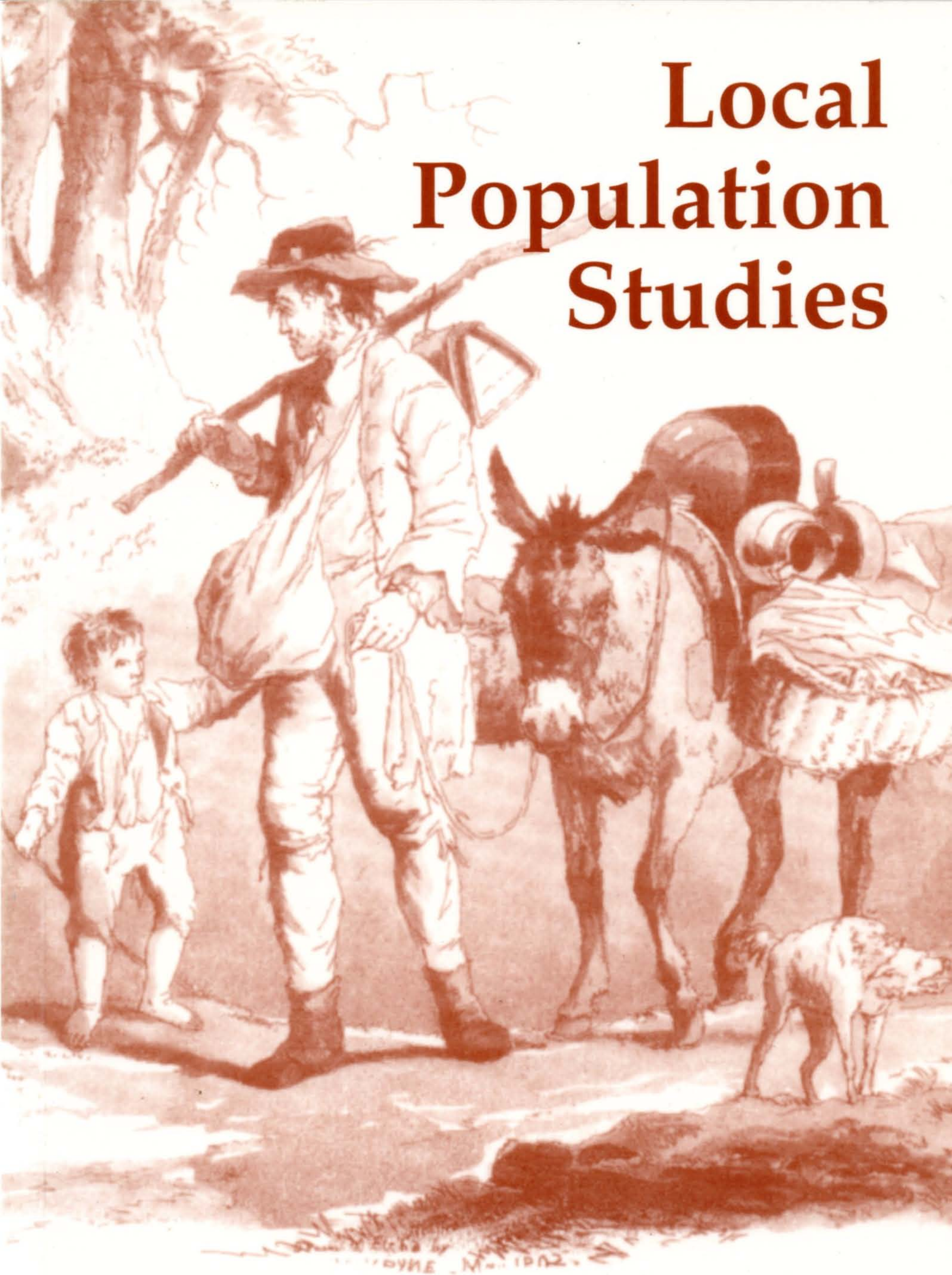
Local Population Studies



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HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND STRUCTURE IN BASSINGHAM, LINCOLNSHIRE, 1851–1901

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Introduction

The need for detailed studies of the household within particular local economic and social contexts has been stressed by Wall and demonstrated by, for example, the comparative work of Goose in Hertfordshire and Smith in Nottinghamshire.[1] The release of 1901 census data has given the opportunity to examine household structure over a fifty-year period; the 1851 census was the first to show the relationship of household members to the head, enabling family size and household structure to be analysed, and Anderson has suggested a period of at least 50 years for any study of gradual change in family behaviour.[2]

This study examines the households of a rural community in Lincolnshire in order to assess the effect of economic and social change in one particular place during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Three questions are posed. Did the size and structure of households change in response to changes in the size and composition of the population? Were the latter affected by changes in the local economy? How did Bassingham households compare with those of other communities?

Bassingham

Bassingham parish is situated in the Kesteven part of Lincolnshire, on the western edge of the county, nine miles S.S.W. of Lincoln and nine and a half miles N.E. of Newark, Nottinghamshire.[3] In the tithe award of 1851 it was assessed at 3,015 acres, and it encompassed a 'large and well-built' agricultural village, the inhabitants numbering 892 in 1851.[4] According to Mills' criteria Bassingham was an 'open' village of many small freeholders. The manor had been divided since the fourteenth century, and of the four major landowners in 1873, only two lived in the village.[5]

The population figures for Bassingham (Table 1) reflect changes that were taking place elsewhere in Britain during the second half of the nineteenth

Table 1 Population change, Bassingham, 1801–1901

Year	Total Inhabitants	% Change
1801	413	
1811	489	+18.4
1821	613	+25.4
1831	704	+14.8
1841	792	+12.5
1851	892	+12.6
1801–1851	+479	+116.0
1861	928	+4.0
1871	853	-8.1
1881	725	-15.0
1891	648	-10.6
1901	614	-5.2
1851–1901	-278	-31.2

Source: BPP 1852-3 **LXXXVI** *1851 Census. Population tables*, 64; CEBs, Bassingham, 1851–1901 (HO 107/2136; RG 9/2477;RG 10/3540 RG 11/3374; RG 12//2712; RG 13/3196).

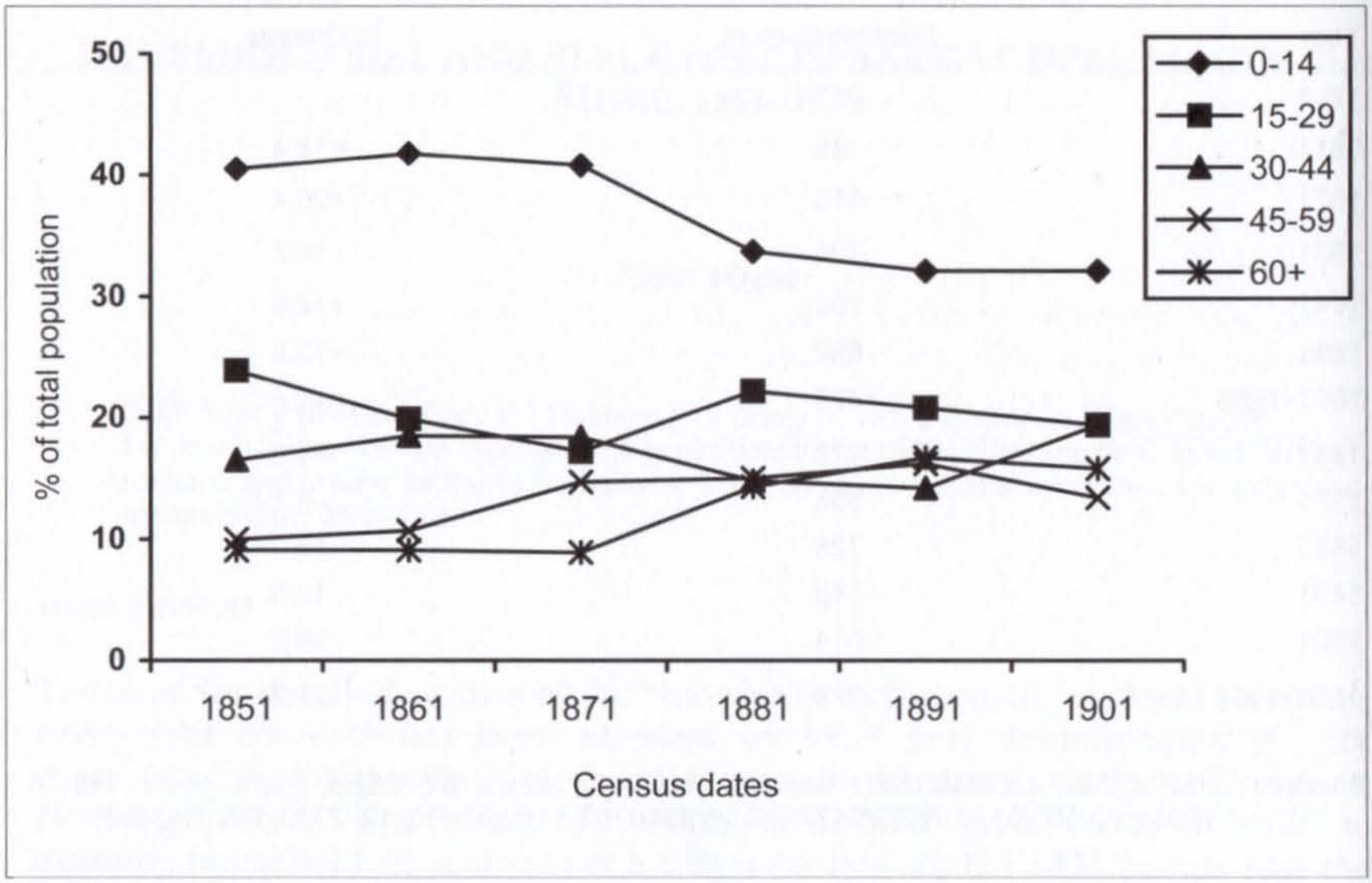
century, a time when the transition from a mainly agricultural, rural society to an industrial, urban society was completed.[6] Most rural populations reached their peak in 1851 or 1861 and then declined.[7] Young people in particular left the countryside to seek employment in the towns.[8]

The figures in Table 1 show that Bassingham's population doubled over the first half of the nineteenth century, peaked in 1861, and then went into notable decline. By 1901 it had fallen back to the 1821 level, having dropped by almost a third since 1851. The fall in the number of inhabitants was accompanied by changes in the age structure of the community as shown in Figure 1.

By 1901, children under the age of 15 formed 32.1 per cent of the population, a significantly smaller proportion compared to the 40.5 per cent they had comprised in 1851. Over the same period the proportion aged over 45 increased from 19.1 per cent to 29.2 per cent.

Throughout the 50 year study period, over half of all occupied males in Bassingham worked in agriculture: for example, 60.2 per cent in 1851, and 57.1 per cent in 1901. However, the village clearly suffered from the general agricultural depression of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when a combination of bad harvests and competition from abroad led to a decline in the agrarian economy. Not all areas suffered to the same extent, but arable areas such as Bassingham were particularly badly hit.[9] In 1902, *The Lincoln Gazette* described 'black clouds' over the village, due to 'the grievously stricken industry of agriculture'. Men had moved away to work in towns.[10] Between 1871 and 1901, Bassingham lost a third of its farm workers; the number falling

Figure 1 Age distribution, Bassingham, by selected age ranges, 1851–1901



Source: CEBs Bassingham, 1851–1901 (see Table 1).

from 125 to 84. These figures include living-in farm servants of whom there were 26 in 1871, but only 11 in 1901. However, the number of farmers decreased only slightly from 22 in 1871 to 20 in 1901.

Apart from agriculture, out of all occupied males in the parish in 1851, 65, or 24.9 per cent, worked in various crafts in 1851; by 1901 their numbers had been reduced by more than half to 30, just 15.9 per cent. The main female occupation was domestic service, which accounted for 53.8 per cent of occupied females in 1851, falling to 46.9 per cent in 1901.[11]

Sources and methodology

The census enumerator's books (CEBs) are the major source for this study.[12] The Bassingham CEBs from 1851–1901 are clearly written; the enumerators all lived in the village and were farmers or tradesmen, except for William Wilson, the doctor's assistant, in 1881, so it is reasonable to assume a fair degree of accuracy.[13] Household size was measured using Anderson's method, a new household commencing with every entry for 'head' in the enumeration column 'relation to head of household', although visitors have been excluded from the analysis.[14] Lodgers are included as part of the households in which they were enumerated, except in 1881 when they were enumerated separately and have been counted as six separate households. Household structure was coded according to Laslett's scheme, as described by Schürer and Mills.[15]

Comparative studies

In order to place Bassingham in a comparative context data have been drawn from published studies of communities representing a diversity of location, type, size, and economic structure. Goose's work on the Berkhamsted region of Hertfordshire in 1851 (which includes the rural community of Aldbury), Tranter's examination of Cardington in 1851 and Nair's study of Highley, Shropshire, 1851–81, have proven particularly useful.[16] In addition, Goose's study also provides comparisons with Laslett's analysis of 100 communities between 1574 and 1821, the work of Armstrong on York, and that of Anderson on Preston and rural Lancashire.[17] Of the latter studies, the Lancashire sample is most directly comparable with rural Bassingham; York and Preston were large urban communities. As well as these published studies, census data for Brough in Westmorland has been used to compare with Bassingham for the years 1851 and 1891.[18]

In 1851 the Berkhamsted region of Hertfordshire included two market towns, which accounted for over 50 per cent of the population; otherwise the area was a rural one. The parish of Aldbury was of comparable size to Bassingham at this time, with a population of 816.[19] The age structure of the region, and of Aldbury, was similar to that of Bassingham at mid-century, with children forming the largest group (36.8 per cent in the region, 39.5 per cent in Aldbury, 40.5 per cent in Bassingham). The proportion of persons aged 45 and over was also much the same as that of Bassingham (18.2 per cent in the region, 18.9 per cent in Aldbury, 19.1 per cent in Bassingham).[20] Although the predominant male occupation in Aldbury was agriculture, the proportion of the male workforce so employed was lower, at 46.4 per cent, than the 60.2 per cent found in Bassingham.[21] Far fewer females worked as domestic servants in Aldbury; only 9.3 per cent of all female workers compared with 53.8 per cent in Bassingham. Aldbury offered alternative employment in the straw plaiting industry.

Cardington was a rural parish in Bedfordshire with a population of 1,451 in 1851, much larger than that of Bassingham. However, the proportion of children, 39.4 per cent, was very close to that of Bassingham, while 17.5 per cent of the inhabitants were aged 45 or over, a slightly smaller proportion than that of Bassingham. As in the latter parish, farming was the predominant occupation in 1851: 11.3 per cent of households were headed by farmers, and almost 50 per cent by agricultural labourers, and around 20 per cent by tradesmen or those engaged in crafts. Domestic handicraft industries, mainly lace-making but with some straw plaiting, occupied almost 70 per cent of resident female offspring aged over 5 years.[22]

Nair's study of Highley, allows comparison across the 1851–1881 censuses. Highley, although basically a farming community, also experienced some degree of industrialisation which affected its economic and demographic structure. In 1851, with 359 inhabitants, it was less than half the size of Bassingham. However, an influx of railway navvies working on the Severn

Valley Railway increased the population by approximately ten per cent in 1861. By 1871 it had declined to about 300, but by 1881 it was back to the 1851 level; a renewal of coal mining had brought more men to the village.[23] These changes were reflected in its age structure. In 1881 a lower proportion of the inhabitants were aged 50 or above: approximately 16.5 per cent compared with approximately 19.3 per cent in 1851.[24] This was a reversal of the situation in Bassingham, where the proportion of persons in this age group increased from 15.3 per cent in 1851 to 23.6 per cent in 1881. Highley's occupational structure also changed. In 1851, 50.9 per cent of working men were occupied in agriculture; by 1881 this had fallen to 32.3 per cent, with almost 50 per cent now employed in coal mining or quarrying. As in Bassingham, the main female occupation was domestic service, which occupied 50.0 per cent and 45.6 per cent of working females in 1851 and 1881 respectively.[25]

In the mid-nineteenth century Brough was a declining Westmorland market town. In 1851 it was just over three-quarters the size of Bassingham, with a population of 695.[26] By 1891 this had fallen to 608, a decrease of 12.5 per cent, compared with 27.4 per cent in Bassingham over the same period. Unlike Bassingham, there was little change in the age structure of the community. In 1891 31.3 per cent of the population were children under the age of 15; they had comprised 32.5 per cent in 1851. There had been 24.6 of the population aged 45 and over in 1851, in 1891 the equivalent figure was 23.5 per cent. During the same period the proportion of children in Bassingham declined from 40.5 per cent to 32.1 per cent, while that of the group aged 45 and over increased from 19.1 per cent to 32.9 per cent.

Brough had a higher proportion of occupied males working in trades and crafts than Bassingham: in 1851, 43 per cent were in these occupations, falling to 36 per cent in 1891. A smaller proportion worked in agriculture, but nevertheless in 1851 farm work occupied one quarter and in 1891 30 per cent of working males.[27] In Brough, however, livestock breeding and rearing and dairy farming predominated, with arable crops being grown for fodder. The area was one of small family farms, where relatives did the work.[28] Thus, unlike arable Bassingham, Brough did not suffer unduly from the agricultural depression. As in Bassingham, the main female occupation was domestic service, employing 64.8 per cent of the female workforce in 1851 and 58.9 per cent in 1891.

Household size

Between 1851 and 1901, the average size of households in Bassingham fell, as shown in Table 2. The figures for 1851 and 1861 in Table 2 closely match Laslett's calculation of the national mean household size of 4.75 persons. They are similar to Goose's mean household size of 4.83 persons for the Berkhamsted region in 1851, and may be compared with the twelve groups of communities included in Mills' 'English Rural Norm' of 1851, also cited by Goose, where the average household size varied between 4.09 and 6.07 persons.[29]

In the Lincolnshire Wolds, Rawding found that larger villages had smaller households, as they tended to be better provided with accommodation, albeit

Table 2 Mean household size, Bassingham, 1851–1901

Year	Number of persons [a]	% change	Number of households	% change	Mean household size
1851	879		182		4.82
1861	917	+4.3	194	+6.6	4.72
1871	843	-8.1	202	+4.1	4.17
1881	711	-15.7	179 [b]	-11.4	3.97
1891	645	-9.3	161	-10.1	4.00
1901	605	-6.2	163	+1.2	3.71

Source: CEBs (see Table 1).

Note: a = excluding visitors
b = including six lodgers enumerated as separate households. If these were not counted as separate households then the mean household size would be 4.11 persons.

often of poor quality.[30] Bassingham was well provided with houses; even when the population was at its peak, in 1861, there were four uninhabited houses and one being built. By 1881, although 30 houses were unoccupied, the number of households had dropped to 179, 3 less than in 1851, which suggests that houses had been built expecting an expanding population but, instead, people had left the village. Between 1861 and 1871 the population decreased by 8.1 per cent, yet the number of households increased by 4.1 per cent, resulting in a fall in mean household size from 4.72 to 4.17 persons; this was well before 1891, when Laslett calculated that a national reduction in household size began.[31] In contrast, Highley, which saw an influx of workers, saw mean household size reach 5.0 persons in 1861 and peak at 5.2 persons in 1881.[32] Mean household size in Brough was, at 4.06 persons, smaller than in Bassingham in 1851, but by 1891 had increased very slightly to 4.07, just overtaking that of Bassingham which by then had declined to 4.00 persons.

A more detailed analysis shows the proportion of households of different sizes in Bassingham in 1851, and how it compared with other communities (Table 3). As in other communities in 1851 the moderate-size 3–6 person household was the most common domestic arrangement in Bassingham, accounting for more than half the households. Large households holding 7 or more persons formed a significant proportion of the total, only exceeded by the percentages found for Preston and the Lancashire rural sample. Bassingham conformed to the general pattern in 1851: rural communities usually had a greater proportion of large households than their urban counterparts, though there were exceptions. In the town of Preston, many households included resident kin and, as the figures for Aldbury and Brough show, not all rural communities contained a high proportion of large households.[33]

The first column of figures in Table 3 demonstrates that the proportion of single person households in Bassingham corresponds very closely to that found in York and in Laslett's 100 communities. It is a higher figure than was found for the 2,300 households in the Berkhamsted region, but smaller than

Table 3 Percentage of households of different sizes, Bassingham and other communities, 1851, plus 'Laslett's 100 communities' 1564–1821

Place	Single person %	Small 1–2 %	Moderate 3–6 %	Large 7+ %
Bassingham	5.5	19.8	54.4	25.8
Brough	11.8	27.7	58.8	13.5
Berkhamsted region	3.7	16.9	60.6	22.0
Aldbury	7.2	23.3	60.0	16.7
Lancashire rural sample	3.0	15.0	51.0	35.0
Preston	1.0	11.0	59.0	31.0
York	5.1	20.0	61.0	19.0
100 communities 1564-1821	5.7	20.0	59.0	22.0

Source: CEBs Bassingham (see Table 1) and Brough (HO 107/2439); Goose, *Berkhamsted*, 64–6.

that for the 180 households in Aldbury. Goose suggests that the percentages widowed in the population might be expected to have a bearing upon household size, but although Aldbury had a slightly above average proportion widowed (6.0 per cent compared with 5.7 per cent in the region as a whole), this did not provide a full explanation for differences across the region. In 1851, 11 per cent of Bassingham's adult population were widowed, yet there was a smaller proportion of single person households than in Aldbury.[34] Out of Bassingham's 53 widows and widowers, only 5 lived alone. Otherwise, families accommodated their widowed relatives, as Anderson found in Lancashire.[35]

Further analysis shows how household size in Bassingham changed over the period 1851–1901, and also how it changed in comparison with Brough over the decades between 1851 and 1891 (Table 4). By 1901 in Bassingham the number of households comprising a single person had increased from 10 in 1851 (5.5 per cent of the total) to 25 (15.3 per cent): a 150 per cent increase in 50 years. On closer examination, 3 of these households in 1851 were those of widows or widowers aged over 60; by 1901 this number had increased to 19. The increase in the number of single-person households would appear to be related to changes in the age structure of the community. People were living longer, and as younger men and women left the village to find work elsewhere, there were fewer families left to accommodate elderly relatives.[36]

While the proportion of moderate size households saw little change, there was a much greater change in the numbers of large and small households. In 1851, around a quarter of all households accommodated seven or more persons, while a smaller proportion, about 20 per cent, included only one or two persons. By 1901, the positions were reversed; over a third of households were now small, while the proportion of large households had fallen to just over 10 per cent. Brough had more small than large households in both 1851 and 1891; it also had a lower percentage of children than Bassingham in 1851, a proportion which had hardly changed by 1891, unlike Bassingham, where the

Table 4 Changes in household size: Bassingham 1851, 1891 and 1901, Brough, 1851 and 1891

Household size	1851		1891		1901
	Bassingham %	Brough %	Bassingham %	Brough %	Bassingham %
Single person	5.5	11.5	12.4	12.2	15.3
Small (1-2)	19.8	27.7	33.5	30.4	35.5
Moderate (3-6)	54.4	58.8	47.8	53.4	53.4
Large (7+)	25.8	13.5	18.6	16.2	11.0

Source: CEBs, Bassingham (see Table 1) and Brough (HO 107/2439 and RG 12/4324).

Table 5 Mean household size by occupation of head, Bassingham, 1851 and 1901

Occupation	1851			1901		
	No. of households	No. of persons	Mean household size	No. of households	No. of persons	Mean household size
Professional	5	30	6.00	7	30	4.29
Farmers	22	134	6.10	21	110	5.23
Craftsmen	37	183	4.95	18	64	3.56
Tradesmen	2	19	9.50[b]	5	30	6.00
Labourers[a]	73	360	4.93	47	178	3.79
Others	43	153	3.56	65	193	2.97
Total	182	879	4.82	163	605	3.71

Source: CEBs Bassingham 1851 and 1901 (see Table 1).

Notes: a = mainly agricultural labourers: 68 in 1851, 43 in 1901
b = the household of William Storr, grocer and draper, had fourteen inhabitants.

percentage dropped. This suggests that a reduction in the number of children was a significant contributory factor affecting household size in Bassingham.

Other studies have demonstrated a relationship between the occupation of the household head and the size of the household. Laslett found that in the 100 communities 1574–1821 the higher socio-economic groups comprising clergy, yeomen and husbandmen all had households of above the mean household size of 4.75 persons; tradesmen and craftsmen had an average household size which lay just below the mean, while labourers had the smallest households.[37] Goose found that in the Berkhamsted region in 1851 farmers had a mean household size of 7.07 persons, while that of agricultural labourers was 4.99. In Cardington Tranter found that farmers headed the largest households, with an average size of 6.38 persons , followed by tradesmen (5.96), craftsmen (4.68) and labourers (4.92).[38] Table 5 shows the household sizes of different occupational groups in Bassingham in both 1851 and 1901.

Table 6 Components of the household by occupation of household head, Bassingham, 1851

Occupation	No. of house-holds	Mean number per household					
		Children [a]	Adult off-spring [b]	Servants	Apprentices	Lodgers	Total
Professional	5	2.0	1.2	1.2	0.2	0.0	4.6
Farmers	22	1.5	1.0	1.6	0.0	0.1	4.2
Craftsmen	37	1.6	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.6
Tradesmen [c]	2	4.0	0.0	1.5	1.5	0.0	7.0
Labourers [d]	73	2.5	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.1	3.0

Source: CEBs Bassingham 1851 (see Table 1).

Note: a = children are defined as those aged less than 15 years
b= adult offspring are defined as resident children aged 15 years or over
c = the household of William Storr included five children, three apprentices and three servants
d = as Table 5, note a.

The 1851 figures are similar to Laslett's, Goose's and Tranter's results. Household size was highest among professional people and farmers (6.00 persons) and lowest among labourers (4.93) and craftsmen (4.95).[39] In 1901 the pattern was similar, although generally households were smaller. The smallest households still belonged to labourers, craftsmen and those in 'other' occupations, at 3.79, 3.56 and 2.97 persons respectively.

Other studies have found that household size was affected by the presence of servants, children, and apprentices.[40] As Table 6 shows, it was the presence of servants and adult offspring which accounted for the larger households of farmers and professional people in 1851, although labourers had a higher average number of children.

Thomas Johnson, the village doctor, headed a household of ten: his wife and four children, an apprentice, a cook, a housemaid, and a thirteen-year old nursemaid. The household of Daniel Wayland, curate, included four unmarried adult daughters and three servants: a cook, housemaid, and thirteen-year old groom boy. The two largest farms in the village (400 and 300 acres) had households of eleven and ten persons respectively: Charles Marfleet accommodated his wife and five children, a cook, two housemaids and a groom/gardener, while Robert Morley of Bassingham House had a wife and two children, three house servants and three farm servants. Yet among the labourers there were also some very large households: for example, William Reynolds' household of eleven included six children and three farm servants. But the largest household in the village was that of William Storr, grocer and draper. As well as William and his wife Mary, this comprised five children under the age of 12, their 17-year old teacher Ruth Bainbridge, three apprentices, a nursemaid, a cook and a groom-cum-porter.

Table 7 Components of the household by occupation of household head, Bassingham, 1901

Occupation	No. of house-holds	Mean number per household					
		Children [a]	Adult off-spring [b]	Servants	Apprentices	Lodgers	Total
Professional	7	0.7	0.6	1.1	0.0	0.1	2.5
Farmers	21	1.6	0.5	0.9	0.0	0.0	3.0
Craftsmen	18	0.8	0.7	0.0	0.1	0.1	1.7
Tradesmen	5	1.8	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.2	4.2
Labourers [c]	47	1.4	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	1.8

Source: CEBs, Bassingham, 1901 (see Table 1).

Notes: a and b = as Table 6
c = as Table 5, note a.

In 1901, the pattern was similar, although generally households were smaller, the largest households being those of tradesmen, farmers and professional persons. Apart from farmers' households, the average number of children per household had fallen, accounting for the decrease in average household size. As in 1851, it was the presence of servants which accounted for the larger households of farmers and professional persons, although the average for farmers was lower than in 1851. Servants and apprentices increased the size of tradesmen's households. Both professional and farmers' households had fewer co-resident adult offspring (Table 7).

Although the overall average household size had fallen, excluding craftsmen, there were still examples of large households in every section of the community. John Morshead, draper and baker, headed a household of eight, comprising his wife, four apprentices, a cook and a housemaid. Farm foreman Arthur Willis accommodated twelve persons: his wife and seven children, plus three farm servants. The rector, a widower, headed a household of eight: two unmarried daughters, a daughter-in-law, two grandsons, a cook and two housemaids. Two agricultural labourers headed households of ten: Frank Porlas housed a wife and eight children, while John Wallace had his wife and six children plus her parents.

The households of Brough present a different picture. Compared with Bassingham, there was less disparity between the average household size of different occupational groups: in 1851 farmers had the largest households (4.92 persons as opposed to 6.10 in Bassingham), while labourers' households were not much smaller (4.43 persons). By 1891, the households of craftsmen were slightly larger than those of the farmers (4.94 persons compared with 4.64), whereas in Bassingham the size of craftsmen's households had fallen to 3.81 persons, and farmers continued to head the largest households with 5.30 persons on average. The households of professionals were much smaller than those of Bassingham (3.80 persons in 1851 and 2.50 in 1891, compared with

Table 8 Household composition, Bassingham, 1851 and 1901

	1851		1901	
	No.	%	No.	%
Solitaries [a]	11	6.0	30	18.4
No conjugal family	4	2.2	7	4.3
Simple family households [b]	29	15.9	22	13.4
Simple family households [c]	108	59.3	83	51.0
Extended family households	28	15.4	20	12.3
Multiple family households	1	0.5	0	0.0
Indeterminate[d]	1	0.5	1	0.6
Total	182	99.8	163	100.0

Source: CEBs Bassingham 1851–1901 (see Table 1).

Notes: a = single or widowed persons living alone or with a servant or lodger; hence totals are higher than those in Table 4.
b = married couple alone
c = married couple, widowed or single parent with never-married child(ren)
d = married man living alone included as single person household in Table 3.

6.00 and 4.40 in Bassingham). Both farmers and professionals in Brough had fewer resident servants than their counterparts in Bassingham: farmers had an average of 0.5 servants and professionals 0.6 servants in 1851 compared with 1.2 and 1.6 respectively in Bassingham. In 1891 the same two groups had 0.5 and 0 servants on average in Brough, whereas in Bassingham in 1901 professionals retained 1.1 servants and farmers 0.9 servants on average. These Brough households had a similar average number of children and adult offspring to those in Bassingham, thus suggesting that the difference in household size can be attributed to the number of servants. Apart from two large farms of over 300 acres, the farms in Brough were below 100 acres, and family members apparently did the work. Although the majority of Bassingham farms were also small (as in Brough, only two were over 300 acres in 1851) Bassingham farmers accommodated more servants; the arable farming there requiring more labour than the livestock farming of Brough.

Household structure

Laslett found that the most common household unit was the nuclear family, and this was the case in Bassingham, as Table 8 shows.[41] The nuclear family predominated here throughout the period, as it did in Highley between 1851 and 1881, and in the Berkhamsted region in 1851, where most of the population lived in nuclear families of moderate size.[42] In Bassingham, the proportion of simple family households declined, from 75.3 per cent in 1851 to 64.4 per cent in 1901; a higher proportion of the community were now living alone. Migration of young people from the village meant that there were fewer families with children. In 1851 120 households (66 per cent) contained children under the age of 15; by 1901 this had fallen to 87 (53.4 per cent). The number of households with children fell by 27.5 per cent yet the total number of house-

Table 9 Average number of offspring per household[a], Bassingham and Cardington, 1851

Occupation	Bassingham			Cardington		
	No. of households	No. of offspring[b]	No. per household	No. of households	No. of offspring[b]	No. per household
Farmers	22	50	2.27	26	90	3.46
Others	155	356	2.30	243	680	2.80
Total	177	406	2.29	269	770	2.86

Source: CEB Bassingham, 1851 (see Table 1); Tranter, 'Bedfordshire parish', p.94.

Note: a = Only households headed by married or widowed persons are included in this table.
b = 'offspring' include both adults and children.

holds fell by only 10 per cent, but the number and proportion of households with young people aged 15–17 hardly changed; from 34 (18.7 per cent) in 1851, to 32 (19.6 per cent) in 1901.[43] Tranter found that in Cardington in 1851 the numbers of resident offspring, including adults, in a household varied according to the socio-economic status of the head; the group with the largest households, the farmers, had more offspring living with them than the rest of the community. However, this was not the case in Bassingham, where the figure for farmers was virtually the same as others in the community (Table 9). But Bassingham farmers had twice as many adult offspring living with them as did other sections of the community, averaging one per household, presumably because they worked on family farms.

It should be noted that not all 'offspring' in the census were blood relations of the adults they lived with. In Highley, a number of families contained children who were in fact stepchildren of one of the couple, as a result of re-marriage or illegitimacy.[44] And in Bassingham, eleven-year old John Wilkinson, living with George and Sarah Weightman and their other children Hugh and Mary Weightman in 1851, was probably the illegitimate son of Sarah, who was Sarah Wilkinson before her marriage in 1841.[45] In 1881, the four children with the surname Norton living with John and Jemima Graves were recorded in the census as his stepchildren.[46]

Apart from one example in 1851, that of Hugh Weightman, a farmer whose son and family shared his accommodation, there were no households where families combined, but as Table 8 showed, extended family households, containing one or more relatives beyond the conjugal family unit, formed a significant part of the community. Brough had a similar proportion of extended family households in 1851 (14.7 per cent compared with Bassingham's 15.4 per cent), with hardly any change in 1891 (14.9 per cent, the same as Bassingham). Both communities conformed to the general pattern of household structure as shown in the nineteenth century CEBs, where extended family households were not unusual.[47] As there was no shortage of houses in either place, these households must have accommodated relatives for economic or practical reasons. Thus in Bassingham, in 1851, we find nineteen year-old

Henry Baguely living and working with his uncle, William Baguely, a market gardener; Ruth Rogers kept house for her widowed farmer brother, George. Similarly, in 1901, William Hewson, a 65 year-old farmer, accommodated his grand-daughter and her husband, using family labour to help on the farm; draper Robert Wilson's niece Emily worked in the shop and lived with his family.

When all households which included non-nuclear relatives are counted (in Table 8, extended family, multiple family and no conjugal family households) 18.1 per cent of households in Bassingham in 1851 contained additional relatives, only a slightly lower percentage than the country as a whole (20.2 per cent).[48] Other communities had a higher proportion of households with co-resident kin; 30.5 per cent in Highley, and around 25 per cent in the Berkhamsted region, rural Lancashire, and Brough.[49] In Highley, there was more pressure on accommodation than in Bassingham, and Anderson found a particularly strong commitment to family relationships in Lancashire: both factors would contribute to a higher proportion of households with kin. By 1901, 16.6 per cent of Bassingham households still accommodated relatives, but the average number per household had fallen. In 1851 it was 0.31, close to Walls' figure of 0.28 for the East Midlands; by 1901 it had dropped to 0.20.[50] Overall, the number of co-resident kin in Bassingham had declined by 41 per cent, although the number of households had fallen by only 10 per cent. In 1851, Brough had more relatives per household than Bassingham, averaging 0.44; generally, households in the Northern region averaged a higher number of relatives, 0.37, than those in the East Midlands.[51] As in Bassingham, the average number per household in Brough fell; by 1891 it was 0.34; again, the total number of households fell to a lesser degree (12.9 per cent), than the number of co-resident kin (32.4 per cent), leading to a lower average per household.

A wide range of relatives were housed in Bassingham; for example, of the 28 extended households in 1851, 13 contained grandchildren without parents, seven included parents or parents-in-law, four included sisters or sisters-in-law, two included brothers, and four included nieces or nephews. A similar range of relatives was accommodated in 1901, when ten households contained grandchildren without parents, six included parents or parents-in-law, one held an unmarried sister-in-law, and four housed nieces or nephews. George and Sarah Weightman provided a home for the illegitimate children of their daughter Mary; three year old Charles in 1871, and ten year old Florence in 1891, when her mother worked as a cook at Uppingham School.[52] In 1851, agricultural labourer John Donson accommodated his 72 year old pauper mother-in-law along with his wife and three children; similarly, in 1901, cottager John Hart's household included his 80 year old widowed mother, as well as his wife and five children. Clearly, there was a continued commitment to family relationships in Bassingham; as Nair found in Highley, relatives took in both the old and the young when necessary.[53]

The proportion of Bassingham households with lodgers in 1851 was, at 7.7 per cent, (Table 10), lower than the approximately 10 per cent found by Goose in

Table 10 Households with servants [a] and lodgers, Bassingham, 1851 and 1901

	1851		1901	
	No.	%	No.	%
Lodgers or boarders	14	7.7	9 [e]	5.5
Servants (all) [b]	34	18.7	24	14.7
Servants (farm)[c]	14	7.7	8	4.9
Servants (domestic)[d]	26	14.3	18	11.0

Source: CEBs Bassingham, 1851–1901 (see Table 1)

Notes: a = male and female servants
b = households which included farm or domestic servants, or both
c = household which included farm servants
d = household which included domestic servants
e = all enumerated as boarders.

the Berkhamsted region at the same date. However, as Goose indicates, lodgers were more prominent in the town than in the countryside. In Aldbury parish only 1.8 per cent of the population were lodgers; in Tring, a market town, 5.5 per cent.[54] Bassingham had 2.2 per cent of its population living as lodgers in 1851, a figure which had fallen to 1.5 per cent by 1901. Brough had a similar proportion of households with lodgers (7.6 per cent) as Bassingham in 1851, and there was little change in 1891 (7.4 per cent compared to 6.8 per cent in Bassingham). It should be noted that in 1851 no distinction was made in the census returns between the different types of lodger, but from 1861 the term 'boarder' was introduced in an attempt to distinguish between lodgers, who lived separately from the rest of the household, and those who boarded with the family; finally in 1901 lodgers were enumerated as separate households.[55] In Bassingham the number of households with lodgers fell from 14 in 1851 to 9 (enumerated as boarders) in 1901, perhaps suggesting fewer employment opportunities, as Nair has shown that in times of increased employment the number of lodgers rose. In 1861 and 1881 around 30 per cent of the households in Highley included non-kin residents.[56] Bassingham contained 14 households with lodgers in 1851, but only half of the lodgers were working men, the latter comprising five agricultural workers, two labourers, and two craftsmen.

In 1901 nine households contained boarders including two agricultural labourers, one police constable, one house painter, one foundry worker, one journeyman baker, one retired shoemaker, one female dressmaker and one female Salvation Army officer. The number of working male lodgers or boarders therefore remained similar (nine in 1851, seven in 1901), but there was a change in their composition, with fewer agricultural workers and a broader range of occupations by the beginning of the twentieth century.

The 18.7 per cent of Bassingham households which contained servants in 1851 (Table 10), was greater than the proportion of similar households found by Goose in the Berkhamsted region (10.0 per cent) or that found by Tranter in Cardington (12.7 per cent).[57] Bassingham offered little female employment apart from domestic service, which may explain why more households there had servants. The Berkhamsted region and Cardington both offered straw

Table 11 Households with servants [a] by household head, Bassingham, 1851 and 1901

Occupation of head	1851 No. of households	1851 No. with servants	1851 % with servants	1901 No. of households	1901 No. with servants	1901 % with servants
Professional	5	3	60.0	7	5	71.4
Farmer [b]	22	16	72.7	26	13	50.0
Trade/craft	39	7	17.7	23	4	22.2
Labourer	73	4	5.5	51	1	2.0
Other	43	4	9.3	61	1	1.6
Total	182	34	18.7	163	24	14.7

Source: CEBs Bassingham 1851, 1901 (see Table 1).

Note: a = both male and female servants are included
b = in 1901 farmers include three foremen.

plaiting as an alternative, plus Cardington also had lace-making.[58] But both Goose and Tranter's studies show that the majority of households with servants were those of farmers, and this was also the case in Bassingham (Table 11).[59]

Between 1851 and 1901, the number of households with servants fell from 34 (18.7 per cent of all households) to 24 (14.7 per cent) in Bassingham, contributing to the overall reduction in household size. The majority of households with servants were still headed by farmers, but a smaller proportion of farming households now had servants. The number of living-in farm servants had almost halved, from 21 in 1851, to 11 in 1901. This reflected changes taking place elsewhere. For example, between 1851 and 1881, the number of farm servants halved in Highley, farm service being in decline by the mid-nineteenth century.[60] In Bassingham, the fall in the number of living-in farm servants can also be attributed to the effect of agricultural depression; overall the number of farm workers fell by almost a third. The number of living-in domestic servants also declined. In 1851, 35 females, including seven children under the age of 15, worked as living-in domestic servants; by 1901, the number had dropped by almost a third to 24, of whom five were children. In general, such work was undertaken by young, single women; in Bassingham, the number of single women aged between 15 and 29 declined by 29 per cent between 1851 and 1901. Here, as was generally the case in late nineteenth-century England, domestic service was already in decline.[61]

Brough had a smaller proportion of households with servants, 15.3 per cent in 1851 and 10.1 per cent in 1891; the family-based farming economy meant that fewer farmers employed resident servants; 3 out of 13 in 1851, 8 out of 22 in 1891. Over the four decades the number of living-in farm servants dropped from 6 to 3, while that of resident female domestic servants went down from 26 to 17. Unlike Bassingham, there was no decrease in the number of young, single women, but here too, a decade earlier, domestic service was in decline, although as in Bassingham there was little alternative employment.

Table 12 Average number of children, servants, lodgers[a] and kin[b] per household, Bassingham, 1851 and 1901

	1851		1901	
	Total no.	Average per household	Total no.	Average per household
Children	362	2.0	197	1.2
Servants	49	0.3	30	0.2
Lodgers [a]	14	0.1	9	0.1
Kin [b]	56	0.3	33	0.2

Source: CEBs Bassingham (see Table 1).

Note: a = includes boarders
b = excludes nuclear family.

Conclusion

This study has shown how particular local economic and social circumstances influenced the size and structure of households in Bassingham during the second half of the nineteenth century. Agricultural depression, leading to a much-reduced population and a change in demographic composition, clearly had its effect. Average household size declined from 4.8 to 3.7 persons, and although more than 50 per cent of households were still of moderate size, there was a significant increase in the proportion of small and one person households, associated with the changing age structure of the community. Fewer households had children, and there were more older people. The number of large households fell. Fewer households had servants; the decline in agriculture had reduced the need for resident farm servants. Fewer families had co-resident kin; at no time during the study period was there an increase in their number which might suggest relatives combining households in response to economic difficulties, as Howlett and Brayshay have shown for some west country communities.[62] Table 12 shows how these changes affected household size and composition. As employment opportunities in Bassingham were limited, it did not attract many potential lodgers from outside, and therefore this group had no significant effect on household size.

Comparisons with other studies have shown that the households of Bassingham corresponded in many ways to those of other communities. The mean household size of 4.8 in 1851 was close to that found in the Berkhamsted region and elsewhere; the majority of households were of moderate size, and the nuclear family predominated. The largest households, expanded by offspring and servants, were mainly those of farmers and professional persons. But the comparisons have also revealed differences and variations which can be attributed to particular local circumstances. Bassingham had a higher proportion of simple family households and a smaller proportion of households with co-resident kin than Highley, where there was more pressure on housing accommodation. Mean household size became smaller in Bassingham,

but larger in Highley in 1861 and 1881, as a result of a different local economy, industrialisation leading to an influx of workers and a rise in the number of lodgers. The proportion of households with lodgers in Bassingham was also smaller than that found overall for the Berkhamsted region, which included two towns, in 1851; generally, lodgers were less common in the countryside. But a higher proportion of Bassingham households had servants than either the Berkhamsted region or Cardington, perhaps because both these places offered females alternative employment to domestic service.

The comparison with Brough, although limited to the period up to 1891, has demonstrated the distinctive experience of two rural communities in different parts of England, and confirms that the changes which took place in the size and structure of households in Bassingham can be attributed to a particular economic and social environment. In Brough, a different type of farming meant a viable and successful local economy; although the population declined, this was not to the same extent as in Bassingham, and did not result in a change in age structure. Thus the decline in mean household size, which had begun in Bassingham by 1861, had not appeared in Brough by 1891, and so the latter did not experience the same changes in the proportions of large and small households. Finally, the family-based, less labour-intensive farming economy in Westmorland meant that farmers' households had fewer servants.

In summary, this study has shown that while Bassingham households shared some characteristics with those of the communities with which it has been compared, there were differences which can be ascribed to its particular local economic and social environment. It is hoped that the value of detailed studies of this kind, which include comparisons with other communities, has been confirmed.

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NOTES

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4. W. White, *Directory of Lincolnshire* (Sheffield, 1842), 600; CEB Bassingham, 1851. There is some confusion over the extent of the parish. The census reports 1851–1881 state that Bassingham parish was 1,940 acres in extent; yet the census reports of 1891 and 1901 give an acreage of 3,057, close to the 1851 tithe award assessment. As far as can be discovered no boundary change took place.

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10. *The Lincoln Gazette*, 6 September, 1902, 6.
11. The figures for domestic service exclude those described in the census as housekeepers who were related to the household head.
12. The National Archives, CEBs, Bassingham, 1851–1901 (see Table 1).
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14. M. Anderson, 'Standard tabulation procedures for the CEBs 1851–1891', in E.A. Wrigley ed., *Nineteenth-century society* (Cambridge, 1972), 140–2. The average number of visitors was ten.
15. K. Schürer and D.R. Mills, 'Family and household structure', in D.R. Mills and K. Schürer eds, *Local communities in the Victorian census enumerators' books* (Oxford, 1996), 285.
16. Goose, *Berkhamsted*; N.L. Tranter, 'The social structure in a Bedfordshire parish in the mid-nineteenth century', *International Review of Social History*, **18** (1973), 90–106; G. Nair, *Highley*, (Oxford, 1988).
17. Goose, *Berkhamsted*, 62.
18. CEBs Brough, 1851 and 1891: H0 107/2439; RG 12/4324. Transcription and database provided by M.E. Shepherd.
19. Goose, *Berkhamsted*, 229–49; includes 96 inhabitants of the village of Pendley.
20. Goose, *Berkhamsted*, 27.
21. Goose, *Berkhamsted*, 30.
22. Tranter, 'Bedfordshire parish', 105–6.
23. Nair, *Highley*, 169, 189.
24. Nair, *Highley*, 198, 200. Approximate percentages calculated from Figures 8.7 and 8.9.
25. Nair, *Highley*, 169, 172.
26. M.E. Shepherd, *From Hellgill to Bridge End*, (Hatfield, 2003), 48–9.
27. Shepherd, *Hellgill*, 55.
28. Shepherd, *Hellgill*, 134–5, 161, 138.
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35. Anderson, *Family structure*, 84.
36. Lawton, 'Population', 20.
37. Laslett, 'Household size', 154.
38. Goose, *Berkhamsted*, 67–8; Tranter, 'Bedfordshire parish', 93.
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42. Nair, *Highley*, 202; Goose, *Berkhamsted*, 63.

43. CEBs, Bassingham, 1851, 1901.
44. Nair, *Highley*, 204.
45. CEB, Bassingham, 1851; L.E. Hunt, *Weightman family history* (unpublished). John Wilkinson is described as 'son-in-law', a term often used to mean 'stepson' in the nineteenth century. See Higgs, *Making sense*, 65.
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49. Nair, *Highley*, 203; Goose, *Berkhamsted*, 71; Anderson, *Family structure*, 84.
50. Wall, 'Regional and temporal variations', 91. The calculation for Bassingham includes all relatives apart from those in the simple family unit of parents and children.
51. Wall, 'Regional and temporal variations', 91.
52. CEBs Bassingham, 1851, 1861, 1901; Hunt, *Weightman family history.*
53. Nair, *Highley*, 204–5.
54. Goose, *Berkhamsted*, 70, 76.
55. Higgs, *Making sense*, 58–60.
56. Nair, *Highley*, 203–4.
57. Goose, *Berkhamsted*, 76; Tranter, 'Bedfordshire parish', 97.
58. Goose, *Berkhamsted*, 37; Tranter, 'Bedfordshire parish', 106.
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