

Aspects of
Kimpton Life
drawn
from the censuses
1841 –1901

Kimpton History Group

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Foreword

Kimpton History Group was formally constituted in 2002 and we now have an active membership of over 50. We have a programme of events which include winter talks and summer visits. From the beginning, our village May Festival has been an opportunity to mount an exhibition of local history material which members have researched and put together in a largely visual form. This publication stemmed from such a group project.

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Disclaimer: We apologise if we have inadvertently made any mistakes. Some of the writing in the censuses is hard to decipher!



Introduction

Censuses provide fascinating and invaluable information about a town, village or hamlet. The information on them is concise but densely packed and sometimes hard to decipher.

We had the idea though that it would be interesting to use the sequence of censuses from 1841 – 1901 to chart the occupations of the people of Kimpton. Accordingly, over the course of a year from Oct 05 to Oct 06, four members of the History Group met regularly to analyse the occupations of the Village / parish since 1841.

The exact route which was taken by the enumerators to record the census information was often very unclear with only a few houses being identified by name. Fairly quickly however we became aware that Church Lane, The Green and Church End were clearly identified on each census and so we decided that in addition to our main study we would also do a focussed study of this specific area of the Village.

We are still unclear as to the exact position of Church End which we have not been able to find on any of the old maps. We deduce that it is probably the collection of cottages which face the Church because in the 1851 census 33 houses are listed as being in Church End and only 5 on Church lane. It is probable that the name 'Church End' applied to different houses for different enumerators in different decades because by 1861 there were 24 houses listed as Church End and 18 on Church lane.

Of the houses still extant on the Green and Church lane most were not there before the 1880s leading to speculations to what the look of the Green and Church Lane was like prior to the new build.

The first official census was put together in 1841 and from then a census was taken of everyone living in England and Wales, every ten years. As there has to be 100 years between the current year and the publishing of a census, we will be able to examine the next census to be released (1911) in the year 2011.



An aerial photograph of the Parish Church

The History of taking a Census

The idea of counting the population and recording the findings is not a recent idea. According to St Luke, Caesar Augustus ordered a Roman census to be taken and that was the reason why Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem before Jesus was born.

In 1086 William the Conqueror, shortly after seizing the English throne, demanded that the people of his new land should be counted for taxation and military purposes and the findings to be recorded in what became known as the Domesday Book. Centuries later, it was partly as a result of fear of another French invasion, under Napoleon, which caused the government to think about counting the population in 1801. It wanted to know how many people needed to be fed and how many were still working the land. Food shortages were a real threat because of a series of bad harvests and large numbers of agricultural workers were serving in the militia and therefore unable to work the land.

The first British census of more modern times was taken on March 10th 1801 and was carried out by parish officials. It was not until 1841 that the government ordered that official enumerators should be employed to survey the entire country. 35,000 male enumerators were supplied with pencils and recorded 16 million people on the night of June 6/7. The criteria for an enumerator was that he “should not be infirm, he must be temperate, orderly and respectable and should conduct himself with strict propriety.”¹

¹ www.statistics.gov.uk 200 years of the Census 2001

The Kimpton censuses

For the first three censuses taken 1841 - 1861 Kimpton was divided into 3 Enumerator districts; roughly speaking: The farms to the north and west of the village and Peter's Green; The High Street and farms to the east; Church Lane, Church End and the Green. In 1871 this demarcation changed and the districts were divided into 2 rather than 3.

As only a few houses are named it is difficult to tell exactly which route the enumerator took and which house was which but the direction can be deduced through the few known houses identified.

From the beginning however, Church Lane, Church End and the Green were identified which led to our decision to do a special study of this key area of the Village.

Specific details of the censuses.

A census has been taken every 10 years since 1841 except for 1941 when we were at war.

1841

Taken on the night of June 6/7^h 1841 Signed June 10th
Exact ages were only required for children under 16 and so adult ages were rounded down to the nearest 5 years. People were required to say whether they were still living in the county in which they were born and whether anyone was foreign born.

Address	HOUSES	NAMES of each Person who abode therein the preceding Night.	AGE and SEX		PROFESSION, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT, or of INDEPENDENT MEANS.	Where Born	
			Males	Females		Whether Born in same County	Whether Born in Scotland, Ireland, or Foreign Part
Village Street	1	John Bailey	35		Grocer	Yes	
		Mary Ann do		50		Yes	
		Charles do	7			Yes	
		George do	11			Yes	
		Alfred do	1			Yes	

Example from the 1841 Kimpton census

Observations from the Kimpton census:

Kimpton population for each enumeration area: 255, 365, 325

Total = 945

People with occupations listed = 304. (Of these many were simply listed as male or female servant.)

Only Church Lane, Church End and The Green were clearly identified.

1851

Taken on the night March 30/31st 1851

There were a number of changes to the questions asked on this census. The government wanted to know how many households there were rather than the number of actual houses. The reason for this was that more than one household might live in a house especially in poor areas. A line was drawn under every household.

People were required to state the parish in which they were born, declare their marital status and relationship to the head of the household. A question was also asked about whether a person was blind, deaf or dumb.

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Parish or Township of Kimpton		Ecclesiastical District of		City or Borough of		Town of		Village of	
House Number	Name of Street, Place, or Road, and Name or No. of House	Name and Surname of each Person who abode in the house, on the Night of the 30th March, 1851		Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of Males Females	Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where born	
		Male	Female					Parish or Township	County
1	Kimpton	William Tooley		Head	Married	21	Ag Lab	Here	Kimpton
		Isabella	do	Wife	Married	20		do	St. Paul's
		Charles	do	Son	Single	1		do	Kimpton
2	Church End	Thomas Day		Head	Married	28	Ag Lab	Here	do
		Harriet Day	do	Wife	Married	24		do	do
		Frederick Day	do	Son	Single	5	Scholar	do	do
		Arthur	do	Son	Single	3		do	do
		Adrian Burston	do	Son-in-law	Single	45	Ag Lab	do	do
3	Church End	Edward Day		Head	Married	35	Schoolmaster	Here	Kimpton
		Ann	do	Wife	Married	37		do	do
		Charles	do	Son	Single	11	Scholar	do	do

An example from the 1851 Kimpton census showing the extra questions asked.

Observations from the Kimpton 1851 census:

Population in Kimpton: 342, 325, 325 = 992

Many more professions / occupations were listed.

More definition of occupation was given (not just male or female servant)

1st mention of the Navy, a Historical engraver, a gentleman, and a governess in Kimpton

To be a wife of a key occupation was listed eg. Farmer's wife.

Exact ages were specified.

There were 33 houses in Church End, 5? in Church Lane and 14 on the Green.(total 52)

The 16 year old son of the Vicar, Frederick Sullivan is shown as a midshipman in the Royal Navy. The vicar and his wife had a lady's maid, a cook, a kitchen maid, a laundry maid, a housemaid, a butler, a groom, a helper and a dressmaker to look after them at the Vicarage (now the Grange)

1861

Taken on April 7/8 1861

No change of questions from the census of 1851

Observations from the censuses:

Kimpton Population: 1014

The Green, Church End and Church Lane had 4 people's registered occupation as being Domestic Duties while the High Street had 68. The High Street is obviously longer but the differential is significant.

The Green, Church End and Church Lane had 63 Plaiters while the High Street had none. There were however 8 plait dealers on the High Street which implies that the more prosperous people lived on the High Street.

The first mention of the Railway is made in that a railway clerk was living in the village.

6 males and 7 females were in Kimpton for one day only for the Hoo Horse Races.

There were 24 houses in Church End, 18 in Church Lane, 14 on the Green and 2 on Park Fields (total 58 suggesting that the boundary between Church Lane & Church End was rather undefined)

6 people were absent visiting friends.

A Royal Naval Captain & his wife were staying with the Vicar at the old Vicarage (now the Grange).

1871

Held on April 2/3 1871

No change to the questions asked.

Observations from the Kimpton census:

Only 2 Kimpton Enumerator districts now.

Kimpton Population: 952

1st mention of the public house *The Boot* and a Postman!

A travelling show with 4 males and 5 females were visiting the village. They were staying for one day and were in a caravan in the High Street. They were all from Bethnal Green and the children of 12, 9, 7, & 5 were described as "artists"

1881

Held on April 3/4th 1881

Observations from the Kimpton Census:

Kimpton Population: 936

1st mention of a Gas man, a painter and a plumber living in the village.

There were 6 visitors in the village on census day.

The old vicarage (now the Grange) is now occupied by Major General Archibald Harem and his family. They have a ladies maid, a parlour maid, a house maid, a cook, a coachman and a groom to attend them.

The Vicar, Thomas D Croft, and his Curate, Arthur Oddie now live in the High Street (probably next door but one to the Goat)

On census day they have a visitor from Australia with them.

A Polish Professor of Languages, Alexander Leliwa, lived in Grove Cottage at Kimpton Bottom.

1891

Taken on April 5/6th 1891

Nation-wide, this was the year which saw the first female enumerators! The Kimpton enumerators were Mr Charles George Chalkley and Frederick Moss.

In response to fears of overcrowding in industrial cities, for the first time a question was asked about the numbers of rooms in the each household.

Administration County of <i>Stafford</i>		The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the										Page 2			
Civil Parish		Municipal Borough		Municipal Ward		Urban Sanitary District		Town or Village or Hamlet		Rural Sanitary District		Parliamentary Borough or Division		Ecclesiastical Parish or District	
of <i>Kimpton</i>		of <i>Kimpton</i>		of <i>Kimpton</i>		of <i>Kimpton</i>		of <i>Kimpton</i>		of <i>Hitchin</i>		of <i>Hitchin</i>		of <i>Kimpton</i>	
Code	No. of ROAD STREET, No. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	ROUSES	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION	Employer	WIDEN BORN	(1) Descent-Drum Head (2) Estate, Inheritance or Lease					
8	<i>Clayton Farm House</i>	1	<i>Charles Lacey</i>	Head	Married	34	<i>Farmer</i>	X	<i>Kimpton</i>						
			<i>Janet Lacey</i>	Wife	do	32									
			<i>Rose Lacey</i>	Daughter	do	10									
9	<i>in the village</i>	1	<i>George Lacey</i>	Head	Married	42	<i>Farmer</i>	X							
			<i>Emily Lacey</i>	Wife	do	38									
			<i>Nicholas Lacey</i>	Son	Child	10									
			<i>Mrs Grace Lacey</i>	Daughter	do	17									
			<i>Susannah Lacey</i>	Sister	do	12	<i>Living on her Mother's house</i>								
			<i>Mary Ann Lacey</i>	Sister	Single	20	<i>Living on her Mother's house</i>								
10	<i>Smith Farm house</i>	1	<i>Francis Lacey</i>	Head	Single	58	<i>Farmer</i>	X	<i>Hatfield</i>						
			<i>Maria Ann</i>	Head	Single	62	<i>Farmer</i>	X	<i>Kimpton</i>						
			<i>David Lacey</i>	Head	Married	42	<i>Farmer</i>	X	<i>Kimpton</i>						
			<i>Mrs Ann Lacey</i>	Wife	do	40									

Observations from the Kimpton census:

Population: 991

For the first time the Wesleyan Chapel is mentioned as a building in the Village.

The enumerator states the Kimpton boundary goes through the middle of the Cross Keys and on the night in question no one slept in the Kimpton half!

The Vicarage has now moved from the Grange to Hitchin Road – now the Old Vicarage.

4 people were living on the parish.

1901

Taken on March 31ST / April 1ST

Observations from the Kimpton Census:

Kimpton Population: 944

The enumerators were Charles George Chalkley and Frederick Moss, both well known men of the village.

William Coleman, living in the High Street, was described as a professional cricketer.

George Davison slept in a caravan attached to a steam roller - presumably they were doing the roads.

3 men slept in the barn in Bury farm – they had come to do the threshing.

Unpublished census' points of interest:

There is a hundred year rule which means that the general public only have access to the census taken a hundred years ago.

In 1951 before the census was taken, the Registrar General for England and Wales asked women to be honest about their ages. Information taken from previous censuses suggested that “ women had adjusted their ages upwards if they married young and down if they married later. Problem pages in newspapers were flooded with queries from distraught women fearful that their true age would become public knowledge.”ⁱ

In the 2001 census a voluntary question about people's religion is included for the first time.

Conclusions

It is no surprise that for a small community living in a valley that farming was the main occupation during the 19th century.

Agricultural labouring as an occupation reached its peak on the 1851 census with 169 people engaged in it falling to 67 in 1901. Straw plaiting was another major form of employment which was largely done by women but it is probable that children and men also took their part. This was a lucrative means of earning additional income for a household and enabled women to remain at home rather than go into service and leave their families. The straw would be plaited and then coiled into rolls and given to the plait dealer who then took it to the plait markets. The ultimate destination of course was the Luton hat industry. The peak years for plaiting were the 1880s but this fell away sharply in 1901 as cheap plait was imported from China and the industry started to die.

Although the National and British Schools were beginning in 1835, schooling was not compulsory. From 1851 many children were recorded as being 'scholars' but this we understand was a loose term and could be applied to the keen school attendee or to those who only appeared spasmodically.



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Kimpton Census Identified Occupations' Comparison

Occupations	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Gentleman		1		1			
Independent means	5	1	3		1	13	14
Vicar	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Vicar's family		2		4			
Curate				1	1	1	1
Magistrate			1				
School master	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
Schoolmistress	1	4	2	3	4	4	3
Scholar		190	208	153	191	174	82
Governess		1	3	5		2	2
Pupil teacher			2	1	3		2
Farmer	16	16	18	20	11	18	13
Farmer's family		35	32	39	20		6
Gardener	8	4	3	5	10	11	13
Gardener's family		3		3	3		
Agricultural Labourer	123	169	149	142	121	129	67
Dairymaid			2		1		
Alms/ ag.labourer		2					
Ploughman			4		1	3	2
Cattleman							11
Shepherd			6	2	4	1	8
Game Keeper	2	4	4	7	7	4	5
Stableman			14		5	3	9
Groom	1	5	7	11	5	5	17
Farm Servant		9	3	8	7	5	
Cowman			1		2		
Whipper in			2				
Huntsman			1				
Footman				2	2	2	2
Bootboy			1				
Butler		2	2	3	1	3	3
Charwoman	1				2		5
Coachman		1	1	3	5	3	5
Cook		2	2	4	7	6	5
Female servant/maid	31	1		8	14	23	9
House maid		3	3	3	8	8	10
Housekeeper		4	11	2	3	8	10
Kitchen maid		2	2	2	2	5	5
Lady's maid		1		1	4	2	2
Laundry maid		1	1	1		1	

Male servant	40	5	1	12		2	4
Nursemaid		1	2	3	1	1	
Valet					1		
Plaiter	17	60	91	93	106	80	29
Plait dealer	3	6	8	6	5	4	3
Bonnet maker		2	20	20	8	7	1
Publican	2	1	4	3	3	1	6
Brewer / brewery worker	2	2	2	4	3	5	8
Cider maker			1				
Beerhouse keeper		1			3		
Victualler			1			2	2
Maltmaker			1		1		
Drayman				2		1	2
Midshipman		1					
Historical Engraver		1					
Policeman		1	1	1	1	2	1
Royal Navy / Army			1		1	1	
Draper						1	4
Tailor	4	3	4	1	6	5	7
Dressmaker		6	14	12	11	11	13
Semstress	4	2	3	5	2	6	4
Machinist					1	1	1
Annuitant (pensioner)		2		3	2		2
Apprentice	4	5	2	4	7	11	7
Artist						1	
Bailiff	1	2	1	7	3	1	2
Baker	3	2	5	2	1	4	4
Blacksmith	6	7	7	5	8	7	7
Brazier	1						
Bread boy		1		2			
Breeder							1
Bricklayer / builder	6	5	5	6	8	9	14
Bricklayer's labourer		2	4	5	5	3	5
Butcher	2	1	2	2	1	1	4
Carpenter	11	13	10	6	9	8	14
Carrier			1				2
Carter			5	1			3
Charcoal burner				1	2		
Civil Engineer						1	2

Coachsmith	1				1	3	
Coal merchant						2	1
Colonial Broker						1	
Cooper				1			
Cripple		1	2	3	1		
Dealer					2		
Domestic Duties		13	98	12	13	5	7
Domestic duties/alms		6					
Drover					1		1
Fishmonger		1		1			
Flintsmith				1			
Foreman							1
Gasman					1		
Grocer	3	5	5	4	7	6	5
Harness maker	1	1	1	1			
Hawker	1					1	1
House dweller		1		3			
House servant		12	13	3	2		
Housewife		6	16	22	109	2	
Inland revenue officer							1
Journeyman butcher		1					
Labourer		12	3		3	6	3
Land agent			1	1	2		
Land surveyor			1				
Landed Proprietor			1		1		
Laundress	4	2	3	5	4	7	12
Lodger				3			
Clerk			1				5
Midwife					1		
Miller	2	1	2	1	1		
Nurse			2	2	1	4	7
Osler				3			
Overseer				1	1		
Painter					1	4	8
Plumber					1		1
Postman				1	1	1	4
Professor of languages					1		
Railway worker			1			1	2
Road labourer						1	4
Sawyer		1		2			
Secretary							1
Servant's wife				3			
Shoemaker		3	5	4	3	3	2

Shop keeper						1	
Straw warehouse lad			1				
Thatcher				1			
Well digger / beer house keeper			1				
Well sinker					1		
Wheelwright	4	2	2	4	3	3	3
Whitesmith						1	2
Woodman					1	2	1
Living on Parish						4	
Unable to work				3	3		2
Visitors		3			3	2	5
Travelling show (visitors)				9			
Unknown (illegible)						7	3
Total	312	668	845	736	735	680	549
Population	945	992	1014	952	936	991	944