

## ECONOMY OF TIME? WEDDING DAYS AND THE WORKING WEEK IN THE PAST

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'Students of the history of time measurement have a **déformation professionnelle** : they welcome every hint of time-discipline and love to add it to their compilation of evidence. This is due, I think, to the sparseness of such evidence, especially for earlier periods: time consciousness and temporal constraints are so obvious that, like Poe's purloined letter, they pass unnoticed.'

[Taken from D. Landes, 'The ordering of the Urban Environment', *Past and Present*, 116, 1987, p. 193.]

### Introduction

As the quotation above suggests, historians of the measurement of time find it, not surprisingly, difficult to find accurate quantitative information as to popular attitudes to the working week in the past. It is suspected that traditional working patterns were very different from those which were produced by the forces of industrialization in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, but efforts to measure such change are usually frustrated by lack of hard information. Without such evidence it will always be difficult to know to what extent customary leisure traditions undermined or constrained the efforts of employers to enforce more regular, and economically 'rational' working times. Some authorities believe that before the arrival of factory-based machine-powered industry working habits were irregular, punctuated by frequent holidays and the observance of a bucolic 'St Monday'. Domestic industries like the metalware manufacturers of industrialising Staffordshire 'followed the traditional work patterns for domestic workshops, that is, they took things easy on Monday and Tuesday, working longer hours towards the end of the week and sometimes working all night on Friday'.<sup>1</sup> More recently, Mark Harrison has argued that one should look for different working patterns not in any transition from a traditional to a modern industrial society but in an historical distinction between town and countryside. Towns and cities are held to have exhibited an early attachment to a regular working week. His evidence showed that the working week in such urban environments has been 'very disciplined, formalized, surprisingly regular and long... since at least the mid-eighteenth century'. Rather than seeing St Monday as evidence of traditional irregular working patterns Harrison sees it merely as part of an urban weekend 'almost all employed people, particularly in the towns, were to be found at work...

Tuesday to Saturday..., their weekend was Sunday and Monday.'<sup>2</sup> There remains agreement that patterns of work in rural areas may have been more irregular than that of towns and cities, not only in terms of a weekly cycle but also wide fluctuations in the seasonality of employment.<sup>3</sup> There seems to be some agreement, too, that economic pressures and fluctuations in employment opportunities affected the rhythm of the working week.<sup>4</sup> The gradual restructuring of the working week came in the second half of the nineteenth century with the establishment of the Saturday half day holiday and the introduction of more large scale machine powered industry.<sup>5</sup> New textile factory towns such as Manchester were early beneficiaries of the Saturday half holiday movement.<sup>6</sup>

This preliminary essay is intended to introduce information which might help in the task of measuring attitudes to the working week in the past. It concentrates, primarily, on the experience of large urban and suburban districts that contained substantial numbers of poorer or 'working-class' inhabitants, since it is the working practices of such individuals that are of particular interest. This does not mean, however, that the general approach is not applicable to rural areas, although the latter possess greater problems of interpretation.

### **Methodology and problems of interpretation**

The methodological approach is essentially that the timing of weddings during the week should tell us something about perceived patterns of leisure time during that week. In essence, wedding days should cluster on those days when work ceased or was pursued less intensively by the workforce. Before we can use the timing of weddings to infer patterns of weekly leisure time, however, we need to know about the constraints over personal choice of wedding day exerted by Anglican canon law. This is needed to ensure that the timing of weddings is not produced solely by strictly followed legal or administrative requirements.

Under Anglican canon law marriages were supposed to take place only in the morning, between the hours of 8 a.m. and noon in the parish church of the bride or groom, during divine service.<sup>7</sup> Guests and witnesses, whether comprising an entire village or more carefully selected friends and neighbours, might be present on either occasion. Recalling his first wedding in 1598, the shipwright Phineas Pett remembered that it had been 'at Stepney church upon a Monday in the forenoon. I kept my wedding at my own charge in my new dwelling house at Limehouse, accompanied with my brothers and sisters, my wife's parents, and divers of her friends and kindred'. When his daughter Martha was married in 1637, on a Tuesday, Pett recorded that 'she was married at Chatham Church, accompanied with the best sort of our neighbours, who were entertained in the garden under a long tent, set up for that purpose, where they ate dined and supped'.<sup>8</sup> Thus, for the convenience of guests and to avoid loss of earnings, weddings should have fallen on days set aside for leisure. The extent to which they fell on what were ordinary working days therefore, should tell us something about the leisure time available to the bulk of the population.

Unlike the case today, where the wedding ceremony is usually a private occasion with only guests admitted, church marriages in the past were supposed to take place in the presence of the local congregation during service time, and might often have coincided with other marriages, baptisms and churchings. This feature of seventeenth-century marriage needs some attention not only because such a restriction might have limited couples' choice of wedding day, but also because some churches in London, St Saviour's, Southwark amongst them, charged higher fees for couples evading the prescribed times. In 1613 the latter parish charged 5s 4d for a marriage by licence, 3s 4d for a wedding by banns 'at extraordinary times' and only 2s 6d for such a wedding at 'the accustomed time'.<sup>9</sup> Under canon law divine service was to be celebrated on all Sundays and Holy Days. The Litany, a separate service, was to be held on every Wednesday and Friday. It is known that a few churches in London followed this schedule.<sup>10</sup> In practice many London churches in the early seventeenth century accepted (and profited) from the desire of many couples to marry outside the permitted times and hours. Thus weddings on 'Sunday or holiday at service time' cost couples 3s 4d in St Olave Hart Street but those married 'afore service tyme or upon a workeinge day' were charged double. Weddings 'at extraordinary times when no service is' cost 6s 6d in St Clement Eastcheap compared to 4 shillings 'in time of devine service in the church'.<sup>11</sup> Marriages on 'prayer days', when morning prayer was read and divine service celebrated, attracted lower fees than those celebrated 'upon any other day' in St Dunstan in the West.<sup>12</sup> Weddings in service time were charged at a fixed rate in St Mary Aldermanbury but 'for private weddings the profitts to be as the parties can agree with the Parson'.<sup>13</sup> It should be stressed that parishes which charged more for weddings on unusual days were very much the exception. Most London parishes distinguished only between licence and banns rather than the timing of the ceremony.

The Directory of Public Worship of January 1645 abolished the canonical restraint over the timing of marriage. The ordinance ordered merely that marriage was to be solemnized:

'in the place appointed by Authority for Publique Worship, before a competent number of credible witnesses, at some convenient hour of the day, at any time of the year...'

The Directory excepted only fast days and advised against Sundays.<sup>14</sup> The inception of Civil Marriage in 1653 eliminated all official restrictions on the timing of the marriage ceremony. These legal changes mean that great care is needed when interpreting the distribution of weddings amongst the days of the week during the period 1645 to 1660. It is particularly difficult to disentangle patterns of leisure from the timing of marriage in this period and this has not been attempted here.

In addition, it should be noted, that interpretation of figures from any one locality is, in some periods and in some regions, complicated by the extent to which parishioners actually married in their local parish church. In some districts it may be that many of those marrying in a church had no previous connection with the parish. If this is the case then the social and economic

characteristics of a particular parish might not be reflected in those who married in the local church. This also means that if large numbers of parishioners married in foreign churches the social composition of the marrying population under study might not remain constant. Under English canon law all marriages should have taken place in the parish where either the bride or groom was resident.<sup>15</sup> However, before Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753, it is demonstrable that many couples avoided the residential qualification, either by undergoing a technically 'clandestine' (but nonetheless valid) marriage often, in fact, by abusing the marriage licence system. Some churches in London married huge numbers of couples from other parishes after 1660. The consistent failure of the Anglican church to enforce local marriage surfaced frequently during the debates over the growing problem of clandestine marriage in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth century.<sup>16</sup> Efforts to tighten up the residence qualification under Hardwicke's 1753 Marriage Act were, to some extent, subverted by the statutory clause imposing only a four week residential qualification on couples, even this was reduced to a derisory fifteen days in 1824.<sup>17</sup> Exploitation of this legal loophole enabled couples to marry outside their parish church using addresses of convenience. There is a little evidence that this practice may have been commoner in urban areas, where the choice of churches was wider and temporary lodgings more readily available.<sup>18</sup> This problem should be borne in mind when considering the information presented below.

### **The timing of marriage in early-modern London**

'You know that Munday is Sundaye's brother; Tuesday is such another; Wednesday you must go to church and pray; Thursday is half-holiday; On Friday it is too late to begin to spin; The Saturday is half-holiday agen.'

[Verse published in *Divers Crab-Tree Lectures*, London, 1639. Cited in J. Brand, *Observations on Popular Antiquities*, H. Ellis (ed.), London, 1813, I, pp. 459n-460n.]

In studying the timing of marriage it is probably advisable to concentrate on parishes or districts with large numbers of weddings every year. This reduces distortions from the effects of popular festivals, random fluctuations, the effects of the prohibited seasons for marriage and the potential risk of bias in the event of changes in the propensity to marry locally.

Three large suburban parishes were chosen for the study: St Saviour's Southwark, St Dunstan's Stepney and St Botolph Bishopsgate. The first of these, St Saviour's Southwark, was a large suburban parish located on the south bank of the river Thames adjacent to London bridge. The population of St Saviour's, grew from some 3000 in the middle of the sixteenth century to 7100 by 1603.<sup>19</sup> Its occupational structure was dominated by large numbers of watermen who lived in the two western liberties of the parish, the Clink and Paris Garden. Otherwise its economy was notable for large numbers of miscellaneous handicraftsmen and some large scale manufacturing, especially brewing and soapmaking. A significant retail and service sector clustered around the Borough High Street. Although the parish was relatively poor it did contain

significant numbers of wealthy individuals who ran High Street shops and service industries and operated the large scale manufacturing concerns.<sup>20</sup> The parish of St Dunstan, Stepney, an east-end suburban area, comprised nine rapidly growing hamlets. In the early seventeenth century its enormous geographical area contained a wide variety of occupations, but its economy was dominated by maritime trades, notably shipbuilding and sailors.<sup>21</sup> Both parishes grew rapidly in the later sixteenth century, with growth in Stepney outstripping that of St Saviour's. It seems likely that Stepney was transformed in this period from a semi-rural parish of some 2000 people to a conglomeration of suburban communities containing some 11,300 inhabitants in 1606-10. Being a much older urban settlement, St Saviour's did not experience a comparable economic transformation.<sup>22</sup> The third parish, St Botolph, Bishopsgate, was located in the liberties of the city, on the north eastern city walls, between Shoreditch, Stepney and Aldgate. Little is known about the occupational structure of Bishopsgate, although the likelihood is that its economy was dominated by low status craftsmen and tradesmen. It was one of the poorest parishes in the city of London in 1638. Its population had expanded rapidly from some 950 in 1548 to about 4700 in 1603.<sup>23</sup> The timing of marriage in these suburban parishes is set out in table 1.

**Table 1. Weekly distribution of marriages in early modern London**

	St Saviour's Southwark			St Botolph, Bishopsgate			St Dunstan, Stepney		
	1576	1611	1633	1576	1611	1632	1576	1611	1633
	1581	1613	1635	1581	1613	1635	1581	1613	1634
Day	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Sunday	41.4	30.2	20.9	49.3	37.2	32.7	28.2	19.2	14.1
Monday	19.4	17.9	21.5	16.6	15.4	16.1	39.0	19.2	22.2
Tuesday	7.3	15.1	17.6	5.4	7.9	13.2	7.6	13.4	15.0
Wednesday	7.1	8.0	8.2	5.9	20.9	18.6	3.5	25.6	21.6
Thursday	11.5	22.2	24.3	11.7	12.6	15.3	14.0	11.4	19.8
Friday	3.8	2.8	2.8	2.9	3.3	2.1	2.9	7.0	4.9
Saturday	9.6	3.9	4.7	8.3	2.8	2.1	4.9	4.2	2.3
Totals	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n	522	464	535	205	215	242	344	500	778
Mean number per year	87	155	178	34	72	61	57	167	389

**Notes:** For this table and subsequent ones the day of the week on which the event occurred was calculated from C. R. Cheney (ed.), **Handbook of Dates for Students of English History**, London, Royal Historical Society, 1961. The percentage columns may not sum exactly to 100 due to rounding.

**Source:** St Saviour's, marriage register, Greater London Record Office, P92/SAV/3001-4. A. W. C. Hallen (ed.), **The registers of St Botolph, Bishopsgate**, Edinburgh, 1886-95. T. Colyer-Fergusson, **The marriage registers of St Dunstan Stepney**, Canterbury, 1898-99, vols 1-2.

The following points emerge from a consideration of table 1. In all three periods every day of the week was available for marriage, on no day was the church 'closed' for weddings, which reassures us that the table does not reflect simply the idiosyncrasies of the local church administration.<sup>24</sup> The similarity of some of the weekly patterns in the three parishes for the seventeenth-century is also encouraging, since it eliminates the possibility that other local factors, such as the availability of a minister, had a significant determining effect. Friday and Saturday were consistently unpopular days in all three parishes. The seventeenth-century figures for Saturday, suggest what might have been predicted, namely that before the widespread establishment (or perhaps re-establishment) of the Saturday half day holiday in the nineteenth century, that day remained a normal working day in the capital. Few couples married on Saturday in these suburban parishes. It may be of interest that in St Saviour's and Bishopsgate there is a suggestion that Saturday had some preference in the sixteenth century, possibly reflecting the last vestiges of the medieval holiday.

Another interesting finding deriving from the table is that the data appear to suggest the absence of a regular and intensive working week. These early modern London parishes seem to follow a more irregular working pattern. In all three parishes weddings occurred in significant numbers in the middle of the week. In St Saviour's, Southwark, Thursday was favoured, rising from 11.5 per cent of all weddings 1576-81 to between 22.2 per cent and 24.3 per cent thereafter. In 1633-5 it was the most popular day for celebrating marriage. In Stepney both Thursday and, in stark contrast to St Saviour's, Wednesday attracted relatively large numbers of marriages. Indeed population growth in Stepney was associated with a remarkable increase in the popularity of Wednesday marriages. From being the second most unpopular day 1576-81, Wednesday became the most popular by 1611-13. From this peak, however, Wednesday's popularity declined. Similarly St Botolph's displays a mid-week peak on Thursday in the sixteenth century, and on Wednesday in the early seventeenth.

Bunching of weddings in the middle of the week does not seem to have been caused merely by the unpopularity of Fridays and Saturdays since, as will be shown later, the existence of the taboo Friday in nineteenth century London did not produce a similar pattern. It may be that the pattern of the working week was less regular than it was to become subsequently. Seventeenth-century suburban Londoners seem more often to have seen working days as suitable wedding days. This is consistent with the notion that the creation of a regular working week, was, in urban areas, produced in the eighteenth century by new commercial forces and a more regulated civic environment.<sup>25</sup> It is possible to find contemporaries satirising the irregular working practices of the early seventeenth century. One of these, quoted at the head of this section, even suggests that Thursday was taken as a half holiday. This is not to equate large numbers of week day marriages as signs of leisure preference or voluntary abstention from work. They might as easily relate to extensive underemployment and irregular work opportunities in the capital which for many may have undermined the order of the working week. If volume and intensity of work may explain the weekly pattern of marriages then the sixteenth century figures are suggestive, since, as is noted below, they suggest a

more sharply delineated working week, with heavy concentrations of weddings on Sunday and Monday and only modest mid-week bunching. Could this be related to greater work intensity in the capital at this period, before population growth outstripped employment prospects and undermined the regularity of the working week?

However, the canonical restrictions, discussed in the previous section, also acted to influence the decisions of couples. In particular it seems likely that the bunching of marriages on a particular day during the working week can be explained in some cases by reference to the timing of local public worship. A dated list of 'money received at the church dore' in St Saviour's, Southwark, can be used to date the actual timing of weekly services. This list reveals that services were usually held on Sundays and Thursdays. Reference to table 1 reveals that the latter day was one of the most popular two days for marriage in the parish in the early seventeenth century. In this case, therefore, it seems reasonable to deduce that the canonical restrictions on marriage influenced couples in their choice of wedding day. Many couples, having decided to marry on an ordinary working day rather than on Sunday, preferred the cheaper service time.<sup>26</sup> One might guess that the mid-week bunching of marriages in Stepney on Wednesday and the peaks in Bishopsgate reflect local variation in the timing of divine service during the week. Reference to table 1 shows that in the 1630s, 45.2 per cent of all weddings took place on Sundays and Thursdays, coinciding with the timing of divine service in St Saviour's. As the earlier discussion implied, the formal requirement of canon law was therefore being flouted in the majority of cases, and couples were preferring to spend a little more for that privilege.

Another means of finding out about the weekly distribution of church services is to look at the timing of christenings in a church. Canon law stated that baptisms were supposed to take place on the first Sunday or Holy Day after the birth in divine service.<sup>27</sup> If baptisms show heaping concentrating on particular days these might well coincide with the local timing of church services. Table 2 presents the daily distribution of baptisms in St Saviour's, Southwark. As can be seen, baptisms in that parish coincided markedly with the timing of church services on Sundays and Thursdays in the early seventeenth century, with 87.9 per cent of all christenings occurring during a church service. In 1579, however, the church was used more promiscuously, with there being no obvious mid-week service time. The Thursday peak in weddings in the 1570s has no counterpart in the timing of baptisms, suggesting a preference uninfluenced by the effects of the timing of local church services. Otherwise table 2 is encouraging, insofar as it shows that weddings were less constrained than baptisms by the timing of local church services.

The weekly pattern of services in London churches only explains concentrations on certain weekdays. Attitudes to, and possession of, leisure time, best explain the timing of marriage. The bunching of marriages during the week must mean that many couples were prepared to celebrate their wedding on what was an ordinary working day, rather than waiting until labour ceased on the Sunday.

**Table 2. Weekly distribution of baptisms: St Saviour's, Southwark, 1579-1634**

	1579	1612	1634
Day	%	%	%
Sunday	42.0	62.2	61.5
Monday	13.0	3.3	1.2
Tuesday	7.3	2.7	2.5
Wednesday	10.4	2.7	4.1
Thursday	6.7	26.7	25.6
Friday	8.8	1.2	3.5
Saturday	11.9	1.2	1.6
Totals	100	100	100
n	193	333	488

**Notes:** The percentage columns may not sum exactly to 100 due to rounding.

**Source:** St Saviour's, baptism register, Greater London Record Office, P92/SAV/3001-4.

The timing of marriage in all three parishes indicates a weekend centring around Sunday and Monday, although the growing popularity of mid-week marriages in the early seventeenth century reduced the sixteenth century predominance. In Stepney and St Saviour's, in 1576-81 between 61 and 67 per cent of couples married on either Sunday or Monday. In both parishes this had diminished to between 36 and 42 per cent in the early seventeenth century. 'St Monday', if such it was, was remarkably visible in Stepney in the later sixteenth century. Bishopsgate showed the same trend, but Sunday and Monday weddings remained more popular, falling together from 66 per cent in the 1570s, to 53 per cent in 1611-13 to 49 per cent in the 1630s. In St Saviour's, Southwark, Sundays were the most popular marriage day, reflecting the cessation of work on that day until the 1630s. Sundays were easily the most popular day in St Botolph's. In all three parishes the proportion of Sunday marriages decreased between the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

At this point it would be useful to be able to distinguish the effects of differences in wealth and occupation on the timing of marriage. If available leisure time is important one might expect the better off to exhibit a different daily pattern of weddings. Accordingly, table 3 sets out the timing of marriage in St Saviour's, Southwark, broken down by method of marriage. Marriage by licence, rather than by the calling of banns, was the more expensive method of marriage in the Anglican church. Purchase of a licence enabled couples to avoid publicity associated with the wedding service, dispensing with the calling of banns and often enabling them to be married in a church of their own choosing. Marriage by licence was also an accepted means of marrying on any day or outside canonical hours. Before the 1620s in London it was a method of marriage resorted to by only a minority of wealthier couples, after that date there is considerable evidence that the practice spread somewhat further down



**Table 3. Weekly distribution of marriage by licence or banns: St Saviour's Southwark, and St Botolph's, Bishopsgate, 1576-1635**

Day	St Saviour's				Bishopsgate			
	1576-81 Licence Banns		1611-13 Licence Banns		1633-5 Licence Banns		1632-5 Licence Banns	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Sunday	16.4	45.4	10.1	33.7	8.6	31.2	17.1	39.8
Monday	11.0	20.7	15.9	18.2	18.5	24.0	18.4	15.1
Tuesday	24.7	4.5	15.9	14.9	25.9	10.6	26.3	7.2
Wednesday	21.7	4.7	15.9	6.6	7.4	8.9	13.2	21.1
Thursday	16.4	10.7	36.2	19.8	28.8	20.6	22.4	12.1
Friday	1.4	4.2	0	3.3	3.3	2.4	1.3	2.4
Saturday	8.2	9.8	5.8	3.5	7.4	2.4	1.3	2.4
Totals	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n	73	449	69	395	243	292	76	166
% by licence	14.0		14.9		45.4		31.4	

**Notes:** The percentage columns may not sum exactly to 100 due to rounding.  
**Source:** See table 1.

the social scale, as the dramatic increase in licence marriages in St Saviour's, Southwark, in 1633-5 reveals.<sup>28</sup> However, if one takes those marrying by licence as a proxy for the wealthier sort, table 3 should enable us to disentangle any wealth effects on the timing of marriage. In general those marrying by banns were more likely to get married on Sundays than those marrying by licence. Despite the removal of the wealthier elements of the population, however, the mid-week peak in marriages remains. The banns population only differs from the general population in that Sunday marriage remained more popular, particularly in the 1630s when the increase in the use of marriage licences depresses the overall incidence of Sunday marriage. Sundays were always the most popular day for marriage for those marrying by banns in St Saviour's, Southwark in the period examined here. The same popularity was also marked in Bishopsgate. It is noticeable that, controlling for wealth in this way, in both Bishopsgate and St Saviour's the banns population appear to exhibit a preference for Monday weddings, Mondays being ranked either second or third in popularity in both parishes. Could this be some evidence for 'St Monday' amongst the poorer sections of the working population of the two parishes?

The essential difference, then, in the timing of marriage between those marrying by licence and those marrying by banns was that those couples marrying by licence consistently avoided marrying on Sundays. In St Saviour's, 1576-81 the figure for the latter was 16.4 per cent compared with 45.4 per cent amongst the banns population, 10.1 per cent compared with 33.7 per cent 1611-13 and 8.6 per cent compared to 31.2 per cent 1633-5. In Bishopsgate in the 1630s the

licence population was half as likely to marry on Sunday as those marrying by banns. For the licence population weddings were commoner on other days of the week, notably Thursdays and Tuesdays. Fridays and Saturdays remained unpopular among both groups. Those able to afford the more expensive form of marriage probably also possessed more leisure time during the week. In particular the avoidance of Sundays might have been due to a desire for a more private wedding service, out of the hurly burly of Sunday divine service when so many of the poorer sort married. It is, however, noticeable that those marrying by licence in St Saviour's also displayed some preference for Thursdays, when we know services were usually held.

The rôle of Sabbatarian thinking should also be discussed since Sunday marriages offended this code. Both the feasting and dancing associated with the marriage celebration and the preparation of food for such wedding feasts violated the Sabbath. Two influential puritan writers, Nicholas Bownde and Richard Greenham, both criticised Sunday wedding dinners explicitly. Greenham suggesting that, if necessary, weddings should be postponed to another day to avoid such profanation. Opponents of Sabbatarian thinking claimed that such opposition was taken to extreme lengths.<sup>30</sup>

The decline of Sunday marriage observable in table 1 therefore might be related partly to the prevailing climate of religious belief. The Sabbatarian movement grew in importance and vehemence during the early seventeenth century and there is some evidence that London may have been penetrated exceptionally heavily by such thinking.<sup>31</sup> If a link between the timing of marriage and puritan thinking could be established it would add a hitherto unsuspected dimension to the current debate on the effects of puritan religious thought and the extent to which the so called 'reformation of manners' was imposed on English society before the Civil War.<sup>32</sup>

To summarise the data on wedding days thus far. Sundays were popular in the early seventeenth century, notably among those marrying by banns, but other days such as Monday and Thursday were also favoured. Friday and Saturday were consistently unpopular in the seventeenth century, although Saturday may have been a little more popular in the sixteenth century. Those marrying by licence were particularly unlikely to marry on Sundays and, therefore, more likely to get married on 'working' days. All the large London suburban parishes exhibited mid-week peaks in weddings, one explanation for which might be a less regular working week.

### **A nineteenth century perspective**

In order to place the evidence presented above for early-modern London into a broader time perspective, it is instructive to examine the available evidence for nineteenth century urban environments. Such an investigation enables us to make some assessment of whether the distribution of wedding days changed

**Table 4. Weekly distribution of marriages: National sample and select Registration Districts, 1864 and 1881**

Day	1864						1881
	National sample	St George Hanover Square	East London	Lambeth	Birmingham	Manchester	Manchester
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Sunday	32.1	22.4	46.3	40.4	34.4	34.8	22.1
Monday	21.5	13.8	19.3	24.5	33.8	21.1	17.8
Tuesday	10.6	19.7	8.0	9.2	8.7	8.4	7.4
Wednesday	7.9	10.7	7.7	6.7	7.4	7.4	11.1
Thursday	8.7	19.0	5.3	6.5	5.2	10.0	10.5
Friday	2.2	0.4	2.0	1.4	1.6	1.6	2.4
Saturday	17.1	14.1	11.3	11.4	8.9	16.8	28.7
Totals	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n	4057	290	300	632	633	1102	n/a

**Notes:** East London comprises the Registration Districts of St George in the East and Whitechapel. The percentage columns may not sum exactly to 100 due to rounding.

**Source:** **Twenty seventh Annual Report of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages in England**, London, 1866, p. xv; except those for Manchester in 1881, which appear in **Forty-fourth Annual Report of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages in England**, London, 1883, p. xi.

between the two time periods and if so whether such a trend might be related convincingly to changing patterns of leisure time between the early seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.

Marriage data for urban areas are selected from surveys conducted by the Registrar General in 1864 and 1881 (table 4). It should be noted that these figures are not as straight-forward as they at first may appear. The figures were drawn from different quarters of the calendar year, and this, because of the effect of the timing and effect of popular holidays and festivals, modifies some of the patterns slightly. Furthermore the national figure given by the Registrar General is an unweighted mathematical average of disparate samples, and in fact conceals interesting regional and social variations.<sup>33</sup> In addition the Registrar's figures include, for the most part, those marrying outside the established church.<sup>34</sup>

Table 4 suggests that Sunday, the traditional leisure day, was universally the most popular day to celebrate weddings, particularly in working class East London and the more socially mixed district of Lambeth.<sup>35</sup> Constraints over leisure time may explain this pattern. 'Economy of time is an alleged motive for Sunday weddings' noted the Registrar in 1866.<sup>36</sup> The distribution of marriages also lends support to the existence of 'St Monday' in these urban areas. The predominance of Mondays in London was not even as great as appears from

these figures due to the distortions imposed by the effect of popular holidays, although it was still the second most popular day for marriage in districts of the capital. There may, however, have been some exaggeration in the comments of a contemporary observer of early nineteenth century London, 'we see Saint Monday so religiously kept in this great city...in general followed by a St Tuesday also'.<sup>37</sup> It was particularly in Birmingham and Manchester that the popularity of Monday weddings was most marked, indeed in Birmingham it almost equalled Sundays. Given the extensive observance of 'St Monday' reported in these towns this latter finding is, of course, precisely what we might expect.

Otherwise the distribution of weddings in the poorer urban districts suggests a working week running from Tuesday to Saturday. There is some suggestion that the intensity of work increased steadily until Friday, but there is little sign that any 'St Tuesday' was observed widely. This represents an interesting difference with the earlier figures. Only Manchester amongst the districts in table 4 displayed any mid-week bunching of the sort found frequently in seventeenth-century London. This suggests, therefore, the existence of a more intensive and regular working week in the capital in the 1860s. It is noticeable that in the 1860s Saturday was the third most popular day for weddings. This may be some evidence that a Saturday half holiday was being taken. Although pressure for a Saturday half day existed in the cotton districts in the early nineteenth century, pressure to observe the holiday increased with the formation of the Saturday Half Holiday Movement in the 1830s. Table 4 does suggest some degree of leisure activity on that day, often of course, pay day in many trades and crafts. The wealthy district of St George, Hanover Square, again reflects the more abundant leisure time possessed by the better off. Fridays remained unpopular but, although Sundays were the most popular day, their predominance was not marked (see above table 4).<sup>38</sup>

Data for Manchester collected by the Registrar General for 1881 also suggest that that town adopted the Saturday holiday early, much as we might expect from the dominance of the industrialised cotton industry. Saturday weddings were unusually popular in Manchester in 1864. By 1881 Saturday was the most popular day, having taken precedence over business from Sundays and Mondays in that city. Otherwise the great unpopularity of Friday weddings in all areas is noticeable, either because the working week was at its most intense on that day, or because of superstitious avoidance of a day popularly thought to be unlucky.<sup>39</sup>

Obviously more data would be required in order to draw firm conclusions about changes in the pattern of the working week. More information on wedding days in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is needed to establish the chronology of any changes with greater confidence. As it stands, however, the figures suggest that, in marked contrast to the less regular pattern exhibited in the early seventeenth century, for poorer districts of London, the working week was reasonably regular, with a weekend centring around Sunday and Monday, in contrast to the less regular pattern exhibited in the early seventeenth century. The nineteenth century figures suggest that the Saturday holiday was becoming more popular, and are especially supportive of the

popularity of 'St Monday' in Birmingham and Manchester, both of which findings agree with substantial literary evidence.

### Wedding days and holidays

Attachment to particular holidays might also have affected the timing of marriage. If a sufficiently large sample of weddings is available, therefore, it might be possible to make some quantitative measure of the extent to which known holidays attracted disproportionate numbers of marriages in this period.<sup>40</sup> This is also important for the argument presented here, since if weddings bunched heavily on holidays one might need to recalculate the figures given in table 1 and 4 to allow for the effect. To pursue this the wedding days of those couples marrying during the year 1667 in the clandestine marriage centre of St James, Duke Place, were examined to measure the extent to which the most popular wedding days coincided with religious or civic holidays.<sup>41</sup>

The results of this exercise are particularly informative. Of those days attracting relatively large numbers of marriages six Sundays, five Mondays, one Tuesday, two Wednesdays and two Thursdays did not appear to coincide with any known religious or civic festival. The remaining popular days did correspond to holidays. The Easter and Whitsun festivals accounted for exceptional numbers of marriages on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. The festivals surrounding Christmas and the New Year were especially popular, including St Stephen (26 December) when 20 out of 286 couples (7 per cent) marrying on Thursday were married and New Years Day which attracted 17 couples (7.8 per cent of all those marrying on a Tuesday). The enduring popularity of these three major festivals is well established.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to these major festivals, this exercise also revealed the popularity of May Day for marriage in London, which attracted seven out of the eighty-two couples (8.5 per cent) who married on unpopular Wednesday. May Day had long been associated with sexuality in the urban environment.<sup>43</sup> The traditional London holiday of Shrove Tuesday also attracted disproportionate numbers of couples.<sup>44</sup> Gunpowder Plot was also markedly popular. Lastly, February 14, St Valentine's day, although not an official religious or civic holiday, does seem to have attracted a disproportionate number of couples, drawn one presumes, by the romantic overtones of the day in question and the customs of which are documented in the pages of Pepys' Diary.<sup>45</sup> Obviously such an exercise is little more than suggestive since it uses data relating to one year and one place only. In a larger study one would need to allow for the contradictory effects of unpopular days and the prohibited periods for marriage, of Lent, Advent and Rogationtide.<sup>46</sup> In particular, for example, St Valentine's day in 1668 fell in Lent, on a Friday, and hence attracted only one couple to marry in Duke Place in that year.

It should be stressed that the popularity of certain holidays, although measurable, was certainly not overwhelming in this period. It was rare for any day to attract even double its annual average in Duke's Place which suggests

that controlling for the observance of such holidays would not alter the annual weekly distribution of wedding days presented above significantly. The fact that many popular wedding days do, in fact, coincide with festivals known from other sources to have been widely observed does, however, suggest that the timing of marriage can reveal something important about local attachment to particular holidays.

For the nineteenth century the Registrar General also noted, in both 1864 and 1881, how the observance of popular festivals affected the timing of marriages. In London during the quarter of the year 1st April to the end of June, no less than 75 of 253 (29.6 per cent) Monday marriages had taken place on Whit Monday, reflecting the popularity of the Whitsun festival in the capital.<sup>47</sup> Similarly 69 out of 459 (15 per cent) of all Sunday weddings had taken place on Whit Sunday. In rural Surrey and Kent, Good Friday attracted no less than twelve out of twenty-eight weddings on that unpopular day.<sup>48</sup> The bunching of weddings around the festivals of Easter and Whitsun, and on Christmas Day and Bank holidays was further remarked on by the Registrar in 1883.<sup>49</sup>

### **Rural wedding days**

The study of rural weekly patterns of marriages is likely to be a particularly difficult exercise. As table 5 illustrates the rural Registration Districts analysed by the Registrar General for 1864 exhibited a rather different pattern from that of most urban districts. Fridays remained unpopular, but Saturday rather than Sunday appeared to be the most popular wedding day, suggesting that abstinence from work was more likely on that day than in the urban districts. For Surrey and Kent the figures suggest a weekend stretching from Saturday to Monday, whilst for the northern counties they indicate a more irregular working week, with only Thursdays and Fridays attracting relatively few weddings. Early nineteenth-century Colyton showed a completely different pattern, with few weddings on Friday or Saturday and a more even distribution of weddings across the week. Interpretation of these rural figures is more likely to be complicated by the influence of popular holidays, however, since the number of weddings per annum in rural parishes is likely to have been small, in Colyton only about ten per year, the impact of a couple of widely observed holidays on the weekly distribution could have had a disproportionate effect. Such an effect could have been enhanced by the more marked monthly marriage seasonality in rural areas, which would have concentrated weddings into particular months, and possibly increased any tendency to marry on local harvest-related holidays. It is also unfortunate that we cannot control for the effects of wealth and occupation in the rural figures available. Changes in the tendency to marry locally might also have had an especially marked effect on parishes only celebrating a small number of marriages per year.

Bearing these limitations in mind it is still interesting that figures for Colyton in the sixteenth and seventeenth century resemble, in some respects, the London data from that period (see tables 1 & 5). In 1550-9 and 1600-9, weddings in Colyton fell most often on Mondays, Sundays being the next popular. In the

**Table 5. Wedding days in Colyton, Devon and select nineteenth-century rural Registration Districts**

	Colyton, Devon*			Extra-metropolitan Surrey and Kent**	Cumberland, Westmorland and Northumberland**
	1550	1600	1800		
	-	-	-	1864	1864
	1559	1609	1809		
<b>Day</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Sunday	19	13	16	24.4	19.0
Monday	39	55	24	18.0	12.9
Tuesday	10	11	13	11.3	14.9
Wednesday	6	8	17	6.7	10.9
Thursday	6	6	25	8.9	8.7
Friday	3	1	5	4.7	3.8
Saturday	17	6	0	26.1	29.9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>n</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>505</b>

**Notes:** The percentage columns may not sum exactly to 100 due to rounding.

**Source:** \* = L. Duchesne, 'Weekly patterns in demographic events (with examples from Canada and England)', *Local Population Studies*, 14, 1975, p. 56.

\*\* = *Twenty seventh Annual Report of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages in England*, London, 1866, p. xv.

sixteenth century Saturdays were reasonably popular, but few couples were marrying on that day by the first decade of the seventeenth century. The figures suggest a working week that included a long drawn out weekend of Saturday to Monday or Tuesday in the sixteenth century and Sunday to Monday or Tuesday in the first decade of the seventeenth. Yet unlike the London parishes there is no sign of any mid-week bunching.<sup>50</sup> Such rural-urban contrasts suggest that more information on the determinants of wedding days in rural areas would be of particular interest and importance.

## Conclusion

This paper is intended merely as an exploratory sally into relatively uncharted territory. The data on wedding days in seventeenth-century London, when compared with similar information collected by the Registrar General for the nineteenth century, suggest that significant changes took place in the timing of marriage between the two periods, which might best be explained by changing patterns of leisure time. If wedding days do reflect available leisure time then the earlier period suggests a less regular working week, with more individuals preparing to marry during that week. Sundays were favoured, especially by those marrying by banns, but many couples chose to marry on Wednesdays

and Thursdays. In contrast in the poor and socially mixed districts of London in 1864, and in new industrial towns, a much more regular pattern of wedding days can be discerned. The 1864 data can be best explained by the existence of a more intensive working week and a weekend centring around Sunday and Monday. In particular, data from Birmingham and Manchester seem to illustrate clearly the existence of that 'St Monday' described so often in literary sources. The nineteenth century data also provide some evidence for the growing popularity of a Saturday half holiday in the later nineteenth century.

It is more than usually the case that such findings call out for further research. If the link between wedding days and leisure time has any validity then the eighteenth and early nineteenth century period might be one of transition from irregular to regular working patterns in towns and cities. Further research on the timing of weddings in towns and cities could shed further light into this dark corner of history. Much more work might also be done on wedding days in rural areas, although distortions imposed by wedding seasonality, small annual numbers and the observance of holidays might make interpretation of the results especially difficult. It might be necessary to collect large quantities of data on rural wedding days before systematic patterns can be identified. Many readers of *LPS* are peculiarly well qualified to perform such a task.

#### NOTES

1. There is a considerable literature on working patterns of which the following is merely a selection: E. P. Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism', *Past and Present*, 38, 1967, pp. 56-97; K. Thomas, 'Work and leisure in pre-industrial society', *Past and Present*, 29, 1964, pp. 50-62; M. A. Bienefeld, *Working hours in British Industry: an economic history*, London, 1972; E. Hopkins, 'Working hours and working conditions during the Industrial Revolution: a re-appraisal', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 35, 1982, pp. 52-66; D. A. Reid, 'The Decline of St Monday 1766-1876', *Past and Present*, 71, 1976, pp. 76-101; H. Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution*, London, 1980. A useful survey can be found in J. Rule, *The labouring classes in early industrial England 1750-1850*, Harlow, 1986, pp. 130-8. The quotation is from Hopkins, *ibid.*, p. 61.
2. M. Harrison, 'The ordering of the urban environment: time, work and the occurrence of crowds 1790-1835', *Past and Present*, 110, 1986, pp. 134-68. The quotations are drawn from pp. 138-9, 140.
3. Harrison, 'Time, work and crowds', p. 141.
4. Harrison, 'Time, work and crowds', p. 139; Reid, 'Saint Monday', p.79. Hopkins, 'Working hours', argues, however, that economic depression merely caused an intensification of work later in the week, rather than the abandonment of 'St Monday'.
5. Harrison, 'Time, work and crowds', p. 140; Reid, 'Saint Monday', pp. 79-90; Hopkins, 'Working hours', p. 64; Rule, *Labouring classes*, p. 134
6. Saturday became a statutory half holiday in textile mills in 1850, Reid, 'Saint Monday', p. 86.
7. For the canon law surrounding the timing of marriage see, *The Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical*, London, SPCK, 1960, p. 27. A revision of canon law allowed a celebration as late as 3pm, this was extended to 6pm in 1936. The revisions to canon law followed earlier statutory changes in 1866 and 1934, see 'Miscellany', *Local Population Studies*, 39, 1987, pp. 59-61. The injunction to hold marriages during divine service was dropped in 1887. Civil marriage existed in England between September 1653 and 1660. It was reintroduced in 1837.
8. See, W. G. Perrin (ed.), *The autobiography of Phineas Pett*, Navy Records Society 51, 1918, pp. 10, 164.
9. The fees for weddings in St Saviour's are set out in the broadside, *A Rate of duties belonging to the Corporation of the Churchwardens of the Parish of St Saviour's of Southwark*, London, 1613.
10. *Constitutions and Canons*, pp. 6-7, nos 13-15. St Bartholomew the Great charged women double fees for churchings 'upon a day not appointed for prayer viz. upon Mondays, Tusdayes,



Thursdays or Satterdayes being not holy dayes'. Lambeth Palace Library CM7/36.

11. Lambeth Palace Library CM7/5, 67
12. Lambeth Palace Library CM7/4.
13. Lambeth Palace Library CM7/98.
14. C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait (eds), **Acts and ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660**, 1911, vol. I, p. 600.
15. **Constitutions and Canons**, no. 62. This held for both those marrying by licence or by banns, nos 101-2.
16. The canonical position was complicated because the Archbishop of Canterbury possessed, or at least was commonly agreed to possess, the power to issue licenses breaking the residential requirements, despite the explicit wording of the 1604 canons. For contemporary concern over the canonical situation see, in particular, H. Prideaux, **The case of clandestine marriages stated**, London, 1691, printed in the **Harleian Miscellany**, 1, 1743.
17. The act also recognised the Archbishop of Canterbury's right to issue licenses breaking this requirement. For 1824 see, 4 George IV, c. 76. 10.
18. Price in 1782 describing the marriage practices in Holy Cross, Shrewsbury, asserted that 'the taking account of the marriages in this parish cannot be of any use in political arithmetic, because it is the custom of the fixed inhabitants to go out of the parish, and be married in distant churches; and the weddings performed in this church are generally between strangers who occasionally reside here so long as to make a place of abode according to the act of parliament made in 1754. R. Price, **Philosophical Transactions**, 72, 1782, pp. 56-7.
19. J. Boulton, **Neighbourhood and Society: a London suburb in the seventeenth century**, Cambridge, 1987, p. 19.
20. Boulton, **Neighbourhood**, pp. 62-71, 175-92.
21. In 1605-10 55% of all those buried belonged to these occupational groups. Each hamlet contained distinctive elements. Bethnal Green, containing only a small percentage of Stepney's population, possessed a large agricultural sector. The other inland hamlets, Mile End and Spitalfields, were dominated by miscellaneous crafts. The riverside hamlets were dominated by the maritime occupations. East London History Group, 'The population of Stepney in the early seventeenth century', **Local Population Studies**, 3, 1969, pp. 39-52.
22. The population of Stepney has been calculated from the totals of baptisms, an average of 350 per year, given in the East London History Group, 'Stepney', applying a birth rate of 32.5 per 1000, adding 5 per cent for underregistration of baptisms in relation to births. This produces a figure of around 11,300 for 1606-10. For the appropriate birth rate, see, R. Finlay, **Population and metropolis**, Cambridge, 1981, pp. 155-7. The population in 1548 can be calculated from the number of communicants listed in the parish, 1360, given in, C. J. Kitching (ed.), **London and Middlesex Chantry Certificate 1548**, London Record Society 16, 1980, p. 72. It has been assumed here that 25 per cent of the population were under the age of communion at that time. Ten per cent has been added to the final total to take account of any floating population. For this latter procedure, see, Boulton, **Neighbourhood**, pp. 18-19.
23. M. F. and T. H. Hollingsworth, 'Plague mortality rates by age and sex in the parish of St Botolph's without Bishopsgate, London, 1603', **Population Studies**, 25, 1971, pp. 137-5; Finlay, **Population and Metropolis**, p.171; Kitching, **Chantry Certificate**, pp. 35-6. The population estimates of 1548 and 1603 were calculated as that in the previous note.
24. An example of extreme church control can be found in Wildberg, Germany, in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Data kindly supplied by Sheilagh Ogilvie show that no one at all married on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The overwhelming majority of couples married on Tuesday, a concentration that increased during the seventeenth century. Such a concentration does suggest that local policy may have affected the personal choice of wedding day.
25. Harrison, 'Time, work and crowds', p. 141; P. Corfield, **The impact of English towns 1700-1800**, Oxford, 1982, pp. 85-6. It has been argued that the practice of beginning theatrical performances in early seventeenth century London daily, in the afternoon, reflected the privileged nature of the audience who had the time to spare. The poorer sort, working all through the day, six days a week, could not have attended. This is only one part of the evidence presented to support the central theme of A. J. Cook, **The privileged playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576-1642**, Princeton, 1981, pp. 169-75, 224-8. If the working week was, in fact, less regular than this author supposes, then, clearly, the opening times may have been far less prohibitive to attendance by the less privileged.
26. Greater London Record Office P92/SAV/1400.
27. B. M. Berry and R. S. Schofield, 'Age at baptism in pre-industrial England', **Population Studies**, 25, 1971, p. 454.
28. For the use of marriage licenses in London see the discussion in V. Brodsky Elliott, 'Mobility and marriage in pre-industrial England', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge,

- 1978, pp. 10-17, 95-7. Note Elliott's claim as to the 'precision of banns: license ratios as an accurate guide to the social status of occupations' *ibid.*, p.97. See also the helpful discussion in the introduction to B. Frith (ed.), **Gloucestershire Marriage Allegations 1637-1680**, Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, 2, 1954. Analysis of London parish registers, marriage license allegations issued by the Bishop of London 1600-1700, and information derived from other parish register evidence all points to a considerable growth in marriage by license in the capital commencing in the 1620s.
29. Bownde, in 1595, had requested the banning of marriage feasts, see R.L. Greaves, **Society and religion in Elizabethan England**, Minneapolis, 1981, p. 403. Greenham's exact words were as follows, 'If it be demaunded, whether this day be fit for mariage or no: I answere, it is, because on that day as it is a day of reioycing, there is a more lawfull libertie of speech, and a more liberall use of cheerfull behaviour. Howbeit, let them not on that day, if they marrie, make their solemne cheere: but seeing they may have a convenient companie some other day, let them either both marrie and feast some other day, or marrie on the Lords day, and feast another'. R. Greenham, **Works**, London, 1599, p. 382. A Norfolk minister was claimed to have said that 'to make a feast or wedding-dinner on the Lord's Day is as great a sin as for a father to take a knife and cut his child's throat', W.B. Whitaker, **Sundays in Tudor and Stuart times**, London, 1933, p.71.& &29 The link was made explicit when, following the reform of the Anglican liturgy by the Directory of Public Worship in January 1645, it was added that of marriage 'we advise that it be not on the Lords Day'.
  30. Firth and Rait, **Acts and Ordinances**, vol 1, p. 600. Hostility to Sunday weddings in Presbyterian Scotland in 1620 led to a Synod order 'that marriages were not to be solemnized on either Saturdays or Sundays unless the parties gave a ...bond that there would be no dancing or other prophanation of the Lord's Day'. See T. C. Smout, 'Scottish marriage, regular and irregular 1500-1940', in Outhwaite, **Marriage and Society**, p. 213. As a consequence of such strict Presbyterian Sabbath observance few Scottish couples married on the Sabbath eve, Saturday, or Sunday itself in the mid nineteenth century, as a survey made by the Scottish Registrar General showed, *ibid.*, p. 228.
  31. See, D. Williams, 'Puritanism in the city government', **Guildhall Miscellany**, 1, 4, 1955, pp. 3-14; P. Collinson, **Godly people**, 1983, pp.429-43; Whitaker, **Sunday**, pp. 102-47; and C. Hill, **Society and puritanism in pre-revolutionary England**, London, 1969, pp. 141-211.
  32. See, for example, M. Spufford, 'Puritanism and social control?', in A. Fletcher and J. Stevenson, (eds), **Order and disorder in early modern England**, Cambridge, 1985, pp. 41-57. For Sabbatarian action in the village of Terling, Essex, see, K. Wrightson, 'Alehouses, order and reformation in rural England', in E. and S. Yeo (eds), **Popular culture and class conflict, 1590-1914**, Brighton, 1981, pp. 9-10; M. Ingram, **Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640**, Cambridge, 1987, pp. 371-2.
  33. My thanks go to Kevin Schurer for his help in tracking down these reports. The national digest has been presented in T. C. Smout, 'Scottish marriage', p.228.
  34. In 1864 in England and Wales 4 per cent of couples married with an ecclesiastical licence, 84 per cent in church or chapel and a mere 2 per cent by civil ceremony. In London the figure for marrying in a church or chapel was 88 per cent. **Twenty Seventh Annual Report of the Registrar-General**, London, 1866, p. xii. In London in 1864 78 per cent of all couples married by the rites of the established church, *ibid.*, p. 2. Anderson found that the national figure for civil marriage was four times higher at 8 per cent, O. Anderson, 'The incidence of civil marriage', **Past and Present**, 69, 1975, p. 55.
  35. A crude method of determining the social composition of these London districts was taken to be the percentage of domestic servants aged 20 or over in the total population of each district given in the 1851 census. Overall only 1.7 per cent of the population of St George-in-the-East and 2.6 per cent of that of Whitechapel were domestic servants in 1851, compared to a more substantial 5.0 per cent in Lambeth and no less than 19.6 per cent in the fashionable district of St George, Hanover Square (which included Mayfair and Buckingham Palace). For this census information see, **BPP 1852-3 LXXXV Census of England and Wales. Population tables**.
  36. **Twenty Seventh Report of Registrar-General**, p. xv.
  37. Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline', p. 73.
  38. For Saturday holidays see, Reid, 'Saint Monday', pp. 99-100; Cunningham, **Leisure**, pp. 143-6. 'The history of Saturday working habits is somewhat obscure, but what seems to have been a fairly regular holiday in medieval and early modern times was probably like other holidays under pressure in the eighteenth century', Cunningham, **Leisure**, p. 145. Bienefeld, **Working hours**, pp. 16-17 notes that masons in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century stopped work at 3pm on Saturdays. Landes has recently pointed out that Harrison's own evidence does, in fact, indicate that Saturday may have attracted a disproportionate number of crowds, Landes and Harrison, 'Debate', p. 197. Cunningham cites John Brand's comment (1777) on an earlier reference to 'the present custom of spending a part of Saturday afternoon, without servile

- labour', *Leisure*, p. 145.
39. K. Thomas, **Religion and the decline of magic**, Harmondsworth, 1978, p. 740. The Registrar General noted that the unpopularity of Fridays may have been due to it being the day of the Crucifixion, **Twenty Seventh Report of Registrar-General**, p. xv. For intensive working patterns on Friday see, Hopkins, 'Working hours', p. 61.
  40. A similar exercise examining the relationship between peaks in conception and fair and festival days has recently been undertaken by E. Lord, 'Fairs, festivals and fertility in Alkmaar, north Holland, 1650-1810', **Local Population Studies**, 43, 1989, pp.43-53.
  41. The dates of these festivals were identified by reference to Cheney, **Handbook of Dates**. All the 1133 marriages taking place in Duke Place in 1667 were analysed. The criterion of popularity was to look at dates when the number of weddings was exceptionally large for that particular day. For the register, see, W. P. R. Phillimore and G. E. Cokayne (eds), **The Registers of St James, Duke Place**, London, 1900, I. For that parish's activities as a clandestine centre, see Brown, 'Fleet Marriages', pp. 119-20.
  42. R.W. Malcolmson, **Popular recreations in English society 1700-1850**, Cambridge, paperback edition 1979. p. 13; L. Stone, 'An Elizabethan coalmine', **Economic History Review**, 2nd series, 3, 1950-1, p. 102. A similar popularity in England was observed by the Registrar General for 1881, **Forty-fourth Report of the Registrar-General**, p. xii. A commentator in 1654 wrote of the extra leisure time available to 'saylers, water-men, shoo-makers, butchers and apprentices' on Holy days in London, cited in Cook, **Privileged Playgoers**, p. 227.
  43. See, P. Burke, 'Popular culture in seventeenth-century London', **London Journal**, 3, 1977, p. 147; C. Phythian-Adams, 'Milk and Soot: the changing vocabulary of a popular ritual in Stuart and Hanoverian London', in D. Fraser and A. Sutcliffe (eds), **The Pursuit of Urban History**, London, 1983, pp. 83-104.g
  44. For Shrove Tuesday see, Burke, 'Popular culture', pp. 144-5; Cook, **Privileged playgoers**, p. 227.
  45. For the popularity of the November the Fifth holiday see, R. Latham and W. Matthews (eds), **The Diary of Samuel Pepys Vol X. Companion**, London, 1983, pp. 163-4. For St Valentine's day see *ibid.*, pp. 377-8. St Valentine's day had been observed since at least the fifteenth century, L. Whistler, **The English Festivals**, London, 1947, p. 92.
  46. For the prohibited periods see the useful summary in R. Burn, **The Ecclesiastical Law**, London, 1824, II, pp.467-8. For recent work on this topic see, W. J. Edwards, 'The definition of prohibited areas', **Local Population Studies**, 38, 1987, pp. 30-5.
  47. Controlling for this effect diminishes, but does not eliminate, evidence for the observance for 'St Monday' in the capital. The Registrar General did not break down the number of marriages taking place on Whit Monday and Sunday by district. If one assumes that the weddings on the two holidays were distributed in the same proportion as the totals of marriages in each district and then reduces the notional Whit Monday and Sunday figures to their quarterly norms (in the case of Whit Monday this would be the total of Monday marriages in the quarter minus the Whit Monday allocation divided by eleven) then the numerical effect is to reduce the percentage of marriages taking place on Mondays by 3-4 per cent in each district.
  48. **Twenty Seventh Report of Registrar-General**, p. xv.
  49. Good Friday was particularly popular in Manchester, the day attracting 36 couples in 1881 when the average was only 2.2, **Forty-fourth Annual Report of the Registrar-General 1881**, London, 1883, pp. xi-xii.
  50. The Colyton figures available for the eighteenth century resemble those for the period 1800-09, the only difference being that there is no marked bunching on Thursday. L. Duchesne, 'Weekly patterns in demographic events', **Local Population Studies**, 14, 1975, p. 56.

## EDITORS' NOTE

Methods of calculating the day of the week from a calendar date are not discussed by the author of this paper. Since it is anticipated that this is a subject that LPS readers will be interested in, a full and detailed account of techniques which can be applied to determine the day of the week of a particular date will be published in the following issue of LPS.