

EPIDEMICS IN LOUGHBOROUGH, 1539-1640

by

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Any historical examination of epidemics must be based upon Parish Registers. Loughborough is fortunate. The Parish Register¹ is in good condition and is almost complete from 1538, when the practice of keeping registers was introduced by law. This study is based upon evidence from it, but two other secondary works were of great use: the first, Charles Creighton's two-volume *History of Epidemics in Britain*,² which, although written in the last century, has not yet been superseded; the second, containing, so far as I am aware, the only previous study of epidemics in Loughborough, is Edwin Goadby's *History of Loughborough*,³ written during the eighteen-sixties.

Before considering the evidence about epidemics it is necessary to define exactly what constitutes an epidemic. A higher rate of mortality is, obviously, a starting point. What is the minimum number of burials which must take place in a given year for that year to be considered one of exceptionally high mortality? It seems reasonable, on the evidence available, to regard 75 burials in any one year in Loughborough as being the minimum requirement for it to be considered a year of epidemic. The average number of burials per year during the period 1539 to 1640 was 51.2. Six years stand out as being far worse than any of the others: 1558-9, 1609-11 and 1631.⁴ The total burials over these three periods were 332, 603 and 167, respectively. There are four other years: 1545, 1577, 1602 and 1617, in which fewer people died than in the peak years, but which, nonetheless, have one or two months in which burials were significantly above normal (usually between March and June). The figures for these four years were 98, 78, 98 and 90 respectively. The year 1621 had two months of suspiciously high mortality, though the total number of burials was only 63. In addition to these eleven years, the year 1551, although one of exceptionally low mortality (only 39 burials), was the year the "Great Sweat" visited Loughborough. This was a peculiar epidemic and will be considered first. The major and minor epidemics will then be examined in chronological order.

In the Parish Register of Loughborough for 24 June 1551 there is a note which reads:

"the Swat called New Acquaintance *alias* Stoupe! Knave and know thy master, began on the 24th of this month"

The plague was well-known in Europe at this time, but the "Great Sweat" was something comparatively new—hence the name "New Acquaintance". Its other, engaging name, "Stoup! Knave and know thy master", was acquired

because, unlike the plague (often called "the poor man's plague"), the "Sweat" killed chiefly the rich. The poor thus gave it this sardonic name. It was particularly quick acting. "There were some dancing in court at nine o'clock that were dead at eleven," wrote Hancocke, a minister in Poole, Dorset.⁵ Dr. Caius, a contemporary observer and physician to Henry VIII, described it grandiloquently as "like the Plague at Athens, a pestilent contagious fever of one natural day".⁶ The symptoms were burning heat, sickness, headache, delirium, intense thirst, laboured breathing and erratic pulse, followed by faintness, drowsiness and profuse sweating. The symptoms reached their height by the seventh hour after the onset, by the ninth delirium set in, and usually death quickly followed. If the victim survived the fifteenth hour the symptoms began to abate, and if he passed the twenty-fourth he usually survived. Few did survive and the disease was very dangerous: in just two weeks in London in 1551 the "Sweat" killed 938 people.

The history of the disease is of some interest. Edwin Goadby⁷ claimed that it was an English disease, unknown elsewhere. This is certainly wrong. It is specifically mentioned by doctors in Lübeck and Bremen, and ravaged the continent (though it spared France) in 1529. Henry VII's mercenaries, recruited near Rouen, transported it to Milford Haven where the first outbreak occurred in 1485. It recurred spasmodically in 1508, 1517, 1528, 1551 and, apart from minor outbreaks in individual parishes, these were the only occurrences. The outbreak of 1551 started at Shrewsbury, and made its way across the country to London. Loughborough was visited only mildly. The Parish Register lists 11 burials from this cause between 27 and 30 June, and then another 8 from 1 to 3 July. These were the only deaths from the "Sweat", without them the year would have been exceptionally healthy, with only half the average normal yearly burials.⁸

The unusual note in the Register suggests that the townspeople expected a more severe visitation, as does also the opening of a plague pit in Dead Lane (a name it received in 1593 and by which it is still known) for the bodies of those who died of the "Sweat". Moreover, the fact that individual dates of burial are not given is possible evidence that the parish priest expected to be overwhelmed with work (as did happen in several parishes, where the registration system broke down under weight of numbers). No indication is given of the professions of those who died, though it may be assumed that the "Sweat" killed chiefly those "of good estate". There are some indications that in Loughborough at least, it killed chiefly the middle-aged, and spared children and the aged. Goadby seems more certain of this than the inconclusive evidence of the Parish Register would allow. The parish priest sometimes commented on burials by writing "a childe" or "an auld man" after the name, but if there were a large number of burials it is likely that he omitted such details. Without a painstaking comparison of baptisms with burials (possible only in the case of those who died before their thirteenth birthday since the Register does not start until 1538) it is impossible to know the ages of those who died, or even whether the parish priest consistently differentiated the deaths of children and the elderly. The

lack of specific references to children and old people does not mean that no deaths occurred amongst these two classes.

What was the "Sweat" and why did it break out? It seems that 1551 was a very wet year throughout the country. Wheat prices were remarkably high and Dr. Caius talked of "striking mists carried from town to town".⁹ Probably more poetry than fact, it still serves to convey the impression of dampness. Loughborough was an exceedingly damp town. But the weather during the previous outbreaks differed greatly: a hot dry summer followed by a mild winter in 1508; a dry winter and spring in 1517; wet all the year round in 1528. Creighton suggests the theory that when the ground is either being drained of or soaked with water, what he calls "soil poisons" occur. The possible diseases he suggests are cholera, yellow fever, or a volatile form of typhus. Cholera does not seem likely, as diarrhoea is not mentioned among the symptoms. Yellow fever is even less likely, as it is a tropical disease spread by Egyptian mosquitoes and Rhesus monkeys. Typhus seems more likely and, indeed, is Creighton's first choice.¹⁰ A rash is commonly associated with typhus, but no evidence of this is given in the symptoms of the "Sweat". This is not impossible to explain: victims of the "Sweat" died so quickly that a thorough medical examination was unlikely to be made and the disease was so contagious that doctors were unlikely to be over-fastidious in their dealings with the sick. More serious is the objection that typhus is carried by fleas from rats, and thus will be most virulent in the most insanitary parts of the town, whereas the "Sweat" was worst in the richest parts. It is conceivable that the contemporary observers were wrong in saying that the poor were spared. Precise statistical data were completely lacking, and the death of a few notabilities would make more stir than that of hundreds of townfolk. The evidence of Caius may certainly be discredited on this point, as his main concern was to eulogize noble deaths. On the other hand, it is known that typhus, in the form we know it today, was present in England at this time: there was an epidemic in Cambridge in 1522, and one in Oxford in 1577. A suggestion which escapes these difficulties is that the "Sweat" was a virus disease, either influenza or a virus pneumonia, which would produce the symptoms described, together with their quick action.¹¹

The first of the epidemics under review occurred seven years later, in 1558, and it may have been related to the "Sweat". The Parish Register was not kept for the reign of Queen Mary (1554-58) "by reasone of the alteracion of Religion, and often chaunge of priestes In thos tymes", but it is resumed in June 1558 and, almost immediately, there is a note announcing the start of "a plague". In that month only two people died, both buried on the nineteenth. The real trouble began in July when 47 died as the plague increased in intensity. Several double burials occurred, and four people were buried each day on the 21, 22 and 27, whilst on 30 July five were buried. The outbreak reached its peak in August (67 burials) and September (66). During these two months 2, 3, 4 or 5 people were buried almost every day, and on 19 August no fewer than 10 were buried. After this the epidemic died slowly away: 38 burials in October, 12 in November, a slight rise in December (17

and January 1559 (23), and then no more, except for a possible recurrence in March (12). Altogether, during the six months of 1558 for which the Register was kept, 249 people died—in six months something like five times the average *annual* death rate. This outbreak was the most intense epidemic to strike Loughborough in the years under consideration. Goadby says that it killed one in ten of the population but as this would put the population at 2,500 his estimate should be treated with caution. C. T. Smith has estimated the population five years later, in 1563, at 256 families.¹² Population figures of this period are highly speculative, but assuming an average of five per family it means that roughly one in five of the population died. As with most epidemics, the parish priest did not include in the Register details of the professions of the victims. Only three are given: an organ-player, the wife of the rector, and a weaver who was “a stranger”, who came to the town and “found the shadow feared of men”—a local priest’s sober comment on the plague after the worst was over.

The note in the Parish Register states clearly that this epidemic was a “plague”, but there are reasons for doubting this. The entire period 1540-1597 and, in particular, the period 1555-8, was a strangely unhealthy one in England. No single disease seems to have been singled out by contemporary observers except for the “Sweat” of 1551. Fabyan talks of “hot agues and a great lask”.¹³ This was dysentery. He later talks of a “bloody flux” and, in 1558, of a “strange fever”. This perhaps indicates the prevalence of some new disease, which was called “plague” by the parish priest at Loughborough for want of a better name. The year 1557 saw an influenza pandemic in Europe that spread to Southampton, where it is said to have infected half the population of the town. It was referred to as “this new burning ague”.¹⁴ In the same year corn was at famine prices not so much due to bad weather, as to the fact that labourers were laid low with “quartan agues”. According to William Harrison, a canon of Westminster, a third of the people of England “did taste the general sickness”.¹⁵ The general picture of a large number of people catching the disease, whilst only a few died, is not borne out by the statistics for Loughborough. The strange fevers were probably either influenza or typhus, both of which could have been virulent enough to cause the high mortality at Loughborough. The only other place, besides Loughborough, to record an outbreak of plague in 1558 was Chester. Two isolated, minor outbreaks of plague in the country in one year are possible, but other prevalent diseases seem a likelier hypothesis. A study of the Chester records could throw further light on the problem. The fact that the Loughborough Register was not kept during the vitally significant years 1554-8 is unfortunate. If during this period any of the fevers and agues which ravaged the rest of the country had been noted, then we could rely more surely upon the medical evidence of the parish priest for the 1558 epidemic. We could be more certain that he could distinguish an ague from a plague.

Evidence from the Parish Register over the period 1540-1597 suggests that during this time of general sickness Loughborough was comparatively healthy. The surviving evidence is the annual burial rate over the “normal” years considered in periods of ten years.¹⁶ The statistics may be influenced

by a decline in population, and consequently of burials, over these years. Yet the facts, even with these qualifications, remain; over the period 1539-49, the average annual burial rate was 44.3; over the period 1567-76 it was 40.4. In the intervening years 1550-66, at the heart of the general malaise throughout the country, the average figure in Loughborough was 37.0 burials, the lowest for the century under consideration. This extremely low figure might have been the result of a large epidemic striking the town in the years for which the Register was not kept, thereby reducing the population and the subsequent death rate for a few years. Further analysis of the figures before 1554 and after 1558 disproves this. It shows that for the period 1550-53 the average annual number of burials was 27, whilst for the period 1560-66 (inclusive) it was 42. Why Loughborough should overall have been apparently so healthy remains a mystery.

Comparisons of Loughborough's state of health with that of other parishes in the country during this period can be gained from the figures calculated in the eighteenth century by Dr. Thomas Short.¹⁷

Year	country parishes			market parishes			Loughborough		
	baptisms	burials	(II)-(I)	baptisms	burials	(II)-(I)	baptisms	burials	(II)-(I)
1557	62	181	119	162	381	219	<i>no figures</i>		
1558	171	340	169	104	159	55	28*	249*	221*
1559	145	252	107	102	149	47	<i>no figs.</i>		
1560	100	162	62	134	201	67	59	62	3
1561	19	32	13	276	399	123	55	51	-4
1562	<i>no figures</i>			58	71	13	62	26	-36

* Figures incomplete.

This evidence confirms that Loughborough was, by and large, more healthy than other parts of the country.

The next, and, numerically the biggest, epidemic to visit Loughborough, occurred in 1609, and lasted for about eighteen months. During the second half of the sixteenth century there were, throughout the country, several isolated plagues, isolated because of the strict quarantine upon visiting such towns. An outbreak in Leicester in 1564 had no effect upon Loughborough; burials remained very low: the thirty which took place included eight people hanged on 19 July, after trials before the Assizes that had moved from Leicester to Loughborough because of the plague. Leicester was again visited in 1593, and the visitation of the clergy had to take place at Market Bosworth.¹⁸ The Loughborough Bridgemasters' accounts for this year contain the following entry:

Item: Lent and Delivered to Edmund Iveson upon a general consent, to stay him from London for fear of the Playge—xxs.¹⁹

In 1609 plague broke out on 24 August, as with the 1558 epidemic, starting slowly with two deaths in that month, but soon it began to get worse:²⁰ 26 died in September, 32 in October, an increase by no means so catastrophic as that of 1558. August, a sultry month, was usually the

worst for plague, and the late start of the 1609 plague probably reduced the number of deaths in the first year. Had it started in June, as the 1558 plague did, the monthly burial figures for the two plagues might have been closely similar. There was a drop in burials for November (18) and December (27) although they still remained high in comparison with normal years. By the end of the year 133 people had been buried. It is possible to tell how many of these deaths were due to the plague because, according to Elizabethan plague regulations,²¹ the bodies of those who died during a plague had to be inspected to find the cause of death. As a result, the priest recorded all deaths from the plague by writing a *p* in the Register against the names. 78 of those deaths in 1609 were from the plague, though even without the plague, the year would still have had a moderately high mortality rate. Nine of November's 18 burials, for example, were of plague victims.

During the winter and spring of 1609/10 the plague was less virulent. There were 15 deaths from it in January, 8 in February and only 7 in March, 11 in April. It then began to increase again, to 27 in May and 26 in June, in July, alarmingly, to 58. Remaining active until November (August (46), September (56), October (48)), it then dropped to 31, and in December to 18. Altogether in 1610, out of a total of 395 burials, 351 died of the plague. In 1611, burials from the plague occurred only in January (8) and February (5). On 10 February a fast was decreed as a thanksgiving for the end of the plague, slightly premature in the event, as two further persons died of the plague later in that month.

The 1609-11 plague, according to Goadby, killed chiefly children and old people but the evidence for this in the Parish Register is again inconclusive. A number of babies killed by the plague, at the age of a few weeks, were buried unbaptized, because both their parents had died before their baptisms (this sort of occurrence was not conspicuous in the other epidemics). There are also one or two accounts of people who took ill and died whilst visiting friends—evidence of the quick action of the plague. The only localities mentioned in the Register are Fenel Street and Woodgate, but we may assume that all the poor sections of the town were badly visited.

The precautionary measures of the Elizabethan plague laws were, so far as we can tell, enforced during this plague. A check was kept on those who died from the plague, and they were buried in Dead Lane—the *place apart* prescribed by law. Loughborough was also put into quarantine by the neighbouring towns and villages. The following letter was sent by the rector of Loughborough to the mayor of Leicester in June 1610:

“Mr Mayor,

Sir, I understand by a neighbour of mine y^t it is your desire y^t I should give warning to my neighbours to keepe them from cominge to your town of Leicester for the time of the Assizes; y^r desire I will by God's helpe accordingly fulfill only I desire to know whether the restraunte must be so generall as none of ye townes for any cause may come thither wth certificate as formerly they have done. I desire to be informed hereoff the rather for y^t myself and one or two of my neighbours are appointed to meet Mastr. Thomas Elkinson of Sherewell and his fayther-

in-law upon an arbitrement which we will put off untill some other tyme if you think y^t our coming will be offensive to anyone. And so thanking you for your care and kindness towards my neighbours in this tyme of visitacion I rest

Your loving friend in Christ assured,

John Brown²².

The Justices of the Peace retired to a safe town to conduct their affairs. The Bridgemasters contributed stone and labour towards the building of a public pest house, and also 2s. 6d. for a load of coal "from the Pytte" (probably Thringstone) for "the visited people".²³ The town gained the services of a Cambridge physician, Dr. Poole, who came to Leicester as a plague specialist. Even without his advice the townspeople sensibly took themselves and their belongings to the Great Meadow (a stretch of common land just outside the town) and built a temporary shanty town on a patch that afterwards was known as Cabin Lees (later Bottle Acres). This plague was certainly not part of a major epidemic. Nichols²⁴ is quite definite about this: "But be it noted," he says, "that this was an accidental and local plague only, which happened on some particular points of the country at this time, and bore no respect to that general plague in the year 1603 . . . which made such terrible havoc and devastation in London and other parts of the kingdom".

The last major epidemic of this period, in 1631, broke out earlier in the year than the others: on 14 March, and it lasted until the following January killing 129 people. The first death did not occur until 29 March. Deaths through April from the plague²⁵ amounted only to 12. An interesting letter from the dignitaries of Loughborough to the mayor and aldermen of Leicester indicates the slow start of the plague, dated 20 April, 1631, it reads:

"These are to certify those whom it may concern that the shateryd town of Loughborowe is not so dangerous as by some may be considered; in as much as there are but onely three houses visited by the Plague: being all of them small tenements, and being in a back lane or place far remote from our markt-place or any common passage, being inhabited by poore people: all attended upon; as well for relief of the visited as for prevention of danger. And there are dead of the sickness as is supposed onely eleven p'sons in all men, women and children, in the space of seven weekes since first ye infection began.

John Browne (parson of Loughborowe)²⁶

J. Holt

Geo Reyner

John Alleyne

Edward Harrison }

Wortley Symonds }

constables.²⁷

And to emphasize the safeness of the town a similar statement was sent next day. The fact that of all the eleven deaths only three different families were affected gives some indication of the success of the quarantine preventative measures.

The plague continued at this low level of mortality for some months: May (8); June (5); July (6). The optimism of the Loughborough officials must have seemed justified, until in August, September and October the death roll began to rise: 17, 30, 29, respectively. In November the decline started (14), in December (7) and in January (3), when the epidemic ended.

Despite such assurances from Loughborough, Leicester was worried lest the infection be carried there at market time and contact between the two towns was severely restrained. On 9 May 1631, although only a few deaths had occurred, the following proclamation was issued in Leicester:

“To the Constable of the Bishopp’s Fee in or nere Leir [Leicester] and to his deputies:

Foras much as we understand that the sickness is growing verie dangerous in Loughborowe and many of the inhabitants there have of late endeavoured to bring their goodes into the town of Leir; and to settle themselves here to the great endangeringe of the Corporacion for preventing whereof (so far as by God’s assistance wee maye) wee have undertaken order for a watch to be kept dayely in severall places in and about the town. And here also have given stout charge that none resort to the said towne of Loughborowe until it please God to stay the said visitacioun. These are therefore to command you to cause convenient watch to be dayly and constantly kept within your said ward or constablerie, for p’venting of the dangers aforesaid and to give stout charge and warninge to all the inhabitants within the said Fee not to entertain or harbour any of the inhabitants of Loughborowe or their goods, and that they forbear carriage to the said Towne, eyther to their markt or otherwise. Thereof fayle not at your perill. Given under our hand the nineth day of Maye, *Anno Domini*, 1631.

Thomas Smithe (Maior)
Gilbert Fawcit
Francis Churchman
Roger Cotes”.²⁸

The mayor and aldermen, on 24 May, passed new regulations relaxing some of the provisions of this proclamation. The new regulations forbade people from Leicester to go to Loughborough without special permission from the mayor or aldermen. But people from Loughborough were allowed to go to Leicester with a certificate from John Browne or “others of credit” to market to “buy provision of victuall for their necessarie uses”.²⁸ Perhaps the reason for this easing of the restrictions was occasioned by the fact that between 9 May and 24 May only six people had died of the plague in Loughborough (two of these were buried on twenty-third, so news of their death may not have reached Leicester).

Leicester prudently ostracised Loughborough, it was also magnanimous with its aid. On 12 November, 1631 the Corporation of Leicester voted £10 to their neighbours “towards their better maintenance in this tyme of their visitacioun”, and, in addition, a public collection was held in Leicester. It is not known how much was collected, but part of a receipt exists, signed by

John Alleyne for 12s. 6d. "of the remaynder of the Collection".²⁸ The citizens of Leicester seem to have been more generous than Loughborough's own churchwardens.

These were the major epidemics that struck Loughborough in the period under review. It seems likely that the "Sweat" was a form of influenza, and it is quite possible that the 1558 epidemic was influenza or a similar disease. There is no evidence to suggest that the two other outbreaks of 1609-11 and 1631 were not of plague. In addition to these four epidemics there were the smaller epidemics mentioned earlier. The first was in 1545 (98 burials), in which a normal January (5) and February (8) were followed by four months of abnormal mortality: March (13), April (23), May (17) and June (15). After this burial figures returned to normal: July (5), August (1). The April and May figures were as high as in a plague year. In 1602, and, to a lesser extent, in 1603, there were similar types of occurrence. In 1602 February had 9 burials, March 18 and April 11. In 1603 the total number of burials was 68 (*i.e.*, just below the 75 which marks years of exceptional mortality) but 14 burials in January causes suspicion. Again in 1617 burials in April (15) and May (12) were well above normal but in this year there was an apparent recurrence in September (10).²⁹ In 1621, although the total burials were 63, March and April had relatively high mortality rates (13 burials in each month).

That there is some factor operating chiefly in spring, in particular from March to May, or, in exceptionally bad cases, until June, seems likely. The most plausible explanation is that these deaths were caused either directly or indirectly by malnutrition. In the case of 1602-3 there is some definite evidence for this from a note in the Syston Parish Register which reads: "In 1601 all the hay was inned out of Syston Great Meadow on the Wednesday before St. James [25 July]. In 1602 harvest was so late that it was St. Matthew's day [21 September] before all the barley was inned. In 1603 a pound of good hops was sold for 2s. 6d., a strike of malt for 17d. and a strike of wheat for 2s. 4d."³⁰ Although there is little evidence, throughout this period, of large numbers of people dying of starvation, with bad harvests whole villages must have been severely underfed, and this malnutrition would lower resistance to a number of diseases and increase mortality. By March and April food stocks would be getting low.

There is one exception to this trend, the year 1577 when the months of exceptionally high mortality came later in the year. January to July was quite normal but in August (9) and September (8), October (12), November (10) and December (12) the increase was more marked. This must be attributed to some other cause: perhaps an unidentified disease, one of the fevers and fluxes common at the time.

That there are fluctuations in the average monthly burial rates is significant and a comparison can be made between the normal monthly averages and those in plague years.

Month	I. Normal Years	II. Exceptional Years	III. Very bad plague years: (1558, 1609-10, 1631)
January	4.80	8.10	9.00
February	4.28	7.10	8.66
March	4.68	8.30	8.00
April	5.02	9.60	13.00
May	4.98	9.90	16.33
June	3.52	8.64	10.50
July	3.62	14.27	27.50
August	3.36	15.46	34.50
September	3.30	20.46	46.25
October	3.56	16.82	36.50
November	3.70	10.73	18.75
December	4.72	10.64	17.75

Thus in the normal years (column I) spring is the most unhealthy season, perhaps because of the lack of the right types of food to build up resistance to disease. April and May, in particular, are sickly months. From June onwards the death rate diminishes until September. In the plague years (column III) this situation is reversed: autumn becomes the most dangerous season but April and May remain unusually sickly. It is strange to find this in the third column where the mortality rate was not affected by the minor outbreaks of disease occasioned by malnutrition which affect the second column. In April the average number of burials during the plague years is 13, and 16.33 in May. Then comes one of the most unusual features of the plague: the June burials drop to 10.50 before rising, next month, to 27.50. This decline is very difficult to explain but it seems to be a feature of most plagues, however problematical the medical explanation.

Any study of epidemics must conclude on this problematic note. Scope remains for the local historian to extract more statistics from Parish Registers, but there is even greater scope for a doctor with an interest in local history to write a study of epidemics from a more expert medical point of view.³¹

NOTES

1. *Leicestershire County Record Office* CC/26-30. The whole Register for the period 1538-1640 is bound in one volume.
2. Charles Creighton, *History of Epidemics in Britain*, (1894), revised edition, Cass (1965), 2 vols.
3. Edwin Goadby, *History of Loughborough*, published in instalments in *The Loughborough Advertiser*, 1864-66. The section of chief interest is chapter 13, "Early Epidemics—The Sweating Sickness and Plague" which was not published in the *Advertiser*. An unpaginated typescript copy of this chapter of Goadby's manuscript exists in the local history section of Loughborough Public Library. This typescript has been used throughout this paper.
4. Although in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the year was reckoned as starting on 25 March, in this article the year has been taken as starting on 1 January. This was chosen as being more in line with other research as well as more convenient to the reader.

5. Quoted Creighton, *op. cit.*, I, 262.
6. Quoted Goadby, *op. cit.*
7. *History of Loughborough, op. cit.*
8. The period 1550-66 was very healthy. The average number of burials per year for the normal years was 37. This was the lowest figure for any period whose average annual death rate was calculated between 1539-1640. See also *fn.* 16.
9. Quoted Creighton, *op. cit.*, I, 278.
10. *The Associated Medical Journal* of 3 August, 1855 (which Creighton may have seen) contained an article on the "Sweat" describing it as a form of typhus.
11. *ex inform.* Dr. H. L. Binnie.
12. C. T. Smith, "Population", *Victoria County History* (1955), III, 140. Based upon Diocesan Returns.
13. Quoted Creighton, *op. cit.*, I, 280.
14. *Ibid.*, 404.
15. Quoted F. J. Furnivall, *Elizabethan England* (1899), 267.
16. In each case, omitting any exceptional years with over 75 burials, groups of ten years have been taken. This gives the average number of burials per year for the "normal" years over an apparently irregular period. For example, in the period 1550-66 the exceptional years 1551, and 1558-9 are excluded and also the years 1554-8 for which the Register is missing.
17. Thomas Short, *A General History of Air, Weather, Seasons, Meteors etc.* (1749), quoted Creighton, *op. cit.*, I, 405.
18. This was the year when Dead Lane received its name which may indicate that locally it was thought likely that Loughboough might be visited.
19. Quoted Goadby, *op. cit.*
20. A significant similarity between this and the 1558 epidemic is their relation to bad harvests. Nichols quotes a note in the Syston Parish Register which reads: "In 1607 the frost was so hard and so continued that it was after St. Valentine's Day before men could set forth plough. In 1609 there died at Loughborough of the plague in one year 500 people". (J. Nichols, *Collections of Leicestershire History* (1795), I, 271).
21. *Cf.*, *State Papers (Domestic)*, vol. XLV, *Miscellaneous Papers*, 27.
22. Quoted Goadby, *op. cit.*
23. The churchwardens, whose accounts are preserved in the Leicestershire County Record Office, do not appear to have spent anything specifically on remedies or relief for the plague victims.
24. Nichols, *op. cit.*, 871.
25. The same marking of plague deaths with a *p* took place for this plague as in the 1609 one.
26. Successor to and namesake of the John Brown who wrote the earlier letter.
27. Quoted Goadby, *op. cit.*
28. *ibid.*
29. It is almost certain that this high September figure was independent of the high spring mortality, and, therefore, is purely coincidental.
30. Quoted Nichols, *op. cit.*, 271.
31. I would like to thank the Department of English Local History at Leicester University and, in particular, Professor W. G. Hoskins and Mr. R. A. McKinley for their help and guidance.