

The Cheshire Township of Kelsall 1841-1891

An example of demographic change

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Abstract

During the 19th century, England moved from an agriculturally focussed to industrial focussed economy and the population moved from rural townships to urban and industrial conurbations. After 1851, decline in the numbers employed in agriculture and widespread rural depopulation stimulated rural-urban migration (Bellerby 1958).

However, most of rural Cheshire was unaffected by sharp population growth (Elrington 1980), yet industrial conurbations south of the River Mersey continued to develop.

Given this situation it would pre-suppose that villages and rural townships were limited in their potential for growth unless they adapted to the new external environment.

Testing this hypothesis, this paper provides the initial results of an exploratory content analysis of the 19th Century Township of Kelsall in Cheshire, between 1832 and 1897, that confirms such a demographic change took place.



Photoprint 1: 19th Century Postcard of Church Street Kelsall

Source: Cheshire Record Office

Kelsall is within the ancient parish of Tarvin, 7 miles east of Chester, and was described in the mid 19th century (Bagshaw 1850) as a "straggling village pleasantly situated on the west side of Delamere forest on the road from Chester to Northwich". Figure 1 is part of a late 18th century map showing Kelsall and surrounding townships.



Figure 1: Ancient Parish of Tarvin, Cheshire, showing location of Kelsall and surrounding area.

Source: Cheshire Record Office.

The distance from Kelsall west to Tarvin is approximately 3 miles and the salt mines of Northwich 9 miles to the east.

The Wesleyan Methodists established a congregation in 1815 completing their chapel one-year later. A new Methodist Chapel was erected in 1884. In 1844 the Anglicans established a Chapel of Ease (St. Peter's) replaced in 1868 with the completion of St Philip's Anglican Church. The Salvation Army established a presence in an area known as "The Barracks".

During the period reviewed initial schooling was provided by societies with religious affiliations. The non-conformists provided Wesleyan Day & Sunday Schools and the Anglican National Society School was established in 1844 with provision for 100 pupils.

Being on a hill neither the railway nor canal system reached Kelsall, however the village did "ribbon" the turnpike. A section of the 1874 OS map is reproduced in Figure 2 and comparison with a manual tracing of the Tithe map of 1838 indicates little change. A daily

coach (1839), then omnibus service, (4 times daily in 1892), departed from the "Royal Oak" connecting Kelsall with Chester.

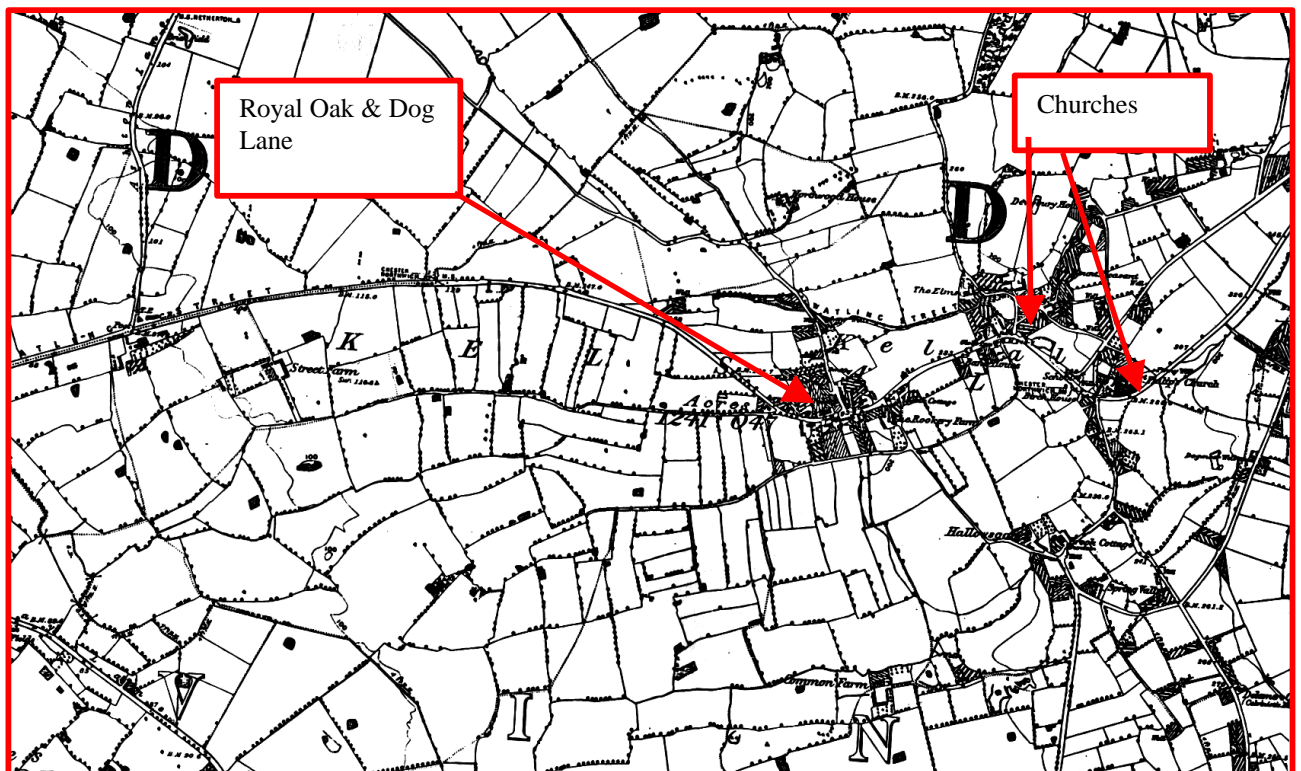


Photoprint 2: Royal Oak Inn 1998

Source: D Dickson, Copyright D Dickson

Kelsall was a nucleated village with population clusters that centred round religion and inns. On the west-side houses and cottages clustered round the Royal Oak Inn and north along Dog Lane. In the centre housing was concentrated around both the Anglican & Wesleyan Methodist churches.

Figure 2: Kelsall Village 1874 (Source OS 6 inch from Cheshire Record Office)



Other researchers and strategy evolution.

Demographic Aspects of the family.

Fundamental differences in some of the conclusions offered by Hareven (1991) and Anderson (1983) are intriguing. Hareven's position is that "the family" is a "kinship" group that interacted with local practices & migratory demands. Hareven speculated about the strategies and choices that populations experienced suggesting considerable geographic mobility as they exercised control over their own lives in response to changing social and economic conditions.

Anderson's opposite view centred on the instability within the household group thus preventing such aspirations.

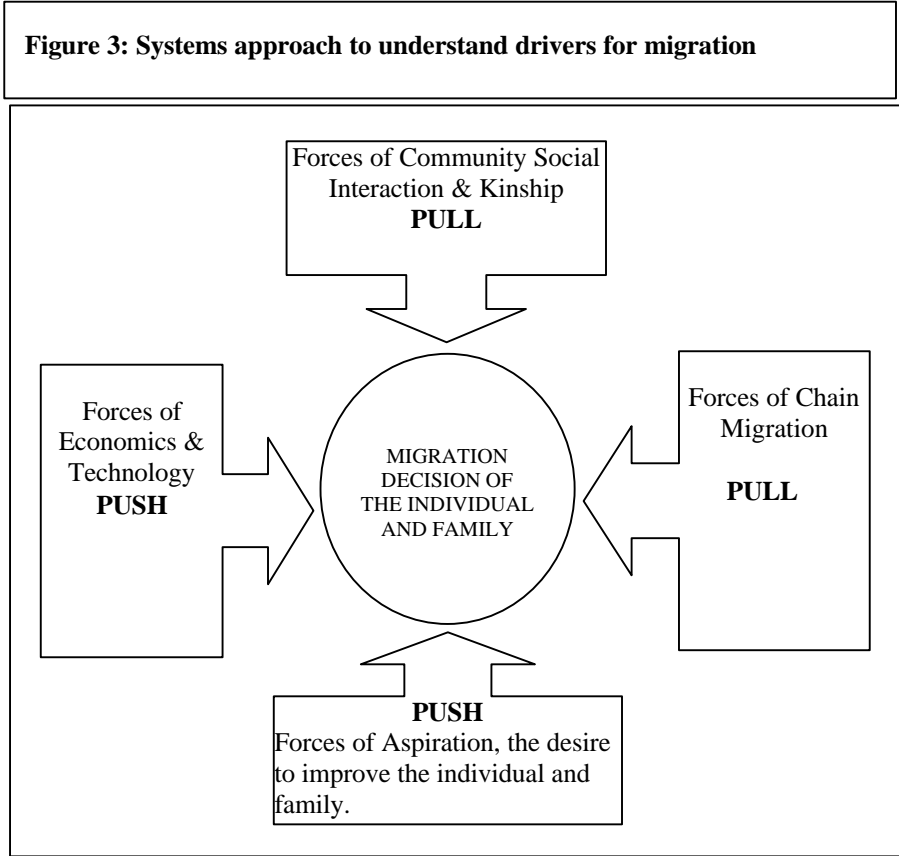
Analysis of the Kelsall data leans more toward the view expressed by Hareven using as evidence the apparent migration of whole families as they changed agricultural employers. Nominal Record Linkage identified individuals who moved from Armstrong's Class III to Class II seeming to confirm that there are quantifiable instances of social mobility.

Mobility and Migration

Jackson (1989) proposes that a systems approach be used to analyse migration. This view concentrates upon the networks that are involved within migration, and that migration was also *intra-rural* rather than just *rural-urban*. The sources chosen did not allow the reconstruction of the inhabitant's migration history that encompassed multiple moves exhibited by the birth places of kin. However NRL did highlight evidence of re-entry to support the intra-rural view of Jackson.

Citing Galtung (1971) Jackson drew the parallel to a *migrant's psychology* that in turn allowed me to consider the systems approach to analysis of migration. Figure 3 uses a force field analysis of my own derivation to demonstrate this.

When considering methods for assessing social stratification Mills (1989) compares the published schemes, and thus identifies the difficulties associated with applying any broad based scheme with the multiplicity of occupations that existed in the 19th century.



Whilst considering the most appropriate method for Socio-Economic Grouping, Booth's (1886) scheme was rejected because his industrial classification does not relate occupations to social classes, a key element of analysis within this report.

Social stratification has both local and national emphasis and whilst the scheme proposed by Armstrong may introduce a bias toward an overlarge Class III, it does provide a rich list of occupational descriptions that facilitate classification. Armstrong's scheme allows for a local level in social hierarchy between the levels of farmer, i.e. those who farm 5 acres and those who farm more. Indeed Mills (1989)ⁱ in their paper do acknowledge the existence of rural social hierarchies, but assert that this may create difficulties when carrying out statistical analysis of the relationship between class and other characteristics of the population. They proposed a scheme that combines all farmers together which I considered too broad for this project.

Tillott's scheme highlights the category "private income", which frequently appear in the CEBs as "independent means" or "annuitant" or "retired". Mills creates a category PEG to encompass these, however this again creates difficulty when trying to assess the origin of an income from occupational sources, it seems hardly likely that all such recipients would "fit" the social PEG classification determined by Mills.

Mills again discusses the social distinction allocated to "journeyman", yet this terminology was not used continually in the CEBs for Kelsall, so would provide an imbalance in any year on year analysis.

A further consideration is the clarification on the work of Armstrong made by Mills concerning the "*classification upgrade*" made by Armstrong toward certain levels of category that were employers.ⁱⁱ Armstrong confirmed that he worked on entry evidence of the CEB to determine the classification, and given that this project analysis follows a similar schedule entry comparison process, despite its limitations, the Armstrong classification method was eventually chosen.

Sources & Methods

The sources used were the unpublished microfilmed copies of the Census Enumerator Books held at the Family Record Centre in London. Photocopies of the textual data for each of the census 1841 - 1891 were made and extracted into machine-readable format for analysis. Apart from the 1841 census, when demographic information was limited to inhabitants names, age and occupations, the other census years provided additional data on relationship to household head, marital status and birthplace to facilitate the process of nominal record linkage. There are documented limitations (Drake 1994) in using CEBs for analysis, i.e. they may not correctly reflect the data collected on the schedules completed by the householder and later transcribed into the enumerators books (Lumas 1997). There may be mistakes in spelling of surnames due to the level of literacy of both the householder and the enumerator.

When recording age there may be deliberate evasion or unintentional inaccuracy by the householder, and difficulty in the interpretation of the transcript in the actual CEB.

For the village of Kelsall all these difficulties were encountered, but the two most challenging were the legibility of the enumerator's writing and the absence of street names. Where legibility was deemed to be most challenging a second opinion was sought. Surname spelling required multiple re-iteration between census years, demonstrating a distinct advantage of comparing as many records as possible. In each CEB extraction the original spelling was used; a database was used to compare census data sorted by surname to identify spelling variations. The absence of street names and only infrequent reference to some farm names and cottages has been particularly challenging. Using a copy of the 25 inch OS map and tracings of areas of the Tithe Map (the original map was 6 feet square!) confirmed that the various enumerators did not follow the same route when compiling their return book, so adding to the complexity of household identification.

Cross-validating individuals over the period required comparison of the raw data provided in each census, revealing a further three challenges involving age, name spelling and place of birth. These are discussed in table one of the appendix.

Tithe Maps & Other Primary Sources

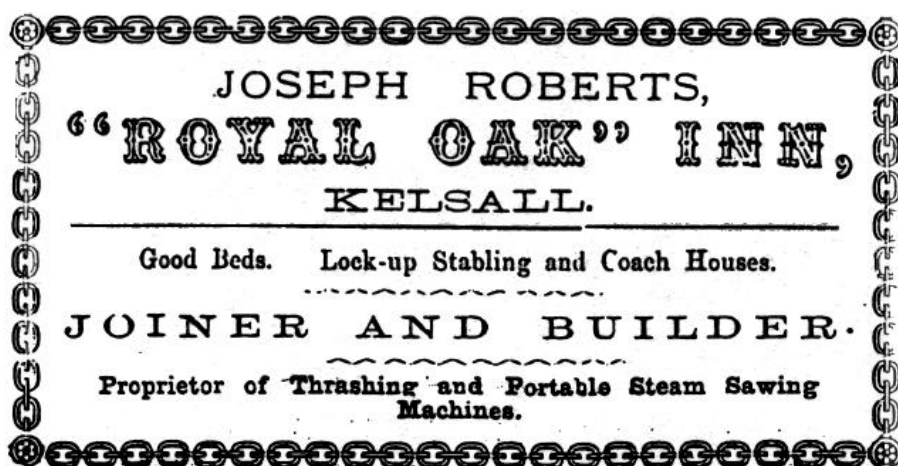
The next step was to benchmark Kelsall by obtaining a list of the inhabitants from as close as possible to 1841, and the Tithe Apportionment Records (1838) provided a list of property owners and tenants. These detailed the owners & occupiers of individual land parcels identified on the tithe map. The data extracted from the Tithe Apportionment and the Wesleyan Chapel Treasurer's Accounts (1815 - 1855) were used in assessing both the pre-1841 social and residential statuses of inhabitants. These documents provided rich lists to determine social stratification, the "landowners" and those who were tenants, craftsmen and labourers. They also provided valuable data to support demographic analysis, listing disbursement charges, daily labour rates etc. and to whom they were paid.

Baptismal, marriage and death registers for Kelsall were also extremely useful in supporting demographic and migratory analysis for the latter part of the 19th century.

Historical Sources:

To support name linkage, data derived from directories (Bagshaw 1850), the Post Office Directories (Kelly 1857), and others such as Morris (1874), Ormerod (1882) and Kelly (1896) are of mixed usefulness. Some editions carried advertisements (Figure 4) that provided

Figure 4: Advertisement from directory that provides expanded demographic information



Source: Morris & Co Directory, 1874 Cheshire Record Office.

additional information, and name lists used for correlation, especially in the periods' in-between census years. Directories mostly followed the same format by giving an alphabetical

list of farmers, trades-persons and craftsmen. Addresses were not provided except for the larger farms and the more affluent householder.

Schools form an important aspect of the village, but sadly the original records for the schools in Kelsall for this period are not available, though both CEBs and trade directories identify the schoolmaster and schoolmistress'. Elrington reports that many establishments were day nurseries rather than schools and took children, often the merest babies, all day while their mothers worked, charging about 2s 6d a week. This perhaps explains why on census returns so many infants were enumerated as "scholar"

Methods

The 1841-1891 census were compared to provide sub sets giving the original inhabitants together with identification of in-migrants and out-migrants.

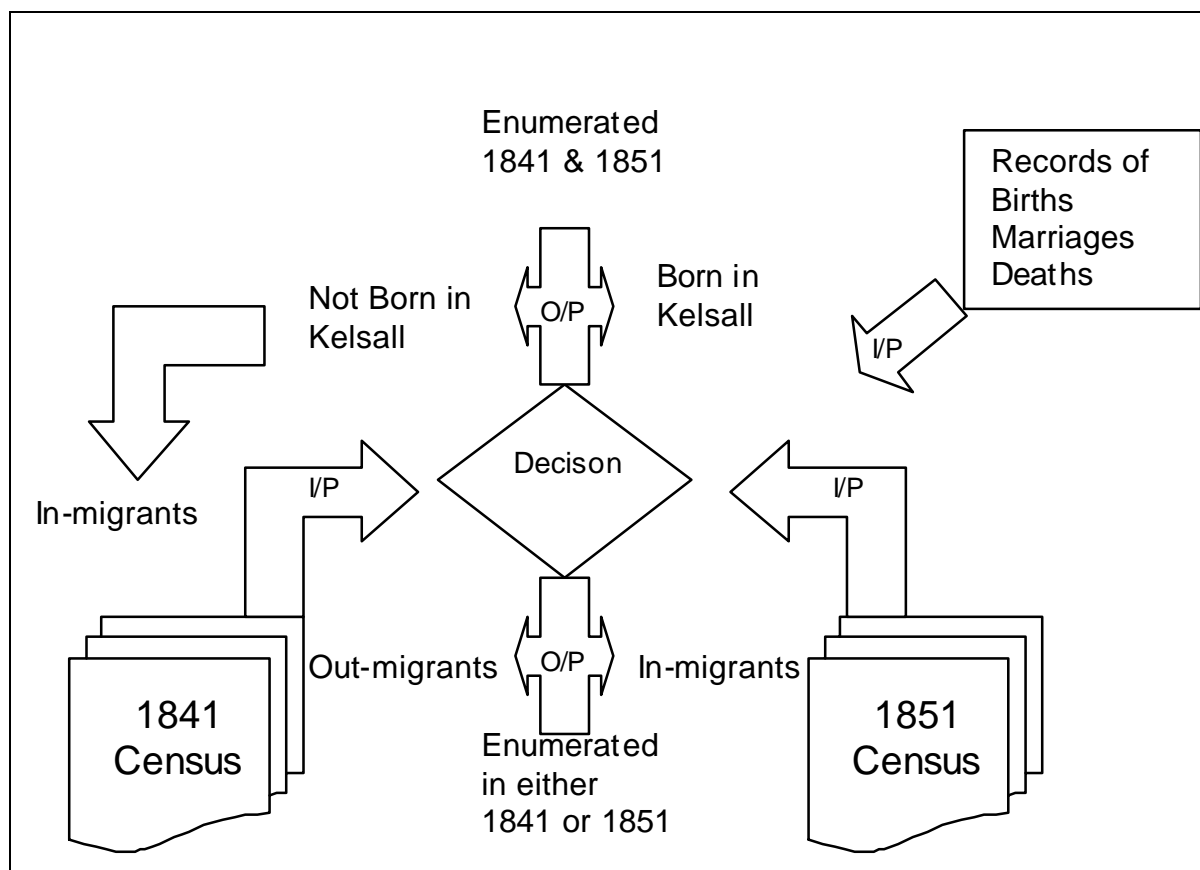


Figure 5 Process adopted for benchmarking

Nominal Record Linkage was used to establish identity and kin relationship by comparison between households of name, age, birthplace and occupation. Data for each of the successive CEBs were compared and links established between names in the original 1838 Tithe Apportionment records, parish registers (where available), and trade directories. Figure 5 provides a pictorial representation of the process developed for determining the levels of migration in Kelsall.

Using this method it was possible to establish a "benchmark" of families resident in 1841 from which to determine migration and demographic data up to and including 1891.

Socio economic groupings (SEGs) were established using Armstrong's method previously described. Individual's occupations not identified in CEBs or trade directories were ignored. Although some SEG classification could have been estimated (Gately 1997), in this instance the estimates would be very subjective and subject to error. Occupational data for those listing more than one occupation, e.g., Farmer & Builder, had the first occupation recorded for the household head. It was noted that often the secondary occupation was attributed to another member of the household. The final assumption made for analysis is that of "apprentice" where I have accorded the SEG classification below that of the "master" for the apprentice. Thus apprentices would achieve social mobility upon completion of their indenture.

Migration data was determined by noting the birthplace of each individual and comparing the radii for 5, 10, 20 miles round Kelsall, whether in or outside Cheshire, Ireland or Scotland. The Welsh county of Flintshire is adjacent to Cheshire and individuals born in Flintshire were classed as "outside Cheshire", that is within either Wales or England.

Findings

Population

Comparison between Kelsall and National population data confirmed that Kelsall did sustain growth but at only half the national rate, achieving an interval median of 7.36%.

	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891
England & Wales (Millions)	10,164	12,000	13,897	15,914	17,928	20,066	22,712	25,974	29,003
Percent interval increase	14.29%	18.06%	15.81%	14.51%	12.66%	11.93%	13.19%	14.36%	11.66%
Kelsall Township	557	598	648	688	626	542	618	638	692
Percent interval increase	18.76%	7.36%	8.36%	5.86%	(8.75%)	(13.42%)	14.02%	3.24%	8.46%

Table 2 Comparison of Kelsall population growth rate to the data for England & Wales

(Sources National data from Mitchell in Drake & Finnegan (1997), Kelsall data History of the County of Chester Volume 2 page 234)

Cross-reference to the whole of the County of Chester confirmed that Kelsall was over 50 percent below the county median of 15.18%. Tri-angulation against two similar local townships of Tarvin (5 miles from Chester) and Tarporley (9 miles NW from Nantwich) also showed median interval growths of 6.57% and 5.12% respectively. This satisfied Elrington's

opinion that *rural* Cheshire did not experience sharp population growth, and that Kelsall was representative of rural Cheshire.

Migration

Table 2 above hides the fact that although achieving growth, Kelsall was far from a stable community. Anderson's paper based his analysis on the 1851 census establishing a great deal of useful data for migration benchmarking. My own analysis agrees with Anderson that with high rates of out-migration rural stability was low right through the period of analysis.

Referencing the appendix table 2, the median interval out-migration between 1891-1841 was 57%, a figure that compares well with Mann's (1996) finding of a median interval of 69% in his migration study of Shipbourne, Kent. Reference to table 3 in the appendix demonstrates that in-migration rose steadily throughout the period, the majority within the five-mile radius predicted by Anderson. The volume fell, as presumably opportunities for social mobility in other industries elsewhere became attractive. Conversely, the percentage of in-migrants from outside Cheshire continued to grow reaching its zenith in 1891.

The agricultural strength of Cheshire lay in dairy farming which provided some cushioning to the agricultural depression of the late 19th century. The fall in corn prices worked to the advantage of those livestock farmers who used corn as feed for their stock. (Armstrong 1990). Nevertheless the harsher economics of farming in the late 19th century (Jefferies 1880) resulted in changes to tenancies in Kelsall that rose from 18% in 1841 to a staggering 83% in 1881.

	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891
Farmers	11	20	16	21	18	21
Median Acreage	N/A	33	50	33.5	46	N/A
Average Acreage	N/A	46	46	46	48	N/A
Tenancy Changes	N/A	18%	30%	60%	83%	66%

Table 3: Farmers & Farm Sizes in Kelsall

Source: Unpublished Census Enumerator Books. No data on farm size was given in 1841 & 1891

The principle that agents tried to follow on leasing farms was to continue with the families of the present tenant in preference to introducing strangers (Scard 1981). In general such requests were favourably considered with son following father. It was observed from the NRL that when the tenant of the farm died prematurely, the widow kept the farm and passed on the tenancy to one of her sons at a later date.

Situated on the north-east edge of a group of similar agricultural townships, Kelsall appears to conform to the typical agricultural pattern (Finnegan 1994) with members of farming families arriving from adjacent townships, most within a five mile radius of Kelsall, to seek a livelihood. Of the all the farmers who were enumerated only one in 1861/62 did not come from within a 10-mile radius of Kelsall, and even this farmer had a popular Kelsall name. Being the significant employer for many of the worker force, when tenant farmers changed, whole families would appear to have moved in and out of the township as they pursued employment opportunities.

Household Demographics

The number of inhabited dwellings rose by 20% between 1851 - 1891 indicating that new houses had been built. The average and median number of persons remained fairly constant between 4 and 7 persons respectively, though farmers maintained larger households of between eight and thirteen toward the end of the 19th century. Scard (1981) recorded that farm families were often large and it was common for tenant farmers to have some of the children working on the farm to help keep labour costs low.

	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891
Total Population	626	542	618	638	692
Average per household	5	4	5	5	5
Median per household	7	5.5	6	7	6.5

Table 5: Average & Mean Household Size

Source: Unpublished CEBs for Kelsall.

These figures are similar to those given by Anderson (1980) who indicates a family size (varying between 1860 and the end of the 19th century) from three to six per household. Anderson's (1990) preliminary analysis of the 1851 census sample suggested that non-conjugal family kin were clustered in small employer households, the households of the self-employed and in the households of farmers.

Table 6 indicates this was true for Kelsall with 75% of the residency status of non-conjugal kin meeting this criterion. By 1891 although the number of non-conjugal kin with residency status in Kelsall had increased by 100% the ratio of 3:1 remained.

	Commercial	Farmers	Crafts	Other
1851	18.75%	18.75%	37.5%	25%
1891	40.6%	3%	31.25%	25%

Notes on small employer households.
 Commercial includes shops and traders.
 Crafts include enterprises such as Wheelwrights, Blacksmiths, Saddlers etc.
 Other includes both labourer's households and those of independent means.

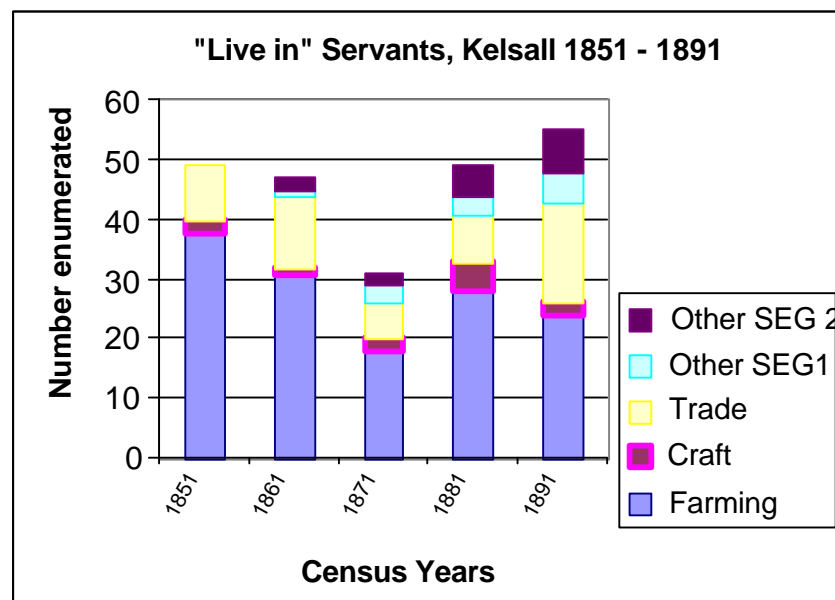
Table 6: Residency Status of non-conjugal family by household classification

The dominance of the commercial enterprises and craft occupations in having residing non-conjugal kin could be to support the business and reduce the level of hired labour. The percentage for farmers is deemed to be a result of less overall labour given that the number of farmers did not substantially alter during the period of review.

The number of other kin (beyond the conjugal unit) residing in the dwellings remained higher than those found by Anderson (1983). Other kin in Kelsall shared 40% of households in 1851 falling to 25% in 1891; this figure being closer to Anderson's 1851 finding's of 27% of households in rural areas.

Servants

The second large group of non-family members are servants. Servants were considered to be

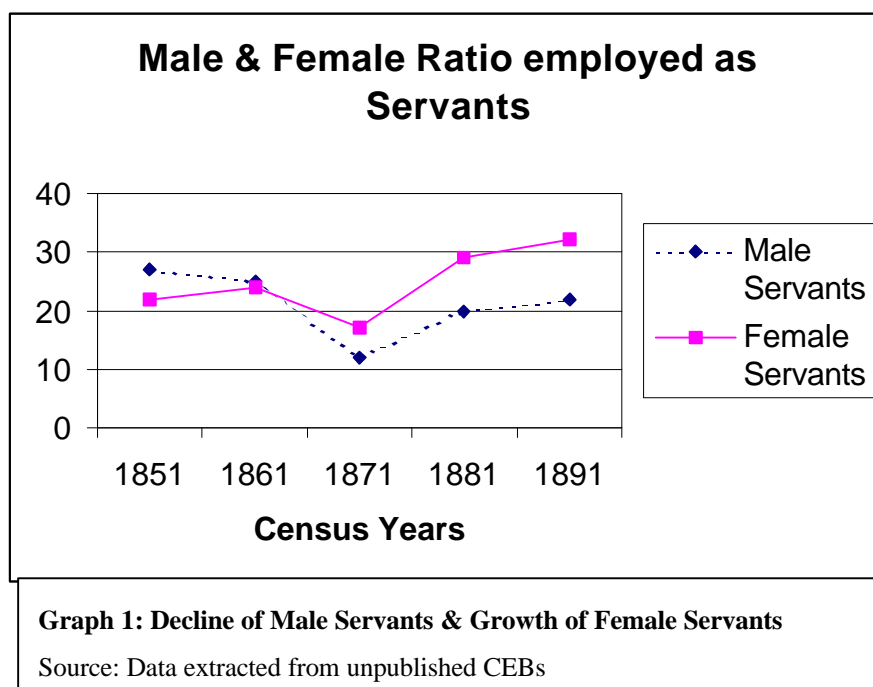


Graph 1: Live-in servants and the household types they were employed in.

important as their existence provides an indication of social status of the employer.

Throughout the period of the report those employed in domestic service continued to grow.

Graph 1 indicates that farmers remained the dominant employers for live-in servants, but that



as commercial enterprise took hold and more persons of independent means who could afford to employ domestic servants were attracted, their influence began to decline. Graph 2 shows that females changed to the dominant gender "in service" as the demand for agricultural labour reduced by 50% coincident following the post1861 agricultural labour watershed.

Social Mobility

Given the absence of suitable interval data, such as known income or wealth of all those enumerated, social scale analysis was undertaken using the ordinal method described by Armstrong (1972) which was subjectively applied to the inhabitants of Kelsall using the available Post Office Directories for triangulation.

	Class 1	Class 11	Class III	Class IV	Class V
1851	0	17%	23%	51%	8%
1861	2%	13%	29%	48%	8%
1871	1%	17%	27%	35%	20%
1881	1%	15%	27%	47%	11%
1891	1%	27%	27%	42%	3%

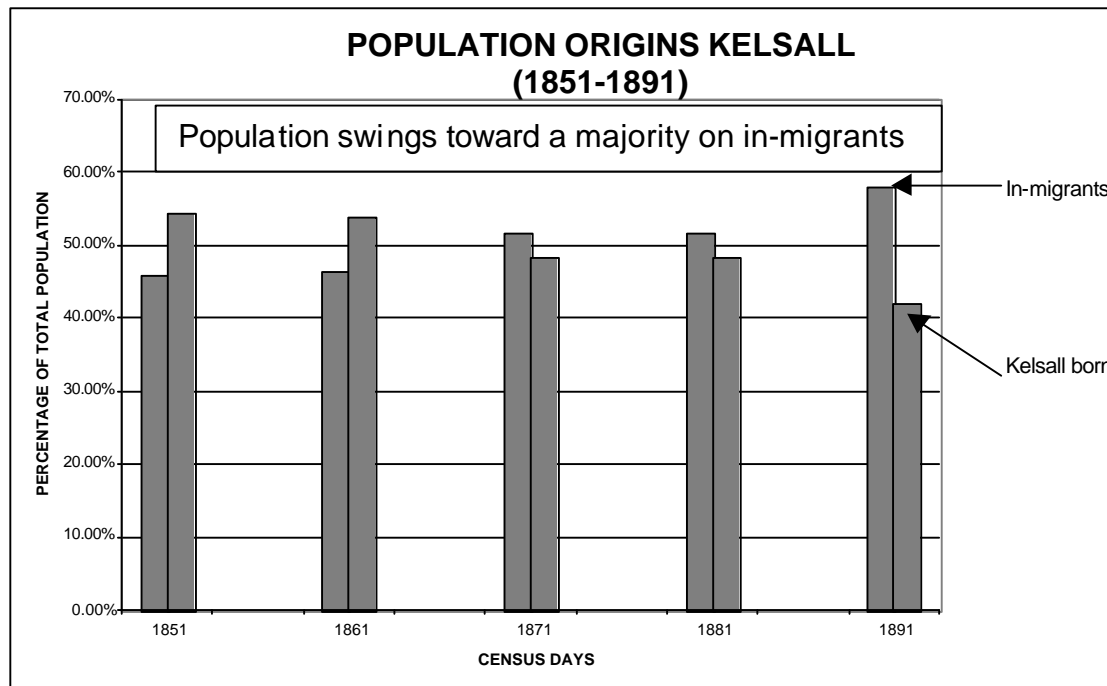
Table 8: Socio Economic Grouping of the enumerated populations of Kelsall 1851 - 1891

Sources: Analysis of the unpublished CEBs and NRL with published historical Trade Directories of the period.

Table 8 summarises the overall findings for the period under review and demonstrates the impact of commerce in Class II and the reductions in labour of Classes IV and V. Class IV's overall total is buoyed by the inclusion of domestic servants.

Conclusions

The preliminary findings suggest that Kelsall followed established 19th century patterns with significant out-migration compensated for by equally significant in-migration. The majority of the migration continued to be related to agricultural factors, though toward the end of the



Graph 3: Population Origins (by percentatge of total) Kelsall, comparison of the ratio between in-migrants & Kelsall born.

19th century the balance has clearly swung toward a populace of in-migrants providing labour for commercial enterprises, and the small but growing element of retired and independent inhabitants, see appendix table 4.

Farming had maintained its position as the primary employer in the district, providing positions for experienced workers and farmer's families, though their influence was clearly declining. There was evidently a collapse in the ten years following 1861 that could be attributed to the 1865-1866 devastation of the dairy herds. The abnormally large swing to non-agricultural labour provides an indication of alternative employment, possibly in road and rail construction. Scard notes the 1863 review by Cheshire landowner John Arden "*William Booth, wife and four children, all young, no constant employment, sometimes employed on railway*, which would lend support to this view.

The percentage of inhabitants occupied in commercial enterprises grew by 45 percent indicating a move toward a combined agricultural and residential community of larger households together with supporting the needs of those retired and of independent means. The

increase in domestic servants in commercial households is a good indicator of this community change.

Kelsall continued to attract people to settle and commence their families, with 55 wives below 43 years compared to 47 in 1881.

The influx of retired and "independent means" inhabitants indicates that Kelsall proffered the prospect of a pleasant rural village in which to reside.

Significantly changing the ratio of agriculturally focussed employment to commercial enterprise, Kelsall, as a community, had adapted to the external environment.

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