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# Studying the Stayers: Kinship and Social Status in Long Melford, Suffolk, 1661–1861

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## Abstract

*This article continues my research into the stable population of Long Melford in Suffolk from 1661–1861, published in *Local Population Studies*, 95, which showed that amongst couples there was an increase in stability during this period, particularly by the early to mid nineteenth century. It considers the relationship between kinship and social status amongst Long Melford couples in the same period, discusses how these factors relate to stability and shows that the increase in stability in Long Melford was largely concentrated in one part of the local population. The article begins with a brief summary of the methods and results reported in that first article.*

## Stability in Melford: the indicators and a brief summary of the results

This paper is a continuation of research reported three years ago in *Local Population Studies*, 95, on the village of Long Melford in Suffolk (normally called just ‘Melford’ by its inhabitants).<sup>1</sup> My study uses a population reconstruction incorporating data from many sources. Stability is measured using indicators of family and of time. The family indicators are 3GEN, indicating individuals where at least one set of grandparents had been present in the parish, and 2GEN, where at least one set of parents had been present but no earlier ancestors. The time indicator is 30YR, indicating adults who spent at least 30 years in Melford from age 16 or older. 30YR ALL indicates all individuals who met 30YR, while 30YR ONLY indicates those who moved into Melford as adults, with no previous kin links to Melford, who stayed for at least 30 years. Couples were defined as 3GEN, 2GEN or 30YR (ALL or ONLY) when either one or both partners met the indicator.<sup>2</sup> 3GEN and 2GEN are statuses imposed upon individuals by their ancestors, 30YR is a status based on their own actions or health.<sup>3</sup> OTHER couples are those who met neither family nor time indicators. 3GEN, 2GEN, 30YR ONLY and OTHER are mutually exclusive categories.

The population reconstruction underlying this study runs from the sixteenth century until 1861; some data sources such as the parish registers and wills cover the whole period,

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- 1 L. Boothman, ‘The stable population of Long Melford, Suffolk over two hundred years’, *Local Population Studies*, 95 (2015), pp. 9–28. A map of the area and a brief introduction to Melford was included in that article. The text of this paper follows the custom of the inhabitants in referring to their place of residence simply as ‘Melford’.
  - 2 Couples are normally married, but the database includes a few known ‘common law’ marriages.
  - 3 30YR is of course influenced by mortality; the national decline in adult mortality begins just before or during period C.

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**Table 1 Percentages of couples meeting stability indicators**

Stability indicator	Period A 1661–1691	Period B 1753–1783	Period C 1831–1861	Period D 1831–1835
3GEN	40.5	49.9	54.4	58.0
2GEN	14.8	10.7	8.5	10.2
30YR ONLY	17.4	19.3	11.4	13.9
OTHER	27.2	20.1	25.7	17.8
30 YR ALL	62.2	66.3	57.5	71.0
Number of couples	1,004	1,075	1,420	724

**Sources:** All data in the tables and figures are extracted from the author's population reconstruction which includes some 80 different types of record. Prime sources include parish registers: Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds branch (SROB), FL509/4/1-9, 12, 15 and, for the Independent Church, The National Archive (TNA), RG4/1853-4, 2883. The reconstruction also used population censuses as follows: 1841 – TNA, HO 107/1012/1 fos. 2-44, HO107/1012/2 fos. 89-168; 1851 – TNA, HO 107/1789, fos. 359-444; 1861 – TNA, RG 9/1131 fos. 83-114, 130-48. Other sources include Hearth Tax returns: 1664 - SROB E179/257/12, 1670 – E179/367/19, 1669-70 – E179/183/612 part 1; rectory terriers: SROB, FL509/3/1,2, SROB, HA505/3/67; Easter Offering lists: SROB, FL509/3/15; rector's accounts: SROB, FL509/3/15; SROB, FL509/3/16; poor rates: SROB, FL509/7/8-9; poor relief, Overseers' disbursements: SROB, FL509/7/1-7; List of Certified Poor 1673: TNA SP46/135/104; settlement certificates and certificates: SROB, FL509/7/12–13; affiliation examinations and orders: SROB, FL509/7/14; parish apprenticeship indentures: SROB FL509/7/15; manorial records: SROB, FL509/13/3a, HA505/1, and FL509/13/3a; the Black Book of Melford: SROB, FL509/1/15; and the tithe apportionment and map: FL509/4/3. The construction includes information from 980 wills held by TNA and the Suffolk and Norfolk Record Offices.

many others do not. There are three periods where additional record sources make assessing presence in Melford at particular periods and linkage between generations considerably easier; these are the 31-year periods 1661–1691, 1753–1783 and 1831–1861, called periods A, B and C. The first five years of period C are also considered separately, as period D. Table 1 provides an outline of the proportion of couples in Melford who met the stability criteria in these time periods; this article examines the couples behind those results in relation first to kinship and then to social status.

### Kinship

The relationship between kinship, stability and migration has been much debated, often in sociological and anthropological studies. Did kin have to be immediately local to provide effective support or to contribute to a sense of belonging? Did large kin groups contribute to a cohesive local identity or might they instead help their members set themselves apart from others in the area? Did extensive kin groups spread across a wider region encourage migration by providing links to employment elsewhere and assistance with making a home in a new place? Did extensive kin groups in a single place encourage members to remain in the local area because of the range of support and friendship they could provide? The size

and complexity of kinship networks and the proportion of families with kin links might vary from settlement to settlement—which factors might be important in determining this?<sup>4</sup>

When historical demographers began to explore kinship they wanted to know how many kin of different sorts an individual might have had, on average, at various points of their life and whether this had varied in different historical periods. Computer simulation suggested that availability of kin would have changed across time; widows in nineteenth century England, for example, were likely to have had more close kin than their seventeenth century counterparts.<sup>5</sup>

The importance or otherwise of kinship in different societies was at the heart of the nuclear kinship debate in the 1980s: were kinship ties weaker, and was kin support less common, in areas where households most commonly consisted of nuclear families, compared to regions where two or more families normally lived as a household?<sup>6</sup> The analysis of kinship in the parish of Terling in Essex, by Keith Wrightson and David Levine showed what were interpreted as low levels of kin links between households compared to results from elsewhere in Europe; along with other similar results this helped to suggest lower levels of kin links in England than in many other places, and perhaps the reduced importance of kinship ties.<sup>7</sup> This caused debate and Wrightson later suggested a consensus which would recognize that kinship had a larger and more complex role than he and Levine had suggested, but which would accept that limitations existed on kinship recognition and utility.<sup>8</sup>

The analysis of kinship in Terling showed that 39.3 per cent of households present in 1671 had some kin link with another household present at the same time; only 24 per cent

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- 4 R. Wall, 'Economic collaboration of family members within and beyond households in English society, 1600–2000', *Continuity and Change*, 25 (2010), pp. 83–108; T. Harevan, *Families, History and Social Change* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 15–20, 32–4; C. Mulder and T.J. Cooke, 'Family ties and residential locations', *Population, Space and Place*, 15 (2009), pp. 299–304; M. Strathern, 'The place of kinship: kin, class and village status in Elmton, Essex', in A.P. Cohen (ed.), *Belonging: Identity and Social Organisation in British Rural Cultures* (Manchester, 1982), pp. 72–100; J. Mogeey, 'Residence, family, kinship, some recent research', *Journal of Family History*, 1 (1976), pp. 95–105; M. Anderson, *Family Structure in Nineteenth-Century Lancashire* (Cambridge, 1971) and B. Reay, *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800–1930* (Cambridge, 1996) provide good examples of the considerable literature.
  - 5 Wall, 'Economic collaboration', pp. 95, 100; J.E. Smith and J. Oeppen, 'Estimating numbers of kin in historical England using demographic microsimulation', in D. Reher and R. Schofield (eds), *Old and New Methods in Historical Demography* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 29–43; S. Ruggles, 'Confessions of a microsimulator – problems in modelling the demography of kinship', *Historical Methods*, 26 (1993), pp. 161–9 and Z. Zhao, 'Computer microsimulation and historical study of social structure: a comparative review of SOCSIM and CAMSIM', *Revista de la Asociacion de Demografica Historica*, 24 (2006), pp. 59–88.
  - 6 The debate has most recently been discussed and summarised in A. Plakans and C. Wetherell, 'Households and kinship networks: the costs and benefits of contextualization', *Continuity and Change*, 18 (2003), pp. 49–76.
  - 7 K. Wrightson and D. Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525–1700*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1995), pp. 82–91; M. Spufford and M. Takahashi, 'Families, will witnesses and economic structure in the Fens and on the chalk: sixteenth century Willingham and Chippenham', *Albion*, 28 (1996), pp. 379–411 and E. Todd, 'Seven peasant communities in pre-industrial Europe. A comparative study of French, Italian and Swedish Rural parishes (18th and early 19th century)', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1981), p. 216.
  - 8 Wrightson and Levine, *Poverty and Piety*, pp. 187–97.

with any links were reported in a similar analysis of Willingham, Cambridgeshire in 1674. My work on late seventeenth century Melford showed that a minimum of 62.1 per cent of households present in 1676 had a kin link with another household present at the same time.<sup>9</sup> Studies by Anderson, Strathern and Reay based on nineteenth and twentieth century evidence have also suggested stronger roles for kinship.<sup>10</sup> Reay specifically challenged the assumption that the low levels of kinship found in England for the early modern period would have continued over the following two hundred years.<sup>11</sup> More recently, analysis of narrative sources has thrown new light on the role of kinship; examples include the analysis of autobiographies and pauper letters and the study of the importance of kin in social networks. This work has enabled both qualitative and quantitative study of kin support and influence.<sup>12</sup>

### Kinship amongst couples in Melford, 1661–1861

Evidence of kinship links comes very largely from record sources available in all the time periods used in this study, the parish register, wills and manorial records, rather than from the additional sources used in each period. Occasionally references in other sources help establish kinship but the only bias in relation to particular time periods relates to the disruption of the parish registers during the Civil War and Commonwealth, mentioned below.

The Melford evidence is quantitative: how many couples, while they were living in the parish, had at least one kin link to another couple or single adult present there at the same time as them? How many links did such couples have? Which types of relationships featured in these links? Were most links to very close kin or were there many links to wider kin? Some families are emotionally closer than others, indeed some people dislike and disregard many of their kin. The Melford data provides no evidence of emotional, social or financial relationships with kin but can suggest the potential for these uses of kinship in this one small town.<sup>13</sup> For this research family trees were constructed for both partners in all marriages, a very labour-intensive activity.

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- 9 Wrightson and Levine, *Poverty and Piety*, pp. 86–7; Spufford and Takahashi, ‘Families, will witnesses and economic structure’; L. Boothman, ‘Mobility and stability in Long Melford, Suffolk in the late seventeenth century’, *Local Population Studies*, 62 (1999), pp. 31–51.
  - 10 Anderson, *Family Structure in Nineteenth-Century Lancashire*; M. Strathern, *Kinship at the Core: an Anthropology of Elmdon, a Village in North-West Essex in the 1960s* (Manchester, 1981); Reay, *Microhistories*.
  - 11 Reay, *Microhistories*, pp. 156–75.
  - 12 Examples include S. King, ‘The residential and family arrangements of English pauper letter writers, 1800–1840s’, in J. McKewan and P. Sharpe (eds), *Accommodating Poverty: the Housing and Living Arrangements of the English Poor, c. 1600–1800* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 145–68; T. Sokoll, *Essex Pauper Letters 1731–1837* (Records of Social and Economic History, new series 30) (Oxford, 2001); J. Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, 2010); N. Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship and Patronage* (Cambridge, 2001); and E. Griffin, *Liberty’s Dawn: a People’s History of the Industrial Revolution* (London, 2013). W. Coster, *Family and Kinship in England 1450–1800* (London, 2001), focuses on many aspects of kinship.
  - 13 All figures about kinship links relate to adult kin present in Melford while the couple were living there as a couple.

The availability of one piece of information, the original surname of the wife, rises from 61.2 per cent in period A to 72.7 per cent in period B and 83.4 per cent in period C. The differences might seem to invalidate any analysis of kinship levels but kin links will almost always be generated by husbands and wives who already had a family background in the parish, those who were 3GEN or 2GEN.<sup>14</sup> The great majority of wives with unknown surnames were either part of a newcomer couple or newcomer wives of 3GEN or 2GEN men who had married elsewhere. More important is the disruption to Melford's marriage registers during the Civil War and Commonwealth periods, immediately prior to period A. This does not have a large effect on the overall proportion of couples with any kin link, but when numbers of kin, and relationships to different types of kin are considered, the effect of this disruption in marriages is likely to be more significant and for these topics it is likely that the results for period A would be slightly higher if full information about marriages between 1642 and 1660 had survived. The disruption of the baptismal register is of less importance because one of the additional sources for period A, Easter Offering lists, links many children to their parents, and manorial registers and wills also provide evidence.

### How many couples had kin links?

The proportions of couples known to have had at least one kin link during the time that they lived (as a couple) in Melford are shown in Table 2. The proportion with any kin link rose from 63 per cent in period A to 73 per cent in period C, with the greatest increase coming between periods A and B. In each period the proportion of couples with kin links is higher than the proportion of 3GEN and 2GEN couples present; this is because some newcomer couples who remained in the parish later had kinship links within Melford,

**Table 2** Couples with any kin link during the time they spent as a couple in Melford

	Period A 1661–1691	Period B 1753–1783	Period C 1831–1861	Period D 1831–1835
Total number of couples	1,004	1,075	1,420	724
Couples with any kin link	636	774	1,037	571
Couples with kin link as % of all couples in the period	63.3	72.0	73.0	78.9
Couples in each period as % of the whole (n =3,499)	28.7	30.7	40.6	
Couples in each period with kin links as % of all couples with kin links (n = 2,437)	26.1	31.4	42.5	

**Sources:** See Table 1.

14 The exceptions are links to a couple's own adult children and the rare occasions when a newcomer already has relations in Melford; the database includes a handful of families where the latter links are known.

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almost always with their own adult children. The table also shows the proportion of all couples present in each period, compared to the proportion with kin links. Reay's study of Hernhill, Kent in 1851 showed 60.5 per cent of households with kin links within Hernhill itself and 65 per cent if kin in neighbouring communities are included.<sup>15</sup>

### How many kin links?

Overall the family trees showed 24,368 different kin links, but they were not evenly spread among couples present in each period. Table 3 shows the mean and median number of kin links for each period: there was a small rise in both measures between periods A and B but a much larger increase in period C. Table 4 shows how the proportion of couples with different numbers of links changed over time. The proportion of couples with only 1 to 6 links fell from 79.2 per cent in period A to 37.8 per cent in period C; over the three periods couples with 1–6 links provided just 16.1 per cent of all links while those with 21 or more links provided 48.7 per cent.<sup>16</sup>

**Table 3 Mean and median numbers of kin links**

Period	Mean number of links per couple	Median number of links per couple
A: 1661–1691	4.5	3
B: 1753–1783	6.9	4
C: 1831–1861	15.7	11
D: 1831–1835	14.4	10

**Sources:** See Table 1.

**Table 4 Kin links: percentage and numbers per couple, by period**

Period	Percentage of couples having each number of links				Total number of links
	1 to 6	7 to 20	21 or more	Percentage of all links	
A: 1661–1691	79.2	20.3	0.6	11.4	2,774
B: 1753–1783	63.4	31.8	4.9	21.6	5,259
C: 1831–1861	37.8	32.8	29.3	67.0	16,335
Total links	3,934	8,556	11,878	100.0	24,368
Total links as percentage of all links	16.1	35.1	48.7		

**Sources:** See Table 1.

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15 Reay's totals do not include what I have called 'distant kin', so couples whose only local kin fell into this group are not included in his results; it is likely that the figures for Melford and Hernhill would have been even more similar if they had been strictly comparable, see Reay, *Microhistories*, pp. 164–8.

16 The couple with the highest number of identified links, Samuel Younger and his wife Louisa nee Perry, were related to 89 other couples or single adults during their married life in Melford.

The outstanding feature of these results is the increased proportion of couples in period C with higher numbers of kin links. Couples present in period C made up 40.6 per cent of all couples and 42.5 per cent of couples with kin links but they had 67 per cent of all kin links. This must be partly because of the rising proportion of couples where both partners were 3GEN: from 9.1 per cent of couples in period B to 18.0 per cent in period C. The number of couples where both partners were 3GEN rose from 83 in period A and 98 in period B to 255 in period C. Such couples would almost inevitably be likely to have more kin links. But the availability of closer and more distant kin also changed over time, which also had a strong effect on the numbers of kin links.

### Which relationships?

Kin links to parents, adult children and siblings, known as first order links, were considered individually. Relationships to aunts and uncles, grandparents or grandchildren, cousins, nephews and nieces were combined as ‘other close kin’; other relations were included as ‘distant kin’. Figure 1 shows, for couples with kin, the proportion related to each of these different groups in each period.<sup>17</sup> Part of the increase in couples with at least one parent alive in the parish must relate to long-term demographic changes between period A and the end of period C: a decline in the mean age at marriage, a rise in adult life expectancy and, in rural areas, a decline in infant mortality; by the mid nineteenth century there was overall a greater chance of couples having parents alive during the early years of their marriage.<sup>18</sup> However the increase in the proportion of couples in Melford who included a 3GEN or 2GEN partner must also be a factor in this increased percentage of couples with parents present in the same parish (see Table 1).

The count of relationships between couples in period C and their adult children was affected by the problem of my data cut-off at 1861; however it was possible to identify this for the couples who were living in the parish in period D, 1831–1835, the first years of period C.<sup>19</sup> The proportion of couples related to at least one sibling of one partner increased by 10 per cent by period C, but the mean number of siblings to whom couples were related increased more significantly, from around 2.5 in periods A and B to 3.8 in period C.<sup>20</sup> Kin links to siblings allow the creation, in the succeeding generation, of links to aunts and uncles, cousins, nephews and nieces; these links, a generation later, allow for the creation of links to more distant kin. The Melford evidence shows significant increases in the proportion of couples related both to ‘other close kin’ and to ‘distant kin’. In period

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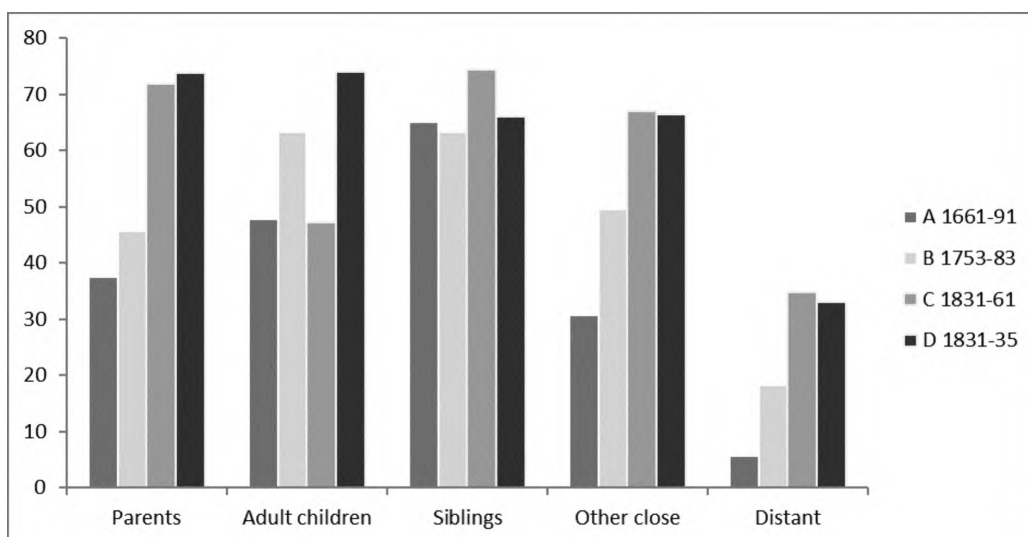
17 When all couples present were included, rather than only those with a kin link, the proportions with the various sorts of kin were around 20 per cent lower.

18 A. Hinde, *England's Population, a History since the Domesday Survey* (London, 2003) provides a useful summary: pp. 192–244 focus on trends in mortality and fertility after 1750.

19 Figure 1 suggests that more parents were related to their adult children than adult children were related to their parents; this is because all links of parents to adult children are included but the links of unmarried adult children are not included here.

20 The figures are for couples with any sibling link.

**Figure 1** Percentage of couples with kin having different types of relationships



**Sources:** See Table 1.

A 70 per cent of couples with kin were related only to first order kin, but by period C over 70 per cent of couples were related to wider kin, 30 per cent only to first order kin. The length of family presence in Melford established in my previous article enabled very complex kinship networks to emerge.<sup>21</sup>

### Couples with common surnames

The results reported above are based on all couples present in each period, but there was a subset of these couples worth considering separately. These were couples where one or both partners had a common surname, defined as a surname present in at least one per cent of all couples in the period concerned.<sup>22</sup> Individuals with a surname common in Melford did not, of course, all have kin links in the parish; some surnames, such as Smith, are common across England while others are concentrated in particular localities. However analysis showed that this measure did have some validity.

In periods A and B at least one partner in over 45 per cent of couples had a common surname and in both periods these couples accounted for between 65 and 70 per cent of kin links. In period C the proportion of couples with at least one common surname was higher, 55 per cent, and these couples accounted for 81.7 per cent of all kin links. These couples were found at all social levels but by period C were concentrated in the lower social

21 Samuel and Louisa Younger's sons, Samuel and William, both had wives from other large Melford families; both couples had kin links with over 60 more distant relations: see Boothman, 'Mobility and stability', p. 19.

22 There were 35 common surnames in periods A and B and 49 in period C, of which 12 appear on the lists in all three periods.



groups: 59.2 per cent among semi-skilled and unskilled workers and 31.8 per cent among skilled workers, tradesmen and shopkeepers.<sup>23</sup> The increased kinship density demonstrated in period C was very much concentrated amongst those in the lower social groups with common surnames.

### **Kinship and stability**

In this research stability is a quantitative measure which uses both previous family presence in Melford and/or long-term residence in the parish as an adult. It of course co-exists with migration in and out of the parish among both young people and couples. As stability in these terms increased between my three periods, it was to be expected that this would lead to an increase in kin links and kinship density. Table 5 shows the proportion of couples with each stability status with kin links and shows the expected high proportions of 3GEN and 2GEN couples.

Some couples had a family background in the parish but did not have any kin present: high mortality, low fertility, migration or a combination of these could explain this; possibly more surprising is the proportion of kin links among 30YRONLY and OTHER couples, the newcomers. Almost all kin links amongst newcomer couples were to their own adult children, the 2GEN individuals of the next generation. In period A half of 30YRONLY couples had adult children who remained in Melford, by period D over three quarters had such links. The proportion of OTHER couples with links to their own adult children also increased after period B.<sup>24</sup>

Table 6 provides alternative evidence about changes in stability and kin links across the three periods, returning to consider couples where at least one partner had a common surname. These couples were considerably more likely to have at least one kin link and they also had higher mean and median numbers of links. Table 3 showed that both the mean

**Table 5 Percentage of couples who had kin links, by stability indicator and period**

Stability indicator	Period A 1661–1691	Period B 1753–1783	Period C 1831–1861	Period D 1831–1835
3GEN	92.4	93.5	97.2	96.1
2GEN	83.2	85.3	90.0	90.1
30YRONLY	50.0	65.8	58.0	77.5
OTHER	17.9	13.6	23.1	31.1
30YRALL	79.9	79.1	89.6	92.0
All couples with links	63.3	71.1	73.0	78.9

**Sources:** See Table 1.

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<sup>23</sup> That is, in social groups 4 and 3 respectively, as defined later in this article.

<sup>24</sup> Three newcomer couples had known relationships to siblings living in Melford; in each case the sibling had married into the parish after the arrival of the newcomer couple in question.

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**Table 6** Kinship links of couples with and without common surnames

	Couples including a common surname			Couples not including a common surname		
	Period A 1661–1691	Period B 1753–1783	Period C 1831–1861	Period A 1661–1691	Period B 1753–1783	Period C 1831–1861
Percentage of all couples in period	46.1	47.0	55.0	53.9	53.0	45.0
Percentage of couples with at least one kin link	76.7	84.6	85.9	51.9	60.9	65.1
Mean number of kin links (couples with any links)	5.4	8.2	18.2	3.0	4.1	7.7
N	463	505	781	541	570	639

**Sources:** See Table 1.

and median number of kin links rose considerably in period C, but it is clear from Table 6 that the increase in both measures was considerably higher amongst couples which included a common surname. This increase was concentrated in an even smaller number of families which had very high numbers of links. In period C there were 781 couples where husband and/or wife had one or more of the 49 common surnames; 284 of these couples featured one or more of the ‘top 12’ common surnames. These 284 couples (20 per cent of the period C total) produced 45.4 per cent of the period’s kin links; their mean number of links was 27.9 per couple and the median 25.<sup>25</sup> Another 497 couples (35 per cent) included a husband and/or wife with one or more of the other 37 common surnames; these families produced another 36.3 per cent of kin links. Just 18.3 per cent of all period C kin links came from the 45 per cent of couples without a common surname.

### Social status

The relationship between stability and social status in England appears to have been complex, and to have varied across time and place. Some researchers studying individual rural communities in the early modern period concluded that more prosperous families were less likely to be mobile than their lower status peers; the more prosperous in these studies were the middling sort in the locality, which included major farmers. The landholding system was crucial amongst farmers: where farms were leased, as in Melford, turnover amongst tenants could be high and many came from outside the parish; where most farms were owner occupied stability was higher. The various forms of copyhold affected more

<sup>25</sup> The surnames were Cadge, Grice, Hardy, Payne, Perry, Prigg, Rising, Salter, Sargeant, Theobald, Whittle and Younger and between them they produced 7,471 kin links. Over 94 per cent (268) of these couples had kin links.

people; copyhold for a fixed number of lives could lead to more turnover than copyhold of inheritance; the latter was the custom in Melford.<sup>26</sup>

Those at the top of the social structure, the gentry and the aristocracy, are thought to have become more mobile in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; Clark suggested that better communications enabled more and longer moves for business, leisure and marriage amongst these groups.<sup>27</sup> Other factors led to changes in mobility or stability amongst those at the lower end of the social structure: Snell and Armstrong both suggested that from the later years of the eighteenth century changes in farmers' employment practices led to an increase in stability as farm servants (who normally left home for service) were replaced in southern and eastern England by agricultural day labourers, more of whom lived in the place where they grew up.<sup>28</sup> Amendments to the settlement laws and the increasing importance of settlement are also suggested to have led to increased stability amongst some of the poor. Wojciechowska found that in early nineteenth century Brenchley persistence was highest amongst agricultural workers; and Escott, studying late-eighteenth century Binfield in Berkshire, also reported that the poor were amongst the least mobile.<sup>29</sup> Although Robin and Strathern's work on Elmdon focused on a later period, it also provided evidence of the stability of families of agricultural labourers in a small parish, although many of their sons had to migrate because of a lack of work.<sup>30</sup>

Four social groups were defined for this study: social group 1 consisted of the gentry, the highest status professionals and the largest farmers, clothiers or manufacturers; social group 2 included substantial farmers and tradesmen and the majority of larger employers and professionals; social group 3 comprised skilled workers, less substantial tradesmen and shopkeepers and husbandmen; and social group 4 included semi-skilled and unskilled workers including agricultural labourers and paupers. The grouping was based on that used by Wrightson and Levine when they examined social status in the small agricultural community of Terling, Essex during the period 1525–1700; they divided families into categories I–IV. They reported that, across their period, category I, gentry and large farmers, were overall the most 'fluid element', while the husbandmen and craftsmen of category III were the most stable; the experience of the yeomen farmers of category II lay somewhere between. The labouring poor of their category IV showed a rapid turnover before 1620 but

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26 P. Clark, 'Migration in England during the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries', *Past and Present*, 85 (1978), pp. 57–90; M. Takahashi, 'Family continuity in England and Japan', *Continuity and Change*, 22 (2007), pp. 193–214; R. Hoyle, 'Tenure and the land market in early modern England: or a contribution to the Brenner debate', *Economic History Review*, 43 (1990), pp. 1–20.

27 Clark, *Migration in England*, pp. 57–90.

28 K.D.M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change in Agrarian England 1660–1900* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 336–43; A. Armstrong, *Farmworkers in England and Wales: a Social and Economic History 1770–1980* (London, 1988), pp. 62–3;

29 B. Wojciechowska, 'Brenchley: a study of migratory movements in a mid-nineteenth century rural parish', *Local Population Studies*, 41 (1988), pp. 28–40; M.M. Escott, 'Residential mobility in a late eighteenth century parish: Binfield, Berkshire 1779–1801', *Local Population Studies*, 40 (1988), pp. 20–35;

30 J. Robin, *Continuity and Change in an English Village: Elmdon 1861–1964* (Cambridge, 1979); Strathern, *Kinship at the Core*.

this stabilised by the middle of the century and by 1700 the poor were almost as stable as the husbandmen and craftsmen of category III. Wrightson and Levine concluded that ‘the overall stabilization of population mobility in seventeenth century Terling ... was produced above all by the checking of the mobility of the poor after 1620.’ However in 1671 population stability in Terling (69 households) was still considerably lower than that in Melford at the same period (approximately 383 households).<sup>31</sup>

Social scientists, market researchers and others now assess social status, and thus the social structure of a population, using a wide variety of measures. For populations in the past, particularly in the pre-census period, there is a far more limited range of evidence available and conclusions are necessarily less detailed. To assess social status in Melford a wide variety of sources was used, including the Hearth Tax and Easter Offering returns, the 1841, 1851 and 1861 censuses, inventories, manorial records, parish apprenticeship, removal and settlement records, poor rate assessments and listings, poor relief records, other valuations and tax returns, tithe records, and wills. The sources available for each period vary considerably, which means that the extent and precision of status attributions must also vary.<sup>32</sup> There is no single data source which can suggest social status consistently between 1661–1861, and for periods A and B there are no sources which allow the social status of almost all couples to be assessed directly; it was however possible to determine the approximate proportions of couples in the different social groups in periods A and B. Couples were first assessed using information about wealth, landholding and occupation; this enabled status to be ascribed to around 66 per cent of couples in period A and to 60 per cent in period B. The status of these couples was then used to provide indicators of status for other couples. For example the poor rate books of period B list heads of household who are ratepayers and separately those who lived in the cottages.<sup>33</sup> All those of known status in the cottages were in social groups 3–4 so an assumption was made that all couples listed as in the cottages were in one of these groups. Those ‘cottagers’ whose social status was not known from other sources were divided between social groups 3 and 4 in the same proportions as those whose status was already identified. However, even with these procedures, there remained considerably higher numbers of ‘status unknown’ couples in period A. The censuses and property valuations of period C enabled a social status to be assigned to almost all couples present.<sup>34</sup>

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31 Wrightson and Levine, *Poverty and Piety*, pp. 81–2; unfortunately the only figures given are those for 1671. For Melford comparisons for the 1670s, see Boothman, ‘Mobility and stability in Long Melford’; for Melford comparisons for 1661–1691 see Boothman, ‘The stable population of Long Melford’, p. 16.

32 References for the Hearth Tax, the censuses, manorial records, Easter Offering lists, wills and poor relief records are given in Table 1. Melford apprenticeship indentures 1663–1819: SROB, FL509/7/15; Melford removal and settlement records: SROB, FL509/7/11–13. The reconstruction includes details from over 60 inventories held by The National Archive or the Suffolk or Norfolk Record Offices.

33 Ratepayers paid the poor rate based on the valuation of their property; cottagers normally paid 1d each time a rate was charged, a few paid 2d. See poor rates: SROB, FL509/7/8–9.

34 The few couples of unknown social status in period C are newcomer couples present for only a short period.

**Table 7 Percentage of couples by social status**

	Period A 1661–1691	Period B 1753–1783	Period C 1831–1861	Period D 1831–1835
Social group 1	6.7	4.1	2.9	2.8
Social group 2	15.6	14.5	10.1	10.1
Social group 3	31.2	38.6	36.3	33.8
Social group 4	26.5	36.3	48.7	50.3
Not known	19.9	6.5	2.0	3.0
N	909	1,008	1,380	724

**Note:** Social group 1 consisted of the gentry, the highest status professionals and the largest farmers, clothiers or manufacturers; social group 2 included substantial farmers and tradesmen and the majority of larger employers and professionals; social group 3 comprised skilled workers, less substantial tradesmen and shopkeepers and husbandmen; and social group 4 included semi-skilled and unskilled workers including agricultural labourers and paupers.

**Sources:** See Table 1.

The social status results given here for periods A and B are therefore less precise than those for period C. Couples in social groups 1 and 2 are, however, highly likely to have been identified within the population reconstruction. Therefore although the distribution of couples between social groups 3 and 4 is less certain in periods A and B, the combined total of couples in these groups and those of unknown status is likely to be broadly accurate.<sup>35</sup>

The results of the analysis of social status are given in Table 7; the total numbers of couples in each period are lower than those shown in Table 1 because this analysis excluded couples where the husband had been widowed and had subsequently remarried, with the first marriage included within the period.<sup>36</sup>

The social structure of Melford changed somewhat over the period of this study. The proportion of couples in social groups 1 and 2 declined, falling from at least 22.3 per cent of couples in period A (1661–1691) to just 13 per cent by period C (1831–1861). Social group 3 was most stable over the three periods, and the proportion in social group 4 grew across time, although the decline in the proportion of couples of unknown status after period A implies less change in social groups 3 and 4 between periods A and B than is suggested in Table 7.<sup>37</sup> The survival of more poor law sources in periods B and C makes

35 The great majority of those of unknown status are likely to have been in social groups 3 or 4.

36 If their later marriage/marriages had been included their social status would otherwise have been counted more than once (four times in one case). The later marriages of widows were not excluded as the sources used to assess status focus on the husband as head of household.

37 This decline in the proportion of higher status families in the population as a whole and deskilling amongst lower status workers in England in this period has been examined by Weisdorf and colleagues: see N. Boberg-Fazlic, P. Sharp and J. L. Weisdorf, ‘Survival of the richest? Social status, fertility and social mobility in England 1541–1824’, *European Review of Economic History*, 15 (2011), pp. 365–92, here at pp. 378–80; A. M. De Pleijit and J. L. Weisdorf, *Human Capital Formation from Occupations: the Deskilling Hypothesis Revisited*, Working Paper 57, Centre for Global Economic History, University of Utrecht (Utrecht, 2014) [www.cgeh.nl/working-paper-series](http://www.cgeh.nl/working-paper-series) [accessed June 2016].

identification of those in receipt of poor relief, considered to be in social group 4, much easier, and this could also partially explain the growth in this group after period A. However, changes in local industry also add to the growth in social group 4; in periods A and B most craftsmen in the textile industry, weavers, shermen, fullers and others, are classified as social group 3. Melford's industry had changed by period C; the new industries employed more semi-skilled workers, classified as being in social group 4. Couples in social groups 3 and 4 together with those of unknown status made up 77.6 per cent of the total in period A, 81.4 per cent in period B and 87 per cent in period C.

### **Social status and stability**

How did these changes in the social structure relate to the issues of stability explored in my previous article?<sup>38</sup> Table 8 summarises the proportions of couples in the upper and lower sections of the social structure who either had a family background in Melford (3GEN or 2GEN) or who were newcomers (30YRONLY or OTHER). In periods A and B the proportions with a family background in the parish in social groups 3 and 4 were only slightly higher than the proportions in social groups 1 and 2 whereas in period C about two thirds of couples in social groups 3 and 4 were from established families compared to one third of couples in the higher social groups. The figures here for period D suggest that this change in social groups 1 and 2 had begun by the 1830s but became more marked later in period C.

The changing mix of stability statuses in each social group across the three periods is shown again in Figure 2. In period A the proportion of couples with a family background

**Table 8 Percentages of couples of known social status: established families and newcomers**

Stability indicator	Social groups 1 and 2				Social groups 3 and 4			
	Period A	Period B	Period C	Period D	Period A	Period B	Period C	Period D
	1661– 1691	1753– 1783	1831– 1861	1831– 1835	1661– 1691	1753– 1783	1831– 1861	1831– 1835
3GEN + 2GEN	55.4	58.6	35.0	46.2	58.5	62.7	67.3	71.3
30YR ONLY + OTHER	44.6	41.3	65.0	53.8	41.5	37.3	32.6	28.7
N	202	196	180	93	525	729	1,172	609

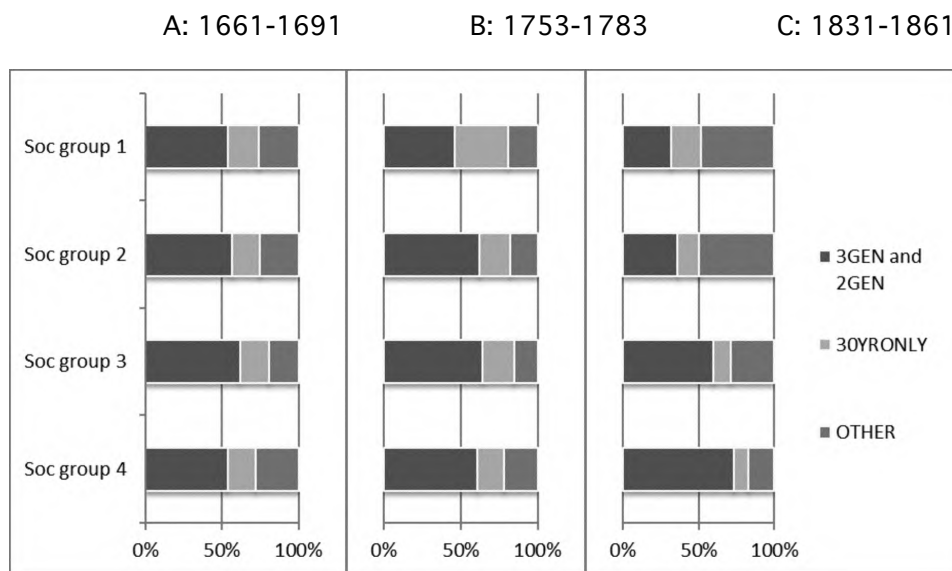
**Note:** Social group 1 consisted of the gentry, the highest status professionals and the largest farmers, clothiers or manufacturers; social group 2 included substantial farmers and tradesmen and the majority of larger employers and professionals; social group 3 comprised skilled workers, less substantial tradesmen and shopkeepers and husbandmen; and social group 4 included semi-skilled and unskilled workers including agricultural labourers and paupers. Couples of unknown social status: period A 182; period B 83; period C 28; period D 22.

**Sources:** See Table 1.

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38 Boothman, 'Stable population of Long Melford'.

Figure 2 Social status and the stability indicators



**Note:** Social group 1 consisted of the gentry, the highest status professionals and the largest farmers, clothiers or manufacturers; social group 2 included substantial farmers and tradesmen and the majority of larger employers and professionals; social group 3 comprised skilled workers, less substantial tradesmen and shopkeepers and husbandmen; and social group 4 included semi-skilled and unskilled workers including agricultural labourers and paupers.

**Sources:** See Table 1.

in Melford (3GEN or 2GEN) was fairly similar in each social group, as were the proportions of 30YRONLY and OTHER couples. By period B there were more newcomer couples in social group 1 but amongst the other three social groups the proportion of couples with each type of stability status was again very similar. However in period C the pattern differed, the backgrounds of couples in social group 2 were almost identical to those in social group 1 while social groups 3 and 4 had a very different mix of stability backgrounds; those with some family background in Melford were dominant, particularly in social group 4.

This analysis concentrates on the adults who spent time in Melford as part of a couple, as did my previous article. However that article included some details of the children of these couples, in particular those who had not been buried in Melford before the age of 16. That work established that in each period just over a third of these individuals were later buried in Melford aged 16 or over.<sup>39</sup> The picture of an increasing concentration of the stable part of the Melford adult population in social group 4 is reinforced by Tables 9 and

<sup>39</sup> Period A: 34.4 per cent; period B 36.4 per cent and period D 34.9 per cent. Period D was used for this analysis because the work tracing all children born to Period C couples had not been completed; see Boothman, 'Stable population of Long Melford', p. 22.

## Kinship and Social Status in Long Melford, Suffolk, 1661–1861

10 which analyse those ‘children’ who married or were buried in Melford as adults in relation to their parents’ social status.<sup>40</sup> The social background of stable ‘children’ clearly changed over time in a similar way to that seen amongst their parents.

**Table 9** Percentage of children (of couples present in periods A, B or D) who married in Melford or married elsewhere but lived in Melford for at least part of their married lives, by their parents’ social status

Parents’ social group	Period A 1661–1691	Period B 1753–1783	Period D 1831–1835
1	4.4	3.1	1.4
2	23.9	15.0	3.6
3	40.9	42.0	29.5
4	28.6	39.3	65.5
Not known	2.2	0.6	0.0
N	548	833	502

**Note:** Social group 1 consisted of the gentry, the highest status professionals and the largest farmers, clothiers or manufacturers; social group 2 included substantial farmers and tradesmen and the majority of larger employers and professionals; social group 3 comprised skilled workers, less substantial tradesmen and shopkeepers and husbandmen; and social group 4 included semi-skilled and unskilled workers including agricultural labourers and paupers.

**Sources:** See Table 1.

**Table 10** Percentage of children (of couples present in periods A, B or D) buried in Melford aged 16 or older, by their parents’ social status

Parents’ social group	Period A 1661–1691	Period B 1753–1783	Period D 1831–1835
1	7.6	3.0	1.6
2	22.6	15.0	4.4
3	38.9	42.6	31.9
4	29.1	39.0	62.1
Not known	1.8	0.4	0.0
N	553	772	435

**Note:** Social group 1 consisted of the gentry, the highest status professionals and the largest farmers, clothiers or manufacturers; social group 2 included substantial farmers and tradesmen and the majority of larger employers and professionals; social group 3 comprised skilled workers, less substantial tradesmen and shopkeepers and husbandmen; and social group 4 included semi-skilled and unskilled workers including agricultural labourers and paupers.

**Sources:** See Table 1.

<sup>40</sup> ‘Married’ here includes couples who married elsewhere but lived in Melford for at least part of their married lives.

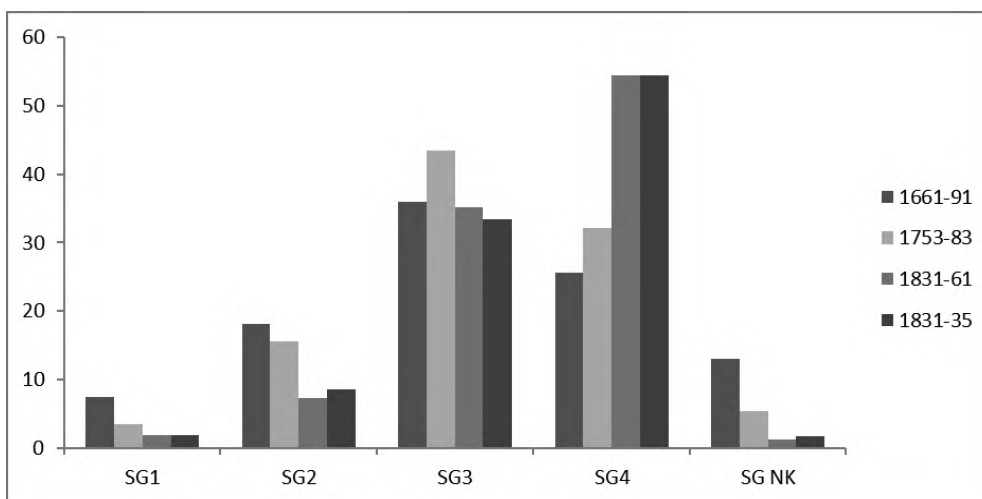


### Kinship and social status

If increased stability led, as expected, to increased numbers of kin links and kinship density, it could equally be expected that there would be similar patterns of change in the relationship between social status and the proportion of couples with kin links, and this is exactly what happened; the changing pattern across time is virtually identical to that seen in Figure 2, which considered social status and stability. In period A the proportions of couples in each social group who had kin links were very similar, by period C this was true of a considerably higher proportion of couples in social groups 3 and 4 than of those in social groups 1 or 2. But there were of course many more couples in social groups 3 and 4; Figure 3 shows, for each period, the proportion of couples with kin who were in each social group. In periods A and B the highest proportion of couples with kin were in social group 3 but by period C and its sub-period D a much larger majority were in social group 4.

It was established earlier that the mean number of kin links per couple had increased significantly by period C; Figure 4 shows how this increase related to social status. In period A, when the overall mean number of kin links per couple was 4.5, couples in social group 2 had a mean of just under 6 links, for all other social groups the mean was around 4. In period B, when the overall mean was 6.8, the mean for social group 1 was considerably lower than those among the other three groups, which were very similar. However in period

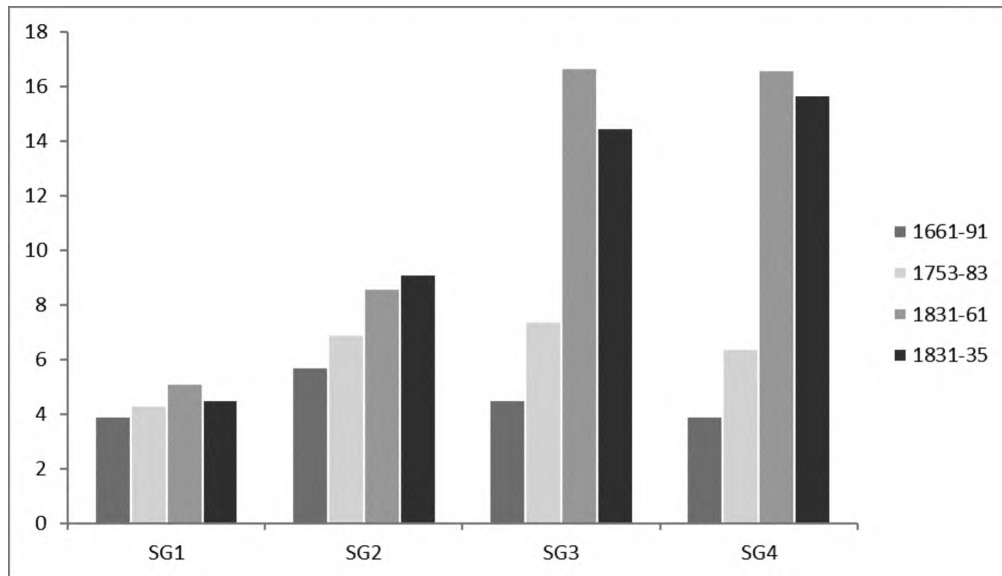
**Figure 3** Percentage of couples with kin, by social status and period



**Note:** SG – social group. Social group 1 consisted of the gentry, the highest status professionals and the largest farmers, clothiers or manufacturers; social group 2 included substantial farmers and tradesmen and the majority of larger employers and professionals; social group 3 comprised skilled workers, less substantial tradesmen and shopkeepers and husbandmen; and social group 4 included semi-skilled and unskilled workers including agricultural labourers and paupers. SG NK – Social group not known.

**Sources:** See Table 1.

Figure 4 Mean number of kin links per couple, by social status and period



**Note:** SG – social group. Social group 1 consisted of the gentry, the highest status professionals and the largest farmers, clothiers or manufacturers; social group 2 included substantial farmers and tradesmen and the majority of larger employers and professionals; social group 3 comprised skilled workers, less substantial tradesmen and shopkeepers and husbandmen; and social group 4 included semi-skilled and unskilled workers including agricultural labourers and paupers.

**Sources:** See Table 1.

C, when the overall mean was 15.7 kin links per couple, the difference between couples in the upper and lower parts of the social structure was more extreme, with the mean for social groups 3 and 4 both being well over 16, with much lower figures for social groups 1 and 2.

### **Kinship, social status and stability: changes over 200 years**

This article has provided evidence for some expected outcomes: that kinship links increased as stability increased; that kinship network complexity or density increased between 1661 and 1861 and that there was a relationship between social status and the extent of kin links. Other outcomes were perhaps less easy to predict: that couples in all social groups had fairly similar experiences in terms of both kinship and stability in 1661–1691 and 1753–1783 but that a different pattern existed by 1831–1861; the extent of the increase in mean kin links and kinship density by the 1831–1861 period; and the extent to which a relatively small proportion of couples provided the great majority of kin links and thus experienced the increased kinship density. The social structure changed, with a fall

in the proportion of couples in the higher social groups and increased differentials between them and those in the lower social groups in terms of stability and kinship. These results from a detailed study of one rural–industrial parish perhaps provide local evidence both for the social changes considered in Snell’s work and, to some extent, for the ‘deskilling hypothesis’ of Weisdorf and colleagues.<sup>41</sup> Combining the Melford changes in social structure and stability between 1661–1861 with Wrightson and Levine’s from Terling in 1525–1700 could possibly suggest that, at least in some rural areas, the 200 years after the Civil War saw a continuing rise in stability amongst couples in the lower part of the social structure.

The results of the kinship analysis may be relevant to the debate about the extent of kinship density which may have existed in rural English parishes in the early modern period and later. Wrightson and Levine, in 1995, considered that ‘the traditional notion of the early modern English village as a cluster of densely related households in which social relations were dominated by extended family ties’ was no longer a tenable belief.<sup>42</sup> This study provides no evidence of the use of kinship ties or whether they were dominant for any or many of the couples present, and the kinship results reported for Melford show that some couples had few kin links in the parish. The extent of kinship ties outside Melford is impossible to know, but in period C a small proportion of couples in social groups 3 and 4 had many kin links in Melford and were part of particularly dense kinship networks within the parish.

The study of Terling covered, first, a period of rapid population increase in England in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries which saw high levels of internal migration and possibly relatively low kinship densities in individual communities and, second, a period from around 1640 to 1700 which saw much slower, if any, population growth, a decline in long-distance internal migration but an increase in seasonal movement; these factors continued into the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>43</sup> The gradual growth in kinship density seen in Melford between periods A and B must have been at least partly the result of this population stabilization. A combination of demographic, economic and social factors then led to some families in Melford developing much more dense kin networks in the early nineteenth century. The same pattern of kinship change between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries may have occurred elsewhere; Reay found similar levels of kinship in Hernhill, Kent in 1851 but had no earlier evidence to compare with Melford or Terling.<sup>44</sup> It is at least possible that the idea of English villages as a cluster of ‘densely related households’ was based on some real situations, but ones which developed only in or after the later eighteenth century, and which related only to families in certain parts of the social structure.

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41 Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor*; see also K.D.M. Snell, *Parish and Belonging: Community, Identity and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700–1950* (Cambridge, 2006); Boberg-Fazlic *et al.*, ‘Survival of the richest?’, pp. 378–80; De Pleijit and Weisdorf, ‘Human capital formation’.

42 Wrightson and Levine, *Poverty and Piety*, p. 197.

43 See Hinde, *England’s Population*, p. 149–62.

44 Reay, *Microhistories*.

To what extent did the changes evident in Melford by period C begin before 1830, or did they mostly come about within the period? It is unfortunate that there are no ‘extra’ archive sources about Melford between 1783 and 1830, which would have enabled the same in-depth study that has been possible for periods A, B and C. The 1790–1830 period saw considerable national changes and challenges, which included a series of bad harvests and increased poverty in the 1790s, over 20 years of a major war and the departure of large numbers of young men into the armed forces. After the end of the wars there were major crises in farming and food prices, serious problems about employment of ex-servicemen and agitation over the introduction of new technology in agriculture; in addition the textile industry had virtually disappeared from many areas of eastern and southern England.<sup>45</sup> In Melford, baptisms, marriages and burials fell in the 1790–1820 period but baptisms and marriages rose sharply in the next decade, which must relate in part to the return of young men from the armed forces. My previous article demonstrated that the increase in 3GEN couples in period C resulted almost entirely from an increase in 3GEN wives; it is possible that during the Napoleonic Wars, with so many sons away, more daughters remained in their home parish to help support their families, and that this pattern then continued into the later nineteenth century.<sup>46</sup>

The results from the ‘sub-period’ D, covering the years 1831–1835, give an indication of the situation at the end of the 1790–1830 period; because of this, figures from period D have been included in many figures and tables in this article. They suggest that much of the change evident in period C had its foundations in the first third of the nineteenth century. The decline in the textile industry might have been expected to increase emigration of young people, and thus lead to fewer marriages in Melford, and a fall in the proportion of newcomer couples as work opportunities declined.<sup>47</sup> The latter did happen but new industries arrived and amongst young people brought up in Melford the proportion who married in the parish, or who spent some of their married life there, was very slightly higher in period D than it had been in period B. The proportion buried there remained steady.<sup>48</sup> Somehow the local economy in periods A, B and D enabled a similar proportion of Melford-bred young people to remain in the parish, but the social status of these young people (or rather of their parents) showed a very different pattern in period D than in earlier periods.

The effects of the changes in the laws of settlement on the rise of endogamous marriages and on the balance of the population between the core, who regarded themselves as truly ‘of the parish’, those with settlement rights, and the remainder have been examined

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45 The post-1815 depression is well documented, see G.E. Mingay (ed.) *The Agrarian History of England and Wales volume VI, 1750–1850* (Cambridge, 1989). The effect on the poor relief system is discussed in S. Williams, *Poverty, Gender and the Life-Cycle under the English Poor Law 1760–1834* (Woodbridge, 2011) pp. 8–10.

46 Boothman, ‘The stable population of Long Melford’, pp. 18–9.

47 The author has traced individuals born in Melford who in the 1851 census were living elsewhere. A large majority of those who were married had done so after leaving Melford.

48 Boothman, ‘The stable population of Long Melford’, p. 23.

by Snell.<sup>49</sup> He suggested that while in the eighteenth century a good proportion of the poorer part of a parish would be within that core, by 1870 the majority of those who felt that they ‘belonged’ would be amongst the property owners and ratepayers.<sup>50</sup> This study’s statistics on 3GEN, 2GEN and 30YR families cannot predict the proportion of the population who felt that they ‘belonged’ in Melford, but may demonstrate the potential size of that group. The rise in the proportion of couples in social group 4 and the concentration of both kinship and stability within that group in period C suggest that there would not have been a fall in the proportion of the lower social groups who felt that they ‘belonged’ in the mid-nineteenth century.

The question of *belonging*, the feeling of local distinctiveness, however, is more complex than this.<sup>51</sup> There is one understanding of place attachment and belonging which relates to a close knit society of kin and friendship amongst people of a similar social status or employment who lived in one place for most of their lives; some of the families in social group 4 with many kin links and many generations of ancestors in Melford were undoubtedly part of that core, who may have been regarded as the ‘real’ Melford families. Strathern wrote about the different concepts of ‘villager’ in Elmdon in the 1960s and the various understandings both of ‘real’ Elmdoners and incomers about belonging in that parish.<sup>52</sup> She considered the different forms of localism which can be present in one place, while Howard Newby described an ‘official’ village community of the middle classes which existed alongside a locally-based working class sub-culture which excluded ‘them’ in authority, and which represented the core of the ‘occupational community’.<sup>53</sup> The extent to which the latter group resented the former seems impossible to measure. Melford’s nineteenth century social structure was more complex than that of Elmdon, with major manufacturers, professionals, shopkeepers and more from the lower middle class alongside farmers, and we know little of how these different groups interacted within the parish. The local newspapers of the mid and later nineteenth century report many of the social and educational activities of the gentry and the middle class in Melford which suggest a thriving middle class society. This must have included many of the OTHER couples so prominent in social groups 1 and 2 in period C, along with some of the wealthier of social group 3.<sup>54</sup> Some of these couples may have felt a sense of belonging to ‘Melford’, but to a rather different ‘Melford’ to that with which many of the more stable identified.

M.B. Katz, writing about Hamilton in Ontario in relation to other Canadian cities, commented that ‘even if Hamilton turns out to be less representative than one might

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49 Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, pp. 115–20.

50 Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, pp. 115–20.

51 Cohen, *Belonging*, provides an introduction to the literature on the issue.

52 Strathern, *Kinship at the Core*, pp. 1–57; nineteenth-century Elmdon had a population approximately a quarter the size of Melford.

53 Strathern, *Kinship at the Core*, pp. 1–57; H. Newby, *Country Life, a Social History of Rural England* (Harmondsworth, 1988), p. 81.

54 [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk) [accessed 20 August 2013].

## **Kinship and Social Status in Long Melford, Suffolk, 1661–1861**

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wish, its study is important because it provides a datum with which to begin an analysis of what is special and what is general'.<sup>55</sup> If this study of long-term stability amongst the population of Melford could be compared with studies of other settlements, preferably with different economic histories, the results might shed increased light on the variations and similarities in population mobility and stability in different types of English communities.

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<sup>55</sup> M. B. Katz, *The People of Hamilton, West Canada: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth Century City* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), p. 41.