Kinship and strategies for family survival on Bodmin Moor during the long nineteenth century (1793 – 1911)

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Abstract

This thesis has used family reconstitution techniques in order to analyse kinship patterns for the Bodmin Moor parishes of St Neot and Bolventor in Cornwall. A kinship database of more than 13,000 individuals was created and kinship links between households in 1793, 1851 and 1911 were then measured. The results revealed the persistence of dense kinship networks that were very different from those found in English studies, and similar to those found in Wales and Brittany.

Twelve factors were identified that contributed to the creation and persistence of high kinship densities. However, the principal underlying reason was the remarkably consistent spatial pattern of Cornish rural society. St Neot and Bolventor, with their structures of hamlets and small, isolated farm settlements, matched the pattern found across most of Cornwall. It was a structure that enabled people to find both marriage partners and employment in close proximity to their places of birth.

Kinship densities were reinforced by remnants of ancient Cornish manorial systems that survived until the end of the eighteenth century, and then by the ultra-local structures of Methodism in the following century. The latter grew at the same time as the rapid expansion in copper mining. Surprisingly, migrating miners from mid and west Cornwall were also found to have dense local kinship networks. Enclosure also reinforced kinship patterns because of the security of tenure offered to occupiers of the newly created moorland farms, and also because the spatial pattern of settlements repeated the structure of lowland communities enclosed in the medieval period.

The collapse in mining and the greater general mobility of the population did result in a weakening of kinship densities towards the end of the nineteenth century. Despite this, first-order kinship links at the beginning of the twentieth century remained higher than for any comparable study of modern or early modern agricultural or mining communities in England, yet remarkably similar to those in Wales. This shared Welsh and Cornish kinship culture provides fresh evidence, along with other factors such as religious experience and a Brittonic language heritage, to support a Celtic narrative for Cornwall that is perhaps more comprehensive and enduring than has sometimes been supposed.

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I would also like to thank the people of Bodmin Moor parishes who not only supplied valuable information but also welcomed me into their homes on numerous occasions. The St Neot Historians were especially helpful, notably Jill Thomas from Tremarkyn whose own book on the history of St Neot provided the initial inspiration for my own research. Special thanks go to the staff of the Cornwall Record Office, past and present, whose friendly help and outstanding quality of cataloguing documents made the job of finding relevant information much easier than might otherwise have been the case.

I am also extremely grateful to the volunteers who run Cornwall Online Parish Clerks (www.opc-cornwall.org). Their freely available databases were an invaluable starting point for tracking and linking life events for people in my own database. A summary of that database was placed online via www.ancestry.com and this generated communication from around the world. Many kind people, too numerous to mention, forwarded documents, photographs and other valuable information about individuals and families. Most were family historians and I relied on many of these to begin piecing together kinship links between individuals in the database.

Family historians sometimes get a bad press, but one whose research helped with the creation of the kinship database used for this thesis underlines just how valuable their work could be. In retirement Bob Roseveare traced the kinship links of thousands of people of Cornish origin with his surname, as well as those with other surnames linked to the Roseveares. As a mathematician and also renowned cryptographer at Bletchley Park during the Second World War he was well qualified for the meticulous family history research he subsequently undertook. Without the previous work of such people my own database building task would have been much more difficult.

Finally, I would like to mention Professor E. J. T. Collins who, although not directly involved with this thesis, inspired my interest in rural history when I was a young undergraduate. Thank-you Ted.

Gary Crossley
Lambriggan, April 2018

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List of abbreviations

BL – British Library

BW – Bewes and Anstis families of Duloe and St Neot

CM – Connock Marshall of Treworgey, St Cleer

CY – Coryton family of Pentillie, Pillaton

CL – Robartes family of Lanhydrock

CN – Carlyon family of Tregrehan, St Blazey

CRO – Cornwall Record Office

FR – Foster family of Castle, Lanlivery

G – Gregor family of Trewarthenick, Cornelly

GR – Grylls family of Helston

MRLISK – Liskeard Methodist Circuit

MRL – Launceston Methodist Circuit

NA – National Archives

PP – Parliamentary Papers

QS – Quarter Sessions

RD – Rodd family of Trebartha

RH – Ratcliffe and Henderson solicitors of Helston

RIC – Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall

Introduction – kinship and distinctiveness

The degree of distinctiveness of Cornish society has been the subject of vigorous debate among historians in recent years. This thesis contributes to that debate by presenting evidence for the persistence of a distinctive Cornish kinship culture from the end of the early modern period, through Cornwall's industrial phase and into the twentieth century. Unlike some top-down studies that have largely relied on the records of Government and the gentry for their assessment of Cornish distinctiveness, the claims in this thesis are the result of a bottom-up, micro-historical approach. Kinship patterns between the families of Cornish farmers, miners, labourers and craftspeople have been measured at key dates in three different centuries. The thesis explains why those kinship patterns came to exist, how they influenced the way local society functioned, and why they contribute to the arguments for the persistence of a distinctive Cornish culture into the modern era.

Cornish distinctiveness did, in fact, receive formal recognition in 2014 when the UK Government granted national minority status as part of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.[1] In making the announcement Danny Alexander, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said that the history, culture and distinctive language of the Cornish were three of the key factors influencing the decision. He added that the Cornish would now be afforded the same status as other Celtic minorities – the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish - within the UK. The outcome was the result of many years of campaigning

[1] UK Government, *Cornish granted minority status within the UK* (24 April 2014), announcement viewed online at www.gov.uk/government/news.

by a number of organisations and individuals, and members of the *Institute of Cornish Studies* (part of the University of Exeter) – particularly historians Philip Payton and Bernard Deacon – played a significant part in setting the agenda for Cornish distinctiveness.[2]

However, the debate over the degree of distinctiveness, its possible geographic extent and the timescale of its decline led to the emergence of what Deacon identified as two increasingly opposed historical perspectives. At one extreme was a *kernowsceptic* camp that played down Cornwall's distinctiveness and Cornish identity, and at the other a *kernowcentric* view that argued Cornish history was not just 'English or British history writ small' but was 'a suitable unit of study in its own right', just like Welsh or Scottish history.[3] The *kernowcentric* agenda was largely presented from within Cornwall, but it also received some support from elsewhere. In his book *West Britons,* early modern historian Mark Stoyle concluded that the Cornish had a separate ethnic identity that had endured for much longer than had often been assumed. He argued the case for the Cornish being a separate people, and drew parallels with the Welsh experience during the English Civil War. He suggested that the overwhelming Royalist support of the Welsh and Cornish was 'founded on the conviction that Parliament was the party of Englishness' and that 'English nationalism lay at the very heart of the English Civil War'.[4]

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[2] For example, see Payton, P., *The Making of Modern Cornwall* (Redruth, 1992), pp. 24-37.
[3] Deacon, B., *A Concise History of Cornwall* (Cardiff, 2007), p. 1.
[4] Stoyle, M., *West Britons, Cornish Identities and the Early Modern British State* (Exeter, 2002), pp. 1, 4-5. See also, Stoyle, M., 'The Dissidence of Despair:

In a pre-emptive strike Stoyle said that those who challenged the Anglocentric view of Cornwall's past would themselves face a backlash.[5] He didn't have long to wait, because a year later J. P. D. Cooper set out his case for a combined Devon and Cornwall historic entity.[6] Cooper argued that the erosion of Cornish distinctiveness meant that the South West peninsula (defined by him as Devon and Cornwall) had effectively become a single region as early as Tudor times. By then, he said, Cornwall and Devon were located 'within England's national imagination, as well as its administrative and judicial framework', with a demonstrable shared loyalty to the Tudor Crown. Payton was horrified at what he claimed was poor use of source material, and added that 'what should have been a stimulating and provocative contribution to an energetic debate about the place of Cornwall and the Cornish (as well as Devon) in the history of the early modern British state is instead an unhappy confusion'.[7]

Two other *kernowsceptics* joined the debate. John Chynoweth dismissed what he termed 'the theory of Cornish distinctiveness' and claimed that by Tudor times Cornwall had become an English county much like any other.[8] He argued that his 'examination of the principal assertions which constitute the theory of Cornish distinctiveness has shown that each is either erroneous, or requires substantial

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Rebellion and Identity in Early Modern Cornwall', *Journal of British Studies,* 38.4 (1999), pp. 423-444.

[5] Stoyle, M., 'Re-discovering Difference: The Recent Historiography of Early Modern Cornwall', *Cornish Studies Second Series,* 10 (2002), pp. 104-115.

[6] Cooper, J.P.D., *Propaganda and the Tudor State: Political Culture in the Westcountry* (Oxford, 2003), p. 3.

[7] Payton, P., *Book reviews, Journal of British Studies,* 44.3 (2005), pp. 644-645.

Chynoweth, J., *Tudor Cornwall* (Stroud, 2002), pp. 21-31. The book was intended as a fresh appraisal of the period following on from Rowse, A.J., *Tudor Cornwall* (London, 1941).

qualification'. However, his assessment was a top down one, with evidence overwhelmingly collected from the records of the Cornish gentry. Some of the few references not concerning male gentry were rather bizarre. These included an assertion, based solely on the relative absence of men described as husbandmen in documents, that 'small farmers can have formed only a small minority of the population' in Tudor Cornwall.[9]

Just as Chynoweth's narrowness of evidence led some to question the validity of his *kernowsceptic* conclusions[10], Stephen Rippon claimed that the perspective of *kernowcentrics* was too narrow. He argued that any objective understanding of Cornish distinctiveness in the past 'was a relative issue that required a broader canvas'.[11] Rippon asked if Cornwall was any 'more different from Devon than Devon was from neighbouring Somerset, or Yorkshire from Lancashire'. His own self-proclaimed 'broader' view turned out to be the same as Cooper's: 'it is the similarities between Devon and Cornwall that stand out, rather than the differences'. Rippon's standpoint had echoes of the earlier work by Pythian-Adams who suggested that Devon and Cornwall formed a single cultural province within England.[12] Pythian-Adams did, however, rather confusingly add that there was a sub-division between Devon and Cornwall 'for obvious cultural reasons' that were not explained.

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[9] *ibid.,* p. 26.
[10] Stoyle, M., *Shorter Notices, The English Historical Review,* 119.481 (Apr. 2004), pp. 505-508.
[11] Rippon, S., *Book reviews, English Historical Review*, cxxv (2010), pp. 132-133.
[12] Pythian-Adams, C., *Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580-1850* (Leicester, 1993), p. 15.

Cooper shared some of this confusion, at one point declaring that there 'was certainly something distinctive about the culture of Tudor Cornwall, setting it apart from Devon and the rest of England'.[13] Despite this tacit acknowledgement of distinctiveness, he declared that much of 'eastern Cornwall was English in all but its frozen Celtic place-names, certainly in terms of its language and agriculture. In the final analysis, Cornwall really should be considered in the company of its eastern neighbour, with the proviso that the parishes south and west of Helston had a particular identity'.[14] Cooper also claimed the *Historical Atlas of South-West England* made 'an eloquent and interdisciplinary case for the coherence of Devon, Cornwall and Scilly as a unit of analysis'.[15]

Among the many contributors to the *Atlas* was Bruce Coleman, who investigated the data for Devon and Cornwall contained in the 1851 Census of Religious Worship.[16] He identified what he claimed were three distinct geographical religious sub-divisions: west Cornwall where the Anglican Church had been 'virtually overwhelmed by a rampant Methodism'; a cross-border east Cornwall and west Devon area where Methodism was relatively strong and the Anglican Church relatively weak; and the rest of Devon where the Anglican Church remained strong and Methodism relatively weak. Coleman also argued that although it was 'tempting to see Cornish distinctiveness' as an explanation for the rapid rise to dominance of Methodism in Cornwall, it was more accurate to

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[13] Cooper, J.P.D., *Propaganda and the Tudor State: Political Culture in the Westcountry* (Oxford, 2003), p. 254.
[14] *ibid,* p. 258.
[15] *ibid,* p. 5; Kain, R. and Ravenhill, W. (eds.), *Historical Atlas of South-West England* (Exeter, 1999).
[16] Coleman, B., 'Religious worship in 1851', in Kain, R. and Ravenhill, W. (eds.), *Historical Atlas of South-West England* (Exeter, 1999), pp. 228-233.

see it as representative of Cornwall's 'incorporation into one of the main contemporary national developments'.

As well as presenting evidence from 1851 Religious Census returns to contradict Coleman's assertion of an east Cornwall/west Devon religious sub-region, this thesis will describe a distinctive Cornish kinship culture that persisted from the end of the early modern period into the twentieth century. As such the findings place it firmly in the *kernowcentric* camp. It will demonstrate how Cornwall was significantly different from Devon and the rest of England in terms of kinship patterns, and also in the way those patterns influenced how society functioned. As we shall see, the deep kinship links were strongly influenced by agrarian structures in Cornwall that contrasted with those in Devon, despite superficial similarities. However, investigation of the persistence of those kinship patterns from the end of the eighteenth century, through Cornwall's industrial phase and into the twentieth century, revealed there were other factors at work.

Those factors were uncovered as a result of the micro-historical approach taken for this thesis. At the heart of the study was a family reconstitution database of more than 13,000 individuals who were born or lived in Bodmin Moor parishes between 1700 and 1911. It is believed the resulting measurement of kinship links between those individuals is the largest of its kind. It also covers the longest time period of any study. This kinship database was set in a social and economic context by also examining all other available sources. These included manorial and estate records, wills, court reports (civil and ecclesiastical), poor relief accounts, tithe apportionments, Duties on Land records, newspaper

archives, decennial censuses, the 1851 Religious Census, individual farm histories, personal diaries and Methodist church records.

This approach in one relatively small geographical area has resulted in the discovery of other evidence of Cornish distinctiveness, some of it contradicting wider perceived truisms. Three examples give a flavour of these other findings: that the nature of farm service that was said to weaken kinship patterns in England had the opposite effect in Cornwall; that rather than being weak as some have suggested the manorial system, in its very distinct Cornish form, was an important agent in reinforcing local kinship patterns; and that migrating miners brought with them strong kinship links that were retained and reinforced when they moved, completely at odds with the findings among the coal miners of north-east England.

In order to set this work in the 'broader' context demanded by Rippon, other studies of kinship patterns from across Britain and other parts of Europe have been compared. These comparisons confirm the differences between Cornwall and England, and also shine a light on the remarkable similarities between the Cornish and Welsh evidence. There is a strong parallel here with Stoyle's claims of early modern distinctiveness in Cornwall. However, it is the totality of this evidence that adds weight to the *kernowcentric* case: even into the twentieth century kinship patterns and the factors that determined them in Cornwall were strikingly similar to those in Wales, and very different from those in England. That this evidence comes from the study of communities in east Cornwall is perhaps the most surprising part of the research findings. St Neot on the

southern edge of Bodmin Moor, together with Bolventor in the centre of the moor, formed the core area for measuring kinship patterns. This is a district that at its closest point is only 10 miles from the border with Devon, and in an area subject to substantial English influence from medieval times.[17]

The micro-study of a relatively small geographical area does raise legitimate questions about whether the results can be claimed to represent a wider Cornish experience. Without further studies measuring kinship in other Cornish communities it cannot be guaranteed that the findings would be replicated. However, there are a number of ways in which the study area was representative of much of Cornwall, and which therefore add weight to the argument that the findings are of wider significance. The eighteenth-century spatial structure of households in St Neot consisted of small farms and cottages situated in hamlets and isolated settlements spread across a patchwork of small, anciently enclosed fields. During the nineteenth century this pattern was added to by miners' smallholdings and then by more systematic enclosure of moorland, but the spatial pattern of hamlets and isolated settlements remained broadly the same.

Balchin described how this pattern of settlement, whether ancient or more modern, was so uniform across Cornwall that the 'distance between each is remarkably constant and the number of homesteads per square mile rarely falls below eight or rises above twelve'.[18] In the mid nineteenth-century St Neot had

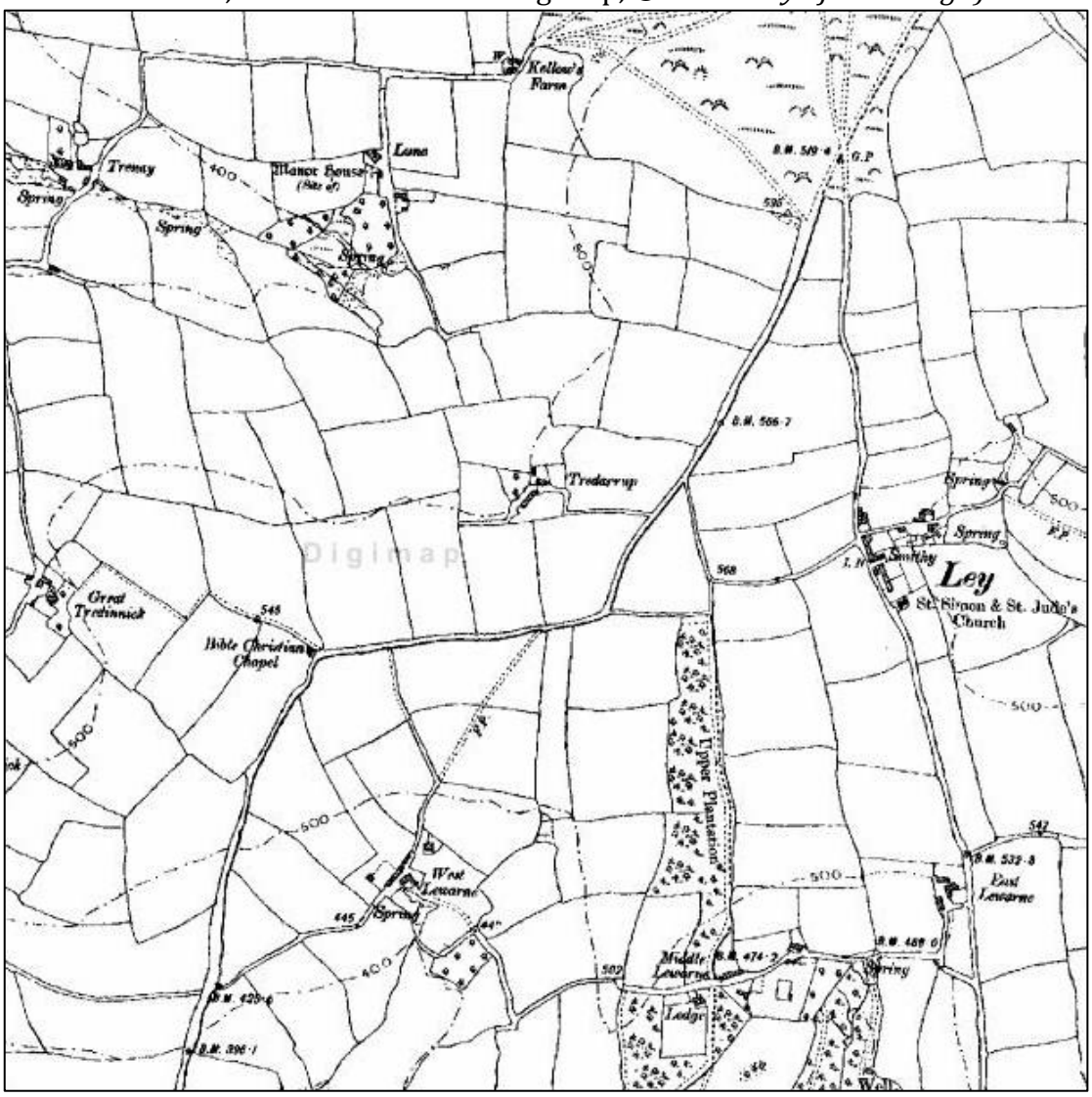
[17] Austin, D., Gerrard, G.A.M. and Greeves, T.A.P., 'Tin and agriculture in the middle ages and beyond: landscape archaeology in St Neot parish, Cornwall', *Cornish Archaeology,* 28 (1989), pp. 29-32.
[18] Balchin, W.G.V., *The Cornish Landscape* (London, 1983), p. 88.

approximately eight homesteads per square mile, rising to nine per square mile by the early twentieth century following extensive moorland enclosure.[19] The size of farms in St Neot was also similar to the Cornish average. According to the 1842 tithe apportionment its average farm size was 75 acres, similar to the 70-acre average for Cornwall as a whole in 1851.[20]

There were other ways that St Neot was representative of the bigger picture. The dramatic changes in economic, social and religious life in Bodmin Moor communities were a microcosm of what happened in many parts of Cornwall during the period. In the eighteenth century St Neot's economy was dominated by agriculture and tinning, together with a small amount of deep mining. During the following century the population of the parish increased dramatically before falling again, partly influenced by the boom and bust in mining, and Methodism became the religion of choice for many of the miners and small farmers. By the end of the century agriculture – always an important part of the local economy – was once again predominant.

[19] Homesteads often contained multiple households. The density of households in St Neot was 11.9 per square mile in 1911.
[20] Shaw-Taylor, L., 'The rise of agrarian capitalism and the decline of family farming in England', *Economic History Review*, 65:1 (2012), pp. 26–60. Census farm size data provides a useful comparative guide but needs to be treated with caution at parish level. Some of the issues are discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Figure 1. Balchin recorded a remarkably constant density of hamlets and isolated settlements across Cornwall. This square mile in part of St Neot was typical of the parish and of Cornwall generally (Map: Ordnance Survey 1:10560 County Series, 1st revision 1907, accessed via EDINA Digimap, © *University of Edinburgh).*



The difficulty of contextualising individual micro-studies of kinship has been a recurring theme in the historiography of the subject since the first time kinship links were measured for a British community in 1939-40. Alwyn Rees conducted it for the Welsh parish of Llanfihangel yng Ngwynfa, a relatively large agricultural community in mid-Wales dominated by small- and medium-sized

farms.[21] As his study was the first of its kind, Rees had no other work to directly compare his results with. However, with the benefit of hindsight the numbers of links between households - almost two-thirds had links of the first-order and more than 80% had first- or second-order links – were high when compared with subsequent studies of communities in England (see figure 2 on page 18 for a definition of first- and second-order kinship).

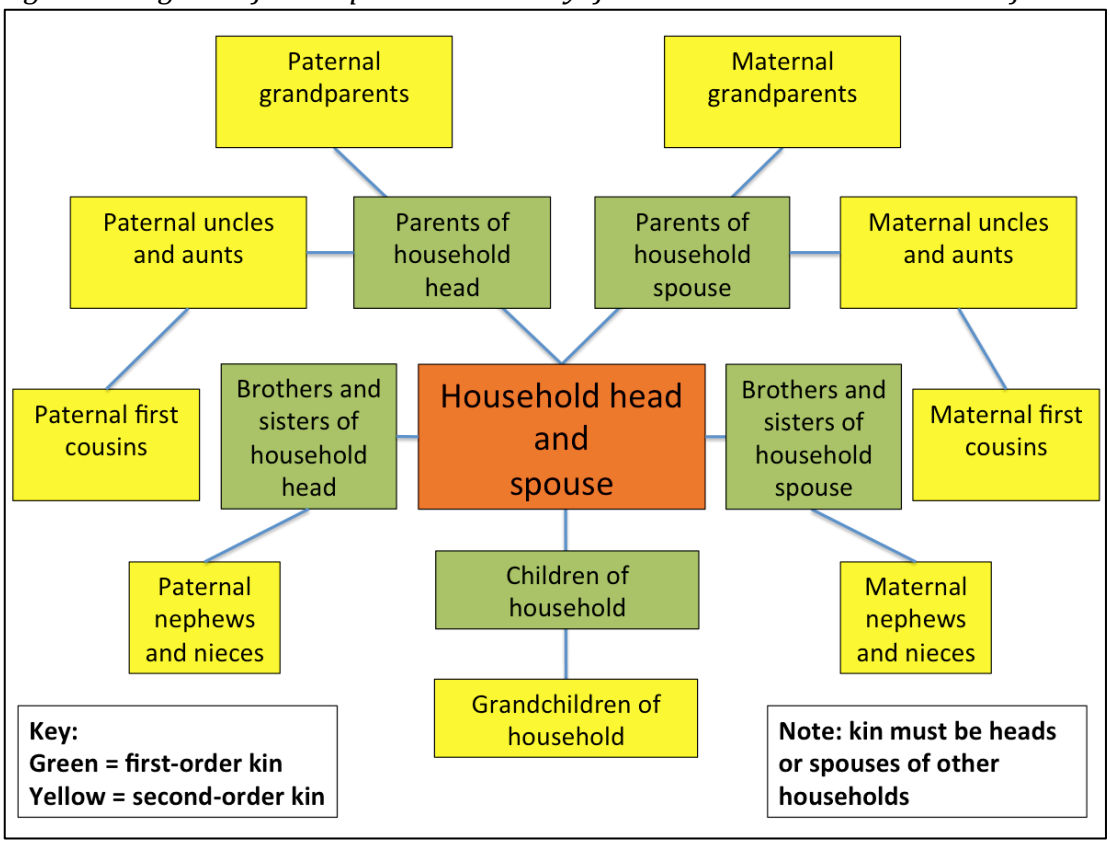
There has been a paucity of studies measuring kinship patterns and since Rees's work there have been fewer than a dozen such studies produced in the UK. The labour-intensive nature of gathering and analysing kinship data, even with modern data-handling technology, is perhaps one reason why very few academic projects of this nature have been undertaken. However, modern computer systems do enable samples to be more easily created and interrogated, and as more micro-studies emerge it is possible to draw more meaningful comparisons.

The first measurement of kinship for an English community followed shortly after the Welsh study, when W. M. Williams published his findings for Gosforth, a large pastoral farming parish in Cumberland.[22] Williams researched kinship links in the parish in c.1950, and like Rees was able to interview his subjects and therefore measure kinship links with a high degree of accuracy. Unfortunately at this time there was no orthodoxy as to how kinship should be measured and categorised, and Williams measured kinship links between what he called

[21] Rees, A.D., *Life in a Welsh Countryside: A Social Study of Llanfihangel yng Ngwynfa* (Cardiff, 1950).
[22] Williams, W.M., *The Sociology of an English Village, Gosforth* (London, 1955).

'family'. This included all first-order kin plus grandparents and grandchildren of household heads and spouses.

Figure 2. Degrees of kinship in a community: first-order and second-order defined.



Just under half of Gosforth householders had close kin in the parish according to Williams's definition, and he felt that his findings described a community with strongly inter-connected kinship networks. However, it became apparent from later studies that while the kinship networks in Gosforth were stronger than for many other places in England, they were relatively loose compared with the pre-industrial communities in France and Italy studied by Emmanuel Todd.[23]

[23] Todd, E., 'Seven peasant communities in pre-industrial Europe. A comparative study of French, Italian and Swedish rural parishes (18th and early 19th century)' (University of Cambridge Ph.D. thesis, 1976).

Todd's study of peasant societies in France, Italy and Sweden was the first to measure kinship patterns without being able to interview its subjects (Todd investigated late eighteenth-century communities) and was the first to define in some detail a methodology of measuring kinship. Like Rees in Wales, Todd measured first-order links – for three communities in France and one in Italy – and found that across the communities three-quarters had first-order links with other households.

Shortly after Todd's work was published, Keith Wrightson and David Levine undertook the first measurement of kinship in early modern England. Their family reconstitution work for Terling in Essex, using Hearth Tax returns for 1671 as a base, contradicted a perception that early modern English rural society was made up of densely interrelated households. Instead they found weak links between households, with a majority of them 'isolated within the village in terms of kinship, unlinked to other households by either blood or marriage'.[24] Two key factors lay behind this isolation: a 'high geographical mobility and the geographical exogamous marriages which characterised the villagers'.[25] Terling, said the authors, was a community dominated by nuclear families that relied overwhelmingly on neighbours rather than kin for help and support.

Later, in *Terling Revisited*, Wrightson and Levine said that they might have 'overplayed their hand' and perhaps inadvertently given the impression that

[24] Wrightson, K., 'Kinship in an English Village: Terling, Essex 1500-1700', in Smith, R. M., (ed.) *Land, Kinship and Life-cycle* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 316.
[25] *ibid.*, p. 332.

they 'culpably minimised the significance of extended kinship ties in Terling'.[26] This was not their aim, they said, although they then reasserted their view that the extensive kinship networks that did exist between some households in Terling were both 'few and untypical'.[27] They also acknowledged that the kinship work on Terling needed to be repeated in other places in order to determine whether the findings were fully representative of early modern England, or restricted to certain types of community.

Further studies measuring kinship were, in fact, slow to appear and the next published work, on the parish of Whickham in Co. Durham for 1666, was also by the same authors.[28] Here the authors found even weaker kinship links than in Terling, and based on family reconstitution fewer than 14% of households were found to have any kinship links. This was largely due to the extremely high mobility of the parish's miners who formed the dominant employment group. Two further studies of kinship in early modern England – for Willingham in Cambridgeshire and Brancepath in Co. Durham – appeared to confirm a growing orthodoxy that weak kinship links were the norm in England.[29] All were markedly different from the earlier findings for Wales, France and Italy, suggesting that there was something particular about the English experience.

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[26] Wrightson K. and Levine, D., *Poverty and Piety in an English Village, Terling 1525-1700* (Oxford, 1995 edn.), p. 188.
[27] *ibid*, p. 189.
[28] Levine, D. and Wrightson, K., *The making of an Industrial Society: Whickham 1560-1765* (Oxford, 1991), p. 332-333.
[29] Spufford, M. and Takahashi, M., 'Families, Will Witnesses, and Economic Structure in the Fens and on the Chalk: Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Willingham and Chippenham', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies,* 28.3 (1996), pp. 379-414; Hamilton, D.E., 'Social Networks. Families and Neighbourhoods: Brancepath Parish in the Seventeenth Century' (University of Durham Ph.D. thesis, 2000).

However, Barry Reay challenged this emerging orthodoxy in his kinship analysis of the Blean area of Kent for the middle of the nineteenth century.[30] Here he discovered relatively dense kinship networks in the parish of Hernhill in 1851, together with substantial evidence that households regularly made use of those kinship ties. It led Reay to caution against drawing too many broad conclusions from a small number of studies, as well as assuming that patterns in the early modern period would necessarily be replicated in a different period. His cautionary arguments were reinforced by Janet Few's more recent work in three Devon communities, which was the first to measure changing kinship patterns over time.[31] She discovered that kinship links were not only very different between the three North Devon communities that were relatively close geographically, but they also changed markedly within each community over a relatively short period of time (in this case between 1841 and 1901).

The decision to construct this thesis around the significance of kinship patterns in Cornish communities stemmed from a study of West Draynes on Bodmin Moor.[32] In this small, relatively isolated community the density of kinship links between households in 1841 was found to be unusually high compared with studies of parishes in rural England (including those by Reay in Kent and Few in Devon), and much closer to the Welsh and French examples. The findings from

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[30] Reay, B., *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800-1930* (Cambridge, 1996).
[31] Few, J., 'Faith, Fish, Farm or Family? The Impact of Kinship Links and Communities on Migration Choices and Residential Persistence in North Devon 1841-1901' (University of Exeter Ph.D. thesis, 2009).
[32] Crossley, G., 'The impact of economic and demographic change on the Cornish moorland community of West Draynes between 1793 and 1851' (University of Oxford M.Sc. Dissertation, 2011).

West Draynes raised a number questions. First, were the results representative of wider Cornish society, or peculiar to one small Bodmin Moor community? Second, was the pattern of kinship the result of specific mid nineteenth-century factors or due to longer-term influences? Third, how did the kinship patterns uncovered affect the way society functioned?

Attempting to answer those questions required the use of both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The former technique was mainly used to measure and analyse kinship patterns, demography, employment changes and property occupation, while the latter was used to provide evidence of where kinship was utilised. At the heart was a relationship database created employing family reconstitution techniques. The 13,000 individuals in the database lived in a Bodmin Moor parish at some stage between 1700 and 1911 (or had first-order kin that did). A majority lived in the parishes of St Neot or Bolventor for at least part of their lives.

Kinship patterns were then measured for the Bodmin Moor parish of St Neot at three key periods: first, the late eighteenth century, which was representative of Cornwall's pre-industrial phase at the end of the early modern period when the manorial system in its modified Cornish form remained important; second, the middle of the nineteenth century when copper and tin mining were close to their peak; and third, the early twentieth century when the short-lived industrial phase was almost finished and many communities had once again become overwhelmingly agricultural.

In one way, however, the parish of St Neot was less typical: it was one of the largest in Cornwall covering almost 14,000 acres. In the eighteenth century virtually all of the population lived in the southern part of the parish consisting of approximately 5,000 acres that were mostly enclosed in the early medieval period. The largely uninhabited moors in the north of the parish were used for turbary and livestock grazing, with tenants or graziers often living a long way off the moor. During the following century occupation and enclosure of the moors saw the population spread northwards, so that by 1910 there were households across the whole of St Neot.

In order to test how larger or smaller geographical areas might have influenced kinship, first-order kin was measured in St Neot as a whole, separately for the south-east of the parish centred on the hamlets of Draynes, Trenant and Treverbyn, and also for the smaller ecclesiastical parish of Bolventor situated to the north of St Neot. This latter parish was created in 1848 out of parts of Altarnun, St Neot and Cardinham parishes and served an expanding community made up of tinners and farmers who were in the process of enclosing large parts of the central moors.[33]

[33] Legally the term tinner referred to anyone working within the tin mining, dressing and smelting industries, and who was subject to Stannary law (which meant all tin miners were therefore tinners). However, on nineteenth-century Bodmin Moor tinners and miners were two separate groups of workers and this thesis has used the same distinction between them as used by the 1851 census enumerators. Tinners (also sometimes called streamers) were those who worked the alluvial and eluvial streamworks of Bodmin Moor that were situated at or close to the surface; miners worked in the deeper mines, most frequently for copper but also for tin, lead and occasionally other minerals.

In addition, kinship links between members of a Bible Christian chapel community in St Neot in 1851 were also measured in order to investigate the relationship between kin and religious change. The analysis of virtually all of the available sources for St Neot and Bolventor, as well as some sources for adjoining parishes, has enabled an analysis to be undertaken of the factors causing the high density of kinship links. It has also been possible to reveal some of the ways those kinship links influenced the way society functioned.

The decision to use Bodmin Moor communities for research, particularly the parish of St Neot, was also influenced by the survival of good quality primary sources that enabled kinship patterns to be measured with a high degree of accuracy. This was especially significant for the pre-census era when data sources can be difficult to use for quantitative purposes and St Neot had a number of distinct advantages in this regard.

Most significantly, a survey of the parish was undertaken in 1793 by David Palmer that recorded the names of occupiers and owners of all of St Neot's farm holdings, cottages and moors.[34] It also listed types of tenancies, as well as the names, sizes and rental values of individual fields and properties. This survey was the main source used to identify households as a base for measuring kinship links at the end of the eighteenth century, and also to analyse farm sizes and employment patterns in the pre-census era.

[34] CRO MS. BK/442: Survey, St Neot Parish by David Palmer of Launceston (April 1793).

An additional important eighteenth-century source were the records of a number Bodmin Moor manors that had property in St Neot. In particular the tenancy arrangements known as leases-for-lives, which predominated on these manors into the second half of the century, proved invaluable. The leases were granted on farms and cottages for a period of 99 years or for the longest life of up to three named people, whichever was shorter (see pages 141-143 for a more detailed description of these leases).

Thus these leases had the advantage of not only naming tenants, but also contained the ages and relationships to the leaseholder of the named lives. These lives were usually close relatives of the leaseholder and, because it was customary to add fresh names for a fee when a life expired, some leases remained in the same families for more than 100 years. As we shall see, as well as an important source for identifying kinship links, the security of tenure afforded by these leases was a crucial factor in the persistence of families within communities.

Parish records for St Neot are also of good quality, with complete baptism, marriage and burial records from the mid-sixteenth century. There were some complications, however, including the regular use of neighbouring parishes for baptisms – particularly Warleggan and St Cleer - which required interrogation of these registers as well. Eighteenth century Cornish land tax records were also extremely difficult to interpret as tenants who held property by leases-for-lives were often listed as landowners. This was because they were responsible for paying the land tax, and the overall result was to significantly overstate apparent

owner-occupiers and understate the property of larger landowners. It was a problem not confined to Cornwall – other places where leases-for-lives existed were also affected.[35]

This thesis is not a total history, but it is a total reconstitution in the sense that it combines family reconstitution with other records. Some of those for the eighteenth century have already been described, and those for the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also fall into two categories. Quantitative sources include the decennial population census, the tithe apportionments of the 1840s, Duties on Land in 1910, the 1851 Religious Census, annual agricultural returns from 1866 and a number of manorial/estate rentals. They have enabled many factors that influenced patterns of kinship to be measured. However, it is qualitative sources that provide a deeper understanding of how kinship influenced behaviour. Newspaper reports, personal correspondence, court records, wills, parish minutes, Methodist records and diaries/journals have all been used to provide context to the bare statistics. Even when all these sources are combined they do not enable the past to be recreated, but when taken together they demonstrate that a micro-historical approach can contribute towards a deeper understanding of the bigger picture. Perhaps most of all it places ordinary people (who sometimes achieved extraordinary things) at the centre of history, rather than at the periphery where they so often appear.

[35] Broad, J., 'Land, inheritance and housing under lifehold: Wylye, Wiltshire 1632-1925'. *Paper presented at a conference held by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure* (Sept. 2011).

Chapter 1. Setting the scene: population, employment and demographic changes on Bodmin Moor during the long nineteenth century

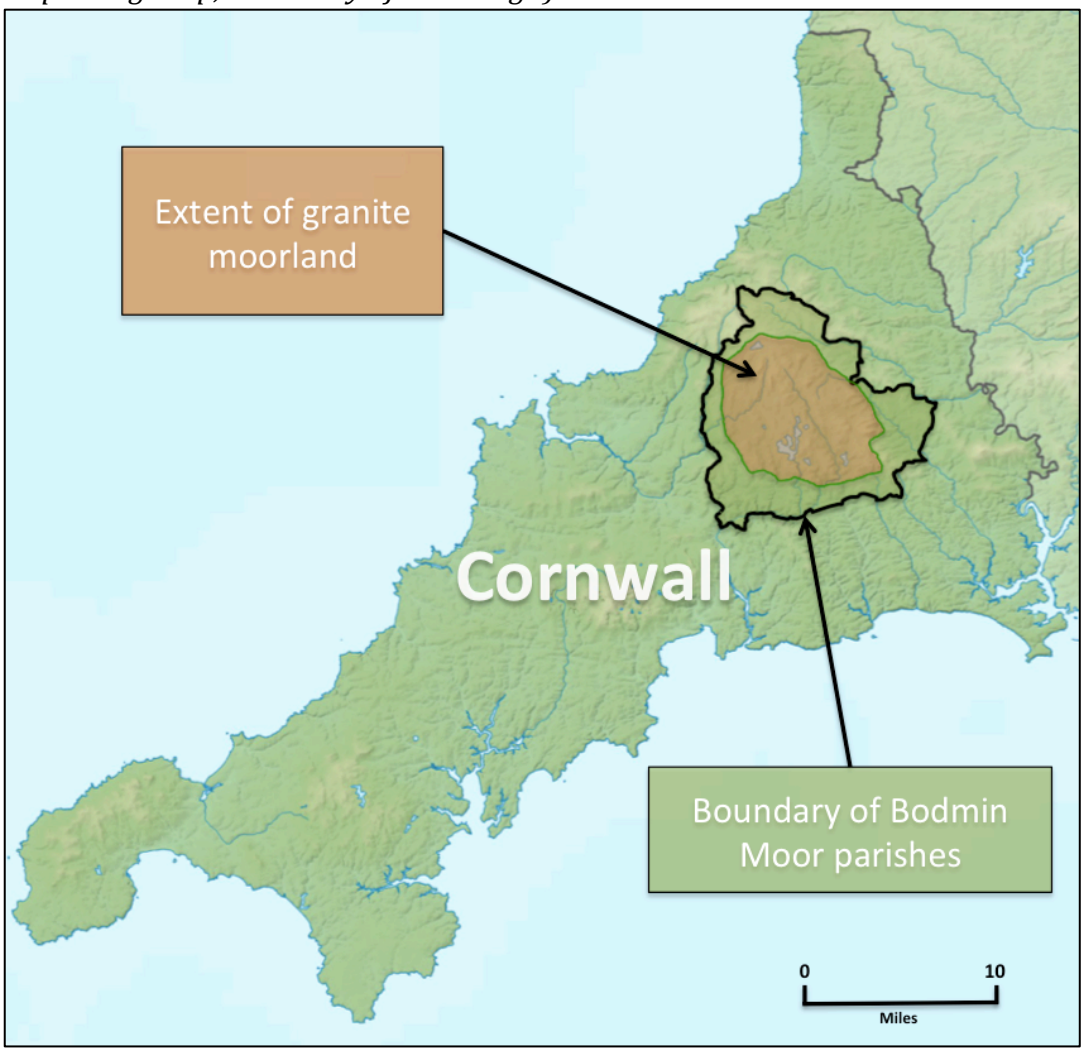
1.1 Introduction

Bodmin Moor is the largest of a number of granite uplands in Cornwall, but by British standards it is both relatively small and low-lying. The granite area covers approximately 50,000 acres and the highest point (Brown Willy) is only 420m (1,380ft) above sea level. Most of the moor sits between 200m (650ft) and 300m (1,000ft). However, for the purposes of this thesis Bodmin Moor is defined as the 13 parishes of St Neot, St Cleer, Linkinhorne, North Hill, Altarnun, St Clether, Davidstow, Advent, St Breward, Blisland, Cardinham, Warleggan and Temple.[36]

These parishes covered a total of 96,682 acres (approximately 11% of the land mass of Cornwall), and in the late 1700s the land was divided almost equally between open moorland and lower-lying anciently enclosed farmland. In 1848 a fourteenth parish was added when Bolventor, centred on Jamaica Inn, was created out of parts of St Neot, Altarnun and Cardinham in order to support the rapidly expanding population of the district.

[36] The parish of St Ive is also sometimes considered as a Bodmin Moor parish but it has virtually no land on the main granite part of the moor and is not included in this study.

Figure 1.1 Map of Cornwall showing the location of Bodmin Moor parishes. (Base map © Digimap, University of Edinburgh)



There were two main soil types within Bodmin Moor parishes. On the granite upland the overlying *growan* soils were relatively thin and acidic. Poor soils were combined with high rainfall that exceeded 60 inches a year in parts, which made for challenging farming conditions. On the other hand, the lower lying *killas* soils on the surrounding sedimentary slates were relatively fertile loams capable of supporting productive arable rotations. Only the steepness of some of these

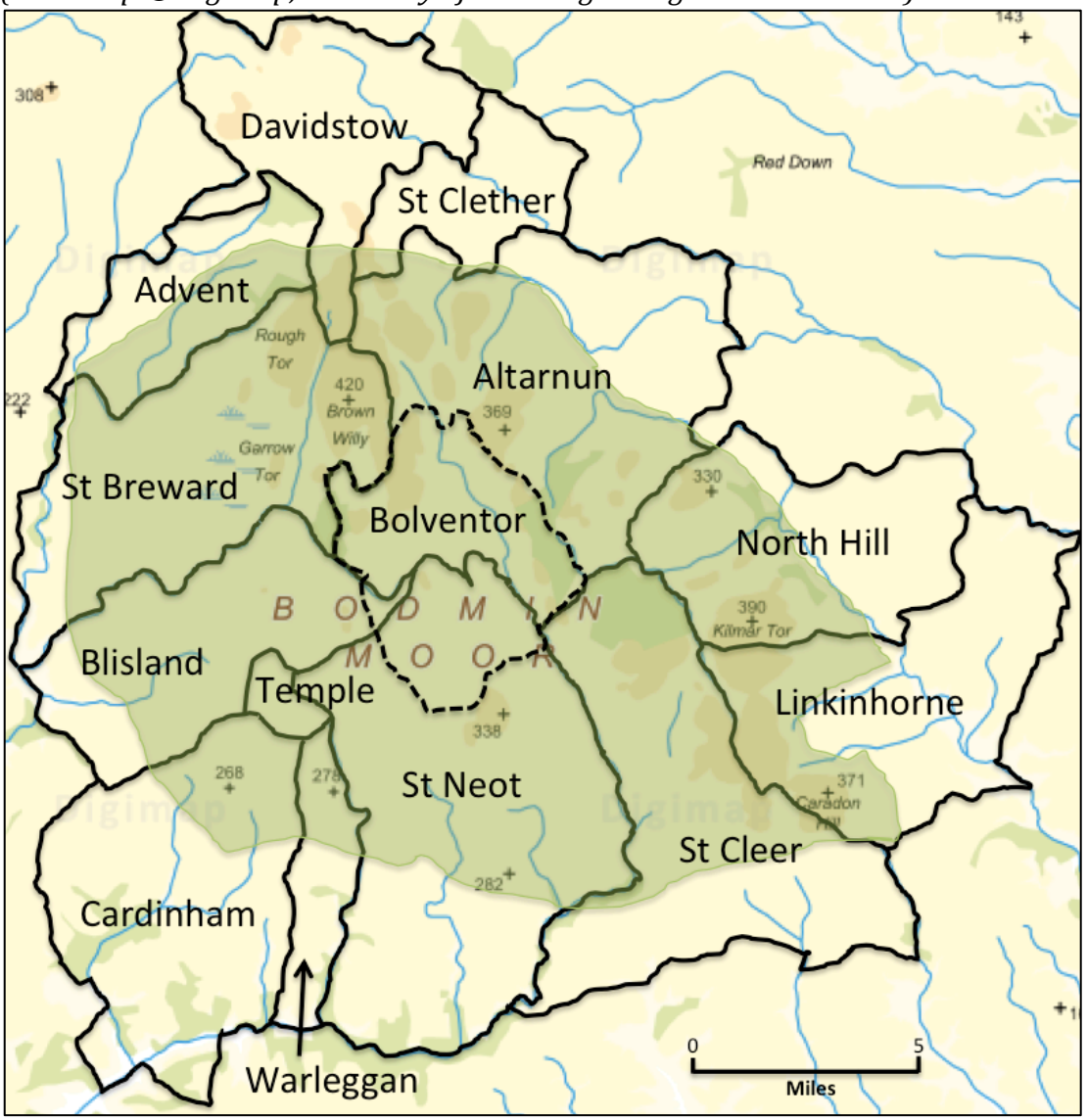
fields restricted their versatility, while the steepest riverside locations were where the small areas of ancient deciduous woodland were located.[37]

At the end of the eighteenth century there were three distinct farming districts in the 13 parishes. First there was a patchwork of generally small farms on the *killas* soils that had been continuously farmed since the medieval period, and it was in these areas that the majority of the population lived. Second, upland farms on the granite were located either on the moorland fringe or along the sides of the river valleys that extended deep into the moor. Most of these farms were also of medieval origin, but their enclosed, cultivated acreage varied depending on the level of demand for farm produce.

Third were the large tracts of unenclosed moorland, which in 1793 made up the bulk of the granite land mass. They were used by those who lived off the moor for fuel – mainly turf and furze – and also for summer grazing of livestock. Moorland was either held in common attached to manors, or taken annually by graziers who either rented an area of moor or paid per head of livestock. As such the moors provided a vital resource for the farmers and cottagers who overwhelmingly lived on properties surrounding the moor itself.

[37] Johnson N. and Rose, P., *Bodmin Moor, An Archaeological Survey. Vol. 1: The Human Landscape to c1800* (Swindon, 1994), pp. 2-3.

Figure 1.2. Map showing the nineteenth-century parishes of Bodmin Moor. The ecclesiastical parish of Bolventor was created in 1848 and the boundary is shown as a dotted line. The green shaded area shows the extent of the granite upland (Base map © Digimap, University of Edinburgh. Heights are in metres).



Despite the unsuitability of the moors for cultivation, they did have some natural advantages compared with other upland areas in the UK. The land was relatively low lying, and although subject to high rainfall it benefited from a mild maritime climate. It was also, for the most part, gently undulating and suited the creation of the large, straight-sided fields that were carved out of the moor in the nineteenth century. In many parts of the moor the new farms were on land with

little or no evidence of previous enclosure. However, in other areas they were yet another layer of human activity on land occupied intermittently back to prehistoric times.[38]

Figure 1.3. The hamlet of Tremaddock in the parish of St Neot was typical of the communities off the moor where most of the population of the 13 moorland parishes lived. In 1793 its three farms covered nine, 19 and 56 acres respectively. The 84 acres were divided into 37 fields, and the farmers had access to common land on the moor for grazing and turbary.[39]



Manorial influence remained strong on Bodmin Moor into the eighteenth century, and even at the start of the French Wars customary tenancies were the norm. As already mentioned, in Cornwall these generally took the form of leases-for-lives that gave a high degree of security of tenure to occupiers. Manors were

[38] *ibid* pp. 60-65.
[39] CRO MS. BK/442: Survey, St Neot Parish by David Palmer of Launceston (April 1793).

generally small and usually had fewer than 2,000 acres of enclosed farmland. Marriage settlements, inheritance and other factors meant that many manors had become hopelessly divided. The landowner, who typically owned a number of manors, was usually an absentee. The significance of manorial structures on kinship patterns will be discussed more fully in chapter three.

A collapse of the manorial system at the end of the eighteenth century resulted in a rapid turnover of farm tenancies in the turbulent post-war period. This was largely the result of a concurrent change from leases-for-lives to short-term tenancies. A side effect was that this also severed many of the links between lowland and moorland as common rights were removed from tenancy agreements. Large areas of moorland were then allocated to new tenants who undertook enclosure. Many of these farms had originated tinners' smallholdings, but by the end of the nineteenth century most were commercial livestock farms.

Ironically the majority of newly enclosed moorland farms were let on leases-for-lives that put all the risks and burdens of enclosing fields and erecting buildings onto the shoulders of the tenants. Many of these leases survived into the twentieth century. The occupiers of these farms were in many cases descended from the tinners who had enclosed the small parcels of land in the early nineteenth century. Tinning had been an important, but intermittent part of the moorland economy for centuries. The tinners had originally extracted tin from deposits close to the surface, but as these were exhausted they mined deeper underground, although in later years many of the surface deposits were also re-worked.

The discovery of rich copper deposits in the southeast of the moor in 1837 transformed the economy of a number of parishes, but only for a relatively short period. It particularly affected the parishes of St Cleer and Linkinhorne, but the 'copper rush' spilled over into other parishes. Miners flocked into the district from all over Cornwall and new communities quickly emerged, while other traditional hamlets also expanded to house mining families. The mines also provided employment for hundreds of local young people born into a community with a rapidly rising population that had predated the mining boom. However, less than 40 years later the copper boom was over and the moorland parishes once again became overwhelmingly agricultural.

Much of the detailed content of the thesis relates to the parish of St Neot, which is perhaps best known beyond its bounds for the outstanding medieval stained-glass windows in the ancient parish church. They somehow survived seventeenth century Civil War and were restored in the 1820s by Richard Gerveys Grylls, who owned the living as well as a considerable number of farms in the parish.[40] St Neot is less well known for the turmoil of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that saw its customary society comprehensively dismantled by a largely absentee group of landowners. The dismantling contributed to great instability during the post-Napoleonic Wars recession, and again during the famine of the 'hungry forties'. Instability was added to by rapid population growth and investment in mining ventures in the first half of the

[40] Michell, J., *Parochial History of St Neot in Cornwall* (Bodmin, 1833). Grylls and his son Henry, who between them were vicars of St Neot for almost 70 years from 1793 to 1862, will feature prominently in subsequent chapters. The Grylls family remained the biggest landowner in the parish until their lands were sold in 1916.

century, which was followed by an equally rapid decline of both in the second part. Only the safety valves of emigration and, to a lesser extent, moorland enclosure stopped a bad situation becoming much worse.

However, there was also resilience that enabled the society to survive despite the enormous external pressures. Part of that resilience came from generations of independence among the small farmers and tinners used to dealing with their own problems in the absence of a resident gentry class. John Rowe described the farmers as 'fiercely independent yeomen…who resented any outside interference or control'.[41] Methodism reinforced the independence at a time when their status was being reduced from yeomen to rack-rented tenants, although even those who remained members of the Anglican Church showed little or no fear in challenging authority.

Underpinning the society, however, were the deep kinship ties that bound society together. The following chapters will describe the nature of those kinship links, and show how they were important in mining, migration and enclosure. They will also demonstrate how kinship ties were invoked in order to support the elderly, the infirm and the less fortunate. The fact that those in need were almost always closely related to those within a community able to provide help meant that close kin, even in the most difficult situations, regularly provided support.

[41] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), p. 261.19.

The rest of this chapter will summarise the key population, employment and demographic changes between 1793 and 1911 that provide a backdrop to the rest of the thesis. Most of the data relates to the parish of St Neot, but this will be set in the context of Bodmin Moor as a whole and in the Cornish and national context where relevant. The implications of these changes will be explored in more detail in subsequent chapters where they relate to the understanding of kinship patterns.

1.2 Population growth and decline

The population of Bodmin Moor, and of Cornwall generally, was already rising rapidly before the onset of the French Wars. It was measured somewhat erratically before the first modern census in 1801, but Returns of the Clergy in Cornwall provide a guide. The returns of 1745 and 1779 put the St Neot population at 585 and 700 people respectively.[42] Reconstitution work based on Palmer's 1793 survey suggests the population of St Neot had risen to c.820 at this date, and the first national census in 1801 gave a population of 906.

Estimates for the population of Cornwall during this period, based on parish marriage data, indicate that its population rose from 133,000 in 1761 to 197,000 by the end of the century.[43] This put St Neot's growth rate in the second half of the eighteenth century broadly in line with the trend for Cornwall as a whole. In

[42] *ibid*, p.163; Lemon, C., 'Notes on the Agricultural Produce of Cornwall', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, 4.3 (1841), pp. 197-208.
[43] Wrigley, E.A. 'English county populations in the later eighteenth century', *The Economic History Review,* New Series 60.1 (2007), pp. 35-69.

turn Cornwall's population was rising at slightly above the national average. Its growth was well below the higher rates of growth for industrial areas in the South Wales, the English midlands and the north, but was higher than the agricultural districts of the south and east.[44]

The eighteenth-century population rise in Cornwall coincided with increased mining of copper and tin, although population levels were rising in most areas, including where mining was less important. There was a particularly rapid growth in deep mining in West Cornwall, but also some expansion of tinning and mining in Bodmin Moor parishes.[45] Between 1756 and 1800 12% of grooms marrying in St Neot were described as tinners.[46] More than 80% of these tinners were sojourners, compared with only 15% for other occupations. Half of the sojourner tinners married in St Neot between 1760 and 1767 suggesting an influx around this time.

In the early part of the nineteenth century the population of St Neot and Bodmin Moor as a whole continued to rise. This was largely the result of demographic factors that will be discussed later in the chapter. However, it was also influenced by the expansion of tinning on the moors and associated enclosure of open moorland. Then in the 1830s the discovery of rich copper deposits in the Caradon area led to a copper rush in St Cleer and Linkinhorne that spilled over into other parishes as speculators attempted to cash in on the bonanza.

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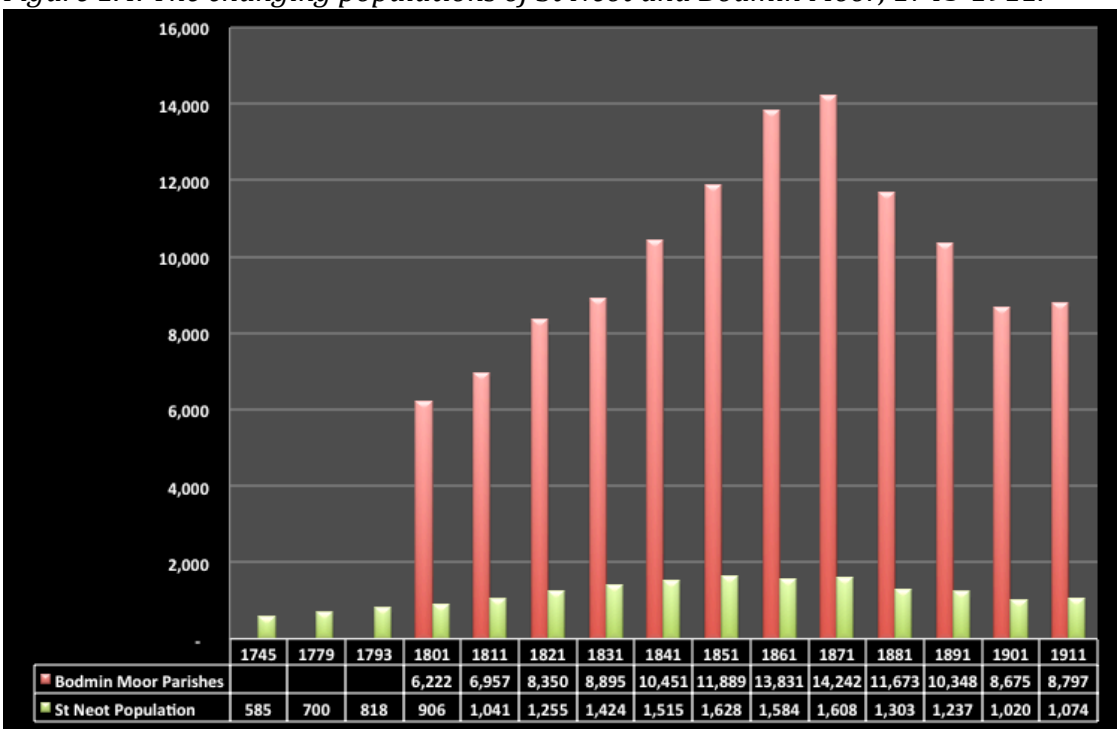
[44] Wrigley E.A. and Schofield, R.S., *The Population History of England 1541-1871* (Cambridge, 1989 edn.), pp. 530-535.
[45] Hamilton Jenkin, A.K., *Mines and Miners of Cornwall, Vol. XII* (Truro, 1966).
[46] CRO MS. P162/1: Registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, St Neot Parish Church (1549-1996).

Figure 1.4. The changing populations of St Neot and Bodmin Moor, 1745-1911.[47]



	1745	1779	1793	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
Bodmin Moor Parishes				6,222	6,957	8,350	8,895	10,451	11,889	13,831	14,242	11,673	10,348	8,675	8,797
St Neot Population	585	700	818	906	1,041	1,255	1,424	1,515	1,628	1,584	1,608	1,303	1,237	1,020	1,074

By the 1850s thousands of miners worked in deep mines, soaking up local surplus labour and attracting inward migration of miners, most of who came from other parts of Cornwall. However, the boom was short-lived and the collapse in copper then tin prices led to an exodus of families from Bodmin Moor, partly to other parts of the UK but mainly to the overseas mining districts of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and North America. By 1901 the population of Bodmin Moor parishes was almost 40% lower than the peak just 30 years earlier, and back to the level of the late 1820s (figure 1.4).

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[47] *Parliamentary Papers 1852-3, lxxxv (1631),* Census of Great Britain, 1851, Population tables, I. Number of the inhabitants in 1801, 1811, 1821, 1831, 1841 and 1851*; Parliamentary Papers 1862 L (3056*), Census of England and Wales, 1861, Vol. 1*; Parliamentary Papers 1872, lxvi (676),* Census of England and Wales, 1871, Vol. 1*; Parliamentary Papers 1883, lxxviii (3562),* Census of England and Wales, 1881, Vol. I*; Parliamentary Papers 1902, cxviii (1360),* Census of England and Wales, 1901, County of Cornwall (1891 and 1901 data)*; Parliamentary Papers 1912-13, CXI (6258),* Census of England and Wales, 1911. Vol. I.

The pattern of growth and decline in St Neot was similar for the average of Bodmin Moor as a whole, although not quite as marked. Even so St Neot's population doubled from c.820 in 1793 to the peak of 1,628 in 1851 before falling back to 1,020 in 1901. This change was to put enormous pressure on a society that was still largely customary in nature in 1793. The next section will describe the structure of that society on the eve of its systematic dismantling and replacement with short-term rack-rented tenancies.

1.3 Owners, occupiers and occupations in St Neot at the end of the eighteenth century

The timing of David Palmer's 'Survey of St Neot Parish' in April 1793 - just two months after the outbreak of hostilities between Britain and France - was apposite.[48] The survey of the parish's farms, cottages and moors provided a detailed breakdown of property occupation and ownership in St Neot just as the ancient manorial system was one the verge of collapse. The system had been under pressure for some time due to the rising population and increased farm product prices, but the political and economic impact of the war and its immediate aftermath was to ensure its almost total disintegration.

No record has so far come to light of the reason for the compilation of Palmer's survey. However, it was carried out at the same time as the appointment of Richard Gerveys Grylls as vicar of St Neot. The Grylls family was one of the

[48] CRO MS. BK/442: Survey, St Neot Parish by David Palmer of Launceston (April 1793).

parish's largest landowners who also owned most of the tithes and held the living for St Neot parish church. It is likely that Grylls commissioned the survey for tithe and/or taxation purposes. The survey was split into three parts. The first was a detailed inventory of every holding, including the name, size (in Cornish customary acres) and rental value of each field. This section included property occupied by craftsmen such as millers and blacksmiths as well as farmers. Second, there was a separate listing and valuation of all cottages, together with details of any gardens or orchards attached. The third part was a summary of the size and value of the 'woods, wastes, downs and commons upon the moors'. There was no listing of the 1,800 acres of commons attached to the parish's manors, presumably because these were not subject to tithes or parish rates.

Figure 1.5 shows a typical entry from the survey for Little Hammett Farm, which reveals much about the nature of landownership and occupation in St Neot in 1793. It was a relatively small upland farm, covering 23 customary acres (27 statutory acres) and was divided into nine fields.[49] There was also a house and common rights. It was part of the Manor of St Neot Barrett that was owned by Sir John Morshead, the biggest landowner in St Neot at the time. Like a majority of properties in St Neot the farm was let on a lease-for-lives. The leaseholder was John Copplestone, but he had sublet the farm to Thomas Langsford for £12 a year. Langsford appeared to be paying slightly over the odds as Palmer valued

[49] A Cornish customary acre was approximately 1.2 statutory acres.

the farm at £10 11s 6d per year. We also know a little more about Little Hammett and its tenants from other records.[50]

Figure 1.5. Palmer's 1793 entry for Sir John Morshead's tenement of Little Hammett in the Manor of St Neot Barrett.[51]



The common grazing rights were on nearby Whiteborough Moor and Berry Down, which would have been a valuable resource enabling a higher stocking rate on such a small farm (moors that would incidentally become the centre of an enclosure dispute in the nineteenth century). Copplestone had been baptised in St Cleer in 1721 and by 1793 was an elderly man, which perhaps explains why he had sublet the farm to Langsford. As well as himself, the named lives on the lease were two of his children, John Copplestone junior and Elizabeth Keast. Both children appear to have left the parish by 1793.

[50] Sale catalogue for Morshead lands in Cornwall, Sept. 1818. Copy held by St Neot and Warleggan Community Archive.
[51] CRO MS. BK/442: Survey, St Neot Parish by David Palmer of Launceston (April 1793).

We also know from Morshead records that Copplestone was charged an annual conventionary rent of 17s for the lease, plus a heriot on the death of a life of £1 14s. In a further twist a Chief or High Rent of 1s 7d on the farm was due annually to the owner of the Manor of Trethevy. This signified that the farm had at some stage changed ownership and had been added to the Manor of St Neot Barrett, but that it was also still attached, at least nominally, to the Manor of Trethevy, hence the rent charge. It is not clear why Little Hammett had transferred from one manor to another, but such transfers sometimes happened as part of inheritance or marriage settlements.

Land Tax records compounded the complications of understanding the relationship between tenants and owners and Copplestone rather than Morshead was listed as landowner in the 1798 schedule.[52] This was because it was the holder of a lease-for-lives who was responsible for paying the land tax, of £1 1s 4d a year for Little Hammett, and not the landowner. As a result, land tax schedules were an unreliable guide to understanding the ownership structure of Cornwall in the eighteenth century. In some years owner would be listed under proprietors while in other years only the leaseholder's name would appear (in the 1799 schedule for Little Hammet Morshead was listed as owner and there was no mention of Copplestone).[53] Similarly, sometimes the leaseholder would be listed under occupier even if there was a different tenant.

[52] NA MS. IR 23/9: Land Tax redemption records, Cornwall (1798), fos. 598-602.
[53] NA MS. IR 23/9: Land Tax redemption records, Cornwall (1799), fos. 721-726.

That is why the detail in Palmer's survey makes it such a valuable resource for untangling the complexities of ownership and occupation for one parish in eighteenth century St Neot. A summary of an analysis of Palmer's survey is shown in table 1.1. It reveals there were a total of 135 occupiers, and 41 owners of 235 tenements, cottages and moors. Of these, 87 individuals occupied a total of 165 farm holdings in the parish. The average holding was 33 acres in size, but each occupier farmed 63 acres on average. There were a further 48 occupiers of 46 cottages, and 15 occupiers of 24 moors. Some of the occupiers of farm holdings in St Neot also occupied moorland (separate from rights on commons).

Table 1.1. Summary of properties, owners and occupiers of holdings, cottages and moors in St Neot, 1793 (acres converted from Cornish customary to statutory)[54]

	Number of properties	Number of owners	Number of occupiers	Estimated acreage	Annual rental value
Holdings	165	38	87	5,500	£2,707
Cottages	46	14	48	25	£80
Moors*	24	10	15	6,275	£120
Total	235	41	135	11,800	£2,907

* Palmer's survey excluded 17 commons not subject to rates or taxes covering approx. 1,800 acres

This moorland was not part of the estimated 1,800 acres of common land in St Neot, and was usually rented on an annual basis for summer grazing. For example, the moors at Lord's Park owned by Sir John Morshead were rented jointly by Peter Gerry of Wenmouth Farm and George Lord of Treverbyn in St Neot. However, in some cases farmers who lived some distance from St Neot took moorland tenancies. Bunning's Park was rented by two occupiers from St Germans and Liskeard. In many cases owners or occupiers of moors would

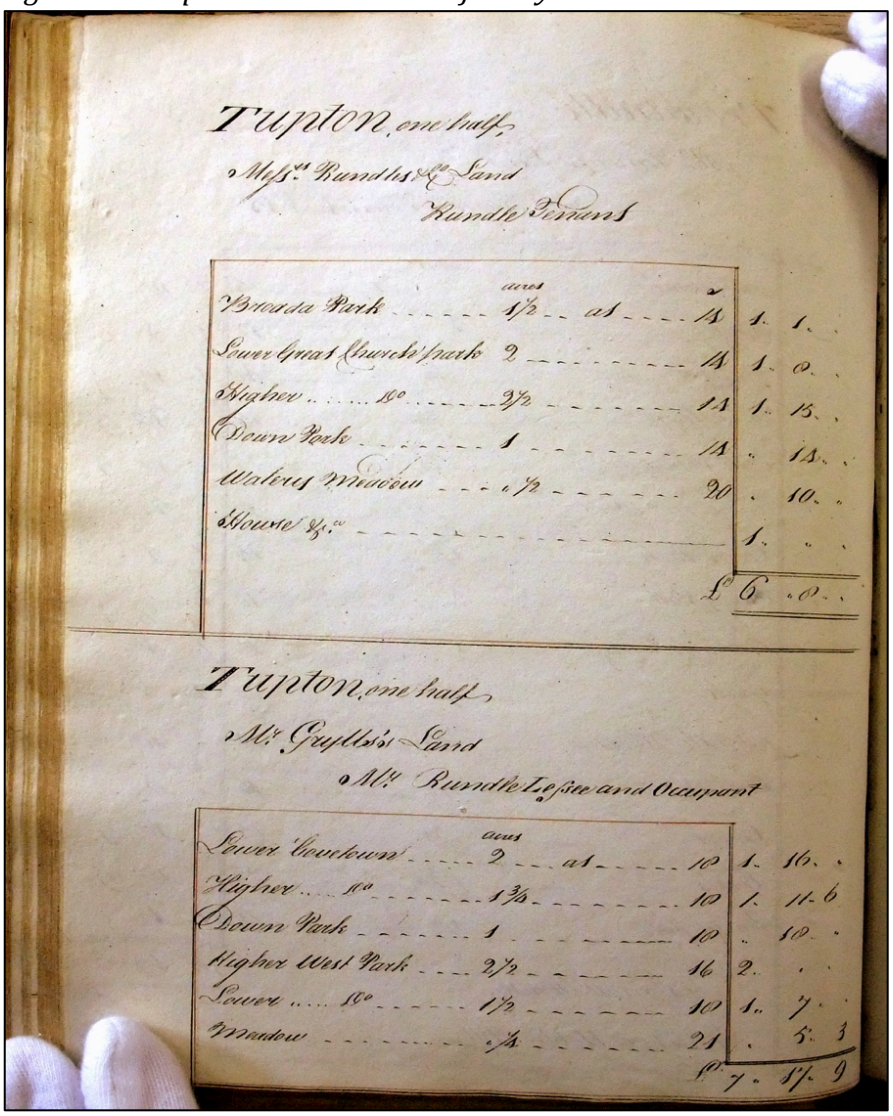
[54] CRO MS. BK/442: Survey, St Neot Parish by David Palmer of Launceston (April 1793).

charge farmers from across east Cornwall to summer their cattle and sheep on an annual per head basis.

The 165 holdings or tenements consisted of a mixture of complete farms, parts of farms where ownership of a farm was divided, smaller parcels of land without buildings attached, and also properties such as mills or blacksmiths which almost invariably had some farmland attached. Divided ownership of farms was a significant feature of the parish and in these instances what were effectively single farms could have two or more owners. Tupton Farm was a good example (figure 1.6). Half of the farm was owned by John Rundle, and the other half by Richard Gerveys Grylls. Rundle occupied the whole farm, half as owner-occupier and half as leaseholder to Grylls.

The picture that emerges from Palmer is one that typified much of Cornwall on the eve of the agricultural and industrial revolutions. The generally small farms and cottages were spread across the anciently enclosed southern 40% of the parish in a pattern of small hamlets and isolated farmsteads. The churchtown around the parish church was home to a minority of the population, while the moors were largely unenclosed and uninhabited. Enclosed fields were also small, averaging around two acres and well suited to the type of convertible husbandry practised in Cornwall.

Figure 1.6. Tupton Farm was one of many in St Neot where ownership was split.[55]



Tupton, one half
Mess.rs Rundles & Co.s Land
Rundle Tenants

	acres			
Broad da Park	1½	at	15	1. 1. .
Lower Great & Church Parks	2		15	1. 0. .
Higher do.	2½		15	1. 15. .
Down Park	1		15	. 15. .
Waters Meadow	½		20	. 10. .
House &c.a				1. . .
			£	6 . 0. .

Tupton, one half
Mr. Gryffith's Land
Mr. Rundle Lessee and Occupant

	acres			
Lower Cowlestown	2	at	10	1. 16. .
Higher do.	1¾		10	1. 11. 6
Down Park	1		10	. 10. .
Higher West Park	2½		16	2. . .
Lower do.	1½		10	1. 7. .
Meadow	¼		21	. 5. 3
			£	7 . 17. 9

The system was described by Fraser: 'Arable is sown with wheat, barley or oats as long as it will bear any; and then grass for eight or ten years until the land is recovered and again capable of bearing corn.'[56] Some farms called furze crofts, on the edges of moors were 'only broke up once in 25 or 30 years' while the moors themselves were 'wholly unenclosed, consisting of marshy grounds, intermixed with rocks and mountains'. Marshall claimed that 'the lands in

[55] CRO MS. BK/442: Survey, St Neot Parish by David Palmer of Launceston (April 1793).
[56] Fraser, R., *General View of the County of Cornwall, Board of Agriculture and Internal Improvement* (1794), p.31.

general are foul and out of tilth' and that the grass leys were 'many of them covered with ferns and thistles'. Fraser blamed the convertible system for this state of affairs.

Oxen remained dominant for ploughing while horses, used generally as pack animals rather than to haul carts, carried materials to and from fields and markets. Many jobs such as sowing, reaping and threshing were still carried out by hand and Marshall was astonished at the method of winnowing corn: 'Farmers of every class carry their corn into the field on horseback, perhaps a quarter mile from the barn, to the summit of some airy swell where it is winnowed *by women!*, the mistress of the farm, perhaps, being exposed to the severest weather, to the cutting winds of winter in this slavish and truly barbarous employment.'[57] Farmers' poor education, he said, meant that '…their knowledge is confined and the spirit of improvement deeply buried under an accumulation of custom and prejudice'.[58]

The upside for both Fraser and Marshall was that there was plenty of scope for improvement from better husbandry methods, particularly by moving to more modern rotations along the lines of the Norfolk four-course, and the introduction of better livestock breeds. Fraser was also excited about the potential from enclosing the moors and wastes. 'I am persuaded that there is, at the very least calculation, 100,000 acres of waste land in Cornwall which may be valued at 7s 6d an acre which could produce an annual rent of £37,500 per annum and leave

[57] Marshall, W., *The Rural Economy of the West of England, Vol. 1* (1796), p. 184. His italics and exclamation mark.
[58] *ibid.,* p104.

a sufficiency of turbary for fuel if properly regulated. What an advantage would arise from such improvement to the force and wealth of this county.'[59]

The pattern ownership was neatly summed up by George Worgan in his Board of Agriculture report when he said that property was 'very much divided, subdivided and vexatiously intermixed; consequently the proprietors of land are numerous. The size of estates varies greatly, perhaps from 20 acres to 500 acres, very few exceeding £500 per annum.'[60] St Neot fitted this description almost perfectly and there wasn't a single manor or estate in the parish with an annual rental value of over £500 in 1793. The biggest, owned by Sir John Morshead, was worth approximately £450 and there were eight other landowners who had properties worth in excess of £100 a year. These owners owned two-thirds of the enclosed land in the parish and a significant proportion of the moors as well (figure 1.7). All of them owned lands outside the parish and only John Rundle lived and farmed in the parish.

Much of the land of these large owners was still organized on traditional manorial lines. These included the manors of Carburrow, Cabilla, Bulland, West Draynes, St Neot Barrett, Treverbyn and Trenay Fawton. However, the traditional manorial system was already in decline and increasing amounts of land were being let on short-term tenancies, usually of seven and 14 years.[61]

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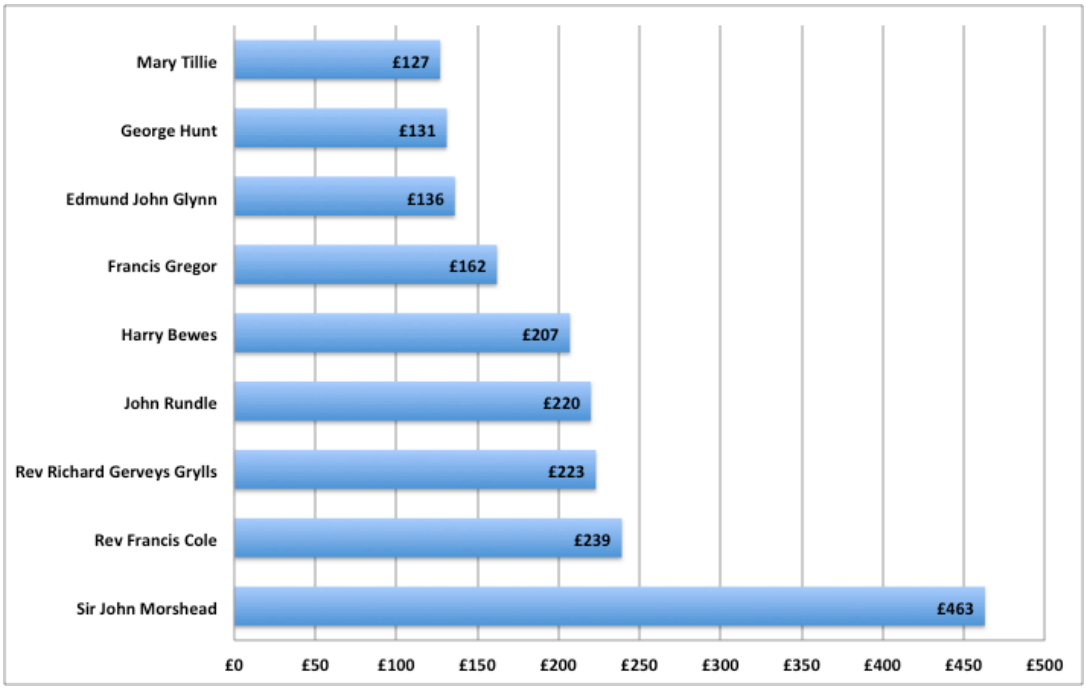
[59] Fraser, R., *General View of the County of Cornwall, Board of Agriculture and Internal Improvement* (1794), p. 58.
[60] Worgan, G., *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall* (London, 1811), p. 17.
[61] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), p. 215.

Over the next 25 years the manorial system largely disintegrated, and the landholdings associated with manors were either sold or simply became collections of tenanted farms linked only by shared ownership. Chapter three will describe how the changes affected tenants on a number of Bodmin Moor manors.

Figure 1.7. The principal landowners in St Neot by rental value of land owned, 1793.[62]



The gap between the nine largest owners and the rest was substantial. The next biggest owner by rental value after Mary Tillie was John Gedye, whose 77 customary acres in the Manor of St Neot Barrett were worth £68 a year. Gedye was the second largest owner-occupier in the parish after John Rundle. There were a further 29 owners of the remaining land in St Neot. Many of these owners

[62] CRO MS. BK/442: Survey, St Neot Parish by David Palmer of Launceston (April 1793).

were minor gentry, while others were prominent local families of the time such as the Gedyes, Dangars and Daveys.

The average rental value of land owned by these smaller owners was just £31, equivalent to 25-30 acres of good quality land. Of the larger landowners in figure 1.7 only John Rundle was resident in St Neot, although Francis Cole lived at Trengoffe in Warleggan, which bordered St Neot. He was vicar of Luxulyan but was said to have refused to live there because of the condition of the vicarage.[63] Richard Gerveys Grylls, who became vicar of St Neot in 1793, appears to have continued to live in Helston for most of the time where he was mayor on nine separate occasions.[64] Overall there were just 10 owner-occupiers in St Neot, and in most cases these farmers also rented additional land while in some cases they also rented out farm holdings.

Table 1.2. Summary of landownership in 1793, enclosed land only.[65]

Rental Value	Numner of owners	Total acreage owned	Average acres owned	Rental value	% of total land
< £10	6	32	5	£24	0.6%
£10 - <£25	7	209	30	£112	3.8%
£25 - <£50	12	906	76	£460	16.5%
£50 - <£100	4	635	159	£315	11.6%
£100 - <£200	4	1,195	299	£522	21.7%
£200+	5	2,520	504	£1,275	45.8%
Total	38	5,497	5,497	£2,707	100.0%

[63] Henderson, C., *Essays in Cornish History* (Oxford, 1935), p. 66. Henderson said that after Cole's death his ghost haunted the lanes and woods of Trengoffe, either 'ensconced in a phantom coach or urging on his spectral hounds'.
[64] Grylls, R.G., *Grylls and Grills, The History of a Cornish Clan, Vol. 1* (London, 1999), p. 172.
[65] CRO MS. BK/442: Survey, St Neot Parish by David Palmer of Launceston (April 1793).

As well as being one of the biggest owners, Rundle was the largest farmer in St Neot by a significant margin. In many documents he was named as John Rundle of Hole to distinguish him from his second cousin of the same name who was also one of the larger farmers in the parish. The rental value of the 300 acres John Rundle of Hole farmed was the same as the smallest 80 occupiers of land and cottages combined. A rather unusual court case in 1812 about him, reported in some depth in the *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, reveals something about the life of a large yeoman farmer in Cornwall at the time.[66]

Rundle had died in the summer of 1811 at the age of 49, just 18 months after taking out a life insurance policy for £400. However, the *Eagle Insurance Company* refused to pay claiming that it was misled about the health of Rundle when the policy was issued; hence representatives of Rundle's family brought the case to court in Bodmin. It revealed how even the largest farmers in St Neot co-operated in farm work, particularly at harvest time. It also demonstrated how the farmers of St Neot travelled together to fairs and markets and socialised regularly in each other's houses. The dispersed nature of farm holdings also meant that farmers were regularly passing by each other's properties.

The trial revealed that Rundle also farmed in Somerset, and that he divided his time between there and Cornwall. The insurance company's refusal to pay was based on its belief that Rundle was an excessive drinker who was already at risk of death from self-inflicted harm at the time the policy was taken out. It brought in witnesses from Somerset who gave evidence that Rundle 'was a person given

[66] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 11 August 1812.

to habitual intoxication', was of a 'debilitated constitution', and that he died 'in consequence of intemperance'. He was alleged to have drunk heavily from morning to night for days on end, often eating nothing more than the 'foot of a duck' at dinner. On one occasion, a witness added, dinner was concluded when Rundle fell off his chair and lay drunk under the table.

However, Rundle's neighbours in St Neot rallied round and John Rosevear among others painted a picture of a healthy, industrious man who was a practical farmer to the end. Another St Neot farmer, John Sibly, told the court he had even planned to have Rundle as a named life on a lease, only a disagreement over the price of the lease preventing this from happening. Sibly's statement was verging on the ridiculous as names on a leases-for-lives were almost without exception the leaseholder, a spouse or young relatives. Occasionally bachelors or spinsters would name non-family members on leases, but these were also generally young people. It was hard to believe that the Somerset and Cornish witnesses were describing the same man but the Cornish jury was swayed by the evidence from St Neot and the Rundle family won its case and, more importantly, the payout of £400.

The Rundle family had built up its landholdings in St Neot over many generations and the land was spread across 14 largely disparate tenements. To add to the confusion, Rundle was only owner-occupier of four of these tenements, choosing to rent out the rest. On the other hand he was tenant of five further tenements owned by others that were more convenient for his own farming needs. In order to understand the class/social structure of property

occupation in St Neot in 1793 the 135 occupiers in St Neot can be divided into four groups: cottagers; smaller farmers and craftsmen; middling farmers; and larger farmers (table 1.3).

Rental value rather than acreage has been used to break down occupiers into different groups because of the huge variation in land types across the enclosed part of the parish. Two farmers who held similar acreages demonstrate why this is more appropriate: Samuel Doney farmed 52 acres on the moorland edge at Wortha with a rental value of £22 16s a year, or just under 9s an acre; in contrast, John Harvey's 50 acres at West Kellatown in the more fertile south of the parish was valued at £46 4s, equal to 18s an acre and in total worth more than double Doney's farm despite the smaller acreage.

Table 1.3. Occupiers by type in St Neot, 1793.[67]

	Number	Average rental value	Average acres	Total acres	% of total acres
Cottagers	48	£2	n/a	n/a	0%
Smaller farmers and craftsmen	38	£8	21	798	14%
Middling farmers	37	£33	66	2,450	45%
Larger farmers	12	£96	188	2,249	41%
All occupiers	135	£21	63*	5,497	100%

* average of the 87 occupiers of land excluding cottagers

Smaller farmers and craftsmen have been defined as those in Palmer's survey who had land and property worth up to £20 a year. Only blacksmiths and millers

[67] CRO MS. BK/442: Survey, St Neot Parish by David Palmer of Launceston (April 1793).

could be clearly identified by property descriptions but other evidence suggests many of the smaller farmers also had other jobs, for example as masons or tinners. They had an average of 21 acres each and evidence from wills and parish registers suggests a significant proportion of these had other sources of income. Middling farmers with land and property worth between £20 and £60 were large enough to be full-time, although other records again suggest that some had other sources of income. Farmers in this group had an average of 66 acres each. Unless they had enough children of working age at home these farmers would have employed labourers, most commonly as farm servants.

There was finally a small group of 12 larger farmers, defined as those with land worth more than £60, who would have employed most of the labourers who were not farm servants. They farmed an average of 188 acres, and in total occupied more than 40% of the enclosed land in the parish as well as substantial areas of moorland for summer grazing. This could not be described as a totally flat social structure and the 12 largest farmers occupied property with a rental value that was, on average, 48 times higher than that of the cottagers and 12 times bigger than the smallest farmers. However, there was no one social group that dominated numerically and only 14% of farmers farmed more than 100 acres.

A majority of the middling and larger farmers held two or more tenements. George Lord, one of the biggest farmers, was tenant of four holdings that made up his 145 customary acres. Peter Knight was an upwardly mobile middling farmer, whose 55 customary acres were split into seven holdings that had three

different landowners. Knight held two of the holdings on leases-for-lives, tenanted a further three on an annual basis from people who held leases-for-lives, and rented two on an annual basis from landowners.

The complications of renting so many holdings in order to get a reasonably sized farming unit must have been a challenge. However, the separate availability of small acres of land enabled farmers to expand and contract as circumstances changed. Knight was still farming in St Neot in 1851 at the age of 90, and his descendants are still farming in the parish today (see page 382). It was the large and middling farmers who tended to hold the positions of parish officials such as overseers of the poor. As we shall see in the next chapter, it was these farmers who had the highest first-order kinship links (in excess of 80%), and they also tended to marry within their own social group.

Further evidence that these different categories of tenant also represented different social classes can be seen by the type of household occupied. The sale document for the Morshead lands from 1818 provided a particularly good description of properties in St Neot.[68] Sir John Morshead was the parish's largest landowner in 1793 but had been taken prisoner of war in the French Wars. He allegedly turned to gambling on his release, which led to the sale of his lands.[69] The largest farm owned by Morshead was the 190 acres at Wenmouth, which was tenanted by Peter Gerry in 1793. The farmhouse was constructed in the

[68] Sale catalogue for Morshead lands in Cornwall, Sept. 1818. Copy held by St Neot and Warleggan Community Archive.
[69] Langdon, A.G., *Blisland Commons Boundary Stones Project* (Bodmin, 2006), p. 81.

eighteenth century and 'built of stone and covered with slate, containing four bedrooms and a corn chamber, parlour, kitchen, dairy and cellar'. There was also an extensive set of farm buildings including stables, ox houses, calf houses, piggeries and various barns. Close by middling farmer John Parsons held the 54 acres at Stockhouse on a lease-for-lives. He was occupier in both 1793 and 1818. The dwelling house was also built of stone and covered in slate, and had three bedrooms plus a parlour, kitchen and dairy.

By contrast, smaller occupiers had houses that often differed little from those of labourers. Some of these properties were also built of wood and roofs were frequently made of thatch. The farmhouse at 34-acre Little Treverbyn, a farm leased by John Bawden but sublet in 1818 to close relative Joseph Davey, had two bedrooms, two rooms downstairs plus a dairy attached. The roof was part slate and part thatch. Just over a mile away mile away the farmhouse at 35-acre Little Hammett, which was discussed earlier, had just one large bedroom, plus a sitting room and a dairy.[70] Outside there was a small barn, together with a garden and stack yard. Of Morshead's 11 cottages nine consisted of just two rooms. In addition, some of the upland holdings only had houses occupied by labourers. For example, Great Hammett was an upland farm rented with Wenmouth, which in 1818 had a labourer's cottage with two bedrooms and a sitting room.

[70] The farm had gained extra land in 1818, hence the increased acreage compared with 1793.

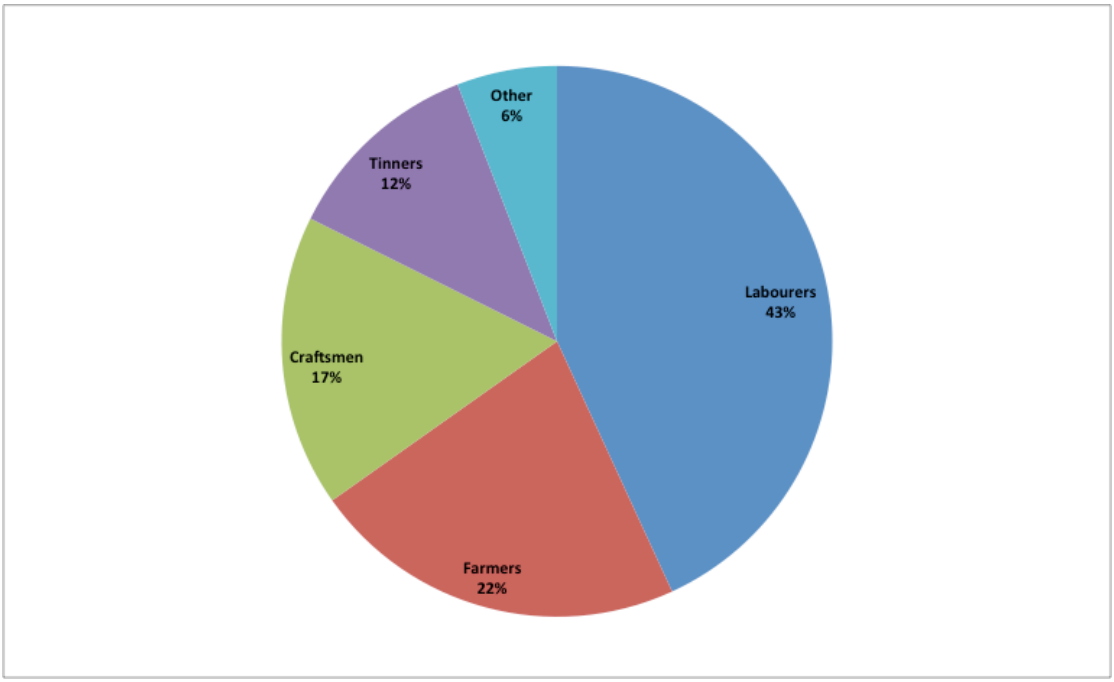
The relatively small number of cottages in St Neot was influenced by two factors. First, the small size of most farms meant they had limited demand for external labour and it was normal for farmers to co-operate at peak times in the farming calendar such as haymaking and harvest. Second, farm servants who generally lived in the farmhouse with farmers' families provided much of the non-family labour. For most farmers employment of outside labour was also influenced by the stage in the lifecycle of a farmer's own family. For example, William Henwood, who farmed at West Draynes in St Neot at the time of the 1841 census, employed two farm servants and two house servants as his own children were too young to work on the farm. By 1851, despite moving to a larger farm, Henwood employed just one farm servant and one house servant because some of his own children were by then old enough to provide some of the farm's labour needs.

In St Neot it is likely that the 12 largest farmers in 1793 with land and property worth £60 or more and an average farm size of 188 acres would have employed a majority of the parish's farm labourers who were not farm servants. Middling farmers would have been employers of external labour (mainly servants) when there were insufficient family resources available. Finally, the smallest group would have been even more reliant on family labour where farming was the dominant occupation. However, even in this group the farmers with significant other occupations regularly employed both indoor and outdoor servants.

In the pre-census era a detailed structure of employment is impossible to calculate accurately, particularly for females but also to a lesser extent for men.

The employment status of males at marriage was recorded in the St Neot parish register between 1755 and 1799 (figure 1.8). Labourers formed the biggest group, making up 43% of the total. Farmers made up 22%, craftsmen 17% and tinners 12%. However, this was not a good guide to overall male employment in the parish because evidence from family reconstitution revealed that around one-third of labourers who stayed in the parish subsequently became farmers. Many of the grooms described as labourers were in fact farm servants or farmers' sons working at home.

Figure 1.8. Occupation at marriage of 366 grooms marrying in St Neot between 1755 and 1799.[71]



Even many of the children of St Neot's largest farmers were described as labourers at marriage. This is because young people with aspirations to farm tended to start married lives as labourers and then wait for a farm to become

[71] CRO MS. P162/1: Registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, St Neot Parish Church (1549-1996).

available, unlike the situation in Wales.[72] This even applied to the largest farmers in St Neot. For example Charles Cawrse who married in 1759 was a member of one of St Neot's principal farming dynasties. In the marriage register he was described as a labourer but by 1793 he was one of the biggest farmers in the parish.

Family reconstitution suggested there were 173 Conjugal Family Units (CFUs) in St Neot in 1793, compared with the lower number of 135 occupiers listed in Palmer's survey. Strictly speaking a CFU is defined as a family that 'consists of a married couple, or a married couple with offspring, or of a widowed person with offspring'.[73] However, there were almost certainly a number of other family types in St Neot in 1793, such as lone individuals (widows, widowers or single people), co-resident siblings and other combinations such as grandparents living with grandchildren. At the 1851 census 96% of the 309 households in St Neot contained CFUs. Of the remaining 12 households, three were made up of lone, elderly women, three by co-resident siblings and six by heads with nieces, nephews or grandchildren. However, for simplicity and because constituents of households could not be measured for 1793, all families have been counted as CFUs.

The difference between the 135 occupiers listed in Palmer and 173 CFUs identified by family reconstitution would have been made up of families that

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[72] Jenkins, D., *The Agricultural Community in South-West Wales at the turn of the Twentieth Century* (Cardiff, 1971), pp. 105-140.
[73] Laslett, P., 'The history of the family', in Laslett, P. and Wall, R. (eds.), *Household and Family in Past Time* (1972), p. 29.

were either renting properties from other occupiers and not identified by Palmer, or were living in extended households with other families. Some cottages were on farms where the tenant listed by Palmer lived in another property. For example, there were at least three cottages and houses on the tenements occupied by Peter Knight. In addition, on some upland farms labourers lived in the farmhouse while the occupier listed by Palmer lived outside the parish. A majority of the heads of additional CFUs were likely to have been labourers and in most cases they were probably occupiers of individual households. However, they cannot be definitively identified as such.

Unfortunately occupations of household members other than heads also cannot be calculated for 1793. Most young people either worked as farm servants, general servants or in their parents' farming or craft businesses. Some also worked as tinners before marriage. Older women, usually married, also frequently worked in the family business. Virtually all people, male and female, worked on farms at key times such as harvest or haymaking and, as already discussed, women almost exclusively carried out some farming tasks such as dairy work and winnowing.

1.4 Nineteenth-century changes in employment

Much more comprehensive employment information for Bodmin Moor communities became available once the detailed decennial censuses were introduced in 1841, although even then there were difficulties of interpretation. In Bodmin Moor communities dual occupations were significant but frequently

not stated, particularly for the large numbers of tinners, craftsmen and labourers who occupied small farms. In addition, there were other issues regarding the erratic enumeration of family labour, particularly on farms, and especially for married women in all households.

However, by combining census data with other sources – particularly the tithe apportionment of 1842 and Duties on Land schedule for 1910 - it is possible to get a clearer picture of the enormous changes in employment that occurred. This section summarises occupations and occupiers in St Neot at two periods: the middle of the nineteenth century, when the population of the district was at its highest; and the beginning of the twentieth century when agricultural change and the decline in mining, together with a fall in family sizes, resulted in a big fall in the size of the population from its 1851 peak. A summary of the changes in occupation of household heads between 1851 and 1901 can be seen in table 1.4. It reveals a growth in the number of farmers over the period, an almost halving of households headed by farm labourers, and the scale of the collapse in mining. The biggest reason for the growth in the 'other' category was a massive increase in the number of households headed by women who often had no stated occupation (the reasons behind the large numbers of such households is discussed on pages 401 to 404).

Other factors behind the increase were a rise in the number of quarry workers and also of general labourers. The latter group were mostly made up of older, former miners. The reasons behind these changes and their impact on kinship will be discussed in detail in chapter five on enclosure, which accounted for most

of the growth in the number of farmers, and chapter seven. However, employment of household heads tells only part of the story, and the stated occupations in 1851 and 1911 of all household members in St Neot is shown in table 1.5 and 1.7.

Table 1.4. Changes in occupation of household heads in the 14 Bodmin Moor parishes between 1851 and 1901.[74]

	1851	1901
Farmer	539	663
Farm labourer	535	289
Craft	294	209
Miner/tinner	481	78
Other	370	818
Total	2219	2057

Despite the growth in importance of mining, agriculture remained the main employer for the majority of members of Bodmin Moor families throughout the period. At the peak of mining between the 1840s and 1860s, far more households were still dependent on agriculture in Bodmin Moor parishes compared with mining. Even in the mining parishes of Linkinhorne and St Cleer mines were only the dominant employer for a relatively short period between the 1840s and 1870s. There was then a group of parishes, including St Neot and Altarnun, where mining also became relatively significant, but was always a minority occupation. Many of the deep mines in these parishes were speculative ventures that made little or no money for the adventurers. Often they were only open for short periods, so that miners had to move mine regularly, change

[74] NA MS. HO 107/1898, 1899, 1902, 1904: Census Enumerators' Books for the Liskeard, Launceston, Bodmin and Camelford Registration Districts of Cornwall (1851); NA MS. RG 13/2178-2199: Census Returns for Bodmin Moor parishes (1901).

occupation or migrate away from Bodmin Moor. Finally there was the group of parishes, such as Cardinham and Blisland, which were largely untouched by mining and where farming was dominant throughout the period.

In 1851 St Neot there were 581 people with a stated employment in the 309 households. Of these, there were 72 miners and 55 tinners, compared with 81 farmers, 105 farm labourers and 64 male farm servants (table 1.5). Most farmers, farm labourers, tinners, miners and crafts people were also heads of households. Farm labouring households also had very few people other than the household head in any form of recorded employment at all. This was largely because most labouring children of working age lived as servants on farms until marriage. There were more than 100 servants working on St Neot's farms in 1851, and they contributed to the larger size and more complex structure of farming households. Farm households contained 43% of all people in employment in the parish, compared with 15% in households headed by farm labourers and 12% in those headed by miners.

Table 1.5. Occupations and household structures in St Neot, 1851 census.[75]

	Households by occupation of household head						
	Farmer	Farm lab	Craft	Tinner	Miner	Other	All households
Occupations of household members	80	72	40	28	44	45	309
Farmer	80	0	0	0	0	1	81
Farm servant	64	0	0	0	0	0	64
House servant	45	0	7	3	3	14	72
Farmer's son working on farm	36	0	0	0	0	0	36
Farmer's daughter working on farm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tinner	10	2	0	41	0	2	55
Farm lab	8	81	4	3	3	6	105
Miner	2	3	2	2	60	3	72
Craft	2	1	65	0	2	2	72
Other	1	0	2	0	1	20	24
Total with occupations	248	87	80	49	69	48	581
No stated occupation	93	86	57	28	55	61	380
Children under 15	182	168	84	68	117	47	666
Total household members	523	341	221	145	241	156	1627
Average household size	6.5	4.7	5.5	5.2	5.5	3.5	5.3

[75] NA MS. HO 107/1902: Census Enumerators' Books for the Liskeard Registration District of Cornwall (1851).

Apart from house servants and small numbers of widows, women were largely absent from the census, even though they were widely employed on farms (see page 378 for further discussion on family labour employment on farms). Another significant difficulty with the census was that dual occupations were rarely stated. In particular, many of the tinners and some of the miners also occupied farmland, usually recently enclosed from open moorland but in most instances the farming element was not mentioned. As a result, one has to look to other sources such as tithe apportionments to get a better picture of land occupation (see table 1.8).

The census also fails to tell us much about the divisions within the farm labourer category. As was mentioned in the previous section, many aspiring farmers began life as farm labourers and about 30% of labourers in 1851 eventually made the transition. However, census returns revealed that the wait could sometimes be a long one. Richard Barnecut, who was the son of a tailor and a lay Bible Christian preacher at Trenant (see page 350), was a farm labourer in St Neot at both the 1841 and 1851 censuses. By the 1861 census at the age of 45 he was tenant of 30 acres at Northwood. His long wait was probably due to lack of capital until his own father died in the 1850s. For many farmers' sons, however, the lack of capital due to large families and the difficult farming circumstances in the first half of the nineteenth century meant they never generated enough capital to farm on their own account.

William Keast, a farm labourer at Newton in St Neot, had been brought up at Lower Bowden in St Neot where his father Thomas was a small farmer. Only one

of William's three brothers managed to become a farmer like his father. William and one other brother remained farm labourers throughout their working lives, while Jeremiah became a stone mason. Most of these labourers with farming backgrounds or aspirations were highly skilled farmworkers. The difficult times of the 1830s and 1840s also meant that some farm labourers who had become farmers had been forced to give up their farms. Thomas Keast (a cousin of William) had been forced off his farm at Draynes in 1848 because of poverty and illness, to become a farm labourer at Diddylake in St Neot (see page 209).

Finally, there were the day labourers who were the bottom of the employment hierarchy and who often switched occupation between agriculture and mining according to local opportunity. Joshua Doney from St Neot was a farm labourer at Draynes Bridge in 1851, but at the peak of the mining boom in 1861 he was a copper miner. By 1871 when copper mining was in decline he had reverted to being an agricultural labourer at Trenant. A shortage of these workers as mining expanded caused difficulties for many farmers, particularly at peak labour-intensive times such as harvest.

The 1851 census also revealed the continuing importance of farm servants. Larger farms had a regular demand for male and female servants, while medium-sized farms would often make use of live-in servants until their own children were old enough to provide sufficient labour. It was normal for both the children of smaller farmers and those of labourers to spend a period as a farm servant until they got married. Once married they usually set up separate households, but occasionally lived as a married couple in the household of a parent or other

relative. The surprising finding that the nature of farm service in Cornwall acted to reinforce kinship links within communities rather than weaken them will be discussed in detail in chapter seven.

There were 311 unmarried male farm servants aged 25 or under on Bodmin Moor in 1851, and they made up a majority of the unmarried male labour force in this age group in most parishes. By contrast there were only 87 unmarried males in the same age group who were farm labourers. Many in this latter group were children of labourers or farm bailiffs who looked after farms for absent tenants. There were also 313 unmarried young men working in mines, mostly in the copper mines of St Cleer and Linkinhorne. Outside these two parishes only a small minority of young men worked in mines: for example only 18 of 161 single men in work aged under 25 were employed in mines in St Neot, while a similar number worked as tinners.

Table 1.6. Employment of single men and women under 26 years of age in St Neot in 1851.[76]

	Males number	Males %	Females number	Females %
Farm servant	51	31.7%	0	0.0%
Farm lab	16	9.9%	1	1.5%
Farmers' son/dau	29	18.0%	9	13.2%
Craft	23	14.3%	3	4.4%
Mine work	18	11.2%	3	4.4%
Tinner	18	11.2%	0	0.0%
Servant	0	0.0%	52	76.5%
Other	6	3.7%	0	0.0%
Total	161	100.0%	68	100.0%

[76] NA MS. HO 107/1902: Census Enumerators' Books for the Liskeard Registration District of Cornwall (1851).

Female employment is notoriously difficult to interrogate from census data and Bodmin Moor is no different. In employment terms most women became invisible once married, so data is generally limited to younger women and widows who assumed responsibility for dead husbands' businesses. So while there were 3,831 males on Bodmin Moor with employment details in 1851, there were just 832 women listed, the majority of whom were unmarried general servants, dressmakers or surface workers on mines. The latter were mainly employed dressing copper ores in St Cleer and Linkinhorne. There were few women employed in female-based crafts in the moorland communities. Around 5% of farmers in the census were women, virtually all of them widows.

Despite the challenges faced by farmers their numbers continued to increase, mostly on the recently enclosed moors. As has already been mentioned, in the first half of the nineteenth century many of the new farmers were also tinners who eked out a precarious living by exploiting the mineral deposits close to the surface of the central moors, while their family members enclosed land from the open moor in order to provide little more than subsistence. The influence of kin on this process will be explored in chapter five.

In the second half of the nineteenth century enclosure became increasingly the domain of full-time farmers. By 1911 there were 104 farmers in St Neot, 30% more than in 1851 (table 1.7). Farms made up 40% of all households and contained 56% of all people in employment. However those farms employed fewer non-family members and there was a sharp decline in the numbers of farm servants and farm labourers.

Table 1.7. Occupations and household structures in St Neot, 1911 census.[77]

	Households by occupation of household head						
	Farmer	Farm lab	Craft	Tinner	Miner	Other	All households
Occupations of household members	97	41	17	0	21	66	242
Farmer	104	0	0	0	0	0	104
Farm servant	27	0	0	0	0	0	27
House servant	27	3	1	0	2	21	54
Farmer's son working on farm	43	0	0	0	0	1	44
Farmer's daughter working on farm	45	0	0	0	0	0	45
Tinner	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Farm lab	1	45	1	0	0	5	52
Miner	7	2	1	0	25	6	41
Craft	1	3	25	0	0	5	34
Other	12	3	2	0	2	53	72
Total with occupations	267	56	30	0	29	91	473
No stated occupation	102	52	26	0	35	74	289
Children under 15	117	75	23	0	47	49	311
Total household members	486	183	79	0	111	214	1073
Average household size	5.0	4.5	4.6	n/a	5.3	3.2	4.4

The number of farm servants in St Neot halved between 1851 and 1911, although the decline was slower and later in Cornwall than in much of the rest of the country (see page 387).[78] At the same time a decline in mining fortunes from the mid-1860s contributed to a sharp reduction in the number of miners and the complete elimination of tinners. As we shall see in chapter five, many tinners (who were also mostly part-time farmers in 1851) had become full-time farmers by the 1870s.

With the decline in mining in the second half of the nineteenth century, farming once again assumed its role as the biggest employer in all the moorland parishes. However as already mentioned, the census returns provided an incomplete and sometimes inaccurate picture of the numerical significance of farms and farmers, and also of the size pattern of farms. Analysis of the 1851 census returns by Shaw-Taylor suggested the average farm in Cornwall was 70 acres in size and

[77] NA MS. RG 14/13638-40: 1911 Census Schedules for St Neot (1911).
[78] Howkins, A. and Verndon, N., 'Adaptable and Sustainable? Male Farm Service and the Agricultural Labour Force in Midland and Southern England, c.1850-1925', *The Economic History Review,* New Series 61.2 (2008), p. 489.

employed 2.7 male labourers (including farm servants, agricultural labourers and other job titles such as shepherd and hind).[79]

This pattern of farm size and employment for Cornwall was markedly different than most of England. Neighbouring Devon, for example, had 4.2 labourers per farm and farm sizes that were, on average, 56% larger than those in Cornwall. The analysis for St Neot revealed it had 2.7 male labourers per farmer, the same as the Cornish average. The 1851 census revealed 28% of farms in Cornwall were less than 20 acres in size, compared with just 11% of farms in Devon and Sarah Wilmot noted that the distinctive structure of farms in Cornwall compared with Devon meant that it could perhaps be regarded as a 'refuge for the small subsistence farmer'.[80]

Shaw-Taylor suggested there was a correlation between small farms and industrialization. 'It is striking that the smallest farms in the country survived in the very heartlands of capitalist industrialization,' he said.[81] It is not clear, however, that Cornish farms were small for the same reasons they were small in the north-west. Although mining was important in Cornwall in 1851, agriculture was the main employer and small farms were the norm across most rural and industrial districts. In addition, the industrial period in Cornwall was short-lived

[79] Shaw-Taylor, L., 'The rise of agrarian capitalism and the decline of family farming in England', *Economic History Review*, 65:1 (2012), pp. 26–60.
[80] Wilmot, S., 'Farming in the Nineteenth Century', in Kain, R. and Ravenhill, W. (eds.), *Historical Atlas of South-west England* (Exeter, 1999), p. 295.
[81] Shaw-Taylor, L., 'Family Farms and Capitalist Farms in Mid Nineteenth-Century England', *Agricultural History Review,* 53 (2005), p. 180.

and the structure of farms, with the exception of miners' smallholdings not generally mentioned in the census, pre- and post-dated this period.

Shaw-Taylor also argued that, despite some flaws, the 1851 census could be used as a reliable guide to the size of farms and the numbers of labourers per farm. He was right that those not mentioned in the census in Cornwall were the smallest part-time farmers who employed relatively little outside labour. However, in Cornwall in 1851 there were hundreds of such small farms occupied by tinners and miners who were completely missing from the census. A more comprehensive guide to *all* households involved in farming in Cornwall in the middle of the nineteenth century was the tithe apportionments of the 1840s. The substantial differences between the census and tithe apportionments in Cornwall confirm that the census averages should be treated with caution. Table 1.8 shows the breakdown for the parish of St Neot in 1842, with a comparison at the bottom for the 1851 census.

This apportionment shows a total of 106 people in St Neot occupying 8,024 acres of enclosed farmland, of which 5,494 acres were classified as arable. Average farm size was 75.7 acres. This compares with 80 farmers farming a total of 4,081 acres in the 1851 census. If one excludes the farmers and farm bailiffs where no acreage was provided then the average farm size in the 1851 census for St Neot was 56.7 acres.[82] This is somewhat counter-intuitive as the census excluded smaller farmers with other occupations (mainly tinners in St Neot). The reason is

[82] NA MS. IR 29/6/143: Tithe Commissioners for England and Wales, Apportionment of the rent charge in lieu of tithes in the parish of St Neot (1842).

that the census also understated the size of holdings of the farmers it did give acreages for. Just as the census has shortcomings in what it reveals about the women of Bodmin Moor, so it also needs to be treated carefully when looking at farming.

Table 1.8. Farmers of St Neot in 1842 by acreage and rental value.[83]

Rental Value	Number of Farmers	Gross rental	Total acres	Average acres
< £10	25	£91	280	11.2
£10 - <£25	15	£251	649	43.3
£25 - <£50	21	£788	1,099	52.3
£50 - <£100	29	£2,058	2,893	99.8
£100 - <£200	15	£1,797	2,734	182.0
£200+	1	£309	369	369.0
TOTAL	106	£5,294	8,024	75.7
1851 census	*80*	*n/a*	*4,081*	*56.7*

The understatement of farm acreages in the census was frequent, and this can often be corroborated with estate records as well as the tithe apportionment. For example, John Lobb farmed 133 acres at Trenay, yet in the census he was listed as farming just 100 acres and Edward Alford farmed 113 acres at Tremaddock, again rounded to 100 in the census. On moorland farms the discrepancies were often more substantial. The moors also contained most of the tinners who sometimes farmed fairly substantial acreages of land, but this was often not mentioned in the census at all (see page 250 for examples of moorland farm discrepancies). Table 1.8 excludes another 10 households that were farming very small acreages of arable land (of less than one acre each), which means that a total of 116 households out of 309 in St Neot in 1851 were farming at least some

[83] NA MS. IR 29/6/143: Tithe Commissioners for England and Wales, Apportionment of the rent charge in lieu of tithes in the parish of St Neot (1842).

land, equivalent to 38% of the total number of households. In addition, many cottagers also kept at least one pig and many also grew vegetables and/or rented small orchards. Some of the cottagers also retained rights of turbary or grazing on the various commons, but by 1851 many of these rights had been lost due to enclosure and changes in types of tenancies.

Given the general unreliability of censuses as a record of farms and their sizes in Cornwall, the changes in numbers and sizes of farms in St Neot at three points over the entire period of study has been calculated using three other sources: Palmer's Survey of St Neot in 1793, which was similar to the tithe apportionment in style and format; the 1842 Tithe Apportionment for St Neot; and the 1910 Duties on Land. The results of this analysis are shown in table 1.9.

Table 1.9. Summary of farm structural change in St Neot between 1793 and 1910.[84]

	1793		1842		1910	
Rental Value	Number of occupiers	Average size (acres)	Number of occupiers	Average size (acres)	Number of occupiers	Average size (acres)
< £10	21	9.0	25	11.2	9	29.3
£10 - <£25	26	36.6	15	43.3	36	56.3
£25 - <£50	24	69.5	21	52.3	29	69.1
£50 - <£100	12	132.9	29	99.8	29	145.7
£100 - <£200	3	220.7	15	182.0	9	157.2
£200+	1	430.0	1	369.0	1	339.0
TOTAL	87	63.2	106	75.7	113	90.9

The farms have been grouped by rental value because of the huge differences in rental value per acre of lowland, upland and moorland farms. The analysis is for

[84] CRO MS. BK/442: Survey, St Neot Parish by David Palmer of Launceston (April 1793); NA MS. IR 29/6/143: Tithe Commissioners for England and Wales, Apportionment of the rent charge in lieu of tithes in the parish of St Neot (1842); CRO MS. DV/1/66: Board of Inland Revenue Valuation Office, Duties on Land Valuation Book, St Neot and Warleggan (c. 1911).

enclosed farmland only, which increased from a total of approximately 5,500 acres in 1793, to 8,000 acres in 1842 and more than 10,000 acres by 1910.

The growth in numbers of farmers between 1793 and 1842 was largely accounted for by the increase in the number of miners' smallholdings on the moors, but the increase in acreage was largely the result of enclosure of land on existing moorland fringe farms. In the later nineteenth century there was a decline in the number of tinners' smallholdings as tinning declined and larger commercial farms expanded on the moors. Despite the growth in the acreage farmed the gross rental value of all land in St Neot hardly changed in nominal terms between 1842 and 1910 due to the decline in farming fortunes after 1870. In real terms there was a substantial decline.

Very few farms and cottages were owner-occupied and their number increased only gradually from just eight in 1793, to 15 in 1842 and 20 in 1910. The proportion of land farmed by owner-occupiers also rose slowly, rising from 10% to 12% over the period. In addition, hardly any families remained owner-occupiers in St Neot for more than two generations. None of the owner-occupier families in St Neot in 1793 were still owner-occupiers in 1842, and only two of the 15 in 1842 were still in St Neot in 1910. One of the two was the Parkyn family from Harrowbridge that arrived in the Draynes Valley in about 1800 and still farm in the valley today. The other was the Mare family. John Mare was a tenant at Tremaddock in St Neot in 1793 and one of his sons enclosed a small farm out

of common land at Berrydown in the early 1840s that was still in the same family in 1910.

Instead most land in St Neot, as well much of the rest of Bodmin Moor, continued to be owned by the gentry. The majority of the gentry also lived outside the Bodmin Moor parishes, although there were some notable exceptions, such as the Rodds who lived at Trebartha in North Hill parish and a branch of the Grylls family who built a house at Lewarne in St Neot in the second half of the nineteenth century. The structure of ownership of farmland for St Neot in 1793, 1842 and 1910 – using the same sources as for occupiers – is shown in table 1.10. Again it excludes unenclosed moorland, commons and woodland. The total acreage of the parish was 13,997 acres, and the amount of enclosed land grew by 87% between 1793 and 1910.

Table 1.10. Ownership of enclosed farmland in the parish of St Neot in 1793, 1842 and 1910.[85]

	1793			1842			1910		
Rental value	Number of owners	Total acreage owned	Average size (acres)	Number of owners	Total acreage owned	Average size (acres)	Number of owners	Total acreage owned	Average size (acres)
< £10	6	32	5	2	11	6	2	15	8
£10 - <£25	7	209	30	7	359	51	19	466	25
£25 - <£50	12	906	76	14	671	48	13	1,001	77
£50 - <£100	4	635	159	15	1,689	113	21	3,492	166
£100 - <£200	4	1,195	299	3	907	302	5	1,872	374
£200+	5	2,520	504	9	4,641	516	5	3,428	686
TOTAL	38	5,497	145	50	8,278	166	65	10,274	158

A number of ownership trends are revealed in the table. The first was the decline in the proportion of farmland owned by the largest owners. Those owning land

[85] CRO MS. BK/442: Survey, St Neot Parish by David Palmer of Launceston (April 1793); NA MS. IR 29/6/143: Tithe Commissioners for England and Wales, Apportionment of the rent charge in lieu of tithes in the parish of St Neot (1842); CRO MS. DV/1/66: Board of Inland Revenue Valuation Office, Duties on Land Valuation Book, St Neot and Warleggan (c. 1911).

with a rental value of £100 or more controlled two-thirds of land by rental value in 1793, but only just over half by 1910. Much of this reduction occurred after 1842 and was part of a process that accelerated after 1870 and continued beyond 1910 as larger estates were broken up and sold. For example, the former manor of West Draynes was broken up and sold in lots in 1904, and the Grylls lands followed suit in 1916. These sales resulted in a growth in numbers of smaller owners. Those with land worth between £50 and £100 a year accounted for a third of all land by 1910. There was the numerical growth of owners with land worth less than £50 a year, although the proportion of the total amount of land owned by this group remained small.

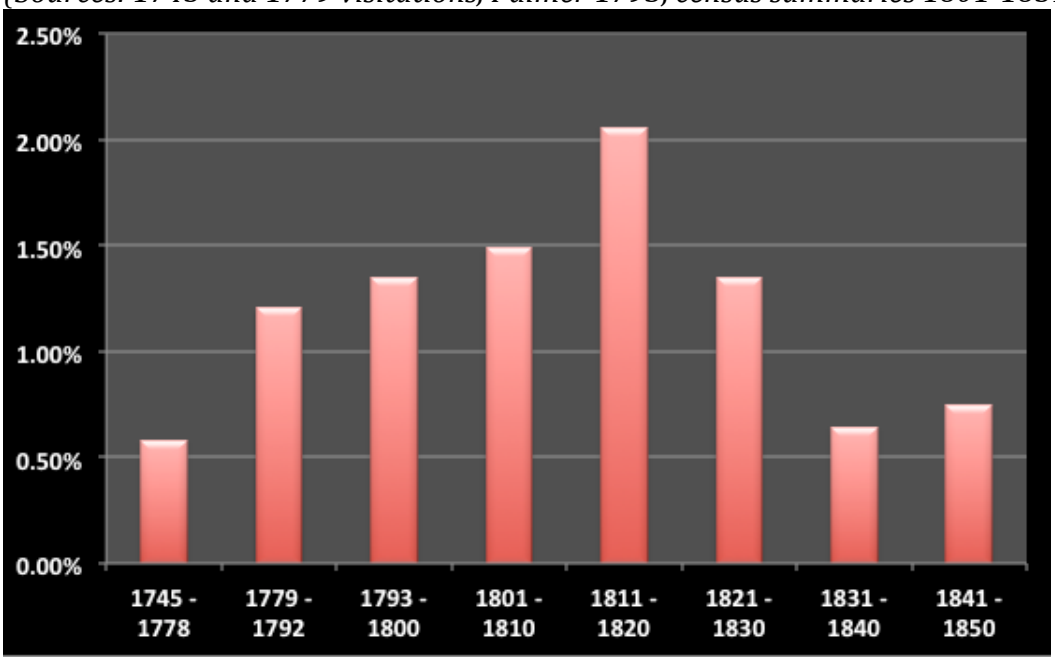
1.5 Demographic changes 1793 - 1911

As already discussed, the rise and fall of Bodmin Moor's population was partly driven by the rapid expansion and collapse in mining, particularly between the 1830s and 1870s. However, there were also wider demographic factors that influenced a rapid growth in the population, particularly before the 1830s. In addition, changing demographic factors after this also contributed to the later decline in the population. It was surprising that the biggest rate of population growth on Bodmin Moor was between 1811 and 1821, when it grew by more than 20%. This increase was well before the rapid expansion in mining and the consequent arrival into the district of large numbers of mining families.

Reasons for this growth were complex but the biggest impact appears to have come from the combined effect of three factors: increasing numbers of families,

rising family sizes and a declining death rate. The first of these factors – increasing numbers of families - was mainly the result of the other two factors, although it was probably influenced by some inward migration. Family reconstitution revealed the arrival of a number of individuals and families into St Neot and surrounding parishes, mainly to become tinners. Figure 1.9 shows the approximate annual rate of population growth for St Neot between 1745 and 1840.

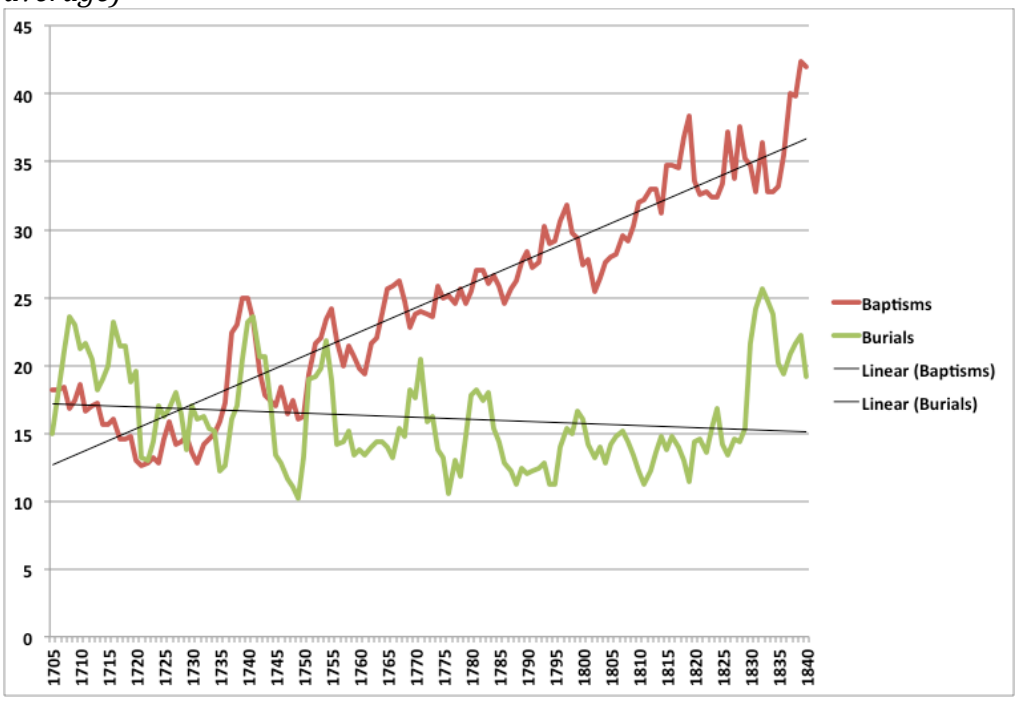
Figure 1.9. Annual percentage population growth rate for St Neot, 1745-1850 (Sources: 1745 and 1779 visitations, Palmer 1793, census summaries 1801-1851).



The population growth rate of St Neot exceeded 2% per annum between 1811 and 1820, but had been on a rising plane since the middle of the previous century. The growing gap between baptisms and burials in the parish can be seen in Figure 1.10, which highlights the increasing divergence from the middle of the eighteenth century. This pattern was similar to the trends observed by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure for parishes

in Devon (unfortunately none of the Cambridge Group's 404 parishes were in Cornwall), at least until the 1820s.[86] The differences after that were mainly explained by the expansion of mining on Bodmin Moor.

Figure 1.10. Annual baptisms and burials in St Neot 1705-1840 (five-year moving average)[87]



The Cambridge Group's conclusion was that the main factor behind the increasing population was a rising birth rate caused by females marrying earlier and having larger completed family sizes. In order to explore this for Bodmin Moor a sample 383 reconstituted families were analysed (where marriages took place between 1750 and 1900 and where there was reliable data for completed family sizes).[88] There was a bias towards families that were less mobile: those

[86] Wrigley, E.A., Davies, R.S., Oeppen, J.E. and Schofield, R.S., *English Population History from Family Reconstitution 1590-1837* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 563-568.
[87] CRO MS. P162/1: Registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, St Neot Parish Church (1549-1996).
[88] CRO MS. P162/1: Registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, St Neot Parish Church (1549-1996); CRO MS. P32/1/: Register of baptisms, marriages and

which moved into the area after starting a family, or left before completing one, are mostly absent from the reconstitution database, and the possible implications of this will be discussed later.[89]

The Bodmin Moor analysis confirms a rising birth rate in the early part of the nineteenth century (table 1.11). The date ranges chosen for the analysis in the table reflect significant periods in relation to nineteenth century population change. Some historians have argued that the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 affected family reproductive behaviour, while it is more generally argued that the trend towards smaller families in Britain gathered momentum after 1870.

Table 1.11. Trends in completed families, Bodmin Moor 1750-1901.

Year of marriage	1750-1799	1800-1834	1835-1869	1870-1901	Total
Completed family size	6.7	6.9	6.6	5.5	6.5
Age of bride at marriage	23.4	22.6	23.2	25.5	23.4
% Pregnant at marriage	41.3%	40.7%	30.1%	28.6%	35.2%
Age of bride at last child	39.3	39.2	37.8	38.2	38.6
Years producing children	15.9	16.6	14.6	12.7	15.2
Av children per year of marriage	0.42	0.42	0.45	0.43	0.43
Total number of marriages	109	91	113	70	383

burials, St Cleer Parish Church (1675-1837); CRO MS. P247/1: Register of baptisms, marriages and burials, Warleggan Parish Church (1547-1998); NA MS. RG 4/429: Launceston Wesleyan births and baptisms (1794-1815); NA MS. RG 4/430: Liskeard Wesleyan burials and baptisms (1806-1834); NA MS. RG 4/110: St Neot Bible Christian births and baptisms (1821-1837).

[89] The exceptions are 70 women listed in the 1911 census where completed family sizes were stated in the census.

In many ways, therefore, Bodmin Moor followed the trend identified by the Cambridge Group. Female marriage ages reached their lowest level of 22.6, and completed family sizes their highest level of 6.9, in the period from 1800 to 1834. More than 40% of brides were pregnant at marriage and the average time spent producing children (measured from marriage date to the baptism of the final child) was 16.6 years.

The Cambridge Group's reconstitution for 12 English parishes revealed a relatively constant age at marriage for females until 1750 and then a reduction to 24.9 between 1750-1799 and 23.4 for 1800-1849.[90] The results for Bodmin Moor females show a similar trend of declining marriage ages after 1750, although average ages at marriage for each period were slightly lower. Reay also noted the same trend for the Blean in Kent, where marriage ages were even lower than those in Cornwall.[91]

It is not entirely clear why age at marriage reached its lowest level during the first half of the nineteenth century. Some pointed to a correlation between the decline in farm service across much of England and the falling marriage age, resulting in a rise in personal insecurity from which marriage was a potential escape.[92] However, in Cornwall farm service remained the main occupation for young men and women in agricultural districts well into the second half of the

[90] Wrigley E.A. and Schofield, R.S., *The Population History of England 1541-1871* (Cambridge, 1989 edn.), p. 255.
[91] Reay, B., *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800-1930* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 42.
[92] Snell, K.D.M., *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660–1900* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 351-2.

century, the sharp decline only setting in much later (see page 387 for full discussion of farm service). In addition, the trend towards younger age at marriage affected farmers' daughters just as much as those of labourers. The decline in age at marriage in Cornwall coincided with the extinguishing of leases-for-lives and consequent loss of security of tenure (see chapters three and four). These leases for both farms and cottages required substantial up-front payments for entry fines (of up to 14 times the annual rental value) and provided a big incentive for people to save.

When farm service began to decline in the second half of the nineteenth century age at marriage was already rising again. By the end of the century age at marriage of women exceeded 25, taking it back to the level of the early 1700s. Women pregnant at marriage had also fallen markedly and the decline of fertility meant completed family sizes were 20% lower than at the beginning of the century. This pattern largely followed the national trend.[93] However, one thing that remained remarkably constant was the number of children born per year of marriage. As a result there was no sign of family limitation methods to limit pregnancy during marriage. Instead the later age of first pregnancy reduced the number of years producing children by almost a quarter from 16.6 to 12.7. Schofield suggested that the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 might have encouraged later age at marriage.[94] However, there was also no dramatic change in completed family size in the immediate period after 1834, suggesting that the

[93] Hinde, A., *England's Population: A History Since the Domesday Survey* (London, 2003), pp. 219-243.
[94] Schofield, R., 'English marriage patterns revisited', *Journal of Family History,* 10 (1985), pp. 8-19.

Act had relatively little impact in Bodmin Moor communities. At first glance the only significant post-1834 change was a big fall in the proportion of women who were pregnant before marriage. However, it is possible that this change was a reflection of factors nothing to do with the Poor Law. The biggest reduction in family size, coupled with a rise in the marriage age, did indeed come after 1870.

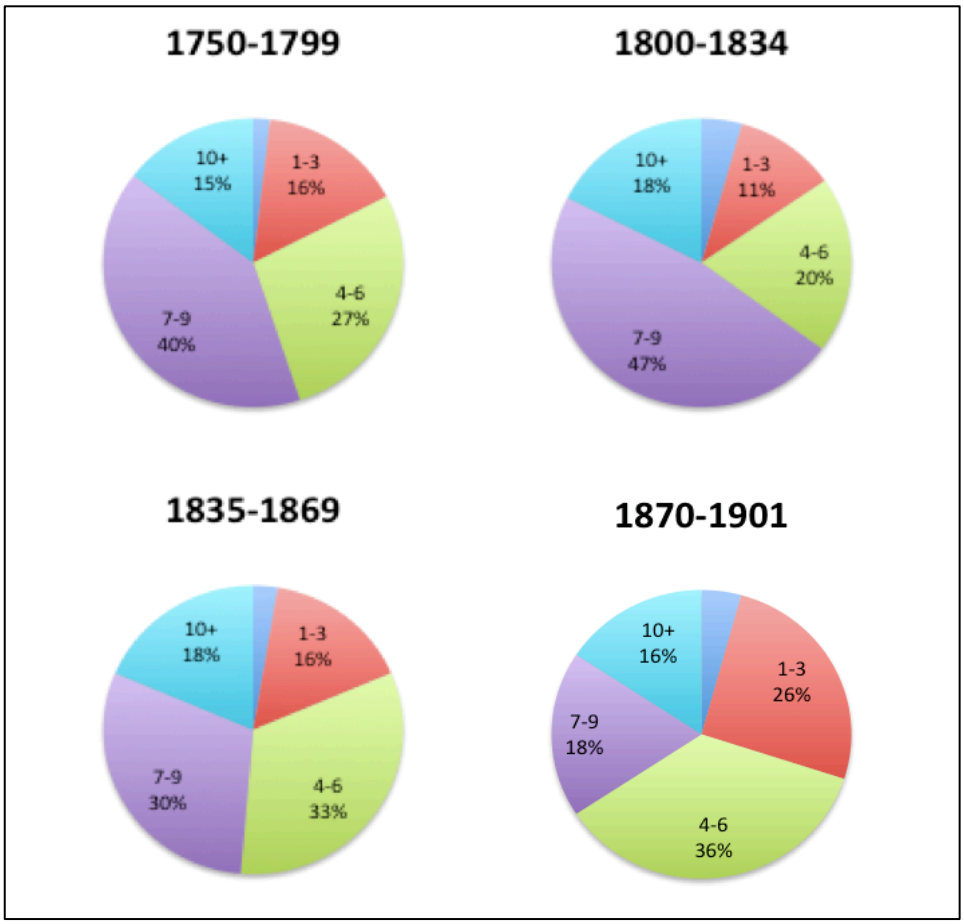
However if one delves deeper into the data there was another significant change in family sizes after 1834. This is revealed in Figure 1.11, which shows the substantial fall in the proportion of larger families with between seven and nine children. Between 1800 and 1834 almost half of all families were of this size, but in the subsequent period this fell to less than one-third of the total. Later average age at marriage for women combined with a lower average age when the final child was born were probably the two main reasons, factors also noted by Reay for the Blean area of Kent.[95]

It is also notable how the proportion of largest families changed little between 1750 and 1900 – throughout the period they made up between 15% and 18% of all households. There is some evidence of large families repeating themselves over several generations in the same dynastic names. For example, the largest family in St Neot at the 1911 census was that of tin miner Richard Nottle and his wife Elizabeth. They had 15 children, with 13 still living at the time of the census. Richard came from generations of moorland tinners and small farmers, and his parents and paternal grandparents both had large families of 10 children (see

[95] Reay, B., *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800-1930* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 51-61.

page 252 for a discussion of the Nottle family's role in enclosure on Bodmin Moor). As well as having nine siblings, Richard also had eight step-siblings when his father remarried after becoming a widower.

Figure 1.11. Breakdown of completed family size by period, Bodmin Moor 1750-1901



Rising fertility would appear to have had an influence on the growth in St Neot's population, but it is also likely that the declining death rate was also a significant contributory factor. In recent years the Cambridge Group has been criticized for placing too much emphasis on fertility as the driving force for population growth after 1750. One of the main critics, Peter Razzell went as far as to suggest that

the Group's claim for a decline in age at marriage was wrong.[96] Instead, he argued that general unreliability of parish baptism registers coupled with some inherent shortcomings in family reconstitution techniques, particularly the exclusion of migrating families, meant that the reduction in marriage ages recorded by the Cambridge Group were likely to be inaccurate. He further argued that a general underreporting of events in parish registers understated the impact of a declining death rate on population growth.

The criticisms made by Razzell need to be addressed for Bodmin Moor and the registers of St Neot in particular. A positive is the completeness of the records for St Neot, for both baptism and burials, throughout the period with no obvious gaps. While there is some evidence of underreporting, the numbers identified are small and do not appear to have proportionately changed over time.[97] Razzell's criticism of potential bias in family reconstitution because it focused on stayers was challenged by Wrigley, who argued that the marriage characteristics of stayers and leavers were broadly similar.[98] In order to test this a broader sample of 1,155 Bodmin Moor marriages from 1700 to 1900 was analysed. Of these marriages, 662 were where the bride was baptized and married in the same parish, and 493 where baptism and marriage were in different parishes (figure 1.12).

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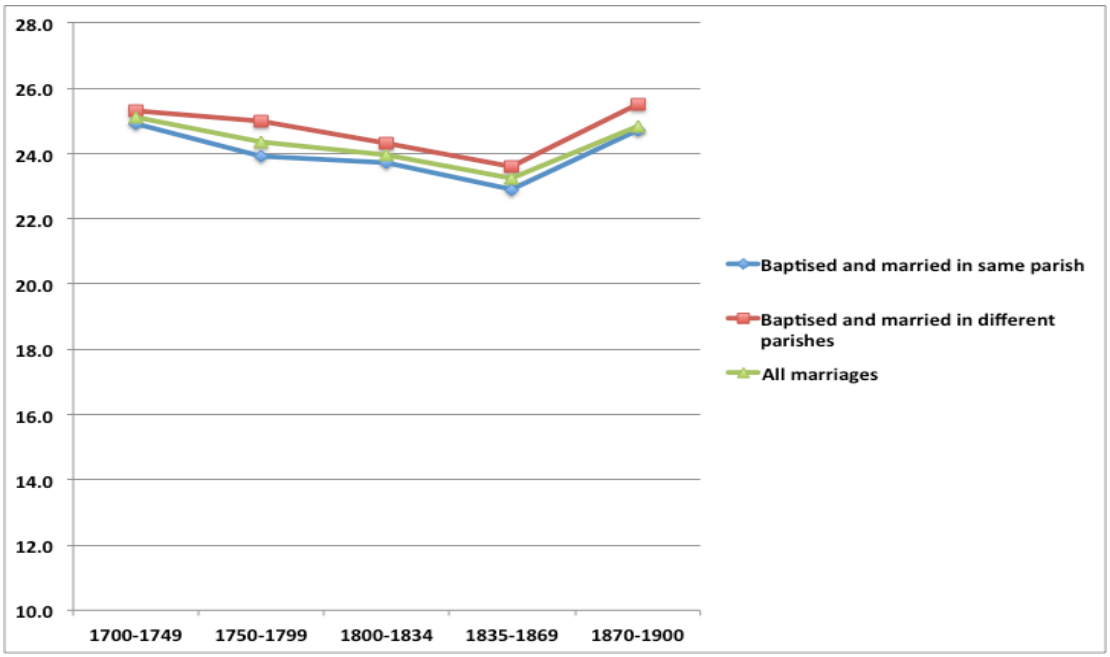
[96] Razzell, P., 'The Growth of Population in Eighteenth-Century England: A Critical Reappraisal', *The Journal of Economic History,* 53.4 (1993), pp. 743-71.
[97] A few cases of missing baptisms were identified from post-1837 marriages and 1851 census data, but baptisms for the overwhelming majority of people were identified in either the parish or nonconformist registers.
[98] Wrigley, E.A. 'How Reliable is Our Knowledge of the Demographic Characteristics of the English Population in the Early Modern Period?', *The Historical Journal,* 40.3 (1997), pp. 571-595.

This larger sample than the 383 fully reconstituted marriages included 'leavers' as well as 'stayers'. Three things are apparent from this broader analysis. First, the average age at marriage was higher for brides who were married in a different parish from baptism – between 1800 and 1834 the difference was about seven months. Second, comparison with table 1.11 confirms that the 'leavers', who were not part of the reconstitution database, married later than the 'stayers'. Third, however, the trend of earlier marriages during the first half of the nineteenth century sandwiched between periods of higher marriage ages remained the same.[99]

Figure 1.12. Average age of marriage for 1,155 Bodmin Moor brides from 1700-1900.



Razzell's assertion that a declining death rate was the sole driver of population growth does not fit with the evidence on Bodmin Moor. The reduction in age of

[99] In a further 38 marriages in Bodmin Moor parishes from 1600-1699 women had an average age at marriage of 26.6. Although this is a small sample, it suggests that the trend to earlier marriages was well underway by 1700.

marriage from the middle of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth, coupled with the associated rise in family sizes, did have a significant impact on the rate of population growth. John Hatcher, while even more critical than Razzell of some of the Cambridge Group's methodology, argued that it was likely that increasing fertility and declining mortality both played a part, perhaps in roughly equal measure.[100] He said: 'It is time to revise working hypotheses, question old assumptions, and continue the advance of the grand project [begun by the Cambridge Group]'.

The evidence for Bodmin Moor does point to declining death rates, as well as rising fertility, significantly contributing to the rapid population growth. This can be seen in figure 1.13, which reveals how the crude death rate, measured as the percentage of deaths relative to the total population of St Neot, halved between 1750 and 1840.[101] Reasons for the decline are difficult to quantify, but they do broadly follow national trends. Improvements in general hygiene and in housing conditions and immunisation against smallpox have been cited as significant reasons for a declining death rate.[102]

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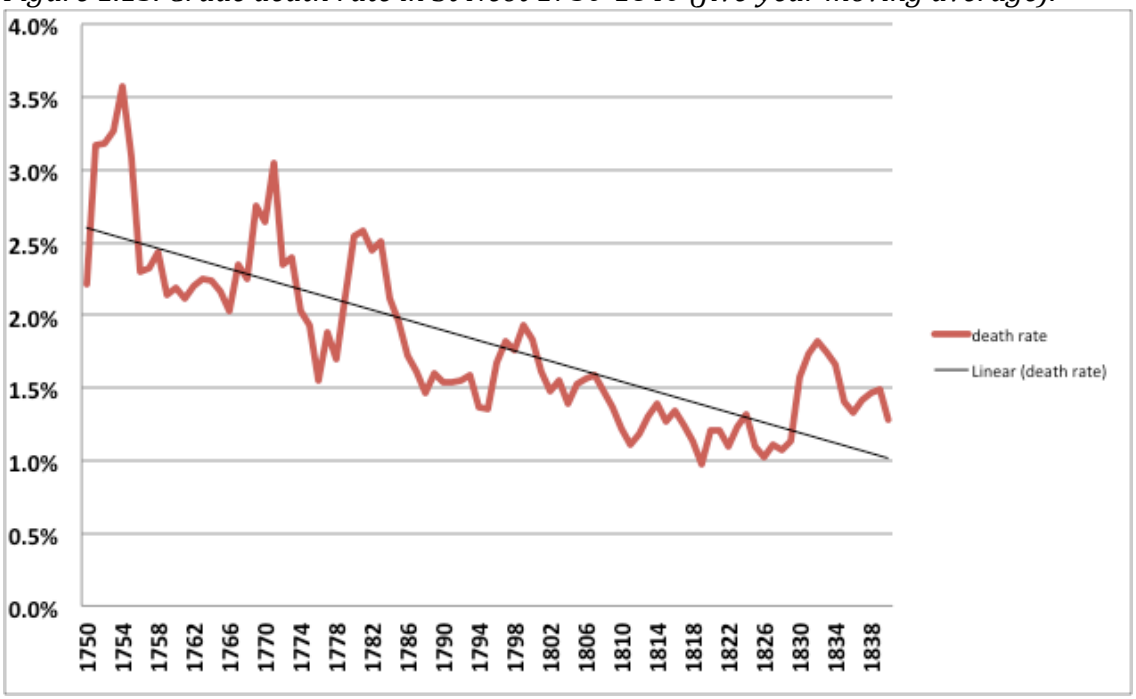
[100] Hatcher, J., 'Understanding the Population History of England 1450-1750', *Past & Present,* 180 (2003), pp. 83-130.
[101] The census returns from 1801, my own reconstitution work for 1793 and the visitation returns for 1745 and 1779 have been used as a basis for calculations. Population movements between these dates have been assumed to be linear, and results smoothed by using a moving five-year average.
[102] Hinde, A., *England's Population: A History Since the Domesday Survey* (London, 2003), pp. 192-218.

Figure 1.13. Crude death rate in St Neot 1750-1840 (five-year moving average).[103]



The burial registers for both St Neot and St Cleer point to a sharp decline in the number of mortality crises (defined as periods where mortality was at last 50% higher than the long term average). In St Neot there were five crises between 1700 and 1750, one in 1779-80 and then none until 1830. The latter crisis was caused by an outbreak of typhoid, which was confined to St Neot churchtown. Earlier crises are not often described although the St Cleer register noted that the very high number of deaths in 1741 was because 'this year the small pox was very fatal'.[104]

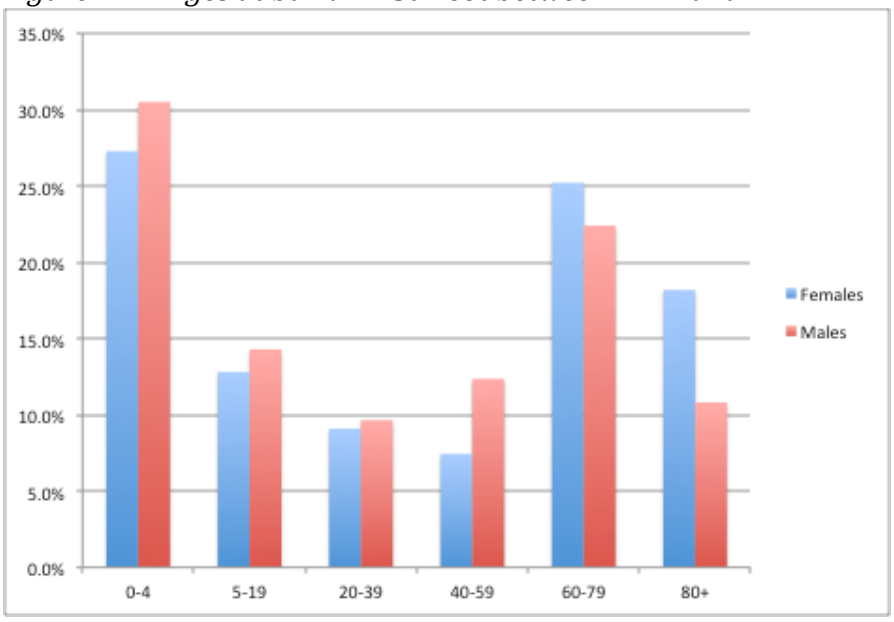
However, the decline in the crude death rate did not mean that high child mortality was eliminated. The recording of ages at death in the registers after

[103] CRO MS. P162/1: Registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, St Neot Parish Church (1549-1996).
[104] CRO MS. P32/1: Register of baptisms, marriages and burials, St Cleer Parish Church 1675-1837.

1813 enables the range of deaths to be analysed and the results for the period up to 1840 are shown in figure 1.14. So at a period when death rates were at historically low levels almost 30% of deaths in St Neot were for people under the age of five years. Beyond the age of four the next highest age group for mortality was not until age 60 or older. Survivors of early mortality had a reasonable chance of living into old age.

This spread of burials by age group, and the declining overall death rate, occurred while Bodmin Moor was an overwhelmingly agricultural district. At this time mining and tinning were minority or subsidiary occupations. However, this was beginning to change. The rapid expansion of copper mining from the mid-1830s had a dramatic impact on the death rates of adult males. Copper dust was poisoning the underground miners, although it would be only decades later that the true cause of death was understood.

Figure 1.14. Ages at burial in St Neot between 1814 and 1840.[105]



[105] CRO MS. P162/1: Registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, St Neot Parish Church (1549-1996).

Many miners started to show symptoms of copper dust poisoning in their 20s and early 30s. It mainly affected miners in St Cleer and Linkinhorne but its impact also spread to neighbouring parishes such as St Neot. The pattern of early deaths was noticed by the vicar of St Cleer, who began to record and measure the differences in ages of death of the copper miners to those in agricultural employment. He found that while the latter were on average 66 years of age at death, the miners were just 38.[106] The causes and impact of this on families and kinship will be explored in more detail in chapter seven.

1.6 Concluding comments

This chapter has outlined the unprecedented structural and demographic changes affecting Bodmin Moor society during the long nineteenth century. A rapidly rising then falling population, the concurrent growth and collapse of deep mining, changes to farming employment, and widespread enclosure all contributed to an instability experienced by virtually all families. Yet at the end of the period there was a spatial structure to local society that would have been familiar to the inhabitants in the late 1700s.

The landscape was still dominated by small farms and cottages that remained largely located in hamlets or isolated settlements. Farms were larger than 100 years earlier, but they remained generally small with a majority under 100 acres in size. There were also more farmers in most Bodmin Moor parishes as a result

[106] *Parliamentary Papers 1864* [3389] *Report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the condition of all mines in Great Britain* pp. 448-450.

of enclosure. The mining boom and bust had left its impact on the landscape, but most engine houses were now silent and those that remained working did so in a precarious and worsening economic environment.

The next chapter will show how, despite the changes, kinship structures remained remarkably strong throughout the period. It will also show how that persistence was strongly influenced by the physical structure of society that in some ways survived the turmoil of the nineteenth century. Subsequent chapters will explain how those kinship patterns helped society to cope with the turmoil.

Chapter 2. Bodmin Moor households and the significance of kin

2.1 Introduction

A short notice in the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* on the 14 March 1879 reported the death at the age of 92 of retired farmer John Mallett, lately of St Neot. The notice also reported that John had brought up 14 children, and 'left behind him 77 grandchildren and 97 great-grandchildren'.[107] That the size of John's family over three generations was noted in the newspaper acknowledged that his situation was unusual. Indeed, his 14 children were double the average for Bodmin Moor families (see table 1.11). In addition, the survival of all of his 14 children into adulthood was an unlikely outcome. For John to have still been alive with that many grandchildren and great-grandchildren must have been a rare occurrence in any community in Britain.

However, the Malletts also exhibited much that typified Bodmin Moor society during this period. As the previous chapter demonstrated, early marriages, with women frequently giving birth into their mid-40s, together with good survival rates of children, meant large families were common. When John married Elizabeth Davey in St Neot parish church in March 1808 he was 21 years old and she was 19. Seven months later they baptised their first child, and by the time their 14th child was baptised in 1836 Elizabeth was 46 years old.

[107] *Royal Cornwall Gazette,* 14 Mar 1879.

The family was mobile, but only over short distances: at each consecutive census the Malletts lived in a different property, all within the south-east part of the parish of St Neot. They were also socially mobile, with each subsequent census recording the progression of John's career from agricultural labourer in 1841, to farm bailiff in 1851, farmer of 30 acres in 1861 and finally into a cottage in retirement in 1871.

Most significantly for this chapter, the Malletts were one of many dynastic families in the district whose numbers contributed to an extremely high level of kinship links between households. At the time of the 1851 census three-quarters of St Neot households had first-order kinship links with other households in the parish. The absolute kinship density – a measure of the number of links per household – was also very high. The Mallets had seven first-order links within the parish, and the dynastic families contributed to an Absolute Kinship Density of 2.08 in 1851 (see table 2.1).[108]

The Malletts were also representative of almost half of farming households and one-third of all households that were home to extended families. At the 1851 census John and Elizabeth, as well as having one daughter living with them, also housed two lodgers, four grandchildren and one male farm servant. Nuclear families, although making up about half of all households, formed a much lower

[108] For the purposes of this thesis dynastic families have been defined as those where the surname was represented in at least four households (as household head) and had been present in St Neot or a neighbouring parish for at least three generations.

proportion of households when compared with many other studies (see section 2.4 on page 124 for comparisons).

We shall return to the Malletts again later in the chapter, but before that the first-order kinship patterns for households in the Bodmin Moor parish of St Neot will be analysed at three key dates – 1793, 1851 and 1911 – and compared with the results for other similar studies in England, Wales and France. The decision to focus on measuring first-order links between households was made because this measure has been most consistently used in other studies. First-order links are defined as those where heads or their spouses had parents, siblings or children who were also household heads or spouses of other households (in the same parish, see diagram on page 18).

Three core pieces of information were used as the starting point for measurement of kinship in St Neot. These were the census enumerators' books for the 309 households in St Neot in 1851, and for the 242 households in the parish in 1911, together with a survey of St Neot in 1793 that listed all owners and occupiers of the parish's 202 farm holdings and cottages at that date.[109] Several main sources were then used for family reconstitution and for establishing first-order kinship links. These were: baptism, marriage and burial records for St Neot; registers of other Cornish parishes where relevant; nonconformist registers for Methodist and Bible Christian circuits (the latter had the advantage of naming mothers' parents in baptism records); manorial and

[109] CRO MS. BK/442: Survey, St Neot Parish by David Palmer of Launceston (April 1793).

estate lease agreements, particularly leases-for-lives which, as already mentioned gave names, ages and the relationships to the leaseholder of lives listed; and wills and land tax records.

Many other sources were used to provide additional information, including census books for Bodmin Moor parishes for the years 1841-1901, databases of tithe apportionments for Bodmin Moor parishes, poor rate and church rate books for St Neot, other manorial and estate records, post-1837 civil registration data at the General Register Office (both indexes and certificates), and newspapers - particularly the *West Briton* and *Royal Cornwall Gazette.* St Neot also boasts a modern local history centre that was able to supply a number of useful documents including farm and family histories.

The result was a kinship database of more than 13,000 individuals born between 1700 and 1911, the majority of who lived for at least some time in St Neot or adjacent parishes. Family heads were only entered into the database if they or their spouses could be shown to have a first-order kinship relationship with someone outside their nuclear family. More than 1,100 families have baptism and marriage dates for the husband and wife, and there are almost 400 fully reconstituted families.

The choice of 1793 as the first date to measure kinship links between households was partly driven by the availability of Palmer's survey but the date is also relevant for a number of other reasons. The survey was undertaken when many traditional customary structures were still in place and the majority of farmers

and cottagers in St Neot held their properties on leases-for-lives from the half dozen manors with land in the parish, which gave them significant security of tenure.

The moors, which made up about two-thirds of St Neot's 14,000 acres, were largely unenclosed and used for turbary and summer grazing by the tenants of various manors. As the last chapter demonstrated, small- and medium-sized farms dominated the parish numerically. In 1793 St Neot, like many other Bodmin Moor parishes, had no resident gentry save for the occasional presence of the vicar, Richard Gerveys Grylls. By 1851 the economy of the parish had been transformed: a growth in copper mining and concurrent moorland enclosure meant the parish was home to twice as many people. However, for the inhabitants life was more insecure and many of the mines in St Neot were speculative ventures offering irregular or short-lived employment.

As a result, miners attracted to the district from mid- and west Cornwall often departed again after only a short period of residence. Traditional customary leases had also largely gone in the name of improvement, replaced by short-term tenancies, increasing the insecurity for farmers and cottagers alike. For many households Methodism in its various forms, largely absent in 1793, had become not only the religion of choice but also a core part of the social fabric of the moorland parishes.

In 1911 the situation had again changed dramatically. Mining on Bodmin Moor collapsed in the 1870s and had become a minority occupation by 1911. There

was some growth in other extractive industries but further enclosure and a reduction in labour-intensive arable cropping in favour of livestock production meant that small farms employing mostly family labour dominated most districts. Methodism was still relatively strong, but a revival of sorts by the Established Church and mass emigration led to dwindling membership numbers.

As a result, the three dates provide studies of kinship at very different stages in the evolution of Bodmin Moor society. Despite the enormous changes described kinship links between households remained high in St Neot throughout the period. The measurement of kinship links in one place, involving more than 700 households at three dates in three different centuries, represents one of the largest studies of its kind. Most other kinship studies have been restricted to a single year and/or been based on very small samples.

The rest of this chapter is split into three parts. The first part will present the finding for kinship links between households in St Neot and compare them with the results of studies in England, France and Italy. The second part will then set out the main factors contributing to the high level of kinship links in St Neot, the most significant of which will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters. The final part will look at the high number of extended kin that lived within individual households, particularly in the mid-1800s.

2.2 Kinship links between households

Depending on the date, between two-thirds and three-quarters of St Neot households had first-order kinship links with at least one other household within St Neot (table 2.1). As we shall see in the subsequent analysis, the proportion of households with kinship links in St Neot was also significantly higher than for any comparable study. In addition, a significant proportion of households with first-order kinship links had two or more links with other St Neot households.

Table 2.1. First-order kinship links between households in St Neot in 1793, 1851 and 1911[110]

	1793	1851	1911
Total number of households	173	309	242
Households with first-order links	71%	75%	64%
First-order links to one household	28%	27%	29%
First-order links to two households	15%	15%	14%
First-order links to three or more	28%	33%	22%
No first-order links recorded	29%	25%	36%
Absolute kinship density	1.82	2.08	1.39

As a result, the average number of first-order links per household – the Absolute Kinship Density (AKD) – was high and reached 2.08 in 1851. There was a decline in first-order links between 1851 and 1911, mainly because of large-scale emigration, but even so the kinship links at the latter date were higher than for any agricultural or mining parish studied in England. Despite the huge changes affecting Bodmin Moor society over the long nineteenth century a majority of

[110] Conjugal Family Units in 1793.

households in St Neot retained close kinship ties with other households in the parish throughout the period.

The analysis for kinship links in 1793 is for the 173 Conjugal Family Units (CFUs) identified from reconstitution, rather than for the 138 individuals living in St Neot identified by Palmer's survey. This is because of the impossibility of identifying individual households membership in this pre-census era. Most of the smaller group of 138 occupiers of farms and cottages listed by Palmer were likely to have been heads of separate households. Analysis of kinship within this smaller group revealed 70% of them had first-order links. The numbers of kinship links were minimum estimates because the kinship origins of just over 20% of heads and spouses could not be found for 1793. Some of these are also likely to have had first-order kinship links.

The difficulty of identifying household members also affected most other pre-census studies: for example Todd measured links between CFUs rather than households in his study of kinship in French and Italian communities, but argued that the majority of CFUs were also likely to have been separate households.[111] Wrightson and Levine, who used households in Hearth Tax returns for early modern Terling, gave both minimum and maximum levels of potential kinship links.[112] For the maximum estimate the authors assumed householders/spouses with the same surnames had kinship links. This approach was investigated for St

[111] Todd, E., 'Seven peasant communities in pre-industrial Europe. A comparative study of French, Italian and Swedish rural parishes (18th and early 19th century)' (University of Cambridge Ph.D. thesis, 1976), pp. 209-210.
[112] Wrightson K. and Levine, D., *Poverty and Piety in an English Village, Terling 1525-1700* (Oxford, 1995 edn.), p. 87.

Neot, but matching surnames in 1851 were found to be an unreliable guide for first order links and so only minimum estimates have been used. The kinship links identified for 1851 and 1911 were likely to have been more accurately calculated than for 1793, mainly because personal details in the census enabled a higher proportion of people to be clearly identified and located in parish registers. Despite this, it was not possible to identify the family origins of almost 10% of heads or spouses in 1851, as well as a small number in 1911. All these were assumed to have zero kinship links, although it is likely some would have had them.

Kinship measurements were generally restricted to first-order links as these were the easiest to calculate in a society with such complicated kinship patterns, and also because these were the links most commonly measured in other studies. However, second-order links were calculated for households without first-order links in 1851. This revealed that a total of 85% of households in St Neot had first-order or second-order links.

One measure deliberately not used in this study is Relative Kinship Density (RKD), which is a measure of the number of kinship links in a community expressed as a percentage of total potential links. RKD only has validity for small samples, or when comparing similar sized samples. This is because, as Todd recognised, as sample sizes grow RKD naturally decreases.[113] Once sample sizes exceed 50 the measure itself becomes virtually meaningless. Todd used RKD on

[113] Todd, E., 'Seven peasant communities in pre-industrial Europe. A comparative study of French, Italian and Swedish rural parishes (18th and early 19th century)' (University of Cambridge Ph.D. thesis, 1976), p. 234.

sample sizes of 50 or less and so was able to make meaningful comparisons between communities, but this was not the case with Wrightson and Levine, who used RKD in a less appropriate way in their subsequent study of Terling in Essex. Their extremely low RKD for Terling of 0.3% was indeed partly influenced by the generally low number of kinship links they discovered in the community. However, by far the biggest influence was the fact that the sample size of 122 households guaranteed a low RKD because of the way the formula is calculated. The formula used for the calculation is: RKD = (AKD*(N/2))/((N*(N-1))/2), where N equals the number of households and AKD is the Absolute Kinship Density. Terling had 122 households in 1671 and an AKD of 0.39, so the formula was calculated in this way: RKD = (0.39*(122/2))/((122*121))/2) = 0.32%.[114]

The flaw in the formula is that it makes no allowance for the physical limit placed on first-order kinship links by the number of parents, siblings and children that any couple can have at any one point in time (and who must also be household heads and spouses to be included in the calculation). Thus the formula on which the RKD relies suggests there was a potential of 7,336 first-order links in Terling (122 multiplied by 121 divided by two). This was the equivalent of 60 links per household, which might be mathematically possible but is impossible in practice. The distortion grows exponentially so that, for example, a sample of 1,000 households would have almost half a million possible links mathematically, but this would require each household to have an impossible 500 first-order links.

[114] *ibid.,* pp232-3. Wrightson and Levine did not explain this calculation, but instead referred to the definition in Todd's thesis.

So when Wrightson and Levine said Terling had a (rounded) RKD of 0.3%, they explicitly implied that the community had only this percentage of total potential links, which was mathematically correct but of no practical relevance. When they then compared the RKD for Terling with the smaller samples in Todd's study – which had RKDs of between 3.3% and 5.5% - they made a very dubious comparison as they over-emphasised the paucity of kinship links in Terling.

Some other authors have also made such comparisons without pointing out the limitations of RKD as a measure. For example, Janet Few compared the RKDs for the three Devon locations in her study with the work of Todd in Normandy, Reay in Kent and Wrightson and Levine in Essex.[115] The huge variations in results caused by differing sample sizes were not explained. Nor were they properly explained when Dorothy Hamilton compared RKDs between Brancepath in Co. Durham and Terling in Essex.[116] The former had 342 households, compared with 122 in Terling and the RKD calculation for Brancepath was based on a ludicrous 116,622 theoretically possible links, compared with 14,672 for Terling.

Despite the dubious use of RKD as a comparative measure, Wrightson and Levine's study of early modern Terling did show that, for this part of England at least, kinship links between households were low. Only 33% of households in

[115] Few, J., 'Faith, Fish, Farm or Family? The Impact of Kinship Links and Communities on Migration Choices and Residential Persistence in North Devon 1841-1901' (University of Exeter Ph.D. thesis, 2009), p. 180. Reay did not publish AKDs or RKDs for his study of Hernhill. In her thesis Few made mistakes in calculating both measures for Hernhill based on Reay's published data because she only included related households in the calculation.
[116] Hamilton, D.E., 'Social Networks. Families and Neighbourhoods: Brancepath Parish in the Seventeenth Century' (University of Durham Ph.D. thesis, 2000), p. 312.

Terling had first-order links to other households in the parish, compared with 71% for early modern St Neot. Moreover, most of the minority of households in Terling with first-order kinship links had them with just one other household. Just 7% of households had first-order links with two or more households – the corresponding figure in 1793 St Neot was 43%.

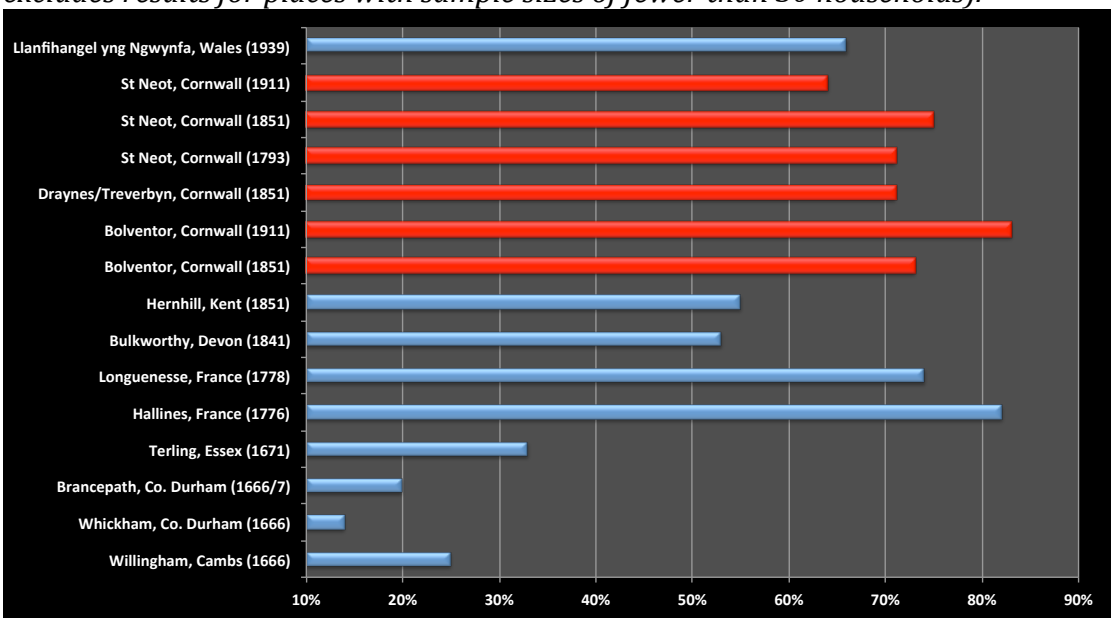
A summary of first-order links for agricultural and mining communities where first-order kinship has been measured is shown in figure 2.1. It excludes results for very small communities with sample sizes of fewer than 30 households. The first-order kinship links in the early modern English studies stood out as being particularly low, with the results for Brancepath and Willingham largely replicating Wrightson and Levine's findings for Terling. A further study by Alan Macfarlane of early modern Kirkby Lonsdale in Westmorland, although not statistically measuring kinship links, concluded this area also did not have heavy concentrations of kin living near to each other.[117] This all pointed to a growing consensus of a picture of rural England characterised by very weak kinship links.

More recent studies have produced rather less consistent outcomes. It is telling that those for England in the modern period (assumed to be those in the table after 1800) have been in very differently structured communities compared with the early modern ones of Terling, Brancepath and Willingham. Reay suggested that the difference between weaker kinship ties in the early modern era and stronger ties for nineteenth-century communities might have been indicative of

[117] Macfarlane, A., 'The myth of the peasantry: family and economy in a northern parish', in Smith, R. M., (ed.), *Land, Kinship and Life-Cycle* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 333-50.

a wider trend affecting many communities.[118] It is indeed likely that demographic and employment factors did influence changes in kinship densities in some communities over time, as has been demonstrated for St Neot, but other evidence suggests there were also inherent characteristics that made some communities more likely to have looser kinship than others.

Figure 2.1. Summary of first-order kinship links for agricultural and mining communities studied in France, Wales, England and Cornwall (the diagram excludes results for places with sample sizes of fewer than 30 households).[119]



Janet Few's results for three places in Devon - Bulkworthy, Bucks Mills and a single street in the market town of Hatherleigh - showed enormous variations in kinship patterns, with first-order kinship links differing over time and place from less than 10% to in excess of 80%.[120] The agricultural parish of Bulkworthy was

[118] Reay, B., *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800-1930* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 175.
[119] See pp. 122-124 and chapter five for a discussion of first-order kinship in Bolventor and Draynes/Treverbyn.
[120] Few, J., 'Faith, Fish, Farm or Family? The Impact of Kinship Links and Communities on Migration Choices and Residential Persistence in North Devon 1841-1901' (University of Exeter Ph.D. thesis, 2009).

made up of hamlets and dispersed settlements typical of agrarian communities across much of Devon. It had similar first-order kinship levels to Hernhill in Kent in the mid-nineteenth century. However, the proportion of households with first-order links halved between 1841 and 1871, and declined even more after that so that by 1901 there were just two households in Bulkworthy with first-order links. The main reason for the decline in kinship densities in Bulkworthy was the increased mobility of families in the second half of the nineteenth century.[121]

The situations in the two other places where kinship was measured by Few were very different. Bucks Mills was an atypical, tiny community on the north Devon coast made up of 24 households in 1841 where virtually every household head was a fisherman. First-order kinship links within this community increased from 58% in 1841 to 80% in 1871 and even more after that, before declining sharply again.[122] The main reason for the extremely high proportion of links in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the dominance of a single dynastic fishing family. In 1901 a Braund headed 17 of Bucks Mills's 27 households, while four of the remaining households had spouses whose maiden name was Braund. Conduit Street in Hatherleigh, where most household heads were either tradesmen or craftsmen, had extremely low links and, like Bucks Mills, was something of an outlier compared with other studies.[123]

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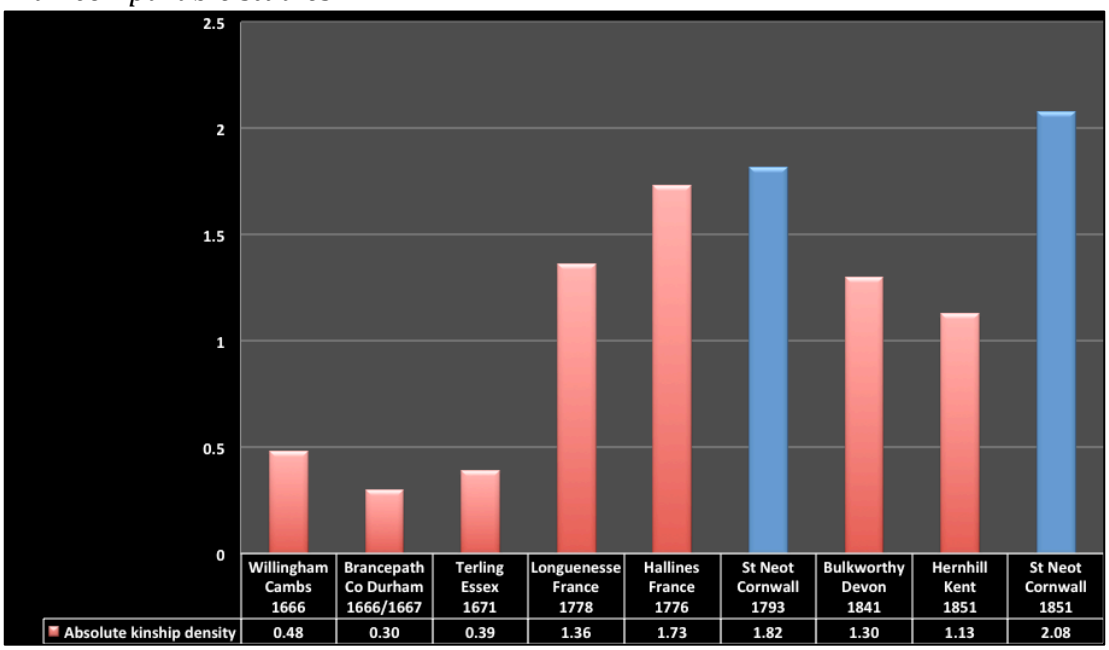
[121] For further discussion in this thesis on the implication of differing structures of societies in Cornwall and Devon on kinship patterns see pages 421-423.
[122] Few, J., 'Faith, Fish, Farm or Family? The Impact of Kinship Links and Communities on Migration Choices and Residential Persistence in North Devon 1841-1901' (University of Exeter Ph.D. thesis, 2009), pp. 148-158.
[123] Few only measured kinship links between households in the fishing hamlet part of the larger ecclesiastical parish of Bucks Mills. The parish was created in

Three things made the Cornish results stand out: first was the overall high level of first-order links across all places studied; second, in St Neot those links were consistently high within the community from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth; and third, they also had extremely high densities of kinship links, with the AKD reaching 2.08 in 1851. As a result of these factors the average household in St Neot in 1793 had four times as many first-order links as those in Terling in 1671. The AKDs for St Neot in 1793 and 1851 were higher than even the French examples, despite the latter having a higher proportion of households with first-order links (figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2. Absolute kinship densities compared. St Neot had higher densities than in all comparable studies.



The community that was closest to St Neot in terms of kinship patterns was the parish of Llanfihangel yng Ngwynfa in mid-Wales, which had 66% first-order

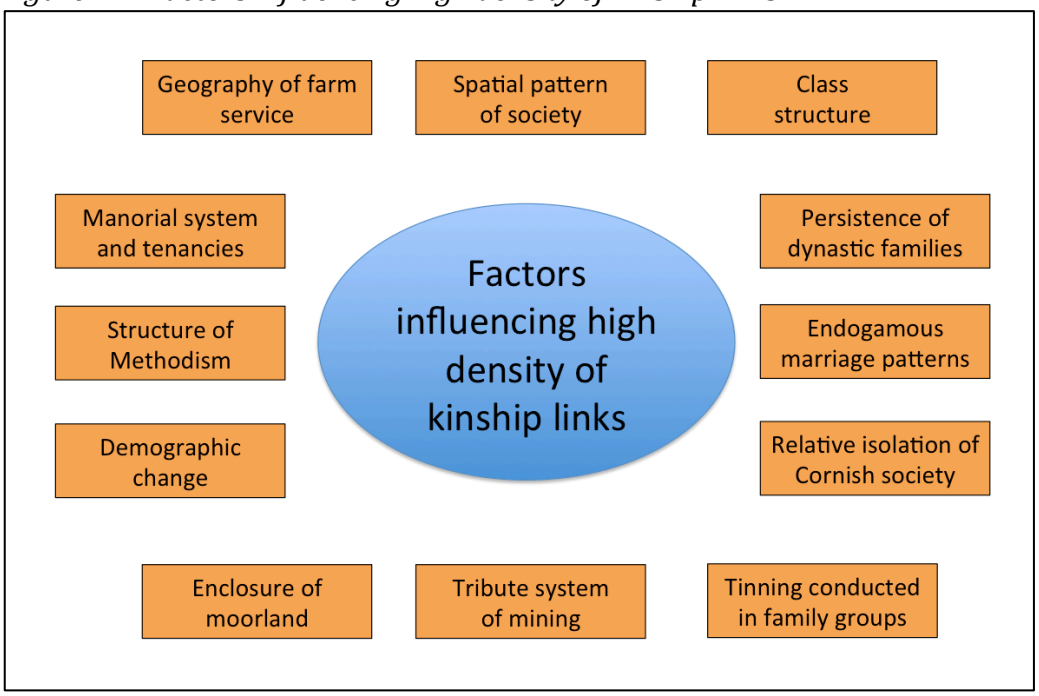
1862 out of the parishes of Woolfardisworthy and Parkham. The hamlet of Bucks Mills straddled part of the boundary between these two parishes.

links in 1939.[124] It was also the most similar in terms of spatial pattern. The structural and kinship similarities between Welsh and Cornish farming communities will be explored in detail in chapter seven (see pages 421-24).

2.3 Factors influencing the high density of kinship links on Bodmin Moor

There were at least a dozen main factors that contributed to the high density of kinship links in Bodmin Moor society. Some were fundamental to the long-term structure of society, while others were more transient in their influence. Figure 2.3 shows the factors that will be introduced in this chapter and that will form the backbone of the rest of the thesis. None of these factors acted independently, and the interrelationships acted to reinforce kinship patterns. It is useful to begin by briefly explaining why each factor was significant in relation to kinship.

Figure 2.3. Factors influencing high density of kinship links.



[124] Rees, A.D., *Life in a Welsh Countryside: A Social Study of Llanfihangel yng Ngwynfa* (Cardiff, 1950), pp. 73-81.

Spatial pattern of society. The spatial pattern of society described by Balchin (page 7) persisted throughout the period of study in most parts of Bodmin Moor. In a majority of moorland communities farmers were the largest employment group and they tended to be relatively immobile geographically. When they did move, it was usually over short distances. In most cases they stayed close to their parents, siblings and married children.

Class structure. There were class differences within Bodmin Moor society, but there was a fluid intersection between small farmers, tinners, craftsmen and labourers (and for a while miners as well). It meant that for most people suitable marriage partners were found locally.

Prevalence of farm service. Young people who did not stay on their parents' farms usually went into farm service. Evidence will be presented in chapter seven to show how the short distances travelled from parental home to the farm of employment reinforced local marriage and kinship patterns. This was in marked contrast to other studies (in England) that found that the long distances travelled by farm servants reduced kinship densities.

Manorial system and tenancies. The importance of manors and the way they functioned impacted on kinship patterns, particularly at the beginning of the period. In particular, the prevalence of leases-for-lives on lowland farms until the early nineteenth century, and on moorland farms throughout the period, gave families security of tenure over a number of generations, providing families with strong incentives to stay in a particular locality.

Persistence of dynastic families. There were more than 150 surnames present at any single census in nineteenth-century St Neot, but a small number of them had a majority of kinship links. In 1851 just 20 surnames were responsible for 60% of all first-order links. Many of these surnames had featured in the registers of Bodmin Moor parishes since the sixteenth century.

Demographic change. The rising population described in the last chapter, which was largely the result of increasing family sizes and a falling death rate, resulted in a rise in the AKD in the first half of the nineteenth century. This meant that although household numbers increased rapidly, the proportion of kinship links rose even faster.

Tinning. The tinners who set up home on the moors in the early nineteenth century worked together in tight kinship groups. Extended families worked together to establish smallholdings on open moorland, as well as to extract tin from deposits at or close to the surface of the moor.

Enclosure. Widespread enclosure to create larger, full-time farms from the 1830s onwards provided opportunities for families to remain within moorland parishes. The descendants of the tinners ran many of these farms and the predominance of leases-for-lives encouraged generations of kinship groups to remain on the moor.

Tribute system and mining. Many of the deep miners were employed on a tribute basis. Small groups of miners known as pares bid against each other to

work specific lodes, usually on a monthly basis. Members of pares were often closely related to each other, so that many of the miners who moved to Bodmin Moor from further west did so in wider kinship groups. Many miners who were single when they arrived quickly married into local families.

Structure of Methodism. Along with mine engine houses, the hundreds of small Methodist chapels were defining characteristics of the nineteenth-century Cornish landscape. They could be found in even the remotest parts of Bodmin Moor, and congregations drawn from small geographical hinterlands served to reinforce local kinship patterns.

Relative isolation of Cornish society. The sea and the River Tamar were physical barriers that kept Cornwall largely separate from other parts of Britain. Even with the expansion of mining on Bodmin Moor and the close proximity of Devon the population remained overwhelmingly Cornish. As a result, Cornwall retained a distinct cultural identity and this thesis will demonstrate that, in a similar way to Wales, recognition of kin was one of its key defining characteristics.

Endogamous marriage patterns. A majority of marriages took place between brides and grooms who both lived within the community. This was largely a function of a combination of the above factors. Most couples then continued to live within the community, at least for a time. The origins of brides and grooms for 705 marriages in St Neot parish church between 1755 and 1850 are shown in table 2.2. In 552 of 705 marriages in St Neot between 1755 and 1850 both the

bride and groom were resident in St Neot. Not surprisingly, virtually all brides were resident in the parish (96%) but it was more of a surprise to find that 80.9% of grooms were also from the parish, although almost 10% of all grooms were sojourners in the parish at time of marriage.

Table 2.2. Origins of brides and grooms marrying in St Neot, 1755-1850.[125]

Origins of bride and groom*	Number of marriages	% of total marriages
Both bride and groom from St Neot	552	78.3%
Bride or groom from St Neot, spouse from in adjoining parish	65	9.2%
Bride or groom from St Neot, spouse from more distant parish	65	9.2%
Neither bride nor groom from St Neot	10	1.4%
Total grooms from St Neot	570	80.9%
Total brides from St Neot	677	96.0%
Total marriages	705	100.0%

*** includes 104 sojourners resident in St Neot at marriage (68 men, 36 women)**

A study of marriage patterns in 69 English parishes between 1700 and 1839 discovered a general rising rate of endogamy from around 50% in the 1720s to 70% in the 1830s, although there was a slight decline in the first part of the nineteenth century.[126] The rate of endogamy in St Neot was higher than this average in all periods, and exceeded 80% between 1755 and 1780, and again between 1826 and 1850. The lowest rate of endogamy was between 1800 and 1825 when the population to St Neot was rising at its fastest rate. The high and relatively stable level of endogamy was probably influenced by the size of St

[125] CRO MS. P162/1: Registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, St Neot Parish Church (1549-1996).
[126] Snell, K.D.M., *Parish and Belonging: Community, Identity and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700-1950* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 183.

Neot – it was a large parish, increasing the chances of finding suitable marriage partners locally. High endogamy levels existed among all occupation groups, even among the offspring of farmers who formed the biggest social group, and who in other studies were found to be most likely to favour exogamous marriages.

After 1836 the occupations of the parents of brides and grooms were recorded in marriage registers, and the results for 268 brides and grooms marrying in St Neot between 1837 and 1850 are shown in table 2.3. During a period of rapidly rising population and expansion in mining, farmers' sons and daughters made up the largest group. There were almost 50% more of them than labourers' sons and daughters who made up the next largest group. Of all those marrying between these dates 40% were offspring of farmers, while 27% were children of labourers, 16% of trade/craft and 14% of miners. This represented a higher proportion of farmers than the 1851 census, where they made up 26% of the total. The explanation for the difference was that many couples who began married life as labourers had become small farmers by the time their own children were married.

Farmers' children were most likely to marry into the same social class, with two-thirds of their sons and daughters marrying other farmers' offspring. Of the remaining farmers' sons and daughters, 11% married the children of labourers, 7% of miners and 9%. However, there was considerable marrying across the employment divide between the smaller farmers (including farm bailiffs), more prosperous labourers, miners and crafts people.

Table 2.3. Marriage patterns by occupation of parents for 268 brides and grooms marrying in St Neot between 1813 and 1850.[127]

Occupation of father	Number of sons and daughters	% marrying farmers' sons and daughters	% marrying labourers' sons and daughters	% marrying craftmens' sons and daughters	% marrying miners' sons and daughters
Farmer	107	67%	11%	9%	7%
Labourer	73	16%	55%	12%	15%
Craft/trade	37	22%	30%	32%	16%
Miner	42	24%	21%	10%	29%
Other	9	56%	11%	11%	0%
All occupations	268	40%	27%	16%	14%

Marriage patterns were also affected by the presence of a small number of dynastic families that had a disproportionate influence. For the purposes of this thesis they have been defined as surnames represented in four or more households at any one time, having also been represented in St Neot or a neighbouring parish for three or more generations. There were 22 such surnames in St Neot in 1851. Between them they made up 14% of all surnames (of household heads) but 60% of all kinship links. However, just eight of these surnames had a disproportionate influence on kinship links in the parish (table 2.4). Most of the eight 'super-dynastic' surnames had been in the parish more-or-less continuously since the sixteenth century, although it is not known how many of those in 1851 were directly descended from the earliest recorded names.

Table 2.4 shows how the 'super-dynastic' families influenced overall kinship links in the parish. As first-order kinship is a measure of links held by both heads of households and their spouses, the table also shows the frequency of the eight surnames as maiden names. For example, the Jane surname featured in five households through the head, and seven households via the maiden name of the

[127] CRO MS. P162/1: Registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, St Neot Parish Church (1549-1996).

spouse (but only in 10 households in total as two male Janes were married to two first cousins also with the maiden name of Jane).

This analysis reveals that these eight surnames were present in 32% of all households in the parish and, of those 99 households, 87 had first-order links in St Neot. In addition, the 'super-dynastic' households had substantially more first-order links per household. As a result, the AKD for these households was 3.4, compared with an average of 1.5 for the other 210 households in St Neot in 1851. In total the 99 households featuring these eight surnames were responsible for 52% of all kinship links.

Table 2.4. The principal dynastic families in St Neot at the 1851 census.

Dynastic surname	Year surname first recorded in St Neot register	Number of households in 1851			Kinship	
		Heads with surname	Spouses with maiden name	Heads and/or spouses with surname	Number of first-order links	Absolute Kinship Density
Doney	1591	11	7	18	66	3.7
Keast	1583	11	6	17	53	3.1
Davey	1568	10	6	16	45	2.8
Hooper	1696	11	3	14	52	3.7
Lobb	1551	6	8	14	27	1.9
Rundle	1599	8	6	14	47	3.4
Mallett	1654	4	9	13	69	5.3
Jane	1577	5	7	10*	73	6.1
Total	n/a	66	52	99**	335	3.4

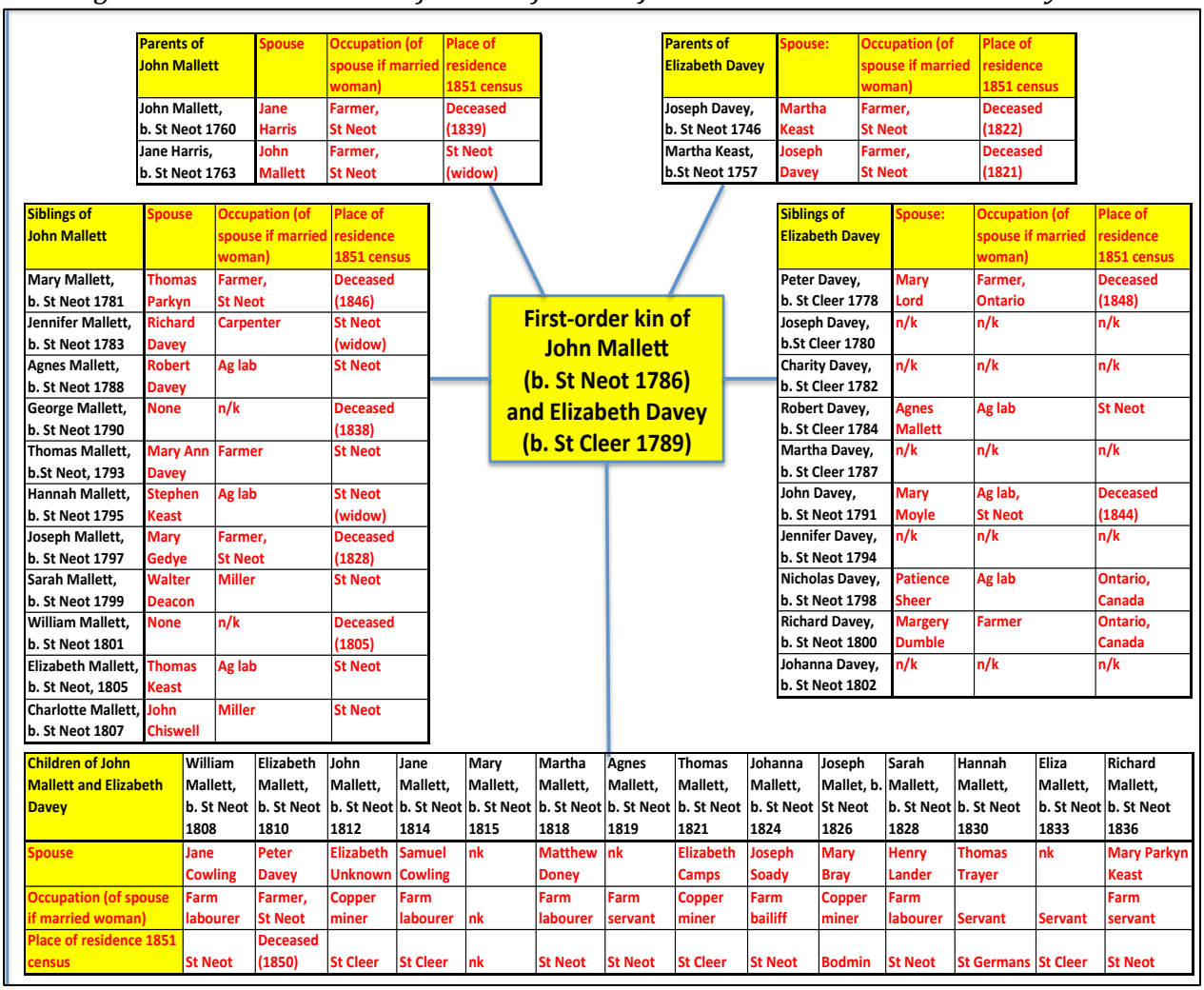
*** Two Jane household heads were married to first cousins with same maiden name**

**** In 19 households both head and spouse maiden names were from these eight dynastic surnames**

Mallett and Davey were two of the eight surnames, and the web of links for John Mallett and his wife Elizabeth Davey (who were introduced at the start of the chapter) are shown in figure 2.4. At the time of the 1851 census they had seven first-order links with other households in St Neot. Only seven other households had the same or a greater number of links in the parish. The extensive links were partly due to the fact that both John and Elizabeth were from large dynastic

families, and also because they also had a large family with most of their 14 children surviving into adulthood.

Figure 2.4. First-order kin of St Neot farmers John Mallett and Elizabeth Davey.



Parents of John Mallett	Spouse	Occupation (of spouse if married woman)	Place of residence 1851 census
John Mallett, b. St Neot 1760	Jane Harris	Farmer, St Neot	Deceased (1839)
Jane Harris, b. St Neot 1763	John Mallett	Farmer, St Neot	St Neot (widow)

Parents of Elizabeth Davey	Spouse:	Occupation (of spouse if married woman)	Place of residence 1851 census
Joseph Davey, b. St Neot 1746	Martha Keast	Farmer, St Neot	Deceased (1822)
Martha Keast, b.St Neot 1757	Joseph Davey	Farmer, St Neot	Deceased (1821)

Siblings of John Mallett	Spouse	Occupation (of spouse if married woman)	Place of residence 1851 census
Mary Mallett, b. St Neot 1781	Thomas Parkyn	Farmer, St Neot	Deceased (1846)
Jennifer Mallett, b. St Neot 1783	Richard Davey	Carpenter	St Neot (widow)
Agnes Mallett, b. St Neot 1788	Robert Davey	Ag lab	St Neot
George Mallett, b. St Neot 1790	None	n/k	Deceased (1838)
Thomas Mallett, b.St Neot, 1793	Mary Ann Davey	Farmer	St Neot
Hannah Mallett, b. St Neot 1795	Stephen Keast	Ag lab	St Neot (widow)
Joseph Mallett, b. St Neot 1797	Mary Gedye	Farmer, St Neot	Deceased (1828)
Sarah Mallett, b. St Neot 1799	Walter Deacon	Miller	St Neot
William Mallett, b. St Neot 1801	None	n/k	Deceased (1805)
Elizabeth Mallett, b. St Neot, 1805	Thomas Keast	Ag lab	St Neot
Charlotte Mallett, b. St Neot 1807	John Chiswell	Miller	St Neot

Siblings of Elizabeth Davey	Spouse:	Occupation (of spouse if married woman)	Place of residence 1851 census
Peter Davey, b. St Cleer 1778	Mary Lord	Farmer, Ontario	Deceased (1848)
Joseph Davey, b.St Cleer 1780	n/k	n/k	n/k
Charity Davey, b. St Cleer 1782	n/k	n/k	n/k
Robert Davey, b. St Cleer 1784	Agnes Mallett	Ag lab	St Neot
Martha Davey, b. St Cleer 1787	n/k	n/k	n/k
John Davey, b. St Neot 1791	Mary Moyle	Ag lab, St Neot	Deceased (1844)
Jennifer Davey, b. St Neot 1794	n/k	n/k	n/k
Nicholas Davey, b. St Neot 1798	Patience Sheer	Ag lab	Ontario, Canada
Richard Davey, b. St Neot 1800	Margery Dumble	Farmer	Ontario, Canada
Johanna Davey, b. St Neot 1802	n/k	n/k	n/k

Children of John Mallett and Elizabeth Davey	William Mallett, b. St Neot 1808	Elizabeth Mallett, b. St Neot 1810	John Mallett, b. St Neot 1812	Jane Mallett, b. St Neot 1814	Mary Mallett, b. St Neot 1815	Martha Mallett, b. St Neot 1818	Agnes Mallett, b. St Neot 1819	Thomas Mallett, b. St Neot 1821	Johanna Mallett, b. St Neot 1824	Joseph Mallet, b. St Neot 1826	Sarah Mallett, b. St Neot 1828	Hannah Mallett, b. St Neot 1830	Eliza Mallett, b. St Neot 1833	Richard Mallett, b. St Neot 1836
Spouse	Jane Cowling	Peter Davey	Elizabeth Unknown	Samuel Cowling	nk	Matthew Doney	nk	Elizabeth Camps	Joseph Soady	Mary Bray	Henry Lander	Thomas Trayer	nk	Mary Parkyn Keast
Occupation (of spouse if married woman)	Farm labourer	Farmer, St Neot	Copper miner	Farm labourer	nk	Farm labourer	Farm servant	Copper miner	Farm bailiff	Copper miner	Farm labourer	Servant	Servant	Farm servant
Place of residence 1851 census	St Neot	Deceased (1850)	St Cleer	St Cleer	nk	St Neot	St Neot	St Cleer	St Neot	Bodmin	St Neot	St Germans	St Cleer	St Neot

John's father, also called John Mallett, had been a farmer in St Neot from at least the 1790s and was tenant of 30 upland acres at East Northwood (also known as Narrada) in 1793. The farm had common rights on Northwood Downs and John Mallett senior also rented additional moorland for summer grazing. He died in 1839 at the age of 79 and his son Thomas became tenant of the farm. By 1861 the tenancy had passed to his brother John Mallett junior. Richard and Charlotte

Barnecut subsequently farmed it (Charlotte was a granddaughter of John Mallett senior) before the farm was merged with West Northwood in the 1870s.

The Daveys had also been farmers in St Neot for a number of generations and in the 1700s were owner-occupiers of land at Bowden, which adjoined Northwood. Elizabeth's father, Joseph Davey was tenant at Little Treverbyn in St Neot in 1793. Another branch of the Davey dynasty farmed at adjoining Great Treverbyn and in 1841 John and Elizabeth's daughter (Elizabeth Mallett, born 1810) married her second cousin Peter Davey from this branch and they took over the farm from Peter's parents.

However, both Peter and Elizabeth died within two months of each other during the winter of 1850-51, and John and Elizabeth Mallett moved to Great Treverbyn with John becoming farm bailiff there. As well as becoming managers of the farm John and Elizabeth took on responsibility for the three young orphaned children of Peter and Elizabeth, having almost completed the raising of their own 14 children.

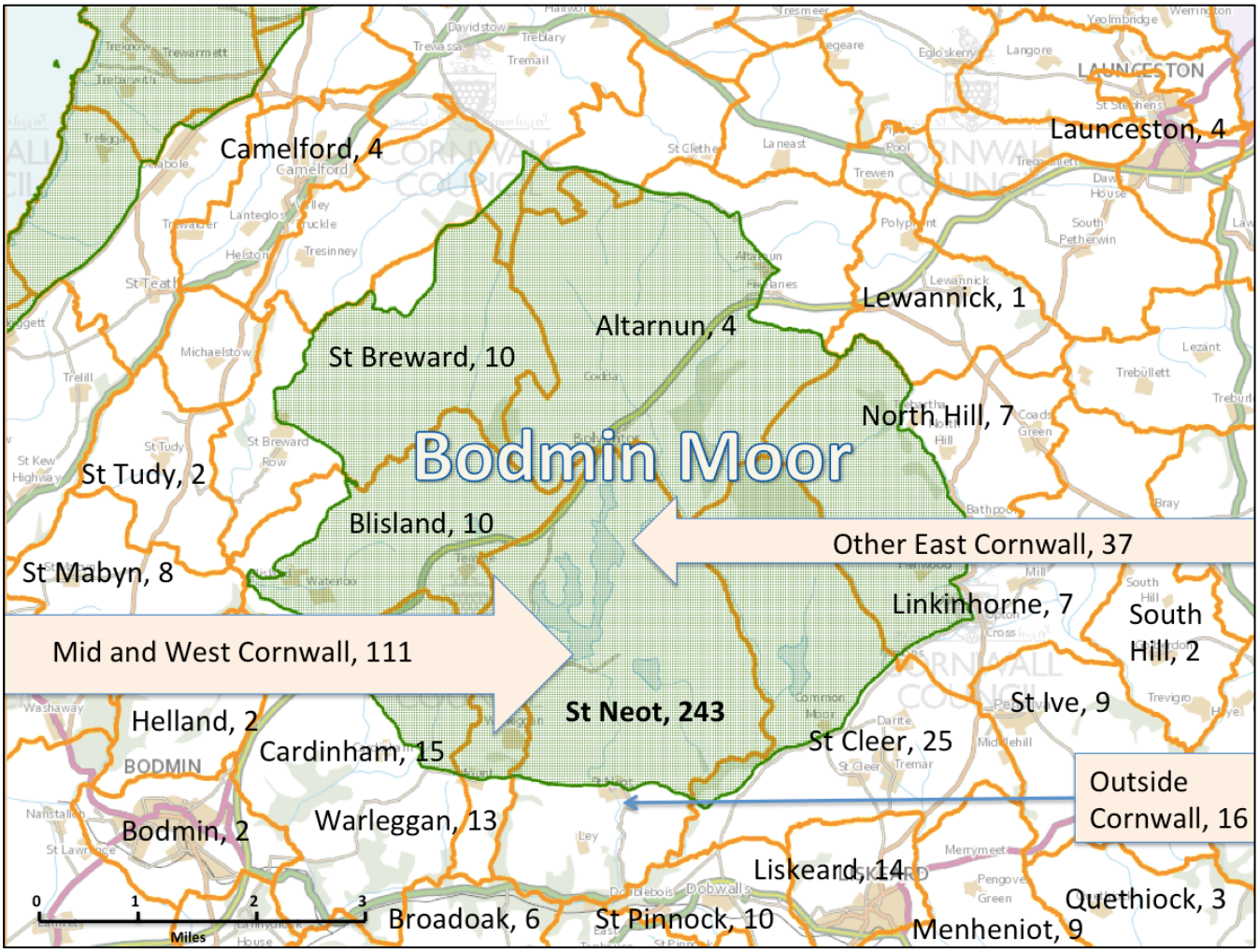
The siblings and children of John and Elizabeth's large family were well represented across the farming, labouring, mining and craft sections of local society, and the lack of a marriage hierarchy also meant that they were able to find marriage partners locally. Of the 22 children and siblings of John and Elizabeth who could be traced at the 1851 census, 10 were heads or spouses in households headed by labourers, seven by farmers, three by craftsmen, and two by copper miners.

Geographical movement tended to be either very local or international – with virtually nothing in-between. Frequently migration (both local and international) involved wider kinship groups. Fifteen of the 22 were resident in St Neot, three in St Cleer, one in Blowinghouse near Bodmin, and three in Canada. John and Elizabeth had a minimum of 85 nieces and nephews, in addition to their 21 brothers and sisters and 14 children, and many of these lived in the St Neot area.

Despite the persistence of many families in St Neot, particularly dynastic ones, and the endogamous nature of most marriages it would be wrong to think of the parish as a closed community. Indeed, there was still considerable movement into and out of the parish – particularly in the first half of the nineteenth century. Not surprisingly people born outside the parish of St Neot were the most likely to have fewer first-order kinship links – 63% of households where heads were born outside St Neot had first-order links, compared with 87% for those born in St Neot.

The places of birth for the 574 heads or spouses in St Neot's 309 households in 1851 are shown in figure 2.5. Those born in St Neot made up 42% of the total, and a further 21% were born in neighbouring parishes. Despite the relatively close proximity of the Devon border, only 16 heads or spouses living in St Neot in 1851 – 2.8% of the total - were born outside Cornwall. Most of these were born in parishes adjacent to the River Tamar, and some of these came from families that had originated in Cornwall.

Figure 2.5. Place of birth of the 574 heads and spouses in St Neot's 309 households in 1851.[128]



A majority of the 111 (19.3%) born in mid- and west Cornwall were miners and their spouses, who moved to St Neot in the first half of the nineteenth century. In contrast, it is striking how few people were born in some of St Neot's adjacent parishes to the north. There were just four heads or spouses in St Neot who had been born in Altarnun, perhaps because the moors acted as a barrier to local movement.

[128] NA MS. HO 107/1902: Census Enumerators' Books for the Liskeard Registration District of Cornwall (1851).

It is more surprising that links were also high for the mobile copper and tin miners, three-quarters of whom were born outside St Neot. Two factors appear to have been most significant. First, many miners migrated to St Neot in larger kinship groups so they had immediate links to other households. Second, many of the miners quickly married into more longstanding St Neot families.

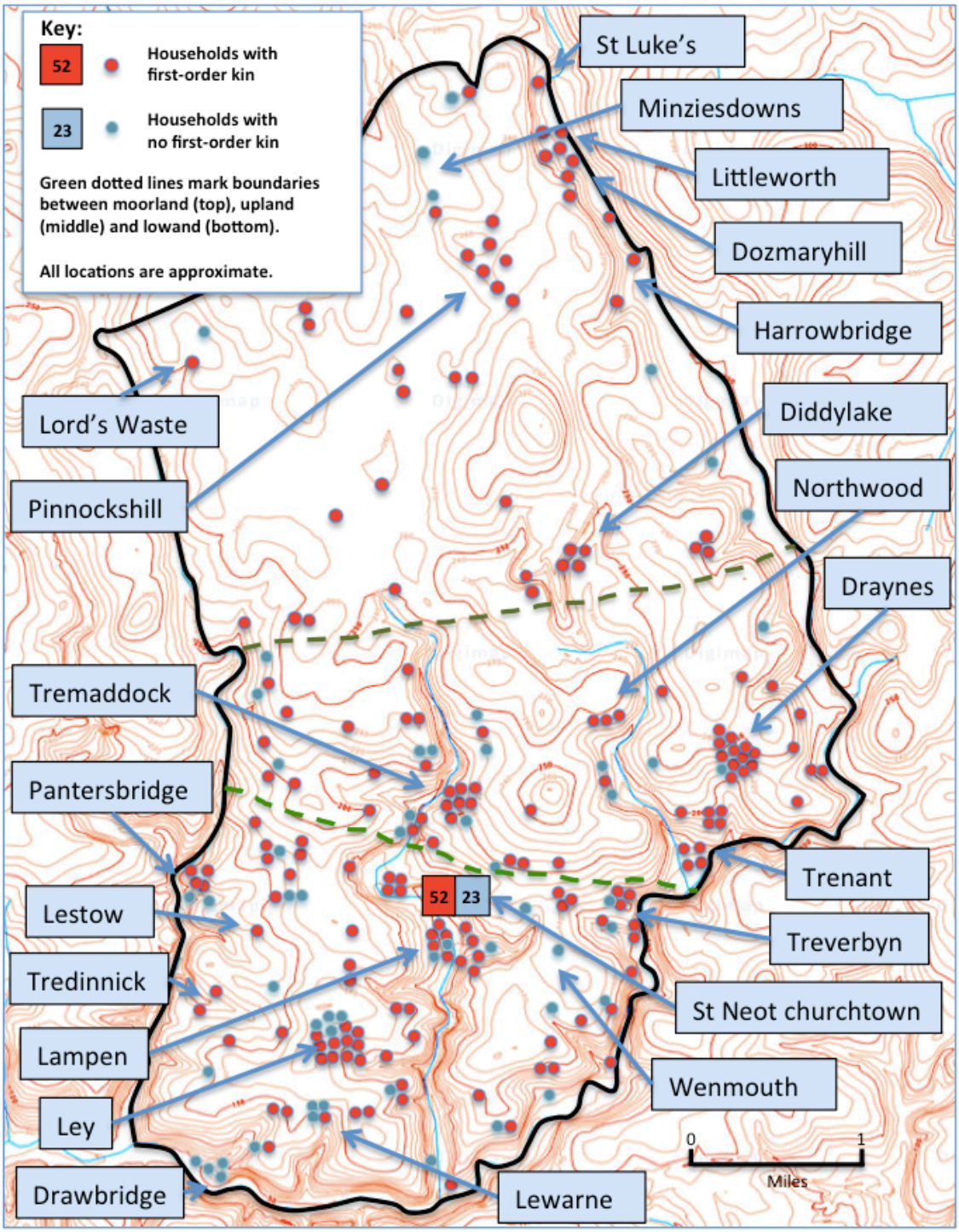
The impact on kinship of migrating miners will be discussed in more detail in chapter seven, but it is helpful here to outline a few examples. William Craze was one of a small number of miners who arrived in St Neot from St Just in the far west of Cornwall during the 1840s. In 1850 he married Mary Hillman whose family had been craftspeople in St Neot for many generations. Mary's sister married another miner from St Just.

The Craze family stayed in St Neot but often miners left as quickly as they arrived. Copper miner Hugh Victor also moved with his family to St Neot from West Cornwall in the 1840s. In 1849 and 1850 two of his daughters married copper miners in St Neot. In the 1850s one daughter moved with her family to another Cornish parish and the other joined the growing number who emigrated to Canada. Despite their mobility both the Craze and Victor families had multiple first-order kinship links in St Neot at the time of the 1851 census. This pattern of new arrivals quickly being assimilated into local society was regularly repeated. One miner with above average numbers of first-order links in 1851 was Edward Edwards who arrived in St Neot from St Agnes in the 1820s. His wife had died in St Agnes in 1825 and he moved to St Neot with his young daughter.

In 1827 Edward married Philippa Doney, daughter of a St Neot blacksmith. Based on baptism records of their children the Edwards were highly mobile before settling back in St Neot in the 1830s. Over the next few years Edward was joined by three of his siblings who also moved to the parish from St Agnes, one already married with a family and two who were single who then married into longstanding St Neot families. By 1851 all four siblings were heads of households, together with Edward's daughter from his first marriage who got married in St Neot in 1848. As a result, Edward Edwards had five first-order kin in St Neot in 1851 with all but one household involved in mining. As well as siblings in St Neot, Edward's mother also moved to the parish from St Agnes after her husband died. She lived with one of Edward's sisters in one of the high number of extended households in the parish. Their significance will be discussed in the next section.

The geographical pattern of first-order kinship links in St Neot is shown in figure 2.6. Locations of households reveal the pattern of hamlets and isolated settlements described by Balchin. By 1851, a sizeable village had also grown around the parish church, and the churchtown housed almost 20% of the parish's population. The inhabitants of the churchtown were predominantly craftsmen, miners and farm labourers. Many of the craftsmen were also employed in the parish's mines.

Figure 2.6. Kinship patterns for the 309 households in St Neot in 1851 (Base map © Digimap, University of Edinburgh. All locations are approximate).



The green dotted lines on the map mark the approximate boundaries between the largely unenclosed moors in the top half of the parish, the moorland edge uplands in the centre, and the lowlands in the south. The households on the

northern moors had virtually all been established in the first half of the nineteenth century. However, the tinners and small farmers of this district had the highest proportion of kinship links, with 86% having first-order links. The main reason for this was because the process of occupation and enclosure was largely conducted in wider kinship groups (see chapter five for full discussion).

Upland areas had the next highest first-order links (80%), with the small hamlets of Tremaddock, Draynes and Trenant having particularly strong first-order links. The lowest proportion of first-order links was in the lowland part of St Neot. This was largely due to the higher proportion of copper miners and farm labourers living in the district. However, even here the proportion of first-order links was high compared with other studies.

Figure 2.7. By 1851 there was a sizeable village at St Neot churchtown. The village was home to a growing number of families of craftsmen, miners and labourers and between 1851 and 1871 it housed almost 20% of the parish's population.[129]



[129] Photograph courtesy of St Neot and Warleggan Community Archive. It is believed to have been taken in the 1940s.

St Neot was, in fact, a society where a majority of households in all employment groups had first-order links (see table 2.5). The density of links was highest for farmers and tinners, with the latter having an average of almost three first-order links per household. A majority of tinners were also small farmers, and many of these became full-time farmers when the industry collapsed later in the nineteenth century. However, even 62% of miners had first-order links, despite that fact that they were the most mobile and only just over a quarter of them had been born in St Neot.

Table 2.5. First-order kinship links in St Neot in 1851 by occupation of household head.

	Farmers	Farm Labourers	Miners	Tinners	Trade/crafts	All households
Total number of households	80	72	44	32	42	309
No first-order links	18%	29%	38%	9%	19%	24%
Related to 1	31%	28%	23%	25%	28%	28%
Related to 2	14%	14%	12%	19%	17%	15%
Related to 3+	38%	29%	27%	47%	36%	33%
Total with first-order links	82%	71%	62%	91%	81%	76%
Absolute Kinship Density	2.21	1.97	1.75	2.97	2.19	2.08

The contrast between kinship links by employment group in St Neot and other studies is marked. In Terling in Essex and the Blean in Kent larger farms meant farmers made up a much smaller proportion of the population.[130] Farmers in these places also favoured exogamous marriages, which were usually geographically distant. As a result, local kinship links of farmers were weak.

[130] Wrightson K. and Levine, D., *Poverty and Piety in an English Village, Terling 1525-1700* (Oxford, 1995 edn.), p. 35; Reay, B., *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800-1930* (Cambridge, 1996), p.166.

Links were also weak for labourers, mainly because a high proportion was employed on short-term contracts. They moved farms, and parishes, regularly.

In Terling farmers had hardly any kinship links at all with other households in the parish: the AKD for all known kinship links was calculated to be between a minimum of 0.16 and a maximum of 0.20, compared with a minimum of 2.21 in St Neot for first-order links only. In other words farmers in St Neot had 10 times more first-order kinship links per household than Terling farmers had for all types of links.[131] Labourers had the strongest links in Terling, but even here St Neot ones were five times more likely to have first-order kinship links than Terling's were to have any kinship connection at all.

In Kent, Reay adopted a slightly different approach to measuring kinship links for occupational groups: for each group in Hernhill he calculated the proportion of first- or second-order kinship links with any of the 584 households in the combined parishes of Boughton, Dunkirk and Hernhill.[132] He found there were just 13 farmers (out of 27) in Hernhill who had first- or second-order kinship links with any of the 584 households. By contrast, in St Neot there were 66 farmers (out of 80) who had first-order links with any of the 309 households within the parish. A further five farmers in St Neot had first-or second-order links with households in neighbouring parishes.

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[131] Wrightson K. and Levine, D., *Poverty and Piety in an English Village, Terling 1525-1700* (Oxford, 1995 edn.), p. 90. The AKDs quoted were for social category II which for Terling was defined as yeomen, substantial husbandmen and craftsmen with between £2 and £8 wealth in land or goods.
[132] Reay, B., *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800-1930* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 166.

One final factor that might have influenced the density of kinship links in the parish of St Neot was its size, as it covered almost 14,000 acres and contained 309 households. In order to test this kinship links were measured within two smaller geographic areas at the time of the 1851 census. The first was the south-eastern part of the parish centred on the hamlets of Draynes, Trenant and Treverbyn.

It also included settlements at Lamelgate, Westerlake, Lankeast, Netherton, Diddylake, Parson's park, Lord's Park, Northwood, Bowden, Killham, Berry Down and Wenmouth. This district covered approximately 3,000 acres and consisted of 65 separate households. As well as long-standing local farming families there had been a relatively recent influx of copper miners into the district and a number of tinners had encroached onto moorland on and around Draynes Common.

The second area was the ecclesiastical parish of Bolventor. In 1851 it had been established just three years and was created to serve the relatively new moorland community around the hamlet of Bolventor. The parish covered about 6,400 acres and in 1851 consisted of 66 households, most of which had been established in the previous 30 years. Most of the community were employed as tinners and small farmers and a majority of households were involved in both these occupations. The kinship patterns for Bolventor will be discussed more fully in the chapter on moorland enclosure.

First-order kinship links for both these areas are summarised in table 2.6. The first point to note was just how similar the results were for overall first-order kinship links: they varied between 71% for Draynes, 73% for Bolventor and 75% for St Neot. The slightly lower percentage of households with first-order kin in Draynes/Treverbyn was caused by the larger proportion of recently arrived copper miners living in the district who had the lowest proportion of first-order links. However, the AKD in Draynes/Treverbyn was even higher than for St Neot at 2.40, a result of the presence of around 25 dynastic families, particularly those with Keast, Mallett, Jane and Davey surnames.

Table 2.6. First-order kinship links in 1851 for Draynes and Bolventor compared with St Neot as a whole.

1851	St Neot	Draynes/ Treverbyn	Bolventor
Total number of households	309	65	66
Households with first-order links	75%	71%	73%
First-order links to one household	27%	18%	29%
First-order links to two households	15%	17%	20%
First-order links to three or more	33%	37%	24%
No first-order links recorded	25%	29%	27%
Absolute kinship density	2.08	2.40	1.74

Bolventor's similar proportion of total households with first-order links was a surprise given that most families had moved there only relatively recently. As we shall see, this was because many families moved onto the moorland around Bolventor in wider kinship groups and the subsequent intermarrying with other families resulted in the AKD rising substantially over the following 60 years.

The fact that the proportion of households with first-order kinship links remained broadly similar in smaller communities (both in terms of geographical area and number of households) suggests that this was not a significant factor in determining overall kinship densities. Subsequent chapters will demonstrate how many kinship groups in Bodmin Moor communities lived in very close proximity to each other. As the next section will show, those households also had a greater propensity to contain extended kin compared with other studies.

2.4 The significance of additional kin within households

The debate over the significance of different household structures in rural England has raged for many years. Alan Macfarlane in his study of parishes in late seventeenth-century Westmorland found little evidence of any households containing additional kin.[133] This largely corroborated Laslett's conclusion that nuclear families were the dominant household structure in early modern England.[134] Lawrence Stone further argued that this was a general English phenomenon that had evolved during the early modern period.[135]

[133] Macfarlane, A., 'The myth of the peasantry: family and economy in a northern parish', in Smith, R. M., (ed.), *Land, Kinship and Life-Cycle* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 344.
[134] Laslett, P., 'Mean Household Size in England since the Sixteenth Century', in Laslett, P. and Wall, R. (eds.), *Household and Family in Past Time* (1972), pp. 125-50.
[135] Stone, L., 'The Rise of the Nuclear Family in Early Modern England: The Patriarchal Stage', in Rosenberg, C.E. (ed.), *The Family in History* (Philadelphia, 1975), p. 21.

However, others argued that the dominance of the nuclear family could be traced back to at least the medieval period.[136] This argument was often linked with the broader narrative of weak kinship generally in English rural society both within and between households. We have already seen that Cornish society exhibited different patterns of kinship links *between* households, and this section will now outline how additional kin *within* households was also more common than in other studies.

It is important, however, to make clear from the outset that the nuclear family was the most common type of household structure in Bodmin Moor parishes, accounting for just over half of households in St Neot in 1851 (it was not possible to measure household structures in 1793 because reliable data was not available). However, nuclear families did not dominate in the way Wrightson and Levine described and complex households – those consisting of extended kin, multiple kin families or co-resident siblings – made up one-third of all households.

This was a higher proportion than for studies of rural Lancashire and Devon and significantly greater than for Kent and Surrey in 1851 (table 2.7). It is likely that some of the factors that influenced St Neot's high number of kinship links between households also influenced the higher occurrence of additional kin within households.

[136] Razi, Z., 'The Myth of the Immutable English', *Past & Present,* 140 (1993), pp. 3-44.

Table 2.7. Complex households compared, 1851 census.[137]

	Total number of households	Complex households	%
St Neot, Cornwall	309	101	33%
Ashworthy, Devon	212	62	29%
Rural Lancashire	855	231	27%
Boughton, Kent	303	53	18%
South east Surrey	817	132	16%
Hernhill, Kent	129	19	15%
Dunkirk, Kent	152	22	15%

Todd measured the significance of additional kin and extended kin within households in two regions of France (Brittany and Artois) and in Tuscany in Italy. It is useful to compare the proportion of complex households for these studies with the result for St Neot (table 2.8). Three patterns emerge: the very high proportion of complex households in Tuscany; the very low proportion in Artios; and those in-between in Cornwall and Brittany.[138]

Table 2.8. Complex households in France and Italy compared with St Neot.

	Year	Total number of households	Complex households	%
Pratolino, Tuscany, Italy	1721	41	24	59%
Briec, Brittany, France	1773	584	225	38%
St Neot, Cornwall	1851	309	101	33%
Longuenesse, Artois, France	1778	66	11	17%
Hallines, Artois, France	1776	52	7	14%

[137] Anderson, M., *Family structure in Nineteenth-century Lancashire* (Cambridge, 1971), p. 84; Lord, E., 'Communities of Common Interest: the social landscape of south-east Surrey, 1750-1850', in Phythian-Adams, C. (ed.), *Societies, Cultures and Kinship* (1993), pp. 131-299; Reay, B., *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800-1930* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 159; Williams, W.M., *A West Country Village: Ashworthy* (London, 1963), p. 218.
[138] Todd, E., 'Seven peasant communities in pre-industrial Europe. A comparative study of French, Italian and Swedish rural parishes (18th and early 19th century)' (University of Cambridge Ph.D. thesis, 1976), p. 60.

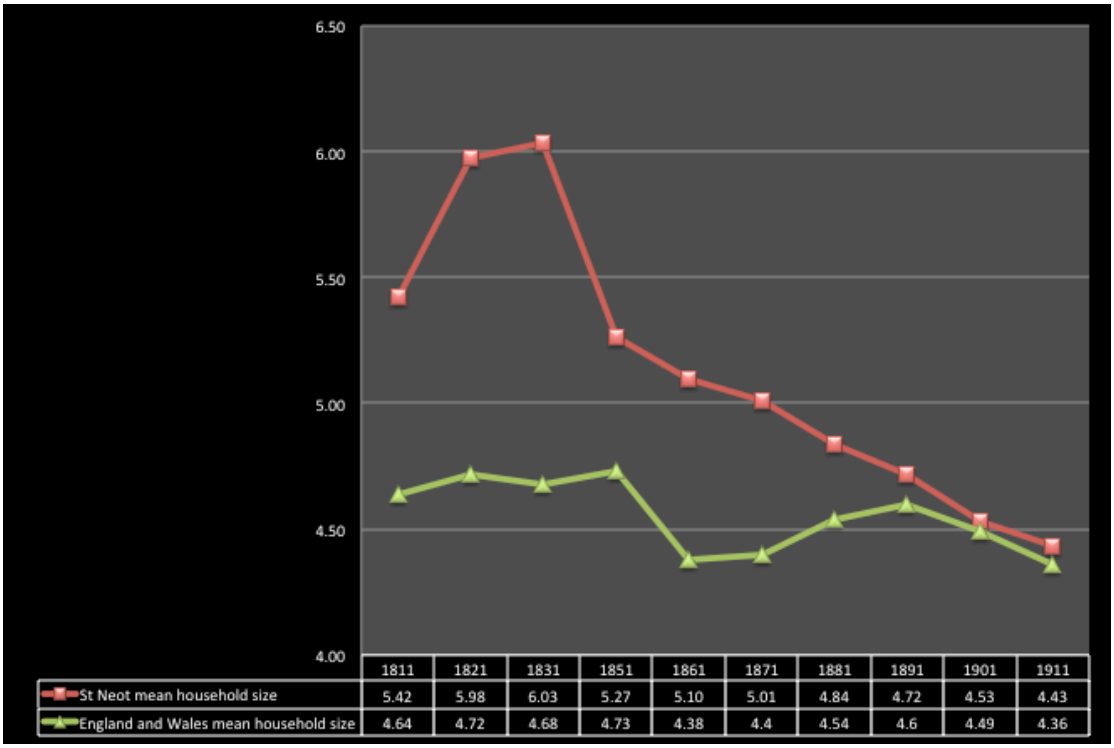
The peasant community of Pratolino stood out because of the predominance of multiple family households: three-quarters of complex families there consisted of such households. Longuenesse and Hallines were in the arable farming district of northern France, characterised by nucleated settlements and relatively large farms. The proportions of complex families were similar to the Kent and Surrey examples where similar community structures existed.

The results of his research made Todd warn others to tread warily when suggesting there were might be national patterns for household structures. St Neot bore the closest resemblance to Briec in Brittany, and it is noteworthy that both places consisted of small farms and dispersed communities.[139] In both communities a high proportion of farming households had live-in farm servants and house servants. In 1851 such households had 25% more occupants on average than all St Neot households (see page 61). One third of the population of St Neot lived on the parish's farms and sometimes servants were also relatives of the head or spouse.

Households in St Neot were larger than the average for England and Wales throughout the nineteenth century (figure 2.8). There was a significant spike in 1821 and 1831, when St Neot's average household size was 27% and 29% bigger respectively. This coincided with the period of fastest population growth and largest completed family sizes discussed in chapter one (see figure 1.9 and table 1.11). Over the following years the gap narrowed so that by 1911 the difference was just 2%.

[139] *Ibid.*, p. *61.*

Figure 2.8. Average household size in St Neot and England and Wales, 1811-1911.[140]



	1811	1821	1831	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
St Neot mean household size	5.42	5.98	6.03	5.27	5.10	5.01	4.84	4.72	4.53	4.43
England and Wales mean household size	4.64	4.72	4.68	4.73	4.38	4.4	4.54	4.6	4.49	4.36

There were a number of factors that explained this change. The first was the decline in farm service and the number of farm servants living on St Neot farms halved between 1851 and 1911. Second was the decline in the proportion of complex households in St Neot. Third was the overall decline in completed family sizes, which fell from 6.9 in 1800-34 to 5.5 in 1870-1901 (table 1.11, page 76). Finally, there was an increase in the number of former mining households headed by lone women, a factor peculiar to parts of Cornwall and one that will be discussed in detail in chapter seven.

[140] Laslett, P., 'Mean Household Size in England since the Sixteenth Century', in Laslett, P. and Wall, R. (eds.), *Household and Family in Past Time* (1972), p. 138. Data not available for England and Wales in 1841.

Despite the tendency for farming households to decline in size through the second half of the nineteenth century, they had a greater propensity to house relatives beyond the nuclear family compared with other household types (table 2.9). These additional household members were typically either grandparents or grandchildren but sometimes more distant relations. William and Elizabeth Jane, who farmed 30 acres at Bowden in 1851, were typical of the smaller full-time farmers in St Neot. They had both a male farm servant and female house servant living in, needed because their own children were too young to work on the farm. William's widowed mother Mary lived with them and the female servant, 17-year-old Harriet Jane, was also related to William.

Larger farms also tended to have bigger and more complex households. In 1851 at 150-acre Lantewey there were four generations of the Cawrse family under the same roof: widowed farmer John Cawrse; his mother Jane; his son and daughter-in-law; and one grandson, aged one. The household also contained four male farm servants and two female house servants.

As a result, almost half of farm households could be defined as complex (table 2.9). This was the same proportion as nuclear farm households, which frequently also housed farm servants. Craft households also had a relatively high proportion of additional kin, but for other employment groups nuclear families made up more than 60% of the total. As a result, nuclear families made up just over half of all households. This made such families the largest group overall, but hardly the predominant type described as the English norm by Wrightson and Levine.

Table 2.9. Household structure in St Neot in 1851 by occupational group of household head.

Type	All households	Farmers	Craft	Ag Lab	Miner
Complex households	33%	48%	38%	25%	24%
Couples	10%	9%	2%	7%	12%
Nuclear	52%	43%	57%	63%	66%
Widow(er) & child(ren)	3%	0%	0%	4%	0%
Unmarried & child	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Solitaries	1%	0%	2%	1%	0%
Total number of households	309	80	42	72	72

However, an important point is *all* household types in St Neot had a greater propensity to have additional kin than in many other places. This can be seen in the comparison between St Neot and Reay's Kent parishes, which shows the proportion of complex households headed by farmers, craftsmen and labourers (Table 2.10). Reay's Blean data in the table represents the combined results for the three parishes of Boughton, Hernhill and Dunkirk in Kent (he only measured kinship links between households in Hernhill).[141]

As already discussed, part of the reason for the difference between Cornwall and Kent was the more complicated structure of farm households in St Neot due to the presence of live-in male and female servants who were sometimes relatives of the household. However, the greater propensity to have additional kin in all household types in Cornwall suggests there were some other factors at work. One was the tendency, almost without exception, for elderly widows and widowers to move in with close kin, most frequently with their married children.

[141] Reay, B., *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800-1930* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 159.

Table 2.10. Complex households by occupation group compared, Cornwall and Kent (1851).

	St Neot, Cornwall 1851			Blean, Kent 1851		
	Number of households	Complex households	% complex	Number of households	Complex households	% complex
Farmers	80	38	48%	73	17	23%
Craft	42	16	38%	132	29	22%
Labourers	72	18	25%	293	31	11%
All households	309	101	33%	584	88	15%

For example, farm labourer William Bawden and his wife Jane lived with their six children and elderly lodger Mary Jane at Chapel Cottage in the hamlet of Trenant. Although described in the census as a lodger, the family reconstitution reveals she was Jane's mother. Mary had moved in with the family after her husband died in 1844. The question as to whether lodgers were also kin has been recognised as a potential issue in some census returns for many years, but can only be effectively resolved through family reconstitution.[142] In St Neot virtually all kin of the spouse living in the same household were described as lodgers, as well as those of the head of house on some occasions.

Sometimes elderly kin moved in with children before being widowed. Miner John Oliver and his wife Mary lived next door to the Bawdens with their seven children and Mary's elderly parents, paupers Ralph and Martha Jane. Indicative of the complex web of relationships in St Neot's many hamlets was the fact that Mary Jane was the sister-in-law of Ralph.

Younger widows or widowers with unmarried children also tended to move in with kin, or kin would move in with them. For example Grace Keast's brother,

[142] Laslett, P., 'The history of the family', in Laslett, P. and Wall, R. (eds.), *Household and Family in Past Time* (1972), pp. 34-39.

Petherick Higman, moved into her farmhouse at Higher Draynes after her husband committed suicide in the 1840s. Close by at Great Draynes Farm, widower John Bate moved in with his brother Joseph. Joseph and his wife also housed an unmarried son, two grandchildren (one a servant, the other a scholar), and two unrelated servants.

It is possible that pressure on housing due to the rising population also affected the number of households with additional kin in St Neot. The sale catalogue for the Morshead family's lands in 1818 – at the time they were the biggest landowners in St Neot – revealed how a number of their properties had been subdivided.[143] Chapel Cottage, where the Bawdens and Olivers lived, had been 'divided into four cottages' some time before 1850 according to a lease document.[144]

Another possibility could be that taking in elderly parents, widowed or otherwise, was a tactic to keep kin out of the workhouse, but lack of data on household composition before the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act makes this difficult to assess. The elderly residents of Chapel Cottage were all paupers and, as will be discussed in more detail later, the parishioners of St Neot strongly opposed the building of a workhouse at Liskeard because it would result in aged kin being taken away from the parish.[145]

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[143] Sale catalogue for Morshead lands in Cornwall, Sept. 1818. Copy held by St Neot and Warleggan Community Archive.
[144] CRO MS. CY/2656: Assignment of lease for Chapel Cottage (1850).
[145] CRO MS. P162/8/1: Twelve Men's book, St Neot (1821-1855).

In addition, the fact that most elderly people had close kin living close by perhaps meant that there was therefore a greater likelihood that they would be given the opportunity to live with family when the need arose. Children were nearly always close enough to be aware of any issues affecting elderly parents. Whatever the reason or reasons, the net effect was that there were just three solitary households in St Neot in 1851, or just under 1% of the total. In the Blean there were 45, equal to 7.7% of all households. Of the three in St Neot two were elderly spinsters and one was a widow with no family close by. One of the spinsters, although living alone, lived next door to her brother.

The proportion of complex households in St Neot declined in the second half of the nineteenth century, dropping from 33% in 1851 to 25% of all households by 1911. Two factors appear to have contributed to this: first, farm households became more reliant on the labour of the immediate family; and second, there was a greater propensity for elderly people to live alone. However, a majority of widowed elderly people still lived with kin and 36% of farm households remained complex in structure. As a result, St Neot in 1911 still had far more households containing extended kin than the Blean had in 1851.

2.5 Concluding comments

When Macfarlane imagined what a foreigner would make of English society at the beginning of the nineteenth century, he said that the visitor would most of all

notice the weakness of kinship and the high rate of geographical mobility.[146] Had the imagined visitor travelled to Cornwall he would have found a very different situation in three ways: first, he would have seen that close kin were highly likely to live on neighbouring farms and in cottages in the same hamlet or parish; second, he would have noticed a greater propensity for wider kinship groups to live together in the same household; and third, he would also have discovered that although mobility was common, it was usually only over short distances and, as we shall see, often within the same parish or manor.

Sovic *et al* suggested that more than the lack of joint or extended kinship groups coming as a surprise to the hypothetical visitor, he or she would have been astonished by the greater propensity of the English to give 'the ultimate responsibility of taking care of the elderly and other needy people' to a community as a whole rather than to close kin.[147]

This was a view shared by Reher, who argued that the role of kin in care of the old 'was much more important in strong-family societies than in societies where weak-family systems prevailed. A structural characteristic of English society, epitomized in the Poor Laws, was that the ultimate responsibility for the wellbeing of the elderly fell to the collectivity'.[148]

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[146] Macfarlane, A., *The Culture of Capitalism* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 145-151.
[147] Sovic, S., Thane, P. and Viazzo, P., 'The History of European Families: Old and New Directions', in *The history of Families and Households: Comparative European Dimensions* (Leiden, 2016), p. 8.
[148] Reher, D.S., 'Family Ties in Western Europe: Persistent Contrasts', *Population and Development Review,* 24.2 (1998), pp. 209-210.

Reher would have found the attitude towards the care of the elderly in Cornwall to be very un-English: virtually all of the elderly people in St Neot and the other Bodmin Moor parishes in 1851 lived with or near to close kin. As chapter five will demonstrate, the importance of the elderly living close to their kin was one of the main reasons the parish rejected proposals for a workhouse in the district in the 1830s (see page 181). It was yet another example of Cornish difference.

Chapter 3. The importance of the manorial system and its influence on kinship patterns

3.1 Introduction

One of the key features of agrarian society in early modern Cornwall was the survival of the manorial system and its associated tenancy arrangements for longer than in many other parts of the country. However, this did not represent the survival of the archetypical English manor, but one that evolved to suit the dispersed nature of Cornish communities. The significance of the manor in this modified Cornish form has been widely misunderstood and this chapter provides a fresh interpretation of its enduring influence, particularly in relation to kinship patterns.

The survival of manorial influence to the end of the eighteenth century was, paradoxically, largely a function of inherent weaknesses of the system from a landowner's perspective. As we shall see, most manors were relatively small, usually situated some distance from the owner's residence, and often hopelessly divided due to marriage settlements and the peculiarities of some tenancy arrangements. In times of relative stability it therefore made sense to let the manors operate with a light touch by reducing any potential administrative burden.

However, rising prices during the eighteenth century put pressure on the system and its associated long-term tenancies. As a result, landowners had already

begun to replace such tenancies with short-term ones before the beginning of the French Wars. Even so, Marshall estimated two-thirds of farms in Cornwall were still let on leases-for-lives in 1796.[149] The systematic dismantling of the system – with a few notable exceptions that will be discussed later – was concentrated in the period between 1793 and 1820.

The historiography of the change to short-term tenancies has largely focused on the narrative of an out-dated system being overhauled by progressive landowners, who then invested in farms and encouraged a backward tenantry to undertake agricultural improvement. There is no doubt some truth in this narrative, but it is a rather narrow explanation that ignores the fact that in the places where leases-for-lives remained improvement could be spectacular. It also sidesteps the real reason many landowners got rid of security of tenure, which was to get a greater proportion of the profits from farming as prices rose.

This chapter will explain how the manorial system worked in Cornwall for the benefit of both landlord and tenant, and how it affected the persistence of kinship groups within communities. It will then outline the process of its dismantling and the consequences for tenants. It will describe how in one generation a majority of Cornish farming families who had enjoyed security of tenure over many centuries were reduced from yeoman farmers to rack-rented occupiers. This change significantly reduced their ability to cope in the post-war recession, forcing many tenants off farms and encouraging the first wave of mass emigration from Cornwall.

[149] Marshall, W., *The Rural Economy of the West of England, Vol. 1* (1796), p.71.

3.2 The evolution of the manorial system in Cornwall

In the rather limited historiography of Cornish land ownership and occupation there has been a tendency to underplay the significance of the manor. Payton, for example, said the term manor needed to be used with caution in the Cornish context. He suggested that their origins in Cornwall were 'for the most part bureaucratic creations, artificial administrative conveniences drawing together the scattering of otherwise diverse, unconnected settlements in particular geographic areas'.[150]

However, much of the evidence for the alleged weak manorial system in Cornwall came from a single source: Hatcher's study of 17 Duchy of Cornwall manors in the medieval period.[151] Hatcher found many of the features of the English manor - such as demesne farming, nucleated villages and open fields – to be completely absent in Cornish manors. Instead he discovered a dispersed and mobile tenantry who had to bid for leases on properties every seven years. The waters were further muddied when Hatcher went as far as to suggest medieval Cornwall could be described as 'non-manorial'.[152]

There were two main problems with the suggestion that Cornwall was non-manorial: the first issue was the fact that landownership in Cornwall clearly was organised into manors; and the second was that the Duchy's landholdings were

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[150] Payton, P., *Cornwall, A History* (Fowey, 2004 edn.), p. 80.
[151] Hatcher, J., *Rural Economy and Society in the Duchy of Cornwall, 1300-1500* (Cambridge, 1970).
[152] Hatcher, J., 'Non-Manorialism in Medieval Cornwall', *Agricultural History Review,* 18 (1970), pp. 1-16.

small in Cornwall and the seven-year shorter-term tenancies that predominated on them were not typical. In reality, manors evolved to suit the circumstances and became the most important Cornish economic unit. Their evolution into something that suited Cornwall meant that manorial influence lasted for longer than elsewhere. In addition, the way manors were organised reinforced the independence of Cornish tenants. Fox and Padel likened the occupiers of manors belonging to the Arundells of Lanherne to a body of shareholders acting in the common good with little outside influence. 'The rules and rhythms of these settlements were determined not by lords but by farming families conforming by custom to established practices.'[153]

By the end of the eighteenth century leases-for-lives (sometimes also called lifeleasehold or lifehold leases) had been the predominant from of tenancy on most farms in Cornwall for 300-400 years.[154] However, the evolution of leases-for-lives in Cornish manors remains obscure. They probably evolved from copyhold tenancies, many of which were also for lives, during the later medieval period.[155] Fox and Padel noted a relatively high turnover of tenants on some Arundell lands and it is possible lifehold leases became popular to encourage tenants to remain on holdings.[156] By Tudor times leases-for-lives had become the most common form of tenancy arrangement.[157]

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[153] Fox, H.S.A. and Padel, O.J., *The Cornish Lands of the Arundells of Lanherne, Fourteenth to Sixteenth centuries* (Exeter, 2000), p. xcii.
[154] Deacon, B., *A Concise History of Cornwall* (Cardiff, 2007), p. 43.
[155] Padel, O. J., pers. comm.
[156] Fox, H.S.A. and Padel, O.J., *The Cornish Lands of the Arundells of Lanherne, Fourteenth to Sixteenth centuries* (Exeter, 2000), pp. cxiii-cxx.
[157] Rowse, A.J., *Tudor Cornwall* (London, 1941), pp. 48-52.

Clay noted that their popularity in most parts of western England began to wane rapidly after 1700 to be replaced by short-term tenancies that had become the norm much earlier in parts of the midlands and eastern England.[158] In Cornwall, Wales and parts of Ireland, however, leases-for-lives persisted for much longer. For example, on Lord Mount Cashell's Antrim Estate virtually all of the 248 lease agreements signed between 1724 and 1822 were leases-for-lives. After 1822 most were leases for 29 years or yearly agreements.[159] In parts of Wales they lasted even longer, being granted in Pembrokeshire until the 1840s although they had generally ceased to be offered elsewhere in Wales earlier in the nineteenth century.[160]

The working of leases-for-lives in Cornwall was neatly summarised by Worgan in 1811:

> 'As to the tenure of tenants, it has been much the custom to grant leases-for-lives to the tenants, for a term of 99 years, determinable on the death of the longest liver of three lives, to be named by the taker. Upon the death of one of the lives named in the lease, it was usual for landlords to consent to the adding a new life to the one remaining. The consideration in the original grant was uniformly a fine paid in hand, of from 14 to 18 years rent of the estate, with a small reserved, or conventionary rent, and suit and services to the manor court; the renewal generally a fine only of three years rent, for one life, or seven for two lives, without any alteration [to the] conventionary rent'.[161]

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[158] Clay, C., 'Lifeleasehold in the Western Counties of England 1650-1750', *Agricultural History Review,* 29 (1981), p. 83.
[159] Wilson, C.A., *New lease on life: Landlords, tenants and immigrants in Ireland and Canada* (London, 1994), p.29.
[160] Houston, R.A., *Social Relations and Economic Life on Landed Estates, 1600-1850* (Basingstoke, 2014); Howell, D.W., 'The economy of the landed estates of Pembrokeshire c.1680-1830', *Welsh History Review,* 3 (1966), p. 274.
[161] Worgan, G., *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall* (London, 1811), p. 19.

The reasons behind Cornish farmers' preference for leases-for-lives were explained by Richard Carew in 1602. He described how the 'once smarting' of a large entry fine was seen as preferable to the 'continual aching' of rack-rental leases.[162] Carew also noted the powerful attraction of the security of tenure offered by such leases: 'they always prefer lives before years, as both presuming on the country's healthfulness, and also accounting their family best provided for when the husband, wife and child are sure of a living'. The 'once smarting' entry fines were generally afforded from inheritances or loans. However once paid, the small annual conventionary rents could be relatively easily paid, whatever the economic or personal circumstances affecting the tenant.

Leases-for-lives retained many of the characteristics of their customary forebears, with lease agreements listing requirements to provide annual harvest days, plough days, capons, geese, hens, and best beasts as heriots. Sometimes peculiarly Cornish requirements such as an annual supply of pilchards also featured in leases.[163] By the eighteenth century most of these charges had been commuted to cash payments, which were delivered to the manor court by a reeve appointed each year from among the tenants.

There were a number reasons for the persistence of leases-for-lives but the biggest attraction for landowners, according to Clay, was that such leases offered a low maintenance option for running manors in districts where farms were

[162] Carew, R., *The Survey of Cornwall* (London, 1602), pp. 58-59.
[163] CRO MS. CL/2/17/2: Luxulyan Manor Rent Rolls (1657-1807).

small, properties were dispersed and transport was difficult.[164] In most cases an agent acting for the landowner would meet once or twice a year with a reeve appointed annually from among the tenants. The reeve would co-ordinate payment of the small annual 'conventionary' rents and notify any changes to lives.

On Cornwall's largest estate the reeves from each of the disparate manors were called to see the agent at Lanhydrock House at least annually and sometimes every six months. Figure 3.1 shows the timetable for the Michaelmas 1743 manorial court meetings held with reeves from 34 Lanhydrock manors. They took place between 30 September and 19 October 1743 and were followed by an audit. Apart from these meetings the main involvement of the estate office was limited to when new leases were issued or when fresh lives were added. The former were usually achieved by public auctions or surveys, and the latter by negotiation. Adding lives was a fairly straightforward process and there were manuals available to help calculate them.[165] The custom of adding of lives had the effect of making such leases-for-lives hereditary.

[164] Clay, C., 'Lifeleasehold in the Western Counties of England 1650-1750', *Agricultural History Review,* 29 (1981), p. 87.
[165] *ibid.*, p. 83.

Figure 3.1. Schedule of meetings for the reeves of Lanhhydrock's Cornish manors at Michaelmas 1743.[166]



A main disadvantage for landowners of this system was the irregular income from each individual farm. A completely fresh lease might only be granted once every 50 years and by adding lives it was not unusual for leases to run for more than 100 years. The annual 'conventionary' payments were tiny by comparison.

[166] CRO MS. CL/2/90: Manorial audit accounts, Cornish Manors (1734-56).

For example, when Charles Cawrse took the lease for East Penkestle in the Manor of Carburrow in 1769 he paid an entry fine of £66. In contrast the annual conventionary rent was just 10s a year.[167] Another disadvantage for landowners was that farms left hanging on a single elderly life could become run down. This in turn would affect the value of the farms for incoming tenants.[168]

There were other issues that started to influence matters. Increasing life expectancy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was reducing income from entry fines and fines for adding additional lives, which were the principal sources of income. Clay suggested that prior to the second half of the seventeenth century a lease-for-lives was considered equivalent to rack-rented leases of 21 years, but that by 1663 this had risen to 33 years.[169] This began to affect the willingness of landowners to grant fresh leases-for-lives, but in Cornwall the advantages of such leases continued to outweigh the disadvantages, at least for a while.

However, by the 1790s rapidly rising farm product prices that could not be reflected in static, small conventionary rents, and political pressure for farm improvement brought abrupt change to Cornwall. Board of Agriculture reports during the Napoleonic Wars condemned the barriers to improvement resulting from leases-for-lives. Fraser in 1794 and Worgan in 1811 were both highly

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[167] CRO MS. CL/2/37: Rental, Lanhydrock, Luxulyan, Helland, Penzance and other parishes (c.1740-1812).
[168] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), p. 217.
[169] Clay, C., 'Lifeleasehold in the Western Counties of England 1650-1750', *Agricultural History Review,* 29 (1981), pp. 83-84.

critical of the standards of husbandry of the farmers of Cornwall holding such leases.[170] Worgan was particularly scathing, claiming that the 'cultivation of leaseholders of this description….is necessarily feeble and spiritless and they live worse and work harder than any description of inhabitants in the country.' He went on: 'It is doubtful whether this peculiar way of leasing land is most injurious to the land, the tenant or the public.'[171]

These were harsh words and there can be little doubt that the workload of a small yeoman farmer was huge, and they were perhaps sometimes slow to embrace new techniques. However, there was also evidence to show that they were adopting new crops such as turnips and potatoes and their convertible husbandry techniques probably only lacked effective weed control.[172] In addition, gradually rising commodity prices in the second half of the eighteenth century had provided a long period of rising prosperity and the wills of leaseholders of even moderately sized farms demonstrate no shortage of capital. For example, when Robert Keast from Higher Trenant in St Neot died in 1796 his will confirmed that he had already shared out £450 between his three sons. In his will he distributed a further £20 to each of them, as well as £20 to each of his four daughters, while the lease of the farm went to his widow Mary. This does not seem like the will of someone 'feeble and spiritless'.[173]

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[170] Fraser, R., *General View of the County of Cornwall, Board of Agriculture and Internal Improvement* (1794), p. 64.
[171] Worgan, G., *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall* (London, 1811), p. 21.
[172] Marshall, W., *The Rural Economy of the West of England, Vol. 1* (1796); NA MS. HO 67/10. Parish acreage returns for Exeter diocese (1801).
[173] CRO MS. AP/K/981: Archdeaconry of Cornwall Probate Court, Will of Robert Keast, yeoman of St Neot (1796).

Worgan's main criticism of leases-for-lives was that the purchase price of the lease, sometimes paid with money borrowed from the landlord, starved the farmer of capital and made him unwilling to invest in the property. In some ways he was probably right. The uncertainty surrounding the length of a lease, together with the irregular nature of the payments of fines, possibly did act as a disincentive to spend on capital improvements. However, Worgan's words have the feel of propaganda on behalf of Cornish landlords. Indeed, three Cornish gentry considerably rewrote his report, which was initially written in 1808. In an introduction to his report, the gentry said they had taken 'great liberties' with the manuscript and 'generally suppressed what was deemed redundant', in the process making 'considerable erasements, alterations and additions'. They claimed they needed to make the changes because Worgan had been forced to carry out most of the research for his report in the winter 'by which he not only endured much hardship, but was also forced to take many things upon trust, of which at a more favourable season he might have been an eye witness'.

Worgan also acknowledged that his comments on leases were 'based on information supplied by Francis Gregor esq., of Trewarthenic'.[174] Gregor was a prominent landowner in Cornwall and one of the biggest in St Neot where his main leaseholder was John Rundle, the most successful farmer in the district at the time. The Gregor family were vociferous in their condemnation of leases-for-

[174] Worgan, G., *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall* (London, 1811), p. 21.

lives and stopped issuing them in St Neot and Warleggan at the end of the 1780s, and instead offered leases of up to 21 years to prospective tenants. [175]

3.3 The importance of manorial influence and leases-for-lives on Bodmin Moor in the late eighteenth century

The security of tenure offered by leases-for-lives meant that they acted as a significant incentive for families to remain on the same farm, or at least within the same manor, for a number of generations. As such it was a powerful factor in reinforcing local kinship patterns. The significance of leases-for-lives to Bodmin Moor communities up until the end of the eighteenth century can be seen from records of a number of manors and estates for which records survive.

The manors of Cabilla, Carburrow, Trenay Fawton, St Neot Barrett, West Draynes and Bulland all retained a majority of leases-for-lives, at least until the 1790s (table 3.1). These manors - which had lands in the parishes of St Neot, Cardinham, Warleggan, St Cleer and Altarnun - only had 12% of tenancies subject to short-term leases, and a majority of these were also for areas of moorland used for summer grazing. Particularly good records have survived for Cabilla and Carburrow manors that were both owned by the Lanhydrock estate. The estate was Cornwall's largest, but its c.40,000 acres were divided into 36 manors that were spread across 111 of Cornwall's 204 parishes. The entire

[175] CRO MS. FS/3/1126: Copy of memoirs, Loveday Sarah Gregor, Trewarthenick, Tregony parish (1851).

estate was mapped in great detail in 1695 and annotations on it indicate it remained a working document into the nineteenth century.[176]

Table 3.1. Types of tenancies on Bodmin Moor manors and estates in the late eighteenth century.[177]

Bodmin Moor manor or estate	Owner in 1793	Number of tenements*	Properties with leases-for-lives	% leases-for-lives	Properties charged rack rents	% rack rented
Cabilla	George Hunt (Lanhydrock)	22	22	100%	0	0%
Carburrow	George Hunt (Lanhydrock)	28	26	93%	2	7%
Trenay Fawton	Rev. Richard Gerveys Grylls	40	40	100%	0	0%
St Neot Barrett and various lands	Sir John Morshead	30	23	77%	7	23%
West Draynes	Mary Tillie (Pentillie Castle)	12	9	75%	3	25%
Lewarne and various lands	Harry Bewes (Duloe)	16	10	63%	6	27%
Bulland	Philip Rashleigh (Menabilly)	6	5	83%	1	17%
Total		154	135	88%	19	12%

*** Excludes 51 tenements charged high rents that were only nominally attached to manors**

A detailed valuation of the manors in 1794, which formed part of a wider survey of all Lanhydrock's manors, provides a useful opportunity to understand how the manorial system operated in Cornwall at the start of our period.[178] This survey listed all tenements, as well as their sizes in Cornish customary acres and their statutory equivalents. It also recorded the name of the tenant, the type of

[176] Holden, P., Herring P. and Padel, O.J., *The Lanhydrock Atlas* (Fowey, 2010), p. 44. This was a complete reproduction of the 1695 mapping of the Lanhydrock Estate's Cornish properties with supporting commentary from the authors.
[177] CRO MS. CY/3876: Rentals, high and conventionary rents, various parishes (1792-1794); CRO MS. CL/2/37: Rental, Lanhydrock, Luxulyan, Helland, Penzance and other parishes (c.1740-1812); CRO MS. CM/1120: Rentals including reeve's precepts, Bulland manor, St Cleer and St Neot (1793); CRO MS. GR/694: Rental, Trenay Manor alias Fawton, St Neot (1761); CRO MS. BW/30/2: Rental, various lands St Neot (1789); CRO MS. BK/442: Survey, St Neot Parish by David Palmer of Launceston (April 1793).
[178] CRO MS. CL/2/37: Rental, Lanhydrock, Luxulyan, Helland, Penzance and other parishes (c.1740-1812).

tenancy arrangement and estimated the open market rental value of each tenement in 1772 and 1794. For leases-for-lives the date the lease commenced was given, together with the names and ages of all lives. Where a life had dropped the date was given where known, or a letter M placed by the name if not. The amounts of any additional annual charges such as heriots were also stated. A summary of the tenancies for the Manor of Carburrow is shown in table 3.2.[179]

The table highlights just how significant leases-for-lives still were in the manor in 1794, and this was reflective of the entire Lanhydrock estate. The year when leases that were active in 1794 had begun varied enormously, from as early as 1719 to as recently as 1793. However, these start dates need to be treated with caution as at least some of them were renewals or extensions of earlier leases.

The entry fines were most often set at around 10 years' rental value, but sometimes specific factors led to wide variations from this average. For example, Walter Visick was only charged 1s to take on Stamping Mill in St Neot in 1747 because it was in ruins and a condition of the lease was that he completely rebuild it at his own expense. More typical of entry fine values was the £290 paid by Charles Cawrse for West Trevina in 1787. This fine represented approximately 11 times the annual rental value.

[179] CRO MS. CL/2/37: Rental, Lanhydrock, Luxulyan, Helland, Penzance and other parishes (c.1740-1812).

Table 3.2. Summary of tenancies for the Manor of Carburrow, 1794.[180]

Tenement	Acres (Customary)	Tenant	Type of tenancy	Year of lease	Entry Fine	Annual rent	Yearly value 1794	Years in same family
Outer Dewey	48	John Bunt	Lease-for-lives	1776	£105	£1	£12	59
Dewey Meadows	110	Thomas Richards	Lease-for-lives	1793	£10 10s	13s 4d	£2	57
Little Tamar	28	Peter Best	Lease-for-lives	1778	£60	£1	£10 10s	70
Moorland	7	Peter Best	Lease-for-lives	1787	£60	£1	£7 10s	63
Moorland Mill	13	Peter Best	Lease-for-lives	1778	£100	£1 6s 8d	£10	67
Stamping Mill	1	Walter Visick	Lease-for-lives	1747	1s	6s 8d	£10	57
Woodland	43	John White	Lease-for-lives	1771	£200	£1 6s 8d	£25	78
East Penkestle (part)	11	Charles Cawrse	Lease-for-lives	1769	£66	10s	£5 10s	49
East Penkestle (part)	18	Charles Cawrse	Lease-for-lives	1770	£28	£1	£11 10s	77
East Penkestle (part)	6	William Cawrse	Lease-for-lives	1719	£3	8s	£2 15s	79
East Trevina	12	John Taunton	Lease-for-lives	1793	£130	£1 6s 8d	£12 10s	42
West Penkestle	51	Charles Cawrse	Lease-for-lives	1785	£120	£1	£14	65
Lower Bowden (part)	with below	Thomas Keast	Rack	n/a	n/a	£7 10s	£7 10s	n/a
Lower Bowden (part)	43	Stephen Smith	Lease-for-lives	1735	£50	£1	£7 10s	108
Hulker & Carbole	60	John Davey	Yearly rack	n/a	n/a	n/a	£3 10s	n/a
Bunts	15	John Pearce	Lease-for-lives	1742	£102 10s	£1 3s	£24	58
Tremaddock Meadows	1	John Taunton	Lease-for-lives	1793	£5 6s	3s 4d	£1	42
Higher Bowden	3	John Davey	Lease-for-lives	1792	£20	£1	£3	58
Stone Parks	7	Frances Isaac	Lease-for-lives	1758	£32 10s	6s	£4 4s	92
Bunnings Park (part)	215	William Harris	Lease-for-lives	1719	£13	£1 16s 8d	£6 5s	78
Bunnings Park (part)	with above	In hand	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£1 5s	n/a
Half of West Colliford	141	Samuel Mitchell	Lease-for-lives	1792	£8 13s	6s 3d	£2	58
Stuffle	130	William Harris	Lease-for-lives	1719	£17	£1 1s	£3 5s	76
Carpuan	105	Thomas Richards	Lease-for-lives	1793	£231	£2 12s	£18	57
Castle Dewey	41	Francis Cole	Lease-for-lives	1788	£200	£1 3s 4d	£24	62
Darite (part)	28	William Hewett	Lease-for-lives	1791	£450	£2	£37	59
Darite (part)	3	James Reper	Lease-for-lives	1742	£42	5s	£5	65
Pengover Green	3	Richard Gartrell	Lease-for-lives	1788	£30	10s	£3 10s	62
West Trevina	34	Charles Cawrse	Lease-for-lives	1787	£290	£1 6s 8d	£26	61
Mennaglaze	104	Francis Gregor	High rents	n/a	n/a	1s 6d	n/a	n/a
Merrifield	208	George Brown	High rents	n/a	n/a	2s	n/a	n/a
Carburrow	53	Matthew Grylls	High rents	n/a	n/a	3s 8d	n/a	n/a
Rosecoll	with Tamar	Harry Bewes	High rents	n/a	n/a	2s	n/a	n/a
Carburrow	14	P. Mayow	High rents	n/a	n/a	1s	n/a	n/a
Bunnings Park (part)	53	Matthew Grylls	High rents	n/a	n/a	1s 9d	n/a	n/a
Tamar	46	Harry Bewes	High rents	n/a	n/a	2s	n/a	n/a
Mennabroom	106	John Buller	High rents	n/a	n/a	1s 4d	n/a	n/a

The dispersed nature of these landholdings in the Manor of Carburrow was captured in a plan of the manor made in 1695 (see figure 3.2). This plan was part of a detailed series of maps of the lands belonging to the Robartes family, collectively known as the Lanhydrock Atlas.[181] The maps included much ancillary detail including land use (arable, pasture, meadow and so on), together with field sizes measured in both Cornish customary acres and the more modern statutory

[180] CRO MS. CL/2/37: Rental, Lanhydrock, Luxulyan, Helland, Penzance and other parishes (c.1740-1812).
[181] CRO MS. FS/2/32: Copy of the Lanhydrock Estate Atlas (1695).

equivalent. The extent of the manor was almost identical 100 year later. Indeed, most field and property boundaries were still unchanged at the time of the tithe apportionments of the 1840s.

Manors in the Atlas were sometimes mapped in their entirety and then more detailed plans were produced for each tenement. The disjointed appearance of land in Carburrow Manor was typical of many Cornish manors. This was partly due to historical inheritance or sale patterns, which resulted in the splitting of many of Cornwall's manors, with displaced properties often being added to the nearest manor of the purchaser. In Carburrow there were three isolated tenements that had been added to the manor at some time, with high rents being paid out to other manors on these tenements.

However, a bigger reason for the disjointed appearance of many manors in the Atlas, including Carburrow, was the exclusion of tenements subject to high rents. These tenements probably had their origins in free tenancies and were subject to very low annual rents of between 1s and 3s 8d a year. They included the tenement of Carburrow in Warleggan that gave the manor its name. The tenants of these holdings listed in table 3.2 were in effect freeholders, and every one of them in Carburrow had sublet the farms to other tenants.

On the plan of the manor these holdings filled many of the gaps where the compass rose was placed. Some of the other gaps were tracts of common land which most of the manor's tenants had access to. Areas of moorland that were mapped in some detail were usually used for summer grazing. Bunning's Park, a

large piece of unimproved pasture on the north-east of the plan (now partially submerged under Colliford Lake), was subject to a confusing mixture of tenancy arrangements in 1794. Part was let on a lease-for-lives, part was subject to a high rent and yet another part was in hand. Some of the graziers were from St Germans in the far south east of Cornwall who brought their livestock more than 10 miles to the moor every spring.

Figure 3.2. Overview of the lands in the Manor of Carburrow from the 1695 Lanhydrock Atlas (Reproduced courtesy of The National Trust, Lanhydrock).[182]



[182] Holden, P., Herring P. and Padel, O.J., *The Lanhydrock Atlas* (Fowey, 2010), p. 315.

An important note of caution regarding the 1794 survey relates to the names of tenants. These were not necessarily the name of the tenant occupying a particular tenement in 1794, and there are three main reasons for this. First, the name of the tenant given in the survey sometimes related to the person who took out the original lease. For example, William Cawrse was listed as tenant at Penkestle and the survey records that he took out the lease in 1719. By 1794 he was long dead but the lease remained active because William's son Henry Cawrse, who was a name on the 1719 lease, was still alive. Palmer tells us that the occupier of the farm in 1794 was in fact Charles Cawrse, revealed by family reconstitution to be William's great-grandson.

Second, sometimes tenants bought a lease as an investment and did not occupy the property themselves. This was the case with John Taunton who took out a reversionary lease for East Trevina in 1793 for a fine of £130. The farm had been in the hands of the Buckler family for many years but by 1793 the lease was hanging on by the life of elderly widow Martha Buckler and the farm was sublet at a rack rent of £11 13s a year to John Rosevear.[183] Taunton took a risk that he would soon get hold of the farm, which he did three years later in 1796. The third reason a tenant might not occupy the tenement was that leases were assignable and they could be sold outside the family. This was sometimes the case where, for example, a widow without direct heirs didn't want to farm a property but needed an income. There were, however, no examples of this in the manor in 1794.

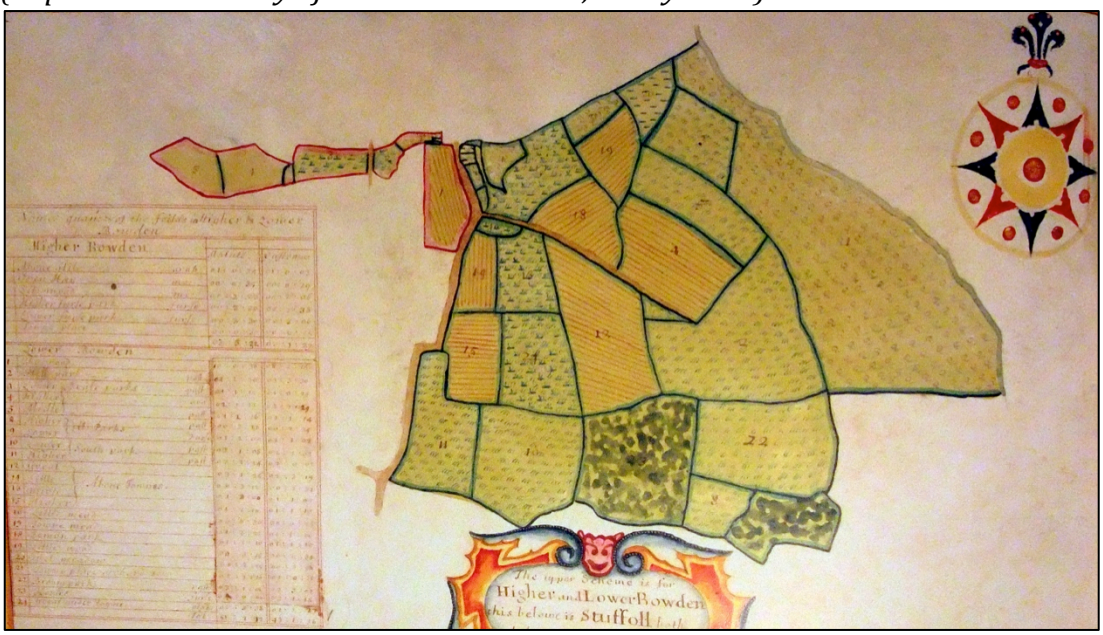
[183] CRO MS. BK/442: Survey, St Neot Parish by David Palmer of Launceston (April 1793).

Despite these complications it is possible using the survey together with other sources to build a picture of occupation and trace how long families could remain on particular properties over many generations. In the case of the Manor of Carburrow annual rentals are available for many years before 1794 and up to 1850 and these recorded who was paying the rent, the type of tenancy, the names of lives, and the dates when lives dropped. From these and other records it is possible to calculate just how long the leases-for-lives that were active in 1794 lasted in the same families. The calculation for each property is shown in the final column of table 3.2.

The average length of these leases was 65 years, with a variation from 42 years up to 109 years. These figures, however, understate the real picture for two reasons. First, some of the leases were reversionary extensions of leases already in place and, second, 10 leases in place in 1794 were still active in 1850 which is the final date when information on them is available. By 1850 most of these leases were hanging by a single life long after Lanhydrock Estate, like most landowners, had stopped granting new leases-for-lives or the addition of lives to existing leases. The property in Carburrow manor which lasted for longest in the same family before and after 1794 was the small upland farm of Lower Bowden in St Neot, which covered 43 customary acres together with rights of pasturage on nearby common land at Berry Down. The 1794 survey and subsequent rentals show that the farm was occupied by same family from 1735 to 1844, a total of 109 years.

However, there is evidence that the Smiths had been in possession of land at Bowden from at least 1694 when a rental shows that Stephen Smith was paying the conventionary rent for Lower Bowden, while his widowed mother Jane held the lease for neighbouring Higher Bowden. The survey of 1794, however, recorded that Stephen had taken out a fresh lease on Lower Bowden in 1735 for a fine of £50. The three named lives were his 36-year-old daughter Mary, together with her children Thomas and Robert Keast (aged nine and five respectively). The annual conventionary rent was £1, with a heriot of £1 13s 6d due on the death of each life.

Figure 3.3. Plan of Lower and Higher Bowden, Manor of Carburrow, 1695. Lower Bowden was leased by members of the same family for at least 109 years (Reproduced courtesy of The National Trust, Lanhydrock).[184]



The manorial rent book shows that Mary died in 1765, while Thomas and Robert died a few months apart in 1796. Robert died first in April 1796, so with the

[184] Holden, P., Herring P. and Padel, O.J., *The Lanhydrock Atlas* (Fowey, 2010), p. 318.

lease hanging by the thread of the elderly Thomas Keast a reversionary lease was taken out by the family in June 1796. They paid £75 to add two names, with the lease starting at the death of the remaining life, which occurred when Thomas died in December of that year. The annual rent and heriot remained as agreed in 1735. The lives added in 1796 were Thomas Keast junior (aged 31) and his wife Mary (aged 24). Thomas was the great-grandson of the original leaseholder Stephen Smith, and he continued to farm Lower Bowden until his death in 1820.

After that Thomas's nephew, Peter Davey who also farmed at nearby Treverbyn, took over the farm and it stayed in the family's hands until Mary Keast - the final life on the lease - died in 1844. Payments over the 109 years from 1735, including fines, heriots and conventionary rents totalled £242 6s 8d, an average of approximately £2 5s a year for a farm with a rental value of £7 10s a year in 1794 and more than double this by the time the lease ended in 1844.

The example of Lower Bowden shows just how beneficial leases-for-lives could be for tenants. Not all leaseholders were so lucky and there was a certain degree of chance attached to how long nominated lives would live. However, for most tenants it was a risk worth taking, particularly as farm prices rose during the latter half of the eighteenth century. There was no evidence of tenants being forced to leave properties in the manor let on leases-for-lives for financial reasons. Annual rents were so low that they could be paid whatever the external circumstances. Those who couldn't afford to add new lives, or who didn't want to for other reasons, simply let the leases run out.

The manor of Cabilla on Bodmin Moor provides further excellent examples of how leases-for-lives enabled persistence of families on specific farms. The manor was much more compact than Carburrow, with most of its 1,700 acres were in one block in the parish of Cardinham. Just one property was outside the parish – the tenement of Hamblys Hill in St Neot.

A plan of the manor in 1695 from the Lanhydrock Atlas is shown in figure 3.4. This structure was identical to when the manor was surveyed almost 100 years later in 1794. There were a total of 41 properties in the manor, of which 22 were let out on leases-for-lives and the remainder were charged high rents. There were no rack-rented properties in 1794.

Figure 3.4. Plan of the Manor of Cabilla from the Lanhydrock Atlas, 1695 (Reproduced courtesy of The National Trust, Lanhydrock).[185]



[185] Holden, P., Herring P. and Padel, O.J., *The Lanhydrock Atlas* (Fowey, 2010), pp. 344-5.

The 1695 map and 1794 survey reveal how the physical structure of the manor had evolved. A darker green line shows the original boundary of the manor, and the nineteen tenements charged high rents are the uncoloured parts within this area. These tenements generated a total annual rental income of just £2 10s 2d and were not mapped in any detail in the Atlas.[186] The lighter green coloured parts within the area represent the 10 farms rented out on leases-for-lives that were part of the original manor. The 14 coloured properties outside the dark green line had become part of the Lanhydrock estate some time before 1695 and had been annexed to the manor. Some of these were nominally part of other manors and high rents were paid out by Cabilla manor for these properties.

Figure 3.5 shows part of the rental details for three farms, which help to explain how different aspects of leases-for-lives worked in practice. At 33.5-acre Yetta (rental No. 6), Thomas Raby had taken out a reversionary lease on 24 June 1743. Raby paid £60 to add the lives of his daughters Mary and Margery, who were aged nine and four respectively. At this time the lease was hanging on the life of William Lang, aged 51. Yetta had been in the Lang family for a number of generations and it is likely that in this case Raby reached agreement with both the Lanhydrock estate and William Lang to take over the farm by way of a reversionary lease. In this way the estate got a new tenant without the need for a survey and before the previous lease expired. It is possible that Lang continued to farm the land, or he might have received some kind of annuity from Raby.

[186] CRO MS. CL/2/37: Rental, Lanhydrock, Luxulyan, Helland, Penzance and other parishes (c.1740-1812). p. 40.

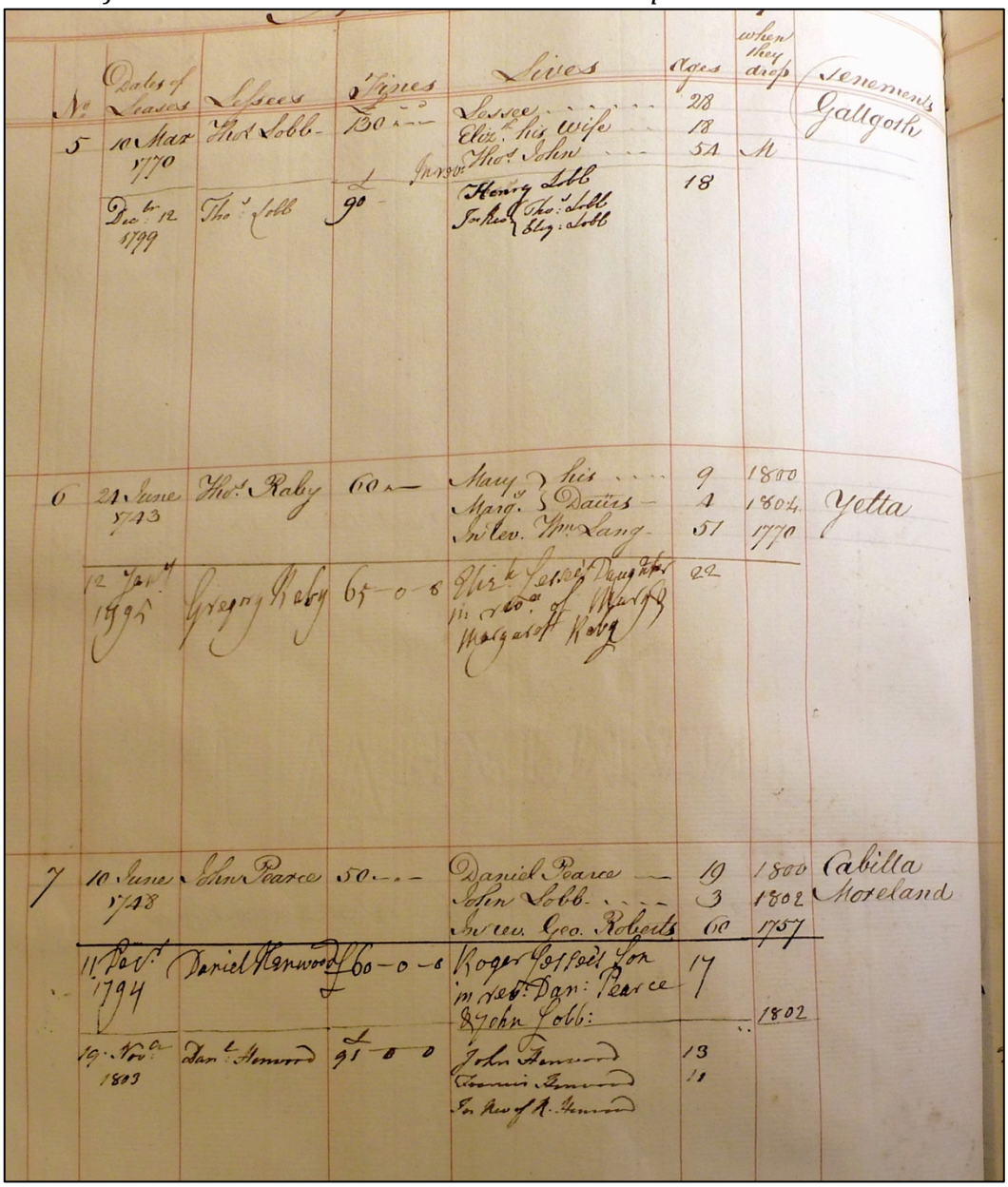
However, it is also possible that Raby and/or Lang did not farm Yetta themselves as subletting was common.

The final column tells us that Lang did not in fact die for another 27 years. In 1795 the lease transferred to Thomas Raby's son Gregory by way of another reversionary lease. He paid £65 to add the single life of his 22-year-old daughter Elizabeth, in reversion of the lives of his now ageing sisters Mary and Margery. Inflation and rising prices meant that the cost of adding a life at Yetta had more than doubled between 1743 and 1795. Adding lives was partly a function of availability of funds, partly a question of timing, and also sometimes of luck. Mary and Margery died in 1800 and 1804 respectively, leaving the lease dependent on a single life.

The lease taken out on Cabilla Moreland (108 acres, rental No. 7) on 10 June 1748 was also a reversionary one. John Pearce paid £50 to add two names to the lease in reversion of George Roberts, then aged 60. By 1794 the tenancy had passed to Daniel Henwood and it cost him £60 to add the life of his son Roger, again indicative of rising prices. In 1803 he paid further £91 to add two more sons to the lease following the death of two previous lives. It is likely that Daniel Henwood purchased the lease-for-lives from the previous tenant of Cabilla Moreland and was then allowed to add lives by the Lanhydrock Estate. Henwood was a successful farmer in the district – when he died in 1829 the burial register described him as the oldest and wealthiest farmer in Cardinham.[187]

[187] CRO MS. P28/1: Register of baptisms, marriages and burials, Cardinham (1701-1983).

Figure 3.5. Details of leases-for-lives at Galgeth, Yetta and Cabilla Moreland in the manor of Cabilla. All tenements were in Cardinham parish.[188]



No	Dates of Leases	Lessees	Rents	Lives	Ages	when they drop	Tenements
5	10 Mar 1770	Thos Lobb	£30	Lessee Eliz. his wife Thos. John	28 18 51	M	Galgoth
	Dec. 12 1799	Tho. Lobb	£90	Inrsn: Thos. Lobb Henry Lobb In Rev. Tho. Lobb Eliz. Lobb	18		
6	24 June 1743	Thos. Raby	60	Mary his Marg. Dau. In lev. Wm. Lang	9 4 51	1800 1804 1770	Yetta
	12 Jan. 1795	Gregory Raby	65-0-8	Dirk. Lobb Daughter In rev. of Margaret Raby	22		
7	10 June 1748	John Pearce	50	Daniel Pearce John Lobb In rev. Geo. Roberts	19 3 60	1800 1802 1757	Cabilla Moreland
	11 Feb. 1794	Daniel Hennwood	£60-0-8	Roger Gosfield Son in rev. Dan: Pearce & John Lobb:	17	1802	
	19 Nov. 1803	Dan. Hennwood	£91-0-0	John Hennwood Francis Hennwood In rev of J. Hennwood	13 11		

The almost hereditary nature of leases-for-lives meant that some families at Cabilla retained their properties for more than 100 years. One of the best examples was the extraordinary Lobb family of Galgeth (rental No. 5) in Cardinham, which occupied the 61-acre farm for at least 134 years. In 1770

[188] CRO MS. CL/2/37: Rental, Lanhydrock, Luxulyan, Helland, Penzance and other parishes (c.1740-1812), p. 35.

Thomas John was the last life remaining on the lease for the 51 customary acres at Galgeth.[189] He was the son of John John who had held the farm until his death in 1717. Son Thomas was only two-years-old when his father died so executors of Thomas oversaw the farm lease until c.1737 when the farm came into the occupation of Thomas Lobb, who came from a well-established family of yeoman farmers in the parish.[190] His father William Lobb had just died, leaving a will worth £457, and Thomas's inheritance probably provided the capital for him to take Galgeth.[191]

Thomas's son, Thomas junior signed a reversionary lease on 10th March 1770, which would come into effect on the death of Thomas John. The lives added were Thomas himself, then aged 28, and his 18-year-old wife Elizabeth. It was more common for children to be added to lives alongside the leaseholder but Thomas and Elizabeth had just married and their first child was only a few weeks old, a risky age to add as a life on a lease. Over the next 25 years the couple would become notorious for having 21 children, by far the largest family in the district.[192]

Thomas junior paid a fine of £130 for the reversionary lease at Galgeth, which had an annual conventionary rent of just £2 8s. The lease was also subject to additional annual charges of two capons or 2s and one goose or 1s, together with

[189] CRO MS. CL/1/54/20: Rental for Cabilla Manor (1770).
[190] CRO MS. CL/2/7/74: Rental for Cabilla Manor (1737).
[191] CRO MS. AP/L/1425: Will of Thomas Lobb the elder of Cardinham (1737).
[192] CRO MS. P28/1: Register of baptisms, marriages and burials, Cardinham (1701-1983).

a heriot of a best beast or £3 6s 8d when a life died. The market rent for the farm was estimated at £27 a year in 1772 so Lobb paid just under 5 years' rental value for adding two lives. In 1799, after Thomas John had died, Thomas junior paid £90 for another reversionary lease to begin after the death of himself and his wife. Thomas added his eleventh child, 18-year-old son Henry to the lease.

Figure 3.6. Plan of Galgeth and South Towne in the Manor of Cabilla from the Lanhydrock Atlas. Four generations of the Lobb family occupied Galgeth from 1737 until at least 1871. A yellow line marks the division between the two properties (Reproduced courtesy of The National Trust, Lanhydrock).[193]



[193] Holden, P., Herring P. and Padel, O.J., *The Lanhydrock Atlas* (Fowey, 2010), p. 349.

Following Thomas's death in 1815 his fifteenth child (also called Thomas) briefly took over the farm before Abraham, who was Thomas and Elizabeth's 20th child, became tenant. However, a decision by the landowner to end leases-for-lives and stop allowing lives to be added meant that the lease on Galgeth finally expired in 1829 when Henry Lobb died, 91 years after the family first took the farm. Despite this setback, Abraham remained on the farm, agreeing to pay a rent of £50 a year. However, these were difficult years for tenants and he immediately began to struggle with the rent. By 1833 he was £80 in arrears and the rent book shows he had only managed to pay £30 of the £80 due. Fortunately he was tenant to a landlord who took a lenient approach to arrears and Abraham recovered and stayed on the farm until his death in 1870. Abraham's son John took over at Galgeth for a while and was farming there until at the 1871 census. However by 1881 he had become a general labourer and died in St Neot in 1906.

3.4 The replacement of leases-for-lives with short-term tenancies

The clamour to get rid of leases-for-lives during the French Wars had an immediate impact on Bodmin Moor. Richard Gerveys Grylls, vicar of St Neot and owner of the Manor of Trenay Fawton, issued no new leases-for-lives on farms and cottages in the manor after 1793. The same was true for the Manor of West Draynes where Mary Tillie also quickly stopped granting leases-for-lives. She had still been extending such leases as late as 1791, when Henry Cawrse added the life of his daughter-in-law Anne to the lease at Killham for £20.[194]

[194] CRO MS. CY/2637: Reversionary lease, house called Kylliowham, West Dreynes, St Neot (15 Oct 1791).

The nature of leases-for-lives meant that they could not always be removed quickly, and landowners were sometimes forced to wait many years for lives on leases to expire. However, most leases had been converted to short-term tenancies by the time of the tithe apportionment. The impact of this transition for 108 tenements in St Neot from the time of Palmer's survey in 1793 to the Tithe Apportionment of 1842 is shown in table 3.3.

Figure 3.7. Anna Maria Hunt (left, later Anna Maria Agar) inherited the 40,000-acre Lanhydrock Estate from her uncle George Hunt in 1798. She spent much of her time in London and left the running of the estate to her stewards, William Jenkin and later his son Alfred. Mary Tillie of Pentillie Castle (right) owned c.10,000 acres including the moorland manor of West Draynes.[195]



These tenements belonged to five of the biggest landowners in St Neot in 1793, and by 1842 some holdings had been sold or amalgamated. However, using the

[195] Tyrrell, S., *Pentillie Castle: An Introduction to the History, Architecture and Eccentric Owners of Pentillie Castle* (Penryn, 2009), p. 11.

tithe apportionment and estate records it has been possible to track the changes for these tenements, most of which were farm holdings of various sizes. In 1793 there were 91 tenements held on leases-for-lives and just 17 rack rented properties. By 1842 the situation was almost entirely reversed with land and property relating to 86 of the tenements let out on short-term agreements.

Table 3.3. Changes in tenancy arrangements between 1793 and 1842 on 108 tenements in St Neot.[196]

Owner in 1793	Manors	Number of tenements in St Neot	Leases-for-lives in 1793	Rack rented in 1793	Leases-for-lives in 1842	Rack rented in 1842
Sir John Morshead	Various lands	28	22	6	2	26
George Hunt (Lanhydrock)	Cabilla, Carburrow	26	24	2	10	16
Rev. Richard Gerveys Grylls	Trenay alias Fawton	26	26	0	6	20
Harry Bewes (Duloe)	Various lands	16	10	6	4	12
Mary Tillie (Pentillie Castle)	West Draynes	12	9	3	0	12
Total		108	91	17	22	86

Almost half of the leases-for-lives remaining were for Lanhydrock properties, the result of the later change of policy compared with other owners. This was probably partly due to the logistical challenge of managing short-term tenancies on such a large estate spread over so many manors and parishes. There was also a short-term financial penalty from abandoning leases-for-lives. This was because income from reversionary leases would immediately come to an end, while farms could only be let at market rates once the final lives on leases expired.

196 CRO MS. BK/442: Survey, St Neot Parish by David Palmer of Launceston (April 1793); NA MS. IR 29/6/143: Tithe Commissioners for England and Wales, Apportionment of the rent charge in lieu of tithes in the parish of St Neot (1842).

These factors probably weighed heavily on the mind of the Lanhydrock steward, William Jenkin. He was a great encourager of leases-for-lives for miners' smallholdings and had a reputation for looking after the interests of tenants, particularly in times of difficulty. He cut an unusual figure as the main representative of Cornwall's largest landowner, his Quaker principles making him stridently anti-war and outspoken on many other matters. On a number of occasions he brought grain into Cornwall at great expense when there were food shortages, encouraging others to do the same and publicly admonishing those who refused. He also refused to pay Church Rates, suffering distraint on his own property as a consequence.[197]

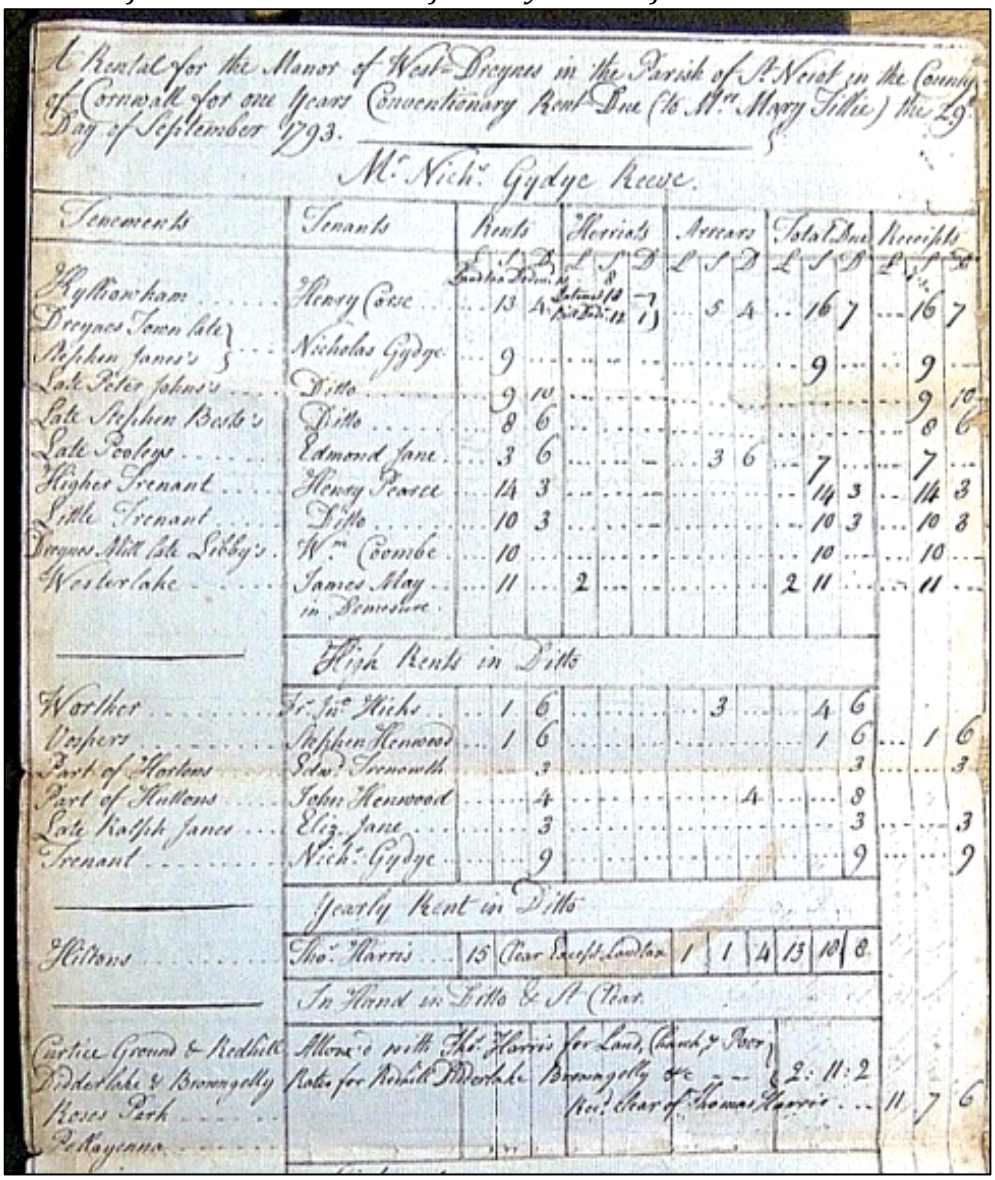
The Lanhydrock estate continued to grant a small number of leases-for-lives after the conclusion of the French Wars, although short-term tenancies were beginning to predominate. One of the final leases-for-lives issued to a Lanhydrock tenant on Bodmin Moor was to Joseph Cawrse at Penkestle in 1818. He was the son of the previous lessee Charles Cawrse, and perhaps the fact that Joseph was the fifth generation of Cawrses at Penkestle influenced matters. However after Jenkin died in 1820 no more leases-for-lives were granted on Lanhydrock's Bodmin Moor manors.

Records for the Manor of West Draynes enable the implications of the change to short-term tenancies to be explored. In 1793, virtually all enclosed land in the manor was still let on leases-for-lives. The total rental income for the manor in

[197] Hamilton Jenkin, A.K., *News from Cornwall* (London, 1951), pp. 5-7.

that year was just £18 2s 11d, plus a £2 heriot that was owed for the death of a life.[198]

Figure 3.8. Rental for the Manor of West Draynes in 1793 when most farms were let on leases-for-lives. Total income for the year was just over £20.[199]



A Rental for the Manor of West Draynes in the Parish of St Neot in the County of Cornwall for one Years Conventionary Rent Due (to Mrs Mary Tillie) the 29th Day of September 1793.

Mr Nichs Gydye Reeve.

Tenements	Tenants	Rents £ s d	Heriots £ s d	Arrears £ s d	Total Due £ s d	Receipts £ s d
Rylliowham	Henry Cosse	13 4	Island 13 — 7 / Pt Dr 11 1	5 4	16 7	16 7
Draynes Town late Stephen Jones's	Nicholas Gydye	9	— —		9	9
Late Peter Johns's	Ditto	9 10				9 10
Late Stephen Bests	Ditto	8 6				8 6
Late Scoleys	Edmond Jane	3 6	—	3 6	7	7
Higher Trenant	Henry Pearce	14 3	— —		14 3	14 3
Little Trenant	Ditto	10 3	— —		10 3	10 3
Draynes Mill late Libby's	Wm Coombe	10			10	10
Westerlake	James May in Pennshaw	11	2		2 11	11
	High Rents in Ditto					
Worthes	Jr Jno Hicks	1 6		3	4 6	
Vespers	Stephen Henwood	1 6			1 6	1 6
Part of Hortons	Edw Trenowth	3			3	3
Part of Huttons	John Henwood	4		4	8	
Late Ralph Janes	Eliz Jane	3			3	3
Trenant	Nichs Gydye	9			9	9
	Yearly Rent in Ditto					
Hittons	Thos Harris	15 Clear Exclusive Landtax		1 1 4	13 10 8	
	In Hand in Ditto & St Clear					
Curtice Ground & Redhill	Allowance with Thos Harris for Land Chimney & Poor					
Biddorlake & Brongolly	Rates for Redhill Biddorlake	Brongolly &c — —			2: 11: 2	
Roses Park			Rec'd Clear of Thomas Harris		11 7 6	
Pellayenno						

In 1800, just seven years later, most of the leases-for-lives had gone and rack rents alone brought in £220. By the end of the French Wars rack rents had

[198] CRO MS. CY/3876: Rentals, high and conventionary rents, various parishes (1792-1794).
[199] CRO MS. CY/3876: Rentals, high and conventionary rents, various parishes (1792-1794).

reached more than £300 a year. They declined slightly in the post-war recession, but not enough to compensate for falling prices and tenants were soon facing severe difficulties.

In the hamlet of Draynes the change in policy also enabled a rationalisation of farm holdings to be implemented. In 1793 there were a total of nine tenements or farm holdings in the hamlet averaging just over 21 acres each. The 200 acres of enclosed land was made up of 90 arable fields plus a small number of meadows and orchards. Of the holdings, four were let on leases-for-lives, four paid high rents and one was let at rack rent.

Some holdings were also split into different parcels, adding to the confusion. It is not clear why the distribution of land was so complex, or when it happened. Rowe has suggested that intermixing of tenements, which was common in many districts of Cornwall, was perhaps a legacy of the ancient Celtic run rig system of land distribution where land was shared out so that all tenants got a fair mix of good and poor land. It is impossible to know if this was the origin of the structure in Draynes.[200]

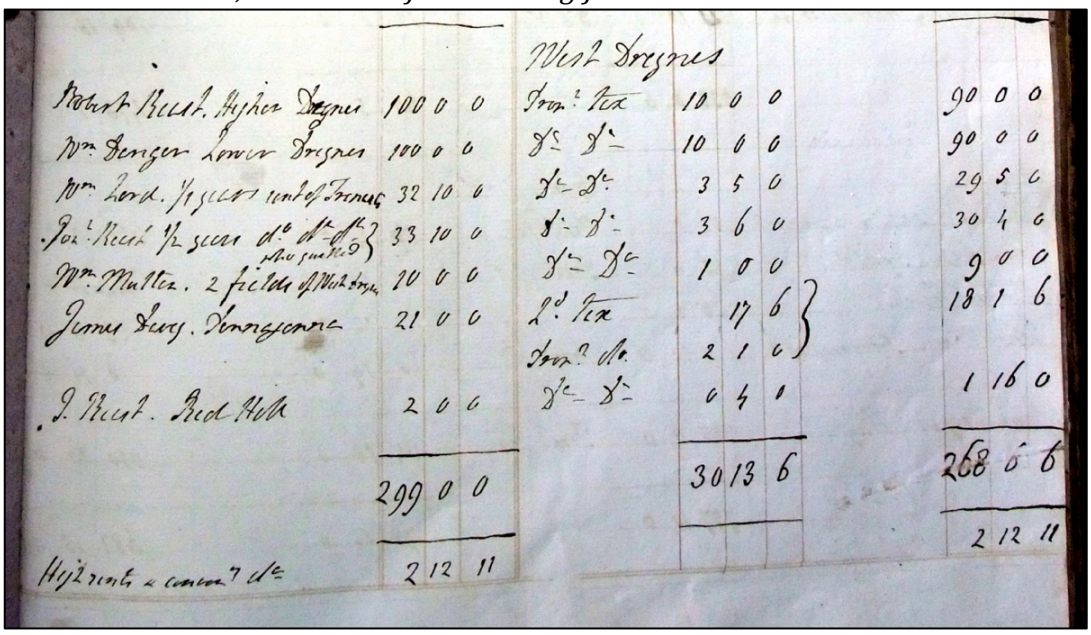
Rationalisation of farms at Draynes began in 1794 with the death of tenant Nicholas Gedye, which enabled owner Mary Tillie to take in hand two of the three tenements he leased there. She also began negotiations to purchase three

[200] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), p.212.

further tenements in the hamlet from Stephen Henwood, John Henwood and Richard Trenowth, completing the acquisitions between 1794 and 1797.[201]

This process enabled her to rationalise about two-thirds of the land in Draynes into two farms which she let out in 1799 to Robert Keast and Joseph Davey for £64 and £67 a year respectively.[202] Both farms were let on 14-year terms and when they were offered again in 1813 Robert Keast renewed for £100 a year, and William Dangar took the other farm, also for £100. Total rack rents amounted to £299 while high rents and conventionary rents amounted to just £2 12 11d (figure 3.9).

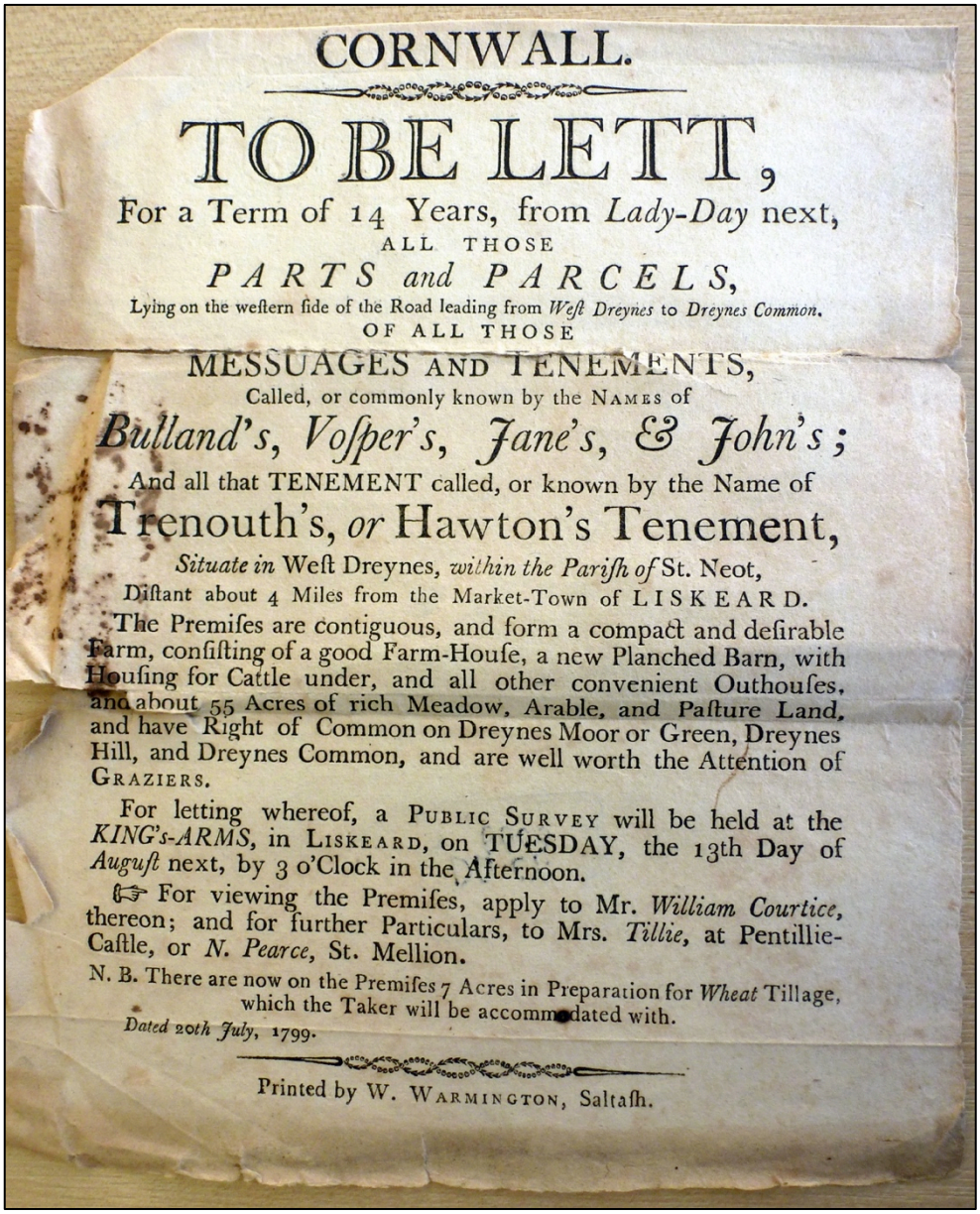
Figure 3.9. Rental income for the Manor of West Draynes in 1815. Total revenue was £301 12s 11d, with £299 of this coming from short-term tenancies.[203]



[201] CRO MS. CY/5914: Articles of agreement, Vosper's, Bullen's and Hawton's in village of Draynes, St Neot (14 Oct 1793).
[202] CRO MS. CY/2632: Counterpart of lease, land and property, West Dreynes, St Neot (26 Jul 1797); CRO MS. CY/2633: Counterpart of lease, land and property, West Dreynes, St Neot (13 Aug 1799).
[203] CRO MS. CY/4553: Rentals, manor of West Draynes, St Neot and St Cleer and lands in Liskeard (1815).

The subsequent difficulties faced by the Keast and Dangar families will be discussed in the next chapter. Meanwhile the final rationalisation of farms in Draynes was completed in 1818 when the last farm on a lease-for-lives in the hamlet expired and the property was added to Robert Keast's farm for an additional £14 a year.

Figure 3.10. Sale poster from 1799 for newly amalgamated farm at West Draynes, created from five tenements.[204] *The farm was taken on a 14-year term by Joseph Davey for an annual rent of £67.*



CORNWALL.

TO BE LETT,

For a Term of 14 Years, from *Lady-Day* next,

ALL THOSE

PARTS and PARCELS,

Lying on the weſtern ſide of the Road leading from *Weſt Dreynes* to *Dreynes Common*.

OF ALL THOSE

MESSUAGES AND TENEMENTS,

Called, or commonly known by the NAMES of

Bulland's, Voſper's, Jane's, & John's;

And all that TENEMENT called, or known by the Name of

Trenouth's, *or* Hawton's Tenement,

Situate in Weſt Dreynes, *within the Pariſh of* St. Neot,

Diſtant about 4 Miles from the Market-Town of LISKEARD.

The Premiſes are contiguous, and form a compact and deſirable Farm, conſiſting of a good Farm-Houſe, a new Planched Barn, with Houſing for Cattle under, and all other convenient Outhouſes, and about 55 Acres of rich Meadow, Arable, and Paſture Land, and have Right of Common on Dreynes Moor or Green, Dreynes Hill, and Dreynes Common, and are well worth the Attention of GRAZIERS.

For letting whereof, a PUBLIC SURVEY will be held at the *KING's-ARMS*, in LISKEARD, on TUESDAY, the 13th Day of *Auguſt* next, by 3 o'Clock in the Afternoon.

☞ For viewing the Premiſes, apply to Mr. *William Courtice*, thereon; and for further Particulars, to Mrs. *Tillie*, at Pentillie-Caſtle, or *N. Pearce*, St. Mellion.

N. B. There are now on the Premiſes 7 Acres in Preparation for *Wheat* Tillage, which the Taker will be accommodated with.

Dated 20th July, 1799.

Printed by W. WARMINGTON, Saltaſh.

[204] CRO MS. CY/6603: Notice, letting of tenements, West Draynes, St Neot (1799).

It was not always easy to get hold of farms while names lives were living and tenants wanted to keep a farm with a low conventionary rent. The final lease-for-lives in the manor finally expired in 1829 when the last life on Westerlake Farm dropped. However, Mrs Tillie was sometimes able to get hold of farms by persuading the leaseholders to surrender or assign back their leases. She achieved this for Higher Trenant in 1800 by agreeing to pay a £40 annuity to the leaseholder. The same family had held the 70-acre moorland edge farm since at least 1669, although the lease had been assigned to another St Neot farmer in the second half of the eighteenth century.[205]

Virtually all leases-for-lives in the manor that expired between 1793 and 1815 were replaced with 14-year agreements which included husbandry restrictions indicative of the changing landlord/tenant relationship. In particular, lease agreements began to define permissible crop rotations, mainly to limit the number of successive corn crops grown, and stipulate minimum quantities sea sand or lime which had to be used as fertiliser.[206] There was also evidence of Mary Tillie spending some of the additional rental income on new buildings and upgrading existing properties, especially at the beginning of 14-year tenancies.[207] An advertisement in 1799 for one of the new holdings in Draynes, which was created from an amalgamation of five tenements, boasted that it had a good farmhouse and a newly erected 'planched barn'.[208] These barns later

[205] CRO. MS. CY/6549: Survey of all the estate of Sir John Coryton by James Tillie (1669).
[206] Worgan, G., *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall* (London, 1811), p. 35.
[207] CRO MS. CY/3864: Rentals, various demesnes (1796-1802).
[208] CRO MS. CY/6603: Notice for letting of tenements in West Draynes (1799).

became known as bank barns and were substantially built two storey buildings with cattle housed below and a large area for threshing and storage of fodder above.[209] They became common across large parts of Cornwall during the nineteenth century. The new farm at Draynes that was taken by St Neot farmer Joseph Davey (figure 3.10) had strict husbandry restrictions in the tenancy agreement:

> 'Eighty seams of good salt sea sand or 40 bushels (16 gallons to bushel) of good well burnt stone lime per acre tilled. No more than three successive crops after this dressing. Ten pounds of new clover seeds and four gallons of good ever grass seeds to be sown and harrowed in with last crop. Straw and dung etc. to be used in premises. Hedges adjoining highway to be cut for preservation of road otherwise only hedges round tillage in first year at proper season and hedges to be recast and made afterwards. No trees or sapling or timber to be cut. Tenant to reside on premises. Not to let or assign without lessor's written permission.'[210]

For a very short period Mary Tillie was able to command ever increasing rents for these tenancies, with tenants fighting to outbid each other in the anticipation of continuing high farm output prices. However, the situation changed dramatically as the French Wars came to a close and many of the farming families that had lost security of tenure quickly began to experience difficulties as rents remained high relative to falling cereal and livestock prices.

3.5 Concluding comments

Leases-for-lives provided long term stability for tenants and a simple yet effective way of running manors and disparate land holdings for landowners.

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[209] Barnwell, P.S. and Giles, C., *English Farmsteads, 1750-1914* (Swindon, 1997), pp. 94-121.
[210] CRO MS. CY/5823: Survey, West Draynes, St Neot (13 Aug 1799).

Once tenants had paid the large entry fine they were better placed to survive the cycles of harvest success and failure. Indeed there were no examples found in Bodmin Moor manors of tenants losing their farms or cottages due to financial difficulties. Provided they paid their small annual conventionary rents on time they retained the customary rights to stay on their holdings.

The customary right to extend leases by adding fresh names or by taking out reversionary leases was also respected, at least until the late 1700s. It meant that generations of the same families frequently remained on the same farms, and the system acted as a strong incentive for wider kinship groups to remain in the district. Family circumstances meant that leases were sometimes assigned, but even in these cases the new tenant was often part of the family's wider kinship group.

As we shall see in chapter five, leases-for-lives remained the favoured tenancy arrangement for newly enclosed moorland farms throughout the nineteenth century. It was no accident that kinship ties were strongest among the occupiers of these farms. However, for the lowland farmers and cottagers the loss of leases-for-lives meant that properties that had been in the same families for generations began to change hands with increasing regularity. The consequences for tenants and the impact on kinship will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4. Kinship as a coping mechanism in St Neot during the first half of the nineteenth century

4.1 Introduction

In the 35 years that followed the end of the Napoleonic Wars Bodmin Moor society was subject to enormous changes in population, employment structures, religious affiliations and land use patterns. In the aftermath of war the farmers, who largely funded parish affairs, were faced with paying rapidly rising poor rates, increasingly unpopular tithes, and church rates which financed a denomination many of them no longer supported. This came at a time when they had largely lost the security and status offered by leases-for-lives as the remnants of the old order disintegrated.

For the rising number of labourers the situation was even more challenging: their wages remained very low and for some life was only manageable with regular or seasonal payments from the overseers of the poor. Serious conflict erupted on a number of occasions among both farmers and labourers, with disruption peaking in the early 1830s and then again in the late 1840s. A number of factors, however, alleviated the situation.

First, emigration from the 1820s onwards to North America and Australia provided a safety valve for some, while also reducing some of the pressure on those who remained. Second, occupation and enclosure of unenclosed moorland by tinners and small farmers enabled many other families to find a more local

escape route. Third, and very significant for a short period, the discovery of rich deposits of copper in the Caradon area in 1837 led to an explosion in the number of deep mines as investors rushed to cash-in on this bonanza. A frenzy of speculation meant that deep mining was also undertaken in areas with little chance of commercial success so that mines opened and closed regularly across many moorland parishes.

The insecurities caused by speculative mining ventures and the loss of security of tenure for both farmers and labourers led to volatility in society that lasted for decades. Migration in and out of the moorland parishes, or regular movement within those parishes, became the norm for many inhabitants. For the copper miners there was the added disaster of dust poisoning which, on average, cut life expectancy by almost three decades. The consequences for families left behind were often calamitous.

A fourth factor influencing the situation was the rapid growth of Methodism, particularly after 1815 when William O'Bryan from Luxulyan brought Bible Christianity to Bodmin Moor communities. Luker argued that Cornwall's largely indigenous form of Methodism provided farmers, craftsmen and labourers with a buttress to their traditional way of life 'which both satisfied religious needs and helped establish personal bulwarks against external pressures'.[211] As a result, Methodism became much more than a religious movement and its impact on Bodmin Moor communities will be discussed in detail in chapter six.

[211] Luker, D., 'Cornish Methodism, revivalism and popular belief c.1780-1870' (University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1987), p. 144.

These issues were not unique to Bodmin Moor parishes – they were experienced to a greater or lesser degree across many parts of Cornwall and some aspects have been well documented by historians. In particular the impact of mining and concurrent expansion of Methodism have been the subject of many studies. Indeed, much of the historical debate about nineteenth-century Cornwall has centred on these two areas. As a result, with the exception of John Rowe, who devoted a chapter to agriculture in one of his books and reproduced the diary of a nineteenth century farmer, farming has received relatively little attention.[212] Yet in many areas, including the majority of Bodmin Moor, farming remained the main employer and principal economic activity.

The micro-history approach using total reconstitution techniques enabled the persistence and importance of dense kinship networks during this period of great flux to be understood. It came as some surprise that the extraordinary level of kinship links in eighteenth-century St Neot persisted into the following century despite the increase in movement of people into and out of the parish. This and the following two chapters will explore the way those kinship links influenced how society functioned. In this chapter the socio-economic impacts of developments in agriculture, mining and landlord/tenant structures will be analysed, while the two subsequent chapters will focus on enclosure and Methodism. In reality it is impossible to separate these areas that impacted on Bodmin Moor concurrently so there will inevitably be some overlap during the discussion.

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[212] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), pp. 208-261; Rowe, J., *Changing Times & Fortunes: A Cornish Farmer's Life, 1828-1904* (St Austell, 1996).

4.2 Significance of kin beyond he nuclear family

The use of kinship beyond the nuclear family as a coping mechanism has been the subject of much debate. Snell among others argued that the use of wider kin for support in English agricultural communities was not widespread, even in times of financial crisis. He said that kin networks were uncommon, 'and the nuclear family was usually isolated and insular, buttressed only by charity and the poor law'.[213] Plakans and Wetherell also questioned the idea of kin as a supportive network. They suggested that wider kinship groups were largely imagined communities which never delivered in real life, and that it was the 'kin cluster within the domestic group that was the main influence on people's lives, not the relatively few ties to outside relatives'. They further suggested that there was a difference between measuring kinship links within communities and understanding how those kinship ties were invoked.[214]

This is a fair point: it is one thing to demonstrate a statistically significant local kinship network such as in St Neot, but quite another to show how it was used. It is also difficult to gather evidence to demonstrate the latter argument, which inevitably means the use of qualitative as well as quantitative sources. This chapter will argue that the extraordinarily broad and deep kinship links in Bodmin Moor communities were only one part of the story: it will also show that

[213] Snell, K.D.M., *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660–1900* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 364-5.
[214] Plakans, A. and Wetherell, C., 'Households and kinship networks: the costs and benefits of contextualization', *Continuity and Change,* 18 (2003), pp. 49–76.

those links were utilized on a regular basis, and also that they were regarded as something significant by the community as a whole.

However, before those arguments are made it is important to understand some of the pressures on Bodmin Moor and wider Cornish society that existed as the nineteenth century unfolded. The biggest challenge in the post-Napoleonic Wars period came from the pincer movement of downward pressure on farming incomes together with the sharply rising population outlined in chapter one. It was a trend repeated over large parts of Britain, but the reaction of Bodmin Moor society was different from many other places because of the predominance of small farmers, who in many cases were from the same kinship and social group as labourers. As we shall see, landowners viewed the empathy between farmers and labourers as false, believing the former were using the latter to achieve their own ends.

4.3 Turmoil and kin after the French Wars

The rising population of St Neot, coupled with the difficult economic circumstances for many after the end of the French Wars, led to rapidly rising poor rate levels. In 1811 payments to poor parishioners totalled £458, equivalent to an average cost of 9s per head of population.[215] This latter figure was the same as for Cornwall as a whole but well below the 13s average for England and Wales. Poor rates in St Neot reached a peak of £910 in 1819, equivalent to 16s per year per head of population. Like many other parishes, St

[215] CRO MS. P162/12: Overseers' Accounts for St Neot (1765-c.1869).

Neot set up a Select Vestry in the same year in and attempt to control expenditure. Its creation was reflective of a much wider national clamour to control spiralling poor relief payments. By 1822 there were more than 2,500 Select Vestries in England and Wales, with 51 in Cornwall.[216]

Minutes of parish meetings suggest that parish leaders believed that the setting up of the vestry was the biggest factor in reducing poor rates. By 1822 poor rates had fallen to £755, the equivalent of 12s a head. However, this performance was not as good as for Cornwall as a whole, which by this time had reduced average rates to 8s per head. St Neot's poor rate was now also higher than the 11s average for England. A further gradual improvement in the situation saw poor rates in St Neot decline to £620 by 1829, but this remained well above the Cornish average and reflected the more difficult situation faced by the mainly agricultural parishes in East Cornwall. This was in contrast to mid and west Cornwall where mining activity had resulted in better employment levels.

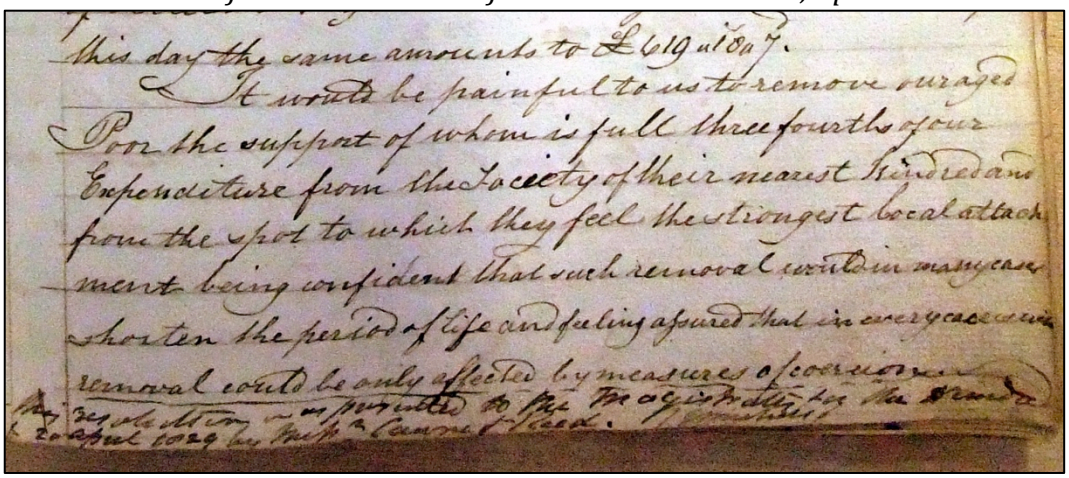
As a result of this continuing difficult situation the 22 parishes of the Hundred of the West, of which St Neot was one, issued a prospectus in 1829 for the building of a workhouse in Liskeard. It was proposed that the workhouse would house all paupers chargeable to the poor rates in the parishes which made up the hundred, with each parish paying in proportion to the numbers of people sent. This was done under the auspices of Thomas Gilbert's Act of 1782 that allowed adjacent parishes to combine, with the approval of two-thirds of ratepayers, and

[216] *Parliamentary Papers 1823, Vol. 345 (570),* Report from the Select Committee on Poor Rate Returns, Appendix B, p. 10.

provide workhouses for the old, the sick and the infirm. Over the next 50 years around 100 such unions were set up.[217]

On 16 April 1829 a special meeting of the principal inhabitants of St Neot met to discuss the prospectus for the new workhouse. Despite the continued difficult circumstances the parishioners of St Neot clearly felt that they were capable of sorting out their own affairs because they strongly opposed the idea of the workhouse. In their explanation for rejecting the prospectus they stressed the importance of kinship in the parish: 'It would be painful for us to remove our aged poor… from their nearest kindred and from the spot to which they feel the strongest attachment, being confident that such removal would in many years shorten the period of life and feeling that in every case such removal could be only affected by measures of coercion.'[218]

Figure 4.1. 'It would be painful for us to remove our aged poor… from their nearest kindred'. Extract from minute book of Twelve Men in St Neot, April 1829.[219]


this day the same amounts to £619 ul 8d 7.
It would be painful to us to remove our aged
Poor the support of whom is full three fourths of our
Expenditure from the Society of their nearest kindred and
from the spot to which they feel the strongest local attach
ment being confident that such removal would in many case
shorten the period of life and feeling assured that in every case such
removal could be only affected by measures of coercion

[217] Higginbotham, P., *The Workhouse Encyclopedia* (Stroud, 2012), pp. 116-117.
[218] CRO MS. P162/8/1: Twelve Men's Book, St Neot (1821-1855), p. 26.

St Neot's parishioners gave two further reasons for opposing the workhouse. The first was a claim that there was almost full employment in the parish with most of the assistance going to the elderly and to support base children. In addition, they said that the opportunity for enclosure on the St Neot moors meant that the parish would be able to absorb future surplus labour. This latter claim turned out to be an accurate prediction and will be explored in detail in the next chapter.

The resolution from the parishioners was presented to the magistrates for the Hundred of the West on 20 April 1829. However, not everyone agreed with the reasons for rejecting the workhouse plan. The vicar of St Neot, Henry Grylls wrote in response that, 'no-one acquainted with the parish of St Neot can deny that many men are almost constantly out of employ and can see quickly that there must be a surplus of population'. The evidence, however, points to Grylls being wrong. Of the £619 18s 7d paid to the poor of St Neot in 1828-9, only £70 13s 6d was paid to labourers with the majority of the rest going to support the elderly of the parish. The payment to labourers primarily consisted of occasional financial support to cover for sickness while temporarily out of work, and for assistance with cottage rental.

Grylls stated his objections in the margin of a copy of the resolution that was placed in the minute book of the Twelve Men of St Neot, a committee set up two years after the Select Vestry in 1821. According to its minute book the committee of Twelve Men represented the 'revival of an ancient custom from time immemorial' to oversee the management of incomes from land and tithes

donated to the parish and used for the relief of the poor of St Neot and also for maintaining the parish church.[220]

The 'twelve respectable persons' were appointed for life provided they attended meetings regularly. Crucially Grylls was not included in the membership. Committees of Twelve Men appear to have been a peculiarly Cornish institutions whose origins are not entirely clear, although such committees existed in a number of Cornish parishes and had the dual objectives of raising and distributing funds for the poor in the period before poor rates were introduced, and for maintaining the fabric of the parish church. In St Neot these funds were generated from ancient bequests of land, tithes and money. These bequests appear to have been made up to the early 1600s, and included the proceeds from 10,000lbs of sugar donated by a former parishioner who had died on the island of Barbados.

In the 1700s these funds were administered by the Churchwardens and it must have irked Grylls to see the control of the funds transfer to a group outside his direct influence. The impetus for the revival of this ancient group in St Neot appears to have been the work of James Michell. Originally from a prosperous Truro family, he was a collector of taxes who moved to Lampen Farm in St Neot in 1818. He quickly became involved in many aspects of parish administration, and in 1833 also wrote the first book solely about the history of the parish of St

[220] *ibid.,* p. 2.

Neot.[221] For a time he was chairman of both the Twelve Men and the Select Vestry.

Initially at least the Twelve Men and the vicar appeared to work together harmoniously. Indeed, one of the first acts of the Twelve Men was to devote a large proportion of their annual income towards the education of the parish's poor children in the Charity School. It had been established in 1815 and relied on non-resident landowners and larger tenant farmers for funding. However, it quickly ran into financial difficulties in the post-war recession, with some people withdrawing support completely and others reducing their contributions.

Henry Grylls was forced to make repeated attempts to get landowners to support the school.[222] The decision of the Twelve Men to pay for the school from the funds they controlled was backed enthusiastically by Grylls and it enabled the school to be put on a sound financial footing for the benefit of all pupils. Over subsequent years the Twelve worked with Grylls to agree admission/removal rules for poor children, as well as to commit to pay to educate all their own children at the school and to support subscriptions for the purchase of books.

In March 1829 the Twelve Men agreed to let 11 acres of parish lands to Henry Grylls for £17 a year on a 14-year lease. As we shall see in the chapter on religion, this agreement between them was to be the source of an increasingly acrimonious relationship. Indeed, the first signs of what was to come came just

[221] Michell, J., *Parochial History of St Neot in Cornwall* (Bodmin, 1833).
[222] CRO MS. CN/1607: Letter asking for money to support the Parish School (1817).

one month later when the vicar expressed his disagreement with the workhouse resolution in the minute book of the Twelve Men.

St Neot's opposition to the workhouse proposal in 1829 was ultimately unsuccessful and one was finally opened in Liskeard in 1839, a result of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.[223] There is no evidence that St Neot opposed this second, statutory implementation. There was opposition in some other Cornish parishes – for example there was rioting at Camelford and Stratton, and disturbances in St Ives and St Just – and there were other cases across western and northern England.[224]

One of the most notorious examples of opposition was at Todmorden in Lancashire where a workhouse was resisted until the 1870s.[225] A statement issued by the ratepayers of Todmorden in 1838 included a paragraph stating that they were making a stand against placing 'those poor, whom we love and respect and who have been guilty of no crime, in a Workhouse and under a discipline and restraint more intolerable than is allotted to felons in a gaol'.[226]

It was the reference to kinship that marked St Neot out from other opposition, and the strength of feeling exhibited in the statement by its ratepayers suggests

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[223] Higginbotham, P., *The Workhouse Encyclopedia* (Stroud, 2012), p. 332.
[224] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), pp. 246-247.
[225] Higginbotham, P., *The Workhouse Encyclopedia* (Stroud, 2012), p. 195.
[226] Extracts of accounts of Overseers of the Poor of Todmorden & Walsden viewed online at: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~todmordenandwalsden/todrebels.htm#anchor1.

that kinship mattered at the parish as well as personal level and was perhaps just as important to the parishioners as the control of the poor rates. Indeed, family reconstitution shows that a majority of the Twelve Men had close kinship links (first or second degree) with at least some of those in receipt of poor relief.

Following the opening of the workhouse in Liskeard in 1839 it is notable how few of the poor of St Neot were sent there. In 1851 only four inmates in Liskeard workhouse, representing less than 2% of the total, were born in St Neot. All four were 18 years old or younger and three of them had unfortunate family circumstances that meant they lacked a local support network. For example, ten-year-old Joshua Jennings's parents, Joshua senior and Loveday, had moved from Gwennap to St Neot in about 1837. They were part of the migration of miners from west and mid Cornwall, and at the time of the 1841 census lived at Lower Draynes. Caleb Jennings, Joshua senior's brother had also made the same move from Gwennap with his family and lived next door.

The family collapsed as a unit in 1847 when Joshua junior's mother died and subsequent censuses show that Joshua senior moved to North Wales and then Lancashire to find mining work. It is not clear why he did not follow his brother to nearby St Cleer where there was plenty of mine work available. Joshua's daughters found work as servants on separate farms near to St Neot while the eldest son Benjamin became a lead miner in Liskeard. It is also not clear why Joshua junior was the only member of the family to end up in the workhouse, but it appears to have been a temporary expedient and by 1861 he was back in the family fold, lodging with his uncle Caleb Jennings in St Cleer. By the 1871 census

the two Joshuas were together again sharing a house at Dalton-in-Furness in Lancashire before Joshua junior was tragically killed in a mining accident there in November 1876.[227]

Elderly paupers, along with other widowed or single St Neot residents aged 60 or over, frequently lived with close kin. In 1851 a majority of the 52 widowed or single elderly people living in St Neot, including 20 paupers, were lodging with relatives, although the kin relationships were usually only revealed by family reconstitution. The most common form of kin cohabitation was elderly people lodging with daughters but there were other combinations, usually where this route was not an option.

As was shown in chapter three, there were just three lone households (out of a total of 309) in St Neot 1851. One of these was not strictly a single person household as 78-year-old Anna Marshall lived with 62-year-old house servant Mary Lobb at Tremaddock. Close kin of both Anna and Mary were farmers in the local area. Kin were also very close to pauper Mary Doney who lived alone in St Neot – her brother Samuel lived next door. The only other person in the parish living alone was another pauper, Susanna Grigg. She had left the parish for Lanlivery with her husband in the 1820s but returned to St Neot as a widow in the 1840s after her husband and eldest son died. Susanna had no family in Lanlivery but had a brother and sister farming in St Neot. There were a small number of elderly people who were not obviously related to other occupiers of

[227] The Coalmining History Resource Centre, viewed online at http://www.cmhrc.co.uk/site/database/result/38701.html.

households where they lived. In some of these cases there were possibly kinship links not identified in the family reconstitution process.

The fact that so many of St Neot's elderly population lived with close kin is at odds with suggestions by some historians that it was the community rather than relatives who shouldered most of the burdens of caring for the old. David Thompson, for example, argued that in most communities geographical mobility and mortality removed much of the potential kinship support.[228] However, Barry Reay found that in the Blean area of Kent in 1851 45% of the elderly (aged 65 or over) were living with a child or other kin. In St Neot the corresponding figure was 66%.

It is possible that this high percentage was partly the result of a reaction to the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act. Snell argued that the act forced kin to look after the elderly, which resulted in greater resentment towards the old within some families and overcrowding in many cottages. He noted a sharp rise in enforcement of orders from the petty sessions for children to support aged parents.[229] However, there was only one example of such an order in St Neot, when three of the sons of Richard Nottle were forced to support their father. The Nottles were one of the dynastic moorland families and their role in enclosure will be discussed in chapter five (see page 252).

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[228] Reay, B., *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800-1930* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 120.
[229] Snell, K.D.M., *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660–1900* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 366.

Richard Nottle had been a husbandman on Bodmin Moor, but by the 1841 census he was 78-years old and described as independent. Unlike most lone elderly people in St Neot he did not live with a close relative. Instead he lodged with Richard and Jane Bullen at Pinnockshill on the St Neot moors. At the time there was no obvious kinship connection between the Bullens and their lodger. Something must have happened to strain Nottle family relations because in 1846 a summons was issued to three of Richard Nottle's sons ordering them to support their father. The summons worked and the following year Nottle's sons began making payments for their father's maintenance.[230]

Richard Nottle's case was exceptional and for the most part the elderly were supported locally with strong intervention of kinship networks. St Neot's ratepayers, who had been initially hostile to any form of workhouse, subsequently largely ignored its presence in favour of local support that was both more cost effective and reflective of the importance of kinship networks within the community.

St Neot was not only notable for its opposition to a workhouse in the 1830s, it also became a centre for unrest in relation to tithes. The labourers of St Neot and a neighbouring parish led the opposition. They believed that reducing tithes would enable farmers to provide more work at higher wages.[231] The poor rate book shows that in December 1830 the militia was summoned to the parish from

[230] CRO MS. P162/18/1: St Neot parish poor law payment and receipt book (1847).
[231] *West Briton*, 24 Dec 1830.

Liskeard and Altarnun to keep order.[232] Newspaper reports suggest that serious unrest was only avoided when Henry Grylls agreed to suspend the collection of the tithe.[233]

Tithes had been a running sore in Cornwall since the end of the French Wars. In 1816, Henry's father Richard Gerveys Grylls was unsympathetic and uncompromising in his rejection of a request from farmers in Breage to temporarily reduce the tithe because of a poor harvest.[234] The situation in St Neot was part of wider disturbances in Cornwall that had potentially been stimulated, at least in part, by the Swing Riots in eastern and southern England. Many Cornish farmers appeared to sympathise with the situation faced by labourers. At South Petherwin, on the north-eastern edge of Bodmin Moor, farmers issued a declaration demanding a reduction in tithe payments of 20% and in rents of up to 30% in order to accede to the 'just demands' of the labourers. In their declaration the farmers said that continued high rents were starving Cornish farmers of capital, reducing 'hundreds of this class… from independence to extreme poverty and distress, and thousands are at this moment on the brink of ruin'.[235]

Further north in Stratton magistrates responded to unrest among labourers by ordering farmers to increase wages from 1s to 1s 4d a day. Not surprisingly, farmers replied by saying they could not afford this unless rents and tithes were

[232] CRO MS. P162/12/2: St Neot Account Book (1831).
[233] *West Briton*, 24 Dec 1830.
[234] Grylls, R.G., *Grylls and Grills, The History of a Cornish Clan, Vol. 1* (London, 1999), p. 179.
[235] *West Briton*, 24 Dec 1830.

reduced. Extra constables were sworn in to maintain order.[236] The liberal West Briton newspaper played a key part in communicating details of the unrest and the complaints of farmers and, while it condemned acts of violence, it was strident in supporting their cause.

Despite the widespread threats of disturbance, and the occasional outbreak of violence such as at a protest against tithes on fish in Mousehole, demonstrations had largely disappeared from Cornwall by the spring of 1831.[237] An idea of the landowners' attitude can be seen in a letter written by the Deputy Lieutenant of Cornwall, Ernest Augustus, to the Home Office in Dec 1830, in which he acknowledged that the wages of labourers were 'shamefully low' but added that the 'most disagreeable circumstance is farmers instigating the people to riot to obtain lower rents or tithes'.[238]

The suggestion that farmers were using labourers for their own selfish reasons ignored the fact that in many ways the farmers and labourers in Cornwall really were in it together. On Bodmin Moor many of the smaller farmers, who made up the majority of occupiers, had been labourers themselves and many of their close relatives were also labourers. Wages for Cornish farm labourers were extremely low, averaging less than 9s a week or less in the 1830s.[239] However, farming

[236] *West Briton*, 17 Dec 1830.
[237] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), p. 294.
[238] Deacon, B., *The Cornish Family* (Fowey, 2004), p. 146.
[239] Snell, K.D.M., *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660–1900* (Cambridge, 1985), p.130.

incomes were also severely depressed. Tithes and poor rates contributed to this, but the biggest change had been the revolution in farm tenancies.

Not only had the loss of leases-for-lives reduced farmers from yeoman to tenants, it had a dramatic impact on annual rent charges. We saw in the last chapter how annual rents for the Manor of West Draynes rose from £18 2s 11d in 1793 to over £300 by 1814. Post-war difficulties faced by farmers forced rental income down again in the 1820s, reaching a low of just over £200 a year in West Draynes in 1828. However, the two remaining farms in the manor let on leases-for-lives, Westerlake and Killham, came in hand in 1829 and were immediately let at rack rent raising the annual rental income to £261.

The impact on individual farmers and farms was significant. At Higher and Little Trenant the annual conventionary rent was just £1 4s 6d a year, but Mary Tillie took back the farm in 1800 by agreeing to provide an annuity of £40 for the two remaining elderly lives. She let the upland farm for 14 years to Jonathan Keast for £67 a year.[240] Keast had married his cousin Mary Keast, whose parents Robert and Sarah Keast had held the assigned lease for the farm.

Sarah Keast died in 1803 but unfortunately the administrator of the will, her son William, died before he could fulfil the task and in the confusion Jonathan and Mary appear to have simply taken over many of the farm's live and dead stock that was intended to be shared between Mary's siblings. A subsequent case in the ecclesiastical courts brought by Mary's sister, which highlighted how having kin all around was not always a good thing, found against Jonathan and he was

[240] CRO MS. CY/2635: Counterpart lease, Higher Trenant, St Neot (20 June 1800).

forced to compensate Mary's brothers and sisters.[241] High farm product prices and competition for farms meant that when Jonathan Keast renewed for another 14-year term in 1814 he had to accept a rent increase to £80 year.[242] However the timing of the renewal was unfortunate for him.

Farm product prices began to fall rapidly after reaching a wartime peak in December 1813. By 1815 prices were in free-fall and Keast was forced to quit the farm, the rent book stating that he could no longer afford the rent.[243] It is not clear if he tried to renegotiate a lower rent, but after he left William Lord took the farm at a lower rent of £65. Lord negotiated further rent reductions down to £50 a year in 1817 and to £45 in 1822. Between 1818 and 1822, during the period when poor rates in St Neot rose to their highest levels and farm prices slumped to post-war lows, Lord was given additional rent abatements of £5 a year. James Carpenter then took the farm for a further 14 years in 1825 for £45. By 1839 the situation had improved sufficiently for Petherick Higman to take the farm for £60 a year. Higman was one of the new breed of farmers on Bodmin Moor, a staunch Bible Christian who combined farming with a granite stone-cutting business.

The difficult economic circumstances affected many other farms in St Neot. For example at Wenmouth Farm, which was sold by the Morshead family to William Glencross in 1818, tenants changed in 1814, 1820, 1824, 1827, 1834 and

[241] CRO MS. ARD165/24: Temerary administration, Sarah Keast, widow of St Neot (1803).
[242] CRO MS. CY/5808: Agreement for lease Higher Trenant (Lady Day, 1814).
[243] CRO MS. CY/2667: Quitclaim, Higher and Lower Trenant, St Neot (1 July 1814).

1840.[244] Thomas Beard had agreed to pay £347 a year for a 14-year term in 1814.[245] Despite the 190 acre farm being one of the best in the district such a rent level was not sustainable.

However, higher annual rents and the move to short-term tenancies did have one beneficial impact: landlords began to invest in improvements to farmhouses and buildings. In 1812 the newly combined farms of Great and Little Tredinnick in St Neot were advertised for rental on a 14-year term. The advertisement described how the farmhouse was about to be enlarged, and that a threshing machine was to be installed in a barn that was about to be rebuilt. The combined farm was large for the district, having 220 acres of enclosed land plus 450 acres of moorland for summer grazing.[246]

The post-war slump meant that the tenant only lasted for four years and the property was advertised again in 1816. It would appear the amalgamation of the farms was not, however, a great success and the farms were once again offered separately. The advertisement did reveal that the threshing machine had indeed been installed at the 152-acre Little Tredinnick. This farm was ironically more than double the acreage of Great Tredinnick which had 70 acres of arable, meadow and pasture. Richard Saunders was tenant of Little Tredinnick at the 1841 census. His mother lived at the farm and was still undertaking manual

[244] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 1 June 1820, 7 Jan 1824, 31 May 1827, 4 Jul 1834, 24 Apr 1840.
[245] Sale catalogue for Morshead lands in Cornwall, Sept. 1818. Copy held by St Neot and Warleggan Community Archive.
[246] *Royal Cornwall Gazette,* 27 Jun 1812, 10 Aug 1816.

work in 1839 at the age of 88 when she 'worked in a harvest field and reaped several shocks of wheat'.[247]

As well as investment in farm infrastructure, farmers were also benefiting from improvements in transport links, helping to bring down the costs of fertilisers and other inputs. In 1844 the letting prospectus for Great Draynes Farm promoted the relative closeness to the recently opened Liskeard and Looe canal 'from whence lime, sand and other manures may be obtained'. The 175-acres farm also boasted a new set of buildings of 'spacious dimensions'.[248] However, these improvements were not enough for the tenant Peter Werry who joined many other farmers from the district in emigrating to Canada.

The higher turnover of tenants following the ending of leases-for-lives was repeated across the parish. The instability this caused, coupled with higher rents, led to a growing chasm between the largely absent landowners and the rest of the population. It is true that prospective tenants no longer needed the high entry fines to secure farms, but these fines had in the past been funded from inheritance and long-term savings. The tiny annual conventionary rents had meant that tenants could more easily survive the peaks and troughs of farm product prices, and also other issues such as animal health problems and crop failures.

[247] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 20 September 1839.
[248] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 2 August 1844.

The tithe disputes of the early 1830s had brought the widening gap between landlord and tenant into sharp focus. To this has to be added the collapse of traditional manorial institutions. By and large the manors of Cornwall ceased to operate along manorial lines. In the process their function as partially self-governing institutions disappeared. The reeve no longer co-ordinated matters at local level and instead agents on behalf of landlords dealt with farmers individually. At the same time many farms and cottages lost their customary rights to common grazing and turbary.

Thus the collective, collaborative nature of farm tenancies in Cornwall, which in many ways had suited landowners as well as tenants, disappeared in little more than one generation. The largest landowner in St Neot, the Grylls family of Helston, also owned most of the tithes and appointed the vicars of St Neot parish church. The family's manors also included large tracts of common land in the north of the parish. These common lands were enclosed from the 1820s onwards without any agreement with tenants whose customary rights disappeared with the expiration of leases-for-lives.

Ironically parcels of former common land were granted to tenants under leases-for-lives because this meant tenants undertook all the capital investment and bore most of the risks involved. The full impact of religious change and enclosure will be dealt with in the next two chapters, but it is hardly surprising that opposition to the tithes was a particular focus in St Neot given the position of power held by the Grylls family.

Much of the controversy surrounding tithes was at least partially resolved by the tithe apportionments of the 1840s. In St Neot all parties broadly accepted the apportionment of 1842. In fact the only public dispute was over whether Sprey Moor in the middle of Bodmin Moor belonged to St Neot or Cardinham.[249] The commissioners eventually placed it in the latter parish.

The tithe apportionment also revealed the extent of the decline in leases-for-lives and the consequent rate of turnover in farms. By 1842 only 11 lowland farms of any size in St Neot were let on leases-for-lives, compared with a majority in 1793. The Lanhydrock Estate owned ten of the 11 and this reflected its later ending of the granting new leases-for-lives compared with other owners. It was also less aggressive in buying out leaseholders. The greater turnover of farms because of the loss of leases-for-lives and the economic turmoil of the post-war years meant that just five of St Neot's farms had occupiers with the same surname in 1842 as in 1793.

However, it is important not to overstate the significance of this latter point. Many individuals moved farms whatever the tenancy arrangement to suit their personal circumstances. This might involve moving to larger tenements as their resources improved, or downsizing as they became older. Samuel Doney farmed 50 acres at South Draynes in 1842, but by 1851 he was in his 70s and farmed just four acres at nearby Draynes Bridge. Lodging with Doney was his brother-in-law John Bickford. Reduced to being a pauper in 1851, Bickford had once farmed at Great Draynes and ironically was once an overseer of the poor in St Neot.

[249] NA MS. IR 18/480. Tithe files for St Neot, Cornwall (1836-1870).

What had changed was that farms now more frequently changed hands due to the financial circumstances of the outgoing tenant. Once a tenancy was surrendered it was also lost to the family, whereas with leases-for-lives there was often continuity of occupation within a wider kinship group.

4.4 Kinship and emigration

For many of those affected by the difficult economic circumstances after the French Wars emigration provided an increasingly viable option. In most cases kinship was a significant factor in influencing where people went and whom they travelled with.

Some of the first people to leave in the post-war recession were the children of St Neot farmer William Dangar. He was owner-occupier of Lampen Farm, and was one of the wealthiest residents of the parish. During the French Wars he took advantage of higher prices by taking on more land. In 1814 he rented Lower West Draynes on a 14-year term at £100 a year, but it proved to be a step too far. Two year later he managed to secure a rent reduction to £75 but in the same year he was forced to issue a notice to creditors.[250] In 1818 he gave up the land at Draynes and also rented out Lampen Farm to James Michell.[251] Later he sold the freehold of the farm to Michell so that by 1842 he owned just seven acres and a number of cottages in St Neot Churchtown.[252]

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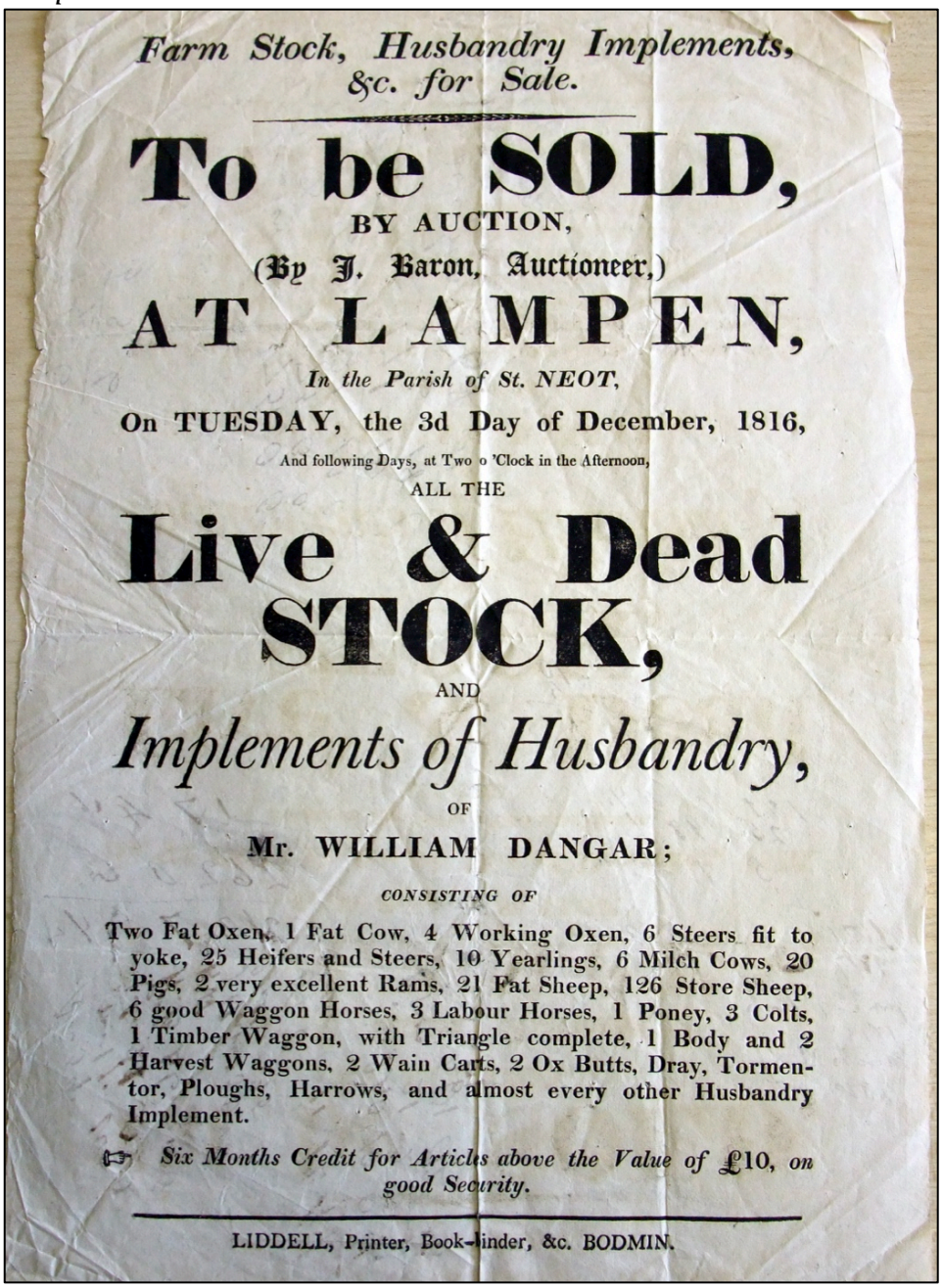
[250] *Royal Cornwall Gazette,* 16 November 1816.
[251] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 20 Jun 1818.
[252] NA MS. IR 29/6/143: Tithe Commissioners for England and Wales, Apportionment of the rent charge in lieu of tithes in the parish of St Neot (1842).

Figure 4.2. Notice of dispersal sale for William Dangar of Lampen Farm, St Neot. The previous month he had issued a notice to creditors.[253]



Farm Stock, Husbandry Implements, &c. for Sale.

To be SOLD,

BY AUCTION,

(By J. Baron, Auctioneer,)

AT LAMPEN,

In the Parish of St. NEOT,

On TUESDAY, the 3d Day of December, 1816,

And following Days, at Two o 'Clock in the Afternoon,

ALL THE

Live & Dead STOCK,

AND

Implements of Husbandry,

OF

Mr. WILLIAM DANGAR;

CONSISTING OF

Two Fat Oxen, 1 Fat Cow, 4 Working Oxen, 6 Steers fit to yoke, 25 Heifers and Steers, 10 Yearlings, 6 Milch Cows, 20 Pigs, 2 very excellent Rams, 21 Fat Sheep, 126 Store Sheep, 6 good Waggon Horses, 3 Labour Horses, 1 Poney, 3 Colts, 1 Timber Waggon, with Triangle complete, 1 Body and 2 Harvest Waggons, 2 Wain Carts, 2 Ox Butts, Dray, Tormentor, Ploughs, Harrows, and almost every other Husbandry Implement.

☞ *Six Months Credit for Articles above the Value of* £10, *on good Security.*

LIDDELL, Printer, Book-binder, &c. BODMIN.

It is not clear whether it was the difficult circumstances in Cornwall or the attraction of emigration that acted as the biggest incentive for the Dangars to leave Cornwall. It is likely that both factors influenced William's son Henry, who

[253] CRO MS. CM/1581/1: Sale poster, stock and implements, Lampen, St Neot (1816).

left St Neot for Australia in 1820. By 1829 four of his brothers had also made the journey to New South Wales and in the 1830s another sister and brother moved there from St Neot. In addition to immediate kin two cousins from other prominent St Neot families, Charles Gedye and Jeremiah Brice Rundle, also moved to Australia to work with the Dangars.[254] The Dangars became one of the most successful pioneering families in South Australia, working as surveyors, ranchers, property developers, factory owners and politicians.

The New South Wales government initially employed Henry Dangar to survey and map large tracts of land thought potentially suitable for settlers. However, he was sacked in 1827 for allegedly using public office for private gain. Dangar lost both a subsequent appeal and all his property in Australia. He returned to Cornwall and in 1828 and married Grace Sibly, who was a member of another prominent St Neot family.

Despite his previous chequered experience, he moved back to Australia in 1830 with his wife and new-born son to take up a position as surveyor and cartographer for the Australian Agricultural Company. By 1850 he farmed more than 300,000 acres based at Neotsfield near Singleton in the Hunter Valley, as well as owning agricultural processing plants in New Zealand and Australia. Dangar named many places after locations and people in Cornwall, including Mount Sibly to honour his wife's family from St Neot.

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[254] Gray, N., 'Dangar, Henry 1796–1861', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Australian National University, 1966). Viewed online at http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/dangar-henry-1954/text2349.

The attractions of Australia to the Dangar family did not encourage many others to emigrate there from Bodmin Moor. The difficult, long journey, and growing opposition to forced transportation from many in Cornwall limited numbers willing to travel there (Henry Dangar was a strong supporter of transportation because of acute labour shortages in Australia).[255] Mass emigration there would have to wait until mining opportunities opened up in south Australia later in the nineteenth century. In any case, another emigration option for farmers in 1820s and 1830s became far more popular with the opening up of opportunities for farming in Canada.[256]

Most of early emigrants from Bodmin Moor headed for Cobourg in what was then known as Upper Canada, and which later became part of the province of Ontario. This emigration option had a strong nonconformist religious context, which will be discussed more fully in chapter eight, but in St Neot a majority of those leaving for Canada in the 1820s and 1830s also had close kinship links. For example, Peter Davey left his farm in the hamlet of Treverbyn in St Neot for Cobourg in Ontario shortly after the death of his daughter Sarah in April 1830. Peter's youngest brother Richard Davey moved out to Cobourg with his young family at the same time, while another brother Nicholas followed shortly afterwards.

In November 1831 Peter Davey wrote to his cousin John Davey, who also farmed at Treverbyn in St Neot, extolling the virtues of moving to Canada:

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[255] Payton, P., *The Cornish Overseas* (Fowey, 2005 edn.), p. 73.
[256] *ibid.*, p. 66.

> ‘Soon after my arrival I bought a lot of land (200 acres) for which I gave £275; the wood will nearly pay for the land and clearing. I shall have 40 acres of wheat next year, and having no rent to pay, no poor rates, no tithes, no Church rates, no land tax and only about five shillings a year to Government, I may fairly hope to do well. But it is useless for idlers or drunkards to come here, as they will be sure to starve. Industrious labourers can support themselves and their families well; wages are from 3/9d to 5s a day. We live in great harmony, so much so that we care little about locking our doors by night; in truth I would not return to England if I could have the land of the estate I rented in St Neot given to me.’

In his letter Davey also sent a message to some of his old neighbours: ‘Tell Mallett and Keast if they could get here their families would soon cease to be a trouble to them’. Mallett and Keast were also close relatives of Davey. John Mallett had married his sister Elizabeth and farmed at Northwood close to Treverbyn, while the Keast referred to was likely to have been one of a number of first cousins living near by.

The Mallets and the Keasts resisted emigration until the 1840s but other local people did join the exodus sooner. Labourer David Ede from Treverbyn left in about 1832 to become a farmer in the same district as Peter Davey. Later Ede’s sister Elizabeth and her husband Thomas Harris from Trenant also emigrated to be with them. Peter Davey was also probably himself influenced to emigrate by two first cousins who left for Canada before him: Matthew Rosevear, who farmed at Tremaddock in St Neot, emigrated to Ontario in 1829, while another John Davey from St Neot (the brother of Mary Davey) left for North America at about the same time.

In February 1832 Peter Davey's letter to his cousin reached a wider audience when it was published in the West Briton.[257] The newspaper had become a strong advocate of emigration and its pages were regular sources of information about opportunities in Canada and elsewhere. An introduction to the letter stated that several farmers from St Neot had wanted to see it published and that all people mentioned had agreed to their names being used.

That year was the peak in emigration from Cornwall to Canada. Between 1831 and 1860 an estimated 42,000 emigrants sailed for Canada from the Cornish and Devon ports of Padstow, Fowey, Truro, Falmouth, Penzance, St Ives, Plymouth and Bideford. From Padstow alone 6,200 departed for Canada over the same period and only Liverpool and London surpassed the numbers leaving the port.[258]

There was a further surge in emigration to Canada in the difficult years of the 1840s. Once again broader kinship groups featured strongly. Peter Werry departed from Great Draynes Farm in St Neot for Canada in 1844. At least six of his nine siblings who survived into adulthood emigrated to the same part of Canada between the early 1830s and late 1840s. Like Peter Davey he bought a 200-acre lot in Durham County, and also like Davey he wrote a letter to a former neighbour about the progress of relatives and also gave details about the practicalities of farming in Canada.[259]

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[257] *West Briton*, 10 Feb 1832.
[258] Payton, P., *The Cornish Overseas* (Fowey, 2005 edn.), p. 69.
[259] CRO MS. AD1976/36: Letter, Peter Werry of Ontario, Canada, to Mark Daniel (21 Feb 1849).

The Keasts and Malletts, who had been urged by Peter Davey to go to Canada in the early 1830s, began to leave during the difficult 1840s. However, they tended to favour the United States. First to depart in 1847 was John Keast from Northwood in St Neot, followed by two Mallett sisters, Agnes and Eliza, who left together from Draynes in 1848. Most of the emigrants were young but when farm labourer Thomas Keast and his wife Elizabeth (née Mallett) left Northwood to join son John Keast, Thomas was 64 and Elizabeth 51. Later a niece of Elizabeth's also emigrated to the United States, while two nephews went to New Zealand.

Intriguingly Thomas Keast was officially listed as only 50 years old when he left Plymouth on the John Bright. Payton noted that a telling insight of how ingrained emigration had become in Cornish culture was the 'extent to which potential Cornish emigrants applying for free or assisted passage schemes were able, allowed, encouraged and even assisted to lie about their status or at least misrepresent their occupational skills or other attributes such as age.'[260]

By the 1840s there were former St Neot residents living in Australia, Tasmania, the United States, New Zealand and Canada. Many of those emigrants came from families that had lived in Bodmin Moor since the reformation. Just as kin was significant to society in Cornwall it also played an important part in migration choices. A majority of the Daveys, Dangars, Werrys, Keasts, Rosevears and Malletts emigrated in kinship groups wider than the nuclear family.

[260] Payton, P., *The Cornish Overseas* (Fowey, 2005 edn.), p. 76.

The pattern of emigrating in wider kinship groups or joining kin already in the New World was not unique to St Neot or Bodmin Moor and Margaret James-Korany noted a similar pattern for some emigrants from a wider geographical area in north Cornwall.[261] Janet Few's study of three North Devon communities - of Bulkworthy, Bucks Mills and Conduit Street in Hatherleigh - found use of kinship links in emigration patterns was heavily influenced by the presence of kin within each place.

Where kinship links were particularly strong in the small fishing community of Bucks Mills most emigrants either left to join close kin or were themselves joined by kin. In Bulkworthy where there were fewer kinship links there was less use made of kin in emigration patterns, while for Conduit Street which had weak kinship links there was no evidence of kin beyond the nuclear family being used at all.[262]

4.5 Kin and community during the 'hungry forties'

For the majority who remained in Cornwall there was a brief improvement in circumstances in the late 1830s and early 1840s before another crisis hit. Labelled 'The Hungry Forties', it was a crisis period for small farmers and labourers alike as a series of disastrous harvests led to widespread food shortages. Philip Payton has argued that this period in Cornish history has

[261] James-Korany, M., 'Blue Books as Sources for Cornish Emigration History', *Cornish Studies Second Series 1* (1993), pp. 34-36.
[262] Few, J., 'Faith, Fish, Farm or Family? The Impact of Kinship Links and Communities on Migration Choices and Residential Persistence in North Devon 1841-1901' (University of Exeter Ph.D. thesis, 2009), pp. 350-355.

received too little attention, remaining 'historiographically invisible' compared with the coverage given to the famines in Ireland and parts of Scotland.[263]

Distress culminated in extreme food shortages and high prices during the winter and spring of 1846-1847. The price of wheat reached 13s 6d a bushel at Liskeard market in May 1847, double the price of a year earlier. For some large farmers with surplus grain this was a bonanza, but for many small farmers a series of poor crops meant they could not afford to pay their rents and arrears grew rapidly. The crisis for labourers was even worse. Many had become hugely dependent on a diet based on potatoes and the complete failure of this crop took them to the edge of starvation.

The shortages of basic foods led to widespread disturbances across Cornwall. On 12 May 1847 there was an unsuccessful attempt at Wadebridge to stop the export of grain where merchants refused demands from demonstrators for the grain to be sold to Cornish labourers at fair prices. There was more success on the same day at Callington, when miners from the Caradon district of Bodmin Moor arrived in force, and also at Launceston market three days later.[264] In both these cases the demonstrators persuaded farmers and dealers to sell their produce at what were deemed to be fair prices. All the proceeds of the sale of wheat, barley and butter were handed to the farmers.

[263] Payton, P., *Cornwall, A History* (Fowey, 2004 edn.), p. 214.
[264] *West Briton,* 14 May 1847, 21 May 1847; Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), p. 159.

There were other disturbances across Cornwall, but in most cases there was little or no violence. The hungry demonstrators were demanding that a moral economy prevail and wanted to prevent what they saw as undue profiteering, especially from the export of grain from Cornwall. They had some success beyond the outcomes of individual demonstrations, as increasingly alarmed magistrates, gentry and mine owners made attempts to secure food at subsidised prices. This action, together with the availability of other food supplies (particularly fish), alleviated the situation so that suffering was not as great as in Ireland or Scotland.

In June 1847 famine conditions reached crisis levels in St Neot and vicar Henry Grylls wrote to absent gentry landowners asking them to provide urgent assistance. In the letter he said that distress had fallen with particular severity on the labourers of the parish and that during a tour of the parish by churchwardens 'to ascertain the extent of the famine, they found labourers without the slightest particle of food of any description in their houses'.[265]

The stimulus for Grylls's letter was a resolution passed by the farmers of St Neot at a parish vestry meeting where they agreed to pay a special rate in order to buy food for the distressed labourers. They asked him to write to the landowners to provide additional funding in order to 'assist us in this present emergency' by providing help to the 'distressed sufferers'.[266]

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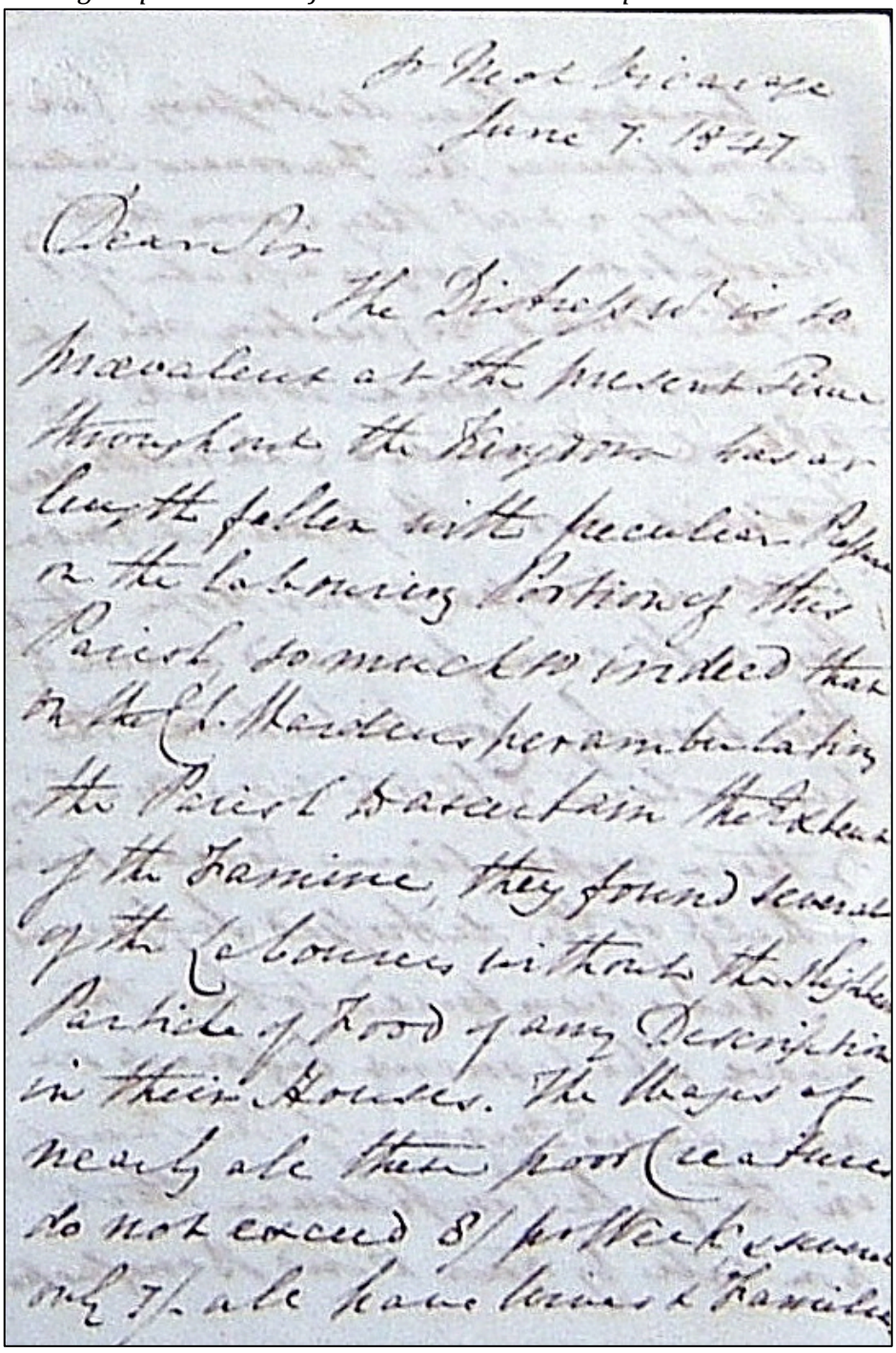
[265] CRO MS. CN/1607: Letter asking for money to alleviate conditions of famine in St Neot (1847). The Grylls family also donated £18 a year from their tithe incomes for the benefit of the poor of St Neot.
[266] CRO. MS. AD1547/3: St Neot vestry minutes (1821-55).

Figure 4.3. Extract from letter written by St Neot vicar Henry Grylls to landowners seeking help to alleviate famine conditions in the parish in 1847.



St Neot Vicarage
June 7. 1847

Dear Sir

The Distress is so
prevalent at the present Time
throughout the Kingdom has
caught [illegible] Poor
in the Laboring Portion of this
Parish so much [illegible] that
[illegible] perambulating
the Parish ascertain the Extent
of the Famine, they found several
of the Labourers without the slightest
Particle of Food of any Description
in their Houses. The Wages of
nearly all these poor Creatures
do not exceed 8/ per Week & some
only 7/- all have large Families

Many of the farmers of St Neot were themselves struggling to cope, and even some of the bigger farmers faced severe financial pressures. A letter from Peter Hambly, the tenant of Wenmouth Farm and one of the largest in the parish, to the

owner William Glencross in early 1849 revealed something of the crisis facing tenants paying large rack rents.[267] Hambly said his potato crop had failed completely in 1845 'and then and every year since I have lost produce worth from £75 to £100 a year'. Already significantly in arrears, he asked for a reduction on the £205 annual rent but this was refused and Hambly was forced to quit the farm.

The situation for many smaller farmers had become especially desperate. Rent books demonstrate how arrears were growing, and also how in some cases kinship networks were used to alleviate distress. Three farmers occupying the smallest farms in the Manor of West Draynes – Thomas Keast, John Doney and Sampson Deacon - had all fallen well behind with rents by early 1848 but they each had very different coping strategies.

Thomas Keast was a member of one of the largest dynastic groups in St Neot in the 1840s and 1850s. In 1841 he farmed 27 acres at Hilltown Farm in West Draynes and his case is particularly revealing as to how local kin provided critical support networks, but only up to a point. Thomas was descended from a long line of yeomen who had farmed in St Neot from at least the early seventeenth century. His father and grandfather had both farmed in the Manor of West Draynes and at the time of the 1841 census three of Thomas's brothers were also farming in the manor. Many of his family had served as overseers of

[267] Glencross papers (No. 333), St Neot and Warleggan Community Archive. Letter from Peter Hambly to William Glencross, 20th January 1849.

the poor and his father had also been a founding member of the revived Twelve Men.

By the summer of 1848 Thomas Keast was struggling and was unable to pay any of the £36 17s 10d rent due at Michaelmas. He and his family were ordered to quit the farm and with few assets and large debts their situation was desperate. The rent book said that 'a combination of sickness and poverty' meant that Thomas was unable to carry on and the farm's owner Augustus Coryton threatened distraint of his possessions in order to recover some of the money owed.

However, Coryton withdrew the threat when two of Thomas's close kin came to his aid. His brother-in-law Edward Alford and brother Stephen Keast offered to pay Coryton £25 and the rent book stated that on 4th Dec 1848 this payment was accepted in 'discharge of the rent' and 'that no distress be taken for rent due at Michaelmas last'. Keast was allowed to thresh and keep his remaining corn, cut turnips as required and use any wood already cut. However, the family were given just three weeks to organise their affairs, as the agreement required them to leave the farm by Christmas.[268]

The situation must have been distressing to Thomas and his wife Patience, but the actions of close kin probably saved the Keasts from entering the workhouse. At the 1851 census Thomas and Patience had become paupers living in a cottage

[268] CRO MS. CY/3882: Rent accounts for lands of Coryton family of Pentillie (1846-1853).

on recently enclosed moorland at Diddylake in West Draynes, along with five of their daughters. Their other daughter Priscilla was housekeeper for another of Thomas's brothers – retired farmer Robert Keast. A newspaper report of a robbery at his house at Trenant in 1856 described her as 'a half-witted creature'.[269]

Kinship support for the family was not total, however, and at least two of the children ended up in Liskeard workhouse. Their only son Matthew was one of the four people born in St Neot to be housed in the workhouse in 1851. Later their daughter Mary Ann Keast was also admitted to the workhouse. While there she was convicted of 'wilfully breaking two panes of glass' and was sent to Bodmin Gaol. Her discharge notes in 1860 said she had not been given work because she was 'of weak intellect'. She had also spent time in the refractory or punishment cell.[270]

By 1851 all four farms tenanted by the Keast brothers in 1841 had changed hands. Oldest brother Robert had retired to a cottage at Trenant and Stephen Keast was a labourer in nearby Dobwalls. The other brother Jeremiah committed suicide at Higher Draynes in 1843. His wife Grace retained the farm, and the 1851 census shows that her younger brother Petherick Higman (the son of Petherick Higman who farmed at nearby Higher Trenant) had moved into the farmhouse to live with her. Grace, who at the time of her husband's suicide was pregnant with her fifth child, had found Jeremiah hanging by a stittle or cow-

[269] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 20 June 1856. See page 394 for details of Priscilla's subsequent marriages.
[270] CRO MS. AD1676/4/6: Criminal Register, Bodmin (1860-1861).

hook and the inquest recorded that he had been in a state of despondency for some time.[271]

The 1840s were harsh on the Keasts from Draynes as two other incidents bear out. In May 1848 Grace's son was burnt to death in an unexplained accident at the farm. It was believed his clothes caught fire in a field being prepared for turnips and he was unable to make it back to the farmhouse. The second incident involved the daughter of a fifth brother, John Keast who had also farmed in Draynes but by 1841 had moved to a small farm in St Mellion. The daughter Caroline, who was born in Draynes in 1821, went into service with a large farmer and was sexually assaulted by him.

Caroline's parents encouraged her to seek justice through the courts and the case was heard before a special jury in August 1844. The court heard graphic details of what allegedly happened and Caroline Keast was subjected to 'a severe examination' by the defence. However, the newspaper reported that her evidence 'remained unbroken'. Her sister Priscilla and brother-in-law Matthew Doney then gave evidence on Caroline's behalf but in the end the jury was not called to give a verdict as the farmer admitted his guilt after the conclusion of the plaintiff's case and agreed to pay £75 in damages.

John Doney's crisis in the Hungry Forties also involved a dispute with a substantial farmer, but this case had a rather unusual outcome. Doney was a second cousin of Matthew Doney mentioned above and son of Samuel Doney

[271] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 10 Feb 1843.

mentioned earlier who farmed at Draynes Bridge in 1851. He farmed 15 acres at Pellagenna in St Cleer, on a farm that was part of the Manor of West Draynes. Like Thomas Keast he had fallen behind with rent payments and by the summer of 1847 was £12 19s in arrears. Facing the prospect of losing the farm if he could not pay the rent due at Michaelmas, on 26 August 1847 he stole 27 sheaves and 16 gallons of oats from the adjoining farm.[272] This farm was occupied by William Henwood, who said that on the day in question he went to inspect an arrish mow in one of his fields and realised some sheaves were missing.[273]

Unfortunately for Doney, servant Maria Wilton who was hanging out washing to dry on the hedge witnessed his rash act, and when the missing oats were found in his barn he immediately offered to take them back or pay for them. However, this was deemed unacceptable and a constable who had been summoned by Henwood took Doney into custody. At the court hearing Doney's defence centred on the suggestion that the practice of mutual borrowing and lending was common custom between farmers. The jury was not convinced, however, and Doney was found guilty.

This was despite one of the jury members, Peter Gerry giving Doney a good character reference in court.[274] We shall learn more about Gerry in the chapter

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[272] *Royal Cornwall Gazette,* 3 September 1847.
[273] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), p. 229. Arrish mows were circular stores of up to 200 sheaves of corn placed in fields, thought to be a remnant of the old Celtic open field or 'run rig' system of farming. Rowe believed they disappeared from this part of Cornwall before 1800 but this suggests otherwise.
[274] *West Briton,* 20 Oct 1847; CRO MS. QS/1/14/303: Quarter Sessions Bodmin (1847), p. 303.

on religion, but it was probably not known to any other jury members or the judge that the prominent nonconformist was married to one of Doney's cousins. On 19th October 1847 Doney was sentenced to 12 months hard labour and was admitted to Bodmin Gaol a day later. He served the full sentence and was released on 19th October 1848.

The release papers reveal something of the appearance of Doney. He was described as 42 years old, 5ft 8ins tall with grey eyes, hair grey and brown, a sallow complexion, sandy whiskers and a face that 'falls in'. He could read and write and was married with three children.[275] In fact on his conviction his wife Elizabeth was heavily pregnant and their third child was born while Doney was inside. However, what is most astonishing about this case is that Doney managed to retain the farm. A note in the rent book appears to indicate that there was an intention to distrain some of Doney's possessions to cover the arrears but it is not clear if this was carried out.[276]

Although there is no conclusive evidence that kinship provided the support that enabled the farm to be kept, it is highly likely to have been invoked. Doney had married his first cousin Elizabeth Doney in St Neot in 1837. She was the daughter of St Cleer farmers John and Mary Doney. John died in 1844 and Mary took over responsibility for farming the 24 acres at Lampretten, just a few fields away from Pellagenna.

[275] CRO MS. AD1676/4/3: Gaol Register, Bodmin (1845-5).
[276] CRO MS. CY/3882: Rent accounts for lands of Coryton family of Pentillie (1846-1853).

For a year between October 1847 and October 1848 mother and daughter ran two neighbouring farms at one of the most difficult periods faced by Cornish farmers in the nineteenth century. It is inconceivable that Elizabeth did not receive assistance from the rest of her family – in addition to her mother Elizabeth she also had three adult brothers living in other households at Lampretten. One was a carpenter, one a blacksmith and the other was a bachelor living with mother Mary.

Another farmer who survived potentially crippling rent arrears was Sampson Deacon, who farmed 14 acres at Killham in St Neot. In early 1848 he was almost one year behind with his £16 a year rent. Like many small farmers Deacon had another occupation, in his case a carpentry business. By 1852 he managed to pay off all his arrears by providing carpentry services to the landlord. As a result, he was able to retain the farm until his death in 1864. His daughter Ann Deacon married lead miner and first cousin John Richards in 1848 and they took over Killham Farm after Sampson died.

Ann Deacon achieved brief notoriety in the district when as an 11-year-old she testified in court against Johanna Chapman who worked as a housekeeper for the family.[277] Chapman had injured Ann with a knife when the latter took bacon without permission. There were no other witnesses and Ann admitted she and Johanna disliked each other. Despite Chapman claiming to have not intended to

[277] *West Briton*, 2 Mar 1838.

injure Deacon when she took the knife from her, she was convicted of assault and sent to Bodmin gaol where she died while in custody in February 1840.[278]

These examples demonstrate a number of things about the district in the 1840s. First, many small farmers had other sources of income not revealed in the censuses. In the case of Sampson Deacon he was listed as a carpenter in the 1851 census, and the secondary occupation of farmer was not mentioned. On the other hand, John Doney was described as a farmer in the census, but his other job as a builder of Cornish hedges was only revealed in the account books of the Manor of West Draynes. In 1853 he was given the contract to build new hedges on moorland enclosures on the edge of Draynes Common.

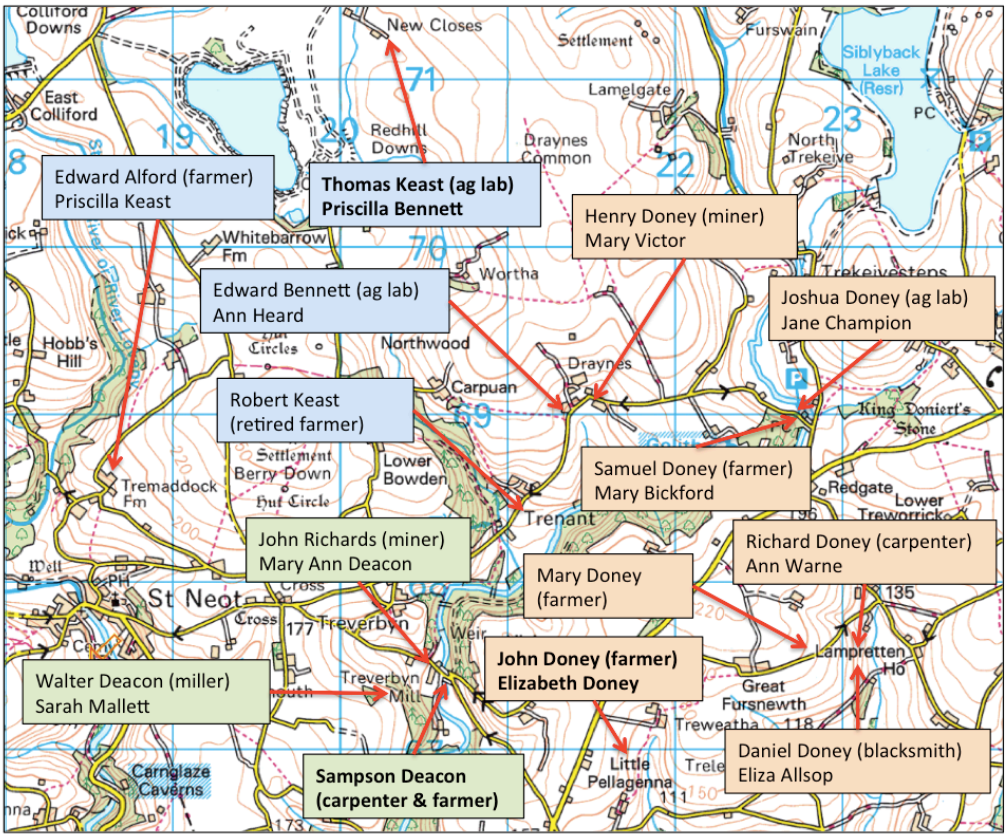
Second, something of the relationship between landlord and tenant is revealed. Both Deacon and Doney were allowed to build up rent arrears, and were given 10% rent abatements in the difficult years at the end of the 1840s. Even a gaol sentence did not affect Doney's relatively secure position. However, the treatment of Thomas Keast demonstrates that as soon as it became clear that a tenant had no prospect of paying the rent he was evicted and distraint was threatened to recover arrears.

The rent book of the manor shows that although rental income had increased considerably, the management of the estate of generally small farms was not straightforward. Leases-for-lives might have been heavily criticised, but they

[278] CRO MS. AD176/4/2: Gaol register, Bodmin, record 5652 (1836-1841).

meant the landowner only became heavily involved in management when a lease expired.

Figure 4.4. First-order kin living within two miles of Thomas and Priscilla Keast, John and Elizabeth Doney, and Sampson Deacon in 1851 (1:25,000 modern base map © Ordnance Survey and Digimap, University of Edinburgh).



Once the leases-for-lives were replaced by rack rents the landowner had more income on an annual basis but also had increased responsibility for farm buildings, had to organise rent collection farm-by-farm and also manage the more frequent turnover of farms. On diverse small estates which predominated in Cornwall this was a challenge and perhaps that is why Augustus Coryton attempted to sell West Draynes manor at auction in November 1841.[279] The farms were described as 'proverbially grassy and fertile, and are the best moor

[279] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 12 Nov 1841.

tenements in this part of the county'. Despite the eulogy praising the quality of the manor's farms the estate failed to sell. A year later the estates of John Wallis, which included Little Tredinnick and other lands in St Neot, also failed to sell.[280]

Third, these cases reveal the significance of kinship among the small farmers of the district. Kin was everywhere, and Doney, Deacon and Keast all had first-order kin living in close proximity. The web of second-order kin was so complex it is extremely difficult to calculate, particularly with the frequent use of the same Christian names within families. The scale and complexity partly explains why marriages between cousins were common.

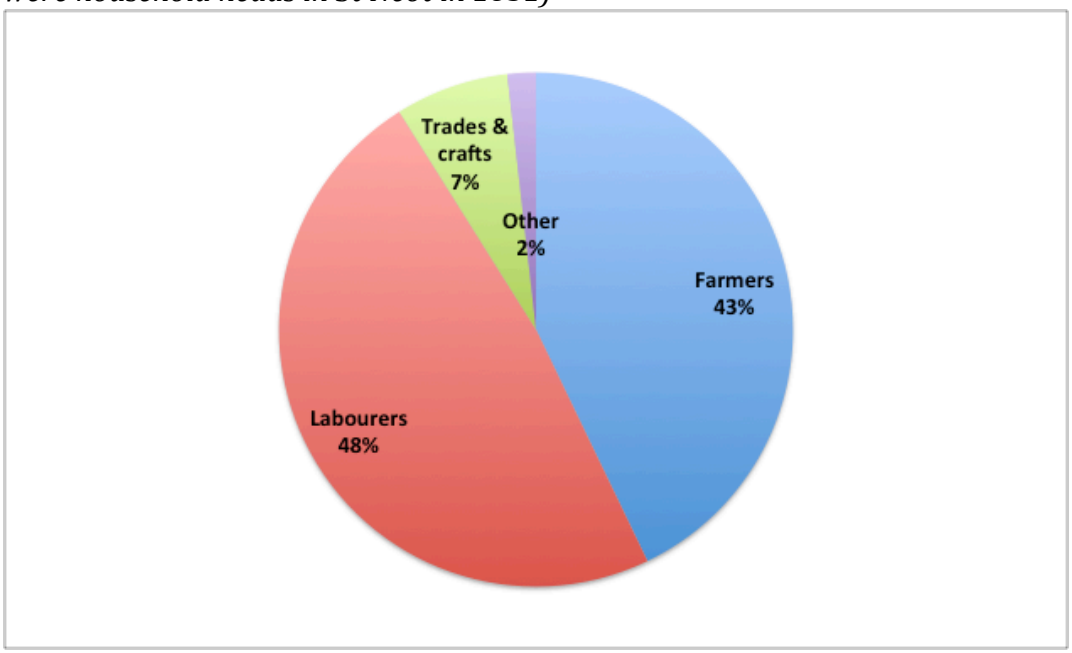
The kinship links of the three small farmers also reveal the porous boundaries between small farmers, craftsmen and labourers. The links between the labourers and small farmers is apparent in the case of John Doney. His father was a farmer who had downsized to four acres at Draynes Bridge in 1851, while two of his brothers were farm labourers, one was a copper miner and one a stone mason. Of his three brothers-in-law two were carpenters and one a blacksmith.

Family reconstitution reveals that 43% of agricultural labourers in St Neot at the time of the 1851 census had fathers who were farmers (includes fathers who were farm bailiffs, see figure 4.5). The corresponding figure from the Blean parishes in Kent was just 14%, with 84% of labourers being the sons of

[280] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 5 Aug 1842.

labourers.[281] Reay described this as convincing evidence for demographic class cohesion among the labourers – in Kent they dominated rural parishes numerically and by-and-large they remained labourers from generation to generation, and also during individual lifetimes.

Figure 4.5. Occupations of fathers of agricultural labourers (for 56 labourers who were household heads in St Neot in 1851)[282]



While the same was true for some families in St Neot, they formed a minority of households. It was common for the sons of farmers to marry as labourers and while sometimes they remained labourers, more often they became farmers themselves. For example, William Crapp was born in 1820 to one of St Neot's more prosperous farmers. In 1849 he married farmer's daughter Bedina Rowe and became a farm labourer at Trebinnick in the parish. He was still a farm

[281] Reay, B., *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800-1930* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 144.
[282] NA MS. HO 107/1902: Census Enumerators' Books for the Liskeard Registration District of Cornwall (1851).

labourer in 1861 but by 1871 was a farmer at 418 upland acres at Colliford in St Neot. Labourers would sometimes have to wait a long time to get a farm.

There was a significant social and kinship divide between the smallest and largest farmers. William Henwood, who had insisted that John Doney was prosecuted, came from a prosperous farming dynasty. He married Susannah Cawrse from a similar dynasty. There was a greater tendency for these farmers to marry within their own social class. However, it is important not to overstate the divide between the larger and smaller farmers. As the nineteenth century progressed there were a number of families who became successful, for example on the back of mining investment, and whose children married across the social spectrum. As we shall see in chapter six, changes in religious affiliation played a significant role in this.

Ironically, the crisis in the late 1840s came at a time of improving economic prosperity in the district. The discovery of rich copper deposits in the Caradon area of Bodmin Moor in 1837 resulted in a massive growth in mining activity. This copper rush was concentrated in the parishes of St Cleer and Linkinhorne, but speculation spread to many other parts of the moor. Some mines made fortunes for their adventurers but many more were active briefly and sporadically. It was also a short-lived bonanza, with cheaper New World copper production leading to a collapse in the market for Cornish copper in the late 1860s. The impact of mining on the community and on kinship patterns will be explored fully in chapter seven.

4.6 Concluding comments

This chapter has demonstrated how the dense kinship links within Bodmin Moor communities were invoked during the turbulent economic periods during the first half of the nineteenth century. Individual families relied on their wider kinship networks, but the reasons given for resisting the workhouse in St Neot also demonstrate that there was a collective recognition that kinship was important.

Kinship did not just matter to families, it mattered to the community as well. This wider recognition marks Bodmin Moor, and possibly Cornwall as a whole, as being significantly different from most other parts of the country, or certainly those parts where kinship studies have been undertaken. Virtually all elderly widows or widowers in St Neot lived with kin, suggesting that this was a cultural phenomenon. Across Bodmin Moor as a whole there were just 25 solitary widows or widowers out of 2,296 separate households, equivalent to just 1% of the total households. Indeed there were only 42 solitary households of any kind across the 12 Bodmin Moor parishes and in at least some of these cases close kin occupied the next or preceding entry in the census enumerators' books.
This chapter has presented evidence that kinship was often most significant when families were reacting to outside stress or facing significant changes: migration of miners, emigration of farmers, crime and financial crises all resulted in wider kinship networks being used. However, demonstrating the ways in which kinship was invoked is difficult as it relies on the records that are available.

More mundane acts like co-operation between kinship groups for labour-intensive farming operations are more difficult to assess. The fact that most people had geographically close kin made it statistically more likely that it would be used. However, this close proximity did not mean kin would necessarily be favoured for normal farming operations. In south-west Wales, for example, Jenkins found that set groups of farms shared labour resources regardless of who occupied the farms. Often co-operating farmers would be related, but that was not the main reason they worked together.[283]

The next chapter will investigate the role of kinship in the greatest change to the landscape of Bodmin Moor during the nineteenth century, enclosure. It will demonstrate that farmers did co-operate in tight kinship groups, both in enclosing the land and also in subsequent activities.

[283] Jenkins, D., *The Agricultural Community in South-West Wales at the turn of the Twentieth Century* (Cardiff, 1971), pp. 51-56.

Chapter 5. Moorland enclosure and the role of kin

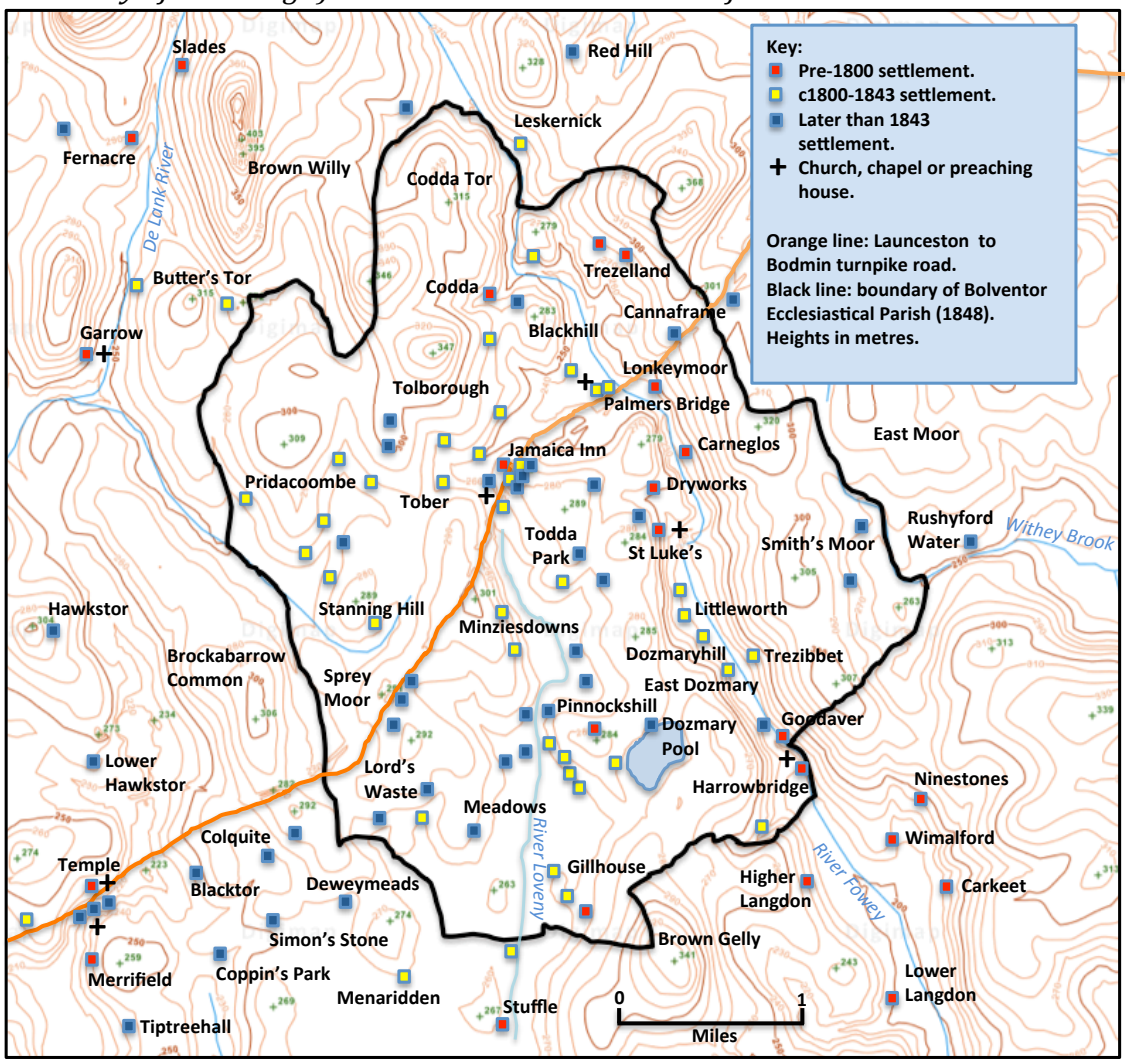
5.1 Introduction

When the inhabitants of St Neot announced their opposition to the building of a workhouse in the Hundred of the West they gave three main reasons for their opposition. Two of those reasons - the distress that would be caused to kin by taking them away from St Neot and the claim, disputed by vicar Henry Grylls, that there was almost full employment in the parish - were discussed in the last chapter.

The third reason, that there was the opportunity to support the rapidly rising population through moorland enclosure, proved to be prophetic. Over the rest of the nineteenth century there was a concerted effort to create dozens of new farms and expand the enclosed acreage of existing farms, on thousands of acres of previously unimproved areas of Bodmin Moor.

This chapter will look at the process of enclosure, and particularly how kinship was critical to its success for succeeding generations of moorland tinners and farmers. In particular, it will focus on enclosure of moorland in the area around Bolventor, which became a separate ecclesiastical parish made up of parts of Altarnun, Cardinham and St Neot in 1848. Figure 5.1 shows the locations of nineteenth-century settlements on c16,000 acres of land in the central parts of Bodmin Moor.

Figure 5.1. Location of settlements on Bodmin Moor where most nineteenth-century enclosure occurred. Although a majority of the isolated and hamlet settlements were created after 1800 the spatial pattern around Bolventor was similar to that identified by Balchin for medieval Cornwall. (Base map © Digimap, University of Edinburgh). Some settlements consisted of more than one household.



There is archaeological evidence to show how enclosure on Bodmin Moor in the nineteenth century was the latest of waves of occupation spread over thousands of years.[284] Reasons for this changing pattern of occupation are sometimes obscure but climate change, population pressure and economic forces all played

[284] Johnson N. and Rose, P., *Bodmin Moor, An Archaeological Survey. Vol. 1: The Human Landscape to c1800* (Swindon, 1994); Herring, P. (ed.), *Bodmin Moor, An Archaeological Survey. Vol. 2: The Industrial and Post-medieval Landscapes* (Swindon, 2008).

a part. In particular, the discovery and subsequent fluctuation in supply and demand for tin is likely to have played a significant part in settlement patterns. Streaming for tin in the moor's alluvial and eluvial deposits had been a key economic activity since the Bronze Age.

The other main activities on the moor were the summer grazing of livestock and the cutting of turf and furze for fuel. Some of the grazing was allocated to local farmers with common rights, but cattle were also brought long distances by herdsmen to spend the period from early May to Michaelmas on the moors. In 1750 Ralph Jane was paid 2s a head for summering young bullocks on moorland near Brown Gelly in St Neot, while at Butter's Tor in St Breward the going rate for cattle was 5s a head in 1836.[285]

Figure 5.2. Summer grazing of livestock on unenclosed moorland was an important part of the farming economy. In parts of the moor it is still the principal economic activity, as here on moorland near Garrow.



[285] CRO MS. CY/4963: Ralph Jane's accounts for Westerlake (to Michaelmas 1750); *West Briton*, 6 May 1836.

During periods of peak demand for food areas of moor were occasionally ploughed and cereal crops were grown. However, this irregular activity was mostly small in scale and likely to take place on the moorland fringe. The big change in the 1820s and 1830s was that substantial areas of moorland were enclosed and cultivated for the first time, particularly in the Upper Loveny Valley and around Dozmary Pool in St Neot, and at Pridacoombe and Tolborough in Altarnun.

It is perhaps surprising that given the growing demographic pressures and associated rising demand for food there was relatively little new enclosure undertaken prior to the 1820s. Board of Agriculture reports written by Fraser in 1793 and Worgan in 1808 saw enclosure of waste as a way of increasing the output of Cornish agriculture. Fraser estimated there were 100,000 acres of waste across Cornwall capable of being enclosed, while Worgan put the total amount of waste at between 150,000 and 200,000 acres.[286] Even as late as 1860 it was estimated there were 191,500 acres of acres waste in Cornwall out of a total of 860,000 acres.[287]

There had been substantial enclosure in other parts of Cornwall the eighteenth century, particularly in the mining districts around Camborne and Redruth, where landowners encouraged labourers to enclose small areas of waste.[288]

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[286] Fraser, R., *General View of the County of Cornwall, Board of Agriculture and Internal Improvement* (1794), p. 58; Worgan, G., *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cornwall* (London, 1811), p. 10. Worgan's report was written in 1808.
[287] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), p. 225.
[288] *ibid*., p.225.

However, most landowners were slow to encourage enclosure, preferring to invest resources in their lowland farms and in mining operations. When landowners did grasp the nettle on Bodmin Moor they followed their predecessors further west by offering tenants the much derided leases-for-lives on favourable terms. In return for the security of tenure offered the tenants took all the risks.

Until the 1850s small-scale occupiers, who in many cases combined tinning with farming, undertook most enclosure. Sometimes this occupation represented illegal encroachment of commons and moors, in other cases it was undertaken with permission of the manor to which moorland was attached. In most cases farming was a subsidiary occupation for these early occupiers, providing subsistence to the tinners and their families.

Small cottages with a few adjoining arable fields began to appear on the moors in apparent random fashion. In reality there was nothing random about their location. They were built close to the streamworks where the tin deposits were worked, where land offered a better opportunity for growing crops, and where water was available. Ruins of some of these properties can still be seen today, joining the longhouses and other remains from previous occupiers of the moor stretching back thousands of years.

As the century progressed many of these small-scale holdings were superseded by more systematic and larger-scale enclosure promoted by landowners. More substantial houses, buildings for livestock and crop storage, and larger straight-

sided fields emerged across large tracts of moorland. Some of these commercial farmers were new arrivals attracted by the opportunities presented, but more often they were the descendants of the tinners who had begun the enclosure process in the first half of the 1800s.

Virtually all enclosure on Bodmin Moor was carried out without recourse to parliamentary means, even though some of it was on common land. Landowners such as the Grylls family were able to bypass common rights due to the dismantling of the manorial system. In many cases farms in moorland parishes lost their common grazing and turbary rights when leases switched from life leaseholds to 14-year terms. James Michell, writing in 1833, bemoaned the lack of interest in the St Neot moors by the parish's inhabitants and he laid the blame at the recent switch to rack-rented tenancies.[289]

It is therefore ironic that the three main landowners who encouraged enclosure on the moors of St Neot and Altarnun did so using leases-for-lives as the main tenancy arrangement. The reason was simple enough: by offering security of tenure and low annual rents tenants were encouraged to move onto inhospitable tracts of land and take on all the risks associated with establishing new farm holdings.

It is also notable that kinship links within Bodmin Moor communities remained strongest where leases-for-lives persisted throughout the nineteenth century

[289] Michell, J., *Parochial History of St Neot in Cornwall* (Bodmin, 1833), p. 22.

and, as we shall see, in many cases into the twentieth century as well. The security of tenure offered by leases-for-lives encouraged subsequent generations of the same moorland families to remain in the district, while the continuing endogamous marriage patterns recorded in the eighteenth century reinforced the links between families.

5.2 The state of the moors at the end of the eighteenth century

When Fraser wrote his report for the Board of Agriculture in the 1790s moorland occupation appeared to have been in retreat for some time. Palmer's survey of St Neot in 1793 pointed to an almost total absence of people living on the moor, with most land being used for turbary and extensive summer grazing. A small number of farms had been carved out of the moors in the medieval period, mostly located on valley sides of the River Fowey and its tributaries where land had better access and was more suitable for cultivation. These areas of medieval enclosure – such as at Codda, Dryworks and Trezelland in Altarnun, and Gillhouse, Stuffle, Higher Langdon and St Luke's in St Neot - harked back to an earlier period when the moor had been more intensively farmed (see map on page 224 for locations of these farms).

However, in 1793 Palmer classified the four holdings in St Neot as moorland rather than farm tenements. Gillhouse was simply described as 'down' worth £8 a year, and the same value was attributed to Stuffle and St Luke's. Higher Langdon with its 'very extensive commons' on Browngelly was valued at £12. In total the four properties, which covered more than 1,000 acres, were worth the

equivalent of just 40 acres of good quality land in the south of the parish. Palmer valued the whole area of moorland in St Neot parish, covering around 8,000 acres, at just £135 a year.[290]

Figure 5.3. The upland farm at Codda next to the upper reaches of the River Fowey was one of the few medieval enclosures on the central moors. Three generations of the same family lived at the farm from 1841, when Richard Bray was herdsman there, to 1911 when his grandson Stephen Bray was farmer of 433 acres. All but 50 acres were unimproved moorland.



There is evidence to suggest that the retreat of more intensive farming on the moors had occurred at least 100 years before Palmer's suvey in 1793. At Stuffle, for example, the farm had reverted to moorland pasture by the time of the Lanhydrock Atlas in 1695. Stuffle was part of the Manor of Carburrow, which

[290] CRO MS. BK/442: Survey, St Neot Parish by David Palmer of Launceston (April 1793).

was in turn owned by the Lanhydrock Estate and the atlas mapped and measured every farm across the sprawling estate. The tenement had 42 fields covering 166 customary acres, but the Atlas noted it had no house and was 'all pasture ground, the inner hedges down, the fields without names'. Despite the state of the holding, the Atlas meticulously recorded the size of every field in both statutory and customary Cornish acres.[291]

Figure 5.4. At Stuffle in 1695 the Lanhydrock Atlas recorded that the inner hedges were down and the fields without names. Almost 100 years later in 1793 the situation appeared to be largely unchanged (Reproduced courtesy of The National Trust, Lanhydrock).[292]



Two maps from the early nineteenth century also point to the absence of enclosure on Bodmin Moor apart from the few medieval enclosures and a small area around Jamaica Inn that was of more recent creation. The inn was built in

[291] CRO MS. FS/2/32: Copy of the Lanhydrock Estate Atlas (1695).
[292] Holden, P., Herring P. and Padel, O.J., *The Lanhydrock Atlas* (Fowey, 2010), p. 318.

the eighteenth century to serve travellers on the Launceston to Bodmin turnpike road. The first map (figure 5.5) was the surveyors' drawings made in 1805 by the Ordnance Survey for its first series of maps. The use of the name Bodmin Moor on this map represented a recent development, the name probably making its first appearance on Martyn's map of Cornwall in 1784.[293]

Figure 5.5. The central moors in 1805 from the Ordnance Survey surveyors' drawings. Most land was open moorland, apart from medieval field systems at Dryworks, Codda and Temple, and the more recent enclosure at Jamaica Inn.[294]



[293] CRO MS. X397/108: Map of Cornwall by Thomas Martyn (1784).
[294] Dawson, O. R., 'Ordnance Survey Surveyors' Drawings, Bodmin Cornwall' (1805).

Prior to the second half of the eighteenth century the moor was known as Foy Moor (moorland of the River Fowey), and indeed this name continued in use after the introduction of the name Bodmin Moor. In the medieval period the Cornish name for the moor was *Goen Bren*, which probably translated as 'downs of a hill'.[295]

The second map (figure 5.6) was of the moors in St Neot belonging to the Duke of Bedford and Thomas Bewes. It was surveyed in June 1811 by Thomas Jope, but he relied on three St Neot residents – Simon Lander, William Gabriel and James Wills – to confirm the boundaries of the four moors.[296] The map was a precursor to sale and the moorland was put on the market in 1812 (figure 5.7).[297] The map provides evidence of the beginnings of the substantial changes that were to come. It detailed encroachment of Pinnockshill, including the erection of a substantial new hedge and the creation of small field enclosures and buildings to the east of Dozmary Pool. This encroachment represented the start of the nineteenth-century enclosure process on this part of the moor. The 1805 surveyors' drawings also mentioned a 'Tinners Lodge' at Harrowbridge just to the south of Dozmary, the use of the word lodge suggesting that the settlement was perhaps not permanent at this date.

The 1811 map made various references to tin workings, which were probably partly responsible for the creation of the 'impassable swamps' also mentioned. In

[295] Padel, O.J., *Cornish Place-Names* (Penzance, 1988), p. 55.
[296] CRO MS. BW/77: Plan of the lands in St Neot belonging to his grace the Duke of Bedford (1811).
[297] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 21 Dec 1812.

addition, the map intriguingly referenced a place called 'Paul Venture' adjacent to Jamaica Inn. This area became known as Bold Venture in the 1830s, and was later shortened to Bolventor. Some sources have suggested the Bold Venture name came from the Rodd family's 'bold venture' to enclose this part of the moor in the 1830s, but the 1811 reference suggest a possible earlier origin.[298]

Figure 5.6. Plan of 711 acres of moorland at Pinnockshill in 1811. Note the marking of illegal encroachments and hedge. The fields in the bottom right hand corner at Dozmaryhill mark the first nineteenth-century enclosure by tinners.[299]



Palmer also hinted at the beginnings of change shown on the 1811 map. One of the surviving copies of the 1793 survey contains a hand written section at the

[298] Padel, O.J., *Cornish Place-Names* (Penzance, 1988), p. 56.
[299] CRO MS. BW/77: Plan of the lands in St Neot belonging to his grace the Duke of Bedford (1811).

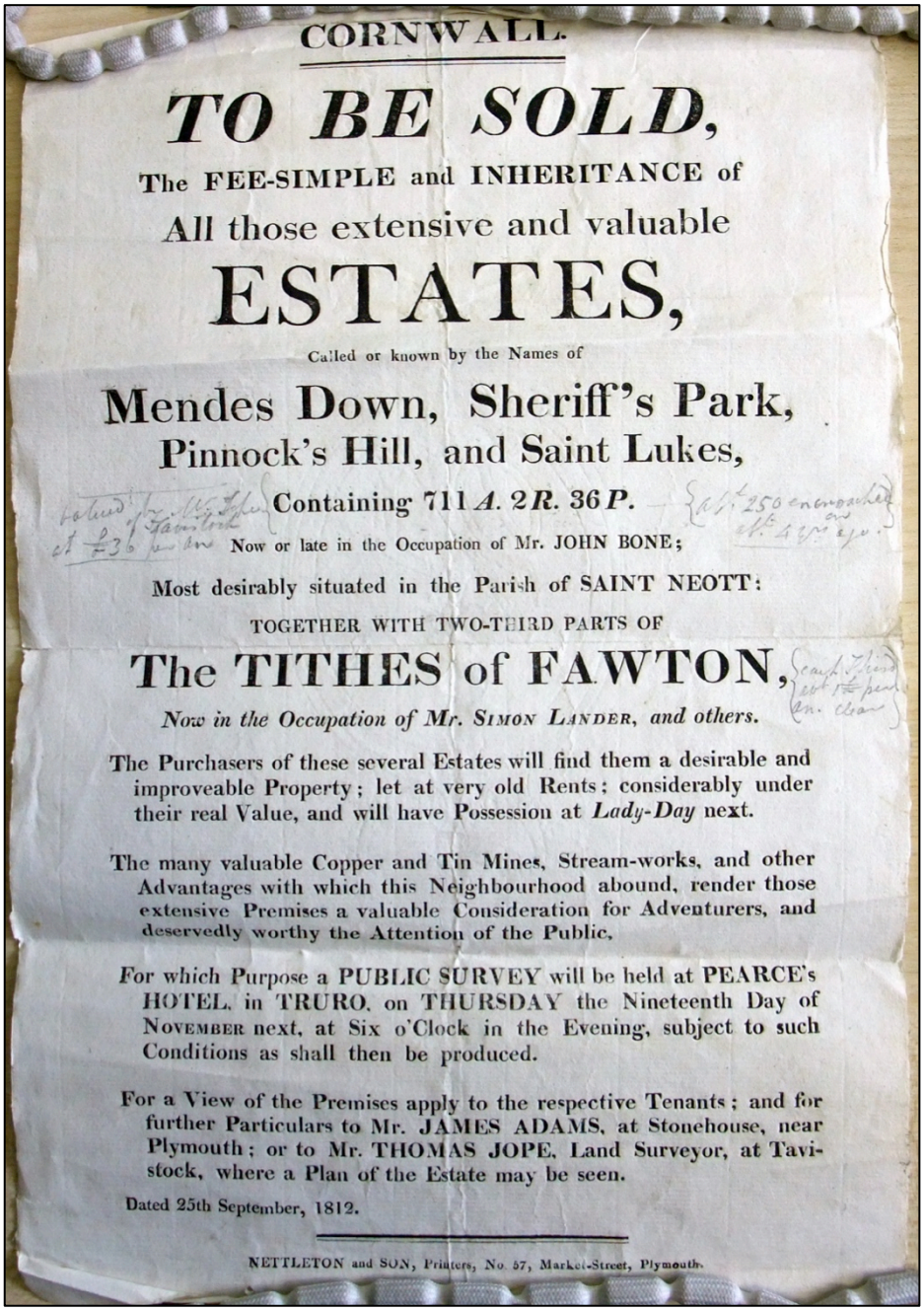
back headed 'Observations on the Moor Tenements 1812'. It noted the arrival of two new tenants – James Wills at Gillhouse and Thomas Parkyn at Harrowbridge. These tenants and their kin were to become associated with improvement and enclosure at their respective tenements for the rest of the century. The Parkyns were unusual in that they were among the few owner-occupiers on the moor during the nineteenth century.

The lack of clear boundaries between moorland properties and their remoteness led to regular conflict over occupation and ownership rights. As well as outlining encroachment on the moors, the 1811 map reinforced the Duke of Bedford's claim of ownership of Pinnockshill and St Luke's, which was disputed. In Palmer's 1812 update on occupation of the moors, it was stated that the moors at Pinnockshill and St Luke's were owned by the Faulkes family but noted that the Duke of Bedford also claimed part of them.

The Stephens family from St Ewe purchased the 711 acres at Pinnockshill, along with 300 acres of adjoining moorland. Unfortunately, the confusion over ownership meant that the family's purchase was contested in court and James Michell claimed that the family only had rightful claim to part of the moor.[300] It is not clear how the dispute was resolved and despite the doubts the Stephens family retained ownership into the twentieth century, overseeing widespread enclosure of the moors around Dozmary Pool in the process.

[300] Michell, J., *Parochial History of St Neot in Cornwall* (Bodmin, 1833), p. 26.

Figure 5.7. Sale notice for the 711 acres of moorland in St Neot in 1812. Annotations in pencil suggested the land had a rental value of £36 a year, but noted that 250 acres had been encroached on about four years earlier.[301]



CORNWALL.

TO BE SOLD,

The FEE-SIMPLE and INHERITANCE of

All those extensive and valuable

ESTATES,

Called or known by the Names of

Mendes Down, Sheriff's Park, Pinnock's Hill, and Saint Lukes,

Containing 711 *A.* 2 *R.* 36 *P.*

Now or late in the Occupation of Mr. JOHN BONE;

Most desirably situated in the Parish of SAINT NEOTT:

TOGETHER WITH TWO-THIRD PARTS OF

The TITHES of FAWTON,

Now in the Occupation of Mr. SIMON LANDER, *and others.*

The Purchasers of these several Estates will find them a desirable and improveable Property; let at very old Rents: considerably under their real Value, and will have Possession at *Lady-Day* next.

The many valuable Copper and Tin Mines, Stream-works, and other Advantages with which this Neighbourhood abound, render those extensive Premises a valuable Consideration for Adventurers, and deservedly worthy the Attention of the Public.

For which Purpose a PUBLIC SURVEY will be held at PEARCE's HOTEL, in TRURO, on THURSDAY the Nineteenth Day of NOVEMBER next, at Six o'Clock in the Evening, subject to such Conditions as shall then be produced.

For a View of the Premises apply to the respective Tenants; and for further Particulars to Mr. JAMES ADAMS, at Stonehouse, near Plymouth; or to Mr. THOMAS JOPE, Land Surveyor, at Tavistock, where a Plan of the Estate may be seen.

Dated 25th September, 1812.

NETTLETON and SON, Printers, No. 57, Market-Street, Plymouth.

Michell also claimed that St Neot had lost hundreds of acres of moorland to Altarnun parish after the building of the turnpike from Launceston to Bodmin in the eighteenth century. He derided St Neot's farmers for not taking an interest in

[301] CRO MS. BW/41: Sale poster for land at Minziesdowns and Pinnockshill (1812).

the boundaries of the parish and blamed their indifference on the fact they were nearly all rack renters. His annoyance had some merit because the ending of manorial leases-for-lives meant that rental agreements rarely detailed specific grazing or turbary rights and there were regular disagreements over rights.

Figure 5.8. Rights to cut turf for fuel were a valuable resource for moorland farmers, and were a frequent source of dispute between tenants and landowners. This photograph was taken on the moor near Brown Willy c1905.[302]



In 1819 tenants of the ancient manor of Trenay Fawton, who by then were mostly rack renters, clashed with the Grylls family over rights of turbary on Lord's Waste. This was a 540-acre common at the northern end of St Neot (most of which became part of Bolventor ecclesiastical parish in 1848) and tenants of the manor had traditionally had access to the land. However, these rights had

[302] Thompson, E.V., *Bodmin Moor Through the Years* (Bodmin, 1992).

been stripped from the rental agreements that had replaced leases-for-lives and Grylls probably wanted control of the land a prelude to subsequent enclosure. Tenants of the manor (mostly in St Neot and Warleggan) had traditionally used the common for both grazing and turbary.

Agent for Trenay Fawton, Thomas Richards wrote to Grylls claiming some tenants were taking turf without the right to do so.[303] Richards also complained that the tenants were taking substantial amounts of spade turf as well as marsh turf and that the former was resulting in destruction of pasture and was making some land impassable. The response of the tenants, who claimed ancient manorial rights on Lord's Waste, revealed something of their attitude to Grylls: 'I have endeavoured to prevent these abuses as much as much as I am able but Mr Mitchell Crossman and Peter Giles persuades the people that Mr Grylls cannot hinder them. They laugh at me for attempting to deny them'.

5.3 Enclosure up to c.1843

Much of the early enclosure on Bodmin Moor before the tithe apportionments of the 1840s was both piecemeal and small scale. The tithe maps for St Neot and Altarnun were both completed in 1843 and show the recent establishment of cottages together with small enclosures across the moor.[304] Virtually all of the occupiers combined tinning with farming.

[303] CRO MS. RH/1/1351: Lord's Waste dispute (1819). Most of the land became part of Bolventor parish when it was created in 1848.
[304] CRO MS. TM/4: Tithe Map, Altarnun (1843).

The allocation of waste land to tinners had been common in other parts of Cornwall for many years. In 1802 the Lanhydrock steward, William Jenkin wrote of the advantages of allotting tinners three or four acres each of waste ground. 'Instead of meeting them staggering from brandy shops you may now see them enclosing and cultivating their little fields, beginning with a small piece (say half an acre) tilled with potatoes. The following year that part is tilled with corn, and a second half-acre planted with potatoes, and so on.'[305] This rather romantic view of the positive effects of tinners' smallholdings on personal behaviour bore similarities to the claims for some of the benefits of Methodism (see chapter six).

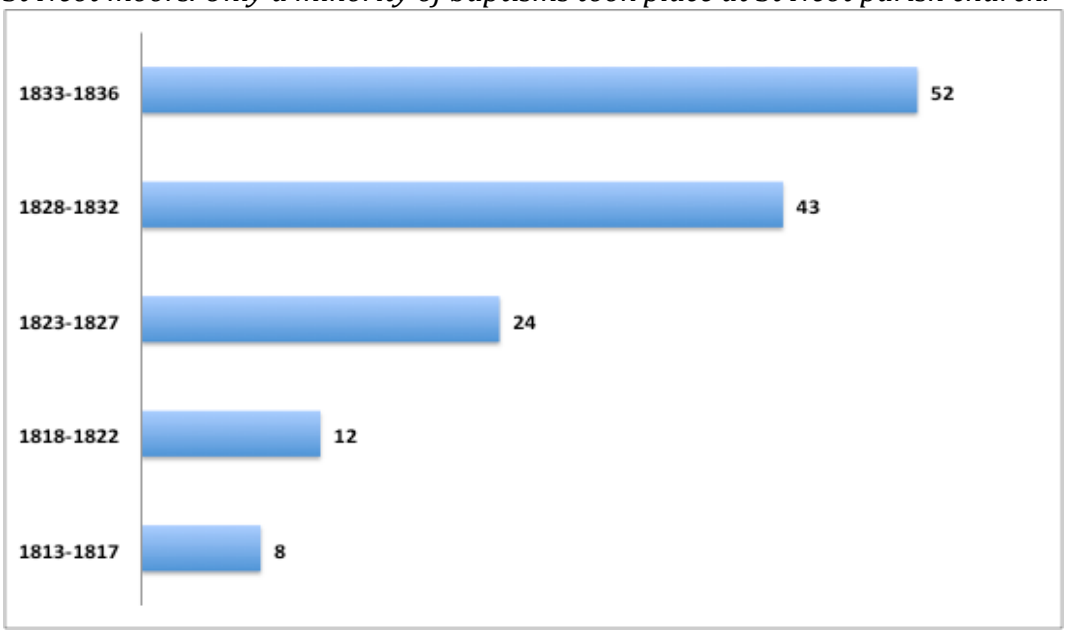
Some of the early enclosures on Bodmin Moor were established without permission of landowners, but very few of these were removed. Instead owners usually attempted to charge rent to these encroachers. In most cases, however, landowners actively encouraged settlement on their moors. The Grylls family promoted occupation on its land, including the common land at Lord's Waste where enclosure was of doubtful legality. On Draynes Common, which was part of the Manor of West Draynes and owned by the Coryton family, early enclosure was mostly by occupiers acting without permission. However, this was of limited impact and most enclosure on Coryton lands took place on adjoining privately occupied property at Diddylake.

The pace of occupation and enclosure on the St Neot moors quickened from the 1820s. Before the census of 1841 this can be demonstrated by analysis of baptism records. Detailed locations of these events were included in parish

[305] Hamilton Jenkin, A.K., *News from Cornwall* (London, 1951), p. 92.

registers from 1813 onwards (figure 5.9). There were only 20 baptisms associated with new moorland tenements in St Neot in the 10 years up to 1822, compared with 67 in the following 10 years, and 52 in the four years between 1833 and 1836.

Figure 5.9. Baptisms recorded for children born at newly enclosed properties on the St Neot moors. Only a minority of baptisms took place at St Neot parish church.



Only 53 of the 139 baptisms for children born on the St Neot moors took place in the parish church. Warleggan and St Cleer were used for a combined total of 57 baptisms, probably because they were easier to get to from some moorland tenements. From 1829 the Bible Christian chapels at St Luke's and Trenant were also used, although only for small numbers of children during this period. Virtually all of the early occupiers were tinners and in 1833 Michell said that 'near Dozmary Pool there are now three streams in working, employing from 60 and 80 men and producing considerable quantities of the purest tin'.[306]

[306] Michell, J., *Parochial History of St Neot in Cornwall* (Bodmin, 1833), p. 16.

The tithe map and apportionment for St Neot revealed the extent of the early enclosures made by tinners – the mostly small farms sat surrounded by large swathes of open moorland. The enclosure of 22 acres by five tinners at Pinnockshill to the west of Dozmary Pool is shown in figure 5.10. The enclosures consisted of 17 mostly-arable fields averaging just over an acre each in size.[307]

Figure 5.10. Part of 1843 St Neot tithe map showing the cluster of tinners' smallholdings at Pinnockshill to the west of Dozmary Pool. Evidence from the St Neot parish register suggests occupation began here in the 1820s. Richard Bullen's four-acre holding was the property furthest on the left.[308]



One of these tinners was Richard Bullen, who occupied four acres of mostly arable land. The Bullen household at the 1841 census typified many of the moorland families in that there were close kinship links with nearby households, and also because the household contained both extended kin and children from

[307] NA MS. IR 29/6/143, Tithe Commissioners for England and Wales, Apportionment of the rent charge in lieu of tithes in the parish of St Neot (1842).
[308] CRO MS. PCNEO/6/1: Tithe Map, St Neot (1843).

previous relationships. Richard was married to Jane Hooper, sister of Philip Hooper who occupied the adjoining seven-acre tenement.

In Altarnun the first systematic, landowner-led enclosure on Bodmin Moor began in the 1830s on land owned by the Rodd family from Trebartha Hall in North Hill parish. Francis Hearle Rodd had bought up large areas of moorland in the early part of the nineteenth century at Tolborough and Pridacoombe in Altarnun, as well as at Todda Park and Gillhouse in St Neot. It is believed that most of the land at Tolborough and Pridacoombe had never previously been cultivated, but when Rev. Edward Rodd inherited the Trebartha lands from Francis Hearle Rodd in 1836 he quickly began to offer leases to prospective tenants.[309] His approach was simple: tenants were offered pieces of land on leases-for-lives at relatively favourable terms. In return tenants were required to enclose the ground and erect a dwelling house and farm buildings, usually within a tight timescale.

It is impossible to get a detailed picture of how the early settlers lived on Bodmin Moor, as there is little documentary evidence. Oral evidence relating to later enclosure not surprisingly suggested that much of the work was extremely challenging. The need to establish tenements quickly meant that neighbours worked together in extended family groups to clear fields, build hedges and erect houses. For the men much of this work took place in the evenings when they returned from the streamworks. However, a large part of the farm work fell to

[309] Herring, P. (ed.), *Bodmin Moor, An Archaeological Survey. Vol. 2: The Industrial and Post-medieval Landscapes* (Swindon, 2008), p. 143.

women and children. A child pulling at the front and a woman pushing often carried out ploughing by hand using a spade plough.[310]

Ploughing was particularly hard work when land was cleared for the first time and the extreme physical work establishing sometimes took its toll. In 1803 William Jenkin wrote to Lanhydrock's owner, Anna Maria Agar informing her that a tenant and his son enclosing waste land in the manor of Bosvenning had both died 'from too great exertions and excess of labour in digging up rocks etc. in improving the ground'. He suggested some rent relief to help the stricken family.[311]

Figure 5.11. A paring spade being used at Brechfa in west Wales in the late 1800s. Ploughs similar to this were used to prepare waste ground in Cornwall in the nineteenth century.[312]



[310] *ibid.,* p. 141.
[311] Hamilton Jenkin, A.K., *News from Cornwall* (London, 1951), p. 97.
[312] Collins, E.J.T., *The Economy of Upland Britain 1750-1950: an Illustrated Review* (Reading, 1978), p. 37.

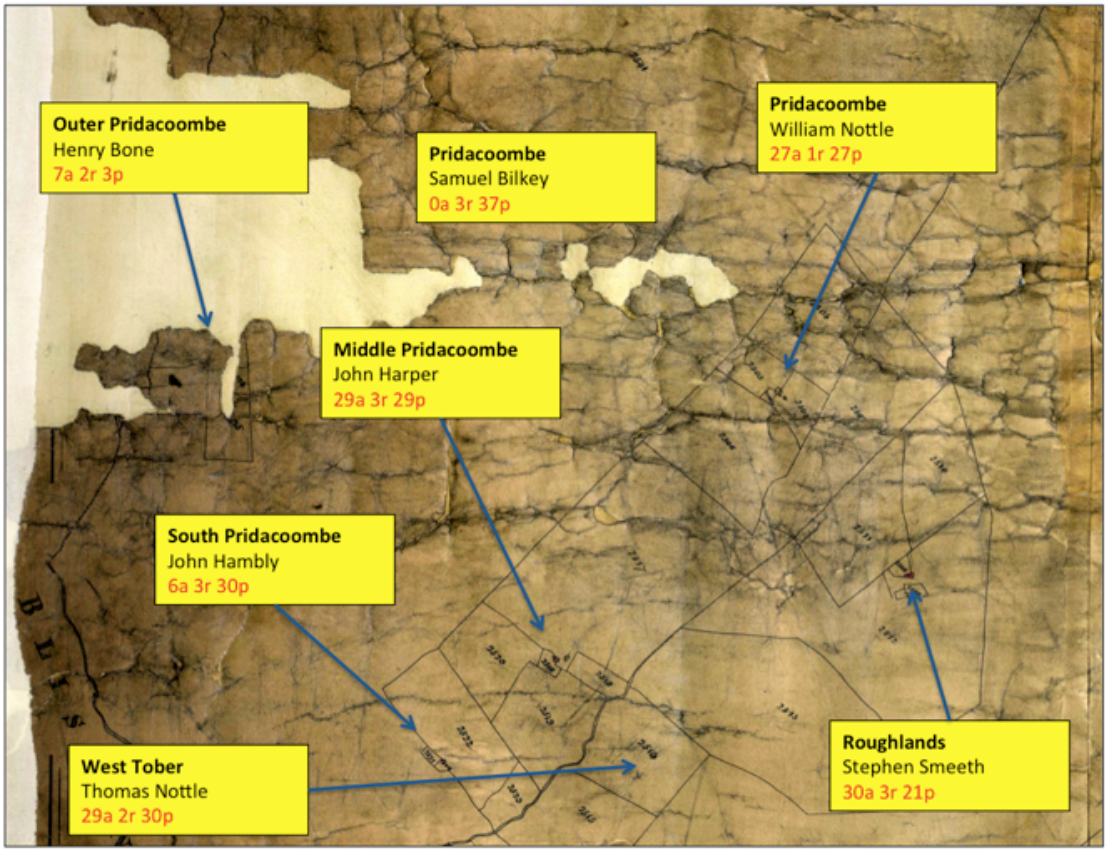
Unlike the tendency to allocate relatively small acreages of waste to tenants in mid and west Cornwall, Rodd offered fairly large plots of about 20 acres each. A typical example was at South Pridacoombe which John Hambly, a labourer from St Neot, signed a lease-for-lives for on 29 May 1837. He named himself and sons John and Thomas on the lease. The rent was only £2 a year but in return Hambly was required 'within 12 months to build a dwelling-house of stone and mortar, with barn, stable and other necessary outbuildings for farming property'. The 20-acre piece of ground had been marked out by the owner for fencing, and the lease provided 'liberty to cut turf in marsh for use in dwelling house'.[313] Like a number of the early pioneers the Hamblys only stayed at South Pridacoombe for a few years. John left the small farm soon after the tithe apportionment - by 1851 John Dawe was tenant at South Pridacoombe and his family were still tenants in 1911.

The security of tenure offered by long leases combined with low rents meant that many of the early families remained on the moor. At neighbouring Middle Pridacoombe John Harper took out a similar lease on 21st November 1837. The names on the lease were himself, his wife Grace and five-year-old son John.[314] The Harpers were among the many tinners who moved to the moor from the Luxulyan district, setting up home on Minzisdowns in St Neot in the 1830s. By the tithe apportionment the family had enclosed 10 acres and held another 20 acres of moor described as coarse pasture. John Harper died at Middle Pridacoombe in 1875 and in each consecutive census he was described as a

[313] CRO MS. RD/201: Lease at Pridacoombe (1837).
[314] CRO MS. RD/69: List of leases-for-lives of F. Rodd esq. (1873).

tinner - like many other tinners and farmers on the moor farming was never mentioned. His widow Grace lived at Middle Pridacoombe until her death in 1889, after which one of their grandchildren occupied the property.

Figure 5.12. In the 1830s the Rodd family encouraged tenants to enclose land by offering leases-for-lives. At Pridacoombe seven tenements were created and by the time of the tithe apportionment more than 130 acres had been hedged and was in the process of being improved (enclosed acreages in 1843 in red).[315]



In 1839 Stephen Smeeth took out a lease-for-lives on 40 acres at Roughlands, a common immediately to the northeast of Middle Pridacoombe.[316] At the date of lease Smeeth was already building a house there, which it was stipulated had to be completed within one year. The family remained on the property until at least

[315] CRO MS. TM/4: Tithe Map, Altarnun (1843). NA MS. IR 29/6/4: Tithe Commissioners for England and Wales, Apportionment of the rent charge in lieu of tithes in the parish of Altarnun (1841).
[316] CRO MS. RD/212: Lease, Roughland Common, Pridacoombe (1839).

1911, gradually extending the house, farm buildings and enclosed land.[317] By the time of the 1910 Duties on Land the third generation of Smeeths was farming 140 acres at Roughlands, of which 66 acres was enclosed and improved. In 1839 the annual rent was £4 and it stayed at this level until the lease expired. In 1876 the family took out a fresh 60-year lease on the farm at £10 a year.[318]

The leases-for-lives favoured by the nineteenth-century landowners of Bodmin Moor worked well for both landlord and tenant. Landowners saw the value of their properties appreciate with little or no personal involvement or investment, and tenants took virtually all the risks. However, tenants had the benefit of security of tenure that enabled many families to remain on the same properties for many decades. Life for them was frequently extremely tough but there was a degree of continuity increasingly denied to lowland occupiers on shorter-term rack-rented tenancies.

5.4 The creation of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Bolventor

By the 1840s the enclosure process meant there were more than 250 people living on the moors centred around Jamaica Inn. Most of the families were tenants of the Grylls, Rodd and Stephens families and they lived a long way from the respective parish churches of St Neot and Altarnun. Francis Rodd, who inherited the properties on Bodmin Moor from his father Edward in 1842, began

[317] The Bolventor parish register suggests the family was still at the farm in 1939.
[318] NA MS. IR 58/71630-71633: Board of Inland Revenue, Valuation Office Field Books, Altarnun (1910).

to lobby for the creation of an ecclesiastical parish to serve the remote community. He was eventually successful, with the new parish of Bolventor being created in 1848.[319] The next chapter will discuss the religious implications of this change while this chapter will focus on the structure of the new parish and its impact on kinship patterns.

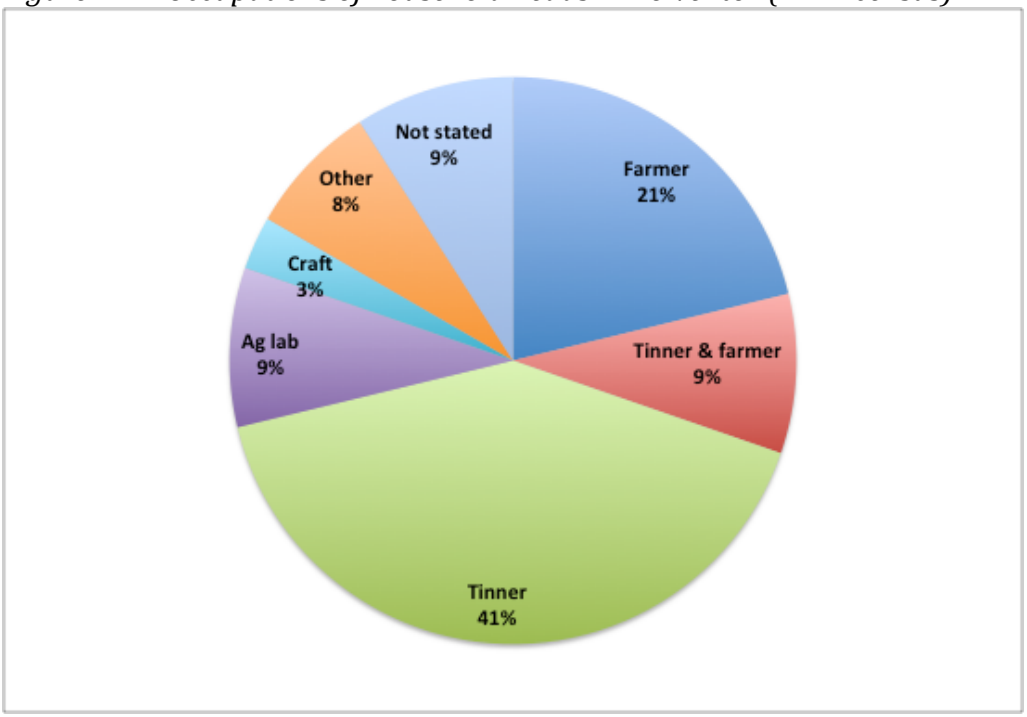
Figure 5.13. An 1848 map of the ecclesiastical parish of Bolventor showing the boundaries established in 1848 and details of the portions taken from the parishes of St Neot, Altarnun and Cardinham.[320]



[319] CRO MS. RD/1161: Letter from Francis Rodd regarding creation of new parish at Bolventor (1846).
[320] CRO MS. RH/1/1350: Plan showing the consolidated chapelry of Bolventor (1848).

Bolventor covered a total of 6,360 acres and all but 256 acres came from the parishes of St Neot and Altarnun. The remainder, called Sprey Moor, had been claimed by St Neot but had been allocated to Cardinham parish at the tithe apportionment. By the time of the 1851 census there was a total population of 331 in the parish, living in 66 households. The breakdown of occupations of household heads is shown in figure 5.14. It highlights the dominance of tinning, with half of all households headed by either tinners or tinners and farmers. If all people in employment are considered then more than two-thirds of households had at least one person employed in tinning or mining. This was also probably an understatement as no occupations were given at all for people in six households where other evidence suggests involvement in tinning. It is therefore likely that three-quarters of households relied totally or partially on tinning.

Figure 5.14. Occupations of household heads in Bolventor (1851 census).[321]



[321] NA MS. HO 107/1899: Census Enumerators' Books for the Launceston Registration District of Cornwall (1851); NA MS. HO 107/1902: Census Enumerators' Books for the Liskeard Registration District of Cornwall (1851).

However, there were shortcomings with the census, which mean some of the information needs to be treated with caution. In particular, the significance of farming was understated, and also sometimes distorted. Other evidence, particularly from the tithe apportionment, indicates that a majority of household heads who were tinners were also farming at least some land in 1851. Sometimes this was only a few acres, but in other instances the acreages could be quite large. For example, tinner Thomas Nottle also farmed 18 acres of mostly arable land at Littleworth. This was not mentioned in the census, but Robert Vague who farmed an almost identical acreage on a neighbouring farm was described as a tinner and farmer, also of 18 acres.[322]

There were also some serious discrepancies for acreages farmed. Some farmers included all the land they occupied, including moorland, others appeared to only give the cultivated acreage, while for a few the low acreages given were something of a mystery. Codda and Gillhouse were two of the largest farms in Bolventor by total acreage, although most land on both farms was unimproved moorland. However, their listings in the census gave completely contrasting pictures. At Gillhouse James Wills senior and James Wills junior were both described as farming 20 acres each, both employing one man. In fact they jointly farmed 239 acres at the farm, of which about 60 acres were enclosed at the time of the tithe apportionment. In contrast, Richard Bray at Codda was described as a 'farmer of 2,500 acres, moor runs employing two men and one boy'. Codda made

[322] NA MS. IR 29/6/143: Tithe Commissioners for England and Wales, Apportionment of the rent charge in lieu of tithes in the parish of St Neot (1842).

up 420 of these acres, the rest being extensive moorland grazings. Only about 40 acres of the land at Codda was enclosed at the time of the tithe apportionment.

This makes the overall picture of farming for Bolventor from the 1851 census of limited value. The 18 farmers listed (12 with farming as the only stated occupation and 6 combining tinning and farming) farmed a total of 3,614 acres with an average size of 200 acres. However this average was hugely distorted by Richard Bray's 2,500 acres and only one farm was close in size to the average. It was further distorted by a number of farms for which acreages were not given because the occupier in the census was classified as a labourer. Table 5.1 shows a comparison for occupiers of land in Bolventor between the tithe apportionment and the census. The apportionment analysis includes all land in the parish except woodland, roads, water and commons, the latter mostly accounted for by Lord's Waste and Sprey Moor.

Table 5.1. The differences between the c.1842 tithe apportionments and the 1851 census reveal the shortcomings of the latter for measuring land occupation in Bolventor. There were 40 occupiers of at least five acres of land in c1842. Moor.[323]

Acres per occupier/farmer	Number of occupiers/farmers	
	c.1842 tithe apportionment	1851 census
500+	1	1
250-499	2	1
100-249	10	2
25-99	13	8
5-24	14	6
Under 5	10	0
Total number of occupiers	50	18
Total acres	5,554	3,614
Average acres per occupier	111	201

[323] The tithe information for Bolventor has been taken from the apportionments and maps for Altarnun and St Neot. The apportionment for Altarnun was completed in 1841, and for St Neot in 1842. Both tithe maps were produced in 1843.

The apportionment provides a much better summary of land occupation, and the 50 occupiers of land is a far cry from the 18 recorded in the census. Analysis of individual plots suggests that by the time of the tithe apportionment there were 859 acres enclosed in fields, representing just 14% of the total area of the parish. Most of the parish was still unimproved moorland or common land. There was some further enclosure between the tithe apportionment and the 1851 census, but most larger-scale enclosure would not occur until the latter half of the nineteenth century.

5.5 Kinship in Bolventor in 1851

The 1851 census enumerated the new parish of Bolventor in two parts. The households in St Neot and Altarnun were listed in these respective parishes, but they were enumerated under the heading of 'part of the ecclesiastical parish of Bolventor'. The part of Bolventor 'alleged' to be in Cardinham parish had no households. Family reconstitution of the 66 households in Bolventor enabled kinship links between the households to be measured and the results of this analysis are shown in table 5.2.

Almost three-quarters of households had first-order links with other households in the parish – a result strikingly similar to that for the long-established community of St Neot. This was surprising given that in such a new community one might have expected links between households to take time to develop. However, three factors seem to have influenced matters: the first was that wider kinship groups, made up of two or more related family households, frequently

moved to Bolventor either at the same time or within a short time span; the second was that opportunities for employment and enclosure encouraged children of the early settlers to stay and set up home themselves; and third, the marriage horizons for the settlers were generally limited to the local area.

Table 5.2. First-order kinship links in Bolventor in 1851. Despite being a largely new community its kinship links were almost identical to those of St Neot at the same date.

	Bolventor, Cornwall 1851 Number	%
Total number of households	66	100%
Households with first-order links	48	73%
First-order links to one household	19	29%
First-order links to two households	13	20%
First-order links to three or more	16	24%
No first-order links recorded	18	27%
Total number of first-order links	115	n/a
Absolute kinship density	1.74	n/a

The Nottle family provide a good example of all three factors. All the Nottles in Bolventor at the time of the 1841 and 1851 censuses were descended from Richard Nottle, a husbandman from Trebartha in North Hill. In 1795 he married Catherine Hocking and they had six children in North Hill before relocating onto the moor some time after their final child was born in 1808. All six children survived into adulthood and table 5.3 summarises the chief events for their six children and some grandchildren based on census material, tithe apportionments, estate records and emigration information. By the time of the 1841 census all six Nottle siblings were married with families and living in what

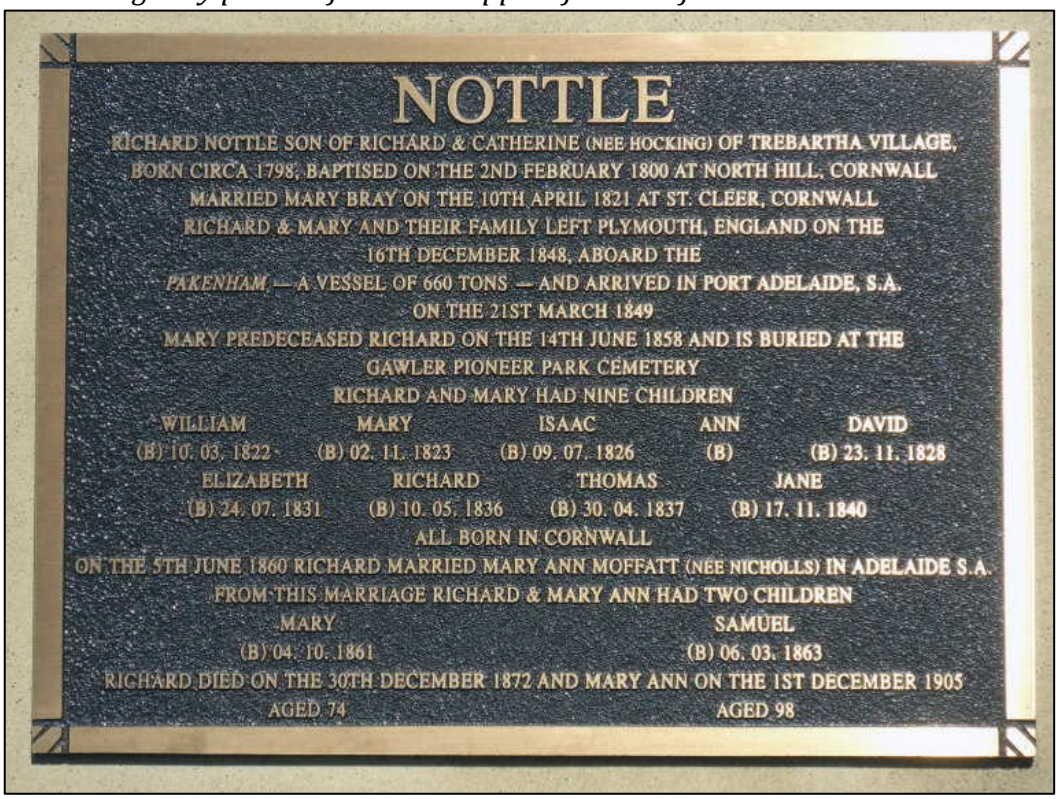
was soon to become Bolventor parish. Between them they had 49 children and, although half the families emigrated during the 1840s, enough children stayed locally to intensify the already deep kinship links. As was common with Cornish kinship groups, the three families that emigrated left for the same part of south Australia, which was a the preferred destination for many Bolventor emigrants.

Table 5.3. Timeline for the children of Richard and Catherine Nottle. The extended family had strong kinship links in Bolventor.

Mary Nottle	**1795**	**Born Trebartha, North Hill**
	1818	Married Nicholas Herring in St Neot (both sojourners). They had nine children
	c1818 - 1822	Nicholas Herring a labourer at Wimalford Farm, St Cleer
	c1823 - 1836	Nicholas Herring a tinner at Dozmary in Bolventor
	1837	Took a lease-for-lives on 20 acres of waste at Stanning Hill in Bolventor from Rodd family
	1837 - 1842	Builds farmhouse and buildings and begins to enclose the moor
	1838	Took out mortgage on the property for £34
	1841 census	Family tinners at property called New York, Bolventor (probably Stanning Hill)
	1842	Assigned the lease for Stanning Hill to John Bone (and transferred the mortgage to him)
	c1842	Emigrated with family to Australia
John Nottle	**1797**	**Born Trebartha, North Hill**
	1827	Married Elizabeth Browning at Lanteglos-by-Camelford, Cornwall. They had eight children
	c1830	Labourer at Redmoor, Dozmary Pool in Bolventor
	1841 census	Labourer at Bolventor
	1849	Death at St Teath, Cornwall
Richard Nottle	**1799**	**Born Trebartha, North Hill**
	1821	Married Mary Bray at St Cleer. Described as tinner from St Neot. They had nine children
	c1821 - 1834	Tinner at Dozmary, Bolventor
	1835	Took lease-for-life from Rodd on land at Tolborough, Bolventor
	1841 census	Labourer at Tolborough, Bolventor
	1843 tithe appt.	Occupier of 47-acre farm at North Tolborough, Bolventor
	1846	Brothers Richard, William and Thomas receive court order to pay for maintenance of their father
	1848	Emigrated with family to Australia
Grace Nottle	**1802**	**Born Trebartha, North Hill**
	1826	Married James Wills, farmer at Gillhouse. They had seven children.
	1841 - 1861 censuses	James & Grace farmers at Gillhouse, Bolventor
	1865	Grace dies at Gillhouse, Bolventor
	1852 - 1907	Daughter Sarah married to farmer George Worden from Minziesdowns, Bolventor
	1864 - 1895	Daughter Mary married to farmer Richard Pearce from Lord's Waste, Bolventor
	1852 - 1887	Daughter Catherine married to farmer John Worden from Pinnockshill, Bolventor
	1876 - 1917	Daughter Elizabeth married to farmer Uriah Hooper from Bolventor then St Cleer
	1856 - 1924	Son James farmer at Menaridden, Bolventor then St Cleer
	1865 - 1911	Son Richard farmer at Menaridden, Bolventor
William Nottle	**1805**	**Born at Trebartha, North Hill**
	1827	Married Grace Herring (sister of Nicholas Herring) at St Neot. They had four children
	1837	Took lease-for-lives from Edward Rodd for 20 acres at Pridacoombe, Bolventor
	1841 census	Labourer at Pridacoombe, Bolventor
	1843 tithe appt.	Occupier of 27-acre farm at Pridacoombe, Bolventor
	1848	Emigrated with family to Australia
Thomas Nottle	**1808**	**Born at Middlewood, North Hill**
	1830	Married Elizabeth Dart. They had 10 children
	1841 census	Farmer at Littleworth, Bolventor
	bef. 1843	Took lease on land at West Tober, Bolventor
	1843 tithe appt.	Tenant of 18 acres at Littleworth and 30 acres at West Tober, Bolventor
	1851 census	Tinner at Littleworth, Bolventor
	1861-1881 censuses	Farmer at Littleworth, Bolventor
	1863	Took out licences to stream for tin at Furzwain in St Cleer and Westerlake in St Neot
	1866	Renewed lease-for-lives tenancy at West Tober with Francis Rodd
	1861 - 1901	Son John farmer at West Tober in Bolventor then Garrow Farm in St Breward
	1861 - 1911	Son James tinner then labourer at Pridacoombe, Bolventor
	1871 - 1911	Son Thomas tinner then farmer in Bolventor. Tin miner in St Neot 1911
	1874 - 1885	Daughter Kitty married to farmer William Bray from St Luke's, Bolventor

The records do not tell us how closely the Nottles worked together, but it is highly likely at least some of them worked together as tinners. It is also probable that they assisted each other in establishing their small farms. An oral testimony from later in the nineteenth century noted how field boundaries for new enclosures were built by neighbours working together. Almost invariably the neighbours of Bolventor were close kin. The same oral source noted how fields were often named after those who helped: for example John Keast, who enclosed land at Todda Park in Bolventor, named one enclosure Jim Nottle's field. The Nottles and the Keasts were closely related and Jim's brother was married to John's sister.[324]

Figure 5.15. A family plaque to the Nottle family at Riverton cemetery, South Australia. This area became a popular destination for Bolventor emigrants. Before he left for Australia Richard Nottle and two of his brothers received a court order demanding they provide financial support for their father.



[324] Herring, P. (ed.), *Bodmin Moor, An Archaeological Survey. Vol. 2: The Industrial and Post-medieval Landscapes* (Swindon, 2008), p. 143.

The Nottles were just one of the extended kinship groups who moved onto the moor during the first half of the nineteenth century. The biggest kinship group was that of the Hoopers. Palmer recorded a Philip Hooper as tenant of Goldhill in St Neot in 1793. He paid £5 a year to rent 10 customary Cornish acres at this moorland fringe farm.[325] Hooper married Jane Wilton in St Cleer in 1780 and the register stated his residence at time of marriage as St Austell. Their first two children were baptised in St Austell, with the remaining six baptised in St Cleer, St Neot and Cardinham. Many of the St Neot and Altarnun Hoopers originated from the St Austell area and, although they are difficult to piece together in kinship terms, all those in St Neot who could be traced were descended from Philip Hooper or his close relatives.

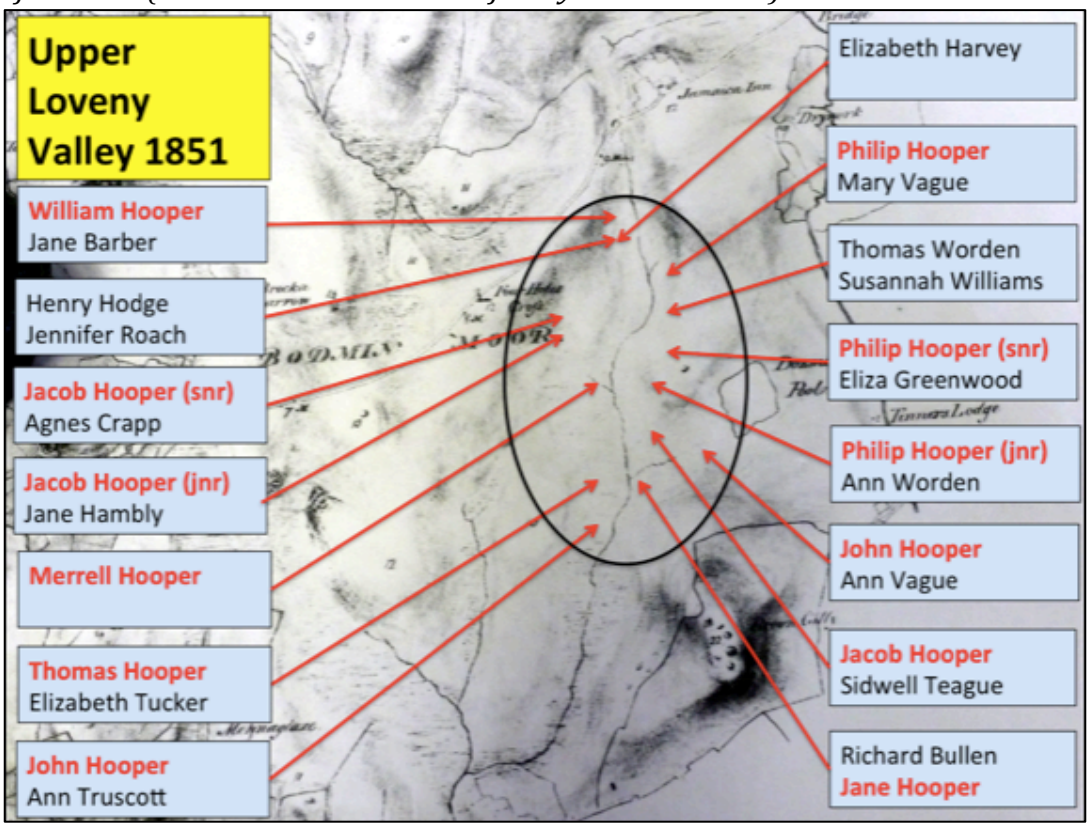
At some stage Philip and Jane Hooper moved deeper onto the moor as they were recorded as living at Pinnockshill in the upper Loveny Valley when they died in the 1830s. Many of the Hoopers moved to this area in the 1820s and 1830s so that by the 1851 census they dominated this part of the moor in kinship terms. Figure 5.16 shows the approximate locations of the 15 households in this part of the valley. This area of about 1,000 acres, now partially submerged under Colliford Reservoir, was open moorland at the start of the century. The Ordnance Survey drawings showed no occupation of this part of the moor in 1805, while the estate map covering most of this area in 1811 marked a single house in ruins to the west of Dozmary Pool. The first baptism recorded here was in 1817 when

[325] CRO MS. BK/442: Survey, St Neot Parish by David Palmer of Launceston (April 1793).

Thomas Hooper and Elizabeth Tucker baptized their son John at St Neot parish church.

All but one of the households were involved in tinning, with most also farming small acreages. Thomas Worden was the biggest farmer in 1851, with 50 acres employing one labourer according to the census. He came from a poor labouring family and was a farm labourer himself at Higher Langdon in St Neot at the 1841 census, but just over a year later the tithe apportionment recorded that the family occupied eight acres at Pinnockshill. Worden's descendants became successful moorland farmers and the family still held the lease-for-lives for the farm at Pinnockshill at the time of the 1910 Duties on Land.

Figure 5.16. Occupation in the Upper Loveny Valley. Twelve of the 15 households contained Hoopers in 1851, and all properties were established on open moorland after 1812 (Source: 1851 census and family reconstitution).



The web of kinship links between the tinners and small farmers of the Upper Loveny Valley was exceptional and 13 of the 15 households had first-order links with each other in this small part of the moor. The two that did not, headed by Henry Hodge and Elizabeth Harvey, had first-order kin living less than a mile away.

Figure 5.17. Tinners in the first half of the nineteenth century began enclosure in the Upper Loveny Valley. Most of the occupiers of the 15 households in 1851 were closely related, and they worked together in the streamworks and their small farm holdings. Many of the cottages were later abandoned and some of the earliest enclosed land now lies under Colliford Reservoir.



At the mid-point of the century the new ecclesiastical parish of Bolventor could be summarised in the following way. There were a small number of larger, full-time farms, which in most cases had at least some in-bye land, some of which was enclosed in the medieval period. They had small areas of arable cropping but most land was used for extensive livestock production. In some cases the tenants of these farms lived elsewhere and herdsmen or hinds lived on the farms permanently.

There was a much larger number of tinners who occupied smallholdings or small farms, largely to provide subsistence for their families. These families had mostly moved onto the moors during the previous 30 years. A hamlet had also grown up close to Jamaica Inn where a small number of services for the community were provided, including a school and Anglican Church by 1851. However, virtually all of the community lived on properties that were dispersed across the moor.

Many of the settlers had moved onto the moorland in wider kinship groups, working together on the tin streams and helping each other put up buildings and clear small areas of moorland to grow crops and keep a few livestock. As a result, a majority of the population had close kinship ties to other families. Kinship ties were weakest in Bolventor's only hamlet close to Jamaica Inn where the innkeeper, curate, schoolmaster and blacksmith had no close ties. However, they were among the few exceptions in a place where kinship was a key factor in a community undergoing rapid and fundamental change.

5.6 Enclosure and kinship in Bolventor in the second half of the century

Economic activity in moorland communities during the second half of the nineteenth century was characterised by a decline in tinning and continued enclosure and improvement of open moorland. For a majority of households farming gradually ceased to be a subsidiary occupation and became the main or only source of income. There were other moorland industries which provided some employment – particularly china clay extraction from the 1860s and quarrying – but these were not big employers in the district around Bolventor.

Enclosure during the second half of the century generally resulted in the creation of larger, straight-sided fields more suitable for commercial agriculture. At the same time farmhouses and buildings became more substantial. It was a process of gradual improvement that was repeated on tenements across the moor. At many other settlements the original small farms and associated buildings were abandoned when they became uneconomic.

Ruins of these farms remain on parts of the moor today, visual evidence of the early period of nineteenth-century enclosure. Figure 5.18 shows the ruins of a farm cottage at Butter's Tor on the border of Bolventor in St Breward parish. For many years this property was occupied by John Henwood Hambly, the son of the Hamblys from Pridacoombe who were discussed earlier. Like most of the family, John was a tinner and farmer. He took over the farm from his father-in-law Ezekiel Tinney who occupied 40 acres at Butter's Tor in 1843. He was listed as a tinner in the 1841 and 1851 censuses with no mention of the 40-acre farm at either census.

John's sister Jane Hambly became a farmer at an equally isolated farm known as Boy's House which was on Lord's Waste in Bolventor, about three miles across the moor from Butter's Tor. This small farm remained in the same family from first enclosure in the 1830s to the end of the period in 1910 and is a good example of how many moorland kinship groups persisted and eventually prospered. At the time of the tithe apportionment in 1843 it was the only farm on the 540 acres of common land known as Lord's Waste.

Figure 5.18. Remains of an abandoned farmhouse at Butter's Tor in St Breward parish. In the 1840s John Henwood Hambly from South Pridacoombe moved here when he married the daughter of occupier Ezekiel Tinney. At the tithe apportionment Tinney occupied 40 acres of pasture at Butter's Tor.



Evidence of settlement at Lord's Waste first appeared in the St Neot baptism register in 1836 when Jane Hooper gave birth to an illegitimate daughter here. Jane was the daughter of Jacob and Agnes Hooper and the family of nine moved to Boy's House and began enclosing a few acres some time between 1827, when they lived at Menaridden in St Neot, and 1836. Over the next 80 years three generations of the Hoopers gradually improved and expanded the farm at Boy's House until it was sold by the Grylls family in 1916.[326]

Table 5.4 summarises the main developments in the occupation of Boy's House, while figure 5.19 maps the progress of improvement between the tithe apportionment in 1842 and the 1910 Duties on Land. Herring noted how

[326] CRO MS. AD1512/10: Sale catalogue, Lewarne Estate, St Neot (1916).

improvement work carried out entirely by tenants on moorland intakes benefited landowners. This was certainly true for Boy's House, which as well as providing a small annual rental income for the Grylls family, was valued at £225 in 1910.[327] Successive generations of Hoopers had created the value by improving the farm entirely at their own risk and expense.

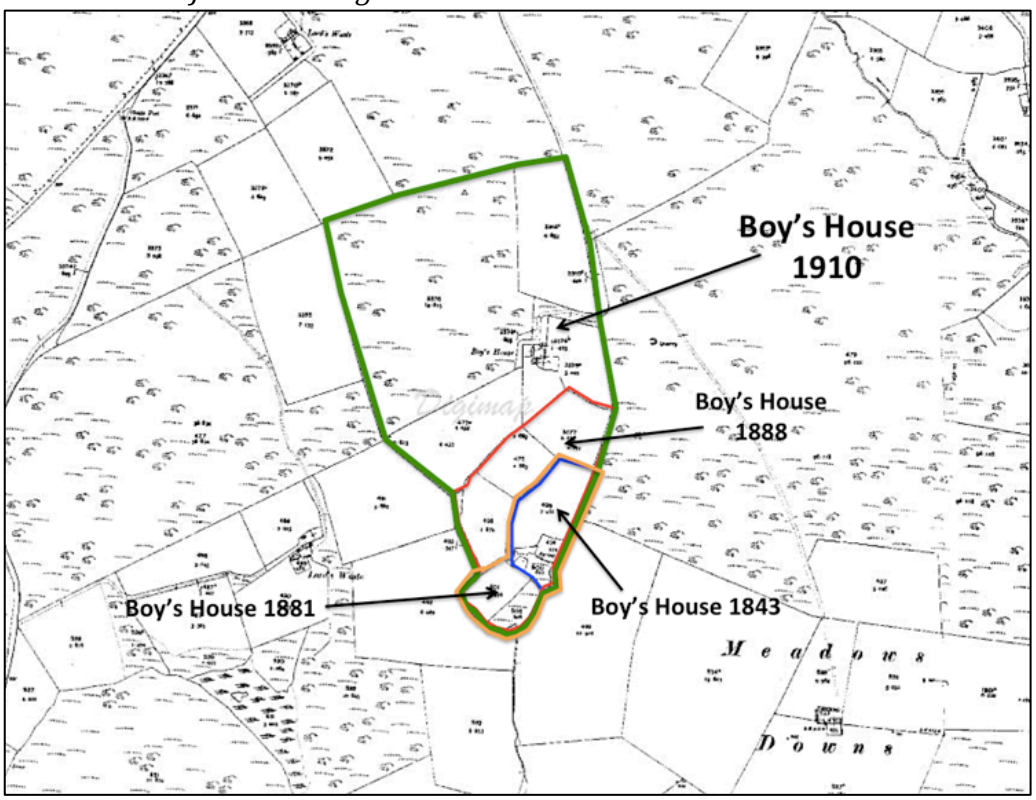
Table 5.4. The progress of occupation and enclosure at Boy's House from 1836 to 1922.

Date	Record type	Occupier	Detail
1836	Baptism	Jacob Hooper	First record of occupation by the Hoopers at Boy's House.
1841	Census	Jacob Hooper	Jacob Hooper senior is a tinner at Boy's House. Originally from St Austell. Married to Agnes Crapp
1843	Tithe apportionmant	Jacob Hooper	Jacob Hooper senior is occupier 0f 3a 0r 29p at Lord's Waste. Four fields of pasture and a garden
1851	Census	Jacob Hooper	Jacob senior joined by Jacob junior who moves to Boy's House with his wife Jane Hambly from Pridacoombe. Both Jacobs are tinners at Boy's House, as is Jacob senior's son John and Jane's brother John Hambly
1853	Burial record		Jacob Hooper junior dies aged 34 of 'brain fever' leaving wife Jane a widow with six children
1855	Burial record		Jacob Hooper senior dies aged 67
1861	Burial record		Agnes Hooper (nee Crapp) dies at Pinnockshill aged 75
1861	Census	Jane Hooper	Jane Hooper (nee Hambly) widow and head of house at Boy's House. Sons James (age 20), Thomas (7) and John (6) live with her. James is a tinner, no occupation given for Jane
1868	Burial record		James Hooper dies aged 25
1871	Census	Jane Hooper	Jane Hooper widow and farmer at Boy's House. Son Thomas and nephew Richard Hooper are miners
1881	Census	Jane Hooper	Jane Hooper widow and farmer of five acres at Boy's House. Grandson Thomas, a scholar, lives with her
1888	OS map		Boy's House enclosed area now 12 acres
1891	Burial record	Thomas Hooper	Jane Hooper dies aged 71
c1891	Grylls estate records	Thomas Hooper	Thomas takes out lease for 20 acres of enclosed land and 31 acres of waste at Boy's House. Rent £8 10s. Lease not dated
1891	Census	Thomas Hooper	Widower Thomas Hooper (Jane's son) is a labourer and farmer at Boy's House. His eight children and housekeeper Fanny Harper also live at the farm
1891	Civil registration		Thomas marries housekeeper Fanny Harper. Two children of Thomas and Fanny baptised at same time as marriage
1897	Grylls estate records	Thomas Hooper	Thomas takes out fresh 50-year lease at Boys House. Rent £3 11s. Commits to spend £100 within seven years on new buildings.
1901	Census	Thomas Hooper	Thomas farmer Boy's House
1910	Duties on Land	Thomas Hooper	Thomas leaseholder of 45 acres at Boy's House. Farm valued at £225
1911	Census	Thomas Hooper	Thomas farmer at Boy's House
1916	Grylls estate records	Thomas Hooper	Farm sold by Grylls family as part of Lewarne Estate sale.
1917	Bolventor war memorial		Son Thomas killed at Flanders in WW1
1922	Inventory of wills	Thomas Hooper	Thomas dies at Boy's House leaving effects valued at £591

[327] NA MS. IR 58/72097-72013: Board of Inland Revenue, Valuation Office Field Books, St Neot (1910).

For at least 20 years from 1861 and 1881 the small tenement was farmed by Jane Hooper (née Hambly). It is likely she farmed it for considerably longer and the farm probably came into her hands in the mid-1850s when her husband and father-in-law died in quick succession. At three successive censuses the household was made up of herself plus various children and grandchildren. Unlike many widows she never remarried, the household dependent on the five acres of enclosed land and the additional income from tinning and mining brought in by her children. It is also likely that the web of kin surrounding her helped Jane – she was closely related to many of the other tinners and small farmers living close by.

Figure 5.19. Mapping of enclosure of Boy's House by the Hoopers, from a three-acre smallholding in 1842 to a 45-acre farm in 1910. At the tithe apportionment it was the only piece of enclosed land on the 540 acres of Lord's Waste. By the latter date the house and farm buildings had moved.[328]



[328] Base map Ordnance Survey 1:10560 County Series, 1st revision 1907, accessed via EDINA digimap (© *University of Edinburgh).*

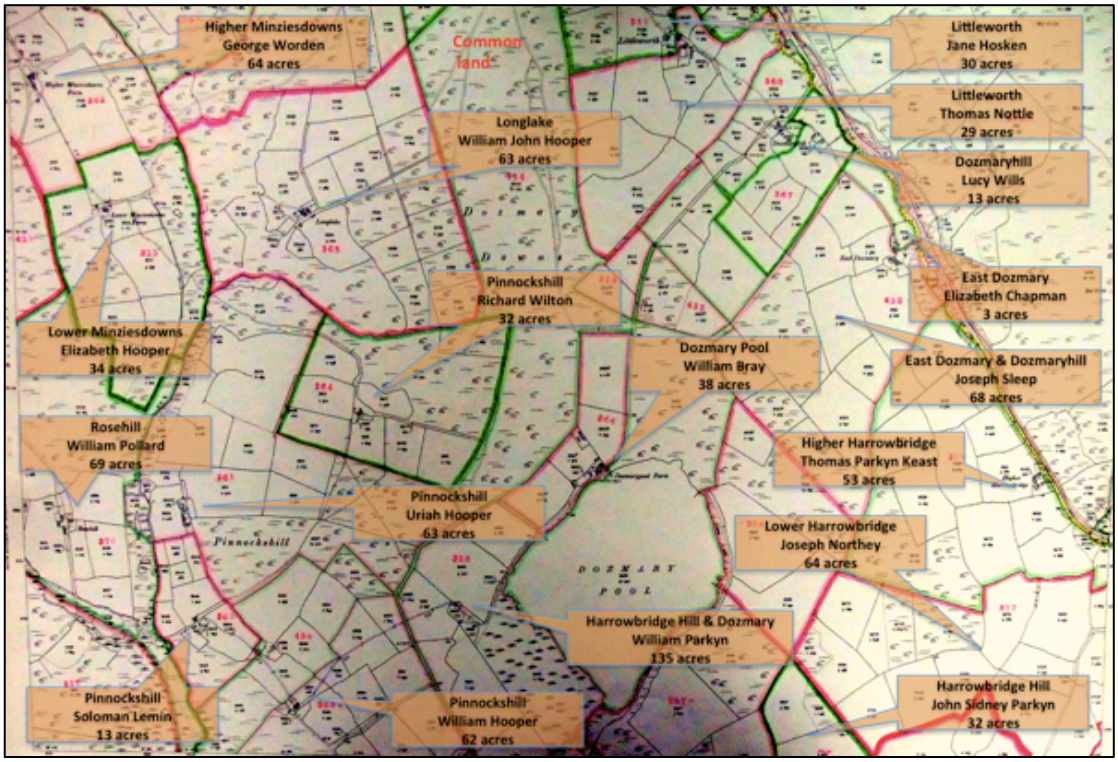
Mention has already been made of the critical part played by women in the economy of the small farms occupied by families with multiple occupations. Some like Jane Hooper became farmers themselves on the deaths of their husbands and others through inheritance down the female line. One of the more unusual was Elizabeth Ann Hooper from Lower Minziesdowns Farm. She took over the running of the farm from her father some time between 1881 and 1891. Elizabeth had two illegitimate children during the 1870s while living with her parents and subsequently ran the farm as a single mother.

At the 1891 census she lived at the farm with her two sons, James a 21-year-old tin miner and Albert a 13-year-old scholar. By 1901 James had married and taken a moorland farm at Hulker in St Neot, while Albert was working full-time at Lower Minziesdowns, employed by his mother. Unfortunately Albert died in 1905 and at the 1911 census 14-year-old granddaughter Lilly Hooper assisted Elizabeth on the farm.

Lower Minziesdowns was one of the patchwork of small farms in the Upper Loveny Valley, mostly developed from the tinners' smallholdings. The surveyor's notebook from the 1910 Duties on Land described the property as a 34-acre moorland farm with about eight acres of marsh and a 'difficult approach'. The farmhouse was 'two up, two down' and the only other building was a cattle shed of stone and thatch. The surveyor valued the farm at £176, one of the lower valuations for farms in the district.[329]

[329] NA MS. IR 58/72097-72013: Board of Inland Revenue, Valuation Office Field Books, St Neot (1910).

Figure 5.20. 1910 Duties on Land map showing the patchwork of small farms around Dozmary and Pinnockshill.[330] *Occupiers' names and farm acreages have been added to the map. Sixty years earlier this land was mostly open moorland.*



Peter Herring summed up the moorland farmers like Elizabeth Hooper neatly,

describing how they were:

> 'without being at all sentimental, tough, adaptable and resilient; winds and rains lashed them as much as their fields and roofs, hardening them. A general lack of capital compared with their wealthier Moor-edge or lowland cousins encouraged a resourcefulness made manifest archaeologically in the often tortuous sequence of successive use of structures and objects. A disused dwelling house becomes a stable, a cow house, a sheep shelter, a fowl house, a store and finally a source of roofing slate, quoin stones, timber, etc.'.[331]

[330] NA MS. IR 128/5/229: Board of Inland Revenue: Valuation Office, Record Sheet Plan No. XXI 15, Dozmary (c. 1910).
[331] Herring, P. (ed.), *Bodmin Moor, An Archaeological Survey. Vol. 2: The Industrial and Post-medieval Landscapes* (Swindon, 2008), p. 28.

Figure 5.21. Women of the moor: Emma Hambly (née Nottle, right) with her two daughters Violet and Daisy and neighbour Ellen Wallis (née Shillaber, left) in the 1920s. Women undertook much of the farm work on small moorland farms while men worked in the streamworks, clay pits or quarries. The photograph was taken at Butter's Tor, probably outside the cottage in figure 5.18 where Emma and her daughters lived. Both Emma and Ellen were directly descended from families who began enclosing moorland at Bolventor in the early nineteenth century.[332]



At the time of the 1901 census three of the four small farms at Dozmaryhill and Littleworth that were originally established by tinners in the first half of the nineteenth century were run by women. All the households were extended with three generations living at each farm. Lucy Wills farmed a 17-acre tenement at Dozmaryhill with her mother-in-law Mary Wills. The surveyor in 1910 described it as a compact moorland farm with a fair six-room house and cart shed, together with a poor set of livestock buildings capable of accommodating 10 cows and three pigs. Mary's husband James Wills had enclosed the land at Dozmaryhill from the 1840s onwards, and the farm remained in the family for 100 years.

[332] Photograph courtesy of Rosemary Parkyn, Wimalford Farm, St Cleer.

Mary Wills died in 1905 and in 1911 Lucy was assisted on the farm by her 20-year-old son, William Deacon Wills, while her daughter Leonora and son-in-law Charles Hooper, who was a clay labourer, also lived at the farm.

Close neighbour Jane Hosken, who farmed at Littleworth, was assisted on the farm by her 43-year-old single son Joseph and two granddaughters aged 25 and 15. The 30-acre farm was described as very hilly and Jane paid a rent of £12 a year.[333] Her other son Richard farmed at nearby Smith's Moor. In 1911 Jane was still a farmer at the age of 87, her son Joseph her employee. Illegitimacy was still common among the small moorland farmers, and two of Jane's daughters had illegitimate children who also lived at the farm.

In between the farms of Lucy Wills and Jane Hosken was Dozmaryhill Farm occupied by Ann Sleep. The Sleep family had run the farm since at least the tithe apportionment and probably (based on baptism records) from the 1820s. Ann took over the 22.75 acres when her husband George died and in 1891 the household consisted of Ann, her son Joseph and daughter-in-law Elizabeth, their son Herbert, and boarder Sydney Sleep. The latter was a schoolmaster and also one of Ann's sons, although this relationship was not mentioned in the census. Like many small farms in the district the cow house was attached to the main house, while the other buildings were irregularly positioned around the townplace (see figure 5.22).

[333] NA MS. IR 58/72097-72013: Board of Inland Revenue, Valuation Office Field Books, St Neot (1910).

Figure 5.22. Ann Sleep farmed 22.75 acres at Dozmaryhill in 1901. The farm was typical of the small tenements beside the River Fowey between Harrowbridge and St Luke's enclosed in the nineteenth century.[334]



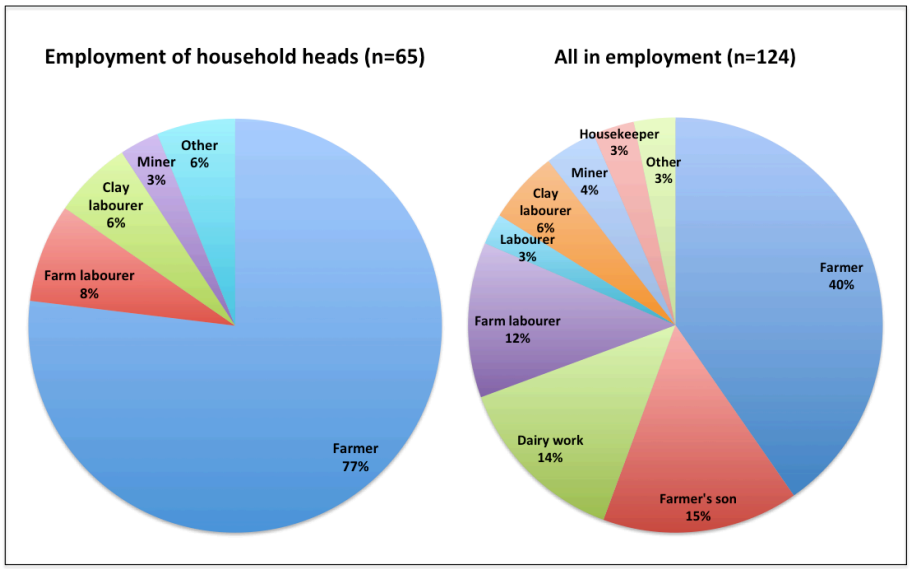
The decline in other employment in the second half of the nineteenth century, particularly tinning, meant that farming dominated the Bolventor economy in 1911. The surveyors' notebooks from 1910 together with the 1911 census combine to provide a detailed picture of the structure of Bolventor society at the end of the period being studied. When combined with the 1842 tithe apportionments and 1851 census they enable change over the second half of the nineteenth century to be measured.

Figure 5.23 shows the breakdown of total employment as recorded in the 1911 census, together with employment of household heads. Farmers made up more than three-quarters of household heads and 40% of all in people employment.

[334] Photograph © Martin Bodman.

Farmers' sons were those listed as working on farms, while those employed in dairy work were mostly farmers' daughters. Farmers' spouses were not given occupations in the census but there were 40 in the parish who would have contributed to the farm economy. In addition to those listed as farmers in the census, a number of household heads with other occupations also farmed some land according to the 1910 Duties on Land. Once again the snapshot of farming seen in the census understated the real position. The parish in 1910 was an economy dominated by a patchwork of small full-time farms occupied by a tight-knit community of farmers, many of who were descended from the original occupiers of the early nineteenth-century enclosures. The surveyors' notebooks give insights into how properties were valued, the size and condition of buildings, the proportion of land improved and the nature of tenancy arrangements.

Figure 5.23. Employment in Bolventor in 1911.[335] At this date three-quarters of household heads were farmers, although the Duties on Land returns reveal some labourers also farmed small acreages.



[335] NA MS. RG 78/796 and RG 78/804. Census Summary Returns for Altarnun and St Neot (1911). Entries for the Ecclesiastical Parish of Bolventor were contained in the returns for these civil parishes.

There were a total of 63 farms in Bolventor in 1910, with an average size of 93 acres. Table 5.5 shows a breakdown of farm size by freehold valuation. The most common groups of farms averaged 70 acres, and typically just under half of this was improved land and the remainder rough grazing and marsh. Large farms tended to have a higher proportion of rough grazing, while small farms had the greatest proportion of improved land. The smallest farms were often unable to provide a full-time living for the occupier. The surveyor said William Soloman Lemin's 13-acre farm at Pinnockshill was too small to provide full-time employment and in the 1911 census Lemin was described as an agricultural labourer. He had taken out a 14-year lease on the farm in 1904 and paid £5 a year rent, although his father had been a tenant at the same farm for approximately 50 years prior to that date. The farmhouse was later abandoned and the farm itself is now largely submerged under Colliford Lake. However, the Lemins remained at Pinnockshill and in the 1970s were reputed to be one of the last families on the moor to be burning turf (peat) fires.

Table 5.5. The 1910 Duties on Land revealed an average farm size of 93 acres for 63 farms in Bolventor, of which approximately 40% was improved land.[336]

Size of farm by freehold value	Number of farms	Total acres	Improved acres	Unimproved acres	Average farm size (acres)
Small - less than £250	15	410	283	118	27
Medium - £250 to £749	33	2,326	1,089	1,244	70
Large - more than £750	15	3,107	1,011	2,088	207
All farms	63	5,843	2,382	3,450	93

[336] CRO MS. DV/1/66: Board of Inland Revenue Valuation Office, Duties on Land Valuation Book, St Neot and Warleggan, 1910; CRO MS. DV/1/12: Board of Inland Revenue Valuation Office, Duties on Land Valuation Book, Altarnun (c.1911). The poor quality of some entries necessitated double checking acreages with the surveyors' field books and maps held at the National Archives, Kew.

Most farms, however, were large enough to provide a full-time occupation for at least one member of the household. The farms enclosed on Rodd's land at Pridacoombe from the 1830s onwards provide good examples of the typical full-time farms in 1910. There were six farms at Pridacoombe and West Tolborough in 1910 and every occupier was directly descended from the tinners and small farmers who began to occupy the moors belonging to the Rodd family in the 1830s. Tinning had largely disappeared as an occupation by 1871 and most occupiers focussed instead on livestock farming. South Pridacoombe had developed into an 80-acre farm in 1910, compared with seven acres in 1842.

Figure 5.24. South Pridacoombe developed from a seven-acre smallholding in 1841 to become an 80-acre farm typical of the district by 1910. The Duties on Land surveyor was impressed with the quality of the farm buildings that, along with the farmhouse, are now grade II listed.[337]

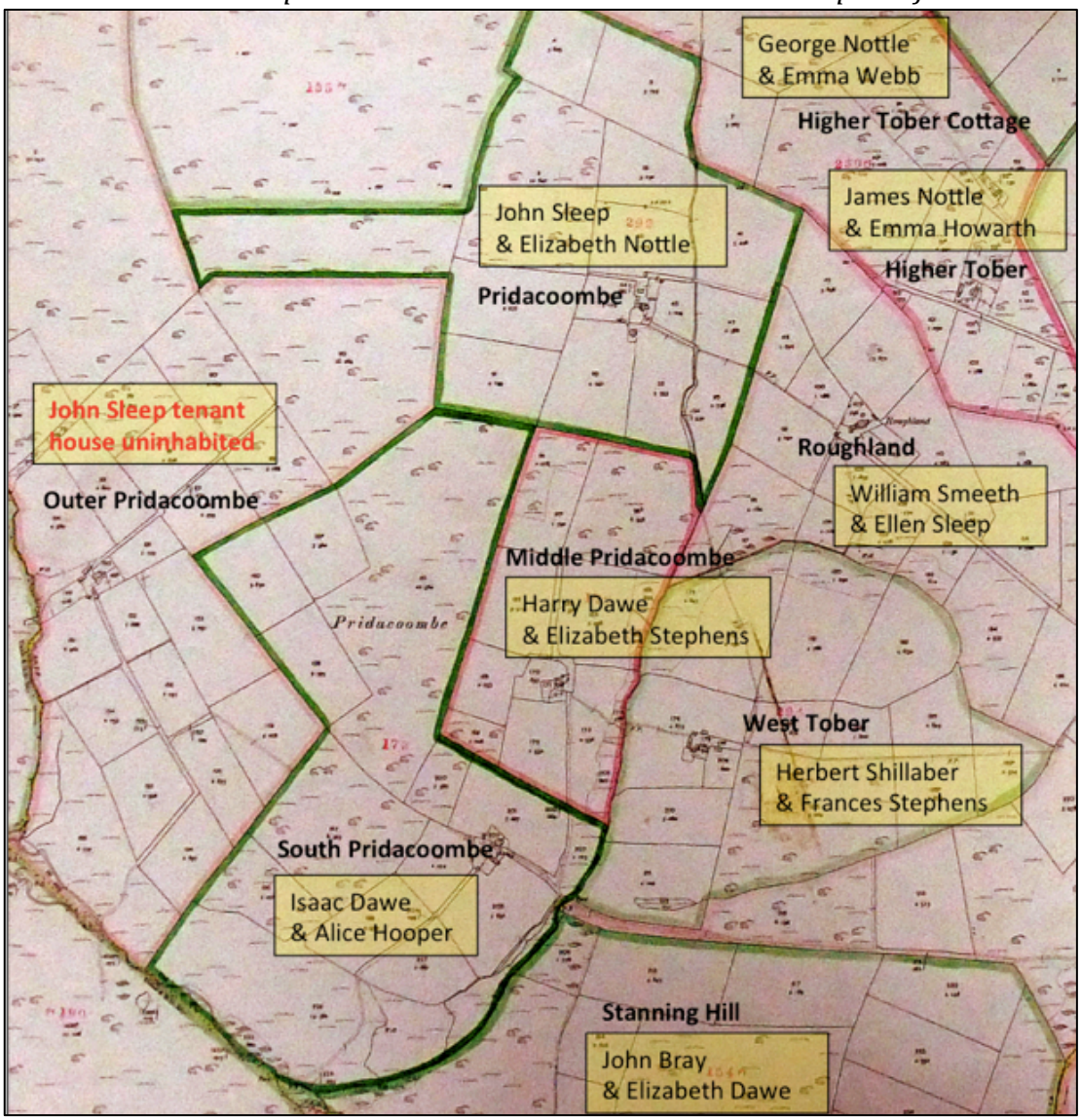


The farm was occupied by Isaac Dawe, who took over from his father John Herring Dawe when the latter died in 1908. John Dawe had taken out a lease-for-

[337] NA MS. IR 58/72097-72013: Board of Inland Revenue, Valuation Office Field Books, St Neot (1910).

lives on the farm in 1865, although he had been farming at Pridacoombe from at least 1851 and his father had taken out a lease-for-lives from Rodd in 1837. By 1910 the family had been at South Pridacoombe for at least 45 years, at an annual rent fixed at £6 15s 6d a year. As well as enclosing the land the Dawes had erected a 'very fair' set of buildings and the freehold value of the farm was assessed at £480 in 1910.

Figure 5.25. The patchwork of farms at Pridacoombe in 1910 shown on the Duties on Land map.[338] Details of tenants and their spouses have been added. All households had kinship links with at least one other in this small part of the moor.



[338] NA MS. IR 128/5/224: Board of Inland Revenue: Valuation Office, Record Sheet Plan No. XXI 10, Pridacoombe (c. 1910).

A low annual rent, long tenancy agreement and the ability to expand the farmed acreage all probably contributed to encouraging the Dawe family to remain in Bolventor. Perhaps there were also negative reasons for staying: they could not sell their property or move anywhere else and get a more attractive rental agreement. Local marriage horizons also contributed to the very strong kinship links. Isaac Dawe had married Alice Hooper whose family farmed at Boy's House. In 1911 Isaac also had a brother farming next door at Middle Pridacoombe, a father-in-law at Boy's House, a sister-in-law at Gillhouse, a brother-in-law at Deep Hatches and numerous first cousins at other Bolventor farms. Like many in Bolventor, Isaac also had kinship links overseas as one of his brothers had emigrated to the United States.

Figure 5.26. John Sleep (front row second from right) and family in 1913 at Pridacoombe. He and his wife Elizabeth (née Nottle, front row second from left) were both descended from families who originally enclosed land in the district in the 1830s. In 1911 the four older children worked on the farm, including the two daughters on the back row who were employed in dairy work.[339]



[339] Thompson, E.V., *100 Years on Bodmin Moor* (Bodmin, 1984), p. 45.

The persistence of leases-for-lives into the twentieth century was an unusual factor in the nature of property occupation in Bolventor. In 1910 there were still 18 farms in the parish let on these lease arrangements. Rodd had ceased to grant this type of lease, or extensions of them, after 1869 when Samuel Penno renewed his lease at Todda Park. After that the estate still granted long leases, initially for 60 years in the 1870s, but the lengths of leases were gradually reduced until they were usually for 14- or seven-year terms after 1900. However, in 1910, 15 of Rodd's 25 farms in Bolventor were still leased on terms of 50 years or more.

There was also a tendency for rent levels to rise after the 1870s as farming prosperity recovered, especially for the livestock farms on the moor. An increasing number of family members were involved in dairy work – all women – and the emergence of a number of regrators is evidence of greater production of higher value dairy products. In the 1870s rental agreements were typically below 2s per acre, but by 1900 some were more than 5s per acre for similar quality properties.

Of the 20 farms in Bolventor owned by the Stephens family 12 were still held on leases-for-lives in 1910. On all but two of these farms the original leaseholder had died and the leases usually depended for their survival on the lives of one or two elderly descendants or relatives of the original leaseholder. For example, the representatives of Jacob Hooper held the lease at Pinnockshill Farm. Two lives remained to keep the lease alive, aged 68 and 65. The tenant of the farm in 1910 was Uriah Hooper – he was a distant relative of Jacob and became a relatively successful farmer, despite having a difficult upbringing.

Figure 5.27. Pinnockshill Farm was still held on a lease-for-lives in 1910, when representatives of the original tenant Jacob Hooper held the lease. The farmhouse was later abandoned and the land is now partially submerged under Colliford Reservoir.[340]



Uriah was baptised in 1842, the illegitimate son of Mary Ann Hooper, who was herself the illegitimate daughter of Jane Hooper. Four years after Mary Ann's baptism Jane Hooper married tinner Richard Bullen who occupied four acres at Pinnockshill in 1842 (see figure 5.10). Uriah initially lived with his grandparents before becoming a labourer in St Neot. By 1881, however, he had become tenant of 28 acres at East Dozmary and subsequently also at Pinnockshill Farm and Venland Farm in St Cleer. His relations with his neighbours were not always harmonious and in 1887 he was accused of assaulting Thomas Stephens in a dispute over the cutting of rushes on land that formed the boundary between his farm at Pinnockshill and Rosehill Farm. Hooper alleged Stephens was cutting rushes on his land and the court heard he 'assaulted him in a violent and

[340] Thompson, E.V., *100 Years on Bodmin Moor* (Bodmin, 1984), p. 11.

ruffianly manner' causing injury which cost a sovereign to be treated by a doctor. The judge said the claim that Stephens was trespassing was irrelevant to the case and Hooper was found guilty of assault and ordered to pay 35s in damages.[341]

Figure 5.28. Four generations of moorland Hoopers c1918. From the left: Uriah Hooper, William Ernest Hooper, Ernest Henry Hooper and William John Hooper.[342] The family became successful farmers despite a difficult start.



Subsequently two of Uriah's children became farmers, daughter Mary Elizabeth Hooper at Dozmaryhill (as a single 20-year-old farmer in the 1891 census) and son William John Hooper at the same farm in 1901 when he was a farmer and regrator. By 1910 William had moved to Longlake, a farm adjoining Pinnockshill Farm. This farm was also held on a lease-for-lives in 1910, the surveyor noting

[341] *Royal Cornwall Gazette,* 19 Aug 1887.
[342] Photograph courtesy of Christine Haimes (née Hooper*)*, great-granddaughter of Uriah Hooper.

very specifically that the remaining life was that of a different William Hooper aged sixty-eight and a half years.

There was renewed enclosure activity on parts of the moor in the 1880s. Perhaps the decline in mining fortunes and a recovery in livestock returns provided incentives for landowners and farmers. On Lord's Waste leases-for-lives continued to be the favoured tenancy arrangement for enclosure by the Grylls family, and remaining unenclosed parts of this moor were carved up between tenants in 1882. In return for favourable terms, tenants were required to make improvements in the same way as the early pioneers at Pridacoombe and Tolborough in the 1830s.

For example, Samuel Wills took on a holding of 102 acres on Lord's Waste where the lease-for-lives granted in 1882 stipulated that the land was to be divided into fields, hedged and £120 to be spent on a dwelling house and other buildings. In return the rent was set at just £8 18s a year. On the neighbouring farm occupied by John Hooper the lease granted in the same year stipulated that £200 was to be expended in 10 years. By 1910 the Duties on Land surveyor noted that Hooper had created 'a rather good moorland farm' covering 68 acres, although the buildings were described as poor. The buildings could accommodate nine cows, one horse and an unspecified number of calves and pigs. The rent was £7 10s a year and when the Lewarne Estate was sold by the Grylls family in 1916 the farm realised £210.[343]

[343] NA MS. IR 58/72097-72013: Board of Inland Revenue, Valuation Office Field Books, St Neot (1910).

Figure 5.29. The ruins of Charles Harper's farmhouse and buildings on Lord's Waste. In 1910 the Duties on Land surveyor described the 70-acre farm as 'one of the poorest holdings on the moor'.



The adjoining 70-acre farm occupied by Charles Harper was sold at the same sale for £200, despite being described by the Duties on Land surveyor as a 'poor, inhospitable holding… one of the poorest holdings on the moor'. The 1882 lease had required Harper to spend £150 on buildings and clear the ground of furze, weed, gorse and stones within 10 years. The moorland was to be divided into fields of five acres each. By 1910 there were 12 fields on the farm, plus a small farmhouse and buildings that were also considered poor. The latter consisted of accommodation for seven cows and two horses as well as a barn, fowl house, trap house and pig house. A later note added to the farmhouse description said 'occupier says three bedrooms but I noticed only two windows!! Rooms must be very small'.[344]

[344] *ibid.,* p. 320.

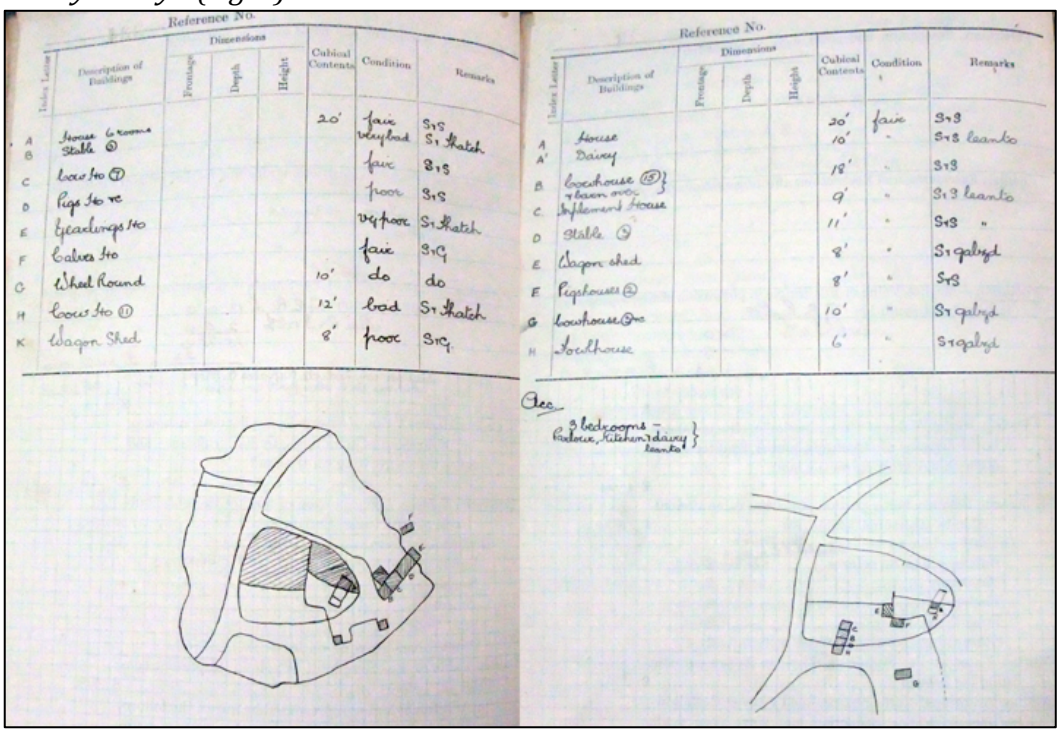
At Harrowbridge kinship links were reinforced by land being divided to accommodate members of the Parkyn family. The Parkyns were among the few owner-occupiers on the moor in the nineteenth century, and they were also among the first to begin enclosing moorland in the Upper Draynes Valley. Palmer recorded two Parkyns – John and Thomas – renting moorland in 1812, and baptism and marriage records suggest they arrived in the district, probably from Lanlivery, in the late 1700s. Thomas Parkyn married Mary Mallett (a sibling of John Mallett, figure 2.4) in St Neot in 1795 and they were among the earliest Wesleyan Methodists in the parish. Thomas died at Harrowbridge in 1837 and at the tithe apportionment his widow Mary was owner of 169 acres made up of 23 arable fields, 11 acres of marsh and 87 acres of unimproved moorland.

Mary died in 1846 and in her will divided the farm between her children Thomas, John and Sarah. Their farms – Lower Harrowbridge, Harrowbridge Hill and Higher Harrowbridge – were between 49 and 64 acres each in size.[345] After John Parkyn's death Harrowbridge Hill was further divided between his sons Matthew and William. As a result, by 1910 the land at Harrowbridge had been split into four owner-occupied farms. By this date first cousins William Parkyn and John Sidney Parkyn occupied the two farms at Harrowbridge Hill. Figure 5.30 shows the summary of both farms from the 1910 surveyors' notebook, highlighting how the cousins shared the same townplace, with the house and some buildings split between them. William also held leases to farmland around Dozmary Pool, while his son William John Parkyn occupied Wimalford Farm

[345] Transcript of will provided by Rosemary Parkyn, Wimalford Farm, St Cleer.

across the valley. As a result, the Parkyns and their descendants dominated this part of the Draynes Valley.

Figure 5.30. Harrowbridge Hill was divided between two cousins and the surveyors' notebook gave details of the buildings occupied by William Parkyn (left) and John Sidney Parkyn (right).[346]



Sarah Parkyn married John Keast, and Higher Harrowbridge was later farmed by their son Thomas Parkyn Keast and, in 1910, then by his son also called Thomas Parkyn Keast. As was common in many moorland families, Thomas senior married first cousin Elizabeth Ann Parkyn from Harrowbridge Hill. Before taking over the farm at Harrowbridge, Thomas and Elizabeth ran Jamaica Inn in Bolventor. Once notorious for smuggling, the inn had become a temperance house by 1881, a situation perhaps influenced by the fact that Thomas and Elizabeth were Methodists. By 1911 the premises were occupied by farmer

[346] NA MS. IR 58/72097-72013: Board of Inland Revenue, Valuation Office Field Books, St Neot (1910).

Elizabeth Arthur. The Duties on Land surveyor noted that the 'house and buildings were formerly the premises of the Jamaica Inn which used to carry on a good trade'. He added that the licence had lapsed and the house and buildings were too large for the size of farm.

5.7 Kinship in Bolventor in 1911

By 1911 the continuity of occupation on Bolventor's small farms that dominated the economy numerically and economically, together with frequent intermarrying between people living on those farms, meant that kinship links were even more complex at the end of the period than sixty years earlier. A total of 54 of Bolventor's 65 households had first-order kinship links to at least one other household (see table 5.6). In addition, the proportion of households with three or more links had increased from 24% in 1851 to 45% in 1911 and the average number of first-order links was 2.4 per household.

Table 5.6. First-order kinship links in Bolventor in 1911 compared with 1851.

	Bolventor, Cornwall 1851		Bolventor, Cornwall 1911	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total number of households	66	100%	65	100%
Households with first-order links	48	73%	54	83%
First-order links to one household	19	29%	13	20%
First-order links to two households	13	20%	12	18%
First-order links to three or more	16	24%	29	45%
No first-order links recorded	18	27%	11	17%
Absolute kinship density	1.74	n/a	2.4	n/a

The percentage with first-order links (83%) was higher than for any other comparable study – the closest was the 82% figure recorded by Todd for Hallines in France in 1776.[347] The only English study reporting a similar percentage of links was for the small community of Bucks Mills in North Devon in 1901.[348] However, as discussed in chapter two this was for a fishing hamlet of just 27 households dominated by a single surname – 78% of households had either a head of house or spouse whose surname at birth was Braund. Had the measurement of kinship taken in the whole of the parish of Bucks Mills then a different picture would have emerged. The hamlet of Bucks Mills made for a fascinating study but was not typical of Devon or perhaps of anywhere else.

In Bolventor the surname distribution of household heads and spouses is shown in table 5.7. There were a total of 47 surnames represented and none dominated the parish, although the Hooper name stands out as being twice as common as any other surname. It was represented in 14% of households, and was the only surname to exceed 10% of the total. The Brays were unusual in that there was little evidence of the family being involved in tinning. All of the Brays in 1911 had kinship links to Richard Bray who had been a herdsman at Codda in Bolventor in 1841. Later he took the tenancy of the farm and eventually farmed more than 2,000 acres of extensive moorland pasture.

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[347] Todd, E., 'Seven peasant communities in pre-industrial Europe. A comparative study of French, Italian and Swedish rural parishes (18th and early 19th century)' (University of Cambridge Ph.D. thesis, 1976), p. 235.
[348] Few, J., 'Faith, Fish, Farm or Family? The Impact of Kinship Links and Communities on Migration Choices and Residential Persistence in North Devon 1841-1901' (University of Exeter Ph.D. thesis, 2009).

Table 5.7. Surname distribution in Bolventor in 1911. There were 47 surnames although eight surnames accounted for almost half of the total.[349]

Surname	Head surname	Spouse maiden name	Total	% of total
Hooper	10	7	17	14%
Bray	6	2	8	7%
Stephens	1	7	8	7%
Nottle	2	4	6	5%
Wills	4	1	5	4%
Shillaber	4	1	5	4%
Worden	4	1	5	4%
Keast	2	3	5	4%
Couch	3	1	4	3%
Sleep	3	1	4	3%
Dawe	2	2	4	3%
Hosken	2	1	3	3%
Northey	1	2	3	3%
Parkyn	2	0	2	2%
Pollard	2	0	2	2%
Penno	2	0	2	2%
Chapman	2	0	2	2%
Wilton	1	1	2	2%
Webb	1	1	2	2%
Smith	0	2	2	2%
Cock	0	2	2	2%
Other surnames	11	15	26	22%
Total number of surnames	32	36	47	100%

In 1911 all six Bray household heads were farmers in Bolventor. At Codda Richard Bray's grandson Stephen and spouse Philippa Stephens had eight first-order links, the highest for any household in the parish. Half of these were due to his wife's links – her father Thomas Stephens (who had been assaulted by Uriah Hooper in 1887, see page 274) was a Bolventor farmer, grocer and regrator whose five daughters were all married to Bolventor farmers. As a result, this

[349] NA MS. RG 14/13638-40: 1911 Census Schedules for St Neot (1911); NA MS. RG 14/13546-52: 1911 Census Schedules for Altarnun (1911).

single family represented six of the eight first-order links for the Stephens surname. The family was also a good example of how new families were assimilated into the community. Thomas's father John Stephens moved from Luxulyan to Bolventor with his family in the early 1860s. Like many others he was a tinner, and he then became a farm bailiff and eventually a farmer at St Luke's.

5.8 Concluding comments

The depth of kinship links measured for Bolventor's moorland households was in one way surprising, as a majority of households and farms were only established in the nineteenth century. However, in other ways the community was representative of much of rural Cornwall. In particular, the landscape pattern of small, isolated farms and hamlets repeated the spatial pattern described by Balchin that was discussed earlier (see page 14). Just as significantly, the persistence of long-term tenancy arrangements gave the small farmers a strong reason to stay and hand over farms to the next generation. In addition, the availability of land for enclosure gave opportunities for more close kin to remain in the district.

The dominance of one social class – small farmers – meant that marriage horizons were for the large part extremely local, and rarely stretched beyond a neighbouring parish. The more distant marriage horizons observed for farmers in Terling were one of the main reasons for their low kinship links in the parish. Reay's study of Hernhill in Kent found that farmers in that rural parish had the

lowest kinship links of any social group, despite the presence of some longstanding farming families. In both places there just were not enough farms to sustain high kinship levels between the farmers within the community.[350] In Terling a majority of observed kinship links were also between generations rather than within single generations, that is between parents and children rather than between siblings. Wrightson and Levine said this was the result of high mobility of children between parishes.[351] In Bolventor the opposite was the case, with 69% of links being between siblings.

Social networks in the community were largely determined by this societal structure. Tinners and farmers co-operated at a very local level – the tinners working the alluvial streams in small groups together, and wider family and neighbour groups clearing land, hedging fields and putting up buildings. Many of the farming operations such as harvesting grain and haymaking brought the same people together. These horizons formed the social networks that in turn also determined where marriage partners were found. This even applied to those who moved into the community. As the century progressed there was another factor that reinforced the societal structure of the moorland communities, and that was the growth of Methodism. The enormous impact of religious change on the way local society functioned will be explored fully in the next chapter.

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[350] Reay, B., *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800-1930* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 166.
[351] Wrightson K. and Levine, D., *Poverty and Piety in an English Village, Terling 1525-1700* (Oxford, 1995 edn.), p. 89.

Chapter 6. Religion, society and kinship on Bodmin Moor

6.1. Introduction

Methodism's rise to dominance during the first half of the nineteenth century became one of Cornwall's defining characteristics of the period. Its impact was so great that by the 1851 religious census a higher proportion of Cornish worshippers attended Methodist services than in any other part of the UK. The overall attendance patterns were strikingly similar to parts of rural Wales, and starkly different to those of its closest English counties of Devon, Dorset and Somerset.[352]

Much has been written about the reasons behind the success of Methodism in Cornwall. A distillation of the works of three historians who undertook substantial research on the spread of Methodism in Cornwall - David Luker, John Rowe and Thomas Shaw – suggests it succeeded where other denominations failed because it worked exceptionally well on a number fundamental levels.[353] First, it provided a simple spiritual message of redemption through faith that resonated with a society undergoing substantial change. Second, it had an organisational structure that placed it geographically at the heart of the communities it served. Third, the socio-economic homogeneity of relatively

[352] Mann, H., *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship in England and Wales* (1854).
[353] Luker, D., 'Cornish Methodism, revivalism and popular belief c.1780-1870' (University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1987); Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.); Shaw, T., *A History of Cornish Methodism* (Truro, 1967).

isolated and independent Cornish communities assisted the spread of Methodism.

Luker argued that over time this resulted in the creation of a *Volkskirche* – or people's religion - that evolved into a peculiarly Cornish interpretation of Methodism that 'served important preservative functions for Cornish pre-industrial society'. Central to the functioning of the people's religion was the role of indigenous revivalism, a dynamic that was both local and lay.[354] There were other reasons behind Methodism's success, such as the weaknesses of the Anglican Church and failure of old dissent to make significant inroads in Cornwall, but these were subsidiary factors.

Alongside its religious success, Methodism had a significant impact on how Cornish society functioned, and it increasingly provided social as well as religious support for communities undergoing rapid change. This societal impact can be best understood by analysis at a local level and a key aim of this chapter will be to show how religious change impacted on the way Bodmin Moor communities functioned, particularly in relation to kinship. Previous chapters have outlined how an overwhelmingly dispersed population, characterised by relatively flat social structures and local marriage horizons, resulted in extremely deep kinship patterns. This chapter will demonstrate how the ultra-local nature of Methodism helped to reinforce communities and kinship patterns

[354] Luker, D., 'Cornish Methodism, revivalism and popular belief c.1780-1870' (University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1987), p. 303.

at a time when other factors such as the breakdown of customary society were having a disruptive impact.

Methodism arrived very early on parts of Bodmin Moor, mainly as a result of John Wesley's evangelising work undertaken as he was travelling through Cornwall to get to his main target of the mining and fishing communities further west.[355] However, until the second decade of the nineteenth century societies remained small and it had relatively little impact in moorland parishes. From then Methodism expanded rapidly in two phases: the first coincided with the difficulties faced in agricultural communities following the end of the French Wars; and the second wave of growth came with the rapid expansion of copper mining in the 1830s.

Bodmin Moor provides a good case study to examine the impact of Methodism on Cornish society because the 14 parishes were representative of the three main types of communities in Cornwall. St Cleer and Linkinhorne became the most industrial because of the discovery of the Caradon copper deposits, while at the opposite end of the scale there were parishes like Cardinham and Blisland that remained largely agricultural. In between there were parishes such as St Neot and Altarnun where agriculture remained dominant in employment terms but where tinning and mining were also important.

[355] Bolitho, P., *The Story of Methodism in the Liskeard Circuit* (Liskeard, 1967), pp. 3-5.

Most of the population in a majority of Bodmin Moor parishes lived in communities off the moor itself, in the hamlets and isolated farmsteads that typified much of Cornwall. Even with the growth of deep mining in Caradon, an overwhelming majority of communities remained dispersed and relatively small. Analysis of returns for 50 places of worship will demonstrate that at the time of the 1851 religious census both attendances and the proportion attending Methodist places of worship were virtually the same for the 14 Bodmin Moor parishes as the average for Cornwall as a whole (see tables 6.1 and 6.2).

The pace and nature of religious change will be analysed for all of Bodmin Moor. However, in-depth analysis of the impact of this change on local society will be largely confined to St Neot and, to a lesser extent, Bolventor. In these two parishes, one ancient and the other established in 1848, it was the Bible Christians who had most success. The reasons behind their success, as well as their impact on kinship patterns in the most remote rural areas of Bodmin Moor will be examined later in the chapter. Before that, however, the factors that paved the way for their success will be discussed.

6.2 The state of the Anglican Church in Cornwall

When the newly ordained clergyman William Haslam arrived from London to take up his position as curate at the parish of Perranzabuloe in 1842 he was shocked by what he discovered. On his first morning the young clergyman set off from his lodgings at Lambriggan to walk the short distance to the parish church. On arrival he was ‘greatly grieved and disappointed’ at the poor state of the

churchyard and church exterior, and once inside his heart sank further, 'for I had never seen a place of worship in such a miserable condition'.[356]

It began to dawn on him why the vicar, who lived 30 miles away, and the bishop were keen to appoint him with surprising haste. At the only service of the day on the following Sunday he was confronted by a congregation made up of 'about a score of listless people, lounging in different parts of the church. This was my first Sunday in my first parish'. To compound his problems Haslam discovered that the parish was seven miles long and that its 'population of three thousand souls was scattered on all sides, excepting round the church'.[357]

The early experience of Haslam in Perranzabuloe neatly encapsulated many of the problems faced by the Anglican Church in much of Cornwall in the first half of the nineteenth century: large parishes; dispersed populations; low levels of church attendance; neglected church property; and the twin evils of non-residence and pluralism. Many of these difficulties had been incubated for a very long time: the geography of dispersed populations combined with large parishes had been a feature of the Anglican Church in Cornwall for hundreds of years.[358]

We shall return to Haslam later in the chapter as he played a significant part in attempting to revive the fortunes of the Church as well as, rather perversely for a Tractarian clergyman, becoming a great advocate of the Bible Christians.

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[356] Haslam, W., *From Death into Life: Twenty Years of my Ministry* (London, 1894 edn.), p. 17.
[357] *ibid*., p. 17.
[358] Balchin, W.G.V., *The Cornish Landscape* (London, 1983), pp. 94-100.

Haslam was not alone in being taken aback by the structure of Cornish society and its impact on the Anglican Church. The rapid population rise in the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century had made a difficult situation worse, particularly in mining districts.

In 1837 a rector from Worcestershire who visited Wendron noted that it contained no less than 74 hamlets, some of which were seven miles from the parish church. The churchtown consisted of the vicarage, a farmer's house, the vicar's tenant, a blacksmith's shop and a small public house.[359] The rector concluded that 'were it not for numerous Methodist chapels the poor miners would be in the state of heathens'.

Wendron and Perranzabuloe were both large parishes – each more than 10,000 acres in size - but similar problems existed in smaller ones as well. When the incumbent of the Bodmin Moor parish of Advent completed the return for the 1851 Religious Census he explained that the low attendance was because 'the church is distant from most of the inhabitants who live in scattered hamlets and farms'.[360] Advent's 4,059 acres made it slightly smaller than the Cornish average and the parish church stood alone in the middle of fields in the western, anciently enclosed part of the parish. There was no village and much of the land in the eastern part of the parish was unenclosed moorland and downland on the western slopes of Rough Tor, Cornwall's highest point.

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[359] Luker, D., 'Cornish Methodism, revivalism and popular belief c.1780-1870' (University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1987), p.65.
[360] NA MS. HO 129/300: Census of Great Britain 1851, Ecclesiastical Census Return for Camelford Union District.

The examples of these three parishes shine a light on the some of the difficulties faced by even the most committed clergymen in Cornwall. A Parliamentary report in 1853 concluded that given good roads and weather people might typically travel up to a mile to church.[361] On these grounds alone this would have excluded most people in a majority of Cornish parishes. It is, however, difficult to get a clear picture of attendance at Cornish churches before the nineteenth century. The number of communicants in parishes provides one of the few hints and Returns of the Clergy in 1745 and 1779 demonstrated a low and declining number of people attending Holy Communion.[362]

In St Neot in 1745 the number of communicants varied from 30 to 100 out of an estimated population of 585, but by 1779 this had declined to between 20 and 30 communicants even though the population had risen to around 700. The situation was very similar in the parish of St Cleer and Luker, based on a sample of 170 parishes from the 1779 returns, noted a direct correlation between communicant levels and size of parish. Almost 60% of parishes larger than 6,000 acres had communicant densities of less than 10% of the estimated adult population. In contrast, some of the smallest parishes with resident gentry and/or nucleated settlement patterns had densities of more than 60%. However, these latter parishes formed a minority of the total and were concentrated in the

[361] Luker, D., 'Cornish Methodism, revivalism and popular belief c.1780-1870' (University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1987), p.66.
[362] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), p. 67.40.

extreme east of Cornwall or in fertile parts of the south coast such as the Roseland peninsula.[363]

The lack of attachment to the parish church could be demonstrated in other ways. A significant proportion of St Neot residents baptised their children in either St Cleer or Warleggan, the parishes immediately to the east or west of St Neot respectively. Between 1813 and 1837, 152 baptisms of St Neot-born children took place in the parish churches of these neighbouring parishes, equal to 15% of total Anglican baptisms.[364] An analysis of the location of residence suggests that the reason for this was geography – those using Warleggan lived closer to its parish church than St Neot's, and the same was true for St Cleer. Most using the latter parish church lived at Treverbyn, Trenant and the Draynes Valley where the River Fowey divided the two parishes. More people in these latter communities used St Cleer's parish church than St Neot's for baptisms.

It therefore seems likely that for many people in Cornwall, probably a majority, visiting church was an infrequent occurrence largely limited to special occasions such as baptism, marriage or funeral. Even then the visits were sometimes to a church other than the one in the parish of residence. A more regular religious role was restricted to the small number of committed Anglicans, and perhaps

[363] Luker, D., 'Cornish Methodism, revivalism and popular belief c.1780-1870' (University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1987), p. 77.
[364] CRO MS. P162/1/9: Register of baptisms, St Neot (1813-1939); CRO MS. P32/1: Registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, St Cleer Parish Church (1675-1837); CRO MS. P247/1: Register of baptisms, marriages and burials, Warleggan Parish Church (1547-1998).

also to those who by accident of geography happened to live close to a place of worship.

Rowe was rather contradictory in this regard, suggesting rather unconvincingly that the Church had 'fulfilled its functions in an agrarian order' that was founded on co-operation and the regular cycle of sowing and harvest.[365] Instead, he argued that the 'real and tragic failure of the Anglican Church' in Cornwall was its inability to 'comprehend that economic changes had revolutionised the structure of society'. The mining revolution had begun in the 1740s at exactly the time John Wesley began his ministries in Cornwall. Rowe suggested that those economic changes, particularly in west Cornwall, made the Cornish particularly receptive to Wesley's simple Arminian message of justification through faith.

However, Rowe himself acknowledged that in eighteenth-century Cornwall it was likely that 'more than three-quarters of the population never entered within the portals of their parish church, save for the purposes of being baptised, married or buried'.[366] If the Anglican Church was fulfilling its functions in the agrarian order, then those functions were severely limited in scope and scale and, as a result, it was vulnerable to a religious onslaught that was more in tune with the geographic and social structure of Cornish communities.

[365] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), p. 67.1.
[366] *ibid.,* p. 67.32.

According to Luker the reality was that the Anglican Church was already a failed institution in Cornwall in the eighteenth century, the result of long-standing structural and organisational deficiencies that were compounded by a rather abstract form of Protestant religion that evolved after the Reformation.[367] Rowe argued that the theological compromise between Catholicism and puritanical Presbyterianism had meant the elimination of both by the end of 1600s. What remained, he said, was a 'mild predestinarian sentiment modified by survivals of the Catholic faith which stressed the beneficence of the Deity'.[368]

The Church in Cornwall also came under attack for pluralism, absenteeism and the poor state of pastoral care. Sermons were frequently designed for an intellectual audience. For example, Rowe claimed that although the sermons of Thomas Grylls, vicar of Cardinham 'were an example of the best Anglican sermonising of the day' they could be scarcely have been more unreadable 'had they been written in Hittite'.[369] It is hard to imagine parishioners flocking to such an offering in good weather, never mind when rain or worse threatened. However, it is also difficult to envisage a significantly higher attendance had services in this sprawling Bodmin Moor parish been more appealing.

Vicars also came from an increasingly interrelated group of lesser gentry, socially and physically distant from the rest of the population. According to Rowe the Anglican Church in Cornwall reached the 'lowest ebb of its spiritual life' in

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[367] Luker, D., 'Cornish Methodism, revivalism and popular belief c.1780-1870' (University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1987), p. 61.
[368] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), p. 67.3.
[369] *ibid*., p. 261.25.

the 1820s, and a survey of parishioners taking Holy Communion in 1821 revealed that in a typical parish just one person in 50 participated. In St Dennis (population 592) the vicar reported: 'Communicants two men, five or six women'. In explanation of such a low number he said that the inhabitants were poor and 'chiefly tenants on rack rents'. This description applied to most of Cornwall by the 1820s.[370]

The evils of pluralism and non-residence also meant that at least a third of parishes were held by clergy who were absentees or who had more than one living. Examples abound of notorious clergy: Richard Milles held the rapidly growing Cornish parishes of Mylor, Mabe, Kenwyn and Kea for more than 30 years up to 1823, as well as a Prebendal Stall in Exeter Cathedral and the Sussex rectory of Tarring; Fitzroy Stanhope held the Deanery of Buryan for 47 years without ever visiting; and Thomas Wills, who held the sprawling parish of Wendron for 53 years up to 1837, hardly ever visited his parish and fathered at least two illegitimate children. A story that he gave the flesh of a diseased cow to the poor of the parish for fear it would infect his pack of foxhounds was probably not true but revealed much about the attitude of local people towards him.[371]

Despite these examples, Deacon argued that it was important not to over-emphasise the pastoral flaws of the Anglican clergy. The worst excesses were not necessarily typical and there is no evidence, he said, to suggest that the clergy of

[370] *ibid.,* p. 261.24.
[371] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), pp. 261.20-261.21.

Cornwall were any better or worse than their contemporaries elsewhere.[372] In addition, while Luker was able to demonstrate strong linkage between communicant density rates and parish size, he could find no correlation in the 1779 returns between attendance and non-residence. Instead he found the highest attendance in parishes served by a neighbouring clergyman, and the lowest where a curate or incumbent resided.[373]

However, the net result of all factors was that the Anglican Church was not able to provide anything like an adequate service to the population. This poor state of affairs was made worse as the eighteenth century progressed with the expansion of copper mining in the west which led to rapid population growth and the creation of entirely new communities that were largely situated some distance from any parish church. It was into this poor and worsening situation that John Wesley stepped in 1743.

6.3 The advance of Methodism in Cornwall

Just as there was a complex set of factors that restricted the success of the Anglican Church, there have been a host of explanations put forward to explain the success of Methodism. The relative impact of these have been debated endlessly and it is not the purpose of this thesis to add further detailed analysis to the subject. However, it is important to consider the significance of the various

[372] Deacon, B., *A Concise History of Cornwall* (Cardiff, 2007), p.115.
[373] Luker, D., 'Cornish Methodism, revivalism and popular belief c.1780-1870' (University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1987), p. 74.

factors at work as some were directly related to the structure of Cornish society, and Methodism's spread did impact on kinship patterns within communities.

The traditional internal Methodist explanation emphasised Wesley's transformation of a people, already abandoned by an indolent and corrupt Anglican Church, whose main behavioural traits were 'swearing, fornicating, drinking, fighting, wrecking and smuggling'.[374] Wesley saved the people by delivering a simple message of justification through faith and the possibility of universal redemption that 'filled every moral, spiritual and social need'. Thus in a few short years, so the argument goes, a society was fundamentally and irreversibly changed for the better. John William Gilbart, writing in 1861, was typical of many Methodist writers in the second half of the nineteenth century when he claimed that 'the effects of Cornish Methodism in making the drunkard sober, the idle industrious, the profligate moral, and in inducing men to provide decently and comfortably for their families, and to give a suitable education to their children, can be attested by thousands of witnesses'.[375]

More recent historians have had no difficulty in agreeing that such an explanation was inadequate, although they have found it less easy to find a consensus about which factors had the most significant impact. Rowe claimed that the main reason Methodism flourished was that it coincidentally supplied a need in Cornwall at the same time as fundamental economic and demographic

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[374] Rule, J., 'Methodism, popular beliefs and village culture in Cornwall 1800-50', in Storch, R. (ed.), *Popular Culture in Nineteenth-century England* (London, 1982), p.61.
[375] Shaw, T., *A History of Cornish Methodism* (Truro, 1967), p.113.

change created the demand. 'In this lies the main reason for the progress and eventual triumph of Methodist dissent in Cornwall without any recourse to vague notions of peculiar Celtic racial traits,' he said.[376] The only exception to this according to Rowe was that the Celtic tradition for singing hymns coincided with the lyrical genius of Charles Wesley to create 'a living communal spirit in their congregations' far different from that uninspired reference in the Anglican Prayer Book to 'quires and places where they sing'.[377]

However, other historians have challenged Rowe's general dismissal of the influence of popular belief and culture. Rule argued that Methodism's ability to translate traditional folk beliefs 'into a religious idiom' was at the heart of its success.[378] Luker took this argument a stage further in asserting that Methodism provided social and spiritual support for a community undergoing profound change by annexing and then moulding popular beliefs.[379] That does not mean that Rowe was wrong to emphasise the importance of the combination of economic and demographic change on the miners and fishermen of the parishes of west Cornwall: David Hempton, for example, demonstrated that in England the biggest growth in Methodism came where structural change in society coincided with fractured paternalism.[380] Rowe's mistake was to dismiss some

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[376] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), p. 67.16.
[377] *ibid.,* p.67.17.
[378] Rule, J., 'Methodism, popular beliefs and village culture in Cornwall 1800-50', in Storch, R. (ed.), *Popular Culture in Nineteenth-century England* (London, 1982), p.63.
[379] Luker, D., 'Cornish Methodism, revivalism and popular belief c.1780-1870' (University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1987), p.396.
[380] Hempton, D., *The Religion of the People: Methodism and Popular Religion c1750-1900* (London, 1996), p.7.

other factors that might help to explain the *extraordinary degree* of Methodist expansion in Cornwall.

Wesley's impact was intensified because his commitment to delivering his message was combined with the provision of comprehensive organisational structures placed at the heart of local communities. The mixture of cottage-based meetings and preaching, together with extensive use of local lay preachers, fitted perfectly with the dispersed and independent nature of Cornish society. In this way religion was taken to the people in their own homes and communities. However, if it was initially taken *to* the people it quickly became *of* the people and, especially after Wesley's death, began to develop a form in Cornwall that was very different from that envisaged by its founding father or the central Wesleyan Methodist hierarchy which succeeded him.

At the heart of the difference was the significance of revivals, which occurred with greater intensity and regularity than any other part of the country, even than in Wales.[381] They also persisted throughout the nineteenth century to the increasing dismay of many connexional authorities. To Luker this enduring importance of revivals was 'explicit proof of a popular indigenisation of Methodism' and demonstrated that the Cornish had turned Methodism into a *Volkskirche*.[382] The role of revivals in Cornish Methodism also drew regular criticism from Anglicans. In the mid-1700s the Bishop of Exeter, George

[381] Luker, D., 'Cornish Methodism, revivalism and popular belief c.1780-1870' (University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1987), p. 122.
[382] *ibid.*, p. 303.

Lavington had compared them to witches' Sabbaths.[383] This comparison was repeated in 1833 by Cornish vicar Richard Polwhele, in a publication that ran to an astonishing 808 pages that was produced in response to a particularly successful revival across Cornwall in that year.[384]

While Polwhele was still fighting Methodism in his rather bizarre way in 1833, other Anglicans were beginning to acknowledge the reality of the situation. In the same year William Grylls, brother of St Neot vicar Henry Grylls, published a sermon in which he declared 'we have lost the people, the religion of the mass is become Wesleyan Methodist'. A stranger visiting Cornwall would, he said, see 'the most impressive spectacle on this earth' of chapels springing up everywhere, built and financed by the people themselves. To Grylls the blame for this situation lay firmly at the door of an Established Church that had neglected 'its true mission [that] this gospel shall be preached to the poor'.[385] Grylls's reward for being outspoken was to be asked to resign from his parish of Crowan, which he did in 1835.[386] At the 1851 census he was described as a clergyman 'not having the care of souls' living with Henry in St Neot vicarage.

The success of revivals, together with the establishment of Methodist societies across most of Cornwall and an extensive chapel building programme, meant that by the time of the 1851 religious census Methodism was dominant in terms

[383] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), p. 67.15.
[384] *ibid.,* pp. 261.26 and 261.40.
[385] Grylls, W., *Conciliation without Compromise: A Sermon Preached at the Annual Visitation of the Clergy of the Deanery of Penwith at Penzance* (1833).
[386] Grylls, R.G., *Grylls and Grills, The History of a Cornish Clan, Vol. 1* (London, 1999), p. 214.

of both attendance and numbers of places of worship. The religious census of 1851 has been much criticised as a source due to a number of potential shortcomings in the quality of the data collected. These criticisms included accusations from some Anglicans that Nonconformist attendances were exaggerated, and from others that attendances were understated as some of the latter places of worship were omitted from the returns. There were also other more specific issues such as confusion over the measurement of Sunday scholars, and potential duplication of attendance at multiple services on Census Sunday. Horace Mann attempted to make some adjustments to aggregated data in order to allow for some of these problems.

In *Rival Jerusalems* Snell and Ell argued that although some of the issues were significant, there was too much emphasis on them rather than on systematic analysis of the huge amount of information contained in the census.[387] As we shall see, there were indeed substantial shortcomings in relation to the returns for Bodmin Moor parishes. Despite the issues, however, they do provide a valuable insight into the structure of religious worship in 1851, which provides a context for understanding how religious change was impacting on Cornish society.

The summary of attendance for Cornwall on 30 March 1851 is shown in table 6.1.[388] The dominance of Methodism is stark – 737 of the 1,104 places of worship

[387] Snell, K.D.M. and Ell, P.S., *Rival Jerusalems: The Geography of Victorian Religion* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 35-46.
[388] Mann, H., *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship in England and Wales* (1854), p. cxcix.

belonged to one of the six Wesleyan Methodist denominations present in Cornwall.[389] Almost two-thirds of all attendance was at Methodist places of worship. Total aggregate attendance was 241,494, compared with a population of Cornwall in 1851 of 355,558. This resulted in an overall Index of Attendance (IA) of 67.7%, and of 43.6% for Methodist places of worship. Only North Wales had a higher Methodist IA (48.9%), while the highest proportions elsewhere were in Lincolnshire (29.5%) and the North Riding of Yorkshire (28.8%).[390]

Table 6.1. Summary of church attendances and places of worship, Cornwall 1851[391]

		Unadjusted aggregate attendances			Watts formula attendants			
	Number of places of worship in Cornwall	Total attendance	Share of total attendance	Attendance as % of Cornish population	Number of attendants in Cornwall	Share of total attendants	Attendants in Cornwall as % of Cornish population	Attendants in England as % of English population
Wesleyan Methodist	412	99,973	41.4%	28.0%	70,258	41.3%	19.7%	5.2%
Bible Christian	182	30,038	12.4%	8.4%	20,685	12.2%	5.8%	0.1%
Wesleyan Methodist Association	93	14,513	6.0%	4.1%	10,699	6.3%	3.0%	0.3%
Primitive Methodist	38	8,374	3.5%	2.3%	6,063	3.6%	1.7%	2.0%
Other Methodist	12	2,769	1.1%	0.8%	1,427	0.8%	0.4%	0.8%
Total Methodist	737	155,667	64.5%	43.6%	109,132	64.2%	30.6%	8.4%
Anglican	265	68,122	28.2%	19.1%	48,860	28.7%	13.7%	20.3%
Other	102	17,705	7.3%	5.0%	12,126	7.1%	3.4%	10.2%
Total	1,104	241,494	100.0%	67.7%	170,118	100.0%	47.7%	38.9%

A majority of attendants at Methodist places of worship were not members – the total membership of Methodist societies in Cornwall in 1851 was 38,417, compared with a total Methodist attendance of 155,667.[392] However, the latter figure included an unknown number of duplicates as well many children

[389] More than 90% of Methodist places of worship were either Wesleyan Methodist (412 places), Bible Christian (182 places) or Wesleyan Methodist Association (93 places).
[390] Mann, H., *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship in England and Wales* (1854), pp. ccxxxiii, ccxi, ccxxxi.
[391] Mann, H., *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship in England and Wales* (1854), p. cxclx; Watts, M.R., *The Dissenters Vol. II* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 28 and 696-697. Data for England excludes Cornwall.
[392] Shaw, T., *A History of Cornish Methodism* (Truro, 1967), p. 98.

attending church and/or Sunday School. The membership number was equivalent to 27% of the adult population of Cornwall.

The issue of duplicate attendance on Census Sunday has been the subject of much analysis and debate, and various (often confusing) attempts have been made to convert attendance figures at morning, afternoon and evening services into an estimate of total attendants. The first estimate of attendants was made by Horace Mann himself, who after exploring various suggestions opted to add together all attendants at the morning service, half at the afternoon service and one-third of the evening service.[393] Mann, however, acknowledged that this method was 'mainly conjectural' and it had the effect of seriously underestimating nonconformist totals.[394] This was because it understated numbers of nonconformists at evening services that often had highest attendance figures. In extreme cases at registration district level total attendants for some denominations by this measure were lower than the total evening attendance.

A modified version of Mann's method - which added together the total of the best-attended service, half of the second service and a third of the poorest attended service - was used by Shaw to calculate attendants in Cornwall. It was a more accurate method for calculating attendants for denominations such as the

[393] Mann, H., *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship in England and Wales* (1854), p. clvi.
[394] Chadwick, O., *The Victorian Church, Part One 1829-1859* (London, 1966), p. 365.

Bible Christians where the best attended service was not in the morning.[395] This method resulted in an estimate of total church attendants in Cornwall of 174,611, of which 113,510 or 65% attended a Methodist place of worship.

More recently Michael Watts adapted this approach based on evidence of attendant levels at a number of nonconformist places of worship.[396] He calculated attendants by adding together (at registration district level) the total for the best-attended service for each denomination with one-third of the attendances at other services.

Watts acknowledged that any formula used to adjust attendance numbers to calculate attendants was subject to various margins of error. He suggested his formula probably provided a conservative assessment of total attendants while potentially overstating the proportion of nonconformist attendants.[397] However, analysis of attendance levels at Bodmin Moor places of worship suggest that his method understates rather than overstates the number of Methodist attendants, possibly by more than 10%. This was because Watts undertook his analysis at registration district level, which had the effect of understating attendances for denominations where there was a spread of peak attendance by time of day.

Partly because of the difficulties of estimating the number of attendants from attendances, Snell and Ell concluded that for comparative purposes the aggregate attendance data provided the best indications of strength of worship

[395] Shaw, T., *A History of Cornish Methodism* (Truro, 1967), p. 96.
[396] Watts, M.R., *The Dissenters Vol. II* (Oxford, 1995), p. 672.
[397] *ibid.,* pp. 671-675.

on Census Sunday.[398] However, despite its limitations the Watts formula provides a useful approximation of attendant levels and is shown alongside aggregate attendance totals in Table 6.1. It suggests that just under half of the Cornish population attended a place of worship on Census Sunday, but the adjustment has little impact on the comparative performance of each denomination. It also highlights just how different Cornwall was from England, the former proportionately having almost four times as many Methodist attendants as the latter.

A further point to note is the small aggregate attendance at places of worship other than Methodist or Anglican. Old Dissent made very little progress in Cornwall – 4% of attendances were at Independent churches or chapels, while a further 2% attended Baptist places of worship. Deacon suggested that the failure of Old Dissent to make headway in Cornwall was a more important factor in the expansion of Methodism than the state of the Anglican Church, its weakness meaning 'that Methodism could establish an effective monopoly of revivalist enthusiasm'.[399] However, although Old Dissent lacked the organisational structure, scale and appeal to effectively penetrate Cornwall's remote and dispersed settlements, it is perhaps a step too far to place this factor ahead of the failures of an Anglican Church. The latter probably had more than 90% of the churchgoing market before the arrival of Methodism.

[398] Snell, K.D.M. and Ell, P.S., *Rival Jerusalems: The Geography of Victorian Religion* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 431-7.
[399] Deacon, B., *A Concise History of Cornwall* (Cardiff, 2007), p. 116.

The marked difference between Cornwall and its nearest English neighbours is further emphasised in figure 6.1, which also summarises relative attendance levels in North Wales, which was the region most similar to Cornwall in terms of the overall share of Methodist attendance.[400] Cornwall had by far the highest proportion of Methodist attendance compared with any part of England, but the comparison with Devon, Somerset and Dorset was particularly marked.

In those three counties Methodist attendance was below 20% of the total, while Anglican attendance averaged approximately 60%, almost the exact opposite of the Cornish experience. In Wales, both Methodist and Anglican shares were lower than in Cornwall, primarily because higher attendance levels for Independents and Baptists. These latter denominations benefited from splits and disputes in eighteenth-century Welsh Methodism.

Some historians - including Luker, Payton and Deacon - have suggested that the success of Methodism in Cornwall provided further confirmation of the distinctiveness of Cornwall. However, not everyone agreed and Bruce Coleman argued that the rapid spread of Methodism represented Cornwall's 'incorporation into one of the main contemporary national developments'. He also said that although it was tempting to see Cornish distinctiveness as a reason for the success of Methodism, it would be wrong to see Cornwall as one homogenous place in 1851.[401]

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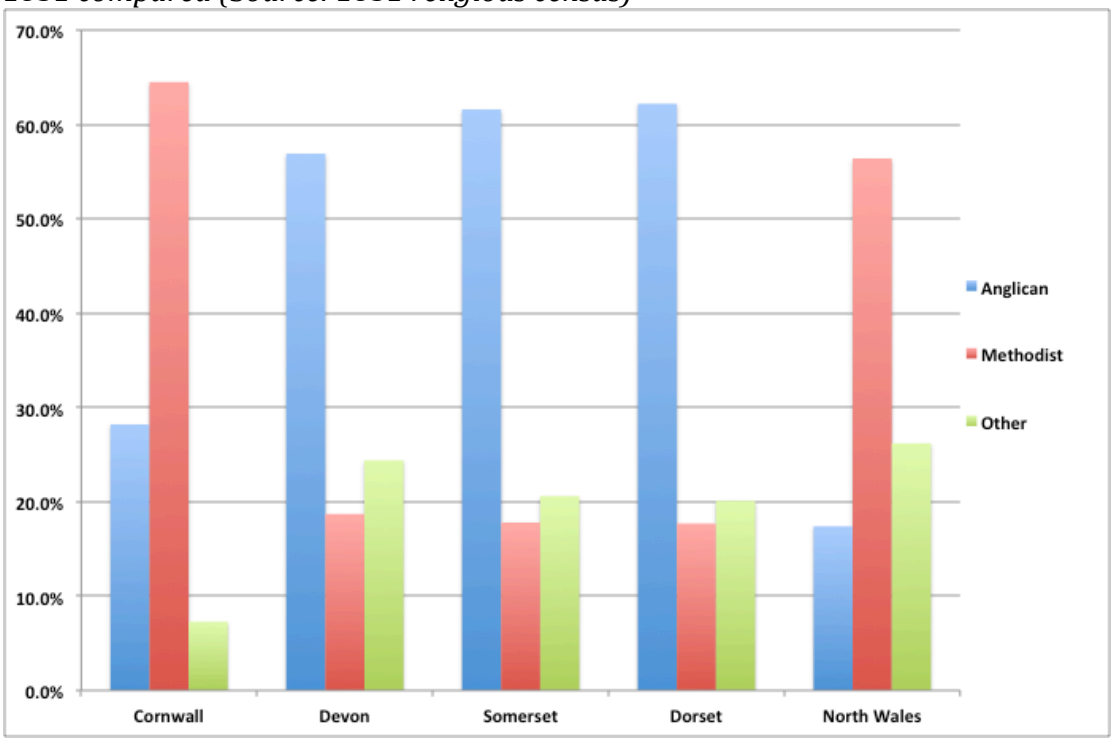
[400] Mann, H., *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship in England and Wales* (1854), pp. ccii, ccii, ccxxxiii.
[401] Coleman, B., 'Religious worship in 1851', in Kain, R. and Ravenhill, W. (eds.), *Historical Atlas of South-West England* (Exeter, 1999), pp. 228-233.

Figure 6.1.Percentage share of aggregate attendance by religious denomination in 1851 compared (Source: 1851 religious census)

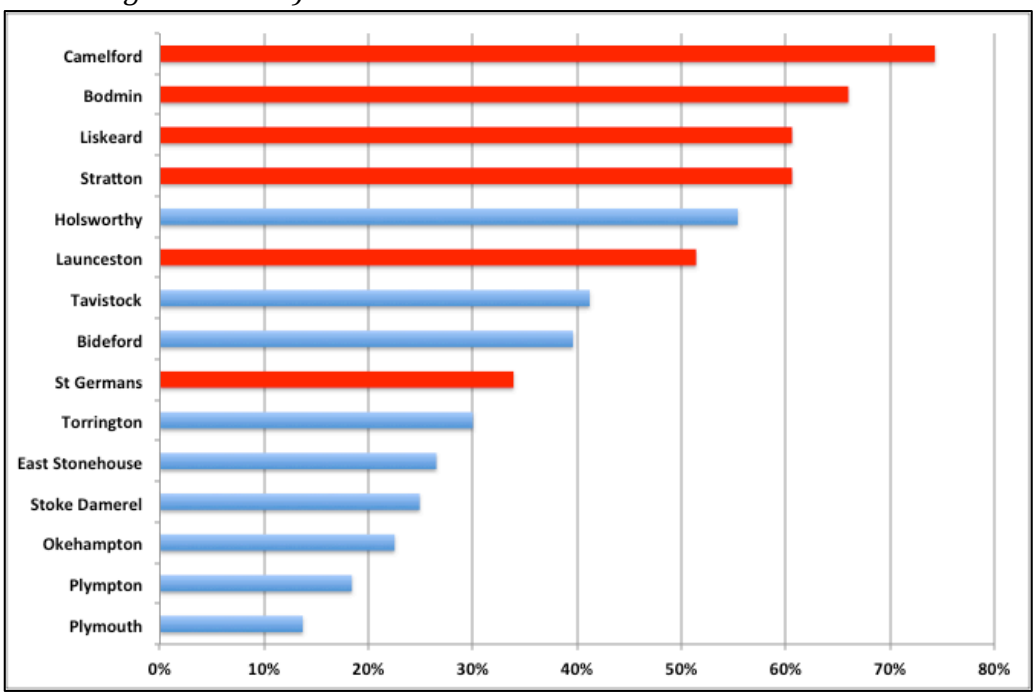


Instead he argued that there were three distinctive geographical areas in Devon and Cornwall: first, Devon east of Dartmoor where the Anglican Church dominated, Old Dissent was well established and Methodism was weak; second, west Devon and east Cornwall (including Bodmin Moor) where Methodism was relatively strong and the Church of England relatively weak; and third, the rest of Cornwall where the Anglican Church had been 'virtually overwhelmed by a rampant Methodism'. It is true that not all of Cornwall had an identical experience but Coleman's argument is weakened by his own analysis of the share of total attendances in individual registration districts, which highlighted the difference between almost all of Cornwall and almost all of Devon (figure 6.2). In only the far south east of Cornwall did Anglican attendances exceed 40% of the

total, whereas most registration districts in Devon saw Anglican percentages above 60%.[402]

The contrast between the success of Methodism in west Devon and east Cornwall was even more marked than the differences between Anglican attendances, largely because of the higher attendances at 'other' places of worship in Devon. In the nine registration districts that constituted west Devon just 28% of aggregate church attendance was captured by the various Methodist denominations.

Figure 6.2. Methodist attendance as a percentage of total attendance in 1851 by registration districts in east Cornwall (in red) and west Devon (light blue). (Source: 1851 Religious Census)



In the six east Cornwall registration districts the corresponding figure was 55%. In fact there was just one of Devon's 20 registration districts – Holsworthy with a

[402] Coleman, B., 'Religious worship in 1851', in Kain, R. and Ravenhill, W. (eds.), *Historical Atlas of South-West England* (Exeter, 1999), p.231.

55% Methodist attendance – that fitted better into the east Cornwall pattern than west Devon. Similarly only St Germans sat better in west Devon than the Cornish one.[403] As we shall see from an analysis of the 14 Bodmin Moor parishes, this part of east Cornwall also had little in common with the Devon experience.

6.4 The growth of Methodism on Bodmin Moor – the evidence from St Neot

John Wesley was a regular visitor to Bodmin Moor parishes during his 32 missions to Cornwall between 1743 and 1789, sometimes staying overnight and preaching to small groups.[404] He was regularly accommodated at Digory Isbell's cottage at Trewint in Altarnun, and he also preached in St Cleer where he stayed with the Daniel family.[405] However, these visits were fleeting and Wesley focused his attentions further west where the mining and fishing communities were most receptive to his message. A few Methodist societies were formed in Bodmin Moor communities at this time, but they remained small and it was only after the French Wars that expansion accelerated quickly.

In St Neot there were a small number of Methodists in the late 1700s and early 1800s, including members of the Parkyn, Sweet, Mallett and Gedye families.[406] All these families were relatively prosperous yeomen farmers: the Parkyns were

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[403] Mann, H., *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship in England and Wales* (1854)*: Places of worship, sittings and attendants in registration districts or poor law unions*, pp. 54-57.
[404] Luker, D., 'Cornish Methodism, revivalism and popular belief c.1780-1870' (University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1987), p. 266.
[405] Bolitho, P., *The Story of Methodism in the Liskeard Circuit* (Liskeard, 1967), pp. 3-7.
[406] Townsend, S. and Townsend, S., *Transcription of Nonconformist Registers for Cornwall, 1760-1837* (CD-ROM edn., 2000).

among the first to enclose moorland at Harrowbridge, having moved to the parish in the late 1700s from Lanlivery near St Austell; the Gedyes were a long-established St Neot farming family and Nicholas Gedye from Tremaddock became one the parish's first itinerant Methodist ministers; John Mallett was a farmer of 30 acres at Northwood as well as occupying extensive areas of moorland; William Sweet moved to St Neot from North Hill in the early 1800s and farmed at Lower Trenant and later at Higher Newton.

Little documentary evidence survives relating to these early Methodists. St Neot was initially part of the Launceston Circuit but there was no mention of a society in the parish when the district was transferred into the newly created Liskeard Circuit in 1809.[407] However, by 1814 Methodist support was sufficient for land to be provided for the building of a chapel in St Neot churchtown. Gedye, Mallett and Sweet were named on the lease. They were also named on a declaration in 1817 that confirmed that the chapel had been built.[408]

However, the Wesleyan Methodist cause was slow to expand beyond these early converts and instead it was the Bible Christians who seized the initiative. William O'Bryan founded the Bible Christians in 1815, following his expulsion from the Wesleyan Methodists. His refusal to accept the discipline of connexional authorities had made his presence within the Wesleyan Methodists untenable. Before his expulsion he had been an itinerant preacher and it is believed he formed a society in St Neot after he preached at Draynes in 1811, although there

[407] Bolitho, P., *The Story of Methodism in the Liskeard Circuit* (Liskeard, 1967), p.9.
[408] CRO MS. MRLISK/296 and 297: St Neot Wesleyan Chapel (1814 and 1817).

was no record of this society in official records.[409] Rowe said of this visit to St Neot that O'Bryan was evangelising the 'fiercely independent yeoman farmers and their dependents, and the diminishing number of "free miners" who still survived on the bleak wastelands of Bodmin Moor, men who resented any outside interference or control, whether it came from "foreign capitalist" or conference-appointed Methodist preacher'.[410] This description of the moorland farmers and tinners could be just as accurately applied to O'Bryan himself.

He was baptised Bryant, but he changed his name because he claimed Irish heritage. However, there was no evidence to support his claim to Irish ancestry - he came from a family of tinners and yeoman farmers from Luxulyan where the structure of local society was almost identical to St Neot's.[411] As the family reconstitution demonstrated, many of the tinners and small farmers on Bodmin Moor came from Luxulyan or nearby parishes. So when he preached in St Neot he was delivering his sermons in a community he understood intimately, where he knew many people personally, and where there were some to whom he was related.

O'Bryan focused his early evangelising efforts almost entirely on the rural areas where Methodism had made less impact. His timing was perfect as it coincided with a rapidly rising population, the declining fortunes of farming in the post-

[409] Bolitho, P., *The Story of Methodism in the Liskeard Circuit* (Liskeard, 1967), p.11. According to Bolitho, O'Bryan was temporarily expelled from the Wesleyans when he established the society in St Neot in 1811.
[410] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), p. 261.19.
[411] Shaw, T., *The Bible Christians 1815-1907* (London, 1965), p.3.

war period, and the loss of customary tenancies. The small farmers and cottagers might have still been 'fiercely independent' as Rowe suggested, but their economic independence and status were being seriously eroded. The contrast between them and the Grylls family - the biggest landowner in St Neot and supplier of vicars to the parish between 1793 and 1862 - was becoming increasingly marked and was to lead to a number of disturbances and disputes in the 1830s and 1840s.

Figure 6.3. William O'Bryan (left) preached in St Neot in 1811 while suspended from the Wesleyan Methodists and made it one of his key targets when he formed the Bible Christians in 1815. James Thorne (right) set up the first society in St Neot in 1817. He later succeeded O'Bryan as leader of the Bible Christians.



In early 1817 O'Bryan's lieutenant James Thorne was chosen by lot to work with the Bible Christians in St Neot and in March a society of 11 members was established.[412] Thorne was said to have been initially reluctant to set up the

[412] Bolitho, P., *The Story of Methodism in the Liskeard Circuit* (Liskeard, 1967), p. 11.

society for fear of upsetting the local Wesleyan Methodists. Bolitho suggested Thorne only relented when the Wesleyans themselves encouraged the setting up of a rival society, but later records suggest the relationship quickly became acrimonious due to some undefined 'unfortunate circumstance'.[413] The society met at Thomas Doney's farmhouse at Treverbyn and the membership was made up of local farmers and craftsmen. Doney later became an inaugural member of the revived 'Twelve Men'.[414]

Towards the end of 1817 St Neot became one of the first of four circuits set up by O'Bryan and in December the first quarterly meeting was held at Trenant. By the end of the year there were further preaching houses at St Cleer, Trewidland, St Pinnock and Drawbridge. Over the next two years St Neot was the base for the establishment of societies as far apart as Boscastle on the north coast and Luxulyan near St Austell, but at the first Conference in 1819 these two more distant places became part of separate circuits.

Around the same time Drift, situated just outside St Neot near Drawbridge, became the first Bible Christian chapel in Cornwall. According to William O'Bryan's wife Catherine, Francis Tamblyn built this small chapel on his farm in 1818.[415] However, Bolitho suggests that a chapel had originally been built here by his father, also called Francis Tamblyn, in the 1780s as a Wesleyan Methodist chapel after he had seen John Wesley preach, and then transferred to the Bible

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[413] *Bible Christian Magazine* (1866), p.550.
[414] CRO MS. P162/8/1: Twelve Men's book, St Neot, 1821-1855.
[415] John Rylands Library Lewis Court Collection, MS. 92.5, Letter from Catherine O'Bryan to Mary O'Bryan, 24 Sept 1818.

Christians when he became a convert in 1818.[416] This conversion to the Bible Christians was said to be the result of a visit by Mary Thorne (mother of James Thorne who became second leader of the Bible Christians) who carried out an evangelical tour in the district in that year.

In some ways the isolated chapel at Drift was testament to the early lack of success of Wesleyan Methodism in east Cornwall. Most societies were small and many places were without societies at all. In 1809 there were only 459 members of the newly formed Liskeard Circuit, about 5% of the total for Cornwall as a whole, despite it covering a large area from the Devon border in the east to Fowey in the west.[417]

For a while Drift was the only chapel in the St Neot Bible Christian circuit, and most classes, prayer meetings and an increasing number of baptisms took place in the farmhouses and cottages of society members. By 1820 there were 38 such places of worship on the St Neot circuit plan, served by two itinerant preachers, 13 lay preachers and 26 prayer leaders (figure 6.4).[418] It is notable how few of these early preaching houses were located close to any parish church. Instead they were situated in the hamlets and isolated farmhouses that were closer to the increasing number of adherents.

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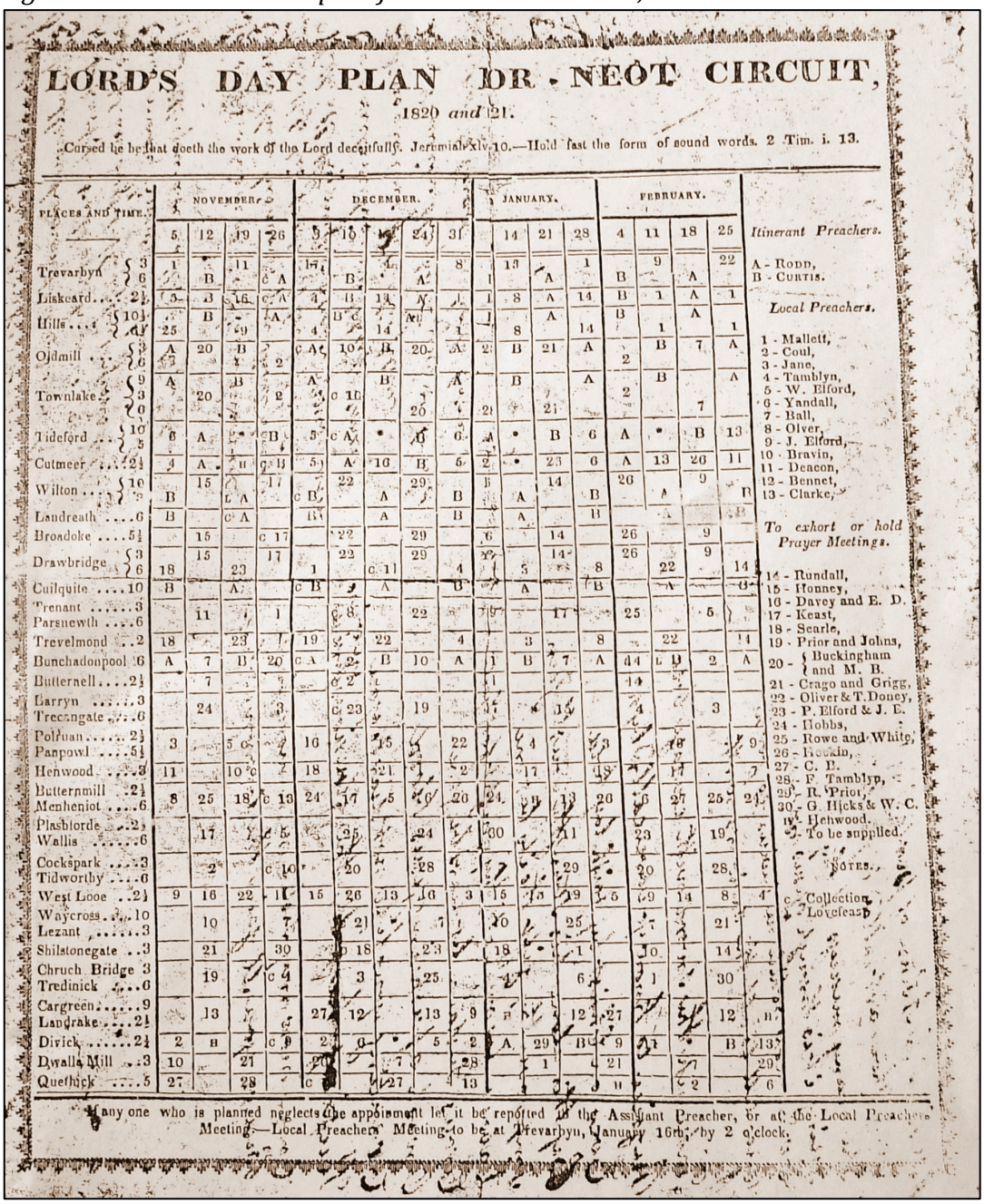
[416] Bolitho, P., *The Story of Methodism in the Liskeard Circuit* (Liskeard, 1967), p. 12. The chapel at Drift was replaced by one at Ley in St Neot in 1836, which was itself superseded by Tredinnick Chapel, also in St Neot, in 1863.
[417] *ibid.,* p.8.
[418] CRO MS. FS/3/7/167: Lord's Day Plan for St Neot Bible Christian Circuit (1820-21).

Figure 6.4. Bible Christian plan for the St Neot circuit, 1820-21.



LORD'S DAY PLAN OF ST NEOT CIRCUIT,

1820 and 21.

Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully. Jeremiah xlviii. 10.—Hold fast the form of sound words. 2 Tim. i. 13.

PLACES AND TIME.	NOVEMBER.				DECEMBER.					JANUARY.				FEBRUARY.			
	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	31	14	21	28	4	11	18	25
Trevarbyn 3	1		11		17		4		8	13		1		9		22
Trevarbyn 6		B		c A		B		A			A		B		A	
Liskeard 2½	5	3	16	c A	4	B	18	A		1	8	A	14	B	1	A	1
Hills 10½		B		A		B c		A				A		B		A	
Hills 11	25		9		4		14		1		8		14		1		1
Ojdmill 3	A	20	B		c A	10	B	20	A	2	B	21	A		B	7	A
Ojdmill 6	13		1	2			2							2			
Townlake 9	A		B		A		B		A		B		A		B		A
Townlake 3		20		2		c 16								2			
Townlake 0								20		21		21				7	
Tideford 10	6	A		B	5	c A			6			B	6	A		B	13
Tideford 5																	
Cutmeer 2½	4	A		B	5	A	16	B	6	2		23	6	A	13	20	11
Wilton 10		15		17		22		29			14			26		9	
Wilton 5	B		c A		c B		A		B	A		B			A		B
Landreath 6	B		c A		B		A		B	A		B					
Broadoke 5½		15		c 17		22		29			14			26		9	
Drawbridge 3		15		17		22		29			14			26		9	
Drawbridge 6	18		23		1		c 11		4	5		8			22		14
Cuilquite 10	B		A		c B		A		B	A		B			A		B
Trenant 3		11		1		c 8		22			17			25		5	
Parsnewth 6																	
Trevelmond 2	18		23		19		22		4	3		8			22		14
Bunchadonpool 6	A	7	B	20	c A	2	B	10	A	1	B	7	A	44	L D	2	A
Butternell 2½		7				c 2				1				14			
Larryn 3		24		3		c 23		19				15		4		3	
Trecangate 6																	
Polruan 2½	3		5 c		16		15		22	4							9
Panpowl 5½																	
Henwood 3	11		10 c		18		21		2	17		13		17			7
Butternmill 2½	8	25	18	c 13	24	17	5		20	24		13	20	6	27	25	24
Menheniot 6																	
Plasblorde 2		17		5		25		24		30		11		23		19	
Wallis 6																	
Cockspark 3		2		c 10		20		28				29		20		28	
Tidworthy 6																	
West Looe 2½	9	16	22	11	15	26	13	16	3	15	15	19	5	19	14	8	4
Waycross 10		10		7		21				10		25				21	
Lezant 3																	
Shilstonegate 3		21		30		18		23		18		1		10		14	
Chruch Bridge 3		19		c 4		3		25				6		1		30	
Tredinick 6																	
Cargreen 9		13			27	12		13	9			12	27			12	
Landrake 2½																	
Divick 2½	2	B		c 9	2	9		5	2	A	29	B	9	11		B	13
Dwalla Mill 3	10		21				7		28		1		21				29
Quethick 5	27		28		c		27		13						c 2		6

Itinerant Preachers.

A - Rodd,
B - Curtis.

Local Preachers.

1 - Mallett,
2 - Coul,
3 - Jane,
4 - Tamblyn,
5 - W. Elford,
6 - Yandall,
7 - Ball,
8 - Olver,
9 - J. Elford,
10 - Bravin,
11 - Deacon,
12 - Bennet,
13 - Clarke,

To exhort or hold Prayer Meetings.

14 - Rundall,
15 - Honney,
16 - Davey and E. D.
17 - Keast,
18 - Searle,
19 - Prior and Johns,
20 - Buckingham and M. B.
21 - Crago and Grigg,
22 - Oliver & T. Doney,
23 - P. Elford & J. E.
24 - Hobbs,
25 - Rowe and White,
26 - Rockin,
27 - C. E.
28 - F. Tamblyn,
29 - R. Prior,
30 - G. Hicks & W. C.
W. Henwood.
? - To be supplied.

NOTES.

c - Collection.
L - Lovefeast.

If any one who is planned neglects the appointment let it be reported to the Assistant Preacher, or at the Local Preachers' Meeting.—Local Preachers' Meeting to be at Trevarbyn, January 16th, by 2 o'clock.

For example, the preaching houses at Trenant and Treverbyn were less than a mile apart, while barely a mile over the parish boundary in St Cleer there were two more at Fursnewth and Hills. Trenant and Fursnewth were paired together and on alternate Sundays the same preacher or prayer leader would hold meetings at 3pm in one then at 6pm in the other. The surnames of the lay

preachers serving both places – Deacon, Keast, Mallett, Doney – were from the families of farmers, millers and blacksmiths living and working within the community.

So why were these small farmers and craftsmen in Trenant and Treverbyn suddenly so responsive to the Bible Christian message? Part of the answer was undoubtedly the focus O'Bryan put on these remote communities that had been largely left behind by the Wesleyan Methodists. But there were other important factors. Luker argued that the industrialising process that had affected mining in west Cornwall was beginning to have a similar impact in agricultural districts and the evidence from Trenant and Treverbyn corroborates Luker's view.[419] Trenant was part of the Manor of West Draynes where farm amalgamation and the systematic driving out of customary tenures had transformed tenancy arrangements during the French Wars.[420]

In addition, escalating rack rents during the wars had not decreased proportionately to the falling farm gate prices in the post-war recession. At Treverbyn, much of the land changed hands in 1818 when the Morshead family sold property in St Neot that was part of the Manor of St Neot Barrett.[421] This included Thomas Doney's 64-acre farm where the first society met. The farm's rent had risen by more than 50% since 1793 and in 1818 stood at £105 a year. These were difficult times and, as discussed earlier, there was a rapid increase in

[419] Luker, D., 'Cornish Methodism, revivalism and popular belief c.1780-1870' (University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1987), pp. 42, 261-3.
[420] CRO MS. CY/3864: Rentals for Manor of West Draynes, 1796-1802.
[421] Sale catalogue for Morshead lands in Cornwall, Sept. 1818. Copy held by St Neot and Warleggan Community Archive.

turnover of farms. Doney quit his farm at Treverbyn in 1824 and John Davey took it at the reduced rent of £81 a year.[422]

The concurrent rising population was also pushing up the proportion of labourers in the community. Declining availability of small farms and the removal of security of tenure meant many labourers were struggling. Many of these labourers were the children and siblings of the same small farmers and craftsmen who were driving the expansion of the Bible Christians. This was a religion of its people and it provided spiritual support within the community, delivered in farmhouses and cottages by people who were part of the community.

Another of the possible explanations for the success of the Bible Christians in the remote rural communities of east Cornwall was its greater use of women as itinerant preachers, lay preachers and class leaders. Deacon noted how women made up a majority of members in many early Wesleyan Methodist societies, and many were involved in preaching and leading prayers. He argued that the emphasis on domestic piety and the cottage as the place for religious meetings particularly attracted them.[423] However, their roles in Wesleyan Methodist societies had become increasingly marginalised by the first decade of the nineteenth century.[424]

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[422] *Royal Cornwall Gazette,* 12 Nov 1825.
[423] Deacon, B., *A Concise History of Cornwall* (Cardiff, 2007), p. 177.
[424] Valenze, D., *Prophetic Sons and Daughters: Female Preaching and Popular Religion in Industrial England* (Princeton, 1985), pp. 10-27.

William O'Bryan had no such intention of marginalising women in the Bible Christians. They were welcomed as itinerant preachers, lay preachers and class leaders to an extent unknown elsewhere. Of the 30 itinerant preachers employed by the Bible Christians in 1819 there were 14 women, including Betsy Reed who became the first female itinerant in the St Neot circuit. Like most of the early itinerants she came from yeoman farming stock.[425] She was also young and of those who became itinerants before 1829 'at least nine were under 23, and three were in their teens'.[426] In the St Neot circuit 11 of the first 21 itinerants were women.[427]

However, women's careers as itinerants were relatively short because they were usually expected to give up their positions once married. Many then joined the large numbers of women who acted as lay preachers and class leaders in individual societies and circuits. During the early, critical period for the establishment of the Bible Christians these key religious practices took place in the homes of society members, 'encouraging women's active participation in spaces identified with them'.[428]

It is noteworthy just how significant women's roles were in a religious denomination that served communities considered by many to be deeply old-

[425] Lloyd, J.M., 'Women Preachers in the Bible Christian Connexion', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies,* 36 (2004), p. 454.
[426] *ibid.,* p. 457.
[427] Bolitho, P., *The Story of Methodism in the Liskeard Circuit* (Liskeard, 1967), pp. 63-64.
[428] Lloyd, J.M., 'Women Preachers in the Bible Christian Connexion', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies,* 36 (2004), p. 453; Valenze, D., *Prophetic Sons and Daughters: Female Preaching and Popular Religion in Industrial England* (Princeton, 1985), pp. 10 and 22-27.

fashioned and conservative. This might be indicative that women had greater freedom in general in traditional Cornish society at this time. It has been suggested that O'Bryan initially turned to young women out of necessity because of a shortage of men able to take on itinerant positions. However, he quickly recognised their ability to recruit converts, and he also appeared genuinely proud that his wife Catherine and daughter Mary both worked as preachers. In one letter he wrote, 'I, my wife and daughter, three of the family at the same time labouring for the Lord. What an honour!'.[429]

At Catherine's funeral in 1860 her grandson emphasised her contribution towards 'breaking down the prejudice against female preachers'.[430] Ironically, this eulogy came when women had been largely eliminated from itinerant positions, although they were encouraged again in the 1890s. The numbers of female lay preachers also declined as the nineteenth century progressed. However, they continued to be appointed in the St Neot Circuit (renamed the Liskeard Circuit in 1846) throughout the period. Typical of the female lay preachers in the circuit was Grace Daniel, a farmer's wife from Trekieve in the Draynes Valley who remained on the preachers' plan into her 70s. The Daniels were one of the many dynastic Methodist families of the district – Grace's father-in-law had provided a building for Bible Christian chapel at Redgate in St Cleer,

[429] Thorne, S., *William O'Bryan, Founder of the Bible Christians* (Plymouth, 1888), p. 80.
[430] Lloyd, J.M., 'Women Preachers in the Bible Christian Connexion', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies,* 36 (2004), p. 456.

and her brother-in-law John Daniel was the driving force behind the building of its larger replacement in the 1840s.[431]

The Daniels were also just one of a number of Bible Christian families who became increasingly interrelated, pointing to one aspect of the important social function provided by Methodist societies that helped to bind local communities together in the face of significant external pressures. This social as well as religious role was increasingly recognised by non-Methodists. In 1829 Anglican clergyman Richard Tyacke of Sithney put the success of Methodism in his parish down to the opportunities of the young to meet members of the opposite sex, together with the fact that preachers were 'generally selected from people from their own sphere of life'.[432] This social aspect will be discussed more fully in the next section.

The replacement of Bible Christian meeting houses with chapels as the focal point for societies began in earnest on Bodmin Moor in the 1820s. In St Neot, Trenant Chapel opened in 1826 to serve the hamlets and isolated settlements at Trenant, Treverbyn, Draynes, Northwood and Bowden. In the following year the chapel at Redgate near Draynes Bridge was opened, which served parts of St Cleer and St Neot parishes. A chapel at St Luke's at the northern edge of St Neot was added in 1829 to support the expanding population on the newly enclosed moors, and seven years later a chapel was built at Ley to replace the small one at Drift. There was also a preaching house in St Neot itself, another at Drawbridge

[431] CRO MS. MRLISK/112: Minutes, Local Preachers' Meetings, Liskeard Bible Christian Circuit (1860-1876).
[432] Deacon, B., *A Concise History of Cornwall* (Cardiff, 2007), p.117.

in the south of the parish, while a third one at Bofindle in Warleggan served part of the west of St Neot.[433]

This spate of chapel building coincided with turmoil among the leadership of the Bible Christians that resulted in the resignation of O'Bryan in 1829. His departure was, like his exit from the Wesleyans 15 years earlier, rather acrimonious and it led to the creation of the short-lived Arminian Bible Christians based at Liskeard where O'Bryan was then living. This had a significant impact on the St Neot Circuit, with membership dropping from 292 in in 1828 to 123 in 1830.

It took until 1837 for membership of the circuit to exceed the pre-crisis high, when it reached 304 members.[434] By then the Bible Christians had St Neot well and truly covered geographically. Ninety per cent of the parish's population lived within one mile of a Bible Christian chapel or preaching house, compared with about 30% who lived within a mile of the parish church and the Wesleyan Methodist chapel. Increasing numbers of parishioners began to baptise their children as Bible Christians in the chapels, preaching houses and also regularly in their own homes.

[433] NA MS. HO 129/303: Census of Great Britain 1851, Ecclesiastical Census Return for Liskeard Union District; Bolitho, P., *The Story of Methodism in the Liskeard Circuit* (Liskeard, 1967), p. 71 and Appendix III.
[434] Bolitho, P., *The Story of Methodism in the Liskeard Circuit* (Liskeard, 1967), p. 16.

6.5 The reaction of the Anglican Church in St Neot and Bolventor

The fastest growth of Methodism in St Neot coincided with the tenure of Henry Grylls as vicar of the parish. He succeeded his father Richard Gerveys Grylls in 1821 and remained vicar for 41 years. The social, economic and spiritual contrast between Grylls and the Bible Christians was extreme and the relationship became increasingly acrimonious.[435] The division between Church and Chapel in St Neot widened considerably in the early 1840s, when anyone who had been baptised as a Bible Christian was refused burial in the parish graveyard. This particularly impacted on children and was only resolved when a burial ground was opened at Trenant Chapel in 1843.

Fourteen-year-old Jane Grigg Mutton, whose family farmed at Bowden in St Neot, became the first Bible Christian to be buried there in March 1843. The refusal to bury non-Anglicans was part of a pattern that was repeated in a number of parishes across Cornwall and Rowe said that 'when Methodists were no longer buried in the same "God's Acre" as Anglicans the sectarian breach had transcended the boundaries of this world'.[436] Rather than bring them back into the Anglican fold, Rowe said this hardened attitudes and alienated the common people.

The acrimony between Henry Grylls and the Bible Christians did not subside and an article from the *Bible Christian Magazine* in 1857 described a confrontation

[435] *West Briton*, 31 March 1843.
[436] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), p261.10.

between Grylls and people attending a revival at the preaching house in St Neot churchtown:

> 'The minister of the Established Church is very much disturbed about it [the revival]; and tells the people, that if they go to that place, they cannot possibly be saved. He said to some of them, they might "howl as loud as they liked until nine o'clock, but that he should send a policeman and put a stop to it after that". The police came one Saturday night and demanded order; but our room being registered, of course, we can claim protection.'[437]

As was discussed in an earlier chapter, Grylls also came into increasing conflict with the Twelve Men of the parish who had taken back control of some parish assets, including income from property and bequests originally intended to support the poor of the parish and pay for repairs to the parish church. It must have disturbed Grylls that he was not a member of the 12 and that some prominent Bible Christians including farmers Thomas Doney and Peter Gerry were members and had an influence over Anglican Church assets.

Indeed Grylls wrote a note in the margin of the minute book of the Twelve Men claiming that Gerry's election had been invalid. Gerry later took a lead in taking action against Grylls over alleged misuse of the parish lands, of which Grylls was tenant. In 1839 a summons had been issued against Grylls over payment of rates and he was challenged for underletting the parish lands, which was not permitted in the rental agreement. Six years later the Twelve Men ordered him to surrender the lands. However, Grylls clearly did not give them up as in 1851

[437] Letter from William Dennis, superintendent of the Liskeard Circuit, to the *Bible Christian Magazine* (1857), reproduced in Bolitho, P., *The Story of Methodism in the Liskeard Circuit* (Liskeard, 1967), pp. 27-30. The style of Bible Christian revivals also affected relations with some of St Neot's Wesleyan Methodists – see page 351.

Gerry was asked by the Twelve Men to obtain 'peaceable possession' of the lands by serving Grylls with a notice to quit.[438]

The Grylls family also came under attack from an unknown source in 1854 when Henry wrote a book about the medieval windows of the parish church that had been restored at considerable expense by his father Richard Gerveys Grylls. An anonymous review in the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* questioned the judgement of restoring windows that had been 'set up in the darkest times of Popery. Artistic taste and antiquarian curiosity may be the first consideration in galleries and museums, but a Church is holy to God, and nothing opposed to God's truth should be intruded there'.[439]

There followed a detailed criticism of the depictions of some of the windows, one described 'with abhorrence', another as 'blasphemous idolatry' while others were 'to use the mildest expression, lamentably out of place'. It is not clear whether this criticism of the windows and their restoration came from Anglicans concerned about the Catholic revival in Cornish Anglicanism, or from Methodists who had come into increasing conflict with members of the Established Church.

Grylls appears to have persisted in his hostility to the Bible Christians throughout his ministry, but elsewhere the Anglican Church began to respond in a more positive way to the challenge of the changing social, economic and religious landscape of Cornwall. In the 1830s and 1840s new parishes were

[438] CRO MS. P162/8/1: Twelve Men's book, St Neot, 1821-1855.
[439] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 22 Sept 1854.

created across Cornwall, principally in the mining districts. More systematic reorganisation of parishes followed the 1843 Church Extension Act when the Bishop of Exeter, Henry Phillpotts appointed Perranzabuloe clergyman William Haslam to propose a series of new parishes. Haslam drew up plans for a total of 19 new ecclesiastical parishes in Cornwall.[440]

This enthusiasm for new ecclesiastical parishes reached Bodmin Moor in 1846 when Francis Rodd of Trebartha Hall wrote to the Church Commissioners seeking approval to create one at Bolventor.[441] This parish was designed to serve the tinning and farming families that began enclosing land and erecting new settlements on the central moors in the first half of the nineteenth century. Rodd and Grylls owned a majority of the land in the area. In his letter Rodd described the area as a 'wild moorland district' where the people were 'unable to receive any religious instruction' save from the occasional visits of clergymen from Altarnun and St Neot.

In fact what Rodd meant was that there was a lack of Anglican instruction: the Methodists were already well established. The Bible Christians had opened a small chapel at St Luke's in 1829, and the 1851 Religious Census revealed there was a Wesleyan Methodist Association preaching house at Palmersbridge near Bolventor that had begun holding services in 1842. The Anglican Church at Bolventor was consecrated in 1848 so that by the time of the 1851 Religious

[440] Miles Brown, H., *The Catholic Revival in Cornish Anglicanism* (St Winnow, 1980), pp. 71-72.
[441] CRO MS. RD/1161: Letter from Francis Rodd regarding creation of new parish at Bolventor (1846).

Census there was serious competition for saving the souls of the farmers and tinners in this wild moorland district.

The acrimony between the Bible Christians and Anglican Church in St Neot reported in the *Bible Christian Magazine* in 1857, was revealed in the same article to have spread to Bolventor.[442] A revival at St Luke's, which had 18 members at the time, had resulted in between 40 and 50 adults being converted, equivalent to about two-thirds of the adult population in the neighbourhood. They included the sexton and most of the congregation of the parish church. The vicar was said to be 'much annoyed at the revival and has laboured to impede its progress … by opposing us with all his might'.[443] Parish and chapel records recorded a sharp decline in numbers of baptisms at the parish church, with only two taking place in 1857, and a concurrent rise at St Luke's after the revival.

The effects of revivals were often short-lived, however, and baptism numbers at Bolventor parish church soon began to recover. Despite this, attempts to revive the fortunes of the Anglican Church had only minimal success across Bodmin Moor parishes. When it opened its doors in 1848, the church at Bolventor became the only new Anglican place of worship established in any moorland parish since the reformation. This was despite the massive demographic changes, and the parish church at neighbouring Temple remained in ruins. The

[442] Letter from William Dennis, superintendent of the Liskeard Circuit, to the *Bible Christian Magazine* (1857), reproduced in Bolitho, P., *The Story of Methodism in the Liskeard Circuit* (Liskeard, 1967), pp. 27-30.
[443] CRO MS. X987/4: Papers, research notes on chapels at St Luke's (n.d.).

1851 religious census, despite its many drawbacks, was about to reveal just how bad things had become.

6.6 Religious affiliation on Bodmin Moor in 1851

The returns for 50 places of worship in Bodmin Moor parishes reveal much about both the problems and the possibilities provided by the census at a local level. The 14 parishes were spread across the four registration districts of Bodmin, Liskeard, Camelford and Launceston and constituted an area equivalent to one of the smaller registration districts.

One of the main issues appears to have been an understatement of the number of Methodist places of worship and worshippers, as there were no returns for places that appeared in baptism and circuit records. For example, in St Neot there were no returns for the Wesleyan Methodist chapel or the Bible Christian chapel at Ley. A number of preaching houses also appeared to be missing from the returns, such as the Bible Christian preaching houses at Temple, St Neot churchtown and Garrow in St Breward.

The reasons for these omissions are not clear, but they were not confined to Cornwall. For example, a study of five registration districts in Shropshire revealed that more than half of the Nonconformist places of worship listed in

circuit records were absent from the returns.[444] The omissions in Shropshire were probably an extreme example and a study of Primitive Methodist attendance levels suggested that between 3% and 10% of total attendants were missed.[445] It is difficult to know the precise scale of omissions for Bodmin Moor – as with Shropshire and Primitive Methodists it would appear that omissions were mostly of smaller places of worship.

An even bigger problem in Cornwall was the refusal of many Anglican clergy to complete a return for 30 March 1851. Representatives of Anglican churches not returning the initial questionnaires were sent simpler forms which only asked for the 'usual number of attendants upon the Sabbath' broken down by time of day and whether attendants were part of the general congregation or Sunday scholars. This form was completed by a variety of people, such as sextons or churchwardens, and sometimes the supplier of information was not recorded.

In the four registration districts of Liskeard, Launceston, Bodmin and Camelford 32 out of 85 Anglican places of worship only returned an abbreviated questionnaire.[446] Despite the associated problems the official tables counted the figures in these abbreviated returns as if they were actual attendances on 30 March 1851. The situation was even worse on Bodmin Moor where original questionnaires were returned for just four of the 13 Anglican churches, and of

[444] Field, C., 'Methodism in the 1851 religious census for England and Wales', *Methodism in its Cultural Milieu: Proceedings of the Centenary Conference of the Wesley Historical Society,* (1994).
[445] Calder, S., *The Origins of Primitive Methodism* (Woodbridge, 2016), p. 159.
[446] NA MS. HO 129/300, 301, 303, 304: Census of Great Britain 1851, Ecclesiastical Census Returns for Camelford, Launceston, Liskeard and Bodmin.

these only Altarnun provided information for attendances on 30 March 1851 and the average for the previous 12 months.[447]

A number of churches and chapels that provided figures for 30 March also noted how attendance figures were lower than normal due to the adverse weather on Census Sunday. No allowance for or mention of this was made on the simpler forms. In contrast, an overwhelming majority of Methodist places of worship provided a detailed breakdown of attendance for both Census Sunday, as well as averages for the previous 12 months. These returns suggest that attendances were 9% lower on Census Sunday than the 12-month average. Only Altarnun of the 13 Anglican churches provided a complete return of attendance figures for both 30 March and the annual average. Its Census Sunday attendance was 6% below the annual average.

These difficulties mean that returns must be treated with a degree of caution, particularly in those parishes where Anglican returns were of questionable quality. Some of these issues make analysis of attendance by individual parish unreliable. There were two further reasons why individual parish attendance figures were unreliable for analysing specific parish attendance levels. First, as we have already seen, some people did not use the parish church of residence where a different parish church was more convenient. Second, this situation was compounded by the fact that many Methodist chapels served communities that straddled traditional parish boundaries. For example, the Bible Christian

[447] There was no return for the parish church at Temple, which closed in the eighteenth century and was in ruins at the time of the 1851 religious census.

preaching house in Warleggan was in a farm building at Bofindle that was close to the parish boundary with St Neot, while St Luke's Bible Christian chapel and a Wesleyan Methodist Association preaching house, both in Bolventor, served remote communities in Altarnun, St Cleer and St Neot.

Despite these drawbacks, the returns did at the very least provide a guide to the pattern of religious worship across Bodmin Moor in 1851. Methodism had filled not only a spiritual gap but also a geographic one by establishing societies, preaching houses and chapels in communities that previously had no places of worship and which were frequently situated many miles away from any parish church. By 1851 most communities were served by chapels, although preaching houses were also still important in some of the most remote Bodmin Moor communities and nine of them made returns.

Table 6.2. Places of worship and attendance summary for 14 Bodmin Moor parishes in 1851 (Source: 1851 Religious Census)

		Unadjusted aggregate attendances			Watts formula attendants			
	Number of places of worship in Bodmin Moor parishes	Total attendance	Share of total attendance	Attendance as % of Bodmin Moor population	Number of attendants in Bodmin Moor parishes	Share of total attendants	Attendants as % of Bodmin Moor population	Attendants in Cornwall as % of Cornish population
Wesleyan Methodist	13	2,349	33.3%	19.8%	1,785	32.2%	15.0%	19.7%
Bible Christian	11	1,228	17.4%	10.3%	961	17.3%	8.1%	5.8%
Wesleyan Methodist Association	12	961	13.6%	8.1%	770	13.9%	6.5%	3.0%
Primitive Methodist	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%
Other Methodist	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
Total Methodist	36	4,538	64.4%	38.2%	3,516	63.4%	29.6%	30.6%
Anglican	13	2,467	35.0%	20.8%	1,989	35.8%	16.8%	13.7%
Other	1	44	0.6%	0.4%	44	0.8%	0.4%	3.4%
Total	50	7,049	100.0%	59.4%	5,549	100.0%	46.8%	47.7%

Like most of Cornwall, Methodism had become the dominant religion in the 14 Bodmin Moor parishes by 1851. The 64.4% aggregate attendance at Methodist chapels and preaching houses was almost identical to the 64.5% average

recorded for Cornwall as a whole. The Watts formula, calculated by place of worship, suggests that this equated to just under half of the Bodmin Moor population attending a place of worship on Census Sunday. Again this is similar to the Cornish average.

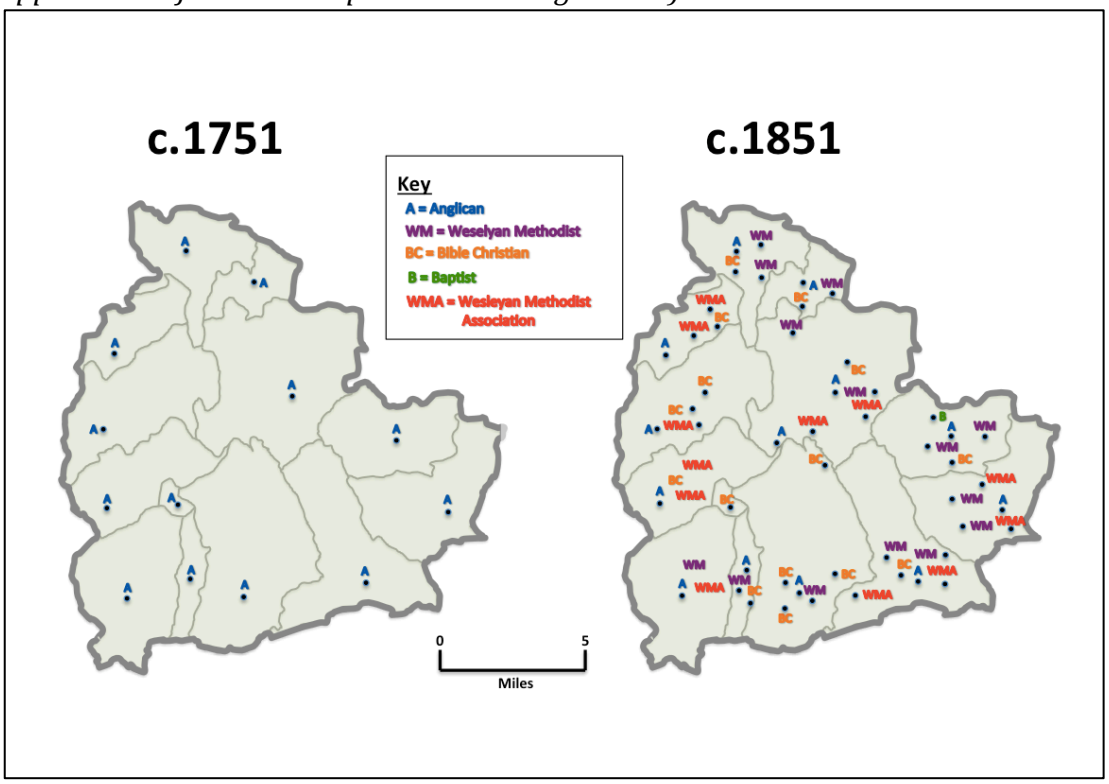
If Sunday Scholars are excluded from the religious census calculations and children under 15 from population census numbers then the aggregate attendance for Bodmin Moor was equivalent to 80% of the adult population. This converts to 69% attendants if the Watts formula is applied, suggesting that more than two thirds of the Bodmin Moor adult population attended a place of worship on Census Sunday. As a number of people would have been prevented from attending due to old age or infirmity, those who attended a religious service as a proportion of those who were able to attend would have been even higher, perhaps as much as 75%.[448]

Of the 50 places of worship 36 were Methodist and 13 were Anglican. There was just one non-Methodist dissenting place of worship, a small Baptist chapel at Trebartha in North Hill. Its isolated presence was indicative of the failure of Old Dissent to make much progress among Bodmin Moor communities. The Methodist returns revealed that many of the chapels had been opened in the 10 years prior to the census, although some replaced earlier preaching houses or chapels. At Coads Green in North Hill the Wesleyan Methodist chapel built in

[448] Mann, H., *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship in England and Wales* (1854). He suggested 7% of adults should be deducted from the England and Wales total to allow for those unable to attend on Census Sunday. See Chadwick, O., *The Victorian Church, Part One 1829-1859* (London, 1966), p. 365.

1849 replaced one built in 1829 that had become too small and was used as a schoolroom instead.

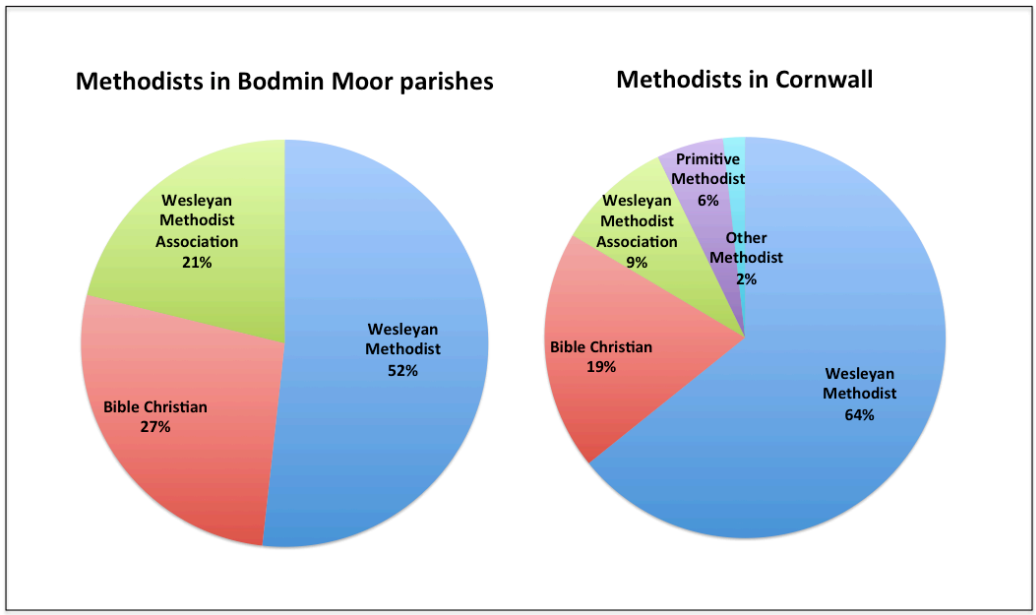
Figure 6.5. Locations of places of religious worship on Bodmin Moor. The 1851 locations include some chapels and preaching houses not in the census returns but known from circuit records to be holding services c.1851 (locations are approximate for some chapels and meeting houses) .



The census also highlighted the impact of the splits that had dogged Methodism, and the secessions that had affected Cornwall as a whole had an even bigger impact in the position of the Wesleyan Methodists in Bodmin Moor parishes. The Bible Christians and Wesleyan Methodist Association (WMA) were particularly successful in east Cornwall and between them attracted almost half of all Bodmin Moor's Methodist attendants in 1851 (figure 6.6). Both were born out of frustration with Wesleyan Methodist connexional authorities, particularly their attempts to impose central discipline on individual societies.

The Wesleyan Methodist Association's presence in Cornwall came as a result of the breakaway of virtually the entire membership of the Camelford Wesleyan Methodist Circuit in 1834.[449] It was led by Thomas Rosevear, a merchant from Port Isaac, who secured the support of 51 of 53 local preachers and 634 of 702 members. On Bodmin Moor this initially impacted on the northern parishes that were part of the Camelford circuit, but Rosevear visited the Liskeard area in 1836 and there were soon chapels and preaching houses in many other moorland parishes.[450]

Figure 6.6. Attendance by Methodist denomination in 1851 – Bodmin Moor and Cornwall compared (Source: 1851 Religious Census)



It was a particularly acrimonious split, with the Wesleyan Methodists claiming for many years that a number of chapels were illegally transferred. There were legal threats and injunctions, personal attacks and attempts to prevent preachers being heard. Even into the 1840s the Wesleyan Methodist quarterly preachers'

[449] Shaw, T., *A History of Cornish Methodism* (Truro, 1967), p. 83.
[450] Bolitho, P., *The Story of Methodism in the Liskeard Circuit* (Liskeard, 1967), pp. 16-20.

plan for the Camelford Circuit listed all the chapels transferred into the Wesleyan Methodist Association, simply putting a 'W' in place of each preacher's appointment to 'denote those Chapels which are presently withheld from the Weselyan Connexion'.[451]

The formation of the Bible Christian Connexion was not so acrimonious principally because it was not strictly created by secession from the Wesleyan Methodists. Instead, it was an evangelical offshoot, whose followers were often called Bryanites after the name of their founder William O'Bryan. The Bible Christians were particularly successful in the more remote agricultural districts of Cornwall and Bodmin Moor became one of their strongholds.

The full list of places of worship in Bodmin Moor parishes making returns in 1851 is shown in table 6.3. The figures in red represent the attendance numbers for Anglican churches provided in the abbreviated returns, and are therefore the ones that need to be treated with the greatest caution. Individual returns revealed some of the complications that resulted. At North Hill the usual number of attendants could not be obtained from the vicar, but the Launceston district registrar declared on the form that he received an estimate (of a total of 330 people) from a 'good informant'.

Likewise the registrar for the Liskeard district noted that the vicar of Linkinhorne 'refused to fill up this return and I have obtained this information from the parish sexton'. Some of these estimates of attendance were

[451] Shaw, T., *A History of Cornish Methodism* (Truro, 1967), p. 84.

questionable: at St Clether the curate stated that the usual attendance was 270, just 10 people short of the entire population of the parish, while Cardinham's equivalent figure of 430 was the largest for a Bodmin Moor parish, and suspiciously high for an isolated church in a large, dispersed community.

Table 6.3. Places of worship in Bodmin Moor parishes in 1851. Figures in red show attendances at Anglican churches that only provided an abbreviated return stating usual attendances on the Sabbath instead of actual numbers on Census Sunday.

Name	Denomination	Ecclesiastical parish	Registration district	Year opened	Aggregate attendance on 30 March 1851	Number of attendants (Watts formula)
Advent Parish Church	Anglican	Advent	Camelford	Ancient	50	50
Altarnun Parish Church	Anglican	Altarnun	Launceston	Ancient	303	225
Blisland Parish Church	Anglican	Blisland	Bodmin	Ancient	35	25
Bolventor Parish Church	Anglican	Bolventor	Launceston	1848	86	73
Cardinham Parish Church	Anglican	Cardinham	Bodmin	Ancient	430	363
Davidstow Parish Church	Anglican	Davidstow	Camelford	Ancient	224	182
Linkinhorne Parish Church	Anglican	Linkinhorne	Liskeard	Ancient	54	45
North Hill Parish Church	Anglican	North Hill	Launceston	Ancient	330	230
St Breward Parish Church	Anglican	St Breward	Camelford	Ancient	77	77
St Cleer Parish Church	Anglican	St Cleer	Liskeard	Ancient	223	208
St Clether Parish Church	Anglican	St Clether	Camelford	Ancient	270	183
St Neot Parish Church	Anglican	St Neot	Liskeard	Ancient	290	250
Warleggan Parish Church	Anglican	Warleggan	Bodmin	Ancient	95	80
Trebartha Chapel	Baptist	North Hill	Launceston	not stated	44	44
Altarnun Bible Christian Chapel	Bible Christian	Altarnun	Launceston	1843	168	122
Blisland Bible Christian Chapel	Bible Christian	Blisland	Bodmin	1837	95	68
Bofindle Preaching House	Bible Christian	Warleggan	Bodmin	not stated	96	96
Congdon's Shop Chapel	Bible Christian	North Hill	Launceston	1847	54	47
Hockings House Chapel	Bible Christian	St Cleer	Liskeard	1846	250	170
Limehead Chapel	Bible Christian	St Breward	Camelford	1848	116	89
Preaching House	Bible Christian	St Clether	Camelford	not stated	30	30
St Luke's Chapel	Bible Christian	Bolventor	Liskeard	1829	21	21
Trenant Chapel	Bible Christian	St Neot	Liskeard	1826	223	166
Trewassa Chapel	Bible Christian	Davidstow	Camelford	1841	125	102
Widewalls Preaching House	Bible Christian	Advent	Camelford	not stated	50	50
Altarnun Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist	Altarnun	Launceston	bef. 1800	315	271
Bowithick Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist	Altarnun	Launceston	1830	30	30
Caradon Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist	St Cleer	Liskeard	1842	400	320
Cardinham Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist	Cardinham	Bodmin	1847	71	52
Coads Green Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist	North Hill	Launceston	1849	235	161
Lanhargy Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist	Linkinhorne	Liskeard	1848	170	170
North Hill Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist	North Hill	Launceston	1810	274	218
Preaching House	Wesleyan Methodist	Davidstow	Camelford	not stated	40	40
Rilla Mill Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist	Linkinhorne	Liskeard	1847	597	377
Tremail Preaching House	Wesleyan Methodist	Davidstow	Camelford	not stated	25	25
Tremar Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist	St Cleer	Liskeard	not stated	40	40
Warleggan Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist	Warleggan	Bodmin	1821	88	60
Wesleyan Preaching House	Wesleyan Methodist	St Clether	Camelford	not stated	20	20
Association Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist Association	St Cleer	Liskeard	1844	112	84
Blisland Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist Association	Blisland	Bodmin	bef. 1800	125	95
Caradon Town Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist Association	Linkinhorne	Liskeard	1842	142	94
Darley Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist Association	Linkinhorne	Liskeard	1847	230	168
Hills Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist Association	St Cleer	Liskeard	1828	47	47
Lank Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist Association	St Breward	Camelford	1837	124	102
Old Cardinham Preaching House	Wesleyan Methodist Association	Cardinham	Bodmin	1835	25	25
Palmers Bridge Preaching House	Wesleyan Methodist Association	Bolventor	Launceston	1842	38	38
Tresinney Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist Association	Advent	Camelford	1840	40	40
Treswallock Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist Association	St Breward	Camelford	1840	36	36
Trewint Preaching House	Wesleyan Methodist Association	Altarnun	Launceston	not stated	27	27
Watergate Chapel	Wesleyan Methodist Association	Advent	Camelford	1820	15	15

Despite its flaws, the religious census did provide a good indication of the scale of Methodist worship on Bodmin Moor in 1851. However, it told us nothing about who the Methodists were in that year. Combining 1851 population census

data with Methodist and Anglican records enables this aspect to be explored in some detail and this exercise has been undertaken for the 309 households in St Neot.[452]

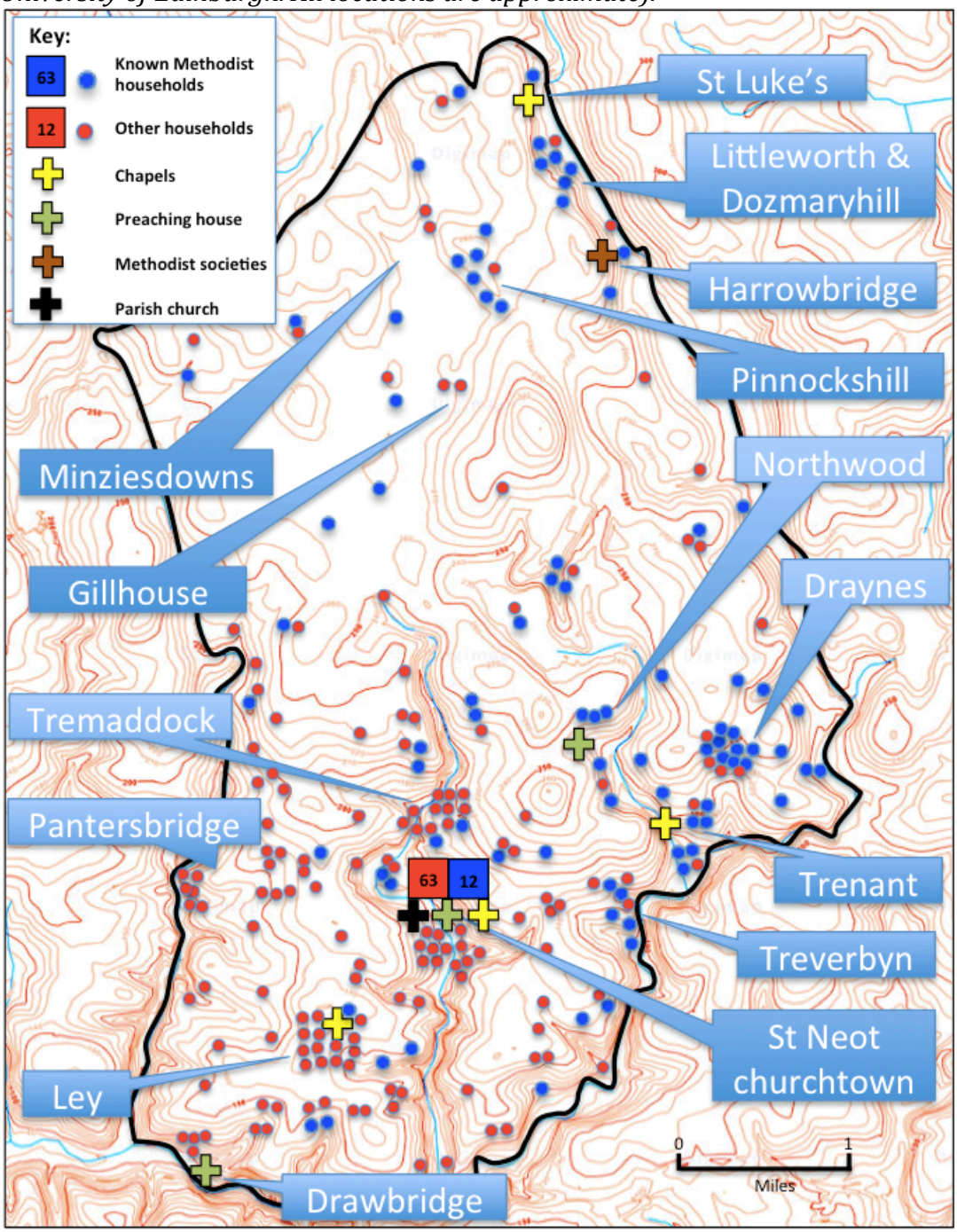
The locations of those households are shown in figure 6.7.[453] Each blue dot represents a household in which at least some members were either baptised or buried as Methodists.[454] In a majority of cases all children in each of these households who were born after 1840 were baptised as Methodists. In the main the red dots represent households using Anglican churches for baptism, although they also include a minority where only civil registration has been used or where no church records have been uncovered (usually the most recent arrivals in the parish).

The map highlights the significant geographical variation in religious affiliation in the parish. Methodist households were dominant numerically in the more remote eastern and northern parts of the parish. These areas were furthest from the parish church, and were also the districts where the Bible Christians had established a strong presence. The opposite was true in the south of the parish,

[452] NA MS. HO 107/1902: Census Enumerators' Books for the Liskeard Registration District of Cornwall (1851).
[453] The households in the northern third of the parish – consisting of the settlements at Gillhouse, Pinnockshill, Harrowbridge, Littleworth, Dozmaryhill, St Lukes and part of Lord's Waste – were transferred to the ecclecisatical parish of Bolventor in 1848 but were enumerated as part of the civil parish of St Neot in the 1851 population census.
[454] NA MS. RG 4/110: St Neot Bible Christian births and baptisms (1821-1837); CRO MS. MRLISK/114: Register of Baptisms, St Neot Bible Christian Circuit (1837-1857); CRO MS. MRLISK/58: Register of baptisms, Liskeard Wesleyan Circuit (1833-1852); Townsend, S. and Townsend, S., *Transcription of Nonconformist Registers for Cornwall, 1760-1837* (CD-ROM edn., 2000); CRO MS. X832/1: Register of burials, Trenant Bible Christian Chapel (1843-1963).

particularly in St Neot churchtown which by 1851 had grown into a sizeable village containing more than a quarter of the parish's households. Here just 15% of households were Methodists as measured by baptism, burial and circuit records.

Figure 6.7. Known Methodist households in St Neot in 1851 (Base map © Digimap, University of Edinburgh. All locations are approximate).



There were 235 children born in St Neot between 1846 and 1850 who were also living in the parish at the 1851 census. Religious baptism records were found for 196 of these children and there were a further 39 children who according to the census were born in St Neot, but for whom no records were uncovered.[455] An overwhelming proportion of children (83%) were baptised in parish churches, chapels, preaching houses or occasionally at their own homes. Of the remainder with no baptism record, more than half of the children were members of households where other children had been baptised. It is possible some of these children were also baptised but records have not been found, or perhaps only civil registration was used. That left 15 children (6% of the total) that were part of households where no baptism records could be discovered for any children.

The records reveal that in terms of baptisms the Anglican Church continued to dominate. Of those children born in St Neot between 1846 and 1850 who were known to have been baptised, more than two-thirds were baptised as Anglicans and just under one-third as Methodists. Of those who were Methodists, almost 90% were baptised as Bible Christians. The remaining Methodist baptisms, which accounted for just under 3% of all children, were Wesleyan Methodists.

[455] CRO MS. P162/1/9: Register of baptisms, St Neot (1813-1939); CRO MS. P32/1: Registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, St Cleer Parish Church (1675-1837); CRO MS. P247/1: Register of baptisms, marriages and burials, Warleggan Parish Church (1547-1998); CRO MS. P14/1: Register of baptisms, marriages and burials, Bolventor Church (1848-1979); CRO MS. MRLISK/114: Register of Baptisms, St Neot Bible Christian Circuit, 1837-1857; CRO MS. MRL/39: Register and baptisms and burials, Launceston Wesleyan Circuit (1819-1880); CRO MS. MRLISK/58: Register of baptisms, Liskeard Wesleyan Circuit (1833-1852).

The tiny number of Wesleyan Methodist baptisms is surprising. This is partly the result of the dominance of the Bible Christians, but it is also likely that some households belonging to both these Methodist denominations continued to use the parish church for baptisms and burials. Choice of place for baptism was not, therefore, necessarily a definitive indication of religious affiliation and many Methodists continued to use the parish church for baptisms out of choice.[456]

There are also examples from other Bodmin Moor parishes of Methodists who also attended Anglican services. In the early years of Methodism in Cornwall the Isbells of Altarnun, who regularly accommodated John Wesley at their cottage in Trewint, remained members of both the parish church and the local Wesleyan society. In neighbouring North Hill, Methodist blacksmith Samuel Pomery, attended Anglican communion every month[457]. Samuel Ough, who was parish clerk at St Cleer for 38 years, became a Bible Christian in 1846 but continued to attend both chapel and church until the vicar confronted him for being too loud at a church service.[458]

It is also likely that geography was as significant as religious commitment for some families when it came to choosing a place to baptise their children. The families of Draynes, who had previously used St Cleer rather than St Neot parish church, tended to switch their allegiance to the Bible Christian chapels at Trenant and Redgate. In the north of the parish St Luke's Bible Christian chapel

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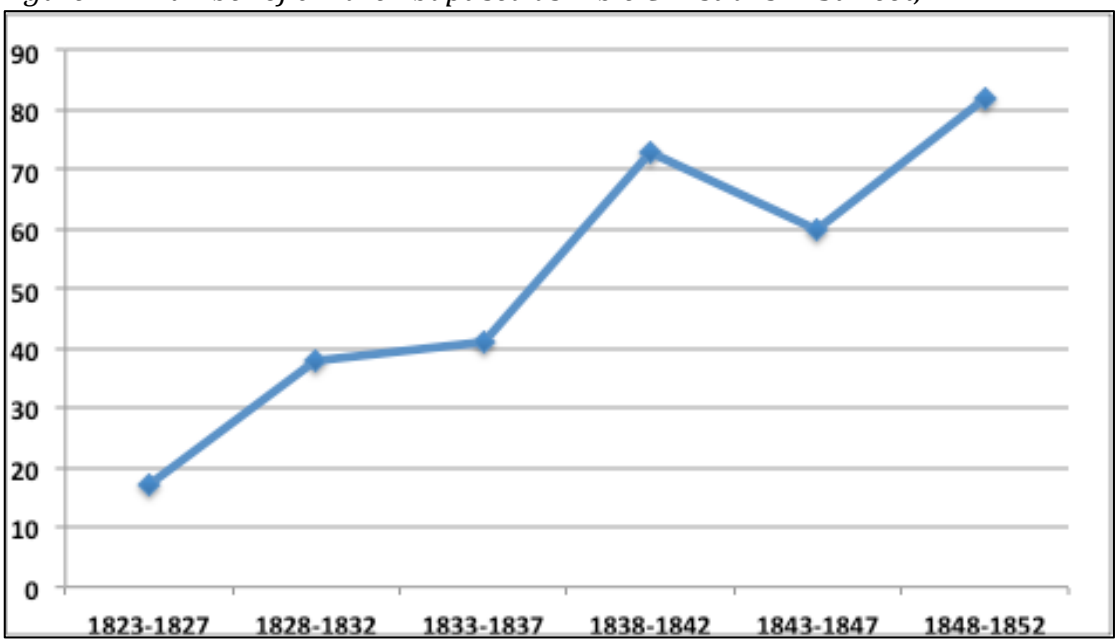
[456] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), p. 261.7.
[457] Shaw, T., *A History of Cornish Methodism* (Truro, 1967), p.122.
[458] Bolitho, P., *The Story of Methodism in the Liskeard Circuit* (Liskeard, 1967), p. 14.

largely replaced Anglican churches for baptisms, although this was partially reversed when Bolventor parish church was opened in 1848.

Some probably continued to baptise their children in the parish church for other reasons – as we have seen, vicar Henry Grylls put huge pressure on his parishioners to use his church for baptisms. This perhaps unduly influenced some of the poorest St Neot residents who, along with the most prosperous, were least likely to be Methodists. Figure 6.8 shows the trend in Bible Christian baptisms in St Neot for the 30 years from 1823.[459] The general rising trend was reversed in the mid-1840s, which coincided with the refusal to bury children baptised as Bible Christians in the burial ground at the parish church in St Neot. However, this was only a temporary setback and Bible Christian baptisms recovered their upward trend into the 1850s and beyond.

Figure 6.8. Number of children baptised as Bible Christians in St Neot, 1823-1852.



[459] NA MS. RG 4/110: St Neot Bible Christian births and baptisms (1821-1837); CRO MS. MRLISK/114: Register of Baptisms, St Neot Bible Christian Circuit (1837-1857).

In terms of occupation categories, baptism records reveal some differences between Methodist and other households. Farmers formed a slightly higher proportion of all Methodists, and labourers a slightly smaller proportion (see table 6.4). Only miners and tinners were significantly more likely to be Methodist. However, there was a more significant division between Anglican and Methodist and that was by the relative prosperity of households. A majority of the poorest households remained Anglican - just three of the 16 households headed by paupers could be identified as Methodists.

Table 6.4. Breakdown of known Methodist and other households in St Neot in 1851 by occupation of household head.[460]

	Methodist households		Other households	
	Number	%	Number	%
Farmer	26	27.4%	54	25.2%
Labourer	21	22.1%	53	24.8%
Craft	7	7.4%	37	17.3%
Miner/tinner	36	37.9%	34	15.9%
Pauper	3	3.1%	13	6.1%
Other occupations	3	3.1%	22	10.3%
Total	96	100%	213	100%

At the other end of the social scale, all 21 households headed by Crapp, Cawrse, Marshall and Rundle surnames remained solidly Anglican with not a single Methodist baptism between them. These households included some of the most successful farming families in St Neot. Some of the other dynastic surnames were totally or overwhelmingly Methodist.

[460] This table, like figure 6.7, is based on those households identified as Methodists primarily from baptism records. As such it excludes the unknown number of households that attended Methodist places of worship but continued to use Anglican churches for baptisms.

These households – headed by Mallett, Keast, Deacon, Hooper, Jane and Barnecut surnames – were mostly made up of smaller farmers, tinners and more prosperous labouring families. This religious divide by surname also hints a bigger difference between Methodists and non-Methodists in St Neot in 1851: in a generally tightly knit community Methodists households had extremely high levels of kinship links with each other.

6.7 Religious affiliation and kinship patterns

A summary of the kinship differences between known Methodist households and other households is shown in table 6.5. In total 84% of Methodist families had first-order kinship links with other households compared with 71% for other households. They also had significantly more first-order links per household, with a kinship density of 2.69 compared with 1.83 for other households.

Table 6.5. First-order kinship links of Methodist and Other households in 1851.

	Methodist households		Other households	
	Number	%	Number	%
Households with first-order links	81	84%	152	71%
Links to 1	30	31%	53	25%
Links to 2	13	14%	34	16%
Links to 3+	38	40%	65	31%
No first-order links	15	16%	61	29%
Total households	96	100%	213	100%
Kinship density	2.69		1.83	

In order to explore why this difference might have occurred the families in the 1851 census that had known connections with the Bible Christian chapel in the hamlet of Trenant were analysed. The chapel, which could accommodate 156 people in pews and a further 60 standing, was opened in 1826 and drew most of

its congregation from the hamlets of Draynes, Treverbyn, Northwood and Trenant (all these settlements were within one mile of the chapel – see figure 6.7). As such it was typical of the dozens of rural Methodist chapels that had opened in east Cornwall in the previous 30 years. The population of the area had grown rapidly in the first half of the nineteenth century, and was made up of a mixture of farmers, labourers, copper miners, tinners and a small number of craftsmen. Despite the growth in population there was no village, and households were either situated in hamlets or isolated settlements. Many of the tinners also farmed small acreages and some of the labourers and miners also farmed a few acres.

A majority of households consisted of heads and/or spouses whose families had been resident in the district for a number of generations, but there were some that had moved to the area from other parts of Cornwall, principally due to the expansion in copper mining. There were 36 St Neot households that could be definitively associated with the chapel in 1851, mainly identified through baptism records. The total population of these households was 224, which was just one more than the total attendance of 223 people at the chapel on Census Sunday, although the latter figure almost inevitably included an unknown proportion of double counting.[461]

This compares with a total population of the hinterland of Trenant Chapel of 331 people in 56 households, suggesting that up to two-thirds of people and

[461] Of the 223 attendants, there were 83 general congregation and 55 Sunday Scholars at morning service and 85 general congregation at evening service.

households in the district were Bible Christians.[462] There might have been more as it is possible that some Bible Christian families continued to baptise their children at St Neot or St Cleer parish churches. In addition, there were a few households in the census that could not be identified as Bible Christians at the time but who were known to be connected with the chapel after 1851. For example, paupers Richard and Ann Beswetherick who occupied a small cottage on the edge of Draynes Common in 1851 were both subsequently buried at Trenant Chapel.

Figure 6.9. Trenant Chapel c.1905. In 1826 it became the first Bible Christian chapel on Bodmin Moor and had 223 attendants on 30 March 1851.[463]

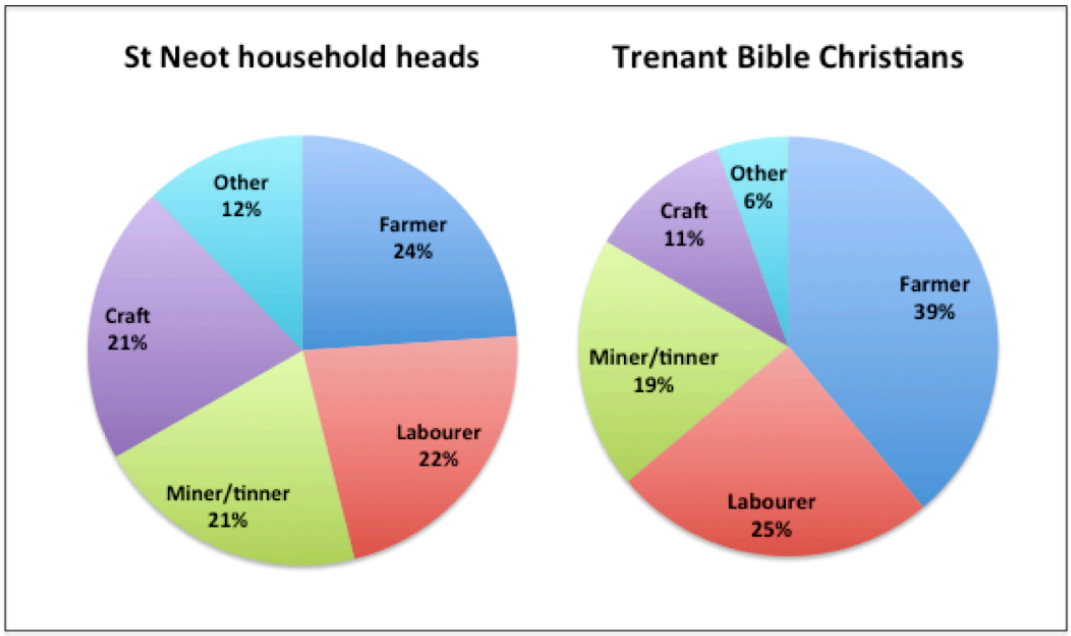


The breakdown of occupations of the known Bible Christians at Trenant in 1851 is shown in figure 6.10, where it is compared with the occupations of all St Neot households. All main occupation types were represented at Trenant, but compared with St Neot as a whole farmers formed a bigger proportion of the

[462] The hinterland consisted of those communities close to the chapel where most of the known members and adherents lived in 1851.
[463] CRO MS. MRLISK/340: Photographs, Trenant Bible Christian Chapel, St Neot.

total. These were overwhelmingly small farmers, such as William Jane who farmed 30 acres at Bowden in 1851. His two sisters married into other Trenant Bible Christian farming families, while his wife Elizabeth was daughter of Petherick Higman of Higher Trenant. Higman was the most prosperous member of the chapel – he had a granite stone business as well as two farms and employed a total of 11 people.

Figure 6.10. Occupations of the 36 heads of households using Trenant Bible Christian chapel in 1851 compared with all 309 household heads in St Neot.



The extensive kinship links of William Jane within the chapel community were indicative of the extremely high number of links among the Bible Christians of Trenant. The proportion with first-order links was also substantially greater than both the average for the parish as a whole and also the district in which the parish was situated. In total 31 (86%) of the 36 households had first-order kinship links to others who used Trenant, compared with 79% for all 56

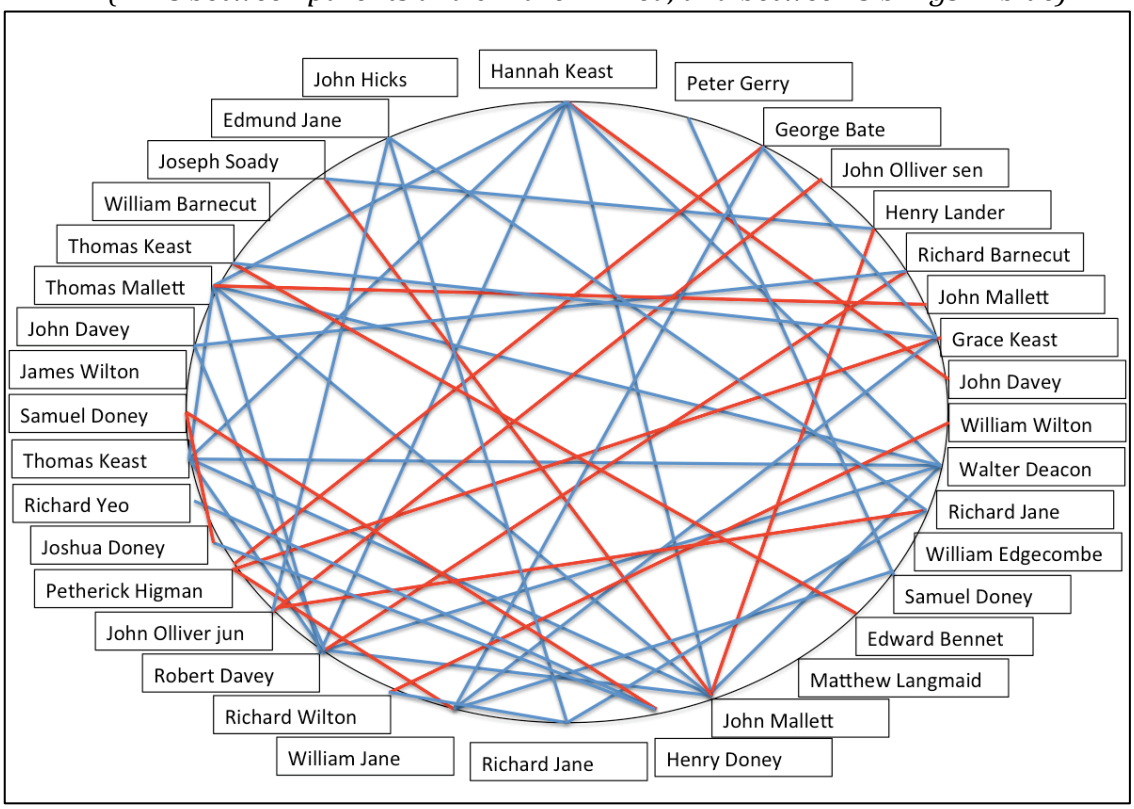
households in the hinterland and 75% for the 309 households in St Neot as a whole.

Of the five chapel-goers that did not have links, only William Barnecut and William Edgecombe had no first-order links at all in the parish. James Wilton was a blacksmith at Treverbyn whose in-laws farmed at Lower Trenant but had no discovered links with the chapel. John Hicks was a miner who had recently moved to St Neot from Roche and had first-order links with Methodists elsewhere in the parish. Matthew Langmaid was a farm labourer whose brother farmed in Draynes. The brother was childless and also had no discovered links with the chapel.

The web of kinship links between the known Bible Christians of Trenant can be seen from figure 6.11. Two-thirds of the links were between siblings (the links in blue on the diagram), and one-third between parents and children. When household heads and their spouses were considered there were a total of 33 surnames represented in the 36 households. However, the dynastic families of the district had a strong representation and just six of the 33 surnames were present (as head and/or spouse) in three-quarters of the Trenant chapel households. Most of these names – Mallett, Jane, Davey, Doney, Keast and Wilton – had been associated with the chapel from the beginning. Many family members had been class leaders or lay preachers, and they continued to exert a strong influence on the chapel for the rest of the century.

When the chapel was completed it became the only public building in the district. Miller Joseph Peek moved to Trenant Mill from Callington shortly after the 1851 census and the family joined the Bible Christian community. His son John wrote in his diary in 1855 that he 'attended the Bible Christian Sunday School at Trenant where they have a nice library of more than 100 volumes of useful books'. However, Peek's diary also pointed to a darker side to chapel life at Trenant. He wrote that at a revival at the chapel in early 1856 'several were converted and I was convicted of sin… there being some very vile persecutors to the cause of Christ in the same place where I was living'.[464]

Figure 6.11. First-order kinship links between Trenant Bible Christian households in 1851 (links between parents and children in red, and between siblings in blue).



[464] CRO MS. AD909: Diaries of John Peek (1860).

For many young people, however, chapel provided an alternative social structure to meeting through working in service. As such chapels like Trenant with their small hinterlands acted to reinforce local marriage horizons. The Doneys are a good example of how the chapel at Trenant provided a source of marriage partners: at least six of the Bible Christian children of brothers Thomas and Samuel Doney married other Bible Christians from Trenant chapel. These marriages also took place across the employment divide, the subsequent households being headed by a mixture of farmers, miners and labourers.

The family also provided evidence in support of the narrative that Methodism improved the moral state of the Cornish, helping to bring to an end ills such as wrecking and smuggling. Nineteenth century obituaries in the *Bible Christian Magazine* often followed a pattern of depicting how bad people were before conversion. The obituary of Thomas Doney's daughter Eliza Daniel detailed how Thomas had even returned to smuggling after conversion, although this was apparently only on one occasion in order to fulfil a promise made before conversion.[465]

Some of the claims in obituaries were perhaps exaggerated, but smuggling was endemic in much of Cornwall in the eighteenth century and was still significant in the first half of the nineteenth.[466] Two of the Bible Christians from the small community at Trenant chapel even had criminal convictions for smuggling, and both were closely connected to Samuel and Thomas Doney. The first was

[465] *Bible Christian Magazine* (1866), p. 550.
[466] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), pp. 274-276, 285-288.

Samuel's wife Mary, who was convicted of smuggling on 21 December 1834 and sent to prison in Bodmin. She was released two weeks later by order of the committing magistrate. As a 54-year-old farmer's wife with eight children she must have made an unusual convict. Three months later Thomas Doney's son-in-law Peter Gerry, who farmed at Northwood, was sentenced to six months in Bodmin jail for smuggling. He served the full sentence. As discussed earlier, Gerry became one of the Twelve Men.

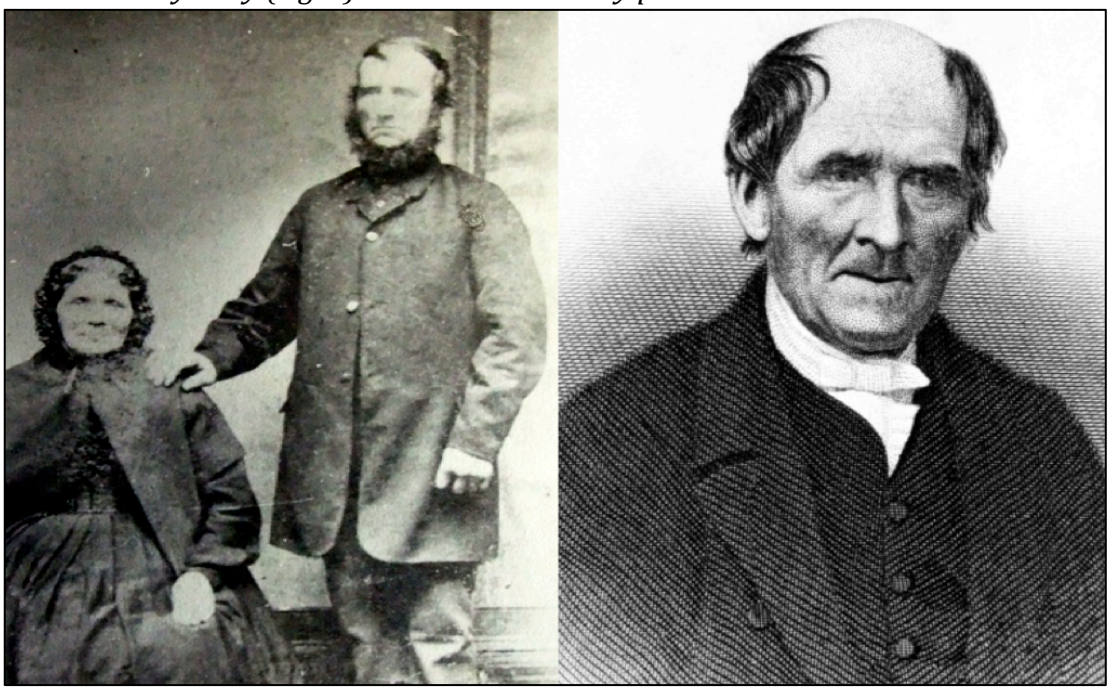
Richard Barnecut was another lay preacher from Trenant chapel whose obituary followed the template of bad man turned good.[467] Born in 1806 in St Pinnock, he was a farm labourer at Draynes until the 1850s when he managed get the tenancy of a 30-acre farm at Northwood that adjoined Gerry's farm. Even the obituary, although full of praise for his compassionate nature, noted that his preaching skills were not great. His son, copper miner John Davey Barnecut also became a lay preacher in the St Neot circuit but died relatively young leaving a large family behind. His wife Elizabeth Doney Edgecombe was a third generation Bible Christian from Trenant.

An unpredictable quality among lay preachers was perhaps inevitable given that they were almost exclusively recruited from the small farmers, labourers and miners who had received a generally limited education, little training and who combined their religious efforts with often gruelling full-time jobs. The best known Bible Christian preacher of the period in St Neot was copper miner Billy

[467] *Bible Christian Magazine* (1874), pp.555-557.

Bray, who moved to the parish in the 1840s.[468] More than anyone Bray perhaps epitomised the *Volkskirche* described by Luker. He revelled in noisy revivals that had been the inspiration for William O'Bryan's ministry, and which according to Shaw drew on the 'Celtic emotionalism' of the Cornish people.[469]

Figure 6.12. St Neot labourer and small farmer Richard Barnecut (left, with wife Charlotte Davey) was a typical rural Bible Christian lay preacher. Renowned Bible Christian Billy Bray (right) was a miner and lay preacher in St Neot in the 1840s.



His extreme evangelical approach captivated audiences across Cornwall yet also caused controversy. Shaw described him as 'the overrated Billy Bray'.[470] Others were more generous and Rowe said he was 'the most famous local preacher of his time, and even of all time, in Cornwall…one of many men of but little learning who felt themselves called to testify their faith to their fellow men.' Rowe claimed Bray's approach was tantamount to 'religious anarchism', but cautioned

[468] Wright, C., *Billy Bray in his Own Words* (Godalming, 2004), p. 107.
[469] Shaw, T., *The Bible Christians 1815-1907* (London, 1965), p. 105.
[470] *ibid.*, p. 111.

against underestimating him because of the attention given to his unusual preaching style. His great success, said Rowe, was that he spoke to the people in their own language and lived as they did.[471]

Bray gained a surprising contemporary supporter in William Haslam, the Tractarian Anglican vicar mentioned earlier. Haslam's exposure to the evangelical preaching of Bible Christians had made him surprisingly sympathetic to their style of preaching and on one occasion, perhaps unwisely, he took some members of the clergy to witness a boisterous revival. In the commotion Bray picked up Haslam and carried him around the room crying 'Here go the posts! Glory! Hallelujah!' The revival didn't, however, impress the other visiting clergy who 'made their escape as precipitously as they possibly could'. Haslam feared a backlash from the visitors but declared 'I would rather have the same thing over and over again, than have the most stately and orderly ceremonials conjoined with ceremonial death'.[472]

It was not just some Anglicans who were disturbed by Bray's preaching style - it also met with opposition from some of St Neot's Wesleyan Methodists. His journal gives an insight into one occasion when two daughters of a Wesleyan member attended a vibrant and noisy revival in the preaching house in St Neot. The father arrived at the house and demanded that the revival meeting be stopped. Bray refused and the father entered the room and removed his

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[471] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), pp. 261.41-261.42.
[472] Haslam, W., *From Death into Life: Twenty Years of my Ministry* (London, 1894 edn.), p. 92. By the time of this incident Haslam had experienced a conversion, supposedly during one of his own sermons, and become an Evangelical Anglican.

daughters. A few days later the revival was still underway and the two young women returned and were converted and they 'praised God with loud voices'. Bray also accused a number of the St Neot Wesleyans of being heavy drinkers and smokers. In his journal he said 'I am the son of a Methodist and I love them, but these was no Wesleyans. If they was, they would love to hear the dear Lord praised. But they had a name to live and was dead'.[473]

In St Neot Bray formed a partnership with John Hicks, a young Bible Christian who was baptised at Trenant Chapel in 1835 (he was the son of John Hicks in figure 6.11). In the mid-1840s when Hicks was just 12 he started accompanying Bray to circuit appointments. They were an unusual duo, Bray preaching and Hicks leading the prayers. 'We was out every Sunday,' said Bray in his journal. 'Though he was so young he would pray with mighty power. We had a chapel full of people wherever we went'.[474] Bray had Quaker friends who helped buy a horse so that he and Hicks could ride rather than walk to appointments across the extensive circuit.

Bray's time in St Neot also served to demonstrate some of the influences of chapel life on kinship patterns. Like many other miners who moved to Bodmin Moor parishes in the 1830s and 1840s, he arrived with his extended family, which included his wife Joan and four adult children. Daughter Ann was already married and moved to St Neot with her husband James Bray (not a close relative). The other children married three cousins who were all members of St

[473] Wright, C., *Billy Bray in his Own Words* (Godalming, 2004), pp. 124-125.
[474] *ibid.*, p. 147.

Neot's dynastic families with strong Bible Christian connections: in early 1846 daughter Grace married miner William Davey; later that year son James married Eliza Mallett; and in July of the following year daughter Mary married Joseph Mallett.

As a result, within a few years of arriving in St Neot there were five Bray families with first-order kinship links with each other and with other families living in the parish. This speedy integration of new arrivals within communities was made easier because of the network of chapels that were hungry for new members. They provided an immediate focal point and social network for people from similar backgrounds. The three Bible Christian chapels in St Neot in 1851 were in communities that had few other public meeting places. Only Ley had an alternative, as there was also a beer house in the hamlet.

Like many miners, Bray moved from place to place as the prosperity of individual mines and mining districts waxed and waned. He had moved to St Neot to work at Wheal Sisters copper mine near Tremarkyn, which opened in 1842. However, like many mines in the district, it was a small speculative venture and was not a great success. In 1849 its operations were merged with nearby Wheal Mary, and later that year the machinery of the mine was sold off and the mine was closed.[475]

[475] Hamilton Jenkin, A.K., *Mines and Miners of Cornwall, Vol. XII* (Truro, 1966), p. 17.

By the 1851 census all five families containing the Brays had left St Neot, but once again kinship played an important part in the process. Billy and his wife were living at a cottage in Blowinghouse, Bodmin. One-year-old grandson Mark Davey was lodging with them. Daughters Mary Mallett and Ann Bray lived with their families in separate neighbouring households, while the other daughter Grace Davey was living in lodgings with her husband in nearby Pool Street, Bodmin. Son James Bray and his wife Eliza emigrated to the United States in June 1848 along with Eliza's sister Agnes Mallett and her husband Josiah Treague. The Bray family stay had been short in St Neot, but the legacy of Billy Bray lasted for a long time.

6.8 Religion and community in the second half of the nineteenth century

As already discussed, the reaction of the Anglican Church to the growth in Methodism in the first half of the nineteenth century was slow, erratic and at times counter-productive. On Bodmin Moor the first signs of a more positive approach had come with the opening of the church at Bolventor in 1848 to serve the new ecclesiastical parish there. There was a further flurry of building and re-building activity from the 1870s onwards, ironically just as the population of the district was falling rapidly due to the collapse in mining.

The ancient church at Temple, which had fallen into ruin in the mid-eighteenth century, was rebuilt and reopened in 1883. However, the vicar of St Neot, Edward Steele who was also curate of Temple, had begun to hold services there before rebuilding was complete. The parish register described how on 4th July

1879 Matthew Keast, the son of William and Eliza Keast from Menaglaze in St Neot, was 'baptised in the ruins of Temple church'.[476] The remote moorland farm where the Keasts lived was closer to the church at Temple than those in either St Neot or Warleggan. After rebuilding, the church continued to be served by vicars or curates from neighbouring parishes.

Figure 6.13. A symbol of Anglican revival and also of surplus accommodation in in late nineteenth-century Cornwall: the church at Temple was rebuilt and reopened in 1883 after being closed for more than 100 years. In 1911 the parish, which also had a Bible Christian chapel, had a population of just 31.



As well as investment in parish churches, both old and new, there was also a campaign to build mission churches in communities located a long way from parish churches. A small number were opened in the 1870s in a haphazard way in various locations across Cornwall but in 1878 a conference of Anglican churchmen in Cornwall debated a paper called 'Church Ministrations in Hamlets'

[476] CRO MS. P162/1/9: Register of baptisms, St Neot (1813-1939), p. 92.

by Canon Thynne. It called for a co-ordinated approach using trained missioners 'of culture, intelligence and zeal' in order to deliver religion to remote rural locations.[477]

To emphasise the need in such locations Canon Thynne described an imagined scene in a Methodist chapel in a Cornish hamlet. In the chapel a young, illiterate preacher had forgotten his lines and 'nervousness obliged him to confess that the ideas he had gathered had gone from him. Would they sing another hymn? But as he could not read the number or the first line the congregation of learners was left to sing what they pleased.' The canon followed this with another example of imagined inadequacy before asking: 'how could beliefs be other than chaotic, how could morality be taught on the Gospel pattern by those to whom the Gospel was a sealed book?'.

The condescending attitude towards the rural poor of Cornwall, either as deliverers or recipients of religious instruction, was clearly still very much alive in parts of the Anglican Church. However, not everyone shared Thynne's view of the world and he was reminded that Methodism had brought religion to parts of Cornwall failed by the Anglican church, and the irony was not lost on others that the structure and organisation set up by Wesley 100 years earlier was now rather belatedly being copied by Anglicans.

Edward Steele, the vicar of St Neot, spoke in favour of using appropriately qualified lay people to take the Anglican message to remote parts of large

[477] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 1 Nov 1878.

parishes like his own. He had begun an appeal the previous year to raise funds for a mission church at the moorland hamlet of Draynes in the east of the parish. He said the church would be able to help those of his parishioners who 'through no fault of their own are unable to accomplish a walk of 10 miles on a Sunday, after six days of hard labour'.[478]

However, it took another 10 years of fund raising before the small mission church with accommodation for 100 people finally opened at Draynes.[479] Around the same time a small church was opened in the hamlet at Ley in the south of the parish. St Agatha's in Draynes was described as having a 'beautifully adorned' altar and, although the music and ritual were described as 'somewhat elaborate', the church was said to have proved 'very attractive among the scattered population of the district'. It would certainly have presented a marked contrast to the simple Bible Christian chapels already long established in the vicinity of Draynes, but its popularity was immediately challenged by the rapidly falling population of the district.

It was a challenge already being faced by the Methodist chapels across Bodmin Moor. Their numbers had continued to increase into the second half of the century and in some parishes there was serious over-supply. Nowhere was this more marked than at Temple where the Bible Christian chapel was joined by the reopened parish church in 1883 to serve a total population of about 50 people. Even if the remote farms beyond the parish boundary were included in the

[478] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 7 Sept 1877.
[479] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 11 Feb 1887.

hinterland, the population from which potential congregations could be drawn was still under 100. By 1911 there were just 31 people living in the parish.

In St Neot, the Bible Christians consolidated their position by opening a new chapel at Tredinnick in 1863, which replaced two smaller chapels at Ley and Drawbridge. A chapel at Bridgend in St Neot churchtown followed in 1872, which replaced a meeting room that had existed there since the 1840s. The remote chapel of St Luke's was rebuilt in 1858, and enlarged in 1891.[480] In the 1860s the Wesleyan Reformers opened a chapel at Harrowbridge close to St Luke's. A larger one in 1891 replaced the small chapel but in 1900 it had just 14 members.

Figure 6.14. The Bible Christian chapel at St Luke's, which first opened in 1829, was rebuilt in 1858 and enlarged in 1891.



[480] Thomas, J., *A Glance over the Shoulder, St Neot Parish from the 18th to the late 20th century* (Tremarkyn, 2004), pp. 85-86.

Even the Primitive Methodists gained a small foothold in the district, opening chapels at Cheesewring and Henwood in Linkinhorne parish and at Venland in St Cleer. The latter became known as Uriah Hooper's chapel, presumably because the chapel was situated on land at his farm (this was the same Uriah Hooper in the photograph on page 275).[481]

The divisions that dogged Methodism appeared to have little negative impact – indeed they appeared to have the opposite effect, at least for a short period. Even personal controversies could act as a spur to an expansion in chapel accommodation, as the Catts controversy in the 1860s demonstrated.[482] Michael Catts was an itinerant Bible Christian preacher in the Liskeard Circuit who was dismissed for an unspecified misdemeanour in 1860 (Bolitho suggested the reason was that he got a young girl pregnant). Despite his dismissal Thomas Tamblyn, one of the leading members of Bethel Chapel in St Pinnock and the son of Francis Tamblyn mentioned earlier, attempted to appoint Catts as a preacher. This move was rejected by the trustees, so a rival congregation was established in a barn at Connon Farm, just over a mile south of St Neot. It was a rudimentary preaching house, with a winnowing machine used as the altar. The barn was replaced by a chapel in 1865, which was situated a few hundred yards away from Bethel Chapel. Briefly Connon was the sole chapel in a denomination known as the Bible Christian Reformers, although it quickly joined the Weselyan Reformers who were expanding in the district.

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[481] Bolitho, P., *The Story of Methodism in the Liskeard Circuit* (Liskeard, 1967), p. 25.
[482] Bolitho, P., *The Story of Methodism in the Liskeard Circuit* (Liskeard, 1967), pp. 30-32.

By the 1880s the parish of St Neot was served by nine churches and chapels from four denominations. A sign of the relative popularity of each denomination at the time could be gleaned from the St Neot School Board elections. In 1891 the five elected members received the following votes: John Hicks Pollard (Bible Christian minister and farmer), 177; William Bray (Bible Christian member and farmer), 151; Edward Steele (St Neot vicar), 140; Joseph Tinney (Wesleyan member and farm labourer), 130; Richard Broad (Anglican Church member and farmer), 122 votes.[483]

The newspaper report on the election described the election as a 'good tempered trial of strength between Church and Dissent'. This did appear to reflect a general softening of the previous hostility between the two, and there was also an increasing degree of co-operation between the different Methodist factions. When Brother Sleep left the Bible Christians to join the Wesleyans in 1891, the preachers' quarterly minutes asked if he would be willing to continue helping as an auxiliary.[484]

Alice Lillas Lobb painted a rosy picture of life as a young Bible Christian in St Neot in the early 1900s.[485] Her father was a lay preacher and she and her sister often sang in the choir at Trenant. She enjoyed chapel social events such as Band of Hope teas and an annual festival, which was followed by a temperance

[483] *Royal Cornwall Gazette,* 16 April 1891.
[484] CRO MS. MRLISK/113: Minutes, Local Preachers' meetings, Liskeard Bible Christian Circuit (1876-1900).
[485] Transcript of recording of Alice Lillas Lobb held at St Neot and Warleggan Community Archive. Recording made in Canada in 1981.

meeting. At the festival a game called French Tag was played where young people paired off and it was at one of these that Alice met her future husband.

At the board school Alice revealed that the children were surprisingly motivated by the wider political environment, debating issues such as free trade and even wearing political colours at election time (orange and blue ribbons for the Liberals and red, white and blue for the Tories). Alice also told of travelling in the Rev. Majendie's car, the vicar of St Neot who owned one of the first ones in the district. When he drove to the Anglican chapel at Ley for Sunday services the St Neot vicar took local children with him, on the proviso that they attended the church service.

Despite all the activity, the over-supply of church and chapel accommodation and declining population was beginning to cause severe problems. For a while the Methodist chapels rode the storm fairly well and membership of the 15 Bible Christian chapels in the Liskeard circuit (a majority of the chapels were in St Neot, St Cleer and Linkinhorne) continued to increase into the 1880s. Membership reached a peak of just under 800 in 1882, around 15 years after the decline in population had begun. Almost 200 people were members of the four Bible Christian chapels in St Neot, at a time when the adult population of the parish had fallen to 639.[486]

[486] CRO MS. MRLISK/113: Minutes, Local Preachers' meetings, Liskeard Bible Christian Circuit (1876-1900).

However, such membership levels were unsustainable in the face of mass emigration and soon the circuit was facing severe difficulties. Just four years after the peak in membership numbers the circuit pastor's annual report in June 1886 painted a gloomy picture of declining membership levels, congregation numbers and income. 'The unparalleled mining depression has caused a continuous stream of migrations and emigrations from the neighbourhood which have drained our societies of no less than 110 members,' he reported. 'We have also suffered a loss of 3 local preachers, 14 Sunday School teachers and 54 scholars. Our congregations have fallen off in like proportion.'

In 1907 the Bible Christians finally merged with the United Methodist Free Churches (itself formed from a previous merger of the Wesleyan Methodist Association and some Wesleyan Reform chapels) and the Methodist New Connexion (which was not represented on Bodmin Moor). The combined United Methodist Church had 21 societies in the Liskeard Circuit, but membership continued a slow decline until it merged with the wider Methodist movement in 1932.

6.9 Concluding comments

This chapter has attempted to assess the impact of Methodism on Bodmin Moor communities during the nineteenth century, particularly in relation to social structures including kinship. Statistical measurement of the proportion of people who were either Anglican or Methodist proved to be problematic. Communicant numbers and Methodist membership statistics provided only partial answers at

best, while the 1851 Religious Census was in many cases an unreliable source for measurement of attendance at parish level.

In St Neot, religious census returns were lacking for at least two chapels and one preaching house, while Henry Grylls's refusal to complete a return meant that churchwarden William Marks filled in an abbreviated questionnaire for the parish church. It is not clear how he calculated the 'usual attendance on the Sabbath' of 320 people. Measurement of religious adherence by where people were baptised, married or buried also provided challenges because, for a variety of reasons, an unknown number of Methodists attended both church and chapel. This quote neatly encapsulated one woman's explanation for her split loyalties: 'I do say for christenings, marryings and berrins we must go to church, but for praichin' and anything for the next world give me the chapel'.[487]

However for all their faults, these sources when taken together with population data help to provide a valuable, if sometimes rather blurred picture of religious adherence in Bodmin Moor parishes. It is fair to conclude that at the 1851 Religious Census between two-thirds and three-quarters of all adults in these parishes attended a place of worship. It can be further assumed that at least two-thirds of these people attended a Methodist chapel or preaching house. This proportion was even higher in the more remote rural locations located furthest from a parish church.

[487] Hamilton Jenkin, A.K., *Cornwall and its People* (London, 1945), p. 197.

This dominance was due to the fact that by 1851 Methodist places of worship had been established in virtually every Bodmin Moor community, no matter how isolated. Where people once had to travel many miles to get to church, most now had a chapel or preaching house within a short distance of their homes. At the same time the very nature of the religious experience had changed. The preachers and class leaders delivered a simple religious message that resonated with their congregations. They were drawn from the communities they served, and in the case of the Bible Christians included many women. Luker described how the 'combination of social and spiritual, of communal and individualistic, of traditional and modern elements which fused in the early Methodist chapels, seemed to bring religion to life, to make Christianity relevant.'[488]

The new chapel communities emerged during a period of extraordinarily difficult economic circumstances. Most small farmers and labourers had been reduced to the status of short-term tenants rather than life-leaseholders, while their children faced even greater insecurities and lower incomes than their parents. For a while in the 1840s the threat of famine also affected many households. Many of the lay preachers became parish officials and through their Methodist activities developed the confidence to withstand external pressures. As such the chapels provided a platform to reaffirm independence at a time when other forms of independence were being eroded.

[488] Luker, D., 'Cornish Methodism, revivalism and popular belief c.1780-1870' (University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1987), p. 397.

It is notable how similar the religious experience on Bodmin Moor was to the nineteenth-century parish of Troedyraur in south-west Wales studied by David Jenkins. He described how power in the Established Church had become remote geographically and socially, while in both senses Methodist leadership was closer to the ordinary people.[489] According to Jenkins, the social distance between the gentry and local Welsh society widened in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries due to the decline of the yeoman farmer class and the rise of short-term tenancies.

The evidence from Trenant Chapel demonstrates that the social function of chapels extended far beyond religion. The chapel became the only public social space in the community and its ultra-local hinterland reinforced the already strong kinship links in the district. Children of the early Bible Christian members frequently married others within the chapel community, leading to extraordinarily deep kinship links in a community where such links were already the norm. However, this did not make it completely resistant to outside influence and the chapel also provided an immediate social space for new arrivals in the community. They also regularly married into the established Bible Christian community. It was a close-knit community, but it was not a closed one. However, sustaining chapels and their strong kinship communities became an increasing challenge as the collapse in mining followed by agricultural recession led to emigration on an unprecedented scale. The impact of these changes on kinship will be discussed in the next chapter.

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[489] Jenkins, D., *The Agricultural Community in South-West Wales at the turn of the Twentieth Century* (Cardiff, 1971), p. 209.

Chapter 7. Kinship and population decline 1851 – 1911

7.1 Introduction

The rapid increase in the population of Bodmin Moor parishes during the first half of the nineteenth century was followed by an equally sharp reversal from the late 1860s (see figure 1.4, page 37). The fall was mainly the result of the collapse in mining, but was also influenced by changes in farming practices due to increasing imports of cheaper food from North America and higher demand for dairy products from a rapidly expanding urban population outside Cornwall. This chapter will analyse these factors, and investigate their influence on kinship patterns.

In census terms the population of the 14 Bodmin Moor parishes reached a maximum of 14,242 in 1871, although it had probably begun to decline soon after 1866 following the collapse in copper prices. By 1901 the population of the parishes had fallen to 8,797, a decline of almost 40% in just 30 years. The former inhabitants of Bodmin Moor's mining and farming communities were dispersed across the Americas, Africa, Australia and New Zealand, as well as closer to home in the mining communities of South Wales, Lancashire and Northumberland. It was a pattern repeated, to a greater or lesser extent, across virtually all of Cornwall.

This great migration out of Cornwall, which peaked in the 1870s and 1880s, has been well documented.[490] However the impact of the population decline on the kinship patterns of those who remained has received less attention. This chapter will demonstrate that as the population fell and Bodmin Moor's economy focused increasingly on commercial agriculture, kinship links within communities remained surprisingly strong given the upheaval faced by many families. As we shall see, in 1911 Bodmin Moor communities retained kinship patterns very different from those found in England but remarkably similar to those in rural Wales.

7.2 Population, employment and kinship in St Neot 1851 – 1911

As with previous chapters, most of the detailed data used in this chapter relates to the parish of St Neot, although with supplementary information from other Bodmin Moor parishes and occasionally the rest of Cornwall. Table 7.1 provides a summary of some of the demographic trends for St Neot using information contained in the seven censuses carried out from 1851 to 1911. The biggest change was between 1871 and 1901 when the population fell by 37%, similar to the 39% decline for Bodmin Moor as a whole. Household numbers also declined sharply over the same period, but not as fast as the population decline because average household size also declined over the same period.

[490] Payton, P., *The Cornish Overseas* (Fowey, 2005 edn.) is a particularly comprehensive book that also contains a useful historiography on p. 417.

The reduction in the number of households was largely a function of fundamental changes in mining and farming employment. These changes – and their impact on kinship patterns – will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter. The falling population was also influenced by the trend towards smaller family sizes, which particularly impacted on the number of children in the parish. Smaller families and a decline in the number of live-in farm servants were the key reasons behind the decline in household size. They fell from an average of 5.3 in 1851 to 4.4 sixty years later. The proportion of women who were household heads more than doubled to reach almost 20% in 1891, double the average for England, before declining again. The factors behind this change will also be explored later in the chapter.

Table 7.1 Key population distribution trends in St Neot 1851 - 1911

	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
Population of St Neot	1,627	1,585	1,608	1,302	1,236	1,020	1,073
Number of households	309	311	321	269	262	225	242
Average household size	5.3	5.1	5.0	4.8	4.7	4.5	4.4
% household heads women	8.4%	11.6%	13.4%	14.5%	19.5%	16.4%	13.2%
% lone households	0.2%	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%	1.2%	1.4%	1.3%
Population distrubution by age:							
0-9	29.9%	29.2%	29.4%	25.5%	24.8%	21.0%	21.9%
10-19	19.8%	20.9%	22.1%	24.1%	23.3%	20.9%	19.3%
20-29	14.1%	12.4%	13.8%	13.3%	14.4%	15.6%	16.0%
30-39	11.3%	11.7%	9.0%	9.5%	10.0%	11.8%	13.0%
40-49	9.5%	9.0%	9.5%	8.8%	9.3%	8.8%	12.4%
50-59	5.7%	7.5%	7.0%	8.2%	7.0%	9.9%	6.7%
60-69	5.0%	5.2%	5.5%	6.1%	6.1%	6.3%	6.4%
70+	4.6%	4.0%	3.8%	4.5%	4.9%	5.8%	4.2%
Average age of population	25.4	25.7	25.4	26.8	27.0	29.4	28.5

As well as a falling population there was also greater mobility of people in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, the impact on place of birth of household heads was not huge, mainly because movement was mainly out of the parish. Those born in St Neot declined from around 50% to 40% of the total, while those born outside Cornwall increased from 2% to 10%. The proportion born in other parts of Cornwall remained fairly stable. Some of these incomers

from outside Cornwall were in fact the children from families that had originated there. Despite the relative close proximity of Devon just 12 household heads were born there.

Table 7.2 Place of birth of household heads in St Neot, 1851 to 1911

	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
Total number of household heads	309	311	321	269	262	225	242
Household heads born in St Neot	49.2%	51.1%	47.4%	46.1%	49.6%	48.4%	40.1%
Heads born in neighbouring parish	21.0%	19.6%	20.6%	22.3%	24.0%	21.3%	25.2%
Heads born elsewhere in Cornwall	28.2%	24.4%	25.5%	23.8%	19.5%	24.4%	24.4%
Total heads born in Cornwall	98.4%	95.2%	93.5%	92.2%	93.1%	94.2%	89.7%
Total heads born outside Cornwall	1.6%	4.8%	6.5%	7.8%	6.9%	5.8%	10.3%

Table 7.3 summarises the main changes in employment by sector in St Neot between 1851 and 1911. The table aggregates employment as described in each census and requires an understanding of a few caveats. Family labour on farms is particularly troublesome and needs to be treated with caution, as there was very little consistency regarding the treatment of farmers' spouses and children. Total family labour on farms in St Neot, calculated from entries made by enumerators, was 63 in 1891, 35 in 1901 and 86 in 1911 (see table 7.3).

The inconsistency appears to have been mostly the result of differing interpretations by enumerators as instructions to them remained relatively consistent.[491] In particular, the exclusion of most wives and daughters from employment in censuses before 1911 is a major problem. An attempt to adjust for this in 1851 in order to provide a better comparison with 1911 will be

[491] Collins, E.J.T. (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol. VII 1850-1914, Part 1* (Cambridge, 2000), Appendix table 41.1, p. 1964-5.

discussed later in the chapter (see table 7.6 for adjusted figures for 1851 and 1911).

There was also inconsistency in the treatment of some other job functions. A good example was the situation regarding farm bailiffs, who were described as such in some instances but as agricultural labourers in others. All farm bailiffs were described as agricultural labourers in 1861. However, a bigger problem with the census in St Neot (and much of Cornwall) was the dual occupations that were only infrequently recorded. As discussed in chapter six this was particularly the case for miners/tinners, many of who were either part-time farmers or lived in farming households.

Table 7.3. Employment patterns in St Neot between 1851 and 1911 (all people listed as in employment at each census)

	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
Farmers	80	71	106	95	102	101	104
Male farm servants	64	59	63	41	38	28	27
Female servants on farms	44	38	45	30	28	28	27
Agricutlural labourers	104	83	101	63	42	42	50
Family labour on farms	48	51	56	58	63	35	86
Total farm employment	340	302	371	287	273	234	294
Miners	69	116	118	35	38	13	43
Tinners	55	27	1	0	0	0	0
Craft workers	76	61	59	39	42	38	34
Other male labourers	0	18	14	53	35	33	21
Other female workers	30	28	45	36	32	30	40
Other	18	42	37	51	45	33	44
Total non-farm employment	248	292	274	214	192	147	182
Total employment	588	594	645	501	465	381	476

Despite the caveats, the census returns do at least provide a useful picture of the overall trends in employment during the period. The increase in the number of farmers after 1861 was largely the result of the moorland enclosure discussed in detail in chapter five. The number of people who were tinners as their main occupation declined rapidly after 1851 and the last one recorded in St Neot was

Francis Welch, who in 1871 was the sole survivor of a tradition in the parish stretching back centuries. In 1881 Edmund Jane was the final tinner in neighbouring Warleggan.[492]

The decline in deep mining employment was also marked, this time primarily in the 1870s, and resulted in significant loss of employment at a time when agriculture was also changing from mixed farming to livestock production. The latter was more reliant on family labour and less on a hired workforce. Male farm labourers halved in number over the period, although the employment of live-in farm servants continued into the early twentieth century. Their importance in relation to kinship patterns is discussed below (see page 387). Craftsmen also declined in number due to a combination of reduced mining activity and changes to farming technology.

The combined effect of mining and farming job losses was a reduction in people in employment in the parish from 645 in 1871 to 381 in 1901, a decline of 41% in just 30 years. This pattern was repeated across much of Cornwall, although the reduction in employment was even higher in places more reliant on mining. There was a small recovery in the population of the parish up to 1911, mainly due to a temporary increase in tin mining activity.

It is surprising that the huge changes between 1871 and 1911 did not have a greater negative impact on kinship patterns within St Neot. Family

[492] Edmund Jane was a tinner at Menaglaze in St Neot until the late 1860s when he moved less than a mile to a property in Warleggan. His gravestone at Warleggan parish church says he was a Bible Christian preacher for 55 years.

reconstitution revealed that first order links did decline during the period, from 75% in 1851 to 64% in 1911, but still remained unusually high even by nineteenth-century standards. The breakdown of first-order kinship and kinship densities in 1851 and 1911 by location of household, occupation group, and place of birth is summarised in Table 7.4.

Kinship links remained strongest among those living in moorland households and also, not surprisingly, for households where the head was born in St Neot. In both these cases households with first-order links remained above 80% in 1851 and in 1911. These two groups also had the highest kinship densities. The biggest negative kinship change for any employment group was among farmers: the proportion of first-order links declined from 82% in 1851 to 67% in 1911. Their average kinship density also declined. However, both measures were still above the averages for St Neot in 1911 and the persistence of dynastic families among farmers was a key reason for the high proportion of kinship links in the parish into the twentieth century.

The rising number of households headed by people born outside Cornwall also had a depressing impact on the number of kinship links. Although overall proportions remained relatively small, their share of households increased from 1.6% to 10.3% between 1851 and 1911. Only one-quarter of these households had first-order kinship links in 1911. The other steep decline in kinship links was among households headed by people born elsewhere in Cornwall. The biggest factor was a greater mobility among farmers who had no kinship ties in St Neot.

Table 7.4. First-order kinship patterns in St Neot by location, occupation and place of birth in 1851 and 1911

	1851			1911		
	Number of households	% with first order kin	Kinship density	Number of households	% with first order kin	Kinship density
All households	309	75%	2.08	242	64%	1.39
Location:						
Village/churchtown	75	69%	1.83	50	56%	1.24
Lowland	108	70%	1.90	89	60%	1.20
Upland	75	80%	2.17	56	63%	1.23
Moorland	51	86%	2.75	47	83%	2.11
Occupation group:						
Farmer	80	82%	2.21	95	67%	1.54
Agricultural labourer	72	71%	1.94	39	69%	1.64
Miner & tinner	76	74%	2.25	24	67%	1.33
Craft	42	81%	2.24	17	71%	1.71
Other households	39	59%	1.67	67	54%	0.99
Place of birth:						
St Neot	151	87%	2.70	97	82%	2.06
Neighbouring parish	65	60%	1.49	61	67%	1.26
Elsewhere in Cornwall	88	67%	1.53	59	47%	0.86
Outside Cornwall	5	20%	0.20	25	24%	0.36

The sharpest decline in kinship by location was in the village of St Neot. In terms of population size and number of households it had grown fastest in the first half of the nineteenth century, and then declined the fastest in the second half. In 1911 there were 33% fewer households than sixty years earlier, compared with a reduction of 22% for the parish as a whole. This was largely because the village population was dominated by mining and labouring households that declined substantially in number from the 1870s onwards. The village also had a higher proportion of households where the head was born outside the parish.

The rest of this chapter will look in more detail at the two biggest changes to affect Bodmin Moor parishes in the second half of the century: the collapse in mining and the fundamental changes to agricultural employment. The impact of these changes on kinship patterns will then be analysed.

7.3 Changes to agriculture c.1851 – 1911

The development of Cornish agriculture in the second half of the nineteenth century can be split into two roughly equal parts. The first from 1850 to 1875 saw a gradual but erratic recovery from the 'hungry forties' described earlier in the thesis. Mixed farming reliant on the sale of grain (mainly wheat but also barley) to pay the rent was the mainstay of the agrarian economy.[493] The second period after 1875 resulted from increasing imports of grain from the New World, which forced farmers to switch to production towards a greater reliance on livestock production (see table 7.5).

This fundamental change affected the whole of British agriculture, but it was less problematic for Cornish farmers because the climate and topography suited grass production. This natural advantage, together with the introduction of labour-saving technological developments, advances in livestock breeding and improvements in transport infrastructure meant that Cornish farmers were able to cope with change better than their counterparts in parts of England.

Indeed, Cornwall was one of the relatively few parts of England and Wales to experience an increase in agricultural production between 1874 and 1894. Gross farm output increased by 5% in real terms over the period, compared with a fall

[493] Rowe, J., *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (St Austell, 1993 edn.), p. 252.

of 6% in neighbouring Devon.[494] Between 1894 and 1911 it fared even better and its 14% increase in output was the highest in the country.[495]

The change to a livestock-dominated farming economy in St Neot between 1866 and 1911 can be seen in Table 7.5.[496] The first national agricultural returns were produced in 1866, a date which also coincided with the beginning of collapse in Cornish mining. The returns for 1881 provide a picture at a time when agricultural change was well underway and when mining had ceased to be a significant economic activity over much of Cornwall. Finally the returns for 1911 summarise the situation at the end of the period.

Table 7.5. Changing nature of farming in St Neot between 1866 and 1911

	1866	1881	1911	% change 1866 to 1911
Cows in milk or in calf	375	561	963	157%
Other cattle	1438	1668	1916	33%
Total cattle	1813	2229	2879	59%
Sheep one year or more	2364	2957	2392	1%
Sheep less than one year	1184	1812	1863	57%
Total sheep	3548	4769	4255	20%
Wheat	262	219	100	-62%
Barley	336	354	270	-20%
Oats	385	525	1026	166%
Potatoes	47	47	28	-40%
Turnips	367	329	274	-25%
Total arable crops	1397	1474	1698	22%
Grass under rotation	406	721	2728	572%
Permanent pasture	1175	1436	3300	181%
Total pasture	1581	2157	6028	281%
Fallow	653	110	0	n/a
Orchards	n/a	52	31	n/a

[494] Collins, E.J.T. (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol. VII 1850-1914, Part 1* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 161.
[495] *ibid.,* p. 218.
[496] NA MS. MAF 68/12: Parish summaries of agricultural returns for Cornwall (1866); NA MS. MAF 68/747, Parish summaries of agricultural returns for Cornwall (1881); NA MS. MAF 68/2457: Parish summaries of agricultural returns for Cornwall (1911).

Immediately apparent from the table are the expansion in livestock numbers and the concurrent rise in the acreage devoted to oats. Cows in milk or in calf increased by more than 150% to reach nearly 1,000 head in 1911, while the acreage of oats rose by a similar percentage to reach more than 1,000 acres. Sheep numbers also increased until the 1870s, but declined after that as dairy farming became more financially attractive. The reduction in sheep numbers was also partly influenced by disease, especially the spread of foot rot, and falling wool prices.[497]

The decline in arable cropping (except oats for animal feed) was also notable. In addition there was no fallow by 1911, perhaps indicative of the ending of convertible husbandry. However, the acreages of grass/pasture in the table need to be treated with caution because it is possible that pasture in convertible rotations was missed if it was not counted as either under rotation or as permanent pasture. This could account for the unrealistically small acreages of total pasture in 1866 and 1881.

Changing farming systems also had a dramatic effect on employment patterns and farms became increasingly reliant on family labour. Table 7.6 shows the change in employment type between 1851 and 1911. It differs from the information in table 7.3 because it includes all farmers' wives, sons and daughters of working age, whether or not they were stated as in employment in each census. These were largely ignored by census enumerators in employment

[497] Collins, E.J.T. (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol. VII 1850-1914, Part 1* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 418-9.

terms in 1851 and rather erratically in 1911. However, they were vital to the farming economy and it was estimated that farmers' wives on small farms in Wales spent about 80% of their time on farming related activities.[498]

The table also understates the amount of labour working on farms, particularly in 1851. There were a number of reasons for this. First, many households headed by tinners were also involved in farming, usually for subsistence but sometimes on a bigger scale that was not recorded in censuses. Second, farming households also regularly included sons (and occasionally daughters) employed in other activities, particularly mining, who helped at key times such as harvest and haymaking. Third, other members of farming and labouring households would also have helped out at those key times.

Table 7.6. Farming employment in St Neot in 1851 and 1911

	1851		1911	
	Number	%	Number	%
Farmers	80	18.1%	104	27.2%
Farmers' wives	68	15.3%	74	19.4%
Farmers' daughters	44	9.9%	47	12.3%
Farmers' sons	39	8.8%	53	13.9%
Total family labour	231	52.1%	278	72.8%
Farm servants (male)	64	14.4%	27	7.1%
Farm servants (female)	44	9.9%	27	7.1%
Farm labourers	104	23.5%	50	13.1%
Total hired labour	212	47.9%	104	27.2%
Total farm labour force	443	100.0%	382	100.0%

[498] Richardson, F., 'Rural change in north Wales during the period of the industrial revolution: Livelihoods, poverty and welfare in Nantconwy, 1750-1860' (University of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 2016), p. 151, referencing Thomas, E., *The Economics of Smallholdings: a Study Based on a Survey of Small Farming in Carmarthenshire* (Cambridge, 1927), p. 54.

With these provisos in mind it can be seen from the table that the proportion of labour provided by farmers and their immediate families increased from about half of the total in 1851 to three-quarters in 1911. Although the total farm labour force declined by 14% over the same period, the hired proportion almost halved. The fall in the latter affected both farm servants and labourers, but the proportion of labourers to servants remained constant. The decline in farm service seems to have been a function of falling numbers of hired labour generally rather than any decrease in their relative popularity. However, by 1911 hired labour was concentrated on the largest farms, especially those without working-age children.

The substantial increase in numbers of farmers between 1851 and 1911 was mainly a function of moorland enclosure. However, as discussed in previous chapters, the census only provided a reliable guide to farmers who were either full-time or generated a majority of their income from farming. Table 7.7 uses tithe apportionment data from 1842 and Duties on Land returns from 1910 to show how the number of occupiers of farmland changed over the period. This reveals a much more modest change in the number of people who were farming at these dates.[499]

The average farm size increased from 76 to 91 acres over the period, but the biggest increase in numbers of farms was those with an annual rental value of

[499] NA MS. IR 29/6/143: Tithe Commissioners for England and Wales, Apportionment of the rent charge in lieu of tithes in the parish of St Neot (1842); CRO MS. DV/1/66: Board of Inland Revenue Valuation Office, Duties on Land Valuation Book, St Neot and Warleggan, 1910.

between £10 and £25 a year, followed by those between £25 and £50. In contrast, the numbers of smallest part-time farms and largest full-time farms declined the most. The result was that full-time family farms that employed little or no hired labour came to dominate the farming economy.

Table 7.7. Farm structure in St Neot in 1842 and 1910

	1842		1910	
Rental value	Number of occupiers of farmland	Average size (acres)	Number of occupiers of farmland	Average size (acres)
< £10	25	11.2	9	29.3
£10 - <£25	15	43.3	36	56.3
£25 - <£50	21	52.3	29	69.1
£50 - <£100	29	99.8	29	145.7
£100 - <£200	15	182.0	9	157.2
£200+	1	369.0	1	339.0
Total	106	75.7	113	90.9

A typical family farm in St Neot in 1910 was Lower Trenant. It had 41 acres of mostly good quality arable and meadow next to the River Fowey, together with common grazing rights. It was also typical of the many farms in St Neot where occupation changed on a regular basis. The Duties on Land surveyor's notebook revealed there was a four-bedroomed farmhouse, together with a compact courtyard of 'fair' farm buildings. These included accommodation for 12 cows, three horses and two pigs. The surveyor gave it a rental value of £50 a year.[500]

The pattern of occupation of the farm reveals something of the changing nature of local kinship patterns among farmers. At the 1851 census bailiff Benjamin Sanders farmed it. His family had extensive kinship links within the parish of St

[500] NA MS. IR 58/72097-72013: Board of Inland Revenue, Valuation Office Field Books, St Neot (1910).

Neot. In 1852 Benjamin's wife died after falling downstairs and he left the farm. In 1861 and 1871 former farm labourer William Blythe farmed it. He was from near Launceston and had no known kinship links with St Neot. In 1872 the farm was sold and Joseph Coppin, a farmer from Blisland, bought the farm for £1,900.[501] For the next 15 years the Coppin family farmed it, until the death of Joseph's son resulted in the farm becoming tenanted again.

The tenants in subsequent censuses were also from outside the parish. In 1891 Walter Baker from Ealing in Middlesex was tenant. His children's entries in the census revealed that the family had lived in Yorkshire, Oxfordshire and Hampshire before settling in St Neot. By 1901 the Bakers were in Devon and Thomas Bowden was the farmer. He was a miner's son from Linkinhorne who had spent time in Northumberland before returning to Cornwall. The family were Bible Christians and his daughter was organist at the adjoining Bible Christian chapel. In the 1911 census John Roscorla, who took a 14-year tenancy in 1907 for £56 a year, was still farmer at Lower Trenant.

The Roscorlas were dairy farmers at St Ive in 1891, and then farmers at Higher Newton in St Neot in 1901 before taking the tenancy at Lower Trenant. John was from St Issey near Padstow and his wife from Torpoint and they had no known kinship links in St Neot. The mobility of farmers like the Bakers, Bawdens and Roscorlas was one of the main reasons for the declining proportion of farmers in St Neot with first-order kinship links. However, their impact must not be

[501] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 22 Feb 1873.

overstated as 64 farmers – representing two-thirds of all farmers - still had first-order kinship links in the parish in 1911.

Among these families there was frequently a continuity of occupation on farms within the parish throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, often within extended family kinship groups. This was not always on the same farm – families would often move farm from generation to generation and it was also common for individual families to move during their farming careers. In most cases such movement was over short distances in a pattern similar to that noted by Jenkins in south-west Wales.[502]

However, there were also cases of families occupying the same tenanted farms continuously. A good example of this continuity was at Lestow Farm in St Neot.[503] It was one of the larger farms in the south of the parish, covering 147 acres of good quality land. The farm remained occupied by direct descendants of Peter Knight, who took a tenancy on the farm some time before 1816, into the twentieth century. The family eventually managed to purchase the freehold of the farm in 1919. However, analysis of the census returns and tenancy agreements does not reveal the continuity as occupation of the farm transferred down the female line on two occasions.

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[502] Jenkins, D., *The Agricultural Community in South-West Wales at the turn of the Twentieth Century* (Cardiff, 1971), pp. 106-116.
[503] Grylls, R.G., *Lestow, St Neot, Cornwall. The History of a Farm, its Owners and its Occupiers* (London, 1992). The farm is still in the same family today (September 2017), run by Colin Arthur, representing more than 200 years of continuity. The family kindly provided help in piecing together the history of Lestow Farm.

Figure 7.1 shows the kin who occupied Lestow at the censuses between 1841 and 1911. At most censuses there were extended kin living at Lestow, and at every census there were also farm servants living at the farm (the latter are not shown in the figure). The figure highlights how many of the Knights lived particularly long lives, the longest being Peter Knight who died at Lestow at the age of 98. According to the 1841 census he was still farmer at Lestow at the age of 90, probably to the dismay of his adult children. His first wife Ann had died without issue in 1797 and it was only when Knight married again in his late 40s to Mary Lean, who was 26 years younger than him, that he had children. By the time their 10th child Henry was born at Lestow in 1817 Knight was 67.

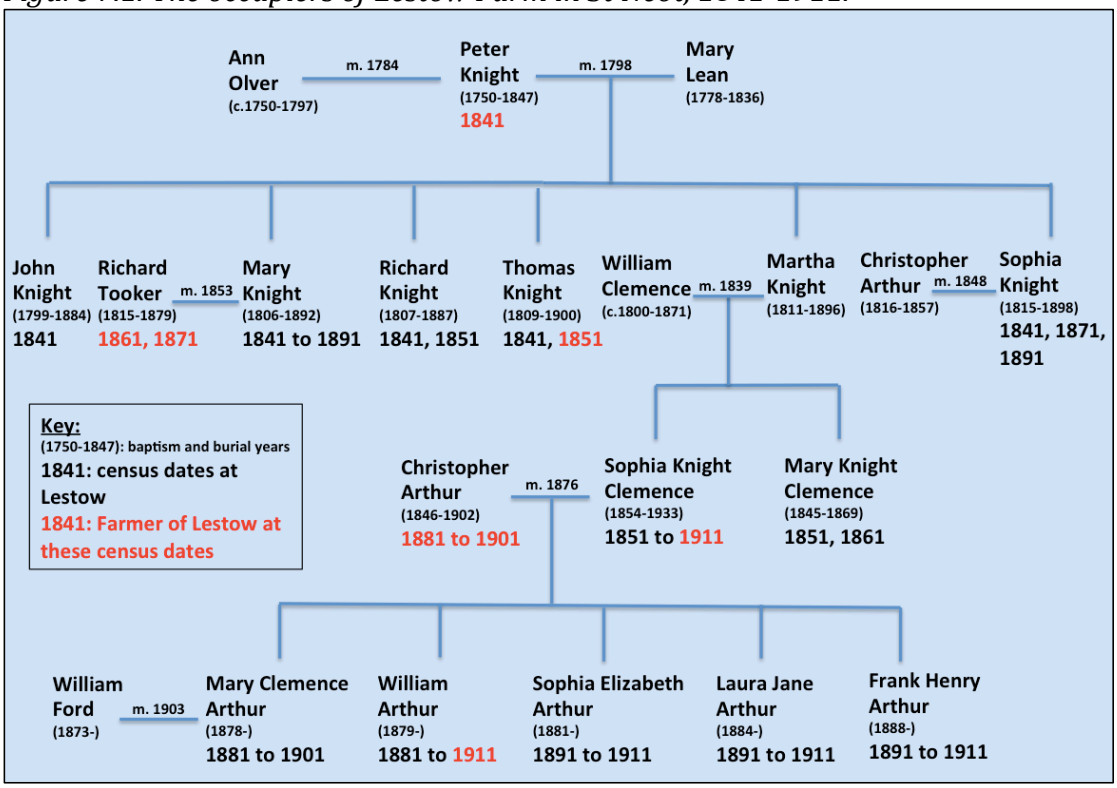
The Knights were one of the more prosperous families in St Neot and linked by marriage to some of the dynastic families in St Neot. Peter Knight was described as a principal inhabitant of the parish and two of his sons became members of the Twelve Men.[504] The family also made headlines in Cornish newspapers on two occasions. The first was when son Joseph was drowned in the River Warleggan in 1836. It was alleged that Joseph and a friend had been poaching on land belonging to the Lanhydrock estate, and an attempt to escape two gamekeepers resulted in him falling into the river.[505]

A verdict of accidental death was recorded, although one gamekeeper admitted pointing his gun at Knight as he fell into the river. The gamekeeper claimed he did this so that Knight could grab the barrel of the gun and escape. Shortly after

[504] CRO MS. P162/8/1: Twelve Men's book, St Neot (1821-1855).
[505] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 8 Jan 1836.

the inquest the gamekeeper committed suicide.[506] On the second occasion son Richard Knight was convicted in a dispute over moorland rights that went to court in the 1840s.[507]

Figure 7.1. The occupiers of Lestow Farm in St Neot, 1841-1911.



By the 1851 census Lestow was being farmed by Peter's son Thomas Knight, who lived at the farm with his sister Mary and brother Richard. All were single and in their 40s. Another brother, John Knight became a small farmer and mine labourer at Jenkin's Tenement which adjoined Lestow. Brothers Richard and Thomas left the farm for Canada in about 1852, possibly influenced by older brother William Knight who had emigrated there before 1851.[508] Shortly

[506] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 22 Jan 1836.
[507] *West Briton,* 5 Aug. 1842.
[508] CRO MS. P162/8/1: Twelve Men's book, St Neot (1821-1855).

afterwards their sister Mary married Richard Tooker from neighbouring Fawton Farm.

The Tookers remained childless so they required substantial hired labour throughout their tenancy. In 1861 the labour force consisted of two male farm servants, one female servant and a farm labourer. When Richard Tooker died in 1879, Christopher and Sophia Arthur took over the farm. Sophia was the daughter of Martha Knight, Mary's sister, while her husband was nephew of Sophia Knight's husband (also called Christopher Knight). Sophia was another of Mary's sisters. When the younger Christopher Arthur died in 1902 his widow Sophia took over the running of the farm.

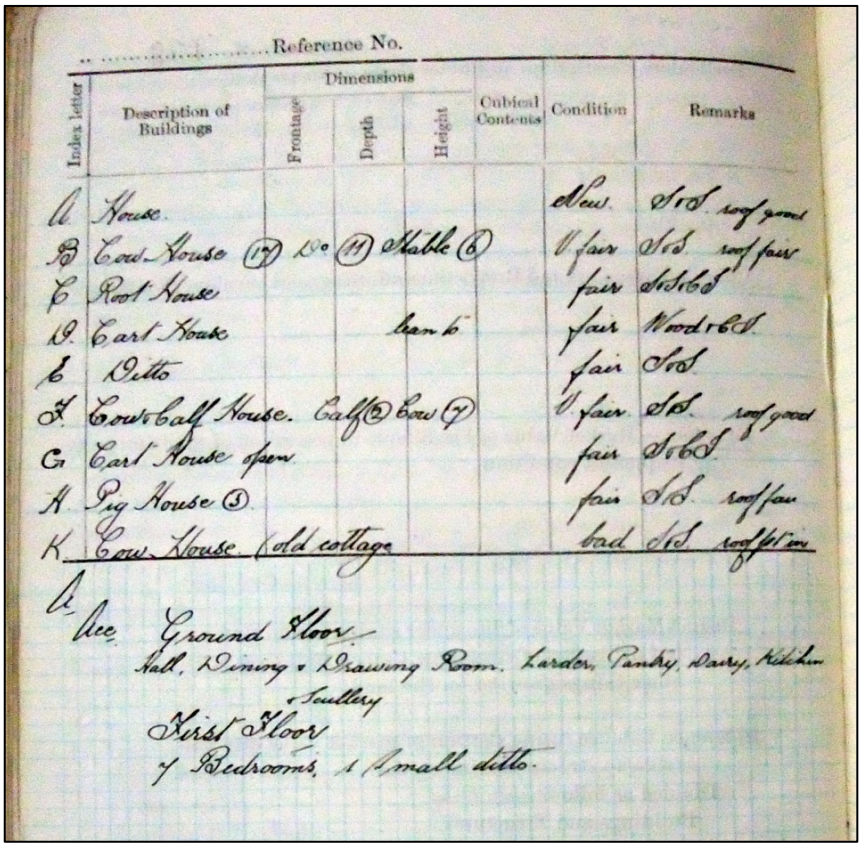
Ownership of the farm changed in 1906 when it was sold by the Grylls family of St Neot, the parish's largest landowner for most of the nineteenth century. The vicar of St Neot, Rev. W Majendie, bought it for £2,800.[509] The sale was a precursor to the sale of all remaining land in St Neot owned by the Grylls family in 1916.[510] Lestow was originally part of the Manor of Trenay Fawton and had been owned by the Grylls family, partly then wholly, for around 300 years.

On buying Lestow, Majendie immediately let it on a 14-year term to the sitting tenant Sophia Arthur, for an annual rent of £123 11s. This was a substantial increase on the £100 rent previously charged and probably reflected the improving situation of farming in Cornwall. However, the rent increase was

[509] NA MS. IR 58/72097-72013: Board of Inland Revenue, Valuation Office Field Books, St Neot (1910).
[510] CRO MS. AD1512/10: Sale catalogue, Lewarne Estate, St Neot (1916).

perhaps also partly due to the building of a new seven-bedroomed house at the farm. The Duties on Land survey in 1910 described Lestow as a 'compact arable farm', with a comprehensive range of fair or very fair farm buildings, which included accommodation for at least 35 cows, six horses, two calves and three pigs. The only building in poor condition was an old cottage converted to a shed housing an unstated number of further cows.

Figure 7.2. In 1910 Sophia Knight Arthur ran the 147-acre 'compact arable farm' of Lestow. It had housing for 35 cows, making it one of the larger livestock farms in St Neot.[511]



Reference No.

Index letter	Description of Buildings	Dimensions: Frontage	Dimensions: Depth	Dimensions: Height	Cubical Contents	Condition	Remarks
A	House					New	S of S. roof good
B	Cow House (17)	20	(11)	Stable (6)		V fair	S of S. roof fair
C	Root House					fair	S of S & T
D	Cart House			barn 6		fair	Wood & T
E	Ditto					fair	S of S
F	Cow & Calf House.	Calf (2)	Cow (7)			V fair	S of S. roof good
G	Cart House open					fair	S & T
H	Pig House (3)					fair	S of S. roof fair
K	Cow House (old cottage					bad	S of S. roof fair in

A Acc. Ground Floor
Hall, Dining & Drawing Room, Larder, Pantry, Dairy, Kitchen & Scullery
First Floor
7 Bedrooms & Small ditto.

Sophia ran the farm in partnership with her eldest son William. Younger son Frank also worked on the farm, together with one adult daughter whose job was 'dairy work'. Another daughter lived at home but worked as a schoolteacher,

511 NA MS. IR 58/72097-72013: Board of Inland Revenue, Valuation Office Field Books, St Neot (1910).

while a third daughter was married to a neighbouring farmer at Fawton. Two live-in farm servants completed the farm labour force: Cyril Nottle, a 15-year-old horseman, and Bessie Crapp, a 19-year-old domestic servant.[512]

7.4 The persistence of farm service and its influence on kinship patterns

In 1911 there were still 54 male farm servants and female servants working on St Neot's farms. They had disappeared from many of the smaller holdings but continued to be employed on larger farms, particularly where there was insufficient family labour available. Despite having three adult children working at Lestow, the farm was large enough to warrant two farm servants as well.

Farm service was particularly important for young males and females during the period of transition from childhood to marriage and setting up home. In 1851 two-thirds of male farm servants in St Neot were under 21. Farm service was also by far the biggest form of employment for males in this age group, accounting for 44% of all in occupations and 75% of employment on farms in St Neot (excluding farmers' sons). The second highest was craft apprentices who made up 14% of all in occupations in 1851.

Despite the decline in numbers of farm servants during the second half of the nineteenth century, they remained important for young people into the

[512] Cyril Nottle was one of a number of young men from the parish who were killed in World War I. He died on 20 July 1916 and is buried at Amara War Cemetery in Iraq. He was a fifth generation Nottle in St Neot, descended from the families who began to enclose moorland in the early nineteenth century.

twentieth century. In 1911 male farm servants still made up 41% of all aged under 21 in employment in St Neot and 90% of all under-21s employed on farms (again excluding farmers' sons). The halving of absolute numbers during the period, from 52 to 27, was matched by the overall decline in hired farm labour. The reduction was probably influenced by the removal of children under 14 from the labour force in the 1870s. In 1851 these younger servants accounted for one-third of all farm servants.

The continuing use of farm servants in Cornwall was one factor in the persistence of tight local kinship patterns. As was discussed earlier, some medieval and early modern historians noted that farm service was a factor in weak kinship patterns in England, mainly because of the large distances many servants travelled from the family home to place of work. This distance increased both future working horizons and geographical spread of marriage partners. Hiring fairs had a big impact on the long distances travelled. For example, Macfarlane argued that the long distances travelled by most farm servants were a big factor influencing the relatively weak kinship links in Westmorland parishes.[513] However, research undertaken for this thesis, and also Kussmaul's wider study uncovered no evidence of such fairs in Cornwall.[514]

The two farm servants at Lestow in 1911 both came from labouring households situated just over a mile from the farm. As most servants were young and single,

[513] Macfarlane, A., 'The myth of the peasantry: family and economy in a northern parish', in Smith, R. M., (ed.), *Land, Kinship and Life-Cycle* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 333-349.
[514] Kussmaul, A., *Servants in History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 60.

the local horizons of work contributed to the local marriage patterns. One farm servant, William Burnett from St Neot wrote a journal that provides an insight into the life in service during the middle part of the nineteenth century.[515] He was born in St Neot in 1836, the sixth child and third son of William and Elizabeth Hancock. The family lived in a cottage at Rows that adjoined Lestow Farm.

William's father was a stonemason who worked on building projects across a surprisingly wide area on and around Bodmin Moor. He was prosperous enough to employ a number of masons including his two eldest sons, although the journal described the family as being poor. William junior also began working for his father at the age of seven, and wrote how he often walked three or more miles to the place of work and then worked 12 hours a day, for six days a week.

After four years, at the age of 11, William's father could not keep employing him and his parents decided to send him to work in farm service. The first farmer he worked for was also a livestock dealer and William spent much of his time moving cattle. However, it was not a great success and, after attempting to run away twice, he moved to another farm 15 months later. At only 12 years of age, having already been working for five years, he took his second position as a farm servant with the Kent family, who farmed at Lewarne in St Neot. Elderly farmer Robert Kent tenanted the farm, but his two adult sons, one married and one a bachelor ran it. As well as farm work William was given the task of reading the

[515] CRO MS. FS/3/1672: William Burnett of St Neot and Singleton, Australia (1915).

weekly *West Briton* newspaper to the elderly father. Robert Kent died in 1850 but his two sons Richard and Joseph continued to farm together in St Neot for 40 years, first at Lewarne and then later at Woodland.

The *West Briton* was Cornwall's main liberal-supporting newspaper, and was particularly popular among farmers and Methodists. It was perhaps surprising that William was able to read given that he began work at the age of seven. For that he had to thank the Bible Christians who had built a small chapel at Ley in the 1830s. His parents were staunch Anglicans who, according to Burnett, had no time for Methodists. However, one of the journeymen masons who worked for William Burnett senior was a Bible Christian who took William to the Sunday School at Ley Chapel where he received a rudimentary education. He had hoped to go the parish school in St Neot but his parents decided they could not afford it.

Instead, Burnett became an apprentice blacksmith for Jeremiah Rundle at Ley. Unfortunately Burnett was dismissed from the apprenticeship due to disagreements over the time he was spending in the beer shop at Ley (locally known as a kiddleywink) and he decided to emigrate to Australia. Unspecified family problems temporarily put paid to this plan and a friend took Burnett's place on the boat (incidentally this friend also travelled and set up home in Australia under his name so emigration lists have the wrong person).

William Burnett senior died in 1855 following an accident during the construction of St Pinnock railway viaduct (situated at the southern boundary of St Neot adjacent to the River Fowey) and William Burnett junior finally achieved

his ambition to emigrate to Australia in 1859. By then he was married to Melinda Kent who he had got to know while working as a farm servant for her father. It was common for farm servants to meet their future spouses while working in farm service. However, it was less usual for the children of the largest farmers to marry servants of lower social status.

Although there was a relatively flat social structure in St Neot, there was still a definite hierarchy and, according to Burnett, Melinda Kent's parents were not pleased that she was marrying the son of a relatively poor craftsman. The Kents were among the relatively small number of larger farmers in St Neot whose offspring tended to marry within their own social group (although one branch subsequently became successful blacksmiths at Ley). Despite their disquiet at the liaison the Kents paid for a drinks reception at the Carlyon Arms after the marriage ceremony at St Neot parish church, followed by a 'sumptuous meal' at the Kents' farmhouse that was 'enjoyed by all and sundry'. Burnett described how on the morning of the wedding he had proudly walked the mile from his family home to the farm of his bride where he had been a servant.

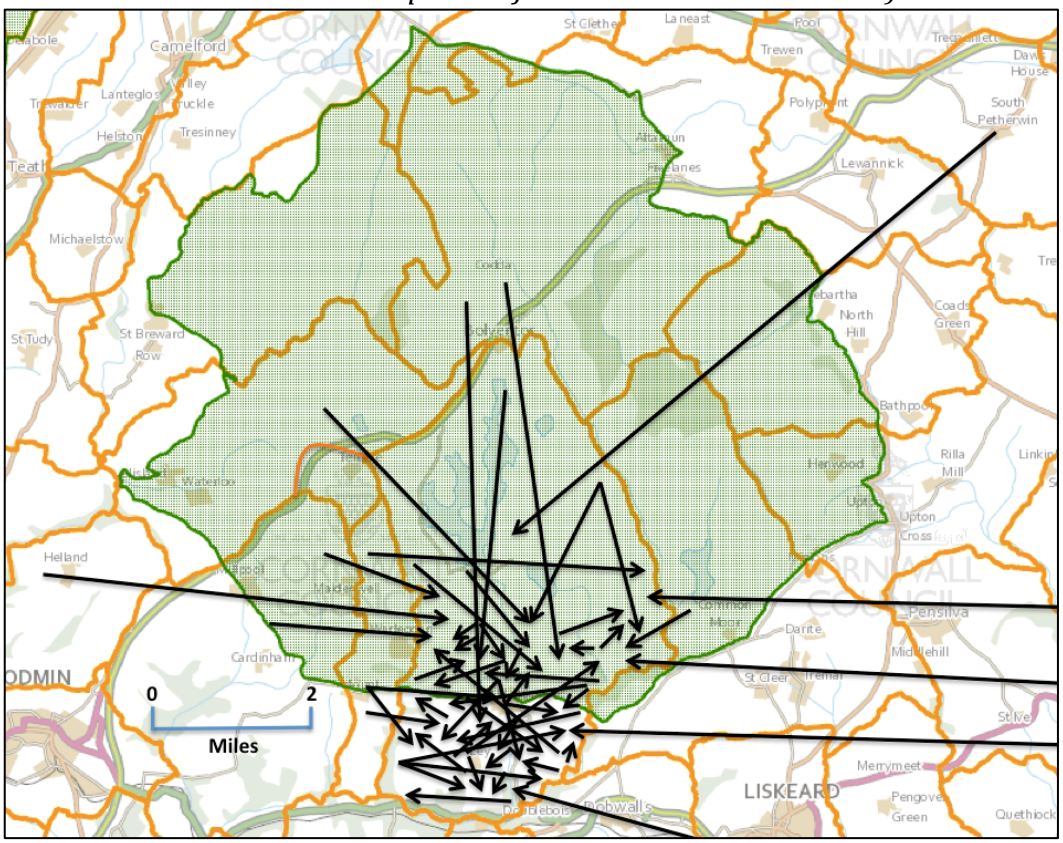
Like the servants at Lestow and most others in the district, Burnett moved only a short distance to begin his period in farm service. Analysis of the origins of 56 male farm servants in St Neot in 1851 revealed that almost three-quarters of them moved from home to farm entirely within the parish.[516] The average

[516] Parental home information was unavailable for eight servants due to the older age of some servants or other factors such as illegitimate children whose parental home could not be located. Six of these eight servants were born in St Neot.

distance travelled from parental home to place of work was 2.6 miles. However, this average was overly influenced by a small number of servants who travelled long distances and the median distance was just 1.8 miles (Figure 7.3).

Servants might have generally found their positions close to the parental home but they rarely worked on farms of close kin. The reason for this could be found in the social status of farm servants. In 1851 most servants worked on large or medium-sized farms but their parents were generally smaller farmers, craftsmen or labourers, as was the case with William Burnett. The families on the largest farms were least likely to send their children into service as they were usually provided with work on their own farms.

Figure 7.3. Movement of male farm servants from parental home to place of work in St Neot in 1851. Each arrow represents the direction and distance of movement from each servant's parental home in 1851 and the farm of residence (it is possible there were other intermediate places of work that are not included).



There were some farm servants who did work for close relatives, such as William Cawrse from one of St Neot's most prosperous farming families who was a servant for his uncle. William Wilton was a servant on his grandfather's farm, and Richard Knight was a farm servant for his brother. However, there were often specific family reasons for such placements and these cases made up less than 10% of the total.

This was consistent with studies elsewhere: in 1851 Devon, Verney and Few discovered that in the parishes of Bulkworthy and Morthoe under 10% and 15% respectively of farm servants were related to the farmer or his spouse.[517] Laslett also found a similar situation existed in early modern England.[518] The significance of farm service in relation to kinship in Cornwall appears to have been that in most cases farm servants moved relatively short distances from home to place of work, frequently married someone who also lived close to the place of work, and then usually set up home (at least initially) in the same vicinity.

As a result, when farm servants married and set up home they lived close to their parents and siblings. For example, farm labourer's son Henry Masters was a servant at Woodland Farm in St Neot in 1851, about two miles from his parental home at Rows. In 1853 he married carpenter's daughter Margaret Cowls from nearby Pantersbridge in St Neot. Henry and Margaret then set up home in

[517] Verney, C. and Few, J., 'Is blood thicker than water? Farm servants and the family in nineteenth-century north Devon', *Local Population Studies,* 91.1 (2013), pp. 10-26.
[518] Laslett, P., 'The history of the family', in Laslett, P. and Wall, R. (eds.), *Household and Family in Past Time* (1972), pp. 56-58.

Pantersbridge and remained a labouring family in St Neot until they were both buried on the same day in St Neot in March 1910 aged 78 and 77 respectively.

In 1841 Daniel Bray was a 10-year-old farm servant for Richard Vosper who rented a large acreage on Bodmin Moor for grazing livestock. Daniel's father Richard Bray was a herdsman for Richard Vosper at Codda Farm near Bolventor in 1841, but by 1851 was tenant at Codda employing three labourers. By then Daniel had become a farm servant for William Worden at Wenmouth in St Neot. Two years later he married Hannah Keast whose family lived at Berrydown which was about half a mile away from Wenmouth. After his marriage Daniel became a farm labourer at St Luke's in St Neot. By 1871 he had taken over the tenancy of Codda from his father where he stayed until his death in 1898. When Hannah died in 1900 their son Stephen took over the tenancy of the 433-acre farm.

About a mile away from Hannah's parental home, first cousin Priscilla Keast was one of the small number of servants who worked for a close relative. In her case she was employed by her uncle Robert Keast, who in 1851 was a retired farmer at Trenant. Priscilla's own father had been evicted from his farm at Draynes in 1848 and by 1851 was a pauper at nearby Diddylake (eviction discussed on page 209). In 1854 Priscilla married James Allen who was a farm servant for Grace Keast (Priscilla's aunt) at Higher Draynes, about half a mile from Trenant. After marriage James became a copper miner at Draynes.

Sometimes being in service close to the parental home had distinct benefits. When servant Mary Wilton was assaulted by her employer at South Draynes Farm in 1867 she was able to return quickly to the family home a mile from the farm. According to details of the resulting court action, Mary had been accused of letting the farmer's son into the house late at night against the instructions of her employer. As a result, Mary was turned out of the farmhouse partially clothed at 4am and was forced to walk home in the driving rain. The farmer was fined 20s with 18s 6d costs.[519]

Daniel Bray and Henry Masters were typical of the majority of male farm servants who had traditionally gone on to become farm labourers or farmers. However, from the late 1830s onwards increasing numbers of Bodmin Moor farm servants like James Allen turned to copper mining as it offered the prospect of higher wages and a potential small fortune if they struck lucky. Unfortunately, it was also a fragile living from job security and personal safety perspectives and both these factors were to have a dramatic impact on kinship patterns as the century progressed. As we shall see, James and Priscilla Allen were soon to become two of the many tragic victims of that fragility.

7.5 Mining and kinship after 1851

For generations the inhabitants of St Neot had repeated a story, said to have originated from Saint Neot himself, that a rich green lode would one day be

[519] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 9 May 1867. The newspaper report gave the name of the farmer as J. Lanyon, but family reconstitution suggests his name was Thomas Lanyon and the son was John Lanyon.

discovered that would prove to be a source of immense wealth. James Michell, a tax collector and farmer who moved to St Neot in the 1820s repeated the legend in his history of St Neot, published in 1833.[520] In the book he also criticised London investors for their 'wild and desperate' speculation in South American joint-stock companies, which 'enriched their proponents but involved many unfortunate and imprudent shareholders and their families in irretrievable ruin'. Their time and money would be better spent investing in the promising lodes in St Neot, he said.

In fact a 'rich green lode' was not to be discovered in St Neot, but just four years after Michell wrote his prophetic words rich deposits of copper were discovered less than three miles away in the adjacent parishes of St Cleer and Linkinhorne. The discovery of copper in the Caradon area in 1837 resulted in a massive growth in mining activity that peaked in the 1850s and 1860s. In 1841 there were 300 miners living in Bodmin Moor parishes, but by 1851 the total had risen to 1,185 and reached 1,790 in 1861. A majority were copper miners, but there were also tin, lead and even gold miners.

The copper rush was concentrated in St Cleer and Linkinhorne, but speculation quickly spread to many other parts of the moor. Some mines made fortunes for their adventurers but many more were active briefly and/or sporadically. It was also a short-lived bonanza, with cheaper New World copper production leading to a collapse in the market for Cornish copper in the late 1860s.

[520] Michell, J., *Parochial History of St Neot in Cornwall* (Bodmin, 1833), pp. 16-17.

There had, in fact, been copper mining on the fringes of the moor for decades prior to 1837. In St Neot, Wheal Mary began production in the eighteenth century but had been closed for more than 50 years before having a new lease of life in 1826. It closed again in 1830 before opening for another three years in 1836, and then for a more sustained period from 1842 to the 1860s.[521]

Between 1828 and 1851 it sold 709 tons of copper for £56,393. In the 1840s Wheal Sisters opened to the east of Wheal Mary and produced 238 tons of copper worth £16,257. In 1848 the two mines merged operations. These were among the few successful mines in St Neot at the time, but their returns paled into insignificance compared with the biggest in Caradon. Between them South and West Caradon mines produced copper worth almost £1m between 1838 and 1856.[522]

Unfortunately for the adventurers and miners, a greater number of mines failed, especially outside St Cleer and Linkinhorne parishes. A typical example of unsuccessful speculation was Wheal Victoria copper mine, which opened in Draynes Woods in St Neot in 1844. It ceased production in 1846 when investment funds ran out before any profitable copper was found. However, the management committee remained optimistic and a prospectus for Wheal Victoria was issued in the spring of 1851, which was full of praise for the mine's wonderful prospects.

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[521] Axford, E.C., *Bodmin Moor* (Newton Abbot, 1975), pp. 161-162.
[522] Phillips, J.A. and Darlington, J., *Records of Mining and Metallurgy* (London, 1857), p. 257.

Seven mine agents put their names to the prospectus. Captain James Osborne of Wheal Venton mine near Liskeard claimed that, 'the sett is extensive, the situation good, the lodes unquestionably the same that have proved so productive to the east of it'. Captain Robert Dunstan of the West Caradon mine noted the plentiful supply of water from the adjacent river and the presence of eight promising parallel lodes. Finally Captain James Richards claimed 'very little doubt remains of it becoming a profitable concern'.[523]

Figure 7.4 Remains of Wheal Victoria copper mine in Draynes Woods. Like many smaller mines if failed to live up to expectations and finally closed in 1855.



A summary of the prospectus was published in a Manchester newspaper in an attempt to entice northern investors. Unfortunately the experts were all wrong. Despite raising enough money to reopen the mine in 1851, the new adventurers

[523] *Manchester Times*, 16 April 1851.

made nothing and the mine closed for good in 1855. This did not stop other unsuccessful attempts to find fortune under the soil of St Neot.

The impact of mining speculation on employment in St Neot was significant. Census records show that the number of tin and copper miners and associated workers in the parish rose from just 15 in 1841 to reach 67 in 1851 and 114 in 1861. By the latter year mines were employing 25% of St Neot's male population, as well as a small number of women doing surface jobs. In neighbouring St Cleer the impact of mine investment was spectacular: the population increased from just under 1,000 to almost 4,000 between 1831 and 1861, with more than half of all employment being in mines in the 1850s.

Initially there were two distinct groups of miners, but the boundaries between them became blurred very quickly. The first group were the miners attracted to Bodmin Moor from other mining districts, chiefly in mid and west Cornwall where some mines were already in decline. A few miners also arrived from Tavistock in Devon, but many of these were also of Cornish origin. The second group of miners were children of the farmers and labourers of the district, attracted by the potential high income from mining.

This attraction was boosted by the tribute system, which was common in many mines. Miners known as tributers worked specific parts of the mine in small teams. They were paid according to the value of the ore raised. Teams of tributers would bid against each other, usually every two months, for the right to mine a specific lode. Their bids would be in terms of being paid a percentage of

the sale value of the ore mined. If tributers bid for a high share of the sale value this would signify a poorer potential lode. Sometimes, however, tributers would get lucky and make a large profit. This would soon be whittled down at the next bidding round as other miners attempted to gain access to successful lodes.

Some writers have claimed this system made capitalists out of the miners, and was one reason why industrial action was less common in the mines of Cornwall compared with other areas. Rule referred to this as 'quietism'.[524] Many of the tribute groups consisted of members of the same family and this is perhaps one reason why extended kinship groups of miners frequently moved together to St Neot and other Bodmin Moor parishes. Deacon noted from nineteenth-century parliamentary enquiries into working conditions in mines that most young miners across mid and west Cornwall worked with their fathers or other relatives.[525]

Despite the influx of miners from other parts of Cornwall, a majority of miners in St Neot came from local agricultural families. At the 1861 census approximately one-third of miners came from mid and west Cornwall with the rest originating in St Neot or a parish close by. Successive censuses also show how many of these individuals moved between occupations as mines opened and closed. The short-lived copper boom provided a higher paid option than farm labouring, and possibly even better than the income from running a small farm. A miner typically received about 15s a week, double the rate for farm labourers. Young

[524] Rule, J., *Cornish Cases* (Southampton, 2006), pp. 222-241.
[525] Deacon, B., *From a Cornish Study, Essays on Cornish Studies and Cornwall* (Redruth, 2017), p. 110.

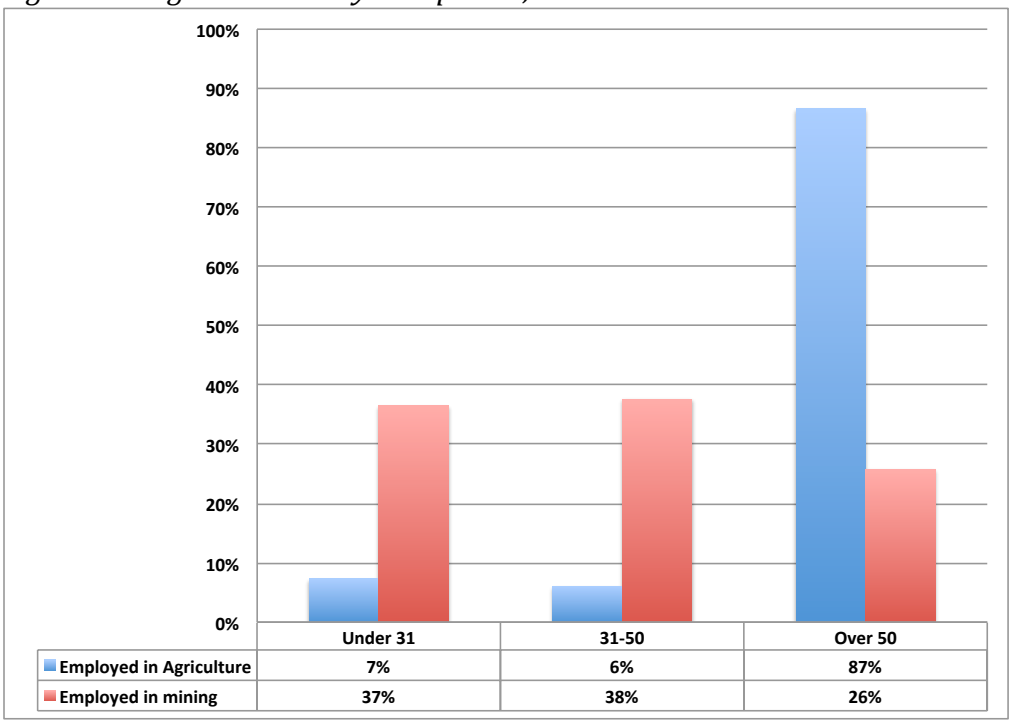
men in particular began to gravitate towards copper mining and larger farmers reported shortages of labour, particularly at peak times. Conversely, mine captains (people in charge of operations at mines) occasionally complained of labour shortages at key agricultural times such as harvest.

However, the attraction of copper mining came at a huge price as miners began to die in large numbers at a very young age. The first person to measure this trend was John Berkeley, the vicar of St Cleer. From 1844 to 1862 he recorded and compared the ages at death of almost 200 adult males - including 82 agricultural workers and 93 copper miners - who were buried in the parish. The difference was significant: the average age at burial of St Cleer's agricultural workers was 66, while that of miners was just 38.

Berkeley presented evidence of his findings to a parliamentary commission in 1862 when he described how miners' health deteriorated rapidly once they became ill. 'From 18 to 25 I think they are generally fine specimens of men, superior in their appearance, and you would judge them to be physically stronger than men of the same age engaged in agricultural operations. But I think that after that they go down the hill much more rapidly, especially if they in any way get any cold.'[526]

[526] *Parliamentary Papers 1864* [3389], *Report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the condition of all mines in Great Britain* pp. 448-450.

Figure 7.5. Ages at death by occupation, St Cleer 1844-1862



	Under 31	31-50	Over 50
Employed in Agriculture	7%	6%	87%
Employed in mining	37%	38%	26%

He said that miners who looked ill would say 'the pipes are stuffed', meaning their bronchial tubes were blocked making breathing difficult. Berkeley added that he was not aware of a single case of a miner past the age of 21 or 22 recovering his health after becoming ill. The committee quizzed both Berkeley and a local surgeon about the possible causes. Miners' diets, damp housing and poor sanitary conditions were considered possible factors, while miners themselves attributed their suffering to bad air.

In fact the miners were closer to the truth because it was the copper dust in the air that was giving them miners' phthisis leading to early death. Closest to the truth was perhaps Christopher Thorpe, mine captain at Wheal Mary in St Neot. He had moved to the parish from Clay Cross, a coal-mining district in Derbyshire, and he told the commission that he believed the miners were getting portions of

rock on their lungs as well as inhaling bad air. The situation regarding dust in copper mines was far worse than in coal mines, he said.

The impact on local communities of so many miners dying young was devastating. In St Neot the hamlet of Draynes had increased in size from 11 to 16 households between 1851 and 1861. In 1851 a majority of household heads were farmers or farm labourers but by 1861 more than half were copper miners. Most heads were from longstanding local agricultural families, but a few were from other parts of Cornwall. Between early 1866 the middle of 1870 four of the household heads in Draynes who were copper miners died. In a tragic twist of fate the widows of the first two miners to die then married the second two miners who died shortly afterwards.

In February 1866 and at the age of 34 Edward Leavis became the first of the copper miners in the hamlet to die. He had been a farm labourer in 1851 and became a copper miner some time during the 1850s. He died just after the birth of his fifth child and one year later his widow married copper miner and widower Richard Jane, in the process becoming stepmother to his seven children. Shortly afterwards they added another child but in less than a year Richard was also dead.

Within a few weeks of Edward Leavis's death his next-door neighbour James Allen was also dead. He had been a farm servant in St Neot in 1841 and 1851, and married farmer's daughter Priscilla Keast in 1854. By the time their first child was born in 1856 he had become a copper miner. After his death and with

three young children to support Priscilla quickly married again, this time to her first cousin Joseph Keast who was also a copper miner in Draynes.

Like Richard Jane, Joseph was also a widower and Priscilla inherited his two children from his first marriage. They soon had a child of their own but disaster struck Priscilla again in the spring of 1870 when Joseph died. He was 40 and Priscilla never remarried. Instead she shared a house with relatives in Draynes before eventually moving to live with her eldest son in St Cleer.

There were at least two more deaths of young copper miners from Draynes district. William Mallett Barnecut died at Draynes Bridge in December 1865. He was 28 and left a widow and young son behind. His older brother John Davey Barnecut died a few years later at the age of 39. Their parents were small farmers in the district who had eight children in total, four of whom predeceased them and three who emigrated to the United States.

The deaths of James Allen, Edward Leavis and William Mallett Barnecut happened just as copper production was passing its peak, and the collapse of Bodmin Moor mining was if anything even more dramatic than the expansion thirty years earlier. Rising production of copper in Chile, Cuba, Australia and the United States precipitated a collapse in Cornish production that hit hard from 1866 onwards. Output of Cornish copper ore fell from 160,000 tonnes in 1865, to 80,000 tonnes in 1870 and just 40,000 in 1880. It was a situation repeated

across Cornwall, with an estimated 11,400 miners losing their jobs in the 18 months after May 1866.[527]

On Bodmin Moor some of the larger copper mines remained profitable for a while, and tin production was more resilient, so that in 1871 there were still 1,450 people employed in mining. By 1881 this had fallen to 920, and in 1891 there were 568 mineworkers in Bodmin Moor parishes. Most of the mineworkers in 1891 were tin miners, with just 20 copper miners remaining according to the census.

Newspapers were flooded with advertisements for the sale of mines or mine equipment, many of them containing an over-optimistic assessment of the continuing potential of mines. Mining expert Edward Pascoe said 'I never saw a finer lode so near the surface' when he reported on the potential for Wheal Coryton mine in St Neot (also known as Killham Mine) in 1872.[528] A total of 36 adventurers, many of them ordinary St Neot miners, attempted to make a success of the mine but they failed and it closed in 1875.[529] A year later the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* reported that all deep mining had ceased in St Neot. This included recently operating mines at Hobb's Hill, Northwood, Tregeagle, Tremaddock and Ambrose Lake.[530]

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[527] *West Briton,* 27 Dec 1867.
[528] CRO MS. LC/viii/23: Report on Wheal Coryton Mine (otherwise Killham) by Edward Pascoe (June 1872).
[529] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 20 July 1872.
[530] *Royal Cornwall Gazette,* 22 Jan 1876.

There were further sporadic attempts to exploit remaining tin reserves when prices rose, such as in the mid-1900s. Most ventures were small in scale but in 1906 the St Neot Mining Syndicate began more significant operations in the south of the parish about a mile from Killham mine. However, like most ventures it suffered from lack of capital and the syndicate's mine was reputedly the last in Cornwall of any size to be operated entirely by hand labour, with no mechanical rock drills being employed.[531]

Figure 7.6. Looking towards Killham Woods from Treverbyn. In the 1870s Wheal Coryton mine on the edge of the woods was the subject of glowing reports but it closed in 1875. A year later all other mines in St Neot were also closed.



As well as declining employment levels, mining communities became notorious for the proportion of households with children headed by lone women. Many of

[531] Hamilton Jenkin, A.K., *Mines and Miners of Cornwall, Vol. XII* (Truro, 1966), p.14.

these women were widows of miners who had fallen victim to dust poisoning, and others were wives of miners who had moved overseas without their families following the collapse of Cornish mining in the late 1860s.[532] Between 1851 and 1891 the proportion of households in St Neot headed by women more than doubled from 8.3% to 19.5%.

In St Cleer the proportion of households headed by women was even higher, reaching 22% in 1881 and more than 30% ten years later. However in some places the proportion of households headed by women exceeded 50%, such as the St Cleer community of Tremar Coombe where 63% of the 48 households in 1891 had female heads. Two-thirds of female heads were widows and most of the remainder were married women with husbands working away. Only 29% of households in Tremar Coombe in 1891 could be classified as nuclear.

Many of the households headed by women contained extended kin, helping wives with absent husbands to cope. In Tremar Coombe in 1891 Hannah Stantan's household contained an aunt, cousin, sister-in-law and brother-in-law. Her husband was absent. Close by lived widow Elizabeth Harris whose copper miner husband had died before 1881. In that census she lived with her two young children as well her mother and sister. By 1891 she was living with her sister and one son who was now aged 15 and working as a tin miner.

[532] Trotter, L., '19th century emigration from Cornwall as experienced by the wives "left behind"' (University of Exeter University Ph.D. thesis, 2015).

Figure 7.7. In 1891 almost two-thirds of the 48 household heads in Tremar Coombe were women (photograph undated but probably early twentieth century).



Some female heads looked after grandchildren as well as children, often when the parents of the grandchildren were working away from Cornwall. In 1881 widow Joanna Soady lived with her son, daughter and granddaughter in St Cleer. Her former husband Joseph Soady had followed a typical career path for the district with subsequent censuses showing him as a labourer, then farm bailiff at Wortha in St Neot before becoming a copper miner. Joseph had been one of the copper miners in the hamlet of Draynes in 1861 before moving the short distance to St Cleer in the mid-1860s. He died in 1876. Joanne's neighbour, Jane Ann Cowling also had children and grandchildren living with her. Her husband George (whose parents had also farmed at Wortha in St Neot) was absent while one of her daughters living with her was also married with the husband elsewhere. Jane Cowling was described as a copper miner's wife and her

husband was probably overseas as he could not be located in the 1881 UK census.

7.6 Migration and kinship after 1870

While it became common for Cornish miners to work overseas or elsewhere in England and Wales and send money back to families in Cornwall, it was more usual for entire families to emigrate from Bodmin Moor communities. As we have seen, emigration had been significant from these communities from the early nineteenth century, but the scale increased dramatically in the late 1860s and 1870s as mining declined. Skilled Cornish miners were in high demand around the world and it was often the most able who left, leaving behind the poorest and oldest members of communities.

Philip Payton described the great migration of the 1870s as the culmination of an 'emigration culture' that had developed in Cornwall over many decades. According to Payton this phenomenon was preceded by a 'culture of mobility' within Cornwall, and enabled by a sophisticated 'emigration trade' that encompassed 'government officials, shipping agents, shipbuilders, local provisioners, newspapers, printers, publications, learned societies, coaching operators, clergymen, solicitors and a host of other public and business interests'.[533]

[533] Payton, P., *The Cornish Overseas* (Fowey, 2005 edn.), pp. 16-17.

The departures from St Neot followed a similar pattern to the rest of Cornwall, with Australia, New Zealand, the United States, South Africa and the north of England dominating. As with migration of miners into the St Neot district in the 1840s, the emigrants also often departed in wider community and kinship groups. Patricia Lay noted how in New South Wales the migration of families, friends and neighbours from particular parts of Cornwall led to the creation of cohesive, clannish communities perpetuated by a tendency to intermarry within the groups. A total of 76 assisted emigrants arriving in the colony before 1877 gave their place of origin as St Neot or a surrounding parish.[534] Lay argued that the 'frontier' moorland and mining characteristics of St Neot helped equip the emigrants with skills to cope with the hardships of the interior of New South Wales. Her comments echoed some of the sentiments of the early emigrants from St Neot who left for Australia and Ontario in the 1820s and 1830s.

The departure of many residents and the consequent weakening of kinship ties had significant implications for the cohesion of local society. Anna Maria Bawden, the widow of copper miners Edward Leavis and Richard Jane discussed earlier, saw many of her children leave the parish in the 1870s. By 1881 five of her adult children and step-children had left Draynes for the Burnley district of Lancashire, joining the almost 500 Cornish families living there at the same census. Many of the families had been encouraged to go to Burnley by the agents of mine owners attempting to break strikes in the Lancashire mines.

[534] Lay, P., *One and all: The Cornish in New South Wales* (Queanbeyan, 2000), pp. 102-109.

However, Lancashire was only a staging post for many and two of Anna's children were soon on their way to North America to join other Cornish families there. One was Anna's son Matthew, who with his wife Jane eventually made their way to gold mines of California that had been a magnet for Cornish miners from the late 1840s. The death notice for Jane in the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* in 1894 was juxtaposed with other notices of deaths in Cornwall, parts of England and various places overseas. Two of the other notices were for men who had died in the gold mines of South Africa, a common destination for Cornish miners.[535]

Unfortunately the gold mines in South Africa were, if anything, even more dangerous than the copper mines of Cornwall, particularly once mechanical drills were introduced. The drills led to a big increase in lethal dust levels underground, resulting in large numbers of deaths from phthisis. A study into the deaths of Cornish miners between 1900 and 1902 who had returned to Cornwall after working in the gold mines of South Africa revealed an average age at death of 36.4 years.[536] On average they had spent just 4.7 years employed using mechanical rock drills in the Transvaal mines. Those who had been miners in Cornwall, and who also died in the same three-year period, did not fare much better, having an average age at death of 37.5 years, although the average period of mine work was 8.4 years.

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[535] *Royal Cornwall Gazette,* 11 Jan 1894.
[536] Burke, G. and Richardson, P., 'The Profits of Death: A Comparative Study of Miners' Phthisis in Cornwall and the Transvaal, 1876-1918', *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 4 (1978), pp. 147-171.

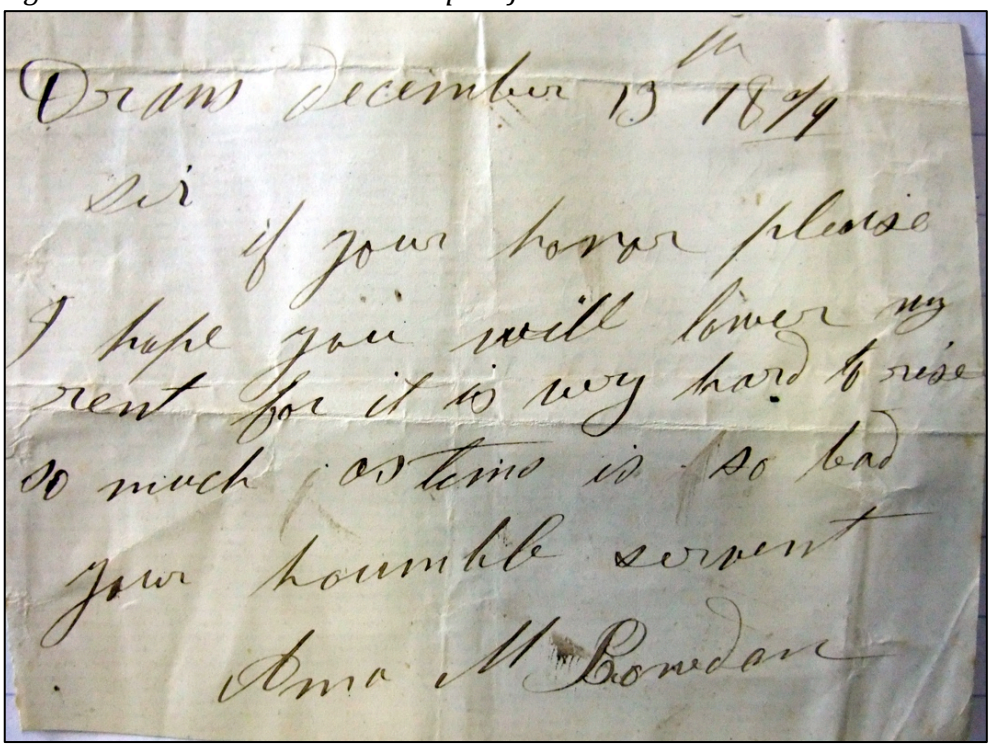
The latter age at death was, in fact, the same as recorded by John Berkeley in St Cleer between 1844 and 1862. However, what Berkeley and others had missed was that the dust was also killing female surface workers (known as *bal maidens*). Collection of death data from the early twentieth century revealed that 55 of 336 deaths from phthisis in the Camborne district between 1904 and 1912 were of women exposed to dust in the surface crushing houses.[537]

The difficulties caused by absent husbands and other family members, and the harsh economic times of the 1870s, resulted in many tenants in St Neot seeking reductions in rents. In December 1879 Anna Maria Bawden wrote to her landlord pleading for a lower rent as 'times is so bad' (Figure 7.8).[538] The 1881 census revealed that her third husband, James Bawden and their one daughter still living at home were both unemployed. The household was completed by two of her grandchildren who were the illegitimate children of two of Anna's other daughters who had moved to Lancashire.

At the same time as Anna wrote her letter, neighbour William Wilton also wrote to their landlord asking for additional time to pay off his arrears. He was a 39-year-old miner with 11 children and had built up the arrears due to a combination of illness and being owed money himself for work completed (presumably mine work). In the 1870s landlords were generally sympathetic to such pleas and the rents on both cottages were reduced from £3 to £2 10s a year.

[537] *ibid.,* p. 163.
[538] CRO MS. CY/6123: Correspondence from tenants relating to arrears and lowering of rents, West Draynes, St Neot (Dec. 1879).

Figure 7.8. Anna Maria Bawden's plea for a rent reduction in 1879.


Dear December 13th 1879

Sir

if your honor please

I hope you will lower my

rent for it is very hard to rise

so much as this is so bad

your humble servant

Anna M Bowden

The loss of kin from Bodmin Moor to destinations around the world also caused other practical difficulties. James Bray, the son of renowned Bible Christian preacher Billy Bray, built Draynes House in the hamlet of Draynes in the 1840s, shortly after his marriage to local farmer's daughter Eliza Mallett. After they emigrated to North America the property came into possession of sisters Hannah and Sarah Mallett, who were both aunts of Eliza. Sarah Mallett married miller Walter Deacon and Hannah married farm labourer Stephen Keast, and both couples remained in St Neot all their married lives.

Hannah died in 1874 and left her share of the property to eight of her children plus three children of her deceased son Thomas. As a result, there were 12 owners of the property in the late 1870s. In c.1880 Augustus Coryton, who owned all surrounding properties at Draynes, agreed to buy Draynes House for

£140.[539] However, tracking down all the owners proved to be a complicated process, made worse because some of those who inherited shares in 1874 were by then dead and had passed on ownership to some of their children. The situation was further complicated because a number of the owners were now spread across the world.

Two of Hannah's children – brothers Stephen Keast junior and George Keast – had emigrated to New Zealand, while the children of their deceased brother Thomas Keast had emigrated to Pennsylvania in the United States to join other family members already there. Two children of another deceased brother, Joseph Keast, were believed to be in Australia and one of Hannah's daughters left for Iowa shortly after the sale. Correspondence shows that great efforts were made to track down all beneficiaries of the sale, but not all relatives could be contacted and it is not clear what happened to the payments due to these people.

Another dynastic family that provides a good case study of the impact of emigration was the Wiltons who had first encroached onto land at Draynes Common in the 1820s. By 1851 there were 36 family members occupying six households situated on the moors on and around Draynes Common. Five household heads were brothers and the sixth was their father, William Henry Wilton, who had set up an illegal encroachment on the edge of Draynes Common in the 1820s. By 1851 he was a farmer of 11 acres there.

[539] CRO MS. CY/1097-1101: Draft conveyance, Draynes, St Neot (1882).

It is hard to get a picture of how the Wiltons lived as little documentary evidence has survived relating to the family. William's sons worked as tinners and farm labourers on the moors and at least some of the sons also occupied illegal encroachments. It is likely that they worked together on the small streamworks and pieces of enclosed farmland surrounding the common. The rent books for West Draynes show the attempts to recover nominal 'acknowledgement' amounts of rent – usually 1s a year – from various Wilton family members. However, even these small rents were only paid sporadically.

Figure 7.9. Looking towards Diddylake and New Closes from Draynes Common. The Wiltons began encroaching on and around the common in the 1820s.



There were occasional references to the Wiltons in St Neot's parish records that suggest theirs was a marginal existence at best. In 1824 William Wilton applied to have two of his children bound as apprentices, but the parish refused stating that there was full employment for the family. However, the parish did agree to

provide two pairs of shoes for the children. In the same year William's wife also successfully applied for financial relief and blankets for the children.[540]

An entry in the St Neot burial register in 1873 also hinted at the toughness of life on the moors: it poignantly stated that the cause of David Wilton's death at Draynes Common Cottage was 'intestines broken by spading'.[541] David was one of William's sons and paring spades were used across Cornwall as small hand ploughs to clear rough ground. They required significant physical effort to push, especially where land was being ploughed for the first time.

The marginal nature of the their existence, and the changing economic background, meant that their small moorland cottages were gradually abandoned and one by one the Wilton families departed from the moor. By 1881 all the encroachment households on Draynes Common had been abandoned, leaving just two families at nearby Diddylake. The West Draynes rent book noted two of the abandonments in 1867 and 1875 with the simple statements 'given up and destroyed' and 'house burnt down'.[542]

The departure of the Wiltons provide further evidence of the kinship networks used in migration in the second half of the nineteenth century. In virtually all cases the Wiltons left Cornwall utilising kinship rather than friendship networks.

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[540] CRO MS. P/162/8: Vestry minutes for St Neot, 1819-1855.
[541] CRO. MS. P162/1: Registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, St Neot Parish Church (1549-1996).
[542] CRO MS. CY/4005: Rent accounts for lands of Coryton family of Pentillie. (1867); CRO MS. CY/4013: Rent accounts for lands of Coryton family of Pentillie (1875).

Some of the Wiltons did stay in the local area, finding employment on farms and on some of the mines that remained active. However, more joined the exodus out of Cornwall that amounted to just under 120,000 people in the final quarter of the century, equivalent to 40% of young adult males and 25% of young adult females.[543]

Elizabeth Mary Wilton, who was born on Draynes Common in 1846, married herdsman Richard Yeo from Mennabroom Farm in St Neot and they subsequently departed, along with a wider kinship group, for the copper mines of South Australia. Meanwhile, Elizabeth's sister, Eliza Wilton went to Alberta in Canada while their uncle, John Wilton had previously emigrated to Tasmania. Brothers John and Frederick Wilton left Cornwall for the gold fields at Thames in New Zealand.[544] They left behind a third brother, Thomas James Wilton who had been blinded in an accident.[545] He married bal maiden, Loretta Coon and they became shopkeepers in St Cleer.[546] Finally another branch of the family went to the South Wales coalfield.

[543] Schwartz, S. P., 'Cornish Migration Studies: an Epistemological and Paradigmatic Critique', *Cornish Studies Second Series,* 10 (2002), pp. 136-7.
[544] I am grateful to David Wilton from Massey University for providing information on the Wiltons in New Zealand.
[545] Wilton family tradition suggests that Thomas was blinded while working in mines in America with his brothers John and Frederick, but this has not been verified.
[546] Mayers, L., *Bal Maidens: Women and Girls of the Devon and Cornwall Mines* (Penzance, 2004), p. 249.

Figure 7.10. Elizabeth Mary Wilton (second left) with husband Richard Yeo from Mennabroom in St Neot emigrated to Australia along with other Yeo family members. Thomas James Wilton (second right) who was blind married Bal Maiden Loretta Coon from St Cleer. First cousins Elizabeth and Thomas were two of the 44 grandchildren of William Henry Wilton who were born in cottage encroachments on and around Draynes Common.[547]



By 1911 there was just one Wilton family left on the West Draynes moors. Joseph Wilton farmed 62 acres at Diddylake. Most of the land was rough pasture with only 18 acres capable of being cultivated. According to the 1910 Duties on Land report Joseph worked the farm part-time and paid £15 a year for an annual tenancy. The house had three rooms downstairs and two bedrooms above. In addition there was a cow house for four cattle, a trap house, barn and piggery.[548] Joseph took over the farm in 1899 when his father, Sampson Wilton died. It is likely that Sampson, who was a tinner at Diddylake in the 1841, 1851 and 1861

[547] Photographs provided courtesy of David Wilton (Massey University, New Zealand) and Lynne Mayers.
[548] CRO MS. DV/1/66: Board of Inland Revenue Valuation Office, Duties on Land Valuation Book, St Neot and Warleggan (c. 1911).

censuses before becoming a farmer there, together with other Wilton kin undertook most of the enclosure of the farm.

Despite the dispersal of many Keast and Wilton families in the second half of the nineteenth century, there were still 18 households with Keast or Wilton surnames in St Neot in 1911, and longstanding families like theirs were still influential in the retention of high kinship links in Bodmin Moor communities into the twentieth century. So although there were 138 different surnames represented by household heads in St Neot's 242 households in 1911, just 16 longstanding dynastic surnames were represented in 103 of them (either as head surnames or spouse maiden names, see table 7.8).[549]

Of the dynastic households, 84% had first-order links within the parish, compared with under half for other households. In addition, just six of the persistent dynastic surnames – Cawrse, Crapp, Hooper, Olliver, Wills and Wilton – accounted for almost half of all kinship links in the parish, despite consisting of just 4% of all surnames. They were spread across the occupation spectrum, but with a concentration in the smaller farmer group.

The Cawrses were an exception and remained among the largest farmers in St Neot, just as they had been in 1793 and 1851. However, the Crapps had declined from more prosperous yeomen to become mostly labourers. Only Robert Crapp

[549] Dynastic was defined as the surname of a household head and/or maiden name of spouse represented in at least four households, where the surname had direct kinship connection to St Neot for at least three generations. A majority had direct dynastic links back to the eighteenth century.

from Stockhouse was a farmer. The Hoopers had expanded from a single family in St Neot in 1793 to become the most numerous and also the surname with the greatest number of kinship links. They were predominantly smaller moorland farmers, having evolved from tinners and subsistence farmers.

Table 7.8. Kinship links of households with dynastic surnames (St Neot, 1911).[550]

Dynastic households	Number of households	Number of with first-order links	% with first-order links	Total number of links	Kinship density
Cawrse	8	8	100.0%	19	2.4
Crapp	5	4	80.0%	15	3.0
Doney	4	1	25.0%	1	0.3
Hambly	4	4	100.0%	10	2.5
Harris	5	4	80.0%	7	1.4
Hooper	15	14	93.3%	49	3.3
Keast	9	5	55.6%	8	0.9
Kent	4	4	100.0%	6	1.5
Lobb	5	4	80.0%	8	1.6
Olliver	8	8	100.0%	22	2.8
Parkyn	4	2	50.0%	3	0.8
Pollard	5	3	60.0%	3	0.6
Rowe	4	4	100.0%	10	2.5
Stephens	6	5	83.3%	7	1.2
Wills	8	7	87.5%	25	3.1
Wilton	9	9	100.0%	22	2.4
Total for dynastic households	103	86	83.5%	215	2.1
Total for other households	139	69	49.6%	122	0.9
All households	242	155	64.0%	337	1.4

The three other surnames with most kinship links were all concentrated in the intersection of small farmers, craftsmen and occasional labourers. For all of

[550] Dynastic households in this table are those where the surname is represented by the name of the household head or the maiden name of the spouse. Where head and spouse both have dynastic surnames the household is listed just once under the surname of the household head.

these surnames there was a continuation in St Neot from the eighteenth century. There were also other longstanding surnames still present in St Neot in 1911, but migration meant that they had either become less numerous or had disappeared altogether. For example, the Rundles and Daveys who were among the most numerous farming families in St Neot in the early nineteenth century were reduced to one household each. Neither household had any first-order kinship links in the parish.

As already discussed, kinship links were also diluted in 1911 by the movement of more people into the parish from outside Cornwall. Half of these incomers were from Devon. Only two of the Devonians had first-order links, and both of these (a mother and son who were heads of separate households) had family links to longstanding St Neot families. Of the 12 heads born elsewhere only three had first-order links and once again these heads had historic links with St Neot.

7.7 Kinship in St Neot in 1911 and the similarity with Welsh parishes

It is difficult to fully contextualise the kinship findings for St Neot in 1911 with other places at a similar date as there have been only a small number of studies that have measured kinship levels in agricultural communities in the first half of the twentieth century. One parish where kinship was measured over a similar period to St Neot was Bulkworthy in Devon.

As discussed in chapter two, Bulkworthy shared some similarities with St Neot. In particular, it was a predominantly pastoral agricultural parish with a

dispersed population and a strong Bible Christian tradition. As such it might have been expected to have a similar pattern of kinship to St Neot. However, the differences were significant. First-order kinship links between households in Bulkworthy fell rapidly in the second half of the nineteenth century, declining from 53% in 1841 to 27% in 1871 and just 11% in 1901.[551] Comparable figures for St Neot were 75% in 1851 and 64% in 1911. Increased mobility into and out of the Bulkworthy appeared to be a key factor in declining kinship links. In 1901 only 14% of household heads were born in the parish. The corresponding figures for St Neot in 1901 was 48%.

Part of the difference in kinship patterns between the two parishes can perhaps be explained because of the dominance of smaller farms in St Neot, together with the persistence of dynastic families on those farms. Average farm size in Bulkworthy was approximately 50% larger than in St Neot, despite the greater acreage of marginal land in the latter parish. This was reflected in the different farm structures in the whole of Devon and Cornwall. In 1915 Devon had almost double the proportion of farm holdings above 100 acres compared with Cornwall (see table 7.9).[552]

If Cornwall was different from Devon, there was one place where there were remarkable similarities and that was rural Wales. In 1915 the structure of farms by farm size in Cornwall and Wales was almost identical. There were two studies

[551] Few, J., 'Faith, Fish, Farm or Family? The Impact of Kinship Links and Communities on Migration Choices and Residential Persistence in North Devon 1841-1901' (University of Exeter Ph.D. thesis, 2009), p. 159.
[552] Collins, E.J.T. (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol. VII 1850-1914, Part 1* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 1807.

of rural Welsh parishes that revealed some of the similarities with St Neot. Both places were large upland parishes with dispersed populations dominated by small farms. David Jenkins analysed kinship in Troedyraur in Cardigan at the beginning of the twentieth century.[553] He described, but did not measure, a web of kinship links that would have been just as familiar to inhabitants of St Neot.

In Troedyraur, most people described and defined other individuals in terms of their kin affiliations. This was done not simply to more clearly identify a person, but to also attribute a social identity that was bound up in that person's kinship background. That would also involve defining the kin group according to their social status, principally as farmers on the one hand or craftsmen and labourers on the other. This would be recognised and noted even if the individual had moved from one social group to the other.

Table 7.9. Farm sizes in 1915 in Cornwall, Wales and Devon.[554]

Holding size	Cornwall	Wales	Devon
< 50 acres	71.5%	70.0%	55.4%
50 - 100 acres	14.9%	17.1%	18.5%
> 100 acres	13.6%	12.9%	26.1%
Total farm holdings	13,640	60,716	17,281

However, the obligations and involvement of kin beyond the nuclear family tended - like in St Neot - to be restricted to significant events such as family crises or providing assistance with moving to a different farm or property. In both places it was close kin who cared for children who had lost one or both

[553] Jenkins, D., *The Agricultural Community in South-West Wales at the turn of the Twentieth Century* (Cardiff, 1971), pp. 157-178.
[554] Collins, E.J.T. (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol. VII 1850-1914, Part 1* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 1807 and 1813.

parents or where parents were unable to cope for some reason. On a day-to-day basis co-operation was as likely to be between neighbours or friends who might or might not have also been close kin.

In the second Welsh study first-order kinship was measured in 1939 for the parish of Llanfihangel yng Ngwynfa in Montgomery.[555] Just like St Neot in 1911, Alwyn Rees discovered that almost two-thirds of households had first-order links with other households in the parish. Although this study related to links measured 28 years after the measurement kinship links in in St Neot, the background conditions were similar for both parishes. The structure of the parish's 114 farm holdings in 1940 was virtually identical to the 113 holdings in St Neot in 1910 (and also similar to the 115 holdings in Troedyraur in 1930). Average farm size was 85 acres in Llanfihangel, compared with 90 acres in St Neot.

There were other similarities between 1939 Llanfihangel and 1911 St Neot. Both had high proportions of heads of households and spouses born in the parish or in a neighbouring one, and there was also evidence of strong persistence of families within the parish from one generation to the next. Had Rees visited Cornwall and St Neot he would have discovered a remarkable similarity with his own findings in Wales.

[555] Rees, A.D., *Life in a Welsh Countryside: A Social Study of Llanfihangel yng Ngwynfa* (Cardiff, 1950), pp. 73-81.

7.8 Concluding comments

The 37 inhabitants of St Neot in 1911 who were old enough to have been alive in the parish at the 1851 census witnessed a very different world from 60 years earlier. New and improved roads and a largely completed railway network meant that the inhabitants of St Neot were better connected to the outside world than ever before. The short-lived industrial period was almost at an end and families that had remained in and around St Neot for generations were now dispersed across the world.

However, through the change there was also continuity. A majority of people still lived in the locality where they were born and most of them remained surrounded by kin. The kinship ties might have weakened, but they were still extremely high when compared with other studies. The spatial structure of dispersed hamlets and isolated, generally small farms remained the dominant settlement pattern. Indeed, these settlements had grown as a proportion of the total because of enclosure on the moors and a decline in the number of labouring families living in the village of St Neot.

Despite the increased mobility into and out of the parish, local kinship links remained high because a significant proportion of people continued to live in the parish after they were married. In particular, there were a small number of dynastic families who contributed disproportionately to the large number of kinship links in the parish. Most of those dynasties had been in St Neot for many generations, and many of the same surnames could be found in the parish

registers in the sixteenth century. Those families helped to provide a depth and continuity of kinship that marked St Neot out to be very different from places in England and yet so similar to rural Wales. It was a pattern that had existed at the end of the early modern period, which survived through the turmoil of the nineteenth century, and was still going strong on the eve of the First World War.

Conclusions

This thesis has revealed how Cornish rural society retained a distinctive structure of kinship into the beginning of the twentieth century. At each point of measurement in 1793, 1851 and 1911 the absolute kinship densities in the parishes of St Neot and Bolventor were between two and a half and five times greater than the early modern first-order kinship densities measured for English communities as far apart as Essex, Lincolnshire and Co. Durham. They were also higher than the densities in nineteenth century agricultural communities in Kent and Devon where kinship was measured.

The biggest influence on the degree and persistence of high kinship densities was the enduring structure of small farms spread across the Cornish landscape. It was a structure that provided opportunities for finding both suitable marriage partners and long-term employment within local communities. This resulted in the presence of influential dynastic families that were rooted in specific locations and which had extremely dense kinship networks. Surprisingly the persistence of farm service contributed to the high density of kinship links because, unlike in many parts of England, Cornish farm servants generally travelled only short distances from parental home to place of work. It is also notable that the economic turbulence and rapidly rising population in the first half of the nineteenth century helped to reinforce kinship densities, at least temporarily. This was a result of the increasing numbers of families being able to find employment locally via the process of moorland enclosure and the expansion of deep mining.

Significantly, kinship densities were consistently high across all classes, something not found in any studies of kinship in English communities. Even the biggest farms of the district were relatively small by national standards, and marriage partners were as likely to be found in the same locality among this group of farmers as among smaller ones. There was a tendency for farmers, labourers and miners to marry within their own occupational groups, but a significant minority of marriages did cross the social divides, particularly where the boundaries were blurred. Tinners, miners and agricultural labourers often became small farmers, frequently in combination with their initial occupations. During the turbulent period after the French Wars there was a blurring in the opposite direction, particularly between the 1820s and 1840s when some farmers were reduced to labourers and even paupers. By the 1850s many kinship groups contained combinations of farmers, craftsmen, miners and labourers.

However, something else had a positive impact on kinship densities that was harder to explain and that was the unexpectedly high kinship densities among the more mobile tinners and the highly mobile copper miners. This finding stood in stark contrast to the very weak densities found among the miners of Co. Durham by Wrightson and Levine. The trend in Cornwall for miners and tinners to work together in small teams accounted for part of the difference. Fathers, sons and brothers migrated together and worked together on the moorland streamworks, or as tributers in the deep mines. It is less clear whether this happened because of the underlying kinship structure of Cornish society, or because it suited the structure of mining. What it does underline is just how

much kinship was a vital agent of change in Cornwall, influencing the decisions of people across all sections of society on whether to stay or move, on where to go and who to go with.

A second reason for the high level of kinship densities among migrating miners was the unexpected speed with which mining families moving into Bodmin Moor communities from mid and west Cornwall were assimilated into local society. Many came from areas where the Cornish language had only recently died out, and with a dialect strongly influenced by that linguistic heritage. Yet within a very short period the children of these incoming miners and tinners were marrying into the local dynastic families that had been on Bodmin Moor since at least the sixteenth century.

It is likely that the common bond of Methodism influenced the rapid integration. The miners arriving on Bodmin Moor from further west were more likely to be Methodists than any other section of society, and they were arriving just as Methodism (particularly Bible Christianity) was rapidly expanding its influence among the local population. The symbiosis between society and a distinctive kind of religious behaviour, seen most clearly in the significance of revivals, had become a feature of the western mining districts in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Migrating miners themselves influenced the spread of a revivalist culture to Bodmin Moor, but this was already a society in turmoil as a result loss of security of tenure and the rapidly rising population levels.

The alignment of Methodist structures with the spatial pattern of local communities was equally significant. The chapels and societies that spread across Cornwall provided a social as well as spiritual space, particularly for the majority of people who lived some distance from the parish church. In this way Methodism acted to reinforce kinship networks within local communities, as well as between those communities and new arrivals. It was also significant how much women were involved in the success of the Bible Christians in Bodmin Moor communities, either as itinerant preachers, lay preachers or class leaders. This was indicative of women's greater general role in a kin-based local society where women such as single mother Elizabeth Hooper could succeed as farmers.

In some ways emergent Methodism contained similar characteristics to the disintegrating manorial system. Both were organised on a scale more in keeping with the spatial structure of Cornish society than those of the parish, and both evolved in ways that reinforced kinship patterns. When landowners began to replace leases-for-lives and other aspects of manorial structures with short-term tenancies and modern estate management practices they found the task of overseeing small disparate estates extremely difficult. On the moors they did not even try, retaining leases-for-lives and other types of long-term tenancies into the twentieth century. It was no accident that in 1911 kinship densities remained highest among these moorland farmers.

Off the moor itself the ending of leases-for-lives in the first half of the nineteenth century began to negatively affect kinship links between families as farms and other properties began to change hands with increasing regularity. Rising

general mobility, and widespread emigration following the collapse in mining then resulted in a more general weakening of kinship ties in the second half of the century. However, the resulting decline was only relative and in 1911 there were still almost two-thirds of households in St Neot, and more than three-quarters in Bolventor that had first-order kinship links with other households in their respective parishes. Those proportions were significantly higher than for any comparable studies of agricultural or industrial communities in England, whether early modern or modern.

Discovering the degree of distinctiveness of kinship patterns in Cornish society, and its persistence into the modern era, was only made possible by the micro-historical approach taken for this thesis. As described in the introduction, it followed in the footsteps of similar studies that began with Alwyn Rees's study of kinship patterns in a mid-Wales community during the first half of the twentieth century. When Rees conducted his research in Llanfihangel yng Ngwynfa he was told of a local saying that the kinship ties between people in the parish were woven together 'like a pig's entrails'.[556]

Had he visited Cornwall he would have discovered that the same simile applied to the communities of St Neot and Bolventor. During research for this thesis the author was told a similar anecdote in which the daughter-in-law of one St Neot farmer observed that he was related to himself in so many ways she was surprised he did not have two heads. That farmer, now in his 90s and still living

[556] Rees, A.D., *Life in a Welsh Countryside: A Social Study of Llanfihangel yng Ngwynfa* (Cardiff, 1950), p. 75.

on the same farm where he was born, was descended from multiple dynastic families that had first-order kinship links in St Neot in 1911, 1851 and 1793.

Rees argued that the clannish loyalty of kinship groups in Llanfihangel was a heritage of Wales's Celtic tribal past. This begs the question as to whether Celtic heritage in some way contributed to the similar structure of Cornish rural communities. The survival of Celtic-language place names across most of Cornwall was a reminder of that heritage, and even into the nineteenth century some Cornish field and farm structures retained aspects of the ancient Celtic run rig system of land distribution. Under this system farm holdings were intermingled so that all occupiers had a fair share of the better land in a community.

This thesis cannot assert that the Cornish pattern of kinship was part of a Celtic heritage, nor whether it contributed to a sense of Cornish territorial identity. Perhaps the role of kinship in those areas could provide a fruitful area for future research. However it does claim that, whatever its origins, a distinctive Cornish kinship culture persisted into the modern era. The culture was distinctive enough to differentiate the Cornish experience from anything English. It has also demonstrated the value of micro-studies that combine quantitative and qualitative techniques. Such studies can illuminate the bigger picture and sometimes contradict perceived wisdoms that turn out to have little foundation in reality, or that are erroneously imported from other places or different time periods.

They can also help to challenge some of the narratives in top-down histories, and in the process provide a picture from a rather different and sometimes more authentic perspective. There are potential pitfalls, particularly in relation to extrapolating local findings that are perhaps not typical of the wider community they claim to represent. This thesis has attempted to avoid those pitfalls by the thorough use of all available sources, by analysing change over a considerable period of time, and by choosing locations representative of the bigger Cornish picture. Hopefully it has succeeded.

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