

# The Family Life of Old People

Peter Townsend

外语系





## MORE ABOUT PENGUINS AND PELICANS

*Penguinews*, which appears every month, contains details of all the new books issued by Penguins as they are published. From time to time it is supplemented by *Penguins in Print*, which is our complete list of almost 5,000 titles.

A specimen copy of *Penguinews* will be sent to you free on request. Please write to Dept EP, Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, for your copy.

*In the U.S.A.:* For a complete list of books available from Penguins in the United States write to Dept CS, Penguin Books, 625 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10022.

*In Canada:* For a complete list of books available from Penguins in Canada write to Penguin Books Canada Ltd, 2801 John Street, Markham, Ontario L3R 1B4.

## ACCESS FOR ALL

### Transportation and Urban Growth

*K. H. Schaeffer and Elliott Sclar*

'Transportation is like the bloodstream in the human body. Just as an improperly functioning blood-circulation system affects the health of every part of the body, so an improperly functioning transportation system over time affects all aspects of society.'

Our cities are being strangled by the technology that made them possible. In *Access for All* two American experts examine the problem through historical analysis and specific case history. They argue that while improved transport enabled the horrifically overcrowded cities of the last century to expand and attain a balance between individual privacy and the economies of scale, the same process resulted in a growth and dispersion of the urban areas which led individuals, in their search for privacy, to lose the concept of community.

Only through an understanding of the complex processes involved can we reverse the trend and recreate a working version of the city: a version which may enable us to control our modern equivalent of Frankenstein's monster.

## FAMILY AND KINSHIP IN EAST LONDON

*Michael Young and Peter Willmott*

The two authors of this most human of surveys are sociologists.

They spent three years on 'field work' in Bethnal Green and on a new housing estate in Essex. The result is a fascinating study, made during a period of extensive rehousing, of family and community ties and the pull of the 'wider family' on working-class people.

'Probably not only the fullest, but virtually the only account of working-class family relationships in any country. The general reader will find it full of meat and free of jargon' - *New Statesman*

'This shrewd - and in places extremely amusing - book combines warmth of feeling with careful sociological method' - *The Financial Times*

'Observant, tactful, sympathetic, humorous . . . I really feel that nobody who wants to know how our society is changing can afford not to read Young and Willmott' - Kingsley Amis in the *Spectator*

'No short account can do justice to this book, charmingly written, engaging, absorbing' - *British Medical Journal*

Obviously there have been changes in the two districts under survey during the last five years. This edition in Pelicans, with its fresh introduction and simplified appendix is justified by the standing the report has achieved as a modern classic of sociology.

✓

外语系

79913520

2505

PELICAN BOOKS

## THE FAMILY LIFE OF OLD PEOPLE

After leaving Cambridge Peter Townsend undertook research into social policy for Political and Economic Planning, helped to produce reports on poverty, the cost of social services, pensions, primary and secondary schools, and investigated the problem of unemployment in Lancashire. In 1954 he was appointed research officer of the newly founded Institute of Community Studies in Bethnal Green, and wrote this book as a result. In 1957 he joined the London School of Economics and embarked on a national study of old people's homes, published in 1962 as *The Last Refuge: A Survey of Residential Institutions and Homes for the Aged in England and Wales*. He undertook a national survey of old people in Britain which was part of a cross-national survey carried out also in the United States and Denmark. One book on the British findings (with Dorothy Wedderburn) was published under the title *The Aged in the Welfare State*. The next, giving the cross-national findings (with Ethel Shanas, Dorothy Wedderburn and others), *Old People in Three Industrial Societies*, was published in 1968. In 1965 he published a study of poverty, *The Poor and the Poorest* (with Brian Abel-Smith). His other publications include *The Concept of Poverty* (1970) and *Labour and Inequality* (1972), both of which he edited; *The Social Minority* (1973) and *Sociology and Social Policy* (1975). Peter Townsend has been Professor of Sociology at the University of Essex since 1963 and Pro-Vice-Chancellor since 1975. He is married and has four children.





D756.185 001680

1959 第3卷 2

E701

PETER TOWNSEND

# THE FAMILY LIFE OF OLD PEOPLE

\*

AN INQUIRY IN EAST LONDON



PENGUIN BOOKS

Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England  
Penguin Books, 625 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10022, U.S.A.  
Penguin Books Australia Ltd, Ringwood, Victoria, Australia  
Penguin Books, Canada Ltd, 2801 John Street, Markham, Ontario, Canada L3R 1B4  
Penguin Books (N.Z.) Ltd, 182-190 Wairau Road, Auckland 10, New Zealand

—  
First published by Routledge & Kegan Paul 1957  
Abridged edition, with a new postscript, published in Pelican Books 1963  
Reprinted 1968, 1970, 1977

—  
Copyright © Peter Townsend, 1957, 1963  
All rights reserved

—  
Made and printed in Great Britain  
by Cox & Wyman Ltd,  
London, Reading and Fakenham  
Set in Monotype Times

Except in the United States of America,  
this book is sold subject to the condition  
that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise,  
be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated  
without the publisher's prior consent in any form of  
binding or cover other than that in which it is  
published and without a similar condition  
including this condition being imposed  
on the subsequent purchaser





For my grandmother and mother



## Contents

List of Tables and Diagrams	9
-----------------------------	---

### INTRODUCTORY

1. The Study in Outline	13
2. Place and People	21

### PART ONE: *The Family Life of Old People*

3. Home and Family	33
4. Living near Relatives	43
5. The Family System of Care	54
6. Man and Wife and the Home Economy	76
7. Sons and Daughters	93
8. Brothers and Sisters	114
9. The Extended Family and the Kinship Network	126
10. Family and Community	139

### PART TWO: *The Family and the Social Problems of Old Age*

11. Retirement	157
12. Poverty	175
13. Isolation, Loneliness, and the Hold on Life	188
14. Who Claim State Care?	206
15. Keeping the Family Together	215
16. Conclusion	227

Postscript 1963: Moving towards a General Theory of Family Structure	235
--	-----

*Contents*

## APPENDIXES

1. A Further Note on Method	257
2. Three Interview Reports	263
3. Examples of Diaries Kept by Old People	296
List of References	314
Index	323

*List of Tables and Diagrams*

TABLES

1. Marital status and childlessness	18
2. Old people sharing household or dwelling with relatives	36
3. Proximity of nearest child	44
4. Proximity of all children	45
5. The greatest frequency with which old people saw at least one of their children	49
6. Frequency with which all children were seen	50
7. Number of relatives seen by average old person	52
8. Old people performing services for others	63
9. Frequency with which old people saw their doctors	65
10. Old people living alone and receiving regular sums of money or help in kind from relatives	79
11. Husbands helping in the house when daughters were available	87
12. Children-in-law seen daily (and weekly) by old people	102
13. Frequency of contact with children, by number of surviving children	103
14. Eldest and youngest married children seen daily by old people	104
15. Married children seen daily (and weekly), by social class of children	109
16. Proximity of all siblings	115
17. Married old people seeing siblings daily (or weekly)	117
18. Old people seeing brothers and sisters daily (and weekly)	122
19. Various family groups to which old people belonged	128
20. Social class of old men compared with all adult men	161
21. Number of men retiring from full-time and all work, by age	163
22. Reasons for men's retirement from full-time work	164

23. Average personal income of old people in full- and part-time employment and retired from work (to nearest shilling)	176
24. Social security benefits, compared with average weekly earnings in the United Kingdom	177
25. Personal income of retired old people, compared with National Assistance scales	182
26. Social isolation of old people	190
27. Social isolation and loneliness	196
28. Proximity of old people to their children	238
29. When old people in Britain had last seen at least one of their children	241
30. Distribution of old people in different electoral wards	260
31. Composition of households of women of sixty and over	261

#### DIAGRAMS

Kinship of a married man	48
Four stages in the development of a new complex of family relationships	245
Three simple forms of the immediate family of parents and dependent children	248
Effects of difference in family structure on relationship between mother-in-law and son-in-law	249

*Introductory*





## CHAPTER 1

### *The Study in Outline*

THIS book is in two parts. The first describes the family life of people of pensionable age in a working-class borough of East London; the second discusses the chief social problems of old age against the background of family organization and relationships.

Concern about the growing number of old people springs partly from an assumption that many of them are isolated from their families and from the community. It is widely believed that the ties of kinship are much less enduring than they once were and that as a consequence the immediate family of parents and unmarried children, of which the individual is a member for only part of his lifetime, has replaced the larger family of three or four generations, of which the individual is a member for the whole of his life, as the fundamental unit of society. Such an assumption is of very great importance and demands careful examination.

The first trial interview I had when I started this study was with an old man whose situation suggested the assumption might be right. He was an old widower of seventy-six years of age who lived alone in two rooms on the third floor of a block of tenement flats. His wife had died two years previously and he had no children. He was a very thin, large-boned man with a high-domed forehead and a permanent stoop. His frayed waistcoat and trousers hung in folds. At the time of calling, 5.30 p.m., he was having his first meal of the day, a hot-pot of mashed peas and ham washed down with a pint of tea from a large mug. The living-room was dilapidated, with old black-out curtains covering the windows, crockery placed on newspapers, and piles of old magazines tucked under the chairs. In one corner of the room by an open fireplace (a 'kitchener') stood a small table covered with worn lino cloth and in another corner stood a broken meat-safe with scraps of food inside. There was a photo of his wife in her twenties on the mantel-piece together with one of a barmaid and a pin-up from a Sunday