

Seasonal Marriage Patterns in Chipping Campden in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.

Nicholas Woodward¹

There are areas of history which can benefit significantly from studying short-term fluctuations. Crime history is a case in point. For example, it has always been assumed that much rural crime was driven by poverty. Yet it has been shown that poaching, one of the most common rural crimes, did not always take place at times of the year when rural poverty was at its highest.² In fact, it was strongly influenced by the availability of game. Similarly, I have carried out a series of studies of property crime in Wales. These suggested that whilst burglary, which was concentrated into the months between December and March, may have been driven by need, this was less true of sheep-stealing which peaked in the Spring and early Autumn, and was often committed by relatively affluent farmers. Likewise, horse-stealing was prevalent in the summer months, a time when itinerant labourers were on-the-move looking for work. This suggested that the crime was an opportunistic one.³

Seasonal fluctuations have also assisted demographic historians. This is particularly true of mortality, and I hope to write more about this in the future. For example, by examining the months in which deaths peaked, in conjunction with other information such as temperatures, food prices and the age of the victims, we can make educated guesses about the causes of mortality crises, those years when mortality was twice, maybe three times, above the norm. It is also possible to use the monthly pattern of burials to examine whether a parish had a poor sanitary environment. Mortality, even to-day, is inversely related to temperatures. It tends to fall from a winter high until the spring only to rise again in the autumn. However, when there is a poor environment this pattern may be interrupted by a peak in the summer, a time when insect-borne and water-borne diseases thrive.

In this paper, however, the focus will be the monthly – seasonal – pattern of marriages. Over the post-war period the monthly incidence of marriage has been inversely related to temperatures. It has risen from a low point in January to a peak in August, after which it has steadily fallen back until the end of the year (Table 1, column 5). In the past, however, the seasonal marriage pattern was very different. It was, moreover, strongly influenced by the industrial structure of a parish. Hence this study the seasonal marriage patterns is of interest for two reasons. First, it can enhance our understanding of the timing of marriage in the past. Secondly, it may be able to inform us about the economic structure of an area and how it changed overtime.

¹ Subject to the usual disclaimer, I would like to thank Judith Ellis for all things Chipping Campden, Catherine Woodward for her comments on an earlier draft of the paper and Jennie Bruce, who was responsible for transcribing the parish registers.

² Harvey Osborne, 'The seasonality of nineteenth-century poaching', *Agricultural History Review*, 48, 2000, pp 27-41

³ N. Woodward, 'Burglary in Wales, 1730-1830: Evidence from the Great Sessions', *Welsh History Review*, 24, 2007, pp 60-91; 'Seasonality and Sheep-Stealing: Wales, 1730-1830', *Agricultural History Review*, 56, 2008, pp 25-47; 'Horse-Stealing in Wales, 1730-1830', *Agricultural History Review*, 57, 2009, pp70-108,

The paper is divided into four sections. In the first we shall consider how and why parishes experience different seasonal patterns, and how that influenced the national profile over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the second section we shall examine the seasonal marriage pattern in Campden over the period. What emerges – a strong autumn peak – is consistent with that we would expect in a ‘corn economy’. In the third section, therefore, we consider if other evidence supports this finding. Finally, by way of a conclusion we briefly consider how this can help the local historian.

Our main source of information has been the parish and civil registers. Campden historians are very fortunate that these have been transcribed. The transcriptions cover the period from the early seventeenth century until the early part of the twentieth. It was felt, however, that coverage and reliability of the seventeenth century information left much to be desired. As a result, the discussion has been confined to the two successive centuries.

Seasonal Marriage Patterns in England: Historians cannot be accused of having neglected marriage. Probably the most celebrated work is Wrigley and Scholfield’s *English Population History of England*.⁴ Based on a sample of over 400 parishes, they reconstructed the English population from the beginning of parish registration in 1538 through to the early years of civil registration, introduced in 1837. Equally important, they tried to explain why the population fluctuated over time. At the centre of this work was why marriage rates, which, along with fertility, was the key to population growth, fluctuated. They argued that structural changes, such as the type of industry and the prevalence of apprenticeships played a role. But marriage, they argued, was also influenced by economic factors, such as wages and prices. Thus a period of rising earnings would, after a lag, act as a stimulus to marriage and eventually to fertility.

Their work also included some discussion of seasonal marriage patterns. Economic incentives – wages and employment - seem to play a role here too. Thus in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries people were reluctant to marry in those months when wages – especially male wages – were high and when employment prospects – especially for women - were good. They preferred to marry when economic conditions were slack and employment prospects poorer.

Furthermore, the months of slack were strongly influenced by the industrial structure of the area. For example, in the late eighteenth century, before the advent of steam vessels, it was quite unusual for those in maritime and fishing communities of the north of England to venture to sea in the winter months. This is then reflected in a distinctive marriage pattern. Marriages would peak in December with a high number of marriages in both November and January.⁵ Similarly, potential grooms from seaports involved in Newfoundland cod fishing were away from home for much of the period between late winter and early autumn. It was only when they returned that there was a flurry of marriages.

⁴ E.A. Wrigley and R.S.Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541-1871, A reconstruction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981

⁵ A Storm, ‘Seasonality of Births and Marriages in a Seafaring Community before the Age of Steam’, *Local Population Studies*, No 52, Spring, 1994, pp 43-47.

Similar influences operated in agricultural parishes. Consider, first, livestock-rearing. This type of farming was found predominantly in low-population density areas in the west of England and Wales. Here the most active time of the year was the spring months. At this time there was both lambing and calving, although, prior to this, stock had to be sold to make way for the new lambs and calves. However, once lambing and calving were completed there was a lull in activity before new employment opportunities emerged for shearing, haymaking and harvest-work, possibly further east. Often couples would use this spring hiatus to marry. As a result, we would expect that in such animal-rearing parishes there would be a late spring marriage peak.

The pattern of marriage for five Shropshire animal-rearing parishes is shown in the first column of Table 1. The data comes from the *Local Population Studies* CD-ROM which accompanied Wrigley and Schofield's *Population History*. It shows that there was a marked peak in marriage in May. After this, marriage falls until October, a time when many harvest workers would return home, when there was a second, much smaller peak.

In grain producing parishes the pattern of farming was very different. Of course, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when animal manure was an important source of land fertility, mixed farming was the norm and grain farmers invariably kept some livestock. Thus much arable farming warranted the description sheep-corn husbandry. Even so, the tempo of the year was largely dominated by the crops and the central focus, in particular, was the harvest. In the first part of the year the level of economic activity would be moderately high with late threshing, sale of the previous year's crops, folding sheep, preparing the land by ploughing and harrowing, stone-picking before spring sowing and weeding. This was followed by haymaking which led into harvesting, a frenetic time when employment and wages were at their highest. When this was over, activity was still quite high with winter ploughing and threshing. But it was less frantic; itinerant labourers returned home, women and children would find only occasional work, while those in employment went onto autumn wages and worked shorter hours, and some farm servants came to an end of their indentures. This then was an ideal time to marry. As column two of Table 1 shows for a sample of Cambridge grain-producing parishes, there was very marked marriage peak in October, although marriages remained quite high both in November and December.

Table 1 Various Seasonal Marriage Indexes

	Shropshire Livestock- Rearing 1800-12	Cambridgeshire Grain Producing, 1800-37	Cambridgeshire Livestock Fattening, 1800-37	Manchester 1881	GB 1947- 2011
Jan	72	75	72	88	28
Feb	83	113	83	95	45
Mar	102	71	102	66	51
Apr	116	87	116	105	97
May	160	77	160	75	114
Jun	120	54	120	135	138
Jul	93	82	93	86	168
Aug	72	41	72	111	172
Sep	63	78	63	110	154
Oct	119	222	119	102	98
Nov	108	179	108	93	65
Dec	91	123	91	135	64

Note: Marriage Index = (Proportion of yearly marriages/Proportion of yearly days)*100

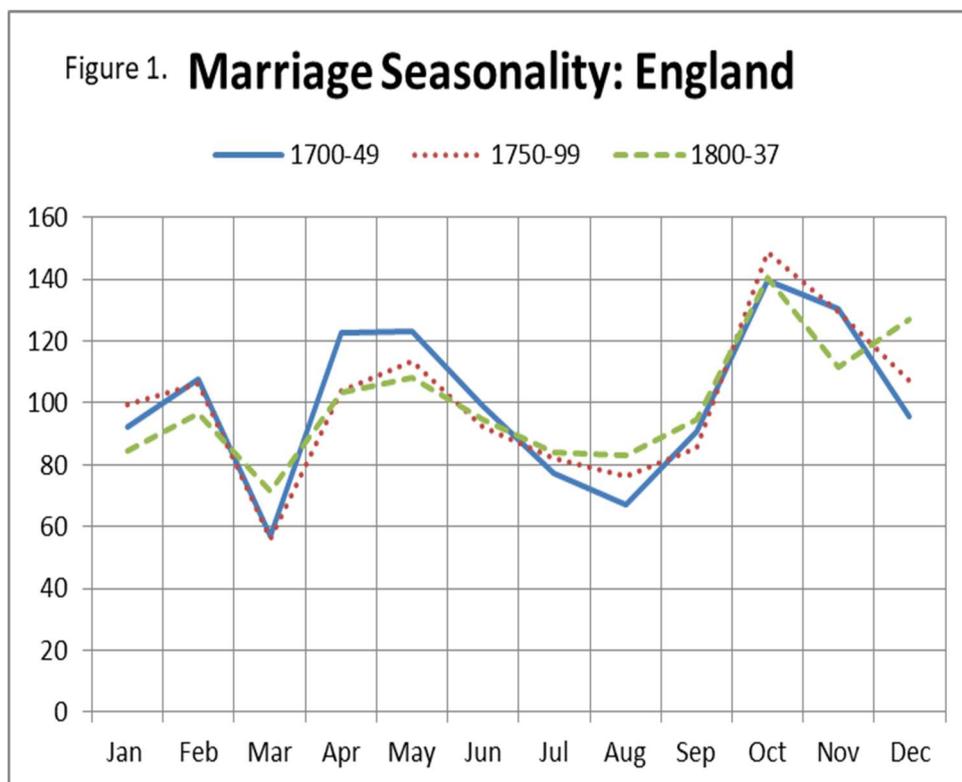
Sources: *Local Population Studies* CD; Manchester - *Registrar General's Annual Report*, 1883; Office for National Statistics, <http://www.ons.gov.uk>

Table 1 also shows the experience of some livestock-fattening parishes. These, too, experienced a marriage peak in the late spring. As in the rearing parishes, the spring was a time when livestock had to be cleared to make way for new stock, hence there is a May marriage peak. Stock also had to be cleared in the late summer-early autumn months, although no doubt some workers in these parishes would be returning from summer harvest work. As a result, there is relatively small peak in October too.

Marriages in manufacturing areas were less predictable as different industries faced their peak demand at different times of the year. Nevertheless, the available evidence suggests that December was a peak marriage month. This is borne-out for Manchester in 1881. The data comes from the *Registrar-General's Annual Report* for 1883. The Annual Report became our main source of demographic information following the introduction of civil registration in

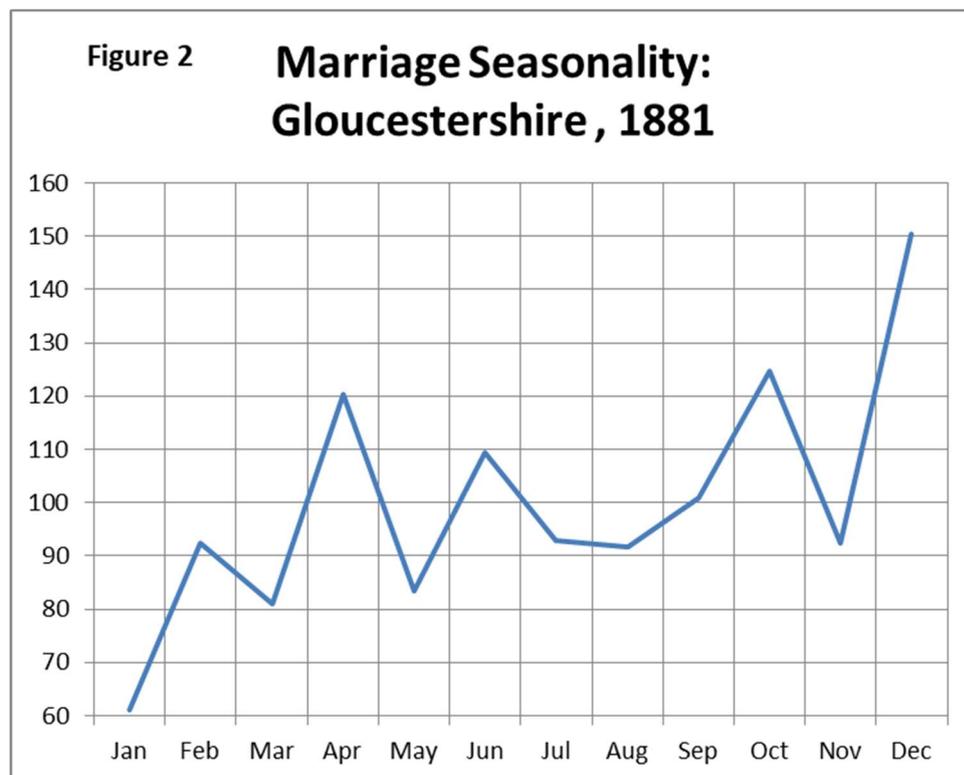
1837. The Report argued that the December peak was a consequence of the low number of daylight hours at this time of year. This would have increased fuel costs. However, low wages throughout the economy at this time of year would have generated low levels of demand too. Thus December was a month of short hours and layoffs, a good time to marry. The 1883 Report, however, also drew attention to a second marriage peak in June. This it attributed to the tendency for manufacturers to use this month for machine-maintenance.

We can now pull this together to explain the national patterns of marriage and how it changed over time. Figure 1 shows marriage seasonality for the years between 1700 and 1837. Despite gradual industrialisation, eighteenth century England was still essentially an agricultural society – it was not until the 1851 Census that a majority of the population were found to be living in urban areas. This is reflected in fairly marked marriage peaks in April-May, reflecting the importance of animal rearing and fattening. There is also a higher peak in October, due to the autumn harvest. During the second half of the century the spring peak becomes less marked while the October peak becomes slightly more prominent. This reflects the rise in population growth and a switch to arable farming. By 1800-37 the economy had become more industrialised and, as we would predict, this has marginally reduced the seasonality of marriages. It has also effected a rise in December marriages.



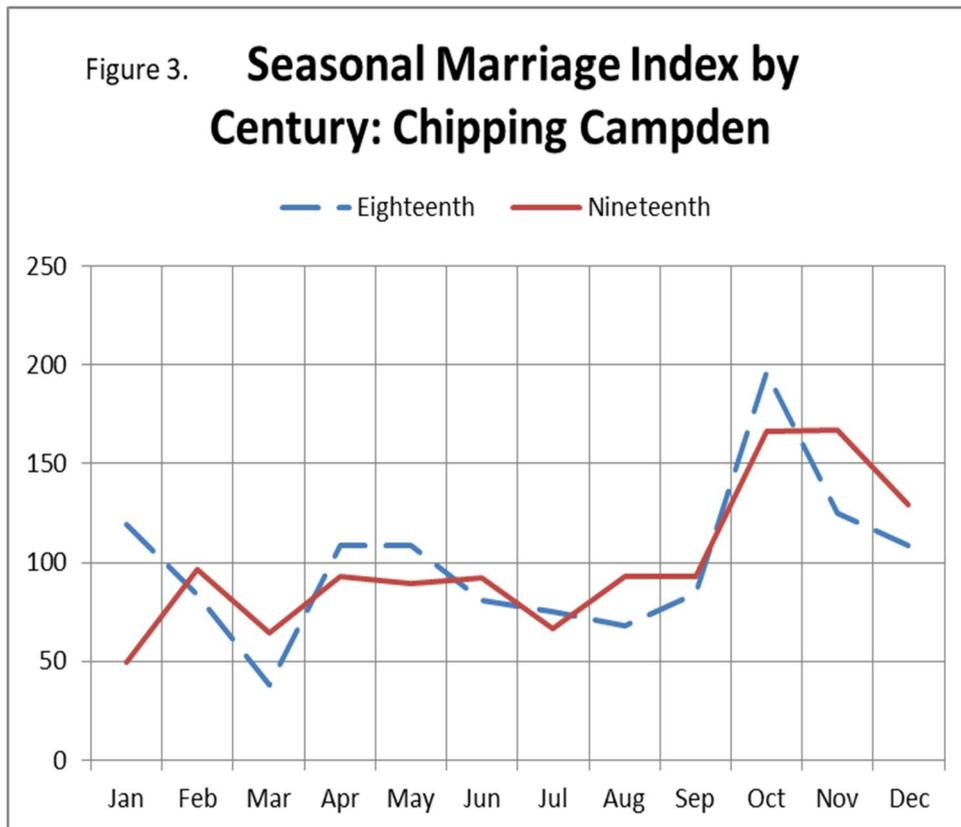
Unfortunately, we do not have national statistical evidence on seasonality for the second half of the nineteenth-century. Rather than extract monthly figures, the Registrar General's Report preferred quarterly information. The one partial exception to this was in his 1883 Report

when he presented seasonal figures for Gloucestershire. He did, however, suggest that Gloucestershire, which at that time included Bristol, would be representative of the country as a whole. Assuming this so, it is evident that by this time marriage seasonality had become much more complex and that manufacturing had begun to exert more influence. The spring and October peaks are still evident and there is also a machine-maintenance peak in June. But what is most perceptible is that December has taken over as the most important marriage month.



Seasonal Marriages in Chipping Campden:

We are now in a position to examine the pattern of seasonality in Campden. The pattern is shown in Figure 3 for both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The most conspicuous feature is that, over the whole period, Campden exhibits the characteristics of an arable-producing area. Following a low level of marriages in the summer, there is a marked peak in the autumn, October in the eighteenth century and October and November in the C.19th. The result was that the four post-harvest months accounted for forty-five per cent of all the Campden marriages that took place over the period.



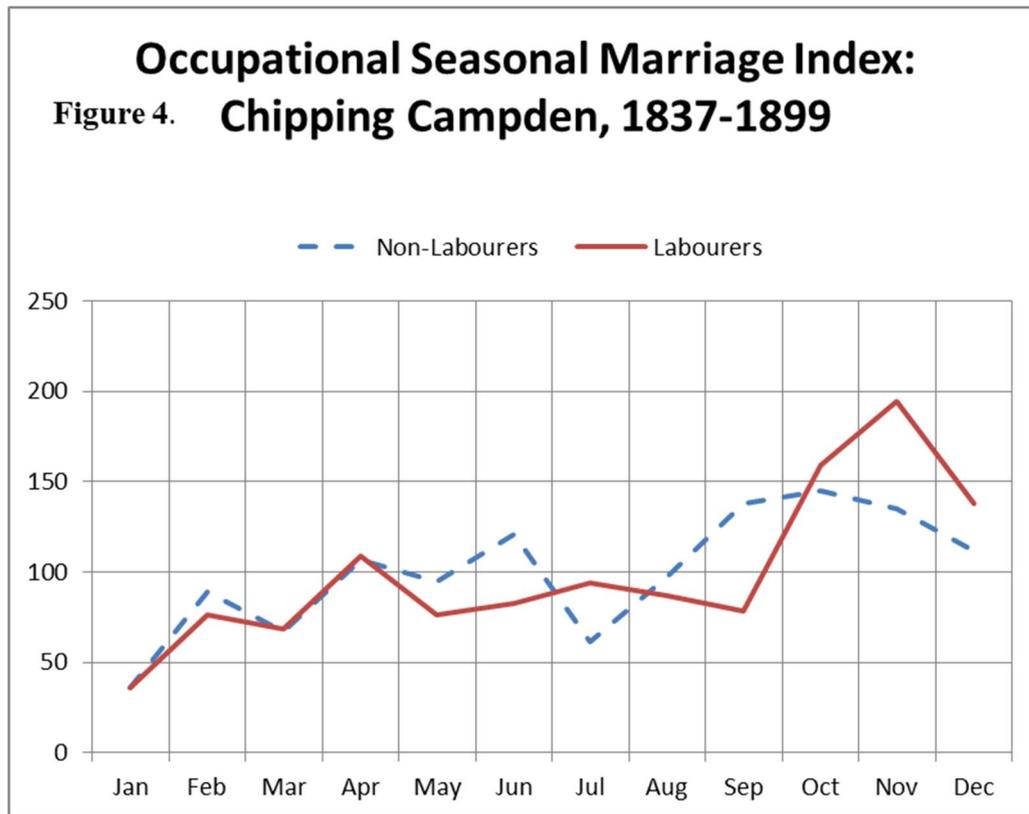
However, the graph also suggests that livestock production is reflected in the marriage pattern. It is noticeable that in the eighteenth century there was an above average number of marriages between April and May. In the nineteenth century, spring marriages were less common but a livestock-rearing cycle is still discernible. Clearly, we should not lose sight of the livestock sector when looking at Campden's history. It is also noticeable that marriages dipped in March. The reasons for this are not clear. It may be a hang-over from the medieval and early modern periods, when abstention was encouraged. However, it should also be remembered that March was, weather permitting, a month of fairly intense farming activity with spring sowing, livestock dealing as well as lambing and calving

Of course, it is possible that these patterns have been distorted by one or two rogue episodes. To check for consistency, therefore, the data has been broken down into quarter centuries. Of course, in all the individual quarters the number of marriages were quite small which increases the risk of distortion from random events. Even so, as Table 2 shows, in every quarter century the peak level of marriages occurred in the autumn. It was only in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when August tied with November, that that finding was at all compromised. It is also evident that, with the exception of the 1800-24 sub-period, the number of spring marriages were slightly above the norm.

Table 2 **Marriage Indexes by Quarter Century: Chipping Campden**

	1700-24	1725-49	1750-74	1775-99	1800-24	1825-49	1850-74	1875-99
Jan	118	134	120	102	78	49	33	35
Feb	127	76	73	61	129	91	86	77
Mar	14	30	47	66	57	76	74	41
Apr	111	111	112	102	59	104	102	108
May	104	155	82	84	74	113	82	76
Jun	78	77	116	57	72	91	102	103
Jul	64	92	66	73	74	55	66	82
Aug	79	39	74	87	94	79	49	181
Sep	107	101	84	41	81	66	131	108
Oct	193	175	198	222	185	167	132	128
Nov	89	108	133	177	178	160	157	181
Dec	118	101	93	124	123	149	148	76

With the introduction of civil registration from 1837 occupational descriptions of the bridegrooms become available and this allows us to extend the analysis. Unfortunately, the descriptions are sometimes very general. Not surprisingly, the prominent occupational group is Labourer. Moreover, it is highly probable the vast majority of these Labourers came from the agricultural sector. Labourers, in other words, maybe a good proxy for Agricultural Labourers. Consequently, it was decided to re-examine the seasonal marriage patterns, comparing Labourers with Non-Labourers. The result is shown in Figure 4. As might be anticipated, there is a strong marriage peak for Labourers in November with a much smaller one in April. What is interesting, however, is that the pattern for non-Labourer is quite closely correlated with that of the Labourers. In particular, the number of Non-Labourer marriages are low in August and September, but then peaked in October. The implication, of course, is that the economic rhythms of the parish were strongly influenced by agriculture. When the demands for agricultural labour were high this would either act as a stimulus to industries linked to agriculture which would discourage marriage. Alternatively when grain sector was booming it would encourage some of those outside the industry to join the ranks of the agricultural workers at least for the harvest period.



We have argued that brides and grooms preferred to marry in the autumn because there were economic incentives to do so – above average wages and high employment in the harvest months. Does the available evidence support this idea? Unfortunately, we do not have information about seasonal wages for Campden. The *Poor Law Inquiry* of 1834, however, provided some information for nearby parishes. This data was provided by local dignitaries rather than the employers. They are also complicated by some payment in-kind, most notably a beer allowance. Nevertheless, the patterns are fairly consistent. Men earned more than women who generally earned more than children. Furthermore, as Table 3 column 5 shows, harvest work seems to have commanded a premium over winter work. This premium varied from a quarter to double, perhaps more, depending on the parish.

Table 3

Winter and Summer Wages: Local Parishes, 1834

Parish	Group	Winter	Summer	Harvest	Ratio of Harvest to Winter Wages
Little Barrington	Men	8/- xb	9/- wb	11/xb	1.4
	Women	No employment	4/-	6/-	
	Child	-	3/-	4/-	
Little Rissington	Men	10/- xb	10/- wb	12/- to 15/-	1.2 to 1.5
	Women	4/-	5/- (haymaking)	5/- to 6/-	1.25 to 1.5
Upper Slaughter	Men	9/- xb	9/-xb	13/- wb	1.4
	Boys	3/6	3/6	3/6 plus bonus (5/-)	
	Women	8d per day	4/- per week	1/- per day	1.5
Todenham	Men	9/- xb	12/- (haymaking)	18/- to 20/- wb	2 to 2.2
	Women	3/- (but no employment for 3 months)	3/6	6/-	2
	Girls	-	2/-	3/-	
Temple Guiting	Men	9/- wb	10/- wb		
	Women	1/6	2/-	3/-	2
Broadway	Men	1/6 per day xb	2/- per day wb	2/- per day wb	1.3
	Women	7d per day	8d per day	1/- to 1/2 per day	1.7 to 2.0
	Girls	No employment	6d	8d to 10d	

Note: xb = without beer; wb = with beer

Source: Poor Inquiry, 1834

In addition to the relatively high wages, the harvest period was one when people worked long hours. For example, the 1843 *Report on the Employment of Women and Children* claimed that during the winter months women in arable farming worked between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm. During the weeding and stone-picking season they would work between 8:00am and 6:00pm. However, with the arrival of haymaking the hours increased considerably to between 6:00am and 6:00pm which was about the same as during the harvest period, although on some occasions they may have been asked to work between 4:00am and 8:00pm. The inevitable conclusion is that the relatively high earnings of the harvest period were achieved through extremely hard work. Thus, it hardly surprising that the end of the harvest was received with considerable relief, even a source of celebration for those concerned, and the early autumn became enshrined as a time of leisure, a time convenient for marriage.

Further Evidence Campden's Industrial Structure

One obvious inference from the discussion so far is that Chipping Campden had all the characteristics of a grain-producing parish. This should be of considerable interest to local historians because we know surprisingly little about the industrial structure of the parish. The history books about the parish, although excellent in many respects, are vague about such issues. It has been surmised that the principal source of employment was agriculture. However, it is not clear what type of agriculture this was: grain production, animal rearing, animal fattening or even dairying? The discussion now suggests that, for virtually the whole of the period, employment was dominated by arable production, although animal rearing/fattening was of some importance too.

The use of marriage seasonality to study industrial structure has been used to good effect by a number of historians, most notably by Ann Kussmaul who has used it to show that Britain became increasingly specialised geographically in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁶ But how reliable is the technique? Obviously it has limitations for large parishes in which employment was concentrated in a number of industries. Similarly, it will reveal little in parishes in which production is dominated by an industry with limited seasonality. In the agricultural sphere dairying is a case in point, because, apart from the drying-off period, the demand for labour from milk and cheese producers was fairly steady throughout the year. From our existing records, however, there is no reason to suppose that dairying was that important in Chipping Campden..

It could also be argued that a better way of determining the economic structure of an area is to use occupational or industrial listings, possibly from censuses, wills or trade directories.

⁶ A. Kussmaul, *A General View of the Rural Economy of England, 1538-1840*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

However, listings have clear limitations. For example, the Campden Censuses for 1841 to 1911 suggests, unambiguously, that agriculture was the predominant industry in the parish. But with occupational descriptions as vague as ‘yeoman’ or ‘agricultural labourer’, it is not clear in what type of farming this was. The conclusion is that marriage seasonality patterns may well provide a useful, if not better, alternative.

Nevertheless, it would be reassuring if we could find some independent sources of evidence to verify the claim that grain production, albeit backed-up by animal rearing or fattening, was the mainstay of the local economy. Fortunately, such evidence is available. It is admittedly thin for the eighteenth century, and so far I have only found one item: the probate inventory for Mary Curtis, 5 June 1701. Her agricultural assets are listed below (Table 4). Thus her arable assets amounted to £76:00, Pastoral to £31:76. Horses, however, prove a complication because we do not know to what use they were put. It is possible that one or more of them were used a source of farm traction, to plough and harrow. This is conceivable as horses began to replace oxen as early as the twelfth or thirteen centuries.⁷ If this were the case, they should be regarded as an arable asset. Alternatively, if the horses were bred for sale, they should be regarded as a pastoral asset. It is also possible that they were kept for leisure purposes, in which case they should be regarded as a part of Ms Curtis’s household assets. Nevertheless, the inventory does not compromise the view that Campden was supported by mixed farming.

Item	Value	Value	Type of Asset
Standing Hay and Corn	60.0		Arable
Other Corn	2.0		Arable
Husbandry Implements	14.0		Arable
Sub-Total	76.0		Arable
28 Ewes and Lambs plus			
5 Barren sheep	12.5		Pastoral
6 Cows	18.3		Pastoral
2 Pigs	1.0		Pastoral
Sub-Total	31.8		Pastoral
4 Horses	21.3		?

Source: Gloucester Archives

Turning to the nineteenth century, we are fortunate to have a surviving land map from 1818 which again supports the position that Campden had a corn economy. Unfortunately, the map does not show how every field was used so it does not give a quantifiable picture of land use. Yet it does allow us to form a qualified impression. It shows that a considerable amount of the land was retained as pasture. Some was held as meadow; there was some timberland, and

⁷ J Langdon, ‘The economics of horses and oxen in medieval England’, *Agricultural History Review*, 30, 1982, pp31-46.

even some for dairying. However, crucial to our argument it also shows a significant amount was held as arable. Furthermore, it should be remembered that arable farming at this time had a greater demand for labour than pasture farming.⁸As a result, it is likely that for much of the year many of the farm workers were dependent on arable-related activities.

This provides us with another way of examining the proposition that this was a grain-producing parish. If grain production was labour-using, then grain producing areas would have had fairly high population densities. In 1831 the population density, measured as acres per head of population, of Chipping Campden was 2.3, a figure, incidentally, which is unlikely to have changed much until the late nineteenth century because the population of Campden, with the exception of the railway boom of the late 1840s/ early 1850s, remained quite stable. But did this make Campden a densely populated parish, a Sheep-Corn economy, to use the phrase from the period? To gauge whether this was the case, Table 5 lists the population density of the other Gloucestershire parishes that feature in the *Local Population Studies* CD. It shows that Campden's population density was very similar to those described as Sheep-Corn and considerably higher than those described as Open-Pasture. The main qualification to this are the two Open-Pasture parishes of Fairford and Westbury, both of which were atypical, having similar population densities to the Sheep-Corn parishes. However, this is readily explained by the presence of a considerable number of dairy farmers in these parishes, important because milk and cheese production was a labour-using activity. Stroud, with an exceptionally high population density for a Sheep-Corn economy, is another anomalous parish. Yet this can be explained by its exceptionally large manufacturing and handicraft sector.

⁸ In evidence to Royal Commission on the Agricultural Labourer it was estimated that labour costs per acre were 44 to 45s and for pasture 20s.

Table 5 Population Density by Parish Type

	Acres per head	Parish Type
Stroud	0.8	Sheep-Corn with manufacturing, retail and handicraft
Avening	2.8	Sheep-Corn
Cam	1.4	Sheep-Corn
Eastington	2.0	Sheep-Corn
Horsley	1.6	Sheep-Corn
Minchinhampton	1.5	Sheep-Corn
North Nibley	2.5	Sheep-Corn
Tetbury	1.8	Sheep-Corn
Winchcombe	2.9	Sheep-Corn
Wooton	1.3	Sheep-Corn
Bishop's Cleeve	5.7	Open-Pasture
Dymock	5.1	Open-Pasture
Fairford	2.7	Open-Pasture with dairying
Westbury	2.6	Open-Pasture with dairying

Source: CD Rom Local Population Studies

Finally, we can draw some inferences from the Registrar-General's 1883 Annual Report. This was unusual because it included quarterly marriage figures for two urban areas as well as five corn-growing counties. The results are shown Table 6. It shows that the urban areas - London and Lancashire - display only modest fluctuations in the frequency of marriage over the year, although there is evidence of an above average number of marriages in the final quarter. In the five corn-producing counties, by contrast, there are a low number of marriages in the first three quarters of the year but an exceptional number in the final quarter. It seems, moreover, that Chipping Campden's pattern of marriage has much more in-common with these corn-counties than the other areas.

Table 6 Quarterly Marriage Indexes 1872-81

	First	Second	Third	Fourth
All England & Wales	84	101	97	117
London	80	100	106	113
Lancashire	90	101	102	106
Five Corn-Growing Counties	74	87	87	151
Chipping Campden	39	93	92	174

Source: Rows 1-4 Registrar General's Annual Report, 1883

Grain and the Campden Historian The upshot is that there is plenty of evidence that Chipping Campden was a corn-producing parish. Furthermore, this has an obvious, though important, implication for the local historian, viz., that analyses of Chipping Campden's history – especially its economic and social developments - cannot ignore the potential role of farming and grain production. To conclude, let me give two examples. One conundrum for the Campden historian is to explain why the parish failed to grow over the industrial revolution period. Why, apart from some silk and cottage industry, it failed to develop much manufacturing industry. No doubt, a number of factors were responsible. However, there are reasons to believe that Chipping Campden was never very attractive to manufacturers because it did not offer the prospect of plentiful and cheap supplies labour, and this, in turn, was largely due to the importance of grain-production which ensured a high demand for labour throughout the year and made exceptional demands during the summer months.. It was surely no coincidence that when Strutt and Arkwright established their early factories they decided to locate in Derbyshire, Strutt in Belper, Arkwright in Cromford. Undoubtedly, one of the attractions of these places was their supplies of running water. However, another attraction was that in these parishes there was pastoral farming which ensured that manufacturers would face little competition for labour from agriculture. Obviously, Campden had neither attraction. Its supplies of energy were limited. But, because it was corn producer, it did not have plentiful supplies of cheap labour either.

Another illustration of the importance of arable farming is the fall in population that occurred in the last quarter of the century. Between the population censuses of 1871 and 1901, Campden's population declined by 23 per cent. When we look at the demographic reasons for this it is clear that out-migration was responsible. Prior to the 1870s the parish had been losing population – mainly men – due to migration, albeit at a fairly slow rate. This was mainly due to the industrial revolution which encouraged people to drift towards the high-wage manufacturing areas. However, after 1871 there was a precipitous increase in this migration. Indeed, our estimates suggest that outmigration more than outnumbered the population decline.⁹In other words, outmigration exceeded the growth of population from the excess of births over deaths

The cause of the migration was the so-called Great Agricultural Depression, which hit grain producing areas in particular. As one commentator put it 'complaints of the condition of the farming industry are common in all districts; but it appears to be most severe where corn is extensively grown.' Behind the problem, however, were a number of developments. The Corn Laws had been repealed in 1846. Furthermore, there had been a series of transport improvements, such as the development of the American railways and improvements in trans-Atlantic steam vessels, which opened-up the American prairies and led to the importation of cheap corn and meat. Thus between 1870 and 1900 domestic wheat prices fell

⁹ This can be estimated from the following identity:

Population₁₉₀₁ = Population₁₈₇₁ + (Births less Burials over the period) + Migrants over the period. The Population figures are available from the Censuses, and the Births and Deaths from the registers. This leaves migration to be calculated as the residual.

by 48 per cent and those for animal products by 38 per cent. This was good news for inhabitants of the cities. But less so for the inhabitants of Campden, where farmers were hit by a marked decline in profitability which forced them to speed up mechanisation and to lay-off labour.¹⁰

¹⁰ M. Turner, 'Output and Prices in UK Agriculture, 1867-1914, and the Great Agricultural Depression Reconsidered' *Agricultural History Review*, 1992, 40, pp 38-51.