

From the *Transactions* of the
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

**Protestant Dissent in Gloucestershire: a Comparison between
1676 and 1735**

by A. E. Jones
1983, Vol. 101, 131-145

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Protestant Dissent in Gloucestershire: A Comparison between 1676 and 1735

By ANTHEA E. JONES

A DECADE AGO Dr Alicia Perceval made available through *Local Population Studies*¹ the series of returns relevant to Gloucestershire made in response to five separate ecclesiastical enquiries of the 16th and 17th centuries. The enquiries reflect the considerable concern of senior churchmen about the adequacy of the church's organisation in face of the winds of change blowing from the continent. Of this series, the last, the Compton Census of 1676, is the best known. This article seeks to examine the extent and distribution of nonconformity in Gloucestershire as revealed by the Compton Census, and further to compare it with a series of early-18th-century surveys particular to the diocese of Gloucester,² an abstract of the first of which is here made available in printed form. A later article will examine the exploitation of these returns as bases for the calculation of population totals. The county of Gloucestershire was coextensive with the diocese; no adjustments have been made in this analysis to reflect the modern county boundaries.

Nonconformity in a religious context is significant so long as the state and its established church require the adherence of all citizens. In this sense, nonconformity existed before the Protestant reformation, and there may indeed be direct connections in Gloucestershire between Lollardy and later dissent.³ The Protestant reformation, however, made the definition of nonconformity much more difficult, because of the uncertainties of the church's leaders, and only after Elizabeth I's church settlement was clearly established, and moreover identified as only modestly Protestant, could nonconformity as a form of Protestant dissent be clearly defined. Archbishop Whitgift's enquiry, set on foot in 1603 just before his death and in the year of James I's accession, sought to ascertain the strength of both Protestant nonconformity and of Roman Catholicism and the possible weaknesses of the Anglican parochial structure. It revealed in Gloucestershire⁴ only a scatter of dissenters, in 32 parishes (some 11 per cent). Though numerically very feeble in nearly all of these parishes (183 persons throughout the whole county), nonconformity existed in the majority of these same parishes in 1676, though by then wider spread and more strongly established. In 1603 Protestant nonconformity, or Puritanism, was primarily a clerical tendency, witnessed to by the Millenary Petition supposedly of a thousand ministers presented to James I on his accession, and prompting Whitgift's survey. It was clerical shortcomings which were reported to James I; there was 'scarce ever a church in England so ill-governed and so much out of order as Gloucestershire'. William Laud was consequently sent in 1616 as Dean of Gloucester 'to reform and set in order what be found amiss'.⁵

1. A. Perceval, 'Gloucestershire village populations', *Local Population Studies*, 8 (Spring 1972), 39–47 and supplement.
2. Glos. Record Office, GDR 285 B(i), 1735; GDR 397, 1743; GDR 381A, 1750.
3. K.G. Powell, 'The social background to the Reformation in Gloucestershire', *Trans. B.G.A.S.* XCII (1973), 96–120.
4. Perceval, 'Glos. village populations', supplement.
5. *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, vol. II, 32.

Between these mainly clerical signs of dissent and the Compton Census of 1676 lay the enormous disruption of the Civil War. Charles II's restoration in 1660 implied also a re-establishment of the Church of England; Gilbert Sheldon, first as bishop of London and then from 1663 Archbishop of Canterbury, laboured to make the restoration as complete as possible. Moreover, the strength of Sheldon's restoration of the church, and the attempt through the Clarendon Code to put pressure on the less orthodox thinkers, whether lay or clerical, resulted in clearer divisions between erstwhile Puritans and the post-restoration conformists. Nearly a thousand ministers were ejected from their livings for failing the tests laid down by the 1662 Act of Uniformity. After 13 years in office, Archbishop Sheldon in 1676 initiated an enquiry to ascertain the progress made. Instructions were sent to Bishop Compton of London to obtain through his fellow bishops 'most certain information' on three points:

1. The 'number of persons, or at least families' inhabiting each parish.
2. The number of 'popish recusants, or such as are suspected for recusancy' among the inhabitants.
3. The number of 'other dissenters . . . which either obstinately refuse or wholly absent themselves from the communion.'⁷

The returns consequently made to Bishop Compton are probably one of the best known sources for the examination of both nonconformity and population in the 17th century. Their value in quantifying the amount of nonconformity may be questioned; it may be suspected that ministers would have wished to play down the number of dissenters in their particular parish, and there was much occasional conformity. The figures no doubt represent minima rather than maxima, and a few clergymen perhaps omitted to make returns at all where nonconformists almost certainly existed. There is no return, for example, for Horsley, later notable for dissent. Nonetheless the Compton Census indicates at least the hard core of dissent. Nationally it has been shown to include rather less than 5 per cent of the population.⁸

Should Archbishop Sheldon have been pleased or upset at the results of the survey in Gloucestershire? Not surprisingly, after the Civil War, nonconformity was wider spread and better established than it had been at the beginning of the century. At first glance there was cause for dismay: in no less than 60 per cent of Gloucestershire parishes there were admitted to be dissenters, people who presumably obstinately refused or wholly absented themselves from the communion. The rector of Daglingworth, whose list of his parishioners made in order to answer the enquiry has survived,⁹ described these as 'Phanaticall Recusants'. However, in many parishes the actual numbers were very small, comprising perhaps members of two or three families. In Daglingworth, the three 'Phanaticals' were a wife and a married couple. The number of dissenters reached double figures in only 20 per cent of parishes (56). These were scattered fairly widely over the whole county. Nineteen were south of Gloucester and east of the river Severn, 11 north of Gloucester and in the Severn Vale, 22 on the wolds and a mere 4 west of the Severn in the Forest of Dean.¹⁰ Even so, nonconformity was hardly a serious threat to the established

6. J.R. Jones, *Country and Court* (1978), 145–55.

7. Perceval, 'Glos. village populations', 42–3.

8. Jones, *Country and Court*, 154.

9. G.R.O., P 107 CW2/1.

10. The basis for this analysis is the historic divisions of the county, the Hundreds, as shown in the map reproduced by G.R.O. (1976), with permission of the English Place Name Society. The groupings into four divisions, comprising the Severn Vale, north and south of Gloucester, the Forest of Dean and the Cotswolds, have some geographical rationale, but do not yield equal sized areas in terms of numbers of parishes. The Cotswolds and the south Vale areas are approximately similar, the north Vale and the Forest of Dean are rather smaller.

church. Only in two places could it be seen in this light – in Tewkesbury and in Bourton-on-the-Water. Bourton had contained 5 dissenters in 1603, now in 1676 nearly half the stated population refused allegiance to the established church. In Tewkesbury the church had declined still further, claiming only a quarter of the townsfolk as members. In 5 other parishes dissent held one fifth of the inhabitants: King's Stanley and Nympsfield in the south part of the vale, Lemington (and Tewkesbury) in the north part of the vale, Aston Subedge and Didbrook with Hailes (and Bourton-on-the-Water) on the wolds.

Some of these places, like Lemington and Didbrook, were very small, and so the proportion of nonconformity is not very reliable. On the other hand, dissenters were not necessarily prominent in places with larger populations. In some of the more sizeable market towns of Gloucestershire, like Cheltenham, Cirencester, Painswick, Thornbury and Winchcombe (all of which in the Compton Census had a population of more than 800) there were less than one fifth dissenters, in some cases much less; Berkeley, Bisley, Dursley, Newent and Stroud returned tiny numbers or none at all. The government's fears expressed in the Clarendon Code that corporations and parliamentary boroughs were particularly in need of protection from dissenting teachers seems to have been ill-founded as far as Gloucestershire was concerned: Cirencester and Tewkesbury were parliamentary boroughs, but though Tewkesbury has been noted as exceptionally unorthodox, Cirencester in 1676 was quite unexceptionable, and so were the smaller corporations. In this connection, the cathedral city and parliamentary borough of Gloucester, which is a special case not really comparable with the other parishes of the county, also returned only a tiny proportion (3 per cent) of nonconformists.¹¹

At this time, as earlier, the extent of nonconformity must have depended on the clergy. Independent congregations were small, and difficult to establish because of official disabilities. The continuing devotion of ejected ministers must to some extent have determined the size and whereabouts of dissenting meetings, but so too did the beliefs of the incumbents of the established church. Despite the Clarendon Code, ministers of puritan style still existed in many parishes; in these places there was no need of independency. The bold declaration by Tewkesbury's minister, for instance, of 1500 nonconformists and only 500 conformists, certainly reflects his unorthodox and energetic encouragement of independency. Two years later Francis Wells was suspended, for preaching against the sins of the nation, and Charles II's sins in particular.¹² In Bourton-on-the-Water, similarly, the rector during the Civil War was a strong calvinist, ejected in 1661.¹³ Gradually these men were eased out of their official positions, and gradually, too, the independent churches became self-sustaining. The real turning point was the Toleration Act of 1689, which followed the establishment of William and Mary on the throne. This freed dissenters from penalties for holding religious meetings, and this act allowed the emergence of larger dissenting congregations.¹⁴

The continuing development of independent churches in Gloucestershire after the departure of James II can be seen from the returns to a diocesan enquiry made in 1735 by Bishop Benson.¹⁵ When he instigated this survey of his new diocese, very soon after his arrival in Gloucester, it may have been simply the wish to know his responsibilities clearly; it may also have been concern

11. The numbers in the Compton Census may represent in some cases families or communicants rather than total population, but the proportion of nonconformists to conformists remains the same.
12. *V.C.H. Glos.* VIII, 155.
13. *V.C.H. Glos.* VI, 47–8.
14. Jones, *Country and Court*, 259–60.
15. G.R.O., GDR 285 B(i). Benson was Bishop of Gloucester 1734–1752.

at the apparent increase in nonconformity. In 1676 the Compton Census had shown a tiny proportion of the population affected (3.6 per cent) but in 1717, for example, there were reputedly 10,000 'hearers' at nonconformist meetings, representing very approximately some 6 per cent of Gloucestershire's population.¹⁶ The questions asked by Bishop Benson in his survey must be deduced from the information compiled into a Commonplace Book. From this it appears that, unlike the national enquiry 60 years earlier, Bishop Benson did not simply specify papists and nonconformists: he required the different denominations to be distinguished as Presbyterian, Anabaptist, Independent, Quaker, Sabbatarian and Congregationalist, 'denomination not known or specified', and finally 'absenters from all worship'. In the Commonplace Book, nonconformist meeting houses and schools are indicated. The number of inhabitants is given for each parish. The status of the living, whether rectory, vicarage, perpetual curacy or chapelry is also indicated, the name of the patron, and in a few cases details of schools and of charities which supplemented the living. Market towns are indicated. One scribe copied all this information into a small paper book, in alphabetical order of parishes within deaneries.

Two further diocesan surveys were carried out under Bishop Benson's authority, in 1743 and 1750.¹⁷ These were directed primarily at ascertaining the value and circumstances of each living. Such information was entered in a cursive hand, with a considerable amount of alteration and addition, so presumably each book was updated as further information came to hand until a fresh volume was needed. Small, leather-bound volumes were prepared, the clerk writing in an elaborate script the name of each place. The same clerk seems to have entered figures for numbers of dissenters and inhabitants, drawn from the first (1735) survey. Careful comparison between the entries in 1735 and 1743, however, shows that in some instances the figures are different, and some of the clerk's first entries in the 1743 book were later amended. Also omissions in the 1735 information were made good. There is more information concerning nonconformity in the 1735 book, which was clearly the basis for the subsequent volumes; in this article, therefore, 1735 is taken as the point of comparison with the Compton Census. In the abstract, however, additional or alternative information drawn from 1743 has been given in square brackets. Use is made of the returns of numbers of inhabitants only for calculating the proportion of dissenters in particular parishes. Many incumbents seem to have made their return hesitantly, saying modestly 'about' before a pleasantly rounded figure. In a later article, it is hoped to evaluate these population figures, some of which are rather surprising. For the purpose of establishing the proportion of dissenters, however, the figures are accepted in the same way as those in the Compton Census.¹⁸ In the following table, which lists the most notable centres of dissent, a question mark has simply been inserted where the figure is most clearly difficult to accept, when compared with the figure given in Sir Robert Atkyns' county history, published in 1712. It calls in question the proportion rather than the absolute number of dissenters.

Bishop Benson's enquiries in 1735, then, showed that nonconformity existed in over half of Gloucestershire's parishes; in this respect there was even some small diminution since 1676. However, the situation was far from reassuring for the bishop, because where it existed, nonconformity was now numerically much stronger. In 62 instead of 56 parishes there were in 1735 10 or more dissenters and, whereas in 1676 a mere 9 parishes had returned 50 or more, in 1735 21 parishes allowed at least 50, 14 parishes 100, and there were 3 parishes with 400 or more.

16. J.R. Holman, 'Higher education in Bristol and Gloucestershire 1650-1750', *Trans. B.G.A.S.* XCV, 91, 96. The proportion is calculated using Atkyns' total figure of 162,568 inhabitants in Gloucestershire c. 1710 (copied into the Bishop's Commonplace Book in 1743: G.R.O., GDR 397).

17. References are given in note 2.

18. See note 11.

These 3 prominent centres of dissent were Cirencester, Horsley and Wotton-under-Edge. The information for the more significant centres is tabulated below: for 1676 those places with 50 or more nonconformists are listed, and for 1735 those with 100 or more. For ease of comparison, both the 1676 and 1735 details are given for all.

The Notable Centres of Dissent in 1676 and 1735

	<i>status</i>	<i>1676</i>		<i>1735</i>		<i>population in 1735</i>
		<i>number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>number</i>	<i>%</i>	
North Severn vale:						
Cheltenham	MT	97	8	[120]*	6	c.2,000
Tewkesbury	PB	1500	75	222	7	c.3,000
South Severn vale:						
Cam		10	2	250	28	[900]*
Chipping Sodbury	MT	51	11	90	8	1,200
Dursley	MT	4	—	250	13	c.2,000
King's Stanley		150	23	14	1	[1,050]*
Kingswood		1	—	100	13	c.800
Marshfield	MT	50	8	206	17	1,200 (?)
Thornbury	MT	92	11	120	7	c.1,800 (?)
Wotton	MT	14	1	400	10	4,000
Cotswolds:						
Bourton-on-the-Water		96	46	100	25	400–500
Cirencester	PB	155	8	700	18	c.4,000
Horsley		—	—	550	46	c.450 families
Minchinhampton	MT	30	4	127	3	4,000 (?)
Painswick	MT	32	3	260	12	2,256
Stow		55	18	59	5	1,283
Stroud	MT	1	—	100	20	c.5,000 (?)
Tetbury	MT	8	—	295	10	c.3,115 (?)
Gloucester	City	110	3	220	3	c.7,000 (?)

* 1743 figures PB = Parliamentary Borough MT = Market Town

The size of the settlement is necessarily a factor in this simple numerical analysis, the basis of the table, since only places with large numbers of inhabitants could have large numbers of nonconformists. Thus Cirencester (c. 4,000), Horsley (more than 450 families) and Wotton-under-Edge (4,000)¹⁹ were all sizeable, while of the 14 places with more than 100 dissenters in 1735, most had a population of at least 1,000. Market towns, boroughs and parliamentary boroughs are therefore prominent; on the other hand, Bishop Benson's clerk noted at the beginning of the paper book that there were 29 market towns in Gloucester diocese, and only 13 of these appear in the list. In these larger places, moreover, nonconformists did not always form a large proportion of the inhabitants. In Cirencester, for example, the percentage was 17.5, in Wotton 10, though in Horsley 46. There were 4 places in 1735 with proportions apparently of 20 per cent or more: Cam in the south, and Bourton, Little Rissington and Horsley in the Cotswold

19. Population figures as stated in 1735 survey.

area. Only Bourton appears in this category in both 1676 and 1735 (3 of these 4 places are listed in the table; Little Rissington had only 170 inhabitants and 40 nonconformists, and so is not included). As Horsley is so prominent a centre of dissent in 1735, it is worth noting that the inhabitants concerned mainly lived on the northern edge of the parish, as it then was, and today would be in the parish of Nailsworth. Nailsworth was created in 1892 from a nucleus in the hamlet of Nailsworth, and parts of Avening, Horsley and Minchinhampton.²⁰ The Presbyterian meeting house serving members from Horsley was at Forest Green, in Avening, the Baptist meeting was at Shortwood, in Horsley, and the Quaker meeting was at Upper Nailsworth, in Horsley. All 3 meeting houses are in the present-day parish of Nailsworth.²¹ A parliamentary garrison had been stationed in Horsley in 1643, which perhaps accounts for its particular prominence for independency.

Meetings were held, as would be expected, in all the principal centres of dissent, and also in a number of smaller centres, occasionally in their own particular building;²² 55 meetings were noted altogether in Gloucestershire²³ (and a further 5 in 1743). The Presbyterians had the largest organisation, with 22 meetings (23 in 1743). Next came the Anabaptists and Quakers with 15 (16) each, the Independents with 5 (7) and the Sabbatarians and Congregationalists with 2. The latter group only existed in 6 places: Ashchurch, Badgeworth, Bibury, Bishop's Cleeve, Naunton and Oddington, while meetings were apparently only held at Ashchurch and Bibury. The uncommon nature of this particular sect is illustrated in the explanation in 1743 in the Bishop's Book for Bibury; in 1735 it had been categorised simply as 'Peculiar': 'A meeting of a sect called Congregationalists about 40 in number. Jacobs of Oxfordshire who died about 30 years ago was their founder. They baptise infants but refuse to swear upon the Bible. Are rigid predestinarians.' The numbers of meetings correspond closely with the numbers in each denomination. The Presbyterians were the largest (2,518), being particularly strong in Cirencester (500), Dursley (250), Kingswood (100), Horsley (100), Marshfield (200), Stroud (100), Tetbury (235) and Tewkesbury (100). Anabaptists were only half as numerous, though with sizeable congregations in Bourton (100), Cirencester (100) and Horsley (200). Independents and Quakers claimed about 500 adherents each in the county. The Independents were only numerous in Cirencester (100) and Horsley (150). In the main centres of nonconformity there were often several different denominations, each with its meeting, and sometimes a meeting house was shared. In King's Stanley, there was 'a meeting house not regularly served, sometimes Presbyterian, sometimes Anabaptist, sometimes none'; and in Bourton an Anabaptist preached one Sunday and a Presbyterian the other, 'but the congregation is almost all Anabaptist'. From many villages, small groups must have travelled some distance to their nearest meeting.

Where there were meetings organised there were often schools run by dissenters too. The importance of the nonconformists in the field of education is clear from Bishop Benson's enquiries. They taught schools in 11 parishes, while the Church of England (and charity schools are here assumed to be Church of England) had schools in 12 parishes; this still left an enormous number of parishes with no school at all. Although schools were taught by dissenters, the pupils were not necessarily of the same religious persuasion, as an occasional comment makes clear. In Cirencester the girls in a school run by a Presbyterian 'go to which service they please', and at

20. *V.C.H. Glos.* XI, 207.

21. *Ibid.*, 216.

22. The Bishop's Commonplace Book may not be a very reliable guide to the existence of meeting houses. In Tewkesbury, for example, there was certainly a Baptist chapel, albeit a converted private house, but the book records only a meeting (M), not a meeting house (MH).

23. This compares with the 48 nonconformist chapels noted in 1715: *V.C.H. Glos.* II, 41.

Winchcombe a Quaker woman 'teaches school but scholars are all of the church'. Probably, though, the usual pattern was for parents of similar beliefs to patronise the school taught by their co-religionist. The work of the dissenters in education must have given Bishop Benson food for thought.

The regional distribution of dissent was much the same in 1735 as it had been in 1676, although an interesting feature of this comparison is that within each region a largely different set of parishes was affected at the two dates. Taking 10 or more dissenters as the qualifying number, the Forest of Dean and Gloucestershire west of the Severn contained only 4 parishes to note, the number exactly as in 1676, but all were different places. South of Gloucester, 18 parishes were noted (in 1676 it had been 19) but more than half were new centres. In the Tewkesbury area of the Severn vale there was more continuity, but only 8 parishes reached the level of 10 dissenters in 1735, compared with 11 in 1676. In the wolds again, a large geographical area, 29 parishes in 1735 compares with 22 in 1676, but over half were new. Dissent seems, therefore, not to have been deeply rooted.

It is tempting to look for explanations of the regional pattern by reference to the clothing trade. In one study of the Gloucestershire industry, dissent has been suggested as a unifying factor amongst textile workers,²⁴ and certainly many of the prominent centres of dissent in 1735 are found in those five hundreds in the south Cotswolds and south Severn vale area notable for a concentration of the industry even in 1608.²⁵ In the 18th century particularly important textile centres were Dursley, Horsley, Painswick, Uley and Wotton, all in these five hundreds, and all but Uley in the significant category of 100 or more dissenters, while Stroud was described in 1757 as 'a sort of capital to the clothing villages'.²⁶ Two of Bishop Benson's respondents, indeed, drew attention to the clothing trade, noting against Horsley 'a great Cloath Place' and against Uley (60 nonconformists out of *c.* 1,500 population) 'several rich clothiers'. At Stroud, on the other hand, it was suggested that 'they go to meeting here tis thought only for want of room in the church.'

To concentrate only on the clothing areas, however, is to overlook the amount of dissent in northern parts of the county – in Cheltenham and Tewkesbury, Bourton and Stow, and indeed in the city of Gloucester, which in 1735 had 200 nonconformists, though this is a surprisingly small number in relation to the stated (probably exaggerated) population of *c.* 7,000. It is also, more importantly, to ignore the many inhabitants of dissenting centres who were not nonconformists (and who is to say which trade or occupation they were involved in?). Further, it ignores special factors, perhaps of personalities, which must explain such concentrations of individual dissenting denominations as the Congregationalists in Bibury, where just such a personal stimulus has already been quoted. Finally, a simple economic factor may underlie much of the sporadic and fluctuating incidence of nonconformity – whether there were the resources to support a meeting house and minister. An illuminating comment was made (in 1793) that 'the Dissenters are gaining much ground in wealth through trade, and (perhaps from thence in great measure) in proselytes.'²⁷ The rich clothiers of Uley could afford to be independent of the established church in all respects, and in other large places there was likewise sufficient wealth. In small agricultural villages it was more difficult to dissent from the norms of the established

24. E.A.L. Moir, 'The gentlemen clothiers' in *Gloucestershire Studies*, ed. H.P.R. Finberg (Leicester, 1957), 253.

25. Bisley, Upper Berkeley, Grumbalds Ash, Longtree and Whitstone. A.J. & R.H. Tawney, 'An occupational census of the 17th century', *Economic History Review*, V (1934), 43.

26. Moir, 'The gentleman clothiers', 226.

27. *Ibid.*, 253.

church. In many places nonconformity could not afford the physical embodiment of the building which helped to perpetuate an institutional existence.

Overall, therefore, the conclusion seems inescapable: that dissent was not a very large factor in the religious life of Gloucestershire. Puritanism certainly existed at the beginning of the 17th century, but widely scattered and claiming the overt allegiance of very small numbers. Even after the Civil War, dissenters, though more numerous, were still a tiny proportion of the population. By the early 18th century, with some measure of toleration established since 1689, dissent had increased, but in only a very few places was it numerically at all significant. By the middle of the 18th century, there was still overall allegiance to the Church of England. It is perhaps worth noting that in 1735 'absenters from all worship' were admitted to exist in 43 parishes, though mainly the vague quantity 'some' was used rather than exact figures – a core of indifference which was quite widespread. Even so, as far as such answers can be trusted, in five-sixths of Gloucestershire parishes some denominational allegiance was the norm for all, though for a few the church was not the Church of England. A hundred years later, Gloucestershire had about 35 per cent of its population attending church on census Sunday 1851, and half of this much diminished proportion were dissenters.²⁸ Clearly dissent and indifference between them had made progress since 1735. Bishop Benson's successors presided over this considerable change in the religious life of the county.

April 1983

ABSTRACT OF THE DIOCESAN SURVEY OF 1735

Note. The abstract has been prepared making use of the abbreviations employed in the original. The order in which parishes have been enumerated is also retained. This is generally alphabetical, though affected by the use of the Latin form of some names, as for example Dean Parva rather than Littledean. The spelling of place names has been anglicised and modernised throughout; the original form, where very different is given in brackets. Some places had the technical status of chapel, like Coleford, Chalford, Moreton-in-Marsh, and a number of other secondary settlements had a church, and are therefore listed under their superior or mother church; this feature of the original is adhered to. All entries are included, even though some places have subsequently been transferred to other counties. The order of the information across the page for each parish has been followed, except that some comments appearing in the right hand-margin have where appropriate been transposed to come before the total of inhabitants. Comments in general have been expanded from the abbreviated form in the original. Information on the name of the patron, and other (sparse) details concerning the living have not been included.

Abbreviations used in the abstract:

R	rectory
V	vicarage
C	curacy (stipendiary)

28. B.I. Coleman, *The Church of England in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (1980), 20–21.

Chap	chapel
MT	market town
RC	papist or Roman Catholic
Anab	Anabaptist
Ind	Independent
Presb	Presbyterian
S & C	Sabbatarian & Congregational
Q	Quaker
MH	meeting house
M	meeting
Sc	school (Church of England school as described in right-hand margin of document is written out in full after 'number of inhabitants')
*	'no return' (comment in right-hand margin)

Numbers of inhabitants are shown in italics. The qualifications 'about', 'more than', 'near', 'thereabouts' have all been abbreviated to *c.*

Information drawn from the 1743 survey is in square brackets.

FOREST DEANERY

Awre: V; 1 RC; *400 [239]*

Blakeney: Chap; MT; number of Presb not named, said to be very small; *[400]*

Abenhall: R; 10 Presb–MH supported chiefly by the funds in London; 10 Ind; *158*

Bromsberrow: R; 2 Presb; some absenters; *138*

Blaisdon: R; 1 Presb; *100*

Bicknor, English: R; 1 RC; some absenters; *500*

Churcham: V; including hamlets of Highnam, Over and Linton, *250*

Bulley: Chap; *45*

Highnam: Chap

Dymock: V; 1 Anab; *700*

Mitcheldean (Dean Magna): R; MT; 20 Presb–MH; *590*

Littledean (Dean Parva): C; *c.200*

Flaxley: C; 5 Presb; *130*

Huntley: R; *200*

Kempley: V; *132*

Lydney: V; 5 RC; 5 Presb; *452*

Aylburton: Chap; 2 RC; *140*

Hewelsfield: Chap; *239*

St Briavels: Chap; 2 RC; *478*

Longhope: V; 17 Ind; *400*

Lea: Chap; 1 Presb; *c.* 20 houses & 20 cottages

Minsterworth: V; 2 Presb; *308*

Newent: V; MT; 6 [2] Presb; 1 Q [1 Anab]; *3000*

Newnham: MT; *300*

Newland: V; 12 RC; 12 Anab; *2500*

Bream: Chap; school

Coleford: Chap; MT; 2 RC; [8 Anab–M]

Oxenhall: C; *c.* 100

Pauntley: C; 1 RC; *c.* 80

Preston: V; [8 houses, 2 cottages]

Rudford: R; *c.* 20 houses, *120*

Ruardean: C; 1 RC; 2 Presb; *300*

Staunton: R; 5 Anab [1 family]; *100*

Taynton: R; *250*

Tibberton: R; 118
 Tidenham: V; 400
 Upleadon: C; 19 houses
 Westbury-on-Severn: V; 1300; school
 Woolaston: R; 30 [8] RC—mass priest comes once a month; in Woolaston and chapels of Alvington and Lancut, *c.* 500
 [400]
 Alvington: Chap; 1 RC; 1 Presb; 1 Q; [100]
 Lancut: Chap; [2 houses]

HAWKESBURY DEANERY

Alderley: R; 3 [1] Anab; 3 Q; 150
 Badminton, Great: C; 200
 Bitton: V; Presb [15]—MH & Sc; [100 Anab—M & Sc; 1Q], some absenters; 5000—6000 [*above 6000*] [each of the chapelries is greater than Bitton]
 Hanham: Chap; number not specified but large
 Oldland: Chap
 Boxwell: R; [1 Anab]; 107 [8 houses]
 Leighterton: Chap; [20]
 Charfield: R; 170
 Cold Ashton: R; 1 Q; 150 [213]; school
 Cromhall: R; 4 Presb; [2 Anab]; 200
 Doynton: R; 260
 Dyrham: R; 200; school
 Didmarton: [R]; 45
 and
 Oldbury: R; [united in 1735]; 5 Anab; 9 Q—M; 160
 Dodington: R; some absenters; 100
 Frampton Cotterell: R; [1 Presb]; 5 [1] Q; 1 absenter; 393
 Hawkesbury: V; 3 RC; 10 Anab—M; 1000
 Badminton, Little: Chap
 Tresham: Chap
 Horton: R; 16 RC—priest & mass at Mr. Paston's; 4 Q; 200
 Iron Acton: R; 6 Presb; 2 Anab; [2 Q]; 300—400 [*c.* 100 families)
 Marshfield: V; MT; 200 Presb—M; 6 [2] Q; 1200
 Pucklechurch: V; Q—M; some absenters; 300; school
 Abson: Chap; 250
 Westerleigh: Chap; 800
 Siston: R; 10 Anab; 5 Q; some absenters; 300—400
 Sodbury, Old: V; some absenters; 200
 Sodbury, Chipping: Chap; MT; RC—1 perverted; 50 [40] Anab—M; 40 [30] Q—M; some absenters; 1200
 Sodbury, Little: R; 6 Anab; 115
 Tytherington: V; 10 Presb; some absenters; 250
 Tortworth: R; some absenters; 241
 Turville, Acton: V; 85
 Tormarton: R; an immoral parish; [1 Anab]; some absenters; 207
 West Littleton: Chap; [67]
 Wickwar: R; MT; 45 Presb [1 family]—M; 15 Anab [1 family]; 3 absenters; [700—800]
 Wapley: V;
 and
 Codrington: 4 [6] Q; some absenters; 180
 Westonbirt:* R; [3 Presb]; 70
 Yate: R; 5 Q [1 family]; some absenters; about 15 dissenters whose denomination is not specified [15 Presb]; *c.* 320

DURSLEY DEANERY

Berkeley: V; MT; 16 Presb—M [8 families—MH]; 2300; school
 Stone: Chap; *c.* 150
 Beverstone: R; 150
 Kingscote: Chap; 134

Cam: V; 250 [300] Ind-M; [900]
 Coaley: V; 9 Presb; 1 Q; 600
 Dursley: R; MT; 250 [100] Presb-M & Sc; some absenters; *c.* 2000
 Frampton-on-Severn: V; 450
 Hill: C; *c.* 20 houses, *c.* 80
 Kingswood (Kingswood Abbey): 100 [60] Presb-M & Sc; *c.* 800 [700]
 Lasborough: R; 2 houses
 North Nibley: C; 14 Presb; 6 Anab; 1700-1800
 Newington Bagpath: R; 7 Presb; 3 Anab; 2 Q; in Newington and Owlpen, 354
 Owlpen (Wolpen): Chap
 Rockhampton: R; 2 Presb; 2 Q; 100
 Slimbridge: R; 1 Presb; *c.* 100
 Stinchcombe: C; 15 Presb; some absenters; 345
 Thornbury: V; MT; 1 RC; 40 Presb-M; 50 [30] Q-M & Sc; 30 absenters; *c.* 1800
 Falfield: Chap
 Oldbury-upon-Severn: Chap
 Rangeworthy: [C]; Presb endowed MH, numbers not specified [4 families]; [140]; [listed under Hawkesbury deanery]
 Uley: R; 40 [77] Presb; 20 [18] Anab-M; *c.* 1500 [1160]; several rich clothiers
 Ozleworth (Wozzleworth): R; 1 Anab; 80
 Wotton-under-Edge: V; MT; 350 [80] Presb-M; 50 [10] Anab [M]; some absenters; 4000; school

STONEHOUSE DEANERY

Avening: R; 50 Presb-M; 6 Anab; 20 Q; *c.* 1000
 Bisley: V; MT; 70 Presb-M; [1 family Q]; *c.* 1000 families; school
 Chalford: Chap
 Brimpsfield:* R; 250
 Cherington: R; 110
 Cowley: R; 200
 Cranham: R; 10 Presb; 170
 Coberley: R; 120
 Elkstone: R; 160
 Edgeworth: R; 106
 Eastington: R; 600
 Frocester: V; 2 Ind; 293
 Horsley: V; 100 Presb [17 families]; 300 Anab [70 families]-M & 2 or 3 Sc; 150 Q [30 families]-M; some absenters; *c.* 450 families (In margin: 21 Presb; 64 Anab; 30 Q; a great cloath place)
 Minchinhampton: R; MT; 70 Presb-M; 17 Anab; 40 Q-M; [meeting house of Methodists licensed]; 4000
 Rodborough: Chap
 Miserden: R; 1 Presb; 5 Anab; 417
 Nympsfield: R; 3 Anab; 3 Q; *c.* 100
 Painswick: V; MT; 1 RC; 20 [15] Anab-MH; 150 [100] Ind-MH; 90 Q [4 families]-MH; some absenters; 2256
 Rodmarton: R; [50 families]
 Shipton Moyne:* R; [30 Presb]; 190
 Stanley, King's: R; 14 Ind-Richard Pontinge a cobbler is a teacher living in the Parsonage; a meeting house not regularly served, sometimes Presbyterian, sometimes Anabaptist, sometimes no service; [1050]
 Stanley, Leonard: [C]; 4 Presb; some absenters; 460
 Salperton: R; 2 absenters; 209
 Stonehouse: V; 2 RC; 1 absenter; *c.* 1000 [759]
 Stroud: [C]; MT; 100 Presb-M; some absenters; *c.* 5000; they go to meeting here tis thought only for want of room in the church
 Syde: R; 51
 Tetbury: V; MT; 2 RC; 235 Presb-MH & Sc taught by a Presb; 38 Anab-MH; 22 Q-MH; *c.* 3115; school
 Winstone: R; *c.* 110
 Woodchester: R; 4 Presb; 2 Anab; 5 Q; *c.* 600

WINCHCOMBE DEANERY

Ashchurch: C; 26 Ind; 2 Q; 24 [26] S&C-MH [meeting on Saturdays]; 400

Badgeworth: V; 4 Presb; 3 Anab; 2 Q; 3 S&C; 500
 Shurdington: Chap
 Brockworth: V; 3 RC; a family absenters; 234
 Charlton Kings: C; 16 Anab; 700
 Charlton Abbots: C; c. 12 houses; 58
 Cheltenham:* [C]; MT; [40 Presb-M; 30 Ind-M; 20 Anab; 7 or 8 S&C; 30 Q-M]; c. 2000
 Colesbourne: R; 20-30 houses; [listed under Stonehouse deanery]
 Elmstone Hardwicke: V; 1 Presb; 1 Anab; 1 woman absenter; 144
 Hatherley, Down: V; 75
 Leckhampton: R; 3 Anab; 120
 Oxenton: R; 10 Anab; 30 families
 Prestbury: V; 10 Anab; 400
 Sevenhampton: C; c. 100 families
 Shipton Oliffe: R; 102
 Swindon: R; 8 families
 Sudeley: R; [5 families]
 Twyning:* V; [1 RC]; c. 350
 Tewkesbury: V; 12 RC; 100 Presb-M; 60 Anab-M & Sc; 50 Q-M; some absenters; c. 3000
 Tredington: C; c. 100
 Whittington: R; 116
 Woolstone: R; 57
 Winchcombe: V; MT; 15 [1] RC; 4 Q—a woman teaches school but scholars are all of the church; 1300
 Gretton: Chap
 Walton Cardiff: C; 6 Anab [1 family]; 30 [5 families]

DEERHURST PECULIAR

Deerhurst: C; 6 Presb; 1 Q; 300
 Corse: V; 160
 Forthampton: C; 200
 Hasfield:* R; 100 or 120
 Leigh (Lye): V; 4 Anab; 2 absenters; 256
 Staverton: V; [100 houses, $\frac{2}{3}$ in Boddington]
 Boddington: Chap; 1 RC
 Tirley: V; 1 RC; 1 Presb; 1 Anab; 3 [1] Q; 200
 Cleeve, Bishop's
 and
 Stoke Orchard: R; 15 Anab; 1 Q-MH, 5 men from other parishes in a poor thatched house; 2 S&C; 500 or 600

WITHINGTON PECULIAR

Withington: R; 500
 Dowdeswell: R; 180

GLOUCESTER DEANERY

Arlingham: V; 370
 Ashleworth: V; 2 Ind; 3 [2] Q; 200
 Barnwood: C; 2 Presb [1 family]; 180
 Brookthorpe: V; 107
 Churchdown: C; 5 Q; 460
 Elmore: C; some absenters; 200
 Fretherne: R; 96
 Haresfield:* V; c. 200
 Hartpury: V; 1 RC [2 families]; c. 200
 Harescombe: 70
 and
 Pitchcombe: R; 90
 Hempstead: R; 5 RC; 109
 Lassington: R; 33

Longney: V; some absenters; *c.* 180
 Matson: R; 30
 Moreton Valence: 152
 and
 Whaddon: C; 106
 Maisemore: C; *c.* 230 [200]
 Norton: C; 240
 Quedgeley: C; 100
 Sandhurst: V; 3 [1] Presb; 200
 Standish: V; 1 absentee; 400
 Hardwicke: Chap; 200
 Randwick: Chap; some absenters; 700
 Saul: Chap; some absenters; 100
 Upton St Leonards: C; [1 Presb]; 300
 Wheatenhurst or Whitminster: C; [a Jew]; 200
 Witcombe, Great: R; 4 Ind; [4 Anab]; 70
 City of Gloucester: 2 RC; 100 Presb-M; 100 Ind-M, Anabaptists go to the meeting; 20 Q-silent meeting; 1000-1100 houses, *c.* 7000

CAMPDEN DEANERY

Alderton:* R; in Alderton and Dixton hamlet, 166
 Aston Somerville: R; 5 Anab; *c.* 60
 Aston Subedge: R; 110
 Batsford: R; *c.* 70
 Beckford: V; 35 RC-priest and mass at Mr Wakeman's; popish bishop has confirmed there; a few have been perverted; 16 Ind; 7 absenters; 350
 Ashton under Hill: Chap; 254
 Buckland: R; [1 RC]; 300
 Bourton-on-the-Hill: R; 5 Presb; 5 [1] Anab; 2 Q; *c.* 300
 Moreton-in-Marsh: Chap; MT; 10 Anab [1 family]; 500
 Cow Honeybourne: Chap; 'no chapel'; [2 families Presb; *c.* 40 families in Cow Honeybourne and not above 6 families in Church Honeybourne; Church Honeybourne in Worcestershire is the mother church]
 Clifford Chambers: R; [32 houses]
 Campden, Chipping: V; MT; 10 Anab; 15 Ind-M; 3 Q-M; *c.* 1500 [1000]
 Didbrook: V; 3 absenters; 5 farms and 10 cottages belonging to Lord Tracy; there is besides Lord Tracy's seat
 Hailes: Chap; 1 farm and 6 cottages belonging to Lord Tracy
 Dorsington: R; *c.* 90
 Dumbleton: R; 1 Presb; *c.* 100
 Ebrington:* V; [3 Q]; 300
 Hinton-on-the-Green: R; 1 Presb [1 family]; [1 family Anab]; 105
 Kemerton: R; 9 Presb; 200
 Lemington: C; 8 families
 Marston, Long (Dry Marston): R; 1 Presb; *c.* 200
 Mickleton: R; 7 RC [2 families]; 9 Anab; 1 absentee; 400
 Pebworth:* V; [5 Presb; 1 Anab]; 250
 Preston-on-Stour:* C; 200
 Quinton: V; 200
 Sezincote: R; no church; farm houses all belonging to Lord North
 Saintbury:* R; *c.* 60
 Stanton: 250
 and
 Snowhill: R; 1 Anab; 120
 Stanway: V; 250
 Shenington: R; 15 Q [1 family]; *c.* 200
 Todenham: R; 4 Q [1 family]; *c.* 250
 Toddington: R; *c.* 250
 Stanley Pontlarge: C; 70 [7 houses]
 Washbourne, Great: C; 2 Presb; 60

Welford: R; 10 RC—priest comes to Mr Bettham's house to say mass; 250
 Weston Subedge: R; 1 Presb; 170
 Weston-on-Avon: V; 70–80
 Willersey:* R; 150 or 160 [150]
 Wormington: R; c. 70

PECULIAR OF CHILDSWICKHAM: V; 1 Presb; 300

STOW DEANERY

Aston Blank or Cold Aston: V; 140 [130]; school
 Barrington, Great: V; 15 Ind; c. 80 houses, 300
 Barrington, Little: V; 150
 Bledington: V; c. 60 houses, 221
 Broadwell: R; 2 Presb; 1 Q; [4 families Anab]; c. 240
 Adlestrop: Chap; c. 130
 Bourton-on-the-Water: R; 1 RC; 100 [200] Anab–M, Flower an Anabaptist preaching one Sunday and Collet a grazier and
 presbyterian the other but the congregation is all Anabaptist; a Quaker is lord of the manor, he lives at Kensington;
 400 or 500
 Clapton: Chap; c. 100
 Slaughter, Lower: Chap; c. 100
 Compton, Little: C; 5 [4] RC; 187
 Condicote:* R; 100
 Guiting, Upper or Temple: C; 2 Anab; 100 houses
 Guiting, Lower, or Guiting Power: V; c. 150 [150 families]; school
 Farmcote: Chap; 6 RC—priest comes to Mr Stratford's to say mass; one has been perverted; [4 families]
 Hawling: R; c. 100
 Hazleton: R; c. 60
 Yanworth: Chap; 80
 Longborough:* V; [29 Anab]; 316
 Naunton: R; 6 Presb; 3 Anab; 2 S&C—a shoemaker and his wife; he is also [?] Unitarian and Anabaptist; 44 families;
 school
 Notgrove: R; 10 Anab; [10 S&C]; c. 130
 Oddington: R; 1 RC; 10 Anab; 20 S&C; [2 families Q]; 338
 Pinnock: R; 2 houses, no church
 [under Campden deanery: united to Didbrook 1738; belonging to Lord Tracy]
 Rissington, Wick: R; c. 170
 Rissington, Little: R; 40 [30] Anab; c. 170
 Rissington, Great: R; 2 Presb; 240
 Stow-on-the-Wold: R; 1 RC; 44 Anab [15 families]–M & Sc; 15 Q [2 families]–M; some absenters; 1283
 Salperton (Sapperton), Cold: C; 1 Anab; 2 absenters; c. 120
 Slaughter, Upper: R; 1 Presb; 20 Anab; 1 Ind; 1 absenter; 127
 Shipton Solers: R; 56
 Sutton-under-Brailes: R; 1 RC—a farm has lately been perverted by Mr Sheldon's priest; 150
 Swell, Upper: R; 3 [2] Anab; 60
 Swell, Lower: V; 15 Anab [2 families]; 1 Q; 160
 Turkdean: V; 120
 Westcote:* R; 140 [120]
 Windrush: V; 183
 Widford: R; 2 houses

CIRENCESTER DEANERY

Ampney Crucis: C; 1 RC; 1 Anab; 357
 Ampney St Mary: C; 118
 Ampney St Peter: C; c. 20 houses
 Baunton: C; 6 Anab–M at the teacher's house; some absenters; 60–70
 Bagendon: R; some absenters; 80–90
 Cirencester Borough: 5 RC; 500 Presb–M & Sc—for girls kept by a Presbyterian; the girls go to which service they

please;—for boys by a Congregationalist from Bibury; 100 Anab—M; 100 Q—M; some absenters; *c.* 4000 [3,800]
 Chedworth: V; [1 Presb; 1 Anab]; 12 denomination not specified; *c.* 500
 Coates: R; *c.* 120
 Coln St Dennis: R; 5 Anab; *c.* 100
 Coln Rogers: R; 1 Anab; *c.* 80
 Compton Abdale:* C; 150
 Daglingworth: R; 1 RC; 1 Anab; 2 absenters; *c.* 140
 Driffield: V; 'church lately beautified'; *c.* 90
 Duntisbourne Abbots: R; 176
 Duntisbourne Rouse (Knight's Duntisbourne): R; *c.* 70
 Farmington: R; [1 Anab]; *c.* 100
 Harnhill: R; 3 Q; not above 4 or 5 farms and as many cottages, *c.* 60
 Hampnett: [12 families]
 and
 Stowell: R; only Mr Howe's house in Stowell
 North Cerney: R; [1 Anab]; *c.* 220
 Northleach: V; 10 RC; 10 Presb; 5 Anab; *c.* 1000 [900]
 Preston: V; 80—90
 Rendcomb: R; 120
 Stratton: R; 5 Anab [1 family]; 138
 Siddington: R; including Siddington St Peter 163; [Siddington St Mary 50; Siddington St Peter: 150]
 South Cerney: V; 4 Anab; 4 Q; 10 absenters; 500 [600]

FAIRFORD DEANERY

Coln St Aldwyn: V; 5 RC; 6 Anab; 282
 Down Ampney: V; 2 RC; *c.* 250
 Eastleach Martin or Boutherop: R; *c.* 130 [100]
 Eastleach Turville: C; 2 RC; *c.* 150
 Fairford: V; MT; 6 [10] RC; 10 Presb [1 family]—M in Mr Lamb's house; 10 [30] Ind—M in a private house; 24 [60]
 Anab—M; *c.* 800 [1200]
 Hatherop: R; 50 [70] RC—a priest and mass at Mr Webb's; 193
 Kempsford: V; 5 [6] Anab; *c.* 100 houses
 Lechlade: V; 2 Q; 900 [1000]
 Meysey Hampton: R; 12 [3] Anab—M; 300 [400, half in chapel of Marston]
 Quenington: R; 1 Ind; *c.* 100
 Sherborne: V; *c.* 360; [listed under Stow deanery]
 Southrop: V; 174

PECULIAR OF BIBURY

Bibury: V; 40 in the Peculiars—M; [a meeting of a sect called Congregationalists about 40 in number; Jacobs of Oxfordshire who died about 30 years ago was their founder; they baptise infants but refuse to swear upon the Bible; are rigid Predestinarians]; *c.* 300 [530]
 Winson: Chap; [120]
 Aldsworth: Chap [C]; *c.* 30 families
 Barnsley: R; *c.* 140