3 Places of Work

In 1626 Stephen Morvell, a chapman from Colne in Lancashire, travelled to Preston fair to purchase linen. Having bought a large quantity, he returned to the inn where he was lodging to measure it and noticed that he had lost his purse. Margaret Slater, the wife of an alehouse-keeper from Ribchester, from whom he had purchased linen earlier that day, was present in the same room. Stephen's purse contained three particularly distinctive foreign coins, known as 'cardecus', and later the news that these coins were circulating in Ribchester led Stephen to suspect Margaret had stolen his purse.[1] Margaret's neighbours testified that she had spent an unusually large amount of money at the fair, and by her own admission 'she paid for flax 12s, for a jerkin-cloth 2s, for exchange of a pewter flagon 18d, for 2 geese 18d and lent 12d to Henry Dewhurst'. She explained that she had brought some of her spending money from home, 'and sold yarn for the rest'. However, this did not account for the foreign coins. Christopher Norcrosse recalled that Margaret's husband, John, had come into Thomas Ireland's alehouse in Ribchester with a cardecus, which he had exchanged for 13.5d. Another cardecus was received by George Rawcliffe of Ribchester for butcher's meat sold to Margaret.[2]

As well as recording information about work tasks, depositions are rich in evidence about spatial locations. From the case of Stephen Morvell's lost purse, we learn that Morvell travelled 27 miles to Preston from the Pennine town of Colne to attend the fair. The journey was far enough that he needed to lodge at an inn overnight. As a chapman, it is likely his trip was to purchase cloth that he could then retail closer to home. Margaret Slater travelled 10 miles from Ribchester to Preston, a return journey that could be accomplished in a day, to sell yarn and cloth and buy flax and other goods. Thus, fairs drew people in from the wider

[1] 'Cardecus' was the English name for *quart d'écu*, a French silver coin worth a quarter of the écu, or 15 sous tournois; the coin circulated between the late sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries: OED online.
[2] LaA, QSB/1/17, 25–6.

region, and commerce caused people to travel from town to town, and from smaller settlements such as Ribchester to larger towns such as Preston. Although no one in the case is described spinning or weaving, the prominence of flax, yarn, and linen cloth in this case is distinctive to Lancashire, an important region for English linen production.[3] The case also offers glimpses of interior spaces where work was carried out: the public room in the inn where Stephen Morvell measured his cloth, and the alehouses of Ribchester which not only sold beer but allowed coins to be exchanged along with gossip. This chapter looks at all these themes, exploring regional differences, contrasts between rural and urban work, transport and travel, inside and outside workspaces, and privacy.

Spatial location is an essential element of the experience of work. Although not always explicitly acknowledged, location is also essential to how historians view work and economic change in early modern England. Industrialisation and urbanisation from the late eighteenth century onwards involved the creation of specialist workspaces which separated work and home. These included not only factories but banks, offices, hospitals, workhouses, and non-residential retail shops. The growth of towns and industry, and the relative decline in agricultural work, reduced the proportion of work taking place outside. Specialisation in industry and agriculture reduced the extent of by-employment. New modes of transport revolutionised the business of moving goods and people. But what did the economy look like, in spatial terms, before these changes took place? Both urbanisation and regional specialisation caused work to be gradually relocated even before the upheavals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but the extent and impact of these changes has been difficult to measure. We know that people from rural settlements must have travelled to market towns to engage in commerce, but the extent and means of this movement has rarely caught historians' attention. Transport is more often studied as a technology or network, rather than as work and time-use.

The work-task data offers insight into all these issues and the findings are not always what we might expect. It is commonplace to state that people worked at home in preindustrial economies, but very few historians have explored, let alone measured, the actual location of work in the period before 1700. This chapter does just that. Gender historians have paid more attention to workspaces, responding to the assertation of an inside/outside division between women's and men's work that was frequently reiterated in early modern didactic literature. Amanda Flather's

[3] Lowe, *Lancashire Textile Industry*.

detailed study of Essex court depositions has shown that while women did work inside more than men, the locations of women's and men's work also overlapped a great deal.[4] Here, we use our wider sample to quantify gendered work patterns. The chapter begins by exploring regional contrasts: the work-task data shows remarkably few differences at the level of general categories although some regional differences in farming regimes, diet, and specialist industries are evident. The contrasting patterns of work between large towns, market towns, and villages are more clearcut, as shown in Section 3.2. Section 3.3 turns to the topic of transport, examining the distances travelled and methods of movement. This is a reminder of the often time-consuming and difficult task of moving things, people, and information around the early modern landscape. The final two sections address the spatial dimension of workplaces, first examining the division between inside and outside tasks and the house as a place of work, before in the final section considering the lack of privacy experienced in all locations.

3.1 Regions

When Dorothy Tottle sat by a window making bone lace in a house at Luppitt near Honiton in east Devon in 1614, or Robert Arcle drew 'coals at the coal pit in East Brandon' in County Durham in 1633, or Thomas Browne grew and sold 'six acres of turnips in a close called maypole close in Horning' in Norfolk in 1693, they were all undertaking regionally distinctive forms of work related to local specialisms.[5] The work-task data was collected from three regions chosen to represent England's contrasting economies: the north, the south-west, and eastern England. Figure 1.1 and Table 1.2 in Chapter 1 show the counties from which evidence was collected. Ann Kussmaul's *General View of the Rural Economy* provides an overview of England's early modern economic regions. She used the seasonality of marriage to map parishes that were dominated by arable agriculture, with October marriages after the harvest; pastoral agriculture, with April, May, or June marriages after spring lambing and calving; and industrial parishes, with no strong seasonality. Her data shows that by the early eighteenth century, the south-west was dominated by a mixture of pastoral and industrial parishes, the east by

[4] Flather, 'Space, place, and gender'.

[5] DHC, Chanter 867, *Follett v. Stone and Tottle*; Yallop, 'Honiton lace industry'; DUIC, DDR: Consistory court depositions (loose), *Fletcher v. Newton*; Hatcher, *British Coal Industry*, p. 83; NRO, DN/DEP/53/58A, *Stone v. Hall*; Overton, *Agricultural Revolution*, p. 95.

arable parishes, and the north by industrial parishes.[6] However, Kussmaul also demonstrated that there was significant change over time. Her maps for the late sixteenth century show far fewer contrasts, with arable parishes spread across the whole of England.[7] Historians have also suggested that the gender division of labour varied regionally, again using evidence from the eighteenth century and later. For instance, Snell argued that women found more agricultural work in south-west England than in the east, while studies of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries show that women found more agricultural work in northern England.[8]

The work-task data shows a notable lack of regional differences for 1500 to 1700 in both the gender division of labour and work repertoires more generally. Table 3.1 demonstrates that the proportion of agricultural work done by women varied by less than one percentage point between the three regions, ranging between 35.6 per cent in the east, and 36.5 per cent in the south-west. The proportion of secondary sector work done by women in the crafts and construction and food processing categories was also quite stable regionally, although somewhat higher in the south-west than elsewhere. The biggest differences appear where least expected, in commerce, housework, and transport, as discussed in more detail below.

The large categories of work used in Table 3.1 hide some important differences in specific tasks. For instance, winnowing, the process of separating threshed grain from the chaff, was done by women in western England and men in the east. There are 29 examples of winnowing in the database. In Devon, Cornwall, and Cheshire, all winnowing was carried out by women; in Somerset, Wiltshire, Hampshire, and Lancashire some men were recorded but women outnumbered them; while in Norfolk, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire only men undertook this task. Sheep shearing was another activity in which women's participation was regionally specific. Of the 75 examples of sheep shearing recorded, 11 were done by women. Of these, 9 came from Devon and 2 from Somerset. Interestingly, medieval manorial accounts suggest that this form of women's work had once been much more widespread.[9]

The overall uniformity of the gender division of labour stemmed, at least in part, from the uniformity of work tasks more generally between regions as shown in Table 3.2. This reveals that the proportion of

[6] Kussmaul, *General View*, Figure 1.1. [7] Kussmaul, *General View*, Figure 1.4.
[8] Snell, *Annals*, p. 49; Verdon, *Rural Women Workers*; Burnette, 'Wages and employment', pp. 678–9, 685.
[9] Rogers, *History of Agriculture and Prices*, Vol. 1, p. 280.

Table 3.1 *Gender division of labour by region*

	S. West		North		East		S. West	North	East
	F tasks adj.	M tasks	F tasks adj.	M tasks	F tasks adj.	M tasks	% by F adj.	% by F adj.	% by F adj.
Agriculture and land	586	1,018	275	482	365	659	36.5	36.3	35.6
Carework	290	72	369	64	297	60	80.1	85.2	83.2
Commerce	886	867	236	357	294	335	50.5	39.8	46.7
Crafts and construction	271	341	133	204	127	193	44.3	39.4	39.6
Food processing	183	230	60	92	96	156	44.3	39.6	38.0
Housework	551	88	251	60	596	76	86.2	80.7	88.7
Management	178	161	142	146	124	166	52.5	49.3	42.7
Transport	239	381	181	262	108	386	38.6	40.8	21.9
Other	12	38	58	36	62	34	24.0	61.7	64.6
Total	3,196	3,196	1,704	1,703	2,067	2,065	50.0	50.0	50.0

Notes: adj. = adjusted. Female work tasks are adjusted using a different multiplier for each region to preserve a 50:50 overall division of tasks within each region: S. West (x2.44), North (x2.41), East (x3.09).

Table 3.2 *Work repertoires by region*

	Total tasks	All tasks repertoire (%)	S. West repertoire (%)	North repertoire (%)	East repertoire (%)
Agriculture and land	2,631	27.3	27.9	24.7	28.4
Carework	564	5.8	4.2	9.0	5.7
Commerce	2115	21.9	27.3	18.9	15.7
Crafts and construction	945	9.8	10.0	10.7	8.6
Food processing	609	6.3	6.8	4.9	6.8
Housework	747	7.7	7.0	6.8	9.8
Management	645	6.7	5.2	8.5	7.5
Transport	1,237	12.8	10.6	14.0	15.4
Other	157	1.6	1.0	2.5	2.0
Total	–	99.9	100.0	100.0	99.9
Total tasks	9,650	9,650	4,506	2,410	2,734

agricultural tasks was slightly lower in the north, and the proportion of crafts and construction slightly lower in the east, but the differences are minimal. As with the gender division of labour, larger differences are evident in categories that would not be expected to vary significantly, such as commerce, transport, and carework. Table 3.2 shows raw data, and some of these variations can be explained by the make-up of the samples.[10] A high proportion of work tasks in the eastern region were taken from coroners' reports: 22 per cent compared to 11 per cent in the north and 5 per cent in the south-west. Coroners' reports record a high number of transport tasks, because they led to accidents, particularly while driving carts. The percentage of transport tasks recorded in the coroners' reports was almost identical in the east and the south-west, at 22.6 per cent and 22.4 per cent, respectively. This indicates that the difference between the regions is largely due to the larger proportion of tasks from coroners' reports in the eastern region. A similar issue occurs with carework. Paternity cases brought to the quarter sessions, in which unmarried women were questioned about the identity of their baby's father while giving birth, recorded many carework tasks relating to midwifery and childcare. In the east and south-west such cases contributed 10 per cent of carework tasks recorded, while in the north the percentage was 44 per cent. Most of the northern cases came from a single county, Cheshire, which provided two-thirds of the carework tasks from northern paternity cases, inflating the proportion of carework tasks in the north as a whole, as discussed in Section 1.1.

[10] See Table 1.2.

Table 3.3 *Regional differences in agricultural work tasks*

Region	S. West		East		North		All	
	Tasks	%	Tasks	%	Tasks	%	Tasks	%
Arable	560	35.8	291	30.2	215	30.1	1,065	32.9
Pastoral	367	23.5	245	25.4	254	35.5	868	26.8
Other agriculture and food processing	636	40.7	428	44.4	246	34.4	1,307	40.3
All agriculture and food processing	1,563	100.0	964	100.0	715	100.0	3,240	100.0
Sheep	175	59.3	84	36.7	93	40.3	352	46.6
Cattle	54	18.3	46	20.1	57	24.7	157	20.8
Horses	38	12.9	61	26.6	52	22.5	151	20.0
Poultry	9	3.1	16	7.0	15	6.5	40	5.3
Other animal husbandry	19	6.4	22	9.6	14	6.1	55	7.3
All animal husbandry	295	100.0	229	100.0	231	100.0	755	100.0

Notes: Arable includes fieldwork, gathering food (mostly gleaning), and threshing and winnowing; pastoral includes animal husbandry, milking, and dairying.

To identify significant regional differences it is necessary to look within the larger categories of work, such as agriculture. There is an extensive literature on regional specialisation within early modern English agriculture, developing out of Joan Thirsk's intricate maps based on evidence from probate inventories.[11] The work-task methodology provides a more muted picture of regional difference in agriculture, as shown in Table 3.3. More agricultural work tasks were involved in livestock husbandry in the north, compared to the south-west or east: in both the south-west and east arable work tasks outnumbered pastoral ones, but the balance was switched round in the north where pastoral work tasks were more common. There were also differences within each type of agriculture. In the south-west and east there were more work tasks mentioning wheat than oats, to a ratio of 2.5:1 in the south-west, and 2:1 in the east. In contrast, in the north there were more work tasks relating to oats, giving a wheat-to-oats ratio of 0.9:1. This is expected, given the difficulties of cultivating wheat in much of northern England and the dominance of oats in the northern diet.[12]

[11] Thirsk, *Agricultural Regions*; Overton, *Agricultural Revolution*, pp. 46–62.
[12] Muldrew, *Food, Energy*, pp. 60–2.

Less expected were the regional contrasts in the ratio of mutton to geese mentioned in work tasks, an indicator of both farming systems and diet. The term 'mutton' allows work relating to sheep flesh to be distinguished from the keeping of live sheep. No such precise distinction is possible with geese, although the majority of geese-related work tasks concern preparation for eating. The database contained 160 work tasks mentioning mutton, mostly relating to butchering, commerce, and food processing, in contrast to 188 that mentioned geese. In the north and east geese were prevalent: for every work task mentioning mutton, there were 4.8 mentioning geese in the north and 3.2 in the east. In the south-west the balance was reversed with 2.8 work tasks mentioning mutton for every one that mentioned geese. These differences highlight regional variations in animal husbandry that are not immediately obvious from Table 3.3, as geese were relatively easy to keep and so did not create large quantities of agricultural work, though they do appear in food processing and preparation tasks. Differences in keeping larger animals are more evident in Table 3.3. Sheep farming was most prevalent in the south-west, while in the north there was more of a balance between sheep, cattle, and horses. In the east, horse-related tasks were particularly common, likely because of their predominance as plough beasts in that region.[13]

As noted at the start of the section, specialisms are evident in the places we would expect. Women making bone lace in the first half of the seventeenth century are found not only at Luppitt but at Trull outside Taunton and Kingsdon near Yeovil in Somerset, and at Amersham in Buckinghamshire.[14] The production of linen yarn and cloth is found in Lancashire, Cheshire, and the North Riding of Yorkshire, with another pocket of activity in Cambridgeshire. Hemp was cultivated most frequently in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk.[15] Work activities in fulling mills, used in the production of heavy woollen broadcloth, occur most frequently in Devon and the West Riding of Yorkshire. Tin mining was found at Calstock parish in Cornwall where a man was 'working in a certain tinworks called Drakewalls' in 1560, and at Ashburton on the edge of Dartmoor in Devon, where another man was 'working in tin workings digging with a tin hook' in 1571.[16] Coalmining is found in County Durham and across the West Riding of Yorkshire where it is documented by coroners' reports at Whitkirk and Barwick in Elmet near

[13] Overton, *Agricultural Revolution*, p. 126. [14] Spenceley, 'Origins'.
[15] On linen and hemp, see Evans, *East Anglian Linen Industry*; Lowe, *Lancashire Textile Industry*, ch. 4.
[16] DHC, Chanter 855, *Thomasine Bligh v. John Prowte*; TNA, KB/9/631a/119. On tin-mining in Cornwall and Devon, see Hatcher, *Rural Economy*. Drakewalls is a village in Calstock parish where the landscape is still scarred by tin-mining.

Leeds, at Bradford, at Sandal Magna outside Wakefield, and at Darfield and Wath upon Dearne in southern Yorkshire.[17]

However, regionally distinctive forms of production had a limited effect on overall work patterns because they took place alongside tasks that were commonplace to every community. An example is provided by Manchester. Early modern Manchester was a centre of the cloth industry, and an early producer of cotton cloth in the seventeenth century. There are 40 work tasks from Manchester in the database. Six come from a single case in 1627 involving a 5 lb sack of cotton wool taken from the warehouse of Henry Wrigley, a Salford chapman, and then pawned with the wife of a Manchester alehouse-keeper.[18] The only other case relating directly to the cloth industry describes Robert Brooke 'being as a workman and weaving' in the 'dwellinghouse' of Edward Dawson in 1666.[19] In contrast, the most common Manchester work tasks were agricultural, a reminder that this was still a rural area.[20] Manchester's status as a market town is evident from six tasks relating to buying and selling, and a further six relating to the transport of goods. There were three management tasks, all relating to borrowing goods and arranging delivery. The remaining six tasks were housework and carework. Thus, Manchester's distinctive manufacturing profile is drowned out by a plethora of work tasks commonly found in other places.

The lack of regional differences, particularly in agriculture and secondary sector activities, is an important finding. When Kussmaul observed marked regional differences in the seasonality of marriage in the early eighteenth century, she suggested this was the consequence of increased regional specialisation. The work-task data shows less difference between regions. It is particularly striking that south-west England seems to have been as arable as eastern England: a pattern also shown by Kussmaul's map for the late sixteenth century. The same map shows more industrial parishes, or parishes with little seasonality in marriage patterns, in the north of England, and particularly the north-west.[21] Figure 3.1 explores regional differences in the seasonality of work tasks, and reveals a similar pattern. The north had less seasonality with multiple peaks and work evenly spread across the summer months, indicative of a

[17] Hatcher, *British Coal Industry*, esp. Map 5.5.
[18] LaA, QSB/1/27, 78. In the 1640s Henry Wrigley had goods worth £5143 stored at London, see Willan, 'Manchester clothiers', p. 180.
[19] LaA, QSB/1/1666, April, Info of Grace Chadwick and Elizabeth Rainsley.
[20] There were eight agricultural tasks and four food processing tasks, including winnowing oats and making oatmeal.
[21] Kussmaul, *General View*, p. 12.

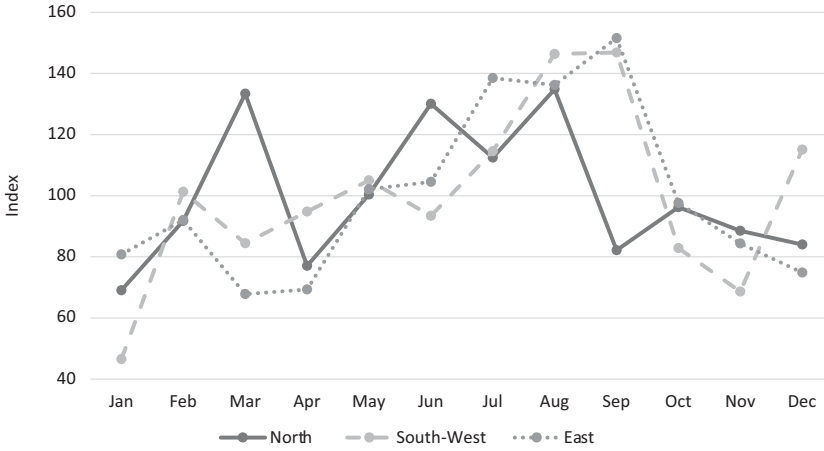

Figure 3.1 Regional seasonality: distribution of monthly tasks compared.
Notes: 100 = monthly average; Integral excluded. The monthly task totals have been subject to a series of weightings and other adjustments explained in Section 4.1 and Appendices C and D. F adjusted = the female multiplier differs from the standard multiplier as it is designed to give an equal number of male and female tasks for each region with monthly data attached, and therefore varies by region: south-west (x2.30), east (x2.81), north (x2.03).

pastoral/industrial economy.[22] In contrast, the east and south-west show an arable-farming pattern with clear peaks of work in the harvest months of August and September.

Overall, the work-task data shows few marked regional differences. Regional economic differences were more muted in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than they became in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as shown by Kussmaul.[23] There were important differences in local and regional economies, especially in agriculture, as historians such as Thirsk have demonstrated.[24] However, these differences did not necessarily lead to contrasting patterns of work. The plethora of commonplace tasks drowns out those that were regionally distinctive, as the example of Manchester shows. Some important regional differences do emerge from the work-task approach: the south-west had more sheep farming, the seasonality of work suggests the north was more pastoral and

[22] The March peak is largely caused by the Cheshire carework tasks associated with paternity cases.
[23] Kussmaul, *General View*. [24] Thirsk, *Agricultural Regions*.

industrial, and specialist industries were dotted across the country. Nonetheless, the importance of shared patterns of work is most evident, a feature of the early modern economy that is often overlooked.

3.2 Town and Country

Towns differed from other settlements not only by their size as centres of population but by their distinctive economic activities and patterns of work, particularly by the presence of weekly markets and the higher proportion of non-agricultural occupations.[25] This section explores the different patterns of work in large towns, market towns, and rural parishes of villages or scattered settlements. Large towns are defined as having populations of 3,000 or more in 1522 or 5,000 or more in 1700.[26] No specifically urban records were consulted to gather evidence of work tasks, but those collected approximately reflect the distribution of population between towns and smaller settlements. Of these, 8 per cent came from large provincial towns, slightly more than Wrigley's estimates of their proportional population, which rose from 3 per cent in c.1520 to 6 per cent in 1700.[27] Market towns were identified using the lists compiled by Everitt for 1500 to 1640.[28] Glennie and Whyte estimate that if these smaller towns are included, 30–33 per cent of England's population was urban in the period from 1540 to 1700.[29] In the work-task database market towns contributed 32 per cent of work tasks. Defined in this way, urban work tasks are slightly overrepresented, making up just under 40 per cent of the total sample.[30]

Table 3.4 explores rural-urban differences in two ways. First, it looks at work tasks according to where the work took place, and, secondly, according to where the worker lived. The clearest differences in work patterns between towns and countryside are found in the categories of agriculture, commerce, and crafts and construction. More agriculture took place in the rural parishes, as would be expected. Nonetheless, it is also clear that agriculture took place in urban parishes.[31] For instance,

[25] Dyer, 'Small market towns', p. 427.
[26] These are the 31 largest provincial towns in England in each period: see Slack, 'Great and good towns', p. 352.
[27] Wrigley, *People, Cities, and Wealth*, p. 162. Wrigley's proportion is of towns of 5,000 or more, excluding London; we include some smaller towns with populations of 3,000–5,000 in the earlier period.
[28] Everitt, 'Marketing of agricultural produce', pp. 468–75.
[29] Glennie and Whyte, 'Towns in an agrarian economy', p. 169.
[30] 9,358 out of 9,650 tasks could be located in specific communities. Tasks without specific locations are not included in this analysis.
[31] Glennie and Whyte, 'Towns in an agrarian economy', p. 173.

Table 3.4 *Rural and urban work repertoires by task location and worker residence*

	By location of task				By residence of worker			
	All locations repertoire (%)	Large towns repertoire (%)	Market towns repertoire (%)	Rural repertoire (%)	All residence repertoire (%)	Large towns repertoire (%)	Market towns repertoire (%)	Rural repertoire (%)
Agriculture and land	27.4	12.8	17.2	34.7	27.4	15.3	19.8	31.2
Carework	5.9	6.8	6.0	5.7	5.9	7.6	7.0	5.6
Commerce	21.6	31.2	32.4	14.8	21.6	21.8	26.6	20.6
Crafts and construction	9.8	12.0	9.7	9.6	9.8	16.0	11.7	8.4
Food processing	6.2	2.6	4.9	7.3	6.2	3.4	6.0	7.1
Housework	7.8	7.8	6.8	8.4	7.8	7.9	7.2	7.3
Management	6.8	10.4	7.8	5.7	6.8	11.2	7.8	6.6
Transport	12.8	14.7	13.4	12.3	12.8	13.9	12.1	11.8
Other	1.6	1.8	2.0	1.4	1.6	2.9	1.9	1.3
Total	99.9	100.1	100.2	99.9	99.9	100.0	100.1	99.9
Total tasks	9,358	734	2,954	5,670	7,850	555	2,311	4,984

Notes: See text for definition of large towns and market towns. 'Rural' contains work tasks in all other parishes. Totals differ because not all tasks can be located by parish, and not all workers have place of residence recorded.

there were more agricultural tasks than tasks involving crafts and construction in market towns, as we saw in the case of Manchester discussed above. On the other hand, large towns and market towns were more than twice as likely to be locations of commerce than rural parishes. Interestingly, however, if we look at where the people engaging in commerce lived, there was relatively little difference between settlement types. This is because many people conducting commerce in towns travelled in from surrounding villages, as in the case of Margaret Slater from Ribchester doing business in Preston, discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The opposite effect was evident for crafts and construction. By location of task, market towns differed little from rural parishes in the proportion of crafts and construction activities, yet looking at the residence of workers shows that people engaged in crafts and construction were twice as likely to be resident in large towns as rural parishes, and somewhat more likely to live in market towns too. As discussed in Section 7.2, building craftsmen and tailors often travelled out from their urban places of residence to undertake work in the surrounding areas.

Exeter provides an example of the range of work observed in large towns. With a population of around 8,000 in the 1520s, growing to 14,000 in 1700, Exeter was among the largest cities in England.[32] It was smaller than London, Norwich, and Bristol but had a similar population to other regional centres such as York and Salisbury in 1500, and Newcastle and York in 1700.[33] A total of 103 work tasks were collected from Exeter, of which 43 related to commerce, 15 to crafts, and 14 to transport. Commonplace tasks such as agriculture and housework could take on a particular local complexion. For instance, in 1633 Alice Hingston deposed that while she was a servant resident in St Edmunds parish in Exeter she milked the three cows belonging to her employer 'all the summer time' while they grazed in the urban commons by the river Exe; 'sometimes they did pasture below the bridge in the ground called the Shillows, and sometimes in the Bonay, and sometimes in other ground adjoining there called the shooting marsh'.[34] These locations correspond to Shilhays, Bonhay, and the Shooting Marsh, all of which survive as modern street names close to the historic Exe Bridge in modern Exeter. Similarly, Agnes Morell alias Wheaten testified that she did laundry, rinsing clothes in 'the tail of the mills situate near Exe Bridge' in 1619, drawing attention both to the mills that clustered in the area near the bridge, and the types of location used for urban laundry work.[35]

[32] MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540–1640*; Stephens, *Seventeenth Century Exeter*.
[33] See Wrigley, *People, Cities, and Wealth*, p. 160. All other towns were smaller.
[34] DHC, Chanter 866, *March v. Joanes*. [35] DHC, Chanter 867, *Wills v. Miller*.

While many of the commercial transactions recorded for Exeter, such as buying and selling foodstuffs like meat, cheese, and bread, were found in large and small towns across the country, others were more distinctive. Three different cases mention visiting goldsmiths to have items valued, to sell gold and silver, and make purchases. The only other place in the work-task database where a goldsmith was recorded was King's Lynn, another port city. Also distinctive to Exeter was the sale of fresh sea fish within the city. When a dispute arose among the fish-sellers with stalls 'a little above the Guildhall' in Exeter High Street in 1674, two of the sellers who gave evidence came not from Exeter but from Teignmouth on the coast, one described as an 'agricola' or farmer, and another as the wife of a sailor.[36] They were among the many people working in Exeter who did not live in the city but came there to buy and sell goods at the markets, fairs, and shops. People also came seeking work. Peternell Bowden, a servant, ran away from her employer in Bishopsteignton and headed for Exeter where she was apprehended at the city's Westgate in 1610. Similarly, Christopher Tooker, accused of stealing a shirt in Topsham, also made his way to Exeter looking for work in 1620.[37]

Women outnumbered men in early modern towns. Souden found a sex ratio of 83 men for every 100 women in large towns, compared to 90 in small towns, and 100 in villages in the late seventeenth century.[38] This difference was reflected in the work tasks collected. In the raw unadjusted data 28 per cent of work tasks were carried out by women overall, but the proportion was 26 per cent in rural settlements, 30 per cent in market towns, and 35 per cent in large towns. This pattern is also found in the residence of workers. Women were 26 per cent of workers living in villages, 32 per cent in market towns, and 36 per cent in larger towns. Souden suggested the high numbers of women in towns resulted from their employment as urban domestic servants, while male servants were employed in the countryside in agriculture.[39] Table 3.5 compares the work repertoires of women who lived in rural settlements with those who lived in towns. There is no suggestion that urban women did more housework; in fact, housework was more common in the countryside. Instead, urban women did less agriculture and food processing, and more commerce and management, as well as slightly more of all other types of work. Souden also found that women who migrated to towns

[36] DHC, Chanter 875, *Office v. Grant*.
[37] DHC, QS/4/Box 16, Michaelmas, 9–12; QS/4/Box 24, Epiphany, 7.
[38] Souden, 'Migrants and the population structure', p. 150. His large towns were Bristol, Norwich, Ipswich, Gloucester, Bury St Edmunds, Leicester, Lichfield, and Southampton.
[39] Ibid, p. 152.

Table 3.5 *Women's rural and urban work repertoires compared, by residence of worker*

	F rural repertoire (%)	F urban repertoire (%)
Agriculture and land	21.2	11.4
Carework	14.1	15.5
Commerce	18.7	23.9
Crafts and construction	7.7	9.2
Food processing	5.5	3.4
Housework	18.8	16.9
Management	5.9	8.7
Transport	7.0	8.9
Other	1.2	2.1
Total	100.0	100.0
Total tasks	1,293	890

Notes: Integral excluded; large towns and market towns combined as urban settlements.

were more likely to be unmarried.[40] The work-task data provided no evidence that unmarried women predominated amongst women working in towns: the proportion of female work tasks undertaken by never-married women was marginally higher in the countryside at 22 per cent, and lowest in large towns at 19 per cent.[41]

Patterns of work differed between towns and the countryside. Unsurprisingly, the higher proportion of agriculture characterised rural settlements while higher proportions of crafts and commerce characterised towns. Women's work was more evident in towns, indicating they made up a higher proportion of urban populations, as other studies have found. Distinguishing between where work tasks were performed, and where workers lived shows that although towns were sites of commerce, many of those engaged in that commerce lived in the countryside. Conversely, while those engaged in crafts and construction were more likely to live in towns, a significant proportion of their work was conducted in the countryside.

3.3 Transport and Travel

In June of 1652, Katherine Singard was walking the 8 miles home from Cranage Mill to Great Budworth, Cheshire, carrying some meal on her

[40] Ibid, p. 138.
[41] Just over a third of women were of unknown marital status and are excluded from these figures.

head. Understandably, she stopped off at an alehouse in Cranage to 'beg some small drink' for refreshment.[42] If moving stuff was thirsty work, it was also absolutely central to the experience of working life in early modern England. Histories of transport have concentrated on technologies, speed, and cost, while studies of people's movement have focused on permanent migration, vagrancy, and the culture of travel.[43] The most comprehensive study is offered by Mark Brayshay, who explores ordinary and elite users of highways through a range of sources.[44] Our approach is different: it contextualises transport and travel as an essential element of people's working lives.

Moving goods, animals, and occasionally people from A to B was far more time-consuming in the preindustrial past than in recent centuries. Horses and carts played some part in the process, but in the majority of cases these journeys were undertaken on foot. At a good pace Katherine Singard's trip to the mill would have taken two hours each way; with a load of meal on her head, it likely took longer than that. The overall proportion of working hours taken up by moving things is not fully captured by our transport category, even though it is the third-largest category of work tasks in the database, accounting for 13 per cent of all tasks. The ubiquity of movement activity means that many tasks placed in other categories had an element of transportation attached to them: carrying thatch up a ladder to thatch a roof was treated as a buildings task (crafts and construction); coming home from the woods with a bundle of firewood was classified as collecting fuel (agriculture and land); taking crops from a field to a nearby barn as farm transport, and moving animals *within* a farm as animal husbandry, to name but a few. Many other activities that were recorded, such as going to reckon a debt, or to check on a flock of sheep, also involved travel but not necessarily the transportation of anything but the self, and these were not classed as transport tasks either.[45]

In other words, tasks involving an element of moving things were both extremely numerous and one of the most difficult things to neatly classify. This section analyses a sub-section of such tasks, whilst recognising that we cannot easily provide a comprehensive picture of all transport

[42] CALS, QJF/80/2, 63.

[43] Willan, *Inland Trade*; Cooper, 'Speed and efficiency'; Wrigley, 'Urban growth'; Erickson and Schmidt, 'Migration'; Whyte, *Migration and Society*; Beier, *Masterless Men*; McRae, *Literature and Domestic Travel*; Fumerton, *Unsettled*.

[44] Brayshay, *Land Travel*, esp. ch. 4.

[45] Travel without a clear purpose, or for leisure, was not recorded as a work task, and nor was simply traveling to a place of work, as it was not clear this was something a third party could undertake instead.

Table 3.6 *Intra-parish tasks vs inter-parish tasks, by gender*

	Tasks	%	F tasks	%	M tasks	%	% by F adj.
Intra-parish	480	47.4	128	59.0	352	44.2	48.5
Inter-parish	533	52.6	89	41.0	444	55.8	34.2
Total	1,013	100.0	217	100.0	796	100.0	41.4

Notes: adj. = adjusted (x2.59). Totals reflect tasks where intra or inter-parish data is known.

activity. As a general rule of thumb, the tasks that were classified as transport activities were those where moving something was the main purpose of the task, rather than a subsidiary part of it and where the distance involved took the actor beyond their immediate environs: 97 per cent of all tasks included in the analysis below took the actor 'outside the household', where their own household was defined as including barns, outbuildings, and gardens.[46] To preserve this focus, the analysis here does not include all tasks that were placed in the large transport category. The subcategory of loading, which involved moving goods but onto carts or horses rather than over distances, was excluded, as were some of the tasks from the horses subcategory, where they related to the care of horses rather than their movement. In addition to the remaining transport subcategories – boats, carry goods, carting, droving, messages, and passengers – the analysis also incorporates the commerce subcategory of go to market. Whilst the transportation of goods bought or to sell was not always explicit in such cases, it is reasonable to assume it was commonly part of a trip to market, and such cases do provide interesting insights into everyday movement activities. This produces a total of 1,212 transportation tasks which form the basis of the analysis here.[47]

One way to examine these tasks is to compare the number that took place within a single parish (intra-parish) with those that involved crossing at least one parish boundary (inter-parish). As Table 3.6 shows, there is a fairly even split between movement tasks that took place within a single parish, such as in 1598 when John Bech of Redbourn, Hertfordshire, went to collect some chaff that he had previously bought from a neighbour, and those that took actors into a different parish, as when Alice Yeomans went in 1618 from her home in Frome, Somerset, to Wells, 14 miles away, to deliver to a clothier a bundle of yarn she had spun.[48]

[46] This 'outside the household' category is explained more fully in Section 1.2.3.
[47] Integral tasks are included in the analysis in this section as they do not have a clear distorting effect on the pattern of transport tasks.
[48] HALS, ASA8/5, 9–10; SHC, Q/SR/33, 122–3.

Table 3.7 *Intra-parish and inter-parish repertoires*

	Intra-parish F repertoire (%)	Inter-parish F repertoire (%)	Intra-parish M repertoire (%)	Inter-parish M repertoire (%)
Boats	0.8	0.0	6.0	4.5
Carry goods	79.7	41.6	55.7	27.3
Carting	2.3	0.0	10.5	14.2
Droving	3.1	5.6	9.7	19.6
Go to market	2.3	40.4	2.8	16.7
Horses	2.3	4.5	6.3	10.4
Messages	9.4	5.6	7.1	4.1
Passengers	0.0	2.2	2.0	3.4
Total	99.9	99.9	100.1	100.2
Total tasks	128	89	352	444

There were some gender differences apparent here, with a higher percentage of women's transport tasks taking place intra-parish, whereas men's activities were more likely to take them inter-parish, but these should not be overstated: both women and men undertook a significant proportion of both types of journeys. Where gender differences are more pronounced is in the types of transport tasks that took actors across a parish boundary, as shown in Table 3.7. Subcategories were defined partly by the form of transport – boats, carts, horses – and partly by what was being transported – goods, messages, passengers, livestock. Travel on foot was rarely specified, but it can be assumed that the majority of carrying goods and carrying messages involved foot travel as other modes of transport were rarely mentioned, and the same is true for going to market. Given the size of these categories, foot travel made up the majority of transport.

For both women and men, intra-parish activities were dominated by the subcategory of carry goods. This encompassed a wide variety of tasks – taking grain to and from mills, collecting purchased crops or other goods, fetching wool, or returning yarn – as well as others such as taking shoes to a shoemaker to be mended, taking linen to be washed, or fetching pans lent to neighbours. This kind of small-scale haulage was not always confined to short journeys though, and carry goods was also the largest category in the repertoire of inter-parish tasks for both women and men alike. It did, however, represent a smaller percentage of the total repertoire of inter-parish tasks for both. For women, inter-parish activity was overwhelmingly, and more or less equally, comprised of just two subcategories: carrying goods and going to market. For men, their

Table 3.8 *Inter-parish task distances (one way)*

Miles	All tasks	%	F tasks	%	M tasks	%
1 to 8	291	64.0	53	71.6	238	62.5
9 to 20	112	24.6	18	24.3	94	24.7
21+	52	11.4	3	4.1	49	12.9
Total	455	100.0	74	100.0	381	100.0
Mean distance (miles)[a]	10.0		7.0		10.6	
Mode (miles)	2		2		2	
Median (miles)	5		6		6	

[a] This average excludes the two longest journeys undertaken, 190 miles (by three male actors together) and 170 miles (by two male actors together) as these were exceptional but had a disproportionate impact on the average. If included the overall average would be 11.9, and for men 12.8. The next highest distance was 111 miles.

repertoire was more diverse, with these two subcategories part of a mixed portfolio alongside carting, droving, and transport involving horses. If men and women crossed parish boundaries with similar frequency, the transport tasks they were undertaking when they did so were often quite different.[49]

The comparison between men's and women's experiences of transport work can be extended by looking at the distances involved in these inter-parish tasks. For 85 per cent of inter-parish tasks, it is possible to calculate the rough distance between the start and end parishes involved.[50] Table 3.8 sorts these into three categories, which are informed by the timescales involved: the first, 1 to 8 miles, represents a journey that done at a purposeful average walking speed of 4 miles per hour would take up to 2 hours to complete. All distances are for one-way trips, so to complete a task would likely have involved a return trip, and thus taken up to 4 hours of the day. Such journeys were time-consuming, but could comfortably be completed within a working day, only taking up part of it. The average distance travelled to a market, 7.4 miles, sits just within this category.[51] This is remarkably similar to the 6.7 miles that the medieval lawyer, Bracton, suggested was a reasonable day's journey to market.[52] The

[49] This is partly a reflection of the overall gender division of labour within these transport subcategories: see Appendix B.

[50] For the other 15 per cent, it is clear the task involved inter-parish travel, but the start or end point was not specified.

[51] For women the average for 'go to market' is 6.1 miles, for men 9.3 miles.

[52] Cited in Unwin, 'Rural marketing', p. 244; Brayshay, *Land Travel*, p. 128. Bracton suggested a round trip of 20 miles, in which one-third each was travel to market, walking about town while at the market, and travel home.

second category, 9 to 20 miles, represents journeys that would have taken at least 2 and up to 5 hours each way, and would therefore have been likely to have eaten up most of the working hours in a given day, especially if walking pace dipped below 4 miles per hour, which would be a fairly brisk speed when carrying goods. The third category, 21 miles and above, contains journeys of a minimum of 5 hours each way, and usually more, and would therefore have been difficult to complete both ways in a single day; in short, they would often have necessitated an overnight stay away from home as part of the task. Walking speeds would of course have varied from person to person, and across seasons and terrains. A small proportion of these tasks were done on horseback, with 7 per cent of tasks in the sample of 1,212 used in this section explicitly stating involvement of a horse. However, broadly speaking, these categories relate to part-day, full-day, and multi-day transport tasks, respectively.

For both women and men journeys of between 1 and 8 miles were by far the most common, with the distance of 2 miles being the most frequently undertaken. Nonetheless, longer full-day transport tasks accounted for roughly a quarter of inter-parish activities for both: it is clear that women were not limited to only short-distance, highly localised haulage work, as shown by their average transport task distance of 7 miles. Return journeys that could be undertaken within a day dominated for both women and men, as the identical mode and median distances travelled indicate. In fact, if all intra-parish tasks are assumed to involve distances of 20 miles or less (one way), they can be combined with inter-parish tasks of under 20 miles to show that 98.5 per cent of women's tasks and 93.3 per cent of men's tasks could be undertaken within a day. It seems that this factor, what could be achieved without the need to stay away from home, dictated the typical upper distances involved in everyday travel tasks. This explains why there were not major regional differences in average task distances. For instance, the average distance travelled to market for each region was very similar: 7.3 miles in the south-west, 7.6 miles in the north, and 7.3 miles in the east. The averages for all transport tasks were slightly lower in the south-west at 8.5 miles, compared to 11.2 miles and 11.5 miles in the north and east, respectively.

Men undertook a higher proportion of longer distance, multi-day tasks than women, who did so only rarely, and this is reflected in men's longer mean average distance travelled. Nonetheless, longer-distance tasks only represented a small proportion of men's transport work. It was three men who undertook our longest recorded journey, sailing 190 miles from Norfolk to Newcastle in 1627, and two men who undertook the second longest, carting 'sundry wares and goods' from Prestbury, Cheshire,

170 miles to London in 1632.[53] The longest distance recorded for a woman was in 1698 when the wife of Thomas Jackson went with her husband 50 miles from Sheffield to York to collect 'hardware' that they then took to the Thirsk fair.[54] Gender differences were more pronounced when it came to the types of tasks undertaken, as Table 3.7 demonstrates. Why did this division of transport labour prevail? One hypothesis would be that because men undertook the majority of longer-distance journeys, this explains their use of carts and horses, both modes of transport that women were rarely recorded using. However, although horses were used for many longer distance trips, 89 per cent of all horse-related transport tasks still involved distances of 20 miles or less. For carting tasks, this figure was 95 per cent: carts were only occasionally used for long-distance travel. In other words, these technologies were primarily used for the short and mid-distance day journeys that made up the bulk of transport work; men's domination of these subcategories was not a result of these tasks being intimately linked with the longer journeys.

Hierarchies of strength and skill are no more helpful in explaining men's dominance of tasks involving vehicles and animals. Women's carrying activities often involved them transporting goods on their heads over many miles, as we saw with Katherine Singard at the start of this section. In 1650 Joan Symonds bought three pecks of grain in Bridgwater, Somerset, a quantity that probably weighed about 45 lbs (20 kgs), and was recorded carrying it home on her head.[55] Carrying activities were not without risk: Agnes Parker of Chilton Cantelo, Somerset, was crossing a bridge in 1592 with a measure of hay on her head and a pot for milking in her hand, when she was tragically blown off the bridge by a gust of wind and drowned in a ditch.[56] Women were no strangers to physically demanding transport tasks; tasks that likely required more strength than driving a cart. It is clear women could and did have the necessary skills to cart, drove, or ride horses, as there are examples of them undertaking all of these tasks in the database. It is true that driving carts, riding horses, and droving livestock were all potentially dangerous activities: carting in particular features prominently in the coroners' reports of accidental death. But so too did collecting water from rivers and ponds, where drowning was a real risk, a task mainly performed by women and children. Nor is it clear that the male-dominated subcategories necessarily conferred higher status on the actor than moving goods on foot. Horse-riding did confer status, but not

[53] NRO, C/S3/26, 82–5; CALS, QJF/61/2, 51. [54] NYCRO, QSB/1699, 202, 207.
[55] SHC, Q/SR/82, 88–9. [56] TNA, KB/9/683b/185.

carting. Carting was low-status male work, typically performed by young men, servants, and labourers.[57] In short, whilst there was a clear division of labour by mode of transport, with women overwhelmingly moving goods on foot whilst men also employed carts and horses, and took responsibility for droving animals, there is no straightforward single explanation for why this was the case.[58]

3.4 Inside and Outside the Home

The spaces in which work took place are a neglected aspect of histories of work. We are currently experiencing a revolution in homeworking as digital technologies remove the need for co-locating workers in purpose-built offices. In this context, the wider implications of where exactly people work become apparent, including issues such as commuting times, the relationship between paid and unpaid work, and the supervision and motivation of workers. The work-task data allows a detailed examination of workspaces before purpose-built workplaces were widely adopted in the nineteenth century. It is a shorthand to say people worked at home in early modern England. In fact, the work-task data shows that the most common workspace was not inside the home or any other building, but outside. Further, many people worked in the homes of others, where they were often closely supervised. Thus, rather than people working 'at home', it is more accurate to say that work took place either at home, in some-one else's home, or from home.[59]

Early modern advice literature repeatedly asserted that women's work was located in the home, while men 'went abroad'. For instance, Edmund Tilney stated that the husband should 'go abroad in matters of profit', while the wife should 'tarry at home, and see all be well there'.[60] Gervase Markham offered more detail when he introduced his book, *The English Housewife*, a sequel to *The English Husbandman*, by stating that:

> having already … passed through those outward parts of husbandry which belong unto the perfect husbandman, who is father and master of the family, and whose office and employments are ever for the most part abroad, or removed from the house, as in the field or yard; it is now meet that we descend … to the office of our

[57] See Section 2.3.
[58] For similar findings from early modern Sweden, see Ågren (ed.), *Making a Living*, pp. 128–35.
[59] Where 'from home' indicates that home is their 'headquarters', for example, in the case of agriculture and transport.
[60] Tilney, *Flower of Friendship*, p. 120; the passage was repeated in Anon, *A Godlie Forme*, p. 168, a book republished at least nine times up to 1630.

English housewife, who is the mother and mistress of the family, and hath her most general employments within the house.[61]

The medieval terms 'husbondman' and 'huswife' both contained the 'hus' element, which referred to their responsibilities as householders. Only for huswives was this later modernised as 'house' and assumed to correspond with a duty of staying within the home as a housewife.[62] Yet women's work in early modern England frequently took them beyond the house: the work-task data not only offers many examples of this but allows the spatial differences between women's and men's work to be measured.

Only a handful of studies have looked in detail at the spatial relations of work inside and outside the home in early modern England.[63] Nonetheless, wider investigations into houses and the activities that took place within them have been exceptionally rich in recent decades. Matthew Johnson prompted a shift in the history of vernacular architecture away from typologies of surviving buildings and their construction techniques towards an appreciation of the wider social and cultural implications of the forms houses took.[64] The objects recorded in probate inventories have been used to reconstruct room-use, and more ambitiously to examine the practice of domestic activities such as cooking and commensality by Anthony Buxton.[65] Even more sophisticated is the approach taken by Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson, combining evidence from surviving houses and objects with inventories, court depositions, and visual and literary sources to reconstruct the experience of living in early modern houses for people of middling status, including their work activities.[66] The work-task data can add to these approaches by showing how work within the house related to the wider landscape of work. This section looks first at the division of work between inside and outside, before moving on to examine work activities in different rooms within the house. The following section explores issues of privacy and supervision.

Table 3.9 classifies workspaces into three main categories: inside, outside, and unknown. Inside workspaces are further divided between the worker's own home, another person's home, non-domestic buildings, and inside spaces for which there is no further information.

[61] Markham, *English Housewife*. [62] An early example is Bullinger, *Golden Boke*.
[63] Flather, *Gender and Space*, ch. 3 and 'Space, place, and gender'; Whittle, 'House as a place of work' and 'Home and work'; Mansell, *Female Servants*, ch. 7.
[64] Johnson, *Housing Culture*; Johnson, *Houses*; Crowley, *Invention of Comfort*.
[65] Overton et al., *Production and Consumption*, ch. 6; Buxton, *Domestic Culture*, ch. 6.
[66] Hamling and Richardson, *Day at Home*, especially chs. 2 and 4; see also King, *Houses and Society*.

Table 3.9 *The proportion of work tasks located in different spaces*

	Own home (%)	Another's home (%)	Non-domestic building (%)	Inside – no details (%)	Outside (%)	Unknown (%)	Total tasks
Agriculture and land	2.9	1.7	0.1	0.3	89.9	5.0	2,635
Carework	20.9	42.6	1.6	3.0	25.5	6.4	564
Commerce	8.1	11.8	0.8	0.2	30.3	48.8	2,115
Crafts and construction	17.7	16.2	9.6	10.4	30.3	15.8	942
Food processing	25.7	19.1	9.6	6.1	21.9	17.6	607
Housework	39.3	13.6	0.5	1.6	37.3	7.6	748
Management	13.3	30.7	1.6	0.9	18.3	35.2	645
Transport	1.1	1.9	0.4	0.2	95.5	1.0	1,237
Other	15.3	26.8	3.8	9.6	33.8	10.8	157
Average	11.5	12.1	2.1	2.1	53.9	18.3	100.0
Adj. average	14.3	13.1	1.8	2.3	50.6	17.9	100.0
Total tasks	1,106	1,169	201	201	5,203	1,770	9,650

Notes: The adjusted average weights women's and men's work tasks at 50:50 using the x2.59 multiplier. These categories are more specific than those outlined in Section 1.2.3.

Specialist rooms and outbuildings, such as shops and barns, are treated as part of the domestic house, but gardens and yards are treated as outside in order to draw a sharp distinction between indoor and outdoor work. Own home was defined as the house in which the person undertaking the work task lived, thus servants doing work in their employer's house are counted as working in their own home, because most lived with their employer. As well as the raw figures, an adjusted average, in which women's and men's work is weighted equally, is provided because women's and men's work had different spatial profiles. The ability to identify workspaces varied according to the category of work task. Commerce and management tasks often had no details other than the transaction that took place, leading to particularly high proportions of unknown tasks; transport, on the other hand, typically took place outside, leading to very few unknowns.[67]

This analysis reveals three very distinctive features to the spatial distribution of work in early modern England. First, a high proportion of work

[67] Integral tasks are included in the analysis in this section as they had no clear impact on the results.

took place outside. This is partly because two large categories, agriculture and transport, were heavily dominated by outside work. However, it is also because other categories that were mostly inside also contained substantial proportions of outside work. Carework, for instance, often involved going to fetch a caregiver, equipment, or medicine, as well as sometimes administering care to people outside. Housework, as discussed in Chapter 5, involved laundry and water collection by and from wells, ponds, and rivers beyond the house. Commerce involved open air transactions at markets and fairs, as well as travelling to market. Within the crafts and construction category, construction involved groundworks, building houses, and maintaining roofs and the external fabric of buildings: all outside activities. A second striking feature is that almost as much work took place in other people's houses as in people's own homes, even when we treat servants as members of a household working at home. Thus, inside work was not necessarily taking place 'at home' but rather 'in houses'. Finally, very little work took place in dedicated inside workspaces. The non-domestic building category is largely made up of mills and churches. Mills were distinguished by the presence of large machinery for grinding corn or fulling cloth. Some mills were also homes, but the court evidence suggests most were not: for instance, a number of theft cases make it clear that no one slept at the mill.[68]

The differences between women's and men's workspaces are shown in Table 3.10. Men's work was more likely than women's to occur outside. Women were more likely than men to work in their own homes and in the homes of others. Yet there were also similarities. If the work tasks in unknown locations are discarded, 52.0 per cent of women's work took place outside. Conversely, 28.4 per cent of male work tasks with a stated location took place inside. These findings support the conclusions of Amanda Flather, that there was considerable overlap between male and female workspaces, and indeed, women and men often worked alongside each other.[69]

While court depositions often provide sufficient information to discern whether a work task took place inside or outside, more detailed descriptions of inside spaces were less common. When particular rooms are mentioned, they sometimes appear incidentally rather than as the location of a work activity. For example, John Okeford, employed as a sawyer by John Abbott of Semley in Wiltshire in 1600, noted that it 'being about noon' he was 'called in to dinner' and thus 'he was sitting in the kitchen of the same house at dinner' with three other people when defamatory

[68] Section 4.2 discusses a case where the miller only slept in the mill at Christmas time.
[69] Flather, 'Space, place, and gender'.

Table 3.10 *Gender and workspaces*

	Own home	Another's home	Non-domestic building	Inside – no details	Outside	Unknown	Total number
F tasks	555	412	30	72	1,159	458	2,686
M tasks	551	757	171	129	4,044	1,312	6,964
F (%)	20.7	15.3	1.1	2.7	43.1	17.1	100.0
M (%)	7.9	10.9	2.5	1.9	58.1	18.8	100.1
F (% of known only)	24.9	18.5	1.3	3.2	52.0	–	99.9
Men (% known only)	9.7	13.4	3.0	2.3	71.5	–	99.9

Notes: These categories are more specific than those outlined in Section 1.2.3.

words were exchanged.[70] The four most common room types mentioned in depositions that also described work activities were chambers, kitchens, halls, and parlours, in that order. 'Chamber' typically denoted an upstairs room in early modern England. Probate inventories show that such rooms were used for sleeping and storage.[71] The work-task data confirms this: tasks taking place in chambers most commonly involved caring for the sick and doing housework. For instance, Mary Hawkings nursed Mary Beard 'in the chamber where the said Mary Beard lay sick' in Wolborough, Devon, in 1670, while Elizabeth Thompson Dobson went 'into her master's chamber to make her master's bed' in South Kirkby in Yorkshire in 1600.[72] However, their use for storage meant that chambers were also mentioned in a wide range of other work tasks concerned with storing and fetching agricultural produce, foodstuffs, and textiles. William Pine 'going into a chamber at the house of Thomas Simpson his master to fetch down some apples' found a bundle of stolen clothes in Hatfield, Yorkshire, in 1677.[73]

The hall, parlour, and kitchen were the main downstairs rooms. A case from Great Elm, Somerset, in 1682, catches the movement of Joan Hearse through her employer's house, 'for she being in Mr Higdon's parlour she came from thence through the hall and was going towards the kitchen with a besom [broom] in her hand' when she was called to

[70] WSHC, D1/42/18, *Abbat v. Clement als Browne*.
[71] Overton et al., *Production and Consumption*, pp. 126, 133; see also Hamling and Richardson, *Day at Home*, chs. 1 and 6 for a more nuanced discussion.
[72] DRO, Chanter 875, 60v–2v; DUIC, DDR/EJ/CCD/1/7, *Dorothy Glover v. George Craggs*.
[73] WYAS, QS1/17/2, 3–4.

witness the tithes being settled.[74] In the medieval period and sixteenth century, the hall was the main living room. In small houses it might be the only room or exist alongside a buttery or kitchen. Many modest early modern houses that survive to the present day had three downstairs rooms, with the hall in the centre, and a parlour and kitchen or buttery on either side, as was evidently the case in Mr Higdon's house.[75] Architectural studies and probate inventories show that the hall almost always contained a hearth and was often used for cooking and eating. In the seventeenth century, however, cooking and eating increasingly took place in the kitchen.[76] Interestingly, we found no examples of cooking taking place in halls; instead, the most common activities were eating, drinking, and working.[77] Most of the work tasks, other than carrying and fetching, concerned textile work. Paul Dixon was engaged in his work as a tailor in the hall of Thomas Kennell's house in Christchurch, Hampshire, in 1591, while Thomas Kennell lay sick in 'an inner chamber within the hall of his house'. Oliver Eldridge was also present in Thomas Kennell's hall 'at breakfast', before going out to plough.[78] The hall was a location where female servants were found spinning, as in the case of Richorda Burden in Kenton, Devon, in 1617, and Maria Browning in Glastonbury in 1604.[79] Joan Foxwill was carding wool beside the fire of the hall in her own house at Venn Ottery in Devon in January 1558.[80] It seems that the hall provided a warm and relatively clean space suitable for these types of tasks.

In alehouses, the hall was the main drinking room. There is little indication that alehouses differed in internal structure and room nomenclature from other houses: the hall was used for eating and drinking, the kitchen or buttery for storing drink and preparing food, and the parlour for more select gatherings.[81] In normal dwelling houses, parlours were used to store items of value: cases mention items such as blankets, clothes, yarn, cloth, and a purse containing money being kept in chests or presses in the parlour from which they were fetched when needed. Mary Rawnforth went 'into the said Ellen Lambes parlour to borrow

[74] SHC, D/D/Cd/97, *Higdon v. Haglie*. [75] Brunskill, *Illustrated Handbook*, pp. 102–11.
[76] Overton et al., *Production and Consumption*, p. 126.
[77] We did not record cases which only contained non-work activities such as eating and drinking; these activities are evident because they also involved work by some of the people present.
[78] HRO, 21M65/C3/10, *Kennell v. Eldridge*; NRO, DN/DEP/8/7E, 107–9 also describes a tailor working in someone else's hall, in Suffolk, 1560.
[79] DHC, Chanter 867, *Pridham v. Combe and Scadlake*; SHC, D/D/Cd/36, *Soote v. Aplyn*.
[80] DHC, Chanter 855, *Colwill v. Foxwill*.
[81] See Section 5.3 for further discussion of alehouse work.

2 blankets' in Malton, Yorkshire, in 1694.[82] Two cases, one from 1557 and one from 1693, refer to making beds and sleeping in the parlour, a reminder that it could also serve as a bedroom.[83] Parlours were used for meetings of various kinds. A case from Lancashire in 1687 described several men gathering in the parlour of Chaddock Hall in Tyldesley to discuss issues relating to an inheritance.[84] At Shingham, Norfolk, in 1645 a group of men were seen entering a neighbour's parlour at night-time and meeting there by candlelight in suspicious circumstances; while in Wrington, Somerset, in 1551 the parlour was the location of a marriage proposal.[85]

Kitchens and butteries were used for storing and preparing food. The main difference between them was that butteries lacked a hearth, unlike kitchens where food was cooked in a fireplace. Architecturally, butteries predate kitchens as a common room in ordinary houses, but kitchens gradually became more dominant.[86] This transition was not evident in the work-task data: activities in kitchens were more common than those in butteries throughout the period. The range of tasks observed in butteries was quite limited, and were connected to fetching beer, storing meat, and folding linen. Activities in kitchens were more varied and suggest it was a room where members of the household often congregated. Two cases concerned incidents with guns. John Gaylarde, a servant, 'standing by the fireplace in his master's kitchen', was cleaning a fowling piece in Somerset in 1591 when it went off; while in Happisburgh, Norfolk, in 1684, Mary Gillam was in the kitchen of Thomas Chamberlaine, a yeoman, and while turned away, 'to wash a pot in a kettle over the fire', William Crow, a labourer, who had been standing holding a gun, shot her daughter-in-law, who was also in the kitchen.[87] Several cases mention eating meals in the kitchen, such as when John Kerry, a male servant, got himself some breakfast and sat down to eat it in the kitchen in Wellow, Hampshire, in 1573, and the case where workmen were called into dinner in the kitchen at Semley, Wiltshire, mentioned above.[88]

The kitchen was also a place where children were often present. For instance, Martha Dowling was sitting in her kitchen with her children when her husband came through from the butcher's shop adjoining to

[82] BI, CP.H.4349, *Office v. Helen Lamb*.
[83] Overton et al., *Production and Consumption*, pp. 126–32.
[84] LaA, QSB/1/1687, Easter, Info of James Hardman.
[85] NRO, C/S3/37, Info of Edward Skevington; SHC, D/D/Cd/6, 41–8.
[86] Overton et al., *Production and Consumption*, pp. 130–1; Pennell, *Birth of the English Kitchen*, pp. 40–5.
[87] TNA, KB/9/1038/205; NRO, C/S3/55A, Info of Sarah Gillam and Mary Gillam.
[88] HRO, 21M65/C3/9, *Bennys v. Cooper*.

tell her about a defamation that had taken place, in Chewton Mendip, Somerset, in 1694.[89] Lucretia Harward, a female servant, 'dressed up [tidied] the kitchen, made a fire, and attended up the children' in her employer's house in Bale, Norfolk, in 1637.[90] More traumatically, Elizabeth Balford, also a servant, was beaten by her master in the kitchen until his wife 'being big with child and having one under her arms did set the child down' and intervened, 'moved by the fury and cruelty of her husband', at Terrington St John, Norfolk, in 1621.[91] Other kitchen activities included storing and fetching cooking pots, pewter, and food; salting meat; and brewing. In terms of the work-task categories, chambers were generally spaces of carework, craftwork commonly took place in halls, parlours were used for management activities, and kitchens for food processing, while housework occurred throughout the house.

The evidence of work tasks disproves common generalisations about workspaces. Rather than work taking place at home, early modern work most commonly took place outside. This was true for women as well as men, although women were more likely to work inside than men. When working inside, people not only worked in their own houses but in the houses of others. Analysis of work inside houses shows that early modern room names related to distinct interior spaces where different types of activities were carried out.

3.5 Public and Private Spaces

Despite the much trumpeted 'spatial turn', the spatial dynamics of historical workplaces remain underexplored. The analysis of space is structured around several closely related binaries: the public and the private; outside and inside the home; openness and closure. Jurgen Habermas sparked the discussion of public and private, taking the public market places and private dwelling houses of Ancient Greece as archetypal examples.[92] Amanda Vickery laid the critical foundations for conceptualising public and private spheres in gender history, demonstrating that the idea of women being confined to the private sphere of the home while men were active in the public sphere was prevalent from at least the sixteenth century.[93] Lena Orlin has focused on the presence and absence of privacy in early modern homes, while the terms 'open' and 'closed' have been applied to late medieval houses by Matthew Johnson and

[89] SHC, D/D/Cd/106, *Culliford v. Cornish*.
[90] NRO, C/S3/31, Exam of Lucretia Harward, also discussed in the Conclusion to Chapter 5.
[91] NRO, C/S3/23, Info of Elizabeth Balford.
[92] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 'Introduction'. [93] Vickery, 'Golden age'.

village topography by Stephen Mileson, and also much discussed in the context of European household economies.[94] 'Open' and 'closed' do not map precisely onto public and private, being closer to ideas of community and individualism, but they share many common features.

This literature draws attention to the categories into which work is instinctively and sometimes lazily organised by economic historians. Thus, women's work is assumed to take place mainly in the private sphere of the home and the dwelling house is assumed to be a private space visible (and audible) only to family members. A common reaction to the work-task data is to question whether housework and women's work are under-recorded because they took place in the home and thus go unobserved. Yet historians such as Orlin and Johnson have demonstrated the openness of early modern houses, which enabled neighbours to observe much of what went on within them. This was particularly the case in the sixteenth century, when windows were often unglazed, but remained the case throughout the period: walls were flimsy, doors were left open, and neighbours frequently entered each other's houses. For the poorer sections of society, houses were too small to offer much internal space, and activities spilled outside. Voices would have been more audible, inside and out, in the absence of the noise pollution that plagues modern industrial society.[95] While early modern moralists liked the idea of women being confined to the home, there is no evidence that this was put into practice, nor were women necessarily doing housework when they did work at home. Not only is spatial location a vital dimension of work, but work is also an important dimension of early modern spatial relations. For instance, Mileson argues that in the fifteenth century yeomen farmers achieved greater privacy by building larger houses set back from village streets. Yet if we also consider the organisation of work, it might be observed that increased land and wealth meant that such yeomen were also surely employing more servants. These servants lived and worked in yeomen's houses, undermining privacy on another level. Their economic functions made households permeable: the early modern home was not a private space in the modern sense.[96]

In modern society we assume a clear delineation between the private space of the home and commercial or public spaces such as shops and streets. In early modern England no such clear distinction existed. Houses could be places of commerce, as we see with alehouses, which are sometimes specifically referred to as dwelling houses despite offering

[94] Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, ch. 4; Johnson, *Housing Culture*; Mileson, 'Openness and closure'; Eibach, 'Das offene haus' [the open house]; Ågren, 'Households'.
[95] Hamling and Richardson, *Day at Home*, p. 38. [96] Ågren, 'Households', p. 26.

hospitality to paying customers.[97] Shops, which could be workshops or places of commerce, or a combination of the two, were typically part of people's houses.[98] In a case from Exeter in 1617, a group of people including four men, two boys, and a woman were 'working on knives' in 'the shop of the house of George Rase', while two women were waiting to buy knives 'standing near the stall of the said shop', who all overheard defamatory words spoken.[99] This suggests a cutler's workshop within a house, with a street-facing window or stall for selling goods. Examples of weaving in which the location was specified all described the work room as a shop. Thus, Henry Turner was weaving 'in his own shop' in Westbury in 1662, while in Leeds in 1625 Thomas Whittaker was described as a weaver 'working of his hand' in another man's 'shop'.[100] A case from Ipplepen, Devon, in 1613 offers further detail about the domestic context of the weaver's shop. Walter Turpyn gave evidence that he and his son were 'in his shop weaving' when Ann Turpyn 'came unto this deponent's door'. The son described how his wife 'was sitting in the entry of the house' talking with their relative Ann Turpyn. Both men heard all the defamatory words spoken by Ann Turpyn to the wife/daughter-in-law, suggesting the weaving shop was just inside the doorway in the main part of the house.[101] This corresponds to Jane Whittle's reconstruction of a weaver's house in early seventeenth-century Uffculme, Devon, where the looms were located in the buttery adjoining the cross-passage and front door.[102] Probate inventories confirm that retail shops were normally part of dwelling houses. This was occasionally confirmed in depositions, as in a case of tobacco theft from Yeovil, Somerset, in 1650, in which Robert Myer described 'being at Mr French his house in Yeovil mercer he saw in his shop a roll of Virginia tobacco', or the case noted above in which a butcher came from his shop through to the kitchen to talk to his wife.[103]

Another way in which the distinction between domestic and public spaces was blurred was by the extent to which people worked in doorways, streets, and backyards where they could be clearly seen by neighbours and others passing by. Spinning and other textile work was often done in the doorway, which offered the benefits of better light and sociability. Maria Tong and Elizabeth Watson 'were sitting together at the good Mr Watsons door sewing' along with Mr Watson's servant Susan Dawson who was 'sitting also there with spinning' in Whittlesey,

[97] See Section 5.3. [98] See Section 8.3. [99] DHC, Chanter 867, *Wast v. Rafe*.
[100] WSHC, A1/110/1662T, 185; BI, CP.H.1704, *Rawdon v. Philip*.
[101] DHC, Chanter 867, *Bully v Turpyn*.
[102] Whittle, 'House as a place of work', pp. 142–4. [103] SHC, Q/SR/82, 52.

Cambridgeshire, in 1560.[104] Similarly, Joanna Edwardes was 'spinning at her turn in the entry of her master's house' at Shebbear in Devon in 1575, and Ellen Kates was 'sitting spinning at her mistresses door' in Pilgrim Street, Newcastle, in 1632, while Agnes Adams was 'sat carding wool at the door of Matthew Roberts' in Farleigh Hungerford in Somerset in 1532.[105] Two cases from Norfolk, from Neatishead in 1600 and Norwich in 1683, record women knitting 'in the street', outside their houses.[106] In addition, depositions often record women 'working' in their doorway, a term which was not specific enough to be included in the database: it is likely many were spinning or sewing.[107] Even those working inside saw activities in the street outside through open doors and windows. William Bishopp was looking out of the house 'where he was at work being a tailor by his occupation' in Seaton, Devon, in 1618 and witnessed a witchcraft accusation.[108] John Poddarde was 'working journey work with one Richard Care shoemaker dwelling in the Butcher Row in Salisbury' and 'sitting at his work in the shop of the said Richard Care' when he witnessed a deponent entering the shop across the street in 1565.[109]

Thus, streets were not only conduits for transport but places of neighbourly interaction. People looked out from their houses, worked in doorways, and went backwards and forwards engaged in daily chores like collecting water and milking, which took them outside several times a day. As most journeys were undertaken on foot, or while travelling slowly with carts or horses, travel was also much less impersonal than modern transport, giving people time to interact and observe what was going on around them. John Northen was 'going with seed corn of his master's into Wishford field to sow' along 'the highway lying above the town' when he witnessed a defamation in Great Wishford, Wiltshire, in 1588.[110] Anne Divine was 'milking in a certain ground of her father's … about 7 of the clock in the morning she saw a strange man' on the nearby highway, who suspiciously washed a bag in a stream at 'a certain place called Whistlebridge near Stoford' in Somerset in 1638.[111]

Some encounters led to assault or theft, but others were more friendly. In Cheshire in 1682 John Cooper fell from his horse in a lane leading from Church Hulme to Middlewich. He claimed he was attacked by a man in a periwig, but his neighbour, Sarah Beswick, deposed 'that she

[104] CUL, EDR/2/4, *Glapthorn v. Watson*.
[105] DHC, Chanter 859, *Rowland v. Padden*; DUIC, DDR: Consistory court depositions (loose), *Leach v. Dodds*; SHC, D/D/Cd/2, *Gylbarde et Adams*.
[106] NRO, DN/DEP/31/34, 433–9; NRO, DN/DEP/51/55, 184–5.
[107] This is one reason why spinning is under-recorded.
[108] DHC, Chanter 867, *Gibbs v. Courtis*.
[109] WSHC, D1/42/6, *Turley v. Mathew*.
[110] WSHC, D1/42/10, *Cowdrey v. Southick*.
[111] SHC, Q/SR/77, 38.

believes nothing but drink had hurt him'. A young man of 16 or 17 years of age, William Hulme, who did not know Cooper, had just passed him on horseback but looked back and saw Cooper's horse without its rider. He went back and caught the horse and tethered him 'upon a stoop at the pavement side'. At this point Sarah Beswick, travelling along the lane on her own errand, joined them and recognised Cooper, 'and finding him then sitting in the dirt said (in the name of God) goodman Cooper where have you been? Seems you have been with no good company that would let you come forth in this order'. She then, using his knife, 'scraped the dirt off his clothes'. With some difficulty he got to his feet, and with even more difficulty was helped back onto his horse, almost falling off the other side, before going off homewards down the lane swaying from side to side on his horse.

This case describes geographical locations in unusual detail, allowing the residence of all the actors, and the incident itself, to be identified on the modern map. John Cooper, a husbandman, lived at Bostock Hall, just north of Middlewich. He had argued with Robert Buckley of Wharton, who was also his tenant, and was slandered by Rebecca Saint, an alehouse-keeper from Cotton, just outside Church Hulme (now Holmes Chapel). William Hulme came from Church Hulme and was travelling to Middlewich. Sarah Beswick was a blacksmith's wife from Kinderton, which was where Cooper fell from his horse, 'in Sproston Lane over against Kinderton Park', also described as 'at the end of Kinderton Street and the lane end which goes towards Byley's Bridge'.[112] Despite the fact court depositions have disputes and crimes at their core, the world they depict is one of many-faceted interactions, involving people of all levels of wealth, engaged in an enormous range of activities. It is unlikely that the work-task data omits activities in private spaces for the simple reason that no space in early modern England – including domestic houses – was fully private. Despite the absence of large, specialist workplaces, work was typically carried out under the eyes of others – or at least with the likelihood it might be seen.[113] While people were often self-employed and might undertake tasks alone, they were nonetheless under observation and subject to the judgement of those around them.

3.6 Conclusion

By measuring and analysing the work tasks taking place in different locations this chapter has shown that the spatial distribution of work

[112] CALS, QJF/110/4, 87.
[113] There were some large, specialist workplaces, such as some mines, shipyards, and ironworks, but these were exceptions.

often confounds expectations. In aggregate, regional differences in work were muted, because the volume of commonplace tasks drowned out regional specialisms – although examples can be used to demonstrate that specialisms, such as coalmining in county Durham or lacemaking near Honiton in Devon – were present. Differences between work in towns and the countryside were more obvious. In this case, however, it is important to distinguish between the location where activities took place and where workers lived: there were higher rates of commerce in towns, but many of those engaged in commerce lived in the countryside; conversely, more workers engaged in crafts and construction lived in towns, but much of their work took place in the countryside. Travel was a significant form of time-use and integral to many forms of work. The great majority of journeys were short enough for people to undertake a return journey on foot in a single day, and the mode and median distances travelled by women and men were identical. Gendered differences of travel arose from men doing more of the comparatively rare multi-day journeys, and the fact men used a range of transport, while women typically travelled on foot. Both women and men were more likely to work outside than inside in early modern England. Despite exhortations in early modern literature for women to work in their own homes, only 25 per cent of their work tasks took place in this location. While domestic houses were by far the most common type of inside workspace, people almost as often worked in others' houses as in their own home. This, as well as the material culture of early modern houses, meant that houses were not private spaces in the same way as modern homes: they were physically and socially open. While people often worked on their own, the openness of houses, the slow pace of travel, and the familiarity of neighbours in small communities meant that few activities, including work, took place away from the observation of others.