconveniences of travel, and it often feels as though the reader is gaining only a partial picture of how a diarist felt. Although all the diaries we have read were never meant to read by anyone other than the diarist, it does feel as though there is a degree of reserve in what was written. Possibly, something that could be thought or even said

could not comfortably be written down. Two examples of travel inconveniences from the diary of Gerald Fitzmaurice illustrate this point. Gerald was a young lawyer in London and recorded the inconvenience of changing trains between different railway companies when travelling in the west of England, and how he and friends dealt with the unreliability of motor cars on an evening out. It is likely that what he said or thought at the time was more vehement (and less polite) than what he wrote:

‘At Yeovil I had to take a taxi and go for 2 ½ miles across country to get to the Junction, the Southern Station [the other was GWR].’⁴⁵

‘[I was} greeted with the news that the car wouldn’t function, or rather, its lights wouldn’t. After attempts to hire a car and/or get a taxi to take us, it ended by our going on John Arthur’s motor bike...he driving, Cecily in the side car and myself on the pillion, a cold night and a bumpy road and some 12 to 15 miles. We arrived very late which was as well as it was a rotten dance.’⁴⁶

Residential migration is not a frequent event for most people and thus is only occasionally recorded directly in a diary. There may be hints about the reasons for a move – though these are rarely spelled out explicitly – and the diarist sometimes offers comments on the suitability and advantages of a new home. However, the process of moving itself is rarely recorded in detail, probably because there was simply not time for diary writing. Two examples of these types of entries come first from the diary of a middle-aged man living comfortably in London in the mid-nineteenth century and, secondly, from a young lady who moved with her family in the first decade of the twentieth century:

We think of leaving Kensington and removing to Notting Hill Square, when we can find a house – as it will be better for Mrs L and the children.⁴⁷

A very busy day unpacking and arranging. My room is so nice and I have a dear little sitting room. It is nice having a new home and starting again. Grown up!⁴⁸

Like most historical sources personal diaries provide only a partial perspective on the life of a diarist. Most do provide reasonably detailed factual information, allowing at least the rudiments of everyday activities (including travel) to be deduced. However, much is left unsaid, and it is rare for a diary to provide detailed explanations of why particular decisions about a move (or any other event) were taken, or to record the feelings and emotions that accompanied those actions. Elaboration beyond what is written explicitly in a diary necessarily strays into the realms of speculation, and there is a risk of ascribing motives and feelings that did not exist at the time. While personal diaries are a rich source of historical information, their limitations must always be recognised and respected.

Notes

¹. For instance: S. Sinke, *Dutch immigrant women in the United States, 1880-1920* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2002); D. Hoerder, *Cultures in contact: World migrations in the second millennium* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2002); A. Hammerton, and A. Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms: A Life History of British Postwar Emigration to Australia* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

². L. Moch, *Paths to the city: regional migration in nineteenth-century France*. (London: Sage, 1983); C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, *Migration and mobility in Britain since the eighteenth century* (London: UCL Press, 1998).

³. On microhistory see: I. Szijártó, 'Four arguments for microhistory', *Rethinking History* 6, no. 2 (2002): 209-215; J. Brewer, 'Microhistory and the histories of everyday life', *Cultural and Social History* 7, no. 1 (2010): 87-109.

⁴. On mobility see for instance: M. Sheller and J. Urry, 'The new mobilities paradigm', *Environment and planning A* 38, no. 2 (2006): 207-226; T. Cresswell and P. Merriman, eds., *Geographies of mobilities: Practices, spaces, subjects* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); J. Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007); On place attachment see for instance M. Hidalgo and B. Hernandez, 'Place attachment: Conceptual and empirical questions', *Journal of environmental psychology* 21, no. 3 (2001): 273-281; I. Altman and S. Low, eds., *Place attachment* (New York: Plenum Press, 1992).

⁵. Sheller and Urry, 'The new mobilities paradigm'.

⁶. The diarist has given permission for the diaries to be used, and for her to be identified, in research and publications. Some other personal names (and selected place names) have been anonymised as the individuals have not given permission to be identified and may still be living.

⁷. J. Urry, 'The "system" of automobility', *Theory, Culture & Society* 21, nos. 4-5 (2004): 25-39; P. Merriman, 'Automobility and the geographies of the car', *Geography Compass* 3, no. 2 (2009): 586-599.

⁸. Diary of Betty (B), Sunday October 11th 1942.

⁹. Diary of B, Sunday April 18th 1943.

¹⁰. Diary of B, Saturday 27th June 1953.

¹¹. Diary of B, Sunday August 16th 1953.

¹². Diary of B, Tuesday May 16th 1961.

¹³. The Preston hospital where B's father was being cared for.

¹⁴. Diary of B, Sunday April 24th, 1977.

¹⁵. Diary of B, Tuesday June 14th, 1949.

¹⁶. Diary of B, Sunday September 15th, 1957.

¹⁷. Diary of B, Friday December 18th, 1960.

¹⁸. Diary of B, Friday November 2nd, 1979.

¹⁹. Diary of B, Saturday January 9th, 1982.

²⁰. Diary of B, Saturday October 26th, 1963.

²¹. Diary of B, Wednesday November 16th, 1977.

²². Diary of B, Friday March 28th, 1975.

²³. Diary of B, Sunday June 10th, 1962.

²⁴. Diary of B, Thursday June 16th, 1966.

²⁵. Diary of B, Thursday October 16th, 1969.

²⁶. Diary of B, Saturday August 23rd, 1952.

²⁷. Diary of B, Wednesday March 11th, 1953.

²⁸. Diary of B, Saturday August 28th, 1954.

²⁹. Diary of B, Saturday August 28th, 1982.

³⁰. Diary of B, Wednesday April 20th, 1960.

³¹. Diary of B, Thursday February 28th, 1980.

³². Diary of B, Monday May 30th, 1955.

³³. Diary of B, Wednesday January 3rd, 1973.

³⁴. Diary of B, Sunday September 24th, 1978.

³⁵. Diary of B, Monday September 2nd, 1957.

³⁶. Diary of B, Saturday July 8th, 1978.

³⁷. Diary of B, Friday April 18th, 1980.

³⁸. Diary of B, Sunday July 25th, 1982.

³⁹. C. Pooley, S. Pooley and R. Lawton, *Growing up on Merseyside in the late-nineteenth century: the diary of Elizabeth Lee* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010); C. Pooley and M. Pooley, 'Young women on the move: Britain c1880-1950', *Social Science History* (in press).

⁴⁰. For discussion of some of these issues see: S. Sherman, 'Diary and autobiography', in *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660-1780*, ed. J. Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 623-48; M. Hewitt, 'Diary, autobiography and the practice of life history', in *Life Writing and Victorian Culture*, ed. D. Amigoni (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 21-39; J. Moran, 'Private lives, public histories: the diary in twentieth-century Britain', *Journal of British Studies* 54, no 1 (2015): 138-162.

⁴¹. For examples of work that explores ordinary lives through personal diaries see: J. Sinor, *The Extraordinary Work of Ordinary Writing: Annie Ray's Diary* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002); C. Feely, 'From dialectics to dancing: reading, writing and the experience of everyday life in the diaries of Frank P. Forster', *History Workshop Journal* 69, no 1: 90-110).

⁴². Diary of Ida Berry, February 26th, 1905. Bishopsgate Institute archive, London (GDP/28).

⁴³. All the diaries used in this part of the paper are available in a public archive and thus we do use full names where appropriate.

⁴⁴. Diary of Annie Rudolph, January 8th, 1923. Bishopsgate Institute archive, London (GDP/11).

⁴⁵. Diary of Gerald Gray Fitzmaurice, June 27th, 1926. Bishopsgate Institute archive, London (GDP/52).

⁴⁶. Diary of Gerald Gray Fitzmaurice, January 8th, 1926. Bishopsgate Institute archive, London (GDP/52).

⁴⁷. Diary of John Leeson, October 17th, 1863. Bishopsgate Institute archive, London (GDP/8).

⁴⁸. Diary of Freda Smith, Thursday August 23rd, 1906. Bishopsgate Institute archive, London (GDP/99).