

POPULATION TURNOVER IN AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LINCOLNSHIRE PARISH IN COMPARATIVE CONTEXT¹

Ruth Tinley and Dennis Mills

Ruth Tinley is Membership Secretary of the Lincolnshire Family History Society and Dennis Mills is Conference Secretary of the Local Population Studies Society and a member of the editorial board of LPS.

The chief sources for this article are the community listings of 1771 and 1791 which survive for Swinderby, a parish lying between Newark and Lincoln in an area of mixed farming on poor soils based on Lias Clay and old river gravels. It is one of a very small number of Lincolnshire parishes for which there exists a detailed listing at a date before the national censuses began in 1801. Altogether four listings were made in the village, in the years 1771, 1779, 1791, and 1798. For the second and fourth only the totals survive, but those of 1771 and 1791 survive as full community listings.²

As is common with such documents, precise reasons for the making of the Swinderby listings are not clear, but a key figure is the Revd. John Disney, LLB, DD, FSA (1746-1816).³ He belonged to a branch of the Disney family whose main residence was at Norton Disney not far from Swinderby. They were also landowners in the latter parish and there are several Disney memorials in both churches. John Disney was educated at Wakefield and Lincoln Grammar Schools and studied law until his health broke down. In 1764 he went up to Peterhouse, Cambridge, and he was ordained in 1768. He is described as 'a careful and exact writer, but not a man of much intellectual force'.

Disney became vicar of Swinderby in 1770. His entries in the register give more information than usual, including for burials the cause of death. His interest in the population problem is evident from the article he published on the Deanery of Graffoe (which includes Swinderby) in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.⁴ He had abstracted the numbers of baptisms and burials in the registers for three approximate ten-year periods between 1688 and 1780. These data indicate a small surplus in baptisms in the decades 1688-1697 and 1741-1750, but a large surplus in the third sample decade (1771-1780). From Disney's table, which includes the dates of enclosures in each parish, it is obvious that he had enclosure in mind as a possible cause of population change. It is now clear that the area was merely experiencing the general population increase, and that the relationship with enclosures was anything but straightforward.⁵ The high level of population turnover reported below should be seen against a background of considerable out-migration. Disney was succeeded at Swinderby by the Revd. Andrew Chambers, who was vicar from 1782 to 1821 and appears to have been resident for most of that time, despite holding several other Lincolnshire livings concurrently.⁶

Figure 1 The first page of Disney's Swinderby listing of 1771, reproduced by kind permission of the Lincolnshire Archives Office and the Vicar and Churchwardens of Swinderby

An accurate Account of the Inhabitants of the Parish
of SWINDERBY in the County of Lincoln taken the 4th Day of
June 1771. By me

John Disney Vicar

	Children	Seoants	Inmates	Total of each Family
Addinsale, George Addinsale Ann. (Farmer)	Margaret Ann			4.
Andrews Thomas, Andrews Elizabeth, (Labourer)				2.
Astling, Thomas Astling, Barbara (Farmer)	Robert Thomas John Barbara	Robt Dunston Mary Gibson		8
Barnes Joseph, Barnes Alice, (Labourer)	William Ann			4.
Beason Henry, Beason Ann (Labourer)	Thomas			3

John Disney made his first survey of the inhabitants of Swinderby on 4 June 1771 and recorded his findings on neatly ruled loose leaves.⁷ The fact that he gave a precise date is important, since if it can be taken as the literal date of the listing it means that the document is a true record of those present on a particular night. It is even possible that there are no complications concerning absentee husbands, as in the 1791 listing Chambers specifically excludes one such person.

The first of Disney's columns, which is unlabelled, gives the name of the householder with occupation and spouse's name; the second gives the names of their co-resident children; the third servants; the fourth 'inmates'; and lastly the total number in the 'family' (ie household). 'Inmates' includes one lodger (the Revd. Joseph Simpson, curate of the nearby parishes of South and North Scarle), and a number of clearly labelled non-conjugal kin, mostly parents or parents-in-law of the household head. Disney wrote that his account was 'to be kept in the parish chest and a new account to be taken at ye end of every 5 or 10 years'. As good as his word, he took another account in 1779, but only the totals survive.

Chambers also complied with this injunction, using a stitched booklet for the 'Acct of the Inhabitants of Swinderby taken the 21st of March 1791'.⁸ There is evidence that he took less care, despite labelling his first column clearly 'Masters and Mistresses'. The stating of occupations is not as clear, nor is the status of 'inmates'. In 1798 Chambers made another listing, but only a summary survives, along with summaries for the three earlier listings, at the end of his booklet. The analysis can usefully begin with these summaries.

Although Swinderby reached a population peak of 572 in 1861, in the late eighteenth century the population was fairly steady around the 220 mark and only reached 254 in 1801 (Table 1). In a diocesan enquiry of 1788-92⁹ Chambers reported that the parish contained 48 communicant families (and no dissenters), a figure that checks well with the 45 households he listed in 1791. Against this, there is the problem that inmates appear to have been excluded from the summary totals for 1779 and 1798.

In order to draw more detailed comparisons between the two listings, the authors decided, where necessary, to put the categories used onto a common basis, taking guidance on relationships and ages from the parish registers and from internal evidence in the listings themselves. This approach made it possible to eliminate the ambiguous category 'inmates', which had apparently been interpreted differently by Disney and Chambers. 'Inmates' were thus dispersed to the categories known as children (children of inmates and stepchildren of the head), other kin (mostly parents or parents-in-law of heads), servants (eg, an apprentice), and lodgers. As far as possible, a similar interpretation was also placed on the definition of co-resident groups throughout the two listings. Thus, where there was evidence of two households living in one 'houseful' (eg two conjugal couples, or an active farmer-widower with his son's family living in), the two households were separated for analytical purposes.

Table 1 Swinderby: an account of the number of inhabitants taken at different dates

Date	Masters* Mistresses*	Boys	Girls	Servants		Inmates	Totals
				Male	Female		
04.06.1771	95	47	40	14	18	10	224
31.12.1779	98	55	46	10	11	-	220
21.03.1791	81	46	36	10	16	33	222
08.05.1798	99	54	42	17	18	-	230

Notes: * Includes labourers, and means 'householders and their wives'.

Source: LAO Swinderby Parish Deposit, 23/10.

Table 2 Swinderby: household composition

	Heads	Spouses	Children	Other kin	Servants	Lodgers	Totals
1771 Numbers	52	43	88	8	32	1	224
Average number per 100 households	100.0	82.7	169.2	15.4	61.5	1.9	430.8
1791 Numbers	50	41	95	2	28	6	222
Average number per 100 households	100.0	82.0	190.0	4.0	56.0	12.0	444.0

Source: Reworked from LAO Swinderby Parish Deposit, 23/1 and 23/10.

In this process, the second listing, by the less careful Chambers, underwent the greatest amount of change, five further households being distinguished by the authors. This brought the mean household size and the distribution of household sizes for his listing more closely into line with that of Disney. The mean household sizes of 4.31 and 4.44 persons per household are rather lower than the mean of 4.74 calculated for 33 communities in Eastern England in the period 1751-1800, but this is consistent with the evidence for stability in Swinderby's total population.¹⁰

Table 3 indicates little change in the distribution of household sizes between the two listings and reinforces the stability of the total population. However, this has to be seen against a background of considerable instability so far as the residence of individuals is concerned (Table 4). Thus, of the 224 Swinderby inhabitants listed in 1771, only 52 (23 per cent) were still there twenty years later. The Swinderby burial register indicates that 44 people had died in the interval, and one further person has been identified in the burial register of the neighbouring parish of Eagle. While known deaths account for 20 per cent of the original figure, this still leaves 127, or 57 per cent, unaccounted for. As a search through the burial registers of the surrounding parishes (Thorpe on the Hill, Thurlby, Norton Disney, North and South Scarle, and North and South Collingham) yielded no further names from the Swinderby listing of 1771, it was assumed that the great majority of those unaccounted for had left the village to settle elsewhere. It should be noted that some of those present at both

Table 3 Swinderby: distribution of household sizes

Persons per household	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	13	Totals	Means
1771	4	9	7	11	5	9	1	4	1	1	nil	52	4.31
1791	4	7	5	15	8	2	4	1	2	1	1	50	4.44

Source: As for Table 2.

Table 4 Swinderby: summary of population turnover, 1771-1791**Swinderby 1771:**

Total names:	224
Names lost 1771-91:	172=77%
Of which, deaths account for	45= 20%
Assumed out-migration for	127= 57%
Names surviving to 1791:	52= 23%

Swinderby 1791:

Names surviving from 1771:	52= 23%
New names:	170= 77%
Of which, incomers:	113= 51%
Births to incomers:	23= 10%
Births to stayers:	34= 15%
Total names:	222

Source: LAO Swinderby Parish Deposit, 23/1 and 23/10.

dates may also have been out of the village for an unrecorded period, while others leaving between 1771 and 1791 may have subsequently returned.

The matter can also be approached by looking backwards from 1791. Of the 222 names at that date, 52 were those of 'stayers', and 170 (77 per cent) were new names. Some new names, of course, were those of children born to parents who were present in Swinderby at both dates. Of the 57 children baptised, 34 were children of these 'stayers' (20 per cent of the new names), while 23 were the children of incomers. There is a hint in these figures that adults with children were less mobile than childless adults. To sum up the 1791 population, 136 (61 per cent) were incomers since 1771 or their children, while only 86 (39 per cent) were stayers and their children born since 1771.

Table 5 indicates an occupational stability between the two listings to be expected from the foregoing analysis. Apart from the reduction from three wheelwrights to one, the only significant change is in the number of labourers. Although there are complications in the way in which they were labelled by Chambers in the second document, it is reasonable to suggest a decline from 20 in 1771 to 13 in 1791 (including LC and LS with the 10 unambiguously described as labourers). There was also a decline from 14 to 11 male servants, probably all servants in husbandry as there was no great house to employ adult male domestic servants. Thus a fall in agricultural employment is signalled as the main change. However, farmers might easily have taken on extra day

Table 5 Occupations in Swinderby, 1771 and 1791

	1771	1791
Blacksmith	2	2
Butcher	1	1
Charwoman	1	-
Curate (from outside parish)	1	-
Farm bailiff	-	1
Farmer	17	16
Innkeeper (and see publican)	-	3
Labourer	20	10
LC (labourer and cottager?)	-	2
LS (labourer and servant?)	-	1
Publican (and see innkeeper)	3	-
Schoolmaster	1	1
Servant (male)	14	11
Servant (female)	18	16
Shoemaker	-	1
Shopkeeper	1	-
Tailor 1771, tailor and farmer 1791 (same person)	1	1
Vicar	1	1
Weaver	1	1*
Wheelwright	3	1
Widow, without occupation	1	3
Total individuals	86	72

Notes: * Plus one weaver identified in settlement certificate. In 1791 there may have been a second wheelwright, as William Raven the named wheelwright had his married son in his household, for whom no occupation was stated.

Source: As for Table 4.

labourers who walked from other nearby parishes, while at the earlier date it is possible that the opposite had been happening.

Overall stability of employment hides a turnover of individuals unless a separate analysis is made, as in Table 6. The main groups are of course very small, but they suggest that occupational differences in turnover were small, and all groups recruited substantially from outside the parish. Turning to servants, which are generally accepted to have been the subject of rapid turnover, only one of those in 1771 remained 20 years later, and this man had changed his place. Only one further male servant of 1771 was living in the parish as a labourer in 1791. Only two of the children listed in 1771 had left home to become servants within the parish, one male and one female. These figures confirm that the usual experience obtained in Swinderby.

Table 7 puts Swinderby into a wider perspective. The longer interval between listings at Swinderby than elsewhere almost certainly accounts for its higher turnover, as the parishes observed at ten-year intervals maintain a remarkably steady level of 50 per cent of names appearing for the first time at the second date. Since our first article appeared, Kitch has suggested that there may have been an annual turnover of village populations of about 4 to 6 per cent.

Table 6 Swinderby: turnover analysed by occupational groups

Occupation	Remained	Removed	Died	Newcomers
Farmers	7	9	3	9
Labourers	7	2	12	7
Trades/craftsmen	4	3	3	3

Source: As for Table 4

Table 7 Swinderby compared with other communities

Parish	County	First listing and population		Second listing and population		% of 2nd total not there at 1st date (Children born since 1st date in brackets)
Swinderby	Lincs	1771	224	1791	222	76.6 (25.7)
Clayworth	Notts	1676	401	1688	412	61.8 (36.2)
Cogenhoe	Northants	1618	185	1628	180	52.2
Bolton Abbey	WR Yorks	1851	502	1861	497	50.5 (16.1)
ditto	ditto	1861	497	1871	476	50.4 (15.7)
Laxton	Notts	1851	534	1861	500	50.6 (25.0)
Elmdon	Essex	1851	525	1861	514	46.3 (26.8)

Source: See footnote 11.

This is based on a wide-ranging survey of different and not always comparable documents over a long timespan from the Elizabethan to Victorian periods.¹² Further confirmation of turnover at about 50 per cent per decade comes from the work of Schürer on two rural areas in Essex in 1861-1881.¹³ Swinderby was at the bottom end of Kitch's range, averaging 3.83 per cent per annum over a 20-year period, though it should be pointed out that this is a very coarse measure.¹⁴

A very general reason for migration emerging from Kitch's study is the movement of farm labouring households from one farm and parish to another on a fairly regular basis. Indeed in Lincolnshire there is plenty of anecdotal evidence that this continued into the present century, well supported by documentary evidence from a school log book for Welbourn. This shows that labourers were still regularly on the move on April 6th ('flitting day') in the years just before the first world war.¹⁵

A recent study carried out by Margaret Escott on Binfield, within the famous Speenhamland district of Berkshire, allows a better comparison to be made with Swinderby than in the table above, since turnover was measurable over a 21-year period, 1780-1801. The first listing in 1780 included 134 households, of which 64 per cent had gone by 1801. This figure is almost exactly the same as that for Swinderby, where, of the 52 households of 1771, 34 or 65.4 per cent had gone by 1791, 20 years later. Escott showed that the higher status

households in Binfield were the most mobile, whereas the labourers and others tended to stay within the parish for reasons to do with poor relief and the Settlement Laws. It is, therefore, rather striking that in Lincolnshire, an area not thought to have suffered so greatly in this respect, the one parish studied yields figures so close to those of a parish in the heavily pauperised South.¹⁶

NOTES

1. This article is a revised and shortened version of R. Tinley and D. Mills, 'The people of Swinderby in 1771 and 1791: a study of population mobility', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 26 (1991), 7-11. Ruth Tinley has also published full transcripts of the listings used in this article in *The quarterly magazine of the Lincolnshire Family History Society*, 4 (1) (1993), 8-10 and 4 (2) (1993), 59-61.
2. The listings are in the Lincolnshire Archives Office, LAO, Swinderby Par. 23/1 and 23/10. See also J. Gibson and M. Medlycott, *Local census listings, 1522-1930: holdings in the British Isles*, (Birmingham, 1992), 27.
3. Two rather contrasting views of Disney may be obtained from the *Dictionary of National Biography* and J.O. Baylen and N.J. Gossman, eds, *Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals, I, 1770-1830*, (Hassocks, 1979), 124-28.
4. *Gentleman's Magazine*, LII (1782), 74-5, in the form of a letter, reprinted in *'Deanery of Graffoe Parish Magazine*, (1889).
5. D.R. Mills, 'Enclosure in Kesteven', *Agricultural History Review*, VII (1959), 82-97 and J.A. Johnston, '17th century agricultural practice in six Lincolnshire parishes', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 18 (1983), 5-14. Swinderby is one of Johnston's six parishes.
6. References cited in footnote 3 and *Gentleman's Magazine*, LII, (1782), 594, for Disney. For Chambers, see *Venn's Alumni Cantabrigiensis*: Chambers was son of Richard, a farmer of Overton Waterville, Hunts and was admitted to Pembroke College, 1762, B.A., 1766. His other livings at various dates were Aubourn (near Swinderby), and Wickenby, Bag Enderby and Somersby, all in Lincolnshire. He appears to have resided at Swinderby over a long period.
7. LAO, Swinderby Par. 23/1.
8. LAO Swinderby Par. 23/10.
9. LAO, Speculum 4.
10. P. Laslett and R. Wall, eds, *Household and family in past time*, (Cambridge, 1972), 192. Rapid population growth is associated with large households because of large numbers of children and a shortage of housing leading to the sharing of accommodation. Furthermore, the absence of gentry from Swinderby helped to reduce the number of very large households. See also R. Wall et al. eds, *Family forms in historic Europe*, (Cambridge, 1983), especially Table 16.5, 509, for further discussion and comparison of complex households in English rural communities.
11. The sources for Table 5 are as follows: Swinderby: authors' calculations from LAO Swinderby Par. 23/1 and 10. Clayworth and Cogenhoe: P. Laslett and J. Harrison, 'Clayworth and Cogenhoe', in H.E. Bell and R.L. Ollard eds, *Historical essays 1600-1750 presented to David Ogg*, (London, 1963), 174, 177. Bolton Abbey: M. Birch, 'Bolton Abbey, West Riding of Yorkshire, 1851-81: population turnover in a 'static' community', in P. Laslett et al., *Victorians on the move*, (Thornborough, Bucks, 1984), 6-9 (available from Mills Historical, 17 Rectory Lane, Branston, Lincoln, LN4 1NA). Laxton: J.V. Beckett and T. Foulds, 'Beyond the micro: Laxton, the computer and social change over time', *Local Historian*, 16 (1985), 452. Elmdon: J. Robin, *Elmdon: continuity and change in a NW Essex Village, 1861-1914*, (Cambridge, 1980), 190. Another study of turnover is that by B. Wojciechowska, 'Brenchley: a study of migratory movements in a mid-nineteenth century rural parish', *Local Population Studies*, 41 (1988), 28-40, but here the data are expressed in terms of persistence. From 1851 to 1861 38 per cent of the population persisted, from 1861-71 31 per cent, and from 1851 to 1871 only 14 per cent (pp. 30-1).
12. M. Kitch, 'Population movement and migration in pre-industrial rural England', in B.M. Short ed., *The English rural community: image and analysis*, (Cambridge, 1992), 62-84.
13. K. Schürer, 'The role of the family in the process of migration', C.G. Pooley and I.D. Whyte eds, *Migrants, emigrants and immigrants: a social history of migration*, (London, 1991), 106-142, but especially 112-13, where data similar to that in Table 7 are shown in an alternative format.
14. This figure was calculated by dividing turnover between 1771 and 1791 by twenty: thus it takes no account of turnover between those dates not caught by the listings. It is also not directly comparable with a generalised turnover figure calculated over ten years.

15. B. Goodhand, 'Changes in the quality of rural life', in D.R. Mills ed., **Twentieth Century Lincolnshire, History of Lincolnshire**, XII, (1989), 325-28.
16. M. Escott, 'Residential mobility in a late eighteenth century parish: Binfield, Berkshire 1779-1801', **Local Population Studies**, 40 (1988), 20-37, especially 24. Our definition of a surviving household is that the whole or part of a conjugal couple can be identified as heading a household at both dates. This specifically excludes new households formed by the marriage of children present in 1771, even if they were included in the same houseful as their parents in the 1791 listing.