BRENCLEY: A STUDY OF MIGRATORY MOVEMENTS IN A MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY RURAL PARISH

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The movement of rural labour and the workings of the rural labour market have all too often been neglected by social historians in favour of the study of the effect of industrialisation on urban society. Yet the condition of the southern agricultural labourer, and in particular his reluctance to move to the manufacturing areas of the north, were subjects for frequent comment in the nineteenth-century:

‘.... though of all classes ..., agricultural labourers are under the greatest necessity to leave their birthplaces, and have the greatest inducement to do so, no class is so hard to move away.’

For example, the workforce in the Weald of Kent was discussed in this context, the Weald being an area virtually devoid of industrial employment and noted for the presence of ‘surplus’ labour. T. L. Hodges reported to the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Emigration that:

‘... there is in almost every parish, and has for several years past been, a considerably larger number of people than the agricultural demands require... the parishes are in considerable distress...’

It was also an area with a high expenditure on poor relief. In the years 1841-71, Poor Law Unions in north/north-eastern Kent tended to have the lowest expenditure levels, while Unions with the highest levels were in the Weald. For example, in the periods 1841-71, and 1865-71, Gravesend Union had a per capita real expenditure level of 3s. 11d., and 2s. 4d., while Hollingbourne Union had expenditure of 13s. 8d., and 10s. 2d respectively.

Migration studies at county and national level preclude a range of questions which together constitute a more detailed probe into labour mobility. From a county study we cannot, for example, confirm or deny the observations of those writers who, on the one hand, hold that agricultural labourers were in fact particularly immobile, or, on the other hand, the contrary view that they were very mobile, pulled by the attractions of industrial work and urban life. In order to discover whether or not this was the case a closer examination of the composition of the ‘movers’ is essential. The task can be fulfilled most
effectively by the study and linkage of the manuscript census, an arduous task even for the student of one parish. Brenchley, a parish lying in the heart of the Weald of Kent was found to be representative of the area and selected for a study which would illuminate some factors influencing population mobility in a mid-nineteenth century agricultural settlement in this region.\textsuperscript{5}

Brenchley was a parish whose population in mid-century numbered 2,704 people, and which continued to grow by as much as 17.3 per cent in the decade 1861-71.\textsuperscript{6} The majority of its workforce was engaged in agriculture, nearly half of the adult males declaring themselves to be agricultural labourers (47.0, 46.6, and 46.8 per cent at the three censuses of 1841, 1851, and 1861).\textsuperscript{7} At that time when the absolute numbers of agricultural labourers were increasing, (if we take workforce at the censuses of 1841, 1851, and 1861 and 1871, the figures are 308, 392, 383, and 451 respectively), the numbers of small (20-100 acre) farmers were decreasing, in fact they fell from 53 to 41 per cent of all landholders in the years 1851-71.\textsuperscript{8} The principal type of farming as given in the Tithe Award was that of arable, including the growing of hops. The reliance on corn meant that the district was likely to be much depressed in times of low corn prices, with resultant unemployment. In times of crisis, the labourers had little alternative means of support as the percentage of household heads who held no land was high and increasing (between 1851 and 1871 the figure rose from 87.5 per cent to 93.8 per cent). As living-in was declining, the agricultural worker no longer had the security provided by this system of employment; in bad times he would now have to face the effects of increased food prices.\textsuperscript{9} However, as living-in was usually a life-cycle phenomenon ending upon marriage, labourers always had to contend with making this adjustment. Furthermore there was little alternative employment in an agricultural parish such as Brenchley, even the coming of the railway in the 1840s brought a minimal expansion in jobs.\textsuperscript{10} The narrowness of opportunity is confirmed by a comparison of the occupational similarities/differences between fathers and sons; in 1851 and 1871 96 per cent and 95 per cent of sons with labouring fathers followed their father's occupations.\textsuperscript{11} The sons who were least likely to follow in their father's footsteps were farmer's sons. In the two censal years of 1851 and 1871 respectively, 50 and 92 per cent of those who left farming attained lower occupational status. Particularly striking is the fact that the fathers of these apparently downwardly mobile youths (as observed in the census of 1851) all had holdings of under seventy-five acres.

However, it would be misleading to depict Brenchley as a pauperised parish. While agricultural labourers lacked any means of self-support or betterment, other than these jobs, their average wage of 12s a week was on par with that for the county as a whole, and Kent was not considered to be a low-wage county. In fact real wages did not diverge markedly either in level or trend from those for the county or nation; in the early 1850s there was a rise in real wages, sustained, though not as great as that which came about after 1870.\textsuperscript{12} We can also infer the existence of unemployment from an examination of expenditure on poor relief. Local information is hard to gather but from a few surviving Relief Ledgers and Journals there is evidence to suggest that the early 1830s were very bad years indeed. At the time approximately a quarter of Brenchley's household heads were claiming relief. Indeed, the Parish Overseer
in 1832 was obliged to pressurise farmers into employing more labour. Brenchley’s expenditure on poor relief was permanently above average for its Union, the county, and England. However, after the mid-1850s, expenditure fell and the discussion of bad winters, bad harvests, and large-scale unemployment disappear from the Poor Law authorities’ correspondence. E. L. Jones, when examining the agricultural labour market in England as a whole, presented a similar pattern of unemployment. He saw the 1840s as the turning point in labour demand, a time after which there were continuous shortages of hands in the 1850s and 1860s. Indeed, he argued that the growth of Arch’s Union in the 1870s was a response to a check in the upward course of the standard of living, as opposed to a desperate response to appalling conditions.13

Reference was made at the beginning of this article to the census being an important source for the study of population mobility. There are two methods which can be adopted: firstly, an analysis of birthplace statistics, and secondly, the linking of successive censuses. Birthplace statistics, or any single year analysis, present a generally static picture of the workforce or population. While such statistics identify the origins of the population at a specific moment in time, they do not indicate the subsequent persistence/mobility of the ‘outsiders’ or of the Brenchley-born, and it is not so much the origin as the transiency of the workforce which is the measure of its response to socio-economic change. Single year analysis therefore disguises the rather brisk turnover of the population. The movement of labour is most effectively studied by the linking of successive censuses. This allows a fuller picture to be drawn of the rates of turnover and persistence (despite the fact that census linkage does not capture inter-censal change). These rates of turnover and persistence can in turn be related to contemporary environmental and economic stimuli.

The 1841 census did not record birthplace in detail; respondents were only asked whether or not they were born in the county of enumeration. Some 90 per cent of all 16-70 year olds in Brenchley replied ‘yes’, the remainder replied ‘no’. Successive censuses which specify the precise place of birth of each individual, reveal how the Kentish-born, and those from neighbouring counties, consistently formed the largest grouping in the parish. The almost exclusively local nature of Brenchley’s catchment area within Kent, and some nearby Sussex parishes, is confirmed by the statistics referring to the parish of birth of the workforce. Approximately half of the 16-70 year olds had been born in Brenchley, the others originating from a distance of only a few miles. The percentage of Brenchley-born declined from 51.8 per cent to 43.8 per cent during the course of twenty years (1851-71), though they continued by far to be the largest contingent.

Three sets of census linkage were undertaken: from the 1851 to the 1861 census, the 1861 to the 1871, and finally the 1851 to the 1861 to the 1871 census. Tables 1 and 2 display the results of the 1851 to 1861, and 1861 to 1871 linkage.

In the three-way link, 927 persons had already been linked from 1851 to 1861. When these pairs were then linked to the 1871 census, 349 persons could be identified as having lived in Brenchley from 1851 to 1871. To summarise, in the decade 1851-61, 38 per cent of the ‘truly linkable population’ persisted; by 1861-

30
71, the percentage had fallen to 31, and when the three-way link was conducted, 14 per cent of the truly linkable population were found to have remained in Brenchley for the twenty year period.\textsuperscript{14} This considerable rate of turnover in Brenchley was not unexpected and had long been a feature of English rural life. In seventeenth-century Clayworth and Cogenhoe, Laslett and Harrison found that of the 401 persons present in 1676, after the subtraction of ninety-one deaths, 50.8 per cent persisted to 1688.\textsuperscript{15} In a recent study of a nineteenth-century Essex village, taking into consideration non-persistence through death and the subtraction of temporary residents, Robin found that 64.5 per cent of the population of Elmdon stayed in the decade 1851-61, a considerably higher persistency level compared to that of Brenchley.\textsuperscript{16}

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<tr>
<th>Table 1. Linkage of the 1851 to the 1861 census</th>
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<td>Persons available for linking (from both censuses)</td>
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<td>Of these, numbers leaving after the 1851 census</td>
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When the census information concerning each individual was first coded, twenty separate pieces of information were recorded, including: birthplace; age; sex; marital condition; type of family; relationship to the head of household;
number of offspring; number of kin; occupation; area of land occupied by farmers. Each of the variables was analysed to see whether independently, or in combination with each other, it or they exercised any discernible influence on people’s persistence.

The birthplace statistics for Brenchley’s workforce had shown the very local nature of Brenchley’s catchment area. When the mobility of these persons was reviewed with reference to the county of birth, it was again evident that very few persons came from distant counties, and the few that did were unlikely to be in Brenchley on the occasion of the next census. The parish of birth data also demonstrated that the more distant the individual’s birthplace was from Brenchley, the more likely it was that they would not be present at the time of the next census. Two hundred and eighty-three Brenchley-born, or 36.2 per cent of the 1851 workforce, persisted from 1851-61, in comparison to 235 or 31.4 per cent, in the next decade. Fifty-four persons born in neighbouring parishes or those up to six miles away (or 23.6 per cent of the 1851 workforce) were still in Brenchley a decade later, the comparative figures for 1861-71 being fifty, or 21.8 per cent. It is evident that mobility was increasing, not only amongst the Brenchley-born but amongst the workforce as a whole: 70.3 to 75.1 per cent. While persistency rates showed a positive relationship with birthplace, it is nevertheless likely that birthplace itself exerted no independent influence on persistency and further features of the persisters need to be explored.

The lack of either horizontal or vertical social mobility discussed earlier could have driven out the younger and more ambitious members of Brenchley’s workforce. There was also a slight surplus of males in 1851 which may have been primarily related to migration. Obviously age is a useful variable for the study of migration. We know that for most persons marriage would have occurred in their early twenties, and that child rearing would have continued until the forties. In general terms, the responsibility and ties of individuals would increase with age, and we can hypothesise that these may have hindered mobility. This was found to be the case in Brenchley where persistency was found to increase with age, with the exception of those aged 51 and over in 1851-61, and those aged 16-20 and 51+ in 1851-71, when this pattern was reversed. However, even the most persistent of groups increased their mobility in the decade 1861-71, the one surprising exception being the very slight increase of 1.3 per cent in persistency amongst the 16-20 year olds. The mobility of those aged 56+ may at first appear surprising, yet it was no doubt due to a greater likelihood of the break-up of the home involved in widowhood. The marginal increase in persistency amongst 16-25 year olds was attributable to the increased persistency of young agricultural labourers.

Overall, women and men had very similar persistency rates, although, as we shall discuss shortly, these rates differed markedly with age. A surplus of males in 1851 (the sex composition of Brenchley was 54 per cent male to 46 per cent female) would suggest a higher persistency rate amongst men in the previous decade. By 1871 the male ‘surplus’ was lower, due perhaps to males being slightly less persistent.

Given that persistency was affected by age, the mobility of Brenchley’s eldest
inhabitants could be related to their marital status. A breakdown of the marital condition of both migrants and persisters supports the suggestion that responsibility hinders mobility, for married persons were the least mobile. Indeed, of all workforce members described as married in the 1851 census, as many as 38.7 per cent were still present in Brenchley ten years later. Additionally, the widowed were very mobile. Thus unattached people, whether young or old, were liable to be mobile. The importance of the fact of being 'unattached' becomes evident when we compare the mobility of married and widowed older persons - the married revealed higher persistency rates. For the years 1851-61 and 1861-71, the unmarried exhibited persistency rates of 17.7 and 16.8 per cent, the married 38.7 and 30.0 per cent, and the widowed 15.2 and 17.1 per cent respectively. Further analysis of migrant persons who were both old and widowed in 1851 showed that 'women with no stated occupation' to have been the dominant group (21.9 per cent), followed by the unemployed (18.8 per cent) and agricultural labourers (17.2 per cent). Perhaps these persons, affected by unemployment, retirement, sickness or poverty were obliged to return to their parish of settlement, enter the workhouse, or go and live with family or friends.

In our examination of life-cycle and labour mobility, we need also to examine the behaviour of different members of the family unit. As the majority of Brenchleyites lived in 'simple' households, it is not surprising that the greatest number of relatives were sons, daughters, wives and heads of households themselves. Outside these immediate relatives the only other substantial groups were lodgers and servants (including assistants and governesses).

If lack of opportunities served to encourage the out-migration of the young, we would expect adult co-resident sons and daughters to be less persistent than their parents. In fact, while persistency amongst the former remained stable, persistent heads and their wives declined. Daughters were less persistent than sons, perhaps because they left home to marry or enter into service. Furthermore evidence supplied by the twenty year linkage showed that the wives, followed by the husbands, were the most persistent (16.5 per cent and 12.3 per cent respectively), their children less so (sons 9.4 per cent, daughters 6.7 per cent), while no servants and only three (5.2 per cent) of the assistants of 1851 could be found in Brenchley in 1871. Meanwhile closer scrutiny of the sons revealed that of those who persisted either from 1851 to 1861, or from 1861 to 1871, 55 per cent and 75 per cent respectively were agricultural labourers. Once more members of the agricultural labouring class showed the strong influence of occupation on their mobility.

The effect of offspring on the mobility of family heads was for persistency to increase with the number of resident offspring. However, the numbers of heads of household with more than seven children were very small, and so too the numbers of persistent heads of household with such a number of children were small and therefore their persistency needs to be treated with caution. In fact over the twenty year period there were no such heads of family persistent in Brenchley. Meanwhile the childless family type, the 'solitary', had a high level of migration, only 15.9 per cent persisted from 1851 to 1861. While childless family units had a tendency to be young, and so the additional factor of the
effect of age on mobility has to be borne in mind, nevertheless it is clear that
the presence of dependent offspring affected mobility. Yet the persistency rates
between 1851 and 1861 of persons heading ‘simple’, ‘extended’ and ‘multiple’
household types were 37.2, 29.9 and 12.5 per cent respectively. If heads of
‘solitary’ and ‘multiple’ family types had similar persistency levels, the
relationship between mobility and household type is clearly not a straight-
forward one.

As persons of the ‘no family’ or ‘extended’ family types had kin residing with
them, the relationship between the number of kin and mobility was examined.
In fact, less than a fifth of all households had any resident kin, and of those
only a quarter had more than one relative. The number of kin was thus too
limited to enable us to establish whether or not it exercised an impact on
mobility.

From a study of the persistency of differing occupational groups, it is evident
that persistency was consistently highest amongst agricultural workers, farmers
and tradesmen, and lowest amongst professional, domestic and commercial
persons. 32.1 per cent of Brenchley’s agricultural labourers persisted from 1851-
61, and 33.2 per cent from 1861-71. The respective figures for farmers were 35.4
and 30.9 per cent, for craftsmen/tradesmen, 31.9 and 23.9 per cent, for
professional persons 22.2 and 6.1 per cent, for domestics 9.2 and 7.9 per cent,
and finally for persons involved in commerce 14.7 and 8.3 per cent.

While we must not forget that persistency was low for all occupational groups,
the reasons for the low rate of persistency amongst professional persons, as
opposed to the rate itself, are open to speculation; perhaps professionals such
as clergymen and solicitors could not further their ambitions by remaining in
an isolated place such as Brenchley, or perhaps they had short-term
assignments.

Those engaged in commercial pursuits, such as railway servants and coachmen,
were mobile by the very nature of their occupations, while those in service
were well aware of the demand for servants in towns such as Tunbridge
Wells. Meanwhile craftsmen and any tradesmen were more likely to be tied
by their businesses to Brenchley. Indeed, the nature of craftsmen’s and
tradesmen’s businesses encouraged persistency, as familiarity with the local
inhabitants stimulated trade. It is interesting to note that master craftsmen
exhibited high rates of persistency: of all master craftsmen present in Brenchley
in 1851, 46.2 per cent were still resident in 1861, while the comparative figure
for grocers, millers and butchers was 43 per cent. It is unlikely that the few
craftsmen resident in Brenchley felt any great need to leave the parish. Indeed,
the high degree of occupational inheritance may have been a result of the fact
that the sons were offered a secure livelihood. In contrast, journeymen
craftsmen were mobile: of those resident in Brenchley in 1851, 37.5 per cent
were present ten years later, while no journeymen tradesmen could be
identified. Perhaps, having some work experience behind them, they sought
greater opportunities in London. Apprentices on the other hand, were supposed
(in theory) to stay to complete their terms of apprenticeship and obtain some
work experience. They were therefore more likely to be traced from one census
to the next over a ten year interval than journeymen, indeed, 37.5 per cent of apprentice craftsmen persisted for the ten year period 1851-61, though no apprentice tradesmen remained.

Like tradesmen and craftsmen, farmers, both owners and tenants, by nature of their business may have been more tied to the parish, or more specifically, the land, and consequently were not a very mobile occupational group. Furthermore, persistency levels were clearly associated with the acreage of land occupied. Persistency increased with the size of holding occupied. Yet, in conformity with the general pattern, persistency declined in the decade 1861-71, especially amongst the very small (under twenty acres) farmers, eight of whom were present in the 1861 census and none in the 1871 census. Although the numbers involved were very small, from the 1851-71 linkage we learn that of the twelve heads of household who held land in 1851, none holding under twenty acres persisted to 1871. The consolidation of land was squeezing out the small farmer, though there was a revival of the twenty to sixty acre holder in the decade 1861-71. As cited earlier, agricultural labourers were regarded by contemporaries as the least mobile of all occupational groups. Clifford’s view was somewhat exaggerated, taking little account of the extent to which labourers were prepared to move locally, from one parish to another. Nevertheless they must be counted among the less mobile social groups. When supposedly better working conditions in other parts of the country were brought to their attention, either by the authorities or as a result of their increased literacy, they were reluctant to leave their locality. Indeed, even when the Poor Law Commissioners financed the move, few applied, and of those who went, many returned. No Brenchleyites were found in these lists of assisted migrants. The cost of any such move may have been prohibitive, especially as only a move to a northern agricultural area or town would appear to entail financial benefits. The constant threat of removal should they become chargeable may also have acted as a disincentive. Clearly these options had limited appeal. Agricultural workers may also have been reluctant to relinquish cottages received from their employers.

**Summary of findings**

Persons from long-distance birthplaces were more likely to make a further move than persons from short-distance birthplaces. Professional persons had higher rates of mobility than labourers, farmers or tradespeople. When the relationship between the two variables ‘birthplace’ and ‘occupation’ was explored it emerged that the majority of professional persons had been born outside Kent (55.2 per cent in 1851), while almost all agricultural labourers (89.3 per cent in 1851), were living in their county of birth. In order to evaluate the comparative influence of distance and occupation we examined the behaviour of the least mobile group, agricultural labourers, and the most mobile group, professionals, originating from Kent. It was found that even when born in the same place, professionals were more mobile than labourers: 23 per cent persisted to 1861, in comparison to 37 per cent of agricultural labourers.

What becomes evident then is a clear geographical demarcation line for the respective labour markets. Labourers, farmers and tradesmen originated from
and moved very locally, while professionals originated from and moved from further afield. The mobility of professionals could have been the product of a variety of factors, such as knowledge of opportunities elsewhere gained in transit, and the ultimate lack of opportunity for professional persons in Brenchley.

In this article we sought to identify the movement of Brenchley’s workforce in response to the continuing change in Brenchley’s social relations and the labour market. The response focused on persistence/migration as indicators of the flows of labour, using the census as our source material. Other sources, such as Poor Law records, marriage registers and poll books were used in the original study and the findings based on these sources complemented that of the census; however, their discussion is outside the scope of this article.

From the birthplace statistics we discovered that, in general, Brenchley drew upon very local sources of labour, the majority of residents originating from the parish or its environs. There was a greater degree of turnover than expected, with the most mobile adults coming from distant places. Not only was there a clear division between migrants and non-migrants in terms of origin, but divisions also emerged along occupational lines. The migrants who originated from longer distances, and who displayed little tendency to remain in Brenchley, were overwhelmingly professional, commercial and domestic persons, while those from closer to Brenchley, who showed a greater reluctance to move were labourers, farmers and tradesmen. It therefore became apparent that several distinctive labour markets were in operation. Even increased literacy did not produce a significant change in the labourer’s behaviour. Indeed, while there was an overall increase in migration in the period studied, the labourers were one occupational group to (fractionally) increase their persistence.

The reasons for the reluctance of the agricultural labourers to move have already been suggested. Their increased persistency in the decade 1861-71 should not be exaggerated, though it is nevertheless of interest, especially since it was most pronounced amongst the younger members of the occupational group. Conditions in Brenchley underwent no sudden change in the 1860s, and there are no data to indicate that the 1860s were worse than the 1850s and that therefore the ‘push’ factors on labourers were stronger. Indeed, perhaps out-migration in earlier decades had resulted in improved conditions for those left behind, though agricultural labourers as a percentage of the workforce were steady throughout the period 1841-71. However, it is not the numbers per se but the condition of the labourers which is of most importance.

An alternative explanation for their marginally changed behaviour in the decades 1851-61 and 1861-71 lies in the decrease of ‘pull’ factors. Perhaps there was a reduction in the pulling power of the towns which now supplied much of their workforce by natural increase. Indeed, immigration from the south-eastern counties to London fell in the 1860s, and Brenchley itself started gaining population from net migration, though the turnover of population was greater than in the previous decade. However, neither the ‘push’ nor the ‘pull’ factors showed any substantial change in the 1860s, and since the increase in
persistency on the part of labourers was only fractional, what is of greater importance is the comparative persistency levels of the different occupational groups. Bearing this in mind, although we have no evidence for worsening conditions in the 1860s, it seems that the high persistency levels of agricultural labourers were at once a reflection and a cause of their low standing and disadvantage within rural society.

Appendix

In order to determine whether or not a pair of records were ‘truly linked’, the following conditions had to be met (and written in the form of a Fortran programme):

Stage 1. Essential conditions for a Match

(1) Source must be different on the two records being matched (i.e. 2 different censuses);
(2) Sex must be identical on both records;
(3) Age must be one, two or three categories higher on the second record (each category consisted of five years);
(4) Marital condition must only change from single to married, married to widowed, or widowed to married;
(5) Name (surname compressed by Soundex and initial of first name)* must be identical on both records;
(6) County of birth must be identical on both records.

Potentially matched pairs having successfully passed the first stage were then tested further. They were tested using four variations which were not essential in order for a pair to be deemed truly matched. The only requirement was that a potential match must achieve a certain score on the basis of these variables to be truly a match.

Stage 2. Non-essential conditions for a Match

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<th>agree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>missing</th>
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<tr>
<td>(1) Place of residence in parish on both records:</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Adults’ trade on both records:</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Persons aged 15 and under, trade on records:</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Parish of birth on both records:</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Union of birth on both records:</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
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A score of +2 had to be obtained on the non-essential variables for a pair of records to be deemed ‘truly linked’.

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An instruction was also written into the linkage programme which ensured that women who changed their name through marriage would not be counted as 'migrants' but as 'persisters' if they remained in Brenchley. The 927 was multiplied by 2 as each person had two census entries. Therefore

\[(1,854 \div 4,938) \times 100 = 37.5\text{ per cent}\]

*For a detailed discussion of the Soundex method see M. B. Katz, *The People of Hamilton, Canada West*. Harvard University Press, Mass., 1975. Katz found that surnames compressed by Soundex method matched exactly for 91.9 per cent of his truly linked pairs, while the initial matched exactly for 89.1 per cent. The surnames of all Brenchleyites had been coded using Soundex, to which a code was added to represent the initial of the first name. The reliability of the initial was never in doubt as the enumerators always wrote out the first name of any individual in full. The only pitfall lay in the possibility of individuals reporting their first name differently from census to census, for example, William John could well become John William.

NOTES


4. 'Real' expenditure was calculated using the Rousseaux Price indices, 1800-1913, cited in B. R. Mitchell & P. Deane, *Abstracts of British Historical Statistics*. Cambridge, 1961, pp. 471-72. The formula used to calculate real relief was: real relief = expenditure on relief (shillings & pence) + agricultural price index. See Poor Law Commissioners, Poor Law Board and Local Government Board Annual Reports, 1841-71, for expenditure on relief.

5. The representativeness of Brenchley was gauged by a detailed study of its occupational and demographic characteristics, namely, sex and age composition, and birth, death, marriage and population growth rates, and the subsequent comparison of those figures to those calculated for all the Wealden Union.


7. Adult is defined as synonymous with the workforce. A study of the census data for Brenchley revealed that those aged under 16 and over 70 represented an insignificant proportion of those gainfully employed. Consequently the age group 16-70 has been used to denote the adult population, or the workforce.


9. Traditionally, a substantial proportion of farm servants (the bailiff, housekeeper, carter, ploughman, cowman, shepherd, dairy and kitchen maids) lived and ate with the farmer in the farm house. They thus had more security than labourers who lived outside the farm, as they
were unlikely to be dismissed and turned out of the farm house in times of depression. There was the possibility that the farmer would not only continue to provide them with lodgings but also board in times of unemployment. Upon marriage, the farm servant left his employer’s home and became a labourer. However, this is not to imply that all those working in agriculture had once ‘lived-in’. This was not the case, though as late as 1851, in Brenchley, 48.5 per cent of the farmers had employees living-in, a figure which dropped to 16.4 per cent by 1871. Tradesmen, though fewer in number, also practised this form of employment, and here the drop was from 23.1 to 8.8 per cent respectively. See also A. Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry in early modern England*, Cambridge, 1981, for a discussion of the decrease of the custom of ‘living-in’ from the late eighteenth-century onwards.

10. C. Tufnell, the assistant Poor Law Commissioner for Kent, 1835-42, estimated that nine-tenths of all railway employees in Kent were from outside the county. The South-Eastern Railway had a branch linking Brenchley parish (or more specifically the hamlet of Paddock Wood) with London built in 1842, but the Brenchley census shows that the percentage of the adult male labour force employed by the railway only grew from 1.6 per cent of the workforce in 1851 to 2.9 per cent in 1871.

11. The extent to which sons pursued their fathers’ callings is in part a reflection of the restricted opportunities available for the younger generation. However, the study of inter-generational occupational change as an indicator of the rigidity of the social structure is undertaken with the following reservations: we can only trace co-resident fathers and sons, and not sons residing elsewhere. Unless we know the pursuits of all the sons, we cannot establish the precise degree of occupational inheritance. Furthermore, a non-resident son could be working as a labourer for another employer, and yet in some later stage in his life-cycle, succeed to his father’s holding. See Wojciechowska-Kibbie, op. cit., pp. 250-2.

12. There is no unbroken series of statistics for the cost of living which would enable us to establish real wages in Brenchley during this period. Nevertheless, inferences can be drawn about the level and trend of wages in Brenchley from movements in the cost of living and real wages at the national and county levels, there being nothing in the Brenchley data to suggest that this would be inappropriate. The levels and trends in real wages were calculated using the Rousseaux Price indices (op. cit., footnote 4), and Bowley’s agricultural wages: Real wages = Bowley’s agricultural earnings + agricultural prices. If the value of real wages in the period 1830-35 (=64) is taken to equal 100 then the trend in real wages was: 1835-40 = 97, 1850-54 = 117, and 1870-74 = 141. See B. R. Mitchell and P. Deane, op. cit., pp. 349-50 and 471-2.


14. By ‘truly linkable’ is meant the population remaining after those who were registered in the parish registers as having been born or died between the two censuses are subtracted from the population, as the inclusion of such persons in the linking would artificially inflate the number of migrants.


16. J. Robin, *Elmdon: Continuity and Change in a north-west Essex Village 1861-1964*, Cambridge, 1980, p. 190. In fact that gap between Elmdon and Brenchley was even greater since Robin’s migration figures are inflated by the inclusion amongst her migrants of women who could not be traced to the 1861 census as a result of name change through marriage.

17. The information recorded was: surname, first name, age, parish of birth, union of birth, county of birth, sex, occupation, class, marital condition, place of residence in the parish, area of land occupied, type of household (see footnote 20 below), relation to head of household, the number of offspring, kin, staff, visitors, lodgers and boarders in the household. Surname, first name, and the number of visitors were not used, since the name variable would tell us nothing about the reasons for persistence/migration, visitors were only temporary residents, and ‘class’ at this time as defined by the Registrar General was too general a category to be used. For example, Class 6, ‘Undeclared occupations’, contained wide ranging occupations such as ‘scholar’, ‘independent’, or ‘unemployed’.

18. Looking at the Brenchley workforce, of those born in Brenchley, 36.2 per cent persisted from 1851-61, in comparison to 23.6 per cent from neighbouring and parishes up to 6 miles away, and 20 per cent from parishes of 6-12 miles distance.

19. Agricultural labourers aged 16-25 increased their persistence from 27.7 per cent in the period 1851-61 to 31.4 per cent between 1861-71. Also the persistency of those aged 25-35 increased from 39.2 per cent to 45.3 per cent between 1851-61 and 1861-71.

21. Evidence for the whereabouts of Brenchley's out-migrants is hard to obtain. A search of the census for neighbouring parishes and the town of Tunbridge Wells revealed these places to be popular destinations, in keeping with the belief that most migration was over short distances. An alternative source of information are the Poor Law Union records, namely, those pertaining to the non-resident poor. A study of these revealed that 29.4 per cent of the heads of household who were recipients of relief were resident in Kentish Unions, 41.2 per cent in Sussex Unions, 14.7 per cent in London and 14.7 per cent elsewhere in the years 1845-66.

22. Evidence of literacy is to be found in the parish's marriage registers which show the signatures of couples being married and therefore enable us to calculate the percentage signing with an 'x'. In the years 1841-6 and 1867-71 respectively, 50 and 18 per cent of the couples both signed with an 'x', 33 and 26 per cent had one partner signing with an 'x', and 17 and 57 per cent had neither partner signing with an 'x'.

23. Public Record Office. *MH. 32. 71*, records of E. Tufnell, the assistant Poor Law Commissioner for Kent, 1st March, 1842.


25. See H. A. Shannon, 'Migration and the growth on London, 1841-71', *Economic History Review*, V, 1935, pp. 79-86. In terms of net migration, Brenchley was at first a loser of population, in the decades 1841-51 and 1851-61 its net loss by migration was 78 and 256, but then it experienced a net gain of 58 persons in the decade 1861-71.