

FAMILY AND MARITIME COMMUNITY: ROBIN HOOD'S BAY,  
c.1653-c.1867

A.Storm

SYNOPSIS

This study of a coastal settlement, in challenging its traditional classification as a "fishing village", may strengthen the case for more investigations of the kind. Coastal erosion at Robin Hood's Bay created a compactness which contributed to the cohesion of the population. Confined between Highland and the North Sea, the settlement shared the remoteness, cultural even more than geographical, of seaward-looking Whitby. With enclosure as a detectable factor, population was probably drawn from the adjacent countryside in the fifteenth century, to accumulate around a fishing-farming nucleus. In the seventeenth century the traditional manorial situation in Fylingdales began to change, with the introduction of 1,000-year leaseholds in Robin Hood's Bay. This contributed to relative immobility of the settlement's population. Servicing by sea of the local alum industry, and the rise of the east-coast coal trade, became the means of extending the equalitarian and co-operative order of fishing to seafaring and shipping enterprise. The return on this, assisted by the unusually long tenure, was sufficient to support the growth of networks of kin so forbidding in their complexity that family reconstitution, from parish registers and wider genealogical sources, became essential to the study. Concern to protect the family is observable, but the growth of strong, puritanical Nonconformity did not frustrate opportunities presented by smuggling. Attitudes, traditional skills and the economic and social order enabled great advantage to be taken of the increase in nineteenth-century shipping, until steam-power intervened. At the heart of both enterprise and resistance to change was the finest mesh of long-standing, entrepreneurial kin testifying to the powerful socialisation that had fostered continuity of residence and maritime employment. The ethic, and the social and economic order by which this obscure community made the description "fishing village" inadequate, suggests that further scrutiny of the coast, not only for the history of merchant shipping, but for people conditioned to the ordering of their own lives, might be profitable.

**CONTAINS  
PULLOUTS**

FAMILY AND MARITIME COMMUNITY:  
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ALAN STORM

Thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy, 1991

This essay is dedicated  
to the memory of  
Raymond Storm,  
Master Mariner,  
1892-1971





Part of the Yorkshire coast from L.J. Wagenhaer's Spiegel der Seevaerdts, 1584-5  
(Maps 52.d.1(4), reproduced by permission of the British Library).



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## ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

### 1. Abbreviations

P.R.O.	Public Record Office.
<u>C.S.P.D.</u>	<u>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic.</u>
N.M.M., Whitby	National Maritime Museum, Port Registry Transcript Scheme, Whitby.
Whitby Lit. and Phil.	The Literary and Philosophical Society of Whitby, North Yorkshire.
Borthwick	Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York; followed immediately by a personal name, the reference is to probate documents of the diocese of York in that repository.
N.Y.C.R.O.	North Yorkshire County Record Office, where Fylingdales parish registers and books are under PR/FY.
V.C.H.	<u>Victoria History of the County of York</u> , II, 1912.
<u>D.N.B.</u>	<u>Dictionary of National Biography</u> , compact edition, 1975.
Fyl.Recon.	Fylingdales family reconstitutions compiled by the writer.
J.S., <u>Memoirs</u>	Jacob Storm [1837-1926], <u>Memoirs</u> (unpublished).
J.S., Miscellany	A collection of transcripts, original documents and abstracts made by Jacob Storm, and in the writer's possession.

A number in brackets after the name of a vessel is its tonnage.

## 2. Terminology

(a) Robin Hood's Bay, a secondary settlement in the North Riding parish of Fylingdales, is locally referred to as "Bay". This is also common usage in official documents, for example the Whitby Muster Rolls of the eighteenth century. The practice is followed here, for brevity.

(b) To facilitate analysis, most of the period covered here has been chronologically subdivided, so that the population history of Fylingdales has been taken to comprise three stages:

Period 1	1653-1720
Period 2	1721-1780
Period 3	1781-1840

These were chosen to make best use of the varying amounts of information given in the parish registers over the years. Period 1 is slightly longer than the others, to compensate for gaps in registration in the decade 1691-1700, in which the use of transcripts still left three years with no record. This avoided discontinuity and periods too short to be statistically useful. The extension as far as 1867 into the era of state registration of vital events, accommodates an important mid-nineteenth century shipping boom.

The component subdivisions of the local population are represented in the diagram on the following page. Their names, as used in the text, are in capital letters. What is henceforth to be termed "the Majority" consists of 34 families long present in the village, and its "Core" comprises five of them which are particularly important on account of their continuity and great numbers.

P A R I S H		
B A Y		remainder of parish: C O U N T R Y
MAJORITY  (including CORE)	remainder of  Bay: BAY REST	remainder of parish:  C O U N T R Y
MAJORITY  (including CORE)	remainder of parish:  P A R I S H R E S T	

(c) The commonest type of vessel referred to is a brig, two-masted and square-rigged; many of the category were probably snows, which carry a supplementary trysail mast, but this difference is slight enough to justify the use of the former term for simplicity. (Types of vessel are illustrated in Appendix 1, on page 276.)

(d) "Mariner", as distinct from "seaman", is used for a man judged, from his position at some time as master or mate, to have been formally trained; "sailor" comprehends all seafarers. <sup>1</sup>

1. The Society for Nautical Research, The Mariner's Mirror, L, 1964, no.4, p.331; LI, 1965, no.1, p.79, no.2, p.189, no.4, p.365.



## INTRODUCTION

Sixty years ago, people well-acquainted with Robin Hood's Bay knew it as the home of sailors rather than fishermen, but as it had no harbour the conspicuous activity was fishing. Shipmaster descendants of long-established families would sit in their substantial villas above the old village and repeat the claim that "this was once the richest place on the coast". Yet in 1876 it was described as "a village of fishermen, who supply the city of York, and the adjacent country, with all sorts of fish in their season".<sup>1</sup> This present investigation was occasioned ultimately by three recent studies. The first was S.Pawley's work on Lincolnshire coastal settlements, where he found not typical "fishing villages", but people supporting themselves by a variety of occupations. The second was P.Thompson's argument concerning the peculiar ethical characteristics of true fishing communities. In the third, S.K.Jones in the course of a maritime history of Whitby noted the remarkable recurrence over more than a century of names belonging to Robin Hood's Bay in Whitby shipping records.<sup>2</sup> The broad aim of this work is to complement these findings. The first objective is to define Robin Hood's Bay economically, and in the course of this it should be possible to show the extent of involvement with the sea that lay outside S.K.Jones' terms of reference. The second objective is to look for attitudes and outlook, and their economic and social expression, which require scrutiny under the light of

1. Ward Lock and Co., Brookes's General Gazetteer, 1876.

2. S.Pawley, "Lincolnshire Coastal Villages and the Sea, c.1300-c.1600: Economy and Society", University of Leicester Ph.D. thesis, 1984; P.Thompson, Living the Fishing, 1983; S.K.Jones, "A Maritime History of the Port of Whitby, 1700-1914", University of London Ph.D. thesis, 1982.

the Thompson thesis.

The strategy is first to proceed from physical circumstances towards the less tangible, that is to say by way of population, economy, and society to ethic. The nineteenth century experience of the community at the height of its shipping achievement is then recounted, and interpreted as a culmination of preceding ideas and events, before general conclusions are drawn.

Basic to this study is the reconstitution of the families of Fylingdales, of which Robin Hood's Bay forms a part. The size of the parish and of its population, and - for the most part - the quality of registration, satisfy the criteria recommended by D.E.C.Eversley.<sup>1</sup> As the work proceeded, continuity of large and increasingly important-seeming maritime dynasties caused problems of identification that could only be resolved with much genealogical research, about which there is a note in Appendix 2 on page 277. Notable sources, other than the registers, were the parish books, probate and shipping records and the notebooks and memoirs of Jacob Storm (1837-1926), master mariner and marine superintendent, of Robin Hood's Bay. More information being inevitably available about the long-standing families, risk of bias occurs in some information drawn from the reconstitutions, and so it is presented with caution, but also with the thought that similar places might furnish comparable evidence.

Essential genealogical research having placed ordinary families in a socio-economic context, the claim might be acceptable that there emerges coincidentally a contribution to the broader kind of family history advocated in 1987 in D.Hey's Family History and Local History in England.

1. D.E.C.Eversley, 'Family Reconstitution', An introduction to English Historical Demography, E.A.Wrigley, ed., 1966, pp.102-110.



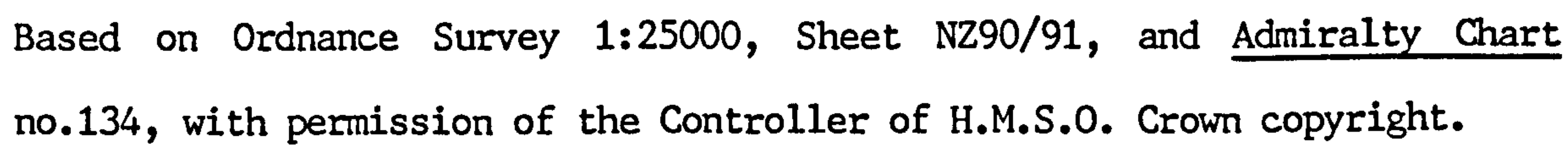
## CHAPTER ONE: THE BASIC SITUATION

Bay is in Fylingdales, a parish of 18,458 acres on the coast of North Yorkshire, between Whitby and Scarborough. Its physical situation and origins are discussed first, and then the formation of its open character.

(a) Physical The parish occupies a clay-filled theatre with wings at the headlands of Peak and Ness, near which shales outcrop. Where clay lies at the sea's edge the shore line has changed substantially, creating a bay, on which Bay village lies. An estimate of erosion can be made if a line be taken at a right-angle to the shore from the mouth of the Mill Beck to a point where the soundings give no sign of indentation, that is to say around a depth of 25 metres. A rate of loss of land of 90 feet per century is obtained for the ten post-glacial millennia. This is shown in figure 1 on page 2. In 1960 R. Agar studied the history of the erosion process from Ravenscar, two miles south of Bay, to the mouth of the River Tees, and found an average rate of 92 feet per century. His estimates near Bay were of 100 feet of erosion per century southward from where the main street meets the sea to the mouth of the Mill Beck, and only 22 feet from the same point northward, where the sea encounters the shale. <sup>1</sup> More recently Scarborough Borough Council returned to the perennial problem of protection, and on the second of the same two lengths of shore gauged the sea's advance to be 75 millimetres a year, or about 25 feet a century. <sup>2</sup>

1. R. Agar, 'Post-Glacial Erosion of the North Yorkshire Coast from the Tees Estuary to Ravenscar', Proceedings of the Yorkshire Geological Society, XXXII, pt. 4, no.19, 1960, pp.409-428.
2. Personal statement by Director of Technical Services, Scarborough Borough Council, 24th March, 1984.

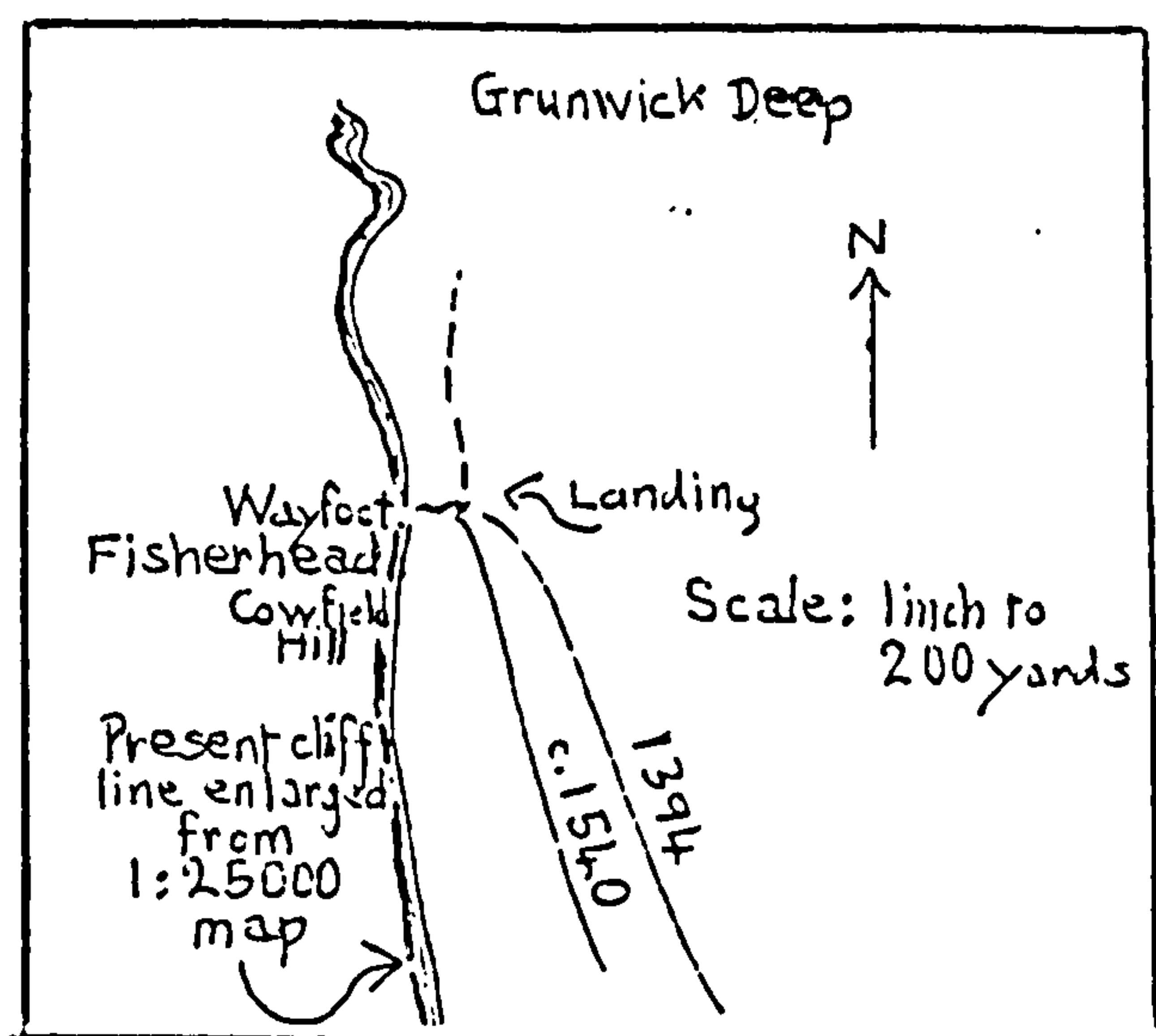
Scale: 2½ inches to 1 mile





The process of erosion was assisted, according to L.Walmsley, by the action of the cliff-top springs in which local water supplies originate, and which run intermittently through sand and gravel in the clay and cause it to slip over the cliff. In 1910, he said, older fishermen stated that they had observed the retreat of the cliffs in their own lifetime. <sup>1</sup> There is photographic evidence in the views on page 4. Loss of land is illustrated by the name Cowfield Hill, by the sea on the southern edge of the village. There is little of the field left now, apart from the uneven ground of the coastal slope. In figure 2 an attempt has been made to show where the shore-line might have been in 1394, when the fishermen of Fyling are first mentioned, and again in c.1540 when John Leland came by. <sup>2</sup>

Figure 2: The Changing  
shore line



1. L.Walmsley, 'Coast Changes at Robin Hood's Bay', The Naturalist, 1st August, 1913, pp.280-282.
2. Whitby Abbey charter reprinted in G.Young, History of Whitby, II, 1817, p.297; John Leland, Itinerary, 1907 edn., I, p.51.



Views across the bay from the N.W.

The house indicated with a cross in 1980 was almost ninety feet from the end of the row in 1890. It is identifiable in the Ordnance Survey map 1:2500 of 1892.

View 1



View 2



No.1 F.M.Sutcliffe, c.1890. By courtesy of The Sutcliffe Gallery, Whitby.

No.2 R.Storm Gillings, 1980.



The difficulty in placing the former shore-line is to allow for the different rates of erosion north and south of the Wayfoot, the seaward exit from the village, but it is apparent that there was probably room east of the present village for the land-based part of a fisherman's work, not to the north but on the lower slopes to the south. The beck may well have formed a creek in the clay. The Landing adjacent to the Wayfoot was described by Thomas Hinderwell as only a narrow passage from the sea, but there may once have been a tiny estuary. <sup>1</sup>

It is tempting to think that this hypothetical promontory was Fisherhead, a name that is now in use further inland, but has always attached to parts of the village south of the King's Beck and the Wayfoot, where the maritime families have always been strong in numbers and where in times when fishing was an important local industry most boat-owners lived. To the north of the mouth of the beck, however, lay shelter under the high cliff and in the deep water of Grunwick. It was in Grunwick Deep that Jacob Storm recalled seeing many fishing boats at anchor on Sunday, "like monster gannets". <sup>2</sup> A pier on the Scars, east of the present Landing Scar, may be imagined as that referred to by Winchester in 1562, when he asked the Queen to devote income from her properties to the repairing of piers at Bridlington and Robin Hood's Bay. <sup>3</sup>

This area, now under the sea, or the tides, seems likely to have been the site of the inundations of the Bay highway reported at the North Riding Quarter Sessions in 1632. The whole countryside was "much prejudiced", because fishing was hindered. <sup>4</sup> This difficulty was to recur:

1. T.Hinderwell, The History and Antiquities of Scarborough, 1811 edn., pp.285-286.

2. J.S., Memoirs, p.21.

3. R.Lemon, ed., C.S.P.D., Elizabeth 1, I, 1856, p.211.

4. N.Y.C.R.O., Quarter Sessions Minutes, 2/5 Jan., 1632, fol.143v.

in 1671 the road was "in great decay", and in need of repairs costing £80. The inhabitants promised to contribute £30, and two years later they were told to pay the residue and to repair the bridge themselves in future. Another two years went by and representatives from the village appeared at the Sessions at Thirsk to contribute to a discussion concerning responsibility for the bridge.<sup>1</sup> Eventually the inhabitants were told that there would be no more money forthcoming from the county treasury, but in 1682 a gratuity of £40 was paid and the two justices decided to view the bridge themselves. The villagers appear to have believed they were in a strong position for they continued in their neglect until, in April, 1738, they faced two indictments for failing to repair their highways and were fined £40 on each. This was at a time when, as will be seen in Chapter 2, estimated population was rising in a way that tends to belie the notion of poverty. The fines were paid and in July the justices decided to apply the money to the making of an inland route by Fylingthorpe, Middlewood and Stoupe Brow, and to take another through Cowfield Hill, clear of the beach.<sup>2</sup>

The existence of the problem is illustrated in Richard Moorsom's will of 1720, in which he disposes of houses and then says that the staiths about them are in need of repair.<sup>3</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary says that a staith is a built-up landing place or an embankment to protect against water, and that the term is used in areas strong in Scandinavian settlement. It relied for the explanation of the term, appropriately, on

1. N.Y.C.R.O., Quarter Sessions Minutes, July, 1671. fol.148v.; 2/14 Oct., 1673, fol.275r; 2/15 July, 1675, fol.53r.
2. Ibid., 2/17 Oct., 1682, fol.37v.; 2/21 April, 1738, fol.148v.; 2/21 July, 1738, fol.150v.
3. Borthwick, Richard Moorsom, Fylingdales, 1720.



a work by a Whitby historian, who had taken it from the anonymous Whitby Glossary of 1855. <sup>1</sup> In the coal ports of the North East the name belonged to the high timber jetty which was the end of the inclined plane from which the waggons from the mine poured coal into ships' holds. These definitions help to provide a picture of houses at the water's edge shored up with timber, and they suggest a degree of impermanence.

If the original road crossed the beck at the bottom of the main street, King Street, as it does now, and continued to Scarborough, the continuation would have been on the cliff or the coastal slope, and not yet lowered onto the beach. Hinderwell, naturally thinking of the approach to Scarborough, said in 1798 that the road had come to lie "along the beach, under a steep cliff to which the sea flows as the tide advances, and the passage is made unsafe, except.....the tide be receding. <sup>2</sup>

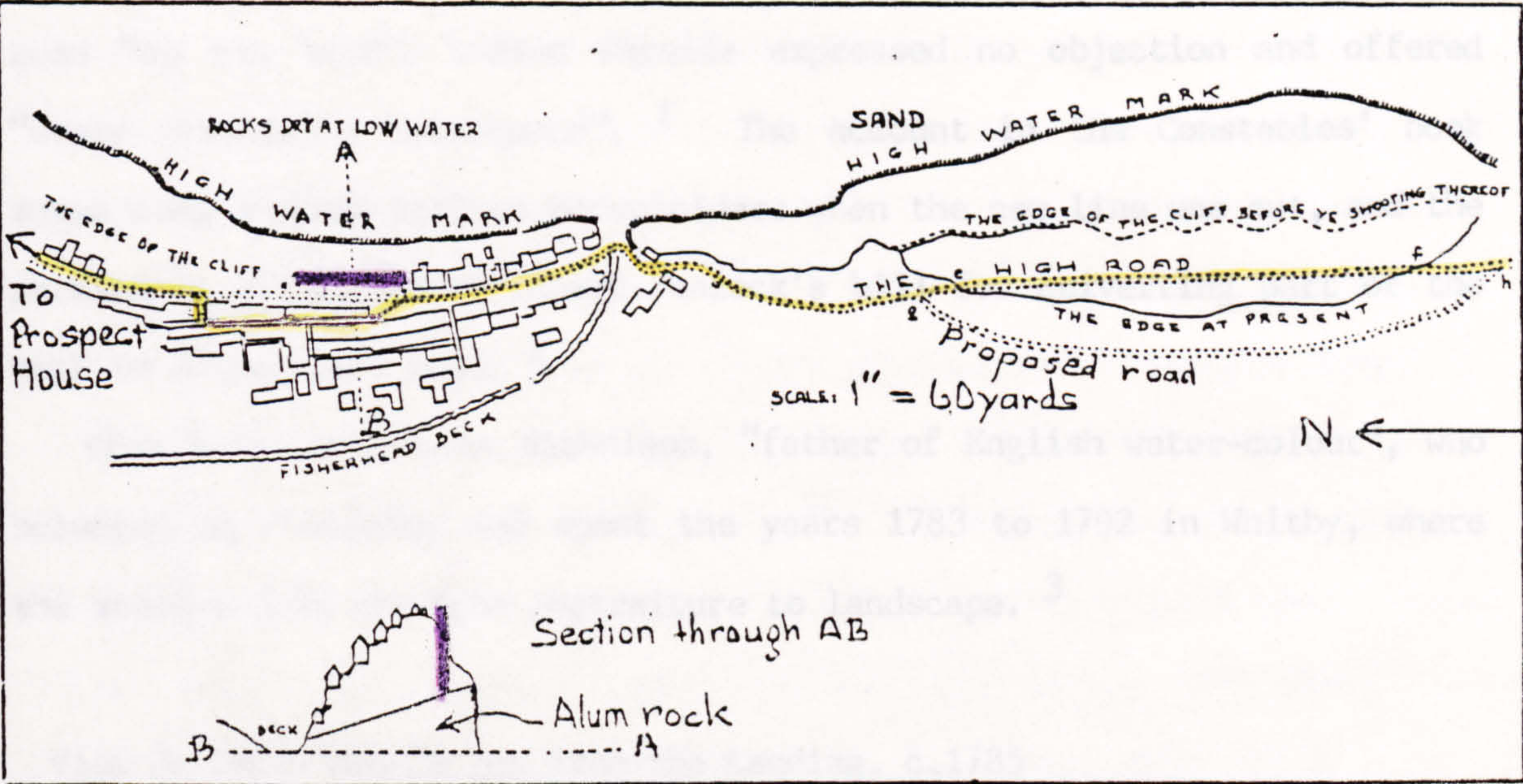
At this point the situation is better discussed in relation to a copy of a plan which was made some time before 1790. It shows a loss of land to the south of the King's Beck, and in a letter of 1790 the landlord, Watson Farside, recalls the event occurring "some years ago". <sup>3</sup> The plan was probably made by a professional surveyor from outside the parish, for the King' Beck is called Fisherhead Beck; but when the work is scaled down to modern maps it is highly accurate. It shows the road coming down south from the direction of Whitby, crossing the beck and quite sharply turning inland to wind through Cowfield Hill, in accordance with the magistrates' arrangements of 1738. Up to this change of course the road is heading seaward, and the five lines south of this point, in succession from high

1. F.Kildill Robinson, Whitby: its Abbey, and the Principal Parts of the Neighbourhood, 1860, p.242.
2. T.Hinderwell, History of Scarborough, 1811 edn., pp.285-286.
3. Whitby Lit. and Phil., P.Burnett, nos.1957 and 1937.



water mark to "ye proposed new road", suggest strongly that its original destination was lost to the sea. This is in figure 3, an adaptation of the plan, which preserves all the boundaries. In the northern part the main road is diverted (shown in yellow) into a narrow passage. The adjacent purple indicates piling.

Figure 3: Cliff erosion c.1790



Figures 3 and 4 can be used together. The latter is based on one made by Lionel Charlton, the Whitby historian, to show the site of a house for Isaac Storm, shipmaster. <sup>1</sup> South of the house old and new roads part.

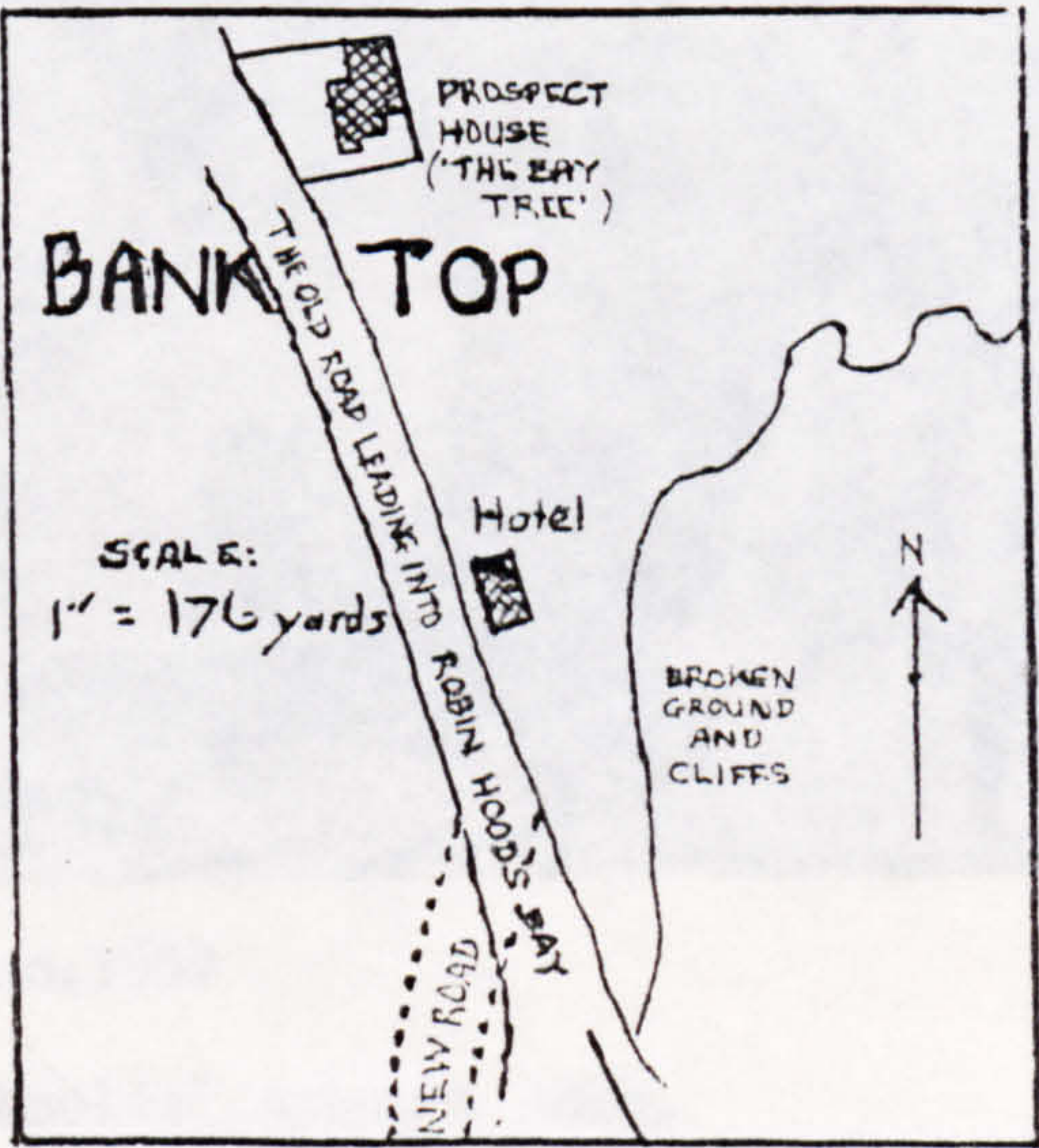


Figure 4: The junction of the old and new roads

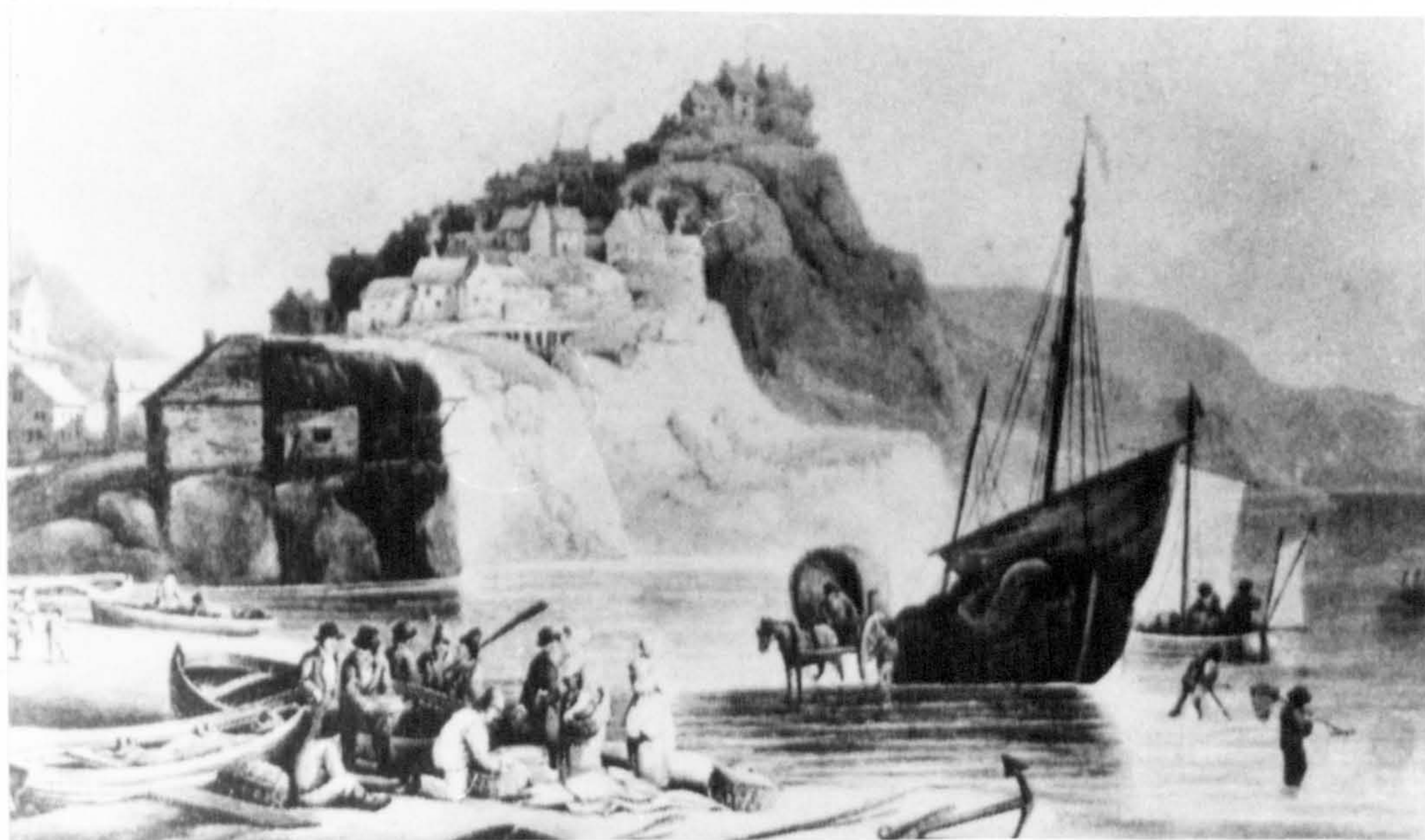
1. Whitby Lit. and Phil., P.Burnett no.2005



The parting is identifiable today beside the Victoria Hotel. The old road, King Street, with many houses, had surrendered to the sea by 1790, victim at last of many "shoots" of the cliff. Only a fragment survived. John Knaggs, the Bay butcher and a frequent holder of parish office, wrote to Watson Farside on 20th November to acquaint him that several houses were in danger, and that a meeting had produced an agreement to have a new road "up the beck". Watson Farside expressed no objection and offered "every reasonable assistance".<sup>1</sup> The account in the Constables' book shows compensation paid to householders when the new line was cut, and the settlement of the mason Robert Peacock's bill for culverting part of the beck to support the road.<sup>2</sup>

View 3 is by Francis Nicholson, "father of English water-colour", who belonged to Pickering and spent the years 1783 to 1792 in Whitby, where the scenery drew him from portraiture to landscape.<sup>3</sup>

View 3: Robin Hood's Bay from the Landing, c.1785



1. Whitby Lit. and Phil., P. Burnett no.1957

2. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/3/1, 1791, Constables' Account Book.

3. D.N.B., Nicholson, Francis, 1753-1844.



The trestle structure which he has included in the picture, below and to the left of the village's crown of houses, is a clear indication of the need for piling. For long the crown was still in place; the record could be as late as 1742. An element of hyperbole is to be suspected, but the houses in the section in figure 3 on page 8 do not seem unnaturally tall enough to suggest an exaggerated vertical scale. The hilly ground they had once commanded had become a series of precarious and grotesque perches. The principal effect was not simply loss to the sea. Erosion crowded the village against the land of small farmers and the steep sides of the beck, and the movement of people away from the cliffs accentuated the crowding. This explains in part Pevsner's "most picturesque fishing village in Yorkshire".<sup>1</sup> More is said of this in section (c) of this chapter: tenure was a factor too. One sign of the infilling and rebuilding is the changing of street names from one decennial Census to another. In a mere decade strange names could appear inside the village, and in 1841 there were nearly fifty houses with only the vaguest of locations, like "Bay".<sup>2</sup>

The principal way into the village became, and still is, the New Road, which enters the village with a one-in-three gradient. The situation is so cramped and hidden that it might have been a waste settlement, and evokes Thompson's view of fishing as an unlikely first choice of occupation.<sup>3</sup> It is easy to pursue this kind of thought and create an image of a place characterised predominantly by isolation, but a broader view of the physical situation shows this was not the case.

1. N.Pevsner, The Buildings of Yorkshire North Riding, 1966, p.308.

2. P.R.O., H.O.107,1265, 1841 Census of Fylingdales.

3. P.Thompson, Living the Fishing, 1983, pp.9-10.

Fylingdales parish is backed by moorland, which was not impassable but was certainly a bar. Approach was easier along the coast, but Scarborough was fourteen miles away. Northward, it was only seven miles to Whitby, and though hilly, the road was less rugged. Within living memory people went to work daily in Whitby, on foot, and Jacob Storm relates how in 1851, near the beginning of his seafaring career, he walked each morning to the town with the ships' company to make his grandfather Thomas Harrison's vessel ready for the spring sailing.<sup>1</sup> This is a vital matter because Robin Hood's Bay had no harbour, only a beach approachable by a skilled handler of fishing craft and the like. However, Whitby harbour was close enough to present the smaller place with economic opportunity. Staithes, the fishing place to the north, as far from Whitby as Bay from Scarborough, did not achieve the same relationship with the port.

If Robin Hood's Bay's isolation was modified because Whitby was at hand, the position of the latter is a relevant issue, and one fundamental factor is that the town, like the village, lay between the wastes of moor and sea. Whitby itself was remote from the rest of the country because it had to look seawards: it had no navigable access to the hinterland, and the moors had little to offer, economically. Its fortune lay in the building, ownership and manning of ships intended to carry the goods of others by sea.<sup>2</sup> From all the histories of Whitby it is only too apparent that when the town flourished it was because of ships and sailors. The idea has not been put thoroughly to the test, but a brief acquaintance with the Whitby parish registers and the port's shipping records readily suggests an impressive continuity of population and maritime employment,

1. J.S., Memoirs, p.36.

2. W.G.East, 'The Historical Geography of the Town, Port and Roads of Whitby', The Geographical Journal, LIII, Dec., 1932, pp.484-487.



perhaps almost as remarkable as that to be found in Robin Hoods's Bay.

The emphasis on ships and the sea seems to be more important as a cultural than as a geographical factor, and the kind of isolation it produced was shared by the smaller place. Dr.Young, writing about Whitby in the early years of the nineteenth century, was impressed by the distinctive nature of manners: he considered they had an "ancient simplicity".<sup>1</sup> One facet of this that caught his attention was that, "gentlemen of the first respectability" would go shopping and carry home "with their own hands" their purchases. This is slight evidence, but it is not impossible that there is to be found in it a trace of the maritime culture, for much of the work done by men on ships is of the nature of housekeeping. In this connection it is intriguing to find P.Thompson in recent times writing of the willingness of young, married men in some of the smaller fishing communities to be accomplished in domestic work.<sup>2</sup>

There may or may not be grains of truth in these matters, but what is more certain is that, having seldom in all its post-Synod experience attained a reputation for anything other than being a seafaring town, Whitby is probably as thoroughgoing an example of the maritime culture as any to be found. There was little opportunity for the representation of any other culture; and for Robin Hood's Bay it was the centre of affairs. The village may even have exceeded Whitby in its obsessive concern with the sea, for it lacked the broad range of professions that accompany the work of a busy port. The conditions were favourable for socialisation, that is to say for the cultivation and transmission of opinions and attitudes current in society, and the intimacy created by the physical compactness may well be considered a factor contributory to the process.

1. G.Young, History of Whitby, II, 1817, p.365.

2. P.Thompson, Living the Fishing, 1983, chapter 10.

A question that follows naturally is, why should so many sailors and shipowners have lived at the harbourless village down the coast from Whitby? As will be seen in subsequent chapters, their numbers, despite the "fishing village" tag, ran into hundreds: maritime matters there were a commitment with which this essay has much concern. Part of the answer - and arguably a large part - lies in Section (c) of this chapter.

(b) The origins of the settlement There is a tradition among the older families of Robin Hood's Bay that they descend from Scandinavian settlers, and the locality certainly has an impressive array of appropriate place-names: Ravenscar, Ness, Normanby, Saxby and Wragby for example. The belief is probably true, in the sense in which the claim can be made for much of the North Yorkshire coast, where Scandinavian names abound. <sup>1</sup>

The name of the settlement casts no light on the subject. The eponymous outlaw is celebrated in "Robin Hood's Butts", tumuli which look down on the bay from above Stoupe Brow, and its transfer from there to the inlet and thence to a settlement appearing late on that geographical feature seems understandable enough in general terms, but there is for this no chronology. <sup>2</sup>

Domesday refers to Figelinge and Nortfigelinge, which suggests the main settlement was to the south, where Fyling Hall remains. The distinction continued when the lands became the property of Whitby Abbey, but in the rent roll of 1396 the names Sothfyling and North Fyling may suggest that the former had declined in relative importance. <sup>3</sup> In the northern part of

1. E.Ekwall, Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names, 1960 edn.

2. Ordnance Survey, 1:50 000, 1983, sheet 94, ref.959021.

3. V.C.H., p.536; Whitby Abbey rent roll reprinted in

G.Young, History of Whitby, II, 1817, p.920.



the parish lie Fylingthorpe - another name indicative of secondary settlement - the hamlet of Raw, and, detached from both, near the spring called Cross Keld, the older of the two churches of St.Stephen. There was a church in the south of the parish, where the farm called St.Iles stands, and there is archaeological and documentary evidence relating to it. <sup>1</sup> It is the siting of Old St.Stephen's that strengthens the idea of decline in the south and increasing population in the north, but of a fishing industry there is no real evidence until 1394, the date that was mentioned on page 3. The occasion was the receiving of a net, paid for out of the Abbey accounts. As for a settlement, Raw and Fylingthorpe were well situated for the conduct of the secondary occupation of fishing, by farmers working the soil beside a landing place or creek. The name "Staithes" (which Ekwall interprets as "landing place") attaching to the fishing settlement north of Whitby, was in use not much later, in 1415. <sup>2</sup> Hoskins thought that the general explanation of more activity in the industry lay in a change in capital provision, in which case the net supplied to the fishermen of Fyling may be regarded as a subsidy. <sup>3</sup>

Such expenditure is most likely to accompany a prospect of improved return on capital, and this could be related to changes in the shoaling of fish, and in particular of the herring, the North Sea staple. Around 1394 there may have been such an encouraging change, for great numbers of foreigners were drawn into English waters at the time by vast shoals of herring, and such amounts were exported that the Crown intervened. <sup>4</sup>

1. F.Kildill Robinson, Whitby Abbey, 1860, pp.260-261; V.C.H., p.536.

2. E.Ekwall, op.cit.

3. W.G.Hoskins, The Making of the English Landscape, 1955, p.97.

4. T.Rymer, Foedera, VII, 1728, p.788.



Then there is the question of security: the coast may have suffered fewer raids, making life at the sea's edge safer: but as late as the eighteenth century pirates were doing much as they pleased in the bay. <sup>1</sup>

The fact remains that the name of the village is not known to have been in use until well after a century following the first recording of Staithes, and so a time may have to be imagined when there was some resemblance to S.Pawley's semi-agricultural Lincolnshire coastal communities. <sup>2</sup> In 1539 there was a muster of the men of Whitby Strand. It contains familiar surnames, destined to be typical of the village down to the present; but the village itself is not named. <sup>3</sup> In the survey of 1540, after the dissolution of Whitby Abbey, "Robin Hoode Baye" appears, and a "herynge house", suggesting a degree of organisation, and the familiar surnames recur. <sup>4</sup> Then John Leland visited the coast, about the same time, leaving a record of Bay as a "fischer townlet" with twenty boats and a "dok or bosom" a mile long. Boats of the three-man type of this coast, would need some sixty men to work them, but they may have been of the larger, five-man variety also in use at the time. <sup>5</sup> In either case they represent a heavy investment, perhaps in the form of a subsidy. Such enterprise recalls Camden's affirmation that in Tudor times herring swam

1. See p.75.

2. S.Pawley, "Lincolnshire Coastal Villages and the Sea, c.1300-c.1600: Economy and Society", University of Leicester Ph.D. thesis, 1984 ,  
Synopsis.

3. J.Gardner and R.Brodie, eds., Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Age of Henry VIII, XIV, pt.1, 1894, p.314.

4. Cartularium Abbatiae de Whiteby, Surtees Society, LXXII, 1905, p.741-2;  
(P.R.O., SC.6/4624,m6R, Ministers' Accounts, Henry VIII).

5. John Leland, Itinerary, II, 1907 edn., p.51.; British Library,  
Cotton MS. Julius F6, f.455.

"by the bounty of providence in great shoals about our coasts, having swarmed in our grandfathers' time about Norway".<sup>1</sup> This could take the village back to before 1500, but not as far back as Staithes' 1415.

There were three changes of ownership of the former Whitby Abbey lands in fifteen years after the Dissolution. The Earl of Warwick acquired them and sold them to Sir John Yorke, who disposed of them to Sir Richard Cholmley.<sup>2</sup> The estate was not profitable, or it was mismanaged, for Cholmley's grandson handed it over in 1626, in his own lifetime, to his heir, together with £11,000 of debt.<sup>3</sup> Such frequent changes are unlikely to have permitted a programme of development, and the improvement urged by Winchester, that is to say the pier, seems to have come to nothing.

National policy, however, was to assist the fishing industry at this time. In 1562 Wednesday was designated a "fish day", and fines were to be suffered by any who failed in observance of this or any other such day. The history of this policy is involved, but in a work originally written in 1584 a medical man could observe that "Accounting the Lent Season, and all fasting daies in the year, together with Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, you shall see that one half of the year is ordeined to eat fish in".<sup>4</sup> The strategy must have met some local need because in 1575 there came a plea from several fishing towns, of which one was Whitby, for its continuation.<sup>5</sup> The main arguments ran that naval manning must otherwise

1. W.Camden, Britannia, 1753 edn., p.905.

2. Calendar of Patent Rolls, Edward VI, III, 1925, p.372, and IV, 1926, p.34.

3. N.Cholmley, ed., Memoirs of Sir Hugh Cholmley, 1787, p.236.

4. A.Luders, ed., Statutes of the Realm, 1278-1714, 1810-1828,

5 Elizabeth, cap.2.; T.Cogan, "The Haven of Helthe", 1612 edn., p.138.

5. R.T.Gaskin, The Old Seaport of Whitby, 1909, p.214, citing [P.R.O.,] State Papers Domestic, Elizabeth, vol.107, no.67, 10th March, 1575.



suffer, and that fishermen had been buying more boats. The fork's first tine was probably the sharper: to judge from his paper endorsed "Argumentes for the increase of the navye", Cecil looked to the fishing industry for sailors.<sup>1</sup> Reliance of an industry on such a policy stresses its precarious nature. In 1614 Tobias Gentleman was still having to argue a similar case, in his Way to Wealth and to Employ Ships' Mariners.

At all events, by 1542 the settlement was in sufficiently firm being for its name to be used officially a second time, in a list of 82 billmen and archers of "Robin Hoyd Baye and Fylling Dayll".<sup>2</sup> Such precedence is accompanied by no sequence of names by which now to determine who lived where in the parish, but clearly Bay could be ignored no longer, and the question arises, how recently had it won this recognition? In 1563 all properties are recorded in an important list of the Cholmley holdings.<sup>3</sup> Bay had come to consist largely of fifty cottages, whose occupants are named in two lists of 28 and 22 respectively. Indeed, this division could even mean that they were separated by the King's Beck, a boundary recalling post-Dissolution changes in ownership. Two "Quarters" later to appear in the parish books, Fisherhead and Bay, may thus already have come into being. In 1577 the settlement is plotted cartographically for the first time, in Saxton's map of Yorkshire, while its nautical significance is attested by its inclusion in a chart, in 1584-5, with a rhumb line from Rotterdam, an anchorage, and a few houses at the sea's edge.<sup>4</sup>

1. Text in T.E.Hartley, Proceedings of the Parliaments of Elizabeth I, I, 1981, pp.103-107.

2. J.Gardner and R.Brodie, Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, XVII, 1900, p.510, and P.R.O., S.P.2/5, pp.296-310.

3. P.R.O., E.318/43/2316, particular of grant to Sir R.Cholmley, 1563.

4. British Library: Maps C7, c.1, 1577; Maps 52.d.1.(4) (L.J.Wagenhaer, Spieghel der Zeevaerdt, 1584-5).

With fifty dwellings on the site, according to the 1563 survey mentioned, there should have been enough menfolk to work twenty boats; there is no very clear indication of land to be worked with the cottages. There was, however, adjacent land being farmed. The largest holding - one of the largest in Fylingdales - was Matthew Storm's Cow Close. As he is not separately listed as a householder he presumably lived on this holding. He paid 38s.4d., and as others paid around 4 shillings an oxgang he was probably more farmer than fisherman. Four kinsmen in the survey had cottages only, and another had a cottage and a small close. These six related households appear to form the largest family group in the settlement and can be imagined as descending from a farming household by the sea, some members of which turned, or had to turn, to fishing. Their number means they may have been present for several generations. This is conjecture, but there is some cause to believe that this most numerous and typical of Bay families had antecedents in the local countryside.

In 1572 Robert Storm (which was the name of one of the cottagers) and his wife were deforciants in the matter of the title to a messuage with land at Aislaby, which is inland and seven miles distant. In the next year Edward Sneton of Fylingthorpe willed that his wife should be followed in possession of his farm by his daughter, Isabel Storm. What could be taken to be more significant is that Robert Storm, a fisherman, was living up at Fylingthorpe when he was mortally sick in 1603. This residence inland again recalls the idea of secondary occupations by the sea. In 1638 his son Henry was granted a lease by Hugh Cholmley of a messuage on the moor at Bonsidedale, a long way from the sea. <sup>1</sup>

1. Yorkshire Fines, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, V, 1888, p.17;

Borthwick: Edward Sneton, Fylingdales, 1573, and Robert Storm,

Fylingdales, 1604; Whitby Lit and Phil., P.Burnett, no.F1784.



There were other names involved with the land that were to become familiar in fishing and seafaring circles. In the important 1563 document George Hewitson had a close on which he lived, and William Smith and Robert Richardson, listed among the cottagers, had a small close each. Twenty-five of the Bay cottagers in all in 1563 had names occurring on the farmholdings at the same time, and some of these country names were to become well known in Bay.

The existence side by side of farming and fishing might be taken as evidence that the landless did not have to migrate, because there was still a living in the parish, but the movement to the sea may have been enforced by enclosure. This would be to turn again to P.Thompson's belief that some fishing settlements arise out of change on the land; and change on the land there was. The mysterious church of St.Iles at Saxby on the moorland side of the parish, and the related ten or twelve houses, indicate as much. <sup>1</sup>

Already in 1563 - to judge by the rents - there were ten substantial farms or closes in Fylingdales. Below them in size were typical holdings of three oxgangs, complete with tenement house, and there were two lots of land specifically described as enclosed. One had been taken from the Fyling town field and the other from Fyling Common. There were left in Fylingthorpe thirteen cottagers, including the parson. Robin Hood's Bay had become the larger settlement.

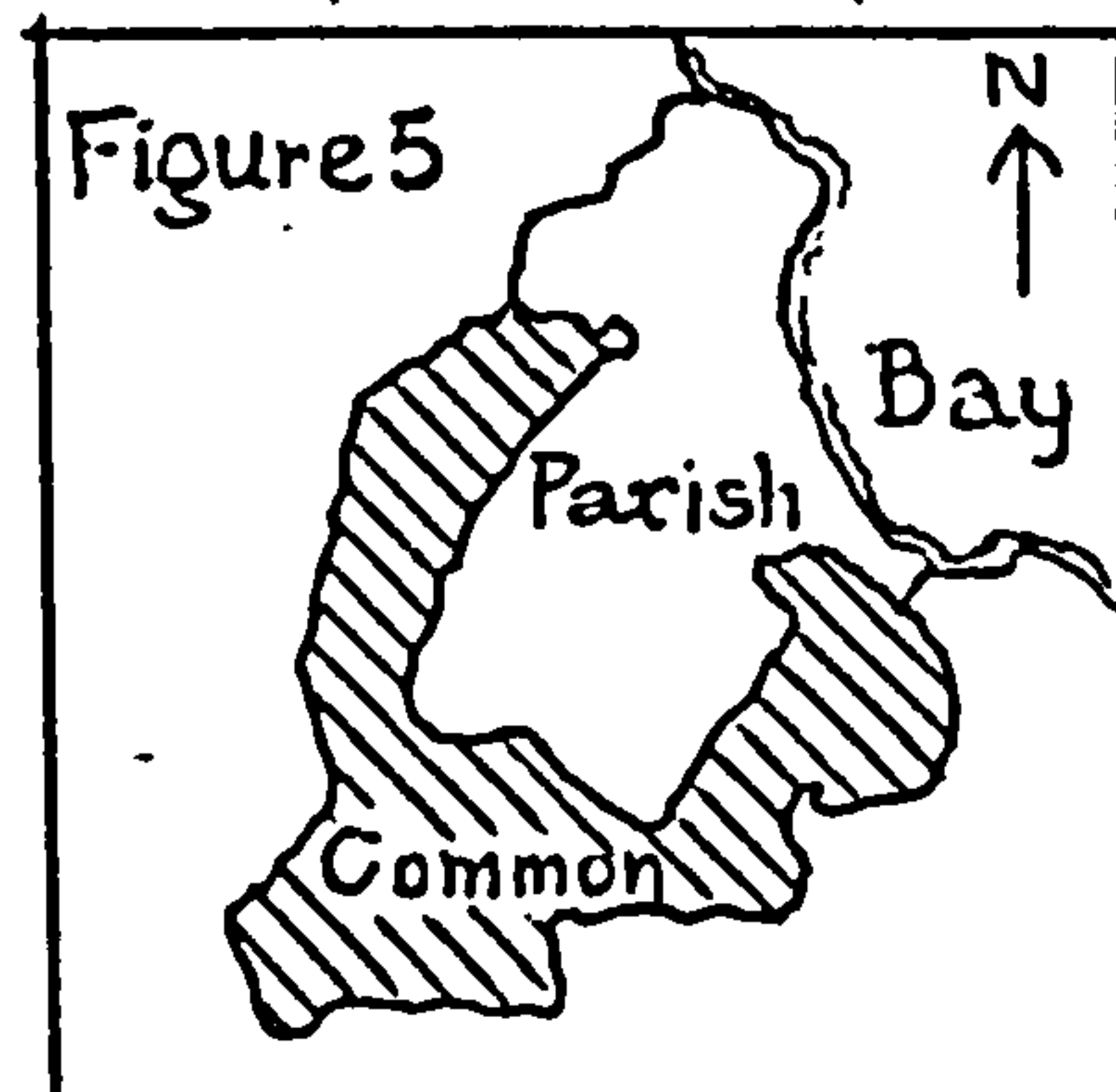
The movement to enclosure could well have been gradual and slow. The long wait for recognition of the fishing community is compatible with this. Part of the explanation could well lie in absorption of the shock of enclosure by the taking in of parts of the great belt of waste to the west, Fylingdales Common. An idea of the size of this waste can be gained

1. F.Kildill Robinson, Whitby: its Abbey, pp.260-261.

from figure 5. The development of assarting is seen in 1563 when one farmer pays for "one close.....or intake upon the moor", and another rents land "lately taken up from the waste.....called the intake". One of the most interesting involvements with the land in the immediate context is that of the fisherman Robert Moorsom, who in 1672 owned Kirk and Foulsike Closes, the second of which was a piece won from the moor, and almost as far from the sea as it is possible to be in the parish.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 5: The extent of  
Fylingdales Common <sup>2</sup>

(Approximate scale: 1" to 3 miles)



There is further but later evidence to support the theory that the village was formed out of the countryside, and perhaps gradually forced into being by changes in that countryside. The eighteenth century parish books contain numerous references to parcels of land which carry the names of members of fishing and seafaring families. For example, in 1754 residents in the Thorpe and Raw Quarters of the parish are to be found paying for "grounds" known as Grangers', Harrisons', Moorsoms', Richardsons', Robsons' and Storms': all names of people heavily involved with the sea and all but the first two present in 1563. Again, in 1751, the widow Isabel Harrison was paying rates for her stables, and the fisherman John Harrison for Storms' stables, down in Bay village itself. <sup>3</sup>

1. Borthwick, Robert Moorsom, Fylingdales, 1672.

2 Ordnance Survey, 1" Sheet 93, Scarborough, 1955.

3. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/3/2, Constables' Rate Book; J.S., Miscellany, transcript from Constables' Rate Book, 1751.



There are also references to the keeping of cows by villagers: the earliest of these concerns another Moorsom, in 1587; he was a fisherman. Further, some of the so-called grounds were large. Storms' Ground was shared by the widow Helm and the fisherman Edward Storm in 1754, and the total paid in rates was more than that borne by many of the farms. <sup>1</sup>

It is noticeable, moreover, in the early years of reconstitution, that marriages between Bay people and others in the parish were much commoner than they later became. It is explained in Chapter 7 that Bay developed into a highly endogamous community, but one of the marriage relationships created outside it becomes a source of difficulty in earlier reconstitution work: one of the very numerous sailors of the Bay family Bedlington acquired by marriage an interest in land at Raw, in 1735. Descendants remained there, and gave rise to a formidable confusion of names. They also added a typical Bay name, in the form "Bedlington's Lane", to the map of the inland parts of the parish. <sup>2</sup>

In all, there is no impression of a rift between maritime and agricultural communities, with rehearsals of prejudice proceeding on either side. The simple explanation may be that the two economies posed no threat or challenge to each other, but equally it may not be inappropriate to suggest that a tradition or awareness of common ancestry and origin survived. Indications of compatibility will be noticed again.

1. Borthwick, William Moorsom, Fylingdales, 1587; N.Y.C.R.O.,

PR/FY/3/2, Constables' Rate Book, 1754.

2. J.S., Miscellany, transcript of indenture of 1735; Fyl.Recon., Rymer, Bedlington; Ordnance Survey, 6" map NZ90NW, ref.939056.



(c) The Establishment of Openness A statement made by the seneschal of the manor of Fylingdales in 1985 describes the somewhat unusual property situation in Robin Hood's Bay. It runs: "There are a number of houses in the old part of Robin Hood's Bay held on a title which is known locally as long leasehold. These leasehold titles were frequently granted by the Cholmley family from the middle of the seventeenth century and are for either one thousand or nine hundred and ninety-nine years. In the majority of cases no rent has been paid or demanded within living memory and most of the leases cannot now be traced. In many cases these leasehold titles have been converted into freehold titles under the provisions of the Law of Property Act, 1925".<sup>1</sup> In that connection, indeed, it was common down to recent times to hear the phrase "as good as freehold". Dr. Young of Whitby wrote in 1817 that most of the Cholmley property in that town was held on leases for a thousand years. According to him, the process began in 1638, and each tenement was subject to an annual rent, if demanded. The amount was usually 2d. to 6d., but in one instance it was three peppercorns and in another two fat hens.<sup>2</sup> This writer was mainly concerned with Whitby, but the transcript of an indenture of 1638 confirms the inclusion of Fylingdales in the arrangement. In this document, 100 messuages, 30 tofts, 10 shops, 20 acres of arable and 8 of meadow in Whitby and Fylingdales were disposed of. Thirty-two items in Robin Hood's Bay were involved.<sup>3</sup> It is thus possible that some families lived continuously on a virtual freehold for the greater part of three centuries from that time.

1. Personal statement made to the author by Peter White, Notary Public, 11th April, 1985.

2. Young, History of Whitby, II, 1817, p.501.

3. Whitby Lit. and Phil., P. Burnett no.1784.



A historian of the village, the Rev. William Dalton, Congregational minister, wrote in 1909 that most of the old houses were still held on leases originally granted by Sir Hugh Cholmley, and by the Farsides, who had land west of the King's Beck. Mr. Dalton had intimate knowledge of the local scene. He had married in the village and his father-in-law was a shipmaster and shipowner whose family had been active in Bay maritime affairs for 150 years. His view was that the picturesque tangle of narrow lanes and huddled houses was the result of generations of people extending and infilling to meet the desire of young women with seafaring husbands to be near their mothers. <sup>1</sup> This is reasonable and normal, but another construction, in the light of the leasehold arrangements, is that the establishing of another home within the bounds of a virtual freehold was a very thrifty tactic. This expansion from within can be considered with the "shoots" of the cliff to explain how so small a place held so many people, and why in the late nineteenth century the spacious Bank Top became an attraction. No doubt some of the long-leasehold property went over the cliff, but there was at the heart of the community a group of people who enjoyed much independence and the advantage of being able to sub-let or sell that for which they had paid little or nothing. There existed in almost classic form the conditions that underlay the Great Rebuilding. <sup>2</sup> The Fylingdales rent roll of the Hugh Cholmley of 1679, at Whitsuntide, confirms the small sums involved. The total was £58.14s.6d., of which only 4s.6d. was for "Bay houses". This looks like a possible error, until the Martinmas returns show Bay producing 4s.0d. out of £58.9s.0d. <sup>3</sup> Although

1. W. Dalton, A Guide to Robin Hood's Bay, 1909 edn., p.24; Fyl. Recon., Dalton, Steel.

2. W.G. Hoskins, Local History in England, 1984 edn., p.190.

3. Whitby Lit. and Phil., P. Burnett no.2017A.



most of the original leases are now untraceable, references to the long terms are still to be found when properties are conveyed. The Wesleyan Chapel, for example, was recently converted to an exhibition centre, and among the deeds there was a record of the 1000-year lease on which the site was held in 1779 when the chapel was built. <sup>1</sup> Transcripts of transactions from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries frequently mention the full term of 1,000 years or the period unexpired. <sup>2</sup> As for the date of introduction of such leaseholds, the earliest example found is in a deed of 1737 concerning the house of Robert Trewhitt, master mariner, which had been purchased by his ancestor and namesake in 1638, the very year of the major disposal quoted by Young of Whitby (see page 22). In the matter of cost, there were peppercorn or money rents, the latter consisting of annual payments ranging from 1d. to 1s.4d, if called for. <sup>3</sup> It was a feature of all agreements, however, that all manorial rights were to remain with the lord of the manor.

The landowning Farsides followed the example of the Cholmleys, from whom they themselves had acquired property in the eighteenth year of Charles II. Their disposals were made on terms similar to those devised by Sir Hugh and his heirs. The arrangement accepted by the fisherman Robert Allison, was one payment of £15, and sixpence a year thereafter if demanded. <sup>4</sup>

After the basic terms, a second important aspect of the leases is the way they illustrate the process of infilling which contributed to the form

1. Documents examined by courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Labistour, The Exhibition Centre, Robin Hood's Bay.

2. Whitby Lit. and Phil., P. Burnett, nos. 695, 178, 919, 13F.1814, 13F.1838, 13F.1847 and 2234.

3. Ibid., nos. 2053 and 1677.

4. Ibid., nos. 13F.1817, and 2331.



of the village. Jacob Storm - he of the Memoirs - transcribed typical deeds relating to a sale in 1739 of a property of which his brother-in-law eventually became the owner, towards the end of the nineteenth century. From these it is evident that in 1739 one Edward Robinson had divided the original house among his sons, and from one of them it passed to the shipmaster Robert Richardson, who sold it for £130 in 1734, by which time the garth had "a new dwelling house therein erected".<sup>1</sup> There is no evidence of any restriction being placed on this kind of development: all that the agreements reveal in this respect is that rent might be charged for any other houses built on the site.<sup>2</sup> The sum stated in such cases for any additional dwelling is 1s.0d, but this exaction may have been avoided by such as Robert Trewhitt, who in 1737 made an agreement with a mason for the conversion of his two houses on one site into three.<sup>3</sup>

A third aspect of the leasehold documents that is of interest is the repetition of long-standing names, including, in addition to those already mentioned, Bedlington, Harrison, Moorsom, Rickinson, Skerry, Storm and Trueman. The idea must be entertained that one of the factors operating in the tying of these people to the village, in the persisting of certain names there, and thus in the forming of the nature of local society, was the advantage they enjoyed in respect of property. In every case, moreover, where the occupation of a person directly involved in a transaction is given, he is either a fisherman or a sailor.

This economic advantage is a fourth element to be perceived in the records of transactions. The rents were small, but their fuller effect is more clearly exemplified in such a case as that of John Cockerill who,

1. J.S., Miscellany, and Fyl.Recon., Knightley Smith, Storm.

2. Whitby Lit. and Phil., P.Burnett, nos.13F.1838 and 13F.1870.

3. Ibid., nos.2053 and 1677.



having married the fisherman's widow Jane Skerry, sold for £70, in 1761, the house which she had inherited, and which had cost 1d. a year since the eighth year of Queen Anne. <sup>1</sup> Conditions might favour the creation of a property market through which credit and investment - perhaps in a fishing boat - might be financed; or saving might be assisted. Thus it is significant to see, later in this essay, prosperity in shipping in the nineteenth century coming to particular households of families where there was a connection between long-standing names and "long leasehold". One such household was that of Thomas Harrison (Jacob Storm's grandfather), whose direct ancestor and namesake, a fisherman, acquired his house in 1685. Another was headed by the fisherman (and future shipowner) Matthew Storm and his wife Martha; at the end of the nineteenth century, and shortly after their marriage, they were paying 1s.0d. a year for property held on a Farside lease. <sup>2</sup>

Finally, concerning the consequences of the changes in tenure, the effect of a degree of economic independence on the spirit or ethic of a community is not to be ignored. The tied cottage belonged to another sort of world. Figuratively, fishermen and sailors are to be seen behind the documentation, buying and selling leases, enlarging the properties, building new houses in the gardens and taking tenants. <sup>3</sup> People who had undertaken to depend on the sea, and not on the landlord's fields, for a living, acquired the additional independence that came with "as good as freehold". This is one of the most important facets of life in the village.

1. Whitby Lit. and Phil., P.Burnett, XII, no.1597.

2. J.S., Miscellany/Fyl.Recon., Harrison and Storm; Whitby Lit. and Phil., P.Burnett, no.13F,1980.

3. Whitby Lit. and Phil., P.Burnett, nos.2234-2238.



There must follow the question, to how many people did the new relative independence come to apply? It would be of great value to know, in fact, to what extent the community under consideration might fairly be characterised as "property-owning", with all the social implications of that condition. Therefore it is necessary to attempt an estimate of the number of households, at least, that might have been affected by the introduction of "long leasehold", and this information may be drawn from the parish register, with some assurance. In its pages, between 1723 and 1759, "householders", who may in fact have been holders of the long leases, are distinguished at burial. <sup>1</sup> There are 83 of these named and so described, but in such a long span of years there is time for sons to succeed fathers, and when the list is checked against the family reconstitutions, to avoid double-counting - for there was much repetition of names - there are 78, and only two about whose exact identity there is some uncertainty. There could have been a few rather elderly people who inherited a house before 1723 and continued in occupation of that property beyond 1759, thus eluding the count, but most "householders" have in all probability been detected, and their number is very substantial. It is of equal importance that 51 of the 78 should belong to the 34 long-term families known in this essay as the Majority, all but one of which were well-established by 1759. <sup>2</sup>

Complete certainty about exactly what the term "householder" meant in Fylingdales cannot be claimed, but the supposition that those so designated were probably "long-leaseholders" derives greater reliability from information in the poll books. In 1807, for example, there were a few Bay residents enjoying the franchise, but only one of them<sup>m</sup> had a

1. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/1.

2. See page xi.



qualifying freehold property actually located in the village, out of a total of 43 electors in the parish. In 1751 there were 150 ratepayers in Bay and Fisherhead Quarters together, and the likelihood is that many of them were occupying premises added in the course of a century to the buildings and plots of the leaseholders, who might well be described as "quasi-freeholders".<sup>1</sup> If the last did indeed number 78, then the next chapter will show that they may well have represented the bulk of the population. They were an important social and economic element.

The details of his property in the will of Francis Storm, in 1738, reveal something of the complexities that were arising with the infilling and converting. There is "the cellar wherein my drink standeth, together with the garth or frontstead above my mother's house.....the chamber wherein Isaac Hornby my under-tenant now lives, together with the half of the garret over it, and also half the kitchen wherein we brew....the house wherein my daughter.....now lives together with half of the garret over it and also half the kitchen wherein we brew.....the house wherein I live.....together with half the garret above the said house.....the chambers over the house wherein I live together with half the garret over them".<sup>2</sup> Long leases were helping to create a tangle, which is today an attraction for tourists.

The broader context is economic, or more properly commercial: a stock of valuable assets had come into being. Property could be used to secure credit, for investment in boats or ships, and this may have been a major factor in growth of the fishing and in the development from that to ownership of trading vessels. Socially, there was a large group that was not proletarian.

1. Yorkshire Poll Book, 1807; J.S., Miscellany, transcript from Constables' Rate Book, 1751.

2. Borthwick, Francis Storm, Fylingdales, 1738.



Explanation of the disposal of property by Cholmleys might cast some light on the condition of Bay, but it does not come readily. According to the story of Sir Hugh's life, he had taken on an estate in debt in 1626, and by 1636 he had become prosperous. J.T.Cliffe quotes him as an example of the successful property manager. It is possible that he was ridding himself of the cost of property repairs. There is an echo here from page 6 of the "great decay" in the village. It is also to be wondered why such long leases were thought appropriate. Freehold would have met the case, except that there were manorial rights and the franchise to consider. A shorter, repairing lease would therefore seem suitable, unless the inhabitants were thought too poor for this, in which case Hugh Cholmley might be credited with a desire to revitalise the economy. Charlton accepts this view of him and gives reason. He had returned from exile in 1649, having changed sides in the Civil War. He compounded for his estate and immediately "set about an alum work at Saltwick", a mile down the coast from Whitby. This attracted people to the town, and they were granted leases on advantageous terms. <sup>1</sup>

Robin Hood's Bay may have been considered a prospective source of labour for the servicing of the alum works by sea, and Cholmley's judgment may have been that the interests of virtual freeholders would coincide with his own. He is an enigma: from the memoirs he is brave and magnanimous, but the descendant who edited them may not have wished to represent him in any other light. His change of heart in the Civil War he attributed to the Parliamentarians' disregard of "the preservation of true religion". This explanation is not universally accepted. <sup>2</sup> The image of a

1. N.Cholmley ed., Memoirs of Sir Hugh Cholmley, 1787, p.441; J.T.Cliffe, The Yorkshire Gentry from the Reformation to the Civil War, 1969, p.153; L.Charlton, History of Whitby, 1779, p.317.

2. D.N.B., Cholmley, Hugh, 1600-1657.



public-spirited magnate is however compatible with Cholmley's work to improve Whitby harbour. Dr.Young saw in him "the laurels of the hero, entwined with the graces of the Christian". <sup>1</sup>

A look at the Hearth Taxes may reveal something of the condition of Robin Hood's Bay, prior to property disposals. Since the village people cannot be separated readily from those in the country districts of the parish, in the seventeenth century, the economic situation of the Majority group might be used as a test; even with this, however, there is difficulty. There were 55 parishioners exempted out of 167 in 1673, and 33 out of 168 in 1674. If the idea can be entertained that exemption of leaseholders paying less than £1 a year was applied by the officials, the leaseholders of Bay, with their small or negligible rents, could appear to be poor. <sup>2</sup> On the other hand, if it was true poverty that was recorded, the village, as represented by the Majority, had a disproportionately large share of it, with 18 out of 33 exempted people bearing the appropriate names. Moreover it had only five of the 22 two-hearth houses in the parish, and only two above that level. <sup>3</sup> Nevertheless the Majority group was growing. Between 1656 and 1674 its cumulative natural increase was 55, and the number of constituent families rose from 20 to 26. By 1690 two more names were present and the cumulative natural increase since 1656 was 135, despite the loss of ten men at sea. <sup>4</sup> These numbers suggest economic improvement, which runs contrary to the idea that the landlord was unburdening himself of a liability when he granted the long leases. It

1. G.Young, History of Whitby, II, 1817, p.838.

2. P.R.O.: E.179/216/462, E.179/261/32; D.Hey, Family History and Local History in England, 1984, p.68.

3. P.R.O., E.179/261/32.

4. N.Y.C.R.O., Fylingdales Parish Registers, and Fyl.Recon.



might be cautiously concluded that the village was not as poor as on paper it might appear to have been, and that while there was no conspicuous prosperity, the stage was set, with the property arrangements, for improvement.

Whatever the motives of the lord of the manor, their ultimate effect was to allow the village to seek its own fortune, enjoying over the years much freedom from rent burdens and supervision. The independence gained might be deemed the greater for reliance on the sea rather than on an agricultural estate for a living.

The situation that arose was summarised pithily in 1838, when several of the oldest inhabitants gave evidence in the case of Cholmley against Farside, concerning the disputed right to take materials from the beach. Thomas Cole's chief recollection of former times was that Robin Hood's Bay "was a droll town in those days; everyone did as they liked".<sup>1</sup> The truth of the nonchalant assessment is witnessed by a letter written in 1832 to E.G.J.Farside in London. The subject was encroachment on Farside land at Bay, taking the form of pig styes, fences, outbuildings, various unspecified obstructions and "binks". These last were for drying fish and were removed at the end of a season. Twenty-nine people who had made "binks" were listed, and every one of these encroachers was of the long-term Majority; fourteen came from the five Core families, with centuries of experience of independent action behind them.<sup>2</sup>

It might be added that people were still doing "as they liked" in modern times. In 1923 Board of Trade notices were posted at the village, prohibiting the customary removal of sand, shingle and stone from the foreshore for the repair of houses and roads. There was a question in Parliament about this.<sup>3</sup>

1. Whitby Lit. and Phil., P.Burnett: no.2156; no.F.1947.

2. Ibid., no.F.1947.

3. Yorkshire Post, 18th April, 1923.



It may now be seen that this community, carved out of the countryside and compacted by the sea into intimacy, had come to represent the very antithesis of the classic seignorial village. This condition, together with the proximity of Whitby, must go some way towards explaining how a large, highly-integrated seafaring population was able to grow by natural increase and inward migration within a maritime place that did not even possess a harbour. An incoming sailor might marry there and solve his housing problem at one and the same time, and so add himself to the numerous natives who had never really experienced such a problem.



## CHAPTER TWO: POPULATION

There is little information about population size before Census years begin in 1801; so the discovery of upwards of 200 sailors in the village in the mid-eighteenth century suggests that the number of people then present in this place of late settlement was larger than might have been suspected.<sup>1</sup> Although parish registers are not an ideal basis for estimates, as argued by Hollingsworth, there is little alternative to their use.<sup>2</sup> In the event, the estimates, tentative though they have to be, seem to justify the ploy: it happens that in Fylingdales, to assume a steady long-term growth to 1801, when other information is not available, would be to miss a great deal of interest, and this applies not only to the parish but to Robin Hood's Bay itself. On investigation, direction and sometimes magnitude of shorter-term movements are seen to have a little reliability that might therefore apply to the longer term. This is better argued when fluctuations are related to the state of the alum industry in Chapter 3.

Registration appears to have been reasonably thorough, before 1814, with much information given that favours reconstitution. Down to 1711 relationship with a parent or spouse is given, at burial, in about half of all cases, and from that date it is almost invariably present. Ages and occupations are also included with the burials from 1778, and dates of birth accompany baptisms from that year. Parentage is given throughout the register of baptisms. Places of residence appear with both baptisms and

1. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, 1747-1749.

2. T.Hollingsworth, Historical Demography, 1969, p.81, and 'The Quality of the Data in Historical Demography', Daedalus, LCVII, no.2, Spring 1968, pp.422-425.



burials from 1734, and accompany marriages in the first decade (1653-1660) and then regularly again from 1711. The difficulty that arises in 1814 is that for nine years the registers were not well kept, but this comes after the onset of the widespread deterioration detected by Krause, and fortunately at a time when the Census is available to make an attempt at adjustment possible, later in the chapter. <sup>1</sup>.

There are particular reasons for thinking that the register may be reliable before 1800. One is that the village was remarkably compact, and the parish books and the registers frequently show the clerks, and occasionally the incumbent, living there. The clerks gained their living on land, but most of them were firmly related by marriage or descent, or both, to the large maritime element. <sup>2</sup> The compactness would be difficult to exaggerate: the area of the village (excluding the modern Bank Top) is about six acres, and an estimate of population in 1800 of about 900 produces a density of 150 to the acre. <sup>3</sup> Most vital events, it is contended, would not escape attention. A second reason is that the population was large enough for the recording of events to become a matter of routine, but not so great that the duty might be burdensome. Over two centuries there was an average of 6.5 vital events per month. Thirdly, the only clear loss of registrations before Census years is in the decade 1691-1700, for which there are seven years of transcripts. Finally, the Methodists, numbered by the incumbent at 53 in 1764, appear in the register like the rest. <sup>4</sup> The pioneers of the Bay Chapel are there, and

1. J.T.Krause, 'The Changing Adequacy of English Registration, 1690-1837', Population in History, Glass and Eversley eds., 1965, pp.379-393.

2. Fyl.Recon., Robinson and Thompson.

3. Ordnance Survey, 25-inch Sheets NZ9404-9504 and 9405-9505.

4. Borthwick, Fylingdales Visitation Return, 1764.



their families. Nonconformist registers do not help with Robin Hood's Bay in the period of this study.

A test of the usefulness of the registers is that it is possible, in the process of identifying occupational dynasties in Robin Hood's Bay, to construct genealogies without encountering special difficulties other than that frequently presented by the great numbers of inhabitants bearing the same names. The extreme example of this often bewildering aspect of continuity is that of the 23 fishermen or sailors, down to the present century, called Isaac Storm. That these people can be placed by means of family relationships revealed mainly in the parish registers is some measure of the quality of the source. <sup>1</sup> There were 72 members of this family in the village, according to the 1841 Census, and if the total is adjusted, by means of the reconstitution, for men at sea - they were fishermen or sailors without exception - it rises to 93, comprising nearly 10% of the estimated village total of 940. <sup>2</sup> There are many large families like this, of long residence, and their presence suggests that a factor alluded to by Williams in his study of Gosforth may have operated: one inhabitant of that place made the matter explicit when he described how concerned the "real old families" were to have their children's presence in the village officially recorded. <sup>3</sup> In the case of Robin Hood's Bay, the "real old families" for this essay are largely covered by the Majority, which does not include every family of long residence but which nevertheless contained 48% of the inhabitants in the 1841 Census population. <sup>4</sup>

1. Fyl.Recon., Storm.

2. P.R.O., H.O.107,1265.

3. W.M.Williams, The Sociology of an English Village: Gosforth, 1969, p.82.

4. P.R.O., H.O.107,1265.



The first practical steps towards rough but serviceable estimates are:

- (a) To make the decadal totals of baptisms the basis of profiles of population fluctuation, after the subtraction of extra-parochial people from the register; if a complete Period 2 (i.e. 1721-1780) is to be obtained for Bay, the projection back of residence in the village from 1734 (when it is first given in the register) has to be attempted; <sup>1</sup>
- (b) The securing of the profiles of fluctuations to as reliable population totals as can be found, which means in this case using the Census totals from 1801, after they have been adjusted to take account of great numbers of men estimated to have been at sea at Census time;
- (c) The application of a scale to the profiles;
- (d) A correction for the under-registration from 1814 to 1822
- (e) The use of the Hearth Tax and a return of communicants as a check on the validity of the early estimates;

Each of these steps is discussed in turn.

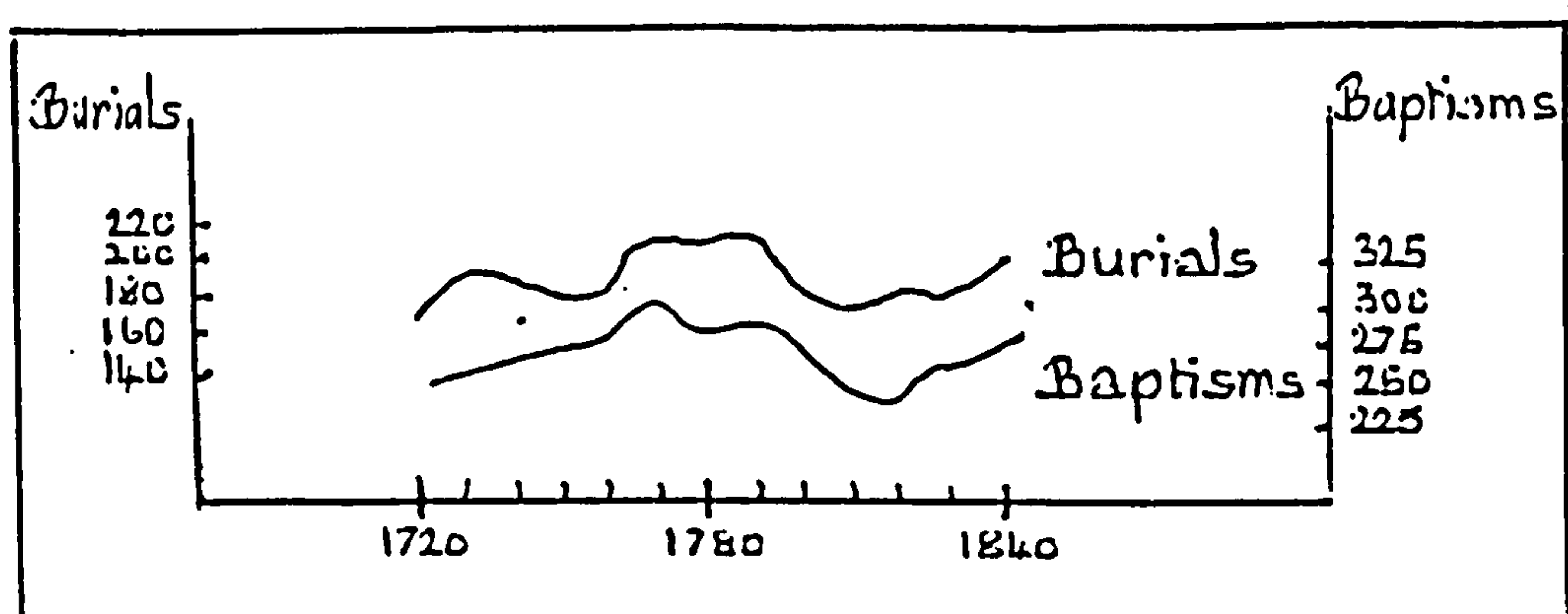
(a) The baptisms have been preferred as trend indicators. Hoskins maintains that can give a "fairly close" estimate, with a multiplier. <sup>2</sup> The burials, being fewer, increase the risk of error, although the general picture they present in figure 6 on page 37 is not strikingly different. To attempt more - say with natural increase - in a parish where, as the next chapter will show, there were surprising contrasts of migration and immobility, would not necessarily lead to better estimates.

1. See page xi.

2. W.G.Hoskins, Local History in England, 1984 edn., p.200.



Figure 6: Baptisms and burials compared, as bases for population estimates: a generalised view.



Dates of birth, as well as baptism, are given with great consistency from March, 1778, but for population trends the use of the baptisms, with which work has to begin, was continued after a trial from 1778 to 1810 revealed no disparity in the results.

Obviously, little idea of the number of children dying unbaptised emerges from putting together registers of baptisms and burials. No custom that could be applied to calculations is to be drawn from the early, isolated remarks like, "born and buried" and "buried by the women". In Chapter 6, Section (f), it is explained that the peculiar, shipping-related seasonality gives rise to the likelihood that baptisms were often delayed long enough to hide infant mortality as high as that suspected by Hollingsworth.<sup>1</sup> However, it is held, circumspectly, that securing the later end of the baptism-based curve of estimates to a total that has a measure of reliability may have a corrective effect - as well as serving the same general purpose as would a multiplier.

1. T.Hollingsworth, 'The Quality of the Data in Historical Demography', loc.cit., p.415-430.



Before decadal baptisms are totalled, two adjustments are needed. One is the removal of extra-parochial people and the other is the projecting of residence in Bay back to 1721 from 1734 (when it is first indicated in the registers), to make a more useful set of statistics for Period 2 (1721-1780).

Non-Fylingdales baptisms almost always came from an industrial area, the Peak alum works, near the high cliffs at the seaward end of the southern boundary of the parish. These were probably established early in the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup> They were just inside Scalby parish, in Cloughton chapelry, and these two places were respectively ten and seven miles from the works.<sup>2</sup> Fylingdales parish church, on the other hand, was only two miles away. After 1734 Peak begins to be mentioned in the registers, and the related baptisms have to be subtracted from the totals. The labour force at the works probably had an effect on Fylingdales registrations before that, but the difference made by the Peak population from mid-eighteenth century, when production was sometimes considerable, is not so great that the situation in the earlier period should be regarded with more than slight caution.

As for the second adjustment, it is not essential, but it is useful, to project residence in Bay back to 1721: two more decades, making a complete Period 2, give a much better set of estimates. If the information in one register is collated with that from another there is little difficulty in attempting to locate many people in the baptismal register, before 1734. The family reconstitutions can also be brought into use to

1. G.Young, History of Whitby, II, 1817, p.810.

2. Ordnance Survey, 1:50 000, Sheet 94, ref.973016.

provide a useful check in this respect, especially when the genealogical information (from, for example, the wills and the records of property transactions) is brought into the investigation. There is help too from the Whitby Muster Rolls, where men of middle age and above are concerned; from 1747 the Rolls give abode and often age of sailors, many of then Robin Hood's Bay men. <sup>1</sup> Success in this procedure depends of course on the assumption that people did not change residence within the parish frequently. There was certainly a relatively static Majority element in Bay. In the event, the attempt at adjustment proved worthwhile: in the figure 7, on the next page, even with a wide margin for error, the number of baptisms allocated to the Bay Majority element at this time, that is before 1734, drew attention to an important time of economic growth. <sup>2</sup>

The decadal totals of baptisms for the parish and the Majority, for the whole period, are in table 1; those for Bay start in 1721-30, and the Peak results have been subtracted from the parish's from 1751-60.

Table 1: Totals of baptisms by decade, 1651-1850.

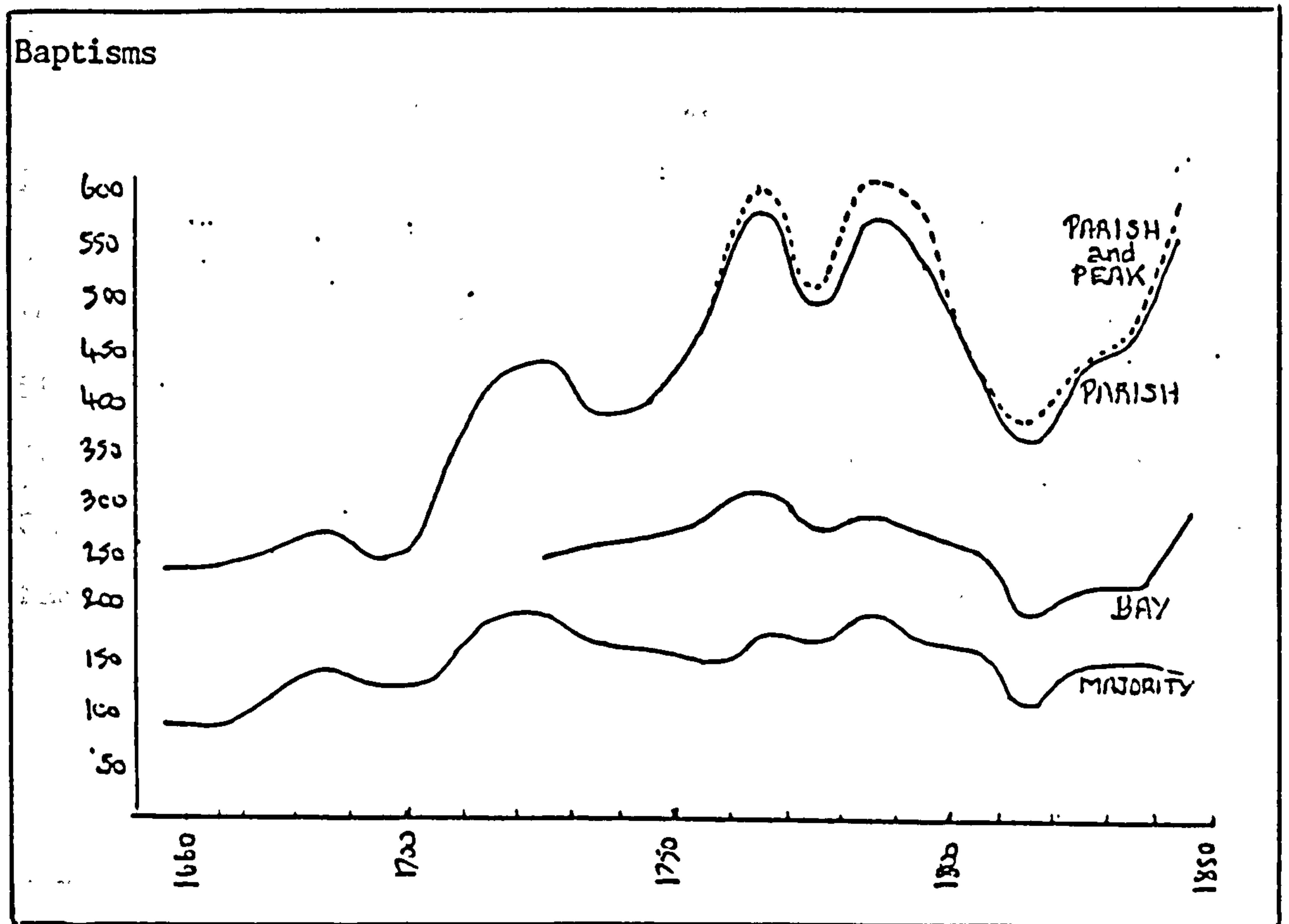
	Peak	Parish	Bay	Maj.		Peak	Parish	Bay	Maj.
1651-60		231		90	1751-60	5	470	276	147
1661-70		246		87	1761-70	25	581	318	172
1671-80		252		114	1771-80	28	496	273	162
1681-90		270		138	1781-90	33	576	287	182
1691-1700		248		126	1791-1800	48	539	267	159
1701-10		307		134	1801-10	0	442	244	156
1711-20		422		182	1811-20	23	365	185	113
1721-30		442	250	186	1821-30	7	430	227	144
1731-40		395	263	158	1831-40	13	465	230	150
1741-50		404	268	155	1841-50	33	565	298	143

In table 1 the first decade, a "short" one, has been augmented by 43%. The profiles of hypothetical population fluctuation derived from these totals are the content of figure 7 on the following page.

1. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, 1747-1760.
2. See p.92.



Figure 7: Profiles of hypothetical population fluctuation derived from totals of baptisms per decade, 1651-1850.



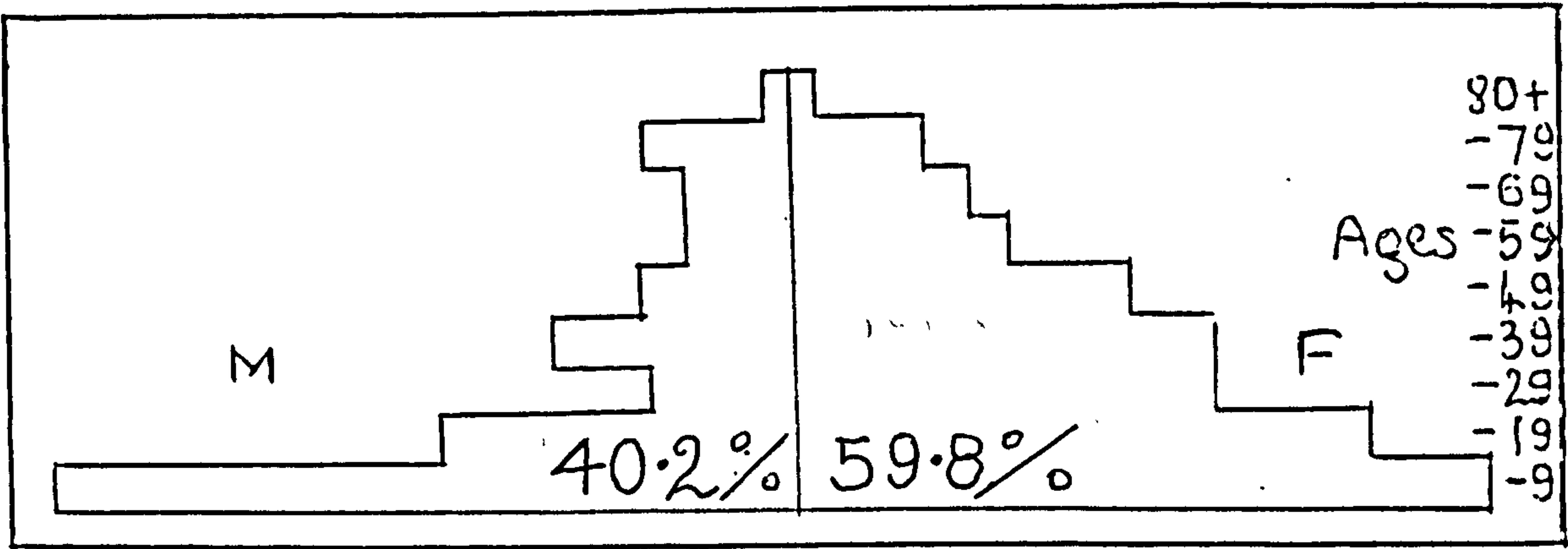
(b) Baptism-based curves in figure 7 can be tied to Census totals, if the latter are adjusted first to take account of men at sea, of whom there were many. In 1841 there were in the Census 233 more females than males in Fylingdales parish as a whole, and when the population of Robin Hood's Bay is separated from that of the parish (as it can be, in that year, for the first time) it has 199 of that excess number.<sup>1</sup> It is easy to find more than 100 sailors and fishermen lost in home waters and abroad in Bay's own

1. P.R.O., H.O.107,1265

list of missing men down to 1850. <sup>1</sup> While this loss must have had some effect on population, its size hardly accounts for the parish's 707 males and 861 females in 1801. <sup>2</sup> The only evidence of excessive male mortality about that time is sixteen sailors and fishermen lost in the two preceding decades.

The Bay population has a striking asymmetry in the 1851 Census, and it is probable that over a long period before that date it would have differed little from the shape in figure 8, had a count been made. <sup>3</sup> In the parish register, throughout the whole period of study, by contrast, 51% of baptisms were of males and 49% of females. The subsequent distortion, therefore, must be due to men being out of the village at Census time, and there may be no great error in assuming that males and females should have been present in about equal numbers.

Figure 8: Population pyramid in 1851



1. W.Conyers and H.Streeting, A Register of the Missing Seamen of Robin Hood's Bay, n.d.

2. Population Return, vol.II (Enumeration), 1801, p.430.

3. P.R.O., H.O.107,2734.



A crude method of determining the number of men possibly absent from the Census totals, therefore, is to double the number of females and then subtract the Census population from this total. This is the starting point for calculations, and the discussion of them, in Appendix 3. The following estimates are obtained. The increment of 10.6 % is explained on page 283.

Table 2: Population estimates for Census years, including adjustment for people away at sea <sup>1</sup>

	CENSUS		ESTIMATES		
	M	F	Total	Parish	Bay
1801	707	861	1,568 + 10.6% =	1,734	
1811	670	689	1,599 "	= 1,768	
1821	758	944	1,702 "	= 1,882	
1831	660	875	1,535 "	= 1,697	
1841			1,597	1,794	940
1851			1,765	1,916	1,022

(c) To make these results usable in conjunction with population curves, a scale has been devised, as shown on the pull-out figure 10 at the end of this chapter. On it, the 1841-50 end of the Bay curve has been given the amended Census total of 1,022, and that of the parish a total of 1,916.

1. Population Return, 1801, vol.II, p.430; Population Return, 1811, p.405; Population Return, 1821, p.405; Population Return, vol.II , 1831, p.786; Population Return, P.R.O., H.O.107,1265; P.R.O., H.O.107,2734.

The vertical scale was derived from the difference of 894 between the Bay and parish totals, and the Census totals were then plotted. Despite the improbable constancy imposed on the diagram by the scale, the procedure gains some validity from the closeness of the axes at X. There is further validity in that, after all the adjusting of Census totals, the fall in population from 1821 to 1831 is about 170 on the scale, which is remarkably close to the 167 attributed in the 1831 population return to the departure of alum workers since the previous count. <sup>1</sup>

The feature of figure 10, at the end of the chapter, that clamours for attention, however, is the great discrepancy between adjusted Census total and baptism-based estimate for the parish in 1821. The next step is to attempt to make this good.

(d) The under-registration of baptisms can be suspected as soon as a comparison between the two estimates becomes available, that is to say in the decade 1801-10. By the next decade there is something definitely wrong. This comes at a time when unreliability of registers is open to general suspicion. <sup>2</sup> Krause puts the start of deterioration near the year 1780, yet at the beginning of the nineteenth century the Fylingdales register reveals great diligence on the part of the registrar. For example, in the five years 1803-07 there were four Bay baptisms out of every five performed or recorded on weekdays, and the remotest parts of Fylingdales were served in the same conscientious manner. The birth-to-

1. Population Return, vol.II, 1831, p.786 n. .

2. J.T.Krause, 'The Changing Adequacy of English Registration, 1690-1837', Population in History, Glass and Eversley ed., pp.379-393.



baptism interval was down to an average of three weeks. The confirmation of under-registration in the subsequent period, however, comes not just from the fewer entries in the register from 1814 to 1822, but from the last years of reconstitution, when an unprecedented number of unregistered people, including members of the long-established families, begins to be named in the Census, in the marriage register, and (on the baptism of their children) in the baptismal register. The memorial inscriptions in the churchyard of Old St.Stephen's have sufficient detail of ages and dates of birth to place the birth of some of these people in the relevant period, but a more specific test is provided by the marriage register, in which there are 32 parties to Core marriages from 1835 for whom there is no place of baptism in any local register, a circumstance at variance with the endogamous character of this group. <sup>1</sup>

If the vertical distance is taken in figure 10 from the Census total of 1821 to the trough of the parish curve, the under-registration appears to be of the order of 34%, to correct which crudely there has to be an augmentation of 52%. This, applied to the hypothetical Bay population, produces the effect of an increase in numbers, for a time, moving the 1811-20 estimate towards the total of "about 1,000" given in this decade by Young, the Whitby historian. <sup>2</sup> The implications of this altered shape of the Bay curve are more fully discussed in the chapters on the alum trade and the shipping business; so the brief justification here for the alteration is that the new crest rises between Young's statement that the alum trade in 1817 was climbing out of depression, and the well-recorded Whitby shipping depression that coincided with the departure of the 167 Fylingdales alum workers between 1821 and 1831. <sup>3</sup>

1. See Chapter 7, Section (b), on marriage horizons.

2. G.Young, History of Whitby, II, 1817, p.647.

3. Ibid., p.817; Yorkshire Gazette, 16th February, 1828.

(e) To check on the adjustments to the figures that have been made so far, it is useful to look at the few estimates that may be attempted for the other end of the period. One Hearth Tax assessment for the whole parish in 1662, for example, lists 99 payers, but there is no list of the discharged to make it useful. Indeed, if that number of householders were used by itself in conjunction with the total of 513 parish communicants of 1676, the product would be a highly improbable 5.2 communicants per household. Regrettably, for 1670 there survives only a list of the 49 discharged.<sup>1</sup> If these fragments are put together, however, the situation begins to resemble that in two more reliable-looking lists of 1673 and 1674.<sup>2</sup> In the former year there were 107 payers and 50 exempt, and in the next, 135 and 33. There is an appreciable variation here over a short time, but the mean total of 162.5 "households" may be a helpful number with which to work. If to it were applied the estimate from pull-out figure 10 of just under 900 for the population of the whole parish, there would be an average of 5.5 occupants per household. This is higher than Hoskins' 5 and Laslett's 4.75 for the mean size of household, which would give parish populations of 812 and 771 respectively.<sup>3</sup> There is reason to think that in Bay - as opposed to the parish - occupancy may have been high, however, because reconstitutions tend to show that the maritime people may have had the largest families.<sup>4</sup> Thus the estimate of about 900 inhabitants may not be improbable. Some sort of cross-check on this may be essayed for 1676. For that year a count of 513 communicants and 18

1. P.R.O., E.179/215/451; Bodleian MS., Tanner 150; P.R.O., E.179/216/461.

2. P.R.O.: E.179/216/462; E.179/261/32.

3. W.G.Hoskins, Local History in England, 3rd edn., 1984, p.198;

P.Laslett, 'Mean Household Size in England Since the Sixteenth Century', Household and Family in Past Time, P.Laslett and R.Wall eds., 1972, p.126.

4. See Chapter 8, Section (b).



"other persuasions" gives a total of 770 persons if Bradley's multiplier of 1.45 is applied to it. Hoskins advises adding on two-thirds with this source, a calculation which would result in a population of 885.<sup>1</sup> The four possible totals of 812, 771, 770 and 885 have been plotted in figure 10 and it will be seen that all fall within a small rectangle lying across the parish curve. If the curve were rotated to meet the 1801 Census point shown in the figure, but on an axis retained within the small rectangle, the account of parish population would change only slightly.

The Hearth Tax does not help with Bay, however. It receives no separate mention, but an attempt to distinguish it is essential to the present enquiry. One possibility might have been to look specifically for sailors and fishermen in the register, had not the recording of occupations before 1778 been meagre and irregular. It is fortunate, therefore, that amid the dearth of such information there is to be found a substantial group of families displaying continuity of residence and occupation, in many cases, back even to when the parish register transcripts begin in 1600.<sup>2</sup> The 34 names in question - known here as the Majority - were chosen for their occurrence over many years and for their continuous and almost exclusive involvement in maritime work. These criteria are in practice virtually inseparable: it is difficult to find a family of long standing whose major interest was not the sea. Unfortunately a few important names had to be omitted, however, because they could not be used without confusion. The outstanding case is the unusually-named Huntrods, amongst whom there were so many Williams that the family defied reconstitution before 1700. Some names selected were not present for the

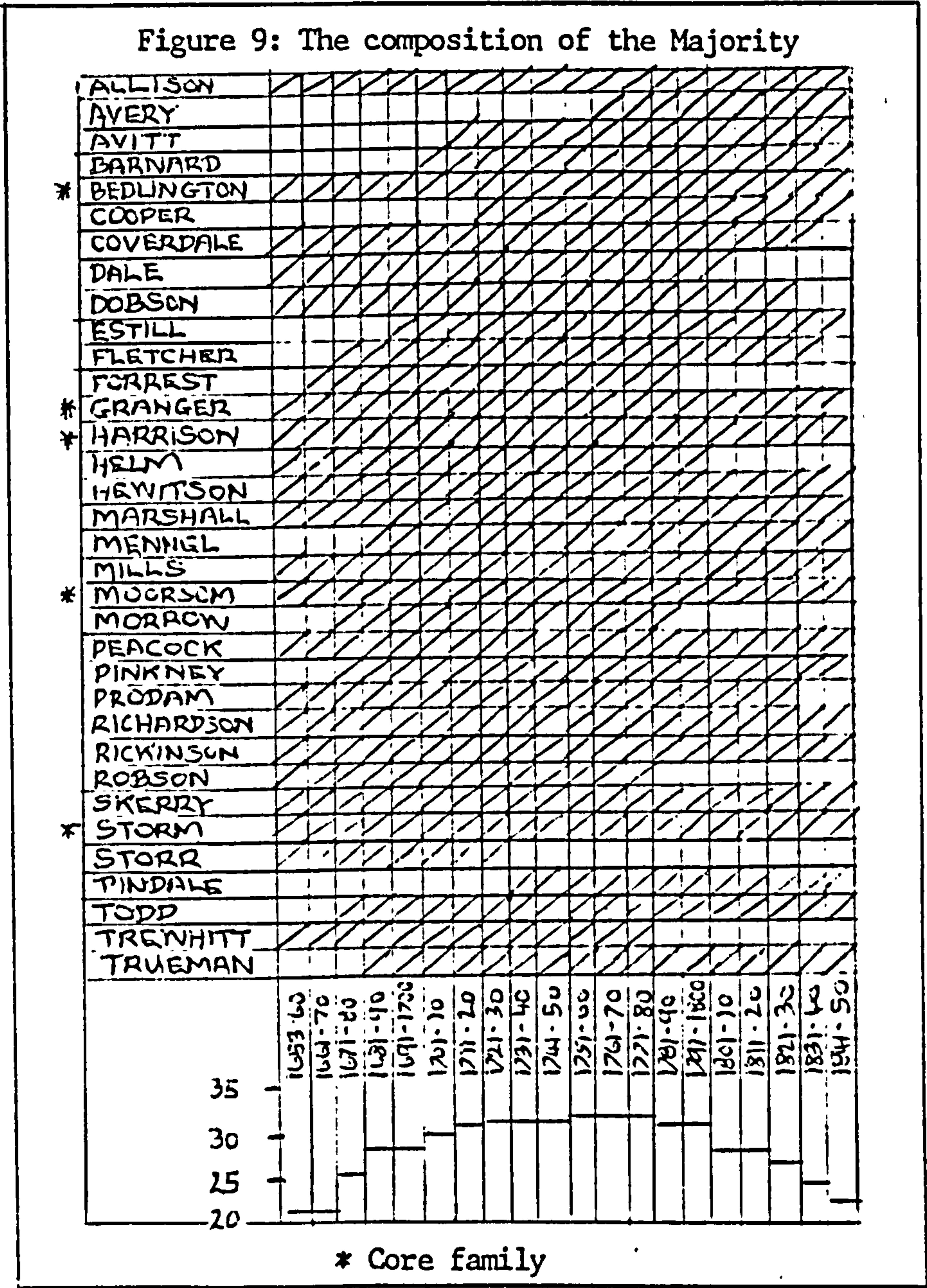
1. L.Bradley, A Glossary for Local Population Studies, 1978, p.50;

W.G.Hoskins, Local History in England, 3rd edn., 1984, p.204.

2. Borthwick, Fylingdales parish register transcripts, 1600-1640.

entire period, but the group comprises the larger part of the long-term population and is still well represented in the area today, as the Middlesbrough Area Telephone Directory (no.234) still testifies. The Majority made up the bulk of the Fisherhead population: in that Quarter of Bay in 1751, 26 ratepaters out of 36 were members, and 27 of the names were still present in 1841. The membership is to be seen in figure 9.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 9: The composition of the Majority



1. J.S., Miscellany, transcript of Overseers' Rate Book, 1751



At the heart of this group, giving it great cohesion, especially through intermarriage, were five families of the Core, those marked in figure 9 with asterisks. Their numbers in the early years of reconstitution, including the last to arrive, Harrison and Granger, suggest that some had been present for several generations.<sup>1</sup> They were not the only strongly maritime people but they were numerous and their dependence on the sea was striking.

The device is not unquestionable, but at some risk of introducing the bias referred to in the Introduction, the Majority has been used to "understudy" the village in Period 1, in figure 10, at the end of the chapter. In that diagram the trend of Bay population must lie between that of the Majority and that of the parish, and the Majority curve has been raised to suggest what the Bay population trend might have been in the years 1653-1721. There may in effect have been slightly interrupted growth leading to substantial numbers. This fits the hint of rising Bay population in 1721-30, obtained by back-projection of residence in the first section of this chapter. It is relevant here that when in 1722 the Collector of Customs at Whitby referred in a letter to his board to "Robin Hood Town", he may have been giving a measure of official recognition to a title that had been in use in property deals for three decades.<sup>2</sup>

Another way of probing for pre-1721 population is to take a straight line from 1563 (when the fifty cottages may have held about 250 people) to the 1721-30 Bay estimate. This has been drawn in figure 10, with little divergence from the estimated trend derived from the behaviour of the Majority.<sup>3</sup>

1. Borthwick, Fylingdales parish register transcripts, 1600-1640.

2. P.R.O., CUST.90, 14h June, 1722; Whitby Lit. and Phil., P.Burnett no.2231.

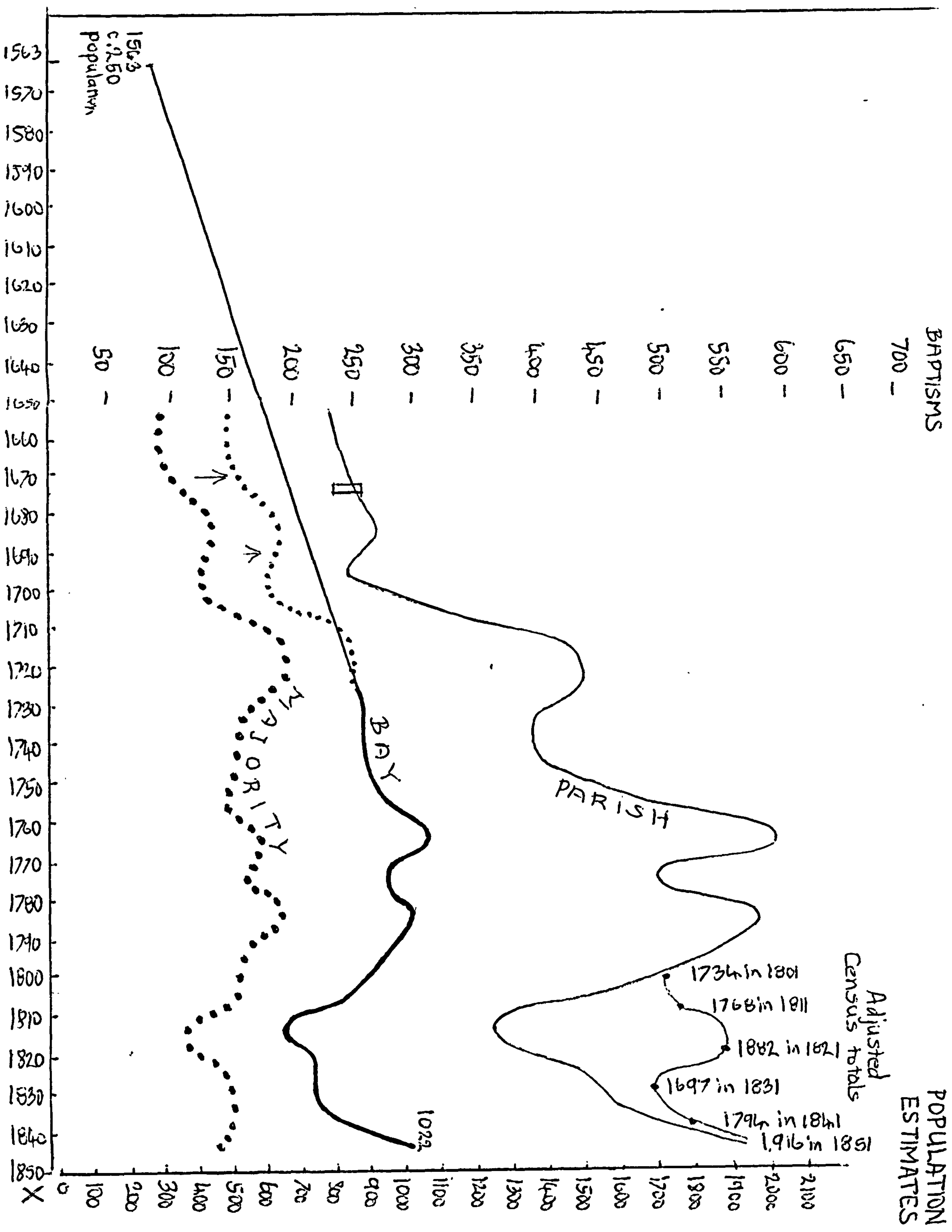
3. P.R.O., E.318/43/2316.

It may be shown, therefore, that for much of the period under examination the population of Bay was possibly more than 800. That figure, however, disguises large fluctuations of population in the parish, to which Bay itself was not immune. One of these apparent oscillations was probably no more than a reflection of under-registration, and its correction has therefore been attempted. In doing so, however, the effect has been to make another fluctuation, which may be linked with alternating recession and recovery in the alum industry.<sup>1</sup> In pull-out figure 11, (immediately following figure 10) such instability seems to be passed on from Peak and Brow to the "Country" population of Fylingdales and thence to the parish as a whole. At Peak and Brow were the alum works, the earlier of which was located, as has been seen, just outside Fylingdales, and the later, inside the parish. The account of this situation, and its implications, first for the parish economy and second for population, are the two parts of the next chapter.

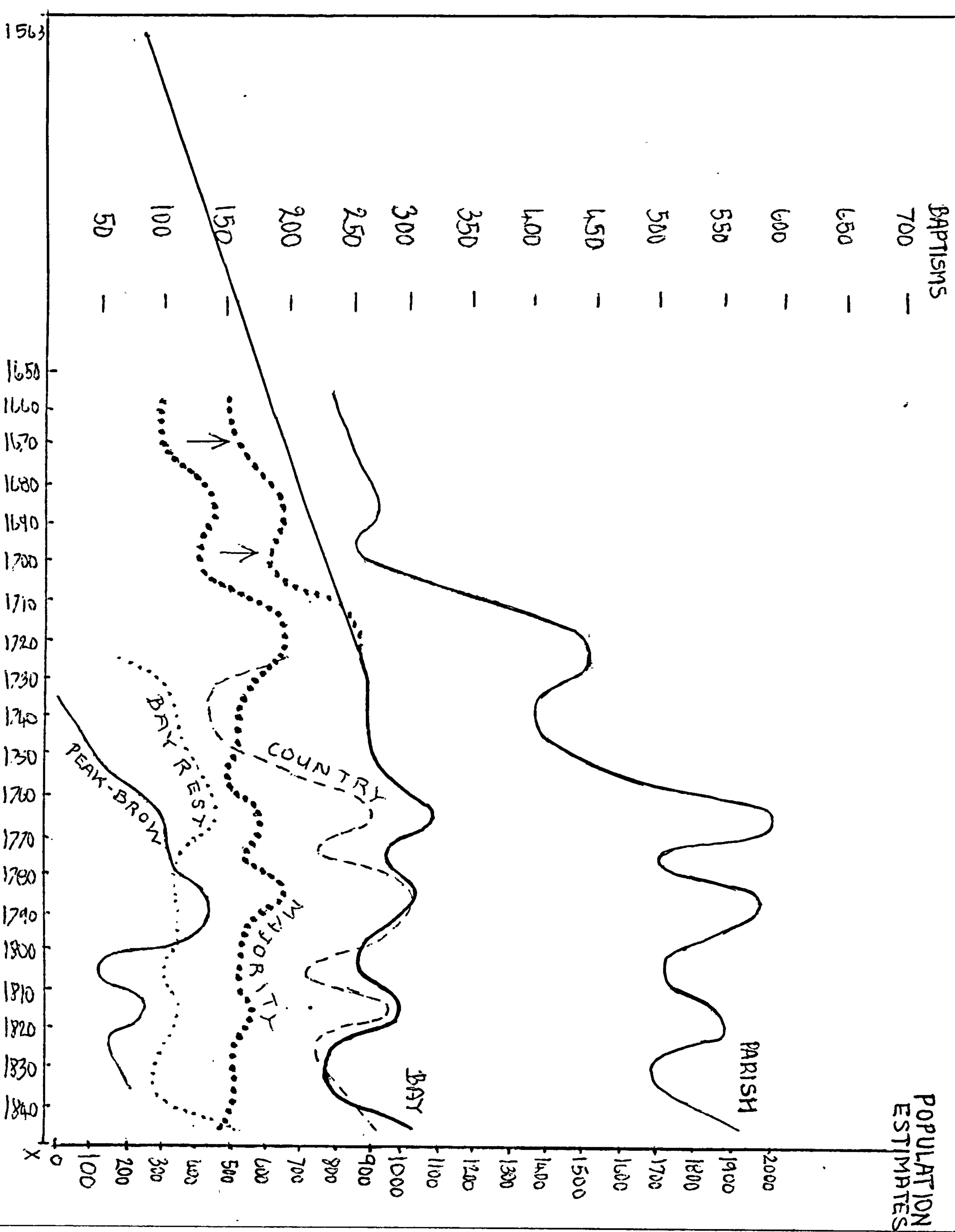
1. Population Return, vol.II, 1831, p.786 n.



Population estimates  
based on decadal  
totals of baptisms  
(from Table 1 on page 42),  
and adjusted Census  
totals



# Figure 11



Comparison of constituent populations of the parish  
(from figure 10 and the decadal totals below)  
all corrected for under-registration,  
1811-22.

	BAY REST	COUNTRY	PEAK-BROW		BAY REST	COUNTRY	PEAK-BROW
1651-60				1751-60	129	194	57
1661-70				1761-70	146	263	95
1671-80				1771-80	111	223	97
1681-90				1781-90	105	289	129
1691-1700				1791-1800	108	272	124
1701-10				1801-10	88	196	45
1711-20				1811-20	72	160	62
1721-30	64	192		1821-30	83	203	51
1731-40	105	132	12	1831-40	80	235	
1741-50	113	136	32	1841-50	155	267	67



### CHAPTER THREE: THE ALUM INDUSTRY

For much of its history Robin Hood's Bay had within sight and easy walking distance a major extractive and manufacturing enterprise, part of a North Riding industry that has been researched on a few locations north of Whitby. The importance of this industry for the village, and thus its effect on population, are discussed in this chapter.

(a) Local economic significance Most of the evidence of occupations in Robin Hood's Bay relates to seafaring, fishing and shipping, but the fluctuations in the population estimates (as in pull-out figure 11) relate usually to those of the Country, which included the alum workers.

In the eighteenth century, Thomas Hinderwell said that Whitby's rise to prosperity as a port began with the carrying trade associated with alum, but he makes no such clear statement about Robin Hood's Bay, only fourteen miles from Scarborough, and already, in his lifetime, the home of numerous sailors. His contemporary, Charlton, agreed with the explanation of Whitby's initial achievement.<sup>1</sup>

The industry depended on "Stone found in most of the hills between Scarborough and the River of Tees in the County of York".<sup>2</sup> Singer called it the first real chemical industry, and the Crown saw in it the prospect of a profitable monopoly.<sup>3</sup> Despite this importance the documentation of the activity adjacent to and within Fylingdales, first at Peak and later at Brow, is scanty.

1. T.Hinderwell, History of Scarborough, 1798, p.265; L.Charlton, History of Whitby, 1779, p.307.
2. D.Colwall, 'An Account of the English Alum-Works, Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, CXLII, 1678, p.1052;
3. C.Singer, The Earliest Chemical Industry, 1948.

The Whitby Customs had an official at Robin Hood's Bay for much of the eighteenth century, to meter the coal for the works, among many duties.<sup>1</sup> The coal was the cargo handled in the largest quantities. Returns, however, were aggregated under Whitby, where the head office of Customs on the coast lay, and so references to individual sites are all too rare, except in the estate records of entrepreneurial magnates like Lord Mulgrave, who successfully conducted several operations to the north of Whitby, to which further reference will be made in the course of this chapter.

The principal producer at Peak was the Cook family of Wheatley Hall near Doncaster, a fact which accounts for the presence near Brow of Cook House, in Fylingdales. Members of the family lived in the parish, appearing from time to time in the various rate books, and at the closure in 1862 the works were still owned by the Misses Cook, yet in the family papers there is no record of alum manufacture which might be useful in the present enquiry. The sites of the workings, however, are still too conspicuous to be missed, because of the great amount of quarrying that created huge heaps of spoil.<sup>2</sup>

Alum was used in dyeing and in the treatment of leather and paper.<sup>3</sup> The direct importance of the substance for Robin Hood's Bay lay less in the shipping out of the finished product than in the delivery of materials essential to production. Indirectly there was significance for the village in its situation near a source of income-generation and spending power.

1. Fyl.Recon., Fox, Robinson, Wilson, Spink (Customs officials).
2. Debrett, Peerage and Baronetage of the United Kingdom, 1980; C.Singer, op.cit., p.197; Ordnance Survey, 1:50 000, 1983, Sheet 94, ref.972017.
3. R.L.Pickles, 'A Brief History of the Alum Industry in North Yorkshire', The Cleveland Industrial Archaeologist, no.2, 1975, p.1.



Delivery to the works was principally by sea, and it is noticeable that the most successful sites were on the coast, as though the transport factor were critical. A good illustration of the value of a site near the sea comes from the correspondence of the Whitby Collector who, anxious about his revenues in 1774, wrote to his Riding Officer at Bay about timber being floated more than ten miles from Scarborough for the building of a new house near the Peak alum works. Richard Winter, speaking for the alum makers, explained that "charges for draught work is materially diminished, as the coals are brought by sea from.....Sunderland or Shields.....but in those works situate in the interior they lie under a considerable expense for carriage.....so that we need not be surprised at only one remaining". <sup>1</sup> A coastal settlement two miles from works was therefore well placed. The materials needed for making alum were coal, brushwood, kelp and urine, the quantities of the last two depending on the kind of alum required. The proportions used probably did not change greatly over the years. Richard Winter, who had supervised Lord Mulgrave's works at Sandsend, a little north of Whitby, lamented bitterly the ignorance that impeded attempts to improve methods; he bemoaned the dependence of some works on urine, and also explained that the deeper the alum rock was quarried the less productive of a saleable product it became, enforcing the use of increasing amounts of materials to maintain output. <sup>2</sup> Six tons of coal were needed for every ton of marketable alum,

1. R.L.Pickles, 'A Brief History of the Alum Industry in North Yorkshire', loc.cit., p.4; P.R.O., CUST.90/5, 26th June, 1773; R.Winter, 'A Mineralogical Outline of the District Containing the Aluminous Schistus', Journal of Natural Philosophy, XXV, no.114, 1810, p.242.
2. R.Winter: 'A mineralogical Outline', loc.cit.: pp.248-253; p.246.

and from Dr.Young's statistics for Peak-Brow works it can be calculated that in a good year 640 tons of alum were made, calling for 3840 tons of coal. <sup>1</sup> The task of delivering such a quantity has to be seen in relation to local conditions. Cargoes for Peak had to be landed at a dock cut and blasted at the foot of great cliffs that made a fearsome lee shore. The postholes of the structure can still be seen at low tide. Winter weather would frequently make the work impossible. Cargoes for Brow could be delivered, according to tide, on the beach scoured by Stoupe Beck, permitting the use of slightly larger craft. The sites and the approaches to the sea are to be seen in an annotated drawing and map made by one of the Whitby Customs collectors. <sup>2</sup> The nearest supply of suitable coal in great quantities, before the growth of the Teesside ports and Seaham Harbour, was Sunderland, sixty miles away. The North Sea colliers were laid up in winter, and they were much larger than the vessels that could operate at Peak. Even the Navy kept capital ships in harbour in winter if it could. <sup>3</sup> Thus there would be much activity in the sea approaches to Peak in summer, to build up stocks and so maintain continuity of production.

The Fylingdales parish rate books record payment of "ship sess" by owners of local vessels, and among them were the sloops that served the alum works, identifiable as such by ownership, or size, or description.

1. A.Morrison, Alum, 1981, pp.10-11; G.Young, History of Whitby, II, 1817, p.817.

2. British Library, K.Top., XLIV22 (Francis Gibson, General View of the Yorkshire Coast, 1791).

3. R.Davis, The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, 1962, p.323.



This "Ship sess" was the rating assessment imposed by the parish on owners of vessels; it operated in Whitby also. On the 31st May, 1768, it was agreed at a Fylingdales vestry meeting "that the ships be rated according to the Old, Customary Method that has been used in the parish for many years past that is to say when Lands is at 12d per pound the ships are rated at 2/- per keel". How long this had been done is unknown, but the earliest record is in 1751, and from that time information is intermittent but not un plentiful down to 1818. <sup>1</sup> One of the named owners was John Ridley of the alum works. His Heckington was a sloop of 49 tons, and the type is important because the fore-and-aft rig was suited to making the open sea from the foot of cliffs in a head wind. The amount of sess depended on the size of a vessel, measured by a keel, a unit of 21.2 tons derived from the coal trade. <sup>2</sup> From the smaller payments for non-fishing vessels it can be deduced that the most typical alum-trade craft was around 50 tons.

A.Morrison, from the modern Teesside chemical industry, reckoned that 250 tons of kelp would be needed in the making of 375 tons of alum, and Richard Winter put the consumption slightly higher. It had to be brought from as far away as Scotland. Willan quotes a case from the Berwick Port Books of the outward shipment of 60 tons of kelp for Whitby. <sup>3</sup> It was

1. G.Young, op.cit., p.599 n.; N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/2/1, Overseers' Rate Book, 1768; J.S., Miscellany, transcript of Overseers' Assessment, 1751.
2. N.M.M., Whitby, no.64, 1786; The Oxford English Dictionary, Compact Edition, 1979;
3. A.Morrison, Alum, 1981, p.12; R.Winter, loc.cit., p.254; T.S.Willan, The English Coasting Trade, 1600-1750, 1938, p.112.

also available near the works, but not necessarily in the amounts needed. In 1838 George Marlow of Fylingdales, giving evidence at the inquiry into the use of foreshore materials, stated that "about fifty years ago" his father-in-law had been paid £30 for seaweed for burning to make kelp. It had been gathered bewtween Staintondale and Whitby. <sup>1</sup>

If ammonia alum was in demand, urine had to be shipped in at the high rate of a ton for every ten tons of finished product. <sup>2</sup> This also came by sea, from centres of population, and the traffic was well known. Some alum was made on Tyneside, and there is an engraving by Bewick, a Tynedale man, of men urinating into tubs outside an inn and others carrying tubs away. <sup>3</sup> Half a ton is about one year's production per person at a daily rate of 2½ pints, according to A.Morrison, and Colwell said that the best supply in quality came from the labouring poor, who could least afford strong drink; but the practice of adding sea water to the containers was not unknown. <sup>4</sup>

Enormous heaps of alum shale, up to 100 feet high, were calcined by burning. Hinderwell remarked that the "immense mountains" by the road from the moor to the beach at Robin Hood's Bay could not fail to impress the traveller. The kindling was brushwood, consumed at the rate of about one ton per ton of alum. <sup>5</sup> The boiling pans were made of lead and stood on

1. Whitby Lit. and Phil., P.Burnett, no.2516; see p.31.

2. J.K.Almond, 'Technical Aspects of Alum-Making', The Cleveland Industrial Archaeologist, no.2, 1975, p.17.

3. South Shields Public Library, MS.338, P.Pilbin, Tyneside Industries, c.1935, p.255; T.Bewick, My Life, 1981 edn., p.120.

4. A.Morrison, Alum, 1981, p.12; D.Colwell, 'An Account of the English Alum Works', loc.cit., pp.1054-1055.

5. R.Winter, 'A Mineralogical Outline', loc.cit., p.243; T.Hinderwell, History of Scarborough, 1798, p.13; A.Morrison, op.cit., p.13.



iron plates. It was necessary that these too came by sea, and they had to be repaired, remade or replaced every two years, according to Daniel Colwell.<sup>1</sup>

Alum-making was therefore a provider of much employment for labourers, craftsmen and sailors, and local experience of inshore work on the part of the last would be valuable. Bay Majority names appear among the payers of small amounts of sess in the parish books, among them Barnard, Estill, (originally Eskdale), Fletcher, Granger, Moorsom, Richardson, Rickinson, Tindale and Todd.<sup>2</sup>

The Brow works came into being in 1752: the rise in Brow baptisms in the register and rate payments in the parish books confirm this event.<sup>3</sup> From that time, farming people near the works, in particular bearers of the names Dent, Windle and Strother, are rated for alum sites and for small vessels.<sup>4</sup> Windle and Dent, for example, paid rates on land at Brow in 1758, and sess for "one large sloop and one smaller".<sup>5</sup> From the Whitby Musters there comes the Bay Packet, a sloop of 43 tons owned by George Estill of Bay in 1775, and, in 1780, by William Jowsey, "agent to the Saltwick alum works" and son of Ephraim, formerly of Brow, whose papers relating to the industry were used by Dr. Young.<sup>6</sup> In the Whitby

1. D.Colwell, 'An Account of the English Alum-Works', loc.cit., p.1055.

2. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/3/2, 4/1, and 5/2, Constables', Churchwardens' and Overseers' Rate Books.

3. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/1, Fylingdales parish register.

4. J.S., Miscellany, transcript of Overseers' Rate Book, 1752.

5. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/3/2, Constables' Rate Book, 1758.

6. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, 1775 and 1880; Fyl.Recon., Jowsey; G.Young, op.cit., p.817 n.

ship registrations of 1786, Messrs. Estill and Jowsey are owners of the Beeswing, and William Jowsey is described as a master mariner of Wallsend-on-Tyne, which is near South Shields where Isaac Cookson had works, to which he brought alum from Whitby. The site was, and to some still is known as Alum House Ham. This was the beginning of a major and surviving chemical enterprise. <sup>1</sup> The links from Bay northward are of interest, because they will be seen again, and nearer to home. In 1786 Edward Windle of "Peak Alum Works" registered the 50-ton sloop Hound. He was essentially a farmer, but he was putting land to more profitable use as opportunity arose. In the same year the Henry was registered in the names Strother and Cook. <sup>2</sup> Thomas Strother was a Brow freeholder, and Sunderland Cook was of the leading alum family in the locality. <sup>3</sup> In 1800 the master of the Henry was the bearer of one of the most distinctive of Bay Core names, Zachariah Granger, and a partner of Windle and Strother in 1784, in ownership of the vessel Good Design, was Richard Gillson, whose family farmed near enough to Bay to appear in the parish books in Bay Quarter. <sup>4</sup> Thomas and Matthew Mennel - a Majority surname - were owners of the appropriately-named Peak Packet and Robin Hood. <sup>5</sup> The existence on the coast locally, and reaching to Wear and Tyne, of an alum-industry community of landholders, farmers, sailors and coal merchants is detectable.

1. N.M.M., Whitby, no.19, 1786; South Shields Public Library, MS.338, P.Pilbin, Tyneside Industries, c.1935, p.255.

2. N.M.M., Whitby, no.66, 1786; R.Weatherill, The Ancient Port of Whitby and its Shipping, 1908, pp.56.

3. Fyl.Recon., Strother and Cook.

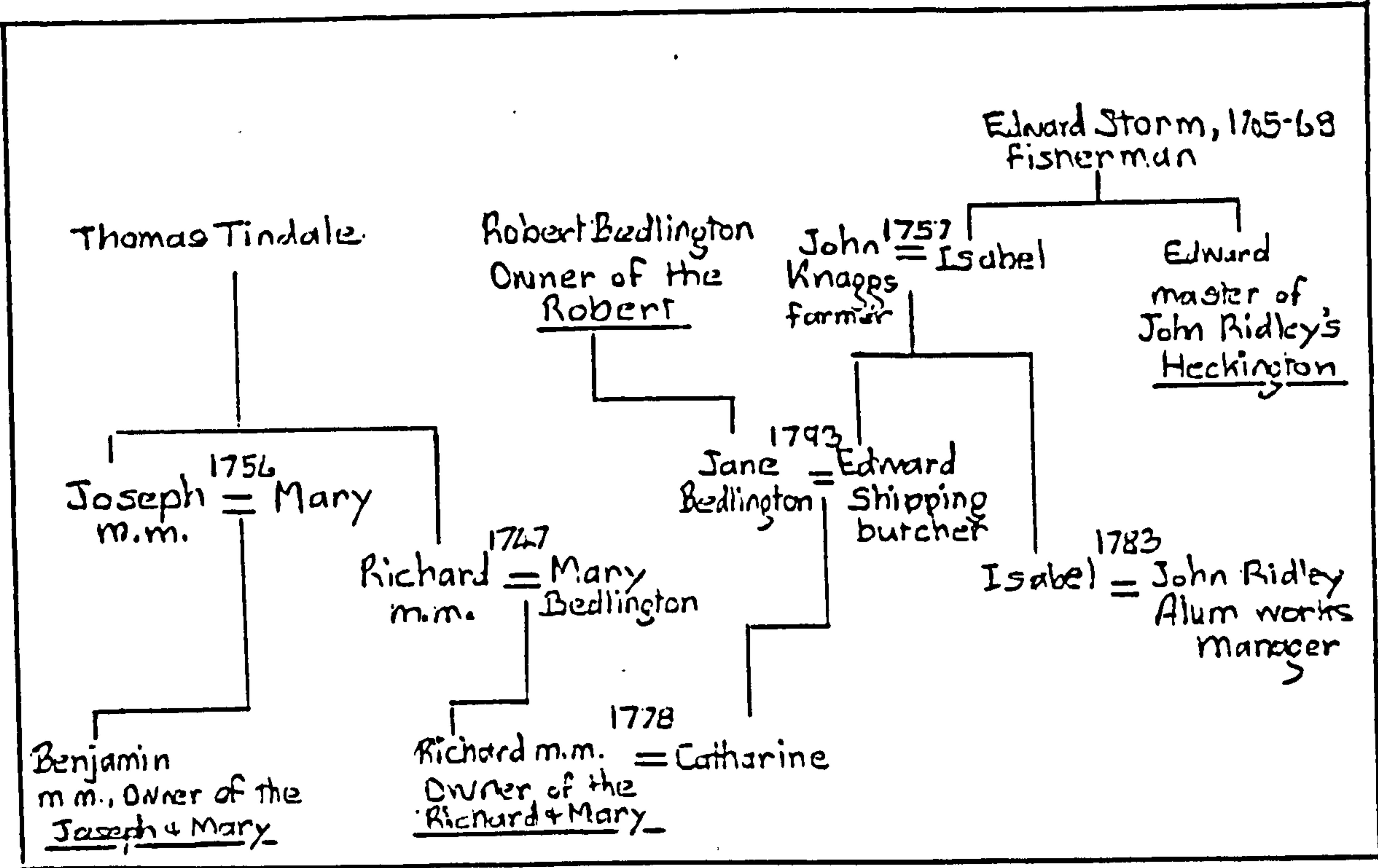
4. Fyl.Recon., Granger and Gillson.

5 R.Weatherill, op.cit., pp.73 and 78.



When the investigation is carried into Robin Hood's Bay the interest there in the trade begins to reveal an essential character: it assisted in the creation of a fine mesh of relationships that integrated business and family involvements, and in which transactions are likely to have been facilitated by the daily life at close quarters. This can be explored through ship registrations, crew musters, parish books and the kinship uncovered through reconstitution, all used in conjunction. Figure 12 (in which the fashion in naming vessels should not be overlooked) is an excerpt, from mid-eighteenth century, from part of such an exploration.

Figure 12: An occupational and kinship network



In this case, Thomas Tindale, from Hackness, drawn to Robin Hood's Bay perhaps by prospects in shipping, was the penultimate recruit to the Majority. His descendants made many Majority marriages and became an important part of the seafaring and shipping community. There is a glimpse here of a kindred of small capitalists linked by the alum industry. A possible example of a fisherman actually changing to alum work is that of

William Bedlington converting his 45-ton lugger Friendship - a typical large fishing vessel - to a sloop, in 1787. <sup>1</sup>

The largest number of Bay vessels employed in the alum trade was twelve. They are identifiable from their owners in the Whitby ship registrations and the Muster Rolls, where the familiar names are still to be found at the end of the eighteenth century. <sup>2</sup> Figure 11, at the beginning of this chapter, suggests that the Peak-Brow population was falling at this time, a trend which seems to be at variance with the employment of so many vessels - a matter to be discussed in the next section. For the moment, the significance of this number lies in the amount of work provided for sailors, of whom 60 or thereabouts would be needed, or, as will be discussed in Chapter 4, rather fewer than the numbers then in fishing. Less specialised cargo work is examined in Chapter 5, where it will be seen that more and larger vessels than those in the alum trade were frequently involved. When the alum craft were at their most numerous, however, the larger vessels were few in number; and here seems to lie the importance of the alum trade for the village. Certainly it was another prop to the economy, conveniently located, and likely to reduce the risk of unemployment; but it was also a route to wider professional opportunity for sailors when in the nineteenth century the village began to enjoy an expansion of its shipping activity. With slumps in the various sectors of the local economy from time to time, such diversity could reduce the risk of general depression.

1. Fyl.Recon., Bedlington, R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.52, and N.M.M., Whitby, 1787.

2. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, 1796-1819, and Fyl.Recon., Cook, Granger, Harrison, Ridley, Strother.



Equally important was the effect of the concomitant increase in spending power on the Bay economy, especially when sales of alum were going well. A little to the south of the Peak works lay Staintondale, a straggle of farms and cottages in Scalby parish. Robin Hood's Bay, on the other hand, had become relatively populous, and when occupations began to be entered in the register around 1780 it appears already so well supplied with the services of craftsmen that the process of becoming a commercial centre for the parish had obviously gone far. Kildill Robinson was able in the nineteenth century to describe Fylingthorpe as a sort of residential suburb of Bay. <sup>1</sup>

Richard Winter's "Outline" of 1810 enables estimates of Peak-Brow income to be attempted. A man could earn sixpence for every cubic yard (or ten barrows) of stone hewed and moved in a day, the exact rate depending on distance from mine to calcining heap. The effect was that in winter 2s.6d. might be realised, and 3s.0d. in the longer days of summer. The labour force sounds inadequate when Winter puts the content of a calcining heap at 100,000 cubic yards of rock. <sup>2</sup> Francis Gibson, the Whitby Collector, estimated the number of workers in his district, which included all the works, to be 553 men, who produced 3,000 tons of alum a year. <sup>3</sup> Young in 1817, acknowledging his debt to "the gentlemen of the Customs" for the information, said that Peak and Brow together were making 300 tons of alum a year "at the present time". <sup>4</sup> This means there were on the sites about 55 labourers, depending, with their families, on the services of Robin Hood's Bay. Then there were the maintenance workers: in addition

1. F.Kildill Robinson, Whitby: its Abbey, 1860, p.261.

2. R.Winter, 'A Mineralogical Outline', loc.cit., p.248.

3. British Library, K.Top., XLIV22.

4, G.Young, op.cit., p.817.

to the necessary carpenters and smiths there were in 1773 a cooper and even a shipwright.<sup>1</sup>

The other, less favourable side of the situation is that employment opportunities lacked stability. According to the Peak-Brow population curve in figure 11 the labour force was migratory; a reserve of local labour sufficient to man a large undertaking is an improbability. In seeking confirmation of the population picture so far outlined it will be necessary to interrelate demographic findings with the fluctuations of trade by which Robin Hood's Bay was not unaffected. If trends in the estimated population and in the state of the alum trade should coincide, the estimates gain in reliability.

(b) Relating population to the state of the alum trade.

It is necessary to look first at the early years of the industry. From 1605 to 1679, with an interruption during the Commonwealth, alum was a Crown monopoly. This phase was studied by R.B.Turton with a view to dispelling romantic tales about the origin of the industry in England.<sup>2</sup> The precise date at which the local manufacture began is difficult to elucidate. Charlton left an account of Hugh Cholmley's alum venture at Saltwick, as recounted on page 29 of Chapter 1, above, but reports of the starting of work at Peak are vague. Hinderwell says the year was 1615, and Young less firmly gives the same period for the inauguration of works at Old Peak, the cliff-top site a little distant from where the main Peak works were to be, and goes on to say that Sir Brian Cook opened the latter.<sup>3</sup> The implication of Young's account is that Cook moved before Cholmley. There was no Cook baronet before 1660, but this is unlikely to

1. Fyl.Recon., Carr and Stainthorpe

2. R.B.Turton, The Alum Farm, 1938, Chapter 5.

3. T.Hinderwell, op.cit., 1798, p.268; G.Young, op.cit., p.810.



affect the chronology significantly.<sup>1</sup> Trade was possibly already in progress during the Civil War, because in 1647 the Admiralty Marshall was ordered to apprehend one Bagworth of Whitby, "master of a ship laden with alum, come from Scarborough". This may refer to a cargo from Peak, the nearest alum site to that town. There was a cargo of two tons of alum sent to London from Whitby in 1650, but although the name of the master was Granger, a Core name in Robin Hood's Bay, the alum could have come from any of several works. It was not until 1674 and 1675 that there was mention of Peak in the Customs accounts, according to Turton.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, in 1675 Ogilby wrote that works at Guisborough had been idle for several years, probably because of ample supplies at Whitby. Since there were no works at the latter town, however, this remark must be a reference to works in the district, of which Peak may have been one.<sup>3</sup>

A change in the control of the industry around this time was to colour much of its history. Turton says that after the Restoration the Crown decided to operate not as before by Prerogative, but by claiming exclusive rights. This meant that new producers would have to be bought out, an arrangement that proved so costly to the Crown that in 1679 it left the industry, allowing investors to come in wherever alum could be found.<sup>4</sup> From this time the character of the industry was marked by instability, and according to R.L.Pickles only the Mulgrave works at Sandsend, two miles north of Whitby, operated continuously for the next two centuries

1. T.Burke, A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage of the United Kingdom, 9th edn., 1847.

2. W.B.Hamilton, ed., C.S.P.D., Charles I, XXII, 1893, p.242;  
P.R.O., E.190/192/8; R.B.Turton, op.cit., p.182.

3. J.Ogilby, Britannia, facsimile edn., 1939, p.269.

4. R.B.Turton, op.cit., p.192; W.A.Shaw, ed., Calendar of Treasury Books, V, 1911, p.12, and VI, 1913, p.37.

in North Yorkshire, the next best record being that of Peak, which experienced a break in the decade 1731-40 and another, of very brief duration, about ten years later.<sup>1</sup>

Only an indirect approach to the post-farm state of the trade in Fylingdales is possible. Before 1700 there appears a seasonality of baptisms possibly connected with seafaring, which occupied men from the end of one winter to the beginning of the next, but this may have arisen from more general shipping work. Then there is the increase in Majority families towards the end of the seventeenth century (to be seen in figure 9 on page 47 and also in pull-out figure 11) for which alum-related work may have been the cause. There may also have been a link with the trade in the fall in the Majority estimates in figure 11, around 1700. The justification for this last is that post-farm euphoria may have run its course and overstocked the market; this is a normal, recurrent feature of the industry, and it cannot be put better than by Charlton, whose opinion it was that "the owner of every allum-work wants to engross all the trade to himself; and so great a quantity of alum is made, that the price is soon reduced, and it lies on their hands as a dead stock, in so much that far from being enriched, they frequently lose large sums thereby, and are even sometimes reduced to beggary".<sup>2</sup> Charlton learnt from the Cholmley papers that the Saltwick works were shut down about 1705, and this offers a more convincing explanation of the supposed fall in Majority (or perhaps Bay ) population: if Saltwick could not be made to pay, then Peak was unlikely to have been unaffected by the adverse trading conditions.<sup>3</sup>

1. R.L.Pickles, 'A Brief History of the Alum Industry in North Yorkshire',  
loc.cit., p.6.

2. Charlton, op.cit., p.360.

3. Ibid., p.339.



Eighteenth and nineteenth century experience of the industry generally followed this pattern, with a few works contriving to remain active, notably Lord Mulgrave's.

A period of idleness at Peak seems to be confirmed by the remarks of a traveller. In August, 1705, a time of year when quarrying, calcining and boiling should have been visibly at their height, Joseph Taylor, "late of the Inner Temple, Esq.", rode north from Scarborough on a "dismal road, particularly near Robin Hood's bay.....down a vast craggy mountain", where he and his companions had to lead the horses. They must have passed very close to the Peak works, yet there is no reference to them. Taylor saw boats on the beach and talked with the "poor fishermen"; yet on the far side of Whitby he visited the "Fine Allom works on the Sea Shore" at Sandsend and spent enough time there to be able to give a good description of the manufacturing process. <sup>1</sup> There seems to have been nothing, or nothing worth visiting, at Peak. The smaller Saltwick works he could easily have missed, especially if he had taken the inland route to Whitby, but not those of Peak. Taylor rode on over the "vast moores", with a guide, until he came to Guisborough, "where formerly have been some Allom works which are now decay'd". This fits into the picture of the success of the enterprise of John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave and, since 1703, Duke of Buckinghamshire, and may explain from where came some of the money to build Buckingham Palace in 1705. <sup>2</sup>

If the price had indeed fallen, there should in this free market have been a revival of demand for alum eventually, until the price rose. It can only have been in anticipation of yet another collapse of the price that the Duke, according to Young, set about binding fellow manufacturers in an

1. Joseph Taylor, A Journey to Edenborough, 1903 edn., p.69-70.

2. Ibid., pp.72-75.; D.N.B., Sheffield, John, 1648-1721.

agreement to suspend operations, in return for compensation, to support the price.<sup>1</sup> Young was informed in these matters not only by Richard Winter and Ephraim Jowsey, who have been referred to, or quoted, but by John Ridley, who appeared in figure 12 on page 58. Ridley was the manager of Peak-Brow from about 1780, and was living on the Bank Top at Robin Hood's Bay when Young was writing his history and giving details of production of those works. A son was born to Ephraim Jowsey in Fylingdales in 1773, which means he may have been of an age to remove him only one generation from the period of idleness at Peak.<sup>2</sup> Despite this, Young was not certain about the course of events. He thought the date he had been given for the cartel, 1726, was probably a misreading of 1716, because the 2nd Duke of Buckinghamshire was a minor at the later date and only his father could have made such an agreement.<sup>3</sup> It seems unlikely, however, that the young magnate was without an agent, or that the Duchess, his mother, a proud, worldly and illegitimate daughter of James II, and eventual inheritor of Mulgrave and the Sandsend works, would permit her son's interest to suffer.<sup>4</sup> The boy died in 1735, but the building of a new mansion by the Duchess before that date is some proof of successful business operations and of the profit to be made out of alum.<sup>5</sup>

The Whitby Collector makes the alum trade seem a normal part of the port's work when he asks in March, 1721, for stationery from London by "any salt, fish or allom vessel". Yet in 1723 the Customs accounts at

1. Young, op.cit., p.815.

2. Fyl.Recon.: Ridley; Jowsey.

3. Young, op.cit., p.815 n.

4. D.N.B., Lady Catharine Darnley under the subject Sedley, Catharine.

5. N.Pevsner, The Buildings of Yorkshire North Riding, 1966, p.260.



Whitby include coal duties at works in Cleveland but none at Peak.<sup>1</sup> This is not conclusive, because it emerges from later correspondence that sometimes at out-stations, where the amount of work did not justify a full-time appointment, another functionary stationed nearby, such as a Riding Officer, would cover the work, and in the seventeen-twenties there was such an officer at Bay, in the person of Richard Wilson.<sup>2</sup> On Herman Moll's map of 1724 the Peak works are clearly marked, which implies that Wilson had work to do up there.<sup>3</sup> If 1726 was the true date of the cartel, the price should have been near a peak, and theoretically the superficial soundness of the economy might well be reflected in rising population. With the subsequent closure of the works, however, the labour force would be expected to disperse. The hypothetical population estimates for the parish do in fact show an increase in the seventeen-twenties, and when the decade is more closely analysed there is seen to be a great increase in the baptisms up to 1727, when the highest annual total up to that time, 64, is recorded. This number was not to be reached again until 1764. The expected fall after 1727, however, is not seen to full effect until the next decade, when there is a trough in the curve of parish estimates in figure 11. Leaving aside for the present the behaviour of the Majority and of Bay Rest in that diagram, the changes do not leave the same clear mark on Bay as on the Country, where the works were.

The cartel was intended to last for 21 years. A period of inactivity is indeed confirmed by the Collector's correspondence, which contains little reference to Peak while occasional coal deliveries are noted elsewhere.

1. P.R.O., CUST.90/1: 8th March, 1721; 1st August, 1723.

2. P.R.O.: CUST.90/4, 4th June, 1754; CUST.90/1, 16th May, 1722.

3. Maps of Yorkshire, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series, vol. LXXXVI, 1933, plate XVI.

It is evident that few sites were enjoying much activity.<sup>1</sup> At length, well short of 21 years, the Collector, Hamlett Woods, asked for help, in February, 1744, with the metering of coal at four works. Mr. Richard Newton had been to the office "the other day.....to give security for the duty of all coals that shall be loaded at the Peak an Allom Work.....which for many years has not been employed, but now again waiting to be revived".<sup>2</sup> The 19 years since Herman Moll's map, or the 18 since the formation of the cartel, could qualify as the period of disuse so vaguely described. Woods was asking London whether the Riding Officer at Robin Hood's Bay should cover the extra work.

It would seem, then, that the free market had broken the cartel, and that new producers had brought about an overstocking and a thus a lower price that revived demand to the point where Cook could expect to earn more than he was being allowed in compensation. Demand began to lift the price, following the usual cycle, and Young says it increased from £14 a ton in 1746 to £26 in 1765.<sup>3</sup> Still in 1744, it became apparent that events were moving rapidly when the Collector reminded his board in London that the sailing season was close and several vessels at a time would be discharging coal. His object was to obtain permission for alum manufacturers to give security for duty payments at Whitby at longer intervals than the usual two months, and so save administrative work.<sup>4</sup> On the 30th June, 1745, John Burgh, the new Collector, asked for a greater allowance of time for site visits. The revival in the industry was in progress, and in 1752 the parish books supply the evidence that new

1. Young, op.cit., p.815; P.R.O., CUST.90/3, passim.

2. P.R.O., CUST.90/3, 22nd February, 1744.

3. Young, op.cit., p.816.

4. P.R.O., CUST.90/3, 24th February, 1744.



works had been called into being at Brow. Three years later, according to Charlton, Saltwick works came to the end of 50 years of idleness.<sup>1</sup>

The Peak-Brow baptisms can be plotted now, and they begin to serve almost as a template for the parish and Country estimates, in figure 11. There is a little increase in the Majority at first, in 1751-60, but Bay as a whole has a considerable rise, which may mean that some of the incoming labour force was housed there. On analysis it is observable in figure 11 that the increase in the village is where it ought to be, that is to say not in the Majority but in Bay Rest. There is some support for this interpretation in Peak-Brow's failure to reach its own distinct highest summit of population at this time. In 1753 there were 16 assessed dwellings paying rates at Brow; in 1754 there were still only 23, and in 1782 the number had risen to 35; so there was more accommodation near the works, eventually.<sup>2</sup> There is an oral tradition in the neighbourhood to the effect that stone for Raven Hall - the new house for which timber was floated from Scarborough in 1773 - came from old cottages of an alum settlement, and this may give an approximate date for the building of new cottages.<sup>3</sup> The population estimates for Bay as a whole, and those of Bay Rest especially, in figure 11, fail to respond as strongly as before to the next alum boom.

In 1734, Mr. Cayley, the Fylingdales incumbent, estimated the number of families in the parish at "about three hundred". The number is suspiciously round, but it is not implausible when compared to the 281

1. P.R.O., CUST.90/3, 30th June, 1745; J.S., Miscellany, transcript of Overseers' Rate Book, 1752; Charlton, op.cit., p.339.

2. J.S., Miscellany: transcript of Constables' Rate Book, 1753; transcript of Overseers' Rate Book, 1754; N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/2/2, Overseers' Rate Book, 1782.

3. See p.59.

ratepayers of 1754. In 1764, however, Mr.Cayley's successor's estimate was only 320, a rise which accords ill with the great hypothetical increase between those years in figure 11. <sup>1</sup> The reason may be a simple one. In his notes accompanying his map and view of the coast, Francis Gibson, the Collector, stated in 1791 that "Five Allum Works make 3,000 tons annually and employ 553". Peak-Brow had eight pans which could make 80 tons each, which means that by proportion there should have been, theoretically, 117 people working there, and perhaps as many as 500 depending on the works in all, when output was at its maximum. <sup>2</sup> This is not at variance with figure 11, according to which parish population may have risen from about 1,400 in the trough of c.1740, when the works were idle, to more than 1,900 at the two subsequent peaks. In view of the movement of such large numbers it would hardly evoke wonderment if the Rev.Mr.Hauxwell had lost the track of his flock.

It is strange at first sight that the revival should have reached the heights suggested by the summit of estimated population of 1761-70 without over-production, a fall in price and a loss of profitability. According to Young the inevitable fall was delayed by the ending of the trade dislocation caused by the Seven Years War. During the respite new works were started, optimistically, at Hawsker Bottoms, on the sea just north of Bay. They failed in the slump that came in the next decade. <sup>3</sup>

1. Archbishop Herring's Visitation Returns, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series, LXXI, 1928, pp.210-211; J.S., Miscellany, transcript of Overseers' Rate Book, 1754; Borthwick, Archbishop Drummond's Visitation Return, 1764.
2. British Library, K.Top., XLIV22.
3. Young, op.cit., p.816; R.L.Pickles, A Brief History of the North Yorkshire Alum Industry, loc.cit., p.4; Young. op.cit., p.816.



The recovery that brought the peak of c.1790 in figure 11 was terminated by war, whatever else may have been happening in the cycle of market conditions. Francis Gibson's Customs accounts include 1,700 tons of alum exported, including 780 to France, in 1791, and in 1793 the only export was 700 tons to Holland. <sup>1</sup> The timing of the next revival comes from the Census, in figures 10 and 11, but also from Dr.Young's details of above-average production in the years 1813-17, when his history was in preparation. The effect is noticeable in Bay, once the adjustment for under-registration has been made, as in figure 11. <sup>2</sup>

The revival is less noticeable in the case of the Majority than in that of Bay, presumably because the former had not experienced so great a fall from the previous high point of estimates. On page 59 the operating of a record number of twelve vessels, when alum production was not at one of its peaks, was remarked. This could only mean that they had found employment other than that provided by Peak-Brow, and this must have included serving more active and profitable works north of Whitby, to bridge the depression. The vessels Peak, Henry, Blessing, Industry, Heckington, and Endeavour, and the masters Andrew Harrison, Zachariah, Jacob and Thomas Granger, George Estill, John Skerry, George, Robert and John Richardson, and Richard Gillson, all at some time associated with the prominent "alum" names Cook, Dent, Ridley, Strother and Windle, can be seen keeping busy, in the Muster Rolls. By 1809 Zachariah Granger had bought the Peak from Thomas Strother and was trading on his own account, and from 1807 Robert Richardson was master of the Little Henry, working for the latest Lord Mulgrave in the line of alum producers. <sup>3</sup>

1. P.R.O., CUST.90/7 and 8.

2. Young, op.cit., p.817

3. Fyl.Recon., of the personal names listed (Mulgrave excepted).

The Peak-Brow revival in the decade 1811-20 was not to match the intermittent great activity of the previous century. The plant worked below capacity. Annual production over the twelve years to 1823 averaged 300 tons, which might have kept 50 men employed, or fewer than half of the full-capacity work-force. <sup>1</sup>.

The departure reported in the population return of 1831, of numbers approximately determinable in figures 10 and 11 (as noted on page 43), ~~anticipates~~ the end of the industry, as a force in local population history. There was another attempt at recovery, affecting the parish generally, or appearing to do so in figure 11, but Jacob Storm said the effective end of operations came when Abraham Streeting succeeded his employer, Sunderland Cook, as ratepayer in 1829, and as occupant of Cook House, where he had formerly been a servant. <sup>2</sup> In the 1841 Census there was an alum miner at Brow, and in 1846 a "rock Clerk" was listed in the baptismal register. In the 1851 Census there were 23 alum labourers at Brow, but the level of former activity was never approached again. <sup>3</sup> By this time population trends in Bay had fallen largely under the influence of the boom in shipping which accounts for the final rise of the Bay curve in Figure 11. The future of the industry lay elsewhere, and indeed to some extent it was to be superseded with Perkin's discovery of the aniline dyes.

1. E.Baines, History, Directory and Gazetteer of the County of York, II, 1823.

2. J.S., Miscellany, note in transcript of Overseers' Rate Book, May, 1829; N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/5/2/5, Overseers' Rate Book.

3. P.R.O.: H.O.107,1265; H.O.107,2734.



It may be inferred, therefore, that the fortunes of the alum industry in Fylingdales can be followed quite closely through estimated local population trends. If the trade thus represented a major factor in the economic - and no doubt the social - life of Robin Hood's Bay, the two sets of complementary trends serve to confer at least a degree of credibility on the estimates of population. In years of decline in the alum trade, however, the estimated totals remain relatively high, and imply that there was much other work available for the support of the inhabitants. The other props of the economy, fishing, seafaring and shipping, are therefore dealt with in the next two chapters.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: FISHING:

Around 1540, Leland could describe Robin Hood's Bay - probably with some justice - as a "fischer townlet", but it is not certain that it would have been possible to state the matter as simply as that in 1653, when the parish register begins<sup>1</sup>. It is more certain that there has always been an element of fishing, and because it is an occupation more locally conspicuous to the traveller than seafaring from a port several miles away, Leland's description has gained currency. Even Hinderwell of Scarborough said the village consisted of the homes of fishermen, at a time when, as will be argued in this chapter, the fishing was a minority occupation.<sup>2</sup> In the first years of registration, however, a few fishermen are described as such, for no obvious good reason, because further indications of employment are very slight in the register until 1778. All the men mentioned so early were of the Majority. In 1686 a boat was lost, with five men - the first indication of the local use of the five-man boat. Four years later there was a similar calamity. Nine of the ten men drowned were of the Majority, six were of the Core, and of the latter there were five from one family. These deaths were entered in the register. From such events there arises a need to know more about methods, progress and structure of this part of the village economy.

Jacob Storm, who lived through the time of the end of the traditional fishing, gives an account of the methods employed.<sup>3</sup> It was the custom at the beginning of Lent to take the larger boats, which were usually rigged as luggers, out towards the Dogger Bank, carrying seven men and two other

1. J.Leland, Itinerary, II, 1907 edn., p.51.

2. T.Hinderwell, op.cit., 1811 edn., p.286.

3. J.S., Memoirs, p.20.



craft, three-man cobs, typical of the coast. The parent vessel would anchor, and while one man kept anchor watch the two cobs would take station one on each side of her, joined to her with a line lying across the stream and baited with hundreds of hooks, for cod, ling and halibut principally. The baiting, shooting and hauling of the lines cannot have been but arduous in any other than the calmest of weather, to say nothing of the preparations on shore. In August the herring fishing with nets began, each large boat having a crew of at least five, and in September there was a general move to the Yarmouth fisheries, for which one or two extra hands were carried. There was also the use of the smaller craft for inshore fishing in the winter, and in the summer by older fishermen and retired sailors, for lobsters and crabs, salmon, haddock, and whiting and other small fish. Thus there was much varied activity, many aspects of which are worth considering, such as the provision, and the cost, of thousands of hooks. There is a burial in the parish register of one John Cockerill, hook-maker, in 1660, but there is no local evidence - and little anywhere else - to take the matter further. H.J.Hurum thought that hook-making was a widely-spread industry, and that some smiths acquired high reputations and won much business in consequence. He cites Izaak Walton's commendation of Charles Kirby of Shoe Lane, London. <sup>1</sup>

Reliable records of numbers of boats are difficult to find before the "ship sess" records in the parish books begin to include fishing vessels, in the second half of the eighteenth century. <sup>2</sup> There are a few earlier, general references to fishing. In 1705, when Joseph Taylor visited the village, he commented that it was inhabited by "poor fishermen" only. This could have been a perpetuation of the cliché learnt from myth, but there

1. H.J.Hurum, The History of the Fish Hook, 1976, pp.51-52,

2. See p.54.

may have been a particular reason for the remark at the time. French privateers had put into the bay the day before and carried off two vessels for each of which the fishermen had had to pay a ransom of £25.<sup>1</sup> This sort of occurrence was not unfamiliar locally. In the previous decade an English ship was pursued into the bay by five French privateers, and her master was held hostage until £200 came from Scarborough. The Frenchmen had on board 25 other masters waiting to be ransomed.<sup>2</sup> Taylor deplored the inactivity of a government that allowed an industry that could support "many thousands" to be ruined in this way. Allowance has perhaps to be made for a stranger's difficulty in penetrating to the reality of the fishermen's condition: it is not difficult to imagine the persuasiveness of their indignation; nor should their ability to find £50 quickly be overlooked.<sup>3</sup>

The real situation was more complex than the visitor knew. When the origins of the settlement were discussed in Chapter 1 the idea was proposed that it had grown out of the farms of the countryside, and evidence was given of continuing attachments to land. Taking land and sea together there may have been more comfort than Taylor recognised, differences in expectations aside. If the legendary poverty of fishermen stemmed from the primacy of land as a source of wealth, these people were not necessarily living in poverty. There were among them men with sons making their way to be masters and owners of trading vessels, as the next chapter will show. However, Taylor came in wartime, when fishermen had abnormal trials to bear. He was overcharged for refreshment and left.<sup>4</sup>

1. J.Taylor, A Journey to Edenborough in Scotland, 1903 edn., pp.69-70.

2. J.Redington, ed., Calendar of Treasury Papers, I, 1868, p.242.

3. J.Taylor, op.cit., pp.69-70.

4. Ibid., p.70.



Peace came in 1714, and it is not entirely surprising after another 17 years of quieter times on the coast to find Robin Hood's Bay judged "the greatest place for fishing in all these parts", and notable for the great quantities of herring taken in season.<sup>1</sup> Appropriately, this was a time of rising population estimates, in the Majority especially, according to figure 11.

Eventually there was government intervention, such as might have pleased Joseph Taylor, to help fishing. There was the usual spur of the need for trained manpower in time of war. The Austrian Succession war of 1740 had brought manning problems for the Navy. Rolt, in his account of hostilities, written a few years later, tells how the press took up in 1741 more than 2,000 men on the Thames in 36 hours. The end of the war brought deliberations concerning manning, and the outcome was the introduction of fishing bounties, in 1750. These were to be helpful to Whitby's whaling industry, which was active from 1753.<sup>2</sup> The effect on ordinary fishing is imperceptible at first. The conditions for entitlement to bounty covered type and cost of vessels, where they must rendezvous and how much time they had to spend at sea. According to J.Dunlop the rules were irksome, and there is no record of payments to, and inspections of any vessels but the whalers in the Whitby Customs books.<sup>3</sup> The irksomeness is easy to appreciate in the case of fishing people used to much independence. From this time onward the shrinking of the Bay fishing

1. W.Camden, Britannia, 1731 edn., p.641.

2. R.Rolt, An Impartial Account of the Conduct of the Powers of Europe Engaged in the Late General War, II, 1749, p.323; O.Ruffhead & others eds., Statutes at Large, 1811, 23 George II, cap.24; Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, 1753.

3. J.Dunlop, The British Fisheries Society, 1786-1893, 1978, p.11.

fleet is traceable in the sess. One factor is that the fishing may have become more difficult with the movement of the herring towards Sweden, a phenomenon reported from 1752 onward. A second is that more work was available on merchant ships, of which Whitby was producing great numbers. Defoe had taken notice of the wealth being built there on shipping as early as 1724. A third possible explanation is that, according to Charlton, dogfish had halved the edible fish supplies in three or four decades; he was arguing a case for a bounty on their reduction.<sup>1</sup> Even so, the best record of the numbers of boats comes in 1762, when there were 14, calling for close to 100 men at the Yarmouth herring event.<sup>2</sup> The fall in the number of boats thereafter was quite rapid. There were twelve in the sess in 1763, and in 1768 only three, despite the haddock glut of 1766 and 1767. From then on there were four to six. Perhaps owners were withdrawing from the sess; but there were no objections to it before 1795, and then it was the church rate that was at issue, which might rather betray a sectarian dispute. It would have been difficult to discontinue payment while others - neighbours and relatives - paid their share.<sup>3</sup>

If the trail is followed from the parish registers into the families and households, some of the uncertainty surrounding this decline can be dispelled. John Richardson of the 1762 owners' list had a son who took over the boat by 1784 and was drowned in 1800. One of several bearers of the name Thomas Bedlington had a son who followed him, and another a son-

1. Reports of Committees of the House of Commons, XIX, pp.129-130;

D.Defoe, A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain, 1971 edn., p.532; Charlton, op.cit., p.362.

2. J.S., Miscellany, transcript of Overseers' Rate Book, 1762.

3. N.Y.C.R.O.: PR/FY/3/2, Constables' Rate Book, 1763; PR/FY/5/2/1, Overseers' Rate Book, 1768; T.Hinderwell, op.cit., 1811 edn., pp.247-248; N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/4/2, Churchwardens' Rate Book, 1795.



in-law. William Storm's son John also became a fisherman, and Matthew Storm (1714-1804), alone of the 1762 owners, was still involved with the fishing in 1784, with his sons, one of whom had already spent some time as a sailor. In that year he bought a new lugger, the Three Brothers, and in 1787, on her registration, he is described, very unusually for a fisherman, as "gent." by the Customs official. He was succeeded in ownership by his sons in 1804, when he was 90, and among his descent were to be many sailors, and the household of the last of the Bay fishermen in the nineteen-thirties. <sup>1</sup> Of the eight other names - those whose boats disappeared from the sess - James Storm died in 1762 without sons, and his sons-in-law Jacob Storm and Nathan Peacock were drowned together in 1783; Edward Storm's son Edward went into the alum trade (he appears in figure 12 on page 58); and James Prodam, son of William, married a farmer's daughter and took to the land; two owners, William Moorsom and John Nightingale, had no sons or other obvious successors, and the sons of Zachariah Granger, Israel Huntrods and James Helm became sailors. <sup>2</sup> All these people are in pull-out figure 13 at the end of this chapter.

Nevertheless the boats rose in number slightly from four to six between 1782 and 1784, despite the fact that new and less restrictive bounty arrangements did not come into force until 1785 and 1786. <sup>3</sup> Even as late as this, therefore, fishing cannot be disregarded for the employment opportunities which it provided. Jacob Storm wrote that his grandfather Thomas Harrison's lugger New Speedwell carried seven hands, and when the bounty was paid there were ten. <sup>4</sup> Hinderwell had some important comments

1. Fyl.Recon., Storm; N.M.M., Whitby, no.132, 1787.

2. Fyl.Recon., Granger, Helm, Huntrods, etc.

3. Sessional Volumes of the Public Acts, 25 George III, cap.65 and 26 George III, cap.106.

4. J.S., Memoirs, p.25.

to make. He thought the Bay fishermen very persevering and active, and was inclined to be sceptical about the Scarborough men's conviction that five-man boats could not be made to pay, because two Bay boats had made £50 a man from April to September in 1796. This success is no doubt to be associated with the brief appearance in the sess of seven boats in 1795. <sup>1</sup>

In addition to the sess, there is a list of members of the Robin Hood's Bay Unanimous Benefit Association, from its inaugural meeting in 1784, which attracted 140 men, including 67 masters and mariners and only 24 fishermen. The latter were under-represented: for the manning of the six five-man boats of that year at Yarmouth some fifty men would have been needed. <sup>2</sup> But the sailors were under-represented too, because the parish registers produce 203 from 1777 to 1792. Absence from the village was an unlikely cause, for the meeting was held in mid-winter. More revealing are the average ages: that of the sailors, including the masters, was 26, and that of the fishermen, 41, suggests a failure to recruit. One difficulty with this interpretation is that there were several ex-sailors back in the fishing, their occupation in the register having changed. Nevertheless the difference is striking. It seems improbable that such a change could have come about suddenly. The low age of the sailors speaks of a time of changing opportunities, and the few in their forties would have been learning their trade around the middle of the century. The numerous sailors at that time were the starting point for Chapter 2, and the next chapter takes the seafaring further back than that.

1. T.Hinderwell, op.cit., 1811 edn., p.242; N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/3/4, Constables' Rate Book, 1795.

2. J.S., Miscellany, transcript of list of membership; N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/4/2, Curchwardens' Rate Book, 1784.



The registers can be drawn back into the discussion: 1781-90 is the first complete decade of fathers' occupations being entered in the baptismal register, and in that time 156 infants of sailors and 61 of fishermen were baptised. For subsequent decades the results are shown in table 3. From this, it would take more than complications regarding family size to obscure the trend: fishing belonged to a dwindling and probably ageing group - although until the turn of the century there would have been times when to an eye-witness the Bay Landing was deceptively busy.

Table 3: Numbers of baptisms from sailors' and fishers' families, by decade, 1791-1850

	Sailors	Fishers
1791-1800	149	51
1801-1810	142	61
1811-1820	103	39
1821-1830	136	36
1831-1840	170	26
1841-1850	143	17

Meanwhile at Staithes, further up the coast, there was still much greater reliance on fishing, as though the Bay men had left it from choice. Young credits Staithes with 25 boats in 1817, and he confirms the six found in the Fylingdales sess for Bay.<sup>1</sup> That said, while profit in fishing around the turn of the century may have depended on bounty, it was still not insignificant in the support of the economy, and was to remain so for some years.

1. Young, op.cit., p.820.

Central to this situation, then, was the extent and social pattern of boat-ownership. Figure 13, the chart at the end of this chapter, includes the boat-owners taken from the sess in 1762, all of whom have been retraced through the reconstitutions by only one route. Such were the ramifications of kinship, there are many alternative routes, but the point to be made here is that there was a complex network of inter-relationships holding together an important occupational group. Nearly all members belonged to the Majority, and the Core predominated. Given both this solidarity and the strength of continuity, the second most significant aspect of figure 13 is that from this group there also came the greater part of the ownership of the village's trading vessels in the nineteenth century. In 1850, descendants of many of those named owned more than 60 vessels, more than half of which were in the hands of the Core. This is properly part of the content of Chapter 10, but it is useful to note here that it was as though fishing had been a rehearsal for what was to come, in that it had provided experience of joint financial enterprise.

A considerable amount of wealth was involved. The losses of men and vessels in 1686 and 1690, and the taking by the French of two others in 1705, draw attention to the heavy investment made by a relatively small group of people. Turton, writing in 1938 about the alum industry, touched on the shipping involved, and put the cost of a ketch in 1667 at between £500 and £700.<sup>1</sup> "Ketch" generally indicates a small vessel, and probably in this case one typical of the alum trade, which means that it was not necessarily larger than a five-man fishing boat. Indeed, Jacob Storm says the kind of boat used by his grandfather, Thomas Harrison, was between 50 and 60 tons. Young put the cost of a new fishing boat in the early eighteenth century at £600.<sup>2</sup>

1. R.B.Turton, The Alum Farm, 1938, p.190.

2. J.S., Memoirs, p.20; Young, op.cit., p.821.



According to R.Davis, one reason for Whitby's rise to prosperity was that its shipyards gave good value for money; therefore when J.Dunlop says a herring buss of 47 tons in the years of the first bounties cost £487, the figure might be regarded as a maximum. Davis uses the smaller measure of £5 to £7 a ton for the early eighteenth century, and this would make the price of a vessel of nearly 60 tons roughly £300 or £400.<sup>1</sup> It seems unlikely that the fishermen would pay less than £300, and even if they were very knowledgeable about the local market in bargains, there was still gear to find. The making of nets would be a familiar art, and the cost of manning was a matter to be settled among the kin from which the shareholding group would come. But fourteen craft still represent an impressive investment.

The custom regarding shareholding, according to Jacob Storm, was that the master provided the boat and four other men the gear. When they went out with the two cobs for the deep-sea fishing they took another man, who had a half-share. As well as each man having a share of the profit, there was also "one for the boat", which went to the master, the man who was supposed to know where to find the fish. Interestingly, a similar system existed on the west coast of Jutland.<sup>2</sup> It is a business structure of much importance, and its significance can easily be missed, or deemed no more than quaint, because the economic unit was so small; yet it was no smaller than that represented by many farms or workshops. There was clear

1. R.Davis, The Rise of the English Shipping Industry, 1962, pp.62-64;

J.Dunlop, The British Fisheries Society, 1786-1893, 1978, p.9;

R.Davis, op.cit., p.372.

2. J.S., Memoirs, p.25; P.H.Moustgaard, 'The Fishing Community, the Gear and the Environment', The Fishing Culture of the World, ed. B.Gunda, 1984, p.337.

authority, tempered by a collective commitment; a combination of independence and interdependence; and there was an incentive to succeed. Thus there were elements that are still discussed idealistically under headings like profit-sharing, co-partnership and industrial democracy. Applicable perhaps only to small units, it was nevertheless a complex, modified form of capitalism, very different from the more familiar, monolithic, authoritarian form. Seen in detachment, it might be mistaken for the apparatus of some Utopian experiment.

Figure 13, the chart of the boat-owning kin, is evidence that local society also had complexities to offer. Endogamy and intermarriage in this enterprising community would tend to retain money within it, and facilitate capital accumulation. This possibility becomes more interesting when related to the almost invariable practice of partible inheritance, which put money and property into many hands, male and female. It is not improbable that a function of, or reason for so much intermarriage may be found here: one system dispersed capital and another reassembled it. This is speculative; it is more acceptable that the business structure of the fishing is to be seen as a preparation for larger ventures to come.

In this context it is important that the fishing was a household-intensive rather than a simple labour-intensive industry. The nature of operations required this. There was much preparatory work to be done on shore, involving men and women, before the boats could go to sea. The labour market was ordered not by hirings but by households. The ideal arrangement might be to have sons willing to man the boat, rather than "go to sea", and daughters to help maintain gear, gather bait, and handle the catch on the boat's return. P.Frank has written of women's work on the coast, and there is no reason to think it was different in Bay.<sup>1</sup> They

1. P.Frank, 'Women's Work in the Yorkshire Inshore Fishing Industry', Oral History, IV, no.1, 1976, pp.57-72.



made an indispensable contribution, especially in bait-gathering. The arduous nature of this work at Eyemouth in Berwickshire is described by A.Fenton, who found that women and children gathered mussels by hundreds of tons in a single year. <sup>1</sup>

For the bigger expeditions sons-in-law and nephews might be available, unless they had their own fathers' boats to man. In practice the ideal would frequently - or usually - be modified to one of inter-household collaboration. There is evidence of the boat-household or boat-family situation from the present century back to the seventeenth, from Isaac Storm photographed around 1900 with his three sons and their coble, by F.M.Sutcliffe, to the losses of 1686 and 1690 referred to at the beginning of the chapter. <sup>2</sup> Between those years there are multiple losses that help to identify the men who were working together: from 1783 to 1846 there were six such disasters and the fifteen men drowned came from six families and ten of them were brothers or brothers-in-law. <sup>3</sup> These are few, perhaps, on which to identify a system, but a consideration of the connections between boats and owners in figure 13 might well prompt the thought that it would be difficult to find a crew that lay outside the family, without defining that term too broadly; and that is from charting two or three generations only, in the main.

It was Jacob Storm's view that the eclipse of the fishing began with the attractions of the sailor's life. It is explicit in his account of his youth. He said, "The boys had every reason and encouragement to go to sea.....and the fishing had become less remunerative than it had been....

1. A.Fenton, 'Notes on Shellfish as Food and Bait in Scotland',

The Fishing Culture of the World, ed. B.Gunda, 1984, p.129.

2. W.Eglon Shaw, Frank Meadow Sutcliffe, 1974, p.12.

3. Fyl.Recon., Granger, Harrison, Peacock, Richardson, Skerry, Storm.

...It is true that there were seventeen cobs, two luggers and a yawl in the fishing, but numbers of the adult fishermen had already become merchant seamen and the boys almost without exception were beginning to be trained in the .... cargo vessels belonging to the place". Exception might be taken to this explanation on the ground that the change had begun long before his birth in 1837; it is necessary, at this point, only to remember the alum sloops. Decline continued with steam train and trawler, until Bay was taking stale fish from distant places. <sup>1</sup>

The 1841 Census contains the names of 38 fishermen, and in 1851 there were 37. By 1861 there were only 20 left and the average age had risen from 34 to 54 in twenty years. The failure of the work to attract men could hardly be clearer. When the Parliamentary investigation of fishing was conducted at about this time, the local enquiries were made at Staithes. <sup>2</sup> Robin Hood's Bay was still a fishing village to writers, but for a long time it had been the home predominantly of people connected with shipping. In figure 13 there are, among all the fishermen and boat-owners, two master mariners, Andrew Harrison and Robert Richardson. They were not the first of that profession in the village, but they are included as a reminder that the transition reveals among the fishing people something of the essential purposefulness that distinguishes a true community. The inauguration of the change is the opening subject of the next chapter.

It is contended, then, that the significance of the fishing is not simply that it provided a living, but that it can be seen, also, as

1. J.S., Memoirs: p.18; Ibid., p.23.

2. P.R.O.: H.O.107,1265; H.O.107,2734; R.G.9,3647-49; Report of the Commissioners on the Sea Fisheries of the United Kingdom, Parliamentary Papers, 1860, IV, p.314.



forming a habit of co-operative involvement in which household and family were significant. In doing so it laid a foundation for maritime activities of a different kind when opportunity arose.





## CHAPTER FIVE: SEAFARING, SHIPPING AND THE SOCIAL ORDER

It is the intention here to consider economic and social factors in the growth of the major local industry, and the social order to which it gave rise.

(a) To 1750 It is the same with Fylingdales as with Whitby: master mariners make their first appearance in the registers. This happened earlier in the case of Whitby, however. There, the burial of Luke Fox in 1635 was the first of a sea-captain "of whose death particular mention is made in our register", says Charlton. It must be said of Fox, however, that he was less a Whitby phenomenon and more a navigator of national repute.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless between 1653 and 1660 there were 13 marriages of master mariners in Whitby, and about that time sailors begin to appear in Fylingdales, where the first clear record is a deposition concerning the property of Robert Huntrods, mariner, "cast away at sea" in 1667.<sup>2</sup>

Thereafter, the presence of seafaring families may be inferred. One who was starting a sea-going career around that time was Peter Dale, mariner, of Stepney and formerly of Fylingdales. He was at his daughter's wedding in 1703 and so presumably began to serve his "time" thirty or more years before. His son John, master mariner, died in Barbados in 1714, but by that time there are more sailors to be found.<sup>3</sup> The brothers John and George Storm were lost in the Industry and the naval vessel Sunderland in 1694 and 1706 respectively.<sup>4</sup> The latter is described as of Robin Hood's

1. Whitby Parish Register, II, part 2, Yorkshire Parish Register Society, LXXXIV, 1928; D.N.B., Fox, Luke.

2. Whitby Parish Register, II, part 2; Borthwick, Robert Huntrods, Fylingdales, 1667.

3. P.R.O., R.G.6/1617/1703; Borthwick, John Dale, Fylingdales, 1724.

4. P.R.O.: PROB.6/70 (folio 69) and PROB.6/82 (LH154).

Bay, and both are identifiable by administrators. The sons of the fisherman, Thomas Storm, were pursuing seafaring careers by this time. These were Matthew, Isaac and Taylor, the last of whom was a master mariner in his will of 1714, and as his baptism was in 1684 he was probably serving his apprenticeship by 1698. Matthew was likewise a master, and a baptism in 1679 suggests his "time" should have been in progress in, say, 1692. He lived to 1757, and he is first in the register as "sailor", then at the baptisms of his children as "master", and at the burial of his wife in 1748 he has the prefix "Mr.", rare in Fylingdales and unique at the time for a shipmaster. In his will of the same year he is "gent.". The title seems to have been reserved in the parish for those who attained a modest independence, outside the usual landed circle, and may serve as a sign not only that the seafaring and shipping had already become profitable but that Fylingdales was setting its own social standards. <sup>1</sup>

These men were followed closely by their kinsmen Robert Richardson and Robert Robson. The former is mentioned and described in the indenture of 1734 to which reference was made on page 25. As their baptisms were in 1684 and 1682 respectively their service at sea must reach back beyond the turn of the century. <sup>2</sup>

An item of general evidence that seafaring was becoming a common occupation in the district is provided by the building of a seamen's hospital in Whitby in 1675. <sup>3</sup>

1. Borthwick: Taylor Storm, Fylingdales, 1714; Matthew Storm, Fylingdales, 1748; Fyl.Recon., Storm.
2. Fyl.Recon., Richardson and Robson.
3. R.Weatherill, The Ancient Port of Whitby and its Shipping, 1908, pp.393-395, reprint of foundation document.



That there was some other commercial accompaniment to the maritime ventures could be relevant when sources of capital are considered. Thomas Storm, who stands with his sons at the head of a dynasty of shipowners and seafarers, was a fisherman; but there was more to his lot than this. In 1674 he was one of only five of the Majority assessed at two hearths, and in 1692 the inventory of his property amounted to £162 (including £4 for fishing gear). He left money to each son, trying to balance the amount for each with other property at his disposal. Matthew got the house, Isaac two stables in Bay, and Taylor Ings Close and its barn.<sup>1</sup> The interest in land and farm buildings may mean that he was keeping draught and pack animals for the distribution of fish beyond the moor, towards York. Jacob Storm remembered the last of this trade, when a waggon drawn by two horses used to toil across the moor to Saltersgate on the Whitby-Pickering road, and a boy would then bring the second horse back home. Thomas's second marriage, to a widow of York, suggests he had dealings that way.<sup>2</sup> The interest in land on the Bank Top and beyond continued in his line, for when the "geats" of Raw Pasture were enclosed in 1808 his great-grandson received an allotment. His grandson Nathaniel's affairs also reveal an interest in land in the same quarter: in 1743 he was party to an indenture concerning the ten acres of Greystones, which he had been using, and he was also the occupier of Ings Close.<sup>3</sup> His occupation was victualler, which could mean innkeeper or dealer in ships' provisions, which latter

1. P.R.O., E.179/261/32; Borthwick, Thomas Storm, Fylingdales, 1692; there is now an Ings House on the Bank Top, which in the present century was owned by a descendant of Thomas (Fyl.Recon., Knightley Smith, Storm).

2. J.S., Memoirs, p.22; Fyl.Recon., Storm.

3. N.Y.C.R.O: Raw, Fylingdales, Enclosure Map, 22nd July, 1808; Register of North Riding Deeds, I, p.483, no.560.

would not be incompatible with his position as nephew, cousin or father-in-law to seven shipmaster-owners, and cousin-removed to many others, some of which complications are in figure 14 at the end of this section of the chapter. In the case of Peter Dale, son of John, the shipmaster who died in Barbadoes, "victualler" does mean a supplier of ships: his account book survives. An interest in this business, or the fish trade, may have lain behind Nathaniel Storm's finding of a wife at Malton, on the "fish road" to York.<sup>1</sup> The other parties to the indenture of 1743 were three more members of the Dale family, the grandchildren of Peter, mariner, of Wapping and Fylingdales, and their occupations were mercer and grocer, baker, and master mariner, all in Whitby.

This variety of trading interests in and around the fishing community is probably highly significant: there was an entrepreneurial spirit. It emanates, for example, from the will of Richard Moorsom, a Bay fisherman who died in 1730, leaving a thirty-second part of the ship "whereof my son Richard is now master", a sixty-fourth of Isaac Storm's ship, six houses in Bay, a close "lately bought from Matthew Storm" and land lying towards the headland of Ness, that is to say near that of Thomas and Nathaniel Storm.<sup>2</sup> Like the two last, Richard Moorsom was not solely a fisherman, but the signs of relative prosperity are also a reminder of the remark in Camden, quoted on page 76, about "the greatest place for fishing in all these parts". In 1727 the names of the three seafaring sons of Richard Moorsom are to be found among those of masters of vessels entering the

1. Northumberland County Record Office, M14,E16; Fyl.Recon., Storm.

2. Borthwick, Richard Moorsom, Fylingdales, 1730.



Thames. Robert brought the John and Ann from Sunderland and Richard the Richard and Jane, and John came in with the Two Brothers from Newcastle. <sup>1</sup> Entering the Thames on the same day as Robert Moorsom, but from Newcastle, was William Coverdale of Fylingdales, master of the William and Jane, a vessel of 237 tons. Behind the brief entries lie the familiar networks of kin made familiar by the fishing, and beginning to extend. William Coverdale was father-in-law of Richard Moorsom who, with brothers Robert and John, was brother-in-law to Isaac Storm. <sup>2</sup> Fylingdales connections can sometimes be traced far afield, by means of distinctive names: Norrison Coverdale, Esq., of London, purchaser in 1795 of the Coverdale (597), from the Whitby yard that built James Cook's Endeavour, was William Coverdale's son. One source of gain for the Coverdales was the cooperage in the Fisherhead Quarter of Bay for which they paid rates for many years. It was a good trade where there were ships' stores, fish and alum to be packed. <sup>3</sup>

Part at least of this determined move into shipping was on a scale beyond that required by the alum industry: the vessels were too big, as the sums paid in the parish sess prove, later in this section. There cannot be much doubt that the dominant factor behind the change was that to which, under the heading of migration in Chapter 7, a loss of Majority population is largely attributed. This was the success of the port of Whitby.

In 1702 the need for harbour improvement at Whitby was recognised by Parliament, which had been reminded of lack of shelter on the coast between Humber and Tyne. <sup>4</sup> With the increasing use of the harbour that

1. P.R.O., ADM.68/194, 30/9, 14/10, and 16/10, 1727.

2. Fyl.Recon., Coverdale, Moorsom, Storm.

3. Young, op.cit., p.553; Fyl.Recon., Coverdale.

4. A.Luders, ed., Statutes of the Realm, 1278-1714, 1811, 1 Anne, cap.13.

this facilitated, comes the identification of "mariners", "sailors" and "masters" in the Fylingdales registers between 1735 and 1741; they number 18. Some of the sailors reappear as masters, which may mean promotion or revised terminology. The inclusion of occupations in the registers being unusual before 1777, there is no obvious reason for this innovation, unless it is the case that all the men were in reality masters, which would make the recognition of status understandable. That five of these men were born before 1700 is ascertainable from the reconstitutions, and by the time of the first official record of ships and their crews at Whitby, that is in 1747-49, there are 31 masters of Bay abode. It could be hazarded that behind the masters there would stand many mates, seamen and apprentices, but it is even so not a little astonishing to find in the new source more than 220 of these, as well as several carpenters and cooks, at a time when the estimated population of the village was about 900. <sup>1</sup> The situation is not beyond reason, however, in the light of the large tonnage owned in Whitby, which stood high among provincial ports in this respect. <sup>2</sup>

The effect of the discovery of this great body of sailors is to make some reassessment necessary. It is difficult to see this as a very recent development. It seems much more convincing as a process that gathered momentum over a few decades, so putting back the beginning of the seafaring phase to a point no later than the great rise in the Majority curve of population estimates (in figure 11, facing p.50) which begins in 1711-20. Many men would then be experienced sailors by the seventeenth-thirties, when Whitby could boast the ownership of 120 vessels. <sup>3</sup>

1. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, 1747-1749.

2. R.Davis, The Rise of the English Shipping Industry, pp.63-64.

3. Journals of the House of Commons, 1732-1737, p.328.



Opportunely, there becomes available about this time a list of masters of Whitby colliers in the Tyne coal trade in the first years of the century, and among the 99 names not one is recognisable as belonging to Robin Hood's Bay. <sup>1</sup> There could have been employment in other trades, but total absence does suggest that the later years of the first decade of the century were beginning to be important for the village's shipping and seafaring interests. In the next decade Majority marriages reached their highest point in two centuries. It is about a generation later when the sess reveals what followed: in 1751 there were 24 vessels, and where the sizes - in the traditional keels - are not given, they can usually be calculated by comparing the amounts paid. <sup>2</sup>

If the sess of 1751, the Whitby Muster Rolls and the reconstitutions are used together, it emerges that the payers are owner-masters, but recollection of the fisherman Richard Moorsom's sixty-fourth and thirty-second parts of vessels is a reminder that behind these men were probably many sharers in the ventures. No broad pattern of ownership can be extracted from wills, and too frequently dispositions are in general terms, like "my shipping". It further arises from comparison of the same three main sources that there are Bay vessels not in the sess. It is difficult to see the complete situation. Rapid turnover of vessels, and absence at sea of owner-masters might be explanations; there may have been avoidance of payment. Thus a list for "around 1750" has been gleaned, and Fylingdales masters have been identified in the reconstitutions. In a few cases where the amount paid and the tonnage are not to be found, number of crew listed in the Muster is a rough guide.

1. Whitby Lit. and Phil. Library, MS. no.387.2.

2. J.S., Miscellany, transcript of Constables' Assessment, 1751.

Table 4: Ships and shipowners c.1750

	Keels	Approx. tonnage
John Cockerill	Mayflower 5½	111
Richard Cropton	Happy Return 6½	143
Thomas Cropton	Good Intent 4½	95
Phatuel Harrison	Dove	c.200
Daniel Huntrods	Providence 3½	74
George Jackson	Providentia 8½	175
Thomas Jackson	Exchange	c.100
Philip Moody	Prince Frederick 8½	175
John Moorsom	Two Brothers -	-
John Newton	Elizabeth 7½	159
William Newton	Elizabeth ?	
Robson Richardson	Mary & Rebecca 6	127
Thomas Richmond	Richmond 6½	143
William Richardson	Restoration c.6	127
Andrew Rickinson	Constant Betty 5½	116
John Rickinson	Success 5½	111
Philip Skinner	Rebecca -	-
Isaac Storm	Matthew 12½	270
Taylor Storm	Constant Matthew 10½	222
Richard Tindale	Richard & Mary 4½	95
William Watson	Dolphin 10½	222
Joseph Wright	Company 4½	95

The name of William Newton's vessel is uncertain. He may have taken over his brother's Elizabeth, because in time John disappears from the lists and William's vessel then has exactly the same tonnage. For the analysis of the situation, therefore, 21 vessels are counted. Thomas Jackson and Thomas Richmond are counted as "Bay", although the registers show them eventually living in Thorpe, and Philip Skinner and William Watson were Country men. There were also nine smaller vessels, none of them of more than three keels. The owners were Robert Barry, William Bedlington, Richard Gillson, Isaac Hornby, John Johnson, Matthew Mennel, George Richardson. William Wood and Joseph Wright. They are listed here because they, or their family names, are in some cases of later interest, and so add detail to the picture of continuity.

When all the holdings in the parish are analysed the shipowning is seen to be emphatically a Bay interest. The result of this appears in Table 5,



Table 5: Distribution of shipowning within Fylingdales

	Core	Majority	All Bay	Country	Total
Larger vessels	4	9	19	2	21
Smaller vessels	1	3	9	0	9
	5	12	28	2	30

in which it is also apparent that the long-standing families were far from preoccupied with fishing

The achievement of this level of ownership may be better expressed in terms of cost of entry, rather than of numbers of vessels, or tonnage. Willan put the cost of a vessel of about 200 tons in the early eighteenth century at £10 a ton, and by the reign of George III, when ships were generally around 300 of 400 tons, the cost was up to £14, taking the price towards £5,000. <sup>1</sup> On a low estimate, therefore, Daniel Huntrods' Providence might have cost more than £700, and Isaac Storm's Matthew more than £2,500. Then the favourable prices to be obtained in Whitby have to be allowed for. The Admiralty valued the Earl of Pembroke (370) at £2,307.5s.6d., or £6 a ton, in 1764. She must have been of the highest specification, since she became Cook's Endeavour. <sup>2</sup> If a bargain like that could be found at £6 a ton, Robson Richardson might have paid £760 for his Mary and Rebecca, named after his wife and his mother. Older ships would undoubtedly be a means of keeping down the cost of entry to shipping, without sacrificing seaworthiness; after all, Nelson's Victory was 40 years old at Trafalgar. <sup>3</sup> Despite this, a ship would be for many

1. T.S.Willan, The English Coasting Trade, 1600-1750, 1938, p.86.

2. R.Davis, op.cit., p.374; D.R.McGregor, Merchant Sailing Ships, 1980, p.47.

3. Fyl.Recon., Richardson; J.Wilton-Smith ed., H.M.S.Victory, 1988, p.3.

the investment of a lifetime, a commitment to be effectively compared with the cost of a house. In 1747 the house in Fisherhead where Phatuel Harrison, of the Dove in Table 4, was brought up, was sold for £55. Nef quotes a payment of half of this sum for a thirty-second share of the collier Cleveland of North Shields in 1731. <sup>1</sup> Obviously there must have been a hidden spread of shares, on account of the risk, if not the cost, and if the experience in Robin Hood's Bay in the nineteenth century is a guide, friends and relatives, and usually the latter, put their savings together. It can be roughly calculated from the foregoing that the basic share, the sixty-fourth, in a Bay vessel of average size might have been upwards of £20. This is comparable to the £39 Peter Dale, son of John Dale of Fylingdales, paid per share of the collier Amphitrite (304) in 1776. <sup>2</sup> Accepting the risks of the shipping business seems therefore to have been challenging but not necessarily formidable.

It is useful to see this sort of investment in relation to rough estimates of the amount of money collier sailors might have brought into the village. Willan used sources of about 1730 to arrive at an idea of the range of wages that might be paid. <sup>3</sup> Summarised in table 6, they may be

Table 6: Wages per voyage

	Master	Mate	Seaman	Boy
Higher	£7	£2.15s.	£1.15s.	15/-
Lower	£5	£2.10s.	£1.10s.	10/-

1. J.S., Miscellany. (This is the Harrison house referred to on page 25.)

J.U.Nef, The Rise of the English Coal Industry, 1932, I, p.395.

2. Northumberland County Record Office, M.14,E16 (Peter Dale's account book).

3. T.S.Willan, op.cit.,pp.17-18.



low estimates for Whitby ships, because the shipowning Chapmans of the port were paying seamen £2.15s. a voyage as early as 1715-1718.<sup>1</sup> The spending power in the village was therefore probably substantial, particularly when the special rewards of masters are considered. They were the important element. Customarily they owned, or part-owned, their vessels, and therefore had a share in the profits of a voyage. Part-ownership was a tradition, or a precaution, that persisted in Whitby shipping down to the end of the nineteenth century at least.<sup>2</sup> Also by custom (one widely followed almost to the present time), masters traded on their own account, with a chest of goods. They could carry passengers too. In a letter he wrote in 1807, William Coultas of Bay, master of the transport Majestic, told his sister he had been allowed £100 by his owners for having to make a voyage without passengers.<sup>3</sup> To all these receipts there must be added the income from other shares held in the village.

There was a powerful financial incentive to become an owner-master, and a social incentive was there too: the shipmaster became a man of standing in the neighbourhood, the figure representative of success in a community where other professional men were rare. The opportunity that awaited the apprentice (or "seaboy", to use the local term) can be seen in the years 1747-49, when 154 out of 265 masters of Whitby vessels were under the age of 36.<sup>4</sup>

Fylingdales had an unusually large share of these important figures, and they form an interesting family-occupational network. A closer look at

1. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Chapman Papers, accounts of the Hannah.

2. J.S., Miscellany: his 1/64 of S.S.Fylingdales, of which he was master, entry no.86650 at Whitby Customs House, 15th July, 1885.

3. J.S., Miscellany, abstract of correspondence of, and concerning William Coultas.

4. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, 1747-49.

the men in Table 4 on page 94, and the owners of small vessels listed on the same page, is facilitated by using figure 14, the pull-out chart at the end of this section. The Majority names, nine among the larger vessels' owners and three among the smaller, are by this time almost to be expected. Descendants of people around whom the settlement grew are prominent. Taylor and Isaac Storm are grandsons of Thomas the fisherman who was lost in 1690, and sons of Matthew, the first shipmaster to be prefixed with "Mr." in the register. <sup>1</sup> Their father has been excluded from Table 4, although he was living at the time, because his ship Matthew and Joseph (mentioned in the will he made in 1748) may be Isaac's Matthew in the sess and the table. <sup>2</sup> She was active in 1747-49 when Isaac brought her back from America, and in 1751 when he brought her into the Thames from Riga. <sup>3</sup> Isaac and Taylor's nephew, another Matthew (1741-1819), was a minor, but he was to have shipping interests in Whitby.

The only Moorsom in the table is John, his brothers having died (see page 91). One brother, Richard of the Richard and Jane, presumably died at sea; his burial is not in the register. He left his children in the care of John, whose wife was sister to Isaac and Taylor Storm. One of these children, Richard, was to become Whitby's leading whaling magnate. <sup>4</sup>

The Dales are not in Table 4, having transferred their business to Whitby and elsewhere, but through them the links between ports are to be seen continuing: in 1763 Isaac Storm left £20 to John Dale, "the son of

1. Fyl.Recon., Storm.

2. Borthwick, Matthew Storm, Fylingdales, 1758.

3. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, 1747-49; P.R.O., ADM.68/219, 6th August, 1747; Whitby Muster Rolls, 1750-51.

4. Borthwick, Richard Moorsom, Fylingdales (Tuition), 1738/9. (A reminder of Moorsom Arctic ventures is Cape Moorsom on the east coast of Greenland, noted in The Arctic Pilot, II, 1975.)



my friend Peter Dale of Shields" (where the Dales were still shipbroking in 1858). <sup>1</sup> They are represented in figure 14 by John (son of Charles and Esther), who, having died in Barbadoes in 1714, left a quarter of his Charles and Esther to his "loving brother" Humphrey Farside. Brother-in-law was the truth of the matter, but the significance is that there was a link with the armigerous and landowning Farsides, a precedent that was to be followed in 1747 by the fisherman's son, Phatuel Harrison, owner-master of the Dove. <sup>2</sup>

The Jacksons begin in Bay with Thomas, and go up to Thorpe with his son John, which is an early intimation of the trend to use of Thorpe virtually as a suburb of the maritime settlement. Philip Moody, of the Prince Frederick, was another who moved there, but George Jackson established himself as a countryman by occupying Middlewood farm while he was still master of the Providentia. His brother John is found in Stepney in 1786, when he was part-owner of the Lively of Whitby, and so he helps to mark out the coal trail. <sup>3</sup>

Another who moved from Bay to Thorpe was Thomas Richmond, of the Richmond, but a second marriage took him back to Bay. His father-in-law, William Watson of the Dolphin in Table 4, was a son of John, yeoman, of Parkgate, Fylingdales, who was baptised in 1629 and probably descended from the Mrs. John Watson of Thorpe who was the only occupier in Fylingdales to be given a title in the important document of 1563. <sup>4</sup>

1. Fyl.Recon., Dale; Borthwick, Isaac Storm, 1763; William Whellan, and Co., Directory of Northumberland, 1858.
2. Borthwick, John Dale, 1714; Fyl.Recon., Farside.
3. Fyl.Recon., Jackson, Moody.
4. Fyl.Recon., Richmond, Watson; P.R.O., E.318/43/2816.

The Croptons had entered the parish only recently, and although connections with the land can be pursued in the parish books, they were associated with the coal business in the parish and also in Sunderland, and had money in shipping. Such connections identify them as suppliers of coal to the alum works, and more will be seen of them in this respect. <sup>1</sup>

From the great density of Cockerills there this name came from adjacent Hackness parish: they have almost a page to themselves in the index of the published register. John, of the Mayflower, presents a problem in the work of reconstitution because either he or another of the same name married a member of the Bedlington family of the Bay Core and went on to become part of a prominent family group in Sunderland shipping. <sup>2</sup> The family was also important in Scarborough, in shipbuilding, but the name probably has more diverse connections with occupations and places in Fylingdales than any other. <sup>3</sup>

Another in Table 4 with associations with the coal country to the north is Joseph Wright, son of Peter and Ann, who, it can be judged from once again putting together the Whitby musters and the Fylingdales sess, had just moved up from his Peter and Ann to the larger Company. He married Frances Storm, cousin of Isaac and Taylor, in 1750, and went to Sunderland where his wife had lived with her first husband, Robert Richardson, master mariner of Bay. Wright and Richardson became familiar names in the shipping of the River Wear. <sup>4</sup> The network becomes complicated at this

1. Fyl.Recon., Cropton.

2. Register of the Parish of Hackness, 1557-1783, Yorkshire Parish

Register Society, 1906; Fyl.Recon., Bedlington, Cockerill; Tyne and Wear Archives, Sunderland Ship Registrations, 1786-1814.

3. Plaque on Scarborough Heritage Trail.

4. Fyl.Recon., Storm, Richardson and Wright; Durham County Record Office, Parish Registers of Bishopwearmouth, Monkwearmouth and Sunderland.



point because it draws in Robson and William Richardson of the Mary and Rebecca and the Restoration respectively, who were Robert's brothers, and also, for the second time, William Watson of the Dolphin, father-in-law of William Richardson. <sup>1</sup>

The names Newton and Skinner occur in both Bay and Brow, and are noteworthy because they present the likelihood of people being drawn into shipping by the alum trade. <sup>2</sup>

Figure 14 reveals more of these entanglements. There are several points to make about the situation. The first is that there was a very compact group, alongside that of the fishing families, and its form recalls the suggestion made in the last chapter that partible inheritance, intermarriage and entrepreneurial impulse went well together, and not necessarily by coincidence. A second is that there were signs of the importance of the coal trade, the so-called nursery of the Navy. Thirdly, the web had spread outward from Bay, both socially and geographically, with the effect of bringing together the descendants of small landowners, farmers, sailors and fishermen, for a time. Successful ventures were rearranging the social pattern, to create a novel middle class. Doubtless distinction remained: the door of the Farside pew in Old St.Stephen's bears the Farside arms, but if this was so in the previous building on the site it is interesting to visualise the scene at worship. A complication is posed by a note in the register in 1709, about fifteen purchasers of pews in the "fishermen's aisle", but the reconstitutions blur the traditional pattern by showing that most of those present, parson included, who were not new to the parish, were likely to be related. <sup>3</sup>

1. Fyl.Recon., Richardson, Watson.

2. Fyl.Recon., Newton and Skinner.

3. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/1, memorandum of 1st September, 1709.

The intermediaries in the process had been the shipmasters. It is a feature of Bay society that from its first known prosperity to the late-nineteenth century move to the Bank Top, there has been daily encounter by people of differing standing and substance but of the same blood, perpetuating strong traces of the equalitarian order of fishing. There is here a different effect from that which is said to have distinguished landowners from farm labourers, according to writers whose views are discussed by M.Strathern preliminary to her essay on Elmdon in Essex. <sup>1</sup>

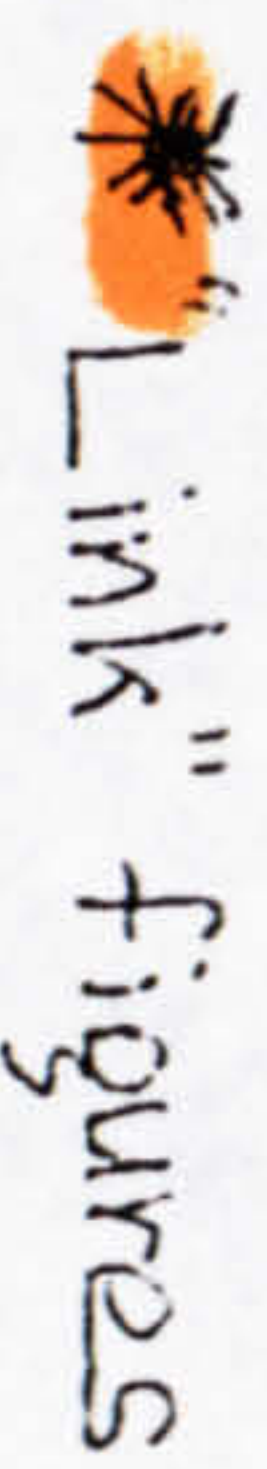
In 1764 there occurred, in effect, a symbolic event. It concerns the plan made for Mr.Farside by Lionel Charlton, historian and surveyor (and already used for figure 4 on page 8). It shows "closes of ground adjoining to Robin Hood's Bay, belonging to Mr.M.Storm, deceased", and in a corner is a small field, with the site marked where "Mr.Isaac Storm....proposes to erect a dwelling house or garden". <sup>2</sup> He was owner of the Matthew in Table 4, and his was the first move from "fischer townlet" to Bank Top. His house - Prospect House - marks the first shipowning phase.

It is thus apparent that Robin Hood's Bay was predominantly a seafaring place, early in the eighteenth century, and almost as long a society of shipowning people and dynasties with an equalitarian tradition.

1. M.Strathern, 'The Village as an Idea: Constructs of Village-ness in Elmdon, Essex', Belonging: Identity and Social Organisation in British Rural Cultures, A.P.Cohen ed., 1982, pp. 247-254. A trace of the egalitarian order is discernible in a record as recent as 1925. Captain B.Ryan of Cardiff sailed to the Americas in a Whitby vessel, as Second Officer, and wrote in his unpublished It's a Strange Game of 1989 (pp.142-155) about the odd "code" by which the ship ran. The strangest rule was that by which when work on deck pressed, officer status was put aside and all "turned to". The master was Isaac Storm of Bay.
2. Whitby Lit. and Phil., P.Burnett, no.2005.



The mid-eighteenth century  
shipowning kin



Anthony Newton Storm, master  
mariner, assistant harbour  
master at Newcastle, New  
South Wales

Master  
Owner-Master



(b) C.1750-c.1800 In terms of numbers of vessels, this was a period of partial decline, followed by signs of revival. To consider these matters, the sess can be compared with, and checked against, not only the musters, but from 1786 the statutory registrations, and on this basis it may be claimed that its information is reliable until the seventeen-eighties. <sup>1</sup>

The lists of owners of vessels in 1755 in tables 7 and 8, on page 104, contain many threads extending from the last phase, with 28 vessels of all sizes, 16 of them large, which from this point always means over three keels. <sup>2</sup> There have been some changes in personalia, but the major difference is that the number of larger vessels has fallen from 21 (if the Newtons are counted once in c.1750). Joseph Wright was continuing to pay sess in Fylingdales despite his move to Sunderland, which implies that there were fellow-shareholders still in the parish. The 1755 list gives a complete account of keels and of the sums paid to the overseers in consequence. The owners of the two largest ships of 1755 were paying as much as the occupiers of the nine largest farms of 1754, when the same rate was levied for the poor. <sup>3</sup>

The deficiency of the sess record from this time is that it is intermittent. In 1795 James Pearson was "not for paying more being sixty-six years old" and Hannah Tindale set a limit to what she was willing to contribute, but there are no conspicuous absences from the lists. <sup>4</sup>

From 1751 to 1818 there were more than 110 recorded payers, and for nearly all of them there is extensive, or at least adequate information in the reconstitutions. Ownership was widely diffused, and more so than the

1. Sessional Volumes of Public Acts, 26 George III, cap.60.

2. J.S., Miscellany, transcript of Overseers' Assessment, Rate Book, 1755.

3. Ibid., transcript of Overseers' Assessment, Rate Book, 1754.

4. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/4/2, Churchwardens Rate Book, 1795.



parish books reveal, since only one owner is given for each vessel. Not until 1824 were details of sixty-fourths to be stated when ships were registered.<sup>1</sup> It might be hazarded, however, that if there was any risk of the growth of adversarial attitudes in this highly integrated society, the wide spread of ownership should have gone far towards dispelling it.

Table 7: Owners of larger vessels in 1755

	Keels	Payment
John Cockerill	5½	£ 10s.6d
Richard Cropton	6½	13 6
Widow Cropton (of Thomas)	4½	9 0
Daniel Huntrods	3½	6 9
George Jackson	8½	16 6
Philip Moody	8½	16 6
William Newton	7½	15 0
Thomas Richmond	6½	13 6
Robson Richardson	6	12 0
Andrew Rickinson	5½	10 6
Isaac Storm	12½	1 5 6
Taylor Storm	10½	1 1 0
John Tindale	3½	6 9
Richard Tindale	4½	9 0
Widow Watson (of William)	10½	1 1 0
Joseph Wright (new ship)	4½	9 0

Table 8: Owners of smaller vessels (under three keels )

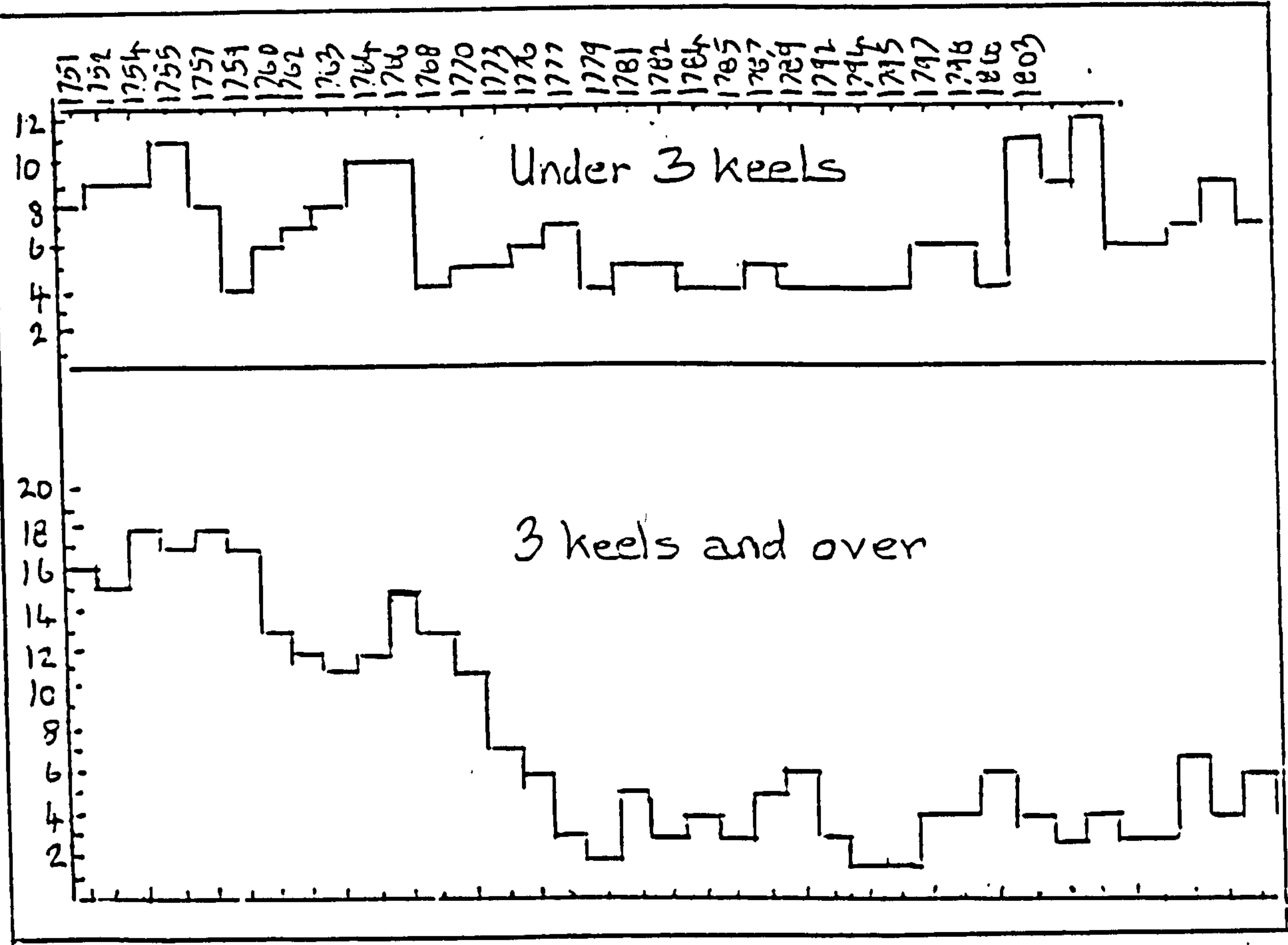
Robert Barry	John Moorson
John Fletcher	Thomas Porter
Charles Gray	George Richardson
John Hill	William Wood
John Johnson	Matthew Wright
Matthew Mennel	Joseph Wright
These smaller vessels paid between 2s.3d and 5s.3d.	

Note: The changes in the ownership situation from the time of these tables to 1818 is given in detail in Appendix 4, p.284.

1. Public General Acts, 4 George IV, c.41, section II.

The longest gap between any two adjacent sess lists is three years, during which interval there might have been some buying and selling of vessels, but this does not arise from the other sources. If there is any distortion it is more likely to be in the length of time for which particular vessels were held, rather than in the main trend to decline which is very plain in figure 15, to which the totals from Appendix 4 have been transferred.

Figure 15: Numbers of vessels in the sess, c.1750-c.1800



An aspect of figure 15 which is worth noting is the quite strong correlation between the undulating numbers of the small craft there, and the fortunes of the alum trade as reflected in figure 11, facing page 50.



A feature of the decline is that while 12 vessels out of 30, large and small, belonged to the Majority around 1750, the group's interest declined until in 1794 there were only six, four of them being small. This distribution of ownership within the village is a subject to be broached after reasons for decline have been discussed.

When the reconstitutions, Appendix 4 and the shipowning kin in figure 14 are compared, names connected with the Country can be seen to disappear. They include Dale, Farside, Jackson, Richmond, Stainton and Watson. The familiar Bay names come and go, while the larger vessels become fewer. Important names, according to the number of larger-vessel symbols in Appendix 4, are Cropton, Tindale, Moody, John Hill and Robert Bedlington, and these too pass out of the scene, except the first. Robert Bedlington had daughters who married sailors, who are in Appendix 4. These were Peter Bedlington and Matthew Pyman, and their father-in-law outlived them. The Tindales had sons but suffered a succession of relatively early deaths; by 1800 they were active again, and on their way to prosperity, led by Benjamin, an important owner-master in the shipping business of the nineteenth century, but they were out of the sess for 20 years. Philip Moody was lost at sea, and 30 years went by before his son brought the name back into the sess. The greatest continuity comes through the daughter of John Hill (son-in-law of Phatuel Harrison of the Dove, in table 4 on page 94) who married Daniel Huntrods and became the mother of Phatuel, the owner of one of only four large vessels in 1800.

Several possible explanations of decline offer themselves. At first sight it was a strange development, because the Seven Years War and the War of American Independence called for many ships, and it is transport shipping more than any other factor that contributed to the prosperity of Whitby owners. The situation was described in doggerel but nevertheless

effectively by John Twistleton of Whitby, who wrote:

"....he was thought a man of note,  
Who governed a fishing boat,"

and explained how eventually,

"Our transport ships by wind and tide,  
Have made our masters swell with pride." <sup>1</sup>

Lionel Charlton reckoned that in 1779 between 70 and 80 Whitby ships were in government pay. <sup>2</sup> These contracts meant regular receipts whether a ship was working or idle, and even Quakers found this irresistible, a circumstance alluded to in Chapter 9, in the discussion of religion.

During the Seven Years War a bill was brought to have seamen's wages remitted, to relieve parishes of the cost of supporting their families, and Whitby was involved in the petition behind the bill. The great number of men away on naval and related service is illustrated by Ralph Davis's estimate of 60,000 out of a total of 70,000 merchant seamen. <sup>3</sup> The press, it might be inferred, had been extraordinarily busy. There is also an estimate of a total in 1789 of 2,958 Whitby seamen. <sup>4</sup> This is not remarkable when the number of transports is considered. The demand for seamen and the fall in the number of Bay vessels must go together, part of the way, and this is supported by the 203 sailors who can be detected in the Fylingdales registers between 1777 and 1792, despite the fewer vessels

1. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Whitby Repository, 1826, pp.350-351.

2. L.Charlton, History of Whitby, 1779, p.359.

3. Journals of the House of Commons, XVII, 1757, p.796; R.Davis, The Rise of the English Shipping Industry, 1962, p.323.

4. British Library, Liverpool Papers, Addl. MS.384,29/30.



owned in the parish then. It is also to be expected that because coastal sailing was more dangerous than usual and coal had still to be got to London, the relatively small body of sailors left would attract higher wages. The accounts of the Chapmans of Whitby show their seamen around the end of the century earning more than £10 a voyage. So manning was expensive. <sup>1</sup>

Then there is, further, the cost of the vessels themselves. With the sort of rise seen towards the end of the century, on page 95, the initial cost of entry to the industry was possibly beyond the means of most would-be owners in Bay. For people accustomed to operating on a family basis, the prospect of risking savings or seeking credit among comparative strangers may well have been unattractive.

Yet another factor is the rise of the Whitby whaling industry, following the bounty arrangements of 1750. <sup>2</sup> Young said a whaler's owner would spend £3,000 in Whitby on gear and stores before sailing for the Arctic. The standards were laid down in bounty conditions, and covered a high level of manning also. There was here a call on the services of sailors and craftsmen and a deterring requirement of much initial capital, with consequent effect on wages and prices. <sup>3</sup>

The forces operating were likely therefore to increase the number of sailors and reduce the number of owners in Bay. The total of 203 sailors discovered in the Fylingdales registers in 1777-92 included 17 masters, but there would be fewer in any one year. For example, in 1797-99 there were only 13 Bay masters identifiable. <sup>4</sup> As counting approaches 1801 and the

1. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Chapman Papers, 1795.

2. A.Luders, ed., Statutes of the Realm, 23 George II, cap.24.

3. Young, op.cit., p.568.

4. Whitby Lit. and Phil, Muster Rolls, 1797-99.

first Census, comparison can be made with the estimate on page 42 of more than 160 people away from the parish, presumably at sea. If that was somewhere near the truth, a remaining factor is the number of men on shore leave at Census time, which would increase the total of sailors. Thus the sailors' numbers were impressive, encouraged no doubt by the high wages, while the ships were fewer. A higher proportion of men than formerly would have to work in ships owned in other places.

The sess having helped to depict the main trend, it is appropriate at this point to return to a remark made in the first paragraph of this section, about the sess being reliable until the seventeen-eighties. From that time it is largely dependable, but it does not deal with the whole story, for there were interests in Whitby ships also. If the Whitby register of shipping is brought into use, at it can be from 1786, there are to be found several vessels with Bay associations. The overall picture of decline is not substantially altered, but the Whitby connection is important as evidence of the symbiotic relationship between populous village and busy port, and of the extension of Bay business ventures.

The two large vessels remaining in the sess in 1794-95 (which is the time of objections to the charge being raised) belong to Phatuel Huntrods and John Ridley, names which provide a clue to the true situation, which can be traced in Appendix 4. John Ridley was clerk, which is to say manager, of the alum works, and he held a small craft, of the kind to be expected in that industry, as well as his Charlotte (199). In 1797 the number of small vessels began to rise (according to figure 15 on page 105), if somewhat unsteadily, and this is at variance with the wartime decline in alum business suggested by the population diagram, figure 11 (facing page 50). Phatuel Huntrods was the nephew of Robert Cropton who paid the sess in 1789, was gone from the lists by 1792, but meanwhile emerged again in the Whitby register of ships in 1787 with an interesting group of people around the vessel Lively (160). The other participants in



the venture were Robert Cropton's brother John, John Jackson of Stepney and late of Fylingdales, Thomas Barker of Robin Hood's Bay (brother-in-law of the Croptons and master of the vessel), and James Atty, a Whitby sailmaker.<sup>1</sup> Also in the ship register in 1787 was the pink John owned by the two Croptons, the executors of John Holt and Matthew Storm, gentlemen, the widow Mrs. Isaac Hornby (whose shipmaster husband was for a time master of the Fylingdales poorhouse), and Jonathan Lacey, ropemaker of Whitby, like the late John Holt.<sup>2</sup> Robert Cropton was the master of the John, but in the Fylingdales Register he is "coal fitter". This occupation appears again in 1807 on the registration of the Gorleston by her Bay master, Andrew Harrison, and four Sunderland coal fitters called Cropton.<sup>3</sup>

John, son of Robert Cropton the coal fitter, was married in Monkwearmouth in 1808, and was known as a shipowner in Sunderland. One of his vessels was the Clara, a name going back to his great-grandmother, Mrs. Clara Hill, daughter of Phatuel Harrison of Robin Hood's Bay.<sup>4</sup> In 1796 Andrew Harrison, a collateral descendant of Phatuel, was running the Peak for Thomas Strother of Peak-Brow, an alum proprietor and therefore a coal buyer.<sup>5</sup>

1. N.M.M., Whitby, 1787, Lively; Fyl.Recon., Barker, Cropton, Huntrods, Jackson.
2. N.M.M., Whitby, 1787, John; Fyl.Recon., Cropton, Hornby, Storm, Estill (the last two having Holt and Lacey connections)
3. N.M.M., Whitby, no.11, 1807.
4. Durham County Record Office, Parish Register of Monkwearmouth; Sunderland Public Library, Corder MS. series 5: J.W.Corder, Monkwearmouth Families, n.p., n.d.; J.Thompson, Recollections of Old Monkwearmouth, 1894, pp.6-8; Fyl.Recon., Harrison, Hill and Cropton.
- 5 Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, no.17, 1796.

There is obviously a group here concerned with the coal trade out of Sunderland, and with the supply of markets which included the alum works of Peak-Brow and probaby those nearer Whitby, and the situation can be related to the bridging of the alum depression referred to on page 70, the rise in the number of small craft in 1797 (traced in Appendix 4 and to be seen in figure 15 on page 105), and John Ridley's acquisition of the Charlotte, to use her as a collier.

Further comparison of the sess and the Whitby registrations enlarges the group. Matthew Storm (1740-1819), nephew of Isaac who built Prospect House on the Bank Top (and grandson of Matthew whose executors partnered the Croptons in the John) paid sess in 1762 and 1763. <sup>1</sup> The amount was the largest in the list, and could only have been for the Venus (302) of which he was master in 1767 when she was trading between Tyne and Thames, and which he was sharing with John Chapman of Whitby at her registration in 1786. <sup>2</sup> The Chapman interest in the coal trade was of long standing: as far back as 1725 Aaron, Abel and Ingram Chapman were sailing frequently in and out of the Thames. <sup>3</sup>

The network spreads deeply into Whitby's commercial life, and a key to this is figure 16 on page 113, in which the use of those names occurring in the text illustrates the introverted connections of business and family. The dominant figure is Richard Moorsom, of the Bay Core family, who in 1786 registered with Lord Mulgrave, the alum manufacturer, their cutter Mulgrave. <sup>4</sup> The nobleman was the Commodore Constantine Phipps who led the unsuccessful attempt in 1773 to find a northern route to India, an

1. Fyl.Recon., Storm; Appendix 4 and N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/3/2.

2. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, 1767; N.M.M., Whitby, 1786.

3. P.R.O., ADM.68, June, 1725-October, 1728.

4. N.M.M., Whitby, 1786.



expedition remembered now for the participation of Midshipman Nelson.<sup>1</sup> Richard Moorsom became the leading owner of Whitby whalers, and builder of the town's "most lavish mansion". There are linked here two foremost industrialists, and it seems to follow naturally that when Moorsom's son, a future Trafalgar captain and admiral, stepped outside usual circles, to enter the Navy, it should have been under Captain Phipps.<sup>2</sup>

Business and family ties recur at the registration of the Benjamin and Mary (330) in 1786. The master was Israel Allison of Robin Hood's Bay, and the list of owners included John Chapman, John Holt, Matthew Storm, Richard Moorsom, the master mariner Thomas Baker of Robin Hood's Bay, and William Linskill, ropemaker of North Shields (and formerly of Whitby).<sup>3</sup> Thomas Baker was also a shareholder of the ship Achilles (180), with Matthew and Taylor Storm, John Chapman, and William Chapman, sailmaker. Taylor Storm, a master mariner, is listed again in 1787 among owners of the Martha (315), who include more Holts and Nathaniel Campion.<sup>4</sup> Chapman, Holt and Campion are all families associated with banking in Whitby. All these names are in Figure 16 on the next page, where they are joined by a member of another banking family, Christopher Richardson.<sup>5</sup>

1. D.N.B., Phipps, Constantine John, 2nd Baron Mulgrave, 1744-1792.

2. N.Pevsner, The Buildings of Yorkshire North Riding, 1966, p.399;  
W.O'Byrne, A Naval Biographical Dictionary, 1849, Moorsom, Robert.

3. N.M.M., Whitby, 1787, Benjamin and Mary; Linskill's son was High Sheriff of Northumberland; his grandson was a member of the Tyne Improvement Commission and first mayor of the borough of Tynemouth (Victoria History of the County of Northumberland, VIII, p.272, and Shields Daily News, 19th March, 1901).

4. N.M.M., Whitby, Achilles, 1786, and Martha, 1787.

5. E.Baines, Directory of Yorkshire North Riding, II, 1823;  
Young, op.cit., pp.581-582.

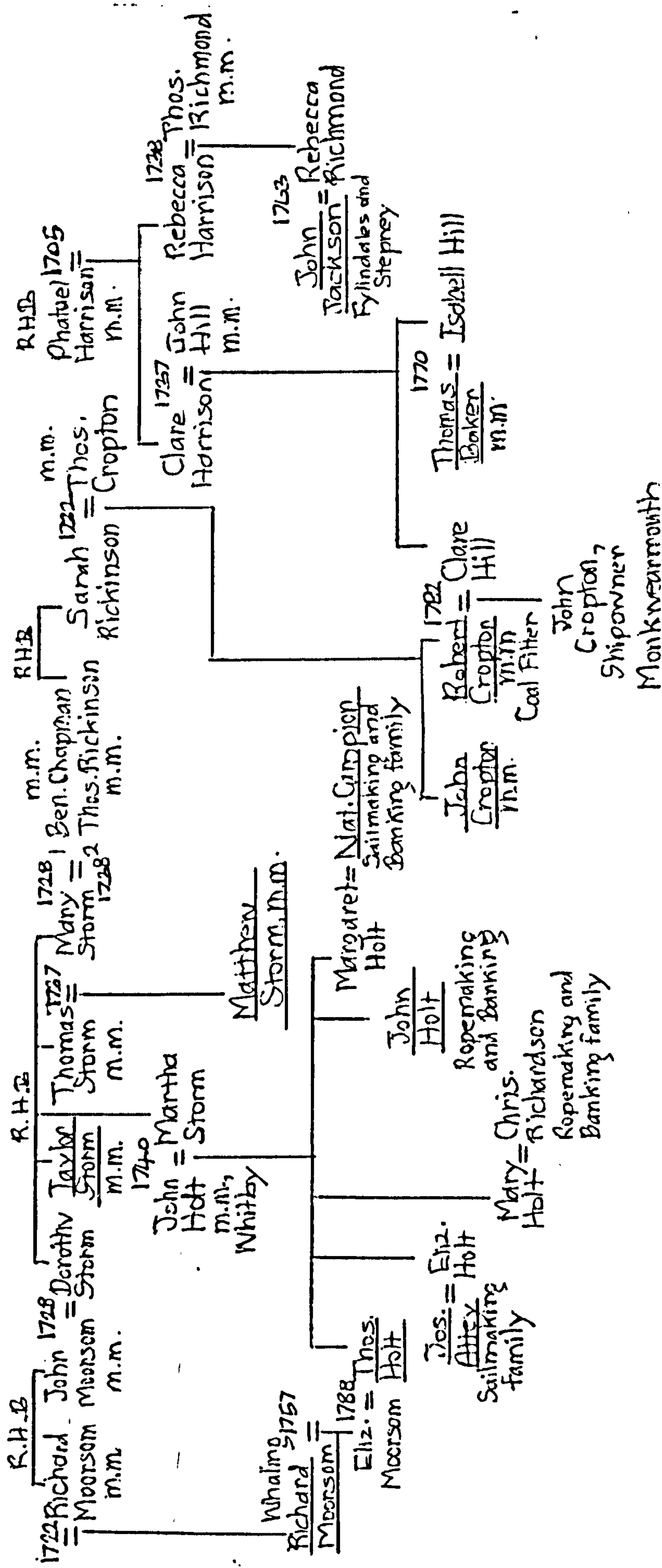


Figure 16: Whitby and Robin Hood's Bay shipowning network, c.1790, using registrations of the vessels Achilles, Benjamin and Mary, John, Lively and Venus. The undated Holt information is from Robert B.Holt's own signed copy of his work, Whitby Past and Present, inside the cover of which he drew a descent; it is in the present writer's possession.



Thus there are intersecting entrepreneurial circles that the sess misses, drawing the two places together, at what superficially appeared to be a period of decline, and illustrating the closeness and economic significance of relationships on this strip of coast.

For Robin Hood's Bay sailors it was important that the entrepreneurial tradition was stronger than the sess would reveal. Their employment as masters and self-employment as owner-masters has been noted, but great numbers of others - some of the 203 counted in the parish register - were also involved. When Thomas Baker commanded the Achilles in 1765-67 he took with him six seamen and two servants (i.e. apprentices) from Robin Hood's Bay; there were two Moorsoms among them. In the same years John Tindale, master of the small Brotherly Love, had an all-Bay crew of four, including an apprentice from the Core.<sup>1</sup> The practice was of long standing: in 1747-49, in Whitby's first musters, Phatuel Harrison's Dove had a mate, Truefoot Dobson, whose abode was given as Whitby but whose birth is traceable to Robin Hood's Bay; the seamen included three from Sunderland and one from Bay and there were four servants from the village, two of them, Richard Tindale and John Granger, destined to become masters of their own vessels. John Tindale, brother of Richard, had already risen to be mate of Charles Gray's Industry, of which all six crew were from Bay.<sup>2</sup> In the same mid-century years, Taylor Storm in his Constant Matthew carried five Whitby men and nine from Bay. One of the nine was John Hill, who has appeared before and also came into figure 16 on page 113.<sup>3</sup> Taylor's brother Isaac had in the Matthew and Joseph seven seamen who came

1. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, 1765-67: no.228; no.131.

2. Ibid., 1747-49: no.116; no.252.

3. Ibid., no.140.

from elsewhere and eight young men and boys from Robin Hood's Bay, all learning the craft of mariner. George Jackson's complement of nine in the Providentia all gave their abode as Bay. The alum trade naturally played a part: in the decade 1781-90 Richard Gillson is often found as owner and master of the small Good Design and Endeavour, making work for himself and seven others, all from the village. <sup>1</sup>

Many could find training and occupation and some, advancement, without looking beyond the village, or beyond kinsmen or connections in Whitby. Thus John Bedlington and William Storm were mate and second mate respectively of Richard Moorsom's whaler Lively in 1786, and the four Bay apprentices Jonathan Skerry, William Todd, William Mills and William Stubbs, all to become masters or owners, or both, were serving aboard the Wisk in 1785, in the pay of John Holt of Whitby. <sup>2</sup>

The events behind the superficial impression of decline having been discussed, it is necessary to return to the matter raised on page 106 of the waning of Majority interest in ownership towards the end of the century. The amount of interest in Whitby suggests that there might have been a loss of population in that direction, and indeed as the number of larger vessels fell in the sess, so the population estimates were falling also. <sup>3</sup> The village remained populous nevertheless, and more so than the 1801 Census was to disclose. There was conservatism, and it is to be found where it might have been expected: after so much extra-parochial activity has been observed the small number of Core men participating in

1. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls: 1747-49, no.131, no.118; January 1785 to January 1786.

2. Ibid., August to October, 1786; Fyl.Recon., Mills, Skerry, Stubbs, Storm, Todd; Whitby Lit. and Phil, Muster Rolls, 1785.

3. See figure 11, facing p.50.



events is remarkable. The count made in the registers from 1777 to 1792, and used previously, was checked against the reconstitutions, and produced a quite unexpected attachment of Core men to fishing. Some men of middle age will be missing, because neither baptisms, marriages nor burials would affect them over the fifteen years, but the numbers found probably could not be increased sufficiently to alter the force of the argument. The numbers of sailors in the five families are in the table.

Table 9: Numbers of Core sailors in the parish register, by family,

1777-92

Bedlington	Granger	Harrison	Moorsom	Storm
7	8	6	7	1

Seventy-five fishermen were counted in the same period, and 37 of them belonged to the Core.

A factor that cannot be overlooked in this attachment to the home base is that these men, and their wives behind them, may have been expressing not only a preference for traditional work and the related bounties, but also an aversion from the unfamiliar, and from naval service in particular. The letters of William Richardson testify to this possibility. He asks in 1794 whether Israel Allison and his son have returned from the French prison. Israel was master of the Benjamin and Mary mentioned on page 112. William Richardson goes on to tell how he was pressed after a long and tedious voyage of eight months from India and China. He met during several years of enforced service several other men from Robin Hood's Bay. One of them, Martin Pearson, died of yellow fever at Port Royal. Of two others, one receives no further mention, and of the second, Joseph Tindale, it is known from the reconstitutions that he returned, to become master of his brother Ben's Mercury. The writer of the letters was

himself drowned at Port Royal, information which came to his parents from a messmate of "these seven years".<sup>1</sup> Jacob Storm (William Richardson's great-nephew) relates how another sailor, Jacob Bedlington, was shot when he attempted to escape from a French prison, and yet another, Matthew Storm, son of the owner of Prospect House, was a prisoner-of-war for many years. There is nothing in the Archives de France about the former case, the records being poor on this subject before 1803, but the other seems to be corroborated by a gap, in eight wartime years, between the births of his first and second children.<sup>2</sup> Three masters of transports, William Coultas, John Peacock and Edward Storm (alias Hall), all died of yellow fever in the West Indies. The last moved into the Navy and served as Master Intendant at Antigua; a rare step for Bay sailors, his son followed him in that service. A fourth, Jonathan Skerry, master of the Ceres, an occasional transport, survived to share in the Bay shipping revival of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Where there was continuity the memories were likely to be long, and if there was a need to be reminded of the press there were still living in the village in 1800 the widow and son of one of the four young men who were seized at the same time in 1739 and died in ensuing naval service.<sup>4</sup> But the neighbourhood needed no reminding of the

1. J.S., Miscellany: letters of William Richardson and Thomas Rushmore; Fyl.Recon., Tindale.

2. J.S., Memoirs, p.14.

3. W.Conyers and H.Streeting, Register of the Missing Seamen of Robin Hood's Bay, n.d.; P.R.O., ADM.7/814/XC/A/022936; W.O'Byrne, A Naval Biographical Dictionary, 1849, Hall [alias Storm], Capt.Edward; Fyl.Recon., Skerry, and Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, 1807.

4. Fyl.Recon., Storm, and P.R.O., ADM.36/1715, 1739-40 (Lenox) and ADM.36/1954, 1744-5 (Marlborough).



threat. One notorious happening concerning the press was the fracas at its Whitby "rendezvous", which led to a hanging, in 1793.<sup>1</sup> Another, ten years later, was the attempt to seize men of the returning whaler Oak, an incident used in Mrs.Gaskell's Sylvia's Lovers, and condemned by Richard Moorsom, J.P., of Whitby.<sup>2</sup> There is also recounted by R.T.Gaskin the story of two of the Bedlington family of Robin Hood's Bay who were pressed.<sup>3</sup> Some people may well have decided that hostilities could come close enough to fishermen and merchant sailors to make the seeking of them unnecessary.

The situation around 1800 in Bay was that shipping exclusive to the village had declined, except for small craft largely employed in the alum industry, but an interest was maintained, through links with Whitby, in the larger shipping, especially that of the coal trade. There was, on the other hand, a tradition of shipowning, whether in large vessels or small, and there was a great accumulation of experience of the sea among some 200 sailors.

The thought is repeatedly evoked by the concentration on maritime occupations, and by the decline just discussed of some shipowning interests, that the limitation might have been due to lack of any education but a narrow vocational training. For want of a more informative source, the degree of literacy disclosed by the signing of the marriage register may serve as a guide. Generally, it was higher among the maritime

1. R.T.Gaskin, The Old Seaport of Whitby, 1909, p.300.

2. Mrs.Gaskell, Sylvia's Lovers, 1863, Chapter 2; Whitby Lit. and Phil., Richard Moorsom, J.P., Letter to William Richmond, Esq., Relating to the Shipping Interest of England, 1832.

3. R.T.Gaskin, op.cit., p.301.

than among the agricultural people. The discussion and the more detailed findings relating to literacy are in Appendix 5. It is not a very difficult step from this topic to further consideration of the condition of the people, which is the subject of the next chapter.

The conclusions drawn in the first section of this chapter concerned the rise of the shipping interest and its dynasties, and the evolving of an equalitarian society. If these are taken together with the activity maintained, despite an element of conservatism, in the later eighteenth century, and in particular with the growth of substantial interests in Whitby and the coal trade, the impression is gained that social as well as economic circumstances were favourable to progress; that the way was in fact prepared for further kin-centred maritime enterprise.



## CHAPTER SIX: THE CONDITION OF LIFE

So far, some indications of prosperity or of potential for prosperity have been observed, and also movements in estimated population that may have a bearing on living standards. The aim of this chapter is at least to reach a point where a cautious generalisation might be made about the state of the people, and hence about the economic status of the settlement. The first intentions are to attempt an estimate of the extent of poverty, and to search for the operation of a modifying self-help factor. Indigence being the indirect cause of much ill-health, mortality is next examined, both seasonally and age-specifically, for evidence of sickness not necessarily poverty-related. In the course of age-specific enquiries the opportunity is taken to look more closely at the reputation of Bay for longevity - one which still persists.

### (a) Poverty

(i) Period 1 (1653-1720): In Chapter 1, during the account of the establishment of openness, the suggestion was made that, failing information in the parish register about the village as a whole, the growth of the Majority population ran counter to evidence of poverty implicit in Hearth Tax exemptions of the order of 20%.<sup>1</sup> Figure 11, at the beginning of Chapter 3, does indeed show an estimated fall in population in the decade 1691-1700, and it was argued in that chapter that this may have accompanied a post-farm slump in the alum trade. However, the number of Majority families went on rising, and by 1720 30 of the constituent 34 names, or half as many again as in 1653, were present, and their cumulative natural increase from 1701 to 1720 was 133. The favourable property situation that had arisen may have been an attraction, and that in itself may be counted a form of rise in living standards. So a

1. P.R.O., E.179/216 and E.261/32.

(12)  
fairly rapid recovery is a possibility. What the Hearth Taxes showed more clearly was the absence of great inequality of wealth within the Majority: no-one paid on more than three hearths and only seven on two or three.

If a clear idea about the state of the poor is unobtainable, a partial view may be afforded by the state of the more prosperous. There are too few inventories to make a good survey, but there is one of 1692, for Thomas Storm, master of a boat, one of only five two-hearth people in the Majority in 1674, and founder of a shipping dynasty. He was near the upper end of the economic scale; so most of the fishing community have to be seen as below the level of comfort to be inferred from this evidence.

Table 10: Inventory of the goods of Thomas Storm, fisherman, in 1692 <sup>1</sup>

	£	s	d
1. Purse and apparel	98	15	6
2. Two silver cups, a dram cup and a thimble	1	10	0
3. Three guineas	3	4	6
4. Two cows	5	18	0
5. Fishing gear	4	0	0
6. Debts	11	19	0
7. In the low house: Table, frame, oak chair, two turned wood chairs, a form, buffet stool, long settle, range, reckon, salt kit and two iron pots	1	10	0
8. In the parlour: Bedstead, two small tables, footstool, cupboard			
9. In the chamber: three bedsteads, a table and frames, form, two footstools, two large chests, a turned chair			
10. In the closet: Pewter dishes, candlesticks, etc.	2	0	0
Small things		2	0
Two pairs of tongs, grid iron, warming pan and brass things		10	0
11. Linen	1	10	0
12. In the garret: Settle, wanded chair, kinlin, frying pan, etc.	1	0	0
13. Three feather beds and bedding	5	0	0
14. Bonds	22	11	0
	<u>162</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>

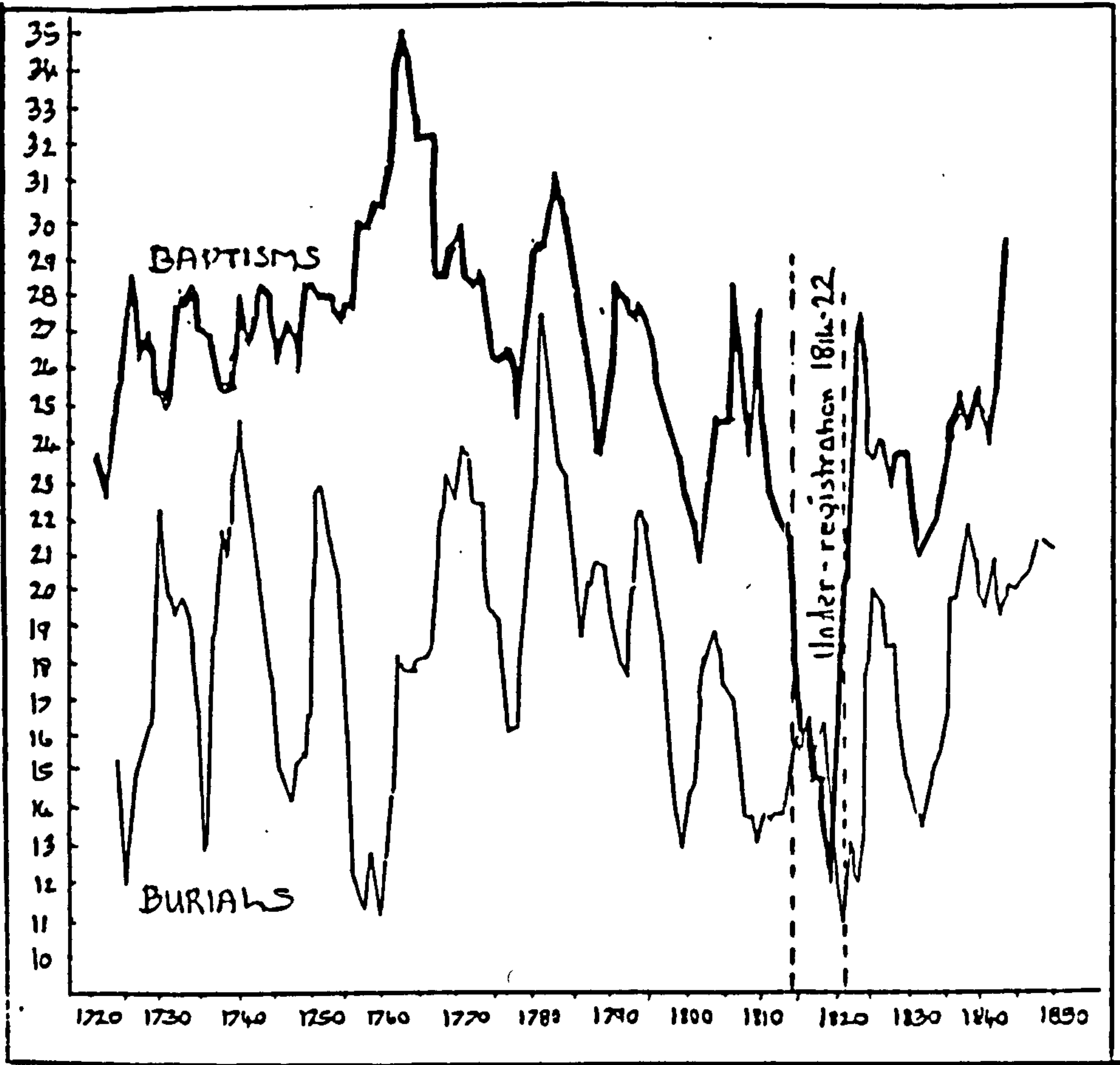
This does not help to show how much further down the scale some were to be found, but in Period 2 the parish registers begin to help a little.

1. Borthwick, Thomas Storm, Fylingdales, 1692.



(ii) Periods 2 and 3 (1721-1840): Putting aside the period of under-registration which is so conspicuous in figure 17, below, the general picture is of a level of baptisms well in excess of burials, especially just after mid-eighteenth century, when there were still many vessels in the sess, including fishing boats, and an alum boom was perhaps attracting a demographically influential element of generally younger families.

Figure 17: Five-year moving average of Bay baptisms and burials,  
c.1721-c.1840



The situation naturally was not uniform throughout the population. The numbers of those described as "poor" at burial may be calculated from the register almost from the beginning of Period 2. The marking of them began

shortly after the government introduced the test of destitution in 1722, to counter the laxity of settlement testing.<sup>1</sup> Bay and Country are compared in figure 18, which is derived from the accompanying table 11.

Table 11: "Poor" burials of Country, Bay and Core compared, by decade, 1721-1830

	Parish Burials	Parish Poor Burials	%	Country Burials	Country Poor Burials	%	Bay Burials	Bay Poor Burials	%	Core Burials	Core Poor Burials	%
1721-30	305	32	10.5	138	14	10.1	167	18	10.7	35	1	2.8
1731-40	295	33	11.2	96	16	16.7	199	17	8.5	43	3	6.9
1741-50	293	22	7.5	120	7	5.8	173	15	8.6	41	0	0
1751-60	275	14	5.1	96	5	5.2	159	9	5.6	36	3	8.3
1761-70	389	4	1.0	183	3	1.6	206	1	0.5	48	0	0
1771-80	387	28	7.2	182	19	10.4	205	9	4.4	45	2	4.4
1781-90	400	49	12.2	179	40	22.3	221	9	4.0	40	5 *	12.5 *
1791-1800	322	32	9.9	146	22	15	176	10	5.6	40	3	7.5
1801-10	312	18	5.7	151	11	7.3	161	7	4.3	41	0	0
1811-20	337	37	10.9	183	26	14.2	154	11	0.6	37	2	5.4
1821-30	313	13	4.1	160	8	5	153	5	3.2	37	1	2.7
	3628	282	7.8	1634	171	10.4	1974	111	5.6	443	20	4.5

\* Two special cases; see page 125

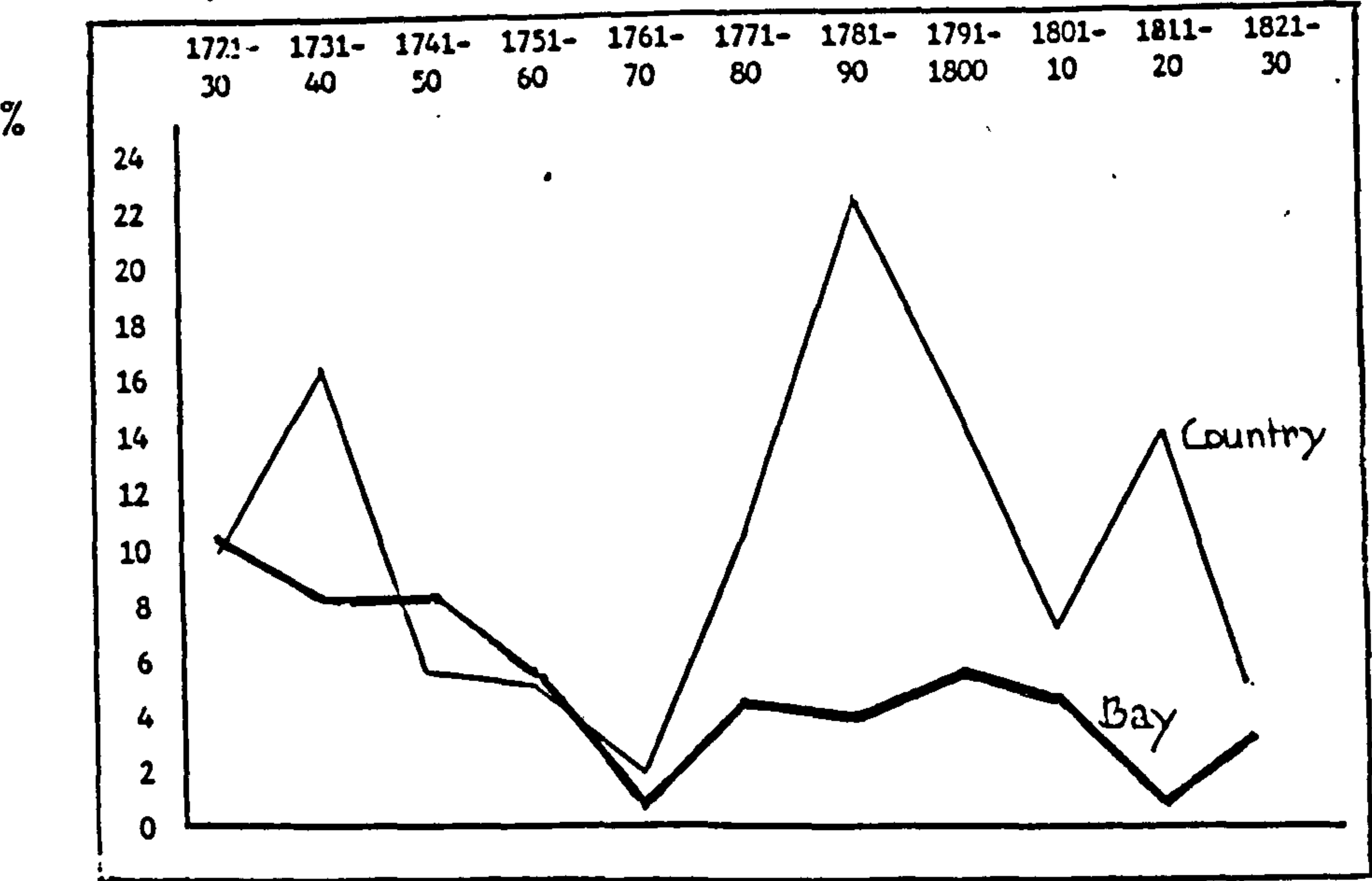


Figure 18: "Poor" burials of Bay and Country compared

1. Sessional Volumes of Public Acts, 9 Geo. I, cap.7; A.Luders, ed., Statutes of the Realm, 3 & 4 William and Mary, cap.11.



Evidence of the recovery and the growth of the alum trade in the eighteenth century strengthens the implication of figure 18 that there was a decline in the numbers affected by poverty down into the decade 1761-70. The proportion of people buried "poor" in Bay was usually lower, or much lower, than that in the Country. This idea again wins support from earlier chapters, because the decline in numbers of ships owned was not distinct until the end of the decade, and from the discussion of fishing it is known that the number of boats was high in 1762.

Another side to this becomes apparent at the end of the decade, and that is the more cautious use of public money. Fylingdales overseers did not at once make use of their powers under the Act of 1722 to establish a poorhouse. Whitby found some action necessary in 1727, but it was not until 1768 that it was agreed in Fylingdales to take this step and premises were found in Fisherhead. They needed conversion and were to cost £8.5s. a year to rent.<sup>1</sup> That this place came into being because of the increasing cost of out-relief is borne out to some extent by the high sess payment by the fishermen in 1762 of 2/- for a big boat, an amount that was much reduced after the poorhouse came into being.<sup>2</sup> In 1784 the sess was 6d., and then it began to climb again.<sup>3</sup> So against decline in numbers of people that are suggested by the "poor" burials, there has to be set the more cautious expenditure evident when those burials begin to rise again. The year of the first sign of the increase was 1769, immediately after the establishment of the poorhouse, when there were four such burials registered, following nine years without any.

1. Young, op.cit., p.596; J.S., Miscellany, transcript of Overseers' Account Book, 1768.

2. J.S., Miscellany, transcript of Overseers' Rate Book, 1762.

3. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/5/2/2, Overseers' Rate Book, 1784.

The extraordinary feature of the course of events from then is the far greater incidence of "poor" burials in the Country. It is at this point that the reconstitutions become useful again. In 1770 a meeting was held to consider the renting, buying or building of "proper" and "convenient" premises. Fylingthorpe being the site of the property negotiated, that becomes the residence in the register of all who were buried from the poorhouse, irrespective of previous domicile. <sup>1</sup> The reconstitutions enable where the deceased really belonged in the parish to be determined, in most cases. The difference between Bay and Country is most apparent in the decade 1781-90, when out of 49 cases registered only nine belong to the former.

The starting point in the search for an explanation is that Core people are rarely found being buried from the poorhouse. These meagre totals of

Table 12: Numbers of Core people buried from the poorhouse, 1721-1830

Bedlington	Granger	Harrison	Moorsom	Storm
3	3	5	6	1

Core people shown in table 12 as buried from the poorhouse have to be seen against the overall total of 443 Core burials in the same eleven decades. There were two special cases included in the "poor" burials of the Core in table 11 on page 123. Here they have been omitted. They were the unmarried Rebecca Moorsom and her child, who died in the Thorpe poorhouse in 1789. All the others were elderly or of great age, where ages are given in the register, or calculable from the reconstitutions. The single Storm case was of a widow from Brow - a unique location for the name - who cannot be fitted into any reconstituted household.

1. J.S., Miscellany, transcript of Overseers' Account Book, 1770.



Behind these numbers is the assumption that Core people did not move around the parish, and all the information about residence that can be added to the reconstitutions before the registers and the Census can help justifies this. So there is a case for believing that the close-knit, well-established families had ways of coping with difficulty and that these were a factor in their history of continuity. Jacob Storm has a little to say on the subject. He wrote that, "After Mr. Walter White visited the King's Head.....he said with some astonishment that there had been over two hundred mourners at the funeral of the husband of his hostess, my cousin Martha, but anyone who knew anything about the meaning of family in Bay need not have been at all surprised".<sup>1</sup> It is the final comment that is more significant here.

So far, information about poverty has come mainly from the register and partly from the Overseers' Account and Rate Books.<sup>2</sup> The latter run from 1766 to 1833, with breaks at 1775-80 and 1816-23. They can be used profitably with the more informative Accounts, which cover the period 1784 to 1837, with gaps at 1801-7 and 1825-6. Despite the missing years, a general outline of the overseers' activities is not beyond reach, and the impression is the not-uncommon one of a humane system gradually coming to feel the pressure of increasing demands. The best guarantee of continuing humanity was that as the office of overseer passed, usually by rotation, the holders were, because of intermarriage (usefully revealed by reconstitution of the whole parish), largely watching over their own kin, whose condition they knew.

1. J.S., Memoirs, p.4;

W.White, "A Month in Yorkshire", 1850, p.118.

2. N.Y.C.R.O.: PR/FY/5/1, Overseers' Account Book; PR/FY/5/2, Overseers' Rate Book.

1. The poor rate rose while the number of "poor" burials, especially of the Country, increased. In 1790 the amount of sess per keel was 10½d., and in 1795 it was up to 1s.7½d. <sup>1</sup> The 3/- in 1807 and 4s.6d. in 1814 were the prelude to the disappearance of the sess, which operated for the last time in 1818. <sup>2</sup> The burden is illustrated by the quashing of valuation and assessment at Northallerton Sessions in 1823 and a subsequent revaluation and reassessment which resulted, roughly, in a quadrupling of an ordinary household payment in Bay, over two years. <sup>3</sup> The shipowners and fishermen had seen what was coming.

The cost of keeping a person in the poorhouse rose from 1s.6d. a week in 1768, when the place was opened, until in 1832 it was 3s.6d. <sup>4</sup> At one point in 1772 there were 23 inmates. A few months later a new master had nineteen in his charge, and twelve years on the same official had 13. <sup>5</sup> In these years much was done on behalf of the poor: the local tailors and shoemakers made and repaired for them; the barber attended; there were medicines for those who were "badly". Regular out-payments were to a few mothers of illegitimate children, and in one month of 1789 there were only

1. J.S., Miscellany, transcript of Overseers' Assessment, Rate Book, 1790; Ibid., 1795.
2. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/5/2/3, Overseers' Assessments, Rate Book, 1807 and 1814; J.S., Miscellany, transcript of Overseers' Assessment, Rate Book, 1818.
3. J.S., Miscellany, transcript of Overseers' Assessment, Rate Book, 1823; N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/5/4, Overseers' Rate Book, 1825.
4. J.S., Miscellany, Transcript of Overseers' Account Book, 1768;
5. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/5/1, Overseers' Account Book, 1832.
6. J.S., Miscellany: transcript of Overseers' Account Book, August, 1772; March, 1784.



six people in the poorhouse.<sup>1</sup> Fylingdales seems a secure place when the constables record in 1787 a total of £6.6s.3d. to help 505 shipwrecked men, travellers and vagrants and, in the next year, the assisting of 235 travellers with passes and the sending on of 180 without. In 1794 the constables, Robert Bedlington and Tyson Coverdale, remarked, "Many travellers, men, women and children have passed at some cost to the township".<sup>2</sup> So some aspects of a national problem were touching Fylingdales, but the parish shows no sign of strain until near the end of the century, if protests about the ship sess can be taken as such.<sup>3</sup>

The largest number of poorhouse inmates in the surviving parish books, original or transcribed, was 32, in 1813.<sup>4</sup> By then out-payments had also increased, varying between 30 and 50 for much of the time. It is not always clear who gets how much: sometimes payments are aggregated, putting the frequency of the payment beyond calculation. Nor are inmates named, until they are buried. In the eighteen-twenties there are usually around 20 of them, and there is no reduction in the number of out-payments.<sup>5</sup>

By 1825 the annual amount raised for the poor was £882, against the £177 of 1766.<sup>6</sup> Thus the burden on the ratepayers had risen, probably overtaking the inflationary effect of a time of war, but there is still

1. N.Y.C.R.O.: PR/FY/5/1, Overseers' Account Book, passim; PR/FY/5/1/1/, Overseers' Account Book, January, 1789.
2. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/3/1/4, Constables' Account Book, 1787; Ibid., 1788; Ibid., 1794.
3. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/4/2, Churhwardens' Account and Rate Book, 1795.
4. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/5/1/2, Overseers' Account Book, 1813.
5. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/5/1/2 and 3, passim.
6. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/5/2/1 and 4, Overseers' Assessment, Rate Books, 1766 and 1825 respectively.

no evidence of desperate or overwhelming poverty. To say that the overseers and constables had been kept busy may be a fair summary of the Fylingdales experience in the years leading up to the poor law of 1833. If the people relying on them for relief are aggregated to find a maximum number, including those receiving small, single payments, they rarely exceed 4% of an estimated parish population of about 1,800, and the commonest payments are to widows. The years missing from the record are an obstacle to precise statements about the Bay poor. There were reasons for there being employment: there was work in Whitby ships, if not always those of Bay, and the small alum craft became busy again after the turn of the century; and the fishing was pursued with vigour, as well as being eligible to apply for bounties. All these factors have been observed in previous chapters, and they lead towards the same conclusion as that reached by way of the "poor" burials, which is that Bay was under-represented among the parish poor.

Where hardship is revealed in the village by prolonged receipt of relief, discussion can almost be confined to a few cases. One of the most important names in the shipping of the nineteenth century was Matthew Bedlington, and so its occurrence among recipients is not expected. On resort to the reconstitutions a case is discovered of misleading repetition of a name, for the man was a member of a branch of the family that had taken to farming, an event described on page 21. <sup>1</sup> "A.Storm", who received payments from 1808 (and perhaps earlier, there being no account for several years), becomes Ann Storm and then "Widow Storm and Daughter", and is identifiable probably as the wife of a prisoner-of-war believed dead. <sup>2</sup>

1. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/5/1/5, Overseers' Account Book, 1829-32, passim.

2. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/5/1/2; See p.117.



Among Core people, Martin, Hannah and Jane Granger are the only others who figure at all prominently in the accounts. The first two are of the same household, and the third was the widow of a fisherman, whose son-in-law, a former cooper at the alum works, also received payments often. Another fisherman's widow, less frequently in the accounts, is Dorothy Moorsom.<sup>1</sup> If the net is cast wider, to include the Majority, there are never more than three of these people in the same account, and widowhood is the prominent cause. The aged Elizabeth Skerry, long dependent on the parish, was the widow of Ezekiel (a former shipmate of James Cook), who had died in the poorhouse at the age of 56. Sarah Chester and Elizabeth Lothian, who received help briefly, came from Majority families and were widows of men lost at sea.<sup>2</sup> Similar cases to these last might have been expected to be more numerous, because there were 33 men recorded as lost at sea between the outbreak of the French Wars and 1832.<sup>3</sup>

Towards the end of the period, another way of seeing the comparative rarity of need amongst Majority families is to count the apprenticeships arranged between 1829 and 1833 for poor children. There were 22 of these and only two had Majority names, and this was at time when figure 11 (facing page 50) puts the estimate of the Majority population at more than half that of the village.<sup>4</sup>

1. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/5/1/4 and 5, Overseers' Account Books, 1827-32.

2. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/5/1/1, Overseers' Account Book, 1784-1800;

3. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/5/1/5, Overseers' Account Book, 1829-32;

Fyl.Recon., Chester, Lothian, Skerry.

4. W.Conyers and H.Streeting, Register of the Missing Seamen of Robin Hood's Bay, n.d.

5. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/5/5, Apprenticeship of Poor Children.

There is a little more than conjecture to be derived from the evidence that Robin Hood's Bay knew less of poverty than the Country, and perhaps a more important inference, in a social context, might be that where there was greatest continuity there seems to be some justification for seeing greatest self-sufficiency also. However, it is obvious from the demands made on the public purse, relatively small though they were, that there was no fiercely principled stand taken on the issue. The attitude is better seen as pragmatic, and coupled with the economic experience of generations.

(b) Self-help Equally pragmatic was the participation in the friendly society movement of the late eighteenth century, the national growth of which made regulation necessary by 1793. There were special aspects of the attack on poverty and insecurity in a maritime settlement. It is not necessary to go beyond the rules of the Robin Hood's Bay Unanimous Benefit Society to see this. They stated that a member who was impressed would be reinstated in membership on payment of arrears of subscriptions.<sup>1</sup>

According to the returns of 1857, Fylingdales had three societies, including one for the Peak-Brow alum workers.<sup>2</sup> The Unanimous Benefit Society was founded in 1784, and the choice of title and holding of the inaugural meeting in the King's Head in Bay imply that, despite the wide range of occupations represented, the village had come to be a parish centre, unless it was that no other place could take 149 men.<sup>3</sup>

1. Sessional Volumes of Public Acts, 33 George III, cap.54;

J.S., Miscellany, transcript of the rules of the Robin Hood's Bay Unanimous Benefit Society.

2. R.P.Hastings, Essays in North Riding History, 1780-1850, 1981, p.111.

3. J.S., Miscellany, transcript of first membership of R.H.B.U.B.S.



The meeting was held in January, which meant that sailors would be able to attend. The representation of the occupational groups is in table 13.

Table 13: Occupational representation at the "Benefit" in 1784

Official	Shipowner	Trader	Mariner	Master Mariner
1	1	2	53	14

Fishermen	Labourers	Craftsmen	Farmers	Others
24	10	16	22	6

Some of the labourers were farmers' sons; so the Country was substantially drawn into the Bay orbit.<sup>1</sup> The surprising feature of the table is that more fishermen and sailors were not present, in view especially of the large numbers of the latter seen in the last chapter. Because of the suspicion already raised that the "older" families coped in their own ways with poverty, the presence of the Core people at the meeting was compared with "poor" burials from their families over a long period, with the results exhibited in table 14. The lowest attendance lay where there were

Table 14: "Poor" burials and "Benefit" attendance compared: Core families

	Bedlington	Granger	Harrison	Moorсом	Storm
Present at the "Benefit", 1784	9	7	3	8	3
"Poor" burials, 1721-1830	3	3	5	6	1
	12	10	8	14	4

1. E.g., Fyl.Recon., Crosby, Leedill, Hodgson, Thompson.

fewest "poor" burials. It may be coincidence that the smallest totals belonged to the two families to which a great effort in nineteenth century shipping is to be traced. On the other hand, if thrift was part of the mechanism by which this was achieved, they should have been more interested in the "Benefit", unless they were already achieving their objectives by other means.

With this evidence it seems worth considering that Core names are infrequently attached to parish office: notwithstanding they were so numerous, they seldom appear in the parish books as overseer, constable or churchwarden. It may well be that parochial duties and maritime occupations were incompatible, but the suspicion lingers that they were diligently pursuing their interests in their own ways: that self-sufficiency is in evidence again. This is arguably a most important aspect of welfare in the village, especially when it is considered how effectively attitudes might be moulded and transmitted within the large, interrelated, settled population; but this is to stray onto ground better examined under the heading of "The Ethic" in Chapter 9.

There was also a young men's society, according to Jacob Storm, who tells how, when it was wound up, his uncle, the shipmaster James Storm (1790-1855), bought a grandfather clock with his share.<sup>1</sup> Another society, the Ancient Shepherds, is still remembered, but the best example of self-help was the creation by village men of two businesses related to the main occupation. These were marine insurance societies.<sup>2</sup> Needless to say, great interest was taken in these associations by Core families, as transactions reported in Chapter 10 will confirm.

1. J.S., Memoirs, p.17, and Fyl.Recon., Storm.

2. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Library no.366.6, Ancient Shepherds' Rule Book, 1835



(c) Seasonality of burials

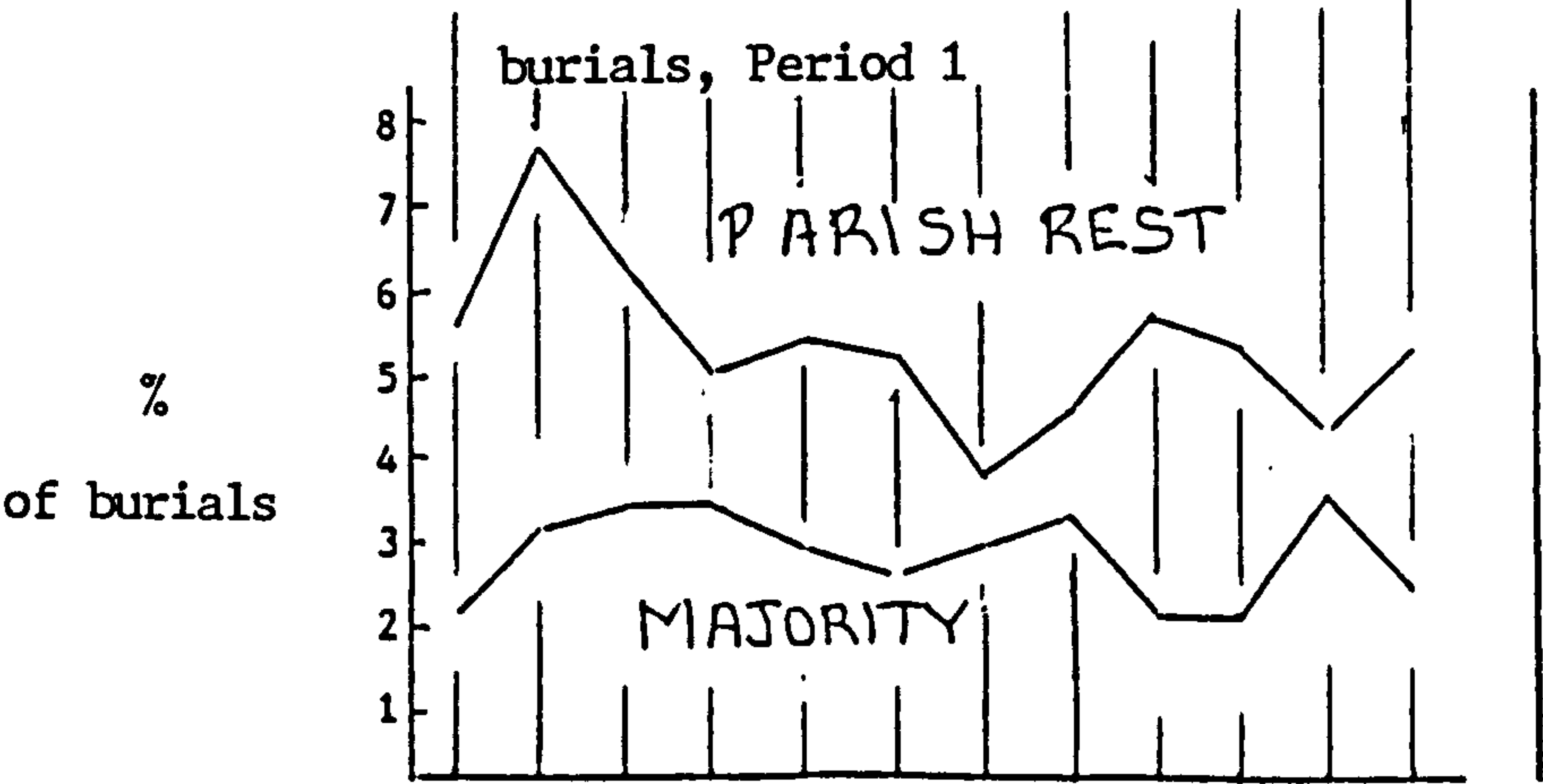
The subject of seasonal mortality patterns clearly links with poverty, which underlies much ill-health. The aim here is to suggest causes of death through its seasonal occurrence. Maritime and agricultural communities are compared, for such general indications of debility as susceptibility to epidemic infection and winter mortality, and for evidence of sickness which may not be attributable to poverty.

Period 1, 1653-1720: At the risk of dealing in small numbers, the Majority has to stand for the whole village in Period 1. Burials are expressed as a ratio of the parish total of 1,328 for the period. Since Country people cannot be clearly distinguished so early, the Majority has to be compared with the Parish Rest. Prominent features that this exercise produces are the different behaviours of the groups in winter, and the peak of late-autumn burials in the Majority. (See table 15 and figure 19.)

Table 15: Seasonality of burials of Majority and Parish Rest  
compared, Period 1, 1653-1720

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Majority burials	29	41	45	45	38	35	39	42	28	28	50	32
% of parish	2.2	3.1	3.4	3.4	2.9	2.6	2.9	3.2	2.1	2.1	3.7	2.4
Parish Rest	88	104	85	68	73	71	51	62	76	71	57	70
% of parish	6.6	7.8	6.4	5.1	5.5	5.3	3.8	4.7	5.7	5.3	4.3	5.3

Figure 19: Graph comparing seasonality of Majority and Parish Rest



So far as winter events were concerned, the heavier mortality of the Parish Rest in January and February was eventually to become part of the normal pattern for both groups. As for November mortality amongst the Majority, there were fifty cases, an average of fewer than one a year over the period. There were two Novembers of relatively high mortality in the parish, in 1681 and 1711 respectively, the one with eight and the other with nine burials, but taking the two years together, only three of these deaths related to the Majority. With its larger numbers, it is the Parish Rest that claims attention here, because its pattern of mortality is comparable with that for the country as a whole, as shown by Wrigley and Schofield, and such a pattern only emerges in Bay in Period 2.<sup>1</sup>

Period 2, 1721-1780: Over these sixty years there was a total of 1,943 parish burials, and the Bay burials can now be expressed as a ratio of these. The resulting comparison is demonstrated in table 16.

Table 16: Seasonality of burials of Bay and Country compared,  
Period 2, 1721-80

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Bay burials	121	107	105	99	107	61	65	77	68	86	99	104
% of parish	6.2	5.5	5.4	5.1	5.5	3.1	3.3	3.9	3.5	4.4	5.1	5.3
Country burials	90	77	74	71	78	56	54	64	62	71	74	73
% of parish	4.6	3.9	3.8	3.6	4.0	2.9	2.8	3.3	3.2	3.6	3.8	3.7

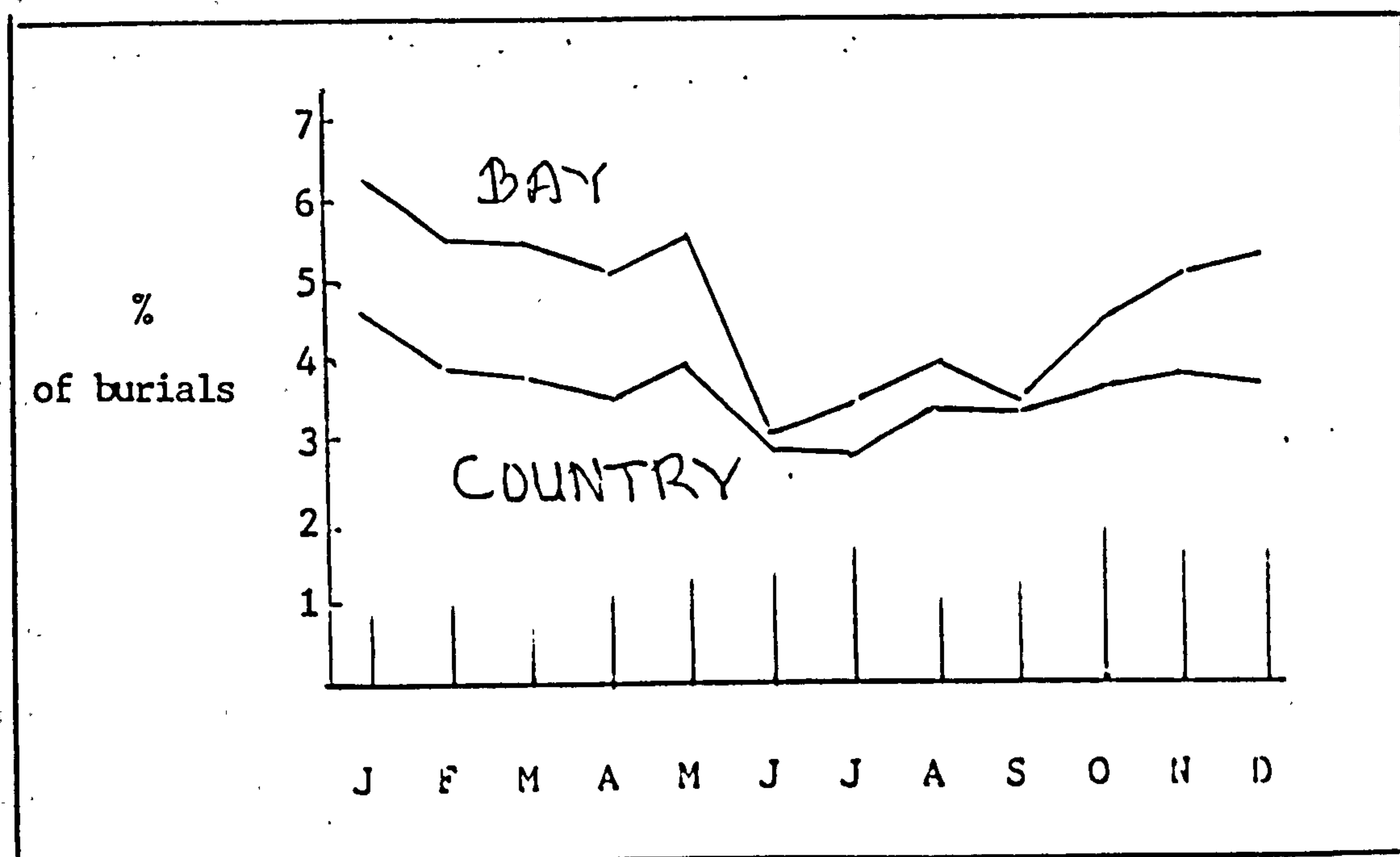
From this it is clear that there is little difference between the two groups over this period. The heaviest mortality was in winter, when it was

1. E.A.Wrigley and R.S.Schofield, The Population History of England: A Reconstruction, 1981, p.293.



rather higher in Bay than in the Country. In summer there was a sharp fall in the village. The differences emerge more clearly from figure 20.

Figure 20: Graph comparing seasonality of burials of Bay and Country, Period 2, 1721-80



When numbers are taken into consideration the difference in winter is very slight - one more death per year on average over the 60 years of the period, taking January and February together. The fishing in winter may have been accompanied by great physical hardship, but there were sailors ashore who had left the heaviest of their work behind for the season. There is nothing here on which to base a tentative explanation, but the rises in May and August are noteworthy, the latter in particular because it persists into Period 3.

Period 3, 1781-1840: The outlines for this period closely resemble those in figure 20, but with Bay lower in eleven months of the year, leaving a conspicuous, and slightly higher, August peak. There is no particular

August of significantly high mortality until 1840 is reached, when in that month there were 13 burials in the parish, ten of them of Bay inhabitants. This did not qualify as an exceptional or "crisis" year in the next section of this chapter, in which disease is discussed, but this incidence of burials and an accumulation of occasionally slightly higher burials from earlier in the period, provides the clearest example of a specifically local aspect of seasonality, because it did not occur in the Country, and it was more pronounced than in England as a whole.<sup>1</sup> A possibility is that the combination of crowding and therefore insanitary conditions, which may have had nothing to do with poverty, came to a head in the summer heat of August. More will said of this in the next section.

The ten Bay burials of August, 1840, included a woman of 61, a sailor of 54, and a master mariner aged 39 who had been drowned in the Thames. The rest were all children, five of them being four years of age or under: four children came from one household in King Street. Five cases were scattered about Bay Quarter and Fisherhead, which is to say they were probably not all using the same water supply. The King Street family were at the Mason's Arms, of which they were the traditional keepers, and a nephew of the innkeeper was lodging in 1841 with one of the families that had lost a child in the previous August.<sup>2</sup> This does not identify a source of transmission, but it is a reminder of the frequent moving of children among relatives when parents went away to sea, a practice which may have spread childhood ailments, even among the prosperous.

This suggests that in the absence of serious calamity in the seasonal cycle, an age- and sex-specific view of mortality may produce indications of areas of vulnerability.

1. Wrigley and Schofield, op.cit., p.293.

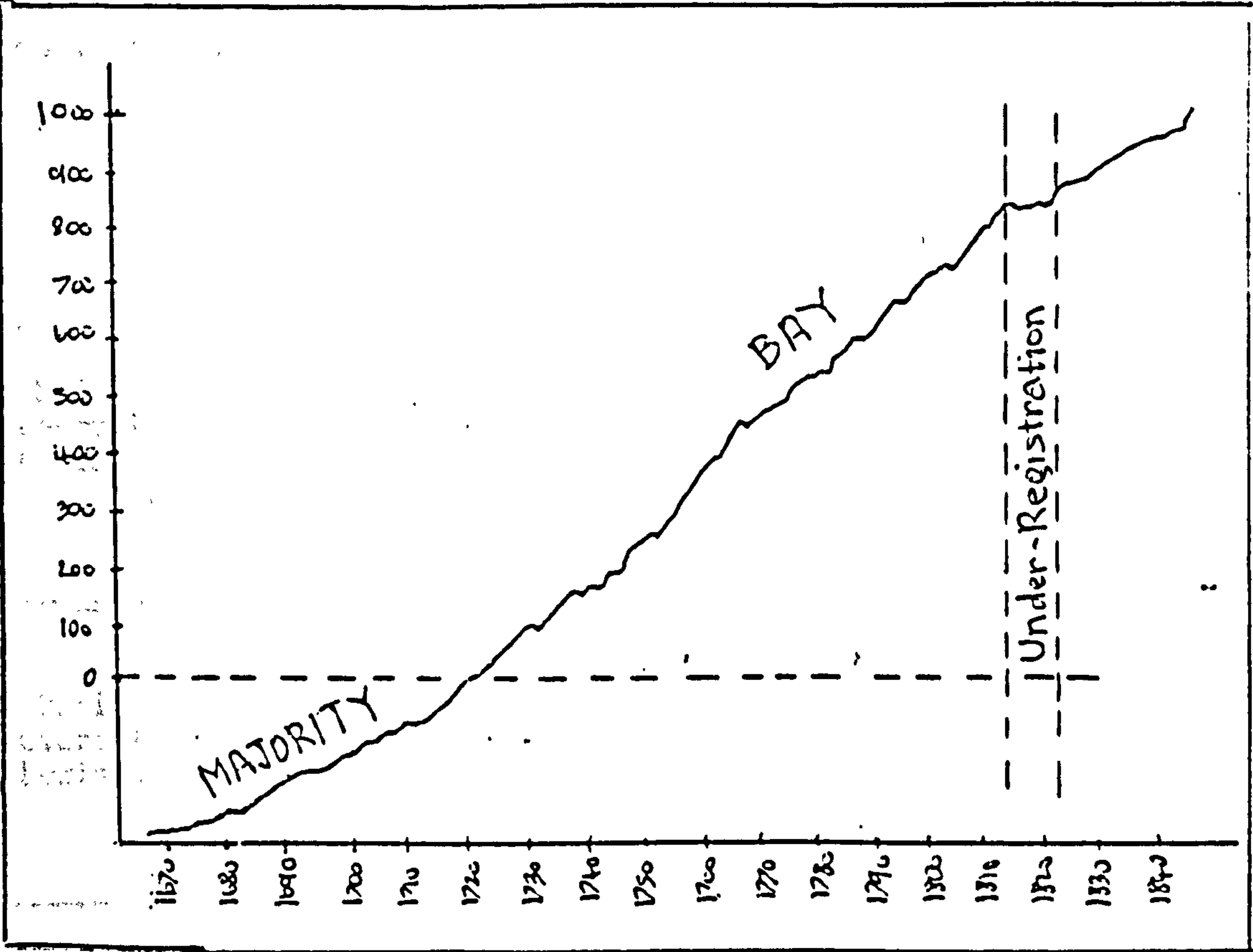
2. Fyl.Recon., Robinson.



(d) Disease      The presence of a substantial population with a large, relatively immobile component says much in itself about the condition of the people.

Mortality has to be seen in relation to the population estimates (see figure 11, facing page 50), and another general view of the population is contained in the cumulative natural increase in figure 21, where, for want of other means, the Majority has been used again to represent the village in the earliest period. No crises relating to harvest years were detectable; there were no indications of disaster, which is perhaps not unexpected where there was sea as well as land from which to draw food. However, the cumulative natural increase, although impressive, was not continuous, in figure 21.

Figure 21: Cumulative natural increase in Bay, c.1670-1840



After the late sixteen-sixties there was fairly steady, overall increase with only brief, intermittent interruptions, some a little more conspicuous than others, and these are the bases for investigation in each of the three periods. As there are no distinct signs of disaster to be drawn from the parish register, criteria were set to draw attention to years of necessarily minor crisis. A "crisis year" is one in which mortality is 25% greater than the nine-year moving average of burials for the particular group under examination, and a "serious crisis" is when the mortality is 40% greater than that average. There was no serious crisis before Period 3, and crises generally were few and small. The investigation of all the exceptional years is assisted by comparing age-groups in Bay and Country, but as before, the Majority has to represent the former in Period 1.

Period 1, 1653-1720: The reverses in cumulative natural increase occur in 1667, 1674, 1681 and 1711, and they meet the first of the two criteria.

Table 17: Exceptional mortality, Period 1, 1653-1720

		Infant	Up to 19		20+		Total	
			M	F	M	F	M	F
Majority (overall total burials 431) Totals  % of 431	1667	4	2	4	3	4	5	9
	1674	1	1	6	-	-	1	6
	*1681	-	7	8	1	6	8	14
	*1711	-	5	10	4	4	9	14
		5	15	28	8	14	23	42
		1.2	3.5	6.5	1.8	3.2	5.3	9.7
Parish Rest (Overall Total burials 897) Total  % of 897	1667	1	3	7	6	6	9	13
	*1674	1	5	5	4	9	9	14
	1681	-	6	4	6	10	12	14
	*1711	-	12	5	7	11	19	16
		2	26	21	23	36	49	57
		0.2	2.9	2.3	2.6	4.0	5.5	6.3

\* Multiple mortality in one or more households



The numbers are perhaps too small to merit great attention, but it is worth observing, in passing, that in both Majority and Parish Rest burials of the young are high relative to those of adults; otherwise it might more convincingly be argued, as in the preceding section, that congestion was contributing to spread of disease. The other notable situation is the high level of burials of young females in Bay, which might signify whooping cough or diphtheria, but as reconstitutions show that children up to four years old suffered most, the second of these is more likely, according to Creighton.<sup>1</sup> Poverty cannot be deduced from this. Furthermore, there has to be borne in mind the complicating factor of infection brought by sea, and relevant to this are the 131 burials and only 96 baptisms in the port of Whitby in the Bay crisis year 1674.<sup>2</sup> To similar effect is the earliest report of infection, when in 1603 Margaret Hoby of inland Hackness wrote that there was plague at Bay. P.Slack emphasises the risk, referring to plague at Scarborough in 1624 and on Tyneside in 1635.<sup>3</sup>

Period 2, 1721-1780: In table 18, the crisis years among those of interrupted increase were 1731, 1739, 1752, 1768 and 1780. The number of young females buried in 1721 - not a crisis year - might be properly associated with those affected in Period 1. Also, the continuing threat from the sea is recalled in 1723 by the Whitby Customs Collector's warning that a French ship carrying plague was being kept off the harbour.<sup>4</sup>

1. C.Creighton, History of Epidemics in Britain, II, 1891, p.672.

2. Whitby Parish Register, II, part 2, Yorkshire Parish Register Society, LXXXIV, 1928.

3 D.Meads, ed., The Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby, 1930, p.205; P.Slack, The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England, 1985, p.66.

4. P.R.O., CUST.90/1, 2nd July, 1723.

Table 18: Exceptional mortality, Period 2, 1721-1780

	Bay (overall total burials 1109)								Country (overall total burials 834)					
		Up to 19		20+		Total		All	Up to 19		20+	All		
		M	F	M	F	M	F		M	F	M	F		
1721	*	9	17	1	4	10	21	31	6	6	-	5	17	
1730	*	8	5	5	7	13	12	25						
1731	*	19	12	3	2	22	14	36						
1738	*	7	5	6	9	13	14	27						
1739	*	20	10	-	9	20	19	39						
1742	*	6	8	5	9	11	17	28						
1752	*	15	17	1	7	16	24	40	2	4	2	6	14	*
1756									3	1	6	7	17	
1768		5	7	8	14	13	21	34						
1780		7	6	9	10	16	16	32	3	2	11	9	25	
Totals		96	87	38	71	134	158	292	14	13	19	27	73	
% of group total		8.6	7.8	3.4	6.4	12.1	14.2	26.3	1.7	1.5	2.3	3.2	8.7	

\* Multiple mortality in one or more households.

A sixth of the period - ten years of crisis and checked increase - produced little more than a quarter (26.3%) of the Bay mortality, but the table also reveals a preponderance of mortality among the young, and evidence of infection in Bay, from 1721 to 1752, while the Country remained unaffected. The notion that certain infections may have been endemic in Bay Town thus gains force. It is highly conjectural that in the second half of the period the absence of traces of multiple infection may be attributable to rebuilding, and consequent improved hygiene; it is the case that very few buildings at the present time belong to a period earlier than the late eighteenth century. The conservative styles are deceptive. <sup>1</sup> However, infectious disease reappears in Period 3.

1. Current Scarborough Borough Concil list of scheduled buildings, 1989.



In the years of multiple infection there were majorities of young male and older female burials in Bay. The situation in the childbearing years is investigated in Section (e) of this chapter; among the young males the matter of some note is the 39 buried in 1731 and 1739. There is no particular affliction that appears at all clearly to be selective in this way, and by 1752, the last year of multiple infection in the table, the deaths of young males were only ten more than those of the young females.

In the end the totals and the proportions are possibly too small to point firmly to trends, but this is also the basis for inferring relative freedom from affliction. Perhaps much has to be ascribed to mishap, a remarkable example of which, for Fylingdales, is the death of Rebecca Taylor and five of her children at remote Foulisike in 1772 and 1773, and of Martin Taylor (still at Foulisike) and his second wife in 1780.<sup>1</sup> However, the excess of young male burials persists, in Period 3.

It may be relevant that down the coast at Boston in 1752 - a bad year for Bay - smallpox brought heavy mortality, which was to recur and intensify over the next nineteen years. However, it is necessary to keep the subject in perspective, because the total excess of burials over baptisms in the ten bad years of Period 2 in the table was 67, which increased the annual average for the period by little over one. Boston, with four times the population, had an excess of burials over baptisms of 186 in three years of the smallpox.<sup>2</sup>

There is no doubt, however, that relatively small though they may have been, Bay was troubled by outbreaks of infection from which the Country escaped. The two communities shared only one crisis year in the period. On the other hand, natural increase was little affected, and so it must be entertained that immunity may have been commonly acquired by Bay people.

1. Fyl.Recon., Taylor.

2. C.Creighton, op.cit., p.526.

Period 3, 1781-1840: The serious crisis years for Bay were 1783, 1788, 1804, 1824 and 1826, and for the Country, 1788, 1789 and 1793.

Table 19: Exceptional mortality, Period 3, 1781-1840

	Bay (overall total burials 1047)							Country (overall total burials 988)						
		Up to 19		20+		All		Up to 19		20+		All		
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1781	*	5	4	6	5	11	9	6	4	7	3	13	8	
1782		4	2	10	14	14	16	3	3	5	4	8	7	
1783	*	13	10	4	11	17	21	1	1	3	11	4	12	
1788		10	7	3	8	13	15	1	7	11	4	12	11	*
1789		5	6	3	6	8	12	1	5	12	10	13	15	*
1793		4	2	5	11	9	13	2	4	10	6	12	0	*
1801		3	-	5	9	8	9	4	3	5	5	9	8	
1804		11	11	4	3	15	14	2	2	3	7	5	9	
1824	* **	3	2	8	10	11	12	-	-	9	1	9	1	
1826		4	8	8	9	12	17	2	3	5	6	7	9	
1829	**	4	-	5	8	9	8	4	1	5	6	9	7	
1830	**	2	-	3	5	5	5	3	3	4	10	7	13	**
Totals		68	52	64	99	132	151	29	36	79	74	108	110	
% of group total		6.5	5.0	6.1	9.4	12.6	14.4	2.9	3.6	7.9	7.5	10.0	11.1	

\* Multiple mortality in one or more households.  
\*\* In each of these years a child of unrecorded sex was omitted.

Two years were omitted because they fell in the period of under-registration, 1814-22. Another factor at work in the eighteen-twenties was the 50 burials of Fylingdales people who had been living in Whitby, and these have been omitted. The indication of a seasonality of burials in the period, in August, has been considered in section (c) of this chapter.

The twelve worst years of the sixty in the period brought little more than a quarter of the mortality. Behind this generality the chief feature of table 19 is that at last there was no great preponderance of burials of the young; even the young males were considerably less at risk than they were in 1731 and 1739 in Period 2. Infection or contagion remained, but



some of the improvement may have been the result of vaccination. Young said the fall in burials in Whitby since 1802 was due to this "striking proof of the blessing.....resulting.....from the discovery". <sup>1</sup>

Over the whole of Period 3 the annual mean of Bay burials was 20.9 and the annual mean of the five serious crisis years was 29.4; so the mean contribution of even the most difficult years to the sixty years of the period was slight. The Rev. William Dalton, who had spent most of his ministry in the village, argued in 1909 the healthy state of the place, observing that there had been only three cases of typhus since his arrival thirty years earlier. One of them had come from a railway encampment. His selecting of this evidence may imply that there was a local familiarity with the disease before his time. <sup>2</sup>

There is no evidence of the cholera that came in 1831 to Sunderland, so familiar to Bay sailors. It was Creighton's belief that the Asiatic cholera came from the Baltic in colliers. By the end of the year it was in North Shields and making its way up the Tyne. In 1832 Whitby had 27 deaths and North Shields 98, Stockton 126 and Hull 300. In 1848 the disease returned from the Baltic and Hamburg, and Tynemouth had more than 300 deaths. Whitby and the rest of the North Riding suffered only 47, while the East Riding was the hardest hit of all. N.Longmate confirmed and recounted Sunderland's side of the story in detail. <sup>3</sup> In September, 1848, a sailor supposed to have died of the cholera was brought ashore at Robin Hood's Bay and buried at Old St.Stephen's, an event which might have evoked comment about any subsequent fatalities, but there is none. <sup>4</sup>

1. Young, op.cit., p.522.

2. W.Dalton, A Guide to Robin Hood's Bay, 1909 edn., pp.29 and 31.

3. C.Creighton, op.cit., pp.793-860; N.Longmate, King Cholera: A Biography of the Disease, 1966, chs. 1 and 2.

4. N.Y.C.R.O., Fylingdales Register of Burials.

The general view of the village's health is that it knew more of the ailments of the young than did the Country, and, if seasonality is drawn into the summary, there was risk of summer afflictions. Factors other than poverty are to be suspected. The crowding on the small site may have been responsible, but exposure to winds off moors and sea may have worked to the opposite effect, because outbreaks of sickness were not calamitous - except on a household scale - and increase confirms that economic progress was not impeded.

(e) Spouses' ages at burial The information for ages at burial has been taken from the family reconstitutions, and it is summarised by sex, population group and period in table 20 on page 146. Two noteworthy points occur immediately in Period 1, 1653-1720. The first is the high proportion of women dying at a great age in the Majority, especially in its Core element. The second is the maternal mortality that becomes quite conspicuous in Period 2, 1721-80.

The different situation of the Majority males in Period 2, 1721-80, gives reason to wonder whether loss of life at sea was an important factor not always made clear in the register. The longevity of Bay females is recurrent, and in Periods 2 and 3 they are joined by the males of the Core, to the effect that Bay had a large element of people in their eighties with females predominant. When the burials of older females are further examined the biggest contribution to the strength of their numbers is seen to come from the Core. The most remarkable demonstration of longevity was made by the Core females in Period 2, with nearly 29.5% of their burials being of octagenarian females. There were only 18 of them, but there were 16 buried at ages 70 to 79 also. This was over a period of 60 years, but if men of the Core are included, in the same years, there were 59 people in all buried at age 70 and over, from the five families.



Table 20: Spouses' ages at burial, 1653-1840. (Group totals are in brackets in the first column.)

-40				40-49			50-59			60-69			70-79			80+		
	M	All	F	M	All	F	M	All	F	M	All	F	M	All	F	M	All	F
Per.1 Core	13	25	12	5	8	3	7	14	7	12	21	9	8	22	14	5	20	15
(110) %	26	22.7	20	10	7.2	5	14	12.7	11.7	24	19.1	15	16	20	23.3	10	18.2	25
Majority	19	41	22	9	19	10	15	25	10	14	26	12	14	39	25	8	30	22
(130) %	24	22.8	21.8	11.4	10.5	9.9	19	13.8	9.9	17.7	14.4	11.9	17.7	21.7	24.7	10.1	16.7	21.8
Parish	11	15	4	5	10	5	3	5	2	5	14	9	8	18	10	5	8	3
(70) Rest	29.7	21.4	12.1	13.5	14.3	15.1	8.1	7.1	6.1	13.5	20	27.3	21.6	25.7	30.2	13.5	11.4	9.1
Per.2 Core	7	21	14	10	11	1	4	8	4	8	16	8	10	26	16	15	33	18
(115) %	12.9	18.3	22.9	18.5	9.5	1.6	7.4	6.9	6.5	14.8	13.9	13.1	18.5	22.6	26.2	27.8	28.7	29.5
Majority	12	31	19	13	21	8	8	23	15	10	25	15	23	41	18	23	55	32
(195) %	13.4	15.8	17.7	14.6	10.7	7.5	9	11.7	14	11.2	12.7	14	25.8	20.9	16.4	25.8	28.1	29.9
Bay	22	67	45	30	44	14	18	46	28	28	65	37	38	82	44	53	114	61
(419) %	11.6	16	19.6	15.9	10.5	6.1	9.5	11	12.2	14.8	15.5	16.1	20.1	19.6	19.2	29	27.3	26.6
Country	3	15	12	5	11	6	6	14	8	10	22	12	3	18	15	14	26	12
(105) %	7.3	14.1	18.5	12.2	10.4	9.2	14.6	13.2	12.3	24	20.7	18.5	7.3	17	23.1	34.1	24.5	18.5
Per.3 Core	12	24	12	9	16	7	10	14	4	20	31	11	22	46	24	21	42	21
(173) %	12.3	13.8	15.2	9.6	9.2	8.9	10.6	8.1	5.1	21.3	17.9	13.9	23.4	26.6	30.4	22.3	24.3	26.6
Majority	14	35	21	13	16	3	13	28	15	23	39	16	16	36	20	14	39	25
(193) %	15.1	18.1	21	14	8.3	3	14	14.5	15	24.7	20.2	16	17.2	18.6	20	15.1	20.2	25
Bay	31	83	52	26	33	12	30	54	24	56	89	33	50	107	57	38	92	54
(463) %	13.4	17.9	22.4	11.2	8.2	5.2	13	11.7	10.3	24.2	19.2	14.2	21.5	23.1	24.6	16.4	19.9	23.3
Country	6	24	18	4	4	0	8	12	4	10	18	8	10	22	12	2	11	9
(91) %	15	26.4	35.3	10	4.4	0	20	13.2	7.9	25	19.4	15.6	25	24.2	23.5	5	12.1	17.6

The difficulty presented by these findings is that not enough can be discovered about the age structure of the whole population. The long-term population, spread among many households, grew old in the parish and produced its octagenarians there, but what cannot be known is the number of people of great age that may have been produced by the other families, those that made a relatively brief appearance in the parish and then moved on. So while there was present in the village a disproportionately large group of elderly members of families with long histories in the village, it is not possible to be so confident about this circumstance as evidence of longevity. Nevertheless, any comparatively large group of the elderly

could be of very great social importance as a potentially conservative force, and a repository of ideas and opinions, and might have much influence on attitudes, to say nothing of property and the power to be derived from it. As in any well-established group, there was a presence of elders, able to exert pressure in favour of continuity, whether or not there was greater life-expectancy.

The general explanation of longevity involves many factors. Two proposed in modern times by A.Comfort are continuing congenial employment and sexual activity.<sup>1</sup> The second notion is beyond examination, but the first immediately appears to have relevance to the community under observation, because of the attachment to traditional occupations. However, the congeniality of sea-fishing as a means of livelihood has been questioned quite recently, in sociological terms, by J.Tunstall, who rejects the idea that it is likely to be followed in all its rigours merely because of a family tradition. He bases his contention on the character of the Hull industry, which has a history he depicts as appalling enough to be judged an extraordinary and probably quite unrepresentative case, with ruthless exploitation of the rootless and the orphaned as a principal feature.<sup>2</sup> If Comfort's "employment" can be taken to embrace "working environment", then in a place like Robin Hood's Bay, occupation among familiar people, things and practices, free from the stress of change, in a word, security, may approach congeniality, provided there is some fulfilment of material expectations. The existence of a degree of freedom to make decisions, or join discussions, regarding the performance of work, may be an attractive bonus. Speculatively it may be

1. A.Comfort, The Biology of Senescence, 1955, pp.177-185 and 273.

2. J.Tunstall, The Fishermen: The Sociology of an Extreme Occupation, 1962, pp.106 and 17-28.



inferred from the persistent acceptance of familiar roles by many successive generations that contentment was the rule, but it is impossible to be certain.

There may be a more practical factor, and that is diet. The "consumption of fish.....correlated inversely with death due to heart disease" in a modern study, and a similar result was produced by research among Eskimos and Japanese fishermen.<sup>1</sup> In all work on this subject there is repeated reference to fatty sea fish. It approaches the fanciful to carry the discussion thus far, but a comparison of coastal and inland settlements might go a little way towards a firmer hypothesis. Historians of population say little on this important aspect of life at the coast.

To give the results a more distinctly occupational character, an aggregation was made of burials of those aged more than 70, from the first entering of occupations in the register, for the 22 years before 1800. The result of this was that 56.2% of the fishing family burials were of people of that age, and only 32% in the farming families.

It may be surmised, therefore, that the nearer the Core is approached, the greater may have been life expectancy. It is often noted by writers, one of whom stated, "Bay is a town of women and old men.....They have seen the world, saved and invested in ships, and, if they have escaped shipwreck, the salt air and security tend to exceptional longevity."<sup>2</sup> Further, whether there was greater longevity or simply a larger congregation of the aged, the preponderance of females surviving, combined with immobility, had implications for the establishment of matriarchy.

1. G.A.Glomsett, 'Fish, Fatty Acids and Human Health', New England Journal of Medicine, CCCXII, no.19, May, 1985, p.1253; Ibid., Kromhout and others, p.1208.

2. L.Walmsley, 'Between the Heather and the North Sea', The National Geographic Magazine, LXIII, no.2, February, 1933, pp.223 and 225.

The other subject arising from the statistics of age at burial was maternal mortality. In table 20 high proportions of deaths of women up to age 39 occur in both Bay and Country in Periods 2 and 3. The next age-group, 40-49, displays a sharp fall, and thereafter, in successive age-groups, there is steady increase until Bay is left with the larger group of women surviving to 80 and beyond. Reference was made in the preceding section of the chapter to the more frequent occurrence of disorders in Bay than in the Country, and this might have been taken to justify an expectation that perinatal infections would take a high toll of female life in Bay in the childbearing years. This does not become apparent. In Periods 1 and 2 there is little difference in burials of females of childbearing age, between Bay and Country, but in Period 3 there was heavier mortality in the Country. One reason for this may have been the ready availability of more or less skilled help in Bay at or around the time of confinement, with both husband and wife being surrounded by close relatives, and it is hardly to be supposed that in so populous a place there was no reserve of experienced midwives. If so, calls on their services would have been frequent: there was an average of two births a month in Bay alone.

The first evidence of professional medical attendance came in 1780, when Mary Tindale was paid one guinea for going to the poorhouse with salves, to treat frostbitten people who had been brought in from the fields.<sup>1</sup> There was a surgeon, Henry Jefferson, present in the village in 1800, but he was cuckolded and went away.<sup>2</sup> In 1805 Mrs. Leadson, midwife, was present. Whether she or her husband was qualified wholly by experience or, in the case of the latter, by apprenticeship to an apothecary or a

1. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/3/1, Constables' Account Book, 1780.

2. Fyl.Recon., Jefferson, Moorsom.



surgeon, is unknown, but the services of "Dr. and Mrs. Leadson" were available for many years. <sup>1</sup> In the 1841 Census there was a Scottish physician, and by 1851 he had been joined by a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, a standard of service that might have indicated remunerative practice were it not that, as William Dalton explained, such people were only retained by fees received from friendly societies, the inhabitants being healthy; and he offered longevity as his single explanation. <sup>2</sup>

Professional help may have played a part in the decline in maternal mortality in Period 3, but the evidence of childhood infections and the survival of many to advanced years, as well as that of cumulative natural increase with which this chapter began, can also lead back to the notion that acquired immunity may have been effective. It may at last be timely, moreover, to air the suspicion that genetic factors should not be ignored.

(f) Infant and child mortality This topic was pursued because of the relatively high mortality among the young noticed in Periods 1 and 2 in the preceding section. The estimates of population were not suitable for the calculation of death rates, and so life tables (table 21) have been

Table 21: Life tables, 1653-1840

Age	Period 1		Period 2				
	Parish Rest	Majority	Parish Rest	Majority	Bay	Country	
0-1	(47) 94.2	(53) 89.2	(80) 92.3	(62) 90.2	(101) 91.4	(41)	89.5
1-4	(32) 74.1	(57) 114	(88) 127.3	(73) 126.7	(122) 134.8	(38)	100.5
5-9	(12) 31.5	(17) 41.7	(12) 23.3	(13) 28.8	(20) 29	(6)	20.2
10-14	(6) 16.7	(2) 5	(7) 16.2	(4) 10.2	(5) 8.4	(7)	27.7

Age	Period 3			
	Parish Rest	Majority	Bay	Country
0-1	(46) 44.3	(45) 61.5	(65) 58	(27) 41.5
1-4	(63) 69.5	(72) 113	(97) 100.	(33) 57.6
5-9	(17) 22.5	(9) 17.6	(16) 17.7	(13) 26.6
10-14	(13) 19.7	(5) 10.6	(9) 12.6	(9) 20.9

N.B. The number of deaths in each age-group is given in brackets

1. Fyl.Recon., Leadson  
2. P.R.O., H.O.107,1265 and H.O.107,2734; W.Dalton, op.cit., pp.29-31.

compiled from family-reconstitution information, to give burials per thousand, in four age groups. Completeness of reconstitution throughout the parish cannot be claimed, as admitted in the Introduction; therefore to have any credibility results obtained have to be emphatic.

There appear at first to be two main features of table 21 calling for comment. The first is the low rates for age-group 1-4 in the Parish Rest in Period 1 and for the Country in Periods 2 and 3, which throw the relatively higher mortality in Bay into relief. Secondly, there is a shift of the higher mortality away from Bay after the age of nine. The first of these shows peculiar influence at work in Bay among young children and recalls what has already been said, in sections (c) and (d) about their diseases. In the age-group 1-4 in Period 2 the mortality is so much lighter in the Country that the table tends to confirm the impression, gained in the discussion of "crisis" and seasonal mortality, that the immediate post-infancy years in Bay could be difficult. As for the marked fall in Bay mortality after the age of nine, relative to that in the Country, it has already begun to suggest that life expectancy was rising appreciably as childhood in the village passed.

However, a third, more general, aspect of table 21 demands attention. This is the low infant mortality. In Periods 1 and 2 the rates in the table do not seem improbable when compared with those obtained by Wrigley at Colyton.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, if his method is followed of matching

1. E.A.Wrigley, 'Mortality in Pre-Industrial England: The Example of Colyton, Devon, Over Three Centuries', Daedalus, XCIII, no.2, Spring, 1968, pp.546-579.



them with the United Nations specimens of life tables, then for the sexes combined the infant mortality for the Majority in Period 1 and for Bay in Period 2 should be doubled. <sup>1</sup>

The experience of the British aristocracy, and of Gautier and Henri's Crulai, recounted by Hollingsworth, suggests the mortality should have been higher still. <sup>2</sup> Wrigley has reservations about making inferences concerning pre-industrial England from findings about the nobility, or France, or modern developing countries, but there is general agreement that infant mortality was higher than parish registers say it was, and that the main reason for this was the delaying of baptisms. <sup>3</sup> Hollingsworth insists on knowing exactly what the baptismal practice was, and Glass writes of the frequency of baptisms with no corresponding births. <sup>4</sup> While Robin Hood's Bay itself means little in population history, as a maritime settlement it may contribute a little information to the subjects of the birth-baptism interval, and of infants dying unbaptised.

Both birth and baptism are given in the register regularly from 1778, and the first impression is that there is little or no pattern to the interval between them. Because there were occupations that took men away from home, the parish was divided into sailors, fishermen and others, and

1. U.N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Studies, No.25, Methods for Population Projections by Sex and Age, 1956, Specimen Life-Tables.

2. T.H.Hollingsworth, 'The Importance of the Quality of the Data in Historical Demography', Daedalus, XCIII, no.2, 1968, pp.415-432.

3. E.A.Wrigley, loc.cit., pp.571-572.

4. T.H.Hollingsworth, Historical Demography, 1966, p.183;

D.V.Glass, 'A Note on the Under-Registration of Births in Britain in the Nineteenth Century', Population Studies, V, 1951, pp.70-88.

the average birth-baptism intervals for the groups, respectively, were 59, 52 and 55 days. This conceals variations. In Period 3, 51% of the sailor and fisher baptisms were performed within three months of birth, and 69% of others within two months.

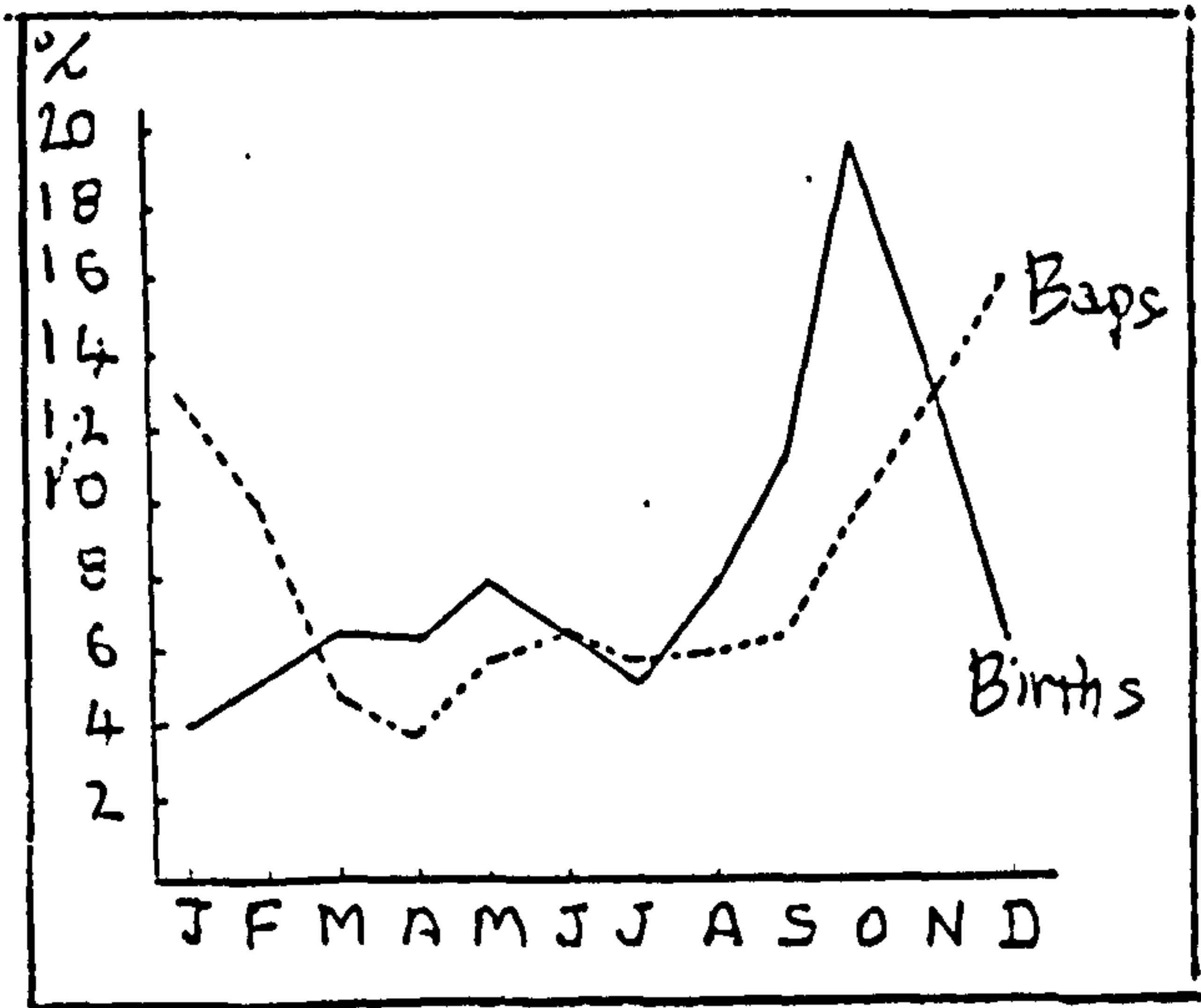
A better perspective is obtained if seasonality is taken into account. It stands out clearly in the conceptions in sailor households, which have been aggregated for Period 3, in table 22.

Table 22: Seasonality of conceptions in sailor households, 1781-1840

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Total
	179	125	57	36	48	58	60	71	61	46	70	101	= 912
% =	19.6	13.7	6.2	3.9	5.3	6.3	6.6	7.8	6.7	5.0	7.7	11.1	

Thus 44% of conceptions were in winter, the time on shore for the coastal trade. Corresponding births were from September to November, in which latter month fathers started returning, with two or three months in which to arrange the family occasion of baptism. Seasonality of baptisms is well marked also, in aggregations over the period, as in figure 22.

Figure 22: Seasonality of births and baptisms of sailors' children, Period 3, 1781-1840



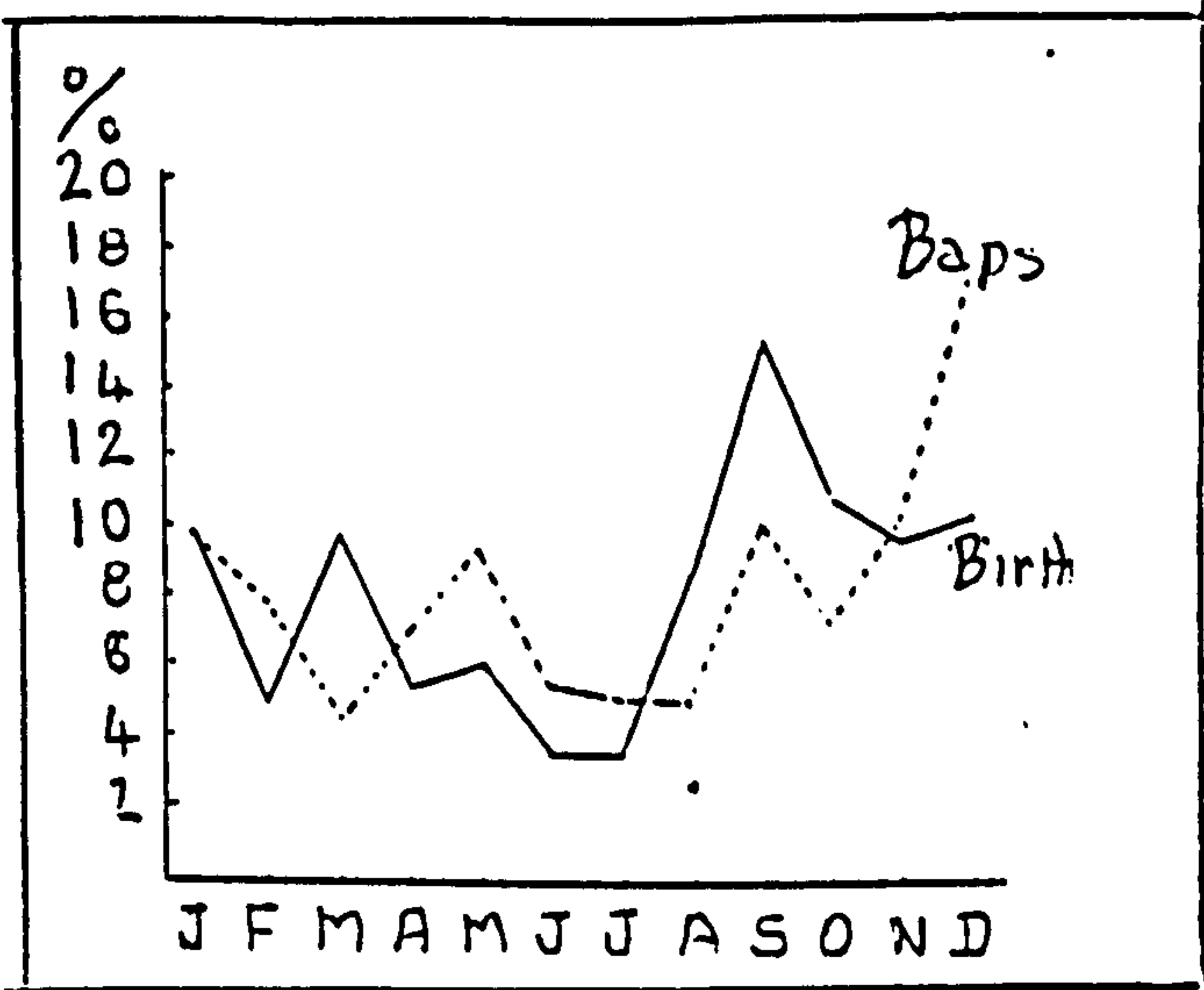
Autumn births are accompanied by an immediate increase in baptisms in October, but three even busier months lead to a peak in December.



There were inevitably small variations, since the number of voyages and hence the exact length of the sailing season depended on the weather. The estimates of the number achievable would depend on the position of the estimator in the industry. A parliamentary committee in the eighteen-thirties heard from a shipowner in the coastal coal trade that he was paying his masters a good wage of £9 a voyage and that twelve voyages could be made in a year, instead of the more usual eight. <sup>1</sup>

The behaviour of the fishermen was slightly different from that of the sailors. They started the five-man fishing in March, working weekly out of Bay, then went to Yarmouth from as early as August and returned in November. Their September peak of births in figure 23 can therefore be associated with post-Yarmouth conceptions, and the June-July trough follows from the absence of fishermen in the previous September-October.

Figure 23: Seasonality of births and baptisms of fishers' children  
Period 3, 1781-1840



But the programme of events also permitted other, smaller peaks (in figure 23) and the great summit of December baptisms suggests that many of these had accumulated over the year, thus lengthening the average birth-baptism interval. The pattern of conceptions underlying events, and the programme

1. Select Committee Report on the State of the Coal Trade, 1969 edn., II, p.25, Reports of Committees of the House of Commons, XIX.

of subsequent baptisms, are less regular than the sailors', and lead to a great clearing of baptisms before Christmas. The conceptions by month are in table 23.

Table 23: Seasonality of conceptions in fisher households,  
Period 3, 1781-1840

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Total
	29	24	28	28	13	28	12	17	11	11	21	37	= 259
% =	11.2	9.3	10.8	10.8	5.0	10.8	4.6	6.6	4.3	4.3	8.2	14.3	

This preference for December kept the sailors' birth and baptism peaks two months apart, and those of the fishermen three months. This might be associated with a time of festivity, but equally it is likely to be because sailor and fisher families, and frequently households, were one and the same and December was the time when the maximum number of men ashore was reached. The effect is seen to advantage in 1826, when in December there were 22 baptisms. The fathers included eleven sailors, five fishermen, one fisherman who had become a boatman in the preventive service, and one each of farmer, farm labourer, butcher, shoemaker and joiner, and all of the last five were related by blood or marriage to sailor or fisher families. <sup>1</sup>

Although the births cannot be investigated in Periods 1 and 2, the monthly totals of baptisms can be, and they have a distinct seasonality about them. The results given in table 24 on page 156 are for the strongly maritime group, the Majority, in Period 1 (1653-1720), and there are two aspects requiring comment. The first observation is that the peak is not

1. N.Y.C.R.O., Fylingdales Register of Baptisms, and Fyl.Recon.



Table 24: Seasonality of baptisms in Bay Majority, Period 1,  
1653-1720

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Total
	73	70	82	54	59	33	61	86	75	103	103	72	871
% =	8.4	8.0	9.4	6.2	6.8	3.8	7.0	9.8	8.6	11.8	11.8	8.3	

in December, and the second is that there is irregularity along the way. This may be explained by the greater numbers in fishing then. By Period 2 (1721-1780) there were 24.3% of Majority baptisms in December-January, to be set against the 16.7% in table 24. The year thus seems to have become more heavily dominated by the coastal-sailing season in Period 2.

This seasonal life of the maritime population is important in the immediate context because it offers an explanation of practice relating to baptism that could be one cause of the apparently low infant mortality. There is a contrast with the Country. The totals of sailors' and fishermen's baptisms in Period 3 have been removed from those of the parish, and they are shown in table 25. There is a different régime here,

Table 25: Seasonality of baptisms of the parish, with sailors' and  
fishers' baptisms removed, Period 3, 1781-1840

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Total
	146	218	138	137	147	155	156	141	139	164	179	170	1890
% =	7.7	11.5	7.3	7.2	7.8	8.2	8.2	7.5	7.3	8.7	9.5	9.0	

with a February peak, but it is not possible to be so specific about a reason for delaying of baptisms in this group by a mean 160 days. It is conceivable, however, that infant mortality was indeed much higher than recorded, and in Bay a possible explanation is to be found. Returning to the comments on page 151, concerning the information in table 21 (the life

tables), the relatively high mortality in Bay for the age-group 1-4, and the reduction after the age of 9, may stand, but infant mortality is a questionable quantity.

The general outcome of the discussion is that direct evidence of poverty is not strong; also, the incidence of disease suggests that other factors affecting health were probably more important. There were, further, other respects in which Bay may have been more fortunate than the Country, such as maternal mortality and longevity. To add the cumulative evidence of variety of employment in the previous three chapters is to give more substance to the hypothesis in Chapter 1 of a thronged and busy village. However, although the community was not noticeably subject to severe physical or economic affliction, there were fluctuations of population, which have been related to the alum industry's fortunes and the attractions of seafaring, and it is with the amount and direction of movement that the next chapter deals.



CHAPTER SEVEN: POPULATION MOVEMENT

Much movement can be inferred from the varying fortunes of the alum industry detected in Chapter 3, and from the intercourse with Whitby described in Chapter 1. As yet, however, there is little idea of direction and extent of movement. The matter is discussed under the headings of Migration and Marriage Horizons.

(a) Migration

(i) General: The amount of movement in and out of Fylingdales varied greatly from one part of the parish to another, and an attempt to assess the variation broadly is made possible by the process of reconstitution. The assessment depends on the degree of completeness with which families in two main population groups in the parish can be reconstituted: the greater the immobility the more complete the record. In table 26 the number of families reconstituted is expressed as a proportion of the total number of baptisms, in Periods 2 and 3, when Bay and Country are separable.

Table 26: Comparison of proportions of families reconstituted  
in Bay and Country, 1721-1840

	Bay			Country		
	No. of baptisms	No. of reconstituted families	%	No. of baptisms	No. of reconstituted families	%
Period 2 (1721-1780)	1648	274	16.6	1140	123	10.7
Period 3 (1781-1840)	1440	288	20.0	1377	179	13.0

It would be reasonable to attribute at least some of the apparent difficulty of reconstituting Country families to the frustration of registration by their mobility.

Confirmation of the amount of movement in the parish can also be drawn from the persistence of 20 surnames from 1563 to 1841, and of another 28 if the limits are set at 1650 and 1850, out of a total of 733 compiled from all sources. Of that total, 314 names occur only once, and 201 of these may be separated into Bay and Country, giving 68 in the former and 133 in the latter. When it is recalled how numerous were the people bearing Majority names, or even how many bore the five names of the Core, the unambiguous impression left is of a parish population that comprised a stable group of families down by the sea, surrounded by a frequently changing population inhabiting the adjacent farmlands. One way of appreciating how widespread was the adoption of the five Core names, is to count the numbers of Core spouses in the reconstituted families throughout the period, of whom there were no fewer than 532.

A corroboratory view is obtained even from the study of a shorter period of substantive change. Figure 11 at the beginning of Chapter 3 shows the estimated total of Bay population falling unsteadily from a peak around 1760 down to the decade 1831-40, during which time the Bay Majority families were responsible for as much as 58% of the village's 1,389 baptisms. Clearly mobility was much higher in the remainder of the population.

It is the intention now to look at each of the three usual periods in turn in Robin Hood's Bay, and then go on to observe a London connection and the general evidence of surnames.

(ii) Chronological account      Period 1: 1653-1720:    The Majority is as usual the group with which to make a start, since the village's estimates are only extrapolations from this component at this time.

In 1711-20 the Majority had an estimated population in figure 11 of some 600, representing an increase of about 300 since the first decade of



the period. There is need to treat the estimates with caution, but the natural increase over the same period was 305. That 31 families - eleven of them new during the period - should reach such a total seems extraordinary, but this kind of representation is characteristic of the settlement. Their total of baptisms in Period 1 was 871, or an average of 13 a year. These years have thus to be seen as a time of great increase for these people, and the critical point in relation to migration is that if the 55% increase in the number of constituent families during the period is reflected only palely on the larger stage, then Robin Hood's Bay was attracting population. The places of origin of 16 spouses are in the marriage register from 1653 to 1660, and they are from adjacent parishes and places lying south, towards Scarborough. This is only a faint hint that new population did not come from far away, attracted by the alum trade or the sea, or by a combination of both.

Period 2: 1721-1780: The approach to the top of the estimated Bay population trend in the decade 1761-70 is the outstanding feature of the period. Bay can be distinguished from Country, and population changes are now more firmly to be linked with the state of the alum industry and its migrant workers. This general view noted, it is again the Majority that claims attention.

Of the 1,105 Bay baptisms, 687 were attributable to the Majority; in the reconstitution as a whole; so again, the static element was strong. Yet there is a substantial fall in the estimates of the size of the group at the beginning of the period. On analysis of this change, there occur clues to the direction in which movement flowed.

At first the rise in estimated Majority population, in Period 1, appears to be a reflection of what was happening in the parish as a whole, before, say, the cartelisation of the alum industry. When the fall begins

in the seventeen-twenties it does not look as though it applied to the remainder of the village. It could have been the case that the strongly maritime element was peculiarly affected by a reduction in alum-related shipping when plant was shut down. More certain is the existence of a counter-attraction at Whitby, which was reaching its zenith as a shipping town. <sup>1</sup>

According to Professor Rogers, Defoe was writing about the Whitby of 1724 when he said it had become prosperous. <sup>2</sup> Within 25 years there were more than 200 Bay sailors working on vessels that used the port. <sup>3</sup> It was during these years that the natural increase of the Majority, which is the content of table 27, came to be halved.

Table 27: Natural increase of the Majority, 1701-40

1701-10	50
1711-20	88
1721-30	54
1731-40	41

The decade 1731-40 proves on examination to have been a relatively unproductive time for reconstitution work with the Majority. There were 34 "useful" families (19 of them assembled from the Core), and 178 baptisms, a product of 19.1%, whereas in other decades of the period the result was 27.7%. So there is an indication here that 1731-40 was a time of abnormal mobility for this group.

1. D.Defoe, A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain, 1971 edn., p.532.  
2. Ibid., p.16.  
3. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, 1747-9.



As no Majority names disappeared from the village during the decade, it is movement of particular members and households of families that must be sought. Investigation reveals that some two dozen households were lost to the group. The details are Appendix 6 on page 292.

A consequence of the interest in Whitby which the details reveal may be the 17 marriages in Fylingdales in the decade 1741-50 with both parties from the town, and four others with one each from there. Nine of these marriages - all in the reconstitutions - had a partner from the Majority.

The sample is not very large, but the Tyne-Scarborough geographical limits in Appendix 6 occur over the next century. To the south, Bridlington and Hull are rarely encountered; further north, beyond the Tyne, Blyth and the smaller Northumberland harbours are seldom mentioned. Scarborough was to remain a place where fishing craft were sometimes bought and Sunderland was for long the most easily reached supplier of coal. The second of these matters has arisen in connection with the alum trade; both reappear when nineteenth century shipping is discussed. Eventually, with industrial and harbour developments, Middlesbrough, the Hartlepoons and Seaham were to intervene, but for long the Tyne-Scarborough limits generally prevailed.

It has been implied that these traces of an exodus arose from the desire to grasp wider opportunities connected with shipping. But many sailors had found the village a useful base from which to operate. It has been argued that tenure of property was a factor tying people to the place, but it might also be argued that the decision to migrate was influenced by shortage of "long leasehold" accommodation after an unprecedented increase in the long-term population who had been occupying it in some cases for a century.

Period 3: 1781-1840: It is the intention to look first at the information that comes from sources other than the Census, and then to concentrate on the Census years.

Even when estimates of numbers are at their lowest in this period the settlement was still populous, apparently. The Majority had 732 of the 1,121 baptisms in the reconstituted families, despite the decline in the ownership of larger vessels discussed in Chapter 5, and there was a marked correlation with the course of the alum industry. The new evidence that can be used is the first regular and thorough entering of occupations in the parish registers from 1777; so some idea is to be gained of the sort of people who were coming into the village.

With no double-counting, fifteen years from 1777 produced 203 sailors in Robin Hood's Bay, and 15 in other parts of the parish. Of the Bay sailors, 36 were new to the parish, and as 90 others belonged to the Majority, there were 77 from other, usually less well-established families. As few Majority men were ever in non-maritime occupations, and 67 out of 75 fishermen counted in the same years came from the group, the new supply of maritime manpower was only about an eighth of the whole.

Of the "new" sailors, 32 married in the village, all but two of them in the 25 years from 1767 to 1792. This constitutes a small average inflow of about two a year. Little is known about their origins. One came from Tyneside, another arrived with the Westmoreland Militia, and a third was from Helmsley in the North Riding.<sup>1</sup> More is known about only one other, Ralph College of Bishop Middleton, on the Durham Coalfield, who, according to a descendant, first came to Fylingdales with a cargo of coal from the Tees, for the alum works.<sup>2</sup>

1. Fyl.Recon., Charters, Stafford, Steel.

2. Information from Mrs.Freda Mansell of the Cleveland Family History Society.



A few of the new sailors entered other occupations: Robert Forbes married the daughter of an innkeeper, and John Clark the widow of another, and both took to that trade. <sup>1</sup>

Also in the fifteen-year count were 34 newcomers who were not sailors. Many of these were in service occupations, including five shoemakers, four tailors, three innkeepers, and one each of miller, exciseman, mason, carrier, barber and schoolmaster. There were also nine labourers. The new element, therefore, was about a fifth of the total counted. Three of their families went into a second or third generation in the village, and one, that of William Stubbs the mason, produced a line of shipmasters with descendants in the parish down to the present time. <sup>2</sup>

To establish more clearly that the newcomers were a minor element, the non-Majority sailors were counted in the registers from 1792 to 1840 and there were 83 of them. There were 36 quite new, 32 of Fylingdales Country origin, 14 of non-Majority Bay family, and one who could not be placed. Over the 48 years, therefore, the movement, especially that from outside the parish to the village's principal occupation, amounted to fairly low external recruitment. Of the 36 "quite new" men, 20 found wives in the village; so there is some overlapping of migration and marriage horizons here.

The extent of an area in which movement occurred is illustrated by transactions and queries recorded by the overseers in 42 of the years between 1784 and 1837 <sup>3</sup>. It stretches from Scarborough to Sunderland, with most activity being concentrated between Scalby and Lyth, that is to say from one parish south of Fylingdales to one parish north of Whitby.

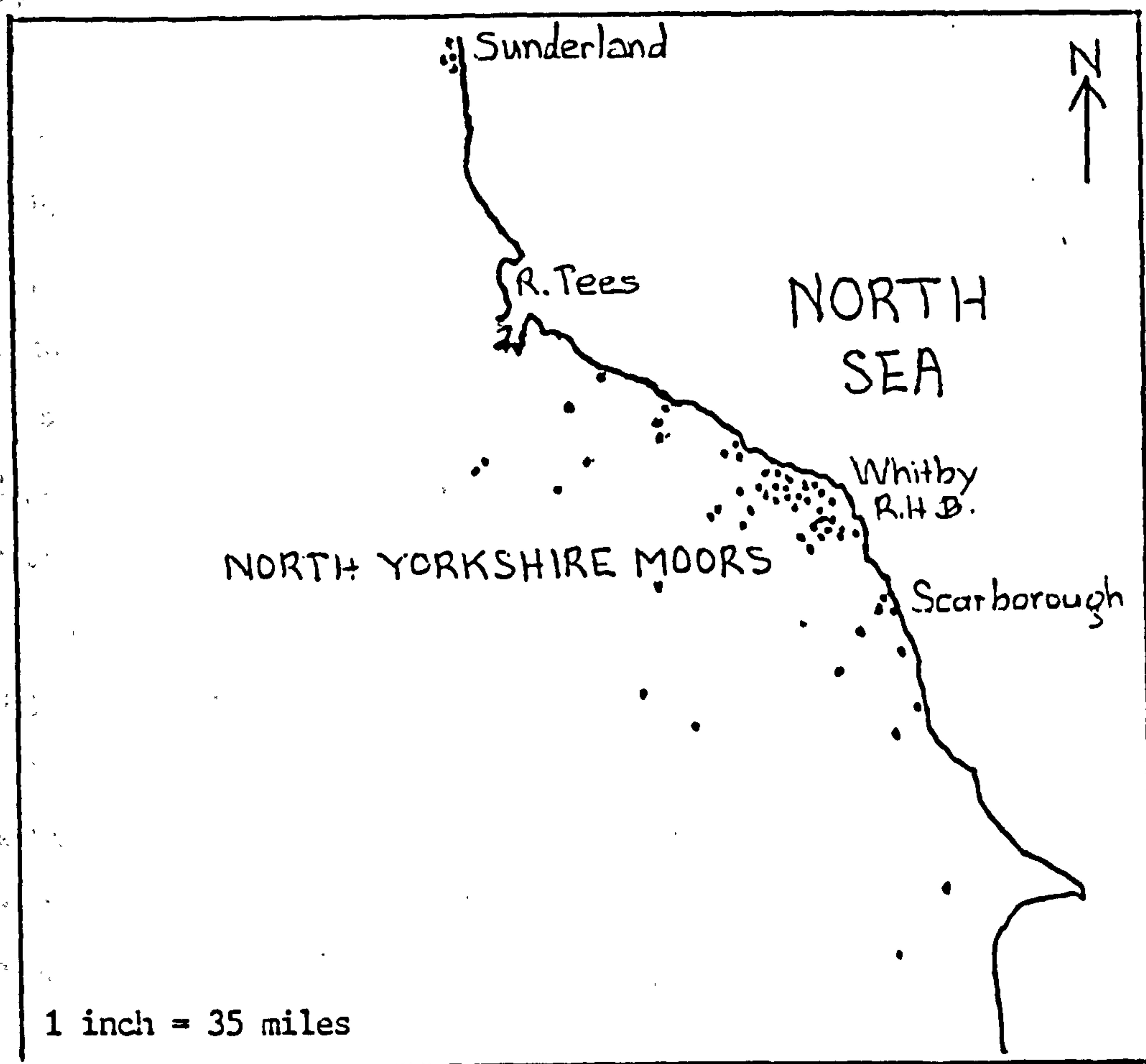
1. Fyl.Recon., Bedlington, Clark, Forbes.

2. Fyl.Recon., Stubbs.

3. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/5/1-6, Overseers' Account Books, 1784-32.

All this information relates to the area defined by places referred to in the settlement certificates and removal orders over the period and these are therefore entered in figure 24. <sup>1</sup>

Figure 24: Places mentioned in settlement certificates  
and removal orders, 1784-1837



The coastal-corridor effect, with Whitby in the middle, is plain, and the limits are North East seaports, if one person from Herne Bay in Kent is excepted.

1. N.Y.C.R.O.: PR/FY/5/4, Settlement Certificates; PR/FY/5/3, Removal Orders.



Turning to the Census years, there were estimated to have been 940 inhabitants of Robin Hood's Bay in 1841, when allowance was made for sailors absent from the village. Three people came from Scotland, and the coastguard service provided two Irish fathers of families. The coastguard element was of some importance, 16 inhabitants in all belonging to households headed by members. Seven of the non-Yorkshire people came from only two households and there were in addition two teachers, a doctor and a visiting child. <sup>1</sup>

In the 1851 Census, 135 people came from outside the parish, and most of them belonged to Yorkshire, and the North Riding in particular. <sup>2</sup> Of some, it might have been guessed that they came from elsewhere: the surgeon's wife was from Hull and two of her daughters were born in Kent. The other medical man, a general practitioner, was a Scot, and the Independent minister was born in Chepstow. The principal reason, however, for the presence of people from distant parts, was official service. There were two visitors from Dorset who had formerly lived in Robin Hood's Bay, being the widow and daughter of a coastguard who had died there in 1846. <sup>3</sup> Another coastguard boatman and his wife were natives of Berwick and Tweedmouth respectively, and their son had been born - presumably during a previous posting - at Saltburn, on the coast north of Whitby. The wife of a Guernsey-born coastguard was from Gosport, a location suggesting that there had been customary former naval service. Similarly, an innkeeper from a coastguard family had been born in the naval country at Portsea.

1. P.R.O., H.O.107,1270.

2. P.R.O., H.O.107,2734.

3. Fyl.Recon., Smith.

A retired Coastguard who had stayed in the village belonged to Kingsand, near Plymouth, and his wife to Polperro, and they had remained because two daughters, born at Kingsand, had married local sailors. A young mariner of the same name, born at Abbotsbury near Portland in Dorset, could have been of the same family; he had married a woman from the Core.<sup>1</sup> Yet another coastguard, from Gainsborough originally, was present with his wife, who was born at Sea Palling in Norfolk, and a young visitor staying with them was the daughter of a former colleague from Ireland.

A native of Fylingdales who had been in the Customs service had living with him a granddaughter who had been born in Plymouth, his daughter and mariner son-in-law being in all probability away at sea.<sup>2</sup>

Then there were women who had married local sailors. Four of them came from places near the sea in Essex. A fifth was from one of the same Essex towns; she had married a joiner, who may have served as a ship's carpenter, and she was probably sister of her fellow townswoman; they can be identified with some certainty as the daughters of a coastguard who had retired in Robin Hood's Bay, because they bore a name otherwise unknown in the village.<sup>3</sup>

Thus inward migration had a distinctly maritime cast, introduced by people other than sailors.

Another strong presence in 1841 and 1851 consisted of lodgers and visitors. In 1841 there were 88 of the former, and in 1851 23 lodgers and 48 visitors. It is as though a tourist industry were already in being. On closer scrutiny, these two terms are seen to be used with discrimination,

1. Fyl.Recon., Bedlington, Tindale, Granger, Smith.

2. FYl.Recon., Coverdale.

3. Fyl.Recon., Barton.

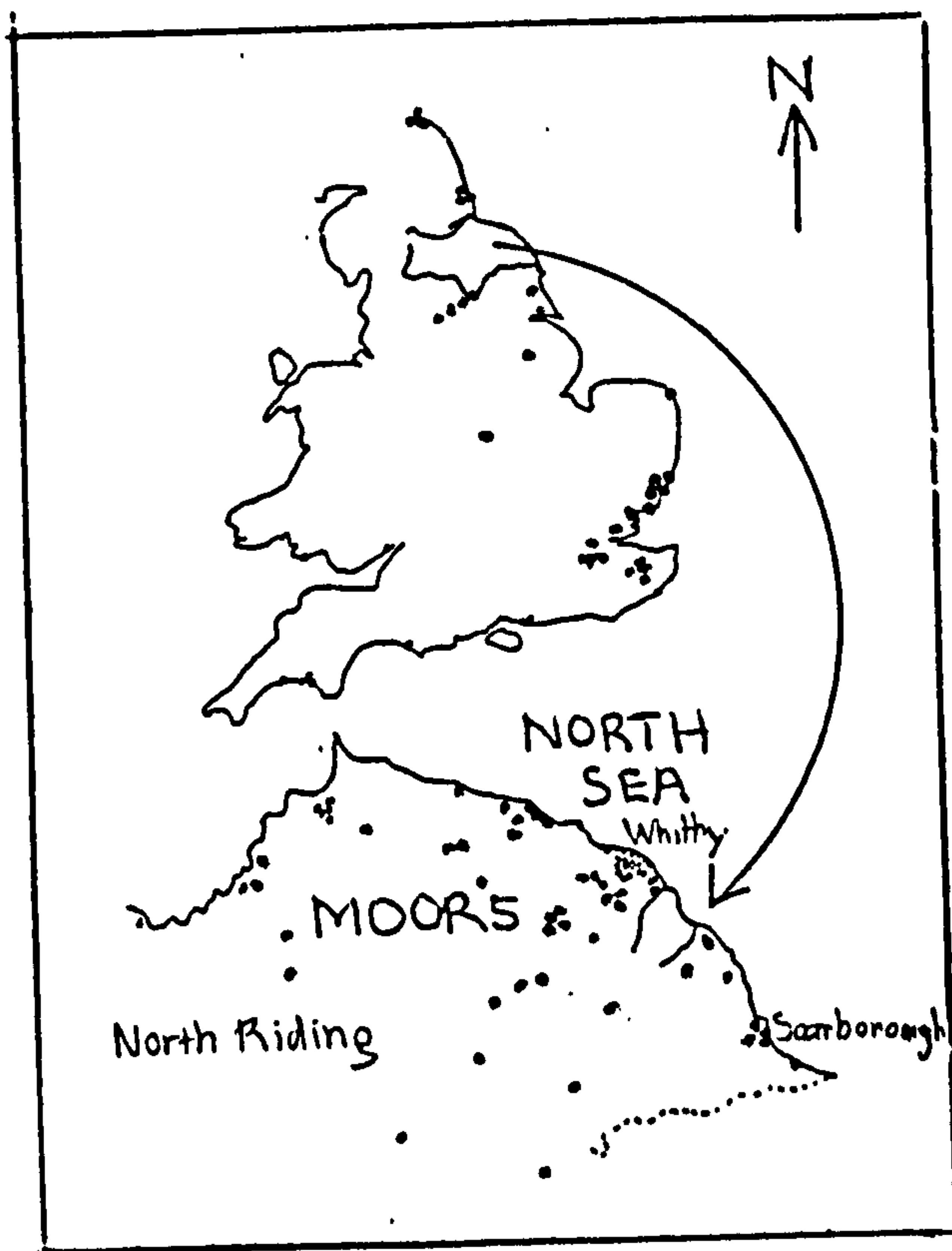


"lodgers" being villagers, and "visitors" former villagers, all staying with relatives. So many can be identified with the aid of the reconstitutions that it is likely that with a little more information all might be so classified. The strongest factor recognisable behind the situation is the absence of male kin at sea.

As for those in the 1841 Census who were born in Yorkshire but not in Fylingdales, there were 75 of them, without the visitors. There were 23 wives or daughters, or widows, three female servants, and 35 males in service occupations. Only one wife had been drawn into the village by marriage to a fisherman.

Robin Hood's Bay was at this time experiencing a surge of interest in shipping, and the rise in inward migration between 1841 and 1851 has to be related to the success attending this. Except in the cases of two Irish and three Scots, the places where these people were born are summarised in figure 25.

Figure 25: Places of origin of  
inward migrants,  
from the 1851  
Census



The map conveys much the same impression as that which was based on the settlement certificates and the removal orders: it is one of movement mainly between the moors and the sea in the North Riding; and as for England and Wales as a whole, the coast is well represented there too.

The 1851 Census provides information about outward migration also. The obvious first place to look is Whitby, where in the year in question there were 56 people of all ages of Robin Hood's Bay origin.<sup>1</sup> The rising town of Middlesbrough had 73, and three from other parts of Fylingdales.<sup>2</sup> When the 73 are traced in the reconstitutions, and the 1841 Census is brought into use, 61 of them are not in the latter. Seven of them were too young to be included, but most of these people had left before 1841, that is to say before the Bay shipping boom which occurred in Bay in mid-century had gained full momentum, and just as industrial Middlesbrough had begun to exist. Over the Tees, in Hartlepool and Stranton (later West Hartlepool), there were 26 inhabitants in 1851 giving Robin Hood's Bay as their native place.<sup>3</sup> Among these people on Teesside there were twelve households with Bay Core names and two sailors from the Core independent of them. The movement had passed northward, beyond Whitby, which was already losing its status as an unrivalled attraction.

(iii) A London connection. Many of the places so far referred to became important to Robin Hood's Bay as sources of ships and cargoes. The proverbial cargo carried out of the ports of the North East was coal, and the traditional point of delivery for much of it was London. Representatives of northern seafaring places might therefore be expected

1. P.R.O., H.O.107,2374

2. P.R.O., H.O.107,2383

3. P.R.O., H.O.107,2384.



to be found in London, and although the evidence is not abundant, Robin Hood's Bay is no exception.

One early example has been mentioned. This was Peter Dale.<sup>1</sup> He was probably a descendant, direct or collateral, of Robert, occupant of one of the fifty cottages of 1563, and grandson of Thomas of Robin Hood's Bay whose will was proved in 1652.<sup>2</sup> In 1703 Peter Dale followed the craft of mariner, but by 1724/5 he had become a victualler of St. John's, Wapping, next to the Pool of London, where the collier fleet would lie, awaiting discharge, and where the inn Prospect of Whitby stands. His son, John, a shipmaster, also lived in Wapping.<sup>3</sup>

Another early resident in the same district was John Storm, lost in the vessel Industry, according to the administration granted in 1694, and owing money to the widow Ruth Atkins of Stepney, which is also by the Pool. He is identified by a reference to his wife, but the name is a useful one for tracing migrants: it was common around Howden on the Humber, until the time of the Hull plague of the sixteen-thirties, and since then it has almost always led to Robin Hood's Bay, or to fishing and seafaring people around Findhorn in Nairnshire.<sup>4</sup>

1. See p.90.

2. P.R.O., E.318/43/2316; Fyl.Recon., Dale; Borthwick, Thomas Dale, 1652.

3. P.R.O., R.G.6/1617/1703; Borthwick, Peter Dale, 1724/5;  
Borthwick, John Dale, 1714.

4. P.R.O., PROB.6/70, f.69; Society of Genealogists, copy of  
Parish Register of Howden, Yorkshire East Riding; Victoria History of  
the County of Yorkshire: East Riding, I, 1969, pp.154-157; Church of  
Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, International Genealogical Index,  
Nairnshire, Scotland.

It is impossible at present to draw more than a rough sketch of the London connection, but the exact location is usually the same district. John Jackson of Stepney was co-owner of the vessel Lively with the Robin Hood's Bay brothers Cropton in 1786. He made one of his last appearances in Fylingdales - in the parish register - when his daughter was baptised in 1777. <sup>1</sup>

In 1805, Matthew Storm, mariner, married Ann Brown, daughter of a Whitby shipmaster, at Wapping. There were living in London in these years two of his kinsmen, who were also partners of his father in ownership of the Benjamin and Mary. They were Richard Moorsom and Abel Chapman, familiar names in the coastal trade. <sup>2</sup> For the choice of London as a place for a wedding there is no obvious explanation, but the marriage at nearby Shadwell of a son of the union in 1842 may mean there was a long connection. Bride and groom were living at 22 and 28, Wapping Wall, respectively, and in the 1841 Census no.22 was occupied by Christopher Crawford, publican, whose age of 64 is compatible with the marriage in the Whitby register of one of that name in 1797. <sup>3</sup> Weatherill draws on a memoir of 1837 by one Will Forth to tell how the Whitby marine painter, George Chambers, owed his first commissions to a "Mr. Crawford, formerly a doctor in one of the whale ships out of Whitby, but then a spirit merchant in Wapping". Apparently Whitby captains met at Mr. Crawford's and Chambers painted familiar coastal scenes on the smokeroom walls. <sup>4</sup>

1. N.M.M., Whitby, no.85, 1786; Fyl.Recon., Cropton, Jackson.

2. Greater London Record Office, Parish Register of Wapping, St.John; Fyl.Recon., Storm; N.M.M., Whitby, no.37, 1786; See pp. 91 and 111.

3. Stepney Registry certificate of 2nd August, 1842;

P.R.O., H.O.107,703, Book 1; N.Y.C.R.O., Whitby Parish Register.

4. R.Weatherill, The Ancient Port of Whitby, 1908, pp.391-392.



At 28, Wapping Wall there was lodging in 1841 a non-native mariner called Robert Cropton, a familiar name in Fylingdales. Close by, at 18, Wapping Wall, there was living in the eighteen-forties Will Elgie Corner, a provision merchant.<sup>1</sup> His name is often among those of shareholders in Whitby shipping, usually with John and Edward Corner, who in 1823 were bacon and ham factors in the town.<sup>2</sup> The brig Mary Ann brought them and the Robin Hood's Bay shareholders Mercy Harrison and Sampson Storm together.<sup>3</sup> In 1846 W.E.Corner shared the brig Dauntless with John Rose of Whitby, and Wapping entered the scene with the sale of his share to John Rose of that place.<sup>4</sup>

There are intimations here of the existence of a colony from the Whitby shipping industry, with an inevitable participation by Robin Hood's Bay. One explanation, apart from the fundamental coal trade, is that some sort of base, away from home, would be welcome to sailors, and another is that there was bound to be a demand for services for men and vessels, and traders who were part of the Whitby shipping and commercial circles were naturally attracted south to provide them.

1. P.R.O., H.O.107,703, Book 1.

2. E.Baines, History, Directory and Gazetteer of the County of York, II, 1823.

3. R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.313.

4. Ibid., p.240.

(iv) The general evidence of surnames. The Fylingdales registers contain many locative and distinctly Scottish surnames, in the second half of the eighteenth century. The locations and the respective numbers of those found in Robin Hood's Bay are in the table. The value of the exercise depends on the persistence of names in counties from as early as the thirteenth century, as explained by R.A.McKinley.<sup>1</sup>

Table 28: Locative and Scottish names in Robin Hood's Bay, 1750-1800

Scotland and the Borders	38
Rest of Northumberland, and Durham	14
Cumberland	6
North Riding	41
East Riding	5
West Riding	8
Lancashire	5

There were nine other names found widely in the North (e.g. Milburn), and fourteen from more distant parts of England and Wales, all with a coastline. If the last fourteen are excluded, then about a third of the main list is derived from each of the North Riding, other northern counties, and Scotland and the Border. Also, several of the Scottish and Border names belong to sailors identifiable in the reconstitutions as newcomers or descendants of such. Scott, Munro, Grant, Carr, Lothian, Eliot, Moffet, Forbes, Armstrong, Sinclair, Stewart, Hay and Campbell are examples, seven of which are in the marriage register from 1777 to 1792.<sup>2</sup>

A measure of integration with economies beyond Tyneside is evident in the middle of the nineteenth century, when Bay purchasers of 37 vessels

1. R.A.McKinley, A History of British Surnames, 1990, pp.5-6.  
2. G.F.Black, Surnames of Scotland, 1946.



built in Scotland are to be found in the Whitby-registered shipping.<sup>1</sup> However, the Scottish names nearly all belong to the late eighteenth century, in the Fylingdales registers, that is to say around the time of the second highest of what might be called the "alum summits" of population. By 1804 one of the newcomers had become master of John Ridley's alun sloop Heckington. He was David Lothian, and he had married the daughter of an alun worker in the previous year.<sup>2</sup> It was close to this time that the presence of Scots at the Boulby alun works north of Whitby was held worthy of recent comment by B.J.D.Harrison.<sup>3</sup>

The supply of kelp may have been a cause of the movement, or it may have sprung from the coal trade of the North East, which was linked with the Border by a large part of the workforce. Writers on Newcastle and its coal trade make frequent reference to Gray's Chorographia of 1649 on this subject. Nef quotes the statements that "Scottish men and Borderers out of Tynedale and Riddisdale" were numerous among northern colliers, and especially among the Tyne keelmen who transported the coal down-river to the shipping.<sup>4</sup> J.M.Fewster dealt with the subject and quoted the keelmen themselves, who put their number in 1712 at 1600, not counting 400 at home in Scotland at the time.<sup>5</sup> This migration of Scots, passing

1. N.M.M., Whitby, passim.

2. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, 1796-1814, index no.408;

Fyl.Recon., Lothian, Jellings alias Gillings.

3. Cleveland Industrial Archaeologist, no.2, 1975, p.36.

4. J.U.Nef, The Rise of the British Coal Industry, II, 1932, pp. 135-136, 148-150.

5. J.M.Fewster, 'The Keelmen of Tyneside in the Eighteenth Century', Durham University Journal, New Series, XIX, 1957, Pt.1, p.24, Pt.2, p.66, Pt.3, p.111.

through industrial employment on Tyne and Wear to Cleveland and the Whitby district forms another possible strand in the ties of the North East's economy.

If the interpretation of the evidence of migration is attempted generally, the whole period might be divided into two phases. There was the increase assisted by the alum trade and the success of Whitby, and maintained down to the hypothetical population peak in 1761-70, despite the removal of people to Whitby and other ports of the North East, and traceable through the Majority. After the summit, the trend to slow loss from a substantial population was checked by intermittent revival of the alum trade, and the inward migration of sailors and of tradesmen arriving to provide services as the village became the local commercial centre.

The second aspect of the subject is the direction of the movement, and there is a clear Whitby-Bay main axis. Next in importance came the North East ports, until developing Teesside began to supersede Whitby by the middle of the nineteenth century. People came in from Whitby and the coastal villages, and to a lesser extent from places around the moor. From further afield, most inward migration was from the North East, the principal exception being those who in later years were sent to the village on official service.

The significance of the amount and direction of all this movement, then, is that they tend to confirm that Robin Hood's Bay was an integral and not unimportant part of the coastal economy of the North East, a factor in the "Geordie collier" complex of men and ships. There is further support for this from research into the dispersal of families that followed the advent of steam: most of the task of tracing them in the later nineteenth century, and in the present century, can be pursued in places between Scarborough and Tynemouth, especially those ports which



were frequented by the steamers that had replaced the sailing ships. The main exception is the movement to South Wales with the increasing export of coal from there. <sup>1</sup>

(b) Marriage Horizons This topic of courtship patterns complements the foregoing in the sense that it demonstrates how voyaging to, and knowledge of other places may still leave a group of people highly introverted, in spatial terms.

From 1653 to 1660 there were 42 marriages in the parish, of which 14 involved people from outside. In nine cases the bridegroom and in five the bride was the outsider, and in the other both parties were from elsewhere. Fifteen of the 16 places of origin were in the North Riding. For the next 52 years no abode was recorded with the 385 marriages, which is to be regretted, because the first seven years had a higher ratio of representation from outside the parish than any decade to come.

Because analysis cannot begin properly before 1715, three different periods from the usual were taken in table 29, in which totals of parishioners' "Outside" marriages (i.e. with "Whitby" and "Other" people) are compared with totals of marriages of Fylingdales residents.

Table 29: Endogamy: groups within Fylingdales compared, 1715-1850

		Total	Outside	%	Whitby	%	Other	%	Fyl.	%
1715-60	Parish	509	84	16.5	63	12.4	21	4.1	425	83.5
	Maj.	211	25	11.8	14	6.6	11	5.2	186	88.1
	Rest	298	59	19.8	49	16.4	10	3.3	239	80.0
1761-1800	Parish	519	74	14.2	26	5.0	48	9.2	445	85.7
	Maj.	260	14	5.4	11	4.2	3	1.1	246	94.6
	Rest	259	59	22.8	14	5.4	45	17.3	200	77.2
1801-1850	Parish	462	75	16.2	23	4.9	52	11.2	387	83.8
	Maj.	223	13	5.8	7	3.1	6	2.7	210	94.1
	Rest	239	62	25.9	16	6.7	46	19.2	177	74.0

1. Author's continuing research on this subject.

The strong Whitby connection comes as no surprise for the town was easy of access, and much used. The significant result is one that was expected. This is the behaviour of the Majority. In the second period there were only three non-Whitby, outside marriages of people from seafaring and fishing families, and the places involved were Scarborough and Monkwearmouth. In the next period the places, other than Whitby, were Scalby, Jarrow, Middlesbrough, Cayton (near Scarborough), Bilsdale and Helmsley. The first four are on the coast, the others almost on the far side of the moors. With Whitby, they sketch collectively in thin outline what was seen in the map-figures earlier in the chapter. <sup>1</sup>

The moor was a major barrier. In the register of Hackness, a parish which meets Fylingdales on the moor, Robin Hood's Bay is mentioned only twice between 1566 and 1783. The too-common Harrison excepted, there is only one Bay Core person in the Hackness register in those years, Mary Storm, who married the "godly" stonemason John Lawson; yet she was one of 333 of the name baptised in Fylingdales. <sup>2</sup> But even in the more accessible Scalby parish, just over Ravenscar by way of the alum works, there were only two Core marriages from 1724 to 1834; so the moor was not the only factor. <sup>3</sup>

A closer look at the Majority between 1715 and 1850 reveals 161 unions in which all the names are from 15 of the 34 in the group, and there are 22 cases of bride and groom with the same name. The fifteen names are Bedlington, Helm, Hewitson, Mills, Moorsom, Peacock, Pinkney, Richardson, Rickinson, Robson, Skerry, Storm, Todd, Trueman and Trewhitt. When the

1. See pp.165 and 168.

2. The Register of the Parish of Hackness, 1557-1783, Yorkshire Parish Register Society, 1906; Fyl.Recon., Storm.

3. Genealogical Society, copy of the Parish Register of Scalby, N.Yorks.



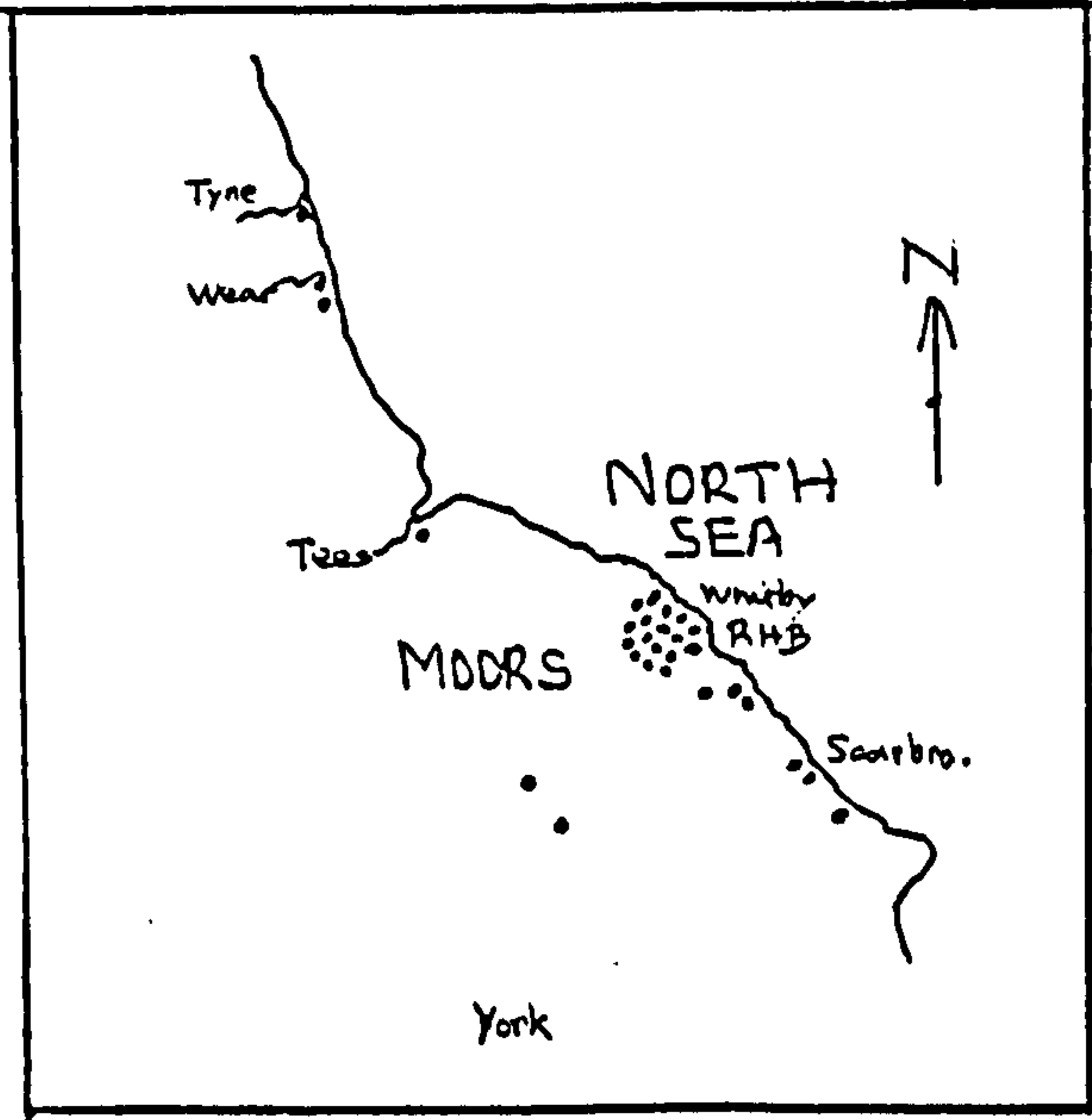
enquiry is narrowed to the Core there is an unusually tight knot of interrelationships. These are often celebrated in names that recall them, "Granger Moorsom Bedlington" being a good example. It is a sign of the strong awareness of identity engendered that this kind of name is still not entirely out of use at the present time.

Table 30: Intermarriage in the Core, 1715-1850

Men	Number of Core wives
Bedlington	16
Granger	16
Harrison	10
Moorsom	12
Storm	29

The village was substantially a family settlement, and economic activity has to be seen in terms of this closeness: people were born into a collaborating group, and a test of its efficacy as an economic and social unit is the relatively low level of movement, now emphasised in figure 26. Seventeen people out of 29 looked no further than Whitby.

Figure 26: Sailor- and fisher-household marriages with people from outside the parish, 1761-1840



It is difficult to escape the conviction that the kind of movement that occurred - both migration and the seeking of spouses - can with some justice be regarded as a reflection of self-sufficiency. It is, nevertheless, too easy to distort the perspective, and to see a society not only introverted but palisaded against the world by consanguinity. Two-thirds of all Majority marriages inside Fylingdales were made outside the group. But reminders of common interest within the parish come in small details also, such as the information that in mid-nineteenth century the officials of the best-known of the parish's friendly societies, the Ancient Shepherds, included two farmers, a master mariner, two shopkeepers, a seaman and three fishermen.<sup>1</sup> The effect of relative immobility is not to be emphasised to the point of creating an image of a sharply-divided parish society.

1. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Library no.366.6, Ancient Shepherds' Minute Book

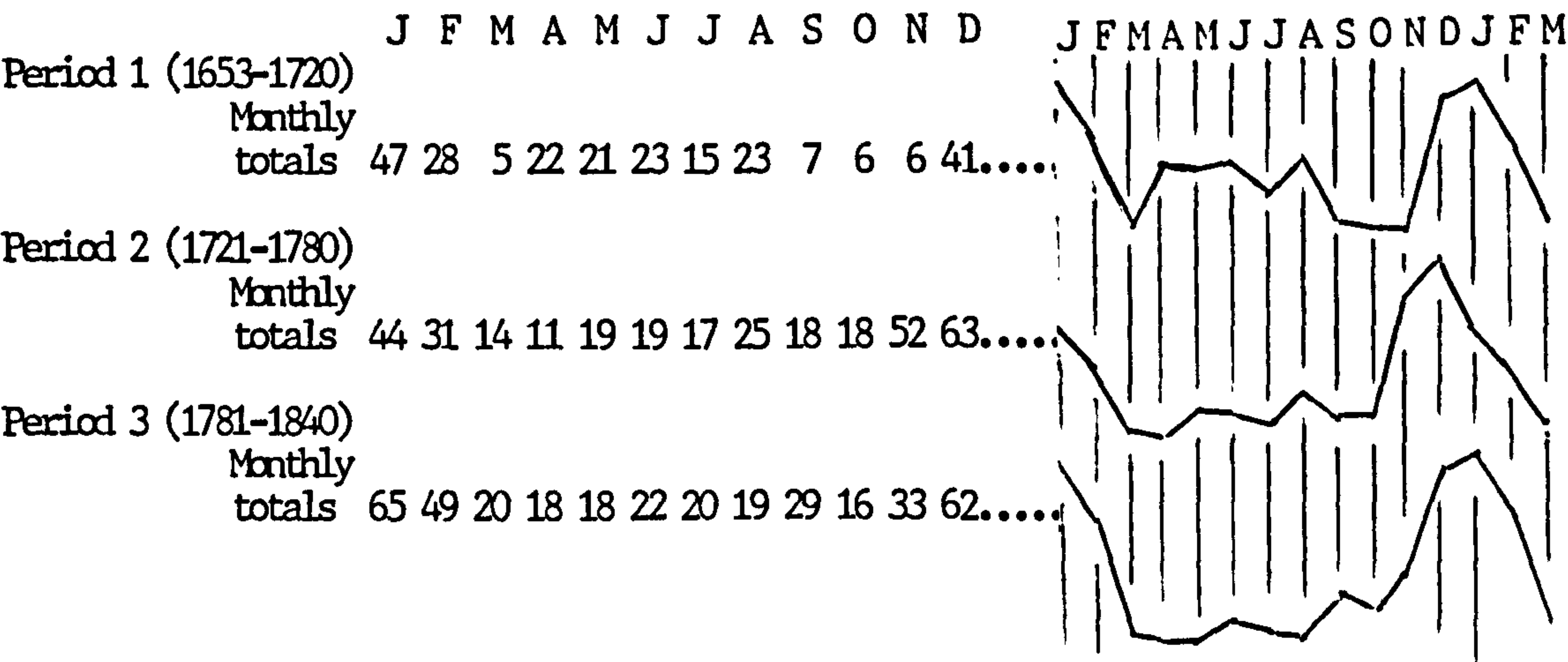


CHAPTER EIGHT: THE FAMILY

A marriage pattern so distinctive, whatever the form of the distinctiveness, prompts the search for special features of the families and family life proceeding from the unions, and the attitudes behind them.

(a) Seasonality of marriages The season for marriages was distinct. In figure 27 that of the Majority can be seen to have moved slightly from one period to another: in Period 1 the impression is that it came between the return from the Yarmouth fishing in November, and the beginning of the weekly deep-sea fishing at Lent. The three months it occupied could thus accommodate households that were becoming involved with the coastal sailing. In the next period the seafaring was growing in importance, and the marriage season was beginning in November and spreading over four months, accommodating the first to return from sea and continuing until all the shipping could start to move again, at the end of February or as early in March as weather allowed. In Period 3 the season had moved to the worst winter months, so resembling the pattern of Period 1 but also probably beginning to reflect the need in the more competitive years to keep ships earning in all but the most potentially dangerous months. This connotes unusually heavy dependence of the community on women, and the

Figure 27: Seasonality of Majority marriages, 1653-1840



next section leads idirectly to the same situation.

(b) The number of children per family In table 31 the size of the families in the three main periods and in the various components of the parish population is examined. The table is derived from the family reconstitutions, and so the possibility of bias originating in the long-term population has to be borne in mind.

Table 31: The number of children per family, 1653-1840

		M F		All	Marr's	Averages		
		M	F	All	Marr's	M	F	All
Period 1 (1653-1720)	Core	124	108	232	43	2.9	2.5	5.4
	Majority	298	296	594	125	2.4	2.4	4.8
	Non-Core Maj.	174	188	362	82	2.1	2.3	4.4
	Parish Rest	272	232	504	141	1.9	1.6	3.5
	Parish	570	528	1098	266	2.1	2.0	4.3
Period 2 (1721-1780)	Core	143	149	292	67	2.1	2.2	4.3
	Majority	340	347	687	163	2.1	2.1	4.2
	Non-Core Maj.	197	198	395	96	2.0	2.0	4.1
	Parish Rest	469	406	875	234	2.0	1.7	3.74
	Parish	809	753	1562	397	2.0	1.9	3.9
	Country	251	207	458	123	2.0	1.7	3.72
	Bay Rest	218	185	401	111	1.9	1.7	3.6
	Bay	588	546	1105	274	2.0	2.0	4.03
Period 3 (1781-1840)	Core	199	171	370	91	2.2	1.9	4.06
	Majority	389	343	732	186	2.1	1.8	3.94
	Non-Core Maj.	190	172	362	95	2.0	1.8	3.81
	Parish Rest	562	477	1039	281	2.0	1.7	3.7
	Parish	981	820	1771	467	2.1	1.8	3.79
	Country	366	284	650	179	2.0	1.6	3.63
	Bay Rest	196	193	389	102	1.9	1.9	3.81
	Bay	585	536	1121	288	2.0	1.9	3.9

Irrespective of the subject of enquiry, it is significant to see the maritime people apparently behaving differently again, with the largest families in the Majority, or, to be more specific, the Core. Some of the



groups were subdivided as this situation began to emerge in the course of the investigation. Working in some cases to two decimal places, it became possible to rank the groups exactly: with much consistency, the further a group lay from maritime occupations, or the smaller its maritime element, the smaller the family. The outstanding anomaly is the position of the Bay Rest in Period 2, when it has the smallest average family size, at a time when the mobile alum workers may have been accommodated in the village.<sup>1</sup> This must be rather more than a neat demonstration of bias in the reconstitution process: Core registration, notably, should have been no more thorough than that of the remainder of the Majority.

Enquiry revealed that the mean size of the Core family was affected by the frequency of occurrence of households to which seven or more children had been born. Over the entire period 34% of Core households were of this kind, and 23% of the remainder of the Majority, confirming the impression arising from a cursory inspection of reconstitution forms. The larger family may be an aspect of immobility as well as of the shaping of the particular way of life. If the situation is not due to bias, it provides an explanation of the natural increase of the Majority and the persistence of certain names. There may indeed have been a practical reason for larger households, namely the need to have enough children to support the fishing. It is noticeable in this connection that, over the whole period, family size fell, alongside long-term decline in importance of fishing. Women's work was crucial to fishing, but family boats had to be manned, and so it is possible that the larger family was related to the need for male children. There was, however, a lower age at marriage.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the need for male children might have led to a high male-female sex ratio, or very frequently resulted in the last child in a family being male, implying the practice of birth control, but these situations do not occur.

1. See p.68.

2. See p.187.

The evidence of diminishing family size is potentially a matter of some importance. In table 31 the fall over the whole period amounted to 24% in the Core and 18% in the Majority. This may be explained by diminishing fecundity, support for which suggestion comes from the apparent increase in the number of childless households in the Majority, and especially in the Core, compared with other groups. Table 32 illustrates this.

Table 32: Childless marriages, 1653-1840

	Period 1 (1653-1720)			Period 2 (1721-80)			Period 3 (1781-1840)		
	No. of fams.	Child- less	%	No. of fams.	Child- less	%	No. of fams.	Child- less	%
Core	43	0	0	67	4	5.9	91	13	14.2
Majority	125	4	3.2	163	9	5.5	186	23	12.3
Parish Rest	141	5	3.5						
Parish	266	9	3.4						
Bay Rest				111	4	3.6	102	4	3.9
Bay				274	13	4.7	238	27	9.3
Country				123	5	4.1	179	11	6.1

The greater relative increase in the number of childless families in the longer-term population as compared with Bay Rest, from Period 2 to Period 3, may have been genetic in origin, in view of the high level of intermarriage that had been established.

A further finding concerning family size comes from data relating to the proportion of first baptisms in the first year of marriage. There is little difference between groups to be observed, but in the middle period there is a smaller proportion of such baptisms, distinctive enough to be significant. Because of what has already been found about the probable effect of the sailing programme on the timing of baptisms in Bay, there



was reason to seek an explanation in seasonality. For this, data relating to the Majority have been aggregated from the baptismal register, and the information relating to sailors and fishermen combined has been added to confirm how closely their behaviour parallels that of the Majority - as indeed it should.

Table 33: Seasonality of baptisms of Majority, and sailor and fisher families, 1653-1840

Majority	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
Period 1	73	70	82	54	59	33	61	86	75	103	103	72	= 871
% of tot.	8.4	8.0	9.4	6.2	6.8	3.8	7.0	9.8	8.6	11.8	11.8	8.3	
Period 2	112	79	64	63	73	73	47	81	54	76	132	126	= 980
% of tot.	11.4	8.1	6.5	6.4	7.4	7.4	4.8	8.3	5.5	7.7	13.5	12.9	
Period 3	119	119	48	48	92	75	76	75	89	96	119	184	= 1140
% of tot.	10.4	10.4	4.2	4.2	8.0	6.6	6.7	6.6	7.8	8.4	10.4	16.1	
Sailors and Fishermen													
Period 3	106	86	42	40	61	56	51	52	67	85	110	148	= 904
% of tot.	11.7	9.5	4.7	4.4	6.7	6.2	5.6	5.7	7.4	9.4	12.2	16.4	

The Majority's main baptismal season was concentrated into the autumn months in Period 1, and into a longer period of winter months in period 2, and from what has already been seen of this, it is not unreasonable to suspect that the change was due to loss of primacy by fishing to seafaring.<sup>1</sup> If this concentration is to explain the low first-year baptisms in Period 2, then in Period 3 the rise in first-year baptisms should be accompanied by a shorter baptismal season, reducing delay. This effect appears in figure 28 on the next page, the peak time for baptisms having shortened from November-January to December only. The cause is very likely to be the lengthening of the sailing season in the years covered by

1. See pp.153-156.

Chapter 10, when the carrying trade was becoming very competitive.

Figure 28: Effect of changes in seasonality on maritime-household

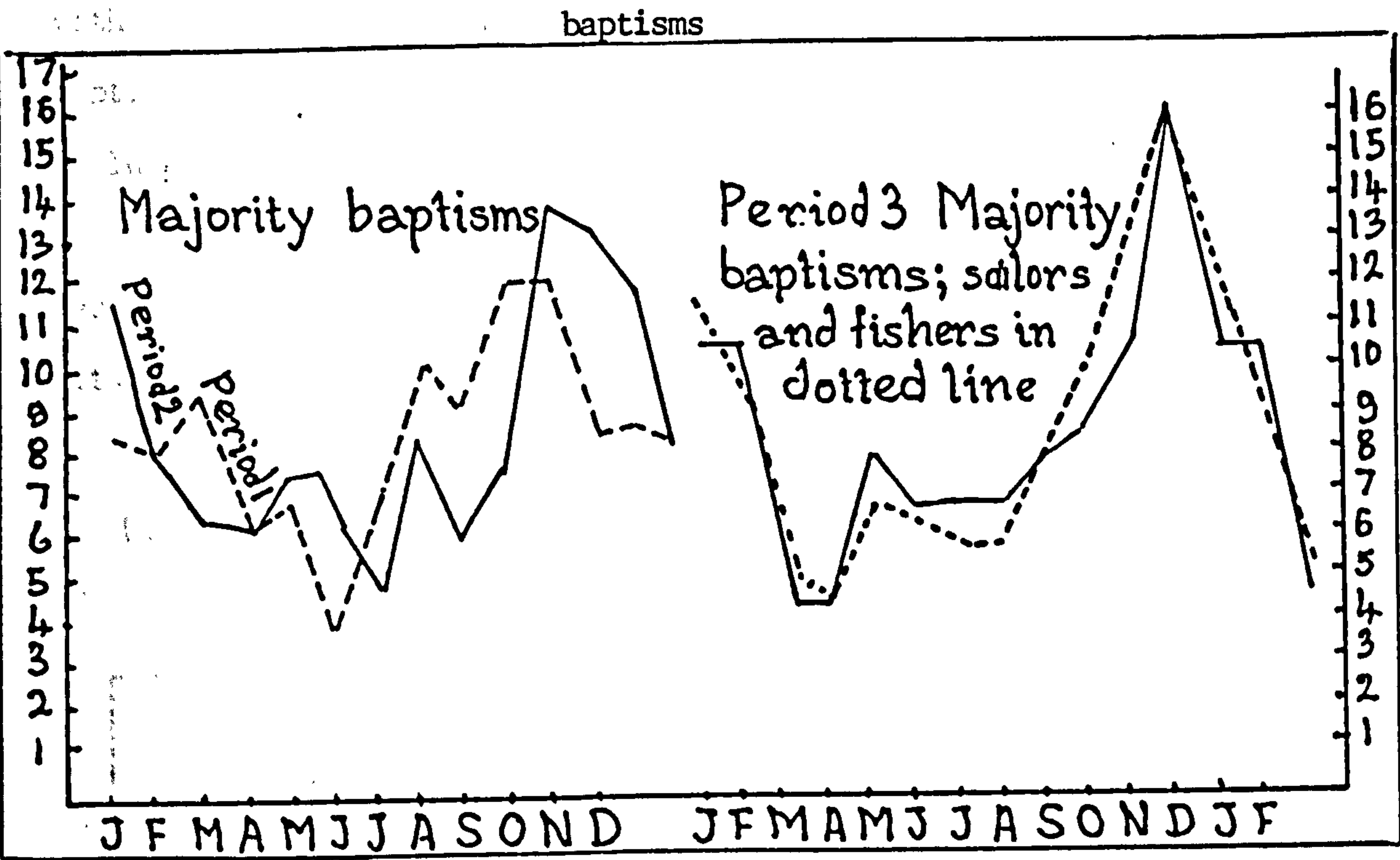


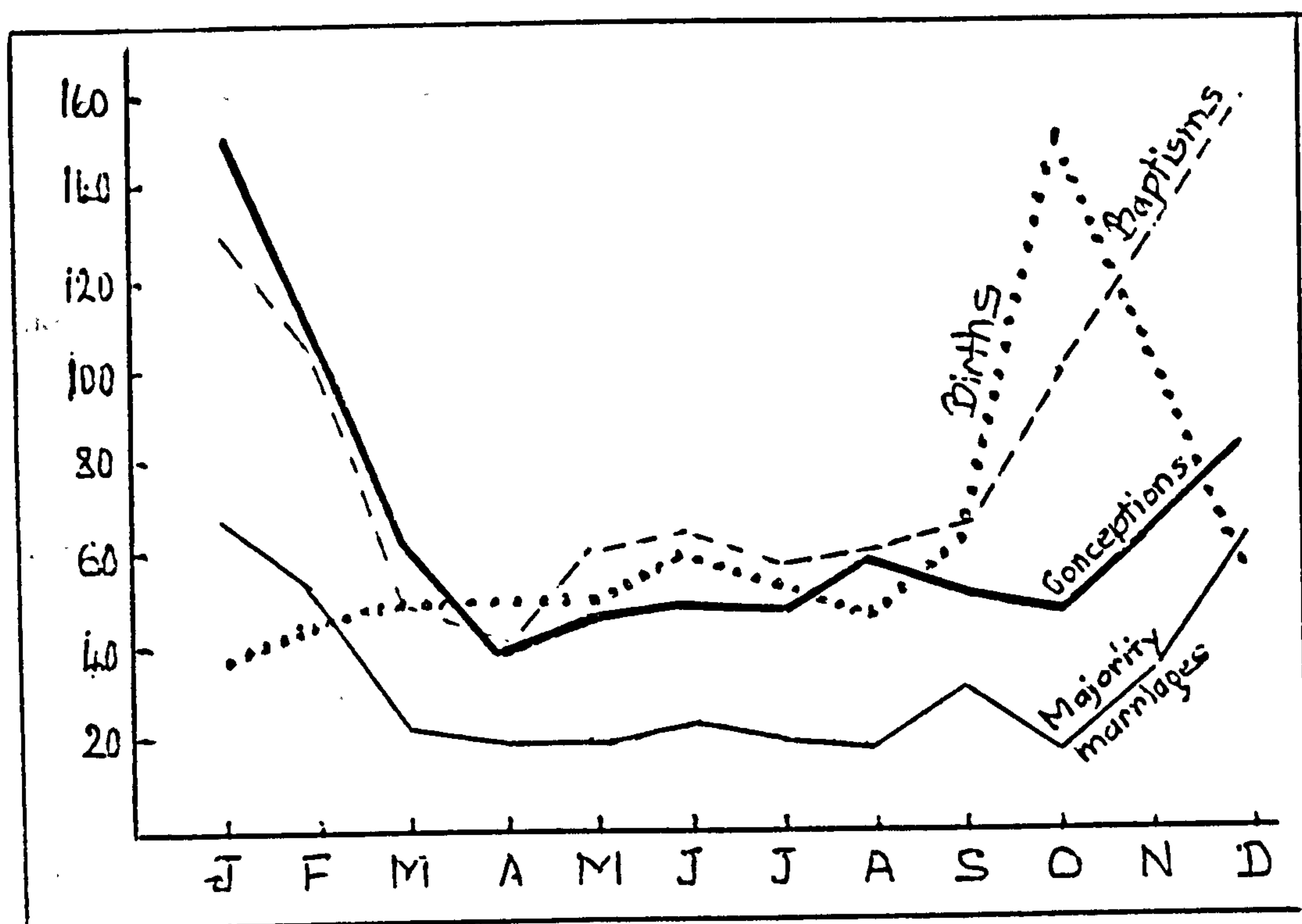
Figure 28 gives another view of what might be taken for, say, a biological factor, and in the event reinforces the importance of the seasonality factor. What this really implies, in more general terms, is that the seafaring way of life with its often prolonged absences requires further investigation, with numbers that a single settlement cannot provide. A little more substance may perhaps be accorded this argument by the longer childbearing period among seafaring households in Robin Hood's Bay, where more children were born in the Core mothers' 41-45 age group than in other groups; but the difference was slight.

A topic that can be pursued a little further, however, with the aid of the Bay evidence, is one to which the last section led, and that is the unusually important place of women in society, as revealed by seasonality. Their position is emphasised in figure 29, in which the general situation of seafarers' families in Period 3 can now be depicted. There is a substantial contrast with Wrigley and Schofield's findings for the country



as a whole. <sup>1</sup> In Bay, spring, summer and early autumn was the time of women's rule, and winter was the occasion of reunion, when much that elsewhere might belong to the whole year was crowdwd into a few months, with Christmas, the patronal festival, the friendly society meetings, the baptisms, the feast on the return from Yarmouth, and much conviviality, including the weddings and their customary accompaniment of toasting from house to house on the way down from church. <sup>2</sup> The winter was a time of reunion and of much conjugality; emphatically a time of continuity of the vital socio-economic unit of the family.

Figure 29: General view of seasonality in the seafaring community  
in Period 3, 1781-1840



1. E.A.Wrigley and R.S.Schofield, The Population History of England: A Reconstruction, 1981, pp.286-293, and 299.

2. J.S., Memoirs, p.21; W.White, A Month in Yorkshire, 1858, p.119.

(c) Age at Marriage The situation is one made familiar in the preceding section, which is to say the mean age at marriage changes steadily over a spectrum ranging from the Bay Core to the farming people. The difference is maintained throughout the three periods in table 34, and also occurs with consistency when the median ages are used.

Table 34: Age at Marriage, 1653-1840

	Period 1				Period 2				Period 3			
	(1653-1720)				(1721-1780)				(1781-1840)			
	M		F		M		F		M		F	
	Mean	Med	Mean	Med	Mean	Med	Mean	Med	Mean	Med	Mean	Med
Core	23.1	24.0	22.7	23.1	25.3	25.0	24.1	23.8	24.7	24.6	23.6	23.6
Majority	24.6	24.6	24.0	24.1	26.3	26.1	24.8	24.5	25.8	24.7	24.0	23.3
Bay					27.0	26.0	25.1	24.6	25.9	24.8	23.9	23.4
Bay Rest					29.1	28.2	25.9	25.6	26.4	25.3	23.7	23.3
Par. Rest	28.2	27.1	26.7	25.6								
Country					30.0	28.4	25.7	24.9	27.6	27.4	25.0	24.0

There is a hidden occupational aspect to the results in table 34: the neatness is upset when the fishermen, who are mainly in the Core, are separated from the sailors. This division means that the numbers being used are becoming small, but the results could be too important to dismiss. In Period 3 there are in the register 32 marriages of fishermen, all Majority men, for whom age and occupation are stated. There are ten others of the same group whose ages can be taken from the reconstitutions. The average age of bridegrooms is 24.5, and of brides 25.5, or nearly two years more than the Core brides' average. The higher age of the fishermen's brides is not caused by a few exceptional cases, because 18 men married older women, a kind of union rare among sailors. To clarify the fishermen's situation it is better to look at the broader context.

In Period 3 the life of the sailor attracted many local men who would otherwise, almost beyond doubt, have become fishermen. The attractions of advancement and profit were within grasp. Between 1777 and 1792, 15 sailors from Fylingdales farms can be traced through the registers and the



reconstitutions, but no sons of farming households turning to fishing have been found. The older way of life was arduous for man and wife, and in that situation the contribution of the older-than-average wife may have been of value. Investment in shipping had come from fishing families, and it was to come again, frequently, in the nineteenth century, but as the result of labour and thrift, as the culmination, in fact, of the sort of self-sufficiency of which signs were noted when poverty and self-help were under discussion. The situation could also be interpreted as a rejection by women, at the earliest possible age, of the strenuous fishing life, such were the qualities called for and without doubt cultivated, among the fishing people.

Apart from this case, there were generally younger marriages in Bay than in the Country, an anticipation of the national trend.<sup>1</sup> Seafaring offers itself as a cause; so the more sailors in a population group, the lower the age. This is one possible way in which table 34 may be suspected of achieving that uncanny statistical change in marriage age as the view moves from Core to Country. The low marriage age in the maritime sector even in Period 1 could mean that seafaring was already common - in the post-farm alum industry perhaps. If the fishing did enable people to marry early, it is to be wondered why so many left it in the first half of the eighteenth century. Alternatively, the fishermen and their families may have had a preference for early marriage on some social rather than economic ground, a matter that will be discussed in the course of the next section.

(d) Pre-marital conceptions      The information concerning pre-marital conceptions has been obtained by allowing ten months from date of marriage to that of first baptism, in the family reconstitutions. The delaying of

1. D.Hey, Family and Local History in England, 1987, p.142.

baptisms can be a complication here, and the results are given for Periods 1 and 2 in full awareness of this. In period 3, however, dates of birth are available, and there is a picture (now almost expected) of the proportion of pre-marital conceptions changing as attention shifts from the Core towards the farming people. To show this, table 35 was derived from the family reconstitutions. The significant distinction is between Core and Country.

Table 35: The proportion of pre-marital conceptions, 1653-1840

	Period 1 (1653-1720)	Period 2 (1721-1780)	Period 3 (1781-1840)
	P-MCs/1st baps x 100 = %	P-MCs/1st baps x 100 = %	P-MCs/1st baps x 100 = %
Core	6/56 x 100 = 10.7	5/75 x 100 = 6.7	15/104 x 100 = 14.4
Maj.	23/187 " = 12.3	21/244 " = 8.6	54/265 " = 20.3
Par.			
Rest	48/159 " = 30.2	27/217 " = 12.4	80/301 " = 27.6

A quite practical explanation of the Core's smaller proportion - apart from concealment - may be the comparative ease with which Bay, a very compact settlement, could be "policed", or its women chaperoned; privacy must have been at a premium. But the position of the Core in this matter is particularly striking: it is as though there were strong control there, more effective than general "policing". It is conceivable that there was an effort to inculcate in the young over the generations an acceptance of continence, in part to cope with problems arising from the absence of men. The theme is taken up again when illegitimacy is discussed.

The objective of promoting continence would be all the more readily achievable where generations stayed together: a steady pressure of opinion could be maintained, or attempted, greater than that feasible among farming families moving according to opportunity at hirings, or in response to leasing policies. If such an effect were secured it would say



much about the potential in the group for conditioning of minds, but the process may also have been assisted by the institution of a lower age of marriage - the lowest in the parish. This may explain the earlier marriages seen in the preceding section, in Period 1, when prosperity founded on first ventures in shipping and seafaring cannot be said with any assurance to have enabled people to marry as early as they did. If influence was present it may have been more social than economic, and the way the Core distances itself even from the rest of the Majority in this respect is arguably a notable social phenomenon.

If the régime was rendered less oppressive by early marriage, it could also be made more effective, given the kind of living at close quarters which prevailed, by the making of "arrangements" and "understandings" by individual people and with the participation of families. A decisive factor could have been that people were "spoken for" when so many men were out of the village for so much of the time.

This idea acquires some force from the apparent ease with which, for most of the time studied, the widowed remarried in Robin Hood's Bay. No doubt many countrymen moved on, and remarried elsewhere, but there was apparently no need for this in the village.

(e) Second marriages      The subject of re-marriage has particular complexities where women are concerned if the different records of males and females in Fylingdales can be the basis of a judgment. Length of widowhood and the incidence of remarriage were the subjects on which data were sought. For women, there was little difference between Bay and Country, but men were more likely to remarry in the home territory if they belonged to the former place. There was a tendency for them to wait longer to remarry, a delay which might be explained by the comparative ease with which families could provide help where there were motherless children.

The Core was not investigated, because it provided too few cases, but within Bay the more frequent remarriage of the Majority men leads back to the vision of an inner multitude of boys and girls, men and women, surrounded from birth with the familiar people of a lifetime, and the consequent facility - to say nothing of help - in the establishing of relationships. This is one tenable interpretation of table 36, compiled from the reconstitutions.

Table 36: Length of widowhood, and incidence of remarriage, 1653-1840

	Period 1			Period 2			Period 3		
	(1653-1720)			(1721-1780)			(1781-1840)		
	<u>Males</u>								
	Number widowed	Ave. length of Whd	% married again	Number widowed	Ave. length of Whd	% married again	Number widowed	Ave. length of Whd	% mar'd again
Maj. P. Rest Bay Coun.	40	59.7	40	81	108.7	35	79	66.1	44.3
	76	27.4	19.7	116	109.7	36.2	122	61.2	34.4
				52	109.5	15.4	76	36.7	19.7
	<u>Females</u>								
Maj. P. Rest Bay Coun.	66	43.1	12.1	76	49.9	17.1	86	75.4	9.3
	74	34.8	12.2	110	51.2	16.4	126	102.3	10.3
				53	71.9	9.4	76	51	14.5

When the length of unions was examined, the only significant difference among the several populations arose from the second marriages. This was that such unions tended to last longer among the maritime population, in which circumstance early widowhood caused by loss of life at sea must have played a part.

(f) Illegitimacy To reconstruct the incidence of bastardy, aggregations were made from the parish register. The entries become less judgmental with the passage of time, and, so far as they can tell the whole story,



yield proportions of all baptisms of 1.75% illegitimacies for Bay, and 5.63% for the Country, over the entire period. The seeming rarity of illegitimacy in Periods 1 and 2 may explain the flight of two couples to the remote chapelry of Harwooddale in Hackness, in 1692, to be married there, in the Fylingdales registrar's reproachful words, "illegally by Mr.Cattley". One already had a child of two months, and in the other case, from the Majority, the bride was pregnant. These precedents were not followed, as far as can be divined from either register. In period 3 the cases are more numerous, and in table 37 they are expressed as a proportion of total baptisms for each population group, at the risk of producing small samples again.

Table 37: Illegitimacies as a proportion of births, Period 3 (1781-1840)

	Parish	Bay	Core	Country
Illeg.	108	39	8	69
Births	2788	1648	460	1140
%	3.8	2.4	1.7	6.0

The Core would have had a minute proportion but for one case, which starts in the register in 1791 with John Hodgson Storm, son of Elizabeth. In the reconstituted families she could only have been the daughter of John, fisherman. Two months before this event the registrar entered the burial of John Hodgson, fisherman, found "drowned or killed" in Whitby harbour. The total for the Core is in any case small when discussion has to come down to individual cases. In the sixty years of Period 3 there were only eight Core illegitimacies, which should be set against the 210 people of the five names in 1841, not counting men at sea. <sup>1</sup>

1. Fyl.Recon., Hodgson, Moorsom, Storm; P.R.O., H.O.107,1265.

There was either successful concealment or resistance to forces at work nearby; but those forces should not be exaggerated, because in the decade 1791-1800, when the national rate had soared, the annual mean of recorded illegitimacies for the whole parish was three. <sup>1</sup>

When illegitimacies and pre-marital conceptions are compared, there are in the Country 6% of the one and 32% of the other, and in the Majority 1.5% and 20.3% respectively. These give ratios of 1:5.3 for the Country and 1:13.6 for the Majority, and suggest a stronger tendency for pre-marital conception not to lead to bastardy, in the maritime community.

If these dissimilarities were the results of group pressure, there is some justification for speculation about its power in other fields, such as choice of employment, spouse and place of residence.

There is little evidence to cast more light on attitudes. There is the matter of Rebecca Moorsom who bore illegitimate children in 1779 and 1789. Although her father was still living in Bay, the second of these births took place in the poorhouse, where mother and child died a week later. A general observation that could be more relevant than a single illustration comes from K.M.Boyd's study of the influence of the kirk session. He comments on their greater propriety in sexual matters almost every time he mentions fishing communities. His explanation of this, if it can be summarised, is the steady work that can lead to a financial share in a boat, within a close community where family life is strong. <sup>2</sup>

The evidence concerning illegitimacy is important as a pointer to the degree of influence and the kind of attitude that resisted pressures from the wider community.

1. Fyl.Recon., Moorsom; P.Laslett, Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations, 1977, p.119.

2. K.M.Boyd, Scottish Church Attitudes to Sex, Marriage and the Family, 1980, pp.27, 64, 96, 110, 129, 139, 144, 309.



The study of seasonality in this chapter has been significant because it reflects the basic rhythms idiosyncratic to the community. In the rest of the chapter, most of what has been said has served to stress the great store set by the family. Unions were made early, there were many children, and there is more than a suspicion of a determined and not unsuccessful defence against promiscuity. If the comparatively low levels of pre-marital conceptions and illegitimacies can be accepted, there was a powerful sentiment that might be held more important than demographic detail, concerning notions of sexual propriety, and it derived energy from the force of socialisation. To say more here about the currents of conviction underlying these facets of the life of the maritime community would be to invade the ground that really belongs to the next chapter, but before leaving this chapter on the family it may be pertinent to propose, tentatively, that in general studies of seasonality, separate account should be taken of the peculiarities of coastal communities.

## CHAPTER NINE: THE ETHIC

Evidence of aspects of thought and outlook has arisen in the course of discussion, under several headings. Terms such as "puritanical", "equalitarian", "self-sufficient" and "entrepreneurial" are all capable of application at some point to the life or work depicted, and it is the intention in this chapter to attempt to show the strengthening of the Nonconformity in which such attitudes may be bred. This subject and that of smuggling are juxtaposed for two reasons. One is that there is a tendency for writers about Robin Hood's Bay to romanticise a supposed preoccupation with smuggling, and the other is that it is a useful way, with the means available, of presenting a broad view of the personality of the settlement. It would be unusual if it were not complex.

(a) Nonconformity It is necessary to recall that from Domesday onwards through the later medieval period there are references to Fyling, "the other Fyling "; and to North and South Fyling, and that these ill-defined places became possessions of Whitby Abbey, at the dissolution of which there were decisions to be made about institutions under the new order. <sup>1</sup>

Complexity is illustrated by circumstances surrounding a contest over tithes in Fylingdales in 1588. In the course of the hearing a witness produced a recollection of having attended divine service at a chapel of St.Iles (sic); another affirmed that there had been no service anywhere other than the parish church of St.Stephen for forty years. This may be taken to mean that St.Iles had begun to fall into neglect shortly after the Dissolution; in fact it had passed into agricultural use by 1588, and is recalled now only by the farm of St.Ives (sic), a field named Chapel

1. V.C.H., p.536; Whitby Abbey rent roll reprinted in G.Young, History of Whitby, II, 1817, p.920.



Garth, and the nearby Kirkmoor, in the south-west of the parish. In this way was Fylingdales' own history of Reformation change, or disintegration, inaugurated. <sup>1</sup> It can be presumed that John Greenkell, the "Parson" in 1563, who lived in a cottage in Fylingthorpe, officiated at St.Stephen's. By that time the north-east part of the parish held the growing flock, which included the dwellers in the fifty cottages of Robin Hood's Bay. <sup>2</sup> Although St.Stephen's reputedly had a Saxon arch before rebuilding in 1821, the unfamiliar dedication to St.Iles may yet indicate an even earlier foundation. <sup>3</sup> Perhaps there is a link with the early history of Christianity in the North; and Reformation zeal rather than demographic change is not a totally improbable cause of abandonment. An institution of Romish character may have had something to do with the comparatively large numbers of recusants in Fylingdales that did not diminish until well into the seventeenth century. The numbers were at their highest in 1612 when there were 35. <sup>4</sup> There was a conservative influence in the parish: according to J.T.Cliffe, the Cholmleys, the lords of the manor, were traditional Catholic supporters. The desertion of the Parliamentary cause in the Civil War by Hugh Cholmley suggests a wariness of new institutions: he had, in his own words, been disappointed in his hopes for "the preservation of true religion". <sup>5</sup>

1. V.C.H., p.537; F.Kildill Robinson, Whitby: its Abbey, 1860, pp.260-261.

2. P.R.O., E.318/43/2316.

3. V.C.H., p.536, and N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/4/6, Churchwardens' Rate Book, 1821.

4. N.Y.C.R.O., Quarter Sessions Minutes, Helmsley, 1st October, 1612.

5. J.T.Cliffe, The Yorkshire Gentry from the Reformation to the Civil War, 1969, p.136; N.Cholmley, ed., Memoirs of Sir Hugh Cholmley, 1787, pp.67-68.

The names of recusants are of Country rather than maritime origin, but sharp divisions cannot be confirmed at this period, particularly in view of the overlapping of populations referred to in discussion of Robin Hood's Bay's origins.<sup>1</sup> One recusant was described as being of Robin Hood's Bay, but he was a yeoman, presumably farming on the edge of the village. There are no Core names among the recusants.<sup>2</sup> There is nothing that might be considered even a brief glimpse of the Old Faith among the commendations in the surviving wills.

It was to be in the maritime settlement that the other form of non-conformity took hold, and Hugh Cholmley may have been entertaining his first suspicions of that movement when he presented to the parish four volumes of sermons preached, according to a note in the parish register of 25th March, 1656, by "Dr. Herston", who can be none other than Samuel Harsnett, Archbishop of York from 1628 to 1631, and by virtue of that office patron of the Fylingdales living, as successor to the Abbot of Whitby.<sup>3</sup> If the gift was a recommendation to orthodoxy it was in keeping with Sir Hugh's way of life, which included prayers led by his chaplain three times a day at the hall. His views may not have matched exactly those of the High Church prelate, but he and Harsnett would no doubt have concurred in disapproval of the Puritanism that drove the latter out his mastership at Cambridge.<sup>4</sup>

1. See p.19.

2. N.Y.C.R.O., Quarter Sessions Minutes, Helmsley, 1st October, 1612.

3. J.S., Miscellany includes a note to this effect, but it is not now to be found.

4. N.Cholmley, ed., Memoirs of Sir Hugh Cholmley, 1787, p.56;

D.N.B., Harsnett, Samuel, 1561-1631.



Fylingdales was one of those remoter places where the process of enclosure began early, and which were open to Dissent of one kind or another. Cholmley ownership was dominant but the selling of the "long leaseholds" that began in 1638 was a further factor in the reduction of manorial influence.<sup>1</sup> This was economically and socially important for Robin Hood's Bay, which was presented with an opportunity to grow under the sway of no dominant ideology.

It is not clear from his Memoirs or any other source exactly when Sir Hugh Cholmley left Fylingdales for his Whitby home beside the Abbey, but the latter became the Cholmley seat. With the lord of the manor seven miles away in the town, and his kinsmen, the two senior Hothams (who had bought the Fylingdales demesne when Cholmley departed) executed after the Civil War débauché at Hull in 1645, one all-but-forgotten chapel, an isolated parish church, and the largest settlement in the parish without a recognisable place of worship, Fylingdales was the sort of place where the voice of Dissent might win a hearing.<sup>2</sup> In 1674 the only person of social eminence left in the parish was Lady Sarah Hotham, a widow.<sup>3</sup>

When Cholmley took over his estates he said the neighbourhood was "suffering for want of a Justice of the Peace", and because there was no other within twelve miles of Whitby he allowed himself to be appointed to the commission.<sup>4</sup> He did not enlarge on the sufferings in his time in the Memoirs. Some 30 years on he might have counted among them the activities

1. D.Hey, Family and Local History in England, 1987, pp.121-131; Whitby Lit. and Phil., P.Burnett, no.1784.

2. L.Charlton, History of Whitby, 1779, p.314; D.N.B., Hotham, Sir John.

3. P.R.O., E179/261/32.

4. N.Cholmley, ed., Memoirs of Sir Hugh Cholmley, 1787, pp.26, 42 and 45.

of George Fox, who was in the North Riding in 1665 and in Scarborough gaol in the following year. <sup>1</sup>

H.Aveling wrote of the difficulties of huge parishes with large numbers of Dissenters, and thought Fylingdales was one of them. Tory squires, he believed, must have thought they were dealing with "fanatics of the most diverse kinds". He quotes Fox's statement that there were many Quakers and Catholics living together in remote parts, and writes that in 1663 Egton Bridge, eight miles from Fylingdales, had 40 of the former and 80 of the latter. <sup>2</sup> Of the Catholic influence, Egton Bridge is a good example. The Catholic tradition is still strong there, for this is where belonged Nicholas Postgate, the octagenarian priest executed at York in 1679, after the Popish Plot, and whose memory is honoured annually in the village by hundreds of Catholic pilgrims. <sup>3</sup>

An impression of the prevailing state of religious affairs in the district is to be gained from Hackness, Fylingdales' neighbouring parish. The registrar was a man of remarkable garrulity, who added much of interest to his entries, in a significantly scriptural style. He described a graveside altercation between the parson and some Quakers in 1652, and a clandestine baptism in 1661 at the manor house, performed by a Catholic priest during the master's absence in London. <sup>4</sup>

W.Dalton in his account of Robin Hood's Bay said there was a Friends' meeting house in 1690. There is no source for this, but at the Helmsley Sessions of 1705 the setting apart was noted of houses at Robin Hood's Bay

1. D.N.B., Fox, George, 1624-1691.

2. H.Aveling, Northern Catholics, 1963, p.343.

3. D.N.B., Nicholas Postgate, 1597-1679, under Postgate, Thomas.

4. Register of the Parish of Hackness, 1557-1783, Yorkshire Parish Register Society, 1906.



for Protestant Dissenters.<sup>1</sup> This is also the time when names like Mercy, Grace and Peace begin to appear in the registers, among Core people. The site seems most appropriate for the growth of Nonconformity, being hidden, unsupervised, largely independent of agriculture for employment, populated by many virtual freeholders, and able to maintain contact by sea with outside influences. Henry Taylor, the Whitby shipmaster and Methodist-turned-Quaker, illustrates the last point with the revelation that he was first claimed by Methodism at Deptford, on one of his London voyages.<sup>2</sup>

The tradition of Fylingdales Quakers acquires more substance from, and is at the same time modified by, a marriage document that has been quoted before. It is that of 1703, relating to the marriage at Whitby of Elizabeth Dale. Her intention to marry had been declared at public meetings at Whitby and Staintondale.<sup>3</sup> This latter place, four miles south of Robin Hood's Bay, was a scattered settlement, remote from its parish church of Scalby, and the manorial rights had been held by the freeholders since the Templars disappeared, before the Dissolution. It qualifies as a place fertile for seeds of Dissent, and in Jeffery's map of 1771 there is a meeting house there, a mile outside the Fylingdales boundary, strategically situated equidistant from Whitby and Scarborough. Meeting House Farm stands there today.<sup>4</sup> In the opposite direction, two

1. W.Dalton, A Guide to Robin Hood's Bay, 1909 edn., p.29; N.Y.C.R.O., Quarter Sessions Minutes, 2/20 January, 1705, f.45.r.

2. H.Taylor, Memoirs of the Principal Events in the Life Of Henry Taylor, 1811, p.9.

3. P.R.O., R.G.6/1617/1703.

4. V.C.H., p.535; Maps of Yorkshire, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series, LVI, 1933, plate xvi.

miles to the north-west of Robin Hood's Bay, stands Mitten Hill, reputedly a former Quaker assembly point, and properly called "Meeting Hill".<sup>1</sup>

In the Quaker manner, there are numerous signatories to the Dale marriage document, and six out of 38 of them are to be found in the Fylingdales registers.<sup>2</sup> The smallness of the number may have been connected with the problem that beset seafaring Quakers, and that was whether to go to sea unarmed. W.Dalton thought this had thinned the attendance of the Fylingdales Meeting. The problem is discussed by M.E.Hirst, who explains that there had to be an all-Quaker crew if there were to be no guns on a vessel. The difficulty existed in Whitby, where the Meeting censured members who would not conform, including Aaron Chapman, who has appeared before in this essay, and the shipowner John Walker who once employed James Cook on his aptly-named Friendship.<sup>3</sup> The pious Henry Taylor, who had commanded a Quaker-owned ship, illustrates the point: "O self interest!" he wrote, recalling his former employer's willingness to enter "freely into the business of war" by accepting a transport contract from the government. He names Benjamin Chapman, relative of Aaron, as an employer, but the identity of the offender is not made clear.<sup>4</sup>

The winds of Dissent were circulating in the district, but it is not until 1743 that there is an indication of their strength in Fylingdales, and that not a very convincing one. The incumbent's estimate of that year includes only "two Presbyterians and two Papists" but within two years the Collector of Customs at Whitby was expressing anxiety in a letter to his

1. F.Kildill Robinson, Whitby: its Abbey, 1860, p.144.

2. P.R.O., R.G.6/1617/1703

3. M.E.Hirst, The Quakers in Peace and War, 1923, pp.228-233; see p.111;

Whitby Lit. and Phil, Muster Rolls, 5th February-14th June, 1755.

4. Henry Taylor, op.cit., pp.35 and 11.



Board about security of the King's money, consequent upon General Cope's defeat at Prestonpans and "the many Papists in this neighbourhood". <sup>1</sup>

The Fylingdales Visitation Return could have been an understatement: in the case of Presbyterians, if not of Catholics, willingness to receive the sacraments, especially those connected with vital events, could well have concealed affiliations. It would be difficult also to count the true Dissenters when 105 people out of 300 families received the Easter sacrament, and fewer still participated on the other principal occasions. The factor of the sailing season would introduce more difficulty, with scores of men and boys away from the parish. <sup>2</sup>

One of the two Presbyterian families, if indeed there were no more, was that of Matthew Storm (1676-1757), master mariner and shipowner, and owner of the land on which Prospect House was to be built. <sup>3</sup> There were in Whitby Old and New Presbyterian Congregations, some members of which were to join the independent Congregation that came into the charge of the town's historian, George Young. The first of these had its roots in Scotland, and Young called it "small but respectable". Perhaps there were among its members those who went to meetings in the houses in Fylingdales noted at the Helmsley Sessions. <sup>4</sup> Matthew Storm's interest is confirmed by his trusteeship, from 1732, of the Wilde Bequest which provided an income for the Old Presbyterian minister. He was still numbered among the

1. Archbishop Herring's Visitation Returns, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, LXXI, 1928, pp.210-211; P.R.O., CUST.90/3, 24th September, 1745;

2. Archbishop Herring's Visitation Returns, p.210,

3. See p.102.

4. Young, op.cit., p.619; N.Y.C.R.O., Quarter Sessions Minutes, 2/20 January, 1705, f.45.r.

congregation in 1748 when the minister, Isaac Barker, witnessed his will. One of his daughters was married to John Holt, son of Joseph, a fellow Wilde trustee and business partner in Whitby. Another married the Quaker captain and shipowner Benjamin Chapman.<sup>1</sup> It is almost a classic example of Dissenting energies necessarily diverted into commerce. Vital events of this circle are to be found in the Whitby and Fylingdales parish registers: no hint of Nonconformity is to be won from those of Fylingdales even when Methodism begins to make headway from mid-eighteenth century. There is, however, a conspicuous absence of Matthew Storm, and his shipmaster brothers Isaac and Taylor, from the list of purchasers of pews when St.Stephen's was rebuilt in 1799.<sup>2</sup>

There is no way of telling how many of the 105 communicants of Easter, 1743 in the Visitation Return, came up to church from Robin Hood's Bay. Out of 54 churchwardens who can be traced in the parish books and registers only four bore Majority names, but that might have been an effect of the work that took the men away from the parish. Thus Dissent is not to be quantified, but neither was there complete Anglican solidarity. Eventually it was to be in the form of Methodism that Nonconformity began to make indisputable and impressive progress in Fylingdales, and it was to Robin Hood's Bay that it came.

P.Thompson makes the statement: "Fishermen are as religious as they are superstitious", and quotes the variety of religious forms that grew in Scottish coastal communities from the seventeenth century. He also cites the hymn-singing in inns of the Staithes fishermen's choir in Yorkshire, the Sheringham Salvationists, the crowded "Harvest of the Sea" services in

1. Young, op.cit., p.619 n.; Borthwick, Matthew Storm, Fylingdales, 1748; Fyl.Recon., Storm.

2. Fyl.Recon., Storm; N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/1, memorandum of 1st May, 1709.



East Anglia, and the great evangelical revival that followed the herring failure of 1921.<sup>1</sup> To these might be added the Rogationtide blessing of the fishing fleet at North Shields, which is still held annually. Exposure to danger at sea and to sudden economic reverses can well be understood in explanation of fishermen's evangelical leanings. It was Henry Taylor's belief also that "a seafaring life is favourable to religious growth", and he quoted the proverbial, "If a man would learn to pray, let him go to sea".<sup>2</sup> He may have been thinking of experience of the numinous as well as danger and insecurity. It was an insight of Wesley's, however, that seems to comprehend the lot of the fisherman and the sailor, and the changing situation of many others of his time. "Chapel" was to be a haven. The appeal of this in a coastal community is an obvious one, and it happened that at Robin Hood's Bay the mission bore fruit, almost as though the conditions had been optimal.

There is little or no doubt about the local impact of his message. He confirmed in his journal that "here was the first society in all these parts, several years before there was any at Whitby". Young puts the founding of the Whitby society at "about 1750"; so if the Rev. Mr. Cayley's estimate in the Visitation Return of 1743 was correct, events had moved swiftly.<sup>3</sup> The word may have preceded Wesley by sea; or the incumbent may have defined Dissent in accord with Wesley's own insistence that he and his societies remained, "what we always have been, true members of the Church of England".<sup>4</sup>

1. P. Thompson, Living the Fishing, 1983, pp.203-204.

2. H. Taylor, op.cit., p.35.

3. J. Wesley, Journal, VI, N. Curnock, ed., 1905, p.518;  
Young, op.cit., p.621.

4. L. Tyerman, Life and Times of John Wesley, III, 1888, p.257.

The progress of the mission can be followed in the journal. On his second visit, in 1757, Wesley wrote of conversations with the Bay society. He preached at the Landing "to the greatest part of the town".<sup>1</sup> The previous call had been in 1753, when he had preached near the sea on a warm, still evening, to "a multitude of people from all parts". On this Galilean sort of occasion the people had been attentive, and interested enough to meet him again in the morning and see him on his way over Ravenscar in the half-light of half-past four. His itinerary was arranged; otherwise, he said, he would have liked to stay for some days.<sup>2</sup> In all of his eleven visits to Robin Hood's Bay there is no hint of real opposition or of the sort of treatment that he learnt about on his way to the village in 1757. In that year he had passed by Hawnby, near Helmsley, where the landlord had evicted all the Methodists.<sup>3</sup> The next visit, in 1759, produced a large crowd, waiting in the usual place by the sea, and in the morning he went on by Stoupe Brow, "over the huge mountain", to Scarborough. He expressed satisfaction with the next visit, of 1761, because he had been received with the familiar attentiveness.<sup>4</sup>

The Fylingdales Visitation Return of 1763 was made by the Rev. William Hauxwell, who thought the total of Methodists was 53. The undertone of his comment that these people "absolutely denied" that they were really Quakers comes close to implying a degree of tolerance. His position was difficult, for he was a young man, being curate to his father, who held the living while officiating at distant Sheriff Hutton.<sup>5</sup>

1. J.Wesley, op.cit., IV, p.223.

2. Ibid., IV, p.62.

3. L.Tyerman, op.cit., II, p.227.

4. J.Wesley, op.cit., IV, p.330; Ibid., IV, p.466.

5. Borthwick, Visitation Returns, 1763, p.204, no.186, Fylingdales.



Several subsequent meetings with Wesley were held in the tiny Square, into which he claimed most of the inhabitants crowded. It is difficult to imagine this was possible, but it would easily have been filled to capacity. When Wesley left after the 1774 visit it was to join the Scarborough congregation in their new chapel, which had been established only after much persecution. Tyerman tells the story of a Mrs. Bozman who regularly rode on an ass the 14 miles from that town to Robin Hood's Bay to attend class. <sup>1</sup> The indefatigable Wesley was able to preach in a new chapel when he returned in 1779. It had been built to accommodate 140 people. He reported the society at peace, but did not fail to record that the members had an inclination to fractiousness and that their "continual jars" would obstruct growth and goodness. According to the Rev. William Dalton strife flared within the society in 1805, and the members mutinied against their minister, but there was to be no break in continuity of the society down to the present time. <sup>2</sup>

A site for the chapel had been bought from Matthew Storm (1741-1819), master mariner, and grandson of the Old Presbyterian of that name. An application had been made on behalf of the society in 1778 to register a chapel. The representatives included John Rymer, farmer, Fairfax Barnard, farmer and sometime sailor, Joseph Dobson, fisherman, John Bedlington, master mariner, William Cobb, a smith in Bay, and Joshua Peel, who is in neither register nor parish books. <sup>3</sup> Family relationships among these men are not difficult to establish: a recent Bedlington-Rymer marriage meant that all, except Joshua Peel, were bound by Core marriages. <sup>4</sup> There were

1. L. Tyerman, op.cit., II, p.410.

2. J. Wesley, op.cit., VI, p.518; W. Dalton, op.cit., p.27.

3. Borthwick, Application for Registration of Robin Hood's Bay Methodist Chapel, 18th July, 1778.

4. See p. 21.

Barnards also in fishing: that was the first employment of Isaac of that name, keeper of the King's Head when the Bay "Benefit" had its first meeting in 1784. <sup>1</sup>

Robin Hood's Bay had received a remarkable amount of attention from John Wesley. One possible explanation was that the village was unavoidable on the road from Whitby to Scarborough, unless the traveller took to the bare moor. Another is that there would be little official opposition. Other possible explanations are that the congregations were larger than he expected, and that he realised the potential of sailors for the spreading of his message in the ports. Perhaps, also, having heard about the smuggling on the coast, he was taking the work of conversion with extraordinary seriousness. In 1776 he wrote to Newcastle to approve the expulsion of a smuggler from the society there, and roundly denounced the crime as a "crying sin". <sup>2</sup> The founding of a long Methodist tradition, on the other hand, does suggest there was a deeper commitment than that behind these explanations, and the existence and strength of such a tradition is attested by the founding of another chapel at Fylingthorpe, in 1818. The site itself was given by the farmer Francis Newton, whose surname is part of the mainstream of Methodist tradition, his brother being Robert Newton, four times elected President of the Methodist Conference. <sup>3</sup>

From this time Nonconformist dynasties begin to appear in the parish, and an outline of the sort of network that arose is in figure 30, the pull-out chart at the end of this section. It will suffice to trace one

1. Fyl.Recon., Barnard, Bedlington, Cobb, Dobson, Granger; See p.131.

2. L.Tyerman, op.cit., III, 215-216.

3. J.S., Miscellany, transcript of Thorpe Chapel subscription list, 1818;

Fyl.Recon., Newton; D.N.B., Newton, Robert, D.D., 1780-1854.



path through the ramifications and give detail of a dynasty that epitomises much of the later history of Robin Hood's Bay. It starts with Robert Newton's sister, wife of Samuel Ireland, who was one of the last managers of the Peak-Brow alum works and a trustee of the Bay Chapel. It continues with his son John, master mariner, trustee of the Thorpe Chapel and manager of the Robin Hood's Bay ship insurance business known as "Granger's and Ireland's". The Methodist interest persisted with John's daughter, who willed her house to be used as a manse.<sup>1</sup> Another of Robert Newton's sisters married the son of William Cobb, one of the applicants for the registration of the new chapel in 1778, and when the memorial stones of a new Thorpe Chapel were laid in 1890 the ceremonies were presided over by Harrison Baxter, master mariner, their great-nephew, a steamship owner in Whitby, who is still remembered in the town for his attachment to Methodism.<sup>2</sup>

The wider social significance of the Methodist Chapel of 1779 is that Robin Hood's Bay had at last acquired a place of worship of its own, and it was in the Dissenting tradition. As if in direct response to a challenge, St.Stephen's was rebuilt within three years of the opening of the Thorpe Chapel. The building work is detectable in the parish books, where there is a note of controversy about making the chancel correspond with the nave.<sup>3</sup> It is startling to see what was made of the new work. The nave windows are pointed and have glazing bars of Gothick pattern but

1. Fyl.Recon., Ireland, Newton, Pearson; York Probate Registry, Jane Ireland, 19th October, 1907. (Copy in possession of the writer, a beneficiary.)

2. Fyl.Recon., Baxter, Cobb, Harrison, Newton; J.S., Miscellany, Order of Service, 28th October, 1890.

3. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/4/6, correspondence of October and November, 1821.

later Georgian refinement, and the plain block of the nave is crowned with a cupola. The break with medieval tradition is virtually complete, and inside all is explained - or nearly all - by the position of the three-decker pulpit. It stands against the south wall, where an aisle might have been, and all the box-pews and the gallery stare towards it. It would be difficult to find a better example of the transfer of interest from the sacramental to the scriptural. It is tempting to think that this was a concession to currents of evangelicalism formed by Dissent, but there are precedents in the strange St.Mary's at Whitby, a building basically Romanesque which acquired in the eighteenth century features that reminded Professor Pevsner of Nonconformist chapels, and a three-decker pulpit in an aisle, as well as internal galleries.<sup>1</sup> It may be more correct to deduce from these incongruities that a wave of evangelical feeling had passed over the countryside, and Methodism had been a part of it.

In Robin Hood's Bay, the wave had not spent its force, and the advent of the Primitive Methodists is celebrated in the parish books with an unceremonious reference to "The Ranters", who in 1830 paid a shilling in rates for their meeting house, with its six pews of four seats each.<sup>2</sup>

A much more resounding impact was to be made with the reappearance of Congregationalism, and its progress was to evoke a firm and practical response from the Established Church. The Old Presbyterian Congregation had once before been represented in the parish, by Matthew Storm (1676-1757) and perhaps few others.<sup>3</sup> Now there came from Whitby John Cass Potter, full of missionary zeal, to conduct meetings in a hired room in Robin Hood's Bay, in 1838. The writer of notes on the transactions of the

1 N.Pevsner, The Buildings of Yorkshire North Riding, 1966, pp.393-395.

2. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/5/1/5, Overseers' Account Book, 1830.

3. See p.202.



Congregational churches at the time inaccurately called the settlement a hamlet and fishing cove, and declared that Mr.Potter was encouraged in his initiative by "circumstances in Providence". He was assisted by seminarians from the training institution that had been established at the far side of the moor at Pickering. <sup>1</sup> Robert Holt, descendant of the shipping partners and Old Congregationalists Joseph Holt and Matthew Storm, remembered Mr.Potter as a deliverer of sermons for which he could find no more flattering description than "excruciating". <sup>2</sup> The pioneer work in this "important and interesting scene of labour" was nevertheless rewarded by the appointment as resident minister of a Pickering seminary, John Jameson. On 28th June, 1840, 25 persons who "had given hopeful evidence of conversion" formed a church, and four days later the first stone of a meeting place was laid. The ceremonies were led by R.S.Watson of Whitby, whose wife was a direct descendant of Joseph Holt, a connection which may mean there was a Congregational dynasty in being of at least a century's duration. <sup>3</sup> It was argued in 1840 that the new body needed its new building because the only other place of worship in the village was a small Methodist chapel. William Dalton, the third Congregational minister at Robin Hood's Bay, claimed there was not enough room for an evangelical gathering, and that a good congregation had easily been found by his predecessor. <sup>4</sup> The enlargement of the Methodist Chapel

1. The Congregational Magazine, 1840, p.573.

2. R.B.Holt, Whitby Past and Present, n.d., p.9.

3. The Congregational Year Book, 1851, p.218; The Evangelical Magazine, 1840, p.495; see the note to fig.16 on p. 113 for the source of the Holt information.

4. The Congregational Magazine, 1840, p.573; W.Dalton, op.cit., p.27.

is still to be read in the external appearance of the building, but despite this sign of advance, there was apparently an attraction about some feature of Congregationalism that Methodism did not provide. Part of the answer may lie in the location of the new chapel in Fisherhead, where so many of the long-term population, dedicated to the sea, had lived for many generations. A church that tried to avoid hierarchy and dogma, whose ideal polity was the scriptural gathering of a few in Christ's name, and whose doctrine was even more elemental than the Anglicanism in Methodism, may have struck a vein of sympathy. It may be more important, and arguable somewhere in the sociology of religion, that the Independents brought the community not only its own meeting place but also its own minister, whereas Methodism relied on circuit ministers. There had arisen a parish within a parish, with fairly clear geographical and social boundaries. A third factor has a strong claim to greatest importance, and that is the resistance to centralisation which promotes the independence of churches within the Congregational movement. Members could feel, perhaps more strongly than those of any other major sect, that their church was their own. In such a distinctive cultural setting this may have been the dominant sentiment.

Congregationalism appears to have been well served locally by its pastors. The Rev. James Jameson, "a very holy man, fervent in piety, continued to labour with great energy and diligence.....and people were added to the Lord", according to an obituary account of his work. In 1849 he moved to Kirbymoorside, and stayed there until in 1852, worn in spirit, he chose to spend retirement in Robin Hood's Bay, where his place had been taken by Thomas Phillips, from Monmouth by way of the the Pickering seminary.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Phillips became the flock's own minister in a very

1. The Congregational Year Book, 1851, p.218.



full sense, marrying the daughter of a shipowning fisherman and becoming partner of his brother-in-law in the brig Nymph. He ministered for thirty years and earned the reputation of being the people's friend and a favourite at Yorkshire Congregational gatherings. In his time Congregationalism was carried to the alum country of Peak, where a chapel was established in 1860. <sup>1</sup> That a stranger could achieve this says much about the man, and at least as much about the people, in that they found him and what he represented so acceptable. William Dalton, his successor, had a similar experience. He married a shipmaster's daughter and carried on the work for 31 years. <sup>2</sup> The affection for the church was commemorated by the building of the Congregational Hall in Fisherhead (a meeting place designed for 400 people and cleared of debt within a year), and confirmed by his statement that for sixty years the church had been entirely self-supporting. <sup>3</sup>

Thus there had come to be four places of worship in Fylingdales, and one just outside the boundary which could serve Nonconformists in the south of the parish. All but the parish church itself were strategically situated. It is difficult to interpret the statistics of attendance for 30th March, 1851 (in table 38), when some went to church or chapel two or three times a day, and where Methodists had a choice of place of worship. A particular local obstacle in the way of assessment is that counting was done when the sailing season had taken many men and some of their wives away from home, affecting the Bay chapels more than the other places. <sup>4</sup>

1. Fyl.Recon, Phillips, Storm; The Congregational Year Book, 1881, p.385;

J.G.Miall, Congregationalism in Yorkshire, 1868, pp.298 and 340.

2. Fyl.Recon., Dalton, Steel.

3. W.Dalton, op.cit., p.23 and 29.

4. P.R.O., H.O.129, Whitby District.

Table 38: Attendance at Places of worship in Fylingdales,

30th March, 1851

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
St.Stephen's	200		400
Thorpe Methodist Chapel			90
Bay Methodist Chapel		204	276
Bay Congregational Chapel	50		150

If these returns are compared with the population estimates it would seem that the challenge to religion was less likely to be found among measurements of relative missionary success of the sects, than in the numerous "species of heathen", as the Rev.Dr.Young of Whitby styled those who made no observance. <sup>1</sup> There were many such in the parish. If the Nonconformists are taken as a whole, however, they represented a prominent display of partiality for alternatives to the Established Church, and Robin Hood's Bay might have been a reproach to a sensitive incumbent.

In 1859 a new parish priest arrived. This was the Rev.Robert Jermyn Cooper, son of a Member of Parliament, and lately of Christ Church College in the Oxford of Pusey and Keble. <sup>2</sup> To a clergyman of these antecedents the chapels and the odd and remote parish church can only have seemed anomalous, and he saw the need to do what the Congregationalists had achieved. First he acquired a parsonage house on the Bank Top. This was Plantation House, formerly the home of John Ridley, the alum works manager, and one of the few dwellings as yet in that vicinity. <sup>3</sup> Then he

1. Young, op.cit., p.622.

2. J.S., Miscellany, biographical note of Rev.R.J.Cooper, M.A.

3. Bulmer's History, Topography and Directory of North Yorkshire, 1890;

Fyl.Recon., Ridley.



negotiated the gift of a site with an owner of Whitby ships who had returned to the parish of his forebears, and within twelve years of his arrival there was a new and austere impressive parish church, a sixth of the cost of which was borne by Mr.Cooper himself. <sup>1</sup> If he had foreseen the building of what was to be a new village of steamer masters' houses on the Bank Top, he was an astute man. The new church was, predictably, a powerful-looking exercise in Gothic revival, by G.E.Street. <sup>2</sup>

The two sides, broadly speaking, of the sectarian story, can be read in the Congregational minister's judgment, delivered in the parish incumbent's fiftieth year of office. He gave the opinion that considerable improvement had been made in the position of the Anglicans. <sup>3</sup>

Before these events occurred, Robin Hood's Bay had come to fit very closely the evangelical pattern drawn by P.Thompson in his chapter entitled "The Protestant Ethic". <sup>4</sup> The interest in this lies not so much in the sectarian aspect itself as in the light thrown on the maritime people's identity by their giving of allegiances. Recourse to oral history emphasises several aspects of this statement, for it is not uncommon to hear members of now-scattered families, including non-observers of more than one generation's standing, make with unhesitating choice of pronoun statements like, "We're all Congregationalists [or Methodists] really". One verdict on what that could mean in terms of outlook comes appropriately from a descendant of the Core, who wrote, "I shall always be content that my mother was a Congregationalist, and that what religion I

1. Fyl.Recon., Barry; Robert Barry Esq., and Rev.Mr.Cooper in J.S.,

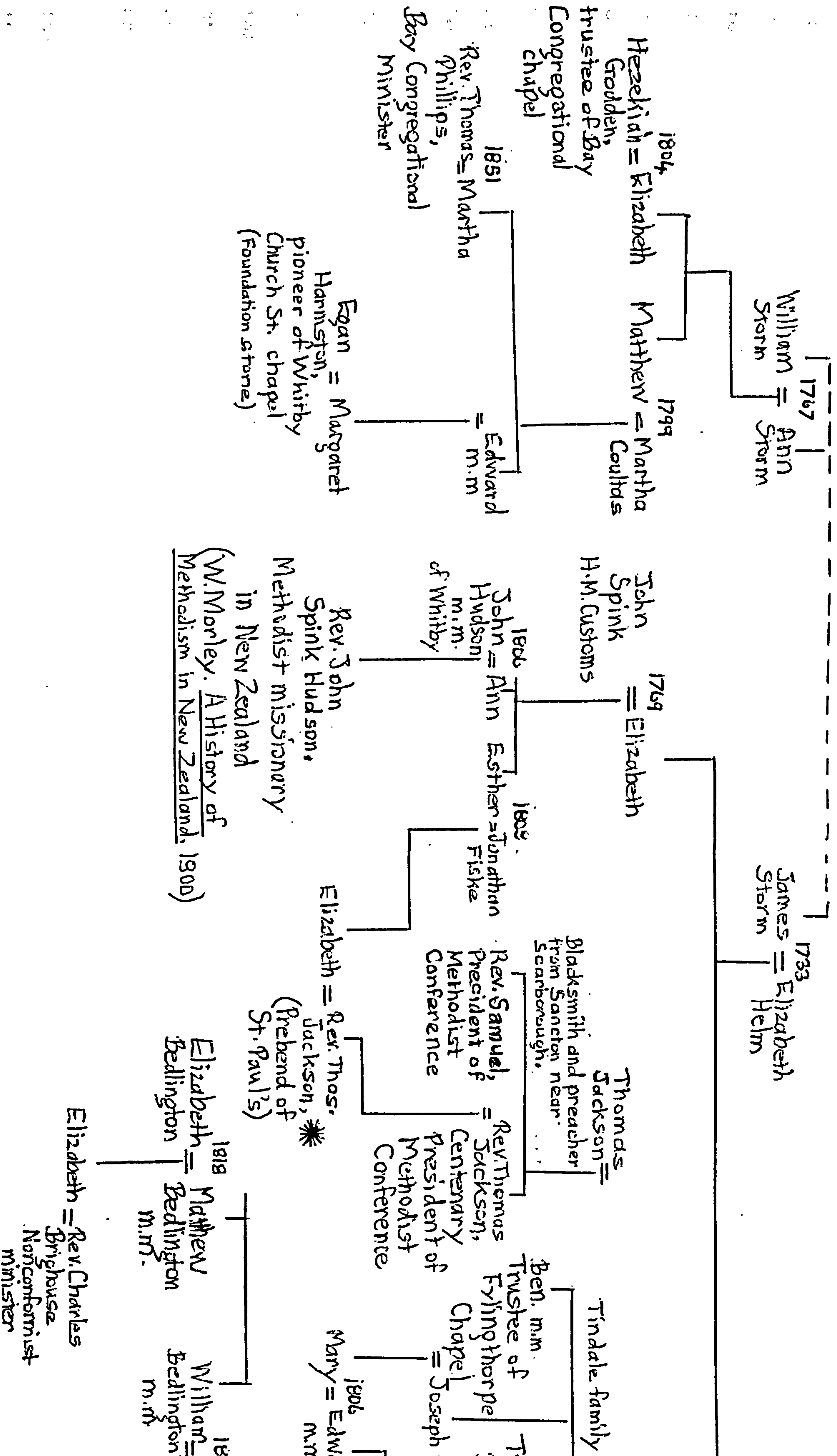
Miscellany, list of donors, new Church of St.Stephen, 1870.

2. N.Pevsner, The Buildings of Yorkshire North Riding, 1966, p.308.

3. W.Dalton, op.cit., p.25.

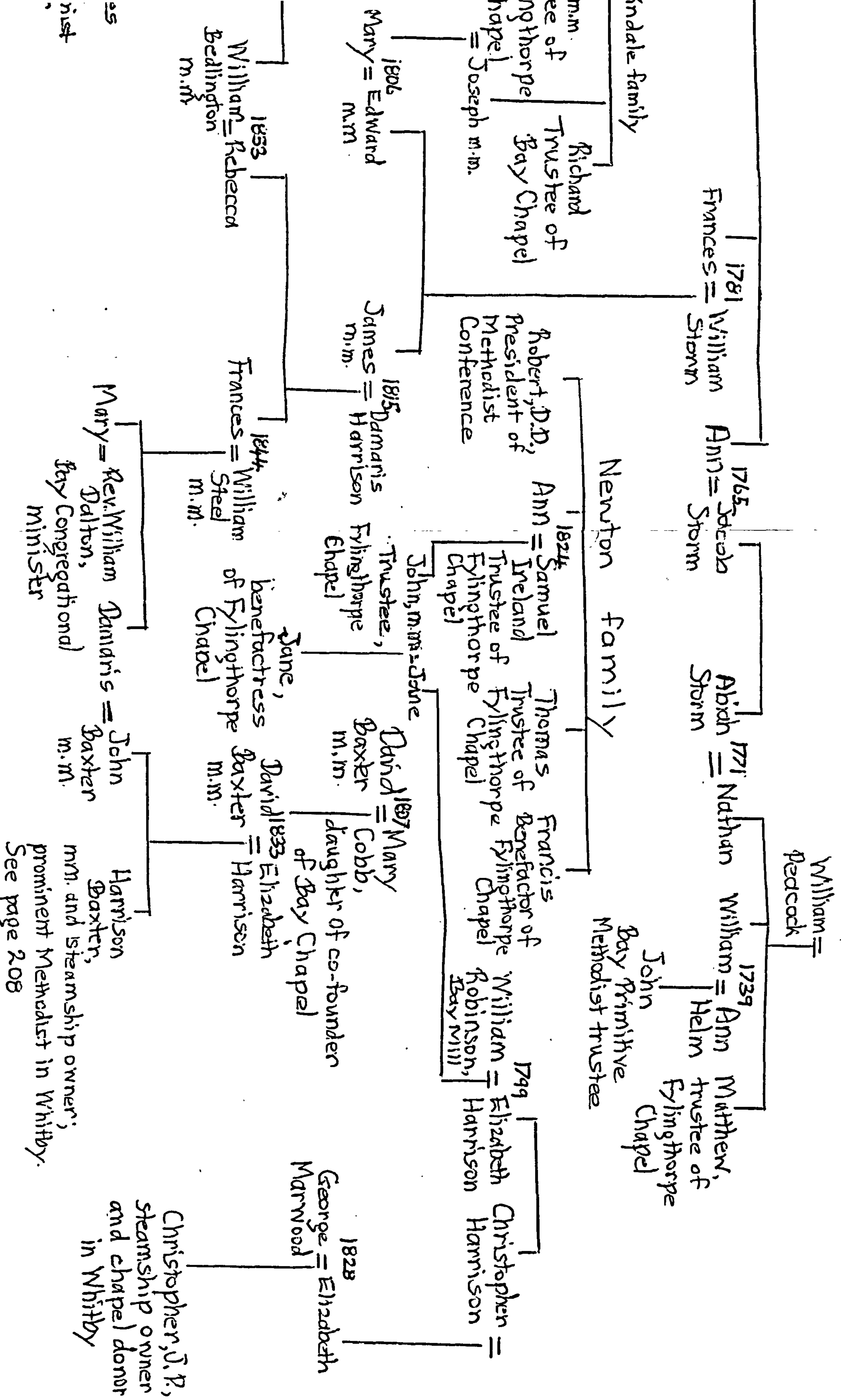
4. P.Thompson, Living the Fishing, 1983, Chapter 12.

# Figure 30 A Nonconformist Network



\* The Jackson information is from the Dictionary of National Biography, and from a chart in J.S. Miscellany supplied by Adml. Sir T.S. Jackson of Prebendary Jackson.





Dictionary of  
a chart in  
11. Sir T. S. Jackson, 1836-1934,

got in my youth was coloured by that stiff, self-regarding faith. It would be no use for me to deny to myself my nonconformist upbringing. Its narrow ideas of right and wrong, its distrust of enjoyment are in my bones".<sup>1</sup> What Max Weber really said is the subject of much debate, but the earnestness this testimony describes - and reveals in the writer - seems to contain something of what he meant about "Protestant ethic" as a condition favourable to endeavour.<sup>2</sup> This helps the case for believing that the crucial factor for the Bay maritime community was the coincidence of cognate attitudes and the economic opportunity presented by shipping growth, the persistent local contribution to which is recounted in Chapter 10. It would be unnatural if this generalised proposition held good for all aspects and features of the life of the place, just as it would have been for there to have occurred among Wesley's local Methodists none of the "continual jars" he observed in 1779. The unconformity provides an appropriate point at which to turn to another facet of the moral order.

(b) Smuggling It is necessary to attempt an estimate of the extent of this practice, and an explanation of its prevalence, and it must be said at the outset that the correspondence of the Collector of Customs at Whitby with his superiors in London and his Riding Officers along the coast, pays much attention to Robin Hood's Bay.

The correspondence begins in 1721, and from this date it is evident that the Customs service was busy, as indirect taxation assumed an increasingly important role in fiscal policy. There is also discernible the tendency for central authority to use the service as an agent of general utility, but the great variety of affairs so informatively

1. S.J.Kunity and H.Haycraft, Twentieth Century Authors, 1942, M.Storm Jameson.

2. M.Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, 1930.



supervised and reported does not conceal the great concern with illicit trade. The Riding Officer at Robin Hood's Bay was Richard Wilson, who in depositions sent on to London by his superior in Whitby, Hamlett Woods, defined his field of operations as the coast from Whitby south to Peak Steel, the cliffs near the alum works, within sight of his house in "Robin Hood's Town". Thus he had about nine miles of coast to watch. He moved to and fro on the sands and cliffs and met his colleagues from the north of Whitby in the town. <sup>1</sup> The correspondence exchanged in January, 1722, makes the situation very clear. In that month there were demands from the Honourable Commissioners, forwarded to the Riding Officers, for more signs of diligence, and also for more complete recording in their journals of their actions. The Collector replied that he had posted Mr. Wilson, but smuggling vessels were on the coast constantly and the Riding Officer could not keep permanent watch. <sup>2</sup> In March Hamlett Woods asked for a small coble for four men with a pair of oars each to pursue smugglers up the Esk at Whitby. The administration moved slowly, but in December inhabitants of the town were offered the spectacle of the Surveyor of Customs chasing a coble up the River Esk until it was forced to jettison the cargo it had received from a vessel lying out at sea. <sup>3</sup> In January of the same year Richard Wilson had seized brandy under the cliffs at Peak, where the alum cargoes were shipped, and gone on to call at Mr. John Postgate's farm at Brow where he seized from an employee six half-ankers (or about 25 gallons) of brandy. In the following February he had secured

1. P.R.O., CUST.90/1, March, 1721.

2. Ibid., January, 1722.

3. Ibid., 7th March, 1722; Ibid., 15th December. 1722.

four half-ankers of brandy in the fields; it had been brought ashore from a French sloop. In his report Richard Wilson added that there was also a Dutch smuggler lying off, with her anchor down, a circumstance which says much about the smugglers' attitude to the law. In this instance their boldness brought action, and in July Wilson was bidden to Whitby to agree the quantity of contraband taken off the Dutchman.<sup>1</sup> About a week after his return to Robin Hood's Bay the Riding Officer took contraband off William Moorsom, the master of a fishing vessel, who had received the goods from a Dutch fishing craft.<sup>2</sup>

This occurrence of a Core name touches on a difficulty additional to the game of cat-and-mouse played by the shore, and that is that Richard Wilson belonged to Fylingdales, his father being a householder at Raw. It follows that to serve the Honourable Board with diligence and impartiality demanded great singleness of purpose, or delicacy. The Riding Officer and the smuggler were related, each having a daughter married to a member of the Core Bedlington family.<sup>3</sup> Another aspect of the same problem was that John, Richard, Robert and Isaiah Moorsom, all of Robin Hood's Bay origin, were at one time or another members of the Customs service at Whitby or Scarborough. It is an engaging illustration of the extent to which relatively static and fecund families can infiltrate the life of a countryside.<sup>4</sup>

The discovery of much contraband continued. Towards the end of 1722, 117 gallons of brandy and three gallons of Geneva were brought in by

1. P.R.O., CUST.90/1, 7th January, 1722; Ibid., 14th June, 1722;

Ibid., 12th July, 1722; Ibid., 4th August, 1722.

2. Ibid., 7th January, 1722.

3. Fyl.Recon., Bedlington, Moorsom, Wilson.

4. Fyl.Recon., Moorsom.,



Wilson and his colleagues from the Cleveland coast, and in the following July 28 gallons of brandy were condemned by the Justices, but despite these demonstrations of diligence the smugglers were undeterred.<sup>1</sup> In July of 1742 it was reported to London that the sloop Henry - a name well known on the coast - had loaded alum at Lingberry works and on being searched as she passed Whitby southward bound, she was found to have 50 gallons of brandy on board. There is much detail of this kind over any short period, to prove the persistence, ingenuity and ubiquity of the smugglers.<sup>2</sup>

Another factor comes to light in 1743, when the Collector informs London that the Justices are not happy about gaoling smugglers and so inflicting a charge on the parishes.<sup>3</sup> Some cases, however, were serious enough to go further than Petty or Quarter Sessions. In 1767 William Cass of Robin Hood's Bay received instructions to give all information he could that might be of service to the Crown while deputising for the Riding Officer who had been called to a trial in London.<sup>4</sup>

A case of particular interest in the present ethical context arose in 1772. In June of that year the Whitby Collector - now John Burgh - sent John Robinson, his man at Robin Hood's Bay, a warrant for the arrest of William Cobb, and in November it was announced that bail of £184.15s. could be put up for the accused. The matter was clarified in November in a letter headed "Attorney General against William Cobb", with which were enclosed statements by Customs employees about discovery and seizure at the accused's house in Robin Hood's Bay of some Geneva and 69 bags and twelve cannisters of tea stowed about the premises, and none more securely

1. P.R.O., CUST.90/1, 9th November, 1722; Ibid., 5th July, 1723.

2. Ibid., CUST.90/1, 11th June, 1724.

3. Ibid., CUST.90/3, 1743

4. Ibid., CUST.90/4, 28th May, 1767.

than under the bed. The Cobbs kept shop, and one of the closets was registered with the Customs for sale of spirits. The obstacle to progress in the case was probably not an uncommon one: this was the absence of an informer at sea. Mrs. Cobb admitted her part, but not her husband. The special interest in this affair is that William Cobb was one of the founders of the Methodist Chapel. <sup>1</sup> Wesley's specific denunciation of smuggling as a "crying sin" was remarked earlier in this chapter, but there is no record that he made this view clear in Robin Hood's Bay; yet he was in the village five days after the warrant for William Cobb's arrest was sent there. If his listeners were meant to put a particular interpretation on a general condemnation of sin, the local understanding of the term may have frustrated the intention, but the characteristic candour of Wesley probably precludes this possibility. <sup>2</sup>

This was, moreover, a time of much official unease, and Robin Hood's Bay earned special mention as a cause. At the beginning of 1773 the Whitby Collector wrote to his Bay deputy:

"We received your letter of the 15 Inst with the Seizure of Seven half anchors, and a Complaint against the Port Officers of Ill usage for coming into Robin Hood's Town, your residence and district - You have been Frequently desired on any run of Goods at RHT or district to give notice thereof to this office, that any assistance might be given that was in our power to prevent that pernicious Practice, but no Notice has lately been given, Altho' almost daily Accounts from one or the other is brought to the Custom House, that great Quantities of Goods is Run at Robin Hood that if this practice be continued Report thereof to the Board will be made...The Port Officers being informed of Goods Run at RHT pursue such Information and come to make Search for Such, but for want of timely Notice Seldom find Goods and are greatly harrassed and Fatigu'd. We therefore look upon their Service as an instance of their Zeal, and not to be censured for ill usage...you are therefore to omit no instance of smuggling...Otherwise we shall be obliged to Report to the Board the Accounts we receive of Smuggling, and that we have no Account or Notice from you.....P.S. You are to take Notice of the Receipt of this Letter in Your Journal Book." <sup>3</sup>

1. P.R.O., CUST.90/5, 16th June, 1772; Ibid., 13th November, 1772;

See p.206.

2. J.Wesley, Journal, 21st June, 1772.

3. P.R.O., CUST.90/5, 14th January, 1773.



This warning was followed by a stern reminder, and news of the receipt in London of an anonymous letter recounting "great frauds" on the coast: the Board had ordered a strict inquiry. The Collector himself urged every effort, because he was certain that there was "great smuggling.....hurtful to Fair Trade and destructive of the People". He had gone through the office records, because he recalled a letter of 37 years before, from the Secretary of the Board, in which displeasure and dismissal were threatened should any officer be unable to explain his absence when any "run" was made in his district. After this the Bay officer, John Robinson, was invited to compose a reply to the anonymous letter, answering allegations that he had permitted and even encouraged smuggling and received a profit from it. <sup>1</sup> Simultaneously a hunt was in progress for Thomas Jackson, formerly of Robin Hood's Bay and under prosecution, who had last been heard of in Sunderland, and the trial of yet another case was proceeding in London. <sup>2</sup>

The scale of operations increased. In October 1774 the Collector warned the captain of the cutter Alarm that Robin Hood's Bay was one of the places where audacious and armed smugglers, whom the Customs men feared to attack, would lie off, in order to conduct their business at night. <sup>3</sup> A month later came news that the Secretary of War had at last ordered the military to help in Cleveland, and in the following February their commander was asked to put a sergeant and six men at Robin Hood's Bay, out of the 20 at his disposal. The billeting instructions were sent to "The Surveyor of Riding Officers at Robin Hood's Bay."<sup>4</sup> The village was the

1. P.R.O., CUST.90/5, 18th February, 1773; Ibid., 3rd March, 1773.

2. Ibid., 2nd July, 1773.

3. Ibid., 11th October, 1774.

4. Ibid., 11th November, 1774; Ibid., 1st February, 1775.

object of the special attention of both Customs and military, and the Collector obviously wanted the arrangement to continue when in 1778 he warned that the situation would be difficult if the troops were withdrawn, because the smugglers were very dangerous people.<sup>1</sup> As if in reinforcement of his warning one of the soldiers posted to the north of Whitby was murdered in 1779, and from the same year there is an account of the discovery of large quantities of brandy, Geneva and tea, with blunderbuses and cartouche boxes for 20 men, in Robin Hood's Bay. They had been recovered by a gang of smugglers.<sup>2</sup> John Spink, a Riding officer who had been commended to London and offered patronage in reward for his work after the murder of the soldier, was posted to Robin Hood's Bay, but the campaign was continuing despite his efforts.<sup>3</sup>

In 1805 Charles Fothergill recalled in his diary how Flamborough had once been a place famous for smuggling, but had come to have few dealings of that kind, the trade having moved north to Robin Hood's Bay. His explanation of the change was that the Bay men had been more ready than those of Flamborough to pay their suppliers.<sup>4</sup>

This was far from the end of the matter. There was a murder trial at York in 1823 which was the culmination of strong animosities bred among smugglers in the neighbourhood. Because of the alleged impossibility of obtaining a fair trial, the defence tried to move the hearing out of the county, but had to settle for a jury composed entirely of West Riding men. The dead man, James Law of Staintondale, was described by the prosecution

1. P.R.O., CUST.90/5, 13th February, 1778.

2. Ibid., CUST.90/6, 20th February, 1779; Whitby Lit. and Phil., Whitby Almanac and Old Time Diary, 1899.

3. P.R.O., CUST.90/6. 19th March, 1779

4. P.Romney ed., The Diary of Charles Fothergill, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Publications, CXLII, 1984, pp.47-48.



as a respectable farmer. It was alleged that he had threatened the accused, however, and violently assaulted one of his friends. James Law had been tried for and acquitted of smuggling, in London, and had subsequently given evidence at the trial of the accused for perjury, again in the capital. A shooting had followed a night of drinking, and ribald song under the accused's window. In custody the latter had offered to clear James Law of all accusations against him of smuggling, and in court a witness stated that there had been "a deal of informations" in the district, and admitted there was one against himself in the Exchequer at the moment. Another witness alleged that the accused had informed against two of his relatives recently. Yet another said he had been a witness in London, but he could not remember how many times he had given evidence. The whole affair opens a window on a countryside alive with suspicions. <sup>1</sup> Jacob Storm passed some remarks on the subject, from abundant personal interest: he had a cousin, a shipmaster, married to James Law's granddaughter, and his wife's grandmother had lived next door to the accused man in the York trial. <sup>2</sup> His own maternal grandmother had a cousin in Staintondale, John Pearson, whom he remembered from his young days, and who had lost freehold land through smuggling. He also recalled the case of his grandfather's cousin, William Storm, master and owner of the brigantine Juno, who had that vessel seized by the Customs. <sup>3</sup> His account of these events includes a whimsical definition of smuggling as "a disagreement with the government over imports", and he found it "a little amusing after the passage of years" to recall that the uncle by marriage

1. The Trial of William Mead, printed Malton, 1823, pp.4-25.

2. Fyl.Recon., Law, Pearson, Storm; J.S., Miscellany, annotated drawing of houses in Staintondale.

3. Fyl.Recon., Pearson, Robinson, Storm; J.S., Memoirs, p.13.

of William of the Juno was the diligent Customs Officer John Spink. What is remarkable about these comments is that the writer was a churchman. <sup>1</sup>

The evidence of heavy involvement with smuggling is strong. On the other hand it has to be said that if the population at large was party to it, it is to be wondered how so many people coped over a long time with the constant need for secrecy and ever-present threat of exposure to severe penalties. The evidence of armed, organised, seaborne operations is also a reminder that the people on shore may have been under intimidation, particularly during the frequent absences of menfolk. Jacob Storm did not condemn smuggling, yet the unfortunate William of the Juno was left to end his days in the Whitby Seamen's Hospital, although he had a son and a brother who were prominent shipowners. <sup>2</sup> This ambivalence may stem from the seafaring life, in which there is opportunity to smuggle, and the risk may be taken as in a challenging sport, or at least as a matter of course. From all sources other than those used in the present discussion the impression gained is of a completely law-abiding place. Only two Justices - usually in Whitby - and two parish constables, seem to stand between the population and the chance of disorder; yet from the parish books life goes on without hint of unrest, or roistering, libidinous, sailor-town. There was no harbour disgorging a shifting population of strangers seeking amusement. There was, however, a disproportionately large number of master mariners, who should have known the importance of order.

1. The tolerance of smuggling is to be compared with his attitude in another matter: in the Whitby Gazette of 24th July, 1908, he attacked in immoderate language the sale of Sunday newspapers. John Spink married a daughter of the fisherman James Storm; his commendation probably served him well as their son John son obtained a commission in the 2nd Foot (list of Generals, Army List, 1868).

2. Fyl.Recon., Storm.



The best opportunities for smuggling should have arisen in conjunction with that work which involved use of remote landing places. This was the fishing, and it is difficult to see the majority of men, the sailors, as primarily the operators of a contraband-based economy; they were essentially sailors by livelihood, and spent much of their time in distant places. Smuggling, nevertheless, was rife. However, there is some natural justification for regarding smuggling in a seafaring community as a special case, for which "crime" would be too strong a term. It might almost be said that the offence was more likely to be popularly deemed to reside in its detection rather than its perpetration. If the great influence of Nonconformity (of which William Cobb was such an eccentric representative) is reintroduced to the discussion, its apparent compatability with illicit trade serves only to emphasise the peculiar view that was taken of that trade. It was kept in a different compartment from the ethic of work and family. If moral judgment is put aside, one tentative conclusion - not totally irrelevant or evasive - might be that there was an element of opportunistic vitality present in the community.

## CHAPTER TEN: NINETEENTH CENTURY SHIPPING AND SEAFARING

This chapter is intended to be in effect a summation of all that has been discussed, in which the circumstances, opinion and behaviour argued to be perceptible give the appearance of being present when the settlement is reaching towards its summit of nineteenth century prosperity. In broad outline, these factors started with the geographically-enforced closeness, went on to the extension of that closeness into economic enterprise, through fishing and seafaring, to the reinforcement of the family and so to the implications of the Nonconformist ethic; all of which may be seen as a function of continuity and socialisation.

Evidence of the presence or operation of the factors is pursuable through the histories of shipping businesses, and it is necessary to look at the nineteenth century achievement in that respect in some detail, to identify the enterprises that are concealed by totals of vessels, however impressive aggregations may be, and by the confusion of names of the entrepreneurs - for which, ultimately, the continuity was responsible. In view of what has been said in previous chapters about the importance of kin and co-operation, it is important to define the character of the enterprises also.

Shipping was last seen in partial decline towards the end of the eighteenth century, but continuing to be based in the village substantially through the agency of the alum industry, and in Whitby through the interest of a particular group in the larger vessels of that port and the coal trade. It is therefore the process of revival at the beginning of the nineteenth century that is the first topic. As the revival proceeded, the alum industry was moving towards decline, and the interest was increasingly in larger vessels. The concentration on these means giving little attention to the alum element, which played no part



in the nineteenth century boom. But it had served a purpose: it had been a source of seafaring experience, as well as livelihood, and it therefore introduces the revival.

(a) The revival Table 39 on page 227 has been compiled from the Fylingdales sess, the Whitby Muster Rolls and registers of ships, and, for details of the people involved, the family reconstitutions.<sup>1</sup> For ease of reference the vessels are also to be found in R.Weatherill, The Ancient Port of Whitby and its Shipping, 1908, which is a useful and accurate abstract of all the shipping register and muster information. At the head of table 39 is John Ridley, manager of Peak-Brow alum works, with his Phoenix and Charlotte.<sup>2</sup> The probability was raised in Chapter 5 that as a consumer of large quantities of coal at the works he became involved in the shipping of it. Several other names connected with the carrying of alum or related coal are in the list. One of them is T.T.Granger, whose father, Zachariah, was owner of the Peak.<sup>3</sup> The son is in the table as master and owner of the brigantine Catherine (100), which was larger than the usual alum sloop.<sup>4</sup> Another apparently moving away from the alum work was Andrew Harrison, sometime master of the Peak, who had acquired the brigantine Gorlstone (95).<sup>5</sup>

1. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/3,4 and 5/2; N.M.M., Whitby; Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls.

2. R.Weatherill, The Ancient Port of Whitby and its Shipping, 1908, pp.76 and 41.

3 See p.70.

4. Fyl.Recon., Granger; R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.230.

5. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, no.17, 1796; Ibid., 1808.

Table 39: Acquisitions of vessels of more than three keels from the beginning of registration in 1786 to the end of the parish sess in 1818.<sup>1</sup>

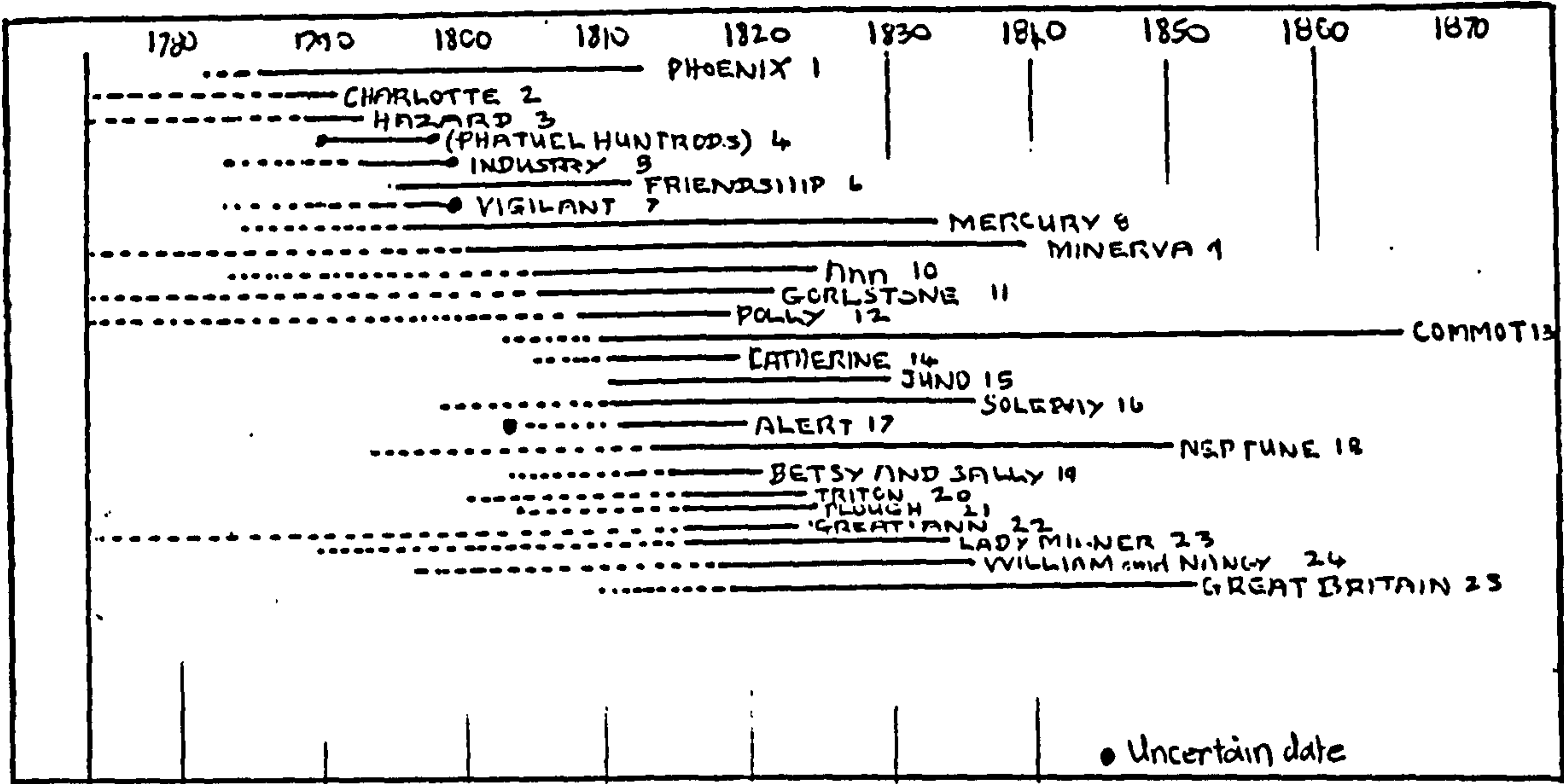
Occupations				Owner	Vessel	Tons	Year	Master
	Master's father	Owner's father	Owner's					
1.	Fisher		Alum Clerk	J.Ridley	Phoenix	121	1786	J.Skerry
2.			"	"	Charlotte	199	1788	
			Merchant	J.Peacock	"			
3.	Fisher-boatowner		m.m.	E.Huntrods	Hazard	63	1789	Owner
4.	Master mariner		m.m.	P.Huntrods	?	c.110	c.1790	Owner
5.	Master mariner		m.m.	Richardsons	Industry	86	1794	Richardsons
6.	Customs		m.m.	R.Robinson	Friendship		1796	Owner
7.	Fisher		m.m.	J.Pearson	Vigilant	74	1797	Owner
8.	m.m.	Glazier	m.m.	B.Tindale	Mercury	101	1797	J.Tindale
		"	m.m.	B.Tindale)	"			B.Tindale
		Farmer	Farmer	J.Walker )	"			
9.	Fisher		m.m.	J.Barnard	Minerva	63	1801	Owner
10.	Fisher		m.m.	Wm.Todd	Ann	125	1806	Owner
			Customs	H.Godden	"			
11.	Master mariner		m.m.	A.Harrison	Corlstone	95	1807	Owner
		m.m.	Coal fitter	R.Cropton	"			
			Bakers	T. & M. McDougale	"			
12.	Fisher	Fisher	m.m.	W.Storm&Co	Polly	77	1808	Owner
		m.m.	Coal ftr	R.Cropton	"			
			Baker	J.McDougale	"			
13.	Fisher		m.m.	J.Skerry	Comot	85	1810	Owner
	Mariner		m.m.	Wm.Todd	"			
	m.m.		m.m.	Wm.Estill	"			
14.	Mariner		m.m.	T.T.Granger	Catherine	100	1811	Owner
15.	Fisher-boatowner		m.m.	W.Storm&Co.	Juno	106	1811	Owner
	"		Innkeeper	S.Thompson	"			
			Mariner	Jas.Storm	"			
16.	Glazier		m.m.	B.Tindale	Solebay	91	1811	Owner
17.	Sailor		m.m.	J.English	Alert	81	1812	Owner
			Fisher/sailor	T.Bedlington	"			
		Fisher/sailor		Wm.Mills	"			
18.	m.m.	Farmer	m.m.	T.Newton	Neptune	135	1814	T.Estill
19.		Sailor	m.m.	I.Mills	Betsy & Sally	81	1815	J.Galilee
		Shipbldr?		F.Spencelayh	"			
20.	Customs		m.m.	R.Robinson	Triton	89	1816	Owner
21.	Fisher	Customs	Mariner	W.Robinson	Plough	93	1816	W.Moorson
				W.Moorson	"			
		m.m.	Coal ftr	T.Cropton	"			
22.	Fisher		m.m.	Todd & Co.	Ann	129	1816	Wm.Todd
23.	Fisher		m.m.	C.Granger	Lady	94	1817	C.Granger
					Milner			
24.	Customs		Mariner	W.Robinson	Wm.& Nancy	90	1818	
25.	m.m.		m.m.	B.Tindale	Gt.Britain	121	1819	B.Tindale jr.
		m.m.	m.m.	J.Tindale	"			

1. Sessional Volumes of Public Acts, 26 George III, cap.60.



In all, from 1786 to 1818, 25 vessels of more than three keels were acquired; so there was a movement away from the alum towards more general carrying, and there were many people involved. The situation begins to resemble that of mid-seventeenth century, but its presentation in table 39 can be misleading, for account has to be taken of the length of time for which vessels were held, and this is illustrated in figure 31, where they are in order of acquisition. The broken line indicates the length of previous ownership, and the continuous line shows how long each was in Bay hands. Thus in 1820 there were 16 vessels, one of which was lost or sold in that year.

Figure 31: Order of acquisition of vessels, c.1800-c.1820



Cost is exemplified by the £16 a ton Jacob Storm records for the brig Industry (98) of which his great-uncle, George Estill, was master in 1812, when she changed hands.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless the rate of acquisition can be seen to quicken in the second decade of the century, in figure 31, and may relate to some aspect of release from wartime conditions, such as greater safety at sea, or a reduction in the official transports which Whitby had traditionally supplied to the government.

1. J.S., Miscellany, Notes on Robin Hood's Bay and Whitby vessels.

As well as the growing number of vessels, it is also ascertainable that the long-term families' involvement was still present. Seventeen of the vessels in table 39 had at least one Majority name among their ownership, and there were six Core owners. This reveals waning of interest in the fishing in which so many Core men had been lingering. <sup>1</sup>

Table 39 is now analysed to see the sort of occupational background that was producing the new generation of entrepreneurs. There is enough information in the reconstitutions for a conclusion to be reached, in all but two cases. One was that of F.Spencelayh who shared the Betsy and Sally with Isaac Mills, and whose known other connection with Fylingdales was that he married the daughter of a farmer in the parish, whose family long farmed St.Ives. <sup>2</sup> The other was John Peacock, part-owner of the Charlotte with John Ridley. <sup>3</sup> This is a case where there were too many of the name, in Whitby as well as Fylingdales, to allow certain identification, and he, like F.Spencelayh, has been omitted. In a few cases where there was more than one occupation an attempt has been made to determine which was the principal. For example, William Robinson, father of Richard who was owner and master of the Friendship, was variously mason, Customs official (which meant coal meter, dealing it is fairly certain with deliveries at the alum works), keeper of the Mason's Arms and parish clerk. In the register he is often simply "officer"; in his will he is "Officer in the Customs" and that is the description used. <sup>4</sup> The analysis of table 39 is in table 40.

1. See p.116.

2. R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.110; Fyl.Recon., Craven.

3. R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.41.

4. Fyl.Recon., Robinson; Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, no.9, 1796; Borthwick, William Robinson, Fylingdales, 1815.



Table 40: Occupational background of shipowners and masters  
in the nineteenth century revival

	Fishing	Seafaring	Trade	Farming	Official
Owner's father's occupation	11	12	2	2	3
Owner's occupation	2	27	8	1	1
Master's father's occupation	12	6	1	0	3

The emphasis in table 40 is on seafaring background among the owners, but fishing was still well represented, particularly by the fathers of masters, and the interest of traders in the village was not negligible. If reference is made to table 39 also, the seafaring owners are found to be mainly master mariners, a predominance that bears witness to the profitable careers that some had been able to make. Jonathan Skerry typifies the trend. A fisherman's son, by 1801 he was master of an alum vessel, John Ridley's Heckington, and in 1807 he had moved to command of the Ceres (288). In 1810 he bought with two other masters the brigantine Commot. His partners in the Commot transaction were related by marriage of their children, and this is typical of most of the rest of table 39, recalling the situation in mid-eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> A chart of relationships (figure 32) to cover the current situation is at the end of the section after page 234. There are only four names in table 39 that do not find a place there. The omission of two Majority names, Barnard and Bedlington, makes the chart less unwieldy, and an unfamiliar name which has been included, McDougale, is important because it preserves ties with Wearside, the people of that name being bakers in Monkwearmouth.<sup>2</sup> One

1. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, 1801 (no.269), and 1808;

Fyl.Recon., Estill, Skerry, Todd.

2. N.M.M., Whitby, no.11, 1807, no.11, 1808.

name new to the parish, but securing a place in figure 32 (the chart of relationships) by means of a Core marriage, and destined to become prominent in the shipping, is Hezekiah Godden, who according to Jacob Storm was in the Customs service and took his retirement in Robin Hood's Bay.<sup>1</sup> Hence most situations or transactions were intensely local, and almost all Bay- rather than Country-based. There were two farming names only. One of them, Newton, had a long connection with shipping.<sup>2</sup> The other, Walker, came in through a brother-in-law, Ben Tindale, and so began a partnership.<sup>3</sup>

It is not simply a case of summarising the sources of initiative in table and chart: it is also demonstrable in the latter, figure 32, that the relationships can be, or more properly have to be explained in terms of one family, Storm, which had retained most of its branches there since the first records of the "fischer townlet" and had come to provide a sort of matrix for the settlement. This cannot be done with any other family, notwithstanding the many alternative ways in which genealogies can be drawn up. The situation may be regarded as one simply mechanical, produced by weight of numbers, but here may be a source or channel of transmission of the more positive socialisation suspected of being present.

However, if vessels at the revival are taken in order, the names first encountered which were to achieve importance in the century were Tindale and Robinson, and not those of fishing families. They were highly integrated with the maritime people on the other hand. The Tindales had come from Hackness, and the first known occupation of any one of them was

1. Fyl.Recon., Godden, Storm; J.S., Miscellany, note on Hezekiah Godden.  
among memorial inscription records.

2. See figure 14, the pull-out chart following p.102.

3. Fyl.Recon., Tindale, Walker.



glazier. They made a first Majority marriage in 1734, and went on to make another 13 by 1839, including eight with the Core.<sup>1</sup> The Robinsons were very much a part of the community, especially through the many occupations and parish clerkship of William, father of Richard of the Friendship. They were not included among the Majority because initially they were too easily confused with others of the name, but their integral nature is confirmed by their descent from Ursula Storm, daughter of a fisherman, William's great-grandmother.<sup>2</sup>

The enquiry into initiatives can be taken further back, however, to follow the path opened up by the Polly, acquired in 1808. Her ownership, "W.Storm and Co.", seems to mark a return to shipping after some years in fishing (see page 116). The vessel is linked by Robert Cropton and James McDougale, the co-owners, with the Wear (and hence the coal trade) according to her registration.<sup>3</sup> Trade was good because W.Storm and Co. have the larger Juno in 1811, while a cousin, Andrew, became master of the Polly. Will Storm's new Juno partners were his younger brother James and his father-in-law, Sampson Thompson.<sup>4</sup> The two brigantines bring an interesting group together of sailors, coal merchant, bakers from Monkwearmouth, and Sampson Thompson, innkeeper and parish clerk.<sup>5</sup> But if the registration of the Juno is consulted again, the father of William and James Storm appears with an interest from time to time. This was William senior, frequently described as a fisherman, but in October 1786 recently

1. Fyl.Recon., Tindale.

2. Ibid., Robinson, Shepherd, Storm.

3. N.M.M., Whitby, no.11, 1808.

4. Ibid., no.16, 1811; Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, no.805, 1811.

5. Fyl.Recon., Storm, Thompson.

returned from a summer voyage to the Arctic as second mate of Richard Moorsom's Whitby whaler Lively. So the seafaring interest had still been there before the revival. The commitment to shipowning had been maintained, moreover, in Whitby, by Matthew, cousin of William Storm senior.<sup>1</sup> From these two, Matthew and William, there is a direct line back to Thomas, master of a fishing boat who, before he was drowned in 1690, fathered a descent of shipmasters, shipowners and fishermen. William's father was one of the fishermen, another Matthew (1714-1804), master of a boat and for many years the payer of the highest parish rates in Fisherhead.<sup>2</sup> He had been the youngest child of a large family, and outlived some long-lived brothers, collecting legacies from two of them on the way.<sup>3</sup> When he died at 90 in 1804, he and his wife, Elizabeth Storm, left a numerous descent, more closely interrelated than ever, and thereby they stand at the head of many of the families and households that are yet to be seen participating in the nineteenth century shipping boom. This is the complex interest that begins to emerge clearly with the brigantine Polly and continues with the Juno.<sup>4</sup>

The brothers William and James (of the Juno) parted company. In 1828 the brigantine entered the Thames from Tonningen, with William in command, but by 1830 she was registered at Scarborough. His conviction for smuggling had taken William from the band of owners and masters.<sup>5</sup> James remained, to initiate one of the village's major enterprises, and several

1. N.M.M., Whitby, no.16, 1811; Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, Lively, October, 1786; See pp.110-112.

2. See p.87; N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/2, passim.

3. Borthwick: Isaac Storm, 1790, and William Storm, 1792, Fylingdales.

4. Fyl.Recon., Storm.

5. P.R.O., ADM.68/217, January, 1828 to June, 1830;  
R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.121; See p.222.



others were drawn from the same household to make the largest contribution to the period of greatest prosperity.

It is important, nevertheless, that people of different occupations came into the process: that the energy generated attracted figures like William Robinson and Sampson Thompson, parish clerks. The standing of the latter is evinced by the number of Sampsons who followed him, one at least of which descendants is living at the time of writing. Then there were the tradesmen. Eventually all occupations were to be represented, including the clergy, until even the surface of affairs was to present an excellent opportunity to observe a network of entrepreneurship enmeshed with another of families and households.

Investigation of these enterprises is the next objective, to see what sort of order or pattern there was behind the large and amorphous quantities of information about ships and <sup>y</sup>owners. Because there were so many people and vessels involved, the major efforts are used as representatives, and most of these stem from Core families. The total of vessels employed at some time by Robin Hood's Bay owners and compiled from all sources, between 1791 and 1890, was 255.

(b) The enterprises of the boom years      One of the best proofs of improving shipping business is that when Dr. Young wrote his history of Whitby in 1817 he was able to report that there was a ship insurance society at Robin Hood's Bay. <sup>1</sup> It was an independent organisation, going by the name of the Robin Hood's Bay Ship Insurance Association, which was usually reduced to "Bay Club" or even "the Club". There was to be another, a product of the increase in business as the middle of the century was

1. Young, op.cit., p.569.





approached. Club lists survive to supplement musters and ship registers, and with their use it becomes apparent that the market was very busy.

Table 41: Totals of vessels employed, 1821-1880, by decade

1821-30	35
1831-40	44
1841-50	73
1851-60	114
1861-70	147
1871-80	89

The year 1867 was made the finishing date for this essay because there is a list of vessels insured in that peak year by the Club. If it is checked against the list of vessels and owners from registrations and musters it is confirmed that ownership was then at its highest. There were 91 Bay-owned vessels, insured by the Club for £112,350, or an average of £1,234 each. This fleet was probably worth much more than all the houses in the village put together. The shipmaster William Estill's substantial Bridge End House was sold in 1871 for £240, and on this basis the 309 habitations of 1861 would have sold for £74,160.<sup>1</sup> The volume of business was also increased by sales. In the decade 1851-60, for example, 44 vessels were sold, making a total of major deals for those years of 158, or an average of more than one a month. This is the other side of shipping: dealing not only in cargoes, but in ships, and knowing when and what to buy and sell, in order to have vessels that will best pay their way, or none at all when conditions are unfavourable. It may well seem a

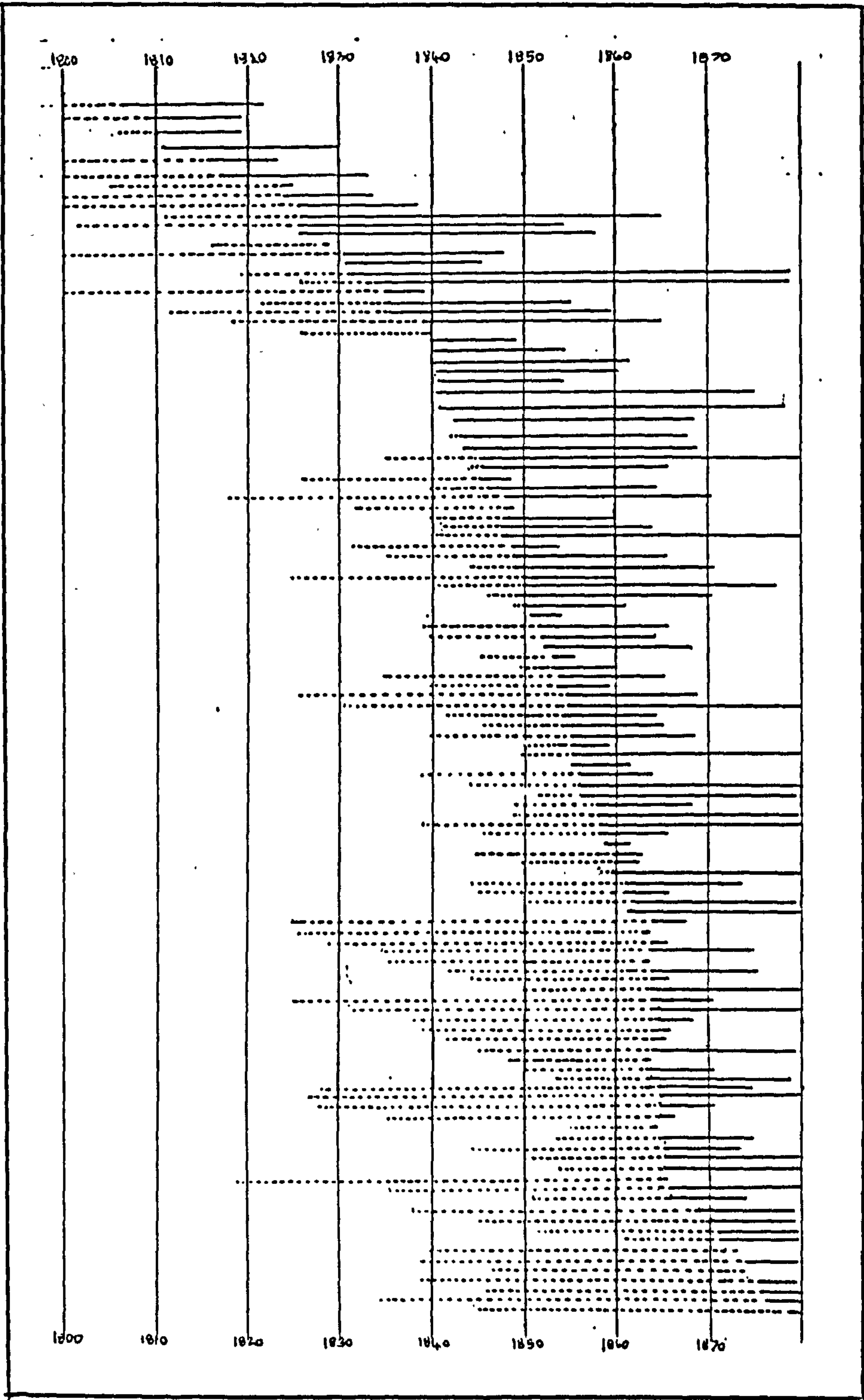
1. J.S., Miscellany, original Club lists; Ibid., copy of lawyer's account for settlement of William Estill's estate; P.R.O., R.G.9,3647-49.

remarkable state of affairs that such a quantity of property should be accumulated and handled. The experience of ownership of many types of craft was long, and so the markets were familiar. Because most of the purchases were not new there would have been much opportunity to discuss the quality and performance of these as they were observed between Tyne and Thames, and in Whitby harbour. This accumulated knowledgeability was second in importance only to general increase in the country's demand for shipping, and the readiness to respond to that need.

When numbers were at their highest there were still 14 Majority names among the owners in the Club list, and 67 of the fleet of 91 were directly associated with these people, and 45 of them had Majority masters. The relevance of such distinction is questionable in the sense that by 1867 so many strands of kinship had been woven into the fabric of investment, management and manning that it had lost definition, but it seems significant that 44 of the 67 Majority vessels of 1867 are readily identifiable with the five Core families, who had eleven in 1837. The process of clearing away a long-standing muddle and identifying people and interests is therefore rewarding and essential. Accounts that follow of the participation of households and families in the growth of the fleet are based on major ownership in 1867, amongst which the Core people with their 44 vessels loom large. There is enough information waiting to be used to support substantial histories of the ventures; here only an outline of each, capable of expansion in that way, is given, but in enough detail to afford a vital view of the community in action, and of its esprit. This approach enables general statements to be made, in section (c) of the chapter, about the characteristics of the boom, and their social as well as economic significance. Appendix 7 comprises the related genealogical charts and figure 33 on page 237 summarises the activities of the Core - their acquisitions and sales (or losses), the age of the vessels, and the period for which they were held.



Figure 33: Core vessels, 1806-1878



The broken line indicates length of previous ownership of each vessel,  
and the continuous line represents Bay ownership

(i) James Storm and family (See Appendix 7(a).) In the foregoing section of this chapter it was shown that the commonest kind of owner was a shipmaster, son of a fisherman or sailor. The first fisherman to be directly involved as owner of a cargo vessel at the time of revival was William Storm, part-owner of the Polly. He had served as a sailor, having been second mate of the whaler Lively, and so it is not unpredictable that his sons should take to seafaring in preference to fishing. William, the elder, lost the Juno, but his brother James, who had been his mate, moved on to become by 1818 master of the Whitby brig Squirrel (122). <sup>1</sup>

In 1827 the Squirrel was registered by Sampson Storm, son of the unfortunate William, and his uncle, James, had become master of another Whitby vessel, the Hero (150). <sup>2</sup> There is no further record of the Squirrel; if she was lost there may have been insurance money to collect, but Sampson Storm does not reappear as owner until he is keeping the Fleece Inn in Whitby, where he married. Between 1852 and 1864 he became owner or part-owner of four vessels ranging from 159 to 318 tons, a major entrepreneurial effort which illustrates the direction of business interest. He insured with the Bay Club, but in 1867 only his executors are listed by the managers. <sup>3</sup>

The functioning of the extended family continues to be traceable. James' command of the Hero was sufficiently profitable for him to be able to go to Sunderland in 1827 and order for himself a new brig of 175 tons, with the Bay fisherman John Smith as a partner. <sup>4</sup> Each partner had

1. N.M.M., Whitby, no.16, 1811; Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, Lively, 1786, and Ibid., Squirrel, 1818.

2. R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.353; Ibid., p.278.

3. Ibid., pp.373, 183, 340, 367.

4. N.M.M., Whitby, no.18, 1827.



a wife of the Core Harrison family and so had close links with the fishing circle around Thomas Harrison, who was to make one of the next important moves in the progress of shipowning. They paid £1,277 for their vessel, and another £480 for fitting and rigging, and named her John and James.<sup>1</sup> John Smith, who had been harpooner of the Whitby whaler Unity, did not live long in enjoyment of the John and James, and his widow transferred her share to his partner and administrator in 1838.<sup>2</sup> James kept this vessel for 20 years, when she went to his only son, John Harrison Storm, who at the peak of the approaching boom owned two vessels himself, and headed a company with three others.

James had young daughters, and so his next venture began when he and his niece's husband, Thomas Coggin, bought the brigantine Ariadne (134) and made another niece's husband master of her, in 1832. The Ariadne passed through several hands until in the 1867 Club list she was owned by a group of masters, Matthew Storm and Co., who had married James' three daughters.<sup>3</sup> Thomas Coggin was the son of John, a sergeant in the South Lancashire Militia who had stayed in Bay, made a Core marriage, and become a member in 1827 of the Jonathan Skerry Success partnership, which stemmed from the revival of the early century and whose subsequent history has yet to be recounted.<sup>4</sup> In 1840 the Coggins invested in the newly-built John Coggin (154), a brigantine, which was worked profitably enough to pay to re-rig her as a brig in 1849, and thereafter to help buy another new brig, the Emily (233), in 1852.<sup>5</sup> A second Emily, a larger brig, was bought

1. J.S., Memoirs, p.25.

2. Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls, Unity, 1787; N.M.M., Whitby, no.10, 1827.

3. R.Weatherill. op.cit., p.215; Fyl.Recon., Bedlington, Steel, Storm.

4. Fyl.Recon., Coggin, Granger; R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.354 (brigantine).

5. Ibid., pp.167, 179.

in 1858, lost in the same year and replaced almost at once by the Fanny (209), which took her name from Frances Storm, Thomas Coggin's wife. <sup>1</sup> She was employed for three years, with John Coggin, a son, as her master, but went down in the Black Sea with all hands. <sup>2</sup> Thomas Coggin died and in the 1867 Club list Fanny Coggin is entered for insurance as owner of the John Coggin, and Thomas's executors own the Emily of 1852. James Storm and the Coggins thus had ventures in progress running parallel to other sides of their operations, illustrating the flexibility and intricacy of the arrangements that families might make.

James Storm bought the brig Rainbow (157) in 1849, the brigantine Isabella (105) in 1851, and the new Sunderland-built Rebecca (193) in 1852. <sup>3</sup> He then sold 32/64ths of the Rebecca to his son-in-law, Matthew Storm, and his son John Harrison Storm and son-in-law John Steel took 8/64ths each. <sup>4</sup> In this way two new companies began to take shape, John H.Storm and Co., and Matthew Storm and Co., and the overlapping of interests barely perceptible in the Club lists begins to assume such a complexity that to draw lines around owning groups with any firmness becomes especially difficult. There was no central direction; the overall pattern has something of the nature of a confederation. In 1854 the Rainbow was lost off Hartlepool, and James sold 16/64ths of the Rebecca to William Bedlington, master mariner, who had in that year married his daughter Rebecca. The three sons-in-law thus became the principals of Matthew Storm and Co. <sup>5</sup>

1. R.Weatherill, op.cit., pp.256, 186.

2. Ibid., p.186,

3. Ibid., pp.341, 342, 287.

4. N.M.M., Whitby, no.12, 1852.

5. Fyl.Recon., Bedlington, Storm; R.Weatherill, op.cit., pp.341,342.



James' son John had started on his own account with the eighth part of the Rebecca bought from his father, and began to make his way in collaboration with the cousinage. He purchased the Brazilian Packet (185) in 1855, and in the following year began a new partnership with his innkeeping cousin Sampson, Jonathan Skerry's son James, and Sampson's son John. The vessel was the brig William Maitland (159). <sup>1</sup> James died in 1856, and in the will made in 1854 and proved by his partner John Coggin, and son-in-law Matthew Storm, he left the houses they occupied to his children and their spouses, which explains the three daughters in adjacent houses in Sunny Place in 1861. <sup>2</sup> His son was still holding James' Isabella in the peak-year Club list of 1867, and the Rebecca had become wholly the property of his brothers-in-law. After 31 years of service the John and James was lost in the English Channel in 1858, and John at once took on the Rienzi (188). <sup>3</sup> The brig Donna (226) followed in 1864 and the similar Willie and Ettie (253) in 1865, the latter replacing the Brazilian Packet (lost that year in the Gulf of Finland), and his share of the William Maitland. <sup>4</sup> A transaction of some social as well as economic importance was that John H. Storm's brother-in-law, Thomas Newton, a Brow farmer's son, had taken a quarter of the Willie and Ettie; his butcher's business in Bay went well with the provisioning of ships. <sup>5</sup> John's sons William and James were young in 1867; in that year he was employing Core masters, but in 1871 William took over the Donna at the age of 24. <sup>6</sup>

1. Weatherill, op.cit., pp.233, 373.

2. Borthwick, James Storm, Fylingdales, 1856; P.R.O., RG9,3647-49.

3. R.Weatherill, op.cit., pp.294, 344.

4. Ibid., pp.245, 375, 223, 373.

5. Ibid., p.375.

6. Ibid., p.245 and Fyl.Recon., Storm.

In 1851 John H. Storm was living in the New Road, the way cut through the village in 1792, after the recent the cliff "shoot", but by 1861 he had moved up the hill. A new residential area had begun to form on the Bank Top and already there were four shipowning masters up there.<sup>1</sup> The modern shaping of the settlement, portended by Prospect House around 1765, was thus resumed as an effect of mid-nineteenth century shipping increase.

This case illustrates the achievement of objectives relating to ownership and command by means of the extended household or family.

(ii) Matthew Storm and Co. (See Appendix 7 (b).) The group is all too easily confused with another led by one of the same name. The other two principals were William Steel and William Bedlington, and all were shipmasters and kinsmen when they married James Storm's daughters. Operations began in 1848 with shares in the brig Princess (186), and continued with the Rebecca, bought from their father-in-law in 1852.<sup>2</sup> From this time it emerges that the company, based on heads of three linked households (the senior being, significantly, childless, and his partners having only young children), had the nature of a business central to three others run separately by each of the partners. With only ten of the total of 26 vessels in musters, registers and Club lists in which at one time or another they had shares, separately or collectively, did all three come together. Within two years of their father-in-law's death the partners were able to buy the brigs Stranton (182) and Victor (208).<sup>3</sup> Ensuing losses, sales, investments and replacements become part of the familiar story, but relationships widen. Typical was the case of the Gem (186). Thomas and William Storm, cousins-once-removed of Matthew, came into the

1. P.R.O.: H.O.107,2734; RG9,3647-49.

2. R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.245/ Fyl.Recon., Storm.

3. R.Weatherill, op.cit., pp.354, 366.



circle to acquire her. William was 21 and not long out of his apprenticeship. The four senior men took 13/64ths each and the young William took twelve for his stake as master. Within the next two years the Gem disappeared without trace, and Thomas Storm left to buy his own Hartlepool (208). He registered her at Sunderland and went on to work her for 20 years with his son, Thomas junior, as her master in due course. <sup>1</sup>

While the dealings in ships were proceeding, the principals continued to serve as masters. In the Club list of 1867 two of the vessels belonging to the company have William Steel and William Bedlington as master, and each of the latter has another vessel, of one of which Matthew Storm is in command. There were ten vessels in all, with an average tonnage of 184, and among the other masters were Reuben Storm, John Steel, James Storm Steel, William Storm, and William Cooper from one of the Majority fishing families. The names themselves suggest that the complex was self-supporting and self-perpetuating. The inclusion of a William Storm is surprising, after the loss of the Gem three years before. This was another, however, from the seemingly endless cousinage of qualified men, a cousin-once-removed of the principals' wives. <sup>2</sup>

The transactions of this enterprise and that which preceded it depict the village as a place alive with commerce, a residential stock exchange, with the emphasis in this instance on collaboration of numerous kin extending from one household, by way of the households of daughters. Behind lay the initiative of James Storm whose wife, Damaris, was the sister of the fisherman Thomas Harrison, a link that may have been instrumental in inspiring an example of masters and owners coming by contrast directly, and rather late, from a single fishing household. <sup>3</sup>

1. R.Weatherill, op.cit., pp.174, 228.

2. Fyl.Recon., Harrison and Storm.

3. Ibid., Harrison and Storm.

(iii) Thomas Harrison and family (See Appendix 7(c).) This household enterprise provides one of the best examples of the nuclear family in action. The head was a descendant of one of the same name who bought a long lease in 1685.<sup>1</sup> His grandfather bought the sloop Speedwell from Scarborough in 1787, having paid parish sess on other small craft before that time, as recorded in Appendix 4.<sup>2</sup> There is no indication of the Speedwell being used in the alum trade, and Thomas is always a fisherman in the parish register. Jacob Storm called her a lugger, which suggests her rig may have been changed to that fashion, a common one among fishing craft.<sup>3</sup> She was purchased after the marriage of Thomas's son John in 1785, and the birth of the next Thomas in 1786.<sup>4</sup> Her place was taken by a larger craft of the same name in 1789, new from a Whitby yard, a purchase that could have been assisted by bounties. There was some good fishing in the next decade, according to Hinderwell, who praised the Bay men for the good use they made of this opportunity.<sup>5</sup>

From the account of the shipping revival that has been given it can be gathered that entrepreneurial activity was gaining momentum early in the nineteenth century. The part played at that time by the family of the patriarch Matthew Storm (1714-1804) has been briefly outlined, and it was his granddaughter, Mercy, who became the wife of the Thomas Harrison who was born in 1786.<sup>6</sup>

1. See p.26.

2. N.M.M., Whitby, no.90, 1787.

3. J.S., Memoirs, p.25.

4. Fyl.Recon., Harrison.

5. R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.80; T.Hinderwell, History of Scarborough, 1811 edn., p.242.

6. See p.233.



It is of this time that Jacob Storm writes that his grandfather, Thomas Harrison, could afford a crew of as many as ten with the aid of the bounties. <sup>1</sup> In 1819, partnered by John Smith (former harpooner, and future part-owner of the John and James, with James Storm), and the fisherman John Avery, his uncles by marriage, he bought the schooner New Speedwell and became her master. <sup>2</sup> Evidently there was still money in fishing, even if it came slowly, because ten years later Thomas's fishermen uncles bought the new lugger Friends, taking the shopkeeper Thomas Newton as a partner. The two uncles were lost at sea in 1833 and 1838, but the New Speedwell continued her career. <sup>3</sup> There is a brief record of her work at the annual Yarmouth herring-fishing event of 1833.

Table 42: Thomas Harrison's Yarmouth fishing account, 1833. <sup>4</sup>

	£	s	d
Oct 9th delivered 100 herrings at Yarmouth		4	6
Oct 16th delivered 700 herrings at 4/- a hundred	1	8	0
Oct 23rd delivered 300 herrings at 5/- at Cromer	2	0	0
Oct 25th delivered 5,000 herrings at £24 a last			
at Worlton	12	0	0
Oct 27th delivered 5,000 herrings at £25	12	0	0
Nov 12th delivered 7 lasts at £13 10s a last	94	10	0
Nov 15th delivered to French at £15 per last	6	15	0
	128	17	6

Seven crew members sailed on this expedition with Thomas. His son Boyce received £9, and William Storm £7; George and John Pinkney were paid £5 each, and three boys received a total among them of £2.11s.6d. According to custom boys were not sharers in profits. There was about £100 left to cover expenses, the master's share, and his "one for the boat".

1. J.S., Memoirs, p.25.  
2. Fyl.Recon, Avery, Harison, Smith; N.M.M., Whitby, no.13, 1819.  
3. R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.267; W.Conyers and H.Streeting, Register of the Missing Seamen of Robin Hood's Bay, n.d.  
4. J.S., Miscellany, Thomas Harrison's Yarmouth notes.

That there were profits to be made is established by the next major transaction, ten years later. In 1843 Thomas Harrison went to the Whitby shipbuilder Henry Barrick and ordered a brigantine of 130 tons, for which he paid £1,104.13s.2d. He called her Harrisons and registered her in the names of himself and three of his sons.<sup>1</sup> This was part of a long-term plan, for John, the eldest son, had begun to serve his apprenticeship to the sea fourteen years earlier, and now he was appointed master of the new vessel.<sup>2</sup> Thomas Harrison was 55 years of age when he achieved this design, and that he was able to do so illustrates William Dalton's observation about the sanctity of capital among Bay people.<sup>3</sup>

John Harrison's four brothers had started seafaring careers, and all served some time in the family's first vessel. Jacob Storm, their nephew, started his sea-going career aboard her, having been indentured to his grandfather at the Whitby Customs House shortly after his twelfth birthday, in 1850. His notes, when pieced together and then integrated with the Memoirs, provide a good and rather rare guide, drawn upon here, to trading on the north-east coast.<sup>4</sup> Other writers on the subject give little or no attention to Robin Hood's Bay, probably because it was no more than a place of shelter in an emergency and not a port of call. Lord Runciman, who knew the trade well in his days as a master, does not mention it at all in his account of the ships and men he knew.<sup>5</sup>

The employment of the Harrisons illustrates the life of a typical Bay vessel. She sailed on her maiden voyage in 1844, bound for the Baltic, and

1. R.Weatherill. op.cit., p.173.

2. J.S., Memoirs, p.26.

3. W.Dalton, A Guide to Robin Hood's Bay, 1909 edn., p.17.

4. J.S., Memoirs, pp.28-32., and Miscellany, Notes on Robin Hood's Bay and Whitby vessels.

5. Walter, Baron Runciman, Collier Brigs and Their Sailors, 1926, passim.



thence to London, with barley from Danzig. This took seven weeks, and then she had to go back to Danzig in ballast for a wheat cargo. The destination was Jersey and the voyage lasted two months. In the remainder of the year there were two coal cargoes from Middlesbrough for London, and on the second of these the crew and their pay were: John Harrison, master, £8, Thomas Harrison junior, mate, £5.10s., William Barnard and George Robinson, able seamen, £4.10s. each, and two apprentices (one of whom was the youngest Harrison brother, Edward), 7s.6d. each. The next year began unpropitiously with a voyage to Archangel in ballast, and in the worst of February weather.

There is a fairly complete record of work in 1847. An early start was made in February, with coal from Middlesbrough to Rochester, and then the Harrisons spent one month and eighteen days going from Whitby to load oats at Landskrona and Helsingborg and take them to Leith. Two voyages followed for which no cargoes are given, but the first was from Leith to Pilau, and thence to London, and the second from Middlesbrough to Guernsey. At the last place a cargo of stone was found. The year was completed with four coal voyages on the east coast.

In 1848 the Harrisons was re-rigged as a brig, to increase her speed, an advantage against which the cost of manning to handle more sail would have to be weighed. The account of her sails shows that she carried 754 yards of canvas at 1s.6d. a yard. A suit of sails at £55 therefore meant that a storm might carry away a large part of a year's profit. Jacob Storm calculated that in 20 years their vessel earned the Harrison family £1,207.2s.6d., or £85 a year. In 1865 she was sold for just over half of her purchase price, after 21 years of service. What makes the return on the capital and the effort look less meagre is that several of the family had made their living aboard her. Nevertheless the accumulation of capital for other ventures would have to depend on savings. There was an obvious

advantage in operating within the household, with members committed, or perhaps more accurately, conditioned to the same objectives and expectations, all the way from apprentice to master and owner. It was fundamental to Thomas and Mercy Harrison's achievement that theirs was a nuclear household with many sons.

Edward, the youngest son, who had been apprentice aboard the Harrisons, became her mate, until he joined the Claret (145), which his brother John registered in 1854. In the next year John registered the Arica (184). This opened up opportunity for the brothers, and Thomas began to serve as John's mate, until their father bought the Fortitude (125) from Thomas Mennel, for £600 and made him master of her. The financial arrangement was that Thomas Mennel, a Bay man, was to receive half of the price at once and the remainder in a year's time. The third son, William, followed Thomas as master. The purchase of the Fortitude is the only reference in the Memoirs to a credit transaction. Simplicity of financial operations is recognisable many years later even among the steamship owners of Whitby, eight out of eleven of whose companies were listed in 1901 without "Ltd." when the advantages of limited liability had been available for many years. <sup>1</sup>

When Thomas senior died in 1860 John was in a position to buy the Daring (151) for himself, spending £926.18s. on her. The cost of just over £6 a ton is a sign of sailing craft coming into the market more cheaply as attention turned to steam. The Harrisons had cost more than £8 a ton. Almost at the same time Edward registered the North of Scotland, a barque of 252 tons, for the family, and became her master. Her size emphasises the need for more carrying capacity. <sup>2</sup> When the 1867 Club list appeared,

1. J.S., Memoirs, p.28; W.J.Cook and Co., Whitby District Directory, 1901.

2. J.S., Memoirs, p.53.



the family business was styled "Mercy Harrison and Sons". John was master of his own Daring, but each of the other four brothers had charge of a family vessel.

Jacob Storm, himself the son of a master-turned-owner, enlarged a little on the theme of family, and divulged where control lay by relating how for six years after his apprenticeship he gave his wages to his parents, and eventually received back a very modest sum with which to begin married life.

There is a little more information in the Memoirs about the financial side of affairs. It does not involve the Harrison household directly, but families and businesses were very close: the two enterprises are always next to each other in the Club lists, an arrangement by the managers that always reveals where there is collaboration, when ownership is explored. The barque Maggie, in which Jacob Storm served, made no profit in 1872 and £325.15s.7d. in 1873. Sometimes a poor return can be attributed to adverse weather, as on the occasion when the barque, bound for Alexandria with coal, was damaged in Channel gales and had to spend nearly two months in Dartmouth undergoing repairs. The profit for the year was £50. A comparison is possible with the brig Coquette which his father bought for £830 cash in 1859. In what was left of the year she made £79 on three coal voyages to Rochester. The summary of profits thereafter is in the table.

Table 43: Profits of the brig Coquette, 1860-79

	£	s	d		£	s	d		£	s	d
1859	79	0	0	1866	147	2	0½	1873	200	2	9
1860	124	17	5	1867	165	19	6	1874	214	18	3
1861	137	16	7	1868	80	19	11½	1875	107	9	5
1862	203	4	0	1869	153	19	11	1876	carried to 1877		
1863	247	4	7½	1870	122	10	0	1877	22	11	2
1864	154	12	1	1871	148	17	4	1878	170	10	8
1865	115	17	6	1872	48	14	3	1879	32	1	3
								Total	2687	19	8½

The gaps are not accounted for, but the total for the 20 years given is £2,687.19s.8d. She was sold in 1880 for £380, and if the original cost is taken from the total there remains a surplus of £2,237, or an average of £112 a year. But the years varied greatly, and the Rev. William Dalton, son-in-law of the shipmaster John Steel, summed up the sea as a source of livelihood as "more or less precarious".<sup>1</sup>

All the shareholders in the village are likely to have gone through the experience of such risk. Jacob Storm said that his uncle, John Harrison, "battled on" at sea into his seventies, and called him, with rather unusual choice of adjective, "one of the most persevering men of his time".<sup>2</sup> There were far worse situations, but the acceptance of small rewards relative to the financial and physical risks suggests, again, that the continuation of the way of life depended not a little on conditioning, or socialisation, however informal, and it is easy to imagine this to have been true of the Harrison family. With John Harrison included, there were eight generations of fishermen and sailors in the reconstitutions alone.

(iv) Storm and Co. (See Appendix 7(d).) About the time Thomas Harrison and family were approaching the purchase of their Harrisons, this group appears in R. Weatherill's summaries of the Whitby shipping. Not even the Club lists make the identity clear, and it is only after work on the ship registrations and the reconstitutions that the Matthew Storm at the head of the group is seen to have no connection with Matthew Storm and Co. described in sub-section (ii). R. Weatherill first names the company on its purchase of the Sunderland-built brig Malta (144) in 1836, and the clue that leads to identification is in the shipping registrations: it is the

1. J.S., Memoirs, p.53; W. Dalton, op.cit., p.17.

2. J.S., Memoirs, p.34.



unusual name of the master mariner Coultas Storm among the new owners of the brig Achilles (195) in 1846.<sup>1</sup> He was a son of the fishing household headed by Matthew and Martha Storm who in 1799 were paying a shilling a year on one of the old "long-leaseholds". The membership is revealed more completely in 1849 when the father and another son, Edward, register the brig Northumberland (212).<sup>2</sup> The existence here of a nuclear-family involvement with shipping acquires further interest when the daughter of the household, Martha, becomes a shareholder of the brig Isabella (166) in 1839. The identity determined, members can be traced as far back as 1826, to the brig Mary (125), registered by two sons, aged 24 and 20.<sup>3</sup>

"Coultas" is the widely- and officially-used form in Fylingdales of Coulthirst. Matthew Storm's wife Martha was the daughter of a farmer, William Coulthirst, and she had a brother of the same name who had taken to the sea and become master of a transport. Martha was his executrix. He died of yellow fever in the West Indies, but he had children and so a legacy cannot be entertained as the means of the family's introduction to shipowning.<sup>4</sup> The case can reasonably be regarded as one similar to the Harrisons', based on fishing and thrift. Another important similarity is that there were sons.

The burning of the Isabella off Hartlepool, in 1840, occasioned a significant event, for Matthew immediately continued in business with a new vessel of 166 tons, bought from a Sunderland yard. Choice of name being the owner's, she became the William and Ann, after his parents.<sup>5</sup>

1. R.Weatherill., op.cit., p.318; N.M.M., Whitby, no.22, 1846.

2. See page 26; N.M.M., Whitby, no.28, 1849.

3. R.Weatherill, op.cit., pp.287, 310.

4. Fyl.Recon., Coultas, Storm; J.S., Miscellany, abstract of correspondence of and concerning William Coultas.

5. R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.372; Fyl.Recon., Storm.

This parentage makes him the grandson of the patriarch Matthew (1714-1804) and brother of the shipowning Mercy Harrison. One effect of the shipping transactions was that in 1841 Matthew was listed not as a fisherman but as a shipowner, a description widely applied to holders of any number of sixty-fourths.<sup>1</sup>

1840 brought the loss of the eldest son, William, in the Halfway Reach of the Thames, and of Andrew, who was lost in a gale with all his crew off the Landsend.<sup>2</sup> The wider family then became effective, the place of one of the sons being taken by a son-in-law who was a master. This was another Thomas Harrison, son of the dealer who handled the local fish catches. There was a remote relationship to the shipowning Harrison household last described.<sup>3</sup> From 1846 to 1849 Matthew Storm and Thomas Harrison worked the brig Achilles. The latter was master, and his brother came in to take a quarter of her, appropriately enough as he had married the widow of Andrew.<sup>4</sup> Both the William and Ann and the Achilles were lost in 1849, in winter months, when in former times the shipping would largely have been idle: the operating season was lengthening. At this, Matthew, Edward and Coultas joined with the grocer Thomas Newton to buy the Northumberland (212), sharing her equally.<sup>5</sup> Martha, their younger sister, had married the Congregational minister, Thomas Phillips, and in 1850 the clergyman and Edward purchased together the Nymph (186), another Sunderland product,

1. P.R.O., H.O.107,1265.

2. W.Conyers and H.Streeting, Register of the Missing Seamen of Robin Hood's Bay, n.d.; See p.137.

3. Fyl.Recon., Harrison (Raw/Thorpe), Harrison (Bay).

4. N.M.M., Whitby, no.22, 1846; Fyl.Recon., Harrison (Raw/Thorpe), Mills, Storm.

5. R.Weatherill, op.cit., pp. 372, 207, 326.



built three years earlier.<sup>1</sup> In 1855 Edward moved out of the framework of the household and took a share of the Mary (171) with Will Baxter and Thomas Jackson.<sup>2</sup> Less familiar names nearly always reward scrutiny by leading to the traditional circles. William Baxter was a shipmaster, and the son-in-law of the Bay joiner - one of the many Zachariahs of the Core Granger family - and Thomas Jackson was the grandson of a shoemaker who had established himself in Bay before his marriage there in 1781.<sup>3</sup>

Just after the death of his father in 1861, Edward bought for himself the Leda (202). There was no son ready to follow him, but Coultas became owner of the Ocean (211) in 1863, and promptly re-started the cycle by appointing his son her master. He gave the process further momentum by taking over the Nymph from his brother and the minister and putting her in the care of another son, William Coultas. Thus one nuclear household was producing others.<sup>4</sup> It marks the solidarity of the maritime group that William Coultas had married the daughter of the "battling" and "persevering" shipmaster John Harrison.<sup>5</sup>

Edward was one of few who took the new opportunity to invest in steam. In 1881 he had the largest holding of shares, in Fylingdales, in the Whitby company headed by Thomas Turnbull, and was one of the very few of his name to leave Bay Town for the more distinctly rural Fylingthorpe.<sup>6</sup>

The basic social importance of this company lies in the variation that was perforce contrived on the nuclear-family theme.

1. Fyl.Recon., Phillips, Storm; R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.327.

2. Ibid., p.311.

3. Fyl.Recon., Baxter, Cobb, Granger, Harrison.

4. R.Weatherill, op.cit., pp.306, 328, 327.

5. Fyl.Recon., Harrison, Storm.

6. A. and R.Long, A Shipping Venture: Turnbull Scott and Co., 1872-1972, 1974, p.88.

(v) The Granger-Tindale-Robinson group (See Appendix 7(e).) Any doubt about the importance of marriages and the extended family would be dispelled by the establishing of the basis of this group's cohesion.

Following chronologically what might for convenience be called the Harrison-Storm network, the name Granger is the one most commonly found in all sources. It was familiar among the alum sloops around the beginning of the nineteenth century, and T.T.Granger was one of the participants in the shipping revival. He had left the alum trade, in which his father Zachariah had been a master, to become master of the schooner Rose in 1808.<sup>1</sup> The next occurrence of the name among owners comes in 1825, when Ben Granger senior, fisher and sometime sailor, shares the brigantine Isabella (102) with Richard Tindale.<sup>2</sup> This is near the beginning of an important association, emerging from the extending and overlapping of families. Hence the composite title of the group.

The Grangers are known to have been present in Fylingdales from the early seventeenth century, but not as far back as 1563. The Robinsons were probably as long in the parish: their prominence in innkeeping, Customs work and parish office has been related and shows a family well integrated with the community, but the early reconstitution is made difficult by the presence of other households of the name. The coming of the Tindales from Hackness and their Fylingdales marriages have also been described.<sup>3</sup>

The association of Ben Granger senior with Richard Tindale began when they became brothers-in-law on the marriage of the former to Isabella Tindale. The relationships revealed by the reconstitutions are better explained in Appendix 7(d). They inherited the Isabella, but there is no explanation of how Richard and Isabella Tindale's widowed mother was in

1. See table 39 on p.227; R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.344.

2. Ibid., p.286.

3. P.R.O., E318/43/2316; Fyl.Recon., Granger; See pp.231-232.



a position to register this 102-ton brigantine at Whitby a year before her death in 1824.<sup>1</sup> It has to suffice to say in this case that she was a member of a shipping circle: she was the sister of John Smith who bought the John and James with James Storm in 1827, and her husband was one of the three owner-masters called Ben Tindale.<sup>2</sup> A complication in the search for a more precise explanation is the great number of vessels called Isabella in all the north-east ports where she might have been registered. The Tindale brigantine Mercury passed to Richard Robinson from his father-in-law, whose widow was bound with fellow administrators in 1831 in the sum of £4,000, from which the vessel may be assumed to have paid her way.<sup>3</sup>

The death of Richard Robinson at 32 had the effect of tightening the strands of association further, because his widow married Ben Granger's mariner son, Ben junior. Appendix 7(e) sets out how there came to be four sons-in-law of the Tindale Mercury families with a shipping interest. Three were masters and the fourth, the younger Ben Granger, was to become joint head of the second of the Bay ship insurance businesses, known as "Granger's and Ireland's" (or more simply "the Indemnity") and as such a person of consequence. Jacob Storm said of him that he was "too well known for words of mine".<sup>4</sup> His family links were at least equally important, because when he married Richard Robinson's widow he became stepfather of two Robinson shipmasters of the future. It is difficult to distinguish father from son when the name Ben Granger arises, but it can be connected beyond doubt with 17 vessels in musters and shipping registers, and their

1. R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.286.

2. Fyl.Recon., Smith, Tindale.

3. Borthwick, Benjamin Tindale, Fylingdales, 1832.

4. J.S., Miscellany, transcript of agreement between Benjamin Granger and John Ireland, 1856; J.S., Memoirs, p.7.

associations with the Grangers, traced in Appendix 7(e) appear to have confirmed the Robinsons in their shipping interests.

In 1835 Ben Granger entered a fundamentally important partnership with his kinsman Marshall Granger and bought the brig Friends' Regard (171). Richard Robinson did not come into this transaction: he may have been inactive as he died in the following year. His Mercury had been lost in 1833, and the Friends' Regard also disappeared, in 1839.<sup>1</sup> But the time of increasing opportunism, of much dealing in vessels, had begun, and in 1841 Ben and Marshall Granger purchased a new brig, of 181 tons, the Isabella Granger. Ben went on to invest in two more newly-built vessels in the next ten years.<sup>2</sup> At the end of that time his stepsons, Richard and Ben Tindale Robinson, were sailors, and from then on the "Ben Granger and Co." of lists of insured shipping indicates a Granger-Tindale-Robinson partnership, most clearly in the names of the masters. In the 1867 Club list the group had eight vessels, and Richard Robinson, Ben Tindale, Ben Tindale Robinson and Tindale Avery were among the masters.

There were other Granger ventures: Marshall's three are in Appendix 7(e). In all, there is a link with 36 vessels between 1811 and 1867, but the largest number is around the childless Ben and his stepsons. That this acquired family recognised his status becomes apparent in steamship days in Whitby: the partnership known as Robinson, Rowland and Marwood bought a steamer from the Turnbull shipyard in the town and gave her the name Ben Granger. The Robinson factor can be identified on the share certificates, which are signed by Ben Tindale Robinson and W.Granger Robinson.<sup>3</sup>

1. R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.266; Fyl.Recon., Robinson; Weatherill, op.cit., p.320, 266.

2. Ibid., p.251 (Sisters), p.351 (Solon).

3. J.S., Miscellany, certificate no.86650, Share Register, Whitby Customs House, 15th July, 1885.



An aspect of the business scene that is better illustrated by this group than might be expected, is that although the title has had to be a composite one, and although there is much interpenetration of families noticeable in Appendix 7(e), an integrity - an almost nuclear character - is detectable, focusing on an apparently childless household.

(vi) Bedlington (See Appendix 7(f).) The name is a locative one from the Northumberland coalfield, and appropriately it made an early appearance at Whitby in 1394-5, when Robert Bedlington was paid for carrying fuel up to the Abbey. By 1607 the name was established in Fylingdales. <sup>1</sup>

The family was represented in shipping at the revival, in 1812, in the person of Thomas, a fisherman, joint owner with William Mills, fisherman, and John English, master mariner, of the Alert (81), a prize taken in the previous year. She was sold to Sunderland in 1820, John English, the master, having died in 1819. For the next 13 years the Bedlingtons were not active as owners, except for Lance Bedlington with his sloop Friendship. <sup>2</sup> Thomas Bedlington was the son of Thomas, a boat-owner of 1762, and William Mills was the son-in-law of Zachariah Granger who also owned a boat then. <sup>3</sup> Appendix 7(f) identifies an affinity with these people in the antecedents of John English, although he came from Foulisike farm in the parish.

Thomas Bedlington's wife died in childbirth and there was no son. It may be coincidental that it was a nephew, Matthew, who started a small fleet, but his father appears to have had no share of any vessel. In 1825

1. Whitby Abbey roll of disbursements quoted in G.Young, op.cit., p.923;

Borthwick, York, Fylingdales parish register transcripts, 1600-1640.

2. R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.210; J.S., Miscellany, Bedlington Log Book.

3. Fyl.Recon., Bedlington, Granger, Mills.

Matthew succeeded James Storm as master of the Whitby vessel Hero, and when she was run down, without loss of crew, in 1827, the owner took him as a partner and bought the brig Peace (178). Matthew Bedlington junior, born in 1818, was to spend his first years at sea in her. <sup>1</sup>

The profit went into a joint purchase with Isaac Storm, in 1840, of the brig Unity (193), new from her Sunderland yard. The partnership continued with the Ami (182), which had been finished in the same port only a year before. Then Isaac Storm, who had married a Scarborough woman, went to live in Hartlepool and left the Bay shipping scene. <sup>2</sup> In the 1867 Club list Matthew Bedlington still held the Peace and the Ami, and had acquired three others, and three of his four sons had come to be employed as masters. The eldest, Matthew, had "come ashore" at 39 to manage the affairs of the Club, and so his name is in the heading of the list. <sup>3</sup> Another son was the William Bedlington who had married a daughter of James Storm and become a principal of Matthew Storm and Co., whose affairs have been outlined. He represents the point at which two households meet, in intermarriage and collaboration, in the extending of operations, the process discussed as an aspect of fishing organisation.

The Mills family affords a similar illustration. When Thomas Mills had a share of the Alert at the shipping revival, with Thomas Bedlington and John English, Isaac Mills had part of the Betsy and Sally. <sup>4</sup> Isaac went on to increase his holdings with the Frances Ann (259), the Alexander (212) and the Eleanor (165). <sup>5</sup> His only son John followed the usual path

1. R.Weatherill, op.cit., pp.278,332; A. and R.Long, A Shipping Venture, 1872-1972, p.86.

2. Ibid., pp.362,211; Fyl.Recon., Storm

3. J.S., Miscellany, note on Matthew Bedlington.

4. See table 39 on p.227.      5. R.Weatherill, op.cit., pp.268, 209, 164.



and became a master. One daughter married Matthew Bedlington junior, which explains why Bedlington and Mills holdings came to be kept together in the insurance lists. The other daughter married Andrew Storm of "Storm and Co.", completing a lateral link across four household businesses, until Andrew was lost off Landsend. <sup>1</sup> The Bedlington-Mills collaboration with its four sons or sons-in-law prospered. Isaac Mills became a man of substance in Bay, with a house and three acres of land on the lane to Thorpe, and other property which can be seen accumulating in the parish books. There were four other houses, one of which was occupied by his son-in-law, Matthew Bedlington junior, who occupied a position of influence with the leading figure in Whitby shipping, Thomas Turnbull. The Turnbull yard launched the steamer Matthew Bedlington in 1882. <sup>2</sup>

The emphasis in this concern is largely on the uniting and collaborating of two households, each to supplement the other's needs in the way of masters and partners.

(vii) Moorsom This smaller enterprise can be explained adequately without the aid of a genealogical chart.

There were two cottages occupied by Moorsoms in 1563 and there were still seven households paying rates in 1776. In 1841 there were eight distinct households, but they formed the smallest Core family in the village. <sup>3</sup> Four households had men away, presumably at sea, and three men remained in fishing, one at a great age. There were eight households

1. Fyl.Recon., Bedlington, Mills, Storm.

2. N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/4/4 and 5, Churchwardens' Account and Rate Books, and PR/FY/5/2/4 and 5, Overseers' Rate Books; A. and R.Long, A Shipping Venture, p.86; Whitby Gazette, 2nd September, 1904.

3. P.R.O., E318/43/2316; N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/4/1 and 2, Churchwardens' Account and Rate Books; P.R.O., HO107,1265.

in 1851, however, a number that might win a family some fame in many villages, and there were five master mariners among them too, two of them in their thirties. <sup>1</sup> When there was so much local enthusiasm for investment it would have been strange had there not been a Moorsom contribution. This is to be seen evolving as a small, household-based venture.

There had been a part in the shipping revival early in the century. William Moorsom, William Robinson and Thomas Cropton were owners of the brigantine Plough in 1816. The second of these had just inherited his father's share, and William Moorsom was her master. <sup>2</sup> How two of these came together has a ready explanation: William Robinson took on the coal metering from his father, and Thomas Cropton was the son of Robert, the coal fitter, or merchant, who had Sunderland connections. <sup>3</sup> It was to Sunderland that the Plough went in 1823, for registration there. The next Moorsom link with shipowning came in 1852, when the rate of acquisition was accelerating and Thomas Moorsom purchased the brig Welcome (228). He died in 1854 and his widow was succeeded in 1856 by kinsmen who included her brother-in-law, Christopher Moorsom, master mariner, cousin of William of the Plough. <sup>4</sup> In 1858 Christopher bought for himself the Sarah and Margaret (191). The Welcome was lost in February of 1866 and replaced in March with the Mary and Emily (203). <sup>5</sup> There were two sons in the reconstitution of his household and in the 1867 Club list Christopher is an owner and each son is master of one of the vessels. This was a smaller venture, but Matthew Bedlington entered a Club valuation of £2,400 and so

1. P.R.O., H.O.107,2734.

2. See p.227; Borthwick, William Robinson, Fylingdales, 1815.

3. See p.110; Fyl.Recon., Cropton, Robinson.

4. R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.335; Ibid., p.370; Fyl.Recon., Moorsom.

5. Ibid., pp. 379, 348, 315.



the viability - or success - of the experienced maritime household is again exemplified, making its way without the array of involvements seen in the larger companies.

(viii) Skerry (See Appendix 7(g).) This Majority firm - the largest not headed by a Core name - was based on the household of Jonathan Skerry, his son James, and his daughters. A glance at Appendix 7(g) establishes that as such a business grew it had to be supported by a much-extended family.

The first parish register entry about the Skerry family was in 1628, and the members were fishermen who do not appear among the owners of boats.<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Skerry II went to sea around 1783, having been baptised in 1770. His elder brother James made a brief appearance in 1808 as master of the Phoenix owned by John Ridley of the alum works, and Jonathan was master of the Ceres (288) in the following year. At the shipping revival he was master and part-owner of the brigantine Commot.<sup>2</sup> She was employed for many years. Jacob Storm's father-in-law, William Pearson, worked aboard her, having been apprenticed to Jonathan Skerry in 1815.<sup>3</sup>

In 1827 Jonathan, John Coggin and Hezekiah Godden bought a bigger vessel of the same type, the Success (129). This combination of master mariner, former militia sergeant and retired Customs man is explained in Appendix 7(g), in which close relationships with Core families almost surround the Skerry household.<sup>4</sup> The chart in effect consists of the entrepreneurial household of Jonathan, brief evidence of the even greater

1. Borthwick, Fylingdales Parish Register transcripts, 1600-1640.

2. Fyl.Recon., Skerry; Whitby Lit. and Phil., Muster Rolls,

no.692, 1806; Ibid., Ceres, 1807.

3. J.S., Miscellany, apprenticeship indenture of William Pearson, 1815.

4. R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.354; Fyl.Recon., Coggin, Godden, Granger, Skerry, Storm.

shipping activity of his son, James, the ties of the latter's wife and sisters, and the extending search for masters of the numerous vessels.

Further purchases after the Success were the brigs Attaliah (177), and William and Hannah (224), another product of Sunderland and not yet three years old. <sup>1</sup> The second earned Jonathan Skerry's son-in-law, John Storm, one of the distinguishing names necessary in the community, "Attaliah Jack". <sup>2</sup> The last vessel is mentioned on account of tonnage and age, topics about which there is now enough information for the purpose of analysis, in section (c) of this chapter. Jonathan died in 1860 aged 89, and it is his son James who is in the 1867 Club list, with five vessels, and masters including John Storm, and two nephews, Isaac Storm Harrison and John Skerry Storm, the implications of which names are self-evident.

(ix) Todd (See Appendix 7(h).) There is a mainly "household" character here, but there is also provided an example of the wide range of minority interests and occupations that might gather round the nucleus. The Todd family was much intermarried with the Core, having been in Fylingdales since 1671-80. The name occurred three times in the lists of those who were active at the revival, early in the century. <sup>3</sup> Appendix 7(h) offers intermarriage as an explanation of early co-operation with Hezekiah Godden. In 1841 the Goddens moved independently by buying a new brig from South Shields and calling her Goddens. She was lost off the Norfolk coast in 1853 and the widowed Elizabeth Godden returned to the Todd circle to share the Ark. <sup>4</sup>

The six Todd ship entries in the Club list in 1867 are included in the

1. R.Weatherill, op.cit., pp.217, 372.

2. J.S., Miscellany, nicknames mentioned in Notes on Robin Hood's Bay and Whitby vessels ; Fyl.Recon., Harrison, Skerry, Storm.

3. Fyl.Recon., Todd; See p.227. 4. R.Weatherill, op.cit., pp.274, 140.



Appendix. Apart from the household base and the sources of collaboration, another feature deserving attention is the recurrence of descent from the household of William and Ann Storm and, consequently, from that of Matthew (1714-1804).

(x) Stainthorpe and Russell Complete homogeneity did not prevail. There were two shipping concerns of origins that were unusual, but not illogical in the context of Fylingdales Country industries. That "outsiders" were drawn into shipowning is evidence of the success of the boom years.

In 1754 George Stainthorpe of Demains Quarter of the parish was paying parish rates of an amount to denote a small farm. In 1763 he had taken in more land and in 1776 he paid the highest rates in the Quarter.<sup>1</sup> There were numerous Stainthorpe baptisms, and several sons to make their way. and when Smith Stainthorpe was born in 1811 his father, another George, was a labourer at the Alum works.<sup>2</sup> This year of birth would put the beginning of a seafaring career at about 1824. In 1846, when he was 35, Smith Stainthorpe bought the brig Gipsy (85), an old craft from the Tyne. This is comparable with what some of the maritime people had been doing 20 years or more earlier. It is witness to the general economic situation in shipping, and to the efficacy of the Bay Club's function, that when the Gipsy was lost three years later her owner could afford to buy the Derwent (227), which was only seven years old.<sup>3</sup> He had four of the insured vessels of 1867, and they had been given a value of £4,900.

1. J.S., Miscellany, transcripts of Fylingdales Onerseers' Assessments, 1754 and 1767; N.Y.C.R.O., PR/FY/4/1, Churchwardes' Account and Rate Book.

2. Fyl.Recon., Stainthorpe.

3. R.Weatherill, op.cit., pp.271, 242.

George Russell also belonged to a Country family, one of those that moved in and out of the parish and thus more difficult to reconstitute. There are Brow associations, more often as labourers in the parish registers than as ratepayers in the parish books, and one of them was George Russell's marriage to the daughter of Abraham Streeting, who served the last Cook occupant of Cook House, the alum caput.<sup>1</sup> His shipowning began with the brig Unity (80), old and small, in 1844, and he had a partner.<sup>2</sup> From this late beginning he went on to become owner by 1867 of four vessels of his own, and to share another in the partnership called G.Russell and Co.

Such achievements characterise Bay as a place of opportunity, for a time, and help to illustrate a unity of Bay and Country. In 1867 Smith Stainthorpe was employing Majority men as masters. Also, there is an interesting doggerel account by Jacob Storm of a pig-killing feast at Stoupe Brow Cottage, where among the company of farming people, labourers, sailors, shipmasters and shipowners who can be identified in the reconstitutions was Smith Stainthorpe, helping to provide the entertainment.<sup>3</sup> A significant divergence may be detectable, however: the Stainthorpe and Russell ventures began comparatively late, suggesting the traditional shipping background carried an advantage.

(xi) There were ten other owners or owning groups in 1867. Together they had 14 vessels in 1867, attached to the Majority names Mennel, Hewson, Peacock and Barnard. The second of these had been in the village since 1563, or earlier.<sup>4</sup> The senior partner of Nathan Hewson and Co. in 1867,

1. Fyl.Recon., Russell, Streeting.

2. R.Weatherill, op.cit., p.362.

3. J.S., Miscellany.

4. P.R.O., E318/43/2316.



and his two colleagues, were masters of their three vessels, and all were married to sisters, granddaughters of Matthew Storm (1714-1804).<sup>1</sup> This sort of relationship is one to which to return in the next chapter.

(c) The characteristics of the boom The essence of the operations seen in section (b) seems at first to lie in the interweaving of families and shipping interests, with major shipping households at points where the weave is made thickest by co-operation, or collaboration. Economic and social networks are inseparable. Absence of central control irresistably recalls modern Whalsay; but the real unity was such that the economy could almost be said to have been one business directed from many points.<sup>2</sup> There stands out, however, the ideal of the household venture, and the nuclear family was its basis, wherever possible. The cases studied might even be arranged in the order in which they approximated to the ideal.

The next feature to be noticed is the prosperity won. A visitor wrote in 1858: "It is a very strange place.... yet there are traders in Bay Town who could buy up two or three of your fashionable shopkeepers in the watering places.....There are no such miserable paupers as swarm in the large towns". In 1866 another observer noted "some good houses on the top of the bank as we go down into the bay, for this little town is rich and has great interests in shipping: and there is an appearance of prosperity in the two narrow and steep streets.....and the more numerous pebble-paved, twisting, bye-ways and passages.....It is very like Staithes, only better built; and not unlike what Whitby was, but smaller".<sup>3</sup>

1. Fyl.Recon., Avery, Hewson, Levitt, Storm.

2. A.P.Cohen, 'A Sense of Time, a Sense of Place', A.P.Cohen ed., Belonging, 1982, pp.29-47.

3. W.White, A Month in Yorkshire, 1858, pp.117, 118;  
W.S.Banks, Walks in Yorkshire, 1866, pp.300, 301.

The third characteristic of the boom is that eventual recession was quite rapid. The reduction in the rate of acquisition of shipping in the eighteen-seventies is one of the main features of figure 33 on page 237. The tonnage of many vessels was given so that the increase in size might be observed. The revival had been founded on fairly small craft: almost all of them were brigantines, and more than half of them were under 100 tons. By the peak year there were several barques in the fleet, and many brigs of more than 200 tons, but pre-Bay ownership of Core acquisitions was lengthening, in many cases, well before the peak year. This is to say there was a search for more carrying capacity, and older vessels made the change possible, because they were cheaper.<sup>1</sup> The time of the change can be fixed with some accuracy. If the line joining dates of acquisition in figure 33 on page 237 were drawn, it would begin to steepen around 1840, and that was the year close to which eleven new vessels were bought, nine of them by the Core. This was in a period of depression in Whitby shipbuilding. The profitable transport business had gone with the wars. It has been suggested that another reason for the lack of orders was the high quality of work in the making good in Whitby of wartime losses.<sup>2</sup> The Whitby shipbuilders Thomas Turnbull and Robert Barry gave evidence to a Select Committee in 1883 that the town was in difficulty.<sup>3</sup> The former, an owner as well as a builder, had a yard on the Esk where he built his no.6 in 1844. She was not sold in Whitby, because she was not registered there. He was to build no more ships at that yard, and proceeded to find his next in Canada. A previous vessel, the British Oak, built in 1840,

1. See pp.227 and 237.

2. S.K.Jones, "A Maritime History of the Port of Whitby", London University Ph.D. thesis, 1982, chapter 7.

3. Select Committee Report on Manufactures, Commerce and Shipping, Parliamentary Papers, 1833, VI, 690.



had been unsaleable locally and lay in London for a year. Building was not resumed by Thomas Turnbull until 1852, and at another yard.<sup>1</sup> This depression of the market may have presented the opportunity to buy new. Thomas Harrison's Harrisons, for example, cost 16% less per ton in 1847 than James Storm's John and James in 1827.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile Bay purchases of new craft in Sunderland suggest the yards there were competitive. The favourable situation would have the effect of reducing maintenance costs for a time, but it gave way within the decade to the use of older craft.

That the time had favoured expansion is abundantly plain from Lord Londonderry's building of a new port further up the coast at Seaham on the estate he had bought in 1822.<sup>3</sup> Thus the fourth main characteristic of the boom was the readiness to take advantage of opportunity. The amount of dealing in the ship market is sufficient evidence of this, but it is also interesting to see the preparations made by way of apprenticing boys to the sea, to produce a remarkable number of master mariners. A result was that of the 24 masters in the outline histories of the enterprises, who were still present in the 1867 Club list, only two were sons of fishermen.

The fifth principal feature on which to comment was the operation of the Clubs. Sufficient information has been given about the firms' operations to make ready replacement of losses a conspicuous proceeding. There was a local tradition of good work in this respect. Charlton said of Whitby that there was no place in England where insurers acted with more honour.<sup>4</sup> Robin Hood's Bay became self-sufficient in respect of this service, and in the 1867 Club list the risks of 56 Whitby vessels and 32 from as far up the coast as West Hartlepool were covered in the village.

1. A. and R. Long, A Shipping Venture, 1974, pp.27-29, 36, 37.

2. See pages 238, 246.

3. D.N.B., Stewart, Charles William, 3rd Marquess of Londonderry.

4. L. Charlton, History of Whitby, 1779, p.362.

The precarious nature of the boom is illuminated by a sixth circumstance, which is the lengthening of the sailing season, to make more voyages possible. Something of this has been discussed, as an aspect of the seasonality of vital events. It is seen at this time to advantage in the seasonality of losses of Core vessels, taken from the registrations.

Table 44: Seasonality of losses of Core-owned vessels, 1840-1880

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Pre-1860	2	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	4	2
1860+	5	6	3	2	2	1	0	2	5	9	5	13

The number of vessels had increased but it is the change in winter that is important. Steam power was helping to make this winter work possible, because tugs could take sailing ships in and out of harbour. A Whitby and Robin Hood's Bay Steam Packet Company came into being to take advantage of the opportunity (as well as provide a passenger service). There are familiar names in the register of shareholders: William Bedlington, Fanny Coggin, Zachariah Granger, William Harrison, Isaac Mills, the Bay butcher Thomas Newton, James Skerry, and William, Matthew and John Harrison Storm; Sampson Storm was a trustee and his son-in-law, William Jameson, was tugmaster. This venture lasted 14 years. <sup>1</sup>

Simultaneously steam brought larger, faster cargo vessels, especially after the John Bowes, the Tyne's first screw collier, took 650 tons of coal to the Thames and reached home again in five days, in 1852. <sup>2</sup> Then

1. Whitby Lit. and Phil. Library, no.387.2; T.M.Quinn, 'Whitby and Robin Hood's Bay Steam Packet Company', The Cleveland Industrial Archaeologist, no.17, 1985, pp.55-68. In the matter of losses at sea it is of general interest that a descendant of the Core was Vice-Admiral Constantine Moorsom, whose 'Moorsom's Rule' of 1849 and Review of the Laws of Tonnage of 1852 contributed internationally to safety of ships.

2. A. and R.Long, op.cit., p.40,



there were the railways to contend with, for home cargoes. So a threat had long been present. In the decade 1861-70, 70 vessels went out of use, and in the next decade only 14 were taken on. By 1875 village-owned vessels were down to 45, and few were left by the end of the century. Jacob Storm's story of his own career illustrates change well. He continued working his brig Black Prince until 1879, "for the sake of my father", but he had growing family to look after, and so he gave his father his half of her, made his partner - a Fylingdales farmer's younger son from Billira on the edge of the moor - master of her, and, symbolically, went mate of a Whitby steamer, to take command of her two months later. <sup>1</sup>

The effect of the ending of the village's experience in sail is well expressed by the writer of an obituary account of the work of Thomas Phillips, the Congregational minister for 30 years. His ministry began, the account runs, at a most prosperous time for wooden shipping, and the reputation of Robin Hood's Bay sailors was high. The transition to iron shipping had been a very serious matter for the minister's flock, because it introduced a new order for which the village was not prepared. Mr. Phillips "entered into the trials of his people, and his....quick business habits came to his assistance in the laborious duties of his pastorate. He obtained a familiar acquaintance with maritime law and general shipping business, and all his skill and perseverance he laid out for the good of his flock". <sup>2</sup> Thomas Phillips' successor, William Dalton, arrived in time to discover that many had lost what he called great fortunes. <sup>3</sup>

1. J.S., Memoirs, p.60. The Black Prince is one Bay vessel of which a particularly good record survives, in the form of a scale model, held by the Merseyside Maritime Museum.

2. Congregational Year Book, 1881, p.385.

3. W.Dalton, op.cit., p.20.

One general effect of these testimonies is to convey an impression of people with little breadth to their knowledge of the world of commerce, despite their involvement in a highly-specialised part of it. A writer in the Whitby Gazette took a similar view, calling the inhabitants of Robin Hood's Bay "simple natives", and "good folk, as yet unsophisticated".<sup>1</sup> W. White had really said much the same in 1858, when he declared "the folk seldom leave the parish; and their farthest travel is to Hartlepool in the steamer that calls in the bay on the way from Scarborough".<sup>2</sup> This statement bears a remarkable resemblance to Joseph Taylor's description, on his visit in 1705, of people who had seldom gone ten miles by land in all their lives.<sup>3</sup> Despite vast accumulated knowledge of distant parts, there was a curious unworldliness: while one opportunity was being seized another was being lost. How this came about is conceivably fundamental, and recalls the intention expressed at the beginning of the chapter. It is contended that the success of the community, down to the challenge of steam, was due not only to opportunities in shipping and inclination to make use of them, but also to the state of preparedness, ethical, social and occupational, for participation. There had been ample foundation and structure prepared for the enterprise of the boom years, initiated by virtually the same stock that gave the settlement its first known generations.

1. J.S., Miscellany, Whitby Gazette cutting, n.d.

2. W.White, A Month in Yorkshire, 1858, p.111; the steamer may well have been that of the Whitby and Robin Hood's Bay Steam Packet Company.

3. Joseph Taylor, A Journey to Edenborough in Scotland, 1903 edn., p.70, and pp.74-5 above.



## CHAPTER 11: GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

If this essay is followed chapter by chapter, it can be summarised as the account of a compact, open settlement with a growing population, enterprising and co-operative in several parts of a mixed economy, and enjoying a condition of life bearable enough to produce a large, static element in which the family was highly important and the outlook was defined by a readiness to accept the precepts of Nonconformity. It is submitted that if reference is made to the Introduction the works of S.K.Jones, S.Pawley and P.Thompson will be seen to have been complemented. Two centuries of great activity ashore and afloat have been shown to lie behind the first's necessarily brief acknowledgement of Robin Hood's Bay; and the proven inaccuracy, or inadequacy, of the description "fishing village" demonstrates, like S.Pawley's findings on the Lincolnshire coast, that there was a need for investigation. Further, the attitudes and outlook displayed in Robin Hood's Bay would seem to corroborate Thompson's view of the ethical character of fishing communities; his category may have been widened, but there is no damage to the argument. Two general conclusions may be drawn, one concerned with the need for defining coastal economies, in the light of Robin Hood's Bay's experience, and the other with the ethic of the place. The second is treated first.

It is necessary to recall Thompson's words about fishing communities' demonstration of "the viability of an alternative way.....for it is only such socially isolated groups that have been able to sustain the truer forms of egalitarianism, which foster real social independence and individuality".<sup>1</sup> Robin Hood's Bay gains in interest because it provides an example of people at the coast ordering their own lives. Habits of life and work had been cultivated over many generations with the effect of

1. P.Thompson, Living the Fishing, 1983, p.222.

enabling the people to continue in relative independence, and even prosperity, in their own small world. The term "socialisation" has been used occasionally in this essay, and indeed it might have been employed more frequently. Its use was highly appropriate in the conclusion to Chapter 8 concerning the strength of the family; but it is the state of obsession with the sea reached at the boom that makes Chapter 10 in effect a continuous testimony to socialisation. It is now contended that such a force was present in exceptional measure, and that both the successful years, and the failure to cope with technological and commercial change, are evidence of that strength. The prosperity of the good years may speak for itself, but the inability to adapt may be equally eloquent.

The movement to ownership of steamers had been feasible, financially, but it was not achieved, although the value given by the Club in the 1867 insurance list to the village's shipping was £110,000, or enough to buy eight steamers like the Whitehall (753), launched in Whitby in 1871, and costing £13,084. A prospective shipowner might expect to enter the market by paying about £200 for a sixty-fourth, yet the only Bay holders of Whitehall shares were Matthew Bedlington of the Club, Harrison Allison the baker, and the shipmaster-owner Richard Robinson; perhaps George Russell should be counted, although he lived up at Thorpe.<sup>1</sup> Romantic attachment to sail is not held adequate in explanation. Rather might the bringing together of capital, as well as the satisfying of all managerial and professional interests, have meant abandoning the long-familiar business attitudes and practices of the traditional economic unit, the household. The first transition, from fishing to shipping, had not demanded this. If there is substance to the proposition of strong resistance to change there should be at the heart of society and economy the people who had rehearsed rôles most thoroughly. The charts of descents in Appendix 7 point to this,

1. A. and R. Long, op.cit., pp.59, 282.



with the recurring explanation of relationships in terms of that family which was the largest in the settlement from the first known years, and which also gives the best evidence of continuity. Here the efficacy of the pattern of life that evolved should be observable, and be illustrated by a unity. Figure 34, the pull-out chart at the end of the chapter, provides support for this, for it shows the synthesis of descents and occupational concerns, and proceeds through the ownership of fishing craft to that of trading vessels, to the point where the descendants of two households (entered in capital letters) owned, collectively, 45 vessels in 1867. Additional distaff lines would have brought in many more. This seems to be more than an example of the extent to which a family might link and bind a population simply by remaining static, and it is the transmission of the ethic, the unrelenting socialisation, that is offered in explanation.

If the proposition of a cultural mould being tested to the limit of usefulness is to be upheld, there should be more evidence of the breaking of the mould; otherwise the fundamental change could be obscured by the continuation of the village as the home of mariners. In 1901 there were still 35 shipmasters, or men known from the family reconstitutions to have been such; but there was only one shipowner.<sup>1</sup> Thus where there was once a strong element of self-employment, or of kinsmen working together, the representative situation became shipmasters employed by owners of steamers based elsewhere. The only substantial and direct connection between a Majority name and the steamers occurs in Hartlepool, where around 1880 there were no fewer than 49 concerns with the larger ships. There, the fleet of Rickinson and Son, was established by the wine-merchant son of a Bay shipmaster-turned-grocer.<sup>2</sup> The very strength that

1. W.J.Cook and Co., Whitby and District Directory, 1901.

2. P.Harley, My Life in Shipping, 1881-1938, 1939, p.69; Whitby Gazette, 5th February, 1904.

had brought success in sail seemed to bring the greatest prosperity to an end. Thus Robin Hood's Bay, because of the unusual strength of the forces behind the great unity displayed, may be as true an example as can be found of socialisation operating in a community. Indeed, it would seem that in the successful interaction of people and the sea - and little other resource - it approached, for a time, the ideal of dynamic "community", or the sociologists' Gemeinschaft, as distinct from mere "association".

The other general conclusion is concerned with taxonomy, and arises from the need for investigation demonstrated by Robin Hood's Bay into true sources of livelihood. Even a perfunctory enquiry elsewhere in the North East supports this. For example, Cullercoats, two miles north of the mouth of the Tyne, was a village the life of whose inhabitants drew Winslow Homer to spend 1881-2 painting there, capturing an epic quality in the fishing life. <sup>1</sup> In 1858 it was "largely inhabited by fishermen", but only one such was named. Three master mariners were listed, which may justify trying to discover whether Cullercoats was really the home of sailors, like Robin Hood's Bay for much of its life. North Shields, with some 300 shipmasters recorded, was only two miles away, and this was where in 1877 William Purdy pioneered steam trawling; yet in 1858 it is not credited with fishing industry or fishermen. <sup>2</sup> Generally, fishermen seem to be marginalised by the little attention accorded them in directories. There were apparently none in Robin Hood's Bay in 1823 and 1848, yet in 1817 Young called it a fishing town near Whitby; and in 1860 Kildill Robinson acknowledged change at Robin Hood's Bay, but called the transition from

1. Northern Centre for Contemporary Art, Sunderland, Winslow Homer, 1988.

2. William Whellan and Co., Directory of Northumberland, 1858; personal account of the Purdy innovation provided by his grandson.



fishing to seafaring and shipping "recent".<sup>1</sup> Staithes, famous for fishing, had in 1901 several fish merchants, but no fisherman entered the local directory's list of inhabitants. On the other hand, this village had several shipmasters, one of whom was additionally described as a shipowner; and where there are shipmasters there will be seamen. At the other end of England, in the creeks and on the coasts of Cornwall, the former Director of the National Maritime Museum encountered the descendants of those whom he called, in 1978, "seafaring countrymen", a designation implying that in those parts also there existed a need to know more exactly how people subsisted, and whether forces operated like those in Robin Hood's Bay.<sup>2</sup> There might be, for example, more evidence of peculiar seasonality, or of the possible effects of a diet different from that enjoyed inland, or indeed of kin-intensive occupation as a recurrent feature of the distinctive maritime culture. This comes back to the other general conclusion, and raises the notion that Robin Hood's Bay, by virtue of its secular, intense and comprehensive dependence on the sea, might be useful as a datum in the classifying of minor coastal settlements.

Events and circumstances discussed in this essay could be seen in an alternative context of the history of merchant shipping, particularly as part of the "story of the services rendered by colliers and their crews to the national economy", but the dominant, persistent image is of a unified society, distinguished by singleness of purpose and combined effort.<sup>3</sup>

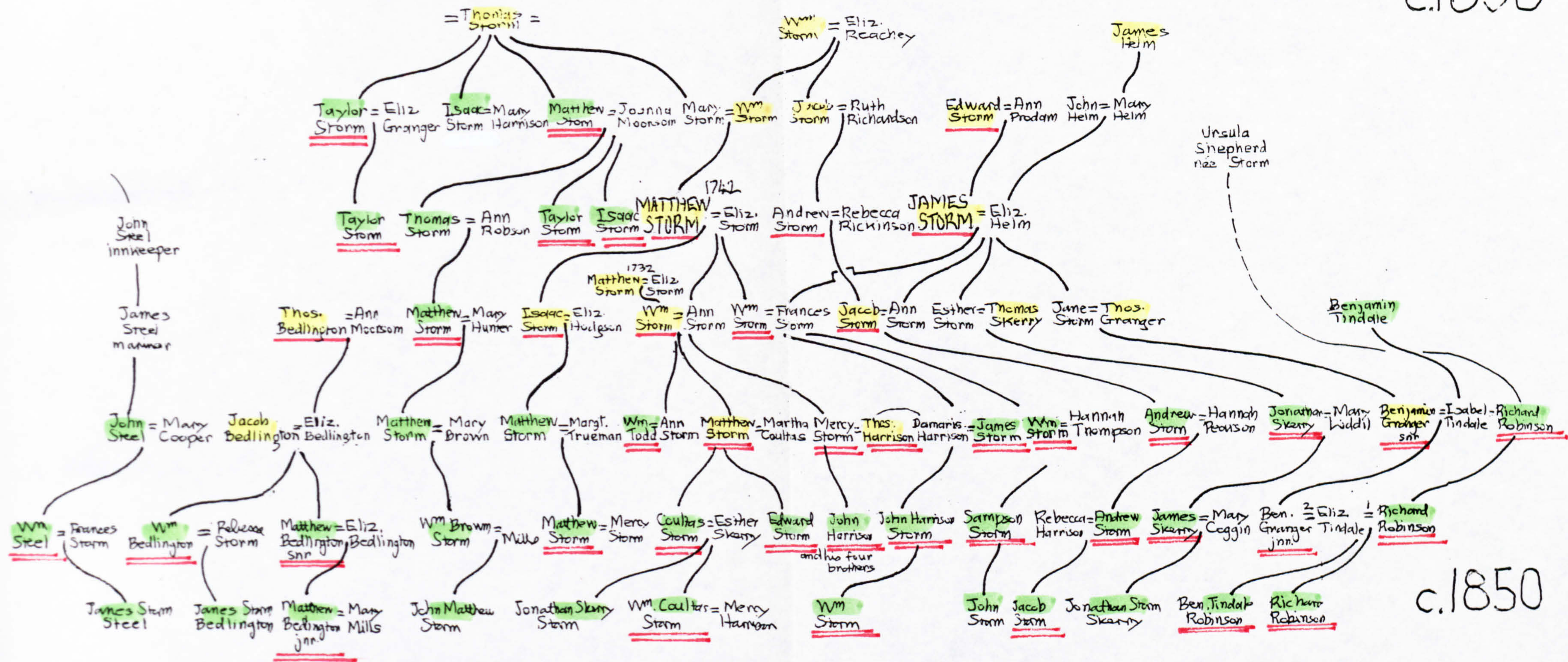
1. E Baines, History, Directory and Gazetteer of the County of York, II, 1823; Slater's Royal, National, Commercial Directory and Topography of York, 1848; G.Young, op.cit., p647; F.Kildill Robinson, Whitby: its Abbey, 1860, p.258.
2. B.Greenhill, 'Seafaring Countrymen', The Countryman, Spring, 1978, pp.71-77.
3. R.Smith, Sea-Coal for London, 1961, p.355.



**Figure 34** The family base of the economy from fishing to the shipping boom

The family base of the economy  
from fishing to the shipping boom

c.1650



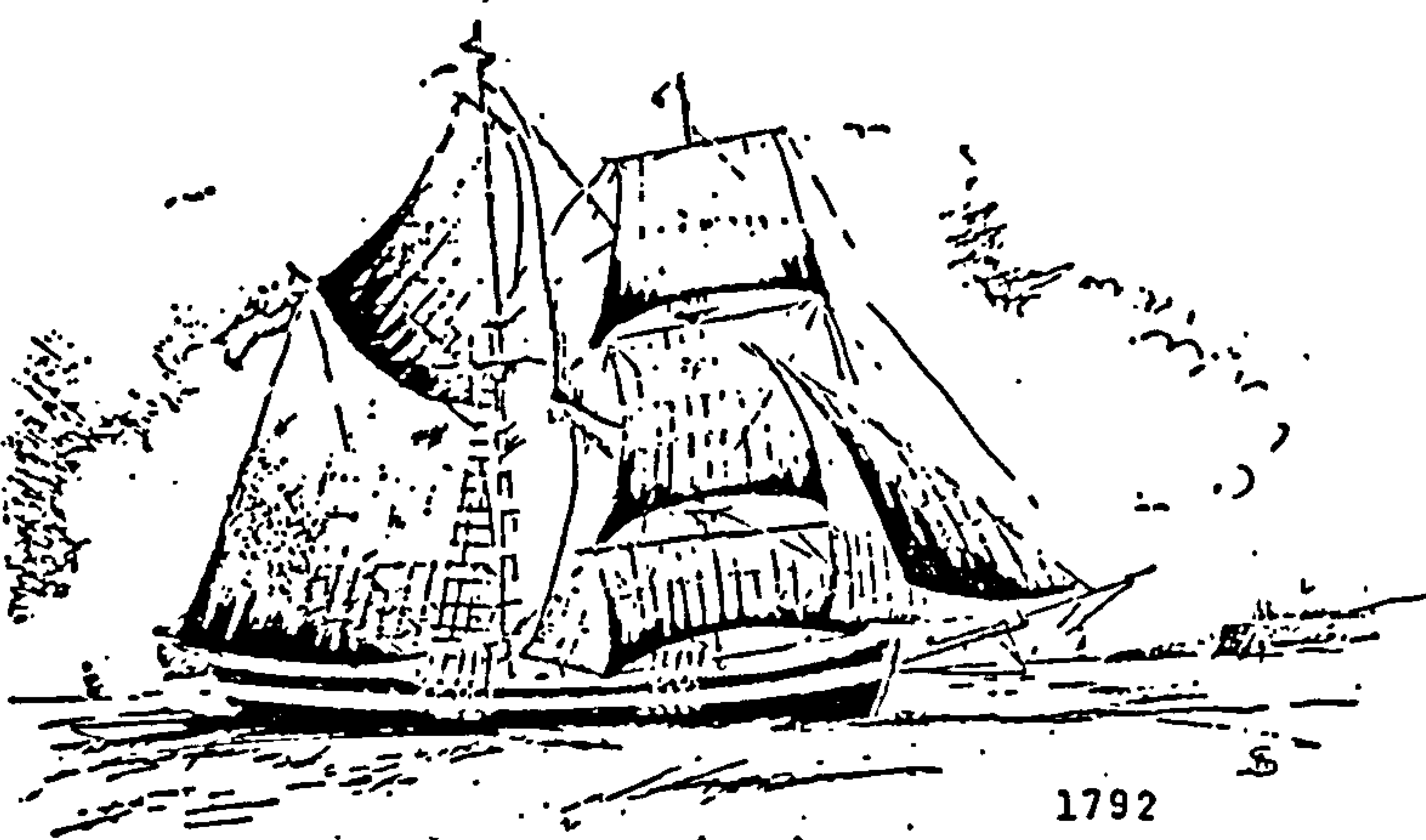
c.1850

- Fisher
- Owner of large boat
- Shipowner
- Master Mariner



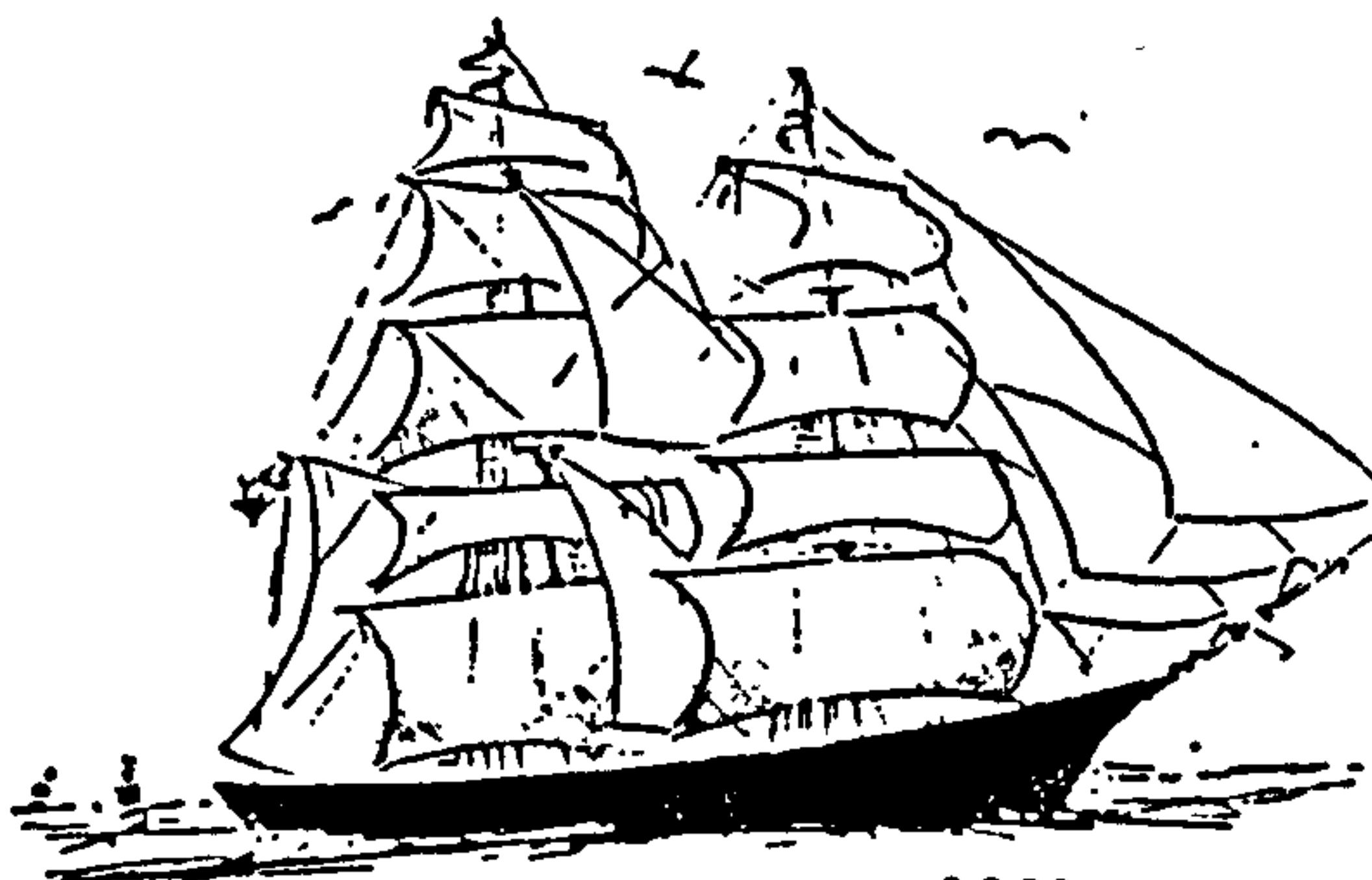
# Appendix 1

## The types of vessel



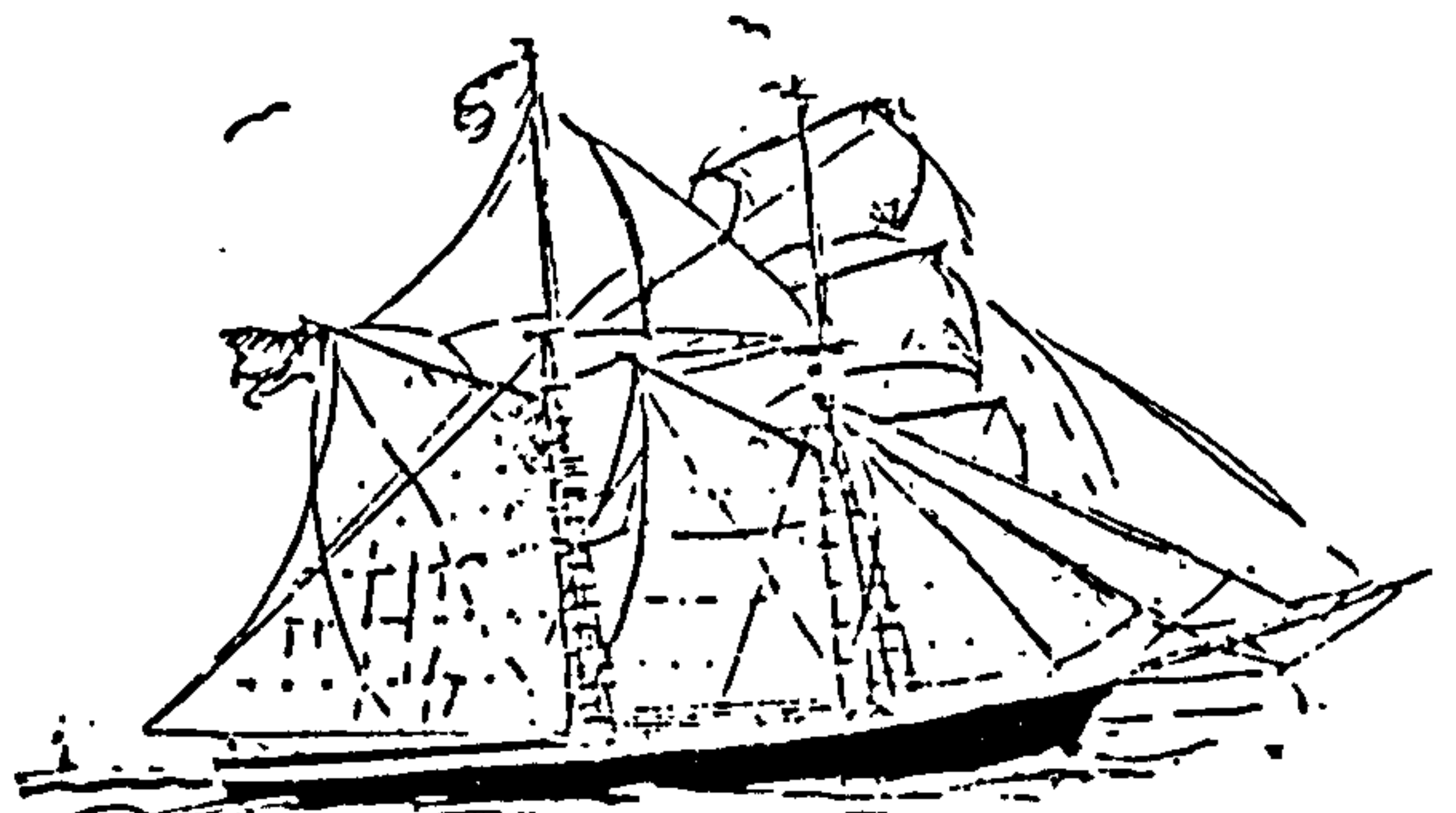
Brothers, brigantine (163)

1792



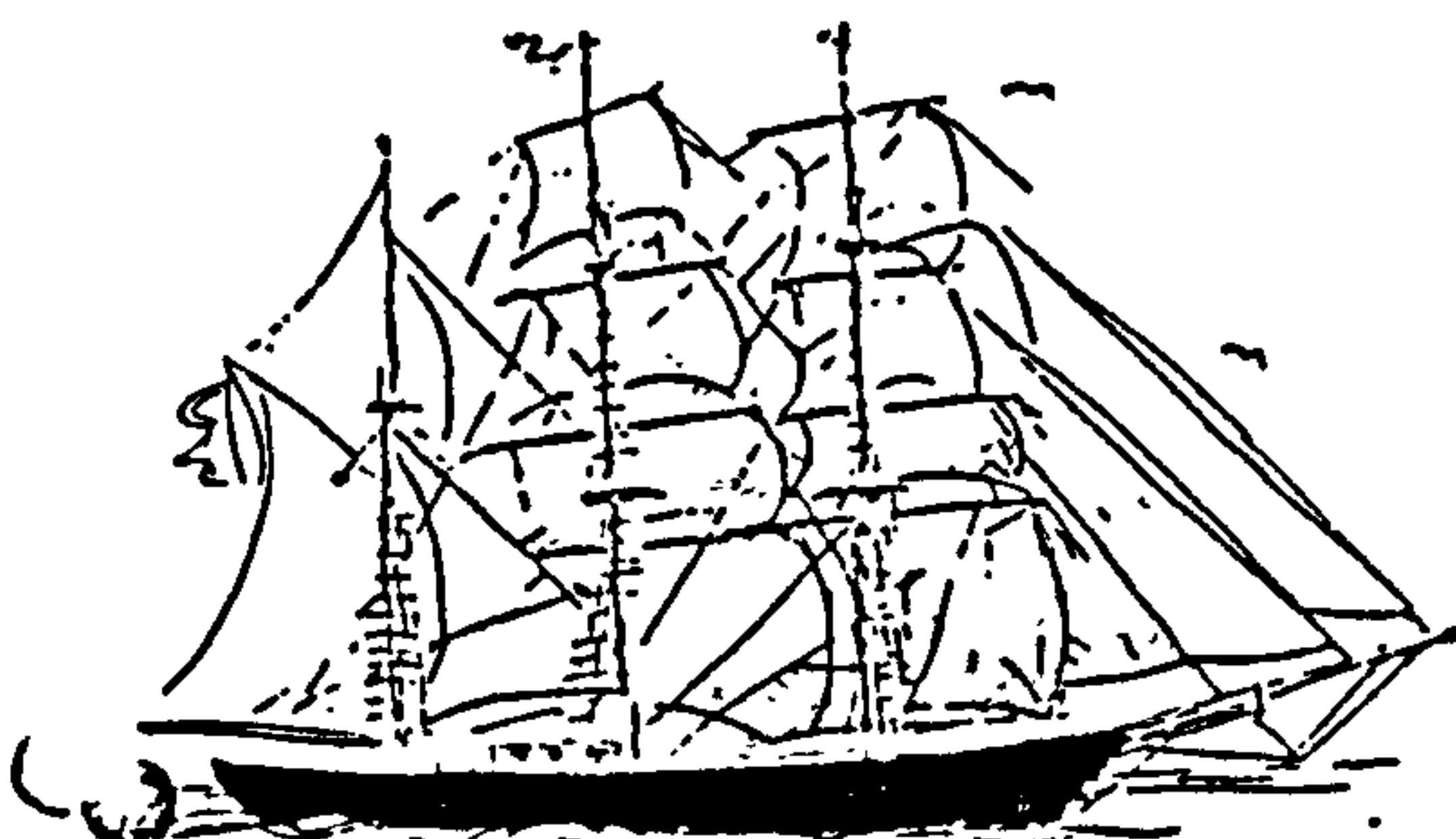
Laura, brig (274)

1861



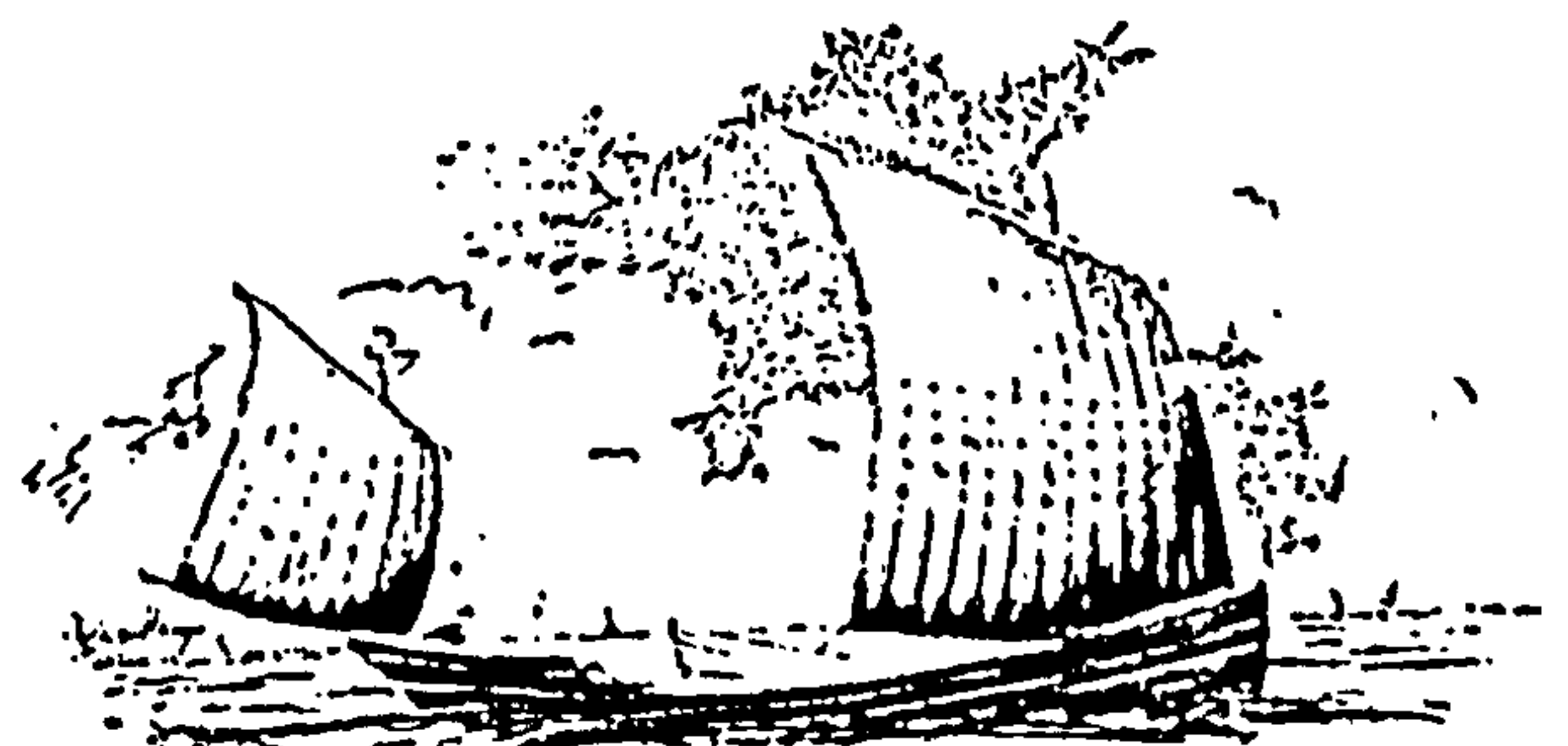
Crosby, schooner (110)

1825



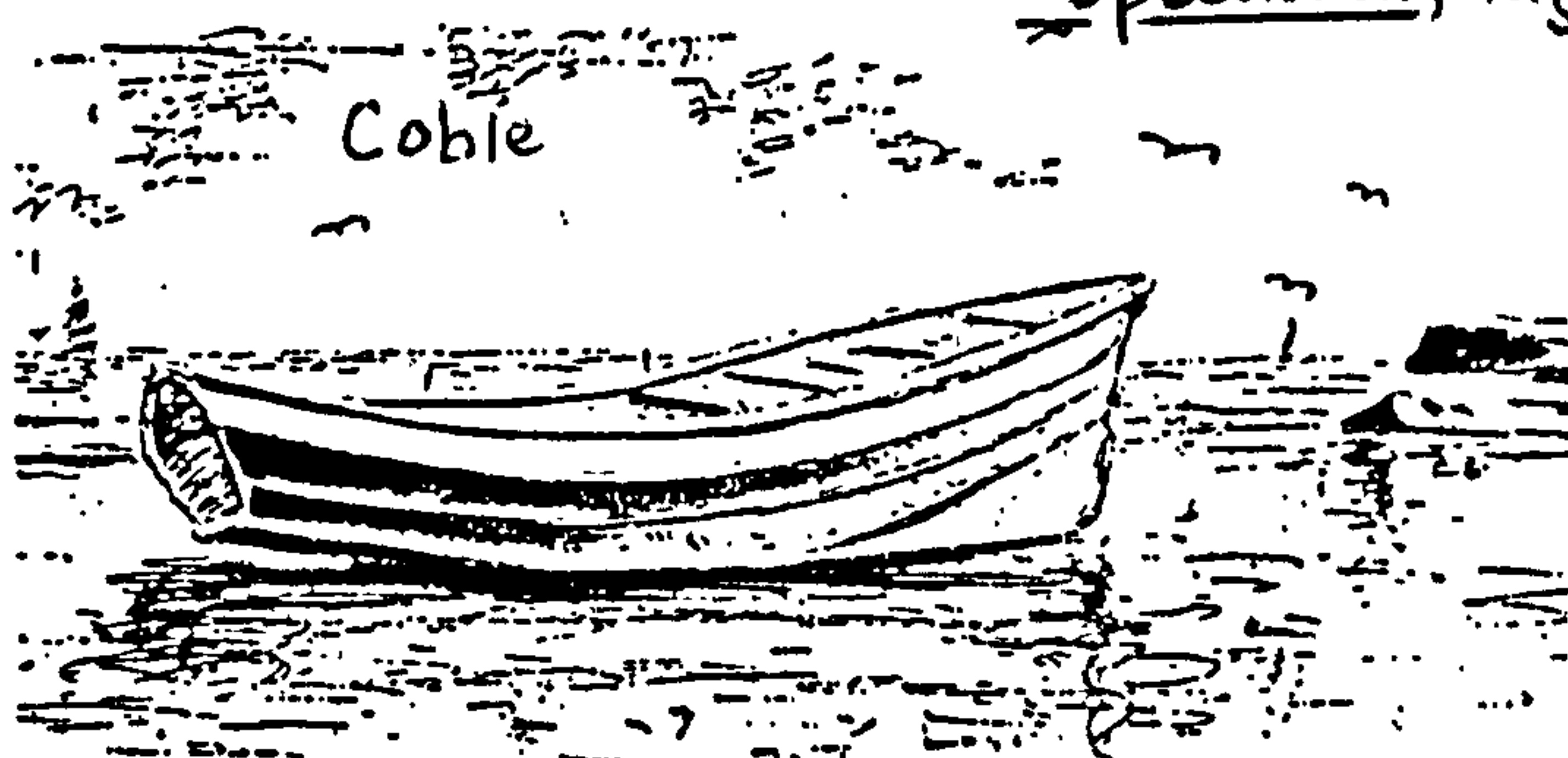
Maggie, barque (292)

1852



Speedwell, lugger (4)

1769



Coble

The design of a coble is said to be traceable to Scandinavia. It is admirably suited to working from a beach, being shaped so that it can approach stern first, while the deep fore-foot keeps a firm 'hold' of the water. At Robin Hood's Bay there was no landing facility other than an approach to the beach between long 'scars' of rock; so it was the coble that made the fishing possible.

## APPENDIX 2: A NOTE ON THE GENEALOGICAL WORK IN THE RECONSTITUTION

Some of this work was begun after World War II, with the object of keeping account of the persistence of maritime employment. This continues, for traces of the occupational bias are still discernible despite the decline in merchant shipping in the late twentieth century. The record was originally seen in the context of the history of merchant shipping, but the present work was undertaken on the realisation, prompted by Professor Phythian-Adams, that there was more to be gained from investigation of the settlement that produced the record.

A reconstitution of Fylingdales families was undertaken, from 17,447 register and transcript entries, in the course of which the placing of children in families, and the identification of spouses and the deceased, was rendered difficult by the repetition of names, an aspect of continuity that effectively increased the scope of the study. Increasingly problems had to be resolved by recourse to sources other than the parish registers, until the exercise became genealogical in character, centering particularly on large dynasties distinguished by long continuity in maritime occupations.

The reconstitution was first supplemented by reference to the registers of the adjacent or nearby parishes of Scarborough, Scalby, Hackness, Sneaton, Whitby, Egton Bridge and Lythe. Next, looking towards York, the registers of Pickering and Old and New Malton and then the 23 parishes of the county town itself were examined. For this, the registers in the Humberside and North Yorkshire County Record offices and the Borthwick Institute, York, were used in conjunction with the publications of the Yorkshire Parish Register Society, and the International Genealogical Index. Involvement with coal-trade shipping brought in St. Dunstan's Stepney and Wapping registers at the Greater London Record Office and, in the case of Stepney, the International Genealogical Index also.



The other principal sources, in the order in which they were brought into use, were:

1. Reminiscences and memorabilia of older members of local families, after World War II;
2. Probate documents of the Principal and York Registries;
3. Whitby Gazette;
4. The Census, 1841-1881, for Fylingdales, Whitby, Middlesbrough, Stranton and the Hartlepoons and Wapping, Middlessex;
5. Indexes to the Civil Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths;
6. Memorial inscriptions in Fylingdales, Whitby, Tynemouth, North and South Shields and Middlesbrough;
7. Transcripts of the Whitby Registers of Ships in the National Maritime Museum;
8. Muster Rolls of Whitby shipping held by the Whitby Literary and Philosophical Society;
9. Parish books of Fylingdales;
10. Transcripts of the Fylingdales Registers in the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York;
11. Probate records of the diocese of York in the Borthwick Institute;
12. Probate documents in the Public Record Office.

This work not only increased ability to place people in the reconstitutions, but offered a much more complete account of the inhabitants of Fylingdales and of the long-standing Robin Hood's Bay families in particular. The results are comprehended in this essay under the general heading of Fylingdales Reconstitutions, or Fyl.Recon. in footnotes.

APPENDIX 3: CALCULATIONS FOR ADJUSTMENT OF CENSUS TOTALS TO ALLOW FOR

MEN AT SEA

More refinement is achieved by going ahead to 1861, when there was more information entered by the enumerators, and working back from there. <sup>1</sup> In that year they took greater account than formerly of absentees. One of the enumerators was the Congregational minister, Thomas Phillips, who, having made a Core marriage and moved into Fisherhead, knew the village well. <sup>2</sup> He was able to append the information that there were 85 sailors' wives with husbands away, and 21 married women staying with their husbands in northern ports. In the schedule the number is actually 86, and that is used in calculations. Thus there would be 107 married men and 21 married women absent. There were also 67 widows and nine widowers. The total of single men and "seaboys" - apprentices - remains to be estimated.

The number of females in the village was stated to be 559, to which total the absent women must be added, to begin with.

559 females in the Census	1,026 b/f
<u>+21</u> women away	<u>+76</u> widowed (male and female)
530	1,102 adjusted village population
<u>-67</u> widows	<u>-922</u> Census total + 21 women away
513 single or married females	180 sailors away
<u>x2</u>	<u>-107</u> married sailors away
1,026 c/f	73 single men and seaboys away

As there were 30 sailors at home in the village the total of 210 represents 19% of the adjusted population of the village.

1. P.R.O., R.G.9,3647-49;

2. See p.252.



Boys were indentured at 12 or 13, according to Jacob Storm, who was himself apprenticed without delay two months after his twelfth birthday in 1850.<sup>1</sup> In 1861 there were in Bay 78 boys in the age-group 8-13, that is to say, moving - many of them - almost inevitably towards a career at sea. In the age-group 14-20, which would cover the apprentice-to-mariner phase, there were 25 more females than males. From 21 to 26 there were 44 females and eleven males. In 1851 the difference was even greater, a circumstance attributable perhaps to the counting taking place at a different time of year: in 1851 the Census month was July, when trading was well under way, but in 1861 the month was March, when for some the sailing season on the coast may just have been beginning.

As for the parish, the number of seafaring families outside Bay was small. There were 17 married sailors at sea or at home, in all, which means there may have been perhaps half-a-dozen absent wives, seaboys and bachelors, by proportion with Bay, in 1861. If these few are disregarded and the 201 Bay males and females with the shipping are added to the parish total of 1,717 in the Census, there is a parish estimate of about 1,918.

The same calculation was made to find estimates for 1851, but the Census schedules have to be inspected this time to detect families where women are away with their husbands.<sup>2</sup> By putting Census and reconstitutions together, twelve cases can be found where seafarers' children are staying with relatives, usually grandparents. These are those about which there is some certainty; there could well have been more: not all the reconstitutions are adequate for this sort of investigation.

1. J.S., Miscellany, indenture document of 16th February, 1850.

2. P.R.O., H.O.107,2734.

This time most of the married sailors at sea are known from their wives being named as heads of household. The calculation is:

521 females in the Census
<u>+12</u> wives at sea
533
<u>-66</u> widows
467
<u>x2</u>
934
<u>+88</u> widowed (male and female)
1,022

If the total of sailors' wives who are household heads (76), the wives at sea (12) and the total in the Census (871) is subtracted from 1,022, the single men and the seaboys number 63. The estimated total of sailors in the Census is therefore:

76 married men at sea
63 single men and seaboys at sea
<u>23</u> sailors at home
162

The total is 15.8% of the adjusted population.

As in 1861, there were few sailors in other parts of the parish, and so the Bay absentees raise the parish total from the 1,765 of the Census to an estimate of 1,916.

The previous Census, that of 1841, is perhaps less useful, because the widowed and the wives of absent sailors are not indicated. <sup>1</sup> It is not

1. P.R.O., H.O.107,1265.



impossible to go through the schedules picking out single men and women and plotting them against reconstitutions, but the widowed can be plotted continuously as the work of reconstitution proceeds, and the result of this is 57 females and 19 males at this time. Since no reconstitution can include everyone, and there may have been remarriages outside the parish, these have to be regarded as rough estimates.

The search for wives at sea produces 18 lots of children staying with relatives (one of them shared between two households) and three doubtful cases. One staying with grandparents is the young Jacob Storm, neither of whose parents, Andrew and Rebecca, is mentioned in the Census. There survives the receipt obtained by his father for his "Greenwich sixpences" incurred on a voyage in his schooner Brothers from Seaham to Harwich at the relevant time. <sup>1</sup>

When the adjustments have been made to the given 1841 totals, there remains an estimated population for the village of 940.

471 females	
<u>+18</u> women with the shipping	
489	
<u>-57</u> widows	
432	
<u>x2</u>	
864	
<u>+76</u> widowed (male and female)	
940 revised total	
<u>-761</u> Census total + 18 women with the shipping	
179 males absent	
<u>+16</u> sailors at home	
195 sailors	

1. J.S., Miscellany, Receiver of Harwich's certificate, July, 1841.

To consider with the revised total of 940 there is an estimate of "about one thousand" made just a year before by the Independents.<sup>1</sup> There was a high proportion of sailors: they were 20.7% of the revised population estimate. A partial explanation of this appears when the males are grouped by age: the sudden drop in numbers, and therefore the preponderance of females, begins at age ten in 1841, and this may mean that before the habit of attending school became firm, boys were going away to sea anticipating apprenticeship by two or three years. This is not at all unlikely, not because it reflects the attitude of the period to child labour, but because at sea the boys were almost certainly in the company of close relatives.

The average number of boys of each age up to nine was ten, and from ten to 13 it dropped to four, which could produce another two dozen young boys at sea.

It is over-cautious to be suspicious about so many sailors: between 1820 and 1848 the names of 211 necessarily younger sailors can be collected from the baptismal register. The Bay-owned shipping was not at its greatest extent then, and while the fleet was still growing village men would have ample opportunity to serve in Whitby-owned vessels. It will be seen, moreover, in Chapter 5, that large numbers of sailors were to be found in the eighteenth century.

With the great body of sailors accepted, the parish inhabitants rise in 1841 from 1,597 to 1,794.

To bring earlier Census totals closer into line with those of 1841 onwards, the crude procedure has been adopted of applying to them an increase of 10.6%, which is the average increase of the later years. All that is claimed for these results is that they should be more useful than the Census totals in providing anchorage for the baptism-based estimates.

1. Congregational Magazine, 1840, p.573.



## APPENDIX 4: VESSELS AND OWNERS IN THE PARISH SESS, 1751-1818

The names are in chronological order of appearing in the parish books. Vessels of three keels and under are marked with a cross, and those greater than three keels are indicated with an oblique stroke.

[illegible]













## APPENDIX 5: A NOTE ON LITERACY

Sample periods were used to examine relative ability to sign the register. This was first possible from June, 1754 to November 1784.

Signatures in the register in Bay and Country compared, 1754-1784

	No. of marriages	Signed/marked	Signed	%
Bay	224	222 males	157 males	77.7
		219 females	78 females	35.6
Country	167	164 males	106 males	64.6
		164 females	60 females	36.5

As far as males are concerned the Bay community was relatively literate, and the explanation may lie in the shipping itself, because of the amount of ship's business to be done by the comparatively large body of men in responsible positions. Those in more lowly stations who aspired to advancement would need to acquire knowledge of the paper work relating to cargoes, Customs, insurance and so on, and training might come automatically where a vessel was a family interest that had to continue.

There may have been more formality than this, because Robert Smelt, schoolmaster, is named in the marriage register in 1786 and twice thereafter in the baptismal register over the next eight years. In later years people so described are usually teachers of navigation, retired shipmasters catering for the demand for instruction from aspiring young mariners. This is the case with Walker Tindale, master mariner, who was listed as a teacher in the 1841 Census, and the practice was officially observed in 1843.<sup>1</sup> It was in this way that one of the North's best-known

1. Report on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture, p.366, Parliamentary Papers, 1843, XII, House of Commons, 510.



nautical schools, Nellist's, of South Shields and Newcastle, originated in Robin Hood's Bay, so great was the demand for instruction, especially after the introduction of formal examinations. <sup>1</sup>

The situation changed. Between January 1813 and May, 1837, 93 out of 108 Bay males signed and 64 of the same number of females, producing respectively 86.1% and 59.2%, or improvements of 10% and 66%. The improvement of females followed the coming of a parish school, the subscribers to which were listed in 1814. <sup>2</sup> There were 15 from the Core out of a total of 148, suggesting lack of enthusiasm on the part of fishermen and seafarers. Poor support may have been due to the promotion of the school by the Anglican National Society, but objections to the schooling of boys, who went away to sea early, would have been easy to arouse. Another factor operating in the case of females may have been the increasing amount of business having to be transacted in the absence of men as shipowning became important in the nineteenth century.

Another sample period was taken, for marriages between 1837 and 1850.

Signatures in the register in Bay and Country compared, 1837-1850

	No. of marriages	Signed/marked	Signed	%
Bay	114	114 males	96	84.2
		91 mariners and fishers	75	82.8
		70 mariners	65	92.8
		91 mariners' and fishers' wives	70	76.9
Country	74	74 males	60	81
		74 females	31	41.8

1. Fyl.Recon., Nellist, Storm; Kelly's Directory of Northumberland, 1928.  
 2. J.S., Miscellany, transcript of subscription list, Fylingdales National School, 1814, with amounts paid.

This supports in the main the factors suspected of being present: the schooling of girls, the involvement of women in family businesses, and the business element in the vocational training of boys. The fleet of vessels owned in the village was growing rapidly at this time, but it is probably correct to think of Robin Hood's Bay as having been a place of much commerce, albeit of a rather specialised kind, for many years.



APPENDIX 6: MAJORITY PEOPLE WHO LEFT BAY, c.1731-40

All the information is derived from the respective parish registers via the family reconstitutions, unless otherwise stated.

- (i). Five appear to have no children;
- (ii). Seven have no burial of either spouse and therefore probably moved away;
- (iii). John Dale, master mariner, is traceable to North Shields; <sup>1</sup>
- (iv). Ithamar Harrison, master mariner, is found in the parish register of Whitby, where he had children;
- (v). Richard Moorsom, master mariner, who married in 1717, went to Whitby, where his wife was buried in 1721;
- (vi). Richard Moorsom who married in 1719 went to Whitby; his wife Rebecca was buried there in 1720;
- (vii). Richard Moorsom who was married in 1740 had children baptised in Scarborough;
- (viii). Robert Moorsom, baptised in 1681, had children baptised in Scarborough in 1720 and 1722;
- (ix). Robert Moorsom who married in 1744 died in Whitby in 1800;
- (x). Peter Richardson, mariner, married a Whitby woman in 1736 and ceased to appear in the Fylingdales register;
- (xi). Robert Richardson, mariner, married Frances Storm in 1737 and went to Wearside; he was drowned in 1739 and his widow married Joseph Wright, master mariner and shipowner of Robin Hood's Bay, in Fylingdales, and they went back to Wearside where descendants of both marriages are traceable in the registers of Bishopwearmouth, Monkwearmouth and Sunderland; Joseph Wright's grandson, John Joseph, D.L., was concerned with the development of the port of

1. Borthwick, Isaac Storm, Fylingdales, 1763.

Sunderland as solicitor to the Sunderland Improvement Commissioners and the Sunderland Dock Company; <sup>1</sup>

- (xii). William Richardson married in Fylingdales in 1744 and at the time he and his bride were already resident in Whitby;
- (xiii) William Rickinson, mariner, married in Fylingdales in 1744, when he and his bride were Whitby residents;
- (xiv). Bartholomew, Christopher, Isaac and Matthew Storm were probably all pressed into the Navy in 1739; the papers of Christopher and Isaac say as much; they went to the Mediterranean in the Lenox in that year and all died in naval service; only one had a child; <sup>2</sup>
- (xv). Henry Storm, baptised in Fylingdales in 1688, had children baptised in Scarborough in 1719 and 1723;
- (xvi). Jacob Storm and Eleanor Hodgson married in Sunderland in 1732, at which time they were living there.
- (xvii). Johnson Storm, baptised in 1727 and married in Fylingdales, had children in Whitby, where he is a carpenter in the register; his father, Bartholomew, went to him on being widowed but was buried at Fylingdales; the highly unusual trade is doubtless due in part to Whitby's shipbuilding expansion, but the original decision may have been occasioned by the pressing of his brother Bartholomew in the year in which he, Johnson, was 13 and ready to be apprenticed.

1. William Whellan and Co., Directory of Durham, 1856; the significance of this association can be seen at the personal level: according to his original letter in J.S., Miscellany, when Edward Richardson of Robin Hood's Bay was loading coal in Sunderland in 1799, he went for legal advice concerning the effects of his son who had been pressed, and died in the Navy, to Joseph Wright, attorney.

2. P.R.O., ADM.36/1715, 1739-40 (Lenox); and ADM.36/1954, 1744-5 (Marlborough).



## APPENDIX 7: PRINCIPAL SHIPOWNING DYNASTIES OF MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

A complete view of ownership would be difficult to illustrate schematically, but the following genealogical charts contain enough linking information to establish that there was a cohesive network of kin and economy in which these households and families constitute the larger concentrations of shipping interest. They all find a place in figure 34 (following page 275).

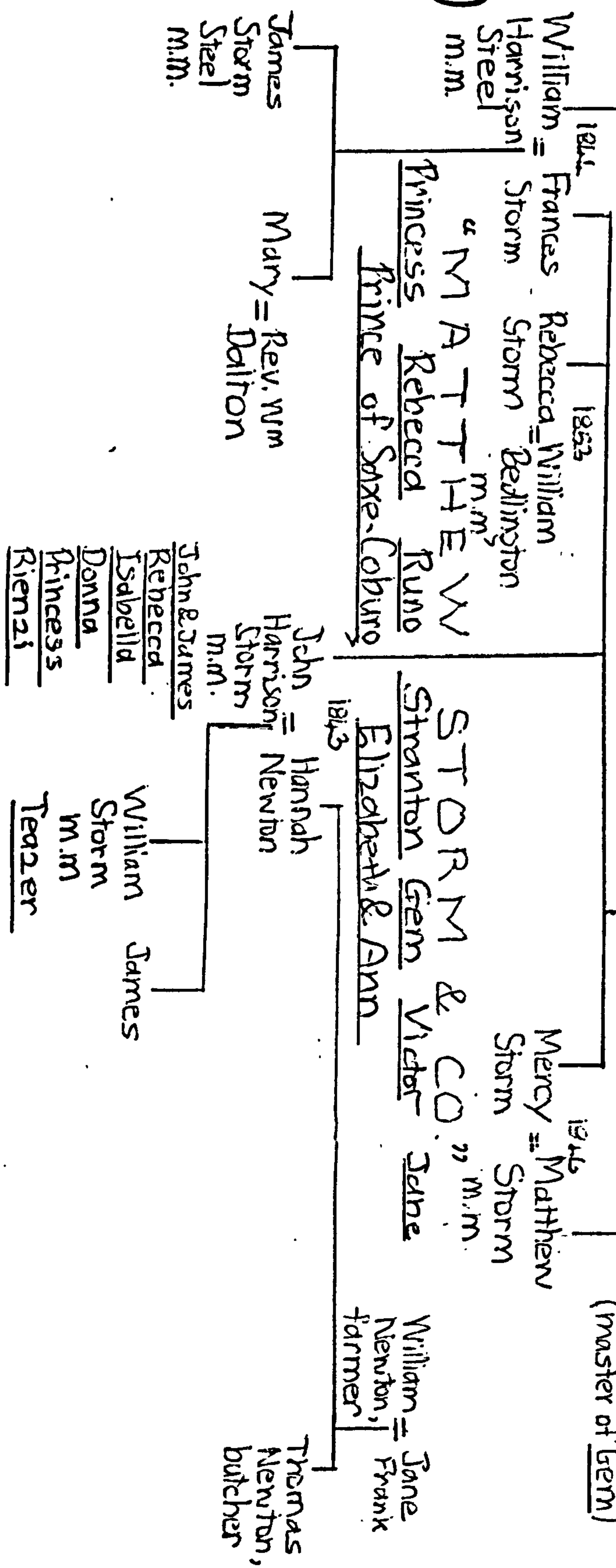
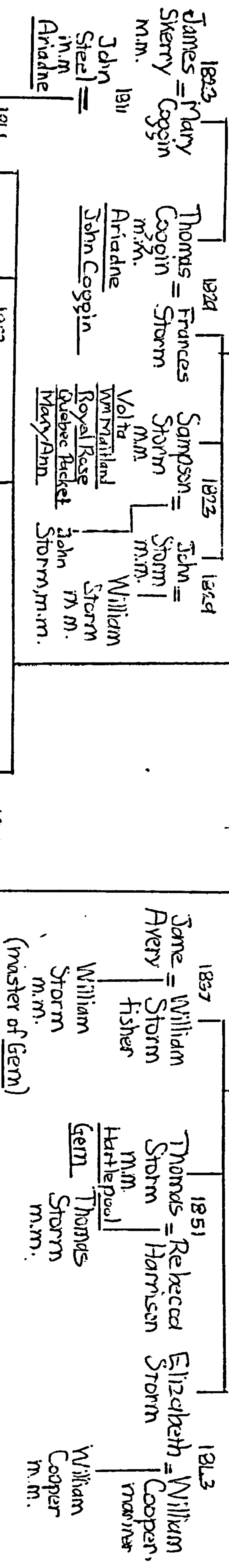
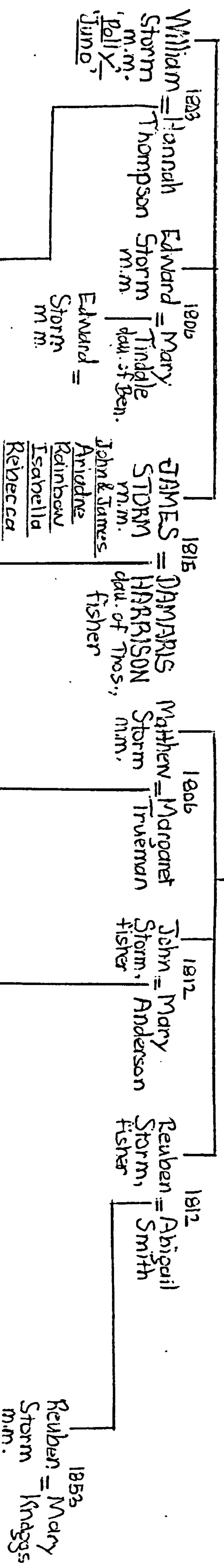
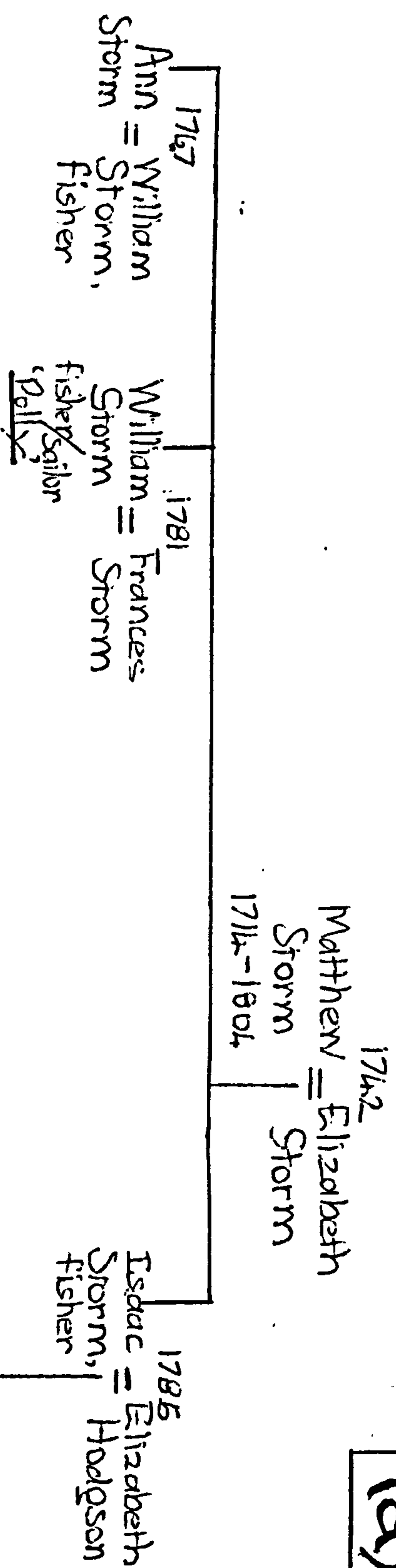
- (a) James Storm and family
- (b) Matthew Storm and Co.
- (c) Harrison
- (d) Storm and Co. (otherwise Matthew Storm [1778-1866] and family)
- (e) Granger-Tindale-Robinson
- (f) Bedlington
- (g) Skerry
- (h) Todd

Appendix 7(a) JAMES STORM AND FAMILY

Appendix 7(b) MATTHEW STORM AND CO.



(a) JAMES STORM and FAMILY



# Appendix 7(c) HARRISON

1. The first part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who were present at the meeting. The names are listed in alphabetical order.

2. The second part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who were present at the meeting. The names are listed in alphabetical order.

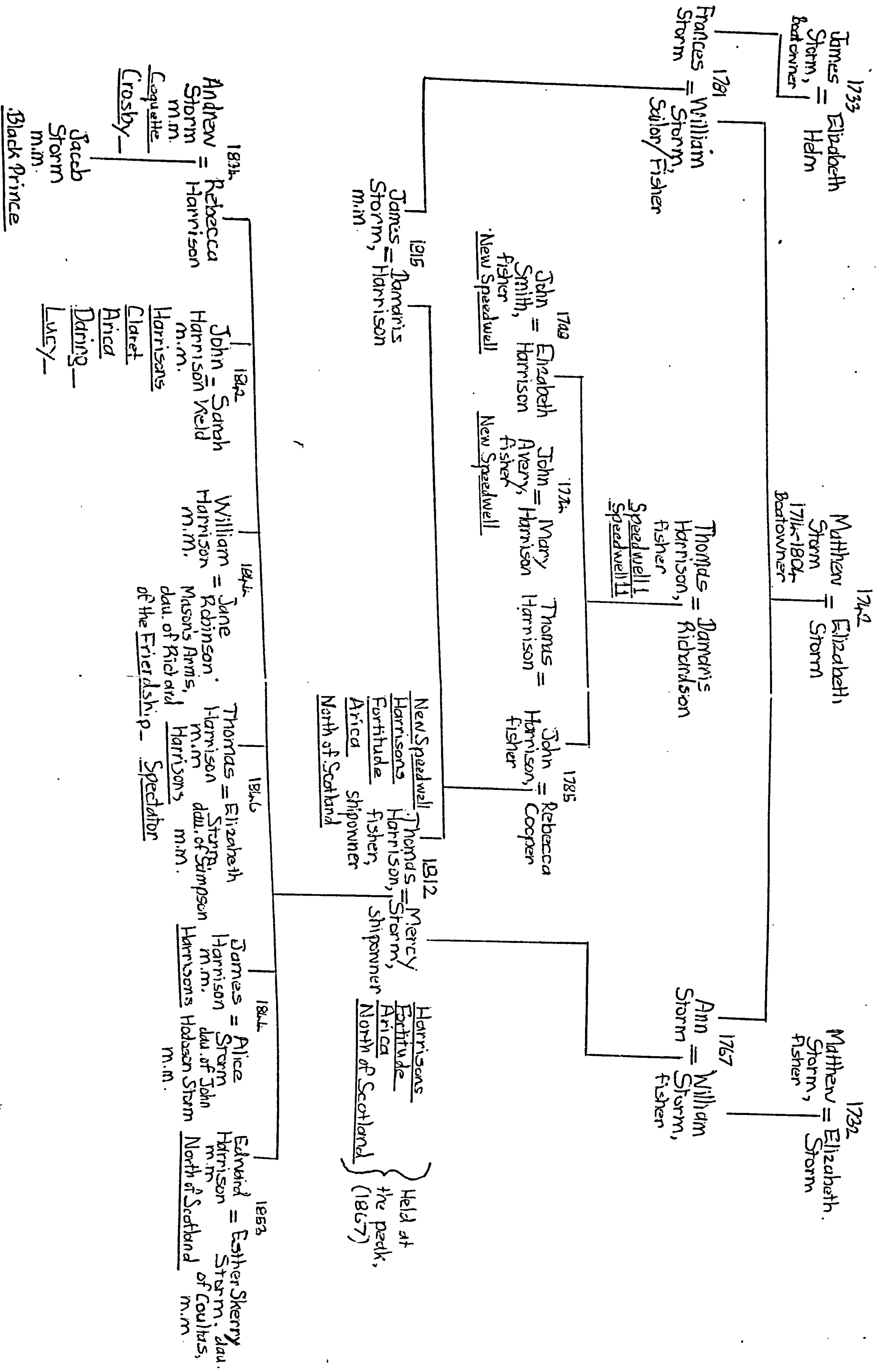
3. The third part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who were present at the meeting. The names are listed in alphabetical order.

4. The fourth part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who were present at the meeting. The names are listed in alphabetical order.

5. The fifth part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who were present at the meeting. The names are listed in alphabetical order.

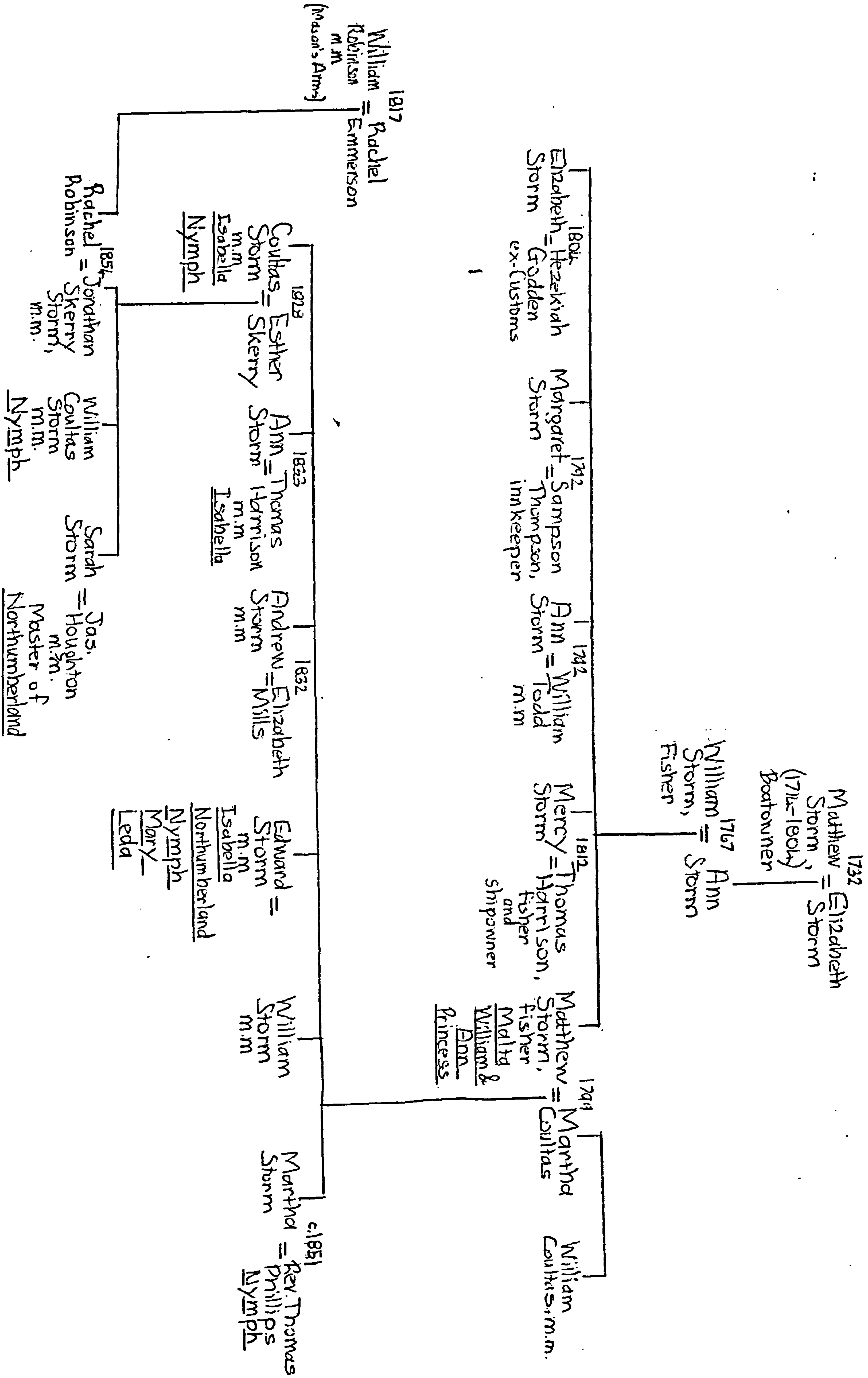


## (c) HARRISON



Appendix 7(d) STORM & CO.

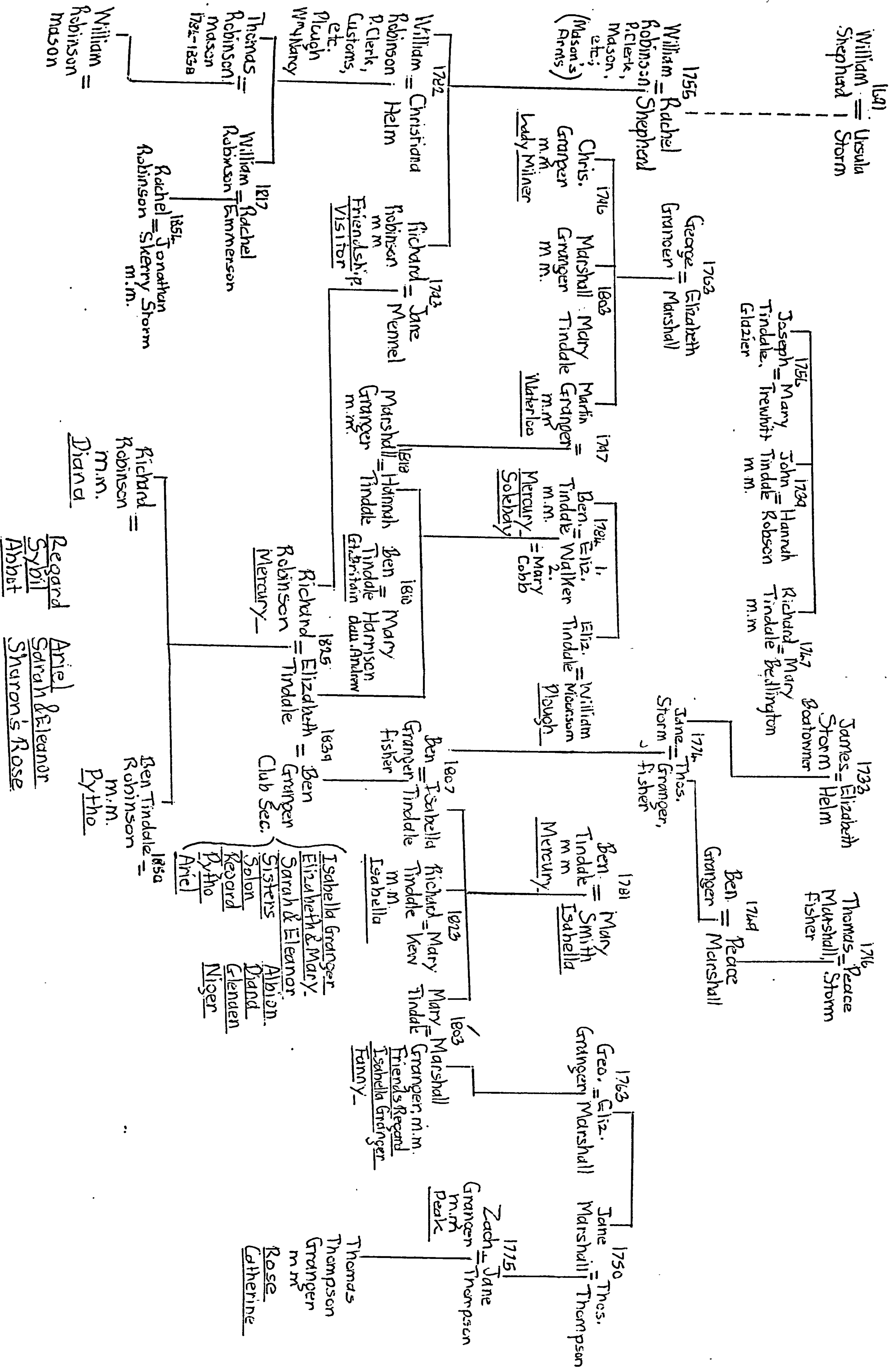




# Appendix 7(e) GRANGER-TINDALE-ROBINSON

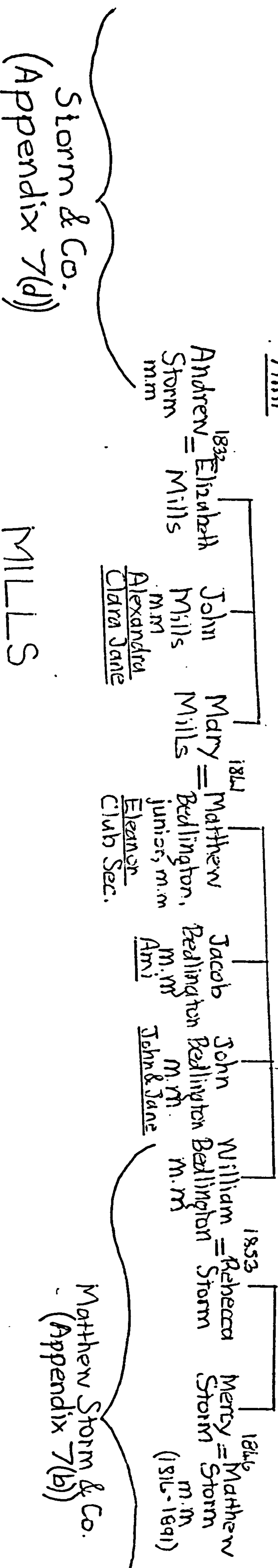
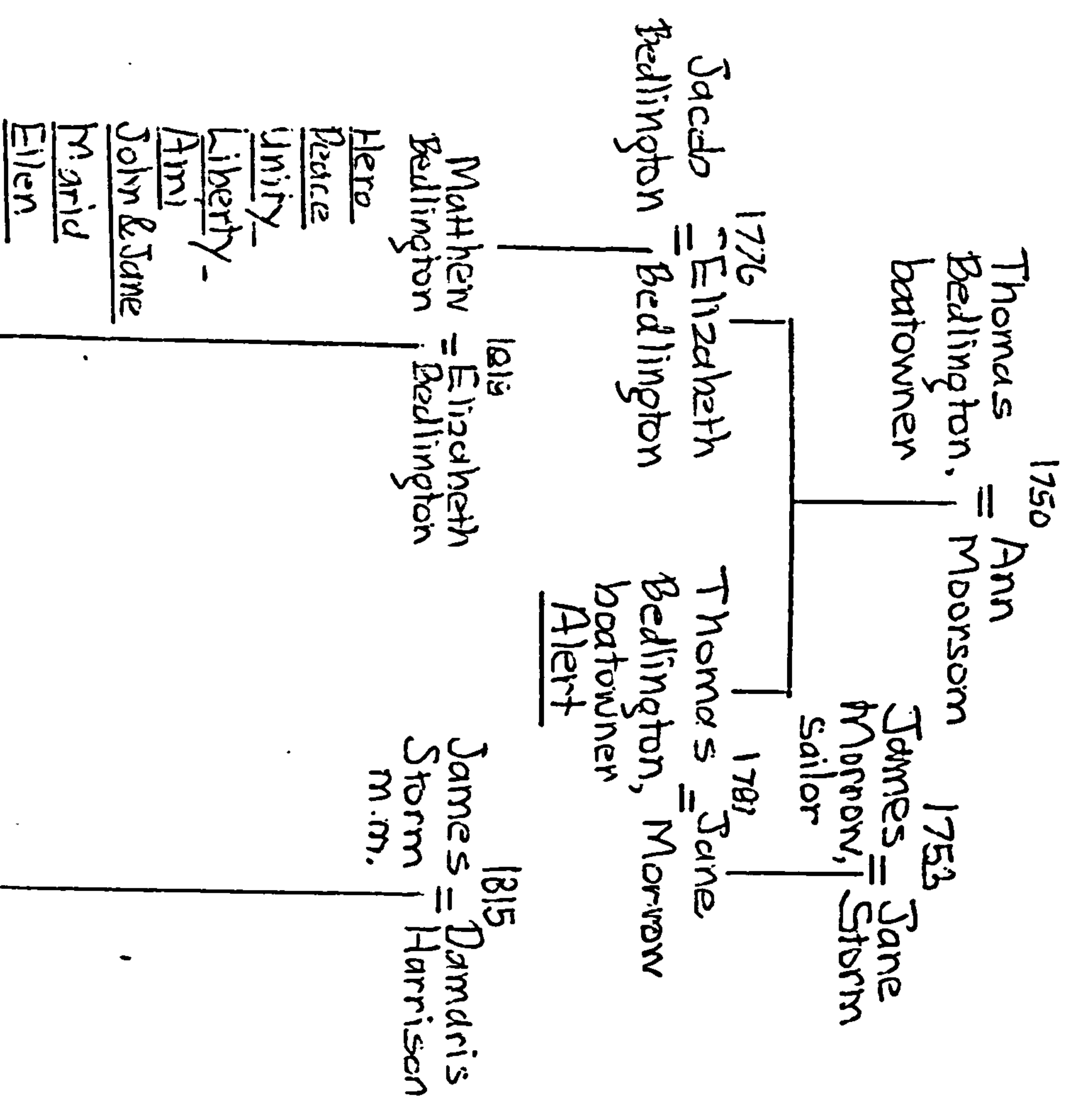
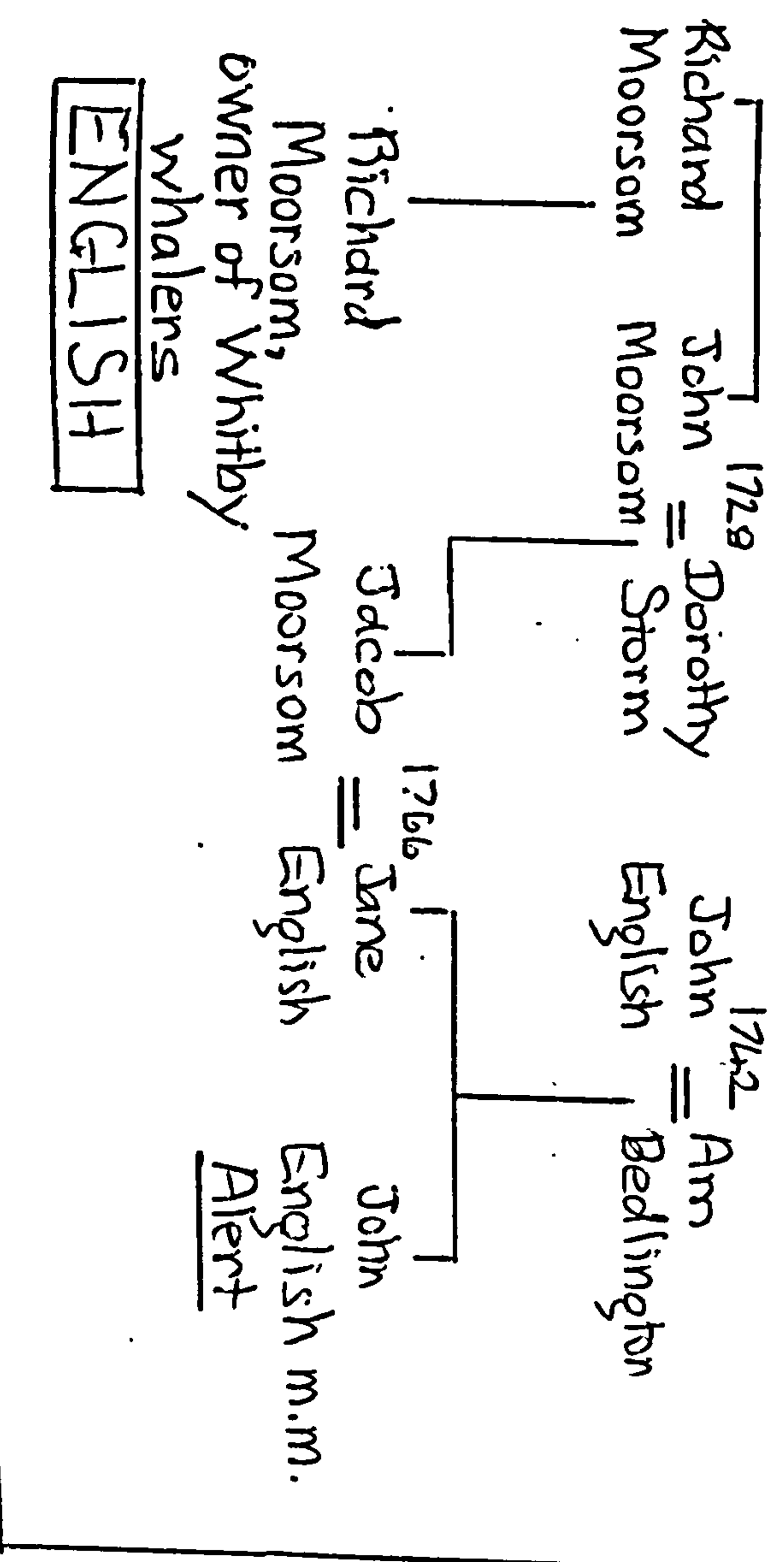


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# Appendix 7(f) BEDLINGTON

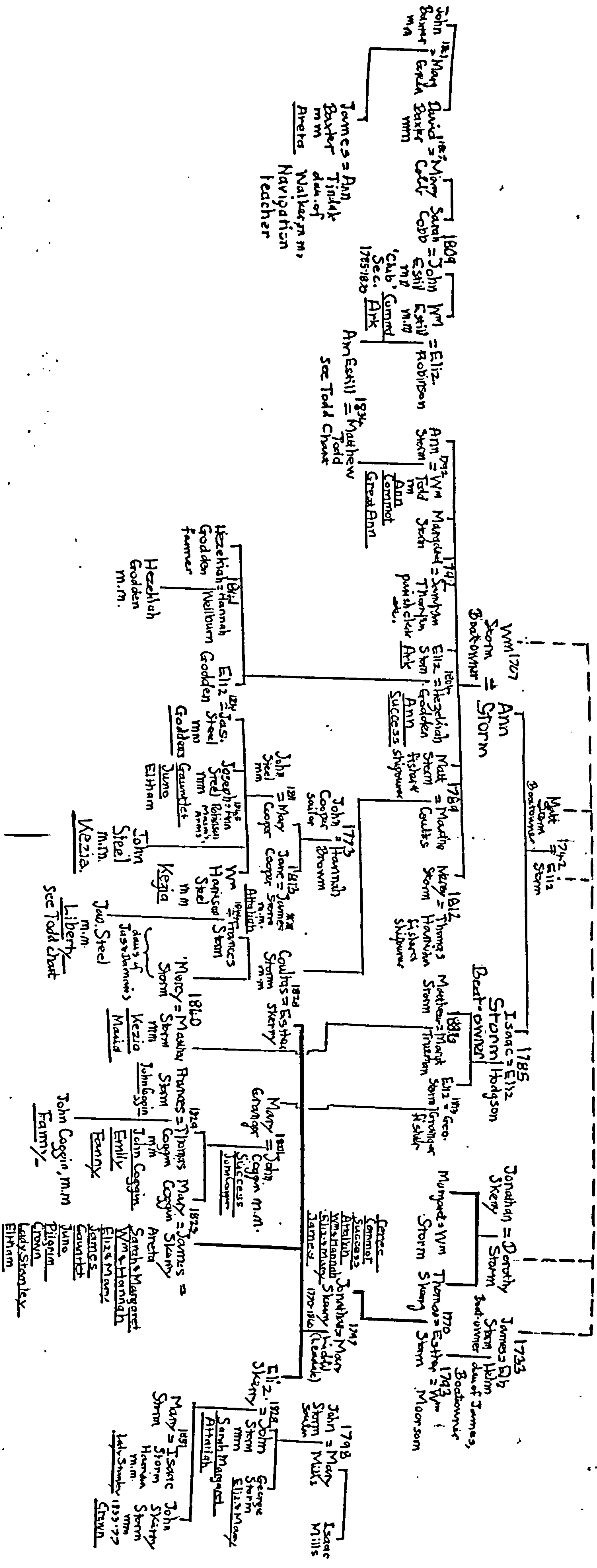




Appendix 7(g) SKERRY



(3) SKERRY

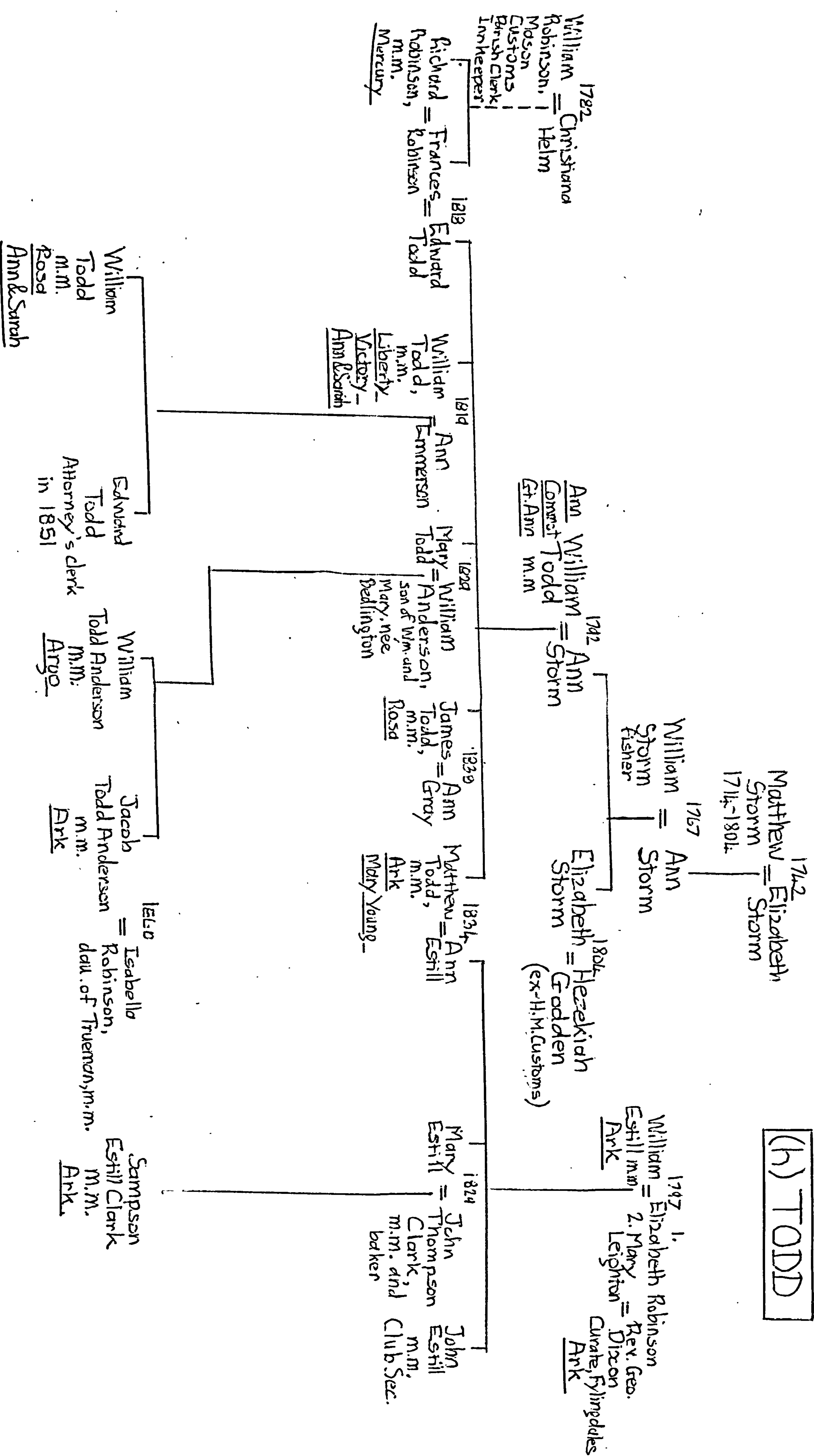


Boatsterer of the Speckioneers  
watch of Wm. Scoresby's whaler  
Esk in 1814

Appendix 7(h) TODD



(h) TODD



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PR/FY/4/6	Churchwardens' papers;
PR/FY/5/1-6	Overseers' Account Books;
PR/FY/5/2/1-5	Overseers' Rate Books;
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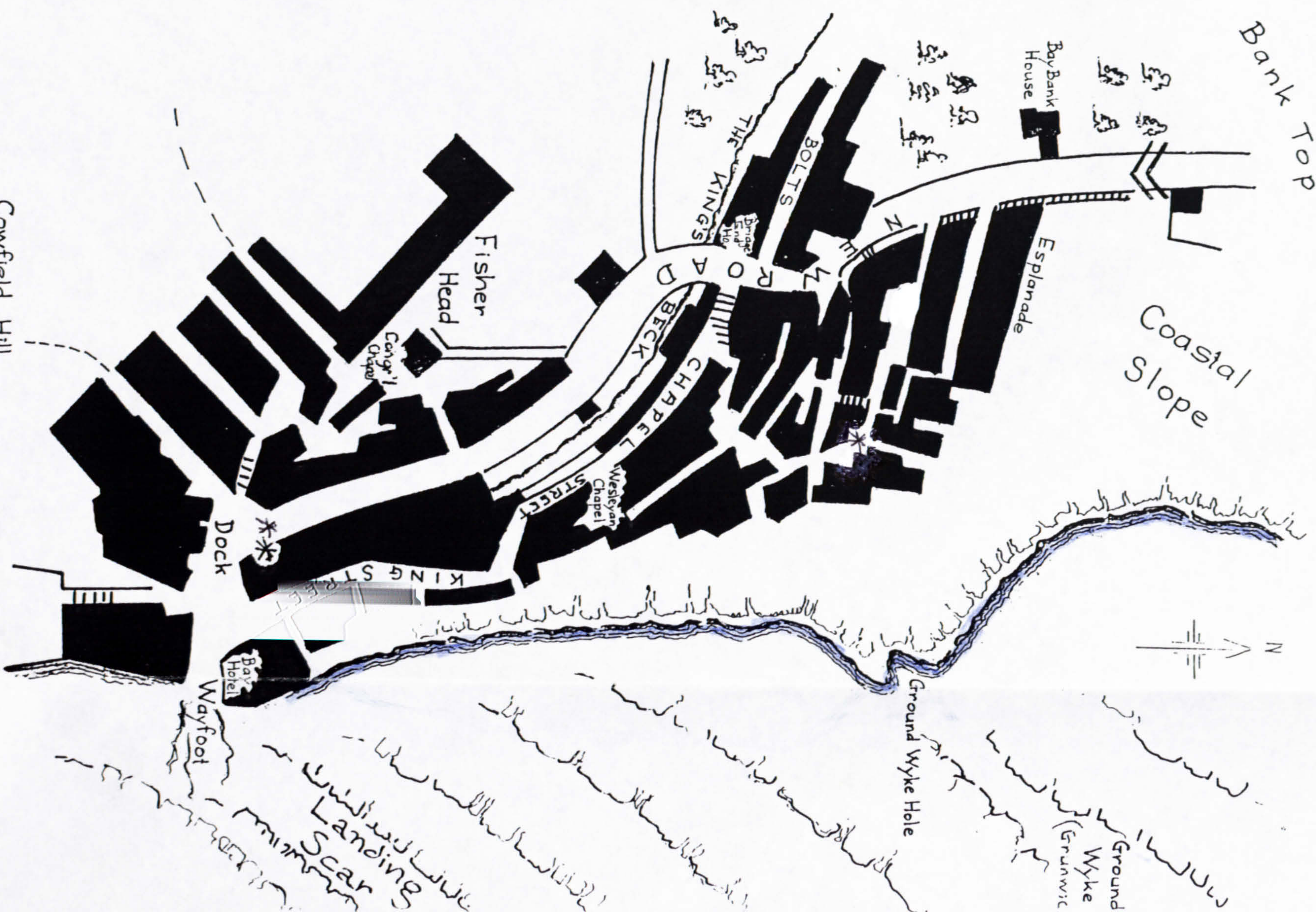
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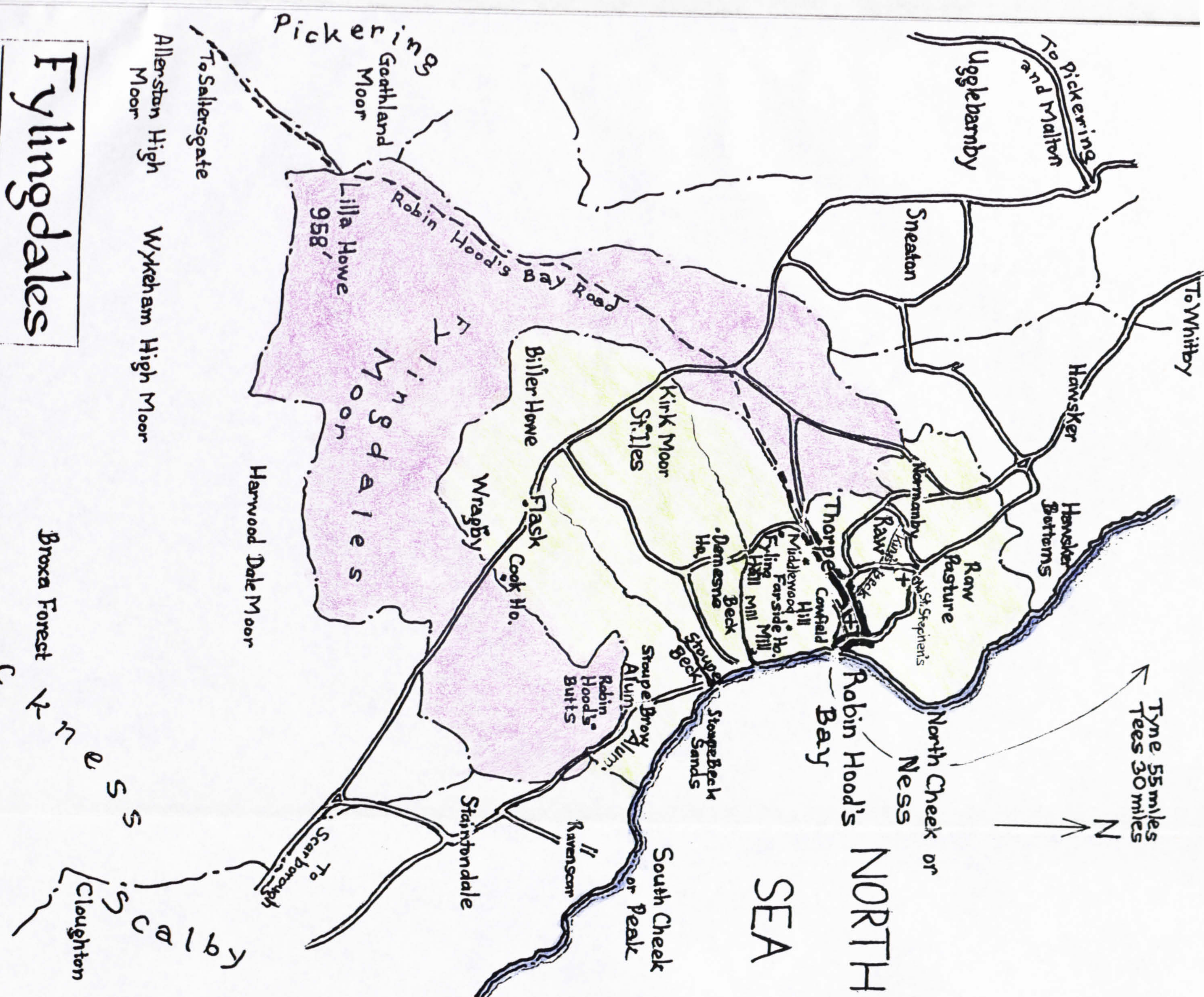


# Robin Hood's Bay



\* The Square  
 \*\* Site of King's Head, now King's Head Cottages

One Inch to 88 yards



# Fylingdales

Ebberston High Moor

H

One Inch to One Mile



**CONTAINS  
PULLOUTS**