

Dalton-le-Dale (Co Durham) and Wacton (Herefordshire) 1841-1901

Occupational Structure in a Changing Environment

Foreword

This comparator commentary formed the main part of an Assignment undertaken as part of an On-line Oxford University 2009 course.

The core sources were the Censuses of 1841-1901 with secondary sources as noted in the commentary.

Any errors or mistakes are entirely of my own making; I would be glad to learn of any errors which will be corrected.

My thanks to Polly Rubery and Dave Angus for support and use of pictures

Brian Hoare

28 November 2009

brianandmavis@btinternet.com

www.east-durham.co.uk

Introduction

The Victorian era in Britain saw significant political, economic and social change. This occurred unevenly and in different ways reflecting the fact that geography, natural resources and technology had a significant bearing on population and occupations.

Occupation was a primary question asked in Victorian censuses² and this commentary considers, decennially from 1841, the recorded occupations for people in two ostensibly similar rural communities and the effect of change over time.

Occupational Structure³

By 1841 both Wacton and Dalton had become predominantly agricultural communities. Life and work for the bulk of people centred on the land. Primary farming supported a small diverse range of craft services but for Dalton the work consequences of the nascent developments of neighbouring Murton, Dowdon (Seaham Harbour) had yet to make any occupational impact.

1851 recorded the beginning of change for Dalton. The presence of a Registrar and Vicar symbolised status; there were four coal mining residents, probably working at the new Colliery at Murton, which now a rail station. For Wacton this represented the peak of its agricultural related activity (53.49%)⁴ and relative prosperity as evidenced by the increase in domestic servants, dressmakers/milliners and an Innkeeper³.

To a degree the censuses 1841-1871 reflected the problem of recording the work of women and children^{5, 6}. The requirements of successive census returns varied and often referred only to male adult workers. Casual, part-time and home work was often unrecorded or was shown as a familial relationship with the household head.

“Scholars” appear in the returns of Dalton (1851-1891) and Wacton (1861-1991) as an occupation for children; Higgs⁹ points out that the definition of the terms was vague and became vaguer over time.

In the decade 1861-1871 Wacton experienced a significant fall in agricultural activity paralleling county and national decline before entering a 30 year period of relative stability. Conversely for Dalton, in number terms⁴ it represented an agricultural occupancy peak from which it never returned. Artisan services declined in Wacton but strengthened in Dalton where smiths and engineers had the transferable skills and opportunity to support the growing mining activities and populations of Murton and Dawdon (Seaham)¹¹.

The period 1881- 1901 saw mining increasingly overtaking agriculture as the principal occupational sector in Dalton; agriculture remained primary in Wacton which had lost its artisans, to be replaced belatedly by the arrival of railway and telegraph. These specialist occupations were filled by migrants who also resided at the former Inn indicating the demise of the social centre.

Conclusion

By 1901 Wantons' total population had barely changed from that in 1841. Through this period there were 82 separate occupations described⁷ in the censuses attributed here to seven different categories;

- Agricultural related
- Artisan trade services related
- Servants and domestic
- Railway, Telegraph, Post related
- Suppliers and retail
- Professional, Independent. Scholars and retired
- Other.

With the exception of 1851/1861 those having no occupation formed the largest proportion of the population⁴.

The occupational summary⁴ indicates that for Wacton agriculture remained the main activity underpinning the local economy throughout the Victorian period and indeed at 1901 was strong³. Whether this reflected prior good weather, hop and harvest yields and/or the results of increased mechanisation and more efficient transportation by the railway is a matter for further study. Whilst some domestic servants remained artisans had departed. The nearby market town of Bromyard had grown¹² and could provide a wide range of support services including medical.

By 1901 the larger population of Dalton was able to support a broader service and supplier community as well as providing many more specialised workers for the colliery. Proportionately the agricultural sector reduced but the actual number employed remained much the same as 1841/1851⁴. Demand for produce would have increased from the exceptional growth of neighbouring Murton, Dawdon (Seaham Harbour)¹¹

Throughout the Victorian period there were 155 separate occupations listed⁸ of which 47 were specific descriptions related to coal mining activity. With the exception of 1871 those having no occupation formed the largest part of the population.

Dalton provides clear evidence of how a community's primary agricultural economy had been overtaken in 60 years by a new and relentless expanding extractive industry fuelling the Industrial Revolution but sufficient to support a tradition of artisan and service suppliers whilst retaining the core element of its rural heritage.

Finally, as Higgs¹³ points out, in broader terms occupations were also social designations reflecting status and perceived social worth. The differing assumptions that individual enumerators made about what constituted an occupation must be taken into consideration in any analysis.

Notes

- ¹ Censuses 1841-1901. Units 2 and 4
- ² Higgs E, "Making Sense of the Census Revisited pp. 97-115
- ³ Table A: Occupations in Wacton and Dalton-le-Dale 1841- 1901. Appendix
- ⁴ Table B: Occupational Summary Wacton and Dalton -le-Dale 1841-1901. Appendix
- ⁵ Higgs E, pp.101-106
- ⁶ Anderson M, What can the mid-Victorian censuses tell us about variations in married women's Employment?
- ⁷ Table E: List of Wacton Occupations from 1841-1901 Censuses. Appendix
- ⁸ Table F: List of Dalton-le-Dale Occupations from 1841-1901 Censuses. Appendix
- ⁹ Higgs E, p104
- ¹⁰ 1876 Elementary Education Act
- ¹¹ Table C: Population change within Easington District 1801-1901
- ¹² Table D: Population change within Herefordshire
- ¹³ Higgs E, p97

Table A - Occupations in Wacton and Dalton-le-Dale 1841-1901¹

Occupation Category	Wacton							Dalton						
	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Ag Labs ² , Labourers, agent, horseman	24	54	49	30	26	21	28	12	7	24	28	13	11	11
Farmers & Relatives	6	15	6	8	9	8	11	6	5	10	14	11	4	3
Carpenters, joiners, coopers & wheelwrights, cartwrights & Apps	6	8	1	4	1	2		4	3	4	5	3	5	3
Independent, Pensioner, annuitant, retd	4				1	1	1	3	1		1	1		1
Mason, Builder, bricklayer, painter	1	1						1	3	1	1	1	1	
Shoemaker	2	1	1									1	2	
Auctioneer, Registrar, Parish Clerk	1								1	1				
Dressmaker, drapers, milliners, weaver, quilter & tailors		3	2					1				1	1	10
Innkeeper, publican ⁴		1	1	1	1			1	1	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]
Servants & housekeepers	4	7	3	11	3	4	5		5	2	7	5	6	3
Merchant, grocer, butcher, miller, fruiterer				1		1	1			1	2	1		4
Surgeon, Chemist U, Printer											1	1	1	1
Police Constable					1									
Sub-postmaster, Telegraph clerk & messenger						2	3							
Railway Employees							4							
Blacksmith, Farrier, Smith, Engineer			1					1	1	2	2	4	5	5
Schoolmistress												1		
Scholars ⁴			(18)	(5)	(23)				(6)	(13)	(19)	(14)	(9)	
Vicar, Clergyman									1	1	1			1
Vicars family									2		5			
Families of Tailor, Mason, Merchant, Fruiterer, Innkeeper										1	8	2		
³ Colliery, mineworkers, manual & non-manual									3	1	2	13	22	87
TOTALS of those occupied⁴	48	90	64	55	42	39	53	29	33	48	77	58	58	129

¹ Occupations derived from Census Enumerator Book tabulations "Rank, Profession or Occupation" (1841-1881) & "Profession or Occupation" (1891-1901) E.Higgs "Making Sense of the Census Revisited" Table 8.2 Abbreviations p115 ³ See Table 5 for fuller occupational descriptions ⁴ Scholars and secondary descriptions excluded f

Occupations	Wacton							Dalton						
	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Number of Persons	30	69	55	38	35	29	39	18	12	34	42	24	15	14
Employed in Farming	30	69	55	38	35	29	39	18	12	34	42	24	15	14
%age of population	27.52	53.49	44.71	27.74	34.31	26.36	35.14	20.45	14.46	33.33	32.8	20.34	11.19	4.13
Employed in Mining	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	2	13	22	87
%age of population	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.61	0.98	1.56	11.02	16.42	26.66
Otherwise occupied	18	21	10	17	7	10	15	11	18	13	13	21	21	28
%age of population	16.51	16.28	8.13	12.41	6.96	9.09	13.51	12.5	21.69	12.75	10.16	17.8	15.67	8.26
Total occupied	48	90	65	55	42	39	54	29	33	48	77	58	58	129
%age of population	44.04	69.77	52.85	40.15	41.18	35.45	48.65	32.95	39.76	47.06	60.16	49.15	43.28	38.05
No occupation	61	39	58	82	60	71	57	59	50	54	51	60	76	210
%age no occupation	55.96	30.23	47.15	59.85	58.82	64.55	51.35	67.05	60.24	52.94	39.84	50.85	56.72	61.95
Total Population	109	129	123	137	102	110	111	88	83	102	128	118	134	339

Table B : Occupational Summary Wacton and Dalton -le -Dale 1841-1901

Location	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Dalton le Dale	40	52	49	73	88	83	102	128	118	134	339
Cold Hesledon	46	31	55	112	83	117	89	99	108	682	899
East Murton	75	71	72	98	521	1381	2104	3017	4710	5052	6514
Dawdon (Seaham Harbour)	22	27	35	1022	2017	3538	6137	7132	7714	9044	10163

Table C : Population Change within Easington District 1801-1901 ¹

¹Whitehead, T “ When Coal was King” Chap 1

Location	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Wacton	109	129	123	137	102	110	111
Bromyard	2515	1394	1385	1322	2126	1460	1663
Leominster	4920	5211	5658	6536	6214	5680	5825

Table D : Population change within Herefordshire ²

² Census records for England and Wales 1841-1901

Table E : List of Wacton Occupations from 1841-1901 Censuses ¹

Occupation	Occupation	Occupation	Occupation
Carter (on farm)	General Servant	Railway Packer	
Cattleman on farm	General Servant (Domestic)	Railway Stationmaster	
Coachman Domestic	Horseman on Farm	Retired Farmer	
Cooper	Horsebreaker	Sawyer	
Dressmaker	Independent	Scholar	
Cowman	Housekeeper	Seamstress	
Dairy Maid	House Servant	Second Waggoner	
Farmer	Indoor House Servant	Servant	
Farmers Daughter	Inn keeper	Servant (Domestic)	
Farmers Son	Journeyman Carpenter	Shoemaker	
Farmers Wife	Labourer	Sick Nurse	
Farm Bailiff	Labourer Agricultural	Stud farm bailiff	
Agricultural Implement Agent	Farm Bailiff & Farmer	Mason	Sub Postmaster
Agricultural Labourer	Farmer Retired	Miller	Teamster on farm
Apprentice	Farm Labourer	Milliner	Telegraph Clerk
Assistant Farmer	Freehold Farmer	Nurse Maid	Telegraph Messenger
Army Pensioner Sub Postmaster	Farm Servant	Nurse	Telegraphist & Postal Clerk
Carpenter & Wheelwright	General Agricultural Workman	Platelayer	Under Waggoner
Assistant in Farm	Farrier	Ordinary Agricultural Labourer	Waggoner
Carpenter	General Farmhand	Pensioner	Waggoner Domestic Servant
Auctioneer	Farm Servant Indoor	Ordinary Farm Labourer	Waggoners Boy
Boarder	F(emale) S(ervant)	Police Constable	Wheelwright
Butcher	General Agricultural Labourer	Parochial Relief Agricultural Labourer	Works for father
			Total 82

¹ Occupations derived from Census Enumerator Book tabulations “ Rank, Profession or Occupation” (1841-1881) & “ Profession or Occupation “ (1891-1901)

Agricultural and related occupations Artisan trades Services and related Servants and Domestic

Railway , Telegraph , post and related Suppliers and retail Other

Professionals , Independent , Scholars and retired

Table F: List of Dalton-le-Dale Occupations from 1841-1901 Censuses ¹

Occupation	Occupation	Occupation	Occupation	Occupation
Apprentice	Coal Miner Screener above grnd	Dressmaker	Grocers Assistant	Pit Labourer
Agricultural Labourers Wife	Coal Miner Railwayman u/g	Cotton weaver	General Merchant	Plough boy
Agricultural Labourer	Coal Miner Putter u/g	Cook	Groom Domestic Servant	Printer
Annuitant	Coal Miner Retired	Domestic Servant	Grocer & Draper	Pudler
Apprentice Cartwright	Coal Miner Set rider u/g	Drapers Assistant	Grocers Clerk	Quilter
Apprentice Plumber	Coal Miner Shifter u/g	Engineman Stationary	Housekeeper	Registrar of Births & Deaths
Blacksmith (Country)	Coal Miner Stoneman u/g	Farmer	Housekeeper Domestic Servant	Retired Innkeeper
Blacksmith journeyman	Coal Miner Timber Drawer u/g	Farmer Innkeeper	Independent	Retired Innkeepers wife
Coal Miner Landing thinder u/g	Colliery joiner	Groom	Merchants wife	Retired Miller
Coal Miner onsetter u/g	Coal Screener above grnd	General Agricultural Servant	Publican & Farmer	Retired Millers wife
Blacksmiths wife	Coal Miner Winchman u/g	Farm Servant	Joiner	Retired Miner
Blacksmith	Coal Miner Small Putter above g	Family Cook Domestic	House Servant	Retired Ship owner
Blacksmith Apprentice	Coal Miner Spare Banksman	Farm Hind	Housemaid	Roadman
Brakesman	Coke Burner	Farm Labourer	Joiners daughter	Scholar
Builder	Coke drawer labourer	Farmers Son	Joiners wife	School mistress (Private)
Bricklayers Labourer	Coke Burners wife	Farmers Daughter	Joiners son	Schoolmaster
Coal gatherer	Colliery mason	Fitter	Labourers wife	Screenman
Butcher	Coal Miners wife	Farmers wife	Joiner & Cartwright	Servant Domestic
Carter	Coal office clerk	Farmer & Publicans wife	Joiner & Cartwrights wife	Shepherd
Cartwright	Colliery boilersmith above grnd	Farm Servant (Indoor)	Mason	Shoemaker
Chemist Unemployed	Colliery engineer	Foreman Shoemaker	Labourer	Sinker
Clergyman (Church of England)	Colliery labourer	Fireman Stationary above grnd	Labourers daughter	Smith & horseshoer
Cartwright Apprentice	Colliery caller above grnd	Farm labourer	M(ale) S(ervant)	Spare horsekeeper Coal Mine
Cartman Colliery above ground	Colliery driver	Farm labourers wife	Milliner	Stonemason
Coal Miner Pony driver u/g	Cook Domestic Servant	General Servant	Painter	Surgeon
Coal Miner	Colliery putter	Fruiterer	Mason & Parish Clerk	Tailor
Coal Miners Asst onsetter u/g	Colliery Fireman	Fruiterers wife	Mason & Parish Clerks wife	Tailors daughter
Coal Miner banksman above grnd	Colliery Stonemason	General labourer above grnd	Milk boy	Tailors wife
Coal Miner Belt Boy above grnd	Colliery Stonemasons wife	General labourer	Outdoor servant	Vicar
Coal Miner Hewer	Colliery Weighman	General servant (Domestic)	Masons Daughter	Vicars daughter
Coal Miner Landing boy u/g	Colliery weighman above grnd	Gamekeeper & coal miner	Masons Wife	Vicars wife
				Total 155

Notes: Agricultural and related occupations Artisan trades, Services and related Servants and Domestic Professionals .Independent, Scholars and Retired
 Coal mining and related occupations Suppliers and Retail

¹ Occupations derived from Census Enumerator Book Tabulations “Rank, Profession or Occupation” (1841-1881) & “Profession or Occupation” (189