

Ampleforth was also noted, as might be expected from the situation outlined above, for its poachers, and many of the villagers in earlier times made part of their living out of poaching on neighbouring estates. It is said that no gamekeeper from the neighbouring estates came to Ampleforth if he could help it, because he would not be welcome, and was quite likely to be mobbed or cheated!

In earlier days, up to the Great War, there was a noticeable literary bent among the Ampleforth villagers. Not only were people given to writing poems - some of them printed privately - but there was the 'Ampleforth Play', which was an annual event, in which a group of actors with a band slowly progressed down the village street, all the while reciting the time-hallowed words of the play, with actions and music. None of it was ever written down, and tragically no one is alive today who can remember the words, and so the play has been lost to posterity.

I shall be very interested to hear from any readers who know of other villages which have had no squire: or from anyone who can throw light on this interesting subject.

Yours faithfully,

Patrick Rowley (The Rev.),  
The Vicarage,  
Ampleforth,  
Yorks.

Dear Sir,

#### Marriage Seasonality - May Marriages

In connection with an enquiry into techniques for investigating seasonality, I have calculated the monthly totals of baptisms, burials and marriages for each decade recorded in the registers of a number of parishes. With the co-operation of members of the Matlock and Burton Joyce Population Study Groups and in particular Mrs. Janet Young of Nottingham, I have been able to collect figures from eleven Nottinghamshire and six Derbyshire parishes. The figures relating to marriage throw some light on Mr. E.W. Smith's query whether folklorists are right to assert that May was traditionally avoided as an unlucky month for marriage (L.P.S. No. 2 p. 67).

The table below shows that:-

1. In 10 of the 17 parishes, the number of decades in which the number of May marriages fell below the average for all 12 months was less than half, and in most cases, substantially less than half, of the total number of decades recorded.
2. There were only 5 parishes in which the number of decades particularly unfavourable to May marriages reached a quarter of the recorded decades.
3. On the other hand, there were 12 parishes in which decades particularly favourable to May marriages reached a quarter of the recorded decades.
4. There were only 4 parishes in which the unfavourable decades exceeded the favourable decades.

I could see no pattern in either the unfavourable or the favourable decades. It would seem, then, that in only one parish (Fledborough) was there any real sign of a disinclination to marry in May, and many of the decadal totals for this parish are so small as to make any conclusion at all extremely hazardous.

I have come across interesting evidence of a favoured month for baptisms (and to a lesser extent for marriages) appearing in some Derbyshire parishes about the middle of the eighteenth century and disappearing towards the end of the century and I hope to submit this evidence to the editors for their consideration for a later issue.

Yours faithfully,

L. Bradley,  
Sheldon Cottage,  
Elton,  
Matlock, Derbyshire

May Marriages

- A Number of decades covered (ending 1830) .
- B Number of decades in which May marriages are below monthly average.
- C Number of decades in which either no or only one month is less favoured than May.
- D Number of decades in which either no or only one month is more favoured than May.

<u>Nottinghamshire Parishes</u>	A	B	C	D
Arnold	25	11	4	6
Burton Joyce	25	10	4	7
Cropwell Bishop	25	14	6	4
Edwinstowe	16*	3	0	5
Gedling	27	8	1	4
Oxton	26	16	1	7
Feldborough +	20	17	17	2
Darlington (chapelry) +	26	11	9	8
Dunham	18	4	2	8
Ragnall	13	7	6	6
Hoveringham	13	9	4	3
<u>Derbyshire Parishes</u>				
Ashover	17	3	2	6
Bradbourne	12	3	2	5
Brailsford	18	9	4	5
Brassington	11	5	3	3
Matlock	19	10	1	6
Wirksworth	21	4	1	9

\* ending 1800

+ in these parishes, decadal totals are frequently so small as to make statements as to order of preference almost meaningless.