

The Collected Works of Peter Razzell

An Anthology

Volume 4

An Anthology

Date: September 27, 2026

Table of Contents

<u>Demography and the Decline of the Roman Empire</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>The Population History of Britain, 1538-1850</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Shakespeare's Biography: A Conundrum Resolved</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>Socio-Economic Status and the History of the Quakers</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>Socio-Economic Status, Oliver Cromwell, the New Model Army and the Growth of Quakerism</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>Socio-Economic Status, the English Civil War, and Oliver Cromwell</u>	<u>39</u>
<u>The Life of Shakespeare: The Growth of Literature</u>	<u>55</u>
<u>Population Growth and Political Radicalism</u>	<u>67</u>
<u>The Centrality of Demography in the Social Sciences</u>	<u>71</u>
<u>Samuel Pepys: A Case Study in the History of Hygiene</u>	<u>74</u>
<u>Burial Practices in Early Modern England</u>	<u>87</u>

Demography and the Decline of the Roman Empire.

Peter Razzell

In his book on the enemies of Rome, Philip Matyszak wrote:

‘Historians blamed the fall of Rome on depopulation, pointing to references in the ancient texts to plagues and *agri deserti* (abandoned fields). Certainly, by the end of the Empire, a few thousand men counted as a substantial army whereas in the glory days of the Republic a single legion contained 6,000 men.’¹

There is evidence that the “urban penalty” in mortality may have been responsible for the depopulation referred to by Matyszak. This penalty can be illustrated with data from a study of British Quakers in the period between the middle of the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries.

Table 1: Estimated Infant Mortality (Per 1000) Amongst Quakers 1650-1849²

Period	London	Bristol & Norwich	Provincial England	Dublin	Cork. Wexford. Waterford & Limerick	Rural Ireland
1650-99	342	219	177	299	166	82
1700-49	269	216	200	196	160	118
1750-99	166	158	124	164	151	82
1800-49	132	107	69	107	62	41

Infant mortality in rural Ireland was between a quarter and a third less than that in London. This Table depicts a progressive increase in infant mortality in urban areas depending on their population size in both England and Ireland. In Ireland the great majority of rural inhabitants lived in isolation, and Freeman has estimated that in 1841 only about 20 per cent of the Irish population lived in villages and towns, the rest in isolated cabins.³

In addition to the Quaker data, there was a similar urban/rural infant mortality gradient in England amongst the general population. For example, the infant mortality rate in sixteen London parishes in 1700-49 was 409/1000, compared to 181/1000 in eighteenth English parishes.⁴

The above evidence reveals that mortality rates in urban areas were twice as high and above than that in rural districts. This was also the case in the Roman Empire and surroundings regions. This can be illustrated by an analysis of population growth in different regions of Europe.

Table 2: An Estimate of the Empire's Population in A.D 164⁵

<i>Region</i>	<i>Population (millions)</i>	<i>Density (per km²)</i>	<i>Increase from A.D. 14 (per cent)</i>
Italy	7.6	30.4	8.6
Maghreb	6.5	16.3	85.7
Iberia	7.5	12.7	50.0
Gaul/Germany	9.0	14.2	55.2
Danube Region	4.0	9.3	48.4

Italy's population suffered from high population density and had a markedly lower rate of population growth in the period 14-164 A.D. than surrounding European countries. This was probably the result of a high concentration of urban cities and towns in Italy during this period.

According to the Internet AI 'Urbanization in Roman Italy saw a massive expansion from the 8th century BCE through the Imperial era ... [involving] the development of colonies and municipalise, creating high urbanization rates (approximately 15-30% in Italy) ... As Rome grew, it expanded by building a network of colonies and creating roads that interconnected the Italian peninsula ... Bioarchaeological evidence shows the urban dwellers in cities like Milan suffered more from infectious diseases compared to rural residents.'

As Frier has written, 'By AD 14, Rome, the imperial capital, had at least 710,000 inhabitants, more than a tenth of Italy's population, and in the following century it may have reached 1 million. ... All the great cities of antiquity, with their fetid conditions and high mortality rates, were heavy net consumers of population.'

Frier posed the question as to 'What happened to the Roman empire's population after A.D. 14.? Clearly there was room for growth, above all in the thinly settled West, and although the population of Italy apparently remained stagnant, elsewhere archaeology had provided conclusive evidence for growth, especially in Africa, Spain and Gaul.'⁶

According to AI Overview on Google, 'Caesar largely raised his legions in Cisalpine Gaul (northern Italy)', and thus they would have been prone to high levels of disease incidence and mortality.

According to Wikipedia, the population of Rome fell to 500,000 in 410 AD because of the sack of the city, and was reduced by the Gothic Wars to 30,000 in 600 AD.

Frier has elaborated the reasons for high urban mortality: 'High mortality rates and pre-modern sanitary conditions made urban regions net population sinks, with more deaths than births. They could only be sustained by constant migration ... Scourges are certain ... numerous 'fevers', including typhus, typhoid fever, Malta and malaria, second, pulmonary illnesses, especially the forms of pneumonia ... In normal circumstances, these causes were probably responsible for around 60 per cent of all deaths. Gangrene, scurvy (especially in times of want); and, less frequently, rabies, tetanus and anthrax ... Also undoubtedly significant were dysentery and diarrhoea (especially for infants) cholera... sanitary standards were poor ... disposal of human waste and garbage; large cities in particular remained fetid ... Rome alone probably

produced about a million cubic metres of human waste each year, a fact worth remembering when we read of Romans bathing in the Tiber. Indeed, the medical writer Galen specifically warns against eating fish from the Tiber ... Roman urbanism implied large and compact settlements linked by swift communications, and thus provided a ready network for infectious diseases to take hold and spread ...'⁷

Augustus sponsored the *Lex Papia Poppaea* in 9 AD to promote marriage and childbearing. In the late Republic, 'protracted conflicts – from the Social War to the triumvirates – had culled a generation of potential citizen-soldiers, leaving shortages for staffing the 28 legions Augustus maintained post-Actium. Reliance on voluntary enlistment from the property-owning classes exposed vulnerabilities with low elite fertility directly impairing the supply of iuniores (military-age males) needed for campaigns in Gaul, Spain and the East.'⁸

However, the areas from which Roman soldiers were recruited expanded over time. 'While they started as an Italian force, by the 2nd century AD, the vast majority of legionaries were Romanized provincials from regions like Hispania (Spain), Gaul (France), North Africa, and the Balkans.'⁹

Smallpox appeared as a new disease in the Mediterranean, and as a result mortality became very heavy, and in 'affected places, probably as much as a quarter to a third of the entire population died ... One reason for the continued decay of population within Roman borders was that fresh outbreaks of serious pestilence continued to occur. A new round of a magnitude fully comparable to the Antonine plague of 165-80 hit the Roman world in 251-66. This time reported mortality in the city of Rome was even greater: five thousand a day are said to have died at the height of the epidemic.'¹⁰

The city of Rome was the central reservoir of infection, and literary sources ... attest the plague in Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, Gaul and Germany; they also stress its heavy toll on human life in cities and on the land, its persistence and recurrence, and the widespread famines and that broke out in its wake,¹¹ The Roman Empire with its network of roads and towns provided an ideal basis for the spread of infection.

The invading Huns, Visigoths and other barbarian tribes¹² lived in rural environments and therefore would have been less prone to high levels of infection found in urban districts. The Huns had traditionally been described as pastoral nomads, living off herding and moving from pasture to graze their animals, with a report that there was an absence of buildings.¹³

According to Tacitus, 'It is well known that none of the German tribes are urbanised, homes among them not being allowed in close proximity. They live apart, scattered, as fountain, field and grove appeal to them. Their villages are not built after our fashion with buildings near together and connected, rather each man surrounds his house with a clear space, either as a precaution in case of fire, or through lack of expertise in construction.'¹⁴

This geographical isolation is similar to the historical conditions in rural Ireland, resulting in lower levels of disease infection. Likewise, 'the Visigoths emerged from the Gothic tribes ... a people believed to have their origins in Scandinavia and migrated south-eastwards into eastern

Europe.’¹⁵ It is likely that the rural environment in Scandinavia was much less prone to infection, allowing the Visigoths, as well as the Huns, to increase their numbers and therefore pose an increasing threat to the Roman Empire.

Reliable demographic evidence is usually lacking in this historical era, but the data in Table 2 shows that population growth was significantly higher in regions outside of Italy with low population densities, resulting in a greater capacity to launch effective attacks on the empire and eventually resulting in its decline.

1 Philip Matyszak. *The Enemies of Rome: From Hannibal to Attila the Hun*, 2023, p. 283.

2 Peter Razzell, The Population History in Britain, 1538-1850, *Online Razzell Academia*, p. 5.

3 Thomas W. Freeman, *Pre-Famine Ireland: A Study in Historical Geography*, 1957, p. 27.

4 Peter Razzell, ‘Population growth and the development of capitalism’ in *Razzell Academia*.

5 Bruce W. Frier, “Demography”, in Alan Boumcw et.al. (eds), *The Cambridge History XI: The High Empire, AD 70-192*, 2000, p. 814.

⁶ Ibid, p. 814,

7 Ibid, p. 813

8 Grokipedia Online, *Lex Papia Poppaea*.

9 AI Overview *Roman Legions Ethnicity*

10 William H. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples*, 1977, p. 116.

11 Frier, ‘Demography’.

12 For accounts of attacks by Visigoths and Huns on Rome see Kyle Harper, *The Fate of Rome*, 2019, pp. 3,196

¹³J. Otto Maenchen-Herfen in Max Knight (ed), *The World of the Huns*, 1973, pp. 169-179.

¹⁴Frier, “Demography”, p. 7

¹⁵Publius Cornelius Tacitus, *Germania* (Poetry in Translation, Online); Herwig Wolfrom, *The Roman Empire and its German People*, 1997, pp. 39-40.

The Population History of Britain, 1538-1850.

Introduction

In 1981 E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield published *The Population History of England 1541-1871*, which has come to be seen as the definitive history of population in the 330-year period between 1541 and 1871. It is based on the analysis of 404 parish registers, using monthly totals of births, deaths and marriages, 'to determine population size, gross reproduction rates, expectation of life at birth, age structure and net migration totals.'¹ This is a major achievement given the scale and scope of the research.

It involved counting back events from the 1871 Census, using the data from parish register returns. Criticisms of the methods and findings of the study have been addressed by Wrigley and Schofield in a second edition of their work.² This includes a discussion of the work of Lindert, as well as research by Lee and Oeppen on inverse and back projection. The latter studies largely confirm the overall conclusion of Wrigley & Schofield's work,³ with the most important finding being that population increase at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century was the result of increases in fertility, 'driven by changes in nuptiality, rather than movement in mortality.'⁴

Lindert has argued that the number of births in the period before 1800 was significantly higher than represented by Wrigley and Schofield.⁵ This is important for the estimates of fertility in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Wrigley and Schofield state that 'Malthus's original insight formed the basis of our thinking'⁶, with increases in fertility driven by the growth of real incomes at the end of the eighteenth century onwards.⁷ It should be noted however that Malthus stressed the reduction in mortality rather than the increase in fertility in explaining the growth of population in the period after 1780 in England.⁸

Regarding mathematical models of the type used by Wrigley & Schofield, Thomas Piketty has claimed that 'for far too long economists have sought to define themselves in terms of their supposedly scientific method. In fact, those methods rely on an immoderate use of mathematical methods ... the new methods often lead to a neglect of history and the fact that historical experience remains our principal source of knowledge.'⁹

Economic historians have adopted such mathematical models to establish long-term growth in the economy, but these have resulted in significantly different conclusions. For example, there is fundamental disagreement between Gregory Clark on the one hand, and Stephen Broadberry and colleagues on the other about long-term growth in England in the

¹ Frontispiece of E.A. Wrigley & R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871: A Reconstruction*, 1989.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, p. xvii.

⁴ Ibid, p. xxviii.

⁵ P.H. Lindert, 'English living standards, population growth, and Wrigley-Schofield', *Explorations in Economic History*, 20, 1983, p. 145.

⁶ Wrigley & Schofield, *The Population History*, p. xxvi.

⁷ Ibid, p. xxii.

⁸ P. E. Razzell, *Essays in Historical Sociology*, 2021, p. 147, in *Peter Razzell Online*.

⁹ T. Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, 2013.

period between the fifteenth and early nineteenth century. The former concluded that there was no significant change in per capita incomes in this period, whereas Broadberry et.al. have concluded that GDP per head approximately doubled in the same period.¹⁰ The different conclusions are the result of disagreements on estimates of population, the impact of technology, employment levels, the incomes of women and children, changing occupational structure, and the effect of enclosures on the demand for labour.

Wrigley and colleagues have added to the mathematical arguments of the *Population History* with detailed reconstitution work on 26 English parishes for the period 1580-1837.¹¹ Their main finding was a reduction in the mean age of marriage of women of about 2.5 years, supporting the argument about the importance of increases in fertility at the end of the eighteenth century. The reconstitution work was initiated by Wrigley in a study of the parish of Colyton in Devonshire.¹² There are however major problems with the data from this study. Applying same-name analysis – to be discussed later in greater detail – to Colyton data revealed the following pattern:

Table 1: Analysis of Burial Registration of Same-Name Siblings in Colyton, 1538-1851.¹³

<i>Period</i>	<i>Total Number of Cases</i>	<i>Cases Traced in the Burial Register</i>	<i>Proportion of Untraced Cases</i>
1538-1600	95	63	35%
1601-1650	121	71	41%
1651-1700	114	86	25%
1701-1750	84	54	36%
1751-1800	94	60	36%
1801-1851	115	98	15%
Total	623	432	31%

There is no linear trend in the proportion of untraced cases, but there was a sharp improvement in burial registration during the period 1801-1851. This can be compared to parish register entries with civil register returns for the period 1837-1850.¹⁴ According to the Colyton civil register, there were 199 children dying under the age of ten in 1837-50, of which 170 were registered in the Anglican parish register, an omission rate of 15%.

This figure is identical to the 15% of same-name case children not traced during 1801-1851. It is also possible to compare evidence on people leaving wills with entries in the burial register, and of 124 wills registered in Colyton in 1553-1773 – 28% – could not be found in the burial register – slightly smaller than the untraced cases in 1538-1800 in Table 1. This and the above research is an example of the triangulation of data, a methodology appropriate for historical demographic research.

The above research reveals major problems with Wrigley's analysis of Colyton data, a problem which will be further revealed in a later discussion of reconstitution work.

¹⁰ G. Clark, 'The long march of history: farm wages, population, and economic growth, England, 1209-1869', *Economic History Review*, 60, 2007, pp. 97-135; S. Broadberry, B.M.D. Campbell, A. Klein, M. Overton and B. Van Leewen, *British Economic Growth, 1270-1870*, 2015.

¹¹ E.A. Wrigley, R.S. Davies, J.E. Oeppen and R.S. Schofield, *English Population History from Family Reconstitution 1580-1837*, 1997.

¹² See Ibid, p. 633 for Wrigley's work on Colyton.

¹³ P.E. Razzell, *Essays in English Population History*, 1994, p. 188, in *Peter Razzell Online*.

¹⁴ I was allowed special access to the original returns in the civil register by the local registrar.

In 1965, H.J. Habakkuk presented a ‘heroically simplified version of English economic history’:

long-term movements in prices, in income distribution ... in real wages ... are dominated by changes in the growth of population. Rising population: rising prices ... low real incomes for the mass of the population ... this might stand for a description of the thirteenth century, the sixteenth century, and the early seventeenth, and the period 1750-1815. Falling or stationary population with ... higher mass incomes might be said to be characteristic of the intervening periods.¹⁵

This statement assumes that population growth was independent of economic development, an assumption challenged by the Cambridge Group, who argued as we have seen that population increase was largely fuelled by economic development.¹⁶

The assumption that real incomes rose during the eighteenth century is open to doubt. Attempts have been made by economic historians to measure average height as a proxy for real income.¹⁷ However, there is controversy about the value of height as a measure of the standard of living, and as Cormac O’Grada has written ‘time-series inferences from height data therefore remain in our view a hazardous occupation and it may well be that anthropometric evidence will not decide the long-simmering standard of living controversies either.’¹⁸

There is also evidence that the economy was not the main determinant of mortality and population growth. Although Ireland lagged severely behind England in terms of real incomes, Irish population increased more rapidly than the English in the eighteenth century.¹⁹ The following table summarises Connell’s estimates of population growth during this period.

Table 2: Estimated Population Growth in Ireland and England & Wales, 1697-1791.²⁰

<i>Period</i>	<i>Ireland</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>England & Wales</i>
1697	2,167,000	1700/1	5,475,000
1754	3,191,000	1750/1	6,467,000
1791	4,753,000	1790/1	8,675,000

The increase in population between 1697 and 1754 in Ireland was 47.3%, whereas the equivalent figure for England & Wales between 1700/1 and 1750/1 was 18.1%. Likewise, the increase in Ireland between 1754 and 1791 was 49.0%, and England & Wales between 1750/1 and 1790/1 was 34.1%.

Doultry, Dickson and O’Grada have sought to revise the eighteenth century population figures for Ireland by statistically re-examining the hearth tax totals through regional analysis. Their conservative estimates of population growth in tens of thousands are as follows:

¹⁵ Razzell, *Essays in Historical Sociology*, p, 222.

¹⁶ Wrigley and Schofield, *The Population History*.

¹⁷ Econometric analysis can be misleading in the study of heights. In research carried out by Voth and Leunig in an article on smallpox and height, they coded “no smallpox” as a result of blank pages, relying on computerised data and not original source material. See Peter Razzell, ‘Did smallpox reduce height?’, *Economic History Review*, 51, 1998, pp. 351-359.

¹⁸ Cormac O’Grada, ‘Anthropometric History. What’s in it for Ireland?’, *Histoire & Mesure*, Volume 11, 1996, p.160.

¹⁹ For a more detailed discussion of Ireland’s demographic history see P. E. Razzell, ‘Population growth and the development of capitalism in Britain, 1550-1850’, 2024, in *Razzell Academia Online*.

²⁰ K.H. Connell, *The Population of Ireland 1750-1845*, 1950; J. Rickman, *Observations on the Results of the Population Act, 41 Geo III*, p. 91.

Table 3: Estimated Irish Population Size 1706-1821²¹

<i>Date</i>	<i>Estimated Population Size, Tens of Thousands</i>
1706	206
1753	257
1791	442
1821	680

The proportionate increases are somewhat less than those estimated by Connell for 1706 to 1753 – 24.8% – but those for 1753 to 1791 – 72% – are significantly higher. The increase between 1791 and 1821 was also a high of 53.8%. The authors conclude ‘a very rapid secular rate of increase by European standards is implied. In demographic history at least, Ireland seems to remain an outlier.’²²

The figures must not be taken too literally, but they do indicate the scale of the different population histories of Ireland and England & Wales. Ireland was much poorer than England & Wales and as Braudel has written ‘the Irish peasant was reduced to severe poverty, aggravated by a rising population.’²³ The Bishop of Cloyne wondered ‘how a foreigner could possibly conceive that half the inhabitants are dying of hunger in a country so abundant in foodstuffs,’²⁴ while ‘a famine of 1740-41 caused the death of a third of the population in some areas.’²⁵

Ireland’s population grew much more rapidly than England’s, and this was probably due to ‘a relatively nutritious diet (potatoes)²⁶ and some degree of epidemiological isolation.’²⁷ There is some evidence that Irish population growth was fuelled by early marriage and a rise in fertility. And this was the conclusion of K.H. Connell who argued that the great accelerations in population at the end of the eighteenth century was due ‘very likely to the increase of fertility that followed earlier marriage.’²⁸ There were certainly a number of contemporary witnesses claiming that the Irish married very early, and Connell wrote that ‘according to an official summary of the immense mass of evidence presented to the Poor Inquiry Commission of 1836, men in Galway usually married when they were between 14 and 21; in Leitrim between 16 and 22; in Mayo and Sligo usually under 20, and in King’s County between 17 and 20.’²⁹

However, Michael Drake challenged this analysis, examining the statistics for the 1830s and concluded that there was no trend towards a lower age at marriage in the

²¹ Stuart Daultrey, David Dickson and Cormac O’Grada, ‘Eighteenth century Irish population: new perspectives: from 1706 to 1753 from old sources’, *Journal of Economic History*, Volume XXL, 1981, p. 624,

²² Ibid, p. 628.

²³ Ferdinand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism*, Volume 3, 1985. p. 373.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ J.H. Plumb, ‘The Irish Empire’, *England in the 18th Century*, 1973.

²⁶ See Arthur Young, ‘Section 5-6: Of the Tenantry of Ireland; Of the Labouring Poor’, *A Tour in Ireland, Made in the Years 1776, 1777, and 1778*, 1780. The potato was introduced into Ireland in the sixteenth century and became widespread by the eighteenth. See ‘History of the Potato in Ireland’, World Potato Congress 2022, *Online*.

²⁷ Overview of the work of Cormac O’Grada, *Online*.

²⁸ K.H. Connell, *The Population of Ireland, 1750-1845*, 1950, p. 248.

²⁹ Ibid, K.H. Connell, ‘Peasant marriage in Ireland: its structure and development since the famine’, *Economic History Review*, XIV, 1961-2, p. 520.

1830s.³⁰ Additionally, according to the Irish Census of 1841, the distribution of the unmarried amongst various age groups was very similar to that in England at about the same time.³¹ According to the 1841 Irish Census there were only 53 married men under the age of 17 in the whole of Ireland.³² It is therefore unclear what the age of marriage was in Ireland, given the conflict between literary and census evidence.

The geographical isolation of the Irish population can be documented by demographic data. The following Table summarizes an analysis of Quaker reconstitution schedules, using same name correction ratios.³³

Table 4: Estimated Quaker Infant Mortality (Per 1000) in England and Ireland, 1650-99.

<i>Place</i>	<i>Infants At Risk</i>	<i>Infant Deaths</i>	<i>Same-Name Ratio</i>	<i>Estimated IMR</i>
London	330	113	12/12	342
Bristol & Norwich	691	117	111/86	219
Provincial England	2781	293	304/181	177
Dublin	591	149	45/38	299
Cork, Wexford, Waterford & Limerick	966	131	54/44	166
Rural Ireland	1953	120	75/56	82

Quaker infant mortality rates in Irish rural areas were about a quarter of those in London and Dublin in 1650-99. The differentials narrowed somewhat during the eighteenth century, as revealed by the following Table, but by the nineteenth century London's Quaker infant mortality rate was over three times of that in Irish rural areas.

Table 5: Estimated Infant Mortality (Per 1000) Amongst Quakers in England & Ireland, 1650-1849.

Period	London	Bristol & Norwich	Provincial England	Dublin	Cork. Wexford. Waterford & Limerick	Rural Ireland
1650-99	342	219	177	299	166	82
1700-49	269	216	200	196	160	118
1750-99	166	158	124	164	151	82
1800-49	132	107	69	107	62	41

This can be further clarified by the Irish 1841 Census which compared the mortality rates of urban and rural districts

³⁰ M. Drake, 'Marriage and population growth in Ireland, 1750-1845', *Economic History Review*, Volume XVI, 1963-64.

³¹ Razzell, *Essays in English Population History*, p. 65.

³² *Population Census of Ireland, 1841*, Parliamentary Papers, 1843, XXIV, p. 439.

³³ I have analysed the original schedules compiled by Vann and Eversley which were deposited in Friend's House in London. See R.T. Vann and D.E.C. Eversley, *Friends in Life and Death*, 1992 for a description of their research.

Table 6: Agee Specific Death Rates According to the 1841 Irish Census.³⁴

<i>Age Group (Years)</i>	<i>Number Living in Urban Areas</i>	<i>Deaths Per 1000</i>	<i>Number Living in Rural Districts</i>	<i>Deaths Per 1000</i>
Under 1	50,369	138.02	311,055	81.35
2-5	105,676	45.49	779,313	17.22
6-15	243,551	9.78	1,813,605	4.51
16-25	242,237	9.90	1,403,660	6.56
26-35	181,208	13.34	973,169	8.34
36-45	132,481	18.42	696,961	11.43

Mortality in the urban areas was up to twice as high as in the rural districts, with 1,135,465 people living in urban areas and 7,039,659 in the rural districts. The great majority of Irish rural inhabitants lived in great squalor. For example, according to a Scottish agriculturalist ‘a large proportion of the peasantry live in a state of misery ... Their cabins scarcely contain an article that can be called furniture, in some families there are no such things as bedclothes ...’³⁵

Likewise, Cambell wrote of the Irish in 1777:

the manner in which the poor of this country live, I cannot but help calling beastly. For upon the same floor, and frequently without any partition, are lodged the husband and wife, the multitudinous brood of children, all huddled together upon the straw or rushes, with the cow, the calf, the pig, and the horse, if they are rich enough to have one.³⁶

Connell concluded that ‘almost every reference to the subject by travellers and doctors underlines the filthiness both of the persons of the mass of the Irish and the interior and surroundings of their cabins ...’³⁷ The result was the prevalence of typhus, griping diarrhoeas and epidemic dysenteries. However, as Connell also concluded, ‘the years of rapid population increase, it is true were free from serious epidemics’.³⁸

Ireland’s rural lower mortality was probably the result of its geographical isolation, avoiding high levels of infection. They lived in scattered settlements in a country that was separated from England and the continent of Europe.³⁹ Freeman has estimated that in 1841 only about 20 per cent of the Irish population lived in villages and towns, the rest in isolated cabins.⁴⁰

There were similar urban/rural infant mortality gradients in England in the eighteenth century. The infant mortality rate in sixteen London parishes in 1700-49 was 409/1000, compared to 181/1000 in eighteen English parishes – over twice as high.⁴¹

³⁴ Connell. *The Population of Ireland*, p. 193.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 58.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 187.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 257. Some of the decline in infant and child mortality would have been the result of the practice of smallpox inoculation in rural Ireland. See P.E. Razzell, ‘Population growth and economic change in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century England and Ireland’, in E.L. Jones and G.E. Mingay (eds), *Land, Labour and Population in the Industrial Revolution*, 1967, pp. 270-273.

³⁹ The “urban penalty” in mortality may have been a factor in the decline of the Roman Empire. Philip Matyszak has written: ‘historians blamed the fall of Rome on depopulation, pointing to references in the ancient texts to plagues and *agri deserti* (‘abandoned fields’). Certainly, by the end of the Empire, a few thousand men counted as a substantial army whereas in the glory days of the Republic a single legion contained 6,000 men.’ The invading Huns, Visigoths and other barbarian tribes lived in more rural environments and therefore would not have been prone to high levels of infection. See Philip Matyszak, *The Enemies of Rome: From Hannibal to Attila the Hun*, 2023, p. 283.

⁴⁰ T.W. Freeman, *Pre-Famine Ireland: A Study in Historical Geography*, 1957, p. 27.

⁴¹ Razzell, ‘Population growth and the development of capitalism’, pp. 3, 4.

There was a marked increase in poverty amongst labourers and other impoverished groups in England at the end of the eighteenth century and first half of the nineteenth. Contrary to the assumption of growing real incomes in the eighteenth century, there is evidence of a marked increase in poverty amongst labourers and other poor groups. Keith Snell has concluded from a review of the evidence that 'there was no doubt among contemporaries that weekly real wages fell in the southern (and many Midland) counties.'⁴² He listed in support of this conclusion the writings of D. Davies, S.G. & E.O.A. Checkland, Marshall, J. Howlett, G. Dyer, W. Friend, Adam Smith, C. Vancouver, G.D.H. & M. Cole, G. Glover, T.P. MacQueen, R. Pahsley, T. Postans, Arthur Young, and J. Wedge.⁴³ He added that 'the list could be considerably extended, and there were virtually no contrary opinions.'⁴⁴

This conclusion can be illustrated by one of the most detailed accounts provided by the Reverend John Howlett, who had been the Vicar of Great Dunmow in Essex for about 50 years. Describing the condition of labourers he wrote in 1796:

for the last forty or fifty years, some peculiarly favoured spots excepted, their condition has been growing worse and worse, and is, at length, become truly deplorable. Those pale famished countenances, those tattered garments, and those naked shivering limbs, we so frequently behold, are striking testimonies of these melancholy truths.⁴⁵

Howlett compiled figures of income and expenditure, using details of wages from farmers' wage books and local knowledge of family incomes and consumption, for the two ten-year periods, 1744-53 and 1778-87. The annual expenditure per family in the first period was £20.11s.2d and earnings £20.12.7d, leaving a surplus of 1s.5d. In the second period the figures were £31.3s.7d and £24.3.5d, leaving a deficit of £7.0s.2d.⁴⁶ Howlett concluded that

Of this deficiency the rates have supplied about forty shillings; the remaining £5 have sunk the labourers into a state of wretched and pitiable destitution. In the former period, the man, his wife, and children, were decently clothed and comfortably warmed and fed: now on the contrary, the father and mother are covered with rags; their children are running about, like little savages, without shoes or stockings to their feet; and, by day and night, they are forced to break down the hedges, lop the trees, and pilfer their fuel, or perish with cold.⁴⁷

This conclusion was supported by Admiral Lord Nelson. In a letter to the Duke of Clarence in 1790 he described the condition of the poor in Norfolk:

the poor labourer [is] really in want of everything to make life comfortable. Hunger is a sharp thorn, and they are not only in want of food sufficient, but of clothes and firing ... [they] cannot afford candles, soap or shoes, and for drink nothing but water, for beer our poor labourers never taste.⁴⁸

⁴² K. M, Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor*, 1987, p. 25.

⁴³ Ibid,

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ J. Howlett, *An Examination of Mr Pitt's Speech in the House of Commons on 12 Feb. 1796, Relating to the Condition of the Poor*, 1796, p. 2. For a similar account of the condition of labourers, see D. Davies, *The Case of Labourers in Husbandry*, 1796, p. 7.

⁴⁶ Howlett, *An Examination* p. 48.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 49. Enclosure may have played a role in generating surplus labour, but this is a controversial thesis. See J.D. Chambers and J.D. Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution, 1750-1850*, 1966.

⁴⁸ Letter from Nelson to the Duke of Clarence, 1790.

Charles Shaw in his autobiography described the conditions of workers in the Staffordshire Potteries in the 1830s and 1840s:

All the great events of the town took place ... [in] the marketplace. During the severity of winter, I have seen one of its sides nearly filled with stacked coals. The other side was stacked with loaves of bread, and such bread. I feel the taste of it even yet, as if made of ground straw, and alum, and Plaster of Paris. These things were stacked there by the parish authorities to relieve the destitution of the poor. Destitution, for the many, was a chronic condition in those days, but when winter came in with its stoppage of work, this destitution became acute, and special measures had to be taken to relieve it. The crowd in the marketplace on such a day formed a ghastly sight. Pinched faces of men, with a stern, cold silence of manner. Moaning women, with crying children in their arms, loudly proclaiming their sufferings and wrongs. Men and women with loaves or coals, rapidly departing on all sides to carry some relief to their wretched homes – homes, well, called such ... This relief, wretched as it was, just kept back the latent desperation in the hearts of these people.⁴⁹

This poverty was also a factor in the revolutionary condition of Buckinghamshire in the 1830s:

Numbers of men were out of work, bread was dear, and the Chartist agitation was violently active. Copies of the *Northern Star* and other Chartist papers found their way into every workshop. Meetings were held almost every evening and on Sundays. Some of the speeches advocated physical force as the only remedy ... Lectures on Peterloo, the Bristol Riots, the Monmouth Rising, and the Pension List were common. Bad trade, low wages, and dear bread were the stimulating causes of widespread discontentment. Men were driven to their lowest depth of hatred of the governing classes... the country was passing through the throes of a political convulsion which was fast ripening into a revolution. The mechanics institute gradually degenerated into a violent revolutionary club.⁵⁰

The History of the Age of Marriage

There is also a problem with the Cambridge Group's assumptions about the age of marriage. They found from their reconstitution work that the mean age of marriage of women had fallen by two-and-a-half years during the late eighteenth century, which is one of the central findings for their argument about the importance of increasing fertility in the eighteenth century.

It is difficult to establish reliable data for many demographic variables in the eighteenth century, and it is necessary to use all available material, which includes marriage licences and other more local sources where necessary. According to marriage licences in Nottinghamshire and Gloucestershire during the seventeenth century the average age of spinsters marrying labourers and husbandmen was over 26 years, whereas the average for yeomen, gentlemen and professionals was between 22 and 24 years.⁵¹ This conclusion is supported by the analysis of marriage licences for the Archdeaconry of Chichester:

Table 7: Marriage Age of Spinsters Marrying Bachelors, 1754-1769, 1770-95.⁵²

<i>Period</i>	<i>Labourers</i>		<i>Yeomen, Gentlemen & Professionals</i>	
	Number	% Under 21	Number	% Under 21
1754-69	142	9%	142	22%
1770-95	169	25%	169	14%

⁴⁹ C. Shaw, *When I Was a Child*, 1980, pp. 42, 43.

⁵⁰ J. Buckmaster, *A Village Politician*, 1982, pp. 98, 99, 124, 153.

⁵¹ Razzell, *Essays in Historical Sociology*, pp. 174, 175.

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 176.

In the earlier period 1754-69 labourers married much later than yeomen, gentlemen and professionals, but by 1770-95 the position was reversed, with labourers marrying much earlier and the elite group much later. The latter differential was maintained throughout the nineteenth century.⁵³

Malthus argued that there had been a diminution in the frequency of marriage during the eighteenth century:

The gradual diminution and almost total extinction of the plagues which so frequently visited Europe, in the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, produced a change [in the incidence of marriage] ... in this country [England] it is not to be doubted that the proportion of marriages has become smaller since the improvement of our towns, the less frequent return of epidemics, and the adoption of habits of greater cleanliness.⁵⁴

This conclusion is supported by data from court records:

Table 8: Proportion of Female Deponents Single in the London Consistory Court, 1583-1817.⁵⁵

<i>Period</i>	<i>Age Group – Proportion Single</i>			
	15-24	25-34	35-44	45+
1583-1611	62%	15%	1%	0%
1703-1713	72%	25%	7%	4%
1752-1783	77%	43%	14%	5%
1792-1817	76%	53%	13%	15%

There were important reductions in the frequency of marriage in all age groups during the eighteenth century, and this was also the case in Yorkshire and other areas of England.⁵⁶ These falls in the frequency of marriage are also to be found in data from burial registers. The following Table summarizes information from twenty-three Bedfordshire burial registers which list the marital status of those buried.

Table 9: Proportion of Spinsters Listed in Twenty-Three Bedfordshire Burial Registers, 1695-1704 and 1795-1804.

<i>Period</i>	<i>Number of Spinsters</i>	<i>Total Known Cases</i>	<i>Proportion of Spinsters</i>
1695-1704	26	817	3%
1795-1804	90	853	11%

There was an increase of eight per cent in the number of spinsters in the period between the ends of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, confirming the trend of diminishing marital frequency. The decline in the frequency of marriage would more than offset the reduction in

⁵³ Ibid,

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 149.

⁵⁵ P. E. Razzell, *Mortality, Marriage and Population Growth in England, 1550-1850*, 2016, p. 67 in *Peter Razzell Online*.

⁵⁶ Ibid, pp. 60-70. Szreter and Garrett have argued that there was a decline in the frequency of marriage from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards. S. Szreter and E. Garrett, 'Reproduction, compositional demography, and economic growth: family planning in England before the fertility decline', *Population and Development Review*, 2000, p. 67.

age of marriage, but more data is needed on marriage frequency to establish this as a reliable conclusion.⁵⁷

Malthus argued theoretically that population had grown in the eighteenth century largely as a result of increasing fertility. However, he qualified this conclusion by noting that in England ‘the more rapid increase of population, supposed to have taken place since the year 1780, has arisen more from the diminution of deaths than the increase of births.’⁵⁸

The population growth that resulted from this fall in mortality resulted in pauperisation of the poor. This led to demoralisation and early marriage and the growth of fertility. Malthus described this in his discussion of England’s demographic experience:

It is not ... among the higher ranks of society, that we have most reason to apprehend the too greater frequency of marriage ... [it is] squalid poverty, particularly joined with idleness, [which] is a state the most unfavourable to chastity ... The labouring poor, to use a vulgar expression, seem always to live hand to mouth ... The desire of immediate gratification, and the removal of the restraints to it from prudence ... prompt universally to early marriage.⁵⁹

A similar process occurred in Ireland. The Irish Poor Inquiry Commission was told by a Catholic curate from Mayo that ‘small holders are induced to marry by feeling that their condition cannot be made worse, or, rather they know that they can lose nothing, and they promise themselves some pleasure in the society of a wife.’⁶⁰ Likewise, ‘from Kilkenny – as indeed, from most other counties – there came almost the same story: labourers get married under the idea they cannot make their condition worse than it is.’⁶¹

The Reliability of Parish Registration

It was common in England to give the name of a dead child to a subsequent sibling of the same sex. This can be illustrated by the example of one London family published by the genealogist Percival Boyd and traced in the 1695 London Marriage Duty Listing.

⁵⁷ The analysis of more burial registers with information on marital status and preferably age would further clarify the subject.

⁵⁸ Razzell, *Essays in Historical Sociology*, p. 147.

⁵⁹ P. E. Razzell, *Population and Disease: Transforming English Society, 1550-1850*, pp. 240-41, in *Peter Razzell Online*.

⁶⁰ Razzell, ‘Population growth and the development of capitalism’, p. 11.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Table 10: The Family of Samuel and Sarah Fowler, Tyler and Bricklayer, of St. Antholin's, London. ⁶²

<i>Name Of Child</i>	<i>Date Of Baptism</i>	<i>Date Of Burial</i>
Thomas	05/07/1677	04/01/1721
Samuel	04/05/1679	29/04/1681
William	08/01/1683	03/06/1708
Samuel	10/05/1685	15/02/1688
John	07/08/1687	-
John	12/05/1689	09/10/1692
Sarah	22/04/1691	06/02/1748
Mary	18/07/1693	12/11/1694
John	21/11/1695	-
<i>1695 Marriage Duty Listing: Samuel Fowler; Wife Sarah, Son James, Son Thomas, Son William, Daughter Sarah. Of St. Antholin's Parish.</i>		

Of the three-baptism same-name cases, high-lighted in bold, two of them were traced in the burial register. The second same-name case – John baptised on the 7th of August 1687 – was found neither in the burial register nor in the 1695 Marriage Duty Listing, indicating that he probably died without being registered. (The last John was baptised in late 1695 and therefore did not appear in the Marriage Duty Listing made before that date).

The same-name method allows for the correction of burial under-registration by multiplying the number of same-name cases divided by the number of such cases found in the burial register. In the case of the Fowler family the correction ratio is 3/2. This inflation ratio corrects both for non-registration due to omission from the burial register, as well as burial in neighbouring parishes and elsewhere, accounting for all forms of under-registration. The repetition of the name Samuel in the burial register indicates a burial same name pattern. He was baptized in 1685 before he was buried in 1688 – in effect showing that baptism registration was perfect.

Data on the frequency of same naming from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century is suggested by the following Table.

⁶² For the background to this table see P.E. Razzell and C. Spence, 'The history of infant, child and adult mortality in London', *The London Journal*, 2007, p. 274, in *Peter Razzell Online*.

Table 11: Proportion of Eligible Families Using Same Names in Six Reconstitution Parishes, 1541-1837.⁶³

<i>Period</i>	<i>Number of Eligible Cases</i>	<i>Proportion Using Same Names %</i>
1541-1600	293	50.1
1601-1650	330	57.9
1651-1700	291	72.9
1701-1750	339	67.8
1751-1800	411	65.6
1801-1837	270	59.5

The data only covers six parishes, but it indicates that many families used same names throughout the parish register period. There was something of an inverted U-Curve distribution in the proportions using same-names, but there is a sufficient majority to make same-naming a valuable basis for assessing the reliability of parish registers.

There has been a criticism of the technique on the grounds that there were living same-name children. A study of Wills indicates the following pattern of living same name children.

Table 12: Living Same-Name Children in English Wills, 1439-1699.⁶⁴

<i>Period</i>	<i>Number of Living Same-Name Children</i>	<i>Total Number of Siblings</i>	<i>Proportion of Living Same-Name Children</i>
1439-1547	77	1249	6.20%
1558-1590	10	713	1.40%
1591-1649	22	2638	0.80%
1650-1699	4	985	0.40%

There were significant numbers of living same-name children in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, although some of them may have been the result of stepbrothers and stepsisters. After 1558 there were very few living same-name children, some of whom might have been stepchildren. Houlbrooke has argued that this was the result of the aftermath of the Reformation:

The greater variety of opinion about the bestowal of names which prevailed after the Reformation gave parents more freedom to follow their own inclinations. One result was that the bestowal of the same name on more than one living child became much less frequent from the sixteenth century onwards. But in many cases parents continued to give babies the same name as older siblings who had died.⁶⁵

The progressive reduction of living same-name children may also have been the result of the

⁶³ Eligible families are those with at least two baptised children of the same sex, to the same parents. The Table is based on the analysis of original reconstitution schedules for Aldenham, Bridford, Austrey, Dawlish, Hartland and Colyton. See Razzell, *Population and Disease*, p. 9.

⁶⁴ Data taken from P.E. Razzell, 'Measurement of the reliability of parish registration through same-name methodology', p.2, in *Peter Razzell Online*.

49. R.A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family 1450-1750*, 1984, pp 131-32.

introduction of parish registration, making it difficult to have two living same name children.

The only complete way of examining the reliability of data on same names is to study local censuses which indicate the status of children and parents. For the late seventeenth century, it is possible to examine systematically the question of living same-name siblings through the analysis of various enumerations taken under the 1695 Marriage Duty Act.⁶⁶ A study was made of eighteen census-type listings covering a total of 6,162 cases. The areas covered were the City of London (1695), Bristol, Gloucestershire, (1696). Goodnestone, Kent (1676), Clayworth, Nottinghamshire (1676 and 1688), Lichfield, Staffordshire (1697), Lyme Regis, Dorsetshire (1696, 1698 and 1703), Swindon, Wiltshire (1697 and 1702), Wanborough, Wiltshire (1697 and 1702), New Romney, Kent (1696 and 1699), Melbourne, Derbyshire (1695), and St. Mary's, Southampton, Hampshire (1695 and 1696). There were 0.15 per cent of children with the living same name children, almost exclusively in the City of London and Bristol.⁶⁷

Galley, Garrett, Davies and Reid have argued that the London and Bristol censuses provide convincing details of living same-name children.⁶⁸ However an examination of the original manuscript censuses, along with data on baptisms, reveals that all these cases are questionable on grounds of transmission errors and other problems.⁶⁹

It is possible to examine this issue further through the study of nineteenth century censuses, with existing research on 45 parishes covered by census/ baptism registers.⁷⁰ The names of 10,954 people living in these parishes were selected from the household schedules of the 1851 Census and found to include no living full same-name cases. In most of these censuses there are references to stepbrothers and sisters sharing the same forename, but these can be recognized by their different surnames or other information in the censuses. Also, in the nineteenth century there are cases of living siblings sharing one common forename (for example, Edward James and Edward George), but no cases have come to light where names are identical. It is therefore important for same-name research that only siblings sharing the same parents and with identical names are selected for study.

For research on the reliability of birth registration it is necessary to locate burial same-name children and then search for the baptism of the second same-name child. For death registration the reverse is the case: location of same-name children in baptism registers searching for the burial of the first same-name child. There were many more cases in the evaluation of death registration because of the use of baptism registers to select the same-name cases, whereas there were many fewer cases in selection from burial registers.

Research using same-name methodology carried out on groups of parishes used in previous work reveals the following pattern of birth and death registration.

⁶⁶ See Razzell, *Population and Disease*, p. 10.

⁶⁷ P.E. Razzell, 'Living same-name siblings and English historical demography; a commentary', *Local Population Studies*, 2011, p. 77, in *Peter Razzell Online*.

⁶⁸ C. Galley, E. Garrett, R. Davies and A. Reid, 'Living same-name siblings and English historical demography: a reply to Peter Razzell', *Local Population Studies*, 2011.

⁶⁹ Razzell, *Living same-name siblings*, pp. 78-80.

⁷⁰ See Razzell, *Essays in English Population History*, p. 93.

Table 13: Estimated Under-Registration of Births and Deaths in England, 1538-1837.⁷¹

<i>Period</i>	<i>Total Number of Births</i>	<i>Proportion of Births Not Registered (%)</i>	<i>Total Number of Deaths</i>	<i>Proportion of Deaths Not Registered (%)</i>
1538-1599	95	39	358	34
1600-1649	236	36	465	31
1650-1699	230	30	617	27
1700-1749	424	21	858	22
1750-1799	546	32	594	27
1800-1837	133	30	451	23

The data from this Table support Lindert's argument that there were greater numbers of births in the pre-1800 period than allowed for by the Cambridge Group. There were also geographical and occupational associations with parish register data. The following Table illustrates the influence of parish populations on the incidence of untraced births in baptism registers.

Table 14: Distribution of Untraced Cases by Population Size of Parish, 1851⁷²

	<i>Under 500 9 Parishes</i>	<i>500-999 7 Parishes</i>	<i>1000-1499 9 Parishes</i>	<i>1500-1999 10 Parishes</i>	<i>2000+ 10 Parishes</i>	<i>Total Sample</i>
Number. of Untraced Cases	107	96	556	736	1508	3403
Total Number of Cases	579	638	2003	2383	5351	10954
% of Untraced Cases	18.5%	15.0%	27.7%	30.9%	35.7%	31.0%

There was an almost linear increase in the proportion of untraced births by the size of the parish population, suggesting that larger populations made it more difficult to establish accurate registration. There was also some influence of occupation on registration accuracy.

Table 15: The Influence of Occupation on the Accuracy of Birth Registration.⁷³

	<i>Professional</i>	<i>Farmers</i>	<i>Shopkeepers</i>	<i>Servants</i>	<i>Labourers</i>
Number. of Untraced Cases	49	194	789	88	1282
Total Number of Cases	118	724	2454	244	4207
% of Untraced Cases	42.2%	26.8%	32.2%	36.1%	30.5%

The association of birth registration accuracy was not as strong with occupation as it was with population size, but there is some variation in the link as depicted in Table 15.

⁷¹ For death under-registration see Razzell, *Population and Disease*, p. 15. The figures for death registration are based on nine Cambridge Group reconstitution parishes. The figures for birth under-registration are based on the analysis of 69 burial and baptisms registers mainly from the counties of Bedfordshire and Derbyshire.

⁷² See Razzell, *Essays in English Population History*, p. 94.

⁷³ Ibid, p. 105.

The main reason for omissions of birth and deaths was clerical negligence,⁷⁴ as indicated by Burn in his study of parish registers:

The custody of parish registers having been frequently committed to ignorant parish clerks, who had no idea of their utility beyond their being occasionally the means of putting a shilling into their own pockets for furnishing extracts, and at other times being under the superintendence of an incumbent, either forgetful, careless or negligent, the result has necessarily been, that many Registers are miserably defective, some having the appearance of being kept from month to month, and year to year, yet being deficient of a great many entries.⁷⁵

This clerical negligence appears to have been present from the sixteenth century onwards. For example, 'in 1567 the incumbent of Tunstall, Kent, appeared to have tired of registering the Pottman family because of its concentration in the parish and simply stated in the register: "From henceforwd I omit the Pottmans."'⁷⁶

Some of the neglect of burial registration was due to the non-payment of fees. In the Northamptonshire parish of Brington, 'the very true reason why this register, is found as imperfect in some years as from 1669 to 1695 is because the parishioners could never be persuaded to take to see it done, nor the churchwardens as ye canon did require, and because they refuse to pay such dues to ye curate as they ought by custome to have payed.'⁷⁷

In 1702-03 'a committee of Convocation drew up a list of ecclesiastical offences notoriously requiring remedy, in which irregularity in keeping registers is prominent in the list of gravamina.'⁷⁸ Evidence for clerical negligence became abundant in the early nineteenth century. The *Gentleman's Magazine* remarked in 1811 that 'the clergyman (in many country places) has entered the names at his leisure, whenever he had nothing better to do, and perhaps has never entered them at all.'⁷⁹ The *Report of the Select Committee on Parochial Registration in 1833* provided substantial evidence on the reasons for defective parish registration. One of the witnesses, Mr William Durrant Cooper, a solicitor, had extensive experience of tracing individuals in parish registers for property cases, and concluded that parish registration was 'exceedingly defective ... [with] a very large number of marriages, deaths and baptisms not entered at all ... especially deaths.'⁸⁰ To illustrate this, he gave the following example:

On the sale of some property [in 1819] from Mr Cott to Lord Gage, it was necessary to procure evidence of the death of three individuals, Mrs Pace, Mr Tuchnott and Mrs Gouldsmith. They were at different places, all in Sussex; Mrs Pace was regularly entered; Mr Tuchnott was buried at Rodmell, about five miles from Lewes, and on searching for the register of burial we found no entry whatever. On making an inquiry in the churchyard of the sexton, he stated he recollected digging the grave, and the ceremony being performed; Mr Gwynne, the rector, whose neglect in that and other parishes is well known, had omitted to enter it ... Mrs Gouldsmith, who was buried at Waldron, in the same county, was not entered, but on going to the parish clerk, who was a blacksmith, he stated he recollected the circumstance, and accounted for her burial not being entered in this way: he said it was usual for him, and not the clergyman, to take account of the Burials, and he entered them in a little sixpenny memorandum book ... If it so happened that the fee [of one shilling] was paid at the time, as was the case with affluent persons, no entry would appear in his book, he only booked what was due to him, and as the clergyman

⁷⁴ Ibid, pp. 108-111.

⁷⁵ J.S. Burn, *The History of Parish Registers in England*, 1862, p. 18.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 41.

⁷⁷ J.C. Cox, *The Parish Registers of England*, 1910, pp. 20, 21.

⁷⁸ W.E. Tate, *The Parish Chest*, 1969, p. 49.

⁷⁹ Burn *The History*, p. 42.

⁸⁰ *Report of the Select Committee on Parochial Registration*, p. 24.

entered the parish register at the end of the year from his book, and not at the time of the ceremony, all burials that were not entered in his book would not find their way into the register.⁸¹

Given the significant unreliability of parish registers, it is possible to triangulate findings on baptism and burial registration through comparison with other measures of reliability. The previous study of forty-five parishes selected from the 1851 Census with information on birth places was compared to the data from same-name research. The results are summarized in Table 16 below

Table 16: Estimated Proportions of Unregistered Births, 1761-1837.⁸²

<i>Period</i>	<i>Proportion of Unregistered Births Through Census Baptism Comparison</i>
1761-1800	32%
1801-1833	31%
<i>Period</i>	<i>Proportion of Unregistered Births Through Same Naming</i>
1750-1799	32%
1800-1837	30%

The proportions of unregistered births using the two different methods of estimating the accuracy of birth registration are virtually identical. The comparison should not be taken too literally as none of the figures above are based on random samples.

It is possible to use the inflation ratios from the census/baptism research to estimate birth rates from 1780 onwards, using the national baptism totals provided by Rickman.⁸³ This yields the following birth rates:

Table 17; Estimated Birth Rates of England & Wales, Per 1,000⁸⁴

1780-89	1790-99	1801-10	1811- 20	1821-30	1831-40
38.2	40.4	41.4	42.0	40.1	35.9

There is an increase in the birth rate between 1780 and 1820, but a significant decline after that date, suggesting that there was a growth in fertility during the period 1789-1820 but a decline after that date. In the light of evidence reviewed, this was likely to be the result of falling female marriage ages triggered by increasing pauperisation.

There was an even greater fall in the death rate during the period 1801-40.

Table 18: Estimated Death Rates for England & Wales, Per 1,000.⁸⁵

1801-10	1811-20	1821-30	1831-40
30.5	28.9	25.9	22.8

⁸¹ Ibid, 25.

⁸² For the figures for the census baptism comparison method see Razzell, 'The evaluation', p. 93.

⁸³ See B.R. Mitchell and Phyllis Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics*, 1971, p. 28.

⁸⁴ For the periods between 1801 and 1840 see Razzell, *Essays in English Population History*, p. 111. For the inflation ratios see Ibid, pp. 99, 100.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 114.

The fall in the death rate was over eight years between 1801 and 1840, approximately halving between the middle and the end of the eighteenth century, significantly outweighing any increase in fertility. There were major falls in mortality in the eighteenth century, with infant and child mortality approximately halving between the middle and the end of the eighteenth century, with similar reductions in adult mortality.⁸⁶ The reasons for these falls are complex and include a range of health improvements, but also an autonomous reduction in disease incidence.⁸⁷

The age structure of the English population appears not to have significantly changed between the early eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,⁸⁸ suggesting that the rise in fertility played a relatively minor role in population growth compared to the reduction of mortality, but this conclusion requires further work on random samples to establish its validity.

The most significant finding from this research is the very high proportion of births unregistered between the sixteenth and eighteen centuries – between twenty-one and thirty-nine per cent. The Cambridge Group assumed that births registered through baptism were perfect between 1539 and 1550 with no births unregistered and only deteriorated slowly to a maximum of 9.5 per cent omitted by the end of the seventeenth century.⁸⁹ The assumptions made for death registration were even more extreme: it was assumed that it was perfect between 1539 and 1640, and only deteriorated thereafter.⁹⁰ The discrepancy between this assumption and the figures in Table 13 poses major problems for Wrigley and Schofield's reconstruction of England's population history.

Existing data suggests that current same-name research is reliable given the triangulation of evidence.⁹¹ However, with the digitisation of parish register and census data, it should be possible in future to create random samples for comprehensive same-name research. This will be important for a revised version of Britain's population history, which suggests that mortality rather than fertility was the key demographic variable in its history.

⁸⁶ Razzell, *Population and Disease*, pp. 70, 72, 74, 76, 80-83, 85, 91, 94-95, 99, 101, 103-05, 107-09, 111-12.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 147-176.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Wrigley and Schofield, *The Population History*, pp. 537-541, section 11.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 545-547, section 11.

⁹¹ See for example P.E. Razzell, *Mortality, Marriage and Population Growth in England, 1550-1850*, 2016, pp. 18, 23, in *Peter Razzell Online*; Razzell, *Population and Disease*, p. 13.

Peter Razzell: Shakespeare's Biography: A Conundrum Resolved.

Shakespeare's early life has remained something of a conundrum despite extensive research into his background. His writing is universally recognized as the outstanding contribution to the history of literature, yet he was the son of a provincial artisan of limited literacy. His father John Shakespeare was a Stratford glover and unable to provide his son with a full education. This has led to the description of Shakespeare as 'the Stratford boor'¹, accounting for why many scholars are unable to accept that he was the author of his plays. His work has been attributed to an extensive range of people of high social and elite status, including among others, Francis Bacon, the Earl of Oxford, and Christopher Marlow.² More recently Lena Cowen has suggested that 'we must picture Shakespeare participating in the intellectual culture of Oxford ... Shakespeare is nearly certain to have taken in lectures and sermons in college chapels.'³ Again, this is pure speculation without any convincing evidence to support it.

The problem is that scholars are unable to accept that the son of a provincial artisan with limited education could have been the author of the plays, and most have invented classical sources to address this conundrum. But as Ben Jonson argued, Shakespeare 'had little Latin and less Greek', and did not adhere to classical rules in writing his plays. However, he showed a unique understanding of vernacular language in creating both his comedies and tragedies.

There is also the conundrum of where Shakespeare went after he fathered three children in Stratford before appearing in London, which has been designated as the "lost years". Some have speculated that he spent this period on the continent of Europe or other places enabling him to acquire the sophisticated culture necessary for the writing of the plays.⁴ None of these ideas have any credible evidence to support them but there is evidence in plain sight to resolve these difficulties.

According to Nicholas Rowe, Shakespeare worked for his father after he left school at an early age: 'Upon his leaving School, he seems to have given intirely into the way of Living which his Father propos'd to him ... tho' he was his eldest Son, he could give him no better Education than his own Employment ...'⁵ What other biographers have not realized is that John Shakespeare was not just a glover but was a private trader involving participation in a highly sophisticated and metropolitan community.

Four legal cases involving John Shakespeare came to light in the Exchequer court, chronicled by D.L. Thomas and N.E. Evans in their article 'John Shakespeare in the Exchequer'. They reveal that the Stratford glover was engaged in subsidiary wool dealings and money-lending transactions, which indicated that John Shakespeare was a dealer in wool on a large scale.⁶ An informer revealed that in 1572 John "Shaxspere" of "Stretford super Haven" and John Lockesley of the same place had illegally bought 200 tods (i.e. 5,600 pounds) of wool, and later that year John Shakespeare was accused of buying 100 tods of wool.⁷

¹ S. Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, 1992, p. viii.

² Ibid, pp. 385-451.

³ L. C. Orlin, *The Private Life of William Shakespeare*, 2021, p. 248.

⁴ Ibid, p. 441.

⁵ C. Nicholl (ed), *Nicholas Rowe the Life of Shakespeare*, 2009, pp. 26, 28.

⁶ D.L. Thomas and N.E. Evans, 'John Shakespeare in the Exchequer', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 35 (1984), pp. 315-18; P. E. Razzell, *William Shakespeare: The Anatomy of an Enigma*, 1990, pp.17-18.

⁷ Thomas and Evans, 'John Shakespeare'; Razzell, *William Shakespeare*, p. 17, 18.

At an earlier date on the 4th November 1568 John Shakespeare alleged that he had sold John Walford twenty-one tods of wool at Stratford, and that £21 owing in cash had never been paid.⁸ Nicholas Rowe's described John Shakespeare as a "considerable dealer in wool", and it is likely that John Shakespeare traded wool on other occasions, which did not result in prosecutions.⁹

John Shakespeare was prosecuted for illegal money lending, and this probably occurred elsewhere. He also traded in a variety of other products: according to Lee, 'he soon set up as a trader in all manner of agricultural produce. Corn, wool, malt, meat, skins, and leather were among the commodities in which he dealt.'¹⁰ He had dealings with people living in London, Worcestershire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Coventry, Nottingham and Stoke in Staffordshire.¹¹

In a court case against the Lambert family in 1587 and 1588, John Shakespeare claimed for a missing twenty pounds he had 'totally lost and failed to acquire the whole gain, advantage and profit which he by buying and bargaining with the aforesaid twenty pounds have had and acquired, to the loss of thirty pounds.'¹² This is the credo – 'buying and bargaining' – of the middleman, a group whose activities Everitt has designated as, 'the free trading between individuals', defined as the 'type of bargaining which was mostly "free", or emancipated from official control: to dealing between individual traders and manufacturers in private.'¹³

Private trading was ubiquitous in Stratford in the late sixteenth century.¹⁴ Everitt has shown that this type of trading grew rapidly in the sixteenth century, particularly after about 1570. He studied it through the records of disputes between traders in the Court of Chancery and Requests, which provide a detailed picture of John Shakespeare's economic and cultural world.

All transactions were conducted on a credit basis, for which legal bonds were drawn up by a lawyer or scrivener.¹⁵ According to Everitt, because of the absence of banks, traders necessarily had to rely on their credit in the local community, and this often 'operated through a network of neighbours, friends, and relatives. Sons, fathers, brothers, cousins, wives, uncles, mothers, brother-in-law: all were drawn into the circle.'¹⁶

Everitt has described the culture which grew up amongst individual traders:

In consequence of this network of kinship and acquaintance, the packmen, carriers, woolmen, and factors who engaged in the private agricultural market were not simply unconnected individuals ... Much of the dealing in which travelling merchants engaged took place in farmhouses. Some took place in barns, and some in warehouses and corn-chambers. Perhaps the most characteristic meeting place of

⁸ Razzell, *William Shakespeare*, p. 19.

⁹ There is some evidence that Shakespeare was familiar with wool dealing. In the *Winter's Tale*, the CLOWN makes the following speech: 'Let me see, Every 'leven wether tods, every tod, yields pound and odd shilling. Fifteen hundred shorn, what comes the wool to? ... I cannot do't without counters. Let me see, what am I to buy for our sheep-shearing feast?' *Act 4.3*.

¹⁰ S. Lee, *Life of Shakespeare*, 1898, C.U.P. Edition 2012, p. 4.

¹¹ Razzell, *William Shakespeare*, p. 20.

¹² B. Rowland Lewis, *The Shakespeare Documents*, Volume 1, 1940, p. 139.

¹³ J. Chartres (ed), *Agricultural Markets and Trade, 1500-1750: Chapters from the Agrarian History of England and Wales*, 1990, p. 92.

¹⁴ For example, 120 of the leading townsmen in Stratford – including Shakespeare – illegally hoarded grain in 1598. Lewis, *The Shakespeare Documents*, p. 284.

¹⁵ Chartres, *Agricultural Markets*, p. 93.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 106.

the wayfaring community, however, was the provincial inn. The Elizabethan inn has no exact counterpart in the modern world. It was the hotel, the bank, the warehouse, the exchange, the scrivener's office, and the marketplace of many of a trader.¹⁷

Everitt has elaborated on the role of the innkeeper in trading activities:

The Tudor and Stuart innkeeper was thus in a powerful position to influence the course of private trading. Many a publican provided cellars or outbuildings for the storage of his client's goods. Some converted their halls or parlours into private auction rooms ... Agreement between prospective dealers was rarely reached without a lengthy series of "speeches" and "communications", and the company often sat far into the night before the transaction was concluded. Sometimes an unscrupulous innkeeper would allow some hapless yeoman (well plied with ale) to be "cozened of his money" by the "glozing terms ... smooth words, and fair speeches" of the other party concerned ... When the bargain was agreed, the local scrivener (sometimes himself one of the guests) was called upon to draw up one of the bonds, and the deed was read out to the assembled company ... not infrequently one of the signatories later confessed himself unable to read it ...¹⁸

The problem arose because of the poor educational system. 'Many marketing disputes arose through the illiteracy of one or other of the parties concerned.'¹⁹ Many of the traders were helped by assistants, who 'undertook the writings of his order books, notes, and letters ...'²⁰ Because of the writing involved in trading transactions, the aid of his son William would have been invaluable to the semi-literate John Shakespeare. As Lena Orlin has argued

For property transactions, wholesale operations, and other aspirational ventures, records and documents were vital. At Stratford's grammar school, William Shakespeare developed skills that were useful to an upwardly mobile family. By the time he was 10, he may have thought of himself as his father's partner.²¹

As Everitt has concluded, 'with the growth of private dealing some grounding in writing and accounting was imperative.'²²

There is some independent evidence to support Rowe's statement about Shakespeare working with his father, and it involves the dispute about the purchase of land in Wilmcote that John Shakespeare had with his brother-in-law Edmund Lambert and his son John.²³ The following is an extract from the court proceedings relevant to the evidence of William Shakespeare's part and status in the dispute.

On the first day of March [1587] ... he [Edmund Lambert] died ... after whose death ... [the land] descended to the aforesaid John Lambert, as son and heir of the said Edmund ... the said John Shakespeare his wife Mary together with William Shakespeare their son, when claim had been made upon them, covenanted the said [land] ... to said John Lambert and ... delivered all writings and proofs concerning the said premises ... besides that, he, the same John Shakespeare, and Mary his wife, at the same time with William Shakespeare their son, have always been ready hitherto not only for

¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 107, 108.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 110.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 115.

²⁰ Ibid, P. 104.

²¹ L. Orlin, *The Private Life*, p. 46.

²² Chartres, *Agricultural Markets*, p. 116.

²³ The dispute is highly complex, and it is discussed in detail in my book on Shakespeare. See 'The Shakespeare/Lambert dispute' in Razzell, *William Shakespeare*, pp. 35-45.

covenanting the aforesaid premises but also for delivering to the same John Lambert all writings and proofs concerning the same ...²⁴

This is evidence that Shakespeare was still working with his father in 1588, helping his father who lacked full literacy. His role appears to have been mainly helping with the delivery and working on written records, invaluable assistance to his father at this time. John Shakespeare was not attempting to reclaim the land but was trying to extract extra money from John Lambert who had only recently inherited the property.²⁵ In effect, he was trying to cheat John Lambert out of £20, at a time when John Shakespeare appears to have been poverty stricken and looking for extra sources of income.²⁶

Having his son helping with writing would have been invaluable to John Shakespeare. As Schoenbaum has written: 'From all the documentary evidence, John Shakespeare was not fully literate. Invariably the documents ... [he] signed either with his mark or with a pictogram ... The fully literate – even those who had become infirm or senile – tended to make a simple scrawl for their signatures rather than crosses.'²⁷ There is evidence that William Shakespeare was familiar with legal terminology. Fripp argued that he showed 'extraordinary knowledge, and large accurate usage, in his writings from the beginning, of legal terminology and procedure.'²⁸ The suggestion made by Malone – who was a barrister – that the dramatist spent some years as a lawyer's clerk, was also supported by other lawyers.²⁹ It is probable that Shakespeare acquired his legal knowledge working for his father in drafting legal documents in trading transactions.

Also, it makes it much more comprehensible as to how Shakespeare acquired the linguistic and cultural knowledge to write plays of such universal and general appeal. It has always puzzled historians how he acquired the knowledge to write such plays. His participation in meetings in inns in London and elsewhere on trading expeditions, with a 'lengthy series of "speeches" and "communications" far into the night, and "smooth words, and fair speeches" ', helps to resolve this conundrum. Everitt makes it clear that these traders were highly cosmopolitan: 'the wayfaring community developed an ethos of its own dissimilar to that of the settled society of town and village. Its spirit of speculation and adventure ran counter to the stable traditions of the English peasantry.'³⁰ This culture provided Shakespeare with both the knowledge and background necessary for his theatrical and business career.

There is also evidence that Shakespeare may have encountered theatre companies directly during his working life with his father. Michael Wood has documented a case where wool-dealing and a theatrical production coincided in 1587:

In mid-June 1587 ... the Queen's Men were on tour in Oxfordshire, rolling their wagon of props and costumes into the wool town of Thame ... at the time of the sheep clip in June the place was full of

²⁴ Lewis, *The Shakespeare Documents*, pp. 138, 139.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ In 1578 John Shakespeare was allowed by Stratford Corporation to pay a reduced contribution for the maintenance of the local militia. Additionally in the same year, he was exempted from contributing towards the weekly maintenance of the poor. See Lewis, *The Shakespeare Documents*, pp. 65-67. For his 'years of adversity' see F.E. Halliday, *A Shakespeare Companion*, 1964, pp. 441-442. This period of poverty culminated in 1592 when he avoided church because of a 'feare of process for debte'. This period of poverty partly explains Shakespeare's involvement in a poaching incident which probably occurred in about 1588 and may have been responsible for him leaving Stratford.

²⁷ Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, 2006, p. 292.

²⁸ E. Fripp, *Shakespeare: Man and Artist*, Volume 1, page 138.

²⁹ Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, p. 332.

³⁰ Chartres, *Agricultural Markets*, p. 111.

wool buyers and others; it was a good time to play, and it was visited by many travelling companies ... There were inns for travellers at the east end ... Here the Queen's Men played on 13 June ... in the yard of an inn called the White Hand.'³¹

It is likely that Shakespeare encountered the Queen's Men in different inns as he and his father travelled the country on wool buying expeditions. Inns were widely used for theatrical productions during this period,³² and it was during sheep shearing in June and other times that travelling players gravitated to these locations to maximise revenue. As Keenan has written

Inns were important as staging places 'for the multitude of carriers'; growing numbers of merchants and traders held meetings and made bargains at inns ... To play at inns was to perform in one of the spaces at 'the heart of the social world' of most early modern English communities ... At the same time, local and visiting inn customers provided a ready and potentially generous audience, most inn customers being drawn 'from the landed, mercantile and professional classes.'³³

In his letter to Edward Alleyn dated 28 September 1593, the theatre impresario Philip Henslowe recorded that the Earl of Pembroke's Men had not made sufficient money on the road and had been forced to sell their costumes and theatrical gear to cover their debts ...³⁴ This explains why theatrical companies were so keen to locate their travelling productions during sheep fairs and times of wool shearing, such as that at Thame. Shakespeare probably encountered The Queen's Men in inns and other venues, which might explain why four of the company's plays were forerunners to Shakespeare's later writing. According to Pauline Montague, these plays were '*The Troublesome Regn of King John, The True Tragedy of Richard III, The Famous Victories of Henery V, The True Chronicle History of King Leir and his three daughters, Gonorill, Ragan and Cordelia.*' She concluded that 'these plays ... are actually among the repertoire of the Queen's Men and Shakespeare's own plays show such an intimate knowledge of these and other of their repertoire, in some cases even before they were published, that several biographers believe that Shakespeare may have been a member of the Queen's Men early in his career.'³⁵

The above arguments are consistent with known evidence and explain how during the so-called 'lost years', Shakespeare was equipped by his experience for both his future writing and his career as an astute businessman. It provides a hypothesis which will enable future research to focus on the background that provided him with the knowledge and vernacular culture for his work as a playwright.

³¹ Michael Wood, *In Search of Shakespeare*, 2005, p. 112. See also p. 143 for a picture of such a provincial inn.

³² Siobhan Keenan, *Provincial Playing Places and Performances in Early Modern England*, D.Phil., University of Warwick, 1999, p. 434. Inns continued to be used in provincial areas for the staging of Shakespeare's plays well into the nineteenth century. See for example 'Snape's Theatre White Lion Inn, Sheep Fair, Rugeley', Advertising Playbill 1847, The British Library, *Online*.

³³ Oliver Jones, *The Queen's Men on Tour: Provincial Performance in Vernacular Spaces In Early Modern England* PhD, University of York, 2012, pp. 43, 56.

³⁴ Pauline Montagna, 'William Shakespeare and The Queen's Men', *Shakespeare and His World/The Elizabeth Theatre*, 2022, *Online*.

Socio-Economic Status and the History of the Quakers.

On the 31st of December 1660 a letter was written from York ‘concerning the Lord Fairfax raising the county in arms ... [reporting] that Lambert was marching south from Newcastle to join the Quakers in Yorkshire.’¹ This indicates that Quakers were still participating in military activity until the very end of the civil war, potentially supporting General John Lambert in the New Model Army. Reay has provided detailed evidence for Quaker involvement in the army,² before they turned to pacifism in the early 1660s.

Many Quakers had been influential radicals in the civil war: the ‘future Quaker leader James Tyler, yeoman, [was a] quartermaster in Lambert’s forces in Scotland,’³ and ‘Winstanley and the Leveller leader John Lilburne became Quakers.’⁴ The army was strongly influenced by the Leveller movement, and according to one account, it was the ‘New Model army in which the Levellers had their primary base,’⁵ while ‘several regiments had raised the sea-green colours at Ware’, as they prepared to go to war.⁶

Quaker letters and journals mention progress in army garrisons in York, Bristol, Holy Island, Berwick-on-Tweed, Lancaster, Carlisle, Chester, Kent, Northamptonshire, Norfolk, London [and] Shrewsbury.⁷ Additionally, ‘Quakers were particularly successful in the garrison towns of Ireland and Scotland.’⁸

This geographical distribution of Quakers is reflected in data from a demographic study.⁹

Table 1: Quaker Infants at Risk, 1650-1849.

<i>Region</i>	<i>1650-99</i>	<i>1700-49</i>	<i>1750-99</i>	<i>1800--49</i>
London	330	519	300	72
Bristol & Norwich	691	990	1062	505
Provincial England	2781	3768	4332	3381
Dublin	591	625	623	270
Cork, Wexford. Waterford, Limerick	966	1402	1300	676
Rural Ireland	1953	2964	2487	513
Total	7312	10268	10104	5417

Infants at risk were essentially children born to Quaker families, and Table 1 indicates that most Quakers were from rural and provincial areas both in England and Ireland. This was the pattern until the nineteenth century, when the overall number of Quakers was significantly reduced, and in Ireland became relatively concentrated in towns and urban areas,

¹ R.C. Latham and W. Mathews, *The Diary of Samuel Peps*, Volume 1, 1971, pp. 6, 7.

² Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution*, 1985. See also Christopher Hill, ‘Quakers and the English Revolution’ *The Journal of the Friends’ Historical Society*, Volume 56, 1992 and Kenneth L. Carroll, ‘Quakerism and the Cromwellian Army in Ireland’ *SAS Open Journals*.

³ Reay, *The Quakers*, p. 18.

⁴ Ibid, p. 20.

⁵ Graham Milner, ‘The Levellers and the 1640s English revolution’, *Online*.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Reay, *The Quakers*, p. 50.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ I have re-analysed Vann and Eversley’s reconstitution schedules lodged in Friend’s House, London. For their study see R.T. Vann and D.E. Eversley, *Friends in Life and Death*, 1992.

According to Reay, Quakerism in the early period ‘mainly drew its membership from what were known as the middling sort of people: wholesale and retail traders, artisans, yeomen, husbandmen.’¹⁰ George Fox himself, the leader of the Quakers, was a shoemaker’s apprentice. Reay’s description of the socio-economic origin of Quakers is confirmed by evidence in marriage registers which list the occupations of grooms.¹¹

As a result of the threat of invasion from Scotland in 1651, ‘Cromwell announced to the army that, if he should fall, England would witness a universal crisis and change the numerous colonels, in all their splendour, who were once tailors, goldsmiths and carpenters, would have to make way for the nobility and courtiers.’¹² This description of the socio-economic status of the New Model Army was confirmed by Samuel Pepys in his diary. He wrote:

of all the old army now, you cannot see a man begging about the street. But what? You shall have the Captain turned shoemaker, the lieutenant, a baker; this, a brewer; that, a haberdasher; this common soldier, a porter; and every man in his apron and frock, etc, as if they had never done anything else – whereas the other [cavaliers] go with their belts and swords, swearing and cursing and stealing – running into people’s houses, by force oftentimes, to carry away something. And this is the difference between the temper of one and the other.¹³

Although the Quakers had relatively humble origins – many of them had come from a Baptist background – they were very literate and established their own libraries with printed books and tracts.¹⁴ They turned out to be the most radical of the sects, including a refusal to pay tithes or to doth hats to superiors and recognize titles, which appeared extremely threatening to established authority. They also refused to recognize people in authority by use of special titles and addressed everyone by the terms ‘thee’ or ‘thou’. In the early period they also interrupted Anglican services, shouting at and accusing the ministers of being “dumb hirelings”. They refused to swear oaths in the belief that all testimony should be truthful without artifice. All this activity reflected a belief in equality, a belief which greatly shocked the authorities, Quakers claiming that the aristocracy and gentry owed their position to the ‘Norman Yoke’, who had seized land and property by forceful dispossession.¹⁵

They adopted fixed price trading where merchants set a single, fair price for goods instead of engaging in bartering or haggling. This policy, popularized by early Quakers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was based on religious principles of honesty, equality, and integrity. Because of their reputation for reliability and quality Quaker businesses flourished in manufacturing, commerce and banking.¹⁶

Their religious culture was also heavily influenced by the radicalism of the New Model Army. According to Baxter

¹⁰ Reay, *The Quakers*..

¹¹ Vann & Eversley, *Friends in Life*, pp, 70, 71; Alan Cole, ‘The social origins of early Quakers’, *Past and Present*, number 48, 1970; Judith Jones Hurwich, ‘The social origins of the early Quakers’, *Past & Present*, Volume 48, 1970, pp. 156-162.

¹² Relazione of England by Giovanni Sagredo, 1656, in Edward and Peter Razzell, *The English Revolution: A Contemporary Study of the English Civil War*, 1999, p. 19.

¹³ Latham and Mathews, *The Diary*, Volume 4, 1995, pp. 173,174.

¹⁴ S. B. Jennings, *The Gathering of the Elect: The Development, Nature and Socio-Economic Structure of Protestant Religious Dissent in Seventeenth Century Nottinghamshire*, D.Phil. Thesis, Nottingham Trent University, pp. 260, 261.

¹⁵ Reay, *The Quakers*, p. 39; Jennings, *The Gathering*, pp. 17, 18

¹⁶ Quaker Fixed Price Trading, *Online*.

‘many honest men [in the New Model Army] ... made it ... their religion to talk for this Opinion and for that; sometimes for State Democracy, and sometimes for Church Democracy; sometimes against Forms of Prayer, and sometimes against Infant baptism, (which yet some of them did maintain); sometimes against Set-times of Prayer, and against the tying of ourselves to any Duty before the Spirit move us ... and sometimes about Free-grace and free-will, and all the Points of Antinomianism and Arminianism ... But their most frequent and vehement Disputes were for Liberty of Conscience as they called it ...’¹⁷

The emphasis ‘against Set-times of Prayer, and against the tying of ourselves to any Duty before the Spirit moves us... about Free-grace and free will’ as well as ‘Liberty of Conscience’ was central to Quaker belief, as ‘God’s message came to individuals directly through the inner light of their personal inspiration.’¹⁸

A comparison of Quaker occupations taken from 250 marriage registers in London revealed the following:

Table 2: Select Occupations Among London Quakers, 1680 and 1780.¹⁹

	<i>1680</i>	<i>1780</i>
Banker	0	7
Merchant	14	20
Surgeon, Doctor	0	6
Stockbroker, Scrivenor, Land Surveyor	0	4
Craftsmen. Artisans	147	30

There was a strong polarisation in the socio-economic profile of Quaker occupations in London between the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. All the elite occupations – bankers, merchants, surgeons, doctors, stockbrokers, scriveners, land surveyors –increased significantly in number during this hundred-year period, whereas there was a massive decline in the number of draftsmen and artisans.

Arthur Raistrick has documented in detail major Quaker achievements in science and industry during the eighteenth century. Among the most famous are Abraham Darby of Coalbrookdale, Joseph Fry chocolate manufacturer, John Lettsom and Baron Thomas Dimsdale medical practitioners, and David Barclay of Barclay’s Bank and Charles Lloyd of Lloyds Bank.²⁰

By the late nineteenth centuries, the Quakers were much wealthier than the general population. 45 Quakers who left Wills in 1868 left an average of £11,496, compared to the next 45 non-Quakers in the probate register, who left an average of £2,267. The 46 Quakers with Wills represented 30 per cent of 151 Quakers dying over the age of 21. This can be compared to 11 per cent of 110,510 men in the general population dying in 1858 who left Wills, suggesting overall that Qaker men were fifteen times wealthier than the general population.²¹

¹⁷ R. Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, Part 3, 1696, p. 53.

¹⁸ BCW Project, The Quakers.

¹⁹ Arthur Raistrick, *Quakers in Science and Industry*, 1950, pp. 30, 32.

²⁰ Ibid,

²¹ Alison Taylor, *Quakers and Industrialism in England & Wales*, Undergraduate Thesis Bedford College, 1973.

I have carried out an analysis of Quaker Wills for the period 1881-89, selecting the first 100 cases from the Quaker memorials website. The mean wealth of this sample was £20,105, compared to the next 100 cases in the probate register with a mean wealth value of £4,795. The Quakers were over four times as wealthy as the control sample, confirming the earlier analysis of Quaker wealth. In the Quaker sample, there were 8 esquires with mean wealth of £106,345, 28 gentlemen with a mean of £9,493, and 8 farmers with a mean of £265.

The success of the Quakers was based on their lifestyle. Not only were they a very cohesive group supporting each other in both adversity and financial activity but living a puritanical lifestyle – distrusting ‘worldly’ amusements – the arts, music and the theatre – and adopting a highly disciplined way of life.²² They developed a very supportive community and were also highly educated, with an emphasis on practicality and science.²³

In the nineteenth century, ‘some Quakers went “gay” and lived according to the normal standards their wealth would secure for them in contemporary Society ... with the inevitable result that many of the children brought up in such conditions married into county families and drifted into the Church of England and ceased to be Quakers.’²⁴

Nevertheless, Quakers were a central part of the ‘protestant ethic’ leading to the development of capitalism.²⁵ They were also leading members of humanitarian movements, such as the anti-slavery campaign. For such a minority within the English population, they made a highly significant and major contribution to the development of English society.

²² Raistrick, Quakers, p.43.

²³ Ibid, pp. 32-34.

²⁴ Ibid, pp. 342,343.

²⁵ See P. E Razzell, ‘The protestant ethic and the development of capitalism: a natural scientific critique’, *British Journal of Sociology*, Volume 28, 1977.

Socio-Economic Status, Oliver Cromwell, the New Model Army and the Growth of Quakerism.

There has been much debate about the nature of the New Model Army during the English Civil War. The background to its creation is the importance of parliamentary constituencies and the way they affected the nature of Members of Parliament.

In 1660 the House of Commons was made up of 39 English Counties and 201 English Boroughs.¹ These boroughs were dominated by corporations which are known to have been strongly associated with puritanism. For example, a Durham cleric urged the king in 1640 not to 'suffer little towns to grow big and anti-monarchy to boot, for where are all these pestilent nests of Puritans hatched, but in corporations.'² Consistent with this statement was Clarendon's conclusion that the chief opposition to the king lay in 'great towns and corporations ... not only the citizens of London ... but also the greatest part of all other cities and market towns of England.'³

Contemporaries were unanimous that the inhabitants of the towns of England were the chief supporters of parliament during the civil war, and that tradesmen were some of their most ardent supporters. For example, this was the conclusion of Parker in his *Discourse of Ecclesiastical Politie*. He wrote that

'tis notorious that there is not any sort of people so inclinable to seditious practices as the trading part of a nation ... And, if we reflect upon our late miserable distraction, tis easy to observe how the quarrel was chiefly hatched in the shop of tradesmen and cherished by the zeal of prentice-boys and city gossips.'⁴

Baxter claimed that tradesmen explained their support for Parliament 'because they say the Tradesmen have a Correspondency with London, and so are grown to be more intelligent sort of Men.'⁵ He also claimed that religious awareness was particularly strong 'among tradesmen and corporation inhabitants.'⁶

Given the importance of borough constituencies in the electoral process, and their links with puritanism, Pym's tour of these constituencies in 1640 involving the promotion of puritanism, becomes significant.⁷ Anthony a Wood wrote that Pym 'rode about the country to promote elections of the Puritanical brethren to serve in Parliament.'⁸ The role of corporations in the membership of the Long Parliament is confirmed by events after the ending of the civil war. In 1661, the Cavalier Parliament passed the Corporation Act, designed to exclude Presbyterians from office, and stipulating that 'no person could legally be elected to any office relating to the government of a city or corporation, unless he had within the previous twelve

¹ UK Parliament Online.

² Derek Hirst, *The Representative of the People? – Voters and voting in England under the Early Stuarts*, 1975, p. 47.

³ Edward Hyde, *The History of the Rebellion*, Volume 2, 1888, pp. 236, 238.

⁴ C. Hill and E. Dell (eds), *The Good Old Cause: The English Revolution of 1640-1660, Its Cause, Course and Consequences*, 1969, p. 238.

⁵ R. Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, Part 3, 1696, p. 30.

⁶ Ibid, p. 27. Weber wrote 'with great regularity we find the most genuine adherents of Puritanism among the classes which were rising from a lowly status, the small bourgeois and farmers.' Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1904, p. 174.

⁷ Hirst, *The Representative*, p. 147.

⁸ S. Reed Brett, *John Pym*, 1940, p.156.

months received the sacrament of the “Lord’s Supper” according to the rites of the Church of England.’⁹

This confirms the importance of boroughs and corporations in the Parliamentary cause, although elections were determined by a mixture of national and local issues. Cromwell’s appointment as Member of Parliament for Cambridge in 1640 can be seen partly as a result of this process. Andrew Barclay has assessed in detail a contemporary account of Cromwell’s background – James Heath’s *Flagellum* published in 1665 – writing that ‘the account of the Cambridge election in *Flagellum* has so far proved to be surprisingly accurate. Most of the details about the various individuals involved in it have been either confirmed or have at the very least been shown to be plausible.’¹⁰

The following is Heath’s account of how Cromwell was selected as a Member of Parliament in 1640:

‘... one Richard Tyms since Alderman at Cambridge¹¹ ... [rode] to be at a Conventicle, (as he usually of every Sunday rode to the Isle of Ely to that purpose, having a brother who entertained them in his course), where he heard this Oliver, with such admiration ... took such a liking to him, that from that time he did nothing but ruminare and meditate of the Man and his Gifts ... this Richard Tyms before the Writs were issued ... began to hammer in his head a project of getting him [Cromwell] chosen a Burgesse for Cambridge, himself being then but one of the 24, and with this device he presently repaired to one Mr Wildbore a Draper, a Kinsman of Cromwells and a Non-conformist likewise ... to ask the advice of his Neighbour Ibbot a Tallow-Chandler whom he found working in his Frock ... he told him, that the Mayor had power to make a Freeman, and saith he you know Mr Kitchman the Attorney (who was a Puritan likewise) ... but the Mayor must not know the reason and design of it; for he is a perfect Royalist.

... Cromwell ... came privately to Cambridge the day before, and took up his lodging at one Almond’s a Grocer¹² ... and a Fortnight after another Common-hall was called for the said Election of Burgesses ... and Mr Mutis a Councillor [was called], and he had the Votes of a great many, all of them Royalists ... lastly our Oliver was named, and the Faction bawled as if they were mad, and by a plurality of voces carried it clear...’¹³

According to Heath ‘the Estate of his Uncle fell to him [Cromwell] and that at last (though wasted and gone) rendered him a Candidate for the ensuing Parliament.’¹⁴ Cromwell was nominated by puritans on the local Cambridge council, and the nature of the corporation is indicated by its post-restoration history. In 1662 ‘the puritan corporation was drastically purged. The mayor, seven aldermen and 13 of the common council were removed.’¹⁵ At least six of the seven aldermen were tradesmen, and as Andrew Barclay has written ‘pretty much all members of the Cambridge corporation in this period were tradesmen resident in the town.’¹⁶

⁹ *Corporation Act 1661*, Wikipedia. For a detailed account as to how the Corporation Act affected three Kentish towns, see Colin Lee, ‘Fanatic magistrates: religious and political conflict in three Kentish boroughs, 1680-1684’, *The Historical Journal*, 35, 1991.

¹⁰ James Heath, *Flagellum: or the Life, Birth and Death of O. Cromwell*, 1665, pp. 18-21. Andrew Barclay, *The Election of Cromwell: The Making of a Politician*, 2011, p. 115.

¹¹ Richard Tyms was ‘described as a glover, but he went on to earn his living as a fellmonger, probably trading in cattle hides rather than sheep skins.’ Barclay, *The Election of Cromwell*, p. 61.

¹² According to Dugdale, Cromwell had ‘mean lodgings in Cambridge, at the time he was chosen burgess for the long parliament.’ William Dugdale, *Short View of the late Troubles*, 1681, p. 460.

¹³ Heath, *Flagellum*, pp. 18-21.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ ‘Cambridge Borough’ *History of Parliament*, 1660-1690.

¹⁶ Personal communication.

The description of the supporters for Cromwell's election - a fellmonger, a draper, a tallow chandler and an attorney - suggests that there was an important role for tradesmen in the election of Cromwell.

Cromwell himself was of a very modest socio-economic background. In 1628 Cromwell's 'subsidy by rating of £4 in goods was little more than that of Huntingdon's leading tradesmen.'¹⁷ Heath gave the following account as to how Cromwell's status had deteriorated:¹⁸

'Oliver had run himself out of that little Patrimony he had, and brought his Mother to the same near ruine ... he fell to his old trade, and frequented his old haunts, consumed his money in tipling... his Estate still decaying, he bestook himself at last to a Farm ... took Servants, and bought him all utensils and Materials, as Ploughs, Carts, etc. ... scarce half a Crop ever reared itself upon his Grounde, so that he was (after five years time) glad to abandon it, and set a friend of his to be the Tenant for the remainder of his time.'¹⁹

Cromwell's family had practised the trade of brewing, described by Heath as follows:

'tis reported Oliver kept a Brew-House, that is a mistake; for, the Brew-house was kept in his Father's time, and managed by his Mother and his Father's Servants ... the Accompts being alwayes given to the Mistris, who after her Husband's death did continue in the same Employment and Calling of a Brewer; and thought it is no disparagement to sustain the Estate and Port of a Younger Brother as Mr Robert Cromwell was ...'²⁰

In 1664 a Mr Rawdon visited Huntingdon and confirmed the existence of a brewery associated with the Cromwell family:

'Mr Rawdon, visiting the town five or six years after the Protector's death, saw the brewhouse, which was yet still standing, in which Cromwell 'played the brewer for some years... the brook at Hinchin, running through their premisses at Huntingdon, offered clear convenience for malting and brewing ...'²¹

There was a third account of Cromwell's family practising the trade of brewing. The royalist Member of Parliament Henry Coke told the governor of Great Yarmouth in 1656 that he knew Cromwell and 'his Father too when he kept his Brewhouse at Huntingdon.'²² It is unclear whether Cromwell was directly involved in the brewery, and the first account suggests that the brewery was managed by Cromwell's mother, but that his father was also involved in the business.

Cromwell was supported by artisans and tradesmen in his election to parliament, linked to his own socio-economic status.²³ The origin of the social status of the New Model Army lies in the recruitment of officers to the Eastern Association. One of the officers of the army, Dodson a native of the Isle of Ely, had served with Cromwell from the outbreak of the war, and described how Cromwell had packed the army with officers sympathetic to the sectaries – that in choosing officers for his own regiment, he had dismissed 'honest gentlemen

¹⁷ Members Biographies, *The History of Parliament, 1609-1629*; Oliver Cromwell.

¹⁸ Barclay, *The Election of Cromwell*, p. 10.

¹⁹ Heath, *Flagellum*, pp. 11-15.

²⁰ Ibid, pp. 8-10.

²¹ Robert Davies, *The Life of Marmaduke*, 1863, p.112,

²² Barclay, *The Election*, p. 24.

²³ Morrill has concluded that Cromwell was 'a man in humbler circumstances.' J.S. Morrill, 'The making of Oliver Cromwell' in *Cromwell and the English Revolution*, 1989, p. 19.

and souldiers that ware stout in the cause', and replaced them 'with common men, pore and of meane parentage, onely – he would give them the title of godly pretious men'²⁴. Whitelocke, another contemporary, described Cromwell's men 'as being mostly freeholders and freeholders' sons, who had engaged in this quarrel upon a matter of conscience.'²⁵

In August 1643 Cromwell justified his mode of selection in a famous speech.

'It maybe it provoked some spirits to see such plain men made captains of horse. It had been well that men of honour and birth had entered into these employments, but why do they not appear? Who would have hindered them? But since it was necessary the work must go on, better plain men than none. I had rather have a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for and loves what he knows than what you call a gentleman and is nothing else.'²⁶

The men who stamped the New Model with a distinctive character were a tight group numbering about 5,000 horse and 7,000 foot.'²⁷ The difficulty in analysing the New Model's composition is that 'of the total officer corps in 1648, half came from backgrounds so obscure that no information can be recovered about them.'²⁸ However, Gentles who has made the most detailed study of them concluded that of the officers in 1647 'twenty-two – about 9 per cent of the total – are known to have had some form of higher education ... Thirty-seven men or about one-sixth ... are known to have risen from non-commissioned rank ... [and] a high proportion ... even at the rank of colonel, were men of relatively low social status ... it is the strongly urban character of the officer corps that is most striking.'²⁹

In order to confirm the low social status of the New Model, an analysis has been carried out to compare the socio-economic status through university attendance of Royalist and New Model officers during the civil war period. The essence of the analysis is to make a comparison using an identical methodology for both armies. It indicates that the Royalist officers were of significantly higher social status than those of the New Model, confirming the literary evidence reviewed above.

Table 1: Proportions of Royalist and New Model Army Officers Graduating from Oxford and Cambridge Universities³⁰.

	Total In Sample	Graduating from Oxford	Graduating from Cambridge	Total Proportion Graduating
Royalist Officers, 1642-60	100	27	25	52%
New Model Officers, 1645-49	100	9	6	15%
New Model Officers, 1649-63	100	7	10	17%

²⁴ C. Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War*, 1974, p. 199.

²⁵ A. Fraser, *Cromwell Our Chief of Men*, 1974, p. 100.

²⁶ Ibid, pp. 66, 67.

²⁷ I. Gentiles, *The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland, 1645-1653*, 1992, p. 40.

²⁸ R. Hutton, *The British Republic 1549-1660*, 2000, p. 6.

²⁹ I. Gentiles, 'The New Model Officer Corps in 1647', *Social History*, Volume 22, 1997, pp. 135, 137, 140, 143,

³⁰ I, Gentiles, *The New Model Army, Volume 2, 1649-1663*, 2016. The above figures are based on a hundred cases selecting the first five names in each alphabetical letter in the relevant biographical dictionaries, covering most alphabetical letters. The royalist figures are taken from P.R. Newman, *Royalist Officers in England and Wales, 1642-1660: A Biographical Dictionary*, 1981; the New Model Army ones are derived from M. Waklyn, *Reconstructing the New Model Army, Volume 1, 1645-49*, 2015; M. Waklyn, *Reconstructing the New Model Army, Volume 2, 1649-1663*, 2016.

There are probably too many false positives in all samples, as suggested by Gentles' finding that only nine per cent of New Model Army officers had received a higher education in 1648, including at the Inns of Court. This suggests that most of these officers were from non-gentry backgrounds.³¹

These conclusions are confirmed by literary accounts by both royalists and parliamentarians. The royalist Denzil Holles, believed that the officers of the New Model Army 'from the general ... to the meanest sentinel, are not able to make a thousand a year lands; most of the colonels are tradesmen, brewers, tailors, goldsmiths, shoemakers and the like.'³² According to another hostile contemporary account it claimed that if you 'Deduct the weavers, tailors, brewers, cobblers, tinkers, carmen, draymen, broom-men, and then give me a list of the gentlemen. Their names may be writ in text, within the compass of a single halfpenny.'³³ The Earl of Manchester wrote in 1645, that Cromwell had chosen for his army 'not such as were soldiers or men of estates, but such as were common men, poor and of mean parentage, only he would give them the title of godly, precious men.'³⁴

In a vindication of the New Model from the charge of intending to sack London, published in the summer of 1647, it is asserted: 'There are verie few of us, but have most of this world's interest in the Citie of London, being chiefly and principally raised thence, and verie many, especially of our officers, being citizens themselves having their wives and children therein.'³⁵

Samuel Pepys in his diary for the ninth December 1663 confirmed the role of London artisans and tradesmen in the New Model Army:

'of all the old army now, you cannot see a man begging about the street. But what? You shall have this Captain turned a shoemaker, the lieutenant, a Baker; this, a brewer; that, a haberdasher; this common soldier, a porter; and every man in his apron and frock, etc, as if they had never done anything else – whereas the other [cavaliers] go with their belts and swords, swearing and cursing and stealing – running into people's houses, by force oftentimes, to carry away something. And this is the difference between the temper of one and the other.'³⁶

This perhaps explains why this socio-economic group was so central to the foundation of the New Model Army. It is indicated by a speech that Cromwell made in 1651 when Charles II threatened to invade England with a Scottish army:

³¹ Gentles, *The New Model 1645-1653*.

³² F. Maseres, 'Memoirs of Denzil Lord Holles', *Select Tract Relating to the Civil Wars in England in the Reign of Charles the First*, 1815, p. 277.

³³ *Mercurius Elencticus*, 7-14 June 1648.

³⁴ C. Hill, *God's Englishman: Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*, 1970, pp. 65, 66.

³⁵ C.H. Firth, *Cromwell's Army: a History of the English Soldier during the Civil War*, 1912, p. 47.

³⁶ Latham and Matthews, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Volume 4, 1995, pp. 373, 374.

‘Cromwell announced to the army that, if he should fall, England would witness a universal crisis and change the numerous colonels, in all their splendour, who were once tailors, goldsmiths, and carpenters [and] would have to make way for the nobility and courtiers.’³⁷

The New Model Army was noted for its harsh discipline ‘including penalties for drunkenness and fornication; blasphemers [who] had their tongues pierced with a hot iron.’³⁸ The army also had a reputation for being ‘the praying army’,³⁹ and their religious faith along with their discipline ‘explained why small handfuls of New Model soldiers were able to put much larger numbers of royalists to flight.’ As the Venetian ambassador observed of the New Model, ‘This much is certain that the troops live as precisely as if they were a brotherhood of monks ... It was observed in the late wars that when the royal forces gained a victory, they abandoned themselves to wine and debauchery, while those commanded by Cromwell, after their greatest successes were obliged to pray and fast.’⁴⁰

The restoration of the monarchy did lead to the abolition of the New Model Army but resulted in many army officers retreating into the radicalism of Quakerism.

Socio-Economic Status and the History of the Quakers.

On the 31st of December 1660 a letter was written from York ‘concerning the Lord Fairfax raising the county in arms ... [reporting] that Lambert was marching south from Newcastle to join the Quakers in Yorkshire.’⁴¹ This indicates that Quakers were still participating in military activity until the very end of the civil war, potentially supporting General John Lambert in the New Model Army. Reay has provided detailed evidence for Quaker involvement in the army,⁴² before they turned to pacifism in the early 1660s.

Many Quakers had been influential radicals in the civil war: the ‘future Quaker leader James Tyler, yeoman, [was a] quartermaster in Lambert’s forces in Scotland,’⁴³ and ‘Winstanley and the Leveller leader John Lilburne became Quakers.’⁴⁴ Quaker letters and journals mention progress in army garrisons in York, Bristol, Holy Island, Berwick-on-Tweed, Lancaster, Carlisle, Chester, Kent, Northamptonshire, Norfolk, London [and] Shrewsbury.⁴⁵ Additionally, ‘Quakers were particularly successful in the garrison towns of Ireland and Scotland.’⁴⁶

This geographical distribution of Quakers is reflected in data from a demographic study.⁴⁷

³⁷ ‘Relatzione of England by Giovanni Sagredo, 1656 in Edward and Peter Razzell, *The English Revolution: a Contemporary Study of the English Civil War* (1999), p. 19.

³⁸ R. Tombs, *The English and their History*, 2015, p. 230.

³⁹ Ibid, p. 95.

⁴⁰ Relatzione of England by Giovanni Sagredo, 1656,, p. 19.

⁴¹ R.C. Latham and W. Mathews, *The Diary of Samuel Peps*, Volume 1, 1971, pp. 6, 7.

⁴² Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution*, 1985. See also Christopher Hill, ‘Quakers and the English Revolution’ *The Journal of the Friends’ Historical Society*, Volume 56, 1992 and Kenneth L. Carroll, ‘Quakerism and the Cromwellian Army in Ireland’ *SAS Open Journals*.

⁴³ Reay, *The Quakers*, p. 18.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 20.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 50.

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ I have re-analysed Vann and Eversley’s reconstitution schedules lodged in Friend’s House, London. For their study see R.T. Vann and D.E. Eversley, *Friends in Life and Death*, 1992.

Table 2: *Quaker Infants at Risk, 1650-1849.*

<i>Region</i>	<i>1650-99</i>	<i>1700-49</i>	<i>1750-99</i>	<i>1800--49</i>
London	330	519	300	72
Bristol & Norwich	691	990	1062	505
Provincial England	2781	3768	4332	3381
Dublin	591	625	623	270
Cork, Wexford. Waterford, Limerick	966	1402	1300	676
Rural Ireland	1953	2964	2487	513
Total	7312	10268	10104	5417

Infants at risk were essentially children born to Quaker families, and Table 2 indicates that most Quakers were from rural and provincial areas both in England and Ireland. This was the pattern until the nineteenth century, when the overall number of Quakers was significantly reduced, and in Ireland became relatively concentrated in towns and urban areas,

According to Reay, Quakerism in the early period ‘mainly drew its membership from what were known as the middling sort of people: wholesale and retail traders, artisans, yeomen, husbandmen.’⁴⁸ George Fox himself, the leader of the Quakers, was a shoemaker’s apprentice. Reay’s description of the socio-economic origin of Quakers is confirmed by evidence in marriage registers which list the occupations of grooms.⁴⁹

Although the Quakers had relatively humble origins – many of them had come from a Baptist background – they were very literate and established their own libraries with printed books and tracts.⁵⁰ They turned out to be the most radical of the sects, including a refusal to pay tithes or to doth hats to superiors and recognize titles, which appeared extremely threatening to established authority. They also refused to recognize people in authority by use of special titles and addressed everyone by the terms ‘thee’ or ‘thou’. In the early period they also interrupted Anglican services, shouting at and accusing the ministers of being “dumb hirelings”. They refused to swear oaths in the belief that all testimony should be truthful without artifice. All this activity reflected a belief in equality, a belief which greatly shocked the authorities, Quakers claiming that the aristocracy and gentry owed their position to the ‘Norman Yoke’, who had seized land and property by forceful dispossession.⁵¹

They adopted fixed price trading where merchants set a single, fair price for goods instead of engaging in bartering or haggling. This policy, popularized by early Quakers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was based on religious principles of honesty, equality, and integrity. Because of their reputation for reliability and quality Quaker businesses flourished in manufacturing, commerce and banking.⁵²

⁴⁸ Reay, *The Quakers*.

⁴⁹ Vann & Eversley, *Friends in Life*, pp. 70, 71; A. Cole, ‘The social origins of early Quakers’, *Past and Present*, number 48, 1970; J. Jones Hurwich, ‘The social origins of the early Quakers’, *Past & Present*, Volume 48, 1970, pp. 156-162.

⁵⁰ S. B. Jennings, *The Gathering of the Elect: The Development, Nature and Socio-Economic Structure of Protestant Religious Dissent in Seventeenth Century Nottinghamshire*, D.Phil. Thesis, Nottingham Trent University, pp. 260, 261.

⁵¹ Reay, *The Quakers*, p. 39; Jennings, *The Gathering*, pp. 17, 18

⁵² Quaker Fixed Price Trading, *Online*.

A comparison of Quaker occupations taken from 250 marriage registers in London revealed the following:

Table 3: Select Occupations Among London Quakers, 1680 and 1780.⁵³

	1680	1780
Banker	0	7
Merchant	14	20
Surgeon, Doctor	0	6
Stockbroker, Scrivenor, Land Surveyor	0	4
Craftsmen. Artisans	147	30

There was a strong polarisation in the socio-economic profile of Quaker occupations in London between the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. All the elite occupations – bankers, merchants, surgeons, doctors, stockbrokers, scriveners, land surveyors – increased significantly in number during this hundred-year period, whereas there was a major decline in the number of craftsmen and artisans.

Arthur Raistrick has documented in detail major Quaker achievements in science and industry during the eighteenth century. Among the most famous are Abraham Darby of Coalbrookdale, Joseph Fry chocolate manufacturer, John Lettsom and Baron Thomas Dimsdale medical practitioners, and David Barclay of Barclay's Bank and Charles Lloyd of Lloyds Bank.⁵⁴

By the late nineteenth centuries, the Quakers were much wealthier than the general population. 45 Quakers who left Wills in 1868 left an average of £11,496, compared to the next 45 non-Quakers in the probate register, who left an average of £2,267. The 45 Quakers with Wills represented 30 per cent of 151 Quakers dying over the age of 21. This can be compared to 11 per cent of 110,510 men in the general population dying in 1858 who left Wills, suggesting overall that Quaker men were fifteen times wealthier than the general population.⁵⁵

An analysis of Quaker Wills has been carried out for the period 1881-89, selecting the first 100 cases from the Quaker memorials website. The mean wealth of this sample was £20,105, compared to the next 100 cases in the probate register with a mean wealth value of £4,795. The Quakers were over four times as wealthy as the control sample, confirming the earlier analysis of Quaker wealth. In the Quaker sample, there were 8 esquires with mean wealth of £106,345, 28 gentlemen with a mean of £9,493, and 8 farmers with a mean of £265.

The success of the Quakers was based on their lifestyle. Not only were they a very cohesive group supporting each other in both adversity and financial activity but living a puritanical lifestyle – distrusting 'worldly' amusements – the arts, music and the theatre – and adopting a highly disciplined way of life.⁵⁶ They developed a very supportive community and were also highly educated, with an emphasis on practicality and science.⁵⁷

The Quakers religious culture was also heavily shaped by the radicalism and puritanism of the New Model Army. The army was strongly influenced by the Leveller movement, and according to one account, it was the 'New Model army in which the Levellers had their primary

⁵³ A. Raistrick, *Quakers in Science and Industry*, 1950, pp. 30, 32.

⁵⁴ Ibid,

⁵⁵ A. Taylor, *Quakers and Industrialism in England & Wales*, Undergraduate Thesis Bedford College, 1973.

⁵⁶ Raistrick, *Quakers*, p.43.

⁵⁷ Ibid, pp. 32-34.

base,⁵⁸ while ‘several regiments had raised the sea-green colours at Ware’, as they prepared to go to war.⁵⁹

According to Baxter

‘many honest men [in the New Model Army] ... made it ... their religion to talk for this Opinion and for that; sometimes for State Democracy, and sometimes for Church Democracy; sometimes against Forms of Prayer, and sometimes against Infant baptism, (which yet some of them did maintain); sometimes against Set-times of Prayer, and against the tying of ourselves to any Duty before the Spirit move us ... and sometimes about Free-grace and free-will, and all the Points of Antinomianism and Arminianism ... But their most frequent and vehement Disputes were for Liberty of Conscience as they called it ...’⁶⁰

The emphasis ‘against Set-times of Prayer, and against the tying of ourselves to any Duty before the Spirit moves us... about Free-grace and free will’, as well as ‘Liberty of Conscience’ was central to Quaker belief, as ‘God’s message came to individuals directly through the inner light of their personal inspiration.’⁶¹

The socio-economic status of the New Model Army was very similar to that of the Quakers, documented by Cromwell and Samuel Pepys. In the nineteenth century, ‘some Quakers went “gay” and lived according to the normal standards their wealth would secure for them in contemporary Society ... with the inevitable result that many of the children brought up in such conditions married into county families and drifted into the Church of England and ceased to be Quakers.’⁶²

Nevertheless, Quakers were a part of the ‘protestant ethic’ leading to the development of capitalism.⁶³ They were also leading members of humanitarian movements, such as the anti-slavery campaign. For such a minority within the English population, they made a highly significant and major contribution to the development of English society. However, their origin lay in the New Model Army, forged by Cromwell, with tradesmen and artisans playing a leading role, a radical contribution to England’s social and political history.

⁵⁸ G. Milner, ‘The Levellers and the 1640s English revolution’, *Online*.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*.

⁶⁰ R. Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, Part 3, 1696, p. 53.

⁶¹ BCW Project, The Quakers.

⁶² *Ibid*, pp. 342,343.

⁶³ See P. E Razzell, ‘The protestant ethic and the development of capitalism: a natural scientific critique’, *British Journal of Sociology*, Volume 28, 1977.

Socio-Economic Status, the English Civil War, and Oliver Cromwell

Socio-Economic Status and the Civil War.

An analysis of the socio-economic status of participants in the civil war is fraught with difficulty. Information on the elites is relatively easy to obtain, but data on rank-and-file members of political and religious groups is largely lacking.¹ Although statistical analysis is virtually impossible, literary evidence is abundant but often very partisan given the nature of the civil war. There is also the difficulty of significant changes in the adherents to parliament and the crown, so that for example more than two-fifths of the Commons and the majority of the Lords left Westminster for the king's cause in 1642.² Also, there were major changes in the social structure of England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which affected the social composition of supporters of the crown and parliament:

... between 1540 and 1640 ... The number of peers rose from 60 to 160; baronets and knights from 500 to 1400; esquires from perhaps 800 to 3,000; and armigerous gentry from perhaps 5,000 to 15,000 ... This numerical expansion was made possible mainly by the transfer of huge quantities of landed property first from the church to the crown and then from the crown to the laity, mostly gentry, in a series of massive sales to pay for foreign wars.³

The House of Commons itself changed during this period, so that it grew from approximately 300 members to about 500, and the gentry component in it rose from about 50 per cent to approximately 75 per cent.⁴ Throughout the civil war there were major changes in the numbers of adherents to the parliamentary and royalist armies, making it difficult to carry out statistical analysis of membership numbers. The alignment of forces of 1640 was different from that of 1642, by which time large number of former parliamentarians had moved over to royalism. There were changes again in 1648, when conservative elements among parliamentarians, designated as Presbyterians, switched back into support for the king.⁵ Many of those who had supported parliament on constitutional grounds in 1640, like Sir Edward Hyde, transferred their allegiance in 1642, whereas those who supported parliament on religious grounds tended to continue to support the parliamentary cause.⁶

The most significant change in parliament occurred in December 1648 when 'under the command of Colonel Thomas Pride, the army purged the House of Commons of any opposition (some 100 MPs were excluded, 45 who were actually arrested – others prudently removed themselves). It was the remaining "Rump" of around 70 MPs who would address the matter of bringing the King to trial.'⁷

There were also major changes in demographic and economic conditions during the second half of the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth centuries. Population grew by over 30 per cent in the period 1570-1609 and prices more than doubled between 1550 and

¹ Underdown, *Revel*, pp. viii, 183-184; C. Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War*, 1974, p. 172.

² R Richardson, *The Debate on the English Revolution*, 1998, p. 45.

³ L. Stone, *Causes of the English Revolution, 1529-1640*, 1986, pp. 72, 73.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 92.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 34.

⁶ *Ibid*, p., 143.

⁷ D. Flinham, *Civil War London*. 2017, p. 41.

1600.⁸ Lawrence Stone noted the changes that had taken place in English society during the sixteenth century as a result of population growth: ‘the excess supply of labour relative to demand not only increased unemployment, but forced down real wages to an alarming degree ... [there was] a polarisation of society into rich and poor: the upper classes became relatively more numerous and their real incomes rose; the poor also became more numerous and their real incomes fell.’⁹

Recent research by Alexandra Shepard using church court depositions indicates that wealth inequality increased markedly during the first half of the seventeenth century.

*Table 4: Median Wealth in England, Deflated to 1550-1559 Values, by Social Group Over Time.*¹⁰

	1550-74	1575-99	1600-24	1625-49
Gentry (N = 367)	£16.00	£8.00	£59.30	£50.00
Yeomen (N = 1104)	£5.34	£7.27	£23.92	£50.00
Craft/Trade (N = 2185)	£2.40	£1.40	£2.99	£5.00
Husbandmen (N = 2127)	£4.00	£3.37	£5.93	£5.00
Labourers (N = 273)	£1.58	£1.35	£1.36	£1.03

Although the gentry increased their wealth – increasing by about three times – the yeomen’s wealth had grown nearly ten times, while labourers’ worth decreased slightly. There was little change among husbandmen and a doubling of wealth among craft/tradesmen. This data suggests that this was a period of ‘the rise of the yeomanry’ during the first half of the seventeenth century. Wrightson has summarized the situation of the yeomen as follows:

Like the gentry, they benefited from low labour costs as employers, while as large-scale producers they stood to gain from rising prices ... Again, like the gentry, they took a thoroughly rational and calculating attitude towards profit ... often ambitious, aggressive, [and] small capitalists ... [they experienced] gradually rising living standards, the rebuilding of farmhouses and their stocking with goods of increasing sophistication and comfort.¹¹

These changes had a significant effect on the relationships between different social classes. Village elites composed of local gentry and prosperous yeomen farmers and tradesmen began to attempt to control the impoverished and unruly elements of the poor.¹²

Long before the civil war, especially in towns and pasture regions where cloth-working or other industrial pursuits were available, the growing gulf between the people ‘of credit and reputation’ and their less prosperous neighbours was reflected in the emergence of parish elites who saw it as their duty to discipline the poor into godliness and industriousness, and who found in puritan teaching (broadly defined) their guide and inspiration. Along with reformist elements of the gentry

⁸ E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England & Wales*, 1981; B.R. Mitchell and P. Deane, *Abstracts of British Historical Statistics*, 1971, pp. 484-486; J. Thirsk, ‘The farming regions’, pp. 857, 858, 1861; E.H. Phelps-Brown and S.V. Hopkins, ‘Seven centuries of the prices of consumables compared with builders’ wage rates’ in E.M. Carus-Wilson (ed.), *Essays in Economic History*, Volume 2, 1962, pp. 193-195.

⁹ L. Stone, ‘Social mobility in England, 1500-1700’, *Past and Present*, Volume 33, 1966, pp. 26-29, 49

⁹ Data from *Perceptions of Worth and Social Status in Early Modern England*, ESRC Reference Number RES-000-23-1111.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Wrightson, *English Society*, pp. 134, 135.

¹² Manning, *The English People*, p. 46; K. Wrightson, *English Society*, pp. 168-73, 181.

and clergy, they mounted a campaign against the traditional culture of the lower orders.¹³

The merging of interests between the gentry and prosperous yeomen and tradesmen makes it difficult to distinguish social statuses in this period.¹⁴ One-hundred-and-two Yorkshiremen obtained coats of arms as gentlemen between 1558 and 1642 and roughly half of them were yeomen farmers. In Lancashire 202 families entered the gentry: 'the majority were prosperous yeomen.'¹⁵ Gordon Batho concluded that 'there was no sharp distinction between lesser gentry and the richer yeomen ... In innumerable wills and legal documents of the age a man is described in one place as a yeoman and in another as a gentleman ...'¹⁶

Oliver Cromwell himself illustrates the ambiguity of status in this period. John Morrill has summarized the evidence as follows:

... his standing in St Ives was essentially that of a yeoman, a working farmer. He had moved down from the gentry to the 'middling sort' ... Despite his connections with ancient riches, Cromwell's economic status was much closer to that of the 'middling sort' than that to the country gentry and governors. He always lived in towns, not in a country manor house; and he worked for his living. He held no important local offices and had no tenants or others dependent upon him beyond a few household servants. When he pleaded for the selection of 'russet-coated captains who know what they are fighting for', and when he described his troopers as 'honest men, such as feared God', this was not the condescension of a radical member of the elite, but the pleas of a man on the margins of the gentry on behalf of those with whom he had had social discourse and daily communion for twenty years.¹⁷

There was a great deal of social mobility at this time, with many wealthy yeomen and tradesmen achieving gentry status during the first half of the seventeenth century.¹⁸ Gentlemen and yeomen/tradesmen were educated together in local grammar schools and universities, and so shared similar cultural backgrounds.¹⁹ There was also an increase in the literacy of both the gentry and the middle classes, whereas most husbandmen and labourers remained illiterate during this period.²⁰ Because of the fear of literacy amongst the 'lower sort', as early as 1543 parliament had stipulated that 'no women, nor artificers, prentices, journeymen, servingmen of the degrees of yeomen or under, husbandmen nor labourers shall read the Bible or New Testament in English to himself or any other, privately or openly.'²¹ Hobbes had complained that 'after the Bible was translated into English, every man, nay every boy and wench, that could read English thought they spoke with God Almighty and understood what He said.'²²

The fear that established authority had of the 'lower sort' obtaining literacy was

¹³ D. Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England, 1603-1660*, 1957, pp. 275, 276.

¹⁴ Hirst, *The Representative*, p. 4; see also O'Day, 'Universities', p. fn 19, p. 100; Wedgewood, *The King's War*, p. 205.

¹⁵ Manning, *1649: The Crisis*, p. 58.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ R. O' Day, 'Universities and professions in the early modern period', *oro.open.ac.uk*, pp. 83, 87, 101; Wrightson, *English Society*, pp. 89; 186, 191-193; Stone, *Causes*, pp. 74;

¹⁸ Wrightson, *English Society*, p.27; see also Manning, *1649 The Crisis*, p. 51.

¹⁹ R. O' Day, 'Universities and professions in the early modern period', *oro.open.ac.uk*, pp. 83, 87, 101; Wrightson, *English Society*, pp. 89; 186, 191-193; Stone, *Causes*, pp. 74;

²⁰ Wrightson, *English Society*, p. 191.

²¹ D. Wilson, *The People and the Book: The Revolutionary Impact of the English Bible 1380-1611*, 1976, p. 87.

²² Stone, *Causes*, p.101.

probably well-founded. As early as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries throughout southern and central England groups of Lollards met secretly in towns and villages to read or listen to readings of Scripture and to consider their contemporary application. Most of them came from the class of skilled, literate traders and craftsmen. They were masons, carpenters, wool-merchants and leatherworkers – men and women whose work took them long distances in search of employment and markets.

This was the classic socio-economic group associated with puritanism, but nevertheless there were many adherents of a higher status. When Prynne, Burton and Bastwick, martyrs to the Protestant cause who had been punished and exiled by the king, returned to London on the 28th November 1640, ‘some three thousand coaches, and four thousand horsemen’ were included in the crowd that welcomed them back to London.²³ During the building of the defensive wall around London, the people helping to build the wall included ‘a great company of the common council and diverse other chief men of the city’.²⁴

Nevertheless the evidence suggests that wealthy aldermen largely supported the crown: ‘strong financial ties bound the wealthy citizens to the crown ... the court contented itself with the belief that the disturbances involved the meaner sort of people and that the affections of the better and main part of the city favoured the king.’²⁵ As a result of this belief, the king placed a guard to the approaches of the Commons with soldiers ‘who disliked or despised the Londoners and officers who, being Westminster men, were friends and dependents of the Court.’²⁶

Clarendon summarized his conclusions about the link between status and affiliation to crown or parliament:

... though the people in general [favoured the king], (except in great towns and corporations, where, besides the natural malignity, the factious lecturers, and emissaries from the parliament, had poisoned the affections,) and especially those of quality, were loyally inclined ...²⁷

Most contemporaries believed that the main support for parliament came from London and other corporate towns, with strong support from the middle sort.²⁸

Lilly writing in 1651 described how the terms Cavalier and Roundhead originated:

They [the Puritans] had their hair of their heads very few of them longer than their ears, whereupon it came to pass that those who usually with their cries attended at Westminster were by a nickname called *Roundheads*, and all that took part or appeared for his Majesty, *Cavaliers* ... However, the present hatred of the citizens was such unto gentlemen, especially courtiers, that few durst come into the city; or if they did, they were sure to receive affronts and be abused.²⁹

²³ D. Purkiss, *The English Civil War: A People's History*, 2007, p. 99.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 286.

²⁵ S. Porter and S. Marsh, *The Battle for London*, 2010, p. 9; see also D. Hirst, *The Representative of the People? Voting in England under the Early Stuarts*, 1975, p. 138; R. Ashton, *The City and the Court, 1603- 1643*, 1979, p. 206; Pearl, *London*, p. xi.

²⁶ C.V. Wedgwood, *The King's War, 1641-1647*, 2001, p. 32.

²⁷ E. Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England Begun in the Year 1641*, Volume 2, 1888, p. 226.

²⁸ An indication of where the city's sympathies lay was the return of four members opposed to the court in the election to the Long Parliament in October 1640.

²⁹ W. Lilly *The True History of King James I and Charles I*, 1715, pp. 55-56 – first published in 1651, p. 246. The association between puritanism and short hair was also found in New England where the rule was ‘that none should wear their hair below their ears’. T. Hutchinson, *The History of the Colony and Province of Massachusetts*, Vol.1, 1936, pp. 130, 131. Some Baptists continued to prohibit long hair as late as 1689. See A.C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists*, 1947, p. 130.

Pepys in his diary frequently distinguished between citizens and gentlemen living in London; for example, at the end of December 1662 he wrote 'only not so well pleased with the company at the house today, which was full of Citizens, there hardly being a gentleman or woman in the house ...'³⁰

Baxter concluded that 'though it must be confessed that the public safety and liberty wrought very much with most, especially the nobility and gentry who adhered to Parliament, yet it was principally the difference about religion that filled up the Parliament's armies and put the resolution and valour into their soldiers, which carried them on in another manner than mercenary soldiers are carried on.'³¹ There is evidence however of tensions between the aristocracy and gentry on the one hand and the middle classes during the outbreak of the civil war. The burden of ship money fell disproportionately on yeomanry and tradesmen, something which was highlighted by William Prynne in his attacks on the crown.³² These tensions were exacerbated by the attitudes of the aristocracy and gentry towards the new middle classes.

The pretensions of yeomen to quality with gentry caused resentment amongst some gentlemen. 'The yeomanry' wrote Edward Chamberlayne ... 'grow rich, and thereby so proud, insolent, and careless, that they neither give that humble respect and awful reverence which in other Kingdoms is usually given to nobility, gentry, and clergy' ... which has 'rendered them so distasteful ... even to their own gentry' that the latter sometimes wished that the yeomen's activities were less profitable or they were taxed more heavily.³³

This is consistent with the patterns of wealth depicted in Shepard's analysis of church court depositions, whereby the yeomanry achieved parity with the gentry by the middle of the seventeenth century.

A number of scholars have noted the breaking of the alliance between the gentry and the middle classes, as the demands for political and religious reforms began to emerge.³⁴ However, this reflected some long-term tensions between these socio-economic groups. For example, as early as 1576, a clause was inserted in an Act of Parliament prohibiting West Country clothiers from buying more than 20 acres of land.³⁵

In Somerset it was alleged that

... a great part of the estate of every farmer or substantial yeoman should be taken from them; alleging that some lords had said that £20 by the year was enough for any peasant to live by ... persuading the substantial yeomen and freeholders that at least two parts of their states would by that commission taken from them ... For though the gentlemen of ancient families estates in that county were for the most part well affected to the King ... yet there were people of inferior degree, who, by good husbandry, clothing, and other thriving arts, had gotten very great fortunes, and, by degrees getting themselves into the gentlemen's estates, were angry that they found not themselves in the same esteem and reputation with those whose estates they had ... These from the beginning were fast friends to the Parliament, and many of them were now entrusted by them as deputy-lieutenants in their new ordinance of the militia ...³⁶

Likewise in Yorkshire when the king summoned the gentry of the county to York in May 1642, he omitted to summon the freeholders, who responded by claiming 'ourselves

³⁰ R. Latham and W. Matthews (eds.), *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Volume 3, 1995, p. 295.

³¹ Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, pp. 30, 31.

³² See Manning, *The English People*, pp. 10, 231.

³³ E. Chamberlayne, *Anglia Notitia*, 1672, pp. 61-63.

³⁴ Manning, *The English People*, p. 46

³⁵ L. Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy*, 1965, p. 28.

³⁶ Hyde, *History*, Volume 2, p. 296.

equally interested in the common good of the county', and as a result 'did take boldness to come in person to York ... thereupon the doors of the meeting house were shut, we utterly excluded...'³⁷

Elsewhere 'Lord Paulet in opposition to the Militia at a combustion in *Wells* ... declared that it was not fit for any Yeomen to have allowed more than the poor Moitie of ten pounds a year ... when the power should be totally on their [the royalists'] side, they shall be compelled to live at that low allowance ... the people did not take the speech as onely directed to the Yeomen, but to all men under the degree of a Gentleman ... the Tradesmen and Merchants...'³⁸

One Parliamentary tract published in 1643 claimed

that this was proof that the royalists intended 'a government at discretion' after the French fashion, because 'the middle sort of people of England, and yeomanry' were the chief obstacles to such a change, and as they composed the main part of the militia, 'then by policy, or even plain force' they must be disarmed ...³⁹

This can be seen indirectly as a consequence of 'the rise of the yeomanry', creating increasing demands by yeomen for equal status with their aristocratic and gentry neighbours. This resulted in tension between these groups, leading on occasions to violence. For example, 'the cavaliers in Somersetshire have used violence on the yeomanry, and have turned them out of doors, and take their arms from them, the people seeing it could not suffer it, for if they prevail now they think they shall be slaves forever.'⁴⁰

Fear was a leading component of the civil war. As we have seen, in London the king and many Members of Parliament and the House of Lords left London in early 1642 as a result of the fear of the population threatening them with violence and intimidation. Many of these members had originally supported parliament on constitutional grounds, but fear had driven them into the support of the king. Many Protestants feared Catholics, particularly after Spain's attempt to invade England during the late sixteenth century. In the provinces many of the aristocracy and gentry feared the threats from the poor and the increasing radicalism of the middle classes. And at a later stage of the war, the Presbyterians feared the increasing power of the radicals in the New Model Army.

There is ample evidence that the middle classes played a significant role in political developments in the English civil war, although the claim that the middle sort were the main supporters of parliament has been contested by a number of historians.⁴¹ There is plenty of contemporary literary evidence to indicate that the middle classes played an important role in the support of parliament. Keith Wrightson has summarized this evidence:

London demonstrators against episcopacy in 1641 were characterized as being 'men of mean or a middle quality', as distinct from both 'aldermen, merchants or common councilmen' on the one

³⁷ C. Hill and E. Dell (eds.), *The Good Old Cause: The English Revolution of 1640-1660, Its Causes, Course and Consequences*, 1969, pp. 244, 245.

³⁸ *A Memento for Yeomen, Merchants, Citizens and All the Commons in England* (August 23, 1642, B.M. E 113 (13), pp. 4, 5.

³⁹ B. Manning, *Aristocrats, Plebeians and Revolution in England 1640-1660*, 1996 p. 69.

⁴⁰ B. Manning, *The English People and the English Revolution*, 1976, p. 328.

⁴¹ The main proponent of the middle sort hypothesis is Manning in his *The English People*. The critics of this thesis have pointed out that many of the middle classes supported royalism or remained neutral. See J. Barry and C. Brooks (eds.), *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550- 1800*, 1994, p. 22; J. Morrill (ed.), *Reactions to the English Civil War, 1642-1649*, 1982, p. 71.

hand, and the 'vulgar' on the other. In Worcester 'the middle sort of people' supported the parliamentary cause. 'The middle and inferior sort of people' of Birmingham resisted Prince Rupert's advance in 1643 despite the defeatist fears of the 'better sort'. At Bristol 'the King's cause and party were favoured by two extremes in that city; the one the wealthy and powerful men, the other of the basest and lowest sort, but disgusted by the middle rank, the true and best citizens'. Such activism and the terms in which it was described were not confined to urban centres. In Somerset the royalists were said to consist of most of the gentry and their tenants, while parliament had the support of 'yeomen, farmers, petty freeholders, and such as use manufactures that enrich the country', under the leadership of some gentlemen and others of lesser degree, who 'by good husbandry, clothing and other thriving arts, had gotten very great fortunes' In Gloucestershire the king was supported by both the rich and 'the needy multitude' who depended upon them. Parliament allegedly had the hearts of 'the yeomen, farmers, clothiers, and the whole middle rank of the people'. According to Lucy Hutchinson, 'most of the gentry' of Nottinghamshire 'were disaffected to the parliament', but 'most of the middle sort, the able substantial freeholders, and the other commons, who had not their dependence upon the malignant nobility and gentry, adhered to the parliament'. Again, Richard Baxter saw the king as finding support among most lords, knights and gentlemen of England, together with their tenants and 'most of the poorest people', while parliament had a minority of the gentry 'and the greatest part of the tradesmen and freeholders and the middle sort of men, especially in those corporations and countries which depend on clothing and such manufactures'.⁴²

The critique of the thesis that the 'middle sort' were the chief supporters of parliament, has not allowed for the major support for parliament of the middle classes in London, who were the prime movers at the beginning of the civil war and were the mainstay of the New Model Army who shaped its outcome.

The turning point in the support of London for parliament occurred in elections held on December 21, 1641 to the Common Council brought in men with active parliamentary Puritan sympathies. These elections transformed the politics of London, and Clarendon attributed to them the king's departure from Whitehall early in January 1642.⁴³

The takeover by radical elements of the Common Council in December 1641 'when that body was effectively captured by the radical party ... Now (wrote one later royalist sympathizer) outgoe all the grave, discreet, well-affected Citizens ... and in their Stead are chosen *Fowke* the Traytor, *Ryley* the Squeeking bodyes-maker, *Perkins* the Taylor, *Norminton* the Cutler, young beardless *Coulson* the Dyer, *Gill* the Wine-Cooper, and *Jupe* the Laten-man in *Crooked-Lane*, *Beadle* of the Ward ...'⁴⁴

This was a time of revolutionary fervour:

when Alderman *Pennington* and Captain *Venne* brought down their Myrmidons to assault and terrified the Members of both Houses, whose faces or opinion they liked not ... when these rude multitudes published the names of Members of both Houses, as enemies of the Commonwealth, who would not agree to their frantic propositions; when the names of those were given by Members of the House, that they might be proscribed, and torn in pieces by those Multitudes, when many were driven away for fear of their lives from being present at those consultations?⁴⁵

This resulted in 236 MPs leaving parliament in June 1642, mostly to join the King at York.⁴⁶ Class hostility grew during the civil war, often associated with religious radicalism: Positions in local and other authorities were increasingly held by wealthy

⁴² K. Wrightson, 'Sorts of people in Tudor and Stuart England' in J. Barry and C. Brooks (eds.), *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800*, 1994, p. 46.

⁴³ Pearl, *London*, p. 132.

⁴⁴ Ashton, *The City*, pp. 205, 206.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 215. See also Stone, *Causes*, p.145.

⁴⁶ Stone, *Causes*, p.141.

members of the middle classes. The nobility and gentry who had supported parliament against the king found that they were neglected, and people of lower status were preferred for places of authority. Clarendon noted that

The nobility and gentry who had advanced the credit and reputation of the Parliament by concurring with it against the King found themselves totally neglected, and the most inferior people preferred at all places of trust and profit.... most of those persons of condition, who ... had been seduced to do them [parliament] service throughout the kingdom, decline to appear longer in so detestable employment; and now a more inferior sort of the common people succeeded in those employments, who thereby exercised so great an insolence over those were in quality above them, and who always had a power over them, that was very grievous ... all distinction of quality being renounced. And they who were not above the condition of ordinary inferior constables six or seven years before, were now the justices of peace, sequestrators, and commissioners; who executed the commands of Parliament in all the counties of the kingdom with such rigour and tyranny as was natural for such persons to use over and towards those upon whom they had formerly looked at such a distance.⁴⁷

Lucy the wife of Thomas Hutchinson tells 'how her husband, the parliamentary officer, found that his allies in Nottinghamshire distrusted civility, thinking it scarce possible for anyone to continue to be both a gentleman and a supporter of the godly interest.'⁴⁸

In 1646 the Presbyterian Thomas Edwards declared that in the previous two years, and especially since parliament's victory at Naseby, the sectaries had in the most insolent and unheard-of manner abused 'all sorts and ranks of men even to the highest.'⁴⁹ Clarendon complained that the sects had 'discountenanced all forms of reverence and respect, as relics and marks of superstition.' In 1663 the Lord Mayor of London issued an order forbidding and repetition of the 'rudeness, affronts, and insolent behaviour' displayed by 'the unruly and meaner sort of people' during the Interregnum towards noblemen, gentlemen and persons of quality passing in their coaches or walking through the streets of the City. This 'undutifulness and contempt of their superiors', he claimed, had been encouraged by the 'late usurped powers.'

The civil war increased this hostility:

... the fury and license of the common people, who were in all places grown to that barbarity and rage against the nobility and gentry, (under the style of *cavaliers*,) that it was not safe for any to live at their houses who were taken notice of as no votaries to the Parliament.⁵⁰

The City authorities complained to the king that most of the disorders came not from them but 'from the unregulated and disorderly suburbs', located in 'the skirts of the city where the Lord Mayor and magistrates of London have neither power ... [and which were] fuller of the meaner sort of people.'⁵¹ The reaction by wealthy merchants in London after 1643 accounted for the development of political Presbyterianism in the City.⁵² Presbyterianism attracted both aristocrats and the gentry not only in London but elsewhere in the country, and contemporaries saw the Independents, Baptists and Quakers as the main source of the extreme and radical opposition to the crown.⁵³

The Quakers turned out to be the most radical of the sects, including a refusal to pay

⁴⁷ Hyde, *The History*, Volume 4, pp. 287, 315.

⁴⁸ L. Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, 1972, p. 132.

⁴⁹ Manning, *1649: The Crisis*, p. 321.

⁵⁰ K. Thomas, *In Pursuit of Civility: Manners and Civilization in Early Modern England*, 2018, p. 322.

⁵¹ Pearl, *London*, p. 129.

⁵² Ibid, p.204.

⁵³ Jennings, *The Gathering*, p, 187.

tithes or to doth hats to superiors and recognize titles, which appeared extremely threatening to established authority. They also criticised the aristocracy and gentry, claiming that the latter owed their position to the 'Norman Yoke', seizing land and property by forceful dispossession.⁵⁴

Although the Quakers had relatively humble origins – many of them had come from a Baptist background⁵⁵ – they were very literate and established their own libraries with printed books and tracts.⁵⁶ Although they eventually espoused pacifism, during the civil war period they were active in the parliamentary army.⁵⁷ All Puritan denominations appear to have had high levels of literacy, particularly the Presbyterians, many of whose ministers had university degrees.⁵⁸

Socio-Economic Status and the Royalist and New Model Armies.

There is difficulty in analyzing the social status of the parliamentary army during the civil war because of its changing composition and numbers. In March 1649, the Commonwealth had 44,373 soldiers in England; in July 1652 it had nearly 70,000, whereas in February 1660, its numbers were fixed at 28,342.⁵⁹ This is less of a difficulty with the royalist army as it was in existence for only a relatively short period.

This essay will focus on the New Model Army, for which there is relatively full information. It was also the most radical of all of parliament's armies, playing the major role in the outcome of the war. According to Ian Gentiles, 'while the number of horse [in the New Model] remained fairly stable between roughly 5,000 and 6,500, the foot and the dragoons underwent violent fluctuations in numbers, from 18,000 to 7,000, owing to massive desertions. The men who stamped the New Model with a distinctive character were therefore a tight group numbering about 5,000 horse and 7,000 foot.'⁶⁰ It is these fluctuations which make statistical analysis so difficult, and it is therefore necessary to rely mainly on literary evidence.

The origin of the social status of the New Model Army lies in the recruitment of officers to the Eastern Association. One of the officers of the army, Dodson a native of the Isle of Ely, had served with Cromwell from the outbreak of the war, and described how Cromwell had packed the army with officers sympathetic to the sectaries – that in choosing officers for his own regiment, he had dismissed 'honest gentlemen and souldiers that ware stout in the cause', and replaced them 'with common men, pore and of meane parentage, onely – he would give them the title of godly pretious men'⁶¹. Whitelocke, another contemporary, described Cromwell's men 'as being mostly freeholders and freeholders' sons, who had engaged in this quarrel upon a matter of conscience.'⁶²

However, there is some evidence that in the early years the aristocracy and gentry played a significant role in the parliamentary army. Baxter claimed that when 'the Earl of Essex came to Worcester, with many Lords and Knights, and in a flourishing

⁵⁴ B. Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution*, 1985, p. 39.

⁵⁵ Jennings, *The Gathering*, p.269; Reay, *The Quakers*, p. 20.

⁵⁶ Jennings, *The Gathering*, pp. 260, 261.

⁵⁷ Reay, *The Quakers*, pp. 41, 42, 50

⁵⁸ Jennings, *The Gathering*, p. 244:

⁵⁹ C.H. Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, 1902, pp. 34, 35.

⁶⁰ I. Gentiles, *The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland, 1645-1653*, 1992, p. 40.

⁶¹ Holmes, *The Eastern*, p. 199.

⁶² A. Fraser, *Cromwell Our Chief of Men*, 1974, p. 100.

[parliamentary] army, [they were] gallantly cloathed ...'⁶³ This was confirmed by another source which claimed that in the parliamentary army 'only seven of the new colonels were not gentlemen, and of nine of them were from noble families.'⁶⁴ This was in the early stages of the civil war when constitutional concerns were the dominant issues. In June 1647 there was a purge of conservative presbyterian officers from the army, including 'some of the most socially distinguished of the army's founders.'⁶⁵

The discipline for which the New Model was famous for originated in the way Cromwell treated his troops. 'At Huntingdon, two troopers who tried to desert were whipped in the market place ... Colonel Cromwell had 2,000 brave men, well disciplined; no man swears but he pays his twelve pence; if he be drunk he is set in the stocks, or worse, if one call the other "Roundhead" he is cashiered ...'⁶⁶ This religious zeal was partly responsible for the discipline that the New Model Army showed in battle, allowing them to defeat royalist armies. However, this was also the result of harsh discipline 'including penalties for drunkenness and fornication; blasphemers [who] had their tongues pierced with a hot iron.'⁶⁷ The army also had a reputation for being 'the praying army',⁶⁸ and their religious faith along with their discipline 'explained why small handfuls of New Model soldiers were able to put much larger numbers of royalists to flight.' As the Venetian ambassador observed of the New Model, 'This much is certain that the troops live as precisely as if they were a brotherhood of monks ... It was observed in the late wars that when the royal forces gained a victory, they abandoned themselves to wine and debauchery, while those commanded by Cromwell, after their greatest successes were obliged to pray and fast.'⁶⁹

According to Anthony Fletcher, 'the instructions sent to [royalist] commissioners of array made it quite clear ... that the officers were all 'persons of quality' with considerable local estates.'⁷⁰ Cromwell largely concurred with this analysis, claiming that he had confronted Hampden about parliamentary soldiers in the early period of the civil war, stating that 'your troopers ... are most of them old decayed serving men and tapsters, and such kind of fellows, and, said I, their troopers are gentlemen's sons, younger sons, persons of quality: do you think that the spirits of such base and mean fellows will ever be able to encounter gentlemen that have honour, courage and resolution in them?''⁷¹

There is other evidence to confirm this statement. According to one source 'the King's forces in the windy summer morning looked magnificent, with bright fluttering banners of every colour and fantasy, as the light flashed from polished breastplates, glowed on damask banners, taffeta scarves and velvet cloaks.'⁷² Cromwell was moved to prayer: 'When I saw the enemy draw up and march in gallant order towards us, and we a company of poor ignorant men ...'⁷³ According to Gentiles

All Charles's officers at Oxford from the rank of captain upwards, were of gentry or more exalted

⁶³ Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, p. 42.

⁶⁴ D. Purkiss, *The English Civil War: A People's History*, 2007, p. 421.

⁶⁵ I. Gentiles, 'The New Model Officer Corps in 1647: a collective portrait', *Social History*, 22:2 (1997), p. 130.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁶⁷ R. Tombs, *The English and their History*, 2015, p. 230.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁶⁹ Relazione of England by Giovanni Sagredo, 1656, Razzell, *The English Revolution*, p. 19.

⁷⁰ Fletcher, *The Outbreak*, p. 356.

⁷¹ I. Roots (ed.), *Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, 1989, p. 134; G. Yule, *The Independents in the English Civil War*, 1958, p. 60.

⁷² Wedgwood, *The King's War*, p. 452.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 452.

status. His regimental commanders early in the war were all noblemen or higher gentry. Throughout the whole royalist army fully 90 per cent of the regimental commanders were gentlemen or peers ... the practice of promoting men from the ranks, which was so common in the New Model, was wholly absent in the Oxford army.⁷⁴

The difficulty in analysing the New Model's composition is that 'of the total officer corps in 1648, half came from backgrounds so obscure that no information can be recovered about them.'⁷⁵ However, Gentles who has made the most detailed study of them concluded that of the officers in 1647 'twenty-two – about 9 per cent of the total – are known to have had some form of higher education ... Thirty-seven men or about one-sixth ... are known to have risen from non-commissioned rank ... [and] a high proportion ... even at the rank of colonel, were men of relatively low social status ... it is the strongly urban character of the officer corps that is most striking.'⁷⁶

These conclusions are confirmed by literary accounts by both royalists and parliamentarians. The royalist Denzil Holles, believed that the officers of the New Model Army 'from the general ... to the meanest sentinel, are not able to make a thousand a year lands; most of the colonels are tradesmen, brewers, tailors, goldsmiths, shoemakers and the like.'⁷⁷ According to another hostile contemporary account it claimed that if you 'Deduct the weavers, tailors, brewers, cobblers, tinkers, carmen, draymen, broom-men, and then give me a list of the gentlemen. Their names may be writ in text, within the compass of a single halfpenny.'⁷⁸ The Earl of Manchester wrote in 1645, that Cromwell had chosen for his army 'not such as were soldiers or men of estates, but such as were common men, poor and of mean parentage, only he would give them the title of godly, precious men.'⁷⁹ In August 1643 Cromwell justified his mode of selection in a famous speech.

It may be it provoked some spirits to see such plain men made captains of horse. It had been well that men of honour and birth had entered into these employments, but why do they not appear? Who would have hindered them? But since it was necessary the work must go on, better plain men than none. I had rather have a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for and loves what he knows than what you call a gentleman and is nothing else.⁸⁰

In a vindication of the New Model from the charge of intending to sack London, published in the summer of 1647, it is asserted: 'There are verie few of us, but have most of this world's interest in the Citie of London, being chiefly and principally raised thence, and verie many, especially of our officers, being citizens themselves having their wives and children therein.'⁸¹

Samuel Pepys in his diary for the ninth December 1663 confirmed the role of London artisans and tradesmen in the New Model Army:

of all the old army now, you cannot see a man begging about the street. But what? You shall have this Captain turned a shoemaker, the lieutenant, a Baker; this, a brewer; that, a haberdasher; this common soldier, a porter; and every man in his apron and frock, etc, as if they had never done

⁷⁴ Gentiles, 'The New Model Officer Corps in 1647', p. 143.

⁷⁵ R. Hutton, *The British Republic 1549-1660*, 2000, p. 6.

⁷⁶ Gentiles, 'The New Model Officer Corps in 1647', pp. 135, 137, 140, 143,

⁷⁷ F. Maseres, 'Memoirs of Denzil Lord Holles', *Select Tract Relating to the Civil Wars in England in the Reign of Charles the First*, 1815, p. 277.

⁷⁸ *Mercurius Elencticus*, 7-14 June 1648.

⁷⁹ C. Hill, *God's Englishman: Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*, 1970, pp. 65, 66.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 67.

⁸¹ C.H. Firth, *Cromwell's Army: a History of the English Soldier during the Civil War*, 1912, p. 47.

anything else – whereas the other [cavaliers] go with their belts and swords, swearing and cursing and stealing – running into people’s houses, by force oftentimes, to carry away something. And this is the difference between the temper of one and the other. ⁸²

Previously on the 4th July 1663 while watching the royal army parade through London, he had observed that ‘all these gay men [royalist horse and foot] are not the soldiers that must do the King’s business, it being such as these that lost the old King all he had and were beat by the most ordinary fellows that could be.’⁸³

It was the junior officers of the New Model who frequently undertook independent political action, such as Cornet Joyce’s seizing of the king at Holdenbury and placing pressure on Cromwell and the senior officers to bring the king to trial and eventual execution.⁸⁴ The wealthy Presbyterians who dominated London’s government at this time, attempted to block the New Army’s access to parliament in 1647, but this was thwarted by the army sweeping away the resistance of the trained bands.⁸⁵ The New Model was reinforced by volunteers raised by Skippon in the suburbs, who were ‘predominantly servants and apprentices’.⁸⁶ It is no accident that the New Model had been able to gain access to London Bridge through Southwark, which had long been a support of the radicals both in parliament and the army. This culminated in the purging of parliament led by Colonel Pride, leaving a rump of about 70 Independent MPs.⁸⁷

In order to confirm the low social status of the New Model, an analysis has been carried out to compare the socio-economic status through university attendance of Royalist and New Model officers during the civil war period. The essence of the analysis is to make a comparison using an identical methodology for both armies. It indicates that the Royalist officers were of significantly higher social status than those of the New Model, confirming the literary evidence reviewed above.

⁸² Latham and Matthews, *The Diary*, Volume 4, 1995, pp. 373, 374.

⁸³ Ibid, p. 217.

⁸⁴ B. Coward, *Cromwell: Profiles in Power*, 1991, p. 50.

⁸⁵ J. T. Schroeder, ‘London and the New Model Army, 1647’, *The Historian*, Volume 19, No. 3, May 1957, p. 249.

⁸⁶ L. C. Nagel, *The Militia of London, 1641-1642*, D.Phil. Thesis, Kings College, University of London, p. 303.

⁸⁷ D. Flinham, *Civil War London*, 2017, p. 41.

Table 5: Proportions of Royalist and New Model Army Officers Graduating from Oxford and Cambridge Universities^{88, 222}

	Total In Sample	Number Graduating from Oxford	Number Graduating from Cambridge	Total Proportion Graduating
Royalist Officers, 1642-60	100	27	25	52%
New Model Officers, 1645-49	100	9	6	15%
New Model Officers, 1649-63	100	7	10	17%

There are probably too many false positives in all samples, as suggested by Gentles' finding that only nine per cent of New Model Army officers had received a higher education in 1648, including at the Inns of Court. This suggests that most of these officers were from non-gentry backgrounds.

Oliver Cromwell and the Election of the Long Parliament.

There has been much debate about the origins of the Long Parliament during the English Civil War. What has not been sufficiently realised is the importance of the nature of parliamentary constituencies and the way they affected the nature of Members of Parliament. In 1660 the House of Commons was made up of 39 English Counties and 201 English Boroughs.⁸⁹ These boroughs were dominated by corporations which are known to have been strongly associated with puritanism. For example, a Durham cleric urged the king in 1640 not to 'suffer little towns to grow big and anti-monarchy to boot, for where are all these pestilent nests of Puritans hatched, but in corporations.'⁹⁰ Consistent with this statement was Clarendon's conclusion that the chief opposition to the king lay in 'great towns and corporations ... not only the citizens of London ... but also the greatest part of all other cities and market towns of England.'⁹¹

Contemporaries were unanimous that the inhabitants of the towns of England were the chief supporters of parliament during the civil war, and that tradesmen were some of their most ardent supporters. For example, this was the conclusion of Parker in his *Discourse of Ecclesiastical Politie*. He wrote that

tis notorious that there is not any sort of people so inclinable to seditious practices as the

⁸⁸ The above figures are based on a hundred cases selecting the first five names in each alphabetical letter in the relevant biographical dictionaries, covering most alphabetical letters. Only names not appearing in C. Webb's *London Bawdy Court, Consistory Court of London*, Volume 1, 1703-13, 1999 were selected for analysis, in order to avoid common names. The royalist figures are taken from P.R. Newman, *Royalist Officers in England and Wales, 1642-1660: A Biographical Dictionary*, 1981; the New Model Army ones are derived from M. Waklyn, *The New Model Army, Volume 1, 1645-49*, 2015 and M. Waklyn, *The New Model Army, Volume 2, 1649-1663*, 2016. The search for university membership was made through the online alumni listings for both universities.

⁸⁹ UK Parliament Online.

⁹⁰ Derek Hirst, *The Representative of the People? – Voters and voting in England under the Early Stuarts*, 1975, p. 47.

⁹¹ Hyde, *The History of the Rebellion*, Volume 2, 1888, pp. 236, 238.

trading part of a nation ... And, if we reflect upon our late miserable distraction, tis easy to observe how the quarrel was chiefly hatched in the shop of tradesmen and cherished by the zeal of prentice-boys and city gossips.⁹²

Baxter claimed that tradesmen explained their support for Parliament 'because they say the Tradesmen have a Correspondency with London, and so are gown to be more intelligent sort of Men.'⁹³ He also claimed that religious awareness was particularly strong 'among tradesmen and corporation inhabitants.'⁹⁴

Given the importance of borough constituencies in the electoral process, and their links with puritanism, Pym's tour of these constituencies in 1640 involving the promotion of puritanism, becomes significant.⁹⁵ Anthony a Wood wrote that Pym 'rode about the country to promote elections of the Puritanical brethren to serve in Parliament.'⁹⁶ The role of corporations in the membership of the Long Parliament is confirmed by events after the ending of the civil war. In 1661, the Cavalier Parliament passed the Corporation Act, designed to exclude Presbyterians from office, and stipulating that 'no person could legally be elected to any office relating to the government of a city or corporation, unless he had within the previous twelve months received the sacrament of the "Lord's Supper" according to the rites of the Church of England.'⁹⁷

This confirms the importance of boroughs and corporations in the Parliamentary cause, although elections were determined by a mixture of national and local issues. Cromwell's appointment as Member of Parliament for Cambridge in 1640 can be seen partly as a result of this process. The following is a contemporary account of how he was selected as a Member of Parliament:

... one Richard Tyms since Alderman at Cambridge⁹⁸ ... [rode] to be at a Conventicle, (as he usually of every Sunday rode to the Isle of Ely to that purpose, having a brother who entertained them in his course), where he heard this Oliver, with such admiration ... took such a liking to him, that from that time he did nothing but ruminate and meditate of the Man and his Gifts ... this Richard Tyms before the Writs were issued ... began to hammer in his head a project of getting him [Cromwell] chosen a Burgesse for Cambridge, himself being then but one of the 24, and with this device he presently repaired to one Mr Wildbore a Draper, a Kinsman of Cromwells and a Non-conformist likewise ... to ask the advice of his Neighbour Ibbot a Tallow-Chandler whom he found working in his Frock ... he told him, that the Mayor had power to make a Freeman, and saith he you know Mr Kitchman the Attorney (who was a Puritan likewise) ... but the Mayor must not know the reason and design of it; for he is a perfect Royalist... Cromwell ... came privately to Cambridge the day before, and took up his lodging at one

⁹² C. Hill and E. Dell (eds), *The Good Old Cause: The English Revolution of 1640-1660, Its Cause, Course and Consequences*, 1969, p. 238.

⁹³ R. Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, Part 3, 1696, p. 30.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 27. Weber wrote 'with great regularity we find the most genuine adherents of Puritanism among the classes which were rising from a lowly status, the small bourgeois and farmers.' Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1904, p. 174.

⁹⁵ Hirst, *The Representative*, p. 147.

⁹⁶ S. Reed Brett, *John Pym*, 1940, p.156.

⁹⁷ *Corporation Act 1661*, Wikipedia. For a detailed account as to how the Corporation Act affected three Kentish towns, see Colin Lee, 'Fanatic magistrates: religious and political conflict in three Kentish boroughs, 1680-1684', *The Historical Journal*, 35 (1991).

⁹⁸ Richard Tyms was 'described as a glover, but he went on to earn his living as a fellmonger, probably trading in cattle hides rather than sheep skins.' Andrew Barclay, *The Election of Cromwell: The Making of a Politician* (2011), p. 61.

Almond's a Grocer⁹⁹ ... and a Fortnight after another Common-hall was called for the said Election of Burgesses ... and Mr Mutis a Councillor [was called], and he had the Votes of a great many, all of them Royalists ... lastly our Oliver was named, and the Faction bawled as if they were mad, and by a plurality of voces carried it clear...¹⁰⁰

According to Heath 'the Estate of his Uncle fell to him [Cromwell] and that at last (though wasted and gone) rendered him a Candidate for the ensuing Parliament.'¹⁰¹ Cromwell was nominated by puritans on the local Cambridge council, and the nature of the corporation is indicated by its post-restoration history. In 1662 'the puritan corporation was drastically purged. The mayor, seven aldermen and 13 of the common council were removed.'¹⁰² At least six of the seven aldermen were tradesmen, and as Andrew Barclay has written 'pretty much all members of the Cambridge corporation in this period were tradesmen resident in the town.'¹⁰³

Also, the description of the supporters for Cromwell's election - a fellmonger, a draper, a tallow chandler and an attorney - suggests that there was an important role for tradesmen in the election of Cromwell. This perhaps explains why this socio-economic group was so central to the foundation of the New Model Army. It is indicated by a speech that Cromwell made in 1651 when Charles II threatened to invade England with a Scottish army:

Cromwell announced to the army that, if he should fall, England would witness a universal crisis and change the numerous colonels, in all their splendour, who were once tailors, goldsmiths, and carpenters [and] would have to make way for the nobility and courtiers.¹⁰⁴

Cromwell himself was of a very modest socio-economic background.¹⁰⁵ Heath gave the following account as to how Cromwell's status had deteriorated:¹⁰⁶

Oliver had run himself out of that little Patrimony he had, and brought his Mother to the same near ruine ... he fell to his old trade, and frequented his old haunts, consumed his money in tipling... his Estate still decaying, he bestook himself at last to a Farm ... took Servants, and bought him all utensils and Materials, as Ploughs, Carts, etc. ... scarce half a Crop ever reared itself upon his Grounde, so that he was (after five years time) glad to abandon it, and set a friend of his to be the Tenant for the remainder of his time.¹⁰⁷

Cromwell's family had practised the trade of brewing, described by Heath as follows:

tis resorted Oliver kept a Brew-House, that is a mistake; for, the Brew-house was kept in his Father's time, and managed by his Mother and his Father's Servants ... the Accompts being alwayes given to the Mistris, who after her Husbands death did continue in the same

⁹⁹ According to Dugdale, Cromwell had 'mean lodgings in Cambridge, at the time he was chosen burgess for the long parliament.' William Dugdale, *Short view of the late Troubles* (1681), p. 460.

¹⁰⁰ James Heath, *Flagellum: or the Life, Birth and Death of O. Cromwell* (1665), pp. 18-21. Andrew Barclay has written: 'The account of the Cambridge election in *Flagellum* has so far proved to be surprisingly accurate. Most of the details about the various individuals involved in it have been either confirmed or have, at the very least been shown to be plausible.' Barclay, *The Election of Cromwell*, p.115.

¹⁰¹ Heath, *Flagellum*, p. 16.

¹⁰² 'Cambridge Borough' *History of Parliament*, 1660-1690.

¹⁰³ Personal communication.

¹⁰⁴ 'Relazione of England by Giovanni Sagredo, 1656 in Edward and Peter Razzell, *The English Revolution: a Contemporary Study of the English Civil War* (1999), p. 19.

¹⁰⁵ In 1628 Cromwell's 'subsidy by rating of £4 in goods was little more than that of Huntingdon's leading tradesmen.' Members Biographies, *The History of Parliament, 1609-1629*; Oliver Cromwell.

¹⁰⁶ A. Barclay, *Electing Cromwell: The Making of a Politician*, 2011, p. 10.

¹⁰⁷ Heath, *Flagellum*, pp. 11-15.

Employment and Calling of a Brewer; and thought it is no disparagement to sustain the Estate and Port of a Younger Brother as Mr Robert Cromwell was ...¹⁰⁸

In 1664 a Mr Rawdon visited Huntingdon and confirmed the existence of a brewery associated with the Cromwell family:

Mr Rawdon, visiting the town five or six years after the Protector's death, saw the brewhouse, which was yet still standing, in which Cromwell 'played the brewer for some years... the brook at Hinchin, running through their premisses at Huntingdon, offered clear convenience for malting and brewing ...¹⁰⁹

It is unclear whether Cromwell was directly involved in the brewery, and the first account suggests that the brewery was managed by Cromwell's mother, but that his father was also involved in the business. Cromwell was supported by artisans and tradesmen in his election to parliament, linked to his own socio-economic status. This was reflected in the employment of russet-coated officers in his army, and his origins were a critical factor in the creation of the New Model Army, a key part in the history of the Long Parliament.

¹⁰⁸ Heath, *Flagellum*, pp. 8-10.

¹⁰⁹ Robert Davies, *The Life of Marmaduke* (1863), p.112,

The Life of Shakespeare: The Growth of Literature

Peter Ernest Razzell

Abstract.

This essay will explore not only the contribution of Shakespeare to English literature but will also discuss biographical research that sheds new light on his life and artistic development. Beyond the well-known accounts provided by Rowe and Malone, recent studies provide insights into Shakespeare's early life, particularly the collaboration with his father in private trading. This aspect of his life significantly shaped his acquisition of cosmopolitan culture, which later became crucial for his work as a playwright. These new findings reflect how historical research continually develops our understanding of literature, with Shakespeare's life becoming a focal point for new ideas. While some of these ideas remain hypothetical, they are grounded in evidence that complements the established narrative, illustrating how literary study itself is an ever-evolving landscape.

Key Words: William Shakespeare, Literature, Private Trading, Cosmopolitan Culture, John Shakespeare.

Introduction

Shakespeare's early life has remained something of a conundrum despite extensive research into his background. His writing is universally recognized as the outstanding contribution to the history of literature, yet he was the son of a provincial artisan of limited literacy. His father John Shakespeare was a Stratford glover and unable to provide his son with a full education. This has led to the description of Shakespeare as 'the Stratford boor'¹ [1], accounting for why many scholars are unable to accept that he was the author of his plays. His work has been attributed to an extensive range of people of high social and elite status, including among others, Francis Bacon, the Earl of Oxford, and Christopher Marlow.² More recently Lena Cowen has suggested that 'we must picture Shakespeare participating in the intellectual culture of Oxford ... Shakespeare is nearly certain to have taken in lectures and sermons in college chapels.'³[2]. Again, this is pure speculation without any convincing evidence to support it.

The problem is that scholars are unable to accept that the son of a provincial artisan with limited education could have been the author of the plays, and most have invented classical sources to address this conundrum. But as Ben Jonson argued, Shakespeare 'had little Latin and less Greek', and did not adhere to classical rules in writing his plays. However, he showed a unique understanding of vernacular language in creating both his comedies and tragedies.

There is also the conundrum of where Shakespeare went after he fathered three children in Stratford before appearing in London, which has been designated as the "lost years". Some have speculated that he spent this period on the continent of Europe or other places enabling

¹ S. Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, 1992, p. viii.

² Ibid, pp. 385-451.

³ L. C. Orlin, *The Private Life of William Shakespeare*, 2021, p. 248.

him to acquire the sophisticated culture necessary for the writing of the plays.⁴ None of these ideas have any credible evidence to support them but there is evidence in plain sight to resolve these difficulties.

According to Nicholas Rowe, Shakespeare worked for his father after he left school at an early age: 'Upon his leaving School, he seems to have given intirely into the way of Living which his Father propos'd to him ... tho' he was his eldest Son, he could give him no better Education than his own Employment ...'⁵[3]. What other biographers have not realized is that John Shakespeare was not just a glover but was a private trader involving participation in a highly sophisticated and metropolitan community.

Nicholas Rowe's *Life of Shakespeare* was the first full biography of Shakespeare, published in 1709.⁶ It was largely based on information provided by the actor Thomas Betterton, who made a special visit to Stratford to collect information on Shakespeare's life. Rowe also used material reputed to have originated from Sir William Davenant, rumoured to be the natural son of Shakespeare.

The biography has attracted a great deal of criticism⁷ [4]. much of it based on Edmund Malone's work on Shakespeare. As Schoenbaum has written, 'it is largely through Malone's achievement the inadequacies of Rowe's essay were now recognized'⁸[5]. Given the importance of Rowe's biography, I will be evaluating Malone's criticisms of Rowe where they are subject to checks using economic, social and demographic research, as well as documentary sources on the lives of both Shakespeare and his father John. There has been a proliferation of biographies on Shakespeare's life – Nicholl claimed that 'there have been many hundreds of them'⁹ – as well as resulting controversies and speculations. Given the latter, I will wherever possible rely on published documentary sources which I will quote fully, but with an acknowledgment of different interpretations of these sources.

This essay will also examine issues beyond the different biographical accounts written by Rowe and Malone. This includes Shakespeare's work with his father in private trading and its influence on his acquisition of the cosmopolitan culture necessary for his later work as a playwright. This research has generated radical new ideas about Shakespeare's life, some of which are necessarily of a hypothetical nature, but based on sources consistent with known evidence.

The Reliability of Parish Registers

Malone implied that Rowe relied exclusively on information derived from the Stratford parish register. Yet as Schoenbaum has pointed out, 'the identity of the poet's bride, first published by Rowe', was only unequivocally confirmed in September 1836 by a marriage bond of 28 November 1582.¹⁰ It therefore appears that Betterton managed to obtain information from local sources beyond the information in the Stratford parish register. Also, Rowe stated that

⁴ Ibid, p. 441.

⁵ C. Nicholl (ed), *Nicholas Rowe the Life of Shakespeare*, 2009, pp. 26, 28.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ K. Duncan Jones, *Shakespeare an Ungentle Life*, 2010, p. 97; Nicholl, *Nicholas Rowe*, p. 7.

⁸ S. Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, 2006, p. 169.

⁹ Nicholl, *Nicholas Rowe*, p.7.

¹⁰ Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, p. 192.

John Shakespeare was ‘a considerable Dealer in Wool’,¹¹ and it is only in the last few years that this statement has been documented in research into legal documents.¹²

Malone also assumed that parish registers were a reliable source of information on births and deaths and believed that John Shakespeare only had eight children. New research however has established that between a fifth and a third of all deaths and births in the period 1550-1650 were omitted from parish registers, due to the unreliable practices of clergymen and their clerks¹³[6, 7]. This was probably true of the Stratford parish register, indicated by the omission of the burial of John Shakespeare’s first daughter Joan, who had a sibling of the same name baptised at a later date.

The poor quality of parish registration is suggested by the practices of John Frith the local clergyman of Temple Grafton, the location of Shakespeare’s marriage ceremony. According to Whitgift’s 1586 survey of the Warwickshire ministry: ‘John Frith, vicar, an old priest and unsound in religion, he can neither preach nor read well, his chiefest trade is to cure hawks that are hurt or diseased, for which purpose many do usually repair to him.’¹⁴

The quality of birth registration is revealed in the pattern of baptisms of John Shakespeare’s children¹⁵ [8]:

Name	Baptism Date	Year	Burial Date
Jone	15 th September	1558	
Margaret	2 nd December	1562	30 th April 1563
William	26 th April	1564	
Gilbert	13 th October	1566	
Jone	15 th April	1569	
Richard	11 th March	1574	
Anne	28 th September	1578	4 th April 1579
Edmund	3 rd May	1580	

The usual gap in births during this period was between two and three years, and yet in the periods 1558-1562, 1569-1574, and 1574-1578 it is in the Shakespeare family between four and five years, suggesting the possibility of some missing births. Although not conclusive, it indicates that Nicholas Rowe may have been right about John Shakespeare’s ten children.

John Shakespeare as Wool Dealer and Private Trader.

Edmund Malone was not fully aware of John Shakespeare’s activities as a dealer in wool and challenged the designation of him as a “woolman”. He knew that John Shakespeare was a member of the Stratford council in the late 1550s and 1560s, occupying all roles in the council from borough constable to mayor.¹⁶ [9] However, four legal cases involving John Shakespeare

¹¹ Nicholl, *Nicholas Rowe*, p.26,

¹² It should also be noted that the monument to Shakespeare in the Stratford Church did not originally depict him with a quill in his hand but merely had him resting on a woollack – which according to Nichol, made him look ‘more a wool merchant than a poet.’ Nicholl *Nicholas Rowe*, pp.74, 75.

¹³ P. E. Razzell, *Mortality, Marriage and Population in England, 1550-1850*, 2016, pp. 18-21; P.E. Razzell, The measurement of the reliability of parish registration through same-name methodology, *Academia Online*.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 87.

¹⁵ Malone, *The Plays*, pp. 610, 611.

¹⁶ F.E. Halliday, *Shakespeare Companion*, pp. 441.

came to light in the Exchequer court, chronicled by D.L. Thomas and N.E. Evans in their article 'John Shakespeare in the Exchequer'. They reveal that the Stratford glover was engaged in subsidiary wool dealings and money-lending transactions, which indicated that John Shakespeare was a dealer in wool on a large scale¹⁷ [10, 11]. An informer revealed that in 1572 John "Shaxspere" of "Stretford super Haven" and John Lockesley of the same place had illegally bought 200 tods (i.e. 5,600 pounds) of wool, and later that year John Shakespeare was accused of buying 100 tods of wool.¹⁸

At an earlier date on the 4th November 1568 John Shakespeare alleged that he had sold John Walford twenty-one tods of wool at Stratford, and that £21 owing in cash had never been paid.¹⁹ It is likely that John Shakespeare traded wool on other occasions, which did not result in prosecutions.

According to Bowden in his study of the wool trade in Tudor and Stuart England, glovers dealt in wool through removing wool in the preparation of the sheep skins. John Shakespeare also traded in a variety of other products: according to Lee, 'he soon set up as a trader in all manner of agricultural produce. Corn, wool, malt, meat, skins, and leather were among the commodities in which he dealt.'²⁰ [12] He had dealings with people living in London, Worcestershire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Coventry, Nottingham and Stoke in Staffordshire.²¹

Nicholas Rowe's description of John Shakespeare as a "considerable dealer in wool" is appropriate given his activities as a wool dealer, but does not allow for the diversity of the business activities that he was engaged in. Rowe's illustration of Shakespeare's monument in Stratford church was based on Dugdale's *Antiquities* and depicts Shakespeare resting on a woolsack without the quill introduced at a later date. As Nicholl has written, this makes Shakespeare 'more a wool merchant than a poet.'²² The monument may have been commissioned by Shakespeare's grand-daughter Elizabeth Barnard or even possibly by Shakespeare himself during his own lifetime.²³ People living in Stratford at that time appear to have seen Shakespeare as more of a businessman than a dramatist, consistent with the fact that only about a half of the plays were published in his lifetime. This suggests that his literary reputation was not a priority for Shakespeare.

John Shakespeare's Economic and Cultural World

In the court case against the Lambert family in 1588, John Shakespeare claimed for a missing twenty pounds he had 'totally lost and failed to acquire the whole gain, advantage and profit which he by buying and bargaining with the aforesaid twenty pounds have had and acquired, to the loss of thirty pounds'²⁴ [13].

This is the credo – 'buying and bargaining' – of the middleman, a group whose activities Everitt has designated as, 'the free trading between individuals', defined as the 'type of bargaining which was mostly "free", or emancipated from official control: to dealing between

¹⁷ D.L. Thomas and N.E. Evans, 'John Shakespeare in the Exchequer', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 35 (1984), pp. 315-18; P.E. Razzell, *William Shakespeare: The Anatomy of an Enigma*, 1990 [Available on *Academia Online*], pp.17-18.

¹⁸ Thomas and Evans, 'John Shakespeare'; Razzell, *William Shakespeare*, p. 17, 18.

¹⁹ Razzell, *William Shakespeare*, p. 19.

²⁰ S. Lee, *Life of Shakespeare*, 1898, C.U.P. Edition 2012, p. 4.

²¹ Razzell, *William Shakespeare*, p. 20.

²² Nicholl, *The Life*, 71.

²³ See the Wikipedia entry on Shakespeare's monument.

²⁴ B. Rowland Lewis, *The Shakespeare Documents*, Volume 1, 1940, p. 139.

individual traders and manufacturers in private.’²⁵ [14] Most of the leading townsmen of Stratford were private traders and were engaged in the illegal trading of corn,²⁶ and private trading was ubiquitous in Stratford in the late sixteenth century.²⁷

In order to understand the rise of private and illegal trading, it is necessary to understand the economic conditions of the time. Population had grown very rapidly in the late sixteenth century, and largely as a result, prices of all commodities had risen very sharply, including wool, barley and other foodstuffs.²⁸ Using an index of wool prices, it had increased as follows: 1450-99 = 100; 1550-59 = 206; 1590-99 = 315.²⁹ The price of arable produce trebled between 1530-59 and 1590-1619, whereas cattle and oxen more than doubled during the same period.³⁰ This had allowed those with capital to exploit these price rises, resulting in the forestalling of grain and speculation in other commodities. As Lewis observed ‘those who had ready funds “engrossed and forestalled” ... and by holding in bulk ... the engrosses and forestallers forced the price rapidly upwards.’³¹ The wet seasons of 1594, 1595 and 1596 exacerbated these price rises,³² leading to great distress and riots amongst the poor.³³[15]

As a result of a general agitation, the Privy Council required local authorities to make a note of corn and malt in their towns. On February 4, 1598 a return of illegal trading in malt was made in Stratford, and more than one hundred and twenty names appear, including that of Shakespeare, his friends Adrian Quiney and Richard Sturley, as well as the four local landed magistrates.³⁴ What the rioters did not realise was that the local magistrates that they appealed to were some of the leading engrosses of grain, and that all the leading townsmen were private traders engaged in the illegal trade.

Everitt has shown that this type of trading grew rapidly in the sixteenth century, particularly after about 1570. Only about a third of country-wide private transactions took place in the same county in the Midland region,³⁵ consistent with the pattern of John Shakespeare’s trading disputes.

All transactions were conducted on a credit basis, for which legal bonds were drawn up by a lawyer or scrivener.³⁶ According to Everitt, because of the absence of banks, traders necessarily had to rely on their credit in the local community, and this often ‘operated through a network of neighbours, friends, and relatives. Sons, fathers, brothers, cousins, wives, uncles, mothers, brother-in-law: all were drawn into the circle.’³⁷

He has described the culture which grew up amongst individual traders:

In consequence of this network of kinship and acquaintance, the packmen, carriers, woolmen, and factors who engaged in the private agricultural market were not simply unconnected individuals ... Much of the dealing in which travelling merchants engaged took place in

²⁵ J. Chartres (ed), *Agricultural Markets and Trade, 1500-1750: Chapters from the Agrarian History of England and Wales*, 1990, p. 92.

²⁶ Lewis, *The Shakespeare Documents*, p. 284.

²⁷ For example, 120 of the leading townsmen in Stratford – including Shakespeare – illegally hoarded grain in 1598. Lewis, *The Shakespeare Documents*. p. 284.

²⁸ Razzell, *William Shakespeare*, pp. 11, 12.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Lewis, *The Shakespeare Documents*, p. 282.

³² Ibid.

³³ The increase in population also resulted in a surplus of labour, which led to poverty and unemployment. In a corporation petition in 1601 it was stated that in Stratford ‘our poor are in number seven hundred and odd, young and old.’, about forty per cent of Stratford’s population. See E. Fripp, *Master Richard Quiney*, 1924, p. 177.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 284.

³⁵ Chartres, *Agricultural Markets*, p. 99.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 93.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 106.

*farmhouses. Some took place in barns, and some in warehouses and corn-chambers. Perhaps the most characteristic meeting place of the wayfaring community, however, was the provincial inn. The Elizabethan inn has no exact counterpart in the modern world. It was the hotel, the bank, the warehouse, the exchange, the scrivener's office, and the marketplace of many of a trader.*³⁸

Everitt has elaborated on the role of the innkeeper in trading activities:

*The Tudor and Stuart innkeeper was thus in a powerful position to influence the course of private trading. Many a publican provided cellars or outbuildings for the storage of his client's goods. Some converted their halls or parlours into private auction rooms ... Agreement between prospective dealers was rarely reached without a lengthy series of "speeches" and "communications", and the company often sat far into the night before the transaction was concluded. Sometimes an unscrupulous innkeeper would allow some hapless yeoman (well plied with ale) to be "cozened of his money" by the "glozing terms ... smooth words, and fair speeches" of the other party concerned ... When the bargain was agreed, the local scrivener (sometimes himself one of the guests) was called upon to draw up one of the bonds, and the deed was read out to the assembled company ... not infrequently one of the signatories later confessed himself unable to read it ...*³⁹

The problem arose because of the poor educational system. 'Many marketing disputes arose through the illiteracy of one or other of the parties concerned.'⁴⁰ Many of the traders were helped by assistants, who 'undertook the writings of his order books, notes, and letters ...'⁴¹ Because of the writing involved in trading transactions, the aid of his son William would have been invaluable to the semi-literate John Shakespeare. As Everitt has concluded, 'with the growth of private dealing some grounding in writing and accounting was imperative.'⁴² Lena Orlin has argued

*For property transactions, wholesale operations, and other aspirational ventures, records and documents were vital. At Stratford's grammar school, William Shakespeare developed skills that were useful to an upwardly mobile family. By the time he was 10, he may have thought of himself as his father's partner.*⁴³

There is some independent evidence to support Rowe's statement that Shakespeare worked with his father, and it involves the dispute about the purchase of land in Wilmcote that John Shakespeare had with his bother-in-law Edmund Lambert and his son John. The dispute is highly complex, and it is discussed in detail in my book on Shakespeare.⁴⁴ The following is an extract from the court proceedings relevant to the evidence of William Shakespeare's part and status in the dispute.

On the first day of March [1587] ... he [Edmund Lambert] died ... after whose death ... [the land] descended to the aforesaid John Lambert, as son and heir of the said Edmund ... the said John Shakespeare his wife Mary together with William Shakespeare their son, when claim had

³⁸ Ibid, pp. 107, 108.

³⁹ Ibid, p. 110.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 115.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 104.

⁴² Ibid, p. 116.

⁴³ L. Orlin, *The Private Life*, p. 46.

⁴⁴ See 'The Shakespeare/Lambert Dispute' in Razzell, *William Shakespeare*, pp.35-45.

*been made upon them, covenanted the said [land] ... to said John Lambert and ... delivered all writings and proofs concerning the said premises ... besides that, he, the same John Shakespeare, and Mary his wife, at the same time with William Shakespeare their son, have always been ready hitherto not only for covenanting the aforesaid premises but also for delivering to the same John Lambert all writings and proofs concerning the same ...*⁴⁵

This is evidence that Shakespeare was still working with his father in 1587 and 1588, providing assistance to his father who was only semi-literate. His role appears to have been mainly helping with the delivery and working on written records, invaluable assistance to his father at this time. However, this interpretation has been disputed by E.K. Chambers:

*This is the only reference to Shakespeare in the litigation conducted by his parent about the property concerned ... William, probably in respect of some right of inheritance, was a party to this, but the negotiation was apparently oral and would not necessarily entail his presence at Stratford.*⁴⁶[16]

There is little evidence that the negotiation was oral⁴⁷, and in any event, William Shakespeare's involvement appears to be concerned with references to writing. Also importantly, both parties to the dispute referred to "heirs and assigns" when the inheritance of property was at issue, whereas William Shakespeare is mainly linked to the submission of written documents. Also I believe Chambers has misread the nature of the dispute: John Shakespeare was not attempting to reclaim the land but was trying to extract extra money from John Lambert who had only recently inherited the property.⁴⁸ In effect, he was trying to cheat John Lambert out of £20, at a time when John Shakespeare appears to have been poverty stricken and looking for extra sources of income.⁴⁹

Having his son helping with writing would have been invaluable to John Shakespeare. As Schoenbaum has written: 'From all the documentary evidence, John Shakespeare was not fully literate. Invariably the documents ... [he] signed either with his mark or with a pictogram ... The fully literate – even those who had become infirm or senile – tended to make a simple scrawl for their signatures rather than crosses.'⁵⁰

There is evidence that William Shakespeare was very familiar with legal terminology. Fripp argued that he showed 'extraordinary knowledge, and large accurate usage, in his writings from the beginning, of legal terminology and procedure.'⁵¹[17] The suggestion made by Malone – who was a barrister – that the dramatist spent some years as a lawyer's clerk, was also supported by other lawyers.⁵² It is probable that Shakespeare acquired his legal knowledge working for his father in drafting legal documents in trading transactions.

Also, it makes it much more comprehensible as to how Shakespeare acquired the linguistic and cultural knowledge to write plays of such universal and general appeal. It has always puzzled historians how he acquired the knowledge to write such plays, but by participating in meetings in inns in London and elsewhere on trading expeditions, with a 'lengthy series of

⁴⁵ Lewis, *The Shakespeare Documents*, pp. 138, 139.

⁴⁶ E.K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, Volume 2 (1930), p. 37.

⁴⁷ John Shakespeare claimed that John Lambert had promised at Stratford to pay £20 for additional evidence for security of title to the Wilmcote property, to be paid in instalments at the manor house of Anthony Ingram in Little Walford. There is evidence that these meetings never took place, as the legal documents reveal that John Lambert already had security of title. See 'The Shakespeare/Lambert Dispute' in Razzell, *William Shakespeare* pp.35-45.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ See p. 11.

⁵⁰ Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, 2006, p. 292.

⁵¹ E. Fripp, *Shakespeare: Man and Artist*, Volume 1, page 138.

⁵² Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, p. 332.

“speeches” and “communications” far into the night, and “smooth words, and fair speeches”’, helps to resolve this conundrum. Everitt makes it clear that these traders were highly cosmopolitan: ‘the wayfaring community developed an ethos of its own dissimilar to that of the settled society of town and village. Its spirit of speculation and adventure ran counter to the stable traditions of the English peasantry.’⁵³ This culture provided Shakespeare with both the knowledge and background necessary for his theatrical and business career.

He would also have been exposed to theatres in London and elsewhere as he travelled around the country with his father. Inns were often centres of theatrical productions⁵⁴ and he probably encountered them throughout the so-called ‘lost years’, preparing him for both his future work as a playwright and his career as an astute businessman. There is also evidence that Shakespeare may have encountered theatre companies directly during his working life with his father. Michael Wood has documented a case where wool-dealing and a theatrical production coincided in 1587:

*In mid-June 1587 ... the Queen’s Men were on tour in Oxfordshire, rolling their wagon of props and costumes into the wool town of Thame ... at the time of the sheep clip in June the place was full of wool buyers and others; it was a good time to play, and it was visited by many travelling companies ... There were inns for travellers at the east end ... Here the Queen’s Men played on 13 June ... in the yard of an inn called the White Hand.*⁵⁵

It is likely that Shakespeare encountered the Queen’s Men in different inns as he and his father travelled the country on wool buying expeditions. Inns were widely used for theatrical productions during this period, and it was during sheep shearing in June and other times that travelling players gravitated to these locations to maximise revenue. This explains why theatrical companies were so keen to locate their travelling productions during sheep fairs and times of wool shearing, such as that at Thame. Shakespeare probably encountered The Queen’s Men in inns and other venues, which might explain why four of the company’s plays were forerunners to Shakespeare’s later writing. According to Pauline Montague, these plays were ‘*The Troublesome Regn of King John, The True Tragedy of Richard III, The Famous Victories of Henery V, The True Chronicle History of King Leir and his three daughters, Gonorill, Ragan and Cordelia.*’ She concluded that ‘these plays ... are actually among the repertoire of the Queen’s Men and Shakespeare’s own plays show such an intimate knowledge of these and other of their repertoire, in some cases even before they were published, that several biographers believe that Shakespeare may have been a member of the Queen’s Men early in his career.’⁵⁶[20]

The Earl of Southampton and the Gift of £1000.

Rowe wrote:

He [Shakespeare] had the Honour to meet with many great and uncommon Marks of Favour and Friendship from the Earl of Southampton ... There is one Instance so singular in the Magnificence of this Patron of Shakespear’s, that if I had not been assur’d that the Story was handed down by Sir William D’Avenant, who was probably very well acquainted with his

⁵³ Chartes, *Agricultural Markets*, p. 111.

⁵⁴ See Schoenbaum, *William Shakespeare*, p. 131; Michael Wood, *In Search of Shakespeare*, 2005, p. 134. See the picture of Green Dragon Inn.

⁵⁵ Wood, *In Search of Shakespeare*, p. 112. See also p. 143 for a picture of such a provincial inn.

⁵⁶ Pauline Montagna, ‘William Shakespeare and the Queen’s Men’, *Shakespeare and His World/The Elizabethan Theatre*, 2002 Online.

*Affairs, I should not have ventur'd to have inserted, that my Lord Southampton, at one time, gave him a thousand Pounds, to enable him to go through with a Purchase, which he heard he had a mind to.*⁵⁷

Malone challenged this account, but clarification of Shakespeare's financial activities is provided by the financial expert David Fallow, who examined them in his doctoral thesis. He analysed the source of Shakespeare's income from his theatrical work and other sources:

*... Playing companies such as The King's Men bought plays outright, paying around £6 for each work ... Shakespeare's averages two plays per year adding another £20 to his income.'*⁵⁸ *'A net £60 per annum would have supported a comfortable, but not extravagant, lifestyle but it would not, by any stretch of the imagination, paid for the stream of investment he made between 1597 and 1613.'*⁵⁹[22]

Given that he did not earn the money for his investments from his theatrical work, this suggests that he must have had alternative sources of income, including gifts from the Earl of Southampton. As we have seen in addition to the thousand pounds, Rowe wrote that Shakespeare met 'with many great and uncommon Marks of Favour and Friendship from the Earl of Southampton', which could have included much more modest sums of money.

Southampton fell out with his guardian Lord Burghley, who had wanted him to marry Burghley's grand-daughter, but Southampton refused and Burghley used his power as Master of the Wards to fine him £5,000, which indicates the scale of Southampton's wealth.⁶⁰ He was highly attracted to the theatre and in a letter dated at the end of 1599, it was stated that he failed to go to court but passed 'away the time in London merely in going to plays every day.'⁶¹

With the evidence of the relationship between Shakespeare and Southampton, and the latter's wealth and spendthrift nature, it is feasible that he did give Shakespeare a thousand pounds and other gifts. It explains how Shakespeare managed to purchase investments between 1597 and 1605, totalling a thousand pounds, and contradicting Malone's claim that there was no evidence that Shakespeare purchased property on this scale.

The Poaching of Deer and Exile

Included in Rowe's biography was an account of how Shakespeare was forced to leave the work with his father, as a result of the poaching of deer from Sir Thomas Lucy's park:

The essential story of poaching, capture, prosecution, and flight has survived in at least three separate versions – those of Davies, Rowe, and Jones.⁶² They were independent of each other and unaware of alternative accounts.

The assumption of Rowe's version of the poaching incident is that it occurred at Charlecote, the manor house of Sir Thomas Lucy. But in the later eighteenth century claims were made that it took place at Fulbrook Park, two miles distant from Charlecote.⁶³ The poaching incident was used by Shakespeare in the autobiographical play *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. He made Falstaff among other things a deer stealer, and satirized Sir Thomas Lucy as Justice Shallow.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ Nicholl, *The Life*, pp. 37, 38.

⁵⁸ D. Fallow, 'Where Did Shakespeare's Money Come From', *Online*.

⁵⁹ Fallow, *John and William Shakespeare*, p. 96.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

⁶¹ Malone, *The Plays*, p. 477.

⁶² Schoenbaum, *William Shakespeare*, p. 103.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 87; Schoenbaum, *William Shakespeare*, pp. 104, 105; Razzell, *William Shakespeare*, pp. 86, 87.

⁶⁴ Razzell, *William Shakespeare*, p. 89, pp. 98, 99.

The major difficulty in its acceptance has been until now the absence of any firm evidence for a deer park at Charlecote or Fulbrook at the relevant period.⁶⁵ Malone claimed that there was no evidence for the existence of parks at Charlecote and Fulbrook.⁶⁶ However, the Sheldon Tapestry Map bearing the date 1588 – the approximate date of the poaching incident – shows a paling attached to Charlecote, bounded on one side by the river Avon.⁶⁷

There was a cony warren licenced at Charlecote owned by Sir Thomas Lucy. In the final quarter of 1584, a second ‘cony keeper’ was added to the list in the Charlecote Household Accounts Book. The pattern of two keepers was maintained right through to the end of the record in 1587.⁶⁸ Schoenbaum has clarified the position of deer at Charlecote: ‘If fallow deer would not come under the heading of beasts of warren, roe deer would. So the episode could have taken place at Charlecote after all.’⁶⁹

The relevant section of the Sheldon tapestry map is as follows:

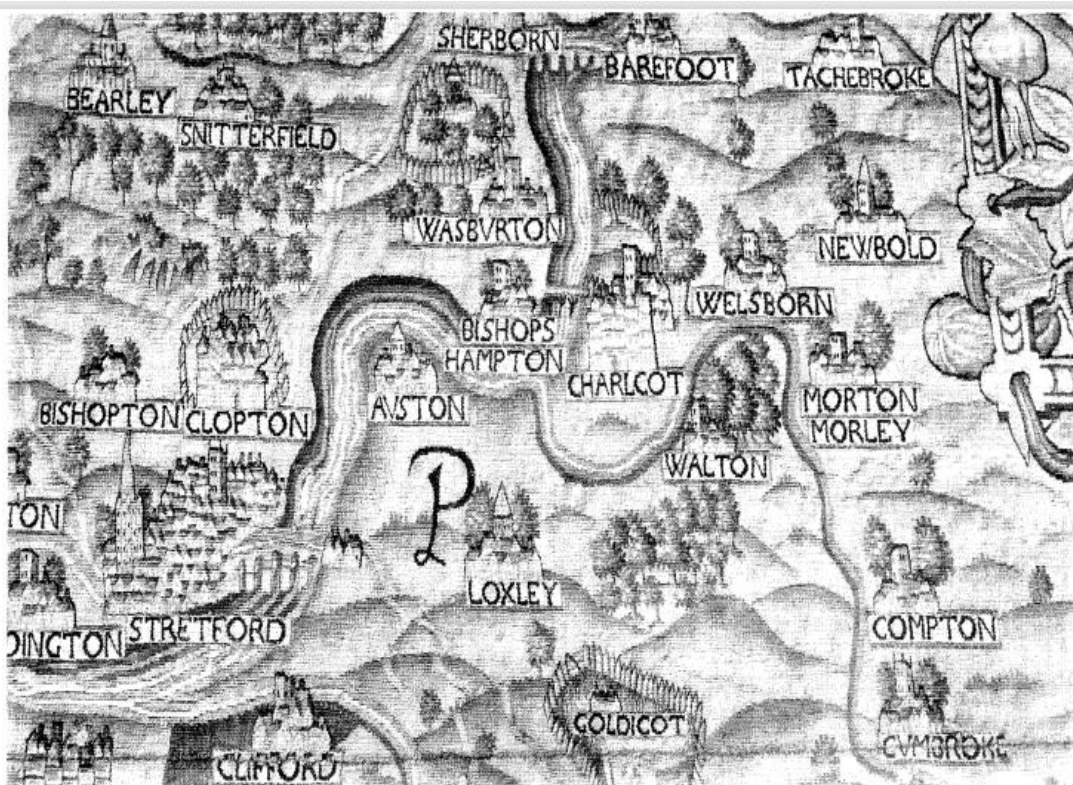


Plate 3: Charlecote and Surrounding Area (From Sheldon Tapestry Map of Worcestershire in The Victoria and Albert Museum)

There appears to be a park at “Wasburton” just east of Snitterfield, which is completely surrounded by palings. and it is precisely where Fulbrook park should be located according to various descriptions. In particular Leland’s account: ‘I roade from Warwicke to Bareford

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 89.

⁶⁶ For a full discussion of the poaching incident see Razzell, *William Shakespeare*, pp. 85-120.

⁶⁷ In the Victoria and Albert Museum.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 93.

⁶⁹ Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare’s Lives*, p. 71.

Bridge ... 2 miles [from Warwick]. Here I sawe halfe a mile lower upon Avon on the right ripe by northe a fayr parke caulled Fulbroke.'⁷⁰

Land at Fulbrook was licenced to Sir Thomas in 1573. The following entry was entered in the Calendar of Patent Rolls for 27 April 1573: 'Licence for Edward Graunt to alienate lands in Fulbroke, co. Warwick, to Thomas Lucy, Knight, John Somervyle and Henry Rogers ...' ⁷¹ This licence reads:

*The Queen ... granted and gave licence ... to our beloved Edward Grant ... [of] one message, twenty acres of land, forty acres of meadow, three hundred acres of pasture and ten acres of woodland, with appurtenances in Fulbrook ... so that he can give and grant, alienate ... to beloved and faithful Thomas Lucy Knight and our beloved John Somerville, Esquire and Henry Rogers, Gentleman ...'*⁷²

Fulbrook had expanded from one acre of woodland in June 1573 to 100 acres of woods in October 1573, and the area in question was designated as Fulbrook Park.⁷³ It is possible that this when it was again created as a hunting park, with protective paling. Fulbrook was only a mile or so away from Snitterfield, depicted in the Sheldon Tapestry Map. Snitterfield was the residence of Shakespeare's uncle Henry Shakespeare and the birthplace of his father, and an obvious location for poaching activities.

Malone wrote extensively about the legislation covering the punishment for poaching activities, and he claimed that nowhere did it list that the poaching deer carried out by Shakespeare should be punished severely.⁷⁴ This does not account for the effect of the ballad Shakespeare wrote satirizing Sir Thomas. According to Rowe the ballad 'is said to have been so very bitter, that it redoubled the Prosecution against him.'⁷⁵ This is confirmed by Jones: 'the ballad ... stuck upon his park gate, which exasperated the knight to apply to a lawyer at Warwick to proceed against him.'⁷⁶

The poaching incident may be linked to a period of poverty that John Shakespeare was experiencing during this time. In 1578 he was allowed by Stratford Corporation to pay a reduced contribution for the maintenance of the local militia. Additionally in the same year, he was exempted from contributing towards the weekly maintenance of the poor.⁷⁷ He was undergoing 'years of adversity'⁷⁸, culminating in 1592 when he avoided church because of a 'feare of process for debte'.⁷⁹ The poaching incident probably occurred in about 1588 and may have been responsible for Shakespeare leaving Stratford. Poaching was not then just a youthful frolic but was linked to a period of poverty and economic hardship.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 106, 112.

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 100.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid, p. 103.

⁷⁴ Malone, *The Plays*, pp.119-147.

⁷⁵ Nicholl, *The Life*, p. 29.

⁷⁶ Schoenbaum, *William Shakespeare*, p. 102.

⁷⁷ Lewis, *The Shakespeare Documents*, pp. 65-67.

⁷⁸ F.E. Halliday *A Shakespeare Companion*, 1964, pp. 441- 42.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

Conclusion: Banishment and Resolution of Exile

It appears that the Shakespeare's banishment as a result of the poaching incident had a profound effect on him. There is an expression in Sonnet 29 of his bitterness at being exiled from his home and family.⁸⁰

*When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweepe my outcaste state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate.*

However, he appears to have come to terms with his exile through his writing as a playwright, for as Rowe tells us: 'The latter Part of his Life was spent, as all Men of good Sense will wish theirs may be, in Ease, Retirement, and Conversation of his Friends',⁸¹ reflected perhaps in the following passage from *As You Like It*:

Sweet are the uses of adversity, which like a toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in his head. And this our life, exempt from public haunt, finds tongues in trees, books in running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything.

⁸⁰ William Shakespeare, *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, 2002.

⁸¹ Nicholl, *William Shakespeare*, p. 72.

Population Growth and Political Radicalism.

In his discussion of the history of Russia, John Mynard Keynes wrote:

European Russia increased her population ... from less than 100,000,000 in 1890 to about 150,000,000 at the outbreak of war, and in the years immediately preceding 1914 the excess of births over deaths in Russia as a whole was at the prodigious rate of two million per annum. This inordinate growth in the population of Russia ... has been nevertheless one of the most significant facts of recent years. The great events of history are often due to secular changes in the growth of population and other fundamental economic causes, escaping by their gradual character the notice of contemporary observers, are attributed to the follies of statesmen or the fanaticism of atheists. Thus the extraordinary occurrences of the past two years in Russia, that vast upheaval of Society which has overturned what seemed most stable – religion, the basis of property, the ownership of land, as well as forms of government and the hierarchy of classes – may owe more to the deep influences of expanding numbers than to Lenin or to Nicholas, and the disruptive powers of excessive national fecundity may have played a greater part in bursting the bonds of convention than either the power of ideas or the errors of aristocracy.¹

This is a form of demographic determinism, although Keynes did not discuss the details of how population growth affected the Russian Revolution, except to state that it had an overall disruptive effect on Russian society.

It is possible to clarify this analysis through previous work on population growth. In his book on the enemies of Rome, Philip Matyszak wrote:

Historians blamed the fall of Rome on depopulation, pointing to references in the ancient texts to plagues and *agri deserti* (abandoned fields). Certainly, by the end of the Empire, a few thousand men counted as a substantial army whereas in the glory days of the Republic a single legion contained 6,000 men.²

Roman urbanism in Italy implied large and compact settlements linked by swift communications and thus provided a ready network for infectious diseases to take hold and spread. Significant population growth occurred in the thinly settled west in Africa, Spain and Gaul, but the population of Italy remained stagnant.³ The growth in regions outside of Italy resulted in a greater capacity to launch effective attacks on a stagnant empire and eventually resulted in its decline.

For England, H.J. Habakkuk summarized the long-term relationship between population growth and economic development:

long-term movements in prices, in income distribution ... in real wages ... are dominated by changes in the growth of population. Rising population: rising prices ... low real incomes for the mass of the population ... this might stand for a description of the thirteenth century, the sixteenth century, and the

¹ John Maynard Keynes, 'The Economic Consequences of Peace' in *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, 2017, p.370.

² Peter Razzell, 'Demography and the Decline of the Roman Empire', *Online Peter Razzell*, p. 1.

³ Ibid, p. 2,

early seventeenth, and the period 1750-1815. Falling or stationary population with ... higher mass incomes might be said to be characteristic of the intervening periods.⁴

Implicit in this analysis is the assumption that population growth created a surplus of labour, leading to a fall of income for the mass of the population, but an increase in the wealth of the owners of capital. Lawrence Stone described this process of social polarisation which took place in England during the sixteenth century because of population growth:

The excess supply of labour relative to demand not only increased unemployment but forced down real wages to an alarming degree ... [there was] a polarisation of society into rich and poor: the upper classes became relatively more numerous, and their real incomes rose; the poor also became more numerous and their real incomes fell.⁵

This is confirmed by data on wealth generated by the Worth and Status Project.⁶

	1550-74	1575-99	1600-24	1625-49
Gentry (N = 367)	£16.00	£8.00	£59.30	£50.00
Yeoman (N = 1104)	£5.34	£7.27	£23.92	£50.00
Trade (N = 2185)	£2.40	£1.40	£2.99	£5.00
Husbandmen (N = 2127)	£4.00	£3.37	£5.93	£5.00
Labourers (N = 273)	£1.58	£1.35	£1.36	£1.03

Although the gentry increased their wealth – increasing by about three times – the yeomen’s wealth grew by nearly ten times, while the labourers’ worth decreased slightly. There was little change among husbandmen and a doubling of wealth among tradesmen. Yeomen were essentially a social status category and were part of the ‘middle sort’ who dominated the support for Parliament in the civil war and were the principal supporters of puritanism at this time.⁷

Wrightson has summarized the situation of yeomen:

‘Like the gentry, they benefited from low labour costs as employers, while as large-scale producers they stood to gain from rising prices ... Again, like the gentry, they took a thoroughly rational and calculating attitude towards profit ... often ambitious, aggressive, [and] small capitalists ... [they] experienced gradually rising living standards, the rebuilding of farmhouses and their stocking with goods of increasing sophistication and comfort.’⁸

An example of this process is to be found in Stratford-on-Avon. Population had grown rapidly during the sixteenth century resulting in a polarisation of wealth. About forty per cent of the population were designated as poor,⁹ whereas at the same time one-hundred-and-twenty of the leading townsmen were found illegally to be hording grain and barley.¹⁰ This resulted in a serious riot, described by Abraham Sturley in a letter to his friend Richard Quiney:

⁴ Peter Razzell, ‘Population Growth and the Development of Capitalism in Britain, 1550-1850’, *Online Peter Razzell*, p.2.

⁵ Peter Razzell, ‘Essays in Historical Sociology’, *Online Peter Razzell*, p. 238.

⁶ Data from *Perceptions of Worth and Social Status in Early Modern England*, ESRC Reference Number RES-000-23-1111.

⁷ See Peter Razzell, ‘A sociological analysis of the English civil war’ in *Online Peter Razzell*.

⁸ K. Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680*, 2013, pp. 134, 135.

⁹ E. Fripp, *Master Richard Quiney*, 1924, p. 177.

¹⁰ B. Rowland Lewis, *The Shakespeare Documents*, 1940, p. 284.

‘U shall understande, brother, that our neighbours are growne with the wantes they feele throughe the dearnes of corne ... malecontent. Thei have assembled together in a great nomber, and travell’d to Sir Tho. Luci on Fridai last to complaine of our malsters; on Sundai to Sir Foulke Gre. and Sir Joh. Conwai. I should have said on Wendsdai to Sir Ed. Grevll first ... Tho. West, returning from the ij knights of the woodland, came home so full that he said to Mr. Baili that night, he hoped within a weeke to leade some of them in a halter, meaninge the malsters ... to se them hanged on gibbettes att their owne dores.’¹¹

This can be seen as an anticipation of Marx’s account of the conflict between capital and labour, although it was fuelled more by population increase than an independent development of the economy.

The polarisation of social classes in England was prominent in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, leading to the growth of political radicalism.¹² The poverty of labourers and the poor was a contributory factor in the wealth for those owning capital. As Malthus wrote: ‘farmers and capitalists are growing rich from the real cheapness of labour.’¹³

The pauperisation of labourers and other working-class groups was most powerfully documented by the Reverend Thomas Howlett. Howlett compiled figures of income and expenditure, using details of wages from farmers’ wage books and local knowledge of family incomes and consumption, for the two ten-year periods, 1744-53 and 1778-87. The annual expenditure per family in the first period was £20.11s.2d and earnings £20.12.7d, leaving a surplus of 1s.5d. In the second period the figures were £31.3s.7d and £24.3.5d, leaving a deficit of £7.0s.2d.¹⁴ Howlett concluded that

Of this deficiency the rates have supplied about forty shillings; the remaining £5 have sunk the labourers into a state of wretched and pitiable destitution. In the former period, the man, his wife, and children, were decently clothed and comfortably warmed and fed: now on the contrary, the father and mother are covered with rags; their children are running about, like little savages, without shoes or stockings to their feet; and, by day and night, they are forced to break down the hedges, lop the trees, and pilfer their fuel, or perish with cold.¹⁵

This poverty was also a factor in the revolutionary condition of Buckinghamshire in the 1830s: Numbers of men were out of work, bread was dear, and the Chartist agitation was violently active. Copies of the *Northern Star* and other Chartist papers found their way into every workshop. Meetings were held almost every evening and on Sundays. Some of the speeches advocated physical force as the only remedy ... Lectures on Peterloo, the Bristol Riots, the Monmouth Rising, and the Pension List were common. Bad trade, low wages, and dear bread were the stimulating causes of widespread discontentment. Men were driven to their lowest depth of hatred of the governing classes... the country was passing through the throes of a political convulsion which was fast ripening into a revolution. The mechanics institute gradually degenerated into a violent revolutionary club.¹⁶

¹¹ Ibid, 227.

¹² E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Classes*, 1966.

¹³ T.R. Malthus, *Essays in the Principal of Population*, 1989, p. 28.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 48.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 49. Enclosure may have played a role in generating surplus labour, but this is a controversial thesis.

See J.D. Chambers and J.D. Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution, 1750-1850, ???*.

¹⁶ J. Buckmaster, *A Village Politician*, 1982, pp. 98, 99, 124, 153.

This is when the writings of Thomas Paine became so prominent, with the emergence of the London Correspondent Society and associated political radicalism, along with the political reaction involving draconite legislation.¹⁷

A further example of the effect of population growth on political radicalism occurred during the French Revolution. It has been estimated that 'Frances population grew by roughly fifty per cent from 19.7 million in 1700 to 29 million by 1800.'¹⁸ According to Wikipedia 20% of the population 'lived in towns or cities, Paris alone having over 600,000 inhabitant. This was accompanied by a tripling in the size of the middle class, which comprised 10% of the population in 1789. Despite increases in overall prosperity, its benefits were largely restricted to the rentier and mercantile classes, while the living standards fell for wage labourers and peasant farmers who rented their land.'¹⁹

This polarisation of socio-economic statuses is similar to what happened in England, as summarized by Habakkuk, It is essentially the result of population growth, that has historically created in England, France and Russia the social inequality and associated political radicalism.

¹⁷ Thompson, *The Making*.

¹⁸ Wikipedia, Population of France 1700-2020, *Online*.

¹⁹ Wikipedia, Overview, French Population History, *Online*.

The Centrality of Demography in the Social Sciences.

Historically social scientists have assumed that economics is the central discipline in the social sciences. This is partly the influence of Marx as well as the dominance of free market liberalism.

In his discussion of the history of Russia, John Maynard Keynes wrote:

‘European Russia increased her population ... from less than 100,000,000 in 1890 to about 150,000,000 at the outbreak of war, and in the years immediately preceding 1914 the ... inordinate growth in the population of Russia ... has been nevertheless one of the most significant facts of recent years. The great events of history are often due to secular changes in the growth of population and other fundamental economic causes, escaping by their gradual character the notice of contemporary observers, are attributed to the follies of statesmen or the fanaticism of atheists. Thus the extraordinary occurrences of the past two years in Russia, that vast upheaval of Society which has overturned what seemed most stable – religion, the basis of property, the ownership of land, as well as forms of government and the hierarchy of classes – may owe more to the deep influences of expanding numbers than to Lenin or to Nicholas, and the disruptive powers of excessive national fecundity may have played a greater part in bursting the bonds of convention than either the power of ideas or the errors of aristocracy.’¹

There is increasing evidence that demography has been neglected in its central role in both history and contemporary life. The “urban penalty” in mortality may have been a factor in the decline of the Roman Empire. Philip Matyszak has written: ‘historians blamed the fall of Rome on depopulation, pointing to references in the ancient texts to plagues and *agri deserti* (‘abandoned fields’). Certainly, by the end of the Empire, a few thousand men counted as a substantial army whereas in the glory days of the Republic a single legion contained 6,000 men.’² The invading Huns, Visigoths and other barbarian tribes lived in more rural environments and therefore would not have been prone to high levels of infection.³

H.J. Habakkuk has summarized the role of population growth in shaping the economic structure of English history:

‘long-term movements in prices, in income distribution ... in real wages ... are dominated by changes in the growth of population. Rising population: rising prices ... low real incomes for the mass of the population ... this might stand for a description of the thirteenth century, the sixteenth century, and the early seventeenth, and the period 1750-1815. Falling or stationary population with ... higher mass incomes might be said to be characteristic of the intervening periods.’⁴

This assumes that population growth was independent of economic development, and there is increasing evidence that growth in Britain was mainly due to changes in ecology and disease incidence.⁵

Malthus argued that there had been a diminution in the frequency of marriage during the eighteenth century:

¹ John Maynard Keynes, ‘The Economic Consequences of Peace’ in *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, 2017, p.370.

² Philip Matyszak, *The Enemies of Rome: From Hannibal to Attila the Hun*, 2023, p. 283.

³ P.E. Razzell, ‘Demography and the Decline of the Roman Empire’, *Online Peter Razzell*

⁴ P.E Razzell, *Essays in Historical Sociology*, 2021, p, 222.

⁵ See P.E. Razzell, ‘Population Growth in Britain, 1538-1850’ to be published in *Family and Community History*.

The gradual diminution and almost total extinction of the plagues which so frequently visited Europe, in the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, produced a change [in the incidence of marriage] ... in this country [England] it is not to be doubted that the proportion of marriages has become smaller since the improvement of our towns, the less frequent return of epidemics, and the adoption of habits of greater cleanliness.’⁶

The decrease in the frequency of marriage led to a reduction in population growth and is a further example of demographic determinism.

Although Ireland lagged severely behind England in terms of real incomes, Irish population increased more rapidly than England’s in the eighteenth century. This is illustrated by the following Table:

Table 1: Estimated Population Growth in Ireland and England & Wales, 1697-1791.⁷

<i>Ireland Population History</i>		<i>England Population History</i>	
Period	Population Size (1000s)	Period	Population Size (1000s)
1706	2060	1700/1	5,475
1753	2570	1750/1	6,467
1791	4420	1790/1	8,675

Ireland’s population grew more rapidly than England’s even though it was much poorer. This was largely due to the benefits of geographical isolation, which can be illustrated by an analysis of the Irish 1841 Census, comparing the mortality rates of urban and rural districts

Table 2: Agee Specific Death Rates According to the 1841 Irish Census.⁸

<i>Age Group (Years)</i>	<i>Number Living in Urban Areas</i>	<i>Deaths Per 1000</i>	<i>Number Living in Rural Districts</i>	<i>Deaths Per 1000</i>
Under 1	50,369	138.02	311,055	81.35
2-5	105,676	45.49	779,313	17.22
6-15	243,551	9.78	1,813,605	4.51
16-25	242,237	9.90	1,403,660	6.56
26-35	181,208	13.34	973,169	8.34
36-45	132,481	18.42	696,961	11.43

Mortality in the urban areas was up to twice as high as in the rural districts, with 1,135,465 people living in urban areas and 7,039,659 in the rural districts. Ireland’s rural lower mortality was probably the result of its geographical isolation, avoiding high levels of infection. They lived in scattered settlements in a country that was separated from England and the continent of Europe. Freeman has estimated that in 1841 only about 20 per cent of the Irish population lived in villages and towns, the rest in isolated cabins.⁹

⁶ Ibid, p. 149.

⁷ K.H. Connell, *The Population of Ireland 1750-1845*, 1950; J. Rickman, *Observations on the Results of the Population Act, 41 Geo III*, p. 91.

⁸ Connell. *The Population of Ireland*, p. 193.

⁹ T.W. Freeman, *Pre-Famine Ireland: A Study in Historical Geography*, 1957, p. 27.

Eventually Ireland suffered from numerous famines because increase of population.¹⁰ This illustrates the central importance of population growth in Ireland's history and further illustrates the centrality of demographic development.

¹⁰ Connell. *The Population of Ireland*.

Samuel Pepys: A Case Study in the History of Hygiene.

The diaries of Samuel Pepys provide very detailed information on personal and domestic hygiene, allowing us to explore in greater detail their possible impact on mortality levels. In order to understand the environment in which Pepys lived, it is necessary to summarise the sanitary condition of the City of London and Westminster during the seventeenth century. Before the great fire of 1666 most houses were timber-framed, and the streets were composed of irregular-shaped cobbles including a central kennel for surface drainage. Although piped water had been laid on in some houses in the City of London and elsewhere, there was virtually no internal plumbing, and many houses were reliant on wells and pumps for their water supply. Some houses had cesspits built outside the house in gardens and yards, but most houses appeared to have had open vaults in basements in which all waste matter – kitchen waste, excreta, urine, rainwater – was deposited.

The waste vaults were usually connected to the “houses of office” (latrines) and kitchen sinks by internal waste ducts and pipes, often made of timber, and sometimes built at an angle to accommodate latrines on the upper floors. Most households at this time used chamber pots emptied into the vaults via the “houses of office” on different floors, although very often the main latrine appears to have been located next to the kitchen,¹ presumably to allow more convenient disposal of all waste material. In the absence of water closets, most excreta and urine were deposited in the vaults through gravity, and the conditions of some of the wooden ducts, particularly in hot weather must have been highly unhygienic. These internal areas of the house – with their deposits of kitchen waste and human manure – must have been ideal breeding grounds for rats, fleas, lice and other parasitical organisms,

¹ See J. Schofield, *The London Surveys of Ralph Tresswell*, 1987, pp. 22-24.

which as we will see later, afflicted Pepys, his domestic household and his social circle.

These vaults were usually emptied by night-soil men who would enter the house after nine o'clock in the evening, using the night-time to empty the contents of the vault. Sometimes the waste matter was pumped into the open street, as happened in the following example. In the 1670s, Lord Guildford bought a house in Chancery Lane in London:

There he found a 'small well in the cellar, into which all the drainage of the house was received', from closet and sink alike. When this was full a pump went to work to clear it into the open kennel (gutter) of the street. As may be imagined 'during the pumping the stench was intolerable', offending not only his lordship, but all the houses in the street . . . Nor was his the only house to create such a nuisance, for 'other houses there, which had any cellars, were obnoxious to the same inconveniences.' Guildford proposed that the inhabitants should join in making a drain along the street deep enough to discharge into the new sewer under Fleet Street, but they refused, 'alleging danger to their houses and other frivolous matters'.²

This practice of depositing manure and other waste products into the street had a long history in London, partly due to many smaller houses not having privies built into them. The statutes regulating the streets of London and still in operation in 1720, included the following:

No Man shall cast any Urine-Boles, or Ordure-Boles into the Streets by Day or Night, afore the Hour of nine in the Night; And also he shall not cast it out, but bring it down, and lay it in the Canel, under pain of three Shillings and four pence. And if he do cast it upon any Persons Head, the Person to have a lawful Recompence, if he have hurt thereby.³

The reader will note that it was only if the passer-by was damaged by the deposit of the urine and ordure boles on his head that he had any legal redress.

The above brief discussion of sanitary conditions in London during the seventeenth century is sufficient to provide the background for

² T.F. Reddaway, *The Rebuilding of London*, 1940, p. 287.

³ J. Stow, *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster*, (ed., J. Strype), 1720, Book 2, p. 307.

discussion of the detailed evidence provided by Pepys's diary. Pepys lived in Seething Lane in the City of London, near to the Tower of London and next to other officials at the Navy Office. His main water supply was from a pump located in a yard shared with his neighbours,⁴ and his waste was discharged into a vault located in his cellar, which he also shared with his neighbours. In the first year of the diary, the following event occurred:

This morning one came to me to advise with me where to make me a window into my cellar in lieu of one that Sir W. Batten has stopped up; and going down into my cellar to look, I put my foot into a great heap of turds, by which I find that Mr Turner's house of office is full and comes into my cellar, which doth trouble me; but I will have it helped.⁵

Pepys agreed that Turner's night-soil should be emptied out of Pepys's cellar, although this was done through Turner's own house and with the agreement that his "vault of turds" should either be enlarged or built as a separate structure.⁶ Pepys also had a problem with his other neighbours – Sir William Batten and his wife – about the "emptying of our houses of office", but after some discussion it was mutually agreed that it should be done through Pepys's "office".⁷ The reasons for these disputes probably lay in the unpleasantness of the process of emptying these vaults. Pepys described how his own cellar was emptied:

So from thence home, where my house of office was emptying, and I find they will do it with much more cleanness then I expected. I went up and down among them a good while; but ... I went to bed and left them [my servants] to look after the people. So to bed ... Up about 6 a-clock and find the people have just done; and Hannah not gone to bed yet, but was making clean of the yard and the kitchen ... going to Sir W. Batten (having no stomach to dine at home, it being yet hardly clean of last night's turds) ...⁸

⁴ R.C. Latham and W.M. Matthews, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Vol. 5, 173, p. 249.

⁵ *Ibid*, Vol. 1, p. 269.

⁶ *Ibid*, Vol. 4, p. 220.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 233.

⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 252, 253.

The willingness to tolerate such conditions appears to have been general. On one occasion Pepys found that “my wife and maid Ashwell had between them spilt the pot of piss and turd upon the floor and stool and God knows what, and were mightily merry washing of it clean. I took no notice but merrily.”⁹ On another occasion, Pepys encountered by accident Lady Sandwich in his house, and “I perceive by my dear Lady’s blushing that in my dining-room she was doing something upon the pott; which I also was ashamed of and so fell to some discourse...”¹⁰ But there were times when Pepys was irritated by the conditions in which he lived, although he made no attempt to change them:

... at night home and up to the leads [on the roof]; but were, contrary to expectation, driven down again with a stink, by Sir W. Pen’s emptying of a shitten pot in their house of office close by; which doth trouble me, for fear it do hereafter annoy me. So down to sing a little, and then to bed.¹¹

Pepys was often bothered by sanitary problems from adjoining houses, including flooding and damp; “In the morning, seeing a great deal of fowle water come into my parler under the partician between me and Mr Davis, I did step thither to him and tell him of it, and did seem very ready to have it stopped.”¹² Pepys’s basement was certainly subject to damp,¹³ but much of it probably due to the internal conditions in his own house. On one occasion he kept a pet eagle in his latrine, but was glad to get rid of it, “she fouling our house of office mightily.”¹⁴ He himself was not averse to using other areas of the house for similar purposes: he once “lacked a pot but there was none, and bitter cold, so was forced to rise and piss in the chimney.”¹⁵ This is reminiscent of

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 155.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, Vol. 5, p. 129.

¹¹ *Ibid*, Vol. 7, p. 113.

¹² *Ibid*, Vol. 1, pp. 304, 305.

¹³ *Ibid*, Vol. 7, p. 336.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, Vol. 5, p. 352.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 357.

Boorde's earlier warning against the practice: "...beware of pissing in draughts, and permit no common pissing place to be about the house or mansion ... And beware of emptying of piss pots and pissing in chimneys."¹⁶

Subsequently when Pepys was staying in lodgings in Greenwich to avoid the plague, he resorted to the chimney in the following way:

And so I to bed, and in the night was mightily troubled with a looseness ... and feeling for the chamber pott, and there was none ... I was forced in this strange house to rise and shit in the Chimney twice; and so to bed and was very well again ...¹⁷

This is very similar to what happened to Charles II's court when they spent the summer of 1665 in Oxford to escape the plague; they were castigated by the diarist Anthony Wood, for "though they were neat and gay in their apparell, yet they were very nasty and beastly, leaving at their departure all their excrements in every corner, in chimneys, studies, colehouses and cellars."¹⁸ It is not surprising given these standards of personal hygiene, that the earth in many house floors, particularly that in cellars, was used as a source of saltpetre (potassium nitrate), which resulted from the deposit of excreta and urine either from animals or human beings.¹⁹ The deposit of excreta and urine on floors appeared to have been general in London, for in 1627, the government issued a proclamation stipulating that the earth remaining from demolished houses in London should be made available to the saltpetre men:

That whensoever any old house or building in London, or within three miles thereof, shall be pulled downe, and the earth and Rubbish is be caried away or remooved, That before any part thereof be stirred or removed, there be notice thereof given at the Kings storehouse for the

¹⁶ H. Edmund Poole, *The Wisdom of Andrew Boorde*, 1936, p. 22.

¹⁷ Latham and Matthews, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Vol. 6, p. 244.

¹⁸ Quoted in Peter Razzell, *Essays in English Population History*, 1994, p. 205

¹⁹ For a general discussion of the use of earth floors as a source of saltpetre see *Ibid*, pp. 203-205.

making of Saltpeter in Southwarke, and that the Deputy or workmen of Saltpeter, doe, and may first take so much of the said Earth or Rubbish, as in their judgement and experience is fittest for Saltpeter for the Kings Service.²⁰

In order to maximise the availability of saltpetre (used in the manufacture of gunpowder), the government attempted to prevent the paving “with stone, or bricke, or Floore with board ... any Cellar or Vault ... or do lay the same with lime, sand, gravell, or other thing, whereby the growth and encrease of the Mine of Saltpeter may be hindered or impaired.”²¹ It is unclear whether Pepys’s cellars were paved or not, or indeed whether his kitchen which adjoined his back yard had an earth floor – most kitchens in the country had earth floors at this time – but certainly the conditions in his basement would have been highly conducive to the growth of saltpetre. The poor sanitary arrangements in Pepys’s house were also reflected in the low level of personal hygiene. There is no evidence that Pepys ever took a bath, although he did occasionally wash his hands and face in cold and warm water.²² He considered that his wife going to a public bathhouse was sufficiently unusual to warrant special comment:

... my wife being busy in going with her woman to a hot house to bath herself, after her long being within doors in the dirt, so that she now pretends to a resolution of being hereafter very clean – how long it will hold, I can guess ...²³

Pepys was forced to sleep by himself on the next night, “my wife after her bathing alone in another bed.”²⁴ Two nights later he was made to clean himself “with warm water; my wife will have me, because she doth herself.”²⁵ The problem was that there was no running water in the

²⁰ J.F. Larkin and P.L. Hughes, *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, 1973, p. 455.

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 455.

²² See the discussion of washing and bathing in the companion volume to Pepys’s diary, Latham and Matthews, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Vol. 10.

²³ *Ibid*, Vol. 6, p. 40.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 41.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 44.

house, and hot water was only available in very limited supply, so that when Pepys washed his “legs and feet with warm water” he was forced to do it in the kitchen.²⁶ On most occasions when Pepys mentioned cleaning himself he referred to rubbing himself clean with a dry cloth.²⁷ He had a constant problem keeping his hair clean, and on one occasion “had Sarah to comb my head clean, which I find so foul with poudering and other troubles, that I am resolved to try how I can keep my head dry without powder.”²⁸ Pepys attempted to deal with this problem by having his hair cut very short and wearing a wig, but he found to his dismay that all the wigs he bought were infested with nits.²⁹ He himself was infested with head and body lice on more than one occasion, and summarised his problem as follows:

So to my wife’s chamber, and there supped and got her to cut my hair and look my shirt, for I have itched mightily these six or seven days; and when all came to all, she finds that I am louzy, having found in my head and body above 20 lice, little and great; which I wonder at, being more than I have had I believe almost these 20 years. I did think I might have got them from the little boy, but they presently look him, and found none – so how they came, I know not; but presently did shift myself, and so shall be rid of them, and cut my hayre close to my head.³⁰

Although concerned on this occasion about lice in his hair and on his body, Pepys was much more relaxed when he stayed at an inn in Salisbury: “Up finding our beds good but we lousy. Which made us very merry ...”³¹ He had a very similar reaction when he discovered fleas in his bed when he stayed at Portsmouth; on this occasion he shared a bed with his colleague and friend, Dr Timothy Clarke, physician to the King’s household:

²⁶ *Ibid*, Vol. 7, p. 206.

²⁷ *Ibid*, Vol. 3, p. 188.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 96.

²⁹ See for example *Ibid*, Vol. 5, p. 212.

³⁰ *Ibid*, Vol. 9, p. 424.

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 231.

The Doctor and I lay together at Wiards the Chyrurgeons in Portsmouth ... We lay very well and merrily. In the morning concluding him to be the eldest blood and house of the Clerkes, because all the Fleas came to him and not to me.³²

This anecdote illustrates one of the central features of personal hygiene in the seventeenth century: there was a strong intimacy and physicality to social life which was probably responsible for the spread of much infection and disease. Dr Clarke as a royal physician was responsible for bleeding and giving physic to members of the royal family and attended the Queen during childbirth,³³ and here we see a direct link between the poor personal hygiene of Pepys and his circle and the health of the royal family. Dr Clarke's medical instruments, in particular his lancet used in treatment for bleeding and other operations on members of the royal family, were almost certainly not properly sterilised and therefore a major source of infection. Also, Clarke attended the births of royal children, and his practices were probably very similar to those of contemporary midwives:

If the membrane bag of fluid in which the baby had developed had not been broken by the time the midwife arrived, she would put her hand up the mother's vagina and break the membrane with a specially sharpened fingernail, or a sharp-ended thimble ... In 1687 a midwife estimated that two-thirds of miscarriages, stillbirths and maternal deaths in childbed were due to colleagues.³⁴

Fleas were clearly present in Pepys's own household, although his attitude towards them appeared to be very matter of fact: "I thought myself to be mightily bit with fleas, and in the morning she [my wife] chid her maids for not looking the fleas a-days. But when I rise, I find that it is only the change of the weather from hot to cold ..." ³⁵ It is in these casual references that attitudes towards personal and domestic hygiene are so revealing for example, when Pepys returned home to

³² *Ibid*, Vol. 3, p. 70.

³³ See for example *Ibid*, Vol. 5, p. 197; *Ibid*, Vol. 7, p. 49.

³⁴ L. Picard, *Restoration London*, 1997, p. 94.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 260.

dine with his friends Batty and Mr How, he and his wife “fell out a little about the foulness of the linen of the table ...”³⁶

On a more intimate level, Pepys makes references to his sexual life revealing much about his own personal hygiene: “... I went up to her [Sarah] and played and talked with her and, God forgive me, did feel her; which I am much ashamed of, but I did no more, though I had so much a mind to it that I spent in my breeches. After I talked an hour or two with her, I went and gave Mr Hunt a short visit, he being at home alone.”³⁷

Pepys makes no mention of washing or changing of clothes after his many sexual encounters, and it is this physicality and lack of concern with smell which probably accounts for Pepys’s reaction to the following incident: “I went to Mr Crews and thence to the Theatre, where I saw again *The Lost Lady* ... And here, I sitting behind in a dark place, a lady spat backward upon me by a mistake, not seeing me. But after seeing her to be a very pretty lady, I was not troubled with it at all.”³⁸ Perhaps this tolerance to spitting has a special Pepysian flavour, but a more general tolerance might help explain the entry in the diary: “At night to supper and to bed – this night having first put up a spitting-sheet, which I find very convenient.”³⁹ Perhaps Pepys was only following here current practice, for as Andrew Boorde had advised: “When you be out of your bed, stretch forth your legs and arms, and your body, cough and spit, and then go to your stool to make your egestion ... And wash your hands and wrists, your face and eyes, and your teeth, with cold water.”⁴⁰

³⁶ Latham and Matthews, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Vol. 9, p. 402.

³⁷ *Ibid*, Vol. 3, p. 191.

³⁸ *Ibid*, Vol. 2, pp. 24, 25.

³⁹ *Ibid*, Vol. 3, p. 262.

⁴⁰ Poole, *The Wisdom of Andrew Boorde*, p.33. The common practice of spitting may have been a factor in the spread of tuberculosis.

Hygiene within the house was reflected in the sanitary conditions of the surrounding streets; we have already seen how the waste and soil from the house was deposited onto the street, and animal manure was a constant hazard, not only from horses, but from pigs, goats, chickens, ducks and cattle.⁴¹ Pepys constantly complained about the dirt and filth of the roads of London, frequently making it impossible for him to walk from one area of the town to another.⁴²

Poor hygiene and inadequate conditions of storage also affected the quality of food and drink. Given the contamination of the soil with excreta and other waste products, and the reliance on wells and pumps, most supplies of water were probably polluted. The ladies accompanying the Portugese Queen complained “much for lack of good water to drink”,⁴³ and although the main staple drink at this time was beer and wine, water was drunk by Pepys and his contemporaries.⁴⁴ Milk was also drunk, but sometimes with uncomfortable consequences:

In our way [from Hackney] drinking a great deale of Milke ... I was in mighty pain all night long, of the Winde griping of my belly and making of me shit often, and vomit too ... this I impute to the milk that I drank, after so much beer. But the cold, to my washing my feet the night before.⁴⁵

This quote not only reveals an ignorance of the dangers of contaminated drink, but a wariness of washing and bathing which was probably quite

⁴¹ See Latham and Matthews, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Vol. 3, p. 243. One of the regulations still in force in 1720 required that ‘No Man shall have any Kine, Goats, Hogs, Pigs, Hens, Cocks, Capons or Ducks in the open Street, under pain of Forfeiture of the same.’ J. Stow, *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster*, Book 2, 1603, p. 306.

⁴² See for example Latham and Matthews, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Vol. 2, pp. 81; 188, 189; *Ibid*, Vol. 4, pp. 3, 12; *Ibid*, Vol. 8, pp. 344, 356, 444; *Ibid*, Vol. 9, pp. 9, 478.

⁴³ *Ibid*, Vol. 3, p. 92.

⁴⁴ For example, on one occasion, Pepys ‘drank on wine, but sent for some water, the beer not being good.’ *Ibid*, Vol. 4, p. 265.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, Vol. 7, p. 207.

general at this time.⁴⁶ The diary also has a number of references to polluted food, which Pepys again appears to have been relatively tolerant of, as indicated in the following quote: "...took Commissioner Pett home with me for dinner, where my stomach was turned when my sturgeon came to table, upon which I saw very many little worms creeping, which I suppose was through the staleness of the pickle."⁴⁷ He was more ashamed of the meat that his father and mother regularly served the children of Lord Sandwich when they were staying with them: "though they buy good meate, yet can never have it before it stinks – which I am ashamed of."⁴⁸

Venison pasties appeared to have been particularly vulnerable to contamination: "a very good pasty of venison, better then we expected, the last stinking basely."⁴⁹ Some of the contamination of meat Pepys attributed to the weather: "... home to dinner, where a stinking leg of mutton – the weather being very wet and hot to keep meat in."⁵⁰ With the absence of proper storage facilities, and the very poor hygienic conditions inside the house, it is not surprising that food often became contaminated.

Pepys frequently describes the illnesses and poor health that he and his family, friends and colleagues frequently suffered from, although these are mainly descriptions of symptoms rather than accounts of the diseases involved. It is possible to recognise in the diary all the classical diseases known to exist at this time: plague, smallpox, typhus, tuberculosis, malaria, dysentery, gastro-enteritis, typhoid fever, measles, scurvy, scarlet fever, venereal disease, and a host of other more minor

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 172 for another reference to Pepys blaming the washing of his feet for an attack of colic.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, Vol. 3, p. 120.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, Vol. 5, p. 193.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, Vol. 8, p. 375.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, Vol. 9, p. 252.

complaints. There are also a large number of deaths referred to in the diary, particularly of infants within the first few weeks of life.⁵¹ It is impossible to calculate an objective measure of mortality from the diary because the references are too piecemeal, but Pepys did list the births and deaths of his own family of origin. There were eleven children born to his father and mother, seven of whom died during childhood; of the four who survived childhood, two of Pepys's brothers died unmarried in their thirties, and his remaining sister married but died at the age of forty-two.⁵²

Pepys himself suffered from a stone in the kidney, and what he called colic; this was a chronic disorder and occurred constantly throughout the period of the diary. From the symptoms described – chronic pain, diarrhoea, flatulence and wind – this was probably a form of gastro-enteritis, a complaint which also afflicted Pepys's wife, Elizabeth. Pepys also described other illnesses, including fever; on one occasion he described his illness as follows: “having been this day or two mightily troubled with an itching all over my body, which I took to be a louse or two that might bite me – I find this afternoon all my body is inflamed and my face in a sad redness and swelling and pimped ...”⁵³ This could have been an attack of typhus, but there is no way of knowing from this distance in time what particular illnesses affected Pepys and his circle of family and friends.

The disease environment revealed by the diary, and the insects and parasites that flourished in that environment (rats, fleas, lice, flies and other micro-organisms), were probably responsible for a range of diseases – plague, typhus, typhoid fever, dysentery, and gastro-enteritis. In the sixteenth and early seventeenth century infant and child

⁵¹ For example, Pepys's friends Mrs Knepp and Mrs Pierce both lost infants within the first few weeks of life; see *Ibid*, Vol. 7, pp. 220, 236.

⁵² *Ibid*, Vol. 5, p. 361.

⁵³ *Ibid*, Vol. 4, p. 38.

mortality were relatively low in London, in spite of the very poor levels of personal, domestic and public hygiene. Death is the outcome of the interaction of a number of variables, including the virulence of pathogens as well as the hygienic state of the environment.⁵⁴ Diseases such as smallpox only became really fatal after the middle of the seventeenth century, and Pepys lived through a period of transition which resulted in the high infant and child mortality of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.

Pepys himself survived the hazards of this environment, dying at the age of seventy,⁵⁵ but most other members of his family died young, including his wife who died at the age of twenty-nine,⁵⁶ leaving Pepys who never remarried, to be survived only by two nephews, his sister's sons.

⁵⁴ This is illustrated by the current role of the MRSA staphylococcus in hospital deaths, the result of the interaction of a virulent bacterium with the poor hygienic condition of hospital environments.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, Vol. 1, p. xl.

⁵⁶ She died from a fever during a journey to Holland. *Ibid*, p. xxxv.

Burial Practices in Early Modern England.

In 1664 Samuel Pepys described the burial of his brother in a local church:

So to my brother's, and to the church and with the grave maker chose a place for my brother to lie in, just under my mother's pew. But to see how a man's tombs are at the mercy of such a fellow, that for 6d he would (as his own words were) "I will just juttle them together but I will make room for him" – speaking of the fullness of the middle Isle where he was to lie. And that he would for my father's sake do my brother that is dead all the civility he can; which was to disturb other corps that are not quite rotten to make room for him. And me thought his manner of speaking it was very remarkable – as of a thing that now was in his power to do a man a courtesy or not.¹

It is unknown whether this resulted in a decay of the corpse, resulting in offensive smells, or whether there was protective covering of floor tiles. Many buildings in England at this time had earth floors, and at an earlier date in 1517 Erasmus gave his well-known account of English buildings:

The floors are generally spread with clay and rushed from some marsh, which are renewed from time to time but so as to leave a basic layer, sometimes for twenty years, under which fester spittle, vomit, dog's urine and men's too, dregs of beer and cast-off bits of fish, and other unspeakable kinds of filth.²

These earth floors were present in the following century and later, evidenced by the presence of saltpetre in earth dug from churches and other buildings. Saltpetre was created by the presence of urine in earth. In order to maximise the availability of it (used in the manufacture of gunpowder), the government attempted to prevent the paving 'with stone, or bricke, or Floore with board ... any Cellar or Vault ... or do lay the same with lime, sand, gravell, or other thing, whereby the growth and encrease of the Mine of Saltpeter may be hindered or impaired.'³

In 1638 'saltpetre men' had sought permission to extend their activities to the floors of churches, 'because women pisse in their seats which causes excellent saltpetre.'⁴ Two saltpetre men, Stephens and Hilliard, were accused of digging 'in churches, hallowed chapels and churchyards, tearing men's bones and ashes out of their graves to make gunpowder of.'⁵

¹ *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* (edited by R.C. Latham and W. Mathews), Volume 5, 1664, p. 90.

² Quoted in Peter Razzell, *Essays in English Population History*, p. 24.

³ J.F. Larkin and P.L. Hughes, *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, 1973, p. 455.

⁴ Michael Miner, Early Gunpowder was Made from the 'Pisse' of Church Ladies'. *Reader Blogs Online*, January 29, 2016.

⁵ *Ibid*,

Women at this time did not wear underwear which was only introduced in the early twentieth century.⁶ Sermons were long and this would have caused problems for many women who would relieve themselves on these earth floors, providing the basis for the growth of saltpetre

Church floors must have had very strong and offensive smells, which may have been acceptable at a time when hygiene was not a priority for many people, including Samuel Pepys.⁷

⁶ 'Women Without Underwear', *Wikipedia*.

⁷ See 'A Case Study of Sanitary Conditions: The Diaries of Samuel Pepys' in Peter Razzell, *Population and Disease: Transforming English Society, 1550-1850*, 2007.