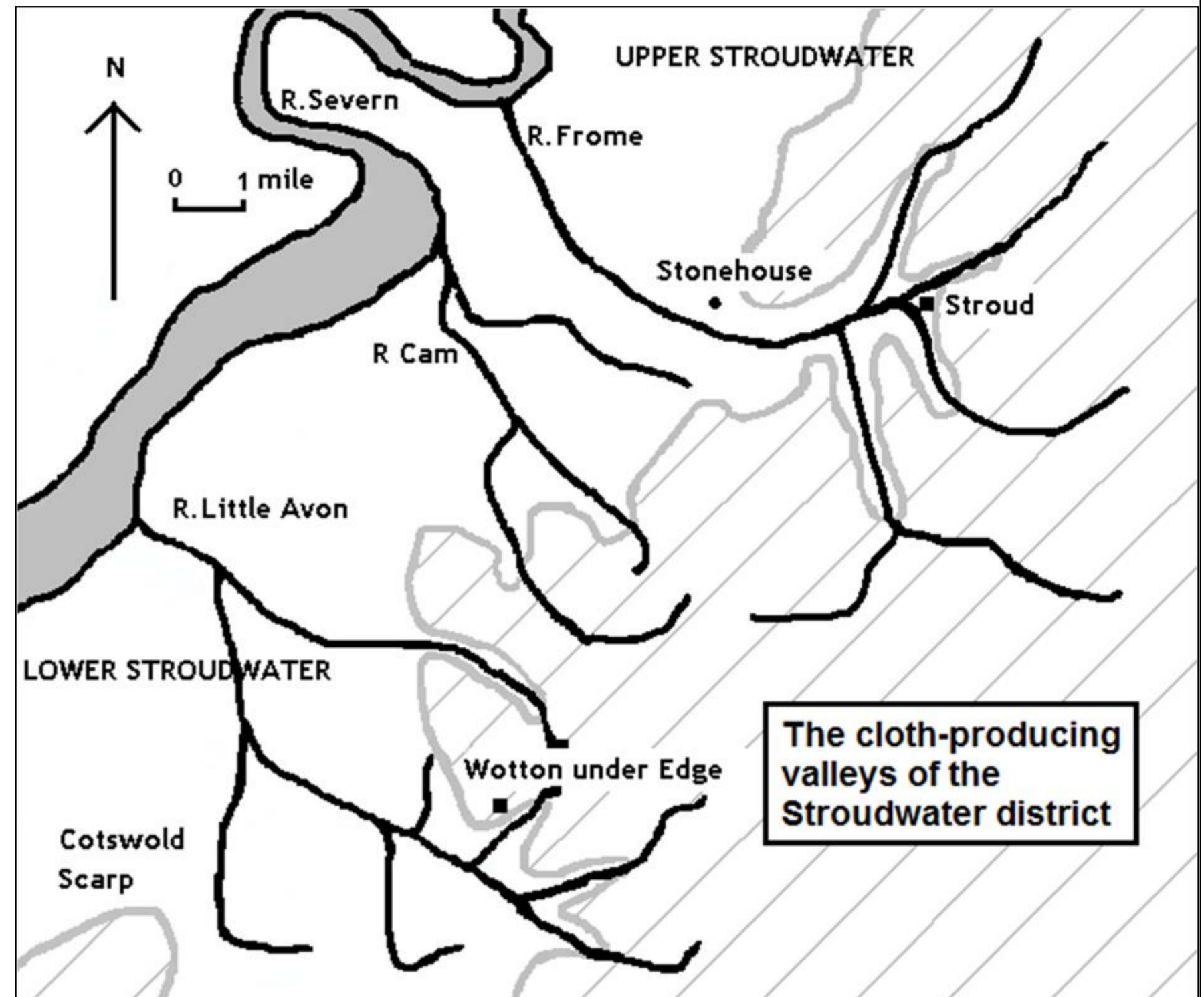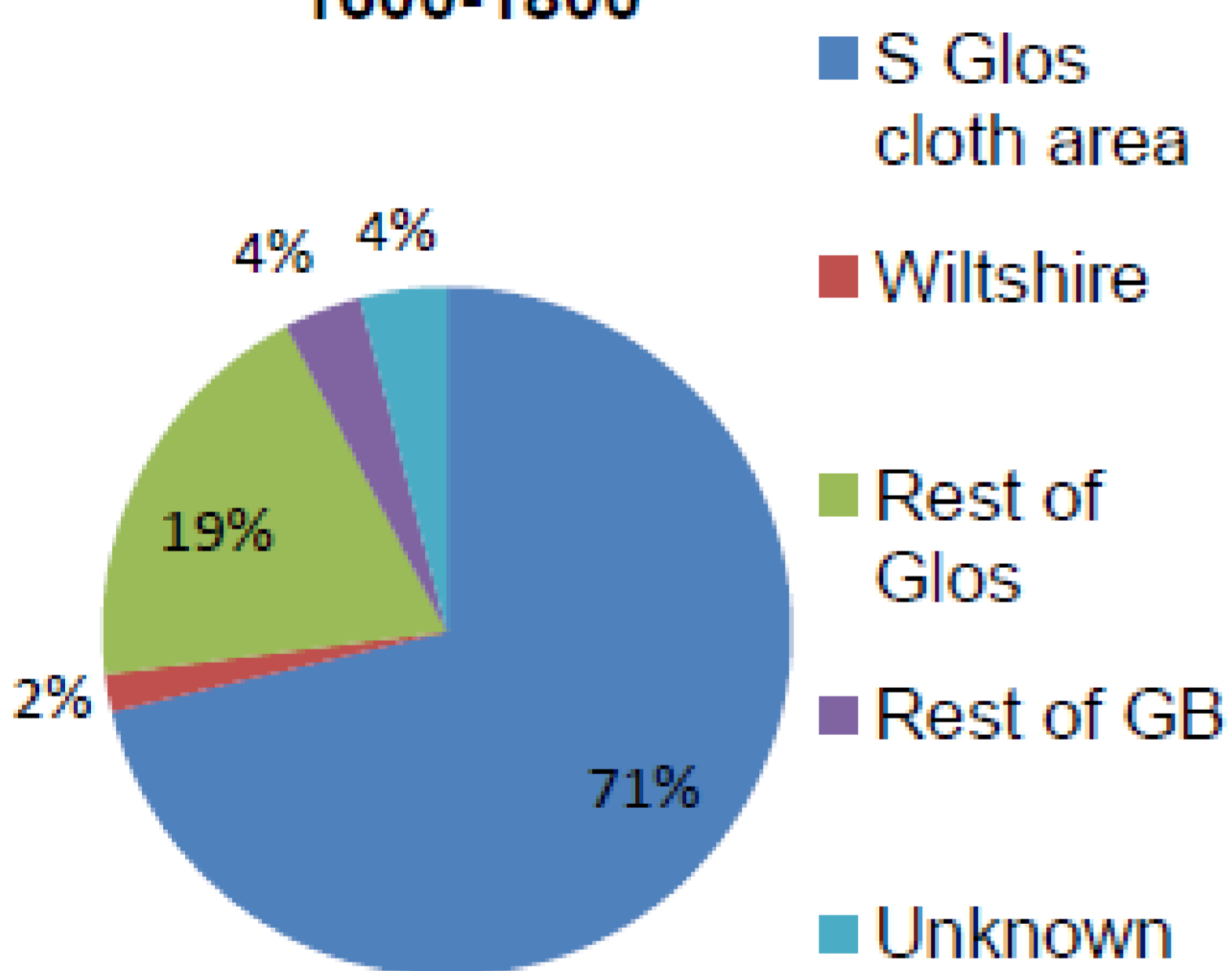# Stonehouse 1600-1800: why did people move?

The woollen cloth industry in the Stroudwater district, although centred on water-powered mills, was still largely home based. As its fortunes changed, cloth workers moved to where their skills were in demand. At least 70% of both incomers and leavers moved within the local cloth valleys, but others went to cloth areas in west Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and the north. After 1750, the lower Frome valley coped better than some other parts with severe depression, and attracted cloth workers.

The cloth-producing valleys of the Stroudwater district

The men who stayed in Stonehouse often held manorial properties with an agricultural base, but food prices were also linked to the cloth economy. Many trades also depended on it, and its management might require travel to London and other centres. However, it did not dictate all movement. Joseph Ellis, a clothier, died in 1771 while at Spa, Germany for his health.

Where men came from, 1600-1800
- S Glos cloth area — 71%
- Wiltshire — 2%
- Rest of Glos — 19%
- Rest of GB — 4%
- Unknown — 4%

A few men are known to have served temporarily as soldiers. Captain William Hopkins Hill, the son of a Stonehouse clothier, was killed in the South Seas in 1793. No cases of deliberate migration to or from places outside Great Britain were found, although there were one or two indirect links to Ireland, and not all movers were tracked.

Roger Parslow, born in Minchinhampton in 1595, was a blacksmith who settled in Stonehouse in about 1630. He prospered, and left property to his family in 1669.

John Budding, born in Stonehouse in 1632, was a weaver who went to the Slad near Stroud, where he left a 'business' in 1687.

William Rudman, a cloth worker from near Malmesbury in Wiltshire, was in Leonard Stanley as a trainee shearman in 1780. He drowned while living in Stonehouse in 1793.

Thomas Carruthers, a mercer and possibly a Jacobite, came to Stonehouse from Annandale in Scotland in about 1703. He prospered, and in 1811 his great-grandson became lord of Stonehouse manor.

Where men went, 1600-1800
- S Glos cloth area — 72%
- Wiltshire — 1%
- Rest of Glos — 13%
- Rest of GB — 3%
- Unknown — 11%