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Contrasting Rural Communities:  
The Experience of South Yorkshire  
in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

Sarah Holland

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of  
Sheffield Hallam University for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy

December 2013

## Abstract

This thesis re-evaluates the Mills model of 'open' and 'closed' villages by applying it to a new geographical area: Doncaster in South Yorkshire. The Doncaster district is a particularly neglected area in terms of village typology and mid nineteenth century rural and agrarian history. The thesis is based upon the study of six village case studies, all in close proximity to the market town of Doncaster, which differed in terms of landownership and land type. Using a range of comparable and widely available nineteenth century sources, including Census Enumerators' Books, trade directories, newspapers and government reports, in addition to estate records where they survive, three thematic chapters examine how and why agriculture, agricultural employment, industry and micro-commerce developed and differed in the six villages. From this analysis, three main arguments of the Mills model are evaluated. Firstly, that the characteristics of villages with and without concentrated landownership were different (classificatory). Secondly, that landownership and landowners were directly responsible for the characteristics of the villages (causal). Thirdly, that the actions of landowners in estate villages had a negative effect on multi-freeholder villages, and made the former dependent on the latter (dependency).

The limitations of the Mills model for understanding village typology are demonstrated. Firstly, variation between villages with similar landowning structures, and change within a relatively short period of time, affect the classification of villages. Secondly, leadership and land type were important causal factors, in addition to differentiated rather than homogenised landownership. Thirdly, the inter-relationships stimulated by the market town in terms of marketing facilities, agricultural societies, trades and crafts, hiring fairs and forums for debate, and the availability of raw materials, skills and labour collectively undermine Mills' notion of one-way dependency between 'open' and 'closed' villages. This thesis suggests alternative frameworks to the sharp dichotomy of the Mills model, which have wider applicability. It argues that a continuum, a sequence along which subtle differences are placed between the two extremes, is a better representation of the characteristics of different villages as it demonstrates variation and change. This contribution is further consolidated by the construction of a diagrammatic framework that places the village at the heart of the complex processes of cause, effect and inter-relationships.

# Contents

Abstract	ii
List of Figures	iv
List of Tables	vi
List of Plates	ix
Acknowledgments	x
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Agriculture, Agricultural Management and Rural Communities	63
Chapter Three: Agricultural Workforces and Hiring Practices	146
Chapter Four: Industry and Micro-Commerce in the Countryside	223
Chapter Five: Conclusion	295
Bibliography	319

## Figures

Fig. 1.1: The Mills Model - a Summary of 'open' and 'closed' Township Characteristics	8
Fig. 1.2: Short's Interpretation of the Mills Model	16
Fig. 1.3: Map Showing the Six Villages in 1841	29
Fig. 1.4: Map Showing the Six Villages in 1892	29
Fig. 1.5: Map of Sprotbrough, 1847	38
Fig. 1.6: Map of Rossington, 1854	40
Fig. 1.7: Map of Warmsworth, 1841	44
Fig. 1.8: Map of Braithwell, 1840	46
Fig. 1.9: Map of Fishlake, 1843	47
Fig. 1.10: Map of Stainforth, 1854	51
Fig. 2.1: Farm Size Continuum, 1851	77
Fig. 2.2: Farm Size Continuum, 1871	80
Fig. 2.3: Proportion of Crops Grown by Acreage in the Six Villages, 1866	97
Fig. 2.4: Map Showing the Market Towns in the Doncaster District	124
Fig. 3.1: Agricultural Employment Continuum, 1851	155
Fig. 3.2: Agricultural Employment Continuum, 1871	156
Fig. 3.3: Relationship between Farm Size and Number of Agricultural Employees, 1851	157
Fig. 3.4: Farm Servants Continuum, 1851	166
Fig. 3.5: Farm Servants Continuum, 1871	167
Fig. 3.6: Relationship between Farm Size and the Number of Farm Servants in the Six Villages, 1851	169
Fig 4.1: Number of Industries in the Six Villages, 1837-1877	229

Fig. 4.2: Industry and Micro-commerce Continuum, 1861	233
Fig. 4.3: Employment in Industry and Micro-Commerce Continuum, 1861	236
Fig. 4.4: Proportion of Trades, Crafts and Industries associated with Agriculture	245
Fig. 4.5: Number of Blacksmiths and Wheelwrights in the Six Villages, 1837	251
Fig. 4.6: Number of Blacksmiths and Wheelwrights in the Six Villages, 1861	252
Fig. 4.7: Number of Blacksmiths and Wheelwrights in the Six Villages, 1877	252
Fig. 4.8: Map Showing Levittt Hagg and the Limestone Quarries at Warmsworth, 1838	277
Fig. 4.9: Map Showing the Don Foundry on the Boundary between Sprotbrough and Doncaster	290
Fig. 5.1: An Amalgamated Continuum	312
Fig. 5.2: An Alternative Framework	314



## Tables

Table 1.1: The Number of Landowners and the Amount of Land Owned in Braithwell, Fishlake and Stainforth during the Mid Nineteenth Century	28
Table 1.2: Overview of Landownership, Acreage, Land Type and Transport Routes in the Six Villages	31
Table 1.3: The Population Size and Density of the Three Estate Villages	34
Table 1.4: The Population Size and Density of the Three Multi-Freeholder Villages	35
Table 2.1: Farm Size in Warmsworth, 1860-61	69
Table 2.2: Farm Size in the Six Villages, 1851	72
Table 2.3: Farm Size in the Six Villages, 1861	72
Table 2.4: Farm Size in the Six Villages, 1871	73
Table 2.5: The Proportion of Different Sized Farms in the Six Villages, 1851	75
Table 2.6: The Smallest and Largest Farms in the Six Villages, 1851-1871	75
Table 2.7: Arable Crops Grown in the Villages by Acreage, 1866	95
Table 2.8: Number of Livestock in the Six Villages in 1866	100
Table 2.9: Attendance at the Celebratory Dinner to Mark the Opening of the New Covered Corn Market by Farmers from the Six Villages	126
Table 3.1: Agricultural Employment as a Proportion of Total Male Employment in the Six Villages, 1851-1871	148
Table 3.2: Ratio of Male Agricultural Employees to Farmers in the Six Villages, 1851-1871	153
Table 3.3: Farm Service as a Proportion of the Male Agricultural Workforce	165
Table 3.4: Age Range of Farm Servants in the Six Villages, 1851	172
Table 3.5: Age Range of Farm Servants in the Six Villages, 1871	173

Table 3.6: Number of Female Servants Employed in the Farmhouses of the Six Villages between 1851 and 1871	177
Table 3.7: Number of Male Agricultural Labourers Listed as Employees by Farmers in the Six Villages, 1851-1871	195
Table 3.8: Number of Male Agricultural Labourers Recorded by Occupation in the Six Villages, 1851-1871	196
Table 3.9: Proportion of Different Aged Male Agricultural Labourers in the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1851	199
Table 3.10: Proportion of Different Aged Male Agricultural Labourers in the Six Villages, 1851	199
Table 3.11: Agricultural Labourers' Wages (average weekly wage) in Doncaster and Nationally in the Mid Nineteenth Century	202
Table 3.12: Average Weekly Wages and Additional Allowances for Men, Women and Children in the Doncaster Area, 1860-1870	204
Table 4.1: Number of Industries and Trades and Crafts Businesses, and Range of Trades and Crafts, in the Six Villages, 1837-1877	227
Table 4.2: Number of People Employed in Industry, Trades and Crafts in the Six Villages, 1851-1871	228
Table 4.3: The Extent and Range of Micro-Commerce in the Six Villages, 1837-1877	230
Table 4.4: Total Male Employment in Industry in the Six Villages, 1851-1871	234
Table 4.5: Total Male Employment in Trades and Crafts in the Six Villages, 1851-1871	234
Table 4.6: Relationship between Population Size and the Number of Trades and Crafts Businesses in the Six Villages, 1861	238
Table 4.7: Relationship between Population Size and Trades and Crafts Occupations in the Six Villages, 1861	240
Table 4.8: Relationship between Population Size and the Range of Different Trades and Crafts in the Six Villages, 1861	240
Table 4.9: Retailers in the Six Villages, 1851-1871	259
Table 4.10: Number of Rural Industries and Total Industrial Employment in the Six Villages, 1861	261



## Plates 1

Plate 1.1: Kip and Knyff Engraving of the Sprotbrough Estate	37
Plate 1.2: Estate Cottages built by Sir J.W. Copley at Sprotbrough in the 1840s	38
Plate 1.3: Rossington Church	41
Plate 1.4: Rossington School	41
Plate 1.5: Estate Cottages Built by the Brown family at Rossington	42
Plate 1.6: Warmsworth Hall	43
Plate 1.7: The Aldam's House in Warmsworth	45
Plate 1.8: Fishlake Church	48
Plate 1.9: Fishlake Manor House	49
Plate 1.10: Houses and Inn Built Beside the Canal at Stainforth	51
Plate 2.1: Mount Pleasant Farm, Rossington	85
Plate 2.2: The Land Agent's House, Sprotbrough	111
Plate 2.3: New Corn Exchange, Doncaster, 1873	129
Plate 3.1: Cottages at Sprotbrough	208
Plate 3.2: Cottages at Rossington	210
Plate 4.1: Gravestone to George Nassau, Village Blacksmith of Sprotbrough, 1825	257
Plate 4.2: Brick Rebuilding in Rossington in the Mid Nineteenth Century	264
Plate 4.3: Carvings of Fox Heads on Rossington Church	273
Plate 4.4: Evidence of the Original Town Quarry in Warmsworth Village (now a park)	276

**1All photographs, with the exception of plate 1.1, were taken by the author of this thesis.**

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## Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis is an examination of the characteristics of and differences between villages in close proximity to each other, and contributes to ongoing debates about village typologies. Central to these debates is the work of Dennis R. Mills on 'open' and 'closed' villages. Between 1959 and 1980, Mills developed what was an innovative approach to the classification of English villages in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> He adopted nineteenth century terminology as the basis for a descriptive and prescriptive model about rural communities. Landownership dominated both the nineteenth century poor law reports that informed the work of Mills, and Mills' own explanations for village differentiation on the basis of how much land was owned.<sup>2</sup> Based on the concentration of landownership Mills differentiated between 'open' and 'closed' villages, and constructed his 'open-closed' settlement model.<sup>3</sup>

Despite numerous critics, the Mills model is still acknowledged as being a useful starting point for identifying village characteristics, and remains the dominant framework for understanding different types of rural communities.<sup>4</sup> Yet, as Barry Reay argued, the fundamental weakness

<sup>1</sup>D.R. Mills, 'The Development of Rural Settlement Around Lincoln, with Special Reference to the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *East Midland Geographer*, Vol. 11 (1959), pp. 3-15; D.R. Mills, 'The Poor Laws and the Distribution of Population c. 1600-1860, with special reference to Lincolnshire', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 26 (1959), pp. 185-195; D.R. Mills, 'Landownership and Rural Population, with special reference to Leicestershire in the Mid Nineteenth Century', Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leicester, 1963; D.R. Mills, 'English Villages in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: a Sociological Approach', *Amateur Historian*, Vol. 6, No. 8 (1965), pp. 271-8; D.R. Mills, *Lord and Peasant in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London, 1980).

<sup>2</sup>PP 1847, XI, *First to Eighth Report from the Select Committee on Settlement and Poor Removal*; PP 1850, XXVII, *Reports to the Poor Law Board, on the Laws of Settlement, and Removal of the Poor*; PP 1860, XVII, *Select Committee on the Irremovable Poor*.

<sup>3</sup>Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 117.

<sup>4</sup>S. Banks, 'Open and Close Parishes in Nineteenth Century England' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Reading, 1982); S. Banks, 'Nineteenth-Century Scandal or Twentieth-Century Model? A New Look at 'Open' and 'Close' Parishes', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (1988), pp. 51-73; D. Spencer, 'Reformulating the "Closed" Parish Thesis: Associations, Interests, and Interaction', *Journal of Historical Geography*, Vol. 26, No. II (January 2000), pp. 83-98; K. Tiller, *English Local History: An Introduction* (Stroud, 1992), pp. 221-222; A. Howkins, 'Types of Rural Communities', in E.J.T Collins (ed), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, 1850-1914*, Vol. VII, Part 2 (Cambridge, 2000), p. 1304; A.J.H. Jackson, 'The "Open-Closed" Settlement Model and the Interdisciplinary

of the Mills model is that few places actually correspond with it.<sup>5</sup> This thesis re-evaluates the Mills model, through the analysis of six villages in South Yorkshire: Sprotbrough, Warmsworth, Rossington, Braithwell, Fishlake and Stainforth. The purpose is not to provide yet another critique to undermine the Mills model, but rather to identify problems associated with its application and to suggest modifications to address them.

The significance of this study lies in three main areas. Firstly, it seeks to advance theoretical frameworks for the study of village typologies. This is in response to the fact that despite repeated criticisms of the Mills model no alternative exists. Key to potential advancements is the development of an approach that is both flexible and able to promote comparative work on village typologies. This proposed comparative approach is crucial to increasing knowledge and understanding of how and why villages in close proximity to each other developed. In addition, it seeks to establish a framework that complements current work on aspects of village life.

Secondly, the study evaluates the Mills model by applying it to a new geographical area: South Yorkshire. The work of Mills, and that of his supporters and his critiques, has concentrated on the counties of Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, and the South East of England. This has resulted in a geographical bias in our understanding of village typologies. Yet, as Stephen Caunce argued, it is not sufficient to assume uniform experiences due to the regional distinctiveness of the North.<sup>6</sup> By analysing a northern county

Formulations of Dennis Mills: Conceptualising Local Rural Change'; *Rural History*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2012), pp. 121-136.

5 B. Reay, *Rural England: Labouring Lives in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 2004), p. 14.

6 S. Caunce, The Hiring Fairs of Northern England, 1890-1930: A Regional Analysis of Commercial and Social Networking in Agriculture', *Past and Present*, 217 (2012), pp. 218-20.

this study seeks to readdress the balance, and establish whether a framework of village typologies can account for regional variations.

Thirdly, despite some work on agriculture and village type in Yorkshire, the county is still under-represented in the literature.<sup>7</sup> Modern South Yorkshire, which was formerly part of the West Riding of Yorkshire throughout the nineteenth century, is particularly neglected in respect of comparative studies of agriculture and village typology in the mid nineteenth century. General studies of South Yorkshire's history have tended to focus on a broader time period, the industrial development of the region, or its aristocratic estates.<sup>8</sup> As David Hey argued in 'Reflections on the Local and Regional History of the North', the variety and depth of history in South Yorkshire is endlessly fascinating, and contributes to a better understanding of both the north of England and the nation as a whole.<sup>9</sup> This research is the first comparative study of rural settlement in the Doncaster district in the mid nineteenth century, and as such makes an important and original contribution to knowledge.

The Doncaster district is a particularly useful geographical area for research into village differentiation in the mid nineteenth century. There were significant differences in land type and landownership, and Doncaster's rural hinterland was on the cusp of industrialisation. The arrival of the Great Northern Railway in 1848 and the establishment of the Great Northern Railway Works in 1853 stimulated some industrial development in the town. West Laith Gate became a nucleus for industry due to its close proximity to the railway. Fawcett's steam corn

7 D. Hey 'Yorkshire and Lancashire' in J. Thirsk (ed), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol. V, 1640-1750* (Cambridge, 1984); D. Hey, *A History of Yorkshire: County of the Broad Acres* (Lancaster, 2005).

8 S. Pollard & C. Holmes (eds), *Essays in the Economic and Social History of South Yorkshire* (Sheffield, 1976); D. Hey, *The Making of South Yorkshire* (Newton Abbot, 1979); D. Holland, *Changing Landscapes in South Yorkshire* (Doncaster, 1980); P.J. Nunn, 'The Management of some South Yorkshire Landed Estates in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, Linked with the Central Economic Development of the Area, 1700-1850' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, 1985); D. Hey, *Yorkshire from AD 1000* (London, 1986); M. Jones, *The Making of the South Yorkshire Landscape* (Barnsley, 2000); D. Hey, *Medieval South Yorkshire* (Ashbourne, 2003).

9 D. Hey, 'Reflections on the Local and Regional History of the North', *Northern History*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (September 2013), pp. 155,169.



mill and Marshall's agricultural machinery showroom were both established in West Laith Gate in 1868.<sup>10</sup> Similarly Marshgate was developed into an industrial area in the second half of the nineteenth century, with both the Victoria Mustard Mill and Elwes' steam powered saw mill using the railways to distribute goods.<sup>11</sup> The villages of Hexthorpe and Balby, on the periphery of the town centre, were transformed into railway suburbs, and the population of Doncaster grew considerably. The population of Doncaster and its suburbs grew from 12,967 in 1851 to 39,404 in 1901.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the countryside surrounding Doncaster was not heavily industrialised until the development of the collieries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Agriculture remained an important, albeit evolving, economic force in the district. Demand for agricultural produce increased in response to the growth and commercialisation of Doncaster, and new market buildings were constructed to cater for the expanding supply and demand networks. This thesis analyses the importance of this evolving relationship between the market town of Doncaster and the six villages during the mid nineteenth century.

The introduction now provides the contextual background to the thesis beginning with a critical review of the main theoretical frameworks for village typology. It then discusses the research questions, evaluates the methodological approach and sources applied to this research, introduces the six villages, and provides a chapter by chapter overview of the thesis.

### **Theoretical Frameworks of Village Typology**

This critical review of the literature charts the progress of the argument and debate about village typologies, and demonstrates the contribution of this research by identifying specific areas worthy of further investigation. To evaluate the Mills model, and the subsequent criticisms

<sup>10</sup> D. Holland, and E.M. Holland, *A Yorkshire Town: The Making of Doncaster* (iBook edition, 2012), p. 52.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

of it, it is crucial to understand the terminology of the nineteenth century poor law that Mills adopted. Parish vestries, ecclesiastical and administrative bodies, were either 'open' or 'select' according to who could participate in the decision making process. An 'open' vestry, as the name suggests, was open to all resident ratepayers. A 'select' vestry was conversely restricted to an elected minority, which was generally dominated by large landowners and therefore closed to the majority of people. The terms 'open' and 'select' to define parish vestries were used in the early nineteenth century by the *Select Committee on the Poor Laws* and in the *Poor Law Amendment Bill*.<sup>13</sup> The 1834 *Poor Law Amendment Act* introduced a new poor relief system focused on the workhouse. As a consequence of these changes, an increasing number of parliamentary enquiries were carried out between the 1840s and 1870s to investigate the problems of the rural poor.

The Select Committees continued to use the terms 'open' and 'select' or 'close', and the distinctions between them were specifically linked to landownership. In 1843, the *Reports on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture* stated that 'an open parish is one which is in the hands of a considerable number of proprietors, while the neighbouring parishes are each owned by one or two (or very few) proprietors'.<sup>14</sup> Responsibility for the cost of poor relief was firmly rooted in parishes, which meant many landowners were anxious to reduce expenditure on poor relief by limiting the size of the population on their estates. The 1846 *Poor Removal Act* meant that people became irremovable from a township after five years residency. This provided further motivation for landowners to restrict settlement on their estates, which resulted in some even demolishing cottages in order to reduce the availability of accommodation.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> PP 1817, VI, *Report from the Select Committee on the Poor Laws*, pp. 22-3, 41, 49, 59, 62, 77, 110; PP 1834, III, *Poor Law Amendment Bill*, pp. 30-1.

<sup>14</sup> PP 1843, XII, *Reports on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*, p. 237.

<sup>15</sup> Mills, 'Landownership and Rural Population', p. 8.

The *Second and Third Reports from the Select Committee on Settlement and Poor Removal* in 1847 particularly highlighted how landownership not only controlled and restricted population growth in 'close' parishes, but also removed the problem of the poor to the already densely populated 'open' parishes.<sup>16</sup> Poor Law commissioners visited fourteen counties in 1848 to examine conditions, wages and accommodation in 'open' and 'close' parishes, and this evidence was presented to parliament in 1850. The *1850 Reports to the Poor Law Board, on the Laws of Settlement, and the Removal of the Poor*, once again emphasised the problems and 'burdens' caused in 'open' parishes by the behaviour of landowners in 'close' parishes.<sup>17</sup> The idea that landowners were able to remove the poor and restrict population growth to limit poor law expenditure in these ways was increasingly regarded as a moral scandal. Consequently, 'open' and 'close' became emotionally charged terms that could be conveniently applied to discussions about the problems of the rural poor.<sup>18</sup>

Mills adopted the terminology and ideas of the poor law reports to examine the relationship between landownership and village characteristics. In 1959, he argued that the differences between population size and density in villages around Lincoln during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were due to differences in landownership and 'the differential operation of the poor laws'.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, Mills adopted the nineteenth century terminology, applying 'open' and 'closed' to multi-freeholder and estate villages respectively.<sup>20</sup> The relationship between landownership and rural population was also the subject of Mills' PhD thesis awarded in 1963.<sup>21</sup> In this study he used

<sup>16</sup> PP 1847, XI, *First Report from the Select Committee on Settlement and Poor Removal*, p. 28, 59; PP 1847, XI, *Second and Third Reports from the Select Committee on Settlement, and Poor Removal*, pp. 25-28, 80-81.

<sup>17</sup> PP 1850, XXVII, *Reports to the Poor Law Board, on the Laws of Settlement, and Removal of the Poor*, pp. 41-2, 127-9, 132, 145, 168-71, 173, 187.

<sup>18</sup> Howkins, *Types of Rural Community*, p. 1304.

<sup>19</sup> Mills, 'The Development of Rural Settlement around Lincoln', pp. 3-15; Mills, 'The Poor Laws and the Distribution of Population', pp. 185-195.

<sup>20</sup> Mills, 'The Development of Rural Settlement around Lincoln', pp. 3-15.

<sup>21</sup> Mills, 'Landownership and Rural Population'.

the county of Leicestershire to argue that patterns of landownership were crucial to understanding population density, social structure, occupations, agriculture and the administration of the poor law. A recurrent theme of his thesis was that of the operation of the poor laws and laws of settlement.<sup>22</sup> In addition to the nineteenth century poor law reports, he used the Census Enumerators' Books and trade directories to demonstrate the juxtaposition of different types of rural communities on the basis of the concentration of landownership. Further work on other parishes and villages in England, including in Nottinghamshire consolidated his argument.<sup>23</sup> These ideas and terms were eventually developed in his book *Lord and Peasant in Nineteenth Century Britain*, which was published in 1980, to form a model of village differentiation.<sup>24</sup> Mills stated that his aim was to 'draw out and assess a dichotomy which existed at that time', and he argued that the estate and peasant systems should be seen in contrast to each other.<sup>25</sup> In doing so, Mills amalgamated nineteenth century ideas and concepts into a twentieth century model of village differentiation (see fig. 1.1).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., chapter five is devoted to the geography of poverty in Leicestershire.

<sup>23</sup> D.R. Mills, 'Francis Howell's Report on the Operation of the Laws of Settlement in Nottinghamshire, 1848', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*, Vol. 76 (1972), pp. 46-52; D.R. Mills, 'Spatial Implications of the Settlement Laws in Rural England', in Open University, *Poverty and Social Policy, 1740-1870*, Block IV (Milton Keynes, 1974), pp. 18-23

<sup>24</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 117.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 16,23,28,116.

Fig. 1.1: The Mills Model - a Summary of 'open' and 'closed' Township Characteristics

'open'	'closed'
Larger populations	Small populations
High population density	Low population density
Rapid population increases	Slow population increases
Many small proprietors	Gentleman's residences
Small farms	Large farms
High poor rates	Low poor rates
Rural industries and craftsmen	Little industry and few craftsmen
Shops and public houses plentiful	Few shops and public houses
Housing poor, but plentiful	Housing good, but in short supply
Nonconformity common	Strong Anglican control
Radicalism and independence strong in politics and social organisations	Deference strong in politics and social organisations
Poachers	Gamekeepers

Source: reproduced from D.R. Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 117

Landownership underpinned the Mills model. Mills used land tax returns and the stipulations of the enclosure acts to measure whether a village was 'open' or 'closed'. He argued that the merit of using enclosure acts was the requirement that three-quarters or four-fifths of the landowners by acreage supported an enclosure Bill in order for it to be successful. This proportion of land therefore equated to the optimum amount necessary to be regarded as the controlling landowner in a township.<sup>26</sup> Mills also utilised the 1832 land tax returns to identify patterns of landownership in mid nineteenth century Leicestershire. He argued that

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74-76.

when cross-referenced with the tithe awards the evidence was comparable, which made the land tax returns a valid source for mid nineteenth century landownership in the absence of comprehensive tithe awards for the county of Leicestershire.<sup>27</sup> According to Mills, a village was 'closed' if 75 per cent or more of the land was owned by one person.<sup>28</sup> Conversely, landownership in 'open' villages was much more fragmented. Mills cited examples of 'open' villages with less than ten landowners and ones with well over one hundred owners.<sup>29</sup> Ultimately, Mills identified four main types of villages based on their landownership structure: resident squire, absentee, freeholder and divided.<sup>30</sup> He argued that in addition to being pivotal to whether or not a village was 'open' or 'closed', the concentration of landownership was also fundamental to how and why villages developed. Based upon these landownership criteria, Mills incorporated three main arguments into his model.

The first argument Mills developed, was that villages could be classified according to landownership, establishing that 'open' and 'closed' villages had different characteristics. In the Mills model concentrated landownership, and therefore 'closed' villages, equated to small populations, low population density, slow population change, low poor rates and good quality housing but in short supply.<sup>31</sup> These characteristics were closely linked with the nineteenth century debates surrounding landownership, village type and the poor law. The model however went beyond these characteristics, claiming that large, capital-intensive farms, little or no industry, minimal trades and crafts, few shops and public houses, strong Anglican control, and deference in politics and social organisations were all features of these villages.<sup>32</sup> Conversely, 'open' villages had fragmented landownership and were characterised in the Mills model by large populations, high population

<sup>27</sup> Mills, 'Landownership and Rural Population', p. 136.

<sup>28</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, pp. 74-76.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 76-7; Mills, 'Landownership and Rural Population', pp. 3,137.

<sup>31</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, pp. 117,119,124; Mills, 'English Villages', p. 275.

<sup>32</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, pp. 28-31,117,120,125-129,133.

density, rapid population increase, many small proprietors, high poor rates, plentiful housing but of poor quality, small farms, rural industry, labour intensive, family continuity, lots of shops and public houses, Non-Conformity, radicalism, and strong independence in politics and social organisations.<sup>33</sup> These classificatory characteristics of 'open' and 'closed' villages reinforced Mills' argument that villages with and without concentrated landownership should be seen in sharp contrast to one another.<sup>34</sup>

The second argument embodied in the Mills model was that landownership was directly responsible for these different characteristics. This added a causal element to the model, which interpreted everything as a direct consequence of how concentrated landownership was. Mills' causal argument was once again linked to the nineteenth century poor law debate. According to Mills, landowners were motivated by social and economic considerations, principally the administration of the poor law and the desire to minimise poor law expenditure by restricting population growth. By establishing the link with contemporary motivations, Mills believed that the use of nineteenth century terminology in a twentieth century comparative model was both justifiable and had wider implications for interpreting the role of landownership.<sup>35</sup>

The third argument that Mills incorporated into the model was again closely linked with the debates concerning the rural poor in the nineteenth century. As previously stated, the *Second and Third Reports from the Select Committee on Settlement and Poor Removal* highlighted that the consequence of landowners restricting the size of the population in estate villages was to increase the population in already densely populated 'open' villages and compound the problems of the poor. Mills developed this idea to argue that a negative inter-

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 117,119,124-5; Mills, 'English Villages', p. 276.

<sup>34</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, pp. 16, 28,120-3,125-7,134; Mills, 'English Villages', p. 211.

<sup>35</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, pp. 23-25, 78-79, 116.

dependency operated between villages, whereby 'closed' villages were dependent on 'open' villages.<sup>36</sup> This was specifically applied by Mills to explain labour supply between villages. He argued that 'closed' villages had a deficit of labour and were therefore dependent on the surplus of labour in 'open' villages.<sup>37</sup>

Mills was aware of certain limitations of the model, acknowledging that the 'distinction between open and closed was not always a sharp one'.<sup>38</sup> In attempting to address this he developed the idea of a four-fold system of classification, which further subdivided village type on the basis of residency and the number of landowners.<sup>39</sup> This idea of subdividing villages had also been discussed in nineteenth century sources including the *Imperial Gazetteer*.<sup>40</sup> Mills argued that the control exerted over a 'closed' village could be weakened if the landowner was not resident. Translated into the four-fold system, this meant that 'closed' villages were distinguished between on the basis of whether or not the landowner was resident or absentee.<sup>41</sup> Mills also recognised that 'open' villages with up to a dozen landowners were potentially very different to those with hundreds of very small landowners. Consequently he separated 'open' villages into multi-freeholder and divided. <sup>42</sup> In recognising the limitations of his model, Mills encouraged further research in order to test and redefine the model.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, Mills himself still persisted with the 'open-closed' dichotomy. He concluded that the 'open-closed' model retained its validity because it highlighted common distinctions between villages with similar landowning structures and was able to summarise a 'wide range of economic, demographic, social, religious and political data'.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, pp. 24, 119-120.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>39</sup> Mills, 'English Villages', p. 272; Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, pp. 88-94.

<sup>40</sup> J.M. Wilson, *The Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales* (6 vols, London, 1870); Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 88.

<sup>41</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 94; Mills, 'English Villages', p. 272.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, pp. 116-117.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.



During the 1970s and 1980s, a number of historians applied the Mills model to villages and parishes in England, and found evidence to substantiate the arguments outlined by Mills. B. A. Holderness argued that smaller populations and slower rates of population growth were characteristic of 'closed' villages, compared to the larger populations of 'open' villages where rates of population growth were faster. Holderness also argued that the size of population and rates of population growth had implications for labour supply and social conditions within villages.<sup>45</sup> Brian Short, with Mills, argued that the 'open-closed' model was particularly useful for explaining patterns of social and political protest in the countryside.<sup>46</sup> Charles Rawding considered the work of Mills to be 'the most comprehensive attempt at constructing a nineteenth century historical geography of rural Britain'.<sup>47</sup> Rawding's own work on the north Lincolnshire Wolds argued that landownership affected employment structure and work opportunities. He demonstrated that 'open' villages had more diverse employment structures and more instances of family labour, compared with the predominantly agricultural occupational structure of 'close' villages.<sup>48</sup> In addition, James Obelkevich and Alan Everitt continued to develop the idea of the four-fold system of classification.<sup>49</sup> This body of additional work largely consolidated the arguments made by Mills, and consequently the essence of the Mills model was reinforced.

The first major criticism of the Mills model was in the work of Sarah Banks, published between 1982 and 1988. Banks responded to the debate about 'open' and 'closed' settlements with criticism of the way in which the terminology was, in her opinion, inappropriately used. Banks

<sup>45</sup> B.A. Holderness, "'Open" and "Close" Parishes in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (1972), pp. 126-139.

<sup>46</sup> D.R. Mills & B.M. Short, 'Social Change and Social Conflict in Nineteenth Century England: The Use of the Open-Closed Village Model', *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (1983), pp. 253-262.

<sup>47</sup> C. Rawding, 'Village Type and Employment Structure: An Analysis in the Nineteenth Century Lincolnshire Wolds', *Local Population Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (Autumn 1994), p. 53.

<sup>48</sup> Rawding, 'Village Type and Employment Structure', p. 66.

<sup>49</sup> J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society, South Lindsey 1825-1875* (Oxford, 1976); A. Everitt, *The Patterns of Rural Dissent: the Nineteenth Century* (Leicester, 1972).

argued that nineteenth century debates about the poor used the terms 'open' and 'close' as part of emotive propaganda to challenge the poor law administration. She reasoned that the terms were in fact undefined and inconsistently used during the nineteenth century to achieve this specified objective. Consequently, Banks argued that their application by historians in the twentieth century simply replicated the confusions and inconsistencies of the nineteenth century.<sup>50</sup>

Specifically, Banks questioned the validity of the model based on evidence from the parish of Castle Acre in Norfolk. Banks found that during the nineteenth century Castle Acre was referred to as an 'open' parish. The parish was populous, with high rates of both population growth and poor rate expenditure. It was also described as being 'immoral, overpopulated with outsiders and as supplying labourers (often through the gang system) to neighbouring parishes'.<sup>51</sup> This coincided with the Mills model in terms of the characteristics of 'open' villages and the dependency argument he promoted. However, in terms of the landownership qualification used by Mills to define 'open' and 'closed' settlements, Castle Acre was not 'open'. Lord Leicester of Holkham owned 97 per cent of the land in the parish, which according to the Mills model would mean that Castle Acre was 'closed'.<sup>52</sup> Banks argued that the remaining 3 per cent of landowners, who included 62 owner-occupiers and small trades people, exercised significant control due to the fact they were resident whereas Lord Leicester was an absentee landlord.<sup>53</sup> Based on this evidence, Banks reasoned that the Mills model did not apply to Castle Acre. Consequently, she argued that the Mills model, and particularly the causal role of landownership, had been undermined, and so could not be adopted as a descriptive and predictive model for all rural communities.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> S. Banks, 'Nineteenth-Century Scandal' pp. 71.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66-68.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

Banks made some valid points, which have resulted in her work being cited as the main critique of the Mills model. Nonetheless, from a theoretical point of view Banks did little to advance theories on how and why rural communities developed. This was partially due to her preoccupation with the terminology applied by Mills. Much space was devoted to how inappropriate the terms 'open' and 'close' were for a historical model. According to Banks, insufficient consensus over definitions of the terms was a significant problem. Despite this, she did not suggest alternatives or resolve any of the terminological conflict. As a consequence, the terms 'open' and 'close' continued to be used to discuss village differentiation. Moreover, another of Banks' major criticisms of the Mills model, that of the causal role of landownership, had actually been raised by Mills. Both authors highlighted that absentee landownership weakened the control of landowners. Whereas Mills merely acknowledged this and returned to the dichotomy of his model, Banks used Castle Acre to explore the variation in great detail. This offered potential for further analysis of the role of differentiation in landownership, and the impact of this on village typology, and yet was not developed in subsequent studies of village differentiation.

During the 1990s few historians engaged with this debate and nor did Mills respond to his critics. In 1991, Alun Howkins argued that it was counter-productive to dismiss the 'open-close' classification 'if for no other reason than that contemporaries...used the category frequently'.<sup>55</sup> In Brian Short's review of the Mills model, published in 1992, it was argued that 'by whatever criteria one decides that a parish is 'open' or 'close'....the contrasts in rural settlement are clear in South East England'.<sup>56</sup> In addition, Short suggested that even if the model were adjusted for regional variation and change over time, 'such modification would leave the parameters and variables essentially unchanged'.<sup>57</sup> Short also produced a modified version of the Mills model, depicted in

<sup>55</sup>A. Howkins, *Reshaping Rural England: A Social History 1850-1925* (London, 1991), p. 25.

<sup>56</sup>B. Short, 'The Evolution of Contrasting Communities within Rural England' in B. Short (ed), *The English Rural Community: Image and Analysis* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 34.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

fig. 1.2, in which he further emphasised the causal and classificatory links with the concentration of landownership.

Both Howkins and Short did however acknowledge that the strict dichotomy of the Mills model resulted in extremes that applied to few parishes or villages. In response to this, they both independently suggested that an alternative way in which to interpret the differences between 'open' and 'close' was on a continuum. Howkins briefly discussed the idea of a continuum with reference to examples of both the 'open' and 'close' extremes from Norfolk and Oxfordshire.<sup>58</sup> Short simply said that parishes 'might instead be placed somewhere along a continuum'.<sup>59</sup> This notion of a continuum has remained an undeveloped concept, only to be raised again by Mills himself in 2006.<sup>60</sup> Howkins and Short also discussed the importance of assimilating more recent approaches to the study of villages and localities into versions of the Mills model, and a sense of spatial awareness that views the village in context to other places and influences.<sup>61</sup> In these respects Howkins and Short established important agendas for future work on village typologies, which have yet to be fully addressed.

<sup>58</sup> Howkins, *Reshaping Rural England*, pp. 25-6.

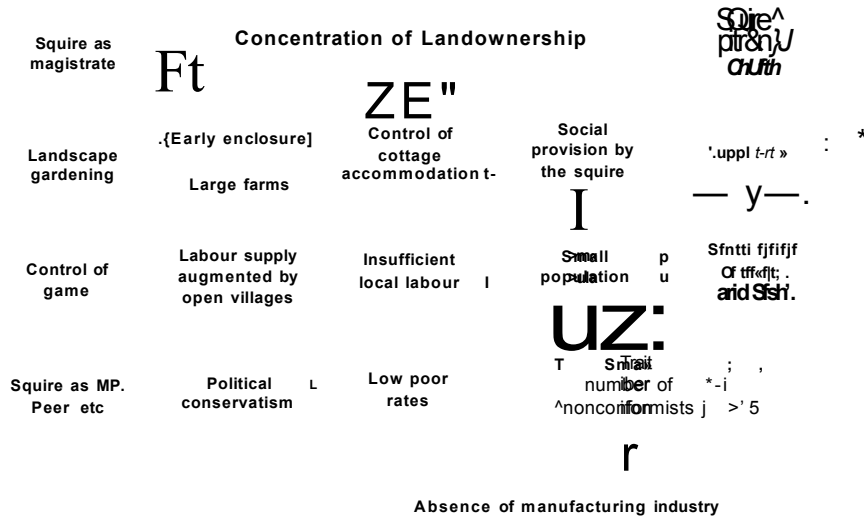
<sup>59</sup> Short, 'The Evolution of Contrasting Communities', p. 37.

<sup>60</sup> D.R. Mills, 'Canwick (Lincolnshire) and Melbourn (Cambridgeshire) in Comparative Perspective within the Open-Closed Village Model', *Rural History*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (2006), p. 5.

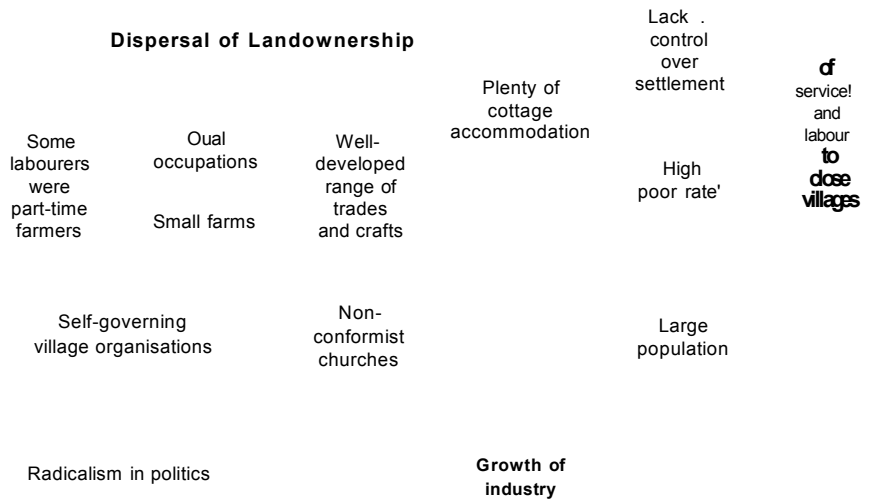
<sup>61</sup> Howkins, *Reshaping Rural England*, pp.28-33; Short, 'The Evolution of Contrasting Communities', pp. 39-40.

Fig. 1.2: Short's Interpretation of the Mills model

Causal links in the close village



Causal links in the open village



Source: Reproduced from B. Short, 'The Evolution of Contrasting Communities within Rural England', in B. Short (ed), *The English Rural Community*, p. 30

In 2000, David Spencer was motivated to reopen the debate and challenge the Mills model, by what he perceived as being a failure to move the debate forward.<sup>62</sup> Spencer argued that despite the important contributions Mills made to the understanding of historical geography of rural England, the Mills model had theoretical weaknesses that undermined its wider applicability.<sup>63</sup> These weaknesses, according to Spencer, were the assumption that an 'open' vestry equated to an 'open' parish and vice versa; the use of the landownership qualification to determine whether a settlement was 'open' or 'closed'; the predictive nature of the model; and the excessive localism.<sup>64</sup> Spencer highlighted the importance of detaching current historical models from nineteenth century terminology as a number of his predecessors had done, but again did not suggest alternatives.<sup>65</sup>

Spencer argued that as landownership was a form of human agency, it should be placed within the context of actions, interactions and processes rather than being preserved as a homogenous and isolated determinant.<sup>66</sup> He also acknowledged the complexity of rural dynamics, and consequently argued that places should be interpreted within spatial contexts rather than in isolation.<sup>67</sup> Spencer's conceptual arguments again offered potential new avenues for research into village differentiation, but their impact has in fact been very limited. This was partially attributable to the fact that Spencer's theories were limited to the 'closed system', rather than the 'open-closed' system, which restricted the comparative analysis promoted by the Mills model. In addition, the article was heavily conceptualised and failed to cite empirical evidence to support his arguments.

<sup>62</sup> Spencer, 'Reformulating the 'Closed' Parish Thesis', p. 85.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., pp. 94-5.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

From 2000 onwards little criticism has been wielded at the Mills model. Writing on parish typology and the poor laws in 2002, B. Khun Song returned to the essence of the Mills model to analyse settlements in Oxfordshire. He argued that the 'open-closed' model retained both appeal and utility, although he placed less of an emphasis on landownership and more on the characteristics of settlements.<sup>68</sup> Mills himself returned to the debate in 2006, continuing to apply his 'open-closed' model to villages in Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire. In acknowledging some of the critiques of his work, Mills argued that the majority of evidence in fact supported his model.<sup>69</sup> He was however now prepared to accept the importance of estate and peasant systems operating within large parishes.<sup>70</sup> Mills also attempted to advance the debate by proposing a move towards the notion of a continuum rather than a strict dichotomy.<sup>71</sup> He did not however fully develop and apply the continuum, and continued to promote the differences between villages on the basis of the concentration of landownership.

Polly Bird's doctoral thesis of 2007 evaluated the role of landownership on settlement change in south-west Cheshire from 1750 to 2000. She argued that the terms 'open' and 'closed' were unreliable indicators of the role of landownership, and that over-reliance upon them had resulted in the role of landownership being under-estimated in comparative studies.<sup>72</sup> In contrast Bird used the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI), which had originally been designed to measure the concentration of industrial companies in terms of the competition between them. Bird argued that HHI could effectively calculate comparative patterns of landownership as well.<sup>73</sup> Despite devising an alternative method of calculating the concentration of landownership,

<sup>68</sup> B. Khun Song, 'Parish Typology and the Operation of the Poor Laws in Early Nineteenth Century Oxfordshire', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (2002), pp. 204, 224.

<sup>69</sup> Mills, 'Canwick and Melbourn', p. 20.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> P. Bird, 'Landownership and Settlement Change in South-West Cheshire from 1750-2000' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Chester, 2007), pp. 68-73, 169.

<sup>73</sup> Bird, pp. 76-88.

she concluded that contrasting settlement patterns were aligned to landownership. Although Bird's work contributed to the continual realignment of thought on 'open' and 'closed' settlements, it had little impact on subsequent approaches to village differentiation. Bird's emphasis on a statistical approach to quantify the role of landownership in relation to settlement change was partially responsible for this limited effect. Consequently, her work challenged how the concentration of landownership was calculated, rather than evaluating how robust the Mills model is for the comparison of rural settlements.

The 'open-closed' model, which Mills developed in the mid twentieth century remains the only model or framework for comparing villages in the nineteenth century, in spite of much criticism and the emergence of new ideas. The longevity of the Mills model is testimony to the fact that many historians still consider it to be a useful starting point for explaining village differentiation. In 2012, A.J.H. Jackson wrote an article examining the value of the 'open-closed' settlement model. Jackson's appraisal acknowledged the considerable body of work published by Mills spanning six decades.<sup>74</sup> He argued that the contributions made by Mills 'have enhanced knowledge and comprehension of local rural life in the nineteenth century'.<sup>75</sup> Undoubtedly, the work of Mills is far more extensive than the 'open-closed' model of settlement with which he is most associated. Yet, Jackson argued that it is the model that retains relevance because of the 'connections that it identifies between landownership and property rights and a diversity of other, local, social, political, economic and cultural attributes'.<sup>76</sup>

For Jackson, the Mills model still successfully facilitated the identification of village characteristics, including population, housing, industry, shops and public houses, religion and politics, or poaching and

<sup>74</sup> Jackson, 'The "Open-Closed" Settlement Model', p. 121.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 126.



gamekeeping.<sup>77</sup> Jackson also cited other authors who extolled the virtues of the Mills model. He quoted K. Tiller who argued that it was 'one of the most useful to historians of rural communities'.<sup>78</sup> Jackson also argued that 'Even if the Mills model has certain weaknesses, the breadth and depth of his attempts to explore the various intersections of the processes of property ownership, power wielding and place making in the countryside are undiminished'.<sup>79</sup>

In light of its merits and enduring appeal, it raises the question of why produce another study re-evaluating the Mills model. This can be answered by reflecting on the current position of the debate. The model clearly has weaknesses, which have often been identified but not generally resolved. As this critical review of the literature demonstrates, the nature of the debate has so far resulted in a stark chasm. The chasm is between those who recognise the problems and limitations of the model but adopt it for convenience, and those who use counter evidence and semantic arguments to undermine the model but do not offer alternatives in its place. A principal objective of this thesis is to narrow this chasm, by suggesting an alternative framework for the study of village typology, which is both robust and addresses the complexities of rural communities in the mid nineteenth century. It also develops the ideas suggested by historians during the ongoing debate, such as the use of continuums and spatial relationships between settlements to examine village differentiation.

Clarification of terminology is key to achieving this. Existing work on village typologies has focused upon the use of the terms 'open' and 'closed', and their applicability to historians. As outlined on page five of this introduction, these were nineteenth century terms that referred to parish vestries. Yet twentieth and twenty-first century historians have used the terms in relation to both parish and village, creating confusion

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 126-7.

<sup>78</sup> K. Tiller, *English Local History*, p. 221.

<sup>79</sup> Jackson, 'The "Open-Closed" Settlement Model', p. 133.

and being the cause of criticism. Preoccupation with the appropriateness of terminology has in many instances diverted attention from village differentiation and the role of landownership. This thesis advocates that a framework for village typology should be detached from the emotive and often contested terminology of the nineteenth century poor law. From the outset, the terms 'open' and 'closed' are replaced with multi-freeholder and estate. This still permits an evaluation of the Mills model and the role of landownership, but anchors the debate to the village rather than parish or vestry.

Closely defined chronological parameters have also been applied to this thesis. This is in contrast to the broader time span of the Mills model, which was supposedly applicable to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The mid nineteenth century is defined in this thesis as being between the late 1830s and the early 1870s. This was a period characterised by both continuity and momentous change.<sup>80</sup> It was dominated by an economic upswing, juxtaposed between two downswings.<sup>81</sup> Changes included population growth, urbanisation and industrialisation, and the introduction of new agricultural practices. The pace and nature of this change was not consistent, and varied considerably from place to place. By focusing on a period of thirty-five years during the mid nineteenth century, the concepts of continuity and change are addressed, and the implications of these for models of village typology are discussed. The thesis also focuses on agriculture, industry and micro-commerce rather than the vast range of village characteristics that the Mills model purported to represent and explain, it interweaves structural changes with an appreciation of the people and places studied, examining not only how they were affected by external factors and the concentration of landownership but also the ways in which localities affected spatial dynamics between places and regions and the role of farmers, trades and crafts people and entrepreneurs on

<sup>80</sup> J.F.C. Harrison, *The Early Victorians 1832-1851* (London, 1971); G. Best, *Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-1875* (London, 1971)

<sup>81</sup> R. Lloyd Jones & M.J. Lewis, *British Industrial Capitalism since the Industrial Revolution* (London, 1998), pp. 33-102.

the one hand and agricultural workforces, apprentices and labourers on the other.

### **Research Questions**

Four key research questions are addressed throughout this thesis. Firstly, this thesis asks whether or not the six villages can simply be classified into two types based on landownership, as implied by the Mills model (classificatory). Patterns of agriculture, agricultural management and agricultural employment, and of industry, trades and crafts are compared and contrasted in the six villages. Similarities and differences between the villages are identified and interpreted in the context of the Mills model to assess whether villages with concentrated landownership shared the same characteristics, and were sharply contrasted with villages without concentrated landownership. The merits of developing the proposed continuum are also examined, by interpreting the classificatory characteristics of the six villages along specially constructed continuums. In addition, the concepts of continuity and change are taken into consideration by analysing whether village characteristics changed during a period of thirty-five years during the mid nineteenth century.

Secondly, this thesis asks what the role of landownership was in relation to agriculture, agricultural employment, and industry and micro-commerce in the six villages. This enables the causal argument of Mills, that village characteristics were caused by the concentration of landownership, to be tested. The causal element of the Mills model has received much criticism, resulting in the role of landownership being undermined. In order to re-evaluate the role of landownership, differences between landowners are highlighted. In addition to the amount of land owned, residency, historical legacy, size of holding, wealth, background and interests are also taken into consideration. The idea of human agency in context, as proposed by Spencer, is also examined. The role of other human agents, including the clergy and

farmers, and other determinants such as topography, geography and climate are also evaluated.

Thirdly, this thesis asks how inter-relationships were stimulated between the six villages, and challenges Mills' dependency theory. Mills argued that decisions taken in estate villages negatively affected multi-freeholder villages, and made estate villages dependent on multi-freeholder villages. This remains the least engaged with part of the Mills model, as only Spencer highlighted the importance of interactions between people and places. A wide range of inter-relationships are analysed to examine the complex dynamics in operation. Throughout the thesis, the ways in which agriculture, agricultural employment, and industry, trades and crafts facilitated and stimulated significant connections between different places are examined.

Fourthly, it asks what the implications of this new research are for both the Mills model, and for developing an alternative framework for studies of village typology. A key objective of the thesis is to evaluate whether or not the classificatory, causal and dependency components of the Mills model can adequately describe and explain village typology. Based on the six villages, deviations from the model and ideas that arise are used to deconstruct the Mills model and reconstruct an alternative framework. Inevitably, it questions the validity of models as frameworks for historical investigation. The potential ability of an alternative framework of village typology to have relevance to the work of historians, and thus the wider applicability of such a construct, is also examined.

## **Methodology**

This thesis combines the principles of local history and microhistory. Depending upon definition and practice only subtle differences distinguish between the two. English local history has a long legacy dating from its inception as an academic discipline in the mid twentieth century. Prior to this date, local history studies had been carried out, but were generally associated with antiquarianism. W.G. Hoskins, Everitt,

Charles Phythian-Adams, and collectively 'the Leicester school' pioneered the academic study of English local history.<sup>82</sup> This tradition is still strong, although definitions, perceptions and practice of local history vary and continue to evolve.<sup>83</sup> In 1975, K. Wrightson identified two major research strategies open to local historians: 'total history', which assembles every record relating to a locality to obtain as full a picture of local life as the sources permit, and 'village sampling', where a particular subject or issue is explored or tested through a variety of local studies.<sup>84</sup> This laid the foundation for two types of local history: those concerned purely with the local and those using the local to illuminate the national.

In 1991, Phythian-Adams examined this relationship between local and national history in more detail in an article entitled 'Local History and National History: The Quest for the Peoples of England'. He argued that localities were not 'directly illustrative of overall national trends' but rather were 'illuminating variants of such wider tendencies'.<sup>85</sup> According to Phythian-Adams, the scope of English local history transcended England and the English, and ultimately should not be limited to England.<sup>86</sup> In other words, he advocated the contextualisation of the local, arguing that localities should be studied with reference to their 'territorial frameworks and neighbours'.<sup>87</sup> Phythian-Adams developed this argument in 'Local History and Societal History', in which he

<sup>82</sup>W.G. Hoskins, *Local History in England* (Harlow, 1959); A. Everitt, *The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion, 1640-60* (Leicester, 1966); C. Phythian-Adams, *Rethinking English Local History* (Leicester, 1987).

<sup>83</sup>A. Rodgers, *Approaches to Local History* (London, 1977); Phythian-Adams, *Rethinking English Local History*; Tiller, *English Local History*; C. Phythian-Adams (ed), *Societies, Cultures, and Kinship, 1580-1850: Cultural Provinces and English Local History* (Leicester, 1996); J. Finberg, *Exploring Villages* (Stroud, 1998); R.C. Richardson (ed), *The Changing Face of English Local History* (Aldershot, 2000); J.V. Beckett, *Writing Local History* (Manchester, 2007); K. Tiller & D. Dymond, 'Local History at the Crossroads', *The Local Historian*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (November, 2007), pp. 250-258; J.V. Beckett, 'Local History in its Comparative International Context', *The Local Historian*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (May 2011), pp. 90-104.

<sup>84</sup>K. Wrightson, 'Villages, Villagers and Village Studies', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1975), pp. 632-9.

<sup>85</sup>C. Phythian-Adams, 'Local History and National History: The Quest for the Peoples of England', *Rural History*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1991), p. 2.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., pp. 3, 20.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

emphasised the need to 'relinquish our still-lingering obsession with the uniqueness and centrality of the single place'.<sup>88</sup>

Hey's recent appraisal of English local history identified two main preoccupations in the academic debate about the study and purpose of local history. The first was the relationship between the local and national, and the extent to which local studies should be an end in themselves or an exploration of national themes at a local level. The second was the definition of appropriate units of study when examining localities.<sup>89</sup> Undoubtedly the study of individual places and regions is at the heart of all local history studies, although how places and regions are interpreted and the implications of such research are still subject to considerable variation. This thesis is concerned with how and why villages in the Doncaster district developed, and the extent to which they illuminate complex historical variants concerning village life in the mid nineteenth century. It also examines the inter-relationships between villages, the countryside and towns, and socio-economic and political influences on the villages. In these respects, this thesis can be defined as a type of local history.

Microhistory is defined as being the intensive historical investigation of a small geographical area in order to examine complex and important historiographical issues.<sup>90</sup> It has been used and evaluated by a wide range of historians from 1979, although the term microhistory is not always explicitly referred to.<sup>91</sup> From some perspectives, it has been absorbed as a type of local history. For example, David Dymond cited

<sup>88</sup> C. Phythian-Adams, 'Local History and Societal History', *Local Population Studies*, No. 51 (1993), p. 44.

<sup>89</sup> D. Hey, 'Reflections on the Local and Regional History of the North',

<sup>90</sup> B. Reay, *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800-1930* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 260-1.

<sup>91</sup> D. Levine and K. Wrightson, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525-1700* (Oxford, 1979); G. Levi, 'On Microhistory' in P. Burke (ed), *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Oxford, 1991); C. Ginzburg, 'Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know About It', *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 20, No.1 (Autumn 1993), pp. 10-35; Reay, *Microhistories*; C. Joyner, *Shared Traditions: Southern History and Folk Culture* (University of Illinois Press, 1999), p. 1; C. French, 'Taking Up the Challenge of Micro-History: Social Conditions in Kingston upon Thames in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Local Historian*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (2006), pp. 17-28.

microhistory in 'Does Local History have a Split Personality?' as promoting new approaches, themes, sources and methods in the field of local history. He argued that microhistory had contributed to demonstrating that 'the local dimension is increasingly important as a tool of investigation and powerfully stimulates new thinking in many historical fields'.<sup>92</sup>

Conversely, Barry Reay argued that microhistory was very different, and that it should be seen as distinct and separate from local history. According to Reay, local history could become trivial if confined to a comprehensive study of individual places, or oblivious of the complexities of local context by trying to illuminate wider trends. He argued that microhistory was different to local history because it neither sought to reconstruct the total history of villages, nor did it use the local to illustrate wider trends. Reay's *Microhistories* was a key work to apply this methodology, in which he examined the Blean area of Kent in the nineteenth century. In the preface to his book, Reay stated that a key aim was 'to show that the implications of the microstudy can range way beyond modest geographical and historical boundaries' and he hoped that *Microhistories* would 'demonstrate the exciting and challenging potentials of microhistory'.<sup>93</sup> For Reay, the 'local' is a space in which historical research can take place. The inter-relationships between the specific and the general are crucial to the effectiveness of this approach. As Reay argued 'The advantage of placing a small community under the microscope is that it becomes possible to see and explore the complexity of social interaction and social and economic processes'.<sup>94</sup> As this thesis aims to facilitate greater understanding of the processes affecting agriculture, industry, micro-commerce and village typology through the detailed analysis of six villages in the vicinity of Doncaster, it employs a microhistorical methodology in addition to that of local history.

<sup>92</sup> D. Dymond, 'Does Local History have a Split Personality?' in C. Dyer, A. Hopper, E. Lord and N. Tringham (eds), *New Directions in Local History Since Hoskins* (Hatfield, 2011), p. 17.

<sup>93</sup> Reay, *Microhistories*, p. xxii.

<sup>94</sup> B. Reay, *Microhistories*, p. 258.

## **The Six Village Case Studies**

The six villages: Sprotbrough, Warmsworth, Rossington, Braithwell, Fishlake and Stainforth were selected by applying stratified sampling.<sup>95</sup> Landownership was the stratum employed as this corresponded with the theoretical framework of the Mills model. The use of land tax returns, enclosure awards and tithe awards established who owned the land in the six villages and how much land they owned. The use of these sources to identify the concentration of the landownership in the six villages coincides with those used by Mills, which is important in terms of conducting a comparative study in order to evaluate the Mills model. The tithe awards provided particularly detailed information about the landownership structure of the six villages, and additionally land occupancy. This information distinguished between the villages with and without concentrated landownership, and therefore between the estate and multi-freeholder villages during the mid nineteenth century. Sprotbrough, Rossington and Warmsworth were the estate villages selected, with one family owning at least 75%. In fact ownership was completely concentrated in the hands of one family at Sprotbrough and Rossington, whereas at Warmsworth there were two absentee landowners. Fishlake, Stainforth and Braithwell had fragmented landownership and were the multi-freeholder villages chosen. Table 1.1 shows the number of different landowners of the three multi-freeholder villages and the amount of land these landowners owned in these three villages. The six villages are all within a ten-mile radius of Doncaster, and are shown in fig. 1.3 in 1841 before the railways and in 1.4 in 1892 after the railways.

<sup>95</sup> National Audit Office, *A Practical Guide to Sampling* (London, 2001).



Table 1.1: The Number of Landowners and the Amount of Land Owned in the Six Villages during the Mid Nineteenth Century

PLACE	TOTAL NUMBER OF LANDOWNERS	NUMBER OF LANDOWNERS WITH LESS THAN 10 ACRES	NUMBER OF LANDOWNERS WITH BETWEEN 11 AND 50 ACRES	NUMBER OF LANDOWNERS WITH BETWEEN 51 AND 100 ACRES	NUMBER OF LANDOWNERS WITH OVER 100 ACRES
BRAITHWELL	23	14	4	2	3
FISHLAKE	59	45	13	1	0
STAINFORTH	42	28	11	3	0

**Sources:** Doncaster Archives, *Braithwell Tithe Apportionment and Map, P71/9/B1-2, 1839-40*; *Fishlake Enclosure Award and Map, PR/FISH/1/5/2-3, 1825*; Doncaster Archives, *DY/Wall/1-2, Hatfield Tithe Apportionment and Map, 1843 (includes Fishlake and Stainforth)*



In addition to the concentration of landownership, other variants distinguished the villages. These included the identity of the landowner, the way in which the land was held, land type and transport communications, which are shown in table 1.2 for the six villages. Mills argued that land type was less important than landownership in village differentiation.<sup>96</sup> Williamson also highlighted that links between land type and landownership were at times indistinct.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, in the Doncaster district, there was a link between the good quality land, with well-drained fertile soils, and the establishment of the large landed estates. This is particularly applicable to the upper magnesian limestone to the west of Doncaster, where the soil was very fertile and the largest concentration of landed estates in the Doncaster area was situated.<sup>98</sup> There was also a strong relationship between the low-lying marshland to the north east of Doncaster and fragmented landownership.

<sup>96</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 19.

<sup>97</sup> T. Williamson, 'The Rural Landscape 1500-1900: The Neglected Centuries', in D. Hooke (ed), *Landscapes: The Richest Historical Record* (Arnesbury, 2000), p. 112.

<sup>98</sup> B. Barber, 'The Landed Gentry of the Doncaster District', in B. Elliott (ed), *Aspects of Doncaster: Discovering Local History* (Barnsley, 1997), pp. 54-55.

Table 1.2: Overview of Landownership, Acreage, Land Type and Transport Routes in the Six Villages

Villages	Acreage	Landowners	Land Type - Geology	Transport Routes
Estate: Sprotbrough	2,881 acres	Copleys - resident - 12th century to 1926	Upper Magnesian Limestone	- River Don - SY Railway - local roads
Warmsworth	800 acres	Battie- Wrightson - absentee and resident	Lower Magnesian Limestone	- River Don - SY Railway - Doncaster to Sheffield Turnpike Road
	184 acres	Aldam -absentee and resident		
Rossington	2930 acres	Prior to 1838 - Corporation of Doncaster - absent  1838-1938- Brown - resident	Bunter Sandstone	- River Torne - Great North Road - Great Northern Railway
Multi- freeholder: Fishlake	3662 acres	59 landowners	Marshy Lowland/Clay Soil	- River Don - local roads
Stainforth	2355 acres	42 landowners	Marshy Lowland/Clay Soil	- River Don - Stainforth and Keadby Canal - Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway and the North Eastern Railway - local roads
Braithwell	1875 acres	23 landowners	Lower Magnesian Limestone	- local roads

Source: Doncaster Archives, P25/9/B1, *Sprotbrough Tithe Apportionment and Map, 1847*; Doncaster Archives, P58/9/B1-2, *Rossington Tithe Apportionment and Map, 1838*; Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E11/41-42, *Warmsworth Tithe Apportionment and Map, 1838-1841*; Doncaster Archives, P71/9/B1-2, *Braithwell Tithe Apportionment and Map, 1840*; Doncaster Archives, DY/Wall/1-2, *Hatfield Tithe Apportionment and Map, 1843 (includes Fishlake and Stainforth)*; W. White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the West Riding, 1837, Vol. 2 (Sheffield, 1837)*, pp. 165, 179-180, 188, 206-207, 200-201, 213; E. R. Kelly, *Post Office Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1861 (London, 1861)*, pp. 206, 276, 328-329, 610, 811-812, 871; E. R. Kelly, *Post Office Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1877 (London, 1877)*, pp. 217, 314, 385-387, 785-786, 1112, 1186

Population analysis was at the heart of Mills' work. Although not the focus of this thesis, the population of the six villages is briefly discussed here. Tables 1.3 and 1.4 show the size of population, the extent of population change, and the population density in the six villages. The three multi-freeholder villages did generally have larger populations than the three estate villages, which accords with Mills' argument about the relationship between landownership and population. However, the exact size of population did vary between villages with similar landowning structures. This is particularly notable at Braithwell, where the population was much smaller than the other two multi-freeholder villages and more comparable to those of the estate villages. In fact by 1871 there were only 372 people living in Braithwell compared to 615 in Fishlake and 748 in Stainforth. Moreover, there were 407 people living in the estate village of Warmsworth in 1871, which exceeded that of Braithwell. The size of population in the six villages fluctuated between 1841 and 1871. With the exception of Warmsworth, the total village populations had decreased by 1871. Population density also varied, and whereas Sprotbrough and Rossington were not densely populated, Warmsworth was; and Fishlake was less densely populated than Braithwell and Stainforth.

Mills calculated the density of landowners by dividing the acreage by the number of landowners, and argued that the higher the figure the more concentrated the landownership." He then compared the density of owners with the population density. He demonstrated a strong correlation between the density of owners and the population density of villages throughout Leicestershire.<sup>99</sup> As table 1.5 shows the relationship between the population density and the density of landowners in the six villages was not straightforward. The concentration of landownership was greatest in the estate villages of Rossington and Sprotbrough, which also corresponded with low population density. Yet the highest population density was in the estate

<sup>99</sup> Mills, 'Landownership and Rural Population', p. 137.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

village of Warmsworth. Although landownership was not as concentrated in Warmsworth as Sprotbrough and Rossington, the density of landowners was far greater than in the three multi-freeholder villages. Similarly, despite ownership not being as concentrated at Fishlake, the population density was relatively small. This brief analysis of population in the six villages is admittedly limited in scope, but does however demonstrate the variation between villages with similar landowning structures with regard to a key characteristic that underpins the Mills model.

table 1.3: The Population Size and Density of the Three Estate Villages

	SPROTBROUGH (2,735 acres)	ROSSINGTON (3,046 acres)	WARMSWORTH (1,311 acres)
1841 - TOTAL POPULATION	381	344	358
1841 - POPULATION DENSITY	0.14	0.11	0.27
1841 - POPULATION CHANGE			
1851 - TOTAL POPULATION	362	402	389
1851 - POPULATION DENSITY	0.13	0.13	0.29
1851 - POPULATION CHANGE	-4.98%	+16.8%	+8.66%
1861 - TOTAL POPULATION	339	400	385
1861 - POPULATION DENSITY	0.12	0.13	0.29
1861 - POPULATION CHANGE	-6.35%	-0.5%	-1%
1871 - TOTAL POPULATION	339	329	407
1871 - POPULATION DENSITY	0.12	0.10	0.31
1871 - POPULATION CHANGE	0	-17.75%	+5.7%

Source: based on statistical evidence from the Victoria County History for Yorkshire, Vol. III, pp. 544-7, 548 and Census Enumerators' Books for Sprotbrough, Rossington and Warmsworth

Table 1.4: The Population Size and Density of the Three Multi-Freeholder Villages

	FISHLAKE (3,909 acres)	STAINFORTH (3,483 acres)	BRAITHWELL (1,949 acres)
1841 - TOTAL POPULATION	629	924	447
1841 - POPULATION DENSITY	0.16	0.26	0.23
1841 - POPULATION CHANGE			
1851 - TOTAL POPULATION	642	881	493
1851 - POPULATION DENSITY	0.165	0.25	0.25
1851 - POPULATION CHANGE	+2.06%	-4.65%	+10.29%
1861 - TOTAL POPULATION	585	751	422
1861 - POPULATION DENSITY	0.15	0.215	0.21
1861 - POPULATION CHANGE	-8.87%	-14.75%	-14.4%
1871 - TOTAL POPULATION	615	748	372
1871 - POPULATION DENSITY	0.158	0.214	0.19
1871 - POPULATION CHANGE	+5.13%	0.4%	-11.84%

Source: based on statistical evidence from the Victoria County History for Yorkshire, Vol. III, pp. 544-7, 548 and Census Enumerators' Books for Fishlake, Stainforth and Braithwell

Table 1.5: Relationship between Density of Landowners and Population Density in the Six Villages, 1851

Villages	Density of Landowners	Population Density
Rossington	2,930	0.13
Sprotbrough	2,881	0.13
Warmsworth	492	0.29
Braithwell	81.5	0.25
Fishlake	62	0.165
Stainforth	56	0.25

Source: see tables 1.2-1.4



The following brief pen portraits expand upon the tabulated information, and provide the contextual background necessary for understanding the detailed analysis of aspects of the six villages. Sprotbrough is located on the upper magensian limestone, 3.5 miles south west of Doncaster. The loam and lime soil was very fertile and well suited to arable farming, which was a natural inducement to the formation of a landed estate. One family owned the village from the twelfth century through to the sale of the estate in 1925-6. Between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries the Fitzwilliam family were the landowners. When William Fitzwilliam died without a male heir in the sixteenth century, the estate passed to his two aunts, Margaret and Dorothy. Dorothy subsequently married William Copley, and the Copley family thereafter owned Sprotbrough.<sup>101</sup> This represented significant continuity of landownership in the village. Sir Godfrey Copley built Sprotbrough Flail in 1685, and subsequently commissioned a Kip and Knyff engraving of the Sprotbrough estate. As plate 1.1 illustrates, Sprotbrough Flail dominated the estate, with the parish church at the heart of the village and the River Don running along the edge of the estate. The River Don was the main transportation route through Sprotbrough for centuries, and continued to be important even after the South Yorkshire Railway Company built a station in the cutting between Sprotbrough and Warmsworth in the mid nineteenth century.

Sir Joseph William Copley (1804-1883) was Lord of the Manor between 1838 and 1883, and resided at Sprotbrough Hall with his wife Lady Charlotte Copley. He also became a Justice of the Peace.<sup>102</sup> Sir and Lady Copley were frequently absent from the estate, initially fulfilling social engagements and then due to ill health. In his obituary, Sir J.W. Copley was described as 'a liberal landlord,...never unmindful of the poor'.<sup>103</sup> During the mid nineteenth century, Copley undertook a rebuilding programme of the village, which included building new estate cottages (plate 1.2), the land agent's house, a school, and a bridge over

<sup>101</sup> D. Holland (ed), *Sprotbrough in History, Part Two* (Rotherham, 1969), pp. 19-25

<sup>102</sup> E.R. Kelly, *Post Office Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire 1877* (London, 1877), p. 1112.

<sup>103</sup> *Yorkshire Gazette*, 6 January 1883, p. 11.

the river Don to replace the existing ferry. Revd. J.G. Fardell wrote that it was a 'pretty village' with flower covered cottages, which have been recently rebuilt 'in a style both pleasing and ornamental'.<sup>104</sup>

Fig. 1.5 shows that although the village was concentrated around the church and along one village street, the river Don acted as another natural focal point for occupation. The Copley's Sprotbrough estate was 2,505 acres in the mid nineteenth century, and included Sprotbrough village, the much smaller settlement of Newton and part of Cadeby.<sup>105</sup> It should be noted that different landowners owned other parts of Sprotbrough parish. These included Sir Fountayne Wilson at Cadeby and William Battie-Wrightson at Cusworth. Despite owning land elsewhere in Yorkshire and in Cornwall, Sprotbrough was the main estate of this branch of the Copley family during the mid-nineteenth century.

Plate 1.1: Kip and Knyff Engraving of the Sprotbrough Estate

**Source: D. Holland (ed), *Sprotbrough in History, Part 2* (WEA, Rotherham, 1969) insert to chapter six**

<sup>104</sup>J.G. Fardell, *Sprotbrough: Or, a Few Passing Notes for A Morning's Ramble* (Doncaster, 1850), pp. 8, 14, 55.

<sup>105</sup>Doncaster Archives, P25/9/B1, *Sprotbrough Tithe Apportionment*, 1847.

Plate 1.2: Estate Cottages built by Sir J.W. Copley at Sprotbrough in the 1840s

Fig. 1.5: Map of Sprotbrough, 1847

**fS** \*

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**Source: Doncaster Archives, P25/9/B1, *Sprotbrough Tithe Map, 1847***

Rossington is situated on the bunter sandstone overlaid with glacial sand and gravel, with predominantly sandy soil. The village is 4 miles south east of Doncaster, and during the mid nineteenth century was connected by road, rail and river. Fig. 1.6 shows the relationship of the village to both the Great North Road, which ran alongside one edge of the estate, and the Great Northern Railway, which ran through the Rossington estate from 1849. In addition, the River Torne was nearby. The ownership of Rossington has been characterised by discontinuity. Rossington was the seat of the Fossards and Mauleys in the post Norman Conquest period. It reverted to the king in the fifteenth century and was then granted to Doncaster Corporation as part of the Soke of Doncaster. Doncaster Corporation was therefore the absentee landowner from the sixteenth century to 1838 when the estate was sold. James Brown (1786-1845), who purchased the Rossington estate in 1838, was not part of a traditional landowning family. The Browns were woollen cloth merchant manufacturers from Leeds, linked with Harehills Grove, 15 Woodhouse Lane and Bagby Mills in that city.<sup>106</sup> The purchase of the Rossington estate was indicative of the increasing number of merchants and manufacturers who invested in country estates during the nineteenth century.<sup>107</sup> Brown rebuilt the parish church, with the exception of the medieval tower, in the 1840s. James Brown's son, James Brown junior (1814-1877), inherited the estate in 1845 and moved to Rossington, where he rebuilt Shooter's Hill and renamed it Rossington Hall. He was also High Sheriff of Yorkshire in 1852 and MR for Malton (1857-1875), and it was on becoming an MP that Brown gave up manufacturing.<sup>108</sup> He was responsible for revoking the license of the Rossington Arms Inn and for rebuilding a number of properties in the village. The rebuilt church, the new school and a set of cottages in the village are illustrated in plates 1.3-1.5. Two years after

<sup>106</sup> Baines, E., *Directory of Yorkshire, 1822* (Baines, Leeds, 1822), p. 118; Baines and Newsome, *General and Commercial Directory of Leeds 1834* (Baines and Newsome, Leeds, 1834), pp. 36,415.

<sup>107</sup> M. Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (London, 1971), p. 8.

<sup>108</sup> R.G. Wilson, *Gentlemen Merchants: The Leeds Merchant Community in Leeds, 1700-1830* (Manchester, 1971), p. 241.

Brown junior's death, the estate passed to the nephew of the last remaining Brown, who was a Streatfield by name. He too was resident in Rossington and built an entirely new Victorian country house. During the mid nineteenth century the Rossington estate was almost 3,000 acres in size.

Fig. 1.6: Map of Rossington, 1854

**Source: Ordnance Survey, 1854, First Edition County Series, 6 inch map, Yorkshire (West Riding), surveyed 1850**

Plate 1.3: Rossington Church

Plate 1.4: Rossington School

## Plate 1.5: Estate Cottages built by the Brown family at Rossington

Warmsworth is located on the lower magnesian limestone, 2.5 miles from Doncaster. The soil was mixed with moil, which necessitated adequate drainage as it had a tendency to turn to clay after it rained. The lower magnesian limestone was particularly good for construction, and the quarrying and lime burning industry expanded during the mid nineteenth century. Warmsworth was connected by the main Doncaster to Sheffield turnpike road, the river Don, and the South Yorkshire Railway, which had a station in the cutting between Warmsworth and Sprotbrough. Two landowners owned Warmsworth in the mid nineteenth century. This was a legacy of the post Norman Conquest division of land, when William de Warenne and Nigel Fossard owned Warmsworth. Subsequently, the land was further subdivided creating many small holders and then reconsolidated until two people owned the village again. The Battie family owned almost 75 per cent of the total acreage by the eighteenth century. They built Warmsworth Hall, depicted in plate 1.6, in 1702 and obtained an Act of Parliament in 1745 to divert the village street that ran through their grounds. The subsequent layout of

the village can be seen in fig. 1.7. In 1748 John Battie married Isabella Wrightson of Cusworth. The newly formed Battie-Wrightson family lived predominantly at Cusworth, leasing Warmsworth Hall. William Battie-Wrightson (1789-1879), who inherited the estates in 1827, was therefore the absentee landowner of Warmsworth during the mid nineteenth century. He also owned land and industry in the north east of England, and was MP for Hull (1830-31) and then for Northallerton (1835-1865). William's younger brother, Richard Heber Wrightson (1800-1881) did in fact reside in Warmsworth for part of the nineteenth century. By the mid nineteenth century, the Battie-Wrightson family owned 506 acres in Warmsworth, which was 81 per cent of the total acreage.

Plate 1.6: Warmsworth Hall



Fig. 1.7: Map of Warmsworth, 1838

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**Source:** Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E11/41-42, *Warmsworth Tithe Apportionment and Map, 1838*

The Aldam family owned the remaining 19 per cent of land (116 acres) at Warmsworth during the mid nineteenth century. The Aldam family had also been partners in a cloth merchant business in Leeds. When this partnership was disbanded, William Aldam (senior) retired to Warmsworth. He gave his son, William Aldam (1813-1890) the Frickley estate as a wedding gift. Due to his father's ill health, William Aldam junior was increasingly responsible for the land the family owned at Warmsworth, where he would stay in the family's house (plate 1.7). In addition, Aldam was a Liberal MP for Leeds in 1841 and 1847. He was also a Justice of the Peace from 1852, and occupied prominent positions in the West Riding magistracy and other local government bodies.<sup>109</sup> He was an active participant in a range of charitable societies

<sup>109</sup> D.G. Paz, 'William Aldam, Backbench MP for Leeds 1841-1847: National Issues versus Local Interests', *Publications of the Thoresby Society, Second Series, Volume 8, 1998*;

and a number of public joint-stock companies. His business interests included the Aire and Calder Navigation Company, the Huddersfield and Manchester Railway Company, and the Leeds and Liverpool Canal.<sup>110</sup>

Plate 1.7: The Aldam's House in Warmsworth

Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/P/36-39 and DD/WA/P/45-55 papers relating to the Aldam family including political matters. Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/Q1/1-20, Quarter Session Notebooks kept by William Aldam 1851-1871.

<sup>110</sup> Doncaster Archives, *Records of the Business Interests of the Aldam Family*, DD/WA/B1/26-1/56, DD/WA/B1/29-1/59, DD/WA/BA/1-2/19, DD/WA/B2/26, DD/WA/B2/27-34; J.T. Ward, 'The Squire as Businessman: William Aldam of Frickley Hall (1813-1890)', *Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (1962), p. 196.

Braithwell is located on the lower magnesian limestone, 6.5 miles south south west of Doncaster. During the mid nineteenth century, the village was not situated on main road, rail or river networks. The landownership of Braithwell was divided. After the Norman Conquest, William de Warenne (as part of the Soke of Conisborough) and William de Percy (held by Mauger) owned Braithwell. Whilst de Warenne owned the largest proportion of land in Braithwell, this reverted to the Crown in the Middle Ages. Subsequently much of this land was gifted to religious houses and after the dissolution and sale of monastic land, the ownership of Braithwell became further divided. By the mid nineteenth century, there were 23 landowners, most of whom owned less than 10 acres. Yet three landowners each owned over 100 acres.<sup>111</sup> They were Mary Amery, who owned 335 acres but occupied less than half of that, Thomas Dyson, who occupied the Manor House and owned 171 acres, and Edward Fox, who owned 159 acres and occupied most of that. In addition, the Earl of Scarborough, who owned the nearby Tickhill estate, owned 69 acres in Braithwell. The Lords of the Manor were not always the largest landowners of Braithwell, and changed frequently during the mid nineteenth century. For example, in 1837 the Duke of Leeds was Lord of the Manor and by 1861 it was S.L. Fox. These patterns of landownership affected the physical layout of the village, which was focused upon more than one axis as illustrated in fig. 1.8. The church and the manor house were one cluster at the top of the map, with cottages and agricultural and industrial properties aligning the main village street, and other farms scattered towards the bottom and right of the map.

<sup>111</sup> Doncaster Archives, *Braithwell Tithe Apportionment and Map*, P71/9/B 1-2, 1839-1840.

Fig. 1.8: Map of Braithwell, 1840

□

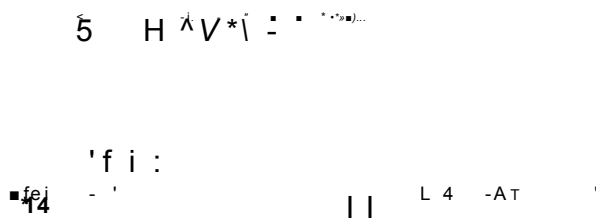
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= 12! | ^

Source: Doncaster Archives, P71/9/B1-2, Braithwell Tithe Map, 1840

Fishlake is located on the marshy lowland, 8.5 miles to the north east of Doncaster, where the soil was predominantly heavy clay in the mid nineteenth century. Fishlake is on the north side of the river Don, and was one mile from the station at Stainforth during the mid nineteenth century. After the Norman Conquest, three people owned land at Fishlake. This land was subsequently fragmented, including several gifts of land made to monasteries, and these holdings were further subdivided after the dissolution. By 1798 there were 130 freeholders listed, 41 of whom were owner-occupiers. Despite some post enclosure consolidation, 59 landowners were still listed in the mid nineteenth century. The majority of these landowners only owned between 1 and 60 acres. As land continued to change hands during the mid nineteenth century, the identities of the principal landowners and the Lords of the Manor at Fishlake also changed. For example, in 1837 the largest

freeholder was R.P. Milnes. By 1877, the principal landowner and Lord of the Manor was Lord Houghton. The physical plan of Fishlake was shaped by these patterns of ownership, as illustrated by fig. 1.9. The church and the manor house, depicted in plates 1.8 and 1.9, along with the river, were collectively one focal point. In addition, the outlying hamlets that were part of the township of Fishlake created other clusters of habitation.

Figure 1.9: Map of Fishlake, 1843



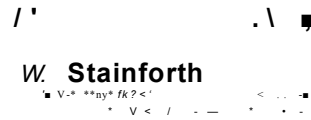
Source: OY/DAW/7/4. Thorne, Hatfield and Fishlake Enclosure Award, 1825

Plate 1.8: Fishlake Church

Plate 1.9: Fishlake Manor House

Stainforth is located 7.5 miles north east of Doncaster. It is situated on the river Don at its confluence with the Stainforth and Keadby canal, and during the mid nineteenth century the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway and the North Eastern Railway served the village. As shown in fig. 1.10 and plate 1.10, the settlement was drawn out along the canal, as well as in the centre of the village and into the fields. Historically it was part of Hatfield parish, and consequently its development was closely intertwined with that of Hatfield. Nevertheless due to the physical distance between Stainforth and Hatfield, Stainforth developed an independent identity. By the mid nineteenth century, 42 landowners owned land in Stainforth, although most of them owned less than 10 acres. The Simpson family was the main landowner of Stainforth in the mid nineteenth century. They also owned land at Fishlake and in other neighbouring villages during this period. The land was clay like neighbouring Fishlake, and the soil was a combination of sand and clay.

Fig. 1.10: Map of Stainforth, 1854



Source: Ordnance Survey, 1854, First Edition County Series, 6 inch map, Yorkshire (West Riding), surveyed 1850

Plate 1.10: Houses and Inn built beside the canal at Stainforth



## Uses and Limitations of Sources

A wide range of original sources have been used to compare and contrast agriculture, agricultural employment, and industry and micro-commerce in the six villages during the mid nineteenth century. Many of these sources are deposited in Doncaster Archives or are available from Doncaster Local Studies Library. In addition, Sheffield Archives, The West Yorkshire Archives Service, the University of Durham Archives, the National Archives and online archival databases have been used. All sources are infused with bias of some nature and consequently should be treated with caution.<sup>112</sup> Nevertheless, many sources have offered great potential for this thesis and their validity in the context of this study can be demonstrated. In addition, a number of core sources, such as the census reports, Census Enumerators' Books, trade directories, Ordnance Survey maps, and nineteenth century government reports have been applied to previous studies of village typology including those by Mills.

A study that examines landownership and estate villages must surely rely extensively on estate records. Estate records include deeds, leases, surveys, rentals, accounts, farm records and maps, all of which provide evidence of how and why estate villages developed certain characteristics. As W.B. Stephens wrote 'Estate and farm records are...a prime source for the local history of agriculture'.<sup>113</sup> This is undeniable, but the extent to which they survive for individual and especially smaller estates is variable. The majority of farm records that still exist relate to larger estates, which means they are not wholly representative.<sup>114</sup> The survival of estate and farm records for the three estate villages studied in this thesis is particularly fragmentary.

Doncaster Archives includes estate records for both the Battie-Wrightson and Aldam families, who owned Warmsworth in the mid

<sup>112</sup> M. Donnelly and C. Norton, *Doing History* (London, 2011), pp. 72-4.

<sup>113</sup> W.B. Stephens, *Sources for English Local History* (Manchester, 1973), p. 129.

<sup>114</sup> N. Verdon, *Rural Women Workers in Nineteenth Century England: Gender, Work and Wages* (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 36.

nineteenth century. Although these records are by no means complete they do include important documents for the study of agriculture and of industry and micro-commerce in Warmsworth in the mid nineteenth century. The Battie-Wrightson papers (DD/BW) include surveys of the estate, field books and farm memoranda books, rental books, miscellaneous memoranda about tenancies, the cash books of the land agent, and quarry correspondence. The Aldam papers (DDAA/A) include the diaries and notebooks of William Aldam covering the mid nineteenth century. They also include parliamentary papers such as letters, election bills and draft speeches relating to the Corn Laws. The Battie-Wrightson and Aldam papers have been used extensively in chapter two to demonstrate the comparative patterns of agricultural management employed by different landowners in the same village. They have also been used to analyse the role of landownership in industry in estate villages in chapter four.

Unfortunately, the estates of Sprotbrough and Rossington are less well represented in the collections at Doncaster Archives. The Copley papers for the Sprotbrough estate are catalogued under DD/CROM. However, there is a substantial gap in the records for the mid nineteenth century. The only estate records relating to this period are the correspondence between Sir J.W. Copley, Doncaster Corporation and the Dun Navigation about disputes concerning the flooding of the River Don (DD/CROM/6/18). This absence of estate records for Sprotbrough cannot be accounted for, although it is rumoured that the records covering this period were destroyed in a fire. With most documents either pre or post dating the period of study for this thesis, estate records pertaining to the Copley's Sprotbrough estate during the mid-nineteenth century have been sought elsewhere. Sheffield Archives also has a collection of Copley papers, but again they relate to earlier than the focus of the thesis. Some records for the Sprotbrough estate during the mid nineteenth century are to be found in the University of Durham Library, Archives and Special Collections under GRE/G. These are the papers of Miss Elizabeth Mary Copley, who was Sir Joseph William's

sister, and those of other Copley relatives. Amongst the correspondence and miscellaneous papers, are the rules of the Sprotbrough Farmers' Club (G18/2/193), which are analysed in chapter two.

Very few estate records for the Brown family at Rossington are held by Doncaster Archives. However, they do have a good collection of records produced by Doncaster Corporation who owned the estate of Rossington until 1838. These include surveys of farms in the 1820s and 1830s (AB/7/3/5) and the Rossington Committee Meeting Minutes in the Corporation Papers (AB/2/2/4/1-3). These have been useful for comparing and contrasting the management of the estate under different landowners, and for evaluating the state of agriculture on the eve of the sale of the Rossington estate to the Brown family. Doncaster Archives also has copies of the sale catalogues for the Rossington estate for 1838 and 1938, which have again been useful for analysing individual farms on the estate and how they changed under the ownership of the Brown family. The West Yorkshire Archive Service in Leeds holds records for the Brown family (WYL442), but these relate predominantly to their industry and property in the Leeds area and not the estate at Rossington.

It is acknowledged that the fragmentary nature of the estate records for the three estate villages does potentially pose limitations. Nevertheless it also creates opportunities. After all, this thesis is not a study exclusively of landed estates, but rather a comparative study of estate and multi-freeholder villages in the mid nineteenth century. The use of comparative sources, available for most if not all of the six villages, has the advantage of countering the bias of those studies that rely predominantly on case studies with nearly complete estate records. In reality, many estate villages are not as well represented with comprehensive estate records, and of course estate records do not cover multi-freeholder villages, so this approach has important implications for studies of village differentiation. The mid nineteenth century produced a vast amount of statistics and documentary evidence,

both nationally and at a local level. This thesis uses a wide range of sources to inform and explain the arguments being made, which are briefly evaluated.

H.C. Prince argued that the tithe maps and apportionments were 'the most complete record of the agrarian landscape at any period'.<sup>115</sup> These maps and apportionments were the product of the Tithe Commutation Acts of 1836-60, which converted all remaining tithes (payments in kind) into a fluctuating annual money payment.<sup>116</sup> They provide information on landownership and occupation, size of farm, use of land, and the extent of unenclosed land and unproductive land exempt from the tithe.<sup>117</sup> The tithe maps and apportionments survive for all six villages studied in this thesis, and are in the collections of Doncaster Archives.<sup>118</sup> They have been used initially to provide evidence of how much land different people owned in each of the six villages during the mid nineteenth century. They have also been used in chapter two to identify farm size, occupancy and the use of land in the six villages during the study period.

In addition, the Census Enumerators' Books (hereafter CEBs) have been used to identify farm size in the mid nineteenth century. The censuses of 1851 to 1881 instructed householders who occupied agricultural land to record the number of acres they occupied. Yet the reliability of this data has been evaluated and questioned frequently. For example, Mills argued that aside from any inaccuracies, many farmers

<sup>115</sup> H.C. Prince, 'Tithe Surveys of the Mid 19th Century', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1959), p. 14.

<sup>116</sup> Stephens, *Sources for English Local History*, p. 124.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>118</sup> Doncaster Archives, P25/9/B1, *Sprotbrough Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1847; Doncaster Archives, P58/9/B1-2, *Rossington Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1838; Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E11/41-42, *Warmsworth Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1841; Doncaster Archives, P71/9/B1-2, *Braithwell Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1840; Doncaster Archives, DY/Wall/1-2, *Hatfield Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1843 (includes Fishlake and Stainforth).

did not record the acreage of their farm at all.<sup>119</sup> Overton was particularly doubtful about the validity of the census to identify farm size.<sup>120</sup> Nevertheless, as Mills went on to argue an 'evaluation of the acreage figures given in the censuses must take into account the fact that they are the most comprehensive for the period'.<sup>121</sup> For the purpose of comparing and contrasting farm size in the six villages, the data recorded in the census enumerators' books for each village has been used in conjunction with that of the tithe awards. The evidence of the size of farms in the six villages has therefore been substantiated by two different sources.

Extensive use of the occupational evidence in the CEB has also been made in order to analyse the agricultural and industrial workforces resident in the six villages. From 1851, farmers were instructed to record the number of people who worked for them, and to distinguish between those living-in on the farm and those living elsewhere. It is recognized that there are difficulties with the use of the CEBs in the examination of occupations. Edward Higgs argued, 'the process of accumulating, arranging and analysing census data was not a value-free exercise'.<sup>122</sup> This particularly affected the extent to which female employees were accurately recorded in the census.<sup>123</sup> The date the census was carried out also resulted in the under-recording of seasonal and casual work.<sup>124</sup>

Nevertheless, the CEBs are still an invaluable comparative source for studying the size and structure of agricultural and other rural workforces. D.R. Mills and K. Schurer have demonstrated the effectiveness of using

<sup>119</sup> D.R. Mills, 'Trouble with Farms at the Census Office: An Evaluation of Farm Statistics from the Censuses of 1851-1881 in England and Wales', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (February 1999), p. 64.

<sup>120</sup> M. Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England: The Transformation of the Agrarian Economy 1500-1850* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 174.

<sup>121</sup> Mills, 'Trouble with Farms at the Census Office', p. 69.

<sup>122</sup> E. Higgs, 'Women, Occupations and Work in the Nineteenth Century Censuses', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (1987), p. 60.

<sup>123</sup> E. Higgs, *A Clearer Sense of the Census* (London, 1996), p. 105.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 105-107; E. Higgs, 'Occupational Censuses and the Agricultural Workforce in Victorian England and Wales', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (November 1995), pp. 700-16.

the CEBs to analyse occupations.<sup>125</sup> Moreover, Edward Higgs argued that the census was 'of fundamental importance for all macro-economic studies' of the period.<sup>126</sup> The CEBs have been used in chapter three to calculate the number of residents in the six villages who were employed in agriculture as paid employees. The census has also been used to identify 'outdoor' agricultural labourers and 'indoor' farm servants. In order to do this, the total number recorded by farmers under their occupational column is cross referenced with those recorded under occupation or relation to head of household as servant. The CEBs have also been used in chapter four to analyse patterns of employment in industry and micro-commerce in the countryside. Additional information about trades, crafts and industry in the six villages has been derived from trade directories. As Mills argued, the 'economically significant' appeared in the directories, and are complementary to the CEBs in a study of occupations.<sup>127</sup> By the mid nineteenth century, several different publishers produced trade directories that covered the Doncaster district, including J. Piggot, W. White, I. Slater and E. Kelly.

Stephens argued that newspapers are 'an essential source' for the study of nineteenth century local history.<sup>128</sup> The Doncaster district had two local newspapers, the *Doncaster Chronicle* and the *Doncaster Gazette*. The *Doncaster Chronicle* was first published in 1838 by Robert Hartley of Baxtergate, Doncaster.<sup>129</sup> During the mid nineteenth century he moved to High Street in Doncaster, and by 1877 the publisher of the *Doncaster Chronicle* was Hartley and Sons.<sup>130</sup> The *Doncaster Gazette*, which predated the *Chronicle*, was published by Thomas Brooke and Co

<sup>125</sup> D.R. Mills and K. Schiirer, 'Employment and Occupations', in D.R. Mills and K. Schurer (eds), *Local Communities in the Victorian Census Enumerators' Books* (Oxford, 1996), p. 136.

<sup>126</sup> Higgs, 'Occupational Censuses', p. 700.

<sup>127</sup> D.R. Mills, *Rural Community History from Trade Directories* (Aldenham, 2001), pp. 13-4.

<sup>128</sup> Stephens, *Sources for English Local History*, p. 24.

<sup>129</sup> I. Slater, *Directory of Northern England*, 1848 (Manchester, 1848), p. 1023.

<sup>130</sup> I. Slater, *Directory of Northern England*, 1858 (Manchester, 1858), p. 92; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1877 (London, 1877), p. 284.

in Doncaster.<sup>131</sup> By 1877 Brooke, White and Hatfield, publishers of the *Gazette*, were situated on Printing Office Street in Doncaster.<sup>132</sup> Broadly speaking the *Chronicle* was Conservative and the *Gazette* was Liberal, although neither paper was a hotbed of political campaigning or bias. Both newspapers predominantly focused on the agriculture of the Doncaster district. Features and reports about agriculture, agricultural employment and hiring fairs pertaining to the six villages studied in this thesis have been used in chapters two and three.

Newspaper reports charting the development of the market buildings in Doncaster during the mid nineteenth century have been used in chapter two to demonstrate the inter-relationships facilitated between Doncaster and the six villages. In addition, newspaper reports summarising the proceedings of local agricultural societies and farming clubs have been used in chapter two to examine the promotion, stimulation and distribution of agricultural knowledge. Chapter three draws upon the reports about the Doncaster Statutes, predominantly featured in the *Doncaster Gazette*, to provide an invaluable insight into patterns of attendance and the hiring of farm servants in the area, and how these changed during the study period. Collectively, newspaper reports and advertisements have been evaluated to demonstrate the extent to which farmers in the district could access agricultural information.

Nationally, there was a plethora of published material relating to agricultural issues dating from the mid nineteenth century. Sir James Caird (1816-1892) was an agricultural writer, with practical farming experience. He was an advocate of both free trade and 'high farming'. Significantly, *The Times* commissioned Caird to investigate the state of English agriculture and published his reports as a series of letters in the newspaper. These were then collectively published in *English Agriculture 1850-51*. His work advocated ways to improve agriculture

<sup>131</sup>J. Pigot, *National Commercial Directory*, 1834 (London, 1834), p. 211; Slater, *Directory of Northern England*, 1848, p. 1023; Slater, *Directory of Northern England*, 1858, p. 92.

<sup>132</sup>Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1877, p. 284.

and highlighted many examples of inefficient farming. A major criticism that Caird repeatedly cited was the failure of landowners to invest in farm buildings, drainage and long leases. Caird argued that agriculture was a business, which was instrumental in the success of the British economy. The work of Caird is used in chapter two to evaluate the expectations placed on local landowners to invest and improve, and the extent to which they did.

In addition, some publications recommended particular agricultural practices, with a growing emphasis on the need for adequate farm buildings. Once again these publications are used in chapter two to measure the extent to which the latest recommendations of the mid nineteenth century literature were in evidence in the six villages.<sup>133</sup> In addition, various farmers' magazines and the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England* (hereafter *JRASE*), which was first published in 1839, were widely distributed. These not only made recommendations but also cited examples of good practice and practical advice. Furthermore, the *JRASE* published prize essays between 1845 and 1869 that examined the agriculture of individual counties. These essays placed the agriculture of English counties within the context of geology, and shaped the perception of agricultural regions during the nineteenth century.<sup>134</sup> Volume 9 of the *JRASE*, published in 1848, featured 'On the Farming of the West Riding of Yorkshire' by John H. Charnock.<sup>135</sup> Charnock provides an account of the geographical and geological context of the county, including a map, before examining the cultivation of different crops and improvements made in farming since 1799. The latter included innovations, drainage schemes, agricultural societies and shows, and the conditions of the agricultural labourer.

<sup>133</sup> H. Stephens, *The Book of the Farm, detailing the labours of the Farmers, Farm-Steward, Ploughman, Shepherd, Hedger, Cattle-man, Fieldworker, and Dairy-Maid* (London, 1844); H. Stephens and R.S. Burns, *The Book of Farm Buildings* (London, 1861); j.B. Denton, *The Farm Homesteads of England: A Collection of Plans of English Homesteads Existing in Different Parts of the Country* (London, 1864).

<sup>134</sup> H.C. Darby, 'Some Early Ideas on the Agricultural Regions of England', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1954), pp. 41-2.

<sup>135</sup> J.H. Charnock, 'On the Farming of the West Riding of Yorkshire: Prize Essay', *Journal of Royal Agricultural Society*, Vol. 9, Part 2, No. 22 (December, 1848), pp. 284-311.



Although the six villages are not specifically cited, Charnock's essay still provides a useful framework for the analysis and evaluation of agriculture in chapter two, and is also referred to in chapter three in relation to the condition of the agricultural labourer.

Numerous nineteenth century Parliamentary Reports were produced, investigating agriculture and agricultural employment. These official publications have inherent bias as they were produced to substantiate nineteenth century debates with a view to changing practice. For example, use has been made of the government investigations into the employment of women, young persons and children in agriculture. The 1843 report was the first gender specific investigation of employment in the countryside.<sup>136</sup> It provides evidence of the wide range of work undertaken by women in the countryside, and the generally positive attitude towards it.<sup>137</sup> The 1867 report provides evidence of the change in the extent of women's work in the countryside and attitudes to it. It revealed extensive regional disparity in the type of work, how women were employed and wages, and also that unease and opposition to women undertaking certain work had increased considerably. Consequently, it has been argued that the reports may have exaggerated conditions or at the very least only cited the worst examples to substantiate their arguments, which must be taken into consideration.<sup>138</sup> Nevertheless, both reports are used to evaluate the role of women in the agricultural workforces of the six villages, and especially attitudes towards female agricultural work during the mid nineteenth century in chapter three.

<sup>136</sup>Verdon, *Rural Women Workers*, pp. 63-4; K. Sayer, *Women of the Fields: Representations of Rural Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Manchester, 1995), p. 34.

<sup>137</sup>Verdon, *Rural Women Workers*, pp. 64-6.

<sup>138</sup>Sayer, *Women of the Fields*, p. 89-90.

## Overview of Thesis

This thesis is divided into three core chapters and a conclusion. The three thematic chapters all address the research aims and questions in order to evaluate the validity of the Mills model for comparing villages in the mid nineteenth century. The themes selected are closely inter-related with the work of Mills on landownership and its affect on agriculture, occupational structure, and economic diversity in rural communities.<sup>139</sup> Chapter two compares patterns of agriculture in the six villages by analysing farm size, evidence of high farming, and crops and livestock. It also re-evaluates the role of landownership in agricultural management and identifies the extent to which inter-relationships between villages and between town and country stimulated agriculture in the mid nineteenth century. This tests the validity of the classificatory, causal and inter-dependency arguments of the Mills model in relation to agriculture and agricultural management in the six villages. Chapter three examines the size and composition of agricultural workforces in the six villages in order to evaluate the classificatory element of Mills model. It also argues the importance of differentiating between different types of agricultural workers. This is demonstrated by the detailed analysis of farm servants and agricultural labourers in the six villages. Statistical comparisons of the number of farm servants and agricultural labourers, analysis of the identity of farm servants and agricultural labourers, and evaluation of the hiring fairs and other employment practices are used to achieve this. As a consequence the causal, classificatory and interdependency elements of the Mills model can be tested in relation to different types of agricultural workers. Chapter four compares the number of industries and trades and crafts businesses, and employment in industry, trades and crafts in the six villages studied in this thesis, and examines the relationship between land, agriculture, industry and micro-commerce. It also evaluates the role of landownership in determining the extent of industry and micro-commerce in the countryside. This tests the validity of the Mills model in

<sup>139</sup>These are recurrent themes in all Mills' work, but particularly his doctoral thesis, 'Landownership and Rural Population' and *Lord and Peasant*.

relation to industry and micro-commerce in the six villages. Finally, the conclusion returns to address the research questions outlined in the introduction of this thesis, and summarises the main findings, discusses the implications of the research, and suggests alternative frameworks for the study of village typology.

## **Chapter Two: Landownership, Agricultural Management and Rural Communities**

This chapter evaluates the classificatory, causal and dependency elements of the Mills model in relation to the agriculture and agricultural management of the six villages. Firstly, it tests Mills' classificatory theory about patterns of agriculture. Mills argued that farm size would be larger in estate villages than in multi-freeholder villages.<sup>1</sup> He specifically reasoned that there would be fewer but larger farms in estate villages, and a greater number of smaller farms in multi-freeholder villages. Data from the census enumerators' books, in conjunction with estate records and the tithe awards, is used to establish whether farms were larger in Sprotbrough, Warmsworth and Rossington (the three estate villages) compared to Fishlake, Stainforth and Braithwell (the three multi-freeholder villages). It also examines whether farm size in the six villages changed during the study period.

Mills also argued that large-scale capital investment in agriculture was greater in estate villages than in multi-freeholder villages, because it required the wealth of large landowners.<sup>2</sup> Evidence of capital investment in the agricultural infrastructure, drainage and machinery of the six villages will be compared and contrasted, as these were all cited by Mills as resulting from large-scale capital investment. In addition, the advancement of agricultural knowledge within the six villages is also analysed, as this too was a component part of 'high farming'. Mills did not use crops or livestock as indicators of village type, and yet by comparing the crops and livestock in the six villages, this chapter contributes to the understanding of farming geographies in the mid nineteenth century, and the differences in agriculture at village level.

Secondly, this chapter evaluates Mills' causal assertions about landownership. Mills argued that villages had different agricultural characteristics because of landownership. He specifically reasoned that

<sup>1</sup>D.R. Mills, *Lord and Peasant in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London, 1980), p. 29,117.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

this was because landowners had both the money and the inclination to develop large farms, invest in machinery and promote 'high farming'.<sup>3</sup> In order to analyse this relationship between landownership and agriculture, the different approaches to agricultural management adopted by the four landowners (Copley, Brown, Battie-Wrightson and Aldam) of the three estate villages are compared using estate records, including the diaries and notebooks of landowners and the cash books completed by the land agents, printed evidence such as newspapers and journals, and visual evidence such as model farms in the modern landscape.

Thirdly, this chapter examines the inter-relationships between the six villages, and between town and country, in relation to agriculture. The Mills model isolates agricultural characteristics in terms of villages and landowners. Consequently the model fails to take into consideration other factors such as the role of the market town and agricultural societies in stimulating inter-relationships. This chapter addresses this deficit and demonstrates the importance of these inter-relationships for individual villages and farmers. This is achieved by analysing the impact of improvements to the market in Doncaster in the mid nineteenth century on the six villages, and the way in which farmers in the six villages contributed to and benefitted from the agricultural forums such as agricultural societies and political meetings in Doncaster.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

## **The Classification of Agriculture**

### **Farm Size**

Farm size was one of the key characteristics used by Mills to demonstrate the sharp dichotomy between village type and patterns of agriculture.<sup>4</sup> He argued that farms were larger and continued to increase in size in estate villages compared to farms in multi-freeholder villages.<sup>5</sup> According to Mills, large farms were advantageous to landowners as they attracted men of capital and ability as tenants.<sup>6</sup> Crucial to evaluating Mills' claim is establishing what constituted large and small farms in the mid nineteenth century. Mills himself did not specify acreages for large and small farms, despite the prominence of farm size in his model. Nor was there a consensus amongst writers who used the terms in the mid nineteenth century. As J. Beckett argued, 'Contemporaries were seldom reluctant to express their opinions about farm sizes, even if they were not of one mind as to what constituted a large or small farm'.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, the terms 'large' and 'small' farm were often applied in a manner that was vague and not comparable, reflecting the objectives of the writers using them rather than definitive acreages.

The nineteenth century debate over farm size was concerned with the relative merits of farms of different sizes, and with identifying an optimum size. From the late eighteenth century, larger farms were frequently perceived as being the foundation for profitable and productive farming. By the mid nineteenth century, opinion was divided over whether increased farm size was beneficial or detrimental to farming.<sup>8</sup> David Low, writing in 1844, argued that larger farms were indicative of revival, whilst smaller subdivided holdings inhibited the

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29,117; D.R. Mills, 'Landownership and Rural Populations, with Special Reference to Leicestershire in the Mid Nineteenth Century', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leicester (1963), p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Mills, 'Landownership and Rural Population', p. 165.

<sup>7</sup> J.V. Beckett, 'The Debate over Farm Sizes in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century England', *Agricultural History*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (July 1983), p. 312.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 308,313,323.

progress of agriculture.<sup>9</sup> Conversely, some agricultural writers blamed larger farms for inefficiency and the demise of the smallholder. James Caird argued that agricultural practice on the Wiltshire downs could be improved by subdividing farms; and J.L. Morton argued that a reduction in farm size would stimulate agricultural progress.<sup>10</sup> As a consequence of the ongoing debate about farm size in the mid nineteenth century, the terms large and small were controversial, and, as Beckett argued, reflected the intensity and significance of the debate rather than the specific measurement of farms.<sup>11</sup>

For the purpose of this thesis, the following definitions have been applied to the six villages. A small farm was less than 100 acres; a medium farm was between 100 and 299 acres; a large farm was between 300 and 499 acres; and a very large farm was over 500 acres. These definitions take into consideration contemporary viewpoints and the work of historians. David Grigg and John Beckett both defined a small farm as one that was less than 100 acres, which corresponds with the 1851 census report's categorisation of farm size.<sup>12</sup> Definitions of farms larger than 100 acres have varied considerably. Farms were subdivided in increments of 100 acres in both the 1851 census report, and Beckett's subsequent analysis of this, suggesting that these were useful demarcations for comparing farm size. Morton argued that the optimum size for a large farm was between 250 and 400 acres, but that farms of between 150 and 200 acres were most in demand.<sup>13</sup> Grigg combined these groups to argue that farms between 100 and 299 acres were medium and those over 300 acres were large.<sup>14</sup> The definitions chosen to represent farms of different sizes in the six villages may be subjected to criticism as a consequence of such variation. Yet, the merit

<sup>9</sup>D. Low, *On Landed Property and the Economy of Estates* (London, 1844), p. 38.

<sup>10</sup>J. Caird, *English Agriculture in 1850-51* (London, 1852), pp. 85-86; J.L. Morton, *The Resources of Estates* (London, 1858), pp. 19, 117-119.

<sup>11</sup>Beckett, 'Debate over Farm Sizes', p. 313.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 325; D. Grigg, 'Farm Size in England and Wales, from Early Victorian Times to the Present', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (1987), pp. 185; PP, 1852-53, LXXXVIII, *Census of Great Britain, 1851* (London, 1854), p. lxxxi.

<sup>13</sup>Morton, 'The Resources of Estates', pp. 117-119.

<sup>14</sup>Grigg, 'Farm Size in England and Wales', p. 185.

of these definitions is that they relate to specific acreages and have been consistently applied to the six villages.

An additional challenge is to devise a suitable method with which to calculate farm size in the six villages in the mid-nineteenth century. The only comprehensive survey of farm size in England and Wales during the mid nineteenth century was via the 1851, 1861 and 1871 population censuses. Occupiers of land were instructed to return the acreages they farmed, and the published census report for 1851 contained data on farm size at both national and county level.<sup>15</sup> This was of course not without its problems, with inaccurate acreages and farmers failing to return an acreage at all being cited as the main criticisms.<sup>16</sup> Mark Overton argued that it was small farmers who particularly failed to answer the question about size of holding, resulting in a bias towards larger farms.<sup>17</sup> Yet, historians have effectively used the 1851 census to evaluate farm size. Grigg and Beckett both analysed the statistics in the 1851 census report to discuss trends in farm size in England.<sup>18</sup> Beckett specifically argued that the rise of the large farm was in fact quite slow, with the small farm remaining a feature of English agriculture. Statistically he demonstrated that small farms, less than 100 acres, equated to two thirds of all farms and accounted for one fifth of the total cultivated acreage.<sup>19</sup> More recently, Leigh Shaw-Taylor argued that the 1851 census had become a neglected source for farm size despite being reliable and able to document the geography of farm size at county level.<sup>20</sup> Shaw-Taylor used the 1851 census to demonstrate strong regional variation, and to argue that smaller farmers were not under-represented.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>16</sup> Mills, 'Trouble with Farms at the Census Office', pp. 64-65; E Higgs, *A Clearer Sense of the Census* (London, 1996), pp. 104-106.

<sup>17</sup> Overton, *The Agricultural Revolution*, p. 174.

<sup>18</sup> Grigg, 'Farm Size in England and Wales', pp. 179-89; Beckett, 'Debate over Farm Sizes', pp. 308-25.

<sup>19</sup> Beckett, 'Debate over Farm Sizes', pp. 309, 325.

<sup>20</sup> Leigh Shaw-Taylor, 'Family Farms and Capitalist Farms in Mid Nineteenth Century England', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (2005), p. 158,164.



This thesis moves beyond county statistics to analyse farm size at village level, and therefore necessitates use of Census Enumerators' Books (hereafter CEBs). Whilst the CEBs are beset with the same problems as the census reports, they have the additional benefit of being able to compare individual farms and villages. The validity of this source can be demonstrated by comparing farm size in the census with the tithe awards and estate records where possible. For the six villages examined in this thesis, there is substantial consistency between the acreages returned in the CEBs and those recorded in other sources at comparable dates. Table 2.1 demonstrates this by comparing the size of farms in the estate village of Warmsworth, using the 1861 CEB and a field book for the village dated 1860. Where both documents provide farm size, the data is comparable indicating the reliability of the farm size data in the census for estate villages where it exists. Only a small holding occupied by a blacksmith and the large East Farm occupied by a farm bailiff at this date were recorded in the field book but were absent from the CEB. Further evidence that indicates the accuracy of the census to determine farm size is provided by a comparison of the 1851 CEB and the Tithe Apportionment for Sprotbrough. The acreages of farms recorded in both documents closely matched those in the Tithe Apportionment of 1847. For example, Richard Hickson returned 270 acres in the census and the farm was listed as being 273 acres, 1 rood, and 5 perches in the tithe apportionment. Similarly, Thomas Wood returned 160 acres in the census, and 155 acres was recorded for this farm for the tithe apportionment.<sup>21</sup> The consistency in farm size evidenced through record linkage in the estate villages demonstrates the value of the CEBs for studying farm size at village level.

<sup>21</sup> TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Sprotbrough 1851*; Doncaster Archives, P25/9/B1, *Sprotbrough Tithe Apportionment and Map, 1847*.

Table 2.1: Farm Size in Warmsworth, 1860-61

Farm	1861 Census	Field Book for the Lordship of Warmsworth, 1860
Warmsworth Hall and East Farm (Richard Heber Wrightson)	Occupied by farm bailiff - no acreage given	176 acres, 2 roods, 3 perches
Warmsworth Centre Farm (Walker)	200 acres	179 acres and 23 perches
Warmsworth Centre Farm (Roberts)	170 acres	172 acres 2 r 32p
Warmsworth South Farm (Wood)	111 acres	111 acres 2r 14p
Warmsworth Farm and Public House (Guest)	36 acres	40 acres Or 9p
Warmsworth Farm - William Thompson	30 acres	31 acres 2r ?p
Warmsworth Farm - William Fitzgeorge (blacksmith and farmer)	No acreage	18 acres 2r 23p

Sources: TNA, RG9/3514, *CEB Warmsworth 1861*; Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E11/18, *Field Book of the Lordship of Warmsworth 1860*

Furthermore, record linkage also reconciles discrepancies in farm size highlighted in the CEBs. This is particularly relevant to the three multi-freeholder villages where larger acreages related to multiple farms. Mills identified this to be a major problem with farm size in the CEBs.<sup>22</sup> Yet, if caution and record linkage are applied then the CEBs are still a valid source for farm size in the three multi-freeholder villages. This is demonstrated by an analysis of the farms at Stainforth. John Bladworth returned an unusually large acreage for the multi-freeholder village of Stainforth between 1851 and 1871. The majority of farms in Stainforth were less than 200 acres in size, which is confirmed by both the CEBs and the tithe apportionment for Stainforth.<sup>23</sup> Yet, according to the CEBs Bladworth farmed in excess of 600 acres.<sup>24</sup> This discrepancy is explained by using the 1843 Tithe Apportionment to identify the different farms Bladworth was referring to. It is evident that Bladworth owned and occupied 93 acres, and that a further 224 acres belonged to Henry Bridgeman Simpson (one of the principal landowners of Stainforth).<sup>25</sup> Exceptionally large acreages in the CEBs do necessitate further attention, and preferably need to be cross-referenced with other sources to compare farm size. Nevertheless, the overall consistency demonstrated here further supports the validity of using CEBs for farm size in this thesis.

According to the 1851 census report, small farms dominated the county of Yorkshire.<sup>26</sup> This has been attributed partially to industrialisation, with both contemporaries and historians identifying a strong relationship between farm size and proximity to industry. In 1844, David Low wrote that 'When the produce of land is very valuable, as when provisions are raised for the inhabitants of large towns, farms will tend to be small',

<sup>22</sup> Mills, 'Trouble with Farms at the Census Office', pp. 67.

<sup>23</sup> TNA, H0107/2349, *CEB Stainforth 1851*; TNA, RG9/3524, *CEB Stainforth 1861*; TNA, RG10/4726, *CEB Stainforth 1871*; Doncaster Archives, DY/Wall/1-2, *Hatfield Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1843.

<sup>24</sup> TNA, H0107/2349, *CEB Stainforth 1851*; TNA, RG9/3524, *CEB Stainforth 1861*; TNA, RG10/4726, *CEB Stainforth 1871*.

<sup>25</sup> Doncaster Archives, DY/Wall/1-2, *Hatfield Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1843.

<sup>26</sup> PP, 1852-53, LXXXVI11, *Census of Great Britain, 1851* (London, 1854), p. lxxxi.

arguing that efficiency, rent and competition in fact repressed the size of farm.<sup>27</sup> John H. Charnock's prize winning *JRASE* essay also argued that farm size in the West Riding was very small in the immediate vicinity to manufacturing, with farms increasing in size in the more agricultural parts of the county.<sup>28</sup> Leigh Shaw-Taylor also cited industrialisation as a factor in explaining why the average farm size in the West Riding of Yorkshire was only 60 acres.<sup>29</sup>

The six villages studied in this thesis were all in close proximity to Doncaster, and yet farm size varied considerably. Farms of less than 50 acres were juxtaposed with those of more than 300 acres. Tables 2.2 to 2.4 show the extent to which farm size differed in the six villages between 1851 and 1871. In 1851, 57.2 per cent of farms in the six villages were less than 100 acres; 33.3 per cent were 100 to 299 acres; and 9.5 per cent that were over 300 acres. These proportions were not dissimilar to those calculated by Grigg for England and Wales at the same date: 62.5 per cent, 29.7 per cent, and 7.8 per cent respectively. In addition, the evidence for the six villages suggests a connection between the concentration of landownership and farm size, as argued by Mills. There were fewer farms, most of which were either medium or large, in the three estate villages compared to the three multi-freeholder villages where there were more farms and the average size of farm was smaller. The largest farms in the estate villages in 1851 were in excess of 300 acres. These were the Walker farm (384 acres) at Warmsworth, the Snowden farm (314 acres) at Sprotbrough, and the Walker farm (310 acres) and the Jennings farm (384 acres) at Rossington.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, very few farms in the three estate villages were under 100 acres. There were in fact just three, all of which were at Warmsworth.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Low, 'On Landed Property', p. 35.

<sup>28</sup> J.H. Charnock, 'On the Farming of the West Riding of Yorkshire: Prize Report', *Journal of Royal Agricultural Society*, Vol. 9, Part 2, No. 22 (December 1848), p. 301.

<sup>29</sup> Shaw-Taylor, 'Family Farms and Capitalist Farms', p. 180.

<sup>30</sup> TNA, HO107/2346, *CEB Sprotbrough 1851*; TNA, HO107/2346, *CEB Warmsworth 1851*, TNA, HO107/2348, *CEB Rossington 1851*. Note that the two farms tenanted by the Walkers did not refer to the same person.

<sup>31</sup> TNA, HO107/2346, *CEB Warmsworth 1851*.

Table 2.2: Farm Size in the Six Villages, 1851

Village	Number of Farms	Number of farms of different acreages				Acreage not specified
		0-99 acres	100-299 acres	300-499 acres	Over 500 acres	
Sprotbrough	4		2	1		1
Warmsworth	6	3	2	1		
Rossington	9		6	2		1
Braithwell	17	12	4	1		
Fishlake	16	12	3			1
Stainforth (re-adjusted using tithe award)	16	9	4			3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>6</b>

Source: TNA, H0107/2346, CEB Sprotbrough 1851; TNA, H0107/2346, CEB Warmsworth 1851; TNA, H0107/2348, CEB Rossington 1851; TNA, H0107/2346, CEB Braithwell 1851; TNA, H0107/2349, CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1851; Doncaster Archives, DY/Wall/1-2, Hatfield Tithe Apportionment and Map, 1843 (includes Stainforth)

Table 2.3: Farm Size in the Six Villages, 1861

Village	Number of Farms	Number of farms of different acreages				Acreage not specified/unknown
		0-99 acres	100-299 acres	300-499 acres	Over 500 acres	
Sprotbrough	6		4	1		1
Warmsworth	7	2	4			1
Rossington	8		5	3		
Braithwell	11	9	1	1		
Fishlake	20	15	3			2
Stainforth (re-adjusted)	12	8	2			2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>34</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>6</b>

Source: TNA, RG9/3516, CEB Sprotbrough 1861; TNA, RG9/3514, CEB Warmsworth 1861; TNA, RG9/3522, CEB Rossington 1861; TNA, RG9/3513, CEB Braithwell 1861; TNA, RG9/3524, CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1861; Doncaster Archives, DY/Wall/1-2, Hatfield Tithe Apportionment and Map, 1843 (includes Stainforth)

Table 2.4: Farm Size in the Six Villages, 1871

Village	Number of Farms	Number of farms of different acreages				Acreage not specified
		0-99 acres	100-299 acres	300-499 acres	Over 500 acres	
Sprotbrough	3		3			
Warmsworth	5	1	2			2
Rossington	7		1	3		3
Braithwell	12	8	2			2
Fishlake	20	16	2			2
Stainforth (re-adjusted using tithe award)	12	9	2			3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>34</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>		

Source: TNA, RG10/4716, CEB Sprotbrough 1871; TNA, RG10/4715, CEB Warmsworth 1871\ TNA, RG10/4724, CEB Rossington 1871\ TNA, RG10/4714, CEB Braithwell 1871\ TNA, RG10/4726, CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1871; Doncaster Archives, DY/Wall/1-2, Hatfield Tithe Apportionment and Map, 1843 (includes Fishlake and Stainforth)

Conversely, the majority of farms in the three multi-freeholder villages were smaller than 100 acres. At Braithwell, 66 per cent of farms were less than 100 acres in size in 1851. Over half of these were less than 50 acres. A similar percentage of farms in Fishlake(73 per cent) and Stainforth (60 per cent)were less than 100 acres in 1851. Again, the majority of these farms were very small, less than 50 acres in size. The persistence of the small farm, that Beckett argued was evident in England in 1851, was therefore strongest in the three multi-freeholder villages of the Doncaster district.<sup>32</sup> The evidence of farm size in the six villages suggests that regionalisation can be misleading, and that to some extent at least the Mills classificatory argument can be substantiated as farm size was notably different in villages with contrasting landownership.

Nevertheless, farm size did vary between villages with similar landowning structures, which casts doubt on the applicability of the Mills model. The Mills model encourages sharp contrasts to be drawn between villages with different landowning structures, when in fact the

<sup>32</sup> Beckett, 'Debate over Farm Sizes', pp. 309-10.

evidence of the six villages actually suggests greater variations were present. Table 2.5 shows that the proportion of different sized farms varied within villages with similar landowning structures in 1851. Three quarters of farms in two of the estate villages, Sprotbrough and Rossington, were between 100 and 299 acres, with the remaining farms between 300 and 399 acres. Yet in the estate village of Warmsworth only one farm was over 300 acres in size, and half were actually less than 50 acres. Similar variation in farm size is evident amongst the three multi-freeholder villages. In both Braithwell and Fishlake, almost half the farms were less than 50 acres in 1851, with another third between 50 and 99 acres. At Stainforth, almost half of the farms were 50-99 acres, and almost a third were between 100 and 299 acres.

Moreover, the smallest and the largest farms in each village often bore little resemblance to the average sized farm in that village. Table 2.6 illustrates the great disparity in farm size within the three estate villages and the three multi-freeholder villages. The difference between the largest and smallest farms in the three estate villages was between 106 to 313 acres, and 111 to 310 acres in the multi-freeholder villages. The largest and smallest farms in each of the six villages were an important part of agriculture in these villages, and therefore should not be consigned to being mere exceptions. In addition, this pattern of farm size coincided with the work of G.E. Mingay, who concluded that most regions were characterised by a mixture of farm sizes with some increasing in size but many remaining small.<sup>33</sup> Whereas the Mills model strives to eradicate what it perceives to be 'exceptions', a more constructive historical approach is to embrace and explain them.

<sup>33</sup> G.E. Mingay, 'Conclusion: The Progress of Agriculture 1750-1850' in G.E. Mingay (ed), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol VI, 1750-1850* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 949.

Table 2.5: The Proportion of Different Sized Farms in the Six Villages, 1851

Village type	Villages	0-49 acres	50-99 acres	100-299 acres	300-399 acres	Over 400 acres
Estate	Sprotbrough			75%	25%	
	Rossington			75%	25%	
Multi-freeholder	Warmsworth	50%		35%	15%	
	Braithwell	47.4%	31.6%	15.8%	5.2%	
	Fishlake	50%	33.3%	16.7%		
	Stainforth	23%	46%	31%		

Source: as table 2.2

Table 2.6: The Smallest and Largest Farms in the Six Villages, 1851-1871

Village type		1851 - smallest	1851 - largest	1861 - smallest	1861 - largest	1871 - smallest	1871 - largest
Estate	Sprotbrough	Thomas Wood 160 acres	John Snowden 314 acres	John Winder 122 acres	John Snowden 315 acres	John Sampson 150 acres	Arthur W Kelsey 298 acres
	Warmsworth	William Thompson 35 acres	Walker farm 348 acres	William Thompson 30 acres	Walker farm 200 acres	George Guest 40 acres	Thomas Shearman 170 acres
Multi-freeholder	Rossington	Joseph Innocent 135 acres	Richard Jennings 384 acres	John Butterill 178 acres	Richard Jennings 343 acres	William Tate 244 acres	Thomas Jennings 350 acres
	Braithwell	Mr Somerset 10 acres	William Law 320 acres	William Fiddler 5 acres	Edmund Demmett 303 acres	William Fiddler 20 acres	George Crawshaw 140 acres
Multi-freeholder	Fishlake	William Hather and George Hand - both 10 acres each	Joseph Needham 188 acres	David Gowland 7 acres	Thomas Birks 200 acres	Maria Foster 6 acres	Thomas Downing 130 acres
	Stainforth	William Foster = farmer and agricultural labour - 7 acres	John Holmes 140 acres	Thomas Dyson 22 acres	William Oliver 230 acres	Henry Jefferson 19 acres	Thomas Oliver 130 acres

Source: as table 2.2-2.4



A continuum is a more representative framework than the Mills model to take account of some of the variations in farm size. Whilst a comparative model or framework cannot comprehensively embody the great disparity in farm size at village level, the continuum provides two main advantages over the Mills model. Firstly, the continuum places the size of farms in the six villages in context of the proportions of different sized farms in England. This approach ensures that the comparison of farm size is relative, rather than arbitrarily applying the terms large and small to farms. Consequently, the continuum is a visual reference point that compares the average farm size in a village with the average farm size in England, and is always relative. Secondly, the continuum accommodates the main differences in farm size within villages with similar landowning structures. This incorporates differences between estate and multi-freeholder villages. The continuum replaces the generalisations of the Mills model with a relative framework that compares average farm size in different types of villages.

Fig. 2.1 depicts the application of the proposed continuum for farm size in the six villages in 1851. The extremes of farm size are placed at either end of the continuum. On the left hand side are the smaller farms, beginning with those of just a few acres. Larger farms are on the right hand side, with those of 500 acres at the furthest point. In addition, the percentage of farms in England and Wales of different sizes is marked underneath the continuum. Whilst disparities in farm size within a village pose a challenge, the six villages have been positioned on the continuum taking into consideration both the average farm size and the extent of variation within a village. For example, the estate villages of Sprotbrough and Rossington have been placed half way along the continuum. This is indicative of the fact that all farms in these two villages were consistently more than 100 acres in size in 1851. Moreover, whilst four of the farms in these villages were in excess of 300 acres in 1851, the largest was only 384 acres.<sup>34</sup> This was at a time

<sup>34</sup>TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Sprotbrough 1851*; TNA, H0107/2348, *CEB Rossington 1851*.

when farms of this size accounted for a third of the total cultivated acreage in England, and that 16 per cent of cultivated land was farmed as part of farms that were in excess of 500 acres.<sup>35</sup> Warmsworth, although an estate village, has been placed further to the left on the continuum. This is because only one farm was in excess of 300 acres, and yet a large proportion of the farms were less than 50 acres.<sup>36</sup> This variation in farm size between the three estate villages is effectively represented on the continuum.

Fig. 2.1: Farm Size Continuum, 1851

small	Fishlake Stainforth	Braithwell Warmsworth	Rossington Sprotbrough	large
	50 acres	100 acres	250 acres	500 acres and over
	<b>62.5%</b>		<b>29.7%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>

Farm size also varied in the three multi-freeholder villages. Although these farms were generally smaller than in the estate villages, some were larger than others. In 1851, 22.5 per cent of all farms in the three multi-freeholder villages were between 100 and 299 acres. This included both tenanted and owner-occupied farms. At Braithwell, the two largest farms were 295 and 320 acres in 1851, but almost half of the farms were less than 50 acres. Braithwell is therefore positioned approximately one quarter of the way along the continuum on the left hand side. None of the farms in Fishlake and Stainforth were as large, so both villages are placed slightly to the left of Braithwell. Fishlake is

<sup>35</sup> Beckett, 'Debate over Farm Sizes', p. 325.

<sup>36</sup> TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Warmsworth 1851*.

the furthest to the left because half of the farms in that village in 1851 were less than 50 acres, whereas in Stainforth only 23 per cent of farms were less than 50 acres. The continuum effectively demonstrates this variation in farm size between the three multi-freeholder villages.

Landownership was evidently not the sole explanation for differences in the size of farms in the six villages. The visual representation of these differences on the continuum promotes alternative explanations to landownership of how and why farm size varied in villages in close proximity to one another. Afton and Turner argued that farm size was inter-linked with land use, labour and capital inputs, and prices and market conditions.<sup>37</sup> At Warmsworth, the comparatively high proportion of very small farms, less than 50 acres, lowered the average size of farms in the village. Warmsworth was therefore positioned differently on the continuum to the other two estate villages. Beckett identified a number of reasons why farms were small during the mid nineteenth century, including practical restraints, lack of capital, poor market conditions and rationalisation.<sup>38</sup> Even Mills acknowledged variation in farm size on large estates, arguing that because the best class of tenant was in short supply in mid nineteenth century Leicestershire it could be difficult for landowners to lease large farms.<sup>39</sup> The fact that two landowners, Aldam and Battie-Wrightson, owned Warmsworth does not reflect contrasting management strategies and thus does not explain the existence of these smaller farms as both landowners owned farms that were less than 50 acres. Detailed analysis of the occupants of these smaller farms does however demonstrate a strong relationship between farm size and occupation. The occupants of two of the three smaller farms both had dual occupations. For example, George Guest was innkeeper and farmer and George Blagden farmed a small acreage in addition to being a joint proprietor of the quarry and lime company that

<sup>37</sup> B. Afton and M. Turner, 'The Size of Agricultural Holdings', in E.J.T. Collins (ed), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol. VII, 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 1836.

<sup>38</sup> Beckett, 'Debate over Farm Sizes', pp. 311-2.

<sup>39</sup> Mills, 'Landownership and Rural Population', p. 165.

occupied the quarries at Warmsworth.<sup>40</sup> This link between smaller farms and dual occupations in the estate village of Warmsworth may have implications for elsewhere, and demonstrates the importance of identifying and explaining exceptions, as opposed to homogenising village type in accordance with the Mills model.

Similarly, a relationship exists between the occupants and the larger farms in the multi-freeholder village of Braithwell. Thomas Dyson owned and occupied Manor Farm in Braithwell in 1851.<sup>41</sup> This farm was 171 acres, which made it one of the larger farms at Braithwell. Dyson's family had been tenants on the nearby Sandbeck estate, which was owned by the Earl of Scarborough.<sup>42</sup> The Earl also owned land at Braithwell, where Dyson subsequently became a tenant and an owner-occupier. This connection between landowner and tenant may have been influential in Dyson owning and occupying land at Braithwell. Dyson was also a pro-active agriculturalist, which is demonstrated by his membership of local agricultural societies and his support of the Braithwell Ploughing and Cow Clubs.<sup>43</sup> This suggests an important link between agricultural ability and ambition, and larger farm size in a multi-freeholder village.

The considerable variation of farm size within villages, and between villages with similar landowning structures, evidenced here weakens the connection between landownership and farm size that Mills argued existed. As D. Low, writing in 1844, argued 'With respect to the size of farms, few general rules can be laid down. In practice, the size of farms must be made to suit the demand, the condition of the tenantry, and other circumstances'<sup>44</sup> Whilst the continuum cannot explain the many and varied reasons why farm size differed, it clearly demonstrates the

<sup>40</sup>TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Warmsworth 1851*; E. R. Kelly, *Post Office Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire*, 1861 (London, 1861), p. 871.

<sup>41</sup>Doncaster Archives, P71/9/B1-2, *Braithwell Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1840; TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Braithwell 1851*.

<sup>42</sup>TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Braithwell 1851*.

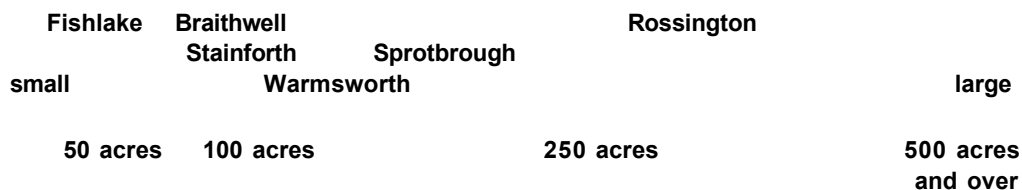
<sup>43</sup>*Doncaster Chronicle*, 17 October 1745, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup>Low, 'On Landed Property', p. 35.

extent to which farm size did or did not correlate with landownership in the six villages.

The continuum also remedies another deficiency of the Mills classificatory model, which is that no provision is made for farm size changing during the mid nineteenth century. Mills classificatory arguments are supposedly valid throughout the nineteenth century and beyond. This is in spite of evidence that farm size was changing in the mid nineteenth century, and that the debate over farm size has dominated the work of both contemporaries and historians. Beckett identified a gradual increase in farm size between 1851 and 1871, but argued that the transition was much slower than sometimes presumed.<sup>45</sup> Whilst the continuum alone cannot explain these changes, it can at least represent the extent to which farms in different types of villages increased or decreased. Fig. 2.2 demonstrates how these changes in farm size are accommodated on the continuum by repositioning the six villages. The continuum provides a visual representation of changes that had taken place to farm size in the six villages. In most instances farm size had remained similar or decreased, with the exception of farms in the estate village of Rossington that had increased.

Fig 2.2: Farm Size Continuum, 1871



<sup>45</sup> Beckett, 'The Debate Over Farm Sizes', pp. 308-309; Overton. *Agricultural Revolution*, p. 204.

Most striking of the changes to farm size, were the opposing trends identified in the estate villages of Rossington and Warmsworth. Rossington moved further to the right along the continuum as the average farm size increased. The largest farm, tenanted by the Innocent family, increased in size from 236 to 270 acres between 1828 and 1861.<sup>46</sup> The farm tenanted by George Wainwright also increased from 113 acres in 1828 to 318 acres in 1871, and the Walker farm from 284 acres in 1828 to 340 acres in 1861.<sup>47</sup> Conversely, Warmsworth moved further to the left because the average farm size decreased. For example, between 1851 and 1861, the farm occupied by Edward Crawshaw decreased from 200 acres to 135 acres.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, the farm occupied by the Walker family at Warmsworth decreased from 348 acres to 200 acres between 1851 and 1861.<sup>49</sup> Whereas the Mills model promoted a sharp dichotomy between farm size in villages with and without concentrated landownership, the continuum acknowledges the extent of variation between villages with similar landowning structures, and changes to farm size over time. More comprehensive explanations of differences in farm size await the evaluation of causation in agriculture later in this chapter. In the meantime, the extent to which these differences in farm size, and the concentration of landownership, affected the ability to implement 'high farming' is evaluated.

### **'High Farming'**

'High farming' is a frequently used term to describe agriculture in the mid nineteenth century, and yet can be remarkably hard to define. P.J. Perry argued that 'the term 'high farming' is notoriously ambiguous and

<sup>46</sup> Doncaster Archives, P58/9/B1-2, *Rossington Tithe Apportionment and Map, 1828*; Doncaster Archives, AB/7/2/9, *Survey of Rossington 1838*; TNA, HO107/2348, *CEB Rossington 1851*; TNA, RG9/3522, *CEB Rossington 1861*.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> TNA, HO107/2346, *CEB Warmsworth 1851*; TNA, RG9/3514, *CEB Warmsworth 1861*; Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E11/18, *Field Book of Warmsworth, 1860*.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

likely to be misunderstood'.<sup>50</sup> He reasoned that this was partially attributable to the inconsistent use of the term by contemporaries.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, 'high farming' has been characterised by capital-intensive practices, innovation and the application of new knowledge from the 1840s.<sup>52</sup> The perceived objective of 'high farming' was to make agriculture more efficient, productive and profitable, although the economic success of this has subsequently been questioned.<sup>53</sup> During the nineteenth century, 'high farming' was heralded as an alternative to protection, in a direct response to the repeal of the Corn Laws. Caird argued that whereas the Corn Laws had merely been a crutch to weak agriculture, the application of 'high farming' strengthened its position.<sup>54</sup> As Caird highlighted, 'high farming' necessitated both permanent improvements such as drainage, reclamation and new farm buildings equipped with machinery, and changes in the ordinary management of farms including the application of manure and fertilisers, types of crops and crop rotations and the livestock breeds.<sup>55</sup> In evaluating the potential application and success of 'high farming', Caird concluded that 'where capital, skill, and the mutual co-operation of landlord and tenant can be combined, the practice of high farming will undoubtedly be found the landlord's true interest, and the tenant's best protection'.<sup>56</sup>

Despite conflicting opinions over large farms during the mid nineteenth century, as cited earlier in this chapter, farm size has been argued to have been a pre-requisite for 'high farming'. Chambers and Mingay argued that farms had to be at least 300 acres in size before they could successfully implement the new ideas and practices of 'high

<sup>50</sup> P.J. Perry, 'High Farming in Victorian Britain: Prospect and Retrospect', *Agricultural History*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (April 1981), p. 156.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>52</sup> Chambers and Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution*, pp. 170-98; Overton, *Agricultural Revolution*, pp. 193-195, 206; M. Overton, 'Re-establishing the English Agricultural Revolution', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (1996), pp. 1-20.

<sup>53</sup> P.J. Perry, 'High farming in Victorian Britain: The Financial Foundations', *Agricultural History*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (July 1978), pp. 365; Overton, *Agricultural Revolution*, pp. 193-195, 206.

<sup>54</sup> J. Caird, *High Farming, under Liberal Covenants, the Best Substitute for Protection* (Edinburgh, 1849), pp. 5-7.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-21, 184.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

farming'.<sup>57</sup> They calculated that in England and Wales, farms of this size amounted to less than 17,000 and occupied only a third of the total cultivated acreage.<sup>58</sup> Consequently, small and even some medium sized farms hindered this process, and without sufficient land, capital and skill, 'high farming' was not possible.<sup>59</sup> Beckett also cited examples of experimentation and innovation on large farms in the East Riding of Yorkshire, Norfolk and Leicestershire, arguing that small owners were 'considered to be too insubstantial to make any real contribution'.<sup>60</sup> In addition, Overton demonstrated geological variation in the ability to practice 'high farming'. He argued that heavy clayland was particularly disadvantaged from this point of view, and that drainage was the key to increasing productivity on this type of land.<sup>61</sup> On the basis of this evaluation, few farmers in the six villages were in a position to engage with and benefit from 'high farming', as farm size alone was generally too small in the six villages studied, without taking into consideration land type and available capital. Indeed the West Riding of Yorkshire was not considered to be a county with a great deal of 'high farming' in spite of industrialisation and mechanisation. This is reflected in Charnock's prize-winning essay through his assessment of the progress of agriculture in the county. Significantly, he attributed any improvements that had taken place to experimentation not mechanisation.<sup>62</sup> He argued that improvements still needed to concentrate on adequate drainage of the land and rotation of crops.<sup>63</sup>

Mills did not specifically use the phrase 'high farming' to classify villages, but he did refer to capital investment in agriculture, which was an underlying principle of 'high farming'. According to Mills, the use of large amounts of capital in order to carry out improvements was greater

<sup>57</sup> Chambers and Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution*, pp. 173-4.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>60</sup> J.V. Beckett, 'Landowners and Estate Management' in Mingay (ed), *Agrarian History*, p. 570.

<sup>61</sup> Overton, *Agricultural Revolution*, pp. 193-4.

<sup>62</sup> Charnock, 'On the Farming of the West Riding', pp. 304-5.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 307-8.



in estate villages than multi-freeholder villages. This included investment in farm buildings, drainage and machinery.<sup>64</sup> The nature of the Mills model also implied that 'high farming' was linked to large farms, as well as concentrated landownership. Evidence of 'high farming' in the estate village of Rossington corroborates this argument. Farm size began to increase at Rossington from the late eighteenth century. At the same time, Doncaster Corporation began to rebuild farms, and continued to make recommendations for the farms at Rossington during the early nineteenth century.<sup>65</sup> The importance of an adequate infrastructure to facilitate and stimulate innovation and agricultural development was increasingly acknowledged by the early to mid nineteenth century. Publications, competitions and loans were used to encourage improvement.<sup>66</sup> Model farms, such as some of the farms built at Rossington, were generally laid out in accordance with the latest ideas about design, were equipped with the latest machinery and tools, and were places where experimental agriculture could take place.<sup>67</sup>

In 1833, the outbuildings of Rossington Grange Farm were found to be dilapidated, and the Rossington Committee of Doncaster Corporation subsequently made recommendations for its improvement.<sup>68</sup> The description of this farm in the 1838 sale catalogue of the Rossington estate provides evidence of the improvements made in response to the aforementioned recommendations. The farm was described as being laid out around more than one yard, and as having an extensive double barn, stable for eight horses, cattle shed, calf houses for six calves, a feeding house for twelve beasts with a granary and dovecote above it,

<sup>64</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 29.

<sup>65</sup> Doncaster Archives, A B /2/2/4/2 and A B /2/2/4/3, *Rossington Committee Meeting Minutes in the Corporation Committee Orders and Papers, 1808-1840*.

<sup>66</sup> R. Brigden, 'Farm Buildings', in Collins (ed), *Agrarian History*, Part 1, pp. 497-504; Brigden, 'Equipment and Motive Power', in Collins (ed), *Agrarian History*, Part 1, pp. SOS-513; S. Wade-Martins, *Farmers, Landlords and Landscapes: Rural Britain, 1720-1870* (Oxford, 2004), p. 88.

<sup>67</sup> H. Stephens and R.S. Burn, *The Book of Farm Buildings, Their Arrangement and Construction* (London, 1861); S. Wade-Martins, *The English Model Farm: Building the Agricultural Ideal* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 93-94; S. MacDonald 'Model Farms', in G.E. Mingay (ed), *The Victorian Countryside*, Vol. 1 (London, 1981), pp. 214-226; Mingay, *Land and Society*, pp. 36-40.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 May 1833.

piggery and poultry houses, a spacious barn with a threshing machine, stabling for three horses, and a slaughter house. The design of the farm was described as being 'well arranged and in the most perfect condition'.<sup>69</sup> The combination of layout, purpose built premises for different agricultural tasks and the inclusion of machinery epitomised 'high farming' through capital investment in agricultural infrastructure. By 1838, Rossington Grange Farm was 284 acres, making it one of the larger farms on the Rossington estate at this date.<sup>70</sup> This link between farm size and improvements to the farm buildings was replicated throughout the estate, with both medium and large farms being well equipped and carefully laid out at the time of the sale of the Rossington estate in 1838.<sup>71</sup> The slightly smaller Mount Pleasant Farm, the farmhouse of which is depicted in plate 2.1, was also enlarged, rebuilt and re-organised during this period.<sup>72</sup> Farm size continued to increase in size between 1838 and the 1870s, under the ownership of the Brown family, who also continued to maintain, and invest in the agricultural infrastructure at Rossington.<sup>73</sup>

Plate 2.1: Mount Pleasant Farm, Rossington

<sup>69</sup> Doncaster Archives, A B/7/3/63, *Sale Catalogue for the Rossington Estate 1838*, p. 21.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., pp. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 22.

<sup>72</sup> Doncaster Archives, A B/2/2/4/2, *Rossington Committee Meeting Minutes*, 29 June 1826 and 22 Nov 1826; Doncaster Archives, A B/7/3/63, *Sale Catalogue for the Rossington Estate 1838*, p. 9.

<sup>73</sup> DY/DAW/9/29, *Sale Catalogue for the Rossington Estate 1938*; Fieldwork conducted personally.

The evidence from Rossington demonstrates a strong relationship between concentrated landownership, farm size and investment in the agricultural infrastructure. It also represents an extreme of 'high farming'. New farm buildings were very capital intensive, and yet according to Perry's work on 'high farming' offered the least return.<sup>74</sup> This accords with Caird's observation in 1850, when he argued that 'In many parts of the country we have seen money squandered on expensive and ill-contrived buildings, from which the tenant reaped little advantage'.<sup>75</sup> In many respects large-scale capital investment in agricultural buildings was the least widely applicable form of 'high farming'.

The notion that 'high farming' only took place on large farms on landed estates is somewhat weakened when other aspects of 'high farming' are taken into consideration. Although drainage schemes and new machinery required capital investment, they were not restricted to the estate villages or the large farms in the Doncaster district. Drainage was considered to be one of the most important improvements of the age, enabling other developments to take place as a direct consequence and one that offered a good return on investment.<sup>76</sup> William Aidam only owned 19 per cent of Warmsworth, including small farms and non-agricultural land. Yet he was able to undertake drainage schemes in the estate village with a view to improving the land.<sup>77</sup> Similarly, machinery was increasingly portable, which meant that smaller farmers could access them through the services of contractors.<sup>78</sup> Evidence of this can be found in the 1861 CEB for Stainforth. William Bradmore (24) and Herbert Johnson (33) were described as the proprietors of steam threshing machines.<sup>79</sup> Although no single landowner invested in

<sup>74</sup> Perry, 'High Farming in Victorian Britain', p. 366.

<sup>75</sup> Caird, *English Agriculture*, p. 491.

<sup>76</sup> Chambers and Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution*, p. 175; Perry, 'High Farming in Victorian Britain', p. 366.

<sup>77</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/1, *Diary of William Aidam*, 17 June 1848.

<sup>78</sup> J. Brown and H.A. Beecham, 'Implements and Machines', in Mingay (ed), *Agrarian History*, p. 305.

<sup>79</sup> TNA, RG9/3524, *CEB Stainforth 1861*.

technology, and the majority of the farms were small, local farmers could hire these machines or the services of Bradmore and Johnson, to thresh their corn. This was a mutually beneficial arrangement as it provided the advantages of new machinery without having to invest in purchasing it outright and had the potential to be a profitable business for the two young men. Evidence of 'high farming' on smaller farms at Warmsworth and in the multi-freeholder village of Stainforth weakens the link between 'high farming', concentrated landownership and farm size proposed by Mills, and highlights the importance of differentiating between different types of 'high farming'.

This distinction between 'high farming' practices is particularly imperative to the acquisition and application of new ideas. Underpinning the advancements in agriculture embodied by the term 'high farming', was awareness that knowledge, ability and skill were as crucial as wealth in successfully implementing new practices. 'High farming' had indeed begun with the foundation of the Agricultural Society of England (later Royal) in 1838, advocating 'practice with science', followed by the establishment of Cirencester Agricultural College in 1845.<sup>80</sup> During the mid nineteenth century, the acquisition and evaluation of information could be as important as capital-intensive inventions and innovations to the local farmer.<sup>81</sup> Farmers' clubs became increasingly popular from the 1840s, as a response to the desire of farming communities to acquire knowledge.<sup>82</sup> The fact that they catered specifically for the tenant farmer and discussed subjects of a useful and practical nature to the locale, were key advantages of the farmers' clubs over larger agricultural societies. Farmers could contribute ideas and opinions, and profit from the experience of others. In the Doncaster district, the opportunities to acquire the latest knowledge and share practical experience were to be found in villages with different landowning structures. At both Sprotbrough (estate) and Braithwell (multi-

<sup>80</sup> Chambers and Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution*, p. 170.

<sup>81</sup> N. Goddard, 'Agricultural Societies', in Mingay (ed), *The Victorian Countryside*, Vol. 1, p. 246.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.

freeholder), the emphasis was on cultivating agricultural knowledge through practical experience and the sharing of ideas.

Sprotbrough Farmers' Club was founded in 1848, with support from the landowner, Sir J.W. Copley. The list of fifteen printed rules conveys the hierarchical structure of this organisation.<sup>83</sup> For example, the president of the club was Sir J.W. Copley, and the vice presidents were William Battie-Wrighton (landowner of neighbouring Warmsworth and Cusworth) and Rev. J.G. Fardell (incumbent of Sprotbrough parish church). In addition to the dominance of local landowners and clergy, the committee was comprised of leading tenant farmers on the estate. The committee was granted the 'power' of inviting gentlemen of the Doncaster district to become honorary members, whereas regular members of the club were forbidden by rule seven to introduce friends. Members also had to be elected and pay an annual subscription of ten shillings. Rule nine specified accepted behaviour and outlined procedures to deal with misconduct. The management structure of the club was organised in favour of the landowners, clergy and leading farmers, who dominated the decision-making processes and financial arrangements. This aimed to ensure that control within the estate village of Sprotbrough was maintained.

In spite of this control, the object of the club was to promote agricultural improvement and to provide a forum for local farmers to meet. It is therefore significant that rule four of the Sprotbrough Farmers' Club specified that members only had to occupy 50 acres of land, and that younger gentlemen who were learning farming and farm bailiffs were exempt from this.<sup>84</sup> This rule is an indication of the inclusive nature of the club, which was indicative of such organisations in the mid nineteenth century. It also provided recognition that tenant farmers actively contributed to the advancement of agriculture through

<sup>83</sup> Durham University Library Special Collections, G 18/2/193, *Miscellaneous Box of Papers Relating to Miss Copley, Rules of the Sprotbrough Farmers' Club, 1848.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

experience, skill and knowledge, whether their farm was small, medium or large. As the nineteenth century writer J.L. Morton argued agricultural progress could be stimulated through smaller farms.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, it was an acknowledgement that in order to implement new ideas and practices, and share ideas and experience, a wide range of farmers had to be able to participate in the acquisition and distribution of knowledge. In respect of contributing to and benefitting from the advancement of agricultural knowledge, farmers of different sized farms therefore had the opportunity to engage with 'high farming'.

A further rule, that specified members should be resident within a five-mile radius, also expanded this inclusion geographically. Villages within this proximity were predominantly situated on the upper or lower magnesium limestone. Consequently, meetings of the Sprotbrough Farmers' Club concentrated on agricultural practices relevant to the geological area. Wheat and turnips were amongst the principal crops grown at Sprotbrough, which meant discussions about these crops were particularly pertinent to members. For example, a meeting held in their first year focused on the growth of wheat, and the advantages of thick and thin sowing.<sup>86</sup> The following year, in 1849, the club discussed the application of different manures advocating that good farmyard manure was superior in the improvement of the soil and the most profitable form of cultivation. In addition, the meeting identified the use of bones as the best artificial tillage, and that a combination of natural farmyard manure and bones should be recommended to farmers.<sup>87</sup> Also in 1849, they discussed the best method for the improvement of inferior grass land, resolving that thin limestone soils be ploughed up and left for two rotations of the crops.<sup>88</sup> In August 1850 they discussed the breeding and treatment of lambs, in which they argued that sheep were valuable livestock and that consequently their chosen subject was one of the

<sup>85</sup> J.L. Morton, *The Resources of Estate* (London, 1858), pp. 117-119; Beckett, 'Debate over Farm Sizes', p. 323.

<sup>86</sup> *The Farmers' Magazine*, vol. 18, second series (July to December 1848), p. 447.

<sup>87</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 19 January 1849, p. 3.

<sup>88</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 16 March 1849, p. 3.

most important they could be engaged in.<sup>89</sup> In each instance special reference was made to the magnesian limestone soil, and determined which of the numerous ideas and techniques being promoted would be most beneficial to them. The application of agricultural knowledge through the Sprotbrough Farmers' Club demonstrates that in addition to landownership, geology and the role of the tenant farmer was pertinent to 'high farming' in an estate village.

The establishment of a farmers' club in the multi-freeholder village of Braithwell in 1845 demonstrates that the advancement of agricultural knowledge was not restricted to estate villages.<sup>90</sup> The club hosted ploughing matches, evening lectures and meetings to discuss agricultural matters.<sup>91</sup> The *Doncaster Chronicle* praised the work of the Braithwell Farmers' Club, arguing that such organisations were a means by which farmers could exchange opinions, discuss ideas and profit from the experience of their neighbours.<sup>92</sup> The annual ploughing matches staged by the club were particularly successful. The objective of these ploughing matches was to improve the proficiency amongst those who used ploughs. Prizes were awarded for the competitors who ploughed half an acre of limestone land in the best manner within four hours. Prize giving was often seen as fostering loyalty amongst farm tenants and farm employees, as well as developing agricultural skill. The *Doncaster Chronicle* promoted prize giving as a method to 'stimulate the farmers of Yorkshire into competitive farming'.<sup>93</sup> The ability to plough land efficiently was of greater immediate importance to the local farmers of Braithwell than capital-intensive practices and innovations.

By failing to take into account the wide range of ways in which 'high farming' manifested itself, the Mills model only acknowledged the most

<sup>89</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 9 August 1850, p. 3.

<sup>90</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 24 October 1845, p. 5.

<sup>91</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 17 October 1845, p. 5.

<sup>92</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 24 October 1845, p. 5.

<sup>93</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 31 March 1875, p. 5.

advanced and capital-intensive instances. Consequently, it is this limited definition of 'high farming' that is reflected in Mills' correlation between concentrated landownership, farm size and 'high farming'. Only the estate village of Rossington corresponded to this ideal, through the construction and development of model farms. Mills' classificatory argument particularly underestimates the important role that knowledge played in agricultural advancement in the mid nineteenth century. In both Sprotbrough and Braithwell the tenant farmer could contribute to, and benefit from, the advancement of agricultural knowledge. The practical application of ideas, which were firmly rooted in experience and relevant to the geological and topographical conditions of that village, had a more profound impact on these farms and farmers than the grand improvement schemes being advocated elsewhere. Through the advancement and application of knowledge, 'high farming' transcended village type and farm size, and thus weakens the Mills' classificatory argument.

### **Crops and Livestock**

Another deficiency of the Mills classificatory model is the way in which it overlooks crops and livestock as agricultural characteristics of different villages. This absence from the model is in itself curious as he devoted a great deal of attention to the subject in his doctoral thesis. Mills used the 1867 crop returns to assess relative proportions of arable and grassland in Leicestershire. He identified two different farming regions in the county: the grassland areas south of Melton Mowbray and east of Leicester and the mixed farming in the rest of the county.<sup>94</sup> Yet according to later work by Mills, crops and livestock were less useful criteria in village differentiation because they were a product of cultural inheritance.<sup>95</sup> By this, he meant that diversity in geology, soil, aspect and natural vegetation were embedded in the history of England. Consequently, Mills divided the country into broad farming regions,

<sup>94</sup> Mills, 'Landownership and Rural Population', pp. 154; in addition, chapter two of his thesis was devoted to geology and physical geography.

<sup>95</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, pp. 16-9.



which were more reminiscent of the arbitrary east-west division of England drawn up by Caird in the mid nineteenth century than of his previously detailed historical analysis.<sup>95</sup> In both the work of Caird and Mills, corn farming was characteristic of the east of England, whereas grazing was representative of the west.

The inclusion of crops and livestock in a framework for the study of villages is in fact an important response to Overton's argument that insufficient work has been conducted into 'the geography of nineteenth century farming'.<sup>97</sup> Overton acknowledged that as a consequence of 'high farming' the link between soil type and agriculture widened because newer farming practices were less dependent on soil type.<sup>98</sup> However, the extent to which these new practices were adopted varied considerably, as already demonstrated in relation to the six villages earlier in this chapter. Undoubtedly assumptions and generalisations have resulted in some agricultural regions being better documented and more comprehensively understood than others.<sup>99</sup> The Doncaster district is particularly under-represented in this respect, being encompassed within Yorkshire or as part of the North in historiography. In the *Agrarian History of England and Wales 1850-1914*, Christine Hailas' 'The Northern Region' discussed the West Riding of Yorkshire. Hailas demonstrated the impact of industrialisation in stimulating farming in the rural hinterland around centres of urbanisation in the county.<sup>100</sup> The Doncaster district was not specifically cited in this publication, nor was attention devoted to the vast differences in geology, topography, spatial relationships and market demand that affected the proportion of crops and livestock in different villages within the county.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*; J Caird, *English Agriculture 1850-51* (London, 1852), p. v.

<sup>97</sup> Overton, *The Agricultural Revolution*, p. 195.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>99</sup> P. Brassley and G.E. Mingay (eds), 'Farming Regions' in Collins (ed), *Agrarian History*, pp. 361-452.

<sup>100</sup> C. Hailas, 'The Northern Region', in Collins (ed), *Agrarian History*, pp. 402-4.

The contemporary importance of geology in agriculture was emphasised in many of the prize essays published in the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society* between 1845 and 1869. A geological framework was used to structure discussions of agriculture at county level. Charnock's essay, entitled 'On the Farming of the West Riding of Yorkshire' began with an account of the geographical and geological context of the county.<sup>101</sup> Significantly, he emphasised the great variety in soil types, 'too numerous to detail', in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Charnock went on to give a general account of the character of the soils in order to 'enable the reader to appreciate the practical advantages of such peculiarities of cultivation in the several localities'.<sup>102</sup> His map identified six main geological areas in the county, which were mountain limestone, coal, millstone grit, magnesian limestone, new red sandstone, and alluvial.<sup>103</sup> Charnock specifically discussed the magnesian limestone and sandstone soils, which are relevant to the study area of this thesis.<sup>104</sup> After ten pages on the character of the soils, Charnock concluded by acknowledging his was a succinct account undoubtedly overlooking some of the variations to be found in the county.<sup>105</sup> The geology of the West Riding of Yorkshire was certainly not homogenous, and neither was that of the Doncaster district. As the introduction to this thesis explained, Sprotbrough was on the upper magnesian limestone, Warmsworth and Braithwell were on the lower magnesian limestone, Rossington was on the sandstone, and Fishlake and Stainforth were both in areas of marshy lowland with clay soils.

The agricultural returns of 1866 were the first comprehensive attempt to collect data with a view to guiding policy and being of benefit to farmers. Caird had argued in 1864 that the publication of agricultural statistics for Great Britain would be in the public's interest.<sup>106</sup> Previous attempts had

<sup>101</sup> Charnock, 'On the Farming of the West Riding of Yorkshire', pp. 284-93.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 285.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 289-90.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293.

<sup>106</sup> MAFF, *A Century of Agricultural Statistics: Great Britain 1866-1966* (London, 1968), p. 3.

been fragmentary and lacked overall purpose. A schedule was drawn up in February 1866, which was sent out in May to collect the data on livestock and in June for the crop acreages.<sup>107</sup> Problems with the data arose from the reluctance of some farmers to give the required information.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, the subsequent returns varied considerably from year to year, making comparisons very difficult.<sup>109</sup> Nevertheless, the 1866 agricultural returns provide the first comparative data about the quantities of different crops and livestock in the six villages. In addition, Mills used the 1867 returns to identify the relative proportions of arable and grassland and of crops within the arable.<sup>110</sup>

The proportions of different crops grown in five of the six villages studied in this thesis are shown in table 2.7.<sup>111</sup> Wheat, barley and turnips were amongst the principal crops grown in these villages. Wheat was grown in both the estate and multi-freeholder villages, and in different soils. Geology and soil type were of primary importance in the growth of wheat in Sprotbrough and Warmsworth. The soil of the upper magnesian limestone to the west of Doncaster was naturally fertile, well drained and suited to arable farming. Geologically, the Sprotbrough estate was therefore prime wheat growing land. Consequently, it is not surprising to find that wheat was the principal crop grown at Sprotbrough, and that it accounted for a third of the arable land in 1866.<sup>112</sup> Similarly at Warmsworth, which was on the lower magnesian limestone, wheat was the principal crop. Although the lower magnesian limestone soils contained clay, the natural mix of loam facilitated the growth of wheat.<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, as the *Farmers' Magazine* argued, as

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>109</sup> Stephens, *Sources for English Local History*, p. 126.

<sup>110</sup> Mills, 'Landownership and Rural Population', pp. 154-6.

<sup>111</sup> The crop returns for Braithwell do not survive.

<sup>112</sup> E.R. Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, p. 811; E.R. Kelly, *Post Office Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire*, 1877 (London, 1877), p. 1111; Doncaster Archives, P25/9/B1, *Sprotbrough Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1847; The National Archives, MAF 68/82, *The Agricultural Returns (crops) for the West Riding of Yorkshire*, 1866.

<sup>113</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E11/41 & 42, *Warmsworth Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1838-41; W. White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the West Riding*, 1837, Vol. 2 (Sheffield, 1837), p. 213; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, pp. 205,871; E.R. Kelly, *Post*

a consequence of artificial manures there was hardly any land where wheat could not be grown.<sup>114</sup> At both Stainforth and Fishlake, where the soil was heavy clay, the application of lime to the land ensured that large acreages of wheat could still be cultivated.<sup>115</sup> The cultivation of large quantities of wheat at Stainforth and Fishlake is indicative of the widening gap between soil type and agricultural capability.

Table 2.7: Arable Crops Grown in the Villages by Acreage, 1866

	Sprotbrough	Warmsworth	Rossington	Fishlake	Stainforth
<b>Wheat</b>	451.25	171.75	363.5	593	319.5
<b>Barley</b>	245.5	118	347.25	217	148.25
<b>Oats</b>	24	15	110.5	173.25	117.25
<b>Rye</b>	1	-	46	7	7.25
<b>Beans</b>	36	13	7	241.75	28.25
<b>Peas</b>	23	11	-	51.5	19.5
<b>Turnips and swedes</b>	276.5	108.5	388	147.75	141.5
<b>Potatoes</b>	59	10	28	50	65.75
<b>Mangolds</b>	8.25	5	14	1.75	1.25
<b>Carrots</b>	-	1.5	5	-	0.5
<b>Cabbage</b>	14.5	18	27	11.5	34.5
<b>Hops</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Other</b>	38.75	45.5	14.25	60	41.5

Source: The National Archives, MAF 68/82, *The Agricultural Returns (crops) for the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1866*

*Office Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire 1867* (London, 1867], p. 970; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1877, p. 217, 1186.

<sup>114</sup> *The Farmers' Magazine*, Vol. 18, second series (July to December 1848), p. 447.

<sup>115</sup> TNA, MAF 68/82, *The Agricultural Returns (crops)*, 1866; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1877, pp. 314, 385.

The dominance of wheat cultivation in all six villages also reflected the increased consumption of wheat during the mid nineteenth century. E.J.T. Collins argued that by the mid nineteenth century wheat was the predominant cereal crop in most parts of the country, having displaced other, coarser grains as the 'general purpose grain'.<sup>116</sup> This suggests that market demand from the Doncaster district and other urban areas promoted and sustained the cultivation of wheat in the six villages during the mid nineteenth century. The extensive cultivation of turnips in the six villages also corresponded to urban expansion and population growth in the Doncaster district.<sup>117</sup> Turnips were used as a fodder crop to fatten livestock and as a cleansing crop to improve the fertility of the land without the necessity to leave land fallow.<sup>118</sup> The importance of turnips to overwinter animals in the Doncaster district was evident through the inundation of stock at the November fair in Doncaster in 1858. The failure of the turnip crop that year meant many animals could not be over-wintered and subsequently inferior animals were sold cheaply if at all.<sup>119</sup>

The exact proportions of different crops grown in the six villages varied considerably, as illustrated by fig. 2.3. In Sprotbrough and Warmsworth, both of which were estate villages located on the fertile magnesian limestone, wheat accounted for 50 per cent of arable cultivation, and barley and turnips were both approximately 25 per cent. This compared with a greater range of principal crops grown at Rossington, Fishlake and Stainforth. In the estate village of Rossington, which had light, sandy soils, turnips accounted for the largest acreage cultivated. In total, 388 acres were cultivated with turnips in 1866, which equated to 31 per cent of the crops grown at Rossington.<sup>120</sup> This was the largest quantity of turnips grown in the study villages, both numerically and

<sup>116</sup> E.J.T. Collins, 'Dietary Change and Cereal Consumption in Britain in the Nineteenth Century', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (1975), pp. 106-8, 112-3.

<sup>117</sup> TNA, MAF 68/82, *The Agricultural Returns (crops)*, 1866.

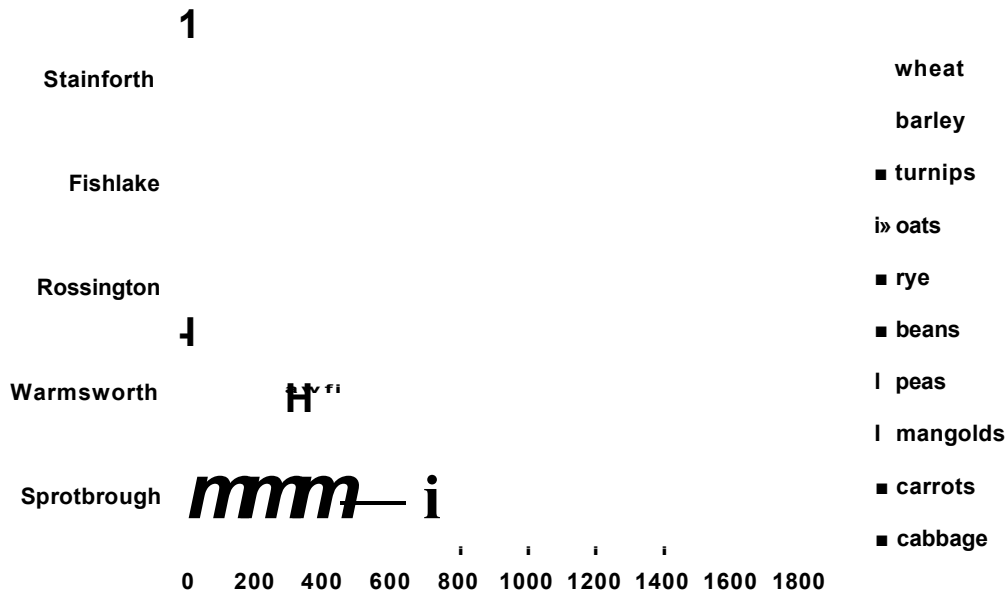
<sup>118</sup> Wade-Martins, *Farmers, Landlords and Landscapes*, p. 27.

<sup>119</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 19 November 1858, p. 5.

<sup>120</sup> TNA, MAF 68/82, *The Agricultural Returns (crops)*, 1866.

proportionately. Turnips were an ideal crop to be grown on light, well-drained soils, which meant that Rossington was able to take advantage of newly developed varieties of root crops from the eighteenth century onwards.<sup>121</sup> The local historian, Edward Miller, noted in 1804 that there was already a preference for growing turnips at Rossington.<sup>122</sup> In addition, as Charnock noted in his essay, turnips were ‘essential for the periodical eradication of couch grass, which rapidly spread on sandy soils’.<sup>123</sup> Turnips continued to be the predominant crop grown at Rossington throughout the mid nineteenth century.<sup>124</sup> A slightly smaller proportion of wheat and barley was grown on the estate, followed by oats that equated to 10 per cent of the total acreage of arable crops cultivated.

Fig. 2.3: Proportion of Crops Grown by Acreage in the Six Villages, 1866



Source: see table 2.7

<sup>121</sup> Wade-Martins, *Farmers, Landlords and Landscapes*, p. 27  
<sup>122</sup> E. Miller, *The History and Antiquities of Doncaster and its Vicinity* (1804, reprint 1984, Howden), p. 236.  
<sup>123</sup> Charnock, 'On the Farming of the West Riding of Yorkshire', p. 299.  
<sup>124</sup> Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, p. 610; TNA, MAF 68/82, *The Agricultural Returns (crops) for the West Riding of Yorkshire*, 1866; Kelly & Co, *Post Office Directory*, 1877, pp. 785-6.

The multi-freeholder villages of Stainforth and Fishlake both had clay soils and wheat was the main crop grown. Thereafter, differing proportions of barley, turnips, oats and beans were grown. Oats were a viable crop even on the heavy clay soils at Stainforth and Fishlake, and beans added nutrients to the soils. In addition, there was a far greater percentage of land left fallow in these two villages compared with the three estate villages. According to Charnock, fallow, wheat and beans were customary modes of cropping on the poorer soils in the West Riding.<sup>125</sup> This suggests that geology was of key importance to the crops grown in these two multi-freeholder villages. In fact, from the analysis of crops grown in the villages studied it is evident that despite market trends and the application of new agricultural practices, which could transcend both landownership and land type, there were still differences in the proportion of crops grown in the six villages that were predominantly still due to geology.

Similarly there were variations in the livestock of the six villages studied in this thesis, as depicted in table 2.8. Charnock argued that the West Riding was not particularly notable for its cattle, citing the East and North Ridings as being more attentive to the stock and breed of cattle.<sup>126</sup> Nevertheless, the 1866 agricultural returns demonstrate that dairy, rearing and fattening were all taking place in the six villages to some extent. Dairy farming was evidently more prevalent in Fishlake than the other villages on account of the number of milk cows returned. Similarly there were more cattle, both under two years and older than two years, and pigs in this village than compared with the others. The village with the next largest proportion of cattle was Rossington, which also had some milk cows. In addition to the statistical evidence of the 1866 livestock returns, the *Archbishop Thomson's Visitation Returns for the Diocese of York, 1865* cited feeding of cattle at Rossington as

<sup>125</sup> Charnock, 'On the Farming of the West Riding of Yorkshire', p. 299.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.

inhibiting attendance of agricultural labourers at church.<sup>127</sup> Moreover, reports of the Doncaster Agricultural Society in local newspapers provide evidence of the attention to cattle breeds at Rossington. The *Doncaster Gazette* noted that James Brown, landowner of Rossington, was amongst the principal breeders exhibiting at the Doncaster Agricultural Show and won a prize of ten pounds in the category for best 'Alderney, Jersey or Guernsey cows or heifers in calf or milk'.<sup>128</sup>

Charnock argued that more attention had been given to the breed of sheep than cattle in the West Riding.<sup>129</sup> Sheep certainly featured predominantly in all six villages, although an exceptionally large quantity of sheep of one year and older were recorded at Rossington. In 1866, a total of 1260 sheep one year or older and 315 sheep under one year were recorded for Rossington.<sup>130</sup> Again, the *1865 Visitation Returns* suggest that the time devoted to attending sheep on the estate was responsible for so few agricultural labourers attending church.<sup>131</sup> The prevalence of sheep at Rossington was again a result of geology. As James Caird observed with regards the sandy land in the Doncaster district, of which Rossington was a part of, 'the land is considerably lighter, and there sheep husbandry is more exclusively followed'.<sup>132</sup> Sheep were often grazed on the lighter sandy soils in conjunction with arable farming.<sup>133</sup> As with crops grown, patterns of livestock were specific to both the Doncaster district and the geology of villages, as well as responding to changing market demand and patterns of consumption. The inclusion of crops and livestock in a framework for the study of villages is therefore crucial to understanding patterns of agriculture in the mid nineteenth century.

<sup>127</sup> E. Royle and R.M. Lawson (eds), *Archbishop Thomson's Visitation Returns for the Diocese of York, 1865* (York, 2006), p. 356.

<sup>128</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 27 June 1873, p. 8.

<sup>129</sup> Charnock, 'On the Farming of the West Riding of Yorkshire', p. 300.

<sup>130</sup> The National Archives, MAF 68/81, *The Agricultural Returns (livestock) for the West Riding of Yorkshire (1866)*.

<sup>131</sup> Royle and Lawson [eds], *Archbishop Thomson's Visitation*, p. 356.

<sup>132</sup> Caird, *English Agriculture*, p. 294.

<sup>133</sup> Brassley, 'Arable Systems' in Collins (ed), *Agrarian History*, p. 463; B.A. Holderness, 'Intensive Livestock Keeping' in Collins (ed), *Agrarian History*, p. 484.



Table 2.8: Number of Livestock in the Six Villages in 1866

	<i>Sprotbrough</i>	<i>Warmsworth</i>	<i>Rossington</i>	<i>Fishlake</i>		<i>Braithwell</i>
<i>Milk Cows</i>	35	44	58	136	72	58
<i>Other Cattle - 2 years and older</i>	25	20	71	143	57	24
<i>Other Cattle - under 2 years</i>	46	57	104	186	53	85
<i>Sheep - 1 year and older</i>	801	289	1260	274	155	498
<i>Sheep - under 1 year old</i>	243	106	315	541	56	237
<i>Pigs</i>	143	84	170	348	114	151

**Source:** The National Archives, MAF 68/81, *The Agricultural Returns (livestock) for the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1866*

Ultimately, the sharp dichotomy of the Mills model is unable to address the unique nature of agriculture in the six villages, and how this changed between 1837 and 1877. This is largely the result of relying upon concentrated landownership to categorise villages and their characteristics, which in turn affects Mills' causal argument. Having established the characteristics of agriculture in the six villages, the causal role of landownership is subsequently evaluated.

## **Causal Explanations of Agricultural Characteristics**

### **Landownership and Agricultural Management**

During the mid nineteenth century, expectations were placed upon landowners to invest in agriculture. Agricultural writers increasingly emphasised the responsibility of large landowners to efficiently manage the agricultural land they owned in the interests of the country as a whole. Caird argued that landowners were capitalists, and therefore 'in nearly all permanent improvements arising from the progress of agriculture he is expected to share the cost. And he is necessarily concerned in the general prosperity and good management of his estate'.<sup>134</sup> According to Caird, landlords required both sufficient wealth and knowledge in order to fulfill their expected roles. In other words, he believed that only through an awareness of what was required, could 'the best and most economical mode of carrying that into effect' be employed.<sup>135</sup> The *Doncaster Chronicle* also claimed that the responsibility of landowners extended to patronage of agricultural associations, in order to advance agriculture in the districts where they owned land.<sup>136</sup> Landowners were expected to be sufficiently engaged with agricultural matters to know when to invest and improve, and also to lead by example and encourage farmers to do the same.

This view was perpetuated in the Mills model. Mills argued that the concentration of landownership was the most important factor in the management of agricultural land, and that consequently the classificatory differences in agriculture between villages were directly attributable to landownership.<sup>137</sup> G.E. Mingay similarly argued that, 'the most obvious of landowner influence lay in the sphere of agriculture' because of landowners' 'near monopoly of farmland'.<sup>138</sup> Subsequent historical analysis has continued to identify links between large and

<sup>134</sup>J. Caird, *The Landed Interest and the Supply of Food* (London, 1878), pp. 57-59.

<sup>135</sup>Caird, *English Agriculture*, pp. 145, 222, 488-497.

<sup>136</sup>*Doncaster Chronicle*, 1 October 1847, p. 8.

<sup>137</sup>Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, pp. 29, 79, 117.

<sup>138</sup>Mingay, *Land and Society*, pp. 34-36.

wealthy landowners and investment in agriculture.<sup>139</sup> Increasingly the disparity in theory and practice has also been acknowledged. According to Beckett, agricultural estates were businesses, and 'their efficiency and profitability depended on good management'.<sup>140</sup> Not all estates were well managed, and some landowners therefore failed in their perceived duty. <sup>141</sup> Beckett argued that whilst land conferred responsibility and opportunity on landowners to invest in and improve agriculture, they did not always have the inclination or ability to meet these expectations.<sup>142</sup> This had been the experience of Caird during the mid nineteenth century, citing regional examples of the apathy of landlords to agricultural management and improvement.<sup>143</sup> In addition, Caird argued that residency affected the ability of landowners to fulfill the expectations placed upon them. For example, he found that in Warwickshire resident landlords equated to order and neatness in the agricultural infrastructure.<sup>144</sup> Evidence from the villages and landowners studied in this thesis demonstrates that both the extent to which landownership was responsible for patterns of agriculture, and the way in which landowners executed the management of their agricultural estates varied.

At Rossington, the agricultural management strategies of the landowners were linked to their wealth. This applied to both Doncaster Corporation who owned the Rossington estate up until 1838, and James Brown who purchased the estate in 1838. Doncaster Corporation's ambitious agricultural visions, both for the town and the estates they owned, necessitated large-scale capital investment. At Rossington, this manifested itself in the construction of well-designed and well-equipped farms. The size and design of these farms were paramount in James

<sup>139</sup>}.V. Beckett, 'Agricultural Landownership and Estate Management', in Collins (ed) *Agrarian History*, p. 729; F.M.L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1963), p. 266.

<sup>140</sup> Beckett, 'Agricultural Landownership and Estate Management', p. 730.

<sup>141</sup> Chambers & Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution*, p. 161; Beckett, 'Agricultural Landownership and Estate Management', p. 734.

<sup>142</sup> Beckett, 'Agricultural Landownership and Estate Management', p. 730.

<sup>143</sup> Caird, *English Agriculture*, p. 145.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., p. 222.

Brown's decision to purchase the Rossington estate in 1838. Brown used his industrial wealth in order to buy into an agricultural ideal, that of model farms and 'high farming'.

Even though it would be another twenty-five years before J.B. Denton's *Farm Homesteads of England* drew parallels between agriculture and industry, and argued that suitable farm buildings were as important for efficient agriculture as good factories and workshops were for industry, it is significant that James Brown chose to purchase an estate with new model farms on it.<sup>145</sup> No doubt comparisons between agricultural and industrial buildings in achieving efficiency and productivity resonated with the Brown family, and the existence of such farms on the Rossington estate would have appealed to them when they purchased the estate in 1838.<sup>146</sup> The wealth and industrial perspectives of the Browns were therefore influential in how they managed agriculture.

The agricultural management strategies of the other landowners studied also reflected their wealth and experiences, but were very different to those of Brown. William Aldam, who owned part of Warmsworth, was a businessman, politician and landowner, who managed to successfully reconcile these diverse and sometimes competing roles. Aldam used politics to campaign for agricultural change. From 1841 to 1847, Aldam represented the Borough of Leeds as a Liberal MP, and supported the Repeal of the Corn Laws.<sup>147</sup> Traditionally, historians have drawn a division between landowners who favoured protection and industrialists who promoted the repeal.<sup>148</sup> Aldam however represented the diversified interests of landowners that Cheryl Schonhardt-Bailey argued could result in the division between landowners and industrialists, and their

<sup>145</sup>J.B. Denton, *Farm Homesteads of England: A Collection of Plans of English Homesteads Existing in Different Parts of the Country*, (London, 1864), preface.

<sup>146</sup>Wade-Martins, *English Model Farm*, pp. 93-94.

<sup>147</sup>D.G. Paz, 'William Aldam, Backbench MP for Leeds 1841-1847: National Issues Versus Local Interests', *Publications of the Thoresby Society, Miscellany, Second Series, volume 8* (1998), p. 28; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/P/1, *Leeds Parliamentary Election Handbills and Other Publicity*, 1841; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/P/10, *Letters*, 1841; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/P/5, *Petition to W. Aldam (Leeds) Opposing the Corn Laws*, 1843.

<sup>148</sup>Mingay, *Land and Society*, pp. 48, 63.

attitudes to the repeal, being blurred. During this period, Aldam still had business interests in Leeds but had yet to inherit land from his father. Nevertheless, his ancestral connections with landed estates in the Doncaster area appear to have made him responsive to the needs of agriculture. In 1841, he wrote and delivered a speech in which he argued that 'a great commercial nation must be great in agriculture - the manufactures cannot be prosperous without agriculture being so too'.<sup>149</sup> Aldam continued to use his speeches to argue that free trade was of equal benefit to industry and agriculture, both of which were crucial to the success of the nation.<sup>150</sup> In politics, Aldam used personal experience to direct his actions, with the intention of reconciling his own interests and those of the electorate and his father's tenants.

As landowner, Aldam also used his direct experience to guide agricultural management strategies at Warmsworth. Alongside appointments for business meetings and the quarter sessions, Aldam made numerous references to Warmsworth and agriculture in his personal diaries kept between 1848 and 1890. In some instances his entries amounted to little more than mere observational comments regarding agricultural practices. For example, in February 1849 he wrote that he 'found them dibbling beans in Warmsworth Field'.<sup>151</sup> This is perhaps not the most illuminating of diary entries, but it is significant in that Aldam was sufficiently interested in such matters to keep a record of them.

Other diary entries demonstrate his personal interest in agriculture, as well as his direct involvement. Aldam often commented on the state of crops and the commencement and progression of the harvest.<sup>152</sup> On some occasions, he made reference to his personal visits into the fields

<sup>149</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/P/16, *Draft Speech on the Corn Laws*, 1841; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/P/19, *Speech delivered in Leeds*, 1841.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*) Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/P/25-26, *Speeches delivered by Aldam*, 1843.

<sup>151</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/2, *Diary of William Aldam*, Wednesday 14 February 1849.

<sup>152</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/1, *Diary of William Aldam*, 19 June and 5 August 1848.

to examine the crops and the stages each of these crops had reached, with special reference to wheat, turnips, swede, beans and mangolds.<sup>153</sup> The brevity of entries is often frustratingly tantalising, such as in December 1855 when he mentioned meeting with a machine maker and registering his interest in threshing machines, yet made no record of the outcome or any decision to invest in new machinery.<sup>154</sup> He did however specifically state in the back of his 1858 diary that he had become better acquainted with his properties on the Warmsworth estate during that year.<sup>155</sup> Then in 1861, he noted that land exchanges were taking place at Warmsworth and that he was regularly inspecting the farm properties as a result.<sup>156</sup>

Aldam also kept detailed notebooks and farm memoranda books, which similarly conveyed his interest and direct involvement with agricultural matters. The notes made were not always place specific, or more frequently referred to Frickley and Clayton. Nevertheless, Aldam's references to Warmsworth included meeting with tenants and prospective tenants, the crops being grown and state of the fields, the maintenance and improvements carried out including fencing, drainage, painting and stable accommodation, and even the division of cattle to avoid infection of cattle plague.<sup>157</sup> He also used these books to record the occasions when he inspected farm buildings and had made necessary repairs and improvements.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 June, 5 August, 20 November 1848; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/2, *Diary of William Aldam*, June-October 1849; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/3, *Diary of William Aldam*, June to August 1850; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/5, *Diary of William Aldam*, 12 April 1853.

<sup>154</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/7, *Diary of William Aldam*, 19 December 1855.

<sup>155</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/10, *Diary of William Aldam*, 1858.

<sup>156</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/13, *Diary of William Aldam*, 1861.

<sup>157</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/2, *Diary of William Aldam*, 14 December 1849; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/6, *Diary of William Aldam*, 4 February 1854; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/E7/5, *Farm Memoranda and Cattle Book*, 1864-1883, pp. 1-3; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/E5/4, *Notebook of William Aldam*, pp. 15 & 20; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/E6/1, *Rental Book*, 1860, pp. 63-65.

<sup>158</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/7, *Diary of William Aldam*, 12 June, 27 June, 22 August 1855.

Another recurring theme in the diaries and notebooks was that of drainage. In June 1848, he made frequent references to the heavy rain in the Doncaster district, and commented on the devastating effects of such heavy rain including many fields at Warmsworth and Frickley being under water.<sup>159</sup> Thereafter, one of Aldam's primary objectives was to rectify the problem and initiate a drainage scheme at Warmsworth. He recorded in his diary that he had consulted the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England* (hereafter *JRASE*) for articles on drainage, and commented that he made notes from two articles about the relative absorbent properties of soil and drawn some drainage plans.<sup>160</sup> The *JRASE* published a number of articles on drainage during the mid nineteenth century, due to the importance assigned to the process in agricultural improvements.<sup>161</sup> He also detailed the time spent calculating the cost of draining several fields, drawing up plans and laying out drainage.<sup>162</sup> On 30 September 1849 Aldam recorded that fifteen men were employed constantly in drainage, and again in December that nearly twenty men had been draining the land.<sup>163</sup> Throughout the 1850s and into the 1860s, more entries recorded work on drainage at Warmsworth or on the other estates where he owned land.<sup>164</sup> What is lacking from both the diaries and notebooks is any sense of outcome. Aldam provides no evidence of whether the drainage schemes have been completed, the expenditure incurred or the success of any work undertaken. Nevertheless, all the entries relating to farming

<sup>159</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/1, *Diary of William Aldam*, 17 June 1848.

<sup>160</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/1, *Diary of William Aldam*, 16 and 17 October 1848; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/2, *Diary of William Aldam*, 13 February 1849, 23 May 1849, 28 May 1849, November and December 1849; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/43, *Diary of William Aldam*, August 1850.

<sup>161</sup>J. Parkes, 'On the Quantity of Rain-water and its Discharge by Drains', *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, Vol. 5, 1845, pp. 119-158; J. Parkes, 'On Reducing the Permanent Cost of Drainage', *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, Vol. 6, 1845, pp. 125-9; J. Parkes, 'On Draining', *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, Vol. 7, 1846, pp. 249-72.

<sup>162</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/1, *Diary of William Aldam*, 16 and 17 October 1848; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/2, *Diary of William Aldam*, 13 February 1849, 23 May 1849, 28 May 1849, November and December 1849; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/43, *Diary of William Aldam*, August 1850.

<sup>163</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/2, *Diary of William Aldam*, 30 September 1849

<sup>164</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/5, *Diary of William Aldam*, April and May 1853; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/14, *Diary of William Aldam*, February 1862.

suggest that direct observation and practical experience, combined with diligence underpinned his agricultural management at Warmsworth and on the other Doncaster estates where he owned land.

Sir Joseph William Copley of Sprotbrough and William Battie-Wrightson of Warmsworth were further removed from the day-to-day management of agricultural estates by employing land agents. Land agents were increasingly employed on landed estates during the nineteenth century, and came to occupy a pivotal position in the agricultural management strategies adopted by landowners.<sup>165</sup> Yet, of the landowners studied, only Copley and Battie-Wrightson employed a land agent. Although Copley was a resident landowner, he was frequently absent from Sprotbrough due to his lifestyle and consequently relied upon a land agent to oversee the estate. Battie-Wrightson on the other hand was an absentee landowner, who combined ownership of agricultural estates with industry, business and politics. He employed land agents and bailiffs on estates and farms he owned elsewhere in the country as well as at Warmsworth.<sup>166</sup> Whilst the exact circumstances varied, the objectives of these two landowners therefore appear to have been similar. They both wanted someone to oversee the day-to-day management of their agricultural estates, rather than to facilitate large-scale improvements.

The relative success of employing a land agent as an agricultural management strategy during the mid nineteenth century was increasingly measured against their professional status and how much training they had received.<sup>167</sup> Caird argued that 'the selection of a properly qualified land agent or steward is, on every large estate, a matter of utmost importance'.<sup>168</sup> A great deal of contemporary literature

<sup>165</sup> Beckett, 'Agricultural Landownership and Estate Management', p. 730.

<sup>166</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E 15/97-112, *Mickley Rental and Accounts of Agents nos. 33-106*, May 1837 to November 1876; Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E 14/16, *Rentals for County Durham Estates*, 1831-1849; Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E 14/87-88, *Miscellaneous Letters on Estate Business for Durham and North Yorkshire*, 1828-1878.

<sup>167</sup> Beckett, 'Agricultural Landownership and Estate Management', pp. 731-2.

<sup>168</sup> Caird, *English Agriculture*, p. 493.



advocated the benefits of employing a professional and qualified land agent.<sup>169</sup> Furthermore, the work of S.A. Webster has recently demonstrated the far-reaching effects of employing a professional land agent during the mid nineteenth century.<sup>170</sup> Failure to employ a professional, qualified land agent was criticised by Caird, especially if recourse to a tenant farmer to oversee an estate was made.<sup>171</sup>

Nevertheless, the employment of a tenant farmer as land agent was in fact common on estates between one thousand and three thousand acres.<sup>172</sup> The Copley estate at Sprotbrough was 2,881 acres and Battle-Wrightson's estate at Warmsworth was only 800 acres.<sup>173</sup> Therefore, it is unsurprising that the land agent employed by both landowners was a tenant farmer. Moreover, both landowners employed the same man. Thomas Wood was a tenant farmer at Lower Sprotbrough from at least 1837, where he occupied and farmed 160 acres of land.<sup>174</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that Wood attended an agricultural training establishment or was qualified in the manner advocated by Caird.<sup>175</sup> In fact, training was still quite rare at this date and many land agents were not properly qualified.<sup>176</sup> The employment of a tenant farmer, such as Thomas Wood, on these smaller estates did however offer particular advantages to the landowners.

<sup>169</sup> Beckett, 'Agricultural Landownership and Estate Management', pp. 733.

<sup>170</sup> S.A. Webster, 'Estate Improvement and the Professionalisation of Land Agents on the Egremont Estates in Sussex and Yorkshire, 1770-1835', *Rural History*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (April 2007), pp. 47-69; S.A. Webster, *Agents and Professionalism: Improvement on the Egremont Estates c.1770 to c.1860* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Nottingham, 2010), pp. 26-28.

<sup>171</sup> Caird, *English Agriculture 1850-51*, p. 493.

<sup>172</sup> Beckett, 'Agricultural Landownership and Estate Management', pp. 732-733.

<sup>173</sup> Doncaster Archives, P25/9/B1, *Sprotbrough Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1847; Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E11/41-42, *Warmsworth Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1841; White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, Vol. 2, pp. 206, 213.

<sup>174</sup> White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, Vol. 2, p. 207; Doncaster Archives, P25/9/B1, *Sprotbrough Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1847; TNA, HO107/2346, *CEB Sprotbrough 1851*; TNA, RG9/3516, *CEB Sprotbrough 1861*.

<sup>175</sup> No admission lists for students to the Agricultural College at Cirencester survive prior to 1880, but Thomas Wood does not appear on the printed student registers 1844-1897 or the handwritten student lists from 1848. Royal Agricultural College Archives, Cirencester, RAC/16/27/1, *Student Register*, 1863-1883; RAC/16/004/2, *Class Lists and Prize Lists*, 1859-1870.

<sup>176</sup> B. English, 'Patterns of Estate Management in East Yorkshire c.1840 to c.1880', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (1984), p. 43.

Wood successfully combined practical farming with day-to-day management and accounting duties that he performed on behalf of the two landowners. He was first listed as the land agent at Sprotbrough from 1852, although it is not evident exactly when he commenced his duties as land agent for Copley.<sup>177</sup> Concurrently he lived and worked as a farmer on the Sprotbrough estate. Wood had the credentials to enable him to be both a good farmer and land agent. He successfully obtained a game certificate for Sprotbrough in 1838 at a cost of £3 13s 6d.<sup>178</sup> He was also a leading member of the Sprotbrough Farmers' Club, and a successful agriculturalist. In 1845 the *Doncaster Chronicle* reported that Wood had grown a large white globe turnip, which weighed twelve pounds and had a circumference of thirty-one inches.<sup>179</sup> Whilst there were increasing concerns in the mid nineteenth century that large specimens were not actually good quality produce, Wood sought to maintain high standards.<sup>180</sup> Wood had a vested interest in the success of farming at Sprotbrough, and used his knowledge and practical experience to inform meetings of the Sprotbrough Farmers' Club. For example, Wood was able to explain the method of cultivation used to grow the large turnip to make a positive contribution to the club's meeting about the best cultivation of turnips for magensian limestone soils.<sup>181</sup> Consequently, Wood's understanding of the practicalities of local farming benefitted other local farmers. Wood's suitability to oversee the Sprotbrough estate equated to his practical experience and achievements of farming on the estate, and his ability to convey his knowledge and skills to others.

The ways in which Wood combined his duty as land agent with practical farming had additional benefits for the landowner. His affinity with the land extended to an affinity with his fellow farmers on the estate. Consequently Wood could effectively enact his duties as land agent. As

<sup>177</sup> W. White, *Gazetteer and General Directory of Sheffield, 1852* (Sheffield, 1852), p. 580.

<sup>178</sup> *The York Herald and General Advertiser*, 13 October 1838, p. 1.

<sup>179</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 12 September 1845, p. 5.

<sup>180</sup> Goddard, 'Agricultural Societies', p. 253.

<sup>181</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 1 February 1850, p. 3.

the *Doncaster Gazette* reported in 1866, Wood showed both 'kind feeling' towards his neighbours and success in fulfilling the wishes of Sir J.W. Copley through his 'praise worthy endeavours'.<sup>182</sup> This was particularly important from a practical and economic perspective, as one of Wood's duties was to ensure that the tenant farmers at Sprotbrough paid their rent regularly. In order to facilitate this process, a large land agent's house was constructed in the heart of village of Sprotbrough.<sup>183</sup> Having previously resided on a farm on the periphery of the estate, Wood was now resident in the main street of the village. The property was the visual embodiment of the role of the land agent. As depicted in plate 2.2, the land agent's house was large with architectural detailing that distinguished it from other properties on the main street of Sprotbrough. The addition of a room to accommodate tenants on rent day was testimony to the way in which the role of the land agent at Sprotbrough had been physically and socially integrated into the village. Contrary to Caird's claims, Thomas Wood provides evidence that a tenant farmer could be an effective land agent on a smaller estate. Furthermore, the measure of success of land agents in this context was their ability to ensure the efficiency of farms on the estate and the cohesiveness of the tenant farmers, rather than large scale, capital-intensive improvements on the estate.

<sup>182</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 23 November 1866, p. 5.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

## Plate 2.2: The Land Agent's House, Sprotbrough

In his capacity as land agent for Battie-Wrightson on the Warmsworth estate he kept cashbooks on behalf of the landowner, which provide further evidence of the efficiency and capability of a tenant farmer to be land agent on a relatively small estate.<sup>184</sup> The entries evidence the maintenance and repairs to buildings and boundaries carried out at Warmsworth, along with hedging and ditching, drainage, and investment in seeds and turnips, livestock and a new weighing machine. In comparison with the large-scale capital investment in the agricultural infrastructure at Rossington these were quite modest improvements, but were nonetheless important to the efficiency and improvement of agriculture on the estate. The financial acumen and administrative abilities of Wood are demonstrated by the way in which these cash

<sup>184</sup>Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/A/36, *Copy Cash Book of Thomas Wood*, January 1845-December 1857; Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E3/14, *Cash Book of Thomas Wood*, February 1839-June 1847; Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E3/15, *Cash Book of Thomas Wood*, January 1865-December 1872.

books for the period between 1837 and 1872 consistently balanced the incoming and outgoing cash. He adopted an organised system of accounting, entering incoming and outgoing expenditure on separate but adjacent pages. The importance of careful accounting procedures was often emphasised in relation to large estates, but were in practice important on a smaller scale too.<sup>185</sup>

The work of Thomas Wood demonstrates that the employment of a tenant farmer to oversee an agricultural estate could be very successful. In spite of his lack of formal training in respect of farm management practices, Wood demonstrated his competency as a land agent on two estates for two landowners. Moreover, efficient management did not equate to capital-intensive practices. Both Copley and Battie-Wrightson achieved efficiency through careful management and the application of local knowledge and experience. This more cautionary approach met the requirements of the landowners and, as demonstrated here, was effective. In this respect a local tenant farmer, with practical experience and familiarity of the land and other farmers, was in fact more appropriate in this context than the employment of a professional land agent. The different approaches to agricultural management adopted by the four landowners in the three estate villages affect the causal relationship between landownership and agriculture, and reflect the importance of acknowledging differentiation in landownership. An overriding problem with Mills' causal argument is that it embodies an ideal or expectation rather than a definitive reality. Moreover, it underestimates the causal role of the farmer in mid nineteenth century agriculture.

### **The Farmer**

All the farmers in the three estate villages were tenants of their respective landlords. The ability, inclination and wealth of all farmers affected the productivity of agricultural land. Consequently from a

<sup>185</sup> Beckett, 'Agricultural Landownership and Estate Management', p. 732.

landowner's point of view, the careful selection of tenants was crucial to the success of agriculture on an estate. Criteria for selecting good tenants included having sufficient capital, being reliable and efficient, and being responsible for finding suitable stock.<sup>186</sup> According to Mills 'tenant farmers with plenty of capital were selected to keep the land in good heart through rotations and other practices, such as not selling manure off the farm, that were laid down in the agreements'.<sup>187</sup> In this respect, the tenant farmer was perceived as both directly affecting the productivity of the agricultural land, and being an extension of the landowners' causal role.

Judiciously worded tenancy agreements and application books kept on behalf of Battie-Wrightson demonstrate the way in which he sought to guarantee the suitability of his tenants and used tenancy agreements to ensure the upkeep and careful management of individual farms. For example, the tenancy agreement drawn up for John Wood in January 1837 stated that Wood 'will at his own expense keep all these demised premises and all the fences ditches and gates belonging thereto in good and sufficient honourable repair order and condition and also shall and will manage and cultivate all the lands according to the best course of husbandry and also shall and will have and keep 40 acres of the said lands in grass for meadows and pasture at all times'.<sup>188</sup> This is indicative of best practice, as the tenancy agreement addressed maintenance of the farm and farming techniques in relation to the capital and ability of the tenant. In addition, this 125 acre farm was leased for an annual rent of £194, which was to be reviewed and renewed annually in accordance with the landowner and tenant agreeing. For Battie-Wrightson's North Yorkshire estates, application books for tenancies contain detailed information about prospective tenants, including land they had previously farmed, marital status, age, previous employment

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 741.

<sup>187</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 29.

<sup>188</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E 11/109, *Tenancy Agreement between Battie-Wrightson and John Wood*, 24 January 1837.

and even information about their families.<sup>189</sup> This was indicative of Battie-Wrightson's careful selection processes applied across all his estates. Prior to selecting tenants to occupy farms on his estates, the landowner and land agent compiled these comprehensive records that not only identified their ability to farm, but also provided psychological profiles determining whether someone was a 'suitable' tenant for the estate. The identity of farmers on the Warmsworth estate was therefore the result of careful selection on the part of the landowner and land agent.

Evidence of continuity amongst farmers in the six villages was indicative of the value of 'good' tenants. Beckett argued that once landowners had secured what they perceived to be a good tenant they were reluctant to lose them.<sup>190</sup> David Stead identified a number of economic and social motivations for this anxiety to retain existing tenant farmers.<sup>191</sup> As Stead argued, 'Sitting tenants possessed established business contacts and specialist knowledge of the idiosyncrasies of the farm's soil'.<sup>192</sup> In addition to the ability to farm the land, change could affect the electoral support for landowners and their candidates.<sup>193</sup> The turnover of tenants could therefore have social, political and economic implications for the landowner and their estate.

Landowners often offered incentives to retain their tenants, in order to limit disruption on the estate. Rent abatements were particularly used in times of crisis. Sir J.W. Copley at Sprotbrough offered 15 per cent rent abatements in 1846, when 10 per cent was the norm in England, suggesting the value he assigned to his existing tenants and their continuity.<sup>194</sup> In addition, landowners used the annual rent dinner to cultivate loyalty amongst their tenants. Entries in Aldam's diaries

<sup>189</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E14/91 *Application Book for Farm Tenancies, 1874-1879*.

<sup>190</sup> Beckett, 'Agricultural Landownership and Management', p. 742.

<sup>191</sup> D.R. Stead, 'The Mobility of English Tenant Farmers, c. 1700-1850', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (2003), p. 174.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 22 May 1846, p. 3; Caird, *English Agriculture*, p. 295.

demonstrate the importance of the rent dinner to foster loyalty, as he was anxious to attend and meet with his tenants.<sup>195</sup> Length of lease was another, often controversial, way in which to facilitate continuity and investment. Long leases were argued either to give farmers the security required to invest in long term improvements or to hamper progress due to inefficiency and inertia.<sup>196</sup> Caird observed that a system of yearly tenure was prevalent in England, and argued that progress necessitated longer leases whilst strongly criticising the use of local customary practices.<sup>197</sup> Few tenancy agreements and leases survive for the villages studied in this thesis, but those that do indicate that an annual tenure system was indeed in operation. For example, the aforementioned tenancy agreement drawn up between Battie-Wrightson and John Wood for a farm at Warmsworth was to be renewed annually.<sup>198</sup> The agreement indicated that renewal was guaranteed if both parties continued to be in agreement. For landowner and tenant farmer alike this potentially created both security and uncertainty.

Continuity was certainly characteristic of many of the tenant farmers in the three estate villages. The CEBs, in conjunction with estate records where available, have been used to calculate the proportion of tenants who continued to occupy the same farm for certain lengths of time. Between 1837 and 1877, in at least 25 per cent of all instances, the same person or family retained occupancy of their farm at Sprotbrough. At Warmsworth, continuity over the same forty year period was even greater, with at least 50 per cent of people or families continuing to occupy the same farm. Over shorter periods of time, continuity was even greater, with many families remaining on the same farm for at least thirty years. Continuity was particularly applicable to the largest farms on the estates. Notable examples included farms tenanted by the

<sup>195</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/3, *Diary of William Aldam*, 4 February 1850; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/5, *Diary of William Aldam*, 7 February 1853; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/D1/6, *Diary of William Aldam*, 3 February 1854.

<sup>196</sup> G.E. Mingay, 'The Farmer' in Collins (ed), *Agrarian History*, p. 793.

<sup>197</sup> Caird, *English Agriculture*, pp. 504-7, 525.

<sup>198</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E11/109, *Tenancy Agreement between Battie-Wrightson and John Wood*, 24 January 1837.



Innocents, Jennings, Walkers and Wainwrights at Rossington, by the Crawshaws and Walkers at Warmsworth, and by Hickman and Wood at Sprotbrough. These farms were all between 140 and 350 acres in size. This continuity of tenant farmers in the three estate villages was indicative of the generally slow turnover of farmers in England during the mid nineteenth century, which was identified by Stead. Stead used estate rentals and land tax returns to identify the continuity of farmers in the South and the Midlands, and argued that the slow turnover in these two areas of England would be reflected elsewhere in England.<sup>199</sup>

Continuity was facilitated through the practice of tenant farms transferring to a family member, which was not an uncommon practice in England during the mid nineteenth century, and potentially provided security to tenants and landowners alike. In the three estate villages, 18.8 per cent of all farms were transferred to other family members during this period. Predominantly, sons and other male relatives were the recipients of these tenancies. Yet female relatives also continued to occupy and run farms in the estate villages of Rossington and Warmsworth. The number of female farmers in England and Wales in the mid nineteenth was in fact small, and the vast majority were widows. This applied to the Elizabeth Innocent and Elizabeth Crawshaw, who took over the tenanted farms after their husbands had died. Elizabeth Innocent occupied the 260 acre farm on the Rossington estate in 1841 and 1851. During this period her son, George, lived with her and was described as an agricultural labourer. In addition, four male farm servants were recorded as living-in on the CEBs. After her death, her son George took over the farm. Similarly at Warmsworth in 1837 and 1841, Elizabeth Crawshaw occupied and ran the 200 acres farm that her husband had done previously, before her son, Edward took over the farm between at least 1851 and 1877. Again, Edward had been resident on the farm prior to taking it over. From a contemporary point of view, it

<sup>199</sup> Stead, 'The Mobility of English Tenant Farmers', p. 188.

was seen as particularly desirable for an adult son to be present on female-headed farms.

Continuity of farms through female relatives can be particularly difficult to interpret. During the nineteenth century, women were to some extent inhibited from being farmers as the farming institutions were dominated by men and middle class women were withdrawing into the domestic sphere.<sup>200</sup> Widows were therefore amongst the most numerous group of females to become farmers. Nicola Verdon's work on Louise Cresswell has demonstrated the strength of opposition some widows faced to remaining on the farm.<sup>201</sup> Verdon had the advantage that Cresswell had written an account of her experiences: *Eighteen Years on the Sandringham Estate*. Cresswell was however a very different woman to those cited in Rossington and Warmsworth. Whereas Cresswell was a young woman farming a very large acreage without the assistance of a male relative, both Innocent and Crawshaw were older, had their sons living and working on the farm, and occupied less than 300 acres. Innocent and Crawshaw appear to have been amongst the many widows who were tolerated as taking over farms. As Verdon argued, permitting a widow to fulfil this role was seen as both convenient and temporary to ensure continuity of family occupancy.<sup>202</sup> The aforementioned tenancy application books that detailed the suitability of family members as well as prospective tenants are testimony to the fact that women and children were an integral part of the farm economy, and may one day have greater responsibility for the running of the farm.

The extent to which Innocent and Crawshaw relied on advisors or their male relatives is not clear, but as the 1861 Census Report stated women could 'often display remarkable talent in the management of

<sup>200</sup> P. Horn, *Victorian Countrywomen* (London, 1990), pp. 124, 218.

<sup>201</sup> N. Verdon, 'The "lady farmer": gender, widowhood and farming in Victorian England' (forthcoming) in R. Hoyle (ed), *The Farmer in England, 1650-1980* (Ashgate, 2013)

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

large establishments'.<sup>203</sup> Women tenanted the largest farm at Warmsworth in 1851 and 1861. According to the 1851 CEB, the 348 acre Walker farm was occupied by executors, although headed by Margaret Walker, the widowed mother of the late occupant, Edward. As Margaret was 71 years of age, it is reasonable to assume that she relied on advisors and family members, as well as paid employees. By 1861, a younger female relative occupied 200 acres of land and employed five men and two boys. In the absence of male relatives, these women used paid employees and presumably networks established within the farming community. Without further evidence we cannot fully understand the position of these women as farmers, but the way in which they took over the farms previously tenanted by their husbands suggests considerable prior involvement in the running and management of the farms. As Verdon argued, farmers' wives were 'a remarkably diverse group in rural society', many of who were active participants in the farm economy performing a range of tasks.<sup>204</sup> In addition, whilst some women farmed independently of male relatives, the evidence from the villages studied suggests that the widow as tenant farmer was indeed a transitory role that ensured the farm remained occupied by the same family until a son was able to take over.

Turnover of tenants in the six villages did vary. Stead suggested a link between turnover and the size of farm, with the former more frequent when the latter was smaller.<sup>205</sup> This applied to some but not all of the small farms in the three estate villages studied. Another explanation for greater turnover was local change, including a new landowner taking over an estate.<sup>206</sup> By comparing the 1841 CEBs with a 1826 survey of the estate, the extent of turnover on the Rossington estate as a result of James Brown purchasing it can partially be discerned. Seven out of

<sup>203</sup> pp 1863, LI11, *Census of England and Wales, 1861*, p. 36.

<sup>204</sup> N. Verdon, "...subjects deserving of the highest praise": Farmers' Wives and the Farm Economy in England, c. 1700-1850', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (2003), pp. 23-39.

<sup>205</sup> Stead, 'The Mobility of English Tenant Farmers', p. 175.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

twelve farms continued to be occupied by the same person. This accords with the findings of Stead, who argued that despite some disruption to tenurial stability, a change of landowner rarely unstabilised the entire tenantry.<sup>207</sup> Stead also highlighted that a problem with a comparison of this nature was that other reasons often explained the turnover, not just the new landowner. He argued that a change of landowner might have hastened turnover, but that it was not generally the cause of substantial changes to the tenantry.<sup>208</sup>

This appears to have been the case at Rossington, particularly as the continuity of tenants bore little relation to the comments made about their farming abilities in 1826 survey.<sup>209</sup> The survey noted the state of management and the abilities of the tenants. It is not surprising that there was continuity amongst tenants such as the Butterills, Piggott, Ellis, Bradford, Innocent and Hudson, whose farms were described as being in a very good state of management. It does perhaps seem more unusual that tenants whose ability or farms were found wanting also continued after Brown purchased the estate, and yet able farmers tenanted well-managed farms did not. It is of course not clear from the survey or the census whether or not improvements had taken place in the meantime. The 1826 survey was conducted at a time when the Corporation were undertaking improvements to the agricultural infrastructure of the estate. As absentee landowners, it appears that the Corporation allowed a number of farms to suffer in terms of the state of buildings and cultivation of the land during the early nineteenth century. It is however reasonable to assume that in addition to rebuilding farms on the estate, the Corporation may have insisted that tenants make notable improvements. The turnover of tenants between 1826 and 1841 may have taken place prior to the sale of the estate in 1838, with farmers leaving Rossington for a number of different reasons. The state of the tenantry and the farms they occupied would have been of

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 186-7.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>209</sup> Doncaster Archives, A B / 7 / 3 / 5, *Survey of Rossington, 1826.*

particular concern in the period leading up to the sale of the estate. The Browns would not have wanted to find new tenants for all the farms at Rossington in 1838.

Through their ability to farm and invest in farming stock, tenant farmers performed a direct causal role in the agriculture of these villages. In addition, to cultivating crops, rearing livestock and investing in farming stock, participation in agricultural societies and farmers' clubs demonstrates the way in which tenant farmers could directly shape agricultural practices. For example, in addition to Thomas Wood (land agent and tenant farmer), Mr Vickers and Mr Flickson, both large tenant farmers on the Sprotbrough estate were members of the Sprotbrough Farmers' Club. Mr Vickers, committee member of the club, was also elected as a member of the Royal Agricultural Society of England in 1849. Mr Flickson used his practical experience to contribute to a discussion on manures conducted by the club. Similarly at Warmsworth and Rossington, the large tenant farmers were engaged in promoting the advancement of agricultural knowledge through practical experience and application, contributing to meetings held by the Doncaster Agricultural Society in Doncaster. Through the membership of and participation in local agricultural societies and clubs, tenant farmers in the three estate villages exhibited very tangible contributions to the agriculture of these villages.

In the three multi-freeholder villages farmers were either tenants or owner-occupiers, occupying farms ranging from a few acres to several hundreds of acres. A few farmers were in fact both owner-occupier and tenant, such as John Bladworth of Stainforth who owned and occupied 93 acres but occupied a total of between 648 acres in 1851 and 772 acres in 1871. Turnover of farmers was far greater in the three multi-freeholder villages than the three estate villages, with notably fewer farms being transferred within families. Many of these farmers occupied very small acreages. Nevertheless farmers, such as Thomas Dyson at Braithweli, who owned and occupied large acreages were often pro-

active agriculturalists who again performed a causal role in local agriculture. Between 1839 and 1846, Dyson sought to represent the farming community of Braithweli at protectionist meetings in Doncaster throughout the campaign to repeal the Corn Laws. He not only attended these meetings, but was also an active participant.<sup>210</sup>

Dyson also provided leadership for stimulating agricultural improvement at Braithweli through his support of the Braithweli Farmers' Club, village ploughing matches and the Cow Club.<sup>211</sup> In 1845, the *Doncaster Chronicle* reported the success of the Braithweli Farmers' Club, and especially the annual ploughing match, and attributed this to their 'active secretary', Mr Dyson, and his 'unwearied exertions' in promoting its success.<sup>212</sup> Dyson was also a member of the Doncaster Agricultural Society and the Doncaster Farmers' Club.<sup>213</sup> He attended and chaired meetings of these organisations and exhibited his produce, much of which was awarded prizes including his Victorian Rhubarb and 'exquisitely flavoured strawberries'.<sup>214</sup> He also strove to grow large but good quality specimens and then share his methods of cultivation. For example, he grew a red globe turnip with a circumference of eighteen inches and weight of six pounds, which he not only exhibited at the Doncaster Horticultural Society, but also used as testimony to the application of different types of manure during a meeting to discuss the best cultivation of turnips.<sup>215</sup> Owner-occupier farmers in multi-freeholder villages could therefore also perform a causal role through their practical experience and contribution to agricultural forums.

<sup>210</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 29 March 1839, p. 4; *Doncaster Gazette*, 13 February 1846, p. 5.

<sup>211</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 24 October 1845, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 16 November 1846, p. 7; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 26 November 1847, p. 7; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 14 November 1856, p. 5.

<sup>212</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 24 October 1845, p. 5.

<sup>213</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 15 November 1844, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 10 October 1845, p. 6; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 16 October 1846, p. 7.

<sup>214</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 15 May 1840, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 10 July 1840, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 6 May 1842, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 8 July 1842, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 30 May 1843, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 24 September 1847, p. 7; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 13 April 1849, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 4 July 1851, p. 5.

<sup>215</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 31 July 1846, p. 5.

The Mills model oversimplifies the causal role of landownership. Landownership did affect the agricultural characteristics of the six villages, but the relationship between landownership and agriculture was more complex than simply the amount of land owned. In addition to the differences between landowners, other human agency was important. Tenant and owner-occupier farmers performed casual roles in the six villages. Agriculture was also affected by geology, topography and climate. Of particular significance to the evaluation of the Mills model is the way in which landownership and agriculture in villages are perceived to be in isolation to external determinants. Yet, inter-relationships existed between the six villages and with the market town of Doncaster that influenced agriculture at village level.

### **Inter-relationships**

The six villages did not operate in vacuums. Important physical and economic inter-relationships existed between villages and between town and country, which had implications for local agriculture. The railways, often cited as reducing village isolation, created new physical inter-relationships between town and country. These were in addition to those inter-relationships established by the country carriers, and the roads, rivers and canals in the area. Moreover, market facilities and agricultural societies and forums facilitated complex inter-relationships between village and between town and country. In spite of these important inter-relationships, the Mills model only accounted for the agricultural characteristics of individual villages. Mills' approach isolated villages from their spatial contexts. Evidence from the Doncaster district demonstrates the importance of understanding the inter-relationships between villages and between town and country, with particular reference to the market town and agricultural societies.

## Market Towns

Agriculture beyond subsistence level depended upon adequate marketing facilities.<sup>216</sup> By the mid nineteenth century, Doncaster was at the heart of the agricultural network that encompassed the six villages. The smaller market towns of Tickhill, Bawtry and Thorne are depicted in fig. 2.4. With the exception of Thorne, these smaller satellite markets had already declined by the mid nineteenth century. For example, the 1822 directory stated that Tickhill market was 'almost disused' and by 1837 it was described as being 'of small importance'.<sup>217</sup> The market town of Doncaster therefore facilitated the supply and demand process from field to consumer for the six villages during the mid nineteenth century. A plethora of improvements to the market facilities at Doncaster were carried out by Doncaster Corporation in the mid nineteenth century. As Louise Miskell argued, large towns were increasingly competitive in agricultural matters.<sup>218</sup> Consequently, as well as addressing the needs of local agriculturalists, many towns were also addressing their own commercial and civic ambitions by investing in architecturally grand yet practical market buildings. It was very much in the interests of both the local farmers and Doncaster Corporation that improvements to Doncaster Market were made in order to compete with other regional markets.

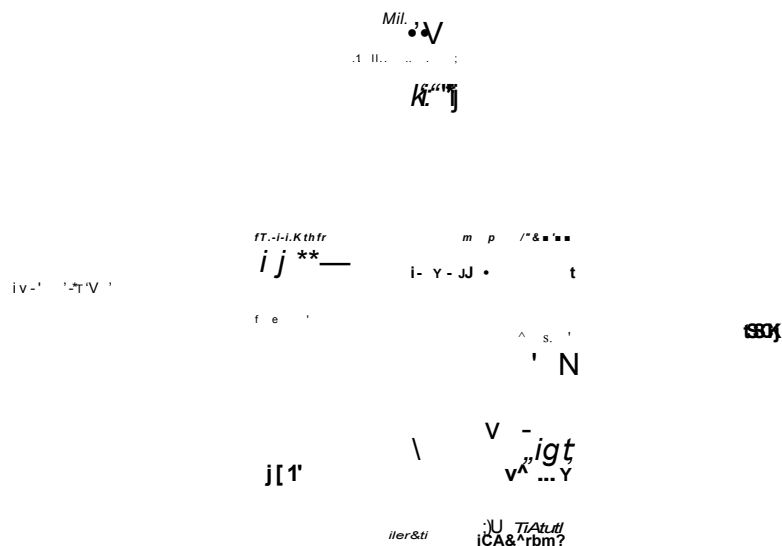
<sup>216</sup> M. Girouard, *The English Town* (London, 1990), pp. 14-16; J Brown, *The English Market Town: A Social and Economic History 1750-1914* (Ramsbury, 1986), pp. 7-9; C.W. Chalklin, 'Country Towns' in Mingay (ed), *The Victorian Countryside*, Vol. 1, pp. 275-287; C. Smith, *The Renaissance of a Nottinghamshire Market Town 1680-1840* (Chesterfield, 2007).

<sup>217</sup> E. Baines, *Directory of Yorkshire*, 1822, Vol. 1 (Leeds, 1822), p. 418; White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, Vol. 2, p. 297.

<sup>218</sup> L. Miskell, 'Putting on a Show† the Royal Agricultural Society of England and the Market Town, c.1840-1876', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (2012), pp. 37-59.



**Figure 2.4: Map Showing the Market Towns in the Doncaster District**



Source: E.R. Kelly, *Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire*, 1893 (London, 1893)

Doncaster Corporation initiated the large-scale clearance of streets and houses in the market place at Doncaster in 1843, in advance of the construction of a covered corn market.<sup>219</sup> As established earlier in this chapter, wheat was one of the main crops grown in the six villages, as well as being extensively grown elsewhere throughout the Doncaster district. Nearby Leeds had had a purpose built corn exchange since 1826, so it was imperative that Doncaster Corporation responded by constructing the covered corn market.<sup>220</sup> The corn market, which was built to the designs of Butterfield (the Borough architect) and opened in October 1844, was reported to have satisfied both the Corporation and the local agriculturalists.<sup>221</sup> Doncaster Corporation Market Committee

<sup>219</sup> Doncaster Archives, AB/2/6/21/4, *Council and Committee Records of Doncaster Corporation, finance committee including markets, 1843-1847*; Doncaster Archives, AB/2/6/21/5, *Council and Committee Records of Doncaster Corporation, finance committee including markets, 1847-1853*.

<sup>220</sup> E. Parsons, *The Civil, Ecclesiastical, Literary, Commercial and Miscellaneous History of Leeds, Halifax, Huddersfield, Bradford, Wakefield, Dewsbury, Otley, and the Manufacturing District of Yorkshire*, Vol. I (Leeds, 1834), p. 147; D. Fraser, *A History of Modern Leeds* (Manchester, 1980), p. 183; S. Wrathmell, *Leeds* (London, 2005), p. 68.

<sup>221</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 18 October 1844, p. 5.

expressed pride in the execution of the plans when they inspected the premises.<sup>222</sup> Both the local and national press reported that 'It has a very imposing appearance; and will be found admirably adapted for the purposes which it is intended, combining ornament with utility'.<sup>223</sup> The new covered corn market therefore fulfilled the civic ambitions of Doncaster Corporation and responded to the needs of the local agriculturalists.

Agriculturalists from the Doncaster area showed their gratitude by holding a dinner in honour of the Mayor and Doncaster Corporation to herald the success of the new corn market. As the *Doncaster Chronicle* reported, such a show of appreciation was testimony to 'the comfort and convenience afforded them by the erection of a new corn exchange'<sup>224</sup> Of particular importance to both buyers and sellers of corn were the three key design elements of space, light and shelter, which were incorporated into the new corn market.<sup>225</sup> Farmers from the six villages subscribed to this dinner and attended the event, and are shown in table 2.9 in relation to the acreage they farmed.<sup>226</sup> They included the aforementioned Thomas Dyson, owner-occupier farmer from Braithweli, and ten other farmers from the three estate villages. With the exception of George Blagden, occupier of the quarry at Warmsworth, the farms they occupied were between 160 and 350 acres. This suggests a link between the size of farm and/or the identity of the farmer on the one hand and participation in this civic occasion. Those farming larger acreages, who were engaged with capitalist farming, therefore relied upon adequate market facilities to maximise their returns. The gratitude of these farmers demonstrates the significance of Doncaster market in stimulating inter-relationships between these villages and farms.

<sup>222</sup> Doncaster Archives, A B /2/6/21/4, *Council and Committee Records of Doncaster Corporation*, finance committee including markets, 1843-1847, 10 June 1844.

<sup>223</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 1 September 1843, p. 5; *The Farmer's Magazine*, vol. 8, second series, July to December 1843, p. 63; *Doncaster Gazette*, 21 June 1844, p. 5.

<sup>224</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 18 October 1844, p. 5.

<sup>225</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 5 May 1844, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 17 May 1844, p. 5.

<sup>226</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 18 October 1844, p. 5.

Table 2.9: Attendance at the Celebratory Dinner to Mark the Opening of the New Covered Corn Market by Farmers from the Six Villages\_\_\_\_\_

farmer (and farm)	village	approximate size of farm in acres
T. Dyson (Manor House)	Braithweli	300
J. Thompson	Braithweli	200
R. Jennings (Shooter's Hill)	Rossington	300
G. Innocent	Rossington	250
W Pigott	Rossington	160
J Walker (Rossington Grange)	Rossington	200
W. Walker (Rossington Bridge)	Rossington	200
E Walker	Warmsworth	348
G Blagden	Warmsworth	50
R. Hickson	Sprotbrough	270
T. Wood	Sprotbrough	160

**Source:** *Doncaster Chronicle*, 18 October 1844, p. 5; *Doncaster Archives*, P25/9/B1, *Sprotbrough Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1847; *Doncaster Archives*, P58/9/B1-2, *Rossington Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1838; *Doncaster Archives*, DD/BW/E11/41-42, *Warmsworth Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1841; *Doncaster Archives*, P71/9/B1-2, *Braithweli Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1840; *TNA*, H0107/2346, *CEB Sprotbrough 1851*; *TNA*, H0107/2346, *CEB Warmsworth 1851*; *TNA*, H0107/2348, *CEB Rossington 1851*; *TNA*, H0107/2346, *CEB Braithweli 1851*; *TNA*, H0107/2349, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1851*

Doncaster Corporation continued to develop the market infrastructure of the town. A few months later, in February 1845, the market committee recommended the removal of the shambles and some houses in order to provide space for a new general market hall.<sup>227</sup> The *Doncaster Gazette* reported that when the new markets were completed they 'will be an honour to the town, not only by their appearance, but by their immense usefulness and accommodation'.<sup>228</sup> The civic ambitions of the Corporation had become increasingly prevalent. The committee were anxious that the new market hall would be aesthetically complementary to the townscape and would be a credit to the Corporation. Accordingly, they inspected several recently erected markets to ascertain the best plans and proceeded with great impetus.<sup>229</sup> Yet in spite of these civic motivations, the outcome was still effective in creating better accommodation for the farmers of the Doncaster district. The reports of the opening of the new general market hall commented on the facilities provided both for buyer and seller, including the new weighing machine.<sup>230</sup> Provision for selling meat and butter in the new market hall also reflected the extent to which livestock and dairy herds were a feature of local agriculture, as demonstrated earlier in the chapter.

The continued importance of both sheep and cattle in the local economy, which is evident in the livestock returns of 1866, motivated the addition of the new wool and cattle markets in 1863.<sup>231</sup> Whilst this was a much more modest affair than the corn exchange and market hall, it was still exceptionally adequate for the purpose it was intended. Covering a space of 1,870 yards and including portable pens, it was

<sup>227</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 28 February 1845, p. 5; Doncaster Archives, A B /2/6/21/4, 17 February 1845, 4 December 1845, 16 January 1846, 10 July 1846, 23 July 1846; Doncaster Archives, DZMD/569, 1847, *Order of Procession for the Laying of the First Stone*, 24 May 1847.

<sup>228</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 2 February 1849, p. 5.

<sup>229</sup> Doncaster Archives, A B /2/6/21/4, *Council and Committee Records of Doncaster Corporation, Finance Committee including Markets*, 1843-1847, 23 June 1845, 28 January 1846.

<sup>230</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 18 May 1849 p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 25 May 1849 p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 1 June 1849 p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 8 June 1849, p. 5.

<sup>231</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 30 January 1863, p. 5.

designed to accommodate large quantities of wool and cattle.<sup>232</sup> It was also partially covered to provide some shelter. On completion, it was reported that the supply of wool was greater than previously and that due to heavy rainfall the advantages of the new structure had been demonstrated.<sup>233</sup> The Mayor once again delivered a speech in which he emphasised both the role of the Corporation in improving the market facilities and that ‘the agriculturalists were great friends of the people of Doncaster’.<sup>234</sup> The trade in wool was extensive, and not limited to local agriculturalists as both the Great Northern and the South Yorkshire railways brought large quantities of wool from other counties into the town.<sup>235</sup> The continued enlargement and improvement of the market facilities in Doncaster therefore benefited the farmers of the six villages, and stimulated inter-relationships that extended beyond the county boundaries, bringing competition as well as additional trade.

The mid nineteenth century improvements to the markets in Doncaster culminated with a new Corn Exchange replacing the original enclosed corn market in 1873 (plate 2.3). Undoubtedly, the new Corn Exchange was symbolic of the civic aspirations of the Corporation, both through its architecture and its ambitious scale.<sup>236</sup> The Mayor delivered a speech in which he expressed his pride in the beauty of the new Corn Exchange he was officially opening.<sup>237</sup> He described it as one of the ‘grandest and most comfortable corn exchanges’ in the country.<sup>238</sup> The new corn exchange was also designed to be more than just a place to sell and buy corn, with space designated for concerts and performances.<sup>239</sup> The local newspapers shared the civic pride of Doncaster Corporation. The *Doncaster Gazette* reported that it was ‘one of the grandest and most

<sup>232</sup>*Doncaster Chronicle*, 30 January 1863, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 29 May 1863, p. 4.

<sup>233</sup>*Doncaster Chronicle*, 5 June 1863, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 12 June 1863, p. 5;

*Doncaster Chronicle*, 26 June 1863, p. 8.

<sup>234</sup>*Doncaster Gazette*, 12 June 1863, p. 5.

<sup>235</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>236</sup>*Doncaster Gazette*, 11 April 1873, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 18 April 1873, p. 8.

<sup>237</sup>*Doncaster Gazette*, 9 May 1873, p. 6.

<sup>238</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>239</sup>*Doncaster Gazette*, 11 April 1873, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 9 May 1873, p. 6; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 9 May 1873, p. 6.

comfortable corn exchanges the country can boast'.<sup>240</sup> Yet the new Corn Exchange still responded to the needs of local agriculture. Once again, the agriculturalists of the Doncaster district held a dinner in honour of the Corporation and this new building.<sup>241</sup> Even though civic ambitions increasingly motivated the Corporation to build grander, more elaborate buildings to enhance the aesthetic appearance of the townscape, they continued to provide positive stimulation of inter-relationships between Doncaster and the six villages.

Plate 2.3: New Corn Exchange, Doncaster, 1873

<sup>240</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 9 May 1873, p. 6.

<sup>241</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 11 April 1873, p. 5.

## **Agricultural Societies and Agricultural Knowledge**

In addition, inter-relationships between these six agricultural villages were facilitated through the advancement and communication of agricultural knowledge. Agricultural societies flourished during the mid nineteenth century in response to the demand for agricultural knowledge, innovation and experimentation in order to inform more efficient agricultural practices.<sup>242</sup> The Board of Agriculture (1793-1822) and the Agricultural Society of England (established 1838 and later granted Royal status) led the institutional promotion of agriculture at a national level.<sup>243</sup> Beneath these were regional and local agricultural societies.<sup>244</sup> Of the six villages studied in this thesis only Sprotbrough and Braithwell had any form of official agricultural organisation, with meetings and shows actually taking place in these villages. Therefore, the agricultural meetings and shows that took place in Doncaster had broad spatial and social implications for the surrounding villages. As Nicholas Goddard argued, agricultural societies based in large towns facilitated the inter-relationship of opinion 'for landowner, occupier and labourer alike'.<sup>245</sup>

As a consequence of the wide-ranging influence such societies could wield, the Copleys of Sprotbrough, the Battie-Wrightsons and Aldams of Warmsworth, and the Browns of Rossington, as well as other local landowners, dominated the committees, membership and meetings of the Yorkshire Agricultural Society (hereafter YAS) and the Doncaster Agricultural Society (hereafter DAS). For example, the president of the DAS was Sir William Bryan Cooke, who owned estates at Wheatley, Bentley and Arksey. Landowners from the estate villages studied in this thesis also occupied prominent positions on the committee. William

<sup>242</sup> N. Goddard, *Harvests of Change: The Royal Agricultural Society of England, 1838-1988* (London, 1988), p. 1; N. Goddard, 'Agricultural Institutions: Societies, Associations and the Press' in E.J.T. Collins (ed), *Agrarian History* Vol. VII 1850-1914 Part II, p. 655.

<sup>243</sup> Goddard, 'Agricultural Societies', in G.E. Mingay (ed), *The Victorian Countryside*, Vol. 1, pp. 245-259; Goddard, *Harvests of Change*, pp. 1, 77; Wade Martins, *Farmers, Landlords and Landscapes*, pp. 13, 88.

<sup>244</sup> Goddard, 'Agricultural Institutions', p. 684.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 686.

Aldam (Warmsworth) was Vice President, Sir Joseph William Copley (Sprotbrough) was a patron, and James Brown (Rossington) was a member of the committee, regularly chaired meetings for the society, and eventually became president of it.<sup>246</sup> In patronising the DAS, these landowners were somewhat socially motivated by the prestige bestowed upon them as a consequence. The committee of the DAS wielded influence and power over the agriculturalists of the local area, taking decisions that affected a large proportion of the population. In this respect, landowners extended their causal role beyond the estate village, using their positions to perpetuate their influence throughout the Doncaster district.

Nevertheless, the objectives of the DAS were wide-ranging and more inclusive than the membership of its committee suggests. The DAS aimed to further the cause of agriculture, specifically 'the advancement of pursuits connected with the farm and all its varied departments' <sup>247</sup> The DAS were aware that many of the farms in the Doncaster district were less than 100 acres in size, and were anxious not to exclude any farmers who could potentially help to improve local agriculture.<sup>248</sup> Consequently, the membership strategy of the DAS promoted inclusivity and sought to reach as many different farmers as possible. This included reducing the membership rate from one guinea to half a guinea with equal privileges for farmers of smaller acreages. The smaller Doncaster Farmers' Club adopted a similarly inclusive policy by offering a reduced membership fee for occupiers of farmland that did not exceed 100 acres.<sup>249</sup> Inclusive membership policies, such as those adopted by the organisations, facilitated inter-relationships between different types

<sup>246</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 5 December 1840, pp. 7-8; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 2 May 1845, p. 8; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 3 July 1846, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 21 August 1846, p. 1; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 4 July 1851, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 2 March 1855, p. 5; *The Farmer's Magazine*, Vol. 17, 1860, p. 477; *Doncaster Gazette*, 10 October 1845, p. 6; *Doncaster Gazette*, 27 June 1873, p. 8; *Doncaster Gazette*, 12 November 1875, p. 5; Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E11/126, *Miscellaneous Papers*, Doncaster Agricultural Society Leaflets.

<sup>247</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 10 October 1845, p. 6.

<sup>248</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 15 November 1844, p. 5.



of agricultural communities through the exchange of experience, ideas and knowledge.

The *Doncaster Chronicle*, an advocate of the DAS, encouraged farmers in the Doncaster district to subscribe to the society and to exhibit at the shows.<sup>250</sup> Reports argued that prize-winning produce stimulated competitiveness and productiveness as well as loyalty, and that active participation in agricultural societies and shows was an integral part of agricultural improvement.<sup>251</sup> The DAS and the Doncaster Farmers' Club were successful in engaging farmers from neighbouring villages, including some of the villages studied in this thesis. Farmers from the six villages noted for their participation in the meetings and shows of the DAS included Thomas Dyson and Mr Thompson of Braithweli, Mr Webster and Mr Flickson of Sprotbrough, and Mr Piggott and Mr Walker of Rossington.<sup>252</sup> Similarly, farmers from the six villages attended meetings of the Doncaster Farmers' Club. For example, T. Wood of Sprotbrough, J. Bladworth of Stainforth, J. Walker of Rossington Grange, and E. Walker and W. Wood of Warmsworth attended the meeting of this club held to discuss the depressed state of agriculture in 1850.<sup>253</sup> The majority of these farmers had also actively participated in the celebrations to mark the improvements to Doncaster's market facilities. This suggests that a core of farmers, generally occupying larger farms, was therefore central to these processes of stimulating knowledge exchange. This is in spite of provisions made to enable smaller farmers to participate. It was the active participation of these core farmers in agricultural societies that stimulated inter-relationships between town and country, and between different types of villages.

These inter-relationships were further enhanced by the research and publications that the DAS were responsible for. The DAS conducted research into new practices and products, which they then published

<sup>250</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 6 May 1842, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 1 October 1847, p. 8.

<sup>251</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 31 March 1871, p. 5.

<sup>252</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 25 September 1846, p. 4.

<sup>253</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 15 February 1850, p. 5.

and sold. Adverts for, and references to, these reports featured in prominent farming journals such as *The Farmers' Magazine* and even the *New York Farmer and American Gardener's Magazine*.<sup>254</sup> Although the potential audience for their research and advice was global, the primary objective of the research was to benefit local farmers in the Doncaster district. Consequently, the reports covered a range of issues relevant to the locality. A widely distributed and frequently cited report, which was researched, written, published and distributed by the DAS, addressed the problems of the turnip fly and how to prevent it. The report was based on the returns of over one hundred farmers in England and Wales, and was advertised as being of 'immense importance to farmers in general'.<sup>255</sup> It recommended the use of a long haired hearth brush and quick lime to rid the plants of the turnip fly.<sup>256</sup> This information was particularly beneficial to local agriculturalists, as the cultivation of turnips in the Doncaster district had increased, including in the six villages, as demonstrated earlier in this chapter. Through their research and reports the DAS stimulated the inter-relationships between different types of rural communities on the basis of the crops grown.

The DAS's acknowledgement that land type influenced agriculture, and that accordingly new ideas and practices had varying impacts on local agriculture, further consolidated these inter-relationships. Their evaluation of the use of new ideas and techniques made specific reference to geological variations. For example, their report on the use of bones as manure concluded that they were particularly beneficial on the limestone and lighter soils around Doncaster, but not on heavy clay soils.<sup>257</sup> This made the information directly pertinent to the farmers in the six villages. Farmers in Sprotbrough, Warmsworth, Rossington and

<sup>254</sup> *The Farmers Magazine*, Vol. 1, May 1834 to December 1834, pp. 336-7; *New York Farmer and American Gardener's Magazine*, Vol. 9, 1836, p. 333.

<sup>255</sup> *The Farmers Magazine*, Vol. 1, May 1834 to December 1834, pp. 336-7; *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, Vol. 2, 1841, p. 207; H. Stephens, *The Farmer's Guide to Scientific and Practical Agriculture*, Vol. 2 (New York, 1862), p. 74.

<sup>256</sup> Stephens, *The Farmer's Guide*, p. 74.

<sup>257</sup> *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, Vol. 2, 1841, p. 320; *The Farmer's Magazine*, Vol. 5, July to December 1836, p. 419; *New York Farmer and American Gardener's Magazine*, Vol. 10, 1837, p. 278.

Braithweli would potentially benefit from the application of bones as manure, whereas those in Fishlake and Stainforth would not. Place specific knowledge such as this transcended landownership. and facilitated the development of agriculture in all six villages.

Reports in the local newspapers also complemented the work of the DAS, and further distributed agricultural knowledge through the district. Goddard argued that the press performed an important role in conveying new ideas and agricultural knowledge to farmers, although he did distinguish between different types of publications.<sup>258</sup> Both the *Doncaster Chronicle* and the *Doncaster Gazette* regularly printed extracts from specialist agricultural journals, reports on agricultural meetings and shows, and advertisements that showcased the latest products and practices.<sup>259</sup> They were both distributed widely, with the *Doncaster Chronicle* specifically listing the six villages as destinations to which their paper was delivered each week.<sup>260</sup> A wealth of information was therefore available to farmers in these six villages about ways to improve the productivity of the land they farmed, regardless of landownership.<sup>261</sup>

The advice in the local newspapers complemented that of the DAS, and frequently made reference to geology and soil type. For example, in May 1841, the *Doncaster Chronicle* published a feature on the best rotation of crops for clay soils, which would have been beneficial for the farmers of Fishlake and Stainforth.<sup>262</sup> Numerous reports focused on the turnip, including advice on different methods of cultivation, the

— Goddard. 'Agricultural Institutions', pp. 672-683.

<sup>258</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 26 December 1840 p. 8; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 6 February 1841 p. 8; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 8 May 1841 p. 8; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 6 May 1842, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 24 June 1842 p. 7; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 1 July 1842 p. 7; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 10 February 1843 p. 7; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 24 April 1846 p. 7; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 5 June 1846, p.1; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 1 October 1847, p. 8; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 16 February 1848 p. 2; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 26 January 1849 p. 2.; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 27 January 1854 p. 2.

<sup>260</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 2 August 1844, p. 5.

<sup>261</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 18 March 1842, p. 1; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 22 April 1842, p 1; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 14 June 1850, p. 1; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 13 March 1857 p. 1.

<sup>262</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 8 May 1841, p. 8.

application of guano, and storage.<sup>263</sup> The reports were also substantiated by evidence from local farmers. This is illustrated by a front page feature published by the *Doncaster Chronicle* in 1846, which advocated using dissolved bones for turnip crops as they were the 'best and cheapest tillage'.<sup>264</sup> Thomas Dyson of Braithwell attributed his success with turnips to the application of dissolved bones mixed with urine, and the aforementioned large red globe turnip, which weighed six pounds and had a circumference of eighteen inches that Dyson had grown, was cited.<sup>265</sup> Through both the DAS and the local newspapers, inter-relationships based on the development and exchange of knowledge were stimulated and sustained, which transcended village type and landownership.

### **Forums for Debate and the Politicisation of the Farmer**

Doncaster was also a nucleus for political debates and forums relating to agriculture during the mid nineteenth century. These debates and forums provided an opportunity for the rural electorate to partake in political discussions about issues affecting agriculture. As such, they performed a significant role in the continuing debate about influence or deference and independence in the rural electorate. The links between landownership and political power, and the potential for landowners to exert control over their tenants, have been at the heart of both contemporary and historical analysis on the rural electorate. The distribution and ownership of landed property, which had been of concern in England from the mid 18th century, had become a central political issue by the mid nineteenth century.<sup>266</sup> The 1832 Reform Act broadened the franchise to include £10 copyholders and leaseholders

<sup>263</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 31 December 1841, p. 8; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 22 April 1842, p. 1; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 29 April 1842, p. 1; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 10 February 1843, p. 7; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 2 July 1844, p. 7; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 29 May 1846, p. 6; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 12 February 1847, p. 7.

<sup>264</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 12 June 1846, p. 1; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 31 July 1846, p. 1.

<sup>265</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 12 June 1846, p. 1; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 31 July 1846, p. 1.

<sup>266</sup> M. Cragoe and P. Reedman (eds), *The Land Question in Britain, 1750-1950* (London, 2010), p. 1.

and £50 tenants at will.<sup>267</sup> Consequently some tenant farmers now had the vote, and traditionally they were perceived as being particularly susceptible to landlord influence.<sup>268</sup>

D.C. Moore's *The Politics of Deference* particularly emphasised the authority and control of the landlord to determine votes. Moore argued that this influence created 'deference communities'.<sup>269</sup> The Mills model also cited deference in politics as being strong in estate villages, and independence and radicalism as being characteristic of multi-freeholder villages.<sup>270</sup> Mills argued that landed estates were the basis for 'political coercion and patronage'.<sup>271</sup> However, rural politics in the mid nineteenth century was far more complex than deference alone. David Eastwood's work on the politics of deference has provided an important reappraisal of the rural electorate. He argued that 'in so far as there was a politics of deference in rural England, it was continually reconstructed through participatory processes'.<sup>272</sup> According to Eastwood, the influence of the landed and the loyalty of the voters were constantly negotiated, and consequently landownership alone did not enable control over the electorate.<sup>273</sup> P. Salmon developed this idea, arguing that land equated firstly to responsibility and only secondly to influence.<sup>274</sup> In addition, Salmon identified the 1832 Reform Act as being significant to the behaviour of the rural electorate. He argued that as the electorate increased, and so did turnout, it was harder to control voters.<sup>275</sup> The composition of the rural electorate was also changing and becoming increasingly diverse, representing competing interests in

<sup>267</sup> P. Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work: Local Politics and National Parties, 1832-1841* (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 121.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 132-6.

<sup>269</sup> D.C. Moore, *The Politics of Deference* (New York, 1976); D. Eastwood, 'Contesting the Politics of Deference: the Rural Electorate, 1820-60' in J. Lawrence and M. Taylor (eds), *Party, State and Society: Electoral Behaviour since 1820* (Aldershot, 1997), pp. 27-8.

<sup>270</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 117.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>272</sup> Eastwood, 'Contesting the Politics of Deference', p. 33.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41-2.

<sup>274</sup> Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work*, p. 125.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 131-2.

terms of class and employment.<sup>276</sup> Salmon argued that the vast majority of the rural electorate were 'far from politically deferential or dependent when it came to exercising their franchise'.<sup>277</sup> Ultimately, deference was only one potential aspect affecting an increasingly diverse rural electorate during the mid nineteenth century.

The repeal of the Corn Laws, arguably the most influential and controversial policy in England during the mid nineteenth century, particularly affected the behaviour of the rural electorate. The Corn Laws had afforded English agriculture protection, and were considered to be a safety net for landowners. Yet, economic depression during the 1830s and a series of bad harvests heightened interest in the Corn Laws and made them a potent political issue throughout the country by the end of the 1830s. The Anti-Corn Law League was founded in 1839 in Manchester, and received the support of manufacturers who placed landowners at the heart of the problem. In response, a group of landowners, clergy and large tenant farmers formed the Anti-League to counter free trade agitation.<sup>278</sup> The latter were motivated by a widespread fear that repeal would reduce income, increase rents and create unemployment, and suspicion that the League represented only the commercial and manufacturing population.<sup>279</sup> Nevertheless, this division between support and opposition for the repeal was often far from straightforward. As Cheryl Schonhardt-Bailey demonstrated, diversification into non-agricultural ventures meant that many landowners increasingly represented multiple interests and were not always opposed to free trade.<sup>280</sup> The issue of agricultural protection split the Conservative Party, landowners and the rural electorate during the 1840s.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144-5.

<sup>278</sup> Mingay, *Land and Society*, pp. 56-58.

<sup>279</sup> P.A. Pickering and A. Tyrrell, *The People's Bread: A History of the Anti-Corn Law League* (London, 2000), p. 141.

<sup>280</sup> C. Schonhardt-Bailey, 'Specific Factors, Capital Markets, Portfolio Diversification, and Free Trade: Domestic Determinants of the Repeal of the Corn Laws', *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (July 1991), pp. 545-569.

J.R. Fisher specifically identified a link between major agricultural issues such as the Corn Laws and more diverse voting patterns.<sup>281</sup> He argued that when particular issues came to the fore in rural politics the idea of 'deferential communities' became less useful in explaining voting patterns.<sup>282</sup> The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 was particularly important in this respect, and according to Fisher 'politicized the rural community to an unprecedented extent'.<sup>283</sup> Eastwood also argued that the repeal of the Corn Laws disturbed 'the settled habits of rural voting and the new unpredictability was registered in the canvas'.<sup>284</sup> The role that the market town of Doncaster played as a forum for debate, and in providing access to knowledge and political ideas for the newly enlarged rural electorate of the Doncaster district, was significant in facilitating independence in politics.

The repeal of the Corn Laws generated strong feeling throughout the Doncaster district, from the start of the campaign in 1839 through to the repeal in 1846, and motivated farmers from different types of villages to become involved with a political issue that specifically affected agriculture. Meetings were held in Doncaster in support of both continued protection and repeal. Evidence of the link between these forums for debate in Doncaster and the farmers in the six villages included attendance to and contributions at the meetings to discuss the repeal of the Corn Laws, and subsequent voting patterns. For example, Thomas Dyson, owner-occupier farmer of Braithwell, spoke on behalf of the independent farmer at a public meeting in Doncaster in 1839, registering opposition to the repeal.<sup>285</sup> This meeting was held in direct response to strong pro-Corn law feeling amongst gentlemen and influential farmers in the Doncaster district. The *Doncaster Gazette*

<sup>281</sup> J.R. Fisher, 'The Limits of Deference: Agricultural Communities in a Mid Nineteenth Century Election Campaign', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 21 (1981), pp. 90-1.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 90-1.

<sup>284</sup> Eastwood, 'Contesting the Politics of Deference', p. 33-4.

<sup>285</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 22 February 1839, p. 6; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 23 February 1839, p. 1.

reported that it was 'one of the most numerous attended agricultural meetings we ever witnessed' and that the town hall was 'densely crowded'.<sup>286</sup> Local landowners, land agents, farmers and industrialists made representation at this meeting. The over-riding message was the potential effects of repealing the Corn Laws on the English farmer, something that was of importance to the six villages in the Doncaster area. Following this meeting, a petition against the repeal secured the signatures of fifty-six people from the estate villages of Sprotbrough, Cadeby and Melton and eighty-three from the multi-freeholder village of Stainforth.<sup>287</sup> Concurrently, support for the Anti-Corn Law League grew in the Doncaster area. In 1839, the Doncaster Anti-Corn Law Association (ACLA), one of 223 ACLAs in England, was founded with several landowners from the Doncaster district amongst the leading figures of the organisation.<sup>288</sup> Of the six villages, support for the repeal mainly came from the estate village of Warmsworth, where William Aldam was landowner. Aldam was the Liberal candidate for the Borough of Leeds, and an advocate of free trade. In addition, the village had a more varied socio-economic composition on account of the quarries. Rather than opposing the reform, the landowner, farmers and some independent trades and crafts people favoured the repeal of the Corn Laws.

In addition to providing information, the political forums in Doncaster were used as propaganda tools by both factions. This is demonstrated by the staged debate between Dr Holland, representative for the pro-Corn Law campaign, and Mr Acland, representative for the National Anti-Corn Law League, at the theatre in Doncaster in 1840. An admission charge and ticketed entry controlled attendance at the event, but support for both parties was numerous and the local newspapers

<sup>286</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 22 February 1839, p. 6.

<sup>287</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 29 March 1839, p. 4.

<sup>288</sup> Pickering and Tyrrell, *The People's Bread*, p. 254; *Doncaster Gazette*, 19 April 1839, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 17 May 1839, p. 4; *Doncaster Gazette*, 1 November 1839, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 28 February 1840, pp. 6-7; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 29 February 1840, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 28 February 1840, pp. 6-7; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 29 February 1840, p. 5; Doncaster Archives, DD/WA/P/12, *Letters regarding the Corn Laws*, 1843.



carried extensive reports after the event. The event was carefully choreographed, akin to the meetings of the Anti-Corn Law League for which Mr Acland was one of the principal lecturers.<sup>289</sup> Acland was also an actor and his performances at meetings such as this verged on the theatrical. The reports in the *Doncaster Gazette* certainly evoked the melodrama of proceedings, conveying the verbal sparring that characterised the event.<sup>290</sup> Acland consequently gained the upper hand and delivered what was a very convincing and persuasive case for the repeal of the Corn Laws.

The subsequent 1841 election for the West Riding of Yorkshire divided the rural electorate in the Doncaster district. Denison and Wortley were the Conservative and pro-Corn Law candidates, and Milton and Morpeth were the Liberal and anti-Corn Law candidates. Denison had in fact attended a pro-Corn Law meeting in Doncaster, where he told the audience to view the efforts of the commercial classes to repeal the Corn Laws with alarm as the consequences would be 'equally unjust towards the farmer and prejudiced to the country at large'.<sup>291</sup> He had gone on to argue that continued protection was in the interests of landowners and farmers, concluding that he was 'firmly convinced it would be the most dangerous experiment the country had ever made; that it has never made one equally dangerous; and I hope and believe the experiment will never be tried'.<sup>292</sup> In spite of the highlighted dangers, farmers in the six villages were split between supporting and opposing the reform. Support for Denison and Wortley came from all the farmers in the estate village of Sprotbrough and the majority of farmers in the multi-freeholder villages of Fishlake and Braithwell.<sup>293</sup> The votes of the farmers in the estate village of Rossington and the multi-freeholder village of Stainforth were split between the Conservative and

<sup>289</sup> Pickering and Tyrrell, *The People's Bread*, p. 192.

<sup>290</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 6 November 1840, pp. 4-5.

<sup>291</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 28 February 1840, pp. 6-7.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>293</sup> *West Riding Election: The Poll for the 2 Knights of the Shire for the West Riding of Yorkshire* (Wakefield, 1841), pp. 177-8, 188, 522-3.

Liberal candidates.<sup>294</sup> At the estate village of Warmsworth, there was overwhelming support for the Liberal, anti-Corn Law candidates amongst the resident farmers.<sup>295</sup> This pattern of voting corresponded neither with landownership nor with occupational group.

The extent to which this voting behaviour represented deference and independence in the rural electorate, and the impact of major issues such as the repeal of the Corn Laws and central forums for debate, would require more detailed analysis of the votes during the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, it is evident that both high unanimity and dissidence rates were present in the six villages studied. Whilst this accords with the work of S. Richardson on the West Riding electorate between 1832 and 1841, unanimity was not greater in the estate villages as Richardson argued.<sup>296</sup> Evidence from the six villages demonstrates much greater diversity in voting patterns than conforms to patterns of landownership. Even where voters voted in accordance with the landowner, as was the case at Sprotbrough, it may, as Eastwood and Salmon argued, have been due to mutual dependence rather than landowner influence. It is perhaps more significant that the farmers of Sprotbrough, like those in the multi-freeholder villages of Fishlake and Braithwell supported the pro-Corn Law candidates. In contrast, the larger capitalist farmers of Rossington were divided in their votes, which was indicative of the more politicised farmers that Fisher identified during this period.<sup>297</sup> The voting patterns in the three estate villages appear to have been influenced by this controversial political issue rather than patterns of landownership, which in the case of Sprotbrough and Warmsworth fostered allegiance with the landowner and in the case of Rossington divided the community.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.. DP. 186,189-90.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>296</sup> S. Richardson, 'Independence and Deference: A Study of The West Riding Electorate, 1832-1841', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Leeds, 1995, pp. 228-31. 243.

<sup>297</sup> Fisher, 'The Limits of Deference', pp. 90,102.

Just seven years later, in the 1848 election, voting patterns in the six villages had changed.<sup>230</sup> The farmers of the three estate villages voted overwhelmingly in support of Denison, the Conservative candidate. The only exception was George Blagden, who in addition to farming a small amount of land was joint proprietor of the quarries at Warmsworth and a non-resident of the village. In the three multi-freeholder villages voting behaviour was more diverse, with farmers voting for both the Conservative and Liberal candidate in similar proportions. This evidence suggests that the farmers in the estate villages were more politicised during the campaign for repeal, and that the farmers of the multi-freeholder villages became more politicised in the aftermath. The extent to which voting behaviour in the Doncaster district accorded with patterns of landownership was weakest during periods of upheaval, such as the repeal of the Corn Laws. As Fisher argued, this was a period of the farmer being an 'independent economic lobbying force'.<sup>231</sup> The forums for debate that existed in Doncaster during the mid nineteenth century promoted and stimulated independence amongst the rural electorate.

## Conclusions

This chapter has provided evidence about agricultural characteristics and management in the six villages that both challenges the Mills model and has significant implications for an alternative model of village typology. Firstly, whilst evidence from the six villages studied in this thesis to some extent supports Mills' classificatory argument about agriculture, the Mills model is too rigid to be representative. For example, farm size and the extent of high farming were both generally greater in the three estate villages than in the three multi-freeholder villages. This coincides with the Mills model in so far as general patterns of agriculture could be classified in terms of landownership.

<sup>230</sup> *West Riding Election: The Poll for the 2 Knights of the Shire for the West Riding of Yorkshire* (Wakefield).

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

Nevertheless, variation between villages with similar landowning structures, and change over time, were significant in patterns and characteristics of agriculture in the six villages. Farm size varied in both the estate and multi-freeholder villages, with a wide disparity between the smallest and largest farms in many instances. In addition, the farms in some villages became smaller whilst in other villages farm size continued to increase. Variation and change are not accounted for by the Mills model, which instead seeks to place estate villages in sharp contrast to multi-freeholder villages. The reality for the six villages was much more complex. As demonstrated in this chapter, a more representative framework than the Mills model for farm size is that of a continuum. The continuum permits variation within a broad spectrum to be represented, and incorporates change overtime. Moreover, 'high farming manifested itself in multiple ways, some of which transcended landownership and thus weakened the Mills model. The limited criteria of the Mills model fails to acknowledge that farm size and capital investment in the agricultural infrastructure were merely two of many agricultural characteristics. Analysis of the development and application of agricultural knowledge and innovative practices, and crops and livestock, in addition to farm size and capital investment, ensure that an alternative framework is more comprehensive than the Mills model.

Secondly, the causal argument of the Mills model is problematical because it relies upon a sole determinant, that of landownership, to influence every aspect of agriculture. Furthermore, the Mills model homogenises the role of landownership. Although the landowners were influential to the way in which agriculture was managed and developed in the three estate villages, the Mills model does not adequately explain how and why, nor does it account for differentiation. The presumption that all landowners reacted in the same way and had the same impact is flawed, as demonstrated in this chapter. The landowners in the three estate villages had different objectives and adopted different management strategies, which consequently affected both patterns of agriculture and the relationship between landownership and agriculture.

The implications of this weaken the Mills causal argument. Without undermining the influential role some landowners played in agriculture, it is necessary to adopt a strategy of differentiation in order to understand the agricultural characteristics of villages to a greater extent.

Landownership requires deconstructing in order to fully understand its relationship between landownership and agricultural land. The key differences between landowners, their objectives and their impact needs to be taken into consideration. It was the differences between landowners, rather than the homogenisation of concentrated landownership and large landowners that is promoted by the Mills model, that more adequately explains the role of landownership in agriculture during the mid nineteenth century. Moreover, the farmer was an integral component in agriculture, resulting in complex tenancy agreements, the fostering of loyalty, and continuity amongst farmers. Farmers in the six villages performed a causal role in agriculture, both practically and theoretically. In addition to landowners and farmers, geology and climate affected agriculture in the six villages.

Thirdly, the Mills interdependency argument, which is closely linked with the poor law, population and labour supply, overlooks the more dynamic ways in which villages were inter-related during the mid nineteenth century. With regards agriculture, this chapter has demonstrated that important inter-relationships existed between the six villages and Doncaster based upon market facilities, the advancement of agricultural knowledge, and politics. This has important implications for re-evaluating the Mills model and for alternative frameworks for village typology. The characteristics of agriculture in a village were shaped by a range of different forces, both within and outside the village. It is important that an alternative framework for studying and interpreting village typology incorporates these inter-relationships, and avoids isolating the village and its agriculture.

This chapter clearly demonstrates the challenges of the practice application of such a rigid model as that created by Mills. Despite the Mills model being very definite about classificatory and causal expectations of concentrated landownership for agriculture, it does not account for variation between villages with similar landowning structures, change over time and differentiation between landowners. Based upon the analysis of agriculture in different types of villages an alternative framework would benefit from adopting the continuum to compare and contrast key agricultural characteristics. It is also essential that an alternative framework be enquiry led so as to encourage the uniqueness of village agriculture to be identified and explained. This argument, challenging the Mills model and suggesting alternative frameworks, is developed further in the next chapter that examines the agricultural workforces of these six villages. In addition to the landowner and the farmer discussed in this chapter, the paid agricultural employee was an important component of village agriculture, who needs assimilating into a framework of village typology.

### **Chapter Three - Agricultural Workforces**

This chapter analyses the size and composition of the agricultural workforces in the six villages. Firstly, it compares the number of paid male agricultural workers in the three estate villages with those in the three multi-freeholder villages between 1851 and 1871. This enables Mills' classificatory argument to be evaluated. Mills argued that the larger farms of estate villages required more labour, resulting in a high ratio of labourers to farmers, and thus a high proportion of paid labour in agriculture.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, he argued that the smaller farms of multi-freeholder villages relied extensively upon family labour.<sup>2</sup> Using the Census Enumerators' Books (hereafter the CEBs), the number of paid agricultural workers in the six villages is compared. An important distinction is made between the relationship between the size of the agricultural workforce and farm size on the one hand and landownership on the other.

Secondly, this chapter demonstrates the importance of differentiating between different types of agricultural workers and how they were employed. Two different types of agricultural workers - the 'indoor' farm servant and the 'outdoor' agricultural labourer - are examined in detail. Using the CEBs, this chapter identifies whether farm service was more characteristic of estate or multi-freeholder villages, in order to demonstrate whether farm service corresponded with patterns of landownership. It establishes how farm service was beneficial to certain villages and farms by identifying patterns in the employment of farm servants between the six villages. It also evaluates how methods of hiring farm servants in mid nineteenth century Doncaster changed, primarily using local newspapers. In addition, it demonstrates how inter-relationships between the six villages and Doncaster were stimulated through the agricultural employment practices.

Underlying Mills' theories about agricultural workforces was his causal

<sup>1</sup>D.R. Mills, *Lord and Peasant in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London, 1980), p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

argument about landowners. Mills argued that landowners controlled both the size and quality of the population. In his words, 'only the law abiding, deferential and morally sound of the labourers were welcome' in estate villages.<sup>3</sup> In addition, according to Mills' dependency argument, the consequence of limiting the size of the population in estate villages was to increase the population of the multi-freeholder villages. He argued that this resulted in a surplus of agricultural labour in multi-freeholder villages that supplemented the deficit of labour in estate villages.<sup>4</sup> The CEBs are used to compare supply and demand of labour in the six villages, and to demonstrate whether the discrepancy between labour supply and demand was greatest in estate villages as implied by the Mills model. The experience of the agricultural labourer is also examined, within the context of place and region.

### **The Size and Composition of Agricultural Workforces in the Six Villages**

Agriculture remained a key occupational group during the mid nineteenth century, although the exact proportion of people working in agriculture varied from place to place. In England and Wales, it has been estimated that approximately 23.5 per cent of all men worked in agriculture in 1851.<sup>5</sup> This estimate included farmers, family labour and paid farm workers, as did the census reports of the mid nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> By 1871, only 16.8 per cent of men in England and Wales worked in agriculture.<sup>7</sup> Yet, as Wrigley argued, agricultural employment in the industrial counties often increased to meet demand from the growing urban and industrial population.<sup>8</sup> As the majority of English agriculture remained labour intensive, it was argued that the increased

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 51,119-120.

<sup>5</sup>B. Afton and M. Turner, 'Agrarian Occupations', in E.J.T. Collins (ed), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol VII, 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 1971; E.A. Wrigley, *Poverty, Progress and Population* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 166.

<sup>6</sup>Afton and Turner, 'Agrarian Occupations', p. 1971; Wrigley, *Poverty, Progress and Population*, pp. 96-97,166.

<sup>7</sup>Afton and Turner, 'Agrarian Occupations', p. 1971.

<sup>8</sup>Wrigley, *Poverty, Progress and Population*, pp. 108-9.



demand for agricultural produce was coupled with an increased demand for agricultural workers.<sup>9</sup>

The proportion of men occupied in agriculture in the six villages far exceeded that of the national average for England and Wales in 1851, as shown in table 3.1. Whereas agricultural employment only accounted for a quarter of all employed men in England and Wales in 1851, at least a third of all employed men in the six villages were occupied in agriculture. In some villages this was much higher, with agricultural employment accounting for two thirds of total male employment in both Rossington and Braithwell in 1851. Similarly in 1871, the proportion of agricultural employment was higher in the six villages than the national average. Agriculture was clearly a key component of the occupational structures of the six villages during the mid nineteenth century.

Table 3.1: Agricultural Employment as a Proportion of Total Male Employment in the Six Villages, 1851-1871 (includes farmers and farm workers aged 15 and over)

	National	Estate			Multi-freeholder		
	Average	Sprotbrough	Warmsworth	Rossington	Braithwell	Fishlake	Stainforth
1851	23.5%	49.4%	37.6%	68.5%	69.3%	56.5%	38.2%
1861	-----	50.6%	44%	65.9%	58%	49.1%	41.4%
1871	16.8%	30.5%	25%	67.2%	56.9%	55%	34.8%

Source: TNA, H0107/2346, CEB Sprotbrough 1851; TNA, H0107/2346, CEB Warmsworth 1851; TNA, H0107/2348, CEB Rossington 1851; TNA, H0107/2346, CEB Braithwell 1851; TNA, H0107/2349, CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1851; TNA, RG9/3516, CEB Sprotbrough 1861; TNA, RG9/3514, CEB Warmsworth 1861; TNA, RG9/3522, CEB Rossington 1861; TNA, RG9/3513, CEB Braithwell 1861; TNA, RG9/3524, CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1861; TNA, RG10/4716, CEB Sprotbrough 1871; TNA, RG10/4715, CEB Warmsworth 1871; TNA, RG10/4724, CEB Rossington 1871; TNA, RG10/4714, CEB Braithwell 1871; TNA, RG10/4726, CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1871

<sup>9</sup>W.A. Armstrong, *Farmworkers: A Social and Economic History 1770-1980* (London, 1988), p. 92.

The exact proportion of men occupied in agriculture in the six villages varied considerably. Agriculture was the main occupation in four villages studied. Between 49.4 per cent and 69.3 per cent of men in Sprotbrough, Rossington, Braithwell and Fishlake were occupied in agriculture in 1851.<sup>10</sup> Additional occupations included domestic service, trades and crafts, and professionals, which were complementary to these agricultural and/or landed communities. As two of these were estate villages (Sprotbrough and Rossington) and two were multi-freeholder villages (Fishlake and Braithwell), no apparent relationship existed between concentrated landownership and the proportion of people occupied in agriculture. This is further evidenced by the fact that the two villages with lower proportions of male agricultural workers had different landowning structures. In the multi-freeholder village of Stainforth only 38.2 per cent of men were occupied on agriculture in 1851.<sup>11</sup> Almost as many men resident in Stainforth had occupations linked to the Stainforth and Keadby Canal. Similarly, only 37.6 per cent of men were occupied in agriculture in the estate village of Warmsworth in 1851.<sup>12</sup> A comparable proportion of men worked in the stone quarries on the periphery of the estate. Therefore, the proportion of men occupied in agriculture within the six villages depended on the economic structure and labour demands of the village rather than landownership alone.

Moreover, between 1851 and 1871, the proportion of men occupied in agriculture decreased by at least 10 per cent in three of the villages studied. This applied to two of the estate villages, Sprotbrough and Warmsworth. At Sprotbrough the proportion of men occupied in agriculture decreased from 49.4 per cent in 1851 to 30.5 per cent in 1871.<sup>13</sup> This decrease was greatest amongst the agricultural labourers. Concurrently, the number of non-specific labourers recorded in the

<sup>10</sup>TNA, HO107/2346, *CEB Sprotbrough 1851*; TNA, H0107/2348, *CEB Rossington 1851*; TNA, HO107/2346, *CEB Braithwell 1851*; TNA, H0107/2349, *CEB Fishlake 1851*.

<sup>11</sup>TNA, HO107/2349, *CEB Stainforth 1851*.

<sup>12</sup>TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Warmsworth 1851*.

<sup>13</sup>TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Sprotbrough 1851*; TNA, RG10/4716, *CEB Sprotbrough 1871*.

CEBs as being resident in Sprotbrough increased. This change was indicative of people who undertook agricultural work as and when required, and often in conjunction with other types of labouring work. At Warmsworth the proportion of men employed in agriculture decreased from 37.6 per cent to 25 per cent, which corresponded with an increase in the proportion of men employed at the quarry.<sup>14</sup> By 1871, a larger proportion of men resident at Warmsworth were employed in industry than in agriculture.

Aggregate statistics for agricultural employment in the six villages clearly did not correspond to patterns of landownership. Rather the employment requirements of agriculture in the respective villages were dependent upon their economic structures. Labour demand was also fluid, responding to the economic framework of the village and reflecting the different ways in which agricultural workers were employed. The variation and changes evident in the six villages affect the applicability of the Mills' classificatory model, which is static and implies that proportions of agricultural employment in villages were constant, and determined by the concentration of landownership. It also highlights the need to differentiate between farmers, family labour and paid workers. This is a crucial distinction, as some of the most significant variations in, and changes to, the proportion of people occupied in agriculture related to paid workers. The remainder of this chapter focuses on the proportion of paid workers employed in agriculture.

### **Paid Agricultural Workers in the Estate and Multi-freeholder Villages**

It is important to identify and reconcile methodological challenges pertaining to the calculation of the paid agricultural workforces. The 1851 census instructed farmers to return the number of indoor and outdoor workers they employed, but unfortunately did not ask them to

<sup>14</sup>TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Warmsworth 1851*; TNA, RG10/4715, *CEB Warmsworth 1871*.

explicitly state when no labour was employed. Consequently, it can be difficult to ascertain whether farms recorded as employing no labour simply failed to report employment figures or really did not employ anyone. In spite of these difficulties, Leigh Shaw-Taylor argued that 'the 1851 farm returns are a reasonable guide to both farm acreage and farm employment (on census day) at county level'.<sup>15</sup>

The 1851 census report included printed tables for each county enumerating the number of men and women in different occupational groups. Shaw-Taylor used this data to compare the number of farmers with the size of farm workforce at county level. He argued that although male farm workers outnumbered farmers everywhere, the proportion of paid workers was much higher in south-eastern England than elsewhere in the country.<sup>16</sup> The ratio of male farm workers to farmers in the West Riding of Yorkshire was only 2:1, compared to a national average of 5:1, and up to 13:1 in parts of southern England.<sup>17</sup> A high proportion, 62 per cent, of farms in the West Riding recorded no male employees, which was equal to Lancashire and Derbyshire and was the highest in the country.<sup>18</sup> A conversely small proportion, only 3 per cent, of farms in the West Riding employed six or more males, which was equal to Lancashire and the second lowest percentage in the country.<sup>19</sup> Shaw-Taylor also categorised farms in terms of their employment patterns as follows: family farms, with little dependence on wage labour; transitional farms, which required some paid labour; and capitalist farms, on which hired labour was predominant with perhaps six or more labourers.<sup>20</sup> Once again he demonstrated the regional disparity in the location of these different types of farms. The largest capitalist farms were concentrated in the south east of England, whereas family farms dominated the north. According to Shaw-Taylor the West Riding of

<sup>15</sup> L. Shaw-Taylor, 'Family Farms and Capitalist Farms in Mid-Nineteenth Century England', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (2005), p. 179.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 182-4

Yorkshire was characterised by family farms, employing few paid employees.

Employment patterns aggregated at county level, as advocated by Shaw-Taylor, conceal variation within counties, and particularly the relationship between farmers and the number of paid employees on individual farms and at village level.<sup>21</sup> The CEBs provide two different ways to calculate the ratio of farm workers to farmers at village level. Firstly, the occupational data can be used to identify the number of resident agricultural workers and the number of farmers. However, these figures are likely to include resident agricultural workers who worked elsewhere yet exclude people who worked in the village but lived somewhere else. The second method is to use the number of employees returned by the farmers in the CEBs. The difficulty that arises from this is that in addition to enumeration mistakes and the failure to record employees, farmers tended to only record their regular employees. Consequently, seasonal and casual labour was under-recorded.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, as few farm records survive for the six villages during the mid nineteenth century, the CEBs are an invaluable source to gauge comparative patterns of agricultural employment in the six villages.

An analysis of the size of the male farm workforce in the six villages clearly demonstrates the way in which the county figures distort the complexity of employment patterns. The ratio of paid male workers to farmers in all six villages was in excess of the average for the county in 1851. This suggests that farms in these six villages were more reliant on paid labour than in other parts of the county. To some extent this reflects the diversity of the West Riding of Yorkshire. Shaw-Taylor calculated an average number of male employees to farmers for a county with enormous topographic and economic differences. The

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 160-1

<sup>22</sup> E. Higgs, *A Clearer Sense of the Census* (London, 1996), pp. 105-107; E. Higgs, 'Occupational Censuses and the Agricultural Workforce in Victorian England and Wales', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (November 1995), pp. 700-16.

southern part of the county was dominated by large, numerous populated areas such as Sheffield, Doncaster, Halifax and Leeds, whereas the northern part was less densely populated. Even within the vicinity of Doncaster, the pattern of agricultural employment varied from village to village. Table 3.2 shows that the ratio of male agricultural employees to farmers was consistently higher in the three estate villages than compared with the three multi-freeholder villages. In addition, the ratios in the three estate villages were higher than the national average, and lower than the national average in the three multi-freeholder villages. This suggests that a relationship existed between the concentration of landownership and the number of paid agricultural workers in a village.

Table 3.2 : Ratio of Male Agricultural Employees to Farmers in the Six Villages, 1851-1871.

	National Average	Sprotbrough	Estate Warmsworth	Rossington	Braithwell	Multi-freeholder Fishlake	Stainforth
1851	5:1	7:1	6:1	10:1	3:1	3:1	4:1
1861	4.8:1	7:1	5:1	7:1	4:1	2:1	3:1
1871	4.:1	4:1	4:1	8:1	3:1	2:1	3:1

Sources: as per table 3.1; W.A. Armstrong, *The Workfolk*, in Mingay (ed), *Victorian Countryside*, Vol. 2 (London, 1981), p. 494

It was this relationship between landownership and the size of the agricultural workforces that interested Mills. He used the estate village of Lockinge in Berkshire to demonstrate a very high ratio of labourers to farmers (17:1).<sup>23</sup> Based upon this, he argued that the ratio of paid employees to farmers would be much higher in all villages with concentrated landownership due to the labour requirements of large farms.<sup>24</sup> Mills did not differentiate between landownership and farm size as two different variables. Consequently, the Mills model amalgamated two very different and distinct ideas into one classificatory argument. It

<sup>23</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 35.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

is crucial to distinguish between farm size and landownership as potential variables affecting the ratio of paid employees to farmers in the six villages, and to evaluate their impact separately.

The evidence from the six villages does support Mills' classificatory argument about the relationship between landownership and paid agricultural workers. Not only were the ratios of farm workers to farmers higher in the three estate villages compared to the three multi-freeholder villages, but the patterns of employment also related to Shaw-Taylor's categorisation of farms.<sup>25</sup> The average number of paid male workers to farmers in the multi-freeholder villages in 1851 equated to small capitalist farms or transitional farms employing both paid labour and family labour. This contrasted with the large capitalist farms of the estate villages, employing six or more men. It is important to acknowledge that these ratios are averages, and the proportion of paid employees on each farm varied. The employment of a large number of paid workers also did not exclude the use of family labour on capitalist farms in the estate villages. Even so, farms in the three estate villages in the vicinity of Doncaster employed a high proportion of paid labour in contrast with those in multi-freeholder villages.

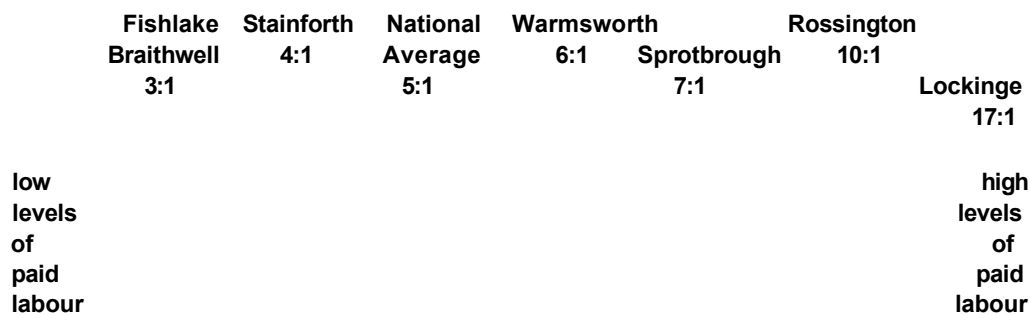
Nevertheless, the employment ratios between villages with similar landowning structures, particularly the three estate villages, varied. For example, Rossington had a substantially higher proportion of paid agricultural employees to farmers in both 1851 and 1871 than the other two estate villages.<sup>26</sup> This affects the sharp classificatory dichotomy of the Mills model, in which Mills argued that all three estate villages should be classified the same, as well as being in direct contrast with the three multi-freeholder villages. A continuum better represents the ratios of paid agricultural employees to farmers in the six villages than Mills sharp dichotomy. As depicted in fig. 3.1, the continuum accounts

<sup>25</sup>Shaw-Taylor, 'Family Farms and Capitalist Farms', p. 185.

<sup>26</sup>TNA, HO107/2348, *CEB Rossington 1851*; TNA, RG9/3522, *CEB Rossington 1861*; TNA, RG10/4724, *CEB Rossington 1871*.

for variation within villages with similar landowning structures. The extremes embodied in the Mills model are represented at each end of the continuum, including the estate village of Lockinge, whilst the national average is placed in the middle. The six villages are then placed along the continuum in relation to these markers and to one another, permitting the substantially higher proportion of paid agricultural workers in Rossington to be distinguished from the lower proportions in the other two estate villages. By accommodating and highlighting the variation in ratios of paid agricultural workforces to farmers in villages with similar landowning structures, the continuum has wider applicability than the Mills model.

Fig. 3.1: Agricultural Employment Continuum, 1851



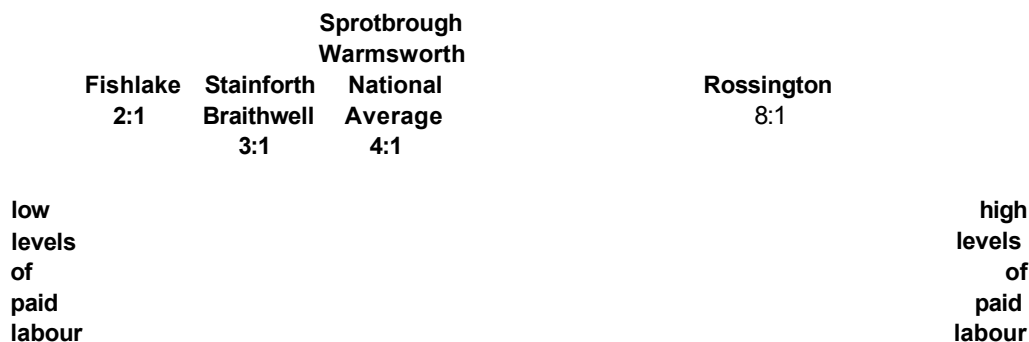
In addition, this continuum is easily adapted to accommodate change over time. This is particularly important as the ratios, especially in the three estate villages, decreased between 1851 and 1871 (see table 3.2). For example, the ratios for Sprotbrough and Warmsworth in 1871 were more akin with those of the multi-freeholder villages, and equal to the national average ratio.<sup>27</sup> This evidence challenges the Mills model, which was static and imposed a sharp dichotomy for the duration of the

<sup>27</sup>TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Sprotbrough 1851*; TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Warmsworth 1851*; TNA, RG10/4716, *CEB Sprotbrough 1871*; TNA, RG10/4715, *CEB Warmsworth 1871*; Armstrong, *The Workfolk*, p. 494.



nineteenth century and beyond. The continuum framework begins to resolve this weakness due to its flexible nature. The continuum is very much a sliding scale, along which the villages move in accordance with the changes that took place during the mid nineteenth century. As fig. 3.2 illustrates, both Sprotbrough and Warmsworth moved further along the continuum and were now in closer proximity with the multi-freeholder villages. Rossington had also witnessed a decrease in the ratio of agricultural workers to farmers but still had the highest proportion of paid workers.<sup>28</sup> The continuum visually represents these changes, and in doing so encourages further analysis and explanation.

Fig. 3.2: Agricultural Employment Continuum, 1871



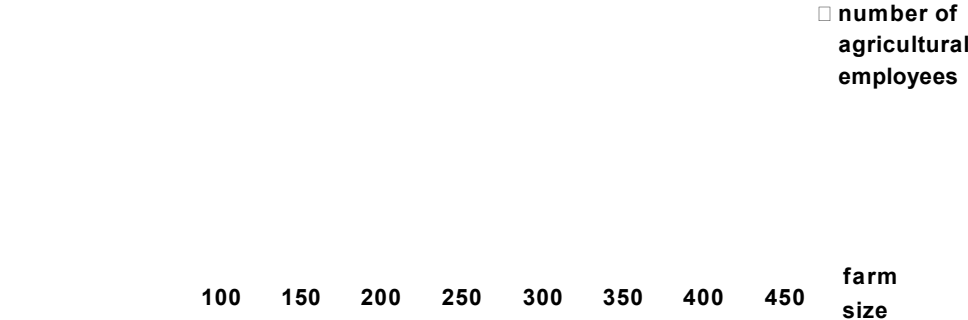
The relationship that Mills identified between farm size and the number of paid agricultural workers is discernible on some of the farms in the six villages between 1851 and 1871. As fig 3.3 demonstrates, the number of paid male agricultural workers gradually grew as farm size increased. For example, farms in the six villages under 100 acres did not employ a regular workforce greater than four men. Farms in the six villages were also at least 250 acres before ten or more regular workers were employed. There were however variations, particularly with regards the number of employees on large farms. Five farms in excess of 250 acres

<sup>28</sup>TNA, RG10/4724, *CEB Rossington 1871*.

only employed six or less regular workers, compared to four that employed twelve to fourteen workers. As Shaw-Taylor argued, the relationship between farm size and employment levels was not always straightforward.

Fig. 3.3: Relationship between Farm Size and Number of Agricultural Employees in the Six Villages, 1851

14



**Source:** TNA, H0107/2346, CEB Sprotbrough 1851\ TNA, H0107/2346. CEB Warmsworth 1851\ TNA, H0107/2348, CEB Rossington 1851; TNA, H0107/2346, CEB Braithwell 185V, TNA, H0107/2349, CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1851\ Doncaster Archives, DY/Wall/1-2, Hatfield Tithe Apportionment and Map, 1843 (includes Stainforth)

At county level the complications that arise from linking the number of agricultural workers to the size of farm become more apparent. In the West Riding of Yorkshire in 1851 a general association between farm size and the size of the paid workforce is once again evident. For example, 80 per cent of all farms employing one person were less than 100 acres in size. In addition, 58.75 per cent of farms less than 100

acres only employed one person, whereas 33.3 per cent of farms in excess of 1,000 acres employed more than twenty people. Yet, some very small farms employed a lot of people, and larger farms often employed fewer people. Although no farms in the county that were in excess of 1000 acres employed less than four people, a third of farms this size only employed four people.

The relationship between farm size and the size of the agricultural workforce was therefore evident in the West Riding of Yorkshire, as well as the six villages, but tended to be less distinct on medium and large sized farms at county level and on large farms at village level. Significantly for the evaluation of the Mills model, the link between farm size and the size of the farm workforce in the six villages applied to farms in both estate and multi-freeholder villages. Therefore, labour demand on larger farms tended to be greater regardless of landownership. Ultimately, Mills' classificatory approach oversimplified the complex and often unique occupational structures of villages in the mid nineteenth century. The assumption that patterns of agricultural employment correlated with patterns of landownership and remained constant renders the Mills model too rigid and static to be wholly representative. Furthermore, the relationship between farm size and the size of agricultural workforces was distinct and separate from that between landownership and the number of agricultural workers per farm.

The Mills model is also deficient in not differentiating between types of agricultural workers and how they were employed, which limits the extent to which the agricultural workforces and patterns of agricultural employment of these six villages can accurately be understood using the Mills model. In this respect, the Mills model is more akin with the traditional tripartite division of rural society as outlined by James Caird in 1851 than later research on agricultural workers. Caird argued that there were three main interests in agriculture: the landowner, the tenant

farmer and the landless labourer.<sup>29</sup> The work of Mills, a century later, continued to homogenise the agricultural worker. Yet more recent work has demonstrated the importance of differentiating between agricultural workers. Alun Howkins argued that differentiation within the labouring population was as important to acknowledge as the differences between labourers and other social groups.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, Barry Reay argued that the 'complex variety of experiences' means 'farm workers in the nineteenth century defy neat classification'.<sup>31</sup> Howkins also argued that more local studies examining the agricultural workforce were required in order to enhance understanding of this complex group of workers.<sup>32</sup> The continued reliance on the Mills model as demonstrated in chapter one of this thesis, means that the existing model for historians to examine village typology perpetuates a mid nineteenth century perspective of agricultural workers rather than taking account of the work of more historians. This chapter now analyses 'indoor' farm servants and 'outdoor' agricultural labourers in turn, and argues that an understanding of different agricultural workers and how they were employed can be incorporated into an alternative framework for village typology.

<sup>29</sup>]. Caird, *English Agriculture 1850-51* (London, 1852), p. 520.

<sup>30</sup>A. Howkins, 'In the Sweat of thy Face: The Labourer and Work', in Mingay (ed), *Victorian Countryside*, pp. 505-7; A. Howkins, 'Peasants, Servants and Labourers: The Marginal Workforce in British Agriculture c.1870-1914', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 92, No. 1 (1994), pp. 49-62.

<sup>31</sup> B. Reay, *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800-1930* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 25,135.

<sup>32</sup> Howkins, 'Peasants, Servants and Labourers', p. 62.

## **Farm Service, Farm Servants and Hiring Fairs**

### **The Regional Experience of Farm Service**

The regional experience of the farm servant in mid nineteenth century England has been the focus of much historical analysis.<sup>33</sup> Farm servants were 'live-in' agricultural workers, who were traditionally hired at hiring fairs for up to a year and lived on the farm. This meant they provided farmers with a continuously available supply of labour during the year. Farm service was also characterised by youth and mobility. Consequently, it has been considered to be a transitional form of employment, between childhood and adult employment, often spent outside the parish of birth.<sup>34</sup> Recent historical analysis and debate has centred on the extent to which farm service declined, survived or adapted in different parts of the country during the mid nineteenth century.

Kusmaul argued that farm service declined in the south and east of England, and was virtually non-existent by the mid nineteenth century.<sup>35</sup> This decline was associated with rapid population growth, a rise in poor relief expenditure, falling real wages for agricultural labourers and the rise in the cost of living.<sup>36</sup> Consequently, the need to secure a constantly available supply of labour on the farm by employing 'live-in' workers was diminished. Conversely, the north of England was perceived as a stronghold for the survival of farm service due to shortages of labour and competition for employment from industry.<sup>37</sup> This chronology has subsequently been challenged. Alun Howkins and

**33**A. Kusmaul, *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1981); S. Counce, 'Farm Servants and the Development of Capitalism in English Agriculture', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (1997), pp. 49-60; G. Moses, 'Proletarian Labourers? East Riding Farm Servants c.1550-1875', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (1999), pp. 78-94; A.J. Gritt, 'The 'Survival' of Service in the English Agricultural Labour Force: Lessons from Lancashire, c.1650-1851', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (2002), pp. 25-50; A. Howkins and N. Verdon, 'Adaptable and Sustainable? Male Farm Service and the Agricultural Labour Force in Midland and Southern England, c.1850-1925', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 61, No.2 (2008), pp. 467-495.

**34**B. Reay, *Rural Englands: Labouring Lives in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 26, 34.

**35** Kusmaul, *Servants in Husbandry*, p. 120.

**36** *Ibid.*, p. 98; Gritt, 'The 'Survival' of Service', pp. 25-50.

**37** Kusmaul, *Servants in Husbandry*, pp. 126-131

Nicola Verdon have argued that in some southern and midland counties, farm service survived due to its ability to adapt after the 1850s.<sup>38</sup> Farm service, they argued, might not have been the dominant system in the counties they studied, but it certainly continued to be important. They identified a link between farm service and areas where climate, soil and farming systems needed a resident workforce, dairying and close proximity to industrial employment.<sup>39</sup>

In addition, Stephen Counce and Gary Moses have urged caution in interpreting the strength of farm service in the north as being a survival of something archaic. Based on their research of farm service in the East Riding of Yorkshire, they both independently argued that farm service was suited to, and beneficial for the development of, capitalist farming in the East Riding.<sup>40</sup> Alistair Mutch and Andy Gritt developed this idea that farm service was not necessarily a survival of an older system in relation to Lancashire.<sup>41</sup> Again independently these authors presented strong evidence to suggest that farm service was in fact fundamental to agricultural change in Lancashire during the mid nineteenth century.<sup>42</sup> Farm service was statistically more predominant in the north of England, and particularly in Yorkshire and Lancashire. The work of Counce, Moses, Mutch and Gritt has demonstrated that the strength of farm service in these two counties during the mid nineteenth century was primarily because it facilitated capitalist farmers in industrial areas to secure sufficient labour. Collectively, the work of these four historians has ensured that regional perspectives of farm service have evolved accordingly.

Despite this greater understanding of farm service in Lancashire and the East Riding of Yorkshire, little or nothing is known about farm service in

<sup>38</sup> Howkins and Verdon, 'Adaptable and Sustainable?', pp. 467-495.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 491.

<sup>40</sup> Counce, 'Farm Servants', p. 51; Moses, 'Proletarian Labourers?', p. 86.

<sup>41</sup> A. Mutch, 'The Farming Ladder in North Lancashire, 1840-1914: Myth or Reality?', *Northern History*, Vol. 27 (1991), pp. 162-83; Gritt, 'The 'Survival' of Service', pp. 28, 50.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

many other areas of the north of England. The position of the farm servant in the West Riding of Yorkshire has been under-researched and yet offers great potential for evaluating farm service in an industrialised county in the north of England during the mid nineteenth century. The published census reports for 1851 and 1871 provide evidence of the West Riding of Yorkshire being a relatively high service area during the mid nineteenth century. In 1851, farm service accounted for 24.6 per cent of all male paid agricultural workers in the region.<sup>43</sup> By 1871, this had increased to 27.4 per cent of the male agricultural workforce.<sup>44</sup> This contrasted with a slightly higher proportion of the agricultural workforce occupied as farm servants in the East Riding of Yorkshire. For example, in 1851 38.5 per cent of the male agricultural workforce was employed as farm servants in the East Riding, and 39.9 per cent in 1871. Counce argued that farm service was a dominant form of agricultural employment in the East Riding of Yorkshire during the mid nineteenth century because it was a good way to meet labour demand. He argued that rising urban demand for agricultural production was accompanied by only a modest increase in the rural population.<sup>45</sup> Close proximity to urban and industrial growth has often been cited as a key factor in why farm service was dominant in some areas, as industry and agriculture competed for workers.<sup>46</sup> This suggests that the industrialisation of the region was at least partially responsible for the statistical importance of the farm servant in the West Riding of Yorkshire during the mid nineteenth century.

Nevertheless, the West Riding of Yorkshire was not a homogenous region in the mid nineteenth century, and treating it as such once again conceals important differences in farm service between parishes,

<sup>43</sup> PP 1852-53, LXXXVIII, *Census of Great Britain, 1851. Population Tables: Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birthplace of the People*, Vol. II, p. 685.

<sup>44</sup> PP 1873, LXXI, *Census of England and Wales, 1871: Population Abstracts, Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birth Places of the People*, Vol. III, p. 467.

<sup>45</sup> S. Counce, *Amongst Farm Horses: The Houselads of East Yorkshire* (Gloucester, 1991), pp. 199-200.

<sup>46</sup> Caird, *English Agriculture*, p. 513; Howkins and Verdon, 'Adaptable and Sustainable?', p. 491.

villages and farms. Other historians have identified similar variation at county level, which has cast doubt over the value of county data for analysing farm service. On the basis of considerable variation between parishes in Hertfordshire, Goose cautioned against over-reliance on the printed county tables for evidence of farm servants.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, Howkins and Verdon concluded that the county was not the best unit of measurement for farm service.<sup>48</sup> In contrast, the CEBs are a very useful source for comparing farm servants and farm service in villages during the mid nineteenth century, and yet use of them for the analysis of farm service remains limited.<sup>49</sup> Howkins and Verdon examined the CEBs for 28 parishes in seven midland and southern counties to analyse patterns of farm service.<sup>50</sup> They argued that inconsistency between the printed county reports and the CEBs, meant that the CEBs were invaluable for studies of farm service at parish and village level.<sup>51</sup> Inevitable difficulties arose from the enumeration process, which included inaccurate recording of farm servants.<sup>52</sup> Farm servants are identified in the CEBs in three ways: relationship to head of household, occupational description and details given under farmers' occupations. The total number of male farm servants in the six villages has been calculated by counting all agricultural workers who 'lived in'. This methodology takes into account farm servants whose occupational description was agricultural labourer even though they lived in and/or their relation to head of household was servant. It therefore accounts for farm servants who were potentially missed in the county reports.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>47</sup> N. Goose, 'Farm Service, Seasonal Unemployment and Casual Labour in Mid Nineteenth Century England', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (2006), p. 296.

<sup>48</sup> Howkins and Verdon, 'Adaptable and Sustainable?', p. 481.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 476, 492.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 467-95.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 477-8.

<sup>52</sup> D.R. Mills, 'Trouble with Farms at the Census Office: an Evaluation of Farm Statistics from the Censuses of 1851-1881 in England and Wales', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (1999), pp. 58-77.

<sup>53</sup> Goose, 'Farm Service, Seasonal Unemployment and Casual Labour', p. 277; Howkins & Verdon, 'Adaptable and Sustainable?', p. 471.



### **Male Farm Service in the Six Villages**

Male farm service was far from moribund in the Doncaster district in the mid nineteenth century, although as a proportion of total agricultural employment it did vary from village to village. The exact proportions of male farm servants in the six villages are depicted in table 3.3. Farm service accounted for nearly half the male resident agricultural workforce in the estate village of Sprotbrough in 1851. At Rossington, almost one third of the male agricultural workforce was employed as farm servants. The requirement for paid labour in the three estate villages has already been demonstrated earlier in this chapter to be generally higher than that of the three multi-freeholder villages. Mills argued that due to the landowner controlling population and accommodation, estate villages were dependent on surplus labour from multi-freeholder villages to meet this demand. Yet the evidence presented here suggests that some farmers in estate villages employed farm servants as a solution to the potential labour deficit. Farm service provided farmers in estate villages with a resident workforce that did not necessitate additional cottage building. The lowest proportions of farm servants were at Fishlake and Stainforth, both of which were multi-freeholder villages with large populations. Mills argued that a large population equated to surplus labour, which reduced the need for farm servants. These statistics suggest that a tentative classificatory relationship between landownership and farm service did exist in the six villages.

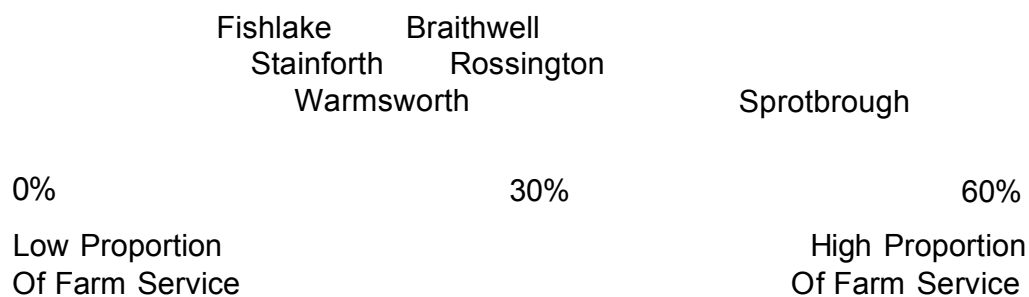
Table 3.3: Farm Service as a Percentage of the Male Agricultural Workforce, 1851-1871

	1851		1861		1871	
	Number of farm servants	Farm service as percentage of total male agricultural employment	Number of farm servants	Farm service as percentage of total male agricultural employment	Number of farm servants	Farm service as percentage of total male agricultural employment
Estate:						
Sprotbrough	14	45.1	9	31	6	30
Warmsworth	7	20	5	15	1	5.2
Rossington	24	27J5	20	32J3	19	34J5
Multi-freeholder:						
Braithwell	15	26.8	9	22.5	6	18.7
Fishlake	7	15.5	6	25	4	11.4
Stainforth	8	17	4	8.5	4	12.1

Source: as per table 3.1

Nonetheless, the variations in the extent of farm service between villages with similar landowning structures should not be ignored or underestimated. In 1851, farm service was only 20% of total agricultural employment in the estate village of Warmsworth. Yet at Braithwell, a multi-freeholder village, farm service was 26.8%, which was greater than in the other two multi-freeholder villages and at Warmsworth. As fig. 3.4 illustrates these variations are again better accommodated on a continuum. The continuum uses the exact proportion of farm service in order to position the six villages. As a consequence, rather than merely saying farm service was a larger percentage of the total agricultural workforce in the estate villages than the multi-freeholder villages it demonstrates the differentiation between villages. This makes the continuum more representative of the experience of farm service in the six villages than applying the strict dichotomy of the Mills model.

Fig. 3.4: Farm Servants Continuum, 1851



The continuum also accommodates changes to farm service over time. Between 1851 and 1871, farm service as a proportion of the male agricultural workforce in the six villages decreased in all but Rossington.<sup>54</sup> At Warmsworth, there was a notable decline in the actual number of farm servants, as well as the proportion of the male agricultural workforce in the village employed as farm servants. By 1871, only one person in Warmsworth was employed as ‘live-in’ farm servant, which was a mere 5.2 per cent of the total male agricultural workforce.<sup>55</sup> This was consistent with a decrease in the total proportion of men employed in agriculture over the same period. Concurrently, the proportion of men employed in industrial occupations on the estate had increased from 23.2 per cent in 1851 to 32.5 per cent in 1871.<sup>56</sup> Far from strengthening and sustaining farm service, close proximity to industrial employment had had the opposite effect in Warmsworth.

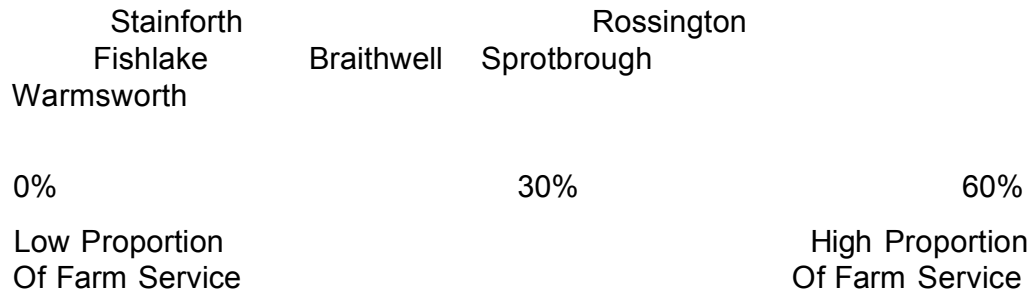
<sup>54</sup>TNA, HO107/2346, *CEB Sprotbrough 1851*; TNA, HO107/2346, *CEB Warmsworth 1851*; TNA, HO107/2348, *CEB Rossington 1851*; TNA, HO107/2346, *CEB Braithwell 1851*; TNA, HO107/2349, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1851*; Doncaster Archives, DY/Wall/1-2, *Hatfield Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1843 (includes Stainforth); TNA, RG9/3516, *CEB Sprotbrough 1861*; TNA, RG9/3514, *CEB Warmsworth 1861*; TNA, RG9/3522, *CEB Rossington 1861*; TNA, RG9/3513, *CEB Braithwell 1861*; TNA, RG9/3524, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1861*; TNA, RG10/4716, *CEB Sprotbrough 1871*; TNA, RG10/4715, *CEB Warmsworth 1871*; TNA, RG10/4724, *CEB Rossington 1871*; TNA, RG10/4714, *CEB Braithwell 1871*; TNA, RG10/4726, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1871*

<sup>55</sup>TNA, HO107/2346, *CEB Warmsworth 1851*; TNA, RG10/4715, *CEB Warmsworth 1871*.

<sup>56</sup>TNA, RG10/4715, *CEB Warmsworth 1871*.

Conversely, at Rossington, the proportion of agricultural workers employed as farm servants increased between 1851 and 1871.<sup>57</sup> This corresponds with the earlier statistical analysis that demonstrated a much higher proportion of paid labour in Rossington than in the other two estate villages. The continuum accommodates these changes, and depicts change in relation to other villages and between different dates, as shown in fig. 3.5. The positioning of the three estate villages on the continuum is particularly indicative of the changes to farm service that had taken place. Rossington had the largest proportion of farm servants in 1871 and was on the right of the continuum. Conversely, Warmsworth was at the left hand side of the continuum with the fewest farm servants. This visual representation of the disparities in farm service in villages with similar landowning structures, and the changes to farm service between 1851 and 1871, provoke the need for further explanations.

Fig. 3.5: Farm Servants Continuum, 1871



<sup>57</sup>TNA, H0107/2348, *CEB Rossington 1851*; TNA, RG10/4724, *CEB Rossington 1871*.

## **Explaining Inter-village Disparities in Farm Service**

Disparities in patterns of farm service were evident in the six villages, in spite of them all being in close proximity with each other and to the market town of Doncaster. The explanations for these disparities, as Goose argued in relation to villages in Hertfordshire, are often far from clear.<sup>58</sup> Goose identified farm size and farming type as possible explanations for, and indicators of, the relative strength of farm service in villages in Hertfordshire.<sup>59</sup> Goose, and Howkins and Verdon, argued that the number of farm servants increased proportionately to the size of farm, due to the supposedly greater labour demand on larger farms.<sup>60</sup> It has also been acknowledged that the relationship between farm size and farm service was not always a straightforward one. Moses argued that the large number of farm servants on large farms in the East Riding told him more about labour demand on larger farms than why farm servants were favoured over other agricultural workers.<sup>61</sup>

The relationship between farm size and farm service in the six villages in 1851 is shown in fig. 3.6. The evidence from the six villages does demonstrate an association between farm size and farm servants in each village. More farm servants were employed as the size of farms increased. The exceptions included smaller farms of less than 100 acres employing up to two farm servants, and slightly larger farms between 100 and 199 acres not employing any farm servants at all. Nevertheless, all the farms in excess of 200 acres in the six villages employed at least two farm servants, and farms employing three or more farm servants were at least 150 acres in size.

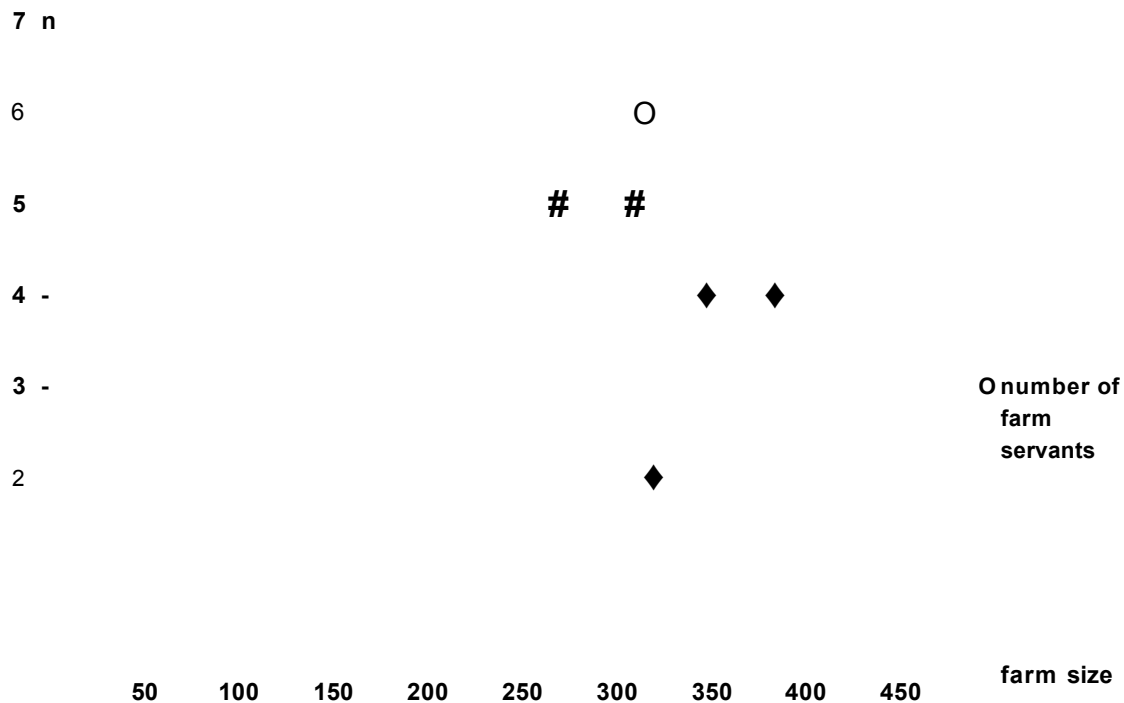
<sup>58</sup> Goose, 'Farm Service, Seasonal Unemployment and Casual Labour', p. 282.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*; Howkins and Verdon, 'Adaptable and Sustainable', p. 481.

<sup>61</sup> G. Moses, *Rural Moral Reform in Nineteenth-Century England: The Crusade against Adolescent Farm Servants and Hiring Fairs* (Lampeter, 2007), pp. 20-1.

Fig. 3.6: Relationship between Farm Size and the Number of Farm Servants in the Six Villages, 1851



Source: TNA, HO107/2346, CEB Sprotbrough 1851; TNA, HO107/2346, CEB Warmsworth 1851; TNA, HO107/2348, CEB Rossington 1851; TNA, HO107/2346, CEB Braithwell 1851; TNA, HO107/2349, CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1851; Doncaster Archives, DY/Wall/1-2, Hatfield Tithe Apportionment and Map, 1843 (includes Stainforth)

These patterns were more or less replicated in 1871. The relationship between farm size and farm servants was in some respects even sharper. Farms employing three or more farm servants were all now at least 250 acres. This suggests that the optimum farm size for employing more farm servants had increased between 1851 and 1871. This is significant in explaining the higher proportion of farm servants at Rossington during this period, as farm size in the village increased between 1851 and 1871. Based on this evidence, farm size was to some extent indicative of the disparity in farm service in the six villages, and of its strength at Rossington.

Other explanations for the strength of farm service have focussed on settlement patterns and the size of the population. Moses argued that a

shift from nucleated villages to dispersed and isolated farmsteads on the Wolds strengthened farm service as the demand for labour could not otherwise be met from the locality.<sup>62</sup> This does not seem applicable to the six villages, where settlement patterns were more nucleated than on the Wolds. Fishlake and Stainforth were the most scattered settlements, yet farm service as a proportion of the total male agricultural workforce was consistently low. Nor did the comparative strength of farm service in the six villages consistently reflect population change. Between 1851 and 1871, the population of all but Warmsworth decreased between 4.2 per cent and 24.5 per cent. At Braithwell, where the population decreased by 24.5 per cent, the number of farm servants also decreased. Yet at Rossington, where the population decreased by 18.2 per cent, farm service increased as a percentage of total male agricultural employment.

Ultimately, it was a combination of factors that were responsible for the high proportion of farm service in the estate village of Rossington. In addition to an increase in farm size and a decrease in the population, farm service at Rossington was indicative of, and integral to, agricultural change on the estate. As demonstrated in chapter two, capital-intensive agriculture including the construction of new farm buildings was indicative of the management strategies adopted by the landowners. This accords with Moses' work on the East Riding of Yorkshire, in which he argued that compared to other parts of the county the Wolds had both the most agricultural change and the most farm servants during the mid nineteenth century.<sup>63</sup> According to Moses, farm service was a way in which sufficient labour to preside over agricultural change could be secured. In fact, Moses argued that the transition to large capitalist farming in the East Riding co-existed with farm service, and that farmers who oversaw the development of the most advanced forms of agricultural production were committed to farm service in the nineteenth

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20-1.

century.<sup>64</sup> At Rossington, the increased farm size, construction of new farm buildings, mechanisation and the application of 'high farming' techniques could all be argued to have increased the demand for agricultural labour. Agricultural change, in conjunction with a decrease in the population, could therefore have necessitated the employment of 'live-in' farm servants at Rossington. Collectively, the evidence suggests that farm service evolved to meet the changing requirements of modern agriculture on the Rossington estate, rather than being an archaic survival of an outmoded form of employment.

### **The Identity of Farm Servants in the Six Villages**

Just as patterns of farm service varied from village to village, so did the farm servants themselves. The characteristic farm servant was young and mobile. According to Reay, almost 60 per cent of male farm servants in England and Wales in 1871 were under the age of 20, and nearly 90 per cent were under 35.<sup>65</sup> Farm service in the West Riding of Yorkshire was also characterised by its youthful nature. In 1851, 51.8 per cent of male farm servants in the county were under the age of 20, and 86.4 per cent were under 30 years.<sup>66</sup> By 1871, this trend was even more pronounced with 58 per cent of male farm servants under 20, and 89.7 per cent under the age of 30.<sup>67</sup> A similar pattern is evident in the six villages as illustrated in tables 3.4 and 3.5. In 1851, 71.5 per cent of farm servants in the six villages were under 30, and in 1871 66.7 per cent were under 30. Farm servants in some of the villages were exclusively youthful. For example, 100 per cent of farm servants in Fishlake and Warmsworth in 1871 were under the age of twenty.

Some of the farm servants in the six villages also conformed to the notion of farm servants being mobile and undertaking life cycle employment. William Mellars, who had been born in Carlton,

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-9.

<sup>65</sup> Reay, *Rural England*, p. 34.

<sup>66</sup> PP 1852-53, LXXXVIII, *Census of Great Britain, 1851. Population Tables: Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birthplace of the People*, Vol. II, p. 685.

<sup>67</sup> PP 1873, LXXI, *Census of England and Wales, 1871: Population Abstracts, Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birth Places of the People*, Vol. III, p. 467.



Nottinghamshire, was employed at the age of 15 as a 'live-in' farm servant on John Thompson's farm in Braithwell in 1861. By 1871, he had returned to Carlton where subsequently he would farm land himself. This provides evidence that in addition to being characterised by youth and mobility, farm service was also an opportunity to ascend the farming ladder. The concept of the farming ladder, applied particularly to the pastoral small farms of north-west England, was one in which farm workers could progress from farm servants to tenant farmers through hard work and saving.<sup>68</sup> Alistair Mutch argued that for some farm servants and sons of farm labourers it was possible to climb the first rung of the farming ladder and tenant a small farm (0-49 acres) in North Lancashire, but very few could contemplate rising further as they did not have sufficient capital and some would fall backwards.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, according to Mutch it was not the norm for every farm servant or son of a farm labourer to climb the farming ladder, although it may have been an aspiration for many.<sup>70</sup> Few farm servants in the six villages can be identified as having become tenants of small farms, suggesting that the farming ladder was not in fact a realistic prospect for the majority of farm servants in the Doncaster district.

Table 3.4: The Age of Male Farm Servants in the Six Villages, 1851

	Percentage of Male Farm Servants Aged:				
	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	Over 50
Sprotbrough	42.9	28.6		7	21.4
Rossington	70	25	5		
Warmsworth	66.7	33.3			
Braithwell	90	10			
Fishlake	80	20			
Stainforth	71.4	14.3		14.3	

Source: TNA, H0107/2346, CEB Sprotbrough 1851; TNA, H0107/2346, CEB Warmsworth 1851; TNA, H0107/2348, CEB Rossington 1851, TNA, H0107/2346, CEB Braithwell 1851; TNA, H0107/2349, CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1851

<sup>68</sup>A. Mutch, The "Farming Ladder" in North Lancashire, 1840-1914: Myth or Reality?', *Northern History*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (1991), p. 162.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid, pp. 172-8.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 178.

Table 3.5: The Age Range of Male Farm Servants in the Six Villages, 1871

	Percentage of Male Farm Servants Aged:				
	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	Over 50
Sprotbrough	33.4	33.3	33.3		
Rossington	60	26.8		6.6	6.6
Warmsworth	100				
Braithwell	87.5		12.5		
Fishlake	100				
Stainforth	80	20			

**Source:** TNA, RG10/4716, CEB Sprotbrough 1871; TNA, RG10/4715, CEB Warmsworth 1871; TNA, RG10/4724, CEB Rossington 1871; TNA, RG10/4714, CEB Braithwell 1871; TNA, RG10/4726, CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1871

Other farm servants in the six villages deviated from this typical model of farm service. Some farm servants were young but undertook farm service in the village where they were born. For example, George Lee was a farm servant in Stainforth in 1851, despite having been born in the village and members of his family still living in the village. Similarly, John Thompson, aged 19, was a farm servant on the Walker farm at Warmsworth in 1861, where he too had been born and members of his family still lived. Other farm servants were actually relatives of the farmers they served. According to Flowkins and Verdon, this practice was not uncommon on smaller farms, citing examples of farms that were 50 and 162 acres that employed nephews and grandsons as farm servants.<sup>71</sup> This applied to two farms and their farm servants in Braithwell in 1871. Charles (30) and John (14) were listed as farm servants living with their father, Joseph Marshall, who farmed 24 acres. Similarly, John and Joseph Hardcastle were the 'live-in' farm servants of their grandfather, John Revill who farmed 25 acres in Braithwell.

Some of the farm servants in the six villages were definitely not young and mobile. More than a quarter of all the farm servants in the six villages were over the age of thirty. Older farm servants were most evident in Sprotbrough and Stainforth in 1851 and in Sprotbrough,

<sup>71</sup> Howkins & Verdon, 'Adaptable and Sustainable', p. 481.

Rossington and Braithwell in 1871. This evidence of older agricultural workers 'living in' challenges the stereotypical youthfulness of the farm servant and has implications for farm service being perceived as primarily life cycle employment, which was undertaken between childhood and adult employment and often outside the parish of birth.<sup>72</sup> For example, William Bailey was a 'live-in' farm servant at Stainforth in 1851 aged forty. He was widowed, and lived in the farmhouse with his son, who was also a farm servant on the same farm. This evidence indicates that a link existed between older farm servants and their personal circumstances. Farm service adapted to suit the needs of farmers and farm workers at different times during the mid nineteenth century, in different places, and at different points in the lives of agricultural workers.

Before moving on to look at the ways in which these farm servants were hired, the role of the female farm servant deserves some attention. The main analysis of farm servants in the six villages has been limited to the male experience due to limitations with the sources and in order to be comparable with other studies. Female farm servants were not always clearly recorded as such in the CEBs. In addition to the general problems of locating female workers in the census, specific issues affected the under-recording of female farm servants. Considerable overlap in the work undertaken by farm servants and domestic servants characterised the 'live-in' female worker, especially on smaller farms, which meant that farm work was not always distinguished from domestic duties in the CEBs.<sup>73</sup> Gary Moses argued that as a consequence, the census suggests a dramatic decline in the number of female farm servants that in fact under-estimates the importance of women on the land during the mid nineteenth century.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, an analysis of

<sup>72</sup> R. Wall, 'Work, Welfare and the Family: an Illustration of the Adaptive Family Economy' in L. Bonfield, R.M. Smith and K. Wrightson (eds), *The World We Have Gained* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 261-294.

<sup>73</sup> Reay, *Rural England*, p. 51; E. Higgs, 'Women, Occupations and Work in the Nineteenth Century Censuses', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (1987), pp. 59-80.

<sup>74</sup> Moses, *Rural Moral Reform*, pp. 26-29.

the extent to which female farm servants were recorded in the CEBs for the six villages is still useful, and very relevant as it was female farm servants who were placed at the heart of the campaign to reform hiring fairs in the mid nineteenth century.

In the West Riding of Yorkshire, 3301 women were recorded as farm servants in 1851 compared to 1466 female agricultural labourers.<sup>75</sup> By 1871 only 590 female farm servants were recorded in the West Riding of Yorkshire compared to 1412 female agricultural labourers.<sup>76</sup> As a percentage of the total female paid agricultural workforce, the proportion of female farm servants recorded in the county had decreased from 69.3 per cent in 1851 to only 29.5 per cent in 1871. Changes to the ways in which women were employed in agriculture in the nineteenth century were closely interlinked to moral concerns about young women living in the farmhouse, as well as about the work they were undertaking.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, as discussed above, female farm servants were often under-enumerated, along with other female workers, in the CEBs. A specific problem with identifying the female farm servant in the census relates to definitions used. In the majority of cases, the distinction between different types of work undertaken by women who lived and worked on the farm was not made. Most female servants undertook a range of jobs, including domestic work in the farmhouse and agricultural work on the land. Yet the census predominantly recorded them as domestic or general servants.<sup>78</sup> Skilled or specialist work, such as working in the dairy, was however usually defined as such in the CEBs. The dairy was considered to be more respectable than fieldwork, with connotations of

<sup>75</sup> PP 1852-53, LXXXVIII, *Census of Great Britain, 1851. Population Tables: Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birthplace of the People*, Vol. II, p. 688.

<sup>76</sup> PP 1873, LXXI, *Census of England and Wales, 1871: Population Abstracts, Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birth Places of the People*, Vol. III, p. 471.

<sup>77</sup> K. Sayer, *Women of the Fields: Representations of Rural Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Manchester, 1995), pp. 67-68.

<sup>78</sup> Howkins & Verdon, 'Adaptable and Sustainable', p. 471; N. Verdon, *Rural Women Workers in Nineteenth-Century England: Gender, Work and Wages* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 82-83, 87, 197; Higgs, 'Occupational Censuses and Agricultural Workforce', p. 707; Higgs, 'Women, Occupations and Work', p. 71.

purity and domesticity, and thus dairy maids were more frequently specified and recorded than other female farm servants.<sup>79</sup>

The evidence for female farm servants in the six villages corresponds with the literature on the subject. Very few women living in the six villages were specified as being farm servants in the CEBs between 1851 and 1871. In 1851, none were recorded; in 1861 a total of nine; and in 1871 just two.<sup>80</sup> In each instance, the female farm servants who were recorded were specified as being dairy maids. A larger number of women were employed as domestic servants in the farmhouses of the six villages between 1851 and 1871. Table 3.6 illustrates the total number of female servants employed by farmers in the six villages, including dairy maids, domestic servants and general servants. According to Nicola Verdon, many women who were recorded as 'general servants' in farmhouses may be assumed to have performed work on the land as well.<sup>81</sup> This may well mean that the number of female farm servants in the six villages was far greater than an initial analysis of the CEBs suggests. Female farm servants are undoubtedly difficult to locate accurately in the census. There is however more evidence about how they were hired, and the contemporary objections about their work and position.

<sup>79</sup>Sayer, *Women of the Fields*, p. 105.

<sup>80</sup>TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Sprotbrough 1851*; TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Warmsworth 1851*; TNA, H0107/2348, *CEB Rossington 1851*; TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Braithwell 1851*; TNA, H0107/2349, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1851*; TNA, RG9/3516, *CEB Sprotbrough 1861*; TNA, RG9/3514, *CEB Warmsworth 1861*; TNA, RG9/3522, *CEB Rossington 1861*; TNA, RG9/3513, *CEB Braithwell 1861*; TNA, RG9/3524, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1861*; TNA, RG10/4716, *CEB Sprotbrough 1871*; TNA, RG10/4715, *CEB Warmsworth 1871*; TNA, RG10/4724, *CEB Rossington 1871*; TNA, RG10/4714, *CEB Braithwell 1871*; TNA, RG10/4726, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1871*.

<sup>81</sup>Verdon, *Rural Women Workers*, pp. 82-83.

Table 3.6: Number of Female Servants Employed in the Farmhouses of the Six Villages between 1851 and 1871.

	1851	1861	1871
Sprotbrough	6	6	5
Rossington	10	13	8
Warmsworth	4	6	3
Braithwell	11	7	3
Fishlake	8	4	4
Stainforth	11	14	11
TOTAL	50	50	34

Source: as per table 3.1

### Hiring Farm Servants in the Doncaster District

The Doncaster Statutes, held every November in the market place for 'the hiring of servants chiefly employed in agricultural pursuits', was the main hiring fair serving the six villages.<sup>82</sup> Other hiring fairs in the vicinity included Thorne, Hatfield, Bawtry, Tickhill and Askern, but these were all much smaller affairs, many of which were in decline during the nineteenth century. It was reported by the *Doncaster Gazette* in 1836 that the Thorne Statutes were not as numerous attended as previously.<sup>83</sup> The smaller statutes also received a decreasing number of mentions in the local newspapers, although many did not disappear completely.<sup>84</sup> This pattern of inter-district superiority amongst hiring fairs was evident elsewhere in the north of England, as evidenced by Counce.<sup>85</sup> As the Doncaster Statutes were by far the largest in the locality, they consequently received the most attention from local newspapers and attracted the most criticism from moral reformers

<sup>82</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 16 November 1838, p. 3.

<sup>83</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 18 November 1836, p. 3.

<sup>84</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 12 November 1858, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 111 November 1859, p. 5.

<sup>85</sup> S. Counce, 'The Hiring Fairs of Northern England, 1890-1930: A Regional Analysis of Commercial and Social Networking in Agriculture', *Past and Present*, Vol. 217, No. 1 (November 2012), pp. 213-46.

during the mid nineteenth century.<sup>86</sup>

Local newspaper reports provide evidence of the changing fortunes of the Doncaster Statutes. As Moses argued, newspapers are one of the most readily available sources for the study of hiring fairs.<sup>87</sup> He qualified this by adding that the reports vary in their comprehensiveness. The *Doncaster Gazette* fortunately furnishes us with detailed accounts of the Doncaster Statutes annually. The reports include information and perspectives about them, including attendance, wages, and the moral campaign to reform them. It is important to acknowledge the inevitable bias embedded in the newspaper reports, especially with regards attitudes to and perspectives on hiring fairs, without underestimating their value. Parallels can also be drawn between the processes taking place in the Doncaster district and those identified in the East Riding by Moses, although the impact of these was significantly different.

The *Doncaster Gazette* charted the uneven development of the Doncaster Statutes from the 1830s. According to the newspaper reports, hiring was disproportionately low compared to attendance in 1838 and from 1842 to 1849.<sup>88</sup> This corresponded with the generally depressed state of agriculture in England during the late 1830s and the 1840s. The exception was 1839 to 1841, when both attendance and hiring were reported to be good.<sup>89</sup> In fact the 1839 report noted that an increased number of 'blooming lasses and lusty lads from the local villages' were present, and that considerable hiring took place with good wages given for all descriptions of servants.<sup>90</sup> The buoyancy of hiring at

<sup>86</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 18 November 1836, p. 3; *Doncaster Gazette*, 17 November 1837, p. 2; *Doncaster Gazette*, 4 November 1842, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 12 November 1858, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 11 November 1859, p. 5.

<sup>87</sup> Caunce, 'The Hiring Fairs of Northern England', p. 79.

<sup>88</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 16 November 1838, p. 3; *Doncaster Gazette*, 18 November 1842, p. 4; *Doncaster Gazette*, 17 November 1843, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 15 November 1844, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 14 November 1845, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 13 November 1846, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 12 November 1847, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 17 November 1848, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 16 November 1849, p. 5.

<sup>89</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 15 November 1839, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 13 November 1840, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 14 November 1840, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 12 November 1841, p. 5.

<sup>90</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 15 November 1839, p. 5.

the Statutes waned thereafter. The general pattern during the 1840s was for the Doncaster Statutes to be attended by a large number of servants seeking positions but for little hiring to take place. Although the newspaper reports did not quantify their statements with statistics, they did speculate about the causes. In 1842, the *Doncaster Gazette* reported that farmers were reluctant to hire unless absolutely necessary due to generally depressed economic conditions, and that servants had to submit to lower wages before they were considered for positions.<sup>91</sup> It appears that after three years of granting high wages, farmers resisted further demands by farm servants. The demand for high wages by farm servants was cited as preventing much hiring taking place between 1844 and 1847 as well.<sup>92</sup> Further to the economic considerations, additional structural change was also identified. As early as 1843, it was reported that hiring was not brisk because of 'the more general and increasing practice' of farmers securing servants prior to the statutes.<sup>93</sup> This suggests that hiring practices in the Doncaster district were already undergoing change in the early 1840s.

Agricultural prosperity from the 1850s affected hiring and wages at the statutes. In Doncaster, a pendulum effect can be identified, which meant that rising wages demands were not always met. For example, in 1848 the *Doncaster Gazette* reported that high wages were both asked and obtained.<sup>94</sup> Yet in 1849, the advanced wages requested were generally not obtained.<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, the 1850s was a period characterised by the numerous attendance of servants at the Doncaster Statutes, increased wage demands and brisk hiring.<sup>96</sup> This coincided with patterns of hiring in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Moses argued that with the exception of a brief downturn between 1857 and the early

<sup>91</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 18 November 1842, p. 4.

<sup>92</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 15 November 1844, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 14 November 1845, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 12 November 1847, p. 5.

<sup>93</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 17 November 1843, p. 5.

<sup>94</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 17 November 1848, p. 5.

<sup>95</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 16 November 1849, p. 5.

<sup>96</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 15 November 1850, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 12 November 1852, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 18 November 1853, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 20 November 1858, p. 5.



1860s, hiring was brisk and wages buoyant at the East Riding hiring fairs.<sup>97</sup> In both instances, the demand for higher wages was characteristic. The nature of hiring fairs brought farmers and farm servants together on neutral territory, with a view to securing workers or work. Moses argued that farm servants increasingly saw their labour as a commodity to be bought and sold during this period, and that due to a scarcity of labour in the East Riding collectively used the hiring fairs as a bargaining process.<sup>98</sup> The evidence suggests that farm servants who attended the Doncaster Statutes were part of this process by demanding increasingly higher wages.

Significantly, demands for higher wages at the Doncaster Statutes met sustained resistance earlier than in the East Riding. Moses argued that it was not until the 1870s that farmers in the East Riding began to resist wage demands. In addition to periodic resistance in the 1840s and 1850s, from 1859 high wage demands consistently checked hiring at Doncaster. The *Doncaster Gazette* reported in 1859 that little hiring took place due to the high wages being asked.<sup>99</sup> Again, in 1866, the *Gazette* wrote that hiring had been checked by exorbitant wage demands.<sup>100</sup> This did not inhibit the farm servants in their quest to command even higher wages. Moreover, the evidence suggests that under suitable circumstances the bargaining power of farm servants in the Doncaster area was still strong as late as 1875. Demand for farm servants far exceeded the supply, which favoured the farm servants. The *Doncaster Gazette* reported that those seeking positions were quick to take advantage of the situation, demanding even greater wages.<sup>101</sup> In many respects this situation polarised the class divide between farm servants and farmers. In extreme cases, farmers reluctantly had to accept the demands resulting in wages that far exceeded those previously known. Whereas the highest wage demands in previous years had risen from

<sup>97</sup> Moses, *Rural Reform*, pp. 92-5.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 92-5.

<sup>99</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 18 November 1859, p. 5.

<sup>100</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 16 November 1866, p. 5.

<sup>101</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 19 November 1875, p. 5.

£20 in the 1860s to up to £30 in 1873, first class farming men were commanding over £30 in 1875. Yet many farmers were determined not to make engagements at such exorbitant prices. By 1877, the majority of farmers in the Doncaster district refused to concede to high wage demands, especially not at the hiring fairs.

This distinct pattern of wage demands not being met was coupled with changing attitudes regarding the Doncaster Statutes, which resulted in hiring practices being redefined in the area. The *Doncaster Gazette* intimated that this process had already begun in 1843, with an increasing number of farm servants securing positions prior to the Statutes.<sup>102</sup> During the mid nineteenth century concerns about the immorality of hiring fairs grew. Principal objections centred upon how they were a demoralising practice, which reduced farm servants to commodities and exposed them to inappropriate behaviour.<sup>103</sup> The *Doncaster Gazette* reported that behaviour at the Doncaster Statutes was increasingly a cause for concern. In 1839 they cited 'several petty depredations and assaults... committed by disorderly persons, chiefly townspeople' and again in 1843 they reported an 'influx of thieves and vagabonds'.<sup>104</sup> Thieves and pickpockets continued to be a feature of subsequent newspaper reports.<sup>105</sup>

The intensity of emotion was heightened by the growing disparity between the crime and immoral behaviour witnessed at the Doncaster Statutes on the one hand and the increasing improvements in the conduct of servants themselves on the other. For example, in 1841 the *Doncaster Gazette* wrote 'It could not fail to prove gratifying to observe the neat and orderly appearance of numerous servants compared with similar occasions, evincing a decided improvement in their manners and

<sup>102</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 17 November 1843, p. 5.

<sup>103</sup> G. Moses, "'Rustic and Rude": Hiring Fairs and their Critics in East Yorkshire c. 1850-75', *Rural History*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (1996), pp. 151-175.

<sup>104</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 15 November 1839, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 17 November 1843, p. 5.

<sup>105</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 17 November 1848, p. 5.

conduct. The principal portion of them returned to their respective homes in the early part of the afternoon'.<sup>106</sup> It was as a consequence of these conflicting behaviours that the *Doncaster Gazette*, in 1849, argued 'the sooner a different plan is adopted the better will it be for all parties both in a religious and moral point of view'.<sup>107</sup> In 1850, the *Gazette* wrote of the 'evil tendency of these gatherings' and argued that it would be 'both wise and judicious if some plan could be devised and answer the same purpose as our statute fairs to prevent many indiscretions as too frequently take place at these annual assemblages'.<sup>108</sup> Similarly in 1851, the same newspaper argued that 'We should be glad...if these annual gatherings were abolished and some better plan devised, at least more in accordance with decorum, by avoiding these temptations which appear to be inseparable from the present custom of hiring and the assembling together of large masses'.<sup>109</sup> This opposition to hiring fairs, and the support of the local press, was echoed elsewhere throughout England during the mid nineteenth century. The national campaign seeking immediate reform and eventual abolition of hiring fairs is considered to date from the late 1850s.<sup>110</sup> Moses argued that the East Riding had been a part of this agitation from the early 1850s.<sup>111</sup> As the reports of the *Doncaster Gazette* have evidenced, the origins of the discontent and action against the hiring fairs in the Doncaster area predated those cited elsewhere.

Notable support for reforming hiring practices in the Doncaster district came from the clergy. Throughout England, it was the clergy who wanted to improve employment practices for all farm servants and spearheaded the pressure for reform. Moral concerns focused on male and female farmworkers being housed together, and about the way in which female farm servants in particular were hired in public.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>106</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 12 November 1841, p. 5.

<sup>107</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 16 November 1849, p. 5.

<sup>108</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 15 November 1850, p. 5.

<sup>109</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 21 November 1851, p. 5.

<sup>110</sup> Moses, *Rural Reform*, p. 134.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Moses, "'Rustic and Rude": Hiring Fairs and their Critics', pp. 151-175.

Clergymen actively involved in the campaign were generally those with hiring fairs in close proximity to them.<sup>113</sup> During the 1840s, Revd. C.E. Thomas of Warmsworth began not only to object to the hiring fairs, but to also provide a practical alternative to them for both farmers and farm servants. Giving evidence to the 1867-68 Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women, Revd. Thomas said that 'For 20 years I have made it my business to discourage as far as possible parents taking their children to be hired at statutes'.<sup>114</sup> He argued that masters seemed 'unaware that they are in duty bound to take some interest in the moral condition of their servants'.<sup>115</sup> By gathering the names of males and females wanting to become farm servants and circulating them amongst those needing servants, Revd. Thomas successfully secured places for young people prior to the statutes. As he himself commented 'there is, I am thankful to see, a growing wish on the part of the parents and the farmers to see this kind of thing abolished, and we shall abolish it in time if we set together...'.<sup>116</sup> In his opinion, if other parishes adopted the practice he had fostered 'we should have an end of statute hiring'.<sup>117</sup> The innovative approach adopted by Revd. Thomas from the 1840s was an early form of the employment register generally associated with the mid 1850s onwards.

The clergy's central role in reforming hiring fairs can also be closely interlinked with the position of the Church of England in the mid-nineteenth century. Concerns about the relative strength of non-conformity compared to the weakness of the Anglican Church were widespread during this period. The 1851 Census of Religious Worship was a unique survey of all places of worships and attendance at them. Almost 80 per cent of places had at least one non-conformist place of worship, and between 33 and 50 per cent of attendees were non-

<sup>113</sup> Moses, *Rural Reform*, p. 134.

<sup>114</sup> PP 1867-8, XVII, *First Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture 1867*, p. 402.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 403.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

conformist.<sup>118</sup> Moses identified a strong link between farm service and Methodism in the East Riding.<sup>119</sup> In the Doncaster district, the Anglican clergy certainly identified a link between agricultural labour and poor attendance at church.<sup>120</sup> The clergy of villages in the Doncaster area also cited dissent as the main impediment of the Anglican Church in response to the 1867 Archbishop's Visitation Returns. In addition, Revd. C.E. Thomas of Warmsworth cited the Statutes as impeding his work.<sup>121</sup> Thomas therefore aimed to fulfill multiple objectives by striving to reform the Statutes, including improving attendance at his own church as well as altering hiring practices.

The practice of securing positions prior to the statutes had implications that went beyond the estate village of Warmsworth. The work of Revd. Thomas was cited by Revd. J. Skinner, who sought to reform hiring practices in East Yorkshire and who heralded it as being excellent practice.<sup>122</sup> Whereas the work of Skinner is perhaps better known due to Moses bringing it the fore, Thomas was pioneering the ideas and actions of the campaign against hiring fairs. By using his position in society to implement his vision for an alternative method of hiring, the actions of Thomas became a catalyst for change that had repercussions throughout the Doncaster district. From 1856 onwards the *Doncaster Gazette* reported that increasingly servants were being hired before the statutes, due to the support of many local clergymen, gentleman and farmers.<sup>123</sup> In 1860, the Gazette wrote that 'we have to observe that the custom of public hiring is not so popular as it was some years ago'.<sup>124</sup> It cited low attendance of both masters and servants as evidence that 'this

<sup>118</sup>A. Everitt, *The Pattern of Rural Dissent* (Leicester, 1972), p. 5; K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Eil, *Rival Jerusalems: The Geography of Victorian Religion* (Cambridge, 2000).

<sup>119</sup> Moses, *Rural Reform*, pp. 139, 155-6.

<sup>120</sup> E. Royle and R.M. Lawson (eds), *Archbishop Thomson's Visitation Returns for the Diocese of York, 1865* (York, 2006).

<sup>^</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 462.

<sup>122</sup> Revd. J. Skinner, *Facts and Opinions Concerning Statute Hirings, respectively addressed to the Landowner, Clergy, Farmers and Tradespeople of the East Riding* (1861), p. 18; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 15 November 1861, p. 6.

<sup>123</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 21 November 1856, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 18 November 1859, p. 5.

<sup>124</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 23 November 1860, p. 5.

objectionable mode of hiring' was being eclipsed.<sup>125</sup> As the newspaper never substantiated their claims with statistical proof of lower attendance, nor always offered precise explanations for them, it is difficult to evaluate whether the tide had changed or this was propaganda to further fuel the campaign.

Register offices were proposed as an alternative method of hiring, which secured positions for servants without the need to attend the statutes. Prospective employers and employees registered with the offices, and positions were secured through them. In other words, they formalised the practice used by the Revd. Thomas. The vicar of Doncaster, an advocate of establishing register offices throughout the deanery of Doncaster, believed they were the best method to 'remedy the demoralising evils' of the statutes.<sup>126</sup> Ten district register offices opened in 1861, including an office at Thorne for Fishlake, Thorne, Sykehouse and Kirk Bramwith, an office at Cantley for Cantley, Rossington, Armthorpe, and an office at Warmsworth, although most business was conducted at the main Doncaster office.<sup>127</sup>

As progress was made in the Doncaster area, expectations rose. The overwhelming sentiment of a meeting held in December 1861, which was attended by over 100 principal farmers from the district, was that the statutes were places 'where almost every species of vice and immorality is spread to entice the wary', and that by replacing them with alternative systems of hiring the morality of servants could be improved.<sup>128</sup> Support from the clergy, landowners and farmers in the locality was undeniable, but the extent to which landowners, farmers and farm servants actually understood and adhered to the new systems of hiring being introduced varied considerably. Moses argued that the limited success of alternative modes of hiring was due to an inability on the part of farmers and farm servants to comprehend the options

<sup>125</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 23 November 1860, p. 5.

<sup>126</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 12 July 1861, p. 5.

<sup>127</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 8 November 1861, p. 5.

<sup>128</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 13 December 1861, p. 5.

presented to them.<sup>129</sup> It was certainly acknowledged by those present at the meeting in December 1861 that 'deep rooted prejudices' had to be overcome with regards the statutes as a day of leisure for the farm servant.<sup>130</sup> Many farm servants viewed the reforms with suspicion, suspecting their day of leisure was at risk. The *Doncaster Chronicle* had already published a report in which it urged farmers and clergy to explain to farm servants how and why the process would be reformed with the hope of alleviating the fears of the agricultural labourer.<sup>131</sup>

In addition, a fee was charged for servants to register. In May 1862, a special meeting of the general registry society of servants met in Doncaster with the objective of removing the charges that inhibited farm servants from using the register offices.<sup>132</sup> Revd. S. Surtees of Sprotbrough, William Aldam of Warmsworth and Mr Job of Hunster Grange, Rossington, who were all present, and Revd. Ornsby of Fishlake, who in his absence had sent a letter, all supported this recommendation. Revd. Surtees provided evidence of the potential success of removing the fees for registering. He told the meeting that he had paid the charge for any servants in his parish, and that consequently several servants had registered who otherwise would have been unable to.<sup>133</sup> The meeting agreed to remove the charges for applications made by farm servants and additionally recommended that one shilling be paid to the farmer where an engagement is made as an inducement.<sup>134</sup>

Farmers and landowners were increasingly placed at the heart of this moral campaign. According to the *Doncaster Gazette*, it was the responsibility of landowners and farmers to lead by example.<sup>135</sup> By 1864, the *Gazette* reported that less farmers and farm servants of a

<sup>129</sup> Moses, *Rural Reform*.

<sup>130</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 15 November 1861, p. 6.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 9 May 1862, p. 6.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 21 November 1862, p. 6.

respectable class had attended the Doncaster statutes. In addition, they noted that the register offices were well patronised. Yet, the paper argued that the offices were unable to transact the business they ought to 'until greater encouragement is given by the employers of labour, who if they resolutely set their faces against the statutes, would bring about the change which is as desirable as it is urgent'.<sup>136</sup> Evidence given to the *First Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture* (1867-68) suggests that within the six villages a hostile attitude was directed towards the hiring fairs. Thomas Wood, land agent of Sprotbrough, argued that the statutes were 'thoroughly bad and demoralising for girls'.<sup>137</sup> James Brown of Rossington said that 'The present system of hirings is most objectionable'.<sup>138</sup>

Thomas Dyson of Braithwell also said he was keen to replace what he called the 'present demoralising system of attending and hiring at annual statutes'.<sup>139</sup> Dyson had long campaigned for reform, taking the opportunity to raise the issue of the statutes during speeches to the Braithwell Ploughing Club, with the aim of dissuading farmers from hiring at the statutes. In 1846, Dyson asserted that he had not hired a servant at the statutes for a number of years and had no intention of doing so again, advocating a register of employers and servants in order to secure positions prior to the statutes.<sup>140</sup> Support for reforming hiring practices came from landowners and farmers in both the estate villages and the multi-freeholder villages, but it is less evident where they had most success. In addition to supporting the clergy's moral campaign, it meant landowners and farmers exerted additional control over the farm servants with a view to limiting their increased confidence in the market place. The involvement of landowners and farmers in the district wide

<sup>136</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 16 November 1864, p. 5

<sup>137</sup> PP 1867-8, XVII, *First Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture 1867*, p. 396.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 395.

<sup>139</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 22 November 1844, p. 7.

<sup>140</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 23 October 1846, p. 5.



campaign extended their causal role beyond the confines of the villages where they owned land and/or farmed, and ultimately affected the way in which the farm servants employed in these villages were hired.

Less attention was devoted to the Doncaster Statutes as an entertainment venue. Hiring fairs performed this role alongside the economic function of hiring. The *Doncaster Gazette* reported in 1843, the day of the statutes was 'generally considered by the men so engaged as a privilege day, and they accordingly claim it as a holiday to which they are entitled, if not by law at least by custom'.<sup>141</sup> Similarly, the *Doncaster Chronicle* reported that a great many people supposedly came to the statutes for the purpose of securing a master or mistress, but in fact intended to enjoy a day of recreation.<sup>142</sup> The business of the Doncaster Statutes was accompanied by entertainment in the form of penny circuses, shooting galleries, 'freak shows', and numerous other Victorian sideshows.<sup>143</sup> The *Doncaster Gazette* reported how the entertainments were 'liberally patronised' and were the 'principal attraction'.<sup>144</sup> Undoubtedly, the entertainments and leisure aspect was to some extent responsible for the number of people who visited Doncaster during the Statutes from much further afield. The South Yorkshire Railway Company ran special trains from York, Wakefield and Sheffield specifically to bring people to the Statutes, which succeeded in inflating the total attendance during the 1850s and 1860s.<sup>145</sup> Consequently, a wide range of different people, from different backgrounds and different types of places, came into contact with one another at the Doncaster Statutes, facilitating the inter-relationships between villages with different landowning structures on common ground.

<sup>141</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 17 November 1843, p. 5.

<sup>142</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 17 November 1844, p. 8.

<sup>143</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 14 November 1840, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 12 November 1847, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 15 November 1850, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 20 November 1863, p. 5.

<sup>144</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 12 November 1847, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 16 November 1855, p. 5;

<sup>145</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 15 November 1850, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 16 November 1855, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 18 November 1870, p. 5.

Moses similarly provided evidence of the impact of the expansion of the railway network on the East Riding hiring fairs from the 1860s.<sup>146</sup> In addition to the large number of excursionists who attended the hiring fairs of the East Riding, the entertainments became more commercialised. Moreover, the moral campaign in the East Riding was directed equally against the economic and entertainment components of the hiring fairs. Consequently, Moses cited examples of alternative rational recreation being provided in the East Riding, such as brass bands and indoor concerts.<sup>147</sup> This was in contrast with the Doncaster district, where the stalls and pubs remained relatively unchallenged by those seeking substitutes to the existing hiring practices. Only in 1868 was a brief aside made to morality, arguing that the amusements did little to advance the morality of the district.<sup>148</sup>

In spite of many parallels between moral campaign to reform the hiring fairs in the Doncaster district and the East Riding, the evidence demonstrates key differences. Firstly, the innovative work of Revd. Thomas of Warmsworth predated that of the examples cited by Moses in the East Riding. It also provided a firm foundation for the more formalised register offices, which were established in the Doncaster district in 1861. Secondly, the relative success of the moral campaign differed. Moses considered the campaign in the East Riding to have had limited success because the economic function of the hiring fairs was not seriously undermined. At Doncaster, the impact of the change was profound, albeit sometimes subtle. The new register offices attracted both farmers and farm servants, and an increasing number of places were secured prior to the statutes. Yet this applied principally to female and experienced male servants, which effectively meant fewer servants in these categories offered their services at the Doncaster Statutes. Consequently, a social hierarchy amongst farm servants, and at hiring fairs, was created.

<sup>146</sup> Moses, *Rural Reform*, pp. 104-5, 112-3.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 117, 194.

<sup>148</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 20 November 1868, p. 5;

Demand for certain types of servants who were now in shorter supply thus increased. From 1843 female servants were generally in greater demand at the Doncaster Statutes, and were employed at increasing wages if they were known to be 'industrious and of steady habits'.<sup>149</sup> The greatest demand was consistently for more experienced female servants during the 1850s.<sup>150</sup> By the 1860s, attendance at hiring fairs became further divided in terms of age and experience. At the 1862 Doncaster Statutes, large numbers of young and often inexperienced servants attended the statutes, but far fewer first rate farming men or higher-class female servants were present. Similarly far fewer farmers of the district were present.<sup>151</sup> As the gap between supply and demand of these types of farm servants grew, it further consolidated the social hierarchies of agricultural workers. Younger or less experienced farm servants who continued to attend the statutes with a view to securing employment were unable to secure the higher wages they demanded. This process had weakened the bargaining power of the farm servant on the open market. Farmers were reluctant to pay more for what they perceived to be less or inferior. It even compelled more people to hire prior to the statutes in order to secure the better servants. Increasingly, it was reported that leading agriculturalists hired their servants through the various register offices.<sup>152</sup> This trend continued into the 1870s.<sup>153</sup> Older and more experienced farm servants, and female farm servants, were better placed to be hired prior to the Statutes and receive higher wages. The Doncaster Statutes may have continued into the twentieth century, but the nature of them had evidently begun to change in the mid nineteenth century. In addition, hierarchies amongst farm servants and low levels of hiring at the Statutes had implications for the

<sup>149</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 17 November 1843, p. 5.

<sup>150</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 15 November 1850, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 21 November 1851, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 18 November 1853, p. 5.

<sup>151</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 21 November 1862, p. 6.

<sup>152</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 17 November 1865, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 16 November 1866, p. 5.

<sup>153</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 16 November 1838, p. 3; *Doncaster Gazette*, 17 November 1843, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 12 November 1847, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 17 November 1848, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 21 November 1856, p. 5.

composition of the agricultural workforce and specifically the agricultural labourer.

### **Agricultural Labourers**

In contrast to farm servants, 'outdoor' agricultural labourers did not live on the farm where they worked. They were often older and married with their own families. Agricultural labourers were also generally more numerous than farm servants. According to Barry Reay, agricultural labourers were by far the largest occupational group in many rural communities.<sup>154</sup> This certainly applied to the West Riding of Yorkshire. In 1851, 27,365 male agricultural labourers were returned for the West Riding of Yorkshire, which equated to 74.9 per cent of the total male agricultural workforce.<sup>155</sup> Between 1851 and 1871, the number of male agricultural labourers in the county decreased to 21,285.<sup>156</sup> Yet this still equated to 71.8 per cent of the total male agricultural workforce. Moreover, the ratio of male agricultural labourers to male farm servants in the West Riding of Yorkshire was 2.97:1 in 1851 and 2.54:1 in 1871. Numerous they may have been, but agricultural labourer was a convenient term applied to what was in fact a 'diverse occupational group'.<sup>157</sup> It included both regular and casual labourers, who lived in different places and undertook different work. It also included some labourers who worked on the land but also undertook other labouring work.<sup>158</sup> Agricultural labourers were by no means a homogenous group of workers.

The detailed analysis of different types of agricultural labourers relies heavily on farm records and wage books, which provide evidence of where they lived, whether they were employed on a regular or casual

<sup>154</sup> Reay, *Rural Englands*, p. 33.

<sup>155</sup> pp 1852-53, LXXXVIII, *Census of Great Britain, 1851. Population Tables: Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birthplace of the People*, Vol. II, p. 685.

<sup>156</sup> PP 1873, LXXI, *Census of England and Wales, 1871: Population Abstracts, Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birth Places of the People*, Vol. III, p. 467.

<sup>157</sup> Reay, *Rural Englands*, p. 46.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

basis, and how much they were paid. As Chiaki Yamamoto wrote, 'detailed studies of farm accounts are needed to answer questions about employment patterns and the consequent earnings of day labourers'.<sup>159</sup> Yamamoto used the wage books and the CEBs to examine employment patterns on the Trentham Home Farm in Staffordshire. He argued that there were two co-existing labour markets: regular and casual workers, who performed different tasks, had different places of residence, and whose wages were different.<sup>160</sup> He found that the regular core workers not only worked more days but also had greater security in their employment, higher wages, and generally lived in cottages on the estate. This was in comparison with the casual workers who Yamamoto found to be more itinerant, less secure and in receipt of lower wages.<sup>161</sup> Joyce Burnette used the wage books for a Derbyshire farm to examine the comparative employment patterns of male and female agricultural labourers.<sup>162</sup> She was able to identify patterns of regular and casual employment through the days worked by different labourers, demonstrating that the majority of female agricultural labourers were casual workers.<sup>163</sup>

The survival of such sources as wage books and farm accounts is however patchy. As E.L. Jones and E.J.T. Collins identified, most of the farm accounts that survive are for the large estates, and often the home farm. They argued that these were unrepresentative of farms in general, as the home farm on a large estate was larger and employed more people than the average British farm.<sup>164</sup> Analysis of employment patterns and wages of different types of agricultural labourers in the six villages is somewhat limited because comprehensive farm account

<sup>159</sup> C. Yamamoto, 'Two Labour Markets in Nineteenth-Century English Agriculture: The Trentham Home Farm, Staffordshire', *Rural History*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (2004), p. 90.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 90, 112.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>162</sup> J. Burnette, 'Labourers at the Oakes: Change in the Demands of Female Day-Labourers at a Farm near Sheffield during the Agricultural Revolution', *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (1999), pp. 41-67.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49, 64-5.

<sup>164</sup> E.L. Jones and E.J.T. Collins, 'The Collection and Analysis of Farm Record Books' *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1965), pp. 86-9.

books do not survive. As many of these were small or medium farms, detailed records may never have existed. Nevertheless, a comparative analysis of agricultural labourers in the six villages and an evaluation of Mills' dependency argument about the supply and demand of labour has been undertaken, using the CEBs in conjunction with mid nineteenth century parliamentary reports into agricultural employment.

### **Supply and Demand of Male Agricultural Labour in the Six Villages**

Agricultural labourers can be identified in the CEBs in two different ways. Firstly, from 1851 farmers were asked to record the number of agricultural workers they employed, and specify how many were 'indoor' and 'outdoor' workers. A limitation of this data is that not all agricultural employees were accurately recorded. As Mills argued, in addition to some farmers failing to give any information, many did not distinguish between their 'indoor' and 'outdoor' employees.<sup>165</sup> The extent to which farmers in the six villages recorded their agricultural employees varied considerably. In 1851, only 18.75 per cent of farmers in Fishlake recorded anybody working for them, whereas 75 per cent did in Sprotbrough and over 60 per cent did in both Warmsworth and Braithwell. There was similar variation in whether or not farmers returned their employees in 1871, and in both years very few farmers in the six villages distinguished between 'indoor' and 'outdoor' workers. Nevertheless, it is possible to calculate the number of 'outdoor' labourers by using the relationship and occupational data to subtract the number of 'live-in' farm servants listed under each farm. The difficulty with this calculation is that farmers frequently only recorded their regular workers.<sup>166</sup> Yamamoto identified an important link between core workers who lived close to the farm where they worked by cross-referencing wage books with CEBs.<sup>167</sup> Consequently, the information

<sup>165</sup> D.R. Mills, 'Trouble with Farms at the Census Office: an Evaluation of Farm Statistics from the Censuses of 1851-1881 in England and Wales' *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (1999), pp. 59-63.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63; N. Goose, 'Farm Service, Seasonal Unemployment and Casual Labour', p. 296.

<sup>167</sup> Yamamoto, 'Two Labour Markets', p. 102.

recorded by farmers in the CEBs about their employees provides important evidence about the regular agricultural workforce in the six villages, rather than seasonal and casual workers.

Using the information recorded by farmers about their agricultural employees, the number of regular male agricultural labourers employed in the six villages between 1851 and 1871 is shown in table 3.7. Even acknowledging discrepancies in the recording of census data, a disparity between villages employing a large number of agricultural labourers and villages employing very few evidently existed. In 1851 the highest labour demand for farm labourers was in the three estate villages and the multi-freeholder village of Stainforth. By 1871, labour demand remained greatest on the farms at Sprotbrough, Rossington and Stainforth. The lowest numbers of regular agricultural labourers employed by farmers between 1851 and 1871 were in Fishlake and Braithwell. These patterns partially coincide with Mills' argument about labour demand being greater in estate villages.

Exceptions included a reduction in the number of regular agricultural labourers in the estate village of Warmsworth, and the constantly high number of regular agricultural labourers employed by farmers in the multi-freeholder village of Stainforth. This suggests that the relationship between patterns of landownership and the number of regular agricultural labourers employed was less distinct. As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, variations in farm size affected patterns of agricultural employment. At Warmsworth, farms were smaller than in the other two estate villages. In addition, the occupational structure was more varied, with an increasing number of men working in the quarries. Demand for agricultural labourers was lowest in Fishlake and Braithwell, both of which were villages with a high proportion of small farms. Farm size, and other occupational demands, therefore affected the number of regular agricultural labourers recorded by farmers in the CEBs. Unfortunately, without detailed farm records and wage books, it is not possible to see whether the decrease in the number of regular

agricultural labourers listed by farmers at Warmsworth, Rossington and Braithwell correlated to an increase in the employment of casual labourers.

Table 3.7: Number of Male Agricultural Labourers Listed as Employees by Farmers in the Six Villages, 1851-1871.

	1851	1861	1871
Sprotbrough	27	16	20
Warmsworth	21	11	2
Rossington	16	40	26
Braithwell	9	13	1
Fishlake	4	6	3
Stainforth	20	29	20

Source; as per table 3.1

The second way in which agricultural labourers are identified in the CEBs is through the occupational column. Everyone listed as an agricultural labourer, with the exception of anyone who was 'living in' on the farm, is included. This method calculates the resident labour force, and is indicative of the supply of labour within a village. As table 3.8 shows, in 1851 there were more agricultural labourers resident in the three multi-freeholder villages than the estate villages, with the exception of Rossington. This reflects Mills' classificatory argument about the size of population and labour force in villages with and without concentrated landownership. A similar pattern is discernable in 1871, although the exact number of agricultural labourers living in the six villages did fluctuate in both 1861 and 1871, which may have been due to inaccurate enumeration. Moreover, the decrease in the number of agricultural labourers resident in the six villages in 1871 compared with 1851 was greatest in the three estate villages. The resident agricultural labourer was certainly more numerous and constant in the three multi-freeholder villages than two of the estate villages.



Table 3.8: Number of Male Agricultural Labourers Recorded by Occupation in the Six Villages, 1851-1871.

	1851	1861	1871
Sprotbrough	17	20	4
Warmsworth	28	28	18
Rossington	63	41	36
Braithwell	41	31	26
Fishlake	38	18	31
Stainforth	39	43	29

Source: as per table 3.1

By comparing these two sets of data for male agricultural labourers, it is possible to analyse patterns in the supply and demand of labour. According to Mills, the discrepancy between the demand for agricultural labourers by farmers and the supply of labourers resident within the same village created a surplus of labour in multi-freeholder villages and a deficit of labour in estate villages. Consequently, Mills argued that this created inter-dependency between the two types of villages. He demonstrated how the deficit of labour in estate villages necessitated the employment of labour from villages with surplus labour.<sup>168</sup> Yet based on the census data for the six villages, the supply and demand of labour did not conform to Mills' sharp dichotomy. With the exception of Sprotbrough, both the estate and multi-freeholder villages had a larger resident population of agricultural labourers than was accounted for by the regular employees of the farmers in those villages. Moreover, when the non-specific labourers are taken into consideration at Sprotbrough, the resident labouring population is enlarged. This is significant because there was a distinct relationship between the decrease in agricultural labourers and the increase in non-specific labourers recorded at Sprotbrough between 1851 and 1871. Many of the non-specific labourers may have worked on the land, possibly in addition to labouring in another capacity, which would therefore have closed the gap between supply and demand of labour in the village.

<sup>168</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, pp. 119-20.

The limitation of the CEBs is that they distort the supply and demand of labour by only providing data for the regular labourers employed by farmers, yet including the total number of labourers resident in a village. As the number of resident male agricultural labourers exceeded the number of regular workers employed by the farmers, it suggests that casual labourers were employed in addition to the regular core workforce. It is not clear from the CEBs where agricultural workers resident in a village actually worked anyway. Without wage books, the exact nature of the supply and demand of labour in the six villages cannot be discerned.

The only evidence to suggest that labourers from outside estate villages were employed on the farms is intimated in a comment made by the incumbent of Sprotbrough, Revd. S. Surtees, to the *First Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture* (1867-68). He argued that The main grievance of the agricultural labourer in this part of the world is that he has to walk often so far to his work, as many villages have insufficient cottage accommodation in proportion to their acreage, and if he has to walk three miles to this work, still he has to be on the spot at 6 am with the others'.<sup>169</sup> On the basis of Surtees' evidence, it appears that casual labour was employed in the estate village of Sprotbrough, and that these casual workers did not live in the village. The quotation does not however fully explain the complexities in the supply and demand of labour. It is evident that the CEBs recorded both casual and regular agricultural labourers, and that the ubiquitously labelled agricultural labourer was in fact a diverse group of workers worthy of further investigation.

<sup>169</sup> PP 1867-8, XVII, *First Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture* 1867, p. 398.

### **The Identity of the Male Agricultural Labourer in the Six Villages**

The position of the male agricultural labourer in relation to that of the farm servant merits investigation. Whereas the farm servant was young, mobile and often undertaking farm service between childhood and adult employment, agricultural labourers were generally older and the regular resident labourers were often less mobile. In England, the majority of agricultural labourers in 1851 were over the age of twenty, and many continued to work as agricultural labourers into their eighties and nineties.<sup>170</sup> This pattern is replicated at county level, as shown in table 3.9. Only 12 per cent of male agricultural labourers in the West Riding of Yorkshire in 1851 were under the age of twenty, whereas 42.1 per cent were aged between 20 and 39. In total, 65.9 per cent of male agricultural labourers in the West Riding of Yorkshire were aged over thirty, with 14.6 per cent over sixty.<sup>171</sup> A similar pattern is identifiable in the six villages, as depicted in table 3.10. Proportionately few agricultural labourers under the age of twenty resided in the six villages. The vast majority of agricultural labourers resident in these villages were aged between 20 and 59. The agricultural labourers resident in the six villages, like their counterparts throughout England, were generally older than the farm servants and continued to work in the same occupation later in life.

<sup>170</sup> PP 1852-53, LXXXVIII, *Census of Great Britain, 1851. Population Tables: Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birthplace of the People*, Vol. I, pp. cl, ccxxiii.

<sup>171</sup> PP 1852-53, LXXXVIII, *Census of Great Britain, 1851. Population Tables: Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birthplace of the People*, Vol. II, p. 685.

Table 3.9: Proportion of Different Aged Male Agricultural Labourers in the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1851

	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99
Male	0.1%	11.9%	22.1%	20%	17.3%	14%	9.4%	4.3%	0.8%	0.1%

**Source:** PP 1852-53, LXXXVIII, *Census of Great Britain, 1851. Population Tables: Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birthplace of the People, Vol. II, p. 685*

Table 3.10: Proportion of Different Aged Male Agricultural Labourers in the Six Villages, 1851

	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89
Sprotbrough	13.3%	33.3%	6.7%	13.3%	26.7%	6.7%		
Rossington	13.6%	22%	18.7%	16.9%	23.7%	3.4%	1.7%	
Warmsworth	12%	12%	24%	20%	20%	4%	8%	
Braithwell	2.5%	15%	27.5%	15%	17.5%	15%	5%	2.5%
Fishlake		22.2%	22.2%	22.2%	11.1%	16.7%	5.6%	
Stainforth	2.6%	13.2%	18.4%	26.3%	21.1%	18.4%		

**Source:** TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Sprotbrough 1851*; TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Warmsworth 1851*; TNA, H0107/2348, *CEB Rossington 1851*; TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Braithwell 1851*; TNA, H0107/2349, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1851*

Barry Reay argued that agricultural labourers were more-or-less both an occupationally and socially static group of workers.<sup>172</sup> By this he meant that the sons of agricultural labourers became agricultural labourers, that agricultural labourers remained labourers on the land for the duration of their lives, and that their daughters would marry into labouring families. Evidence from the six villages generally supports Reay's argument. In all six villages, the majority of agricultural labourers remained agricultural labourers throughout their lives. The main exceptions were at Sprotbrough where agricultural labourers were increasingly recorded as labourers, and at Warmsworth and Stainforth where agricultural labourers worked on the land and in the quarries and

<sup>172</sup> Reay, *Rural England*, p. 39.

in maritime industries respectively. A number of fathers and father-in-laws were recorded in the CEBs as living with their labouring children and still working on the land as labourers themselves as older men. Many of the sons of agricultural labourers in the six villages continued to live in the same village, and to work as agricultural labourers. Furthermore, many of the daughters of agricultural labourers who remained in the same villages married into labouring families. The regular agricultural labourer was more of a constant in the six villages than the farm servant during the mid nineteenth century.

The notion that agricultural labourers remained agricultural labourers for the duration of their lives fostered a perception that fieldwork was without prospects. Providing evidence to the *First Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture in 1867*, the Revd. S. Surtees argued that 'All our intelligent boys and the sons of the more intelligent and better off labourers are, generally speaking, put to a trade or brought up to other occupations. They do not bring their sons up to fieldwork'.<sup>173</sup> This quotation is indicative of the notion that agricultural labourers lacked social and economic mobility. It also reflects the moral aspirations of the clergy and the way in which education was perceived as crucial to occupational advancement. This unfortunately results in a one-dimensional view of the agricultural labourer, which fails to take into consideration regional and hierarchical differences between agricultural labourers.

Social hierarchies defined agricultural labourers. The main distinctions related to the work undertaken, skill and wages. Peter Dewey distinguished between those in charge of animals and ordinary labourers. According to Dewey, shepherds were at the top of this hierarchy, followed by those who worked with horses and cattle.<sup>174</sup> In

<sup>173</sup> PP 1867-8, XVII, *First Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture 1867*, p. 398.

<sup>174</sup> P. Dewey, 'Farm Labour' in Collins (ed), *Agrarian History*, pp. 814-5.

the six villages, a small number of shepherds, ploughmen and cattlemen were denoted in the CEBs, but most agricultural labourers were not differentiated between. This did not however mean their work, wages, opportunities and living conditions were equal to one another, or to those of agricultural labourers elsewhere in the county.

In 1848, Charnock wrote of the condition of the agricultural labourer in the West Riding of Yorkshire in his *JRASE* prize essay. He argued that 'there is, perhaps, no district in the kingdom in which he is better paid, better housed, and better cared for'.<sup>175</sup> According to Charnock, wages of the common labourer were 14 to 16 shillings a week, increasing to approximately 18 shillings per week for an occupation requiring more skill and judgement.<sup>176</sup> Regional variations in agricultural wages were considerable during the nineteenth century. Broadly speaking England could be divided into the low wage south, with the exception of London and its hinterland, and the high wage north.<sup>177</sup> E.H. Hunt argued that the primary reason for this regional disparity was the more rapid development of industry in the coalfields of northern England from 1750.<sup>178</sup> Agricultural wages had to compete with those of industry. Caird had used this argument in 1851 to explain differences in agricultural wages, arguing that farmers had to compete with the 'increasing and more tempting wages of the manufacturer'.<sup>179</sup> Wages in the West Riding of Yorkshire were higher and increased more rapidly than in many southern counties. Between 1867 and 1870 the average weekly wage for an agricultural labourer rose to 17 shillings and 6 pence according to the calculations of E.H. Hunt.<sup>180</sup> This was a considerable

<sup>175</sup>J.H. Charnock, 'On the Farming of the West Riding of Yorkshire: Prize Report', *Journal of Royal Agricultural Society*, Vol. 9, Part 2, No. 22 (December 1848), p. 311.

<sup>176</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup>Hunt, 'Industrialisation and Regional Wage Inequality', pp. 942-946.

<sup>178</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 947; E.H. Hunt, 'Labour Productivity in English Agriculture, 1850-1914', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (August 1967), p. 280.

<sup>179</sup>Caird, *English Agriculture*, p. 513.

<sup>180</sup>E.H. Hunt, 'Industrialisation and Regional Wage Inequality: Wages in Britain, 1760-1914', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (December 1986), p. 965.

increase from the period 1833 to 1845, when the average weekly wage for agricultural labourers in the county was only 11s 9d.<sup>181</sup>

The average weekly wage of agricultural labourers in the Doncaster area was not quite as high as that of the average for the West Riding of Yorkshire, but it was still considerably higher than the national average in the mid nineteenth century. As table 3.11 illustrates wages in the Doncaster district were consistently two to three shillings higher than the national average during this period.<sup>182</sup> These wages were consistent with the higher wages being paid to agricultural labourers in the north of England at this time, but reflected the disparity of wages within a county. As the highest agricultural wages in the mid nineteenth century were paid in areas in close proximity to industry, wage differences within the West Riding were symptomatic of the extent of industry in different parts of the county. The Doncaster area was not extensively industrialised in the mid nineteenth century, and therefore the wages were not the highest in the county.

Table 3.11: Male Agricultural Labourers' Wages (average weekly wage) in Doncaster and Nationally in the Mid Nineteenth Century

	National average	Doncaster area
1860	10s 9d	13s 6d
1861	11s 1d	14s
1868	12s	14s
1869	11s 8d	14s
1871	12s	15s

**Source:** PP 1861, L, *Return of the Average Rate of Weekly Earnings of Agricultural Labourers, Part 1, 1860, p. 12; Ibid., Part 2, 1861, p. 9; PP 1868-9, L, Return of the Average Rate of Weekly Earnings of Agricultural Labourers, 1868, p. 15; PP 1871, LVI, Return of the Average Rate of Weekly Earnings of Agricultural Labourers, 1871, p. 27; B. Afton and M. Turner, 'Wages' in Collins (ed), Agrarian History, p. 2013*

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> PP 1861, L, *Return of the Average Rate of Weekly Earnings of Agricultural Labourers, Part 1, 1860, p. 12; Ibid., Part 2, 1861, p. 9; PP 1868-9, L, Return of the Average Rate of Weekly Earnings of Agricultural Labourers, 1868, p. 15; PP 1871, LVI, Return of the Average Rate of Weekly Earnings of Agricultural Labourers, 1871, p. 27; B. Afton and M. Turner, 'Wages' in Collins (ed), Agrarian History, p. 2013.*

Average wages are notoriously difficult to assess as they often conceal differences and fluctuations. As Yamamoto argued, wages tended to be more stable and consistent for core workers as they were less subjected to seasonality; unlike those of casual workers whose wages were more market dependent.<sup>183</sup> Wages also varied depending on experience, how they were paid and market forces. As depicted in table 3.12, the average weekly earnings by task, albeit a less secure income, were higher than the average weekly wage for men. Few allowances were given to the agricultural labourer in the Doncaster area. The exceptions were for the most experienced labourers during harvest. For example, in 1860 an experienced male labourer could be hired for four weeks at the higher weekly wage of 18 shillings and in addition received a daily allowance of breakfast, dinner, supper and three pints of ale.<sup>184</sup> By 1868-9, the equivalent agricultural labourer could no longer expect to receive additional allowances during harvest time, although wages were substantially higher during the four weeks of harvest. Whereas on average an agricultural labourer earned 14 shillings per week at this date, wages increased to between 20 and 24 shillings during harvest.<sup>185</sup>

<sup>183</sup> Yamamoto, *Two Labour Markets*, pp. 89,104.

<sup>184</sup> PP 1861, L, *Return of the Average Rate of Weekly Earnings of Agricultural Labourers*, Parti, 1860, p. 12.

<sup>185</sup> PP 1868-9, L, *Return of the Average Rate of Weekly Earnings of Agricultural Labourers*, 1868, p. 15.



Table 3.12: Average Weekly Wages and Additional Allowances for Men,

	Average weekly wage for men	Average weekly earnings by task	Average weekly wage for women	Average weekly wage for children (under 16)	Any allowances
1860	13s 6d	15s			None, except to a very few choice men, and to those only for about four weeks during harvest and hay time, when they have been hired for 18s a week, with the allowance of daily breakfast, dinner and supper with about three pints of ale -
1861	14s		9s	4s 6d	however, by task, many only got 16s without all allowances. Allowance of two drinkings per day, one quart of ale with bread or bread and cheese for all of these.
1868-69	14s		6s	6s	No allowances - although wages increase during four weeks for harvest - 20-24s for men, 12-14s for women and 12-14s for children under 16.
1870	15s		6s	4s	No allowances - not regular work for women or children.

**Source:** PP 1861, L, *Return of the Average Rate of Weekly Earnings of Agricultural Labourers, Part 1, 1860, p. 12; Ibid., Part 2, 1861, p. 9; PP 1868-9, L, Return of the Average Rate of Weekly Earnings of Agricultural Labourers, 1868, p. 15; PP 1871, LVI, Return of the Average Rate of Weekly Earnings of Agricultural Labourers, 1871, p. 27*

Skilled and experienced agricultural labourers could not only command higher wages, but were also often in great demand. Accordingly, some farmers strove to promote improved agricultural techniques with the incentive of prizes in order to both foster loyalty and improve productivity on the land. As mentioned in chapter two, the Braithwell Farmers' Club sought to encourage agricultural labourers to participate in the annual ploughing matches. The ploughing matches were an opportunity to test skill and ability, and to take pride in their technical achievements. Complaints that ploughing matches induced conceit and led to demands for higher wages were countered by the excellence exhibited by the agricultural labourers. At Braithwell, the ploughing matches, and prizes awarded, were reported to have been successful in motivating and stimulating agricultural labourers to become better ploughmen. In addition, discussions took place about the relative merits of different ploughs, specifically that of the swing and wheel ploughs. In a report on the Braithwell Ploughing Club, the *Doncaster Gazette* argued that 'the labouring classes were a class neither the landlords nor the farmers could do without', and that consequently participation in such organisations should be promoted.<sup>186</sup> The Braithwell ploughing matches demonstrated that skill and ability were desirable qualities in agricultural labourers, which contributed to their respectability and suitability to live and work in a village. Additionally, a large proportion of entries to the school at Braithwell were the children of labourers, who were taught alongside the children of farmers and trades and crafts people.<sup>187</sup> This was countered by the fact that the log book for the school recorded a high level of absences due to children partaking in agricultural work at certain times of the year. For example in May 1872, it was noted that 'several boys away from school this week on account of their parents sending them to work in the fields'.<sup>188</sup> The disparity in opportunities, and range of skills and abilities, meant that the agricultural labourer was very much subjected to social hierarchies throughout their lives.

<sup>186</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 23 October 1846, p. 5.

<sup>187</sup> Doncaster Archives, P71/8/1, *Admission Register of Town School at Braithwell*, 1867-1877.

<sup>188</sup> Doncaster Archives, P71/8/2, *Log Book of National School, Braithwell*, 1871-1910.

The housing conditions of agricultural labourers were also the subject of contemporary literature. In 1845, the *JRASE* published an article by John Grey entitled 'On the Building of Cottages for Farm-Labourers'. Grey argued that the construction of dwellings for agricultural labourers deserved at least as much attention as that of farm buildings. He explained how housing conditions affected the health, comfort, well-being and moral character of the inhabitants. Consequently he reasoned that as the success of agriculture depended upon, amongst other things, the agricultural labourer consideration should be given to their houses and standards of living.<sup>189</sup> He cited one of the Royal Agricultural Society's objectives as being 'to promote the comfort and welfare of labourers, and to encourage the improved management of their cottages and gardens'.<sup>190</sup> His article then expounded upon the ways in which to achieve this goal. Grey argued it was the responsibility of the landlord to provide suitable cottage accommodation, with enough separate rooms and a garden.<sup>191</sup>

Mills distinguished between housing conditions in estate and multi-freeholder villages on the basis of the concentration of landownership. He argued that superior housing was associated with landed estates, whereas multi-freeholder villages had a greater supply of housing but of a worse condition.<sup>192</sup> According to Mills, landlord control in estate villages restricted housing and resulted in overcrowding in multi-freeholder villages.<sup>193</sup> This argument was present in the parliamentary commissions of the 1830s and 1840s as well. Yet, housing conditions varied within villages, as well as in different parts of the country. As Mr Portman evidenced in the *Fourth Report from the Select Committee on Settlement, and Poor Removal* in 1847, cottages in counties such as Yorkshire were 'vastly superior to the average dwellings in the southern

<sup>189</sup> J. Grey, 'On the Housing of Cottages for Farm-Labourers', *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, Vol. 5, 1845, p. 237.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 237-8.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>192</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 117.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

counties' and 'gardens are almost universally attached to them'.<sup>194</sup> Accommodation in the six villages varied considerably, as did perspectives on the state of labourers' housing in the Doncaster district. Evidence given to the 1867-68 *First Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture* (1867) provides some indication of the condition of cottage accommodation for the agricultural labourer in the Doncaster district, although inevitably the motivations for the report and who was giving the information affected the descriptions. In addition, contemporary accounts of rural housing and sale catalogues provide supplementary evidence.

At Sprotbrough, the Revd. Fardell wrote a rather pious account of the cottage accommodation in the estate village. According to Fardell, the cottages were 'replete with the comforts and necessaries of that station of life; and those which have been rebuilt are in a style both pleasing and ornamental, so that the peasantry now enjoy homes not to be excelled by the poor of any parish around'.<sup>195</sup> It is unclear what Fardell constituted to be appropriate cottage accommodation, and indeed whether or not it would have met the approval of social reformers during the period. An increasing concern in the mid nineteenth century was that more attention was being given to the outward appearance of cottages, which meant that pretty facades could mask the stark reality of poor living conditions.<sup>196</sup> Attention to aesthetics was clearly a key consideration in the erection of the cottages at Sprotbrough, as illustrated by plate 3.1. The cottages rebuilt in the mid nineteenth century were an integral part of the estate landscape, and imprinted upon an older, evolving landscape. This does not mean the interior conditions were necessarily poor. In an age of social responsibility, the

<sup>194</sup> PP 1847, XI, *Fourth Report from the Select Committee on Settlement and Poor Removal*, p. xxv.

<sup>195</sup> Revd. J.G. Fardell, *Sprotbrough, or A Few Passing Notes for A Morning's Ramble* (Doncaster, 1850), p. 55.

<sup>196</sup> G. Darley, *Villages of Vision* (Paladin Books, 1978), p. 10.

onus was placed firmly on landowners to create dwellings that catered for the moral and physical well-being of their tenants, as well as being aesthetically pleasing.<sup>197</sup> A number of publications and authors outlined the essential requirements for healthy living conditions, including Henry Robert's cottage designs produced for the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes, Sir Henry Acland's *Health in the Village*, and J.C. Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture*.<sup>198</sup>

Plate 3.1: Cottages at Sprotbrough

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., p. 93; Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (London, 1971), p. 16.

<sup>198</sup> Darley, *Villages of Vision*, pp. 94-5.

At Rossington, the evidence suggests that aesthetics were effectively combined with the recommendations for improving accommodation. Plate 3.2 depicts the mock timbered, brick cottages erected in the estate village in the mid nineteenth century by the Brown family. In both design and amenities, the new cottages embodied many of the principles being expounded by the commentators of the day. It is particularly notable that when the Brown family purchased the estate, there was only one cottage with three bedrooms, a property that commanded a much higher rental value than its neighbours as a result. A century later when the estate was sold again, about half of the cottages had three or more bedrooms and were generally better appointed and more attractively built than their predecessors.<sup>199</sup> The group of four cottages pictured was described as attractive and well built. They also each had three bedrooms, some of which had fireplaces, which addresses contemporary concerns about overcrowding and comfort.<sup>200</sup> The inclusion of three bedrooms in cottage accommodation was still an aspiration in 1884 when Acland wrote *Health in the Village*. As with the farm buildings, cottage accommodation at Rossington was in many respects superior to that of its neighbours owing to investment by the Browns. In 1867, the *First Report on the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture* included an account of the 'good' cottages at Rossington.<sup>201</sup> Accommodation could therefore be both picturesque and meet the expectations of moral and sanitary reformists.

<sup>199</sup> AB/7/3/63, *Sale Catalogue for the Rossington Estate*, 1838; DY/DAW/9/29, *Sale Catalogue for the Rossington Estate*, 1938.

<sup>200</sup> DY/DAW/9/29 Doncaster Archives pp. 42-43; Darley, *Villages of Vision*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>201</sup> PP 1867-8, XVII, *First Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture*, 1867, p. 395.

Of particular note in a number of the villages was the provision of a garden. It was specifically noted that most cottages in the three estate villages had gardens attached to them.<sup>202</sup> At Warmsworth the cottage gardens represented pride in the village, economic advantages and a leisure pursuit through the Warmsworth Cottagers' Horticultural Show. The show, established by the Aldam family, was reported to have the primary objective of making their tenants more industrious, and encouraging them to take pride in their homes cottages.<sup>203</sup> The *Doncaster Chronicle* heralded the show as being exemplary, citing improved order amongst tenants as being tangible benefits.<sup>204</sup> The *Doncaster Gazette* also wrote that 'of all societies established for the benefit of a rural population, there is none which can be more advantageous'.<sup>205</sup> The produce grown in the gardens supplemented income earned working in the fields. In addition, prizes of a useful

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 395-6, 402.

<sup>203</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 22 July 1859, p. 5.

<sup>204</sup> *Doncaster Chronicle*, 11 July 1845, p. 5.

<sup>205</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 17 June 1842, p. 5.

nature were awarded for the best specimens of fruit, vegetables and flowers to stimulate interest and productivity. Detailed analysis of the prize winners, achieved by cross-referencing the newspaper reports with the CEBs, demonstrates the range of occupational groups the shows brought together. These included shopkeepers and crafts people as well as agricultural labourers and quarry workers.<sup>206</sup> Through their active participation and the award of prizes, agricultural labourers both benefitted from the provision of a cottage garden and developed almost cultural ownership of a part of the estate village.

Evidence given to the commission by a farmer from the multi-freeholder village of Stainforth also conveyed the impression of good housing. The account considered the accommodation at Stainforth to be 'good', with rooms that were 10 to 12 feet square, good ventilation, and on average two bedrooms, with a garden attached.<sup>207</sup> Without additional evidence to substantiate this claim, it is difficult to be certain how accurate and/or typical this was. Nevertheless, it is indicative of the fact that housing in multi-freeholder villages was not necessarily always inadequate.

Problems with the quality of cottage accommodation were identified in both multi-freeholder and estate villages. At Braithwell William Law, a farmer of 320 acres, said the cottages were too small, and that about twenty of them did not have gardens, which was considered to be a disadvantage.<sup>208</sup> At Warmsworth, the Revd CE Thomas, a keen

<sup>206</sup> *Doncaster Gazette*, 17 June 1842, p. 5; *Doncaster Gazette*, 2 August 1844, p. 4; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 11 July 1845, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 7 June 1850, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 25 June 1852, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 8 September 1854, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 22 August 1856, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 22 July 1859, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 21 June 1861, p. 5; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 17 July 1863, p. 5; TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Sprotbrough 1851*; TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Warmsworth 1851*; TNA, H0107/2348, *CEB Rossington 1851*; TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Braithwell 1851*; TNA, H0107/2349, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1851*; TNA, RG9/3516, *CEB Sprotbrough 1861*; TNA, RG9/3514, *CEB Warmsworth 1861*; TNA, RG9/3522, *CEB Rossington 1861*; TNA, RG9/3513, *CEB Braithwell 1861*; TNA, RG9/3524, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1861*; TNA, RG10/4716, *CEB Sprotbrough 1871*; TNA, RG10/4715, *CEB Warmsworth 1871*; TNA, RG10/4724, *CEB Rossington 1871*; TNA, RG10/4714, *CEB Braithwell 1871*; TNA, RG10/4726, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1871*.

<sup>207</sup> pp 1867-8, XVII, *First Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture, 1867*, p. 401.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 395.



advocate for moral reform of the hiring fairs, sought to improve cottage accommodation for the agricultural labourer. He demonstrated an awareness of the importance of good cottage accommodation for 'health, comfort and morality', before citing examples of healthy children dying and immorality being rife due to overcrowding. He argued that although some improvements had been made at Warmsworth, most cottages still only had one or two bedrooms, that drainage and ventilation were poor, and that parents and children did not have separate rooms to sleep in. He even found that the kitchen formed additional sleeping quarters for families in the cottages.<sup>209</sup> Thomas characteristically went beyond an observational criticism of the situation, and suggested improvements. He argued that 'where work is plentiful and labour well paid, cottages could be constructed, good and comfortable dwellings, with every necessary, at a cost which would repay the landed proprietor, taking into consideration how much he and his tenants are losing by labourers coming from a distance even of two miles to their work', adding that if the accommodation was comfortable then labourers would pay 5l or 6l a year instead of the 3l to 4l rent they paid for poor quality housing.<sup>210</sup> A link was identified between poor housing in estate villages and absentee landlords in the *Fourth Report from the Select Committee on Settlement, and Poor Removal*<sup>211</sup> As both Aldam and Battie-Wrightson were absent from Warmsworth, this could offer some explanation for the particularly poor housing evidenced on the estate.

The availability of housing, as opposed to its condition, particularly distinguished between accommodation in the estate and multi-freeholder villages near Doncaster. Thomas Wood, farmer and land agent at Sprotbrough commented that 'more cottages are wanted'.<sup>212</sup>

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., p. 402.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> PP 1847, XI, *Fourth Report from the Select Committee on Settlement and Poor Removal*, p. xxv.

<sup>212</sup> PP 1867-8, XVII, *First Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture, 1867*, p. 396.

Similarly, the number of cottages at Rossington was not considered sufficient 'for the requirements of the land'.<sup>213</sup> In contrast, sufficient numbers of cottages were reported in the multi-freeholder villages of Braithwell and Stainforth.<sup>214</sup> The availability of cottage accommodation in different types of villages was closely interlinked to the operation of the settlement laws and poor law removal. Mills founded his dependency argument upon this, in terms of the supply and demand of labour on the one hand and cottage accommodation on the other. The *Fourth Report from the Select Committee on Settlement, and Poor Removal* in 1847 argued that the scarcity of cottages was an 'evil' of the parochial system, which stopped building on large estates and increased overcrowding in neighbouring multi-freeholder villages.<sup>215</sup>

Where an agricultural labourer had the combination of regular work, high weekly wages, and good cottage accommodation with a garden attached, their supposed 'condition' was much improved from their counterpart who was out of regular employment, could not secure the best wages and whose house was in poor quality and/or far from their place of work, and lacked a garden. The experience and position of the male agricultural labourer in the Doncaster district was evidently varied, depending on the balance of work, wages and accommodation.

### **The Female Agricultural Labourer**

The female agricultural labourer was similarly diverse with regards their status and the work they undertook. Moreover, during the mid nineteenth century, there were multiple, and changing, perceptions of female agricultural work. In spite of moral objections to certain types of female agricultural work, women continued to be extensively employed

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 395.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 395,401.

<sup>215</sup> PP 1847, XI, *Fourth Report from the Select Committee on Settlement and Poor Removal*, p. 15.

in agriculture during the mid nineteenth century.<sup>216</sup> This is reflected at county level in the census reports. Whereas there had been a considerable decline in the number of female farm servants between 1851 and 1871 in the West Riding of Yorkshire, the number of female agricultural labourers remained more constant. A total of 1466 female agricultural labourers were recorded in the West Riding of Yorkshire in the 1851 Census Report.<sup>217</sup> By 1871, 1412 women were still recorded as working as agricultural labourers in the county.<sup>218</sup> In addition, it is thought that the total number of women who worked on the land was under-enumerated.<sup>219</sup> As Joyce Burnette argued 'the census did a poor job of recording the employment of females in general and female farm workers in particular'.<sup>220</sup> Female agricultural labourers were therefore perhaps an even more significant component of the agricultural workforce in the West Riding of Yorkshire in the mid nineteenth century than the census suggests.

It is hard to identify the extent to which women were employed as agricultural labourers in the six villages through the CEBs. Based on the evidence of the CEBs alone, very few women who lived in the six villages were employed as agricultural labourers. None was recorded as living in Sprotbrough or Braithwell between 1851 and 1871, and very few in Fishlake, Stainforth and Warmsworth. In both Fishlake and Warmsworth, the few female agricultural labourers who were recorded in the CEBs were widows, primarily of agricultural labourers. For example, Emma Dodson (58) was the widow of an agricultural labourer, who lived alone and worked as an agricultural labourer in Warmsworth

<sup>216</sup> Sayer, *Women of the Fields Representations of Rural Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Manchester, 1995), pp. 87-105; Reay, *Rural England*, pp. 55, 59.

<sup>217</sup> PP 1852-53, LXXXVIII, *Census of Great Britain, 1851. Population Tables: Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birthplace of the People*, Vol. II, p. 688.

<sup>218</sup> PP 1873, LXXI, *Census of England and Wales, 1871: Population Abstracts, Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birth Places of the People*, Vol. III, p. 471.

<sup>219</sup> Higgs, 'Women, Occupations and Work', pp. 59-80; Reay, *Rural England*, p. 55.

<sup>220</sup> J Burnette, 'Married with Children: the Family Status of Female Day Labourer at Two South-Western Farms, *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (2007), p. 78; J Burnette, 'The Wages and Employment of Female Day Labourers in English Agriculture, 1740-1850, *Economic History Review*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (November 2004), pp. 665-6.

in 1871.<sup>221</sup> At Fishlake, Mary Bradford (76) and Sarah Brammer (57) were widows, agricultural labourers, and paupers, both of whom lodged with other families in 1851.<sup>222</sup> Also at Fishlake in 1851 a widowed woman, who lived with her son, was recorded as a former agricultural labourer in receipt of parish relief.<sup>223</sup> At Stainforth both widows and married women were recorded as agricultural labourers. Amelia Schofield (63) was recorded in the 1861 CEB as widowed, in receipt of workhouse relief, and an agricultural labourer.<sup>224</sup> Conversely, Alice Mullins was a married agricultural labourer in Stainforth in 1871. Her husband, John, had previously been an agricultural labourer but by 1871 was listed as working on the railway.<sup>225</sup> A far greater number of female agricultural labourers were recorded at Rossington. Thirteen different female agricultural labourers were recorded in the CEBs as living in Rossington between 1851 and 1871. This included married, single and widowed women, both with and without families to support.<sup>226</sup> As Higgs argued the enumeration process was far from value free, and often resulted in the under-enumeration of women workers. Consequently, the CEBs provide only arbitrary evidence of female agricultural workers in the six villages.

Evidence from the official reports of 1843 and 1867-8, which specifically investigated the employment of women, young persons and children, provides additional evidence by which to qualify that of the CEBs. In the absence of farm records, which some historians have used to overcome the methodological challenges of studying the female agricultural labourer, the reports are a key source for understanding female agricultural labour in the six villages.<sup>227</sup> Inevitably, these reports were

<sup>221</sup> TNA, RG10/4715, *CEB Warmsworth 1871*.

<sup>222</sup> TNA, H0107/2349, *CEB Fishlake 1851*.

<sup>223</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> TNA, RG9/3524, *CEB Stainforth 1861*.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*; TNA, RG10/4726, *CEB Stainforth 1871*.

<sup>226</sup> TNA, H0107/2348, *CEB Rossington 1851*; TNA, RG9/3522, *CEB Rossington 1861*; TNA, RG10/4724, *CEB Rossington 1871*.

<sup>227</sup> E.L. Jones and E.J.T. Collins, 'The Collection and Analysis of Farm Record Books', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1965), pp. 86-89; M.E. Turner, J.V. Beckett, and B.

imbued with bias, reflecting the social and political concerns and motivations of the time. Indeed there was a considerable change in perspective between the 1843 and 1867-8 reports, due to changing perceptions of female agricultural work.

The 1843 report was the first gender specific investigation of conditions in the countryside. It was comparatively quite minor, with the majority of attention still focussed on women and children in mining following the 1842 report into conditions in the mines. Consequently, the countryside was perceived to be a place of refuge, and was contrasted with the mines and towns.<sup>228</sup> As Karen Sayer argued, the 1843 report was not reworked through the ideology of domesticity.<sup>229</sup> Very little was written about the employment of women in the Doncaster district in the 1843 report. It observed that the employment of women in agriculture in the Doncaster district was greater than in the Holderness area of East Yorkshire, but not as extensive as on the Wolds or the turnip districts of the north.<sup>230</sup> The report concluded that the employment of women in agriculture in the Doncaster area, as in many other areas, depended upon the quality of the soil and the nature of crops grown.<sup>231</sup>

As aspirations, expectations and ideologies evolved, a woman's place was increasingly depicted as being in the domestic sphere. Fieldwork did not only take place in a very public and male dominated sphere, but was also imbued with connotations of immorality. The Sixth Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council in 1863 focussed on women's labour, especially gang labour, as the cause of infant death.<sup>232</sup> The moral outcry that followed resulted in the Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture

Afton, *Farm Productivity in Farm Accounts, 1700-1914* (Oxford, 2001); Burnette, 'The Wages and Employment of Female Day-Labourers', pp. 664-90.

<sup>228</sup> Sayer, *Women of the Fields*, pp. 34-6.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>230</sup> pp 1843, XII, *Reports of Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioner on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture, 1843*, p. 283.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283.

<sup>232</sup> Sayer, *Women of the Fields*, p. 67.

being established in 1867. The questions asked focussed on the nature of the work undertaken, how frequently women worked and whether it was too much for them. In addition, the commission specifically asked whether such work affected the morals of women, and whether it prevented them from becoming good wives and mothers. As Sayer argued, the 1867 Commission was shaped by dominant ideologies about morality and domesticity.<sup>233</sup> Consequently, parallels were drawn between employment practices in agriculture and industry, with a view to reforming and regulating the employment of women and children in agriculture along the lines of that of industrial employment.

The 1867-8 Commission substantiated the astute links drawn in the 1843 Report between the quality of the soil and the nature of crops grown on the one hand and the extent of female labour on the other.<sup>234</sup> As Nicola Verdon argued, 'female agricultural workers were frequently sought for their nimble fingers and their ability to quietly tolerate tedious and unrewarding jobs'.<sup>235</sup> At Warmsworth, the Revd. C.E. Thomas reported that twenty-two females were employed on the land, nine of whom were under eighteen and thirteen of whom were over eighteen and predominantly married. According to Thomas, Their work in spring is bird tenting, picking twitch, dibbling beans, and hoeing corn. In summer, in weeding and singling turnips. In autumn, in potato picking. In winter, in cutting and pulling turnips and tenting'.<sup>236</sup> Similar jobs were cited by John Bladworth, a farmer, as being undertaken by female labourers at Stainforth. Bladworth stated that women's work consisted mainly of hand picking couch grass, weeding corn, bird tenting, and singling and hoeing turnips.<sup>237</sup> Women were therefore employed to execute similar types of work in both estate and multi-freeholder

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 68-9.

<sup>234</sup> pp 1843, XII, *Reports of Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioner on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*, 1843, p. 283.

<sup>235</sup> Verdon, N., *Rural Women Workers in Nineteenth-Century England: Gender, Work and Wages* (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 197.

<sup>236</sup> pp 1867-8, XVII, *First Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture 1867*, p. 402.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 401.

villages.

The evidence given to the Commissioners by farmers, landowners and members of the clergy in the Doncaster district varied considerably in respect of their opinions and attitudes towards the employment of women in agriculture. Revd. Thomas at Warmsworth, who spearheaded the campaign to reform hiring practices in the area, deemed such work as turnip cutting and pulling in winter as being 'cruel employment for women'.<sup>238</sup> The 1867-8 Commission also sought to highlight a link between women performing farm work on the one hand and higher rates of infant mortality, poor morality, and an inability to become good wives and mothers on the other.<sup>239</sup> The Revd. S. Surtees, incumbent of Sprotbrough, shared this viewpoint. He commented that 'The women who work in the fields are mostly widows, and some few of the labourers' wives. You may mark them out by the general untidiness of the home, the less well-to-do appearance of the children, and the discomfort of the cottages'.<sup>240</sup> Surtees emphasised that the majority of women who lived on the estate were employed in domestic service, if they were in employment at all. He emphasised that the majority of women who worked on the land at Sprotbrough actually lived elsewhere. For example, he claimed 'potato-setting and ingathering is mostly done by Irish women and girls who come from Doncaster'.<sup>241</sup> Irish migrant labour in the mid nineteenth century constituted an important contribution to agriculture in England, and the *Doncaster Chronicle* reported an influx of Irish reapers into the area in August 1840.<sup>242</sup> The employment of women and the Irish was controversial as it had the potential to lower wages for core workers over a period of

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 402

<sup>239</sup> Sayer, pp. 67-80.

<sup>240</sup> PP 1867-8, XVII, *First Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture*, 1867, p. 398.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>242</sup> J.H. Johnson, 'Harvest Migration from Nineteenth Century Ireland', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, No. 41 (June 1967), pp. 97-112; E.J.T. Collins, 'Migrant Labour in British Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 35 (1976), pp. 38-59; *Doncaster Chronicle*, 15 August 1840, p. 5.

time.<sup>243</sup> In addition, it had moral implications, which contravened the prevalent ideologies of domesticity. Consequently, Revd. Surtees physically and ideologically distanced himself and the estate village of Sprotbrough from the employment of resident women as agricultural labourers.

Not everyone in the Doncaster district was opposed to the employment of female agricultural labourers. Most notable were the farmers who valued the work of women on their land. John Bladworth owned just under 100 acres at Stainforth, and in total farmed approximately 700 acres in the village in the mid nineteenth century. He favoured the employment of women and children on the land, arguing that it was in the financial interest of both the women and the farmers and had no detrimental effects. Bladworth was insistent that the work required of women was appropriate to their physical strength and that the fresh air was conducive to their health. In direct response to the question of immorality amongst women who worked in the fields, he said 'I have never been able to draw a comparison unfavourable to those who work in the fields; neither does it in any way encourage illegitimacy'.<sup>244</sup>

In addition, Bladworth highlighted the economic benefits of women working on the land. In their historical analysis, Verdon and Burnette have demonstrated the value of female agricultural labour in terms of making a significant contribution to the household.<sup>245</sup> The wages of women in the Doncaster district, albeit lower than those of men, were still some of the highest in the country.<sup>246</sup> The average weekly wage for a woman in the Doncaster area was nine shillings in 1861, and six shillings in 1868-9. Despite a decrease in the weekly wage for women working on the land, women in the Doncaster area could still earn up to

<sup>243</sup> Yamamoto, 'Two Labour Markets', p. 110.

<sup>244</sup> PP 1867-8, XVII, *First Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture 1867*, p. 401.

<sup>245</sup> Verdon, *Rural Women Workers*, pp. 61-2, 188-9; Burnette, 'Married with Children', p. 77.

<sup>246</sup> Burnette, 'Wages and Employment', p. 677



fourteen shillings during the four weeks of harvest in 1868-9.<sup>247</sup> Bladworth reasoned that a woman could complement her husband's wage by six shillings if she worked on the land.<sup>248</sup> At the same time he stated that 'the women that go out to field work are principally widows who have little or no means of subsistence'.<sup>249</sup> This complements the evidence of the CEBs.

Undoubtedly, the crux of Bladworth's argument was concerned with the economy of employing women on the land. From his perspective as a landowner and farmer, women and children provided an economical source of labour. In his words, 'The labour of women and children is the most economical the farmer can employ, for in work which requires suppleness of finger, or activity rather than strength, they will do as much as a man.'<sup>250</sup> This was a view shared by industrialist James Brown who owned the Rossington estate. He told the Commission that 'Children, young persons, and women are employed in agriculture in this parish at 8 or 9 years of age. I do not consider such employment injurious to their health or morals'.<sup>251</sup> Perspectives on the employment of female agricultural labourers in the six villages were shaped by the economic contribution to farming, as well as moral concerns. Changing and competing perceptions of female agricultural work further complicated the notion of 'the agricultural labourer' in the mid nineteenth century.

## Conclusions

This chapter has provided evidence about the agricultural workforces in the six villages that challenges the Mills model and has important implications for alternative frameworks. Firstly, the evidence for patterns

<sup>247</sup> PP 1861, L, *Return of the Average Rate of Weekly Earnings of Agricultural Labourers*, Part 1, 1860, p. 12; *Ibid.*, Part 2, 1861, p. 9; PP 1868-9, L, *Return of the Average Rate of Weekly Earnings of Agricultural Labourers*, 1868, p. 15.

<sup>248</sup> PP 1867-8, XVII, *First Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture 1867*, p. 401.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 395.

of agricultural employment in the six villages has demonstrated that the Mills model oversimplified the complex and often unique occupational structures of English villages in the mid nineteenth century. Whilst some evidence suggests that patterns of agricultural employment correlated with landownership, it certainly was not consistent across all six villages. The continuum approach resolves this problem by illustrating the relative positions of different villages in terms of the proportion of paid workers to farmers. This approach also enables the changes that took place to the proportions of paid labour in the six villages between 1851 and 1871 to be accommodated.

Secondly, this chapter has demonstrated that the Mills model is deficient in not differentiating between types of agricultural workers. Significant trends affecting the proportion of paid agricultural labour in a village related to farm service, hiring fairs, the casualisation of the agricultural workforce, and disparities in wages. Quantifying and classifying patterns of agricultural workers in isolation to these factors, results in a very one dimensional perspective. Yet this is what the Mills model encourages by being rigid, static and unable to differentiate between agricultural workers. In addition to the aforementioned continuum, an alternative framework necessitates the analysis of different agricultural workers and the incorporation of dynamic inter-relationships. This is achievable by ensuring that an alternative framework is enquiry led and facilitates research into different types of agricultural workers, unlike the rigid and undifferentiated Mills' model. This is particularly significant in relation to the hiring fairs and the supply and demand of agricultural labourers. Consequently, rather than the negative dependency theory of the Mills model, dynamic inter-relationships were stimulated between villages and between town and country. The agricultural worker, and methods of employment, ensured that villages with and without concentrated landownership were intricately linked. These interconnections thus transcended landownership.

Agricultural employment within the six villages was shaped by actions taken outside the village, as well as within it. The agricultural workforce was important to the six villages, yet the agricultural employees were indeed a complex and hard to define group of workers that evolved during the mid nineteenth century. A framework for the study of village typology must accommodate variation between villages, change over time, differentiation between different types of workers, and inter-relationships. These arguments are developed further in chapter four, which examines industry and micro-commerce in the countryside. Agricultural villages they may have been, but not everyone worked in agriculture in the six villages during the mid nineteenth century. The economic and occupational diversity of these villages complemented the agriculture and agricultural employment in them.

## **Chapter Four: Industry and Micro-Commerce in the Countryside**

This chapter examines the relationship between the land, agriculture, industry, trades and crafts. The term micro-commerce has been devised to describe the small scale buying and selling of goods and society in the countryside, and in recognition that many trades and crafts people and village businesses were in fact engaged in more than one activity.<sup>1</sup> Firstly, this chapter tests Mills' classificatory theory about the extent of industry and micro-commerce in the countryside. Mills argued that estate villages had little or no industry, and very few trades and crafts; whereas multi-freeholder villages had a lot more.<sup>2</sup> This chapter establishes whether or not the three estate villages, Sprotbrough, Warmsworth and Rossington, had virtually no industry and minimal trades and crafts, in contrast to the three multi-freeholder villages, Braithwell, Fishlake and Stainforth. In order to test this hypothesis, the number of industries and trades and crafts businesses and occupations in the six villages are compared and contrasted, using trade directories and Census Enumerators' Books (hereafter CEBs). In addition, it demonstrates the importance of differentiating between types of industry, trades and crafts and determining the scale and scope of businesses.

Secondly, it challenges Mills' causal assertions about landownership. Mills attributed the differences in the extent of industry in villages to the concentration of landownership.<sup>3</sup> He argued that landowners limited the amount of industry in estate villages, with a view to restricting population growth and poor relief expenditure, in doing so Mills failed to differentiate between landowners, other than on the basis of how much land they owned. This chapter compares and contrasts the four landowners in the three estate villages in order to demonstrate how the differences between landowners affected their causal role towards

<sup>1</sup>Although the term has been used to describe an online selling and purchasing model that involves the exchange of very small sums of money, this is its first application in this context.

<sup>2</sup>D.R. Mills, *Lord and Peasant in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London, 1980), p. 117.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 116-7.

industry on their landed estates, it particularly examines the complex dynamics of landownership and industry through the case study of quarrying at Warmsworth, which draws upon the extensive correspondence between the landowners and the quarry and lime company (Lockwood, Biagden and Kemp). Consequently, it demonstrates the importance of differentiation between landowners in order to understand the different extent of industry in the three estate villages.

Thirdly, this chapter examines the inter-relationships between villages, and between the countryside and towns, in terms of industry and micro-commerce. Mills implies that the limited range of trades and crafts in estate villages made them dependent on the wider range of trades and crafts available in multi-freeholder villages.<sup>4</sup> This chapter challenges this idea of one-way dependency, and argues that mutual dependency existed between different types of villages, and between the countryside and towns. A comparison of the range of different trades and crafts in the six villages is used to identify whether or not a disparity in the provision of trades and crafts existed between estate and multi-freeholder villages. It also argues that inter-relationships were stimulated by the availability of resources and skills and by geography.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 120-3; D.R. Mills, *Rural Community History from Trade Directories* (Aldenham, 2001), pp. 66-70.

## **The Classification of Industry and Micro-Commerce in the Six Villages**

As M.J.D. Edgar observed, 'rural was not always a synonym for agricultural'.<sup>5</sup> Many rural, and even predominantly agricultural, areas contained some trades, crafts and industry. The extent of industry and micro-commerce affected the occupational structure of a village. E.A. Wrigley made an important distinction between men on the land and men in the countryside. He argued that between 1811 and 1851 the number of men in the countryside grew by roughly half, whilst employment in agriculture only rose by a tenth in the same period. He identified a significant increase in the number of men employed in ten major trades and crafts.<sup>6</sup> Economic and occupational diversity should therefore be key considerations in the study of villages. Understanding the links between rural communities and industry and micro-commerce is essential for interpreting village typologies.

### **Quantifying industry and Micro-Commerce in the Six Villages**

The Mills model proposed a simplified comparative measure of both industry and micro-commerce in villages using the arbitrary measure of 'more' versus 'less'.<sup>7</sup> The model does not specify whether or not this was a measure of employment or the number of businesses. His detailed research suggests that the model quantified occupations rather than businesses. Using a combination of CEBs and trade directories he primarily examined occupations in Leicestershire for his doctoral thesis.<sup>8</sup> In *Lord and Peasant*, he again focussed specifically on occupational differences between villages.<sup>9</sup> Both the number of businesses and the occupational evidence is used to quantify industry and micro-commerce in the six villages.

<sup>5</sup>M.J.D. Edgar, 'Occupational Diversity in Seven Rural Parishes in Dorset, 1851', *Local Population Studies*, No. 52 (Spring 1994), p. 48.

<sup>6</sup>E.A. Wrigley, *Poverty, Progress and Population* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 87-8.

<sup>7</sup>Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 117.

<sup>8</sup>D.R. Mills, 'Landownership and Rural Population, with Special Reference to Leicestershire in the Mid Nineteenth Century', Unpublished Phd Thesis, University of Leicester, 1963, p. 163.

<sup>9</sup>Mills, *Lord and Peasant*.

The two main sources used to quantify industry and micro-commerce in the six villages are trade directories to identify the number of industries and businesses in a village, and the CEBs to calculate the number of residents employed in industry and micro-commerce.<sup>10</sup> C.A. Crompton identified these to be the 'two most important...sources for the study of occupations', and used them to analyse rural occupations in Hertfordshire during the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup> He advocated cross-referencing the CEBs with appropriate directories, in order to assess the regional stability of different trades and the employment status within them.<sup>12</sup> J.A. Chartres and G.L. Turnbull used trade directories to calculate the threshold populations of selected villages based on crafts and trades in nineteenth century Norfolk and the North Riding of Yorkshire.<sup>13</sup> Other historians have concentrated on the occupational data in the CEBs, in order to provide detailed information about individuals employed rather than the number of businesses. Charles Rawding used the 1851 CEBs for parishes on the Lincolnshire Wolds to compare village type and employment structure; and Christine Hallas used the CEBs to analyse craft occupations in Wensleydale and Swaledale.<sup>14</sup> Chartres and Turnbull argued that whilst the census from 1851 provided the means to assess occupational trends in crafts, the analytical process was not without difficulty as occupational classifications changed from census to census.<sup>15</sup> By using both sources it is possible to distinguish between the number of business and the

<sup>10</sup> Mills, *Rural Community History*, pp. 11-5; D.R. Mills and K. Schiirer, 'Employment and Occupations', in D.R. Mills and K. Schiirer (eds) *Local Communities in the Victorian Census Enumerators' Books* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 136-60; E. Higgs, 'Occupational Censuses and the Agricultural Workforce in Victorian England and Wales', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (November 1995), pp. 700-16.

<sup>11</sup> C.A. Crompton, 'Changes in Rural Service Occupations During the Nineteenth Century: an Evaluation of Two Sources for Hertfordshire', *Rural History*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1995), pp. 193-203.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>13</sup> J.A. Chartres and G.L. Turnbull, 'Country Craftsmen' in G.E. Mingay (ed), *The Victorian Countryside*, Vol. 1 (London, 1981), p. 321.

<sup>14</sup> C. Rawding, 'Village Type and Employment Structure: An Analysis in the Nineteenth Century Lincolnshire Wolds', *Local Population Studies*, No. 52, No. 2 (Autumn 1994); C. Hallas, 'Craft Occupations in the Late Nineteenth Century: Some Local Considerations', *Local Population Studies*, No. 44 (Spring 1990).

<sup>15</sup> Chartres and Turnbull, 'Country Craftsmen', p. 315.

total employment, and reveal disparities in the extent of trades, crafts and industry in the countryside.

The number of industries, and trades and crafts businesses, and the range of different trades and crafts, listed in the trade directories between 1837 and 1877 in the three estate villages are compared with those in the three multi-freeholder villages in table 4.1. Collectively, more industry and trades and crafts businesses were located in the three multi-freeholder villages than in the three estate villages during this period. In 1861, 68 trades and crafts businesses provided 26 different trades and crafts in the three multi-freeholder villages compared to only 25 trades and crafts businesses in the three estate villages, providing 20 different trades and crafts. Although the exact number of industries and trades and crafts businesses varied, this overall pattern was consistently present between 1837 and 1877. This evidence suggests that as a statistical measure of the extent of industry and trades and crafts businesses in the six villages, Mills' classificatory model has merit.

Table 4.1: Number of Industries and Trades and Crafts Businesses, and Range of Different Trades and Crafts, in the Six Villages, 1837-1877

Village type	1837			1861			1877		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Estate	4	22	17	5	25	20	4	23	19
Multi-Freeholder	18	68	27	11	68	26	10	54	27

**NOTES: 1. Total industries; 2. Total trades and crafts businesses; 3. Range of different trades and crafts**

**Source: W. White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the West Riding, 1837, Vol. 2* (Sheffield, 1837), pp. 165, 179-180, 188, 206-207, 200-201, 213; E. R. Kelly, *Post Office Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1861* (London, 1861), pp. 206, 276, 328-329, 610, 811-812, 871; E. R. Kelly, *Post Office Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1877* (London, 1877), pp. 217, 314, 385-387, 785-786, 1112, 1186**



Similarly, using the CEBs to identify occupational data, the combined total employment in industry, trades and crafts in the six villages was greater in three multi-freeholder villages than in the three estate villages. As shown in figure 4.2, in 1851 124 people were recorded as having occupations in industry, trades and crafts in the three multi-freeholder villages compared with 89 in the estate villages. Again, although the exact figures changed, consistently more occupations of this nature were recorded in the three multi-freeholder villages than in the three estate villages in 1861 and 1871. The contrast in the number of trades and crafts occupations recorded was particularly striking. In 1851 and 1871, more than twice as many people were recorded as being employed in trades and crafts in the three multi-freeholder villages than the three estate villages. The aggregate data once again suggests a link between concentrated landownership and the occupational structure of villages.

Table 4.2: Number of People Employed in Industry, Trades and Crafts in the Six Villages, 1851-1871

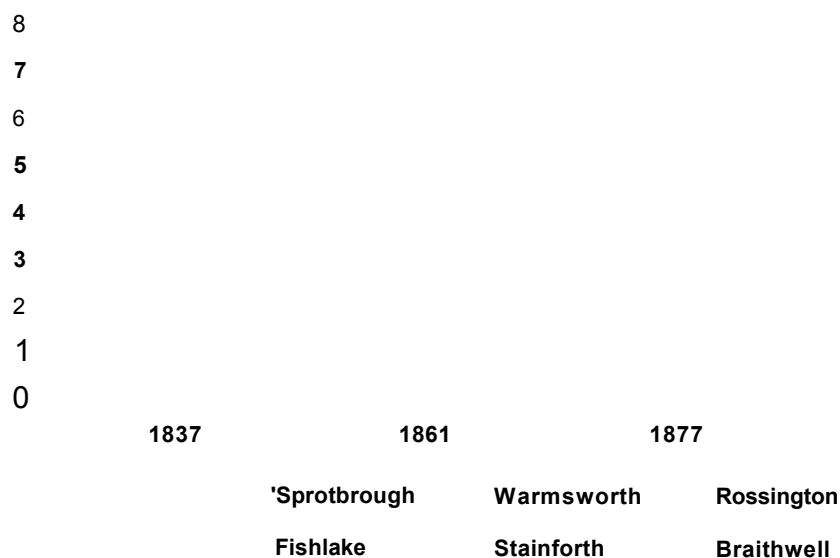
Village type	1851		1861		1871	
	Industry	Trades and Crafts	Industry	Trades and Crafts	industry	Trades and Crafts
Estate	41	48	28	47	64	42
Multi-Freeholder	24	100	21	87	19	107

Freeholder

**Source:** TNA, HO107/2346, CEB Sprotbrough 1851; TNA, HO107/2346, CEB Warmsworth 1851; TNA, HO107/2348, CEB Rossington 1851] TNA, HO107/2346, CEB Braithwell 1851; TNA, HO107/2349, CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1851] TNA, RG9/3516, CEB Sprotbrough 1861] TNA, RG9/3514, CEB Warmsworth 1861] TNA, RG9/3522, CEB Rossington 1861] TNA, RG9/3513, CEB Braithwell 1861] TNA, RG9/3524, CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1861] TNA, RG10/4716, CEB Sprotbrough 1871] TNA, RG10/4715, CEB Warmsworth 1871] TNA, RG10/4724, CEB Rossington 1871] TNA, RG10/4714, CEB Braithwell 1871] TNA, RG10/4726, CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1871

Nevertheless, the Mills' classificatory argument exhibits fundamental flaws, which have significant implications for the application of the Mills model to these six villages. The first limitation is the sharp dichotomy of the Mills model. The use of the arbitrary terms 'more' and 'less' industry and trades and crafts, based entirely on the concentration of landownership, sought to position estate and multi-freeholder villages in direct contrast to one other.<sup>16</sup> In doing so, the Mills model fails to acknowledge both the extent of variation between villages with similar landowning structures, and the disparity between the extent of industry and the extent of trades and crafts in a village. The aggregate figures for both the number of businesses and employment conceal important differences between villages with similar landowning structures. Fig. 4.1 illustrates the number of industries in the six villages between 1837 and 1877, and table 4.3 shows the number of trades and crafts businesses, and the range of different trades and crafts, in the six villages during the same period. Detailed analysis of this data demonstrates that not all estate or multi-freeholder villages had the same number of industries, or trades and crafts businesses.

Fig 4.1: Number of Industries in the Six Villages, 1837-1877



Source: see table 4.1

<sup>16</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 28.

Table 4.3: The Extent and Range of Micro-Commerce in the Six Villages, 1837-1877

Village	Number of trades and crafts 1837	Range of trades and crafts 1837	Number of trades and crafts 1861	Range of trades and crafts 1861	Number of trades and crafts 1877	Range of trades and crafts 1877
Estate villages:						
Sprotbrough	6	5	6	5	5	4
Warmsworth	9	6	8	8	9	8
Rossington	7	6	11	7	9	7
Multi- freeholder villages:						
Fishlake	25	10	25	10	22	10
Stainforth	26	9	31	10	17	7
Braithwell	17	8	12	6	15	10

Source: see table 4.1

The estate villages of Warmsworth and Rossington coincided with Mills' classificatory extreme, as they had virtually no industry and minimal micro-commerce. At Warmsworth, only industry, less than ten trades and crafts businesses, and only between six and eight different types of trades and crafts, were listed in the trade directories between 1837 and 1877.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, the maximum number of trades and crafts businesses listed for Rossington between 1837 and 1877 was eleven, with no more than seven different trades and crafts during this period.<sup>18</sup> Yet in the estate village of Sprotbrough there were more industries listed than in the other two estate villages, and yet the least number of trades and crafts businesses between 1837 and 1877, and the smallest range of

<sup>17</sup> W. White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the West Riding*, 1837, Vol. 2 (Sheffield, 1837), p. 213; E. R. Kelly, *Post Office Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire*, 1861 (London, 1861), p. 871; E. R. Kelly, *Post Office Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire*, 1877 (London, 1877), p. 1186.

<sup>18</sup> White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, Vol. 2, pp. 200-201; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, p. 610; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1877, pp. 785-786.

different trades and crafts.<sup>19</sup> In contrast to the Mills model, the number of industries and businesses varied in the three estate villages, in spite of concentrated landownership being the common denominator. Furthermore, a disparity between the extent of industry and the extent of micro-commerce existed, which meant that more industry did not equate to more micro-commerce in the estate village of Sprotbrough.

Similar variation in the extent of industry and micro-commerce was evident in the multi-freeholder villages. Stainforth consistently had a large number of industries, and by 1877, a significantly greater number than Fishlake and Braithwell, as illustrated by fig. 4.1.<sup>20</sup> Stainforth and Fishlake both had more micro-commerce than Braithwell, particularly in 1837 and 1861. In 1861, 31 trades and crafts businesses, and 10 different trades and crafts were listed for Stainforth, and 25 businesses and 10 different trades and crafts were listed at Fishlake.<sup>21</sup> In contrast, only 12 businesses and 6 different trades and crafts were listed in the multi-freeholder village of Braithwell.<sup>22</sup> The extent and variation of trades and crafts and of industry therefore differed in villages with similar landowning structures. This meant that the number of industries and businesses were not always consistent with patterns of landownership as inferred by the Mills model.

The continuum is more representative of the extent of industry and trades and crafts in the six villages, than the sharp dichotomy of the Mills model. This is because a continuum permits villages to be placed at different points, rather than only at the two extremes. Fig. 4.2 depicts the continuum and where the six villages would be placed along it, both in terms of industry and trades and crafts in 1861. At one end of the continuum is Mills' classificatory extreme of the estate village with

<sup>19</sup>White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, Vol. 2, p. 207; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, p. 811; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1877, p. 1112.

<sup>20</sup>White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, Vol. 2, p. 188; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, p. 328; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1877, p. 386.

<sup>21</sup> Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, pp. 328, 276.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

virtually no industry and minimal trades and crafts. In terms of the industries listed in the trade directories, this is where Rossington and Warmsworth are placed on the continuum. As more industries were located at Sprotbrough, it is placed slightly further along the continuum. The position of these villages on the continuum alters slightly in terms of the extent of trades and crafts, because as demonstrated at Sprotbrough there was a disparity between the extent of industry and the extent of trades and crafts.

The converse classificatory extreme of the Mills model, that of lots of industry and a well developed range of trades and crafts, is represented at the other end of the continuum. None of the three multi-freeholder villages are placed at the very end. This is because their position on the continuum should be relative and take into account industrialised villages.<sup>23</sup> With regards industry, Braithwell and Fishlake had a comparable number of industries to the estate village of Sprotbrough. Only Stainforth is positioned further along the continuum towards Mills' classificatory extreme of lots of industry because it had both more industries and a greater range of different types of industries. The three multi-freeholder villages are further dispersed along the continuum in terms of trades and crafts. The number of trades and crafts businesses, and the range of different ones, at Braithwell were comparable with the estate village of Rossington. Consequently Braithwell is on the left of the continuum, whereas Fishlake and Stainforth, both of which had a far greater number of trades and crafts businesses and a greater range of trades and crafts, are on the right of the continuum. The continuum successfully represents both the variation between villages with similar landowning structures, and the disparity between the extent of industry and the extent of trades and crafts in a village. In doing so, it overcomes the first limitation: the sharp dichotomy of the Mills model.

<sup>23</sup>D. Hey, 'Industrialized Villages' in Mingay (ed), *The Victorian Countryside*, Vol. 1, pp. 353-63.

Fig. 4.2: Industry and Micro-commerce Continuum, 1861



A disparity also existed between employment in trades and crafts and in industry. Table 4.2 showed that more people had industrial occupations in the estate villages than in the multi-freeholder villages. In fact, it was the large number of industrial occupations at Warmsworth that consistently distorted the figures for industrial employment in the three estate villages, which can be seen in table 4.4. Industrial employment was otherwise not particularly great in either the estate or multi-freeholder villages. A similar disproportionately high number of people were employed in trades and crafts at Warmsworth, compared with the other two estate villages. As table 4.5 shows, Sprotbrough and Rossington had comparable numbers of men employed in trades and crafts, whereas Warmsworth consistently had more. Also, more people were employed in trades and crafts in Stainforth than the other two multi-freeholder villages.

Table 4.4: Total Male Employment in Industry in the Six Villages, 1851-1871

Village	1851	1861	1871
Estate:			
Sprotbrough	5	2	4
Warmsworth	29	22	39
Rossington	7	4	1
Multi-freeholder:			
Braithwell	7	7	1
Fishlake	4	5	6
Stainforth	13	9	9

**Source:** TNA, HO107/2346, CEB Sprotbrough 1851; TNA, H0107/2346, CEB Warmsworth 1851; TNA, H0107/2348, CEB Rossington 1851; TNA, H0107/2346, CEB Braithwell 1851; TNA, H0107/2349, CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1851] TNA, RG9/3516, CEB Sprotbrough 1861; TNA, RG9/3514, CEB Warmsworth 1861] TNA, RG9/3522, CEB Rossington 1861] TNA, RG9/3513, CEB Braithwell 1861] TNA, RG9/3524, CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1861] TNA, RG10/4716, CEB Sprotbrough 1871] TNA, RG10/4715, CEB Warmsworth 1871] TNA, RG10/4724, CEB Rossington 1871] TNA, RG10/4714, CEB Braithwell 1871] TNA, RG10/4726, CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1871

Table 4.5: Total Male Employment in Trades and Crafts in the Six Villages, 1851-1871

Village	1851	1861	1871
Estate:			
Sprotbrough	12	12	10
Warmsworth	22	22	19
Rossington	14	13	13
Multi-freeholder:			
Braithwell	27	21	28
Fishlake	33	28	33
Stainforth	40	38	46

**Source:** see table 4.4

The continuum, as depicted in fig. 4.3, can also represent the occupational disparities revealed within the six villages. Employment in trades and crafts is shown on the lower side of the continuum and employment in industry is shown on the upper side of the continuum. This permits both the variation in employment between villages to be illustrated and the differences in employment in industry and in trades and micro-commerce. With regards employment in trades and crafts, the continuum demonstrates that, although more people were employed in trades and crafts occupations in the three multi-freeholder villages than the three estate villages, there was a great deal of variation between the villages with similar landowning structures. Sprotbrough and Rossington are located at the far left hand side of the continuum because very few people had trades and crafts occupations in these two estate villages in 1861. This is in contrast to the estate village of Warmsworth, where nearly as many people had trades and crafts occupations as in the multi-freeholder village of Braithwell. Warmsworth and Braithwell both occupy quite central positions on the continuum as a result. Stainforth had the largest number of residents employed in trades and crafts, and is consequently located towards the far right hand side of the continuum. The dynamics on the continuum are significantly altered with regards industrial employment. Rossington and Sprotbrough remain on the far left of the continuum as very few people had industrial occupations in those two estate villages. In addition, the three multi-freeholder villages are also located towards the left of the continuum, as they too had few residents employed in industrial occupations. Only Warmsworth is located towards the centre of the continuum as a far greater number of men were employed in industry.



Fig. 4.3: Employment in Industry and Micro-commerce Continuum, 1861



The location of villages on the continuum varies depending upon whether the number of industries and business or total employment are quantified, and whether industry or micro-commerce is being compared. The position of Warmsworth differs the most, with more employment in trades, crafts and industry than the number of businesses and industries located on the estate. The least contrast between estate and multi-freeholder villages was with regards industry and industrial employment. Very few of the villages studied had much industry or industrial employment during the mid nineteenth century. The difference in the number of trades and crafts businesses and occupations was in fact graduated along the continuum, with estate villages broadly contrasted to multi-freeholder villages.

Population size, rather than the concentration of landownership, has also been used to explain variations in the provision of trades and crafts, and in the number of trades and crafts occupations, in villages during the mid nineteenth century. Chartres and Turnbull used the size of settlement and the number of craftsmen listed in the trade directories for Norfolk and the North Riding of Yorkshire to assess the viability of

specific crafts and their relative importance to the rural community.<sup>24</sup> Chartres applied the same technique to tradesmen.<sup>25</sup> In each case, it was argued that the actual size of the population mattered less than the rank order of the crafts and trades. Crompton also argued that villages with larger populations had a greater number of trades and crafts businesses, and a bigger range of different types of trades and crafts.<sup>26</sup> He used both trade directories and CEBs, arguing that the results were comparable. Crompton divided the population size by the number of trades and crafts to calculate what he described as a crude measure of the concentration of rural service provision.<sup>27</sup> Edgar also identified a link between population size and the provision of trades and crafts, arguing that larger villages had disproportionately more trades and crafts.<sup>28</sup>

The evidence from the six villages suggests a similar link between the size of population and the extent of trades and crafts. Table 4.6 shows that Stainforth had both the largest population and the largest number of trades and crafts businesses in 1861. Similarly, the smaller villages had fewer trades and crafts businesses. Sprotbrough and Warmsworth had the smallest populations and the fewest trades and crafts businesses. In the case of Stainforth and Fishlake on the one hand and Sprotbrough and Warmsworth on the other hand the size of population also equated to the concentration of landownership. This accords with the work of Mills and Rawding on village type and population size. The Mills model at least inferred a link between concentrated landownership, population size, and the extent of industry and micro-commerce, but again homogenises village type. According to Mills the contrast between the size of population in estate and multi-freeholder villages was more important than the variation in population size between villages with similar landowning structures.<sup>29</sup> Rawding, in his study of village type on

<sup>24</sup> Chartres and Turnbull, 'Country Craftsmen', pp. 320-1.

<sup>25</sup> J.A. Chartres, 'Country Tradesmen' in Mingay (ed), *Victorian Countryside*, Vol. 1, p. 301-4.

<sup>26</sup> Crompton, 'Changes in Rural Service Occupations', p. 197-8.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Edgar, 'Occupational Diversity', p. 54.

<sup>29</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 117.

the Lincolnshire Wolds, found that larger villages had a greater proportion of people working in trades and crafts, and a wider range of trades and crafts available.<sup>30</sup> He was also able to demonstrate that population size did correlate with the concentration of landownership on the Lincolnshire Wolds. His evidence showed that there was clear distinction between open and close parishes, with approximately 26 per cent of the workforce employed in trades and crafts in open parishes, but only 10 per cent in close parishes.<sup>31</sup>

Table 4.6: Relationship between Population Size and the Number of Trades and Crafts Businesses in the Six Village, 1861

Village	Population	Number of trades and Crafts Businesses							
		<4	<8	<12	<16	<20	<24	<28	<32
Stainforth	751								X
Fishlake	585							X	
Braithwell	422			X					
Rossington	400			X					
Warmsworth	385		X						
Sprotbrough	339		X						

Source: Kelly, E. R., *Post Office Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1861* (Kelly, London, 1861)

Nevertheless, the estate village of Rossington and the multi-freeholder village of Braithwell were exceptions to the sharp contrast between village type, population size and the provision of trades and crafts. Rossington and Braithwell had contrasting landownership, yet similarly sized populations and a similar number of trades and crafts businesses. This demonstrates the importance of population size rather than the concentration of landownership in determining the number of trades and

<sup>30</sup> Rawding, 'Village Type', pp. 60-1.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

crafts businesses in a village, and thus explaining the graduated positioning of the six villages along the continuum.

This pattern is replicated with regards the number of trades and crafts occupations in villages of different sizes. As table 4.7 shows, more people were employed in trades and crafts occupations in villages with larger populations. The only exception was at Warmsworth, where a slightly disproportionate number of people were employed in trades and crafts compared to the size of the population. Only the relationship between the size of population and the range of different trades and crafts was more complicated, as shown in table 4.8. The biggest range of different trades and crafts in 1861 was indeed in the two largest villages, Stainforth and Fishlake. Similarly, the smallest village, Sprotbrough, had the fewest different trades and crafts. The difficulty arises with the three middle-sized villages, Warmsworth, Rossington and Braithwell, which ranged in size from 385 to 422. In spite of the similarity in population size, Braithwell only had six different trades and crafts, whereas Warmsworth had eight. Overall, the relationship between the extent of trades and crafts businesses and occupations on the one hand and the size of the population on the other was strong in the six villages. Population size therefore appears a more apt indicator of the extent of trades and crafts than the concentration of landownership, as the size of estate and multi-freeholder villages varied considerably.

Table 4.7: Relationship between Population Size and Trades and Crafts Occupations in the Six Villages, 1861

Village	Population	Number of Trades and Crafts Occupations						
		<6	<12	<18	<24	<30	<36	<42
Stainforth	751							X
Fishlake	585					X		
Braithwell	422				X			
Rossington	400			X				
Warmsworth	385				X			
Sprotbrough	339		X					

Source: see table 4.6

Table 4.8: Relationship between Population Size and the Range of Different Trades and Crafts in the Six Villages, 1861

Village	Population	Range of Different Trades and Crafts									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Stainforth	751										X
Fishlake	585										X
Braithwell	422						X				
Rossington	400							X			
Warmsworth	385								X		
Sprotbrough	339					X					

Source: see table 4.6

The second limitation of the Mills' classificatory model is that it is static, and supposedly represents the extent of industry and micro-commerce over a long period of time. This is particularly problematical when applied to the mid nineteenth century, because the period between 1837 and 1877 was very much one of transition. Whilst England was becoming an increasingly urbanised and industrialised nation, the pace and geographical impact of this varied considerably.<sup>32</sup> Chartres and Perren argued that the full impact of 'economic transformation' had not been experienced in the countryside during the 1840s and 1850s.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, they argued that in certain trades, crafts and industrial processes continuity in the countryside prevailed into the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>34</sup> The contrasting processes of industrialisation and de-industrialisation were also a feature of the countryside during this period. Rural industry, as Chartres argued, was indeed complex during the mid nineteenth century.<sup>35</sup>

The collective number of industries in the six villages decreased significantly between 1837 and 1877, from 22 to 14. Moreover, this decrease in industry was greatest in the three multi-freeholder villages. Whilst the range of different trades and crafts remained consistent in the three multi-freeholder villages, the actual number of businesses decreased between 1861 and 1877. This was in contrast to the total number of trades and crafts businesses, and the range of different trades and crafts, which remained relatively stable in the three estate villages. Employment in industrial occupations fluctuated in the six villages, but employment in trades and crafts in both estate and multi-freeholder villages remained relatively constant.

<sup>32</sup> G.E. Mingay, 'Introduction: Rural England in the Industrial Age', in G.E. Mingay (ed) *The Victorian Countryside*, Vol. 1 (London, 1981), p. 3; P. Hudson (ed), *Regions and Industries: A Perspective on the Industrial Revolution in Britain* (Cambridge, 1989); J. Chartres and R. Perren, 'Trade, Commerce and Industry: Introduction', in E.J.T. Collins (ed) *The Agrarian History of England and Wales 1850-1914*, Part II (Cambridge, 2000), p. 947; J. Stobart, 'Regions, Localities, and Industrialisation: Evidence from the East Midlands, c. 1780-1840', *Environment Planning A*, Vol. 33, no. 7 (2001), pp. 1305-1325.

<sup>33</sup> Chartres and Perren 'Trade, Commerce and Industry: Introduction', p. 947.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> J.A. Chartres, 'Rural Industry and Manufacturing', in Collins (ed), *Agrarian History*, Part 2, pp. 1101,1149.

Population change has also been used to explain patterns of trades and crafts in the countryside. Chartres and Turnbull identified a strong relationship between rural depopulation and the decline in craft employment.<sup>36</sup> Hallas also found that craft employment peaked in accordance with peaks in the population, and that the decrease in employment in virtually all crafts from either 1861 or 1871 was consistent with rural depopulation.<sup>37</sup> Crompton also identified a decline in the number of steady trades settled in villages from 1851 to 1871.<sup>38</sup> Only the populations of Stainforth and Sprotbrough decreased significantly between 1841 and 1871, from 924 to 748 and 381 to 339 respectively. Yet, the number of trades and crafts in Sprotbrough remained almost consistent, whereas the number diminished in all three multi-freeholder villages regardless of population change. The link between population change and patterns of trades and crafts in the six villages was therefore not as strong as the work of other historians suggests. This is perhaps because rural depopulation was not as rapid or profound as in some areas. Competition could however still erode the foundations of micro-commerce, particularly in multi-freeholder villages where multiple businesses and people fulfilled the same occupational roles.

The gap between the extent of industry and micro-commerce in the estate and multi-freeholder villages was narrower by 1877, which weakens the sharp dichotomy of the Mills model when applied over a period of time, and for comparative purposes. The continuum enables change in the number of businesses and occupations to be accommodated in a structured framework. The continuum becomes a sliding scale that demonstrates the extent of change and how change affected different places and even different industries and trades and crafts businesses. This makes it more widely applicable than the sharp dichotomy and static nature of the Mills model. Although the continuum

<sup>36</sup> Chartres and Turnbull, 'Country Craftsmen', p. 319-321.

<sup>37</sup> Hallas, 'Craft Occupations', p. 18.

<sup>38</sup> Crompton, 'Changes in Rural Service Occupations', p. 201.

resolves difficulties concerning variation between villages with similar landowning structures, change over time, and discrepancies between industry and the trades and crafts businesses and between the number of businesses and occupations, it is still somewhat limited. To further explain the different patterns of industry and micro-commerce in the six villages, it is necessary to differentiate between types of industry and types of trades and crafts, and examine the scale and scope of businesses.

### **Differentiating between Industry and Micro-Commerce in the Six Villages**

The third limitation of the Mills model is that it does not differentiate between types of industry or types of micro-commerce. Instead it relies upon a statistical comparison of industry and micro-commerce that not only assumes the fortunes of both industry and micro-commerce in the countryside were the same, but that the fortunes of different types of industries, trades and crafts were all the same. Within the detailed research of Mills there is greater appreciation of industry in the countryside and analysis of its distribution than the dichotomy of the model suggests. In his doctoral thesis, Mills analysed the distribution of industry in Leicestershire, and distinguished between primary, secondary and tertiary industries. He also argued in *Lord and Peasant* that whilst manufacturing was largely absent from estate villages, extractive industries were not uncommon.<sup>39</sup> By further differentiating between industries, trades and crafts the extent, pace and nature of change and variation in the six villages becomes evident.

The relationship between land and agriculture on the one hand and industry and micro-commerce on the other is particularly important in understanding the role of industry and micro-commerce in the six villages. As Crompton argued, the agricultural community both

<sup>39</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, pp. 30-1.



sustained and stimulated demand for trades and crafts.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, Hallas identified a link between the primary activity of agriculture and the need for a wide range of crafts and trades, arguing that trades and crafts people were 'integrally associated with the relative self sufficiency of the rural economy'.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, the key trades and crafts, such as blacksmith and shopkeeper, provide an indication of the vitality of rural society.<sup>42</sup> As fig. 4.3 illustrates, the majority of industries, trades and crafts in the six villages in the mid nineteenth century were complimentary to agriculture and/or rural society. In total, 81.5 per cent businesses listed in the trade directories for the six villages between 1837 and 1877 were directly related to agriculture or related to rural society. Such industries and businesses included food processing industries; blacksmiths, wheelwrights and agricultural engineers; clothing trades and industries using wool and leather; and shops and public houses, all of which were important cogs in agricultural and rural life. The remaining 18.5 per cent of industries and businesses were location specific, dependent upon topography, geology or occupational skills, such as quarrying, brick and tile yards, boat building and sail making.

<sup>40</sup> Crompton, 'Changes in Rural Service Occupations', p. 193.

<sup>41</sup> Hallas, 'Craft Occupations', p. 18.

<sup>42</sup> J Stobart, 'Food Retailers and Rural Communities: Cheshire Butchers in the Long Eighteenth Century', *Local Population Studies*, No. 79 (Autumn 2007), p. 23.

Fig. 4.4: Proportion of Trades, Crafts and Industries associated with Agriculture, 1837-1877

- Directly linked with agriculture
- » Linked with rural society
- Other

Source: White, W, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the West Riding, 1837* (White, Sheffield, 1837); Kelly, E. R., *Post Office Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1861* (Kelly, London, 1861); Kelly, E. R., *Post Office Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1877* (Kelly, London, 1877)

A particularly strong relationship existed between crops grown, food processing industries and consumption in England in the mid nineteenth century.<sup>43</sup> Food processing industries literally processed agricultural crops, and included milling wheat for baking and malting barley for brewing. Significant structural changes to food processing industries began to take place during the mid nineteenth century. Changes in technology and imported grain stimulated the transition from small processors to large producers, which was often accompanied by a shift from the countryside into towns.<sup>44</sup> Yet in 1850, and in some instances later, there were many examples of crops grown, processed and consumed within small geographical areas in the English countryside. Of all the industries listed in the trade directories for the six villages,

<sup>43</sup> NK, 'Food Processing Industries', in Collins (ed), *Agrarian History, Part 2*, pp. 1060-61; B.A. Holderness, 'Agriculture and Industrialization in the Victorian Economy', in Mingay (ed), *Victorian Countryside*, Vol. 1, p. 188.

<sup>44</sup> NK, 'Food Processing Industries', p. 1060.

62.5 per cent were food processing in 1837, and 53.3 per cent in 1877. This demonstrates a much stronger relationship between industry and agriculture in the six villages than suggested by the Mills model. Mills in fact neglected processing industries in his analysis of the distribution of industry in Leicestershire, as he felt insufficient numbers of men were employed in them to warrant a detailed examination.<sup>45</sup> By differentiating between food processing industries it is also possible to identify and explain trends within specific industries.

Wheat was one of the principal crops grown in all six villages, and milling took place in four villages in 1837 and three in 1861 and 1877. This corresponded with national trends in milling. Prior to 1860, English corn mills primarily processed home-grown corn, as the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 did not trigger an immediate deluge of foreign wheat.<sup>46</sup> Certainly in 1850, there was no particular geographical concentration of this industry. The majority of wheat was processed and consumed close to where it was grown, and in some instances in the villages where it was grown.<sup>47</sup> Many village mills were small-scale operations, and in some instances the wheat was grown and milled by the same person or members of the same family.<sup>48</sup> In total 1,855 farmers listed milling as a subsidiary occupation in the 1851 census.<sup>49</sup> This applied to William Thompson, who was the miller at Braithwell in 1837 whilst another family member, John Thompson, was a farmer.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, Robert Ward junior was the miller at Fishlake in 1837 and his father, Robert Ward senior, was a farmer.<sup>51</sup>

Due to locational factors and manorial control, Sprotbrough was the only estate village studied to have a corn mill. Sprotbrough Mill was located

<sup>45</sup> Mills, 'Landownership and Rural Population', p. 220.

<sup>46</sup> R. Perren, 'Milling' in Collins (ed), *Agrarian History*, p. 1062.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1064.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1064.

<sup>50</sup> White, W, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the West Riding, 1837* (White, Sheffield, 1837), p. 165.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 180-1.

at Lower Sprotbrough on the river Don, and was water powered. As the manorial mill, farmers from neighbouring villages had to use it to grind their corn from 1279.<sup>52</sup> This appears to have affected the distribution of mills and patterns of corn milling in the area during the mid nineteenth century. For example, Battie-Wrightson, who resided at Cusworth, used the mill at Sprotbrough during the mid nineteenth century to grind corn from his estates in the Doncaster area, including Warmsworth.<sup>53</sup> This was the legacy of Cusworth, part of Sprotbrough parish, historically using the manorial mill at Sprotbrough. The enduring requirements of landowners and farmers from other villages, as well as from Sprotbrough, ensured that this corn mill was operational until the early twentieth century. As J. Tann argued, the continuity of village mills over long periods of time was indicative of their significance to the local economy.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, the farmers at Rossington had been obliged to use the town mill on the River Don at Doncaster until at least the eighteenth century because Doncaster Corporation were the Lords of the Manor of Rossington.<sup>55</sup> As Rossington was located on the Great North Road, in close proximity to Doncaster, the use of corn mills elsewhere continued through the mid nineteenth century. Topography and manorial obligations evidently still shaped patterns of corn milling in the three estate villages during the mid nineteenth century.

In contrast, there were fewer maltsters in the six villages. In fact, the only villages studied to list a maltster during this period were the multi-freeholder villages of Fishlake and Braithwell. This was in spite of barley being grown in all six villages. National patterns of malting were in fact comparable with those of milling in mid nineteenth century England. Up until the 1850s small-scale maltsters met local demand, and

<sup>52</sup> D. Holland (ed), *Sprotbrough in History*, Part Two (Rotherham, 1969), p. 45.

<sup>53</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/B/149-153, *Account Books for Cereals ground at the Sprotbrough Mill*, 1853, 1858, 1860 x 2, 1862.

<sup>54</sup> J. Tann, 'Corn Milling' in G.E. Mingay (ed), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol. VI, 1750-1850 (Cambridge, 1989), p. 400.

<sup>55</sup> J. Wainwright, *Yorkshire: An Historical and Topographical Introduction to the Knowledge of the Ancient State of Stafford and Tickhill* (Sheffield, 1829), p. 23.

consequently maltsters were widely distributed throughout the country.<sup>56</sup> This also led to a close relationship between the farmers and maltsters, which can be evidenced at both Braithwell and Fishlake in 1837. Charles and George Kay were both farmers and maltsters at Braithwell.<sup>57</sup> At Fishlake, Thomas and Joseph Birks and Thomas Wilkinson were farmers and maltsters.<sup>58</sup> In addition, links existed between processing on the one hand and retail on the other. For example, George Kay of Braithwell was listed as a farmer, a maltster and the innkeeper of the Red Lion in 1861.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, William Mason of Braithwell who was listed as a maltster and the publican of the Butcher's Arms in 1837 and 1852.<sup>60</sup> The relationship between farming and food processing was therefore particularly strong up until the 1860s.

By 1877 no maltsters were listed in the six villages studied. Jonathan Brown identified a notable decline in the number of small brewers and the demise of many village mattings in England from the 1860s onwards. This corresponded with the rise of the large scale brewing industry.<sup>61</sup> Large-scale breweries changed patterns of supply and demand throughout England during the mid nineteenth century.<sup>62</sup> The evidence for the Doncaster district is limited in its ability to assign direct responsibility for the decrease in village maltsters to the rise of the large-scale operations in the countryside and in towns. The decrease in village maltsters in the Doncaster district was however concurrent with the development of several larger maltings and breweries in the area. Evidence from the account books of Darley's Brewery in Thorne does suggest that supply and demand networks had altered by the 1870s. Darley's Brewery, founded by William Marsdin Darley (1827-1892) in the

<sup>56</sup>J Brown, 'Malting' in Collins (ed), *Agrarian History*, p. 1082.

<sup>57</sup>White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, Vol. 2, p. 165.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>59</sup>Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, p. 206; TNA, RG9/3513, *CEB Braithwell 1861*.

<sup>60</sup>White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, Vol. 2, p. 165; W. White, *Gazetteer and General Directory of Sheffield and Twenty Miles* (Sheffield, 1852), p. 427; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, p. 206; TNA, RG9/3513, *CEB Braithwell 1861*.

<sup>61</sup>Brown, 'Malting', p. 1077.

<sup>62</sup>E.M. Sigsworth, *The Brewing Trade in the Industrial Revolution: The Case of Yorkshire* (York, 1967); Brown, 'Malting', pp. 1076-77.

1850s, was less than five miles away from Stainforth and Fishlake. In 1872 Darley's Brewery purchased barley from farmers at Fishlake and Stainforth, and in 1874 Abraham Coates, innkeeper of the Old Anchor Inn at Fishlake, purchased beer from the Darley's.<sup>63</sup> This is indicative of increasing reliance on food processors outside the village for malting and brewing, although inevitably such limited entries are not conclusive of the reasons for the demise of the village maltster. Moreover, whilst the link between agriculture and food processing industries remained paramount, the nature of this relationship had evidently evolved during the mid nineteenth century.

In addition, evidence of the important links between agriculture and micro-commerce in the countryside is to be found within businesses that made and serviced items required for agriculture and rural society. A large proportion of the trade and craft businesses in the six villages were a direct response to the requirements of agriculture. In 1837, 46.6 per cent of all trade and craft businesses listed in the directories for the six villages had a direct link with agriculture.<sup>64</sup> By 1877, 42.9 per cent of businesses still had a direct link with agriculture.<sup>65</sup> Such businesses included the blacksmith and wheelwright, who were collectively responsible for shoeing horses, making tools and machinery, making wheels for carts and mills, and increasingly for more general tasks.<sup>66</sup> Agriculture and rural society were very much dependent on blacksmiths and wheelwrights during the mid nineteenth century, and as a consequent Mills defined both crafts as being 'essential' to a rural community.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Doncaster Archives, DY/DAR/1, *Ledger for the Darley Brewery, 1863-1891*.

<sup>64</sup> White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory, 1837*, Vol. 2, pp. 165, 179-180, 188, 206-207, 200-201, 213.

<sup>65</sup> Kelly, *Post Office Directory, 1877*, pp. 217, 314, 385-387, 785-786, 1112, 1186.

<sup>66</sup> J.A. Chartres, 'The Retail Trades and Agricultural Service', in Collins (ed), *Agrarian History, Part 2*, p. 1161; Chartres and Turnbull, 'Country Craftsmen', pp. 322-326.

<sup>67</sup> Mills, *Rural Community History*, pp. 53-64.

Total employment of blacksmiths and wheelwrights in England and Wales increased between 1841 and 1871.<sup>68</sup> The horse was still very much at the heart of agriculture and rural life in England during the mid nineteenth century, providing motive power and transportation.<sup>69</sup> Blacksmiths were the most numerous of the horse and vehicle crafts, and were widely and relatively evenly distributed.<sup>70</sup> Yet, as Chartres argued the true village blacksmith was in fact only a small proportion of the total, and one that was in decline in the late nineteenth century.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, such was their importance, that blacksmith and wheelwright businesses appeared at the lowest population thresholds in villages in the North Riding of Yorkshire and Norfolk during the mid nineteenth century.<sup>72</sup>

In the six villages, blacksmiths and wheelwrights represented 20 per cent of all trades and crafts businesses listed in 1837. This proportion remained constant throughout the mid nineteenth century, with blacksmiths and wheelwrights still accounting for 20.8 per cent of all trades and crafts by 1877. Each of the six villages had at least one blacksmith or wheelwright between 1837 and 1877 performing these crucial roles, which is testimony to the predominantly agricultural nature of these villages and the importance of these two crafts. The three multi-freeholder villages had more blacksmith and wheelwright businesses in 1837 and 1861 than the three estate villages, which is illustrated by figs. 4.4 and 4.5. This coincides with Mills' argument that micro-commerce was more prolific in multi-freeholder villages.<sup>73</sup> However, by 1877 most villages only had one of each, including the three multi-freeholder villages where the biggest decrease in these two crafts took place, as depicted in fig. 4.6. The gap between the number of blacksmith and wheelwright businesses in the estate and multi-freeholder villages had

<sup>68</sup> Chartres, 'The Retail Trades', p. 1163.

<sup>69</sup> Chartres and Turnbull, 'Country Craftsmen', p. 314.

<sup>70</sup> Chartres, 'The Retail Trades', p. 1163.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1164-5.

<sup>72</sup> Chartres and Turnbull, 'Country Craftsmen', p. 321.

<sup>73</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 117; Mills, 'Landownership and Rural Population', p. 220.

narrowed. The reason for the decrease in blacksmiths and wheelwrights in the three multi-freeholder villages is not clear, although could have been due to changing demand from the resident population, competition from town based craftsmen, or the consolidation of businesses meaning that one business fulfilled the role previously undertaken by multiple businesses. In spite of this decrease, the presence of blacksmith and wheelwright businesses in the six villages in the 1870s was indicative of the demand for their services in the countryside. As Crompton argued, they were among the few village trades and crafts that could still be considered to be stable by this period.<sup>74</sup>

Fig. 4.5: Number of Blacksmiths and Wheelwrights in the Six Villages, 1837

**Blacksmith**

**Carpenter or  
wheelwright**

**Source: White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, Vol. 2, pp. 165, 179-180, 188, 206-207, 200-201, 213**

<sup>74</sup>Crompton, 'Changes in Rural Service Occupations', pp. 199-201.



Fig. 4.6: Number of Blacksmiths and Wheelwrights in the Six Villages, 1861



Source: Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, pp. 206, 276, 328-329, 610, 811-812, 871

Fig. 4.7: Number of Blacksmiths and Wheelwrights in the Six Villages, 1877



Source: Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1877, pp. 217, 314, 385-387, 785-786, 1112, 1186

The village blacksmith was a lynchpin in agricultural society for all six villages during the mid nineteenth century. As such it provides a useful case study to demonstrate the integral link between the village population and craft businesses, and how certain characteristics of the village blacksmith transcended landownership. Continuity amongst blacksmiths is evident in both the estate and multi-freeholder villages. For example, Edmund Fitzgeorge was the blacksmith in the estate village of Warmsworth from 1837 to 1871.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, members of the Johnson family were blacksmiths in the estate village of Rossington between the 1830s and the 1870s.<sup>76</sup> In the multi-freeholder villages, Samuel Tomlinson and his son Samuel were the village blacksmiths in Fishlake from 1837 to 1877; George Mawson and his son John who were the blacksmiths in Stainforth between 1837 and 1877; and different branches of the Thompson family were blacksmiths at Braithwell during the mid nineteenth century.<sup>77</sup> Continuity within families was indicative of both a profitable business that the blacksmith had invested in and a rural community anxious to retain an important skill within the village.

Apprenticeships were similarly characteristic of both estate and multi-freeholder villages. Skilled crafts, such as blacksmithing, had a long legacy of apprenticeships, which was still in evidence during the mid nineteenth century in some of the villages studied. The nature of apprenticeships had however changed by the mid nineteenth century. According to K.D.M. Snell, the formal apprenticeship system was in decline prior to the Statute repeal in 1814 that removed regulations over

<sup>75</sup> White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, Vol. 2, p. 165; TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Warmsworth 1851*; TNA, RG9/3514, *CEB Warmsworth 1861*; TNA, RG10/4714, *CEB Braithwell 1871*.

<sup>76</sup> White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, Vol. 2, p. 201; TNA, H0107/2348, *CEB Rossington 1851*; TNA, RG9/3522, *CEB Rossington 1861*; TNA, RG10/4724, *CEB Rossington 1871*; Kelly, *Post Office Directory 1877*, p. 786,

<sup>77</sup> White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, Vol. 2, pp. 165, 180, 188; TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Braithwell 1851*; TNA, H0107/2349, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1851*; TNA, RG9/3513, *CEB Braithwell 1861*; TNA, RG9/3524, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1861*; TNA, RG10/4714, *CEB Braithwell 1871*; TNA, RG10/4726, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1871*; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1877, pp. 217, 314, 386-7.

who could enter profitable trades and how long apprenticeships lasted.<sup>78</sup> Snell argued that agricultural prosperity in the mid eighteenth century increased demand for labour in supporting trades and crafts, and that master craftsmen responded by employing apprentices as a cheap source of labour.<sup>79</sup> It was agricultural depression in the 1830s that Snell concluded further aggravated the situation. He evidenced this through the example of small farmers who went into trades, and the many trades who were dependent on the rural poor, which resulted in the apprenticeship system changing further.<sup>80</sup> By the mid nineteenth century, apprenticeships ranged from the informal to the formal, and from a source of cheap labour to a respected means of transferring knowledge and skills.<sup>81</sup> The length of apprenticeships also varied, although it is not always clear from the sources available the exact nature of apprenticeships in the six villages. The traditional apprenticeship, lasting a minimum of seven years and restricted to children of masters and holders of certain property qualifications had gradually been eroded to become a more short term and strictly contractual process to train skilled workers. As Snell argued, by the nineteenth century there was much variety in the practice of apprenticeships.<sup>82</sup>

The experience of apprenticeships in the six villages varied considerably, and included both family and non-family members. In the estate village of Rossington Thomas Johnson was apprenticed to his widowed mother, Maria Johnson in 1851.<sup>83</sup> Similarly, in the multi-freeholder village of Fishlake Samuel Tomlinson was apprenticed to his father in 1851.<sup>84</sup> These apprenticeships were representative of the importance of transferring skills and knowledge, not just businesses and

<sup>78</sup> K.D.M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England 1660-1900* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 228.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 241-3.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>81</sup> J. Lane, *Apprenticeship in England, 1600-1914* (London, 1996), pp. 1-8, 130-1

<sup>82</sup> Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor*, p. 259.

<sup>83</sup> TNA, H0107/2348, *CEB Rossington 1851*.

<sup>84</sup> TNA, H0107/2349, *CEB Fishlake 1851*.

tools, to the next generation. In addition, pauper children were apprenticed to craftsmen in the nineteenth century. Yet, as Joan Lane argued, the number of pauper children apprenticed in a trade could affect the social standing of that trade.<sup>85</sup> George Burton, 'a poor child' from the village of Braithwell, was apprenticed by indenture to Thomas Westby, tailor, in 1834. This indenture specified that Burton was to live and remain with his master until the age of twenty-one years.<sup>86</sup> The stipulated age and the official documentation of this apprenticeship suggest that this was indicative of the traditional ties and regulation of apprenticeship. Whether or not it was common practice is unclear, although no other indentures exist for apprentices in the six villages during the mid nineteenth century. George Burton's case was particularly significant because he was a pauper child obliged to adhere to the requirements of the overseers of the poor law. The principles behind apprenticing pauper children varied, but included easing the burden of the poor on rate payers and providing master blacksmiths with labour and valuable premiums.

Apprentices who were not members of the blacksmith's family or bound by the poor law administration were generally more mobile. Young apprentice blacksmiths in the six villages originated from further afield, including Newark, Chesterfield and Huddersfield. These apprenticeships stimulated inter-relationships between the villages and neighbouring counties, sustaining a supply of labour within the village and a knowledge network beyond the village. In addition, the occupations of their fathers included agricultural labourer, pottery labourer and cloth draper. This was indicative of the transition in apprenticeships from regulated to more general entry into trades and crafts. Again, the social level of the parents of apprentices was argued to affect the status of the trade or craft.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>85</sup>J. Lane, *Apprenticeship in England*, p. 131.

<sup>86</sup>Doncaster Archives, P71/6/B2/12, *Apprenticeship Indenture of George Burton, 1834*.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

The village blacksmith was generally held in high esteem, regardless of the composition of apprentices, on account of the crucial role they performed. As Chartres and Turnbull argued, skilled toolmaking could save both time and money for those using the items produced by a good blacksmith.<sup>88</sup> Such was the importance of the village blacksmith in the countryside during the mid nineteenth century, that Chartres has argued that their proprietors were the fourth constituent of rural society, alongside landowners, farmers and agricultural labourers.<sup>89</sup> This status was sometimes preserved in the stone memorials erected after their death. For example, the iconography of the gravestone to George Nassau, the village blacksmith at Sprotbrough, was overtly occupational. As plate 4.1 depicts, the gravestone includes a depiction of a blacksmith's tools and a verse describing his occupation. The well-known blacksmith's epitaph, attributed to the poet Flayley, is transcribed below plate 4.1.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Chartres and Turnbull, 'Country Craftsmen', p. 323.

<sup>89</sup> Chartres, 'The Retail Trades', p. 1150.

<sup>90</sup> G.N. Wright, *Discovering Epitaphs* (Aylesbury, 1972), p. 25; W. Andrews, *Curious Epitaphs* (London, 1883), p. 43.

Plate 4.1: Gravestone to George Nassau, Village Blacksmith of  
Sprotbrough, 1825

*My Sledge and Hammer lies declined,  
My Bellows too have lost their wind;  
My Fire's extinct, my Forge decayed,  
My Vice now in the dust is laid;  
My Iron and my Coals are gone,  
My Nails are drove my work is done;  
My fire-dried Corpse lies here at rest,  
My Soul is waiting to be blest.*

**Transcript of the 'blacksmith's epitaph' on the gravestone to George Nassau**

Occupational identity was a recurring theme in nineteenth century gravestones. William Andrews' *Curious Epitaphs* observed that 'many interesting epitaphs are placed to the memory of tradesmen'.<sup>91</sup> Snell's work on gravestones acknowledged the symbols and explicit mentions of occupations, although did not focus on these specifically.<sup>92</sup> As the Nassau gravestone was more decorative and poignant than many of the others in Sprotbrough churchyard, it stands as a physical testimony to the integral role of the village blacksmith in the early to mid nineteenth century. Such a gravestone was both a manifestation of how Nassau and his family identified themselves through the craft they specialised in, and recognition of the pivotal role the village blacksmith was to rural life.

Retail trades, particularly shops and public houses, were equally integral to rural society, as the rural crafts such as the blacksmith and wheelwright were to agriculture. Moreover, the fortunes of retail trades were often interwoven with those of agriculture, as farmers and labourers principally provided their custom.<sup>93</sup> Consequently, village retailers provide an initial indication of the vitality of rural society.<sup>94</sup> The mid nineteenth century was predominantly an era of 'growth and diversification of country trades'.<sup>95</sup> Table 4.9 shows the relative fortunes of shopkeepers, innkeepers and butchers in the six villages between 1851 and 1871 using the CEBs. Retail trades were more prolific in the three multi-freeholder villages than the three estate villages. Whereas a maximum of one or two shops served the estate villages, at least two shopkeepers were recorded in each of the multi-freeholder villages. In Stainforth, the largest of the six villages, the number of shopkeepers, innkeepers and butchers listed was consistently greatest. The

<sup>91</sup> Andrews, *Curious Epitaphs*, p. 33.

<sup>92</sup> K.D.M. Snell, 'Gravestones, Belonging and Local Attachment in England 1700-2000', *Past and Present*, No. 179 (May 2003), p. 111.

<sup>93</sup> Chartres, 'Country Tradesmen', p. 312.

<sup>94</sup> J. Stobart, 'Food Retailers and Rural Communities: Cheshire Butchers in the Long Eighteenth Century', *Local Population Studies*, No. 79 (Autumn 2007), p. 23; Chartres, 'Country Tradesmen', pp. 302-4.

<sup>95</sup> Stobart, 'Food Retailers', p. 23.

distribution of retail trades therefore corresponded with the size of the population, rather than exclusively the concentration of landownership.

Table 4.9: Retailers in the Six Villages, 1851-1871

	Shopkeeper			Innkeeper			Butchers		
	1851	1861	1871	1851	1861	1871	1851	1861	1871
Sprotbrough	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1
Warmsworth	2	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
Rossington	0	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	0
Fishlake	2	2	3	2	1	3	0	1	2
Stainforth	8	7	5	3	4	2	4	5	4
Braithwell	2	3	3	2	2	0	1	2	1

Source: see table 4.2

The CEBs and trade directories often recorded ‘shopkeeper’, without specifying the exact nature of the retail trade undertaken. To some extent this was due to the rise of the general shopkeeper, selling a wider range of goods. Indeed the majority of the retailers recorded in the CEBs and trade directories were indeed simply recorded as shopkeepers. In addition, a large number of the general shopkeepers in the six villages were female. This was indicative of the composition of general shopkeepers during this period.<sup>96</sup> A range of specialist retailers can however be identified in the six villages. For example, drapers, tailors, and particularly grocers were listed throughout the mid nineteenth century. The presence of butchers in the six villages was also significant in terms of the links between agriculture and rural trades. As Jon Stobart argued butchers dealt essentially with rural products, and were integrated into both the rural economy and rural society.<sup>97</sup> Landownership was particularly important in creating a disparity in the number of public houses in the six villages. The landowners restricted the sale of alcohol on their estates, and at Rossington and Sprotbrough actually revoked the licenses during the mid nineteenth century and turned the premises into farms. Even at Warmsworth, where the retail of

<sup>96</sup> Chartres, 'Country Tradesmen', p. 308.

<sup>97</sup> Stobart, 'Food Retailers', p. 35.



beer continued throughout the nineteenth century, there was only one public house. This was in contrast to four public houses at Stainforth in 1861.

### **The Size and Scope of Industry and Micro-Commerce in the Six Villages**

The fourth limitation of Mills' classificatory argument is that it does not take account of differences in the size, scale and scope of industries and businesses. This is problematical because one industry or business could employ a large number of people within a village, whereas lots of smaller ones might rely on family labour and employ very few people. Consequently the Mills model is constrained and limited to a statistical comparison of the number of industries and micro-commerce businesses and occupations. It is often difficult to assess the business structure of rural trades, crafts and industries without comprehensive accounts, which rarely exist for small village businesses.<sup>98</sup> Hallas argued that some indication of the size of blacksmith businesses could be obtained by dividing the number of people with that occupation with the number of businesses.<sup>99</sup> This however does not provide an accurate assessment of the size and structure of businesses. Yet, the CEBs and trade directories do collectively provide an indication of employment patterns in relation to the number of businesses.

The CEBs for instance can provide some indication of the structure of trades and crafts businesses. From 1851 the census instructed that economic status be recorded alongside occupation. This aimed to distinguish between master trades and crafts people on the one hand and apprentices, assistants and journeymen on the other, and also provide information on the numbers of people employed by the master trades and crafts people. Crompton argued that this directive was often ignored, based on the evidence of parishes in Hertfordshire where no more than 38 per cent accurately recorded status and numbers

<sup>98</sup> Chartres, 'Country Tradesmen', p. 300.

<sup>99</sup> Hallas, 'Craft Occupations', pp. 24-5.

employed.<sup>100</sup> Even fewer trades and crafts people in the six villages recorded information about their economic status or number of employees. Nevertheless, occupational data in the census can be cross referenced with the trade directories, which essentially recorded master crafts people and independent trades people as opposed to employees.<sup>101</sup> The master crafts people often employed one or two people, sometimes as apprentices. By and large the village trades and crafts were not large employees, which was indicative of small scale businesses and the use of family labour.

A substantial disparity between the number of industries listed in the trade directories and the number of people employed in industry in the CEBs existed in the six villages, and is depicted in table 4.3. The highest ratio of employment in industry to industries was in the estate village of Warmsworth. There may only have been one industry but 27 residents were regularly employed by it. In contrast, Stainforth had five industries in 1861 but collectively they only employed eleven residents. The extent of regular employment in industry in the six villages was determined largely by the scale and scope of the industry.

Table 4.10: Number of Rural Industries and Total Industrial Employment in the Six Villages, 1861

	Number of industries	Employment in industry
Sprotbrough	3	8
Warmsworth	1	27
Rossington	1	3
Fishlake	3	2
Stainforth	5	11
Braithwell	3	10

Source: E. R. Kelly, *Post Office Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1861*, pp. 206, 276, 328-329, 610, 811-812, 871; TNA, RG9/3516, *CEB Sprotbrough 1861*; TNA, RG9/3514, *CEB Warmsworth 1861*; TNA, RG9/3522, *CEB Rossington 1861*; TNA, RG9/3513, *CEB Braithwell 1861*; TNA, RG9/3524, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1861*.

<sup>100</sup> C.A. Crompton, 'Changes in Rural Service Occupations', p. 196.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 196-7; D. and J. Mills, 'Occupation and Social Stratification Revisited: The CEBs of Victorian Britain' in R. Rodger (ed), *Urban History Yearbook*, No. 16 (1989), pp. 63-77.

The way in which the scale and scope industries affected employment patterns is effectively demonstrated by the extractive industries in the villages studied in this thesis. Quarrying and brickmaking were widespread extraction industries in England in the mid to late nineteenth century, responding to both local requirements and the growing demand for building materials in towns.<sup>102</sup> Both the urban and rural population of the Doncaster district increased during the mid nineteenth century, and the demand for stone and bricks to build houses was great in both town and local countryside. Yet most of the extractive industries studied in this thesis were small scale, fulfilling the demands of the village, as is demonstrated by the following case studies of brickmaking at Rossington, Sprotbrough and Fishlake.

It was not uncommon for landed estates to have small brickyards, which employed few people and provided building materials sufficient for the estate. At Rossington, the small brickyard owned by Doncaster Corporation was sold to the Brown family along with the rest of the estate in 1838. It had been valued in 1835 at 10 pounds per annum, but it was noted that it was not let at that time.<sup>103</sup> The Brown family maintained the quarry, but again it was only used as and when required by the landowners for estate re-building. For example, George Firth and Theophilus Gough are listed as the brick and tile makers in the trade directories for 1852 and 1861 respectively. During this period, the Brown family rebuilt a number of cottages and farms on the estate using bricks made on the estate, as depicted in plate 4.2. This small brickyard was the only industry, and thus industrial employment, on the Rossington estate. Consequently, industrial employment in the village never amounted to more than 1.9 per cent (1861) of the total workforce of the village, whereas agriculture equated to 50.9 per cent in the same year. Similarly, a clay pit and brick yard were maintained at Sprotbrough for

<sup>102</sup> Chartres, 'Rural Industry', pp. 1139-1143; G.E. Mingay, *Rural Life in Victorian England* (London, 1976), p. 110.

<sup>103</sup> Appendix to the First Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into Municipal Corporations: Part III Northern and North Midland Circuits (London, 1835), p. 1504.

estate use in the 1840s, which coincided with Sir J.W. Copley rebuilding several estate cottages in the mid nineteenth century.<sup>104</sup> In both instances, brick making fulfilled the requirements of the respective landed estates, and the limited scale and scope of the industry resulted in few people being employed in these industries.

The scale and scope of extractive industries was no greater in the multi-freeholder villages than in the estate villages. At Fishlake, a small clay pit is shown on the 1854 Ordnance Survey map, and Joseph Marshall was listed in the 1861 and 1877 directories as the brickmaker in Fishlake.<sup>105</sup> Locally made bricks were used locally as demand required, which again resulted in a low number of people regularly employed. Despite the differences in the landownership of Fishlake, the brickyard fulfilled a similar purpose to those at Rossington and Sprotbrough. Fragmented landownership did not necessarily equate to large-scale extraction of clay and production of bricks, even though the demand from Doncaster and other towns was vast. Larger brick yards developed specifically to supply the demands of urbanisation in the Doncaster district. The clay pits and brickyards in both the estate and multi-freeholder villages studied remained small, catering for village needs and thus did not employ many people.

<sup>104</sup>White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, Vol. 2, p. 207; Ordnance Survey, 1854, First Edition County Series, 6 inch map, Yorkshire (West Riding), surveyed 1850; G. Fardell, *Sprotbrough: Or, a Few Passing Notes for A Morning's Ramble* (Doncaster, 1850), pp. 8, 14, 55.

<sup>105</sup>Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, p. 276; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1877, p. 314; Ordnance Survey, 1854, First Edition County Series, 6 inch map, Yorkshire (West Riding), surveyed 1850.

The only larger scale extractive industry in the six villages was stone quarrying at the estate village of Warmsworth. The lower magnesian limestone was considered particularly good quality for construction, and the lime was suitable for application to marginal agricultural land and use by builders and iron founders.<sup>106</sup> Consequently, stone and lime were transported out of the Doncaster district. Numerous advertisements were printed in local and regional newspapers around the country extolling the virtues of the superior quality stone and lime from the Warmsworth quarries. Examples of these advertisements demonstrate the scope of this extractive industry in terms of geographical coverage. A notice in the *Leeds Intelligencer* in 1820 stated that the proposed warping sluice to be built on the south bank of the River Ouse near Swinefleet was to be built of 'quality' stone and that Warmsworth stone was being considered.<sup>107</sup> In 1844, a feature in the *Sheffield Independent* on the proposed Doncaster Branch of the Lincoln, York and Leeds railway highlighted that Warmsworth stone had long

<sup>106</sup> D. Holland, *Changing Landscapes in South Yorkshire* (Doncaster, 1980), p. 28; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, p. 871.

<sup>107</sup> *Leeds Intelligencer*, 23 October 1820, p. 1.

been 'celebrated for its building purposes'.<sup>108</sup> Both the *Bristol Mercury* and the *London Standard* printed features in 1845 about the value of Warmsworth limestone for 'building purposes'.<sup>109</sup> The commercial potential for the limestone from the quarries was therefore far greater than the requirements of the estate in the mid nineteenth century.

A similarly wide market existed for the lime from Warmsworth. For example, the *Stamford Mercury* advertised lime from the Warmsworth quarries as being the best quality for building and agricultural purposes'.<sup>110</sup> In addition to the lime that Lockwood, Blagden and Crawshaw supplied directly, merchants and agents acted as intermediaries between the quarry company and people wanting to purchase lime. Significantly, the advertisements of the Sheffield based agents took pride in the fact they were the sole agents for Warmsworth lime. This presumably enabled the agents to negotiate savings when purchasing the lime from Lockwood, Blagden and Crawshaw and to secure customers. Certainly their advertisements increasingly announced reductions in the cost of lime due to special arrangements reached with the quarry company. For example, in 1851 and 1852, William Travis of Canal Street, Sheffield advertised a 'great reduction' in the price of Warmsworth building lime, from 13s 4d to 11s 8d per ton.<sup>111</sup> The ability to make arrangements for carriage with the Midland Railway Company meant that Mr G.O. Brown, and later his widow who continued to run the business, could offer a constant supply of Warmsworth lime at a reduced price.<sup>112</sup> By the 1860s and 1870s, J.H. Sales was advertising

<sup>108</sup> *Sheffield Independent*, 21 December 1844, p. 4.

<sup>109</sup> *Bristol Mercury*, 27 September 1845, p. 1; *London Standard*, 9 October 1845, p. 7.

<sup>110</sup> *Stamford Mercury*, 7 February 1873, p. 1.

<sup>111</sup> *Sheffield Independent*, 12 March 1851, p. 1; *Sheffield Independent*, 22 March 1851, p. 1; *Sheffield Independent*, 29 March 1851, p. 1; *Sheffield Independent*, 12 April 1851, p. 1; *Sheffield Independent*, 19 April 1851, p. 1; *Sheffield Independent*, 10 April 1852, p. 4; *Sheffield Independent*, 14 Aug 1852, p. 1; *Sheffield Independent*, 28 August 1852, p. 1; *Sheffield Independent*, 11 Sept 1852, p. 1; *Sheffield Independent*, 25 Sept 1852, p. 1; *Sheffield Independent*, 4 December 1852, p. 1.

<sup>112</sup> *Sheffield Independent*, 24 April 1852, p. 3; *Sheffield Independent*, 15 May 1852, p. 1; *Sheffield Independent*, 29 May 1852, p. 1; *Sheffield Independent*, 2 September 1854, p. 1; *Sheffield Independent*, 12 January 1856, p. 4; *Sheffield Independent*, 6 August 1854, p. 1.

fresh Warmsworth lime for between 9 and 10 shillings per ton.<sup>113</sup> The railways and use of commercial agents widened the market for lime from Warmsworth.

Due to the expansive markets for, and trade in, stone and lime from the quarry at Warmsworth, this one industry employed more people than any other single rural industry in the six villages. Moreover, the total number of residents of Warmsworth recorded as employed at the quarries in the CEBs increased between 1841 and 1871. These statistics are indicative of growth in the sector nationally. In England and Wales the total number of people employed in quarrying between 1841 and 1881 grew from 17,000 to 46,700.<sup>114</sup> Employees at the Warmsworth quarries and lime kilns included quarry labourers, lime burners and book-keepers. The majority were labourers or lime burners, with the generic occupational title 'quarryman' frequently used by the census enumerators. The total number of quarry labourers employed at Warmsworth may have been even greater, because as Chartres argued some labourers were employed in both the quarries and agriculture and yet this distinction was not always made on the census.<sup>115</sup> For example, John Firth, a quarry man in 1841 and 1871, was recorded as an agricultural labourer in 1851 and 1861.<sup>116</sup> The impact of industrialisation on the demographic and economic structure of Warmsworth, resembled that identified by M. Yasumoto at Methley, in West Yorkshire. Yasumoto argued that industrialisation and urbanisation in the region stimulated demand for stone and lime, resulting in a symbiotic relationship between industry, towns and the countryside in parishes where the raw materials could be extracted.<sup>117</sup> Undoubtedly the high proportion of employment

<sup>113</sup> *Sheffield Independent*, 16 April 1864, p. 2; *Sheffield Independent*, 15 October 1864, p. 2; *Sheffield Independent*, 10 April 1868, p. 1; *Sheffield Independent*, 9 June 1868, p. 2; *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 27 March 1869, p. 2.

<sup>114</sup> Chartres, 'Rural Industry', p. 1139.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1139-1143.

<sup>116</sup> TNA, H0107/1329, CEB Sprotbrough 1841; TNA, H0107/2346, CEB Sprotbrough 1851; TNA, RG9/3516, CEB Sprotbrough 1861; TNA, RG10/4716, CEB Sprotbrough 1871.

<sup>117</sup> M. Yasumoto, 'Industrialisation and Demographic Change in a Yorkshire Parish', *Local Population Studies*, No. 27 (Autumn 1981), pp. 10-25.

in the quarries at Warmsworth was due to the scale and scope of the industry, which was in response to external demands for raw materials.

Food processing and micro-commerce in the six villages were characterised by small units of production. Consequently most of the industries and businesses in the six villages did not employ large regular workforces. This is particularly evident with the food processing industries. Numerous food processing industries were listed in the trade directories for the six villages, yet they provided little regular employment. In England and Wales in 1851, a large proportion of millers employed no more than two men, and many of these employed either nobody or just one man.<sup>118</sup> The village mill employing two or less people was certainly the norm in the villages studied in this thesis. For example, Luke Crawshaw, the miller in the estate village of Sprotbrough, employed an assistant miller and carrier in 1851 and two carters in 1861.<sup>119</sup> In each instance, the employees lived with Crawshaw and his family. This links with the scope of the business, and the fact that Sprotbrough com mill served a wider geographical area than just the village and thus necessitated the regular employment of carters or carriers. Far fewer employees were recorded as working for the millers in the three multi-freeholder villages. The millers at Fishlake and Stainforth employed no more than one person, and the millers at Braithwell engaged no regular employees.<sup>120</sup> This was indicative of the fact that multiple people ground corn in these villages, and that each one operated at a small scale. Therefore, despite being prolific in number, the food processing industries in the six villages employed very few people.

<sup>118</sup> R. Perren, 'Milling' in Collins (ed) *Agrarian History*, p. 1062.

<sup>119</sup> TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Sprotbrough 1851*; TNA, RG9/3516, *CEB Sprotbrough 1861*.

<sup>120</sup> TNA, H0107/2346, *CEB Braithwell 1851*; TNA, H0107/2349, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1851*; TNA, RG9/3513, *CEB Braithwell 1861*; TNA, RG9/3524, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1861*; TNA, RG10/4714, *CEB Braithwell 1871*; TNA, RG10/4726, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1871*; White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, pp. 180,188; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1852, p. 206; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, pp. 276, 329; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1877, p. 314.



Some industry and micro-commerce in the six villages was more-or-less reliant on family labour. A good example of a small-scale family run manufacturing business is the Clarkson family's framework knitting workshops at Braithwell.<sup>121</sup> The Doncaster district was not generally associated with the industry in the nineteenth century, although Daniel Defoe writing in the 1720s described the town as 'a great manufacturing town, principally for knitting'.<sup>122</sup> Its relative insignificance to the industry at large is reflected in the fact that no mention was made of Braithwell or the Doncaster district in the 1845 Report into the Conditions of Framework Knitters. This is contrast to parts of Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, where the framework knitting industry was more prevalent both in terms of the numbers of frames and employees. The report focused on the conditions of framework knitters and a series of grievances that had accumulated.<sup>123</sup> These included complaints about wages, payment in kind and frame rents, which largely did not apply to the family run business at Braithwell.

Although an atypical industry in the Doncaster district, its location in the multi-freeholder village of Braithwell coincided with Mills' work on the stocking trade in Leicestershire. Mills argued that there was a strong relationship between landownership, class, labour and framework knitting.<sup>124</sup> The framework knitting workshops at Braithwell were the product of the Clarkson family's entrepreneurship and land owned by the Amery family, which were united through marriage in 1777.<sup>125</sup> Mills also correlated instances of stocking frames with patterns of landownership. He identified a far greater number of frames in multi-freeholder villages in Leicestershire, than in the estate villages where

<sup>121</sup> White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, Vol. 2, p. 165; White, *Gazetteer and General Directory of Sheffield*, 1852, p. 427; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, p. 205; Kelly, 1877, p. 217; TNA, HO107/2346, *CEB Braithwell 1851*; TNA, RG9/3513, *CEB Braithwell 1861*; TNA, RG10/4714, *CEB Braithwell 1871*.

<sup>122</sup> D. Defoe, *A Tour Through England and Wales* (Everyman Edition, edited by G.D.H. Cole, 2 Vols, London, 1959), Vol. 2, p. 181.

<sup>123</sup> PP 1845, XV, *Report of the Commissioner appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Framework Knitters*.

<sup>124</sup> Mills, 'Landownership and Rural Population', pp. 226-33.

<sup>125</sup> N. Hawker and L.A. Pugh, *A Goodly Heritage: being A History of the Parish of Braithwell and Micklebring through the Millennium* (Braithwell, 2000), no page numbers given.

there were very few.<sup>126</sup>

The CEBs for Braithwell provide evidence that demonstrates how the Clarkson's framework knitting business perpetuated family employment by primarily only employing family members. For example, William Clarkson employed two of his sons (aged 13 and 15) as framework knitters in 1851.<sup>127</sup> By 1861, his son, Benjamin (23) was the principal framework knitter, living with his widowed mother, Ann.<sup>128</sup> By 1871, Ann herself was described as a hosiery manufacturer (58), with her son, George Joseph (27), managing the business and two of her daughters (Charlotte, 23 and Jane, 20) working as framework knitters alongside them.<sup>129</sup> These employment patterns were indicative of the hosiery industry in England, which continued to be predominantly rural and family based in many places during the nineteenth century.<sup>130</sup>

The only deviation from the employment of family labour amongst the framework knitters of Braithwell was in 1861. Age, and the fact that the rest of the family was occupied on their own frames, indicates that this was a necessity. George Clarkson, the father of the aforementioned William Clarkson, was 77, employed four men in addition to his grandson. These employees included William Mann from Nottinghamshire, who was recorded as living on the premises.<sup>131</sup> Mann was 51 years old and had previously resided in Nottingham where he worked as a framework knitter, which suggests he was skilled and experienced.<sup>132</sup> Evidently, framework knitting at Braithwell was essentially small scale and self-sufficient during the mid nineteenth century. The reliance on family labour was again indicative of the scale and scope of their business.

<sup>126</sup> Mills, 'Landownership and Rural Population' pp. 238-9.

<sup>127</sup> TNA, HO107/2346, *CEB Braithwell 1851*.

<sup>128</sup> TNA, RG9/3513, *CEB Braithwell 1861*.

<sup>129</sup> TNA, RG10/4714, *CEB Braithwell 1871*.

<sup>130</sup> Chartres, 'Rural Industry', pp. 1106-1114; M. Palmer, *Framework Knitting* (Aylesbury, 2002), p. 9.

<sup>131</sup> TNA, RG9/3513, *CEB Braithwell 1861*.

<sup>132</sup> TNA, HO107/2132, *CEB Nottingham 1851*.

Quantification of industry and micro-commerce in estate and multi-freeholder villages is more complex than the statistical count of the number of industries and businesses, and occupations, used in the Mills model. As demonstrated here, by acknowledging the differences between industries, trades and crafts and appreciating the scale and scope of businesses, a more comprehensive understanding of the extent and distribution of industry and micro-commerce can be constructed. The inclusion of these criteria not only ensures greater applicability, but also demonstrates the disparities between villages with similar landowning structures. This in turn has implications for the causal role of landownership.

### **Landownership and Industry in the Three Estate Villages**

The relationship between landownership on the one hand and industry and business on the other was particularly complex by the mid nineteenth century. As Thompson argued, an important economic distinction existed between landowners who were purely agricultural and landowners who received an income from industry.<sup>133</sup> Of the latter, a further distinction separated landowners who merely received rents and royalties and landowners who were entrepreneurs.<sup>134</sup> The Mills model however does not make these distinctions. In fact, the model fails to differentiate between landowners, except on the basis of how much land they owned. Consequently, Mills argues that all large landowners performed the same *causa!* role, whereby they restricted industry on their estates in order to maintain control over the size and composition of the population.

Mills' interpretation of the relationship between landownership and industry fails to acknowledge the changes taking place during the mid

<sup>133</sup> F.M.L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1963), p. 267.

<sup>134</sup> D. Spring, 'English Landowners and Nineteenth-Century Industrialism', in J.T. Ward and R.G. Wilson (eds), *Land and Industry: The Landed Estate and the Industrial Revolution* (Newton Abbot, 1971), pp. 51-52.

nineteenth century. Increasingly, landowners had industrial and other non-agricultural sources of wealth, whilst industrialists and businessmen were investing in landed estates.<sup>135</sup> Moreover, it does not account for the fact that, as already demonstrated, the extent of industry and industrial employment in the three estate villages studied varied considerably. The relationship between landownership and the extent of industry in these three estate villages was much more complex than Mills argued. To understand the complexity of this relationship it is necessary to identify and explain the differentiation between landowners. This includes issues of landownership such as residency, legacy and wealth, and attitudes to and interests in industry in the mid nineteenth century.

The Copleys of Sprotbrough, as outlined in the introduction of this thesis, were long standing, resident landowners. Their wealth was predominantly generated from agricultural rents throughout the nineteenth century. Sir Joseph William Copley had minimal business interests, although he was a director of the South Yorkshire Railway Company.<sup>136</sup> In the 1840s and 1850s he invested in the rebuilding of some of the cottages in the village, rather than industrial or urban ventures. In theory, Copley epitomised the landowner of the Mills model, who had little interest in industry and restricted industry on his estate. In reality, Copley's relation with industry was slightly more complex. Whilst he certainly did not promote industry on his estate, he was tolerant to some small-scale manufacturing and food processing industries on the periphery of the Sprotbrough estate.

Conversely, virtually no industry was located within the estate village of Rossington, yet the landowner from 1838 was an industrialist. The Brown family had developed a woollen cloth manufacturing and

<sup>135</sup> Thompson, *English Landed Society*, pp. 242,268.

<sup>136</sup> Holland (ed), *Sprotbrough in History*, p. 67.

merchant business in Leeds.<sup>137</sup> James Brown (1786-1845) purchased the Rossington estate in 1838, and his son James (1814-1877) inherited the business and the estate in 1845.<sup>138</sup> The transition from merchants to landowners through the profits of trade was not uncommon, and according to R.G. Wilson the fortunes made in the Leeds woollen trade secured the place of at least two dozen families in Burkes' Peerage.<sup>139</sup> The motives of industrialists and businessmen investing in land and landed estates in the nineteenth century were varied. Some purchased landed estates with the intention of developing extractive industry. The 1838 sale catalogue for the Rossington estate advertised the brickyard as having a 'bed of excellent clay, kiln and tile shed'.<sup>140</sup> Yet the exploitation of clay reserves was not a principal objective in the Browns purchasing the estate, and the brickyard was only maintained to meet the requirements of the estate. Other motivations for businessmen and industrialists purchasing landed estates included the acquisition of social status and landed leisure.<sup>141</sup> The Brown family adopted the role of the paternalistic and leisured landowners after purchasing the Rossington estate in 1838. They rebuilt cottages, farms and communal buildings in the village and staged fox hunts on the estate. Their passion for fox hunting was even immortalised in the carved fox heads that adorned the parish church they rebuilt in 1844, as depicted in plate 4.3.

<sup>137</sup> Baines, E., *Directory of Yorkshire, 1822* (Baines, Leeds, 1822). p. 118; Baines and Newsome, *General and Commercial Directory of Leeds 1834* (Baines and Newsome, Leeds, 1834), p. 415.

<sup>138</sup> R.G. Wilson, *Gentlemen Merchants: the Merchant Community in Leeds 1700-1830* (Manchester, 1971), p. 111.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220.

<sup>140</sup> Doncaster Archives, AB/7/3/63, *Sale Catalogue for the Rossington Estate 1838*, p. 4.

<sup>141</sup> W.D. Rubinstein, 'New Men of Wealth and the Purchase of Land in Nineteenth Century Britain', *Past and Present*, No. 92 (August 1981), pp. 125-147; T. Nicholas, 'Businessmen and Land Ownership in the late Nineteenth Century', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (February 1999), pp. 28; F.M.L. Thompson, *Gentrification and the Enterprise Culture, Britain 1780-1980* (Oxford, 2001).

## Plate 4.3: Carvings of Fox Heads on Rossington Church

The consequences of industrialists investing in landed estates for pleasure have been intensely debated. M.J. Wiener argued that in some instances the purchase of landed estates by industrialists led to a decline in entrepreneurial spirit from the mid to late nineteenth century.<sup>142</sup> Wiener demonstrated that as capitalists became landed proprietors 'the radical ideal of active capital was submerged in the conservative ideal of passive property, and the urge to enterprise faded beneath the preference for stability'.<sup>143</sup> Conversely, Julie A. Smith argued, 'landownership by itself does not carry any implications for entrepreneurial vigour. If British businessmen in their spare time chose to hunt foxes, along with traditional land-owners....it cannot be inferred that their business performance would necessarily be damaged'.<sup>144</sup> It is difficult to judge the direct impact of landownership on the industries belonging to Brown because account books do not survive for the mid nineteenth century. The Browns continued to run their business for a further nineteen years after purchasing the Rossington estate. Election

<sup>142</sup> M.J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980* (1981: 2nd ed., 2004), pp. 13-4, 97, 159.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>144</sup> J.A. Smith, 'Landownership and Social Change in Late Nineteenth Century Britain', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 53, No. 4, p. 775.

as a Member of Parliament for Malton in 1857 finally led James Brown to sever his links with manufacturing and business. This accords with Weiner's argument that the social integration of industrialists as men of landed leisure resulted in the waning of the industrial spirit of the nation.<sup>145</sup> Nevertheless, as R.G. Wilson argued, the transference of capital was not necessarily unproductive.<sup>146</sup> The evidence suggests that Brown's entrepreneurial spirit remained active, albeit increasingly directed towards the newly acquired agricultural estate. At Rossington, this is demonstrated specifically in relation to investment in the agricultural infrastructure. Brown brought new wealth and his business acumen from industry to the agriculture of Rossington. Brown's investment in the agricultural estate of Rossington epitomised the metamorphosis of entrepreneurial spirit, which was effectively applied to capitalist farming and drew upon industrial principles.

Unlike Copley and Brown, both William Batfie-Wrightson and William Aldam had legacies of combining landowning and business interests prior to the mid nineteenth century. The Aldam family had been cloth merchants in Leeds from 1735 through their partnership with Benson. This evolved to become Aldam, Pease, Birchall and Co of Leeds.<sup>147</sup> The partnership was terminated in 1839, and William Aldam senior retired to Warmsworth. In addition to the land at Warmsworth, the family owned the Frickley estate, which Aldam senior gave to his son, William Aldam junior, in 1844. Thereafter, Aldam junior had increasing responsibility for the land at Warmsworth as well due to his father's ill health. Nevertheless, despite ownership of a Sanded estate, William Aldam junior continued to pursue numerous business interests. During the mid nineteenth century, he was an active participant in both railway and canal navigation companies, including the Huddersfield and Manchester Railway, the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, and the Aire and Calder Navigation Company, and regularly documented the business

<sup>145</sup> Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit*, p. 159.

<sup>146</sup> Wilson, *Gentlemen Merchants*, pp. 235-6.

<sup>147</sup> Documents relating to these businesses are held at Doncaster Archives and are catalogued as DD/WA/B1.

meetings he attended in his diaries.<sup>148</sup> William Battie-Wrightson similarly combined ownership of agricultural land with the ownership of industry. His ancestors had developed collieries on the land they owned in Northumberland. Although the family no longer directly managed them by the mid nineteenth century, the Mickley and Risemoor collieries continued to be extensively documented in Battie-Wrightson's accounts.<sup>149</sup> This enduring mix of landownership and business interests by both landowners was not uncommon during the mid nineteenth century, but it did affect their relationship with industry in the estate village of Warmsworth where they both owned land.

The Battie family developed a small village quarry at Warmsworth in 1758, the evidence of which is depicted in plate 4.4, which they both owned and directly managed. It was not uncommon for landowners to 'extract the wealth beneath the soil' on their estates, and as Mills argued 'over a period of several centuries the landed classes actively promoted mineral exploitation on and under their estates'.<sup>150</sup> At Warmsworth, the extraction of stone corresponded with population growth and estate rebuilding in Warmsworth in the mid eighteenth century.<sup>151</sup> The stone was therefore quarried on a small scale to meet the requirements of the estate.

<sup>148</sup> Documents relating to these businesses are held at Doncaster Archives and are catalogued as DD/WA/B2; William Aldam's diaries are held at Doncaster Archives and are catalogued under DD/WA/D1.

<sup>149</sup> Thompson, *English Landed Society*, pp. 266-7; Documents relating to industry on Battie-Wrightson's estates are held at Doncaster Archives and are catalogued as DD/BW/E14 and DD/BW/E15.

<sup>150</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 30.

<sup>151</sup> D. Holland, *Warmsworth in the Eighteenth Century: Population Change, Agriculture and Quarrying in a Rural South Yorkshire Community* (Doncaster, 1965), pp. 7-11.



Plate 4.4: Evidence of the Original Town Quarry in Warmsworth Village  
(now a park)

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The reserves of good quality limestone were however far greater than this initial village quarry, and offered potential for commercial extraction. Fig. 4.6 shows the location of the quarries at Warmsworth Cliffs (Levitt Hagg), which were subsequently developed. Management of the quarries also transferred from the landowners to lessees in 1766. This corresponded with the inter-marriage of the Battie and Wrightson families, and was indicative of the preferred management practices adopted by the Wrightsons in relation to the collieries they owned in the north east of England.<sup>152</sup> As the scale of quarrying at Warmsworth increased, so did the number of different landowners from which the quarries were leased. By the nineteenth century, Lockwood, Kemp and Blagden (later Lockwood, Blagden and Crawshaw) leased the quarries

<sup>152</sup>Thompson, *English Landed Society*, pp. 265-6.

and lime kilns at Warmsworth from the Battie-Wrightson family, and three other landowners.<sup>153</sup> The main landlords continued to be the Battie Wrightsons, who owned almost twice as much quarry land than the next largest landowner (Mr Fox), the equivalent of 18,560 chaldrons compared to 9,720.<sup>154</sup> The two remaining landowners were William Aldam (7,560) and Sir J.W. Copley (6,160).<sup>155</sup>

Fig. 4.8: Map Showing Levitt Flagg and the Limestone Quarries at Warmsworth, 1838

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Source: Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E11/41-42, *Warmsworth Tithe Map, 1838*

<sup>153</sup>White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, p. 213; White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1852, p. 579; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, p. 871; Kelly, 1877, *Post Office Directory*, p. 1186.

<sup>154</sup>Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E11/78, *Agreements between Messrs. Lockwood, Kemp and Blagden and the Landowners (Aldam, Copley, Fox, Wrightson)*, 1846/47 (7 items), item 1, p. 1.

<sup>155</sup>*Ibid.*

By the mid nineteenth century it was increasingly rare for landowners to directly manage mineral exploitation on estates.<sup>156</sup> This reduced the risks for the landowner, without actually selling the land and losing valuable income.<sup>157</sup> Nevertheless, the four landowners were divided in their attitudes towards the Warmsworth quarries. Fox and Copley were satisfied to relinquish any control in return for rents and royalties. Battie Wrightson and Aldam were somewhat more reluctant to accept this, and exhibited a proactive attitude towards the quarries. In spite of their official position as rentiers, their involvement in the quarries was never quite reduced to simply receiving rent and royalties.

The involvement by Battie-Wrightson and Aldam manifested itself through on-going management issues relating to the quarries, which led to disputes and tensions both between the different landowners, and between the landowners and the quarry and lime company. These disputes and tensions are particularly evident from correspondence and agreements dated from the 1840s, which addressed issues over boundaries, how rents were calculated and what they equated to. Boundaries were important from the landowners' perspective as they signified who owned what, and subsequently how much income in the form of rents they received from the lessees. Documents were drawn up to establish the exact perimeters of the land owned by Aldam and Wrightson in the 1760s.<sup>158</sup> Boundaries, and the reorganisation thereof, were a recurring theme in documentation relating to the quarries. In 1846, an agreement between the landowners and the occupiers of the quarries stated that it was the responsibility of the landowners to organise the boundaries of the quarry land in accordance with the land they owned.<sup>159</sup> Furthermore, point 13 of the same document stated That no proprietors shall allow the privilege of working limestone

<sup>156</sup> D. Spring, 'English Landowners and Nineteenth-Century Industrialism', p. 51.

<sup>157</sup> Thompson, *English Landed Society*, p. 264.

<sup>158</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E 11/71, *Brief Memorandum regarding Boundary Stakes between the land of John Wrightson and Mr Aldam, 1760s*.

<sup>159</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E 11/78, *Agreements between Messrs. Lockwood, Kemp and Blagden and the Landowners (Aldam, Copley, Fox, Wrightson), 1846/47 (7 items)*, item 2, p. 1.

beyond the boundaries set out in the lease, to the Lime Company, or to any new company or individual, without the consent in writing of the other proprietors'.<sup>160</sup> Battie-Wrightson was increasingly concerned about how the organisation of his land potentially affected his business relationship with the quarry owners. He proposed that by re-arranging the boundaries, calculations and payments would become more efficient, benefitting all parties.<sup>161</sup> As the main landlord of the quarries, Battie-Wrightson had the most to gain from this. He also had the business acumen to bring to these discussions and agreements. Consequently, Battie-Wrightson used his position as landlord and his experience as a businessman to negotiate what he perceived to be an advantageous readjustment of the physical boundaries of the quarries.

A more contentious issue concerned the amount of income drawn from the quarries by the landowners. This not only related to the amount of land owned, but more significantly how much stone and lime could be extracted from that land, and the calculations of average workings and rents. As landowners and businessmen, Wrightson and Aldam were reluctant to leave these important calculations solely to the quarry and lime company. The landowners inevitably wanted the highest rents possible for industrial concerns, especially as agricultural rents were potentially high during prosperous years. The quarry and lime company conversely favoured lower rents and royalty payments due to the landowners in order to increase their profit margins on the stone and lime they sold. Consequently, it is unsurprising that rents and the calculation thereof were the cause of disputes and disagreements between the landowners and the quarry and lime company.

Rents were calculated based on the capacity land had for extracting limestone, using a chaldron as the measurement.<sup>162</sup> The chaldron represented the amount of limestone extracted by the quarry firm that

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, item 7.

<sup>162</sup> Dictionary.com, *Definition of a Chaldron* [online]. Last accessed 7 March 2013 at: <http://www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/chaldron->

could then be sold on the one hand, and the monetary rents received by the landowners on the other. The calculation of the chaldron itself was the source of disputes at Warmsworth, as evidenced by the memorandums of conversations between Blagden and Aldam. According to Aldam, the size, weight and capacity of a chaldron of stone varied depending upon whose calculations were used resulting in inconsistency. A more accurate interpretation was that misunderstandings had arisen following a conversation between Blagden and Aldam in 1846. Aldam insisted that based on the evidence of the land agent, Mr Wood, a chaldron was 64 cubic feet, which meant that 61 chaldrons would be about 2 1/4 tons, yet claimed that Blagden had said a chaldron was about 2 1/4 tons'.<sup>163</sup> Blagden was consequently required to immediately draw up a new document that clearly stated the calculations for both a chaldron of limestone and of lime.<sup>164</sup> These amended calculations coincided with Wood's original figures that Aldam favoured, and were as follows:-

"Chaldron of stone 64 cubic feet and weighs 2 ton 9 cwt  
Chaldron of lime 48 cubic feet and weighs at 1 ton 2 .....0 cwt  
The chaldron of stone is 64 cubic feet, and weighs 2 ton 9 cwt  
When burnt it would 48 cubic feet, and weigh about 1 ton 2  
cwt".<sup>165</sup>

No documentary evidence substantiated Aldam's claim that Blagden had miscalculated the size of a chaldron, but the laborious process of recalculating the figures demonstrates the importance of accurately calculating a chaldron, and the influence the landowners continued to exert over management issues at the quarries.

The methodology used for calculating rent was the source of further disputes between the landowners and the lime and quarry company. From the landowners' perspective, it was preferable that the threshold for aggregate workings was set high, as each chaldron worked equated

<sup>163</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E11/78, *Agreements between Messrs. Lockwood, Kemp and Blagden and the Landowners (Aldam, Copley, Fox, Wrightson)*, (7 items), item 3, Memorandum of conversation between Mr Blagden and Mr Aldam, 17 January 1846.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

to a monetary rent. The landowners received a rent proportional to the amount of land they owned and what this equated to in terms of the amount of limestone that could be extracted. Consequently, the main landowning interest (that of the Battie Wrightson) received the largest rent. According to the agreement drawn up between the landowners and lessees in 1846-47, this amounted to a rent of £600, compared to rents of £315 (Fox), £245 (Aldam) and £200 (Copley).<sup>166</sup> This corresponds with the Battie-Wrightson rental books, in which Lockwood, Blagden and Crawshaw paid £300 half yearly.<sup>167</sup> This was in excess of the agricultural rents Battie-Wrightson received from land in Warmsworth.

The quarry and lime company however benefitted from a lower average threshold, as this increased the amount of profit. The 1846-7 agreement stated that current workings, and therefore rents, would be calculated on the basis of the average for the previous seven years.<sup>168</sup> This was achieved by a further clause that stated that The Lime Company shall give free access to their books and accounts for the purpose of calculating fairly the past average workings, and also for the purpose of calculating the excess if any, in future years'.<sup>169</sup> Current rents were therefore determined by past workings.

The quarry and lime company perceived this method of calculating rent from the average workings as unfair because it resulted in an artificially high threshold. Blagden argued that the accounts demonstrated that the preceding seven years included an unusually good year. A total of 48,973 chaldrons were extracted and sold in 1840, which was considered to be their best year. Blagden reasoned that because 1840 was an exceptional year, the averages calculated by the landowners were unrepresentative of their usual annual workings and generally unattainable. As a direct consequence of this dispute, Blagden asserted

<sup>166</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E11/78, *Agreements between Messrs. Lockwood, Kemp and Blagden and the Landowners (Aldam, Copley, Fox, Wrightson)*, (7 items), item 1, p. 1.

<sup>167</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E2/4, *Rentals of Battie-Wrightson, 1827-1840*; DD/BW/E2/7, *Rentals of Battie-Wrightson, 1853-1856*.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, item 2, p. 1.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

that the firm would not agree to a lease of 21 years on these terms.<sup>170</sup> This turned out to be an idle threat, but was symbolic of the increasingly strained relationship between the landowners and lessees.

The calculation of rents was further complicated by the inclusion of a clause about the surplus and deficit workings. The aggregate workings were calculated to be 42,000 chaldrons of limestone, but if the workings fell below 30,000 chaldrons of limestone, then the lessees were entitled to a deduction of ten per cent from the rent of each landowner. In the event that the total workings fell below 25,000 chaldrons then the lessees could claim a deduction of one fifth from each landowner or even terminate their lease without any penalties.<sup>171</sup> This appealed to the quarry and lime company as a means of leverage, which they perceived was a way to manipulate their multiple landlords. They had used this arrangement to their advantage in 1843 when Lockwood, Kemp and Blagden wrote to William Battie-Wrightson regarding their rent.<sup>172</sup> The quarry and lime company acknowledged the return of ten per cent on their half yearly rent, but went on to state their dissatisfaction as another of their landlords had made an even greater reduction to their rent. They sought a similar reduction from Battie-Wrightson and argued that it would permit them to invest capital and make improvements to the quarries, itself a requirement for lessees.<sup>173</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that Battie-Wrightson conceded to such a demand. As a tenacious businessman, Battie-Wrightson sought the highest possible rents, and favoured a different clause that stated if the workings exceeded 42,000 chaldrons then the landowners received additional rent per chaldron.

<sup>170</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E11/78, *Agreements between Messrs. Lockwood, Kemp and Blagden and the Landowners (Aldam, Copley, Fox, Wrightson)*, (7 items), item 3, Memorandum of conversation between Mr Blagden and Mr Aldam, 17 January 1846.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E11/77, *Letter from Lockwood, Kemp and Blagden to W. Battie Wrightson*, 27 November 1843.

<sup>173</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E11/78, *Agreement between the Landowners and Quarry Occupiers, 1846-1847*, (7 items), item 2.

In spite of becoming landlords instead of managers of the quarries, the Battie-Wrightson family maintained some authority over the lessees and the other landowners. Both Battie-Wrightson and Aldam, as landowners and businessmen, exercised significant influence over decisions regarding the quarries during the mid nineteenth century. In addition to economic incentives, the close geographical proximity of both landowners to the quarries, and their own extensive business portfolios, affected the extent and nature of their continued involvement in the quarries at Warmsworth. Such case studies demonstrate the importance of differentiating between landowners, and understanding how and why their relationship with industry developed accordingly. Landownership was undoubtedly important in the extent and distribution of industry and micro-commerce, but it was also not the only determining factor.

### **Inter-relationships**

Industry and micro-commerce in the countryside facilitated, and were stimulated by, important inter-relationships between different communities in terms of supply and demand. Mills' argument was however limited to the dependency of estate villages on multi-freeholder villages. According to Mills, this dependency was necessitated because of the limited range of trades and crafts in estate villages, and was made possible due to the greater range of trades and crafts in multi-freeholder villages.<sup>174</sup> Consequently, he argued that larger villages with independent trades and crafts people acted as retail nuclei for surrounding smaller villages.<sup>175</sup> Rawding also identified that the larger 'open' villages fulfilled a role as service centres for smaller villages.<sup>176</sup> Crompton additionally argued that there was a hierarchy of provision in the countryside, and that larger villages served smaller villages.<sup>177</sup> Mills went on to develop this argument through the use of 'essential' trades and crafts and their relative rank positions. Mills argued that the

<sup>174</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, pp. 120-3; Mills, *Rural Community History*, pp. 66-70.

<sup>175</sup> Mills, 'Landownership and Rural Population', pp. 4-5.

<sup>176</sup> Rawding, 'Village Type', p. 61.

<sup>177</sup> Crompton, 'Changes in Rural Service Occupations', p. 198.



blacksmith, wheelwright and shoe and boot maker were essential crafts and that the publican and shopkeeper were essential trades, which collectively were indicative of self-sufficiency in the countryside. These trades and crafts, supposedly provided an index to the extent to which a village was dependent on somewhere else.<sup>178</sup>

As table 4.4 demonstrates, the three multi-freeholder villages had a larger range of trades and crafts, and more businesses providing them, than the three estate villages. This supports Mills' arguments that a disparity between the provision of trades and crafts in villages with different landowning structures existed. For example, Sprotbrough had the smallest range of trades and crafts, and the fewest trades and crafts businesses. Yet, there is no evidence that this made the estate villages dependent on the multi-freeholder villages as argued by Mills. Of the top ten trades and crafts listed by Mills, the only one missing from all six villages was baker. This is indicative of the fact that in many villages people made their own bread from locally ground flour. Only the absence of a publican at Rossington and a wheelwright or carpenter at Sprotbrough prevented all six villages having the 'essential' trades and crafts identified by Mills in 1861.

Each village had at least one shopkeeper, which along with the publican, was argued by Chartres to be indicative of the strength of rural retail in a village.<sup>179</sup> Neither the directories, nor the CEBs generally specified the exact nature of retail undertaken with the exception of the grocer and the draper. Yet, retail was a characteristic feature of these villages. In addition, postal services were provided in the six villages, either through Doncaster or with a specific post office in the village. In each instance, the role of postmaster was combined with another occupation. For example, at Braithwell in 1861, Edward Varah was the village postmaster and schoolmaster. The role of postmaster was often combined with village trades and crafts. At Stainforth in 1861 and 1877,

<sup>178</sup> Mills, *Rural Community History*, p. 53.

<sup>179</sup> Chartres, 'Country Tradesmen', p. 308.

Thomas Biacker Sales was listed as both postmaster and shoemaker. Similarly, John Asher was postmaster and shoe and boot maker at Sprotbrough in 1877. John Woodhouse was tailor and postmaster at Warmsworth in 1877, and Samuel Revill was butcher and postmaster at Braithwell in 1877. The provision of postal services in both estate and multi-freeholder villages, and the combination of postmaster and often a craft occupation, consolidated self-sufficiency in villages and the importance of crafts people.

Table 4.11: Ten Essential Trades and Crafts Businesses in the Six Villages, 1861

Trades and Crafts	Sprotbrough	Warmsworth	Rossington	Fishlake	Stainforth	Braithwell
Shoemaker	1	1	2	3	5	1
Carpenter or wheelwright	0	1	1	3	4	2
Tailor	0	1	2	4	2	2
Blacksmith	1	1	1	3	2	1
Shopkeeper	2	1	3	3	8	2
Mason	0	1	0	0	0	1
Bricklayer	0	0	0	1	1	0
Publican	1	1	0	3	4	2
Butcher	1	1	1	1	3	0
Baker	0	0	0	0	0	0

Sources: E. R. Kelly, *Post Office Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1861*, pp. 206, 276, 328-329, 610, 811-812, 871

Rather than assuming that the estate villages were dependent on the multi-freeholder villages for trade and crafts, it is more accurate to argue that Doncaster was a retail centre serving both the estate and multi-freeholder villages as and when required. This was due to an even greater range of trades and crafts being present in the market town, and the close proximity of the six villages to Doncaster. Furthermore, as Chartres argued, carrier services provided critical transport and linking services between consumers and providers.<sup>180</sup> Employment among

<sup>180</sup> Chartres, 'Retail Trades', p. 1180.

carriers increased considerably from the mid nineteenth century, facilitated by the requirements of the expanding railway network and changing patterns of supply and demand.<sup>181</sup> Thomas Trimmlingham of Fishlake was specifically listed as a carrier in the 1861 directory, operating between the village of Fishlake and the market town of Doncaster every Saturday.<sup>182</sup> Inter-relationships that existed between industry and micro-commerce in the six villages and between town and country provide a more effective method of interpretation and analysis than Mills' dependency model. The nature of these complex inter-relationships is demonstrated through three case studies: the location of specific industries and business in the estate village of Sprotbrough; the canal based industries and crafts in the multi-freeholder village of Stainforth; and the transfer of knowledge and skills through apprenticeships.

Inter-relationships existed between the estate village of Sprotbrough and neighbouring villages and industries that challenge Mills' dependency theory. Far from being dependent on multi-freeholder villages as inferred by the Mills model, a range of different communities were dependent on the corn and flint mills and the agricultural engineering located in the village. Topographical factors meant that Sprotbrough corn mill was one of the few corn mills located on the magnesian limestone near Doncaster.<sup>183</sup> Moreover, it had the legacy of being the manorial mill. Consequently, Sprotbrough Mill served landowners and farmers from surrounding villages that depended upon it. The account books of William Battie-Wrightson are testimony to this. Battie-Wrightson owned land in two neighbouring estates, Cusworth and Warmsworth, and relied on the mill at Sprotbrough for grinding cereal crops. Up to fifteen entries per month were made in the account books for cereals ground at the Sprotbrough Mill on behalf of Battie Wrightson,

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1183.

<sup>182</sup> Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, p. 276.

<sup>183</sup> Holland (ed), *Sprotbrough in History*, Part 2, pp. 44-49.

and the annual expenditure for this was approximately £30.<sup>184</sup> The monopoly of Sprotbrough Mill was mutually beneficial to the miller and the landowner, in terms of stability of trade on the one hand and rents on the other. Consequently, the mill at Sprotbrough continued to operate until 1930, in spite of competition from a large flour mill in Doncaster.<sup>185</sup> This case study of Sprotbrough Mill demonstrates how locational factors and agricultural demand created dependency on an estate village, including from neighbouring estate villages.

The flint grinding mill on the river Don at Lower Sprotbrough was also water powered.<sup>186</sup> It supplied the Don Pottery at nearby industrialised Swinton with the ground flint to mix with clay in order to make their cream-ware pottery.<sup>187</sup> Moreover, from the late eighteenth century to 1860, the inter-relationship between the flint-grinding mill at Sprotbrough and the Don Pottery at Swinton was even more symbiotic than the supply and demand of ground flint. The owners of the pottery were also occupants of the grinding mill. The Green family, who founded the Don Pottery in 1801, sought a suitable location to grind the flint they required in proximity to their pottery. Consequently, they converted the disused fulling mill at Sprotbrough into a flint grinding mill in order to provide a raw material required for the manufacture of their cream-ware. In 1837, Joseph Green was still the occupant of the flint mill at Sprotbrough.<sup>188</sup> In spite of the Green family being declared bankrupt in November 1840, including J. Green of Sprotbrough Mill and W. Green of Swinton, the mill and pottery were collectively acquired by Mr Barker, who purchased the pottery and leased the mill, which suggests that both were still going concerns at this date.<sup>189</sup> This ensured that the inter-relationships

<sup>184</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/B/149-153, *Account Books for Cereals ground at the Sprotbrough Mill*, 1853, 1858, 1860 x 2, 1862.

<sup>185</sup> Holland (ed), *Sprotbrough in History*, Part 2, p. 47.

<sup>186</sup> Doncaster Archives, DD/BW/E/7/50, *Sketch Plan of River Don, Flint Mill and Canal Cut at Sprotbrough*, mid 19th century.

<sup>187</sup> Holland (ed), *Sprotbrough in History*, Part 2, p. 47.

<sup>188</sup> White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, Vol. 2, p. 213.

<sup>189</sup> *Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 28 November 1840, p. 4.

between the estate village of Sprotbrough and industrialised Swinton continued.

Furthermore, even when the owner of the pottery and the occupant of the mill were no longer one and the same, the supply and demand inter-relationship continued. In both 1861 and 1867, Charles Walker was listed in the local trade directory as charcoal blacking manufacturer and occupier of the flint mill at Sprotbrough. Although no business records survive for this period, the 1861 directory described it as 'an extensive flint mill', suggesting that business was still strong.<sup>190</sup> By the 1870s, Walker's Effingham Mills business in Rotherham had expanded and they had relinquished their lease on the flint mill at Sprotbrough. Nevertheless, the relationship between the flint mill and the pottery continued, and in 1877 Benjamin Harris was listed as Commission Merchant and Flint Grinder at Sprotbrough, supplying the Don Pottery with ground flint.<sup>191</sup> This relationship was sustained until the Don Pottery closed in 1893. Geographical proximity with industry, and topographical location on the river Don, were crucial to this inter-relationship, which meant that an industrial settlement was reliant on the estate village of Sprotbrough throughout the mid nineteenth century.

Location was similarly important in the inter-relationships stimulated by the Don Foundry at Sprotbrough. This agricultural engineering enterprise was located on the boundary between the parish of Sprotbrough and Doncaster, as depicted in fig. 4.7, on land owned by Sir J.W. Copley. Small-scale agricultural engineering businesses, such as the Don Foundry, represented the transitional phase between hand made agricultural implements and the large-scale agricultural engineering industry.<sup>192</sup> As Chartres and Perren emphasise, 'it was only after 1850 that mechanised substitutes for agricultural workers, and the

<sup>190</sup> Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, p. 812.

<sup>191</sup> Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1877, p. 1112.

<sup>192</sup> D. Grace, 'The Agricultural Engineering Industry' in Collins (ed), *Agrarian History*, Part 2, pp. 1000-1004.

agricultural engineering industry they created, emerged and matured'.<sup>193</sup> During the mid nineteenth century, some village blacksmiths diversified and small foundries were developed to cater for changing demands. It is significant that the Don Foundry did not represent the evolution of local blacksmithing or undermine the position of the village blacksmith in Sprotbrough. Nor was agriculture in Sprotbrough any more advanced than the other five villages studied with regards the introduction of modern machinery. As demonstrated in chapter two, the landowning family and the tenant farmers of Sprotbrough were relatively conservative in their use of machinery.

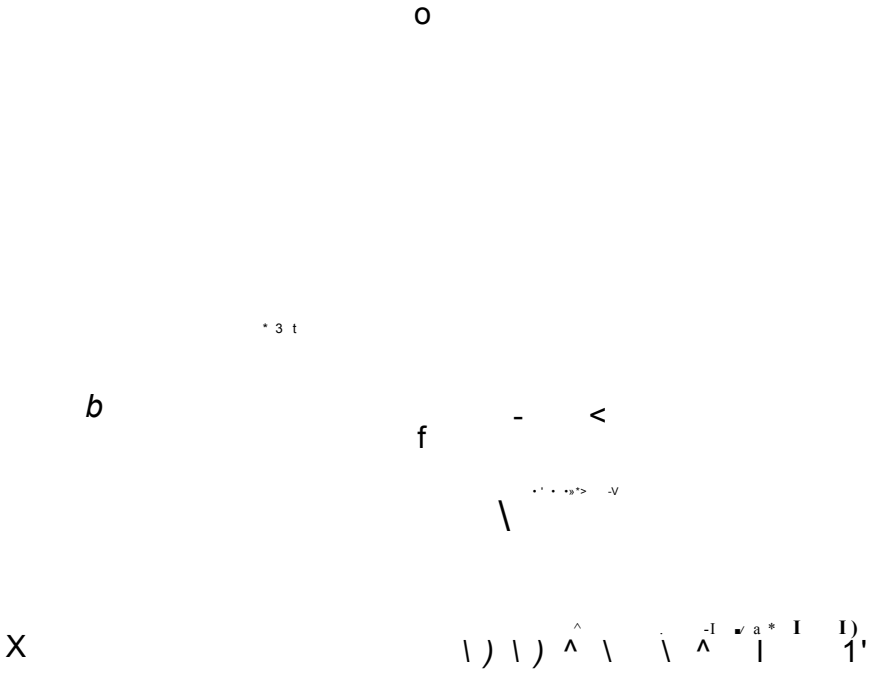
Instead, the Don Foundry was a new venture developed by the Walkinshaw family. John Walkinshaw junior, who had inherited his father's business, ran the foundry between at least 1847 and 1871.<sup>194</sup> In 1861 Walkinshaw was listed in the local directory as 'engineer, iron founder, and manufacturer of agricultural implements, weighing machines, crabs, blocks, jacks, pumps, hot water apparatus, kitchen ranges, pans, spouting, palisading and wire fencing'.<sup>195</sup> Such items were manufactured for town and country markets, and for both industry and agriculture. The focus of business was therefore centred on Doncaster rather than in the estate village of Sprotbrough. Location was key to establishing this inter-relationship between Sprotbrough and the surrounding market for the items manufactured at the Don Foundry.

<sup>193</sup> Chartres and Perren, 'Trade, Commerce and Industry: Introduction', p. 948.

<sup>194</sup> Doncaster Archives, P25/9/B1, *Sprotbrough Tithe Apportionment and Map*, 1847; TNA, HO107/2346, *CEB Sprotbrough 1851*; TNA, RG9/3516, *CEB Sprotbrough 1861*; TNA, RG10/4716, *CEB Sprotbrough 1871*.

<sup>195</sup> Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, p. 812.

Fig. 4.9: Map Showing the Don Foundry on the boundary between Sprotbrough and Doncaster



Source: Doncaster Archives, P25/9/B1, *Sprotbrough Tithe Apportionment and Map, 1847*

The inter-relationships between the multi-freeholder village of Stainforth and other places demonstrate the role of the canal in creating interconnected networks of supply and demand, and of labour and skill. The boat builders and sail makers of Stainforth were located on the banks of the Stainforth and Keadby Canal, which was an important artery for transporting goods, transferring knowledge and skills, and inter-connecting with other maritime communities. During the mid nineteenth century two principal boat building yards were located at Stainforth, which served both local and national markets. Benson’s Yard was a family run business owned by the Benson family.<sup>196</sup> In addition to family labour, the boat builders employed other people, which further

<sup>196</sup>White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, Vol. 2, p. 188; TNA, HO107/2349, *CEB Stainforth 1851*; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, p. 328; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1877, pp. 385-386.

stimulated inter-relationships between Stainforth and other communities with a large proportion of canal or maritime occupations. For example, in 1851 three men were employed by the Bensons, two of whom were apprentices (John Garrett, 17 and John Foster, 14) who lived with the family.<sup>197</sup> Both men were the sons of agricultural labourers, who lived in Thorne and Stainforth respectively. By 1861, both men were married and worked as a shipwright and a ship's carpenter respectively.<sup>198</sup> However, by 1871 both men moved out of Stainforth, with Foster residing in Fishlake where he worked as a ship's carpenter, and Garrett living in Hull where he worked as a shipwright.<sup>199</sup> Thus, whilst the two apprentices were from non-canal based families, they both pursued trades that utilized the skills they had acquired as apprentices.

The boat builders also generated trade for sail makers, who made sails for new boats and replacements for older vessels. Total employment in boat building and associated trades increased between 1851 and 1871, which included employees and apprentices who moved to Stainforth from elsewhere.<sup>200</sup> Many were born in places such as Goole, which were renowned for their canal trades and crafts. For example, William Shirtliff was listed as a sail maker in both the CEBs and the trade directories throughout the mid nineteenth century.<sup>201</sup> Shirtcliff had been born in Goole, which had a strong maritime heritage, suggesting that some of the skill and knowledge base for the canal based industries in Stainforth originated from such places through the movement of people and families in the nineteenth century. The boat building and sail making industries at Stainforth were an integral part of much wider networks of production, marketing and knowledge transfer, which were stimulated by the canal and the river.

<sup>197</sup> TNA, HO107/2349, *CEB Stainforth 1851*.

<sup>198</sup> TNA, RG9/3524, *CEB Fishlake and Stainforth 1861*.

<sup>199</sup> TNA, RG10/4726, *CEB Fishlake 1871*; TNA, RG10/4782, *CEB Hull 1871*.

<sup>200</sup> TNA, HO107/2349, *CEB Stainforth 1851*; TNA, RG9/3524, *CEB Stainforth 1861*; TNA, RG10/4726, *CEB Stainforth 1871*; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1877, pp. 385-386.

<sup>201</sup> White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory*, 1837, Vol. 2, p. 188; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1861, p. 328; Kelly, *Post Office Directory*, 1877, pp. 385-386; TNA, HO107/2349, *CEB Stainforth 1851*; TNA, RG9/3524, *CEB Stainforth 1861*.



Apprenticeships transferred knowledge and skills between villages and other places, as well as within a village as demonstrated earlier in this chapter. A number of blacksmith's apprentices learnt their craft in one of the six villages and then set up their own business in a town. For example, in 1851, Charles Brooks (17) was apprenticed to Edmund Fitzgeorge in the estate village of Warmsworth. Thereafter he lived and worked as a blacksmith in Rotherham and Sheffield. By 1911, aged 77 and widowed, he boarded with a family in Rotherham where he was still occupied as a blacksmith. Similarly, Mark Beevers (17), who was apprenticed to George England in 1861 in the multi-freeholder village of Fishlake, had moved to Rotherham by 1871 where he worked as a blacksmith. Rather than an exodus of blacksmiths and their families from the six villages into towns in the mid nineteenth century, apprenticeships supplied village blacksmiths with a relatively cheap supply of labour, and facilitated the transfer of knowledge and skills from both estate and multi-freeholder villages to towns.

## **Conclusions**

This chapter has provided evidence about industry and micro-commerce in the countryside that challenges the Mills model. Firstly, whilst the number of industries and micro-commerce businesses was greater in the three multi-freeholder villages than the three estate villages, the sharp dichotomy of the Mills model is insufficient to explain patterns of industry and micro-commerce in the countryside. This chapter has demonstrated that the number of industries and micro-commerce businesses in villages with similar landowning structures varied considerably. Moreover, a disparity existed between the number of industries and the number of micro-commerce businesses. The proposed continuum is more effective in representing these variations than the sharp dichotomy of the Mills model. In addition, the continuum can be adapted to accommodate change over time, which is important as the number of industries and businesses in the six villages changed between 1837 and 1877. To further explain patterns of industry and

micro-commerce in the six villages, this chapter has demonstrated the importance of differentiating between different types of industries and micro-commerce businesses and examining the scale and scope of industry and micro-commerce. Of particular importance to an alternative framework for village typology is the acknowledgement that many industries and micro-commerce businesses were complimentary to agriculture, and that the scale and scope of these industries and businesses are more apposite measurements by which to compare their extent than a purely statistical count.

Secondly, this chapter has demonstrated that the relationship between landownership and industry in the six villages was far more complex than the extent to which landownership was concentrated. The landowners' residency, wealth, attitudes and interests all contributed to how they responded to industrial opportunities on their estates. At Warmsworth, the two landowners actively promoted industry and were reluctant to relinquish their involvement despite the quarries being leased during this period. This was on account of their business interests and acumen and their geographical relationship to the quarries. At Rossington, the industrialist James Brown purchased a landed estate and no industry was developed or expanded. Rather than undermining his entrepreneurial spirit, Brown directed his business acumen to consolidating the agricultural infrastructure in the estate village. It is crucial that landowners are not homogenised on the basis of how much land they own, as the relationship between landownership and industry was in fact very complex.

Thirdly, this chapter has demonstrated that Mills' dependency argument underestimates the importance of inter-relationships between villages and between town and country. The six villages sustained a core of 'essential' trades and crafts. Requirements not met within the villages stimulated inter-relationships, but there is no evidence to suggest that the three estate villages were dependent on the three multi-freeholder villages. Moreover, the estate village of Sprotbrough was at the heart of

agricultural and industrial networks that depended upon the corn mill, flint mill and the Don Foundry located on the estate. In addition, the canal network at Stainforth extended the inter-relationships geographically. Knowledge and skill transfer via apprenticeships were also important ways in which the six villages were inter-related with other people and places. Ultimately, the six villages were not heavily industrialised, and nor was the Doncaster district during the mid nineteenth century. The majority of industries therefore complimented agriculture in the six villages. Moreover, they were often sustained due to inter-relationships that connected people and places throughout the district and beyond. Merely comparing the number of industries and micro-commerce businesses in villages and attributing this to the concentration of landownership, as the Mills model does, cannot explain the complex and often unique ways in which industry and micro-commerce operated in the countryside.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This thesis has evaluated the Mills model and contributed to debates about village typologies. Through the detailed analysis of agriculture, industry and micro-commerce in six villages in the vicinity of Doncaster, it has evaluated the classificatory, causal and dependency arguments of the Mills model. This has enabled fundamental flaws within the Mills model, which undermine its applicability as a framework for the study of village typology in the mid nineteenth century, to be identified. In addition it has applied a combined methodology of local history and micro-history. This approach has both furthered knowledge and understanding about the Doncaster district and provided new insight into patterns of agriculture, agricultural employment, and industry and micro-commerce in rural England during the mid nineteenth century. This conclusion summarises the main findings of this thesis and discusses their implications.

One of the unique features of this research has been the application of the Mills model to a new geographical area. As discussed in the introduction of this thesis, the Doncaster district has been neglected in terms of comparative studies of agricultural communities and village typology in the mid nineteenth century. By examining the three multi-freeholder villages and the three estate villages during the mid nineteenth century, this thesis has made a contribution to the knowledge and understanding of rural settlement in the Doncaster district. In addition, it complements existing studies of South Yorkshire history, which have broader timeframes and an emphasis on industrialisation or aristocratic estates.<sup>1</sup> Specifically it has readdressed the deficiency in academic work about village typology in the Doncaster district and South Yorkshire.

<sup>1</sup> S. Pollard & C. Holmes (eds), *Essays in the Economic and Social History of South Yorkshire* (Sheffield, 1976); D. Hey, *The Making of South Yorkshire* (Newton Abbot, 1979); D. Holland, *Changing Landscapes in South Yorkshire* (Doncaster, 1980); P.J. Nunn, 'The Management of some South Yorkshire Landed Estates in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, Linked with the Central Economic Development of the Area, 1700-1850' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, 1985); M. Jones, *The Making of the South Yorkshire Landscape* (Barnsley, 2000).

The Doncaster district was predominantly agricultural in the mid nineteenth century. Moreover, the towns and newly developing suburbs increased demand for agricultural produce and were subsequently reliant on the agriculturalists of the district. Chapter two demonstrated patterns of agriculture in the six villages, how these changed over time and the relationship between the villages and the market town of Doncaster in respect of agriculture. The Doncaster district was characterised by both large capitalist farms and small ones of less than ten acres, and both tenant and owner-occupier farms. Although farms were generally larger in the three estate villages compared to the three multi-freeholder villages, large capitalist farms employing a large number of regular employees were to be found in both types of villages. Furthermore, a few small farms (less than 50 acres) were located in estate villages. The mix of small, medium and large farms in close proximity to one another, including within the same village, demonstrates that generalisations about farm size conceal significant variations. Moreover average farm size in the six villages changed between 1851 and 1871. The debate about farm size has concentrated on the extent to which farm size was increasing during the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Significantly, the average farm size decreased in the estate village of Warmsworth and increased in the estate village of Rossington. These two opposing trends reflected differences in agricultural management, the extent of capital-intensive farming and diversity in the village economy.

Continuity amongst the tenant farmers was also evident in the six villages, which was indicative of the slow turnover of farmers nationally.<sup>3</sup> In many instances, tenant farmers occupied the same farm for in excess of thirty years, with many of these transferring to relatives thereafter. Continuity of tenant farmers in the Doncaster district was closely linked

<sup>2</sup>J.V. Beckett, 'The Debate over Farm Sizes in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century England', *Agricultural History*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (July 1983), pp. 308-25.

<sup>3</sup>D.R. Stead, 'The Mobility of English Tenant Farmers, c. 1700-1850', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (2003), pp. 173-89.

to the expectations of landowners. Detailed tenancy agreements and rent abatements demonstrated the anxiety of some landlords to select and retain 'suitable' tenants. The size of farms and the identity of farmers in the six villages varied in relation to local circumstances including landownership, location and the availability of suitable tenants with sufficient capital, and broader economic trends.

'High farming' manifested itself in different ways and to varying extents in the Doncaster district. Only in the estate village of Rossington did 'high farming' equate to large-scale capital investment in the agricultural infrastructure of the estate. Elsewhere, in both the estate and multi-freeholder villages, innovations in drainage, the application of technology and the advancement of agricultural knowledge were all effective ways in which farmers sought to improve productivity. Moreover, through membership of the Doncaster Agricultural Society and the Doncaster Farmers' Club, farmers from throughout the district including the six villages had access to the latest agricultural knowledge, and were able to share their practical experiences and gain from those of others. The Doncaster district was evidently receptive to advancements in agriculture, emphasised by the reports of the *Doncaster Gazette* and the *Doncaster Chronicle*. As demonstrated in chapter two, the practical application of ideas, which were firmly rooted in the experiences of local farmers and relevant to geology, was more appropriate and therefore more effective than large-scale investment in some of the villages. Nevertheless, in spite of attempts by the local farmers' clubs and agricultural societies to facilitate the participation of smaller farmers through membership clauses, the reality was that a core of large farmers frequented the meetings and shows of these societies.

Farms in the six villages, like others in the Doncaster district, were primarily arable combined with livestock. Wheat, barley and turnips were the main crops grown in all six villages. Despite the gap between geology and the agricultural capabilities of land having widened by the mid nineteenth century, the detailed analysis of crops and livestock in

the six villages demonstrated that geology and soil type continued to affect the proportion of crops and livestock during this period. Geologically the Doncaster district was diverse, with magnesian limestone to the west, bunter sandstone to the south east, and marshy clay land to the north east. Certain crops grew better in different soils, such as the turnip, which although one of the main crops in all six villages was more extensive at Rossington due to the light sandy soils. In addition, different methods of cultivation were more appropriate to different land types as evidenced by the work of, and reports and recommendations by, the local agricultural societies and newspapers. Prior to this thesis, work on farming regions in the mid nineteenth century had absorbed the Doncaster district into a vast northern region. As a consequence of this research it is evident that patterns of agriculture differed in villages in close proximity to one another on account of geological differences.

Agriculture in the six villages was also closely inter-related to the market town of Doncaster. As a consequence, the investments and improvements undertaken by Doncaster Corporation received widespread support from farmers in these six villages. Between 1843 and 1877, Doncaster Corporation redeveloped and rebuilt the market, including facilities for the sale of corn, meat, butter, wool and cattle. Doncaster Corporation's pride in the new market infrastructure of the town reflected both its civic aspirations and the importance of agriculture in the district. It is particularly significant that facilities directly related to the agriculture of the area, with an emphasis on the cultivation of corn combined with livestock. Patterns of agriculture in the six villages were therefore inter-related with developments in the market town of Doncaster. The inter-relationships demonstrated in chapter two are particularly significant for two reasons. Firstly, the role of Doncaster as a marketing centre has been acknowledged in the agricultural literature for earlier periods but not in the mid nineteenth century, and yet as evidenced here it continued to perform a crucial role in agricultural trade. Secondly, whereas the Mills model isolates the agriculture of

villages, the inter-relationships evidenced in the Doncaster district have applicability to other agricultural communities during the mid nineteenth century.

The proportion of people employed in agriculture in the six villages during the mid nineteenth century was indicative of their agricultural nature. Chapter three demonstrated that without detailed farm records, an analysis of agricultural workforces in the six villages was limited to resident and regular agricultural workers. Nevertheless, this analysis contributes to work emphasizing the importance of differentiation within agricultural workforces.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, some significant trends have emerged from this research about agricultural employment in the six villages. For example, the ratio of agricultural employees to farmers in the six villages was much higher in 1851 than the average for the West Riding of Yorkshire. Furthermore, the ratio of employees to farmers was greater in the three estate villages compared to the three multi-freeholder villages. Some of the larger farms in the estate villages were employing a high proportion of paid labour, and the average ratio of employees to farmers was higher in the three estate villages than the national average.

This thesis particularly affords a new regional perspective on hiring practices in the mid nineteenth century. Despite numerous studies about the regional experience of farm service and the farm servant, which were discussed in chapter three, the position of the farm servant and farm service in some parts of the north of England has been under researched. The Doncaster district was especially neglected in this respect prior to this thesis. As a consequence of this research, patterns of farm service and hiring in the Doncaster district have been identified and analysed. The West Riding of Yorkshire was a high service area

**4A.** Howkins, 'In the Sweat of thy Face: The Labourer and Work', in Mingay (ed), *Victorian Countryside*, pp. 505-7; A. Howkins, 'Peasants, Servants and Labourers: The Marginal Workforce in British Agriculture c.1870-1914', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 92, No. 1 (1994), pp. 49-62; B. Reay, *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800-1930* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 25,135.



during the mid nineteenth century, and farm service was far from moribund in the Doncaster area during that period. The exact number of farm servants in the six villages varied, as did the proportion of agricultural workers employed as farm servants both in 1851 and 1871, Chapter three demonstrated that farm service was particularly strong in conjunction with several factors, including farm size and the type of farming. For instance, of the six villages, Rossington had the largest number of farm servants. It also had the largest farms, livestock to tend to and an innovative, capitalist approach to agriculture.

Much has been written of the moral campaign to reform hiring fairs in East Yorkshire. Yet the evolution of the Doncaster Statutes provides important evidence about the reform process and the implications of reform, as demonstrated in chapter three. From at least the 1840s the incumbent of Warmsworth, Revd. C.E. Thomas, proactively sought to reform hiring practices in the Doncaster area. His moral obligations manifested themselves in a practical alternative, which Thomas initiated at Warmsworth. He organised a register of both servants and masters, and facilitated the securing of positions prior to the Statutes. The success of Thomas was cited in the work of the better-known Revd. Skinner, who sought to reform hiring practices in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Moreover, the idea spread through the district affecting the other villages studied in this thesis, Support came from local landowners, the clergy and farmers, and by 1861 register offices had been established throughout the Doncaster district as well as in the town centre. In addition to highlighting the influential role of Thomas and his supporters in the Doncaster district, chapter three also demonstrated the impact of this reform. Attendance amongst farm servants at the Doncaster Statutes was increasingly divided between the older, more experienced male and female farm servants on the one hand and the younger, less experienced farm servants on the other. In other words a social hierarchy within farm servants had been established due to the moral reforms.

Agricultural labourers in the Doncaster district were employed both as regular and casual workers, although the evidence available provides most information about the regular agricultural labourers. Even in the absence of detailed farm records for the six villages, it has been possible to identify a profile of the male agricultural labourer in the Doncaster district as generally being paid higher than the average weekly wage in England during the mid nineteenth century, and as having the opportunities to acquire skill through participation in agricultural clubs and ploughing matches. In some instances, this was combined with good cottage accommodation and the provision of a garden, which constituted a better standard of living for the agricultural labourers than is generally acknowledged.

In addition, evidence of the female agricultural labourer in the six villages contributes to knowledge about the experience and perception of the work of women on the land during the mid nineteenth century. As Nicola Verdon, Edward Higgs and Joyce Burnette all argued, the female agricultural labourer was an important part of the agricultural workforce but often 'invisible' with regards documentation.<sup>5</sup> According to the CEBs, very few female agricultural labourers lived in the six villages. The majority of those who were recorded, were widows. However, the 1867-8 report into the employment of women in agriculture revealed that female agricultural labourers in the six villages were more numerous than the CEBs suggest, and that perceptions of women's agricultural work also varied considerably. The clergy presented a negative view of women's agricultural work, implying that it was unsuitable to their physical and moral character. Revd. Surtees drew a parallel between women working on the land and the untidy state of their homes and

**5** N. Verdon, *Rural Women Workers in Nineteenth Century England: Gender, Work and Wages* (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 31-3; E. Higgs, 'Women, Occupations and Work in the Nineteenth Century Censuses', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 23 (1987), pp. 59-82; J. Burnette, 'Married with Children: the Family Status of Female Day-Labourers at Two South-Western Farms', *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (2007), p. 78; J. Burnette, 'The Wages and Employment of Female Day Labourers in English Agriculture', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 57, No. 4 (2004), p. 682.

children.<sup>6</sup> Revd. Thomas judged the agricultural work undertaken by women as being cruel.<sup>7</sup> Conversely, John Bladworth, a landowner and farmer at Stainforth, favoured the employment of women and children on the land. Bladworth argued that the work was appropriate to a women's strength, that the fresh air was conducive to their health and that no parallel existed between work and illegitimacy. He also cited economic benefits for both women and farmers.<sup>8</sup> Perspectives on women's agricultural work in the Doncaster district, including the six villages, were therefore defined in terms of morality on the one hand and economic factors on the other.

In the context of agriculture and agricultural employment, chapter four demonstrated the relationship between the six villages and industry and micro-commerce. Doncaster was not a heavily industrialised area during the mid nineteenth century. Prior to the railways it was affectionately referred to as an elegant country town, with a famous racecourse, an agricultural hinterland and an absence of manufacturing.<sup>9</sup> The railways brought some industry to the town and new inter-connections between the countryside and the town, but as demonstrated by chapters two and three it remained predominantly agricultural. The six villages were not dominated by industry, and the majority of industry and micro-commerce was complementary to agriculture. The role of the corn miller, blacksmith and wheelwright were integral to life in the six villages. The scale and scope of most of the industries was small, resulting in a low proportion of industrial workers in the six villages. The exception was the large-scale quarrying at Warmsworth, which served a wide geographical market. Of particular significance was the way in which industry and micro-commerce in the six villages facilitated and

**6** PP, *Commissioners Report on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture, 1867-68*, p. 398.

**7** PP 1867-8, XVII, *First Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture 1867*, p. 402.

**8** PP 1867-8, XVII, *First Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture 1867*, p. 401.

**9** W. White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the West Riding 1837*, Vol. 1 (William White, Sheffield, 1837), p. 267

stimulated inter-relationships between places. Geography, spatial relationships and specific skills were all significant to these processes. It is evident that economic and occupational diversity in the six villages underpinned agriculture and rural society in them during the mid nineteenth century.

Ultimately, this thesis has examined a hitherto under-researched area in terms of agriculture and village typology in the mid nineteenth century. Through the successful application of local history and microhistory, it has both established new empirical evidence about agriculture, agricultural workforces, and industry and micro-commerce in the Doncaster area during the mid nineteenth century, and examined complex historical issues concerning these aspects of village life in order to facilitate greater understanding of social and economic processes in the English countryside.

In addition, this thesis has directly addressed the four research questions outlined in the introduction to this thesis. These concern the classificatory, causal and dependency arguments of the Mills model, and the implications of this new research for alternative frameworks to study village typology. The conclusion now summarises the arguments developed in this thesis, which answer these four research questions. Firstly, the thesis asked whether villages could be classified into two types according to landownership. This was in order to evaluate Mills classificatory argument that patterns of landownership created different village characteristics. Mills specifically argued that villages with concentrated landownership had large farms, capital investment in agriculture, greater labour demand, were dependant on multi-freeholder villages for a supply of labour, and minimal industry and micro-commerce.<sup>10</sup> Conversely, Mills argued that villages with fragmented landownership had small farms, lacked evidence of 'high farming', had a surplus of labour that supplied estate villages, and lots of industry and

<sup>10</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London, 1980), p. 117

micro-commerce.<sup>11</sup> Ultimately, Mills encouraged the characteristics of villages with different landowning structures to be seen in sharp contrast to one another, and therefore the Mills model interprets the classification of villages as a sharp dichotomy between estate and multi-freeholder.<sup>12</sup>

This thesis argues that whilst Mills' classification of villages is not wholly inaccurate, it is limited in its applicability. It is unable to account for variation within village type. As the three thematic chapters have all demonstrated, villages with similar landowning structures sometimes exhibited different characteristics. Therefore, although farm size, 'high farming', agricultural employment, and industry and micro-commerce were generally different in the three multi-freeholder villages compared to the three estate villages, there were important exceptions. For example, farm size was generally larger in the three estate villages than the three multi-freeholder villages studied. Yet, farm size within villages and types of villages varied, and there was a great disparity between the smallest and the largest farms in these villages. The arbitrary use of 'small' or 'large' and 'more' or 'less' make actual statistical comparisons difficult. Moreover, two opposing trends affecting farm size were discernible in the six villages during the mid nineteenth century. This was most apparent in two estate villages, where the farms in one increased in size whereas they decreased in size in the other.

In addition, whilst large-scale capital investment in the agricultural infrastructure was only undertaken in the estate village of Rossington, 'high farming' manifested itself in different ways in both estate and multi-freeholder villages through the advancement of agricultural knowledge, which transcended landownership. With regards agricultural workforces, a link between the ratio of agricultural employees to farmers and landownership was again identifiable in the six villages. Yet variation between villages with similar landowning structures further undermines the sharp dichotomy of the Mills model. This is particularly evidenced by

» Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 16,28.

the estate village of Rossington, with its larger farms and more capital intensive agricultural practices, which had a much higher ratio of male agricultural workers to farmers than in the other five villages. Similarly, whilst there were more industries and trades and crafts businesses in the three multi-freeholder villages compared to the three estate villages, the size and structure of these businesses differed. The largest industrial workforce was in fact resident in the estate village of Warmsworth and employed in the quarries. In both the estate and multi-freeholder villages studied a core of trades and crafts was inter-linked with agricultural practices.

The Mills classificatory argument only uses limited criteria and restrictive definitions to classify villages. As this thesis has demonstrated, in addition to farm size, capitalist investment in agriculture, the size of the agricultural workforce, and the extent of industry and micro-commerce, other characteristics defined agriculture, industry and micro-commerce in the six villages. For example, evidence of crops and livestock enhances knowledge and understanding about patterns of agriculture and farming regions. By limiting his interpretation of 'high farming' to capital-intensive improvements, Mills underestimated the value of the acquisition and application of agricultural knowledge and the use of portable machinery, which transcended landownership.

With regards agricultural workforces the Mills model is equally limited, as it does not differentiate between different types of agricultural workers. Of specific importance are the differences between the identity and experiences of farm servants, regular and casual agricultural labourers, and men and women working on the land. To understand changing and contrasting patterns of agricultural employment in villages it is particularly important to understand the capacity in which agricultural workers were employed. Moreover, evolving practices of hiring farm servants reflected moral objections to public hiring and revealed social hierarchies between farm servants. Further to this are the perceptions of female agricultural workers, both farm servants and

agricultural labourers, and the disparity between moral objections and economic advantages. The model also does not differentiate between types of industry and micro-commerce, many of which were complementary to agricultural and village life. For example, food processing industries, and the village blacksmith and wheelwright, were integral to the agricultural requirements of the six villages. Furthermore, the scale and scope of industries and businesses are more apposite measures of the extent of industry and micro-commerce than merely how many businesses operated in a village.

Particularly problematical with regards the classification of villages is the static nature of the Mills model, which is supposedly applicable to the whole of the nineteenth century and beyond. In reality, change was a feature of the mid nineteenth century. Patterns of agriculture, agricultural employment, and industry and micro-commerce were not always the same in the 1870s as they had been in the 1830s. This applied to farm size, the ratios of agricultural employees to farmers, and the number of and range of different trades and crafts businesses and occupations, which in some instances lessened the gap between the estate and multi-freeholder villages. Collectively these three limitations undermine the applicability of the Mills model for the classification of villages, and specifically weaken the sharp dichotomy Mills emphasised.

Secondly, this thesis examined the role of landownership in relation to agriculture, agricultural employment, and industry and micro-commerce in the six villages. This was in order to evaluate Mills causal argument, that village characteristics were directly attributable to the concentration of landownership.<sup>13</sup> Mills justification for arguing this was based on the social and economic motivations of landowners in response to the administration of the poor law. Consequently, the Mills model homogenised landownership on the basis of how much land was owned. Landownership was important to the way in which agriculture

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 78-83.

developed in the six villages, and the extent of industry and micro-commerce. Nevertheless, this was not exclusively due to the concentration of landownership. In addition, the size of the estate, wealth, residency, historical legacy, interests and attitudes, and involvement with industry affected the actions of the landowners. It is therefore essential to differentiate between landowners. Moreover, the actions of landowners should be considered within a broader spatial dimension rather than being limited to the village. Through their membership of agricultural societies, and their involvement in the moral campaign against hiring fairs, landowners were able to extend their causal role throughout the Doncaster district.

In addition, other causal factors affected agriculture, agricultural employment, and industry and micro-commerce in the six villages. Doncaster Corporation performed a key casual role that affected agriculture in the Doncaster district. As the Corporation of a growing town and borough they invested heavily in new market buildings in Doncaster that benefitted the agriculturalists of the six villages. They also, as the landowners of Rossington prior to 1838, invested in the agricultural infrastructure of the village. The clergy also occupied a casual role, particularly with regards the employment of female agricultural workers and the hiring fairs. Revd. C.E. Thomas of Warmsworth spearheaded the moral campaign to reform the hiring fairs in the Doncaster district, and had considerable impact on changing the behaviour of landowners and farmers in the Doncaster district. The farmer was an integral part of the productiveness of an agricultural estate, which related to their capability, suitability and stock and resulted in complex tenancy agreements. Moreover, the farmers of the six villages participated in agricultural societies and farmers' clubs and thus contributed to the acquisition and application of agricultural knowledge in the six villages. Even the agricultural labourer affected agriculture due to their skill and suitability, and their membership of local agricultural organisations and participation in ploughing competitions. Topography, geology and climate were amongst other factors that also affected crops



and livestock, and the nature of industry and micro-commerce in the six villages. Consequently, the reliance on a sole determinant, landownership, to explain the characteristics of villages further limits the applicability of the Mills model.

Thirdly, this thesis examined the relationships between the six villages. This enabled both the dependency argument of the Mills model to be evaluated and a more complex inter-relationship argument to be developed. Mills dependency argument was once again based on the debates concerning the rural poor in the nineteenth century. The *Second and Third Reports from the Select Committee on Settlement and Poor Removal* highlighted that a consequence of the 'open' and 'close' parish vestries system was increased migration of people from estate villages to the already densely populated 'open' villages.<sup>14</sup> Mills developed this idea to argue that estate villages were dependant on multi freeholder villages for labour supply and a range of trades and crafts.<sup>15</sup> However, as this thesis has demonstrated, a deficit in estate villages did not necessarily make them dependent upon multi-freeholder villages. Inter-relationships existed between town and country, particularly focused on the market town of Doncaster. Doncaster affected patterns of agriculture, agricultural employment, and industry and micro-commerce in the six villages through the market infrastructure and agricultural societies, hiring practices, the mobility of people and labour supply, and the provision of additional trades, crafts and services. Furthermore, inter-relationships were stimulated between the six villages and neighbouring villages and towns founded upon the transfer of knowledge and skills through apprenticeships. To some extent the six villages both created dependency and were dependent on other places. Consequently, the application of dynamic inter-relationships between villages and between town and country is a more effective approach than the one-way dependency of the Mills model.

<sup>14</sup> PP 1847, XI, *First Report from the Select Committee on Settlement and Poor Removal*, p. 28, 59; PP 1847, XI, *Second and Third Reports from the Select Committee on Settlement, and Poor Removal*, pp. 25-28, 80-81.

<sup>15</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, pp. 24, 119-120.

Fourthly, this thesis asked what the implications of this new research into a hitherto under-researched area are for the Mills model, and for developing alternative frameworks for the study of village typology. It is very important to acknowledge that although the Mills model is limited in its ability to account for variation, change and differentiation, it is not wholly inaccurate. As demonstrated throughout this thesis, and summarised in this conclusion, the six villages coincided with many of the generalisations of the Mills model. In so far as it was intended to draw out the differences that existed, the model has provided historians with a useful framework to identify and discuss the main differences between different types of villages. The work of Mills was also far more extensive and detailed than the enduring model suggests. Whilst he insisted on drawing out the sharp dichotomy that existed between villages based on landownership Mills was aware that in practice it was very much a generalised or idealised form of reality.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, Mills argued that 'within the framework provided, there are many opportunities for local historians to test hypotheses which will refine delineation of the model and add to the sum of social scientific knowledge of English rural society'.<sup>17</sup> In doing so he encouraged further study and the modification of the model. The failure to rise to this challenge, and the continued reliance on the Mills model, is therefore to some extent also responsible for the limitations in applicability.

The limitations of the Mills model already outlined in this conclusion undoubtedly affect the wider application of it. The unique nature of villages in England, and patterns of agriculture, agricultural employment and industry and micro-commerce in the countryside cannot be represented and certainly cannot be explained by the Mills model. This was a concern raised by Barry Reay who felt the model was flawed because few places actually corresponded with it.<sup>18</sup> Based on the detailed analysis of the six villages in the Doncaster district, this thesis

<sup>16</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 116-7.

<sup>18</sup> B. Reay, *Rural England: Labouring Lives in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 2004), p. 14.

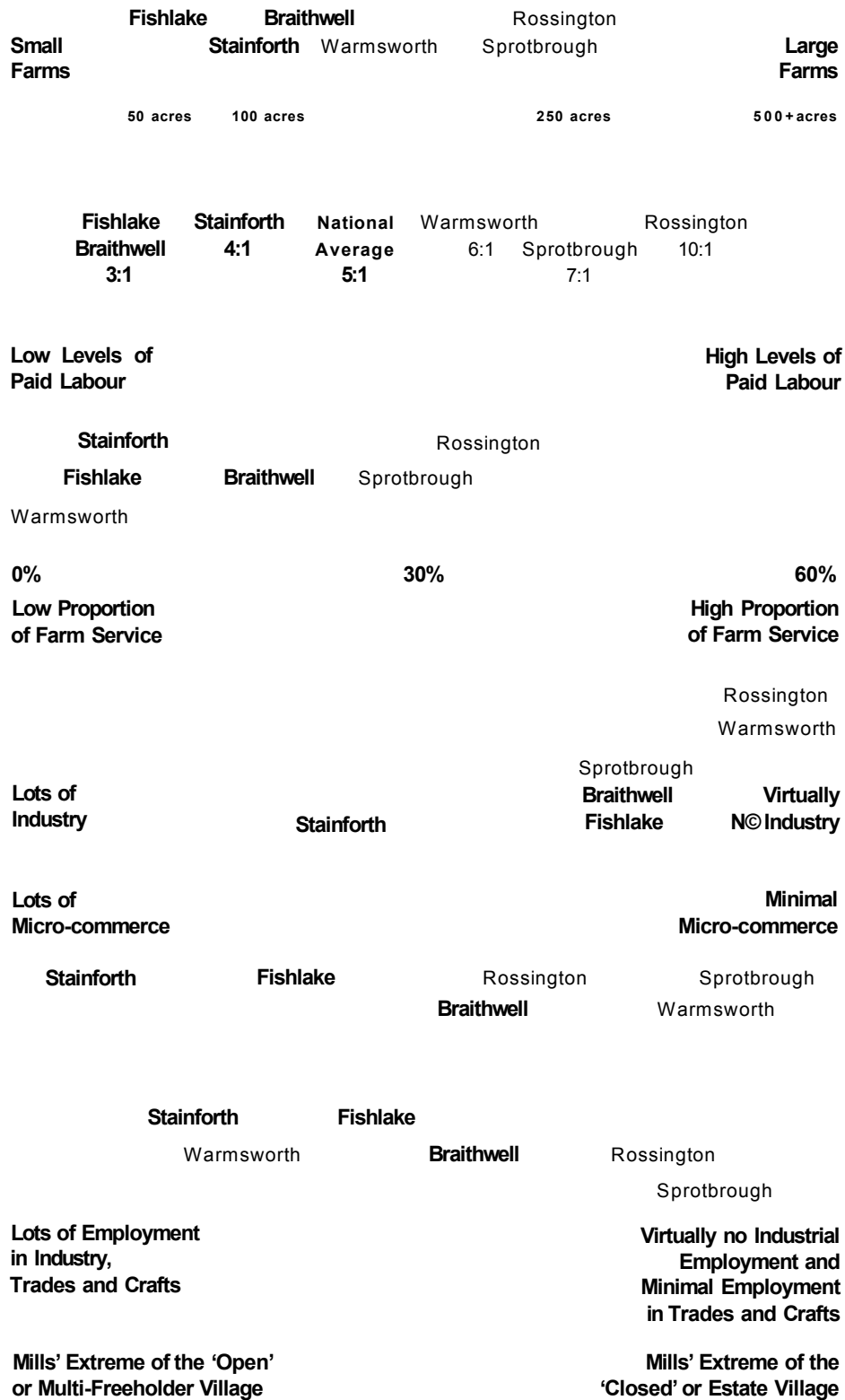
has demonstrated the difficulties encountered with the practical application of the Mills model. Instead a framework that is flexible and adaptable, that accommodates variation between villages with similar landowning structures and change over time, that incorporates additional criteria, that differentiates between landownership and acknowledges the other aforementioned causal factors, and that inter-relates the village to other settlements including the market town particularly through marketing and the transfer of knowledge and skills is required to be more robust than the Mills model. This is an ambitious objective, and one that raises the issue of whether a model or framework can ever adequately describe and explain village differentiation. In many respects models and frameworks can only go so far in describing and explaining the differences between villages. They provide tempting generalisations, which if not careful are akin to the 'one size fits all' edict gradually eroding the uniqueness of village in England. Certainly the more inflexible and static a model is, such as the Mills model, the fewer places it can actually be truly representative of.

This thesis has developed the concept of a continuum to better represent the characteristics of villages than the Mills classificatory model. Whereas the Mills model does not account for variations between villages with similar landowning structures, change over time or additional criteria, the continuum can incorporate all of these. Although Brian Short, Alun Howkins and Dennis Mills all independently suggested the idea of a continuum as an alternative framework to the strict dichotomy of the Mills model, no one developed, evaluated or applied it thereafter. In this thesis, the continuum has been successfully constructed and visually represented, and effectively applied to the six villages. The effectiveness of the continuum in permitting variations within a broad framework and accommodating change over time has been demonstrated in relation to farm size, agricultural employment, farm servants, and industry and micro-commerce. The continuum also maintains the basic parameters of the Mills model yet provides context to the notions of 'more' or 'less' and 'larger' or 'smaller' used by Mills. As

demonstrated by its application to the six villages, the continuum represents variation between villages with similar landowning structures, change over time and the comparative position of villages in relation to different variables. The continuum is an effective alternative to the strict dichotomy of the Mills model with regards the classification of villages. Rather than concealing variations and change, it promotes them in order to encourage the detailed explanation of the varied experience of English villages in the mid nineteenth century.

In addition, the continuum demonstrates the importance of comparing village characteristics. Whereas the Mills model upholds extremes for each of the criteria it includes, the continuums show that the villages occupy differing positions in relation to diverse criteria. Fig. 5.1 demonstrates the implications of attempting to amalgamate different village characteristics. The continuum line at the bottom represents the extremes of the Mills model. On the left hand side are the characteristics Mills identified as being representative of multi-freeholder villages: small farms, low levels of paid labour, a low proportion of farm service, lots of industry and lots of micro-commerce, and lots of employment in industry, trades and crafts. On the right hand side are the characteristics Mills identified as being representative of estate villages: large farms, high levels of paid labour, a high proportion of farm service, virtually no industry or industrial employment and minimal micro-commerce or trades and crafts occupations. Of the six villages studied in this thesis, the three multi-freeholder villages are depicted in blue and the three estate villages are depicted in green. Using data primarily from 1851, and the continuums from chapters two, three and four, the six villages have been positioned in relation to one another and the selected criteria.

Fig. 5.1: An Amalgamated Continuum



The amalgamated continuum demonstrates that although an overall pattern of the multi-freeholder villages towards the left hand side of the continuum and the estate villages towards the right is evident, there was a disparity in experiences. It is evident that none of the villages was constantly at the extremes of Mills' model. Moreover, with the exception of the multi-freeholder village of Stainforth, the villages do not occupy the same position on the continuum in relation to different criteria. This is most notable in the very low proportion of farm service in the estate village of Warmsworth and the comparably small extent of industry in Braithwell and Fishlake. This is significant because the Mills model of village typology assumes consistency across a broad range of characteristics.<sup>19</sup> Even Short's modified version of the model maintained the links between disparate characteristics and criteria based on the concentration of landownership. Conversely, the continuum is a sliding scale rather than a static entity, along which not only change over time can be accommodated but also the relative position of villages in relation to different criteria.

The continuum is however limited to addressing the classificatory criteria of village differentiation rather than developing causal explanations and complex inter-relationships. As a consequence of the fluidity of village characteristics in terms of variation and change, this thesis proposes that an alternative framework of village typology should be exploratory. Based on the analysis of how and why the six villages in close proximity to each other and the market town of Doncaster developed, an alternative diagrammatic framework has been devised, as shown in fig. 5,2. This is intended as a tool to facilitate the exploration of the complex dynamics of rural life in the mid nineteenth century. The village itself is placed at the heart of this alternative framework, with the casual, classificatory and inter-relationship strands connected through the village.

<sup>19</sup> Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, p. 117.

Historical  
Legacy

Proportion of  
land owned

Size of  
Estate

Wealth

Involvement  
with Industry

Interests and  
Attitudes

Residency

The alternative framework addresses the limitations of Mills' causal and dependency arguments, as well as expanding upon the classificatory element of the Mills model. The upper section of the diagram addresses causation within the village. Landownership is identified as a key causal determinant responsible for the development of villages. However, whereas the Mills model homogenises landownership on the basis of how much land was owned, the alternative framework differentiates between landowners. It acknowledges that residency, size of estate, wealth, historical legacy, involvement with industry, and attitudes and interests all affected the actions of landowners, as well as the proportion of the land owned. In addition, it incorporates other human agency, including the causal role of the clergy, farmers, trade and crafts people and even labourers to some extent. Other causal determinants that affected the villages are also included such as land type and socio-economic and political factors.

The lower section of the framework represents the classificatory characteristics of villages. It focuses upon agriculture, agricultural employment, and industry and micro-commerce in line with the research undertaken on the six villages, but could be expanded to include other criteria. This section of the alternative framework incorporates different sub-elements of the three main categories. It demonstrates the extent of variables, many of which could be subdivided further. This can then be used in conjunction with the continuum to explore variation and change. The middle of the framework is dominated by the village, which is interconnected with 'other villages and 'the market town'. Unlike the Mills model, which reduces dynamic relationships to one-way dependency between estate and multi-freeholder villages, this section of the framework represents the inter-relationship between villages and between the countryside and towns. The significance of these inter-relationships in terms of trade, skills, labour supply, knowledge networks, marketing facilities and forums is also emphasised. In addition, the inter-relationships between village characteristics are also shown on the framework by way of dotted lines connecting them.



In constructing the amalgamated continuum and alternative framework, this thesis has contributed to and enhanced the on-going debates about village typology. Collectively, these two approaches avoid the limitations of the rigid and static nature of the Mills model. They do not purport to be a definitive model of village life, but rather promote enquiry led research of a comparative nature. The complex dynamics processing cause and effect through the village result in an almost infinite range of scenarios. The alternative framework enables the classificatory, casual and inter-dependency elements to be examined and interpreted within it. This consequently supports comparative research about how and why villages in close proximity to one another developed, which is of particular importance in order to develop understanding about village typology.

This thesis has also gone further than other critiques of the Mills model in establishing new parameters for the study of village typology in the mid nineteenth century and applying them to a range of different villages. This can be demonstrated by reference to the critiques of the Mills model and evidence of how this thesis is different to them. The two main opponents of the Mills model have been Sarah Banks and David Spencer.<sup>20</sup> Both Banks and Spencer criticised the use of the terms 'open' and 'close' or 'closed', and yet neither of them advanced alternatives. As demonstrated in this thesis, clarity of terminology is essential. In accordance with the primary research objectives, of evaluating the role of landownership and identifying an alternative framework that more effectively describes and explains villages, the terms estate and multi-freeholder were applied to the villages in the vicinity of Doncaster. The terms estate and multi-freeholder represented the concentration of landownership in a village, without reference to the terminology of the nineteenth century poor law, or to parishes. Both

<sup>20</sup> Banks, S., 'Open and Close Parishes in Nineteenth Century England'. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Reading, 1982, p. 114; Banks, S., 'Nineteenth-Century Scandal or Twentieth-Century Model? A New Look at 'Open' and 'Close' Parishes', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (1988), pp. 51-73.

estate and multi-freeholder are directly related to the village, which this thesis argues should be at the heart of any alternative framework.

Additionally, both authors argued that the Mills model was in some way deficient but did not create an alternative. Spencer came the closest to moving the debate forward by identifying key concepts for the study of village typology. For example, he argued that the predictive nature of the Mills model and its excessive localism were fundamental flaws that undermined its applicability to other places. He advocated a contextual approach, whereby villages were treated in spatial contexts rather than in isolation.<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, Spencer did not apply this to specific villages and the processes were not developed or evaluated by other historians. This thesis has developed and evaluated the contextual approach, and demonstrated the complex dynamics that influenced and inter-linked villages. The continuum and alternative framework detach the analysis of village typology from the terminology of the nineteenth century poor law, they differentiate between landowners, they acknowledge variation between villages with similar landowning structures and between different criteria, and they place the village within a spatial context demonstrating the inter-relationships that existed. They also demonstrate that an alternative framework cannot be reduced to a predictive mechanism to describe and explain village typology. Rather an alternative framework should be as complex as the villages it seeks to represent.

In conclusion, the enduring appeal of the Mills model is testimony both to its supposed ability to summarise a wide range of data and the absence of an alternative framework. This thesis argues that neither are adequate justifications for the continued use of the Mills model and its inherent use of the 'open' and 'closed' terminology, a sharp dichotomy of classification, and its inflexible and static nature. Villages, and patterns of agriculture, agricultural employment and industry and micro-

<sup>21</sup> Spencer, 'Reformulating the 'Closed' Parish Thesis', pp. 85, 94-5.

commerce within them, varied considerably. Moreover landowners differed considerably, in terms of their attitudes and actions. In addition, villages in the mid nineteenth century were inter-connected with the spaces and places around them. This thesis argues that an alternative framework should be flexible, transferable and enquiry led, in order to understand the complexities of villages as opposed to constraining their unique experiences to coincide with convenient dichotomies. The application of the continuum and alternative diagrammatic framework has overcome many of the limitations of the Mills model, and provides a comparative framework to structure comparative work on village typology in the future.

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