

Agricultural workers in mid nineteenth-century Brighton*

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Abstract

Like many other English towns, Brighton had a number of residents who described themselves as agricultural workers in the 1861 census. This article examines where they were born, when they moved to Brighton, their housing and occupational histories. Most seem likely to have been casual workers on South Downs farms within walking distance of the town.

According to the census taken on 7 April 1861, there were agricultural labourers living in every one of the 72 towns outside London for which separate occupational details were listed. The percentage they formed of total number of adult males (aged 20 and over) was often very small but it tended to rise as the size of town decreased. In 31 towns the agricultural labourers formed under two per cent of the adult males; most of these were industrial towns or ports, but the list includes Oxford, Cambridge, Bath and Brighton. In another 27, between two and five per cent of the adult males were agricultural labourers: these towns were mainly long-established and medium-sized, and included county towns such as Carlisle, Lincoln and Winchester, together with a few industrial towns. The 14 towns with over five per cent of their adult males classed as agricultural labourers were all fairly small and located in arable or mixed-farming districts; the highest percentages were in Wisbech, Dorchester, Bedford, Bury St. Edmunds and Maidstone.¹ (The Appendix lists the percentages for all 72 towns.)

While it has long been known that small country towns housed a number of agricultural labourers, the contingents living in less obviously rural towns give rise to some interesting questions.² Were they employed within the town's boundaries on farms round the fringes of the built-up area, or did they travel to work in surrounding parishes? Were they employed all the year round or only at seasons of high demand? Alternatively, were they too old to work and simply recording their former chief occupation? Had they been born in the town or were they migrants from the countryside? And why did they work in agriculture while living where many alternative occupations were available? This article will attempt to answer such questions for Brighton, which had a total population in 1861 of 77,693; there were 314

* I am grateful to Edward Oliver, cartographer in the Department of Geography at Queen Mary, University of London, who drew the figures.

¹ 1861 *Census of Population*, II, (1863), Cmd 3221. (ed.), *The Victorian countryside* (2 vols, 1981), I,

² C. W. Chalkin, 'Country towns' in G. E. Mingay pp. 281–2.

agricultural labourers among the 19,461 males aged 20 and over (1.61 per cent) and 54 among the under 20s.

I

By 1861, Brighton had grown from a small fishing town into a seaside resort that stretched for some two miles along the Sussex coast, from Kemp Town in the east to the border of Hove parish in the west.³ Expansion inland was stimulated by the opening of the railway station in 1841, which led to a growing influx of holidaymakers, followed in the late 1840s by the establishment of the London Brighton and South Coast Railway Company's main engineering works in the town.⁴ Working-class housing gradually spread across the town's former open fields, and by 1861 little farmland survived within its boundaries. It is the agricultural workers living in this northern part of Brighton, covered by Enumeration Districts 15 to 45 of the 1861 Census, that form the focus of this study.

Most English towns in the nineteenth century had an army of casual workers living within their boundaries who would take any labouring job that came along.⁵ These men would have been classed by the census enumerators as labourers, general labourers or day labourers, and there were many of these in Brighton in 1861. It is assumed that those who said that they were *agricultural* labourers would have been more dependent than these general labourers on farm work. Within Enumeration Districts 15 to 45 in 1861, there were 145 men who recorded their occupation as agricultural or farm labourer, together with one shepherd and two farm bailiffs. The 145 agricultural labourers included 117 men aged 20 and over (37 per cent of Brighton's total of agricultural labourers in this age group) and 28 younger men (50 per cent of Brighton's total). For the current analysis, these 148 men are divided into three groups: 96 heads of household (including three men in the Brighton workhouse), 17 lodgers, and 35 sons or other relatives living in the households of others. The decision to live in Brighton in the case of the relatives would have been made by the household head, and the main question of concern for this group is why these (mainly young) men chose agricultural work when there were urban alternatives on their doorstep. The other two groups are of greater interest and we need to ask why they were living in Brighton while working in agriculture? Or the reverse, why were they working in agriculture while living in an urban area?

Brighton is located where the South Downs meet the coast between the valleys of the rivers Adur and Ouse (see Figure 2). The higher and steeper parts of the Downs were devoted to sheep pasture in the mid-nineteenth century while lower and more gently-sloping land supported arable fields.⁶ The farms were often several hundred hectares in extent and each employed many men, made up of a small band of permanent employees who were housed nearby and a

³ Sue Berry, 'Brighton in the early nineteenth century', in Kim Leslie and Brian Short (eds), *An Historical Atlas of Sussex* (1999), pp. 94–5.

⁴ June A. Sheppard, 'Brighton's railway workers in the 1850s', *Sussex Archaeological Coll.* 139 (2001), pp. 191–201.

⁵ Raphael Samuel, 'Village labour', in Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Village life and labour* (1975), pp. 3–5.

⁶ Brian Short, 'Agricultural regions, improvements and land use, c. 1840', in Leslie and Short (eds), *Historical Atlas*, pp. 96–7.

larger group of casual workers who were often drawn from a distance.⁷ Downland farms within about 90 minutes walk of Brighton would between them have needed several hundred casual workers at busy times such as harvest, and men living in Brighton would have been well-placed to exploit the opportunities offered. Such was the demand that even those who were slowed by age or infirmity would probably have been welcomed.

Figure 1 shows the addresses listed in the 1861 Census Enumeration Books (CEBs) of those agricultural workers who were lodgers or household heads.⁸ Some were living close to the one surviving farm in the borough, known as Scabe Castle, and others were close to the boundary with Preston where much farm land still survived.⁹ The remainder lived in ordinary urban streets, mostly in one of four clusters: around Elder Street and New England Street, between London Road and the railway land; in the fork between London Road and Ditchling Road; around Frederick Street, in the angle between Trafalgar Street and Queen's Road; and on Albany Hill, east of St Peter's Church. These streets were characterised by relatively low rateable values and houses or rooms that could be rented fairly cheaply.¹⁰

The CEBs also tell us the ages of Brighton's agricultural workers in 1861. As might be expected, sons were mostly in their teens or early twenties. Twelve of the 17 lodgers were under 36 (eleven were unmarried and one widowed); one had been born in Brighton and the remainder were migrants from the rest of Sussex. Five lodgers were aged 50 or over, all of whom were widowers or unmarried and born in the rest of Sussex. The 93 household heads were aged between 22 and 73, while the three men in the workhouse were aged 73, 77 and 80. Nine of these 96 men said that they had been born in Brighton, 11 were born outside Sussex and 76 gave their birthplace as a parish in the rest of Sussex.

The discovery that the majority of the 1861 agricultural workers had been born in the more rural parts of Sussex prompts several further questions. At what age did they move to Brighton and how long had they been living in the town? Had they been agricultural workers throughout their lives? What led them to move to Brighton? Since these men would not have had much formal education, they are unlikely to have left any answers of their own, and an alternative approach has to be used to provide answers.

Each 1861 lodger and head of household was sought in the 1851 CEBs for Sussex, using name indexes that cover Brighton itself, the whole of East Sussex and large parts of West Sussex.¹¹ Those men with fairly uncommon names, such as Stephen Akehurst, posed few problems of identification, but in the case of those who were called Thomas or William combined with a common surname like Turner or Smith, it was necessary to look closely at the other details provided when comparing the 1851 evidence with that for 1861, especially the man's age and

⁷ Brian Short, 'Landownership in Victorian Sussex', in Leslie and Short (eds), *Historical Atlas*, p. 98.

⁸ TNA, RG9/595-8.

⁹ Sue Farrant, 'The Stamford Estate in Brighton and Hove, 1870-1939', in Sue Farrant (ed.), *The Growth of Brighton and Hove, 1840-1939* (1981), pp. 35-40. Most of the land around the race course was downland pasture.

¹⁰ Brighton Rate Book, Jan. 1855, East Sussex Record Office, (hereafter ESRO) BH/B/4/42/1.

¹¹ For East Sussex: C. J. Barnes, *East Sussex Census*

1851, *Index*, parts 1-23 (1987-94); part 24 (2001) on fiche, pub. by Family Roots (Eastbourne and District) FHS. For Brighton: Sussex Family History Group Microfiche Series, PF 12-19 (1997-8). For West Sussex: *Sussex Family History Census Index 1851, Thakeham Registration District 1 and 2* (1989); Microfiche series, PF30 Horsham, 1841 and 1851 and PF50, Petworth 1841 and 1851 (2000); Microfiche Series for 1841-91 Census Indexes for 45 West Sussex parishes (1994-2002); all published by the Sussex Family History Group.

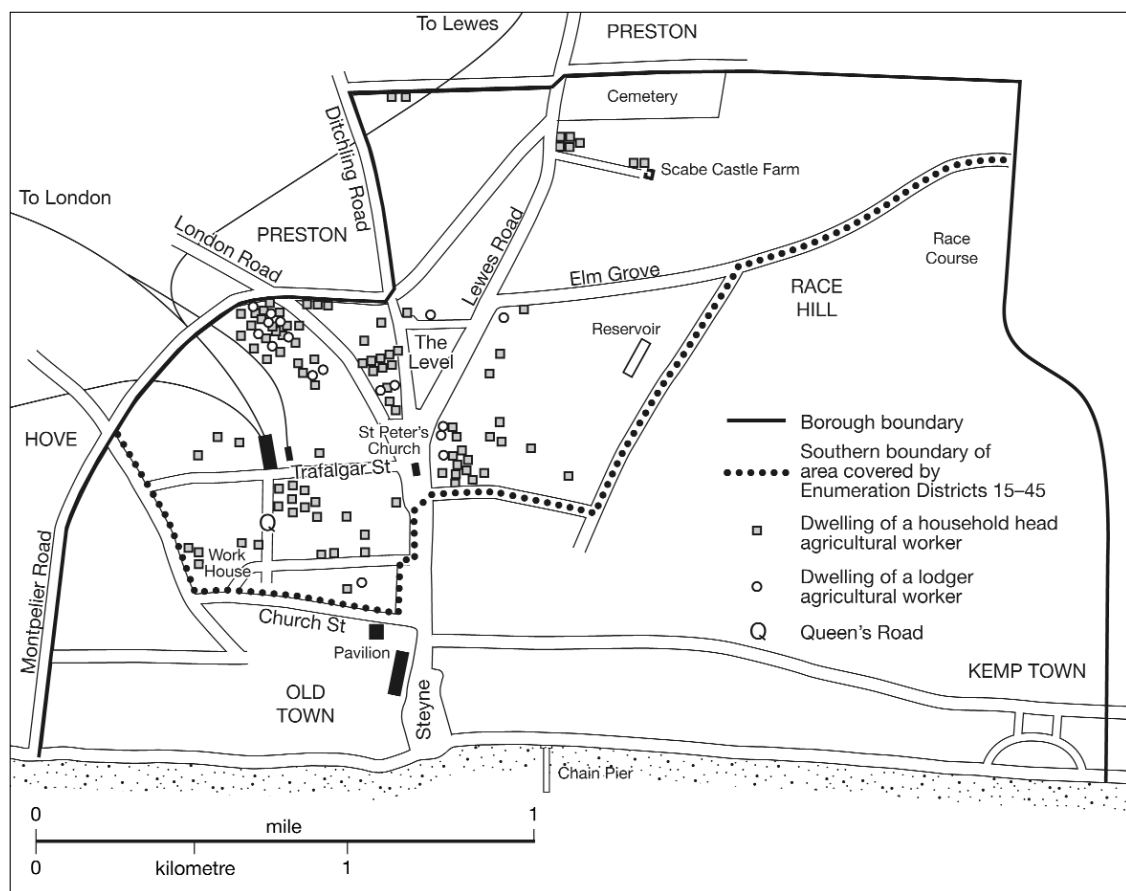


FIGURE 1. Brighton in 1861: residences of agricultural labourers in Enumeration Districts 15-45. The base map used is an undated (1850s?) map by J. Rapkin in Brighton Reference Library; the scale is approximate.

Source: TNA, RG9/595-8.

birthplace and the names and ages of his wife and any children. In the process, some minor discrepancies were discovered between the 1851 and 1861 records, even when there was no doubt that the same individual was involved. Some 1851 teenagers had exaggerated their ages, while older men sometimes did the opposite, in both cases probably to make it easier to convince an employer of their suitability. Taking account of the ten-year interval, variations of up to three years were regarded as acceptable where other details agreed. In a number of instances, different but adjacent birth parishes were named, and occasionally more widely separated places; these discrepancies seem likely to have been due to moves in early childhood that were later forgotten. For the majority of the 1861 heads of households, however, the combination of age, birthplace and family details was sufficient to ensure correct identification, though two men with names that were repeated 20 or more times (William Smith and William Knight) had to be omitted from the search. There is less evidence available in the case of lodgers because of the absence of any family in 1861, hence the linkages suggested for them should be regarded as more tentative.

Out of the 113 men sought, 77 (68 per cent) were found in 1851, with roughly equal numbers living in Brighton, living in the rest of Sussex and not found. There are three possible reasons why some men were not found in 1851: they were living outside Sussex; they were living in a West Sussex parish not covered by a name index; or they were living in Sussex but because of variations in the spelling of surnames (exacerbated in some cases by the enumerator's handwriting), they were not identified.¹²

II

The 1861 CEB evidence used on its own allows a consideration of the birthplaces and residences of the agricultural worker lodgers and heads of households on 7 April of that year. The sample of 77 men for whom data for both 1851 and 1861 are available enables us to examine their occupational changes and ages, including likely ages of migration to Brighton. A closer study of these four aspects of the lives of the 1861 agricultural workers sketches out the context within which decisions were taken that may explain their presence in Brighton.

(a) Places of Birth

According to the 1861 CEBs, nine of the agricultural workers who were then heads of households had been born in Brighton, 76 in other parishes in Sussex, nine in other English counties and one in Ireland. One lodger was listed as born in Brighton, with the remaining 16 born in other Sussex parishes. Some discrepancies in birthplaces recorded in 1851 and 1861 have already been noted. Three men who gave Brighton as their place of birth in 1861 had named a rural Sussex parish in 1851; it is assumed here that the place named in 1851 was the correct one. On this basis, 79 out of the 95 heads of household with birthplace details (83 per cent) and 16 out of the 17 lodgers (94 per cent) were migrants from elsewhere in Sussex.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of these Sussex places of birth. In those cases where different parishes were listed in 1851 and 1861, the two places are shown linked, apart from the three Brighton discrepancies where the 1851 parish only is plotted. It is apparent that most migrants had been born within a radius of about 25km (16 miles) of Brighton; the only distant birthplaces (Bosham, Sidlesham and Oving near Chichester, some 40 km west of Brighton, and Battle, a similar distance to the east) are omitted from the map. Within the area mapped, it is noticeable that few men were born in parishes on the South Downs, and that the majority had come from parishes in the Weald, north of the Downs. Access to Brighton from this district was easy as it was crossed by the main roads and railway between the town and London.

The predominance of Wealden over downland birthplaces is likely to be linked with contrasting patterns of landownership, farm sizes and rates of population growth in the two areas. During the nineteenth century, the South Downs were characterised by parishes dominated by a few large landowners, large farms and stable or declining population numbers, resulting in few potential migrants. Wealden parishes had many small landowners, small farms and

¹² It was largely by chance that the lodger named as William Gasgun in 1861 was identified as the William Gausden of 1851.

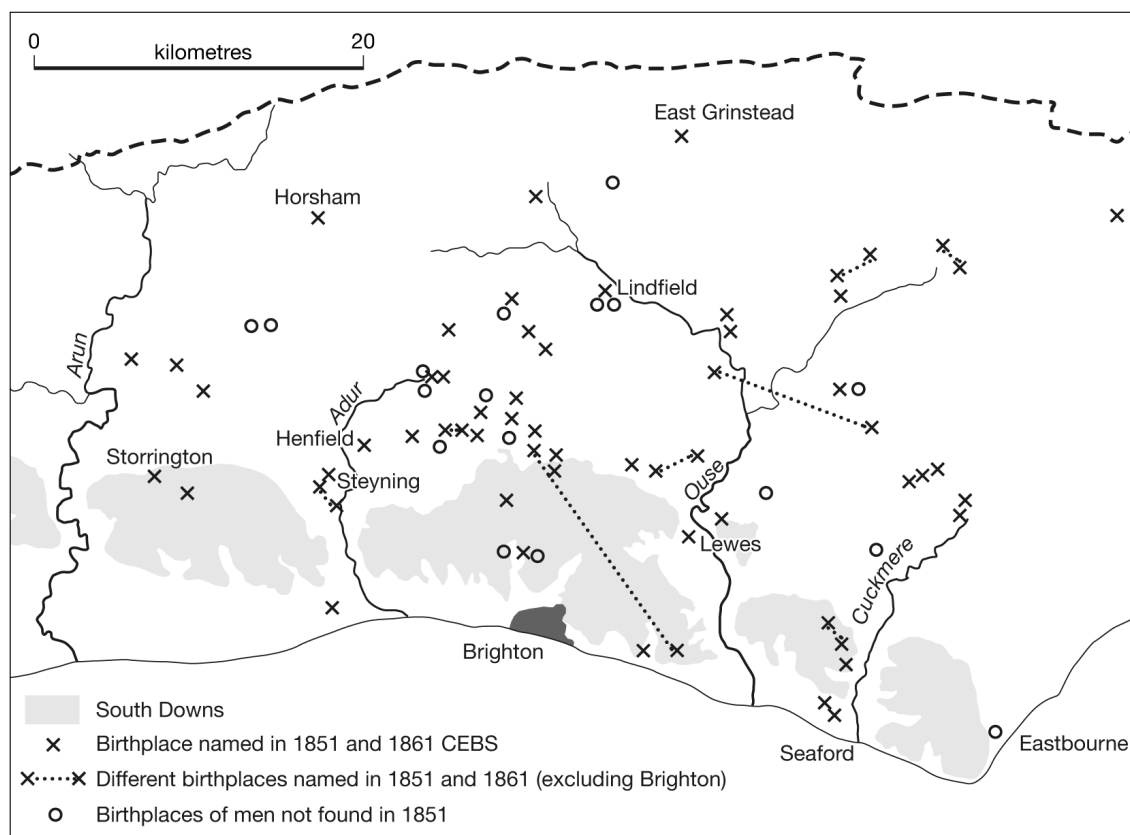


FIGURE 2. Sussex places of birth (excluding) Brighton) of agricultural labourers living in Brighton in 1861.

Source: TNA, RG9/595–8.

growing population numbers during the same period.¹³ High levels of seasonal unemployment had long been common among the numerous casual workers of Wealden parishes, many of whom had become accustomed to travelling to other districts, including the South Downs, to find work at certain times of the year.¹⁴ In the process, they may have passed through or visited Brighton and have come to appreciate that the town offered advantages as a place from which a range of employment could be accessed. It is therefore not surprising to find that many of the 1861 agricultural workers in the town were born in Wealden parishes.

¹³ Brian Short, 'The evolution of contrasting communities within rural England', in Brian Short (ed.), *The English rural community: image and analysis* (1992), pp. 19–43; id., 'Landownership in Victorian Sussex', pp. 98–9.

ture in the nineteenth century', *EcHR* 29 (1976), pp. 38–59; Peter Brandon and Brian Short, *The South East from AD 1000* (1990), p. 32; Peter Dewey, 'Farm Labour' in E. J. T. Collins (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, VII, 1850–1914* (2 vols, 2000), I, pp. 823–5.

¹⁴ E. J. T. Collins, 'Migrant labour in British agricul-

TABLE 1. 1861 agricultural labourers searched for in the 1851 CEBs

	<i>Found in Brighton</i>	<i>Found in Sussex</i>	<i>Not found</i>	<i>1861 total</i>
Lodgers	3	6	8	17
Household heads	38	30	28	96
Total	41	36	36	113

(b) Ages and dates of migration

Table 1 summarises the results of the search for the 1861 agricultural workers in the 1851 CEBs. Out of the 96 heads of households, 38 were found to be already living in Brighton ten years earlier; if we deduct the six who had been born there, we are left with 32 men who had moved to the town before 1851. Thirty heads of households were found living in other Sussex parishes in 1851, so these must have moved to Brighton between then and 1861. Twenty-eight were not found in any name index examined; of these, six had birthplaces outside Sussex and are likely to have still been outside the county in 1851, leaving 22 men whose non-identification must be explained by the reasons discussed above. Out of the 17 lodgers of 1861, one Brighton-born and two Sussex-born men were living in the town in 1851, six were identified as living in other Sussex parishes and eight were not found.

The ages in 1861 of the lodgers and household heads are plotted in Figures 3A and 3B respectively. On the assumption that most lodgers were recent arrivals, their ages hint that most migration was taking place at two different stages of the life cycle: between about 18 and 35, or in the 50s or 60s. The motives of the two groups are likely to have been different, with family circumstances far more significant for the older men.¹⁵

Figure 3B shows that most heads of household were aged 30 or over in 1861, a reflection of the usual age of marriage, combined with the most common age of migration. The largest age group was those aged 40 to 49 years, with steadily decreasing numbers in the older groups. The size of each group reflected both age-related mortality and the numbers moving to Brighton at earlier dates, and the bars are shaded in an attempt to provide some indication of decadal variations in migration to the town. Brighton-born men formed half of the 20 to 29 year-olds and 14 per cent of the 30 to 39 year-olds, but were otherwise insignificant. Those who were already in Brighton by 1851 formed 60 per cent of the 40 to 49 year-olds but a much smaller percentage of all other year groups. Those who had arrived after 1851 predominated in all groups except the 20–29s and the 40–49s. These patterns seem to suggest that there was a large movement into Brighton from the 1840s onwards.

Many of those who moved to Brighton when in their twenties or early thirties were single and all their children were born after they had arrived in the town. In a few cases, however, the ages and birthplaces of children allow us to date the father's move more precisely. The clearest instance is provided by Reuben Brown, who in 1861 had one child aged 12 born in Rotherfield,

¹⁵ Of the five men over 50 in 1861, three said that they were widowers and two that they were unmarried. However, one of the 'unmarried' men had a wife in 1851, and it is therefore possible that the remaining man had also been widowed before the 1851 census.

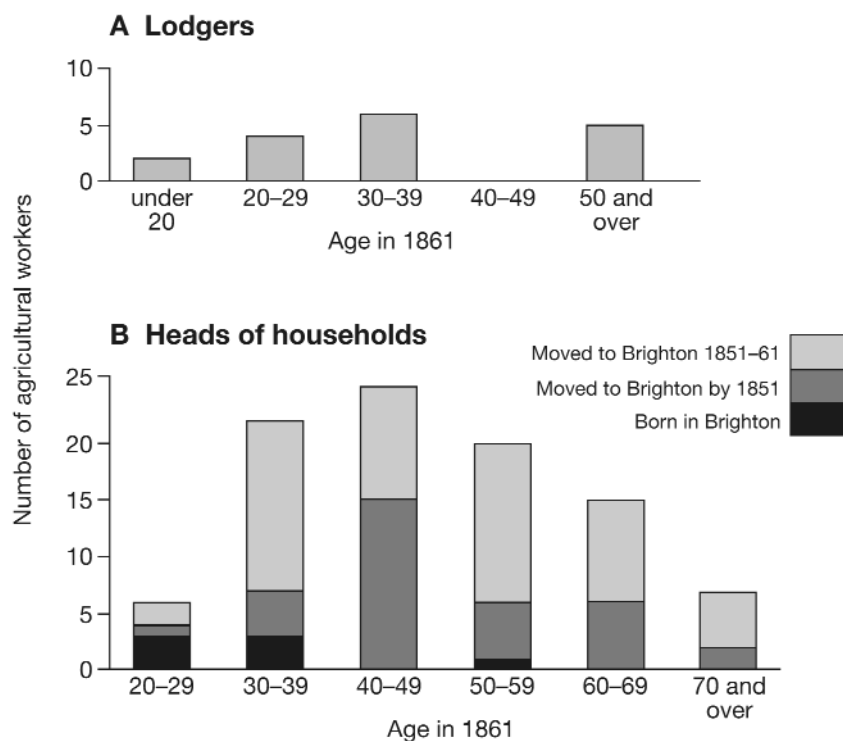


FIGURE 3. Ages of agricultural labourer lodgers and heads of households living in Brighton in 1861.

Source: TNA, RG9/595-8.

where Reuben was living in 1851, and another aged nine born in Brighton. Reuben was 43 in 1861, so we can calculate that he moved to Brighton in 1851 or 1852 when he was 32 or 33, towards the latter end of the usual age for migration.

If there was, as suggested above, a particularly large movement into Brighton from the 1840s, what might be the explanation? The arrival of the railway, bringing more visitors and more employment to the town must have been one factor. At the same time, improved communications were widening the horizons of those living in the countryside, making them more aware of the opportunities available in towns like Brighton. It seems unlikely that the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 had any significant influence, for recent work suggests that patterns of outdoor relief were not significantly different in the 1840s from those that prevailed before 1834.¹⁶

¹⁶ Richard Smith, 'Charity, self-interest and welfare: reflections from demographic and family history', in Martin Daunt (ed.), *Charity, self-interest and welfare in the English past* (1996), pp. 23-50; Steven King, *Poverty and welfare in England, 1700-1850: a regional perspective* (2000), chs. 5, 8.

(c) Occupations

During the nineteenth century, migration from the countryside to a town was usually associated with a change of occupation, the new occupation varying with the town's economy.¹⁷ In the case of mid-nineteenth century Brighton, workers were needed particularly for the building, service and holiday-resort industries. Whether the 1861 agricultural workers living in Brighton had changed from jobs in agriculture to these urban-type jobs on arrival in the town can be tested by comparing the 1851 occupations of the men still living in Sussex at that date with the occupations of those who were by then in Brighton.

Of the 26 heads of households who were living elsewhere in Sussex in 1851, and for whom occupational data are available, 19 were working on the land: 14 agricultural labourers, three farm servants, one farmer's son and one gardener. The remainder had a range of menial occupations: bone boiler, bricklayer's labourer, lime-burner's labourer, day labourer, chair bottomer, roadman and house servant. Among the six lodgers found living elsewhere in Sussex in 1851, five were agricultural labourers and one a child in Lindfield workhouse. The majority of the 1861 agricultural labourers in Brighton evidently had some experience of working in agriculture in their youth.

The 41 men who were already living in Brighton by 1851 (38 heads of households and three lodgers) provide us with a sample of the types of occupation that the rural migrants adopted once settled in the town. Nine heads and one lodger had regular jobs in 1851 that would have been reasonably well-paid by working-class standards: engine-driver, railway plate-layer, police inspector, fly driver, painter, baker, brick maker, whitesmith, maltster and journeyman wheelwright. One carter, one cellarman and three house servants had less well-paid employment, and the remaining 25 men had labouring work of some kind, including ten who described themselves as agricultural labourers.

This sample suggests that many of the 1861 agricultural labourers had found some alternative form of employment soon after moving to Brighton. A few had a regular and modestly well-paid position in 1851, but most had taken a labouring job that may have given them a slightly higher wage than would have been their lot if they had remained in their home parish. Nevertheless, many would have been subject to the periods of unemployment often associated with resort activities or trade recessions. Whether even at this stage some had left their urban employment during the harvest season to work on nearby farms we do not know.¹⁸ But by 1861, years of heavy physical toil would no doubt have taken their toll of some, who then had to find lighter work and possibly supplement their wages by seeking financial help from the Poor Law Union.¹⁹ Perhaps it was this group that responded most readily to the appeals for seasonal harvest workers; such work could be relied on and was relatively well-paid, so the men involved may have come to regard this as their identifying occupation while still taking any other job they could find during the rest of the year. At this time, even the elderly

¹⁷ Colin Pooley and Jean Turnbull, *Migration and mobility in Britain since the eighteenth century* (1998).

¹⁸ W. A. Armstrong, 'Rural labour I: systems of employment', in G. E. Mingay (ed.), *Agrarian History of*

England and Wales, VI, 1750–1850 (1989), pp. 677–83.

¹⁹ Pat Thane, *Old age in English history* (2000), p. 26, suggests that it had long been accepted that many men had to switch to lighter tasks after the age of 50.

were expected to work so far as they were capable, and very few of those listed as agricultural workers in 1861 would have been fully retired.

(d) Housing

As Brighton's population grew during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, many new streets of working-class houses appeared. How far did the ready availability of housing help to attract to the town the migrants who became the 1861 agricultural labourers?

The housing need of those identified as heads of households would have varied with their family size and composition. In 1861 there were 29 agricultural workers whose household comprised just two people, the second person usually being a wife, but occasionally it was a sibling or a child. Such small households were content with two or three rooms. In some cases these rooms formed the whole of a tiny cottage, for example John Lyland aged 46 and his wife were living at 4 Oxford Court, and Thomas Burtenshaw aged 67 and his wife were the sole occupants of 9 Elder Row, both three-roomed cottages.²⁰ It was more common, however, to find such small households sharing a five- or six-roomed house with another household, the whole dwelling sheltering between five and ten persons. Most young couples started their married life in this way and this was how many elderly couples ended their days. Their weekly rent would have been between one and two shillings.²¹

The 41 men with a number of young children might well have needed more rooms, but at this stage in their life-cycle there was only one full-time wage-earner, so they could rarely afford as much space as they needed. Some were living in one of the tiny cottages in the courts or back streets, like Thomas Southon and his wife and five children, aged between six months and 14 years, at 12 Oxford Court. Most were sharing one of the many five- or six-roomed houses with another family, such as William Dunstall at 11 Union Street, which housed seven adults and eight children in 1861. Sometimes the co-resident families appear to have been related or the adults had been born in the same parish. Weekly rents for the whole house were usually about four shillings.

A third type of household belonged to the 23 men who were not the sole wage-earners of the family. Sometimes the wife was bringing in some income, in the majority of cases from laundry work. More frequently the other wage-earners were older sons or daughters, as in the case of John Leney, living at 5 Jersey Street, with a son aged 21 who was a clerk, a daughter aged 19 who was a milliner and a son aged 16 apprenticed to a printer. Families like this invariably occupied the whole of a five- or six-roomed house, sometimes in one of the slightly better-class streets. There were usually fewer than eight people living in such houses, with rents between four and five shillings a week.

Lodgers, whether young or old, rented one room or shared a room with one or more other lodgers for under a shilling a week. They were most likely to be found in the lowest-rated streets.

In many respects, housing conditions in Brighton differed little from those in the rural areas

²⁰ Details of the number of rooms are taken from the Field Books of the 1910 'Domesday' Survey, TNA, IR 58/127.

²¹ Rents quoted are based on figures in the 1855 Rate Book, ESRO, BH/B/4/42/1.

of Sussex from which the migrants had come, where crowding and sharing were also common.²² Brighton houses were more closely packed than in most rural parishes and in the 1850s conditions in some streets where agricultural workers were living may have been squalid as a result of little attention being given to sewerage and waste disposal.²³ To set against this, many of the houses were fairly new, and it was probably easier to find a house or rooms to rent than in a rural parish.

III

Using this evidence on birthplaces, ages and dates of migration, occupations and housing conditions, it is now possible to attempt to answer the questions posed in the introduction. A small number of the 1861 agricultural workers who were heads of households seem likely to have been full-time employees on farms either within or close to Brighton's boundaries, living in dwellings that were a little apart from the continuously built-up area. Since farmers often welcomed the cheap labour provided by teenagers, many of the young relatives may also have been employed full-time. Another small group of aged or infirm men are likely to have not worked at all. The vast majority of the 1861 adult agricultural workers, however, seem likely to have worked on farms for only a few weeks each year. During the rest of the year they would no doubt have taken any job available, but probably spent most of the time without paid work and forced to relied on other means of support for survival. To what extent that support came from relatives or friends on the one hand or from the Poor Law Authorities on the other is not known.²⁴

Most of the adult agricultural workers had moved to Brighton when in their twenties or early thirties, during the 20 years prior to 1861, with Wealden parishes acting as the main source area. These men had probably been attracted by the prospect of better employment opportunities, housing and services in Brighton than in rural parishes. Like many men involved in heavy physical work, some had become unfit by the time they had reached their fifties and unable to continue with the jobs they had found on arrival in the town. They then became true casual workers, relying heavily on seasonal work on downland farms, hence reverting to describing themselves as agricultural workers. Another smaller group of men, who had continued to work as agricultural labourers while living in the rest of Sussex, moved to Brighton when in their fifties or later and joined the band of seasonal agricultural workers.

Against the background of the social and economic conditions that prevailed during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the presence of agricultural workers in Brighton at this time becomes understandable. Their numbers were then at their peak; they fell from the 312 of 1861 to 202 in 1871 and 197 in 1881 (in 1873 there was a boundary extension to incorporate part of Preston parish), rose in 1891 to 241, then fell to 169 in 1901. As the century progressed and some agricultural activities were mechanised, the need for seasonal work on downland farms

²² Dewey, 'Farm labour', pp. 845–7.

²³ E. Cressy, *Report to the General Board of Health on a preliminary inquiry into the sewerage, drainage and supply of water ... of Brighton* (1849); Anthony Dale, *Brighton Town and Brighton People* (1976), pp. 194–8; Keith Fossey, 'Slums and tenements, 1840–1900', in

Farrant (ed.) *Growth of Brighton*, pp. 53–9. The worst streets were in the older parts of Brighton not included in this analysis.

²⁴ Thane, *Old age*, p. 11: 'poor relief and family support for older people were complementary'.

diminished but never completely disappeared.²⁵ Whether other towns experienced a similar decrease remains an open question; it is possible that in less hilly districts the bicycle helped to keep the number of town dwelling workers more stable.²⁶

Appendix

Agricultural labourers as a percentage of all males aged 20 and over living in English towns in 1861

Southampton	0.39	Brighton	1.61	Kings Lynn	3.31
Liverpool	0.43	Oxford	1.74	Norwich	3.39
South Shields	0.43	Reading	1.76	Poole	3.47
Plymouth & Devonport	0.51	Huddersfield	1.86	Winchester	3.53
Birmingham	0.55	Bath	1.94	Stockport	3.70
Newcastle-on-Tyne	0.59	Cambridge	1.95	Carlisle	4.05
Bristol	0.65	Northampton	1.99	Lincoln	4.06
Sunderland	0.68	Exeter	2.06	Macclesfield	4.62
Gloucester	0.70	Truro	2.11	Lancaster	4.83
Derby	0.96	Bolton	2.14	Wakefield	4.96
Manchester & Salford	0.97	Bridgewater	2.19	York	5.11
Hull	1.07	Chatham & Rochester	2.24	Ipswich	5.14
Portsmouth	1.13	Worcester	2.33	Boston	5.74
Sheffield	1.16	Dover	2.43	Newark	5.86
Coventry	1.32	Leicester	2.47	Hereford	6.28
Yarmouth	1.35	Wolverhampton	2.51	Chester	6.55
Nottingham	1.35	Blackburn	2.55	Canterbury	6.66
Halifax	1.35	Preston	2.56	Stafford	7.63
Oldham	1.36	Leeds	2.56	Colchester	8.10
Whitehaven	1.37	Salisbury	3.16	Maidstone	8.92
Tynemouth	1.43	Kendal	3.19	Bury St Edmunds	9.45
Dudley	1.44	Durham	3.21	Bedford	9.76
Gateshead	1.48	Shrewsbury	3.29	Dorchester	10.57
Bradford	1.53	Chichester	3.30	Wisbech	10.61

Source: 1861 *Census of Population* II (1863), Cmd. 3221

²⁵ E. J. T. Collins, 'Harvest technology and labour supply in Britain, 1790-1870', *ECHR* 22 (1969), pp. 453-73; W. A. Armstrong, 'The workfolk', in Mingay (ed.) *Victorian Countryside*, II, pp. 491-505; E. J. T. Collins, 'The rationality of "surplus" agricultural labour: mechanization of English agriculture in the nineteenth century',

AgHR 35 (1987), pp. 36-46; Dewey, 'Farm labour', pp. 844-5.

²⁶ P. J. Perry, 'Working-class isolation in Dorset, 1837-1936', *Trans. Institute of British Geographers* 46 (1969), p. 134.