OUT-MIGRATION 1821-1851 FROM A WEALDEN PARISH: CHIDDINGLY

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Recent years have seen significant advances in our knowledge and understanding of past migration patterns in Britain. The broad picture that has emerged is of continuous local ‘circular’ population movement for purposes of employment and marriage, within a radius of about 16 km. Longer-distance migration varied over time in both extent and character. Many people were on the move during the Tudor and Stuart period of rapid population growth, with the unemployed often tramping long distances to any places that offered opportunities, whether these were towns, areas of expanding industries or waste land that could be reclaimed. There then followed a century or so from c.1650 when the national population remained virtually static; there was less migration, the distances covered were shorter, and the former somewhat aimless wanderings of the poor gave way to a townward movement dominated by skilled craft workers. The late eighteenth-century resurgence in population growth saw a fresh impetus to migration, mainly to local towns and industrial districts, but in circumstances that were very different from those that prevailed in Tudor/Stuart times. By this period, the administration of the Poor Law ensured that the basic needs of the destitute were provided in their parishes of settlement, thereby reducing the need to migrate. In spite of this, a significant rural-urban migration had developed by the mid-nineteenth century.¹

Within this broad picture, much detail still remains unclear and many questions unanswered. Even where nineteenth-century census enumerators’ books have been used for detailed local studies, the emphasis (using birth-place data) has been on in- rather than out-migration.² As Pooley and Doherty explain in their study of Welsh migration to English urban areas, the collection and analysis of evidence needed to identify and follow out-migrants is an extremely complex and time-consuming exercise.³ For the years prior to the first census enumerators’ books (1841), there are still relatively few local studies of migration, and Pooley and D’Cruze have described the period between c.1750 and 1850 as the least well understood in terms of migration activity.⁴ Even more significant, we rarely have evidence concerning the processes and circumstances of migration; in other words, we do not know who moved, when and why, or how they selected their destinations. Diaries and family histories may sometimes provide insights, but the few persons for whom such evidence is available may not be representative of the larger movement.⁵
The parish study that follows aims to fill a few of the gaps. It is an exercise in nominal record linkage, using data for the period 1821–1851, and distinguishing between local ‘circulatory’ and distant migration. Because female migrants marry and require lengthy research in marriage registers to identify and locate, the emphasis here is on male migrants; and at this stage of the research, no attempt has been made to follow distant migrants to their assumed reception areas. In spite of these limitations, some interesting pointers to the scale and character of the migratory patterns of the period emerge.

Sources

The parish of Chiddingly lies in the Weald of East Sussex. The principal sources used were a detailed listing prepared in connection with the 1821 census, together with the 1841 and 1851 census enumerators’ books. Although the 1821 and 1841 listings are slightly less informative than that for 1851, there are few problems involved in linking the records of those individuals who remained in the parish throughout the 30-year period. Individuals living in Chiddingly in 1821 but not 1841, or there in 1841 but not in 1851 had either died or moved away. The parish burial register was used to identify those interred locally; the impression is that the vast majority of parish deaths are thus accounted for. The remainder, who must have moved away, can be classified as either local or distant migrants. Chiddingly is fairly centrally located in East Sussex (Figure 1), hence its local migration field was wholly contained within the county; distant migrants could have travelled either to the far eastern or far western parts of the county, or to places beyond the county boundary. The identification of Chiddingly-born persons living elsewhere in East Sussex in 1851 has been greatly aided by the publication over the past decade of a series of booklets containing computer-based tabulations of the census enumerators’ records, each booklet covering one, two or three Registration Districts. Chiddingly-born persons can be quickly identified in the lists, and since the names of persons are listed alphabetically in each booklet, even those Chiddingly residents of 1821 or 1841 born elsewhere who had moved to other parishes in the county can be located. Unfortunately no such booklets covering Brighton and its vicinity have yet appeared.

Since children often left home from the age of about fifteen (and in some poor families even earlier), it was necessary to supplement the census details by adding certain names from the parish baptismal register. This too appears to have been surprisingly comprehensive, as it included children born to known dissenter parents, apart from the dozen or so families who were adherents of Heathfield Independent Chapel, which had a preaching station in the north-eastern part of Chiddingly parish. The baptismal record made it possible to identify not only children who had died young, but also a number born in the 1820s who had left home before the 1841 census was taken.
Social and demographic context

Early nineteenth-century Chiddingly supported a predominantly agricultural community living in hamlets and scattered farms; apart from a few men engaged in brick-making in the south of the parish, those not employed on the land worked in service occupations. Farms were either medium-sized (40-120 ha. /100-299 acres) or small (8-39 ha. /20-99 acres), and there were numerous tiny part-time holdings. The medium-sized farms each employed several ‘constant’ men housed in tied cottages, and there were still some living-in farm servants, but much of the agricultural employment was temporary or seasonal. Fat cattle, dairy products, wheat, hops and poultry were marketed, but much produce was consumed locally. Agriculture had prospered during the early years of the nineteenth century, but the depression that followed the defeat of Napoleon was severe in the district, a result of unfavourable soils which limited the scope for agricultural improvements, at least until the 1840s. Traditional farming practices remained prevalent and farm incomes modest.\textsuperscript{12}

It is not surprising therefore to find that there were no wealthy families living in Chiddingly, though one or two of the larger farmers would have been comfortably off by local standards. Families with modest but adequate means
Table 1  Birthplaces of household heads and their wives, 1851

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiddingly</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 8 km</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsewhere in E. Sussex</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside E. Sussex</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Females include a few women classed as housekeeper.

included those of most other farmers, together with traders and master craftsmen. Below them in the social pyramid came labourers with smallholdings who often had a range of skills that enabled them to earn an adequate supplementary income, together with the permanent farm employees living in tied cottages. Finally, there were the landless poor who either relied on casual work (mainly agricultural) or were elderly, infirm or widowed. The social pyramid was broad-based and shallow in height, typical of the 'open' communities of the Weald.13

The population of Chiddingly parish grew from 673 in 1801 to 1,085 in 1851, before falling during the second half of the nineteenth century to 824 in 1901. Growth resulted from a combination of large average family size with an infant mortality rate that was low by national standards.14 The 1851 birthplace details for household heads and their wives reveal the usual extensive population import from neighbouring parishes, but relatively few residents had been born more than 8km away (Table 1).

A turnpike road dating from 1766 crossed the southern part of the parish, linking Hailsham (6 km south-east of Chiddingly, 1851 population 1,825) with the county town of Lewes (13 km to the west, 1851 population 9,097); a branch went to Uckfield and thence to London. These were the main routeways that linked Chiddingly to the outside world during the period under consideration.15 Access to the turnpike from the north of the parish was by a series of lanes which no doubt were almost impassable during wet weather.16 The poorer members of the community, who made most of their journeys on foot, probably rarely travelled more than a few miles from home, except perhaps when seeking temporary employment.17 Farmers, traders and craftsmen who owned horses and horse-drawn vehicles were more mobile and no doubt visited Lewes regularly. This town was the focus for the trade of a large part of mid-Sussex, and those who visited it regularly were brought into contact with others from throughout this area.18 Through such contacts they would have acquired a good knowledge of conditions elsewhere that could guide decisions about migration.

A comparison of 1821 and 1851 census details shows that during the interval there had been an increase of 35 households in Chiddingly and in 31 of these the head was a labourer (Table 2). A possible explanation for this growth that needs
Table 2  Numbers of male heads of household by occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Farmer</th>
<th>Labourer</th>
<th>Craft / trade</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+31</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3  Numbers of employees in agriculture in 1821 and 1851

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Heads</th>
<th>Sons at home</th>
<th>Lodgers</th>
<th>Farm servants</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>+31</td>
<td>+11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>+36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures for 1821 are approximate, as no occupations were indicated for most sons and lodgers; all sons of labourers and all lodgers were therefore assumed to work in agriculture unless otherwise stated.

Initial consideration is that there had been a substitution in the agricultural labour force of married men for living-in farm servants. However, Table 3 shows that this was not the case, since the decline in number of farm servants had been more than matched by an increase in the number of unmarried sons living with their parents or in lodgings and working in agriculture. Instead it is evident that there had been a real increase in married labourers seeking work, in line with the known problems of surplus population revealed by several studies of the contemporary poor-law administration. At least some of Chiddingly’s labourer heads of household were forced to rely on whatever casual work they could obtain, probably on local farms at harvest and other busy times, in local brickworks or nearby woodlands at certain times of the year, and by travelling to districts like the South Downs when there were seasonal demands for labour that did not coincide with those in the Weald. Winter unemployment and reliance on poor-law assistance nevertheless remained common.

Whilst the number of labourer heads of household increased between 1821 and 1851, the number of farmer and tradesmen/craftsmen heads remained stable (Table 2). A general increase during the first half of the nineteenth century in employment in traditional trades and handicrafts took place in the larger settlements like Uckfield and Hailsham rather than in more rural parishes like Chiddingly. The stable numbers of farmer and craftsmen heads suggest that at least some of their children must have moved away, while unemployment or underemployment among labourers must surely have made local prospects appear few and unattractive to their children. ‘Push’ factors were thus undoubtedly present, and the following sections will examine the out-migrational response.
Table 4  Chiddingly-born persons aged 15 and over living elsewhere in East Sussex, 1851

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Farmers</th>
<th>Male servants</th>
<th>Labourers</th>
<th>Craftsmen &amp; traders</th>
<th>Female servants</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 8km</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-16km</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 16km</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chiddingly-born living elsewhere in East Sussex

The published tabulations of the 1851 census enumerators’ books have been used to locate Chiddingly-born persons who were at that date living elsewhere in East Sussex (apart from those in the Brighton area). All individuals aged 15 and over (plus a few who were younger but with a listed occupation) were included, giving a total of 416 persons. Their distribution provides some indication of out-migrational movement to places within the county. Analysis was by occupational groups, with dependants with no listed occupation included with the head of household. To classify migrational distances, three zones were distinguished (Figure 1): (A) parishes wholly or largely within 8 km of the boundaries of Chiddingly parish; (B) parishes wholly or largely between 8 and 16 km distant; and (C) parishes more than 16 km distant. The results are summarized in Table 4.

Of the total migrants included in the analysis, nearly 45 per cent were labourers and 30 per cent craftsmen or traders. Comparison with the proportions these formed of the household heads in Chiddingly itself in 1851 (55 per cent labourers and 26 per cent craftsmen or traders) confirms the greater propensity of the latter group to leave their home parish. Distances migrated are analysed by the percentages of each occupational group found in each of the three distance zones, bearing in mind that the two outer zones cover a larger area than the inner zone. More than half the labourer migrants were living in zone A and only 11.4 per cent in zone C, confirming their tendency to move only short distances. Farmers and male (mainly agricultural) servants were distributed more evenly through zones A and B but had rarely moved into zone C; closer study shows that few went to parishes on the South Downs, suggesting that farming migrants were seeking a familiar Wealden environment. Craftsmen and tradesmen were more evenly spread over the three zones, the high percentage in zone B reflecting the attraction of the county town of Lewes, where over 20 per cent of this occupational group’s migrants were to be found. Female servants were also concentrated in Lewes (29 per cent), but otherwise they were widely distributed. These patterns serve to confirm existing views about the varying migratory patterns of different occupational groups.23

Such an analysis leaves many questions unanswered. In most instances we do not know when and why these migrants left Chiddingly; only in the case of the young and unmarried can we assume that it was during the 1840s, to find
employment. We also do not know what proportion the East Sussex residents formed of all Chiddingly migrants; in the light of the evident attraction of Lewes, a larger scale movement to Brighton and Hove (where there was a 10-fold increase in population between 1801 and 1851) seems likely, while others no doubt moved further west along the coast or to London. Until the 1851 birthplace data are fully computerised, the task of tracing such migrants remains impossibly tedious. An alternative method of approaching these questions is therefore explored in the next section.

Family context

Out-migration may occur either as family groups or as individuals, in the latter case usually in the form of young unmarried persons moving away from their family of upbringing.

Some Chiddingly families disappeared as entities during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, though individual members can often be traced. In most instances the disappearance was a feature of the normal life-cycle, when one or both parents died after all or most of the children had left home. Of greater interest for the current study were families with younger parents that had disappeared from Chiddingly by 1851; 68 were identified, of which 44 (65 per cent) were found to be resident elsewhere in East Sussex, mainly in zone A, and 16 (24 per cent) are known to have disintegrated as a result of the death or transportation of a parent. This leaves only six instances for which distant migration is a known or likely explanation; in three of these, families received financial assistance in the 1830s or 1840s to emigrate to North America or Australia. For the most part, therefore, family migration was a local affair, part of the regular pattern of population exchange among neighbouring parishes.

The out-migration of young people was examined by means of identifying the children born to certain couples living in Chiddingly during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. This was feasible only for long-staying couples, and even in the case of some of these there are doubts about the completeness of the list of offspring, for example when there is a wider than usual age gap between siblings. However, the details are believed to be reliably complete for 65 families, and at least largely complete for another 47. The children of these families who had died young were identified from the burial register and eliminated from further consideration. Some of the survivors aged 15 and over were living in Chiddingly in 1851, and others were living elsewhere in the county. Among these two groups, the sons and unmarried daughters can be located easily, but correct identification of all married daughters would require lengthy consultation of numerous marriage registers; as a result the migration of daughters will receive only limited attention here. Sons aged 15 and over not found either in Chiddingly or elsewhere in the county are assumed to have migrated to more distant places.

A study based on such sources and assumptions has significant limitations. First, the families studied form a self-selected group, restricted to the less migratory couples, since any couple that spent only a few years in Chiddingly

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automatically excluded itself from consideration. It seems reasonable to assume that migratory parents would have had children who were more prone to leave the county than the children in the group studied here. In other words, we are not dealing with a true sample, but rather with a group representative of the less migratory elements of Chiddingly's population. Secondly, the gender bias in the sample is unfortunate, as it is generally believed that young females were more migratory than young males. Thirdly, errors in the sources used, such as the possible occasional omission of births and deaths from the registers, may invalidate individual assumptions of distance migration. In spite of these limitations, the paucity of alternative methods of measuring out-migration at this period provides a justification for the exercise, provided that the results are treated as approximate only.

Little can be said about the migration of daughters, on account of limitations to the study already mentioned. Among daughters aged between five and nine in 1841, 64 per cent of those with farmer or craftsman fathers and 48 per cent of those with labourer fathers were still found to be living in Chiddingly under their maiden names in 1851, though not necessarily in the parental home (comparable figures for sons in the same age group were 56 per cent and 65 per cent). Those unmarried migrant daughters who were traced had all become servants, mainly in households in zone A. It is possible in a few instances to gain a glimpse of the personal links that must often have influenced the locational decision; for example, two sisters and two daughters of John Guy (brickmaker and farmer of 50 acres) were servants in Lewes in 1851, while two girls were servants in the Hamsey household of a farmer who had previously lived in Chiddingly. Virtually all of the handful of married daughters traced had a husband whose occupation was similar to that of their father.

Turning now to the sons, it is useful to start with a consideration of their occupations, with particular interest in a comparison of the occupations of fathers and sons. This is only possible for those 224 sons aged 15 and over who were living in East Sussex in 1851 (in some cases their fathers had moved to other East Sussex parishes by 1851). Table 5 shows the occupations of the sons of farmers, craftsmen etc., and labourers (mostly agricultural labourers). Roughly one quarter of farmers' sons were themselves farmers, and many of the younger ones described as 'at home' were almost certainly working on the father's farm prior to launching out on their own. Nearly one third had become craftsmen or more frequently traders, such as butchers, millers, corn dealers and shopkeepers. However, about one quarter were labourers, suggesting that there had been some downward social migration, affecting especially the sons of small farmers. Among the sons of craftsmen etc. nearly 62 per cent had followed in their fathers' footsteps, often in exactly the same craft, no doubt because they had received their initial training at home. Only one had become a farmer, but 31 per cent were labourers, once again pointing to downward social migration. Among the larger group of labourers' sons, if we combine the figures for labourers with those who were living-in servants in 1851 but likely to become labourers on marriage, we find over 90 per cent remaining in the same occupational group as their fathers. One son had managed to acquire a tiny (presumably part-time) farm, and six others had become petty craftsmen, mainly shoemakers. This
Table 5  Occupations of sons aged 15 and over living in East Sussex, 1851*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father's occupation</th>
<th>Not employed†</th>
<th>Farmer</th>
<th>Craftsman or trader‡</th>
<th>Labourer</th>
<th>Servant</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsman</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:  
* = includes some families that had moved to other parishes in East Sussex;  
† = includes those described as ‘at home’, in the Hellingly workhouse and in Lewes prison;  
‡ = includes schoolteachers and a dissenting minister.

Table 6  Places of residence of sons aged 15 and over, 1851

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father’s occupation</th>
<th>Locally</th>
<th>Zones b &amp; c</th>
<th>Distant</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsman</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Includes only sons of fathers who remained in Chiddingly, apart from three farmers who had moved just across the parish boundary.

confirms the view that there was little scope for upward social mobility for those sons of labourers who remained in the rural parts of the county.30

The same occupational groups for fathers have been used (though in this case excluding parents who had moved to other East Sussex parishes) for an analysis of the location of sons. Three distance zones were recognised: parishes in zone A combined with Chiddingly itself formed a local zone, where any sons located in 1851 can be classed as ‘stayers’; zones B and C combined represent medium-distance migration, while sons not found in East Sussex are classed as distant migrants. Table 6 reveals that the sons of craftsmen and traders were most likely to become distant migrants (41 per cent), while less than half remained in the locality. Seventy one per cent of labourers’ sons were ‘stayers’ and 23 per cent were distant migrants, while farmers’ sons were the least migratory, with 80 per cent ‘stayers’ and under 15 per cent distant migrants.31 It is worth noting however, that although labourers’ sons were less likely to become distant migrants than craftsmen’s sons, in numerical terms the contributions of the two groups were similar.
Table 7  Distant migrants by birth-order (percentage of living sons aged 15 and over in each birth-order group for each occupation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father's occupation</th>
<th>sons 1 &amp; 2</th>
<th></th>
<th>sons 3 &amp; 4</th>
<th></th>
<th>sons 5–10</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsman</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total distant migrants</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explanations can be linked with employment prospects in the locality. The many sons of craftsmen who were trained in their fathers’ workshops would have found only a few local openings for their skills, so they were forced to move away to gain further experience as journeymen, and perhaps eventually to establish their own business. This was a long-established tradition. Labourers’ sons faced the choice of remaining in the locality as labourers, with the associated disadvantages of underemployment and low pay, or moving to an expanding urban centre where casual work was more readily available and an enterprising man had some prospects of betterment. Most clearly preferred the former course, perhaps trapped by their limited horizons and the strong community ties that enveloped them. Farmers’ sons had a similar attachment to the locality, and those who did not become farmers themselves often remained in the area by becoming traders or by downward social mobility into the ranks of labourers. Little is known about where any of the distant migrants went or what occupations they followed, except to note that two or three were transported to Australia, and three sons of one labourer became soldiers.

The family data were used to consider one further question: did birth order influence the likelihood of distant migration? Only families where there were no doubts about the completeness of the record were used for this exercise, except in the case of farmers where so few families passed this test that it was decided to use all farmer families, while treating the results with extra caution. Table 7 shows that in all three occupational groups, it was the middle-order sons who were most likely to become distant migrants. In the case of craftsmen and traders, the elder sons were also likely to move away (to make room in the father’s workshop for younger brothers?), whilst among labourers it was the younger sons who were nearly as migratory as their middle-order brothers. The numbers are too small for much weight to be placed on the figures, but the results could point in the right direction. No doubt decisions about the initial placement of any son were taken by the parents, who would naturally be inclined to exploit their local knowledge and contacts first. When it came to the turn of sons three and four, perhaps local opportunities had been exhausted and the parents turned to more distant contacts? Autobiographies reveal that some young men moved on from local placements, making their own decisions in their late teens or early twenties to try their luck in more distant places, but it
seems unlikely that middle-ranking sons would be more prone to make such a decision than their elder brothers. At the other end of the age range, younger sons may have been more likely to remain in the parental home until marriage, either because it was now less crowded, or because they were needed to help or support ageing parents. This is an aspect of migration that needs more detailed consideration using a larger data set than is available here.

To summarize, the sons and daughters of the sample families did leave Chiddingly in considerable numbers during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The sons most likely to move away were the children of craftsmen and traders, especially those who were following in their fathers’ footsteps, but they were joined by nearly one third of the middle-ranking and younger sons of labourers. The tradition of moving away from the home area was already well established for craftsmen, but for labourers it was still in process of evolving, hence the number of relatives and friends living in the reception areas and providing scope for chain migration was steadily increasing.

Conclusion

Two types of migration affected the parish of Chiddingly between 1821 and 1851. First, a long-standing interchange of population with nearby parishes continued, involving both family groups and young people moving independently; since local in- and out-migrants were by this date similar in number, this type of movement had little impact on total population change. Secondly, a sizeable proportion of young people, mostly aged between 15 and 25, moved to distant places where employment prospects were better; there was little compensatory long distance in-migration, so this movement did influence population numbers by reducing the rate of increase. Among young men, it was the sons of craftsmen, traders and professional men who were most likely to join this distant migration stream, a reflection of the wider geographical network of contacts that usually existed among persons in these occupational groups, combined with a long-standing tradition of travelling to find work. In contrast, the sons of farmers only rarely left the Wealden district, chiefly because farming skills acquired there did not easily transfer to different environments. The sons of labourers occupied an intermediate position, being more migratory than the sons of farmers but less migratory than the sons of craftsmen and traders.

It is the labourer group that is the most interesting, because attitudes to out-migration among their sons appear to have been in process of change. It seems likely that relatively few such sons (less than one in ten?) became distant migrants during the early eighteenth century, whereas by the late nineteenth century the proportion had reached well over half. Clearly the century between 1750 and 1850 was a time of transition, with the period covered by this article representing the later phase. If the assumption that many of Chiddingly’s out-migrants ended up in Brighton is correct, then it seems likely that the attraction to this resort began when it started to grow in the late eighteenth century (1760 population about 2,000; 1821 – 24,429); a vigorous demand for servants, grooms, building workers and general labourers only 27 km away could hardly have failed to attract Chiddingly’s young labourers at a time when their numbers
were increasing and local employment becoming more difficult to find. More
details of the scale and timing of this migration may be available in the records of
Brighton itself.

NOTES

1. D. A. Souden, 'Movers and stayers in family reconstitution populations', Local Population Studies, 33
11–48 & 213–52; C. G. Pooley and I. D. Whyte eds, Migrants, emigrants and immigrants: a social history of
G. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'Migration trends in British rural areas from the 18th to the 20th centuries',

2. D. Mills and C. Pearce, People and places in the Victorian census, Historical Geography Research Series 23
(1989); this lists many publications dealing with migration that have used the census enumerators' books.

3. C. G. Pooley and J. C. Doherty, 'The longitudinal study of migration: Welsh migration to English
towns in the nineteenth century' in Pooley and Whyte, Migrants, 213–52.


6. East Sussex Record Office, Lewes (henceforth ESRO) PAR 292/37/1; 1841: Public Record Office
(henceforth PRO) HO107/1118; 1851: PRO HO107/1638. The 1821 listing names houses and where
there was multiple occupation notes '2 dwellings' or 'two families'; the names and ages of most
individuals are given, together with their relationship to the head; occupations are listed for most male
heads but not for lodgers or adult children; later annotations in some cases give details of year of
death, movement out of the parish ('gone to Falmer'), and occasionally other details ('killed on
railway').

7. J. A. Sheppard, 'Housing the agricultural worker in nineteenth-century Sussex: a case study', Sussex
Archaeological Collections, 131 (1993), 185–92.


10. Baptismal Register 1813–1946 for the parish of Chiddingly, ESRO PAR 292/1/2/1; cf. R. S. Schofield,
'Age-specific mobility in an eighteenth-century rural English parish' in Clark and Souden, Migration
and Society, 253–66.

notes in 'The reconstruction of nineteenth-century rural communities', Local Population Studies, 51
(1993), 47, that 91 per cent of rural births were included in the parish registers in the south-eastern
counties of England.

127–41; M. Beswick, 'Brick and tile making on the Dicker in East Sussex', Sussex Industrial History, 13

Editorial Committee of the University of Sussex, Sussex: environment, landscape and society, (Gloucester,

Historical Geography, 8 (1982), 373–94, especially Figure 5; R. I. Woods, 'Approaches to the fertility
372–3. Huzel's tables, showing demographic indices calculated for various parishes in the 1820s,
include Hellingly, an immediately neighbour of Chiddingly, where the infant mortality rate he
considered (55–60 per 1,000 births) was among the lowest. This figure is almost certainly too low, but
the relative advantage of the area may be correctly identified.

15. The influence of the railway can be ignored for the period under consideration; the nearest station on
the line from Lewes to Hastings, opened in 1846, was about 4 km beyond the southern boundary of
the parish.


17. 'Sussex men in general, and Sussex peasants in particular, were no great travellers. People coming from a distance of twenty miles were looked upon as "furriners"...', M. A. Lower, 'Old speech and old manners in Sussex', Sussex Archaeological Collections, 13 (1861), 218 (Lower was born and brought up in Chiddingly); Short argues the case for considerable mobility for employment and marriage, B. M. Short, 'The geography of local migration and marriage 1500–1900', University of Sussex Research Papers in Geography, 15 (1981).


20. Brandon and Short, The South East, 321; Brent, Georgian Lewes, 9.

21. Chiddingly vestry minutes, ESRO PAR 292/12/1.

22. While the population of Chiddingly increased by about 25 per cent between 1821 and 1851, the small towns of Hailsham and Uckfield both gained over 40 per cent.


25. According to notes added in a later hand to the 1821 census listing, Thomas Funnel (cooper) and family emigrated to America in 1832 and Thomas Roberts (labourer) and family departed for Australia in the same year, ESRO 292/37/1; Trayton Townshend's move to Australia was noted in November 1848 as financed by Chiddingly vestry, ESRO PAR 292/12/1.


31. cf. K. Schürer, 'The role of the family in the process of migration' in Pooley and Whyte, Migration, 106–42.


33. The baptismal register entry for Sophia Jenner, 19 July 1824, records that her father William was transported for sheep stealing, ESRO PAR 292/1/2/1; notes on the 1821 listing indicate that Stephen Richardson was twice transported, ESRO PAR 292/37/1; three sons of Richard Robards (household no. 80) are described on the 1821 listing as having subsequently become soldiers, ESRO PAR 292/37/1.
