

Wiltshire Marriage Patterns 1754-1914

Wiltshire Marriage Patterns 1754-1914:
Geographical Mobility, Cousin Marriage
and Illegitimacy

By

Cathy Day

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

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This book is dedicated to my ancestors,
who led me to think about their marriage choices,
and to my descendants, who will no doubt do the same

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is to examine marriage patterns in the parishes of Stourton and Kilmington in southwest Wiltshire in the period 1754-1914, in order to determine who married whom with reference to geographical mobility, consanguinity and illegitimacy. It will address the questions of where marriage partners were born, who married their cousins and how often, and what was the impact of illegitimacy on marriage prospects. It will ask how religious affiliation and economic status were associated with those aspects of marriage patterns. It is hoped that by quantifying some aspects of these patterns in small-scale rural societies, and placing them in their historical, social and geographical context, some light will be shed on localised aspects of population structure in historical England.

This book will not consider the question of how an individual was attracted to a potential mate, on which historical data are usually silent. For this reason it will not focus on romantic love as a notion. In the 19th century and particularly amongst the middle classes, romantic love was seen as a prerequisite for marriage (Anderson, 1986:286) but individual mate choices are not the subject of this book. Rather, this project will attempt to fill some gaps in knowledge about English marriage patterns in the 18th and 19th centuries at the community level.

This study used the technique of multi-source parish reconstitution with nominative record linkage, whereby a wide variety of documentary sources were used to establish extensive pedigrees of all persons married in the two parishes in the research period, along with much relevant detail of their lives, such as occupation, religion, date of birth and place of birth. Similar techniques were used for Earls Colne, Essex for the period 1380-1854 (Macfarlane, 1977) and Berwick St James for the period 1841-1871 (Hinde, 1987). Unlike other work, in the present study individuals were traced wherever they lived, even after they left the parish of marriage.

Full details of the technique, and alternatives that were considered, are described in Chapter 3, along with a discussion of why this technique was selected. In summary, multi-source parish reconstitution with nominative

record linkage was used in an attempt to overcome the limitations of some other techniques. For example, family reconstitution based only on Anglican registers may not be entirely representative of the whole population (Wrigley et al., 1997), whereas this project includes Catholics and Nonconformists. Reconstituting a single family at a time, and only whilst it is resident in one parish, is unlikely to be representative of common experience at that time, as it only considers families who were relatively immobile (Hinde, 2003:168, Wrigley et al., 1997). This project aims to fill in a gap in the current knowledge about aspects of marital patterns of a religious minority, as well as that portion of the population who did not remain in the parish of their birth.

As an example of the gap in knowledge, previous studies of age at first marriage were able to determine the bride's age in only 30-40% of cases since they included only the ones who were born in the parish in which they were married (Oosterveen et al., 1980:105). Other authors have lamented their inability to trace families across multiple parishes with the resources available in the 1980s (Coleman, 1984:20). By contrast, the technique used in this project of tracing a group of individuals wherever its members went in England and Wales, overcame this problem. Age at first marriage for both bride and groom could be determined in 96% of cases (Section 4.4.1) and birthplace could be determined in almost 100% of cases after 1830 (Section 5.4.1). People moving from their birth parish presented only a small problem, and this was almost completely overcome if the individual lived past 1841, when national censuses of named individuals in Britain were conducted every decade, and records could be linked between parishes.

The need to go beyond one parish and to use more than just church records has been long-recognised (Oosterveen et al., 1980:120). A very wide variety of material is now available, which was not publicly accessible during previous studies. A veritable explosion of raw material, including parish records, censuses, wills and Poor Law records, has appeared on the internet in the last decade and enabled this project to go well beyond the lives of people confined to their birth parish. The sources and their uses are described in Chapter 3.

For most of human history and pre-history, humans have lived in small scale societies. Since mate choice is one of the factors that affect population structure, it is important to understand the processes that influence this choice in one such small-scale society. This project may make a useful contribution towards filling some gaps in our knowledge, firstly by determining the overall frequency of certain patterns, but also by examining the differences in those frequencies based on factors such as

religious affiliation and social class. By reconstituting extensive lineages for every spouse in two parishes, and gathering non-pedigree information about them, it is possible to not only quantify but perhaps also to explain some aspects of marriage patterns.

Before progressing to the core themes of this book, it is necessary to understand some key parameters of marriage patterns in the region. That is, the marriage rate and the age at first marriage. Chapter 4 quantifies these features for Stourton and Kilminster. It asks how religious affiliation and economic status were associated with variations in marriage rate and age, and how this region of England was positioned demographically with respect to the rest of the country.

Chapter 5 examines the geographic mobility of those married in Stourton and Kilminster, as well as that of their parents and grandparents. Previous research in England has indicated that marriage partners typically came from near the place of marriage, although this was affected by occupational class (Harrison and Boyce, 1972). In Chapter 5, trends over time in birthplaces of people married in Stourton and Kilminster are examined, and patterns and gender asymmetries are identified.

Previous research in other regions has demonstrated that the choice of marriage partners is influenced by certain geographical features such as rivers and forests (Cesard, 2007, Harrison, 1995:49, White and Parsons, 1976). An attempt is made to relate geographical mobility in southwest Wiltshire to natural and man-made features of the landscape.

The research area is at the intersection of three counties, so other counties were certainly within walking distance for the inhabitants. The question of whether county boundaries formed barriers for spousal movement will be considered.

Since the project produced multi-generation pedigrees, the book also examines the birthplace of ancestors of inhabitants of Stourton and Kilminster, and asks how trends in geographical distribution of birthplace changed over the research period.

Previous research has used residence at time of marriage as an indicator of place of birth (Harrison, 1995:43, Perry, 1969). However, in rare cases when both place of birth and marriage have been recorded for all marriage partners in a parish, the level of geographic mobility in the population has been shown to be much greater than if place of residence had been used (Smith and Pain, 1989). This project asks how closely birthplaces of marriage partners aligned with residence at time of marriage, and adds to the knowledge on that subject.

There has been no published work on the frequency of consanguinity in England using pedigree analysis (Smith et al., 1993:357). There have been studies of consanguinity using pedigree analysis amongst Scottish and Welsh isolates (Williams, 1986, Brennan et al., 1982) and on island populations of European descent (Leslie et al., 1981). Whilst these studies are valuable in their own right, human populations are not typically isolated, either socially or geographically (Coleman, 1984:20). This book about rural English villages that are not especially isolated produces findings that may be more representative of other English rural parishes.

There has been work in Britain on inbreeding using the technique of isonymy (Bramwell, 1939, Darwin, 1875, Lasker, 1983). Other early studies have used interviews and questionnaires to ask subjects to state the degree of consanguinity of themselves or their parents (Bell, 1940, Mitchell, 1862, Pearson, 1908). These studies and the techniques employed, along with their advantages and limitations, are discussed in Chapter 6. It is hoped that this project will go some way to answering its questions by using an alternative, time-consuming, but ultimately highly informative, technique that will attempt to address the gap in data quality.

In order to examine the effect of multiple generations of consanguineous marriages, the average inbreeding coefficient for each parish is calculated from pedigrees. However, as the focus of this project is marriage rather than morbidity or mortality, any health consequences of inbreeding are not considered (Bittles and Makov, 1988).

In societies where consanguineous marriage is common or preferred, the age of first marriage is often low (Bittles, 1980). To what extent this applied in 18th and 19th century rural England is discussed.

In some societies consanguineous marriage is associated with a higher-than-average socio-economic status of the partners, whereas in other societies, it is only the very poorest and least literate who marry their cousins. In some places both ends of the socio-economic scale favour consanguineous marriages (Bittles, 2004, Bittles, 1993). This project examines the economic status of spouses in 1st cousin marriages, as well as the religion of those involved, as asks how these influence the level of consanguineous marriage. Although work has been done on these issues in other countries, they are lacking for England.

Chapter 7 examines the relationship between illegitimacy and marriage experience. It does not examine the impacts of illegitimacy on maternal health and infant mortality, both of which are well documented (Gill, 1977, Higginbotham, 1985, Macfarlane, 1980). It addresses the question of how illegitimacy was associated with subsequent marriage prospects of the

mother of the illegitimate infant, along with that of the father and the illegitimate child itself.

In a study using English parish registers from the 16th to the 19th centuries, a trend was identified indicating that illegitimacy was more common in some families than others. This was termed the ‘bastardy-prone sub-society’ (Laslett, 1980a). Whether this phenomenon existed in Stourton and Kilmington is addressed.

The influences of geographic mobility, consanguinity and illegitimacy on each other, with respect to marriage, are considered. Occupations of all people concerned, their religion, the economy of their parish, their family reproductive and marital experiences and their places of birth are all considered with respect to their influence on marriage patterns.

Previous research on English marriage patterns has often focused on a single aspect, such as geographical mobility, consanguinity or illegitimacy (Adair, 1996, Gill, 1977, Harrison, 1995, Laslett et al., 1980). By examining several aspects separately and together, this project illuminates complex interactions between factors, that may not be apparent when viewed in isolation. Links between cousin marriage and illegitimacy, as well as between illegitimacy and geographic mobility, and between geographic mobility and cousin marriage, are all examined. Previous research in each of the identified aspects of English marriage patterns is discussed in detail in the relevant chapters.

The historical, geographical, religious and economic background of the parishes of Stourton and Kilmington is described in Chapter 2. The present section addresses the reasons for choosing these parishes as the focus for the study.

Initially, Stourton was chosen as the primary focus, and this was for a number of reasons. Firstly, Stourton has an almost complete set of Anglican parish records, stretching from 1570 to 1983. Where there are missing periods, chiefly during the Interregnum of 1649-1660, these were supplemented by Bishops’ Transcripts, which were copies of the parish records made annually and sent to the Bishop. In addition, there are surviving records of Catholic baptisms and burials from 1767 to 1954, and Catholic marriages from 1837 when they became legally valid. The Anglican and Catholic records provide a complete picture of organised religion in that parish. Detailed information on the church records is given in Section 3.4.

Almost all parishes in England and Wales have surviving copies of the ten-year censuses from 1841 to 1911, and these are all publicly available (Section 3.4.5). What is unusual about Stourton is that the census returns for 1821 and 1831 have survived, giving much greater certainty to the

family reconstitution process. In addition, there are census substitutes available for Stourton for the years 1751 and 1767. These are discussed in Section 3.4.5.

An almost complete set of Poor Law administration papers survives for Stourton, including the crucial Bastardy Bonds which name the alleged fathers of illegitimate children born in the parish. Whilst the Bonds are only extant for the period 1766-1822, they provide an invaluable source for studying patterns of illegitimacy that is lacking in church records, wherein only the mother of an illegitimate child was normally named. Other Poor Law papers cover the period 1701-1863, filling in gaps in the church records and clearing up uncertain identifications. All wills and administrations proved in England for Stourton inhabitants are preserved and these often shed light on ambiguous family relationships.

Whilst Stourton has excellent, well-preserved records, the question arises as to how representative the parish was of all English parishes. The unusual completeness of its records already sets the parish apart from many other parishes, and its prominent Catholic minority and restricted in-migration, which are discussed in Chapter 2, are also atypical of rural English villages of the time. To overcome this objection, the neighbouring parish of Kilmington was added to the study. Kilmington was of similar size to Stourton but differed in three ways that are relevant to this project: (1) it was an 'open' village that did not restrict in- or out-migration, (2) its records are less complete, and (3) it had no Catholics but a history of Protestant Dissenting. Kilmington was chosen because it abutted Stourton but was different from it in ways that were relevant to this project.

The present research focuses on marriages that took place in the two parishes in the period 1754-1914. The starting date of 1754 was chosen as this was the year in which Hardwicke's Marriage Act (An Act to Prevent Clandestine Marriage¹) became effective. From that year onwards, for a marriage to be valid in England or Wales, it had to be performed in an Anglican church, by an Anglican clergyman, between the hours of 8 and 12 in the morning, following the publication of banns or granting of a marriage licence. The only exceptions permitted were for Quakers and Jews (Howard, 1904:458). Before Hardwicke's Marriage Act, legally valid marriages included not only church weddings but also clandestine marriages (before a priest but with no other witnesses) and mutual declaration of marriage (not necessarily with witnesses) followed by consummation (Teichman, 1982:25). The latter case generally had no documentary evidence and whilst it was rare, its very existence made it

¹ 26 Geo. 2 c.33

difficult for the present author to be certain that all marriages in the research area were included. The proportion of marriages for which registration was defective varied throughout English history (Wrigley and Schofield, 1981:28). At the beginning of the 18th century it was around 5% (Wrigley and Schofield, 1981:29) and Hardwicke's Act reduced the deficit further. By the 1760s fewer than 1% of marriages were unregistered (Wrigley and Schofield, 1981:30). This provides a high level of confidence that the present project includes all legally valid marriages in the parishes and period under study.

The end year of 1914 was chosen since the start of the First World War caused enormous disruption to the lives of marriageable people and the subsequent marriage patterns were unlikely to reflect usual practice, before or after that time. In Kilmington there were no marriages at all during the First World War. In Stourton, a number of marriages were contracted between local women and men born as far afield as Australia and New Zealand. This had not occurred before the start of the war.

This book uses new techniques and a previously unavailable volume of data to answer questions about the birthplace of marital partners, their genetic relatedness to each other and their illegitimate reproductive history. It attempts to fill gaps in our knowledge of some aspects of marriage patterns in historical England and to describe the impact of religious affiliation and economic status on marriage patterns during this period.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides background information on the two core parishes of Stourton and Kilmington, as well as the nearby market town of Mere, which is relevant to understanding marriage patterns in Stourton and Kilmington in the period 1754-1914. It describes aspects of the physical landscape as well as the social environment which influenced marriage patterns in the region.

2.2 Geography

The ancient parishes of Stourton and Kilmington are situated in the southwest corner of Wiltshire in southwest England, adjacent to the county boundaries of Somerset and Dorset. The term ‘ancient parishes’ refers to the traditional parishes that had existed more or less unchanged from the Middle Ages until the middle of the 19th century (Cunliffe, 1993:328-330). Beginning in the 1840s the Anglican Church began to create new parishes, referred to as ‘modern parishes’, to cater for an increase in population. Parish boundaries were regularised throughout the 19th century. Throughout this book, the parishes referred to are the ancient ones. Until the county boundary re-organisation of 1895, parts of the parish of Stourton and the entire parish of Kilmington were in Somerset (Mayes, 1995). The parish of Stourton consisted of three ancient manors: Bonham and Gasper in Somerset, and Stourton in Wiltshire. The parish of Kilmington consisted of the village of Kilmington and the hamlet of Norton Ferris, a mile¹ from the main village.

County or provincial boundaries have been shown to be important in migration patterns in studies of other European countries. In the

¹ Throughout this book, the imperial measure of miles will be used for distance calculations, since this was the unit used at the time, and modern studies of British historical demography use this unit of measure.

Netherlands (Barrai et al., 2002) and Italy (Barrai et al., 1999), studies of the distribution of surnames indicate clustering associated with provincial boundaries. In Switzerland (Rodriguez-Larralde et al., 1998) surnames were clustered by language group, which in turn was related to provincial boundaries, although not tightly. Whether county boundaries played some role in spouse preference in the present study is considered in Section 5.4.4.

County boundaries were also significant in tracing family relationships since they caused confusion to the inhabitants in the responses that they gave to various official enquiries. For example, the 1841 census asked all householders whether or not they were born in the county in which they now resided. Those inhabitants of Gaspier in the Somerset part of Stourton parish who were born only a few hundred yards away in the Wiltshire part of the parish should have answered 'no', but often incorrectly answered 'yes'. Similarly, Zeals, whilst in Wiltshire, was near the border of Dorset and inhabitants frequently gave incorrect responses to this question, seemingly unaware of precisely where the county boundaries actually lay, or perhaps precisely where they had been born.

The nearest town was Mere, three miles from Stourton and four from Kilminster. Mere's population was between 2,000 and 3,000 throughout the 19th century. The nearest large town was Frome, 11 miles north in Somerset, which had between 11,000 and 12,000 inhabitants throughout the 19th century. The nearest city was Bath, 24 miles to the north. London was over 100 miles to the east.

The research area is in Wiltshire but it is immediately adjacent to Somerset in the west and Dorset in the south. An imaginary line drawn from the northeast corner of Wiltshire to the southwest corner divides the county into two distinct types of land. The northern portion is chalk and the southern portion is predominantly clay (Mayes, 1995). The clay soil is ideally suited to dairy farming and Wiltshire inhabitants sometimes describe the two different areas as 'chalk and cheese', in recognition of the predominance of dairy products in the southern clay portion. The two types of land meet in the region under discussion, and there are a great many springs where the chalk and clay soils meet. It is thought that the name 'Mere' is from the Saxon word *mere* meaning 'a body of water', although it could also be derived from the word *mearc* meaning 'boundary' or 'border' (Longbourne, 2004, Skeat, 1879) which is also applicable in this case. There are so many springs in this region that one area particularly dense in them is called Six Wells, and it is from these wells that the Stourton family derived their coat of arms. The rivers in the

area and their potential to influence geographical mobility of marriage partners are discussed in Section 5.6.2.

Somerset to the west of the research area is almost entirely flat. The rest of Wiltshire to the north and east contains the Salisbury Plain, an enormous undulating chalk downland.

The area of the three parishes contains many hills, downs and combes. There is a large chalk escarpment to the north of Mere and east of the village of Stourton, which rises abruptly to almost 900ft at Whitesheet Hill. The hilly nature of the terrain impeded movement by foot in certain directions (Section 5.6.1).

Finally, a significant aspect of the physical landscape in this region was the enormous Forest of Selwood, which was called *Coit Maur* or Great Wood by the ancient Britons (Rackham, 1986:84). It was probably a boundary between the ancient British tribes to its east and west (Cunliffe, 1993). In Saxon times it stretched from the Thames Valley in the northeast to the Vale of Blackmore, Dorset in the west (Mayes, 1995:120). How forests influenced marriage patterns is discussed in Section 5.6.3.

2.3 History

2.3.1 Early History

This region has been continuously inhabited for thousands of years. Two Mesolithic sites have been identified in Stourton (Mayes, 1995:80) and Mesolithic flint cores were found north of Mere (Longbourne, 2004). There is ample evidence that humans have occupied Stourton since Neolithic times (Mayes, 1995) and numerous Neolithic artefacts have been found around Mere (Longbourne, 2004). A Neolithic camp existed on Whitesheet Hill and it is surrounded by barrows of the Bronze Age. A fort was built on this site in the Iron Age (Mayes, 1995).

There is evidence of Roman occupation at Whitesheet Hill and Kilminster (Mayes, 1995). Roman coins dating from 65 AD to 166 AD were found in Mere Cemetery in the 20th century (Longbourne, 2004).

Stourton was colonised by the Saxons by the late 7th century (Mayes, 1995). In 1995 the skeleton of young woman was uncovered in Mere with three pieces of fine Saxon jewellery beside her. This was identified as a 7th century Saxon burial. It is thought that part of St Michael's parish church in Mere is of Saxon origin (Longbourne, 2004).

The area is steeped in tradition about its role in ancient British affairs. The legendary King Arthur is supposed to have defeated the Saxons nearby in 495 AD, and in 878 AD King Alfred of Wessex is supposed to

have gathered his army to defeat the Danes at nearby Penselwood (Watkin, 1989). A folly called Alfred's Tower was built between Stourton and Kilmington to commemorate Alfred's victory at that place (Mayes, 1995:69).

Local people are well-versed in folk culture surrounding these nation-building events. During my fieldwork in January-August 2007 and July-September 2008, locals were keen to point out the stone where King Alfred allegedly gathered his forces, or Alfred's Tower, or explain about King Arthur's legendary association with the area. They have a strong sense that this area is 'special' to Britain.

The parishes of Stourton, Kilmington and Mere were all identified in the Domesday Book (Williams and Martin, 1992) indicating that they were well-defined and long-established communities by 1086 AD.

2.3.2 Mediaeval Era

The Stourton family was an ancient family of warriors who had prospered by success in battle and by aligning themselves with the eventual winners in disputes over the crown. They claimed descent from a semi-mythical giant named Botolph and claimed an ancient connection to the land through having helped King Alfred defeat the Danes in the 9th century. In the 14th century the family purchased the manors of Bonham and Stourton and took the name of the parish as their family name, becoming the Lords Stourton (Stourton, 1899). The significance of this family's influence on marriage patterns will be described in Section 2.4.1.

In 1243 the Manor of Mere was granted to Richard, Earl of Cornwall. In 1337 the title became Duke of Cornwall, and was held by the eldest son of the King of England. The land was inalienable, so could not be sold, and reverted to the Crown whenever there was no son of the sovereign (Longbourne, 2004). For this reason, the manor of Mere has been linked to the Royal Family without interruption for eight centuries, and is still owned by the present Prince of Wales. As the manor could never be sold, this also provided stability in ownership, and this may have contributed to economic and political stability.

2.3.3 The Arrival of the Hoare Family

In 1717 Henry Hoare of Hoare's Bank in London purchased the manors of Stourton and Bonham from the (by then) impoverished Catholic Stourton family (Hutchings, 2005:39). The Stourton family subsequently moved to Yorkshire. The Hoare family demolished the old 'Stourton

Castle' and built Stourhead House, filling it with precious artwork and furniture. Beginning in 1721, successive owners developed the magnificent Stourhead Gardens (The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty, 1985). This is now recognised as one of the most beautiful pieces of artificial countryside in England (Bettey, 1986:211). Sir Richard Hoare was created 1st Baronet Hoare in 1786 and the title was passed to subsequent owners of Stourhead (Hutchings, 2005).

The Hoare family turned the parish of Stourton into a closed village. English rural villages could be classified as 'closed' or 'open'. A closed village had one proprietor who owned almost all the land and the number of labourers' cottages was strictly limited by the land owner (Holderness, 1972, Mills, 1959, Spencer, 2000). The most tightly controlled closed parishes were ones with a single landowner who was also resident in the parish (Mills, 1959), as was the case in Stourton. The landowners spent money beautifying the village (Holderness, 1972, Spencer, 2000). In a closed village, the churchwardens tried rigorously to exclude paupers from obtaining a legal settlement there and attendance at Anglican church services was often monitored and reported on (Spencer, 2000, Wilson, 2007:201). The limitation on labourers' cottages and strict enforcement of the settlement rules prevented itinerant labourers from settling in a closed village. Stourton fitted the description of a closed village very well. In 1812 Sir Richard Colt Hoare had all the cottages between the church and the pleasure gardens demolished because they looked unattractive and spoiled the view (Hoare, 1792-1842). The Stourhead Annals are full of detail about the beautification of the village (Hoare, 1792-1842). In 1855, the head of the Hoare family owned all of the labourers' cottages in Stourton parish, as well as 28 out of the 43 rateable properties (Churchwardens of Stourton, 1835-1868). Only two additional labourers' cottages were built in the period 1838-1855, so that it was virtually impossible for a new labourer to move into the village. There was a rigorous attempt by the church wardens to exclude non-parishioners from the parish, with large sums of money spent on court cases against other parishes in an attempt to have paupers removed from Stourton (Churchwardens of Stourton, 1701-1863).

Some would argue that the key factor in determining whether a parish was closed or open was not land ownership but rather the exercise of power (Spencer, 2000:90). Even with this definition, Stourton was very much a closed village, with the parish's Poor Law papers demonstrating the keen and personal interest that successive heads of the Hoare family had in excluding non-local paupers (Churchwardens of Stourton, 1701-1863).

There have been objections raised to the classification of parishes as open or closed, but they have revolved around questions of the purpose of closure and the mechanisms by which it was achieved (Spencer, 2000:90) rather than whether or not they existed. Another objection to the classification is that closure was a process and that land ownership was not fixed in time (Spencer, 2000:88). Whilst this is true, it does not apply to the research area in the period under consideration, as the entire parish was owned by one family from 1717 until it was handed to the National Trust in 1947. Since the National Trust is now the major landowner in the parish, it operates almost like a closed village to this day. Kilmington was progressively purchased by the Hoare family over two centuries, but the majority of the land purchases were in the second half of the 19th century (Hoare, 1792-1842) when the Poor Law rating system, which was said to have created closed villages (Mills, 1959), was revoked.

There is also discussion about whether the closed entity was the village or parish (Spencer, 2000:92). In either case, the label fits Stourton since the village of Stourton and the hamlet of Gasper, both within the parish, were all effectively closed to potential paupers.

Only 23% of the villages of Dorset, Somerset and West Wiltshire were closed in the mid-19th century (Holderness, 1972:135). The closed nature of the parish of Stourton is significant from a demographic perspective since it limited the amount of in-migration.

The diaries of members of the Hoare family indicate the strong interest that members of the 'Great House' had in their community, with visits to the 'deserving poor' and comments on village life (Hoare, 1891-1918, Hoare, 1845-1890). School records show the head of the Hoare family paid close attention to the achievements of the school (Wilkins, 1873-1905). Poor Law records show the attention to detail of the Hoare family in managing the lives of the poor of the parish (Churchwardens of Stourton, 1701-1863).

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, the Hoare family went about purchasing neighbouring land, including a great deal of the parish of Kilmington. However, they were not the exclusive owners of Kilmington and did not live there. Kilmington operated as an open village. Chapter 6 discusses the impact of the difference between open and closed villages on in-migration and hence on geographic mobility and consanguinity.

The research area was not involved in the Swing Riots of 1830, when labourers demanding higher wages burned hay ricks and threshing equipment (Betty, 1986:262-268). Although Sir Richard Colt Hoare was concerned that the fires were approaching Stourton and Kilmington (Mayes, 1995:132) there does not appear to have been any destruction of

property on Hoare lands, as there is no mention of damage in the Stourhead Annals (Hoare, 1792-1842).

2.3.4 The 20th Century

The heir to Stourhead, Henry Hoare, was killed in action during the First World War and his parents eventually left their entire estate to The National Trust in 1947, including sufficient land and rented cottages to maintain the enormous gardens and house (Hutchings, 2005). A condition of the gift was that a member of the Hoare family is always resident at Stourhead House, and the arrangement continues to this day (Hutchings, 2005).

2.4 Religion

This section describes religion in the research area in the 18th and 19th century. For clarity and brevity, throughout this book the term ‘Anglican Church’ is used to refer to the Church of England or Established Church. ‘Catholic Church’ is used to refer to the Roman Catholic Church. The term ‘parson’ is used for the ordained Anglican clergyman in charge of a parish. The differences between a Rector, Vicar and Perpetual Curate in the Anglican Church were related to how they were traditionally paid from the Middle Ages until midway through the 19th century, and are of little consequence in this book (Webb, 1980:642). In this book, Catholic clergymen are referred to as ‘priests’ and Protestant Dissenting clergymen as ‘ministers’.

2.4.1 Religion in Stourton

The parish church of St Peter’s in Stourton was established in 1291 and at the Reformation it became part of the newly-established Church of England. Since it was compulsory for all adults to attend an Anglican service at least twice a year until 1791 (Church, 1996), St Peter’s was the hub of the community. The Hoare family were committed Anglicans and influenced village religious life. Of the six charities that operated in Stourton in the 19th century, four required that the ‘deserving poor’ be communicant members of the Anglican Church to receive assistance (Wiltshire Family History Society, 1983). Prior to the New Poor Law² of 1834, the Poor Law was administered through the Anglican Church, and

² 4 & 5 Will. 4 c.76