

THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF A BEDFORDSHIRE PARISH IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

THE CARDINGTON CENSUS ENUMERATORS' BOOKS, 1851

In an earlier article, I outlined some of the main social and demographic characteristics of the Bedfordshire parish of Cardington during the late eighteenth century, using for the purpose the invaluable survey of the parish compiled by a local schoolmaster, James Lilbourne, in 1782.¹ Because of the growing interest in the historical process of social change,² it has been thought worthwhile to examine the socio-demographic structure of Cardington at a later period. The date chosen for this second snap-shot was 1851 and the source materials used are the enumerators' schedules of the parish which were prepared for the

Table 1: *Households by social and occupational status*³

Description of household ⁴	Number of households	Percentage of all households	Number of People	Percentage of all people
Farmer	32	11.3	204	14.1
Tradesman	26	9.2	155	10.7
Craftsman	28	9.9	131	9.0
Labourer	187	65.8	920	63.4
Others	11	3.9	41	2.8
Total	284	100.0	1451	100.0

¹ N. L. Tranter, "Population and Social Structure in a Bedfordshire Parish: The Cardington Listing of Inhabitants, 1782", in: *Population Studies*, XXI (1967), pp. 261-282.

² P. Laslett, "Size and Structure of the Household in England over Three Centuries," in: *Population Studies*, XXIII (1969), pp. 199-223; J. W. Nixon, "Comments on Peter Laslett's Paper", in: *Population Studies*, XXIV (1970), pp. 445-447; P. Laslett, "A Comment on J. W. Nixon's Note", in: *Population Studies*, XXIV (1970), pp. 449-454; C. M. Law, "Local Censuses in the 18th Century", in: *Population Studies*, XXIII (1969), pp. 87-100.

³ Throughout the subsequent text the term "household" should be taken to mean separate dwelling-house, i.e. each dwelling forms one household and may contain more than one family.

⁴ For a list of the occupations included in each of the categories see Appendix I.

census of that year.¹ Although the listings for 1782 and 1851 differ somewhat, both in the nature of their content and in the degree of their coverage of the local population,² a crude comparison between them has proved to be possible.

The socio-occupational composition of the parish in 1851 was little different from that in 1782. The wealthier more substantial members of the local community, roughly classified in the text as farmers, comprised only a small proportion of total household heads or population; whilst the large majority of the population resided in dwellings headed by agricultural day labourers (or their equivalents in terms of social class), or by men involved in the usual retailing and crafting activities characteristic of rural parishes. Again as in 1782, an overwhelming proportion of all resident female offspring aged over five years was occupied in domestic handicraft industries of one kind or another, though principally lacemaking.³ If the social structure of Cardington changed in any respect during the first half of the nineteenth century, it did so against a background of economic continuity.

Table 2: *The marital status, age and sex structure of the population*

Age in years	Males								Females							
	Single		Married		Widowed		Total		Single		Married		Widowed		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
0-4	84	18.5	—	—	—	—	84	11.7	125	27.9	—	—	—	—	125	17.
5-9	114	25.2	—	—	—	—	114	15.9	76	17.0	—	—	—	—	76	10.
10-14	98	21.6	—	—	—	—	98	13.7	75	16.7	—	—	—	—	75	10.
15-19	76	16.8	—	—	—	—	76	10.6	76	17.0	1	0.4	—	—	77	10.
20-24	42	9.3	11	4.6	—	—	53	7.4	41	9.2	20	8.2	—	—	61	8.
25-29	16	3.5	40	16.7	1	4.3	57	8.0	21	4.7	38	15.5	1	2.4	60	8.
30-34	10	2.2	35	14.6	—	—	45	6.3	13	2.9	35	14.3	—	—	48	6.
35-39	3	0.7	30	12.5	2	8.7	35	4.9	9	2.0	37	15.1	2	4.8	48	6.
40-44	3	0.7	29	12.1	—	—	32	4.5	1	0.2	30	12.2	2	4.8	33	4.
45-49	1	0.2	24	10.0	2	8.7	27	3.8	—	—	30	12.2	2	4.8	32	4.
50-54	1	0.2	26	10.8	1	4.3	28	3.9	4	0.9	17	6.9	3	7.1	24	3.
55-59	3	0.7	19	7.9	5	21.7	27	3.8	5	1.1	16	6.5	5	11.9	26	3.
60-64	1	0.2	13	5.4	5	21.7	19	2.7	1	0.2	6	2.4	7	16.7	14	1.
65 & over	1	0.2	13	5.4	7	30.4	21	2.9	1	0.2	15	6.1	20	47.6	36	4.
Unknown	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	453	100.0	240	100.0	23	100.0	716	100.0	448	100.0	245	100.0	42	100.0	735	100

¹ For the nature of these schedules, and for a discussion of the methodology in their use see, W. A. Armstrong, "Social Structure from the Early Census Returns", in: E. A. Wrigley ed., *An Introduction to English Historical Demography* (London, 1966), pp. 209-237.

² For a description of the 1782 listing see Tranter, loc. cit., pp. 261-263.

³ See Appendix II, and compare with Tranter, loc. cit., p. 281.

Of the total resident population in 1851,¹ 49.3% was male and 50.7% was female. This roughly equal balance between the sexes was, however, made up of widely varying sex ratios in certain of the age-groups: note especially, the considerable excess of males over females in the age groups 5-9 and 10-14 years, and the marked surplus of females between the ages 0-4, 35-39, and 65 and above. 41.3% of the male population of the parish was below the age of 15 years, 41.7% between the ages 15 and 44, 11.5% between 45 and 60, and only 5.6% aged 60 and above. Among the female population 37.5% was aged below 15 years, 44.5% between 15 and 44, 11.2% between 45 and 60, and 6.8% was aged 60 or more. Of 716 males living in the parish in 1851, 33.5% were married, 3.2% widowed and 63.3% were recorded as single, while of 735 females 33.3% were married, 5.7% widowed and 61% were single. Altogether, 177 persons aged 20 years and above were described as unmarried – 12.2% of the entire population. 67.8% of these, however, were in the 20-30 year age group, and most of them would have presumably married some time after 1851.

A comparison of the marital, age and sex structure at Cardington in 1782 and 1851 is hampered by the failure of the Lilbourne listing to give details of the inhabitants of farm tenement properties. It is possible that differences between the marital, age and sex composition of the population in 1782 and 1851 could simply be explained by the exclusion of the farmer population from the earlier listing, and its inclusion in the 1851 data. To allow for this possibility, the marital, age and sex structure of the “farmer” population in 1851 has been separately analyzed, and is given in Appendix III. On the assumption that the structure of the farm tenement population in 1782 was roughly similar to that of 1851 we can attempt a crude comparison of variations in the marital, age and sex composition of the parish between 1782 and 1851 by directly comparing the data given in Table 2 with that for cottage tenements in my earlier study.²

The balance between the sexes was slightly more equal in 1851 than it had been in 1782, though there remained a small excess of females in the population. Assuming that the sex structure of “farmer” households in 1782 was similar to that of 1851, we can further presume that the imbalanced sex ratio, in favour of females, of the total population of Cardington in 1782 was even more marked than the data relating only to cottage tenements indicated. Thus, over the course of the first half of the nineteenth century, the trend towards a better

¹ The census return for Cardington in 1851 gives a total population of 1,455 (719 males and 736 females). My own count of the enumerators' returns gives a population of 1,451 (716 males and 735 females).

² Tranter, *loc. cit.*, pp. 265-266.

balanced sex distribution was even more rapid than our own evidence shows.

Significant changes also occurred in the age distribution of the population between the two dates. By 1851 a slightly smaller percentage of the population of the parish lay in the age-group below 15 years than had been the case seventy years earlier. If we once again assume that the age-composition of the "farmer" population in 1782 was similar to that in 1851 (when 53.4% of all male and 42.0% of all female members of "farm" households were below 15 years of age), the decrease in the proportion of young persons in the population over the period must have been even greater than our comparison of cottage tenement (1782) and total population (1851) suggests. The percentage of the population in the most active, and fertile, age-groups (15-44 years), on the other hand, had increased by 1851, whilst the proportion aged 60 years and over had fallen slightly.

Finally, interesting changes had taken place in the marital status of the population at Cardington over the first half of the century. The proportion of married and widowed persons had fallen, and that of single persons had increased. Moreover, the omission of the farm tenement population from the 1782 figures, probably results in an understatement of the degree of this change since the "farmer" population in 1851 (in which unmarried servants were numerous) had a relatively high percentage of celibates.¹

Table 3: *The average size of households according to the social and occupational status of the household head*

Social and occupational status	No of households	No of persons	Persons per household
Farmer	32	204	6.38
Tradesman	26	155	5.96
Craftsman	28	131	4.68
Labourer	187	920	4.92
Others	11	41	3.73
Total	284	1451	5.11

Although we cannot make a simple comparison between the average size of household at Cardington in 1782 and 1851, since the 1782 data relate to cottage tenement households only, there is little doubt that the number of persons per inhabited household had increased during the first half of the nineteenth century: compare for instance the com-

¹ 65.2% of all males and 74.8% of all females resident in "farmer" households were classified as single, see Appendix III.

bined figure for tradesmen and craftsmen in 1851, 5.30, with the average size of craftsmen households in 1782, 5.12: and, more particularly, compare the 4.92 persons per labourer household in 1851 with those of 4.15 and 3.27 for households headed by labourers and widows respectively in the 1780's.

Otherwise, the variations in household size by socio-occupational class follow a pattern we have been taught to expect – highest among farmers, lowest among labourers, and at an intermediate level among craftsmen and tradesmen. Does an examination of the composition of households throw further light on the reasons for this positive variation of household size with wealth and income?

Table 4: *The average number of resident offspring in households by the social and occupational status of the household head**

Social and occupational status	No of households	No of resident offspring	Resident offspring per household
Farmer	26	90	3.46
Tradesman	25	81	3.24
Craftsman	26	60	2.31
Labourer	182	516	2.84
Others	10	23	2.30
Total	269	770	2.86

* Offspring is taken to mean resident offspring of whatever union and of whatever age, unmarried or married, in each household. Only households headed by married or widowed persons are included in this table.

Part of the explanation for the relatively high average number of residents in farmer and tradesman households is obviously the relatively large number of resident offspring they contained. Thus, households in the "farmer" category, which contained 1.27 persons more than the average (see Table 3), also had 0.60 more resident offspring than the average for all social classes (Table 4). Tradesman households, with 0.85 persons more than the average (see Table 3), had 0.38 more resident offspring than the average figure for all households. The number of resident offspring in households of other social classes was more severely restricted, either by higher mortality, lower fertility, a greater economic inability to maintain children in the parental home, or more probably by a combination of all three factors.

Compared to the average number of resident offspring in 1782, that for households in the groups classified as "farmers", "labourers", "others", and the average of all households had increased by 1851. By far the greatest increase occurred among the labouring population,

a fact which helps to account for the relatively large increase in the overall size of labourer households between 1782 and 1851.

The proportion of households headed by married couples, widowers or widows without resident offspring was small, 12.6%, and similar to that in 1782.¹ Only one in every five household units was headed by

Table 5: *The marital status of household heads*

Households headed by:	Number	Percentage of all households
Married couples	229	80.6
Widowers	18	6.3
Widows	21	7.4
Unmarried persons		
a) male	11	3.9
b) female	5	1.8
	16	5.6
Total	284	100.0

a widowed or unmarried person. The normal rule, as in the 1780's, was for households to be headed by married couples, though there may have been a slight increase in the proportion of such households and a corresponding decrease in the proportion headed by widows and widowers between 1782 and 1851.² At the same time as the percentage of households headed by widowed persons declined, the proportion of widowed lodging in the households of others increased. In 1782 there were only seven widowed lodgers in cottage tenement properties.³ By 1851 there were twenty-two – a threefold increase at a time when the population of the parish grew by only 79.1%.

A more detailed look at the composition of households is taken in Table 6. As at Cardington in 1782,⁴ by far the most common household in 1851 was that composed of the nuclear family only, i.e. households headed by married couples, husbands or wives, widowers or widows, with their immediate offspring. Nevertheless, the predominance of such household units was far less marked by the mid-nineteenth century than it had been in the early 1780's,⁵ even when we allow for the fact that the proportion of nuclear families in non-cottage households in 1782 is biased upwards by Lilbourne's failure to include the resident servant population (included in the category "other persons") in his

¹ Cf. 15.4% of cottage tenement households in 1782, Tranter, loc. cit., p. 268.

² Compare the data on Table 5 with Tranter, loc. cit., p. 269.

³ Ibid., p. 271.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 270-271.

⁵ Ibid., p. 270.

Table 6: *The composition of households*

	Number	Percentage
Households composed of married couples and:		
1) Offspring only	127	58.5
2) Offspring and relatives	24	11.1
3) Offspring and other persons	32	14.7
4) Relatives only	5	2.3
5) Other persons only	3	1.4
6) Relatives and other persons	1	0.5
7) Offspring, relatives and other persons	7	3.2
8) Married couples only	18	8.3
Total	217	100.0
Households composed of husbands or wives and:		
1) Offspring only	5	41.7
2) Offspring and relatives	1	8.3
3) Offspring and other persons	4	33.3
4) Relatives only	—	—
5) Other persons only	—	—
6) Relatives and other persons	—	—
7) Offspring, relatives and other persons	1	8.3
8) Husbands or wives only	1	8.3
Total	12	100.0
Households composed of widowers and:		
1) Offspring only	6	33.3
2) Offspring and relatives	4	22.2
3) Offspring and other persons	1	5.6
4) Relatives only	2	11.1
5) Other persons only	1	5.6
6) Relatives and other persons	—	—
7) Offspring, relatives and other persons	2	11.1
8) Widowers only	2	11.1
Total	18	100.0
Households composed of widows and:		
1) Offspring only	13	61.9
2) Offspring and relatives	2	9.5
3) Offspring and other persons	—	—
4) Relatives only	1	4.8
5) Other persons only	4	19.0
6) Relatives and other persons	—	—
7) Offspring, relatives and other persons	—	—
8) Widows only	1	4.8
Total	21	100.0

	Number	Percentage
Households composed of unmarried persons and:		
1) Offspring only	—	—
2) Offspring and relatives	—	—
3) Offspring and other persons	—	—
4) Relatives only	4	25.0
5) Other persons only	6	37.5
6) Relatives and other persons	4	25.0
7) Offspring, relatives and other persons	—	—
8) Unmarried persons only	2	12.5
Total	16	100.0

description of such households.¹ The increase in the relative importance of persons other than immediate offspring in the composition of household population is one of the most significant features of the changing social structure at Cardington during the period between the late eighteenth and mid nineteenth centuries.

The proportion of households containing persons who were not related to the household head remained small (4.9% of all households), but it was significant enough to help fashion one of the most important differences in household structure by socio-occupational class, viz. the relatively large size of “farmer” households.² Most vital in this respect was the existence and distribution of the servant population. 5% of the total population, grouped in 12-13% of all households, were described as servants in 1851. By far the heaviest concentration of servants was found in the households of farmers. Together with the greater number of resident offspring which these households contained,³

Table 7: *Households with servants*

Description of households	No of households	No of persons	No of households with servants	No of servants	% of households with servants	% of persons
Farmer	32	204	23	53	71.9	26.0
All others	252	1247	13	19	5.2	1.5
Total	284	1451	36	72	12.7	5.0

¹ In 1851, of all households with resident servants the majority of which were “farmer” households and can therefore be roughly equated with “non-cottage” households in 1782, only 50% were composed of household heads and their immediate offspring – a similar ratio to that found for all households in the parish in 1851 (see Table 6), and one which was much lower than that for “non-cottage” properties in 1782.

² See Table 3.

³ See Table 4.

Table 8: *The marital status, age and sex structure of the servant population*

Age in years	Males						Females					
	Single		Married		Widowed		Single		Married		Widowed	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
0-4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5-9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10-14	—	27.8	—	—	—	—	—	9.8	—	—	—	—
15-19	8	44.4	—	—	—	—	17	41.5	—	—	—	—
20-24	3	16.7	—	—	—	—	8	19.5	—	—	—	—
25-29	1	5.6	5	83.3	—	—	8	19.5	3	50.0	—	—
30-34	1	5.6	1	16.7	—	—	1	2.4	2	33.3	—	—
35-39	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	4.9	—	—	—	—
40-44	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	16.7	—	—
45-49	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
50-54	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55-59	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2.4	—	—	—	—
60-64	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 & over	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	100.0
Unknown	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	18	100.0	6	100.0	—	—	41	100.0	6	100.0	1	100.0

this imbalanced distribution of the servant population accounts for the relatively large size of “farmer” households. The bulk of the servant population was female (66.7% of all servants), and unmarried (81.9% of all servants). It was heavily concentrated in the age-group 10-30 years, and especially in that between the ages 15-19.

Table 9: *Households with lodgers**

Number of households with lodgers	Percentage of all households	Number of lodgers	Percentage of all persons
86	30.3	161	11.1

* Lodgers are defined as all those persons who were not the heads of households (married couples, widowed or unmarried persons) or their immediate offspring. Grandchildren and other relatives are therefore treated as lodgers. Servants have been excluded from this analysis.

Just below one-third of all households in the parish contained lodgers, but only about one-tenth of all persons can be classified as lodgers according to the broad definition we have adopted. Significantly, however, the proportion of lodgers in the population of 1851 was slightly higher than in that of 1782, at least amongst cottage tenement inhabitants.¹ The relationship of the lodger population to

¹ In 1782, 6.7% of the cottage tenement population were lodgers. See Tranter, loc. cit., p. 271.

Table 10: *The relationship of lodgers to household heads*

	Number	Percentage of total
a) Relation by blood or marriage:		
Mother or father	9	5.6
Sister or brother	13	8.1
Grandchild	38	23.6
Nephew or niece	18	11.2
Cousin	1	0.6
Aunt	1	0.6
Son in law or daughter in law	18	11.2
Brother in law or sister in law	3	1.9
Mother in law	2	1.2
Stepdaughter	1	0.6
Unspecified relative	1	0.6
b) Not related	56	34.8
Total	161	100.0

the household head is set out in Table 10. In about 65% of all cases, lodgers were related either by blood or marriage to the head of the household, the most frequent relationship being that of grandchild.¹ One of every three lodgers was not related to the household head.

Table 11: *The marital status, age and sex structure of the lodger population*

Age in years	Males						Females					
	Single		Married		Widowed		Single		Married		Widowed	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
0- 4	10	17.9	—	—	—	—	13	21.3	—	—	—	—
5- 9	10	17.9	—	—	—	—	9	14.8	—	—	—	—
10-14	7	12.5	—	—	—	—	7	11.5	—	—	—	—
15-19	11	19.6	—	—	—	—	7	11.5	1	8.3	—	—
20-24	7	12.5	5	50.0	—	—	10	16.4	4	33.3	—	—
25-29	6	10.7	1	10.0	—	—	2	3.3	2	16.7	—	—
30-34	2	3.6	2	20.0	—	—	2	3.3	3	25.0	—	—
35-39	1	1.8	—	—	2	40.0	5	8.2	—	—	2	11.8
40-44	1	1.8	1	10.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
45-49	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	5.9
50-54	—	—	—	—	1	20.0	2	3.3	—	—	—	—
55-59	1	1.8	—	—	1	20.0	2	3.3	—	—	2	11.8
60-64	—	—	—	—	1	20.0	1	1.6	—	—	4	23.5
65 and over	—	—	1	10.0	—	—	1	1.6	2	16.7	8	47.1
Unknown	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	56	100.0	10	100.0	5	100.0	61	100.0	12	100.0	17	100.0

¹ In passing, we may note that, as in 1782, households with resident grandchildren were rarities. In 1851 only eighteen households (6.3% of the total) contained grandchildren.

On balance of the sexes, females outnumbered males in the lodger population, largely due to a greater number of elderly widows. The bulk of the population was concentrated in the younger age-groups, and was therefore unmarried. Of course, this reflects the inclusion of grandchildren in our definition. If we consider only those lodgers of marriageable age (from the age-group 20-24), then 54.5% of all males and 47.2% of all females were unmarried.

By recording place of birth of household and family heads, and place of residence of all their offspring who were alive at the time, the listing of 1782 gave a valuable insight into the high degree of spatial mobility among a rural population in the late eighteenth century.¹ The 1851 enumerators' returns only record place of birth of the resident population, and give no information of the whereabouts of those children born to Cardington families who were not living in the parish at the time of the census. Nevertheless, some indication of migratory habits can be gleaned from this information.

Table 12: *Place of birth, by social and occupational status of the household head*

Description of household	Place of birth															
	Cardington		Elsewhere in Bedfordshire		Elsewhere in England & Wales		Scotland		Ireland		Overseas		Un-known		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Farmer	123	60.3	56	27.5	22	10.8	-	-	1	0.5	1	0.5	1	0.5	204	100.0
Tradesman	106	68.4	40	25.8	8	5.2	-	-	-	-	1	0.6	-	-	155	100.0
Craftsman	92	70.2	31	23.7	6	4.6	1	0.8	-	-	-	1	0.8	131	100.0	
Labourer	748	81.3	133	14.5	35	3.8	-	-	2	0.2	1	0.1	1	0.1	920	100.0
Others	12	29.3	16	39.0	9	22.0	-	-	-	-	-	4	9.8	41	100.0	
Total	1081	74.5	276	19.0	80	5.5	1	0.1	3	0.2	3	0.2	7	0.5	1451	100.0

About three-quarters of the population listed as resident at Cardington in 1851 had been born there, and most of the remainder (about one-fifth of the total population) had been born elsewhere in the county. Very few came from farther afield, attesting once again to the limited geographic parameters of spatial mobility. This pattern was reflected in the migratory behaviour of all the social classes isolated. However, there were certain, interesting differences in the nature of geographic mobility as between one socio-occupational group and another. If we omit the category defined as "others", there

¹ Tranter, loc. cit., pp. 276-277.

appears to be a positive correlation between wealth and income on the one hand, and the frequency and scope of mobility on the other. The smallest proportion of persons who had been born in the parish is found amongst those in the group defined as "farmers", and the largest proportion amongst the "labouring" population, whilst the figures for "tradesmen" and "craftsmen" fall somewhere between the two extremes. Alternatively, the highest proportion of residents born outside the parish is found among "farmers", and the lowest among "labourers", with "tradesmen" and "craftsmen" again falling neatly between the two. Of residents born outside the parish, those in "farmer" households more frequently came from outside the county. In Bedfordshire by the mid nineteenth century, spatial mobility was easier, more regular and covered greater distances, the more substantial a person you were.

It should be allowed that the data on geographic mobility given in Table 12, tend to understate the degree of movement because they include persons too young to have moved by their own initiative. The population below the age of 16 years naturally shows a marked propensity towards having been born in the parish. Perhaps a better

Table 13: *Place of birth of household heads, by social and occupational status*

Description of household	Place of birth: Male															
	Cardington		Elsewhere in Bedfordshire		Elsewhere in England & Wales		Scotland		Ireland		Over-seas		Un-known		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Farmer	14	48.3	11	37.9	2	6.9	-	-	1	3.4	-	-	1	3.4	29	100.0
Tradesman	15	57.7	8	30.8	3	11.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26	100.0
Craftsman	14	50.0	12	42.9	2	7.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	100.0
Labourer	119	73.9	34	21.1	4	2.5	1	0.6	1	0.6	1	0.6	1	0.6	161	100.0
Others	-	-	3	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	100.0
Total	162	65.6	68	27.5	11	4.5	1	0.4	2	0.8	1	0.4	2	0.8	247	100.0
Place of birth: Female																
Farmer	6	27.3	9	40.9	6	27.3	-	-	-	1	4.5	-	-	-	22	100.0
Tradesman	7	29.2	12	50.0	4	16.7	-	-	-	1	4.2	-	-	-	24	100.0
Craftsman	12	52.2	10	43.5	1	4.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	100.0
Labourer	88	50.9	65	37.6	19	11.0	-	-	1	1.4	-	-	-	-	173	100.0
Others	2	20.0	5	50.0	2	20.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	10.0	10	100.0
Total	115	45.6	101	40.1	32	12.7	-	-	1	0.4	2	0.8	1	0.4	252	100.0
Total for males and females	277	55.5	169	33.9	43	8.6	1	0.2	3	0.6	3	0.6	3	0.6	499	100.0

test of migratory habits would be to consider only those persons old enough to migrate. The most convenient way of doing this is to examine place of birth of household heads.

Using this measure of mobility, only just over one-half of all those household heads resident in 1851 had been born in the parish, and as many as one-third had been born elsewhere in the county. Relatively few, however, (about 10%) originated from outside Bedfordshire. Males seem to have been rather more static than females: a much larger proportion of male than female household heads had been born in the parish: females also appear to have migrated longer distances than males, certainly many more women than men had been born outside the county. As in Table 12, the data emphasize the relative mobility of men and women in the social group defined as "farmers", and the relative immobility of those in the labouring population.

Before concluding our discussion of migration, we might note the place of birth of the servant population:

Table 14: *Place of birth of servants, by sex*

	Cardington		Elsewhere in Bedfordshire		Elsewhere in England & Wales		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Male	14	58.3	7	29.2	3	12.5	24	100.0
Female	20	41.7	19	39.6	9	18.8	48	100.0
Total	34	47.2	26	36.1	12	16.7	72	100.0

Slightly less than half the servant population had been born at Cardington, and a little over a third elsewhere in Bedfordshire. Mobility seems to have been greater and more adventurous among females than males.

It would be wrong to suggest that the social structure of Cardington altered radically between 1782 and 1851. Yet by emphasizing the points at which changes did occur we are in some danger of leaving this impression. Nothing could be further from the truth. In its essentials the organization of local society in the mid nineteenth century remained very similar to that of the early 1780's: "labouring" households predominated over households of other social classes: the sex-ratio of the population remained roughly balanced, with only a slight surplus of females: a customarily high percentage of the population was found in the dependent age-groups below the age of fifteen years: household size and the number of resident offspring per house-

hold continued to vary with socio-occupational class in the same way as in 1782: by far the most common household was that composed of the nuclear family only, and households shared by more than one family unit were rarities: the large majority of households were headed by married couples: adult celibacy, among both males and females was rare: the servant population remained heavily concentrated in tenements of the "farmer" class: spatial mobility was frequent, albeit over short distances.

Nevertheless, within this picture of general stability, a number of minor, but noticeable, modifications to the social structure of the parish did occur: the sex ratio became a little better balanced; the percentage of the population aged below 15 and above 60 years fell slightly, while that in the more productive age groups between 15 and 44 years rose; the proportion of married and widowed persons in the population decreased, and that of unmarried persons increased; household size and the number of resident offspring per household rose, particularly amongst the population of the labouring class; there was a slight rise in the percentage of households headed by married couples, and a corresponding fall in the percentage headed by widowed persons; the predominance of households composed solely of the nuclear family lessened as the percentage of lodgers in the population increased. All this took place in a community which remained essentially rural and agricultural and in which domestic handicraft industries of one kind or another continued to play an important role.

The basic explanation behind many of these changes relates simply to the rapid growth in the population of the parish between the early 1780's and 1851, and more specifically to an alteration in the relationship between total population and the number of houses available to accommodate it. We cannot gauge with any precision the size of the population in 1782. But to judge from the number of "households" recorded in the Lilbourne listing (180) and from the number of "families" in the parish given by an ecclesiastical return for 1788-1792 (179),¹ we can assume a population of about 810.² By 1851 this had risen to 1,451, an increase of 79.1%. Over the same period the number of households had increased by only 57.8%. As a result, household size, the number of resident offspring per household, and the percentage of lodgers in the population increased. The growing proportion of unmarried adults may likewise have reflected the difficulties of securing the necessary accommodation within which to base a marriage. None of these indicators should be taken to imply that Cardington

¹ Lincolnshire County Record Office, Speculum Number 4, ca. 1788-1792.

² 180 households multiplied by an assumed average household size of 4.5.

suffered drastically from the pressure of population on available housing stocks or on general standards of life and comfort. To judge from the census evidence, real poverty was rare in 1851, and largely the result of old age and infirmity. Only seventeen households (6% of all households, comprising 4-5% of the total population) were headed by persons variously defined as paupers, alms persons, or receivers of parish relief. Nine of these households were headed by widows, in all but one case elderly, and one by an elderly widower. In the remaining seven pauper households headed by married couples, the majority of heads were also elderly.

The other modifications in the social fabric of the parish which occurred between 1782 and 1851 are less easy to explain. An improved sex ratio may have been due to a relative fall in male compared to female mortality rates, or to changes in the sex composition of in and out migration. The decrease in the percentage of the population below 15 years of age could have stemmed from falling birth-rates, improvements in the mortality rates of adults relative to those for children (possibly reflected in the lower percentage of widowed persons in the population and in the decreasing proportion of households headed by widows and widowers), or else to an unusually marked influx of adults in the period preceding 1851. Without the necessary demographic information we have no way of telling.

At no time during the period between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, was the parish of Cardington subjected to the violent economic and demographic strains which were common to some other parts of England. Its economy remained largely unchanged, and although population expanded substantially, its rate of growth was presumably far below that of the new and thriving industrial and commercial centres. The fact that the social structure of the parish in 1851 so closely resembled that of 1782 bears adequate witness to this. Even so, the rate at which population at Cardington increased was sufficient to bring about certain modifications to the social structure of the parish. How much more dramatic were the changes in the social composition of communities subjected to more radical economic and demographic changes only the test of future research will show.

APPENDIX

I

THE OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS

a) <i>Farmer</i>	Number	c) <i>Craftsman</i>	Number
Farmer	19	Carpenter	8
Schoolmaster	2	Blacksmith	6
Proprietress of houses	1	Wheelwright	3
Commander Royal Navy	1	Brickmaker	3
Landholder	1	Bricklayer	2
Curate	1	Plumber	1
Farmer and Miller	1	Shoemaker	1
Farmer and Malster	1	Machinist	1
Student for the Ministry	1	Clerk	1
Cornfactor, Farmer, and Baker	1	Matmaker	1
Land proprietress	1	Tailor	1
Sportsman	1		
Lawyer	1	Total	28
Total	32		

b) <i>Tradesman</i>	Number	d) <i>Labourer</i>	Number
Carrier	4	Agricultural Labourer	81
Butcher	3	Farm Labourer	57
Publican	2	Lacemaker	17
Baker	2	Labourer	8
Shopkeeper	2	Market Gardener	5
Pig Dealer	2	Game Keeper	3
Cattle Dealer	1	Groom	2
Beer Seller	1	Washerwoman	2
Poulterer	1	Laundress	2
Grocer	1	Straw Platter	2
Horsekeeper	1	House Servant	1
Draper	1	Sailor	1
Hostler	1	Charwoman	1
Innkeeper	1	Farm Labourer's Wife	1
Postmaster	1	Ratcatcher	1
Innkeeper and Butcher	1	Coachman's Wife	1
Miller	1	Woodman	1
Total	26	Shepherd	1
		Total	187

e) <i>Others</i>	Number
No recorded employment	8
Parish Relief	2
Almsperson, Workhouse	1
Total	11

II

THE OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF RESIDENT FEMALE OFFSPRING AGED OVER FIVE YEARS*

	Number	Percentage of Total
Lacemaker	114	58.2
Scholar	23	11.7
Straw Platter	21	10.7
Dressmaker	3	1.5
Laundress	2	1.0
Servant	2	1.0
Washerwoman	1	0.5
Schoolmistress	1	0.5
Bonnet Sewer	1	0.5
Shoebinder	1	0.5
No recorded employment	27	13.3
Total	196	100.0

* To facilitate comparison with Tranter, loc. cit., p. 281, all resident female offspring in households included in the farmer category have been excluded.

III

THE MARITAL STATUS, AGE AND SEX STRUCTURE OF THE "FARMER" POPULATION

Age in years	Males						Females					
	Single		Married		Widowed		Single		Married		Widowed	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
0-4	9	15.5	—	—	—	—	14	16.3	—	—	—	—
5-9	12	20.7	—	—	—	—	12	14.0	—	—	—	—
10-14	10	17.2	—	—	—	—	10	11.7	—	—	—	—
15-19	11	19.0	—	—	—	—	23	26.8	—	—	—	—
20-24	9	15.5	—	—	—	—	8	9.3	—	—	—	—
25-29	3	5.2	6	22.2	1	22.5	11	12.8	7	25.9	—	—
30-34	2	3.4	1	3.7	—	—	2	2.3	2	7.4	—	—
35-39	—	—	5	18.5	—	—	2	2.3	4	14.8	—	—
40-44	—	—	2	7.4	—	—	1	1.2	5	18.5	—	—
45-49	—	—	2	7.4	—	—	—	—	2	7.4	—	—
50-54	—	—	6	22.2	—	—	1	1.2	3	11.1	—	—
55-59	1	1.7	3	11.1	1	22.5	2	2.3	3	11.1	1	50.0
60-64	—	—	1	3.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	50.0
65 and over	1	1.7	1	3.7	2	50.0	—	—	1	3.7	—	—
Unknown	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	58	100.0	27	100.0	4	100.0	86	100.0	27	100.0	2	100.0