
The Seasonality of Marriages and Baptisms in some Devon Seafaring Parishes*

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Abstract

This article shows that, for a sample of Devon parishes during the period c.1700–1850, there were seasonalities in the events of marriages and baptisms in general, but that in parishes linked to seafaring, especially in the Newfoundland trade, the seasonal patterns were much greater and occurred in different months. Seasonal variations also declined and changed over time, which in part was due to the changing economies of the maritime parishes, especially after 1800 when the Newfoundland trade changed and declined. It cannot be claimed that this trade was exclusively responsible for the seasonal pattern, but the results confirm that seafaring was linked to the variation in the number of marriages and baptisms from month to month.

Introduction

Philip Bond was baptised in Down St Mary, Devon in October 1749. He became a parish apprentice for his ‘meat, drink and clothing’.² He then did short-term work in a number of parishes, spent eighteen months in Ashcombe and then worked in Combeinteignhead and agreed a Newfoundland contract in January 1770. Philip continued his work until he sailed on 7 April 1770 for ‘that season and that following,’ a typical contract of two summers and a winter. He returned to Combeinteignhead in the autumn of 1771, his marriage banns were read twice in December of that year and for the third time in the following January. Philip married Dorothy Nicholls, of Combeinteignhead, on 14 January 1772. In February he was interviewed by the parish overseers. Whether or not he had requested assistance is debatable: it is possible that the parish just wished to know Philip’s legal settlement, which also became that of Dorothy his wife under the Poor Law.³ Philip married when he returned from sea and, given the short time lag, may have been returning to his ‘love’. Devon overseers’ examinations provide evidence of a number of such seamen who married on their return from sea.

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2 Devon Heritage Centre (hereafter DHC), parish register of Down St Mary, Devon, 3419A/PO9/3; DHC, parish register of Combeinteignhead, 3149A/PR/1.

3 After 1795 examinations could be made only if assistance had been requested. Before that, parish officials may have questioned people in advance of necessity as a precaution. The differing opinions of K.D.M. Snell and N. Landau were discussed by R. Wells, ‘Migration, the law, and parochial policy in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Southern England’, *Southern History*, 15 (1993), pp. 86–142.

Registration of marriages, baptisms and burials was required by Thomas Cromwell from September 1538, but not all parishes complied and consequently the survival of early parish registers is inconsistent. The use of books was not required until a bill of Elizabeth I in 1598.⁴ The period of this study includes Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753 which required marriage to be by banns, if one of the partners was resident in the parish, or by licence if not.⁵

The timing of marriages was affected by a variety of factors. First, there were church rules with respect to times of the year when marriages might take place. The 'closed seasons' for marriage were: Advent to St Hilary (effectively the end of November to 1 January); Septuagesima to Low Sunday, the first Sunday after Easter (Lent and Easter); and Rogation Sunday (around 25 April) to Trinity Sunday (after Whitsun). Marriages were therefore seasonal because of these rules. By the eighteenth century, the former 'closed seasons' for marriages were no longer observed in the same way as before the Commonwealth period (1649–1660), and had been effectively reduced to Advent and Lent.⁶ Second, there had to be the opportunity of the initial meeting of the couple but also important was the ability to pay, not just for the ceremony, but to be able to provide a home and sustenance for the couple. Employment and the cost of living affected everyone. For those working on the land, even if with varying seasonal intensity, the opportunities for meeting were not as constrained as for seamen who were away for long periods of time. Seasonal employment may be expected to have some impact on the seasonality of marriages. Wages and payments for service also varied. Those working on the land might be paid *pro rata* for artisanal work, or be employed by the week, month, or year, with payments on the quarter days. Those who went to sea were paid at the end of their contract or, for self-employed fishermen, when the fish was sold. The cost of living influenced how far the money received would be sufficient. Could it support a potential family? The affordability of marriage might vary from year to year, so it is necessary to consider the seasonality of marriage and baptisms over a reasonable time period. This is necessary also in the example studied in this article because in the case of those who went to Newfoundland, not all returned the same year.

The seasonality of vital events was considered by E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield who comment that the seasonality of marriages appears to relate to farming type in rural areas, but that urban parishes might differ.⁷ Their sample of parishes included 15 in Devon, with some, such as Paignton, Staverton and Topsham having links with the Newfoundland trade.⁸ They do not include the parishes studied here. Leslie Bradley's two part study relating to the seasonality of marriages and then baptisms thought that the three influential factors were the regulations and the constraints of the economy, the local variations in the

4 See for example W.E. Tate, *The Parish Chest*, 3rd edn (Chichester, 2000), pp. 44–5; 62–3.

5 An Act for the better preventing of clandestine marriage. 26 Geo. II c. 33 (25 March 1754).

6 The prohibition on marriages during Advent and Lent was not absolute: marriages could still take place during these periods. There were, however, substantially fewer marriages in Advent and Lent than one might expect.

7 E.A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541–1871: a Reconstruction*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 285–310, especially pp. 298–310 for marriages.

8 Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History of England*, pp. 485–6.

nature of communities, which might include farming type and local customs, and the ‘accidental’, which might include one-off special events.⁹

The possibility that fishing communities might have experienced different marriage and baptism seasonality has attracted less attention. Alan Storm relates the seasonality of marriages and baptisms in Robin Hood’s Bay, North Yorkshire, to the ‘customary sailing period’ and the fact that owner-masters needed to keep the vessels employed once they went to sea at the end of winter and worked until winter returned.¹⁰ From the North Sea there might be occasional visits home, but effectively the seamen were away for up to nine months of the year. He found that most marriages were solemnised from December to February, with a peak in January. It is Ann Kussmaul, in considering the seasonality of marriages on the general scale, who comments that, while the agricultural year was an important factor in rural parishes, with spring peaks in marriages in pastoral areas and autumn peaks in predominantly arable areas, where fishing was a major employer there was no one seasonal pattern of work, except for the ‘extreme case of North Atlantic cod’ when ships left the west country ‘in late winter’ and returned in ‘early autumn’.¹¹ Kussmaul thought that it is only fishing, with its seasonal absence of marriage partners that has a bigger impact than harvest on marriage patterns.¹² Her analysis uses Wrigley and Schofield’s parishes for south-west England, and she classifies the parishes into three types, ‘arable’, ‘pastoral’ and a third type described as ‘rural industry’. Those with links to seasonal fishing appear as ‘rural industry’. She does discuss the disappearance of autumn marriages from the South West, but this is without considering the possibility that changes in the Newfoundland trade may have influenced the changing pattern.¹³

Using a case study of some parishes with known involvement in the trans-Atlantic fishing and fish trade, with a group of primarily agricultural parishes for comparison, this article will show that as the nature of the trans-Atlantic trade changed, there was some impact on the seasonality of marriages and baptisms as hinted at by Kussmaul.

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- 9 L. Bradley, ‘An enquiry into seasonality in baptisms, marriages and burials, part 1: introduction, methodology and marriages’, *Local Population Studies*, 4 (1970), pp. 21–40 and L. Bradley, ‘An enquiry into seasonality in baptisms, marriages and burials, part 2: baptism seasonality’, *Local Population Studies*, 5 (1970), pp. 18–35. Other authors have written about marriage seasonality: P.A. Houston, *The Population History of Britain and Ireland 1500–1750* (Basingstoke, 1992), p. 33, seems to follow Wrigley and Schofield, adding that urban areas tended to have a flatter curve throughout the year for all vital events. Subsequently there were further articles related to specific areas, such as Shropshire and Ruislip and of the seasonality of baptisms in four types of settlement, from rural areas through market towns to cities and London: see W. J. Edwards, ‘Marriage seasonality 1761–1810: an assessment of patterns in seventeen Shropshire parishes’, *Local Population Studies*, 19 (1977), pp. 23–7; D. Jacobs, ‘Seasonal variation patterns in baptisms and burials for Ruislip, Middlesex’, *Local Population Studies*, 48 (1992), pp. 33–40; A. Dyer, ‘Seasonality of baptisms: an urban approach’, *Local Population Studies*, 27 (1982), pp. 26–34. One recent article relates to France: see W. Rault and A. Regnier-Loilier, ‘Seasonality of marriages, past and present’, *Population*, 71 (2016), pp. 675–9.
- 10 A. Storm, ‘Seasonality of births and marriages in a seafaring community before the age of steam’, *Local Population Studies*, 52 (1994), pp. 43–7. Storm says (p. 43) that the sailors of Robin Hood’s Bay used the nearby port of Whitby.
- 11 A. Kussmaul, *A General View of the Rural Economy of England 1538–1840* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 16–17.
- 12 Kussmaul, *General View*, pp. 16–17.
- 13 Kussmaul, *General View*, p. 17.

The Devon background

With both Bristol Channel and English Channel coastlines, Devon has always had a good many seamen, on fishing, merchant and naval ships. Apart from those who fished local waters by the day, the seamen were often away for extended periods of time, especially those who engaged in the transhumant, Newfoundland cod fishery or those on naval assignments. Long periods away reduced the times available for courting and marriage. Bernard Capp has written about the naval seamen, although only to 1700, and Peter Earle about the merchant seamen from the late seventeenth century. Neither refers to any seasonality for marriages. Capp commented that when the men went to sea, the wives could not be sure when, if ever, their husbands would return.¹⁴ Earle says that, although most seamen were young bachelors, there were practical benefits in marriage, including ‘sex at cheaper rates than “professionals”’, as well as the home-making, affection and provision of a ‘haven’ to which to return.¹⁵

In Devon, the Exe, Teign and Dart estuarine areas were of particular importance for the Newfoundland trade which had a seasonal pattern respecting the time away from home. These areas and the parishes mentioned in the article are shown in Figure 1. The proportion of seafarers was probably highest in Dartmouth, especially St Saviour’s parish, which included the main harbour area on the deep water ria; Teignmouth had a more accessible hinterland, with the river navigable to Newton Abbot, but the estuary was affected by a sandbar. Unfortunately, there is little specific evidence concerning the actual numbers of seamen in each of the various parishes.

For the eighteenth century, there is some general information. Joseph Farrington described the recruitment for the Newfoundland seafarers which took place annually in Newton Bushel, with Wolborough, now part of Newton Abbot.¹⁶ He reported that during the peace before the Napoleonic Wars, Newton Abbot had sixteen ships’ captains who sailed to Newfoundland and that up to 1,200 sailors might assemble in the town to be hired for a voyage. For Philip Bond, finding work in Combeinteignhead, adjacent to Newton Bushell, was possibly a deliberate move.

In the 1770s the then Dean Milles of Exeter Cathedral sent a questionnaire to every parish.¹⁷ The parochial returns varied in detail. Brixham sent five or six ships to Newfoundland every year; Dittisham, upstream from Dartmouth, reported that it had no trade or manufacturing but ‘...the Newfoundland business...common people going thither every year’ and Paignton exacted 2s 6d as tithe from every man returning from

14 B. Capp, ‘Naval seamen, 1650–1700’, in C.A. Fury (ed.) *The Social History of English Seamen 1650–1815* (Woodbridge, 2017), pp. 33–50, here at pp. 46–7.

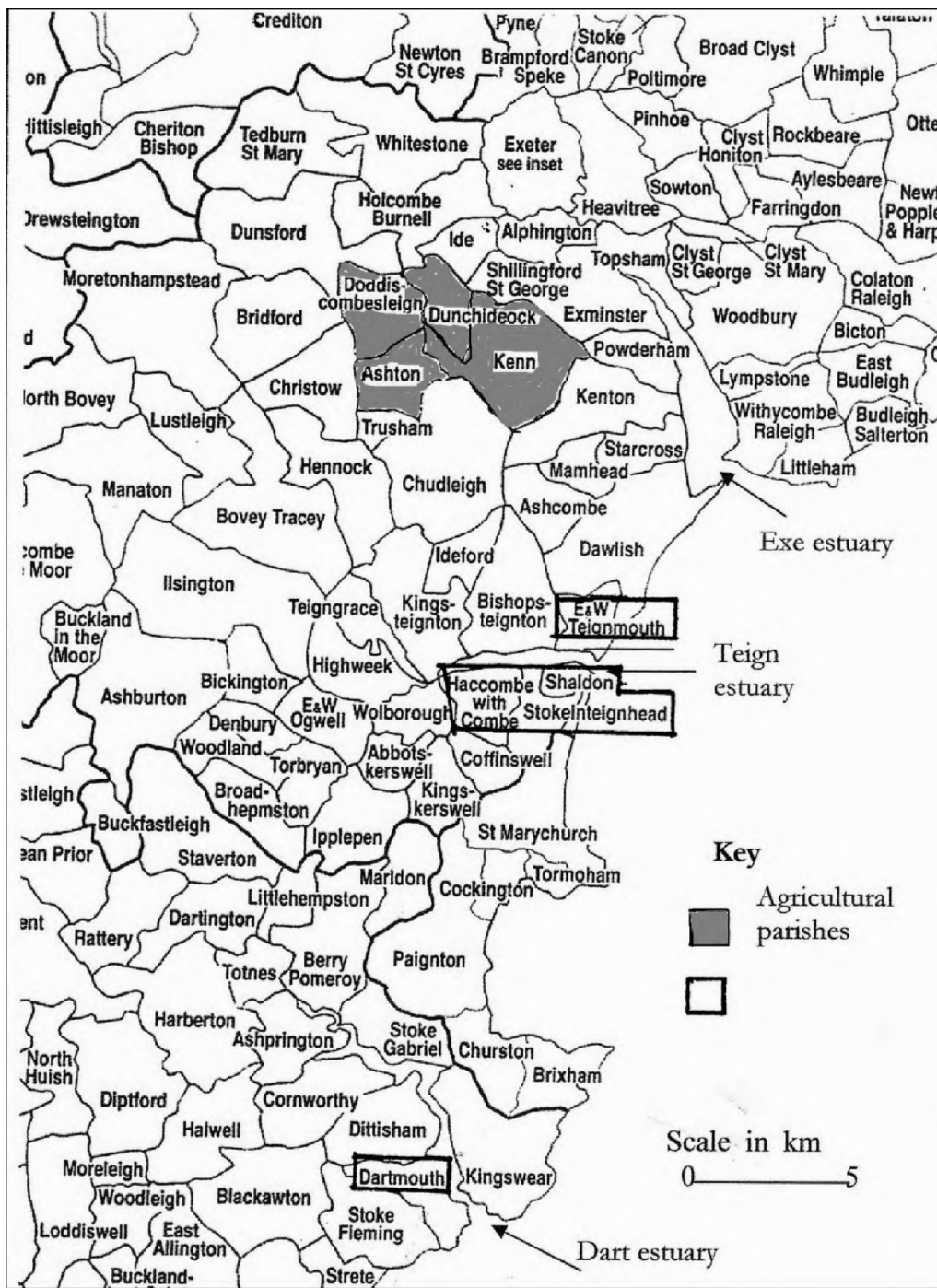
15 P. Earle, ‘The origins and careers of English merchant seamen in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries’, in Fury, *Social History of English Seamen*, pp. 129–46, here at pp. 142–3.

16 J. Farrington, *The Diary of Joseph Farrington: Volume X July 1809–December 1810*, edited by K. Care (Newhaven and London, 1982), pp. 3,561–62.

17 Bodleian Library, Oxford, Dean Milles Parochial Collections vols. 1 & 2 (Answers to queries c. 1777).

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Figure 1 The Exe, Teign and Dart estuaries and their ecclesiastical parishes



Notes: Newton Abbot is shown as 'Wolborough', Combeinteignhead as 'Hacombe with Combe', and St Nicholas as 'Shaldon'.

Source: Based on parish data as supplied by Devon Family History Society.

Newfoundland. Every labouring man about Coffinwell was said to have been to Newfoundland.¹⁸ Fanny Burney visited Teignmouth and saw women operating a seine net and competing in the regatta, because ‘...all the men are at Newfoundland every summer, & all laborious Work is done by the Women...’¹⁹ In 1794, Fraser commented on the potential usefulness of the new drill-plough in the area where ‘...the propensity of the young men to go to sea, in the Newfoundland and other...fisheries...is so great as to render hands very scarce for...agriculture.’²⁰

A note to the 1841 census reported that about 150 seamen were absent from St Saviour’s and a further 50 from Townstall, both in Dartmouth; at Teignmouth, the discrepancy between the male and female population was ‘...partly attributed to the absence of men at sea’, as it was also at Brixham.²¹ An 1850 Devon directory shows that Teignmouth and Shaldon had no fewer than 12 master mariners each, although Dartmouth had only 3, but 12 ship owners, who may have been mariners.²² Master mariners and ship owners also needed support crews.

The beginnings of the Newfoundland fishery were in the late sixteenth century, especially after Humphrey Gilbert of Devon claimed Newfoundland for Elizabeth I, in 1583.²³ The main period of operation was from about 1650 to 1850. This transhumant, trans-Atlantic fishery is placed in its wider context by Olaf Jenson.²⁴ There are a number of general accounts of the Newfoundland fisheries, such as those of Ralph Lounsbury and Gillian Cell.²⁵ A more recent account of the development of the Newfoundland fishery is given by Shannon Ryan.²⁶ Some accounts are specifically concerned with Devon and the South-West.²⁷ A few sources go to the practical level of information, as in Fay’s *Life and*

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- 18 D.W. Prowse, *A History of Newfoundland* (Portugal Cove-St Philip’s, Newfoundland, 2002), p. 298. This book was originally published in 1895.
 - 19 F. Burney, *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney, Volume 1: 1768–1773*, edited by L.E. Troide (Oxford, 1988), pp. 292–4.
 - 20 R. Fraser, *General View of the County of Devon with Observations on the Means of its Improvement* (Barnstaple, 1790), pp. 24–5. This book was originally published in 1794.
 - 21 Census of Great Britain 1841, *Abstract of the Answers and Returns made Pursuant to Acts 3 & 4 Vic. c. 99 and 4 Vic. c. 7 Intituled Respectively ‘An act for taking an account of the population of Great Britain’ and ‘An act to amend the acts of the last session for taking an account of the population’, Enumeration Abstract*, British Parliamentary Papers 1843 XXII [C. 496], p. 61; The National Archive, Census enumerators’ books, Dartmouth 1841.
 - 22 W. White, *White’s Devon: 1850* (New York, 1968). This book was originally published in 1850.
 - 23 Prowse, *History of Newfoundland*, p. 51.
 - 24 Olaf U. Jenson, *War and Trade in Eighteenth-Century Newfoundland* (St John’s, Newfoundland, 2013).
 - 25 R.G. Lounsbury, *The British Fishery at Newfoundland: 1643–1763* (New Haven CT, 1934); G.T. Cell, *English Enterprise in Newfoundland: 1577–1660* (Toronto, 1969); M. G. Dickinson (compiler), *A Living from the Sea: Devon’s Fishing Industry and its Fishermen* (Exeter, 1987), Chapter 10, pp. 67–79.
 - 26 S. Ryan, *A History of Newfoundland in the North Atlantic to 1818* (St John’s, Newfoundland, 2012).
 - 27 K. Matthews, ‘A history of the west of England-Newfoundland fishery’ (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1968); M.G. Dickinson (compiler), *A Living from the Sea* (Exeter, 1987), pp. 67–79; D.J. Starkey, ‘Devonians and the Newfoundland Trade’, in M. Duffy (ed.), *The New Maritime History of Devon*, Vol. 1 (London, 1992), pp. 163–71; T. Gray and D.J. Starkey, ‘The distant-water fisheries of south west England in the early modern period’, in D.J. Starkey, C. Reid and N. Ashcroft (eds), *England’s Sea Fisheries: the Commercial Sea Fisheries of England and Wales since 1300* (London, 2000), pp. 96–104.

Labour in Newfoundland and there are the personal perspectives of journal writers, James Yonge and Aaron Thomas.²⁸

The trade was regulated by the Western Charters, the first dated 1634 and with amendments up to 1671, when three of the new rules were '[t]hat every fifth man be a green man not a seaman', '[t]hat no fishing ship part hence for Newfoundland before the month of March' and '[t]hat no fisherman or seaman remain behind after fishing is ended'.²⁹ In practice, a few over-wintering 'caretakers' would be left in Newfoundland, some of whom would be those who had been recruited for two summers and a winter. As the fishery increased, those over-wintering increased also, but fishing servants were male and only with an increase in the numbers of females did permanent migration take over, especially from around 1805.³⁰ Some were apprenticed to merchants or recruited locally by merchants or bye-boat keepers, but many were contracted men, like those described by Farrington.³¹

A typical first contract was for two summers and a winter, which meant being away for eighteen months in all, from about the end of March through to October or November the following year. Those engaged in this seagoing were those on fishing ships, those on larger ships (including bye-boat keepers, who went out annually to use boats stationed on Newfoundland), and seamen who increasingly over time might be at sea for a complete triangular or even longer voyage. A typical triangular voyage might go from Devon to Newfoundland—possibly to the West Indies—then back across the Atlantic to the Iberian peninsula (or sometimes Italy), where most fish would have been sold and a cargo of wine, fruit and/or salt brought back to England and Devon. Thus an absence from late March until at least October might then extend through to perhaps December or January, if engaged on a larger sack or trading ship.

A few fishermen, like Robert Tolchard, continued to go out annually, in his case for over 49 years.³² When he died in East Ogwell, near Newton Abbot, he left property in Torbay, Newfoundland. Others became residents of Newfoundland, so reducing the degree of transhumance.³³

The peak numbers of British fishing ships and the use of bye-boats occurred between 1776 and 1792, but over time the numbers and types of ships involved in the trade varied

28 C.R. Fay, *Life and Labour in Newfoundland* (Cambridge, 1956); J. Yonge, *The Journal of James Yonge 1647–1721*, edited by F.N.L. Poynter (London, 1963); A. Thomas, *The Newfoundland Journal of Aaron Thomas 1794*, edited by J.M. Murray (London, 1794). Thomas's original watercolours, and probably the whole journal, are archived at Memorial University Newfoundland, St John's, Newfoundland.

29 The regulations are quoted in full in Prowse, *History of Newfoundland*, pp. 154–5.

30 See, for example, W.G. Handcock, *Soe Longe as There Comes Noe Women: Origins of English Settlement in Newfoundland* (St John's, Newfoundland, 1989), pp. 95–104.

31 A 'bye-boat' was a boat kept 'by' in Newfoundland, the owners making an annual migration to their 'plantations'.

32 Bob Tolchard, in *Devon Family History Journal*, February 2001, p. 31.

33 An overview, related specifically to the West Country and the settlement of Newfoundland is given by Gordon Handcock: see Handcock, *Soe Longe as There Comes Noe Women*; and G. Handcock, *The West Country*, http://www.heritage.nf.ca/society/west_country.html [accessed 3 December 2020].

noticeably in response to periods of war.³⁴ What began as a gradual change from a migratory fishery to one of more general trade, which included Newfoundland cod, became especially marked during and following the Napoleonic wars, 1793–1815. The percentage of fish taken by the migratory fishery became negligible post war. For convenience, the year 1800 will be used as the marker of this change.

Method

To investigate the seasonality of marriages and baptisms in relation to the Newfoundland fishery, and to test them against the more general pattern found in the area, a sample of parishes was constructed. The parishes of St Saviour's, Dartmouth (Dartmouth) and West Teignmouth (Teignmouth), on the eastern bank of the River Teign, are used to represent port towns. In each case, the parish used is that including the port area. Their 1801 populations were 1,671 and 1,528 respectively. The 1801 census was taken on 10 March, when fewer men might already have been at sea.³⁵ The Teign estuary's west bank parishes illustrate the effects of seamen on the seasonality of events in smaller parishes. These 'seamen's' parishes are Combeinteignhead (Hacombe with Combe), Stokeinteignhead and St Nicholas (present day Shaldon and Ringmore) (Figure 1) These parishes had a combined total population of 1,664 in 1801. They are known to have included Newfoundland merchants, such as Rendell and the Codners, and 'Newfoundland men' in their populations, perhaps with other seafarers.³⁶

For comparison, a group of inland agricultural parishes with similar populations was needed. The four contiguous parishes of Ashton, Doddiscombeleigh, Dunchideock and Kenn (Figure 1) had a population total of 1,494 in 1801.³⁷ Charles Vancouver's figures give a good indication of employment.³⁸ Agriculture is clearly dominant at 39 per cent of the total population, although rather less in Kenn. A Kenn sample of 63 marriages has farmers at 11 per cent, and labourers plus one servant making up 51 per cent; 30 per cent were artisans and the rest were a few designated gent/esquire, who probably also had farming interests. The seamen's parishes had only 14 per cent employed in agriculture.

For the years from 1716 to 1850, when data for all parishes were available, monthly marriage totals were extracted for each of the sample parishes. Where the information was given in the registers, the seamen's marriages were noted. Monthly baptism totals were

34 M. Hardy, 'The Newfoundland trade and Devonian migration c. 1600–1850', *Local Population Studies*, 89 (2012), pp. 31–53, see especially Table 1, p. 36, <https://doi.org/10.35488/lps89.2012.31>.

35 It has been assumed, perhaps incorrectly, that the Napoleonic Wars may have had a similar impact on all parishes. The census was not taken again as early as March until 1851, by which time the population of the seamen's parishes had increased marginally.

36 M.R. Hardy, 'Exe-Dart Devon: some social and economic effects of the Newfoundland trade' (unpublished MA dissertation, University of Leicester, 2010), pp. 102–4, 107.

37 An exact population match could not be made. Adding a further agricultural parish sent the population mismatch in the opposite direction.

38 C. Vancouver, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Devon* (Newton Abbot, 1969), pp. 400–27, especially pp. 405, 418, 411 and 413–14. This book was originally published in London in 1808.

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extracted from the registers of each parish for 1700 to 1849 (although for West Teignmouth only from 1706, the first available year). These dates allow the pattern of baptisms to be compared with those given by Wrigley and Schofield.³⁹ The monthly totals for the seamen and agricultural groups of smaller parishes were aggregated.

It is possible to compare the seamen's and the agricultural parishes statistically. Chi-squared tests of the null hypotheses that marriages and baptisms occur evenly throughout the year will show the extent to which this is true, or not, for each type of parish.⁴⁰ In practice, one expects degrees of variation due to the influence of the church year and local economies, but their comparative significance needs to be shown. To compute the chi-squared value we first need the total numbers of events observed in each month i , O_i . Here, i denotes each of the 12 months from January to December. These observed values are compared against the expected number in the corresponding month, E_i , if events were spread evenly through the year. The expected number equates to the total for the year divided by twelve.

Once we have the 12 observed and expected values, we apply the formula

$$\chi^2 = \sum_i \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i},$$

where χ^2 is the chi-squared statistic. The value of the chi-squared statistic is then checked against a printed table showing the significant values for the number of degrees of freedom, which in these cases is equal to the number of months in the year minus one, that is $12 - 1 = 11$. Essentially, the higher the chi-squared value, the more strongly the null hypotheses can be dismissed and that, in these cases, the more significant the variations are through the year. It is important to recognise, however, that the chi-squared statistic indicates only whether or not there is a seasonal pattern: it does not indicate the actual patterns of the events during the year, which can be shown more easily on graphs.

Due to the differences in the parish sizes and increasing numbers of marriages and baptisms, monthly indices of marriages and baptisms were calculated. These events are not distributed evenly across each year. Not all months or years are the same length. Allowing for leap years, an average year may be considered to be of 365.25 days, so the average number of marriages or baptisms per day would be the total for the year divided by the number of days. Suppose we have T_i events in month i , and a total of T events in the calendar year. Suppose also that there are N_i days in month i . The average daily total of events in month i is then T_i/N_i . These are then needed as a proportion of the overall annual total

39 Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History of England*. All years, even those before 1752, were considered to begin in January.

40 For an easy-to-follow explanation and demonstration of this process, see, for example, G. Nagle with M. Witherick, *Skills and Techniques for Geography A-Level* (Cheltenham, 2001), pp. 31–5, and the critical values table on p. 94.

per day, $T/365.25$. Using the daily figures will result in very small numbers, so the result is multiplied by 100 to give a manageable figure. The resulting index of seasonality is calculated by the formula:

$$\text{index of seasonality} = \frac{T_i / N_i}{T/365.25} \times 100.$$

Monthly indices of 100 will result if marriages or baptisms are evenly spread over the year, but such results are not expected. Although smaller numbers tend to exaggerate any peaks or troughs on a graph, the indices make for ease of comparison and mark clearly any seasonality.⁴¹

The seasonality of marriages

The reduction in the migratory fishery and the increase in the use of sack ships were most marked from about 1800. To see what impact this change had on the seasonality of marriages, the chi-squared values for the seamen's and the agricultural parishes were calculated for the period before and after 1800, on the null hypotheses that there would be no significant differences. The results are shown in Table 1.

All save one of these values exceeds the critical value of 31.26 for a one in a thousand chance of there being no seasonal variations, but in both types of parish the degree of seasonality declines after 1800, that for agricultural parishes to a value less than the critical value at the five per cent level. The values for seamen's parishes indicate a *very* high proba-

Table 1 Results of chi-squared test of seasonality of marriages

Period	Chi-squared values	
	Seamen's parishes	Agricultural parishes
1716–1800	424.5	35.6
1801–1849	83.7	18.0

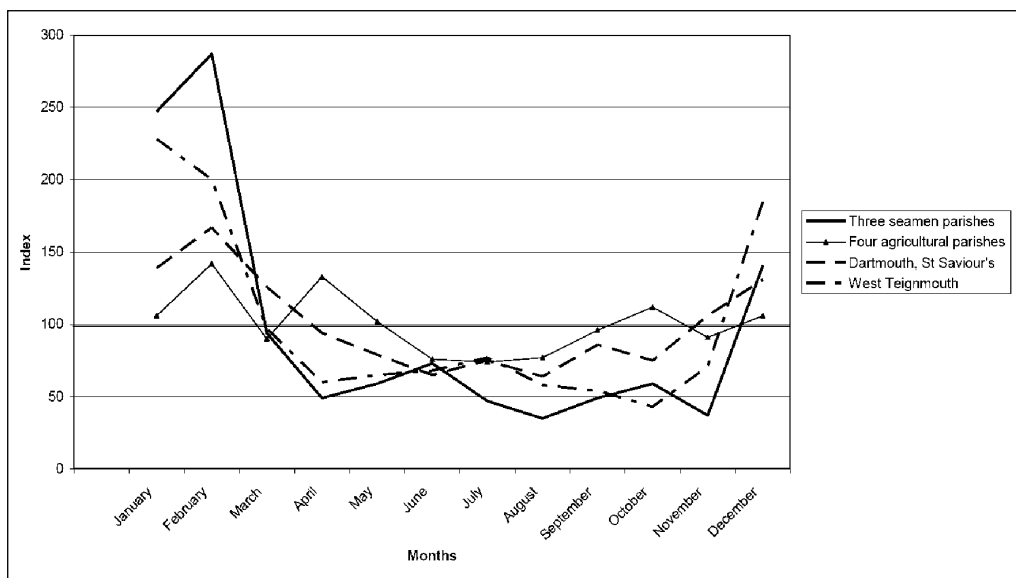
Notes: The critical value for the chi-squared test at the 5 per cent level of statistical significance is 19.68, and the corresponding value at the 0.1 per cent level is 31.26 (denoting a one in a thousand chance of obtaining such a strong seasonal pattern by chance if there really were no seasonal variation). The seamen's parishes are Combeinteignhead (Hacombe with Combe), Stokeinteignhead and St Nicholas (present day Shaldon and Ringmore). The agricultural parishes are Ashton, Doddiscombeleigh, Dunchideock and Kenn.

Sources: Parish registers of Combeinteignhead (Devon Heritage Centre (hereafter DHC) 3149A/PR/1), Stokeinteignhead (DHC 3420A/PR/1), St Nicholas (DHC 1528A/PR/1), Ashton (DHC 2016A/PR/1), Doddiscombeleigh (538A/PR/1), Dunchideock (1213A/PR/1) and Kenn (266A/PR/1).

41 This formula was provided to the author by Professor K.D.M. Snell.

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Figure 2 Monthly marriage indices, 1716–1800



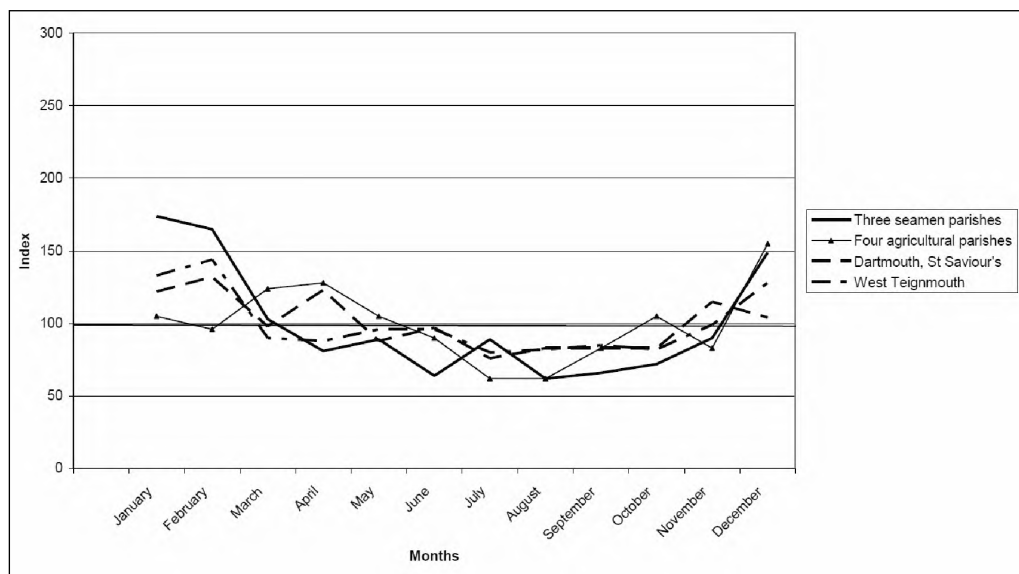
Notes: The three 'seamen' parishes are Combeinteignhead (Hacombe with Combe), Stokeinteignhead and St Nicholas (present day Shaldon and Ringmore). The four agricultural parishes are Ashton, Doddiscombeleigh, Dunchideock and Kenn.

Source: Based on parish data as supplied by Devon Family History Society.

bility of divergence from what would be expected if the null hypothesis were true: if there truly were no seasonality of marriages in these parishes, the chance of obtaining the data we observe is substantially less than one in a thousand. Therefore we conclude that there was a very marked seasonality in their marriages.

The nature of the extreme and less extreme seasonalities of the agricultural parishes, and any monthly differences between them, can be shown by graphs using the calculated indices of seasonality. The indices for marriages were calculated for 1716 to 1800 and then 1801 to 1850 (Figures 2 and 3). Each of the graphs, plotted on the same scale, shows the indices for Dartmouth, Teignmouth, the seamen's parishes and the agricultural parishes. If the agricultural parishes are thought to be nearer the norm for the time, they show that in the eighteenth century (Figure 2) marriages were more likely in February (index 142), April (133), October (124) and December (106). The figures for February and April suggest marriages before and after Lent and, as the figures are higher than for October and December, that the parishes were largely pastoral rather than arable. This is likely, as the terrain ranges from about 50m in deep valley bottoms to almost 200m on the Haldon Hills. The other link could be considered economic, with the importance of the quarter days for employment and payments. The quarter days are Lady Day (25 March), Midsummer Day (24 June), Michaelmas (29 September) and Christmas Day (25 December). Servants often had a day's holiday at Christmas time.

Figure 3 Monthly marriage indices, 1801–1850



Notes: The three 'seamen' parishes are Combeinteignhead (Hacombe with Combe), Stokeinteignhead and St Nicholas (present day Shaldon and Ringmore). The four agricultural parishes are Ashton, Daddiscombeleigh, Dunchideock and Kenn.

Sources: Parish registers of Combeinteignhead (Devon Heritage Centre (hereafter DHC) 3149A/PR/1), Stokeinteignhead (DHC 3420A/PR/1), St Nicholas (DHC 1528A/PR/1), Ashton (DHC 2016A/PR/1), Daddiscombeleigh (538A/PR/1), Dunchideock (1213A/PR/1), Kenn (266A/PR/1), Dartmouth St Saviour (DHC 2992A/PR/1) and West Teignmouth (DHC 4012A/PR/1).

In the nineteenth century (Figure 3), the graph has a more even form, but the main peak has moved to December (155) while that for October has declined to 105. The separate peaks for February and April appear to have flattened into March and April with 124 and 128 respectively. How far the results reflect relatively small numbers exaggerating the index values, changes in the nature of the economy, or possibly variations in the dates of Easter is debatable, but throughout the whole period, the agricultural parishes show that the main seasons for marriages were spring and December.

In contrast, the graphs show that the seamen's parishes had a marked winter peak with indices below 100 from March through to November. This applied to both centuries, but whereas in the eighteenth century the peak is in February, with the exception of Teignmouth where it was January (228), in the nineteenth century a maximum in February remained in Dartmouth (132) and became the case for Teignmouth (144) but the seamen's parishes' maximum had shifted to January (174). Dartmouth shares the winter high of the other seamen's parishes but in the nineteenth century also has a lesser peak in April (123). This resembles one of the peaks shown in the agricultural parishes. In this later period the indices for marriages in parishes with seamen show a general decline in their extremes, with the highest at 174 and none falling to 50 or below. The graphs for Dartmouth and West

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Teignmouth have become more alike with both approaching the norm of 100 in June. The three seamen's parishes show slight increases for May and July.

Changes in the indices in the nineteenth century may reflect the changes in the Newfoundland trade. Fishing ships, bye-boat keepers and their servants needed to leave in March in order to make the most of the fishing season and have time to salt the fish. Sack ships, concerned primarily with trade, could leave later. In 1772, the *Juno* and the *Kenton* of Dartmouth left in April and were back in November, but the *Success*, which left in April, sailed to Newfoundland, then to Santander and Cadiz before returning, and arrived back in Dartmouth on 26 February 1773.⁴² In 1816 William Fox of Teignmouth had three ships engaged in the Newfoundland trade. One, the *Three Williams*, departed by 3 May, but went first to Liverpool with a cargo of local ball clay, before proceeding to Waterford, Ireland, with coal and salt and only then with further cargo to Newfoundland. The return journey was via Oporto with the fish, then to Bristol with fruit, followed by Newport, south Wales, for coals which were brought back to Teignmouth by March 1817.⁴³ With variable times away from home, seamen's marriages, while still mainly in the winter, could occur at other times before departure or on return.

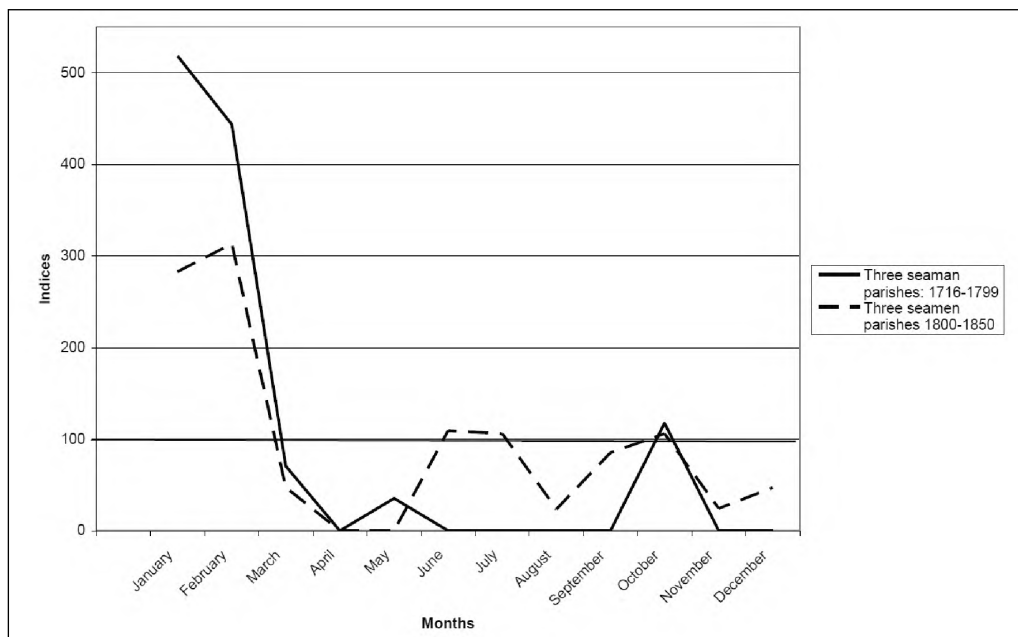
Although the sample is inevitably smaller, the recording of the occupation of seaman or mariner being inconsistent, there is sufficient information to calculate the indices also for the marriages of known seamen, for before and after the turn of the century, although only after 1800 for Teignmouth (Figures 4 and 5). For the three seamen's parishes, the peak moved from January to February and is lower, although this may be due partly to the size of the data set which is greater than that before 1800. More noticeably, the lack of any marriages through the middle of the year disappears, with about average numbers in June and July. February may reflect the later returns of ships from triangular voyages via Iberia, but the mid-year marriages are less easily accounted for solely in terms of Newfoundland trade, although later departures may account for some. Others could be due to seamen having other maritime occupations, as in coastal trade or the Royal Navy. Figure 5 gives the graphs for Dartmouth and Teignmouth. Before 1800, Dartmouth's mariners' marriages show an extended peak in February and March, then very small numbers until September and a slow increase through December and January. September seems early, but the rest are as one would expect. After 1800, Dartmouth's indices still show a peak in February with more in January than before, but a drop in March, more in April and again in June. These may reflect later departures, combined with those of other forms of maritime activity. Teignmouth appears similar to Dartmouth for the winter period, but lacks the April and June increases of Dartmouth and the three seamen's parishes. Unlike ships from the Teign estuary, those from Dartmouth were less likely to be making journeys which involved going to a port such as Liverpool en route. Dartmouth was the superior haven, but it had poor inland communications. There was no wheeled traffic into Dartmouth until the new road of 1825 and no local, special, export cargo available.⁴⁴

42 The National Archives, London, BT98/3.

43 DHC 2386M add2/C1, papers of the Fox family of Shaldon.

44 R. Freeman, *Dartmouth and its Neighbours* (Chichester, 1990), p. 146.

Figure 4 Monthly marriage indices for known mariners of the three seamen's parishes, 1716–1799 and 1800–1850



Notes: The three 'seamen' parishes are Combeinteignhead (Hacombe with Combe), Stokeinteignhead and St Nicholas (present day Shaldon and Ringmore).

Sources: Parish registers of Combeinteignhead (Devon Heritage Centre (hereafter DHC) 3149A/PR/1), Stokeinteignhead (DHC 3420A/PR/1) and St Nicholas (DHC 1528A/PR/1).

The seasonality of marriages in ports and parishes with participants in the Newfoundland trade does appear to have had distinctive characteristics, setting it apart from the seasonality of marriages shown in local agricultural parishes. Changes of seasonality in marriages with the turn of the century are apparent, but are less easily linked with confidence to the effects of changes in the Newfoundland trade. The nineteenth century results for the three seamen parishes appear to have more in common with those of Dartmouth than with Teignmouth on the opposite bank of the Teign estuary.

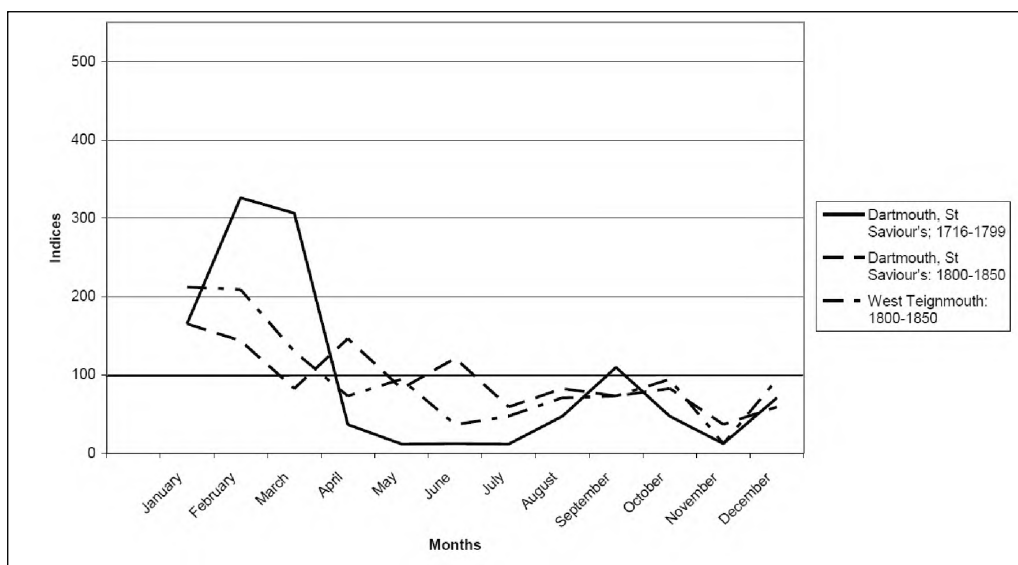
Factors leading to this could include the fact that the deepest water of the Teign shifted from the west bank, the St Nicholas' side, to the east, Teignmouth, possibly related to the building of the bridge in 1827. Some of the former merchants of the mariner parishes, like some of the Codners, moved to St Marychurch and Dartmouth and others, including the Rendells, became resident in Newfoundland and held office there.⁴⁵ Other migratory seamen became residents, by misfortune and/or debt or as successful former bye-boat keepers, merchants or artisans.⁴⁶ The Shaldon Bridge enabled St Nicholas to have a share in Teignmouth's tourist trade, which increased with the coming of the railway in 1846.

45 Hardy, 'Exe-Dart Devon', p. 99.

46 Handcock, *Soe Longe as There Comes No Women*, pp. 176–7.

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Figure 5 Monthly marriage indices for known mariners of Dartmouth St Saviour and West Teignmouth parishes, 1716–1799 and 1800–1850



Sources: Parish registers of Dartmouth St Saviour (DHC 2992A/PR/1) and West Teignmouth (DHC 4012A/PR/1).

Teignmouth was different from Dartmouth due to its more extensive trade and the likely dilution of the proportion of seamen by those who began to serve the tourist trade. Perhaps ironically, in 1847, two ships left Teignmouth carrying passengers for St John's. Those with building-related skills were encouraged to go to help rebuild St John's after the disastrous fire of 1846.⁴⁷ The area as a whole contributed to the permanent settlement of Newfoundland which in turn reduced the former trade with the island.⁴⁸

It seems clear that the Newfoundland trade had some influence on the timings of marriages in at least the sample seamen's parishes analysed here as compared with the agricultural sample. Participation in the Newfoundland fishery may have affected the age of marriage. Philip Bond would have been only about 23 years of age, but John Wyatt, who was born in Bovey Tracey, was apprenticed to a butcher of Denbury, then went to Newfoundland and continued there for 17 years before returning, working in Christow for six months and then marrying in Bovey Tracey.⁴⁹ There is the possibility that the average age at marriage might be higher. The trade also may have affected the overall numbers of marriages in the seamen's parishes resulting in fewer per head of the population, but not all marriages were in the home parishes.

⁴⁷ *Exeter Flying Post*, 22 April 1847 p. 3, column a.

⁴⁸ Hancock, *Soe Longe as There Comes No Women*, pp. 156–80.

⁴⁹ DHC Bovey Tracey 2160A/783, 22 November 1824. This suggests that he would have been around 38 or 39 years of age at marriage.

Seasonality of baptisms

If seamen were away for months at a time, there would be time limitations on legitimate conceptions, births and baptisms. Baptisms did not necessarily occur immediately after a birth, although the time lag was often short. For some years, West Teignmouth registers give the dates of birth and baptism. Most were within the range of a few days to a month, but there were some notable exceptions, especially after 1800.

As for the marriages, using the total numbers of baptisms per month for the seamen's and the agricultural parishes, chi-squared values can be calculated. To match the data given by Wrigley and Schofield, the years were divided into the periods 1700–1749; 1750–1799 and 1800–1849. The results for the null hypothesis that there would be no variation through the year are given in Table 2. All of the chi-squared values exceed the critical value of chi-squared of 31.26 showing that, if the null hypothesis of no seasonality were true, the chance of getting the patterns we observe is less than one in a thousand, but it is clear too that the rejection of the null hypothesis is even more solidly based in the seamen's parishes than the agricultural ones.

As with the marriages, graphs of the monthly indices will help to show when during the year the variations and their sizes occurred (Figures 6–8). Figures 6–8 also include the average seasonal pattern of baptisms from E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield's study of 404 English parishes.⁵⁰

Table 2 Results of chi-squared test of seasonality of baptisms

Period	Chi-squared values	
	Seamen's parishes	Agricultural parishes
1700–1749	111.4	54.4
1750–1799	391.5	35.6
1800–1849	144.6	46.9

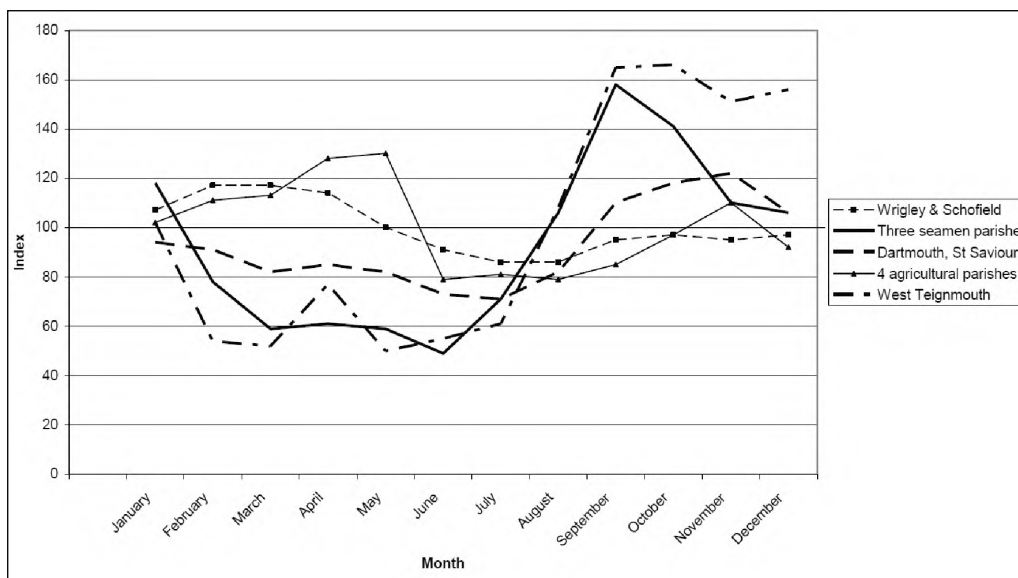
Notes: The critical value for the chi-squared test at the 5 per cent level of statistical significance is 19.68, and the corresponding value at the 0.1 per cent level is 31.26 (denoting a one in a thousand chance of obtaining such a strong seasonal pattern by chance if there really were no seasonal variation). The seamen's parishes are Combeinteignhead (Hacombe with Combe), Stokeinteignhead and St Nicholas (present day Shaldon and Ringmore). The agricultural parishes are Ashton, Doddiscombeleigh, Dunchideock and Kenn.

Sources: Parish registers of Combeinteignhead (Devon Heritage Centre (hereafter DHC) 3149A/PR/1), Stokeinteignhead (DHC 3420A/PR/1), St Nicholas (DHC 1528A/PR/1), Ashton (DHC 2016A/PR/1), Doddiscombeleigh (538A/PR/1), Dunchideock (1213A/PR/1) and Kenn (266A/PR/1).

50 Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History of England*, p. 287. It might be asked why I did not include graphs of the 'average' seasonal pattern of marriages in Figures 2–5. This is because, as Ann Kussmaul has shown, the idea of an 'average' seasonal pattern of marriages has little meaning in a situation where the distribution of marriages across the year in the majority of parishes fell into one of two distinct patterns: a spring peak in pastoral parishes and an autumn peak in arable parishes. See Kussmaul, *A General View*.

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Figure 6 Baptism indices 1700–1749



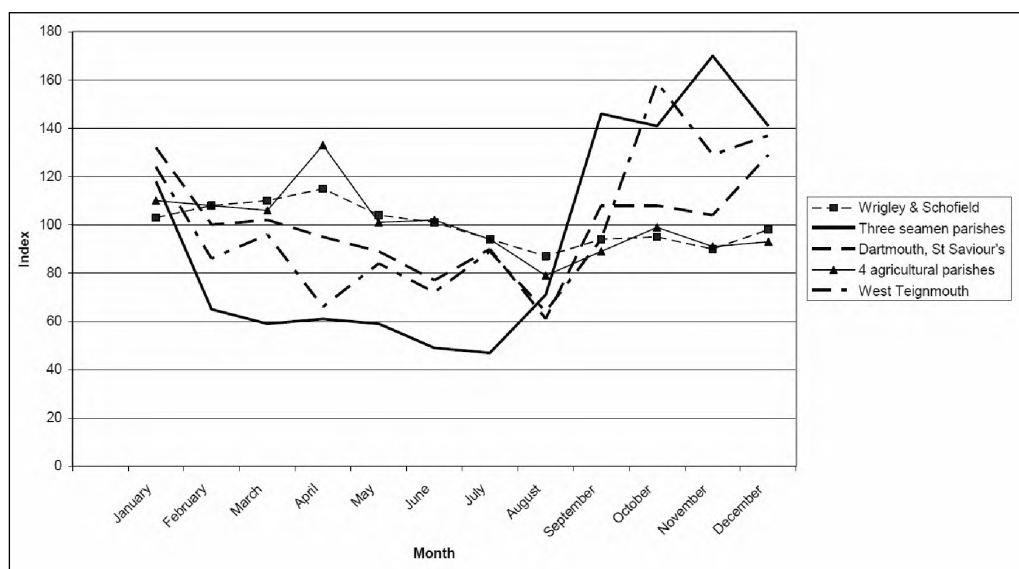
Notes: The three 'seamen' parishes are Combeinteignhead (Hacombe with Combe), Stokeinteignhead and St Nicholas (present day Shaldon and Ringmore). The four agricultural parishes are Ashton, Doddiscombeleigh, Dunchideock and Kenn.

Sources: Parish registers of Combeinteignhead (Devon Heritage Centre (hereafter DHC) 3149A/PR/1), Stokeinteignhead (DHC 3420A/PR/1), St Nicholas (DHC 1528A/PR/1), Ashton (DHC 2016A/PR/1), Doddiscombeleigh (538A/PR/1), Dunchideock (1213A/PR/1), Kenn (266A/PR/1), Dartmouth St Saviour (DHC 2992A/PR/1) and West Teignmouth (DHC 4012A/PR/1). E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541–1871: a Reconstruction* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 287.

Perhaps the most interesting feature is that, whereas the greatest annual variations for the seamen's parishes is in the period 1750–1799 (Figure 7), that is when they are least relatively variable for the agricultural ones (this was the peak period of the Newfoundland trade, with both fishing and sack ships operating, so a time when the men's movements may have become the most marked, with the knock-on effects for marriages and baptisms). The seasonality of baptisms declines, relatively, after 1800, but not back to the level of the pre-1750 period, suggesting that seafaring continued to have an influence. The degree of variation over the time periods is less marked for the agricultural parishes and perhaps linked more to the relative success of the economy year by year.

In the period 1700 to 1749 (Figure 6) the sample agricultural parishes have a similar but different seasonality from that given by Wrigley and Schofield's much broader sample of data. Both show above-average baptisms for the early part of the year, but the Devon sample peaks in April and May with a minor peak in November as well. Between 1750 and 1799, the Devon indices and those of Wrigley and Schofield are much nearer to each other and the more marked peak in the Devon sample might be due primarily to the smaller total number of baptisms exaggerating the index number. Assuming the conceptions occurred

Figure 7 Baptism indices 1750–1799



Notes: The three 'seamen' parishes are Combeinteignhead (Hacombe with Combe), Stokeinteignhead and St Nicholas (present day Shaldon and Ringmore). The four agricultural parishes are Ashton, Doddiscombleigh, Dunchideock and Kenn.

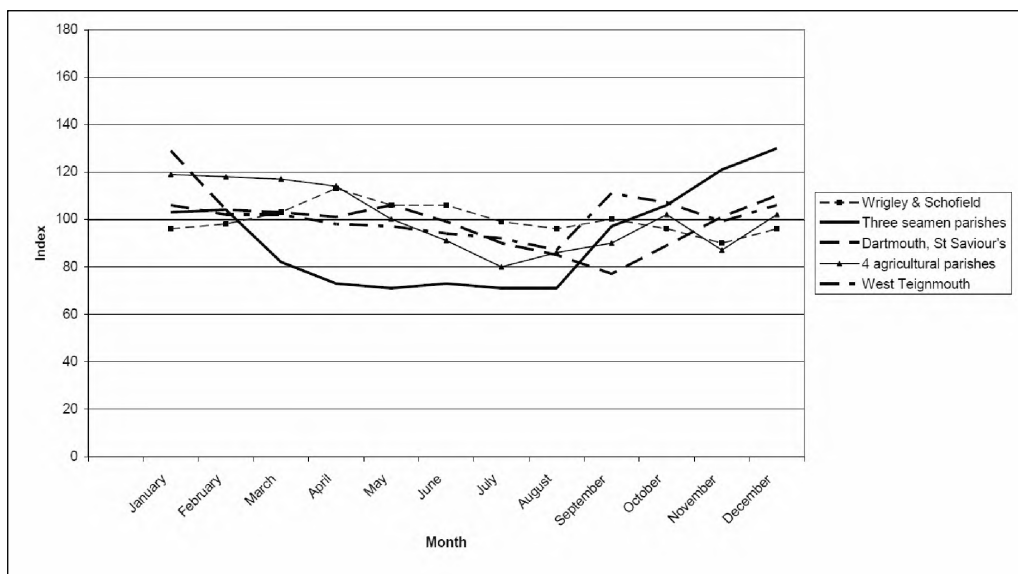
Sources: Parish registers of Combeinteignhead (Devon Heritage Centre (hereafter DHC) 3149A/PR/1), Stokeinteignhead (DHC 3420A/PR/1), St Nicholas (DHC 1528A/PR/1), Ashton (DHC 2016A/PR/1), Doddiscombleigh (538A/PR/1), Dunchideock (1213A/PR/1), Kenn (266A/PR/1), Dartmouth St Saviour (DHC 2992A/PR/1) and West Teignmouth (DHC 4012A/PR/1). E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541–1871: a Reconstruction* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 287.

nine to ten months earlier than baptisms, the peaks for conceptions were during the summer, perhaps after hay making or during harvest time. Alternatively, if conception and births were earlier, was there perhaps a local preference for Easter baptisms, which increased the Devon parishes' numbers? By the nineteenth century (Figure 8), the Devon agricultural sample, although still not identical to that of Wrigley and Schofield, has a much more similar curve through the year, but it is now Wrigley and Schofield's sample which shows the April peak. The slight increases in autumnal baptisms would reflect winter conceptions, a time of longer nights and less farming activity. In general, the seasonality of the baptisms for the Devon sample agricultural parishes and Wrigley and Schofield's large general sample became less marked over time, with the greatest divergence occurring in April.

The seasonality of baptisms in the seamen's parishes is notably different from the agricultural parishes throughout all three time periods, but especially so before 1800. Instead of most occurring in spring, the peak months for baptisms are in the autumn and winter. Before 1750, all the parishes with seamen have an index of over 100 only from September to January, with most baptisms falling between September and November. A September

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Figure 8 Baptism indices 1800–1849



Notes: The three 'seamen' parishes are Combeinteignhead (Hacombe with Combe), Stokeinteignhead and St Nicholas (present day Shaldon and Ringmore). The four agricultural parishes are Ashton, Doddiscombeleigh, Dunchideock and Kenn.

Sources: Parish registers of Combeinteignhead (Devon Heritage Centre (hereafter DHC) 3149A/PR/1), Stokeinteignhead (DHC 3420A/PR/1), St Nicholas (DHC 1528A/PR/1), Ashton (DHC 2016A/PR/1), Doddiscombeleigh (538A/PR/1), Dunchideock (1213A/PR/1), Kenn (266A/PR/1), Dartmouth St Saviour (DHC 2992A/PR/1) and West Teignmouth (DHC 4012A/PR/1). E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541–1871: a Reconstruction* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 287.

peak, if occurring soon after the births, would put conception in November or December. Teignmouth's peak times were the most marked, but the parish also had a small increase in April, which suggests a few conceived during the preceding summer. In the later eighteenth century, to 1799, the parishes with seamen retain their winter bias, but the peaks have moved later, to October, November and, for Dartmouth, December/January. Teignmouth's rest-of-the-year has become more erratic than before. Contributory factors to this may be that one incumbent periodically baptised several on one day and (perhaps) the beginnings of the tourism element of the economy.

Into the nineteenth century, the seasonality of seamen's parish baptisms becomes less marked, but still with most occurring between September and February, or November and March for Dartmouth. The loss of extremes may be in part the result of larger overall numbers, as in West Teignmouth where there were approximately twice as many baptisms as there had been in the preceding period (3,545 compared with 1,665), but for Dartmouth, much of the curve has flattened and the low in August is more marked than the former peaks. Was this a result of Dartmouth's changed maritime activity and/or an increase in other occupations in the parish?

Just as some records include references to seamen marrying, some also specify seamen as fathers of those baptised. Within the seamen's parishes, St Nicholas has children of seamen recorded throughout the period 1813 to 1851. For example, in 1837 there were eight such baptisms, five of which were between November and January, but in 1851, there were nine spread across the year with the exceptions of April to July inclusively. Stokeinteignhead records seamen as fathers until 1847, as in 1815 and 1816 when there were nine baptisms, all between September and January. Combeinteignhead has fewer such records.

Teignmouth baptisms rarely specify an occupation, but Gilbert Clapp was a known Newfoundland merchant, who spent time on each side of the Atlantic.⁵¹ His son, Thomas, was born 24 July 1775 and baptised 7 January 1784. It is possible that Thomas had been born in Newfoundland or (less likely) that his father was away for that period of time. William Jones was specified to be a mariner and his daughter Margaret was baptised in April 1817, but the date of birth is not given. However, some dates of birth are given and show delays: born 1818, baptised in 1821, born 1822 and baptised in 1827 are two examples. Teignmouth's annual totals also suggest a 'baby boom' post the Napoleonic Wars, a peak repeated in 1834.

Dartmouth records have less information, but do detail the baptisms of Jonathan Steed's four children: the first was one born in December 1787 and baptised in April 1789, twins were born in October 1789 and baptised in November 1789: the fourth child was born on 5 December 1790 and baptised on 23 March 1791, when the first three were all 'signed'. Given the delays, Jonathan may have been a seaman, the family awaiting the father's, or the whole family's, return from sea. There were similar time lags in 1836 when the fathers were known to be seamen: examples are birth 17 August, baptism 5 October; birth 6 July, baptism 13 November. If the delays were not for the fathers to be present, might they have been for them to have brought home the money for the payments?

Children may have been born in Newfoundland but awaited baptism in the home parish in Devon. Some, mostly merchant or boat-owning families, spent time on each side of the Atlantic. A bundle of correspondence sent to Mr Row is addressed variously to St John's and Shaldon.⁵² The 1851 census for Shaldon records a Rendell grandchild as born in Newfoundland.

If one compares these graphs of the seasonality of baptisms with those of the marriages (Figures 2 and 3), one notices, for example, a February marriage peak comparable with November/December/January baptisms, approximately a nine month difference. The results suggest that the baptism peaks are related to the marriage peaks, but the baptisms are not all for first-born. The peak months for baptisms move forward over time, equating to conception times in approximately December, February and then March/April.

51 DHC 4062A/PR/1/5, West Teignmouth marriage register, October 1764; TNA PROB 11/1234/90; Gilbert Clapp had three children: Thomas, Gilbert and John; Noad's map and schedule of property in St John's, Newfoundland; Pigot's *Directory of Devon and Cornwall 1830* (London, 1830), p. 262.

52 *The Teignmouth Post*, Friday 7 July 1939, p. 6.

It might be claimed that these timings reflect the changing ship return times and departures of the Newfoundland traders.

This interpretation is almost certainly too simplistic and convenient, especially when one considers the results alongside the Dartmouth data. This shows a seasonal peak moving from November to December/January and then January with, in the two later time periods, an August, then September, 'peaked' trough, rather than a general trough through about half of the year. Baptismal seasonality might be affected by men wishing to be present at the baptismal service, in which case baptisms might be delayed, but also with seamen being away from home for long periods their fertility may have been lower than that of other families.

For all data sets, the annual variations decline over time, but the amount of variation across the year is greater in the study samples than in the national sample of Wrigley and Schofield. However, the seamen's parishes collectively show an increase in variation in the second half of the eighteenth century before it declines in the nineteenth. In the case of Dartmouth, the differences across the years are less than those for the seamen's parishes.

It might be claimed that these variations reflect the changing Newfoundland trade, but it is likely that a number of factors were involved. There was an overall decline in the direct Newfoundland trade, more marked for Dartmouth than the Teign estuary area where the trans-Atlantic link became a component of more extended trading with variable departure and return times. From about 1820 Dartmoor granite was added to the ball clay for export from the Teign. Here and in St Nicholas, tourism also continued to increase.⁵³ As the direct Newfoundland trade declined from the 1830s, some merchants removed from Shaldon and Teignmouth to Liverpool.⁵⁴ These factors combined to dilute the Newfoundland element of the maritime influences on the sample parishes and the seasonality of their baptisms.

Conclusions

This study shows that marriages and baptisms were seasonal in all parishes, as all were affected by the church, cultural norms for the area and the local economy. However, the seasonality of these life events was statistically markedly greater for the seamen's parishes than the agricultural parishes and the degree of seasonality changed over time, in general declining. The graphs show that the other important difference was in the nature of the seasonality. It is not possible to say that the Newfoundland trade alone was responsible for the distinctive patterns in the seamen's parish records, as not all seamen were engaged in this activity, but it was an important component of local trade. The marked seasonality of the presence of males in the community is likely the main reason why these seafaring parishes differ from local agricultural parishes and the average of the country in their patterns of marriages and baptisms. Although the seasonality of the events, especially of

53 H.J. Trump, *Teignmouth*, 2nd edn (Chichester, 1986), pp. 35, 46.

54 Trump, *Teignmouth*, p. 43.

baptisms, cannot be fully accounted for by the Newfoundland trade, the presence of a degree of change at the turn of the century would suggest that the trade had a considerable influence on the results.

For further evidence, results from parishes elsewhere which were involved in the trade, such as Barnstaple, Bideford and Plymouth in Devon for the earlier period and Poole, Dorset, might support the interpretation given here—or not. Results from other maritime areas, not engaged in the Newfoundland trade, might establish whether or not the seasonal features are peculiar to seafaring areas in general or specific to the study area.

Related questions arise. Did the long absences of seamen affect their typical ages at marriage? To what extent did seamen marry in their home areas, since (by definition) they were mobile? Might a combination of all the above have influenced the local rate of population growth? Such investigations will be complex and difficult, as there are challenges not just of data gathering, but of taking into account all the local variations in socio-economic and cultural norms of the areas concerned.