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## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURES IN SOUTH-EAST MONMOUTHSHIRE 1851-1861**

### **An Analysis of Census Enumerators' Schedules**

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Two ever-present problems thwart researches into social and economic history: first the limited amount of material related to the study topic and, second, the methodological problems associated with the selection of proven techniques to derive the maximum benefit from the labour and time expended in research. The first problem is encountered most frequently. Nevertheless, in a scientific age when generalisation of principle rather than contemplation of the unique should be the intellectual goal, the second problem also looms large especially when quantities of documentary evidence are available for processing. This essay examines interrelated aspects of these two problems with specific reference to the Census Schedules of 1851 and 1861.

To date, the interdisciplinary but largely uncoordinated assault on these Census Enumeration Schedules by geographers and historians has illuminated certain characteristics of urban<sup>1</sup> and rural<sup>2</sup> society of mid C19th England and has focussed attention upon profitable areas awaiting comparative research. This pilot article which considers the census for the parishes of Caldicot, Caerwent<sup>3</sup>, Portskewett and Rogiet seeks to demonstrate the range of social data contained in the Enumerators' Schedules of 1851 and 1861 and so to contribute towards the small but growing collection of published studies prepared for early Victorian Wales.<sup>4</sup>

A brief description of the nature and content of the Schedules is desirable to introduce the analysis.<sup>5</sup> The well preserved manuscript schedules for the census enumerations of 1841; 1851 and 1861 deposited at the Public Record Office yield selected factual information for the individuals of every household. At censustide 1841 each household head was legally obliged to furnish information on the names, age, sex and occupation of each inhabitant and also to indicate whether or not the birthplace of the individuals lay within the same county, elsewhere in England and Wales, in Ireland or in foreign parts. As in the later census counts the appointed enumerator transcribed the relevant details to the existing bound volumes of printed forms.<sup>6</sup>

More detailed personal records for each individual were filed for the census of 1851 and 1861: the exact age of each resident was recorded and not an approximation to the lowest year of five as had been the earlier practice for persons aged over fifteen years, the natal parish and county were noted and the marital status and relationship to the household head were stated. Occupational entries were made for working adults and scholars were identified. Wherever appropriate physical infirmities were also noted for each individual.<sup>7</sup>

As the 1841 Schedules are inferior in their recorded quality and scope to those of 1851 and 1861 emphasis is placed upon the latter two schedules.<sup>8</sup> Where possible, themes developed from the examination of these parish records are supported by cross reference to contemporary literature. For convenience the analysis is presented in three parts:

- (i) Household composition
- (ii) Employment structure
- (iii) Population mobility.

#### *(i) Household Composition*

Elementary family units composed of both parents and children or of childless, invariably recently married, couples account for 56 per cent of the enumerated households in 1851.

Even with the inclusion of incomplete families this figure only attains 61 per cent. The comparable but untabulated values for 1861 are 54 per cent and 77 per cent, respectively. These data point clearly to the significance of the composite household sheltering the elementary family together with additional members in the persons of lodgers, relations, servants or visitors. This assertion is underwritten by a cursory inspection of household size as shown on Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**HOUSEHOLD SIZE**

Household Size	Caldicot		Caerwent		Portskewett		Rogiet	
	1851	1861	1851	1861	1851	1861	1851	1861
1	9	20	5	18	4	2	-	1
2	24	34	16	24	4	4	1	2
3	26	30	18	25	4	8	1	3
4	24	25	27	18	11	4	2	4
5	20	22	17	25	2	7	7	1
6	15	14	17	12	9	9	6	2
7	14	7	8	7	6	1	2	3
8	6	2	8	2	-	1	-	3
9	4	1	3	7	-	-	-	-
10	1	2	2	5	1	1	-	-
10+	3	1	5	6	-	1	2	-
Total	146	158	126	149	41	38	21	19

In 1851, for instance, 19 per cent of the households of Caldicot Parish contained more than six persons whilst comparable figures for Caerwent Parish were 20 per cent, Portskewett Parish 17 per cent and Rogiet Parish 19 per cent. Although many agricultural labourers lodged with village households, the accepted social practice for young single agricultural servants of both sexes to reside in the homesteads of the large labour-intensive farms, especially at Caldicot and Caerwent, is certainly confirmed in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION:**  
**PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH ADDITIONAL MEMBERS**

Additional Member	Caldicot		Caerwent		Portskewett		Rogiet	
	1851	1861	1851	1861	1851	1861	1851	1861
Lodgers	14	6	8	12	15	8	25	10
Relations	14	8	5	5	22	10	5	-
Servants	10	13	19	18	22	9	30	21
Visitors	1	1	4	3	-	10	-	-
Total Households =100%	146	158	126	149	41	38	21	19

Figure 1

AGE STRUCTURE OF THE PARISHES OF CALDICOT AND PORTSKEWETT WITH SELECTED SOCIAL AND OCCUPATIONAL COMPONENTS 1851 AND 1861

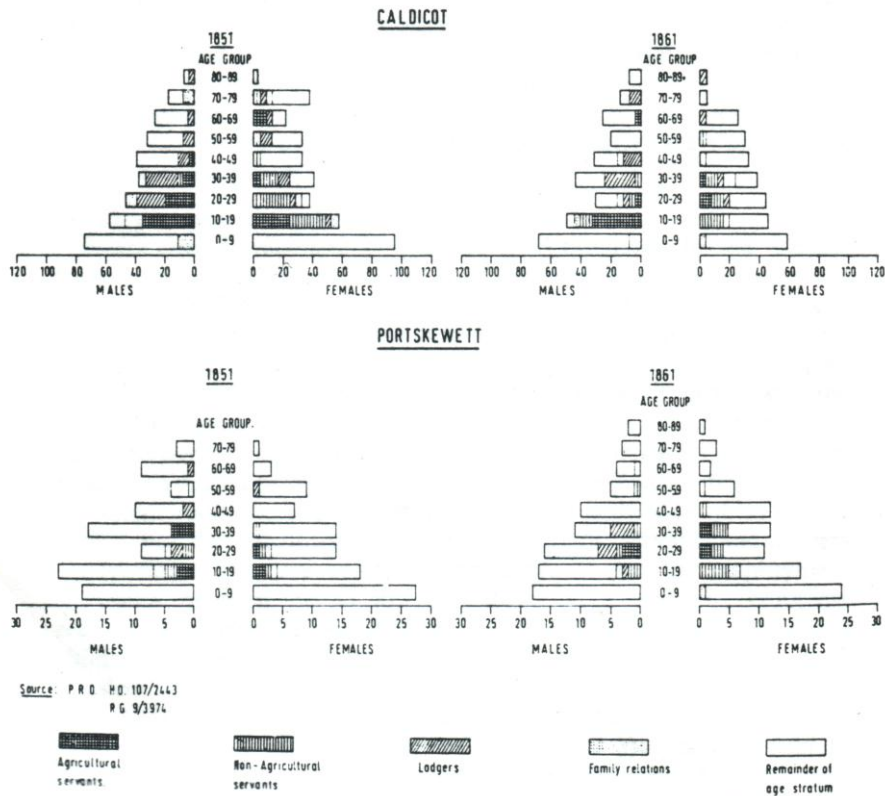
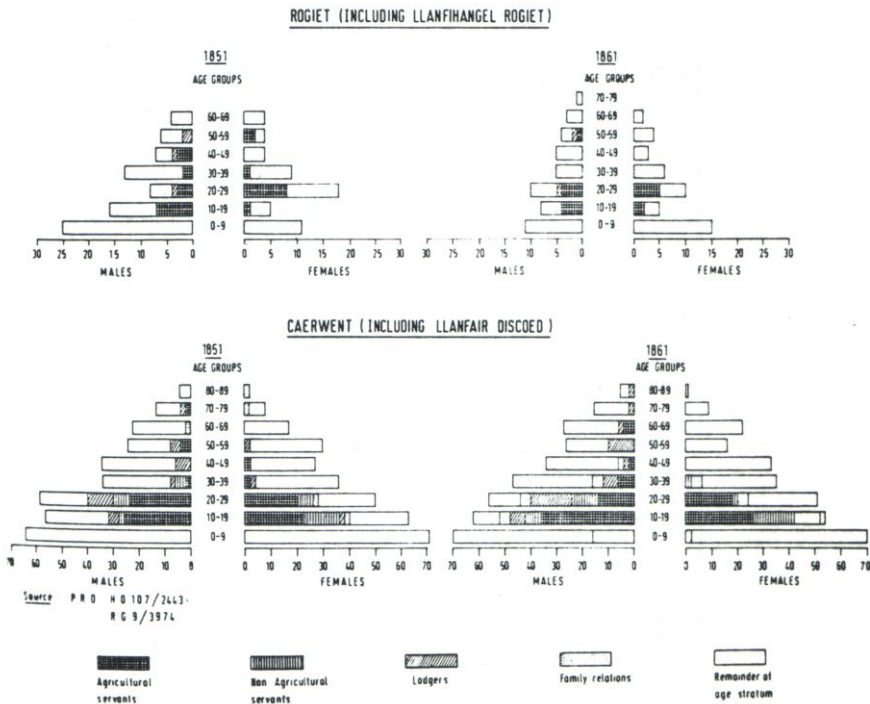


Figure 2

AGE STRUCTURE OF THE PARISHES OF ROGIET AND CAERWENT WITH SELECTED SOCIAL AND OCCUPATIONAL COMPONENTS 1851 AND 1861



Representatives drawn from the whole spectrum of kinship also resided with many elementary families. Aged "pauper" parents, siblings of the male and female household heads and nieces, nephews and grandchildren appear in the extended kinship structure of each parish. (Figs. 1 and 2) Humanitarian, welfare and economic motives undoubtedly inspired these arrangements. Teenage children frequently resided with aged grandparents. Girls usually performed domestic chores whilst instances of teenage lads undertaking agricultural labouring duties for their grandparents or uncles are recorded in several parishes. Moreover, relatives provided a significant proportion of the parish labour forces engaged by village retailers and craftsmen and usually boarded with their employers.

Pressures on village accommodation may possibly explain the numbers of "scholars" residing with their grandparents or relations within the village cores at Caldicot and Caerwent. Alternative and equally as valid explanations may be advanced to account for this association but the "farming-out" of young children from large poor families to relatives was not uncommon in the Victorian era. Evidence to support the acute overcrowding experienced in tied housing (at Caerwent and Llanfair Discoed) was subsequently presented by the Vicar, the Rev. MacDonald Steel, in 1867:

'There is a good deal of overcrowding in the cottages. The bedroom accommodation is bad. In one instance a father, mother, girl of 12 and a boy of 13 sleep in the same room. Fortunately all the girls going away so early they are not home long enough for any bad results to come from this.'<sup>9</sup>

According to the Vicar of Caldicot, the Rev. E. Tuberville Williams, there was little overcrowding in the rented and frequently ill-repaired cottages of the village until the Caldicot Wire Works became fully operational in 1862.<sup>10</sup>

Table 3 illustrates the variety of composite household structures emerging from the interplay of these economic and kinship arrangements in 1851. Thirteen per cent of all households sheltered at least one lodger and the economic significance of this additional source of household income to poor labouring families and to widows with young families requires little further comment. No doubt many widowers with young children were particularly grateful for the domestic assistance of their kin.

Table 3

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION: ADDITIONAL MEMBERS 1851

Type of Family Unit		ADDITIONAL MEMBERS										Total
		Lodgers	Relations	Servants	Visitors	LODGERS +			RELATIONS +			
						Relations	Servants	Relations + Servants	Servants	Visitors	Servants + Visitors	
Childless couples	37	6	4	1	3	3	-	-	1	-	1	56
Elementary family	152	18	12	27	2	-	1	2	2	-	1	217
<i>Incomplete families</i>												
Widow alone	4	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	12
Widow & children	6	3	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	14
Widower alone	6	1	6	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	20
Widower & children	-	-	9	3	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	15
AGGREGATE	205	31	36	35	6	4	2	3	6	-	6	334

(ii) *Employment Structure*

Parish based occupation data are not tabulated in the Census Enumeration Abstracts of 1841 and as mentioned previously the quality of the Enumerators' Schedules is inferior to that of 1851 and 1861.<sup>11</sup> More serious than the common statutory limitations of adult ages being recorded in five year groups and the absence of a stated relationship between individuals and the household head, was the inconsistent recording of other desired information. For instance, in 1841 occupation data were not recorded for thirty-one male householders in Caldicot Parish. Fortunately, more fruitful research can be based upon the subsequent Enumeration Schedules of 1851 and 1861. For three male groups - household heads, servants and lodgers - occupation data are analysed comparatively and the employment capacities of each parish are identified. Unfortunately, complete records are sadly lacking for the married females and unmarried children eligible for employment.

Adequate records for married female employment exist for only 5 per cent of the relevant households in 1851 and for 14 per cent in 1861. (Table 4)

**Table 4**  
**EMPLOYMENT OF WIVES**

Employment Category	Caldicot		Caerwent		Portskewett		Rogiet	
	1851	1861	1851	1861	1851	1861	1851	1861
Agricultural Labourer's wife	1	2				4		3
Baker				1				
Charwoman	2			2	1	1		
Dressmaker/ Seamstress	2	2	1			1	1	1
Farmer						1	1	
Gardener's wife				1				
Haulier				2				
Hawker				1				
Huxter	1	1						
Labourer's wife			1	3				
Laundress		1						
Schoolmistress	1			2	1	1		
Shepherd's wife				1				
Shopkeeper				1				
Staymaker	1			1				
Work on farm				11				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>

The diligence of the Enumerator at Caerwent in 1861 was certainly contributory to the latter statistic. Sporadic and even more infrequent reference to the unmarried female employment structure would render any appraisal to be of limited value so this component of female employment is excluded from analysis. Similarly many adult male children residing at home

have to be excluded from this analysis. This flaw in the records is especially frustrating as many farmers who employed little or no labour when according to crude economic calculations they should have done frequently had son(s) aged over twelve years living at home and without ascribed employment or recorded exemption as "scholars".<sup>12</sup> (Table 5)

**Table 5**

**MALE CHILDREN: EMPLOYMENT INSTANCES WHEN OCCUPATION RECORDED**

	Caldicot		Caerwent		Portskewett		Rogiet	
	1851	1861	1851	1861	1851	1861	1851	1861
Agriculture	27	6	5	12	6	7	5	-
Other Employment	3	1	2	8	2	1	2	-
TOTAL	30	7	7	20	8	8	7	-

Census Enumeration Abstracts for the parishes of Caldicot Hundred demonstrate conclusively that agricultural activities employed most labour throughout the period 1801-1831. Inspection of Tables 6 and 7 would support this statistical observation in 1851 and 1861 whilst contemporary literary comment clarifies the nature of the production incentives and provides insight into the systems of farming activity.<sup>13</sup>

**Table 6**

**MALE HOUSEHOLDERS: OCCUPATIONAL GROUPING**

	Caldicot		Caerwent		Portskewett		Rogiet	
	1851	1861	1851	1861	1851	1861	1851	1861
Agricultural <sup>(1)</sup>	100	105	75	102	15	17	19	20
Local Retail Service Industry <sup>(2)</sup>	11	8	7	8	2	1	-	-
Craft Industry <sup>(3)</sup>	11	12	19	17	5	3	1	-
Railway	5	5	-	-	1	1	-	-
Professional	4	8	6	6	2	2	-	-
Other Employment	9	4	25	12	14	4	1	1
TOTAL	140	142	132	145	39	28	21	21

(1) Includes farmers, farm labourers, shepherds, carters, waggoners, etc.

(2) Includes shopkeepers, grocers, bakers, butchers, etc.

(3) Includes blacksmiths, coopers, saddlers, boot/shoemakers, carpenters, masons, etc.

**Table 7**  
**LODGERS AND SERVANTS: OCCUPATIONAL GROUPING**

		MALE						FEMALE					
		LODGERS			SERVANTS			LODGERS			SERVANTS		
		No	Employed in Agric.		No	Employed in Agric.		No	Employed in Agric.		No	Employed in Agric.	
No	%		No	%		No	%		No	%			
CALDICOT	1851	18	18	100	19	9	46	8	1	13	19	10	52
	1861	11	5	46	14	10	71	4	-	-	12	-	-
CAERWENT	1851	14	8	58	34	28	82	4	-	-	24	13	54
	1861	24	17	71	40	34	85	1	-	-	31	21	68
PORTSKEWETT	1851	5	3	60	11	8	73	1	1	100	16	3	19
	1861	8	5	63	8	4	50	-	-	-	14	4	28
ROGIET	1851	4	3	75	17	17	100	-	-	-	13	13	100
	1861	2	1	50	9	9	100	-	-	-	7	7	100
TOTAL	1851	41	32	78	81	62	77	13	2	16	72	39	54
	1861	45	28	62	71	57	80	5	-	-	64	32	50



Relative to the remainder of the Principality, south eastern Monmouthshire, immediately inland from the seasonally inundated tract of the Caldicot Levels, has always been in the van of agricultural progress and as early as 1794 John Fox<sup>14</sup> was able to identify arable components of an intrusive Norfolk crop rotation namely turnips and clover in association with the cereal crops wheat and barley.<sup>15</sup> Charles Hassall was able to comment unequivocally in 1812 that:

'... mixed husbandry, affording a combination of tillage, dairy, breeding and feeding, prevail much in this valuable district which lies convenient for exporting the produce across the Severn to Bristol: in which several vessels are employed in the ports of Monmouthshire.'<sup>16</sup>

Urban-industrial markets of the Monmouthshire Coalfield likewise provided a lucrative market for ambitious local farmers.

At the height of a period of agricultural prosperity in 1870, an informative farm study by Thomas Bowstead describing the management and stocking policies pursued at Slough Farm, Caerwent, lends weight to these earlier observations.<sup>17</sup> Recurrent emphasis is laid upon the marketing opportunities opened to agriculturalists by the industrial boom towns of the Monmouthshire Coalfield and Bowstead follows carefully the line of argument pursued previously by Charles Hassall and William Fothergill<sup>18</sup> when he recalls that:

'Beef and mutton command as high a figure here as in the largest and most flourishing of our English towns, while dairy produce is largely bought up. In fact everything the farmers have to sell realises a highly remunerative price, and the resources of the land, if they are not already made the most of, must soon be called into the fullest action.'<sup>19</sup>

Hassall, Fothergill and Bowstead were in complete agreement that the full agricultural potential of the Caldicot Levels lay unrealised. Each writer offered his remedies for this situation including the careful integration of the predominantly pastoral farming systems with the broadly based mixed farming systems of the more elevated tract inland, the necessity for careful stock breeding policies favouring the cross breeding of the Glamorgan heifer and Hereford bull and the more stringent monitoring of common land grazing to derive the maximum seasonal advantage from communal grazing.<sup>20</sup>

Brief systematic consideration of the aggregated parish occupation structures illustrates the acute dependence of each parish community upon an agricultural employment base.

Comparison of the male occupation structures of Caldicot Parish for 1851 and 1861 shows that similar absolute and relative totals of household heads were engaged in agricultural work. (Table 6) Similarly male servants were predominantly engaged in agricultural work whilst the lodgers who frequently resided in the village core were generally craftsmen although the intrusive railway industry contributed three members to this latter group. (Table 7) Where annotated, farmers' sons and the sons of tradesmen invariably followed in their fathers' occupation whereas the adult daughters of householders and farmers' wives were rarely ascribed an occupation.

Farm size, land quality, farming practices and family age structure and composition conditioned the employment potential of each farm unit. The farms of *Caldicot Parish* fall into two reasonably distinctive size groups. In the north of the parish the smallholdings of Highmoor Hill and Caerwent Brook were invariably of less than twenty acres with some tenants being ascribed the compound occupation labels of farmer/haulier or farmer/butcher.<sup>21</sup> Scant female occupation records suggest that certain smallholders' wives assisted in the various small scale enterprises of their holdings as "agricultural labourer's wife" or "huxter". Larger farms in the remainder of the parish usually had recruited a part of their labour force from outside the family and several young unmarried servants of both sexes resided in the homestead. Few persons outside the immediate or extended family

were employed in the craft sector in 1851 or 1861 and the professional households within the village offered limited male employment opportunities. Eighteen females, ranging in age from twelve to seventy-four years of age were recorded as agricultural servants, domestic servants or housekeepers in 1851 and, likewise, in 1861 agriculture absorbed a large proportion of this group.

Fifty per cent of the male working population of *Portskewett Parish* were employed in agriculture in both census years. Two large farms, Southbrook Farm and Leechpool Farm, dominated the employment structure in conjunction with the New Passage Inn which employed five men in connection with its trans-shipment functions for the cross Channel ferry. Village craft and service employment was restricted yet both the Vicarage and Portskewett House employed balanced male and female domestic staffs.

Ifton Farm, Great House Farm, Green Farm and Rogiet Farm jointly dominated the employment capabilities of the grouped parishes of *Rogiet, Llanfihangel-Rogiet and Ifton*. Figure 2 confirms that variable numbers of the single young farm servants of both sexes boarded with their employers, whilst the majority of married men lived with their families in tied cottages. Upon marriage, apparently, a servant who formerly had lodged in the homestead was classed as an agricultural labourer.<sup>22</sup> With the accepted possibility of a small margin of interpretative error arising from the omission of some farm names in 1851, Table 8 summarises the localised employment role of these farms on the basis of information recorded against the farmer's name.<sup>23</sup>

**Table 8**  
**ROGIET, LLANFIHANGEL-ROGIET AND IFTON:**  
**FARM LABOUR STRUCTURES 1851 AND 1861**

	Acreage	Male Labour Force		Labour Force Resident in Homestead		Adult Children 14+ years of Age Resident at Home		Acreage per Male Labourer*
		Men	Boys	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Rogiet Farm								
1851	200	5	-	4	3	2	1	28.5
1861	310	12	-	3	2	1	-	23.8
Great House Farm								
1851	350	14	-	2	6	-	-	25.0
1861	341	10	2	2	1	-	-	28.4
Green Farm								
1851	300	10	-	2	3	-	2	30.0
1861	360	10	3	2	2	-	1	27.7
Ifton Farm								
1851	340	18	-	7	2	-	-	18.8
1861	388	19	2	3	1	-	-	18.5

\*Excluding the owner but including his adult sons

Although a representative craft sector distinguished the village of Caerwent which supported one blacksmith, two carpenters, three masons, three shoemakers, four tailors and a saddler in 1851, the largest proportion of the labour of *Caerwent, Llanfair-Discoed and Dinham Parishes* was engaged in agricultural work. A comparable range of craft industry was

represented in the village in 1861 but again agriculture was the dominant employer. The hamlet of Llanfair-Discoed possessed its own minor craft sector with representatives of most crafts noted at Caerwent but in addition boasted a cooper and two wheelwrights in 1851. By 1861, however, the cooper was recorded as "being out of business" and his task had been taken over by one of the wheelwrights recorded in 1851 and who in 1861 masqueraded as the sole cooper and wheelwright for the hamlet and grouped parishes. The hamlet of Crick possessed its own blacksmith.

Large labour intensive arable farms of the Nedern valley such as Great Dinham Farm extending to over 560 acres and employing eleven male labourers and two women in 1851 and twenty-one labourers three boys and four women in 1861, had numbers of workmen designated as "carter" or "waggoner". The ancillary employment of young children from agricultural labouring families reflects family indebtedness to the industry.

Presenting evidence to the *Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture* the Reverend MacDonald Steel, Vicar of Caerwent, asserted that very few boys were employed in agriculture before the age of fourteen years but that some younger boys tended birds.<sup>24</sup> Fragmentary evidence for the twenty lads recorded in 1861 would confirm this statement. Child assistance in the seasonally labour demanding tasks of potato picking and swede cropping was common but the Vicar carefully noted that, in practice, the girls cared for the younger members of their family to free their mothers for these seasonal field duties.<sup>25</sup> Mr Matthew Langley of Llanfair-Discoed presented similar opinions to the Commission and hinted that the casual female labour customarily recruited for these seasonal tasks was becoming increasingly difficult to hire:

'There is some difficulty in getting women. Formerly they used to come out and pick swedes, but now they stay at home.'<sup>26</sup>

Diligent recording of census information in 1861 permits the elaboration of these later statements. (Table 4) Although in many households of agricultural labourers no occupation was assigned to the wife, other agricultural labourers' wives with a broadly comparable number of children were assigned the label "work on farm". Would this distinction justify the conclusion that the latter group of wives formed part of the regular labour force whereas, perhaps, their counterparts emerged only in response to peak seasonal labour requirements?

In both census years the craft industries of the rural service centre, Caerwent, and of the nearby hamlets of Llanfair-Discoed and Crick were characteristically family concerns.

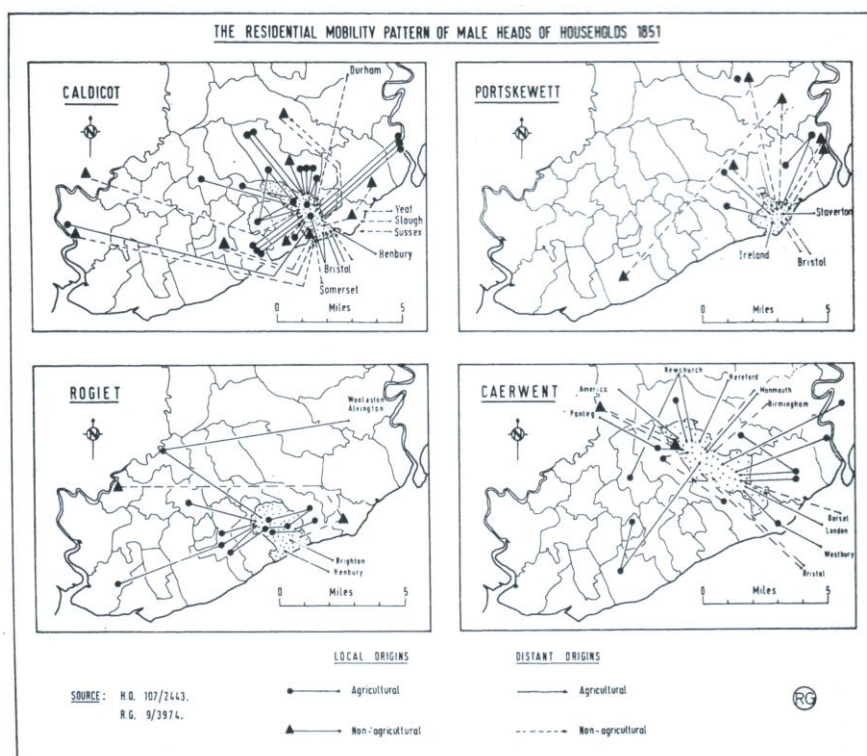
### (iii) *Population Mobility*

Numerous local studies of mid-nineteenth century population mobility have been restricted to a description of net population change within the administrative divisions for which the census data are compiled.<sup>27</sup> The parish was the smallest unit for which published population sex totals were tabulated before 1841 and it is fortunate that access to the Enumeration Schedules of 1851 and 1861 permits more detailed research. From 1881, however recourse to the bald aggregate sex totals is again necessary as the relevant enumeration schedules have, as yet, to be released by the Registrar General for public inspection.<sup>28</sup>

Several economic and social historians have pointed to the problems associated with the measurement of localised mobility and the artificiality of administrative boundaries which frequently partition the spatial patterning of community and economic life.<sup>29</sup> Short distance residential mobility across the boundaries of census units is recorded but, unfortunately, movements of an equivalent distance within any unit are concealed. Hence variations in, say, parish size, parish shape or even population distribution can easily render a false impression of the preferred directions of movement for a comprehensive knowledge of localised mobility is denied.<sup>30</sup> Irrespective of these crippling data limitations, certain general directions of population mobility determined from available library sources can be elaborated

by referring to two "period-pictures" of net residential mobility derived from the Enumeration Schedules. First, broad regional migration trends are discussed briefly to place the net localised mobility patterns into their true context.

**Figure 3**



A masterly interpretation of county nativity information from consecutive Census Enumeration Abstracts by Professor Brinley Thomas confirms the attraction that the South Wales coalmining industry held for the relatively ill-paid rural agricultural labourers of the adjoining areas throughout the latter part of the 19th century. Professor Thomas's study suggests that during the decade 1861-1871 about 70 per cent of the migrants to the Glamorgan Coalfield were recruited from the five neighbouring Welsh counties.<sup>31</sup>

Footnotes in the Census Enumeration Abstracts document the continued migration of youthful agricultural labourers from several south east Monmouthshire parishes to the thriving mining activities of the South Wales Coalfield and Forest of Dean Coalfield:

'The decrease of the population in the parishes of Llanvaches, Wilcrick, Witson (*sic*), Goldcliff and Kemeys Inferior, is ascribed to the removal of labourers to the mining districts.'<sup>32</sup>

Table 9 depicts the generalised nature of net population decline in Caldicot, Portskewett and Rogiet over the intercensal period 1851-1861. Also, whereas Figures 1 and 2 show no appreciable intercensal modification of the age-sex profile for Caerwent, the declining population totals and changing age composition of Caldicot, Portskewett and Rogiet arising from emigration are clearly illustrated.<sup>33</sup> Table 10 highlights the reduced proportionate significance of the youthful population of Caldicot and Rogiet. In agreement with C. S. Read<sup>34</sup> Charles Hassall had outlined one local reaction to the exodus of this youthful agricultural labour to the Coalfield industries as early as 1812 when he stated that:

'Agricultural labour, at all times forming a very heavy item on the expenses of a farm, has, during the last six or eight months been a source of real anxiety, if not

alarm, to the arable farmer ... wages ... have, since Christmas, advanced about 15 per cent.<sup>135</sup>

**Table 9**  
**INTERCENSAL POPULATION CHANGE**

	1841	% Change over 1831	1851	% change over 1841	1861	% change over 1851
<b>CAERWENT</b>						
Males	348	+2.5	308	-11.5	346	+12.3
Females	284	-3.1	303	+6.6	286	-5.6
TOTAL	632	-2.8	611	-3.3	632	+3.4
Ave. Household size	5.5		5.1		5.0	
<b>CALDICOT</b>						
Males	328	+9.7	338	-3.1	287	-15.7
Females	297	+4.9	323	+8.7	292	-9.6
TOTAL	624	+7.2	661	+5.9	579	-12.4
Ave. Household size	4.8		4.9		4.2	
<b>PORTSKEWETT</b>						
Males	106	+0.9	100	-5.7	87	-13.0
Females	91	+7.6	87	-4.4	88	+1.1
TOTAL	197	+3.6	187	-5.0	175	-6.4
Ave. Household size	5.8		5.3		4.8	
<b>ROGIET</b>						
Males	64	-4.5	81	+26.6	36	-55.5
Females	52	-21.2	55	+5.8	36	-36.4
TOTAL	116	-12.1	136	+17.2	72	-47.0
Ave. Household size	5.0		6.5		4.2	

**Table 10**  
**PERCENTAGE AGE GROUPINGS OF POPULATION 1851 AND 1861 AGE IN YEARS**

Parish		Less than 15	16 - 45	Greater than 45	100% =
Caldicot	1851	37	39	24	661
	1861	30	41	29	579
Rogiet	1851	41	40	19	136
	1861	34	45	21	72

Perhaps the low activity rates recorded for married females and young children in agriculture were a financial response to proximity to the "higher-wage" districts of the South Wales and Forest of Dean Coalfields so that the vital necessity for dependants to contribute towards their household income would have been correspondingly less. Evidence presented to the *Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture* for

neighbouring areas of the County bears out this observation.<sup>36</sup>

Frustrating though it is not to know what motivated agricultural labourers to migrate, one clue may lie in the comparison of the wage statistics tabulated by A. W. Fox<sup>37</sup> with those for the various industrial categories computed from the records of selected collieries by Professor Thomas.<sup>38</sup> (Table 11)

**Table 11**  
**COMPARISON OF WAGE RATES:**

	<i>Glamorgan Coalfield Wages</i>	
	1869	1873
	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>
Hewers	24 5	48 9
Timbermen	25 0	53 4
Hauliers	20 0	31 6
Landers	21 0	36 9
Labourers	15 0	24 0

B. Thomas: *op. cit.*, p. 340

**AGRICULTURAL WAGES AT CHEPSTOW**

	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891
	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>
Summer Rate	no info	12 0	12 0	13 0	14 0
Winter Rate	no info	12 0	12 0	13 0	14 0

A.W. Fox: *op. cit.*, p. 340

Even compensating for discrepancies in real wage rates which might have arisen from less costly rural living, in 1869 even a labourer in a colliery could earn 25 per cent more than his agricultural counterpart at Chepstow.<sup>39</sup> More remunerative coalfield employment would not have lain outside the reach of an intelligent agricultural labourer as many "carters" and "waggoners" were surely well qualified to become hauliers and others, one imagines, may well have aspired to the lucrative heights of timbermen or hewers. One question that cannot be answered is whether or not the labourers and their families moved to the coalfield or did the males migrate alone to return at convenient intervals to their families? Certainly the latter feature was common in areas fringing coalfields and was noted in 1923 by A. M. Jones in her study of Welsh rural industry.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the well documented age and sex selective regional migration drift towards the South Wales Coalfield and the Forest of Dean, large numbers of individuals and completed families also moved into the parishes of south east Monmouthshire. A very tentative estimate of the strength of "foreign" population elements in the localised community structures can be derived from the analysis of the birthplace records of household heads, their relatives, servants and lodgers. More tentatively still, outline mobility currents can be reconstructed from the sequential analysis of available child birthplaces recorded in the larger households.

Nativity records of *male and female householders* provide no clues as to the intervening residential locations nor to the periods during the individual's life cycle when movement to the present house occurred; these records register net mobility alone. Aggregated birthplace records for the four study parishes do, however, indicate several interesting features. (Table 12) First, intermarriage from within the study parishes was the most common marriage arrangement in both census years when records show that over 60 per cent of the male and female householders were locally born. When birthplaces within the broader region of south eastern Monmouthshire are also considered, these figures fall only a little short of 70 per

cent.<sup>41</sup> Second, the marginally higher proportion of female householders born within south eastern Monmouthshire and resident in the four sample parishes suggests either premarital short distance migration or, conversely, the migration of the bride to her husband's parish upon marriage.<sup>42</sup> Whatever the explanation, the fact of mobility has been established although the timing and motivation remain unknown. Third, aggregate birthplace ratios of male and female householders suggest longer distance movement to be a distinctive characteristic of male householders.<sup>43</sup> Fourth, birthplace evidence reveals the existence of four Irish born households in 1851 and six in 1861. Usually the male household heads were employed as agricultural labourers but a different Irish born cordwainer resided at Caldicot in both years.

Table 2 shows that the majority of *householders' relatives* were sprinkled liberally throughout the villages of Caldicot, Caerwent and Portskewett. Frequently, the younger relations were natives of the parish whereas many geriatric parents and adult siblings of the householders had originated in more distant locations.

**Table 12**  
**BIRTHPLACES OF MARRIAGE PARTNERS**

1851						
Males	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Total
Females						
(1) No Partner	-	12	3	7	5	27
(2) Study parishes	4	74	18	27	24	147
(3) S.E. Mon.	5	32	14	6	8	65
(4) Mon. and Gloucs.	1	14	4	15	5	39
(5) Elsewhere	-	9	6	8	24	47
Aggregate	10	141	45	63	66	325
1861						
Males	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Total
Females						
(1) No Partner	-	8	4	6	6	24
(2) Study parishes	10	72	15	12	16	125
(3) S.E. Mon.	3	26	34	7	4	74
(4) Mon. and Gloucs.	2	12	2	15	9	40
(5) Elsewhere	2	10	6	9	27	54
Aggregate	17	128	61	49	62	317

As for neither the lodgers nor servants of either sex was a discernible regional birthplace distribution associated with agricultural employment or otherwise, the analysis of the regional origins of lodgers and servants is conducted irrespective of employment. Nearly three quarters of the *male lodgers* had been born outside south-east Monmouthshire. (Table 13) Wiltshire, Devon, Somerset and south Herefordshire were the foremost origins at both census counts. Although fewer in number, a similar regional birthplace pattern was detected for *female lodgers* the greater number of whom were born outside the county.

**Table 13**  
**LODGERS AND SERVANTS: BIRTHPLACES**

Birthplace	MALE				FEMALE			
	Lodger		Servant		Lodger		Servant	
	1851	1861	1851	1861	1851	1861	1851	1861
Study parishes	10	10	31	37	6	2	28	24
Neighbouring parishes	-	4	12	7	-	-	9	7
Remainder of S.E. Mon.	1	-	5	3	-	-	10	11
Elsewhere	30	31	33	24	7	3	25	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>64</b>

Just under 40 per cent of the *male servants* in 1851 and 52 per cent in 1861 were born in the sample parishes and some 40 per cent in 1851 and 34 per cent in 1861 had originated outside south-east Monmouthshire. Similarly, in both census years, approximately 38 per cent of the *female servants* were born locally and the corresponding percentages for "foreign" elements are 35 per cent and 38 per cent, respectively.

Sizeable proportions of servants and lodgers of both sexes had originated from neighbouring parishes and from elsewhere in south east Monmouthshire. Shirenewton and the more sparsely populated parishes of south central Monmouthshire were particularly prominent in these totals and also the more geographically remote parishes of the Caldicot Levels namely, Goldcliff, Nash, Redwick and Whitson.

Analysis of Table 7 has already shown that a large proportion of the female servants were not employed as agricultural labourers in Caldicot, Portskewett and, to a lesser degree, in Caerwent. Associated with this statistical feature is the large proportion of the female labour force originating from outside south east Monmouthshire. Domestic labour requirements of the large country seats such as Mount Ballan House, Portskewett House, Caldicot Hall and the Rectories of the parishes were frequently met by teenage servants recruited from the neighbouring County of Gloucester and from Somerset and Devon which, in the latter cases, might reasonably underwrite the value of the New Passage Ferry for cross Channel travel. (See Figs. 1 and 2)

*Child birthplace records* provide a further insight into the compound nature of mobility although ignorance of intervening locations unmarked by childbirth arises once more.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, within limits, record of a childbirth in a different parish together with a child's age broadly suggests the period within which the family has moved. Figure 3 has been compiled on the basis of child birthplace information for 1851 and a comparable, but unpublished, parish base map was prepared for 1861.<sup>45</sup> Consistently for each parish, the principal component of all registered mobility originated from within south east Monmouthshire and most often from within a three mile radius.<sup>46</sup> Strong mobility currents from south central Monmouthshire can be readily identified and also the less pronounced movement from the more remote parishes of the Levels. Cross Channel migration, in particular from Somerset, was a significant element detected in each parish and earlier identified in Table 12.

Sequences of family movement detected in most parishes register localised inter parish movement but also, occasionally, as in 1861 the return of families that, hitherto, had migrated farther afield. The description of two family case histories drawn from Rogiet Parish



and represented on Figure 3 will clarify this discussion on localised mobility.

(i) A 38 year old Undy born agricultural labourer married to a 33 year old Penhow born wife had three locations noted for his children aged nine years, seven years and six weeks - Nash, Magor and Rogiet.

(ii) An Undy born widower, 47 years old, agricultural labourer, with four children had migrated successively to Llanfihangel-Rogiet, Caldicot, Ifton, Llanfihangel-Rogiet and Magor in the space of 35 years before resettling, eventually, at Llanfihangel-Rogiet.

Comparative examination of all family mobility records shows that no specific pattern of migration can be attributed to either the agricultural or non-agricultural components but that on the basis of the census evidence both groups had displayed very similar migration preferences.

Complementing the localised mobility patterns already discussed child birthplace records for selected Irish agricultural labourers at Caerwent, Caldicot and Portskewett reveal the direction and approximate timing of their emigration from famine-stricken Ireland and in 1861 also indicate a family willingness to engage in agricultural pursuits. (Table 14)

**Table 14**

**RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY OF SELECTED IRISH FAMILIES**

Parish	Age		Occupation	Birthplace	Parish	Age		Occupation	Birthplace
	M	F				M	F		
Portskewett 1851	37		Ag Lab	Ireland	Caerwent 1861	45		Ag Lab	Ireland
		37		Ireland		49	Birdminder		Ireland
		4		Ireland		12			Caerwent
		2		Portskewett		9			Caerwent
				5	Caerwent				
Caerwent 1851	33		Ag Lab	Cork	Caerwent 1861	32		Ag Lab Occupied on farm	Ireland
		31		Roscommon		38	Ireland		
		6		London		10	Bridgenorth		
	5			Caerwent			(Salop)		
	2			Caerwent					
2m		Caerwent							

*Conclusion*

How far has our historical understanding of rural community life been broadened by the foregoing analyses? Because of the restricted factual content of the census records only selected structural aspects of community form can be analysed; the sociological dimensions of community life still remain a closed chapter. Moreover, the satisfying explanation of derived patterns is impeded by the inadequacies of supporting literature and many intriguing questions still remain unanswered.

We should not admit defeat, however, because limited advances can be made by determined research. This essay has exposed the content of the Census Schedules and has presented certain appropriate techniques to illustrate the various ways in which the census material can be processed. With the recent release of the 1871 Schedules which under the hundred year rule for historical records had until now remained inviolate at the Public Record Office it is timely to challenge readers to produce comparable parish case studies from

elsewhere in the County of Monmouthshire. Without doubt such concerted effort would repay handsome dividends and increase our comparative knowledge of the community structures in both the urban-industrial west and rural east of the County.

#### REFERENCES

- 1 One outstanding published work is that by R. Lawton: *The Population of Liverpool in the mid-nineteenth century*, Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, Vol. 107, 1955, pp. 89-120. An interesting quantitative approach to the analysis of these Schedules is provided by R. Smith: *Early Victorian Household Structure: A Case Study of Nottinghamshire*, International Review of Social History, Vol. 15, 1970, pp. 69-84.
- 2 *Examples* of such work in rural areas are W. M. Williams: *A West Country Village: Ashworthy*, London, 1963, pp. 115-139. J. A. Sheppard: *East Yorkshire's Agricultural Labour Force in the mid-nineteenth century*, Agricultural History Review, Vol. II, 1961, pp. 43-54.
- 3 In recognition of small population totals and the functional interdependence of certain parishes, the census records for Llanfair-Discoed and Dinham are analysed with those of Caerwent and Llanfihangel-Rogiet, Ifton and Rogiet are grouped.
- 4 Interesting case studies are those by G. J. Lewis: *The Demographic Structure of a Welsh Rural Village During the mid-nineteenth century*, Ceredigion, Vol. 5, 1966, pp. 290-304.  
S. Thomas: *The Agricultural Labour Force in some South- West Carmarthenshire Parishes in the mid-nineteenth century*, Welsh History Review, Vol. 3, 1966 pp. 63-73.  
R. L. Gant: *The Decay of the Landed Estates in the Mid-Usk Valley: A Study in Human Geography*, Unpublished B.A. Thesis, Univ. Coll. of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1964, pp. 27-33 and pp. 36-39 uses these census records to examine the early Victorian household structures of the country seats in the region and also to examine the functional characteristics of Crickhowell.
- 5 W. A. Armstrong: 'Social Structure from the Early Census Returns' in E. A. Wrigley (ed.): *An Introduction to English Historical Demography*, London, 1966, pp. 211-214 fully explores the content of these documents.
- 6 Usually the copper-plate handwriting is legible and only in isolated cases is it difficult to decipher a word. Pencil was used in 1841 whereas in 1851 and 1861 entries were made in ink.
- 7 Deaf, dumb and blind persons were identified in a column on the extreme right hand side of the Schedule.
- 8 W. A. Armstrong: *op. cit.*, p. 211, outlines the problems associated with the interpretation of the 1841 Schedules.  
Reference numbers for the documents consulted at the Public Record Office, Chancery Lane. London are:  
1851-H.O. 107/2490, 107/2443  
1861-R.G. 3975/3978.
- 9 *Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture*. 1870. Appendix to Third Report, p. 146, paragraph 42.
- 10 *ibid.*, p. 145, paragraph 39.
- 11 Aggregated census data were tabulated for the following divisions of Monmouthshire in 1841: Aberystwyth, Bedwellty and Trevethin, Pontypool Town, St Woollos and Newport County Borough.
- 12 G. J. Lewis: *op. cit.*, p. 294, discusses this problem with selected illustrations.
- 13 See R. L. Gant: 'Monmouthshire Moors Agricultural Geography Project: Background Material in R. L. Gant and A. J. Francis: *Severnside Field Excursion: Briefing and Projects*, School of Geography, Kingston Polytechnic, February, 1971, Typescript.
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- 15 D. Thomas: *Agriculture in Wales during the Napoleonic Wars. A Study in the Geographical Interpretation of Historical Sources*, Cardiff, 1964, p. 9, points out that the higher water table of the Levels severely restricted the arable acreages whereas in the vicinity of Chepstow substantial acreages of wheat, barley and turnips were cultivated on the more elevated tracts of fertile, freely-draining soils.
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- 18 W. Fothergill: *The Farming of Monmouthshire*, Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society, Vol. 6 (Second

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- 19 T. Bowstead: *op. cit.*, p. 289.
- 20 The geographical distribution of communal grazing land is carefully examined by:  
M. Davies: *Common Lands in South-East Monmouthshire*, Transactions of the Cardiff Naturalists' Society, Vol. 85, 1955, pp. 5-15 and by D. Sylvester: *The Common Fields of the Coastlands of Gwent*, Agricultural History Review, Vol. 6, 1958, pp. 9-26.
- 21 Dual occupations for smallholders have been noted elsewhere, for instance by M. A. Havinden: *Estate Villages. A Study of the Berkshire Villages of Ardington and Lockinge*, London, 1966, p. 55.
- 22 Dr. J. A. Sheppard: *op. cit.*, p. 48 notes a similar arrangement in her Yorkshire study.
- 23 Frequently, but not necessarily, the name of the farm, acreage and size of male labour force are recorded. J. A. Sheppard: *op. cit.*, p. 45 prudently points out that there is no way of checking the accuracy of these records.
- 24 *Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture*. Appendix to Third Report, p. 146, paragraph 42.
- 25 Evidence presented by F. E. Green: *A History of the English Agricultural Worker 1870-1910*, London, 1920, p. 77 and by B. Thomas: *The Migration of Labour into the Glamorganshire Coalfield*, *Economica*, Vol. 10, 1930, p. 284 suggests that the Education Act of 1870 effectively reduced the size of the child labour and child-minder forces. Consequently more women were confined to the home although seasonal absenteeism from school undoubtedly occurred. W. Hasbach: *A History of the English Agricultural Labourer*, London, 1966, Appendix VI, p. 416 notes that the employment of women as day labourers was on the decrease throughout the higher wage districts of Wales in the early 1860s. On pp. 269-70 the author traces the effects of the Education Acts of 1870, 1873 and 1876 on the availability of child labour.
- 26 *ibid.*, p. 45, paragraph 44.
- 27 Among the well presented case studies illustrating population mobility are H. C. Darby: *The Movement of Population to and from Cambridgeshire between 1851 and 1861*, *Geographical Journal*, Vol. 101, 1943, pp. 118-125.  
R. A. Lawton: *Population Movements in the West Midlands 1841-1961*, *Geography*, Vol. 43, 1958, pp. 164-177.  
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- 28 Notable studies of this kind are E. G. Ravenstein: *The Laws of Migration*, *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. 48, 1885, pp. 167-235 and Vol. 52, 1889, pp. 241-305.  
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- 31 B. Thomas: *op. cit.*, p. 280. S. Thomas: *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73 presents carefully researched evidence to expose the progressive drift of agricultural labour from Western Carmarthenshire to the industrialised areas of East Carmarthenshire, Glamorgan and Monmouthshire.
- 32 *Census Enumeration Abstract*, 1851, p. 19, note (h).
- 33 'The decrease of population in the Parish of Caldicot is mainly due to emigration' *Census Enumeration Abstract*, 1861, p. 705, note (a).
- 34 C. S. Read: *On the Farming of South Wales*, *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society*, Vol. 10, 1849, p. 154.
- 35 C. Hassall: *op. cit.*, p. 322.

- 36 Several correspondents noted the increasing independence of the agricultural labourers. The Rev. A. C. Saunders of Magor, for instance, commented that: 'The nearness of the mines keeps up the wages in Magor, and makes the people independent, for they and the farmers alike know that good wages are to be had within an hour's railway.' *op. cit.*, p. 150, paragraph 58.
- 37 A. W. Fox: *Agricultural Wages in England and Wales during the last fifty years*, Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Vol. 66, 1903, p. 322.
- 38 B. Thomas: *op. cit.*, p. 282.
- 39 'Wages are 10s. to 15s.; the former in the purely agricultural parish, the latter near the mines; average value in hard cash, 12s. It is mostly paid in money, sometimes however 10s and cider, and there are other privileges, regulated by local circumstance, such as ... potato ground ....'  
Meeting of the Board of Guardians. Chepstow Poor Law Union, October 23rd, 1869. Quoted in the *Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children Young Persons and Women in Agriculture, Appendix to Third Report*, p. 144, paragraph 37.
- 40 A. M. Jones: *The Rural Industries of England and Wales, Vol. IV, Wales*, Oxford, 1923, p. 10.
- 41 From their various academic standpoints geographers, sociologists and economic historians are deeply interested in patterns of intermarriage. The study by P. J. Perry: *Working-Class Isolation and Mobility in Rural Dorset, 1837-1936: A Study of Marriage Distances*, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, No. 46, 1969, pp. 121-141 confirms the significance of localised intermarriage. An appended bibliography itemises other studies of this nature prepared for parts of rural Britain and urbanised America.
- 42 K. Bukatsch: *The Constancy of Local Population and Migration in England before 1800*, Population Studies, Vol. 5, 1951, p. 62.
- 43 No evidence emerges from this analysis either to support or refute E. G. Ravenstein's observation that females were more 'migratory' than males. See E. G. Ravenstein: *op. cit.*, p. 199.
- 44 Child birthplace records were particularly valuable in indicating the migrational history of the navy gang employed on bridge construction at Knaresborough in 1851.  
J. A. Patmore: *The Navy Gang of 1851*, Journal of Transport History, Vol. 5, 1962, pp. 182-189.
- 45 Obviously certain family case records were unsuited to this analysis. In 1851 only 23 % of the cases could be used and in 1861 20%. These were divided on occupational grounds into:

	<i>Agricultural Occupations</i>	<i>Non-Agricultural Occupations</i>	<i>Total</i>
1851	48	28	76
1861	45	21	66

- 46 See footnote (30) and E. G. Ravenstein: *op. cit.*, p. 198. Ravenstein suggested that major currents of migration were composed of a myriad of short distance movements.