

A STUDY OF OCCUPATIONS IN YORKSHIRE PARISH REGISTERS IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURIES

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Introduction

The distribution of occupations in eighteenth and early nineteenth century Britain is a topic of continuing interest and is particularly relevant to the debate about the pace and scope of early industrialisation. Studies of this period identify changes in occupational structure, particularly in the reduction in the proportion of the population working on the land, as one of the key factors which made possible the development of an industrial economy. As Wrigley points out, 'If six men in ten can devote their energies to secondary or tertiary production and yet be adequately fed, a very different economy will emerge from that which is possible if only two or three men can be spared from the land without running the risk of mass starvation'.¹

This transition could only come about because substantial increases in agricultural productivity had been achieved, albeit slowly, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.² Population growth in the eighteenth century raised fears of food crises. These concerns were most acute in the 1790s, but increases in the production of manufactured goods made it possible to export these in order to pay for corn imports to supplement home production in years of poor harvest.³ These national trends are well known but there is little information available at the local and regional level to illustrate the realities of occupational change for individual communities.

This study aims to provide a body of new information which shows how Yorkshire parishes were affected by the ongoing changes. The data are derived from baptism registers between 1720 and 1829 from parishes in all regions of Yorkshire, both agricultural and industrial, and illustrate how, at a local level, one effect of these changes was to bring about increasing differentiation between communities. Each parish had its own particular characteristics, some remaining traditionally agricultural, some having a specialised industrial group for a period of time and some becoming overwhelmingly industrial.

Movement out of parishes which were predominantly agricultural into those which gave opportunities for additional employment had occurred over a long period. Pickles has shown this for Yorkshire from the mid-seventeenth century onwards.⁴ For example, some 2,900 people left Wharfedale between 1670 and 1743. The baptism registers studied reinforced this conclusion. Parishes which depended entirely upon agricultural occupations appeared, in general, to have low or stable population levels, whereas those with many industrial occupations were more populous and showed rapidly rising numbers of baptisms. Many of these parishes showed characteristics which could be described as 'proto-industrial' in that they had rural domestic industries whose product was sold to markets outside their region. This was particularly seen in the textile districts, such as Airedale and Calderdale and in the parish of Saddleworth. Saddleworth lies on the border between Yorkshire and Lancashire and covers a large and unproductive moorland area with very scattered settlement; here baptisms were high and almost all the fathers in the register were engaged in domestic textile manufacture.

Sources

The Mid-Wharfedale Local History Research Group, a Workers Educational Association class, collected occupational information from parish registers: individual contributions are acknowledged at the end of this article. Since this project was conducted in class, it was necessary to concentrate on those Yorkshire parishes whose registers were printed or transcribed and available from the Yorkshire Archaeological Society library. Not all of these gave sufficient occupational information but 62 out of the almost 1,000 parishes in Yorkshire were studied.

The criteria used in assessing a register as a meaningful source were that occupational information should be given for at least one decade and that at least 80 per cent of the entries should give the father's occupation. In practise many registers were found where five or six decades of occupations were recorded. Baptism registers were used rather than marriage or burial registers since they cover a longer span of life and are more likely to reflect the composition of the adult male labour force. Seven of the parishes used were city parishes in York; the other 55 were scattered across the three Ridings, the greatest concentration being in the West Riding with very good coverage of Airedale and Wharfedale, areas of particular local interest.

Using the baptism registers meant that the occupational data collected related only to the fathers of the infants being baptised and these were counted each time a child was born. Thus there is no information about the work of women, whether in domestic industry or on farms, or about children's work. Women and children were a vital part of the labour force and the distortion which is produced by their absence must be kept in mind.⁵ Nor can the percentages derived from the baptismal registers be compared directly with the early census figures since these were based upon the whole working population rather than one age group, and also recorded family rather than individual

employment in the first three censuses.⁶ Baptism registers contain very few living-in servants since their terms of employment made it difficult for them to marry and set up a home. To see what effect this had, a comparison was made of some of the baptism registers with a surviving Craven Muster Roll and it was found that the differences were not as great as might have been anticipated.⁷

Types of occupation

It was decided to classify the recorded occupations into three broad categories, agricultural workers, non-agricultural workers and labourers. The first group, those known to be occupied in agriculture, consisted of occupiers of land, that is fathers who were described as husbandmen, farmers or yeomen and also shepherds, hinds, graziers, cattle-drovers and day-labourers. The non-agricultural category included every father who was given a craft, industrial, service or professional description. In many cases, of course, the village craftsman would also have been engaged to some extent in agriculture. For example, the case was found of a man who was recorded as a tailor in one instance and a husbandman in another. In a few registers the clerk recorded dual occupations but in most parishes dual occupations must have gone unrecorded. It seems likely, however, that it was the predominant occupation which was listed. It has often been pointed out that the poverty of the upland farms in areas such as Calderdale drove the husbandmen to find a supplementary occupation but there is no doubt that in a rural parish such as Saddleworth, on the Lancashire-Yorkshire border, where 97 per cent of the occupations in 1770–79 were non-agricultural, men regarded themselves primarily as clothiers rather than farmers.

An interesting example of changing occupational descriptions can be seen at Conistone in Upper Wharfedale. In this parish the freeholders had bought the manorial rights and controlled lead mining on the moors. The relative proportions of agricultural and non-agricultural occupations, the latter mostly miners, varied from decade to decade; when mining activity was high, as in the 1740s and 1780s, few fathers called themselves farmers or husbandmen, but as mining declined the numbers of farmers and husbandmen grew. It would seem that the Conistone freeholders described themselves in terms of their principal economic activity at that time and the change in the character of the parish reflected the conditions in the market for lead.

Although most occupational descriptions were clear it was difficult to classify those described as labourers. Very few parishes recorded day-labourers and where this was the case they were included in the agricultural category. One parish clerk, at Carleton-in-Craven between 1716 and 1731,⁸ appeared to be trying to make a distinction between different sorts of labourers because he introduced a new classification, 'agricol.', alongside yeomen, husbandmen, and labourers. This, however, was an isolated instance and it was normally not possible to divide the labourers between the agricultural and industrial categories. Of course the economic context of the parish gave clues to the character of the labourers' work but there were wide variations between

parishes. For example it was noticeable that the proportions of labourers to landholders varied across the different farming regions of Yorkshire. At Myton-on-Swale, in an arable area, the proportion of labourers to landholders was very high, with 62 labourers to 8 landholders from 1810 to 1819, while in the Dales parish of Arncliffe, a sheep farming area, from 1740–49 no labourers at all were recorded. In general, however, both the mainly agricultural and the mixed agricultural/industrial parishes contained substantial numbers of labourers, though it was noticeable that many of the most industrialised parishes had relatively few labourers.

This classification enabled an assessment to be made of the economy of a given parish in one decade and also to see whether or not there were significant changes in the following decades. The changes at Conistone, in the Wharfe Valley, have already been mentioned but the situation in many parishes was less volatile and showed a more stable economy or more gradual change.

Types of parish

The parishes studied showed very wide variations in character. They ranged from small parishes with as few as 40 to 50 births in a decade to large parishes with 1,200 to 1,500 births in a decade. The percentages of those engaged in different categories of occupation varied similarly and it was decided to group the individual parishes into three categories in order to make more meaningful comparisons. The three categories of occupation are presented for each parish in Tables 1, 2 and 3 as percentages of the whole for each available decade; the total number of births for the decade is also given. Thus small parishes can be distinguished from large ones and their growth, or lack of growth, can be assessed.

The first category, listed in Table 1, contained parishes which were essentially agricultural; they were also usually small in terms of numbers of births per decade. These parishes normally had a proportion of non-agricultural occupations mainly in the traditional crafts which could be seen as supporting the agricultural sector.

The second category, listed in Table 2, consisted of parishes which appeared to have a mixed economy. Here, alongside traditional crafts, we found service and professional occupations as well as specifically industrial ones. Agriculture and labouring were still important but, as well as a greater variety of non-agricultural occupations, there was usually some specialised occupation which raised the percentage of non-agricultural occupations but did not dominate the whole. An example of this type of parish is Aberford, north-east of Leeds, where there was a specialist group of pin-makers in the 1740s and 1750s.

The third category, listed in Table 3, consisted of parishes which were essentially industrial; the industrial base was mainly textile, or textile related, but there were examples of mining, quarrying and metal working. These parishes were also the most populous with rapidly rising numbers of births per decade.

Table 1: Occupational categories in Yorkshire agricultural parishes, 1720-1829 (percentages)

No.	Parish	1720-29		1730-39		1740-49		1750-59		1760-69		1770-79	
		Ag	Non No. -ag	Ag	Non No. -ag	Ag	Non No. -ag	Ag	Non No. -ag	Ag	Non No. -ag	Ag	Non No. -ag
1.	Acomb												
2.	Adel												
3.	Amcliffe			64	0	36	79						
4.	Askham Bryan												
5.	Bardsey											26	28
6.	Bishopthorpe											45	56
7.	Bolton Abbey												
8.	Bowes												
9.	Braithwell												
10.	Brandesburton									48	35	17	94
11.	Burghwallis									53	28	19	72
12.	Cantley												
13.	Carlton (Snaith)												
14.	Clayton												
15.	Collingham			45	36	19	69	43	41	16	61	33	30
16.	Denton											24	31
17.	Eston											45	80
18.	Great Ayton												
19.	Heslington												
20.	Hooton Pagnell												
21.	Huggate	79	21	0	43	52	33	15	52	60	19	21	48
22.	Kirk Ella												
23.	Lythe											28	37
24.	Myton-on-Swale												
25.	Riccall												
26.	Saxton												
27.	Weston	35	37	28	71	38	27	35	97	35	44	21	48
												32	41
												27	69

Table 1 (Continued)

No.	Parish	1780-89			1790-99			1800-09			1810-19			1820-29			
		Ag	Lab	No.	Ag	Lab	No.	Ag	Lab	No.	Ag	Lab	No.	Ag	Lab	No.	
		-ag		-ag		-ag		-ag		-ag		-ag		-ag		-ag	
1.	Acomb	30	43	27	174	25	34	41	177	8	56	36	188	11	54	35	190
2.	Adel	29	36	36	280												
3.	Arncliffe																
4.	Askham Bryan	24	31	46	72	32	31	36	91	19	56	25	91	7	60	32	68
5.	Bardsey	15	41	44	55					25	50	24	84	26	51	23	112
6.	Bishopthorpe	28	28	43	56					0	69	31	55	15	49	37	108
7.	Bolton Abbey	53	24	22	245	36	24	39	256	43	16	41	276				
8.	Bowes	15	55	30	71	22	39	39	127	19	37	44	136	16	55	29	191
9.	Braithwell	36	32	32	88	31	44	25	91	22	36	42	140	11	54	34	133
10.	Brandesburton	21	57	22	51	11	60	29	80	23	53	23	64				
11.	Burghwallis																
12.	Cantley	17	52	31	114	35	40	25	142	26	53	21	184				
13.	Carlton (Snaith)					3	68	28	60								
14.	Clayton													16	53	31	130
15.	Collingham	48	28	24	58	49	22	29	49	63	7	30	43	59	19	22	63
16.	Denton	38	31	31	125	49	19	32	109	53	6	41	103				
17.	Eston	24	33	43	214	38	30	32	216	23	31	46	222				
18.	Great Aylton	50	27	23	22	48	29	24	42	38	26	36	73	32	39	29	56
19.	Heslington	19	52	29	112	23	41	36	73	9	55	35	127				
20.	Hooton Pagnell	44	40	16	68	29	51	20	76	40	39	22	101				
21.	Huggate																
22.	Kirk Eilla	34	31	36	442	33	30	37	414	26	37	37	530	23	33	43	230
23.	Lythe									8	62	30	37	2	73	25	44
24.	Myton-on-Swale	32	38	30	137	20	51	28	148	31	43	25	122				
25.	Riccall	28	52	19	96	41	35	24	116								
26.	Saxton																
27.	Weston																

Key to occupations: Ag = agricultural, Lab = labourer, Non-ag = non-agricultural, No. = total number of father's occupations in the sample.

Table 2: Occupational categories in Yorkshire mixed agricultural/industrial parishes, 1720-1829 (percentages)

No. Parish	1720-29		1730-39		1740-49		1750-59		1760-69		1770-79													
	Ag	Lab Non No. -ag	Ag	Lab Non No. -ag	Ag	Lab Non No. -ag	Ag	Lab Non No. -ag	Ag	Lab Non No. -ag	Ag	Lab Non No. -ag												
1. Aberford			14	33	53	126	14	37	49	187	11	36	53	176	10	36	54	206	14	42	44	180		
2. Barwick in Elmet															18	41	40	240	17	45	37	312		
3. Burnsall	50	7	51	157	44	11	48	138																
4. Carleton in Craven	50	20	30	127																				
5. Conistone	37	32	31	71	31	31	38	58	9	30	61	23	41	27	32	56	43	31	27	49				
6. Crofton	35	2	63	51	37	6	57	109	21	12	57	97	11	31	58	98	9	22	68	95	15	29	56	117
7. Danby																								
8. Easingwold									28	4	68	283	29	8	63	304	23	15	63	275				
9. Hemsworth	28	30	42	115	23	35	42	141	18	39	43	188					18	41	41	176	9	42	49	185
10. Ilkley	37	23	40	159													25	19	56	177	28	19	53	194
11. Otley	24	16	60	783	29	18	53	875																
12. Rylstone					46	5	49	167	51	4	45	172	42	11	46	195	34	17	49	163	36	19	44	154
13. Skipton																					9	33	58	600
14. Stokesley	20	12	68	342	13	19	67	365	13	17	70	376												

Table 2 (Continued)

No. Parish	1780-89		1790-99		1800-09		1810-19		1820-29	
	Ag	Lab Non No. -ag	Ag	Lab Non No. -ag	Ag	Lab Non No. -ag	Ag	Lab Non No. -ag	Ag	Lab Non No. -ag
1. Aberford	12	43 45	7	45 48	10	44 46				
2. Banwick in Elmet	16	43 41	20	54 345	17	49 34				
3. Burnhall							24	26 51	161	33 13 54
4. Carleton in Craven							13	19 68	142	20 12 68
5. Conistone	25	21 54	47	22 31	44	32 25				
6. Crofton	16	23 60	3	39 58	18	44 38				
7. Danby			32	13 54	39	12 49				
8. Easingwold	21	21 58	15	30 55	11	34 55	18	37 45	427	14 43 43
9. Hemsworth	16	38 45	196	14 49	37	162	15	43 42	250	
10. Ilkley	19	17 64	191	20 19	61	211	42	7 52	163	
11. Otley	18	9 73	693*	18 9	73	693*				
12. Rylstone	41	22 37	143	32 24	44	119	56	1 43	160	
13. Skipton	6	32 62	741	3 22	75	867	4	20 76	999	
14. Stokesley										

Key to table: Ag = agricultural occupations,

Lab = labourer,

Non-ag = non-agricultural occupations,

No. = total number of father's occupations in the sample.

Note: * These figures were recorded for two decades (1780-99) and have been divided by two.

Table 3: Occupational categories in Yorkshire industrial parishes 1720-1829 (percentages)

No. Parish	1720-29		1730-39		1740-49		1750-59		1760-69		1770-79	
	Ag	Lab Non	Ag	Lab Non	Ag	Lab Non	Ag	Lab Non	Ag	Lab Non	Ag	Lab Non
	-ag	No.	-ag	No.	-ag	No.	-ag	No.	-ag	No.	-ag	No.
1. Addingham												
2. Baildon	18	11	71	185	11	23	67	199	11	18	71	259
3. Bingley												
4. Burley in Wharfedale												
5. Garforth					21	16	64	77	11	20	69	103
6. Hartshead									6	6	88	344
7. Horbury	4	16	79	209					9	4	87	405
8. Idle												
9. Keighley					12	9	79	271	15	8	76	476
10. Kidwick	34	6	60	669	26	15	59	729	19	22	59	761
11. Linton									14	24	62	763
12. Saddleworth					11	<1	89	1,071	7	0	93	1,289
13. Sheffield	3	7	90	3,405	2	8	91	2,664*	4	0	96	1,255
14. Slisden									7	<1	92	1,352
									20	6	74	884
									12	0	88	445
									4	0	96	1,255
									22	17	60	232
									7	7	86	502
									11	3	85	491
									14	13	73	857
									17	0	83	449
									3	<1	97	1,194
									28	14	58	291

Note: * = 1730-1736

Table 3 (Continued)

No. Parish	1780-89		1790-99		1800-09		1810-19		1820-29			
	Ag	Lab Non -ag	Ag	Lab Non -ag	Ag	Lab Non -ag	Ag	Lab Non -ag	Ag	Lab Non -ag		
1. Addingham	21	19 61	233	15 16 69	386	19 4 76	437	22 5 73	606	18 3 79	765	
2. Baildon	9	9 82	505	9 8 84	488	13 3 84	478					
3. Bingley						22 4 74	1,394					
4. Burley in Wharfedale	31	7 62	118	16 17 68	198	28 16 56	152					
5. Garforth	3	29 68	146	5 25 71	164	5 24 71	198					
6. Hartshead	9	3 88	589	9 3 88	605	11 2 87	708					
7. Horbury				2 9 89	607	1 16 83	893					
8. Idle								10	3 87	316	7 2 91	470
9. Keighley												
10. Kildwick	19	6 75	967									
11. Linton												
12. Saddleworth	1	3 96	1,508									
13. Sheffield												
14. Slisden	26	7 67	277	20 12 68	293	19 11 70	304	20 11 69	495	19 10 71	690	

Key to table:

Ag = agricultural occupations,

Lab = labourer,

Non-ag = non-agricultural occupations,

No. = total number of father's occupations in the sample.

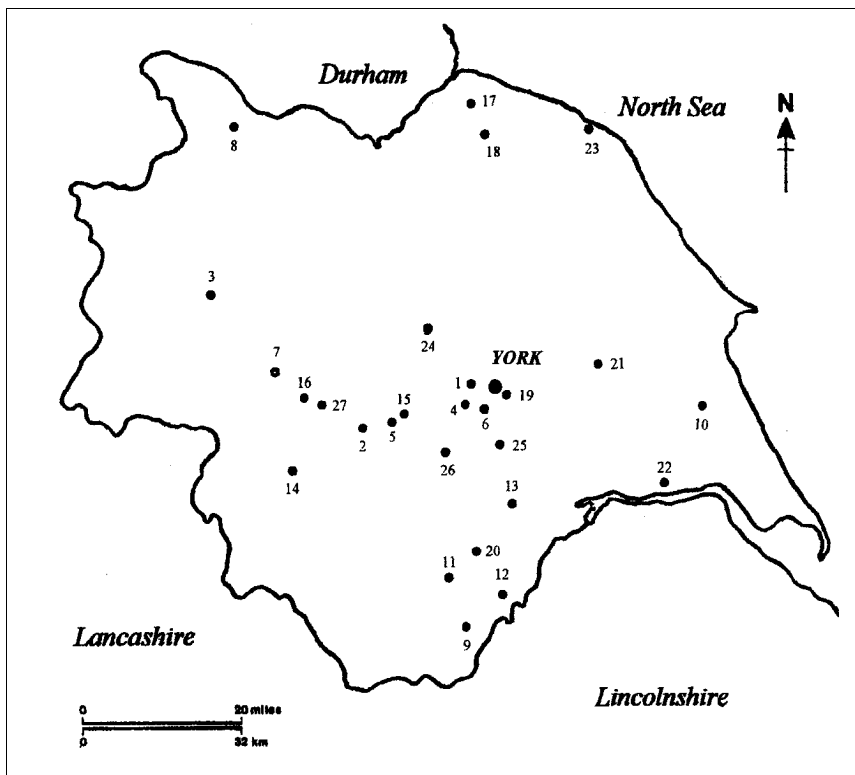
Some parishes fell easily into a category but there were, naturally, parishes which lay on the borderline between one group and the next which were difficult to assign. The occupational mix also varied from one decade to another, so account was taken of the range within which the percentage of non-agricultural occupations moved. The percentage of non-agricultural occupations was considered to be the most significant parameter and the parishes were grouped on this basis. Thus, the agricultural parishes (Table 1 and Figure 1) showed a range of non-agricultural occupations over the whole period from 0 per cent to 46 per cent. The comparable percentages for the mixed agricultural/industrial/service parishes (Table 2 and Figure 2) were from 25 per cent to 68 per cent with the exception of three market towns, Stokesley, Otley and Skipton which reached more than 70 per cent of non-agricultural occupations. The figures for these parishes illustrate the difficulties encountered in classifying the parishes.

The percentages of non-agricultural occupations in the industrial category (Table 3 and Figure 3) ranged between 56 per cent and 97 per cent, and in many cases their industrial character was already established at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Although there is some overlap between categories, it was felt that this grouping helped in understanding the different occupational structures and how they developed over the period studied. It also highlighted the fundamental difference in character between the parishes in the agricultural and mixed economies and those which had fully entered the industrial phase.

The industrial parishes were mainly in the West Riding, for example Addingham and Hartshead. In these parishes one occupation predominated and, although they were still in a sense rural rather than urban, the proportions of landholders and labourers were low. Many of these industrial villages were well established in the first half of the eighteenth century and appeared, by the increasing numbers of baptisms, to be parishes whose populations were growing rapidly. At Baildon, near Bradford, baptisms rose from 199 between 1730 and 1739 to 505 between 1780 and 1789. The population of the neighbouring parish of Bingley, similarly engaged in textiles, had already increased by 53 per cent between 1670 and 1743.⁹

Unfortunately, no occupational information was available for parishes in what were to become the great industrial cities of Yorkshire, apart from Sheffield between 1717 and 1736. The only complete decade recorded was 1720 to 1729. In this period there were 3,405 baptisms, and 3,027 fathers were in non-agricultural occupations, overwhelmingly engaged in making sharp-edged tools. The edge-tool trade in Sheffield was organised on a small workshop basis, and although there was regulation of the trade by the Cutler's Company this cannot have been too restrictive since the number of registered masters grew from 498 in 1624 to 2,054 in 1682.¹⁰ Sheffield must have been attracting migrants from other areas. The Leeds registers, although printed, contain no occupational information. This probably reflects the great expansion of the city and the pressure on the system of parish registration.

Figure 1 Yorkshire: agricultural parishes



Note: The numbered locations on this map refer to the places shown by the row numbers in Table 1

The York registers (Table 4), on the other hand, provided occupational information for over 100 years; and shorter periods of coverage were available for the market towns of Skipton and Otley. Thus the information available in print covered a very wide range of parishes and, in varying degrees, afforded a picture of male employments across Yorkshire in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This information, despite its limitations, is particularly valuable since it covers the period before census-derived statistics were available, and shows what men were doing in crafts and industry in the period before the change to a large-scale, energy-based factory economy.

Agricultural parishes

It is generally accepted that the proportion of the adult male labour force engaged in agriculture had decreased steadily from a level of 70 to 80 per cent in 1600 to about 40 per cent by 1800,¹¹ It must be remembered, however, that although the

Table 4: Occupational categories in York, 1720-1819 (percentages)

Parish	1720-29		1730-39		1740-49		1750-59		1760-69			
	Ag	Lab Non-ag	Ag	Lab Non-ag	Ag	Lab Non-ag	Ag	Lab Non-ag	Ag	Lab Non-ag		
Holy Trinity, Christ Church												
Goodramgate			4	5 91	209	3	3 95	243	1	5 94	136	
St Crux	0	1 99	163	2	2 98	158	3	2 96	127	1	8 91	127
St Lawrence												
St Martin, Coney St.												
St Mary, Castlegate	4	19 77	195	3	12 86	210	1	15 85	205	5	9 86	188
St Michael-le-Belfrey										7	2 91	326

Table 4 (Continued)

Parish	1770-79		1780-89		1790-99		1800-09		1810-19			
	Ag	Lab Non-ag	Ag	Lab Non-ag	Ag	Lab Non-ag	Ag	Lab Non-ag	Ag	Lab Non-ag		
Holy Trinity, Christ Ch	2	9 89	182	3	5 91	170	1	9 89	171	2	8 89	288
Goodramgate												
St Crux	4	6 90	189	3	3 95	222	5	1 95	199	1	4 95	210
St Lawrence												
St Martin, Coney St.												
St Mary, Castlegate	1	11 88	210	1	13 85	193	1	10 89	226	1	10 89	283
St Michael-le-Belfrey	10	5 85	311									

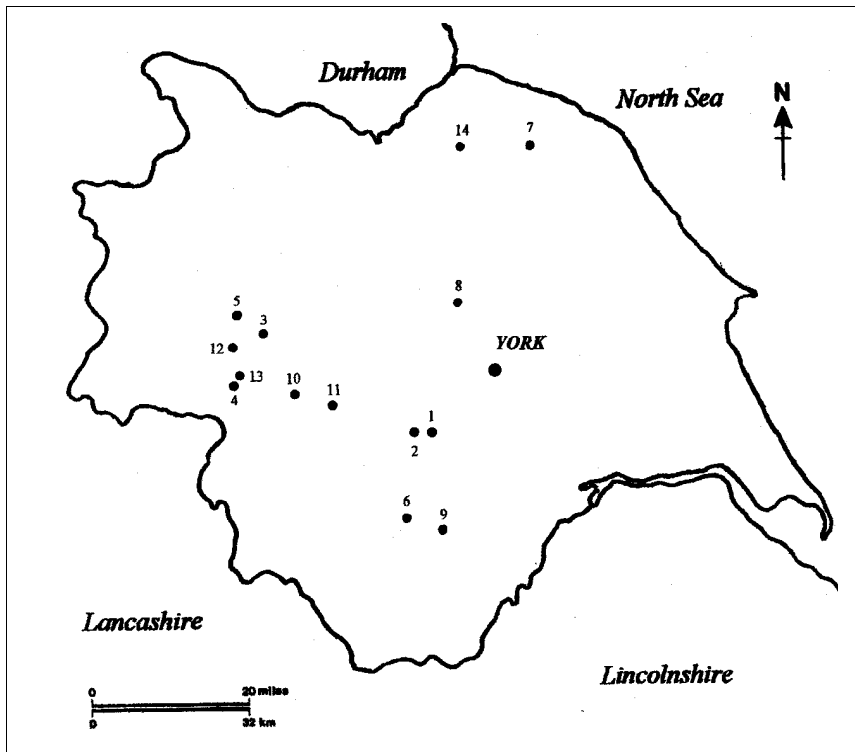
Key to table: Ag = agricultural occupations,

Lab = labourer,

Non-ag = non-agricultural occupations,

No. = total number of father's occupations in the sample.

Figure 2 Yorkshire: mixed agricultural/industrial parishes



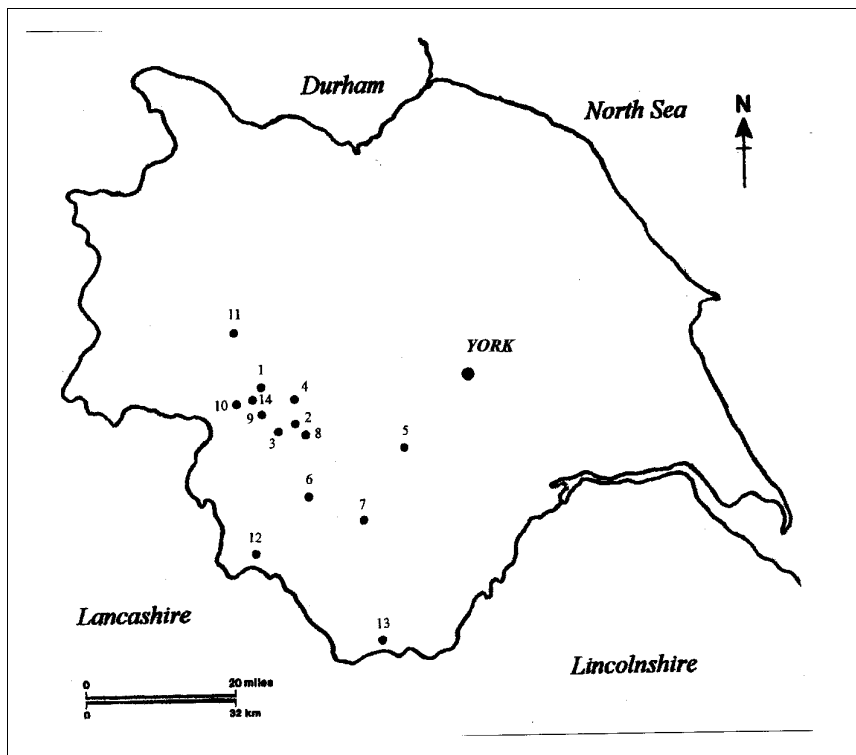
Note: The numbered locations on this map refer to the places shown by the row numbers in Table 2

proportion in agriculture was decreasing, the absolute numbers, due to increasing population over the country as a whole, were rising until about 1850.¹²

Clearly, such a reduction in the proportion of the labour force needed in agriculture implies a rise in productivity, since the population was rising rapidly in the latter part of the eighteenth century and the country was not dependent on large scale imports of food from abroad. Many parts of Yorkshire, however, were dependent for grain on imports from other areas. Leeds, for example, imported food and raw materials in exchange for the manufactured goods of the area.¹³

The parishes included in Table 1 are distributed across all three of the old Ridings of Yorkshire and their agricultural practises varied widely. As many as eight regional farming groups were identified in a study of late seventeenth-century Yorkshire probate inventories by Long.¹⁴ These inventories showed that the farms of the Wolds region were the largest and

Figure 3 Yorkshire: industrial parishes



Note: The numbered locations on this map refer to the places shown by the row numbers in Table 3

most valuable, while those of the Dales and the West Riding industrial region were the least valuable, and it is very likely that these conclusions remained valid throughout the eighteenth century. One feature pointed out by Long, which has considerable relevance to occupational patterns, is that 'every group except the Wolds had a larger percentage of its valuation in cattle than in any other item'. Corn was of almost equal importance to cattle in the Vale of York and sheep accounted for a significant part of the valuation in the Dales and North Yorkshire Moors. The author concluded that 'it is probably not too much to say that cattle formed the backbone of the farming of the times'. Changing circumstances in the second half of the seventeenth century rendered the production of meat and dairy produce more profitable in the north.¹⁵ The trade in butter was of considerable importance in York and this will be discussed later.

It is generally believed that increasing use of new fodder crops was an important factor in agricultural improvement, but little specific evidence

relating to Yorkshire has been found. The probate inventory study discussed above found no mention of the new crops such as rape, and a detailed study of Wharfedale probate inventories by Pickles found only one instance in the eighteenth century.¹⁶ Emphasis on livestock production meant dependence on the market and, if the new crops were not as widely used in Yorkshire as in some other areas, some means of improving the productivity of pastures must have been employed. The practice of convertible husbandry increased fertility and in some parts of Yorkshire, the Dales for example, the process of enclosing land at the edge of the moorland, thus improving it for cattle, had been going on for many years.¹⁷ Other methods could also be employed such as manuring, drainage and liming; certainly limeburners are mentioned in the registers and the remains of limekilns can be seen in the landscape. Piecemeal enclosure of open field lands took place in many parishes to such an extent that parliamentary enclosure, when it took place, related only to moorland and waste. This sort of agricultural reorganisation meant that landlords could issue leases for years and try to improve the profitability of their estates. Such changes had considerable effect on the capability of the land to maintain cattle but are very difficult to quantify. However, the resilience of the pastoral economy and its relative prosperity in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries must surely have contributed to the growth of commercial activity which we can see in the small towns and villages across Yorkshire. The agricultural depression of 1730–50 although bad for farmers and landlords meant that, for a period, corn prices were low and more money was available for the purchase of other types of goods.¹⁸ Twenty-seven parishes in this study remained predominantly agricultural through the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Their common characteristic was the relatively low level of non-agricultural occupations; thus one can be fairly confident that the fathers described as labourers were mainly occupied in agriculture. The ratio of landholders to labourers varied across the regions being higher, for example, in parishes in the Vale of York where corn growing was important and lower in the Dales area where pastoral farming prevailed. However, in many parishes the tendency was for the proportion of labourers to rise relative to the landholders. This can be seen to varying degrees at Huggate, on the Wolds, at Bishopthorpe, near York, at Collingham in Wharfedale and at Askham Bryan in the Vale of York. This last register clearly reflected the enclosure of open field and commons in 1811–13. In 1800–09 there were 29 farmers and 28 labourers recorded: in 1810–19 there were 17 farmers and 51 labourers. In this case the link between the parliamentary enclosure and the change in occupational structure is clear, but there are other parishes, for example Brandesburton in the East Riding and Hemsworth in the West Riding, where the proportion of landholders relative to labourers steadily declined throughout the eighteenth century but parliamentary enclosure did not take place until the nineteenth century.

Between 1760 and 1769 in Brandesburton, 48 per cent of the recorded occupations were farmers and husbandmen and 35 per cent labourers; by

1810–19 the situation was reversed with 11 per cent landholders and 54 per cent labourers. Parliamentary enclosure of open field, pasture and commons did not take place until 1844–7 but a considerable change in occupational structure had already occurred. The percentage of non-agricultural occupations rose from 17 per cent in the earlier decade to 34 per cent in 1810–19 without any indication of industry. In 1760–69 the principal occupations were blacksmith, shoemaker, tailor and weaver but by the 1810s the range had expanded to include butcher, carpenter, carrier, soldier, innkeeper, glazier, draper and ostler. Brandesburton is in Holderness, an area which is now considered to be very good farming land and whose farms were second in average valuation to those of the Wolds area in the late seventeenth-century probate inventories already cited. The range of occupations which developed suggest that the parish was acting as a small market centre in spite of being close to the town of Beverley.

The baptism register of Huggate has a very good record of occupations from 1720 to 1809 (Table 1). The parliamentary enclosure of a two-field system took place between 1767 and 1773. The farming was not purely arable since the named agricultural occupations included shepherds and hinds as well as a warrener and a poulterer. The percentage of non-agricultural occupations remained fairly constant from 1730 onwards and, in fact, this parish had one of the lowest percentages of non-agricultural occupations in this study. The non-agricultural occupations were mainly the most basic trades and crafts needed by a farming community. These percentages can be compared with those derived from the 1831, 1841 and 1851 census returns which show between 17 and 18 per cent engaged in 'the ten major retail and handicraft employments'.¹⁹ The percentages of those in non-agricultural occupations in this study were normally higher than these derived from the census returns because all trades and crafts as well as the vicar, schoolmaster and other professions were included. Almost all the registers studied had some textile workers, usually weavers, even when they lay outside the recognised textile areas and these are not included in the 'ten trades'. The numbers of baptisms recorded in the mainly agricultural parishes tended to be low and to show little increase. Most agricultural parishes appeared to be relatively static, losing any increase to other areas. Pickles has shown that between 1672 and 1743 many parishes in the agricultural parts of Yorkshire lost population.²⁰

It might have been expected that the growth of the great cities of Yorkshire would have acted as a stimulus to agriculture and market gardening in their neighbourhood. By 1800 Leeds and Sheffield were the sixth and seventh ranked cities in England and would have generated an increased demand for food. An increase in agricultural activity in the West Riding between 1831 and 1851 has been noted in the census returns,²¹ but the only register found to show an increase in agricultural occupations was that of Eston in the North Riding and even here it is possible that this was due to a change in nomenclature. Until 1780 the register lists farmers and yeomen but after that date begins to list husbandmen in addition and fewer labourers. However, the percentage of non-agricultural occupations, which are the usual mixture of weavers, tailors,

shoemakers, masons, carpenters, butchers and blacksmiths, does not increase over the period. Since Eston is on the Tees, it may be that the rising numbers of husbandmen were producing food for the growing population of Teeside.

Mixed agricultural/industrial parishes

The borderline between the essentially agricultural parish and the mixed agricultural/industrial parish is difficult to define and the percentages of non-agricultural occupations varied widely. In practice, however, it was found that when a parish had a proportion of 40 to 45 per cent or more of non-agricultural occupations there was either a group of men following some specialised industrial occupation or the parish was acting as a market centre. Thirteen parishes have been included in this category in Table 2. Some of these parishes had lower percentages of non-agricultural occupations in some decades but if there was evidence of industrial activity they were included in this category.

Examples of parishes with specialised industrial groups were Aberford, north-east of Leeds and Crofton, near Wakefield. At Aberford there were both pin-makers and colliers and at Crofton colliers and clothiers. In each case the industries had a relatively limited life; at Aberford the number of pin-makers declined after 1759 and at Crofton the number of colliers was much reduced after 1789. The term 'collier' was used earlier for charcoal burners but had been used for some time in the West Riding for coal miners. 'Miner' usually meant a lead miner,²² and was found in the registers of Linton, Conistone and Rylstone. At Crofton there was also a banksman who was in charge of the above-ground operations at the pit.

Another parish with colliers was Barwick in Elmet. Barwick is one of a group of four adjacent parishes, Barwick, Aberford, Garforth and Saxton, for which we have varying spans of occupational data and which demonstrate very clearly the striking differences which could exist between neighbouring parishes. Although located in the old West Riding, they had very little textile activity but had good agricultural potential, being on the magnesian limestone ridge, and were well placed on a main route, the Great North Road. Saxton was at this period an essentially agricultural parish and has remained so to the present day. Aberford, already mentioned for its early pinmaking industry, and Barwick were mixed agricultural/industrial parishes but Garforth falls into the third category of industrial parish since here the percentage of non-agricultural occupations rose as high as 71 per cent in the last decades of the eighteenth century. The industry at Garforth was again coal mining, but whereas at Barwick the numbers of colliers dropped between 1800 and 1809 they remained high at Garforth and in this decade the register unusually listed both colliers and miners. There had been coal mining at Garforth between 1730 and 1749 but the highest number of colliers was found at the turn of the century.

Both Aberford and Barwick were also market centres with a wide variety of retail trades and crafts including basketmaker, breechesmaker, heelmaker,

swansdownmaker and linen draper in Aberford and waggoner, huckster, pipemaker, potmaker, skinner, bucklemaker, dishturner, excise officer, schoolmaster and dancing master in Barwick as well as a jockey and a huntsman. Garforth showed no such variety of occupations though there was a schoolmaster and an engineer.

Some parishes moved from agricultural to mixed agricultural/industrial in the course of the eighteenth century. Examples of this were Carleton-in-Craven, where increasing numbers of weavers were found. Similarly at Ilkley, in Wharfedale, the number of textile workers increased and in 1780–89 the percentage of non-agricultural occupations rose to 64 per cent. A mill was built in 1786 but Ilkley later developed more as a spa town than an industrial village. Pickles has shown that there was migration out of Wharfedale in the first half of the eighteenth century but that after about 1740 capital became available for industrial development and the movement out of the valley was halted.²³ By the end of the century two parishes which lie immediately west of Ilkley, Addingham and Silsden, developed into industrial parishes and are included in that section.

There were very few parishes without some textile workers; in the southern part of the West Riding the description 'clothier' was used for those producing woollen cloths, while in Airedale and Wharfedale weavers and woolcombers were found indicating the production of worsted cloth. Linen was also produced in some parishes; linen-weavers, flax dressers and hecklers appear in a few registers. Occupations specific to the cotton textile industry begin to appear in the registers towards the end of the eighteenth century, especially in those parts of the West Riding which had easy communication with Lancashire. Cotton was never a domestic industry in the West Riding and the presence of cotton weavers or spinners implies that there was a mill within walking distance. Many of these mills were small and were situated in otherwise rural areas as, for example, at Beamsley, in the parish of Bolton Abbey. Here a cotton mill provided industrial employment for a time but did not raise the percentage of non-agricultural occupations high enough to warrant removing the parish from the agricultural category. It is clear, from the agreement concerning the building of the mill in Ilkley in 1786, that these mills could be used for woollen or cotton production according to the conditions of trade.²⁴

While many of these mixed agricultural/industrial parishes were clearly growing quickly and becoming more industrial, there were a few whose occupational structure changed very little in the course of the eighteenth century. For example, at Rylstone, in Craven, where occupations were recorded from 1720 to 1820, the percentage of non-agricultural occupations was almost always between 40 and 50 per cent. There were both colliers and miners in this parish, since Rylstone was on the border between coal and lead mining areas, in addition to textile workers though none of these groups became dominant. The percentage of agricultural occupations also remained fairly constant and the parish is today essentially agricultural.

It can be seen that the range of industrial occupations was limited to textiles, coal, lead and iron working but it may be that the label of 'mixed agricultural/industrial parish' is misleading since there were several parishes whose non-agricultural sector was substantial but made up mainly of a variety of service occupations. In some cases, where the village was one of a cluster around a larger town, 'semi-urban' might be more appropriate as a label but this implies a settlement pattern which would not fit all the parishes.

Brandesburton, in Holderness, has already been mentioned as an agricultural parish which had a wider range of service occupations than most. Similarly Hemsworth, in the West Riding (Table 2) showed a great variety of occupations which raised the non-agricultural sector to 49 per cent between 1770 and 1779. Occupations recorded in addition to the usual crafts and trades were surgeon, attorney, dishturner, fellmonger, threadmaker, apothecary, chandler, schoolmaster, skinner and collarmaker. In spite of being only about six miles from Pontefract, Hemsworth appeared to be functioning as a small market centre and this illustrates the perhaps surprising range of occupations which were found outside the well known market towns. This was a parish whose population is recorded as having increased between 1672 and 1743.²⁵

There were four old market towns among the parishes recorded: Easingwold in the East Riding, Stokesley on Teesside in the North Riding and Skipton and Otley in the West Riding. Stokesley has been included in Table 2 even though the percentage of non-agricultural occupations was very high, from 68 to 70 per cent, in all three decades for which we have figures. It had a very wide range of service occupations but apparently no specialised industrial group. The figures for Easingwold run from 1740 to 1829 and range between 43 per cent and 68 per cent in non-agricultural occupations, also without any industrial group. At both Otley and Skipton, however, there were industrial occupations as well as the range of service trades normal to a market town. Both towns had some textile industry; in addition, at Otley there were many occupations connected with leather processing and at Skipton ropes and paper were produced. Both these parishes, however, are very large and contain a number of purely rural townships around the market centre and for this reason were placed in the mixed group.

Industrial parishes

The third category of parish was in many ways the most striking. These were the industrial parishes or villages where one occupation was dominant. These were not an entirely new phenomenon; similar villages are found in the medieval period but they became much more common in the eighteenth century. Fourteen parishes out of the 62 recorded came into this category. In some places the occupational information was only available for a short period and in others the industry in question, for example lead mining at Linton in Wharfedale, was subject to pronounced fluctuations so that they were only 'industrial' at certain periods. In other places, however, we found a long run of good occupational figures which showed a remarkably consistent

picture throughout the eighteenth century, as at Saddleworth, Hartshead and Baildon. Table 3 shows that the industrial character of these parishes, each of which was involved in a different aspect of textile production, was already established in the early part of the eighteenth century and was maintained throughout.

At Saddleworth the predominant occupation was clothier; in the decade 1750–59 there were 1,045 clothiers out of 1,250 non-agricultural occupations. In the agricultural category men described themselves as yeomen or husbandmen but it is clear from contemporary descriptions and the wills of the small clothiers of the West Riding that clothiers normally had some land and that ‘the word “yeoman” was often only an *alias* for “clothier”’.²⁶ If this is taken into account, it would seem that Saddleworth was almost entirely given over to textile production although in appearance it remained a rural area of scattered settlements. This dependence on textiles is shown by the distress suffered in the parish in 1799 and 1800 because of the lack of foreign markets for their cloths. This situation came to the notice of William Wilberforce and prompted him to send a consignment of 50,000 herrings from Hull to Saddleworth to feed the poor.²⁷

Some specialised textile occupations also appear in the register, for example, clothdresser, fustian weaver, fuller, scribbler, cropper, shearman, jersey comber, stapler and linen webster. Towards the end of the century a few new occupations appear such as ragman and card buyer along with occupational indicators of cotton production namely cotton spinner, cotton twiner, cotton manufacturer and engineer, engine labourer and engine scribbler who may well have worked in a cotton mill. However, the numbers of clothiers who apparently worked on a domestic scale remained high with 1,234 clothiers recorded out of 1,449 non-agricultural occupations between 1780 and 1789. Among the parishes studied, Saddleworth was one of the largest, both in extent and population. However, it had one of the lowest percentages of labourers who only appear in any number in 1780–89 when no husbandmen are recorded. Those men in the non-agricultural category who were not engaged in textiles were mainly masons, carpenters, tailors, shoemakers and blacksmiths. There were also more carriers than were found elsewhere but the range of non-agricultural occupations was quite limited and showed none of the diversity which we found in many less populous parishes.

At Hartshead (Table 3) again there were many clothiers but here they were equalled in numbers by wiredrawers and cardmakers. Hartshead is in the southern part of the West Riding in the area which produced traditional woollen cloths and carding the wool was an essential part of the process of manufacture. Between 1780 and 1789 the register records 159 clothiers and 174 wiredrawers and cardmakers. Although cards were doubtless made in other places also, this is the only instance of this industry in the registers studied and Hartshead may have supplied cards to a considerable area. Coal and iron were available in or close to Hartshead and colliers, banksmen, forgemen and an iron roller maker appear in the register. The numbers of those involved in cardmaking grew steadily during the eighteenth century from 59 entries in the

1740s to 78 in the 1750s, 113 in the 1770s and 174 in the 1780s. There were many more labourers here than at Saddleworth but, as at Saddleworth, the other non-agricultural occupations were mainly of a utilitarian nature. Some carriers and boatmen were also recorded as Hartshead is on the Calder.

Another aspect of textile manufacture was seen at Horbury, near Wakefield. The recording of occupations in the register was sporadic but the percentages of non-agricultural occupations in these short periods was very high, reaching 83 per cent between 1800 and 1809. Between 1720 and 1729 the main occupation recorded was clothier but by the close of the century, although there were still some clothiers, these were now outnumbered by weavers and spinners. Spinning was traditionally done by women and children at home and this was the only parish where we found a substantial number of fathers (116 in 1800–1809) as spinners. Machine spinning in factories became widespread at the end of the eighteenth century,²⁸ and this new development at Horbury must have been due to the introduction of machine spinning there. This parish illustrates the change from domestic industry to factory-based industry accompanied by development of an urban proletariat.

The Baildon register (Table 3) shows a parish which could almost be described as urban. It is immediately north of Bradford, one of a number of industrialised villages which cluster around the town, and its occupational structure was dominated by textiles although there was some coal mining, evidence of which can still be seen in remains of bell-pits on Baildon Moor. The highest percentage of non-agricultural occupations, 86 per cent, was found between 1771 and 1780 when 63 per cent of all occupations were in textiles. Heaton's classic study of Yorkshire textiles places Baildon just inside the *woollen* district,²⁹ but the register shows large numbers of weavers and woolcombers indicating that worsted cloth was also being produced. There was one woollen mill in Baildon in existence before 1790 but the bulk of the cloth was being produced domestically using the whole family unit. The parish was heavily dependent on textile manufacture.

The large increase in the number of baptisms in Baildon has already been mentioned; two other parishes which were also growing rapidly were Addingham and Silsden. Baptisms at Addingham rose from 232 between 1770 and 1779 to 765 between 1820 and 1829; in the adjacent parish of Silsden the comparable figures are 291 and 690. Both parishes fall into the worsted district; the first worsted mill was built at Addingham in 1787 and there is also a building believed locally to have been a 'Piece Hall' in the main street. The industrial character of these parishes is shown in their high percentages of non-industrial occupations which rose to 79 per cent in Addingham and 71 per cent in Silsden between 1820 and 1829. Addingham was the more dependent on textiles with 52 per cent of total occupations in textiles. The textile sector at Silsden was smaller but the parish also had some coal mining and a considerable number of nailmakers. This industry flourished particularly in the period 1770 to 1816 which saw the construction of the Leeds-Liverpool canal which would have both transported and used the product.

Improvements in transport were reflected only slightly in the registers. Where a parish lay on a canal or navigable river there was usually a small group of boatmen. The extensive network of turnpike roads which developed in the mid-eighteenth century probably resulted in increased numbers of carriers but these are only noticeable in a few registers.

The York Registers

The York city parishes (Table 4), judged solely by their percentage of non-agricultural occupations, would fall into the industrial category but, the York occupations were almost entirely service occupations, reflecting the importance of the city as the provincial capital. The range and variety of crafts practised in York at this period place the city in a different category to any other place in Yorkshire. The percentage of non-agricultural occupations was frequently well over 90 per cent. York's position as an ecclesiastical centre with both the Minster and a very large number of parish churches, together with a considerable military presence in the town, extended the range of occupations well beyond those of the Yorkshire market towns. There were many fathers designated 'gentleman' or 'esquire' and many of the great variety of tradesmen were clearly catering for luxury markets. These include wine merchants, tea merchants, artists, sculptors, booksellers, musicians, furriers, jewellers, staymakers, hairdressers and drapers. Naturally there were also many representatives of the more usual trades and crafts. In addition there was a considerable number of fathers described as 'translator', a description not found in any other registers. A translator is one who transforms (or repairs) footwear (for example, clogs) but the term is rarely used.

Because York lay on the Ouse, which carried a great deal of trade, there were also many maritime occupations listed ranging from waterman, shipwright and chandler to ship's captain. The waterborne trade out of York was mainly of agricultural produce and changes in agricultural markets had an effect on occupations in the town. Dairying was an important aspect of farming which has left no direct evidence in the baptism registers of the countryside since it employed women as milkmaids and dairymaids. In the middle of the eighteenth century, however, York was the main collecting point for wholesale butter which was then shipped down the Ouse from York to Hull and thence to London.³⁰ This trade accounted for over 40 per cent of the revenue of ships operating between York and Hull and its decline in the 1770s and 1780s due to competition from Irish butter is reflected in the drop in the number of mariners found in the register of the parish of St Mary, Castlegate where their numbers declined from 64 in 1750-1759 to 28 in 1780-1789. In the 1790s, however, the number began to rise again, so it would seem that some other trade had developed to replace the traffic in butter.

Conclusions

All but one of the parishes described here as industrial lie in the old West Riding and they were mainly involved in textile manufacture. The earliest

occupations recorded for several of these parishes date from the first quarter of the eighteenth century and their occupational structure was already 'industrial' in the sense that most of the fathers in the baptism registers were in non-agricultural occupations. These parishes lie in that part of Yorkshire where it has been shown that the population was increasing between 1672 and 1743. A large number of the mixed agricultural/industrial parishes are also in this area and the picture of trade and industry which can be built up from the baptism registers fits very well with the pattern of population growth shown by Pickles.

The industrial character of many parishes is reflected in the occupational structure revealed by the baptism registers. Saddleworth is, perhaps, the clearest example of this with almost the whole population depending upon domestic textile production. Another parish which depended almost entirely on a single product was Hartshead with the manufacture of combs. These were parishes where the number of baptisms was rising strongly probably due to immigration from more agricultural areas but it would seem that the rewards were meagre. All the parishes which can be characterised as industrial had relatively few other craftsmen and tradesmen and these were mainly in the food or building industries. In Baildon, for example, there was a steady increase in the numbers of masons and carpenters through the eighteenth century.

In contrast to this, many of the mixed agricultural/industrial parishes give the impression of a more consumer-oriented society. This is most evident in York itself but several other parishes, even some which were not strictly market towns, were able to support a wide variety of trades and services which extended well beyond the purely utilitarian. They appear to have been communities where people had more disposable income and greater choice in how to spend it. They would also have provided goods and services for other parishes in their neighbourhood which did not offer the same opportunities.

One effect of the developments of the eighteenth century was increasing differentiation between parishes. In place of a more uniform background of agricultural activity, the movement of population out of the purely rural areas and the growth in numbers of the more industrialised parishes created areas of markedly different characters, some static and some more dynamic. This development shows clearly in the Wharfe valley above Otley where four of the recorded parishes remained agricultural, three were mixed agricultural/industrial and three became industrial.

These conclusions match very closely the observations made by Daniel Defoe in the 1720s in his *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*. He commented on the huge growth in textile manufacturing, especially around Halifax and Leeds. He also noted the relationship between the manufacturing areas and the countryside. He pointed to the importance of the cattle trade and the great demand for beef from the manufacturing areas and described how a clothier would buy two or three large bullocks in the autumn 'which they kill and salt and hang up in the smoke to dry. This way of curing their beef keeps

it all the winter...'. Their beef, butter, cheese, mutton and corn all came from the surrounding areas and so 'this one trading, manufacturing part of the country supports all the countries round it, and the numbers of people settle here as bees about a hive.'

On leaving Leeds and travelling up the Wharfe valley he was immediately struck by the contrast: 'In a word, the country look'd as if all the people were transplanted to Leeds and Hallifax, and that here was only a few just left at home to cultivate the land, manage the plough and raise corn for the rest.'³¹

Almost all of the industry with which we have been concerned was small scale and domestic. There is evidence of a few mills, for example in Horbury for spinning and in Addingham for worsted manufacture, but they were all water-powered which limited their location and size. Coal was actively mined, but was not used to provide motive power at this time. In the mid-nineteenth century the change to steam power was to transform industry and remove many of the constraints which had limited growth. However, the present study of occupations in eighteenth century Yorkshire shows what a wide range of activities, both industrial and commercial, already existed and had been established for some time in the Yorkshire countryside prior to the arrival of steam power. Many changes had already occurred: population movement had been going on for several generations; farms were producing food for the manufacturing areas even though numbers of men had left the land; new skills had been developed; transport and commercial networks had already been built up. It was on the basis of this already quite complex and developed local economy that the later, greater changes took place.

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