

THE GREAT WESTBERE CENSUS OF 2005

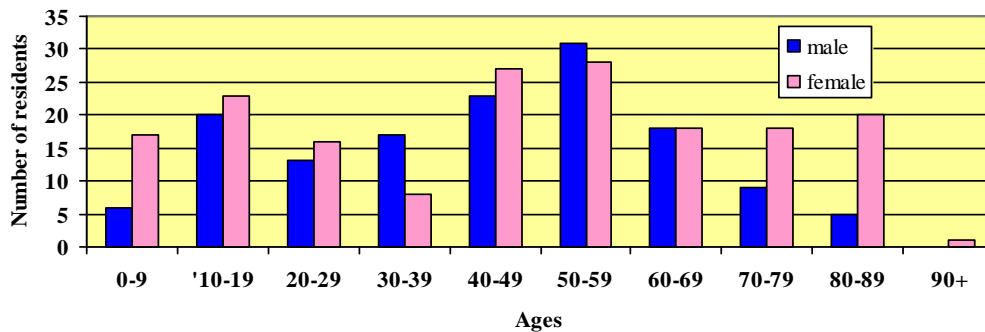
As the details of the national census of 2001 will not be available in village form until 2101, we decided, as part of our LHI project, to conduct our own survey of the parish. It was called the Great Westbere Census of 2005.



In July/August, 18 enumerators, including youngsters, went out with recording sheets to interview the villagers.

Although the exercise was entirely voluntary, virtually everyone responded. A total of 114 households participated; 11 were away (it was the holiday season) and 11 properties were unoccupied. Details of 318 residents were recorded and the results enabled us to build up an age-sex chart. We were able to compare this with similar charts compiled for 1851 and 1901 (using official census data).

Westbere Age-sex Structure 2005
318 residents responded



The population has fallen considerably from its 1901 total of 370. This is probably because Westbere never experienced a twentieth century housing boom, and a number of properties were lost in parish boundary changes in 1987. There is a smaller percentage of children, and the proportion of those aged 60 or over has increased to 30%.

Interestingly, of those aged 70 or over, 74% are female. In 1851, 96% of residents had been born in Kent. By 1901 this had fallen to 75%. Our survey revealed that only 42% of current residents were born in Kent and only 4 people were born in Westbere! The survey also revealed that of the 318 residents, 71 are children/students; 132 are employed and 115 are not employed. Of the 132 employed, 17 are long-distance commuters working outside Kent. Of the 115 who gave Kent as their county of employment, 38 work in Westbere – most of them from home. Undoubtedly this has been made possible by computer technology.