

THE RICH, THE POOR AND THE MIGRANT IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY STRATFORD-ON-AVON

J. M. Martin

J. M. Martin lectures at the Middlesex Polytechnic. He is interested in the economic, social and demographic history of Warwickshire between the Restoration and the nineteenth century.

Introduction

In the first article (in LPS 19) we treated the households of the Stratford community as an homogeneous whole, but this almost certainly glosses over the reality. Neil Tranter at Cardington and, more recently, Peter Laslett, have detected noticeable variations in household structure between different social groups.¹ In this article we shall give some attention to this question.

Households in wealthy and poor wards

The Stratford listing notes only the occupations of the most prominent townsmen, wholesale tradesmen and representatives of the principal crafts. However, the hearth tax returns serve as an useful additional source, allowing a breakdown of households by ward and level of wealth. And as Beauchamp records the parish of settlement of most families a further distinction can be made between indigenous and 'foreign' householders.²

The question of the difference in levels of wealth between the Stratford wards has already been considered in the first article and we must now correlate this information with variations in the size of the Stratford household. It will be remembered that High Street and Bridge street were the smallest and wealthiest of the wards in 1673; according to the 1765 listing they also possessed the largest mean household size. (Table 1)

Table I Six Stratford wards, 1765 — household size by number of persons

Town ward	persons in household										no hshlds	no prsns	MHS
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+			
High St	1	2	1	7	4	2	6	2	2	3	30	174	5.80
Church & Chapel St	4	19	18	28	21	11	8	6	5	1	121	538	4.44
Sheep St	6	15	14	13	8	6	6	4	4	3	79	347	4.39
Wood St	25	27	23	20	12	12	12	5	5	1	142	541	3.80
Henley St	6	17	25	8	14	7	7	4	2	1	91	372	4.08
Bridge St	4	1	11	7	7	8	5	4	0	1	48	227	4.72

In Wood Street ward, on the other hand, there dwelt in 1673 the humbler type of rent-paying householder. It was the only one of the six wards to see a dramatic rise in house numbers between the years of the hearth tax and of the Beauchamp list. In 1801 the rating list shows that it also contained the largest number of labouring households: fifty of the 121 identifiable households in this ward were headed by male labourers, a third of all those ascribed in 1801 to labouring householders. It is significant that Wood Street had a quite different distribution of household sizes from wealthier wards like High Street and Bridge Street. The distinctive difference lay in the number and proportion of solitaries and of households containing only two persons. More than half of the Borough's solitaries were found in Wood Street, where they represented 18 per cent. of the ward's households. Altogether no less than 37 per cent of Wood Street households consisted of one or two persons only, while they amounted to no more than 10 per cent. in High Street and Bridge Street. It is not surprising, therefore, that Wood Street ward possessed the smallest overall household mean: 3.78 compared with 5.80 for High Street.

These details enable us to establish a relationship between household size and a rising level of wealth. Indeed, the hierarchical pattern in size distribution of the household is evident in the comparatively large size of the domestic household amongst groups of the town's leading citizens compared with the size for the Borough as a whole which, as shown in article 1 was 4.30 persons. Figures for the more prominent families in the Borough are based on the occupational detail recorded by Beauchamp. Using information about the principal Borough trading and manufacturing activities, householders have been divided into three categories. Household size for these three groups ranged from 7.00 persons (leading manufacturers and traders) to 5.46 persons (lesser craft and tradesmen).³

Table II Stratford, 1765 — households of leading citizens

	households	persons	MHS
Leading craftsmen & manufacturers	11	77	7.00
Leading tradesmen	53	293	5.52
Lesser craft & tradesmen	49	268	5.46
Subtotal rows 1-3	113	638	5.64
All households	511	2199	4.30

Indigenous households whose heads possessed a legal settlement within the Borough are also found to be larger than those whose settlement lay outside the Borough but still within the parish of Old Stratford and than those which lay further afield (Table III). The margin of difference between these groups was, however, less pronounced than that between the wealthier Borough families and the community as a whole.⁴ Tranter has suggested that the domestic household of the trading class was larger than that of the cottager at Cardington because it contained more resident offspring. He found that the labouring families had, on average, five children but no more than two were resident within the parental household. Laslett has observed that there is a tendency for the households of men of yeoman status and above to contain more servants than the households of humbler men.

Table III Stratford, 1765 — household size by settlement of head

Settlement	households	persons	MHS
Borough	306	1390	4.54
Outside borough/within parish	52	206	3.96
Outside parish	110	453	4.11
Unknown to Beauchamp	32	105	3.28

Origin of Stratford migrants

Beauchamp's record of the origins of Stratford householders, as defined by legal settlement, throws interesting light on the immigrant part of the Borough community. Additional information is supplied by the parish register and other documents. Of the 511 households set out in Beauchamp's list there are 110 where the head is said to have a specific settlement outside both Borough and Parish. To this figure we should probably be justified in adding a further thirty-two where Beauchamp has written 'querry' in the settlement column: most of the latter appear to be also men possessed of a settlement outside the Parish. 'Foreign' households thus account for something in the region of 21-27 per cent of the total. Norwich, the second city in the Kingdom, could show no higher proportion of foreigners in the years around 1700, a time in its history of very rapid growth; in 1782 the figure here was still reckoned to be 26 per cent.⁵

Indeed, the figures for Stratford must be regarded as the absolute minimum number of immigrants, since they do not include the numerous families who had arrived with a 'parish pass' and had then later gained legal settlement in the town, and are so recognised by Beauchamp. Family reconstitution enables us to trace a number of such families. John Hickman was the town crier; he appeared in the parish at the time of the great fever epidemic of 1727-8; his settlement was established in the Borough by 1765. George Garwood and William Eaves had similar experiences, obtaining settlement certificates in 1747 and 1748 respectively. John Curtis, on the other hand, coming into observation in 1726, at the time of his marriage to Ann Biddle, baptised five children in the parish

between 1728 and 1748, but in 1765 still retained his settlement in the town of Tetbury. Finally, one ought to take into account those who came in with exemption gained by virtue of the purchase of property in the town.

The catchment area from which Stratford and Norwich drew their immigrants may well have been different in scale. In Stratford roughly one third of the immigrants came from parishes within a four miles radius and a further third from between a five and nine miles radius; only 20 per cent. of 115 immigrants had travelled as much as 20-100 miles and only three possessed a settlement at over 100 miles distance.⁶ (Table IV). Against Miss Corfield's evidence that some of Norwich's immigrants had a legal settlement at over 100 miles distance, we should set the fact that even in the case of Birmingham 90 per cent. of immigrants originated from within a radius of twenty miles, which does not, of course, exclude the possibility that their place of birth was, in some instances, very much further afield.⁷ Whatever may have been the pattern of immigration into large industrial centres, a high level of mobility over short distances was not unusual by the mid-seventeenth century. Thus, of 258 couples marrying in Old Stratford and 80 in the neighbouring parish of Alcester during the Commonwealth years 1654-58, in 165 and fortyone instances respectively, the couples were described as 'foreigners' in the two marriage registers.⁸

Several of the features touched on here are illuminated by an analysis of 522 surviving Stratford settlement certificates, most of which originated from the years 1700-70.⁹ (Table V). The number of certificates is almost the same for each of the decades up to 1770. The pattern of migration is not unlike that suggested by the Beauchamp record. Some 245 (46 per cent.) were drawn from a five mile radius. Of those traceable from outside the parish, 28 per cent. were drawn from within five miles and a further 31 per cent. from five to ten miles. As in Beauchamp's listing, therefore, nearly two-thirds refer to men whose settlement lay in one of the villages or small towns lying at no more than ten miles distance. Only eightythree (21 per cent.) described a settlement at more than twenty miles journey from Stratford.

Table IV Stratford, 1765 — distance travelled by 115 named immigrant families with settlements outside parish

Settlement from borough miles	immigrant families		mean distance travelled miles	mean distance travelled by stated % of families miles	
	no.	%		%	miles
0-4	39	33.9	2.2	25	1.8
5-9	35	30.4	6.8	50	3.4
10-19	15	13.1	13.0	75	4.6
20-100	23	20.0	37.3	90	7.3
100+	3	2.6	—	100	11.8

Table V Stratford, 1700-1820 — origin of immigrants*

Period	within parish		beyond parish				
	0-5m	0-5m	5-10m	10-20m	20-30m	30-50m	50+m
1701-10	16	13	13	9	4	3	4
1711-20	14	15	16	16	8	4	2
1721-30	12	9	12	6	6	1	5
1731-40	23	9	14	7	9	4	5
1741-50	15	13	21	10	4	4	1
1751-60	19	23	17	10	4	0	1
1761-70	29	8	20	9	2	4	2
1771-80	1	5	4	1	0	1	1
1781-1820	9	12	3	5	2	2	0
Certificates	138	107	120	74	39	23	21

* Based on 522 settlement certificates

Given that most immigrants into Stratford had travelled over only a short distance, it is of interest to trace their places of origin. The settlement pattern shows that the 110 householders in the Beauchamp listing not claiming Stratford as a place of settlement came almost entirely from the neighbouring villages of the Avon valley and from the locality immediately to the south of the town. Few appear to have originated from beyond a line drawn seven miles upstream to the north or east of the county town, Warwick.

It has been shown elsewhere that the populations of the large industrial towns of Birmingham and Coventry, on the one hand, and of certain secondary industrial centres like Nuneaton and Bedworth on the other, all began to grow well before 1765.¹⁰ However, all these communities lay in the north of the county. It is possible that the level of money wages, (a topic still needing detailed investigation), reflected in a comparatively high standard of consumption, would make these towns a more attractive goal to migrants than Stratford.¹¹

An examination of 522 Borough settlement certificates has tended to confirm the pattern outlined above. Only migrants originating from within the 5-10 mile band show any bias towards particular communities: of the 120 in this category, fortyseven (39 per cent.) originated from one of the three nearby towns of Warwick, Alcester and Henley. In the 10-20 mile category, which included Coventry, no more than four certificate holders were attributed to any one place, apart from those from the small Cotswold town of Chipping Campden which accounted for eight of the seventyfour. This distribution pattern was repeated in all other mileage bands. Birmingham, for instance, accounted for only nine of 139 migrants in the 20-30 mile category, while of the twentyone originating from above fifty miles all recorded different settlements; five individuals claimed a settlement in London.

It is worth examining the relationship between household size and distance travelled by Stratford immigrants. There are differences in household size, but it is difficult to discern any meaningful connection with distance travelled, (Table VI). At least twentytwo of the 110 immigrants were skilled crafts— or tradesmen: there appears to have existed no particular bias in the settlement pattern of this group, so that differences arising from social or occupational distinctions may have blurred any correlation with distance journeyed. The household size of those coming in from above twenty miles appears to have been comparatively small: a noteworthy feature is the number of households consisting of one or two persons. Why this should be is not clear. In eleven instances a specific occupation or calling is recorded, which makes it unlikely that the household of this type of immigrant was small because exceptionally poor.

The migrant in Stratford

Length of residence of immigrant families within the Borough probably further blurred relationship between household size and location of settlement. A comparison of householders' names and parish register entries shows that of the ninety-two 'foreign' households for which the evidence is not in doubt, forty-seven (51 per cent.) had resided in the town for at least fifteen years, and fifty-eight (63 per cent.) for at least ten years (Table VII).

Table VI Stratford, 1765 — household size and distance travelled by immigrants*

Settlement from borough miles	households no	persons no	mean household size
0-4	39	170	4.35
5-10	33	132	4.00
10-19	14	68	4.85
20+	24	83	3.45
All households	110	453	4.11

* Immigrants from outside the parish only

Table VII Stratford, 1765 — length of residence of ninety-two immigrant families

Length of residence before 1765 Years	families	
	no	%
15+	47	51.1
10-14	11	12.0
5-9	15	16.3
1-4	7	7.6
under 1 year	12	13.0

Some immigrant families had been in the town since the great smallpox and fever epidemics of the late 1720s had carried off over 800 parishioners within six years. This crisis period had taken heavy toll of heads of households. During the years 1715-24 adult male burials had amounted to 192 of a total of 696 burials (27.5 per cent.); between 1725-29 the figure rose to 217 of 705 (30.8 per cent.). An examination of the mortality distribution amongst couples who married in the years 1700-24 shows that the older men who had wed in the decades before 1720 were the hardest hit by the crisis (Table VIII).¹² About one fifth of males marrying in those years perished between 1725-9. Immigration and re-marriage quickly replaced the dead and filled the empty houses. Marriage ceremonies in the town were roughly twice as numerous in 1730-4 as in any previous five-year period.

This reflected a good deal of re-marriage, particularly since on the female side mortality was highest amongst younger married women, so that a significant proportion of marriageable survivors must have consisted of young widowers. Some of the increase in nuptiality can probably also be explained by a rise in the number of foreign males marrying in Old Stratford from the early 1720s, judging from the descriptions in the marriage register (almost certainly a gross under-estimate). There is no guarantee that this group of men settled to bring up a family in Stratford. That many did not do so is the most plausible explanation of the puzzling behaviour of the baptism series. Despite the increase in marriage ceremonies five-yearly aggregates of baptisms remained roughly constant over the period 1725-59 (Table IX). Another factor helping to explain this pattern was a sharp fall in recorded baptisms during actual crisis years, notably 1728-30, 1737-8, 1742, 1744, 1749, 1754 and 1756-8. It is significant however, that the final size of the 'closed' family suggested by reconstitution appears unaffected by these numerous crises.

Table VIII Stratford, 1700-24 — Crisis mortality

Marriage cohort	burial period	total couples no	couples in observation no	males dying		females dying	
				no	%	no	%
1700-09	1700-09	204	106	8	7.5	13	12.2
	1710-19			11	10.3	16	15.0
	1720-24			12	11.3	10	9.4
	1725-29			24	22.6	12	11.3
1710-19	1710-19	198	83	1	1.2	10	12.0
	1720-24			3	3.6	6	7.2
	1725-29			18	21.6	16	19.2
1720-24	1725-29	103	42	6	14.2	10	23.8

The percentage dying of each cohort does not reach 100 per cent because a certain proportion can be identified as surviving to the 1730s.

Table IX Stratford, 1700-1809 — five-yearly baptism/marriage aggregates

Period	marriages	baptisms	ratio baps/ marriages	widower marriages	ratio baps/ 1st marriages
1700-04	120	393	3.61		
1705-09	84	387	3.84		
1710-14	113	351	3.99		
1715-19	85	406	3.89		
1720-24	103	385	2.74		
1725-29	161	347	2.16		
1730-34	188	377	2.06		
1735-39	171	379	2.34		
1740-44	144	364	2.73		
1745-49	125	374	2.57		
1750-54	148	363	2.65		
1755-59	127	334	3.01		
1760-64	130	393	3.17		
1765-69	132	382	3.57		
1770-74	129	450	3.42		
1775-79	144	482	3.25		
1780-84	135	454	3.59	19	4.43
1785-89	130	453	3.75	31	4.69
1790-94	142	500	3.49	23	4.21
1795-99	152	523	3.48	27	4.34
1800-04	139	505	4.16	31	5.27
1805-09	102	508		20	

Thus 483 offspring resulted from 131 first marriages contracted during the years 1700-19 (mean of 3.67 children), while the figures for the decades 1720-9 and 1730-9 were 199 from fifty-three marriages (3.75), and 206 from fifty-five marriages (3.74). Over the same time-intervals sixty-one offspring were produced by thirty-seven second marriages (mean of 1.64 children), thirty-six from twenty-one marriages (1.71) and forty-eight from eighteen marriages (2.66).

One further conclusion we may draw from these data is that some proportion of immigrant families, perhaps a substantial one, made its first appearance either at marriage or in the early stages of family formation. Information on the age-structure of the Borough population in 1765 also suggests that many immigrant householders had been long established within the town.

We may begin by recalling that 10 per cent of households consisted of one and 43 per cent of between one and three persons; 105 of the 511 households (20.5 per cent) were headed by women, of whom at least seventy-five are known to have been widowed. In 1801 the figure was still seventy-two of 510 households. It is, therefore, unlikely that married couples of child-bearing age formed more than a fraction of the whole community of householders, though the figures quoted above are not much different from those worked out by Laslett for his sample of one hundred pre-industrial communities.

Age structure in 1765

Pursuing the question of age-structure, it was decided to look more closely at the thirty-one householders of the wealthy High Street ward and the 142 householders of the poorer Wood Street ward. The distribution of the

final child baptisms within the families of household heads recorded in the 1765 listing has a bearing on the issue. Seventeen of twenty-six High Street families (65 per cent) and fifty-four of ninety-one Wood Street ones (59 per cent) had baptised their last child a minimum of five years before the date of the listing.

Only three (11 per cent) and twenty-six (28 per cent) did so in the years after the listing was made. Judging from these figures the child-bearing part of the householders in the two wards in Beauchamp's time was not large (Table X).

Length of residence has some bearing on the age-structure of the householding community (Table XI). Here the parish register can once again be of assistance in determining the pattern by taking note of the earliest reference to householding families. We found a reasonably unambiguous connection between the register entries and twenty-six of the thirty High Street householders, but with only ninety-four of the 142 which comprised Wood Street. In the latter ward, therefore, the picture may be distorted since a third of the householding families could not be accounted for with confidence. As far as it goes, however, the evidence is in accord with our previous findings. Only a tiny proportion of householders had married, or begun to register the baptism or burial of offspring within five years of Beauchamp's survey. From the information available we must conclude that a substantial number of householders, even in Wood Street, had married and were resident within the parish at least twenty years before Beauchamp set to work on his recording task. Consequently only a modest proportion of households may have contained spouses still within the child-bearing age range in 1765.

Table X Stratford — final child baptisms in families of household heads listed in 1765

Ward/type	total hshds no	first appearance in register												
		hshds in post 1765				pre-1765								
		sample no	no	%	1-4 yrs no	%	5-9 yrs no	%	10-14 yrs no	%	15-19 yrs no	%	20+ yrs no	%
Wood St poor	142	91	26	28.6	11	12.1	10	11.0	7	7.7	11	12.0	26	28.6
High St Wealth	30	26	3	11.5	6	23.2	3	11.5	5	19.2	5	19.2	4	15.4

Table XI Stratford — first appearance of family of household head in register pre 1765

Ward	total hshds no	first appearance in register							20+ yrs no	mean years	median years
		hshds in		pre-1765							
		sample no	no	0-4 yrs no	5-9 yrs no	10-14 yrs no	15-19 yrs no				
Wood St	142	94	15	9	14	10	46	20.6	19.5		
High St	30	26	2	3	7	5	9	18.5	15.3		

Conclusion

From our examination of the Beauchamp listing and ancillary sources we have discovered an hierarchical pattern in household size. The principal trading and craft families of Stratford (113 households) were found to be associated with a large household of 5.64 persons. At the other end of the scale households of immigrant families consisted of 3.92 persons. A similar hierarchical pattern was detected when the size of the household was set against the level of wealth found in the six town wards in 1673.

It is unlikely that future research will be able to show that the range of mean household size from 5.64 to 3.92 was due mainly to differences in age at marriage, to the mean number of offspring produced by the 'closed' family or to child mortality. As others have hinted, it will also be necessary to take account of patterns of geographical mobility amongst the offspring of different social and occupational groups and of the substantial living-in population amongst different social classes.

The immigrant population, as defined by legal settlement, was substantial even within a small market town like Stratford, where the economy was, at the time of the listing, in a state of recession. Householders with a settlement outside both Borough and Parish were not less than 21-27 per cent of all householders. The geographical distribution of immigrant settlement was, however, a not unfamiliar one: a third was drawn from neighbouring parishes within a four miles radius of the town and only one fifth came from more than twenty miles distance. Furthermore, the great majority of immigrant householders came from a line south and west of Warwick, seven miles up stream.

It proved not easy to trace any correlation between household size and distance travelled from the place of origin. The blurring of such a relationship, if, indeed, one had existed, might well be attributable to the length of residence of immigrant household heads. No less than forty-seven (51 per cent) of a sample of ninety-two whom it was possible to trace in the parish register, had been married and were resident in the parish for at least fifteen years. One might tentatively draw the conclusion that a large segment of immigrant families had entered the ranks of Borough householders either at marriage or in the early stages of family formation.

NOTES

1. P. Laslett, 'Mean household size in England since the sixteenth century', P. Laslett and R. Wall (eds), **Household and Family in past time**, 1972, p. 154.
N. L. Tranter, 'Population and social structure in a Bedfordshire parish: the Cardington Listing, 1782', **Population Studies**, XXI, 1967, pp. 261-78.
2. It is possible that the notes recording settlement origin were added later by Wheeler in preparation for his **History**.
3. The categorization of occupations was inevitably arbitrary. The first two groups in Table II were made up of manufacturers, the more substantial craftsmen and of wholesale traders. Examination of the families furnishing the aldermanic class assisted in the task of categorization. Of the principal tradesmen there were seven callings, namely grocers, ironmongers, maltsters, mercers, butchers, carriers, and victuallers, accounting for thirty-four of the fifty-three. Amongst the lesser trades and crafts there were six: tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, blacksmiths, bakers and barbers, which comprised thirty of the forty-nine.
4. This result is not surprising since it is likely that a number of immigrant families do not appear as such in the 1765 listing. Eleven households are not classified in Table III because the settlement origin was unclear.
5. P. Corfield, 'A provincial capital in the late seventeenth century: the case of Norwich', P. Clark and P. Slack (eds), **Crisis and order in English towns, 1500-1700**, 1972, p. 267.
6. It seems likely that, as in the case of Birmingham, the 'settlement' may in some instances have represented place of birth. Three immigrants are excluded from the calculation of mean distance travelled set out in Table IV, owing to inadequate information.
7. D. E. C. Eversley, 'Industry and trade, 1500-1800', in W. Stephens (ed.), **Victoria County History, Warwickshire**, Vol. VII, 1964, p. 90.
8. **Alcester Parish Register**, Vol. II, 1654-8, Warwick County Records Office, D.R. 560/2; **Old Stratford Parish Register**, The Birthplace Records Office, Stratford, D.R. 243/19.
9. I am grateful to Philip Styles who analysed the surviving certificates, for permission to use his figures. The 74 derived from 20-30 miles (Table V), include one undated certificate.
10. J. M. Martin, 'The rise in population in eighteenth century Warwickshire', **Dugdale Society Occasional Paper**, No. 23, 1976, pp. 14-16.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-8. M. B. Rowlands, 'Industrialisation in the West Midlands, 1560-1760', Paper delivered to conference on 'The teaching of regional and local history in universities', 19 December 1976, p. 9.
12. Table VIII, column 4 refers to couples 'in observation'. This means couples of whom either the date of burial or their survival up to 1730 is known through later reference, e.g., 'Sarah, daughter of Frances, widow Ainge, buried 15-2-1730'. This means of course, that the percentage of people dying cannot add up to 100 because some individuals are known to have died after 1729.

Acknowledgments:

I am greatly indebted to the late Philip Styles for comment on an earlier version of this piece, and to Robert Bearman, senior archivist, the Birthplace Library, Stratford-on-Avon, for valuable additional information. Finally, my thanks to Richard Wall and Karla Oosterveen of the Cambridge Group for their encouragement and assistance with successive drafts.

QUALIFIED GRADUATE LIBRARIAN

available for routine bibliographical work, document research and indexing.
Northumberland, Durham and Tyneside area.

Write Box 12, Local Population Studies, Tawney House, Matlock,
Derbyshire, DE4 3BT