

PARISH LISTINGS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE: PENNINGHAME AND WHITHORN (WIGTOWNSHIRE) IN PERSPECTIVE.

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Until the recent publication of **Scottish Population History** (edited by Michael Flinn)¹ the history of demographic and social structures north of the Border had been little explored. Those who had made tentative enquiries into that field were more concerned to estimate the total population of Scotland and its geographical distribution at various dates than to examine the structure of that population.² Though some attempts had been made to derive measures of the socio-economic distribution of the population from Poll and Hearth tax returns, these sources have not been subjected to detailed demographic or social structural analysis.³ Even the valuable pioneering work of Flinn *et al* has passed briefly over nominal listings of inhabitants and 'censuses' prior to the nineteenth century, discussing only the circumstances of their compilation and offering some suggestions on their qualitative and quantitative coverage.⁴ If the study of Scottish social history is to progress, some initial work on Scottish listings is required both to assess their uses and limitations and to allow some preliminary comparisons with the work already done for England by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure. Indeed, at a time when considerable interest has been aroused by efforts to interpret the apparently unique socio-demographic experience of England,⁵ it seems incongruous that no attempt has been made to look at areas which were geographically contiguous but which were supposedly very different in the past.

The parish lists of Wigtownshire and Minnigaff were published nearly sixty years ago by the Scottish Record Society,⁶ and comprise listings of 'all the inhabitants above the age of twelve years' in seventeen parishes of south-west Scotland in 1684. Compiled by the minister of each parish for military reasons associated with the Covenanting movement, the lists were, it seems, intended to give an idea of the fighting strength of the area and the number of politically reliable and unreliable persons. They vary widely in the amount of information provided.

All inhabitants above the age of twelve are named, their names being grouped under the landholding unit on which they lived. None of the listings gives more than an occasional indication of occupation or social status, though Glasserton appears to have a list of cottars or sub-tenants

associated with each land unit. Unfortunately, for the parishes of Glasserton, Kirkinner, Kirkmaiden, Leswalt, Mochrum, Sorbie, Stoneykirk, Stranraer and Wigtown, no relationships are given which would enable us to link the named persons. Some relationships are given for Glenluce, Inch, Kirkcowan, Kirkcolm and Minnigaff, but these are insufficient for any detailed analysis. For the parish of Portpatrick the list gives the name of the male family head, but often no detail for the rest of the family: for example, at Pigmeoch Litle in Portpatrick 'Quantin Kilpatrick and his wife and servants' or, at Cragoch 'Pat Malvolian and his wife and children'. Only for the parishes of Penninghame and Whithorn are marital status and relationship to the family head explicitly stated for nearly every person, and it is upon these two communities that the following discussion is based.

There are however a number of general problems associated with the lists. Firstly, it is not clear whether they were drawn up from memory, or from a special survey of the parish, or whether indeed the incumbent has simply updated an existing ecclesiastical examination roll of those liable for catechism. Those noted as 'withdrawers from worship' or 'fugitives' may have been added from memory as persons who had dissociated themselves from the Church of Scotland. Secondly, it is uncertain whether the minister listed only those people who were actually present, or whether he included those who should have been resident.⁷

The amount of information which can be derived even from those listings which provide relationships on a consistent basis is strictly limited. While only those above the age of twelve years were included, ages were not specified for any person. No distinction was made between dwelling houses or domestic groups and we cannot analyse household size or composition. It might be possible to break down the groups of names within each landholding unit or 'farm-toun' (hamlet), but this might well misrepresent household size and composition. The following examples of the sort of grouping found in the listings illustrate the problem.

Ochiltree

Bernhard Stewart h.
 Marion McKie w.
 Joh. Stewart s.
 Rob. Stewart h.
 Marg. McComb w.
 Joh. McMulleroch h.
 Marion Stewart w.

Markland

Joh. McRutter h.
 Jonet McTier w.
 Joh. McRutter s.
 Marg. McRutter

Dunnance

Patrick Fergusone h.
 Jane Houstone w.
 Hugh Duncce sv.
 Donaldsone sv.
 Alexr. Black h.
 Janet Clugstone w.
 Agnes Black d.
 Janet Maxuell sv.
 Samuel Black h.
 Jane Quid w.
 Robert Burnie h.
 Margaret Minoch w.
 Alexr. and William Burnies s.
 Isobell Burnie d.
 John McClellane h.
 Jane Martine w.

It is clear for the Markland holding that we are dealing with a household, but in the other two cases the internal composition of the unit can only be speculated upon. This, plus the narrow range of familial designations provided as a key to the lists — husband, wife, widow or widower, son, daughter, servant — necessarily limits the number of comparisons which can be made with those English listings which present inhabitants on a



Figure 1. Sketch map of position of communities analysed.

Key:	1 Penninghame	2 Whithorn	3 Stoke on Trent
	4 Lichfield	5 Chilvers Coton	6 Ardleigh
	7 Wembworthy		

nominative basis, and which give ages, marital status and relationship to the household head. Even in England such listings are extremely rare before the nineteenth century, and only a handful can be used for comparative purposes. Some idea of the demographic and social structural characteristics of the two Scottish parishes can however be gained and some simple analyses conducted to determine how similar those characteristics were to the pattern obtaining in certain contemporary English communities. All the settlements to be considered are indicated on the map (Figure 1). The listings of inhabitants for Chilvers Coton, Lichfield

and Stoke on Trent were chosen for comparison as the only lists contemporaneous with those for Penninghame and Whithorn which offer information on age and relationship for most persons. Ardleigh and Wembworthy were included as late eighteenth century examples of almost wholly agricultural communities which might be thought to bear a closer resemblance economically to the Scottish parishes. In fact the English parishes were probably not very similar to Penninghame and Whithorn: Chilvers Coton and Stoke on Trent had significant elements of mining and cottage industry, Lichfield was a city of some 3,000 people, and Wembworthy and Ardleigh were both highly commercialised agricultural communities quite different to the primitive pastoral farming which seems to have obtained in pre eighteenth century Wigtownshire. Finally it should be realised that the English listings were compiled for a variety of reasons which bore little similarity to the politico-military purposes which occasioned the Scottish ones. The lists for Wembworthy and Chilvers Coton were probably compiled for estate management purposes, Ardleigh in connection with the fear of a French invasion, Lichfield and Stoke on Trent under the 1694 Marriage Duty Act.⁸

Despite these differences, a comparison of the seven parishes can not only show the variations between English parishes with widely differing economic structures, but also give some idea of the relative similarity of the demographic and social structural features in the Scottish and English parishes. The following tables provide a summary indication of this.

Table 1. Total population aged thirteen and above and sex ratios in two Scottish and five English parishes.

Parish	Date	Total population aged thirteen and above	Sex ratio
Penninghame, Wigtownshire	1684	589	93.1
Whithorn, Wigtownshire	1684	797	82.1
Chilvers Coton, Warwickshire	1684	513	86.1
Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire	1701	1023	85.4
Lichfield, Staffordshire	1695	1970	75.6
Wembworthy, Devonshire	1779	154	111.0
Ardleigh, Essex	1796	734	106.2

Table 1 shows the total population aged thirteen and above in the seven parishes, and the sex ratio in that population: i.e. the number of males per 100 females. The mean sex ratio for all seventeen parishes in Wigtownshire included in the printed lists is 90.7, the median 89.6 and the standard deviation 14.9. This is not markedly out of line with our English examples. There is however no way of knowing without more detailed study of this area whether the numerical preponderance of females was due to a greater male propensity to migrate, of the sex ratio at birth or of differential mortality. Generally more males than females are born, but this is counterbalanced by heavier male infant mortality, and in a situation where population is stagnating or falling the age structure of the population may become older and thus have contained more females. This may well have been the case in late seventeenth century Scotland. At the same time, both pastoral agricultural

regions and towns in England tended to have a surplus of females⁹ and this was probably also true of Penninghame with its cattle and sheep based economy, and of Whithorn which, as a royal burgh, performed many of the functions of a small market town in addition to farming in the landward part of the parish. These possibilities are considered more fully below as part of the more detailed discussion of population structures in the selected parishes.

This discussion is based on the sort of issues raised by John Hajnal in his paper on 'European Marriage Patterns in Perspective'¹⁰ as a means of identifying the distinctive socio-demographic characteristics of north-western Europe. Hajnal showed that since the sixteenth century this part of the world had displayed a demographic pattern marked by late age at marriage and a high proportion of women who never married. This he felt had profound implications on social organisation, fertility and the standard of living which made northwestern Europe unique. No direct comparison with Hajnal's work is possible here since, firstly, the Scottish listings do not permit any estimate of the proportion of women never married by the end of the childbearing period, and secondly, since we do not know the age at marriage of those in the listings. We can nevertheless derive some (admittedly crude) measures which will allow some simple comparisons between our Scottish and English parishes while remaining within the broad framework of Hajnal's important discussion. One such measure is of the proportion of the population aged thirteen and above who were married at the time the lists were compiled.

Table 2. Proportions married and widowed of total population aged thirteen and above in two Scottish and five English parishes.

Parish	Married		Widows		Widowers		All widowed	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Penninghame	378	64.2	44	7.5	14	2.4	58	9.9
Whithorn	444	55.7	49	6.2	16	2.0	65	8.2
Chilvers Coton	270	52.5	34	6.6	11	2.1	45	8.8
Stoke on Trent	505	49.4	82	8.0	36	3.5	118	11.5
Lichfield	884	44.9	145	7.4	22	1.1	167	8.5
Wembworthy	66	42.9	6	3.9	3	1.9	9	5.8
Ardleigh	346	47.1	26	3.5	22	3.0	48	6.5

Table 2 shows that the proportion married at Penninghame and Whithorn was appreciably higher than in any of the seventeenth and eighteenth century English parishes. This does not necessarily imply that the socio-demographic structure of these communities was fundamentally different. It must be recognised that a high proportion married may imply a low age at marriage or a low proportion never marrying. In certain demographic situations both may be possible. As noted above, the stagnation or even decline of population in the late seventeenth century may have tended to produce a situation where there were proportionally more older people, more married and widowed persons and thus fewer servants and children.

It is also possible that the lists may be biased against unmarried people, and especially spinsters, since they were not seen as constituting a

political threat. Indeed, the Scottish lists are distinguished by the almost total lack of persons specified as unmarried who were not either servants or children. There is for example no equivalent of 'spinster' and in only one case, that of John and Gilbert Herron 'single persons and brother tenants' in Grainge on Cree, Penninghame are any inhabitants of (assumed) adult status described as unmarried. Further suggestion of this possible shortcoming in the listings — or perhaps simply in the key to relationships provided — is given by the authors of Scottish Population History who find that a very high proportion of women dying over age fifty were unmarried: a mean of 20.7% in eleven eighteenth century parishes. It is difficult to conceive of changes which would have produced a shift from a situation where it appears that virtually all women married to one where one fifth did not — a circumstance still more improbable in view of the prevailing female surplus suggested by the sex ratios above and by other eighteenth century evidence.¹¹ Of course without more detailed study these remarks must remain speculative rather than conclusive.

Table 3. Proportion of servants in total population aged thirteen and above and sex ratios in two Scottish and five English parishes.

Parish	Male servants		Female servants		All servants		Sex ratio
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Penninghame	26	4.4	32	5.4	58	9.8	81.3
Whithorn	47	5.9	59	7.4	106	13.4	79.7
Chilvers Coton	31	6.0	40	7.8	71	13.8	77.5
Stoke on Trent	29	2.8	40	3.9	69	6.7	72.5
Lichfield	97	4.9	148	7.5	245	12.4	65.5
Wembworthy	26	16.9	13	8.4	39	25.3	200.0
Ardleigh	65	8.8	41	5.6	106	14.4	106.2

Table 4. Summary ratios of children and servants per married or widowed person, and the ratio of servants to children in two Scottish and five English parishes.

Parish	Ratio of children per married and widowed	Ratio of servants per married and widowed	Ratio of servants per child
Penninghame	0.19	0.13	0.68
Whithorn	0.28	0.21	0.75
Chilvers Coton	0.35	0.23	0.65
Stoke on Trent	0.39	0.11	0.29
Lichfield	0.43	0.23	0.55
Wembworthy	0.41	0.52	1.26
Ardleigh	0.48	0.27	0.55

Turning to servants and children, table 3 shows that the proportions of the former in our Scottish parishes fall within the range shown by the English examples, and are indeed within a few percentage points of all but Wembworthy. In England most servants were in the age range fourteen to twenty five,¹² another important feature of its society but one with which we cannot compare our Scottish examples due to lack of information on ages. The distribution of servants by 'household' cannot

be determined accurately, but table 4 shows the ratio of servants per married or widowed person, and also the ratio of servants per child, again in the population aged thirteen and above. The latter suggests that the Scottish parishes had more servants per child than all the English parishes except Wembworthy, though the differences were not very great, while the former implies rather fewer servants per family at Penninghame and at Stoke on Trent. This last point may have been due less to any cultural differences than to identifiable economic factors. If, as seems to have been the case, variations in occupational structures and wealth distribution can have marked influences on the number of servants in individual households, then the same may be true of variations at the regional and village level. Indeed, Richard Wall of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure has discovered significant differences in household composition in different areas of England in the period around 1700, and most notably in the number of servants and, to a lesser extent, children per household. In Wiltshire for example 14% of households had servants, while in London that figure rose to 58%; the former had a mean of 0.3 servants per household, the latter 1.3.¹³

The rather lower proportion of sons and daughters aged thirteen and above residing with their parents in our Scottish parishes can perhaps be explained in much the same way.

Table 5. Proportions of children in total population aged thirteen and above and sex ratios in two Scottish and five English parishes.

Parish	Sons		Daughters		All children		Sex ratio
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Penninghame	50	8.5	35	6.0	85	14.5	142.9
Whithorn	57	7.2	85	10.7	142	17.9	67.1
Chilvers Coton	54	10.5	55	10.7	109	21.2	98.2
Stoke on Trent	110	10.8	131	12.8	241	23.6	84.0
Lichfield	168	8.5	280	14.2	448	22.7	60.0
Wembworthy	16	10.4	15	9.7	31	20.1	106.7
Ardleigh	98	13.3	93	12.7	191	26.0	105.4

If one accepts that the number of coresiding children tends to be low for the poor and for farmers of low and middling socio-economic status, rather higher for the rich and the better off farmers, and highest for tradesmen and craftsmen, then it is quite possible that parishes which were poorer overall, and which had a higher degree of economic polarisation would have a lower number of coresident children as a matter of course.¹⁴ Certainly the hearth tax returns for this area show that nearly all those taxable paid on only one hearth.¹⁵

Finally we can consider the sex ratios of children (Table 5) and servants (Table 3) in our Scottish and English parishes. The sex ratio for servants shows a disproportionately large number of females in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century examples, and this may reflect the greater demand for female servants in both pastoral agricultural regions and in towns. In the more highly commercialised agriculture of the late eighteenth century there may have been a greater need for male servants.

The evidence is not unequivocal. Penninghame shows a large number of coresident sons relative to daughters, and these may have been used in place of male servants by farmers in this parish.¹⁶

While we have been able to draw some tentative conclusions about the socio-demographic structures of these Scottish and English parishes in comparative perspective, it is very difficult to extrapolate much from the listings about the social conditions of life obtaining in those communities, and especially the Scottish ones.¹⁷ The inability to determine the size and composition of the household has, for example, repercussions on how we shall interpret the groups of names associated with each landholding unit. It is generally thought that married 'servants' would live separately from their employers while single men and women would live in the same house, eating and sleeping with the family.¹⁸ Problems arise however when we try to estimate the size and composition of the units of production and consumption in the Scottish communities. Was the landholding unit the basis of a communal enterprise? Did some of the inhabitants other than those designated servant work for the principal tenant in the same way as married wage labourers in England or did they farm separate plots and give labour services to the tenant from whom they rented land? In short, did the conjugal family units which can be detected in the listings exist for social, economic and cultural purposes as separate and distinct entities, or were all merged in a communal effort for subsistence? The family is a social rather than a purely biological unit, and it is with these real forms of social interaction that we should be concerned. Aggregate figures tell us little about these vital aspects.

There are clearly interpretative difficulties in all that has been said, created by the admittedly poor quality of the Scottish lists, and the severely limited choice of English lists for comparison. Nor can we safely generalise from two Scottish examples and five English ones to compare the two nations. Yet in terms of statistically observable features, the main point to emerge from this study is that the parishes considered here are not greatly dissimilar. Such differences as did exist may have been occasioned by economic variations, and by short term demographic fluctuations which nevertheless occurred within a framework of shared socio-demographic characteristics. Furthermore, it may be posited that the socio-demographic structures which obtained in England (and much of northwestern Europe) varied considerably both over time and even between contiguous areas, and that those structures varied only within a range of experience which made them unique. If this is so, it must be recognised that on the basis of the information provided here it is at least possible that Scotland shared in that experience.

NOTES

1. Michael Flinn (ed.), **Scottish Population History**, Cambridge, 1977.
2. For example J. G. Kyd 'Scotland's Population', **Scottish Historical Review**, 28, number 106, October 1949; **Scottish Population Statistics**, Edinburgh, 1975 edition.
3. For example K. Walton 'The Distribution of Population in Aberdeenshire 1696', **Scottish Geographical Magazine**, 66, 1, June 1950 pp. 17-26. D. Adamson 'The Hearth Tax' **Transactions of the Dumfries and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society**, XLVII, XLVIII, XLVIV, 1970, 1971, 1972, pp. 147-77, 133-45, 56-83. D.

- Semple (ed.) **The Poll Tax Rolls of the Parishes in Renfrewshire for the Year 1695**, Paisley, 1864 (published privately: copies available at the British Museum, Scottish Record Office and Paisley Burgh Library.) A notable exception to this pattern can be found in N. Tranter 'The Reverend Andrew Urquhart and the Social Structure of Portpatrick in 1832' **Scottish Studies**, 18, 1974, pp. 39-62.
4. Flinn, pp. 65-9 and pp. 80-6.
 5. P. Laslett and R. Wall, (eds.), **Household and Family in Past Time**, Cambridge, 1972. This experience was not of course confined to England but characterised most of northwestern Europe.
 6. W. Scott, (ed.), 'The Parish Lists of Wigtownshire and Minnigaff' **Scottish Record Society**, vol. 50, Edinburgh, 1916.
 7. *Ibid.* pp. 2-5 provides a short introduction to the lists, but is probably incorrect on some points. I am grateful to Mr. A. E. Truckell of the Dumfries Burgh Museum for this information and for his valuable comments on this subject. A fuller discussion of listings in general and the problems arising from their means of compilation and overall completeness can be found in Peter Laslett's 'The Study of Social Structure from Listings of Inhabitants' in E. A. Wrigley, (ed.), **An Introduction to English Historical Demography**, London 1966.
 8. Xerox copies of all the English listings used here are held by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure. Comments on the economic structures of the English parishes are based on the 'Parish Characteristics' files kept by the Cambridge Group. For the Scottish parishes information furnished by Mr. Truckell was augmented by use of the **Statistical Account of Scotland** published by Sir John Sinclair in twenty-one volumes at Edinburgh between 1791 and 1799. Material on Penninghame can be found in volume 3, pp. 339-43, and on Whithorn in volume 16, pp. 275-98.
 9. I am grateful to Dr. Roger Schofield of the Cambridge Group for this information. Flinn p. 192 suggests the same was true of Scotland.
 10. J. Hajnal, 'European Marriage Patterns in Perspective' in D. V. Glass and D. E. C. Eversley, **Population in History**, London, 1965, pp. 101-43.
 11. Flinn, p. 280; cf. p. 251 which shows that the population of the annexed estates in mid-eighteenth century Scotland had a sex ratio of 91.1.
 12. P. Laslett, **Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations** Cambridge, 1977, p. 34 and p. 44.
 13. Richard Wall, 'Changes in English Household Structure 1650-1971', paper presented to the Joint Meeting of the British Society for Population Studies (Royal Statistical Society) and the Population Geography Studies Group (Institute of British Geographers) at the University of Liverpool 21-23 September 1977, pp. 281-2. I am grateful to Mr. Wall for his permission to quote from this paper and for his generous help in the preparation of this article.
 14. Flinn, p. 194 shows from the Poll Tax schedules for the 1690's that as social status declined so too did the number of resident servants; the relationship is less clear in the case of children.
 15. Scottish Record Office E/69/25/1, 'List of Hearths within the Shire of Galloway' deponed 31 January 1695. The schedules are arranged by units different to those found in the listings and cannot be directly compared.
 16. Even for Penninghame and Whithorn, some relationships are not given, and these cases are treated as unknown. They comprise 1.2% of the total of named persons at Penninghame, and 4.9% at Whithorn. For the English parishes those whose age, sex and relationship is not stated are included in this category, but so too are those categories in the English examples which are not found in the Scottish lists. The figures are: Chilvers Coton 3.5%, Stoke on Trent 8.8%, Lichfield 11.5%, Wembworthy 5.8% and Ardleigh 5.9%. The lack of resident kin, lodgers or spinsters described as such may have been due to the fact that there were none to record in the Scottish parishes. Alternatively, the lack of a sufficiently expanded key to familial relationships may mean that certain important designations were suppressed. It is however interesting to find a descriptive terminology so firmly based on the nuclear family in a society where kinship was allegedly so important.
 17. There appear to be few other documents with which we can check or augment the information provided in the listings. Parish registers in this area rarely commence before the eighteenth century. Poll tax lists do not survive for this region. Kirk Session registers and estate papers do survive and may repay further study.
 18. J. E. Handley, **Scottish Farming in the Eighteenth Century**, London, 1953, pp. 276-7.